

AVON BIRD REPORT

2012

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

October 2013

CONTENTS

Advert and Avon Ornithological Group (AOG)		Front cover
Editorial	H.E. Rose	3
From the Recorder	J.P. Martin	4
Submission of Records		7
Photographs	R.M. Andrews	8
Review of 2012	R.J. Higgins	9
Migration Summary		14
Weather Report for 2012	R.L. Bland	15
Contributors of Records		18
Systematic List		19
Swans and geese	A.D. Scott	20
Ducks	N.L. Milbourne	26
Game birds	R. Mielcarek	38
Divers to grebes	R.J. Higgins	40
Raptors	B. L. Lancaster	49
Water Rail to Common Crane	R.J. Higgins	58
Waders	H.E. Rose	62
Skuas and gulls	J.P. Martin	79
Terns and auks	R. Mielcarek	87
Doves to woodpeckers	D. Nevitt	91
Shrikes to warblers	M. Bailey	102
Waxwing to Tree Sparrow	R.L. Bland	118
Wagtails to Corn Bunting	K.J. Hall	129
Escaped and released birds and hybrids	R. Mielcarek	144
Bird Survey Data		147
Avon Ringing Report 2012	M. Bailey & E. Drewitt	149
Nightingale Survey 2012	R.L. Bland	156
Breeding Water Rails at CVL in 2012	M. Dadds	157
The Spring Migration of 2012	H.E. Rose	161
Migration Watches along the Severn Estuary, 1966-2005	R.L. Bland	165
Fifty years ago – Autumn Migration on Steep Holm in 1962	P.J. Chadwick	168
Unusual Ornithological Events in the Avon area 2006-2012	A.H. Davis	169
One Flock	G. Warren	172
Gazetteer		173
Index of Species Accounts		175
Advert		Back cover

Typeset in WORD 2007 and printed by Healeys, Ipswich

ISSN Number – 0956-5744

Front cover: Hoopoe at Sand Bay, Oct. 30th, photographed by Rob Cross.

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

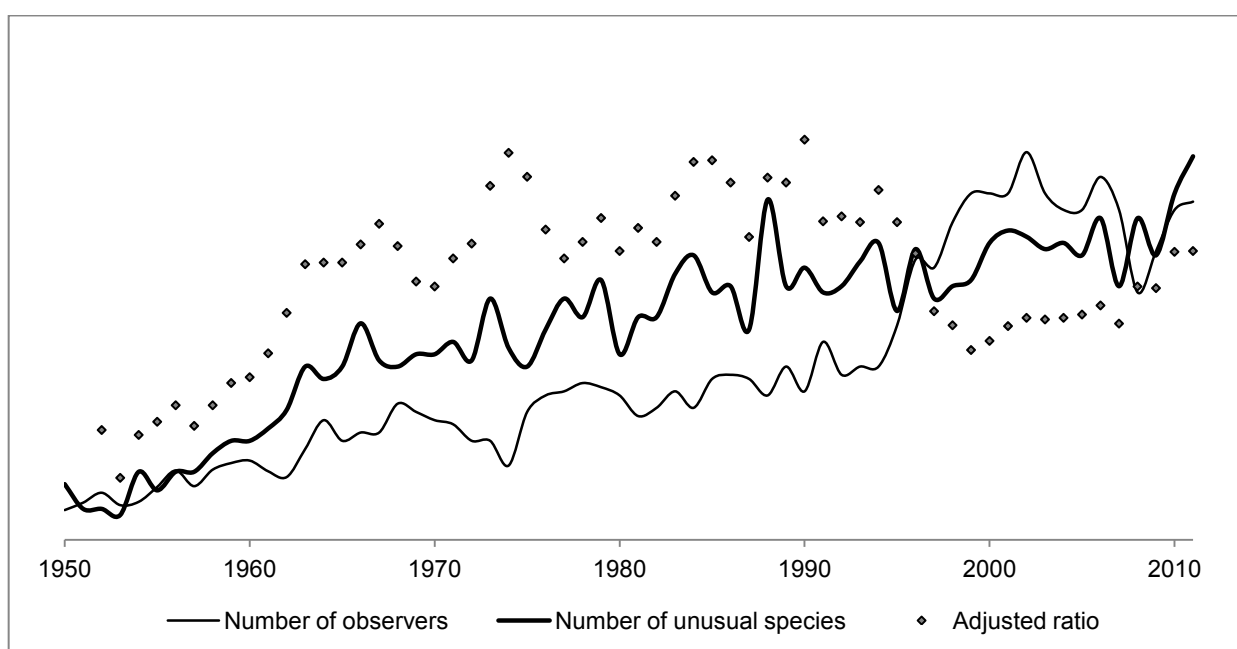
Editorial

Are our bird populations declining? There is a general impression in some circles that the answer to this question is a definite 'yes'. Certainly some local breeding activity is at a low ebb at the moment. And as can be seen from the Red and Amber Conservation Status data given in the Systematic List of this Report, nationally a substantial proportion of all UK species are showing worrying reductions. But others are doing well with greatly increased productivity including for example Great Spotted Woodpecker and Goldfinch, and there is always going to be some ups and downs in any part of the animal kingdom.

With these thoughts in mind, while I was going through some old records I was able to extract the data to construct the diagram below. The time scale is 1950 to the present, and the thin continuous graph line in the diagram gives an estimate of the number of active ornithologists in the Avon area over this period. This data was calculated by counting the number of contributors listed in each edition of this Report (and its predecessors) published during the period. These figures range from 36 in 1950 to 470 in 2003 and the graph shows a fairly steady increase until the early 1990s, a rapid increase to 2000 with fairly constant numbers since then. This rapid rise a decade or so ago coincided with the improved quality of this Report including the use of colour and the detailed coverage of every species. The thick graph line in the diagram gives the number of species recorded in each year during the period. About 162 species are recorded every year in the Avon area, so only the excess over this figure is illustrated in the graph. This excess ranged from ten in 1953 to 62 in 1989 and 68 in 2011. Although the number of species recorded, that is the bio-diversity of our avifauna, is a crude estimate, it has been

shown in other contexts to be at least a guide to the health and well-being, or otherwise, of a wildlife population.

But of course the more ornithologists that are active, the more birds will be seen. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that the two graph lines rise more or less in parallel. Rather speculatively I decided to see if there was any significant collation between these two sets of data by looking at an adjusted ratio to give a 'status figure' for the total bird diversity / populations in each year in the Avon area. Clearly the number of species seen will not increase linearly with the number of observers, so some kind of adapted ratio was needed. I came up with one (basically I used a smoothed out version of the square-root of the observer count leaving the species count unaltered) and it gave the dotted graph in the diagram below. If this means anything at all it shows a fairly constant rate over the past sixty three years with perhaps the 'best' period being the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it will be interesting to see if the rise in the last couple of years is sustained. However, it should be noted that the drop in the dotted graph over the past fifteen years coincided with the large increase in the number of observers, and so this needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the data. But speaking generally, I believe this exercise shows that our bird populations are faring reasonably well and that overall there has been no major fall, or rise, during this period; only that some years were better than others which is to be expected. Some species have fared badly, a few even becoming locally extinct during the period – Red-backed Shrike and Cirl Bunting for example – whilst others have gone from being very rare to relatively common, and these include Little Egret and Collared Dove.



As usual we have a number of reports and papers which add to our understanding of the dynamics of the avifauna in our area, and these begin with the 2012 Ringing Report written as usual by Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt. Our first main paper is by Mark Dadds, he has been studying Water Rails at CVL and his paper adds greatly to our understanding of this species in Avon. Secondly, there are three papers describing different aspects of migration in our area, one for spring and two for autumn over the past half century. Thirdly, Andy Davis has produced a further instalment in his series of papers detailing the unusual occurrences in our area (he also provided helpful comments on the systematic list), and Richard Bland has given an account of the disastrous breeding season for our Nightingales in 2012. We end with a first - Geoffrey Warren's poem, when did you last see a poem in a bird report?

It is again a pleasure to acknowledge with thanks all the hard work and long hours put in by many observers, editors and computer specialists to produce this Report. Without observers there would be no Report, and so first our thanks goes to all those who went out into the field, recorded their sightings and submitted them to us, please do keep them coming. Details on how to submit records are given on page 7.

Many hours have been spent in front of computer screens ordering and collating the electronic files which has made the work of producing this Report so much easier (and more accurate), amongst others we thank Richard Bland, Nick Hawkridge, John Martin and Richard Mielcarek for this. As well as to the authors listed above, our thanks also go to the following who contributed to this Report, except for the first and last listed they are all members of the editorial committee – some are new and our especial gratitude goes to them for agreeing to take on their tasks.

- Richard Andrews, our photographic editor
- Mike Bailey for part one of the passerines and the Mallard drawing on page 164
- Richard Bland for the weather report, collation of the survey data and part two of the passerines

- Ken Hall for part three of the passerines
- Rupert Higgins again for his excellent Review of the Year, and the divers to grebes and the rails to Crane sections
- Brain Lancaster for the raptor section
- John Martin for the gull section and all his work associated with the Recorder's Committee
- Nigel Milbourne (with some help from Mark Ponsford) for the duck section
- Dave Nevitt for the pigeon to woodpecker section
- Tony Scott for the swans to Shelduck section
- Keith Vinicombe for helpful comments on the systematic list and some photographs.

Thanks are also due to all those who provided photographs, some of which are quite exceptional, names are given with the photo captions. Finally, thanks are due to Richard Mielcarek for the game birds, terns and hybrids sections (he is also a member of the editorial committee), help with the administration of the work of the Recorder's Committee, and most important the final production of this Report ready for the printers.

The activities of the Editor's and Recorder's Committees are overseen by the AOG Executive Committee whose members are appointed by our sponsoring organisations – Bristol Naturalists Society and Bristol Ornithological Club. In 2012 the members of this committee were Richard Belson (chairman) and Jane Cummings (treasurer) appointed by the BOC, and Richard Mielcarek (secretary) and the Editor appointed by the BNS. Any comments that you may have about this Report – complimentary or otherwise – should be addressed to a member of this committee. It is provided free to members of the BNS and BOC, details on how to become a member of either of these organisations are given on the inside front cover of this Report.

Harvey Rose (Editor)

Address for e-mails – h.e.rose@bris.ac.uk

From the Recorder

While 2012 might mainly be remembered for its lousy cold and wet summer the year actually got off to a fine start with its only new species for our area, the two brief and elusive Penduline Tits at PW Nature Reserve, on Jan. 15th. Spring then continued where the splendid autumn of 2011 left off with a

fine run of rarities including: our fourth record and fifth individual Black-winged Stilt, at CVL on April 10th (relocating from Dorset); third Red-throated Pipit, at New Passage on 22nd; third Laughing Gull, at Severn Beach and fifth Red-rumped Swallow, at Alveston, both on May 1st; third Squacco Heron, at

CVL on 2nd moving to BL where it remained until 17th; third Great Reed Warbler at Weston STW from 19th to June 2nd and sixth Rose-coloured Starling at Severn Beach on 10th. The seemingly constant rain then filled the lakes and, for rarities at least, the rest of the year was rather less eventful. Having said that, the recorder's committee assessed a respectable 131 county rarity records during the year (some involving multiple records of the same individual). As usual the great majority (just under 90% this year) were accepted. Many were supported by photographs, which are usually immensely helpful in the assessment process. Most birders now have some way of at least obtaining a record shot for a high proportion of notable birds they find; see the article by Richard Andrews on page 8. This is not always the case, of course, and the myth that single observer records not photographed will not be accepted on principle is just that, a myth. A number of examples appear in this Report.

The standard of written descriptions is, to be honest, somewhat variable. Some are great but with others acceptance is as much a function of the generosity of the committee as the quality of the notes. There is plenty of advice out there about how to describe a bird and it is worth familiarising yourself with it, if you have never done so. The introduction is probably the least read part of a field guide, yet good examples are packed with useful information on identifying and describing birds. That in the Collins Bird Guide is a good example (Mullarney *et al.* 2009). A key factor when describing a bird is to say what you see and not what you think you should be seeing. You might 'know' the features you are looking for, and this can be helpful of course, but what does the bird in front of you actually look (and sound) like? Look at it afresh and this will not only result in better descriptions but you should learn more from your birding and for me that is what makes it fun. If you learn something new you have had a good day. Incidentally, if you need convincing, Britain's first Eastern Bonelli's Warbler took over a decade to be accepted because some observers described the call as 'hueet' because they 'knew' that is what Bonelli's sounded like, while others described the 'chip' call it was actually giving. Now most people know that the 'chip' calls are diagnostic of Eastern Bonelli's but that was not the case in 1987. Only with honest and accurate observation can we make progress of this kind.

The list of scarce species requiring some supporting evidence for publication (see overleaf) remains the same as last year apart from the addition of Olive-backed Pipit, with its removal from the list of species considered by BBRC as of Jan. 1st, 2013. With no records for Avon this is somewhat academic at present, but should you be the person to find Avon's

first then send your notes to me rather than BBRC, and do not be too disappointed as it is still a classy Asian rarity! Details of the reason for the decision (they were simply getting slightly too numerous to qualify as a national rarity) are found on the BBRC website: <http://www.bbrc.org.uk/660>

Common Cranes are always a welcome sight but are now posing us a particular problem. The Great Crane Project (GCP) has released 57 Cranes on the Somerset Levels over the past three years with more to come during the life of what is currently a five year project. Of these, happily, 51 were still alive at the end of March 2013 and some of them have made occasional visits back to Slimbridge, where they were raised. Meanwhile about 20 pairs of naturally established wild Cranes are breeding in Britain and others visit as scarce migrants each year. Cranes have always been rare with us but sightings have gradually been increasing more or less in line with the slow natural increase in the British Crane population. There were six records up to 2011, all but one of them (in March 1971) since the millennium. Not surprisingly, with us being in a direct line between their birthplace and release areas, sightings are significantly up since the start of the GCP, with at least six records of flocks of up to eight in 2012. The released birds are colour ringed but these are not easily seen on birds flying over so it has become very hard to distinguish between truly wild Cranes (doubtless still occurring occasionally) and GCP birds (now much more likely to be seen in our area). All local records of Cranes will now be assumed to be from the GCP unless there is strong evidence to the contrary. Of this year's records only that over Bishopston seemed likely to relate to a wild bird. For more information about this project visit: <http://www.thegreatcraneproject.org.uk/cranes>. Hopefully such distinctions will soon be blurred further by wild reared Cranes appearing regularly in our area – an exciting prospect.

As ever I would like to thank the recorder's committee for their hard work during the year, namely Richard Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancaster, Richard Mielcarek and Harvey Rose. Richard Mielcarek, as last year, took on much of the burden of record management, distribution and collation as well as chasing up a minority of 'missing' records. In addition, Richard Bland continued his sterling work on calculating statistics on breeding and wintering populations and arrivals and departures of migrants. Harvey Rose also provided much advice and encouragement through the year. Thanks too for all those who sent in records, by whatever means, keep them coming.

Mullarney, K., Svensson, L. & Zetterström, D., 2009. Collins Bird Guide, Second Edition. Harper Collins.

John Martin

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. The figure in brackets is the number of live individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011. Species in italics have not yet been recorded in the Avon area.

Whooper Swan (44)	Spotted Crane (32)	Hooded Crow (7)
Bean Goose (29)	Corncrake (6)	Willow Tit (49)
Pink-footed Goose (10)	Crane (10)	Bearded Tit
American Wigeon (2)	Stone-curlew (8)	<i>Short-toed Lark</i>
Green-winged Teal (12)	Kentish Plover (7)	Woodlark (19)
Ring-necked Duck (24)	Dotterel (17)	Shore Lark (9)
Ferruginous Duck (6)	American Golden Plover (2)	Red-rumped Swallow (2)
Eider * (2)	Temminck's Stint (9)	<i>Greenish Warbler</i>
Long-tailed Duck (51)	White-rumped Sandpiper (5)	Pallas's Warbler (1)
<i>Surf Scoter</i>	Purple Sandpiper * (4)	Yellow-browed Warbler (28)
Velvet Scoter (34)	Pectoral Sandpiper (34)	<i>Radde's Warbler</i>
Quail** (6)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper (6)	Dusky Warbler (2)
Red-throated Diver (27)	Red-necked Phalarope (6)	Wood Warbler in autumn
Black-throated Diver (11)	Grey Phalarope (73)	<i>Barred Warbler</i>
Great Northern Diver (41)	Pomarine Skua (172)	Dartford Warbler (38)
<i>White-billed Diver</i>	Arctic Skua * (31)	Subalpine Warbler (1)
Fulmar * (9)	Long-tailed Skua (10)	Icterine Warbler (1)
Cory's Shearwater (2)	Great Skua * (9)	Melodious Warbler (1)
<i>Great Shearwater</i>	Sabine's Gull (37)	Aquatic Warbler (7)
Sooty Shearwater (0)	Ring-billed Gull (67)	Marsh Warbler (3)
Manx Shearwater * (12)	Caspian Gull	Waxwing
Balearic Shearwater (1)	Iceland/Kumlien's Gull (38/5)	Rose-coloured Starling (7)
<i>Wilson's Petrel</i>	Glaucous Gull (13)	Bluethroat (4)
Storm Petrel * (8)	White-winged Black Tern (9)	<i>Red-breasted Flycatcher</i>
Leach's Petrel (198)	Roseate Tern (3)	Richard's Pipit (20)
Shag (69)	Guillemot * (1)	Tawny Pipit (2)
Night-heron (5)	Razorbill (42)	Red-throated Pipit (0)
Cattle Egret (9)	Black Guillemot (1)	<i>Olive-backed Pipit</i>
Great White Egret (6)	Little Auk (18)	Serin (2)
Purple Heron (3)	Puffin (3)	Twite
White Stork (8)	Turtle Dove	Common Redpoll (14)
Glossy Ibis (8)	Long-eared Owl (122)	<i>Arctic Redpoll</i>
Spoonbill (39)	Nightjar** (3)	<i>Parrot Crossbill</i>
Red-necked Grebe (16)	Alpine Swift (4)	Common Rosefinch (3)
Slavonian Grebe (45)	Bee-eater (9)	Hawfinch
Honey-buzzard (20)	Hoopoe (25)	Lapland Bunting (47)
Black Kite (3)	Wryneck (46)	Cirl Bunting (3)
Hen Harrier (86)	Golden Oriole (16)	<i>Ortolan Bunting</i>
Montagu's Harrier (10)	Red-backed Shrike (7)	<i>Rustic Bunting</i>
Goshawk (40)	Great Grey Shrike (14)	Little Bunting (3)
Rough-legged Buzzard (0)	Woodchat Shrike (5)	
Red-footed Falcon (1)	Chough (1)	

* records away from the estuary/coast, including records from upstream of the old Severn Bridge

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

Subspecies

We also require descriptions for locally rare subspecies – ie any subspecies which is not regularly 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>	Siberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita tristis</i>
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>
Arctic Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina arctica</i>	Grey-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i>
'Continental' Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>	Scandinavian Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus littoralis</i>
'Nordic' Jackdaw	<i>Monedula monedula monedula</i>		

As well as the species and subspecies listed above, 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), and
- out-of-season migrants (for example a Whimbrel in January, or a Goosander in July)
- in the event of queries regarding any record.

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

Submission of Records

We welcome records of every observation of the following: Bewick's Swan, all geese and ducks, Red-legged and Grey Partridge, Quail, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Bittern, Little Egret, all grebes, all raptors, Water Rail, all waders, Kittiwake, Little, Mediterranean, Yellow-legged, and Great Black-backed Gulls, all terns, Stock Dove, Ring-necked Parakeet, Cuckoo, all owls, Nightjar, Kingfisher, all woodpeckers, Firecrest, Marsh Tit, Sand Martin, Cetti's, Wood 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, Yellowhammer and Snow, Reed and Corn Buntings.

For the common species we would particularly like records of the following:

- Evidence of, or suggestive of, breeding for the following species: Mute Swan, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Moorhen, Coot, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Swift, Jay, Goldcrest, House Martin, Willow, Garden, Sedge and Reed Warblers, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Goldfinch, Linnet and Bullfinch;
- First and last sightings of summer and winter visitors;
- Blackcaps and Chiffchaff in winter, and Black-headed and Common Gulls in summer;
- Passage or cold-weather movements, including rates per hour;
- Size and site of all roosts at any time of year;
- Large flock counts;
- Unusual activity, including early or late song, display or breeding, birds at unusual sites and individuals with aberrant plumage;
- Regular counts from well-watched sites including gardens;
- Birds that have obviously or probably escaped from captivity, or which are considered to be hybrids.

Records should supply details of the species, the number of individuals, the date seen, the site with as accurate a grid reference as possible and any other relevant information.

Records can be submitted in a number of ways:

- to the BOC, either monthly by email to bocbirdsightings@hotmail.co.uk or via the 'Contact us' page on the website <http://bristolornithologicalclub.co.uk> or <http://www.boc-bristol.org.uk/>;
- by inputting them to the BTOs BirdTrack website – for details see <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/taking-part>;
- annually, before the end of January, by e-mail to the Recorder at avonbirdrecorder@googlemail.com. Ideally they should be as an Excel spreadsheet;
- BTO WeBS counts and other BTO and local survey data is automatically made available to us.

All records are kept at the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) in Bristol so they are properly archived and available for conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the bird-life of the area.

Photographs

Each year we receive photographs for possible inclusion in the Report, not all of which we can use, so we thought it would be worthwhile to outline the criteria we use to select images for publication.

We primarily choose images of species that have some relevance to the year in question, rather than species that happen to have been photographed in the Avon area during the year. For example, this year most of the images are included because they have some relevance to the text. Some depict a rare or scarce species (for example Squacco Heron, Scandinavian Rock Pipit), some are common species which had an unusual year or for which there was a noteworthy record (Cuckoo, Garganey), and others accompany a paper or illustrate a specific item in the text (Water Rail, Dunlin).

However, we have an increasing number of submissions that fulfil the above criteria, but are not suitable for publication for technical reasons. So we ask contributors to consider the following when submitting images to the editor for possible publication via e-mail, or on CD or DVD.

1. Send a full-size uncropped image. A high resolution JPEG is fine, no need for TIFF or RAW files. This is the main reason why we could not consider a number of submissions this year. Due to the sizes required by the printers for the Report plates, an image which looks good when reduced for the internet does not usually provide sufficient quality for publication as it will only occupy a fraction of the page when reproduced in B5 format.
2. Do not crop pictures. Even if it is not a frame-filler, leave the image uncropped as we often need more space around a subject in order to fit a picture where it is required in the Report. A number of images we receive are so closely cropped around the subject that we simply cannot fit them on the page using the layout we require.
3. If your camera allows it, send an unsharpened image. Sharpening an image produces artefacts which are usually invisible when viewed as submitted, but sometimes we need to enlarge a photograph to fit to a desired size, this also enlarges the sharpening artefacts which can then look unsightly in the final printed version. We apply sharpening to the final resized image when we put the pages together. As an example, the Hoopoe image on the cover of this Report is a substantial crop which we might not have been able to do had the original been sharpened.

Whilst we occasionally ask to use a particular picture we have seen on the internet or elsewhere, selections for the Report are usually taken from submissions made directly to the editor during the course of the year. Photographs selected for publication are not only judged on their image quality or species depicted, as outlined above, but also on aspects like (a) landscape/portrait orientation, (b) other planned photographs for the Report, (c) whether a photograph of the relevant species has appeared recently, (d) other submissions of the same species to choose from, or (e) page binding and where the photograph is to be placed in the Report.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all photographers who have submitted images to this, and previous, Reports; they make a valuable contribution to the overall success of the whole project.

Richard Andrews

Review of the Year

Any summary of 2012 must begin with reference to the exceptional weather, which included the wettest April and summer on record. This had a significant impact on the area's bird populations. In particular, many resident passerines already at a low ebb following a succession of recent cold winters suffered extremely low productivity in 2012, as did several summer visitors. The failure of species in severe decline such as Cuckoo and Spotted Flycatcher to show any improvement added to a thoroughly gloomy summer. The weather meant that water levels at the reservoirs were high throughout the second half of the year, resulting in a poor autumn and winter here. The unsettled weather did produce some recompense in a good series of mid-summer seabird records. The exceptional run of rare birds through the later part of 2011 continued through the spring of 2012, with both the reservoirs and the coast producing several significant records. The autumn was extremely disappointing, however; Nearctic waders, for example, were entirely absent following an excellent showing in 2011.

The state of bird recording continues to change as dramatically as the weather: the rise in the popularity of electronic recording schemes, notably Birdtrack, means that the volume of records we receive has increased enormously in recent years. Whilst this is extremely welcome, it has made comparison of bird numbers with previous years problematic for some species.

First Winter Period

Following three cold winters it was a relief that 2012 began with more normal weather conditions. There was just one cold spell, lasting from Jan. 30th to Feb. 13th. Rainfall was just below average, with most rain falling in January.

In the mild conditions there were low numbers of many wildfowl, particularly species such as White-fronted Goose, Wigeon, Smew and Goosander that are often associated with freezing weather. The effects of the dry summer of 2011 were still seen at the reservoirs, however, where species such as Teal, Mallard and Pochard were numerous until water levels rose in February. On the coast, counts of Shelduck were reasonable, the highest being 490 at Sand Bay in February but Brent Geese were scarcer than in recent years. Goldeneye numbers at the reservoirs were average but the DEFRA cull of Ruddy Duck has clearly had a massive effect on this species, with the maximum count of four at CVL around 0.5% of the levels seen before shooting began.

The mild weather had a less marked impact on waders, but may have contributed to the reasonable numbers of wintering Common Sandpiper and a February record of two Little Stints at CI-Y. A good showing by Golden Plover may have been

unexpected in the absence of freezing conditions. Trends amongst the more numerous species were generally positive: Dunlin improved slightly following some poor years, Curlew numbers were about average and there were several good counts of Redshank but a slight decline in Oystercatcher populations. Purple Sandpiper continued to winter in small numbers.

The winter was good for two migrant raptors, Merlin and Short-eared Owl. There were long sequences of sightings of the former at several coastal sites, accompanied by a good scatter of inland records. The latter wintered in high numbers, mostly at coastal sites, especially OPS, Aust Warth and Weston STW, but more unusually in the Marshfield area where up to seven were regularly seen. In contrast, no Hen Harriers lingered and only one was recorded moving through the area, but there were several sightings of one or two Marsh Harriers at CVL.

Migrant passerine numbers were generally low and counts of Fieldfare, Redwing, Brambling and Lesser Redpoll were all below average, with only Siskin producing a reasonable showing. Roost gatherings of other species included 20,000 Starlings at New Passage throughout most of the period and 100 Goldfinch at the New Cut, Bristol on Jan. 5th. Other notable counts included a site record 53 Blackbirds at Weston STW on Feb. 11th and 30 Bullfinch at CVL on several dates in January. Stonechat numbers increased slightly, suggesting a slow recovery from recent cold winters, and there was a good sequence of Black Redstart sightings. High water levels meant that no Water Pipits were recorded at the reservoirs, but counts on the coast were high. The importance for farmland birds of the South Gloucestershire Cotswolds was indicated by flocks of 1,800 Linnet in wildbird cover at Old Sodbury and of 300 Yellowhammer and a record 400 Corn Bunting in the Marshfield area.

Several rare and scarce visitors from the exceptional autumn of 2011 stayed into 2012. These included: the four Pink-footed Geese, which remained at BL until Feb. 23rd and then relocated to CVL where they were present to March 22nd; the Lesser Canada Goose spent much of the winter at Torr Res. in Somerset before returning to CVL between March 15th and 28th and unexpectedly reappearing here on April 15th; the BL Long-tailed Duck also moved to CVL where it remained until May 13th; and the Slavonian Grebe, which stayed faithful to BL until Feb. 3rd. Also exhibiting site fidelity was the CVL Spotted Sandpiper, which barely moved until it disappeared during a movement of Common Sandpiper on April 21st; the Great Grey Shrike in the Charlton Fields area was last seen on March 23rd; the Yellow-browed Warbler at CVL was present until Feb. 12th; and three Twite at OPS were relocated on Jan. 14th, to be joined by a fourth on

15th and finally disappear on Feb. 13th. The period also saw several significant new arrivals. Ring-billed Gulls were seen at CVL on Jan. 3rd and at BL on 18th and a Glaucous Gull first seen at New Passage on Jan. 5th subsequently visited several other coastal locations without ever settling anywhere. A second Slavonian Grebe visited CVL briefly on 8th but the outstanding record of the winter involved another brief visit, by two Penduline Tits to PW Nature Reserve on 15th. The expansion of the species' range and recent upsurge in UK records meant that this addition to the area's list was not unexpected, but the brevity of their stay frustrated many would-be observers. More routine were records of two Whooper Swans at CVL on 19th and an Iceland Gull here on 25th and at BL the following day. During the brief spell of relatively cold weather a Siberian Chiffchaff was found at CVL on Feb. 6th and a Smew arrived here on 9th, to be joined by a second on 12th. Winter records of Sandwich Tern elsewhere in Britain are not unusual, but the record of one over ASW on 18th was the first such occurrence in our area. There then followed two records of Nearctic diving ducks. Lesser Scaup has lost some of its previous lustre as the number of sightings has steadily risen but a male at CVL on 23rd was still noteworthy as were two male Ring-necked Ducks that visited PW on 27th, having previously been seen in Dorset.

Spring

March was warm and dry, with south-westerly winds in the first part of the month and easterlies in the second. April also began with dry weather, but a cold northerly airflow, before exceptionally wet weather set in from 19th. The beginning of May was also cold and wet but south-westerlies from 6th introduced much warmer conditions.

As in 2011 spring saw a small passage of Eider, which peaked with four during improving weather on May 8th. The first Garganey appeared on March 23rd and three more arrived on April 1st.

The largest ever spring movement through the area of Red Kite was noted. Sightings were dispersed throughout the season but there were small peaks on March 26th and between May 17th and 26th. The passage of Osprey was also good, lasting from March 25th until April 30th, with a small peak on April 4th. Numbers of Marsh Harrier were low, however, and only one Hen Harrier was seen, at OPS on March 31st. The first Hobby of the year was recorded on April 25th but the main arrival was delayed until the second half of May.

The first Little Ringed Plover of the year was seen on March 24th, with the first migrant Common Sandpiper following on April 10th. Passage of both species peaked in late April, when many birds were probably held up by the wet weather. A high count of 24 Common Sandpiper was made at CVL on 21st. Numbers of some waders, including Snipe and Dunlin, were low but several species had a good

passage. Peak counts of several were later than usual, presumably due to the weather, but preceded the arrival of warm weather on May 6th. During the first week of May a reasonable passage of both Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwit peaked; an exceptional count of 30 Greenshank was made on 2nd; a better than average sequence of Curlew Sandpiper records began on 3rd; and two Wood Sandpipers were found on 4th. Throughout the spring Knot numbers were low but counts of both Grey Plover and Sanderling were higher than usual. Weston STW also produced a good count of Greenshank, seven on 27th and it was not until the end of the month that the Ringed Plover passage began in earnest, with peak numbers not arriving until June 4th to 6th, when Sanderling counts were also high.

Numbers of terns and other seabirds were generally poor but there was a movement of Little Gull around March 25th and a high count of 34 of this species at CVL on April 25th. Below par species included Arctic Skua, Mediterranean Gull and the three most common terns. What tern passage there was peaked around April 30th and May 1st, when moderate counts were made on the coast.

One of the noteworthy events of the year was the appearance of much larger numbers than usual of several passerine migrants, notably Redstart, Whinchat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit, and of large visible movements of hirundines, although the poor weather meant that several of these were late in coming. Despite the warm weather in March there were few early records of migrants, the main exception being the appearance of House Martin on 11th. Sand Martin and Wheatear, on 6th and 16th respectively, were slightly late. There were marked movements of Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Lesser Redpoll between 24th and 31st, when the first Willow Warbler and White Wagtail were also seen. Despite the northerly winds the end of March and beginning of April saw the first sightings of Redstart on 30th, Reed Warbler on 1st, Whitethroat on 2nd, Sedge Warbler on 3rd and Pied Flycatcher on 5th, all slightly ahead of schedule, but there was no large scale movement over this period. There was another small flurry of activity on April 8th, when the last Fieldfare and first Ring Ouzel were seen. A slightly larger flurry followed on 11th, when the first records of Swift, Lesser Whitethroat and Tree Pipit, and the last of Water Pipit, were made; there was a major influx of Willow Warbler; and Chiffchaff and White Wagtail passages peaked. The exceptionally large passage of Redstart was at its height on 14th. It was not until the end of the month that arrivals of some species, including large influxes of Swift, Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler and Wheatear on April 27th and 28th, got underway. May was the month that saw exceptional numbers of some species, presumably involving birds that had been held up by northerly winds: the fact that several maxima occurred before the weather became favourable suggests that many were determined to battle through but were then

held up in our area. During the first week of the month, before the weather changed on 6th, there were huge movements of Swallow and House Martin, peaking on 2nd and 4th respectively; a small influx of Wood Warbler; the first records of Spotted Flycatcher and Nightingale; and large numbers of Whinchat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit.

The spring produced a good sequence of records of rare and scarce species, with a surprising number of birds overcoming the northerly winds in the second half of April and first week of May to overshoot from the south. March was generally quiet, with only a Lesser Scaup at CVL from 11th, two Common Cranes over BL on 22nd and a Scandinavian Rock Pipit at CVL on 25th of note. As is often the case, it was adverse weather in April that produced a greater concentration of sightings. Although the status of Common Crane in our area is becoming increasingly difficult to judge following introductions in Somerset a bird over Bishopston, Bristol, on 2nd had good credentials, its appearance fitting well with the departure of one from the Devon coast and subsequent arrival in Staffordshire. A Great White Egret was seen at Portishead on 8th and a Black-winged Stilt at CVL on 10th. The same site produced a Green-winged Teal on 17th and possibly a different individual on 30th. A White Stork flew over Combe Down, Bath on 21st. A Red-throated Pipit that was seen briefly at Northwick Warth on 22nd was our third record, but our first in spring. Occurrences of Turtle Dove, unfortunately, now fall into the unusual category and two of the three seen this year were on 23rd and 30th. A Red-rumped Swallow was grounded by bad weather at Alveston on May 1st, its appearance coinciding with the beginning of large movements of common hirundines, and on the same day the weather brought a Laughing Gull to nearby Severn Beach. For many observers the outstanding rarity of the spring was a Squacco Heron that was found at CVL on 2nd and moved between here and BL until its last appearance on 17th, bringing to an end an exceptional 12 months at the reservoirs, which began with the Blue-winged Teal at CVL in June 2011. A Pomarine Skua that appeared here on 12th was less unusual and the same day saw a Great White Egret visit CI-Y. The final outstanding rarity of the season was a Great Reed Warbler that spent two weeks from 19th at Weston STW.

Breeding

The breeding season was dominated by exceptionally wet weather. This had profound effects on many species.

High water levels at the reservoirs often lead to good breeding seasons for wildfowl, but this year rapidly rising levels flooded out many nests here, whilst heavy rain killed many fledglings. Both Little and Great Crested grebes failed to breed at CVL and many Coot broods failed to survive. Pochard, however, had a better year and Mallard numbers were more or less normal. An intensive survey of

Water Rail nests showed CVL to be much more important as a breeding site for this species than previously thought. Away from the reservoirs fortunes were mixed. There were no Gadwall broods and Mute Swan had a terrible year, with around a third the usual number of cygnets fledging, but Tufted Duck, Little Grebe and Moorhen all had reasonable seasons. Grey Heron remained at a low level following recent cold winters, with no evidence of any significant recovery.

The rainfall also had a clear effect on many raptors. The number of pairs of Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Peregrine and Barn Owl were all high but productivity was extremely low. Kestrel seems to have been affected less severely but Hobby had a poor year. On a brighter note there were signs of a recovery in Tawny Owl numbers.

Widespread flooding produced improved conditions for Lapwing but although pairs were present at a higher number of sites than in recent years breeding success appears to have been low. Oystercatcher productivity was also low but Ringed Plover enjoyed a very good year. Little Ringed Plover, in contrast, did not attempt to nest in 2011.

Many passerines exhibited the same, rather depressing, reaction to both the recent cold winters and this year's wet summer. Low populations of many species, including Blue Tit, Great Tit, Wren, Blackbird, Robin and Chaffinch, were compounded by poor productivity to leave numbers extremely low. Many summer migrants fared no better. Garden Warbler arrived in good numbers but Whitethroat saw a large fall and the productivity of both, as well as Blackcap, Sedge Warbler and Reed Warbler, was very poor. There was no better news about those species that have been in steady decline in recent years: populations of Cuckoo, Rook, Willow Warbler, Starling, Mistle Thrush and Spotted Flycatcher continued to fall and there are worrying signs of a similar trend in Pied Wagtail. Two farmland specialists, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting, also appeared to have very bad years, possibly exaggerated by poor weather inhibiting recording. The related Reed Bunting did well at its main site, CVL, but appears to have been scarce elsewhere. Scraps of good news are hard to find, but Treecreeper appears to be doing well and there were suggestions of improvements in both Kingfisher and Dipper. Although Linnet population levels remain well below those of the past they appear to be rebounding slowly, whilst the rapid increase in the Goldfinch population continued and there was a very slight rise by the much declined Greenfinch.

The year was also poor for several of our less common breeding species. There was no suggestion that Tree Pipit bred and recent cold winters continue to affect Stonechat, which also did not breed; 15 pairs of the latter held territory in 2008. Yellow Wagtail was present at two sites in the Cotswolds, without any evidence of successful

breeding, and Grasshopper Warbler was very scarce after several good years. The very small populations of Nightjar and Nightingale appear to be stable but Quail had a poor year. One of the most unlikely breeding species of recent years, Goldeneye, nested at CVL again but the single duckling seen perished in the very poor weather.

Summer

June was wet and stormy almost throughout and rain fell virtually throughout the first three weeks of July, although there was some warmer weather in the last week of the month.

The last few years have seen an absence of summer gales and therefore a paucity of seabirds, but large numbers were seen this year due to two periods of stormy weather in June. The first, centred around 8th, produced record numbers of Storm Petrel including 30 at Severn Beach on 9th and three and two at CVL and BL respectively. Around the same time there were good numbers of Fulmar, Gannet, Great Skua, Arctic Skua and Kittiwake, with an exceptional series of Pomarine Skua sightings at Severn Beach on 8th. The second storm arrived on 22nd. There were generally fewer seabirds than during the first storm but Manx Shearwater numbers were much higher and there were further records of Pomarine, Arctic and Great skuas.

There was the normal scatter of Common Scoter records during the summer, reaching a slight peak on July 1st, and an Eider appeared during the high winds on June 22nd. Teal was the first of the returning migrant duck, on June 17th, followed by Pintail on July 27th and a Scaup on 31st.

Rarity activity was reasonably high during the first ten days of June. The third and last Turtle Dove of the year was seen at Timsbury on 6th and the rarest seabird forced into the Estuary by the gales was a Sabine's Gull at Severn Beach on 9th. On the same day a party of four White Storks, which had most recently been seen in Gwent, flew over the Avon Gorge. A first-summer Rose-coloured Starling appeared at Severn Beach on 10th but thereafter the summer was very quiet, with only a returning Ferruginous Duck at CVL from July 12th providing any interest.

Autumn

Dismal weather continued through most of the autumn. August was dull, with southerly winds and regular spells of heavy rain and although September began with fine weather there were torrential storms on 24th, a pattern that continued into October. The month ended with north-easterly airflows and frosts from 27th.

With water levels high at the reservoirs numbers of almost all waterfowl here were very low, a picture compounded by low populations of coarse fish, which led to extremely low counts of Grey Heron,

Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe and Cormorant at CVL. The only species to provide an exception was Tufted Duck, which reached a record 2,475 here in September. Teal numbers, which were extremely depressed at the reservoirs, were high on the Estuary.

Passage seabird numbers were also very low, with virtually no skuas and a distinct scarcity of Black, Common and Arctic terns. The only noteworthy tern record involved eight Sandwich Terns at CVL on Sept. 9th.

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 noted on Oct. 21st.

As would be expected in a year of high water levels wader numbers at the reservoirs were low, although flooding to the west of Heron's Green at CVL did attract some species, including Wood Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank. Even on the coast numbers of several species, including Dunlin, Little Stint, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank, were poor. Other species had a stronger showing, however. Ringed Plover numbers, peaking around Aug. 16th, were better than average, as was the Common Sandpiper passage, which was later than usual with a maximum of 27 at CI-Y on 30th. The next day 62 Black-tailed Godwit flew over CVL and there was a very strong arrival of this species at Severnside between Oct. 13th and 29th, reaching a maximum of 360, accompanied by an above average number of Knot, which peaked on 16th. The Axe Estuary attracted excellent flocks of two more common species, including a record count of 330 Oystercatcher, also on 16th, and a maximum of 665 Redshank on Sept. 22nd.

The first clear signs of autumn passerine passage were in early July, when a Wheatear was seen on 1st and the first Tree Pipit appeared on 7th. The first Whinchat then followed on 27th but the early part of the autumn was generally quiet, although there were small peaks of Sedge Warbler on Aug. 10th, Chiffchaff on 13th and Yellow Wagtail on 20th. Many Swifts left in the first week of the month and the last was seen on Sept. 10th. Several species appeared in large numbers in the spring but of these only Wheatear, with marked influxes on Aug. 30th and Sept. 10th, had a good autumn passage. Otherwise, the poor Whinchat passage peaked on Sept. 8th and last dates for several species, for example Redstart on 26th, were earlier than usual. The first dates for several winter visitors were also late, with Redwing not being seen until Oct. 4th and Fieldfare not until 14th. Passage of both these species was poor, but Brambling appeared in reasonable numbers between 23rd and 30th, a period that also saw marked movements of Starling, Blackbird, Chaffinch and Siskin as well as five sightings of Hawfinch and a fall of Song Thrush on Steep Holm. Although several summer visitors departed early, individuals

of some lingered very late, with notable last records of Whinchat on Nov. 14th, Swallow on 15th, Wheatear on 20th and Lesser Whitethroat on 23rd.

After an exceptional autumn for rarities in 2011 there was a distinct lack of excitement in 2012. There was little to report in the first half of August, and the end of the month only produced a Great White Egret briefly at CVL on 20th, a Lesser Scaup here from 28th and an elusive Spotted Crake at PW on 30th. CVL also attracted a Red-necked Grebe on Sept. 7th and a second Ferruginous Duck from 8th; the next day a Cattle Egret visited Northwick Warth and nearby there was a family group of five Pale-bellied Brent Geese at Severn Beach on 11th. After this minor period of activity there was then another influx of scarce birds, all of an easterly origin, between 25th and 29th. The first date produced a Wryneck at RPD, which was followed by a Lapland Bunting at CI-Y on 28th. On the following day a Wryneck was found at CVL and a Yellow-browed Warbler in Bedminster. There was another record of Lapland Bunting at CI-Y on Oct. 4th, with a Pale-bellied Brent Goose at the same site from 10th. CVL then came to the fore, although none of the species recorded here was unexpected. A second Lesser Scaup arrived on 12th, followed by a Ring-necked Duck on 14th and a Slavonian Grebe on 15th, to provide observers here some incentive to search through the wildfowl flocks. The most appreciated bird of the autumn, however, was a confiding Hoopoe found at Sand Bay on 25th. Unfortunately a fly-over Wood Lark nearby at Sand Point was less co-operative.

Second Winter Period

Wet weather continued through the last two months of the year, with spells of heavy rain in November from 1st to 4th and from 20th to 26th, and in the last two weeks of the year. Temperatures were generally on the low side, with northerly winds bringing frosts at the end of November.

Water levels were high at the reservoirs throughout and numbers of waterfowl here were therefore very poor, although Water Rail found the conditions to its liking. Fish-eating species continued to be very scarce, especially at CVL. Even at the coast there were very few notable records and none at all of either Bewick's Swan or White-fronted Goose. Dark-bellied Brent Goose was almost as scarce, but there was a high count of 19 moving north-westwards over Bishopston, Bristol. More exceptional was a series of diver sightings in the Sand Point area. Foremost amongst these was Red-throated, which totalled 21 between Dec. 4th and 30th with a maximum of 12 on the former date. There were also several sightings of Great Northern, possibly relating to the same individual, and a single Black-throated on 9th. The weather conditions at the time suggest that these

birds were not storm-driven. There has been little intensive watching here at this time of year in the past; future observation may clarify whether there is a regular migration through the area, or if these were exceptional occurrences linked to a factor such as unusual shoals of fish.

The few species to benefit from the wet weather were Snipe and Jack Snipe, with extensive areas of flooding thought to be responsible for good counts of both, which included gatherings of over ten of the latter at both Aust Warth and CI-Y. A series of records of Ruff along the coast may also have reflected nearby flooding. Golden Plover counts were also high but trends amongst other waders were unexceptional. There was a slight improvement in Dunlin numbers but the large flocks seen in previous decades continue to be absent. Oystercatcher, Curlew and Redshank all had reasonable winters but Spotted Redshank was absent, with the presumed returning individual failing to visit CI-Y after 13 winters of attendance.

Numbers of migrant passerines in the winter were similar to those in the autumn. Redwing, Fieldfare and Lesser Redpoll were all less numerous than usual but Siskin was fairly common and there was a wide scatter of Brambling records, although no large flocks were reported. Amongst the less common species it was another good winter for Black Redstart and the slow improvement shown by Stonechat continued. High water levels meant that there were very few inland records of Water Pipit. Two Tree Sparrows at Marshfield on Nov. 30th were the only reported this year. It was encouraging to see the flock of Corn Bunting here reach 300 on Nov. 6th after their poor showing in the breeding season. Other good counts made over the period included a roost of up to 500 Pied Wagtail in Bristol city centre and 30 Reed Bunting at Woollard on Nov. 6th.

The winter was as disappointing as the autumn for rare and scarce birds. A small party of Snow Bunting at Severnside, which peaked at six on Nov. 10th, proved popular as did an influx of Waxwing, which began on the same day. A poor berry crop, however, meant that no large flocks of the latter built up and most groups were extremely mobile. Nonetheless the number of individuals reported reached 135 on Dec. 9th. On Nov. 18th there were three noteworthy records: a Pale-bellied Brent Goose, which most unusually was in a field near Chew Magna; three Whooper Swan at BL; and a Common Redpoll, also at BL. The wet and windy weather produced the only Grey Phalarope of the year, at CI-Y from 23rd and there was a Velvet Scoter at Sand Bay on Dec. 1st. The only other records of note in December involved a Lesser Scaup at BL on 7th and a Yellow-browed Warbler in a garden near Midsomer Norton on 19th.

Migration Summary

The average first arrival date over the last 40 years for the 29 summer migrants tabulated below is April 9th, but in 2012 the average was three days earlier, on the 6th. Six species arrived significantly in advance of their normal date, with the species showing the greatest deviation from the average listed first: House Martin, Garganey, Reed Warbler, Little Ringed Plover and Whitethroat, while Swift had an equal second earliest arrival.

The average last departure date over the last 40 years is Oct. 3rd, but in 2012 it was six days later on 9th, with eight species departing significantly later than normal, Lesser Whitethroat, Cuckoo (which had its latest sighting but under unusual circumstances; see text entry), Whinchat (latest departure date), Little Ringed Plover (second latest departure date), Wheatear, Whimbrel, Whitethroat and Swallow. However, not all species remained later than normal, with four species having last sightings significantly earlier: Common Tern, Redstart, Yellow Wagtail and Grasshopper Warbler.

From March 21st until the end of April winds were easterly or northerly almost without a break and this significantly delayed the main Swallow migration (see article on p. 161), and probably that of many other species, but this seems to have had little impact on first dates. However, it may well have had an impact on the subsequent build up of species counts, particularly for Wheatear.

Migrant first arrival and last departure dates for 2012					
Summer migrants	Arrival	Average	Departure	Average	Comments
Wheatear	Mar. 16th	Mar. 11th	Nov. 20th	Nov. 2nd	Departure 18 days later than average
Sand Martin	Mar. 6th	Mar. 14th	Oct. 8th	Oct. 6th	
Swallow	Mar. 17th	Mar. 23rd	Nov. 15th	Nov. 5th	Departure ten days later than average
Willow Warbler	Mar. 24th	Mar. 26th	Oct. 1st	Sept. 23rd	
White Wagtail	Mar. 28th	Mar. 27th	Sept. 29th	Sept. 29th	Arrival 17 days earlier than average, earlier dates all in 1997
House Martin	Mar. 11th	Mar. 28th	Nov. 6th	Oct. 31st	
Ring Ouzel	April 8th	Mar. 31st		Oct. 7th	
Tree Pipit	April 11th	April 3rd	Oct. 7th	Sept. 30th	
Little Ringed Plover	Mar. 24th	April 6th	Oct. 15th	Sept. 17th	Arrival 13 days earlier than average, departure 28 days later than average and equal second latest, the latest ever was Oct. 18th (in 1976)
Yellow Wagtail	April 8th	April 6th	Sept. 28th	Oct. 13th	Departure 15 days earlier than average
Redstart	Mar. 30th	April 7th	Sept. 26th	Oct. 13th	Departure 17 days earlier than average
Garganey	Mar. 23rd	April 9th	Sept. 6th	Oct. 9th	A female over-wintered, the arrival date is that of the first male. Departure 33 days earlier than average
Whimbrel	April 11th	April 11th	Oct. 19th	Oct. 5th	Departure 15 days later than average
Cuckoo	April 12th	April 12th	Sept. 24th	Aug. 25th	Latest recorded departure but see text, previously Sept. 23rd (in 1983)
Common Tern	April 17th	April 11th	Sept. 9th	Oct. 13th	Departure 34 days earlier than average
Sedge Warbler	April 3rd	April 13th	Oct. 2nd	Oct. 1st	
Whitethroat	April 2nd	April 14th	Oct. 7th	Sept. 26th	Arrival 12 days earlier than average, departure 11 days later than average
Pied Flycatcher	April 5th	April 14th		Aug. 29th	
Garden Warbler	April 8th	April 14th	Oct. 28th	Sept. 25th	
Grasshopper Warbler	April 13th	April 15th	Sept. 6th	Sept. 19th	Departure 13 days earlier than average
Reed Warbler	April 1st	April 17th	Sept. 24th	Oct. 4th	Arrival 16 days earlier than average
Whinchat	April 20th	April 19th	Nov. 14th	Oct. 14th	The latest departure
Lesser Whitethroat	April 11th	April 20th	Nov. 23rd	Sept. 28th	Departure 56 days later than average
Swift	April 11th	April 20th	Sept. 10th	Sept. 19th	Equal second earliest arrival date, earliest was April 8th in 2001
Wood Warbler	April 28th	April 21st		NA	
Nightingale	May 5th	April 23rd		Aug. 27th	Arrival 13 days later than average
Hobby	April 25th	April 23rd	Oct. 7th	Oct. 3rd	
Black Tern	April 23rd	April 25th	Oct. 6th	Oct. 10th	
Spotted Flycatcher	May 2nd	May 2nd	Sept. 25th	Sept. 24th	

Weather Report for 2012

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 data, and since then I have used The Times daily report 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 also traced records from some other sources back to 1853, and I have used this site to fill in the gaps. A long series of readings, for at least thirty years, is crucial to any understanding of the continuous processes of climate change. I use the wording "long-term average" to mean the average back to 1853. The wording "since records began" is often used without

a clear date reference, which can create confusion. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature as the basis for their readings, but many sources only quote the daily maximum and so I have used this figure throughout.

The year in question, 2012, was the third exceptional one in a row. It had the highest March temperature since 1853. The thirty-year average, the normal definition of climate change, reached 14.03°C, a figure last seen in 1961. Rainfall was the highest recorded since 1853 at 1420mm. The previous record, 1253mm set in 1882, was thought at the time to be the highest in 150 years (Horton, West Country weather book). And it was also the wettest April and the wettest summer since 1853.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Av. max °C	15	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.5	13.7	14.6	14.2	15.5	14.7
Ten-year Av. °C	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.5
Rainfall mm	758	945	896	952	1107	1150	986	747	847	1420
Ten-year Av. mm	963	954	956	974	997	1005	993	943	945	981

Table 1 Average mean maximum temperature and rainfall. The second and fourth rows give the average for the ten years up to and including the year referred to.

Seasons

Winter The temperature average for the period (December 2011 to February 2012) was 9.1°C, back to a more normal level after three cold winters. Rainfall, at 77mm per month, was just below average. There were 30 frost nights (October to April), the last on April 16th. A cold snap from Jan. 30th to Feb. 13th saw 14 days of ice on ponds, and two days of snow.

Spring (March to May) Average temperature was 15.3°C, two degrees above normal, largely caused by the warmest March since 1853. Rainfall at 84mm was 50% above the long term average.

Summer (June to August) Average temperature was at 19.6°C, a little lower than normal. Rainfall was a record 149mm per month, the highest recorded since 1853, and double the long term average. June had a record 187mm of rain, triple the normal and it was the wettest month of the year.

This was the fifth summer in a row with an above average rainfall.

Autumn (September to November) Average temperature at 14.3°C was normal. Rainfall was 50% above normal, and the November figure, at 178mm, was double its usual value. On Sept. 24th, 72mm fell, the wettest day since July 11th, 1968.

Seasonal Comparisons The tables below put the 2012 data into perspective. First, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, the average since 1853, and the difference between 2012 and the long term average. Table 3 overleaf gives the same data for rainfall and Table 4 gives the monthly percentage deviation in 2012 from the average since 1853.

For temperature, January and March were warmer, the rest of the year was close to the long term average. For Rainfall, February and March were dry, the rest of the year was very wet..

	2012	Minimum	Maximum	Av., since 1853	Diff.
Winter	9.0°	1917-2.5	1920-10.6	7.5°	1.5°
Spring	15.3°	1887-10.4	1893-16.6	13.0°	2.3°
Summer	20.3°	1883-18.0	1976-23.9	20.2°	-0.1°
Autumn	14.3°	1915-10.6	1959-16.8	14.0°	0.3°
Annual	14.7°	1892-12.1	1921-15.6	13.7°	1.0°

Table 2 2012 seasonal average temperature compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853

	2012	Min	Max	Av. since 1853	Diff
Winter	74	1964-21	1995-154	79	-5
Spring	88	1893-17	1981-107	60	28
Summer	149	1995-11	2012-149	74	75
Autumn	139	1978-26	1935-173	87	52
Annual	118	1864-49	2012-118	75	43

Table 3 Average monthly rainfall in mm for each season in 2012 showing the maximum, minimum and average since 1853, the difference between 2012 and the average since 1853

	Temp.	Rain			Temp.	Rain
Jan	26%	-6%		Jul	0%	49%
Feb	10%	-56%		Aug	6%	79%
Mar	49%	-53%		Sep	2%	42%
Apr	1%	174%		Oct	0%	35%
May	12%	31%		Nov	3%	105%
Jun	-4%	206%		Dec	-2%	110%

Table 4 Monthly percentage deviations in 2012 from the norm

Monthly Summary 2012

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Av.
Temp °C	9.1	8.2	14.9	12.6	18.3	18.6	18.6	21.5	18.3	14.1	10.5	8.8	14.7
Rain mm	79	27	28	156	81	187	107	152	112	128	178	185	119

Monthly average temperatures and total rainfall for 2012

January The first two weeks were warm with westerly winds around high pressure in Spain. Jan 13th to 17th was a cold period with frosts, light east winds and high pressure. This was replaced for a week by warm westerlies. On 26th temperatures fell sharply and snow fell briefly on 30th.

February The first two weeks saw frosts, ice on ponds and reservoirs, and largely easterly winds driven by a Baltic high. The second two weeks were warmer with westerly winds around high pressure in Europe, and they were almost completely dry.

March Warm southwesterly winds dominated for the first three weeks, and then switched to the east and temperatures soared to 23°C from 24th to 28th. It remained dry, and drought orders were made. Sunshine hour totals were 50% above normal.

April Winds switched to the north from the start of the month and remained from this direction throughout. Temperatures stayed around the normal of about 13°C. The long dry spell was broken from 19th when low pressure took control and the last two weeks were on the whole dull, cold and wet. Migration was seriously held up.

May The month began with northerly winds, and rain for the first week, but the wind switched to southwest on 6th, and during this first week a huge flood of hirundine migration poured through the area. Temperatures rose above 15°C and the rain ceased for the rest of the month. On 21st temperatures rose abruptly to 21°C and reached 29°C on 25th and 26th, which was to be almost the highest temperature of the year.

June Dominated by low pressure systems, the month saw southwesterly winds and rain and a maximum of 25°C on 28th. Only eight days were without sunshine, but three of these had over ten hours. It proved to be the wettest June since 1853.

July Temperatures only reached 20°C on five days in the first three weeks during which it rained almost daily, and winds were mostly from the northwest, but from 21st the sun came out and the temperatures picked up to 30°C on 25th and 26th as high pressure took over.

August A dull month, temperatures were consistently around 20°C with little sunshine, winds were mainly southerly, and there were regular outbreaks of fairly heavy rain.

September It began fine and warm with high pressure but temperatures fell below 20°C on 11th and were down to 14°C by 26th. The first three weeks were almost dry and then on 24th rainfall of 72mm fell, creating widespread flooding especially on the Somerset levels.

October The month began with the temperature at 18°C, and this fell below 10°C on 26th. Four weeks rain fell between 3rd and 8th, although there was little more for the rest of the month. Northeast winds set in on 22nd and the first frost came on 27th.

November Temperatures were around 10°C throughout, but there were only three frosts. There was heavy rain on the first four days and from 20th to 26th. Winds shifted to the north on 23rd and temperatures fell to 5°C on 30th with frost and ice on ponds.

December For the first two weeks temperatures were low, the wind was in the north and there were eight frost nights. On 14th the wind switched to the west, and temperatures rose to 11°C. The last two weeks saw over 150mm of rain, and it was the wettest December since 1965.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the remarkable events of 2012 to be put in perspective. There seems to be no pattern in these figures, except for the fact that the number of days without sun increased from around 70 to around 100. It is also interesting to note that, contrary to common perception, two days in every three had no rain at all.

		2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Hottest day	°C	32	28	30	35	27	28	28	26	29	30
Coldest day	°C	1	3	0	0	2	2	-1	-5	1	1
Wettest day	mm	45	45	47	39	40	35	36	36	40	72
Sunniest day	hr.	15.1	13.9	14.8	14.7	14.1	14.9	14.7	15.6	14.7	15
Longest dry period	days			14	22	24	16	20	24	23	17
Longest wet period	days			7	11	8	8	8	7	5	15
Frost	nights	49	30	32	33	25	44	42	76	22	41
Snow	days	0	6	2	2	2	1	19	33	0	1
Storms				1	3	6	4	1	1	1	1
Hotter than 25°C	days	22	13	14	27	1	7	5	3	14	19
Colder than 5°C	days	25	15	26	39	18	14	37	60	13	16
More than 10hr. sun	days	42	19	38	36	45	29	49	46	44	38
No sun	days	56	90	89	107	99	95	95	106	104	93
No rain	days	263	231	248	234	238	228	265	269	253	205

Richard Bland

Contributors of Records

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.

S Ablitt, C Adams, D Agombar, J Aldridge, L Allnatt, R M Andrews, A Angell, D J Angell, R. Artingstall, A Ashman, P & B Atkey, B Atkinson, T & N Aubrey, G Avery, N Ayers, S Ayers, P Baber, L Bailey, M Bailey, K Bainbridge, A P Baker, M Baker, P Barber, T Bardot, R Barnes, J Barnett, A & G Barrett, K Barrett, N Barrett, R Beale, R Belson, R Bennett, J Bennett, M Benson, R Billingsley, P Black, S Black, S Blackmore, B Blake, P Blanchard, R L Bland, G T Blowfield, C Bollen, L J Bond, A Bone, C Bosanquet, H Bowden, P D Bowerman, R Bowerman, B & J Bowler, D W Bowring, P A Bowyer, C T Boyce, J Boyd, M T Breaks, M J Breward, T Bridges, S Brock, D Brooke-Taylor, B Buck, P Buckle, J Budd, D Bull, R & M Bulmer, K Burford, P J Burston, J F Burton, R Burton, N P Bushell, G Butler, G Campbell, J Cant, K Carruthers, A Cassin, B R Catlin, P J Chadwick, R N Chadwick, D Chalk, M Chamberlain, I Chandler, B & M Channon, A Chapman, C Chapman, P Chapman, P & S Chapman, A Chard, M Chown, A Clark, F C Clark, D Clarke, B Clements, A Cole, M Collier, R Collis, A Cooper, J F Copeland, P J Coslett, R Cox, B Crabb, C Crabb, J & A Craddock, C Craig, R H Creighton, N & B Crocker, P Croom, A Cross, A Crossman, H Crouch, J Croxton, D & N Cullen, J Cumming, R M Curber, G Curnow, S Curtis, M Dadds, C Dale, B D'Arcy, R R Darsley, G Davies, S Davies, A H Davis, E Davis, M Davis, R Daw, A Dawes, C Dawes, G Dawes, L & P Delve, A Devine, T Dibb, G Dicker, W Dickson, M Dimery, T Dingwall, C Diprose, S Dobson, M Dodd, P Dolton, T Doman, P Dommett, J Douglas, G Down, P Down, E Drewitt, G Dring, C Drown, J E Druett, J W Duckworth, T Dudman, J Duffy, I Duncan, P E Dykes, W Earp, D Eccles, B Edge, D Edmondson, D & K Elliot, G Elliott-Moustache, D Elvin, D Emery, S D Emery, R J Emery, D Esam, P J Evans, R Evans, S Evans, T Evans, S Falkner, P Farmer, C Farrell, M Feay, H Feetham, R Ferguson, R Fleetwood, A Flook, P Flynn, L T Ford, R Ford, A Fournier, K Frampton, P Francis, R J Francis, A Fraser, D French, L Garner, J J Garrigan, S George, A Gibb, D Gibbs, A Gilbert, J P P Gilder, R Giles, C Goatcher, E Godsiffe, M Gorely, H Grandy, B M J Gray, P Green, C Greenfield, P A Gregory, S Gregory, B Grey, S Grey, S Hale, C Hall, K J Hall, A R Hallam, R J Halsey, S Halsey, C Hancock, N Hankins, J Hansford, D Hardcastle, D Harley, A & G Harman, G Harris, M Harris, R Harris, S Harris, A Harrison, N Harvey, J Hatch, W Hatch, N & A Hawkrigge, R Hawkrigge, R Hawley, M Hayes, J Hazell, P J Hazelwood, J Hedges, M Hedges, L Hemming, A Herring, C Heyworth, Y Heward, R Hewitt, C Higgins, R J Higgins, D Hill, M J Hill, R Hindle, J Hingley, B Hoare, M F H Hobbs, S Hobson, A Hockey, R Holbrook, C Holman, J & C Holmes, R J Hoodless, D Horlick, H Horlick, H Horrocks, P J Horton, E G Hoskins, P House, S Howe, D Howells, J Hudson, G Hughes, T Hughes, R Humphreys, C Hunt, M Hunt, R Hunt, A Hutchings, J Hutchings, P E Hutchings, C Ingram, L Ingram, S Isgar, M A Jackson, B T Jeal, M Jenkins, K Jensen, R Jewell, C Johnson, H Johnstone, M Johnson, R Joliffe, C Jones, G Jones, H Jones, K Jones, A D Jordan, D Julian, M Keighley, R Keil, P Kelly, R Kelsh, S Kempson, N Kempson, L Kendall, D Kilbey, W King, H Kingston, S Kitchen, D Knowles, P Ladd, W Lambson, B Lancaster, C Lane, A Langson, R Laughton, K Lawlor, R Lees, M Leivers, A Levinson, P Lewis, R Lisle, S Lockhart, H Lupton, L Maber, B Macdonald, S Mackie, H Macpharsion, J Marks, N Marriner, S Marriott, P Marshall, B Martin, J P Martin, T Mason, C Matthews, S Matthews, J B Maxwell, M Maxwell, H Maynard, T McGrath, J D McGreal, D McLaughlin, M McDonald, T McLellan, A Mears, J Mercer, W Middlemist, A J Middleton, R G Mielcarek, N R Milbourne, R Miles, J Millman, G Moore, N J Moran, C Morris, G Morris, V F L Moss, C Mott, A Mullan, S Mullins, F Neate, D Nevitt, J Newman, D Newton, D Northover, J Oakley, B Ofield, J A Oliver, J & P Ottley, J Packer, R Palmer, S J Parker, S Parry, D M Pearce, M Pearce, S Pedley, D J Perriman, C Perry, S Perry, D & M Playle, M Plenty, V Polley, M S Ponsford, R Pooley, C Porter, J Porter, D Poulton, G Powell, J & M Powell, G Pratt, J & S E Prince, D Pritchard, M Pruett, L Pryce, R J Prytherch, P Quinn, J Quinell, J Radford, H Raeburn, P Raven, B Rawlings, A Rawson, R F Reader, P Reay, D Reynolds, A Rhodes, K Rhodes, J Rickard, T Riddle, L F Roberts, D Robinson, P Robinson, P Rock, A Rollett, H E Rose, C Ross, H K Sackett, M J Saffery, J Sanders, S Sanins, G Sapsed, V Savery, P & H Savill, S Sayers, R Scantlebury, A D Scott, M Scott, T Scott, A Setchfield, L Shaw, J Shepherd, R Sherman, R Skipp, A Skull, J M Slavin, J Slowey, O Smart, D Smith, F Y Smith, G Smith, H Smith, I Smith, J Smith, M A Smith, M H Smith, P Smith, R Smith, S Smith, V Smith, C Smith-Nichols, M Southam, J Sparks, B & J Speidel, C P Sperring, D Spittle, R & J Staples, C Stapleton, I Stapp, B Steadman, R Steer, N J Stephens, R Stephens, A Sterry, D R Stoddard, G Stoddart, C J Stone, S Storey, G Suter, K Sutton-Spence, H Taffs, M Tanner, A Taylor, M Taylor, D & C Teague, R Terry, G Thoburn, G Thomas, M Thomas, B Thompson, C Thomson, J & P Thorogood, S Tidswell, N Tippet, R Tippet, M P Toms, J Tonkin, J R Tottle, C Trott, D Trump, M Trump, N Tucker, W Tucker, C E Tudge, the late J Tully, R Turner, S Turner, D Tweedy, S Twiddy, A Tyrer, K Vickery, C Vines, K E Vinicombe, P J Vokes, D H Wall, E Wall, D Warden, G Warren, N Warren, T Warren, G Watkins, P Watson, S Watson, A Waygood, D Webb, A Webster, R & L Weeks, J N Wells, J West, A Weygood, L Wheatland, A White, D White, I White, P White, R J & C White, W White, J Whitfield, D Wilkinson, R William, A Williams, I Williams, J Williams, K Williams, P Williams, R Williams, H Willmott, G Woodbury, T Worsfold, L S Wyatt, D Yeadon, G Youdale, S F Young, S Zamze.

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 – www.cvlbirding.co.uk,
 Birding South Gloss – www.thebirdsofsouthgloucestershire.co.uk,
 Severnside Birds – www.severnsidebirds.co.uk,
 Weston Birds and Moths – www.birdlist.co.uk

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The systematic list 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 the BOU on their website at www.bou.org.uk using the "British (English) Vernacular Name" and "Scientific Name" lists.

The words used in the Systematic List to describe a species status in the Avon area are defined below.

Status	Level of abundance	Breeding Numbers
Very rare	Five or fewer records in the Avon area	As per level of abundance
Rare	Less than annual; many years pass between sightings	
Very Scarce	Less than annual; 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 population which is largely sedentary and occurs throughout the year. It may be augmented by passage migrants and/or winter visitors.

Summer Visitor – a species that occurs during the late spring and/or summer after migrating from its wintering areas.

Winter Visitor – a species that occurs during the winter months after migrating from its breeding areas. These include species that do not occur during the summer (e.g. Fieldfare), or that already have a separate resident population (e.g. Starling).

Passage migrant – a species that appears 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).

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

Vagrant – a species well away from its normal range.

Storm/Wind-blown visitor – used with seabirds that typically occur after having been blown up the Bristol Channel (and often from much further afield) as a result of strong winds.

Irruptive – a species that occurs, sometimes in large numbers, only irregularly.

Average maximum count This is the period average used to monitor the status of wildfowl. It is the average of the three highest monthly counts for the season in question; for a short season (e.g. moult) the average of the two highest counts is used.

Average count This is the period average used to monitor the status of waders and is the average of the monthly maximum counts for the season in question.

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 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.

For species that are rare locally the status line includes the number of individuals published between 1983, the first year the AOG was responsible for producing the Report, and 2011. If a later initial year is shown, this will be

either the first year for which descriptions were required for the species, or the year of the first record. Where the relevant Report has stated that an individual is likely to be the same as that seen in a previous year, it has not been counted a second time. We give the names of observers who found the bird or submitted descriptions or photographs.

