

AVON BIRD REPORT

2013

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

October 2014

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Front cover: Peregrine photographed by Pete Blanchard.

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

Editorial

Recently the British Ornithological Union (BOU) has been updating the British List to bring it into line with the latest scientific and taxonomic research mainly related to the DNA revolution. The wildfowl and passerine groups were re-ordered a few years ago, and in 2013 the *chardiformes* – waders, gulls etc. – were treated similarly. At the present time the non-passerine land-birds are being considered, this includes moving the falcons to the top of the passerines – a very radical move. But as this is ‘work in progress’ we have decided not to make these 2014 land-bird changes now, and wait until a more settled position for this large collection has been reached. So for this Report (for 2013) we are using the list published by the BOU in 2013.

The new order of the six main parts of the *chardiform* group is now

Plovers, Sandpipers, Skuas, Auks, Terns and Gulls;

full details can be found on the BOU website (www.bou.org.uk) dated June 2013.

The individual order within each of the last four of these subgroups has not changed, but there has been a major re-ordering of the waders.

This new order begins with (for the sake of simplicity I have only included species that are recorded in the Avon area on a reasonably regular basis)

- Stone-curlew followed by the three black-and-white waders Black-winged Stilt, Avocet and Oystercatcher in that order.

The plover subgroup is next with the larger species first starting with

- Golden Plover and ending with Lapwing,

then comes the smaller *charadria*

- Little Ringed Plover to Kentish Plover, with Dotterel now put into this subgroup.

The sandpiper subgroup also starts with the larger species beginning with

- Whimbrel to Bar-tailed Godwit followed by the single species subgroup containing Turnstone.

The sizeable *calidris* subgroup (the 2013 BOU lists 22 species in this subgroup) is placed next starting with

- Knot, Ruff (now included in this subgroup), Curlew Sandpiper and Temminck's Stint (now split away from the other ‘stints’), then the main medium sized species including Sanderling and Dunlin, and ending with Little Stint and Pectoral Sandpiper.

The three phalaropes (Wilson's to Grey) are placed next followed by

- Common (and Spotted) Sandpiper,

and the *tringa* subgroup (with ten species) in their current order beginning with

- Green Sandpiper and ending with Redshank.

The last in the list includes

- Jack Snipe, Woodcock (now split away from the *Numenius* curlews) and Snipe,

with the pratincoles bringing up the rear.

A few other minor changes, mainly involving single passerine species, have been made compared with the previous list. They are as shown in the Systematic List beginning on page 19; note that an alphabetical list of all species discussed in this Report can be found on page 183. Further changes in the *chardiform* group are possible, amongst the gulls for example, but it is likely that the wader order will remain fixed for some time to come.

As usual following the current Systematic List we have a number of papers covering various aspects of Avon's avifauna. We begin with the first instalment of a survey of Avon's waders over the past 60 years, the second instalment dealing with the common species will be published next year, and a short paper on birding seventy years ago. Next comes an account by John Martin of his (and others) remarkable sighting of a *Fregetta* petrel on Severnside in November 2009 now that this record has successfully passed through the relevant national committees – this was not only the ‘first’ for the UK but also the ‘first’ for Europe as a whole, quite remarkable! This is followed by three papers reporting on unusual records at the reservoirs: a Bonaparte's Gull at CVL in April (Keith Vinicombe), a series of Osprey sightings at BL also in April (Nigel Milbourne), and a series of autumn skua sightings at CVL in late September (Keith Vinicombe). We round off this part of the Report with the Ringing Report written as usual by Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt, and the BBS Report, written for the first time by Dave Stoddard

It is as usual a pleasure to thank all those who have made this Report what it is. First and foremost I would like to thank all of our observers and photographers who spent many hundreds of hours in the field collecting data sometimes in very poor weather! – do please keep the records coming; details of how to submit records are given on page 16. Secondly, I would like to thank the authors of the various sections of the Report. These include Rupert Higgins for his as usual highly readable Introduction this year documenting the generally poor conditions

and records reported in 2013, the authors of the papers listed above, and the section editors:

- Richard Bland – larks, hirundines, Waxwing to wagtails and the weather
- Ken Hall – warblers, pipits, finches and buntings
- Rupert Higgins – divers to grebes including the pelagic seabirds, and Water Rail to Coot
- Brian Lancaster - raptors
- John Martin – skuas to gulls
- Richard Mielcarek – escapes and hybrids
- Nigel Milbourne (with some input from Mark Ponsford) – ducks
- Dave Nevitt – near passerines
- Tony Scott – swans, geese, Shelduck and game birds
- Dave Stoddard – crows to tits.

Several editors, and Andy Davis and Keith Vinicombe, helped with the process of checking details and proof-reading. Finally, I would also like to

thank all those dealing with the electronic aspects of the production, our photo editor Rich Andrews, and those who constructed the large record data files that make the editors work so much easier than it used to be in the days of paper records, these include Nick Hawkridge (for the BOC) and especially Richard Mielcarek.

In 2013 the members of the AOG executive committee which oversees the whole enterprise were as in 2012: Richard Belson (Chairman), Richard Mielcarek (Secretary), Jane Cumming (Treasurer) and the editor. If you have any comments on any aspects of this Report, please send them to a member of this committee. Members of both the Bristol Naturalists' Society and the Bristol Ornithological Club receive copies of this Report as part of their subscription; details of how to join either of these organisations are given on the inside of the front cover of this Report. Back numbers of the Report are available from the editor, prices on application.

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From the recorder

John Martin

The past year, 2013, was interesting if not classic with one new species for our recording area: an adult Bonaparte's Gull at CVL on April 27th. Long overdue, with multiple records from neighbouring counties, this delicate North American gull fed with Black-headed Gulls and Arctic Terns over the middle of the lake for just one day (see Keith Vinicombe's article on page 160). It came in the middle of a purple patch for CVL with a Woodchat Shrike and two Whiskered Terns here the same week. Otherwise, the long-staying Desert Wheatear on Severnside late in the year was a highlight for many.

We all know that, sometimes, 'good' birds simply get away. An example of this was a wader seen at New Passage on Oct.16th, 2012 by Brian Lancaster showing features of a yellowlegs and claimed as a Lesser by him. It was found Not Proven by BBRC and as both yellowlegs species are BBRC rarities, and BBRC does not consider either/or records of this pair, we were unable to consider it as a yellowlegs sp. Sometimes knowing when to let something go is an important birding skill – if in doubt let it go!

You might notice an unfamiliar site name in the accounts for various wildfowl, wader and some other species this year, that is: 'Western Distribution Park, Severn Beach'. This area, centred on ST552823, two km inland of New Pill and closer to the M49 than to the coast is part of the former levels landscape that is sadly disappearing rapidly under a mass of new distribution warehouses and the like. These and other developments in the stretch between the B4064 (the Pilning to Easter Compton road) and Avonmouth are permitted under a planning consent dating back to 1957, which consequently makes no provision for nature conservation. It is somewhat ironic therefore that an accidental wetland emerged here with a combination of hedge clearance, blocking of some of the rhines, grazing by 'traveller's' ponies and the wet autumn and winter of 2012/13 creating ideal conditions for wetland birds. There were shallow pools with muddy margins, water-filled ditches and areas of short grassland with rushy tussocks. Rupert Higgins drew my attention to it early in the year after he saw good numbers of Teal, Jack Snipe, and Snipe at the site. During April and May (despite being away for three weeks) I recorded 12 species of wader including Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Green Sandpiper and Greenshank, as well as up to 12 White Wagtails and a drake Garganey. Little Ringed Plover numbers reached at least 14, with much display, although I suspect they were mostly breeding away from the wetland itself on recently cleared areas. Several pairs of Lapwing attempted to breed and produced at least one brood of juveniles. Canada Goose, Mallard, Moorhen and Coot certainly bred while Little Grebe and perhaps Gadwall probably at least tried.

It was good while it lasted, but it had dried out by mid-summer and, sadly, is now no more.

A number of interesting publications of particular relevance for local bird recording are worth mentioning here. The 2012 Gloucestershire Bird Report includes a paper by Jon Overfield who trapped 47 Wheatears at Hock Ditch, Gloucestershire in April and May 2012. Biometrics showed that no fewer than 37 of them were 'Greenland' Wheatears, of the race *leucorhoa*, while eight were indeterminate (in the small zone of overlap in wing length) and a mere two were of the nominate race. This confirms our recent species status comments that this subspecies is a common migrant whose true numbers are unknown due to difficulties of positive identification in the field. Even so, the proportion of *leucorhoa* was surprisingly high, albeit boosted by a big catch in late April at what I would think must be the peak time for this subspecies. Greenlands were recorded throughout the trapping period (April 6th to May 4th), the two nominate on April 6th and 27th. More data on the seasonal ratios of these races would be most useful.

