

AVON BIRD REPORT

2011

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

October 2012

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Typeset in WORD 2007 and printed by Healeys, Ipswich

ISSN Number – 0956-5744

Front cover: Waxwing photographed by Richard Andrews

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

Editorial

The past year, 2011, was outstanding in several ways for the birdlife of the Avon area. Although not every species prospered, it will long stand out for a variety of remarkable sightings and records. Foremost was the number and range of waders seen at the main reservoirs during the autumn and early winter periods – 34 species were recorded and the ‘star’ bird was a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper which stayed for about a month. There were also record numbers of Pectoral Sandpipers, five further North American ‘shorebirds’, and for our more normal species a flock of 24 Spotted Redshanks in mid-November was a fine sight. Amongst many other surprising occurrences I would also like to single out the following:

- Our first Pinkfeet (four) for ten years in December;
- Three Great White Egret and ten Spoonbill through the year;
- Up to 2000 Bar-tailed Godwits on the coast in late April;
- A notable increase in records of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, a species of particular recent concern,
- Close on 3000 Waxwing sightings early in the year; and
- Apart from the sandpiper mentioned above, new species for our area included: Lesser Canada Goose (sometimes known as Richardson’s Cackling Goose) at BL and CVL, Pallid Harrier on the Mendips, and Pied Wheatear at Oldbury.

Low water levels at the reservoirs and favourable weather conditions contributed to this remarkable series of sightings, but it does seem to indicate that in general many bird communities are in good shape. And the records received so far for 2012 suggest that this upturn is continuing. For more details keep reading!

The systematic list gives details of all notable sightings for 2011, no taxonomic changes were reported by the BOU this year and so the order of bird species in this list is unchanged from last year. As usual, following this list we have a number of ornithological papers. The first, by Keith Vinicombe, is a celebration of the remarkable events at the main reservoirs over the past year. Then comes two papers on important single species for our area – Shelduck and Nightingale. Shelduck is a major estuarine species with good wintering numbers which seem to have improved recently although breeding numbers have dropped over the past half century. On the other hand Nightingale is now restricted almost entirely to the east of our area near the Cotswolds, but seems to be holding its own at these sites. This paper was written by Stephen Birks and Claire Halpin, they are members of the Lower Woods management team and have considerable knowledge of the wildlife of these woods. The third single species paper, by Nige Nilbourne, gives a detailed and vivid account of the Sharp-tailed

Sandpiper’s month long stay at the main reservoirs. The final single species paper, by Darryl Spittle, describes the four day stay of a Pied Wheatear at Oldbury in late October. A paper on the occurrences of the Lesser Canada Goose will appear in a future issue of this Report when the relevant national bodies have passed judgement. For details concerning the brief Avon sighting of the Pallid Harrier (it was present in Somerset for three weeks), the reader is referred to the Somerset Bird Report.

This Report is the seventy-fifth in a continuous run that began in 1936, and included all of the war years although sightings were necessarily curtailed during this period. To celebrate this milestone we are republishing the first Report, for 1936, in full. It is interesting to note how things have changed, both in the sightings and in the style of the Report, it was written by Howard Davis who was both recorder and editor at the time. It is also of interest to note that probably less than twenty observers submitted records. There follows the usual BBS Report by Richard Bland and John Tully (see below), and the Ringing Report by Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of John Tully in April of this year after a long illness. He was a leading member of the Bristol Ornithological Club and had supported this publication over many years including as treasurer of the Executive Committee from 1990 to 1997. He had a great interest in the commoner birds of our region, and he wrote extensively on the Feral Pigeon and House Sparrow populations that occur locally. But perhaps his most abiding legacy to Avon ornithology and to this Report was his support and advocacy of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). With Richard Bland he persuaded and encouraged many observers to take part, and he wrote the annual report published here. He was able to complete the 2011 BBS Report, and we publish it now in memory of him and his untiring work and dedication to the birds and birders of the Avon area.

Finally, it is a pleasure to report on and thank all those who have made this publication possible. First I must thank Richard Mielcarek who not only wrote two sections (swans to Shelduck and skuas to auks) of this Report, and contributed considerably to a third (ducks), but again undertook the considerable task of knocking the various editorial contributions together to produce the fine looking text that you see in front of you now. I have mentioned the paper’s authors above, thanks are due to them and the following:

- Richard Andrews for his editorial and technical work on the photographs;
- Richard Bland for the Weather Report and the first half of the passerine section;
- Martyn Hayes for the game birds, rails to Crane, escapes and hybrids sections;
- Rupert Higgins for the excellent Review of the Year and the divers to grebes section;

- Brian Lancaster for the raptor section;
- John Martin for the latter half of the passerine section, his leadership of the recorder's committee and help with electronic recording, (his e-mail address is: avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com);
- Dave Nevitt for the doves to woodpeckers section;
- Mark Ponsford for parts of the ducks section.

I should also like to thank everyone who helped with the electronic collection of the data including all those who wrote the Bird Records Section of the monthly Newsletter of the BOC, Steve Hale, Richard Bland, and for the first time Mark Dadds who made a considerable contribution to this work. The general

running of the AOG including the publication of this Report is overseen by the Executive Committee whose members are appointed by the sponsoring organisations – BNS and BOC; in 2011/12 the members were: Richard Belson (Chairman), Richard Mielcarek (secretary, e-mail: rmiel@globalnet.co.uk), Jane Cumming (treasurer) and the editor. Any comments or criticisms of this Report can be sent a member of this committee. Last and by no means least I and my team members wish to thank all those observers who submitted records, whether a few or hundreds. This Report would not be possible without them, and I would encourage ALL those who go out into the field to enjoy, study and/or count the remarkable birds that occur in the Avon area to submit records either electronically or on paper. For details of how to do this, see page 17.

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Postscript. Late in the production process of this Report it was discovered that the identification of one of the unusual waders was wrong, this has been put right but it has meant that the Report is appearing later than we would have liked.

From the Recorder

The year 2011 will long be remembered not only for its large selection of rarities, but also for the sheer number of birds at the two main reservoirs in an extended bird-filled autumn. Full details can be found elsewhere in this Report but both CVL and BL produced some top quality birds. The best was perhaps the juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper which arrived at BL on Nov. 18th, moved to CVL next day and then spent most of its time here in a record-breaking 28-day stay. This record was exceptional in so many ways in British terms: it was by far the longest stay for a bird of this species; it was the only time that wintering was attempted; and records of juveniles are massively outnumbered by those of adults. The great disparity in numbers of adult and juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in Britain presumably reflects their highly unusual migration strategy in which some juveniles, but virtually no adults, take a pronounced detour from their Siberian breeding grounds to the rich feeding grounds in western Alaska. After feeding up there they proceed on a southward migration which probably takes them right across the Pacific in a single epic stage. The juveniles arrive in Alaska from late August and the last depart from there in October and November. This is apparently only the second well-documented case of such a differential migration among birds (Handel & Gill, 2010).

The 'Sharpie' of course attracted many admirers and on its first Saturday at CVL a memorable 'supporting cast' included a Semipalmated Sandpiper (although admittedly its identification was only confirmed retrospectively from photos), two Long-billed

Dowitchers, a Spotted Sandpiper, a Grey Phalarope, two Black-necked Grebes, ten Bewick's Swans, a Red-breasted Merganser and four Water Pipits. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was one of 34 wader species recorded at CVL during this remarkable autumn.

Clearly the low water levels at the reservoirs were a factor in producing the high bird numbers. Other recent dry autumns with low water levels, however, have failed to produce anything like the numbers and diversity of waders recorded this year, so this return to form was most welcome. Presumably, a combination of factors was involved. We can only hope they are repeated soon but this seems unlikely in 2012, at least, with lake levels currently high after an exceptionally wet summer. If Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was our bird of the year, the first-winter female Pied Wheatear at Oldbury Yacht Club from October 25th to 28th was the autumn's star bird on the coast. This high class eastern vagrant is now almost annual on the east coast but remains an extreme rarity in the southwest. It performed superbly and was often seen flycatching from the yacht club roof showing its black underwing coverts and distinctive tail pattern. A beautiful juvenile Pallid Harrier hunted over Black Down and adjacent parts of Somerset from Sept. 28th to Oct. 15th, part of an exceptional influx of this once extreme rarity. A handful of lucky observers witnessed it fly well into Avon airspace on Sept. 30th making it a first record for two recording areas!

Another potential new species for the Avon list was Lesser Canada Goose. One was at BL on Nov. 1st and 2nd moving to CVL from 2nd to 5th before relocating to Torr Reservoir, Somerset from 12th, where it wintered. It reappeared at CVL in spring 2012 before having the decency to depart for who knows where. The taxonomy and nomenclature of Canada Goose forms is a vexed question. The BOU recently approved a two-way split of the larger and smaller forms into Greater Canada Goose *B. canadensis*, (polytypic, with subspecies *canadensis*, *fulva*, *interior*, *maxima*, *moffitti*, *occidentalis* and *parvipes*); and Lesser Canada Goose *B. hutchinsii* (polytypic, with subspecies *hutchinsii*, *leucopareia*, *minima* and *taverneri*) (Sangster *et al.* 2001), which is in line with the American Ornithologists Union's treatment. English names are problematic, with BOU's recommended 'Lesser Canada Goose' being particularly confusing as it was previously widely applied to the form *parvipes*, which is now part of the 'Greater Canada Goose' polytypic. AOU calls the small birds Cackling Goose, because of their high pitched calls, but this name is not ideal either as it was previously often applied to the race *minima*. The forms are variable and naming them is often difficult. Our bird was considered to be of the race *hutchinsii*, albeit a rather small dark example, American expert David Sibley's support for this identification being most helpful. Vagrant Lesser Canada Geese, mainly of the race *hutchinsii*, are annual in very small numbers in Western Scotland with flocks of Arctic breeding Barnacle Geese. Even these birds have yet to be formally added to the British list presumably mainly because of difficulties in accurately identifying individual birds. The escape problem is also a significant stumbling block which applies much more to our bird than to those wintering with Barnacle Goose flocks in Scotland. Were a vagrant to turn up in our area it would surely join up with a Canada Goose flock, as the current bird did, but we are also less remote from wildfowl collections, where the small forms are quite popular. Thus it might be some time before we have decision about this bird – do not hold your breath.

Given the number of BBRC birds recorded during the year (eleven, which is exceptional and might well be a record) it is not surprising that the number of local rarities was also high with 135 records of local rarities assessed this year (88 in 2010) of which 128, 95%, were accepted, a slightly higher acceptance rate than last year. We are aware of reports from various sources of up to 29 other county rarities that were not submitted for various reasons. Some were reported on national bird news services, others on local websites or forums but without any supporting details, and so they cannot be published with confidence. We suspect some observers had second thoughts about their claims and chose not to submit, but a proportion of the records might represent genuine occurrences. Their omission,

however, does not significantly affect the status of any species in the Report, apart from at a very local level (notably CI-Y where a handful of active observers do not submit descriptions, a situation that we hope will change in the near future), but we would welcome late submissions of any of these records.

Submission of records has never been easier. Records submitted to BOC, including those e-mailed to bocbirdsightings@hotmail.co.uk and from the Forum page at <http://www.boc-bristol.org.uk>, are used to compile a spreadsheet for the monthly bulletin and also passed to the recorder. This is recommended as the best way to submit records. Records can also be sent directly to me, either by post to 34 Cranmoor Green, Pilning, Bristol, BS35 4QF, or, preferably, by e-mail to avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com. Ideally records should be submitted as an Excel spreadsheet and should state the species, the number of individuals, the date seen and the site (with grid reference if possible). Records submitted to BirdTrack are also available to us as are WeBS counts and other BTO surveys. All records are kept - they are stored by the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) in Bristol so they are properly archived and can be used for conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the bird-life of the area.

The write-up of the Severn Beach *Fregetta* petrel, drafted some months ago, is still not complete so it will not appear in this year's report, though hopefully it will be ready for next year. Finally it just remains for me to thank all those who have helped with records during the year including the recorder's committee (Richard Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancaster and Harvey Rose) and Richard Bland (Bristol Naturalists Society). Matt Plenty was unfortunately unable to take up his role on the recorder's committee due to work commitments. Special thanks are due to Richard Mielcarek who has taken much of the burden of my recording role on his own shoulders and from 2012 has been compiling local rarity records for circulation and chasing up those lacking documentation. He has also agreed to join the recorder's committee from this year (2012 record assessment onwards).

References:

Handel, C. M. & Gill, R. E. (2010). Wayward Youth: Trans-Beringian Movement and Differential Southward Migration by Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. *Arctic*, **63**, 3, open access PDF.

Sangster, G., Collinson, J. M., Helbig, A. J. and Knox, A. G. (2005). Taxonomic recommendations for British birds: third report. *Ibis*, **147**, 821-826

John Martin (Recorder)

Species for which descriptions are required

For the locally rare species and subspecies set out below we require a description that confirms the plumage, and other details noted in arriving at the identification.

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

* sight records of non-singing birds away from established breeding areas

Subspecies

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

Greenland White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>	Scandinavian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita abietinus</i>
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Siberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita tristis</i>
Arctica Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina arctica</i>	Greenland Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe leucorroa</i>
'Continental' Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>	Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>
'Nordic' Jackdaw	<i>Monedula monedula monedula</i>	Grey-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i>
		Scandinavian Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus littoralis</i>

Further details are on page 18.

Review of 2011

The year will long be remembered for its exceptional sequence of rarities in the autumn. Most of these were Nearctic waders at BL and CVL, both sites also hosting a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper as well as a Lesser Canada Goose. The concentration of rare birds here must rival, if not exceed, that ever recorded at any other site in mainland Britain. Other exceptional occurrences involved a Pied Wheatear at Oldbury-on-Severn and a Pallid Harrier that briefly strayed into our area from Somerset. The excitement generated should not be allowed to disguise the fact that populations of many of our commoner birds are at a very low ebb, following a sequence of wet summers and cold winters. Habitat changes mean that there is a real possibility of Lapwing following species such as Turtle Dove to local extinction as a breeding species. There was better news for some migrants, however, with Whitethroat in particular enjoying a bumper year. The end of the year saw notable influxes of grey geese and Short-eared Owl.

First Winter Period

Although the cold weather of late 2010 was to have an influence on the year's bird populations it did not continue into 2011. January started mild and wet followed by two weeks of cool weather before south-westerly winds returned in February.

The cold weather at the end of 2010 led to some wildfowl movement and numbers of several species, including Bewick's Swan, Wigeon and Goosander remained high into 2011. The whole winter only produced one record of Smew, however, at BL from Feb. 11th. Continued low water levels at the lakes allowed large populations of Shoveler, Pochard and Tufted Duck to persist here. As in recent years the south-western part of the coast has produced several good counts; these included 535 Shelduck at Sand Bay in February and 2,000 Teal at the Axe Estuary in January.

Lingering influence of the cold weather was also evident in some wader species. A return movement of 2,000 Golden Plover through CI-Y was noted on Jan. 24th and Woodcock were once again widespread. However, numbers of Snipe and Jack Snipe were again low, the former especially showing worrying signs of a long-term population slump. Amongst the more numerous estuarine species the decline in Dunlin, especially at Severnside, continued but Curlew numbers were average and several exceptional Redshank counts were made. The fortunes of Black-tailed Godwit have fluctuated widely in recent years with a sudden fall following several years of steady increase; there were slight signs of a recovery during this period and Turnstone also saw an improvement. Oystercatcher has shown a long term upwards trend and this continued, especially on Severnside. Numbers of the scarcer species were unexceptional, with Greenshank and Common Sandpiper recorded only from the R. Avon,

one or two Spotted Redshank and an average scatter of Green Sandpipers

Raptor interest was provided by a good sequence of Hen Harrier sightings at several sites along the coast. Merlin was widely scattered, although only regularly seen at CI-Y.

Once again there was clear evidence of the impact of the series of cold winters on several species of passerine. Despite low water levels Water Pipit was absent from CVL, but reasonably frequent on the coast, and Stonechat remained uncommon. However, there was a slight increase in Chiffchaff numbers and Blackcap was more numerous than ever before. Black Redstart numbers, following recent breeding records, were high but Firecrest showed a decline. Winter thrushes, especially Fieldfare, were scarce. The fortunes of migrant finches varied. Siskin and Brambling were both more numerous than usual but Lesser Redpoll was very uncommon. As usual there were some impressive passerine counts, especially from the Marshfield area where maxima of 600 Linnet, 200 Yellowhammer and 200 Corn Bunting were recorded. Elsewhere Salford produced an impressive 300 Pied Wagtail and 70 Yellowhammer.

Spring

The spring was dry throughout. The first week of March was cold, with north-easterly winds, but for the rest of the month southerly and south-easterly winds dominated. These continued for much of April, but there was a spell of northerlies in mid-month. May was warm and sunny with light, usually southerly, winds.

The most noteworthy wildfowl records of the season involved an unusually strong passage of Eider. Single birds were seen on April 16th and 17th, followed by six at Severn Beach on May 11th, 30 here the next day and 25 at Ladye Bay on 23rd. Goldeneye numbers peaked in March, when the total for the reservoirs was around 200. The first Garganey appeared on March 25th and the last Pintail was seen almost a month later, on April 23rd.

Once again spring proved to be the time to see Red Kite although the wide spread of sightings, which came between March 21st and May 18th, suggests dispersal rather than any consistent passage. Seven Ospreys were seen, between April 1st and May 2nd. April 15th produced both the year's first Hobby and the start of a small movement of Marsh Harriers, which involved probably five birds and lasted until May 10th.

Spring passage of waders began in late March, when the first Little Ringed Plover was seen on 23rd followed by a sizeable arrival between 24th and 27th. The spring's first Greenshank was seen on

April 2nd and the next day produced the first passage Common Sandpiper, along with the season's only Little Stint. A count of six Jack Snipe at Leap Valley on 25th was exceptional, and presumably involved passage birds. There was a strong migration of Bar-tailed Godwits, beginning on 28th, peaking on 30th and continuing to May 4th. Whimbrel numbers were also much better than in recent years, with a peak on 2nd. Later in the month there was a good passage of Ringed Plover, which continued until June 2nd.

The year's first notable movement of seabirds came on March 10th and 11th, when good numbers of Gannet and Kittiwake were seen, and there was a small Sandwich Tern passage on April 2nd. Late April and early May saw further movement, coinciding with the passage of Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel, with good numbers of Common, Arctic and Black Terns and Arctic Skuas, especially on May 2nd, along with Little Tern and Little Gull. Pomarine Skua followed with single birds on May 7th, 11th and 22nd. A brief spell of strong winds at the end of the month provided further interest on the coast, producing some noteworthy counts of Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Gannet accompanied by a few each of Storm Petrel, Razorbill, Guillemot and Great Skua.

The southerly winds at the start of March resulted in early records of Sand Martin on 2nd, Wheatear on 8th and Swallow and Ring Ouzel on 9th, the last-named the earliest on record. There was then something of a lull, broken by a period in mid-month when the first Redstart, also the earliest on record, and Willow Warbler arrived. Large scale passage began in the period 22nd to 28th, which saw the first House Martin, Blackcap and Tree Pipit; last Fieldfare and Redwing; marked arrivals of Sand Martin, Chiffchaff, Ring Ouzel and Wheatear; and visible migration involving Meadow Pipit and Lesser Redpoll. The theme of early arrivals continued into the first week of April, when Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler and Reed Warbler all appeared ahead of schedule. The dates of the first Garden Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and Yellow Wagtail and the main influx of Sand Martin, Blackcap and Willow Warbler, all in the same period, were more normal, and a small passage of Brambling was detected. Further marked influxes were seen at the end of the month, coinciding with wader and seabird movements, involving Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler. Amongst the less common species there were more records of Ring Ouzel, Redstart, Whinchat and Pied Flycatcher than in recent years and the best passage of Yellow Wagtail for 18 years, peaking during the Whimbrel passage on May 2nd. Tree Pipit was less numerous than usual, however, and Wood Warbler probably had its worst spring on record, with only two birds seen.

The spring was not outstanding for rare and scarce species but a few were seen, mostly on the coast.

The first involved a Hoopoe at Clevedon on March 15th followed nearby by a Stone Curlew at Cl-Y on April 10th. A Ferruginous Duck was present throughout most of the period, and strayed to Publow Farm on 17th and 18th. A Turtle Dove was seen at Severn Beach on 24th. Most scarce species occurred in a seven day period, coinciding with the passage of waders, seabirds and some passerines in early May. The first was a Kentish Plover at Sand Bay on 2nd; followed by a further Hoopoe, at OPS on 3rd; a second Turtle Dove at Severn Beach on 6th; a Honey Buzzard over the same site the next day; and the season's third Hoopoe, at Weston-s-Mare on 9th. The coastal monopoly was broken only by a Ring-necked Duck, which was present at CVL from May 6th to 9th. After this flurry the remainder of the month was quiet.

Breeding

May and June was warm and sunny, but there were spells of wet weather in July. The effects of poor winter and summer weather in previous years were evident in several species.

Our two most widespread wildfowl species, Mute Swan and Mallard, both enjoyed good breeding seasons but numbers of most other species were down particularly at CVL where Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Coot and Moorhen all fared badly and Pochard failed to breed. Tufted Duck, however, had a good season elsewhere, in contrast to Shelduck, which did badly on the coast but well at CVL. There was no evidence of further decline in Grey Heron numbers, but neither was there a sign of any recovery.

Diurnal raptors enjoyed a good season, following recent declines in some species. Sparrowhawk had its best season since 1997; Buzzard was recorded from the largest number of sites yet; Kestrel showed a slight increase from 2010; Hobby had a reasonably good year; and the Peregrine population was the best to date. The fortunes of owls were in marked contrast. Recent cold winters caused a sharp decline in the number of Barn Owl pairs, from 21 to seven, and populations of Tawny Owl and Little Owl also fell.

Probably no breeding species has declined as rapidly in recent decades as Lapwing, with evidence of breeding noted at only four sites in 2011: thirty years ago the equivalent figure was 149. The less common breeding waders also fared rather poorly: Oystercatcher was successful at two sites and breeding was at least attempted at a further three; five pairs of Ringed Plover represented a decline from last year; and Little Ringed Plover managed only one unsuccessful attempt.

The ability of resident passerines to cope with recent cold weathers has varied. Although a fall in the Goldcrest population might be expected no evidence of this was seen. On the other hand, several species known to be especially vulnerable to freezing

conditions did decline. These included Green Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Cetti's Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper, Wren, Robin and Stonechat. Great Tit numbers also dropped sharply, but this was probably due to a poor breeding season in 2010; Blue Tit showed little change. Blackbird was present in good numbers but appeared to suffer poor productivity, whilst there was evidence of sharp falls in both Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush. The fortunes of migrant species were mixed. Blackcap and Whitethroat were both at a record high, and following a decline Chiffchaff recovered to 2004 levels. Garden Warbler, however, was less numerous than recently and Grasshopper Warbler was markedly rarer than in recent years: this species is subject to cyclical changes in population levels. There were slight recoveries of Cuckoo and Willow Warbler, two species that have given cause for concern in recent years, but Spotted Flycatcher declined after a slight recovery in 2010. Amongst the farmland birds Yellowhammer became more numerous but less widespread, apparently retreating into a core area on the Cotswolds; Corn Bunting declined slightly; Linnet became slightly more common; and Skylark was stable. Two widespread finches had divergent fortunes: Goldfinch numbers rose to their highest ever, whilst Greenfinch continued to fall, now down by more than 70% on its 2006 levels.

One pair of Long-eared Owl bred at one of the two sites used in 2010. Nightjar and Willow Tit maintained a precarious toehold at opposite ends of our region and there were very welcome signs of a slight increase in the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker population. Another species giving slight hope is Yellow Wagtail, up from two to three possible breeding sites this year, whilst one pair of Tree Pipit probably bred in the Mendips. There may also have been a small increase in the Nightingale population and the recently established colony of Sand Martin at BG continues to expand.

Summer

The weather conditions throughout were largely settled with no strong winds or significant rainfall, although the latter part of July saw some rain.

With no strong westerly winds there was, as in recent years, an almost total absence of seabird records, with just a Storm Petrel at Severn Beach on July 17th rewarding the efforts of sea watchers.

There was only one record of Common Scoter during the period, but a count of eight at CVL on June 26th was the highest of the year. Summer may be a quiet time of year for wildfowl, but returning Teal from June 11th and Wigeon from July 5th illustrate that ducks are migrating at this time of year, providing some suggestion that a Red-crested Pochard seen at CVL from June 19th might have been of continental origin.

The brevity of the summer hiatus between passage periods is strikingly illustrated by wader records over the season. Passage was still underway on June 2nd, when Ringed Plover, Sanderling and *Arctica* Dunlin were still moving, and the last Greenshank of the spring was recorded on 6th. A single Knot at CVL on 12th was hard to attribute to either spring or autumn passage, but the first returning Common Sandpiper arrived on the same day, followed by Greenshank on 24th and both Green and Wood Sandpipers on 27th. As far as waders are concerned, summer 2011 lasted for six days !

A Great White Egret at BL on June 11th and a Blue-winged Teal that arrived at CVL on June 12th provided a taste of things to come at the two lakes. A Montague's Harrier was seen at Marshfield, an area that has produced several records of this species in the recent past, on July 3rd and more unusually a Corncrake was heard calling at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 31st.

Autumn

Winds in August were largely westerly and the weather was quite settled. September saw three wet spells, the first two of which were associated with the arrival of large depressions on 6th and 12th, which were significant in terms of trans-Atlantic rarities. October was generally warm and dry with light winds.

The water level at CVL dropped substantially over the period and waterweed growth was very strong, allowing water bird flocks to build to exceptional levels, if slightly below those of 2010. Particularly noteworthy were Gadwall, present in numbers far exceeding any counted previously; record numbers of Mute Swan; and large concentrations of Wigeon feeding on the floating weed. Mallard, Tufted Duck and Coot numbers were high at both CVL and BL and Shoveler was numerous at the former, although relatively scarce at CVL. Little Grebe counts at CVL were high, but numbers of Great Crested Grebe and Moorhen were both low. The first Goosanders were seen on Sept. 15th and a Long-tailed Duck at BL on Oct. 13th was unusually early.

The strong winds associated with the September depressions brought two marked influxes of seabirds, mostly involving Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Gannet. Around 6th there were also records of Storm Petrel, Shag, Pomarine, Arctic and Great Skuas and Guillemot, whilst around 12th there were further records of Shag and Arctic Skua as well as of three Leach's Petrel.

Raptor passage was evident through the season, with first records of Marsh Harrier on Aug. 6th and Osprey on 17th, followed by Hen Harrier from Sept. 14th, when a Goshawk was also seen. The last Hobby was recorded on Oct. 21st.

With low water levels at both CVL and BL the wader passage at the reservoirs was the best for several

years although some species, including Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank, were not as numerous as might have been expected. Little Ringed Plover was present at CVL in record numbers, reaching a maximum of 16 on Aug. 2nd, when a strong passage of Common Sandpiper also peaked. Greenshank and Green Sandpiper were seen in average numbers, peaking on 11th and 19th respectively. Ringed Plover was numerous both at CVL and on the coast. The highest count of this species, 675, was made on 31st, when there were small influxes of both Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper. There appeared to be a small movement associated with the depression on Sept. 12th, when numbers of Knot, Sanderling and Curlew Sandpiper were at their highest and there was also a marked influx of Grey Phalarope, probably involving nine birds.

Strong autumn passage of several passerine species was noted, although Whinchat and Stonechat were both very scarce and there were no records at all of either Ring Ouzel or Pied Flycatcher. There were larger than usual numbers of Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Redstart, all reaching maxima between Aug. 20th and Sept. 4th. The period Sept. 15th to 19th, when a belt of rain crossed the area, was also significant. The last Swift and Willow Warbler, the latter very early, were seen then and there were peak numbers of Swallow, House Martin and Blackcap. The last few days of September and first few of October produced the last sightings of Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit and first of Fieldfare and Redwing. Later on, there was a large movement from Oct. 14th to 16th involving Wood Pigeon, Skylark, Fieldfare, Redwing, Chaffinch, Lesser Redpoll and Crossbill. The first Bramblings arrived at the same time. There were several very late records of summer migrants. An exceptionally heavy Reed Warbler was trapped at CVL on 23rd, with winter sightings of Swallow and Wheatear on Nov. 12th and 30th respectively.

Autumn 2012 will be remembered by birdwatchers from all over the UK as a classic for rare birds at the main lakes. An exceptional series of Nearctic waders was for many the highlight, after a total absence of these birds in 2010, but other species were involved as well. A combination of low water levels at the reservoirs and strong depressions sweeping across the Atlantic clearly helped, but it is striking that neither our coast nor adjacent counties enjoyed even an average year for American vagrants. Following the Blue-winged Teal at CVL in June, the sequence started with a Lesser Yellowlegs here on July 8th, which in contrast to most other rare birds was present for one day only. A good season for Spoonbills then got underway with two here on 25th. August was fairly quiet, with a Ring-necked Duck at BL on 17th and at CVL from 29th and a Temminck's Stint at the latter on 26th hardly exceptional. Unsettled weather in September started the series of outstanding records. The first of the

year's Pectoral Sandpipers was found on 2nd with a second on 12th. A Spotted Sandpiper, which over-wintered, followed on 24th, with another Pectoral Sandpiper the next day. The latter species continued its influx with two on Oct. 2nd and another on 3rd. BL then got into the act with two Long-billed Dowitchers on 10th. These birds spent much of the rest of the year moving between the two lakes before splitting up to winter in Dorset and Hampshire and then re-uniting on the Somerset Levels. A Great White Egret at CVL on 14th provided some variety, although it was seen by very few people. The lakes then had a relatively quiet period, before hitting another peak in early November. A Lesser Canada Goose was found at BL on 1st, before moving on to CVL and then Torr Reservoir, Somerset, where it over-wintered. The origin of this bird will never be known for sure, but it arrived during small influxes of this species to both eastern North America and Britain, behaved like a wild bird throughout its stay, and left in spring as would be expected of a wild bird. The next day a Lesser Scaup was found at CVL, allowing one observer to see six species of *Aythya* within an hour. On 10th a Semipalmated Sandpiper arrived here, the first record for the site, although it was only identified subsequently from photographs. After this succession of arrivals from the west it was something of a shock that perhaps the outstanding bird of an outstanding autumn came from the far east, although maybe travelling *via* Alaska, in the form of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. It was found at BL on 18th but by the next day it had moved to CVL, where it joined the two Long-billed Dowitchers, the Semipalmated Sandpiper and the Spotted Sandpiper to the delight of visitors from near and far.

Although the unprecedented, and probably never to be repeated, events at the lakes grab attention it was also an exceptional autumn elsewhere in our area. A Woodchat Shrike remained at Sodbury Common from July 30th to Aug. 21st, joining an outstanding series of more common migrants at this previously under-watched site. The storms on Sept. 6th produced a Sabine's Gull at Severnside followed by one at Sand Bay two days later. The first of the season's three Wrynecks was found at Bishop Sutton on 10th and then five Spoonbills, the largest party ever seen in our area, moved from Severnside to CVL on 14th. Pallid Harrier has become much more frequent in Britain in recent years, but the discovery of one at Blackdown, Somerset, on 28th provoked much excitement. It strayed the short distance into our area on at least one occasion during its 18 day stay. October opened with single Wrynecks at Sand Point on 2nd and RPD on 7th and a Richard's Pipit at Northwick Warth on 15th. Yellow-browed Warblers at Worlebury on 22nd and Dundry on 27th were also fairly standard, although still exciting, fare. Much less predictable was the discovery of our area's first Pied Wheatear at Oldbury-on-Severn on 25th. It stayed for three more days to delight many with its confiding behaviour.

Second Winter Period

The last two months of the year were generally mild, with the exception of a cold snap between Dec. 14th and 19th. November was mainly settled, with a high over the Baltic and Russia funnelling southerly winds over our area. The pattern was broken by a large storm on Dec. 8th.

The low reservoir water levels continued well into the winter and large numbers of Wigeon, Teal and Shoveler persisted. Pintail was numerous at BL but strangely scarce at CVL. Our first ever over-wintering Garganey remained at CVL into 2012. Shelduck numbers were low in the northern part of the Estuary but there were exceptional counts of 600 at the Axe Estuary in October and 580 at Sand Bay in December. Many northern breeding species enjoyed a good season in 2011, probably because large lemming populations diverted the attention of predators away from eggs and fledglings. As well as accounting for high numbers of some waders this also resulted in a good year for some wildfowl. There was a marked influx of Bewick's Swans from Nov. 9th to 20th and more unusual was an influx of grey geese, which appeared in two waves on Nov. 17th and Dec. 10th. On the former date there were parties of wild Greylags at both BL and CVL, with further birds at OPS two days later, and two Tundra Bean Geese flew past CI-Y. On the latter date four Pink-foots arrived at BL and a Tundra Bean Goose was found at Weston STW, where it joined an apparently wild Greylag that had arrived seven days earlier. The only Whooper Swan of the year visited CVL on 23rd, before flying through BL.

Few seabirds were seen during the storms of early December but good numbers of Kittiwake were noted from 3rd to 17th and later in the year there was a Shag at Severnside on 22nd, following a good sequence of autumn records here.

Short-eared Owl was exceptionally numerous, with peak counts of three at Aust, five at CI-Y and, most impressively, seven in the Marshfield area. Merlin was also widely recorded, although regularly only at CI-Y.

Recent trends exhibited by several estuarine waders continued. Redshank was exceptionally numerous, particularly in the south-western part of our coast and Oystercatcher counts at Severnside were high, whilst Curlew was present in broadly average numbers. Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwit, however, were both scarce. Of the more widely distributed species Golden Plover, Snipe and Jack Snipe were all uncommon, although there was a good count of six Jack Snipe at Weston STW. After a poor autumn for the species it was a real surprise when a flock of 24 Spotted Redshank visited CVL briefly on Nov. 12th.

Several passerines continued to show the effects of recent cold winters. Despite the low water levels at CVL Water Pipit was virtually non-existent here, although there were good numbers at some coastal sites. No Firecrests were seen and Stonechat remained scarce. In the milder weather far fewer Blackcaps visited gardens than in recent years. Fieldfare and Lesser Redpoll were reasonably numerous but very few Brambling were seen. There was a large Siskin passage in November but few of these stayed with us and December records were few. Good counts made over the period included 300 Stock Dove at Bleadon, the same number of Skylark at Marshfield and 230 Carrion Crows by the R. Avon on Dec. 7th.

Several November rarities are described above, since they formed part of the autumn passage. Otherwise, another Ring-necked Duck arrived at CVL on 7th and then moved to BL and Weston STW. A Great White Egret was seen briefly at CI-Y on the same date and a Slavonian Grebe arrived at BL, where it was to overwinter, on 11th. A small party of Snow Bunting spent much of the period at CI-Y, peaking at four on 13th. A Great Grey Shrike, also to prove a long-stayer, was found at Charlton Fields on 23rd. Great Northern Divers were seen at CVL on 27th and at PW during the early December storms. A Ring-billed Gull was at CVL on 12th. Twite are now rare in our area, so the discovery of three at OPS on 20th was noteworthy; these stayed into 2012, as did a Yellow-browed Warbler trapped at CVL on 29th.

Rupert Higgins

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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.

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

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

Records taken solely from Birdguides are marked (per BG).

Weather Report for 2011

Data sources

The BNS began publishing weather data in 1872 with G. F. Burder's paper on rainfall in Clifton since 1853, and this led me to search for temperature data back to that date. From 1920 until its closure in 2002 the Long Ashton Research Station provided the published data, and since then I have used the **Times** daily reports for Bristol, although since 2000 I have also used my own rain gauge. There is an excellent website at www.afour.demon.co.uk which has traced records from some other sources back to 1853, and I have used these to fill in the gaps. A long series of reports is crucial for an understanding of the continuous processes of climate change, which is normally defined as the average for the previous thirty years. I use the term "long-term average" to mean the average back to 1853. The term "since records began" is often used without a clear date reference, and this can create confusion. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature

as the basis, but many sources only quote the daily maximum and so I have used this data throughout.

The year that has just passed, 2011, was another exceptional one. It had the highest April and November temperatures since 1853, and the second highest (the first was for 1921) annual temperature at 15.5°C. The thirty-year average, the normal definition of climate, reached 14.0°C for the first time since 1962. It was over 14.0°C from 1949 to 1962, and the highest ever was 14.05°C in 1950. Rainfall was 50mm (three weeks worth) below normal but the thirty-year average has reached 963mm, higher than the previous maximum in 1938 of 959mm. The long term average is just 900mm. April was exceptionally dry, with just four millimetres of rain falling. There have been six previous years with single digit April rainfall - the most recent was in 1984. In the past century such events have occurred on average every 24 years.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Av. Max °C	14.3	15	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.5	13.7	14.6	14.2	15.5
Ten year av. °C	14	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4
Rainfall mm	1058	758	945	896	952	1107	1150	986	747	847
Ten year av. mm	995	963	954	956	974	997	1005	993	943	945

Table 1. Average maximum temperature and rainfall. The average rows are for the ten years up to and including the year in question.

Seasons

Winter (December 2010 to February) Average temperature was 6.8°C, the third below average winter in a row, which is unusual. It was caused by the exceptional cold in December 2010 as the temperature in February was above average. Rainfall, at 72mm per month, was just below average. A total of 41 frost nights (October to April) was recorded, the last on March 19th. There were 34 nights cold enough to create ice, and 23 days with lying snow, all in December. The winter cold began on Nov. 24th, and only ended on Dec. 27th. Two brief cold snaps were also noted in January.

Spring (March to May) Average temperature was 16.1°C, the second warmest since 1853 (the record was set in 1893) caused by a heat wave at the end of April. This had a profound effect on plants. Rainfall at 21mm per month was drier than average,

and it was the second dry spring in a row and the driest since 1990.

Summer (June to August) Average temperature at 20.0°C was spot on the long term average, but it was the fourth wet summer in a row, with 90mm of rain per month.

Autumn (September to November) Average temperature at 16.8°C was the highest ever recorded. October had the fourth highest temperature for this month since 1853, and November the highest. Rainfall was below average.

Seasonal Comparisons To put the 2011 average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes with their years, the average since 1853, and the difference between 2011 and the long-term average.

	2011	Minimum	Maximum	Av., since 1853	Difference
Winter	6.8°	1917-2.5	1920-10.6	7.5°	-0.7°
Spring	16.1°	1887-10.4	1893-16.6	13.0°	3.1°
Summer	20.0°	1883-18.0	1976-23.9	20.2°	-0.2°
Autumn	16.8°	1915-10.6	1959-16.8	14.0°	2.8°
Annual	15.5°	1892-12.1	1921-15.6	13.6°	1.9°

Table 2 2011 seasonal average temperature compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853.

	2011	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Difference
Winter	72	1964-21	1995-154	79	-7
Spring	21	1893-17	1981-107	60	-39
Summer	90	1995-11	1879-140	74	16
Autumn	68	1978-26	1935-173	87	-19
Annual	71	1864-49	1882-104	75	-4

Table 3 Seasonal annual rainfall compared with the minimum and maximum and average since 1853

Monthly percentage deviation in 2011 from the average since 1853

Temperature February, April, October and November were warmer than normal.

Rainfall March, April, May, October and November were drier than normal, and January, June and December were wetter.

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Temp	-5	33	22	47	6	0	1	-3	9	23	32	25
Rain	55	8	-75	-93	-29	48	21	6	10	-43	-29	31

Table 4 Monthly percentage deviations in 2011 from the norm

Monthly summaries for 2011

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Av.
Temp °C	6.9	10.1	12.2	18.7	17.3	19.3	21.0	19.7	19.6	17.3	13.5	9.8	15.5
Rain mm	130	67	15	4	44	92	87	90	87	54	62	115	71

Table 5 2011 Monthly average temperatures and total rainfall

January The first two weeks were cool, and very wet from 11th to 17th. Winds switched to the North on 17th, and high pressure took charge with five days of frost from 18th to 22nd and again from 28th to 31st. The winds stayed in the North or East, and it remained largely dry. There were 17 sunless days, and eleven frosty nights.

February The month began with SW winds and a warm spell, reaching 15°C on 11th, but staying dry and overcast. There was a cooler spell of SE winds round a Baltic high in the third week, and a warmer final week. There were 17 sunless days, and three frosty nights.

March The first week was cold and dry with NE winds, but southerly winds from 10th caused temperatures to rise to 16°C on 15th and the SE winds round high pressure produced 19°C on 25th, and remained above 15°C for the rest of the month. Only six sunless days, but it remained very dry.

April The first ten days were dominated by high pressure, very light winds, and bright sunshine that saw temperatures reach 22°C on 9th and 10th. It was slightly cooler from the 12th to the 16th then a new warm spell with very light winds saw a temperature of 26°C on 21st. There were only seven sunless days and the average sunshine was 2.1 hours a day greater than normal and effectively no rain fell.

May Temperatures remained high, at around 18°C throughout the month, and sunshine was almost continuous; there were just two wet days.

June The maximum temperature was on 3rd (25°C), the sun continued to shine, with only six sunless days, although total sunshine hours were normal, and all of the month's rain came on two days. Winds were generally light and westerly.

July Temperatures were around 20°C throughout but 26°C on 4th. Although there were only four sunless days, sunshine was 1.1 hours per day less than the recent average. There were two wet spells from 6th to 9th and 16th to 20th. Winds were generally light westerly.

August Warmest at the start with 24°C, by the end temperatures were down to 18°C. Only seven sunless days, but total sunshine was 2.1 hours a day lower than average. There was significant rain on five days. Westerly winds predominated throughout.

September The westerly pattern continued with three wet spells from 5th to 10th, 17th to 21st and 25th to 26th. Temperatures were around 18°C until 26th when an abrupt warm spell saw 29°C on 29th, the warmest day of the year, with cloudless skies. There were only seven sunless days, but below average sunshine.

October The month began with the temperature at 28°C, and it remained warm until 18th when it fell to 12°C but the last week was warmer. Few sunless days but sunshine was average, and there were just two seriously wet days.

November Temperatures remained above the long-term average of 10.0°C throughout the month. Winds were southerly throughout with low pressure in the West Atlantic, and a high over the Baltic and Russia. There were no frosts, and 21 days were rainless.

December Winds switched to the West and North-west with a significant storm on the 8th, and strong winds on eight other days. There was a cold spell from 14th to 19th but it remained the warmest December since 1994 and 50mm of rain fell in two days on 13th and 14th. There were just four frost nights.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the abnormal events of 2011 to be put in perspective. There seems to be no pattern in these figures, except for the number of days per year without sun which has increased from about 70 to about 100. It is also interesting to note that, contrary to common perception, two days in every three had no rain at all.

		2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Temperature of hottest day	°C	26	32	28	30	35	27	28	28	26	29
Temperature of coldest day	°C	0	1	3	0	0	2	2	-1	-5	1
Rainfall on wettest day	mm	60	45	45	47	39	40	35	36	36	40
Largest amount of sunshine/day	Hr.	15	15.1	13.9	14.8	14.7	14.1	14.9	14.7	15.6	14.7
Longest dry spell	Days				14	22	24	16	20	24	23
Longest wet period	Days				7	11	8	8	8	7	5
Frost, number of nights	Days	14	49	30	32	33	25	44	42	76	22
Number of days with lying snow	Days	0	0	6	2	2	2	1	19	33	0
Number of storms	Days				1	3	6	4	1	1	1
Count of days hotter than 25°C	Days	3	22	13	14	27	1	7	5	3	14
Count of days colder than 5°C	Days	17	25	15	26	39	18	14	37	60	13
Count of days with at least 10hr sun	Days	30	42	19	38	36	45	29	49	46	44
Count of days with no sun	Days	78	56	90	89	107	99	95	95	106	104
Count of days with no rain	Days		263	231	248	234	238	228	265	269	253

Table 6 Extreme annual events over the past decade

Richard Bland

Bird Surveys

The data from a number of different bird surveys, both local and national, have been used in compiling the Systematic List. There are a number of local 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.

BBS

The BTO **B**reeding **B**ird **S**urvey which began in 1994. Surveyors are birdwatchers who are able to recognise all the species by sight and song. They walk 2km within a square kilometre, early in the morning when bird activity is at its greatest and record all birds seen or heard. Two recording visits are made, one between April 1st and May 15th and a second at least four weeks later and before the end of June. Results in one year are compared with the same results by the same observer in the same square the previous year to give a measure of change. The method of survey does not count shy, nocturnal or rare species that are known to nest or possibly nest within the Avon region.

In 2010, 194 one-km squares were visited and a total of 66,977 birds was counted by 125 observers at a rate of 126 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. An index for common species, set at 100 for 1994, shows the change over time. Figures for 2001 are not available because Foot and Mouth disease prevented an effective survey.

CABS

The **C**lifton **A**rea **B**ird **S**urvey. This is a local weekly survey of ST 5673 begun in 1994. In 2010 weekly counts taking 58 hours were made, 7,058 birds of 42 species were counted at a rate of 121 birds per hour. For common species the percentage change from the previous year is given.

WGS

The **W**inter **G**arden **S**urvey. This local survey began in 1973/4, and involves counts of birds using gardens between October and March. In 2009/10, 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.

Atlas

The BTO Bird Atlas 2007-11. It is based on four surveys that were made in each of the 400 tetrads of the BTO Avon region; the region has 17 10-km squares (hectads) and two hectads ST26 (Steep

Holm) and ST37 (Poet's Walk Clevedon) which have a tiny land area. The surveys were almost all of two hours, two in the winter, two in the summer, and counted every bird seen or heard.

For many species the Atlas distribution is compared with the same information from the Winter Atlas 1981-84 and the Breeding Atlas 1988-91. The Winter Atlas 1981-84 included a tetrad survey in which observers built up a species list over three winters, which tends to create a larger distribution for uncommon and elusive species than the present Atlas. As this survey used timed counts, it is possible to compare the rate-per-hour at which species were seen with the same figure from the present atlas, and this is done for the some species. The Breeding Atlas 1988-91 required observers to make two one-hour visits to each tetrad, but no counts were made, so that the distribution figures are lower for most species than those obtained by the present Atlas.

WeBS

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is a national project which monitors all non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. It provides the principal data on which the conservation of these birds, and of their wetland habitats, is based. The species accounts in the systematic list give the WeBS status for those waterbirds whose Avon area populations are of International or National Importance.

The criteria for International Importance for ducks, gulls etc. differ slightly from those for the waders. For the first group a site is by definition of International Importance for a particular species of wildfowl (that is any waterbird except waders) if it regularly holds for at least part of the year either 20000 individuals or at least 1% of the estimated total population in North-west Europe. So for example the Severn Estuary is currently second in International Importance for Lesser Black-backed Gull somewhat behind Morecombe Bay which is first. For the waders the definition is the same except that the term 'north-west Europe' is replaced by the term 'East Atlantic Flyway'. Birds using this flyway mainly winter on or near the west coast of Africa and the lower western parts of Europe, and move north to breed in the northern parts of North America, Northern Europe or the extreme north-western parts of Asia. For example the Severn Estuary is of International Importance for Dunlin as it holds in winter at least 1% (in fact recently it was about 4%) of the East Atlantic flyway population during the winter.

For National Importance the criteria is the same for all waterbirds. A site is of National Importance if it holds 1% or more of the estimated total British population. So for example CVL is of National Importance for Great Crested Grebe, the British 1% count is currently 159, and CVL regularly holds three times this.

Submission of Records

Records submitted to the BOC, including those emailed to bocbird sightings@hotmail.co.uk and from the Forum page at <http://www.boc-bristol.org.uk/>, are used to compile a spreadsheet for the monthly bulletin and also passed to the recorder. **This is recommended as the best way to submit records.** Records can also be sent directly to the recorder, John Martin, either by post to 34 Cranmoor Green, Pilning, Bristol, BS35 4QF, or, preferably, by e-mail to avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com. Ideally records should be submitted as an Excel spreadsheet and should state the species, the number of individuals, the date seen and the site (with grid reference if possible). Records submitted to BirdTrack are also available to us as are WeBS counts and other BTO surveys. All records are kept - they are stored by Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) in Bristol so they are properly archived and can be used for conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the bird-life of the area.

We welcome records of every observation of the following: 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 like the following records;

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

As well as the species and subspecies listed on page 6, 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.

Descriptions can be emailed to the Recorder at avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com.

Record earliest and latest dates for Migrants in the Avon area		
Summer migrants	Earliest	Latest
Garganey	4 Mar '69	overwintered '11/12
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	5 Dec '04
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	overwintered '09/10
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	9 Feb '08 ¹	20 Nov '86
Spotted Flycatcher	16 Apr '83	27 Oct '87
Nightingale	7 Apr '61	12 Sep '77
Redstart	17 Mar '11	12 Nov '72
Whinchat	19 Mar '74	12 Nov '67
Wheatear	28 Feb '98	30 Nov '11
Pied Flycatcher	30 Mar '02	14 Oct '06
Yellow Wagtail	15 Mar '70	2 Dec '03
White Wagtail	1 Mar '07	23 Nov '03
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

1 – had possibly overwintered

Status Comments

The table below defines the status words used in the Systematic List.

Status	Level of abundance	Breeding Numbers
Very rare	Five or fewer birds recorded in the Avon area	
Rare	Less than annual; many years pass between sightings	As per level of abundance
Very Scarce	Less than annual, but typically recorded every two or three years	
Scarce	Very small numbers noted virtually every year	1 - 9
Uncommon	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 that 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 that 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 that 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 that 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.

Irruptive A species that occurs, sometimes in large numbers, irregularly, and often due to a crop or similar failure.

Status Tables

Reports for 1991 onwards have presented a database monitoring the progress of the common wildfowl and wader species in the Avon area. 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 is used to monitor 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.

For most seabirds, seaduck and 'coastal' waders, a brief indication of abundance inland is usually given.

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

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 up to four of the surveys defined on page 16. The lower one gives the BBS index for the past decade, the BBS distribution in 2010, 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 first arrival dates, last 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.

Bird-days This is 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.

The Avon Area

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 - the term 'Avon area' is used to describe this region. To aid comparisons with older (1995 or earlier) Reports '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.

Back issues of this Report are available from the editor, address on page 4. These are available for most years from 1979 although some are now quite scarce; prices on application.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The systematic list given below follows the species order first proposed by Prof. H.K. Voous in 1971 with several major adjustments made by the British Ornithological Union, the latest in 2008. The nomenclature follows that of the BOU as given on their website at www.bou.org.uk using the "British (English) Vernacular Name" and "Scientific Name" lists.

Some frequently occurring place name abbreviations are as follows:

ASW	Avonmouth Sewage Disposal Works and its surroundings
BG	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
BL	Blagdon Lake
CI-Y	Severn shore and environs between Clevedon and mouth 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 St George's Wharf including the dock area and the bank of the R. Avon north of the Avon bridge
RPD	Royal Portbury Dock (the dock area only)
Sevenside	The Severn shore and environs from Aust to Chittering 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.

Initials are given only when descriptions and/or photographs have been submitted, or in special circumstances, and are in alphabetical order based on the surname.

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

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
110	82	98	70	80	85	72	85	80	64
Numbers wintering in Bristol City Docks - Maximum count (ten-year average = 83)									
2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
97	101	126	117	115	98	107	115	125	187
Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average = 119)									

The number wintering in Bristol City Docks continued to decline, and the counts throughout 2011 were particularly poor. Conversely, the CVL moult count increased to record numbers which, unusually remained in three figures into the second winter period.

There were records from 63 sites, which compares with 60 in 2009 and 74 in 2010. The table below shows the monthly maxima at the main sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Portishead	25	15	22	18					8		7	
PW	5	9	2					8	32	26	26	9
CI-Y	9	6	28	8	6	9	26	8	19	10	3	8
Weston STW	44	49	18	64	37	8	9	21	19	23	11	93
Bristol Docks	45	42	38	19	12	9	12	14	17	15	5	9
Kenn Moor		37	41	9		2						50
Tickenham Moor	29		5	16							9	22
Backwell Lake	39	26	34	26	14	8	8		9	7	13	36
BG	2	2	5	9	12	8	9	9	12	11	12	5
CVL	55	55	60	85	105	140	175	180	145	155	145	135
BL	5	10	10	11	16	32	36	36	39	39	51	31

The only counts of 20 or over not included in the above table were 20 at Davis Lane, near Clevedon on Jan. 1st, 22 at Hewish on Feb. 27th and again on April 24th, and 28 at Claverham on 10th.

Mute Swan Breeding Good numbers of young were reported, with breeding confirmed at the following sites: Backwell Lake (two nests with four cygnets), BL (four pairs with 15 cygnets), Bristol - New Harbourside (pair with four cygnets), Capricorn Wharf (pair with four cygnets), and opposite the SS Great Britain (pair with one cygnet), Cl-Y (15 young on May 21st), Chew Magna Res. (pair with four cygnets), CVL (14 broods, 48 cygnets), Ham Green Fishing Lake (pair with five cygnets), Hewish (pair with six young on July 3rd), Keynsham Marina (pair with six cygnets), Nailsea Moor (pair with four cygnets) and Weston STW (two pairs with eight cygnets). In addition there were reports of fledglings from both R. Avon in Bath and Newton Park Lakes but without details.

1992/2001 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
118	120	74	128	144	121	123	121	88	120	124+

Mute Swan - Number of cygnets (ten-year average = 116)

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

Again two consecutive winter periods with good numbers.

First winter period

Pilning – two adults in flight on Jan. 28th;

CVL – three adults from Jan. 1st until 7th increased to five adults from 8th to 23rd. These were all presumed to relate to the birds present in December 2010;

BL – three adults, including the individual known as Blagdon, on Jan. 2nd.

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
Min. Number	18	27	47	47	18	11	7	6	41	37
Bird-days	18	908	687	180+	131	11	8	10	156	356

Winter counts and bird-days

Second winter period

Between Nov. 9th and the end of the year at least 26 individuals were seen and there were 412 bird-days, mainly from CVL or BL. The details are as follows:

Northwick Warth – four flew to NE on Nov. 20th;

Cl-Y – four adults flew upriver on Nov. 9th;

Weston STW – a juvenile seen intermittently between Dec. 10th and 31st was the first record for the site;

CVL/BL – the situation is complicated with the flock regularly fragmenting and smaller groups moving between the two sites or away completely. However, at least 15 individuals were involved, eight adults, two second-winters and five juveniles. A lone adult (named 'Morton') arrived at BL on Nov. 11th and he was joined on 15th at CVL by a further seven adults and five juveniles. On 17th a family party of two adults, two second-winters and four juveniles were present at BL. A group of six adults and four juveniles were then present from 19th until Dec. 10th when an extra adult arrived at BL. The next day the group was back down to ten and these remained until Dec. 17th but on 19th the group at BL had increased to twelve with an additional two adults. A flock of varying size was then present into 2012.

Two of the adults at CVL/BL carried darvic rings – yellow 525 (Saruni) and white BCL (Winkey who has been seen locally in previous years). In addition another five of the adults present here were identified by the shape of their yellow bill markings; these were Sarune (the partner of Saruni), Winker (Winkey's new partner), Morton, Jonitor and Willows; names provided by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Very scarce winter visitor.

Description species

The species was recorded for its fifth consecutive winter with records from the second half of 2011.

An adult at CVL with six Bewick Swans on Dec. 23rd was seen later the same day, in flight, at BL (RJH, RMi, NRM).

1992/93	95/96	97/98	99/00	00/01	04/05	05/06	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
2	6	1	1	1	2	2	1	8	3+	3	1+

Whooper Swan – Numbers seen in the last 20 winters

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor.

Both *A. f. fabalis*, Taiga Bean Goose and *A. f. rossicus*, Tundra Bean Goose have been identified.

Two records, both relating to the race *A. f. rossicus* (Tundra Bean Goose);

CI-Y – two in flight on Nov. 17th (SM);

Weston STW – one seen intermittently between Dec. 10th and 18th (MSP *et al.*).

Previous local records of Tundra Bean Geese are as follows: 13 at BL in October 2006, one at BL and CVL January to March 1996, and one at the Yeo Est. (CI-Y) in December 1993. In addition, two at CVL in January/February 1958 were not racially assigned.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Rare winter visitor.

One record, as follows:

BL – four, two adults with two first-winters, from Dec. 10th into 2012 (NRM *et al.*). They visited CVL on 27th, being seen in flight over the B3114 and appearing to land in a field near to the lake (RMA).

These are the first records since 2002, when one was present at BL and CVL between May 31st and June 9th. There were also three records in the 1990's: CVL and BL between October 1999 and February 2000, Aust and Northwick Warths in February and March 1996, and CVL in March 1996.

GREY GOOSE Sp *Anser sp*

Two grey geese in a stubble field near Weston STW on Dec. 5th were either Pink-footed or Bean Geese. Individuals from both species were in the general area around this time, but the identification could not be clinched (GW).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

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

WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is first in the list of sites of National Importance

The promising start in autumn 2010 did not continue into 2011 and there were no records at all in the second winter period.

First winter period

CI-Y – the adult and first-winter from 2010 were seen on Jan. 1st and 6th, with one still present on the 9th;

CVL – a first-winter on Feb. 17th and then from March 5th until 26th;

BL – a first-winter on Feb. 18th and 20th, presumed to be the same as above.

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
2+	22	2	7+	28	8	3	8	31	22

Numbers each winter

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon introduced resident and former summer moult migrant.

Excellent numbers were reported for a second year running, with some flocks lingering, and records from a wider spread of sites than normal.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Sites	9	10	6	5	9	11	7	12	10	18
No. individuals	15	45	16	11	32	74	33	27	80	102

Sites and numbers each year

Greylag Goose con't

The details are as follows (all were single birds unless otherwise stated):

OPS – Feb. 26th, a flock of 19 on Nov. 19th, two the next day, and probably the same flock in December with twelve on 3rd, ten on 4th, and eight on 17th and 30th;

Littleton Warth – 14 on Nov. 19th and eight on Dec. 17th were the same as at OPS;

Aust Warth – two on Nov. 16th;

Northwick Warth/New Passage – ten on Feb. 8th and two on Oct. 14th;

Severn Beach – three in flight on Feb. 16th and three on April 17th;

PW – records of two on Oct. 3rd, 8th and 13th and Nov. 5th, with one on 3rd, were all presumed to relate to the same individuals;

Portishead – in flight on Jan. 9th. Two seen on Sept. 22nd, Oct. 18th and 26th, Nov. 28th and Dec. 5th, 13th and 20th were presumed to be the same as those at PW;

Walton Bay – two in flight on Aug. 6th;

CI-Y – three on Nov. 24th and eight to NE on 30th;

Sand Pt. – two flew to W on Oct. 16th;

Weston STW – Dec. 3rd, 4th, 17th, 24th and 31st;

Heneage Court Pools – six on Feb. 25th;

Lower Woods – two in flight on April 29th;

Batheaston NR – March 23rd;

Warmley – six flew to NE early morning on Nov. 18th;

Saltford STW – April 28th;

CVL – Feb, 18th to 21st, March 25th, April 12th and 18th, two on May 3rd and 4th, from June 5th to July 15th moulting with the Canada Goose flock, with two others in flight on June 21st, Oct. 13th, and nine which arrived at 13.30hrs on Nov. 17th;

BL – two from June 16th until 19th, with five on Nov. 17th.

The flocks at CVL and BL on Nov. 17th and the bird at Weston STW in December all showed fresh and immaculate plumage with upperparts and flanks very heavily barred with white and they had longish, rather thin bills that were predominantly pink (although at least some with orange at the base) and a rather obvious, contrasting white nail (see photograph opposite). They differed subtly from resident birds of the nominate race and showed a mix of features of the nominate race and the eastern race *rubirostris* (e.g. the significant pink component in the bill). Their arrival coincided with a large movement through France and the Channel Isles thought to be from Sweden and heading for Spain.