The following abbreviations are used throughout this Report:

ASW	Avonmouth Sewage Disposal Works and its surroundings
Atlas	The Avon Atlas that collected data on local bird populations between 2007 and 2011
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee. The abbreviation in the species heading means they have accepted the records.
BBS	The BTO Breeding Bird Survey
BG	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
BL	Blagdon Lake
CABS	The Clifton Area Bird Survey.
CI-Y	Severn shore and environs between the western outskirts of Clevedon and the mouth of the R. Yeo (sometimes called Clevedon Bay), including Blake's Pool and the tidal part of the Yeo.
CVL	Chew Valley Lake
OPS	Oldbury-on-Severn Nuclear Power Station and environs
PWD	Portbury Wharf and Dock, including Portbury Wharf NR, St George's Wharf and Chapel Pill, Royal Portbury Dock and the bank of the R. Avon north of the Avon bridge
RR	Used in the species heading to indicate that a recovery is mentioned in the Ringing Report on page 149
Severnside	Severn shore and environs between Aust Warth and Chittingen Warth
Weston STW	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and environs
WeBS	The BTO Wetland Bird Survey
WGS	The Winter Garden Survey.

In the monthly maxima tables a blank means that no records were received for that month.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

[RR]

Fairly common resident; most winter just inland from the coast around Kenn Moor. For unknown reasons the Bristol City Docks wintering flock has dwindled to an insignificant number. Summer moulting flocks occur at principally at CVL.

WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is twelfth in the list of sites of International importance.

There was a small increase over 2011 in the number of sites where this species was recorded, but still slightly less than in 2010. The number wintering in Bristol City Docks continued to decline, and the poor maximum count for the site reduced the ten-year average to a new low. Conversely, the CVL moult count remained high.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
82	98	70	80	85	72	85	80	64	22

Numbers wintering in Bristol City Docks - Maximum count (ten-year average = 74)

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
101	126	117	115	98	107	115	125	187	140

Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average = 123)

There were records from 70 sites, which compares with 60 in 2009, 74 in 2010 and 68 in 2011. 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	4	2	20		16	20	12	1	15	16	6	
PWD	25							21		25		
CI-Y	15	7	4	11	23	2	2	2	7	7	10	12
Weston STW	51	78	91	29	68	16	24	18	21	6	10	4
Bristol Docks	7	22									4	
Kenn Moor	70	85	90	77	79					26	43	78
Backwell Lake	39	42	30	19	28	12	5	8	8	9	14	25
BG	2	4	4	16	15	14	10	10	21	22	22	19
CVL	93	55	80	105	95	130	140	140	95	70	40	40
BL	19	21	24	17	13	20	23	19	16	19	15	5

Counts of 20 or over not included in the above table were as follows:

East Hewish – 30 on April 9th and 27 on 27th;

Claverham – 88 on March 5th;

Claverham Drove – 50 on May 16th;

Tickenham Moor – ten on Jan. 4th and 18th.

Parties of up to 43 were seen in the Kingston Seymour/Hewish/Nailsea Moor areas between January and April, they were probably wandering from the Kenn Moor flock.

Breeding An extremely poor year with many nests washed out. Breeding confirmed at the following sites: Portbury Warth NR (four cygnets), Weston STW (five cygnets), Eastville Park Lake (five cygnets), Ham Green Pond (one cygnet), Eastwood Farm (one cygnet), Lambridge, Bath (three cygnets), Batheaston (five cygnets), Saltford (five cygnets), Backwell Lake (five cygnets of which one was known to have survived), and CVL (four broods with 15 cygnets only three of which fledged).

1993/2002 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
121	74	128	144	121	123	121	88	120	124+	44

Mute Swan – Number of cygnets (ten-year average = 109)

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant. Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is third in the list of sites of International Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge).

Following two consecutive winter periods with good numbers, 2011/12 was again good but the majority were seen before the New Year. The records for the 2012 first-winter period are given below, none at all were seen in the second-winter period:

First winter period

Weston STW – an immature was seen on Jan. 1st, 14th and 28th, and again on Feb. 11th;

Kenn Moor – four on Feb. 21st;

CVL – two were present on Jan. 1st, 15th and 25th;

BL – a maximum of eight was present throughout January but this had reduced to four by the end of February. They were last seen on March 1st. Two of the adults present from 2011 were identified by the shape of their yellow bill markings. These were Sarune and Saruni who were accompanied by their four young. Also present from 2011 were Jonitor and Willows; names provided by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge.

Saruni, a female, was ringed as a cygnet at Slimbridge in 2004. Sarune, a male, arrived there with Saruni as an adult in 2009, and Willows and Jonitor arrived as adults in 2011 (sexes unknown). Sarune was previously paired with a different female. During the past four decades over 4000 pairs of these swans have been studied at Slimbridge with only one previous couple moving on to find new partners.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Very scarce winter visitor with 44 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Description species.

This species was recorded for its sixth consecutive winter, counts for the last 20 years are tabulated below. The details for 2012 are as follows:

CVL – an adult in Stratford Bay on Jan. 19th (D Warren, R Mielcarek) was later seen on Herriott's Pool with a second adult (J Aldridge, A H Davis *et al.*), both flew off high to S at 16:35;

BL – three adults were seen briefly on Nov. 18th (N Milbourne *et al.*) before flying off to W.

1992/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	2001/02
2	0	0	6	0	1	0	1	1	0
2002/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
0	0	2	2	0	1	8	3+	3	3

Numbers seen in the last 20 winters

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Rare winter visitor with ten individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Description species.

The family party of two adults with two first-winters from 2011 remained at BL until Feb. 23rd, they were the first of this species to be seen in the Avon area since 2002. The party then relocated to CVL where it remained until March 22nd (many observers).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS status: the Severn Estuary is first in the list of sites of National Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge).

A poor year with just one record of eight seen from Wain's Hill, CI-Y flying up-river on Jan. 28th.

The table below shows the total number of individuals recorded each winter in the last ten years.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
22	2	7+	28	8	3	8	31	22	8

Numbers each winter

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon introduced resident and former summer moult migrant. It is assumed that most if not all belong to the western race (naturalised population) A. a. anser. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

Only low numbers were recorded with a maximum count of eight at OPS on Jan. 1st.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Sites	10	6	5	9	11	7	12	10	18	20
No. individuals	45	16	11	32	74	33	27	80	102	49

Sites and numbers each year

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

OPS – eight on Jan. 1st, March 17th and 30th, and three on April 22nd;

Northwick Warth/New Passage – March 26th, April 30th, two on May 12th, Oct. 23rd to 30th, and Nov. 4th;

PWD – two on Jan. 2nd, 3rd, 20th and 22nd, two on Feb. 7th and 23rd with one on 29th, March 7th, April 3rd, 7th, 8th, 13th and 26th, three on 28th, May 11th and 25th, and Aug. 3rd;

Portishead Lake – two on Jan. 1st and 2nd, Feb. 10th to 15th, July 8th, 12th, 29th and 31st, Sept. 16th and 27th, Nov. 25th, and Dec. 10th;

CI-Y – two on March 8th, May 20th and 22nd;

Weston STW – Jan. 1st;

Axe Estuary – April 9th;

Ozleworth Bottom – two on March 22nd;

Falfield – six on Feb. 25th;

Heneage Court Pools – seven on April 6th;

Henfield – Sept. 18th;

Leyhill Prison Pond – four on March 4th and four on May 6th;

Chipping Sodbury Common – Jan. 23rd;

Sea Mills – one flying over on March 27th;

Batheaston NR – Feb. 24th;

Bathampton Meadows – April 9th;

CVL – Feb. 15th and 16th, March 15th, April 8th, two on 20th and 23rd, one on May 2nd, two on May 22nd, June 11th and 28th, and July 1st, 6th, 11th, 23rd and 27th;

BL – one on Jan. 12th, June 20th and 23rd, Aug. 14th, 16th, 19th, 22nd and 27th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

[RR]

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

Good numbers continue to winter at the reservoirs but the numbers moulting here were below the long term average, see tables below.

	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
CVL	54	90	72	61	51	65	84	229	110	206
BL	256	401	278	124	192	241	315	221	348	404

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March), ten-year average = 102 (CVL), (BL) 278.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
	780	730	572	507	415	295	385	440	500	417

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average = 504)

This year's total of the number of sites where the species was recorded rose to a new high of 55 continuing the recent trend for a wider distribution.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
	23	31	29	26	28	53	48	50	48	55

Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average = 39)

One with an orange neck collar marked 'DL' was noted at BL on Oct. 28th and several subsequent dates. It had been marked at Cotswold Water Park on July 4th as part of an ongoing study.

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	18	20	9	12	14	12	12	33	47	48	41	37
Portishead Marina								20			10	
PWD	24	16	25	12	5	13	30	38		5	8	8
CI-Y	56	45	22	15	14	3	20	145	150	170	130	130
Weston STW	72	15	32	15	8	9	8	84	188*		25	22
Backwell Lake	47	30	9	12	4	1				17	19	34
R. Avon, Keynsham	26	24		2						59	32	
Batheaston NR	105	102	99	45	70	4	42	16	0	36	40	95
CVL	285	100	105	74	95	410	425	20	155	na	104	241
BL	210	377	33	26	26	119	104	361	246	514	142	1

* Highest ever count for this site.

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

New Passage / Northwick Warth – 48 on Aug. 31st;

Sand Bay – 150 on Sept. 2nd;

Axe Estuary – 85 on Aug. 4th and 72 on Dec. 16th;

Falfield – 30 on Feb. 25th;

Coalpit Heath – 72 on Aug. 26th;

Saltford – 40 on Aug. 31st, 45 on Sept. 3rd and 56 on Oct. 27th;

Kenn – 35 on Feb. 7th;

Kenn Moor – 50 on Aug. 15th, 44 on Sept. 26th.

Breeding The number of confirmed sites was again on the low side with breeding only noted at the following four: OPS (four goslings), Batheaston NR (seven nests, 16 goslings), PWD (nine goslings) and CVL (four broods, 11 goslings). Observers are encouraged to report all breeding attempts by Canada Goose (*Eds.*).

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Confirmed sites	4	5	6	8	3	10	12	6	7	4
Nests/broods	13	9	9	14+	7	19+	18+	12	18	10
Young	50+	41	35	39	16+	72	73	52	49	40

Breeding details

ACKLING GOOSE *B. hutchinsii**Very rare vagrant or escape.*

Description species.

In last year's Report we used the older name for this species, viz: Lesser Canada Goose. The individual reported there and seen at both CVL and BL spent the winter at Torr Res., Somerset, it returned to CVL and was on Herriott's Pool from March 15th to 28th, and again on April 15th. It was last seen locally, at Torr Res., on April 22nd.

This record is still being considered by BBRC, see the 2011 Report for fuller details. The photograph opposite page 24 of that Report was wrongly captioned, the date should have been April 15th, 2012, not 5th.

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 probably occurred. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 50% of the UK breeding population occurs in fewer than ten sites.

WeBS status: Naturalised. The Severn Estuary is sixth in the list of sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more in Great Britain,

Numbers were very similar to those of 2011 with only four records away from CVL/BL: three at BG on May 24th, two at Saltford on Aug. 31st and one at Sand Bay on Sept. 2nd. A single bird was associating with the Canada Goose flock at Weston STW on Aug. 28th.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Sites	1	0	1	4	0	1	2	6	4	3
Numbers	1	0	1	8	0	1	2	250	4	6

Sightings away from CVL/BL

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL remains stable, with a maximum of 23 in 2012.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
21	14	12	11	11	17	19	20	23	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	23	12	22	12	6	5	11	13	9	0	13	13
BL	19	12			1			13	13	13	13	13

Breeding A pair with two young was noted on Herriott's Pool, CVL on May 14th. The goslings did not survive. Breeding was first noted here in 1998 and has been attempted in each year since then; see table below.

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Pairs	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
Goslings	3	0	0	6	1	7	0	3	0	5	6	5	4	1	2
Fledged	0	0	0	6	0	7	0	3	0	0	6	1	2	1	0

Breeding at CVL since 1998

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla***Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *B. b. bernicla*.

Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Very scarce inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

Low numbers were recorded in both winter periods, the largest flocks being 13 at Severnside in January and Littleton in February, and 19 over Bishopston in November. The records are given below and refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

First winter period

Littleton Warth – 13 on Feb. 12th and eight on March 29th;

Aust Warth – Jan. 1st;

Northwick Warth/New Passage – Jan. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th;

Severn Beach – Jan. 5th, 13 on 15th, and five on May 10th – a late date.

Second winter period

Littleton Warth – two on Nov. 24th;

Northwick Warth/New Passage – two on Oct. 11th and one from Dec. 15th to 18th;

Severn Beach – eight on Oct. 27th, two on Nov. 2nd and four on 24th;

CI-Y – one between Oct. 10th and 19th, nine on 26th, eight on 27th, two on 28th and four on 30th;

Sand Bay – two on Oct. 27th and Nov. 18th;

Axe Estuary – Sept. 1st;

Bishopston (Bristol) – an unusual record of 19 flying to NW on Nov. 4th (R J Higgins);

Bathampton Meadows – Nov. 29th. (another unusual inland record, not recorded at this site in the last ten years);

BL – Oct. 14th.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant with 26 individuals recorded since the first record in 1995.

Description species.

There was a good number of records following two blank winters; all were in the autumn and included the first from an inland site. The details are as follows:

Severn Beach – a family group of two adults and three juveniles videoed on Sept. 11th by P D Bowerman were still present the next evening until 18.00 when they departed towards Wales. What was presumably the same group was seen at Collister Pill, Gwent on the 18th;

CI-Y – a juvenile/first-winter was seen intermittently near the Yeo Est. between Oct. 10th and 22nd (S Sanins *et al.*). An adult was photographed in the same area on the 17th (J Williams);

North Wick, near Chew Magna – at 12.50 on Nov. 18th, whilst surveying for winter thrushes, K Carruthers found a first-winter in a field on the southern slopes of Dundry Hill. It allowed him to approach to within 25 metres before flying off to E.

1994/95	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	2009/10
1	1	3	1	2	19

Number of individuals in winters when seen

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

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

A single bird was recorded at CVL in every month except May. Two were noted here on June 11th. The table below gives the numbers seen during the past 20 years.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	1*	0	1	1	0	0	1	5+	2

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

WeBS: the Estuary is seventh in the list of sites of International Importance for 2010/11.

Good numbers wintered and it was a much better breeding season than 2011.

First winter period (January to March) There was an increase in the numbers wintering north of the Avon with a highest count of 140 at Severnside on March 10th bringing numbers to above the ten-year winter average of 110. South of the Avon the highest count was 490 at Sand Bay on Feb. 12th, this was below the ten-year average of 529. See tables below.

	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
North of R. Avon	195	116	90	104	117	130	90	40	80	140
South of R. Avon	434	470	360	650	415	630	500	479	862	490

Highest winter count at a single site (October - February). N. of Avon ten year average = 110. S. of Avon ten year average = 529.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
87	152	203	105	147	120	90	142	262	308

Shelduck wintering at CI-Y - Average of the three highest counts (October – February). Ten year average = 161

Breeding A good year, with breeding reports as follows: Severnside where five broods and a total of 30 young were seen; other juveniles seen at or near the coast were 16 at OPS, 17 at Littleton Warth, and 35 at Royal Portbury Dock. There were five broods with a total of 29 young at the CI-Y coast, and two pairs with broods of seven and eight at Weston STW. Breeding was also reported inland: at CVL where there were just five young, and at BG where there were 11 young.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
121	154	144	123	162	116	181	163	186	78	163

Shelduck breeding - Total number of young (Average of last ten years is 143)

Second winter period (September to December) Very low numbers were recorded north of the Avon with a maximum count of 46 at Severn Beach/Northwick Warth on Dec. 28th, but good numbers were noted to the south, the highest count being 540 at Sand Bay on Nov. 18th.

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	25	52	48	33	51	34	32	3	3	2	10	10
Littleton Warth	30	23	58	36	45	31	21	7			4	33
Severn Beach/NW	60	88	140	155	105	87	75	30	16	8	7	46
CI-Y	210	225	215	210	135	90	150	125	375	360	265	210
Sand Bay	255	490	10	56	8	10		5		270	540	400
Axe Est./Weston STW	102	120	99	62	45	47	17	102	48	205		14
CVL	32	29	39	44	28	26	5	2	1	0	2	9

Recorded at a further 21 sites (17 in 2008, 12 in 2009, 20 in 2010 and 18 in 2011).

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.

As in the past few years there was a good series of records, also as in 2011 successful breeding was noted at Chipping Sodbury giving a total of 11 ducklings this year. The overall trend is one of an increasing population.

The records for 2012 are as follows (single birds unless stated otherwise):

Bitton – a male on Dec. 30th at Field Grove Farm;

Chipping Sodbury – a pair on April 26th, one brood (seven juvs) on May 20th, one on July 1st, a second brood (four juvs) on 15th, two on Aug. 19th and a female on Sept. 24th;

Duchess Pond, Stapleton – May 20th;

Falfield – two males on April 23rd;

Horton Court – May 15th;

Horwood Farm – May 12th and 28th;

Little Sodbury – present on June 6th;

Lower Woods – April 5th and a pair on May 28th;

PWD – Oct. 28th;

Saltford – a male from June 23rd to July 24th;

Tortworth Lake – 14 on Feb. 5th and three on May 6th;

Weston Moor – a female on Jan. 7th;

Winterbourne – Oct. 19th.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
14	10	17	11	1	1	5	13	13	2	5	3	6	22	19	20	42	39	32	45

Total number of individuals each year

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occurs in the UK.

WeBS: The Estuary was the eighth site in National Importance, after four of International Importance, in 2010/11.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
2001/02 – 2010/11 Av.	757	172	124	315
2010/11	1283	397	296	659
2011/12	860	728	129	572

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

Numbers were well down on the high counts of recent winters both on the Estuary and inland, due, no doubt, to the milder 2011/12 winter, the average for CVL above solely reflects high numbers at the end of 2011 as the count fell rapidly in the latter half of the winter period. The highest single count was of 830 on Sevenside during February, and a drake was noted at Weston STW until 6th May - 'a late date for this site'.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	July	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	108	148	73					1	75	100	190	297
Littleton Warth	118	475	21	1					17	30	110	72
Sevenside	500	830	110	3				6	70	450	300	400
PWD	130	200	41				1		10	48	80	170
CI-Y	375	625	275	18					45	225	330	500
Axe Est/Weston STW	60	118			1					21	35	64
BG		9										1
CVL	110	20	2	1			3	4	23	72	58	20
BL	81	151	15	1			2		13	62	91	50

Other sites There were a few at other sites including: Backwell Lake, BG, R. Avon at Keynsham, Chipping Sodbury Common, Southmead Swimming Lake, Weston Moor and Yate, but no count made double figures.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Fairly common resident, winter visitor and late summer/autumn moult visitor, most numerous in autumn. Uncommon as a breeding species. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occurs in the UK.

WeBS: CVL was the eighteenth site in National Importance, after seven of International Importance, in 2010/11.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	117	41	79
2010/11	217	19	118
2011/12	447	65	256

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003 – 2012 Av.	253	104	178
2011	540	32	286
2012	125	4	64

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

The table above shows the dramatic decline in the number moulting at BL during the last decade. Numbers were low over the whole recording area during 2012, but especially so at CVL and BL.

Breeding There were no local breeding records in 2012, although some breeding activity was noted at New Passage in late May.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Broods	3	2	4	4	1	3	5	1	3	0

Number of broods at CVL each year

Monthly maxima of Gadwall at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1				4						8	5
Sevenside	4	46	7	6	6	2						
ASW/Hoar Gout	27	54	27	6	1	4	1				26	30
PWD	42	36	10	5	2	2	5	16	40	32	38	12
Weston STW	17	6	4						2	11	8	10
Backwell Lake	17	9	2						1			4
BG	4	7	2									4
CVL	150	35	25	50	15	100	25	105	145	45	3	9
BL	21	11	1	2	2	2		2	5	9	31	22

Reports from other sites in the first winter period included a drake at Chew Magna Res. on Feb. 21st, the first since 2002 (*per* R. Mielcarek); 14 at Tortworth Lake on Feb. 5th; up to four at Kingsgate Park, Yate, during January and February; a drake on the R. Avon at Bath on Feb. 8th; seven at Nailsea Pond on 9th; and finally, a pair at Rushmead, Marshfield, on March 15th. Later in the year, one was noted on the R. Avon at Keynsham on Nov. 11th.

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occurs in the UK.

WeBS: The Estuary was the third site in National Importance, after six of International Importance including the Somerset Levels (first), in 2010/11.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	253	1203	548	668
2010/11	213	2743	718	1225
2011/12	223	1932	1198	1118

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

With water levels remaining low at CVL and BL during the first winter period, numbers were double the ten-year average, while counts were close to the average on the Estuary. However, after the wet summer, high reservoir levels meant that few were attracted in during the second winter period. On the other hand the Estuary attracted above average counts suggesting, perhaps, that at least some arriving at the reservoirs, on finding conditions to be unfavourable, moved to the Estuary. The high numbers on Sevenside in the autumn were due to the ideal conditions (flooded and ungrazed) on the Flash at Northwick Warth. A pair noted at PWD on May 23rd were possibly the last of spring, although they may have been potential breeders, the last Avon breeding record was in 1952. A drake at Sevenside on June 17th was the first to return.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	92	30	24	17	1	1		18	22	30	320	450
Littleton Warth	145	60	49	28				11	18	450	220	420
Sevenside	160	155	200	63		1	1	155	400	400	70	260
PWD	300	350	52	4	2			22	65	750	300	140
CI-Y	400	275	300	160	3			40	45	300	310	525
Axe Est.	500	800	96	19				10	8	400		275
Weston STW	144	89	39	19				15	6	4	34	21
BG	80	92	29	6				12	26	49	68	62
CVL	1820	250	180	120	2	5	8	230	410	50	100	190
BL	831	628	15	4				1	2	1	9	35
Chew Magna Res	23	48	34						2	2		3

Other sites There was a good series of counts from a number of other inland sites, particularly the moors, but the only counts of 50 or more were:

Congresbury Moor – 85 on Feb. 13th dropping to 50 by 26th;

Saltford – 120 on Dec. 17th;

Weston Moor – 50 on Dec. 9th.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolensis*

Rare Nearctic vagrant with 12 individuals between 1983 and 2011.

Two records from CVL: a drake seen close to the Bernard King hide on April 17th and 18th was photographed (C J Stone *et al.*). It, or possibly another, was at the back of a flooded Herons Green Pool on 30th and May 1st, again it was photographed (K E Vinicombe *et al.*).

There are 16 previous Avon area records, the last were in 2010 with two on the Estuary and one at CVL.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common and widespread resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. Fairly common breeder (by far our commonest breeding duck). Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK population has declined at least 25% in the past 25 years.

WeBS: The Estuary was first in the list of sites with at least 2000 birds in 2010/11.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	535	233	384
2010/11	741	240	491
2011/12	730	375	553
Average of three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (November to March)			
Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003 – 2012 Av.	885	419	652
2011	1115	555	835
2012	610	112	361
Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period (July to September)			

At CVL and BL, winter numbers were again above average, mainly reflecting the high counts during late 2011. The winter period of 2012/13 will probably be below the ten-year average due to high water levels which also account for the below average moult counts tabulated above.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	166	183	40	40	41	63	99	125	159	200	150	150
Littleton Warth	6	31	7	3	3	31	1	71	62	80	8	21
Severnside	144	122	90	40	25	35	21	84	90	40	38	59
Sea Mills	20	5	16	21						47	30	40
CI-Y	120	130	41	38	45	70	75	135	155	200	130	190
Axe Estuary	68	74	27	8	12	28	52	138	122	25		60
Weston STW	37	27	22	13	24	40	81	101	104	15	14	8
CVL	770	585	410	385	255	285	310	675	545	550	430	410
BL	200	167	101	108	85	124	93	120	104	213	36	105
Backwell Lake	71	39	33	28	30	114	150	77	123	99	43	68
Keynsham Park	142	131	65	28	33	95	53	102	91		79	62
Three Brooks NR	33	30	35	1		26	55		42	54	47	67

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

Aztec West – 62 on June 24th, 71 on Sept. 16th, 72 on Oct. 14th and 77 on Nov. 18th;

BG – 60 on Jan. 7th and 57 on 11th with 53 on Aug. 18th;

Bath – 50 on Dec. 27th;

Bath University – 80 on Oct. 9th;

Bradley Stoke – maxima of 54 in October and 67 in December;

Eastville Park Lake – maxima of 100 in February, 72 in June, 60 in July, 57 in October, 57 in November, and 59 in December;

Keynsham, R. Avon – 86 on Feb. 4th and 60 on Oct. 28th;

Kingston Seymour – 58 on Feb. 6th;

West End, Nailsea – 72 on Jan. 2nd;

Patchway – 60 on Jan. 10th;

Portishead Boating Lake – 72 on Nov. 25th;

Saltford – 86 on July 31st, 52 on Aug. 30th, 50 on Oct. 24th, 65 on Nov. 5th and 55 on Dec. 12th;

Weston Moor NR – 100 on Jan. 7th.

Breeding Aside from CVL tabulated below, 54 broods with 271 young were reported, similar to last year, although with fewer young. The earliest broods were noted at Chew Magna Res. and at Hotwells on April 7th.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Broods	29	16	17	22	29	21	38	24	31	21
Young	154	93	93	100	176	130	213	115	176	130

Mallard – number of broods and young at CVL each year

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

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

WeBS: The Estuary was the eleventh site in International Importance in 2010/11, although most occur outside the Avon area.

2012 was a rather poor year for this species in the Avon area. The last spring record was of five on April 6th at New Passage and the first to return were three at CVL on the early date of July 27th. All records at the major sites are tabulated below:

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3						10	5	1	1
Severnside	37	1		5			2	2		
CI-Y	2						4	7	2	5
CVL	12	17	2	2		1	10	19	13	
BL	8	4								

The second table gives a 'snapshot' of the occurrences for the past decade.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
70	47	140	77	60	29	70	65	57	37

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

Unusually, a female wintered at CVL and BL, it was captured and ringed by CVRS on Feb. 14th (see photograph opposite page 32). The first spring record was of a drake at CVL on March 23rd, and the last record of the year was of another on Sept. 6th at Batheaston NR. All records are listed below.

Spring and summer

Severn Beach – a drake on May 8th;

CVL – a wintering female from Feb. 6th to April 5th when it was paired with a migrant male, a drake from March 23rd with three, two drakes and a female from April 1st to 17th, a pair from 18th to 20th, then a drake until May 12th, with a pair noted again on May 30th and a male on June 6th;

BL – the wintering female from CVL on Jan. 15th and 28th, and single drakes on April 2nd, 29th and May 21st.

Autumn

OPS – a female on Aug. 13th;

Northwick Warth / New Passage – four on Aug. 14th, with two from 15th to 21st, an adult drake on 28th and two on 30th, then a female from Sept. 1st to 3rd;

Batheaston NR – one on Sept. 6th;

CVL – single birds from July 26th to 28th and Aug. 14th to 18th, and finally two on 21st on Heron's Green Pool.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors*

[BBRC]

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

A female photographed at Weston STW on Sept. 28th, 2009 has recently been accepted by BBRC (P A Bowyer, M S Ponsford).

BBRC have accepted six other records, with the last in 2011, but this is the first away from CVL.

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 and BL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occur in the UK.

WeBS: The Estuary was the sixth site in International Importance, CVL was first in National Importance after eight of International Importance, but BL no longer qualified in 2010/11.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	283	62	151
2010/11	265	157	214
2011/12	287	90	188

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003 – 12 Av.	334	153	243
2011	365	239	302
2012	253	5	129

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

Main sites Winter counts at CVL were in line with the ten-year average, whereas BL was above average, even if the numbers were small. The moult count at BL was extremely low. Counts at the other main sites were also either average or below.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside								15	17	10		
ASW	20	26	4	1							14	12
PWD	21	29	13	4				2	2	15	22	16
CI-Y	35	30	4	2			1		2	5	9	3
Backwell Lake	55	40	12	12		2			4	19	28	30
BG	35	97	59	2				6	26	29		32
CVL	25	35	125	35	5	5	7	45	295	210	40	6
BL	17	56	11	3		4			1	8	15	10

Other sites Reports were received from 13 other sites but the only double figure counts were from:

Weston STW – ten on Jan. 1st;

West End, Nailsea – ten on Jan. 2nd, 18 on Feb. 9th and 24 on March 1st.

Breeding It is thought that a pair may have nested at CVL but no young hatched (*per* K E Vinicombe).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

An extremely poor showing was noted after the upturn during the last three years. The details are as follows:

OPS – a male from Sept. 21st was seen on and off to the year end;

CVL – a male on Jan. 1st, another on June 19th which moved to BL and was noted back here from 25th to July 8th;

BL – a male on Jan. 2nd, presumably from CVL, and another from June 22nd to 24th also from CVL.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
1	5	6	0	6	5	19	23	25	3

Total number of individuals each year

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Fairly common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant. Uncommon in summer; scarce breeder at CVL, has bred at BL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% during the past 25 years.

WeBS: CVL was the fourth site and the Estuary was tenth in National Importance, after two of International Importance, in 2010/11.

During the winter of 2011/12 numbers at the main reservoirs were above average for the last decade but not as high as in the previous winter. Unfortunately, only one count was received from BG in November or December when they might have been expected to be at their highest.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	744	213	98	359
2010/11	1217	361	139	572
2011/12	930	238	75	414

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

The table below summarises the counts from the main sites, there were also records from eight other sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weston STW	82	6	9						1	1		
Backwell Lake	12	9	3							2		5
BG	63	96	8	18		1	5	40	35	42		46
CVL	905	365	60	42	36	70	10	35	90	175	500	350
BL	99	147	11	5	1	16	40	37	5	94	67	119

Breeding There was a return to normal at CVL with three broods noted and one nest that failed.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of broods	3	2	1	4	6	2	2	2	0	3
No. of young	9	9	4	14	35	9	4	8	0	8

An individual marked with a blue nasal saddle F V1 was reported at BL from July 10th to 16th. It was ringed and fitted with its saddle at St Philbert de Grand Lieu in France on May 1st, 2012, aged +2A (unknown). This is the first sighting since it was ringed, and was another in a series of recoveries of this species ringed in France. It indicates some at least moulting at the Avon reservoirs originate from here.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Scarce Nearctic vagrant with at least 24 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

2012 was another good year for this species, the details are as follows:

PWD – two adult males were seen and photographed on Feb. 27th (S Hale *et al.*). These are likely to have been the two males that had been at Chard Junction, Dorset until the previous day;

CVL – an adult male was photographed in Stratford Bay on Oct. 14th (G Jones). What was presumed to be the same individual was then found on Nov. 1st in Herons Green Bay where it remained until the 28th (many observers).

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), 2010 (a male at CVL in the autumn) and 2011 (a male at CVL for four days in spring, an eclipse male during the autumn at BL and CVL and a first-winter male touring CVL, BL and Weston STW).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Formerly a rare vagrant but now scarce, annual since 2000, and possibly bred in 2006. At least six different individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Description species.

An adult male was at BL from July 12th to Aug. 19th (N R Milbourne *et al.*) and, what was presumed to be the same individual, was then at CVL on Aug. 30th and 31st, and Sept. 1st, 14th, 18th and 22nd (K E Vinicombe *et al.*).

An adult female was found and photographed at CVL on Sept. 8th and was then seen daily until 12th, and again on 18th and 22nd, and Oct. 1st, 4th and 18th (J P Martin *et al.*).

The adult male is presumed to be one of those reported in previous years although it was not seen in the spring as those in the past were.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant. Now a scarce breeder. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

WeBS: CVL was seventh in National Importance in 2010/11.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	1125	322	723
2010/11	1717	240	979
2011/12	1347	435	891

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003 – 2012 Av.	991	603	797
2011	1305	812	1058
2012	1485	656	1071

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

As can be seen from the tables above, wintering numbers were again above the ten-year average, but down on 2010/11 at CVL, perhaps at the expense of an increase at BL. However, the moult flock, which was about the same size as in 2011, was up at CVL and down at BL. Sightings at the other main sites were normal.

The table below shows the monthly maxima for the main sites, notable amongst which was the huge September count at CVL - a site record.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
ASW	23	40	5	7	7						29	33
PWD	15	19	26	19	14	6	6	15	8	13	12	23
Weston STW	18	15	18	21	8	5		3	3	5	4	3
Backwell Lake	12	30	6	4						13	14	20
BG	142	166	60	57	11	56	238	307	174	67	81	75
CVL	845	865	865	615	80	65	290	495	2475	2085	780	780
BL	273	198	216	311	32	66	588	724	211	542	580	736
Chew Magna Res	13	14	8	10		6	3	1	4	7	11	9

Other sites Recorded at a further 26 sites but none of them had a count exceeding 25.

Breeding It was the best breeding season since 2006, probably helped in no small part by the wet conditions that ensured nests and new broods were hidden from aerial predators in marginal vegetation. There were two broods (eleven young) at OPS, probably five broods at PWD (although details are unclear about how many young hatched, it was at least seven), a single brood at Portishead Boating Lake (six young), a single brood (six young) at Clapton Moor reserve, nine broods at CVL (at least 34 young), and two broods and one destroyed nest at BL (ten young).

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites	6	4	5	6	4	5	4	4	5	6
No. of broods	11	8	6	20	4	8	9	7	7	22
No. of young	72	42	25	115	16	55	29	41	25+	74+

Breeding success in the Avon area

An adult drake with a blue nasal saddle bearing the number 34, was noted at CVL on Sept. 4th and BL from Nov. 9th to at least Dec. 16th. This individual was also noted at BL in 2008 and 2009. It was ringed at Marolles-sur-Seine in France on Nov. 19th, 2007 (*per* A Caizergues).

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Now a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, but has occurred in most months. Most frequent at the reservoirs.

A notable year at CVL but BL counts were poor.

	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
CVL	0	0	3	2	0	1	1	1	4	3
BL	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	2	4	0
Max flock	1	1	4	3	1	7	6	3	5	3
Average of the three highest monthly maximum counts and the largest single count (November – February)										
	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
	3	1	0	4	0	0	1	1	0	1

Number of individuals on the Estuary each year

The last record in the first period was at BL on April 12th, and two eclipse drakes at CVL on July 31st were the first to return. The details are as follows:

First winter period

CVL – the adult male from 2011 stayed until March 25th, with an immature noted on Jan. 4th and a female on Feb. 13th;

BL – an adult drake was noted from Feb. 26th to April 12th.

Second winter period

PWD – a first-winter male noted on and off from Nov. 14th to the year end;

CVL – the post-breeding period saw the return of two eclipse drakes from July 31st to Aug. 1st, a pair of first-winters on 21st, a first-winter drake on 28th, a juvenile from 29th to Oct. 14th when it was joined by another, rising to four on 17th, eight on 23rd, nine (seven juveniles and two first-winter drakes) from 31st to Nov. 23rd (one count of ten on 4th), with eight until 27th. A first-winter female from 30th to the year end was joined by a first-winter male from Dec. 21st also to the year end;

BL – a first-winter drake was present from Oct. 31st to Nov. 19th.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis*

[BBRC]

Rare Nearctic vagrant with seven individuals accepted by BBRC up until the end of 2011 following the first in 2000.

The best year to date and the first time two have been seen together. BBRC have accepted four different individuals, with a further record, from BL in December into 2013, still in circulation.

In the spring there was a first-winter male photographed at CVL on Feb. 23rd (K E Vinicombe *et al.*) and an adult male here from March 11th to 23rd (C J Stone *et al.*).

In the autumn an adult male in eclipse was found at CVL on Aug. 28th and remained until Nov. 16th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*); by Sept. 4th it had dropped its primaries, on 20th the new primaries were two-thirds grown and by 28th they were fully-grown; on Oct. 3rd the body plumage was still in eclipse but by 16th it was in nearly full plumage, with just some brown on the flanks. This is considered to be the individual previously seen at Wimbleball Lake, Somerset and the Cardiff Bay, Cosmeston Lakes, Glamorgan area. It was missing from CVL between Oct. 19th and 21st when a male was seen in Cardiff Bay.

A second adult male, with more advanced plumage, was present at CVL between Oct. 11th and 30th (R Mielcarek, R J Higgins *et al.*). The two males were seen together on a couple of occasions.

To date there has only been one female identified locally, at BL in October 2000.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

Scarce winter visitor and scarce/uncommon passage migrant, but may occur in any month. Very rare inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the past 25 years.

After a better showing in 2011, there were just four records, all apparently of spring migrants, in 2012:

Severn Beach – one on April 12th, and four, two males and two females, on May 8th;

Walton Bay – female / immature on June 22nd in gale force conditions;

Sand Bay – one on May 5th.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
19	13	2	1	2	0	2	0	56	7

Eider – total number of individuals each year

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce winter visitor with 51 recorded between 1983 and 2011; some at the reservoirs may stay for several months.

The first-winter female from 2011 remained at BL until Jan.12th. What was presumed to be the same was relocated at CVL on Feb. 2nd and stayed here until 12th; on 14th it was back at BL where it remained until March 2nd. It returned to CVL on 3rd and stayed until April 27th, apart from a visit to BL on 18th. During this time it went through a body and tail moult before attaining summer plumage. It reappeared at CVL on May 2nd and remained here until finally departing on the 13th.

The table below shows the records for the last decade.

Year	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
No. seen	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1

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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population and range have both declined by at least 50% in the past 25 years

An excellent showing, not least due to an exceptional flock of 100 on Severnside during the peak migration period of November. The first was at CI-Y on Jan. 4th, with the last of the year on Dec. 31st at Sand Point. The majority of reports were from the coast.

The records are as follows:

OPS – present on Nov. 19th, *per* Birdguides;

Severnside – three on May 31st, a pair on June 4th, 11 on 8th, dropping to two males from 9th to 11th, two on 30th, one each on July 1st and 4th, at Severn Beach, three in flight 4th, at Northwick Warth, 25 in flight on Nov. 20th and 100 floating upstream on 25th at Severn Beach, and finally one on Dec. 23rd at New Passage;

Avonmouth Docks – a female on Sept. 28th;

CI-Y – one on Jan. 4th, two on March 21st, three (two males) on Sept. 16th, one on 18th, eleven on Oct. 1st, two on 4th, and one on Dec. 5th;

Sand Point – two males on June 8th, a female on Oct. 16th, two down-river on Dec. 4th, one up-river on 16th, and one down-river on each of 30th, and 31st;

Weston Bay (Anchor Head) – at least 20 on Nov. 23rd, with two on Dec. 6th, and six on 16th;

BG – a single first-summer male from July 21st to 23rd on No.3 Reservoir;

CVL – three males on July 1st, with two immature/females on Nov. 8th, just one noted on 12th and 13th, but three from 14th to 26th.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
26	58	129	145	85	75	53	59	51	206

Total number of individuals each year

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Rare/ very scarce winter visitor, very rare inland, with 34 recorded between 1983 and 2011

One record, the first since 2008: one flew past Sand Pt. on Dec. 1st (P A Bowyer). The table below summarises the records for the past 20 years.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	5	2	0	0	0	1

Total number of individuals each year

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

The status table below shows that the average number at BG in the 2011/12 winter was well down on recent years, but numbers at CVL and BL were in line with the long term average.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Total
2002/03 – 2011/12 Av.	89	21	13	123
2010/11	115	21	14	150
2011/12	123	27	8	126

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

Bred at CVL for the first time since 2008 when a female and chick were noted on June 4th (M Jenkins *et al*). The duckling was present until 9th, but not thereafter. This is only the second breeding record for the area.

Main sites The monthly maxima at the three 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
BG	3	5	1								1	2
CVL	95	110	145	19	4	2	1		3	35	60	80
BL	21	31	22	3						16	10	12

The following table summarises the spring counts at CVL over the past decade.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
100	85	178	175	162	170	105	135	155	145

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Other sites A normal showing away from the reservoirs, being recorded at four sites as follows:

Severn Beach – one on Feb. 12th;

Avonmouth – one on Nov. 26th;

PWD – one on Nov. 20th and 21st;

Eastville Park – female on Aug. 16th.

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor, mainly to CVL and BL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

The poor showing of the past few years continued into 2012 with records only from CVL – an adult female from Feb. 9th to 20th at Herriott's Pool (see photograph opposite page 33), and two additional redheads in Stratford Bay on 12th and 13th. The table summarises the sightings for the past decade.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
9	8	2	2	4	0	0	3	4	3

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 drake has been seen for the last 33 winters at CVL, it is assumed that the same individual has been involved in each winter but there is no proof.

A good year with a good spread of records.

First winter period

Aust Warth - three on May 6th;

Northwick Warth – one on May 2nd;

Severn Beach – a female on April 26th;

PWD – a male on April 7th;

BG – a female from Feb. 11th to 26th with a male on 16th;

CVL – the regular male (see above) was present from Jan. 3rd to March 13th, with a female on Feb. 20th;

BL – an adult male from Jan. 2nd to 6th, also on 28th, Feb. 5th and 15th.

Second winter period

Severn Beach – a first-winter male on Oct. 27th;

Weston-s-Mare – one on Oct. 12th;

BG – a female from Feb. 11th to 26th with a male on 16th;

CVL – an eclipse male was present from Oct. 10th to the end of the year when it attained full plumage. A juvenile female arrived on Dec. 11th and stayed into the New Year.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

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

The CVL status table shows that the 2011/12 winter counts were well down on the previous year and also well below the average, although not the lowest, for the last decade.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
25	55	27	22	24	54	32	26	80	25

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

The highest count of the year was 31 on Feb. 13th at CVL.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
57	52	17	28	43	65	21	95	65	31

Maximum counts at CVL each year

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	3	4					1	1
Backwell Lake	3	2						12
BG	2	3					4	3
CVL	18	31	8			2	5	12
BL	5	8	2			1		

The table above summarises the counts at the main sites, Otherwise they were recorded as follows, there may be some duplication because this species often roosts on the reservoirs and flies out to feed elsewhere.

First winter period

OPS – a drake on Feb. 7th;

Aust Warth – a drake on April 15th;

PWD – a drake on Jan. 31st and Feb. 13th;

Portishead Pier – a drake on Feb. 5th;

Chew Magna Res. – one on Jan. 10th and 25th, and on Feb. 7th;

Nailsea, West End Pond – three on Feb. 9th;

R. Chew, Compton Dando – a female on Feb. 26th;

R. Avon and R. Chew, Keynsham – maxima of three in January, eight in February, one in March;

R. Avon, Saltford – maxima of one in January, one in November and two in December;

R. Avon, Bath - three (one drake) on Feb. 27th and 28th.

Second winter period

Sand Point – one on Dec. 9th;

Weston STW – five females on Nov. 15th;

Goosander con't

Axe Estuary – seven on Dec. 11th;

Eastville Park Lake – two on Nov. 12th;

R. Avon and R. Chew, Keynsham – maxima of three in December;

R. Avon, Saltford – maxima of one in November and two in December.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL and scarce elsewhere, now very scarce. Was regularly culled by order of Defra, the last recorded local breeding in 2008.

WeBS: CVL was eighth in the list of sites containing at least 30 birds in 2010/11.

The only sites to attract this now rare introduced species were CVL and BL. In January 2011 it was estimated that at most 150 were still present in the UK (WeBS).

CVL - up to four present in the first winter period, with a male in May and June, then two males from Aug. 16th with a maximum of five (on Dec. 29th) to the year end;

BL – a regular injured male was present throughout the year, with a maximum count of three from Oct. 22nd to Nov. 19th.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

A very poor year with records from only ten sites away from ST77, and then only in small numbers, mainly in the first half of the year. The highest count from ST77 was a mere 45 at Marshfield on Dec. 4th and there were only a further seven double figure counts from this area. The only other site with regular records was Saltford, with a maximum count of six.

First winter period (January – March) Reported from five sites (*cf.* eight in 2011 and 2010). The highest count at Marshfield was 27 on Jan. 1st and there were 38 at nearby West Littleton on Feb. 23rd. Away from ST77 the only records were from BA with four at Batheaston NR on Jan. 2nd (and three on 29th), two on Marksbury Plain on Feb. 11th and two at Midsomer Norton on March 29th.

Breeding season (April – June) Reported from just six sites (*cf.* 11 in 2011) but no evidence of breeding was received. There were just two records from the Marshfield area, two on April 13th and one on 22nd. In SG away from ST77 there were four records from the Hawkesbury Upton/Horton area, with a maximum of three on May 12th, and one at Northwick Warth on April 7th. In BA a series of records was noted at Saltford, mainly of a single bird but with three on May 12th, plus records from North Widcombe (one on May 3rd) and Langridge (three on May 20th).

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) In ST77 there were just seven records, with double figure counts on Nov. 10th (ten) and 30th (27), and Dec. 4th (45) and 9th (20). At Saltford there were regular sightings of small numbers between July 9th and the end of the year, with six being seen between Oct. 10th and Nov. 29th. The only other record was from Hillesley in SG, one on Nov. 1st.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites - SG	1	3	n/a	6+	1	7	3	2	3	4
No. of sites - NS	0	0	4	4	2	2	1	4	8	0
No. of sites - BA	8	14	8	12	19	12	18	17	5	6

Number of sites away from ST77

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Uncommon, local and declining breeding resident. Small numbers may be released for 'sporting' purposes. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

Although records were received from eight sites there was no evidence of a breeding population at any of these and, for the first year, there were no records from the Marshfield area. All records are given below.

SG – records from four sites, the area around Grickstone Farm, Old Sodbury (four on April 24th, with two seen at two different places, and one on June 19th), Frampton End Road (two on May 18th with one on 26th, and two on July 19th), Chase Lane, Wickwar (two on May 20th), and Thornbury (two on May 27th);

BA – two records, one at Hunstrete on Jan. 7th, and one at Langridge on May 20th;

NS – one at Blake's Pool Reserve, CI-Y on Jan. 9th was possibly the same as seen here in December 2011. A group at Portbury Warth NR were seen regularly in one area between Feb. 2nd and Aug. 8th, and again on Nov. 21st, numbers fluctuated between two and five.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites - SG	3	1	2	5	2	3	1	1	1	4
No. of sites - NS	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2*	2*	2
No. of sites - BA	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	2

Grey partridge records and sites away from the Marshfield area, * implies that feral birds are excluded

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.)

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor, and presumed breeder, to the north-east of the area. Rare passage migrant. Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

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

A poor year.

The first in the Marshfield area was one heard on June 4th. There were then no further records until July when one or two were regularly heard between 5th and 16th; another gap followed into August when one or two were heard between 12th and 26th. The final record was of three seen when they were disturbed at a site between Northfield and Rushmead Lanes.

The only other record was of one calling at Compton Dando on June 30th.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
9	2	16	5	5+	3	5	10	10	14+	3

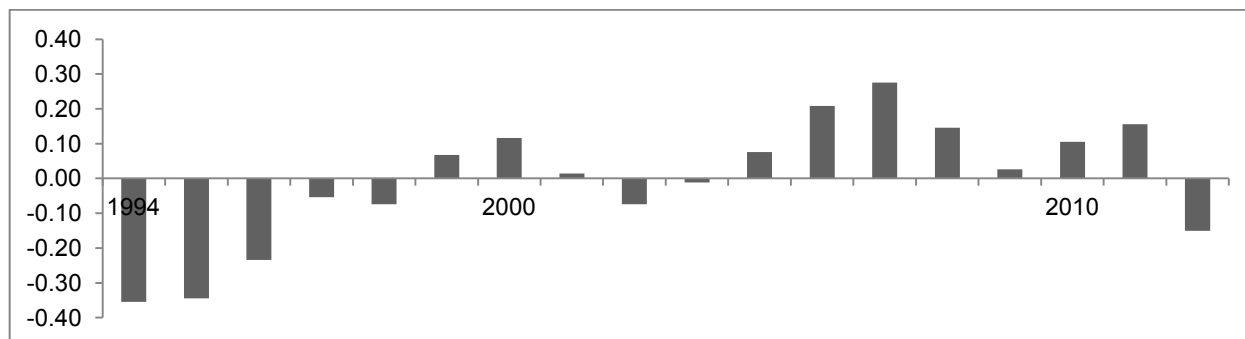
Number of singing males each year

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Widely reported, with records from at least 70 sites, but most counts were in single figures. The largest count was 75 adults and juveniles at Walton Common on Aug. 24th, with good numbers also in the Marshfield area, 70+ at Rownham Farm on Aug. 31st and 60+ at Shirehill Farm on Dec. 9th, and at Horton, regular counts in double figures and a maximum of 58 on Nov. 27th.

Breeding At CVL, 23 calling males were noted during the breeding season (*cf.* 34 in 2011). The local BBS count rate has increased by 24% since 1994 and the species was recorded from 48% of the squares surveyed. The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 1.17 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 1.17

A completely white individual was noted at BL on Jan. 14th, and a second whose plumage was half normal and half pure white was seen regularly at Walton Common in the early part of the year.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

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

Descriptions required.

An exceptional series of records off Weston in December, all noted by P A Bowyer, a just reward for his regular seawatching at a largely unexplored time of year. The details are as follows:

Dec. 4th – 12 seen off Sand Pt. in a NNW force 4, with four moving upstream and eight down, between 08.00 and 10.15;

Dec 7th – three moving upstream off Anchor Head in a NW force 2 between 08.00 and 08.50;

Dec. 9th – two downstream off Sand Pt. in a NW force 4 between 08.40 and 11.40;

Dec. 15th – one downstream off Sand Pt. in a SSW force 3 between 09.00 and 11.30;

Dec. 30th – three downstream off Sand Pt, in a WSW force 5 between 08.30 and 11.00.

Although good numbers were present off the North Somerset coast at this time there were no reports from any other Avon sites in the Estuary. The nearest area where the species is regularly recorded is the Exmoor coast of Somerset, approximately 50km to the SW of Sand Point.

The most recent record was of one at CVL in late 2009. Between 1983 and 2011 records were split equally between the coast and inland, 14 and 13 respectively.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor; sometimes storm-driven with 11 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Descriptions required.

One record: one moving up river off Sand Pt. on Dec. 9th (P A Bowyer) – see Red-throated Diver above.

This is the first record since one on Severnside in 2000 and two in 2003, both at CVL.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes staying for a considerable length of time at the reservoirs.

Descriptions required.

The only records received were from Weston-s-Mare in November, possibly relating to one individual, as follows:

Nov. 20th - swimming by Birnbeck Pier at 08.25 and photographed as it flew off to N (P A Bowyer);

Nov. 23rd – flew west past Sand Pt. in the morning (P A Bowyer);

Nov. 24th – a confiding juvenile on the marine lake, see photograph opposite page 32, remained until the 29th when it was found dead (many observers).

Between 1983 and 2011 records were split equally between the coast and inland, 20 and 21 respectively.

Divers in the Avon area

	1992/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	2001/02
Red-throated	3		1	1		3			2	1
Black-throated			1						1	
Great Northern	1		1			2			3	
Diver sp.			2	2	1				1	
	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
Red-throated				1		2	1	1		
Black-throated	2									
Pacific								1		
Great Northern	3		1	1	5	3	5	2	3	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 with nine recorded between 1983 and 2011. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

Descriptions required for inland records.

Strong south-westerly winds in June produced an outstanding series of records of several seabirds, including this species. There was a large peak in numbers on 8th, and a smaller one on 22nd. Smaller influxes were also noted in January and April, but none in the second half of the year. After a blank year for inland records in 2011 there were two records, involving three birds, at CVL as follows: two on April 5th (R Mielcarek *et al.*) and one on 29th (R M Andrews). The former record was after a period of strong north-easterly winds, which is often the case when this species occurs here. The table below shows all coastal records received.

	Jan		Apr	May	June					
	3	21	17	4	8	9	16	22	23	30
Sevenside	1	1			30	1	1	2	1	
Avonmouth					8			3		
Portishead					50			2		
Ladye Bay	1	1	1							1
Sand Point				1	79			1		
Anchor Head								7		

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 with 12 recorded between 1983 and 2011. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

Descriptions required for inland records.

June, in particular, produced an excellent series of records in strong south-westerly winds (*cf.* Fulmar, Gannet, Storm Petrel and the skuas). Large flocks are regularly seen in the Weston-s-Mare area whenever moderate or strong winds blow in mid-summer. It has been suggested that these relate to feeding flocks drifting further up the Estuary rather than wrecked birds. By contrast, and as noted in 2011, records later in the year tend to be more concentrated at Sevenside, suggesting that these are truly storm-driven. The individual at PWD on Sept. 18th was picked up and taken into care. The table below shows all records, none were seen inland.

	June							Sept			
	8	9	10	16	17	22	23	12	15	18	25
Sevenside	30				1	60	100	4	1		5
Avonmouth/PWD	40					45	4			1	
Portishead	16					120					
Ladye/Walton Bays						23	60			1	
Sand Point	175	42	13	232	27	150	700				
Anchor Head						600	350				1

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Scarce storm-driven summer/autumn visitor to the Estuary south-west of the Second Severn Crossing; rare in winter and very rare inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 50% of the UK breeding population occurs in fewer than ten sites.

Descriptions required for inland records.

The strong south-westerly winds in June produced the best ever year for this species. Exceptional counts were made on 9th, when the number at Sevenside was the largest on record in our area. None was seen outside the period June 8th to 23rd. One seen at Avonmouth on 9th was taken by a Peregrine. Five were recorded inland during the coastal influx as follows:

CVL – three on June 9th (R Mielcarek, R M Andrews *et al.*);

BL – two, also on June 9th, photographed (S Davies *et al.*).

Between 1983 and 2011 eight were recorded inland, the last being three in 2000.

Storm Petrel con't

The table below shows all coastal records.

	June					
	8	9	10	16	17	23
Sevenside	10	30	2	1	4	1
Avonmouth/RPD		24	1			
Portishead	2	7				
Sand Point	5	16			1	
Anchor Head					1	

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Uncommon storm-driven visitor, mainly in spring and summer. Rare inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European breeding population is found in the UK.

This species showed a wider scatter of records through the months than the previous species, but as with all seabirds in 2012 there was a marked concentration between June 8th and 22nd, and it was the only seabird to be recorded upriver of Sevenside. However, the annual total was lower for this species than in the previous two years. Unusually there were no records after July 15th and it might be the scarcity of autumn gales that accounts for its relatively poor showing. There was one inland record: one over Henbury (Bristol) on June 22nd (E Drewitt). The table below shows all coastal records.

	Feb	May	June								July	
	18	10	1	8	9	16	17	22	24	30	1	15
OPS			1	1					1			
Sevenside		3		25		8	28	5		1	6	1
Avonmouth				1				3				
Portishead				10								
Ladye/Walton Bays	2							2				
Sand Point				8	1	10	13	2				
Anchor Head								2				

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-breeders.

Although the average of the maximum counts at CVL in 2011 was the lowest since 2006, in 2012 it only reached half of that year's figure and was the lowest since 1998. It seems that suitably-sized coarse fish were very scarce and this is depressing the numbers of several fish-feeding species (*cf.* Great Crested Grebe) whilst reduced competition from fish for invertebrate prey leads to large counts of Tufted Duck. It remains to be seen whether this is a permanent trend.

1998/08 Av	2009	2010	2011	2012
133	197	203	145	73

CVL January to December average maximum counts

Elsewhere there is some suggestion that low numbers at CVL are reflected by poor counts at both BG and BL. A typical scatter of low counts was made on the Estuary, but numbers on the R.Avon at Salford were noteworthy.

Breeding Once again no count was received from our only breeding site on Steep Holm, although nest-building was noted here as early as Jan. 15th.

The table opposite gives details from the regularly counted sites. As usual the species was recorded from many other localities, normally in small numbers and often as over-flyers. The highest count from a site not in the table was 13 at Hotwells (Bristol). There was an interesting sequence of records of small groups seen flying in a predominantly south-westerly direction between Sept. 23rd and Oct. 7th, namely eight past OPS on Sept. 23rd; five past here on Oct. 6th; and 14 over Sevenside and 17 over PWD, both on 7th.

Monthly maxima of Cormorant at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	4	4	4	5	10	6	5	8	7	3	2
Littleton				2	4			5			1	
Severnside	7	6	3	4	4	5	1	2	2	2		1
PW	2	2	3	6	5	1		1				
CI-Y	4	3	5	3	2	1	6	6	2	4	2	2
Weston STW	5	13	7	5	5	2	5	4	2	3	2	11
R. Avon at Bath	6	3	3	2	1			2	2	1	5	9
R. Avon at Keynsham	8					1					6	3
R. Avon at Saltford	1	2		2	5	4	4	4	3	9	13	21
Kenn Moor	12	1	4		1	1	3	6	5	6	7	3
BG	30	23	15	3	6	9	17	18	30	84	58	75
CVL	35	90	15	20	20	5	35	15	60	70	30	25
BL	43	75	12	2	10	6	7	10	19	17	22	65
Batheaston	11	20	15	5	6	2	7	12	14	12	9	14
Loxton	20								9	3	8	

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce visitor, mainly in autumn and winter (rare inland); sometimes storm-driven. A total of 69 live individuals were recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Descriptions required.

Three were recorded, unusually all in the first half of the year. The details are as follows:

Severn Beach – an adult on the water on May 4th (B Lancaster, R M Andrews);

CI-Y – one in flight downriver at about 07.00 on June 3rd in poor misty conditions (H E Rose);

Sand Pt – photographed on June 9th (P A Bowyer).

Coastal records predominate over those inland, with only 15 of the latter since 1983.

Tubenoses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

	93/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Fulmar	55	87	139	16	272	79	62	40	26	112	192
Cory's Shearwater			1								
Manx Shearwater	404	1230	1920	40	1600	1216	1680	380	100	1015	2811
Storm Petrel	4	2	8		28	27	25	1		9	108
Leach's Storm Petrel	2		2	2	115	2	1	24	1	2	
Gannet	18	102	152	46	570	195	172	57	267	240	134
Shag	2	1	3	5	3	2	5	2	3	6	3

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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status due to historical decline and the small population size.

After records from eight sites in 2011, this species was seen at six sites in 2012, but this still compares very favourably with any previous year. They were seen at the main reservoirs and at some low-lying sites adjacent to the coast. Recorded as follows:

ASW – two on the roadside pool on Feb. 3rd;

Portishead – flyover birds on Jan. 26th and Feb. 4th;

Weston STW – one on Feb. 9th (one was seen here in November 2011);

Weston Moor – one on Jan. 3rd;

Bittern con't

CVL – in the first winter period one was reported on six dates from Jan. 14th to Feb. 18th; two were seen on 19th and 25th and March 9th, and there were a further three sightings of single birds until 29th. In the second winter period one was seen on five dates between Nov. 3rd and the year end;

BL – one on Feb. 11th and 12th.

SQUACCO HERON *Ardeola ralloides*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

A superb summer-plumaged adult moved between CVL and BL for 16 days in May. First seen distantly in flight across the north end of CVL at 09.05 on 2nd but not specifically identified (K E Vinicombe), it was relocated in the late afternoon at the other end of the lake, around Herriott's Pool, where it showed on a number of occasions (A H Davis, M Jenkins *et al.*). It was seen briefly on the morning of the 4th and in flight at 15.05 on the 5th. On the 6th it was at CVL early in the morning before being found by S and S Mackie late morning at BL where it showed very well for the rest of the day to many observers. On the 7th it was again at CVL in the morning before relocating to BL, see photograph opposite page 49. It then remained at BL until 17th.

This is the third Avon area record following one at CVL in May 1973 and one at Hutton Ponds, Weston-s-Mare in June 1977.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Rare vagrant with nine recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Descriptions required.

One record: at Northwick Warth on Sept. 9th. A juvenile was found here feeding amongst cattle on the saltmarsh at 09.00 and remained for the rest of the morning but could not be relocated in the afternoon (A D Scott, J P Martin, B Lancaster *et al.*, photographed).

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 50% of the UK breeding population occurs in fewer than ten sites.

After seven years of fairly steady counts at CI-Y there was a dramatic increase here and the contrast with the lower numbers at other sites is striking. Most of the high counts at CI-Y come from a roost in a small inaccessible wood behind the Kingston Seymour SW, at dawn the birds move out of this wood first onto nearby fields close to the road where they can be counted, they then soon disperse over a wide area. The maximum WeBS count, which covers the whole of the coastal stretch but no inland areas, was only 16 and the count in January, at four, was less than a tenth of the monthly maximum. Most of the birds presumably disperse along rhynes and the fishing lakes in the area. The September count at OPS involves a party of seven seen flying to S (*cf.* Cormorant). Numbers at the lakes were low, presumably a consequence of low populations of coarse fish and high water levels.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	7	2	1	4
Littleton Warth			3		3			1	4	2		
Sevenside	1	2	5	5	3	1	2	4	2	2	1	1
RPD/PW	4		1	1			1	1	5	4	1	1
CI-Y and environs	45	23	33	14	9	7	16	15	16	14	9	59
Sand Bay			1	2	1					3		
Axe Est	4	4	8	4	5	3	6	9	9	2	3	6
BG	2	3								2	1	
CVL	3	3	8	4	3	2	1	3	4	2	2	3
BL	2		1	2	1				1	1		
Backwell Lake	2	3		2						2	3	4

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

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
13	15	27	39	31	32	24	21	23	59

Maximum count of Little Egret each year from CI-Y and environs

Other sites Reported in small numbers from the levels and moors of North Somerset. Noted elsewhere in the region as follows:

Falfield – one on Feb. 25th;

Tortworth – one on Feb. 5th;

Thornbury – maxima of four in January and two in February and August;

Yate – one on Feb. 24th;

Marshfield – one on Feb. 6th;

Pilning – one to north on Feb. 4th;

Avonmouth - three at Vosa Pools on Nov. 14th and two at ASW on Nov. 16th;

Keynsham Hams – two on May 11th;

R. Avon at Saltford – one on May 2nd, four on 6th and single birds on Nov. 5th and 28th;

Chew Stoke – one on March 8th;

Chew Magna Res. and environs – two on Jan. 15th and Feb. 21st, with single birds on the nearby Winford Brook on Jan. 1st and 14th, and Dec. 11th and 31st;

Publow – three to S on March 21st and one on 30th;

Midsomer Norton – one on Dec. 13th;

Litton – one on Nov. 7th and 8th.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Rare vagrant with six recorded since the first in 2002.

Description species.

With this species now regular on the Somerset Levels we had another year of multiple occurrences, although again all sightings were brief. The details are as follows:

Portishead – one flew past Black Nore within 30 metres of R Joliffe on April 8th;

CI-Y – one briefly at Tutshill's Ear Pools, Yeo Est at 13.00 on May 12th (S Sanins);

CVL – one photographed at 07.50 at the back of Herriott's Pool on Aug. 20th flew off to SE at 08.15 (S Davies).

2010 – Late submission of one photographed in flight to W at BL on the evening of Dec. 31st (N R Milbourne).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species.

The status table shows a collapse in numbers at CVL, due to a combination of high water levels and low populations of coarse fish. Counts were also down at Sea Mills.

	1999/08 Av.	2009	2010	2011	2012
CVL	18	28	32	35	16
Sea Mills	18	8	12	13	8

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills

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

Monthly maxima of Grey Heron at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	5	6	5	4	3
Littleton Warth	1	1	2		1		1	2	1	1		1
Sevenside	10	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	4	1	3
CI-Y	4	1	1	2	4	2	4	5	3	4	2	1
Axe Est./Weston STW	3	2	2	3	3	6	5	5	3	3	6	4
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	6	3	6			7	1	1	4		8	8
R. Avon at Saltford	1			1	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	4
BG	6	3	5	2	2	7	4	4	6	4	5	4
CVL	16	10	9	7	9	3	4	16	9	5	3	3
BL	18	15	5		4	1	3	2	4	3	3	6

Two records of overflyers not included in the above table were: eight over OPS to SW on Sept. 23rd (cf. Little Egret and Cormorant); and nine to N over Severn Beach on Dec. 30th.

Other non-breeding records Records were received from a wide range of other sites, often as single birds in flight. The maximum counts not in the table above were: nine at Keynsham Hams on May 11th (cf. Little Egret); seven at Yatton on July 15th; five on the New Cut (Bristol) on Jan 7th, at Chipping Sodbury golf course on Aug. 19th, on Kenn Moor on Sept. 27th, and at Batheaston on May 11th.

Breeding The counts from the main sites suggest a very slow recovery from the decline caused by a series of cold winters. The table below shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region.

	Grid Ref	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Widcombe Manor	ST761633							2			
Dodington Lakes	ST753802							3		4	
Newton Park	ST692640	5			8	4		2			3
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	25	25	25	25	25	34	25	25	17	16
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761				1	1	2	1	1		
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	33	29	29	25	36	51	39	30	31	32
Easter Compton	ST560811	8	7	8	0	0	0	0	0		
Pill	ST530739			5	5	5		7	6	7	3
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	52	45	45	33	48	42	45	40	42	43
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	3			4	8	4	4		4	
Total		126	106	112	101	127	133	128	102	105	97

Occupied Grey Heron nests each year

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare vagrant with eight recorded between 1983 and 2011. True status confused by the likelihood of escapes from captivity. Descriptions required.

Two records, details as follows:

Bath – one soaring over Combe Down at 11.25 on April 21st (R Kelsh);

Avon Gorge – four flew NE along the gorge at 10.20 on June 9th (C Bosanquet). Four were reported over Patchway later that morning but no details were submitted. These are presumed to be the four that had left Dingestow, Gwent earlier that morning after a two-day stay.

The last Avon record was in 2010.

Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Bittern	3	3	3	3	1	3	6	11	10	9
Cattle Egret			1		1		6	1		1
Great White Egret	1			1				1	3	3
Purple Heron							1			
White Stork			1	1				2		5
Glossy Ibis					1		6	1		
Spoonbill				1	1	1	4	2	10	
Spotted Crake	2	1	1		1	2	1			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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK population has declined by at least 25% in the past 25 years.

CVL is currently ranked third in Great Britain for this species. (The Wetlands Bird Survey 2010/11).

1999/08 Av	2009	2010	2011	2012
68	135	123	92	38

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

Counts at CVL continued to decline. Heavy rain and high winds combined to suppress waterweed growth and produce very poor feeding conditions.

Away from CVL most of the main sites also showed declines, after three years of falling counts. Spells of freezing weather may well be to blame.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside		2	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	3	
PW	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	9	4	14	13	12
CI-Y	8	10	6	2		1						
Axe Est./Weston STW	1	3	4	5	3	4	4	15	13	8	3	2
Tortworth Lake			2		2				3	2		
Three Brooks LNR	2	4	3	3	1	2			5	4	5	5
ASW and environs	5	4	3	2	2	3	4	1	1		1	1
Kenn Moor	7	14	12						1	4	4	8
R. Avon at Saltford										1	1	
BG	14	19	5				3	4	8	15	16	11
Chew Magna Res.				2	1	1	2	4	4	2		1
CVL	20	15	11		3	4	5	5	45	50	3	6
BL	2	3	3	1	4		2	6	7	5	8	3

Other sites Reported from a further 21 sites (*cf.* ten in 2007, 15 in 2008, 23 in 2009, 22 in 2010, 14 in 2011). Four were at Wick Quarry on Jan. 23rd; all other reports were of ones and twos. There were records from the R. Avon, in addition to the Saltford counts in the table above, at St Annes, Keynsham, Bath and Batheaston. Following four records from the tidal mouth of the R. Avon in 2011 single birds were seen here on Oct. 15th and Nov. 7th.

Breeding There was no sign of any recovery at CVL, despite the high water levels. It seems that the high population of pike has rendered the main lake unsuitable as a nesting site for this species. Two broods were seen here on Herons Green Pool, but both were predated by gulls. Reports were received from eight sites away from CVL, an improvement on recent years, as follows:

PWD – three broods totalling three young;

Three Brooks LNR, Bradley Stoke – a nest in April failed, but a subsequent attempt produced a single juvenile;

Wick Quarry – one brood of one young;

ASW and environs – one brood of two young on the Vosa pool;

Little Grebe con't

Weston STW – three broods and four young (*cf.* nine broods here in 2008);

Chew Magna Res. – a brood of three, of which one survived;

BL – two broods of three and four respectively;

Litton Resrs. – one brood of two young.

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Broods	17	2	9	2	6	6	3	3	0	0	2
Young	27	2	13+	3	10	9+	4	5	0	0	0

Little Grebe – CVL broods and young

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Sites	8	6	12	6	5	8	6	4	4	4	8
Broods	16	12	18	14	18	15	14	10	12	9	21

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.