Redpoll taxonomy is complex and identification to one of the several forms that occur in Britain is often difficult. Up to now there was arguably better material available for the identification of the rare Arctic Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*) taxa than for distinguishing the more regular Common Redpoll (*C. flammea*), especially its continental subspecies 'Mealy Redpoll' (*C. f. flammea*), from our own Lesser Redpoll (*C. cabaret*). An excellent paper by Andy Stoddart in *British Birds* for December 2013: 'Redpolls: a review of their taxonomy, identification and British status' goes a long way towards sorting out these issues. While Lesser Redpoll, the form breeding in the vast majority of Britain, is by far our commonest redpoll taxon we do have occasional winter records of Mealy as well as an intriguing spring passage of redpolls in some years that also includes at least some Meales. Other taxa could occur and the paper is well worth close scrutiny, as are these tricky redpolls. The fact that they are becoming more frequent at *niger* seed feeders in gardens allows at least some to be scrutinised closely and photographed. We should now be able to identify many more confidently using the new paper.

The internet is increasingly a source of information on identification matters. Recent very useful progress in the identification of Siberian Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita tristis*) has been summarised in two papers on Martin Garner's splendid Birding Frontiers website; see the reference section for details. One deals with plumage and the other with vocalisations - highly recommended reading!

Finally, a paper by Keith Vinicombe (*British Birds*, April 2014) examined the author's counts of Common *Sterna hirundo* and Arctic Terns *S. paradisaea* at CVL, where identifications are likely to have been very reliable, over a 36-year period. These data are compared with counts from seawatching headlands on the south coast of England – at Portland and Dungeness – and also on the north coast of France, at Cap Griz Nez. Both species are passage migrants at CVL with the largest numbers in spring. Common Tern was the most numerous at all seasons with Arctic passage mainly in a more concentrated period in late April and early May. The author also notes that the primary dark wedge of Common Tern is least obvious in spring and urges caution in identifying this tricky pair, especially under difficult conditions, at this season. He also questions the reliability of data from some areas such as the Severn Estuary where reported Arctic Terns outnumber Common Terns in spring. This includes my local patch so I am familiar with the often tight packs of distant spring 'Commic Terns' here, dip feeding three or more kilometres out in the Estuary against the evening light and then heading up river without presenting a decent view.

While I have certainly seen Common Terns identified as Arctics here on occasion, I also wonder whether these large spring movements up the Estuary might have different origins than many of those seen at CVL. Might they be heading for the large Arctic Tern colonies on Anglesey or even cutting across England towards Northumberland, for example? In the West Midlands, where the identification of spring terns at reservoirs should be as reliable as it is at CVL, spring Arctic Terns had outnumbered Common Terns by about three to two in the decade prior to the publication of Harrison *et al.* (1982), with a strong peak between April 20th and May 9th. The reported spring (April-May) ratio for the past ten years in the Avon part of the Bristol Channel is even higher than that at roughly 2.4 Arctic for each Common, but the timing was the same. This does suggest there might have been some over-recording of Arctics in the Estuary in

spring. While good spring movements of Arctic Terns do certainly take place up the Estuary in some years, not all tight packs of Commic Terns are Arctics. Keith certainly has a point – let's be careful out there and if in doubt put them down as Commics. By the way the bird whose photograph appears on page 200 (plate 92) is actually a juvenile Arctic Tern photographed by our photo editor Rich Andrews.

As usual I need to thank the many people who have made my job a lot easier over the past year. In particular Richard (Rich) Mielcarek again took on much of the burden of record management, distribution and collation as well as chasing up a minority of 'missing' records. I would also like to thank the recorder's committee for their hard work during the year, namely Rich Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancaster, Richard Mielcarek and Harvey Rose. Dave Stoddard took over from Richard Bland in calculating statistics on breeding and wintering populations, and arrivals and departures of migrants. Richard continued to organise and report on the long running WGS. Harvey Rose's keen eye for accuracy and detail as ever significantly improved drafts of various documents. Thanks too for all those who sent in records, by whatever means, keep them coming. It would be really helpful if more observers routinely submitted notes and/or photos in support of the county rarities listed elsewhere in this Report (page 180) without having to be 'chased up'. And if you rely mainly on images please do include at least some basic notes on where and when the photo was taken, what the bird was doing and so on. Note that we will now be assessing the records as they come in so there is no need to wait until the end of the year to submit them – best to do it right away. Indeed, as suggested previously here, by using Bird Track you should be prompted for descriptions of the relevant rarities anyway and if you use the form that pops up there we get them in a good organised format. Finally, note that Lesser Spotted Woodpecker has been added to the list of description species as we are receiving no more than a handful of records even in a good year.

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Review of 2013

Rupert Higgins

This was, on the whole, a poor year for birds: recent cold winters and the exceptionally wet summer of 2012 had left many species at a low ebb. Cold spells during the early part of the year led to further population declines and the coldest spring since 1962 delayed breeding for many species. There were bright points, however. The spring passage of several passerines was excellent and the autumn passage was also better than average. A dry summer meant that water levels at the reservoirs dropped and numbers of both wildfowl and waders were high. This was also not a classic year for rarities: after a blank year for Nearctic waders in 2012 the only confirmed record in 2013 was of a fly-over American Golden Plover. Despite this there were two outstanding records: our first Bonaparte's Gull in the spring and our second Desert Wheatear in the autumn.

First Winter Period

The winter was not exceptionally cold, but there were significant cold snaps in mid January and late February with snowfalls and ice across smaller water bodies. Both months were drier than usual.

Wildfowl numbers were rather low throughout the period due to a combination of the wet weather of 2012, which resulted in high water levels at the reservoirs, and a generally mild winter in northern Europe. One of the few species to have a reasonable winter was Scaup; CVL held a small group for much of the winter and there were scattered sightings elsewhere. Smew, which in the recent past was a regular winter visitor, has become quite a rarity and only one was seen, at CVL on Feb. 2nd. Perhaps the most noteworthy wildfowl record was of 32 White-fronted Geese briefly on Jan. 4th at Northwick Warth.

In the absence of strong winds few seabirds were seen, but a Great Northern Diver was at CI-Y on Jan. 1st and there was a small movement of Kittiwake from 27th to 31st.

For the second winter running Golden Plover was reasonably numerous, as was Lapwing. The arrival of snow on Jan. 18th triggered a large movement of the latter, the biggest since 1997, accompanied by Fieldfare and Skylark. Wet conditions provided by rain in late 2012 appeared to favour Snipe: the outstanding of several good counts was 350 at Weston Moor on Jan. 31st. Both Jack Snipe and Woodcock were reasonably widespread, although not in large numbers. On the coast there were high numbers of Curlew, Turnstone and Redshank and a flock of Knot formed at CI-Y in January. Dunlin counts were average. None of the scarce waders was present in any significant quantity and there

was only one record of Spotted Redshank, at CI-Y on Jan. 1st.

Both winter periods of 2012 were good for Short-eared Owl but the birds seemed to move on around the turn of the year, because few remained into 2013. Merlin sightings were scattered, with two regular birds on the coast and perhaps three mobile birds inland. There were no Hen Harriers and Marsh Harrier was scarce.

Numbers of some resident passerines, notably Blackbird and Robin, were improved, suggesting that they enjoyed reasonable breeding success in 2012 but others, such as Goldfinch and Chaffinch, showed a slight drop. There was, however, a flock of 1,000 of the latter at Marshfield on Feb. 9th; Skylark was less numerous than usual here. Fieldfare and Redwing were not abundant but both, especially the former, featured in the cold weather movement on Jan. 18th together with Skylark. None of the migrant finches had an outstanding winter, but numbers of Brambling and Siskin were slightly above average; Lesser Redpoll, on the other hand, was scarce. There was no evidence of any significant Stonechat recovery and Water Pipit was uncommon: this was to be expected at the reservoirs, where water levels were high, but even on the coast there were few. Firecrest was slightly more frequent than in recent winters, however, and Black Redstart was present at several sites. The flock of Corn Bunting at Marshfield has become regionally important in the last few years, and 300 were seen here on Jan. 10th. Yellowhammer was less numerous here, peaking at 200 on March 12th; a flock also formed at Compton Dando, where 124 were seen in Feb. 8th.

The season was not exceptional for rare and scarce species. Waxwings from the invasion in late 2012 remained, although in declining numbers, and a Siberian Chiffchaff was found at CVL on Jan. 2nd. The same site then produced a Caspian Gull, on 11th, and a Ring-billed Gull on 15th, although neither lingered. A Richard's Pipit, at CI-Y on Jan. 12th and 17th, was probably the best bird of the period. Three Twite were found at Aust Warth on 20th and proved popular during their long stay. Two species that were widespread until recently but have now become rarities, Tree Sparrow and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, were seen at Wrington on 20th and New Passage on 26th respectively. February was even quieter, producing a Snow Bunting at CI-Y on 18th; a Hawfinch at Yate from 24th; and a Slavonian Grebe at BL from 28th.