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.

Good numbers continue to winter at the reservoirs and the numbers moulting here are getting back towards the long term average, see tables below.

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
CVL	118	54	90	72	61	51	65	84	229	110
BL	268	256	401	278	124	192	241	315	221	348
Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March), ten-year average is 93 (CVL), 264 (BL)										
	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
605	780	730	572	507	415	295	385	440	500	
CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average = 523)										

Records came from a total of 48 sites, which continues the recent trend for a wider distribution.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
	26	23	31	29	26	28	53	48	50	48
Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average = 36)										

The numbers at the main sites are set out in the table below.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/ Littleton Warth	5	5	5	10	9	6	8	30	62	35	36	2
Portishead Marina	19	18	14							30		
PW	18	17	15	6	31	30		20	21	16	26	6
CI-Y	36	46	29	10	9	18	23	24	45	175	130	70
Weston STW	11	23	8	24	19			92	92	67	59	152
Backwell Lake	34										52	37
R. Avon, Keynsham	41						9			98	10	60
Batheaston NR	88	79	79	45	23		61	0	0	0	81	77
CVL	60	50	85	60	30	400	495	505	50	40	205	130
BL	200	175	37	11	150	174	356	386	485	350	202	271

Other sites The only counts over 25 not included in the above table were as follows:

Easton-in-Gordano – 30 in a field on Sept. 7th;

Frampton Cotterell – 50 in flight to N to roost on Aug. 9th;

Heneage Court – 30 on Feb. 25th;

Kenn Moor – 80 on Dec. 3rd;

Puxton – 60 on Nov. 17th;

Saltford – 49 on Jan. 18th and 31 on Oct. 15th;

Wrington – 34 in flight to E on Oct. 19th and 53 on 30th;

Yatton – 40 in flight to W on Oct. 19th.

Breeding The number of confirmed sites was again on the low side with breeding only noted at the following sites (number of goslings in brackets); OPS (three), Littleton Warth (three), Bristol, Bathurst Basin to Castle Wall (five), Bristol, Abbey Wood (pair with nest, outcome unrecorded), Batheaston NR (six nests, 18 goslings), PW (two broods, three goslings) and CVL (six broods, 17 goslings).

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Confirmed sites	2	4	5	6	8	3	10	12	6	7
Nests/broods	7	13	9	9	14+	7	19+	18+	12	18
Young	36	50+	41	35	39	16+	72	73	52	49

Canada Goose - Breeding details

Observers are encouraged to report all breeding attempts by this species.

LESSER CANADA GOOSE *B. hutchinsii*

Very rare vagrant or escape

A small Canada goose found at BL on Nov. 1st showed characteristics of this recently split North American species (NRM, RMI *et al.*) – see photograph opposite page 24. It was at CVL the next morning before flying back to BL; it was then seen at CVL from 3rd to 5th before relocating to Torr Res., Somerset where it spent the winter. The record has been submitted to BBRC.

Although this species has not yet been accepted onto the British List there are a number of records of presumed wild birds mainly with flocks of Barnacle Geese in W Scotland. The taxonomy and identification to subspecies (it is polytypic, with subspecies *hutchinsii*, *leucopareia*, *minima* and *taverneri*) is vexed but eminent American birder David Sibley considered the Avon bird most likely to be of the north-eastern form *B. h. hutchinsii* 'Richardson's Canada Goose', the race which accounts for most Scottish and Irish records. Another was seen in Gwent from Nov. 13th to 24th. As with other wildfowl, the possibility of escape from captivity is a stumbling block, but the arrival of three in the area in the same winter may suggest a wild origin.

Fuller details of this bird can be found at <http://birdwatchidblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/cackling-geese-closer-look.html>. The AOU's name for this species is Cackling Goose: Lesser Canada Goose was a poor choice by BOURC as it had previously been used for the race *parvipes*, which is now not even part of *B. hutchinsii*; but Cackling Goose is not ideal either as it was sometimes applied to the race *minima*.

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.

There was no repeat of the influx of early 2010, with only a handful of records away from CVL/BL and all of those in spring.

A single individual was on Severnside between March 5th and April 3rd, being seen mainly around New Passage, there was one at BG on April 16th and two at PW on May 20th.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Sites	5	1	0	1	4	0	1	2	6	4
Numbers	8	1	0	1	8	0	1	2	250	4

Sightings away from CVL/BL

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL continues to increase in size, with a new maximum of 23, suggesting that new birds are arriving.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
	17	21	14	12	11	11	17	19	20	23

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	18	14	14	9	7	5	7	7	21	23	21	20
BL	18					1		7	23	23	23	21

Breeding There were two pairs at CVL on Herriott's Pool but only a single gosling was seen, which had fledged by mid-July.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

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

Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Very scarce inland.

A very poor first winter period, see table below, but better numbers were noted in the second winter period with a very early arrival.

First winter period (single birds unless stated otherwise)

OPS – Jan. 8th and two on Feb. 9th;

Severn Beach – March 1st;

Northwick Warth – three on Feb. 7th, two on March 21st with one on 23rd;

CI-Y – three on Jan. 2nd and one on March 2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, 20th and 21st;

Sand Bay – Feb. 22nd;

Weston-s-Mare – three on Jan. 2nd (seen at CI-Y later in the day).

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
	42	48	79	226	127	147	38	226	144	24

Winter bird-days (Ten-year average = 110)

Second winter period (single birds unless stated otherwise)

OPS – an extremely early arrival on Aug. 8th and again on 16th, Oct. 18th and 21st, 16 on Nov. 8th with two on 20th, Dec. 3rd and 4th;

Littleton Warth – an adult on Aug. 13th and an adult and a first-winter on Nov. 19th;

Aust Warth – Sept. 1st and 3rd;

Northwick Warth/New Passage – Sept. 4th, 7th and 13th, Oct. 4th with eight (four adults, four first-winters) on 23rd, Nov. 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 13th;

Severn Beach – Oct. 16th and Dec. 29th;

CI-Y – five on Oct. 1st and 17th with two on 26th and one on 29th, Nov. 11th with five on 28th and two on 30th.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

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

Exceptional numbers, with records of single birds from six sites as follows:

Bath, Pulteney Weir – Jan. 2nd;

Saltford – a very tame individual on Jan. 18th and 21st;

R. Avon, Keynsham – Feb. 16th, possibly same as above;

BL – March 16th;

CVL – June 3rd and into 2012;

CI-Y – Dec. 19th.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
2*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	1*	0	1	1	0	0	1	5+

Numbers each year (* treated as escapes)

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.

Good numbers wintered but it was a very poor breeding season.

First winter period and spring There was an increase in the numbers wintering north of the Avon but still well below the ten-year average of 105. The highest winter count to the south was well above the ten-year average of 534 and the average number at CI-Y was well above the decade average of 141, see tables below.

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
North of R. Avon	89	195	116	90	104	117	130	90	40	80
South of R. Avon	542	434	470	360	650	415	630	500	479	862

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

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
110	87	152	203	105	147	120	90	142	262

Wintering at CI-Y - Average of the three highest counts (October - February)

Breeding A very poor year with no reports from Severnside; the only juveniles seen at or near the coast were eight at OPS, eight at Littleton Warth, four at Pill, ten at PW, 21 at CI-Y and four at Weston STW. Also bred inland at CVL where there were four broods with 23 young.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
105	70	154	144	123	162	116	181	163	186	78

Breeding - Total number of young (Average of last ten years is 138)

Autumn and second winter period Still poor numbers north of the Avon, with a maximum count of 70, but above average numbers to the south, the highest count being 600 on the Axe Est. on Oct. 22nd.

The numbers at the main sites are set out in the table below.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	21	47	55	50	48	12	10	3	6	3	9	11
Littleton Warth	9	49	51	14	21	26	2	5	1		5	9
Severn Beach/NW	80	77	90	125	25	70	22	15	2	5	70	42
CI-Y	205	175	220	140	110	84	91	52	225	400	300	175
Sand Bay	535	300	210	14	15	14	2	2		180	120	508
Axe Est./Weston STW	7	104	81	35	68	30	28	4	2	600	127	151
CVL	34	29	29	31	32	30	29	9	6	8	20	20

Recorded at a further 18 sites (17 in 2008, twelve in 2009 and 20 in 2010).

A paper on page 139 gives an account of the occurrences of this species in Avon over the past sixty years.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata**Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.*

Although there was a drop in records from the high counts of 2009 and 2010, the figure of 32 individuals was still significantly higher than the twenty-year average of 15. Successful breeding was recorded at three separate sites with three broods and a total of eleven young.

The records for 2011 are as follows:

Oakleigh – one on April 7th;

Tortworth Lake – female with three young on June 5th;

Weston Moor – male on Jan. 19th and 22nd, and two on Sept. 3rd;

Clapton-in-Gordano – four on Oct. 10th;

Bristol (Conham) R.Avon – male on Oct. 23rd;

Heneage Court – three males and one female on Feb. 25th;

Chipping Sodbury GC – female with five young on June 12th, with four young still present on 26th;

Swineford – male on Jan. 9th;

Hunstrete – pair with three young on Oct. 28th;

CVL – two on Nov. 11th;

Saltford – male on Jan. 1st and 14th, and on March 24th, it had part of one wing missing and had been present for at least 18 months.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
19	14	10	17	11	1	1	5	13	13	2	5	3	6	22	19	20	42	39	32
Total number of individuals each year																			

WIGEON *Anas penelope**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.*

WeBS: There are four sites of International Importance followed by 19 of National Importance, the Estuary is seventh on this second list.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	719	107	119	315
2009/10	1233	92	59	461
2010/11	1283	397	229	636

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

The recent run of severe winters has brought large numbers into the Estuary, especially to the more north-easterly part. The high counts at Sevenside in 2010 (up to 2400) were not repeated but four figure counts in January included 1000 at OPS on 1st and 3rd, and 1300 at Littleton Warth on 8th, and in November on Sevenside on 23rd.

Numbers at CVL in the second-winter period were significantly higher than they have been for many years, being the highest count since 1987 but the patterns of seasonality and behaviour have changed markedly since then. Whilst in the earlier period peak numbers occurred in mid-winter and grazed on grassland, in the last two years flocks have formed in late summer and have fed on the lake on dense beds of waterweed. This pattern is very recent; cf. the monthly maximum of one in November 2009. Whether it continues remains to be seen.

Main Sites The table below gives the maximum monthly counts for the main sites. Although several lingered into May mainly at coastal sites, the last of the winter/spring was a male on May 24th. It had joined a female (with a damaged wing) at Weston STW on April 30th and remained here until 24th, and this injured female summered at this site as did another bird at CI-Y (also injured) and an eclipse male was noted on several dates in June at CVL. The first returning individuals were noted at CVL, with a party of six on July 5th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	July	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1000	162	69					18	60	98	130
Littleton Warth	1300	181	20					4	210	355	243
Sevenside	900	350	100	30			19	20	300	1000	750
PW	500	200	100	1				8	60	100	52
CI-Y	400	185	140	16			7	26	135	285	270
Axe Est/Weston STW	69	67	3	2		1	1	10	90	96	78
BG	10	3							5		2
CVL	560	155	4	2		6	3	147	630	855	700
BL	512	44	9	2		1		4	82	90	146

Other sites Records involving low counts were received from a further nine sites, the only one exceeding 20 was as follows:

Anchor Head (Weston-s-Mare) – 25 on Jan. 16th.

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 22nd in National Importance for this species.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	78	43	61
2009/10	94	21	58
2010/11	217	19	118
Average of three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (October to March)			
Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002 – 2011	264	125	199
2010	290	38	164
2011	540	32	286
Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (July to September)			

Overall the tables show high numbers at CVL.

Main sites In line with the recent national trend the fortunes of this species continue to improve with CVL recording the highest counts ever during the moult and second winter periods, these were at least in part due to the unprecedented growth of waterweed *cf.* Wigeon; the previous highest count at this site being 425. This contrasts with its fortunes at BL where numbers continue a steady decline.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	2										1
Sevenside	40	10	4	8					6	6	9	7
ASW/Hoar Gout	71	32	23	6	3				13		16	20
Avonmouth Docks			15	20	9						6	
PW	44	26	6	3	4	3		9	16	17	33	26
Weston STW	36	18	4	3	1	2	3	3	8	3	17	21
Backwell Lake	14	1								4	2	
BG	28	5	4	3	3	3			7	6	10	9
CVL	75	80	15	40	96	164	125	430	650	555	535	250
BL	19		3	4	7	28	33	8	31	72	50	72

Recorded at a further seven sites, the only counts in double figures were as follows:

Astra Zeneca Pools, Sevenside – eleven on Jan. 21st;

Axe Estuary – ten on Oct. 16th, 20 on Nov. 20th and twelve on Dec. 18th.

Breeding Recorded at two sites, PW with one brood containing two young, and CVL with three broods comprising 26 young. Elsewhere a pair summered at Weston STW but there was no evidence of breeding.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Broods	1	3	2	4	4	1	3	5	1	3

Gadwall - Number of broods at CVL each year

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 second in the sites of National Importance.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	250	1090	486	608
2009/10	173	1222	56	484
2010/11	213	2743	718	1225

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

There were good numbers at BL in both the 2010/11 winter and also late in 2011 following three poor winters here, whilst at CVL the high numbers present in late 2010 did not remain into 2011 but counts here in late 2011 were again well above average as would be expected in a year with very low water levels.

Small numbers were present throughout the summer at CVL and away from here the first to return was a female at BL on June 11th. The monthly maxima for the main sites are given in the table below.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	130	84	43	10				1	1	1	86	331
Littleton Warth	65	95	53	2				1	12	110	65	102
Severnside	80	100	60	25				19	100	170	300	100
P W	209	200	13	10		1			100	90	90	100
CI-Y	285	190	170	95			3	22	40	135	225	175
Axe Est.	2000	1050	187	31						36	29	464
Weston STW	122	170	203	9			1	4	9		33	53
BG	67	42	31					1	27	41	70	80
CVL	580	380	270	10	3	26	50	225	995	1670	2305	1135
BL	871	62	21	2		1	6	10	514	1545	1116	933
Chew Magna Res	60	6	20					1		11	34	42

Other sites Records were received from 29 further sites with counts exceeding 50 at the following:

Chapel Pill/RPD – 100 on Dec. 10th with 400 on 16th;

Weston-in- Gordano – 80 on Jan. 15th;

Clevedon seafront – maximum of 180 during November and 60 on Dec. 12th;

Weston Bay – 200 on Dec. 30th.

Ringling recoveries A female shot on the Bleadon Levels on Jan. 29th had been ringed as an adult at Schipluiden, Netherlands on Sept. 21st, 2008. A male at BL on Nov. 22nd and 24th marked with a pale green nasal saddle (HJV) had been ringed as an adult on Feb. 2nd at La Grand'Mare, St Opportune-la-Mare, near Le Havre, France.

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: Although the Estuary was formally a site of National Importance, Britain no longer has any sites of National Importance.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	535	233	384
2009/10	583	139	361
2010/11	741	240	490

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002 - 2011	885	419	652
2010	1150	667	909
2011	1115	555	835

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

The late summer moult numbers at both CVL and BL were again significantly higher than the ten-year averages. The counts at CVL in the 2010/11 winter were also significantly higher than the ten-year average and the breeding population here was again above average. The table below lists the monthly maxima for the main sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	80	51	30	25	27	57	67	117	157	164	231	137
Littleton Warth	24	38	10	5	10	48	66	56	58	71	21	6
Severnside	70	80	80	40	30	90	5	70	70	90	150	140
*Sea Mills	30	24	12	9	29		32	19	25	58	59	48
CI-Y	130	60	50	34	28	85	100	200	200	290	130	105
Weston STW	40	21	21	13	31	104	137	102	93	37	27	36
CVL	665	555	430	310	350	705	1185	1045	865	745	700	720
BL	226	112	68	83	131	123	161	406	705	741	551	374
Chew Magna Res	10	16	30	4	6	11	79	99		3	45	88

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

Other sites Records of counts of 50 or over were received as follows:

Avonmouth Docks – 65 on Aug. 26th;

Portishead Boating Lake – 92 on Nov. 11th;

PW – 50 on Jan. 24th;

Weston Moor – 50 on Jan. 19th;

Axe Est. – 58 on Jan. 23rd, 54 on Feb. 20th, 57 on Nov. 20th and 56 on Dec. 18th;

Backwell Lake – maximum of 76 during November;

BG – 57 on Jan. 1st and 64 on Dec. 26th;

Keynsham – maxima of 77 in January, 76 in April, 91 in May, 134 in November and 132 in December;

Saltford – maxima of 71 in February, 74 in August and 92 in October;

Litton Resrs. – 71 on Sept. 18th, 99 on Oct. 16th and 54 on Nov. 20th.

Breeding At CVL there were above average numbers in both broods (average over last decade is 24) and young (average over last decade is 131) as shown in the table below.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Broods	11	29	16	17	22	29	21	38	24	31
Young	67	154	93	93	100	176	130	213	115	176

Mallard - Number of broods and young at CVL each year

Elsewhere records were received of 52 broods and 320 young (*cf.* 42 broods and 224 young in 2009 and 50 broods and 238 young in 2010); this includes 15 broods and 94 young at BL. The first chicks were seen on April 14th at both Keynsham and BL.

The Avon BBS index has remained relatively stable over the last six years as can be seen from the table below.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
165	156	194	155	131	136	128	138	128	134

Mallard - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 51%)

Ringed recoveries A male found shot dead at Charfield on Oct. 19th had been ringed as a first-year at Slimbridge, Glos. in December 2009.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor; most occur at CVL in autumn. Wintering birds leave from mid-February to early April with autumn arrivals usually appearing in mid-September.

WeBS: the Estuary is currently eleventh in International Importance for this species although they mostly occur outside the Avon area.

Counts were below average, with few present at the start of the year and the highest numbers in the autumn at BL as opposed to CVL. Far higher numbers would have been expected at CVL given the low water levels and dense growth of waterweed. The reasons for this relative scarcity are not clear, but large growths of filamentous alga (blanket weed) early in the summer may indicate some minor problem with water quality that affected this species.

The table below shows the monthly maxima at the regular sites. The last to depart in spring were two at the Kenn Est. (CI-Y) on April 23rd whilst the first in the autumn were three at CVL on Aug. 27th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside		1	2				1	1	3	3
CI-Y			4	2				1	2	4
CVL	12	24	6			4	18	18	16	28
BL	2						14	29	57	3

Records were also received from the following two sites:

OPS – three on Feb. 5th and a male on Dec. 18th;

Weston STW – one on Dec. 12th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
67	70	47	140	77	60	29	70	65	57

Maximum single count in the Avon area each year

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.

The first in spring was a pair at CVL on the early date on March 25th and birds were seen here in every subsequent month, with a distinctively coloured female remaining from Oct. 10th into 2012 being the first local record of overwintering. Away from CVL there were reports from three other sites.

Spring and summer The records are as follows:

Weston STW – a male on May 8th;

CVL – a pair was seen on March 25th, and a male from April 8th to 17th, two on 18th, and a pair from May 16th to 18th. A pair on June 5th and 7th with a male on 9th and 10th and three males from 11th until 22nd were joined by a female on 13th with an eclipse male still present on 29th.

Autumn The records are as follows:

OPS – a pair on Oct. 26th;

CVL – an eclipse male was present in July from 22nd and up to three eclipse males were present throughout August with two still on Sept. 3rd and a juvenile male on 13th. An orangey coloured juvenile female, present from Oct. 10th, was seen intermittently until Dec. 20th before moving to BL in January 2012. On 14th February it was trapped and ringed at CVL and was last seen there on 20th April, having paired with a migrant male. This is the first wintering record for the area;

BL – three on Aug. 16th, one from Oct. 16th to 26th with two on 28th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
3	5	1	8	5	2	2	4	5	4

Maximum single count at CVL each year

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors*

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

One record: a female in the Hollow Brook area at CVL from June 12th to 24th (SD *et al.*). [BBRC].

This is the sixth accepted record for the Avon area and the first since 2003 when a female was at CVL in the autumn. The only record away from CVL was of a female at BL in 1993 paired with a Shoveler which was not considered to be wild and is not included in the above total.

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 no longer qualifies as a site of International Importance but does remain as a site of National Importance being ranked first, BL is fifteenth, the Estuary is now recognised as fifth in International Importance.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	283	62	172
2009/10	159	71	115
2010/11	265	157	211

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002 - 11	351	169	260
2010	525	29	277
2011	365	239	302

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

Main sites The winter-period status table above show that during the 2010/11 winter the numbers at CVL were in line with the average over the last decade whereas those at BL were double the average. The moult flock numbers at BL were also well above the decade average while those at CVL were only slightly above average. At CVL counts in the late summer were disappointing given the low water levels (*cf.* Pintail) whilst the peak count was in the third week of November which is later than normal.

The table below lists the monthly maxima at the main sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW	15	4									9	15
PW	13	13	3							2	7	11
CI-Y	6	18	12								2	12
Weston STW	14		11				1				11	12
Backwell Lake	37	2	3							4	16	18
BG	33	17	4			1		5	6	9	7	15
CVL	200	200	135	4	3	8	12	85	295	435	560	175
BL	8	11	24	6	1	1	2	15	173	305	145	68

Other sites Reports were received from twelve other sites but the only double figure counts were as follows:

New Passage – twelve on Feb. 19th;

Axe Est. – ten on Nov. 20th and Dec. 18th.

Breeding A pair summered at CVL but there was no sign of any young. Although a pair was proved to breed here in both 2007 and 2009, these are the only such records in the last 20 years.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

High numbers occurred for a third year in succession. The details are as follows:

BG – the six present at the end of 2010 remained until Jan. 8th;

CVL – a male on Jan. 1st and a female on 26th and 27th were probably part of the flock that had been at BG in December 2010. There were none then until one was reported on June 19th. A male and three females arrived on Sept. 28th but the following day there were two males and two female/juveniles, with three still on 30th. A pair was then seen between Oct. 5th and 16th with a female remaining until Nov. 1st and a male on Oct. 31st which then moved to BL. There were two adult males and a first-winter on Nov. 8th with a male on 13th, and one reported on 23rd and 26th. In December two pairs were noted on 11th and then a male on 27th and 28th;

BL – a pair in eclipse were present on July 29th. A male arrived on Nov. 1st and remained until Dec. 18th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
5	1	5	6	0	6	5	19	23	25

Red-crested Pochard - Number of individuals per year

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 fifth in the list of sites of National Importance, and the Severn Estuary is tenth.

The status table below shows that numbers locally in the 2010/11 winter were extremely high, well in excess of the average for the last decade.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	717	206	92	338
2009/10	798	189	103	363
2010/11	1216	361	139	572

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

Major sites The table below summarises the main counts.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASW/Hoar Gout	14	4									1	5
PW	19	9	1								7	4
Weston STW	75	111	13	3	1	1	5	1	4	4	9	80
Backwell Lake	10	8	7								3	2
BG	49	44	10			19		23	49	67	57	62
CVL	1200	1145	195	24	45	41	11	70	275	490	965	920
BL	450	316	33		2	32	57	176	39	262	216	237
Chew Magna Res	9	5	4									

Other sites Records were received from nine other sites, but no count exceeded seven.

Breeding 2011 was an extremely poor year, with no evidence of breeding at any site (only four females were present at CVL, where low water levels undoubtedly thwarted any breeding attempts). This is the first blank year there since 1995.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of broods	6	3	2	1	4	6	2	2	2	0
No. of young	14	9	9	4	14	35	9	4	8	0

Breeding success at CVL each year

Five individuals at BL and at least two at CVL had been marked with blue nasal saddles. The only one to be traced, F NP, seen at BL on Nov. 18th, had been marked earlier in the year as an adult female on May 20th at St. Philbert de Grand Lieu which is south-west of Nantes in France.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Scarce Nearctic vagrant.

Description species

A good series of records as follows:

CVL – an adult male was present from May 6th until 9th (AHD, RMi, KEV). An eclipse male, presumably the individual from BL, was present between Aug. 29th and Nov. 4th (RMi *et al.*). Also a first-winter male was present on Nov. 7th (RMi *et al.*);

BL – an eclipse male was noted between Aug. 17th and 24th (many observers). The first-winter male from CVL was recorded here from Nov. 8th to 25th (NRM *et al.*);

Weston STW – a first-winter male, presumably the CVL/BL individual, present between Dec. 3rd and 12th (MSP *et al.*) was the first record for the site.

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), 2008 (eight at CVL), 2009 (a male seen at both BL and CVL), and 2010 (a male at CVL in the autumn).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Formerly rare vagrant but now Scarce as recorded annually since 2000 and possibly bred in 2006.

Description species

A single adult male, thought to be the one possibly hatched at the lake in 2006, was seen at a number of sites between Feb. 12th and Nov. 5th, presumably the male recorded in previous years. The details of his movements are as follows:

CVL – first noted on Feb. 12th (RJH), but not again until March 10th (RMi) and also on 28th. It was then seen intermittently up to April 23rd (many observers) and was seen displaying to female Tufted Ducks. It was subsequently seen on May 8th, from June 23rd to 25th, and most days between Sept. 1st and Nov. 5th (RMi *et al.*);

Publow Farm – seen and photographed on a small fishing lake here on April 17th and 18th (*per* AHD). The photographs proved it was the CVL individual;

BL – present between July 13th and Aug. 24th (NRM *et al.*).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant. Now a scarce breeder, in the 1950s and 1960s good numbers (up to 80) used to breed at CVL.

WeBS: CVL is currently tenth in the list of sites of National Importance.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11	1064	307	685
2009/10	1097	470	783
2010/11	1716	240	978

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002 - 2011	914	595	755
2010	1133	677	905
2011	1305	811	1058

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

The above status tables show that the numbers at CVL in the 2010/11 winter were exceptionally high when compared with the average for the last decade, and the numbers in the summer of 2011 at both CVL and BL were also very high, possibly as a result of low coarse fish populations (low coarse fish populations can result in increased populations of aquatic invertebrates, this benefits invertebrate feeding waterfowl such as Tufted Duck).

The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
ASW	96	6	9						13	24	17	22
PW	19	15	18		6				12	11	10	12
Weston STW	25	33	19	27	6	1	5	7	11	10	23	23
Backwell Lake	25	15	11	4							4	16
BG	151	101	64	57	23	55	483	490	170	81	207	134
CVL	950	685	605	345	100	90	155	510	2100	1895	1055	1090
BL	98	261	169	220	39	71	622	1001	219	383	502	419
Chew Magna Res	17	17	7	13	4	6	6	11				7

Recorded at a further 20 sites, although the only double figure counts were as follows:

OPS – five pairs in April, although no sign of any young;

VOSA Pool, Avonmouth – twelve on March 7th;

RPD – eleven on April 15th and May 15th;

Saltford – up to 27 during January.

Tufted Duck Breeding 2011 was another extremely poor season at CVL where there was just one brood of six young, only one of which survived. Elsewhere breeding was recorded at PW (three broods), Weston STW (one brood, four young), BG (female with five young on Aug. 14th), and BL (one brood, seven young).

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites	6	6	4	5	6	4	5	4	4	5
No. of broods	12	11	8	6	20	4	8	9	7	7
No. of young	72	72	42	25	115	16	55	29	41	25+

Tufted Duck - Breeding success in the Avon area

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

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

A below average year by recent standards and there was only one record away from CVL or BL. The regular wintering at CVL and BL is only a recent occurrence, as can be seen from the following table:

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
CVL	1	0	0	3	2	0	1	1	1	4
BL	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	2	4
Max flock	3	1	1	4	3	1	7	6	3	5

Average of the three highest monthly maximum counts and the largest single count (November – February)

The species is surprisingly rare on the Estuary itself as can be seen from the following table.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	3	1	0	4	0	0	1	1	0

Number of individuals on the Estuary each year

The last in the first winter period was a male at CVL on April 19th and the first to arrive was a juvenile female at BL on Oct. 14th. The full details are as follows:

First winter period

CVL – a male was reported on Jan. 3rd and 17th. Two first-winter males arrived on Feb. 13th, with one still present on 22nd, and increasing to three males on 26th. An adult female was seen on Feb. 24th. In March a first-winter male was present from 5th, with a second male on 7th, 17th, 20th and 22nd, and a third from 26th until April 1st. There was then a single first-winter male present from April 2nd until 19th;

BL – a first-winter male on Jan. 1st, 12th and 14th was joined by an adult pair and an extra first-winter male on 15th, this group being then seen intermittently until March 6th. A single adult male was then present from March 12th until April 9th.

Second winter period

Sevenside – a female on the VOSA Pool near ASW on Nov. 3rd and 4th;

CVL – an adult male in eclipse arrived on Oct. 30th and was present until the end of the year. He was joined by an extra adult male and a female on Nov. 8th with the female also present on Nov. 9th, 11th and 13th and Dec. 6th, and two were reported on Dec. 5th and 10th;

BL – unusually only recorded in October, a juvenile female from 14th until 16th and an adult male from 24th to 26th.

Year	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
No. seen	7	4	8	8	6	9	24	23	18	12

Number of individuals each year (July – June)

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis*

Rare Nearctic vagrant

One record: an adult male at CVL on Nov. 3rd and 4th (KEV *et al.*). [BBRC]

This is the seventh Avon area record following two at BL in 2000, two again at BL in 2007, a mobile individual recorded at three sites in 2008, and a first-winter male at CVL in 2010.

2010 – the bird at CVL was present on March 7th and again from March 17th to April 8th.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

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

Good numbers in the Estuary in spring, the details are as follows:

Severn Beach – a female on April 16th and 17th, six on May 11th with a flock of 30 the next day consisting of two males, six immature males and 22 females;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – a flock of 25 on May 23rd.

The Severn Beach flock is reminiscent of the flock of 40 here in May 2001.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
2	19	13	2	1	2	0	2	0	56

Number of individuals each year

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

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

Description species

One record, a juvenile/first-winter female at BL from Oct. 13th into 2012 (MPe, RMi *et al.*).

The table below shows the records for the last decade.

Year	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
No. seen	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0

Number of individuals seen (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.

Another below average year. The first was at CI-Y on March 19th with the last of the year, also here, on Dec. 6th. The majority of the reports were from the coast.

The records are as follows:

Severnside – a male on March 26th and April 1st, 3rd and 6th was joined by four extra males and a female on the 2nd, then a pair on May 5th. In July one was present on 17th and 30th with three on 18th, with a female on Aug. 1st and 6th, one on Sept. 4th, a male on Oct. 8th and 11th with a female/immature on 9th, and a female on Nov. 29th;

Portishead – male on May 2nd;

Clevedon (Ladye Bay) – four on May 15th;

CI-Y – a male on March 19th, four on Aug. 28th and one on Dec. 6th;

Sand Point – three on May 9th;

Weston Bay – three males and a female on April 9th;

CVL – two males were noted on March 31st, eight on June 26th (the largest flock of the year), an adult male on Sept. 22nd, two males and a female, all adults, on Oct. 7th and four juveniles on Nov. 2nd.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
143	26	58	129	145	85	75	53	59	51

Number of individuals each year

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. Scarce away from the main reservoirs, and scarce/very scarce in summer although bred at CVL in 2008.

The status table below shows that the average numbers at BL and BG in the 2010/11 winter were in line with the average over the last ten years, whereas those at CVL were significantly above average. The highest count at CVL during March to May was also higher than the ten-year average of 135.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Total
2001/02 – 2010/11	84	20	14	118
2009/10	88	36	17	141
2010/11	115	21	14	150

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

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
80	100	85	178	175	162	170	105	135	155

Goldeneye - Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Main sites The monthly maxima at the three main sites are given in the table below. Both CVL and BL had a period in mid-summer when none appeared to be present, at BL this was between June 9th and July 29th whereas at CVL it was between July 22nd and Sept. 28th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	10	10	9								4	3
CVL	130	130	155	4	1	2	1		1	20	55	98
BL	25	24	33	6	3	1	1	1	1	2	9	9

Other sites Recorded at only two further sites as follows:

Shepperdine – a female on Dec. 18th;

Saltford – one on Jan. 1st.

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 the good series of records last year 2011 was poor with just one record in the first part of the year as follows:

BL – a female from Feb. 11th to 28th.

The table below shows the annual maximum count at CVL for the last ten winters: there was a maximum of four in the first part of the 2010/11 winter although all of these departed during the freezing conditions in December 2010.

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
5	9	8	2	2	4	0	0	3	4

Numbers at CVL each winter

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

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

A male has now been seen for the last 32 winters (although we have no proof that the same individual has been involved in each winter).

First winter period

CVL – the male from 2010 was last noted on March 8th.

Second winter period

OPS – a female/immature on Nov. 19th;

BG – an adult male on Dec. 26th and 27th was probably the individual from CVL;

CVL – the regular male, in eclipse plumage, arrived on Oct. 15th and remained until the end of the year. On 25th and 28th two eclipse males were present, on Nov. 12th there were two males and three females, and on Dec. 15th two were present.

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 2010/11 winter count was almost double the ten-year average (41) and significantly the highest in the last decade.

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
65	25	55	27	22	24	54	32	26	80

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

The largest count for the calendar year 2011, 65 at CVL on Jan. 17th, was also above average, no doubt a legacy of the high numbers here in December 2010. Other significant counts in January were nine at Salford on 1st and twelve at the R. Axe on 23rd, no doubt a result of the harsh weather conditions.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
55	57	52	17	28	43	65	21	95	65

Maximum counts at CVL each year

The last in spring was two at CVL on April 4th, which was the only April record. The first to return were a male at Salford on Sept. 15th and 17th, and a redhead at PW on 16th, but these were the only September records. In fact arrival in the second winter period was slow and in low numbers as can be seen from the following table of maximum monthly counts from the main sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	5	3	1					
Backwell Lake	5	1						3
BG	4	6						1
CVL	65	30	15	2		4	11	14
BL	38	14	2				1	11

It is known that this species tends to use the larger reservoirs as roosting sites, often returning at dusk having spent the day on the rivers in the region. Two main areas away from the reservoirs are:

R. Axe between Bleadon and the Estuary – with maximum counts of twelve in January, seven in February and four in December;

R. Avon between Keynsham and Salford – with maximum counts of nine in January, four in February and March, one in September and October, three in November and four in December.

Elsewhere recorded from a further eight sites as follows (single birds unless stated otherwise):

Orchard Pools, Severn Beach – three in flight on Jan. 29th;

PW pools – redhead on Sept. 16th;

Portishead Marina – Jan. 1st and 4th and Feb. 1st;

Portbury ditch, Clapton-in-Gordano – March 1st;

Coopers Lake, Yate – male on March 18th;

Batheaston NR – male on Jan. 16th, and a female on Feb. 1st;

Prior Park, Bath – Jan. 2nd;

Chew Magna Res – female on Dec. 5th, the first here since 1998.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL; scarce elsewhere. Now being regularly culled by order of Defra with the last recorded local breeding in 2008.

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

The table below gives the monthly maxima at CVL and BL, the only sites to hold this species at all regularly now, albeit in vastly reduced numbers.

The only other records were from BG (one on Jan. 1st) and, unusually, Backwell Lake (one on July 16th).

Ruddy Duck – Monthly maxima at regular sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL	7	11	6	3	2	2	1	2		3	3	3
BL	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Reported from about 20 sites across the region, but there were only six reports of coveys reaching double figures. The highest count was for the Marshfield area with 200 logged on Jan. 3rd. As usual the majority of records came from this area but other sites included Batheaston NR, Hinton Charterhouse (up to 23) and Saltford,

First winter period (January – March) As in 2010 reported from eight sites. In addition to figures above, twelve were present at Marshfield in January and seven in March but numbers here are distorted by releases for 'The Shoot'. There were seven at Saltford in January, eight in February, and ten were seen at Dunkirk in March. Small numbers were also reported from Corston, CVL and Maes Knoll.

Breeding season (April – June) Reported from eleven sites but no nests or young were seen. Counts of five or more were only noted in the Marshfield area.

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) Recorded at only seven sites as in 2010 with generally low counts. Coveys of five or more were at Marshfield (six on July 11th, 30 on Dec. 2nd), and at Saltford up to 14 were present in August, October, November and December. One other notable count came from Stowey with seven in September.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites - SG	6	1	3	n/a	6+	1	7	3	2	3
No. of sites - NS	4	0	0	4	4	2	2	1	4	8
No. of sites - BA	10	8	14	8	12	19	12	18	17	5

Number of sites away from ST77

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

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

Ten presumed released birds in the Portbury area first seen in late autumn 2010 were still present in January 2011. Just four other sites reported this species which is rapidly declining in the Avon area. One or two were seen at Marshfield, Uphill Marsh, Saltford and Blake's Pool Reserve, CI-Y.

All records are given below. Observers are encouraged to submit every record of this species, with six figure grid references, in order that the declining status can be monitored. Local knowledge about the release of birds would also be most useful. (Eds.)

SG, Marshfield area - single birds on March 21st, 22nd and May 9th;

B&NES, at Saltford - two on Oct. 1st, 13th and Dec. 12th, and one on Oct. 28th;

NS - two were at Uphill Marsh on Aug. 24th, and one at Blake's Pool Reserve, CI-Y on Dec. 27th.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of records received	24	16	12	15	18	10	8	16	9*	11*
No. of sites - SG	6	3	1	2	5	2	3	1	1	1
No. of sites - NS	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2*	2*
No. of sites - BA	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1

Records and sites away from Marshfield area, * implies that feral birds are excluded

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

Descriptions required for all sight records of non-singing birds and all records away from the Marshfield area.

The first to arrive was at Marshfield on May 14th when an individual was heard calling from Shirehill Lane and they continued to be reported from this area until Aug. 5th. Also heard near Easton-in-Gordano with one calling on May 27th and 29th and up to three between July 3rd and 12th; a report of two calling at Lower Failand Farm

on July 12th was assumed to relate to these birds. There was one at Yatton on July 24th. The maximum count was around six on July 16th, two less than in 2010 but more in line with the annual average for the last decade, and at least 14 were noted altogether

Below is summarised the records for the main sites in the Marshfield area.

Down Road – up to five were heard calling on May 31st, two on June 11th, and at least three on the 25th. Three were calling on July 3rd, four on 11th, and several on Aug. 5th;

Rushmead Lane – at least two on July 3rd, three on 16th, up to four on 18th, and several heard on Aug. 5th;

Tormarton Road – one, possibly two, heard about 100 metres east of the village on July 14th.

Middledown Lane – one seen briefly from Middledown Road on July 15th, and three on 16th;

Northfield Lane – two heard on July 27th.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
9	4	2	16	5	5+	3	5	10	10	14+

Quail – Number of singing males each year

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Widely recorded with records from at least 50 sites but in most cases counts were in single figures. Seen regularly in the Walton Common area throughout the year, the maximum count was 65 in August most of which were (presumably hand reared) juveniles. As the observer only covered a small part of the whole woodland site this count was considered to be a gross underestimate.

Otherwise fifteen counts of ten or more were received as follows (five in 2010), in date order they were: Marshfield, 20 on Jan. 3rd, Hinton Charterhouse 17 on March 5th, Timsbury 24 on April 6th, Stony Littleton twelve on April 15th, Peasedown eleven on 8th, Hawkesbury 33 on 20th, Compton Dando twelve on 26th, Hunstrete ten on May 16th, Queen Charlton 15 on 28th, Langridge 13 on July 1st, Combe Hay 20 on Sept. 5th, Burnett eleven on Oct. 26th, CVL 16 on Nov. 20th, and OPS 13 on Dec. 24th.

Breeding The only report was of seven freshly hatched eggs on a grass verge at Marshfield, a brood at CVL where 34 calling males were noted during the breeding season and four young at Weston STW in September.

On several occasions from Nov. 24th onwards a virtually pure albino was noted in the Walton Down area, its plumage was almost entirely white or whitish, the only colour noted was the red wattle and pale yellow beak.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
145	134	142	152	169	177	161	146	156	162

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 58%)

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

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

One day during a spell of strong winds in November produced two records, one inland and one coastal, and there was a further coastal record in December. This is about average for this species in the Avon area, see table below.

RPD – one on Dec. 9th (CJS);

Sand Point – one on Nov. 27th (PAB);

CVL – a juvenile on Nov. 27th and 28th (many observers).

DIVER SP *Gavia sp.*

One at Aust on Feb. 19th was considered to be a Red-throated, but it was not seen well enough for a firm identification to be made.

Divers in the Avon area

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
Red-throated	1				1		2	1	1	
Black-throated		2								
Pacific									1	
Great Northern		3		1	1	5	3	5	2	3
Diver sp.		2	2	1	1		3	1	3	1

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

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

After four poor years 2011 saw improved numbers. Reasonably strong winds in late May produced some good counts, notably at Sand Point on 26th. Steady south-westerlies in September produced a long sequence of records in the upper Estuary, including on three dates at OPS (*cf.* Manx Shearwater and Gannet). None was reported inland, and the table below shows all records received.

	March		May				Sept							Oct	
	10		22	24	26	29	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	9	10
OPS									1	1	1				
Sevenside			5			1	2	6	2	1	2	3	1	1	1
Portishead			1												
Ladye Bay			4		5			9		1					
Sand Point			4		45			5				1			
Anchor Head	5			1				2							

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.

There was an upturn in records following two poor years. It is noticeable that only a few of the late May birds were upstream of Clevedon, whereas Sevenside produced the bulk of the September records. Comparison of records for Sand Point and Anchor Head highlights the impact of observer bias of this and other seabirds. There are no records from both sites on the same day, because the majority here come from the same observer, who visits either one site or the other on any one day. Increased observer effort certainly explains much of the increase over the years, but some of this may be genuine; it is difficult now to imagine a year producing only six bird-days, as in 1992. One inland record at BL on Sept. 7th (NRM *et al.*), a first for the site, coincided with several on the coast, including an unusual record of one on three consecutive days at OPS (one was also recorded here in September 2010). The table below shows all coastal records.

	May							Sept								
	16	22	23	24	26	28	29	4	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	17
OPS											1	1	1			
Sevenside		5					1	1	1	50	10	4		1	3	2
Portishead		9								3						1
Ladye Bay CI-Y		26	43		130	105	9			28						
Sand Point		180			240						7			1		
Anchor Head	2			35		70				44						
BL											1					

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.

After two very poor years 2011 produced a slightly improved showing for this species although the high counts between 2006 and 2008 are beginning to look like an aberration. Recorded as follows:

Sevenside – single birds on May 22nd and 26th, July 17th and Sept. 7th;

Ladye Bay – single birds on May 26th and 29th;

Sand Point – one on May 22nd and two on 26th.

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.

A poor year with just two seen during the September gales which produced an exceptional series of other seabird records in the upper Estuary:

Sevenside – two on Sept. 12th, with one on the next day (BL *et al.*).

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Uncommon storm-driven visitor, mainly in spring and summer. Rare inland.

This seabird species was unusual in that the number of records in 2011 was lower than that for 2010. The tubenoses, Gannet and Shag table below reveals that there is a much stronger correlation between good years for Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel than there is between any of these species and Gannet. This is at least in part because they often turn up in storms earlier in the year than any of these other species. In 2011 there were a few March records, but as with other seabirds the majority came in late May and early September.

As noted under Manx Shearwater observer effort has a major impact on seabird counts and this makes identification of long-term trends difficult. However, the difference shown by comparison of records from the 1990s with those from the most recent decade is surely notable. Whilst records of other seabirds increased by a factor of between two and three those of Gannet increased by a factor of almost ten. The national population has increased over the same period but to nothing like this extent, suggesting that some change in the ecology of the Bristol Channel, either in our area or the south-west, has made it much more attractive to this species.

	March			April	May				Aug	Sept					
	10	11	14	12	8	22	26	29	13	6	7	8	12	17	18
OPS											1	4			1
Sevenside	60		1		1	3				7	3	2	1	1	1
Portishead						4				2					
Ladye Bay		6				15	7	2		11					
Sand Point						49	45		1						
Anchor Head	6			1						5					

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor, especially to the main reservoirs; breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm. Two races occur:

P. c. carbo - previously dominated all records and probably still accounts for all breeding birds.

P.c. sinensis - now fairly common amongst non-breeding birds.

UK ten-year change up 14%.

The average of maximum counts at CVL shown in the table below was the lowest since 2006. As in earlier years it seems that low populations of suitably-sized coarse fish are having an adverse effect on numbers (*cf.* Great Crested Grebe) whilst reduced competition from fish for invertebrate prey leads to large counts of Tufted Duck.

1998/08 Av	2009	2010	2011
133	197	203	145

CVL January to December average maximum counts

Elsewhere, BG did not see a repeat of the exceptional December 2010 count, but numbers were high here. Numbers at BL may be suffering as a consequence of conditions at CVL.

In 2011 there was little evidence of the cold weather dispersal that was seen in December 2010.

Careful examination by KEV of 40 Cormorant at CVL on March 30th showed that most, if not all, were of the continental race *sinensis*.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	2	3	5	3	3	9	8	5	8	7	3
Littleton		1	4	1	2	1		2	1			
Sevenside	1	2	1	2		2	3	2	2	6	2	
CI-Y	1	1	3	6	3	2	7	5	11	10	5	2
Weston STW	3	12	8	3	9	2	3	4	15	3	1	5
R. Avon at Bath	7	7	2		1		2		1	1		7
R. Avon at Keynsham	5	2			1			2			3	3
R. Avon at Saltford	11	12	9	7	5						12	11
Kenn Moor	10	13	6	2	1	1	6	6	3	4	7	11
BG	38	50	24	20		10	26	26	54	78	45	190
CVL	160	65	85	15	10	11	30	50	165	110	45	45
BL	23	52	95	11	10	6	15	38	8	88	140	40
Batheaston	9	11	11	2	1	1	7	13	12	17	12	10
Loxton		4	5							9	8	
Litton Resrs.					1	7	6	2	3	1	5	

Other sites As usual recorded from many, normally in small numbers and often as over-flyers. A high count of 40 was made at Portishead on April 17th. Otherwise the highest count was eleven at Chew Magna Res. on Jan. 1st.

Breeding Once again no count was received from our only breeding site on Steep Holm.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

An excellent series of records was received including, unusually, a spring record. The details are as follows:

OPS – a juvenile on Sept. 8th (PJH);

Sevenside – single birds on May 22nd (BL), a juvenile from Sept. 13th to 17th (BL *et al.*) and on Oct. 10th (BL);

New Passage – one on Sept. 18th, the Sevenside bird;

CI-Y – a juvenile on the marine lake on Dec. 22nd and 23rd (GJ);

Anchor Head / Birnbeck Pier, Weston-s-Mare – one on Sept. 6th (PAG) and another on Dec. 24th, probably the bird seen at CI-Y (GW);

Tube-noses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

	1992/ 2001 ave	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Fulmar	55	130	87	139	16	272	79	62	40	26	112
Cory's Shearwater				1							
Manx Shearwater	404	586	1230	1920	40	1600	1216	1680	380	100	1015
Storm Petrel	4	9/12	2	8		28	27	25	1		9
Leach's Storm Petrel	2	5/9		2	2	115	2	1	24	1	2
Gannet	18	134+	102	152	46	570	195	172	57	267	240
Shag	2	2	1	3	5	3	2	5	2	3	6

Scarce seabirds – Annual bird-day totals

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

With the establishment of a breeding population just to the south of our area on the Somerset Levels recent years have produced a wider scatter of sightings. Both 2009 and 2010 saw records from four sites; in 2011 they were recorded at an unprecedented eight sites, as follows:

Old Passage – one on April 16th;

Orchard Pools, Severn Beach – one on Jan. 24th and 25th and Feb. 9th and 12th;

PW – single birds on Feb. 6th and March 15th;

CI-Y – one on Jan. 2nd and Feb. 20th;

Weston STW – one on Nov. 18th;

Clapton-in-Gordano – one on Jan. 5th;

Backwell Lake – one, first recorded in December 2010, on several dates between Jan. 11th and Feb. 8th;

CVL – in the first winter period one was seen on several dates from Jan. 1st onwards, with two on 22nd, Feb. 17th and March 4th, followed by a final record of three on 5th. In the second winter period one was seen on several dates from Nov. 13th.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

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

Despite the cold weather during the last two winters there is no evidence of decline at CI-Y. This species was slightly less numerous at CVL than in 2010, probably as a consequence of poor populations of coarse fish (*cf.* Cormorant), but more common than in any other year. The exceptional count at Chew Magna Res. is a reflection of the species' ability to exploit temporarily favourable conditions.

Recorded from a total of 33 sites (*cf.* 17 in 2003, 20 in 2004, 23 in 2005, 26 in 2006, 17 in 2007, 24 in 2008, 38 in 2009 and 32 in 2010).

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1						2	2	2	2	1	1
Littleton Warth										1		
Severnside		1	2	1	7	2		1	1	1	2	1
RPD/PW			1			1		2	1	1	1	1
CI-Y and environs	23	12	5	7	4	7	14	19	14	22	16	19
Sand Bay							1	3		2	1	
Axe Est	3	3	6	3	4	2	3	6	3	6	1	1
BG	1			1			1	1	1			1
CVL	5	1	2	6	2	5	13	15	13	9	4	2
BL	2	1	1		3		1	4	1	10	10	4
Backwell Lake	1	2	2	1						1		1
Litton Resrs.			1	1	1	2	1		3		1	

The table below gives the maximum count at the main Avon area site, CI-Y.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
7	13	15	27	39	31	32	24	21	23

Maximum count each year from CI-Y and environs

Other sites Reported in small numbers from the levels and moors of North Somerset. The scatter of records in early January suggests some cold weather dispersal. Noted elsewhere in the region as follows:

Rockhampton – two on Nov. 23rd;

Thornbury – four on Dec 7th;

Kingsgate Park, Yate – one on Jan. 3rd and 7th;

Easter Compton – single birds on March 17th and April 2nd;

Pilning – one on Jan. 3rd and three on April 3rd;

Little Egret con't

Leap Valley, Downend – single birds on Jan. 1st, 8th and 16th;

Eastville Park – one on Jan. 7th;

Netham Lock, Bristol – one on July 21st was presumably the bird seen at Brislington;

R. Avon at Brislington – one on July 17th;

Keynsham – one on May 14th;

R. Avon at Saltford – one on Jan. 17th;

Flax Bourton – one on Jan. 29th and two on Dec. 27th;

Long Ashton – one on Aug. 1st;

Batheaston NR – one on Feb. 25th;

Chew Magna Res. and environs – single birds on Jan. 1st and 30th and Aug. 3rd were typical for this site, but following the draining of the lake for maintenance works an unprecedented 16 were present on 23rd. The supply of fish presumably dwindled rapidly, since the respective total for the next three days were seven, five and three; there were further records of single birds from Sept. 8th to 27th, on Oct. 3rd and Nov. 28th;

Woollard – one on March 27th.

Cameley – one on Aug. 2nd.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Rare vagrant.

This species has become increasingly common in the Somerset Levels to the south of our area and it is perhaps no surprise that the number of records this year equalled the previous all-time total. Unfortunately none stayed for any length of time.

BL – one on June 11th (NRM *et al.*);

CVL – one on Oct. 14th (CJS *et al.*);

CI-Y – one on Nov. 7th was seen on Blackstone Rocks but then flew towards the Kenn Estuary (SS).

There are three previous Avon area records: one that flew from Flat Holm (Glamorgan) into Weston Bay in September 2002; one at CVL on single dates in June and July 2003; and one at CI-Y in April 2006.

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 another good year at CVL, due to low water levels producing excellent feeding conditions, and continued slight improvement in the Sea Mills area. The second table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

	1999/08 Av.	2009	2010	2011
CVL	18	28	32	35
Sea Mills	18	8	12	13

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	4	5	3	3	3	4	4	6	5	6	5
Sevenside	2	3	3	1		1	1	3		3	3	2
CI-Y	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	3	14	5	3	2
Axe Est./Weston STW	1	1	2	10	2	4	3	4	4	3	7	2
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	6	13	1	2	4	4	1	8	6	8	12	3
R. Avon at Saltford		3	2	3	6				4		2	2
BG	5	4	4	4	6	6	10	12	13	6	6	4
CVL	10	12	8	10	10	35	21	25	22	16	16	6
BL	9	6	4	2	3	7	8	12	16	18	24	9
Litton Resrs.			8	1	3	7	12	4	2	6	9	

Other non-breeding records Records were received from a wide scatter of other sites, often as single birds in flight. The maximum counts not in the table above were four at both Weston Moor on Jan. 2nd and Burnett on May 10th. Eels were noted as prey items at both PW and Eastville Park.

Breeding Disappointingly few records were received, but counts from two sites where recording is consistent, Cleeve Heronry and CVL, suggest that there was no further decline since 2010, despite the cold weather early in the year. The BBS index shows a 6% decrease since 2010, returning to the level seen in 2009. Since 1994 there has been a 25% increase in the BBS index, but the species' BBS distribution has remained constant. The table below shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region:

	Grid Ref	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Widcombe Manor	ST761633								2		
Dodington Lakes	ST753802								3		4
Newton Park	ST692640	7	5			8	4		2		
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	16	25	25	25	25	25	34	25	25	17
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761					1	1	2	1	1	
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	31	33	29	29	25	36	51	39	30	31
Easter Compton	ST560811	8	8	7	8	0	0	0	0	0	
Pill	ST530739				5	5	5		7	6	7
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	45	52	45	45	33	48	42	45	40	42
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	2	3			4	8	4	4		4
Total		109	126	106	112	101	127	133	128	102	105
Grey Heron - occupied nests each year											

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
150	163	182	150	178	144	181	125	131	125

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 25%)

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Scarce passage migrant.

Even allowing for the multiple sightings of several individuals this was an exceptional year for Spoonbills, producing our largest ever party of the species and a long series of records along the coast, probably totalling ten birds.

One was seen at CVL in May, followed by two there in July; five moved from Severnside to CVL in September; two appeared at Severnside in early October, one of these birds then spent some time at PW, with a brief trip back to Severnside, before visiting, in turn, OPS, CI-Y and Weston STW over the period of two days; and finally a bird at Severnside in mid-November may well have been this individual.

The records are as follows:

OPS – one on Oct. 28th (*per* OPSweb);

Severnside – five on Sept 14th (*per* SBweb), two first-winter birds on Oct. 2nd, with one remaining until 3rd (JPM, RFR *et al*), one on Oct. 5th, an immature from Oct. 14th to 16th and one first-winter bird on Nov. 14th and 16th (*per* SBweb);

PW – one first-winter bird seen on eight dates between Oct. 4th and 22nd (CJS, SH *et al*);

CI-Y – one on Oct. 28th and 29th (*per* CI-Yweb);

Weston STW – a juvenile on Oct. 29th (MSP);

CVL – one on May 4th (*per* CVLweb), two on July 25th (many observers), five seen on Sept. 14th and 15th (many observers, see photograph opposite page 25) and an immature that arrived from the south in the early evening of Oct. 19th and was not seen subsequently (*per* CVLweb), which could well have been one of the birds seen on the coast.

This constitutes almost a quarter of all Avon area records, bringing the total since 1920 to 41. The most recent were a series of four sightings in April and May 2006; a single bird in August 2007; one at OPS and Severnside in September 2008; two at OPS and single birds at CI-Y and CVL in April, August and September in 2009; and in 2010 single birds at CVL and BL in October and at OPS in December.

Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Bittern	5	3	3	3	3	1	3	6	11	10
Cattle Egret				1		1		6	1	
Great White Egret	1	1			1					3
Purple Heron								1		
White Stork				1	1				2	
Glossy Ibis						1		6	1	
Spoonbill					1	1	1	4	2	10
Spotted Crake		2	1	1		1	2	1		
Annual totals										

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.

CVL is currently ranked fourth in Great Britain for this species. (The Wetlands Bird Survey 2007/08).

BBS distribution 4%.

UK 25-yr change down 76%.

1999/08 Av	2009	2010	2011
68	135	123	92

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

The annual maximum at CVL was down on very high counts made in 2009 and 2010, but the combination of good waterweed growth (which produces good feeding) and low water levels (which forces birds into the open) continues to produce good autumn counts despite the decline in the importance of the lake as a breeding site.

Following a marked decline between 2009 and 2010, seen at all of the major sites, there was evidence of a further, although less marked, decline between 2010 and 2011. There can be little doubt that these declines are due to freezing weather, which must affect a species of small water bodies and the margins of larger lakes especially severely.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside			4	4						1		
PW	3	3	5	4	2				10	12	14	11
Axe Est./Weston STW	1	2	5	8	8	7	13	17	15	6	3	2
Tortworth Lake						1	2			3		
ASW/Hoar Gout		1							4	3	2	4
R. Avon at Saltford	5	1	2							1	2	5
BG	6	12	6		1		3	2	13	24	19	17
Chew Magna Res.		3	2	1	2	3	5	15				
CVL	6	8	4	4	4	35	75	105	95	60	25	25
BL	1	1		2	4	5	3	10	18	5	3	4
Litton Resrs.						1			10	5	3	

Other sites Reported from a further 14 sites (*cf.* eleven in 2006, ten in 2007, 15 in 2008, 23 in 2009, 22 in 2010). There were records from the R. Avon, in addition to the Saltford counts in the table above, at Keynsham, and Bath, and from the R. Frome at Snuff Mills. There were unusual records from tidal habitats at the mouth of the R. Avon, where exceptionally there were records of single birds on Feb. 22nd, March 23rd, April 11th and July 11th, and from Severn Beach where one was seen on Oct. 16th. The highest count not in the table above was of six at Three Brooks LNR Bradley Stoke on Feb. 5th; there was also a record on four here on Oct. 22nd.

Breeding As in 2010 there were only two pairs present at CVL and no evidence of a breeding attempt; the minimum number of broods here between 1992 and 2000 was ten and the largest number was 27. It is likely that breeding elsewhere is under-reported but there is worrying evidence of a widespread and ongoing decline, although records show that there also seems to have been a decline between 1995 and 1998. A site used regularly in recent years, the Grebe Pond at Northwick Warth, was rendered unsuitable, at least for a while, by very poorly timed and misguided work attempting to enhance the wetland here. Reports were received from four sites away from CVL as follows:

PW – one brood of three young;

Three Brooks LNR, Bradley Stoke – one pair produced a single young;

Weston STW – five pairs with five broods and nine young (*cf.* nine broods here in 2008);

BL – two pairs each produced single young.

	1992/2001 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Broods	17	6	2	9	2	6	6	3	3	0	0
Young	28	9	2	13+	3	10	9+	4	5	0	0

Little Grebe – CVL broods and young

	1992/2001 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Sites	5	7	6	12	6	5	8	6	4	4	4
Broods	9	9	12	18	14	18	15	14	10	12	9

Little Grebe – Sites and broods away from CVL

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

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

CVL is currently ranked fourth in Great Britain for this species (The Wetland Bird Survey 2007/08).

Counts at CVL between 2007 and 2009 were very high, but they fell sharply in 2010 and this fall continued in 2011. As noted in previous reports this coincided with exceptionally high counts of Tufted Duck. There is a suggestion that low populations of coarse fish favour this duck but result in poor counts of this grebe. Whether this will prove to be a permanent trend remains to be seen. The very low numbers early in the year at the main sites are a consequence of cold weather.