WeBS status: CVL is currently ranked fifth in Great Britain for this species (The Wetland Bird Survey 2010/11).

Counts at CVL between 2007 and 2009 were very high, but they fell sharply in 2010 and this fall continued in 2011 and accelerated in 2012, the worst year here for this species since 1964. 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 the duck but result in poor counts of this grebe.

1999/08 Av.	2009	2010	2011	2012
463	565	355	195	93

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	12	23	38	33	31	28	50	58	67	64	15	11
CVL	5	14	55	40	45	55	75	105	100	60	20	25
BL	9	7	15	8	21	7	28	24	11	22	4	7

Records were received from a wider range of sites than usual possibly because poor conditions at CVL forced birds to disperse elsewhere. Recorded as follows:

Sevenside – single birds on Jan. 2nd, Feb. 26th, March 2nd, May 1st and 2nd and June 10th;

PWD – one on many dates from Jan. 1st was joined by a second on June 2nd, when display was noted, there were further records of the original individual on July 1st and 3rd, and then a different bird was seen on Sept. 24th and Oct. 29th;

CI-Y – single birds on Jan. 14th, Aug. 2nd, Sept. 16th and Oct. 15th;

Weston STW – single birds from April 16th to 30th, May 21st and Oct. 21st;

Heneage Court – one on April 6th;

ASW – single birds on Nov. 16th and Dec. 25th;

Ham Green – one on Jan. 22nd;

Purdown (Bristol) – one on June 14th;

R. Avon at Saltford – one on Sept. 13th;

Backwell Lake – single birds on March 12th, May 25th and June 6th, 14th and 25th;

Chew Magna Res. – one or two recorded on many dates between Jan. 15th and Oct. 25th;

Litton Resrs. – the only reports concern breeding (see below).

Breeding Although high water levels normally favour this species at CVL no breeding was attempted for the second year running. The table below reveals that in the last ten years only in 2007 was the number of either broods or young greater than the average for the previous decade. Elsewhere reported as follows:

BL – two broods of one young each;

Litton Resrs. – two broods of one young each.

	1993/2002 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Broods	30	2	6	0	20	38	20	8	1	0	0
Young	49	4	9	0	43	62+	26+	12	2	0	0

Great Crested Grebe – CVL broods and young

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegana*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; records away from the main reservoirs are very rare. A total of 18 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Descriptions required.

One in summer plumage at CVL on Sept. 7th and 8th (R Mielcarek *et al.*) was the first here since 2004, see table below.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Almost always at freshwater sites and rare in the Estuary. A total of 45 were recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Three records as follows, see table below for previous records.

BL – the individual from 2011 remained until Feb. 3rd (many observers);

CVL – one on Jan. 8th (G Jones) and one on Oct. 15th (P Black, R Mielcarek *et al.*).

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding and wintering population.

The trend of poor grebe numbers extended to this species, which produced its worst showing since 2005. All records came from either CVL or BL.

CVL – two, one of which was in summer plumage, were present on March 3rd. In the autumn there was an adult on Sept. 4th and 6th, and the BL individual was seen here on Oct. 31st and Nov. 1st;

BL – three were seen on May 1st. Another was present from Sept. 29th to Oct. 30th and again on Nov. 5th after its visit to CVL. A fifth was present from Dec. 8th into 2013.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Red-necked	1		1		1				1		1
Slavonian	2	1	1	1	1	2	1		3	1	2
Black-necked	9	5	9	6	14	9	10	8	9	11	8

Annual totals

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

The best year to date, with a total of 90 bird-days (*cf.* 54 in 2011, see table on p. 51). There was only one record before mid-March, most were from then on until late May with only small numbers in the second half of the year. The monthly totals (January to December) are given in the table below.

Monthly distribution of bird-days												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	0	21	9	35	7	2	3	3	5	2	2	90

Recorded at 47 sites (*cf.* 46 in 2011), 13 in SG, 27 in BA & NS, and seven in *Bristol*. In May four were seen together at Lansdown and Charlcombe, near Bath on 25th.

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

Red Kite con't

January – at Weston STW on 15th;

March – at Gordano Valley on 16th, Aust Warth on 17th, at Charmy Down on 19th and Eastville Park, Bristol on 21st. On 22nd at Thornbury, and CVL, at New Passage on 23rd and Compton Dando on 25th. On 26th at Tockington (two), BL, CVL and nearby at Breach Wood. On 27th at OPS, Severn Beach and PWD, on 28th over Whitchurch, Bristol. On 29th at Congresbury Moor and CVL, at Severn Beach on 30th and Siston Common on the last day of the month;

April – at Inglestone Common on 1st and two days later over Whitehall, Bristol. At Worle and CVL on 13th, CI-Y on 16th and the next day at Aust Warth. At Severn Beach on 21st and 22nd, and the last of the month was at Yate on 30th;

May – at CI-Y on 2nd and at Portbury on 4th, at CVL on seven dates from 6th to 30th, most in the second half of the month, with two on 17th and five sightings on 30th (it was unclear whether more than one bird was present). At Elberton on 11th and at Saltford on 13th, 20th and 23rd. On 17th at Chipping Sodbury Common, Keynsham, Tickenham Moor and Gordano Valley, and the following day at Tytherington and Almondsbury. At Lansdown on 19th, four here and one nearby at Charlcombe on 25th, at Portishead and Gordano Valley on 23rd, Langford on 24th and the next day at Thornbury, Cleeve Wood and Arnos Vale, Bristol. On 26th at OPS, Portishead and Claverton Down, and on 27th at Chipping Sodbury Common and Lower Woods;

June – on 1st at Gordano Valley and Saltford, the next day at Clifton Wood, Bristol. At CVL on 6th and 16th, Almondsbury on 10th and Stanton Drew on 25th;

July – in the Gordano Valley on 10th and at Weston-s-Mare on 25th;

August – on Nailsea Moor on 12th, Backwell on 21st and CI-Y on 29th;

September – at Timsbury on 13th and two at Saltford on 22nd;

October – at Marshfield on 6th, to N over New Passage and Aust Cliff on 9th, to N at Middlehope on 24th, at Long Ashton on 27th and New Passage on 30th;

November – at ASW on 13th and Congresbury Moor on 24th;

December – over Clevedon on 11th and Westbury Park, Bristol two days later.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

[RR]

Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the breeding and wintering populations.

The bird-days total for 2012 was 19, see table on p 51. Compared with 2009 and 2011 this is well down, but it is slightly up on the ten-year average of 17. Most reports were from CVL with a total of 13 bird-days (*cf.* 46 in 2009, eight in 2010 and 17 in 2011).

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

PWD – May 20th;

Weston STW – May 19th;

CVL – two on Jan. 26th, one on Feb. 20th, March 17th and 18th, during April two on 1st and 26th, in May a second-calendar-year male on 1st and 15th.

Second half-year

Northwick Warth – Aug. 9th;

Severn Beach – to E on Oct. 4th;

CI-Y – July 23rd;

Weston STW – July 26th;

Marshfield – Sept. 2nd;

CVL – Aug. 20th and a second-calendar-year male on Nov. 17th. The latter was ringed and wing-tagged with the letters AG as a nestling at Sculthorpe Moor, Norfolk on June 10th, 2011, it was subsequently seen at Isle of Sheppey, Kent on Oct. 31st, 2011 and Newport Wetlands, Monmouthshire on Sept. 11th, 2012.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly to the coast, with 86 records between 1983 and 2011.

A poor year with just two records (*cf.* one in 2009, 17 in 2010 and 13 in 2011). The details are as follows:

One, an immature/female type, flew to NE over Walton Bay, Clevedon on Jan. 28th at 16.00 (H E Rose) and an adult male was at OPS on March 31st at 17.00 (A J Middleton).

HARRIER sp. *Circus sp.*

Three records of single female or immature birds on the coast:

One to SE at Portishead on May 4th (N Tucker), another to NE at OPS the next day (P J Hazelwood), both were thought to be Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus*. Another seen briefly at Portishead on July 28th (N Tucker) was thought to be Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus*.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Very scarce visitor and resident with 40 records between 1983 and 2011.

By recent standards an average showing (see table below) with one record: a female at Three Brooks Nature Reserve, Bradley Stoke on Nov. 3rd (S Emery).

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

Year	1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	2002
Honey Buzzard	0	2	2	0	1	3	0	4	0	0
Black Kite	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Kite	2	2	1	3	6	1	2	5	1	4
Marsh Harrier	1	8	2	4	2	16	4	8	7	4
Hen Harrier	1	0	4	1	4	1	2	2	1	6
Montagu's Harrier	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goshawk	0	0	1	0	5	2	8	9	1	0
Osprey	2	22	8	5	4	7	2	14	7	2

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Honey Buzzard	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0
Black Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Red Kite	6	3	17	11	24	31	62	70	54	90
Marsh Harrier	15	2	11	8	6	29	52	14	28	19
Hen Harrier	7	3	3	3	4	14	1	17	13	2
Pallid Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Montagu's Harrier	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Goshawk	2	0	0	1	0	3*	0*	0*	1	1
Osprey	3	4	10	6	12	13	14	13	13	25

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

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

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

An excellent year with 786 records received, the highest number ever, the spread across the year was reasonably even but there were more in the latter half of the year, especially in December, and few in June and July at the peak of the breeding season. The good breeding season in 2011 may partly explain this, but see comment under Buzzard.

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2012 and the previous five years:

Monthly distribution of records													
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2012	61	65	62	66	64	28	61	63	72	75	75	94	786

Sparrowhawk breeding The assessment of the number breeding in 2012 was good but lower than in 2011 which was the best year since 1997 when the total was 74. For the second successive year there was a slight increase in the SG total, but it was still lower than the 2008 peak. The details are as follows.

	1993-02 Av	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
SG	10	12	16	10	16	11	24	13	14	17	20
BA & NS	33	37	30	29	36	34	35	32	29	45	34
Bristol	13	13	6	13	11	10	9	10	8	10	13
Total	52	62	52	52	63	55	68	55	51	72	67

Sparrowhawk breeding sites

Located at just one site at CVL (*cf.* three in 2009, one 2010 and three in 2011).

Other observations Noted on Steep Holm on March 23rd.

Prey species reported There were few reports but these included Green Woodpecker, Blue Tit, House Martin, Starling and Blackbird. One was regularly reported attempting to predate House Martin nests at Wrington.

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 poor year, the overall breeding success was the lowest to date and the assessment of breeding sites was average, the cold/wet weather was probably a major factor. On the other hand the total of the records actually received, 1169, was the most to date. These were spread reasonably evenly across the year, many in the display period from February to May but there were fewer reports from June to August and in November. One possible explanation for this rise is the increasing use of electronic recording systems making it easier for observers to submit records, but as with the previous species 2011 was also a good breeding season.

Monthly distribution of records

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2012	83	120	139	112	114	65	73	78	91	116	66	112	1169

Breeding R J Prytherch's study area, which covers some 75km² of Failand and Gordano, had a very poor year, 105 pairs held territories, one more than in 2011 which was a record year. Of the 32 nests checked 27 were successful but only 27 young fledged. The brood success ratio was the lowest to date and as noted above this was almost certainly attributable to the inclement weather during the breeding season. A paper describing RJP's study at this site over the past 30 years is given in the May 2013 edition of *British Birds*.

The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2012 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1993 to 2002. 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 J Holmes's survey work from 1991 to 2004.

Year	1993-02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
SG	28	29	44	25	49	39	45	46	47	56	37
BA & NS	135	174	196	196	206	213	202	211	172	226	210
Bristol	3	9	12	16	14	12	9	8	11	10	9
RJP's Study Area											
Active nest sites	63	84	85	88	90	92	97	99	103	103	105
Chicks fledged	59	66	107	92	50	80	47	73	87	43	27
Successful nests	38	40	60	56	37	52	33	47	60	27	27
Brood success ratio	1.58	1.65	1.78	1.64	1.35	1.54	1.42	1.55	1.43	1.59	1.00

Breeding sites

At CVL, eight pairs were found and five of these were successful (*cf.* nine pairs in 2009, five in 2010 and nine in 2011).

Large groups/counts All counts in double figures are listed below, many of these were at CVL in the period Feb. 23rd to July 27th, elsewhere they ranged from March 10th to Nov. 6th.

Large groups/counts at CVL Twelve on Feb. 23rd, 16 on March 23rd and 12 on 30th, 18 on April 11th, 26 on 16th and 11 on 30th, 14 on May 22nd, 15 on 25th and 20 on 30th, 11 on June 1st, 19 on July 20th and 22 on 27th.

Large groups/counts elsewhere Ten were counted in March at BL on 10th and at Marshfield on 19th, at OPS on April 1st, and at CI-Y on July 23rd, then 20 were noted at Newton St. Loe on Sept. 16th with 15 at Knowle Hill on Nov. 6th.

Bristol Often reported over the outer suburban areas of the city, elsewhere at Montpelier on Feb. 10th and July 15th, at Eastfield Road, Westbury-on-Trym on Feb. 22nd and March 12th, over Bishopston on April 2nd and July 17th. During May over the city centre on 12th, Brandon Hill on 22nd, to WNW over Redland the next day and on 30th, at Southmead on June 20th, and at Arnos Vale on 25th and July 8th.

Other notes Pale morphs were seen at Rushmead Lane, Marshfield on May 19th and Littleton Warth on June 16th. Two at Hawkesbury Upton on Nov. 3rd, were described as being grey and white, lacking any brown coloration. Observers are asked to record any unusual plumage so that we can obtain a better understanding of the plumage variation of this species in our region.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

A very good year (see table on p. 51) with most in April at CVL and BL; records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

CVL – First reported on March 25th and 26th, in April noted on seven dates from 4th to 20th, a total of nine bird-days (*cf.* five in 2011). There were multiple sightings on 4th and 6th but it is likely that only one individual was involved on each day.

BL – To ENE on March 26th, a day later than at CVL, in April on 5th, 14th and 19th.

Elsewhere – Over Abbots Leigh on March 29th, flew towards Kenn from the coast at CI-Y on April 30th, to NW over Bishopston on 12th, at OPS the next day, at Thornbury on 15th, Rangeworthy on 18th and one fishing on the R. Avon, east of Bath on 20th. Two records in September of satellite-tagged individuals, to SE over Axe Estuary on 1st and another to S across our region during the night of 12th.

The reports above for Sept. 1st and 12th were of satellite-tagged individuals named 'Aigan' and 'Stan' respectively. Their full life histories and migration details can be found on the Highland Foundation for Wildlife's website at www.roydennis.org.

'Aigan' was one of three chicks ringed in the Moray area, Scotland on July 1st, 2012, her sister 'Fiddich' was also satellite tagged. On Aug. 30th 'Aigan' left the nest site and after a flight of 414km she roosted just west of Castle Douglas on the Isle of Man. On Sept. 1st she left another roost site near Llandovery, Carmarthenshire and flew SE towards Cardiff crossing the Bristol Channel, passing over the Axe Estuary and reaching the Somerset Levels at 13.00. Her flight continued until 16.00 when she roosted at Broadmayne, Dorset having flown 185km during the day.

She arrived in West Africa in late October, subsequently spending time in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau, and is expected to stay in this area for a few years until she reaches maturity when it is hoped that she will return north to breed.

'Stan' was ringed as a chick near Forres, Moray, Scotland on July 11th, 2012. On Sept. 12th at 10.30 he left the nest site, and with favourable north westerly winds, was over Cairngorm, by midday, by 17.00 he was at Wigton, Cumbria and at 19.30 over Market Drayton, Shropshire having covered 528km in nine hours. He continued his journey through the night on a flight path that took him over the Avon area, the following day by 06.00 he was south of Brittany heading out over the Bay of Biscay. He crossed the coast of northern Spain at Santander and continued to migrate inland over the Cantabrian Mountains, eventually roosting on a hillside near Villanueva de Valdara, Castile-León at 18.00. This was an incredible non-stop flight of 1701km in 33 hours.

He continued his migration reaching the Canary Isles, he left Gran Canaria on Sept. 18th arriving at the Cape Verde Islands two days later. He was recorded here until 26th and his last known location was on the island of Santo Antao. Unfortunately, no further signals were received from the satellite transmitter and all contact was lost.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

2012 was another average year for this species with breeding activity noted at 79 sites (*cf.* 81 in 2011), however, an exceptional 1198 records were received, the highest total ever and the first time the number has exceeded one thousand, but see comment under Buzzard.

The table below gives the monthly total of reports for 2012 and the previous five years. Although records were quite evenly spread across the year most were in March and April with fewer in January, February, July and August.

Monthly distribution of records													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2012	79	78	125	129	101	113	67	79	103	119	103	102	1198

The table below gives the years when the total number of records received exceeded 700:

	1984	1985	1988	1989	1993	1994	2008	2012
Total records received	738	720	750	736	721	723	754	1198

Breeding An average year in the Avon area, noted in the breeding season at 79 sites. In the four years from 2006 to 2009 a total of 90+ sites was recorded (*cf.* 108 in 2006, 100 in 2007, 103 in 2008 and 90 in 2009). However, 2010 was a relatively poor year with just 75 sites and the number of records improved slightly in 2011. The distribution of records in 2012 was 21 in SG, 52 in BA & NS and six in Bristol, notes on some of these nest sites are set out below.

SG For the third successive year a nest was found in a hollow tree at Stoke Park, three nearly fledged young were seen preening at the entrance to the park on June 15th, (*cf.* five fledged at this site on same date in 2011). A nest box was used at the Rolls Royce site at Filton and two young fledged in mid-June.

BA & NS During June at Yanley four recently fledged young were seen on 11th, and at Hicks Gate three recently fledged young were reported on 23rd. Nest boxes were used at the following locations: at Cleeve where four small young were present on 2nd, three were ringed on 17th and these were seen again on 25th; at Langford where four young and one cold egg were noted on 2nd, four were ringed on 17th and all were present on 25th; and at Sidcot where four eggs were found on 2nd and three young were ringed on 27th.

Bristol 'A' Bond warehouse, Hotwells was used for the fifth successive year, three young were visible in the nest cavity on May 30th, two nearly fledged young were in the nest cavity and one recently fledged young was on the roof on June 5th.

	1993-02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
SG	22	19	24	17	29	25	36	31	22	23	21
BA & NS	56	79	57	60	72	68	63	53	45	51	52
Bristol	9	11	5	5	7	7	4	6	8	7	6
Total	87	109	86	82	108	100	103	90	75	81	79
Breeding sites											

Other notes In order to try to prevent a population decline, the Hawk and Owl Trust has established a research programme called 'The Kestrel Highways Project'. This project aims to discover whether a lack of nest sites within suitable feeding habitats is a significant contributory factor to poor breeding success. A programme was launched in 2008, 240 nest boxes have been provided at approximately one mile intervals along some of the country's major highways. The renowned conservationist Dr. Luc Hoffmann has funded the project. Locally, 60 nest boxes have been installed in South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire and Gwent, and another 34 have been installed in North Somerset and Somerset along the A38 and A370.

Ringed recoveries One ringed as a nestling at Piple Bottom on June 5th, 2011 was found freshly dead having been hit by a car at Dundry on Jan. 11th.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

[RR]

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; most are recorded on the coast; scarce inland. Graded nationally currently as of Amber Conservation Status, previously it was red listed but there has been a substantial recent recovery.

A very good year for this species in the Avon area with a total of 143 bird-days (*cf.* 111 in 2011). The bird-day total was same as in 2008 and this was the best year to date. During the year there were 98 bird-days in the first half-year and 45 in the second half (*cf.* 68 and 43 in 2011). Most were in January, February and March with 21, 29 and 34 bird-days, respectively. As usual many of the records were from Severnside with 60 bird-days (*cf.* 45 in 2011), 47 bird-days in the first half year and 13 in the second half (*cf.* 41 and four in 2011). There was also a good number of reports from CI-Y with 40 bird-days (*cf.* 34 in 2011), 25 in the first half year and 15 in the second (*cf.* 16 and 18 in 2011).

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

OPS – April 7th;

Littleton Warth – Feb. 12th;

Severnside – reported on 44 dates from Jan. 1st to April 13th, most in March when a male and female were present on 10th and 12th, and two were noted on 31st;

PWD – Jan. 13th and 16th;

CI-Y – noted on 23 dates from Jan. 4th to April 24th, two were present on Jan. 28th and Feb. 11th, a male and female were reported on April 16th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – March 31st;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Feb. 29th, March 25th and April 7th.

Second half-year

OPS – Oct. 13th, 26th and 27th;

Severnside – reported on 13 dates from Sept. 8th to Nov. 12th, most in October, three in September and on just one date in November;

CI-Y – noted on 14 dates from Oct. 13th to Dec. 18th, a male and female on Dec. 1st, most in October and on just one date in November;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – Nov. 14th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Sept. 22nd and Dec. 21st.

Inland - First half-year

Marshfield – Jan. 7th and 31st, Feb. 8th, 12th and 26th;

Congresbury Moor – Feb. 11th, March 5th, two the next day and April 1st;

Elsewhere – in January at R. Avon, Keynsham on 15th and CVL on 20th, during February at Hallen on 14th and a male at Weston Moor on 26th, in March at Bradley Stoke on 9th, Kenn Moor on 12th, Iron Acton on 28th and at Alveston three days later.

Inland - Second half-year

Marshfield – Oct 17th, in November a male on 9th and 14th, during December on 8th, 15th and 21st;

Congresbury Moor – Oct. 18th, Nov. 30th and Dec. 20th.

Elsewhere – in November at CVL on 20th and a male near Falfield on 25th.

Year	1993-02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Avon area	56	107	127	101	93	76	143	84	84	111	143
Severnside	23	59	98	53	57	69	93	65	47	45	60

Bird-days per year

Ringling recoveries A male ringed as a nestling at Middleton, County Durham on June 21st, 2009 was found freshly dead, having died of natural causes, at Stanton Drew on Jan. 24th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

The run of poor to average years continued, 2012 was again poor and similar to 2010. Also there were some reports of 'grounded' individuals seen during the poor spring weather. The records are given below, they refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

Arrival The first record of the year was at CVL on April 25th. Most were reported in the first two weeks of May with only a few records in BA away from CVL. There were only three other records in April as follows:

NS – at BL on 28th;

BA – two at CVL on 30th;

Bristol – over Brandon Hill on 26th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April: 26th in 2007, 17th in 2008, 19th in 2009, 13th in 2010 and 15th in 2011.

Breeding Confirmed at just one site in BA, three young fledged on Aug. 13th, they were still in the area on 30th. Breeding was suspected at a further six sites none in SG, four in NS and two in BA. A summary for the past two decades is given below.

	1993-02 Av	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
SG	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	0
NS	3	2	4	4	4	6	3	6	3	6	3/4
BA	5	6	4	5	4	4	5	5	2	2	3
Total	10	10	10	10	10	12	10	13	6	10	6/7

Breeding status both confirmed and suspected

Other sightings Reported from a total of 40 localities, nine in SG and 26 in BA & NS as summarised below, and five in Bristol: over Brandon Hill on April 26th, during May at Montpelier on 6th, at Horfield Common on 8th and at Redland on 12th, at Whitchurch on July 19th, and over Montrose Avenue, Redland on Aug. 8th.

Number of localities per month where birds were observed (including CVL)							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	0	4	1	5	2	4	1
Bristol	1	3	0	1	1	0	0
BA & NS	2	12	5	5	14	15	1
Total	3	19	6	11	17	19	2

At CVL, the main site, the first report was on April 25th as noted above, five days later than in 2011, then again on 30th. At this site one or two were reported on 15 days in May (with four on 1st, 25th and 30th), eleven days in June (with four on 25th and 26th), six days in July, eight days in August (with three on 28th), and twelve days in September (with three on 9th, 11th and 17th, four on 5th and 13th and five on 14th). The last record of the year here was on Sept. 21st, seven days earlier than in 2011.

Departure The late records were as follows, two were for October:

SG – at Aust Warth on Sept. 28th and Charfield on 30th, and at OPS on Oct. 7th, the last of the year;

NS – at CI-Y on Sept. 25th and at Congresbury Moor on Oct. 3rd;

BA – at CVL on Sept. 21st.

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, near Cribbs Causeway, 2012), 29th (Backwell 1998), and Nov. 11th (Dundry 2005).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.

Generally 2012 was a slightly below normal for this species.

Breeding An average year, 17 chicks fledged, eight fewer than last year, the 'best year' was 2010 when 26 fledged.

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested on the Clifton/Durdham Down side and three chicks fledged (*cf.* five in 2010 and 2011). Five also fledged here in 2008, this is a large number and the most to date. Breeding was last reported on the Leigh Woods side of the Avon Gorge in 2005. One of this year's fledglings wandered from the Avon Gorge before it was able to fend for itself and was found grounded and hungry at Stanton Drew on July 23rd. It was taken into care by the Hawk and Owl Trust, checked by a vet and released back into the Gorge on 25th. It was still present a few days later.

Year	1993-02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of juveniles fledged	2.5	3	2	2	3	3	5	1	5	5	3

Peregrine breeding success in the Avon Gorge

On Steep Holm one chick fledged, the last report of breeding success on the island was in 2004 when two fledged. Noted almost annually since then but no evidence of breeding activity has been received during this period. One was recorded here on Jan. 15th, a pair on March 23rd and July 21st, a juvenile and an adult were present on June 23rd and a female on Sept. 15th.

St. John's Church, Bath was used for the seventh consecutive year, four eggs were laid but only two chicks fledged (*cf.* four in 2010 and three in 2011). This site was filmed for the for BBC television series 'Springwatch'.

Wick Quarry Four young fledged (*cf.* four in 2010 and 2011).

Undisclosed sites.

SG Present early in the breeding season at two sites (*cf.* three in 2010 and two fledged successfully, three in 2011 and none fledged), both were on man-made structures but there was no evidence of breeding success at either of them;

NS Located at three sites (*cf.* four in 2010 when six fledged, three in 2011 when seven fledged), one site produced three juveniles, another site failed and there was no evidence of breeding success at the third;

BA Reported from one site (*cf.* one site in 2010 and 2011, three fledged successfully in both years), one fledged successfully;

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge Noted at two sites producing one and two young, respectively (*cf.* one in 2010 and two fledged, two in 2011 and three fledged). A juvenile was rescued, using an upturned umbrella (!), from the R. Avon in central Bristol on June 21st. It was taken into care overnight, ringed with both colour and BTO rings, and released the next day. Subsequently, it was seen with both parents until mid-July.

Year	1993-02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites occupied	5.7	8	9	14	15	12	11	13	13	12	12
No. of birds fledged	10.8	13	17	13	13	21	20	11	26	25	17
No. of successful nests	4.4	5	8	8	7	9	7	6	9	8	8

Peregrine breeding success

Non-breeding records

OPS, Severnside, PWD 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 bird-day counts at these sites and the main reservoirs.

Peregrine – Monthly bird-days for other coastal sites, CVL and BL													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sand Point/Sand Bay	1					1		2		1	2	1	8
Weston-s-Mare	1		1										2
Weston STW		1	1	1	2					1	1	1	8
Axe Estuary	1	1								1	1	1	5
CVL	11	6	4	2	6	5	2	6	2	1	3		48
BL	3	1		2	2					3			11

Inland (excluding CVL & BL) in the first half year Single birds unless stated otherwise:

Bristol In January at the Wills Memorial Building on 1st, Stokes Croft on 12th and St. Mary Redcliffe on 25th, on a Bonded warehouse at Hotwells on Feb. 29th and June 5th, at Whitchurch on March 23rd. Over Bishopston and at Holy Trinity Church, Stapleton on April 12th. In May at Sea Mills on 12th, over Redland on 19th and Arnos Vale on 25th, during June at Purdown on 14th and Horfield on 26th;

Bath away from St. John's Church At Sham Castle on March 25th;

SG At Marshfield on Jan. 31st (two), Feb. 8th and May 27th, in February two at Westerleigh Common, Yate on 12th, West Littleton Down on 18th and two again at Westerleigh on 23rd. At Chipping Sodbury Common on March 18th, in April at Bradley Stoke on 1st, Lower Woods on 8th and Wapley on 28th. At Leap Valley, Downend on May 7th and Kingswood on June 2nd;

NS In January at Tyntesfield on 7th and Kenn Moor on 31st, at BG on Feb. 14th and May 15th. At Yatton on Feb. 16th, Pill on March 22nd and April 20th, and at Easton-in-Gordano on April 22nd;

BA Noted at Chew Magna Res. on Feb. 7th and at Saltford on May 21st.

Second half-year

Bristol On a Bonded warehouse at Hotwells on July 5th and 21st, Aug. 1st (two) and 3rd, in November on 9th (two), on 19th (two) and Dec. 24th. In July over Horfield on 7th, Parsons Street, Bedminster on 20th and Penpole Wood on 28th. During August over Bishopston on 8th (two) and at Wills Memorial Building the next day, then in September on 5th and on 7th (two). Two at Clifton Cathedral on the following dates Sept. 6th, Oct. 6th, Nov. 6th and 8th. At St. Philips Marsh on Sept. 6th, Montpelier the next day and Oct. 24th, at St. Werburgh's on Oct. 18th;

Bath away from St. John's Church At Beacon Hill on July 2nd and Claverton Down on Dec. 13th;

SG At Yate Rocks on July 15th, in August at Warmley on 5th (two), at Abbey Wood two days later and on Oct. 2nd. Over Winterbourne on Oct. 7th and Wapley on Nov. 19th, and in December at Bitton on 3rd and Westerleigh on 19th;

NS During July at Tyntesfield on 17th, Nailsea two days later and Dundry on 28th, Sept. 3rd and Nov. 18th. At Yatton on Aug. 8th, Dec. 9th and 28th, Wrington on Aug. 9th and Oct. 9th, and at Long Ashton on Aug. 14th, over Kenn Moor on Sept. 21st and Dec. 5th. In November at Hewish on 4th, Bleadon the next day and at Congresbury on 18th;

BA At Saltford on July 22nd, 24th, Aug. 9th, 16th and 29th, then on eleven dates from Oct. 2nd to Nov. 27th, most were in November. In August at Chewton Keynsham on 25th and Chew Magna the next day, with two at Wellow Brook on Dec. 18th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

WeBS Status: The Estuary was fourth and CVL was seventh most important site in 2010/11.

The last two years have seen records from a large number of sites, suggesting that this species has not been badly affected by the recent cold weather (first table below). The second table summarises the counts from the regularly watched sites away from CVL. There was an upturn in counts at CVL in the second winter period, as is usual in years with high water levels. K E Vinicombe's survey of sites through the two winter-periods gave 20 in the first and 34 in the second, although this method does not allow for the likelihood that some individuals move from site to site around the lake.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
16	14	16	24	23	23	20	18	24	27

Number of sites reported each year

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites away from CVL								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1					1	3	4
Sevenside		3	2			1	2	2
PW				1			3	2
CI-Y	1	2	1	1		4	3	2
Weston STW	1	1	1			2	3	3
Backwell Lake		1	1					1

Breeding Intensive survey at CVL suggests a minimum of ten successful breeding attempts by at least eight pairs although since the breeding period saw heavy rainfall and rapidly rising water levels the level of success was low. Since birds were heard calling in another four areas there might have been another four pairs. The paper by M Dadds on page 157 provides full details. The May record from BL listed below may relate to a breeding attempt. At Steep Holm, where breeding took place in 2010 despite the apparent unsuitability of the habitat, two were heard during March and chicks were seen on the exceptionally early dates of April 6th and 7th, the good weather in March may have been a factor.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	2	3	4	6	3	4	2	2	5	2	4	5	3	0	2	6	4	1	10

Number of nest sites detected at CVL each year

Other records Reported from a wide range of sites, with the record in the extremely urban setting of Broad Plain in particular showing that this species can turn up at virtually any wetland. In the first winter period up until March 22nd these records involved probably ten individuals. In the second winter period from Oct. 10th there were probably 22. Analysis of the records is difficult, but there seems to have been an influx in mid-October, possibly followed by another in mid-November. The records are as follows:

Chipping Sodbury Common – one on Oct. 14th;

Yate Common – one on Dec. 18th;

Three Brooks LNR – one on Oct. 10th;

Emerson's Green – one on Feb. 13th;

Leap Valley – one on Feb. 25th and two on both Nov. 17th and Dec. 15th;

Hoar Gout – one on Nov. 18th;

Pill – one on March 22nd;

Broad Plain (Bristol) – one on the lower reaches of the R. Frome on Feb. 5th;

Brislington Brook (Bristol) – single birds on Nov. 13th and Dec. 7th;

R. Avon at Hanham – one on March 9th;

Keynsham – one on March 10th and from Dec. 8th to the year end;

R. Avon at Saltford – single birds on Oct. 26th and 30th, Nov. 5th, 18th, 23rd and 28th, and Dec. 5th, 8th and 26th, with two on 9th;

Batheaston – single birds on Jan. 29th and Oct. 20th and three on Dec. 1st;

Kenn Moor – single birds on Dec. 7th and 13th;

Sand Point – one on Nov. 15th;

Yatton – two on Feb. 7th and three on both Nov. 30th and Dec. 10th;

Congresbury Moor – one on Nov. 13th, three on 30th and one on Dec. 26th;

Worle – one on Dec. 29th;

Ebdon – one on Jan. 14th;

BL – one heard on May 17th and one on Oct. 15th.

2011 – The record of three at Leap Valley, Downend on June 11th was an error.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Scarce passage migrant with 32 recorded between 1983 and 2011. Most records come from CVL in August and September.

One record, the first since 2009: an elusive individual at Portbury Wharf NR, was found at 15.40 on Aug. 30th and remained until Sept. 3rd (L Wheatland, N Sey *et al.*).

There were records of one or two in each year between 2003 and 2009.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

[RR]

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

Population change in England between 1996 and 2006 was up by 10%.

Counts at the main reservoirs were extremely low. There is no doubt that this was in part due to high water levels which makes counting difficult, but there must be other factors responsible and the long term decline shown in the first table below is of concern. The recent cold winter weather may have affected numbers, and the presence of pike at CVL may also be affecting the species here.

Year	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
CVL	147	245	125	80	90	55	70	180	125	75	35
BL	57	132	46	105	82	30	21	38	33	27	20

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

Monthly maxima of Moorhen at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	8	7	6	4	2	6	4	9	11	7	14	12
PWD	10	9	2	4	2		7	9	9	20	21	17
CI-Y	8	14	20	7	4			4	2	8		6
Weston STW	6	8	6	4	3	4	7	8	8	1	3	5
ASW and environs	4	5					2	1	9	6	9	
Three Brooks LNR	5	9	7	3		5	2		5	7	4	9
Emerson's Green	7	3	3		3		5	4	4	2	1	4
Duchess Park		1	3	2		2	3	1		5	4	1
Eastville Park		10	4	8	1	3	5	6		2	3	6
Backwell Lake	20	12	24	5	5	5	3	4	21	5		28
Saltford	4		2	1	5	5	6	3	7	9	8	10
R Avon, Keynsham	13	23									8	11
CVL	30	15	20	10	2	1	5	15	35	35	20	10
BL			2	5	4	1	5	4	19	11	17	20

Recorded from a wide range of other sites. The largest numbers were on Kenn Moor, where 15 were counted on Feb. 15th and 26 on March 2nd.

Breeding No details were received from CVL. Confirmation that breeding continues here would be welcome. At BL two broods of two and four, respectively, were located. Elsewhere recorded at 18 sites (*cf.* ten in 2009, 12 in 2010 and in 2011) as follows:

OPS – a brood of four;

PWD – three broods;

Weston STW – three broods totalling seven juveniles;

Tortworth – a brood of four;

Three Brooks LNR – a brood of one;

Southmead (Bristol) – a brood of four;

Emerson's Green – two broods totalling five juveniles;

Marshfield – a brood of three;

Eastville Park – a brood of three;

Abbots Pool – one brood;

Tickenham – a brood of three;

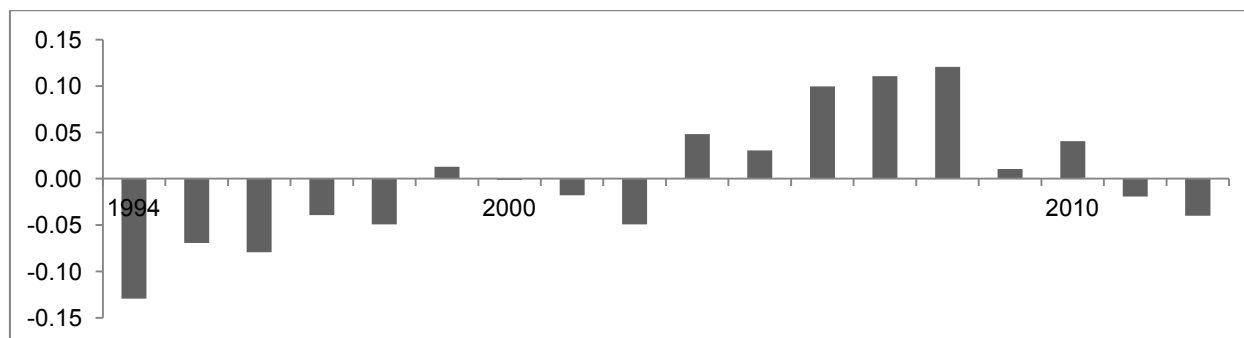
Bath University – a brood of five;

Batheaston – a brood of one;

Chew Magna Res. – one brood, with three on the nearby Winford Brook;

Litton Resrs. – two broods.

The local BBS count rate per hour in 2012 was 82% higher than that recorded in 1994, although the count rate has decreased in the last two years. The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 0.24 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.24

COOT *Fulica atra*

[RR]

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

WeBS status: CVL is currently eleventh in the list of sites of National Importance (2010/11).

Numbers at both main sites were slightly below average. Waterweed growth was suppressed by high rainfall and resultant turbid water, and almost as soon as mats of weed began to appear at CVL in September they were broken up by high winds. PWD is becoming increasingly attractive to this species, but counts at Weston STW were very low in the second winter period.

Year	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
CVL	2326	3285	3335	2210	2360	2095	2020	3050	2880	3110	2475
BL	1172	1990	2080	3151	1400	2323	1403	970	678	1247	1070

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	4	4	4	7	9	7	8	12	7	8	7	7
PW	33	21	20	7	4	9	27	34	30	41	47	62
Weston STW	32	37	12	14	14	23	15	28	17	17	14	8
Tortworth		18			19	4	1		20	16		
ASW and environs	6			2		1	2		13	8	28	13
Backwell Lake	58	16	26	19		40	37	17	42	24	33	20
BG	88	72	60	26	19	59	151	146	207	94	113	96
Chew Magna Resr.	9	15	13	14	7	8	5	7	8	6	5	6
CVL	745	475	545	425	225	575	1355	1680	2475	1625	775	675
BL	276	142	153	112	95	200	522	796	530	922	1070	778

Other records Recorded from a wide range of sites, the highest counts not in the table above being eight at Orchard Pools (Severn Beach) in July and at Eastville Park in February, and six at Duchess Park (Bristol) in May.

Breeding At CVL there were 26 broods, totalling 50 young. The table below shows evidence of a long-term decline. Many nests were flooded out by rapidly rising water levels in the early summer. At BL ten broods were seen, totalling 17 juveniles. Here too flooded nests were noted, on July 7th. Elsewhere recorded as follows: OPS (at least three broods); Orchard Pools (two broods, three young); Chittening Warth (a brood of four); Weston STW (seven broods totalling 12 young although all nests on the UV pool were flooded); Avonmouth (a brood of five); Three Brooks LNR (one brood, two young); Yatton (a brood of one); Batheaston (two nests failed); Chew Magna Res (four broods totalling 13 young); and Litton Resrs. (three broods totalling five young).

Year	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of nests	na	116	121	n/c	112	91	96	67	n/c	n/c	n/c
No. of broods	69	41	44	4	34	41	28	27	22	11	26
No. of young	190	91	102	9	70	91+	61	77+	46	n/c	50

Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus*

Rare vagrant but a release project has been in place in Somerset since 2010.

One that flew to N over Bishopston at 13.30 on April 2nd (R J Higgins) was assumed to be the unringed adult that flew off to N from Colyford Marsh, Devon at 11.00, and which arrived at Cannock Chase, Staffs in the evening.

A number of other parties were noted in flight (details below in chronological order); although no rings were noted it is thought highly likely that these all relate to the Great Crane Project. This reintroduction attempt, using chicks hand reared at Slimbridge, has released a total of 57 at a site in Somerset since 2010; 52 are known to be still roaming freely and flocks have started to wander from the release site.

BL – two adults on March 22nd, departed to NE (N R Milbourne);

Kingswood – three to N calling late morning on April 5th (R Tippet);

Hanham – one over R. Avon at 13.00 on April 6th (*per* Great Crane Project website);

Common Crane con't

Banwell – a total of eight, a group of three and a group of five, at 11.50 on April 22nd eventually departed to the south over the Mendips (K Lawlor, P Thorogood);

Upper Weston, Bath – eight at 13.15 on June 4th (*per* Great Crane Project website);

Saltford – two adults flew upriver at 12.40 on June 30th (J W Duckworth). At 13.10 they were seen over Burnett and Compton Dando and then headed off to E (B M Gray).

Previous Avon area records are: one over Clevedon in March 1971; two over Severn Beach in January 2000; five at Tortworth in February 2003; one over OPS in May 2008; one past Aust Warth in March 2010 and one over Clevedon in February 2011.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce breeding species. Scarce inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

YEAR	Severnside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Est.	Total
1992/93 - 2001/02 Av.	52	16	19	72	159
2002/03 - 2009/10 Av.	82	29	18	84	213
2010/11	93	32	42	99	266
2011/12	75	40	22	67	204

August to February average counts

The status table shows a slight drop in the 2011/12 winter period compared with the previous period, but it is likely that the 2012/13 figure will be high again as can be seen from the table below. Indeed the Avon area record count for this species was broken in 2012 when 330 were noted at the Axe Estuary on Oct. 16th, most were roosting in two groups at the mouth of the river. The previous record was also set at this site in October 1959 when 217 were recorded. The monthly maxima are summarised below. As with some other wader species it is good to see some reasonable counts from Sand Bay, a site that has produced some high numbers in the past before the sand-dredging operations undertaken a decade or so ago. The only other non-breeding records not in the table were from BG with single birds in July and August.

Monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	8	12	10	3	4	5	4	2	2	1		2
Littleton Warth	7	6	5	1		2	5			1		2
Severnside	70	95	90	60	21	27	36	66	92	100	65	120
Sea Mills		1	2									
PWD/Pill/Avonmouth Docks	4	10	18	3	7	8	5	12	6		2	6
CI-Y	30	27	32	46	22	8	23	38	52	45	42	30
Sand Bay	92	18	1		4					92	20	
Axe Est./Weston STW	100	63	125	32	4	2		136	196	330	160	86
CVL					1	1	2	3				
BL		3			1							

Breeding Nesting activity was noted at the same four sites as in 2011 (five sites in 2008 and three in 2009 and 2010), and at least four chicks fledged.

The details are as follows:

Avonmouth Docks – two pairs nested in May but no eggs or chicks were seen, another two pairs (possibly with some overlap) nested in June again without success;

PWD – two pairs produced nests with four eggs each, one in May and one in June, but no chicks were seen later;

CI-Y – as usual about three pairs were present, display was noted, and in early July two chicks were seen which fledged and remained in the area into autumn – the first successful breeding at this site since 2008;

Weston STW – a pair bred successfully for the second year running, the nest was on the roof of the visitors centre and two chicks fledged.

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

Description species.

One record: an adult male at CVL on April 10th (R Palmer *et al.*) which stayed close to Stratford hide for most of the day being appreciated by many birders – see photograph opposite page 65.

Perhaps surprisingly this was only the fourth record for the Avon area, the previous records were of one shot near Thornbury sometime before or during 1848, an adult and an immature adult which stayed for five days at CVL in May 1965, and another seen flying down-river at OPS in May 1997.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Uncommon winter visitor/passage migrant. Rare inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding and wintering population.

As with some other wader species in 2012 counts were on the low side, well down on last year's record, see the table below. Four sites were involved, three coastal and one inland, which is about normal. The records, for just February and May, are as follows:

OPS – one on May 19th;

Sevenside (Severn Beach) – two on Feb. 7th;

Sand Bay – four on May 2nd and five from 3rd to 6th;

CVL – one on Feb. 25th.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
6	9	6	14	4	8	15	8	15	22	9

Number of individuals per year

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

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

A reduced showing compared with 2011 was noted and there were no definite breeding records. The total of the monthly maxima was 47, this compares with 24 in 2008, 29 in 2009, 44 in 2010 and 84 in 2011. Apart from Northwick Warth (Sevenside) where a pair were seen feeding and may have attempted to breed nearby, all sightings were of passage from March 24th to June 1st (spring), and from June 20th to Oct. 15th (autumn). The highest count was six on Sevenside on May 6th. Details of all records are given below.

OPS – single birds on March 31st, April 13th, May 17th, 25th, 27th and 30th with four on July 20th;

Littleton Warth – one on April 15th;

Sevenside – one on March 24th, 25th, April 8th and 21st, three on 25th and 27th, five on 29th and May 1st, six on 6th, 8th and 11th, four from 13th to 15th, and two on 26th. Then two on June 20th, four on July 2nd, and single birds on Sept. 9th, 12th, and 17th and on Oct. 15th;

PWD – two on April 22nd and one on Sept. 17th;

CI-Y – two on April 5th, three on May 7th, and single birds on Aug. 16th, 19th and 23rd;

BG – one on April 11th and Aug. 17th;

CVL – one on March 30th and 31st, five (record spring count for the site) on April 5th and two on 16th;

BL – two on June 1st.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon winter visitor, and fairly common passage migrant (most numerous in autumn). Small numbers occur inland on passage. Scarce breeder. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has fallen by more than 25% over the past 25 years.

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

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was 6th in International Importance for passage.

Counts were back to more normal levels after the high figures of 2011, also the Sevenside autumn passage was poor. Breeding numbers held up, see below the main table. Generally the early spring passage was poor, but the later passage, for the last week of May and the first week of June involving birds presumably heading to the high arctic, was quite strong. The best counts at this time were 52 at CI-Y on June 4th and 65 at Severn

Beach on 6th. The autumn passage was fairly normal but did last longer with more seen in the first week of October than usual. During the whole autumn passage the highest count was 460 at CI-Y on Aug. 16th.

YEAR	OPS		Sevenside		CI-Y		Total	
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	19	138	15	271	19	109	53	518
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	1	57	16	284	11	130	38	471
2010/11	3	80	5	185	14	588	22	853
2011/12	4	62	12	82	30	280	46	424

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

The main table below gives the fortnightly or monthly maxima for the main sites. The only other non-breeding records were: one at BG on Feb. 25th and two at BL on May 14th.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima of Ringed Plover at regularly counted sites																	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Jun		Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov	Dec
					1–15	16–31	1-10	11-30		1–15	16–31	1–15	16–30	1-15	16-31		
OPS	4	4		7	13	17			9	89	31	10	35	27	3	5	5
Sevenside	11	7	2	16	50	47	65	3	3	134	100	30	3	18	14	23	13
PWD/Pill	11	24	6	7	28	7	6	3	6	75	230	147	26	50	20	21	
CI-Y	6	5		5	18	70	52	2	6	375	460	58	100	85	10	7	8
Sand Bay					60	50	34		31	70	300	175	32			5	
AxeE./Weston STW	23					50				3	35	40		70		25	3
CVL				1	2	1					1	1					

Breeding As in the past few years nesting took place in the Avonmouth/Royal Portbury Docks area, eight nests were found producing at least 17 chicks, a record for this site. Many of these were ringed. On the Avonmouth side of the docks four pairs bred and reared 11 chicks. On the Portbury side three pairs nested and reared at least six chicks by the end of May. Further nests were noted here in late June and in mid-July, but it was not known if these were repeat attempts or involved new pairs, in any case outcomes were not recorded.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant (usually more numerous in autumn than in spring). Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
1453	2020	3310	1475	2460	3336	1790	1966	1591	3457	2720

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

Counts have been keeping up well during the past few years as is shown by the status line above, and good numbers were noted in both winter periods in 2012. Present up to April 24th and from Aug. 10th onwards (both of these coastal).

The table below summarises the main monthly maxima. Other counts over 20 included in January: 100 at Bannerman (Bath) and 32 at Dundry; in February: 50 at Burnett, 24 at Ebdon and 640 in the Old Sodbury/Little Sodbury area; in March: 35 at Lansdown; in April: 30 at Horton; in October: 30 at Tog Hill; and in November: 95 at Wapley Hill (Yate).

Monthly maxima at regularly watched sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
OPS		1			1				2	10		
Sevenside	1	20	2				6				1	
CI-Y	6	40	8	1				3	1			
Axe Est./Weston STW	60	29	1							17	30	
Tormarton	140		160						168			
Marshfield area	300	30							2	125	170	
Cold Ashton	400									100		
Saltford							1			6	210	
Bristol Int. Airport									17		24	

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

YEAR	Severnside	CI-Y	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	11	31	42
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	9	25	34
2010/11	3	44	47
2011/12	1	43	43

September to March average counts

The status table above shows average winter counts at CI-Y but Severnside was poor, on the other hand this second site produced some good counts during spring migration. There were also more than usual at Sand Bay from September onwards. Noted up to June 16th (Sand Bay) and from July 18th (OPS) onwards. The table summarises the monthly maxima, otherwise six were noted at PWD on Sept. 26th dropping to four on 30th, and single birds were at Axe Estuary in February and May. There were also two unusual inland records: one at CVL on Feb. 7th and another in the Marshfield area from May 19th to 21st.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		2					1		5	26	11	1
Littleton Warth								1		19		
Severnside			2	22	38			3	5	3		2
CI-Y	50	60	26	2	2		1	1	15	40	31	54
Sand Bay					2				14	3	26	32

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Fairly common and widespread winter visitor and passage migrant; can become common in some winters. Uncommon and declining breeding resident/summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was ninth in National Importance (there were also three sites of International Importance).

Year	Severnside	CI-Y	CVL	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	332	262	347	941
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	283	375	216	874
2010/11	118	432	280	830
2011/12	223	797	319	1239

August to February average counts

The status table above shows a continuing improvement over the past few years. On the other hand our second method for monitoring winter flocks, that is using January and December maximum counts (see second table below) again shows lower than average totals.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
January	5200	8300	8800	7400	3520	4840	7760	3710	3000	3550
December	5400	6200	6900	3200	3640	2770	3450	3950	3800	2100

Totals of the maximum Avon counts for January and December at all main sites

The best counts for the year came from CI-Y and the nearby moors, especially Kenn Moor, in the first part of February. It seems that large numbers congregated here in this time prior to their northerly spring migration. In the latter part of the month only a few remained.

The third table summarises the monthly maxima at the main well-watched sites, away from the late January to mid-February period no count was over 600.

Non-tabulated counts over 30 included in February (there were none in January): Burnett 30, Old Sodbury 55, St. Pierre (ST58) 65, and West Littleton 40; in October: Radstock 50; in November: Hawksbury Upton 70 and Keynsham (R. Avon) 43; and in December: Hewish 200, Queen Charlton 40, and Three Brooks NR (Bradley Stoke) 100.

Monthly maxima of Lapwing at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	600	100	4	1		1	1	12	19	112	240	530
Severnside	500	250	12	1	1	1	4	3	2	70	180	200
R. Avon, Sea Mills	60	140							10		90	80
PWD	56	100	2						18		18	30
CI-Y	900	2250	25	10	16	8	28	70	18	165	170	550
Sand Bay										21	100	
Axe Est./Weston STW	460	940					1		1	50	9	350
Marshfield	600	20									9	
Old Sodbury		55							3		27	
Kenn Moor		1000	25	1					6		52	100
BG	1	98									10	20
CVL	200	120	18	7	4	5	18	30	30	102	60	195
BL	200	250	3					17		38	80	52

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 the 2010 Report. Observers are requested to submit all breeding evidence, however slender, so that this decline can be properly monitored. Successful breeding was noted at just one site: Dowlais Farm, CI-Y. Breeding attempts were noted at a further nine sites, the generally wet conditions may have encouraged more activity than in the last two years. The details are as follows:

OPS – two were present in late March;

New Passage – a male was reported in May;

CI-Y (Dowlais Farm) – up to six pairs were noted and three were successful producing two broods of three and one of four, this is the fourth year in a row when chicks have been recorded at this site;

CI-Y (Tutshill's Ear Pool, Yeo Estuary) – up to six were seen in May and it is possible that one was sitting on a nest;

Horton/Hawkesbury Upton – two were seen in May;

Yate Rocks – one was 'calling' in May;

Kingston Seymour – display was noted in May over a flooded field between the village and the M5 motorway;

Kenn Moor – display was noted in March and April;

Steep Holm – one was described as 'singing' in early July;

CVL (nearby farmland) – two pairs were on nests in early May, both failed. Then two further nests were seen, one had four eggs, and there was possibly a third nest in the first week of June, again all failed due to farming activities.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

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 almost certainly also hold for the Avon area.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was fourth in the list of sites of National Importance (there were also 13 of International Importance).

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
610	386	411	1520	172	595	293	462	2133	1073	876
Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts for coastal sites										

An average showing was reported with a drop from the high counts of past two years. Present up to June 9th and from July 21st into 2013 with just three counts over a hundred: 125 at CI-Y on April 7th, 100 at Severn Beach (Severnside) on May 3rd and 150 at CI-Y again on Oct. 22nd.

The March CVL record (for 23rd) was of one swimming in Herriott's Pool with a group of feeding Black-tailed Godwits. Apart from these single-day counts the spring passage was notably weak but the autumn passage was better.

The monthly maxima are tabulated below, the only other record was of two at Littleton Warth on Oct. 19th.

Monthly maxima of Knot at coastal sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS					11				40	3	2	
Severnside			1	10	100	3	1	20	44	6	1	2
PWD		60		2	11			2	3			
CI-Y	60	25	11	125	27			2	65	150	18	30
Sand Bay					3			12			1	1
Axe Est		1		22					1			
CVL			1						1			

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

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

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was 15th in National Importance after four of International Importance.

A better than average year for this species with a few winter records and some high counts in late spring. Unusually it was noted at five sites in the first winter period but only one in the second, the spring passage was from April 18th to June 19th, and the autumn passage was from July 5th to Oct. 1st. The count of 25 at Sand Bay in May was high but not a record for spring which was set at Severnside with 36 in May 1987.

Severnside – one on May 7th and 14th rising to five on 16th and 16 on 26th, with 20 on June 4th dropping back to one on 9th. Then three on July 16th, one on 28th, two on Aug. 4th, one on 22nd, two on 27th and 28th, three on Sept. 3rd, four on 9th and eight on 11th, and finally a winter record of one on Dec. 23rd;

PWD – one on Feb. 2nd and May 25th, three on July 16th (see above), one on 17th, Aug. 9th and 16th, two on 25th, one on Sept. 28th and two on Oct. 1st (the last autumn Avon record);

CI-Y – one on April 22nd, two on May 2nd and 20th, one on 25th and July 5th, two on 9th, three on Aug. 2nd, one on 8th, two on 19th and 22nd, three on Sept. 13th, five on 16th and one on 17th;

Sand Bay – two on Feb. 13th and May 3rd, 25 (the highest Avon count this year) on 19th, two on 24th, nine on June 1st, three on 2nd. Then two on Aug. 3rd, three on 5th, two on 16th, ten on Sept. 1st, seven on 15th and nine on 16th;

Weston Beach/Axe Estuary – two on Feb. 9th, three on May 26th, one on Aug. 19th, ten on Sept. 1st (see above), and one on 21st;

BG – two on Feb. 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th (unusual inland winter records);

CVL – single birds on March 15th, April 18th, May 13th and 15th, and Aug. 20th.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
15	4	19	9	12	33	15	9	24	11	20

Maximum single Severnside spring passage count

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

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

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was third most important site.

As has become the norm over the past few years, numbers were again on the low side with no count over two. The total of the monthly maxima was 13, this compares with 15 in 2009, 13 in 2010 and 18 in 2011.

As last year one or two were noted at CI-Y up to April, otherwise present from Aug. 17th to Oct. 13th at just five sites, all coastal.

OPS/Shepperdine – one on Sept. 28th and 30th, and on Oct. 1st, three on 3rd with another on 13th;

Severnside (Northwick Warth) – one on Oct. 7th;

PWD – one on Sept. 28th (see OPS entry);

CI-Y – two on Feb. 11th, and single birds on April 4th and 16th, Sept. 10th, 16th and 20th to 22nd, with two again on Oct. 2nd;

Sand Bay – an adult on Aug. 17th.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Passage migrant; scarce in spring, uncommon in autumn. As with Little Stint, some autumns can be lean whilst others record sizeable flocks. Very rare in winter.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was the most important site.

Counts were a little below normal and there were no inland sightings. The total of the monthly maxima, at 33, compares with 20 in 2008, nine in 2009, 95 in 2010 and 64 in 2011. More than usual were seen in spring (from May 3rd to June 1st), and the autumn passage lasted from Aug. 2nd to Oct. 30th, the highest count was eight. The details are as follows:

OPS/Shepperdine – single birds on Sept. 28th, and Oct. 1st and 13th;

Severnside – three on May 3rd and 4th with one on 8th, 13th, 16th and 17th (Severn Beach), then single birds on Aug. 26th, Sept. 2nd to 4th and 9th, and finally on Oct. 7th (Northwick Warth);

PWD – one on Aug. 23th and Sept. 10th, two on 26th and 28th, three on Oct. 1st with five on 3rd;

CI-Y – two on May 5th, then one on several dates in August (2nd to 22nd), eight on Sept. 16th, six on 17th, three on 21st and one to the end of the month, two on Oct. 1st and 4th, three on 10th, one on 15th and two (the last of the year) on 30th;

Sand Bay – one on June 1st and two on Aug. 16th;

Axe Estuary (Weston STW) – two on Sept. 8th.

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years.

Description required for inland records.

Records were again almost a repeat of those for the last few years. Noted at four sites up to May 21st (a late date, 1st in 2011) and from Nov. 1st (Oct. 30th in 2011). The details are as follows:

Severnside – single birds on March 17th, several dates in November (5th to 16th), and Dec. 31st;

Battery Point, Portishead – seven in January, six in February and March, three on April 10th, four on May 4th, five on 5th, two on 9th and one on 21st. Then one on Nov. 1st, two on 2nd, three on 3rd increasing to seven by 30th, and up to nine throughout December;

CI-Y – two on Feb. 8th and one on Nov. 4th;

Bimbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare – five in January, six in February, and seven in March and April up to 24th, and four on 26th. Then one on Nov. 8th increasing to five by the end of the month with six throughout December.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

[RR]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; uncommon in mid-summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK non-breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the past 25 years.

Three races occur: *alpina* breeding from N Scandinavia to Siberia, *arctica* breeding mostly in N E Greenland, and *schinzii* breeding in N W Europe. In Avon *alpina* is a common, and sometimes abundant, winter visitor and *schinzii* is a common passage migrant.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was sixth in International Importance.

YEAR	OPS		Severnside		CI-Y		Total	
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	908	233	2439	439	2499	128	5846	800
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	534	46	1767	381	1300	256	3601	683
2010/11	800	63	1020	180	1610	335	3430	578
2011/12	1014	47	1900	75	1936	225	4850	347

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

Compared with recent years the winter counts showed an improvement but both the spring and autumn passages were on the weak side. Also as last year no count was over 3000, this is a low figure when compared with some in the past. The record is 16500 set at CI-Y in January 1989. The table below gives the monthly maxima for all sites.

An individual seen by J Williams and others at CI-Y on Sept. 22nd did cause some comment because of its long bill. The possibility was entertained that it might have belonged to one of the N. American subspecies. But on further consideration (with some input from B. Bertholtz) it was decided that it was a juvenile of the subspecies

alpina, the only slightly odd feature being that most present at this time of year belong to the subspecies *schinzii*. A photograph taken by JW appears opposite page 64.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	900	470	36	2	9		54	53	40	400	1150	350
Littleton Warth	500	550	3				1	7	2	80	290	4
Severnside	2600	1600	170	22	215	100	95	91	60	1200	2000	2000
R. Avon, Sea Mills	26	20		1			1				10	20
PWD	1000	220	45	6	40	5	36	140	160	250	350	400
CI-Y	2500	1680	750	100	150	35	170	300	175	600	2250	2800
Sand Bay	70	40		13	200	50	57	180	175	20	10	400
Axe Est./Weston STW	900	182	18		30		32	35	18	60	1300	1600
BG	2	4			1		2					
CVL		6		2	14		2	1		1		1
BL	10	1										

Arctica Dunlin *C. a. arctica*

Rare passage migrant only recorded in late spring.

Two records: single birds seen with groups of *schinzii* Dunlin and other waders at Severnside on the evening of May 19th (J P Martin) and at CI-Y on the morning of June 3rd (H E Rose).

There were three records in 2010 and further details were given in a paper in the 2009 Report.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon autumn passage migrant; scarce in winter and on spring passage. Graded as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the past 25 years.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was 16th in National Importance.

Numbers dropped back to normal levels after the better showing last year. No count was over four and there were only a few inland sightings (at BG in February). Apart from these, records were from April 7th to June 7th, and from Aug. 13th to the end of the year. The three records (of two) for December were unusual and may have referred to the same pair moving up and down the coast.

Severnside – two on Aug. 28th, one on 30th and Sept. 2nd, then one again on Oct. 11th, 15th, 22nd and 28th, and two on Dec 28th;

CI-Y – four on April 7th, two on 8th and on May 10th with one on June 7th. Then one on Aug. 13th and 14th, two on Sept. 15th and three on 20th, one on several dates between Oct. 14th and 22nd and on Nov. 18th, and finally two on Dec. 5th;

Axe Estuary – two on Dec. 16th;

BG – two from Feb. 2nd and 4th, and from 14th to 16th.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
37	26	10	35	11	35	3	12	29	43	25

Total for the year of the maximum monthly counts

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; probably overlooked. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was the ninth most important site.

There was a better showing in 2012 compared with the previous few years, this probably reflected the extremely wet conditions prevailing in the second winter period. These conditions produced some high counts in December including nine on 10th and 12 on 26th on Aust Warth, and ten in a field close to the mouth of the Yeo (CI-Y) on 30th. The highest ever single count in the Avon area was for ASW in February 2005 when 17 were noted in similarly wet conditions. Present up to March 26th (PWD and CI-Y) – an early last date, and from Oct. 10th (PWD) into 2013.

The table summarises the counts at the main sites, single birds were also noted at Stup Pill (Avonmouth) on Feb. 4th and Yanley Quarry with two on March 2nd.

Jack Snipe – Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites							
	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1				1	1	1
Sevenside	2	3	3		1	1	12
PWD		7	1		1	1	1
CI-Y	2	3	1			2	10
Sand Bay						2	4
Weston STW	4	6	1		1	2	1
Yate	1	4	4			1	2
Batheaston	3						1
Congresbury Moor						1	1
CVL	2	2				1	1

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; has undergone a decline in the last decade. Rare breeder. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of European Conservation Status.

Two races: *gallinago* (palearctic) and *faeroeensis* (breeding N Isles and Iceland). Most in Avon are from the race *gallinago* but an unknown, but probably very small, number of *faeroeensis* may also occur.

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	28	17	20	65
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	29	14	15	58
2010/11	1	3	7	11
2011/12	3	10	8	21

November to February average counts

In last year's Report we commented (and gave a 30-year bar chart) on the long term decline of this species in the Avon area, and this situation hardly improved during the first half of 2012; see the table above. But during the second half there was a major upturn which was probably in the main due to the extremely wet conditions that prevailed at this time. So it seems likely that the 2012/13 total for the above table will be back to the level it was twenty years ago. It will be interesting to see if these higher counts are sustained in the longer term once the weather and field conditions get back to 'normal'. And this may partly explain the poor showing during the past few years when the weather (and so the winter farmland) was dryer than usual.

Present up to May 12th (at CI-Y) and from July 25th (at CVL) into 2013. The highest count (106) was at PWD on Dec. 8th. In the past some high counts have come from sites in the Gordano Valley but none were received from here in 2012. It was reported from several other sites in both winter periods but no count was over three. One noted at CVL on Feb. 9th appeared very rufous and so may have belonged to the race *faeroeensis*.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	5						2	7	2	50	30
Littleton Warth			1					9			8	12
Sevenside	15	8	9	4				21	32	15	53	64
R. Avon, Sea Mills	9	4								2		
PWD	10	31	1	1				3		30	17	106
CI-Y	10	5	25	2	1			24	20	14	32	85
Sand Bay											25	
Axe Est./Weston STW	1	2								3	8	3
Batheaston NR	8	12	5						1	1	4	4
Yate		3	3									9
Keynsham, R. Avon										5	6	80
Saltford										2	1	11
Congresbury Moor	35	35										12
Kenn Moor	1	31							7	26	81	11
CVL	17	6	16	2			4	5	22	26	16	9
BL	8	14	7	1						2	30	20

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

Again numbers were above the long-term norm and there were more multiple counts than usual with two of five (on Kenn Moor in January and Walton Common in December; a discussion with the local gamekeeper suggested that this species has been under-recorded at this site over the past winters). The total of the monthly maximum counts was 52, 23 in the first winter period and 26 in the second. This compares with 43 in 2009 and 2011, and 89 in 2010, but the average for the previous decade is only 23. Noted up to March 17th, and from Nov.11th into 2013. The details are as follows; records refer to single birds (often overflying) unless stated otherwise.

First-winter period January: Pilning on 2nd, Weston Moor on 7th, OPS on 9th, ASW and Rocks East and Lower Wood on 21st, Kenn Moor on 23rd with five on 31st, and CVL on 26th; February: Eastwood Park (Failand) on 1st, Pilning and Wrington Wood on 2nd, Wick on 5th, Cadbury Camp and Yatton (two) on 7th, Kenn Moor on 15th and 17th, Burnett on 18th, and Weston Moor on 19th; and March: Stidcote Lane (Tytherington) on 5th, CVL on 8th (two), 12th and 15th, and at Bradley Stoke on 17th.

Second-winter period October: Faulkland Copse on 29th; November: Bath (grounds of Royal United Hospital) on 11th, Worle on 17th, Lower Woods on 21st, and Yate Rocks on 26th; and December: Saltford on 1st, 4th 8th (two), 15th (two), 17th (two) and 23rd, Henleaze and Sand Point on 4th, Lansdown (three) and Lower Woods (two) on 6th (three), Failand (two) and Severn Beach on 10th, Walton Common (five) on 11th, PW on 13th and 17th, and CVL on 18th.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Uncommon passage migrant; generally more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status due to its historical decline.

Two races: islandica (breeding N Isles and Iceland) and *limosa* (breeding W Europe eastwards). Most records refer to the race *islandica*, the other, *limosa*, is a rare visitor with definite records for June and July only.

WeBS: In 2010/11 the Estuary was fifth in National Importance (after 29 of International Importance).

Counts improved again with some notable sightings in October. Records were unspectacular up to mid-August, then 70 arrived at CI-Y on 18th falling back to single figures a fortnight later, and a flock of 62 flew to W over CVL on 31st. But the best sightings came at Northwick Warth (Sevenside) in October. A flock of about 80 arrived on 13th, it was joined by a further 150 on 22nd, and another 150 (giving a grand total of 380) by 29th, most then left with only 40 noted on Nov. 3rd and five on 17th. This flock almost certainly involved birds displaced from Slimbridge.

The table below summarises the main monthly maxima, the only non-tabulated counts were of one at BL on Feb. 8th, and two at Chapel Pill on July 8th.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2			10			3	2	1	10	12	
Littleton Warth		1					1					
Sevenside (Northwick)		2	7	5		2	35	21	53	380	40	20
PWD	1			6	3	10	15	23	39			
CI-Y	2	3	4	3	15		30	70	9	14	1	
Sand Bay								11		102	1	
Axe E./Weston STW			2		1			4	2	4		
CVL			9	4		5	1	62				

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Passage migrant in varying numbers – usually uncommon, but can occur in good numbers on spring passage, often coinciding with northerly or easterly winds. Scarce in winter and inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

As last year there was a reasonable spring passage which took place during the first week of May. About 640 were noted at this time, the comparable figure for 2011 was between 2500 and 3500 depending upon how much overlap there was between flocks as they moved up the Estuary. Notable spring passages were also recorded in 1984 (up to 8000), 1990, 1993, 2000 and 2007. Otherwise counts were normal, that is only small numbers occurred with no discernible pattern, except that all sightings were coastal and no count was over 17. The table below summarises the monthly maxima at all sites.

Monthly maxima of Bar-tailed Godwit at regularly counted coastal sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	2	1	3	7	48				1	1	1	1
Sevenside		4	4	23	290			7	1	1		
PWD	1				80			17	3	1		
CI-Y		4	8	2	205		2	4	17	5	2	2
Sand Bay				1	30							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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years.