Spring

March began with a spell of warm weather, but northerly and easterly winds brought exceptionally cold conditions until April 11th when a depression was followed by warm weather until 24th. There was also warm weather for much of May, but it was cold at the end of the month. Rainfall throughout was low.

The spring produced a good passage of sea duck, beginning with four Red-breasted Merganser at CVL on April 7th and four Velvet Scoter here on 12th. A Long-tailed Duck arrived here on 28th and the next day there were three Eider at Severn Beach. The first Garganey of the year arrived on April 3rd, but it was a poor spring for this species.

There was an exceptional passage of Osprey, with easterly winds apparently holding up any onward movement and allowing numerous people to experience excellent views of this charismatic species. The first was seen on March 21st and at least four were present at BL on 30th, with the last lingering until April 8th; there were further birds on 13th and May 3rd. The total of Ospreys at BL alone was between nine and 14. The year's first Hobby was seen on April 17th. The increase in Red Kite continued, with sightings throughout the season peaking around 20th during the period of southerly winds. The last Merlin departed on 21st, when there was a slight peak in Marsh Harrier sightings. A late Hen Harrier, the year's first, was at Weston Moor on May 19th.

Avocet numbers were better than usual in the spring, with a good passage from March 3rd to April 21st: with the species now breeding in both Gloucestershire and Somerset we should expect more sightings. Despite the cold weather a slight wader movement was evident on March 24th, when the first Little Ringed Plover and flocks of Black-tailed Godwit arrived followed by the year's first Whimbrel the next day. The last-named had a reasonable spring passage, peaking on April 28th, but numbers of several other species, notably Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruff and Sanderling, were very low.

March was poor for seabirds, although there was a small movement of Kittiwake on 15th and Little Gull on 27th, and the year's first Sandwich Tern was seen on 31st. April began with a Red-throated Diver at Middle Hope, the first Common Tern of the year and the peak of a good passage of Sandwich Terns all on 6th. The aftermath of the mid-month depression brought the year's first Black Tern on 15th, and single Great Northern Diver and Shag and an influx of Common Tern the next day, followed by the peak Arctic Tern passage on 18th. A period of easterly winds between May 8th and 11th produced the best series of seabird records of the season. Arctic Skua was not frequent, but there were high numbers of both Pomarine and Great Skuas, together with a single Storm Petrel, and a good count of Manx Shearwater.

For the second year running the spring passage of several species of passerine was much better than usual; those that appeared in notable numbers include Ring Ouzel, Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Wheatear, White Wagtail, Tree Pipit and Meadow Pipit. The warm weather of the first week of March produced a few early migrants, including Chiffchaff on 2nd, Blackcap on 6th and Sand Martin on 7th, but the cold easterly airflow that then set in delayed many arrivals. However, there were first sightings of two species that appeared in record numbers, White Wagtail and Wheatear, on 9th. The former involved a remarkable 34 birds at Middle Hope, building to 100 here on 29th; the total of records through the season was almost ten times the previous best, presumably due to birds drifting to our area in the easterly winds. This factor may also have accounted for our best ever Ring Ouzel passage, which started with six at Sand Point on 23rd, the day of the first major influx of Wheatear and the day after the first Swallow was seen. It was not until the depression of mid-April brought southerly airflows that large movements of most species occurred. This period produced the first records of Grasshopper Warbler on 12th; Lesser Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler on 13th; Swift, Reed Warbler and Pied Flycatcher on 15th; and Whitethroat and Whinchat on 16th. Mass arrivals of Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler, Redstart, Wheatear and Tree Pipit were seen over the same period. The cold weather had delayed the departure of several winter visitors and there were still 200 Redwing at BL on 15th; both this species and Fieldfare were last seen on 17th, when Goldfinch and Siskin passage peaked. Many arrivals continued to be delayed: 19th and 20th, for example, produced the first Cuckoo and Garden Warbler, and the peak passage of Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Pied Flycatcher and Whinchat. Later in the month the last Brambling was seen on 30th, a day that also saw the largest number of Yellow Wagtail records and an extraordinary 200 Wheatear at Marshfield. The first Spotted Flycatcher was not seen until May 10th, and numbers of this declining species were very poor.

The first few days of March produced records of Hawfinch, Snow Bunting and Long-eared Owl, but the month was generally quiet. The gull passage was poor, with the only noteworthy sighting an Iceland Gull at CVL on 13th. There were widely scattered sightings of Stone Curlew across southern Britain in late March and our area saw two: at Northwick Warth on 23rd and a different bird at OPS on 29th. The first half of April was also quiet, with a pair of Slavonian Grebes at BG on 9th and a Long-eared Owl at ASW on 11th reflecting the wintery weather, but the improved conditions from 16th produced a flurry of sighting coinciding with the mass arrivals of many commoner migrants. The first was an unusual spring Wryneck at Tytherington on 16th, followed by a Common Redpoll at CVL on 17th. The expected scarce wildfowl were represented by a Ring-necked Duck at CVL from 20th and a Ferruginous Duck at BG from 19th. On the latter date there was a Spoonbill at Sand Point.

A Woodchat Shrike was a good find at Widcombe Common on 21st and it stayed long enough to overlap with Whiskered Tern sightings at nearby CVL on 23rd and 25th. The same site then produced the best bird of the year, our first Bonaparte's Gull on 27th. May, by contrast, was very quiet, the best birds being a Common Redpoll at Sand Point on 3rd and a Ferruginous Duck at CVL from 13th.

Breeding

Wildfowl breeding success was mixed, with heavy predation, probably from both Great Black-backed Gull and American Mink, at CVL leading to poor success for many species. After two blank years it was a relief that seven Great Crested Grebe broods appeared here, but once again no indication was seen that Little Grebe had bred. Mute Swan and Shelduck both had poor years, but Water Rail did well at CVL and Coot enjoyed its best season here in a decade, and good success generally. The two broods of Shoveler at CVL were exceptional by recent standards, but Pochard had a poor year and Tufted Duck suffered particularly heavily from predation. Egyptian Goose bred for the first time, a pair at CVL producing six young.

Many species of raptor suffered very poor productivity in 2012 and this was reflected in poor numbers of Sparrowhawk, Little Owl and Tawny Owl, and those of Kestrel were the worst for a decade. The high numbers of Barn Owl early in the year were surprising, but this species had another very poor breeding season, as did Buzzard. On a brighter note, Hobby numbers increased and Peregrine had its best year on record.

The outstanding event for breeding waders was the accidental creation of the temporary wetland near Severnside described by the Recorder in his article (page 5), which attracted good numbers of Little Ringed Plover and Lapwing and suggested that a properly designed habitat creation scheme could boost populations of these species. Lapwing had a reasonable year by recent standards and Redshank bred for the first time since 2001, at CI-Y. Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover and Little Ringed Plover once again bred at the mouth of the Avon. A Curlew was seen at West Kington, an area where they have bred in the past, in June.

The picture amongst passerines was one of almost unrelenting gloom. A combination of recent cold weathers, 2012's exceptionally wet summer and this year's cold spring combined to depress numbers of nearly every species. Even Goldfinch, whose recent improvement seemed unrelenting, saw a drop in numbers and amongst those particularly badly affected were Goldcrest and Bullfinch. There was evidence of particularly poor productivity in, amongst others, Great Tit and Blackbird. Virtually all summer visitors were affected, perhaps because the cold spring depressed populations of their invertebrate prey. Species bucking the trend included Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Jay, Rook, Reed

Warbler and Robin: the improvement in the last-named was striking. Of those species of migrant that have caused particular concern over recent years Cuckoo and Willow Warbler suffered further declines but there was some suggestion of a slight recovery by Spotted Flycatcher.

The year was, unfortunately, notable as being the first in which no evidence was found that Nightingale bred. There were no records at all of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker over the breeding season and only one of Tree Pipit. A pair of Yellow Wagtail was present in suitable breeding habitat at West Kington in June and pairs of Stonechat were present but no breeding proof for either was seen. The CVL population of Cetti's Warbler continued to decline but it was reasonably frequent elsewhere. Nightjar appeared to have bred at two Mendip sites and Long-eared Owl nested unsuccessfully at one site. Scattered sightings of Siskin were made, without any proof of breeding. At CVL, in addition to the first breeding record of Egyptian Goose, a brood of Goldeneye was reared and a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls produced a chick, which failed to survive.

Summer

The summer was almost unrelentingly hot and dry.

The summer passage of Common Scoter was very poor, with only two records received, but a Scaup was seen on June 26th and six Red-crested Pochard were at CVL on July 13th. A Wigeon summered at CVL and as usual non-breeding wildfowl began to return over the period, with the first Teal being seen on June 18th and the first Pintail on July 8th.