1999/08 Av	2009	2010	2011
463	565	355	195

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	11	20	26	43	43	41	69	67	60	47	29	15
CVL	20	25	95	90	100	225	250	180	145	110	160	50
BL	21	10	14	18	16	15	29	33	23	42	45	14

Records were received from a wider scatter of sites than usual but few of these can be attributed to cold weather movements; it is possible that poor conditions at CVL over the summer and autumn forced birds to disperse elsewhere. Recorded as follows:

Sevenside – one on March 30th, two on April 10th and single birds on 17th and May 4th and 30th;

PW – one from Dec. 10th to 13th;

CI-Y – single birds on July 30th and Aug. 2nd, 5th, 14th and 20th;

Axe Est. – two on Jan. 23rd;

Weston STW – one on Nov. 26th;

R. Avon at Saltford – one on Jan. 1st;

Green Park, Bath – one on Oct. 27th;

Chew Magna Res. – one or two recorded on many dates between March 2nd and July 15th;

Litton Resrs. – one on April 19th, two on May 15th and three on June 19th;

Breeding Low water levels caused another very poor year at CVL and no breeding was attempted. This species is opportunistic and the decline in breeding at CVL is not necessarily permanent: for example, compare the six young here in 1995 to the 153 in 1996. Reported from elsewhere as follows:

Tortworth – one nest was occupied; the outcome is unknown;

Chew Magna Res. – a nest was occupied on April 26th but abandoned by May 2nd. The birds were nest building again on May 31st and sitting on June 7th, but this nest had disappeared by 15th.

	1992-2001 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Broods	30	5	2	6	0	20	38	20	8	1	0
Young	49	6	4	9	0	43	62+	26+	12	2	0

Great Crested Grebe – CVL broods and young

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

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

One at BL remained from Nov. 11th into 2012 (many observers).

2010 Erratum: the dates for the BG bird given in the 2010 Report should have read Jan. 13th to 15th.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

With the exception of records on the first day of the year and in October arrivals were noted from Aug. 1st to Sept. 15th, with some lingering until Nov. 20th. All records came from the main reservoirs.

BG – two, a juvenile and an adult, on Aug. 14th with the juvenile remaining until Sept. 14th;

CVL – a juvenile was seen on Aug. 15th, followed by an adult (possibly the BG individual) on 17th and 18th. In September a juvenile present from 7th was joined by another on 15th and a third on Oct. 13th only, then two from Nov. 1st to 20th;

BL – a single bird on Jan. 1st (none was recorded in December 2010). In the autumn a juvenile on Aug. 1st was joined by another on 3rd and one was then present from 5th to 13th, with a different bird from Aug. 22nd to Sept. 14th. Another was seen on Oct. 21st.

2010 Addendum – One was present at BG from Dec. 5th to 18th.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	1992/2001 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Red-necked	1	1		1		1				1	
Slavonian	2		1	1	1	1	2	1		3	1
Black-necked	8	11	5	9	6	14	9	10	8	9	11

Annual totals

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Very scarce passage migrant.

One record: one to N over Northwick Warth on May 7th at 11.10hrs (PDB, ADS). This is the second Severnside record, the first was at New Passage in May 1991.

This was the second earliest date for this species in the Avon area, the earliest was at Weston Moor, Weston-in-Gordano on May 5th, 1995.

Since the turn of the century this species has been recorded in the Avon area in 2000, 2008 and 2010 with four, three and two bird-days, respectively.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.

An excellent year but fewer records than in the preceding two years, these were the best to date. Most were in the period February to June, no records were received for January, August and December. Recorded at 46 sites (*cf.* 47 in 2010), twelve in SG, 26 in BA & NS, and eight in Bristol. A total of 54 bird-days (*cf.* 70 in 2010) was recorded during the year.

The following records were received, they refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

February – the first was at Priors Wood, Portbury on 16th at 12.55hrs, then the following day at ASW at 09.30hrs, Somerdale, Keynsham at 12.15hrs, Patchway at 13.10hrs and Bath, to NE at Saltford on 21st and to E over Clifton on 28th at 17.10hrs;

March – at Walton Bay, Clevedon on 3rd, at Abbots Leigh on 6th, over M5 at Weston-s-Mare on 12th, to E at Claverton on 16th. On 21st to SW over Montpelier, Bristol and at CVL, the following day at Marshfield, on 23rd at CI-Y and New Passage at 17.10hrs. On 25th at Woodland Road, Clifton at 11.15hrs, later in the day to W at Clifton Down at 15.00hrs, and at Victoria Park, Bedminster on 28th;

April – to S at Tyntesfield on 6th, at Yatton on 8th at 16.00hrs, the following day at RPD and Redland, Bristol, at CVL on 18th. On 22nd over Kingswood at 10.40hrs, at Saltford and Burrington Combe at 13.45hrs, at Lower Littleton on 23rd at 15.45hrs, the next day to W at Abbots Leigh at 18.00hrs. On 25th at Chipping Sodbury Common at 14.30hrs and Marshfield at 16.00hrs, to E at Lulsgate on 27th at 13.00hrs and the following day over Severn Beach at 07.45hrs;

May – on 1st over Falfield at 13.00hrs and at Horwood Farm, Lower Woods. In the Gordano Valley on 5th, 7th, 10th and 17th, at Almondsbury on 15th, CI-Y on 18th and Latteridge on 29th at 17.30hrs;

June – on 2nd at Ham Green, over Lansdown at 13.30hrs and Marshfield at 17.00hrs, the following day over Aust Cliff at 09.00hrs, at Portishead at 11.30hrs and 13.30hrs, at Wick on 6th and Peasedown St. John on 26th;

July – at RPD on 3rd, the next day at Marshfield and at Wrington on 27th at 16.00hrs;

September – at Wraxall on 3rd at 16.30hrs, the following day at Marshfield and at New Passage on 29th;

October – to N over Gordano Valley on 6th at 10.15hrs and 10th, the next day at Hewish and over Wellow on 15th;

November – at Clevedon on 6th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL.

With a total of 28 bird-days 2011 was another excellent year for this species in the Avon area (*cf.* 29 in 2008, 51 in 2009 and 14 in 2010), Most reports were from CVL with a total of 17 bird-days, (*cf.* 24 in 2008, 46 in 2009 and eight in 2010), the majority in April and August with six bird-days each.

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

First half-year

Avonmouth – May 8th;

Portbury Wharf – to ESE on May 10th;

CI-Y – at Blake's Pool on April 30th;

CVL – a second-calendar-year male on April 15th, 18th, 19th, 21st, 25th and 27th, a female on May 9th and 10th;

BL – May 9th.

Second half-year

CI-Y – during September to S at Wain's Hill on 3rd and 28th, in October on 26th and 31st, and on Nov. 8th;

Weston STW – a juvenile on Aug. 6th;

CVL – in August juveniles on 8th and 17th, a female and juvenile on 30th and 31st, during September on 1st and 8th, and on Nov. 13th;

BL- Aug. 8th.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

A good year with a total of twelve bird-days (*cf.* one in 2009 and 17 in 2010). The details are as follows, records refer to single female or immature birds unless stated otherwise, and give sites and dates when present.

First half-year

January – at Aust Warth on 1st (PDB *et al.*), and CI-Y on 9th (SS);

February – CI-Y on 12th (SS);

March – a male to NW over CVL on 25th (KEV).

Second half-year (It is assumed that the six CI-Y records all refer to the same individual.)

September – at Wick Quarry on 14th (PB);

October – at CI-Y on 12th (SS) and to SE on 15th (JMcG);

Hen Harrier con't

November – at CI-Y on 11th, 17th and 21st (SS);

December – at CI-Y on 6th and 17th (SS).

2010 – late report of a female or juvenile over CVL on Oct. 2nd (KEV).

PALLID HARRIER *Circus macrourus*

Very rare vagrant

One record, a juvenile male at Black Down, Mendip Hills, Somerset from Sept. 28th to Oct. 16th was seen to fly north east towards Blagdon Lake and into the Avon area on Sept. 30th (PAG *et al.*) – see photographs opposite page 57 [BBRC].

This is the first record for the Avon area and for Somerset.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Very scarce summer visitor

One record: a second-calendar-year male drifted slowly to SE at Orchid Lane, Marshfield on July 3rd at 20.45hrs (MH, JB).

Recent records from the Marshfield area were a female or immature in August 1982, nearby at West Littleton Down in June 1994, a second-calendar-year male in June 2005, and a female/immature nearby at Tormarton in May 2008. Since 1980 there have also been about seven Avon records away from this site.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Very scarce visitor and resident.

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. Recorded from a site in SG in 2008, 2009 and 2010 but breeding was unconfirmed. However it was not reported here in 2011. At present it is not the committee's intention to publish full details of the earlier records 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*).

One record: a first-calendar-year female being mobbed by a Kestrel as it flew across the Severn Estuary towards Gwent from Northwick Warth on Sept. 14th (SH). This is the fourth Severnside record, the others were a male in July 1997, a first-calendar-year male in August 1998 and a female in November 2006.

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

Year	1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	2001
Honey Buzzard	0	0	2	2	0	1	3	0	4	0
Black Kite	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Kite	1	2	2	1	3	6	1	2	5	1
Marsh Harrier	6	1	8	2	4	2	16	4	8	7
Hen Harrier	2	1	0	4	1	4	1	2	2	1
Montagu's Harrier	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Goshawk	0	0	0	1	0	5	2	8	9	1
Osprey	5	2	22	8	5	4	7	2	14	7
Red-footed Falcon	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Honey Buzzard	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1
Black Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Red Kite	4	6	3	17	11	24	31	62	70	54
Marsh Harrier	4	15	2	11	8	6	29	52	14	28
Hen Harrier	6	7	3	3	3	4	14	1	16	13
Pallid Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Montagu's Harrier	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1
Goshawk	2	2	0	0	1	0	3*	0*	0*	1
Osprey	4	3	4	10	6	12	13	14	13	13

Bird-day totals for the last 20 years (* excludes records from SG site)

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

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

A good year with 584 records received, the spread across the year was reasonably even, most in March, April and August during the display and dispersal periods respectively.

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2011 and the previous five years:

Monthly distribution of records													
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2010	50	22	29	70	35	37	39	35	48	40	38	48	491
2011	39	48	62	74	42	28	20	62	52	52	45	60	584

Breeding The assessment of the number breeding in 2011 was the best since 1997 when the total was 74. The SG total was slightly higher than in 2010 but was still lower than the 2008 peak. The totals were 17 in SG, 45 in BA & NS and ten in and around *Bristol*.

	1992-01 Av	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
SG	10	7	12	16	10	16	11	24	13	14	17
BA & NS	32	32	37	30	29	36	34	35	32	29	45
Bristol	13	13	13	6	13	11	10	9	10	8	10
Total	55	52	62	52	52	63	55	68	55	51	72

Breeding sites

Three pairs were found around CVL, all bred successfully (*cf.* three in 2008 and 2009, one in 2010).

At Weston STW an adult and four juveniles were noted on Aug. 6th.

Prey species reported There were few reports, one was of a Starling that was killed, cached and retrieved later the same day at Keynsham on Feb. 2nd. A Jackdaw was taken and held for several minutes but survived its ordeal at Bishop Sutton on Oct. 25th, and other species noted were Great Tit, Blackbird and House Sparrow.

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.

A good year, overall breeding success was the best since 2005 and the assessment of breeding sites was the highest to date. Records received totalled 883, similar to 2009 but lower than the peak in 2007, many of these were in the display period from March to June but few were reported between July and September.

Monthly distribution of records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2010	86	51	101	121	88	90	55	29	35	36	50	79	821
2011	68	62	141	125	77	112	23	47	45	59	66	58	883

Breeding RJP's study area, which covers some 75km² of Failand and Gordano, had an average year, 104 pairs held territories, one more than in 2010 which was a record year. Of the 35 nests checked 27 were successful and 43 young fledged.

The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2011 and the previous nine years as well as the ten year average from 1992 to 2001. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area, and an estimate of numbers in the southern 60km² of ST66 based on JH's survey work from 1991 to 2004.

Year	1992-01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
SG	27	27	29	44	25	49	39	45	46	47	56
BA & NS	123	169	174	196	196	206	213	202	211	172	226
Bristol	3	8	9	12	16	14	12	9	8	11	10
RJP's Study Area											
Active nest sites	58	84	84	85	88	90	92	97	99	103	103
Chicks fledged	57	51	66	107	92	50	80	47	73	87	43
Successful nests	36	38	40	60	56	37	52	33	47	60	27
Brood success ratio	1.62	1.34	1.65	1.78	1.64	1.35	1.54	1.42	1.55	1.43	1.59

Buzzard – Breeding sites

At CVL, nine nests were found and seven of these were successful (*cf.* five in 2008, nine in 2009 and five in 2010).

Large groups/counts All counts in double figures were noted from February 19th to May 13th and most of these were at CVL. In February there were 14 on 19th, in March there were eleven on 10th twelve here two days later and ten at Lulsgate on 23rd. During April at CVL there were ten on 9th and 20 three days later, 14 were at BG on 19th and 14 at CVL on May 13th. The largest all time counts in the Avon area were all in the Flax Bourton/Wraxall area during October 2004 with 58 on 17th, 60 the next day and 54 on 21st.

Bristol Often noted over the outer suburban areas of the city including Bishopston and Westbury-on-Trym, records from the inner parts were as follows. In January at St Philips on 11th and 21st, during March over College Green on 4th and Easton on 25th, Stokes Croft on April 3rd and Brandon Hill on Sept. 27th.

Other notes Pale morphs were at Charmy Down on April 15th, Stoke Park on May 15th, one with a strikingly pale head, rump and tail and a dark tail band seen near Yatton on Sept. 29th. Unusual prey items included a very large Grass Snake at CVL on July 1st, another had taken a Magpie at PW on 9th.

Ringling recovery One ringed as a nestling at Walton-in-Gordano on June 17th in 1997 was found long dead at Brokerswood Country Park, Hawkeridge, Wiltshire on April 21st.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

A good year, most were reported during April and September, noted at CVL on five dates from Aug. 17th to Sept. 21st, but only one was recorded at BL; all records refer to single individuals.

CVL – First noted here on Aug. 17th and 21st, then on Sept. 1st, 2nd and 21st, five bird-days (*cf.* five in 2010).

BL – A single record to W on April 1st at 19.00hrs.

Elsewhere – In April at CI-Y on 7th and to N on 10th at 12.45hrs, in SG from the Wiltshire border to NNW on 15th, and at Sand Point on 28th. During May to NE at Severn Beach on 1st at 06.50hrs, the next day to E over Bath, and at Littleton Warth on Sept 6th.

Other notes The report from SG on April 15th was of a satellite-tagged individual named 'Nimrod' and his full life history and migration details can be found on the Highland Foundation for Wildlife's website at www.roydennis.org. A summary of his spring 2010 migration was given in the 2010 Report.

'Nimrod', a male, was ringed as a chick near Rothes, Moray, Scotland on July 5th in 2001, and was caught and tagged nearby at Findhorn Bay on Sept. 1st in 2008. From Oct. 23rd, 2010 to March 22nd, 2011 he used the same wintering grounds in Guinea Bissau, West Africa as he had in the previous year. He commenced his northward migration on March 22nd, a day later than in 2010, when he was located at the River Gambia. On April 14th he roosted near Corfe Mullen, Dorset having flown 486 kilometres in the day from Les Sables d'Olonne, Pays de la Loire, France, crossing the French coast at Cap Frehel just after 13.00hrs. On 15th he flew through Wiltshire into SG passing over Gloucester at 11.30hrs. He continued to Bridgnorth, Shropshire and by 17.00hrs was over the River Mersey north of Ellesmere Port, he roosted in a copse on farmland at Mere Brow near Preston, Lancashire having flown 333 kilometres during the day. He finally arrived at his nest site near Forres, Moray, Scotland on April 17th at about 13.00hrs, the same date as in 2010.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus**Fairly common breeding resident.*

An average year for this species with breeding activity noted at 81 sites, the number of records received was 650.

The table below gives the monthly total of reports for 2011 and the previous five years. Although records were quite evenly spread across the year many were in June, with fewer in January, July, September and December.

Monthly distribution of records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2010	48	50	42	71	59	111	38	40	35	36	40	44	614
2011	36	50	67	59	59	84	35	49	40	62	69	40	650

The table below gives the 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, it was noted in the breeding season at 81 sites, similar to the total in 2005. In the four years from 2006 to 2009 noted at 90+ sites (*cf.* 108 in 2006, 100 in 2007, 103 in 2008 and 90 in 2009). However, 2010 was a poor year with just 75 sites. The distribution of records in 2011 was 23 in SG, 51 in BA & NS and seven in Bristol.

Nest boxes were used at the following locations, near Chittening Warth, Weston STW where one fledged, Wyndhurst Farm Langford where five large downy young were noted on May 31st and ringed on June 6th, and Compton Dando where five young were ringed on 7th. A hollow Ash tree was used at Stoke Park for the second successive year and five recently fledged juveniles were seen on June 15th.

In *Bristol* present for the fourth successive year at 'A' Bond warehouse, Hotwells, one recently fledged juvenile was seen on June 8th.

	1992-01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
SG	22	21	19	24	17	29	25	36	31	22	23
BA & NS	54	49	79	57	60	72	68	63	53	45	51
Bristol	9	9	11	5	5	7	7	4	6	8	7
Total	85	79	109	86	82	108	100	103	90	75	81

Breeding sites

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

A good year for this species in the Avon area with a total of 111 bird-days (*cf.* 84 in 2009 and 2010). During the year there were 68 bird-days in the first half year and 43 in the second half. Most were in January, March and November with 21, 29 and 17 bird-days, respectively. As usual many of the records were from Severnside with 45 bird-days, 41 in the first half year with 19 in March and only four in the second half (*cf.* 22 and 25 in 2010). There was a good number of reports from CI-Y with 33 bird-days, twelve of these were in November, 16 in the first half year and 18 in the second half (*cf.* one and 16 in 2010).

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

First half-year

Severnside – A male was reported on 28 dates from Jan. 1st to April 27th (see photograph opposite page 56), probably the same individual throughout, a male and female were noted on Jan. 31st, Feb. 21st and the following day;

PW – March 18th;

CI-Y – reported on sixteen dates from Jan. 11th to March 27th, most in March;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – April 9th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Jan. 4th, Feb. 20th, March 12th and May 2nd.

Merlin Second half-year

OPS – Oct. 26th and Dec. 11th;

Sevenside – reported on just four dates, Sept. 22nd, Oct. 7th and 16th, a male on the latter date, and Dec. 11th;

PW – a male on Oct. 6th;

CI-Y – noted on 15 dates from Oct. 22nd to Dec. 20th, three in October and December, nine in November, a male present on Nov. 20th, a male and female present on Oct. 15th, 21st and 28th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – Nov. 2nd and Dec. 3rd;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Oct. 29th, Nov. 27th and Dec. 6th.

Inland - First half-year

A male on Kenn Moor on Feb. 16th, at CVL in January on 7th, 11th, 23rd and 30th, and a male on the first date.

Inland - Second half-year

At Marshfield on Sept. 2nd, Nov. 6th and 20th, Dec. 17th and 28th, at Saltford on Oct. 23rd and a male on Dec. 12th. At CVL noted on five dates: Sept. 7th, Oct. 7th, 9th, 21st and Nov. 2nd, and Congresbury Moor on Dec. 18th.

Year	1992-01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Avon area	55	70	107	127	101	93	76	143	84	84	111
Sevenside	21	32	59	98	53	57	69	93	65	47	45

Merlin – Bird-days per year

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

An average year in the Avon area, single birds unless stated otherwise.

Arrival The first record of the year was for Portbury Village with three on April 15th, noted elsewhere during the month as follows.

SG – at Severn Beach on 23rd;

NS – at CI-Y on 24th, two at Clapton-in-Gordano the next day, Wrington on 27th and at Portishead the following day;

BA – at Saltford STW on 25th, 28th and 29th, at CVL on 20th, 24th, 26th and 29th;

Bristol – to NE over Henbury on 30th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April: 14th in 2006, 26th in 2007, 17th in 2008, 19th in 2009 and 13th in 2010.

Breeding Confirmed at just one site in SG, three were seen on Sept. 4th, one was a juvenile.

Breeding was suspected at a further nine sites one in SG, six in NS and two in BA.

	1992-01 Av	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
SG	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
NS	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	3	6	3	6
BA	5	6	6	4	5	4	4	5	5	2	2
Total	9	9	10	10	10	10	12	10	13	6	10

Breeding status both confirmed and suspected

Other sightings From April 15th to Oct. 21st reported from a total of 31 localities, eight in SG, 21 in BA & NS, and three in Bristol, over Henbury on May 1st, two at St. Andrews on the latter date and Whitchurch on June 2nd.

Number of localities per month where birds were observed (including CVL)							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	1	3	2	2	3	2	1
Bristol	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
BA & NS	7	11	11	3	11	10	1
Total	9	16	14	5	14	12	2

CVL Regularly reported at this site with one or two often seen, three on May 6th, Aug 21st, 25th and Sept. 3rd. First report was on April 20th, five days earlier than in 2010, then again on April 24th, 26th and 29th, noted on ten dates in May, eleven in June, two in July, 14 in August and eight in September. The last record of the year was on Sept. 28th, four days later than in 2010.

Departure There were two reports in October, the late records were as follows:

SG – Spaniorum on Oct. 21st, the last of the year;

NS – an adult and juvenile at BL on Sept. 21st, and one at Yatton two days later, PW and CI-Y on Sept. 28th, at Kenn on Oct. 7th and 10th;

BA – CVL on Sept. 21st and 27th.

The latest dates for the Avon area, all but one in October, were as follows: 14th (Nailsea 1979, Severnside 2007), 15th (Severnside 2007), 16th (Severnside 2004 and 2007), 17th (Severnside 2007), 19th (CI-Y 1998, Severnside 2007), 21st (Iron Acton 1995, Spaniorum 2012), 29th (Backwell 1998), and Nov. 11th (Dundry 2005).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.

Breeding Another excellent year, 25 chicks fledged successfully, one less than last year, which was the best to date, the previous 'best year' was 2002 when 25 fledged.

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested on the Clifton/Durdham Down side and five chicks fledged (*cf.* one in 2009 and five in 2010), see photograph opposite page 25. Five also fledged in 2008, this is a large number and the most to date. Last bred on the Leigh Woods side of the Avon Gorge in 1996 and 2005.

Year	1992-01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of juveniles fledged	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	5	1	5	5

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge

There were no records from Steep Holm.

St. John's Church, Bath was used for the sixth consecutive year, three chicks fledged (*cf.* one in 2009 and four in 2010).

Wick Quarry Four young fledged (*cf.* two in 2009 and four in 2010).

Undisclosed sites.

SG Present at three sites (*cf.* three in 2010 and two fledged successfully), all were on man-made structures but there was no evidence of breeding success;

NS Located at three sites (*cf.* four in 2010 and six fledged), seven juveniles fledged, two sites produced three and four juveniles but there was no evidence of breeding success at the third site;

BA Reported from one site (*cf.* one site in 2010 and three fledged successfully), three fledged successfully;

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge Noted at two sites (*cf.* one in 2010 and two fledged), these produced one and two juveniles respectively.

Year	1992-01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites occupied	4.6	13	8	9	14	15	12	11	13	13	12
No. of birds fledged	8.5	25	13	17	13	13	21	20	11	26	25
No. of successful nests	3.5	10	5	8	8	7	9	7	6	9	8

Breeding success

Non-breeding records

OPS, Severnside, PW/RPD and CI-Y – One or two frequent throughout the year at these well-watched sites.

Possibly under recorded at the other coastal sites, the table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

Peregrine – Monthly bird-days for other coastal sites, CVL and BL													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Portishead	1			2	1								4
Sand Point/Sand Bay										1	1		2
Weston-s-Mare	2	1			1				1			2	7
Weston STW	3		1	1	1			1	1	2		1	11
Axe Estuary				1						1		3	5
CVL	7	2	5		2	4	3	11	14	15	23	8	94
BL			2	2					4	1	7	3	19

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

First half-year

Bristol In January at Stapleton on 9th, ASW on 17th, Redland on 27th and Cumberland Basin the next day, in February over Bond Street, Broadmead on 7th, at Redland and Brentry on 12th and two at Wills Memorial Building on 20th. During March over Badock's Wood on 13th and Bristol Grammar School, Clifton on 16th. At Shirehampton on April 9th and Christ Church, Clifton on May 2nd;

SG In January at Pilning on 6th and Kendleshire on 16th, during March at Frampton Cotterell on 20th and Chipping Sodbury on 27th, also at Chipping Sodbury on April 3rd;

NS At BG on Jan. 1st and Feb. 26th, at Wrington two on Jan. 8th and June 4th. During February at Congresbury on 3rd, Yatton on 16th, Tickenham on 25th and Bleadon Hill two days later. Two at Pill on April 19th and at Abbots Leigh on May 2nd;

BA Noted over Saltford on eleven dates from Jan. 6th to May 11th, and at Lansdown on March 11th.

Second half-year

Bristol At Henleaze on Oct. 17th, in November over Hotwells on 14th and seen at night with prey, a Lapwing, at Wills Memorial Building on 16th, and at Clifton Cathedral on Dec. 20th;

Bath away from St. John's Church Two at Claverton Down on Oct. 20th;

SG Over Leap Valley, Downend on Nov. 20th, in December at Westerleigh on 1st and Marshfield on 17th;

NS At Pill on Aug. 28th, during October at Yatton on 2nd and 16th, BG on 19th, nearby at Dundry on 23rd and Kenn Moor on 30th. At Abbots Leigh on Nov. 12th and three at BG on Dec. 4th;

BA At Saltford on July 14th, on four dates in October, two on 17th and Nov. 7th, at Charmy Down on Aug. 25th and Chew Magna reservoir on Oct. 15th.

Other notes On March 10th at Villice Bay, CVL a juvenile caught a Coot on the water, then swam ashore with its prey where it killed and ate it.

Ringed recoveries One colour ringed as a nestling in the Avon Gorge on May 20th in 2010 was found freshly dead at Kidderminster, Hereford & Worcester on Oct. 8th, two months earlier it had been seen in the Malvern Hills, Hereford & Worcester. Another ringed as a nestling at an undisclosed site in Powys on June 3rd in 2000 was found long dead at Bristol Docks on April 20th.

2010 A late record of a first-calendar-year male colour ringed in the Avon Gorge on June 19th in 2008 was seen at BL on April 11th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

An above average year with records received from 24 sites. Oddly none was reported in either April or May. The highest single count was at CVL where five, a pair with three young, were seen from Herriott's Bridge in July. Very few, if any, noted at CVL from January to March, numbers no doubt suppressed by cold weather, although ten were noted at scattered sites around the lake between October and December (*cf.* eight in 2010 and 15 in 2009).

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
18	16	14	16	24	23	23	20	18	24

Number of sites reported from each year

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1									1	2
Severnside	2	1	2					1			1	2
PW			1					1			1	
Backwell Lake	3	1	2									
CVL	1					3	5	2	3	3	3	4

Breeding Adults with young were noted at CVL on July 4th and 15th, two half grown juveniles were seen on Aug. 3rd and a full grown juvenile on 12th and 15th.

92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
2	0	2	3	4	6	3	4	2	2	5	2	4	5	3	0	2	6	4	1

Water Rail – Number of nest sites at CVL each year

Other records Recorded from other sites as follows (in alphabetical order):

Abbeywood – one on March 11th;

Axe Estuary – one on Oct. 16th;

Batheaston NR – one on Jan. 21st, and one on Dec. 30th;

Batheaston Tollbridge – one on Dec. 10th;

BL – one on March 13th, four on Nov. 20th;

CI-Y – three on Jan. 1st, one on March 20th, two on 22nd, one on Sept. 8th, two on Oct. 13th, one on Nov. 28th, one on Dec. 18th, and two on 31st;

Emerson's Green – one on Jan. 1st,

Lawrence Weston – one on Feb. 22nd;

Leap Valley – one on Jan. 22nd and 29th, one on Feb. 27th, one on March 13th, and three on June 11th;

Max Bog, Winscombe – one on Nov. 17th;

RPD Ind. Est. – two on Jan. 22nd;

Saltford – one on Jan. 1st and 4th, one on Feb. 5th, two on Oct. 28th, one on Nov. 4th, 5th, 22nd, 25th and 28th, two on Dec. 2nd and one on 3rd, 4th, 9th, 24th, 28th and 30th;

Sand Bay – one on Jan. 23rd;

Three Brooks NR, Bradley Stoke – one on Feb. 14th, one on March 14th, 28th and 29th;

Uphill Marsh – one on March 21st;

Weston Moor – one on Oct. 20th;

Weston STW – one on Jan. 4th and 8th, one on Oct. 30th, one on Dec. 3rd and 17th, four on 10th, two on 31st;

Yate Common – two on Nov. 29th;

Yatton – two on Jan. 20th, one on March 26th.

2010 On Steep Holm a nest was found during bramble clearance work on the plateau on Aug. 10th about 100 metres from the only small pond. It contained at least two and probably three pulli, and three or four eggs. One pullus was briefly taken into care and released back at the nest site when recovered. On Aug. 12th the nest was empty with no sign of predation.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Formerly uncommon, now a rare passage migrant

One was heard calling briefly at 07.45 on Chipping Sodbury Common on July 31st. (ADJ).

There have only been two records in Avon in the last 20 years: the remains of a Peregrine kill in Bath in October 2002 (see the 2008 Report), and another at BL in May 2003.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

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

Population change in England 1996-2006; up 10%.

Counts at CVL and BL were down on both the 2009 and 2010 figures, and the low counts at the latter site over the last five years are a particular cause for concern. The tables below give the maximum counts at the main reservoirs over the past decade, and the monthly maxima at all main sites for 2011. The harsh winter of 2009/10 may have impacted populations at both sites.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
CVL	105	245	125	80	90	55	70	180	125	75
BL	75	132	46	105	82	30	21	38	33	27

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

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	2	1	2	1	2	8	6	5	6	6	10
RPD	23		6									
PW	1	2								2		4
Emerson's Green	8	5	3	2	2	1	4	7	7	8		10
Backwell Lake	16				1+	1+					22	
Saltford		28	15	8	10		1+	16			24	26
R Avon, Keynsham	35	22							1	7	15	
CVL	35	10	2		5	15	40	45	75	50	30	15
BL	3	3	3	4	1	1	4	27	19	8	4	3
CL-Y	2	4	4	2			2	2		4	10	6
Weston STW	3	1	3	1	6	8	10	8	9	5	7	12

Recorded from a further 36 sites (*cf.* 55 in 2008, 41 in 2009 and 19 in 2010). The only other outstanding counts were from Yatton where ten were recorded on July 3rd and Chew Magna Res. with 14 on Aug. 12th.

Breeding Occurred at CVL (no details) and BL (pair with two juveniles) at Pipe Bay. Elsewhere recorded at twelve sites (*cf.* ten in 2009, twelve in 2010) as follows: Backwell Lake (one young), Bristol Harbour (two adults and a young), Emerson's Green (adult with three chicks), Horsecastle, Yatton (pair with six young including two juveniles from first brood feeding juveniles from second, another adult plus five juveniles), Malago Greenway, Bedminster (nest with at least two eggs seen in a culvert underneath St Johns Lane), New Harbourside (two young seen), Olveston (six adults and a well-grown immature), OPS (pair with three small young, and three large juveniles from a previous brood), Orchard Pools, Severn Beach (one brood, two young), Swineford Lock, Saltford (one young), Tortworth Lake (two broods, six young), Rickford Pond, Burrington (pair with three juveniles), Weston STW (four pairs, four broods and ten young) and Winford Brook (two broods in a garden).

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
201	173	261	245	308	318	327	227	255	200

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution = 21%)

COOT *Fulica atra*

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

WeBS status: CVL is currently eighth and BL twelfth in the list of sites of National Importance.

Avon BBS distribution 10%.

Numbers at BL have improved dramatically in the last twelve months with nearly a 100% increase on the 2010 figure. Although still below the ten-year average of about 1700, the site has shown a marked improvement. The ten-year average for CVL is about 2800 making 2010 an average year with 2011 marginally better. As with 2010 BG attracted good numbers especially in the second half of the year. The tables below give details of the maximum counts.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
CVL	3715	3285	3335	2210	2360	2095	2020	3050	2880	3110
BL	1740	1990	2080	3151	1400	2323	1403	970	678	1247

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

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	2	3	5	5	5	3	3	2	3	4	4
PW	3	5	15						38	47	40	40
Weston STW	31	26	18	17	22	34	53	75	78	48	44	49
Axe Estuary	14	34	16		10		40	53		64	60	43
Tortworth			1			13	10			31		
Backwell Lake	43		15	13	8					35	35	33
BG	275	122	48	34	35	67	242	210	212	161	167	125
Chew Magna Resr.	17	10	8	8	12	15	20	22				
CVL	290	410	345	385	455	920	1490	1940	2805	3110	2850	2290
BL	33	208	210	180	256	362	952	1247	850	330	200	224

Other records Recorded from a further 26 sites (*cf.* 35 in 2008, 23 in 2009 and twelve in 2010). But the only other site with a count of ten or more was Litton Res. with ten on April 19th.

Breeding This occurred at Batheaston NR (a nest), BL (seven broods, 18 young), Chew Magna Res. (four broods), CVL (eleven broods: low numbers in a poor season with low water levels), Orchard Pools (two broods, five young), Tortworth Lake (five broods, ten young) and Weston STW (eleven broods, 19 young).

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of nests	88	116	121	n/c	112	91	96	67	n/c	n/c
No. of broods	50	41	44	4	34	41	28	27	22	11
No. of young	110	91	102	9	70	91+	61	77+	46	n/c

Coot – Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus*

Rare vagrant.

One record: one was seen in flight and heard calling over Clevedon on Feb.11th (TS).

Previous Avon area records are: one over Clevedon in March 1971; two over Severn Beach in January 2000, five (and the highest count) at Tortworth in February 2003, and one over OPS in May 2008.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

YEAR	Sevenside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Est.	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	45	15	22	75	157
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	82	27	17	82	208
2009/10	83	35	13	68	199
2010/11	93	32	42	99	266

August to February average counts

The status table shows a healthy population with some notably increased counts mainly in the western part of our region, this is similarly reflected in the main table below. Sevenside again recorded several three-figure counts. Apart from those at CVL there was only one inland record, a single bird passing over Marshfield on April 8th.

Monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	6	15	4	8	1	1	3	1	2	7	6
Littleton Warth	7	3	1		1			1			5	
Sevenside	145	110	66	14	6	1	10	26	65	70	100	140
Sea Mills		2		1								
PW/Pill/Avonmouth Docks	2	2	6	18	8	3		28	3			
CI-Y	32	31	31	17	12	11	45	48	48	47	47	30
Sand Bay	35		58	2			3				2	41
Axe Est./Weston STW	4	66	90	4	5	4	13	64		150	57	32
CVL		1	1	1	1	1	2	5	1			

Oystercatcher Breeding Nesting activity was noted at four sites all on the coast (five in 2008 and three in 2009 and 2010), the following details were received.

Avonmouth Docks – in late April three nests were noted all of which contained eggs, the outcomes were not known;

PW – one pair bred and one chick was seen in the third week of May;

CI-Y – as usual about three pairs were present throughout the breeding season and some display was noted, but it seems unlikely that any pair actually nested successfully;

Weston STW – a pair raised two young both of which were still present in late August. This is the first successful breeding at the site.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Uncommon winter visitor/ passage migrant. Rare inland.

A record total, 22, was reported in 2011 which was in large part made up of a single flock of twelve at CI-Y in February. This was the first time that a double-figure count was recorded in the Avon area, but as noted in last year's Report counts in our region are still on the low side compared with some other sites in SW England. The records are as follows.

Severnside (Aust Warth) – two on May 19th;

PW – two on Feb. 12th;

CI-Y (Yeo Estuary) – eight on Feb. 25th, twelve on 26th and two on 27th, then five on Aug. 31st and one on Sept. 19th.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
5	12	9	6	14	4	8	15	8	15	22

Number of individuals per year

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Rare vagrant.

Description species

One record: single bird at CI-Y on April 10th was seen by several observers and photographed (SL, JW *et al.*).

This is about the tenth record in the Avon area half of which are for this site, the first was in December 1925 (two) and the last (one) was in April 2008 both at CI-Y or Woodspring Bay.

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 with many other wader species in 2011 good numbers were reported with at least one record count. But on the down side only a single breeding attempt was reported (at New Passage, see below), although given the number and range of the records received it is likely that some successful nests went unrecorded. Present from March 23rd to Sept. 29th (both at CVL as in 2010). The details are as follows, there were no reports away from the main sites as sometimes has happened in the past.

OPS – one on April 11th, two on 19th, and one from 21st to 24th;

Severnside – one on March 24th, two on 27th, one on April 12th and 14th, and a pair on 26th and 27th; this pair were seen displaying and copulating on a wet area at New Passage but they left as it dried out. Two again were noted on June 21st, Aug. 27th and 29th, one on Sept. 6th, two on 7th, three on 8th and one on 9th;

PW – four on March 27th, then two on Aug. 27th and 29th, one on Sept. 6th and three on 8th;

CI-Y – three on March 24th, two (at the Dowlais Farm scrape) on 28th, four on April 7th and 9th, one on May 21st, 29th and June 4th, then two on July 30th, Aug. 13th and 14th and one on 28th;

Sand Point – one on April 21st (unusual here);

BG – one on March 26th, two on April 3rd, then one on nine dates up to May 4th and on June 30th (breeding has occurred here in the past when they used the empty filter beds but the high water levels stopped this in 2011);

CVL – single birds on March 23rd, April 6th, 13th and 18th, four on 19th, three on 20th, two on 24th and one on 26th, then one on May 8th and 12th, two on 15th and 22nd, and one on 30th and June 5th. An adult and a juvenile on June 28th were followed by a remarkable series of counts up to the end of August detailed in the table on page 78, maxima were: 14 in July (on 27th), and 16 in August (on 2nd) – a record single count for the lake and the Avon area. Finally one was present from Sept. 23rd to 29th;

BL – one on May 13th was the only record which is surprising given the CVL records listed above.

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).

YEAR	OPS		Sevenside		CI-Y		Total	
1991/92 – 2000/01 Av.	21	155	16	307	19	110	56	572
2001/02 – 2008/09 Av.	11	57	16	280	11	123	38	460
2009/10	5	33	9	30	14	185	28	248
2010/11	3	80	5	185	14	588	22	853

Winter (Oct. to Feb.) and following autumn passage (Aug. and Sept.) average counts

Populations fluctuate from year to year, and this is shown dramatically by the fortunes of this species in the last two years, see the status table above. After poor passages in both spring and autumn last year, 2011 produced some of the highest counts yet recorded. As with a number of other wader species the main causes were probably a good breeding season in the arctic regions and favourable weather conditions during the passages.

The table below gives the fortnightly or monthly maxima at all but one site. The highest count was 675 at CI-Y on Aug. 31st (the record high for this site is 770 set in August 1989). Two points are of note. The three double figure June counts were all recorded on 1st or 2nd indicating a late spring passage of birds heading for the far north, also the two three-figure counts in late autumn (115 at CI-Y and 152 on Weston Beach) were recorded two days apart and suggest a late autumn passage of birds delayed by the mild weather. The only non-tabulated record was of three at BG on May 30th, part of the late spring passage mentioned above.

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	4	5		4	15	30	7	1		15	80	80	12	5	4	3
Littleton Warth										7			5	1		
Sevenside	7			3	20	45	70	90		70	120	250	28	8	21	15
PW/Pill		10	12	9			2	1	1	225	540	132	23	1		
CI-Y	20	4	2	6	32	105	110	24	2	275	675	500	60	115	12	10
Sand Bay			3		6	10	35			13	26		30			
Axe E./Weston STW		20						20			13	70			152	
CVL					1	2	3	2		23	64	90	110	3	1	
BL										1	14	16	28	1		

Breeding Nesting was only recorded in Avonmouth Docks as in the past three years but numbers were down. Probably five pairs nested, chicks from three of these were ringed (two from the first and one each from the other two). This compares with nine nests in 2007, eight in 2008, four or five in 2009 and ten in 2010 when 13 chicks were ringed.

KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Rare vagrant.

Description species

One record: a male was at Sand Bay on May 2nd (PAB).

This is the fifteenth record for this species in the Avon area but only the second for the site, the first was on May 6th, 1980.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
1302	2025	2020	3310	1475	2460	3336	1790	1966	1591	3457

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

Several times in the past few years (2004 and 2007) quite large flocks have been seen at CI-Y in late winter (end of January or early February) either passing through or resting on the Estuary mud before moving NE. The largest of these movements ever recorded was on Jan. 24th when several large flocks amounting to at least 2000 birds were noted. This was probably a return movement after the bitterly cold conditions of December 2010/early January 2011.

Otherwise counts were fairly normal, the status figure for 2011 given in the table above includes the CI-Y January count (2000). In the second-winter period there were only two three-figure counts: 52 arrived at BL on Oct. 15th which had increased to 165 by 28th, and 150 were noted at Marshfield on Dec. 17th. The count of 69 at OPS on Nov. 15th was a record for the site. The only other double-figure count was of 30 at Dyrham Park on Dec. 24th.

Monthly maxima at regularly watched sites											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	8								69	
Sevenside		6							2	1	12
CI-Y	2000	8	10	3		1	1	2	25	6	
Sand Bay		14	1						25		
Axe Est./Weston STW	23	6	6				1		6	7	9
CVL	1		1					2	30	35	3
BL									165	10	
Marshfield area	14	50	50	200						34	150
Lansdown/Bath			340						95		
Saltford	1		8							8	7

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

YEAR	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	11	32	43
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	9	24	33
2009/10	3	25	28
2010/11	3	44	47

September to March average counts

Numbers were fairly normal with as usual most being reported at CI-Y. The two counts of 75 here (on March 9th and Dec. 27th) were of single flocks seen on the sea wall with Dunlin at high tide. Noted up to May 29th (one at CI-Y) and from Sept. 8th (one on Sevenside) onwards. The table below lists the main counts, single birds at CVL in the early part of the year were unusual for this site in winter, they were seen from Jan. 8th to 11th and on Feb. 13th. The only non-tabulated record was of one at BL also in winter on Nov. 27th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		2		1	7			3		
Sevenside		1		3	14		1	1	2	
PW/RPD				3	2				1	
CI-Y	60	48	75	14	8		1	28	60	75
Sand Bay	4				4				11	20
Axe Estuary	16	5							2	
CVL	1	1						1	3	

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	Sevenside	CI-Y	CVL	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	321	267	373	961
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	288	366	227	881
2009/10	183	211	139	533
2010/11	118	432	280	830

August to February average counts

The status table suggests that counts have returned to more normal levels after a dip in the 2009/10 season. But our second way of measuring the populations does not fully bear this out. In January slightly fewer than 3000 were present, this compares with 4840 in 2008, 7760 in 2009 and 3710 in 2010, but the very cold conditions in December 2010/January 2011 may have forced flocks to move south out of our region to find more amenable habitats. In December about 3800 were present, this compares with 3450 in 2009 and 3950 in 2010 and includes the largest count of the year, 1500 on Dec. 17th, of flocks moving south-west along the M5 corridor behind CI-Y. The only other count over a thousand was of 1045 at CVL on Nov. 17th.

The main table summarises the monthly maxima at the main well-watched sites. Non-tabulated counts over 50 included in January: 90 at ASW and at Pilning, 150 at Kingston, 300 at Hewish, and 95 on Kenn Moor, 60 at this site again in November, and 150 at ASW and 110 at Nimlet in December. It should also be noted that there was a considerable drop in the number of reports from the less well-watched sites, that is those not included in the table below, especially in the second winter period, there were 15 similar reports in the 2010 Report.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	350	160	1	1	2			17	27	230	800	600
Littleton Warth	23										34	
Sevenside	30	17	7						1	8	400	400
R. Avon, Sea Mills	200	53						1	30	30	100	60
PW	100	74				5						35
CI-Y	800	910	600	11	12	34	25		2	200	725	1500
Axe Est./Weston STW	780	400	2	1	2				43	170	460	160
Saltford	80		1	40							60	94
BG	160	8			3				1	9	28	12
CVL	415	170	3	5	4	52	90	70	100	230	1045	470
BL	47	14	4		3	1	10	1	24	100	485	500

Breeding As we have noted in several previous Reports the number of breeding pairs has declined drastically over the past thirty years; see the graph in last year's Report. At the present rate it will not be long before this species ceases to breed at all in the Avon area. Observers are strongly requested to submit all breeding evidence, however slender, so that this decline can be properly monitored. In 2011 breeding activity was only noted at **four** sites, of which only one can be described as entirely natural, this compares with 149 in 1982, and is the worst year ever. The only hope is that some attempts are going unrecorded. The details are as follows.

OPS – display was noted in March and again in late April, no further details were available;

CI-Y (Dowlais Farm) – as in the previous two years up to six pairs were present at some time during the breeding season, some of these nested and at least one pair was successful producing three fledged young;

Kenn Moor – one pair was seen displaying in March;

CVL (Stratford Bay area) – display was reported over a maize field (in May) and on the lake shore (in early June). Two pairs bred successfully both producing four chicks seen in early July. Another chick not part of these two broods was seen near Stratford Lane but no date was given. This is the first successful breeding at this site since 2002.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

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

Two races, *islandica* (Nearctic) and *canutus* (Siberian), occur in NW Europe. Recent research suggests that virtually all occurring in the UK are from the first race *islandica*, and so this will also hold for the Avon area.

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

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
618	542	386	411	1520	172	595	293	462	2133	1073

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

There were only a few three figure counts: 180 on the shingle bank near Blackstone Rocks, CI-Y at high tide on Sept 11th, 240 at RPD on Oct. 8th with 125 here on 11th. Present up to May 12th and from Aug. 13th (both CI-Y) although one in summer plumage was seen at CVL on June 12th. The only non-tabulated record was of one at BL on Oct. 20th.

Monthly maxima at coastal sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		2			4				1	5	1	1
Sevenside		1		3	33			2	35	1	2	
PW/RPD/Avonmouth			3	1	12			6	39	240		
CI-Y	51	20	75	80	25			31	180	90	25	6
Sand Bay	1	1							30			
Axe Est./Weston Beach	50	1		1								
CVL						1		10	4	1		

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

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

Another species with a fairly average showing, there were only three double figure counts: eleven at Severn Beach in late May, 20 (a high count for this site) at OPS and ten at Sand Bay in early September. There were three records for the first winter period, otherwise they were present from April 16th to June 2nd and from July 17th to Oct. 15th. The details are as follows, the inland May records at BG and BL were on the high side.

OPS – three on May 2nd, one on June 12th, five on Aug. 27th, and one on Sept. 7th and 20 on 8th;

Sevenside – one on April 22nd otherwise the main spring counts were seven on May 2nd, eight on 18th, eleven on 29th and seven on June 1st. Then one on Aug. 10th, two on 14th with four from 29th to Sept. 13th and one on 17th;

PW – eight on May 30th, two on Aug. 19th, one on 20th, 25th and 26th, five on 27th and one on Sept. 12th;

CI-Y – one on April 16th and 17th, and on July 17th, nine on 25th, then one on several dates in August and on Sept. 11th with two on 17th;

Sand Bay – one on Feb. 22nd, two on May 21st, ten on Sept 10th and one on 17th;

Weston Beach/Axe Estuary – six on Jan. 6th, one on Feb. 24th, three on June 2nd, two on Aug. 28th and one on Sept. 1st;

BG – five on May 30th;

CVL – one on May 8th and 9th, one on Aug. 27th and 29th, two on Sept. 2nd and 7th, then three until 15th with one on 18th and on Oct. 15th, all autumn records refer to juveniles;

BL – nine on May 30th, see PW and BG.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
17	12	4	19	9	12	33	15	9	24	11

Maximum single Sevenside spring passage count

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*

Very rare vagrant.

Description species

One record at CVL, the first for this site: a juvenile/first-winter from Nov. 10th to 20th (RMA, KEV *et al.*) [BBRC]. Although in the field it was thought likely to have been a Semipalmated, it was always too distant to be absolutely certain. The identification was confirmed from several images of it that fortuitously appeared in RMA's photographs of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (see opposite page 73). Killian Mullarney, who also examined

the photographs, noted that it looked remarkably similar to a moulting juvenile present at Tucumshin, Co. Wexford, Ireland, in October, although it was of course impossible to be certain that it was the same individual.

Initially another was reported in September which gave somewhat distant views. Recent re-examination of the best photographs taken at the time has led to its re-identification as a grey-toned juvenile Little Stint. Killian Mullarney confirmed this identification after images were sent to him.

This is only the third record for the Avon area, the first being at OPS in August 1990 and the second at Northwick Warth in September 2009.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

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

There was a slight improvement in the reports of this species in 2011 but numbers were still low. The total of the monthly maxima was 18, this compares with 15 in 2009 and 13 in 2010, but with 64 in 2001. One or two were noted at CI-Y in April, otherwise present from Aug. 15th to Nov. 20th at five sites only.

Severnside – single juveniles on Sept. 6th and from Oct. 2nd to 11th;

CI-Y – one on April 3rd, two on 6th and one on 23rd, then one again on Aug. 31st and Sept. 4th with two on 18th;

BG – a juvenile on Sept. 16th;

CVL – two different adults on Aug. 15th and 18th, then juveniles as follows: one from 25th to 29th, two on 30th and 31st, then three on many dates up to Sept. 28th, with four on 2nd, 5th, 7th and 9th, then one on Sept 12th and 13th (this was originally identified as a Semipalmated Sandpiper), two on 30th and finally a single bird from Oct. 28th to Nov. 10th;

BL – one from Oct. 27th to Nov. 1st.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Rare vagrant.

Description species

One record: a juvenile was at CVL on Aug. 26th and 27th (SNGH, JPM *et al.*).

Apart from the one listed below there have been about 20 records of this species in the Avon area more than half of which were noted at CVL, but the two most recent were seen at Severn Beach in May 2004 and at Sea Mills in March 2009.

2009 A second record for this year was of one at CVL on May 20th that circled low over Heron's Green Pool, calling, and then flew high to the west (KEV).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant.

Description species

Although this is the commonest North American shore bird to occur in the Avon area (a total of 42 has been reported since the first in 1935), 2011 broke all records with six or seven seen at CVL between Sept. 2nd and Oct. 15th but none were seen at any other site. The details much of which was provided by RMI are as follows, they were all juveniles. There was also a report of one on Nov. 25th but no details or photograph was available. (Many observers).

Bird 1 - Present from Sept. 2nd to 12th, it was bulky (clearly larger than the accompanying Dunlin) and the breast markings were greyish buff (see photograph opposite page 72). When other waders were flushed it remained behind crouching amongst the rocks;

Bird 2 – Present from Sept. 12th to 19th, it was clearly smaller than Bird 1, the breast markings were darker and it had small white patches at the base of the bill, it was very ready to fly off when disturbed;

Bird 3 – Present from Sept. 25th to 30th, it was medium-sized and had pale breast markings and no white patches below the bill which was quite long and predominantly pink;

Birds 4, 5 and 6 - Birds 4 and 5 arrived on Oct. 2nd, one was larger than the other, and Bird 6 which was quite small arrived on the following day. They were all still present on 6th, the two smaller ones stayed until 13th and one of these stayed until 15th. The largest of these was noticeably paler than the other two having thick pale fringing on its coverts.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata**Very rare vagrant.*

Description species

A juvenile was discovered at BL on Nov. 18th (RMi, NRM *et al.*); it then moved to CVL on 19th where it was present more or less continuously until Dec. 11th, being seen by many observers from far and wide (see photographs opposite page 73). It then returned to BL on Dec. 12th and remained until 16th, having made a brief visit here on Nov. 30th.

It is the first record for the Avon area and the undoubted highlight of a remarkable autumn at the reservoirs. It was the longest-staying and latest ever Sharp-tailed Sandpiper recorded in Britain and also only the fifth juvenile. A full account is given on page 149.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Passage migrant; scarce in spring, 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 number of reports was reasonable compared with those of the previous few years but there were no high counts and only one spring record. The total of the monthly maxima was 64, this compares with 20 in 2008, nine in 2009, and 95 in 2010. The autumn passage lasted from Aug. 20th to Oct. 29th (both CI-Y), the details are summarised below.

OPS – two on Sept. 9th and 11th;

Sevenside – two on Aug. 27th and 30th, one on several dates until Sept. 15th, three 17th, 22nd and 24th, two on 26th and 27th, five on 29th, then two until Oct. 8th and one until 17th;

PW – one on Aug. 20th, two on 26th, four on Sept. 11th and one on Oct. 8th;

CI-Y – one on May 4th and 5th, then one on Aug. 20th and 27th, eight on 29th, 13 on 31st, eleven on Sept. 3rd, five on 4th, four on 11th, 17th and 18th, twelve on 28th, seven on Oct 1st, four on 12th and two on 29th;

Sand Bay – three on Sept. 5th and one on 17th;

Axe Estuary – two on Sept. 29th and one on Oct. 16th;

CVL – single juveniles from Aug. 23rd to Sept. 10th, three on 11th, one on 16th and 17th, five on 18th, six on 19th and 21st, two on 22nd, one on 26th, and a late individual on Oct. 26th.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Scarce winter visitor; has declined during the past 15 years, but is now showing some signs of recovery. Very rare inland.

Description required for inland records.

The 2011 records were an almost exact repeat of those for each of the past few years. Noted on the coast at the usual three sites up to May 1st and from Oct. 30th onwards. The details are as follows.

Sevenside – single birds on Jan. 2nd and Dec. 31st;

Battery Point, Portishead – six noted up to mid-April although there are only records of two in March, seven on April 17th and five from 19th to 29th. Then one on Oct. 30th, four from Nov. 13th until five on Dec. 13th into 2012;

Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare – seven on Jan. 9th and 25th, two on Feb. 22nd, five on April 6th, four on 20th and one on May 1st. Then three on Nov. 17th and 23rd, four on 28th and five on Dec. 17th and 27th.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; uncommon in mid-summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage.

C. a. alpina breeding N Scandinavia to Siberia - mainly occurs as a winter visitor,

C. a. schinzii breeding N W Europe - mainly seen on passage,

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

YEAR	OPS		Sevenside		CI-Y		Total	
1991/92 – 2000/01 Av.	935	260	2380	414	2511	137	5826	811
2001/02 – 2008/09 Av.	570	47	1813	457	1195	247	3578	751
2009/10	388	31	1700	37	2174	230	4262	298
2010/11	800	63	1020	180	1610	335	3430	578

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

In line with several other wader species the passage counts were up, but the general decline in the wintering populations continued. The largest counts were only of 3000 for the Axe Estuary in early January and Northwick Warth, Severnside twice in late November. The record Avon count is five times this figure but taken two decades ago. The table below gives the monthly maxima at all sites, the better than average counts at the two main reservoirs were a consequence of the low water levels.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	700	500	200	45	50	4	1	25	100	200	1500	2000
Littleton Warth	800	280	65					8	65	90	335	450
Severnside	700	1350	460	72	200	200	80	160	200	300	3000	2000
R. Avon, Sea Mills	45	27	2								10	20
PW/RPD	800	1000	400	26	86	1		225	170	300	1000	600
CI-Y	1500	2500	1050	200	140	44	275	350	320	1250	2250	2000
Sand Bay		35	3	23	135				50	45		50
Axe Est./Weston STW	3000	330	40			60		6	30	2	1000	310
BG				1	2				1			
CVL	34	25	3	3	15	2	5	12	72	32	55	50
BL	32						1	2	9	26	21	63

Arctica Dunlin *C. a. arctica*

Breeding N E Greenland - probably a regular migrant in very small numbers, mainly in late spring.

Three records of single birds: Severnside on May 22nd, CI-Y on June 2nd, and CVL on May 14th. A paper detailing the occurrences of this subspecies in the Avon area was given in last year's Report.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

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

A good series of reports from CVL in the autumn and early winter periods, otherwise there was the usual scattering of sightings mainly of single birds. Noted up to May 4th and from July 23rd onwards, the largest count was of nine at CVL on Sept. 4th. The details are as follows.

OPS – single birds on Feb. 9th and May 3rd;

Severnside – a female on May 1st and one on Oct. 2nd;

Avon Gorge, Sea Mills – one on Sept. 10th;

CI-Y – one on March 25th, two on Aug. 20th, one on 28th and four on Sept. 16th;

Weston STW/ Axe Estuary – single birds on Jan. 4th and Oct. 16th;

CVL – a male on March 21st and 25th, and three on 26th. Then one on July 23rd, and the maxima for the next three months were: four in August, nine in September, four in October, all of which were juveniles; see table on page 78. One remained to the end of the year with two on Nov. 12th.

BL – two on Oct. 15th with one until 20th.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
43	26	26	10	35	11	35	3	12	29	43
Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts										

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyrtes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; probably overlooked.

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

Counts were generally on the low side except for two reports of six at Leap Valley, Downend on April 25th – a good count for this site and a month later than any other sighting – and at Weston STW on Dec. 24th. Present up to the date of the Leap Valley record and from Sept. 26th at Northwick Warth.

The table summarises the counts at the main sites, single birds were also noted at Sand Bay on Jan. 23rd (records used to be more regular at this site) and at Max Bog, Winscombe on Nov. 17th.

Jack Snipe – Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside		1	1			1			1
PW/RPD	1							1	1
CI-Y	2		1				1	1	1
Weston STW	1	1					1	1	6
Yate	2	4							
Leap Valley, Downend	2			6					
Batheaston			1						2
CVL						1		1	

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

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

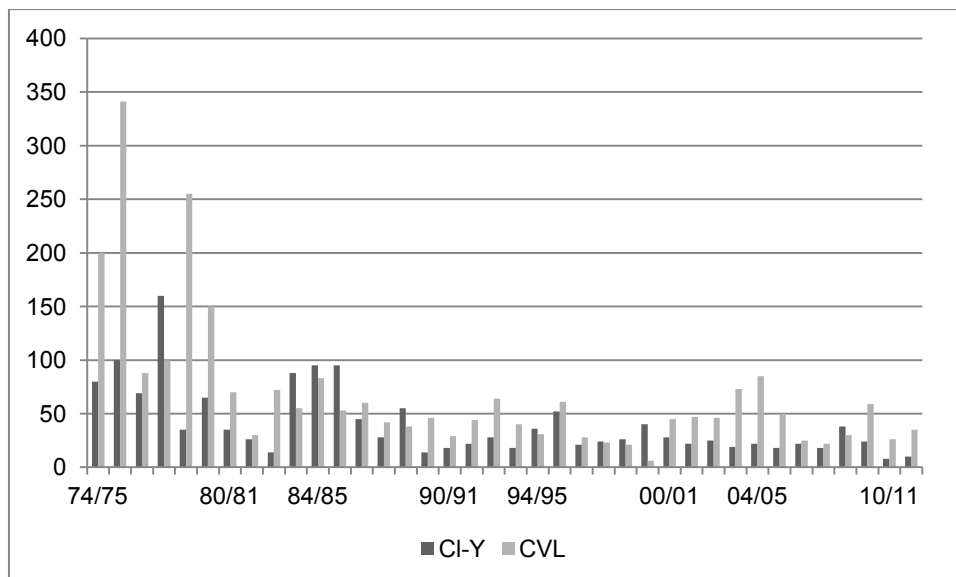
Two races: *gallinago* (palearctic) and *faeroensis* (breeding N Isles and Iceland). Most in Avon are from the race *gallinago* but an unknown, but probably very small, number of *faeroensis* may also occur.

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

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	>21	16	19	56
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	35	15	15	65
2009/10	8	15	18	41
2010/11	1	3	7	11

November to February average counts

This species has suffered a major population collapse at some coastal sites recently as is shown in the status table above. There has been a long-term decline but it seems to have accelerated recently especially on the coast; see the bar chart below which gives the maximum single count at CI-Y and at CVL in each year since the mid-1970s. The reasons are unclear, the cold weather in the 2010/11 winter was thought at the time to have affected counts, but the weather was mild for most of the 2011/12 winter and numbers dropped again. On the coast erosion of the salt marsh, increased disturbance and overgrazing of the marsh vegetation might be factors but these do not explain the recent falls. Inland counts have not shown such a marked decline recently but the long-term picture is similar to that on the coast as the chart below shows.