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 Estuary.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was the third most important site.

YEAR	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1993 – 2002 Av.	32	33	79	144
2003 – 2010 Av.	23	51	63	137
2011	35	64	104	203
2012	23	12	104	139

April and May average counts

The total spring count was lower in 2012 compared with 2011. This was mainly due to the fact that very few were seen at Sevenside which is perhaps surprising when one considers the good godwit counts for this site mentioned above. As usual the best numbers were seen at CI-Y, the highest count (130) was noted here on May 5th. Also as usual passage was much weaker in the autumn than it was in spring.

First noted on April 11th at CVL (5th in 2011), and most had passed through by May 20th when 17 were seen at CI-Y. The main autumn passage was stronger than in 2011 and lasted from July 7th to Oct. 19th (14th in 2011) when one was seen at Littleton Warth. The table below summarises the monthly maxima. Other sightings (all of single birds and usually in flight) were at Hallatrow in April, Saltford and Wrington in May, and BG in August.

Maxima at main sites									
	Apr		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-31					
OPS/Littleton	3	13	32	1		1	3		1
Sevenside	3	11	12	6	1	4	4		
PWD		6	6	3	2	3	4		
CI-Y	2	92	130	36	4	9	10	5	2
Sand Bay	1	10	31	3	2	2	4	1	
Axe Est./Weston STW		67	1	1			2		
CVL	1	2	1	1		1		2	
BL		1	1	1					

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. A very rare breeder. Uncommon inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by 25% in the last 25 years.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was fifth in National Importance (there are two of International Importance).

YEAR	OPS	S-side	CI-Y	Axe E.	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	535	185	161	68	949
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	181	167	150	56	419
2010/11	289	143	168	16	616
2011/12	199	177	321	26	723

August to February average counts

There was little difference between the records of this species in 2011 and 2012, good numbers were noted at several coastal sites. Perhaps the only change was at CI-Y where the post-breeding (July/August) flock was larger than usual. But as noted in last year's Report this may simply be a reflection of the fact that very few now use the Axe Estuary region at this time of year. The table below summarises the monthly maxima at the main

sites. There was also a number of isolated inland reports usually of birds in flight; these included one at Marshfield and six on Chipping Sodbury Common in April, one at BL in July, one over Westbury-on-Trym (Bristol) in August, and three at Leap Valley and one at Wrington in October.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	290	200	250	300	4	28	160	500	530	635	350	270
Littleton Warth	88	220	90	8		1	23	28	28	150	45	120
Sevenside	230	160	180	140	10	30	205	230	200	95	200	240
R. Avon, Sea Mills	2		2			3			1		2	
PWD/Pill	71	57	63		10	52		68	73	68	11	18
CI-Y	330	265	210	210	30	42	375	420	275	375	325	265
Sand Bay	98	33	1		14	31	96	82	145	102	90	40
Axe Est./Weston STW	31	37	36		14		5	36	2	10	49	30
CVL		1	4						1	2		

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% in the last 25 years.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was the sixth most important site.

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	2011	2012
Spring	59	65	65	57	29	38	93	65	88	73	94
Autumn	180	166	178	136	139	141	184	186	197	205	237

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

There was the good scattering of winter reports, the spring passage was well above average and the autumn passage was one of the strongest on record. Both are shown in the table above.

The best count in spring was at CVL on April 21st when 24 were recorded during a full circuit of the lake. The July and August counts were normal although some late in this period were larger than usual. These included 25 at Northwick Warth on 20th (with 18 here on 28th), 27 (the highest count of the year) near the Yeo mouth (CI-Y) on 30th, and 19 at Weston STW on 19th. The main spring passage lasted from April 10th to May 28th and the autumn passage was from June 26th to Nov. 1st.

The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites.

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	8	3	6	5					
Littleton Warth											9					
Sevenside					3	15	2	14	2	7	25	9				
R. Avon*	5	2	1	5	4				3		4		4	3	5	3
PWD	2			1	1		2	5	4	10	3	5				
CI-Y					5	9		16	12	21	27	6	1	1		
Sand Bay						1				2		1				
Weston STW					1	3			2	3	19		1	1		
Saltford						1			1	1	2					
BG			1	5	6	4		2	13	12	6	5	2	2	2	2
CVL	1		1	2	24	4	1	6	8	5	7	4	2	1	1	
BL	2	1	2	3	8	2	2	4	4	4	5	3	2	2		

R. Avon* includes the river bank at Sea Mills including Horseshoe Bend and the New Cut at Southville.

Other records, mostly of single birds, included sightings at Bradley Stoke in April, at Batheaston NR, Eastville Park, Keynsham, Stoke Park (two) and Weston Moor in May, and on the R. Avon at Keynsham in September.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularius*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

One record: the individual first noted (by A H Davis) at CVL on Sept. 24th, 2011 remained at this site until April 21st. Although it spent much of its time on the causeway at Herriott's Pool, during the cold weather in January and February it was often seen beside the main lake. By the beginning of April it had acquired some small dark spots on its underparts, three weeks later it was in full summer plumage when it was watched chasing and calling to a Common Sandpiper. On 21st there was a large influx of these sandpipers and it seems likely that it left with them on their onward migration overnight.

This was the fourth to be recorded in the Avon area, the previous records were for BG and CVL twice.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common passage migrant; more numerous in autumn. Scarce winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
91	124	70	76	76	51	63	94	110	121	90

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

As with several other wader species sightings were normal with no high counts or notable blanks. Present up to April 12th – a rather early date, and from July 2nd into 2013. As last year there were no reports from ASW. Good numbers used to occur here and probably still do, but access to the sludge lagoons away from the road is impossible at the moment and so no records were forthcoming. Also unusually Severnside produced just one sighting. This year the highest count, nine on Aug. 6th, came from 'Tutshill's Ear Pool' a recently constructed small lake about a kilometre from the mouth of the R. Yeo at CI-Y. This general area has produced some high counts in the past including one of 14 in August 1984 seen during the construction of the first Blake's Pool.

The table below summarises the main monthly maxima. There was also a number of sightings of single birds not included in the table, these were: at Sea Mills (R. Avon) in January; at Chew Stoke STW and Marshfield in February; at New Passage in March (24th); at Widcombe in July (the first seen on autumn passage on 2nd); at Dundry in August; and at Loxton in November.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth						1	1	1			
CI-Y		1		1		3	9	6	2	1	2
Axe Est./Weston STW						1	1		4		
Saltford						1	1	2	1	1	2
Yatton		1	1								
BG			1				1		1		
CVL	4	1	6	2		4	6	7	2	3	1
Chew Magna res.		1	1								
BL	1	1									

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, very scarce in spring. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

The individual (occasionally two were present) that has been noted at CI-Y for the past 13 winters did not return in 2012/13 (there were also a few isolated reports for three winters prior to 1999/00); the autumn records listed below were all thought to refer to migrants. As with other long-stayers we have no definite proof that the same individual was present throughout, but times of occurrence and similar behaviour patterns suggest that this was true. Otherwise very few were seen at just four sites, and no count was over two. The details are as follows.

Severnside – one on Aug. 8th;

PWD – one on Aug. 23rd;

CI-Y - the regular individual was present up to April 7th with two noted on Jan. 2nd and Feb. 9th and 14th, then one on Oct. 19th with two on Nov. 3rd;

CVL – two on Aug. 12th, and Sept. 11th and 12th.

	1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	0	0	0	4	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Autumn	12	5	10	7	10	4	11	6	2	3	4	3	24	6	3	3	2	12	36	9

Spotted Redshank – 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.

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
CI-Y	14	8	5	3	4	3	4	4	6	6	5
CVL	7	23	4	5	1	2	1	7	10	11	2

Maximum single counts for the year at CI-Y and CVL

With one exception, counts were generally again on the low side. The exception was for Severn Beach where a flock of 30 was seen on May 2nd; another flock of seven at Weston STW on 27th was also on the high side and quite late for spring migrants. Previously the highest spring count was 14 at CI-Y in May 1994. As has become the rule (since 1989) one spent both winter periods at Sea Mills, but not two as has sometimes occurred in the recent past. The spring passage was from March 28th to May 27th, and autumn from July 17th to Nov. 29th – a rather late date. The table below summarises the monthly maxima. There were three other sightings of single birds: at BG from July 28th to Aug. 6th, at BL on Aug. 24th and 25th, and at Sand Bay on Nov. 17th and 18th.

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth					2	1	1	7				
Sevenside				1	30		1	1				
Sea Mills, R. Avon	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1
PWD/Avonmouth					1		1					
CI-Y				2	3		2	5	3	1	1	
Axe E./Weston STW					7					1		
CVL			1				1	2	1			

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and scarce in autumn, most frequent at CVL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation concern due to the small size of the UK breeding population.

Probably about four, two on the coast and two inland, were noted at the same sites as last year. This is slightly below average for this species in the Avon area, counts have ranged between one and nine over the last two decades, see the table below. The details for 2012 are as follows:

CI-Y – two were seen by several observers on the Dowlais Farm scrape on May 4th and 5th;

CVL – a juvenile on Aug. 15th, and what was probably a second juvenile on 25th, 26th, 28th, 30th, 31st and Sept. 3rd.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
6	5	6	7	7	7	8	8	4	1	7	8	8	1	2	2	9	4	7	4

Total number of individuals for Avon

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; uncommon in summer, very scarce breeder. Uncommon inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years.

Two races: *totanus* (breeding in the UK, western Europe and further east) and *robusta* (breeding in Iceland). It is not known to which race the Avon populations belong.

WeBS status: In 2010/11 the Estuary was twelfth in International Importance.

YEAR	OPS	Sea Mills	CI-Y	Axe E.	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	49	84	104	183	420
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	41	87	151	207	486
2010/11	29	60	284	364	737
2011/12	33	88	325	275	721

August to February average counts

Redshank con't

Recently outside the breeding season this species appears to be going from strength to strength. Although the last Axe Estuary figure in the above table is a bit down, it seems likely that the 2012/13 figure will again show an increase as a high count of 665 was recorded here on Sept. 22nd, and the count of 520 on April 6th was also notable. Again numbers at CI-Y are holding at a high level, and both Severnside and Sea Mills produced some excellent counts this year. The Reports published during the 1970s give some very high counts. These included: 1973 – “large autumn passage, 700 to 1000 during August and September”; 1977 – “900 at Sand Bay in October”; and 1979 – “1500 at PW (St George’s Warth) in July”.

The table below summarises the monthly maxima at almost all sites. The only other reports were of single birds at Eastville Park (Bristol) on Jan. 21st and BG on April 13th.

Monthly maxima of Redshank at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	15	32	21	9		2	21	16	34	30	52	25
Littleton Warth	50	40	66	43				3	9	70	40	90
Severnside	100	90	200	57		2	35	75	120	235	150	120
Sea Mills, R. Avon	110	55	210	250			16	60	70	40	110	60
PWD/Avonmouth	185	235	75	70	2	70	100	170	240	400	135	215
CI-Y	415	320	345	180	6	9	130	95	165	450	415	380
Sand Bay	35	1	20							50	20	30
Axe Est./Weston STW	225	185	40	520		17	235	300	665	280		192
CVL			3		1	1	3	4	2		1	

Breeding Present again at PWD and CI-Y in May but no firm breeding evidence was received from either site. The single bird at CVL this month was a late spring migrant only seen on 1st.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common winter visitor/passage migrant. Scarce mid-summer and inland. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occurs in the UK.

YEAR	OPS	Severnside	CI-Y	Total
1992/93 – 2001/02 Av.	55	131	20	215
2002/03 – 2009/10 Av.	43	124	26	193
2010/11	23	116	38	177
2011/12	43	103	53	199

August to February average counts

Counts at Severnside seem to be holding firm whilst those at some other coastal sites have improved recently, but there is always the problem of double counting – a flock may be at New Passage on one day and PWD the next, for example. Present in every month of the year at up to eight sites, but between May 27th and July 19th only noted at Severnside.

The table below summarises the monthly maxima at all sites.

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	65	59	20	4	3		3	20	33	60	45	40
Littleton Warth			1					12	21	21		
Severnside	150	130	150	63	20	2	12	80	100	150	200	120
PWD/Avonmouth	61	100	20	60				32	50	100	50	15
CI-Y	52	58	105	22	6		15	29	65	70	42	72
Sand Bay					1			8				
Axe Est./Weston STW					1			1	3			
CVL					2		1					

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce, wind driven visitor, usually in autumn, very rare at other times. Records are about equal between inland and coastal. Description species.

One record, a poor showing after last year's record count: a juvenile/first winter on a wet field near the mouth of the R. Yeo (CI-Y) from Nov. 23rd to 26th (JC, SSt, *et al.*) – see photograph opposite page 80.

The table below gives the number of sightings for the past two decades, half (26) were coastal and half inland.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
2	1	3	1	5	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	6	1	1	3	4	3	11	1

Total number of individuals for Avon

Autumn Migration at Chew Valley Lake

Water levels remained high throughout the autumn period and as a consequence counts were well down on those of 2011. The total ten-day count, at 295, was not the lowest on record but a third of it was made up by a single large Black-tailed Godwit flock that flew over but did not land, and better than usual Snipe counts in September and October. One observer noted that the numbers present would have been even lower were it not for the extensive flooding of Heron's Green at this time. Also the number of wader species recorded, at 17, was one of the lowest on record, it was also 17 in 2007 but it was 31 in 2011.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
425	786	281	834	211	134	108	569	505	1119	295

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
Oystercatcher			1		3							
Ringed Plover						1	1					
Golden Plover												1+
Lapwing	1		28	24	15	25	30	30	27	21	26	34
Knot							1					
Sanderling						1						
Dunlin			2			1	1	1				1
Snipe			4			1	5	22	6	13	26	14
Black-tailed Godwit			1	1	3	11	62*					
Curlew									1		2	
Common Sandpiper	6	2	8	6	7	6	5	1	2	2		
Green Sandpiper			4	3	3	6	2	7	5	2	1	2
Spotted Redshank					2			2				
Greenshank			1		1	2		1				
Wood Sandpiper						1	1					
Redshank	1	3	2	1	4	1	1	2				
Turnstone			1									

CVL - Maximum count in each ten day period - * Flyovers which did not land

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 including Aust and Chittening Warths (SS), and Clevedon to the R. Yeo, including its tidal part (CI-Y).

Only species/subspecies/populations that are mainly migratory have been included, so for example Ringed Plover is included because most are recorded on autumn passage, but Redshank is not because most are resident outside the breeding season. For Dunlin, those that occur in autumn are mainly passage migrants from the subspecies *schinzii* although some wintering *alpina* will probably have arrived by the end of the period.

	2007	08	09	10	11	2012
Sevenside	4216	3005	1858	1828	2471	1914
CI-Y	1934	1823	2983	3102	5452	4231
Ratio CI-Y/SS	0.46	0.61	1.61	1.70	2.21	2.21

Totals of the maximum ten-day counts for Sevenside and CI-Y as given in the main table below

The summary table above shows that over the past three years counts have been fairly stable, in 2012 they were slightly down on those of 2011. The Sevenside total was helped by higher than usual counts of Black-tailed Godwit.

		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	4							1			1	
	CI-Y					1	1						
Ringed Plover	SS			3	5	134	70	44	16	5	2	18	14
	CI-Y	4	6	3	150	460	360	130	52	100	4	85	10
Golden Plover	SS					6							
	CI-Y								3			1	
Grey Plover	SS			1	1	1	3			5	5	7	1
	CI-Y		2	1	1	5				3	24	40	27
Knot	SS				1	3	6	20	13		44	6	1
	CI-Y					1		8	65	50	45	60	150
Sanderling	SS		3	1	2		2	3	4				
	CI-Y	2			3	2	2	1	5				
Little Stint	SS										1		
	CI-Y								1	1	2		
Curlew Sandpiper	SS						1	1	1		1		
	CI-Y				1	1	1		8	3	2	3	
Dunlin	SS		37	29	95	40	35	60	45	25	17	50	400
	CI-Y	10	170	135	250	100	225	140	150	150	200	375	175
Ruff	SS						2					1	1
	CI-Y					1			2	3		1	1
Black-tailed Godwit	SS	4	35	4	2	4	21	53	11	42	2	77	350
	CI-Y	30	10	3	15	70	52	26	9	5		14	7
Bar-tailed Godwit	SS					7		1	1				
	CI-Y	2	1		1	4			14	2	17	1	5
Whimbrel	SS	2	2	2	4	3	4						
	CI-Y	9	8	7	10	7	3		5	2	3	1	
Common Sandpiper	SS	14	5	2	7	11	25	12	3				
	CI-Y	16	12	11	19	16	15	27	4				
Green Sandpiper	CI-Y	1	2	3	9	5	2	2		2	1	2	
Spotted Redshank	SS				1								
	CI-Y												1
Greenshank	SS			1		1	1				1		
	CI-Y		2	1	5	2	1			3	1	1	1

Sevenside and CI-Y - Maximum autumn ten-day counts

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor with at least 172 recorded between 1983 and 2011. Very rare inland.
Description species.

A good coastal passage was noted in June but on only two days, the actual number of individuals involved was hard to assess but was probably in excess of 16; also another was seen inland. The details are as follows:

Severn Beach – on June 8th an adult mid-morning remained for about 30 minutes; at 11.10, just after high tide, a flock of 13 arrived and lingered for some time (D Nevitt *et al.*). Early afternoon, on the falling tide, a flock of 12 (ten pale and two dark) were seen heading off down-channel to be replaced a few minutes later by a flock of nine pale morphs (P D Bowerman); in the evening, at 17.30, there was a flock of five, four pale and one dark, which left up-channel over the Second Severn Crossing (J P Martin *et al.*). During the afternoon of June 22nd three, two pale and one dark, were noted by B Lancaster;

CVL – a pale phase on the evening of May 12th (M Jenkins, R Mielcarek *et al.*) spent most of the time sat on the water and allowed a boat to approach to within two metres, it was even heard calling – see photograph opposite page 81. It roosted and was seen briefly early next morning.

A summary of the sightings for the past ten years is given on page 80.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Uncommon spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn). Rare inland, mainly at CVL, with 31 recorded inland between 1983 and 2011. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years.
Descriptions required for inland records.

Apart from a late surge of records in June during an influx of seabirds associated with strong winds, the spring passage was below average with a total of about 31 seen. The midsummer records could also have been part of this late spring event. The autumn passage was again poor.

Spring passage The first were two past Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare, on April 17th. A trickle of records of up to three then came from various sites along the Estuary until May 27th. Most records as usual were noted at Severn Beach but the total of just seven here on four dates was poor compared with most recent years. There was then a late influx associated with strong southwest winds and rain on June 8th, which brought many other seabirds into the Estuary.

Recorded on 13 days as tabulated below.

	April				May							June	
	17th	18th	27th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	10th	19th	26th	27th	8th	9th
OPS					1				1				
Littleton Warth									1	1			
New Passage				1									
Severn Beach			3			1	2	1				11+	
Portishead													1
CI-Y		1											
Sand Point											1	2	1
Anchor Head	2										1		

Midsummer At least five at Severn Beach on June 22nd and a dark morph adult here on July 1st was also associated with strong winds in the Estuary.

Autumn passage Again poor with just three records: a pale morph at Severn Beach on Aug. 22nd; one at CI-Y on 30th, and a dark morph at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on Sept. 24th.

Two inland records, both from CVL in October, were as follows:

Two adults on 9th, one pale and one dark phase, arrived at 11.00 and lingered before departing to SW at 12.15 (R Mielcarek, C Craig); and a dark phase juvenile on 11th flew W after being flushed by a boat at 10.25 (R Laughton).

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor. Rare inland with nine recorded between 1983 and 2011. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European Breeding population is found in the UK. Descriptions required for inland records.

An unusual year with all but one in spring and most of them in June. There was just a single autumn record. A minimum of 12 were recorded as follows.

Spring passage Recorded on only four dates: one up-channel at Anchor Head on April 26th; at least five at Severn Beach and one at Sand Point on June 8th; two at Severn Beach and one at Sand Point next day and a late record from Severn Beach again on 22nd. The June records all came during periods of strong SW winds. Whether the last really represents a late spring record is a moot point.

Autumn One headed to NE off Sand Point on Nov. 2nd.

SKUA sp *Stercorarius sp.*

Three records of unidentified skuas as follows:

Sand Pt. – one on June 8th and 9th was probably a Pomarine (P A Bowyer);

Sand Bay – a moribund small skua found by a dog walker on Sept. 18th was picked up by a Secret World employee who passed it onto West Hatch where, unfortunately, it died. The measurements reported to us indicate either Long-tailed or Arctic but they were not diagnostic of either, while no plumage description or photographs were taken to our knowledge;

CVL – at 15.35 on Jan. 5th a dark juvenile, either Pomarine or Arctic, flew in high over Woodford Bank, spooked the gull roost and departed to SW (S Mackie, K E Vinicombe).

Skuas in the Avon area

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Pomarine Skua		59	4	3	13	3	17	2	5	17+
Arctic Skua	54	65	23	50+	51	37	47	17	40+	40+
Long-tailed Skua						1				
Great Skua	16	26	10	26+	13	4	14	3	13	12
Skua sp.	1	58	11	6	7		5		9	3

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. A total of 37 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

One record: Severn Beach, one complete with a hood on June 9th (C J Stone, B Lancaster, J P Martin *et al.*). This is the second year in succession that this species has been recorded at this site.

A summary of the sightings for the past 20 years is given on page 87.

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the past 25 years.

A fairly good year: recorded on 33 dates (23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, eleven in 2010 and 26 in 2011), mainly in the winter periods, but with a good spring passage including an unusual June influx in stormy weather.

January/February There was a small influx at the start of the year then just two more records, both from Ladye Bay, Clevedon including the largest flock in the first winter period of 110 on the sole February date. Inland records comprised a first-winter at CVL and five at ASW as tabulated opposite.

	January					February
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	21st	18th
OPS				3		
New Passage			1			
Severn Beach			30			
Portishead	1		1			
Ladye Bay					6	110
ASW				5		
CVL		1				

January and February records

Spring passage The only March record was of 21 at Severn Beach on 3rd. The next were 40 here on April 3rd followed by 150 on 10th, and 15 on 16th. Next day there were 28 at OPS, 50 at Aust and three at Severn Beach. May produced one at Severn Beach on 4th then 75 at Sand Point on 13th with 22 here on 27th. An unseasonably windy June began with one at OPS on 1st. The 8th was the big seabird day in the Estuary and produced one at OPS, 35 at Aust Warth, at least 40 at Severn Beach and seven at Sand Point. Next day just one was at Sand Point. There followed 20 at Ladye Bay on 16th, one at Severn Beach on 22nd and another at Sand Point next day. Inland spring records came from CVL where there was a first-winter on April 5th and one on May 1st.

Summer An adult at CVL on July 4th was unusual.

Second winter Records at the end of the year all came from the Estuary, typically on windy days. Severn Beach had four records; the barrier of the Second Severn Crossing causes them to linger at this well-watched site. Most records, seven in total, came from the Sand Point and Weston-s-Mare areas as did the largest flock of 52 on Nov. 10th. This apparent increase from the lower Estuary is mainly due to more intensive winter seawatching at Sand Point and Anchor Head. They are presumably more frequent here than further up the Estuary, but often overlooked as they tend not to linger.

	November			December						
	2nd	10th	22nd	4th	7th	9th	23rd	27th	29th	30th
Shepperdine			1							
New Passage						1				
Severn Beach			20				30		5	6
Ladye Bay										20
Sand Point	17	52		7			1			49
Weston-s-Mare					23			29		

November and December records

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Av. of 3 highest counts	303	263	166	416	88	170	233	92	200	83
No. of dates recorded	22	30	29	22	27	23	19	5	15	14

Sevenside – Data over the last ten years

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

[RR]

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers of non-breeders remain throughout the summer. Huge winter roost at CVL. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

WeBS status: The Estuary was the fourth most important site in 2010/11 (CVL was not listed due to lack of counts).

Our commonest wintering gull. This species was reported from 19% of gardens in the WGS in 2011/12, down on the 30% of the cold winter of 2010/11, but about average for the eleven seasons since the survey began.

The large winter numbers typically tailed off rapidly in March. As usual most records in April and May came from the coast where there was the regular passage of migrants, mainly immatures.

The first to return were noted in June with for example two adults at CVL on 8th, and the first juvenile was at CI-Y on 17th. Numbers were much larger by the end of the month with a further increase in July and then good number to the end of the year. J P Martin noted very few juveniles in a flock of 450 at Littleton on July 21st but a higher proportion amongst 560 at New Passage on Aug. 8th and 37% were juveniles in a sample of 177 here on 13th. Might this suggest better breeding success in colonies further afield?

Black-headed Gull con't

The only four figure count away from the sites tabulated below was of 1500 on Kenn Moor on Sept. 29th. Other notable counts included 750 at Avonmouth Docks on Jan. 6th and 690 at Sand Point on July 7th. As is usual no regular counts were received from CVL. The high counts at CI-Y during the autumn were attracted to the site by the very wet conditions that prevailed at this time.

Monthly maxima of Black-headed Gull at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3000	1500	50	10	50	750	1000	600	700	1000	400	150
Littleton Warth	23	2	1	1	0	0	450	320	350	250	70	5
NP/Northwick Warth	310	290	90	4	8	43	380	690	550	345	130	600
Severn Beach			310	45	51	50	200		130		20	
CI-Y	2200	3000	1500	60	15	45	1200	1000	3000	2750	1500	675
Sand Bay	300	255	50		6	270	790	600	275	375	175	45
Axe Estuary	90	367	60	44	11	56	450	740	630	40		50
Weston STW	307	237	24	88	26	8	636	409	527	572	212	40
Sea Mills	100	250	110		2	3	155	120	110	111	70	
Saltford	111	100			2	12	105	93	175	145	450	630
BG	238	175	14				1	8	24	34		
BL	2000	100	300		6	1	100	243	13	740	9	768

Other records An albino was reported at PWD on Jan. 7th and a leucistic adult was photographed at CVL on Nov. 7th.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce in winter. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

Three in the first winter period were followed by an early movement in late March and early April. Numbers at CVL were only average apart from an excellent flock on April 25th. The autumn passage was rather poor.

Winter 2011/12 The first-winter individual from December 2011 remained at ASW until Jan. 5th, it reappeared on Feb. 1st and stayed until 18th, two were present on 3rd. An adult was at Severn Beach on Jan. 3rd and another was at CVL on 7th.

Spring passage The first record was of five at CVL on March 24th. Next day a large group of 17 (a first-winter and a mixture of adult and second-winter birds) flew up-river past New Passage, and the CVL flock increased to six. On March 26th one arrived at PWD staying until April 6th with three present on 1st. On March 31st a first-winter moved up-river with some Black-headed Gulls off Severn Beach and then off New Passage. In mid-April there were two at CVL on 16th with three (two adults and a first-winter) on 18th. These were followed by an exceptional 34 here on 25th (mainly adults but with at least seven first-winter and two second-winter birds). Just one remained here on 26th. In May there was one at CI-Y on 12th and another at OPS on 27th.

Autumn passage First were two (adult and first-summer) at Northwick Warth on July 15th followed by one at CI-Y on 20th. There followed a first-winter at PWD on Aug. 19th and one at CI-Y on Sept. 23rd. Another two were here on Oct. 14th and 15th, an adult at CVL on 23rd and 24th and the last of the year again at CI-Y on 30th.

Summary										
	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	:	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Days recorded at CVL	1		2	5					1	2
Maximum CVL count	1		6	34					1	1
Days recorded elsewhere	4	16	7	3	2		2	1		3
Max. Count elsewhere	1	2	17	1	1		2	1		2

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	13	2	2	5	3	6	3	19	6	15
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	1	3	1	2	5	1	3	5	2	1

CVL – average counts

LAUGHING GULL *Larus atricilla*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

An adult in summer plumage flew up-river past Severn Beach at 13.20 on May 1st; it was heard to call (B Lancaster).

This is the third local record following one on the R. Avon at Bedminster in June, and again in July 1999, and another at CVL in April 2006 which like the Severn Beach sighting was only seen briefly.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

Records in the first-winter period were about average, although the expected early spring passage never materialised at CVL. The May records were all from the coast in the first nine days of the month and mostly moving up-channel. The highest June counts came from the last few days of the month.

The first returning juvenile was at New Passage on July 22nd and four were here on Aug. 19th along with a second-winter, whilst an adult and juvenile were seen hawking for insects nearby at Pilning on the same day. Thereafter no count exceeded two to the year's end.

The recent huge increase in the population of this species in some areas, for example in parts of nearby Dorset, has not been reflected locally.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites	16	17	14	17	23	23	20	21	18	19
Max count	8	5	11	6	8	7	6	4	8	6

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below, with records from the following eight sites contributing to the bottom row: ASW, Axe Estuary, Cl-Y, Marshfield, Pill, Pilning, Saltford and Uphill.

Monthly maxima at main sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS			1		1	4	6	2	2	1		
New Passage			2	1			2	5	1	1		1
Severn Beach					4	1	1			1		1
PWD	3	1				3	4	1	2		2	
Portishead area					3		1					
Weston STW							1	1	1	1		
Sea Mills	1		2							1		
BG		1										
CVL	3	2	2	1		1	2	1		1	2	2
BL	1	3					1			1	1	1
Eight other sites	2	3			3	2	2	2	1	4	2	1

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 usually on upland or flooded fields and are often thinly spread elsewhere. Huge (c.18000) winter roost at CVL and significant one on the Estuary that is difficult to count. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European population occurs in the UK.

Not a species that is systematically recorded, making meaningful comparisons with previous years difficult. The tabulated sites were the only ones where regular counts were at made.

As usual no roost counts were attempted at CVL, a major undertaking. Also as usual very few (max. five at the Axe Estuary in February) were seen on the coast south of Portishead, large numbers usually only occur here during severe winter weather.

Monthly maxima of Common Gull at regularly counted sites												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	200	500	30	1		1	5	15	7	40	35	40
New Passage	350	30	17	5			1	1	11	23	170	120
Severn Beach	26			30	14	1			4		16	
BL	650	95	5	2						50	137	1500

Most counts from elsewhere were in single or double-figures, the only in three or four-figures were as follows:

Marshfield – 200 at Shirehill Lane on Jan. 25th and 2000 here on Feb. 17th;

Keynsham – 200 at Somerdale on Nov. 25th and 200 again at the rugby ground on Dec. 23rd;

Saltford – 150 on Dec. 24th and 200 on 26th;

BG – 110 on Jan. 11th and 210 on Feb. 12th;

Alderley – 102 on Dec. 9th;

Bradley Stoke – 142 on Feb. 28th.

As usual few were noted between May and July. A total of 14 at Severn Beach on May 2nd represented spring passage as did six here the next day. Later there was a first-summer here on 26th and an adult on June 9th. Other single individuals at OPS on June 21st and Severn Beach next day were precursors to regular records from OPS through July and the first back at CVL. The first juvenile was at Severn Beach on 27th.

A number of unusual individuals were noted at CVL as follows: two adults with mantles as pale as Black-headed Gull on Jan. 20th (R Mielcarek); an adult with white primaries in the roost the next evening and one with mainly white primaries, perhaps the same, on 28th; a first-winter with a particularly dark head and underparts on Feb. 9th; a second-winter with obvious black markings in the tail and faint dark marks on the tertials on 16th and one with a similar tail pattern, perhaps the same, seen more briefly on 26th.

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 or in summer. A total of at least 67 were recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Two records, as follows:

CVL – an adult was found feeding along the road to Woodford Lodge in the afternoon on Jan. 3rd (R Mielcarek *et al.*), it allowed a very close approach, and was seen to have a gash on the underside of its left wing. It remained around Woodford Lodge, often sitting on a pontoon, until 21st, and was relocated at the dam on Feb. 13th where it remained around the Tea Rooms car park until the 23rd. During its stay it recovered from its injury whilst feeding on a daily handout of bread and scraps – see photograph opposite page 96;

BL – an adult photographed on Jan. 18th (N R Milbourne) was possibly the bird seen in the roost at CVL on Dec. 12th, 2011.

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past 20 years is given on page 87.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

[RR]

Western subspecies *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 ones in other towns. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European breeding population is found in the UK.

WeBS status: the Estuary was seventh in National Importance (after three of International Importance) for 2010/11 (CVL is not listed due to a lack of counts).

The table opposite shows the maximum counts from the main sites excluding CVL, which is the most important site but where no full count was attempted this year. The regularly counted sites still reflect the species' historic status as a passage migrant and summer visitor with the highest numbers during these times. Whether such patterns are reflected at the main site is unknown because of the difficulty of counting the CVL roost.

Monthly maxima of Lesser Black-backed Gull at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	2	5	60	5	250	250	15	1	1	2	
Littleton Warth		2	4	4	12	7	17	98			2	
New Passage	2	11	14	18	17	7	7	35	10	13	2	2
CI-Y	6	14	20	19	24	6	5	5	20	9	5	4
Axe Estuary	6	10	26	23	16	4	20	63	33	8		5
Sea Mills	9	7		3	1	4	4	26	5	4	2	
BL	4	188	530	36	44	100	12	13	200	100	21	20
Saltford	2	12		7	50	53	104	26	10	10	19	49

A count of 1000 at Sand Point on June 8th was the highest received, these were thought to be mostly from Steep Holm probably responding to the stormy weather that day. The only other high counts away from the main sites (tabulated above) were of 120 at the R. Avon, Keynsham on June 9th and 115 along the R. Avon in Bath from Norfolk Crescent to Fieldings Footbridge on July 27th.

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, as follows: adults on Feb. 6th, March 20th, and two on April 13th. The table below gives the numbers seen during the last two decades.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
5	2	5	0	0	5	10	5	1	6	5	9	11	7	7	4	8	9	3	4

Number of individuals seen each year

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

[RR]

Western subspecies *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 ones in other towns. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the long term and the non-breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the past 25 years.

WeBS status: the Estuary was third in National Importance (after two of International Importance) in 2010/11.

The table below shows the maximum counts from the main sites excluding CVL (where the roost was not counted this year).

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	5	11	12	60	82	200	150	16	3	9	3	4
Littleton Warth		12	17	6	17	6	6	15	1			14
New Passage	150	25	15	60	27	29	6	70	13	9	15	80
CI-Y	55	85	80	70	325	30	65	215	55	75	85	95
Axe Estuary	32	32	32	13	43	19	50	40	67	2		50
Leap Valley, Downend	5	3	1	3	8	1	1	2	10	30	5	5
Saltford		2		11	80	89	25	2	23	4	14	70
BL	154	21	30	2	5	10			183	645	123	71

The only counts in three figures from other sites were as follows: 120 at Avonmouth on Nov. 4th and 110 at BG on Sept. 9th. The October count from BL was high for this site (N R Milbourne). At least six fell victim to Peregrine attack on Steep Holm in May.

L. a. argentatus

Scarce but doubtless overlooked winter visitor.

There were five reports as follows: from New Passage, at least one adult with a large gathering a big gulls feeding on the rocks at low tide on Jan. 8th; a first-winter at BL on 16th and 21st (N R Milbourne); another first-winter at CVL on March 13th (R Mielcarek) and a second-winter here on Nov. 9th. This subspecies is scarce locally despite being a common winter visitor to the Midlands, for example as close to our area as a Gloucester rubbish-tip in some years. It is doubtless overlooked to some degree, also not all individuals are safely identifiable, especially immatures.

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

An average year, as can be seen from the table below, but only CVL and BL had counts of more than one.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites	9	5	7	7	11	11	9	10	10	8
Max count	n/a	9	9	5	4	5	6	9	10	3+

Number of sites and maximum count at any one site

Monthly breakdown												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL – min. count of Individuals	2	2	1	5	1	3	7	8	6	4	2	3
BL – estimate of individuals	4	1		1		6		2	3	3	2	1
Counts at six other sites	3	2	1	1	1	1		2	2		1	

As tabulated above, recorded from six other sites, the same number as in 2010, all were single individuals as follows: an adult at PWD on Jan. 7th; first-winters at New Passage on Jan. 15th and Feb 13th, and CI-Y on Jan. 29th, Feb.12th and 14th; PWD on March 30th; BG on April 10th and 24th; a third-year at OPS on June 6th and 30th; a juvenile moulting to first-winter at New Passage on Aug. 5th; at CI-Y on 10th; at OPS on Sept. 29th and 30th (third-year); an adult at BG on 30th and at PWD on Nov. 7th.

Hybrids between Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull are relatively frequent in the mixed colonies in Bristol and they rather closely resemble this species. Observers should report and note age classes of all records of this species and take care with identification, especially away from the two regular sites. (Eds.)

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoideus*

Very scarce winter visitor; occurs more frequently than Glaucous Gull. A total of 38 were recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Two records, probably of a single individual, the first since 2008, the details are given below; a summary of the records for the past decade can be found after the Great Black-backed Gull entry.

CVL – an adult photographed in Heron's Green in the morning of Jan. 25th (B & J Bowler, M Hamziz, R Turner);

BL – an adult, probably the same as above, in the late afternoon of Jan. 26th before flying off to E (N R Milbourne *et al.*).

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Very scarce winter visitor with 13 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Two records, the first since 2008, the details are given below; a summary of the records for the past decade can be found after the Great Black-backed Gull entry.

Estuary – a second-winter that flew close past New Passage on Jan. 5th (P D Bowerman) was seen again here, distantly, at 11.00 on Jan. 8th (J P Martin *et al.*) and then at 15.15 the same day in flight to S over PWD (L Wheatland, N Sey). It was seen briefly in flight over St. George's Wharf (also PWD) the next day (C J Stone);

CVL – a first-winter coming to bread on Herriott's Pool around noon on March 24th was photographed (B Ofield *et al.*).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon breeding resident - nests in small numbers on Steep Holm. Generally uncommon elsewhere (perhaps surprisingly so); seldom recorded inland away from the reservoirs. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% in the past 25 years.

More widespread than for many years as shown in the main table below. Counts did not quite reach last year's peak at CVL but good numbers were noted here throughout the spring and summer (where dead Pike were an attraction).

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of sites	12	13	12	15	20	17	15	18	24	27
Max. count	5	22	18	11	10	9	21	19	36	26
Steep Holm pairs	10	13	9	10	11	n/a	13	n/a	n/a	n/a

Great Black-backed Gull – 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	6	3	2	3	3	4	5	7	3	3	2	2
Littleton Warth			1			1	1				1	1
New Passage	3	2	3	6	1	2	3	2	1	1	3	1
PW	3	1	2	1	1	1				1	1	
CI-Y	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	4	2	3		2
Sand Bay	1	7	2	2				5	2	2	3	3
Axe Est.		2		2			1	2		1		
R. Avon, Sea Mills										2	1	
BG	2	2	3					5			2	
CVL	4	6	16	13	14	12	20	18	7	7	5	4
BL	8	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	6	2	1	3

Occasional records came from a further 16 sites – nine of which were inland as follows: Litton on Jan. 27th; MOD, Abbey Wood on 31st; Langford on Feb. 12th (two); Folly Farm on March 11th; Stanton Drew on April 22nd; Avon Gorge below the suspension bridge on June 6th (two); Newton St. Loe on 9th; R. Avon at Rownham on July 18th and Oct. 6th; Hotwells (Bristol) on Aug. 9th; and Chew Magna Reservoir on Sept. 16th (two).

Breeding Again there were no reports from either Steep Holm or Denny Island in the Bristol Channel.

Rare gulls in the Avon area

	1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	2002
Sabine's Gull				2	5		1		2+	
Laughing Gull							1			
Franklin's Gull								1		
Ring-billed Gull		4+	3+	2		2	1		2+	2
Caspian Gull										2
Iceland Gull	1	1					1	6		3
Kumlien's Gull				1	1					1
Glaucous Gull			1					1	1	2

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Sabine's Gull		2	1		1				1+	1
Laughing Gull				1						1
Franklin's Gull						1				
Ring-billed Gull	3+	3+		3	2+	3+	3+	2	4+	2
Caspian Gull		1		2	1	1				
Iceland Gull	1		1		1	2				1
Kumlien's Gull	1	1	1	1					1	
Glaucous Gull				1		1				2

Total number of rare gulls recorded in each of the last twenty years

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant; generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding range has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

A poor year with just three records, none of which were inland. The details are as follows:

OPS – one on May 1st;

New Passage – a juvenile on July 22nd;

Severn Beach – one on June 8th.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Coastal	9	5	1	19	2	14	3	1	6	3
Inland	6	1	0	7	2	1	4	3	3	0

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. Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

A poor year except for one day in early May.

Spring passage The first were two at CVL from April 23rd to 25th, an average arrival date. An obvious movement occurred on May 1st with at least 83 recorded at Severn Beach and 14 at OPS but the only other coastal records were on May 4th, when there were two at Severn Beach and one at Ladye Bay, and June 8th when one was again at Severn Beach. At CVL the species was recorded in ones or twos on eight dates up to May 18th but there were no other inland records.

Autumn passage Poor with the first, a juvenile, at Severn Beach on July 22nd. At CVL there were records for Aug. 12th and 13th, and Sept. 23rd to 27th but no count exceeded four. A juvenile was present at Dowlais Farm, Cl-Y from Sept. 29th until Oct. 6th, an unexceptional last date; it was regularly seen actively feeding over the farm scrape.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	3	2	2	1	2	5	3	2	14	2
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	36	70	31	30	13	10	10	43	24	3
No of days recorded (total for year)	25	46	17	42	15	14	17	24	40	15

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

Although the total number recorded was average there were two unusual records, an exceptionally early spring record and a large group inland in the autumn.

Spring passage One heard and then seen in flight at the unusual location of ASW on Feb. 18th (G Hughes) is the earliest Avon record. There are a number of previous March Avon records, including 12th in 1960 (one at CVL) and 13th in 2004 (two at PWD) but there is at least one January record from the Estuary, one at Wall Common, Somerset on Jan. 5th, 2007. The only other spring records were of one at OPS on April 17th, two here on May 1st and two at Sand Pt. on 26th.

Autumn passage The first autumn record was of one at New Passage on July 27th, but the only other record was, unusually, of eight, including a metal-ringed adult and two begging juveniles, that spent most of Sept. 9th at CVL.

Unusual Terns in the Avon area

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Little Tern	16	6	1	26	4	15	7	3	9	3
White-winged Black Tern			1							
Sandwich Tern	86	13	6	21	4	35	15	23	35+	15

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. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 50% of the UK breeding population occurs in fewer than ten sites.

A poor year apart from three flocks seen in April.

The first in spring was one at CVL on the slightly late date of April 17th while the last in autumn were ten here on the early date of Sept. 9th.

The spring coastal passage started with 78 at Severn Beach on April 30th but there were only 25 coastal bird-days in May (with 14 of these from Ladye Bay on the 4th) and three in June.

The autumn passage on the coast involved records from OPS (one on Aug. 20th), Littleton Warth (seven on 19th), and New Passage (six on July 28th, four on Aug. 2nd, one on 11th, 30 on 17th, nine on 18th and one on 20th).

At CVL spring numbers were above average with two large flocks in April, c.85 on 23rd and 68 on 25th. The numbers in autumn were below average as was the number of dates they occurred, see table below. The only other dates that recorded double-figure counts here were: May 1st (11), Aug. 19th (21) and 24th (28), and Sept. 9th (10).

Common Tern - summary for CVL										
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep				
No. of days recorded	7	13	4	5	5	1				
Maximum count	85	11	8	3	28	10				

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	28	3	11	20	5	17	5	23	14	55
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	24	37	9	35	6	38	38	80	20	20
No. days recorded (total for year)	35	27	32	44	53	61	44	61	47	35

Common Tern – average counts at CVL

Records from the other reservoirs were as follows:

BG – four on Aug. 27th;

BL – single birds on April 25th and 26th, June 8th and 27th, and July 22nd.

Unusual inland records were of two heard calling at c.23.00 over Bishopston on July 25th and one at Kingsgate Park, Yate on Aug. 8th.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but can occasionally occur in large flocks in the Estuary under favourable conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often appears after westerly gales. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding range has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

A poor year, see table below, with only four counts in double figures.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Max count for year	280	1000	1000+	80	45	43	13	25	150	25
Av. of 3 highest counts	123	580	378	44	33	42	9	16	135	20
No. days recorded during year	15	19	14	19	32+	26	25	19	40	22

Annual details for Avon

Spring passage The first were three at OPS and one at Ladye Bay on April 15th. There were then two at CVL on 19th with ten here on 23rd, five on 24th, three on 25th, and one on 28th and 29th. On the 28th there was also one at Aust with 17 at Severn Beach on 30th.

The only coastal records for May were two at OPS on 1st and 18 at Ladye Bay on 3rd, whilst at CVL there was one on 7th and 8th, two on 11th and one on 28th. The highest count of the spring was 25 on June 8th at Severn Beach, with a first-summer here the next day being the last of the spring; there was also a first-summer at BG on the 4th.

Autumn passage The first to return were two adults at CVL on July 17th. The August records were of one at Severn Beach on 22nd, the only autumn record from the coast, and one at CVL on 29th and 31st (a juvenile). The last of the year was another at CVL on Sept. 26th.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

There were a number of reports of unidentified *sterna* terns as follows:

OPS – two on May 5th were considered to be probably Arctics;

Common/Arctic Tern con't

New Passage – three on April 15th were considered to be probably Arctics so possibly the birds seen at OPS that day, and one on Aug. 11th;

Severn Beach – 350 on May 1st, the largest flock of *sterna* terns seen during the year, and one on June 8th and 9th.

Spring Coastal Tern passage

The table below estimates the annual spring passage of terns up the Bristol Channel.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Common	223	37	142	120	291	561	3	2	593	103
Arctic	388	1982	1134	136	131	201	21	0	524	41
'Commic'	973	2775	208	849	485	606	138	240	2410	352
Total	1584	4794	1484	1105	907	1368	162	242	3527	496

Total of the highest count from a coastal site for each day in April and May

The second table below gives the ten-day maxima at CVL during the autumn, cf. the wader table on page 77.

Autumn passage at CVL									
	Jul			Aug			Sep		
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28
Little Gull									1
Black Tern			1		2	1			4
Common Tern	2		3		21	28	1	10	
Arctic Tern		2				1	1		1

Maximum count in each ten day period

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records prior to 2008. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European breeding population is found in the UK.

Descriptions required for inland records

An average year, with the details involving six individuals as follows.

OPS – one paddling up-river on the incoming tide on Oct. 6th was only the third record for the site;

Littleton Warth – one swimming up-river very close to the salt marsh edge over a big high tide on Sept. 18th;

Northwick Warth – one on Sept. 22nd;

Severn Beach – one floating down-river on Sept. 8th, and another seen drifting up-river on the rising tide on Dec. 31st was later retrieved in an exhausted condition from the beach and taken into overnight care;

Sand Pt. – one on May 12th was the only spring record.

Auks in the Avon area

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Guillemot	8	8	1	11	4	3	37	3	11	6
Razorbill		1	1	2					1	
Guillemot/Razorbill	3				1				6+	
Little Auk				2	1		1	1		

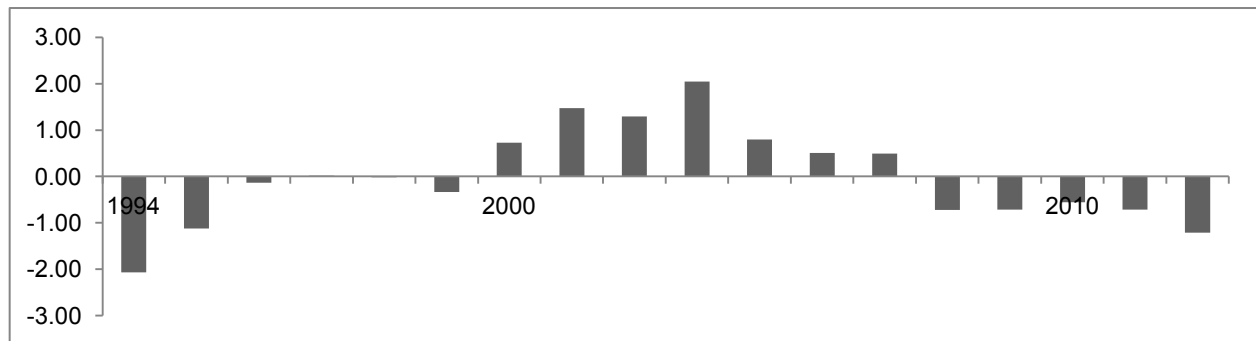
Total number of auks for the past ten years.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia var*

Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.

Survey Data This species was counted by BBS from 58 tetrads which represented 32% of those surveyed, significantly down from 44% in 2011 and the lowest figure recorded since 1999. The Avon population has shown an increase of 2% since 1994 and is estimated at 7700 breeding pairs. Across the UK, there has been a population decline of 13% since 1995 with a current estimate of 550000 pairs.

The average BBS count rate per hour since 1994 is 3.3 and the chart below shows how each year has varied from this long term average. The count rate has increased by 69% since 1994.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 3.3

WGS data showed a decrease, with records from 35% of gardens as against 47% in 2011. However, the WGS rate remained constant with an average of 1.6 per garden per week.

The numbers counted by CABS continued the increase of the last two years as is shown below:

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
31	27	24	16	13	14	11	16	18	21

CABS rates per hour

The only three figure flocks noted were: 136 in Bristol on Feb. 12th with 134 here on April 28th and 102 on Nov. 2nd; 140 at London Road, Bath on Oct. 6th; 220 on 28th on stubble by the R. Avon at Keynsham with 140 here on Nov. 11th; and 110 at Temple Quay, Bristol on Dec. 6th.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Fairly common but declining breeding resident. The species is graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because at least 20% of the European breeding population is in the UK.

Across the UK, the long term trend is a decline of 8% since 1970, with the short term trend of a 9% increase since 1995. The estimated UK population is 260000 pairs.

It is widespread in small numbers. After last year's welcome increase in the number of sites where this species was recorded, 2012 saw the number back down to the level of the previous three years.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
22	17	30	33	90	73	64	73	94	68

Number of sites in Avon

Flocks Sizeable flocks over 35 were reported as follows: 140 at Grickstone Farm, Little Sodbury on Feb. 8th with 56 here on April 24th; 150 at Old Sodbury on Feb. 8th; 50 at Marshfield on April 21st; 134 at Weston STW on Jan. 14th and a good run of records at OPS with monthly maxima of 80 in January; 70 in February and 35 in December.

The only possible migrants noted were: a single bird in a flock of Woodpigeons flying NE over New Passage on March 25th, and two over Leap Valley on Oct. 27th in a large movement of Woodpigeons.

Breeding: Potential breeding activity was recorded as follows: a pair, with the male performing a display flight, at Littleton Warth on March 10th and again on April 8th with another male singing; a male calling in Badock's Wood, Westbury-on-Trym on March 29th and April 1st; four singing at both Horton on April 24th and Hawkesbury Upton on 26th; one singing at Sheep's Wood, Westbury-on-Trym on May 17th; one at a nest at

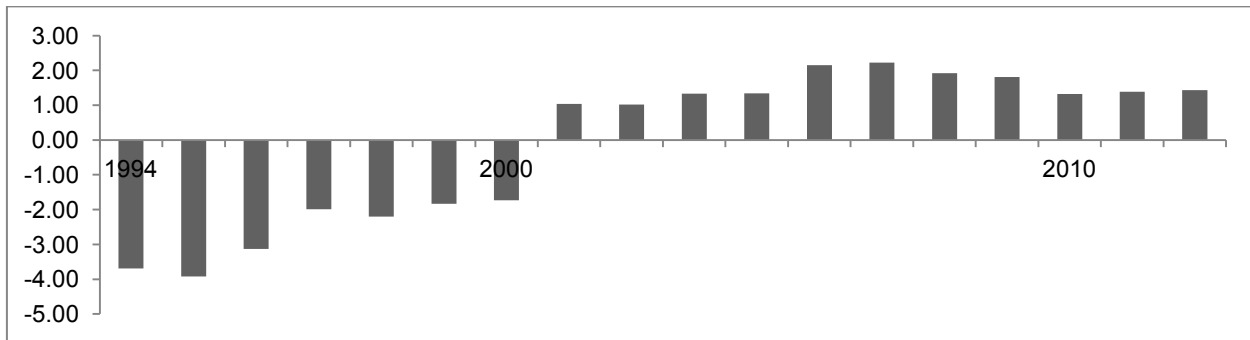
Snuffs Mill on 19th; six singing males at CVL (two pairs in 2011); and a pair at Weston STW. Observers are again encouraged to submit all Stock Dove breeding records (*Eds*).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident and probable migrant.

Survey Data This species was counted by BBS in 180 tetrads which represented 99% of those surveyed; an increase of two percentage points against that found in 1994. The Avon population is estimated at 21500 breeding pairs, the eighth most common breeding species. Across the UK, the long term trend is an increase of 30% since 1970, with the short term trend of a 37% increase since 1995. The estimated UK population is 5.4 million pairs.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 11.45 and the chart below shows how each year has varied from this long term average. The count rate has increased by 66% since 1994.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 11.45

In the WGS it was recorded in all participating gardens, the same as the previous three years, and numbers remained broadly constant with a 3% decline from 2011 but a 49% increase over 10 years.

CABS data showed a decline of 17% in the rate per hour from 2011, and a 6% decline over 10 years but a 35% increase since 1994.

January to May Three figure counts were recorded as follows: 100 at West Littleton on Feb. 23rd; 195 at New Passage on March 23rd including 165 to NE, with 120 (81 to NE) on 24th and 225 (192 to NE) here on 25th; 300 at Middledown House on April 6th; 800 at Marshfield also on 6th; 154 at Weston STW on May 3rd and 100 at Horton on 6th.

Breeding As usual, breeding activity was not well reported. A nest was found at Leap Valley on Feb. 25th where at least three pairs bred; there were 12 pairs with at least three young at Weston STW; and a juvenile was seen at New Passage on Oct. 13th.

Autumn Migration Sizeable movements were seen as follows: 225 over Horton on Oct. 24th were a precursor to a major movement that happened around Oct. 27th. Huge flocks were seen moving west along the South Wales coast and these were mirrored in our area by – 390 to SW over Leap Valley; 400 over Bradley Stoke and 410 to S over Savages Wood, all on 27th. These was followed by 780 to N in three hours at Sand Point on Oct. 28th; 205 to N at Sand Point in 1.5 hours on Nov. 1st; 210 to N at Middle Hope in 1.25 hours on 5th; 265 to SW at Brandon Hill in 1.5 hours on 6th; 1300 to N at Sand Point in 1.5 hours also on 6th; 155 to N here on 11th and 110 over Leap Valley on Dec. 1st.

November and December Three figure counts were recorded as follows: 150 at New Passage on Oct. 28th; 168 at BL also on 28th; 194 at Horton on 29th; 160 at Norton on Nov. 28th; 350 at Marshfield on 30th and 600 here on Dec. 9th; 600 at Shirehill Farm also on 9th; 250 at Flax Bourton on 10th; 200 at BL on 19th and 500 at CVL on 21st.

A leucistic individual was present at Weston STW on April 19th and May 19th.

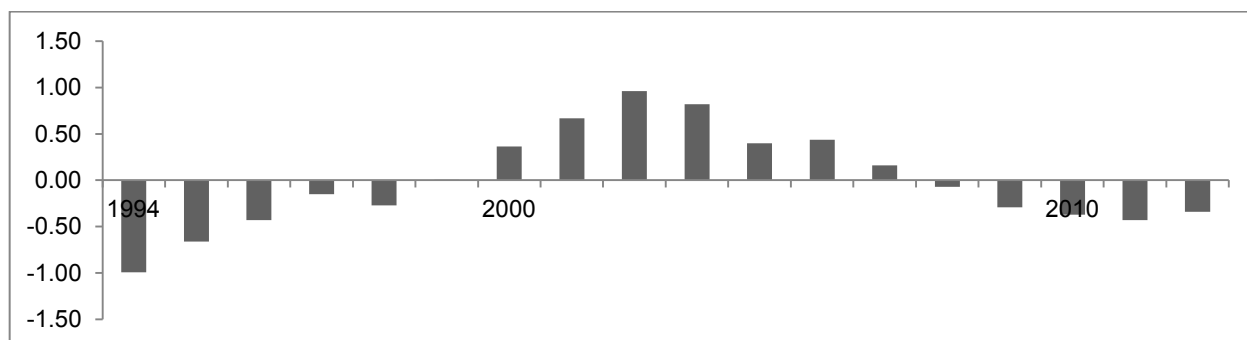
COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident.

Survey data This species was counted by BBS from 119 tetrads which represented 66% of the squares surveyed; a decrease of a percentage point against that found in 1994. Across the UK, the long term trend is an

increase of 233% since 1970, with the short term trend of a 23% increase since 1995. The estimated UK population is 990000 pairs.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 2.11 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average. The local count rate per hour has increased by 58% since 1994.



Collared Dove – the annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 2.11

The local breeding population is estimated as 3200 pairs.

WGS recorded this species in 88% of participating gardens (87% in 2011) with numbers the same as the previous year. However, CABS data showed a dramatic 49% reduction from 2011. Set against a CABS decline of 84% over ten years and a decline of 81% since 1994, this data should be closely monitored in the coming years.

A total of 42 double-figure counts were received (27 in 2011). Those of 15 or more were as follows: 15 at Nailsea West End on Jan. 2nd with 16 here on June 6th; 21 at Kingston Seymour on Feb. 6th; 18 at New Passage on March 23rd with 20 there on 24th; 18 on June 10th and up to 23 from October to the end of the year; a series of high counts at Redland from August to the year end with the highest of 19 on Nov. 2nd; 15 at Avonmouth on Oct. 10th; and 15 at Cl-Y on Nov. 3rd.

Breeding Surprisingly the only records suggesting possible breeding were two males singing at Henbury on May 13th and one male singing at Westbury-on-Trym during May and June.

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 with 21 individuals recorded between 2002 and 2011.

Description species.

By current standards an average year, with three noted but none lingered. The details are as follows:

OPS – one briefly on April 30th (D Spittle);

Severn Beach – one briefly on April 23rd (S Hale);

Timsbury – one photographed in a garden on June 6th (C Matthews).

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of bird-days	3	10+	5	7	2	3	2	0	2	3
No. of records	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	0	2	3

Bird-days and records each year

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

An occasional visitor, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population.

There were two records in 2012 (six records in 2010 and four in 2011), both of single birds in spring:

Henleaze, Bristol – one on May 14th;

Frenchay – one on June 6th.

This species is now common in the western parts of London but the expected spread towards our area has yet to materialise.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce and seriously declining spring migrant and breeding summer visitor. Very scarce after June. The species is graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status due to the UK breeding population declining by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

Whilst the numbers recorded by BBS are so low that statistical analysis is not possible, they do give a good indication of the scarceness of this species. In 2012 just five were recorded in four tetrads during 533 hours of timed counts. In 2011 a total of 18 were recorded from nine tetrads during 530 hours of timed counts.

Across the UK, the long term trend is a decrease of 62% since 1970, with the short term trend of a 49% decrease since 1995. The estimated UK population is 16000 pairs.

The first report came from Sand Point on April 12th (*cf.* 6th in 2005, 12th in 2006, 11th in 2007, 13th in 2008, 12th in 2009, 13th in 2010 and 11th in 2011).

The decline continues; although the number of bird-days was higher than last year, analysis of the submitted records shows that this simply reflects more observers recording long-stayers at popular sites. Critically, the number of records was down by 23% on 2011 and the only sites where more than one was recorded on any day were Engine Common (on only one date), CVL, OPS and Weston STW. The latter two sites were the only locations where the species was regularly recorded throughout the breeding season. At Weston STW a pair was assumed to have attempted breeding.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of bird-days	93	74	97	75	100	74	43	93	86	104
No. of records	87	69	78	63	98	70	43	73	76	58

Bird-days and records each year

There were just two autumn records, of one on Aug. 14th at Dowlais Farm, CI-Y and an unfortunate juvenile with no tail and missing some primary feathers at New Passage/Severn Beach from Sept. 24th to 30th. Unusually, this individual had replaced some wing coverts, presumably after some kind of injury or attack that must have happened some time beforehand – see photograph opposite page 97. This represents the latest “departure date” recorded in Avon.

	April	May	June	July	August	September
Bird-days	16 (24)	66 (50)	14 (11)	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (0)
Records	13 (19)	34 (45)	9 (11)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1(0)
Sites	12 (16)	30 (16)	8 (10)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1(0)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2012 bird-days, records and sites (2011 in brackets)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation efforts in several areas. The species is graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

This species is not recorded in sufficient numbers by Avon BBS to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis. In the UK, the short-term trend (since 1995) is of a 290% increase. The current UK population is estimated at 4000 breeding pairs.

A very good year by recent standards with the highest number of records for at least 20 years, see table below. There was a good spread of records in both summer and winter, in contrast to recent years when the vast majority of records were for the breeding season. It is pleasing to be able to include records from the Cam Valley for completeness.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of records	88	93	94	119	91	115	137	95	110	161
No. of sites	35	38	43	44	26	35	41	42	42	54

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding There were very few reports; surely this does not accurately reflect the situation. The details are as follows (none came from SG):

NS – Weston STW, one in a nestbox on May 3rd, with food being taken to the nest here on July 17th and three including at least one juvenile on Aug. 18th;

BA – a pair at a nestbox at CVL on July 5th. One pair was recorded breeding here but apparently three broods were raised at this site.

Observers from the Cam Valley reported that the poor weather had a 'devastating' impact on chick survival rates, with quite a few nests having just a single chick (either dead or alive). It is surmised that siblings had been eaten to try to stave off starvation. However, the quality of the habitat in this area ensured that many nests did fledge chicks. It is considered that due to the poor weather also limiting recorders' nest visits, almost certainly there were additional chicks which had fledged and left the nest before recording visits were possible. The number of nests within the area has grown to 21 and further potential sites are being researched for the erection of additional nestboxes.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
SG	0	2 (4+)	0	0	0	0	0	6 (11)	0 (0)	0(0)
NS	3 (11)	6 (17+)	8 (17)	1 (4)	2 (10)	2 (7)	4 (5)	3 (6)	3 (9)	1(1+)
BA	2 (6)	4 (5+)	2(7)	2(2)	1 (5)	2 (5)	4(11)	12 (27)	4 (11)	1(?)
Cam Valley	n/a	n/a	12(25)	2(4)	n/a	n/a	13(27)	n/a	12(34)	21(42)
Total	5 (17)	12 (26)	22 (49)	5 (10)	3 (15)	4 (12)	21 (43)	21 (44)	19(54)	23(43+)

Barn owl – numbers of breeding pairs (and number of fledged young in brackets)

Note that the Cam Valley data has also been retrospectively added for 2011.

One successfully caught a Swift at CVL on May 14th. On Dec. 5th, one stopped a motor cyclist in his tracks at Newton Park, Bath as it flew past at helmet height!

Corpses One was found dead by the M5 near Kenn village on Oct. 31st.

Ringling report – An interesting record concerned a female in an owl box at Burnett on Feb. 19th that had been ringed as a chick on Salisbury Plain in July 2011.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Uncommon breeding resident and declining.

This species is not recorded in sufficient numbers by Avon BBS to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis. Across the UK, the long term trend is a decrease of 52% since 1970, with the short term trend a 40% decrease since 1995. The estimated UK population is 5700 pairs.

2012 saw a huge increase in the number of records but over half related to one pair at PWD so the true number of records is static. The number of sites decreased by one to 39.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of records	126	128	114	147	134	139	87	91	98	192
No. of sites	58	48	48	49	46	66	49	48	40	39

Number of records and sites per year

Only recorded regularly at OPS, PWD and Saltford. It is encouraging that regular sightings were noted at OPS after a gap in 2011. There were many sightings at Wroughton in 2011 but none in 2012 – probably due to a lack of observer coverage. It was also noted as not seen at Widcombe Common, formerly a regular site.

Breeding The only specific references to potential breeding were at PWD (pair with three juveniles on July 1st, with at least two juveniles still on Aug. 4th) and Dundry (at least one pair in the vicinity of the village). Reported in the breeding season (between April and June) from 16 sites (17 sites in 2011) so presumably breeding is more widespread than the records suggest.

The maximum count was five at Saltford on Nov. 26th.

Observers are again encouraged to submit all breeding records (*Eds*).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident.

This species is not recorded in sufficient numbers by Avon BBS to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis. In the UK, the long-term trend (since 1970) is of a 35% decrease and the short-term trend (since 1995) is of a 23% decrease. The UK population is estimated at 50000 breeding pairs.

Tawny Owl con't

The number of records received was back up to the levels of a few years ago and the number of sites remained stable as is shown in the table below.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
No. of records	125	227	220	235	293	213	276	206	186	256
No. of sites	54	66	89	57	95	81	111	79	78	84

Tawny owl – number of records and sites per year

Breeding Evidence of breeding was received as follows: a pair mating in a tree at Wickham Court, Stapleton on Jan. 18th; two owlets at Yatton on April 30th; four pairs at BL including a juvenile in a nestbox on May 7th and 8th with two here on 9 th; a juvenile at Wrington Warren on 16 th; possibly nesting at Middle Wood, Odd Down, Bath on 21st; one with two young at Kenn Moor on 23rd; four young calling at Arnos Vale on 25th; an adult and a juvenile at Salford on several dates in June and July; two pairs in the vicinity of Dundry village and six hooting males at CVL.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant with 123 records between 1983 and 2011. Very rare in summer, bred successfully in 1991, 2010 and 2011.

Description species

There was no evidence of breeding this year. Two were noted flying around and calling on Jan. 7th at the NS site previously used for breeding. Two had been seen here on Dec. 26th, 2011, not one as stated in the **2011 Report**. However, they were not seen subsequently despite searching.

There were two records in the second half of the year, as follows:

Portishead – one photographed on a garden pergola at 18.30 on Oct. 27th (S Faulkner). It remained for 15 minutes;

Bath – one in Weston Wood in the evening of Dec. 31st (D J Angell).

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
2	2	2	7	14	3	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1	7*	6*	4

Number of individuals each year (* includes successful breeding)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast. The species is graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

An excellent year, with the largest number of bird-days and records yet reported, see table below. Good numbers were also noted in 1982, 1989 and 2003, but bird-days and record counts were not published and so a direct comparison is not possible. After the significant number of records in the closing months of 2011, the early part of 2012 saw a continuation of good numbers, increasing to peak from February to April. The major influx enabled many to enjoy widespread sightings. As last year, 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. Sightings continued in remarkable numbers into May, with three records in June and even one in July. August was the only month with no records.

	2005	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Bird-days	105	100	100	260	105	67	194	423
Records	56	79	102	186	100	48	113	222

Bird-days and records each year

First winter period (single birds unless otherwise stated):

Coastal records:

OPS – regular sightings of one from January to April, last seen on 21st;

Aust Warth – sightings were regular throughout the period – in January most sightings were of one or two but five were seen on 28th; the same pattern continued in February peaking at five on 17th and seven on 25th; in March the peak count was six on 12th, followed by many records of three or at most four up until the end of April.

Severn Beach – up to four on seven dates between Feb. 11th and April 30th presumably also relate to wandering Aust birds;

PWD – one on six dates between Jan. 6th and April 10th;

CI-Y – up to two on six dates in April;

Weston STW – single birds occasionally between January and April, with four on April 30th.

Inland records:

Pill – one on the R. Avon foreshore on Jan. 16th;

Dundry – one over hilltop fields on April 12th;

Marshfield – an excellent run of records in the early part of the winter, providing superb opportunities to view these owls. Up to five were seen on nine dates in January, up to seven on eight dates in February, a single record in March of seven on 25th and two on April 7th.

Summer period (May to August) One of the most remarkable features of the year was the numbers remaining in the summer months:

Coastal records:

OPS – one on May 20th;

Aust – one on May 2nd and two on 3rd;

Severn Beach – one on June 18th and 19th;

PWD – one on May 7th;

CI-Y – a single bird on May 1st to 4th, 8th, two on 19th, one on 20th, two on 22nd then one on June 24th and July 5th;

Weston STW – two on May 1st and one on 3rd.

Inland records:

Weston Moor – one on May 11th.

Second winter period (single birds unless otherwise stated), There were significantly fewer records than earlier in the year:

Coastal records:

OPS – two on Oct. 18th;

Littleton Warth – one on Oct. 19th;

New Passage/Northwick Warth – one on Oct. 21st and one on Nov. 2nd;

Severn Beach – single birds on Sept. 22nd and Oct. 20th.