A depression in mid-June was strong enough to produce a sequence of seabird records in the Estuary. Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Pomarine Skua, Arctic Skua, Arctic Tern and Kittiwake were all seen over the period 13th to 15th. After a lull there were then at least four Storm Petrel, two Arctic Skua and further records of Manx Shearwater on 22nd and 23rd, followed by two Sandwich Tern at CVL on 26th.

As usual spring wader passage continued into early June. Last dates included Common Sandpiper on 4th, Sanderling on 6th, both Ringed Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit on 9th and Grey Plover on 10th. Records of Turnstone on 23rd and Grey Plover on July 11th are hard to ascribe to either passage, but return movement of Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper began on June 20th and 23rd respectively.

There were no true rarities over the period. A Spoonbill was at Wick St Lawrence on June 23rd and perhaps the best record was of a "Channel" Wagtail at BG on 26th. A Tree Sparrow was seen at New Passage on July 9th and a very unseasonal Hawfinch was at OPS on 31st.

Autumn

Dry weather continued almost throughout the autumn, with only a few days in mid-September and the second half of October seeing any rain. Winds were also generally light, until a series of westerlies in late October.

With very little rainfall since the beginning of the year, water levels at the reservoirs fell quickly and some good flocks of wildfowl formed. Particularly notable were counts of Mute Swan and Teal at CVL, Shoveler at BL and Wigeon, Mallard, Gadwall, Pintail and Tufted Duck at both lakes. Little Grebe numbers were reasonable at CVL but continued to fall at BL; those of Moorhen and Coot were good at both. There was a better than usual influx of Bewick's Swan from Oct. 15th to 20th and small flocks stayed at both main reservoirs.

Passage of both Black Tern and Little Gull was poor, but that of Common Tern was average and numbers of Arctic Tern were high. Both of the last two species were most numerous around Aug. 23rd and 24th. Sandwich Tern was also reasonably common, reaching a peak around Sept. 6th. A north-easterly wind and low cloud on 26th combined to produce one of the most remarkable events of the autumn, when several groups of Great Skua passing through CVL totalled more than had previously been seen in the lake's history; the same day also produced four Arctic Skua here and two days later a Pomarine Skua passed through. Strengthening winds at the end of the autumn brought at least three Leach's Petrel and a Storm Petrel to Severnside on Oct. 28th.

After an excellent showing in the spring Osprey was scarce in the autumn, with only two sightings. There was an ongoing scatter of Red Kite records, but no clear evidence of any passage, and Marsh Harrier was scarce. The first Merlin was seen on the early date of Aug. 25th, and the last Hobby on a more typical Oct. 15th.

The low water levels at the reservoirs were not reflected in exceptional numbers of waders here, although small flocks of both Ruff and Green Sandpiper built up at CVL. On the other hand, Common Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank were very scarce. Numbers of Greenshank were about average, as was the total of four Wood Sandpiper. There were few clear signs of major movements, but the Ringed Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and Ruff passages all began on Aug. 18th to 19th. Later in the month the first Curlew Sandpiper appeared on 24th and the first Little Stint on 30th; numbers of both were moderate, the former peaking in the first week of September and the latter in the last. Notable amongst the commoner species were exceptional counts of both Oystercatcher and Redshank on the Axe Estuary; the latter was also numerous at CI-Y and Severnside.

The first clear signs of autumn passerine passage were provided by a Yellow Wagtail on July 6th, a peak in Sand Martin numbers around 8th and 9th, followed by migrant Willow Warblers appearing on 26th. White Wagtail followed its outstanding spring, with another record showing, which started on 16th. No other species reached the exceptional heights of the spring, but Redstart, Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit were all more numerous than usual. August was generally quiet, but there were peaks of Willow Warbler on 18th, Tree Pipit on 20th, of White Wagtail on 23rd and of Redstart and Wheatear on 25th. There was then a very large count of Yellow Wagtail at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 9th, a date which also saw the last record of Swift, with the exception of an exceptionally late individual. Chiffchaff counts were highest on 11th and the last Willow Warbler was seen the next day. Hirundine passage peaked between 15th and 18th. The end of the month saw several last dates: Reed Warbler on 21st, an early date, Whinchat on 29th and Sedge Warbler and Tree Pipit on 30th. Departure was even more obvious on Oct. 5th, when the last Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat and Whitethroat were all seen, with the last Redstart the day before. The 5th also saw the first of five Ring Ouzels, another good showing. Arrival of winter visitors was slightly late. Although a single Redwing was seen on 1st there were no further sightings until the weather broke on 11th, when there were sizeable influxes of this species, Fieldfare and Starling. Two each of Ring Ouzel and Snow Bunting were seen on the same day and the following day there was some movement of Chaffinch, Brambling, Greenfinch and Goldfinch. A late swift sp. was seen on 26th and passage of other species lingered into November, when the last Wheatear was seen on 9th, Ring Ouzel on 10th and White Wagtail on 13th.

In the largely settled weather the autumn was rather quiet in terms of rarities. The first sighting of note was of two Spotted Crake at CVL on Aug. 14th. An exceptional series of sightings of Nightjar began at Worle on 17th. At CVL the long-staying Ferruginous Duck from the spring was joined by another on 27th and the following day another two Spotted Crake were found here. There were no unusual visitors in the first half of September but the mid-month depressions brought some interest. Two more Nightjars were found on 16th and 18th, at Northwick Warth and Dundry, respectively. The winds were sufficiently strong to bring two different Grey Phalaropes to the Estuary: at New Passage on 18th and Littleton Warth on 21st. The end of the month saw a flurry of water bird sightings, none of them provoking as much excitement as they would have done a few years previously. They involved Glossy Ibis at Weston STW from 21st and at CVL from 27th; and Great White Egret over Yate on 26th, at BL from 27th and at Severnside on 28th. A Lapland Bunting was found at Northwick Warth on 28th and a Turtle Dove was at OPS on 29th, when another Nightjar was seen, at PWD. A further Nightjar arrived at RPD on a ship from Spain on Oct. 9th. Although October was poor for rarities, it produced the season's best

bird and the year's only Nearctic wader, an American Golden Plover over BL on 23rd. There was a small arrival of Bearded Tit at the end of the autumn, with two at Severn Beach, also on 23rd, four at Weston STW on 30th and another four at CVL from Nov. 13th.

Second Winter Period

November started with a spell of wet weather but turned cold and frosty in mid-month. It remained generally dry until the second half of December saw the year's only sustained spell of wet weather as a series of depressions swept across the area.

Water levels were slow to rise at the reservoirs and numbers of many wildfowl remained high but Pochard, which normally increases over this period, was scarce. Counts of Shelduck were reasonably high on the coast and a large flock of Cormorant formed at CVL. A total of five Whooper Swan moved through at the start of November and there was some evidence of an influx of Water Rail around 10th. A Long-tailed Duck was at CVL from 11th and two Pink-footed Goose began their long stay on 22nd. A total of ten Red-crested Pochard was at BL on Dec. 12th and the season's only Smew spent three days at CVL from 26th.

A Black-throated Diver allowed excellent views at CVL from Nov. 16th but was eclipsed by an exceptional series of diver records from Sand Point. These included three Great Northern, but Red-throated was by far the most numerous, totalling 47 records which included 28 on Nov. 26th. Counts of this size were unprecedented until 2012, when there was a similar sequence here in early December. Flocks of Red-throated Diver are regularly seen off the west Somerset coast, approximately 50km from Sand Point, and the sightings here may involve some of these birds making feeding movements up the Estuary.

There were no marked influxes of raptors, with just one Hen Harrier, over Sand Point on Dec. 24th, and small numbers of Merlin. Barn Owl was notably uncommon after a poor breeding season.

Although Redshank and Curlew are declining in the UK as a whole, they continue to do well in our area. There were particularly good counts of the former at CI-Y and the Axe Estuary. Turnstone were also present in good numbers and Dunlin has avoided any decline in recent winters. An unusually large flock of Black-tailed Godwit formed at Severnside from Nov. 23rd but counts of most other species, including Knot and Purple Sandpiper were low. Inland, Golden Plover, Jack Snipe and Woodcock were infrequent.

None of the migrant passerines was numerous. Numbers of Redwing were average, but Brambling, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and Fieldfare were all scarce. Low counts of Blackbird and Chaffinch, amongst others, may have been the result of the poor breeding season. Water Pipit was again uncommon, but there were signs of distinct improvements in numbers of both Firecrest and Stonechat. A roost of up to 10,000 Starling at the Pilning Wetland was noteworthy. The flock of Corn Bunting at Marshfield has grown steadily in recent winters and a record count of 500 was made on Nov. 7th.