Maximum winter counts at CI-Y and CVL

In 2011 no count exceeded 50, the largest count was 49 on Congresbury Moor on Dec. 18th, and in the coastal areas the largest count was 27 at Weston STW on 24th. The table below summarises the main counts.

The only other counts of note were in January at ASW (five), Kingston (five) and Sand Bay (twelve), in November at Harnhill (three) and Max Bog, Winscombe, (18), and in December on Weston Moor (twelve).

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May :	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3		1						3	4	
Littleton Warth			1							9	
Sevenside	6	5	2					1	3	5	10
R. Avon, Sea Mills									4	6	
PW	5	3	3				1		4	4	20
CI-Y	2	2	1				1	3	4	10	5
Axe Est./Weston STW	20	1						1	1	1	27
Batheaston NR	3	24	14	1					4	10	14
Leap Valley, Downend	4	2	2	3							
Congresbury Moor		5									49
Kenn Moor	12	23		1						2	
Saltford	1	1	1							1	
CVL	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	13	35	25
BL			5	1						3	1

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Very rare vagrant.

Description species

Two juveniles arrived at BL on Oct. 9th, they moved to CVL on 11th but then regularly commuted back and forth between the two lakes until Dec. 13th, see photograph opposite page 73. Remarkably, this was an almost exact repeat of the behaviour of two juvenile/first-winters seen at the lakes from late September 1977 to mid January 1978. This year's birds also visited Catcott Lows, Somerset, briefly on Nov. 30th. After leaving BL, they were present on Lodmoor, Dorset, from Jan. 2nd to 12th, 2012, before separating, one moving to the Fleet. After wintering in Dorset, one then moved to Meare Heath, Somerset, on March 19th, it was joined by the other the following day, remaining either here or at Catcott until May 2nd, when they left. It is remarkable how they re-found each other after such a long separation! (RMi, MPe, KEV *et al.*) [BBRC].

There have been four previous records of this species in the Avon area, three in the 1970's and another two years ago. The first was of two that arrived in September 1977 at CVL and remained until January 1978 spending most of their time at BL. The second record was of one at Aust in October 1977 but BBRC felt that not enough detail had been provided and they recorded it as a Dowitcher sp. The third, also accepted as Dowitcher sp., was seen at CVL on Oct. 28th, 1978; it is perhaps surprising that this record has not been mentioned in the pages of this Report before. The final one was a juvenile at CVL in September and early October 2009.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

Records returned to more normal levels after the high numbers seen during the cold spell at the end of 2010. A total of 43 bird-days was reported, 25 in the first winter period and 16 in the second with only two in December. This compares with 43 again in 2009 and 89 in 2010, and an average of 23 for the previous decade.

Noted up to March 14th, and from Nov. 3rd into 2012. Most counts were of one or two but four were seen at OPS in November. The details are as follows; records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

First-winter period January: Orchard Pools, Sevenside on 23rd, ASW on 1st (two), Abbots Leigh on 16th, Gordano Valley on 8th, Failand on 19th, Kenn Moor on 5th and 18th (two), Saltford on 25th (two), Combe Hay on 15th, and Bleadon on 23rd (three). February: Chittening Warth on 18th, Abbots Leigh on 17th (two), Weston Moor on 18th, Rocks Edge Wood (ST77) on 12th (two), CVL on 15th and Burlledge Hill on 2nd. March: Abbots Leigh on 6th (two), Kenn Moor on 3rd, BG on 7th, Saltford on 4th and Tickenham on 14th.

Second-winter period November: OPS on 21st (four), Blake's Pool (CI-Y) on 14th, Locking on 3rd, Saltford on 23rd and CVL on 17th. December: Hollywood Tower (ST58) on 19th and CVL on 5th.

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.*

The species is classed as "Near Threatened" by BirdLife International due to a decline of >25% in 15 years, although the race *islandica* continued to increase in Britain until 2004/05 and has been stable since then.

In 2011 there was a slight improvement compared with the previous year but most counts were in single figures, and on Severnside, which has hosted some quite sizeable flocks in the recent past, the maximum was only three. The Avon coastal monthly maxima total was 145 in 2011, this compares with 117 for 2010 (not 91 as stated in last year's Report) and an average of 408 for the previous decade. The table below summarises all counts.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS			2	22			3	1				
Severnside	1	1	1	2	2		2		1	3	1	1
PW		1	1	2		2	3	4	2			
CI-Y	6	1	2	21	2		6	1	25	2	7	
Sand Bay	1	2										
Axe E./Weston STW		2			1				3		6	1
CVL	3		13	14	9	7	24	11	8	3	4	3
BL									9	3	3	2

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.

Every few years when the wind conditions are right big flocks are seen in the Estuary on spring passage. They form part of the large population that winters in West Africa, breeds in Northern Russia and Siberia and usually follows the main European coast on spring passage. In 2011 possibly as many as 3500 took the more northerly route and provided some spectacular birding for the coastal watchers as many of the birds were in full red breeding plumage. This all happened in the week beginning on April 30th, see the first table below. It is interesting to note that virtually none were seen south-west of CI-Y or inland. In the last thirty years large spring passage flocks have been seen in 1984 (when at least 8000 were recorded), 1990, 1993, 2000 and 2007.

	Apr			May			
	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
OPS		18		40	115	46	
Severnside	1000	1500	1760	305	1320	320	104
CI-Y		125	250	200	225		36

Outside this passage week counts were normal, that is only a few occurred, the largest count being twelve at CI-Y in late May. The table below summarises all counts, apart from those at CVL in April and September all sightings were from the coast.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted coastal sites													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr 1-27	28 - 4	May 5-31	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	1			115			1			1	3	
Severnside	6	6	2	4	1760				1	3	2	2	2
PW	1			1	305	6	1	1	2	1		1	1
CI-Y	1	8	10	4	225	12	1		1	3	5		2
Sand Bay	4	3			5	3					1		
Axe Estuary	3		2							1		1	
CVL					1					2			

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant, uncommon in autumn, but fairly common in spring. Scarce summer visitor and very rare in winter. Uncommon inland on passage.

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	CI-Y	Total
1992 - 2001 Av.	31	31	79	141
2002 - 2009 Av.	24	51	64	139
2010	4	26	40	70
2011	35	64	104	203

April and May average counts

The trend of lower counts noted in the past few years was reversed, at least temporally, in 2011 when quite good numbers were seen on spring passage; see the previous species. This species follows a different spring passage route to the godwits as it is assumed that most of those we see in spring are headed on a north-westerly route to Iceland, hence there is no strong connection with the passage of the previous species which heads NE to northern Russia.

First noted on April 5th at PW, and most had passed through by May 20th when six were seen at the Axe Estuary. The highest count was 155 at CI-Y on May 2nd which was also the same date as the highest count (77) at Severnside.

The autumn passage was particularly weak, the largest number seen was only four at CI-Y on Aug. 20th but one or two birds stayed into October, the last being seen at CVL on 14th, it is unusual for one to stay at the lake for such an extended period. The table below gives details of most sightings, the record at Sea Mills on April 23rd was unusual for this site. Also one was noted at Littleton Warth on Sept. 7th.

Maxima at main sites									
	Apr		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	5-19	20-30	1-10	11-31					
OPS	7	26	43	3		4	1	1	
Severnside	20	50	77	2			2	2	
Sea Mills, R. Avon		9							
PW	1	2	10				1	2	
CI-Y	5	52	155	61	4	6	4	3	1
Sand Bay		11	15	2	1				
Axe Est./Weston STW	1		6	6					
CVL		3	1			1	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	CI-Y	Axe E.	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	575	187	157	70	989
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	194	167	152	59	572
2009/10	333	149	150	25	657
2010/11	289	143	168	16	616

August to February average counts

Over the past few years the status tables have shown little change although the decline at the Axe Estuary seems to be continuing. It is possible that these flocks now prefer the CI-Y area as numbers here have improved in the last year or so. The table below summarises most counts, otherwise 15 were noted near Frampton Cotterell on March 24th, and single birds were seen at BL on July 29th and Oct. 25th, and at Saltford on Dec. 2nd.

Curlew – Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	350	75	460	200	3	15	275	15	235	380	60	215
Littleton Warth	16	48	21	53	2		17	2	41	145	225	33
Sevenside	110	115	85	68	2	80	90	110	140	220	240	140
R. Avon, Sea Mills	2	2	2							1	2	
PW/Pill	53	66	40	15	3	22		80	58	82		110
CI-Y	250	240	215	91	39	98	250	335	300	345	325	345
Sand Bay	60		98	16	11	35	45	110	30	82	65	77
Axe Est./Weston STW	2	66	1	3	6	5	7	46		5	31	29
CVL		5	2			1	2		2		1	1

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	63	65	65	65	57	29	38	93	65	88	73
Autumn	184	160	166	178	136	139	141	184	186	197	205

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

In line with many other waders in 2011, this species had an average spring and near-record autumn passage; this is shown in the status table above. The highest count was 24 at CI-Y on Aug. 2nd. Only noted by the R. Avon in the Sea Mills area in the first winter period but there were reports from four sites in the second period. The spring passage lasted from April 3rd (one at PW) to May 24th (one at CVL), the autumn passage lasted from June 16th (one again at PW) to Oct. 4th (one at CI-Y), and records were received from six coastal and eight inland sites.

The table below details the main counts. Remaining reports mostly for April were as follows: one heard calling over Kingsdown, Bristol on 6th, one on Kenn Moor on 20th, one at Sand Point also on 20th, two at Saltford on 21st with three here on May 5th and one on Sept. 27th.

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					1	1		4	1	2		3				
Littleton Warth									1	4						
Sevenside				3	2	10	7		7	14	2	1				
R. Avon*	6	3	4	6	1	1			5	5	6	12	13	1	3	2
PW				2	2	2	2			3	1			1		
CI-Y				1	2	5		12	18	24	15	10	1	1		2
Axe Est./Weston STW					3	1		3	3	4	2		1	1		
BG				9	7	5	2	16	10	5	8	9	8	1		
CVL				3	8	4	3	6	10	18	14	3	2		1	1
BL				3	6	4	2	3	4	11	4	2	4		2	2

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

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularius*

Very rare vagrant

Description species

One record: an adult, still largely in summer plumage, was discovered on the causeway at Herriott's Pool, CVL, on Sept. 24th (AHD *et al.*), see photograph opposite page 72. This popular bird remained until April 2012, having survived some periods of severe freezing weather in January and February (when it moved temporarily onto the main lake). It had lost its spots by late October, but had started to regain them by early April. [BBRC].

This is the fourth record for the Avon area, the three previous being at CVL in October 1982 and August 2007, and at BG in November 2003. The latter, although un-aged at the time, is now considered to have been a winter adult.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common passage migrant; more numerous in autumn. Scarce winter visitor.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
90	110	124	70	76	76	51	63	94	110	121

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

Counts were normal in the first half of the year, but as with several other wader species more were noted on autumn passage than usual bringing the yearly status average to a near-record figure. Due to access problems there were no records from ASW which has produced several high numbers in the past. The highest count was 16 at CVL on Aug. 19th, and double-figure counts were recorded here on about ten dates during the month. Present up to May 1st (CI-Y) and from June 27th (CVL), and noted at fourteen sites during the year.

The table below gives the main counts.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside	1							1	2	1	1	
CI-Y			2	1			7	2	3	1	2	2
Axe Est./Weston STW	1			1	1		2	2	1			2
BG									1	1		
CVL	4	3	2	4		1	8	16	9	7	6	6
Chew Magna Res.							1			1	2	
BL	1							1	2		2	
Saltford	2			1				1		2	1	1

Non-tabulated sightings, all of single individuals, were as follows: Pilning on March 22nd, Batheaston Reserve on April 5th, PW on 8th, Long Ashton on Aug. 3rd, Emerson's Green on 6th and OPS on Nov. 13th.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

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

Except for one remarkable record this species had a fairly average showing in 2011 with as usual one, or occasionally two, at CI-Y in both winter periods, none on spring passage, and a weak autumn passage which lasted from July 17th to Oct. 29th with a maximum count of only two. The exception was at CVL on Nov. 24th when a flock of 24 was reported. This is the largest Avon area count for more than thirty years, 29 were recorded in September 1978 and 25 in September 1979 both also at CVL. The remaining sightings are listed below.

Sevenside – one on Aug. 16th;

CI-Y - one from 2010 up to April 7th with two on Jan. 23rd and 24th, another on July 17th and 18th, two on Aug. 20th, one on 21st and on Sept. 3rd, two again on Oct. 26th, and then one until the year end although two were present on Dec. 17th;

Weston STW – one on Oct. 29th;

CVL – a juvenile from Aug. 19th to 28th, another juvenile on Sept. 3rd, single unaged individuals on 13th, 23rd and 25th followed by the exceptional November flock (24 on 24th) mentioned above;

BL – juvenile on Oct. 23rd and 24th.

	1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	2	0	0	0	4	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Autumn	7	12	5	10	7	10	4	11	6	2	3	4	3	24	6	3	3	2	12	36

Spring and autumn passage, total of the maximum counts

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
CI-Y	14	10	8	5	3	4	3	4	4	6	6
CVL	8	4	23	4	5	1	2	1	7	10	11

Maximum single counts for the year at CI-Y and CVL

The generally low numbers of Greenshank in Avon in the past few years continued in 2011, there was only one sighting north of the R. Avon, and only one count in double figures – eleven at CVL on Aug. 11th. As usual one was seen at Sea Mills throughout both winter periods, there was a small spring passage from April 2nd (CVL) to June 6th (CI-Y), and an average autumn passage from June 24th (CVL) to Oct. 29th (CI-Y). The main sightings are tabulated below, the remaining records were: three at OPS on July 30th, and single birds at Sand Bay on May 2nd, in flight over Chipping Sodbury on July 31st, and at BG on Aug. 12th.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at regularly counted sites													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
								1 – 15	16 – 31				
Sea Mills, R. Avon	1	1	1	2	1			1		1	2	1	1
PW/Avonmouth									1	1			
CI-Y				1	2	1	6	5	1		1		
Weston STW					3		1	2					
CVL				1		2	4	11	7	8	1		
BL									2	3	1		

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

Very rare vagrant.

Description species.

One record: an adult roosting on Herriott's Pool, CVL, on July 8th, then later feeding in front of Herriott's Bridge (KEV *et al.*), see photograph opposite page 73.

This was the first of a remarkable eleven rare North American waders seen at CVL during the autumn but, unlike the others, it stayed for only one day. It is the fourth record for the Avon area, the others being at CVL in September 1967, ASW in October 1984 and the Axe Estuary in October 2006.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

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

Probably about seven, three on the coast and four inland, were seen on autumn passage. This is above average for this species in the Avon area, counts have ranged between one and eight over the last two decades. The details are as follows.

CI-Y – single bird(s) on Aug. 13th, 14th, 17th and 21st (photographed), and on 28th and 29th;

CVL – an adult from June 27th to July 2nd, an unaged individual on July 30th, a juvenile from Aug. 10th to 15th and another from 19th to 29th.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

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

Two races: *totanus* (breeding in the UK, western Europe and further east) and *robusta* (breeding in Iceland).

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.	Total
1991/92 – 2000/01 Av.	56	80	106	176	418
2001/02 – 2008/09 Av.	38	93	136	216	483
2009/10	40	79	214	168	501
2010/11	29	60	284	364	737

August to February average counts

Counts of this species have increased markedly in the last few years, especially so at the coastal sites in the west. Flocks of 400 plus are now not uncommon, it is thought that good feeding conditions have contributed to this rise. Most had left the area by the second week of April heading to their breeding grounds in northern Europe and/or Iceland, and they began to return in mid-June with good numbers present by early August. As in 2010 the Axe Estuary produced the best counts although CI-Y was not far behind.

The main table below summarises all counts with one exception. Some counts have been received from Pill near the mouth of R. Avon, for example 125 on Aug. 19th. It is conjectured that these form part of either the Severnside or the PW flocks.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	56	38	22	41				56	35	25	52	19
Littleton Warth	31	50	65	17			1		5	65	91	45
Sevenside	100	190	100	13			14	75	100	110	150	70
Sea Mills, R. Avon	60	53	200	135			3	55	100	145	100	50
PW	48	175	63	18	4	80		42	135	160	38	2
CI-Y	295	320	330	140	5	38	135	120	140	460	430	425
Sand Bay	75									1		12
Axe Est./Weston STW	450	370	670	495			168	400	152	570	205	190
BG						1			1			
CVL			1	1		2	5	1	5		1	
BL			1	1		3	1		1			

Breeding A few were present in May at both PW and CI-Y but no firm breeding evidence was received from either site.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

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

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1991/92 - 2000/01 Av.	63	142	29	234
2001/02 - 2008/09 Av.	45	126	26	197
2009/10	28	88	31	147
2010/11	23	116	38	177

August to February average counts

Numbers improved in 2011 compared with the previous year, this was especially noticeable at OPS and CI-Y, and the Sevenside counts seem to be getting back to near normal levels. Noted in every month, and the highest counts were as usual from Sevenside with 160 on Feb. 26th and 150 on the last day of the year.. The table summarises the main counts, note that there were several records from CVL during the autumn. Also two were noted at the Axe Estuary on Jan. 9th, and single birds were at Sand Bay on Aug. 17th, and BL on 4th and Dec. 16th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	47	34	9					23	23	53	66	10
Littleton Warth	7								35	8	91	
Sevenside	110	160	135	24	9	12	10	48	105	55	90	150
PW	20	9	100	2			9	63	22	21	40	7
CI-Y	57	45	75	25	2	2	7	60	22	80	75	47
CVL							1	2	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

The autumn Atlantic storms that brought several North American waders to the Avon area also helped to make 2011 a record year for this species. Eleven or twelve were reported including a group of three at CVL in September. The previous highest yearly total was seven in 2005. The details are as follows, all were juveniles or first-winters.

Sevenside – one at Severn Beach on Sept. 17th (*per* SBweb);

PW – one on Sept. 12th (SH, CJS);

Sand Point – one on Sept. 12th (PAB);

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare – one on Sept. 13th (BB);

Axe Estuary and environs – one at Weston STW on Sept. 8th and 9th, with this or another at Uphill Beach on 13th (PAB), and back at Weston STW on 14th and 15th (MSP);

Grey Phalarope con't

CVL – one on Sept. 13th, three on 15th (RJH), then one from Nov. 1st to Dec. 2nd. This last bird, which unusually stayed for more than a month, was difficult to see as it spent most of its time in the centre of the lake (RJH, RMI *et al.*);

BL – one from Sept. 7th to 9th (see photograph opposite page 80) and another on Sept. 13th and 14th (NRM *et al.*).

Autumn Migration at Chew Valley Lake

Autumn water levels at the lake were again low providing good feeding conditions for many species. But this cannot fully explain the number and range of wader species that were present. It seems likely that many populations had a good breeding season, also the weather conditions over northern Europe and the North Atlantic in the early autumn were favourable. The total of the wader maximum ten-day counts for the autumn of 2011 was 1119. The last year when this figure was over a thousand was 1995 when it stood at 1125, but the record figure is 2272 set in 1975. On the other hand the total number of wader species recorded during the standard autumn period, 31, was the best ever. But it should be noted that migration continued into November adding three more species to this count, these were Semipalmated and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, and Woodcock.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
454	178	786	281	834	211	134	108	569	505	1119

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			1	3	2	4	3	1			1	1
Oystercatcher	1		2	1	5	1		1	1			
Little Ringed Plover	10	7	14	16	6	6			1	1		
Ringed Plover				2	23	64	47	90	110	1	3	4
Golden Plover								2				1
Grey Plover											1	1
Lapwing	80	60	90	70	55	75	100	75	70	nc	155	230
Knot						10	3	4	2	2	1	1
Sanderling						1	2	3			1	
Little Stint					1	1	4	4	3	2		1
Temminck's Stint						1						
Pectoral Sandpiper							1	2	2	3	2	
Curlew Sandpiper						1	1	5	6			1
Dunlin		5	4	3	12	8	11	30	72	17	32	16
Ruff			1		3	4	9	3	4	4	3	1
Jack Snipe									1			
Snipe			1		1	1	3	1	3	4	13	
Long-billed Dowitcher											2	2
Black-tailed Godwit	12	21	1	3	11	6	8	7	1		1	2
Bar-tailed Godwit							2	2				
Whimbrel		1			1	1	1		1	1	1	
Curlew	1		2						2			
Common Sandpiper	6	6	10	18	10	14	5	2	6	1		
Spotted Sandpiper						1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Green Sandpiper	2	4	8	11	16	16	9	6	5	3	4	7
Spotted Redshank					1	1	1		1			1
Greenshank	4	3	1	3	11	7	8	3	1			1
Lesser Yellowlegs	1											
Wood Sandpiper	1		1		1	1						
Redshank	4	5	4		1	1		5	5			
Turnstone				1		1	2	1			2	
Grey Phalarope								3				

CVL - Maximum count in each ten day period

Autumn Wader Migration on the Coast

Applying the same ten-day maximum counting method used in the CVL table above, the main table below gives a summary of the autumn wader migration at the two best-watched coastal sites – Severnside (SS) and Clevedon to the R. Yeo (CI-Y). Only species/populations that are mainly migratory have been included, so for example Ringed Plover is included because most of the birds recorded are on autumn passage, but Redshank is not included because most are resident outside the breeding season.

	2007	08	09	10	2011
Severnside	4216	3005	1858	1828	2471
CI-Y	1934	1823	2983	3102	5452
Ratio CI-Y/SS	0.46	0.61	1.61	1.70	2.21

Totals of the maximum ten-day counts for Severnside and CI-Y as given in the main table below

In last year's Report we gave a summary table, see above. It showed a remarkable change in the counts at the two sites. For a long while up to the mid-2000s counts at Severnside were usually well above those for CI-Y, but this started to change in about 2006 or 2007, and the situation is now completely reversed as is shown above. This change is not just restricted to these two sites, counts at OPS are also down whilst those at Sand and Weston Bays have generally improved. Some suggested causes were discussed in the 2010 Report.

		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						2	3	1				
	CI-Y			2		2	1						
Ringed Plover	SS				11	70	120	250	28	18	3	8	
	CI-Y	1		2	18	280	400	675	500	8	40	8	1
Golden Plover	SS										2		
	CI-Y		1			1		1	2			25	
Grey Plover	SS							1				1	
	CI-Y								1	1		10	20
Knot	SS						2	6	35	19		1	
	CI-Y					10	12	40	180	12	90	1	35
Sanderling	SS				2	2	4	5	4				
	CI-Y			9	1	1	1		2				
Little Stint	SS							1			1	1	
	CI-Y							1	2				
Curlew Sandpiper	SS						2	2	3	3	5	1	
	CI-Y						8	13	4	12	7	4	
Dunlin	SS		16	80	160	80	60	200	110	180	300	350	250
	CI-Y	16	105	275	260	350	275	300	320	65	300	150	350
Ruff	SS										1		
	CI-Y						2		4				
Black-tailed Godwit	SS		2									3	
	CI-Y	1	1	6	1	1	1	5		25		2	
Bar-tailed Godwit	SS						1		2	3	2	2	1
	CI-Y							1	1		3	5	1
Whimbrel	SS				2	1	2	2	2	1			
	CI-Y	1	6	5	4	4	4	4	2	1	1		
Common Sandpiper	SS		7		14	9	2	1					
	CI-Y	12	11	18	24	15	11	7	10	1	1		
Green Sandpiper	SS					1			2			1	
	CI-Y	1	2	7	2	2			3	3		1	
Spotted Redshank	SS					1							
	CI-Y		1			1	2	1					1
Greenshank	CI-Y			6	5		1						
Wood Sandpiper	CI-Y					1	1						

Severnside and CI-Y - Maximum ten-day counts

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor. Very rare inland.

Description species

A reasonable year with five records as follows, a summary of the sightings for the past ten years is given on the next page.

New Passage – a juvenile photographed on Oct. 18th (per SBweb);

Severn Beach – an adult dark morph on May 11th (PDB), a pale morph on 22nd (per SBweb) and another adult pale morph which flew up channel and probably headed inland on Sept. 6th (SE *et al.*);

Avonmouth Docks – an adult pale morph which flew up channel on May 7th (CJS).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Descriptions required for inland records

A good spring passage with a minimum of 37 seen. The autumn passage was again poor.

Spring passage The first was a dark phase that moved upriver past Anchor Head on April 19th and the last were two on the evening tide at Severn Beach on May 31st. Recorded on 13 days as tabulated below.

	April								May				
	19th	21st	22nd	23rd	25th	28th	29th	30th	2nd	3rd	22nd	23rd	31st
OPS									4				
Severn Beach			3	3		2	2	1	5	2	6	1	2
Portishead									3				
Ladye Bay		2			4				2	5			
Sand Pt.		1											
Anchor Head	1												

Autumn passage Again poor with just two records involving three birds; a dark phase and a pale phase to NE at Severn Beach on Sept. 6th and one at Sand Pt. on 12th.

2010 A late record of three adults, two pale morph and one dark, at CVL on Aug. 26th (KEV).

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

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

Descriptions required for inland records

A better year than 2010, see table on the next page, with a minimum of 13 recorded.

Spring passage Three records of single birds; upchannel at Anchor Head on April 12th, at Ladye Bay on May 23rd and upchannel at Sand Pt. on the morning of 26th.

Autumn passage on the coast Recorded on seven dates as tabulated below;

	August	September					October	
	14th	6th	9th	11th	13th		9th	10th
OPS			1					
Severn Beach		2			1		1	1
Avonmouth Docks		2						
Portishead		2						
Ladye Bay				2				
Sand Pt.	1							
Anchor Head		1						

Inland One record: one at BL on Sept. 17th (NRM *et al.*), the first site record.

SKUA sp

Unidentified skuas were reported as follows:

New Passage – brief views of six small Skuas downriver on Sept. 16th;

Portishead – two, seen distantly, in the afternoon of April 28th were thought probably to be Arctics;

Sand Pt – one on the morning of May 22nd was possibly a Pomarine.

Skuas in the Avon area

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Pomarine Skua			59	4	3	13	3	17	2	5
Arctic Skua	45+	54	65	23	50+	51	37	47	17	40+
Long-tailed Skua	1						1			
Great Skua	16+	16	26	10	26+	13	4	14	3	13
Skua sp.	1	1	58	11	6	7		5		9

Total number of skuas for the last ten years

SABINE'S GULL *Xema sabini*

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

Two records, the first since one in 2007, see the table on page 86:

Severn Beach – a juvenile on Sept. 6th (per SBweb) was probably the same as one on Sept. 12th and 13th (BL *et al.*), see photograph opposite;

Sand Bay – a photographed juvenile on Sept. 8th to 10th (NW *per* WBweb) was possibly the same as the Severn Beach bird listed above.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Usually a storm-driven visitor; uncommon, but large flocks sometimes occur in the Estuary. Also occurs in anticyclonic conditions in early spring as a presumed migrant. Scarce inland, usually only at CVL.

A reasonable year, recorded on 26 dates (23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, eleven in 2010), mainly in the winter periods, but there were no autumn records.

January/February The majority were seen at Severn Beach, with one on Jan. 11th, an adult on 14th, 40 on 16th, and 200 on Feb. 4th and 5th. In addition 40 were noted off Ladye Bay on Jan. 15th and one downriver at Chittening Warth on Feb. 6th.

Spring passage Strong SW winds on March 10th resulted in 215 past Anchor Head in the morning and at least 200 off Severn Beach, with just six at Ladye Bay the next day. There were 30 at Severn Beach on 30th. In April there were 38 to NE over Blackstone Rocks, CI-Y, on 9th and 30 here on 11th. The only records in May were 80 at Severn Beach in strong SW winds on the morning of 22nd (and subsequently seen moving downriver off Avonmouth Docks), ten at Severn Beach next day and one here on 29th. There were 26 at CI-Y on June 16th with an adult at Severn Beach the same day.

Second winter Following an adult at Severn Beach on Nov. 29th, there were good numbers during December with 96 at Sand Pt. and 40 at Ladye Bay on 3rd, 17 from Anchor Head on 5th, 46 at Sand Pt. on 7th, 80 at Severn Beach on 8th, 15 at Sand Pt. on 13th, five at the Yeo Est. on 17th, and twelve at Severn Beach and four at Avonmouth Docks on 29th.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Av. of 3 highest counts	317	303	263	166	416	88	170	233	92	200
No. of dates recorded	36	22	30	29	22	27	23	19	5	15

Kittiwake on Severnside – data over the last ten years

Inland records Three records as follows;

R. Avon, Sea Mills – a first-winter on Jan. 16th;

CVL – an adult on March 31st;

BL – an adult on Dec. 9th.

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. There is some evidence that it is becoming commoner in gardens with the WGS showing an eleven percent increase in gardens visited over the last ten years, and a 30% increase since the surveys' inception 37 years ago.

There were four figure counts from OPS, CI-Y, and BL as shown in the table below, although no roost counts from CVL were received. Four figures counts from other sites were 5000 in Weston Bay on Jan. 29th, 1200 at PW foraging on the flooded salt-marsh on Sept. 26th, 1000 at Somerdale, Keynsham on Jan. 17th and 1000 on Herriott's Pool, CVL on Nov. 20th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2000	1000	40	70	14	28	700	1300	1000	3000	500	300
Littleton Warth	6	500			47			750	90	185	390	32
Sevenside	50	22		36	22		20	300	800		550	
CI-Y	2000	1500	425	30	40	160	800	800	550	750	600	750
Sand Bay	500	425	150		1	14	870	700		225	380	270
Axe Estuary	3	686	7	1	11	85	440	196		192	385	300
Weston STW	123	492	41	9	102	131	500	559	498	472	127	156
Sea Mills	200	250	50				52	190	160	75	150	200
Saltford		710	211							266	700	500
Leap Valley , Downend	8	7	4	2			1		1	2	23	3
BL	604	2030	2		3	2	112	200	435	525	420	385

The first juveniles of the summer were two at PW on June 13th with one at CI-Y on 16th.

Other records A leucistic individual was at Sea Mills on Feb. 28th and an albino at CVL on March 3rd. An adult found freshly dead at CVL on Sept. 5th had been ringed as a young bird at Rymättylä, Turku-Pori, Finland on June 18th, 2001. An adult ringed in Copenhagen, Denmark on March 19th was seen in Bristol on Dec. 2nd.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce in winter.

Numbers at CVL were only average but there were records from several other sites, including a first-winter that spent the last three weeks of the year at ASW.

Spring passage The first record of the year was from CVL, with two first-winters on Jan. 9th, but the spring passage here was rather erratic, with the last on May 3rd, a first-summer. Numbers at CVL were low, mainly ones or twos except for five on March 30th, six on April 18th and seven on 25th. There were also spring records from BL (a first-summer on March 26th), Severn Beach (a second-summer on May 1st and a first-summer the next day), and Ladye Bay (five on May 2nd).

Autumn passage Autumn passage at CVL was similarly poor, taking place between Aug. 2nd and Nov. 11th but with one long staying first-winter in September accounting for the majority of the records. There were also autumn records from Sand Pt. (one on Sept. 7th), Severn Beach (a first-winter on Sept. 7th), New Passage (one on Sept. 11th, a juvenile/first-winter on 13th and an adult on Oct. 29th), PW (a first-winter on Sept. 12th), BL (a juvenile from Sept. 13th to 17th), Portishead (a juvenile on Sept. 13th) and BG (six on both Oct. 19th and 29th). A first-winter remained at ASW from Dec. 11th into 2012, with probably the same bird visiting nearby Northwick Warth and Severn Beach on 17th.

CVL summary										
	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	:	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
No. of days recorded	1	1	4	4	2		4	18	4	2
Maximum count	2	1	5	7	1		1	1	2	2

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	1	13	2	2	5	3	6	3	19	6
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	15	1	3	1	2	5	1	3	5	2

Little Gull at CVL – average counts

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase.

Although there were some better counts this year, the number of sites involved was low – see table below;

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites	14	16	17	14	17	23	23	20	21	18
Max count	n/a	8	5	11	6	8	7	6	4	8

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

The monthly maxima at the main sites are as follows, with records from the following additional eight sites: Littleton Warth, St George's Wharf, Cl-Y, Axe Est., Ham Green, Cumberland Basin, Bristol, Keynsham, Somerdale and Saltford.

Monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1					2	1		1	1	
Sevenside		2		5		1	3	2			1	1
RPD	2	5	3				1	1	2	2	2	3
Portbury Wharf		1							1	3	1	
Portishead area	1							1	1			
Weston STW		1				1		1	2			
Sea Mills	1	1							1		3	
BG									1		1	2
CVL	3	5	6			1	2	2	1	2	2	8
BL		1					1		1	1	1	1

Unusually a pair was displaying at CVL on March 6th.

Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings of this species. (Eds.)

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.

Slightly more widespread than in 2010 with reports from a total of 38 sites (compared with 37 in 2009 and 34 in 2010). As usual no roost counts were attempted at CVL.

Most counts were in single or double-figures, the only in three or four-figures were as follows;

OPS – 100 on Jan. 1st and Feb. 26th;

Weston Bay – 1500 on Jan. 29th;

Axe Est. – 150 on Dec. 27th;

Marshfield – 1500 at Downtorns Farm and 100 at Shirehill Farm on Dec. 2nd;

Lansdown – 180 on Dec. 3rd;

Keynsham – 900 at the rugby ground and 600 at Somerdale on Jan. 13th with 2500 at Somerdale on 17th, and 500 at Charlton Road on Nov. 22nd;

Saltford – 540 on Feb. 4th, 'hundreds' on Oct. 21st, 515 on Nov. 3rd and 375 on Dec. 28th;

BG – 200 on Nov. 17th and 700 on Dec. 27th;

BL – 400 on Jan. 15th, 445 on Feb. 11th and 108 on Dec. 17th

There were no records between May 22nd (when seven at Severn Beach) and July 4th (one at CVL).

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.

A good series of records, as follows.

Somerdale, Keynsham – an adult watched for 30 minutes and photographed on the morning of Jan. 17th (JA, AHD);

CVL – an adult watched bathing on Herriott's Pool at 14.30 on Feb. 19th then flew off to SE (AHD), and on Feb. 28th a different adult was in Herons Green Bay for much of the day (AHD, RMI *et. al*). Adults were also seen in the roost on Feb. 26th (KEV) and March 5th (RMA). Finally an adult was seen in the roost on Dec. 12th (KEV).

2009 – A late report of an adult at CVL on Dec. 19th (KEV).

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.

The table below shows the maximum counts from the main sites excluding CVL. The only count from CVL was of 3500, mainly adults, roosting on March 11th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	40	24	60	15	50	42	4	22	3	7	28	2
Littleton Warth	2	4		15	13		8	6		2	2	
CI-Y	5	15	15	10	8	14	3	10	4	7	5	6
Axe Estuary		33	31	15	20	2	6	7		13	13	7
Weston STW												
Sea Mills	3	52		2	4		3	2	3	6	11	3
Leap Valley, Downend	3	3	9	17	6	5	8	3	1	10	2	1
BL	16	190	195	7	3	2	9	10	1	8	22	4

Recorded from a further 58 sites (54 in 2010) although the only three figure counts away from CVL not included in the table above were 110 at Clutton on Jan. 26th, 300 in Weston Bay on 29th and 110 at Saltford on Nov. 3rd.

Breeding The first juvenile was not noted at CVL until July 15th.

One on a Bishop Sutton roof top on July 29th was trying to swallow a dead Blackbird.

Scandinavian race *L. f. intermedius*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; annual at CVL. Probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage.

There were only three records, all from CVL; adults on Feb. 5th, March 14th (a small, very dark, very long-winged individual), and Nov. 21st.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
9	5	2	5	0	0	5	10	5	1	6	5	9	11	7	7	4	8	9	3

Number of individuals seen each year

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

The table below shows the maximum counts from the main sites excluding CVL (where 2000 mainly adults were roosting on March 11th).

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	80	38	75	28	50	48	4	3	5	20	2	2
Littleton Warth	29	2		24	3			2	1		13	
CI-Y	20	43	30	38	24	12	100	75	6	50	100	60
Axe Estuary	5	99	2	12	77	4	1	12		23	47	600
Leap Valley, Downend	15	7	3		2	3	2	1	1	2	12	3
BL	14	73	40				1			21	34	2

Reported from a further 47 sites (43 in 2010), with counts in three figures or more as follows: 400 at Anchor Head on Jan. 16th with 3000 in Weston Bay on 29th, 100 at PW pools on March 26th, 110 at Saltford on May 1st with 105 here on Nov. 3rd, and 850 at Kingston Seymour on Nov. 26th.

There were two reports of birds that were possibly of the northern subspecies, *argentatus*, from Weston Bay on Jan. 29th and PW on Aug. 11th. This race is scarce locally with less than 50 published records in the last 20 years, although it may be being overlooked due to the problems of identification and elimination of hybrids with Lesser Black-backed Gull.

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.

An average year, as can be seen from the table below, but only CVL and BL had a count of more than one.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites	6	9	5	7	7	11	11	9	10	10
Max count	15	n/a	9	9	5	4	5	6	9	10

Number of sites and maximum count at any one site

Monthly breakdown at CVL and BL												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL – max count	1		1	2	4	4	10	8	5	5	1	1
CVL – individuals	1		1	4	5	4	15	13	8	6	1	1
BL – estimate of individuals					1	1	1		3	1	1	2

An analysis of KEV's records from CVL shows the following age distribution of individuals:

adults	– 27%
fourth year	– 1%
third year	– 3%
second year	– 14%
first year	– 40%
juvenile	– 15%

Recorded from eight other sites, the same number as in 2010, as follows: OPS (Feb. 12th and a second-summer on June 11th), Littleton Warth (adult on Aug. 13th), Severn Beach (third-summer on May 8th), Portishead Boating Lake (first-winter on Dec. 5th), PW (Jan. 22nd and June 11th), Floating Harbour, Bristol (July 23rd), BG (April 3rd and 26th, May 18th, Nov. 23rd and an adult on Dec. 8th), and Saltford STW (adult on April 25th).

KUMLIEN'S GULL *Larus glaucoides kumlien*

Rare Nearctic winter visitor, many of the records relate to one returning individual.

An adult flew into CVL at 14.00hrs on Feb. 21st and was watched until dusk (AHD, RMI). What is presumed to be the same individual was seen in the roost on March 4th (*per* BG), 5th (GJ, KEV) and 12th (RMA, AHD, KEV).

This is the first record of this race of Iceland Gull since 2006, see the table of rare gulls overleaf.

Rare gulls in the Avon area

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Sabine's Gull			2	1		1				1+
Laughing Gull					1					
Franklin's Gull							1			
Ring-billed Gull	2	3+	3+			2+	3+	3+	2	4+
Caspian Gull	2		1		2	1	1			
Iceland Gull	3	1		1	3+	1	2			
Kumlien's Gull	1	1	1	1	1					1
Glaucous Gull	2				1		1			

Total number of rare gulls for the last ten years

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.

More widespread than usual, and in higher numbers, as shown in the tables below.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites	12	12	13	12	15	20	17	15	18	24
Max count	6	5	22	18	11	10	9	21	19	36
Steep Holm pairs	30	10	13	9	10	11	n/a	13	n/a	n/a

Number of sites, maximum count and pairs breeding on Steep Holm

Monthly maxima at regular sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	6	2	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Littleton Warth	2											1
PW		2			4	4						
CI-Y	5	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2
Sand Bay	2	3	1	2	1			2		9	4	2
Axe Est.		2										2
R. Avon, Sea Mills	3	2							4			
BG	5	3	2	3	3		1	1	2	6	3	4
CVL	6	7	17	19	10	14	32	30	36	32	7	3
BL	3	2	4	4	3	2	8	2	12	3	6	4

Occasional records came from a further 14 sites – half of which were inland; R. Avon at Clifton (two on Feb. 27th), New Cut, Bristol (March 5th), MOD, Abbey Wood (March 17th), East Dundry (June 18th), Chew Magna Res. (three on Aug. 23rd), Kingston Seymour (Nov. 28th), and ASW (Dec. 4th).

The record numbers at CVL, with a maximum of 36 on Sept. 13th, was attributed to birds being able to feed on dead pike.

An analysis of KEVs records from CVL revealed an age distribution during the year of 50% adults, 12% second or third years and 38% juvenile or first-years.

Breeding There were no reports from either Steep Holm or Denny Island in the Bristol Channel.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant; generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

Eight records, an average year but an improvement on the previous two, see table below. The details are as follows:

Severn Beach – one in a large tern movement on May 2nd, with others on 4th and 22nd, and Sept. 5th and 6th;

PW – one on Aug. 28th;

CVL – two on April 25th and a juvenile on Sept. 29th and 30th (a late date).

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Coastal	2	9	5	1	19	2	14	3	1	6
Inland	0	6	1	0	7	2	1	4	3	3

Little Tern records for the last ten years

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 very good year.

Spring passage An excellent passage, starting on April 18th and finishing on May 7th (both at CVL). Large numbers passed through on May 2nd, mainly on the coast, with records from Ladye Bay (an extraordinary 77, including a single flock of 45), Portishead (47), Chittening Warth (three), Severn Beach (23), New Passage (three), CVL (16), BG (nine) and BL (six). At CVL the species was recorded on nine dates with a highest count of 16 on May 2nd and 3rd. The only other records were from Severn Beach (two on April 21st and four on May 3rd).

Autumn passage An extended autumn passage between Aug. 4th (one at CVL) and Oct. 10th (one at Severn Beach). The majority of records were from CVL where it was recorded on 31 dates with a highest count of 31 on Sept. 16th, and the last record was of one on Oct. 6th. Away from CVL there were records from BL (adult and juvenile on Sept. 13th with the adult still present the next day, and a juvenile from Sept. 17th until 23rd), Weston STW (one on Sept. 14th, 17th and 18th), New Passage (one on Sept. 17th) and Severn Beach (one on Sept. 17th and one on Oct. 10th).

There were records at CVL on 40 dates during the year, the highest number of days since 2006 and the spring average count was the highest in the last decade, see table below.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	1	3	2	2	1	2	5	3	2	14
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	13	36	70	31	30	13	10	10	43	24
No of days recorded (total for year)	12	25	46	17	42	15	14	17	24	40

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

A good year, in both spring and autumn, and including a number of inland records.

Spring passage The first records were on April 2nd, all relating to birds moving downchannel, with two at Severn Beach, 14 at Ladye Bay and three at Anchor Head. There were three at CVL the next day, with another here on 7th. The remaining spring records came from Anchor Head (one upchannel on April 13th), Severn Beach (two to NE on April 22nd), CI-Y (three on May 2nd) and PW (one on the pools on May 29th).

Autumn passage The first autumn record was one at RPD on July 30th, followed by three (one juvenile) at CVL on Aug. 2nd. The other autumn records were three at CVL on Sept. 9th, with an adult at Severn Beach on 11th, and two at both CVL and Pulteney Bridge, Bath, possibly the same birds, on 21st.

Unusual Terns in the Avon area

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Little Tern	2+	16	6	1	26	4	15	7	3	9
White-winged Black Tern	1			1						
Sandwich Tern	20	86	13	6	21	4	35	15	23	35+

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.

Large numbers moved up the Estuary in spring, mostly on one day, but a below average year at CVL.

The first in spring were two downriver at Anchor Head on April 2nd with one at BG next day while the last in autumn was a juvenile at CVL on Sept. 29th.

The spring coastal passage essentially occurred on May 2nd, when 575 were counted at Ladye Bay, a day when large numbers of 'commic' terns were reported from other sites on the Estuary. The only other spring coastal records were from Severn Beach (one on April 22nd, seven on May 3rd, and one on 4th and 16th), CI-Y (four on May 4th) and OPS (two on May 4th and one on 24th).

The autumn passage on the coast involved records from Uphill sluice (one on July 23rd), New Passage (one on Aug. 6th and 16th), Severn Beach (one on Sept. 5th with two next day and one on 18th), Sand Pt. (two on Sept. 7th) and RPD (one on Sept. 12th).

At CVL the first in spring was a flock of 16 on April 9th and 10th, which was the spring maximum count here. The last in autumn was a juvenile on Sept. 29th, with a maximum autumn count of 23 on Sept. 16th. Numbers were generally poor, as can be seen from the tables below.

Summary for CVL										
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep				
No. of days recorded	6	6	6	6	10	13				
Maximum count	16	3	4	12	21	23				

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	11	28	3	11	20	5	17	5	23	14
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	37	24	37	9	35	6	38	38	80	20
No. days recorded (total for year)	43	35	27	32	44	53	61	44	61	47

Average counts at CVL

Records from the other reservoirs were as follows:

BG – one on April 3rd and 30th, and on Aug. 28th with eleven on Sept. 1st;

BL – two on July 14th, 28 flew to W on Aug. 28th, three on Sept. 7th with four on the next day and one from 12th to 14th.

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.

An excellent year, see table below, with a significant spring passage through the Estuary.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Max count for year	66	280	1000	1000+	80	45	43	13	25	150
Av. of 3 highest counts	60	123	580	378	44	33	42	9	16	135
No. days recorded during year	13	15	19	14	19	32+	26	25	19	40

Annual details for Avon

Spring passage The first was one at OPS on April 9th with the next one at CVL on 18th and then there were 140 at Ladye Bay and 60 at Severn Beach on 21st with 120 at Ladye Bay the following day. The next movement was on 30th with 100 at Blackstone Rocks, CI-Y and 110 at Severn Beach. The main passage occurred on May 2nd, the same date as Common Tern, with counts of 60 from OPS, 115 from Avonmouth Docks and 150 from Ladye Bay. The last of the spring were two at CVL on May 30th.

Autumn passage The first to return was one at CVL on July 18th (with an ad and a begging juv all day on Jul. 29th); then noted on a further 25 dates until the last, a juvenile at RPD, on Oct. 12th. The highest autumn count was 16 at Sand Pt. on Sept. 9th but this was the only count in double figures. A third of the autumn records were from coastal sites, 16, compared with 21 from CVL and eleven from BL.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

Unidentified *sterna* terns that were in addition to the movements mentioned under the Common and Arctic species accounts were as follows:

Severn Beach – 35 on April 22nd, 90 on May 1st, 1600 on 2nd, 350 on 3rd and 140 on 4th. Photographs suggest the majority of the birds on May 2nd were Common Terns;

Avonmouth Docks – 300 on May 4th;

Portishead – 145 on April 28th;

Anchor Head – twelve on April 2nd, with 13 on 19th and c70 on May 28th.

Spring Coastal Tern passage

The first table below estimates the annual spring passage of terns up the Bristol Channel whilst the second shows the autumn passage at CVL.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Common	80	223	37	142	120	291	561	3	2	593
Arctic	179	388	1982	1134	136	131	201	21	0	524
'Commic'	46	973	2775	208	849	485	606	138	240	2410
Total	305	1584	4794	1484	1105	907	1368	162	242	3527

Total of the highest count from a coastal site for each day in April and May

The second table gives the ten-day maxima during the autumn period, *cf.* the wader table on page 78.

Autumn passage at CVL												
	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 Gull				1	1	1	1		1			2
Black Tern				1	5	15	8	31	22	12		
Common Tern	2	2	12	8	21	15	5	23	6	1		
Arctic Tern		1	3		1	1	5	9				

Maximum count in each ten day period

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records prior to 2008.

Descriptions required for inland records

An average year but better than both 2008 and 2010, see table below. The details are as follows.

Sand Pt. – five on May 22nd with one upchannel on 26th were the only local spring records. Also one on Dec. 3rd;

Severn Beach – single individuals on Sept. 6th, 12th and 13th and on Oct. 11th.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Very scarce storm-driven visitor, rare in summer. Occurs in smaller numbers than Guillemot. No inland records.

One accepted record: one downchannel from Hole's Mouth, Avonmouth Docks on May 26th (CJS).

There were other reports from the Estuary in May but no details were submitted.

AUK sp

Three records of unidentified auks, as follows:

Severn Beach – at least four on May 22nd;

Avonmouth Docks – two on May 28th;

Ladye Bay – one on May 22nd.

Auks in the Avon area

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Guillemot	10	8	8	1	11	4	3	37	3	11
Razorbill	2		1	1	2					1
Guillemot/Razorbill	16	3				1				6+
Little Auk	1				2	1		1	1	
Puffin	2									

Total number of auks for the past ten years.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia* var

Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.

BBS data showed an increase in distribution from 37% to 44% but the BBS population index fell by 6% from 222 to 209. This index has fallen 46% since 2002 but appears to have broadly stabilised in recent years (see table).

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
385	371	432	331	307	306	208	209	222	209

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 44%)

The CABS index also showed signs of stabilising.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
39	39	35	31	23	18	20	15	24	26

CABS Index, based on 100 in 1994

WGS data showed a significant rise in the percentage of gardens visited, from 29% to 47%, as well as an increase in numbers from an average of 1.2 to 1.5 per garden.

The only three figure flocks noted were: 110 at Pulteney Bridge, Bath and 160 at London Road, Bath, both on Oct. 22nd, 200 at Keynsham Memorial Park on Nov. 6th, a similar number on stubble in Keynsham on 13th with 300 here on Dec. 7th.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

Population change in England 1996-2006: down 2%.
BBS distribution 29%

Widespread in small numbers. This year saw a significant jump in the number of sites where this species was recorded, back to the level of 2007.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
16	22	17	30	33	90	73	64	73	94

Number of sites in Avon

Flocks Sizeable flocks over 35 were reported as follows: 36 at BG on July 24th, 300 at Bleadon on Dec. 18th, and 50 at Marshfield on March 6th. Weston STW had a good run of flocks with 276 on Jan. 29th, 130 on Feb. 26th, 94 on Nov. 27th, 82 on Dec. 10th and 300 on 24th. OPS also recorded good numbers in December with 38 on 11th, 80 on 12th, 85 on 23rd, 65 on 24th, 40 on 27th and 67 on 30th.

The only possible migrant noted was a single bird at Sand Point on Oct. 20th during the BOC Migration Watch.

Breeding Potential breeding activity was recorded as follows: one was noted in a nest box at Weston STW on March 19th, on 27th two were singing at a possible nest site at Oldbury Vale, at Shepperdine a male was singing, eggs were laid and there were two additional pairs nearby. Singing birds were reported at Westbury-on-Trym and Brentry on April 4th, two pairs were using tree holes at Knapp Farm, Thornbury on May 3rd, the same date as a pair was recorded in Alveston. On May 24th, at BL a pair was using an ash tree, possibly breeding, two pairs were recorded at CVL, and on June 26th one flew from a possible nest site at Widcombe.

Observers are again encouraged to submit all breeding records (*Eds*).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus**Abundant breeding resident.*

In the 2010/11 winter WGS recorded this species in all participating gardens, the same as the 2009/10 winter, although numbers were 4% lower. CABS data for 2011 showed a decrease of 22% over that for 2010.

BBS data currently shows a relatively stable position with the population index being the same as in 2010, the index having increased steadily since 1994; its most spectacular increase has been in urban and suburban areas, presumably taking full advantage of the increase in garden feeding.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
161	161	165	165	175	176	172	171	165	165

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 99%, BBS population estimate 18100 breeding pairs)

January to May Large flocks were noted as follows: 490 at Weston STW on Jan. 8th which increased to 1500 on the next day, and 268 here on Feb. 12th; 150 were at Keynsham on Jan. 23rd, 175 at Sea Mills on March 18th increasing to 290 by the following day and 310 by 29th. Some 160 headed NE over OPS on March 26th, with 27th producing 150 over Sand Point and 250 over Wain's Hill, Cl-Y.

Breeding The only evidence received was of an adult building a nest in Midsomer Norton on May 15th, fledged young were seen in Redland on May 27th, and a recently fledged juvenile was at Keynsham on Nov. 8th.

Autumn Migration Sizeable movements were seen as follows: 300 to SW over Walton-in-Gordano on Oct. 14th, at Sand Point with 180 on Oct. 16th, 138 on 20th, 150 on Nov. 2nd and 67 on 4th, also 655 over Cabot Tower, Bristol on Nov. 6th.

November and December Three figure counts were recorded as follows: 110 at Downend on Nov. 5th, 400 at Sand Bay on 7th with 450 at Uphill on the same day, 100 at Henbury on Nov. 14th, 200 at Compton Dando on Dec. 4th, 480 at Weston STW on Dec. 10th with 270 here on 12th, and 800 at CVL on 15th and 600 on 20th.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto**Common breeding resident.*

WGS recorded this species in 87% of participating gardens in the 2010/11 winter (77% in 2009/10) with numbers up 21% on the previous year. However CABS for 2011 showed a 22% decrease over 2010.

BBS data shows a continued slight downward trend since a peak in 2003 as the table below shows.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
248	274	262	224	228	203	182	163	155	150

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 68%, BBS population estimate 2700 breeding pairs)

A total of 27 double-figure counts were received, many more than last year. The highest, all in June, were 20 at Eastville on 19th, 19 at St. George's, Weston-s-Mare on 29th, 17 at Severn Beach on 23rd and at West Wick on 22nd.

Breeding A record from Bishops Sutton of freshly broken eggs beneath a nest on Jan. 28th represents a very early nesting attempt; it was followed by a similar record at a second nest here on Feb. 28th. Fledged juveniles were seen at Clevedon on April 2nd and Marshfield on June 29th. Two young were being fed in Frampton Cotterell on Aug. 30th.

No migratory movements were noted.

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

After no records in 2010, it is pleasing to receive two this year: single birds at Severn Beach on April 24th (MCo) and May 6th (PDB).

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of bird-days	3	3	10+	5	7	2	3	2	0	2
No. of records	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	0	2

Bird-days and records each year

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

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

There were four records in 2011 (six in 2010), all of single birds in the first quarter of the year:

Eastville Park – one on Jan. 1st and 14th;

Frenchay – one on Feb. 19th;

Broadmead – one on March 21st.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon and seriously 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.

BBS data showed an increase in distribution from 3% to 5%, and a population index rise from seven to eleven, a 49% increase. Despite this, in terms of records received, 2011 was an average year by recent standards, this is shown by the table below.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of bird-days	66	93	74	97	75	100	74	43	93	86
No. of records	58	87	69	78	63	98	70	43	73	76

Bird-days and records each year

First noted in the Gordano Valley on April 11th (*cf.* 6th in 2005, 12th in 2006, 11th in 2007, 13th in 2008, 12th in 2009 and 13th in 2010).

Regularly recorded throughout the breeding season from Almondsbury, Burrington Coombe, CVL (both male and female), OPS and Weston STW.

There was only one autumn record, of one at Clutton on Aug. 6th. Assuming from the date that this record refers to a juvenile, it was the only one recorded in 2011.

	April	May	June	July	August
Bird-days	24 (21)	50 (46)	11 (20)	0 (1)	1 (5)
Records	19 (11)	45 (38)	11 (18)	0 (1)	1 (5)
Sites	16 (7)	16 (16)	10 (14)	0 (1)	1 (1)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2011 bird-days, records and sites (2010 in brackets)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation effort in several areas.

An average year by recent standards, see table below. Again the majority of sightings were noted during the breeding season when hunting adults are more obvious in the daytime.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of records	65	88	93	94	119	91	115	137	95	110
No. of sites	30	35	38	43	44	26	35	41	42	42

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding There were far fewer reports than in 2010, the details are as follows (none came from SG):

NS – three nesting pairs raised nine young (three nesting pairs fledged six young in 2010) - PW (one pair using a nest box with four chicks ringed), Weston STW (one pair, two young), and Ubley (pair with three chicks, two of which were ringed);

BA – four nesting pairs raised eleven young (twelve nesting pairs fledged at least 30 young in 2010), one pair at BL (North Shore) with three chicks which were ringed, Charlton (three chicks reported), Coombe Hay (pair with two chicks), Compton Dando (three chicks fledged from a pole box).

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
SG	0	0	2 (4+)	0	0	0	0	0	6 (11)	0 (0)
NS	2 (6)	3 (11)	6 (17+)	8 (17)	1 (4)	2 (10)	2 (7)	4 (5)	3 (6)	3 (9)
BA	0	2 (6)	4 (5+)	14 (32)*	4 (6)*	1 (5)	2 (5)	15 (38)*	12 (27)	4 (11)
Total	2 (6)	5 (17)	12 (26)	22 (49)	5 (10)	3 (15)	4 (12)	19 (43)	21 (44)	7 (20)

Barn Owl - Numbers of breeding pairs (and number of fledged young in brackets)

* includes block data from Cam Valley, part of which may be from Somerset

Corpses One was found on Sept. 3rd on the verge of the M4 just off the Severn Bridge. Another was found on Oct. 15th by the M48/A403 junction.

Ringling recovery One found dead on March 18th at Middlezoy, near Bridgwater, Somerset had been ringed as a nestling at Yatton on June 28th, 2010.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Fairly common breeding resident but declining.

UK 25-yr change: - 46%.

BBS distribution: 1%

2011 saw a slight increase in the number of records but the number of sites declined by over 16%.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of records	141	126	128	114	147	134	139	87	91	98
No. of sites	47	58	48	48	49	46	66	49	48	40

Number of records and sites per year

The BBS distribution fell from last year's 3% to just 1% in 2011.

Only recorded regularly at PW, Saltford and Wrington. Sites with regular sightings in 2010 but not in 2011 were Congresbury and OPS. It is not known whether this is down to a genuine decrease or simply that no records were received.

Breeding The only specific references to potential breeding were at PW (pair with one juvenile on June 30th), Frampton Cotterell (pair holding territory), and Dundry (two pairs on June 2nd). Reported in the breeding season (between April and June) from 17 sites so presumably breeding is more widespread than the records suggest.

The maximum count was seven at Saltford on Oct. 28th. The observer commented that in the area concerned, comparable counts of 20 were made in the mid to late 1980s (JWD).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident.

UK 25-yr change: - 25%.

BBS distribution decreased from 3% to 2% but the number of records is not sufficient for BBS population monitoring. WGS data revealed a decline in records from 22% of gardens in 2010 to 12% in 2011.

Without specific surveying it is unwise to draw conclusions too swiftly, but the above figures do draw attention to a potentially significant decline.

The number of records received was also down on those of 2010 but the number of sites remained stable as is shown in the table below.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of records	145	125	227	220	235	293	213	276	206	186
No. of sites	55	54	66	89	57	95	81	111	79	78

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding Evidence of breeding was received as follows: PW - one at a nest box on March 25th, Yatton - three juveniles in a nest box on April 6th and an adult in a Barn Owl nest box on 18th, Kenn Moor - adult with two juveniles in a nest box on 11th, Wraxall - one flew out of nest box on 12th, Lincombe Barn Park - two full grown owlets were seen on 16th, Frome Valley, Frenchay - owlets seen also on 16th, Burnet Manor Farm - adult and fledgling on May 18th, Widcombe Hill, Bath - juvenile calling on 24th, Lower Littleton - juvenile calling on June

11th, Burrington Coombe – juvenile calling on 14th, and Wrington – juveniles calling at two locations on 16th and 19th and an adult with juvenile on 26th.

Tawny Owl Counts Four were recorded at Abbots Leigh on March 6th, with six here (three pairs) on Nov. 29th. Four were recorded at Conham on July 21st and at Frenchay on April 16th. Five were at Salford on Dec. 3rd. Once again a good series of records was received from Wrington with four on March 19th, five on April 17th, seven (the maximum count received this year) on Oct. 3rd, seven again on 29th, and five on Nov. 6th and Dec. 18th.

A corpse was found at Blaise Castle on Aug. 15th.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Very rare in summer, bred successfully in 1991 and 2010.