PWD – one on Dec. 3rd;

CI-Y – one on Oct. 14th, 19th and 20th;

Sand Point – single birds seen during migration watches on Oct. 17th, Nov. 11th and Dec. 15th.

Inland records:

Kenn Moor – one on Nov. 27th was injured by barbed wire and had to be put down;

Marshfield - there was another good run of records with the first to return on Oct. 20th, increasing to two by Nov. 3rd. There were 13 more records of one or two before the year's end.

Monthly breakdown

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	:	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2012 (2011)
Records	25	27	42	47	18	3	1		4	29	18	8	222(113)
Bird-days	55	66	100	96	22	3	1		4	41	25	10	423(194)
Max. count	5	7	7	4	2	1	1		1	3	2	2	7(7)

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor. The species is graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status due to the breeding range reducing by more than 50% over the long term.

Descriptions are required for sight records away from the Mendips.

Just two records were received this year:

Burrington/Rod's Pot – two on May 26th;

Burrington Ham – one on June 19th.

With records from the main areas where breeding is presumed annually, there appears to be no cause for concern locally.

Nightjar con't

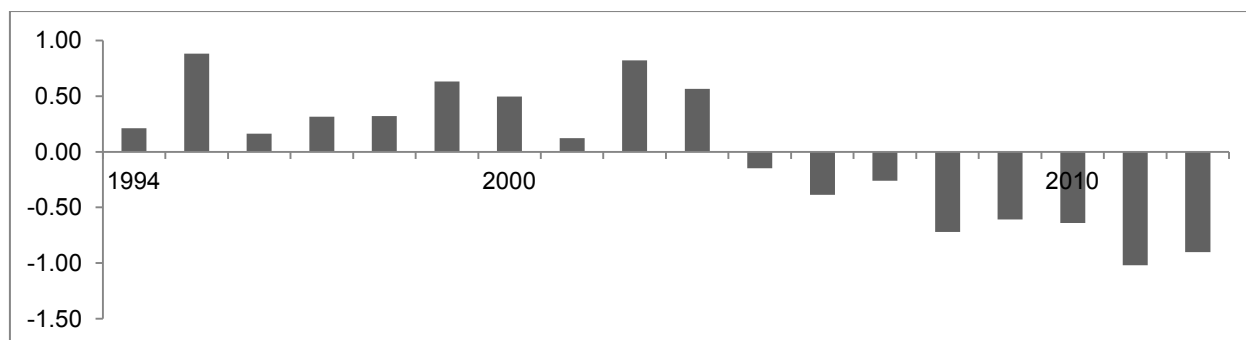
Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Churring males	0	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	2	3
Reports	0	6	1	8	5	3	4	3	2	2

Nightjar – number of churring males and reports each year

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. The species is graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status due to the UK breeding population declining by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 72 tetrads which represented 40% of those surveyed; this distribution is a decrease of 30 percentage points against that found in 1994. The Avon population estimate is 2500 breeding pairs. Across the UK, the short term trend is a 38% decrease since 1995. The estimated UK population is 87000 pairs.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 2.2

Arrival The first was one at CVL on April 11th, there were nine at BL and 30 at CVL on 14th, with 50 at the latter site on 15th. The next records away from the reservoirs were of two at PWD on 25th and 13 back over breeding territory at Redland on 26th. There was a more general arrival from 27th and 28th, with several reports at potential breeding locations in the first ten days of May. Many observers noted that they were late returning, by from one to nine days relative to local averages. There was a movement NE of several hundred at CI-Y on May 11th.

Summer flocks There were 14 counts in four figures, all from CVL as follows: 1000 on April 27th and 30th, then 1500 on May 2nd, 3000 on 4th and 1000 on four dates in the following week. 3000 on 14th was followed by 1500 on 17th then 2000 on June 6th, 4000 on 8th, 3000 on 11th and finally 1500 on Aug. 1st.

Breeding Encouragingly, more breeding information was reported than in recent years: eight were circling over a regular nest site at Filton on May 8th; one entered a nesthole at Marshfield on 24th; three were in flight over a nest site at Arnos Vale on 25th; one entered a nest hole at Kensington Gardens, Bath on June 6th; four were prospecting nestboxes at Southmead on 19th; nine were screaming over a nest site in Nailsea throughout May and June; there were two nests, with a possible third, at Hotwells on June 27th; three pairs with four young were at Hanham on July 16th; at least three nests, one with young, in Redland on July 25th; and two were still attending a nest site in Haydon, near Radstock on Aug. 30th, having been present all summer.

Departure Reports indicated a general departure in the closing days of July and the first week of August. The last three-figure count was of 285 over Southmead on 5th. After 35 at the same site on 9th, there was a steady flow of single-figure records to the end of the month. Just two records in September were received, both of single birds, over Saltford on 3rd and Emerson's Green on 10th.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area. The species is graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

Across the UK, the long term trend is of a 16% decrease since 1970. The short term trend is a 33% decrease since 1995. The estimated UK population is 5100 pairs.

Reports were received from 96 sites, an improvement on 2011 presumably showing signs of recovery after the severe 2010/11 winter.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
n/c	56	86	74	80	95	75	96	82	96

Kingfisher – number of sites each year

During the first winter period, January saw 31 records from 21 sites (*cf.* 23 sites in 2004, 30 in 2005, 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 26 in 2008, 19 in 2009, 23 in 2010 and 17 in 2011), this was no doubt due to less severe weather than in 2011. February saw 32 records from 25 sites with March showing an increase to 33 records from 19 sites.

Breeding Reports received that indicated breeding were as follows: one attending a nest at Snuff Mills, Bristol on May 19th; one at a nest site at Three Brooks LNR on July 24th and 25th; an adult visiting a nest box provided by the lake owner at Southmead Swimming Lake on Aug. 10th; and an adult seen twice carrying food towards a nest on the R. Chew at CVL on 14th. The use of a nest box is particularly interesting as this species is not well known for taking to nest boxes. Also the number of records received from Saltford and Winford Brook during this period again suggests that breeding took place at these sites.

Post-breeding dispersal as usual created a rise in the number of records. August saw records rise to 39 from 17 sites (32 from 23 sites in 2011). September saw the peak with 65 records from 28 sites (15 records from 11 sites in 2011), thereafter declining until the end of the year with 51 records from 23 sites in October (22 from 16 in 2011), 32 records from 23 sites in November (22 from 11 in 2011) and 26 records from 17 sites in December (20 from 15 in 2011).

The highest counts were received from CVL (four on Aug. 20th and 25th), Saltford (four on May 2nd) and Eastville Park (four on April 8th). Regular reports came from Backwell Lake, Batheaston NR, Bradley Stoke Three Brooks NR, BL, CVL, CI-Y, Eastville Park, Keynsham, New Passage, Northwick Warth, OPS, PWD, R. Avon in Bath, Saltford, Weston STW, Winford Brook and Yate.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Very scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn with 25 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Description species.

One was found by two botanists in the dunes at Sand Bay in the evening of Oct. 25th (H Crouch, F Rumsey). It remained in the area until Nov. 4th, and was seen by many observers and photographers.

Autumn records are unusual with only five others since 1983; in September 1985 at Sandford, August 1986 at CI-Y, September 1986 at Long Ashton, August 1987 at Bedminster Down and then Bishopsworth, and September 2002 at Norton Hawkfield.

The table below summarises the records for the past 20 years. It is worth noting that from the 1950s to the 1990s this species was noted almost annually with multiple records in some years, in 1977 up to eight were present and at least one pair bred hatching three young.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
2	1+	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	1

Number of individuals each year

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce autumn passage migrant, very rare in spring, with 46 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Description species.

An average year (see table below) with two autumn records as follows:

Royal Portbury Dock – one photographed along the access road to the sewage farm on Sept. 25th (S Hale);

CVL – one, trapped, ringed and photographed by CVRS on Sept. 29th, was watched in the field for a while after its release (many observers). This was the fifth record for this site.

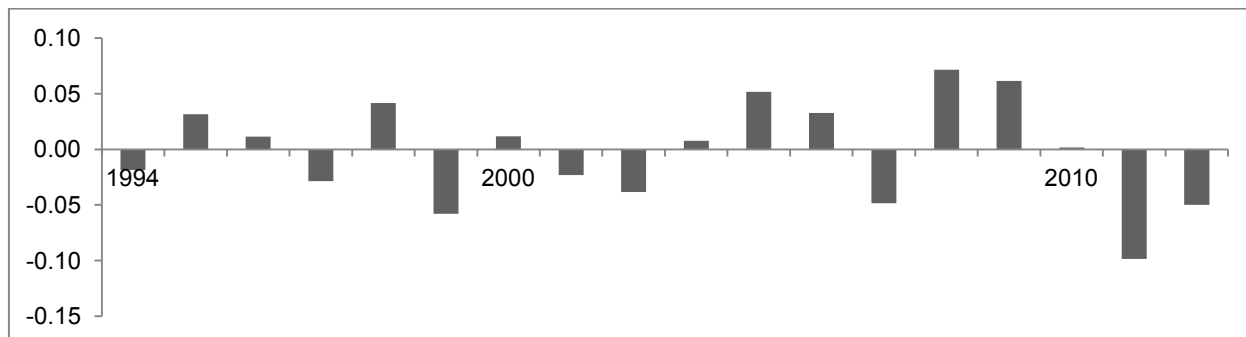
1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	0	2	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	7	3	2	3	2

Number of individuals each year

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally. The species is graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

Survey data This species was counted by BBS from 83 tetrads which represented 46% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of five percentage points against that found in 1994. Across the UK, the long term trend is an increase of 115% since 1970, with the short term trend of a 40% increase since 1995. The estimated UK population is 52000 pairs.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.4

The CABS rate for the year showed an alarming 50% reduction on 2011. The index (recording rate) stands at 0.9, compared to 3.3 just four years ago. The WGS data was identical to 2011 for both distribution and rate of observation. With different survey data showing such marked differences, clearly caution should be exercised in analysis. However, the evidence would dictate that attention should be focussed on understanding the potential huge decline shown by CABS in case there is a significant issue here.

2012 bucked the downward trend of the last four years with a 25% increase in records from 2011, although from rather fewer sites than previously.

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Records	323	236	333	231	529	524	453	458	413	516
Sites	127	103	127	93	235	227	209	197	180	151

Records and sites each year

Breeding There were 139 records from 70 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, 202 from 131 sites in 2010 and 164 from 107 sites in 2011), representing a 15% decrease in records and 35% decrease in sites from 2011. The sites recorded were distributed as follows:

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
April	26	61	30	67	63	47	71	57	39
May	17	53	21	54	67	65	53	49	26
June	6	36	14	58	53	52	35	29	21

Number of sites with records during the breeding season

The number of sites for each of these summer months is therefore at the lowest level recorded since 2006.

At CVL five calling males were noted (*cf.* five in 2006, six in 2007, seven in 2008, five in 2009, six in 2010 and eight in 2011).

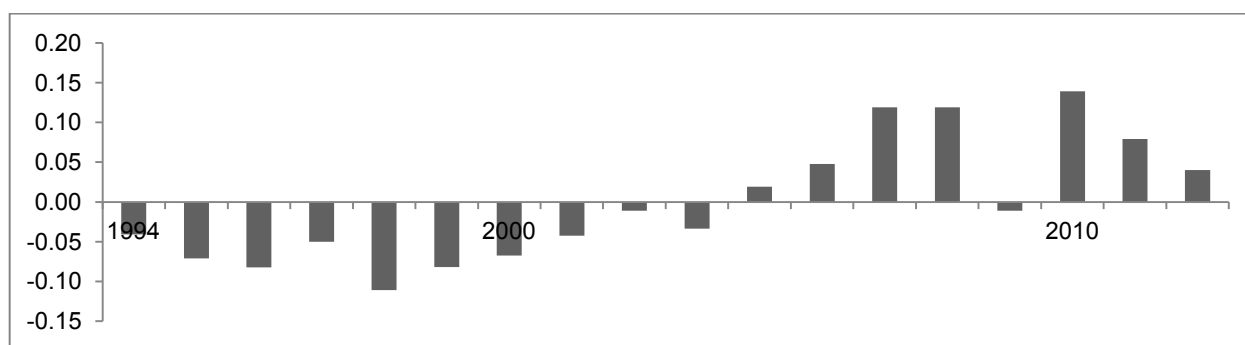
The only other records concerning breeding were of fledged young as follows: at Hanham Weir on June 17th, at PWD on June 29th, at Nailsea on July 1st, at Bath University on several dates in July, at Blackhorse, and near Mangotsfield on July 21st. Two juveniles were at Portishead on July 23rd, with one at Brentry on Aug. 6th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

Survey data The BBS count rate per hour has increased by 35% since 1994. The Avon area BBS distribution data showed records in 80 tetrads representing 44% of those surveyed, down from 47% in 2011 but up from 33% in 1994. Across the UK, the long term trend is of a 368% increase since 1970. The short term trend is an increase of 141% since 1995. The estimated UK population is 140000 pairs.

The BBS average count rate per hour since 1994 is 0.27 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



Great Spotted Woodpecker – the annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.27

WGS data showed a significant decrease in distribution at 39% (60% in 2011) which is now back to the level of 2006. It is still 39% up on the 1994 level. The rate of recording halved from 0.2 to 0.1.

After last year's highest number of records, 2012 saw a further huge 39% rise:

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Records	172	149	339	193	415	372	317	402	423	590
Sites	76	77	173	80	191	172	181	182	197	200

Records and sites per year

Breeding Drumming was reported from 14 sites (*cf.* seven in 2004, 14 in 2005, 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009, four in 2010 and 12 in 2011) up until April 13th and then again on Aug. 12th but not subsequently. The highest count was of five at Saltford on Aug. 6th, a site that had many records of three or more. Seven other sites recorded up to four.

At CVL there were ten pairs (*cf.* six in 2005, seven in 2006, ten in 2007, seven in 2008, 13 in 2009, nine pairs in 2010 and ten in 2011). Breeding was also recorded from: Nailsea – excavating nest hole on April 15th; adult feeding young at BL on May 14th; nest at Snuff Mills on 19th; nest at Keynsham Memorial Park on 20th; two nests in Saltford on 21st; a nest with young in Cold Ashton on 24th; a nest in Nowhere Wood, Nailsea in late May, and a nest with juveniles in Prior's Wood, Portbury on 27th. Juveniles were additionally seen in Nailsea on June 1st, two in High Littleton on 8th, one at Easton-in-Gordano on 25th, OPS on July 20th and Leap Valley on 21st.

Although there were many records from the coast, the only one noted as being of a migrant was at Northwick Warth on March 26th. One at Clapton-in-Gordano killed a House Martin and its chicks to feed its own young.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce and elusive resident, last proven to breed in 2003. The species is graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status due to the UK breeding population declining by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

After last year's encouraging records, 2012 sadly did not continue the temporary upward trend, and breeding was not proven at any site. All records are listed below:

Bickley Woods, Longwell Green – one on Sept. 6th;

BL – one on May 8th;

CVL – two sites; at the first, one drumming on one date in March and another in April; at the second, one seen twice in April and May. Since the sites are not far apart, they are treated as the same individual in the table below;

Leigh Woods – one on Aug. 24th;

Lower Woods – one on April 6th;

New Passage – one on Dec. 17th;

Severn Beach – one on Dec. 5th.

Given the proximity of both location and date, it is likely that the last two of these records relate to the same individual so they are treated as such.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker con't

Year	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Bird-days	20+	3	7	3	3	2	10	4	13	10
Individuals	9	3	7	2	3	1	3	4	10	6

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker – Bird-days and individuals each year

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce winter visitor with 14 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2011.

The individual from 2011 seen at a site between Charlton Fields and Chewton Keynsham was present until Jan. 8th. It was then relocated and photographed in the same area on March 15th and remained until 23rd (many observers). The table below lists the numbers seen in the last 20 years.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1

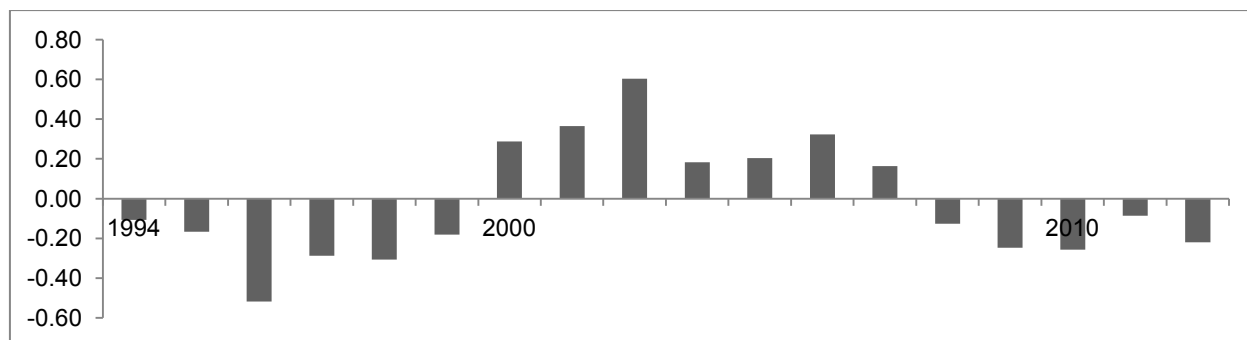
Individuals per year

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

The local population remains stable and was recorded from all squares in the 2007–11 Avon Atlas. This survey found higher numbers in urban areas, especially during the winter. There was no change in the WGS figures as they continued to be present in all gardens surveyed.

Breeding There was a small increase in the BBS distribution in 2012 (from 92% to 97%) although this is slightly down in comparison with 2003 when they were present in 99% of the squares surveyed. The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 4% since 2011 and by 3% since 1994, see the bar chart below. The species was recorded in 175 tetrads which represented 97% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of four percentage points compared with 1994. Their generalised ecology enables them to thrive in urban, suburban and farmland habitats. The long-term trend is a moderate increase although this appears to be greater in England when compared with the rest of the UK.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 3.35

Large groups Sizeable flocks included 17 at Keynsham Community Woodland on Jan. 24th and 30 at Congresbury Moor on Nov. 19th. The highest count was 56 from a survey around Saltford on Dec. 29th.

The local breeding population is estimated to be 3700 pairs.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Predominantly found in woodland but becoming more evident generally during the winter. The local population was recorded from 64% (summer) and 68% (winter) of the tetrads in the 2007–11 Avon Atlas. There has been a decline in WGS figures over the previous ten years but this is within the context of a 54% increase since 1994, and reflects the national picture in which the population shows some fluctuation but no long-term trend.

Breeding The BBS counted 141, a decrease of 6% from 2011, but the local count rate per hour has increased by 27% since 1994. It was recorded from 71 tetrads which represented 39% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of ten percentage points from that found in 1994.

The highest counts were from coastal sites associated with migration during October: 26 on 15th at Aust Cliff / M48 Service Station, 25 on 8th and 15 on 21st at Northwick Warth, and 20 on 15th and 17 on 18th at Sand Point. Inland, nine were present on April 2nd in Montpelier and six on Sept. 30th at Stoke Lodge feeding on acorns in an evergreen oak.

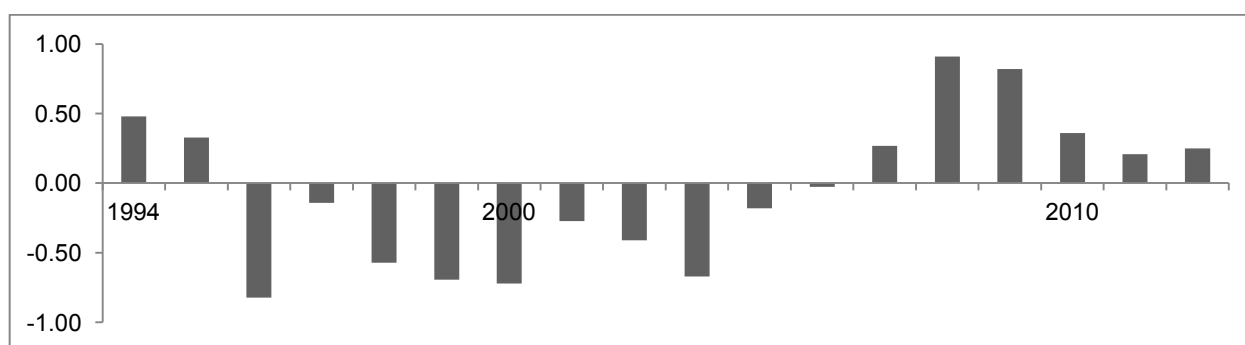
The local breeding population is estimated to be 1500 pairs.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant.

A hole nester breeding communally utilising quarries, mature woodland trees and chimney pots in towns, villages and the Bristol suburbs. They remain in pairs throughout the year, the bonding being evident when seen in perched groups and even in flight within large flocks. Found universally throughout the region.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 1% from 2011 but has decreased by 3% since 1994, see the bar chart below. It was recorded in 155 tetrads which represented 86% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of two percentage points from that found in 1994. Nationally the population has increased rapidly since the 1960s, although the increase has only been 'moderate' in England; a situation which also applies to the Avon area.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 7.26

The largest flock reported was a pre-roost gathering of 2500 at Denny Island, CVL on Jan. 22nd. Other pre-roosts at this site varied from 100 to 600. Large feeding flocks up to 600 were seen at various times from farmland sites, especially near CI-Y and at Marshfield. Some 300, mainly noisy juveniles, were noted at the Bathampton Reserve on June 20th.

The local breeding population is estimated to be 10000 pairs.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident.

Recorded from 50% (summer) and 76% (winter) tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas indicating dispersal from rookeries to feed more widely outside the breeding season; particularly on lowland arable farmland. Noticeably absent from large urban areas.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 44% since 1994. The species was recorded from 71 tetrads which represented 39% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of 25 percentage points from that found in 1994. However, these figures are not directly comparable as the proportion of urban squares increased abruptly in the BBS survey from 2000 onwards. Nevertheless, the figures from the five-yearly Rookery Surveys for 1995 – 7517; for 2000 – 7906; for 2005 – 6107; and for 2010 – 5254, also suggest a decline between 1995 and 2010 of about 30%, so the trend is clearly downwards.

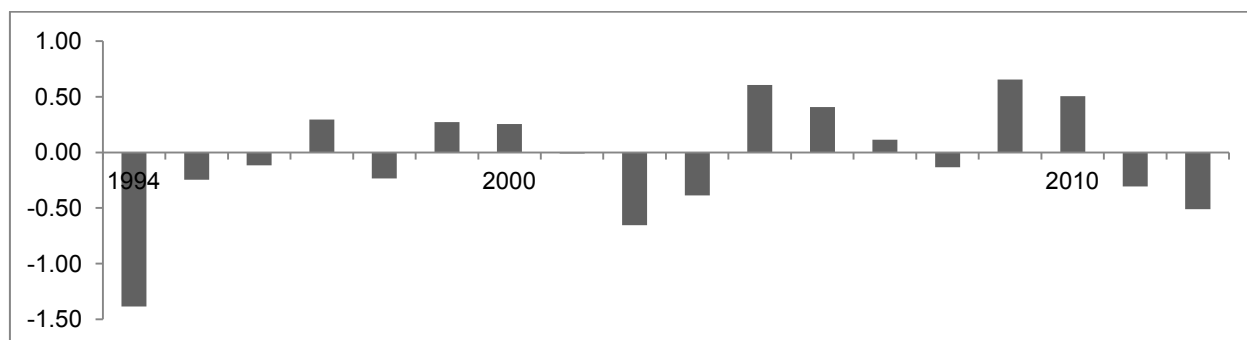
The local breeding population is estimated to be 6900 pairs (the estimated Rook population in previous Reports is now considered to have been too low). With a non-breeding cohort of first-year birds the winter population is estimated at 20000 individuals.

The largest flock recorded was 200 on Dec. 17th at Steeple Ashton, otherwise there were widely scattered reports of small flocks of up to 150 from several open farmland sites.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone**Common breeding resident.*

The local population remains stable and is found throughout the region with records from all tetrads in the 2007–11 Avon Atlas. Pairs are highly territorial and large flocks of non-breeders are concentrated in mainly coastal areas, for example 200+ at Kingston Seymour on Jan. 25th and 150 at OPS on 6th and Aug. 2nd. The largest inland flocks were 150 at Keynsham, R. Avon, on Jan. 6th and 200 at Marshfield on Dec. 10th.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour decreased by 3% from 2011 but has increased by 13% since 1994, see the bar chart below. The species was recorded from 180 tetrads which represented 99% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of two percentage points from that found in 1994.



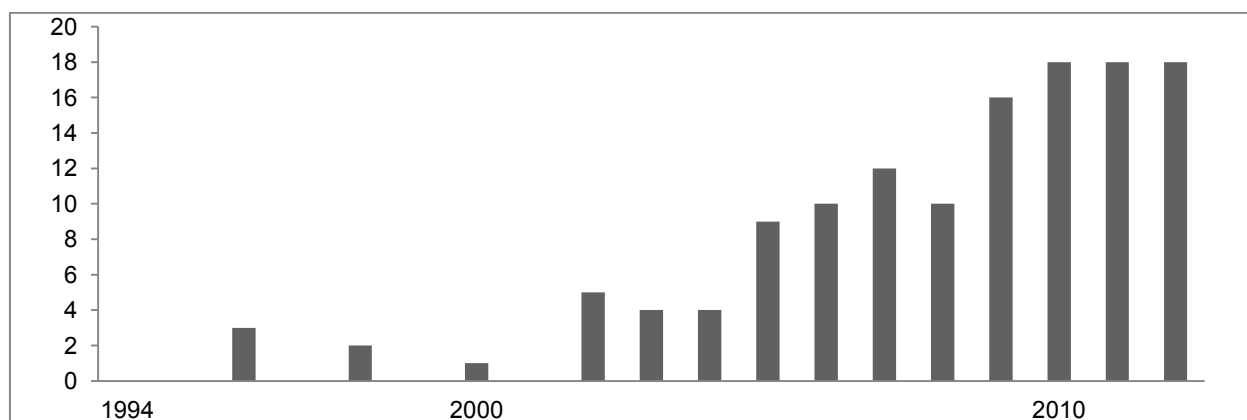
The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 7.97

The national population has increased steadily since the 1960s and now stands at about one million pairs. The local breeding population is estimated to be 8900 pairs.

RAVEN *Corvus corax**Uncommon breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.*

The local population has increased steadily since 1994.

Breeding The BBS counted 68 individuals from 32 tetrads which represents 18% of those surveyed. The breeding distribution indicates an increase of 18% from that found in 1994. However, the counts have been steady since 2010 and so it remains to be seen if the population has reached a plateau, see bar chart below.



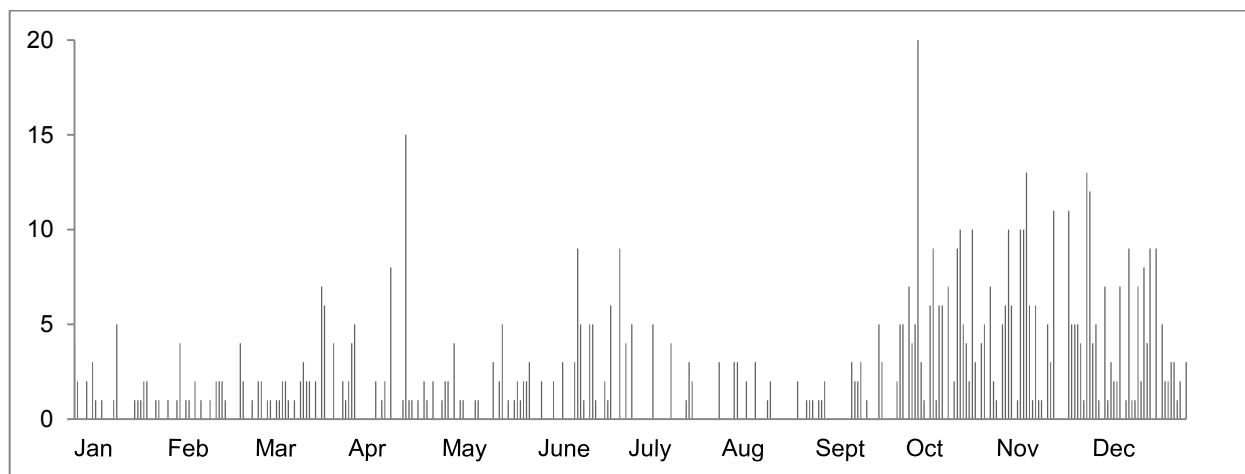
The percentage of BBS squares in which this species occurred between 1994 and 2012

Most of the many records received were of one or two and these were well distributed throughout the region. The highest count was from Marshfield with 20 on July 16th.

The local breeding population is estimated to be at least 100 pairs.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus**Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. The population suffers badly in harsh winters.*

The population fluctuates quite widely but is basically stable.



Goldcrest – maximum single daily counts throughout 2012 in the Avon area

Spring passage The first peak in the graph, when the highest count was 15 on April 21st at Goblin Combe probably represents the onset of breeding, although a migratory movement cannot be ruled out. The second peak in the last two weeks of June represents the juveniles entering the population.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 9% since 1994. The species was recorded from 63 tetrads which represented 35% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of seven percentage points from that found in 1994.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
13	6	10	15	12	18	4	4	12	18

Number of singing males recorded around CVL by KEV

However, their productivity was as likely to have been compromised by the poor weather as with other insect eaters. The higher counts in the last quarter of the year presumably reflect the arrival of immigrants and passage birds from northern UK and Europe.

The local population is estimated to be 5000 pairs.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

This species is a regular winter visitor, albeit in very small numbers. Sightings were again low in the 2011/12 winter period, see table below, with records (three) in January and February only, and a possible passage migrant in April. The second winter period hosted four up to the year end. The details are as follows, they were all on or near the coast and refers to single birds:

Thornbury – Jan. 26th;

Blaise – Feb. 12th, 18th and 19th;

Portishead – Dec. 2nd;

Portbury – Oct. 11th;

CI-Y – Jan. 27th, April 27th (Congresbury Yeo) and Oct. 22nd and Nov. 6th (both from the path beside Dowlais Farm);

Sand Point – Oct. 14th and 28th, and Nov. 10th and 16th.

Winter	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
No. seen	6	13	7	2	10	10	19	18	4	3

Individuals seen each winter, October to March

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding resident.

The population continues to be at a low ebb. The species was recorded from 96% of the WGS gardens. Until this year it had been 100% since at least 2001.

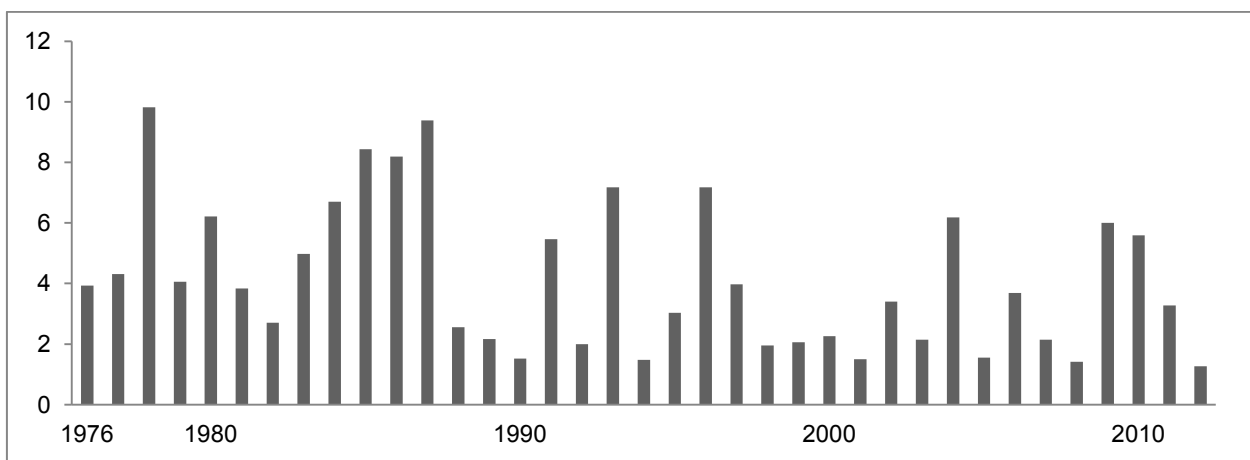
Blue Tit breeding The local BBS count rate per hour and CABS counts have decreased since 1994.

% change	2011 - 2012	10 year	Local 1994 - 2012
BBS count rate	-19	-16	-19
CABS	-19	-47	-57

Following a poor breeding season in 2011, the prolonged wet periods during the summer had a further detrimental effect on the population. At CVL for example, the chick survival rate, both in the nest and post-fledging, was well below average. The graph below shows the productivity and is calculated by comparing the juvenile to adult ratio for birds that were alive between Aug. 1st and Dec. 31st, from 1976 to 2012. The productivity for 2012 was the lowest recorded but of the same order as that of the similarly poor breeding seasons of 1990, 1994, 2001, 2005 and 2008.

From the current perspective, given that small populations can rise and fall, the BBS count rate, CABS and the CVL data are all indicating that the population is well below the norm. This could, of course, change but a run of good years will be needed for the population to fully bounce back.

The estimate for the local population (still our fifth commonest bird in 2012) is 51000 pairs. The UK national picture indicates a gradual long-term increase since 1966 although it is difficult to relate this to the local situation in the Avon area.



Productivity based on the ratio of juveniles to adults at Chew Valley Ringing Station.

GREAT TIT *Parus major* *Abundant breeding resident.*

2012 was not a good year for this species and the WGS count rate was the lowest since 2001, the year when this statistic was first calculated.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour decreased by 13% from last year but it has increased by 24% since 1994. The species was recorded from 175 tetrads which represented 97% of those surveyed; this distribution is an increase of nine percentage points against that found in 1994. As with the previous species the wet summer negatively affected chick survival and there was little evidence of repeat breeding by the adults.

The local population is estimated at 31000 pairs (the sixth most abundant species in the region). Nationally the population has shown an increase since 1966, but this may have stabilised in recent years.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater* *Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.*

Breeding The BBS counted 114, an increase of 5% from last year and the local count rate per hour has increased by 70% since 1994. The species was recorded from 48 tetrads which represents 27% of those surveyed.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
34	34	31	25	29	24	29	32	26	27

Proportion of BBS squares in which it was recorded

The number ringed was similar to that in 2011 but productivity was low and a reduced population level may be expected for 2013.

The 2007-11 Avon Atlas suggests 3000 pairs but notes that this may be too low. The UK population has shown a modest increase since 1985.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the long-term.

A locally and nationally declining species. This is reflected in the population estimates given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas of 1000 pairs in 1992, reducing to 250 in 2012.

They were reported from 6.5% of the Avon area tetrads with the highest single count being four at Lower Woods, Wickwar. Other records were mainly from woodland areas at 25 scattered locations. There were also sightings from gardens in Banwell and Easton-in-Gordano where they were coming to feeders. The garden in Banwell, in particular, was visited by one or two on a regular basis throughout the year.

PENDULINE TIT *Remiz pendulinus*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

The first Avon area record was of two found and photographed feeding on bulrush by the hide at Portbury Wharf NR late afternoon on Jan. 15th by two visiting birders (D Kilham, J Wood). The two were also seen later by H Taffs for a couple of minutes when they flew up and perched in a hedge before flying off to N.

This species is widely but locally distributed throughout central and eastern Europe, from Denmark, Germany and Italy northeast to central Sweden and Estonia but is absent from much of NW Europe although locally numerous in Spain. It is largely resident, or dispersive in Europe. The suggestion has been made that southern England falls within the regular wintering range of a northern European breeding population, the birds then head to their breeding grounds in early spring. The numbers reaching the UK in recent years has been between two and 20 per year.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, the majority recorded from the extensive reedbeds at CVL.

Records, unusually all from the coast, were as follows:

Northwick Warth – an adult male and female type found by visiting birders at the Grebe Pond late afternoon on Oct. 6th remained until early morning on the 10th (many observers, photographed). There was one, again near the Grebe Pond, on the morning of the 13th (B Lancaster);

PWD – one flew to S calling at 11.00 on Sept. 19th (S Hale). On Oct. 14th the ringers heard one calling regularly in the reedbed; it flew up and away at 09.45 (E Drewitt *et al.*).

The species is surprisingly rare on the coast, the only records being of three at Sand Bay in October 1965, a pair near ASW in 1976, one trapped at Littleton Pits in 1981, one at PWD from January to March 1986, one at Sand Pt. in April 1988, two at Chittening Warth in March 2004, one at OPS in April 2008 and one at Weston STW in 2010.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

Very scarce late autumn migrant with 19 records between 1983 and 2011.

One record: one seen during a migration watch at Sand Pt. on Oct. 27th (P A Bowyer).

The table below gives the numbers seen during the past two decades.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	1

Individuals each year

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Declining but still common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the long-term.

The local BBS figures fell by 50% between 1994 and 2002, but have been stable since then.

Winter The largest flocks in the first-winter period were 200 on Jan.1st at Cl-Y, 250 near Radstock on 3rd, and a remarkable 1500 at Marshfield on Feb. 5th (M Hayes) with 1,000 here the next day. This seems to be feature of the Marshfield area at this time of year, for example, 1000+ were noted here on Feb. 5th, 2009. There were no large counts in the second winter period, the highest being 100 at Marshfield again on Nov.7th with 70 here on Dec. 17th, and 80 at Saltford on Nov. 26th.

Breeding The earliest song was reported on Jan. 27th at Easton-in-Gordano and then at several sites during February and March. The local BBS count rate per hour decreased by 15% from last year and by 40% since 1994. The species was recorded from 74 tetrads which represented 41% of those surveyed; this distribution is a decrease of 18 percentage points from that found in 1994.

Autumn migration Only small numbers were noted, the highest count being 18 at PWD on Oct. 7th "heading SW hugging the coast".

The population for the Avon area is estimated to be 4300 pairs.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

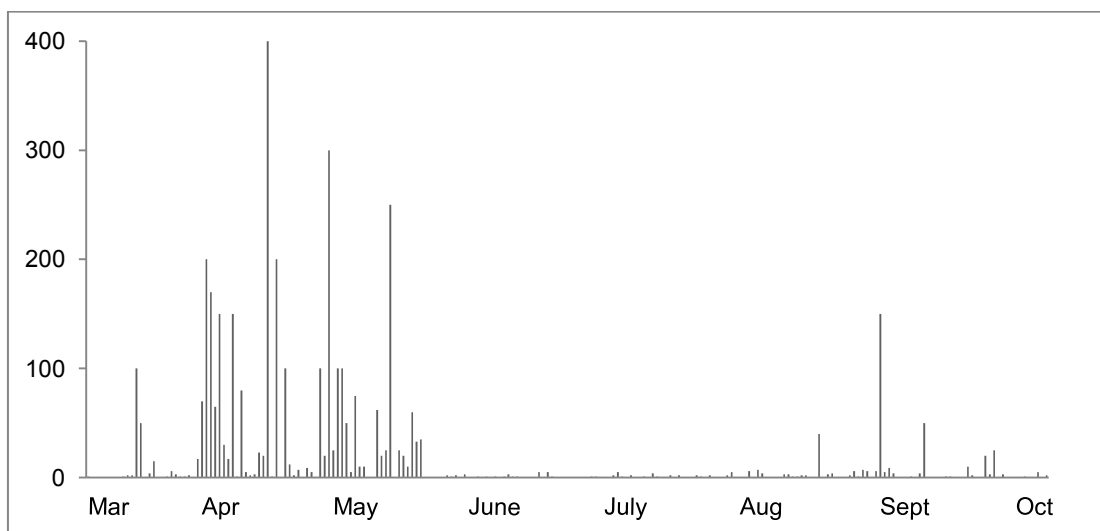
Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor. Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

A normal year.

Arrival and passage The first arrival was one on March 6th at CVL and the highest count was 400 at CVL on April 16th, see graph below. The lower than average spring passage numbers in March were probably due to the fine weather which encouraged migrants to pass straight through to their breeding areas. However, some movement was noted in reasonable numbers at coastal sites into early June.

Breeding At the artificial breeding wall at BG up to 25 holes were investigated early in the season, about 18 pairs attempted to breed (c.20 in 2011), and seven of these tried second broods. The best estimate of the total number of young hatched from both broods was 65, but as some left the area quite soon after hatching a precise count of young was not possible. This gave a 'total count' for the site in 2012 of c.100 which compares with 80 to 100 in 2011. No breeding details were received from any of the traditional sites along the Avon valley. Observers are asked where possible to submit all records so that a full account of the breeding population in Avon can be obtained. (Eds.)

Autumn passage and departure The graph below shows that there were noticeably smaller numbers during the autumn passage. The largest counts being 40 at Northwick Warth on Aug. 17th, 150 at OPS on 31st and 40 at CVL on Sept. 11th. The last record was of two heading S at Weston-s-Mare on Oct. 8th.



Maximum daily counts for the Avon area during 2012

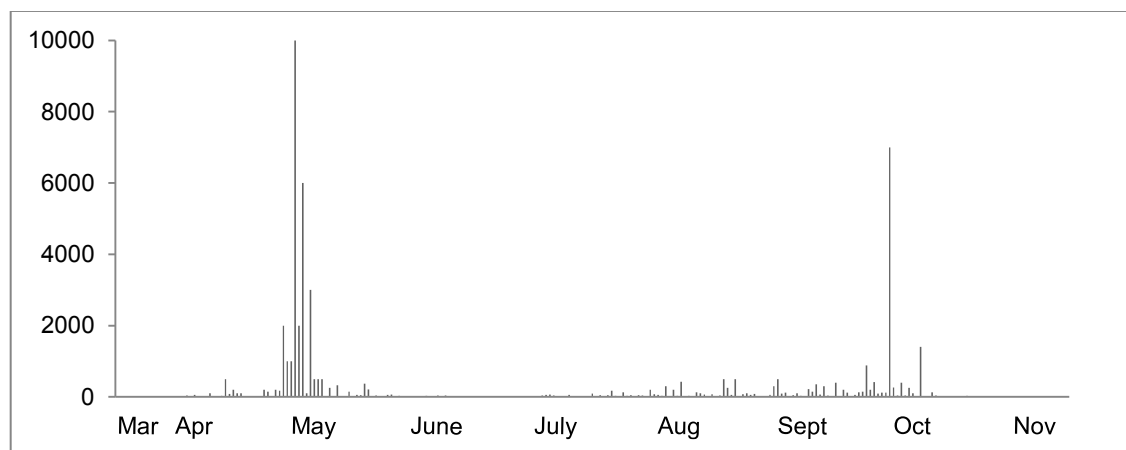
SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

[RR]

Common passage migrant and common breeder. Graded as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation status.

There was a spectacular spring passage.

Arrival and spring passage The earliest record was of five at PWD on March 17th. The spring and autumn passage movements are shown on the graph below and is based on the maximum daily count noted in the Avon area. The main spring passage peaked between April 29th and May 6th with the highest count on May 2nd of 10000 heading NE at Severnside; see comments on page 161.



Maximum daily counts for the Avon area during 2012

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 86% since 1994. However, despite this increase, the overall distribution remains the same as in 1994 with records from 130 tetrads representing 72% of those surveyed. The 2007-11 Avon Atlas gives an estimated breeding population of 6000 pairs.

Autumn passage and departure The highest counts for this period were at Weston-s-Mare with 7000 heading SW on Sept. 30th and 1400 on Oct. 8th. The latest sighting was of one also at Weston-s-Mare on Nov. 15th.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Hirundo daurica*

Very rare vagrant.

The fifth record for our area concerned one that was photographed perched on wires over an Alveston garden on May 1st (M Dodd). It was present from 10.10 until 10.25 in heavy rain.

The previous records were for PWD in June 1970, Severn Beach in September 1977, New Passage in April 1988 and CVL in October 1990.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common passage migrant and breeder. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

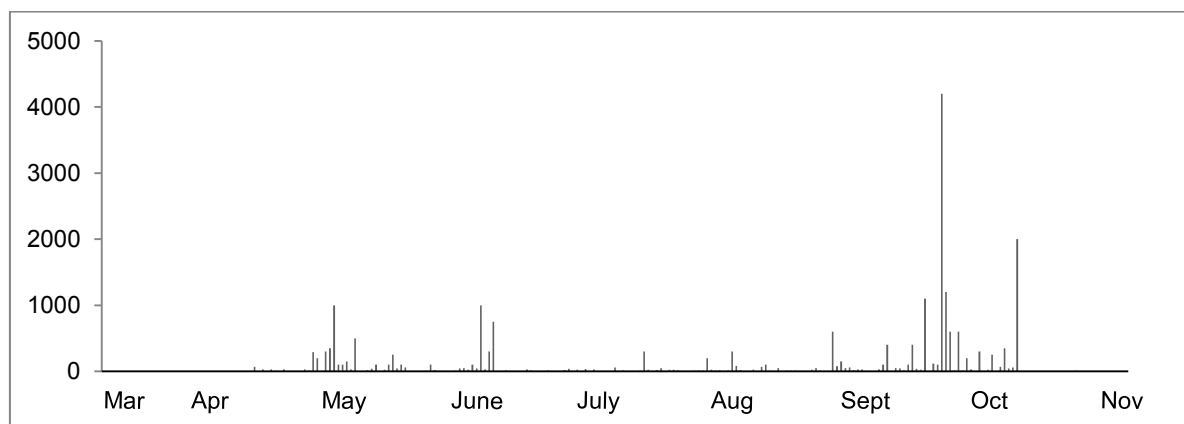
The continuing slow decline was noted but there were some high autumn counts.

Arrival The first sighting was at CVL when two were seen on March 11th. This is 17 days earlier than average, but the earliest ever was in 1997 when three were seen at CI-Y on 4th. The main arrivals occurred in early May with a peak count at BL of 1000 on May 4th, see graph below. A count of 1000 at CVL on June 8th was made during gales and undoubtedly represents flocks congregating from surrounding areas.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 39% since 1994. The species was recorded from 57 tetrads which represented 31% of those surveyed. This is an 18% decrease in their distribution compared with 1994. The population for the area is estimated at 4300 pairs. Nationally the population is in decline although it appears to be faring better in N. Ireland and Scotland.

Post-breeding and departure The autumn passage counts peaked on Sept. 24th with reports of 1000 at Severn Beach, 1500 at Sand Bay, 4200 at Weston-s-Mare, and 800 at BL. There was a further high count of 2000,

again at Weston-s-Mare, flying N on Oct. 12th. The last sighting was of one on Nov. 6th during a migration watch at Brandon Hill, Bristol.



House Martin – maximum daily counts for the Avon area during 2012

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

[RR]

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

CVL There were just six singing males around the lake, suggesting that the cold and wet weather in 2011 and 2012 has affected numbers.

Elsewhere There was a fall in both numbers and sites from 2010 but it was slightly higher in 2011. Present during the breeding season at ten sites; ASW, Axe Estuary, BL, CI-Y, Congresbury Moor, CVL, Pill, PWD, Weston STW and Yatton.

The table below gives the basic breeding data for the Avon area over the past 17 years.

	1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
CVL singing males	1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28	31	14	6
Other singing males						3	2	4	3	7	14	14	21	32	33	41	13	19
Number of sites						3	2	4	3	5	13	10	8	18	19	17	8	10

Singing males at CVL, and breeding season singing males from other sites.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

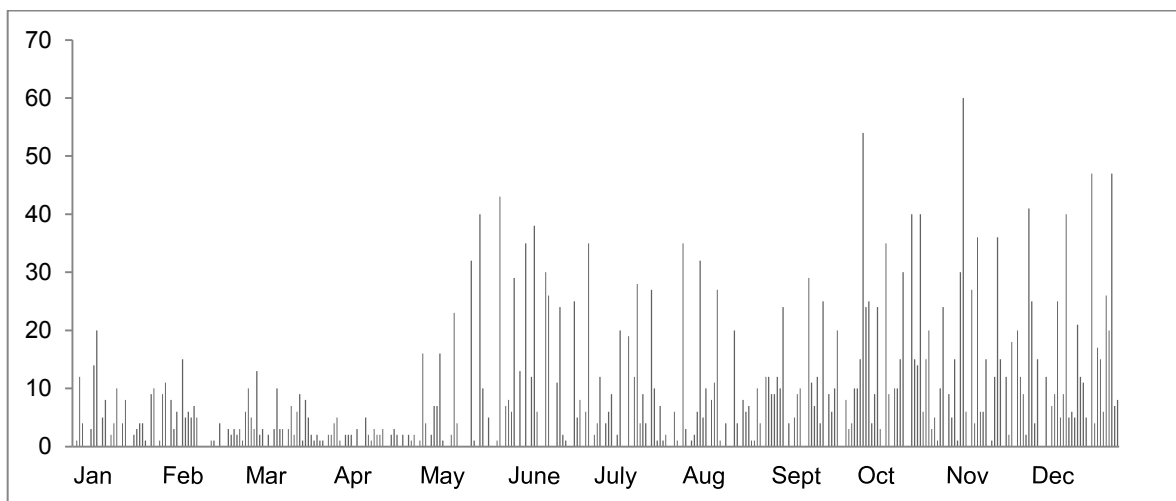
Common breeding resident.

An average year.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 2% since 1994. The species was recorded from 83 tetrads which represented 46% of those surveyed. This is an increase in their distribution of three percentage points since 1994.

The graph opposite shows the maximum counts per day throughout 2012. The gradual decline in numbers during the first winter quarter probably reflects continuing mortality but also the fact that they are less obvious during March and April as the foraging activity in groups breaks up while nesting. The appearance of the first broods can be seen as the counts jump up in mid-May when the distinctive sight and sounds of family parties are noted by observers. At CVRS, for example, the dates when juveniles were first ringed in May were two on 6th, 28 on 13th, and 12 on 19th.

Although the population is prone to fluctuations due to high mortality in cold winters the long-term trend in England shows an increase since the mid 1980s. The estimated population in the Avon area is 5000 pairs.



Long-tailed Tit – maximum daily counts in the Avon area during 2012

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Uncommon spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

Descriptions required for autumn records.

Eight were reported during a narrow arrival window of no more than nine days, all dates being later than average. Single birds were noted at Leigh Woods on April 28th, at three sites - Bristol A38, Yanley Lane, Long Ashton on May 1st, at another three sites - Aust Cliff, Avonmouth STW and New Passage - on 3rd, and CVL on 6th. Two were seen at Frampton Cotterell on 2nd.

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last ten years, almost all of which were on spring passage.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	8	9	8	10	5	3	7	8	2	8
Passage totals each year										

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

[RR]

P. c. collybita Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Also an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident.

Another average year.

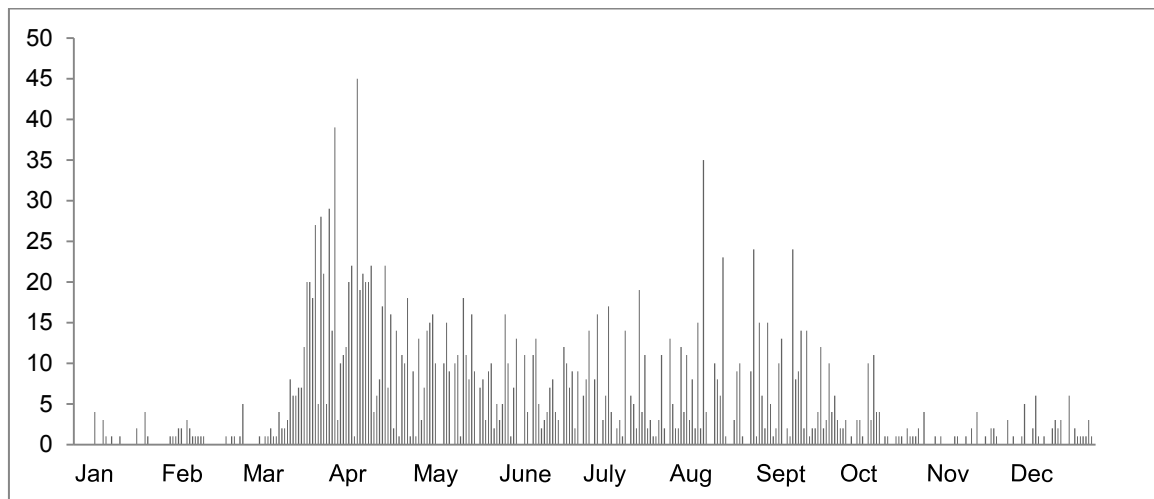
First Winter A total of 23 bird-days was noted in January and 33 in February. This included a singing male at the Square Pool at ASW on Feb. 15th.

Spring passage The graph below is based on the highest single count per day for 2012. The spring passage noticeably picked up in late March and April with a maximum count of 45 on April 11th at CVL, and 39 were noted near Almondsbury on 13th where two nests were being built.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 33% since 1994. The species was recorded from 162 tetrads which represented 90% of those surveyed, and is an increase of six percentage points since 1994. The breeding population in the Avon Area is estimated at 10400 pairs.

Autumn passage The start was not that clear cut but the peak count was 35 on Aug. 13th at Chipping Sodbury Common, with numbers gradually tailing off through to October.

Second winter In November and December there were 46 and 61 bird-days, respectively; mainly coming from regularly watched coastal sites and inland at CVL and Saltford.



Chiffchaff – maximum daily counts in the Avon area during 2012

Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis*

Scarce or very scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.

One record, from CVL: one watched from Stratford hide for some time by a number of observers on Feb. 6th (P Black, K E Vinicombe *et al.*); at one stage it was seen with a nominate Chiffchaff for comparison. It was noted again, and photographed, on the 9th. It was unringed (see below).

2011 – A late record was of one trapped, ringed and photographed by CVRS on Dec. 4th.

The table below gives the number of accepted records of this subspecies reported in the last 20 years.

1992	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	1

Records each year

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

[RR]

Common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

Low numbers continue.

Arrival The earliest record was for March 24th at PWD two days before the average 'first date'. The main spring passage was in April (521 bird-days) with the highest numbers: 17 on 11th, 21 on 16th and 50 on 24th.

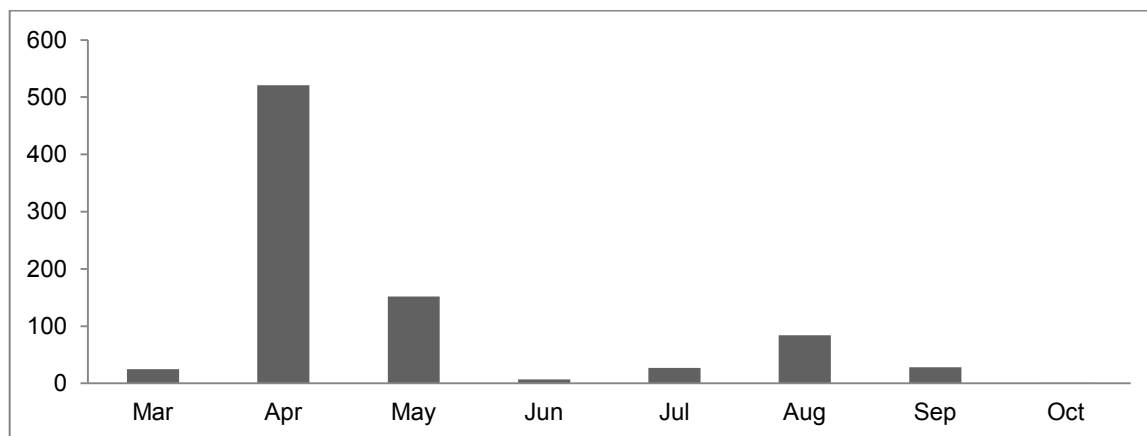
Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by a massive 79% since 1994. The species was recorded from 45 tetrads which represented 25% of those surveyed; this distribution is a decrease of 37% from that found in 1994. Although singing males were recorded at various sites in April, May and June, only one nest was reported. This was at Lower Knowle Farm, Almondsbury where the first of seven eggs was laid on April 28th but the young were predated a few days prior to fledging. CVRS did ring 20 juveniles but all were either in, or had completed, their post-juvenile moult and could therefore have come from further afield.

The national picture is of a species which is faring better in upland habitats and suffering a long-term decline in southern England. The ringing totals for Avon have increased in the last five years but it is probable that these are mainly of passage migrants.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
234	220	270	299	209	39	86	101	140	172

Avon ringing totals

Departure The graph opposite shows the number of bird-days per month, clearly the autumn passage was less obvious with fewer numbers being reported than in spring. The last record was from CVL on Oct. 1st, which is a week later than the average 'last date' since 1970 of Sept. 23rd,



Willow Warbler – bird-days per month, Avon area 2012

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce or very scarce autumn visitor; rare in winter with 28 records since the first in 1986.

There was a good showing with four records as follows:

OPS – one found on Oct. 17th remained until the 29th and was photographed (P Hazelwood *et al.*);

Bedminster – one calling from small urban gardens was seen briefly at 08.00 on Sept. 29th (P Marshall);

CVL – the individual ringed at CVRS in December 2011 was trapped again Jan. 1st and was seen in the ringing area on 6th. It was re-found at Stratford hide on 11th and seen here intermittently until Feb. 12th (many observers, photographed);

Midsomer Norton – one was feeding in a garden adjoining the Wellow Brook between 13.00 and 15.00 on Dec. 19th (V & B Smith, photographed).

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years. It was first reported in the Avon area in 1986 when there were five records.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	5	0	1	3	4

Records each year

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* [RR]

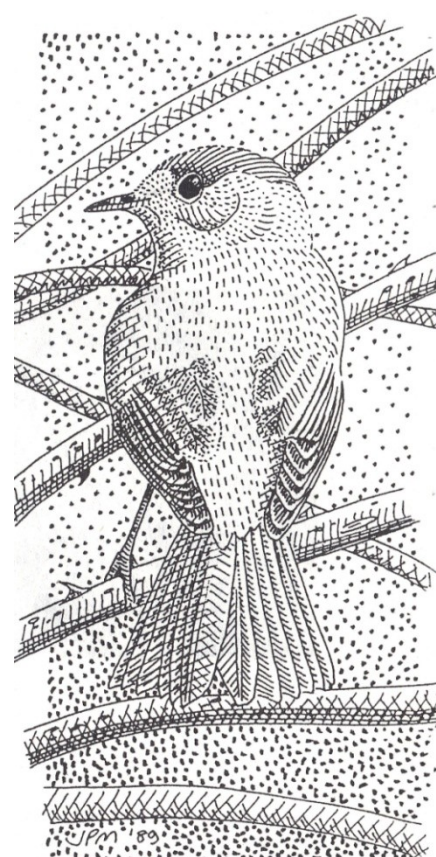
Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. It is now also a fairly common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

Nationally the breeding population has grown by 87% in the past 25 years, and there has been a similar increase locally.

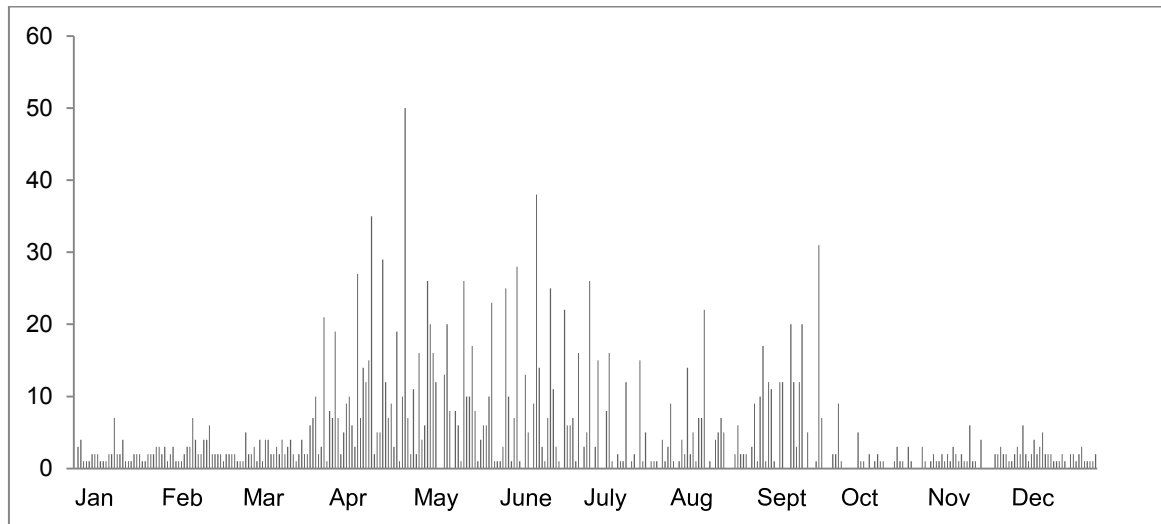
Winter 2011/12 WGS recorded them in 81% of gardens which is typical of recent years.

The graph overleaf shows the highest single count per day at any one site during 2012. There were no clear cut-off points between the arrivals and departures of our summer and winter visitors, and it is difficult to tell from the graph to what extent they overlap.

The first and second winter periods within the calendar year were approximately from January to March and then from October to December. These visitors are known to be mostly migrants that spend their summers in the forests in Southern Germany.



Blackcap – J P Martin

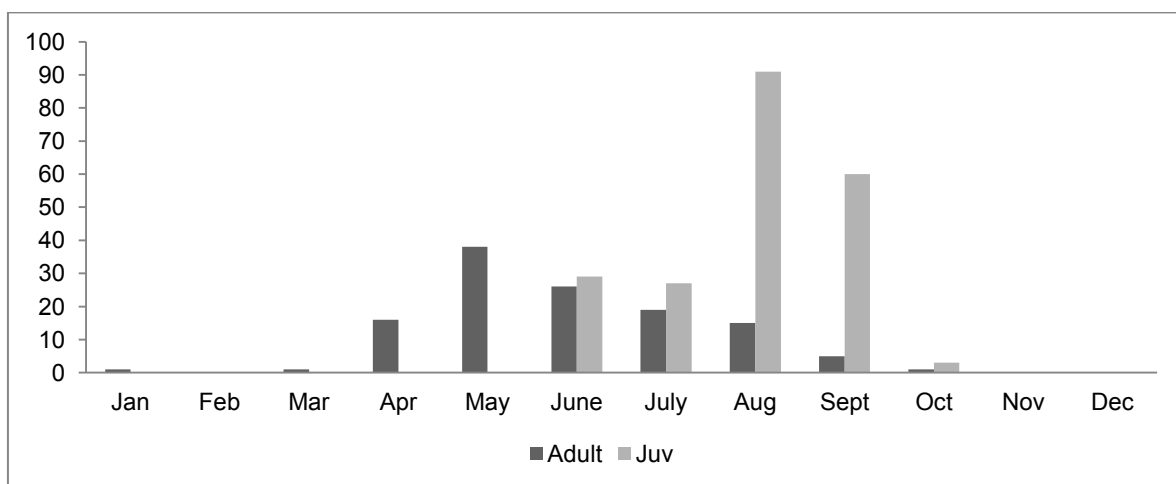


Blackcap – maximum daily count in the Avon area 2012

Spring arrival and passage This is seen by the rise in numbers at the end of March with seven at PWD on 26th, ten at BL on 7th and 21 at CI-Y on 30th. The highest total was 50 at PWD on April 28th.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 90% since 1994. The species was recorded from 154 tetrads, which represented 85% of those surveyed, and is an increase of 15% in their distribution since 1994. The second peak in the day graph in June and July results from juveniles appearing on the scene. The estimated breeding population in the Avon area is 13400 pairs. However the national picture in 2012, calculated by the BTO, indicated that productivity was low; down 62.4% compared with the average over the previous five years.

Autumn passage This was in evidence during September with movement at coastal sites, for example: 17 at PWD on 3rd, 20 here on 13th, 20 at GVRs on 17th and the peak count of 31 again at GVRs on 23rd. An analysis of those ringed at CVL (graph below) indicates that most passing through at this time were juveniles.



Monthly totals of adult and juveniles Blackcap ringed at CVRS 2012

Second winter The October and November sightings were mainly coastal but with gardens coming to the fore in December.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The numbers counted by observers are usually low and there was no sense of passage movements as seen, for example, with the previous species. The first record, of one at Clifton on April 8th, was six days earlier than the average 'first date', there followed a ten-day gap until 18th when one was at Splatts Abbey Wood and another the next day at OPS. The main arrivals were towards the end of April and the beginning of May.

Despite the higher than average number of adults being ringed in Avon, the breeding season was poor and the number of juveniles caught was very low. This is shown in the table below where 2012 was the first recent year in which the juvenile to adult ratio fell below one (0.8). At CVL, a brood of four was ringed on June 7th but they failed to fledge, probably due to the poor weather and the first fledged juvenile was seen on 17th. The national picture for 2012 was also bleak with the BTO reporting a 53.9% drop in productivity compared with the average over the previous five years. The estimate given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas for the breeding population is 500 pairs.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Adults	17	18	8	17	4	15	25
Juveniles	71	28	25	37	46	25	21
Juv : Adult	4.2	1.6	3.1	2.2	11.5	1.7	0.8

Garden Warbler – productivity in Avon 2006 – 2102

The season finished with one at New Passage on Sept. 15th, which was ten days before the average 'last' date for the past 25 years, but it was followed by a late record of one at Severn Beach on Oct. 28th. This was not the 'all-time' latest record date which is Nov. 21st set in Winscombe in 1993.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

By recent standards a normal year.

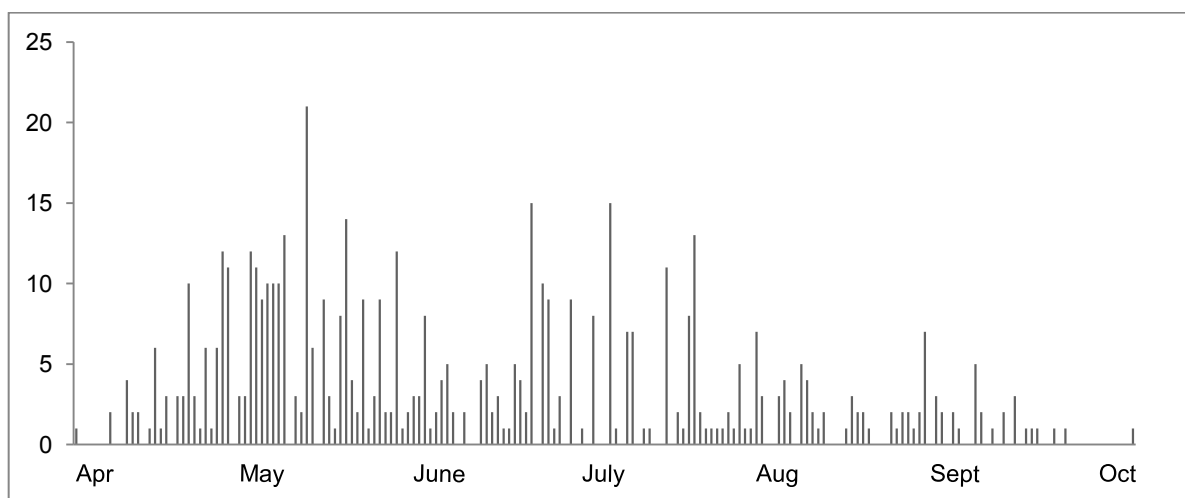
Spring arrival and passage The first sightings were of three at Saltford STW on April 11th (the average date for the first sighting is 20th), one at Congresbury Moor on 13th and another, a day later at OPS. The main arrivals were towards the end of April and the beginning of May.

Breeding A brood was noted at Chipping Sodbury Common on June 26th. The BBS counted 41 and the local count rate per hour has decreased by 45% since 1994. The species was recorded from 20 tetrads which represented 11% of those surveyed; this is a decrease of 8% in their distribution compared with 1994. The estimate for the breeding population given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas is 1000 pairs.

Departure and autumn passage Small numbers were recorded from the coast throughout August through to one at New Passage on Sept. 16th twelve days earlier than the average 'last' date. But it was followed by one at Sand Point from Nov. 11th to 23rd. Although this species has been recorded previously in winter, this individual was assumed to be a late migrant, photographs taken at the time suggested that it belonged to the nominate race.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the long-term.



Maximum daily count in the Avon area 2012

This species is widely distributed as a breeder throughout the Avon area. The population is very dependent on the rainfall in the Sahel region of Africa and is liable to fluctuate quite widely. The graph above plots the maximum number per day recorded in the Avon area during 2012.

Whitethroat arrival The first was seen at CVL on April 2nd, twelve days earlier than average, and it was followed by two at Stockwood Open Space on 8th. The peak was six weeks later with 21 at OPS on May 13th.