The winter was more eventful than the autumn in terms of rare and scarce birds. A Lesser Scaup was found at CVL on Nov. 4th; what was probably the same individual then visited BL from Dec. 7th. A Dartford Warbler began its long stay at Sand Point on Nov. 10th and a Richard's Pipit flew over the same site on 12th. Two Glossy Ibis were at CVL on 26th and a Snow Bunting was a good record here on 28th; birds at Sand Point on Dec. 1st and at CI-Y on 9th were more usual. Two Twite that arrived at Aust Warth on 7th were probably returning birds; on the same day a Green-winged Teal visited Weston STW. Our first winter Scandinavian Rock Pipit, identified from rings, was at Portishead on 9th. The most widely appreciated bird of the winter was a confiding Desert Wheatear at Severn Beach from 11th to 14th. There was then an exceptionally late Swallow at New Passage on 17th and finally a Green-winged Teal, possibly the bird from Weston STW, here on 27th.

Migration Summary

Richard Bland

March 2013 was the coldest March in Bristol since 1962, with frosts and north-east winds from 10th, and these continued through to April 11th when they finally shifted to the south. It might have been anticipated that spring migration would have been seriously delayed but, remarkably, as far as the earliest records are concerned, arrival dates for almost all species were very close to the 25-year average. However, it is clear that substantial numbers only began to appear when the weather improved, and for some species this meant that passage lasted longer than usual, in some cases well into May.

Departure dates are always far more erratic than those for arrival, and the three-week hot dry spell in July, which was the hottest since 1983 and hotter than 1976, may have had a significant impact on some species. This dry spell had a very dramatic impact on many plants, and may therefore have created problems for some fledglings. Four species had departure dates more than 15 days later than average, but nine were last seen ten or more days earlier than average.

The table below lists species in their average* arrival order, where average* denotes the average for the last 25 years; see the individual species accounts for more details.

Summer visitors/migrants	First arrival	Average*	Diff.	Last departure	Average*	Diff.	Comment
Sand Martin	March 7th	March 8th	-1	Sept. 18th	Oct. 5th	-17	Early departure
Wheatear	March 9th	March 10th	-1	Nov. 9th	Nov. 7th	2	
Swallow	March 22nd	March 19th	3	Dec. 17th	Nov. 7th	40	Latest ever
White Wagtail	March 9th	March 24th	-15	Nov. 13th	Oct. 5th	39	Third latest
House Martin	April 5th	March 24th	12	Oct. 23rd	Oct. 26th	-3	
Willow Warbler	March 31st	March 24th	7	Sept. 12th	Sept. 24th	-12	
Ring Ouzel	March 23rd	March 30th	-7	Nov. 10th	Oct. 23rd	18	Third latest
Tree Pipit	April 6th	April 1st	5	Sept. 30th	Sept. 30th	0	
Little Ringed Plover	March 24th	March 30th	-6	Oct. 1st	Sept. 17th	14	
Redstart	April 3rd	April 4th	-1	Oct. 4th	Oct. 11th	-7	
Yellow Wagtail	April 9th	April 6th	3	Oct. 23rd	Oct. 10th	13	
Garganey	April 3rd	April 8th	-5	Oct. 17th	Oct. 10th	7	
Common Tern	April 6th	April 9th	-3	Sept. 26th	Sept. 28th	-2	
Sedge Warbler	April 13th	April 10th	3	Sept. 30th	Sept. 30th	0	
Whimbrel	April 10th	April 10th	0	Oct. 2nd	Oct. 12th	-10	
Pied Flycatcher	April 15th	April 11th	4	Oct. 1st	Sept. 5th	26	Sixth latest
Cuckoo	April 20th	April 13th	7	Aug. 7th	Aug. 17th	-10	
Reed Warbler	April 15th	April 12th	3	Sept. 21st	Oct. 7th	-16	
Whitethroat	April 16th	April 12th	4	Oct. 5th	Sept. 26th	9	
Grasshopper Warbler	April 12th	April 14th	-2	Sept. 5th	Sept. 18th	-13	
Garden Warbler	April 20th	April 13th	7	Oct. 5th	Sept. 24th	11	
Swift	April 15th	April 16th	-1	Sept. 9th	Sept. 16th	-7	See page 93
Hobby	April 17th	April 19th	-2	Oct. 15th	Oct. 8th	7	
Lesser Whitethroat	April 13th	April 18th	-5	Oct. 5th	Oct. 3rd	2	
Wood Warbler	April 20th	April 20th	0	NA	NA		
Whinchat	April 16th	April 20th	-4	Sept. 29th	Oct. 15th	-16	
Nightingale	April 18th	April 23rd	-5	NA	NA		
Black Tern	April 15th	April 26th	-11	Sept. 22nd	Oct. 3rd	-11	
Spotted Flycatcher	April 30th	May 2nd	-2	Sept. 15th	Sept. 28th	-13	
Winter visitors							
	Last departure			First arrival			
Jack Snipe	April 16th	April 9th	7	Sept. 28th	Oct. 2nd	-4	
Redwing	April 17th	April 9th	8	Oct. 1st	Sept. 29th	2	
Brambling	March 31st	April 15th	-15	Sept. 17th	Oct. 8th	-21	
Fieldfare	April 17th	April 16th	-1	Oct. 11th	Oct. 6th	5	

Migration first arrival and last departure dates

Weather Report for 2013

Richard Bland

Data sources

The Bristol Naturalists Society began publishing weather data in 1872 with G. F. Burder's paper on rainfall in Clifton since 1853, and this led to a search for weather data back to that date. From 1920 until its closure in 2002 the Long Ashton Research Station provided this data, and since then I have used the *Times* newspaper daily report for Bristol for temperature readings, and since 2000 my own gauge for rainfall. There is an excellent website at www.afour.demon.co.uk which has also traced records from other sources back to 1853, and I have used this to fill in some gaps. A long series of records is crucial to any understanding of the

continuous processes of climate change, which is normally defined as the average of the previous thirty years. I use the term 'long-term average' to mean the average back to 1853. The term 'since records began' is often used without a clear date reference, this can create confusion. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature as their basic unit, but many sources only quote the daily maxima and so I have used this figure throughout.

The past year, 2013, had the lowest March temperature since 1962, the hottest July and the hottest summer since 1983, and just over half the rainfall of 2012.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Av. max °C	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.5	13.7	14.6	14.2	15.5	14.7	14.8
Ten-year av. °C	14.2	14.2	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.5	14.5
Rainfall mm	945	896	952	1107	1150	986	747	847	1420	799
Ten-year av. mm	954	956	974	997	1005	993	943	945	981	983

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 in 2013

Winter (December 2012 to February 2013) The average temperature was 7.7°C, close to both the long-term and the ten-year averages. Rainfall average was 101mm per month, December being very wet and February very dry. There were 40 frost nights (October to April), the last on April 7th, 22 of them in March and April, ensuring a very cold late spring. Cold snaps occurred from Jan. 12th to 25th, from Feb. 21st to March 3rd, and from March 21st to April 7th, there were eight days of lying snow in January, and ponds were frozen for a total of 13 days up to the end of February.

Spring (March to May) Average temperature was 12.3°C, the coldest since 1996, caused by the coldest March since 1962. Rainfall at 52mm per month was below the long-term average.

Summer (June to August) Average temperature at 22.9°C was the warmest since 1983 mainly as the result of a three-week spell of hot dry weather in July. Rainfall at 37mm per month was the driest since 1995.

Autumn (September to November) Average temperature at 15.7°C was normal, and rainfall at 91mm per month was also normal.

Seasonal Comparisons

To put the 2013 seasonal averages into perspective Table 2 below shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, the average since 1853, and the difference between 2013 and the long-term average. The most obvious feature is the fact that the second half of 2013 was much warmer than normal.

	2013	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Difference
Winter	7.7°	1917 - 2.5°	1920 - 10.6°	7.5°	0.2°
Spring	12.3°	1887 - 10.4°	1893 - 16.6°	13.0°	-0.7°
Summer	22.9°	1883 - 18.0°	1976 - 23.9°	20.2°	2.7°
Autumn	15.7°	1915 - 10.6°	1959 - 16.8°	14.0°	1.7°
Annual	14.8°	1892 - 12.1°	1921 - 15.6°	13.7°	1.1°

Table 2 – The 2013 seasonal average temperature compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853

Table 3 overleaf gives the same detail for rain. Winter rainfall was heavily influenced by the December figure, as both January and February were dry months, as was the summer as a whole.