Description species

After last year's two breeding records it was disappointing that only one pair was reported as breeding in 2011, but pleasing that it was successful. The pair bred in NS, with two adults from April 30th and up to four juveniles seen on seven dates between June 10th and Aug. 1st. All four young fledged successfully by June 25th. A single bird was also present at the same site on Dec. 26th.

In addition one was noted at Portbury Warth on Nov. 9th (KB).

1991	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
23*	15+	2	2	2	7	14	3	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1	7*	6*

Number of individuals (* includes successful breeding)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

An excellent year, especially in the second winter period; see table below. A major influx enabled many to enjoy widespread sightings. As well as multiple groups at coastal sites, the significant occurrence was of an inland concentration at Marshfield, also a number of other inland sightings were noteworthy.

	2005	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Bird-days	105	100	100	260	105	67	194
Records	56	79	102	186	100	48	113

Bird-days and records each year

The last record of the first-winter period came from Weston STW on April 27th and the first to return was on the very early date of Aug. 3rd at Aust Warth. There were no summer records.

First winter period (single birds unless otherwise stated):

Aust Warth – Up to four were regularly seen throughout January up until 29th. Then the sole record for February was of three on 20th. Birds returned in March, with regular sightings from 2nd to 28th. April saw just two records: one on 10th and 14th.

Severn Beach/Chittening Warth – three on March 13th, presumably the Aust birds;

CI-Y – Jan. 20th;

Weston STW – April 17th and 27th.

Second winter period (single birds unless otherwise stated):

OPS – a single bird recorded on five dates between Oct. 18th and Nov. 15th;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth – an early individual on Aug. 3rd was followed by regular sightings from Oct. 29th, with up to three being seen on 25 dates in November. From 28th just one remained until the year's end;

Severn Beach/Chittening Warth – Oct. 15th, 16th and 17th, two on Nov. 20th and Dec 29th;

Clevedon/CI-Y – the first two were recorded on Oct. 17th, increasing to four on 31st. Up to two were seen on several dates in November, increasing to three on 30th. Five were noted on Dec. 4th, with six on 12th; four were still present on 18th, the last record of the year;

Weston STW – one seen on five dates between Oct. 30th and Dec. 11th, with three on Dec. 10th.

Inland records (single birds unless otherwise stated):

BG – Oct. 24th;

Clapton-in-Gordano – Jan. 20th;

Puxton Moor – Nov. 8th;

Whitchurch – flew to E over the houses on Eastnor Road at 0830 on Nov. 27th;

Marshfield – two on Nov. 21st had increased rapidly to seven by 27th. December saw records of multiple birds continuing, with more than three on four dates up to the monthly maximum of six on 10th. Thereafter, one was seen on 17th.

Monthly breakdown									
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Oct	Nov	Dec	2011 (2010)
Records	11	1	17	4		11	44	25	113 (48)
Bird-days	25	3	36	4		15	55	56	194 (67)
Max. count	4	3	3	1		4	7	6	7 (4)

Bird-days = the sum of the maximum daily counts for each site

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

Description required for sight records away from the Mendips

At the regular site of Burrington Ham there was a single bird on April 23rd and at least two on June 30th. No reports were received from the nearby regular site of Rod's Pot.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Churring males	0	0	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	2
Reports	1	0	6	1	8	5	3	4	3	2

Number of churring males and reports each year

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: - 25%.

Migration dates: Forty year average first date April 20th. Forty year average last date Sept. 20th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
96	125	115	85	75	80	61	66	65	49

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 48%. BBS population estimate 2000 pairs)

Arrival The first two were at Kenn on April 17th, the same date as the first Avon record in 2010. On 20th recorded at Clifton Downs, Clevedon (three) and Henbury (five), on 22nd one was at Frampton End Road, and on 26th at CVL (ten), Keynsham (two), Walton Bay and Weston-s-Mare. There was a more widespread arrival from 30th. The first three-figure count was of 400 at CVL on May 3rd and rain here on 9th resulted in a count of 1500.

Summer flocks All four-figure counts for the year came from CVL with the highest of the year, 3000, on May 16th, then 1000 on 20th and again on 24th. Some 2500 were present on 26th, with 2000 on June 9th, 16th, 24th and July 18th.

Breeding The only information came from Inverness Road, Bath where birds were noted visiting a nest site, and nesting was suspected in Lark Rise Church, Hanham.

Departure The last double-figure count was on Aug. 20th (15 at Portbury) and there was a slow trickle of records until Sept. 3rd. The last of the year was one at CVL on 19th.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: + 24%.

BBS data showed an increase in distribution for the year but since the quantity of data is small it is speculative to draw conclusions.

Reports were received from 82 sites, on the surface an encouraging figure; however the number of records (233) was significantly down, presumably due to the severe winter weather of recent years. Several records referred to numbers being significantly down.

Year.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
No. of sites	52	n/c	56	86	74	80	95	75	96	82

Kingfisher - Number of sites each year

During the first winter period, January saw 17 records from eleven sites (*cf.* 23 sites in 2004, 30 in 2005, 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 26 in 2008, 19 in 2009 and 23 in 2010), this was no doubt due to the effect of the severe weather. February again saw 17 records, but from 13 sites with March showing an increase to 23 records from 13 sites.

Breeding The only direct proof of breeding received was of an adult carrying food at Keynsham Memorial Park on May 12th and a pair with two young at Compton Dando on May 14th. However, 45 records for the period April to June came from 24 sites (*cf.* 17 in 2004, 13 in 2005, 16 in 2006, 23 in 2007, 40 in 2008, 25 in 2009 and 31 in 2010). The number of records received from Saltford and Winford Brook during this period suggests that breeding also took place at these two sites.

Post-breeding dispersal as usual created a rise in the number of records. August saw the peak, with 32 from 23 sites. This unexpectedly declined sharply to 15 records from eleven sites in September, thereafter stabilising until the end of the year with 22 records from 16 sites in October, 22 records from eleven sites in November and 20 records from 15 sites in December. The highest counts were received from Saltford (six), Compton Dando (four) and Eastville Park (four). Regular reports came from Batheaston NR, BG, BL, Chew Magna Res., Compton Dando, CVL, CI-Y, Eastville Park, Keynsham, New Passage, Saltford, Weston STW and Winford Brook.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Very scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

Description species

An above average spring with three birds occurring.

Clevedon – one in a Channel Road garden on March 15th (LJ);

OPS – one on May 3rd (JAL);

Locking Rd, Weston-s-Mare – one on May 9th (PAB).

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
2	2	1+	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	3

Number of individuals each year

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce autumn passage migrant. Very rare in spring.

Description species

An average year (see table below) with three autumn records as follows:

Bishop Sutton – one on Sept. 10th (DW);

Sand Point - one on Oct. 2nd (PAG);

RPD – one from Oct. 7th to 13th (SH *et al.*), see photograph opposite page 97.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	0	0	2	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	7	3	2	3

Number of individuals each year

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally and probably locally.

The BBS population index showed a highly significant 25% decrease in 2011. The fact that the BBS distribution also fell, to the lowest level since the survey started in 1994 reaffirms that alarm bells should be ringing to try to identify the cause.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Index	99	95	107	118	113	92	124	121	105	79
Dist %	44	47	47	56	54	46	57	55	46	40

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 and BBS distribution percentage

The WGS data also showed a decline, from 38% of gardens in 2010 to a mere 27% in 2011, although the number of gardens involved in this survey, 30, is small.

2011 continued the downward trend of the last four years. Both the number of records and the number of sites more than doubled between 2006 and 2007 but both have shown worrying declines since then.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
Records	165	323	236	333	231	529	524	453	458	413
Sites	75	127	103	127	93	235	227	209	197	180

Green Woodpecker - Records and sites each year

Breeding There were 164 records from 107 sites during April, May and June (*cf.* 77 records from 57 sites in 2006, 220 from 132 sites in 2007, 241 from 130 sites in 2008, 191 from 121 sites in 2009 and 202 from 131 sites in 2010), distributed as follows:

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	2010	2011
April	26	61	30	67	63	47	71	57
May	17	53	21	54	67	65	53	49
June	6	36	14	58	53	52	35	29

Green Woodpecker - Number of sites records received from during the breeding season

At CVL eight singing males were noted (*cf.* five in 2006, six in 2007, seven in 2008, five in 2009 and six in 2010). It is notable that of all the quantitative data given above for this species, this is the only one showing a positive trend.

The only records of actual breeding were of an adult feeding fledged young at Ham Green Hospital on June 9th and an adult with young at Saltford on July 10th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

Population change in England 1996 - 2006: + 92%.

The BBS data showed identical distribution figures for both 2010 and 2011, but the population index figures showed a 15% drop from those of 2010 but were still 53% up on 2002 levels.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
99	113	103	126	139	170	170	113	178	152

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 47%)

WGS data showed a big annual decrease (79%) after last year's massive increase so that it is now at approximately the same level as 2009.

There was also another increase in the number of records, being the largest number received in the last decade, this is shown by the table below.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Records	226	172	149	339	193	415	372	317	402	423
Sites	66	76	77	173	80	191	172	181	182	197

Records and sites per year

Breeding Drumming was reported from twelve sites (*cf.* seven in 2004, 14 in 2005, 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009 and four in 2010) up until June 1st and then again from Nov. 28th. A total of eleven were counted at CVL on April 14th, with ten here on June 1st. Other high counts were six at Saltford on Oct. 7th and five at both OPS on March 24th and in a Banwell garden on June 12th. At CVL there were ten pairs (*cf.* six in 2005, seven in 2006, 10 in 2007, seven in 2008, 13 in 2009 and nine pairs in 2010). Breeding was recorded from a Banwell garden (three juveniles), BL (pair at nest with juveniles), Cold Ashton (adults feeding young), Eastville Park (young in the nest), Montrose Avenue, Bristol, PW, Severn Beach (family party), Shepperdine Farm Orchard and Thornbury Hacket Wood. Curiously, only the first of these sites recorded breeding in 2010.

Great Spotted Woodpecker con't

One was seen at Battery Point, Portishead during the Migration Watch here on Oct. 16th.

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 highly encouraging year with a huge increase to 13 records from seven sites, spread across the year. Breeding was not proven at any site. All records are listed below:

Tortworth Church – one on July 16th;

Lower Woods – one on Aug. 2nd;

Marshfield – one on April 9th and 13th;

Bath University – one on Feb. 27th;

Leigh Woods – one on May 16th;

CVL – up to two birds on four dates in March with drumming heard once;

Undisclosed NS site – a pair was seen to leave a nest hole in an old Walnut tree in March.

Year	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Bird-days	16+	20+	3	7	3	3	2	10	4	13
Individuals	11	9	3	7	2	3	1	3	4	10

Bird-days and individuals each year

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor.

One arrived at a site between Charlton Fields and Chewton Keynsham on Nov. 23rd (RP *et al.*) and was recorded daily into 2012. Seven have now been seen in the past decade.

91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1

Individuals each year

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*

Rare vagrant.

An obliging first summer female was found on Sodbury Common on July 30th (DP *et al.*) and was seen by many observers until Aug. 21st, see photograph opposite page 97. The only previous records are of one shot at Marshfield prior to 1887, one at the same site in July 1989, one at Prospect Stile in April 1993, one at Thornbury in April 1994 and one of the Mediterranean race *L. s. badius* at Uphill June 2005.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	-2	5	-17	-1	-3

The local population is largely stable, although they do tend to move into urban areas in winter especially in cold weather, giving the impression that they are commoner than they really are. Numbers recorded by WGS were slightly down for the second year running, as were the CABS counts, but BBS results suggested a small recovery after two years of decline.

Large groups The only sizeable flocks identified were 19 at OPS on Oct. 8th, 29 were seen at Chew Magna School on Oct.14th, and 21 at Keynsham Community Woodland on Dec.16th. There was an exceptional count of 90 from a walk around Saltford on Dec. 7th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
115	122	109	110	113	108	99	96	95	101

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 92%, BBS Avon population estimate 3550 pairs)

JAY *Garrulus glandarius**Fairly common breeding resident.*

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-11	England 95-08
% Change	-9	-9	-8	7	4

All three local surveys recorded lower numbers, which may suggest that they were affected by the cold weather in December of 2010.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
144	191	169	126	128	165	143	161	152	139

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 39%)

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula**Common breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant.*

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-11	England 95-08
% Change	-8	-1	1	-3	43

The local BBS results reveal an essentially stable population. They were present in about 50% of WGS gardens during the 2010/11 winter, and numbers were back to the high levels of 2008/09.

On Jan. 1st a flock of 1500 was seen at the Chew Valley fruit farm, and on 29th the same number were noted roosting at Middledown Farm, near Marshfield. Weston STW recorded its highest yearly count of 145 on the same date. In October there was a roost of 400 at BL, and 400 were recorded feeding in stubble nearby at Ubley on Nov. 11th. In November there were an estimated 1000 at a roost at Sutton Court, near CVL, and a similar number in a pre-roost gathering at CVL on Dec. 27th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
90	89	85	91	93	97	106	104	98	97

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 83%, BBS Avon population estimate 8900 pairs)

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus**Common breeding resident.*

BBS England 95-08 change, down 3%, local, down 33%.

No large flocks were recorded this year. Four pairs nested near Ivywell Road on the Clifton Downs in Bristol, the first use of this site since 1975. In 1939 a group moved to Clifton Green from the Downs water-tower, and the highest count here was of 18 nests in 1943. They nested in the large Elm trees which died from Dutch Elm Disease and were felled in the 1975-6 winter.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
94	73	82	95	76	78	79	82	62	67

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 40%, BBS population estimate 4450 pairs)

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone**Common breeding resident.*

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	-1	-10	22	16	18

They were recorded in 80% of WGS gardens, and in the same numbers as in the 2009/10 winter, but BBS showed a slight decline. The population in the past decade has been essentially stable.

The largest count was 230 by the R. Avon at Keynsham, on Dec. 7th, and up to 100 were frequently recorded at OPS. There was an unusual account of one attacking and killing a Woodpigeon on Clifton Down on Sept. 19th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
125	111	115	130	127	123	119	131	129	116

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 99 %, BBS Avon population estimate 8200 pairs)

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

BBS distribution 18%.

BBS counted 76 in 35 of the one-km squares covered (18%). Breeding was proved at ten sites, five of them new, and was possible at five others where display was seen. However this understates the true situation. Since 1990 at least 60 nest sites have been identified, and they are often site-faithful. The Atlas Survey proved breeding in 42 tetrads. In ST57, the ten-km square including half of Bristol, there were five proved breeding sites, and two more were suspected. If this density were true across the region there must be around 100 breeding pairs.

A flock of 35 was seen at Ubley in May and one of 30 at Marshfield in January, with 20 here in October. There was a total of 560 records from over 100 sites, excluding the BBS squares.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
5	4	4	9	10	12	10	16	18	18

BBS distribution; percentage of one-km squares in which Raven were recorded.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. The population suffers badly in harsh winters.

2011 BBS distribution 32%.

	BBS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	41	-13	14

It might have been anticipated that the coldest December since 1916 in 2010 would have had a harsh impact on the population, but there is no evidence of this. The BBS figures went up, as did the percentage of WGS gardens in which they were seen, although numbers remained very low. The implication is that the 2010 breeding season must have been a very good one, and that winter survival was better than might have been anticipated.

There were 285 records from a very wide variety of sites. These included 16 ringed on Jan. 1st at the Chew Valley fruit farm.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
BBS	135	172	156	156	94	144	119	56	63	88
CVL	14	13	6	10	15	12	18	4	4	12

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 and number of singing males recorded around CVL by KEV

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is now a regular winter visitor in small numbers to several sites, but 2011 was a poor year. All sightings are listed below, and they were all of single birds: in January one was present at Dowlais Farm, Clevedon, on 20th and 22nd; in February one was recorded at Newbridge Road, Bath on 2nd and at PW on 20th; one was found in Rock Wood, Walton-in-Gordano, on March 26th which stayed until April 1st. A most unusual record because of its date, Aug. 26th, was of one sighted in a garden in Kingsdown, Bristol.

Winter	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
No. seen	10	6	13	7	2	10	10	19	18	4

Individuals seen each winter, October to March

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding resident.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	-7	1	0	0	0

In the 2010/11 winter they were present in every WGS garden in slightly reduced numbers. Over the past decade the population has fluctuated but is trendless. The local BBS revealed a peak in 2005, which is similar to the national picture, with a trough in 2008 from which there has been a steady recovery back to the level first

recorded in 1994. There were poor breeding seasons in both 2007 and 2008, but good ones in 2009 and 2010, and clearly the cold weather in December in 2010 did not cause serious losses.

At DW's site at CVL 17 of 74 nests failed, but 264 young were ringed, an overall average of 3.6 nestlings per nest. The Ringing Report on page 161 contains charts showing how the breeding of this, and the next, species has gradually become earlier.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
110	108	112	114	102	94	84	86	99	100

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 98%, BBS Avon population estimate 42,100 pairs)

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-11	England 95-08
% Change	-25	-11	-17	113	39

This was a bad year for the species, which has been increasing steadily since 1998. There was a sharp fall in the numbers recorded by WGS gardens, back to a level last seen in 2004/05. It is not clear whether this is related to a poor breeding season in 2010, or the cold weather of December 2010. BBS and CABS also showed falls.

The warm spring weather led to a first egg laid date of March 30th, exceptionally early. DW's site at CVL had 51 nests, of which seven failed completely, 219 young were ringed, a rate of 4.3 fledglings per nest.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
127	134	145	141	154	140	147	142	159	142

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 97%, BBS Avon population estimate 29,900 pairs)

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.

	WGS
% Change	-4

As usual they were found in around 90% of WGS gardens, and in almost the same numbers as in the previous winter. Too few are counted by BBS to enable a reliable population index to be constructed, and the proportion of squares in which they have been recorded shows sharp fluctuations, but no trend.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
30	34	34	31	25	29	24	29	32	26

Proportion of BBS squares in which it was recorded

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montana*

Apparently a very scarce resident.

Three records were accepted as follows: Jan. 30th, one, Inglestone Common (MCo); two in song in Lower Woods, April 20th, with a third on 25th (PBa, PBu); and one in Lower Woods on July 30th (BL). The table below gives the numbers recorded in the past two decades.

91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3

Records each year

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident.

BBS distribution 5%.

BBS England 95-08 change, down 21%,

Since 1998 there have been individual records from 213 one-km squares. During 2011 records came from 35 squares, seven of which were new since 1998, 13 in the breeding season. It is surprising that, after thirteen

years, it can still be recorded from new sites, these included Harptree Combe, Stoke Gifford, near Newbridge Bath, Peasedown St John and near Marshfield. Twelve of the sites have been recorded back to 1998 and 1999.

	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Total squares	20	52	26	58	37	35	36	30	35	45	35
New squares	13	23	6	29	27	9	13	6	22	10	7

Marsh Tit - Annual total of one-km squares and new squares in which this species was seen

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, the majority recorded from the extensive reed beds at CVL.

Description species

One record; a pair in the reeds at Herriott's End, CVL on Oct. 4th (RMI *et al.*).

From 1970/71 to 1994/95 they were seen in every winter at CVL, and in 1991 a pair raised two broods here. During the past decade there have been several records from CVL including a single bird in November 2002, several records including three together in 2003, in April 2006 and March 2010. Elsewhere single birds were recorded on Severnside in March 2004, OPS in April 2008 and Weston STW in 2010.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Declining but still common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

	BBS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	-1	-29	-19

Locally, BBS figures showed a 50% fall between 1994 and 2002, but a stable population since then.

Winter The largest flock in the first winter period was 60 at Compton Dando on Jan. 20th. In the second period 300 were seen at Marshfield on Nov. 18th, and there were 100 on a stubble field at Keynsham on Dec. 18th.

Breeding Song was reported from Feb. 21st and BBS recorded them as usual in 42% of squares visited, and at a rate that has not altered over the past five years. There were 24 territories at Weston STW (up from 14 in 2010) and two were recorded by KEV around CVL. The Cotswolds provided a third of the breeding season records.

Autumn migration watch The first migratory movement was seen as early as Sept. 23rd when 59 were recorded flying south over Weston STW. On Oct. 12th, 80 were seen flying S over CVL and 60 on the 13th. On 14th a surprising 86 were recorded over Easton in Bristol, and 30 flew over GVRS.

On the Migration Watch weekend of Oct. 16th just 29 were recorded from the coast, but CI-Y had 60 on 17th. After that the only recorded movements were of 20 over CVL on 19th and 20 at BL on 28th with the last, eight to S here on Nov. 3rd.

The weather conditions in October were dominated by high pressure, which probably had the result that most passage was at great height and so invisible to ground observers.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
57	61	65	82	74	76	75	75	72	71

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 42%, BBS Avon population estimate 3800 pairs)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.

England 1995-08 up 11%.

Arrival and departure data.

40 year average first date March 14th, range 50 days. 1966-1988 average March 19th, 1987-2011 average March 9th.

40 year average last date Oct. 6th, range 55 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, stable around 210 days since.

Arrival and passage The first arrival was one at BL on March 4th, which was also present on 5th, and on 12th there were three at PW, two at CVL and nine at BL. There were 60 at CVL on 16th and 40 on 21st. On 25th there were with 100 at PW and 76 at Weston STW. Numbers built fairly steadily to a peak on April 4th when 1500 were present at CVL and "large numbers" at BL. The following day there were abruptly none. There was a

brief second wave between April 10th and 14th, and a final flurry on May 2nd when 150 passed through PW. The impressive total for the whole spring passage was 13,200.

Breeding The colony at BG was estimated at between 80 and 100 individuals with about 20 pairs breeding. Pairs were also present at the traditional sites at Somerdale, and the River Avon upstream of Keynsham, and at a new site close to Newbridge in Bath.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Feeder Rd., Bristol								2		
Floating Hbr., Bristol								?		
BG	1+						3	3	7	c20
Somerdale	11	6	14	14				NA		NA
R. Avon, Keynsham	2	1	1			5	1+	2	NA	NA
Batheaston	?	2	?		3/4	2	1	NA		
Midford Brook										
Woollard			?							
Newbridge, Bath										NA
Total	14+	9	15	14	3/4	7	5+	7	7	c20

Sand Martin - Occupied nests each year (NA means birds present but no clear signs of nesting)

Autumn passage and departure One at CVL on June 11th was regarded as the first return. But passage was spasmodic totalling only 960, the largest group being 200 at CVL on Aug. 18th. The last record was one at CVL on Oct. 6th, which is the average last date.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common passage migrant and common breeder.

England 95-08 up 29% Local change: up 46%.

Arrival and departure data.

40 year average first date March 24th, range 30 days, but March 21st for the past decade.

40 year average last date Nov. 4th, range 40 days, no trend.

40 year average time spent 224 days, range 20 days, trend rising from 213 to 232 since 1976.

Arrival Recorded passage totalled 6500, although the true total was clearly much larger. It began on March 9th when two were seen at Clevedon. This was the equal second earliest date, and ten days ahead of the average. However, numbers were minute throughout the rest of March and the first three weeks of April. 80% of the records came between April 26th and May 2nd. There was a more or less continuous passage along the coast between Clevedon and OPS from April 26th to 30th, with at least 1000 on the first date, and smaller parties on May 1st and 2nd.

Breeding BBS numbers have been remarkably stable since 2004 except for a sharp peak in 2007, although there has been a 50% increase since 1994.

Autumn passage and departure Recorded passage totalled 16,850, but of this 10,000 was the estimate for Sept. 17th at Weston STW, which was the peak of the passage. It began with 225 at CI-Y on July 30th. There were sporadic peaks on Aug. 17th, a wave from Aug. 28th to Sept. 3rd and a final movement beginning on Sept. 17th to 26th. This movement came just before the record heat wave in the last week of September. After that tiny numbers were seen almost daily to the end of October. The last two were one at Aust on Nov. 9th and another at OPS on 12th, which was heading north. This is six days later than the average last date.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
114	104	158	149	161	229	156	176	173	152

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 73%, BBS Avon population estimate 8200 pairs)

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common passage migrant and breeder.

England 1995-08 down 8%. Local change: down 41%.

Arrival and departure data.

40 year average first date March 28th, range 30 days, but average March 25th from 1985-2009.

40 year average last date Oct 31st, range 40 days, but average Oct. 28th 1985-2009.

40 year average time spent 219 days, range 10 days, trend stable since 1978.

Arrival Mysteriously there were almost no records from CVL, and the total recorded passage was just 250. The first sighting was on March 22nd at Clevedon and there were four at Aust on the same day, two days earlier

than the average first date. Very few were seen subsequently until April 12th when 70 were seen at PW, grounded by rain. From then to the end of the month ten to twenty were seen more or less on a daily basis, but without any pattern to the movement.

House Martin Breeding BBS recorded them in 35% of squares, compared with 49% in 1994, and the counts suggested a 50% fall since 1994, although there was a slight increase on 2010. Birds returned to a breeding site at Whitchurch on April 14th, to Inverness Road, Bath, on 15th and to Pooles Wharf, Bristol, on April 24th. Here nest building was recorded on May 29th, and two nests were still occupied on Sept. 25th. Sea Mills Station had 19 nests on Aug. 15th and one was still occupied on Sept. 23rd. At Wrington young were still being fed on 26th. At least twelve pairs were present at Walton-in-Gordano, a newly recorded site.

Post-breeding and departure A total passage of about 7000 began with 300 at CVL on July 18th, although this may just have been a feeding gathering, as no further large groups were recorded until Aug. 17th when 40 were seen at Brandon Hill, and there were over 500 at CVL on 18th. The main passage began on Sept. 4th when 300 were milling around the reactor towers at OPS. There were 600 at CVL on 5th and 1500 on 7th, 1000 were recorded here on 12th and 500 on 13th and 20th. An unusual record was of 1000 moving south on 24th in the Avon Gorge, and 250 were recorded at OPS on the same day. The last record was of four at New Passage on Oct. 9th, seventeen days earlier than the average last date.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
69	78	79	69	62	102	70	50	50	62

House Martin - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 35%, BBS Avon population estimate 3660 pairs)

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

BBS distribution 3%, BBS England 97-07 change, up 80%.

A steep fall in numbers and sites.

CVL There were just 14 singing males around the lake, suggesting that the cold weather in December of 2010 had taken a severe toll.

Elsewhere In the breeding season there were 13 singing males: at ASW, CI-Y, Keynsham STW, PW, RPD, Uphill and Yatton reserve. Outside the breeding season they were recorded from these sites and Weston STW (a male on April 9th).

	1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
CVL singing males	1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28	31	14
Other singing males						3	2	4	3	7	14	14	21	32	33	41	13
Sites						3	2	4	3	5	13	10	8	18	19	17	8

Singing males at CVL, and breeding season singing males from other sites.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-08	England 95-08
% Change	31	-29	3	61	10

Despite, or perhaps because of, the very cold weather in December 2010 they were present in every WGS garden, and in sharply increased numbers. However, BBS recorded an equally sharp decrease.

There were a number of remarkably high counts from survey walks, including 80 seen passing along the coast in ten minutes on Oct. 26th at Wains Hill, Clevedon, 40 were seen on Brandon Hill on Aug. 2nd, 23 in a garden at Fishponds on Feb. 24th, and the same number at Southmead in November. Observers do not always make clear whether counts are of single flocks, or accumulated over time.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
119	115	125	102	95	135	146	141	163	115

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 50%)

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus**Scarce or very scarce autumn visitor; rare in winter.*

Description species

Three records of single birds as follows: on Oct. 22nd at Worlebury (GW); on 27th in a garden on Dundry (DN); and on Dec. 29th, ringed at CVRS (*per* AA), which stayed into 2012.

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years. It was first recorded in the Avon area in 1986 when there were five records.

91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	5	0	1	3

Records each year

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix**Uncommon spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996.*

Descriptions required for autumn records

UK 95-08 change: down 61%.

Migration dates:

40 year average arrival date April 21st range 20 days, no trend.

There were just two records of single birds. The first on April 10th at Nunnery Point, CVL, was in brief song. This date is the 4th earliest every recorded, and ten days earlier than average. The second came from a BBS square, ST4860 near Havyatt Green, Lower Langford, on April 17th.

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last ten years, almost all of which were on spring passage.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	10	8	9	8	10	5	3	7	8	2

Passage totals each year

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 95-08 change, up 45% , local fluctuating.

A better than average year.

First Winter In January there were records of twelve from seven sites, (Saltford, Bedminster, Stokes Croft, Montpelier, PW, ASW, and Bath), and in February nine from three sites, (Keynsham, Saltford and OPS). The Saltford area had a maximum of seven on Feb. 5th.

Spring passage A singing male at Keynsham STW was reported on Feb. 26th, and on March 1st there were two at Saltford STW where six had been recorded on Feb. 18th. The next was one at BL on 4th, and then passage proper began on 12th, when 23 were reported from eleven sites. For the rest of the month there were daily records of up to 40 until 26th when 100 were recorded, and 105 on 28th. This pattern is very similar to last year's records.

Breeding BBS showed an increase for the second year running, back to population levels last seen in 2004. There were 73 singing males around CVL, a record, see table on page 110.

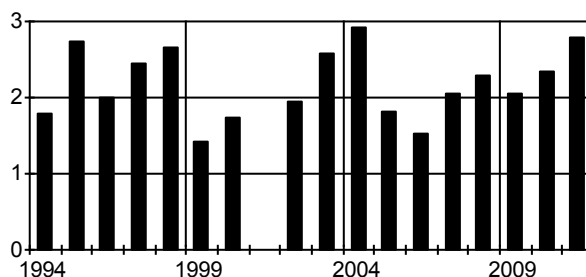
2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
110	144	165	102	85	115	129	115	131	157

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 91%, BBS Avon population estimate 10,900 pairs)

Autumn passage A fall of 20 in a Dundry garden on Aug. 16th was the first indication of passage. A total of 48 was counted at Saltford on Aug. 30th. GVRs ringed two on Sept. 4th, 16 on 15th and 39 on 22nd. At Saltford there were 13 on Oct. 1st, and smaller numbers through the rest of the month. Three were ringed by GVRs on 14th. The last at Weston STW was on 22nd, there was one at NP on 23rd, and two at CVL on 31st.

Second winter In November there were reports of ten individuals from seven sites (Aust, BL, CVL, Kenn, OPS, Pill, Saltford). In December ten individuals were recorded from five sites (Banwell, BL, CVL, Saltford and Bradley Stoke).

The changing populations over the past decade of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Whitethroat are shown by charts giving the rate per hour at which they have been recorded by the Avon BBS.



Chiffchaff – BBS rates 1994-2011

2000/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
100	83	129	222	193	237	117	94	56	46	68

Chiffchaff - Winter bird-days

Siberian Chiffchaff. *P. c. tristis*

Scarce or very scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.

Description subspecies

One recorded at Saltford (JWD) on Jan.11th, was heard again on March 8th and 15th. Both song and calls were noted, and it is thought likely that this was a single over-wintering individual.

The table below gives the number of accepted records of this subspecies seen in the last 20 years.

1991	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1

Records each year

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor.

BBS England 95-08 change, down 30%, local, down 72%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date March 26th, range 25 days, but average March 23rd in past decade.

40 year average last date Sept. 24th, range 30 days, trend stable.

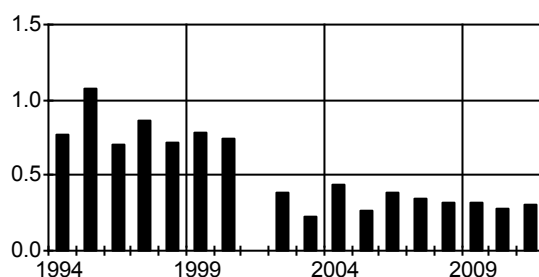
40 year average time spent 183 days, range 40 days, 185 days since 1985.

An average year by recent standards.

Arrival There was an early record on March 13th at Northwick Warth. The next record was of two at PW on 25th which is the normal first date. There were ten on 26th and nearly 50 on 28th. The main passage occurred between April 2nd and 9th after which up to 15 were recorded on most days.

Six singing males were heard around CVL, compared with none in 2010. BBS showed a slight increase.

Departure There were very few passage records. Six appeared in a Dundry garden on Aug. 16th; GVRs ringed three on Sept. 4th and on 15th. The last record was from Severn Beach on 16th, a week earlier than the normal last date.



Willow Warbler – BBS rates 1994-2011

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
BBS index	51	30	57	35	49	45	42	42	36	39
Ringling Total	222	234	220	270	299	209	39	86	101	140

Willow Warbler - Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 and ringing totals (2011 BBS distribution 32%)

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	Local 95-08	England 95-08
% Change	-7	21	1	51

A record year. BBS found this species in 88% of squares, up from 70% in 1994, and they were counted in greater numbers than ever before. Nationally, their breeding population has grown by 87% in the past 25 years.

Winter 2010/11 WGS recorded them in 93% of gardens, the highest proportion ever. Numbers built up rapidly in December 2010 in response to the cold, and peaked over the New Year. They fell off slightly in January but peaked again in response to the cold in early February. There was the usual steady decline through March. Birds that had been wintering in a Redland garden remained until April 2nd.

Spring arrival and breeding season The first probable migrants were seen at PW on March 23rd, and again on 24th, and on 25th they were recorded at CVL and two sites in Clifton, and on 26th from OPS and New Passage. On 28th nine were at BL, seven at PW and six at CVL. In April there were 19 at Saltford on 5th, ten singing males at PW on 6th, 30 at Saltford on 8th, 26 at BL on 10th, and 36 at Saltford on 11th. There were fewer until 21st when there were 36 at Saltford, with 39 here on 23rd, 33 on 25th and 31 on 28th.

In the breeding season a record 70 territories were noted around CVL.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
158	142	152	152	128	144	130	142	170	206

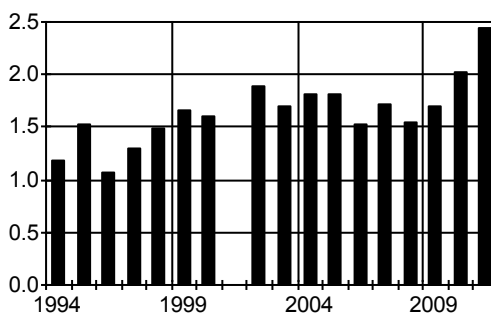
Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 88%, BBS Avon population estimate 13,300 pairs)

Autumn passage Began with 25 in Sand Bay on Aug. 30th, the first significant count. In September 29 were caught by GVRs on 4th, 78 on 15th and 19 on 22nd. During October up to five were reported, most in the second half of the month.

Second winter period In November ten bird-days were recorded from seven gardens, and there were also 14 bird-days from the coast and eight from Saltford. In December there were records of 81 bird-days from 21 gardens, with a peak in the third week. This total is about a third of that recorded in December 2010.

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
0.58	0.52	0.43	0.45	0.64	0.37	0.46	0.51	0.58	0.54

Blackcap - Average numbers per garden per week



Blackcap – BBS rates 1994-2011

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin**Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

BBS England 95-08 change, down 19%, local, down 50%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date April 14th, range 30 days, trend stable.

40 year average last date Sept. 26th, range 60 days, trend stable.

40 year average time spent 164 days, range 60 days, trend stable.

BBS recorded them in 11% of squares compared with 26% in 1994, but the numbers counted are too few to create a meaningful index. Three were heard on April 8th at RPD, which is six days earlier than the average. The next was on 16th at OPS, and passage peaked on 26th when 23 were recorded at CVL.

In the breeding season a record 58 singing males were recorded around CVL (see table on page 110), and there were records from 17 other sites. BBS counted only 32 in 22 squares.

There were just five records in August, four in the first half of September and a final record on 21st, at Brentry, which is just two days earlier than average.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca**Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

BBS England 95-08 change, down 3%, local, up 30%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date April 20th, range 20 days, but average April 16th since 2000.

40 year average last date Sept. 28th, range 40 days, but average Sept. 22nd since 2000.

40 year average time spent 161 days, range 40 days, stable since 1990.

They were found in 17% of BBS squares, the same figure as in 1994, but numbers counted are too small to create a reliable population index. Nationally the population has been rising since a nadir in 1998.

The first was seen at OPS on April 11th, the third earliest date ever, eight days earlier than average. The next was at Woodspring Bay the following day. Passage peaked around 24th.

BBS counted 74, and there were six singing males around CVL, and four territories at Weston STW.

A few were recorded from the coast throughout August and the first week of September. There was single birds at Brentry on Sept. 17th, at OPS on 18th and at Weston STW on Sept. 26th, the last of the year which was three days earlier than average.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis**Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

BBS England 95-08 change, up 18%, local down 29%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date April 14th, range 20 days, but average April 10th since 2000.

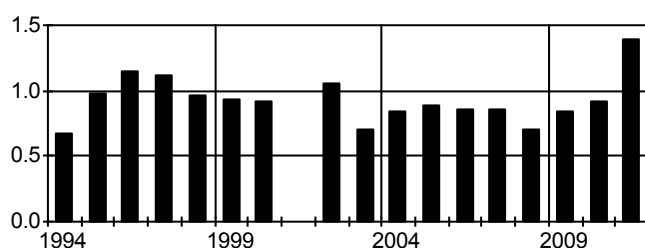
40 year average last date Sept. 25th, range 30 days, trend stable.

40 year average time spent 164 days, range 40 days, but 170 days since 1985.

Arrival The first was seen at Saltford on April 7th. This was the equal third earliest arrival, and six days earlier than average. Six were present at five sites on 8th. Passage appeared to come in three waves, the first peaking on the 10th, the second on the 20th and the third on 30th.

Breeding There were twelve singing around CVL, the best figure since 15 in 1977. Weston STW held 17 territories, one fewer than in 2010. BBS counted them in record numbers, 50% up on 2010 and 53 were recorded in 18 one-km squares within the city of Bristol, the most for many years.

Autumn Very few were recorded on passage on the coast. There were eight at OPS on Aug. 2nd, twelve at Chittening on 22nd, and five at Sand Bay on 30th. GVRs ringed four on Sept. 4th and there were four at Severn Beach on 16th. The last three were one at Chittening on 29th, one at Saltford on Oct. 1st and the last at OPS on 2nd, six days later than the average last date.



Whitethroat – BBS rates 1994-2011

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
158	104	126	133	128	127	104	125	137	207

Whitethroat - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 63%, BBS Avon population estimate 4900 pairs)

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.

England 1995-08, down 23%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date: April 14th, range 20 days, no trend.

40 year average last date Sept 19th, range 40 days, no trend.

Spring passage The first was heard on April 6th at CVL which was eight days earlier than average, and the third earliest ever, and the third year running with an early arrival. The next was reeling in a supermarket car-park in Fishponds on 7th and the third at Pill on 8th. On 9th seven were heard at five sites, and there were daily records from then on. The largest number was eleven from four sites on 16th. Passage was continuous to May 5th, by which time 105 bird-days had been recorded from 27 sites.

Breeding season There were no breeding reports, but birds were heard reeling at Prospect Stile, OPS and CVL in late May or June.

Autumn passage GVRs ringed four on Sept. 4th and one on 15th. The last record was on Sept. 25th from Aust, seven days later than the normal last date.

	Av. 1992/01	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	24	20	6	39	37	47	32	29	67	74	105
Breeding season	3	1	1	2	2	7	11	4	6	6	0
Autumn	17	24	12	6	29	6	3	6	7	16	9

Spring and autumn passage bird days and breeding season territories.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 12%.

BBS England 95-08 change, down 6%.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date April 13th, range 24 days, but average April 8th since 2000.

40 year average last date Sept. 28th, range 30 days, trend stable.

40 year average time spent 168 days, range 40 days, but 172 days over past decade.

BBS recorded this species in 17% of squares, an increase on the 7% in which they were found in 1994, but too few are counted to enable a population index to be constructed.

Spring Three were seen on April 4th, one at CVL and two at Weston STW, which is six days earlier than the 25 year average first date. In 1992 this average was April 15th. One was ringed on 7th at CVRS, and on 14th ten were recorded at three sites. Passage was steady through the rest of the month, with a peak on 21st and 22nd.

Breeding A total of 31 singing males was noted around CVL with 35 at Weston STW.

Autumn passage There were very few autumn records. GVRs ringed six on Sept. 4th and one on 15th. One was at CVL on 19th, a juvenile was at Uphill on 21st and the last was another at Weston STW on 26th, three days earlier than the average date.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

BBS distribution 12%.

BBS England 95-08 change, up 22%, local, up 90%

Migration dates:

40 year average first date April 18th, range 30 days, trend continuous fall in date since 1972, and last decade average date is April 8th.

40 year average last date Sept. 28th, range 50 days, and average of last decade Oct. 2nd

40 year average time spent 164 days, range 50 days, trend continuous increase since 1975, and average 77 days over past decade.

BBS found them in 13% of squares, which compares with just 3% in 1994. Nationally they have increased by 51% in the past 25 years.

Arrival The first was heard on April 3rd at CVL, the joint earliest date with 2001 and 2002 when such an early date was unheard of. The 25 year average first date is now April 13th and the ten-year average is April 8th. Three were seen on 6th and one on 7th, and from then on passage was more or less steady throughout the month.

Breeding There were 45 singing males at Weston STW, 18 at Blake's Pools, 16 on the Strawberry Line at Yatton, and 16 at RPD. At CVL there were three nests with eggs in April, an exceptionally early start, 164 nests were found in total and 436 young were ringed.

Autumn passage GVRS ringed four on Sept. 4th and one on 22nd. The last, at Weston STW, was on Sept. 26th. However, CVRS ringed one on Oct. 23rd, the fourth latest date ever. It weighed 20.9 grams, beating the previous Avon record, from 53,000 captures, by over a gram. The normal summer weight is 10 to 13 grams.

Warblers at CVL

	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Sedge Warbler	7	18	4	7	11	11	7	41	20	41	31
Garden Warbler	28	26	17	15	14	28	27	29	37	40	58
Blackcap	29	40	32	23	23	31	35	45	49	47	70
Chiffchaff	18	35	35	29	25	30	38	38	45	57	73
Willow Warbler	5	0	2	6	6	0	7	9	3	0	6

Singing males within the perimeter of CVL counted by KEV using a standardised method

WAXWING *Bombus garrulus*

Scarce irruptive winter visitor. Erratic locally with a big influx in winter 2004/05.

The snow began on Nov. 27th, 2010, and a Waxwing irruption began at the same time with a peak just before Christmas. Between Jan. 1st and April 4th there were records of 1205 bird-days, with a maximum flock size of 54. The majority of the records were from 22 different sites within greater Bristol, including car-parks belonging to Messrs. Aldi, Gardiner Haskins, Saab, Sainsbury and Waitrose, and the Newman Hall, almost certainly because various varieties of Rowan and Whitebeam had been planted. There were also records from Bath University, Clevedon, Keynsham, Little Stoke, the Lulsgate control tower, New Passage, and Tesco at Weston-s-Mare.

The records suggest there were roughly 30 birds in the region throughout January and February, and numbers fell gradually through March. The last were 15 seen at St Andrews on April 4th. They were highly mobile presumably stripping food sources at one site before moving on.

There were no records in the second winter period.

	1981/82	88/89	95/96	98/99	00/01	02/03	04/05	05/06	08/09	09/10	2010/11
Bird-days	6	1	c75	3	c107	c42	10875	1	c70	22	2897
Max. flock	3	1	5	1	6	2	377	1	14	20	112

Winters in which Waxwings were seen in Avon

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common breeding resident. Scarce away from established sites.

BBS distribution 16%.

BBS England 95-08 change, up 56%.

Because they are elusive, they were only found in 16% of BBS squares, and too few are seen to enable a population index to be created. Nationally this species has been increasing steadily since 1970.

Since 1998 they have been reported from 314 one-km squares, although in this period 166 of these sites have each only produced a single record. However, in 2011 records came from 81 one-km squares, 23 of them new, and 25 with records back to 1998 or 1999. It was present in winter in 13% of WGS gardens; the provision of garden feeding is probably assisting winter survival.

	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Total squares	21	59	69	80	87	34	54	42	65	83	81
New squares	12	22	27	28	26	9	13	6	22	31	23

Total number of one-km squares in which species was reported each year

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly Common breeding resident; possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

BBS Distribution 7%.

BBS England 95-08 change, down 13%.

Since 1998 they have been found in 266 one-km squares, and this year they were recorded in 69 of them, 22 of which were new. It was recorded in just 7% of BBS squares, and just 21 were counted in 530 hours of timed counts. This is distinctly fewer than in 2010, and the species may well have suffered from the cold weather in December of 2010.

	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Total squares	19	35	49	26	61	26	41	36	44	57	69
New squares	7	16	28	13	27	11	14	10	14	13	22

Total number of one-km squares in which species was reported each year

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident. Probably the commonest breeding bird in the region.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	-16	-9	1	-24%	14

The coldest December since 1916 in 2010 clearly had an impact as BBS numbers were down for the fourth year in succession, and are back to their level after the cold winter of 1995/96. The WGS also recorded lower figures. However, it remains the commonest species in the region. Song was recorded from Feb. 6th to Nov. 6th.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
BBS Index	124	115	115	117	92	103	97	89	83	76
Steep Holm territories	25	nc	9	19	16	18	28	28	nc	nc

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 98%, BBS Avon population estimate 46,000 pairs)

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; passage migrant and winter visitor.

	WGS	BBS	Local 94-11	England 95-08
% Change	76	0	-68	15

In the 2010/11 winter they were present in 63% of WGS gardens, and numbers increased by 76%. There was a surge to nearly double the winter average in the last week of November as the snow fell, and they stayed at about this level until the New Year. The average for the whole winter was back to normal for the past decade, but still half what it had been in the 1970s.

The BBS recorded them in 64% of one-km squares, and in the same numbers as the previous year. In January small roosts were recorded at Avonmouth and Patchway, and in February there was an estimated 10,000 at Ebbdown Farm, near Marshfield.

Starling con't

In October small numbers were seen during migration watches. On 16th, 1460 were seen flying west at Sand Point in four hours, and 565 in an hour here on 19th.

A dramatic roost built up at New Passage during November. There were 7000 on 18th and an estimated 17,500 on 19th and 25,000 on 26th. The roost was in a *Leylandii* hedge, and one observer noted that birds were colliding with a nearby cable and killing themselves as they dived into the roost. Numbers reached 45,000 on the Dec. 9th but there were only 10,000 on 10th, and no subsequent records.

Feeding flocks of up to 2500 were seen at CI-Y in December.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
80	71	61	60	60	59	39	37	32	32
Starling - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 64%, BBS Avon population estimate 9400 pairs)									
2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
3.9	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.9	2.4	4.1
Starling - 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 15%. Ten-yr local change: stable.

There were reports from most of the streams in the region, and no evidence that the cold weather in December 2010 damaged the population. It was seen throughout the year on the Winford Brook, generating 128 bird-days. All other sites created 77 bird-days.

Breeding was probable at 13 sites: North of the Avon on Little Avon at Damery; on the Frome at Iron Acton, Ridge Wood in Yate, Frenchay, and Snuff Mills; on the R. Boyd at Wick; on the Siston Brook at Willsbridge; and possibly on the Trym at Blaise. South of the Avon on R. Cam at Hallatrow; on the R. Chew at Keynsham, Publow, and Compton Dando; on the Winford Brook, near Littleton.

They were seen at eleven sites in winter, two of which, the Bye Brook at Shockerwick and the Wellow Brook at Radford, were different from the breeding season.

	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Bird-days	39	29	38	56	51	89	77	84	173	201	205
Localities	11	12	13	14	10	13	12	8	9	18	23
Total bird-days and number of reported sites each year											

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast.

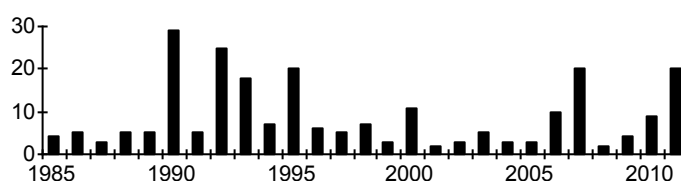
Migration dates:

40 year average first date: April 1st, range 30 days, with no long term trend.

40 year average last date Oct. 20th, but many years have no observation.

The first was seen on March 9th, in Failand, the earliest first-date yet recorded, and 20 days earlier than normal, (CJS). The next date was 25th when one was reported from North Weston. Five more were seen to the 29th, at Clandown, PW, Walton Common and Sand Point, and then there was a pause until April 7th, when one was at PW, and there was another at Marshfield on 10th. On the 16th one was found on Sodbury Common, and it was seen on an almost daily basis until 29th. This ensured that the total bird-days, at 20, was the highest since 2007.

None were seen in the autumn.



Ring Ouzel spring passage 1985-2011

	1991/00 Av.	2001	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	6	2	3	5	3	3	10	20	2	4	9	20
Autumn	3	2	1	2	1	19	1	0	2	4	2	0

Ring Ouzel - spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-08	England 95-08
% Change	3	-1	-6	3	23

In the 2010/11 winter WGS numbers were the same as for the last three winters, and there was no variation during the course of the winter. BBS counts showed no significant drop, so they survived the cold weather in December 2010. However, the 2011 breeding season does not seem to have been a good one as numbers seen by the CABS fell steadily from early May, and reached an all-time low in mid-summer from which there was very little later recovery. Song was recorded from Feb. 27th and ended on June 25th, a normal pattern. There was an interesting record on Jan. 1st from Hotwells of song at night.

The first nest building was recorded on March 3rd and the first fledgling on 14th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
174	165	164	161	155	164	156	151	142	141

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 100%, BBS Avon population estimate 38,300 pairs)

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Migration dates:

40 year average arrival date Oct. 3rd range 60 days, but Oct. 8th in past decade.

40 year average last date April 13th, range 40 days, average April 15th in past decade.

40 year average time spent 192 days, range 50 days, but only 176 in past decade.

First half-winter In the 2010/11 winter they were recorded in just half of the WGS gardens, down from 74% the previous year, and in smaller numbers. However, the main influx began on Dec. 10th in 2010, peaked in the week up to Christmas, declined a little to the New Year, and then virtually disappeared.

The largest flocks recorded in January were 400 at OPS on 8th and in February 400 at Kenn Moor on 21st, but most groups were around 50 or below. In March 500 were seen at CI-Y on 6th, 300 at Backwell on 9th, and 200 on Weston Moor on 11th. Numbers then fell until 20th when there were 125 at CI-Y and 200 at Marshfield on 21st. The last were ten at BL and one at Weston STW on 28th. This was an early last date, 19 days earlier than average.

Second half-year The first arrivals appeared on Oct. 4th when 20 were recorded at Huntingford Mill, near Damery, and on 13th, 64 were seen near Wapley, 48 at North Stoke, 30 at CVL, 15 on the Bitton Cycle track and three at New Passage. There were 84 at Saltford on 14th, but after that very few were seen for the rest of the month. In November eight flocks of 300 or over were noted, the largest, 450, at Clevedon on 26th. In December there were nine flocks of over 200, as well as 750 on Kenn Moor on 16th and 1750 at CI-Y on 15th, 1500 here on 17th, 1000 on 18th, 2000 on 20th, but only 300 on 27th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident, which declined in the 1980s. Status as a passage migrant and winter visitor uncertain.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 95-08	England 95-08
% Change	0	-19	6	12	25

In the 2010/11 winter they were present in 83% of WGS gardens and in numbers that were similar to those in 2009/10. Numbers tripled abruptly in early December 2010 as snow covered the land, peaked in the second week, and remained high until the end of January. However, it is clear that the cold weather in December took a heavy toll as BBS numbers fell to their lowest level since 1999. Song was recorded by CABS from Jan. 16th to July 8th, a normal pattern.

A total of 27 pairs bred around the perimeter of CVL, as in 2009 and 2010.

In the second winter period song was first recorded at Clifton on Nov. 20th, and was continuous from Dec. 5th to the end of the year, stimulated by the warm weather.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
169	148	160	158	139	145	163	145	156	126

Song Thrush - Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 82%, BBS Avon population estimate 5550 pairs)

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Migration dates:

40 year average first date Sept. 30th, range 25 days, but Sept. 27th over past decade.

40 year average last date April 9th, range 30 days, but April 4th over past decade.

40 year average time spent 191 days, range 30, no trend.

First half-winter In the 2010/11 winter WGS recorded this species in 93% of gardens, and in the highest numbers since the 1996/97 winter. Numbers peaked in the second week of December 2010, when the land was snow-covered, at a level five times normal, and then slowly fell during the rest of the month, and they more or less abandoned gardens in the New Year.

In January there were just two flocks of 200 or over, the larger, 350, at Cl-Y on 22nd. In February there was a single flock of this size, 215, at Kenn Moor on 21st. In March there were 120 at Batheaston on 3rd, and 200 on Weston Moor on 11th. The last sighting was of one in Bath on 29th, ten days earlier than normal.

Second half-year One was heard over Redland on Sept. 29th. The next was one on Dundry on Oct. 10th and on 13th there were 50 at Lulsgate, and tiny numbers from seven other sites. About 1000 were seen on 14th at Saltford, but the total of all other sightings in October was lower than this. Migration watches saw very few. In November there were no flocks over 200; the largest was 170 at Saltford on 7th but in December there were nine such flocks, the largest, 600, at Cl-Y on 20th.

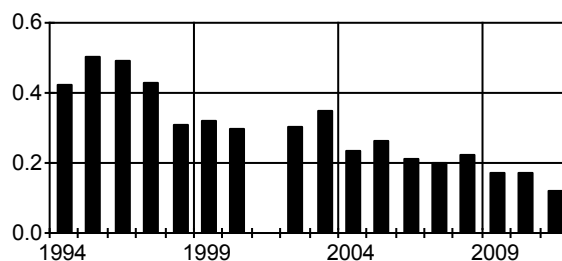
MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and probable winter visitor.

BBS England 95-08 change, down 25%, local, down 56%.

BBS recorded them in just 21% of squares, compared with 26% in 2010, and 42% in 1994. The numbers counted were down by 30% on 2010, continuing a decline that has seen a drop of 76% since 1995. The causes of this continuing decline are unknown, and the cold weather in December 2010 may have played a part, even though their main winter food is berries rather than soil invertebrates.

The largest count was 19 at OPS on Feb. 5th, song was recorded in January and February, nest building in March, and a juvenile was recorded on May 7th. Four pairs bred around CVL, also 16 were counted at Saltford on Aug. 1st but none were seen here after the 16th. In December there was a series of records of a bird defending Mistletoe throughout the month.



Mistle Thrush – BBS rates 1994-2011

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
73	83	56	62	50	48	52	40	40	29

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 21%)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata**Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

BBS distribution 1%. BBS England 98-08 change, down 48%, local down 33%

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.

After three years with more stable numbers there was a further decline in bird-days.

The first was at Sand Point on May 8th, followed by two at New Passage the next day. From 10th there were then just ten more records of 16 individuals to the end of the month. The only obvious migrant was one at Weston STW on 14th – only the third record for this site. The others were at just nine sites including two different areas around BL. Most records were of single birds apart from four at Shire Valley, Marshfield on 21st and at BL on 30th.

In June and July there were 14 records from just ten sites (18 from 14 sites in 2009, 15 from eleven in 2010). Sites included three areas around BL and Shire Valley, Marshfield into mid-June. Fledged young were noted on Chipping Sodbury GC on July 25th and four were at Bannerdown on 27th.

The 18 August records came from ten sites and again included a mixture of breeders and migrants (for example one at well-watched CVL on 28th, although none was recorded from the coast). Regular sightings came from Chipping Sodbury Common with a peak of seven (four adults and three young) on 6th. In September there were single birds at Aust STW on 1st, Compton Dando on 4th, OPS on 9th and the last at Saltford on 28th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
151	222	128	108	109	58	98	97	100	81

Bird-days per year

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant breeding resident and passage migrant.*

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
%Change	-9	-9	6	-4	25

This species remains abundant and widespread with records from 96% of BBS squares (this has varied between 95% and 100% during the past decade). The BBS index was down again this year following the second consecutive hard winter. CABS numbers were slightly up on last year, perhaps suggesting birds survived the cold winter better in the city than in other areas.

A total of 18 was recorded on the regular BBS walk at BL in April, and 32 were counted at both Leap Valley, Downend, on Nov. 16th and Backwell Lake on 24th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
128	134	134	128	128	138	140	143	121	112

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 96%, BBS Avon population estimate 35,100 pairs)

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos**Scarce breeding summer migrant; Scarce/very scarce passage migrant.*

England 10 yr change down 53%. local down 80%.

40 yr average arrival date April 12th. There has been no trend in this date, but the number of records in recent years has been small.

The first were single migrants in song at Batheaston Nature Reserve on April 14th and PW next day. Otherwise the only records again came from the Lower Woods – Inglestone Common – Horwood Farm area. Recorded here between April 18th into June (no precise last date recorded, although once singing stops they are elusive and the date of the last record is unlikely to represent the actual departure date) with two singing on the first date, three by 24th and up to five by the end of the month (SJB, CH). One nest was found with five eggs, which hatched on May 16th and fledged successfully. Two further pairs were seen feeding young on 24th. A fourth male was apparently unpaired and sang into June (CB). Intensive field work suggests numbers might be fairly stable here and breeding success was good. All are now confined to areas of dense scrub with no records of singing birds from the woods. A paper discussing occurrences of the species at this site is on page 145.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
11.4	5	2	3	11	8	6	5	3	3	4-5

Nightingale - Estimate of number of pairs attempting to breed each year

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently.

No repeat of last year's successful breeding but otherwise an average year, the number of bird-days was inflated by regular reports of a few long staying individuals.

In the first winter period two, a male and a female or first-winter, were in the Portishead Marina area from Jan. 1st, the male remaining until to Feb. 9th and the female type until March 13th. Otherwise all records at this time were of single birds: at Hotwells from Jan. 6th to 7th; Severn Beach from Jan. 6th to Feb. 7th; CVL, the male from December 2010 intermittently from Jan. 14th to Feb. 12th; Ashton Vale from Jan. 16th to 28th; and Nailsea on Feb 14th.

Single migrants were seen in March on the sea wall at Cl-Y on 9th and in a Weston-s-Mare garden on 27th.

The only suggestion of possible breeding this year was of one at Romney House car park (Bristol City Council Offices), Lockleaze, on July 18th and 22nd.

The first of the autumn was at Clevedon on Nov. 3rd. This was followed by single birds at Portishead the next day; at New Passage on 7th and nearby Severn Beach from (probably the same) 8th to 9th. One at RPD on Nov. 20th was followed by three more sightings of presumably the same individual up to Dec. 31st. Single birds were in two different areas of Yate on Nov. 22nd, at Severn Beach on Dec. 14th and Anchor Head on 24th.

1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
28	17	25	24+	16	12	33	45	111	88	63

Bird-days each year

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor.

BBS England 98-08 change, down 10%.

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 189 days, with a range of 60 days, and no trend.

An average spring with a number of early records followed by the best autumn for at least a decade.

Spring passage One at How Ham Farm, Clapton-in-Gordano on March 17th (MHe) – was our earliest ever, the previous record being March 20th, 1994 at Horton. There followed three more March records of single birds in the Gordano Valley on 26th, at RPD on 27th and in a Portishead garden on 28th. After further records at Kenn Moor and PW on April 2nd, there were daily records from 5th to 10th. These came from 15 sites, six of them on 6th including two at PW and then four at Sand Point on 9th. No more were seen until 18th with one or two at five sites until 23rd. The only May records were of one at Sand Point on 2nd, and one at Almondsbury and two at Tyntesfield on 4th.

The total of 37 in spring from 22 sites, 14 of them inland, was the best since 2006.