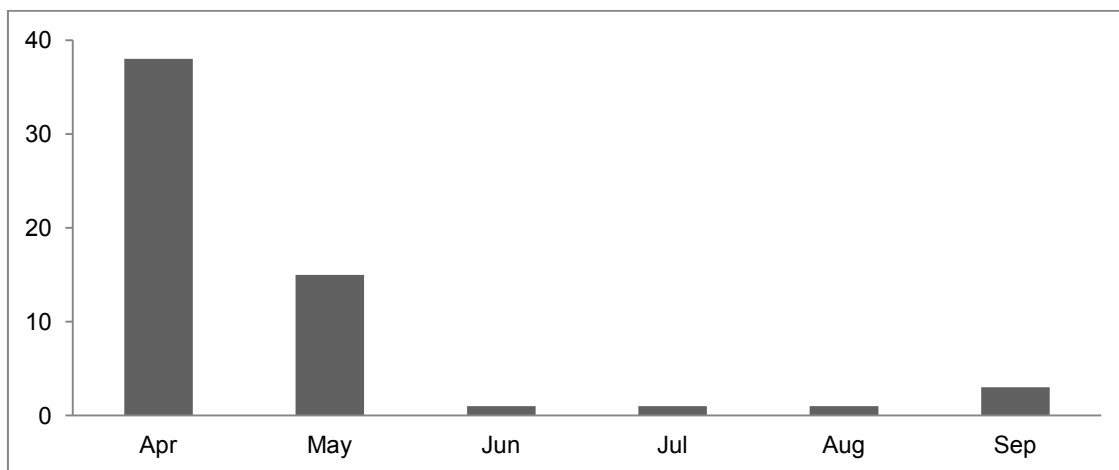
Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 50% from last year although the rate has increased by 4% since 1994. The species was recorded from 102 tetrads which represented 56% of those surveyed and is an increase of five percentage points in their distribution since 1994. A total of 12 singing males were present at CVL. Feeding of four fledglings was noted at OPS on May 31st and a brood was seen at Chipping Sodbury Common on June 26th. Seven nests were located near Almondsbury during May and June with five broods fledging successfully. The second peak in the graph above, during July, presumably represents the recruitment of young into the population. The national figures for the UK in 2012, produced by the BTO, indicate that although the adult abundance was 3.3% higher than the average for the previous five years, the productivity was down by 56.8%. The estimate for the breeding population given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas is 6000 pairs.

Autumn Small numbers were recorded along the coast during August and there was a suggestion of a passage movement at the end of August / early September with seven at Northwick Warth on Aug. 31st, and five on Sept. 9th at OPS. The last was at CVL on Oct. 7th which is 11 days later than average.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years

Spring passage The first was heard at Weston General Hospital, Uphill on April 13th and a total of 53 bird-days was recorded by mid-May (see graph below). This is half the number of bird-days (105) noted during the same period in 2011. Also, they were only recorded from 16 sites compared with 27 in 2011.



Bird-days per month in the Avon area 2012.

Breeding season There were no confirmed breeding reports, but up to three were heard reeling at Lower Knowle Farm, Almondsbury (ST58) during April, May and June. Although not proven it is therefore possible that breeding did occur in this area.

Autumn passage Reports of this very secretive species included one on Aug.18th at Chipping Sodbury Common and three ringed by GVRs on Sept. 6th which is 13 days earlier than the average 'last date'.

	Av. 1993/02	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	24	6	39	37	47	32	29	67	74	105	53
Breeding season	3	1	2	2	7	11	4	6	6	0	1
Autumn	18	12	6	29	6	3	6	7	16	9	4

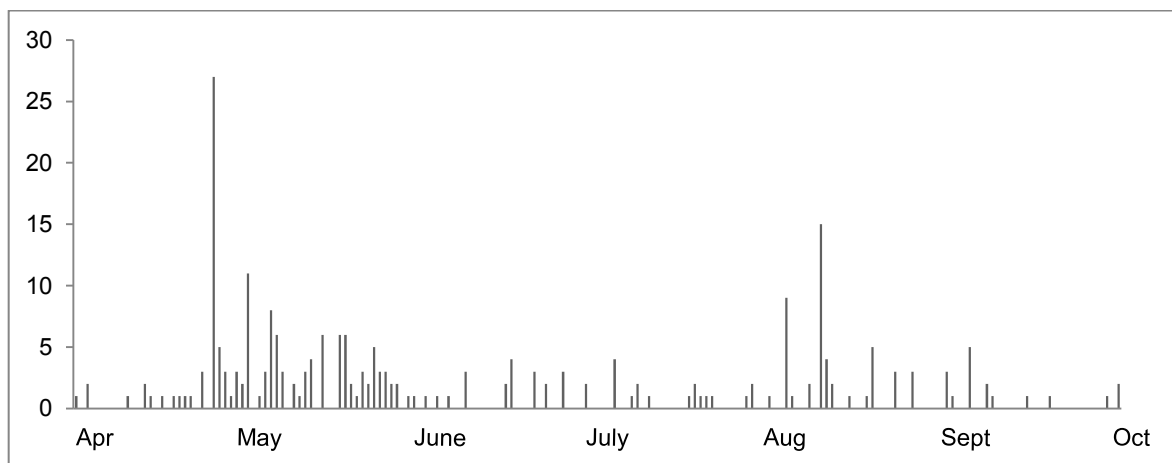
Avon spring and autumn passage bird-days and breeding season territories

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

[RR]

Another normal year.



Sedge Warbler – maximum daily count in the Avon area 2012

Spring The first was seen on April 3rd at Uphill, which is ten days earlier than the average 'first date'. Small numbers were recorded through the rest of the month with a spike of 27 at CVL on April 27th.

Breeding The BBS counted 67 and the species was recorded from 20 tetrads which represented 11% of those surveyed. This is an increase in their distribution of four percentage points compared with 1994. A total of 16 singing males was noted around CVL and three nestlings were ringed on June 20th. In a study at Lower Knowle Farm, Almondsbury, nine nests were found, all within an area of 2.5 hectares. First egg dates for eight of the nests ranged from May 6th to 23rd, and four of the broods fledged successfully. Egg laying began in the ninth nest on June 26th but this subsequently failed. Overlaps of breeding activity meant there were definitely seven and probably eight different females involved (M Dadds *pers comm.*). Nationally, it was a poor breeding season in 2012 and the BTO calculated that the adult abundance was 19% lower than the average for the previous five years, and productivity was down by 28%. The estimate for the local breeding population given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas is 600 pairs.

Autumn passage This was centred around Aug.10th when 15 were ringed at CVL. The latest sightings were of one at CVL on Sept. 29th and another on Oct. 2nd at PWD, a day after the average 'last date'.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

[RR]

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

A below average year but with some late broods.

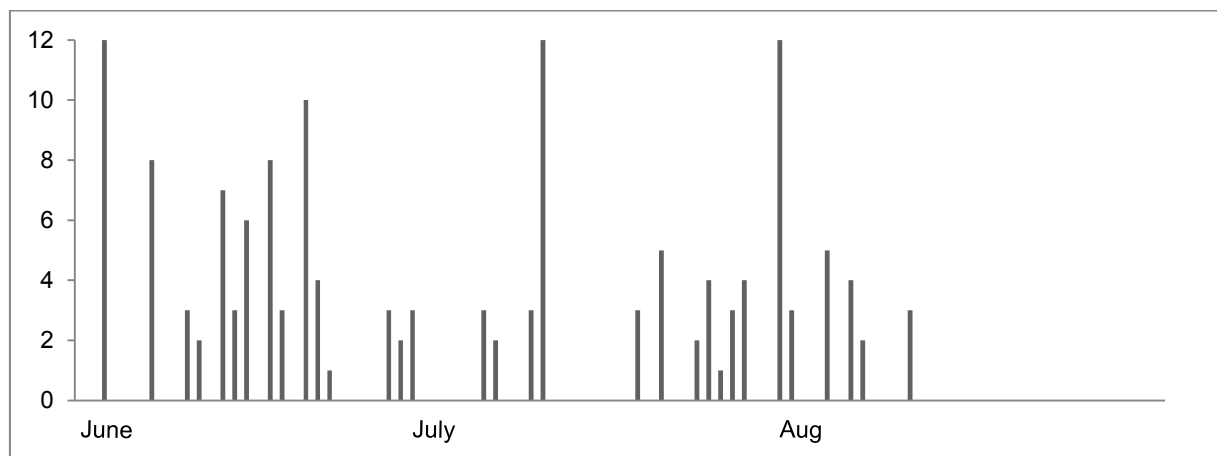
Arrival The first was seen on the early date of April 1st at Weston STW, this was 16 days earlier than the average 'first date', and it was followed with one on 7th at CVL and another on 8th at CI-Y. From then on passage was more or less steady with small numbers at many sites throughout the month.

Breeding The BBS counted 139, a decrease of 5% since 2011. The species was recorded from 21 tetrads which represented 12% of those surveyed, and is an increase in their distribution of 9% compared with 1994. The high rainfall during the spring and summer meant that it was a poor breeding season.

This was particularly so at CVL where, instead of the water level dropping throughout the summer it actually rose (see graph on page 160). The reservoir was full by June 21st and remained so for the rest of the year and into 2013. As part of a long-term study here, and despite the high water levels restricting the searching for nests, the first broods were ringed on June 3rd and the last on Aug. 10th.

The spread of ringing dates shown in the graph below, with nestlings hatching into late July and early August, suggest that it is possible for some pairs to have produced two broods. However, there is also some debate about the extent to which these later dates actually represent replacement clutches following failed earlier attempts.

The estimate for the breeding population given in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas is 1500 pairs.



Reed Warbler – nestlings ringed at CVL in 2012.

Autumn passage GVRs ringed two on Sept. 23rd, and the last was noted at Saltford on 24th ten days earlier than the average 'last date'.

Warblers at CVL

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Sedge Warbler	4	7	11	11	7	41	20	41	31	16
Garden Warbler	17	15	14	28	27	29	37	40	58	46
Blackcap	32	23	23	31	35	45	49	47	70	76
Chiffchaff	35	29	25	30	38	38	45	57	73	83
Willow Warbler	2	6	6	0	7	9	3	0	6	1

Excluding Reed Warbler, count of singing males made by KEV within the perimeter of CVL using a standardised method

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

A singing male found on May 19th at Weston STW remained until June 2nd (M S Ponsford *et al.*), it was seen by many observers and photographed.

This was the third Avon record. Song was recorded at CVL in May in 1992 and 2008, but the 2012 individual was the first to stay for more than a one day.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce irruptive winter visitor. Erratic locally with a big influx in winter 2004/05.

The second-winter period saw the third largest irruption locally in the last thirty years.

The first local report was of one at Sand Point on Nov. 10th, 15 were seen in Bath on the 19th and there were daily records from 23rd. A further 110 were noted during the rest of November, the largest flock being 30 at Avonmouth. In the first five days of December 79 were seen, and daily totals reached 135 from seven sites on 9th, the largest flock was 49 at Bradley Stoke (see photograph opposite page 120). On 10th there were 60 in this flock, but only another 16 elsewhere. Up to 82 were seen daily between 12th and 17th, the largest group being 47 at Combe Down on 15th. The berry resources of the area had been poor at the beginning of the invasion, and by now they were more or less exhausted, so the birds left. Five were recorded on Dec. 20th, 30 on 23rd and the last of the year, 13 on 24th.

In all 950 bird-days were accumulated, and they were seen at 37 sites spread across the region.

Flocks remained until April 2013 – the table opposite shows only the details up until the end of 2012; full details for the entire winter will be provided in next year's Report.

	1981/82	88/89	95/96	98/99	00/01	02/03	04/05	05/06	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
Bird-days	6	1	c.75	3	c.107	c.42	10875	1	c.70	22	2897	0	950
Max. flock	3	1	5	1	6	2	377	1	14	20	112	0	60

Winters in which Waxwing was recorded in Avon

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A normal year.

This species is widespread but not well recorded. Nationally the population increased by 71% between 1995 and 2009, but too few are counted locally to measure change. The BBS counted 84 in 17% of its squares, and it has been reported since 1998 in 346 one-km squares. This year it was recorded from 68 squares, 32 of these were new. Its elusiveness is emphasised by the fact that, in the past 14 years, there is only one square from which it has been reported in every year, ST 5373 which includes Abbots Leigh, and it has only been reported once in half (170) of the squares in which it has been occurred during the past 14 years.

In the recent Atlas Survey, involving both winter and summer counts in 337 tetrads in Avon, it was present in 51% of them (172). The results from records since 1998 add another 43 tetrads to this distribution, and it is only apparently absent in 122 tetrads, 36%. These include areas that are heavily urbanised, the North Somerset levels, and highly arable tetrads. However, the recording system, especially the widening use of BirdTrack, is ensuring that records come from areas previously rarely visited, and this is illustrated by the continued growth in the number of new one-km squares from which it is reported each year.

Breeding was proved at two sites, in Nailsea and on Walton Common, they were recorded from 37 other sites during the breeding season and from 44 in winter. They are sedentary, and it is likely that they were breeding at all of the sites in which they were recorded.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Total squares	69	80	87	34	54	42	65	83	81	68
New squares	27	28	26	9	13	6	22	31	23	32

Total number of one-km squares in which species was reported each year

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A normal year.

Like the above species this one is also not well reported. Nationally, the BBS has shown an 11% decline between 1995 and 2009. Locally, the BBS in 2012 counted 45 in 10% of the squares covered. Since 1998 there have been records from 291 one-km squares, and this year they were recorded in 71 of them, 22 of which were new. The recent Atlas found them in 186 of the 337 tetrads in the region, 48%, and annual records have added another 54 to this distribution.

In the breeding season they were reported from 25 sites, and 30 during the winter periods. They are sedentary and were likely to be breeding at every site in which they were seen.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Total squares	49	26	61	26	41	36	44	57	69	71
New squares	28	13	27	11	14	10	14	13	22	22

Total number of one-km squares in which the species was reported each year

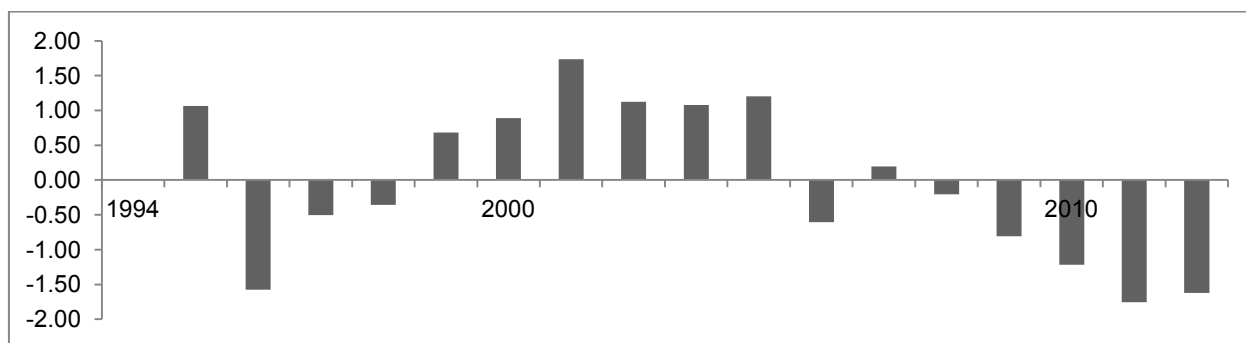
WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident.

There was a recovery from the low numbers in 2011, but the breeding season was poor.

Nationally and locally numbers collapsed in 1996 after the severe winter, and then recovered reaching a plateau in 2002 before falling by 26% between 2007 and 2011 as a result of the three successive cold winters. The 2012 BBS showed a small 3% increase. There is evidence that the 2012 breeding season was a poor one. At CVL five nests were found by D Warden in an area that over the past twelve years has had on average 11.6

nests, and four of these failed. Nine pairs were recorded in Leap Valley, but no young were seen, and autumn records from the CABS were well below average.



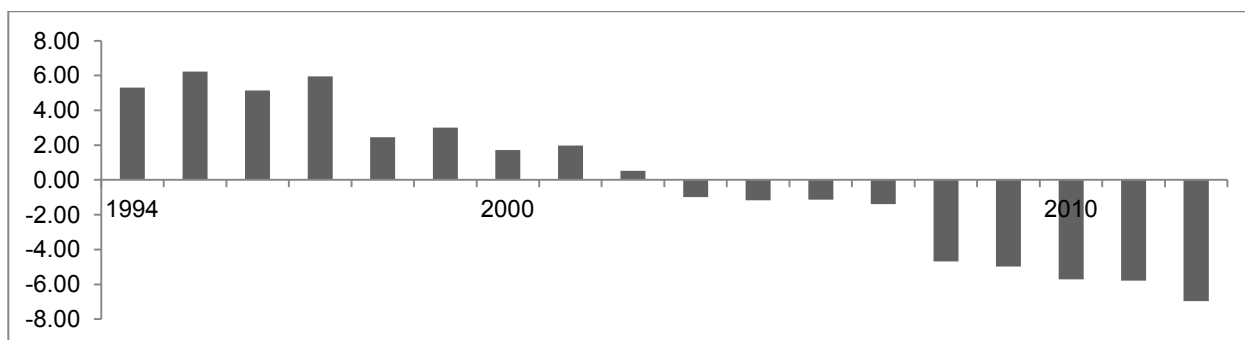
Wren – the annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 7.24

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; also passage migrant and winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by 50% in the last 25 years.

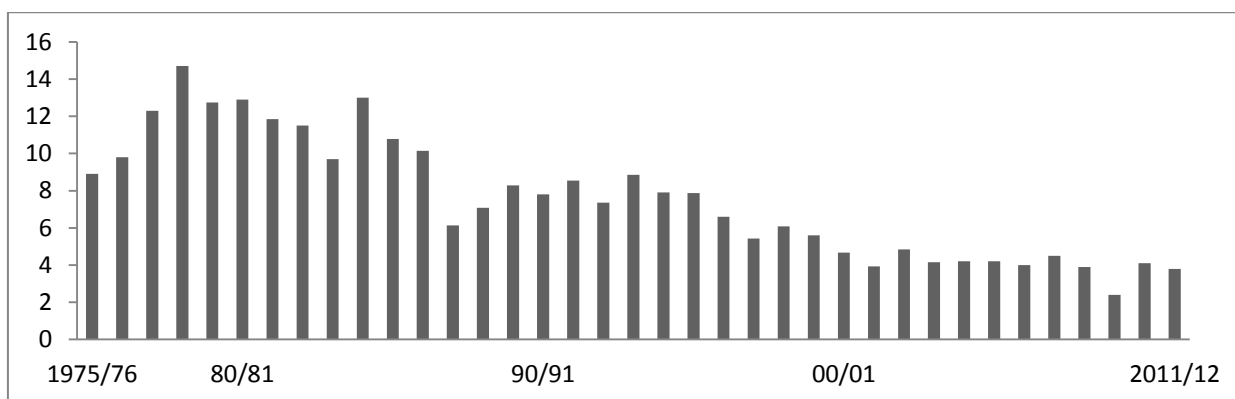
The slow decline of this species shows no sign of stopping.

Both nationally and locally the decline since 1997 has been more or less continuous. The 2012 BBS showed a 73% fall since 1994 in the breeding population, and the new Atlas winter counts suggest a 42% fall since 1984 in the very much larger winter population.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 10.95

The WGS, running since 1975, has shown a 58% fall from an average of almost nine per garden-week to just under four in 2011/12, although numbers have been largely stable since 2000.



WGS data - Average number per garden per week, 1975-2011

The breeding population is estimated to be 8500 pairs, with a fall of 12% since 2011 and the lowest level yet recorded, although they are still very widely distributed.

In January and February there was a roost of around 20000 at New Passage and also in January there were large feeding flocks of 2000 at CI-Y, 1400 at Weston STW and 1000 at Marshfield.

The first juveniles appeared on May 10th, an early date, and several juvenile flocks were reported, the largest, 115, at New Passage in July.

Between Oct. 10th and Nov. 23rd a total of 34 timed migration watches was held, most at Sand Point, 65 hours in all. During this time 64700 were counted at a number of sites along the Estuary, this figure may be too high as some flocks could have been counted more than once as they moved through. It is assumed that most originated from the Baltic region, the direction of travel may seem puzzling but it mainly reflects the wind direction at the time as migrants are mainly seen flying into the wind. The table below gives the main counts from Sand Point and includes the date, the daily count, the direction of travel, and the duration of the watch in hours.

October										November										
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	30	31	1	2	3	5	6	7	9	10	11	15	17	18
880	2200	6050	6250	3200	400	6260	950	630	730	600	650	610	2600	270	490	2100	1550	270	300	670
S	N	NE	N	NE	N	N	NW	NW	N	NW	NE	N	N	N	N	N	N	NW	N	S
1	1	4	4	2.3	0.5	3	2.5	1	1.5	1	2	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.2	4.5	1	3.5	4
Starling – timed (hours) autumn migration counts at Sand Point (P A Bowyer <i>et al.</i>)																				

Starling – timed (hours) autumn migration counts at Sand Point (P A Bowyer *et al.*)

Several counts were also received from New Passage during the last week of October, those over 1000 included 1580 on 23rd (N or NE, a two hour watch), 2650 on 24th, 10000 on 25th (NE, a four hour watch), and 5000 on 29th; also in November 1500 were counted on 11th. Finally, two four-figure counts were noted at CI-Y in November: 1000 on 11th and 2000 on 14th moving west.

During the second winter period a roost of 5000 was reported from New Passage in October, but no other roosts were reported. The largest feeding flock was 2000 at Marshfield on Nov. 25th, and in December the largest feeding flock was 600 at CI-Y on 30th.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Pastor roseus*

Rare vagrant, with seven individuals between 2000 and 2011 after no 20th century records.

Description species.

One record: a first-summer found at Severn Beach at 11.30 on June 10th amongst a small mobile flock of Starlings (R Emery *et al.*) – see photograph opposite page 57. It was reported as present the next morning.

This is the sixth record since 2000, the last being a juvenile at New Passage in September 2004.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers.

Records from the Winford Brook continue to dominate, but there were breeding season records from 20 sites. Breeding was probable at all of them and proved at three.

Nationally, there has been a 35% decline since 1995, but locally the evidence suggests that the population is stable. The site details for 2012 are as follows:

North of the Avon: on the R. Boyd at Wick; at Snuff Mills and Frenchay on the Frome; and on the Siston Brook at Willsbridge.

South of the Avon: at five sites on the R. Chew - Chew Magna, Compton Dando, Pensford, Publow, and Keynsham; on the Winford Brook at Lower Littleton; on St. Catherine's Brook at Lambridge; on the Lam Brook at Northend, north of Bath; on the Wellow at Welton; on the Cam at Combe Hay; and on the Somer in Midsomer Norton.

They were recorded at 11 sites in winter: on the R. Boyd at Wick; on the R. Frome at Chipping Sodbury, Yate, Snuff Mills and Eastville Park; on the R. Chew at Pensford, Publow and Keynsham; on the Winford Brook at Lower Littleton; on the Wellow Brook at Welton; and on the Midford Brook at Midford.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Bird-days	38	56	51	89	77	84	173	201	205	125
Sities	13	14	10	13	12	8	9	18	23	25

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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 50% in the past 25 years.

A normal spring passage was recorded, but none were seen in the autumn.

The average first arrival date is March 31st, but this year the first records were for April 12th when two were seen at Sand Point and one at Dundry. Then single birds were noted at Clapton on 13th, at OPS on 14th, at Aust Warth on 15th, at Weston STW on 16th, and at PWD on 21st with a second here on 28th – the last record.

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	8	5	3	3	10	20	2	4	9	20	12
Autumn	1	2	1	19	1	0	2	4	2	0	0

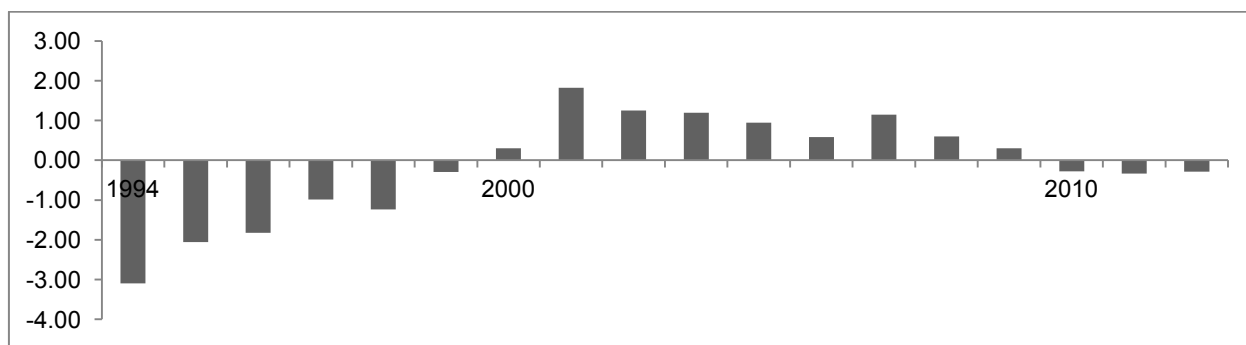
Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.

An average year.

Nationally the population grew steadily from 1994 to 2008, but locally it peaked in 2002 and has declined slowly since then. There was a 15% fall between 2008 and 2011 caused by three cold winters, and no increase was recorded by BBS in 2012. It remains the third commonest breeding species with an estimated population of 44000 pairs.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 9.69

In the 2011/12 winter the WGS numbers showed a sharp fall, perhaps because it was a warm winter. Numbers rose sharply in the January cold snap. Also there was a record site count at Weston STW of 53 on Feb. 11th.

A total of 15 was recorded on Steep Holm in March, although it was not clear whether these represented territories. Elsewhere the first eggs were found on March. 28th and the first fledgling on April 15th. CABS reported very few fledglings and recorded the lowest autumn figures since 1994, suggesting a poor breeding season.

In October, migration was noted past Sand Point on Oct. 24th (five to NE) and 25th (18 to N during a four-hour watch), and there were records of influxes at Leap Valley on 27th (10) and at Battery Point, Portishead on 29th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

No large flocks were present in either winter period.

First half-year Present in 30% of the WGS gardens, but totals recorded were 30% lower than last year, as the winter was much milder. Most of the records came from the two week cold spell in January.

There were no records of large flocks in the first three months of the year. The largest recorded in January was 200 at Marshfield on 7th and in February 750 at Cl-Y on 8th. Most groups were around 50 or below. Numbers were smaller in March, the largest flock being 75 at Chipping Sodbury Common on 18th. There were just four records in April, the last, on the 8th, was of 50 at Wetmoor. This is four days earlier than the average last date.

Second half-year In general arrival was late, and smaller numbers were noted than in the previous winter.

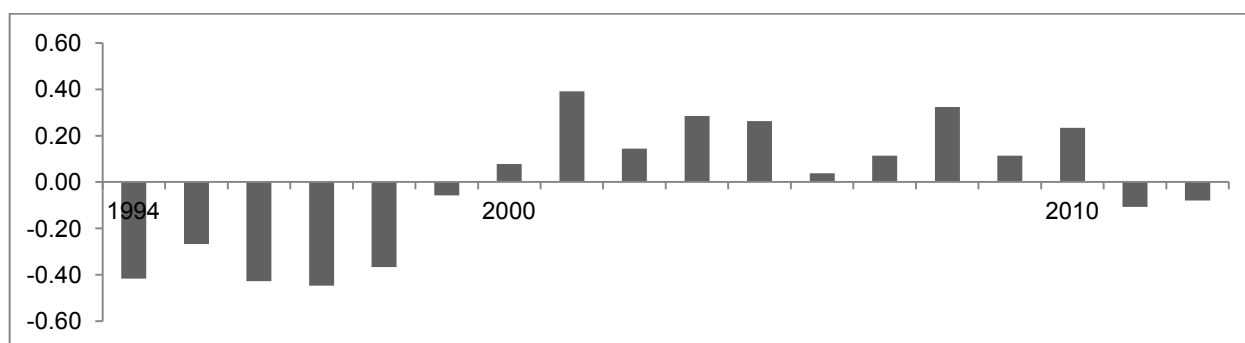
The first record was ten days later than average on Oct. 14th, three flying over PWD, and one on the same day at Sand Point. On the 20th there were 35 at Northwick Warth and on 25th 200 at Saltford. In late October the migration watches counted just 300 in 35 hours, a very low rate, and in November 1400 were counted in 27 hours, a rate of 50 per hour, and half of these were at Sand Point in three hours on 10th. In November the largest flock was 750 at CI-Y on 14th and in December 250 here on 31st.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% in the long-term.

By recent standards a normal year.

Nationally the population rose by around 30% after the collapse caused by the 1995/96 cold winter, and peaked in 2008, but the three subsequent cold winters caused a fall back to 1994 levels. Locally the increase peaked in 2002, it fluctuated up to 2010, but it fell sharply in 2011 after that hard winter. In 2012 the BBS showed a 2% increase. The breeding population is estimated at 6300 pairs.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 1.59

Song stimulated by a warm autumn began in December 2011, and continued through to the end of July, suggesting a protracted breeding season. A total of 27 singing males were recorded around the perimeter of CVL, the same figure as in the previous three years. Also 15 were recorded on Steep Holm in January but only one in the breeding season.

About 20 migrants were grounded by poor weather conditions at Steep Holm on Oct. 24th, but very few were recorded during the migration watches.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Only small numbers were reported in both winter periods.

First half-winter In the 2011/12 winter the WGS recorded this species in 65% of the gardens in the survey, almost all during the January cold snap, and in numbers close to the decadal average.

Remarkably no large flocks were recorded in January. In February the largest flock was on Nailsea Moor, 415 on a recently fertilised field, on 10th. Congresbury Moor had 300 on 2nd and 200 on 26th. In March there were 120 at OPS on 10th and 40 at Walton Common on 21st. There were five April records, the last at the CVRS site near CVL on 21st, which is the third latest date yet recorded, shared with 1978 and 1984.

Second half-year The first was seen at New Passage on Oct. 4th, four days later than average, and five were reported from Bishopston on 6th. On 7th there were records from nine sites, including 800 flying to N at Northwick Warth.

There were 65 hours of migration watches between Oct. 10th and Nov. 29th during which time 900 were counted at a rate of 14 per hour, almost all travelling in a northerly direction. The highest rate was 300 in three hours on Nov. 10th at Sand Point. On 14th, 1000 were recorded flying west at Clevedon, but this count was not timed. In November and December there were feeding flocks of up to 200 on Congresbury Moor and elsewhere.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years

The slow decline continues.

Nationally the population has fallen steadily by a third since 2000. Locally numbers fell abruptly in 1998, levelled off until 2003, and then fell steadily again. The 2012 BBS results were the lowest yet for this survey, and their distribution has fallen to 24% of the squares surveyed, compared with 42% in 1994. The causes of this change are unknown. There were four singing males around CVL, as last year.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 50% in the past 25 years.

There was a further decline. Nationally the population has halved since 1994, and this fall has been mirrored locally by a continuing drop in records.

In 2012 the first were at Wain's Hill and OPS on May 2nd, which is the normal first date, and there were records from six widely scattered sites up to May 10th. A total of 23 was counted in the next ten days, eight of them on 16th which was the peak of the passage, and 21 were counted in the last ten days of the month. Five of the records were of pairs which may have been setting up territories, but two late migrants were seen on 25th at Sand Point.

Breeding was proved at Abbots Pool and CVL. In June and July there were ten records from nine different sites. This marks a further decline in breeding season records: in 2009 there were 18 records from 14 sites; in 2010, 15 from 11 sites; and in 2011, 14 from ten sites.

In August they were recorded from eight localities, including a family party of five on 26th at Claverton. In September there were ten records of single birds, the last on 25th, a typical last date.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
222	128	108	109	58	98	97	100	81	92

Bird-days per year

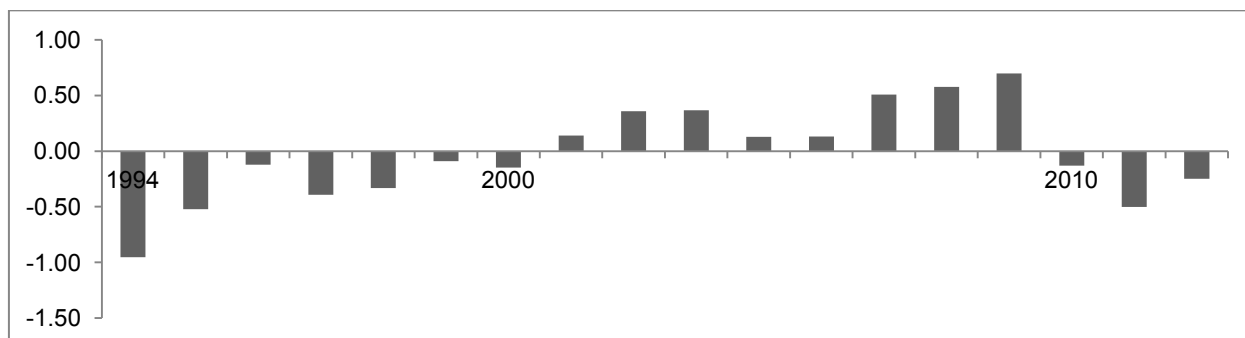
ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident.

An average year.

Nationally the population reached a low point in 1997 after two cold winters, and then increased steadily during the warm winters up to 2008 reaching a level 40% higher. The impact of the recent cold weather has reduced the population back to the level of 1999. Locally the pattern was different, with a fairly steady increase peaking in 2009, and a steep drop of 22% to 2011. In 2012 the BBS showed a 6% increase, to give an estimated breeding population of around 42000 pairs, the fourth commonest Avon area species.

Nest building was first recorded on the early date of Feb. 25th, and young were being fed on April 4th. Two were noted on Steep Holm in April. The very wet summer may have resulted in a poor breeding season as autumn numbers were the lowest ever recorded by CABS.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 4.82

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce breeding summer migrant, and scarce or very scarce passage migrant. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years.

In 2012 there was a BTO survey of all sites where the species has been recorded in the past decade, the results of which are summarised on page 156.

The first arrivals were two singing males at Lower Woods on May 5th, twelve days later than normal, this is probably related to the poor weather conditions in April. All subsequent records came from Lower Woods except for one at Chipping Sodbury Common on May 27th. Breeding was attempted in Lower Woods by five pairs and two were partially successful, see the paper referred to above.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
10	2	3	11	8	6	5	3	3	4-5	5

Estimate of number of pairs attempting to breed each year

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years.

The huge increase in bird-days recorded this year was probably the result of better recording of a small number of long-stay individuals rather than to any dramatic increase in the numbers present.

In the first winter period a male that had been present since November 2011 at Portishead was seen on several dates up to March 9th. A female was noted with it on six occasions in January and February, with a second male on Jan. 25th. Another individual was seen at Sand Bay from Jan. 7th to the 20th. Thus there were at least four individuals in the area during this period.

One was recorded in song near College Green three times in April, the last on 30th, and one was recorded on May 4th at Northwick Warth.

There were two early autumn records, on July 27th and Aug. 8th both at Cribbs Causeway.

The first in winter was seen on Oct. 27th at CI-Y. In November a female was reported from the Portishead Police HQ on 2nd with a male here on 11th. A pair was present at the Portishead marina from 14th to 23rd and a female was seen at Sand Point from 24th to 30th. A female was at OPS on 25th with a male here on 30th. In December a first-winter male was seen from 1st to 24th at OPS. At Portishead Pier a pair was present from 2nd to 23rd. One was at Sand Point on 1st, 2nd, 17th and 25th and probably the same at Anchor Head on 10th. A further individual was seen at Hotwells on 12th. This suggests that a possible nine were present in the second winter period.

1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
28	25	24+	16	12	33	45	111	88	63	125

Bird-days each year

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Uncommon passage migrant. National conservation status Amber.

A huge spring passage was followed by poor autumn one.

Spring passage Unprecedented, twice the level of any previous year back to 1984, and passage continued later than normal probably because of the more or less continuous northerly winds in April. The first, a week early, was seen at Lansdown on March 30th. Five were noted at four sites on April 6th. Passage peaked on 14th when 31 were counted at eight sites, and it continued at a slower rate through the rest of April, and the first week of May, the last was one at Sand Point on 13th. There were records from 34 sites, 18 of which were inland.

Spring migrants						
Date	Mar 17-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	1	5	82	27	22	1
Max count	1	2	9	3	2	1

There were records from Chipping Sodbury Common on June 25th and July 1st, from Clapton-in-Gordano on 11th, and a juvenile at Saltford on 31st, all of which most probably involved post-breeding dispersal.

Autumn Redstart passage Mediocre, possibly implying a very poor breeding season in the light of the exceptional passage in spring. On average in the past decade passage has been a third higher in autumn than in spring. This year it was lower by 85%. The first was at Severn Beach on Aug. 8th and three were seen at different sites on 9th. Eight other single birds were seen during the rest of the month and four in the first week of September. The last were at Severn Beach and Weston-s-Mare on Sept. 26th, 17 days earlier than usual. The total was 18 individuals from 13 sites.

Autumn migrants						
Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	:	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	5	3	4	4		2
Max count	1	1	1	1		1

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	20	26	49	34	65	18	26	28	24	37	138
Autumn	29	35	30	26	36	16	20	17	29	78	18

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the past 25 years.

By recent standards a large but late spring passage was followed by a poor autumn one.

Spring The best passage since regular records began in 1984, but it peaked later than usual. The first was noted at the Yeo Estuary, CI-Y on April 20th, a normal first date. The second was in the same area on 24th and the third at CVL on 27th. Passage peaked on May 2nd when 22 were counted at ten different sites and it was almost complete by 9th, but one was at CI-Y on 12th, and individuals were recorded at two sites on 13th. The total passage, 89 from 21 sites eight of them inland, was double the average for the past decade.

Spring migrants				
Date	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	1	20	65	3
Max count	1	4	7	2

Autumn A poor passage, the worst since 2007, implied in the light of the high spring passage, a poor breeding season. The first was seen at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 27th, the next on Aug. 9th at Northwick Warth, and on 11th two were at Battlefields, near Lansdown. Ones or twos were seen during the rest of August, and the peak, such as it was, came on Sept. 8th when five were seen at two sites. There were regular sightings through the rest of September. In October single birds were noted at Avonmouth and CI-Y on 1st, at Uphill on 12th and at Shepperdine on 13th. The last, a month later than average and the latest record ever, was recorded at CVL on Nov. 14th (R Mielcarek, C and H Craig) – the previous latest record was on Nov. 12th, 1967. The total of 44 records from 22 sites, five of them inland, was well below the average for the last decade of 95.

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	1	2	6	14	10	8	2			
Max count	2	1	2	3	4	3	2	1			
1993/02 Av.		2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	43	45	46	41	48	31	24	18	37	34	89
Autumn	115	188	71	90	138	33	127	88	92	77	44

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce breeding species.

An average year, there were no breeding records but numbers in both winter periods increased slightly on the previous year, suggesting some population recovery after three cold winters. Nationally the population doubled between 1994 and 2006, but it has since fallen back to the 1994 level.

First winter period In the first two months a maximum of 30 individuals generated 79 bird-days from 15 sites, seven of them inland. The maximum count was five at Weston STW on Jan. 28th. This was a notable improvement on last year, suggesting a good breeding season in 2011.

Spring passage Light, with 20 bird-days from ten sites, and all but four in the first two weeks of March.

Breeding Disappointingly there were records of only nine birds in the breeding season, and none of them suggested breeding activity.

Autumn passage The first to return were found on July 11th at Severn Beach, five weeks after the last breeding season record. There were records of three others in July, five in August and 15 in September. Just five were seen in the first ten days of October, and passage peaked between 12th and 15th when 12 were seen at five sites. The final tally was 57 in September and October, this compares with 23 in 2010 and 26 in 2011, but there were 112 in 2009 prior to the two recent cold winters.

Second winter period In November there were records of 37 bird-days from ten sites, and in December 40 bird-days from 15 sites. The probable maximum number of wintering individuals was 29, an encouraging increase on the last two years, they came from 16 sites five of which were inland.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Jan. – Feb.	38	44	48	57	44	55	51	22	17	30
Breeding pairs	3	8	11	12	7	15	2	2	3	0
Nov. – Dec.	40	45	62	55	63	69	50	16	19	29

Estimated number of Stonechat 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. Both nominate O. o. oenanthe and O. o. leucorhoa (Greenland Wheatear) occur and both are probably common migrants, albeit hard to identify with certainty in the field. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of its European Conservation Status.

The largest spring passage ever recorded beat the 2006 record by 12%. Nationally the population has grown steadily following a low point six years ago.

Spring passage One was seen at both CI-Y and Aust Warth on March 16th, five days later than average and eight were noted at five sites, including the Cribbs Causeway Shopping Centre, on the following day. Numbers remained low through the rest of the month and did not pick up until April 13th, when 45 were reported from ten sites, and on 15th when 97 were counted at 11 sites including 40 at Littleton Warth. A second wave came through on 27th when 270 were noted again at 11 sites including 86 at Middle Hope. Then 180 were counted on 30th, 165 on May 2nd, 149 on 3rd, and 227 on 5th, the end of the main passage. But 40 were reported at CI-Y on May 12th, and daily records continued to 20th with five more to the end of the month. Seven were recorded in June, the last on 12th at PWD. The final sum total of the passage was a remarkable 2273 bird-days.

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	18	38	69	384	651	967	137	5
Max count	3	6	8	42	86	90	40	2

Autumn passage The passage was the largest since 2005, and a third higher than average. But it was just a third of the spring passage and this proportion has been around four-fifths during the past decade. This possibly implies a comparatively poor breeding season. The first to return was at CI-Y on July 5th, and there were 14 more records this month. Daily records of small numbers were noted throughout August, with numbers picking up in the last four days, 45 being counted at three sites on 30th.

Another wave came through on Sept. 10th when 42 were seen, and then there were daily records in diminishing numbers to the end of the month. Daily records continued until Oct. 21st with four in the first ten days of November, one on 14th, one on 17th and a final one on 20th at CI-Y, 18 days later than average. This is the fifth equal latest record, shared with 2005.

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	36	28	110	123	110	103	96	20
Max count	8	8	27	22	21	12	25	4

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	513	338	820	814	2036	450	496	418	296	980	2273
Autumn	398	603	546	651	560	332	670	495	482	842	617

Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the last 25 years.

The fourth poor spring passage in a row was followed by a second blank autumn.

The first in spring was a male on April 5th seen and photographed in a suburban garden in Cranbrook Road, Redland (Bristol), it stayed for about an hour. This was nine days earlier than normal and the fourth earliest record shared with 1999 and 2002. The next was at PWD on 14th, and the third at Aust on 15th. Then there were single birds at Nailsea on 27th, at Severn Beach on May 1st (a male), at OPS on 2nd and the last at Bradley Stoke on 5th completed the passage.

None were seen in the autumn.

	1993/02 Av.	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	15	1	7	14	22	2	22	1	8	12	7
Autumn	5	3	1	12	0	1	0	2	3	0	0

Spring and autumn passage numbers each year

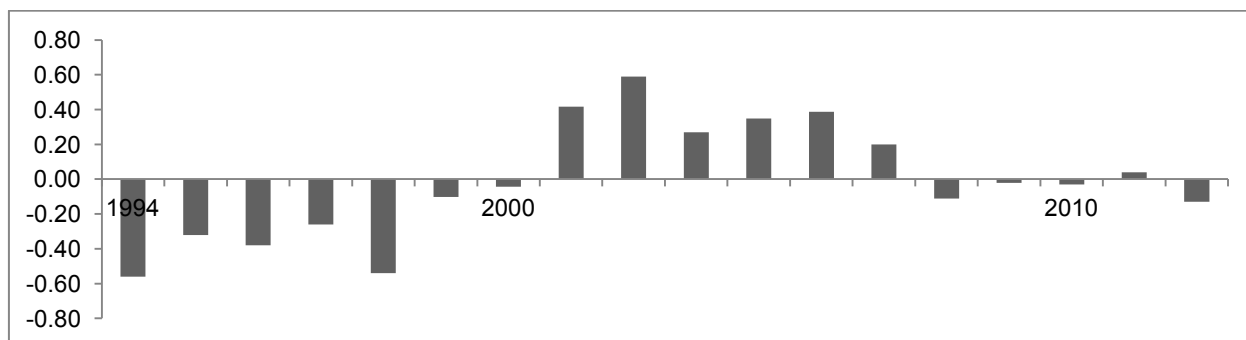
DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 25% in the long-term.

A normal year.

Nationally the population increased from a low level in 1997, the result of two cold winters, and reached a peak in 2010, before an abrupt fall in 2011 caused again by the cold weather. Locally the pattern was rather different with a peak in 2003 and a steep fall between 2006 and 2008. The population was then stable, but showed a slight fall in 2012. Its local breeding population is estimated to be 22000 pairs.

On Steep Holm, where it is the commonest passerine, 25 were counted in January and ten in April.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 2.22

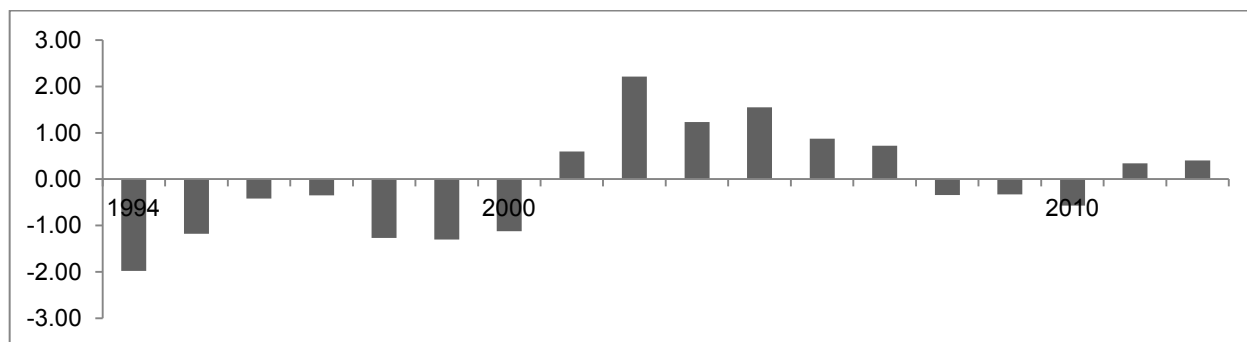
HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Still abundant but declining breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 50% in the last 25 years.

The slight improvement noted last year continued into 2012.

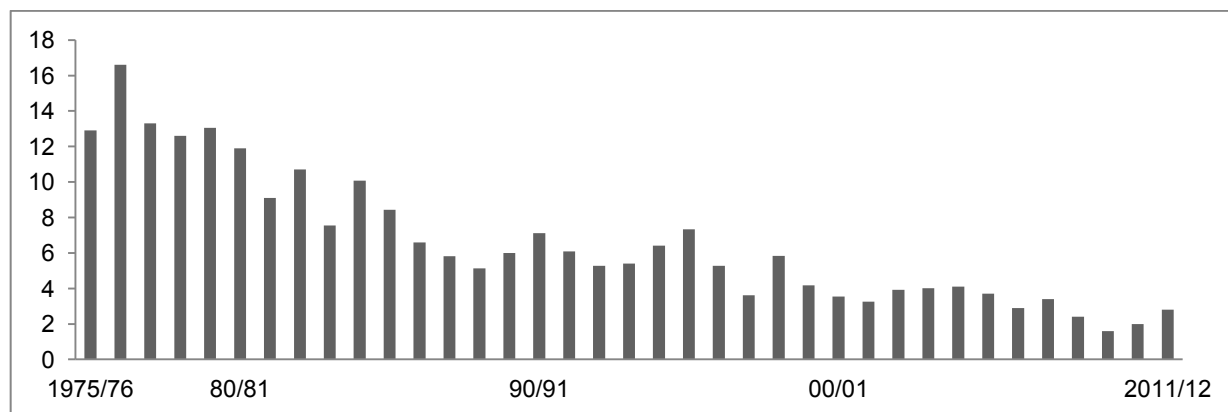
Nationally numbers fell by a quarter between 1994 and 2008. Locally the pattern has been more complex, with a peak in 2003, and a drop of 30% to 2010. There was a 14% increase in 2011 but no further rise in 2012.

The local breeding population is estimated to be around 40000 pairs, making it the second commonest species.



House Sparrow – the annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 7.46

Since 1975 the WGS has recorded a fall from an average of 16 per garden-week to 2.8 in 2011/12. The main decline was between 1975 and 1988, and numbers have been fairly stable since 2000, see chart below.



House Sparrow – WGS average numbers per garden per week in winter

There was a flock of c.100 in August at Heron's Green Farm, CVL, and there were six records of counts of over 50 although it was not clear whether these were of individual flocks or not.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by at least 50% in the last 25 years.

Extinction in Avon appears to loom with only one record this year: two were seen at Marshfield on Nov. 30th feeding with Chaffinches.

In the Atlas survey the only breeding population was outside Avon on the Mendips. The species is effectively no longer a resident in the Avon area. In 1993 flocks of up to 40 were noted (at ASW) and breeding was noted in at least four sites.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Bird-days	72	52	40	18	5	2	5	8	8	2
Sites	7	3	4	4	3	2	2	1	5	1

Bird-days and sites each year

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

M. f. flavissima. Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

An excellent spring passage was followed by a better than average autumn movement.

The total spring passage of about 439 was by far the best in recent years, see table below, although a large proportion passed in just a couple of days at the beginning of May.

Yellow Wagtail spring records				
Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	2	21	37	366
Max count	2	11	8	186

Spring passage The passage started with two at Weston-s-Mare on April 8th and peaked in the first few days of May. Eleven were seen New Passage on 13th with four at OPS on the same date, then there was a series of ones and twos on the coast between 14th and 26th at Severnside, PWD and Clevedon, rising to eight at Northwick Warth by the end of the month, while inland, five appeared at CVL on 29th. There was then a sizeable passage with 92 flying NE over Wains Hill, CI-Y on May 1st, with 186 seen at OPS on the same day, many also moving NE. On the next day, 48 were seen at Northwick Warth while on the 3rd, CI-Y logged 12. During this period ones and twos were also seen elsewhere on the coast and at CVL. Small numbers then continued to be seen along the coast until the end of May, the largest on any one date being ten at Northwick Warth on the 8th and the same number at CI-Y on the 10th. Single birds were also seen on a couple of occasions at BL and CVL during May.

The only June records from potential breeding sites came from Old Sodbury and the Hawkesbury Upton/Horton area, but the most that can be said is that birds were present in suitable habitat.

Autumn passage A singleton over Saltford on July 15th probably marked the start of this passage, the next record being of four on Northwick Warth on the 24th. Severnside then reported ones and twos regularly through to Aug. 19th, with similar numbers on odd dates at OPS, PWD, Weston STW, Chipping Sodbury Common, BG and CVL. Numbers then picked up in the last ten days of August, with Northwick Warth/New Passage reporting up to 15 on several dates, 28 on 20th, and up to 11 through to Sept. 9th. Small numbers were also noted along the coast (OPS, PWD, CI-Y, Sand Bay, Uphill) during this period and these continued through to 25th. Inland, one or two were also seen in September at Saltford (3rd, 4th, 15th and 22nd), BL (18th) and CVL (3rd, 4th, 14th and 16th), this last site hosting the final three of the year on 28th.

The autumn total of 278 was again above average for recent years as is shown in the table below.

Yellow Wagtail autumn migrants							
Date	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	8	8	50	84	102	17	9
Max count	4	2	28	15	11	4	3

	1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	157	155	72	49	131	118	78	62	59	121	67	125	86	164	25	42	165	439
Autumn	735	195	91	88	273	188	279	72	132	386	160	125	156	102	147	404	258	278

Yellow Wagtail – bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the long-term.

Widely reported in both winter periods, with records coming from at least 40 sites across the area including reservoirs, streams and rivers, sewage works, gardens, and town and city centres.

In January and February 56 bird-days were reported with one or two at 37 sites. In the second winter period (November to December) there were 107 bird-days from 30 sites, again mostly in ones and twos, but up to five at Saltford on several dates, and nine here on Dec. 12th.

Reports during the breeding period for April to June came from about 28 sites (24 in 2011). Breeding behaviour was noted from Banwell, Temple Quay (Bristol), central Bath (where a nest was destroyed by flooding), New Passage and the main dam at CVL. Two juveniles were seen at this last site on Aug. 10th, with seven feeding close together in the overflow channel on Sept. 11th. The BBS counted 16 from just 11 tetrads, too few to provide a true guide to any population changes.

Autumn migrants were principally reported between Oct. 20th and 28th, from OPS, New Passage and Middle Hope/Sand Point, the maximum count being four on any one date, although the odd bird had been seen on the move from mid-September.

2011 – The report of ten at Leap Valley, Downend on April 17th was an error.

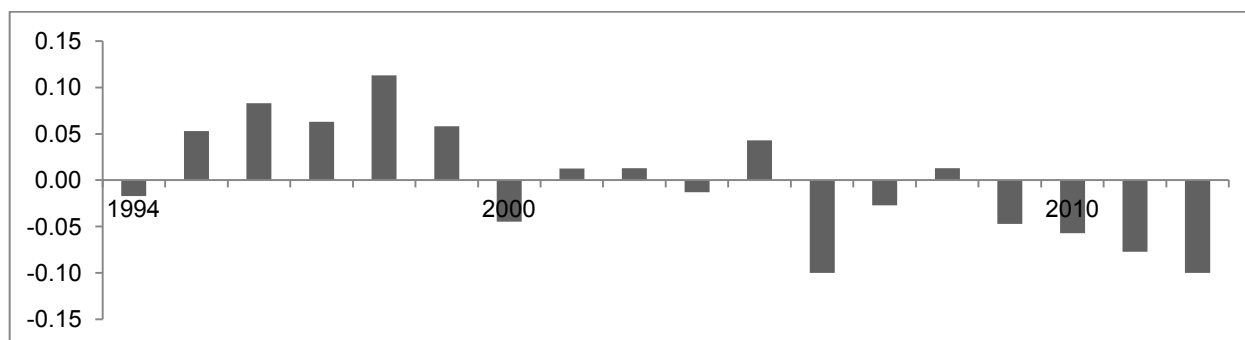
WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

[RR]

Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrelli**Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant.*

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 8% since 2011 and by 27% since 1994. The species was counted from 59 tetrads which represented 33% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of 6% against that found in 1994. However, the 2007-11 Avon Atlas indicates that birds were present in 80% of the tetrads surveyed.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 0.32 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.32

First winter period In this period, three roosts were counted: 160 at OPS on Jan. 22nd and still 100 here on March 3rd, about 100 at the Mall, Cribbs Causeway in mid-February and 83 in reeds at Weston STW on Feb. 29th. Otherwise, there were 33 at New Passage on Jan. 1st and up to 20 here in late February, with no more than eleven at a variety of other scattered sites.

In March and April the only double-figure counts came from New Passage (16 on March 7th), CI-Y (32 on 13th) and BG (20 on April 4th), presumably migrants on the move. The 100 counted at Cribbs Causeway on March 26th were presumably at a pre-roost gathering. Breeding was confirmed at CVL (four pairs) and in Portishead (two young raised), and juveniles were seen at Northwick Warth. Small numbers were noted at regularly counted sites, but elsewhere this widespread species (*cf.* BBS data) is clearly under-reported as far as casual records are concerned.

Autumn and second winter period The first groups started to form from early July onwards, with 35 at OPS on 5th, 60 CI-Y on 20th and 40 at New Passage on 23rd, then Severnside and OPS regularly recorded up to 30 well into September. Elsewhere, apart from 12 at the Axe Estuary on Aug. 4th, single-figure records continued to be the rule until late September when 40 were reported from PWD on the 21st, ten at Saltford on the 23rd and 24 at PWD again on the 29th. In October there was a distinct increase with 60 at Cribbs Causeway on the 2nd, 40 at Northwick Warth on the 3rd, 120 at Bristol Airport on the 7th and 50 at Saltford on the same date, 100 at BL on 11th, 50 at OPS on 15th, and 108 at Saltford on 24th. A trickle of migrants was seen on the coast in the last ten days of the month, 29 at New Passage on 20th and 19 at Aust on 22nd being the highest counts.

In the second winter period a major roost formed near the Hippodrome in the centre of Bristol from early November, attracting an impressive 500 on Nov. 22nd and at least 200 were noted here on Dec. 15th. There were also good numbers at Saltford throughout, peaking at 220 on Dec. 5th, and wide scattering of smaller numbers elsewhere.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba**Uncommon passage migrant.*

The 2012 spring was one of the better periods of recent years, and reasonable numbers were also seen in the autumn. Both arrival and departure dates were in line with the long-term average.

Spring passage The first records of the year came from CVL with single birds on March 28th and 31st and two on April 5th. The lake continued to produce most of the sightings through the rest of the month with up to four on many dates. BG was another favoured site, with six on the 10th and up to three through to 25th. Four were seen at CI-Y on 7th and 10th with two on 20th, while single birds were noted at New Passage on 14th, 15th and 27th. A male at Grickstone Farm, near Chipping Sodbury on April 24th was the only record away from the more regular sites. Up to three were seen in early May at New Passage, CI-Y and CVL through to the 15th, with the last spring migrant noted on the beach at Uphill on 17th.

White Wagtail spring records					
Date	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	2	17	16	18	6
Max count	1	6	4	4	3

Autumn passage The majority of sightings came from the coast, starting with three on Severnside on Sept. 8th and again the next day, with two on 10th. In the next week to the 16th up to four were noted on the coast at PWD, CI-Y, Sand Bay and Uphill, with one inland at BG. The final records came from CVL where single birds were seen on Sept. 16th, 28th and 29th.

	1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	63	na	na	na	67	144	81	51	34	46	29	64	81	34	43	64	67	39	59	67
Autumn	21	11	na	na	12	7	2	7	2	4	11	74	24	9	7	15+	6	5	43	32

White Wagtail – bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

Good numbers on spring passage were followed by a much thinner autumn, no breeding records were received.

Spring records				
Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	0	24	29	65
Max count	0	7	10	30

Spring passage The first spring migrants were noted at Sand Point, when three were seen on April 11th (the long-term average is April 3rd), with two the next day and seven on 13th. On this last date, one was seen at OPS and two were at New Passage. There then followed a regular series of sightings, up to four at a time, at various points along the coast, through to May 13th when the last one was noted at Sand Point. Some more notable counts included ten heading NW at New Passage on April 30th, 12 at OPS on May 1st, when there were five over Wain's Hill, CI-Y, and 30 over Northwick Warth on 2nd. Away from the coast migrants were seen at Chipping Sodbury Common (one on April 16th), Weston Moor (one on 18th), CVL (one to S on 20th), Walton Common (six on May 6th), and Saltford (one on 7th).

Autumn records									
Date	Jul 1-10	Jul 11-20	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-30	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	1	0	1	0	3	2	6	1	0
Max count	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0

Autumn passage As in the spring the majority of the autumn migrants were noted along the coast, starting with single birds at Northwick Warth on July 7th, at Sand Point on 8th and CI-Y on 9th. Apart from one at Northwick Warth on July 21st there was then a long gap until single birds were noted at Leap Valley, Downend on Aug. 18th, and at New Passage and Dolebury the next day. Eight were seen, in ones and twos, from Aug. 30th to Sept. 15th at Severnside, Walton Common, Sand Point and Saltford with the final sighting of the autumn noted from Dolebury on Oct. 7th.

	2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
Spring	68	24	61	111	55	48	25	33	44	119
Autumn	22	14	37	30	25	23	12	35	30	15

Total number of passage individuals each year

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species, mainly on the coast. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

As usual, good numbers on spring and autumn passage, but high water levels at the reservoirs at the end of the year meant that most were to be found in low-lying areas nearer the coast.

In the early part of the year, small groups were recorded from the coast, low-lying areas such as Kenn Moor and the Gordano Valley and at the reservoirs, mostly 30 or less. Some larger groups included 45 at Batheaston NR on Feb. 3rd, 50 near Yatton on 16th and 50 at Northwick Warth on 29th.

Spring passage Movement was first noted at New Passage on March 2nd (five to NE), but the main migration started from 23rd, with small groups regularly noted at Severnside through to early May, the direction almost always being to the NE, as is usual here. The peak seemed to be around April 14th, when 81 were on the move here, out of 130 counted, and 300 were seen over Wain's Hill, CI-Y the same day. On April 10th at CI-Y, 210 were noted as migrants, and other large counts during this period included 150 at Sand Point on March 23rd, and 56 at OPS on 31st. Apart from three N over CVL on 15th, there were few records of movement inland.

From mid-May to mid-July there was a scattering of mostly ones and twos along the coast from OPS, Aust Warth, New Passage, PWD, CI-Y and the Axe Estuary, with inland records from Hawkesbury Upton, Burrington and Newton St. Loe, but whether any bred is not known. The BBS counted 65 from 12 tetrads, representing 7% of the squares surveyed, but at least some of these could have been migrants.

Autumn passage Numbers increased again from late July, with 40 at CI-Y on 20th and 14 at New Passage on 22nd although visible migration as such did not seem to commence until Aug. 31st when four were seen over Saltford with one over Brandon Hill, Bristol on Sept. 6th. Other records of migrants inland included three to S over CVL on Sept. 12th, 22 to S over Saltford on 18th and nine on 23rd, ten over Bradley Stoke on 29th, 363 over Brandon Hill, Bristol on Oct. 4th when large numbers also passed over Saltford, and 28 flew over Bradley Stoke on 28th.

The highest numbers were, of course, on the coast, some of the larger September counts being 250 at CI-Y on 15th, when there were also 150 at Sand Bay and 38 at Weston STW, 80 at Northwick Warth on 21st and 100 here on 25th with 75 at Weston-s-Mare on the same date. Passage peaked in early October, with 800 at Northwick Warth on 5th and 520 to S over Weston-s-Mare on 7th (during a three-hour watch) while 150 seen at Saltford the same day also indicated the scale of the passage. Smaller numbers continued to pass through for the rest of the month, with coordinated counts around the 24th to 26th producing maxima of 37 at Aust Warth, 25 at New Passage, 60 at PWD, 40 at Middle Hope, and 13 at Saltford.

Second winter period During the last two months of the year, up to 40 could be found at the usual coastal sites, the highest numbers being at CI-Y (135 on Nov. 14th), Avonmouth (45 on Nov. 4th) and New Passage (70 on Dec. 23rd). There were few inland records, ten on Congresbury Moor on Dec. 10th and 12 at Saltford on Dec. 12th being the only ones in double figures and none were noted at the reservoirs due to the high water levels.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*

Very rare vagrant.

Description species.

The third Avon record: one at Northwick Warth at 09.00 on April 22nd (J P Martin, B Lancaster, photographed). It was watched for a few minutes and then flew a short distance but could not be relocated despite an extensive search.



Red-throated Pipit – J P Martin

Red-throated Pipit con't

The previous records were at BL in September 1973 and at CVL on Dec. 16th, 1979 (not Oct. 4th as published in the 1981 Report).

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.

The general picture was of up to six being seen throughout the year at various spots along the coast, winterers remaining at non-breeding sites until mid-March and reoccupying them from late September.

First winter period Sites occupied in the early part of the year included: Shepperdine, OPS, Littleton Warth, Aust Warth to Severn Beach, PWD, Portishead marina and pier, CI-Y and the Axe Estuary. The highest count was eight on March 9th and 10th at PWD, perhaps indicating migrants on the move.

From early April to the end of May, up to three were regularly noted at PWD, Portishead, CI-Y and Anchor Head (Weston-s-Mare), and up to six from then until mid-September. Nesting was noted at Anchor Head, and a juvenile was seen at OPS on June 30th. Four were seen on Steep Holm on July 19th, this being another regular breeding site but not covered on a regular basis.

Autumn and second winter period The first arrival on Severnside involved four at Chittening Warth on Sept. 21st and up to five were regularly reported from this section of coast until the end of the year, with ten being counted at Severn Beach on Dec. 8th. During the same period CI-Y recorded two to five on a regular basis, one or two were present at OPS throughout, four were noted here on Nov. 17th, one or two were seen at Littleton Warth from mid-October to the end of the year, and the same situation was true at Battery Point, Portishead.

The only coastal migrant counts came from Sand Point where one to three were seen moving N on Oct. 25th, 26th and 28th, with nine here on Nov. 13th, this time heading S. Away from the coast singletons were seen at CVL on Oct. 14th and 19th, Nov. 1st and 3rd, at BG on Oct. 20th and 27th, and one was seen at Sea Mills on Oct. 15th.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis*

Wintering Rock Pipits are assumed to include an unknown proportion of this subspecies, some of which become identifiable in spring; ten have been recorded since the first in 1994.

A summer plumaged individual was on the dam at CVL in the afternoon of March 25th (S Curtis, R Mielcarek *et al.*).

The videograb opposite page 64 shows how distinctive, and similar to Water Pipit, this subspecies can be in spring. The salient features to note are the long, stout, all dark bill (shorter and weaker in Water), the distinct malar stripe (which Water lacks) and the lack of contrast between the crown and mantle (the grey crown in Water contrasts with the browner mantle).

Not surprisingly all local records of this race have been between March 2nd and April 8th. The first record was from CI-Y in 1994 and subsequent records have come from Chittening Warth in 1997, New Passage in 1998, Sea Mills and CVL in 2001, Severn Beach and CVL (three) in 2005, and Severn Beach in 2006.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, Scarce on the coast. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK wintering population.

Scarce at CVL, but good numbers were noted from Severnside.

There were no records from CVL in the first half of the year, but the coast was much more fortunate. Up to four were noted at CI-Y in January, with singletons at Weston STW and Northwick Warth. This latter site, and nearby New Passage, then had regular counts of one to three through February to the end of March, with five being noted on Feb. 13th and six on March 18th. During this period one or two were also noted on odd dates from OPS, Portishead, CI-Y and Weston STW. The only April record came from PWD, with one on 11th.

OPS was the site for the first migrant of the autumn, with one on Oct. 21st, while on 23rd CVL had its first of the year. It, or another, was caught and ringed by CVRS on Nov. 3rd, and on 11th three were seen coming to roost in the reeds at Herriott's Bridge. However, the only other record from the lake was of one on Dec. 5th, making it another poor year here, probably as a consequence of a run of cold winters and the high water level in the autumn (see graph on p. 160). Back on the coast, migrants or wintering individuals were seen at Severnside

(single birds on twelve dates between Nov. 8th and Dec. 23rd, with two on Nov. 26th), CI-Y (one on Dec. 17th), and Sand Point (one on Oct. 28th, two on Dec. 8th, and one on 15th).

	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
CVL max	11	17	17	6	5	7	6	20	2	1
Coastal	4	3	11	6	6	7	7	5	10	28
Other inland	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0

Water Pipit – maximum counts at CVL and estimated numbers at coastal and other inland sites each winter

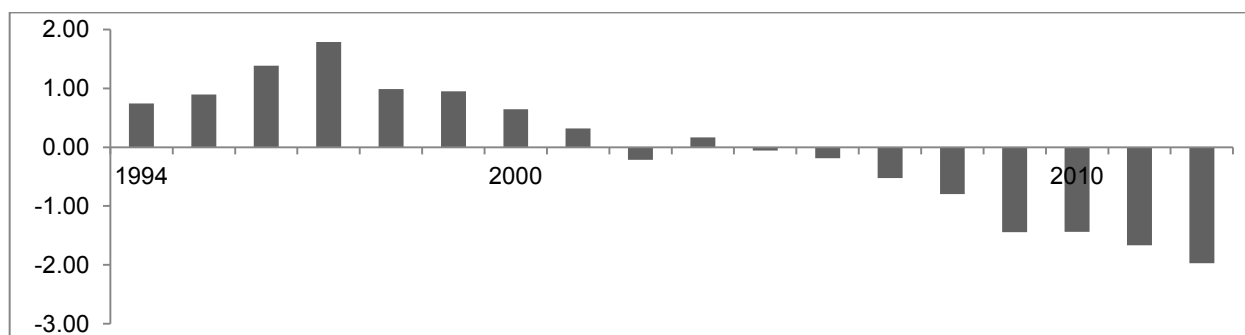
CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Some impressive numbers on autumn migration, but the slow decline in the local breeding population continues.

Breeding The Avon BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 8% since 2011 and by 43% since 1994 (see graph below), compared to an increase nationally by 12% over the same period, and by 37% since 1970. The species was counted locally from 171 tetrads, which represented 94% of those surveyed; this distribution has decreased slightly, by 3%, since 1994.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 5.53 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 5.53

The local breeding population is estimated to be 12400 pairs, the ninth commonest local breeding species.

WGS recorded this species from all survey gardens in the 2011/12 winter, a level only previously attained in 2008/09, although it has been recorded from at least 89% of gardens for the past decade. But the WGS index was down again at 2.5 birds per garden per week, the lowest figure since 2004 when it was 1.8.