	2013	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Difference
Winter	101	1964 - 21	1995 - 154	79	22
Spring	52	1893 - 17	1981 - 107	60	-8
Summer	37	1995 - 11	2012 - 149	74	-37
Autumn	91	1978 - 26	1935 - 173	87	4
Annual	67	1864 - 49	2012 - 118	75	-11

Table 3 – Average monthly rainfall in *mm* for each season in 2013, and maximum, minimum, long-term average (since 1853), and difference between 2013 and the long-term average

The monthly percentage deviations in 2013 from the long-term average are as follows:

Temperature: July and December were well above average, and March was well below.

Rainfall: February, April, June and August were very dry, while October was wetter than average.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temp	2	-6	-24	1	1	4	26	11	9	19	2	30
Rain	15	-65	-7	-42	8	-56	-18	-71	-39	67	-10	45

Table 4 – Monthly percentage deviations in 2013 from the norm

Monthly Summary for 2013

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Av.
Temp °C	7.3	7.1	17.6	12.8	16.5	20.1	26.2	22.5	19.7	16.7	10.4	10.2	14.8
Rain mm	97	22	56	33	67	27	59	25	48	159	78	128	66

Table 5 – The 2013 monthly average temperatures and total rainfall

January The first week was warm with SW winds and overcast skies, but on 10th the wind turned east and then north, temperatures fell and frost brought ice on 16th and 10cms of snow on 18th, which remained to 25th with a maximum of 0°C on 20th. Winds turned southerly on 16th and 14°C was reached on 29th, bringing the first significant rain in a dry month.

February The month began with NW winds, sunny days and cool temperatures. A warm spell from 14th to 19th, with bright sunshine and southerly winds, gave way to cold SE and then NE winds around a Baltic high, and a return to frosty nights and cold days with a maximum of 3°C for the rest of the month. It was very dry throughout.

March A warm start, with 17°C recorded on 5th, was rapidly followed by cold easterly winds around a Greenland high, and frosts from 10th to 14th brought both some bright sunshine and ice to ponds. There was a brief respite on 15th, with the only decent rainfall of the month, cold days returned, with a maximum of 1°C on 24th, and ice on ponds for the rest of the month. It was the coldest March since 1962, and only just warmer than 1916, the coldest on record since 1853.

April For the first week easterly winds persisted with night-time frosts, but brilliant sunshine raised the daily maximum to 12°C on 6th. At last on 11th the wind shifted south, and a proper depression, effectively the first of the year, swept through. Temperatures reached 16°C on 16th, but it remained very dry and sunny with southerly winds dominating from 14th to 24th giving an opportunity for migrants to pass through in good numbers.

May The first week was dominated by SW winds, clear skies with 13.6 hours of sunshine on 1st, high temperatures reaching 25°C on 7th. There was a cooler spell from 9th to 16th, the temperature only reaching 10°C on 14th, but it remained warm and dry for the rest of the month, with more northerly winds around an Atlantic high, although it was very cool during the day on 23rd, 24th and 28th.

June The first nine days were dominated by high pressure, NE winds, up to 15 hours of sunshine per day, and temperatures up to 23°C; it was also completely dry. From 10th to 16th SW winds brought a little rain, and slightly lower temperatures, down to a maximum of 16°C, and on 19th the monthly peak of 27°C was reached. Then high pressure took over from 25th dominating the next four weeks. Only 25mm of rain fell in the month.

July The first three weeks were dominated by high pressure, clear skies, and temperatures that reached 32°C on 22nd. Winds were light, there was no rain, grass turned pale brown, and half of the plants on the Bristol Downs ceased flowering. It was the hottest July since 1983. On 23rd low pressure took over, rain fell, and temperatures dipped a little under the influence of SW winds.

August The highest temperature of the month was 31°C on 1st, and the daily maxima only fell below 20°C twice. There was very little rain, normal sunshine, and from 11th high pressure to the east kept winds light.

September The first 12 days were hot and sunny but temperatures fell below 20°C on 13th, and a decent 17mm of rain fell. It was warmer again from 19th to 25th, but overcast, and the last few days were dominated by easterly winds. By this point in

the year total rainfall was 140mm, or two month's worth, below normal.

October For the first week the temperature remained around 20°C, but then fell to about 17°C for the rest of the month. The long sequence of dry days that had set in since January, creating the situation where only one day in four saw any rain, ended on 12th, and westerly winds became dominant around a series of Atlantic lows.

November The first week was warm (up to 15°C) and wet, but temperatures fell to 8°C, the coldest since April 4th, and the first frost came on 19th, with a daily maximum of 7°C. High pressure with north winds dominated for the last two weeks, and the month was effectively dry from 11th. Autumn was almost 2°C warmer than average.

December The first ten days were dry, dull and warm, and the first rain did not come until 15th and

16th when temperatures reached 14°C for the last time. The next two weeks saw a series of intense depressions sweep across, bringing strong SW winds, heavy rain, and flooding to some parts over the Christmas week, although our area including Bristol missed the worst of both the wind and the rain. By the end of the year, despite the cold spring, the annual average temperature was the same as in 2012.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for the extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the extreme events of 2013 to be put in perspective. There seems to be no pattern in these figures. It is also interesting to note that, contrary to common perception, two days in every three have no rain at all.

		2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Hottest day	°C	28	30	35	27	28	28	26	29	30	32
Coldest day	°C	3	0	0	2	2	-1	-5	1	1	0
Wettest day	mm	45	47	39	40	35	36	36	40	72	33
Sunniest day	hrs	13.9	14.8	14.7	14.1	14.9	14.7	15.6	14.7	15	15
Longest dry period	days	19	14	22	24	16	20	24	23	17	20
Longest wet period	days	14	7	11	8	8	8	7	5	15	9
Frost	nights	30	32	33	25	44	42	76	22	41	67
Snow	days	6	2	2	2	1	19	33	0	1	8
Storms		0	1	3	6	4	1	1	1	1	1
Hotter than 25°C	days	13	14	27	1	7	5	3	14	19	32
Colder than 5°C	days	15	26	39	18	14	37	60	13	16	29
More than 10hr sun	days	19	38	36	45	29	49	46	44	38	44
No sun	days	90	89	107	99	95	95	106	104	93	95
No rain	days	231	248	234	238	228	265	269	253	205	238

Table 6 – Weather extremes for the past decade

A note on climate

Climate is defined as the normal weather measurements over a period of time, usually thirty years. Because it is an average it changes only slightly year by year. Weather varies much more between years than climate does in centuries, and birds, like all other wildlife, respond to the changing conditions they experience. Data gathered over the past decade on the Bristol Downs suggests that, as a general rule, a one-degree change in average temperature will lead to a week's change in the

average timing of events for both plants and birds, although individual species may respond much more than this. The changes since the last ice age have led to a continual transition in the wildlife that can survive here, and this process continues. Seasonal change, such as the very cold spring in 2013, can have a much more dramatic short-term effect on bird populations, and I show in the table below how the climate figures for each season for the past decade have altered. They show that since 2004 spring is warming rapidly, summer is becoming wetter, but the other seasons have remained stable.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Winter °C	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.9
Spring °C	12.9	13.0	13.1	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.3	13.3	13.3	13.5
Summer °C	20.3	20.3	20.3	20.2	20.2	20.3	20.3	20.4	20.4	20.5
Autumn °C	14.2	14.3	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.5
Winter mm	87	86	87	89	88	88	86	87	87	87
Spring mm	65	65	67	68	69	68	67	64	65	63
Summer mm	66	66	67	68	69	70	70	72	74	74
Autumn mm	91	92	91	91	93	95	95	93	94	94

Table 7 – Climate data for the past decade

Submission of Records

All records are welcome. For unusual or rare species and subspecies, including out of season migrants, see page 180. For the uncommon and scarce species we are keen to receive details of all sightings and, where available, any supplementary information. Reports of the common species are also welcome with emphasis on the aspects listed in the second paragraph below.

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;
- Timed counts of passage or cold-weather movements;
- 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 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.

Guide to the Systematic List

The County of Avon, as an administrative unit, ceased to exist on April 1st, 1996. It was replaced by four 'unitary authorities' - South Gloucestershire (SG), Bristol (BR), Bath and North-east Somerset (BA), and North Somerset (NS). The area covered by these four administrative units corresponds almost exactly to the old County of Avon, and the area covered by this Report is also unaltered - 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 River Avon, and 'South Avon, SA' corresponds to BA, NS and BR south of the river.

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 2013. The nomenclature follows the BOU on their website at www.bou.org.uk using the "British (English) Vernacular Name" and "Scientific Name" lists.

Each species heading includes, in *italics*, a brief description of the local status using the following definitions.

Status	Level of abundance	Breeding Numbers
Very rare	Five or fewer records in the Avon area	
Rare	Less than annual; several years pass between sightings	As per level of abundance
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 occur in all suitable habitats	10000 +

For locally very scarce species the heading shows two figures, the number of new individuals recorded in 2013 and the number of individuals recorded between 1983, the first year AOG was responsible for producing the Report, and 2012. If descriptions were first required for the species subsequent to 1983, the second figure will be the number of accepted individuals since the later date. Where the Report has stated an individual is likely to have been the same as that seen in a previous year, it has not been counted for a second time. For description species we normally give the names of the observers who found the bird or submitted descriptions and/or photographs.