Spring migrants								
Date	Mar 17-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31	June 1-10
Bird-days	4	22	5	2	4	0	0	0
Max count	1	4	2	1	2	0	0	0

Autumn passage A female at Northwick Warth on the unusual date of June 23rd might have been a failed breeder. Two juveniles at OPS on July 2nd, one still present next day, had presumably wandered from their natal site rather than having bred locally. Later in July records from Aust Warth on 23rd and Sodbury Common on 28th (two) were more typical migrant records. August was the peak month with records from 13 sites, nine of them inland, with the best run of records from Chipping Sodbury Common including an exceptional ten on 21st. One at Cribb's Causeway on 23rd was unusual. Passage was all but over by September with single birds at three sites to 5th and just two more, at Chipping Sodbury Common on 16th and RPD on 18th. Late records were of two in Royal Fort Gardens, Clifton on Oct. 16th and one at Worle on 27th.

The protracted autumn passage of 78 bird-days came from 18 sites, eleven of them inland. A disproportionate 49 bird-days came from just one site, Chipping Sodbury Common, previously rarely watched.

Autumn migrants											
Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10	Oct 11-20			
Bird-days	14	15	36	3	2	0	0	2			
Max count	4	6	10	1	1	0	0	2			
	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	19	37	26	49	34	65	18	26	28	24	37
Autumn	29	27	35	30	26	36	16	20	17	29	78

Redstart - Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant, usually more numerous in autumn. Formerly bred, now rare in mid-summer.

BBS England 98-08 change: down 43%.

Migration dates:

Forty year average first date April 19, range in recent years ten days, no trend.

Forty year average last date Oct 15th, range 42 days. A slight trend to earlier last dates since 1989.

Average time spent 178, range 30 days, no trend.

An average spring, but the autumn passage was the third lowest since 2002.

Spring The first were three at Aust Warth on April 17th followed by sightings at six sites between 19th and 25th including four at CI-Y on 20th. They were then widely recorded (records from ten sites) on most dates from April 29th to May 7th with peaks of three at CI-Y on 1st and five at Weston STW on 2nd. The last of the spring were at Saltford on 17th and CI-Y on June 4th.

The spring total of 34, from 14 sites, six of them inland, was about average for recent years.

Spring migrants					
Date	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	10	4	18	1	0
Max count	4	1	5	1	0

Autumn The first were two at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 26th. In August there were one or two at CVL, Marshfield and Chipping Sodbury Common on six dates to 20th. Passage picked up in the last ten days of the month with birds noted at seven sites with a peak of four at Northwick Warth on 27th. They were more widespread in early September with records from ten sites up to 10th including six at Weston STW on 3rd. Passage then tailed off with just one or two at four sites to 19th. Late in the month there were three at Weston STW on 23rd and six here on 26th. A final flurry in the first week of October produced one or two at five sites with the last at Chittening Warth (two) and Saltford on 7th.

The autumn total of 77 was another poor showing. Autumn records came from 14 sites, seven of them inland.

Autumn migrants											
Date	July 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10			
Bird-days	2	3	4	24	22	6	9	7			
Max count	2	1	2	4	6	2	6	2			
	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	49	22	45	46	41	48	31	24	18	37	34
Autumn	97	180	188	71	90	138	33	127	88	92	77

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant and scarce breeding species.

England ten-year change: up 184%. Local ten-year change: has begun to breed again.

A further decline in the first winter period. At least one pair bred and two others were present in suitable habitat but autumn and winter numbers showed no improvement.

Stonechat First winter period In the first two months it was recorded from just ten sites (15 sites in the same period last year), only three of them inland. Three at Sand Bay on Feb. 22nd was the highest count with records of two at three further sites, each on just a single date. These records perhaps involved a mere 17 individuals, down on last year's 22 and well down on the estimate of 51 from the same period in 2009. There was only a single record in January with the rest in February, and 19 of the total of 23 bird-days in the latter month came from 18th onwards. This strongly suggests these later birds were early migrants and that the actual wintering population was reduced to a handful.

Spring passage The spring passage which probably began in February gathered pace in March with a total of 35 bird-days from 14 sites, half of them inland, up to 17th. The only record later in March came from Sand Point where there was a pair on 27th. The peak count was six at Severnside on 12th, which comprised three at Severn Beach and another three (or possibly the same) at nearby Chittening Warth. Otherwise there were three at Weston STW, also on 12th, and records of two from a further three sites. Another presumed migrant was then at Chittening Warth on April 7th.

Breeding A pair continued to be reported occasionally at Sand Point through April until June 19th, when they were calling agitatedly, but no young were seen. A pair with a single youngster at Weston STW on June 1st was the first breeding record for the site. A further pair was at Felton Common on June 14th.

Autumn passage The first to return was a juvenile at CVL on July 25th with no more until two at Sand Bay on Aug. 22nd and one at Pill on 28th. In September there were six records, four from 18th onwards, of one or two at Aust Warth, Chittening Warth, CI-Y, and Chipping Sodbury Common. October produced just ten records, from six sites (two of them inland: CVL and Saltford), with five at Uphill on 3rd, four at Chittening on 7th and a total of roughly 16 individuals. The total of about 28 migrants from late July through to October was well down on most recent years. A total of 112 was estimated in September and October 2009, a fairly typical year, but this year's figure of 26 is comparable with that of 23 for the same period in 2010, which followed the first of the two recent killer winters.

Second winter period There were eleven records in November, of one or two at six sites (two inland: Congresbury Moor and CVL) involving perhaps 13 individuals. Some of these were probably migrants as there were just five records in December of one or two at CI-Y, Felton Common, PW and Weston STW.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Jan. – Feb.	25	38	44	48	57	44	55	51	22	17
Breeding pairs	3	3	8	11	12	7	15	2	2	3
Nov. – Dec.	58	40	45	62	55	63	69	50	16	19

Stonechat - Estimated number of individuals present in the two winter periods and breeding pairs each year

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly on the coast and at traditional inland sites.

BBS England 98-08 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.

An excellent passage in both spring and autumn with some high counts. A very late bird was at RPD at the end of November.

Spring passage The sum of all reported bird-days for the spring was 980, the best since the exceptional 2006 spring passage. The first sightings were two at Wick St Lawrence on March 8th followed by three at CI-Y and one at Severn Beach the next day. They were regular from 11th to the end of the month with records from 20 sites, most in the last week and notable counts of 16 on Severnside on 26th, 21 at CI-Y and 25 at RPD next day. Passage peaked in April with much better numbers than last year and 18 records of double figure counts (just two such counts in April 2010). Notable counts were 50 at CI-Y on 10th, 35 at Dundry on 18th building to an impressive 59 the following evening, and 33 at CI-Y on 20th. The other 14 double figure counts were all of ten to 19 at seven sites, two of them inland.

Good numbers were still passing through in early May with peaks of 21 at CI-Y on 2nd and 14 at Northwick Warth on 6th. Numbers quickly tailed off by mid-month with the last few stragglers to 30th. Again there was some evidence of a double peak in passage and as usual many of the later birds showed characteristics of Greenland/Iceland populations.

Spring migrants								
Date	Mar 8-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	28	151	195	361	92	137	12	4
Max count	4	25	50	59	17	21	5	2

Autumn passage Totalled 842, the best for at least a decade. One at Severn Beach on June 18th could have been a late spring or early autumn bird. The next were single juveniles at CVL and Lansdown on 30th. Then there were further single birds at CVL on July 27th and Chipping Sodbury Common next day.

The bulk of the passage was from early August to mid-October and is summarised in the table below. The peak was again in late August and early September. Records were widespread with most from coastal and traditional inland sites as usual. Notable counts were: ten at New Passage on Aug. 6th; 18 at CI-Y from 17th to 20th then 43 there on 28th and 46 on 31st falling to 35 on Sept. 3rd; 55 at Severnside, 29 at OPS and an exceptional 17 at BG all on Sept. 4th; then low double figures at three coastal sites on seven more occasions with ten still at CI-Y on Oct 2nd. After 20th there were nine more records during the month at three coastal and one inland (Marshfield) site.

In November there were late birds at CI-Y on 2nd (two), Severn Beach on 5th, Axe Estuary on 8th and the last at RPD on 30th (SH). This compares with our latest on Dec 9th to 12th, 1994 at OPS.

Autumn migrants (main passage period)								
Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10	Oct 11-20
Bird-days	39	75	194	233	109	87	48	31
Max count	10	18	43	55	12	14	14	9

	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	536	219	338	820	814	2036	450	496	418	296	980
Autumn	392	518	603	546	651	560	332	670	495	482	842

Wheatear - Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

PIED WHEATEAR *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Very rare autumn vagrant.

A first-winter female at Thornbury Sailing Club, Oldbury from Oct. 25th to 28th (DS *et al.*) was the first record for the Avon area of this rare vagrant. The bird spent much of its time foraging along the boulders at the edge of the salt marsh and often perched on the roofs of the yacht club buildings, making frequent flycatching sallies over the crowd of observers – see article on page 151 and photographs opposite page 121 [BBRC].

The species has a wide breeding range from eastern Romania and Bulgaria, south and eastern Ukraine and widely east across southern Russia, Siberia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia to northern China. The winter range is northeast and east Africa as well as the southwest Arabian Peninsula. Up to 2010 there were 61 accepted British records, most from late autumn but very few from the southwest.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.

UK 1998-2008 change, down 45%.

Migration dates:

Forty year average first date April 14th, range 25 days, trend earlier by ten days 1976-2002, then later.

Another poor spring and a blank autumn for this declining species.

The first of spring was a male at Lawrence Weston on April 6th. There followed one at CI-Y the next day, which stayed until 8th when there was also one in a Clevedon garden. Remaining April records were: one at Saltford on 11th; the first female of the year at Victoria Park, Bedminster on 14th; one at Prior's Wood, near Pill on 17th and an exceptional five at Sand Point on 21st. One at Marshfield on May 2nd was the last of the year.

	1992/01 Av.	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	15.3	22	1	7	14	22	2	22	1	8	12
Autumn	3.9	2	3	1	12	0	1	0	2	3	0

Spring and autumn passage numbers each year

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis**Abundant breeding resident.*

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
% Change	-18	3	-114	-15	17

The BBS survey recorded this species from 90% of squares, a figure which has remained rather stable in the last decade (range 90%-94%) and stood at 88% in 1994. The BBS index has increased from 100 (the baseline) in 1994 to 136 showing that the population has increased while the distribution has remained stable.

The WGS counts showed an average of 1.3 birds per garden per week, slightly more than double the 1974 figure (when the survey began) but about the same as for most of the past decade (range 1.2 to 1.6). Birds were recorded from nearly all (97%) WGS gardens compared with only 72% in 1974/75. CABS figures were slightly down on last year's high. Six territories were noted at Weston STW.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
159	169	150	155	157	146	127	133	132	136

Avon BBS index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 90%, BBS Avon population estimate 21,000 pairs)

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus**Still abundant but declining breeding resident.*

	WGS	BBS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
% Change	15	13	-13	-13

The species is still widespread and was recorded from 73% of BBS squares, which compares with 67% in 1994 and between 68% and 72% during the past decade. The BBS index, at 142, shows a slight increase on the previous three years. WGS recorded its presence in only 67% of gardens with an average of 2.0 birds per garden per week, both up on last year (52% and 1.5, respectively, but those were the lowest since the survey began in 1973).

Some decent sized late summer gatherings suggested 2011 might have been another good breeding season: 100 gritting at Stanton Prior on Aug. 8th; 110 at Weston STW on 13th (the highest count of the year here); and 150 at Woodspring on Sept. 14th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
147	176	159	164	152	149	130	130	126	142

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 73%, BBS Avon population estimate 42,100 pairs)

1991/92-2000/01 Av.	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
5.3	3.2	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.7	2.9	3.4	2.4	1.6	2.0

WGS average numbers per garden per week in winter.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus**Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding bird.*

BBS England 98-08 change up 32%.

After last year's single record there were spring and autumn records plus a mid-summer sighting, although occurrences of this species remain very scarce.

In spring two were on Walton Moor on April 9th.

One was briefly at a feeder in a Portishead garden on July 1st.

In autumn there was one at OPS on Sept. 3rd; two at CI-Y next day; and two at Northwick Warth on Oct. 22nd.

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Bird-days	288	72	52	40	18	5	2	5	8	8
Sites	9	7	3	4	4	3	2	2	1	5

Bird-days and sites each year

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

M. f. flavissima. Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor.

UK 25-yr change: down 74%.

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. 9th, range 30 days, no trend.

40 year average time spent 191 days, range 10 days, trend erratic fall by 10 days 1970-2008

A return to form with the best spring passage for 18 years, followed by a fairly good autumn passage by recent standards.

Spring The first were four at PW on April 5th followed by single birds at Northwick Warth on 8th, Sand Point on 9th, and Aust Warth and Sand Point on 10th. Small numbers, up to three, were then noted regularly at a scatter of sites from 17th to May 8th with higher counts of four at Clapton-in-Gordano and five at CI-Y on 20th; ten here and four at OPS next day; eight at Severn Beach on 23rd; nine here on May 1st; 36 at CI-Y in the early morning of 2nd (much the highest count of the year) and nine here on 4th. Thereafter there were four at CI-Y on 12th and two on 21st. Other locations were: Anchor Head, Aust Warth, Chittening Warth, CVL, Dundry, New Passage, Pilning, Saltford and Weston STW.

The total spring passage of about 165 was the best since 1993, see table at end of the species account.

Spring records						
Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	8	26	45	80	4	2
Max count	4	5	10	36	4	2

Breeding season In June two were recorded in ST77 on 11th and one at Littleton Warth on 13th, calling and returning to a bare area in a patchy cereal crop, although not seen on subsequent visits. Five including a juvenile were in a bean field, typical breeding habitat, at Marshfield on July 4th.

Autumn The first arrivals were five at New Passage on July 30th. Records were regular through August with frequency of records, number of sites and numbers of birds all tending to increase through the month and peak counts of ten at Chipping Sodbury Common on 20th; 18 at New Passage/Northwick Warth on 23rd and 25th; ten at CVL on 27th; and 24 at CI-Y on 28th. Passage numbers declined in the first ten days of September but birds were still widespread with up to four at seven sites. Thereafter records came mainly from CVL with regular reports until the last three here on 30th. Elsewhere there was one at Chipping Sodbury Common on 16th and two at CI-Y on 28th.

Apart from the sites mentioned above they were also recorded in the autumn at: Aust Warth, BG, Littleton Warth, Marshfield, Nailsea, Sand Bay, Sand Point and Thornbury Pill.

Finally, there was a rather grey and white first-winter at OPS on the exceptionally date of Dec. 1st (AB, AM), which was thought possibly to belong to an eastern race (or species: 'Eastern Yellow Wagtail *M. tchutchensis*' is now split by most authorities such as IOC, although not yet by BOU) but identification is currently not fully understood and in any case this individual did not stay long enough to allow critical examination of plumage or recording of its call.

Autumn migrants								
Date	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10
Bird-days	5	23	56	134	26	5	8	0
Max count	5	4	10	24	4	2	3	0

The autumn total of 258 was above average for recent years, see table below.

	1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	176	na	157	155	72	49	131	118	78	62	59	121	67	125	86	164	25	42	165
Autumn	na	na	735	195	91	88	273	188	279	72	132	386	160	125	156	102	147	404	258

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea**Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

UK 1998-2008 change: up 20%. Local ten-yr change; down 50%

Winter and migrants Widely reported in both winter periods, with records coming from at least 36 sites across the area including reservoirs, streams and rivers, sewage works, gardens, and town and city centres. In January and February 44 bird-days were reported with up to three at 24 sites. In the second winter period (November to December) there were 102 bird-days from 20 sites with six at Saltford on Nov. 10th and still five here on Dec. 28th. The vast majority of winter records related to one or two birds.

Numbers during the autumn migration were again generally low with records of one or two passing through the usual coastal migration spots in September and October but no larger movements reported. Eight at BG on Sept. 23rd was the highest count reported at this time, with up to five noted at Saltford on several dates.

Breeding Reports during the breeding period of April to June came from at least 32 sites although some of these might have been migrants, such as one to NE at Severn Beach on May 2nd. Nonetheless this shows some recovery from last year's total of 24. Breeding was proved at BL, Bristol Bridge, Ham Green Fishing Lake and the River Frome at Snuff Mills with adults feeding newly fledged juveniles seen in each case. There were ten at Leap Valley, Downend on April 17th.

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; down 31%.

First winter period The OPS roost held 50 on the afternoon of Feb. 13th, a much lower number than last winter. The most notable count early in the year was 300 at Saltford on Feb. 18th. Otherwise no count exceeded 30 recorded at BL on Jan. 1st.

Spring migration During March and April there were 14 at CI-Y on March 23rd; 20 at PW on 28th and at OPS on April 8th. A count of 66 at Saltford on March 1st probably involved wintering birds as numbers then gradually dwindled to just six by 22nd.

Breeding season Widely reported in the breeding season with records during May and June from at least 31 sites. Presumably under-reported as this is fewer than the number of breeding season sites reported for the much more localised, but better recorded, Grey Wagtail (even allowing for the fact that April records are included under 'breeding season' for that species). The Avon BBS index was down again, perhaps in response to two hard winters.

Autumn migration and second winter period Post breeding and autumn gatherings were generally modest with 30 leaving the OPS roost on Sept. 24th and 59 at Saltford on 29th, but otherwise there were no more than 20 up to the end of September. Numbers at Saltford increased to an impressive peak of 160 on Oct. 15th, while 150 were at the CVL roost on 22nd and 123 at OPS on 25th. Visible migration was noticed at various coastal sites in autumn but counts were very low. The co-ordinated count on Oct. 16th, for example, produced: eleven over Wain's Hill; six over Battery Point; and two over Sand Point in a light westerly wind. The highest counts in the last two months of the year were: 120 at Saltford on Dec. 28th; 100 at BL on Nov. 9th (low water levels hence a significant exposure of mud for feeding); and 70 at New Passage/Northwick Warth on Nov. 19th and 25th (attracted by the bare mud of the largely dry 'Pilning Wetland').

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
110	110	101	120	72	97	110	90	87	80

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 30%)

White Wagtail *M. a. alba**Uncommon passage migrant.*

Forty year average first date March 27th. Forty year average last date Sept. 29th.

An average spring by recent standards and the best autumn total since 2004.

Spring passage The first were two early birds at CVL on March 15th with another at BG on 20th and just one other March record from PW on 28th. In April one or two were noted at BG, CI-Y, CVL and PW from 5th to 10th; six records came from six different sites from 14th to 20th with six at Dundry on 19th and five at CI-Y next day; and ten more records from four sites from 21st to the end of the month including nine at Severn Beach on 21st, but otherwise no more than four together. There were no May records this year.

White Wagtail spring records						
Date	Mar 11-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	3	1	9	19	27	0
Max count	2	1	2	6	9	0

Autumn passage The first of the autumn was an early individual at CVL on Aug. 23rd. In September there were twelve records from CVL from 6th to 20th, mainly of one or two but with ten on 9th (KEV) and five next day. There were also records from BL at this time with single birds on Sept 9th, 17th and 18th. Two were at CI-Y on Oct. 4th then one at CVL on 11th and two unusually late birds on 25th, with one still present on 26th. The low autumn water levels at the reservoirs provided good feeding conditions this year.

	1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	67	63	na	na	na	67	144	81	51	34	46	29	64	81	34	43	64	67	39	59
Autumn	25+	21	11	na	na	12	7	2	7	2	4	11	74	24	9	7	15+	6	5	43

White Wagtail - Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi*

Very scarce autumn migrant, exceptional in winter.

Description species

One record: one watched feeding on Northwick Warth on Oct. 15th (BE).

This was the third consecutive year with a single record and brings the all-time total for our area to about 27.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
0	1	4	1	3/4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	1

Individuals each year (all in autumn except for one in spring 1995 and one in winter 2004/05)

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.

England 1998-2008 change: down 30%.

Arrival and departure data

40 year average first date April 3rd, range 20 days, trend fall by 19 days 1974-94, stable since.

40 year average last date Sept. 30th, range 50 days, no trend.

40 year average time spent 180 days, range 15 days, no trend.

A below average spring and a slightly above average autumn by recent standards, albeit boosted by a high single day total from Lansdown which accounted for over a third of the autumn total.

Spring records						
Date	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	2	6	10	17	9	0
Max count	2	3	6	7	3	0

Spring The first were two early arrivals at Wain's Hill on March 27th (SS, HT), followed by one at New Passage on April 2nd, one at Longbottom on 8th, another at Sand Point on 9th and three here next day. Single individuals were noted at three sites from 15th to 20th plus six at Dundry on 19th. Late April produced seven on Severnside, five at CI-Y and three at OPS on 21st, and one at Severn Beach on 30th. Records then came from five sites from May 1st to 4th, single birds apart from three to NE over Severn Beach on 1st and with records from three other sites that day. Apart from the sites mentioned above there were also records from Almondsbury, Aust Warth, Avonmouth and New Passage.

Breeding One was singing at the most regular breeding site, Burrington Ham, on April 29th.

Autumn records						
Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	4	8	14	0	0	1
Max count	1	2	11	0	0	1

Autumn The first of the autumn passed over Chipping Sodbury Common on July 31st. Single birds were noted at Aust Warth, Emerson's Green, OPS and Saltford in the first week of August. One or two were then noted at New Passage, OPS and Saltford from 16th to 19th. The best count of the autumn was eleven at Lansdown on

Tree Pipit con't

23rd but otherwise just single individuals at Sand Bay and Severn Beach to the end of the month. The only September record was of one at GVRs on 22nd. The last was a late bird that flew over New Passage on Oct. 2nd (BL, JPM).

	2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
Spring	25	68	24	61	111	55	48	25	33	44
Autumn	12	22	14	37	30	25	23	12	35	30

Tree Pipit passage - Total individuals each year

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species, mainly on the coast.

BBS distribution 4%.

England 1998-2008 change: down 6%.

2010/11 Winter Aggregations in January and February included: 58 at Saltford on Feb. 17th; 40 by the R. Avon at Keynsham on Jan. 21st; 30 at PW on Feb. 20th; and 21 at OPS on 12th. Otherwise the only double figure counts during this period were of ten to 18 at four sites, all near the coast.

Spring Numbers picked up in early March with 40 at CI-Y on 6th. The first big movement in March was on 13th when 200 moved to NE over CI-Y after which there were the following three figure counts: 300 to N at Middle Hope on 16th; a steady passage of 140 to NE over CI-Y on 20th; 100 at Saltford on 22nd; 210 to NE at CI-Y on 23rd; 300 at both Sand Point and over Wain's Hill on 27th; and 105 at Weston STW on 28th. Also on the last date a flock of 28 flew low to N over the housing estate at Whitchurch, an unusual record for this site. Good movements continued into April with reports of: 225 to W over CI-Y on 3rd; 100 at Chipping Sodbury Common on 3rd; 370 to NE at CI-Y on 9th; and 235 to NE there as late as 20th, when 25 moved to NE over Severn Beach. The last sign of migration was on May 2nd when three flew NE at Severn Beach.

Breeding From May to July small numbers were reported from just four sites: OPS (one or two), Littleton Warth (a singing male), Marshfield and near Ham Green. A pair bred at Weston STW.

Autumn passage The few August reports included 38 at Aust/Northwick Warth on 1st, which probably involved local breeders and their offspring rather than migrants. Passage picked up in mid-September with 30 at CI-Y on 15th; 60 at Congresbury Moor and 40 at Severn Beach next day; and 90 at Littleton Warth on 17th. The last third of the month saw higher numbers with 100 at Northwick Warth on 21st, 62 over Brandon Hill on 23rd, 65 at Chitterning Warth on 28th and 110 at CI-Y on 28th. October was the peak month as usual with good numbers at CI-Y on several dates peaking at 180 on 17th. Elsewhere there were 130 over Brandon Hill in urban Bristol on 2nd; 56 at Saltford on 4th; 110 to S at CVL on 13th; and 60 at Compton Dando and 53 to W in four hours at Sand Point on 16th. Otherwise small numbers were reported widely including many migrants flying over, especially from mid-September to mid-October.

2011/12 winter In the last two months of the year the peak count was 100 at BL on Dec. 15th, the low water levels here producing an extensive drawdown zone and good feeding conditions. Elsewhere there were 70 at CI-Y on Nov. 9th, 53 at Saltford next day and 50 at New Passage on 19th, but otherwise no count exceeded 22.

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 Present at the usual coastal wintering sites in the first three months with peak counts: 25 at PW on March 24th (KEV), perhaps including migrants as otherwise the peak there was twelve on Jan. 22nd on the big high tide; six at RPD on March 12th; five at Severn Beach on two January dates; four at Chitterning Warth on Feb. 17th and at CI-Y on March 11th; three at Aust Warth on Jan. 2nd and at Portishead Marina on March 30th; and one or two at OPS, Littleton Warth, New Passage, Battery Point, Portishead sea front, Banwell Estuary and Weston-s-Mare. Wintering birds had mostly departed by the end of March. In general fewer seemed to be present at wintering sites, perhaps due to the harsh conditions early in the year.

Breeding Noted in the breeding season at: Birnbeck Pier (a pair feeding two juveniles on May 18th); Sand Point (up to four including at least one singing male); Wain's Hill, CI-Y (up to four) and the Portishead area (at least two birds). No records were received from Steep Holm this year, a regular breeding site.

Autumn and winter Three were at the recent breeding site, Avonmouth Docks, on Aug 28th. Otherwise the first of the autumn away from breeding sites were at New Passage on Sept. 4th and two at Weston STW on 23rd. Numbers increased during October with up to ten at Weston STW/Axe Estuary; seven at CI-Y; and one or two at Chittingen Warth, Aust Warth, Oldbury Pill and OPS. With birds settled on their wintering grounds in the last two months there were rather more than during the same period in 2010 with up to eight at Littleton Warth; seven at Sand Point; six at CI-Y and Severn Beach; four at Chittingen Warth, Battery Point, Portishead and Clevedon; and one or two between Aust Warth and New Passage.

Inland single individuals were at CVL on Oct. 8th, 17th and 19th.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, Scarce on the coast.

None seen at CVL in the freezing conditions at the start of the year. The autumn was slightly better here but none was reported after early December. It seems that the several weather of recent winters taken a severe toll on inland wintering Water Pipits. Coastal numbers were relatively high early in the year, birds possibly displaced from frozen inland sites.

Inland Autumn numbers at CVL were again modest with the first two on Oct. 13th, then two more on 26th after which one was recorded on nine dates from Nov. 15th to Dec. 1st plus an isolated record of four, at Sutton Wick, on Nov. 19th.

Coastal sites At the start of the year all records came from the coast as the usually favoured inland site of CVL was frozen for much of the time. One was at Weston STW on Jan. 4th; one at the Banwell Estuary on Feb. 9th; one at Sand Bay on Jan. 9th; one at Severn Beach on five dates from Jan. 2nd to Feb 13th; one at Littleton Warth on Jan. 30th and it or another on March 2nd; and up to three in the Shepperdine area north of OPS from Jan. 17th to Feb. 10th.

In the autumn the first coastal record was one at Northwick Warth on Nov. 7th with further records here on 26th and Dec. 23rd. Two were at Littleton Warth on Nov. 19th and one at CI-Y on Nov. 28th and Dec. 18th.

	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
CVL max	7	11	17	17	6	5	7	6	20	2
Coastal	4	4	3	11	6	6	7	7	5	10
Other inland			1				1			1

Maximum counts at CVL and estimated number of individuals at coastal and other inland sites each winter

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
% annual change	1	-5	5	-27	9

Winter flocks in the first two months included 300 at Marshfield on Jan. 8th, 100 at Rushmead Lane on 22nd and counts of 30 to 53 at six other sites. The first recorded song was at CVL on Jan. 22nd, two weeks earlier than the average for Clifton, from 1948 to 2000, of Feb. 8th.

WGS showed an increase from 3.3 to 3.8 birds per week, the second highest figure of the past decade. They were recorded from 97% of participating gardens. The CABS index was slightly up on the previous two years, but at 38 suggests a significant decline since 1994 when the index was set at 100.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
93	85	91	87	85	80	75	65	65	62

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 92%, BBS Avon population estimate 11,500 pairs)

The BBS index showed a further decline and the BBS distribution fell from 97% last year to 92%. The decline has been underway since 2006 following a sustained outbreak of *Trichomonosis*, a disease caused by microscopic parasites.

Fourteen to SW over OPS in three hours on Sept.18th heralded the autumn passage. October produced a handful of good diurnal migration counts but was much reduced compared with 2010. On 16th, 1340 moved to W along Sand Point in four hours and 845 were counted over Wain's Hill but only 58 over Battery Point in the

Chaffinch con't

light westerly wind. Later there were 695 over Sand Point in 45 minutes on 19th, 265 here in the same period on 20th and 127 over the Axe Estuary in 30 minutes next day. Some movement continued into mid-November with 100 per hour over Sand Point on 13th, when there were also 120 at CI-Y.

Numbers at the end of the year were down on last winter after a reduced autumn movement and the largest flocks reported were: 155 at Weston STW on Dec. 12th; 100 at Aust Warth on 12th and at OPS on 26th and 27th; and flocks of between 30 and 54 at three other sites.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Migration dates:

Forty year average first date Oct. 9th, range 40 days, no trend.

Forty year average last date April 18th, 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.

Widespread at the start of the year with a sizeable flock (by recent standards) present at Marshfield and evidence of passage during April. A poor autumn and second winter period.

Winter 2010/11 Widespread reports at the start of the year. The largest gathering was 100 at Marshfield on Jan. 11th with still 50 here on Feb. 24th but only two reports of up to 16 between these dates. Otherwise there were 20 at Abbott's Leigh on March 13th; and up to six at 22 other sites, at least eight of them gardens, to the end of March. There was evidence of spring passage with a flock in a Claverton garden all year rising from a maximum of six early in the year to twelve by March 23rd and 25 on April 3rd. A flock at CVL during April peaked at 23 on 14th with the last, four, on 18th, while a flock at Henleaze peaked at 15 on 4th with the last two on 19th. One flew over Sand Point on April 10th and the last were two late birds at Leap Valley, Downend on May 8th (ADJ).

Autumn migrants The first were reported over New Passage on Oct. 14th with just six more records of one to three during the rest of the month from four sites, half of them flying over Sand Point mid-month, the others from Axe Estuary, Brentry and Saltford. November produced six at Leap Valley, Downend on 6th, one at OPS on 11th, ten at Abbott's Leigh next day, one at CVL on 15th and another over Pilning the following day.

Second winter period There was just one December record of one at Weston STW on 24th.

1991/92-00/01 Av.	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
403	109	103	270	20	3065	25	246	242	43	738

Bird-days October-March

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

	WGS	BBS	CABS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
% annual change	-18	-19	6	-42	0

Winter flocks With no counts from winter roosts the only concentrations early in the year were 16 at CI-Y on Feb. 22nd and 14 at Saltford on 17th. Numbers were slightly higher at the end of the year with 80 at Brentry on Dec. 25th and flocks of 10 to 27 reported from six other sites in the last three months of the year.

WGS recorded this species from 80% of gardens (this figure was 100% in 2001/02, although only 72% in 1974/75 the first year of the survey, when use of feeders by the species was still in its infancy). The WGS index was down again at 2.2 birds per garden per week, the lowest figure for the past decade, although higher than the figure of 0.7 for 1974/75.

BBS recorded them in 81% of squares, which represented a further reduction in distribution, but the same as the 1994 figure. The BBS index fell further to 51 (100 in 1994), a halving of the breeding population in less than two decades. The decline has actually occurred since 2006 when the index had reached a high of 173 before the onset of *Trichomonosis* (see table below), so during the last seven years the population has dropped by at least 70%.

The CABS index was up slightly at 33 compared with 100 in 1994 and its peak of 292 in 2003.

Spring and autumn flocks and movements Twenty to NE over OPS on April 9th was the only report of migration in spring. Early in the autumn there were gatherings of 40 at Saltford on Aug. 30th and 55 at CVL on

Sept. 9th. Visible migration was noted in autumn with a peak in mid-October including the following counts: 26 over Wain's Hill on 16th; 29 over Sand Point in 45 minutes on 19th; 72 over Sand Point in 45 minutes on 19th; 20 here in 30 minutes next day; and 15 over OPS on 22nd.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
151	160	166	157	173	128	82	83	63	51

Greenfinch - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 81%, BBS Avon population estimate 6,200 pairs)

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.

	WGS	BBS	Local 98-08	England 98-08
% Change	13	11	98	48

In January there were 60 on Weston Moor on 2nd; 30 at Bath University on 4th, Kingsgate Park on 14th; and 50 at Marshfield on 18th, plus ten to 26 at eight other sites. In February there were 67 at Saltford on 17th plus records of ten to 25 at seven other locations. March numbers were generally lower but there were 50 at CI-Y on 20th, 80 here on 27th and 40 at Saltford on 22nd.

Visible migration in spring included 115 to W at CI-Y on April 6th; 110 to NE here on 20th; and 60 to NE at OPS the next day.

BBS recorded the species from 80% of squares, a further small increase. The BBS index reached a new high of 241. It was present in 90% of WGS gardens in the 2010/11 winter, the highest yet recorded, although numbers were only marginally higher than last year. In 1974/75, when the survey began, no gardens recorded this species.

Two were again noted apparently taking road salt (although the possibility that they were taking some other food source could not be ruled out) at Bath University Depot on May 26th (DF).

Late summer flocks included 65 at CI-Y on July 25th and 35 at Langridge on 30th. Larger flocks were widely reported in August with peak counts of 400 at PW on 21st; 300 at Hill on 31st; 250 at CVL on 18th; 160 at CI-Y on 14th; 110 at Langridge on 29th; plus 30 to 80 at five other sites. Good flocks remained in September at some sites with 200 at CI-Y on 15th; 100 at OPS on 3rd and 60 to 90 at six other sites. October's peak count was 145 at Saltford on 1st when there were still 100 at OPS with flocks of 30 to 85 reported from four other sites.

Visible migration in autumn as usual involved smaller numbers than in spring. On the co-ordinated watch on Oct. 16th there were 26 over Sand Point in four hours, 25 over Wain's Hill and 15 over Battery Point. No other migration count exceeded twelve.

Good numbers remained into November with 150 at CI-Y on 7th and 110 at Saltford on 10th plus flocks of 32-60 at six other sites. There were still 80 at Saltford on Dec. 28th with 30 to 55 at five other sites. The higher numbers than in the same period of 2010 presumably reflect the much milder weather in 2011.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
110	122	123	147	173	150	200	215	217	241

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS Distribution 76%, BBS Avon population estimate 9,900 pairs)

1991/92-2000/01 Av	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	3.1	2.6	2.6	2.6

WGS - Average numbers per garden per week.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce breeding species.

BBS England 98-08 change: up 9%.

Good numbers in the first winter period and a light spring passage was again followed by very few summer records. There was reasonable autumn passage and fair numbers at a few sites at the end of the year.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
481	650	198	7	3	1	6	2	105	420	486	321

Monthly bird-day totals

Siskin Winter 2010/11 A good first winter period followed the strong passage in autumn 2010. In January the largest flocks were 71 at Saltford on 21st; 60 at Kenn Moor on 5th and 50 at Weston Moor on 22nd plus up to 25 at 18 other sites. Even higher numbers were noted in February with 134 at Saltford and 120 at Kenn Moor on 11th; 80 at Wooscombe Bottom on 27th and up to 35 at nine further sites. Numbers were much reduced in March, although there were still 36 at Saltford on 18th.

Spring Coastal migrants were on the move from March 5th when 53 passed NE at OPS, the highest count of the month. Other records of flyovers involved much smaller numbers with 20 at Severn Beach on 15th but otherwise no more than twelve. By April passage was all but over with just four records: one at Saltford on 8th; four over Sand Point on 10th and one on 16th; and one at Abbott's Leigh on 25th. The last of the spring were two at Portishead and one to NE at Severn Beach on May 2nd.

Summer In June a migrant was at Weston STW on 12th. Birds were heard at BL on July 13th with five here on 19th and one on Aug. 8th and 20th, perhaps dispersing from breeding sites on nearby Mendip.

Autumn passage In September there was one at GVRs on 2nd followed by regular reports of coastal migrants with some flocks already building up at inland sites including 30 at CVL on 19th and 20 at Dolebury Warren on 25th. Ten over OPS on 21st was the largest movement of migrants noted with up to six at six other sites through the month. October produced records from 25 sites, many involving migrants flying over, including: 30 at Brandon Hill on 2nd; 20 to S at Dundry on 12th; 25 to S at CVL the next day; 42 over New Passage, 30 at GVRs and 18 to W over Easton all on 14th; 21 to W in four hours at Sand Point on 16th; 19 to S at Max Bog on 20th and 30 at Saltford on 26th. Smaller numbers were reported from a further 15 sites. Migrants continued to trickle through in November until at least 17th, when ten moved to S over Max Bog during the day.

Winter Some good flocks were present in the second winter period with November records from 15 sites including 61 at Saltford on 16th and 60 at CVL on 22nd, both sites producing regular records during the month. They were reported from just six sites in December, however, with regular reports of up to 40 at Saltford (this site accounting for 239 of the bird-day total of 321 for the month), 30 at Wrington and Yatton, both on 3rd, and 20 at Congresbury on 18th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

BBS England 98-08 change, down 24%, local, down 9%.

During January and February the largest gathering was again at Marshfield with 600 here on Jan. 8th. Other significant flocks at this time included 260 at CVL on Jan. 3rd; 110 at Flax Bourton on Feb. 12th; 80 at BL on Jan. 1st; and 15 to 40 at eight other sites. In March 60 were at PW on 12th and 85 at CI-Y on 27th but otherwise no more than 30.

Spring migrants The first report of spring migrants was of eight to NE over OPS in three hours 45 minutes on March 26th. Birds were noted moving at various coastal sites over the next month but always in small numbers apart from exceptional counts of 325 to NE at CI-Y on April 9th and 285, again to NE, here on 20th (SS), the latter date producing just seven over OPS in 90 minutes. Numbers at Saltford peaked at 130 on 7th with much lower numbers during the rest of the month.

Reported from 38% of BBS squares, the highest since 2002 but down from 48% in 1994. The BBS index, at 50, was slightly up but has still halved since 1994 when it was set at 100.

Late summer flocks included 140 at CI-Y on June 4th increasing but no more than 42 at other sites during the month. In July there were up to 400 at CI-Y and 35 at Marshfield. In August up to 400 were at CI-Y, 150 at Littleton Warth, 100 near West Littleton and 80 at Thornbury Pill. Numbers were generally slightly lower in September with up to 90 at CI-Y, 54 at Weston STW and 40 at Easton-in-Gordano.

A trickle of visible migration was reported in October. The organised watch on 16th produced 25 over Wain's Hill, 17 to W at Sand Point, and two over Battery Point. Grounded birds in October included 100 at Bath Racecourse on 13th and up to 200 at CVL at the end of the month on the weedy drawdown zone. Early November saw: 200 at BL on 9th; 175 at CI-Y early in the month; up to 300 at CVL and 110 at Rushmead Lane on 6th. Numbers remained high at some sites in December when there were up to 220 at CVL and 100 at both CI-Y and Rushmead Lane.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
64	54	58	62	49	46	73	44	48	50

Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 38%, BBS Avon population estimate 3300 pairs)

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Now rare winter visitor, formerly more regular.

Three at OPS on Dec. 20th (MP) were seen again in early 2012 by many observers. Our first record since two at the Axe Estuary in February 1998. Following a recent large decline in range and numbers nationally, the species is now a red-listed bird of conservation concern.

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%.

The worst winter since 2006/07 was followed by a modest spring with exceptional numbers from one site on two dates. An unusual mid-summer record was followed by a good autumn passage with a slightly better second winter period.

First winter period January and February records amounted to a mere 20 bird-days from just six sites with seven in the Gordano Valley on Feb. 28th but otherwise no more than four at Compton Dando, CVL, PW, Weston Moor and Yate Common.

Spring Passage Birds were more widespread (13 sites) in March but no more than four were noted (Leap Valley, Downend on 4th) apart from coastal migrants. Records of flyover migrants came from Wain's Hill (one on 9th, an exceptional 60 on 26th and 30 on 27th, HT), New Passage (eight on 26th), and Sand Point on 27th. Migration continued into April with one to six at ten sites, five of them coastal, apart from 15 over Wain's Hill on 1st. The last of the spring were singles at Weston STW on May 1st and CI-Y on 4th.

Summer Two were at Burrington Ham on June 30th (SFY), an area with potential breeding habitat, although perhaps more likely early post-breeding wanderers. The nearest regular breeding sites are on the Quantocks and Exmoor.

Autumn passage The first was one at CVL on Sept. 15th. There were regular reports from Sept. 22nd with one or two at five sites plus twelve at Severn Beach on 24th. This heralded a good October with 329 bird-days during the month from 25 sites. The peak occurred mid-month when there were at least 70 at GVRs on 14th (33 trapped and ringed) with a further 21 ringed there next day. There was a peak of 30 at Saltford on 20th with twelve at Marshfield on 28th. Other counts were all in single figures but there were many records of visible migrants mainly at coastal sites. One trapped at GVRs on 14th and two there next day were large, with wing lengths on 75mm, but with buff wing bars and strongly brown washed flanks not typical for Mealy (although outside the normal size range for Lesser) (DN).

Second winter period In November there were maxima of twelve at OPS on 19th, eleven at Saltford on 4th and 22nd but no more than three at ten other sites. December records were sparse with just seven of up to five (Flax Bourton) at five sites. There was a total of 94 bird-days in the last two months.

2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
526	159	481	51	578	33	101	237	102	49

Winter bird-day totals November to February

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary very sharply from year to year.

Hardly any at the start of the year but an influx in October produced regular records to the end of the year.

One at Wrington Warren on March 23rd, eight over a Henbury garden on May 28th and three to SW over Springfield Farm, near Horton on July 13th were the only records until an influx in October.

After one over OPS on Oct. 8th further records (single birds unless stated) came from: GVRs on 9th, 14th (four) and 15th; BL (four to W on 11th); Littleton Warth, New Passage and Sand Point (three) on 16th; Dundry on 17th (three) and 31st (four); BG (six – only the third site record, TB), Dolebury (twelve) and Sand Point (two) on 20th; Chew Magna on 25th; and Mountney's Farm, near Inglestone Common (five) on 26th.

In November records came from OPS (six to SE) and Sand Point (eight) on 5th; New Passage (eleven flew past on 7th and one on 12th); Saltford on 9th and 22nd (two); OPS on 12th (two); Sand Point on 13th; BL on 14th

(three); and Failand on 21st. In December two were at Saltford on 18th, 14 at Abbots Leigh on 17th increasing to 15 on 24th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
100	100	4	130	1	0	90	47	96	120

Crossbill - Bird-days each year

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common breeding resident.

BBS Distribution 34%

BBS England 1998-2008 change up 3%, local up 60%

The small sample means that the BBS index is quite 'noisy' and prone to fluctuations such that the BBS figure for our area is no longer considered sufficiently robust for publication. They were recorded from 34% of BBS squares, about average for the past decade although down from the 42% recorded in 1994. KEV found twelve pairs around CVL in June. The WGS now records this species in much higher numbers than when it began in 1974/75. They first registered at an average of 0.1 birds per garden per week in 2002/03, hit 0.2 for the first time in 2004/05 and reached 0.3 for the first time in 2010/11.

Regular counts at Saltford produced up to five in February, six in March, eight in April, seven in August, ten in October, 13 in November and 21 on Dec. 12th (JWD). Otherwise the largest counts reported were twelve at OPS on Dec. 17th and ten at PW on 7th. These late autumn and winter counts hint at a winter influx.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred.

Description species

There were three autumn records of single individuals: at Saltford on Oct. 7th (JWD); over OPS on Nov. 11th (DS) and from a Combe Dingle garden on 14th (WE).

2009 Additional records came from a Blagdon garden on Jan 17th (P Smith *per* NRM), and CVL on April 2nd (KEV).

Year	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
No. seen	1	1	0	23	2	1	38	0	2

Number of individuals seen (July to June)

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce winter visitor formerly more numerous.

A good autumn.

An approachable bird was on the sea wall at New Passage on Oct 17th. A good series was noted at CI-Y with one from Oct. 29th to Nov. 5th with two on 6th. There was then a gap before four appeared here on 13th staying until at least 18th with three until 30th and one remaining through December. Two were at the Axe Estuary on Nov. 7th and 8th, four at Sand Point on 12th, one over Aust Warth on Dec. 10th and another over Stratford Hide, CVL on 12th (AHD).

1991/92-2000/01 Av.	2001/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2010/11
6.6	0	0	18	11	0	0	1	0	5-6	15

Individuals seen each year

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Common but declining breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.

BBS England 98-08 change, down 14%, local, down 8%.

Once again the Marshfield area held some impressive flocks at the start of the year, but the breeding range showed a further small contraction despite the index going up. Might this suggest that measures to help farmland birds are locally effective but not widespread enough to maintain distribution?

First winter period The largest flocks early in the year were 200 at Marshfield on Feb. 6th, 70 at Saltford on Jan. 16th and 40 at OPS on 31st, but no more than 21 noted away from these three sites. Up to eight in a Nailsea garden during the hard weather was unusual (JT).

Spring/summer A presumed spring migrant was at Wain's Hill, CI-Y on March 12th. The BBS recorded this species from 27% of squares, a further small decline from 28% last year but a massive contraction from 51% in 1994. The BBS index, however, showed a slight improvement.

Autumn Fifteen were at Saltford on Aug. 4th, the peak for the month with 19 on Sept. 27th. A return to normal on the coast after last year's good passage, with single birds at Sand Point on Oct. 20th, Axe Estuary on 21st, New Passage on 23rd and Sand Point again on 29th. Later there was one at Severn Beach on Nov. 24th and two at Aust Warth on Dec. 1st.

Second winter period Numbers at Saltford reached 15 in October, 32 in November and 17 in December. The largest flock was 45 at Rushmead Lane, Marshfield on Nov. 6th; with up to 30 at OPS in November, with 35 on Dec. 26th and 24 at Compton Dando on 4th, but elsewhere no more than ten together.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
66	52	54	58	58	64	79	60	64	73

Yellowhammer - Avon BBS Index based on 100 in 1994 (2011 BBS distribution 27%, BBS Avon population estimate 2000 pairs)

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

BBS England 98-08 change, up 39%, local, up 10%.

Singing males at CVL showed a further increase but the species is only locally common, over 90% of BBS squares producing no sightings.

Early in the year the highest counts were: 18 at PW on the salt marsh on Jan. 22nd; 15 at Severn Beach on Jan. 2nd; and ten at Marshfield, OPS and Sand Bay in the first two months of the year.

BBS counted 60 in 9% of the squares visited. There were 43 singing males at CVL, the highest number for at least a decade, and 21 territories at Weston STW (slightly down on last year's 30). Small numbers were reported in summer from 14 other sites.

Autumn Some were noted moving with other visible migrants in mid-October with one or two over four sites on 16th and six over Sand Point in 45 minutes on 20th. At GVRs on 14th two were trapped but ten other were around the station with about the same number passing overhead. Next day there were at least 20 around the trapping area.

In the last two months they were widespread (records from 12 sites) but the only double figure counts were of 15 at Blake's Pool, CI-Y, on Dec. 20th, and ten at OPS on 24th.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
36	29	20	13	31	32	31	30	36	43

Singing males at CVL each year

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 98-08 change, down 4%. Local ten-yr change, up 250%.

A large flock in the core area at the start of the year with somewhat fewer in the second winter period.

First winter period One was at CI-Y on Feb. 26th but all other records were from the core Marshfield area. The winter flock here was estimated at 140 on Feb. 19th and 200 on 27th with 48 still here on March 22nd.

In the Cotswold stronghold BBS counted 37 in eight squares, somewhat down on last year, although not all were necessarily singing males. Better coverage of the key areas compared with last year suggests numbers are fairly stable, although again many records were imprecise about the exact site, or whether singing was heard or not.

Second winter period The Marshfield flock numbered 100 on Oct. 12th and there were just two more records in the area to the end of the year.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
21	18	18	23	12	na	na	40	32	37

Corn Bunting - Estimated number of singing males each year



Bramblings

Migration Summary

The average arrival date of the following 29 summer migrant species over the past forty years is April 9th, but this year the average was eight days earlier, on April 1st. The average departure date over forty years is Oct. 3rd, and in 2011 it was Oct. 8th although if we ignore the very late Garganey sighting the date is Oct. 5th. These changes may reflect both more intensive recording, and the fact that the forty year average March-April temperature was 11.4°C, whereas for 2011 it was 15.4°C. This exceptionally high temperature was primarily a result of the very high temperatures in the last week of April, at the end of passage for most species.

Migrant first arrival and last departure dates for 2011							
Summer migrants	Arrival	Average*	Difference	Departure	Average*	Difference	Comments
Sand Martin	March 4th	March 9th	-5	Oct. 6th	Oct. 6th	0	
Wheatear	March 8th	March 10th	-2	Nov. 30th	Nov. 6th	24	2nd latest
Swallow	March 9th	March 19th	-10	Nov. 12th	Nov. 6th	6	2nd earliest
White Wagtail	March 15th	March 24th	-9	Oct. 26th	Oct. 3rd	23	
House Martin	March 22nd	March 24th	-2	Oct. 9th	Oct. 26th	-17	
Willow Warbler	March 25th	March 25th	0	Sept. 16th	Sept. 23rd	-7	
Ring Ouzel	March 9th	March 29th	-20	NA	NA		Earliest ever
Tree Pipit	March 27th	April 1st	-6	Oct. 2nd	Sept. 29th	3	5th earliest
Little Ringed Plover	April 6th	April 1st	5	Sept. 29th	Sept. 14th	15	
Redstart	March 17th	April 4th	-18	Oct. 16th	Oct. 13th	3	Earliest ever
Yellow Wagtail	April 5th	April 6th	-1	Sept. 30th	Oct. 10th	-10	
Garganey	March 25th	April 8th	-14		Oct. 10th	71	Overwintered
Common Tern	April 2nd	April 8th	-6	Sept. 29th	Oct. 2nd	-3	
Sedge Warbler	April 4th	April 10th	-6	Sept. 26th	Sept. 29th	-3	
Whimbrel	April 5th	April 10th	-5	Oct. 14th	Oct. 11th	3	5th earliest, 3rd latest
Pied Flycatcher	April 6th	April 12th	-6	NA	NA		
Cuckoo	April 11th	April 12th	-1	Aug. 6th	Aug. 17th	-11	
Reed Warbler	April 3rd	April 13th	-10	Oct. 23rd	Oct. 8th	15	Equal earliest, 4th latest
Whitethroat	April 7th	April 13th	-6	Oct. 2nd	Sept. 26th	6	3rd earliest
Grasshopper Warbler	April 6th	April 14th	-8	Sept. 25th	Sept. 18th	7	3rd earliest
Garden Warbler	April 8th	April 14th	-6	Sept. 21st	Sept. 23rd	-2	
Swift	April 17th	April 18th	-1	Sept. 19th	Sept. 15th	4	
Hobby	April 7th	April 19th	-12	Oct. 21st	Oct. 8th	13	2nd earliest, 2nd latest
Lesser Whitethroat	April 11th	April 19th	-8	Sept. 26th	Sept. 29th	-3	3rd earliest
Wood Warbler	April 10th	April 20th	-10	NA	NA		4th earliest
Whinchat	April 17th	April 20th	-3	Oct. 7th	Oct. 15th	-8	
Nightingale	April 14th	April 23rd	-9	NA	NA		
Black Tern	April 18th	April 26th	-8	Oct. 10th	Oct. 5th	5	
Spotted Flycatcher	May 8th	May 2nd	6	Sept. 28th	Sept. 28th	0	
Winter migrants	Departure			Arrival			
Redwing	March 29th	April 8th	-10	Sept. 29th	Sept. 29th	0	3rd latest
Brambling	April 19th	April 15th	4	Oct. 14th	Oct. 9th	5	
Fieldfare	March 28th	April 17th	-19	Oct. 4th	Oct. 5th	-1	4th latest

NB. Species are listed in their average arrival order.

* average of last 25 years – see individual species account for more details

Spring Passerine Migration

Both February and March were 2.5°C warmer than the long term average, and the hot spell at the end of April broke all previous records. It is no surprise that as a result almost all spring migrants arrived earlier than their 25-year average date, and that the average for 28 species was six days early. For eleven species their first arrival dates were amongst the earliest five dates ever recorded, and of those three were the earliest ever (Ring Ouzel, Redstart and Reed Warbler). The only exceptions were Spotted Flycatcher, which was unusually late, and Little Ringed Plover.

March began with a week of cold NE winds, but then southerly winds brought the temperature up to 15°C on 12th, high pressure took over on 18th, and dominated for the rest of the month with light E and SE winds, and the temperature reached 19°C on 25th.

April began a little cooler, but high pressure again took charge on 9th, and dominated for the rest of the month. Temperatures reached 22°C on 9th and 26°C on 21st, although they fell back to a more normal 17°C in the last week. Winds were almost always light, and often from the east or south east.

	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-15	Apr 16-30	May 1-15	May 16-31
Wood Warbler			1	1		
Ring Ouzel	1	6	2	11		
Spotted Flycatcher					8	10
Redstart		4	22	7	4	
Whinchat				17	18	1
Wheatear	35	189	252	425	156	6
Pied Flycatcher			7	6	1	
Tree Pipit			7	39	9	

Total numbers recorded in each period

ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Australia

CVL – one was present for several days from Dec. 12th to 16th.

CHINESE (SWAN) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Asia

CVL – an adult was seen with the Canada Goose flock on Jun. 23rd.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

Arctic Siberia

Batheaston NR – one was noted mixing with Canada Geese on Dec. 10th and 30th.

PARADISE SHELDUCK *Tadorna variegata*

New Zealand

Keynsham, Somerdale – one probably this species or a hybrid was seen on flooded fields on Jan. 20th.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Asia

Saltford – two were seen on March 24th;

CVL – two unidentifiable hybrids from June 11th to 19th, later seen at Slimbridge, Glos. and also Bristol Zoo.

ROSYBILL *Netta peposaca*

South America

CI-Y – one seen on the Yeo Estuary with Shelduck on Sept. 29th.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

Central and South America

Saltford – one was first reported on Jan. 1st, then March 21st and 22nd. It was not reported again until Nov. 13th when it was noted until Dec. 30th. It was also seen on the R. Avon at Keynsham on Jan. 22nd and is presumably the bird from January and December 2010.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

N. America

Backwell Lake – a male was reported at regular intervals throughout the year from Jan. 10th until Dec. 26th and is presumably the male noted here from November 2010.

CHILOE WIGEON *Anas sibilatrix*

South America

OPS – one was seen associating with Mallards on the shore south-west of Lagoon 3 on Jan. 2nd;
Bristol Zoological Gardens – one on Jul. 16th.

SPECKLED TEAL *Anas flavirostris*

South America

BL – one probably this species at Peg's Point with Tufted Ducks on Sept. 14th but its unclear which race of this complex was involved.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

Asia

Bath – one at Walnut Springs on Feb. 15th;
Avonmouth Docks – one on Oct. 6th.

MONK PARAKEET *Myiopsitta monachus*

South America

Henbury – one on April 7th.

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulates*

Australia

Pill – one on March 22nd.

ROSY- FACED LOVEBIRD *Agapornis roseicollis*

Africa

Severn Beach – one on April 17th.

CONURE sp

South America

Correction – entry in the **2010** Report should read Bristol not Bath.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

Africa

BL – one at North Shore on April 5th;
Chewton Place, nr Keynsham – three on April 17th.

LANNER FALCON *Falco biarmicus*

SE Europe/ Africa/ Asia

OPS – one on Dec. 26th.

ZEBRA FINCH *Taeniopygia guttata*

Australia

Redland – one on Ashgrove Rd on March 15th.

HYBRIDS

It should be noted that the parentages reported in this section are what seemed to the observer(s) to be the most likely.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Weston Moor – three on Feb. 18th, April 3rd;
PW – three on March 27th and April 4th.

These individuals are probably linked to a group that have been seen intermittently in the Gordano Valley since mid-2009, some of which show a hybrid influence. Records in the **2009** and **2010** Reports probably relate to this group which is thought to originate from a nearby collection.

CANADA X GREYLAG GOOSE *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

Backwell Lake – one on Jan. 22nd.

LESSER CANADA X BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta hutchinsii x Branta leucopsis*

BL - a small goose (slightly smaller than a Barnacle) on May 26th and June 7th, 11th and 19th was considered to probably be of this parentage.

BARNACLE x CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis x Branta canadensis*

CVL – one, like a Canada but with the head patterning of a Barnacle, on Jan. 24th, Feb. 18th and 21st, June 28th and July 15th, 19th and 28th. Another goose at CVL, possibly of this parentage, was similar to a Canada but with the whole face and top of neck white; it was seen on June 15th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd and 28th, July 1st, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 19th, 22nd and 25th, Sept. 5th and Dec 23rd. It visited BL on Aug. 1st.

Batheaston NR – one, like a Canada but with a Barnacle type head pattern, on Feb. 11th and 18th.

SNOW GOOSE type *Chen caerulescens*

PW – a blue phase on Nov. 19th.

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 female, similar in size, structure and plumage to a Ferruginous Duck but with a Tufted type wingbar, and assumed to be a Ferruginous x Tufted, on April 8th and 9th was presumed to be the same as a female seen on Jan. 9th. What is assumed to be the same individual was then seen regularly between Aug. 26th and Sept. 14th and again on Oct. 21st. It was also seen at BL on Aug. 18th, Oct. 20th and Nov. 5th.
- b. A male, similar in appearance to Scaup was seen regularly at BL from Jan. 12th until April 27th. It was presumed to be the male present here in December 2010, and also January to April 2010.
- c. One seen on Feb. 14th was possibly a Pochard x Tufted. In addition, two with similar mixed parentage on Sept. 5th with one intermittently from. 9th to 29th.
- d. a male, like a huge Tufted Duck but with a red crown, was probably a Tufted x Red-crested Pochard. Initially seen on Jan. 24th it reappeared between June 19th and July 1st, again on Sept. 23rd and 27th, when in eclipse, and also on Oct. 24th. It was also regularly seen at BL between Oct. 17th and Dec. 10th.
- e. the male presumed Ferruginous x Pochard, present during September, October and November 2010, was seen again on Feb. 4th. Males considered to be of this parentage were subsequently observed regularly between Aug. 17th and Dec. 28th, with two males present on at least Sept. 26th and Oct. 22nd, and a male Redhead type present between Nov. 3rd and Dec. 15th. On Dec. 28th a further male, the size of a Pochard and with a domed head, a white eye, a dark grey mantle, paler flanks and a white undertail, was also present.
- f. A female on June 24th was showing characteristics of both Red-crested Pochard x Pochard.
- g. Two males thought to be Tufted x Pochard were present on Sept. 5th with one lingering until the 29th.
- h. A female, presumed Pochard x Ring-necked Duck at BL on Sept. 6th.
- i. A female Pochard type, but with a greyish domed head and a large white blaze around the base of the bill, on a number of dates between Aug. 25th and Dec. 28th. This may be the same as a female, described as a cross between a Pochard and a Ring-necked Duck but with a whiteish wingbar and considered to probably be a Pochard x Tufted, that was present for several weeks from Sept. 20th. Another similar female, but with the head a rich brown colour and a large white ear covert spot, was present on Feb 14th and again on Aug. 30th.
- j. A female Tufted type, but with a rounded head and a grey flecked mantle and considered to be a Scaup x Tufted, on Nov. 10th, 11th and 15th.
- k. An adult drake, resembling Lesser Scaup with the bill pattern of Tufted Duck at BL on Nov. 17th.
- l. A male, like a Pochard but with a darker grey mantle, a plum coloured head and a blue-grey bill, on Feb. 14th. What was probably the same male, now with pale flanks, a grey mantle, a plum coloured head with no tuft, an orange eye, and a pale band inside the bill tip, was seen on May 13th and then regularly between Nov. 22nd, when a Lesser Scaup type wingbar was noted, and Dec. 30th.
- m. individuals resembling first-winter Scaups, but not large enough and with a slightly incorrect head shape, were seen on Feb. 7th and Nov. 10th.
- n. a male, very similar to a Ferruginous, including domed head shape, white eye and white vent, but with a head a dark plum colour, on Sept. 7th, 8th, 12th and 27th and Oct. 11th.