First winter period Winter flocks on the coast in the first two months included 100 at OPS on Jan. 1st and 14th, 100 at Axe Estuary also on 12th, 100 at CI-Y on 14th, while inland there were 300 at Marshfield on Jan. 29th with 500 here on Feb. 12th.

The first recorded song was at CVL on Jan. 23rd, while a small flock here on March 8th were seen to be feeding where the *Miscanthus* ('elephant grass') biofuel crop had been harvested. Breeding was recorded on Steep Holm, with three fledglings seen here on May 21st and at least five on July 21st.

Spring passage was minimal, with 33 heading NE on March 25th at New Passage and 20 on the 31st at OPS being the only counts of any significance at all.

Autumn and second winter period The autumn migration period kicked off with 96 over Brandon Hill, Bristol on Oct. 4th, while 315 were seen heading N over Weston-s-Mare on the 10th with 165 here the next day. Sand Point produced 250 on Oct. 14th, with 415 seen heading W the following day while 1445 were counted here in an hour on 18th. On Severnside, although there had been a handful on the move since mid-month, more significant numbers started to occur from the 21st when 400 were counted at Northwick Warth, 226 at Aust Cliff on 22nd, 2700 at New Passage on the 23rd and 1800 on 24th. Also on 24th, 1800 were seen passing Walton Bay and 3100 over Middle Hope, all these heading NE. Numbers peaked on 25th, when 16000 were counted at New Passage, mostly to NE, some of these possibly being included in the 10000 seen at Aust Cliff, 1000 at OPS, 2500 at PWD and 3850 at Walton Bay. At Sand Point, 5200 were also seen heading N, while inland, 120 were counted heading E over Herriott's Bridge, CVL.

Chaffinch con't

Good numbers continued to move along the coast through to mid-November with, for instance, 1000 at OPS on Oct. 26th, 1560 over Sand Point on 28th, 1405 here on Nov. 1st and 230 on 11th. By Nov. 6th, the flock at Marshfield again numbered 300, building to 700 on 25th, with 300 still present on Dec. 9th. Other larger gatherings included 100 seen feeding in stubble at CVL on Nov. 17th, 110 at Horton on the 28th, 150 at CI-Y on 29th, 100 on Lansdown on Dec. 6th, with a record count of 215 at Weston STW on the same date. In December, 125 were counted at Saltford on 12th, and 200 at CVL on 21st.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Few in the early part of the year, following on from low numbers at the end of 2011, but there was a significant autumn passage, with small numbers widespread to the end of the year.

First winter period Just a handful of records at the start of the year, mostly in ones and twos, apart from a flock of 50 at Marshfield on Feb. 5th. There were only two records in April, singletons at CVL on 13th (in song) and at Walton Common on 22nd.

Autumn migration The first were 18 reported at Sand Point on Oct. 1st, with one at PWD on the same date. Between one and four were then recorded on various dates from 7th through to 22nd, at coastal sites from OPS down to Weston-s-Mare, and inland at Chipping Sodbury Common (8th), Blagdon (16th and 18th), Tyntesfield (19th) and Saltford (21st). The last week of the month produced 36 actively migrating at New Passage on 23rd, 29 at Middle Hope on 24th with 55 at Aust Warth on the same date. The next day saw 15 over PWD and 58 over Sand Point, the latter site reporting 13 on 28th and 23 on 30th, when 30 were seen at CI-Y. There was a scattering of smaller counts elsewhere along the coast during this period. Small numbers continued to be seen throughout November, at coastal sites predominantly, with up to 15 at Sand Point to mid-month, but 12 heading SW over Brandon Hill, Bristol on 6th was a notable inland count.

Second winter period By December, small numbers were well distributed, being seen in gardens in several places, but the only flocks of any size were ten to 15 at feeders in Chew Stoke from mid-month, ten roosting at Nunnery Point, CVL on 18th, 30 at Woollard on 21st and 10 at Marshfield on 23rd.

1992/93-01/02 Av.	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
384	103	270	20	3065	25	246	242	43	738	100

Bird-days October-March

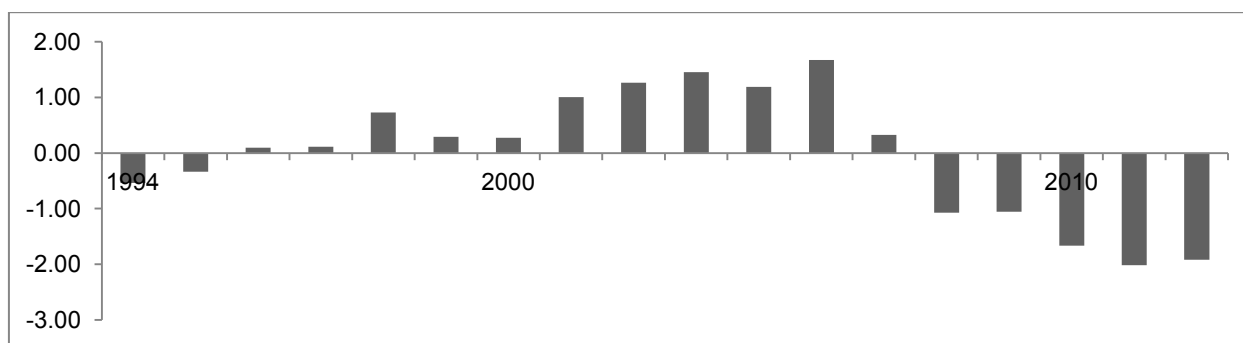
2011 – The report of two at Leap Valley, Downend on May 8th was an error.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

There are some indications that the long-term decline has been reversed.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 6% since 2011 but has decreased by 46% since 1994. The species was counted from 142 tetrads which represented 78% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of 3% against that found in 1994. Numbers have fallen by 60% from their peak in 2006 when the *trichomonosis* disease struck, but at last this year have shown a small increase. The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 3.56 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 3.56

The local breeding population is estimated to be 7000 pairs.

WGS recorded this species from 81% 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 2.0 birds per garden per week, the lowest figure for the past decade, although higher than the figure of 0.7 for 1974/75.

First winter period Although widely reported, and with an increase in garden counts compared to previous years, there were few gatherings of any size in either winter period. In fact 30 on Steep Holm on Jan. 15th was one of the highest counts. There were 27 at Nailsea Pond on Feb. 9th and still 22 here on March 1st. Congresbury Moor hosted 25 on Feb. 15th with 50 here on March 6th but most other counts were of 20 or less.

The only evidence of migration in the spring was of 16 at New Passage on March 25th and 10 over OPS on 31st, all heading NE.

Autumn and Second winter period A post-breeding group of 50 at West Littleton Down on Aug. 24th was well ahead of the main migration which started with 65 at Sand Point on Oct. 17th, 45 on 18th, 39 on 19th and 37 on 20th. The first four migrants at OPS were noted on this last date, with 15 heading NE on 27th being the highest count here. On 23rd, 28 were counted in two hours heading NE at New Passage. There were 25 at Aust Warth the next day and 21 were counted at Middle Hope on the same date. The 27th saw 15 to NE over OPS, and 20 on the move at CI-Y. At Sand Point, 51 were noted as heading NW in a 2.5 hour watch on 30th with three to 14 being seen on the move here on various dates through to Nov. 23rd. Numbers at CI-Y, which had remained at around 20 to 25 for much of the year, rose to 50 on Nov. 14th and 75 on Dec. 1st, the highest recorded anywhere all year.

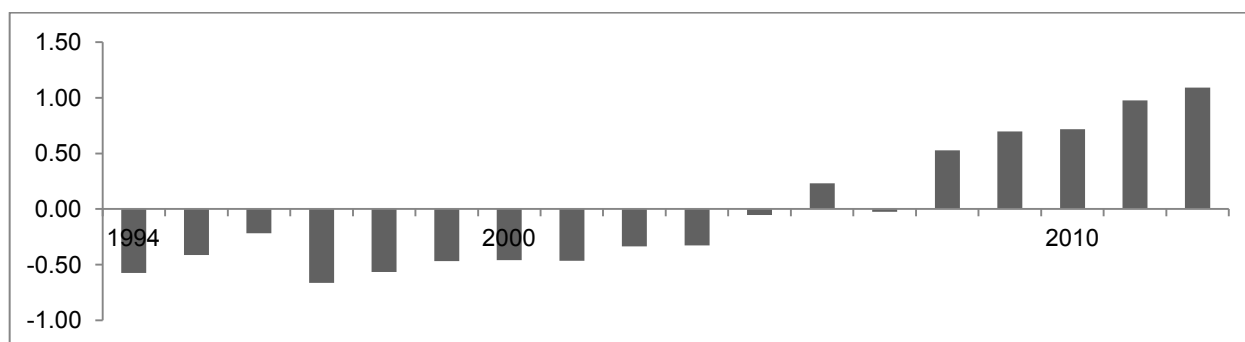
GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.

This species continues to increase in numbers both as a breeder and as a migrant.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 4% since 2011 and by 151% since 1994. The species was recorded from 160 tetrads which represented 88% of those surveyed; this distribution was an increase of 23% against that found in 1994, and mirrors the situation nationally where numbers have increased by over 90% since 1995.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 1.67 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 1.67

The local breeding population is estimated to be 11200 pairs, the tenth commonest local breeding species.

It was present in 96% of WGS gardens in the 2010/11 winter, the highest yet recorded, although numbers were only marginally higher than the previous year. In 1974/75, when the survey began, no gardens recorded this species. The WGS index, at 2.8 birds per garden per week, was also one of the highest figures for recent years.

1992/93-01/02 Av.	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
0.467	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	3.1	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8

WGS - Average numbers per garden per week.

First winter period Small numbers were noted at many sites, including birds coming to garden feeders, in the first three months of the year. Some larger gatherings included 50 on Congresbury Moor on Jan. 9th and Feb. 2nd, dropping to 20 by Feb. 26th, 50 at CI-Y on Jan. 23rd, 77 in Blagdon on 30th and 30 on Kenn Moor on Feb. 5th. A roost count of 100 on Jan. 5th by the R. Avon in Bristol (New Cut, Rownham, B Bond) was of note, with 20 still here on Feb. 20th.

Goldfinch con't

By March the largest count was 38 in Bath on the 5th, with only small numbers scattered elsewhere, and some movement included 29 heading NE at New Passage on March 24th, and 88 going the same way the next day. A count of 80 was made here on 30th, and 55 were noted going NE on 31st.

Spring passage In April even higher numbers were noted moving along the coast, particularly in the second half of the month and into May. At New Passage/Severn Beach 260 were counted heading NE on the 14th and again on 28th, 288 on 30th, 380 on May 2nd and the 250 seen here on May 12th was also indicative of migration. At OPS, 60 were seen on the move on April 28th with 185 on May 1st also heading NE. At CI-Y, 350 were heading NE on May 1st and 150 were counted on 5th. By the 19th, when eight were noted going NE at Littleton Warth, the spring passage appeared to be over.

Late summer flocks included 50 at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 27th and 79 at Saltford on the 31st. In August there were 65 at New Passage on the 10th and 80 at Chipping Sodbury Common on the 12th, with 50 counted feeding on thistles at Hicks Gate, Keynsham on the same date. There were 80 at Northwick Warth on 16th, 65 at CI-Y on 18th, 80 at OPS on 25th and 100 here on Sept. 1st. Weston STW logged its highest count of the year on Sept. 4th, with 90 being logged and other good September counts included 125 at CI-Y on 15th, when 150 were also seen at Sand Bay, and 70 at PWD on 21st.

Autumn passage Visible migration in autumn was first noted on Sept. 29th, with 55 heading S at Weston-s-Mare, while 520 were counted here, also to S, on Oct. 7th during a three-hour watch. At Sand Point, 18 passed S in an hour on Oct. 22nd, and 50 were seen on the move at Aust the next day. On the 24th, 24 at Middle Hope, 30 at New Passage and 20 at PWD were all heading NE. The next day, a three-hour watch at Aust produced 88, while between 10 and 15 were counted at New Passage, PWD, Walton Bay and Sand Point. A series of watches at this last site produced counts of between ten and 40 on several dates through to Nov. 3rd, all to N or NW.

Small numbers remained to the end of the year, larger counts including 50 at Marshfield on Nov. 6th, 70 at Saltford on 11th, 65 at CVL on 13th, 50 at CI-Y on 14th, 50 at Yatton on Dec. 10th and 71 in Saltford on 26th. By Dec. 16th there were 60 at the Rownham roost site occupied earlier in the year.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce breeding species.

Present in fair numbers at the start of the year, there was a light spring passage, but good numbers moved through in the autumn.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
214	137	117	66	45	23	9	5	50	1536	314	350
Monthly bird-day totals											

In the first two months of the year, the largest groups were 25 at Wrington Warren on Jan. 6th, 35 at Compton Dando on 11th, 30 at Huntingford on the same date, and 45 at CVL on 13th. Up to 20 were seen at 23 other sites during this period, although most counts were in single figures.

Spring passage In March and April, the only double-figure count was ten at New Passage on March 2nd, although smaller numbers continued to be reported quite widely, the majority being from the coast, indicating some movement. Passage was reported from OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside, Portbury, PWD and Wain's Hill, CI-Y, but inland wintering birds were still to be found in small numbers at Midger Wood, Abbots Leigh, CVL and BL among others. At BL, which is covered almost daily, the last was a single on May 5th, the next being two on Aug. 7th, probably birds that had summered/bred not far away, but an adult and three juveniles at New Passage on June 9th would have come some distance, even if only across the Bristol Channel. Up to four were reported at various sites through May and June, both inland (e.g. Saltford and Whitchurch) and on the coast.

Autumn passage One or two were reported on a few dates in July and August, but records started to increase from Sept. 9th when three at New Passage indicated the real start of autumn. Apart from six at CVL on Sept. 18th, sightings were still only noted in twos and threes at most, the first double-figure count being 23 at Saltford on Oct. 2nd. Migrants then started to be noted more regularly, both inland with seven over the Cabot Tower on the 4th and five over CVL on the 6th, and on the coast with 11 to S in three hours at Weston-s-Mare on 7th being the more significant counts early in the month.

Up to seven were noted at various coastal sites, until on 23rd a count of 28 at New Passage and 30 at Aust heralded the main autumn movement. This peaked on the 25th when 310 were counted at Aust in three hours, 290 at New Passage and 195 at Sand Point, both in a four hours count. At PWD, 55 were noted on the same day, while on 27th 30 were seen on the move at OPS and at CI-Y. In all cases, the direction was either N or NE.

A trickle of migrants continued through to the end of November, but by this time the largest numbers were at recognised wintering sites. There were 30 at Saltford on Nov. 9th, and 25 at CVL on the same date. Saltford still hosted 24 on Dec. 28th, and other flocks in the second winter period included ten on Kenn Moor on Nov. 23rd, 20 at BL on Dec. 7th, 50 on Weston Moor on 9th, 40 on Kenn Moor on 11th and 20 at Yate on 28th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

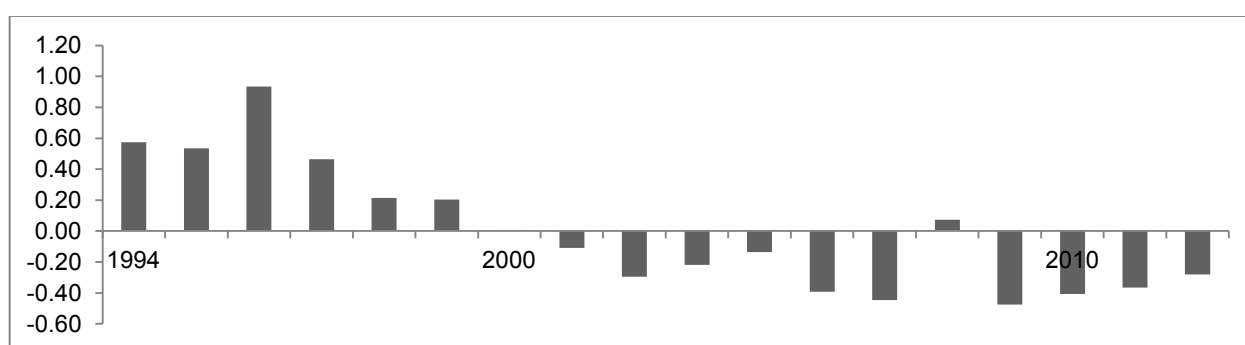
[RR]

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the long-term.

Some indication of better fortunes as far as breeding is concerned, and a few significant winter flocks in places were noted.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has increased by 10% since 2011 but has decreased by 45% since 1994. The species was counted from 66 tetrads which represented 36% of those surveyed; this distribution is a decrease of 12% against that found in 1994.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 1.31 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 1.31

The local breeding population is estimated to be 4800 pairs.

First winter period During this period, the Marshfield area held by far the most significant flocks, with 500 here on Jan. 14th, up to 1000 on Feb. 5th and 500 on 12th. Wild-bird cover at Grickstone Farm, Old Sodbury, proved its worth when 1800 were counted on Feb. 8th. About 80 were noted at BL on Jan. 1st, and 100 in maize stubble at CVL on Feb. 18th but otherwise there were no gatherings above 45 in either January or February.

Spring passage At OPS, a flock of 42 on March 18th was seen feeding in maize stubble, underlining its value as a food source for small birds in winter. The first spring migrants were noted at New Passage on March 23rd, with 25 heading NE and migration along the coast continued through to the end of April. Some larger counts included 125 at CI-Y on March 26th, 100 at New Passage on 30th, and 57 at OPS on 31st. In April, 225 were noted migrating at CI-Y on 10th, while 300 in Long Ashton could well have been part of the same movement. On the 14th at New Passage, at least some of the 50 present were seen heading NE, with similar numbers at OPS in the same period.

During the summer and early autumn, good numbers were consistently reported from CI-Y, for example 100 on May 8th, 80 on July 5th, 250 on 20th, and 275 on Aug. 7th, but apart from 120 at New Passage on July 28th, most counts elsewhere were no more than 50.

Autumn and second winter period Numbers started to increase from September, when there were 65 at New Passage on 1st, 70 here on 9th, 150 at Littleton Warth on 18th and 200 on Charmy Down, Swainswick, on 29th. In October migrants were noted both on the coast and inland, but numbers in general were small, the main counts being 21 to S over Saltford on 4th with 35 also to S here on 16th, 30 to S over Dolebury Warren on 7th, ten to S over Sand Point on 19th, 50 to N in three hours at Aust on 25th, 30 to NE at OPS on 27th and 25 to N at Sand Point on Nov. 7th.

Some of the larger gatherings at the end of the year included 120 at Weston STW on Nov. 4th (the site's highest count of the year, with still 92 here on Dec. 6th), 100 at Marshfield on Nov. 6th and 300 here on Dec. 23rd, 100 at CI-Y on 12th and 60 in scrub along the shore at Avonmouth on 20th. With water levels high at CVL and BL, there was no repeat of the numbers that occurred here during the previous winter apart from a flock of 100 in one of the lakeside fields at CVL on Oct. 29th.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Now rare winter visitor, formerly more regular, with 33 recorded since 1990.

The three seen at OPS in December 2011 were re-found on Jan. 14th (P J Hazelwood), with a fourth noted between 15th and 22nd, and they were seen by many observers until Feb. 13th. These were the first to be seen in Avon since February 1998, when two were seen at the Axe Estuary.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

[RR]

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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

This species continues to be seen regularly at traditional sites, although numbers remained relatively modest both on migration and during the winter periods.

First winter period In January and February the only counts into double figures were ten on Jan. 5th by the R. Avon in Keynsham, 30 in alders by the Little Avon at Huntingford on 11th and 14 on Thornbury GC on Feb. 14th. Otherwise, records came from Abbots Leigh, BL, Charfield, Compton Dando, CVL, the Gordano Valley, Northwick Warth, OPS and Yate, mostly just single birds.

Numbers rose slightly in March, when migrants were on the move, with 23 at New Passage on 24th, 38 on 25th and 25 on 26th, all heading NE. Four at Sand Point on 24th would also have been migrants. Coastal records continued through April and came from OPS, Severnside, CI-Y and Anchor Head, the maximum being just seven at this last site on 30th, the same number being noted at New Passage on 14th. Ones and twos continued to be noted up to May 13th when the last pair passed Sand Point, although 20 at Northwick Warth on 4th provided a late flurry.

Autumn and second winter period There were then no records until Sand Point provided the first singleton of the autumn on Sept. 15th, the next being three at Bradley Stoke on 28th. From then on there were regular reports through to the end of October from a wide range of sites, mostly over-flyers. The majority of records involved no more than three individuals on any one occasion, the main exceptions being eight at Aust on Oct. 14th and 24th, six at Saltford on 21st and 11 at Herriott's Pool, CVL on 24th. The vast majority of records in this period came from the usual coastal sites but inland there were some over Bristol (Montpelier and Brandon Hill).

In November and December the only double-figure counts came from CVL (ten on Nov. 9th and again on Dec. 31st), Marshfield (15 on Nov. 30th), Weston Moor NR (15 on Dec. 9th), Congresbury Moor (12 on 13th and 25 on 21st), Yate (23 on 16th) and Chew Magna (ten on 21st). Otherwise, between one and seven were seen at 15 other sites during this period.

2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
159	481	51	578	33	101	237	102	49	170

Winter bird-day totals November to February

COMMON REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Mealy Redpoll *C. f. flammea*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly rare, but more regularly recorded in recent times with 14 recorded between 1983 and 2011. This species hybridises with Lesser Redpoll, so intergrades are possible which should be considered in any write up.

One record: one at BL on Nov. 18th (N R Milbourne), seen for a couple of minutes at 14.40, it could not be relocated.

The first local records of this species were two at Saltford STW between February and April 1962, CVL in October/November 1965 and BL in December 1965. The next records were not until 1996, with two at Ashton Court in March and one at CVL in April. Subsequent records have been from CVL in March 2001, Thornbury GC in February 2004, Severn Beach two in April 2004, a Stapleton garden in December 2005, Sand Pt. in May 2006, Keynsham in February 2008, Severn Beach in April 2008, Severn Beach in January 2009, a Yatton garden in April 2009, and Chittening Warth in May 2009.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary very sharply from year to year.

No major influx was noted, only four counts were into double figures, but they occurred throughout the year.

In January six were seen at Wrington Warren on Jan. 6th with single birds up to 13th. Ten flew over Abbots Leigh on 8th, but nine seen in the area on 29th indicate that they might not have gone very far. More obvious migrants were singletons at Littleton Warth on 22nd and OPS on 29th. Two were noted at West Tanpit Wood (Failand) on Feb. 6th and six at Corporation Woods, near Wrington on the 16th.

Migrants in March included one at OPS on 7th, four at New Passage on 24th and two here on 30th. A pair was seen at Dolebury Warren, on the Mendips, on 30th, close to a potential breeding site.

In April, passage was noted at OPS (one on 5th), Wain's Hill, Cl-Y (two on 6th) and Sand Point (one on 13th). Away from the coast seven were counted at Chewton Wood on 14th and two were seen at Goblin Combe on 21st (with a singleton at nearby Brockley Combe on July 5th).

Over the summer, migrants were seen at Sand Point on May 2nd (two), June 9th (one) and July 21st (nine) with three in Weston-s-Mare on June 16th. Other mid-summer records came from Failand (six on 9th), and Combe Dingle (12 on 24th).

A series of flyover records filled the rest of the year. Two over Salford on Aug. 10th were followed by four on Oct. 21st. Single birds were noted at Weston-s-Mare on Aug. 24th, Chew Magna (Oct. 15th), CVL (20th), New Passage (23rd), Aust Warth (24th) and OPS (Nov. 19th) with twos seen at PWD (Oct. 25th), Old Sodbury (28th) and Totterdown (Dec. 6th).

Finally, the highest count of the year, 25, was made in King's Wood, Cleeve, on Dec. 9th.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
100	4	130	1	0	90	47	96	120	146

Bird-days each year

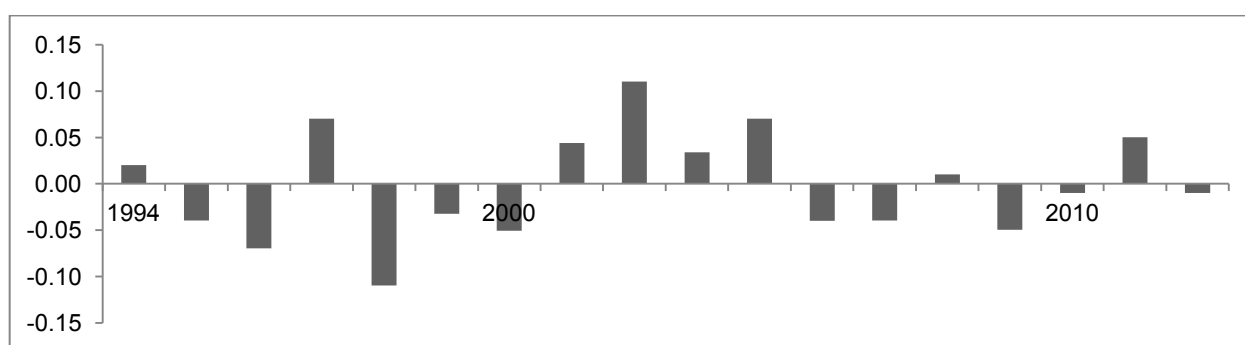
BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common breeding resident. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the last 25 years.

The population appears to be stable at the moment.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 17% since 2011 and by 9% since 1994. The species was recorded from 63 tetrads which represented 35% of those surveyed; a decrease of 7% against that found in 1994.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 0.31, the graph below showing random fluctuations rather than a trend as the species is elusive and not effectively monitored by BBS.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.31

The local breeding population is estimated as 2000 pairs and the 2007-11 Avon Atlas results indicate that it may breed in over 60% of tetrads. At CVL, where K E Vinicombe makes a regular breeding survey, 15 pairs were located (12 in 2011), and, perhaps coincidentally, 30 were counted at Woodford Lodge in January. Although very widely reported in single figures, the only other double-figure counts were made along the Strawberry Line, Yatton, with 14 here on Feb. 7th, and up to the same number on various dates in December.

Regular counts were made throughout the year at OPS, with up to 20 in January, then four to six for most of the year, and a slight increase again in November, when nine were seen apparently migrating W on 3rd. Other migrants were noted at Sand Point (three on Oct. 19th, singletons on 28th and again on 30th, all heading N) and at New Passage (two on Oct. 23rd, three on 25th, again all heading N).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred. A total of 73 were recorded between 2003 and 2011.

Although none were seen in the early part of the year there was a good series of autumn records as follows:

OPS – one flew to NE on Oct. 26th (A Middleton), with another, which flew low along a hedge, the next day (P J Hazelwood);

Aust – one to NE at 10.20 on Oct. 25th (S Emery);

New Passage – one to NE at 09.00 on Oct. 25th (B Lancaster, J P Martin *et al.*);

Middle Hope – one at 07.55 on Nov. 5th (P A Bowyer);

Old Sodbury – two in flight on Nov. 18th landed briefly (G Youdale);

Saltford – three records: to SE at 08.45 on Oct. 18th, two to SE at 09.40 on 31st, and one at 08.15 on Nov. 26th landed in a hedge and stayed for two minutes (all W Duckworth).

Year	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
No. seen	1	1	0	23	2	1	41	0	2	3

Number of individuals seen (July to June)

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce winter visitor formerly more numerous. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because of the small size of the UK breeding population.

After a good autumn in the previous year, only one group stayed for more than a day in 2012.

1992/93-01/02 Av.	2002/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	2011/12
5	0	18	11	0	0	1	0	5-6	15	16

Individuals seen each year

The individual that remained at CI-Y from the previous autumn was last seen on Jan. 4th and, perhaps coincidentally, one was seen the next day at New Passage. In the autumn a migrant was seen heading NE at Chittingen Warth on Oct. 21st, and at CI-Y one flew over on Nov. 4th. The only settled birds were at Severn Beach, where two arrived on Nov. 8th, rising to five on 9th, reaching a maximum of six on 10th, five on 11th, four on 12th and five on 13th. They were mainly seen feeding on the shingle here, and attracted a steady stream of visitors who were rewarded with some very close-range views.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Very scarce autumn migrant and very rare winter visitor, mainly on the coast with 47 recorded between 1983 and 2011.

Two records, both from CI-Y: one heard on Sept. 28th (R Hunt), and one calling over Dowlais Farm Scrape at 16.00 on Oct. 4th (W Earp) which flew out towards Flat Holm.

1993	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	0	13	0	2

Individuals each year

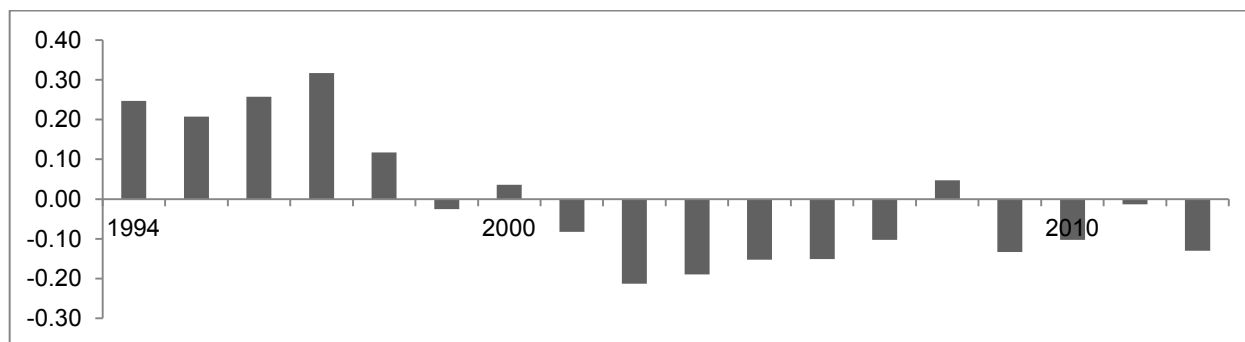
YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Common but declining breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

Continues to decline as a breeding species, but wintering numbers seem to be holding up.

Breeding The local BBS count rate per hour has decreased by 17% since 2011 and by 40% since 1994. The species was counted from 40 tetrads which represented 22% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of 29% against that found in 1994.

The average count rate per hour since 1994 is 0.71 and the graph below shows how each year has varied from this long term average.



The annual variation of the BBS count rate per hour from the average of 0.71

In the first winter period, the largest gatherings were, as usual, in the Marshfield/West Littleton area, with 300 counted on several dates in February. But OPS also attracted good numbers, with up to 40 over the same period, while 70 were noted near Old Sodbury on Feb. 8th, 50 near Writhlington on 2nd, and up to 60 gathered in a stubble field near the dam at CVL from early February into early April. Elsewhere, the picture was of mostly single-figure numbers at a variety of sites with no obvious pattern evident.

During the breeding season, the 2007-11 Avon Atlas clearly indicates that the main population lies in the eastern part of our area, with much smaller numbers elsewhere.

The pattern of pairs and small groups continued on into October, when just the odd migrants were noted on the coast (for example one to NW at Sand Point on Oct. 30th, and one to W at OPS on Nov. 3rd). The only large winter flock was again at Marshfield, where there were 200 on Nov. 6th, with up to 60 here at times to the end of the year. Woollard attracted 28 on Dec. 7th, rising to 100 here on 21st. Elsewhere, ten at OPS on Dec. 16th was the highest count, with smaller numbers at about seven other sites, although no doubt it is under-recorded.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant. Graded nationally as of Amber Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 25% over the long-term.

During the breeding season, singing males were noted at a wide range of sites, both coastal and inland, indicating that the species is widespread but only in small numbers at any one place. The main exception is CVL where K E Vinicombe located 51 singing males, a further increase on the 43 noted here in 2011, while 22 were also noted at Weston STW (P A Bowyer), also a small increase on last year's 21.

The BBS counted 53, a decrease of 7% from last year. The local count rate per hour has decreased by 27% since 1994. The species was recorded from 17 tetrads which represented 9% of those surveyed; this distribution was a decrease of 3% against that found in 1994, but the sample size is probably too small to be truly significant.

First winter period In the first two months of the year, double-figure counts came from OPS (up to 15 on several dates to early February), ten at CI-Y on Jan. 14th, 12 at Batheaston NR on 29th (a site record) and 15 near Old Sodbury on Feb. 8th. In March, three heading NE over New Passage on 25th was the only evidence of any migration as such.

Second winter period In the autumn, again the picture was of single birds or small groups at a wide range of sites, the only double-figure counts being 30 at Weston STW on Sept. 15th, 15 at PWD on Oct. 29th and 11 here on Nov. 16th, 11 at Sand Point on Oct. 30th (migrating NW), 12 at OPS on Nov. 10th and 16 here on Dec. 16th. In addition to the migrants at Sand Point mentioned above, seven were seen at Weston-s-Mare on Oct. 7th (heading S), then a handful were seen on the move at Sand Point and New Passage between Oct. 19th and 28th.

Finally, a count of 30 at Woollard on Dec. 21st was the largest gathering reported during the year.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
29	20	13	31	32	31	30	36	43	51

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. Graded nationally as of Red Conservation Status because the UK breeding population has declined by more than 50% over the last 25 years.

As in 2011, the winter flock in the core area peaked early in the year with slightly smaller numbers recorded in the second winter period.

First winter period The winter flock at Marshfield comprised 116 on Jan. 18th, 200 on 29th, 300 on Feb. 5th and peaking at 400 on 12th, a record number as far as recent counts are concerned, with a rapid dispersal after that.

A migrant was seen from Wain's Hill, CI-Y, on March 17th, the only record away from the main area.

During the breeding season the BBS counted 19 in four squares in Cotswold stronghold, a fall from the previous year's survey result. The poor weather cannot have helped but with such a localised species a specific survey of singing males would be needed to give a more reliable result.

Second winter period The Marshfield flock rapidly reached 300 by Nov. 6th with up to 100 counted on various dates up to Dec. 23rd.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
18	18	23	12	na	na	40	32	37	19

Estimated number of singing males each year

ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS**BLACK SWAN** *Cygnus atratus*

Australia

Weston STW – one on April 7th and 8th.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

Arctic Siberia

Batheaston NR – the bird from December 2011 was seen again on Jan. 2nd.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Eurasia

CVL – one from July 5th until Aug. 10th was carrying a yellow avicultural ring.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Asia

CVL – one on Feb. 18th.

CAPE SHELDUCK *Tadorna cana*

Africa

A female was at PWD between Feb. 3rd and March 27th and again in August from the 4th until the 11th; it also visited Severn Beach on Feb. 25th, the Yeo Est. on March 31st and Littleton Warth on Aug. 19th.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Asia

OPS – a female on May 5th was presumed to be the same as one seen flying downriver on the 19th.

CI-Y – one on April 8th.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

N. America

Backwell Lake – the male reported since November 2010 remained all year;
Warleigh Weir, Bath – a male on May 18th.

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulates*

Australia

New Passage – one sat in a tree on April 27th.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Australia

OPS – one on Aug. 19th

CVL – a very vocal male on Dec. 10th.

WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO *Tauraco leucotis*

Africa

Dunkerton – one on May 6th. Apparently this bird has survived two winters in the wild.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

Africa

Chewton Place, nr Keynsham – three on May 20th.

HYBRIDS

It should be noted that the parentages reported in this section are what the observer(s) considered to be the most likely.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Weston Moor – five on March 16th with three on 18th;

PWD – three on March 22nd and two on May 10th;

Clevedon – two on April 28th.

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.

CANADA X GREYLAG GOOSE *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

Backwell Lake – one was regularly noted from Jan. 16th until Oct. 15th. There were also up to three other hybrid geese reported at this site.

BARNACLE x CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis* x *Branta canadensis*

CVL – one from 2011, similar to a Canada but with the whole face and top of neck white, was seen on Jan. 19th and 27th, Feb. 14th and March 7th. It was joined by a second, similar bird, on Jan. 24th and 25th.

SNOW GOOSE type *Chen caerulescens*

PWD – a blue phase on Oct. 7th.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

As usual most records came from CVL, as follows;

- a. the male 'Lesser Scaup type' (individual I. in the 2011 Report) was seen again on Jan. 5th;
- b. one of the male Ferruginous x Pochards from 2011, the individual with a dark undertail, was seen again on Jan. 5th. A male, considered to be of this parentage, was also seen on Oct. 25th;
- c. two female Pochard types, both with a large facial blaze around the bill, on Jan. 2nd with one again on 26th. One of these, with a peaked head, was present again from Oct. 8th into 2013;
- d. a male, presumed Tufted x Pochard, with a reddish-brown head and a wispy tuft, on April 10th and 12th;
- e. a male, like a large, dark Ferruginous Duck and presumed to be a Ferruginous x Tufted, from Aug. 23rd until Sept. 17th. Another, smaller, bird on Oct. 17th had a dark undertail;
- f. a female, like an enormous Tufted Duck with a domed head and a reddish eye, on Sept. 3rd;
- g. a male Tufted x Pochard, resembling a Lesser Scaup but with a broad black bill tip, from Sept. 14th until Oct. 19th and again from Nov. 22nd to Dec. 6th. A second male, with a more rounded head, was present on Nov. 12th and 13th.
- h. a male, resembling a Lesser Scaup but with a darker mantle, on Nov. 27th had a blue nasal saddle and had been ringed, as an immature Scaup, on January 11th, 2011 at Saint-Philbert-de-Grand-Lieu in France;
- i. a female aythya, resembling a Scaup but with too angular a head shape, was present between Aug. 29th and Sept. 26th and moulted all its primaries;
- j. a female Pochard type with a yellow eye between Sept. 17th and 21st was considered to be a Tufted x Pochard. Two females on Sept. 14th were also considered to be of this parentage;
- k. a female on Oct. 29th and Nov. 5th and 22nd was considered to be a Scaup x Tufted, probably the bird present in November 2011.

The only report away from CVL was of a male 'Lesser Scaup type', considered to a Tufted x Pochard, that was present at BL from Aug. 22nd until Dec. 21st.

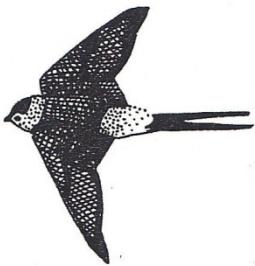
In order to help track individuals it would be very useful if observers of *Aythya* hybrids could include some descriptive notes of the bird's appearance (*Eds.*).

HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

CVL – adults, in the roost on Jan. 4th, and on Herriotts Pool on Oct. 19th, and a third calendar year on Herriotts Pool on March 20th.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012
1	6	1	1	1	0	0	9	4	6	29	6	7	7	3

Bird-days each year since the first record in 1998



JPm 94

Red-rumped Swallow – JP Martin

Bird Survey data used in the Systematic List

The data from a number of different regular bird surveys, both local and national, have been used in compiling the species accounts in the Systematic List. These surveys use different techniques, operate at different times of the year, and vary in the quantity of the information recorded, but they all provide valuable information on population change, especially for the common species. Each is described below.

BBS the BTO Breeding Bird Survey

This survey has been running since 1994, although figures are not available for 2001 because Foot and Mouth disease prevented an effective survey that year. The area covered is not exactly the same as that covered by this Report as it includes the whole of the Mendips in ST35, ST45, ST55, ST65 and ST75, and excludes small areas of S Gloucs in ST59 and ST69. The total area is 1680 square km, compared with 1500 square km for the county of Avon.

Surveyors walk two km 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. The survey method does not monitor elusive, nocturnal or rare species.

In 2012 100 surveyors counted a grand total of 67,479 birds from 181 squares in 533 hours, an average rate of 127 birds an hour, a little below the average since 1994 of 138 an hour. This brought the total counted since 1994 to 1,047,619, and a small ceremony was held at the BOC meeting in September to celebrate counting the millionth bird, a Woodpigeon. Two new species were added in 2012, Bittern and Crossbill, whilst bad weather in June prevented second counts in 13 squares.

The individual species accounts give details of the numbers counted and the like-for-like percentage difference between 2012 and 2011. This is the basis of the BTO's national methodology, and enables direct comparison with their annual results. It ensures very precise comparison with the previous year, but is less accurate over the long period of time since 1994. Also shown is the percentage difference between the rate per hour recorded in 1994 and that in 2012. This rate is calculated by dividing the total counted by the total time taken.

We also show the total number of squares in which a species was recorded in 2012, and the percentage of the 181 squares surveyed which that represents. Distribution varies by a very small amount from year to year but shows trends over longer periods, so we also show how distribution has changed since 1994

in percentage points for those species which are present in more than 5% of squares. This means that if the percentage was 40% in 1994 and is 50% today, the increase is 10 percentage points. This helps to identify those species whose distribution is growing or shrinking regardless of change in the population. For species that are elusive the distribution change is a much more precise measure of change than the counts, which will fluctuate wildly.

For the main breeding species we include a bar chart showing the long term changes in the number counted per hour and, for the commonest, an estimate of the local breeding population. This estimate is derived by multiplying the average maximum counts per surveyed square by the total number of squares in the region, and by a factor allowing for detectability and treating the result as pairs rather than individuals. This is done partly because many of the BBS records are of singing males, partly to ensure that the resulting density in pairs per square kilometre is compatible with past estimates from the Common Bird Census. There is no estimate for Swallow because the maximum counts were all of migrants.

CABS the Clifton Area Bird Survey.

This is a weekly survey of ST 5673 which began in 1994 and uses the BBS methods outlined above. It shows the seasonal patterns of change in bird use of the square, and enables change to be measured on an annual basis.

In 2012 there were 49 walks totalling 57 hours and 6300 birds of 47 species were counted at an overall rate of 110 birds per hour.

For common species the species account has a status table which shows the percentage change in CABS data from the previous year.

WGS the Winter Garden Survey.

This survey began in the 1973/4 winter and involves counts of birds using gardens between October and March.

In 2011/12 31 gardens participated, there were 660 weeks of observations and 25,444 birds of 53 species were counted.

Percentage changes in WGS numbers present are recorded in the status chart of the relevant species account.

WeBS the Wetland Bird Survey

This is a national project which monitors all waterbirds in the UK and provides the principal data on which the conservation of these birds, and of their wetland habitats, is based. It covers the whole of the Severn shore, the major reservoirs and many of minor local waters.

The species accounts in the systematic list incorporate all available local WeBS data and, for those waterbirds whose Avon area populations are of International or National Importance, gives their WeBS status.

The criteria for International Importance differs slightly between wildfowl and waders. A site is 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 as the British 1% count is currently 159, and CVL regularly holds three times this.

Avon Ringing Report 2012

Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt

During 2012 a total of 5766 birds were ringed in the Avon area. This is a substantial fall compared with 2011 and well below the average of 7179 for the previous four-years. There were two main reasons for this; both related to the exceptionally cold and wet weather during the spring and early summer months.

(a) At CVL, which contributes the majority of the records, the water level from April onwards kept rising so that the reservoir was full to over-flowing by June. This is the reverse of the situation in normal years when the lake is more or less full in early spring and then the level gradually drops through the year. This greatly restricted the area of the reedbed that could be accessed for ringing and had a negative effect on capture totals.

(b) The other consequence of the bad weather, and this affected the ringing nationally, was the reduction in productivity. This can be seen by the numbers ringed in the UK, at 942,754, a fall of about 14% compared with the record of 1.1 million set in 2011. The BTO's Constant Effort Site (CES) results, based on standardised catching effort, also reflected this and are given in the table below. The breeding success for the warblers, tits and common residents was poor and, in the case of the warblers, it was the lowest since the CES monitoring began in 1983. Comparison with the Nest Recording Scheme showed that although fledgling production was lower than average, the survival of chicks once they had fledged was also adversely affected by the weather. The thrushes, however, fared better (or less badly) as the wet weather favoured their foraging habits.

Although the top 20 list has remained relatively stable for the previous five years there were some notable changes in 2012. The round-up of Canada Geese and roost catches of Sand Martin were not possible at CVL, so they do not feature in the list.

Reed Warbler, for the first time since 2007, lost the number one spot due to the unprecedented high water levels at CVL during the summer. This reduced their breeding success and made nest locating and the ringing of nestlings more difficult.

Peregrines had a reasonable breeding season, and broods ringed contained mainly two or three chicks (rather than three or four as in previous years). Thirteen were ringed in the Avon area in total, this included the first for Bristol city centre. The pair nesting in the centre of Bath featured on the BBC's Springwatch programme, and the ringing of the chicks was broadcast across the UK. Around half were ringed in the nest, and the rest upon fledging when they had become grounded. A brood of five young Ravens hatched in a nest in Portishead, and were ringed for the first time. A study of Water Rails by M. Dadds at CVL greatly increased the number ringed to 29.

Of the 190 recoveries of ringed birds reported to the BTO for the Avon area, 126 (66%) were from P. Rock's long-term colour ringing study of urban gulls. Other colour ring sightings included Dunlin, Marsh Harrier, Peregrine, Coot and Black-headed Gull. The recently formed ringing group operating at Portbury Wharf ringed around 20% of this year's total and were rewarded with controls of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and the exceptional recovery of a Linnet from Ireland. The bulk of CVL's recoveries were sadly of Canada Geese shot in Devon, Dorset and Somerset.

A few less common birds were encountered at CVL. A Yellow-browed Warbler was retrapped on Jan. 1st and later took up residence near Stratford Hide, a female Garganey was noted on Feb. 14th, a Wryneck was caught in the large Heligoland trap on Sept. 29th, and a Water Pipit came to a tape lure set for Meadow Pipits on Nov. 3rd.

2012 productivity versus 5yr average	(%)
Migrants	
Chiffchaff	-40.8
Willow Warbler	-26.4
Blackcap	-62.4
Garden Warbler	-53.9
Lesser Whitethroat	-33.1
Whitethroat	-56.8
Sedge Warbler	-28.4
Reed Warbler	-34.5
Resident tits	
Blue Tit	-30.7
Great Tit	-34.0
Long-tailed Tit	-43.6

2012 productivity versus 5yr average	(%)
Other residents	
Cetti's Warbler*	-65.7
Treecreeper*	-33.3
Wren	-16.5
Blackbird	5.6
Song Thrush	-2.9
Robin	-6.6
Dunnock	-30.1
Chaffinch	-38.2
Greenfinch	-10.8
Goldfinch	-17.6
Bullfinch	-28.8
Reed Bunting	-49.5

Productivity for 23 common breeding songbirds from the national Constant Effort Site scheme (published by the BTO).

Species Top Twenty Totals

Table 2 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2012 (2011 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2011 and 2012. Note that some year-to-year changes were definitely affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and catching opportunities.

Pos.	Species	2012	%	Pos.	Species	2012	%
1(2)	Blue Tit	709	-28	11(19)	Blackbird	162	+46
2(3)	Blackcap	591	-35	12(12)	Wren	147	-5
3(5)	Great Tit	545	-21	13(13)	Goldfinch	146	-1
4(4)	Chiffchaff	454	-40	14(17)	Dunnock	133	-4
5(1)	Reed Warbler	428	-70	15(23)	Chaffinch	131	+41
6(7)	Swallow	214	-32	16(20)	Lesser Black-backed Gull	129	+25
7(9)	Long-tailed Tit	195	+10	17(6)	Sedge Warbler	96	-82
8(10)	Robin	178	+7	18(24)	Reed Bunting	87	-1
9(11)	Greenfinch	176	+12	19(21)	Goldcrest	67	-32
10(16)	Willow Warbler	172	+23	20(22)	Bullfinch	66	-31

Notable Recoveries received from the BTO since the publication of the 2011 Report

The records listed below in Table 3 are listed because of the distance travelled and/or longevity. Local recaptures at the same site, or between ringers within the Avon area, have been omitted. The first line of each entry gives details of the initial ringing, subsequent lines provide details of the recovery, including the distance, direction and elapsed time from the original ringing.

Mute Swan

Ring number	X5397	
Adult Female	19-10-2005	Harry Stoke, near Bristol
Freshly dead (poisoned)	26-04-2012	Bradley Stoke, near Bristol 4km 6y 6m 7d

Canada Goose

Ring number	5203528	
Adult	30-06-1998	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	13-01-2012	Cullompton (Devon) 75km SW 13y 6m 14d
Ring number	5213525	
Adult Female	27-06-2000	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	05-10-2012	Frampton on Severn (Gloucestershire) 53km NNE 12y 3m 8d
Ring number	5215613	
Adult Male	26-06-2001	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	13-01-2012	Curry Moor, North Curry (Somerset) 40km SW 10y 6m 18d
Ring number	5239100	
Adult	29-06-2004	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	15-09-2012	Exe Estuary (Devon) 93km SW 8y 2m 17d
Ring number	5243603	
Adult	28-06-2005	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	05-10-2012	Frampton on Severn (Gloucestershire) 53km NNE 7y 3m 7d
Ring number	5254362	
Adult	24-06-2008	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead (shot)	02-09-2012	Beaulieu River Estuary (Hampshire) 105km SE 4y 2m 9d
Ring number	5262184	
Adult	28-06-2011	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead	14-10-2012	Dolton, near Winkleigh (Devon) 109km WSW 1y 3m 16d

Cormorant

Ring number	5228980	
Nestling	09-06-2003	Sands of Forvie NNR, Newburgh (Grampian Region)
Long dead	02-05-2012	Chew Valley Lake 668km S 8y 10m 23d

Marsh Harrier

Ring number	FH11669	
Nestling Male	10-06-2011	Sculthorpe Moor (Norfolk)
Alive (wing-tag seen)	31-10-2011	Little Bells Farm, Isle of Sheppey (Kent) 163km S 0y 4m 21d
Alive (wing-tag seen)	11-09-2012	near Newport (Gwent) 294km WSW 1y 3m 1d
Alive (wing-tag seen)	17-11-2012	Chew Valley Lake 289km SW 1y 5m 7d

Merlin

Ring number	DA56667	
Nestling Male	21-06-2009	Middleton (Durham)
Freshly dead	24-01-2012	Bromley Villas, Stanton Drew 365km S 2y 7m 3d

Moorhen

Ring number	FA64382	
First-year Male	22-12-2011	Chew Valley Lake
Freshly dead	12-04-2012	Hope, Welshpool (Powys) 152km NNW 0y 3m 21d

Coot

Ring number	GC35694	
Adult Female	22-01-2012	Radipole Lake (Dorset)
Alive (colour rings seen)	25-02-2012	Chew Valley Lake 79km N 0y 1m 3d

Dunlin

Ring number	Colour ring	
First year	31-07-2012	Svarlbard, Spitsbergen
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-09-2012	New Passage 3052km SSW 0y 1m 29d

Black-headed Gull

Ring number	EG43136	
Nestling	12-07-2000	Pylewell Lake (Hampshire)
Freshly dead (hit by car)	26-07-2012	Nailsea 120km NW 12y 0m 14d
Ring number	EY09035	
Nestling	16-06-2012	Hosehill Lake (Berkshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-07-2012	Oldbury Nuclear, Thornbury 107km WNW 0y 0m 21d
Ring number	6215769	
Adult Male	26-04-2011	Ostensjovannet, Oslo(Akershus) Norway
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-01-2012	Backwell 1,265km SW 0y 8m 12d

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Ring number	GH45634	
Nestling	07-07-1986	Central Bristol
Freshly dead	15-10-2012	Bristol 2km 26y 3m 8d
Ring number	GF40648	
Nestling	25-06-1994	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	24-07-2003	Calne Sand Pits (Wilts) 42km E 9y 0m 29d
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-10-2012	Quarteira, (Algarve) Portugal 1,657km SSW 18y 3m 9d
Ring number	GH67491	
Nestling	29-06-1991	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	13-07-1995	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 49km NNE 4y 0m 14d
Caught by ringer	07-02-2009	Stoke Orchard (Glos) 64km NNE 7y 7m 9d
Alive (colour marks seen)	10-06-2009	Stoke Orchard (Glos) 65km NNE 17y 11m 12d
Alive (colour marks seen)	04-12-2010	Malaga, Spain 1,646km S 19y 5m 5d
Alive (colour marks seen)	09-06-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site 9km ENE 19y 11m 11d
Ring number	GF52034	
Nestling	28-06-1995	Bristol
Alive (ring read in field)	28-04-2006	Birmingham (West Midlands) 125km NNE 10y 10m 0d
Alive (colour marks seen)	14-08-2006	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 48km NNE 11y 1m 17d
Alive (colour rings seen)	20-02-2012	Valdovino, Spain 963km SSW 16y 7m 23d
Ring number	GF40953	
Nestling	25-06-1995	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	17-01-2001	Swindon STW (Wilts) 55km ENE 5y 6m 23d
Alive (colour marks seen)	22-11-2002	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 47km NNE 7y 4m 28d
Alive (colour marks seen)	19-12-2008	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 48km NNE 13y 5m 24d
Alive (colour marks seen)	21-01-2011	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 48km NNE 15y 6m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	14-02-2012	Caldecotte Lake (Bucks) 144km ENE 16y 7m 20d
Ring number	GF85330	
Nestling	03-07-1998	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	27-08-2004	Hoedic, France 460km S 6y 1m 24d
Alive (colour rings seen)	30-01-2012	Carsington Res. (Derbyshire) 190km NNE 13y 6m 27d

Ring number	GF85312	
Nestling	03-07-1998	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	06-10-1999	Matosinhos, Portugal 1,233km SSW 1y 3m 3d
Alive (colour marks seen)	15-11-2001	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 47km NNE 3y 4m 12d

Ring number	GF85312	
Nestling	03-07-1998	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	03-12-2007	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 48km NNE 9y 5m 0d
Alive (colour marks seen)	30-10-2009	Gloucester 51km NNE 11y 3m 27d

Ring number	GR19167	
Nestling	27-07-2010	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	17-12-2010	Agadir, Morocco 2,410km SSW 0y 4m 20d

Ring number	GR19130	
Nestling	15-07-2010	Bath
Alive (colour marks seen)	11-10-2010	Valdovino, Spain 963km SSW 0y 2m 26d
Alive (colour rings seen)	17-02-2012	Cordoba, Spain 1,513km S 1y 7m 2
Caught by ringer	23-05-2012	Chouet Landfill, (Guernsey) C.I. 210km S 1y 10m 8d

Herring Gull

Ring number	GN31930	
Nestling	25-06-2002	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	21-02-2003	Zeebrugge, Belgium 400km E 0y 7m 27d
Alive (colour marks seen)	01-10-2004	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 47km NNE 2y 3m 6d
Alive (colour marks seen)	02-11-2007	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 47km NNE 5y 4m 8d
Alive (colour marks seen)	05-02-2010	Hempsted Landfill Site (Glos) 47km NNE 7y 7m 11d
Alive (colour rings seen)	09-02-2012	Cotswold Waterpark (Wilts) 50km ENE 9y 7m 15d

Swallow

Ring number	Y697070	
First-year	03-08-2012	Chew Valley Lake
Caught by ringer	28-08-2012	Farlington Marsh (Hants) 124km ESE 0y 0m 25d

Cetti's Warbler

Ring number	Y118637	
First-year Female	30-09-2011	West Meadows, Bradford's Farm (Berkshire)
Caught by ringer	06-05-2012	Chew Valley Lake 85km W 0y 7m 6d
Ring number	L229891	
First-year	24-06-2011	Magor Marsh (Gwent)
Caught by ringer	22-09-2011	Chew Valley Lake 32km SSE 0y 2m 29d
Caught by ringer	01-01-2012	Chew Valley Lake 32km SSE 0y 6m 8d

Chiffchaff

Ring number	AR3539	
First-year	21-08-2011	Veurne, (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium
Caught by ringer	27-11-2011	Chew Valley Lake 369km W 0y 3m 6d
Ring number	DPC679	
Juvenile	27-06-2011	Swindon STW (Wilts)
Caught by ringer	06-04-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 65km W 0y 9m 10d
Caught by ringer	24-06-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 65km W 0y 11m 28d

Willow Warbler

Ring number	EAK946	
Full-grown	15-04-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead
Caught by ringer	21-04-2012	Calf of Man (Isle of Man) 318km NNW 0y 0m 6d
Ring number	CNC863	
First-year	07-08-2010	Wraysbury Gravel Pits (Berkshire)
Caught by ringer	14-04-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 153km W 1y 8m 7d

Blackcap

Ring number	X740610	
First-year Male	05-09-2009	Pett Level (Sussex)
Caught by ringer	09-09-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 247km WNW 3y 0m 4d
Ring number	D178478	
First-year Male	27-11-2012	Portland Bill (Dorset)
Freshly dead (cat)	09-12-2012	Hanham, Bristol 104km N 0y 0m 12d

Ring number	X164996	
Juvenile Male	05-09-2010	Walton in Gordano
Caught by ringer	04-06-2012	Penclacwydd, (Dyfed) 93km WNW 1y 8m 30d
Ring number	L797440	
Juvenile	29-07-2012	near Edington (Wiltshire)
Caught by ringer	18-08-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 50km WNW 0y 0m 20d

Sedge Warbler

Ring number	L924728	
Adult	14-08-2011	Chew Valley Lake
Caught by ringer	13-08-2012	(Loire-Atlantique) France 447km S 0y 11m 30d

Reed Warbler

Ring number	F086525	
Juvenile	16-08-1988	Chew Valley Lake
Caught by ringer	28-07-1990	Litlington (Sussex) 204km ESE 1y 11m 12d
Ring number	L590209	
Adult Male	02-08-2011	Titchfield Haven (Hants)
Caught by ringer	15-07-2012	Chew Valley Lake 112km WNW 0y 11m 13d
Ring number	L924631	
First-year	07-08-2011	Chew Valley Lake
Caught by ringer	23-08-2012	(Loire-Atlantique) France 447km S 1y 0m 16d
Ring number	X610147	
Nestling	06-07-2009	Chew Valley Lake
Unknown	05-04-2012	Boumia, Morocco 2,078km S 2y 8m 30d
Ring number	AH6128 (CIJ)	
Full-grown Male	22-04-2011	Grouville Marsh, Jersey. Channel Islands
Caught by ringer	06-05-2012	Chew Valley Lake 241km N 1y 0m 14d
Ring number	6740862 (FRP)	
First-year Female	25-08-2011	Noyant, (Maine-et-Loire) France
Caught by ringer	27-05-2012	Chew Valley Lake 446km NNW 0y 9m 2d

Pied Wagtail

Ring number	L976455	
First-year	12-08-2012	East Kilbride (Strathclyde)
Freshly dead (hit by car)	11-12-2012	Brislington, Bristol 496km SSE 0y 3m 29d
Ring number	V923399	
Adult Female	22-10-2007	Slapton Ley (Devon)
Alive (colour rings seen)	02-12-2008	Bristol (City Centre) 150km NNE 1y 1m 10d

Linnet

Ring number	Y167044	
Juvenile Male	06-08-2011	Bellisland Lough, Milltown (Galway)
Caught by ringer	31-03-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead 482km ESE 0y 7m 25d

Lesser Redpoll

Ring number	Y103636	
First-year	22-10-2011	Walton in Gordano
Caught by ringer	02-02-2012	Blashford, Ringwood (Hants) 97km SE 0y 3m 11d
Ring number	Y103485	
First-year	01-10-2011	Walton in Gordano
Caught by ringer	13-10-2011	New Barn Farm (Dorset) 92km S 0y 0m 12d

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2008-2012

The annual ringing totals for the period 2008 to 2012 are given in Table 4 below, together with the average numbers ringed annually for the period 2008-2011 in the last column. (Note: this table is based on up-dated figures provided by the BTO and there are a few, small, changes to the species totals and the year totals compared with those that appeared in the previous 2008 to 2011 Reports).

Species	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	4 Yr Av.
Mute Swan	7	2	0	1	2	2.5
Canada Goose	69	162	94	144	0	117.3
Teal	0	0	0	15	10	3.8
Mallard	6	3	19	17	22	11.3
Garganey	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Tufted Duck	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Grey Heron	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Manx Shearwater	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Sparrowhawk	4	1	2	4	7	2.8
Buzzard	0	0	0	0	3	0.0
Peregrine	4	3	13	17	13	9.3
Kestrel	1	0	20	30	28	12.8
Water Rail	4	2	0	0	29	1.5
Moorhen	5	6	13	26	59	12.5
Coot	0	4	11	5	5	5.0
Oystercatcher	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Ringed Plover	0	0	13	2	9	3.8
Lesser Black-backed Gull	107	91	144	103	129	111.3
Herring Gull	20	21	31	33	61	26.3
Stock Dove	0	0	0	2	1	0.5
Wood Pigeon	3	3	5	6	12	4.3
Collared Dove	0	0	0	1	1	0.3
Barn Owl	17	9	34	38	43	24.5
Little Owl	0	0	5	1	0	1.5
Tawny Owl	0	0	4	15	12	4.8
Nightjar	0	0	2	0	0	0.5
Swift	0	2	0	0	8	0.5
Kingfisher	10	21	15	5	8	12.8
Wryneck	0	0	1	0	1	0.3
Green Woodpecker	1	1	0	2	3	1.0
Great Spotted Woodpecker	14	14	11	15	21	13.5
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Magpie	1	1	3	3	11	2.0
Jay	2	4	2	3	6	2.8
Jackdaw	6	0	1	4	0	2.8
Carrion Crow	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Raven	0	3	2	3	0	2.0
Goldcrest	97	3	23	99	67	55.5
Firecrest	2	0	0	0	0	0.5
Blue Tit	678	811	822	983	709	823.5
Great Tit	654	710	562	694	545	655.0
Coal Tit	33	54	42	84	63	53.3
Marsh Tit	13	3	3	1	0	5.0
Skylark	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Sand Martin	35	76	258	192	6	140.3
Swallow	852	242	384	314	214	448.0
House Martin	39	65	3	1	13	27.0
Cetti's Warbler	41	68	41	19	24	42.3
Long-tailed Tit	148	146	131	177	195	150.5
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	0	1	1	0	0.8
Wood Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	0.5
Chiffchaff	413	435	466	755	454	517.3
Willow Warbler	101	86	101	140	172	107.0
Blackcap	378	426	514	916	591	558.5
Garden Warbler	35	54	50	42	53	45.3
Lesser Whitethroat	20	16	6	17	19	14.8
Whitethroat	27	21	29	43	53	30.0
Grasshopper Warbler	8	1	10	12	5	7.8
Sedge Warbler	97	253	301	545	96	299.0
Reed Warbler	883	1,090	1,182	1,440	428	1148.8
Nuthatch	3	5	4	11	23	5.8
Treecreeper	20	14	41	32	19	26.8
Wren	169	110	115	154	147	137.0
Starling	81	25	27	145	7	69.5

Blackbird	127	77	145	111	162	115.0
Fieldfare	5	2	4	9	10	5.0
Song Thrush	55	42	33	31	57	40.3
Redwing	10	14	28	16	6	17.0
Mistle Thrush	1	0	0	1	5	0.5
Spotted Flycatcher	5	0	1	1	2	1.8
Robin	164	146	128	167	178	151.3
Nightingale	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Redstart	0	0	1	0	12	0.3
Wheatear	2	0	0	0	0	0.5
Dunnoek	158	91	118	139	133	126.5
House Sparrow	17	5	56	22	38	25.0
Yellow Wagtail	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Grey Wagtail	1	1	1	0	1	0.8
Pied Wagtail	54	0	48	7	21	27.3
Tree Pipit	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Meadow Pipit	38	3	0	0	15	10.3
Water Pipit	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Chaffinch	170	183	175	93	131	155.3
Brambling	47	0	3	25	2	18.8
Greenfinch	288	300	203	157	176	237.0
Goldfinch	96	226	160	148	146	157.5
Siskin	313	55	0	3	25	92.8
Linnet	3	0	0	1	47	1.0
Redpoll (Lesser / Common)	123	6	6	132	36	66.8
Bullfinch	46	58	117	95	66	79.0
Yellowhammer	2	1	0	0	0	0.8
Reed Bunting	54	86	105	88	87	83.3
TOTAL	6,891	6,360	6,898	8,566	5,766	7178.8

Nightingale Survey 2012

Richard Bland

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) allocated the Avon area 16 tetrads which were to be surveyed twice between April 21st and May 14th to record Nightingale song. If any were found a further optional night-time survey was suggested between

May 18th and June 4th to discover if unmated males were still in song.

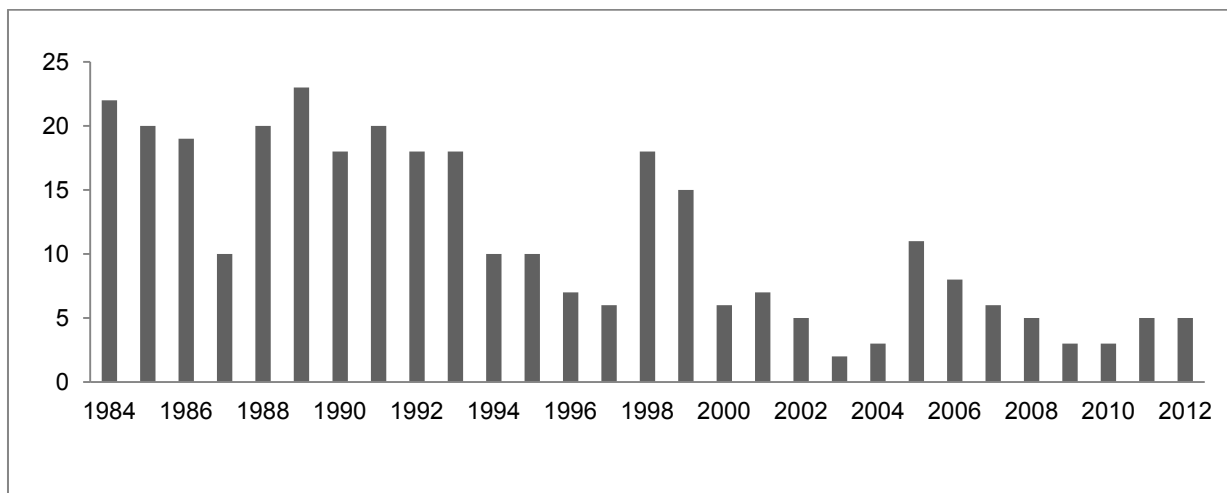
The 16 tetrads allocated are listed in the table below. It did not prove possible to survey ST58H.

ST35X	Webbington		ST78D	Hall End
ST58H	Severn Beach		ST78H	Lower Woods
ST67I	Frenchay		ST78I	Horwood Farm
ST67Z	Westerleigh		ST78N	Wetmoor
ST68V	Coalpit Heath		ST78P	Inglestone Common
ST76N	Charlcombe		ST78S	Horton Court
ST76S	Bathampton		ST78T	Hawkesbury
ST76T	Bath		ST78U	Inglestone

Nightingales were only found in two squares. First in ST78D, where one was in song at night on May 31st, although it had not been heard on two earlier visits, and the second was in ST78I - the Horwood Farm area - which for several years has been the only breeding site in the region. This site was intensively studied, and six singing males were present, arriving on April 18th or 19th. Three territories held nests, two of these had their first clutches destroyed and also their second clutches failed. The third lost its first chicks, perhaps to the weather, and one was still sitting on a nest on July 3rd. Three cocks remained unpaired, one sang until June 24th, one arrived on May 22nd and was last heard on 31st, and the last arrived on May 18th and was last noted singing also on 31st.

In general this was a disastrous season caused by the huge rainfall in April and June which broke all local records going back to 1853. Avon is on this species' western limit in Europe, and is also close to its northern limit, and successive BTO surveys have confirmed a steady decline in territorial birds. The last complete Avon survey, in 1980, found 53 singing males at 20 sites. The chart shows the numbers of singing males recorded from 1984 to 2010. These were all 'casual' records rather than part of an organised survey.

I am grateful to the surveyors who were: C Boyce, M Jackson, M Johnson, S Lockhart, C Stapleton, D Stoddard, H Willmott, and G Youdale.



Breeding Water Rails at Chew Valley Lake in 2012

Mark Dadds

Water Rail was added to the list of species considered by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) in 2006, primarily because it was inadequately covered by various annual monitoring schemes. The RBBP Report for 2010 (Holling, 2012) lists five Water Rail territories spread over two sites in the Avon area. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) 2007-2011 Atlas Survey found this species in only eight out of the 403 Avon tetrads during the breeding season, half of which were either at CVL or BL. Breeding was only proved at the former site where there was thought to be a possible four pairs, and the breeding population for the whole Avon area was roughly estimated to be 25 pairs (Bland and Dadds 2012).

In 2012 four Water Rail nests were found in the part of the nature reserve area at CVL within which the Chew Valley Ringing Station (CVRS) operates (Figure 1). These are thought to be the first nests for

this species ever found at CVL. Nationally, the average number of Water Rail nests reported to the BTO Nest Record Scheme (NRS) during the previous 10 years is 1.5 per year, and the total number ever reported (since 1939) was 119. For 2012 a total of five was reported; that is, the four CVL nests plus one other (D Leech BTO, pers. comm.).