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 mainly 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 only irregularly, sometimes in large numbers (mainly Waxwing).

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

Average count – used to monitor waders. It is the average of the monthly maxima for the season in question.

Bird survey data used

The data from a number of regular bird surveys, both local and national, have been used in compiling the species accounts. These surveys use different techniques, operate at different times of the year, and vary in the information recorded, but they all provide information on population change, especially for the common species.

BBS - the **BTO Breeding Bird Survey** In 2013 a total of 176 squares was surveyed in the Avon area, excluding those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset, and 53,286 birds of 110 species were recorded. Changes from year to year (e.g. 2012-13) are calculated by comparing the best of the two counts in each year in those squares that were surveyed in consecutive years by the same observer and the result is expressed as a percentage change figure. These changes may be combined together to determine the change over longer periods (for example 2004-13). Most accounts provide, for the species most frequently recorded, the annual percentage change for each of the past ten years together with the percentage changes since 1994 and since 2003. In some cases this is not given if the population is stable and very little change was noted since 2012. Although the BBS gives a reliable measure of the changes for many of the common species of the town and the general countryside, including many of the farmland species which have fared so poorly over the past twenty years, the results should be used with caution; changes of a few per cent are not likely to reflect any really significant change while changes of 10% or more almost certainly are significant. Likewise changes over longer periods are more prone to distortion than those for shorter ones, but they should still provide evidence of significant increases or decreases. For further details see the full report on page 175, although it should be noted that the figures in this report are based upon the full BTO Avon Region, part of which lies in Somerset.

CABS - the **Clifton Area Bird Survey** This is a weekly survey of ST 5673 which began in 1994 and uses the BBS method. It shows the seasonal patterns of change in the square, and enables this to be measured on an annual basis. In 2013 there were 48 (49) walks totalling 56 (57) hours and 5400 (6300) birds of 41 (42) species were counted at an overall rate of 96 (110) per hour (2012 figures in brackets). For common species accounts the percentage change in this data from the previous year is displayed.

WGS - the **Winter Garden Survey** This survey began in the 1973/4 winter and involves counts using gardens between October and March. In 2012/13 a total of 32 (31) gardens participated, there were 740 (660) weeks of observations and 33,200 (25,444) birds of 52 (53) species were counted (2011/12 figures in brackets). Percentage changes in WGS numbers present are displayed in the status chart of the relevant species account.

WeBS - the **Wetland Bird Survey** run by the BTO, RSPB, JNCC and WWT This is a national project which monitors all waterbirds in the UK and provides the principal data on which the conservation of these species and their wetland habitats are based. Locally, it covers the whole of the Severn shore, the major reservoirs and many of the minor local waters. The species accounts incorporate all available WeBS data and, for those waterbirds whose Avon area populations are of International or National Importance, their WeBS status.

Red and Amber List species

It was felt desirable to include some indication of the national conservation status of the species that occurred in the Avon area in 2013. Hence for all species listed in this Report, except for those that are locally or nationally rare (that is require a description), the species header gives a classification of its *national* conservation concern - Red for serious concern, and Amber for less serious concern, with a figure defined below indicating the reason for this concern. The lack of a Red or Amber entry in the species header implies that the species is of Green conservation concern, that is its current status is stable with no major anxiety. Further details and evidence about this classification can be found in the June 2009 edition of British Birds.

Species are Red Listed for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Listed by BirdLife International as Globally Threatened.
2. A severe decline in the UK between 1800 and 1995, without substantial recovery.
3. A decline in either the UK breeding or non-breeding population of more than 50%.
4. A decline in the UK breeding range of 50+% as measured by the number of occupied ten *km* squares.

Species are Amber Listed for one or more of the following reasons:

1. A species of European Conservation Concern.
2. A previously Red listed species for a historical decline but with a substantial recent recovery.
3. A decline in either the UK breeding or non-breeding population of more than 25%.
4. A decline in the UK breeding range of more than 25%.
5. The UK breeding population has less than 300 pairs, or the non-breeding population is less than 900.
6. At least 50% of the UK population is found at ten or fewer sites.
7. At least 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

The Systematic List

The following abbreviations are used:

ASW	Avonmouth Sewage Treatment Works and surrounding areas
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee. This is used to mean the committee has accepted the record or records mentioned
BG	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
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
BL	Blagdon Lake
CI-Y	Severn shore and its 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 its surrounding areas
PWD	Portbury Wharf and Dock, including Portbury Wharf NR, St George's Wharf with Chapel Pill, Royal Portbury Dock and the bank of the R. Avon north of the Avon bridge
RBBP	Rare Birds Breeding Panel. This is used to mean that details of a breeding record have been passed to this panel, which collects data on the rarer species breeding in the UK.
RR	This is used to indicate that a recovery is mentioned in the Ringing Report on page 167.
Severnside	Severn shore and its environs between Aust Warth and Chittingen Warth inclusive
Weston STW	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and surrounding areas

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

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

[RR]

Fairly common resident; most winter inland on the North Somerset moors. Summer moulting flocks occur mainly at CVL.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 24th in the list of sites of National Importance in 2012/13.

There was a small decrease from 2012 in the number of sites where this species was recorded. Only two reports, each of nine in February and August, were received for Bristol City Docks. Regular feeding here has ceased and it appears that the flock has moved onto the North Somerset moors. The CVL moult count remained high. Data for both of these sites for the past ten years is tabulated below.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
98	70	80	85	72	85	80	64	22	11
Maximum umbers wintering in Bristol City Docks (ten-year average = 66)									
2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
126	117	115	98	107	115	125	187	140	145
Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average = 127)									

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 23 squares, which represented 13.1% of those surveyed. The total counted during the two visits was 128.

There were records from 64 sites, which compares with 60 in 2009, 74 in 2010, 68 in 2011 and 70 in 2012. Apart from the eleven tabulated sites most of the remaining 53 held fewer than five. The table below shows the monthly maxima at the main regularly counted sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eastville Park	13	14	12	14	2	2			7	6	9	13
Keynsham, R.Avon	6	9	4	2	2	2			1	5	7	4
Portishead Lake		5	2		2	2				2	4	5
PWD	6	2	2	2	2	8	8	10	22	16	9	P
CI-Y	4	3	37	3	3	3		2	1	2	42	5
Axe Est./Weston STW	39	24	35	5	10	9	5	12	38	18	68	59
Kenn Moor	76	66	72	73							23	32
Backwell Lake	37	25	27	25	8	12	15	8	8	13	35	22
BG		1	5	2	6	2	10	6	2	2	10	5
CVL	40	34	42	50	61	110	140	145	135	115	105	65
BL	9	7	7	7	21	29	33	27	39	56	25	14

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Mute Swan continued

Other not tabulated counts over 20 included the following, some or all may have involved birds from Kenn Moor:

Claverton Drove – 49 on Jan. 26th and 46 on April 7th;

Kingston Seymour - 25 on Jan. 6th and 9th, 39 on 25th and 38 on April 2nd;

Hewish area – 30 on Jan. 6th, March 3rd and 10th, 35 on 11th rising to a maximum of 50 by 23rd, 40 on April 2nd and 35 on 13th;

Uphill Hospital grounds - 70 on Feb. 24th.

Breeding Another poor year (see table below) with only 13 successful broods recorded. Breeding was confirmed at the following sites: Orchard Pools, Severn Beach (pair with seven cygnets), Backwell Lake (pair with six cygnets). Prior Park, Bath (pair with four cygnets), Chelwood (pair with five cygnets), CVL (five broods with 17 cygnets, of which 14 fledged), BL (two pairs with a total of eleven cygnets) and Weston STW where three pairs nested resulting in two broods, of three and four.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
116	128	144	121	123	121	88	120	124+	44	57

Number of cygnets per year (ten-year average = 107)

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

[Amber 1, 6, 7]

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in the list of sites of International Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2012/13.

A fourth consecutive good year but nearly all of the records were noted in the second winter period.

First winter period

Weston STW – three on Feb.15th;

BL – two were present on Jan.13th and 14th.

Second winter period

OPS - four on Nov.17th and six on 24th;

Northwick Warth - a flock of seven adults was noted on Oct. 20th with seven again on Nov. 23rd including five adults;

CVL - two on Oct.17th had increased to seven by 23rd, they remained until Nov. 8th. There were four on 10th but this increased to 12 on 12th, one of which was identified as Pazazzo, a 12 year-old first seen at Slimbridge in 2003;

BL – from Oct.15th to Nov.14th two were present, they were joined by a further eight on 15th. These ten had reduced to seven by 21st, when they were last seen. Two of the adults present from 2012 were identified as Willows and Jonitor who arrived as adults in Slimbridge in 2011 (sexes unknown).