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 (*Eds.*).

HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

CVL – adults on Jan. 13th, March 29th, Oct. 7th and Dec. 28th, a second-calendar-year on June 28th and a fourth-calendar-year on Aug. 12th;

BL – an adult at on Sept. 6th.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011
1	6	1	1	1	0	0	9	4	6	29	6	7	7

Bird-days since first record

Chew and Blagdon in 2011-12 - The Ultimate Year?

Keith Vinicombe

Many birders judge the quality of a year's birding by the number of rarities they see. At CVL and BL, most years manage to turn up one or two 'BB Rarities'. But reading through the pages of this Report, it will be immediately apparent that 2011 was in a class of its own. Why was this?

The numbers of birds at the lakes and the quality of the birding is determined by a number of factors, the most important of which is water level. Being drinking water reservoirs, summer pumping means that levels usually start to fall in early summer so that, in a 'normal year', a muddy, food-rich margin soon starts to appear. This of course attracts waders, which are undoubtedly the most sought after of all the lakes' migrants. Not only are we enamoured by the beauty of their plumage and the delicacy of their structure, but we are in total awe of their phenomenal globe trotting capabilities. The earliest migrants are relatively local: Lapwings, Redshanks and Common Sandpipers from Britain and Green Sandpipers from Scandinavia. But, as the autumn progresses, species arrive from more distant and exotic lands: Iceland, Greenland and the tundras of Siberia. But what really raises the adrenaline are the 'Yanks'. In a good year, we can usually expect one or two trans-Atlantic vagrants, but the autumn of 2011 produced an astonishing eleven individuals of five species. But it wasn't just the waders. At Chew, in the twelve months from June 2011 to May 2012, we had the phenomenal total of 22 American birds of eleven species (not allowing for possible duplication with two of the duck records). Ironically, however, the 'bird of the autumn' came not from America, but from Russia: a superb juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, discovered by Nigel Milbourne at BL on Nov. 18th (relocating to CVL the following day). This bird, which breeds in eastern Siberia, should have been in Australia! Needless to say, it attracted hundreds of birders from far and wide.

So why was 2011 so good? Most crucially, the water levels fell quickly, producing large areas of mud by early July. Low water levels do not just benefit the waders, they also benefit grebes, ducks, coots, even terns and passerines. They do this by concentrating the food supplies (fish and invertebrates), they bring the weed closer to the surface, they expose muddy food-rich margins, and I suspect that they also increase invertebrate numbers by raising the water temperature. In addition, the exposed shoreline benefits a disparate bunch of passerines that includes pipits, wagtails, wheatears and finches. But three other important factors also come into play. Firstly, a good wader passage depends on the summer's breeding success on the Arctic tundras. Success rates are cyclical, dependant largely on the Lemming cycle. In a good Lemming year, the predators eat the Lemmings, allowing the birds to

rear their young unmolested. This certainly seems to have been the case in 2011, at least for the Canadian breeders. Secondly, to produce falls of birds, we need poor weather (in calm, anticyclonic conditions, they simply fly straight over). But to receive American waders, we need westerly gales. Not only that, but the gales need to coincide with the time that the birds are migrating: around the September full moon. The weather in September 2011 was spot on. It was a changeable month, with frequent south-westerly and westerly winds. It was in fact the sixth most 'south-westerly' September in 139 years of record keeping. The first gales struck on 6th (remnants of Tropical Storm 'Lee') with further strong winds on 12th (remnants of Hurricane 'Katia'). The latter hit bang on the full moon and caused a major arrival of American waders, right across Britain and Ireland. The huge scale of the displacement was confirmed by events on the island of Bermuda, 640 miles off the coast of North Carolina. A contemporaneous arrival there included up to 100 American Golden Plovers, 180 Pectoral Sandpipers and a record 1,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers, followed by an astonishing 1,000+ Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the first week of October (*Bermuda Audubon Society Newsletter* Vol. 22. No. 3).

The final piece of the jigsaw is observer coverage. When my friends and I used to cover Chew in the 1960s and 1970s, during school and university holidays, we soon began to realise the potential for finding good birds on weekdays, when most of the older birders were at work. But we also realised just how much we were missing. Factor into the equation our relative inexperience, poor optics and inadequate literature, and it was obvious that we were missing as much as we were finding. What would be achieved with good optics, better ID guides and blanket coverage? The autumn of 2011 surely answered that question. It just so happens that, in recent years, a number of the most active and experienced local birders have reached retirement age, several having taken early voluntary retirement. In the autumn of 2011, the lake was covered on a daily basis by a number of seasoned regulars, all of whom were on the look-out for rarities. The first 'autumn' rarity at CVL was found by Sean Davies on June 13th: the lake's sixth Blue-winged Teal. This was followed by a Lesser Yellowlegs on July 8th and then the lake's third Spotted Sandpiper on Sept. 24th. The excellent range of the more normal species present ensured that from late August onwards we had blanket coverage and we never looked back! On Nov. 10th the lake's first and long overdue Semipalmated Sandpiper arrived. Eight days later, when hundreds arrived to see the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, it was possible to stand on Herriott's Bridge and see Spotted Sandpiper, two Long-billed Dowitchers, Semipalmated Sandpiper

and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper! With water levels remaining low, the spectacular run continued unabated into the New Year, the final rarity being discovered on May 2nd 2012: CVL's second Squacco Heron. The 2011 rarities are of course thoroughly documented in this report, but the following list is well worth a quick scan. It will confirm what an incredible twelve months it was.

Apart from Shetland and Scilly, could anywhere else in Britain boast such an amazing list of records? Will it ever be bettered? I hate to be a pessimist, but as I write this in mid-July 2012, having endured three of the wettest and most miserable months on record, with the water at the reservoirs cascading over the overflows, I somehow doubt it!

Rare birds recorded at CVL and BL from June 2011 to May 2012

Chew	Blagdon
Whooper Swan (2)*	Whooper Swan*
Pink-footed Geese (4)*	Pink-footed Geese (4)*
Lesser Canada Goose*	Lesser Canada Goose*
<i>Green-winged Teal</i> (2)	
Blue-winged Teal	
Ring-necked Duck* (2)	Ring-necked Duck* (2)
Ferruginous Duck*	Ferruginous Duck*
Lesser Scaup (3)	
<i>Long-tailed Duck*</i>	Long-tailed Duck*
<i>Fulmars</i> (4)	
	Manx Shearwater
Great Northern Diver	
Spoonbill (9)	
<i>Squacco Heron*</i>	<i>Squacco Heron*</i>
Great White Egret	Great White Egret
<i>Slavonian Grebe</i>	Slavonian Grebe
	<i>Common Crane</i> (2)
<i>Black-winged Stilt</i>	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	
Temminck's Stint	
Pectoral Sandpiper (6)	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper*	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper*
Long-billed Dowitcher (2)*	Long-billed Dowitcher (2)*
Spotted Sandpiper	
Lesser Yellowlegs	
Grey Phalarope (5)	Grey Phalarope (2)
<i>Pomarine Skua</i>	
Ring-billed Gull (2)	<i>Ring-billed Gull</i>
<i>Iceland Gull</i> (3)	<i>Iceland Gull*</i>
<i>Glaucous Gull</i>	
Bearded Tit (2)	
Yellow-browed Warbler	
<i>Siberian Chiffchaff</i>	
<i>littoralis Rock Pipit</i>	

* = same bird seen at both Chew and Blagdon

2012 only records are in italics and, of course, are subject to acceptance by the relevant committees.

Shelduck in Avon during the Last Half Century

Harvey Rose

Shelduck is an important species in the Severn Estuary being present in good numbers for most of the year including the breeding season, much higher numbers occur on and near the coast than inland. This holds true for the Avon area which accounts for major proportion of the whole Estuary population. These populations have been studied for at least the last half century, and this note will discuss the changes that have occurred during this period. Mike Taylor had planned to produce a similar account but, unfortunately, he died before he could write it.

The Historical Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland [1996] states that in the Severn Estuary in the latter part of the nineteenth century Shelduck was an abundant breeding species on the Glamorgan and Monmouth coasts, common on the Gloucestershire coast and uncommon on the Somerset coast from the south of Bristol. By the middle of the twentieth century breeding on the southern side of the Estuary seemed to have improved as H. H. Davis [1947] states:

“Sheld-duck: Resident. Common and well known as a breeding species on Brean Down; at Woodspring [CI-Y]; along the Severn reaches [Sevenside]; and elsewhere in coastal areas. Also breeds on Steep Holm, and nesting has been reported from Denny Isle. Very large congregations sometimes noted off Brean Down in autumn. Occasional on inland waters in winter.”

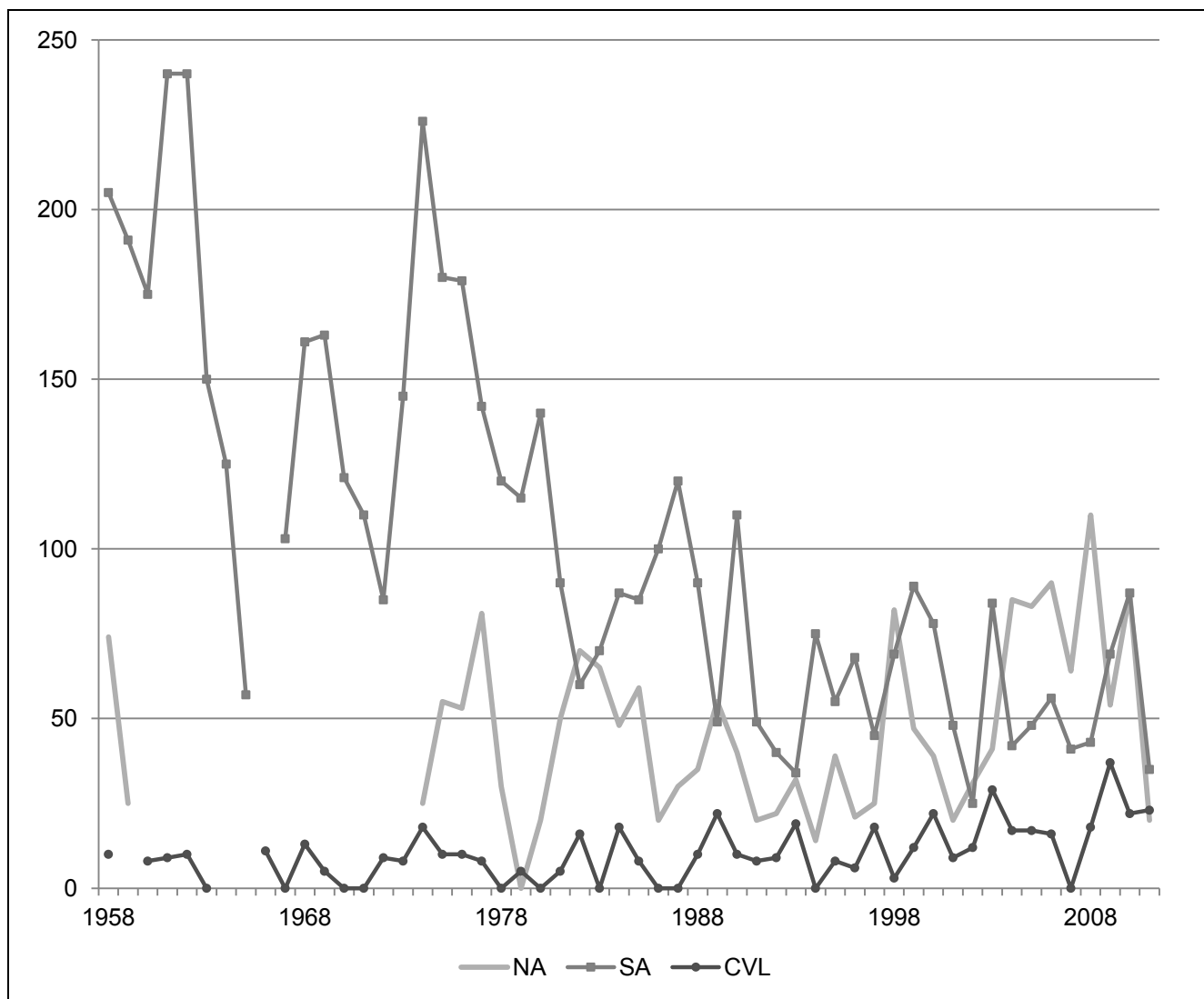
In 1958 the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge began a Shelduck Survey for the whole of the Severn Estuary. (Although the survey's main concern was Shelduck, some other duck species were counted including Wigeon and Mallard.) It lasted for five years but tended to tail off in the latter part. There were two aspects. In the first, the local birders were asked to count flocks and brood sizes on the coast, and this has continued more or less uninterrupted until the present time. The second was an aerial survey undertaken between 1958 and 1962. About 60 flights were made during this period. They started from an airfield near Gloucester, proceeded along the north coast of the Estuary to Cardiff, then crossed south to Weston-s-Mare and returned to Gloucester following the southern bank of the Estuary. They used a small single engine plane, an Auster, the pilot was Peter Etheridge and the observer was Hugh Boyd who was an active birder up to very recently and co-authored a paper in the 2009 edition of this Report.

Shelduck breed locally in good numbers. They usually nest in burrows, occasionally old Rabbit burrows, sometimes a surprising distance from water. Other nest sites are sometimes used, for example in 1960 a nest was reported 10m up an Elm tree at Portbury [Somerset Birds, 1960]. Once the chicks have hatched the parents lead the family

party on foot to the nearest water, usually the Severn or a tributary but sometimes a lake, CVL being the prime example. It is worth noting that the male involvement in this activity is unique amongst British duck species. Chicks from several broods then form sometimes quite large crèches (occasionally with over 50 chicks) watched over by one or two adults. At this time, usually early to mid-July, most of the local adults (with those from the rest of the UK) leave to moult either at a large site in the North Sea close to the Dutch and/or Danish coasts – the Waddensee, or at a smaller moulting area in Bridgwater Bay in Somerset, but it is not known with certainty whether the Avon birds moult at the main North Sea site or in Bridgwater Bay. One suggestion is that most of the Avon birds use the first site, and the majority of the Bridgwater moulting flock comes from Ireland. One reason for this is that flocks have been reported in the early July period apparently leaving the area on evening flights heading east. After moulting the flocks slowly return to the Estuary, mainly during September, and then they remain until the next breeding season so that quite large numbers are seen at both ends of the year. A rough estimate of the population size for the Avon area at these times is about 1000 with possibly three to five times this figure in the whole Estuary. The latest WeBS Report, for 2009/10, gives a five-year mean of 4480 for the Severn Estuary population as a whole with a total count of 5148 for the 2009/10 winter.

Breeding numbers

Our discussion will cover two aspects – breeding and the winter flocks, and we shall consider the breeding data first. During the 1958-62 survey and in most years since then reasonable attempts have been made to count the number of chicks reaching the water. As noted above pairs mostly nest in burrows inland and then walk to the coast with their offspring. This first period is fraught with obstacles and danger, and we have little idea how successful it is or what percentage of chicks actually reach the water. But once they have found a river or lake site the chicks tend to stay put until they have grown large enough to fly, this means that they can be counted with relative ease. Also, most of the main crèche sites are well known and this was also true in the past. In the first graph on the next page we give the available data for numbers of chicks recorded during the period 1958 to 2011 in three batches: first, those recorded in each year on the coast north of the mouth of the R. Avon up to the Oldbury area, secondly, those counted south of the mouth of the Avon to Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare including the major site at CI-Y (see discussion below), and thirdly CVL.



Shelduck - Number of chicks recorded each year in North Avon (NA), South Avon (SA) and CVL

A number of points need to be made about this data

(a) Some broods arrive at a regular crèche site but leave almost immediately. Hence, clearly in several cases these broods go uncounted although of course they may move to another regularly watched site and be counted at this second site.

(b) After the first survey (1958 to 1962) and before 1974 when the county of Avon came into existence, the published data north of the R. Avon includes that for Slimbridge which hosted many of the breeding pairs. Hence no data for NA itself is available for this period.

(c) At the beginning of the survey the southern boundary was Birnbeck Island, just north of Weston-s-Mare. But since the 1980s the published information for SA has included data from the area south of the town around the Axe Estuary. Hence the counts for SA for the first two decades of the survey are probably an underestimate. Note, Davis [1947] stated that Brean Down was a major breeding site in the 1940s.

(d) During the early part of the survey it was thought that almost all broods would have reached

the crèche stage by mid-June, and at that time this may have been true. But by the 1980s it had been noted that some broods arrive at this stage much later with occasional fresh broods appearing in the first week of August. So it is possible that the early data missed a few late broods as the survey counts tended to stop before the end of June.

Discussion

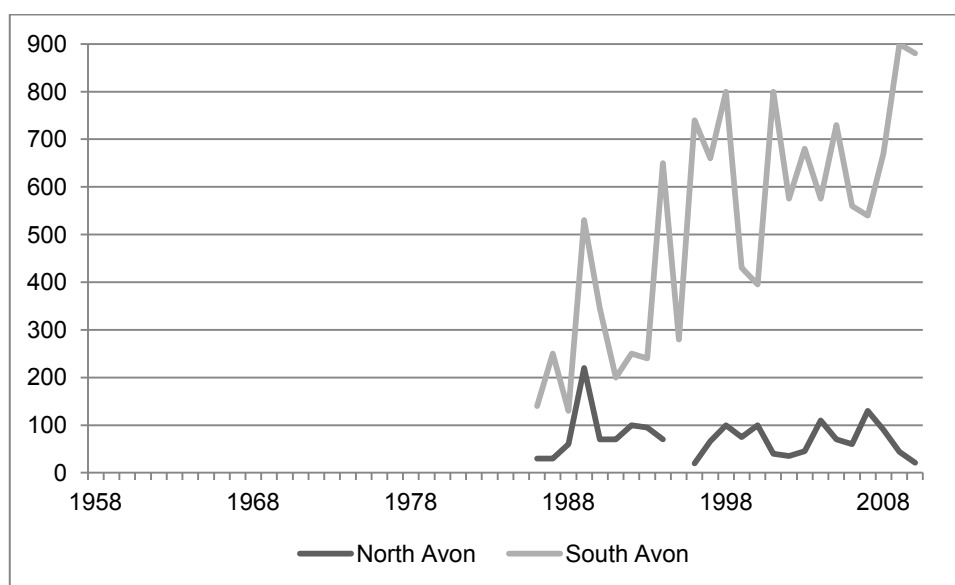
Although the counts are small, the data from CVL is reasonably constant, also the winter counts for the whole of Avon have not varied that much, see below. Hence, overall we may assume that the population has been relatively stable for the last half century and more. This is also borne out by data from various BTO national breeding atlases that have been published during the last forty years. The counts for NA seemed to have improved recently. But those for SA, and especially those for CI-Y which has been and remains one of the best sites for this species in the Estuary, have seen some decline over the period. Apart from building work (mainly for housing) that has taken place inland from CI-Y during the past half century one other construction seems to have had a major impact on brood numbers here. This was the construction of

the M5 motorway during the 1970s. We noted above that pairs choose breeding sites inland, and it is perhaps surprising how far inland some of these can be as the motorway now appears to have cut off several sites. The evidence for this is as follows. After the motorway was built there were a number of records of family parties trying to walk across the road surface with disastrous consequences. In one published report for 1977 two adults and twelve chicks were noted, the adults were killed but the eight of the chicks survived to fledging with some human help [Avon Bird Report, 1977]. There is also a record of a family party turning up on the doorstep of a house on the western outskirts of Nailsea on the landward side of the motorway [Avon Bird Report, 1979]. This may go some way to explain the drop of the counts for SA during this period. As noted above Steep Holm was a notable breeding site during the first half of the last century. This is not so now, and it has been suggested that the cause was the growth in the gull populations here since that time. Although the decline of the Rabbit population (possibly again gull related), and the consequent ranker vegetation growth, may have also contributed to this decline. Below we note that there seems to have been an increase recently in the winter counts for the more southerly part of the Estuary. This suggests that some pairs have found new breeding sites in the Estuary, possibly on the west Gloucestershire coast between Chepstow and Lydney, and other quieter parts, which may have gone some way to make up for the losses mentioned above.

Winter flocks

We shall now consider the winter flocks. Below and on the next page we give three graphs to illustrate the late autumn to spring distribution. For much of the last half century this Report has given estimates of coastal numbers dividing the Severn coast into two sections: those occurring north-east of the mouth of the R. Avon at Avonmouth up to Oldbury and including Severnside, and those occurring south-west from St George's Wharf (now RPD) down to the Axe Estuary including Cl-Y although as we noted above during the early years of the survey the lower limit was Birnbeck Island and so it excluded the flocks around the Axe Estuary and Brean Down.

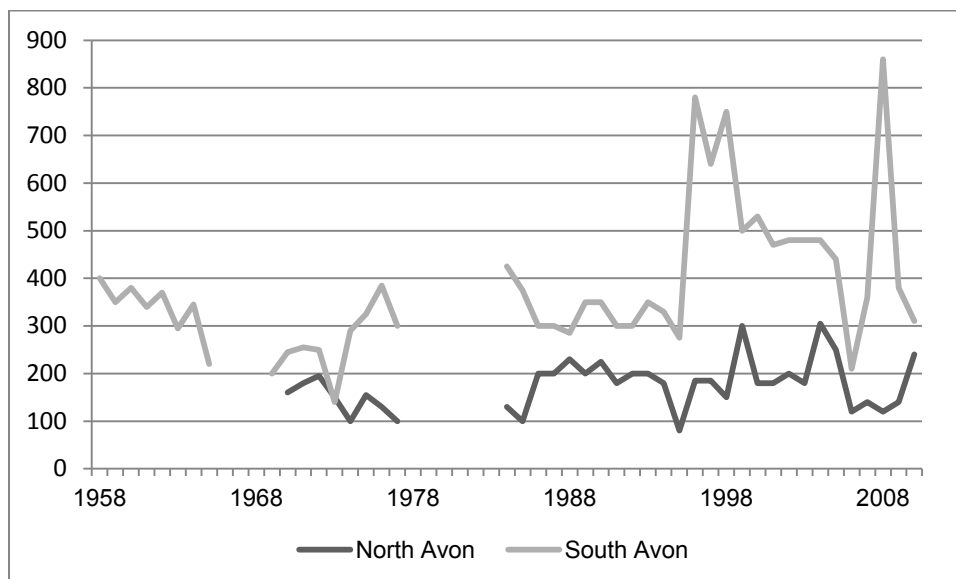
The first graph gives the available data for the last three months of the year, that is after the birds have returned from their moulting period in the Waddensee. The two lines on the graph give the maximum counts for each year (where available) for the two sections of Estuary coast as described above. At this time of year it seems that many of the birds congregate in the outer Estuary. Davis [1947] also noted this for the earlier part of the past century. There has been a notable and steady increase here over the past twenty years not reflected in the breeding data which suggests that many of these birds are not local, that is not Avon breeders.



Maximum counts for the period up to December.

The second graph gives the data for the first part of the year using the same division as above, that is the maximum count from January to late April for each year where information is available. During this period the data suggest that many birds move

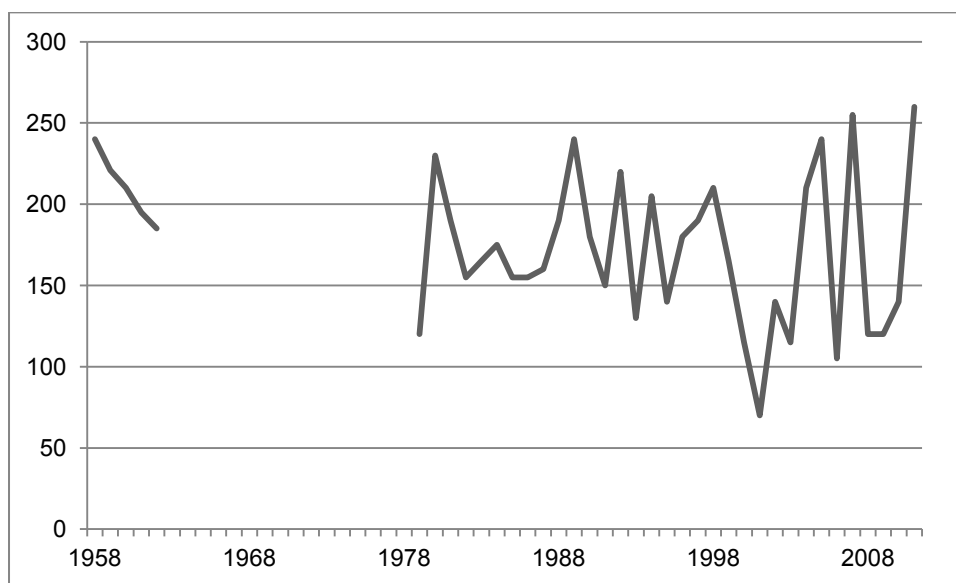
slowly up the Estuary to breed as the ratio of the number of birds north-east and south-west of Avonmouth in many years at this time is much more equal than it was during the late autumn period.



Maximum counts for the period up to late April

The third graph gives the maximum single count at CI-Y for each winter period from 1958 to 1962 and from 1978 to the present; during these periods this section of coast has been counted in a uniform and standardised way. In about 80% of the years in question the maximum count was made between late January and mid-March. The main exceptions were in 1999, 2004, 2005 and 2011 when it was

made earlier. This further adds weight to the suggestion above that a major part of the population moves up the Estuary from south-west to north-east to breed during the period January to April as the mean maximum count here usually occurs in late winter. It should also be noted that the data in this graph is fairly uniform in contrast to the breeding data discussed above.



Maximum count for each winter at CI-Y

Discussion

The data sets presented above suggest that the Shelduck populations in the Severn Estuary are and have been fairly stable for a long time, although some decline has occurred which may have reversed recently. The area south of Clevedon known as CI-Y was very productive prior to the 1970s but as we noted above the construction of the M5 motorway probably had a major effect of the number of pairs breeding on this stretch of the Estuary as they need relatively undisturbed rural

areas fairly close to the coast to breed with no major obstacles to impede their post-breeding walk to the coast.

One major future threat to the population's stability is the prospect of a Severn Barrage. This project was rejected a few years ago but its eventual construction has recently been put back on the agenda. The problem with this proposal for the Shelduck, and many other wild populations, is mainly the following. During and after its construction there would be a considerable amount

of “development” of the coastal strip all along both the English and Welsh parts of the Estuary which would become much like a large new lake. This development would probably block off many of the possible breeding areas as the construction of the M5 did to a smaller extent in the 1970s, and so breeding numbers could be greatly reduced.

Postscript for 2011

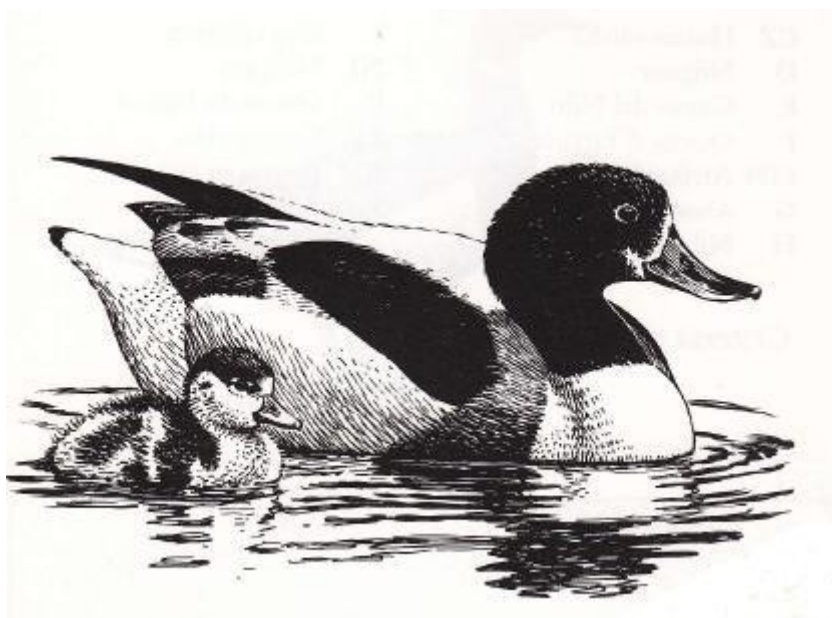
Except at CVL breeding counts in 2011 were poor probably caused by the cold spring weather. Preliminary information so far available suggests that breeding in 2012 was again affected by poor spring weather. On the other hand the winter counts for both 2010/11 and 2011/12 were again on the high side.

References

The main data sources were (a) this Report from its first issue in 1979, (b) its predecessor the Proceedings of the BNS from 1958 to 1978, (c) the Field-work Review of the Ornithological Section of the BNS Nos. 10 to 12, 1958 to 1962, and (d) some unpublished papers and notes left by Mike Taylor after his death. Also

Davis, H. H. [1947] – *A revised list of the birds of the Bristol District*. In the Proc. of the BNS, Vol. XXVII, Part IV published in August 1948.

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Nightingale by David Thelwell

Nightingale Survey in Lower Woods and Surrounding Area

Stephen Birks and Claire Halpin

1. Introduction

Nightingales in Britain: Changing Habitats

"In addition to the changes in the Nightingale's range, there has been a noticeable shift in habitat use over recent decades. Once a bird of woodland, especially coppice and young plantations, Nightingales are now found predominantly in scrub with over half the singing males found in 1999 residing in such habitats." (BTO 2011)

The Nightingale's distribution, population and habitat preference in Britain is thought to be in the process of change. The last nationwide survey was carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) in 1999, and showed that the range had contracted since the previous survey in 1980, and also that there was a shift in habitat use away from mixed woodland and active coppice and towards scrub (Wilson *et al.*, 2002).

The last extensive survey of singing nightingales in Lower Woods, Inglestone and Hawkesbury Commons and surrounding farmland was conducted six years ago by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (Burditt, 2005). The 2005 survey identified between ten and twelve singing birds. With these records in mind it was considered that a new survey of Lower Woods and surrounding areas would contribute valuable knowledge to these processes of population and distribution change.

The Background to the Survey

Inspired by a Bat Survey at Lower Woods during the late summer of 2010, some of the participants (who are also regular Lower Wood volunteers) decided to organise a Nightingale Survey along similar lines during the spring of 2011.

The foremost purpose of the survey was to gather reliable data that could be compared to the 2005 survey in terms of number of singing males and territories. In addition it was thought that it would be useful to gather data on the times of day and night nightingales sing and to record singing birds to explore audio identification of individual singing males. However, the approach to the conduct of the survey was intentionally kept informal, as we wanted to encourage people to have the simple pleasure of coming along, experiencing the woods at night, and hearing the song of the nightingales.

The survey mostly brought together people who are actively involved with the Wildlife Trust conservation work in the Woods and are 'known' to each other. Surveying the nightingales also established relationships with a local farm manager Jim Clark, a professional sound recordist Gary Moore, and

Andrew and Mandy who live near the Woods, and walk in the Woods most days. In fact it was Mandy who alerted us, before the survey even began, to the nightingales singing on the farmland between Lower Woods and Wickwar in the Little Avon river valley.

2. Methods

The second week in May was identified by local experts as the peak week for Nightingale 'sightings' in recent years, and therefore the survey was planned to run between May 6th and 14th. The survey aimed to cover Lower Woods Nature Reserve, Inglestone and Hawkesbury Commons on foot, and surrounding farmland by negotiating access with landowners or using public footpaths.

During the week commencing May 6th, the Woods were walked systematically between 8pm and 11pm. However, the enthusiasm of the surveyors was such that observations began before the official start of the survey and was continued by some surveyors, on a less intensive level, until the end of the month. The survey site was also visited at other times of the day and on five occasions overnight surveys were conducted to observe the night-time singing of the birds.

3. Results

Numbers and Territories

Singing birds were found in two valleys formed by the Little Avon River and one of its tributary streams on Horwood Farm, to the west of the Woods. They delivered their song from dense thickets of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and bramble scrub that interlace the grassland of the farm. It was reported, by a very reliable source, that Nightingales began singing in this area on the April 18th this year in these valleys, and that this has been the usual arrival date for three years of the last five years.

The survey established that birds were heard regularly in two distinct areas of Horwood Farm: the field adjacent to the Hunting Lodge, and the south slope of the Little Avon river valley. In the Hunting Lodge field, on two occasions, two individuals were heard singing simultaneously and single birds on other occasions. On the south slope of the river, on one occasion, three individuals were heard singing simultaneously and on several occasions, two were heard simultaneously.

During the survey week no Nightingales were heard singing from within the Woods or on the Commons. The distance between the two areas where Nightingales were identified indicates that it was unlikely that there was any crossover of birds

between the two. The conclusion therefore is that this survey identified five distinct singing males, although it is possible that there were more than this. All birds appeared to be singing from dense scrub dominated by Hawthorn.

For details of observation dates, the time spent observing and the areas of the woodland walked, please refer to the Appendices.

The Singing Times of the Nightingales Surveyed

The Nightingales occupying all of these territories were heard singing at many different times of the day and night regardless of clear or cloudy skies, warm or cold nights, or the intensity of the moonlight. On four overnight visits the Little Avon Valley birds sang from dusk till dawn, although, as the survey progressed the birds appeared to start singing later at night. On the final overnight visit on the 19th May, one bird that we came to call the Concrete Bridge Bird sang at dusk, ceased singing at 10.15pm for an hour and then began singing and sang until daylight began to return at about 4am.

On the night of May 6th a number of birds were observed to be singing throughout the night and some were also heard singing throughout the nights on May 12th, 14th, 18th and 20th. Other than confirming that a number of birds sang throughout the night no other discernible patterns of singing could be confirmed, although consistent night-time singing of the birds' full repertoire appeared to begin later at night as the survey continued. On May 6th the birds began singing at 9.45pm and on 20th consistent singing did not begin until 11.30pm.

4. Discussion

Our results support the BTO paper that Nightingale populations and habitats are changing. The number of individuals heard in this survey was five, as opposed to the ten to twelve identified in 2005, and it appears that the Nightingale population in the area surveyed no longer frequents many traditional sites that were occupied in the previous survey.

There were reports of Nightingales being heard on Inglestone Common (near Lance Coppice) before the survey began, but these could not be confirmed during the survey week. There was a confirmed 'sighting' from within the Woods (South Moon Ridings) after the survey ended; however it is not possible to say whether this was a new individual or one of the Horwood Farm birds moving territory. Certainly, one of the Nightingales on Horwood Farm was still singing throughout the night by the end of the survey week, and as it is believed that Nightingales generally only sing throughout the night whilst trying to attract a mate, it is possible that this bird had failed to pair in the one location and had moved on. Around the date that the South Moon Ridings Nightingale started singing, it was reported that the Horwood Farm birds were no longer singing, which may lend support to this theory.

In both the 2005 and 2011 surveys, identifying the exact number of singing males was problematic as the birds being monitored move around to some extent. Therefore during this survey a number of sound recordings were made and it is hoped that it will be possible to identify individual singing birds from their song when the recordings are analysed. It is also hoped that new recordings can be made in 2012 to establish if the same individuals have returned. These findings will be published in due course.

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Appendix A: Detailed results

Date	Miles	Times	Areas surveyed	Grid refs.	Notes
21/04		22.00 - 22.30	Horwood Lane		1 bird heard some distance from the bottom of Horwood Lane. Probably pheasant pen bird
01/05		5.45 - 6.00	Margery Hay	ST737878	2 birds heard by concrete bridge
04/05	2.75	12.30 - 16.00	Plumber's Trench, Horwood Farm	ST734876 ST736878 ST737878	1 bird by hunting lodge; 2 singing together along track from concrete bridge
04/05	2.14	18.00 - 22.00	Horwood Farm	ST737878 ST736878 ST734879	2 birds by concrete bridge; 1 next to pheasant pen

07/05	3.3	15.00 - 18.30	Plumber's Trench, Horwood Farm, Bishop's Hill Wood, Upper & Lower Wetmoor, Horton Great Trench	ST737878 ST734876	1 bird by concrete bridge; 1 in field opposite hunting lodge
07/05	2.83	20.00 - 22.30	The Walk, West side of Woods, Lower Wetmoor	ST737878	1 bird by concrete bridge
07/05	4.15	20.00 - 22.30	Bay's Wood, Stonybridge Wood		
07/05	3.69	20.00 - 22.30	Horwood Great Trench, Burnt Wood, Littley, Oakhall		
07/05	1.68		Wickwar to Sturt Bridge		
08/05	2.4	14.30 - 16.00	Littley, Hawkesbury Common, Bucklesbury Farm		
08/05	4.24	20.00 - 23.30	Plumber's Trench, E & W Stanley, Upper Wetmoor, Burnt Wood, Horwood Farm	ST737878	Pheasant pen bird & 1 by concrete bridge
09/05	4.11	14.00 - 17.30	Plumber's Trench, Horwood Farm, Upper Wetmoor, Stony Bridge, Sturgeon, Littley, Hawkesbury Common		
09/05	0.89	20.00 - 20.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay, Abram's Walk	ST737878 ST736878	2 birds by concrete bridge
09/05		20.30 - 22.30	Littley, Lance Coppice, Inglestone Common		
09/05	2.07	20.30 - 22.30	Horwood Farm, Bishop's Hill Wood, Bedford's Wood	ST734875	2 birds on footpath in field opposite hunting lodge. 2 birds in distance from Mandy's house
10/05	2.82	20.00 - 22.25	Lance Coppice, Assley Common		
10/05	4.19	20.00 - 23.30	Horton Great Trench, Footpaths around Horwood Farm, Shortwood Farm, Horton Great Trench from south end of NR to Lodge		
11/05	3.16	2.00 - 4.00	Horwood Farm		
11/05	2.94	20.00 - 23.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay, Horwood Farm	ST737878 ST736878	3 birds from concrete bridge, 1 possibly pheasant pen bird
12/05	1.49	20.00 - 22.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay		
12/05		22.30 - 8.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay	ST737878	Started singing 21.30; full song from 23.30
13/05	2.79	20.00 - 22.30	Horton Great Trench, Mossy Wood, Horwood Farm		
13/05	3.17	22.30 - 9.00	Horton Great Trench Lodge – south end		
14/05	1.09	12.30 - 15.30	Shepherd's Knap, River between E/W Stanley & Lower Wetmoor		

14/05	4.85	20.00 - 22.30	Lance Coppice, road along north boundary of NR, South Moon Ridings, Margery Hay, Horwood Farm		
14/05	1.04	22.30 - 7.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay	ST737878	Full song from 23.00, singing all night
15/05	0.62	7.30 - 8.30	Plumber's Trench, Margery Hay		
	62.41				Survey effort 146 hours

Appendix B: Area covered

The following map shows the routes taken by surveyors throughout the week. Some routes were taken more than once.



Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – New to the Avon Area

Nige Milbourne

On Nov. 18th I had been birding all morning and was driving back towards the Fishing Lodge when I decided to stop at Green Lawn to check the gulls on Tiny's Shallow. I spotted a small wader creeping around near the Point that I was not immediately able to name. Composing myself, I noticed the bright red cap and immediately thought of the Pectoral / Sharp-tailed Sandpiper pair, so I returned to my car for the Collin's Guide which points out that the "Sharpie's" head pattern, especially behind the eye, is stronger than for Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* and this, together with the general orange wash and minimal streaking on the breast, seemed to fit nicely with the bird I was looking at. I rang RMI at 12.35hrs to tell him I had a "goody". He rang me back a few minutes later and I told him I thought I had one of the pair mentioned, and by the time he arrived I felt pretty sure that it was a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*. I did not wish to influence his judgement until he had time to have a good look at the bird and come to his own conclusion about its identity.

When a few people had taken a look we had a general discussion about the possibility of its being a Pectoral Sandpiper with KJH and MJ who had arrived from CVL. I said it was unlike any wader I had seen before, and they all agreed that it did not look like any of the "Pecs" that had been at CVL during the autumn. We were in broad agreement that it was a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper with some reservations about its gait and the fact that we could not readily see a bold white eye ring. AHD turned up and, after some time watching, his reaction was to agree with our identification. CC noting the red cap, brought the possibility of Long-toed Stint *Calidris tenuirostris* into the discussion because we had all commented on the creeping gait, large feet and long toes, and because we could not really gauge its size as no other waders were present. I have to say I did not think it was, having previously seen Long-toed Stint in Goa, but it was right that we eliminated this possibility. We checked some of the field guides I had in the car and CC declared he was happy that it was not a Long-toed. KEV arrived at 14.20hrs and after a quick look said that he thought "it's a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper".

The word was put out to the wider birding community and we all enjoyed good, but distant, views from Green Lawn. As the afternoon wore on, the bird walked towards the landing stage, so we moved, and the steady stream of visitors had good views from here until dusk. When it was nearer it came up on to the top of the mud and picked around occasionally carrying food items to the water's edge

for a wash before swallowing them. At dusk it flew back to the Point and out of view from the Lodge.

Description

Size, behaviour and structure - A small shorebird that first fed at water level under the crumbling edge of the eastern side of the Point known as Tiny's Shallow in front of the Fishing Lodge. It moved with a creeping gait which gave it a relatively long-legged and long-toed appearance as it frequently crouched, facing us, when apparently threatened. During initial observation, the bird was on its own with few others nearby for size comparison other than Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* and Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*. However, later in the afternoon I photographed it beside a Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*. It appeared to be larger than a stint, thereby ruling out Long-Toed, and closer in size to a Dunlin *Calidris alpina*.

Head - One of the most striking features of the bird when first discovered was the rufous cap 'glowing' in the sunshine, this immediately put me in mind of the Pectoral / Sharp-tailed Sandpiper pair. It was fairly heavily streaked with black. The other obvious aspect was the broad white supercilium that flared, including downwards, behind the eye. The field guides suggested that it should also have a bold white eye ring, but it was not until it came to within about 80 metres range from the landing stage late in the afternoon that I really saw this feature through my x45 telescope. I would say it was not particularly bold on this individual. The lores and auriculars were darkish brown. The chin and throat were white with some streaking.

Body - The third and conclusive identification feature was the virtually unstreaked, orange-buff wash on the breast. This ruled out Pectoral Sandpiper of all ages and was a further pointer towards Sharp-tailed. There was a gorget of fine streaks on the throat and the breast had five or six dark streaks each side at the top, but otherwise it had an orange / ginger wash that ended abruptly on the lower breast. The belly was white but had four or five grey smudges on each flank and there were three or four dark streaks either side of the white vent. The scapulars had black centres with rufous fringes and the coverts appeared to be greyish with pale fringes. I did not really see any mantle / scapular lines until watching it from the Lodge when two ill-defined yellowish straps could be seen. The tertials were dark brown with rufous fringes and the primaries were dark brown to black. I did not see the upperwing pattern as first, but see below.

Bare parts - The bill was dark brown and slightly shorter than the length of the head. The shape was slightly decurved. Late in the afternoon at close range, I could see that the base of the lower mandible was paler. The eye appeared dark and the legs greenish-yellow.

Call - I did not hear the bird call at any time.

Later observations - While I was watching it on the afternoon of Dec. 15th, I was struck by how much more prominent the two greyish Vs over the mantle and scapulars were than when it first arrived in mid-November. The grey-brown smudges on the flanks were also more developed than when it first appeared, but few were really chevrons as such, and the crown seemed less rufous. There were also more streaks on the sides of the breast by the time it left. I photographed and watched the bird in flight several times during its last period at BL. The feet projected slightly beyond the tail and frequently dangled down a bit. It appeared somewhat larger than a Dunlin and the wing bar was less marked. When feeding or in flight it was quite noticeable that the sandpiper often led the Dunlin flock that associated with it. While in flight I was able to see the black line of feathering down the centre of the rump and tail. There were some black streaks on the white uppertail coverts and the dark tail feathers came to a central point.

Dates of occurrence at BL:

Nov. 18th at Tiny's Shallow,

Nov. 30th (NM, JPM *et al.*) at Bell's Bush,

Dec. 12th to 16th at Bell's Bush/Burmah Road and Pipe Bay/Lodge.

The bird spent the intervening periods at CVL.

There have been 32 previous records in the UK up to 2007, and this constitutes the fifth occurrence of a juvenile on these shores. It was the longest stayer by far. Most vagrant waders occurring in the UK are juveniles, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are unusual in that they do not fit this pattern. It has been suggested that most 'Sharpie' juveniles spend their first autumn/winter period in Alaska before heading south and this may explain this behaviour pattern.

Discussion

According to O'Brien *et al.* (2006) Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is an Asian species that breeds in northern Siberia and winters primarily in Australia by following the East Asia – Pacific Flyway. Small numbers winter in New Guinea and New Zealand. As noted above it turns up in autumn in western Alaska and on the Pacific coast of America, with

multiple records in western Alaska in spring as well. To quote Hayman *et al.* (1998) "in some years, a few birds apparently join the eastward movement of Pectorals from Siberia across North America and even reach W Europe; some possibly reach Europe from the east." 2011 was marked by the appearance of six Pectoral Sandpipers at CVL, although curiously there were none at BL. It is not clear whether our bird arrived from the east or the west. As Hayman *et al.* suggests it could have formed part of the considerable number of North American waders, including several Pectoral Sandpipers, that occurred in Avon during the autumn having stopped off somewhere, for example in Ireland, on the way. On the other hand it could have arrived independently from the east. O'Brien *et al.* states that "peak numbers occur in south-east Asia in August / September (adults and juveniles), although some are still moving in November (mostly juveniles). They arrive at their wintering grounds from late August to November, with peak arrival in September."

Although I noted some changes between the middle of November and a month later, O'Brien *et al.* confirm that the juvenile moult occurs primarily at the wintering sites between December and March. Limited head and body moult may rarely take place before wintering grounds are reached. It is possible that the bird may have stayed at the North Somerset Reservoirs longer had the water level remained low enough for waders and shorebirds to feed on the muddy margins. However, rising water levels confined the wader flock to a very small area, and it was also subjected to regular Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* attacks which may have combined to drive all of them away. It was somewhat poetic that I should have been the finder and also the last person to see the bird before it departed with a small flock of Dunlin when yet another Peregrine attack occurred in front of the Fishing Lodge around 11.00 hrs on Dec. 16th. This flock probably flew off west over the dam, after spending some five minutes or so wheeling around the dam end. I watched as the raptor chased a lone member of the flock which narrowly escaped predation settling back on the mud in front of the Lodge with a Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*.

References

- Hayman, P., Marchant, J. and Prater, T. (1998) *Shorebirds, an identification guide to the waders of the world* Croom Helm, London and Sydney.
- O'Brien, M, Crossley, R. and Karlson, K. (2006) *The Shorebird Guide* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York.

Pied Wheatear at Oldbury-on-Severn

Darryl Spittle

On Oct. 25th, following a few days of strong southeasterly winds, I was undertaking a wildfowl and wader survey along the Estuary near Oldbury-on-Severn. On approaching Thornbury Yacht Club, a wheatear flicked up from the sea wall and landed on the roof of the yacht club. It's behaviour (I have yet to see a Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* perched on the Yacht Club roof) and something odd about it's jizz meant I lifted the bins at which point the question 'Why isn't that a Pied Wheatear *O. pleschanka*?' popped into my head. Not being able to answer the question, I quickly grabbed a camera from my bag and got a few digi-scoped images. While fumbling around I also noted a few features (e.g. pale, grey-toned and cold-looking overall, fringing to the lower scapulars, chat-like jizz, long-winged impression) and, after a few more minutes, saw the tail pattern. Self doubt and an innate overly-cautious streak meant I was not 110% confident of the features to rule out female eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O. hispanica melanoleuca*, so I awaited the arrival of a colleague and, despite the inherent vagaries of mobile communication attempting to thwart me, made a couple of phone calls to double-check. A few discussions later, happy with the identification, and having checked with the Yacht Club that they would not mind a smattering of extra visitors, I put the news out albeit, of the first three locals I tried to contact, the first had his phone switched off, the second was in Norfolk and the third seemed strangely unimpressed with the news (he'd thought I'd said Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*).

It later transpired that the bird had almost certainly been seen earlier in the morning by two or three local birders but had been written off as Northern Wheatear. My colleague and I had covered the same survey area the previous day; therefore it is almost certain that the bird arrived between the evening of the 24th and early morning of the 25th.

Description

Bare parts: Black bill, very dark brown irides (appeared black in the field), and black legs and feet.

Upperparts: Crown, nape, mantle and scapulars greyish-brown; lower scapulars dark greyish-brown, neatly fringed pale brownish-grey; fringing on upper scapulars, mantle, nape and crown very difficult to see in the field (visible in close-up photos); the entire

upperparts appeared pale and cold toned. Back, rump and uppertail whitish, this feature was much more extensive than on Northern Wheatear reaching the base of the exposed tertials when the bird was at rest. Lesser/marginal and median coverts blackish edged pale sandy-brown; greater coverts and alula dark blackish-brown edged sandy brown, greater coverts tipped off-white; primary coverts, tertials, secondaries and primaries all dark blackish-brown edged pale sandy-brown becoming off-white towards tips. Underwing coverts blackish.

Tail: Central pair (TF 1) blackish, TF 2-6 white with blackish subterminal bar and pale sandy brown tips, subterminal bar becoming broader outwardly, more extensive on outer webs giving a serrated look to the upper border of the bar.

Underparts: Chin and throat a greyish-cream with dusky sandy brown 'wedges' on the lower half of the malar and moustachial areas; a narrow greyish-cream lower edge to the throat bordered the upper breast; the upper breast band was quite mottled in appearance, largely greyish-brown at the sides, it became weaker and infused with sandy brown tones in the centre. The upper edge, where it met the pale bordered throat was reasonably clear-cut, the lower edge was diffuse as it faded into an creamy-white lower breast; belly, vent and undertail creamy-white, palest on undertail; the upper flanks showed some limited areas of sandy brown most notably below the carpal joint and below the tips of the primary-coverts. These areas on the flanks and the sandy brown infused ear-coverts were the 'warmest' parts of the plumage.

Structure: Looked proportionately long-winged with primary projection greater than exposed tertials; approximately 15% smaller than Northern Wheatear present for comparison.

Jizz: Petite, compared to Northern Wheatear, and behaviour reminiscent of Whinchat or Redstart with lots of active fly-catching, at which it was very adept, bouts of hovering, nippy and darting in flight, little time was spent right on the ground, almost always on a post, or similar.

Calls: A low, dry, short 'krrrsch'; it called regularly, for example during aggressive interactions with Northern Wheatear and at times in response to the presence of observers.

Seventy- five years ago

Harvey Rose

The current Report is the 75th in a series going back without a break, even during the Second World War, to the first in 1936. To celebrate this milestone we are republishing the first Report in its entirety. It was written by Howard Davis who farmed land at Little Stoke now part of a housing estate. He was one of the few active birders at that time, Severnside being one of his main sites. Individual records had been published for many years prior to this, but the 1936 Report was the first to give a reasonably comprehensive account of the main ornithological sightings in the Bristol district (now more or less the Avon area) for a whole year in one place. A list of observers was not given, it is safe to assume that only a small number was involved almost certainly less than 15. The first published list

of observers, for the 1942 Report, contains only twelve names. It is interesting to note which species are discussed and which are left out. So for example only four passerines are included. One impression given is that many fewer birds occurred in the district in 1936 than do today, but this must surely be due to a lack of observations rather than to a lack of birds. But in a few cases this may in fact be true. For example he states that a record of 18 Bar-tailed Godwits on Severnside was the first spring record here. He also comments about the lack of Great Crested Grebe pairs but, of course, it should be noted that CVL did not exist at the time. The style of presentation is also very different to current practice.

Ornithological Notes, Bristol District, 1936

By H. H. Davis, M.B.O.U.
(*Read in title, 4th March, 1937*)

The increased interest taken in the bird-life of the Bristol district during recent years has been well maintained in 1936, and as the succeeding pages will show, a number of noteworthy observations have been reported.

It is pleasing to know that so wary a species as the Raven can become sufficiently indifferent to the presence of man as to nest immediately overlooking the road, river and rail traffic of the Avon Gorge. That a pair has now done so seems to indicate a spread from one of the two long established breeding sites in the Bristol Channel. The continued presence of Crossbills early in the year, as a result of the 1935 invasion, was not unexpected, while the visit of Pied Flycatchers on Spring passage, and a Sandwich Tern in Autumn are events which, although probably occurring more frequently than is supposed, do not often come under the notice of observers. In spite of the Bristol area being on the border-line of its westerly range in Britain, that graceful little falcon, the Hobby, can still be numbered among our Summer visitors.

A Common Scoter, Goosanders, and Slavonian Grebes have been seen at the North Somerset reservoirs, while the visit of a Sheld-Duck, two Little Stints, and a Kittiwake to Barrow constitute three additional species to the list of Birds at the Barrow Gurney reservoirs¹. Owing to the abnormally wet summer and the consequent high water level at both Blagdon and Barrow, very few waders were observed at either place in September, and at no time has there been a repetition of the unprecedented number of Duck as recorded in December, 1935 (cf. *Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 1935, p. 105).

Among more familiar waders at the Severn mouth in Autumn, Grey Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, a Little Stint and Bar-tailed Godwits were identified, and a party of eighteen of the latter was seen there in Spring.

The following classified notes represent the more important observations made during the year by various members of the B. N. Soc. Ornithological Section.

RAVEN (*Corvus c. corax*). The breeding of a pair in the Avon Gorge for the only time on record was an event of considerable interest. The birds were first noticed on February 19th, and within a few days were seen carrying sticks to a site on the Gloucestershire side. It is most satisfactory to relate that three young were successfully reared, although unfortunately two of these came to grief a few weeks after leaving the nest.

¹ A complete list of Barrow Gurney Reservoir Birds is given in the *Proceedings of the Bristol Nat. Soc.*, 1933, pp. 467-9. To this list must also be added the Knot (*Calidris c. canutus*) and the American Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*), both of which were identified at Barrow in September 1935 (cf. *British Birds*, Vol. XXIX, p. 183).

On the several previous occasions Ravens have been observed in the vicinity of the Gorge; that they remained to breed in the present year was certainly some recompense for the fact that for the first time since 1928 the Peregrines' eyrie was untenanted. It is now to be hoped that the Avon cliffs, like those of Brean Down and Steep Holm, will become an annual stronghold of both Raven and Peregrine, and that the attractions of the Gorge may be still further enhanced by aerial combats such as those witnessed wherever the two species are close neighbours.

CROSSBILL (*Loxia c. curvirostra*). In common with other areas in southern Britain, an immigration occurred on the Somerset side of Bristol during the latter half of 1935, and, in consequence, Crossbills were still tolerably abundant in the early part of 1936. They were frequently seen at Long Ashton from January to mid-March, while in the Leigh Woods and Failand districts, flocks, varying in size, were noticed until the second week of May. Although nesting has previously taken place in the above localities (cf. *Reports on Somerset Birds*, 1930, p. 7, and 1934, p. 7) there is no evidence to show that any remained to breed during the present year.

CORN BUNTING (*Emberiza c. calandra*). A single bird was frequenting a vetch field near Stoke Gifford for a short while on the evening of July 16th, but was not seen afterwards. Although occurring and breeding locally on the Cotswolds, it is apparently not often noticed in close proximity to the city.

PIED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa h. hypoleuca*). Several visited Leigh Woods during the Spring migration. Two males seen there on April 15th remained until the 20th. A single bird was reported at the Abbots Pool on the 22nd, and another in Leigh Woods on May 2nd. One—female or immature—was observed in a copse on the outskirts of Tortworth Court on August 2nd.

HOBBY (*Falco s. subbuteo*). On July 10th a pair was watched at close quarters on the Gloucestershire side of Bristol where the species has been noticed each summer since 1932. No information, however, is yet forthcoming regarding an eyrie in the district.

On a recent occasion, and almost within sight of the city boundary, Mr. J. H. Savory and the writer were fortunate in being able to obtain a telescope view, at 150 yards range, of a Hobby plucking a kill.

SHELD-DUCK (*Tadorna tadorna*). Two were seen at Blagdon on February 1st, and one on No. 3 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, on the 2nd. Although common on the coast, it is seldom seen at the reservoirs, and there is no previous record of its occurrence at Barrow.

PINTAIL (*Anas a. acuta*). A pair was observed at Blagdon on April 5th. Recorded at the North Somerset reservoirs fairly frequently but only in small numbers.

SCAUP (*Nyroca m. marila*). An adult male was again present on Barrow Gurney reservoirs where it remained from January until the third week of April or later. That a single male should be the sole representative of this species each winter at Barrow during the last four years suggests the probability of its always being the same bird (cf. *Reports on Somerset Birds*, 1933-36).

GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala c. clangula*). Although not of infrequent occurrence it may be of interest to record that among seven or eight Goldeneye at Blagdon on December 26th was a very fine adult male.

COMMON SCOTER (*Oidemia n. nigra*). A single male was seen on No. 3 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, on September 26th but it had departed by the following day. This sea-going duck is an occasional visitor to the North Somerset reservoirs, more often in Spring, but at no time in anything but small numbers.

GOOSANDER (*Mergus m. merganser*). A pair at Blagdon on April 5th were, for a few moments, under observation from a car at no more than twenty yards range. Has been fairly frequently recorded, usually in Winter, at the North Somerset reservoirs.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps c. cristatus*). For the third successive year a pair bred on the lake at Tortworth Court. Two broods were reared, the first being hatched late in April, and the second on or about August 16th. The colonization of this water in 1934 corresponds with the noticeable east to west extension of the breeding range of this species, and it is interesting to relate that during the progress of the Great-Crested Grebe enquiry, 1931 (cf. *British Birds*, Vol. XXVI), no nesting pairs were reported from the Gloucestershire side of the Bristol area.

There were no less than fifty-three at Barrow Gurney reservoirs on August 9th, all of which were adults.

SLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps auritus*). One, in almost full breeding plumage, was observed on No. 3 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, on April 7th and 10th, but it had departed by the 19th. Another, in a similar state of

dress, was clearly identified at Blagdon on April 11th. This species is of rare occurrence at the North Somerset reservoirs.

In Winter some difficulty may be experienced in distinguishing the Slavonian from the Black-necked Grebe, at which time both present a decidedly black and white appearance when on the water; in Summer plumage the chestnut lower-neck of the former should prevent any confusion. Distinguishing characters at all times, however, are the slender up-turned bill and the arched forehead of the Black-neck as compared with the stout, straight bill, and the comparatively flat forehead of the Slavonian.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius apricarius*). A flock of almost seventy were in company with Lapwings in a field at Little Stoke on January 24th. Although not an uncommon Winter visitor to this locality, it is usually only seen in small numbers.

GREY PLOVER (*Squatarola s. squatarola*). A party of twenty-one were frequenting the river bank between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on October 4th. When watched in flight, the black axillary feathers were plainly visible. This is the largest number yet recorded at the Severn mouth.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris testacea*). Observed on the Avonmouth-Severn Beach mud flats on several dates in September. Three were there on both the 20th and 22nd. Although of regular occurrence on this stretch of mud in Autumn, it has not yet been reported in Spring.

LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*). One was seen in company with Dunlin along the Avonmouth-Severn Beach mud flats on September 20th, while at Barrow Gurney reservoirs on the 26th two extremely tame birds were identified. The Barrow birds had left by the following day. These occurrences are of interest in that there appears to have been an unusual number of Little Stints passing through the British Islands at this time (cf. *British Birds*, Vol. XXX, pp. 195, 230).