Additional proof of breeding within the same area at CVL was also obtained by the trapping and sighting of a number of pulli. All these observations are summarised in Table 1. Each is a proof of a successful breeding attempt, that is at least some eggs were laid. However, as discussed below, when timings, locations and estimated ages of pulli are taken into account, it is possible that some of the observations refer to the same breeding attempt, or to a replacement or second clutch by the same pair.

No.	Date	Observation
1	19 May	Nest 1: Adult flushed from ten eggs, on surface of 80cm deep water
2	9 June	Nest 2: Ten eggs and nearby agitated adult
3	26 June	Nest 3: Four hatching eggs; a fifth egg floating in water alongside
4	26 June	Adult flushed from where at least one small downy pullus was seen running for cover
5	11 July	One or two small downy pulli seen and an agitated adult heard very close by
6	15 July	A blackish pullus estimated to be about a third adult size seen running away along one of the net lanes
7	19 July	Nest 4: Eight eggs and two nearby agitated adults
8	2 Aug	Three pulli trapped
9	18 Aug	Two pulli trapped
10	19 Aug	One pullus trapped
11	25 Aug	An adult and a downy pullus trapped together
12	1 Sept	One still partially downy pullus trapped

Table 1: Observations of nests found, and pulli trapped or sighted, during the 2012 breeding season at CVL. The location of each observation is shown on the map (Figure 1).

Observation 1 The first nest (Nest 1) was found on May 19th and was revisited on 24th by which time all of its ten eggs had gone. One side of the nest was trodden down suggesting that the nest had been repeatedly visited by a predator and the eggs removed. Successful hatching can be ruled out by looking at the change in the water level during the preceding days (Figure 2). Eggs are laid on consecutive days and then require about 21 days of incubation (Andreas, 1998). For successful hatching to have occurred the first egg would have been laid no later than April 23rd. The nest site was on dry land on this date, but was covered in water to a depth of 80cm by May 19th, so the nest would have been flooded out well before this date. In fact, it may well have been a replacement clutch as the main breeding season starts in April. Loss of first clutches through flooding probably affected most of the Water Rail pairs at CVL in 2012 as their nests are nearly always built over water (J Ferguson-Lees *et al.*, 2011).

Observation 2 A second nest (Nest 2) was found on June 9th. Between 26th and July 1st the number of eggs dropped from ten to four, and on 5th the nest was empty. This gives an earliest possible hatching date of June 27th.

Observation 3 A third nest (Nest 3) was found on June 26th, located only 15m from Nest 1 (Observation 1). The four eggs in the nest were hatching so the first egg was laid on June 1st, approximately. As the eggs from Nest 1 were lost some time between May 19th and 24th, coupled with the close proximity of the two nest sites, this third nest would appear to be a replacement clutch for the same pair.

Observation 4 An adult was flushed on June 26th from where at least one small downy pullus was seen running for cover. This observation is unrelated to Nest 2 (Observation 2) and Nest 3 (Observation 3) as both of these contained eggs on

this date. After hatching the young are brooded on the nest for the first few days (Cramp and Simmons, 1980). The contour feathers are not visible in the field until 14 to 18 days old (Becker, 1995). So a small pullus wandering around in the open that still looks to be covered in black down is between 0.5 and 2.5 weeks old.

Observation 5 One or two small downy pulli were seen on July 11th and an agitated adult was heard very close by; see Observation 11.

Observation 6 On July 15th a blackish pullus estimated to be about 1/3 of adult size was seen running away along one of the net lanes. The brief view means the age was uncertain; see Observation 9.

Observation 7 A fourth nest (Nest 4) was found on July 19th. On 29th the nest still contained all eight eggs and agitated adults were in close attendance. On Aug. 2nd the nest contained one egg with another in the water alongside. Both appeared to have started to hatch but were now dead. Late hatching eggs have been observed to be deliberately destroyed by a parent stabbing it with its bill (Percy, 1951). The nest contained small fragments of egg shell and membrane, suggesting that the six other eggs had hatched successfully.

Observation 8 Three pulli were trapped on Aug. 2nd. Their primary and secondary feathers were still partially sheathed with about 25% of the length consisting of emerged feather. This would make them less than 36 days old when compared to two captive bred Water Rails studied by Cordonnier (1983) which had a third of the pin length as emerged feather at 36 days. However, Andreas (1988) shows a photograph of a pullus described as approximately 35 days old, which had its remiges still fully in pin which would make the three trapped pulli older than 35 days.

These three pulli were caught at a location 55m from Nest 2 (Observation 2) and 55m away from where the downy chick was seen on June 26th (Observation 4). On Aug. 2nd any surviving pulli from Nest 2 could have been up to 36 days old (see Observation 2 above) so potentially could be the source of the three trapped pulli. Considering the estimated age of the downy pullus seen on June 26th (see Observation 4 above) which would be 5.5 to 7 weeks old on Aug. 2nd, it seems less likely to be one of the three trapped pulli (or a sibling), but the possibility cannot be ruled out.

Observation 9 Two pulli trapped on Aug. 18th were at the same stage of development as the three trapped on 2nd (Observation 8). The pair was caught approximately ten metres from where a pullus was seen on July 15th (Observation 6). Due to the proximity and uncertainty about the age of the July 15th pullus, it was treated as possibly one of this pair or a sibling.

Observation 10 A pullus trapped on Aug. 19th was slightly less developed than those trapped on Aug. 18th (Observation 9) in that their flight feathers were only just starting to break out of the tips of the pins. It was caught more than 90m away, and at least two pairs of adults were regularly heard in the area covering the Aug. 18th and 19th trapping sites. At high population densities nests may only be 20 to 50m apart (Cramp and Simmons, 1980). After about three weeks adults become more aggressive towards their young and drive them out of their territory, unless it is later in the breeding season (that is too late for another brood) in which case they are tolerated (Andreas, 1998). As Aug. 18th/19th is late in the breeding season, these pulli should still be within their respective parents territories. So the pulli trapped over these two days came from broods raised by two separate pairs.

Observation 11 On Aug. 25th an adult and a downy pullus were caught in a driven trap for which the operating area was near where small downy pulli had been seen on July 11th (Observation 5). The age of the trapped pullus was estimated to be one to two weeks, based on its still all downy plumage and the limited extent of black at the base, and grey near the tip, of its otherwise still largely whitish bill (Sigmund, 1958). The 45 days between these two observations is theoretically sufficient for the July 11th pulli to have been abandoned by the parents (at about three weeks of age) and for another small clutch to have been laid, incubated and raised to an age of one to two weeks. It is known that in related species the female lays another clutch while the male is still at least partly tending the previous brood (Flegg & Glue, 1973). Consequently, the possibility that only one pair was involved cannot be ruled out, and considering the proximity of the two observations this actually seems to be the most likely scenario.

Observation 12 A pullus trapped on Sept. 1st was caught only 25m from the site of Nest 4 (Observation 7). Its weight, 60gms, when compared to graphs of weight gain for five ♂♂ and four ♀♀ captive raised Water Rail pulli (Sigmund, 1958) puts it in the age range of 18 to 25 days. The presence of contour feathers on the back and underparts places it towards the top end of this range (Cordonnier, 1983). The youngest theoretical age the pulli from Nest 4 could be on this date is 31 days (that is hatching on Aug. 1st) so the Sept. 1st pullus could not have been from this brood. Also, as the nest was still active on July 29th, even if the clutch had subsequently been predated, there would not have been sufficient time for a replacement clutch to account for the presence of the Sept. 1st pullus. Producing a minimum clutch size (five eggs at one per day), incubating for about 21 days, and then at least 18 days of pullus growth accounts for 44 days, and that does not include nest building. Consequently, the Sept. 1st pullus must have originated from a different pair.



Figure 1: Map of the nesting sites. The numbers on the map correspond to the observation numbers in Table 1, and the arrows point to the precise location of these observations.

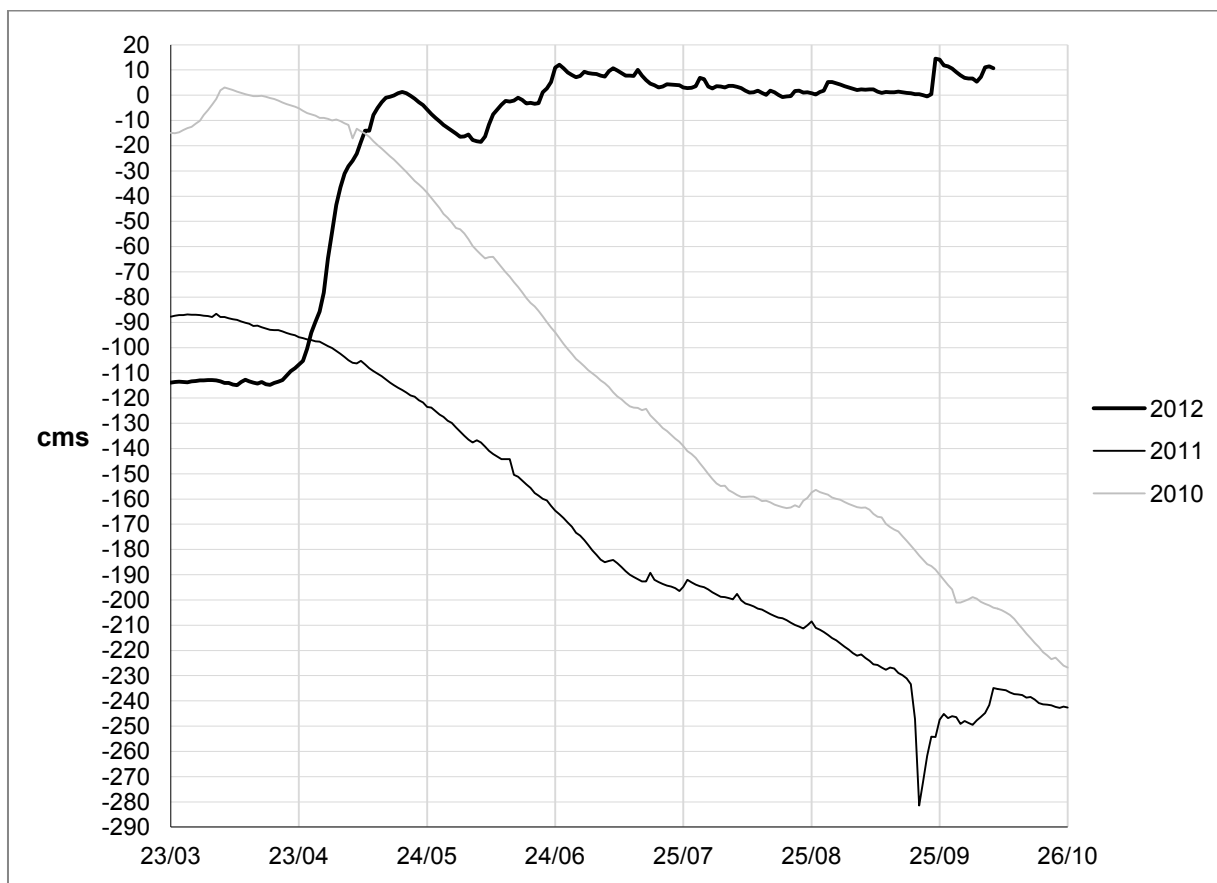


Figure 2: Water level (relative to overspill) at CVL in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Summary

The observations described above and tabulated in Table 1 are proof of a minimum total of ten successful breeding attempts involving a minimum of eight different pairs of Water Rail. In addition, within that part of the nesting area (Figure 1), this species was regularly heard calling during the breeding season in at least four other distinct areas away from the locations of the observations detailed above, so represent at least another four possible breeding pairs.

Acknowledgements

CVL water level data was provided by courtesy of P Bulmer of Bristol Water.

I wish to thank Dr D Leech for providing the up to date Nest Record Scheme (NRS) Water Rail totals. The NRS is funded by a partnership of the BTO and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Natural Resources Wales, and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency).

Thanks are also due to Mike Bailey for comments and suggestions made on the initial draft of this paper.

References

- Andreas, U. (1998) - *Einblicke in das Leben der Wasserralle [Insight into the life of the Water Rail]*. Der Falke **45**: 284–289.
- Becker, P. (1995) - *Identification of Water Rail and Porzana crakes in Europe*. Dutch Birding **17**: 181–211.
- Bland, R. and Dadds, M. (2012) - *Avon Atlas 2007–11*.
- Cordonnier, P. (1983) - *Notes sur la croissance des poussins de Râle d'eau Rallus aquaticus [Notes on the growth of Water Rail (Rallus aquaticus) pulli]*. Alauda **51**: 309–312.
- Cramp, S. and Simmons, K.F.L. (eds). (1980) - *The Birds of the Western Palearctic, Volume 2*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Ferguson-Lees, J., Castell, R. and Leech, D. (2011) - *A Field Guide to Monitoring Nests*. British Trust for Ornithology.
- Flegg, J. J. M. and Glue D. E. (1973) - *A Water Rail study*. Bird Study **20**: 69–79.
- Holling, M. (2012) - *Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2010*. British Birds **105**: 352–416.
- Percy, W. (1951) - *Three Studies in Bird Character. Bitterns, Herons and Water Rails*. Country Life, London.
- Sigmund, L. (1958) - *Postembryonální vývoj chřástala vodního (Rallus aquaticus) [Postembryonic development of the Water Rail (Rallus aquaticus)]*. Sylvia **15**: 85–118.

The Spring Migration of 2012

Harvey Rose

The back windows of my house in Walton Bay overlook the Severn Estuary. On the morning of May 1st I opened the curtains at about 7 o'clock and immediately noticed a large flock of birds at the end of the garden, some perched on wires or bushes and some in flight. They were House Martins, the first I had seen in 2012, and there were about 300 which was one of the larger counts of the spring. For me this was the start of a remarkable few days birding as tens of thousands of migrants moved up the Estuary. The majority were hirundines but as we shall see a large number of species was involved. The poor April weather seems to have held up many, but not all, migrants, and the 'flood gates' appeared to open on May Day. To illustrate this fascinating aspect of the birding year I shall describe what we know about the migration that took place during the last few days of April and the first nine days of May in 2012. These events were unusual but not unprecedented, and in this short note I have made no attempt to compare them with past migrations. My only purpose is to celebrate a singular ornithological event.

First, I would like to put this movement into context. Generally speaking spring (and autumn) migration is not uniformly continuous but proceeds in a series of surges preceded and followed by sometimes quite long lulls, and the events under discussion constituted a stronger and larger surge than usual. It is estimated that something in the order of 500 million birds migrate north from Africa to Europe each spring. So if only about half of one percent pass through the Avon area, this still represents well

over two million. The distance across Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains is about 8000kms, and if we suppose that the migrants are fairly evenly spread across the continent as they move north and note that Avon is about 40kms 'wide', this figure of a half of one percent (1 in 200) may not be too far from the truth. In most years almost all of the birds in this total move through unseen and unrecorded, either at night or if during the day, then too high to be seen as they make use of the higher-speed following winds that often occur several thousand metres up. But in 'adverse' conditions when they are flying into the wind, many fly quite close to the ground as the wind speed is lower here (in some extreme conditions - for example in thick fog - some have been recorded flying less than a metre above the ground). And this appears to be what happened during some parts of the spring passage in 2012.

April was the first of a long series of cold and wet months in 2012. For much of the month up to the last few days the winds were mainly north-westerly and about 20km per hour, and the temperature was around a cool 13°C. In the last few days the wind changed to a northerly-easterly direction, strengthened, and the temperature increased to more normal levels. By May Day the wind direction changed again (in fact it changed during the later part of April 30th) to the south-east and then north-west the following day before reverting back to the north-east for the next three days, and the temperature also dropped considerably on 3rd. This data is tabulated below.

Date (April/May)	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
Wind direction	NE	NE	E	SE	NW	NE	NE	NE	SW	SW	SW	NW
Wind speed (kph)	20	40	30	15	15	12	16	16	10	16	9	20
Temperature (°C)	10	18	18	18	15	10	10	12	14	15	17	15

As can be seen from this data, on May Day the wind was lighter, the direction had changed to the south-east, and the temperature remained reasonable. But by 3rd the wind was back in the north-east and the temperature had dropped again. At least in part, this was probably the trigger that produced the spectacular visible migration recorded in the few days of May.

Clearly not all migrant species were affected equally. For example most of the warblers appeared to pass through in a fairly steady trickle as usual with a few larger groups from early/mid-April to mid-May. But as in previous years only small numbers were noted and so most (in some cases more than 95%) passed through unrecorded. Also counts of some high-arctic breeding waders peaked in late May/first few days of June because their breeding grounds do not thaw out until mid to late June, or even later. The main species recorded, and I emphasise 'recorded',

during the late April/early May period under consideration were:

Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Commic Tern, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Whinchat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail and Goldfinch.

Due to problems with identification of distant estuarine flocks I have lumped together Arctic and Common Terns, the largest counts were recorded as Common/Arctic - "Commic" - anyway. At this time most individually identified coastal *sterna* terns were Arctic, and most inland terns were Common. Mainly resident species which have a migrant component were excluded from the table below because of the difficulty of distinguishing between these two parts of their populations. But where a component was clearly defined, for example with Goldfinch, then these were included in the table. Even accounting

for these exclusions, 63 migrant species were recorded during the nine-day period.

The most obvious migrants during this period were the Swallows. One observer at New Passage on the afternoon of May 1st reported that in one hour they were passing north-east at the rate of 200 per minute, and that during the time he was observing at least 10000 passed through. Also on this day 6500 passed through the Axe Estuary and 5000 were noted at CI-Y, giving the figure of 21500 in the table. Some individuals were probably counted at more than one site as they moved up the Estuary, but this is partially compensated for by the fact that the passage lasted all day whilst the birders were only out in the field for part of the time. Some other observers were counting over longer periods (several days), and at least one reported that the passage rate was higher (by about 25%) on the next day (2nd) but well down on the following day (3rd). Also the highest single-day count at CVL was 4000 on 4th. Hence, it is reasonable to suggest that something like 50000 passed through during this period. The total European (excluding Russia) breeding population is estimated to range between 14 and 19 million [EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds, 1997], and so our suggested migration figure is about one-third of one percent of this estimate which is similar to the proportion of Avon to European migrants mentioned above. Both House Martin and Sand Martin numbers were much lower, the highest count of the former during this period being 1000 (at CVL).

Other species with exceptional coastal counts included: Bar-tailed Godwit (although down on 2011), Greenshank with a flock of 30 on May 2nd,

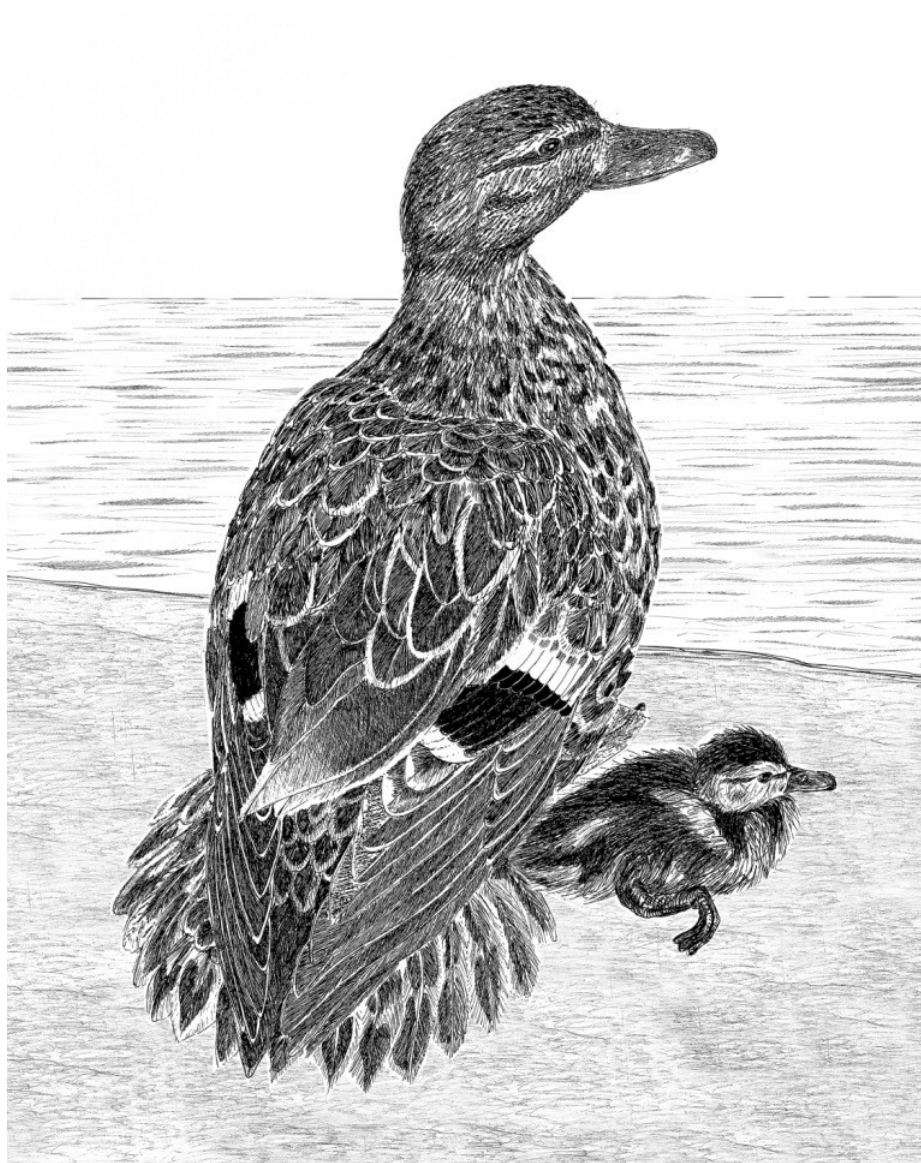
Black Tern with a high count of 83 on 1st, Swift with some good (100+) counts, Wheatear with several counts between 80 and 90, Yellow Wagtail again with several exceptional counts, the highest being 185 at OPS made up by a feeding flock of 80 plus a group of 105 which passed straight through and probably involved birds seen earlier either at CI-Y or Severnside (or both), and Goldfinch with over a thousand recorded on 2nd. Inland the count of 4000 Swallows at CVL on May 4th was high and there were better than average Wheatear counts at several sites including 20 on Chipping Sodbury Common also on 2nd.

The table below summarises the Avon area passage during the nine days from April 28th to May 9th split into four three-day periods. For each species the highest count at each main site for each three-day period was taken, these were then divided into two parts – coastal (c) and inland (i) – and in each part the counts were just added together. This means that a few flocks may have been ‘doubly-counted’, but as we noted above this was probably compensated for by the fact that most observers were not in the field from dawn to dusk. One observer noted that, on May 2nd, the passage was strongest just as the sun came up. And of course, many more passed through completely unrecorded at night. This all adds up to a remarkable series of ornithological events, and shows how important migrant watches are to the understanding of our bird populations and their movements. But as noted above, the 2012 events were almost certainly not unprecedented, and it hoped that this note will form part of a series of papers on Avon spring migration which will provide a better picture of these most intriguing and fascinating movements.

Summary of the spring migration in Avon between April 28th and May 9th

Species	April 28-30	May 1-3	May 4-6	May 7-9
Garganey	2 (i)	1 (i)		1 (c)
Eider			1 (c)	4 (c)
Storm Petrel				15 (c)
Squacco Heron		1 (i)		
Black-necked Grebe		3 (i)		
Marsh Harrier		1 (i)		
Hen Harrier			1 (c)	
Osprey	1 (c)			
Hobby	1 (c)	10 (2-c, 8-i)		
Avocet		5 (i)		
Little Ringed Plover	5 (c)	5 (c)	6 (c)	8 (c)
Ringed Plover	26 (c)	135 (c)	83 (c)	43 (c)
Grey Plover	23 (c)	41 (c)	2 (c)	
Knot	17 (c)	116 (c)	34 (c)	
Curlew Sandpiper		3 (c)	5 (c)	1 (c)
Dunlin	28 (c)	445 (c)	285 (c)	46 (45-c, 1-i)
Bar-tailed Godwit	23 (c)	335 (c)	395 (c)	70 (c)
Whimbrel	131 (130-c, 1-i)	174 (c)	214 (c)	95 (94-c, 1-i)
Common Sandpiper	8 (i)	19 (9-c, 10-i)	21 (15-c, 6-i)	21 (19-c, 2-i)
Greenshank	1 (c)	30 (c)	4 (c)	
Wood Sandpiper		2 (c)		
Arctic Skua	1 (c)	2 (c)		
Kittiwake		1 (i)	1 (c)	

Laughing Gull		1 (c)		
Mediterranean Gull		1 (c)		4 (c)
Common Gull		14 (c)		
Commic Tern	79 (78-c, 1-i)	371 (360-c, 11-i)	17 (16-c, 1-i)	7 (i)
Black Tern	1 (i)	98 (97-c, 1-i)	2 (c)	
Little Tern		1 (c)		
Sandwich Tern		2 (c)		
Cuckoo	1 (c)	6 (3-c, 3-i)	3 (c)	5 (3-c,2-i)
Swift	1122 (82-c, 1040-i)	1975 (475-c,1500-i)	3250 (130-c, 3020-i)	1065 (25-c, 1040-i)
Sand Martin	353 (53-c, 300-i)	180 (125-c, 55-i)	96 (85-c, 11-i)	13 (10-c, 3-i)
Swallow	3985 (785-c, 3200-i)	23500 (21500-c, 2000-i)	8170 (1820-c, 6350-i)	1200 (510-c, 690-i)
House Martin	403 (380-c, 23-i)	700 (490-c, 210-i)	1122 (72-c, 1050-i)	540 (10-c, 530-i)
Wood Warbler	1 (i)	4 (1-c, 3-i)	1 (i)	
Chiffchaff	55 (28-c, 27-i)	39 (18-c, 21-i)	77 (5-c, 72-i)	31 (10-c, 21-i)
Willow Warbler	39 (18-c, 21-i)	35 (33-c, 2-i)	17 (5-c, 12-i)	14 (c)
Blackcap	36 (19-c, 17-i)	37 (15-c, 22-i)	109 (26-c, 83-i)	52 (20-c,32-i)
Garden Warbler	2 (i)	3 (i)	10 (4-c, 6-i)	6 (i)
Lesser Whitethroat	10 (8-c, 2-i)	26 (18-c, 8-i)	12 (5-c, 7-i)	9 (5-c, 4-i)
Whitethroat	32 (26-c, 6-i)	46 (30-c, 16-i)	50 (20-c, 30-i)	48 (36-c, 12-i)
Grasshopper Warbler	4 (3-c, 1-i)	5 (1-c, 4-i)	5 (c)	1 (c)
Sedge Warbler	11 (5-c, 6-i)	17 (13-c, 4-i)	19 (16-c, 3-i)	15 (11-c, 4-i)
Reed Warbler	8 (6-c, 2-i)	15 (13-c, 2-i)	16 (11-c, 5-i)	26 (20-c, 6-i)
Starling	103 (57-c, 46-i)	8 (c)		
Ring Ouzel	1 (c)			
Spotted Flycatcher		2 (c)	2 (1-c, 1-i)	2 (c)
Nightingale			2 (i)	
Black Redstart			1 (c)	
Redstart	8 (5-c, 3-i)	7 (6-c, 1-i)	11 (9-c, 2-i)	1 (c)
Whinchat	10 (c)	21 (15-c, 6-i)	12 (8-c, 4-i)	5 (2-c, 3-i)
Wheatear	152 (130-c, 22-i)	161 (140-c, 21-i)	206 (156-c,50-i)	87 (51-c, 36-i)
Pied Flycatcher		2 (c)	1 (i)	
Yellow Wagtail	16 (11-c, 5-i)	326 (320-c, 6-i)	19 (18-c, 1-i)	14 (13-c, 1-i)
White Wagtail	6 (2-c, 4-i)	25 (24-c, 1-i)	6 (3-c, 3_i)	1 (i)
Tree Pipit	10 (c)	47 (c)	8 (2-c, 6-i)	1 (i)
Meadow Pipit	34 (33-c, 1-i)	76 (c)	6 (c)	33 (c)
Goldfinch	380 (c)	980 (c)	150 (c)	44 (35-c, 9-i)
Siskin	5 (i)	16 (c)	2 (1-c, i-1)	
Linnet	50 (c)	125 (c)	35 (c)	100 (c)
Lesser Redpoll	8 (c)	3 (2-c, 1-i)	21 (20-c, 1-i)	
Crossbill		2 (c)		
Totals	7215 (2474-c, 4741-i)	30175 (26244-c, 3931-i)	14405 (3670-c, 10735-i)	3655 (1241-c, 2414-i)



Female Mallard and duckling beside stream in Midsomer Norton High Street, 22nd May 2013. Drawing by Mike Bailey.

Migration Watches along the Severn Estuary, 1966-2005

Richard Bland

This is the first of a two-part migration survey, the second part bringing the study right up to date will appear in the 2013 Report. Down the years October migration watches from key vantage points along the Severn Estuary have been a fascinating ornithological activity producing many remarkable records. They have not been analysed in detail since M Sainsbury's article in *Bristol Ornithology* 5 which appeared in 1971, and this note is an attempt to put this right. Here we have recorded the details of 35 watches undertaken in 23 of the years between 1966 and 2005. During these watches, 414 hours in total, some 192600 birds were counted involving at least 54 species. Watches have usually taken place simultaneously at a series of vantage points, normally Aust, New Passage, Sand Point, and Brean Down, and usually teams have watched for about three hours at each point. The totals quoted below are the numbers recorded on a particular date summing over all the watch points. To compare different years a rate has been derived by dividing the total counts by the total number of hours of watching. It is possible that some flocks were counted more than once as they usually fly quite

fast, which means at around 40km per hour, and could easily move right down, or up, the Estuary during the course of three hours. The data from a number of individual counts from particular sites which may well have given higher movement rates has not been included. But this may also have involved some double counting, and so the data given excluding these extra counts is probably more accurate. On the other hand the process of identifying and recording a species in the half-light of dawn is difficult, and certainly needs more than one pair of eyes and hands.

Throughout the period 1966 to 2005 the watches has been dominated by two species, Chaffinch and Starling. All together Chaffinches have provided 41% of the total and Starlings 33%. The next most abundant species was Redwing, with 4%. Chart 1 shows the annual rates per hour recorded for the two main species. The variation between years is striking, as is the dominance in the early years of Starling, see below.

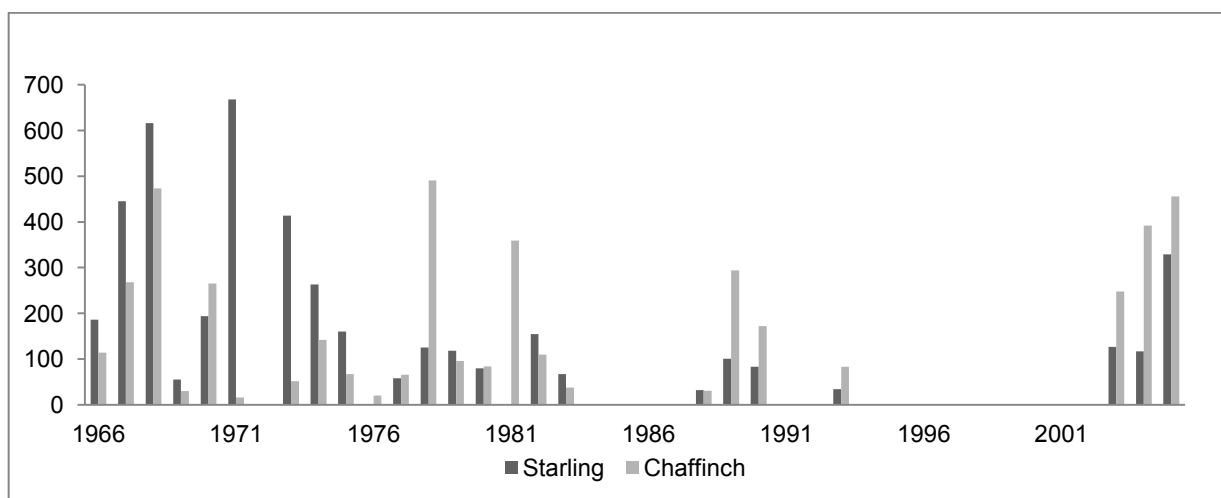


Chart 1 The rate per hour at which Starling and Chaffinch were seen during migration watches 1966 to 2005

In particular years and circumstances a few other species have been moving in significant numbers. They are shown in Table 1 below. The House Martin total is based on one spectacular movement in 1981

with 2000 at Brean Down, 2200 at Sand Point and 4550 at New Passage all seen during a five-hour watch and all moving north-east.

Species	% of total	% of counts
House Martin	5	60
Redwing	4	80
Greenfinch	3	100
Meadow Pipit	3	97
Linnet	2	94
Fieldfare	2	60
Skylark	1	97
Goldfinch	1	91
<i>Alba</i> wagtail	1	86

Table 1 Species forming more than 1% of the total

Table 2 lists the main remaining species, their totals are small but many are quite frequently recorded. In some cases it is not always clear whether a species

recorded by the watch was actually migrating; some may have involved local residents that happen to have been seen during a watch.

Species	% of counts	Species	% of counts
Lesser Redpoll	89	Collared Dove	20
Brambling	83	Tree Pipit	17
Mistle Thrush	74	Carrion Crow	17
Siskin	71	Yellow Wagtail	14
Song Thrush	66	Stock Dove	14
Swallow	63	Goldcrest	14
Reed Bunting	60	Chiffchaff	14
Wood Pigeon	57	Sand Martin	14
Tree Sparrow	54	Golden Plover	11
Blue Tit	49	Sparrowhawk	11
Grey Wagtail	49	Long-tailed Tit	11
Bullfinch	40	Kestrel	9
Jackdaw	37	Wheatear	8
Blackbird	29	Rook	6
Great Tit	29	Crossbill	5
Jay	26	House Sparrow	4
Yellowhammer	23	Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	2

Table 2 Species forming less than 1% of the total, showing percentage frequency

The overall average annual rate for 1966 to 2005 was 425 birds per hour, varying between 98 (1971) and 1181 (1968). The highest individual rate was on Oct. 19th, 1968 when over 18 hours of the watch the rate was 2019 per hour. It is of interest to note that EG Holt [1950], observing mainly at Burnham-on-Sea between 1947 and 1949, recorded peak rates of between 4000 and 6000 per hour for Chaffinch, and between 6000 and 7000 per hour for Starlings. (It is not clear whether he actually recorded such totals during the course of an hour).

The rate is dependent on a number of factors. First it depends on the number of hours of observation, because there is often a clear peak between 08.00 and 09.00, observations before 07.00 and after

09.00 usually record very little. In general, depending upon the date of the watch, observation have started at 07.00 and lasted for three hours, but sometimes more. It would probably be better to record totals per hour or per half-hour, as peak movements can easily exceed 1000 per hour. Secondly, the size of a movement is also heavily dependent on the weather, but as the watch has to be organised months ahead, it is a matter of chance whether it is a good day or not. Dates chosen have varied between Sept. 18th and Nov. 4th, and the peak rates were between Oct.15th and 19th, but this may be coincidental as watches on dates between Oct. 12th and Nov.1st have on occasion produced high numbers.

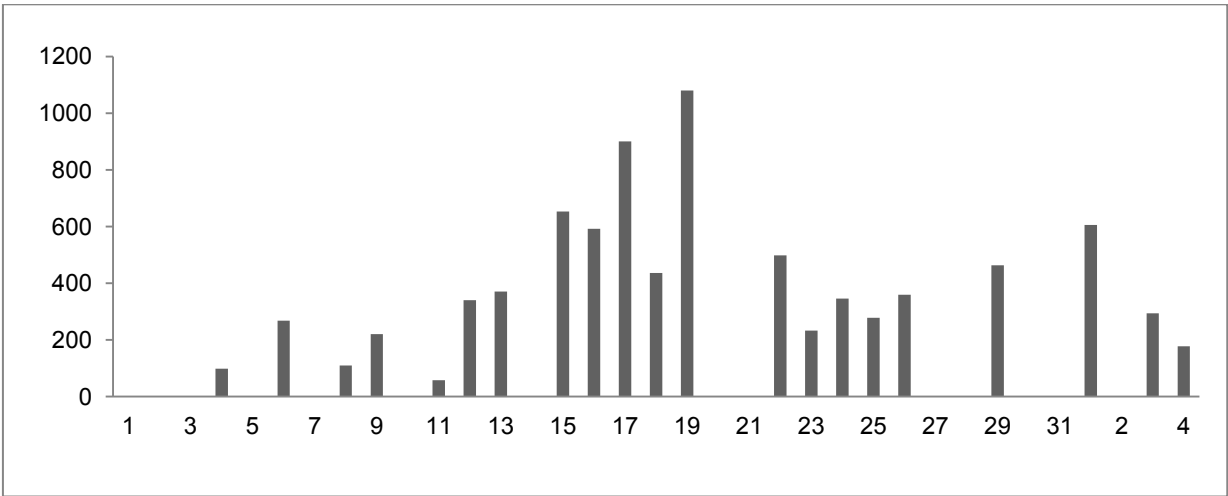


Chart 2 Overall average rate recorded on different dates in October and early November

Chart 3 shows the annual rates recorded since 1966. In the 1990s there was, I think, a feeling that the glory days of the Severn Estuary diurnal

migration were over when there had been a series of poor seasons, and it is a great pity that the watches did not continue consistently through the 1990s.

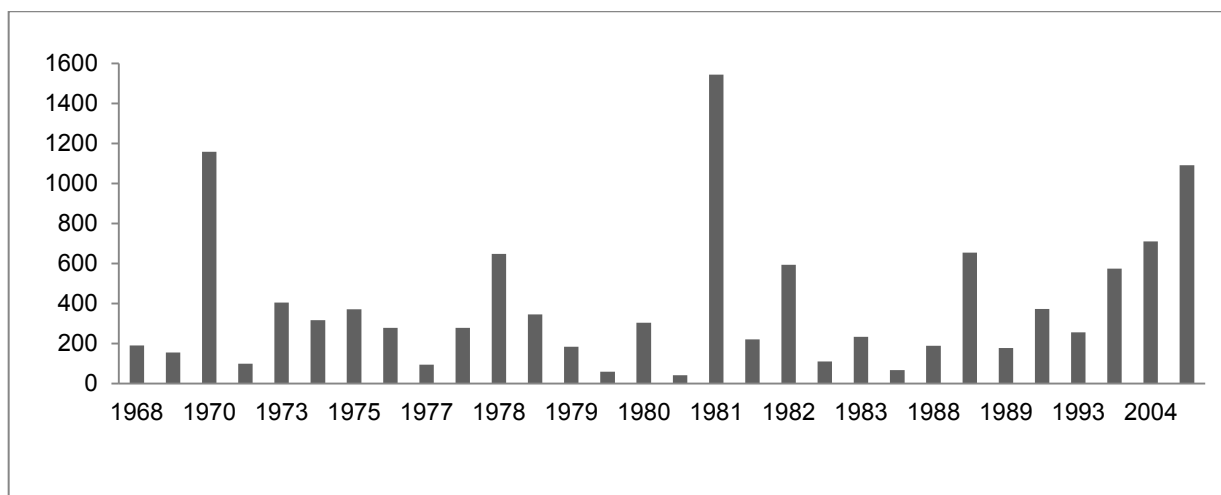


Chart 3 Annual rates per hour 1966-2005 for all species

Unfortunately, when the counts were originally collated weather details were not also collated as this data was almost certainly recorded at the time. Hence we have not been able to relate the totals to the prevailing weather. Generally, birds were seen to be travelling down the Estuary in a generally south-west direction or occasionally they were travelling west across it. Confusingly, sometimes they were travelling north-east up the Estuary. The direction of the movement usually reflects the wind direction, as they fly into the wind. It seems probable that this is because it is actually more difficult for passerines to fly with a following wind, or in calm conditions, than into a head wind. This is because a following wind provides no lift, and they have to work quite hard to keep themselves airborne. A light headwind is ideal, as all of their energy can then go into forward momentum. A strong headwind slows their progress, and will force them close to the ground in order to minimise its strength, but it at least ensures progress, even if, apparently, in the wrong direction. One might assume that the birds we see are mainly from England or Scotland moving south and west for the winter, but this may be quite false. They could be many from the Baltic that have made a wrong landfall, as clearly happened to a huge Redwing movement in October 2004 involving some individual counts up to 2000.

There is much that remains mysterious about the whole process of diurnal migration. Most migration takes place at night, although it is not clear whether

what is recorded along the Severn during early morning watches is the tail end of travel during the night, or whether it is using a slot when conditions are often calm and it is after dawn so the light conditions make finding feeding sites easier. There is still a great deal of ignorance about both the origin and destination of the flocks we see. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that on almost every morning during October and into early November at least 1200 birds are on the move, which implies a movement of some 50,000 diurnal migrants during this period. What we manage to see and record is almost certainly only 'the tip of the iceberg' of the actual movement. Some flocks follow the coast, but others may be moving on a broad front across the whole region which is both unobserved and largely unobservable. The night-time calls of Redwings in October certainly imply the latter. I have been told, although I do not remember by whom, that the Severn Estuary is the only place in the country where Chaffinches can be regularly seen on migration. Whether true or not, getting up at dawn to watch hundreds of them and many species on the move remains a wonderful experience.

References

- Sainsbury M, 1971 *Visible Migration along the south-east shores of the Severn estuary*. Bristol Ornithology **5**, pp. 195-200.
- Holt E G, 1950 *Autumn migration along the Bristol Channel*. British Birds **43**, pp. 271-73.

Fifty years ago – Autumn Migration on Steep Holm in 1962

Paul Chadwick

This is a transcript of a paper which appeared in the Proceedings of the BNS in 1963 and refers to observations made by Paul Chadwick and others in September and October 1962. It is of interest to note the dates – Sept. 16th to Oct. 6th, nowadays a similar project would probably take place about three weeks later; see for example the comment about Chaffinches below and the Starling entry in the systematic list.

In addition to field studies on breeding gulls and resident passerines, carried out on Steep Holm, the Research Station there has been occupied for up to fifteen days in September and October in each of the past three years. The main object has been to record, trap and ring some of the many diurnal migrants visiting and passing through the island at this season, and the following is a summary of the 1962 [so half a century ago] sightings.

September 16th: A marked passage of Swallows was in progress on arrival and it was estimated that at least 750 crossed the Channel from Wales via Flat Holm and Steep Holm. With them were about 25 House Martins and 15 Sand Martins, while other migrants noted were a Kestrel, a Mistle Thrush and a Yellow Wagtail. Birds on the island included two Wheatears, a Whitethroat and a Goldcrest, and in the late afternoon a Turnstone settled on a scree near the summit.

September 22nd to October 6th: Observed migration was mostly on a south to south-east heading and the chief feature was again an impressive movement of hirundines (517 caught and ringed). Owing to an insufficient number of observers it was not possible to maintain a continuous watch throughout each day; hence the figures quoted tend to underestimate the true size of the movements. The largest discrepancy probably occurs in the total of Swallows and it seems likely that this was nearer 15000 than the 10000 recorded. The peak movement took place in a period of warm weather, with little or no wind, from Sept. 22nd to 25th but good counts were also made on 28th to 30th, with moderate to strong winds varying between west and south-east, and again on Oct. 2nd when there were force 4-5 south-west to west winds. House Martins (1050 seen) were much more in evidence than in the autumns of 1960 and 1961 though Sand Martins were relatively scarce.

Kestrels were recorded on nine days, with a maximum of four on Sept. 22nd when a female Sparrowhawk also flew over, heading ESE. Two days later a Buzzard settled for a short while before moving off across Bridgwater Bay. Peregrines (now only infrequent visitors) were seen – one on 24th and one on 25th.

Skylarks were noted on all days except Sept. 30th but were in small numbers apart from the 24th when 100 passed over. Meadow Pipits were recorded, the majority being counted in three short periods – c.500 on Sept. 23rd and 24th; c.450 between 27th and 29th; and c.700 on Oct. 2nd and 3rd. There was also a daily movement of *alba* Wagtails (except Sept. 30th) with 230 being seen, one half passing in the period Sept. 23rd to 25th. Grey Wagtails appeared on nine days but only in small numbers. Of a total of 1210 Starlings seen, nearly half passed on Sept. 23rd and 24th.

Apart from two days in September when Linnets were observed in fair numbers (85 on 24th and 170 on 29th), the movement of finches did not really begin until Oct. 2nd when 290 Greenfinches, 39 Goldfinches and 420 Linnets crossed the Channel. Greenfinches were more numerous on the 3rd but counts showed a marked reduction on the following three days while the number of Linnets declined from 170 on the 3rd to 60 on 6th. Contrary to expectations, Chaffinches were infrequently noted and the total for the entire period was only 104. A Chaffinch that was trapped proved to be a bird which had been ringed on the island on the same date in 1961. Two House Sparrows were seen on Oct. 2nd, and the next day there was a marked easterly passage lasting an hour from 08.00. In all 143 were counted, some settling on the island, as did some of the 54 recorded on the 4th.

Other observations included those of a Golden Plover on Oct. 3rd and 4th, and a Curlew on Sept. 25th and 26th, while Oystercatchers were present on most days – with a maximum of six on Sept. 26th and Oct. 5th. A Stock Dove was present from Sept. 30th to Oct. 5th, and a Turtle Dove made a short stay on Sept. 27th. Very small parties of Carrion Crows and Jackdaws appeared on Sept. 29th (the latter departing northwards towards Flat Holm) and a party of Jackdaws on Oct. 4th passed the island heading south.

Wheatears (up to three) were present from Sept. 24th to 29th, a Whinchat arrived on the 24th and single Redstarts were trapped on the 24th and 25th. A small movement of Robins occurred, and Chiffchaffs were also moving through (29 trapped), as also were a few Goldcrests.

Among less frequent visitors were a Spotted Flycatcher on Sept. 26th; a Whitethroat on 27th and 28th; a Blackcap and a Garden Warbler (both mist-netted) on Oct. 3rd; and two Pied Flycatchers (netted on 4th). Single Tree Pipits were identified among the many Meadow Pipits passing through on Sept. 24th and 28th. Two species not previously recorded for Steep Holm were Lesser Whitethroat (one on Sept. 25th) and Lesser Redpoll (three or four on 30th).

Unusual Ornithological Events in the Avon area from 2006 to 2012

Andy Davis

This paper is essentially a historical reference for unusual ornithological events in the region which is now referred to as the "Avon area". The first part, from 1945 to 1980, was published in the Report for 2005, and the second part from 1981 to 2005 was published in the 2006 Report. The aim of this short paper, and that of the previous two, is to document

in one place the more important influxes, heavy passages, seabird "wrecks" and other interesting movements of various species by presenting the salient details of the event followed by a reference/s. The abbreviations used for frequently occurring place names are the same as in the body of this Report.

2006	<p>Gales in early December produced the largest numbers of Leach's Petrels since the famous 1952 wreck. A total of 115 were recorded with the largest count of 45 at Severnside on Dec. 6th.</p> <p>An influx nationally of Pectoral Sandpipers produced 130 in the UK and at least 40 in Ireland. Locally four juveniles were noted.</p> <p>A Laughing Gull at CVL on April 17th, was one of several April records following the unprecedented influx of this species in late 2005, caused by the remnants of hurricane "Wilma" in early November.</p> <p>Best recorded Brambling influx since 1993/94 with 3065 bird-days recorded, October 2005 to March 2006. One flock of 500 noted.</p> <p>Hawfinch influx noted January to March, minimum of 13, maximum of 17.</p>	<p>Avon Bird Report, 2006 Boyd (1954)</p> <p>ABR, 2006</p> <p>British Birds 100:716-717 and 100:46-48, ABR, 2006</p> <p>ABR, 2006</p> <p>ABR, 2006</p>
2007	<p>A Cattle Egret at CVL, Oct.11th to 13th. Part of an unprecedented influx into southern England which started with a scatter of records in October and then the main influx during November and December.</p> <p>A Glossy Ibis at CVL, early November. Nationally a record-breaking influx mainly in the south-west of Britain in the spring from late April. A total of 17 noted at Frampton, (Glos), from April 20th to mid-May.</p>	<p>British Birds 101:528-9 ABR, 2007</p> <p>Davis and Thoburn (2007), British Birds 101:532-533</p>
2008	<p>Record number of eight Ring-necked Ducks at CVL on Nov. 9th, cf. unprecedented flock of 15 in Co.Galway, Ireland in September and October.</p> <p>Honey Buzzard: major influx of continental birds mid September. Locally, three records.</p> <p>Exceptional autumn for Wrynecks with seven recorded.</p> <p>Five Yellow-browed Warblers recorded, equal to 1986 influx.</p> <p>Large influx of "Nordic" Jackdaws especially in the Northern Isles in autumn 2007/early 2008. First known Avon records ever, first winter period of 2008.</p>	<p>ABR, 2008</p> <p>ABR, 2008</p> <p>ABR, 2008</p> <p>ABR, 2008</p> <p>ABR, 2008, Davis (2008) <i>Nature in Shetland</i> (2007, 2008)</p>
2009	<p>Pale-bellied Brent Goose – record numbers including a flock of 18 on Sept.1st at Severn Beach.</p> <p>Cattle Egret: three records, five birds including a recently fledged juvenile. This followed another influx into UK and SW Ireland in early 2008, and a second influx in late 2008. A pair bred in Somerset in 2008 rearing one youngster.</p>	<p>ABR, 2009</p> <p>British Birds 102:543-546, ABR, 2009</p>

2009 con't	<p>Glossy Ibis: nationally, a large influx into the UK and Ireland, almost all originating from Spain. Locally, three records involving six individuals.</p> <p>Best year ever for Marsh Harrier in the Avon area, with 52 bird-days recorded.</p> <p>South-westerly gales produced the following between Nov. 22nd and 29th: Red-throated Diver (CVL), four Great Northern Divers, at least 19 Leach's Petrels, four Pomarine Skuas (two at CVL), at least six Great Skuas, and two extreme rarities: a White-bellied/Black-bellied Storm-petrel on Nov. 25th off Severn Beach, and a Pacific Diver at the same site on Nov. 27th.</p> <p>Long-billed Dowitcher: one at CVL, Sept. 23rd to Oct. 2nd, part of an excellent autumn influx in the UK.</p> <p>Black Redstart: 111 bird-days, probably the highest number ever, mainly in the autumn and second winter period.</p> <p>Count of 20 Water Pipits at CVL, Nov. 26th, the highest count at this site since 1972.</p> <p>Exceptional influx of Hawfinches during first-winter period, 36 bird-days recorded.</p>	<p>British Birds 103:574-575 ABR, 2009</p> <p>ABR, 2009</p> <p>British Birds 104:566-7 for <i>Fregetta</i> petrel British Birds 103:569 for Pacific Diver Hayes (2009) ABR, 2009</p> <p>British Birds 103:587-588. ABR, 2009</p> <p>ABR, 2009</p> <p>ABR, 2009</p> <p>ABR, 2009</p>
2010	<p>Ferruginous Duck: a record four birds at CVL in the autumn.</p> <p>Record year for Red Kite, 70 bird-days noted.</p> <p>A Citrine Wagtail at CVL on Sept. 7th, part of a small UK influx, late August/September.</p> <p>National influx of Lapland Buntings in the autumn and winter. Locally, record numbers noted on the coast.</p>	<p>ABR, 2010</p> <p>ABR, 2010</p> <p>British Birds 104:617, ABR, 2010</p> <p>ABR, 2010 Pennington <i>et al.</i> (2012)</p>
2011	<p>Record numbers of Red-crested Pochards, 25 individuals recorded. Also, high numbers in previous two years with 23 in 2010 and 19 in 2009.</p> <p>Record numbers of Spoonbills, ten individuals including a group of five, <i>cf.</i> high national numbers and breeding in 2010 and 2011.</p> <p>Unprecedented UK autumn influx of Pallid Harriers involving 29 birds. Locally, a juvenile male at Black Down (Somerset) flew into Avon on Sept. 30th.</p> <p>Record numbers of Little Ringed Plovers in the autumn at CVL where up to 16 were noted.</p> <p>Record influx of Nearctic waders in the autumn: 6/7 Pectoral Sandpipers, a Semi-palmated Sandpiper, two Long-billed Dowitchers, a Lesser Yellowlegs, and a Spotted Sandpiper. Also, a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper from Siberia was noted at BL/CVL. It was an excellent autumn in the UK for Nearctic waders, including a record year for S-p Sandpipers and L-b Dowitchers.</p> <p>Early autumn gales brought seabirds into upper Estuary and inland, including a record 11 or 12 Grey Phalaropes with three together at CVL.</p> <p>Quail: nationally the best year ever for this species. Locally good numbers, at least 14.</p>	<p>ABR, 2009, 2010, 2011</p> <p>British Birds 104:632 ABR, 2011</p> <p>British Birds 105:567-570 ABR, 2011</p> <p>ABR, 2011</p> <p>British Birds 105:576(Semi-p Sandpiper) and 583(Long-billed Dowitcher) Milbourne (2011) Vinicombe (2011) ABR, 2011</p> <p>ABR, 2011</p> <p>Holling <i>et al.</i> (2013) ABR, 2011</p>

2011 con't	Waxwing: late November 2010 to early April 2011 saw influx of 2897 bird-days, cf. 10875 bird-days in 2004/05.	ABR, 2011
	Pied Wheatear: one at Oldbury-on-Severn, Oct.25th to 28th. Two other UK records in early November.	British Birds 105 :609 ABR, 2011
2012	Record number of four Lesser Scaup at CVL including two together.	This Report
	Storm Petrel: strong south-westerly winds in early June produced 108 bird-days, a record count for Avon.	This Report
	Best year ever for Red Kite with 90 bird-days, even better than 2010.	This Report
	Short-eared Owl: largest recorded influx ever with 423 bird-days and 222 records. Largest count seven.	This Report
	Waxwing: late 2012 saw the third largest irruption since 1980, 950 bird-days, maximum flock 60.	This Report
	Very large visible spring passage late April to early May including in excess of 20000 Swallows. Over 60 species involved including Squacco Heron and Red-rumped Swallow.	Rose, this Report page 161
	Unprecedented spring Redstart passage (in recent times), 138 bird-days noted.	This Report
	Largest spring Wheatear passage (in recent times), 2273 bird-days noted.	This Report

References for national papers

Boyd, H (1954). *The wreck of Leach's Petrels in the autumn of 1952*. British Birds **47**:137-163.

Nature in Shetland (2007, 2008) (website www.nature-shetland.co.uk) November/December 2007 and January/February 2008.

Pennington, M G, Riddington, R and Miles, W T S (2012). *The Lapland Bunting influx in Britain and Ireland in 2010/11*. British Birds **105**: 654-673

Holling *et al.* (2013), *Rare breeding birds in Britain in 2011*. British Birds **106** 496-554

Local references

Davis, A H and Thoburn, G (2007). *Glossy Ibis at Chew Valley Lake, a new species for the Avon area*. Avon Bird Report 2007, 137

Davis, A H (2008). *Eastern sub-species of Jackdaw in the Avon area*, Avon Bird Report 2008, 155-156

Davis, A H (2005), *Unusual ornithological events in the Avon area 1954 to 1980*. Avon Bird Report 2005, 155-168.

ibid (2006), *Unusual ornithological events in the Avon area from 1981 to 2005*. Avon Bird Report 2006, 131-144.

Milbourne, N (2011). *Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - new to the Avon area*. Avon Bird Report 2011, 149-150

Hayes, M (2009). *Pacific Diver - new to Avon*. Avon Bird Report 2009, 149-150

Vinicombe, K (2011). *Chew and Blagdon 2011-12, The Ultimate Year?* Avon Bird Report 2011, 137-138

Reports

Rose, H E (*Ed.*). Avon Bird Report, 2006 to 2012, Avon Ornithological Group.

One Flock

Geoffrey Warren

Restless, they rise as one
before the restless rising tide
and like a tiny cloud
at once a shape is formed
and yet before one can decide
what shape? a second shape is born
and then a third
as though a single bird
could change or twist its shape at will.
However technically one tried
no human skill or pride
could faultless synchronise like them.
They turn at speed and change
not only form but hue:
now dark, now sun touched dazzling white
now wheeling left, now right
until by some invisible decree
the order comes 'Descend'
and still in strict formation see them bank,
glide in, and safely come to land
upon the tide-lapped strand;
the aerial display is at an end
until some dog no owner can restrain
disturbs their rest and puts them up again.
At length they settle down awhile
and, undisturbed, display
not structured uniformity
but individual personality
like troops released from regimented drill
'Stand Easy' then 'Dismiss'.
So some tuck beak beneath their wing and doze
one leg it seems is all they need,
while others run and feed
or bathe and splash in an incoming wave
or bicker gently when
a neighbour moves or comes too close
for closeness can for now be set aside.
And yet for all their subtle difference
some instincts still remain
for in advance of coming rain
the breeze is settled firmly in the west
and when their brief activity is done
they turn as one
and, bunched together, face towards the wind
(as down the years on this same beach)
new generations 'knowing' this is best
obeying ever that same inner call
they stand, or rise, one flock, united all.

Watching the Dunlin flock on Weston Beach, December 2012

Gazetteer

Most of the major local sites are shown on the map on the rear cover; this gazetteer lists many of the others that are mentioned in the Systematic List.

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 that are part of Bristol but outside the Unitary Authority area have the word 'Bristol' placed after their main names.

Abbey Wood, Bristol	6178	SG	Downend, Bristol	6577	BR
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS	Doynton	7274	SG
Alveston	6388	SG	Dundry	5566	NS
Anchor Head	3062	NS	Dunkerton	7159	BA
Arnos Vale	6071	BR	Durdham Down, Bristol	5674	BR
Ashton Park	5572	NS	Dyers Common	5583	SG
Aust Cliff/Warth	5689	SG	East Harptree	5655	BA
Avon Gorge	5673	BR	Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS
Avon Wildlife Park	6768	BA	Emerson's Green, Bristol	6776	SG
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR	Englishcombe	7162	BA
Badocks Wood, Bristol	5777	BR	Failand	5773	NS
Banwell	3958	NS	Falfield	6893	SG
Barrow Hill	5167	NS	Farmborough	6660	BA
Bath University	7764	BA	Felton Common	5265	NS
Bathampton Meadows	7766	BA	Filton, Bristol	6079	SG
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA	Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR
Bathford	7966	BA	Flax Bourton	5069	NS
Bedminster	5871	BR	Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA	Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR	Frome Valley	6377	BR
Blackberry Hill, Bristol	6177	BR	Hall End	7086	SG
Blaise Woods	5678	BR	Hallatrow	6357	BA
Bleadon Hill	3657	NS	Hanham	6472	SG
Blind Yeo	3969	NS	Happerton Farm	5274	NS
Bloomfield, Bath	7463	BA	Hawkesbury Upton	7687	SG
Brandon Hill, Bristol	5772	BR	Haydon Hill	6953	BA
Brentry	5879	BR	Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR	Hengrove Park, Bristol	6069	BR
Bucklands Pool	4769	NS	Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR
Burledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA	Hicks Gate	6369	BA
Burnett	6665	BA	High Littleton	6458	BA
Butcombe	5161	NS	Hinton Blewitt	5956	BA
Cadbury Camp	4572	NS	Hinton Charterhouse	7758	BA
Cameley	6157	BA	Hoar Gout	5380	BR
Camerton	6857	BA	Horfield, Bristol	5977	BR
Castle Green, Bristol	5973	BR	Horton	7584	SG
Chapel Pill	5376	NS	Horwood Farm	7387	SG
Charfield	7292	SG	Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR
Charlton Field	6366	BA	Hursley Hill, Whitchurch	6165	BA
Charmy Down	7670	SG	Iford	7959	BA
Chelvey	4867	NS	Iron Acton	6883	SG
Chelwood	6861	BA	Jubbs Wood	5174	NS
Chew Stoke	5661	NS	Kendleshire	6679	SG
Chittening Warth	5382	SG	Kenn	4169	NS
Churchill	4459	NS	Kewstoke	3364	NS
Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS	Kingsgate Park, Yate	7181	SG
Claverham	4466	NS	Kingston Seymour	4066	BA
Claverton	7864	BA	Ladye Bay	4072	NS
Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS	Langford	4560	NS
Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR	Lansdown	7268	BA
Clutton	6259	BA	Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR
Compton Dando	6464	BA	Littleton Warth	5890	SG
Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA	Locking	3659	NS
Dolebury Warren Reserve	4558	NS	Longwell Green	6571	BA

Lower Knole Farm	5884	SG	St George's Wharf	5376	NS
Lower Littleton	5563	BA	St Phillips Marsh, Bristol	6072	BR
Lower Woods	7487	SG	Stanton Drew	5963	NS
Lulsgate	5065	NS	Stanton Prior	6762	BA
Marksbury	6662	BA	Stantonbury Hill	6763	BA
Middle Hope	3366	NS	Stockwood Reserve	6269	BR
Montpelier	5974	BR	Stoke Bishop, Bristol	5676	BR
Moorgrove Wood	5578	SG	Stowey	5959	BA
Newbridge, Bath	7165	BA	Stup Pill	5282	BR
Northwick Warth	5587	SG	Sutton Hill	5958	BA
Orchard Pool	5485	SG	Swineford	6968	BA
Over	5982	SG	The Niatts	5985	SG
Oxbow Reserve, Bath	7766	BA	Tickenham	4571	NS
Parks Farm, Tormarton	7879	SG	Totterdown	6071	BR
Pill	5276	NS	Tunley	6959	BA
Pilning	5585	SG	Tyntesfield	5171	NS
Portbury	4975	NS	Tytherington	6788	SG
Portbury Wharf NR	4877	NS	Ubley	5358	NS
Prior Park, Bath	7663	BA	University of West of England	6277	BR
Publow	6264	BA	Uphill	3259	NS
Puxton Moor Reserve	4063	NS	Walborough	3157	NS
Redhill	4963	NS	Walton Common Reserve	4273	NS
Redland, Bristol	5875	BR	Warmley	6773	SG
Redwick	5585	SG	Welton Vale	6755	BA
Regil	5363	NS	West Harptree	5656	BA
Rickford	4959	NS	West Littleton	7675	SG
Rowberrow	4658	NS	Westerleigh	7080	SG
Royal Portbury Dock	5077	NS	Weston Moor Reserve	4473	NS
Sand Bay	3365	NS	Whitchurch	6167	BR
Sea Mills, Bristol	5576	BR	Wick	7072	SG
Sevenside	5383	SG	Wick Warth	3566	NS
Shepperdine	6295	SG	Willsbridge Reserve	6670	SG
Shirehampton	5376	BR	Winford	5465	NS
Shirehill Farm	7876	SG	Woodspring Bay	3566	NS
Siston	6674	SG	Woollard	6364	BA
Sneyd Park, Bristol	5575	BR	Wooscombe Bottom	6365	BA
Snuff Mills, Bristol	6276	BR	Worlebury Hill	3162	NS
St Andrews Park, Bristol	5975	BR	Yeo Estuary	3666	NS
St Annes, Bristol	6272	BR			

Alphabetical Index of Species Accounts

	Page		Page
Arctic Skua	79	Golden Plover	64
Arctic Tern	89	Goldeneye	36
Avocet	63	Goldfinch	137
Barn Owl	94	Goosander	37
Barnacle Goose	24	Goshawk	51
Bar-tailed Godwit	71	Grasshopper Warbler	116
Bearded Tit	107	Great Black-backed Gull	86
Bewick's Swan	21	Great Crested Grebe	48
Bittern	43	Great Grey Shrike	102
Black Redstart	125	Great Northern Diver	40
Black Tern	88	Great Reed Warbler	118
Blackbird	122	Great Skua	80
Blackcap	113	Great Spotted Woodpecker	100
Black-headed Gull	81	Great Tit	106
Black-necked Grebe	49	Great White Egret	45
Black-tailed Godwit	71	Green-winged Teal	29
Black-throated Diver	40	Green Sandpiper	74
Black-winged Stilt	63	Green Woodpecker	100
Blue-winged Teal	31	Greenfinch	136
Blue Tit	105	Greenshank	75
Brambling	136	Grey Heron	45
Brent Goose	24	Grey Partridge	38
Bullfinch	141	Grey Phalarope	77
Buzzard	52	Grey Plover	65
Cackling Goose	24	Grey Wagtail	130
Canada Goose	23	Greylag Goose	22
Carion Crow	104	Guillemot	90
Cattle Egret	44	Hawfinch	142
Cetti's Warbler	110	Hen Harrier	50
Chaffinch	135	Herring Gull	85
Chiffchaff	111	Hobby	56
Coal Tit	106	Hoopoe	99
Collared Dove	92	House Martin	109
Common Crane	61	House Sparrow	128
Common Gull	83	Iceland Gull	86
Common Redpoll	140	Jack Snipe	69
Common Sandpiper	73	Jackdaw	103
Common Scoter	35	Jay	102
Common Tern	88	Kestrel	54
Coot	61	Kingfisher	98
Cormorant	42	Kittiwake	80
Corn Bunting	144	Knot	66
Crossbill	140	Lapland Bunting	142
Cuckoo	94	Lapwing	65
Curlew	72	Laughing Gull	83
Curlew Sandpiper	68	Lesser Black-backed Gull	84
Dipper	121	Lesser Redpoll	140
Dunlin	68	Lesser Scaup	34
Dunnoek	128	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	101
Eider	34	Lesser Whitethroat	115
Egyptian Goose	25	Linnet	139
Feral Pigeon	91	Little Egret	44
Ferruginous Duck	32	Little Grebe	47
Fieldfare	122	Little Gull	82
Firecrest	105	Little Owl	95
Fulmar	41	Little Ringed Plover	63
Gadwall	27	Little Stint	67
Gannet	42	Little Tern	87
Garden Warbler	114	Long-eared Owl	96
Garganey	30	Long-tailed Duck	35
Glaucous Gull	86	Long-tailed Tit	110
Goldcrest	104	Magpie	102
		Mallard	29

Mandarin Duck	26	Shelduck	25
Manx Shearwater	41	Short-eared Owl	96
Marsh Harrier	50	Shoveler	31
Marsh Tit	107	Siberian Chiffchaff	112
Meadow Pipit	132	Siskin	138
Mediterranean Gull	83	Skua sp	80
Merlin	55	Skylark	108
Mistle Thrush	124	Slavonian Grebe	49
Moorhen	59	Smew	36
Mute Swan	20	Snipe	70
Nightingale	125	Snow Bunting	142
Nightjar	97	Song Thrush	123
Nuthatch	119	Sparrowhawk	51
Osprey	53	Spotted Crake	59
Oystercatcher	62	Spotted Flycatcher	124
Penduline Tit	107	Spotted Redshank	74
Peregrine	56	Spotted Sandpiper	74
Pheasant	39	Squacco Heron	44
Pied Flycatcher	128	Starling	120
Pied Wagtail	131	Stock Dove	91
Pink-footed Goose	22	Stonechat	126
Pintail	30	Storm Petrel	41
Pochard	32	Swallow	109
Pomarine Skua	79	Swift	98
Purple Sandpiper	68	Tawny Owl	95
Quail	39	Teal	28
Raven	104	Tree Pipit	132
Red Kite	49	Tree Sparrow	129
Red-breasted Merganser	36	Treecreeper	119
Red-crested Pochard	31	Tufted Duck	33
Red-legged Partridge	38	Turtle Dove	93
Red-necked Grebe	49	Turnstone	76
Red-rumped Swallow	109	Twite	140
Red-throated Diver	40	Velvet Scoter	35
Red-throated Pipit	133	Water Pipit	134
Redshank	75	Water Rail	58
Redstart	125	Waxwing	118
Redwing	123	Wheatear	127
Reed Bunting	143	Whimbrel	72
Reed Warbler	117	Whinchat	126
Ring Ouzel	122	White-fronted Goose	22
Ring-billed Gull	84	White Stork	46
Ringed Plover	63	Whitethroat	115
Ring-necked Duck	32	White Wagtail	131
Ring-necked Parakeet	93	Whooper Swan	21
Robin	124	Wigeon	27
Rock Pipit	134	Willow Warbler	112
Rook	103	Wood Sandpiper	75
Rose-coloured Starling	121	Wood Warbler	111
Ruddy Duck	38	Woodcock	71
Ruff	69	Woodlark	107
Sabine's Gull	80	Woodpigeon	92
Sand Martin	108	Wren	119
Sanderling	67	Wryneck	99
Sandwich Tern	88	Yellow-browed Warbler	113
Scandinavian Rock Pipit	134	Yellow Wagtail	129
Scaup	34	Yellowhammer	142
Sedge Warbler	116	Yellow-legged Gull	86
Shag	43		