PURPLE SANDPIPER (*Calidris m. maritima*). Twelve, with Turnstones, on the Avonmouth-Severn Beach mud flats on March 29th is the largest number yet noticed there on any one day. A single bird on May 10th provides the latest date yet recorded for this species at the Severn mouth.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa l. lapponica*). A flock of eighteen between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on May 10th is the first Spring record of this bird at the Severn mouth. Of these, three were in partial and one in full red dress. As early as July 26th two were seen on the mud flats off Littleton-on-Severn.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias n. niger*). A fairly frequent visitor to the North Somerset reservoirs in Autumn, though less often in Spring, this Tern was again observed in September. At Barrow Gurney there were two or three on the 12th, while four were seen at Blagdon on the same date, and two on the 13th.

At Blagdon, on September 12th, there were also about six Common (or Arctic) Terns.

SANDWICH TERN (*Sterna s. sandvicensis*). One, an adult assuming Winter plumage, was identified by Mr. H. Tetley and the writer between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on September 30th. A clear telescopic view of the bird was obtained when the black bill and legs placed its identity beyond reasonable doubt. This Tern has rarely been noticed in the Bristol district and there is apparently no authentic record of its previous occurrence at the Severn mouth.

KITTIWAKE GULL (*Rissa t. tridactyla*). A single specimen, in the "tarrock" state of dress, was seen at No. 3 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, on August 9th. It was extremely tame and allowed an approach to within eight to ten yards. Another was picked up on the river bank near Severn Beach on November 15th. Typically a Gull of open sea, the Kittiwake only visits the district occasionally, usually storm driven, or as a lost wanderer.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE (*Alectoris r. rufa*). As in 1935, at least one pair bred near Stoke Gifford. In neither year, however, were more than two or three young reared. The heavy clay soil of this particular locality is probably unsuited to a bird, the natural habitat of which is reputed to be sandy or stony ground.

One, found dead at the water's edge of No.1 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, on March 8th, may, from its head injuries, have been struck down by a hawk.

The Breeding Birds of the Avon Region, 2011

John Tully and Richard Bland

John Tully died in late May 2012, and this was his last BBS summary written in October 2011. John had run the local BBS scheme since its inception in 1994, and his drive and enthusiasm ensured that we were able to cover over 10% of the local area, a greater proportion than almost any other region of the country. We have plotted in detail changes in the populations of the commonest birds, and this information has been available to the environmental officers of the four unitary authorities that make up the Avon area. A further result has been the creation of a large body of observers well versed in the skills of timed counts, and this enabled us to undertake a complete Atlas tetrad survey of the whole region in both winter and summer in two years to coincide with the national BTO Atlas. We were also able to use the results from this Atlas survey to confirm our BBS findings. John's love of birds, and his desire to find accurate methods for monitoring them, will be sorely missed.

Introduction

Minor modifications have been made to the document sent to BBS observers in October 2011. This Avon area report includes all the 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] north of the OS line ST50 and west of the line ST80 which in total gives an area of about 350 sq km. This report has only been possible due to the skill and dedication of many members of the British Trust for Ornithology, Bristol Ornithological Club and the Bristol Naturalists Society, some have been involved for many years.

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 song. They undertake a two-km walk within a square kilometre 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

About 120 surveyors spent over 530 hours counting 67,479 birds of 107 species to establish the numbers and distribution of breeding species in Avon. They visited 193 kilometre squares, that is 11.5% of the total area. The distribution of the coverage was 39 squares in BA, 44 in BR, 45 in NS,

45 in SG and 20 in SO. No new species were added to the Avon BBS list this year.

Table 1 below summarises the total counts from both walks, the percentage distribution of each species, and the overall rate per hour. This survey does not seek breeding evidence, but measures change in populations from year to year. The table indicates definite breeders with no mark, possible breeders with an asterisk * and non-breeders with two asterisks **. BBS does not effectively monitor shy, nocturnal or rare species that are known to nest or possibly nest within the Avon area. Barnacle Goose, Water Rail, Long-eared Owl, Nightjar and Dipper need to be added to the list of definite Avon BBS breeders. Possible nesters not recorded in the survey included Quail, Nightingale, Redstart and Siskin. The total of 95 breeding species and eight possible breeders is a measure of the avian biodiversity of the Avon area during 2011.

Table 2 lists the 20 commonest species in the area ordered by population size. The figures in brackets give the positions in 2010. The second column shows the percentage distribution of these species.

Table 3 gives the percentage changes between 2010 and 2011, and between 2000 and 2011, for the 25 commonest species. These changes are based on the 178 squares that were covered in both 2010 and 2011 by the same observer.

Since 2010 seven of these 25 species have increased and 18 decreased, this may relate to the exceptional cold weather of December 2010. Lesser Black-backed Gull has increased by 55%, Whitethroat by 39%, Blackcap by 21% and Chiffchaff by 16% [all of these are migrants or partial migrants]. There is also a welcome 9% increase in the resident House Sparrow population, whereas Swift has decreased by 24%, Greenfinch by 22% and Song Thrush by 16%. The last winter had a mixed effect on vulnerable resident species with Goldcrest surprisingly up by 26%, but Long-tailed Tit down by 30% although these two species have very small sample sizes.

Over the medium term since 2000, nine species have increased and 16 decreased. The most notable increases were: Herring Gull up by 124%, Lesser Black-backed Gull up by 58%, Goldfinch up by 51% and Blackcap up by 49%, these were offset by Starling down by 59%, Greenfinch down by 56% and Swift down by 53%.

Table 4 estimates the breeding populations of the common species within the four local authorities. Together with all other breeding species, we

estimate a total of about 400,000 breeding pairs in the Avon area.

Historical data 1994-2011

The historical backlog of BBS data for Avon continues to grow with some 984,288 birds counted in over 7100 hours in the field by a collective team of

about 210 birdwatchers. A total of 142 species has been recorded during these counts, excluding those of suspected domestic origin. We should be counting our MILLIONTH bird in the 2012 breeding season! This large amount of data is available to anyone carrying out local studies and we welcome requests for information.

Table 1 – 2011 data

Species	Number	Dist. %	Rate	Species	Number	Dist. %	Rate
Mute Swan	221	13	0.4	Rook	2094	40	3.9
Canada Goose	141	9	0.3	Carrion Crow	4059	99	7.6
Shelduck	143	6	0.3	Raven	76	18	0.1
Mandarin Duck	1	1	0.0	Goldcrest	150	32	0.3
Gadwall	9	1	0.0	Blue Tit	2633	98	4.9
Mallard	1053	51	2.0	Great Tit	1734	96	3.3
Tufted Duck	55	3	0.1	Coal Tit	123	26	0.2
Red-legged Partridge	88	10	0.2	Marsh Tit	11	2	0.0
Grey Partridge	1	1	0.0	Skylark	708	42	1.3
Pheasant	707	58	1.3	Sand Martin	14	1	0.0
Cormorant	42	13	0.1	Swallow	1541	73	2.9
Little Egret**	15	2	0.0	House Martin	636	35	1.2
Grey Heron	107	25	0.2	Cetti's Warbler	6	2	0.0
Little Grebe	4	2	0.0	Long-tailed Tit	327	50	0.6
Great Crested Grebe	14	3	0.0	Wood Warbler*	1	1	0.0
Red Kite**	1	1	0.0	Chiffchaff	1484	91	2.8
Sparrowhawk	49	18	0.1	Willow Warbler	161	32	0.3
Buzzard	221	49	0.4	Blackcap	1301	88	2.4
Kestrel	45	16	0.1	Garden Warbler	32	11	0.1
Hobby	2	1	0.0	Lesser Whitethroat	74	17	0.1
Peregrine	6	3	0.0	Whitethroat	736	63	1.4
Moorhen	119	21	0.2	Grasshopper Warbler*	2	1	0.0
Coot	139	7	0.3	Sedge Warbler	117	10	0.2
Oystercatcher	11	2	0.0	Reed Warbler	174	13	0.3
Little Ringed Plover*	1	1	0.0	Nuthatch	86	16	0.2
Ringed Plover	16	1	0.0	Treecreeper	21	7	0.0
Grey Plover**	5	1	0.0	Wren	2903	98	5.4
Lapwing	38	4	0.1	Starling	2737	64	5.1
Dunlin**	15	1	0.0	Blackbird	4995	100	9.4
Bar-tailed Godwit**	2	1	0.0	Song Thrush	787	82	1.5
Whimbrel**	34	2	0.1	Mistle Thrush	66	21	0.1
Curlew**	110	3	0.2	Spotted Flycatcher	1	1	0.0
Common Sandpiper**	1	1	0.0	Robin	2289	96	4.3
Redshank*	4	1	0.0	Stonechat	7	1	0.0
Turnstone**	2	1	0.0	Wheatear**	28	4	0.1
Black-headed Gull**	160	3	0.3	Dunnock	1200	90	2.3
Common Gull**	3	1	0.0	House Sparrow	4132	73	7.8
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2633	67	4.9	Yellow Wagtail	5	1	0.0

Herring Gull	2013	60	3.8	Grey Wagtail	16	5	0.0
Great Black-backed Gull	6	2	0.0	Pied Wagtail	128	30	0.2
Feral Pigeon	1371	44	2.6	Tree Pipit	22	1	0.0
Stock Dove	214	29	0.4	Meadow Pipit	39	4	0.1
Woodpigeon	6807	99	12.8	Rock Pipit	5	1	0.0
Collared Dove	889	68	1.7	Chaffinch	2044	92	3.8
Cuckoo	18	5	0.0	Brambling**	2	1	0.0
Barn Owl	1	1	0.0	Greenfinch	818	81	1.5
Little Owl	1	1	0.0	Goldfinch	1407	80	2.6
Tawny Owl	6	2	0.0	Linnet	498	38	0.9
Swift	626	48	1.2	Bullfinch	189	34	0.4
Kingfisher	10	4	0.0	Yellowhammer	372	27	0.7
Green Woodpecker	159	40	0.3	Reed Bunting	60	9	0.1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	183	47	0.3	Corn Bunting	48	4	0.1
Magpie	1727	92	3.2	TOTAL	67479		
Jay	171	39	0.3	Time, hrs	533.1		
Jackdaw	3960	83	7.4	Birds per hour	127		

Table 2 – The most numerous species

		Count	Dist.%
1	Woodpigeon [1]	6807	99
2	Blackbird [2]	4995	100
3	House Sparrow [5]	4132	68
4	Carrion Crow [3]	4059	99
5	Jackdaw [4]	3960	85
6	Wren [6]	2903	98
7	Starling [7]	2737	64
8=	Blue Tit [10]	2633	98
8=	Lesser Black-backed Gull [13]	2633	64
10	Robin [8]	2289	96
11	Rook [9]	2094	40
12	Chaffinch [11]	2044	92
13	Herring Gull [12]	2013	60
14	Great Tit [15]	1734	96
15	Magpie [16]	1727	92
16	Swallow [14]	1541	73
17	Chiffchaff [-]	1484	91
18	Goldfinch [19]	1407	76
19	Feral Pigeon [17]	1371	44
20	Dunnock [20]	1200	90

Table 3 – Percentage changes for the commonest species

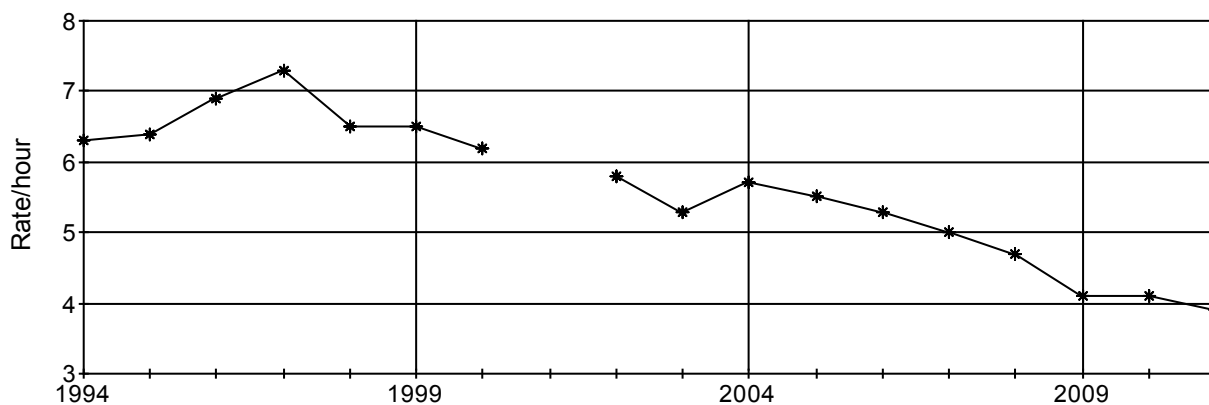
Species	2010/11	2000/11		2010/11	2000/11
Mallard	-2	-20	Blackcap	21	49
Lesser Black-backed Gull	55	58	Chiffchaff	16	34
Herring Gull	-6	124	Blue Tit	-1	-3
Feral Pigeon	-13	-38	Great Tit	-13	-5
Woodpigeon	-3	23	Magpie	1	-14
Collared Dove	-4	-16	Jackdaw	-3	4
Swift	-24	-53	Carrion Crow	-11	-17
Skylark	-13	-22	Starling	3	-59
Wren	-10	-27	House Sparrow	9	29
Dunnock	-3	-6	Chaffinch	-9	-31
Robin	-8	1	Greenfinch	-22	-56
Blackbird	-2	-7	Goldfinch	11	51
Song Thrush	-16	-19			

Table 4 – Estimated breeding populations

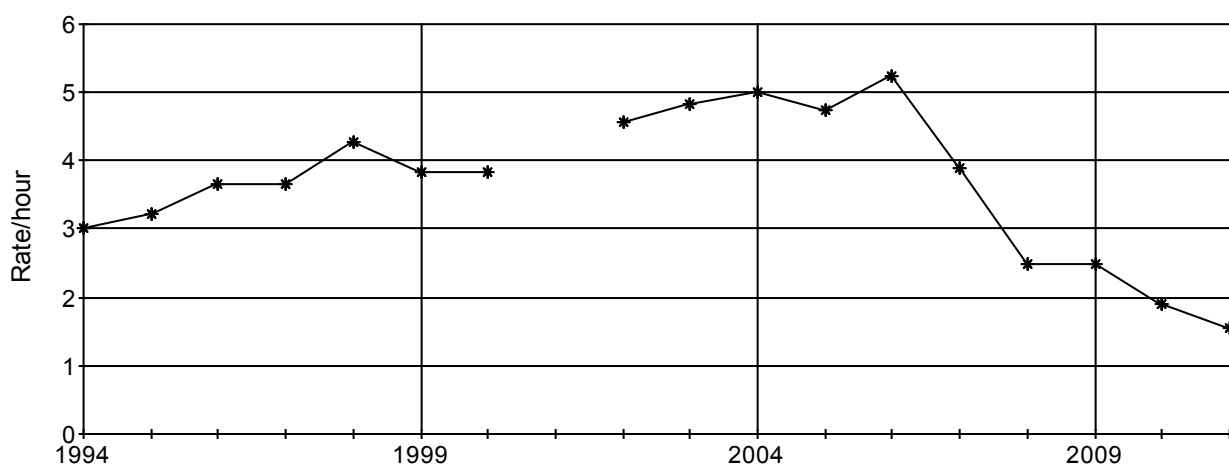
Breeding pairs in Avon	BA	BR	NS	SG	Total
Wren	12500	7200	12800	13500	46000
Blue Tit	9500	6000	11800	14800	42100
House Sparrow	8500	9000	14800	9800	42100
Blackbird	9800	5800	10200	12500	38300
Robin	8500	5200	10400	11000	35100
Great Tit	8000	4200	9200	8500	29900
Dunnock	4900	3000	6500	6600	21000
Woodpigeon	4900	2900	4000	6300	18100
Blackcap	4000	1800	3000	4500	13300
Chaffinch	3500	800	3200	4000	11500
Chiffchaff	3000	1100	3000	3800	10900
Goldfinch	2300	800	3600	3200	9900
Starling	1600	1600	3400	2800	9400
Jackdaw	2500	900	1900	3600	8900
Carrion Crow	1500	1200	2000	3500	8200
Swallow	2000	-	2000	4200	8200
Greenfinch	1900	700	2000	1600	6200
Song Thrush	1500	550	1500	2000	5550
Whitethroat	1500	-	1200	2200	4900
Rook	850	-	1400	2200	4450
Linnet	1200	-	1400	1400	4000
Skylark	1300	-	800	1700	3800
House Martin	1100	60	1300	1200	3660
Magpie	800	850	800	1100	3550
Collared Dove	450	700	600	950	2700
Swift	900	200	400	500	2000
Yellowhammer	1000	-	-	1000	2000
Total for the Avon area					395710

Comments on recent trends in the finch species

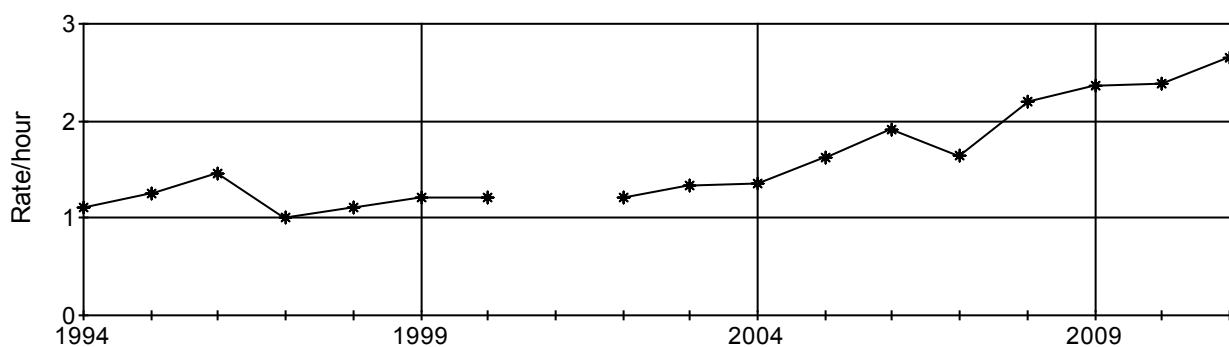
The **Chaffinch** has declined slowly from a peak in 1997. The decline was sharpest between 2004 and 2009. The population is now 38% lower than in 1994, no data is available for 2001, the F&M year.



The **Greenfinch** has been dramatically affected by the disease Trichomonosis. Numbers increased strongly between 1994 and 2006, and the disease struck that autumn. The population is now 50% below its level in 1994.



Goldfinch numbers were stable for the first decade of the BBS survey, but they have grown rapidly since 2004 influenced partly by the introduction of thistle (Niger) seed into garden feeders.





House Sparrow, one of John Tully's favourite birds

Avon Ringing Report, 2011

Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt

A new record of 1.1 million was set in 2011 for the number of birds ringed in the UK in a calendar year. This just exceeded the one million achieved in 2010 which was itself a record. During 2011 a total of 8403 birds were ringed in the Avon area. This is substantially above the previous four-year average of 6633, an increase of 27%, and was mainly due to the ringing station at CVL whose total of 5396 birds ringed was their seventh highest since ringing began at the lake in 1963. This represents about 65% of the birds ringed in the region and was made possible by the low water levels during the spring allowing access to all of the net lanes in the reed bed.

The top 20 list contains the same species as in the previous year but there were some changes of position. Reed Warbler retained its number one spot and, as in previous years, this was helped by DW's nest finding skills and the ringing of nestlings around CVL. The other common warblers: Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler and Willow Warbler also seem to have fared well both in terms of over-winter their survival and

breeding success, and Blackcap numbers increased significantly to the point where they nearly deposed Blue Tit as No. 2 in the table. Finch numbers generally declined, especially Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Bullfinch.

Peregrines had another good breeding season, broods ringed contained mainly three or four chicks and in the case of the Avon Gorge pair, five. In terms of Peregrines ringed this was the best year yet for the Avon area. Young Ravens that hatched in a nest in the Avon Gorge were ringed for only the second time.

Of the 614 recoveries of ringed birds reported to the BTO for the Avon area, 505 (82%) were from PR's long-term colour ringing study of urban gulls. Many had wintered in Portugal and one even made it to Mauritania in West Africa. Other colour ring sightings included Glossy Ibis, Peregrine, Moorhen and Black-headed Gull. The only rarity ringed was the Yellow-browed Warbler that later took up residence near Stratford Hide at CVL.

Species Totals

Table 1 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2011 (2010 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2010 and 2011 *Note that some year-to-year changes were definitely affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and catching opportunities.*

Pos.	Species	2011	%
1(1)	Reed Warbler	1440	+22
2(2)	Blue Tit	921	+17
3(4)	Blackcap	916	+81
4(5)	Chiffchaff	755	+65
5(3)	Great Tit	666	+20
6(7)	Sedge Warbler	545	+84
7(6)	Swallow	314	-18
8(8)	Sand Martin	192	-26
9(14)	Long-tailed Tit	168	+33
10(15)	Robin	165	+34

Pos.	Species	2011	%
11(9)	Greenfinch	157	-23
12(17)	Wren	154	+43
13(11)	Goldfinch	148	-8
14(20)	Canada Goose	144	+53
15(19)	Willow Warbler	140	+41
16(13)	Blackbird	112	-20
17(12)	Lesser Black-backed Gull	106	-26
18(16)	Bullfinch	93	-20
19(10)	Chaffinch	92	-47
20(18)	Reed Bunting	88	-15

Notable Recoveries received from the BTO since the publication of the 2010 Report

The records listed below in Table 2 are of interest for their distance travelled and/or longevity. The local recapture of birds at the same site or between ringers within Avon have been omitted.

Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date ringed Date received	Place ringed Place recovered	Distance km	Duration Years
MuteSwan					
X4250	First-year Freshly dead (pollution)	17-09-2001 28-03-2011	Harry Stoke, near Bristol Portishead	16	9y 6m 11d
X3987	First-year Caught by ringer ring read in field Freshly dead (disease)	09-01-2003 12-09-2006 02-04-2007 10-02-2011	Clapton, near Berkeley, Gloucestershire Slimbridge Slimbridge Littleton-Upon-Severn	11 11 10	3y 8m 3d 4y 2m 24d 8y 1m 1d
Canada Goose					
5239040	Adult Male Unknown	29-06-2004 23-07-2011	Chew Valley Lake: 51°19'N 2°38'W (Avon) Twyford, near Winchester, Hampshire	98	7y 0m 24d
5259123	Adult Freshly dead (shot)	29-06-2010 24-11-2011	Chew Valley Lake near Barnstaple, Devon	102	1y 4m 26d
Teal					
NLA 3603829	Full-grown Female Freshly dead (shot)	21-09-2008 29-01-2011	Midden-Delfland, Schipluiden, The Netherlands Bleadon Level	509	2y 4m 8d
Mallard					
GC88591	First-year Male Freshly dead (shot)	04-12-2009 19-10-2011	Slimbridge Charfield	13	1y 10m 15 d
Grey Heron					
1299350	Nestling Long dead	29-04-2007 25-01-2011	Cleveland Farm, Wiltshire Dodington	36	3y 8m 27d
Glossy Ibis					
ESI 7113171	Nestling Male colour rings seen ring read in field	18-06-2010 06-09-2010 17-09-2010	Juncabalejos, Parc Nacional de Donana, (Sevilla) Spain River Otter, Budleigh Salterton, Devon Cabot Industrial Park, Avonmouth	1542 1652	0y 2m 19d 0y 2m 30d
Buzzard					
GJ28677	Nestling Long dead	17-06-1997 21-04-2011	Walton-in-Gordano Brokerswood Country Park, Hawkeridge, Wiltshire	46	13y 10m 4d
Peregrine					
GC46021	Nestling Alive (colour rings seen) Freshly dead (injury)	20-05-2010 06-04-2011 08-10-2011	Avon Gorge Malvern Hills, Hereford & Worcester Kidderminster, Hereford & Worcester	74 104	0y 10m 17d 1y 4m 18d
GC46006	First-year Male colour rings seen	19-06-2008 11-04-2010	Avon Gorge Blagdon Lake	16	1y 9m 23d

GN09414	Nestling Long dead (on wire or netting)	03-06-2000 20-04-2011	Powys Old Dock, Bristol	58	10y 10m 17d
Turnstone					
NOS 7541300	First-year ring read in field	13-08-2010 23-03-2011	Revtangen, Klepp, Rogaland, Norway Severn Beach	951	0y 7m 10d
Black-headed Gull					
EP79327	Adult Freshly dead	10-01-2009 12-02-2011	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex Chew Valley Lake	219	2y 1m 2d
EX30171	Nestling colour rings seen colour rings seen colour rings seen	07-06-2010 24-02-2011 26-03-2011 13-10-2011	Hosehill Lake: 51°25'N 1°5'W (Berkshire) Uphill Beach, Weston-Super-Mare WWT, Slimbridge Weston-Super-Mare	133 98 134	0y 8m 17d 0y 9m 19d 1y 4m 6d
EX30179	Nestling colour rings seen	07-06-2010 17-12-2011	Hosehill Lake, Berkshire near Portbury, Bristol	116	1y 6m 10d
DKC 6H7439	Adult Male colour rings seen	19-03-2011 02-12-2011	Svanemollebugten, Copenhagen, Sjaelland, Denmark Bristol	1107	0y 8m 13d
SFH ST207998	First-year Freshly dead	18-06-2001 05-09-2011	Rymattyla, Turku-Pori, Finland Chew Valley Lake	1817	10y 2m 18d
Lesser Black-backed Gull					
GH36705	Adult Caught by ringer colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen Alive (colour marks seen)	19-07-1986 24-11-2007 06-04-2008 22-03-2009 28-03-2010 02-04-2010 01-05-2010 02-04-2011 06-06-2011	Foxhall, near Ipswich, Suffolk near Wingmore Farm, Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire Orfordness, Suffolk Orfordness, Suffolk Orfordness, Suffolk Orfordness, Suffolk Orfordness, Suffolk Orfordness, Suffolk Shortwood Landfill Site, Pucklechurch	230 22 22 22 22 22 22 22 254	21y 4m 5d 21y 8m 18d 22y 8m 3d 23y 8m 9d 23y 8m 14d 23y 9m 12d 24y 8m 14d 24y 10m 18d
GH67436	Nestling colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen colour marks seen	29-06-1991 26-10-1994 27-09-2004 03-11-2006 30-10-2010 05-12-2011	Bristol Figueira da Foz, Beira Litoral, Portugal Caparica, near Lisbon, Estremadura, Portugal Figueira da Foz, Beira Litoral, Portugal Malaga, Spain Torremolinos, Malaga, Spain	1346 1517 1346 1644 1657	3y 3m 27d 13y 2m 29d 15y 4m 5d 19y 4m 1d 20y 5m 6d
GF17131	Nestling colour marks seen colour marks seen	07-07-1992 17-12-1992 09-10-2011	Bristol Rabat, Morocco Quarteira, Algarve, Portugal	1965 1657	0y 5m 10d 19y 3m 2d
GF17234	Nestling colour marks seen Then seen in nearly all winters at	23-06-1993 29-10-1993 05-09-2011	Bristol Figueira da Foz, Beira Litoral, Portugal Matozinhos, Douro Litoral) Portugal	1346	0y 4m 6d

GF17205	Nestling Female	22-06-1993	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	25-11-1994	Gloucester Landfill Site,	49	1y 5m 3d
			Hempsted, Gloucestershire		
	colour marks seen	22-10-2002	Gloucester Landfill Site,	49	9y 4m 0d
			Hempsted, Gloucestershire		
	colour marks seen	03-11-2004	Gloucester Landfill Site,	49	11y 4m 12d
			Hempsted, Gloucestershire		
	colour marks seen	03-11-2006	Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire	65	13y 4m 12d
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	20-08-2011	St George, Bristol	4	18y 1m 29d
GH36705	Adult	19-07-1986	Foxhall, near Ipswich, Suffolk		
	Caught by ringer	24-11-2007	Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire	230	21y 4m 5d
	colour marks seen	06-04-2008	Orfordness, Suffolk	22	21y 8m 18d
	colour marks seen	22-03-2009	Orfordness, Suffolk		22y 8m 3d
	colour marks seen	28-03-2010	Orfordness, Suffolk		23y 8m 9d
	colour marks seen	02-04-2010	Orfordness, Suffolk		23y 9m 12d
	colour marks seen	01-05-2010	Orfordness, Suffolk		23y 9m 12d
	colour marks seen	02-04-2011	Orfordness, Suffolk		24y 8m 14d
	colour marks seen	06-06-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site		24y 10m 18d
FA39621	Adult	11-12-2010	Rainham Tip, Greater London		
	colour rings seen	05-05-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site	183	0y 4m 24d
	colour rings seen	16-06-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site	183	0y 6m 5d
GC48274	Nestling	02-07-2009	Bath		
	colour marks seen	06-08-2010	Baldaio Lagoon, Coruna, Spain	1015	1y 1m 4d
	colour marks seen	09-06-2011	Albion Landfill, Norris Hill, Leicestershire	163	1y 11m 7d
GN75405	Nestling	25-06-2005	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	01-09-2005	Gloucester Landfill Site,	48	0y 2m 7d
			Hempsted, Gloucestershire		
	colour marks seen	19-10-2010	Vazon Bay, Guernsey	221	5y 3m 24d
	colour marks seen	08-10-2011	L'eree, Guernsey	223	6y 3m 13d
	colour marks seen	15-10-2011	Slapton, near Kingsbridge, Devon	150	6y 3m 20d
	colour marks seen	18-10-2011	L'eree, Guernsey	223	6y 3m 23d
GC13410	Nestling	06-07-2007	Bath		
	colour marks seen	15-01-2009	Ferrol, Coruna, Spain	982	1y 6m 9d
	colour marks seen	27-06-2009	Tittesworth Reservoir, Meerbrook, Staffordshire	196	1y 11m 21d
	colour marks seen	07-01-2010	Shawell Gravel Pit, Leicestershire	140	2y 6m 1d
	colour marks seen	08-02-2011	Shawell Gravel Pit, Leicestershire	140	3y 7m 2d
GC13378	Nestling	26-06-2007	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	05-12-2010	Iwik, Parc National de Banc D'arguin, Mauritania	3709	3y 5m 9d
GC13439	Nestling	10-07-2007	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	11-01-2009	Malaga, Spain	1644	1y 6m 1d
	colour marks seen	11-04-2011	Chouet Landfill, Guernsey	217	3y 9m 1d
	colour marks seen	09-11-2011	Barra, Beira Litoral, Portugal	1290	4y 3m 30d
GF40502	Nestling	19-06-1994	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	15-01-2005	Barbate, Cadiz, Spain	1715	10y 6m 27d
	colour marks seen	30-11-2005	Barbate, Cadiz, Spain	1715	11y 5m 11d
	colour marks seen	19-09-2008	Quarteira, Algarve, Portugal		14y 3m 0d
	colour marks seen	16-12-2008	Barbate, Cadiz, Spain	1715	14y 5m 27d
	colour marks seen	26-08-2010	Faro (Airport), Algarve, Portugal	1659	16y 2m 7d
	colour marks seen	15-09-2011	L'eree, Guernsey	223	17y 2m 27d

GN21265	Nestling	01-07-2000	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	16-06-2003	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	2y 11m 15d
	colour marks seen	21-07-2003	near Little Marlow, Buckinghamshire	128	3y 0m 20d
	colour marks seen	12-10-2006	Matosinhos, Douro Litoral, Portugal	1233	6y 3m 11d
	colour marks seen	04-01-2010	Malaga, Malaga, Spain	1644	9y 6m 3d
	colour marks seen	30-03-2011	Chouet Landfill, Guernsey	217	10y 8m 29d
GN49048	Nestling	02-07-2002	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	16-01-2010	Bocabarranco, Telde, Canary Islands	2815	7y 6m 14d
	colour marks seen	08-10-2011	Bocabarranco, Telde, Canary Islands	2815	9y 3m 6d
GN49090	Nestling	03-07-2002	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	08-11-2004	Chiclana de la Frontera, Cadiz, Spain	1696	2y 4m 5d
	colour marks seen	29-09-2008	Medina Sidonia, Cadiz, Spain	1686	6y 2m 26d
	colour marks seen	21-09-2010	Matosinhos, Douro Litoral, Portugal	1233	8y 2m 18d
	colour marks seen	25-02-2011	Chouet Landfill, Guernsey	217	8y 7m 22d
GN75405	Nestling	25-06-2005	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	01-09-2005	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	0y 2m 7d
	colour marks seen	19-10-2010	Vazon Bay, Guernsey	221	5y 3m 24d
	colour marks seen	08-10-2011	L'eree, Guernsey	223	6y 3m 13d
	colour marks seen	15-10-2011	Slapton, near Kingsbridge, Devon	150	6y 3m 20d
	colour marks seen	18-10-2011	L'eree, Guernsey	223	6y 3m 23d
Herring Gull					
GF85300	Age Unknown	30-06-1998	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	11-01-2002	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	3y 6m 12d
	colour marks seen	14-12-2007	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	9y 5m 14d
	colour marks seen	21-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	13y 0m 21d
GF85277	Nestling	27-06-1998	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	15-02-2002	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	3y 7m 19d
	colour marks seen	21-10-2008	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	10y 3m 24d
	colour marks seen	21-01-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	12y 6m 25d
GN21278	Age Unknown	01-07-2000	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	13-12-2001	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	1y 5m 12d
	colour marks seen	19-07-2003	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	3y 0m 18d
	colour marks seen	17-09-2009	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	9y 2m 16d
	colour marks seen	13-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	11y 0m 12d
GN31585	Nestling	21-06-2001	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	20-01-2009	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	7y 6m 30d
	colour marks seen	23-03-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	9y 9m 2d

GN31708	Age Unknown	03-07-2001	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	12-12-2001	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	0y 5m 9d
	colour marks seen	11-12-2007	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	6y 5m 8d
	colour marks seen	14-10-2009	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	8y 3m 11d
	colour marks seen	25-03-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	48	9y 8m 22d
GN87114	First-year	23-01-2010	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex		
	colour marks seen	01-11-2010	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire at Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	194	0y 9m 9d
	with 6 further sightings between these dates				
	colour marks seen	08-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	194	1y 5m 15d
	colour marks seen	28-07-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site		1y 6m 5d
	colour marks seen	30-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	194	1y 6m 7d
	colour marks seen	03-08-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted, Gloucestershire	194	1y 6m 11d
GC13373	Nestling	26-06-2007	Bristol		
	colour marks seen	04-10-2010	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted: (Gloucestershire)	48	3y 3m 8d
	colour marks seen	18-10-2011	Silverdale, Staffordshire	176	4y 3m 22d
GR19028	Nestling	06-07-2010	Bath		
	colour marks seen	12-11-2011	Shawell Gravel Pit, Leicestershire	140	1y 4m 6d
GR19202	Nestling	24-06-2011	Bath: 51°23'N 2°22'W (Avon)		
	colour marks seen	05-10-2011	Upton Warren, Hereford & Worcester	104	0y 3m 11d
Barn Owl					
GC74939	Nestling	28-06-2010	Yatton		
	Freshly dead	18-03-2011	Middlezoy, near Bridgwater, Somerset	32	0y 8m 18d
Sand Martin					
V990467	Nestling	28-05-2009	Applegarthtown, Lockerbie, Dumfries & Galloway		
	Caught by ringer	02-04-2011	Chew Valley Lake	428	1y 10m 5d
X578584	Adult Male	27-06-2009	near Arkholme, Lancashire		
	Caught by ringer	02-04-2011	Chew Valley Lake	313	1y 9m 6d
X738105	First-year	05-09-2009	Pett Level, Sussex		
	Caught by ringer	02-04-2011	Chew Valley Lake	235	1y 6m 28d
L058252	Adult	31-08-2010	Chew Valley Lake		
	Caught by ringer	09-08-2011	Le Massereau, Frossay, Loire-Atlantique, France	457	0y 11m 9d
Dunnoek					
X297889	Juvenile	11-06-2009	Chew Valley Lake		
	Dead	10-06-2011	East Huntspill, Somerset	27	1y 11m 30d
Nightingale					
L119053	Adult Male	07-05-2011	Bathampton, Bath		
	Caught by ringer	14-06-2011	Chew Valley Lake	24	0y 1m 7d

Blackbird

NOO JB34517	First-year Male Freshly dead (bird of prey)	08-08-2010 03-03-2011	Molen, Larvik, Vestfold, Norway Wick	1140	0y 6m 23d
CT93692	Adult Male Freshly dead	05-02-2010 31-01-2011	Tynning, Timsbury, Bath Tynning, Timsbury, Bath	0	0y 11m 26d

Song Thrush

RT08117	First-year Freshly dead (cat)	20-11-2010 09-10-2011	Five Bells, Watchet, Somerset Bristol	60	0y 10m 19d
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Sedge Warbler

X022316	First-year Female Caught by ringer	18-08-2010 03-08-2011	Orfordness, Suffolk Chew Valley Lake	302	0y 11m 16d
Y228040	Full-grown Caught by ringer	28-07-2011 20-08-2011	Guist, East Dereham, Norfolk Chew Valley Lake	295	0y 0m 23d
L924654	First-year Caught by ringer	12-08-2011 17-08-2011	Chew Valley Lake Pett Level, Sussex	235	0y 0m 5d

Reed Warbler

V251596	First-year Caught by ringer	15-08-2006 17-04-2011	Leighton Moss, near Silverdale, Lancashire Chew Valley Lake	317	4y 8m 2d
L382517	First-year Male Caught by ringer	19-08-2010 22-05-2011	Pett Level, Sussex Chew Valley Lake	235	0y 9m 3d
L923396	First-year Caught by ringer	10-07-2011 31-07-2011	Chew Valley Lake Pett Level	235	0y 0m 21s
Y220721	Juvenile Caught by ringer	05-08-2011 21-08-2011	Church End, Woodwalton, Cambridgeshire Chew Valley Lake	206	0y 0m 16d
X186853	First-year Male Caught by ringer	11-08-2009 01-05-2011	Betley Mere, Betley, Staffordshire Chew Valley Lake	190	1y 8m 20d
V928900	Juvenile Caught by ringer	25-07-2008 08-08-2010	Chew Valley Lake Tour Aux Moutons, Donges, Loire- Atlantique, France	447	3y 0m 14d
ESA Z33923	Adult Caught by ringer	17-08-2008 28-05-2011	Murueta, Vizcaya, Spain Chew Valley Lake	901	2y 9m 11d

Blackcap

X164266	First-year Male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	12-09-2009 22-04-2011 22-06-2011	Walton in Gordano Aldermaston Gravel Pit, Berkshire Aldermaston Gravel Pit, Berkshire	116 117	1y 7m 10d 1y 9m 10d
ESI 2N33861	First-year Male Freshly dead (cat)	17-10-2010 30-05-2011	Zaframagon, Coripe, Sevilla, Spain Chew Stoke	1612	0y 7m 13d

Garden Warbler

L923899	First-year Caught by ringer	10-07-2011 28-07-2011	Chew Valley Lake Pett Level, Sussex	235	0y 0m 18d
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Goldcrest

DXR954	First-year Male	05-11-2011	Chew Valley Lake		
	Freshly dead	17-12-2011	Chew Valley Lake	0	0y 1m 12d

Pied Flycatcher

X760688	Nestling	27-05-2011	Paradise Farm, Presteigne, Powys		
	Freshly dead	24-07-2011	Hill Farm Barn, Cold Ashton	103	0y 1m 27d

Blue Tit

L059630	Nestling	18-05-2011	Chew Valley Lake		
	Freshly dead	14-07-2011	Compton Martin	19	0y 1m 26d

Jackdaw

ET82787	Nestling	22-05-2001	Slimbridge		
	Freshly dead (shot)	03-08-2011	Thornbury	18	10y 2m 12d

Chaffinch

T816034	First-year Male	05-11-2005	Chew Valley Lake		
	Freshly dead (cat)	20-03-2011	Bishop Sutton	3	5y 4m 15d

L056039	First-year Female	11-04-2010	Chew Valley Lake		
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	13-03-2011	Chew Valley Lake	0	0y 11m 2d

L062819	Juvenile	09-08-2010	Timsbury: 51°19'N 2°29'W (Avon)		
	Freshly dead	17-10-2011	Keynsham	8	1y 2m 8d

Brambling

L691090	First-year Male	19-10-2010	Gibraltar Point, Skegness, Lincolnshire		
	Caught by ringer	26-03-2011	Upper Farm, near Failand	274	0y 5m 7d

Greenfinch

TE77409	First-year Male	01-01-2010	Timsbury, Bath		
	Freshly dead (cat)	28-09-2011	Clutton	3	1y 8m 27d

TE77433	First-year Female	18-10-2010	Timsbury, Bath		
	Dead	29-03-2011	Shoscombe	7	0y 5m 11d

TH78897	First-year	30-10-2009	Timsbury, Bath		
	Dead (hit glass)	16-04-2011	Bloomfield, Timsbury, Bath	2	1y 5m 17d

Bullfinch

X611854	Adult Male	19-12-2009	Chew Valley Lake		
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	21-07-2010	Chew Valley Lake	0	0y 7m 2d

Reed Bunting

V928748	Juvenile Female	19-07-2008	Chew Valley Lake		
	Caught by ringer	22-01-2011	Cary Moor Nature Reserve, Somerset	29	2y 6m 3d

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2011

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2007 to 2011 are given in Table 3 below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the period 2007-2010 in the last column.

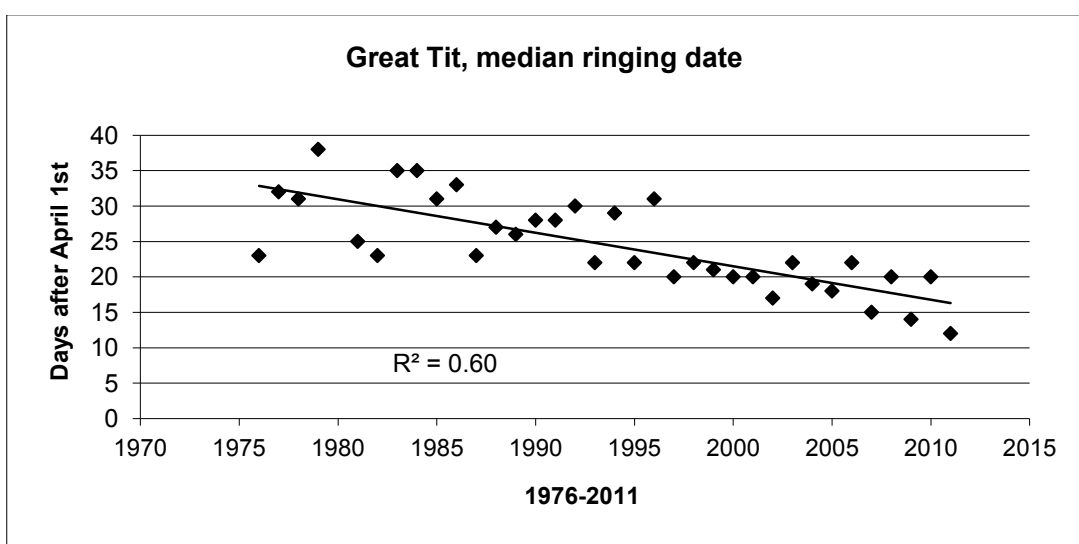
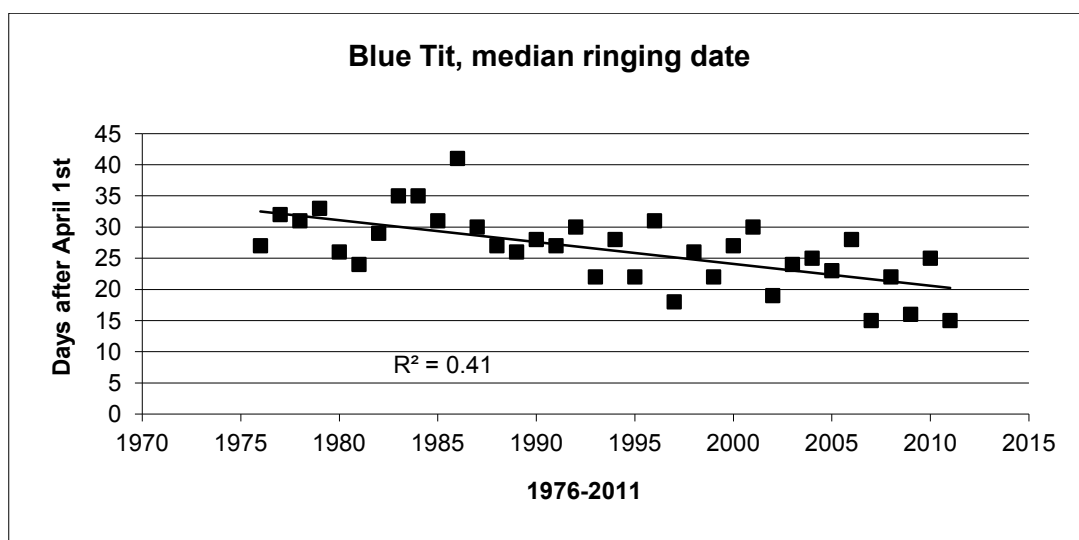
Species	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	4YA
Mute Swan	6	7	2	0	1	3.8
Canada Goose	51	69	162	94	144	94.0
Teal	0	0	0	0	15	0
Mallard	4	6	3	19	17	8.0
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Grey Heron	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Sparrowhawk	3	4	1	2	4	2.5
Buzzard	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Peregrine	2	4	3	13	17	5.5
Kestrel	10	1	0	12	25	5.8
Water Rail	4	4	2	0	0	2.5
Moorhen	3	5	6	13	26	6.8
Coot	0	0	4	11	5	3.8
Oystercatcher	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Ringed Plover	5	0	0	13	2	4.5
Snipe	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	66	114	89	144	106	103.3
Herring Gull	16	20	21	31	30	22.0
Stock Dove	4	0	0	0	2	1.0
Wood Pigeon	0	3	3	5	6	2.8
Collared Dove	0	0	0	0	1	0
Barn Owl	32	17	9	15	38	18.3
Little Owl	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tawny Owl	13	0	0	2	12	3.8
Nightjar	4	0	0	2	0	1.5
Swift	2	0	2	0	0	4.0
Kingfisher	2	10	21	12	5	8.3
Wryneck	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Green Woodpecker	1	1	1	0	0	0.8
Great Spotted Woodpecker	13	16	14	11	14	13.5
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Magpie	1	3	1	3	3	2.0
Jay	2	1	4	2	3	2.3
Jackdaw	9	6	0	1	4	4.0
Rook	3	0	0	0	0	0.8
Carrion Crow	2	0	0	0	0	0.5
Raven	4	0	3	2	3	2.3
Goldcrest	39	74	3	24	76	35
Firecrest	1	2	0	0	0	0.8
Blue Tit	637	608	810	796	921	712.8
Great Tit	748	670	710	557	666	671.3
Coal Tit	28	40	54	42	65	41.0

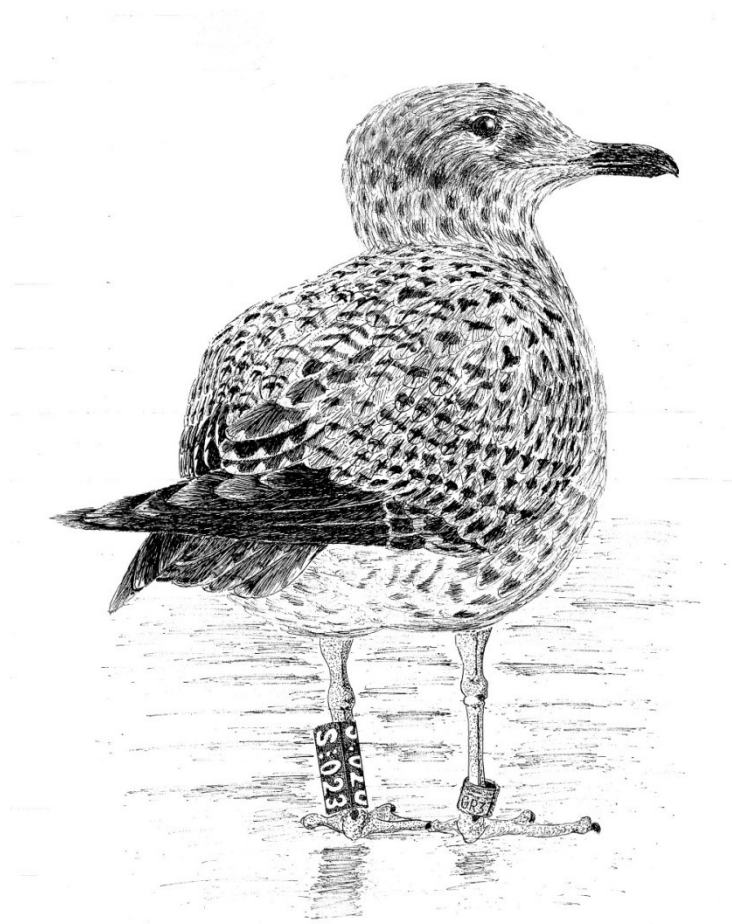
Marsh Tit	4	12	3	3	1	5.5
Skylark	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Sand Martin	19	35	76	258	192	97.0
Swallow	787	847	242	383	314	564.8
House Martin	30	39	65	3	1	34.3
Cetti's Warbler	28	41	68	41	19	44.5
Long-tailed Tit	162	138	146	126	168	143.0
Yellow-browed Warbler	0	2	0	1	1	0.8
Wood Warbler	0	2	0	0	0	0.5
Chiffchaff	388	415	435	461	755	424.8
Willow Warbler	209	39	86	101	140	108.8
Blackcap	682	379	426	509	916	499
Garden Warbler	46	35	54	50	42	46.3
Lesser Whitethroat	10	20	16	6	17	13.0
Whitethroat	21	27	21	28	43	24.3
Grasshopper Warbler	8	8	1	10	12	6.8
Sedge Warbler	171	97	253	299	545	205.0
Reed Warbler	734	884	1,086	1,180	1,440	971.0
Nuthatch	0	8	4	4	9	4.0
Treecreeper	15	18	14	39	30	21.5
Wren	101	168	110	113	154	123.0
Starling	43	81	25	27	145	44.0
Blackbird	83	120	77	142	112	105.5
Fieldfare	27	6	2	4	9	9.8
Song Thrush	76	54	42	30	31	50.5
Redwing		10	14	28	16	13.0
Mistle Thrush	37	1	4	0	0	10.5
Spotted Flycatcher	0	5	0	1	1	1.5
Robin	150	159	146	125	165	145
Nightingale	0	0	0	0	1	0
Redstart	1	0	0	1	0	0.5
Stonechat	3	0	0	0	0	0.8
Wheatear	0	3	0	0	0	0.8
Dunnock	78	153	91	110	139	108.0
House Sparrow	20	5	5	60	22	22.5
Tree Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Yellow Wagtail	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Grey Wagtail	0	5	1	1	0	1.8
Pied Wagtail	15	124	0	48	7	46.8
Tree Pipit	2	0	0	1	0	0.8
Meadow Pipit	2	37	3	0	0	10.5
Chaffinch	216	168	183	175	92	185.5
Brambling	0	47	0	3	25	12.5
Greenfinch	472	289	300	203	157	316.0
Goldfinch	79	129	226	167	148	150.3
Siskin	11	285	55	0	2	87.8
Linnet	0	3	0	0	1	0.8

Redpoll (Lesser / Common)	18	123	6	6	132	38.3
Bullfinch	44	44	58	116	93	65.5
Yellowhammer	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Reed Bunting	61	54	86	104	88	76.3
TOTAL	6,571	6,806	6,359	6,798	8,403	6,633.5

Evidence for our resident birds breeding earlier can be seen in the two graphs below. These plot the median ringing dates for Blue Tits and Great Tits at CVL. The data points on the graphs are for the date by which half the pulli had been ringed. That is, for example, if 100 pulli were ringed in a year, the point used on the graph is the date on which the 50th one was ringed etc

A significant trend is indicated with Blue Tits presently breeding some 12 days and Great Tits 16 days earlier in comparison with the late 1970s / early '80s.





Colour ringed 1st year Herring Gull S:023 from the Bristol region reared by the Secret World Wildlife Rescue Centre. The bird was released at Apex Park, Burnham-on-Sea on July 22nd and photographed by Gary Welsby at Hensol Lake, Cardiff on Feb. 9th, 2012. Drawing by Mike Bailey.

Gazetteer

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	Chew Valley Lake (CVL)	5760	BA
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS	Chittening Warth	5382	SG
Almondsbury	6084	SG	Churchill	4459	NS
Alveston	6388	SG	Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS
Anchor Head	3062	NS	Claverham	4466	NS
Arnos Vale	6071	BR	Claverton	7864	BA
Ashton Park	5572	NS	Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS
Aust	5789	SG	Clevedon	4071	NS
Aust Cliff	5689	SG	Clevedon-Yeo (CI-Y)	3868	NS
Aust Warth	5689	SG	Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR
Avon Gorge	5673	BR	Clutton	6259	BA
Avon Wildlife Park	6768	BA	Compton Dando	6464	BA
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR	Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA
Avonmouth Sewage Wks (ASW)	5379	BR	Dolebury Warren Reserve	4558	NS
Axe Estuary	3159	NS	Downend, Bristol	6577	BR
Backwell Lake	4769	NS	Doynton	7274	SG
Badocks Wood, Bristol	5777	BR	Dundry	5566	NS
Banwell	3958	NS	Dunkerton	7159	BA
Barrow Gurney Res. (BG)	5368	NS	Durdham Down, Bristol	5674	BR
Barrow Hill	5167	NS	Dyers Common	5583	SG
Bath	7564	BA	East Harptree	5655	BA
Bath University	7764	BA	Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS
Bathampton	7766	BA	Emerson's Green, Bristol	6776	SG
Bathampton Meadows	7766	BA	Englishcombe	7162	BA
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA	Failand	5773	NS
Bathford	7966	BA	Falfield	6893	SG
Bedminster	5871	BR	Farmborough	6660	BA
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA	Felton Common	5265	NS
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR	Filton, Bristol	6079	SG
Blackberry Hill, Bristol	6177	BR	Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR
Blagdon Lake (BL)	5060	NS	Flax Bourton	5069	NS
Blaise Woods	5678	BR	Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA
Bleadon Hill	3657	NS	Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG
Blind Yeo	3969	NS	Frome Valley	6377	BR
Bloomfield, Bath	7463	BA	Goblin Combe Reserve	4765	NS
Brandon Hill, Bristol	5772	BR	Gordano Valley	4473	NS
Brentry	5879	BR	Hall End	7086	SG
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR	Hallatrow	6357	BA
Bucklands Pool	4769	NS	Hanham	6472	SG
Burledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA	Happerton Farm	5274	NS
Burnett	6665	BA	Hawkesbury Upton	7687	SG
Burrington	4759	NS	Haydon Hill	6953	BA
Butcombe	5161	NS	Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR
Cadbury Camp	4572	NS	Hengrove Park, Bristol	6069	BR
Cameley	6157	BA	Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR
Camerton	6857	BA	Hicks Gate	6369	BA
Castle Green, Bristol	5973	BR	High Littleton	6458	BA
Chapel Pill	5376	NS	Hinton Blewitt	5956	BA
Charfield	7292	SG	Hinton Charterhouse	7758	BA
Charlton Field	6366	BA	Hoar Gout	5380	BR
Charmy Down	7670	SG	Horfield, Bristol	5977	BR
Chelvey	4867	NS	Horton	7584	SG
Chelwood	6861	BA	Horwood Farm	7387	SG
Chew Magna Res.	5663	BA	Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR
Chew Stoke	5661	NS	Hunstrete Lake	6462	BA

Hursley Hill, Whitchurch	6165	BA	Sea Mills, Bristol	5576	BR
Iford	7959	BA	Severn Beach	5384	SG
Inglestone Common	7688	SG	Severnside	5383	SG
Iron Acton	6883	SG	Shepperdine	6295	SG
Jubbs Wood	5174	NS	Shirehampton	5376	BR
Kendleshire	6679	SG	Shirehill Farm	7876	SG
Kenn	4169	NS	Siston	6674	SG
Kenn Moor	4368	NS	Sneyd Park, Bristol	5575	BR
Kewstoke	3364	NS	Snuff Mills, Bristol	6276	BR
Keynsham	6568	BA	St Andrews Park, Bristol	5975	BR
Kingsgate Park, Yate	7181	SG	St Annes, Bristol	6272	BR
Kingston Seymour	4066	BA	St. Phillips Marsh, Bristol	6072	BR
Ladye Bay	4072	NS	Stanton Drew	5963	NS
Langford	4560	NS	Stanton Prior	6762	BA
Lansdown	7268	BA	Stantonbury Hill	6763	BA
Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR	Steep Holm	2360	NS
Littleton Warth	5890	SG	Stockwood Reserve	6269	BR
Locking	3659	NS	Stoke Bishop, Bristol	5676	BR
Longwell Green	6571	BA	Stowey	5959	BA
Lower Knole Farm	5884	SG	Stup Pill	5282	BR
Lower Littleton	5563	BA	Sutton Hill	5958	BA
Lower Woods	7487	SG	Swineford	6968	BA
Lulsgate	5065	NS	The Niatts	5985	SG
Marksbury	6662	BA	Thornbury	6490	SG
Marshfield	7873	SG	Tickenham	4571	NS
Middle Hope	3366	NS	Timsbury	6658	BA
Midford	7660	BA	Tormarton	7778	SG
Midsomer Norton	6655	BA	Totterdown	6071	BR
Montpelier	5974	BR	Tunley	6959	BA
Moorgrove Wood	5578	SG	Tyntesfield	5171	NS
Nailsea	4770	NS	Tytherington	6788	SG
New Passage	5486	SG	Ubley	5358	NS
Newbridge, Bath	7165	BA	University of West of England	6277	BR
Northwick Warth	5587	SG	Uphill	3259	NS
Oldbury Power Station (OPS)	6094	SG	Walborough	3157	NS
Orchard Pool	5485	SG	Walton Common Reserve	4273	NS
Over	5982	SG	Warmley	6773	SG
Oxbow Reserve, Bath	7766	BA	Welton Vale	6755	BA
Parks Farm, Tormarton	7879	SG	West Harptree	5656	BA
Paulton	6556	BA	West Littleton	7675	SG
Pill	5276	NS	Westerleigh	7080	SG
Pilning	5585	SG	Weston Moor Reserve	4473	NS
Portbury	4975	NS	Weston STW	3157	NS
Portbury Wharf (PW)	4877	NS	Weston-s-Mare	3261	NS
Portishead	4676	NS	Whitchurch	6167	BR
Prior Park, Bath	7663	BA	Wick	7072	SG
Publow	6264	BA	Wick Warth	3566	NS
Puxton Moor Reserve	4063	NS	Wickwar	7288	SG
Redhill	4963	NS	Willsbridge Reserve	6670	SG
Redland, Bristol	5875	BR	Winford	5465	NS
Redwick	5585	SG	Woodspring Bay	3566	NS
Regil	5363	NS	Woollard	6364	BA
Rickford	4959	NS	Wooscombe Bottom	6365	BA
Rowberrow	4658	NS	Worlebury Hill	3162	NS
Royal Portbury Dock (RPD)	5077	NS	Wroughton	4762	NS
Saltford	6867	BA	Yate	7182	SG
Sand Bay	3365	NS	Yatton	4365	NS
Sand Point	3165	NS	Yeo Estuary	3666	NS

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