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (4, 49)

Very scarce winter visitor.

Descriptions required.

This species was recorded for its seventh consecutive winter. Counts for the last 20 years are tabulated below and the details for 2013 are as follows:

New Passage – an adult flew over to N, calling, at 09.55 on Nov. 3rd (B Lancaster, J P Martin, V Savery). It seemed to drop down on the Welsh side of the Estuary having earlier been reported flying past both Anchor Head and Severn Beach;

Sand Point – three adults flew downriver at 08.55 on Nov. 4th (P A Bowyer), eventually being lost behind Steep Holm.

2003/04	04/05	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
0	2	2	0	1	8	3+	3	3	3+

Numbers seen in the last ten winters

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus* (2,10)

Rare winter visitor.

Descriptions required.

Two adults found at CVL on Nov. 22nd (P Black *et al.*) remained here until Dec. 28th when they moved to BL (N R Milbourne) and stayed into 2014.

In the last 30 years there are records from February/May 1986 (one at BL, CVL and BG), November 1988 (a sick bird caught by a dog at Littleton Warth), February/March 1996 (one on Severnside) March 1996 (one at CVL), winter 1999/2000 (one at CVL and BL), May/June 2002 (one at BL and CVL) and winter 2011/12 (a family party of four at BL and CVL).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in the list of sites of National Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2012/13.

A slightly better year: 32 briefly joined the Canada Geese flock at Northwick Warth on Jan. 4th before flying on over PWD to the south-west; one was on Northwick Warth again on 5th. Also two were here on Nov. 21st.

The table below shows the total number of individuals recorded each of the last winters.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
2	7+	28	8	3	8	31	22	8	35

Numbers each winter

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

[Amber 6, 7]

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.

Average numbers were recorded with a maximum count of seven at the Axe Estuary on Nov.10th. The table below summarises the counts during the last decade.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Sites	6	5	9	11	7	12	10	18	20	17
No. individuals	16	11	32	74	33	27	80	102	49	58+

Sites and numbers each year

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

Northwick Warth / New Passage – April 7th and 13th, and Dec. 28th;

Severn Beach (Western Distribution Park site) - March 19th, two on April 16th, 19th and 24th, May 2nd and 12th.

PWD – Jan. 20th, Feb. 24th, March 30th and 31st, April 8th, 10th, 12th, 15th, 19th, 24th and 25th, and Aug. 22nd;

Portishead Lake – Jan. 4th, 6th, 7th, 11th and 17th, Feb. 5th, 13th and 24th, March 4th, 11th and 23rd, April 3rd and 9th, June 4th and 6th, Aug. 19th, Oct. 28th, Nov. 4th and 24th, and Dec. 20th;

CI-Y – Feb.12th, three on March 12th and one on April 8th;

Sand Point - Sept. 2nd;

Anchor Head – two moving upriver on May 25th;

Axe Estuary - seven on Nov.10th;

Charfield - unspecified numbers noted on Jan. 13th and Dec. 1st;

Chipping Sodbury Common – two on April 14th and 21st;

Stoke Park Estate - April 14th;

Eastville Park - May 17th;

Saltford - one overhead on March 5th and two over on 28th;

CVL – two on Feb.14th, one on 15th and 28th, April 20th, and Nov. 7th, 8th and 12th;

BL – Feb. 17th to 26th, and Nov. 13th and 17th.

GREATER 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 BL, but CVL saw a significant fall in the first winter period of 2013 as compared with the end of 2012. The numbers moulting at CVL were down again for the second successive year and are now below the long term average, see tables below. Also 2013 saw the occurrence of a regular flock at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands, counts of which appear in the table of regularly counted sites overleaf.

Greater Canada Goose continued

	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
CVL	90	72	61	51	65	84	229	110	206	167
BL	401	278	124	192	241	315	221	348	404	355

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (Sept. to March), ten-year average = 113 (CVL), 288 (BL)

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
	730	572	507	415	295	385	440	500	417	318

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average = 458)

The total of the number of sites where the species was recorded fell from last year's high of 55 to 51.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
	31	29	26	28	53	48	50	48	55	51

Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average = 42)

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 14 squares, which represented 8% of those surveyed. The total counted was during the two visits was 128.

Once again one with an orange neck collar marked 'DL' was noted at BL, on Jan. 8th and several subsequent dates until 28th. It had been marked at Cotswold Water Park on July 4th, 2012 as part of an ongoing study. This or another with an orange neck collar was subsequently seen at Swineford on Feb.14th and Bathampton Meadows on 20th.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/ Littleton Warth	38		4	5	11	9	1	40	1	70	19	26
Northwick Warth	12	13	17	15	6	20	1	23	72	76	45	44
PWD	10	16	13	12	26	40	60	48				11
CI-Y	85	30	42	53	7	5	19	170	140	130	67	100
Backwell Lake	74	14	15	7	9	10	7		150	11	1	20
R. Avon, Keynsham	25	24	21	7		3					20	23
CVL	1	105	75	55	30	165	345	290	121	80	65	120
BL	305	210	59	4	33	86	72	307	300	252	347	383
Weston STW	66	77	39	17	14		9	95	104		51	101

.Monthly maxima at the main sites

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

Aust Warth - 45 on Dec. 2nd;

Severn Beach - 28 on June 1st, 60 on Sept. 22nd, 75 on Oct. 13th, 36 on Nov. 10th, and 30 on Dec. 7th;

Portishead Lake - 27 on Feb. 7th;

Axe Estuary – 42 on Dec. 7th;

Saltford – 36 on Jan. 12th; and 42 on Sept 29th;

Wrighton - 44 on Sept. 21st and 40 on 22nd;

Kenn Moor – 58 on Jan 18th, 64 on 21st, 66 on Aug. 19th, 88 on Sept. 4th, 135 on 11th, and 160 on 19th.

Breeding The number of confirmed sites was again low with breeding was reported from the following six: Severn Beach (Western Distribution Park, two pairs with five and six goslings), PWD (three broods), Stockwood (pair with three goslings), Backwell Lake (pair with four goslings), CVL (five broods, 16 young), and BL (pair with two goslings).

The table below summarises the data for the last decade; observers are encouraged to report all breeding attempts. (Eds.).

	2004	04	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Confirmed sites	5	6	8	3	10	12	6	7	4	6
Nests/broods	9	9	14+	7	19+	18+	12	18	10	13
Young	41	35	39	16+	72	73	52	49	40	36+

Breeding details

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

[Amber 6]

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.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in the list of 'naturalised' sites in 2012/13.

Numbers were slightly down on those recorded in 2012 and with no records away from CVL or BL. The feral flock that commutes between these sites has reduced slightly, with a maximum of 17 in 2013 as shown in the table below.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
14	12	11	11	17	19	20	23	23	17

Maximum count from CVL or BL

The second table summarises the data from the past decade.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Sites	0	1	4	0	1	2	6	4	3	0
Numbers	0	1	8	0	1	2	250	4	6	0

Sightings away from CVL and BL

The third table shows the distribution of records through the year at the two sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL	11	14	15	11	4	13	10	13	17	15		16
BL	14	15	6					8	16	17	16	16

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding Noted only at CVL with three broods (six young, of which four fledged). Breeding was first noted here in 1998 and has been attempted in each year since then as shown in the table below.

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Pairs	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	3
Goslings	3	0	0	6	1	7	0	3	0	5	6	5	4	1	2	6
Fledged	0	0	0	6	0	7	0	3	0	0	6	1	2	1	0	4

Breeding at CVL since 1998

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

[Amber 1, 6, 7]

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

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

Numbers of bird-days for the last decade are given in the table below and show that 2012/13 was similar to 2011/12, both being below the ten-year average.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
79	228	127	147	38	226	144	24	88	98

Bird-days October-March (ten year average 120)

Actual counts were of low numbers recorded in both winter periods, the largest being seven at CI-Y in January. The records are given below.

First winter period

Severn Beach – three on April 6th;

CI-Y - two on Jan.16th, three on Jan.17th and seven on Feb. 24th.

Second winter period

CI-Y – three on Oct.16th.

Anchor Head - three on Nov. 9th.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Very scarce visitor, the majority of the local records are now thought likely to relate to the expanding UK feral populations.

Successful breeding at CVL was a first record for this species at this site and in Avon as a whole. One was reported at CVL from January to April 11th when it was joined by another. One or two were seen on various dates throughout the rest of the month and all of May when a brood of six appeared on 30th.

One was present on Northwick Warth for one day; this was the first record for Severnside. The table below gives the number of adults seen during the past 20 years. It is probable that the records at Portishead Lake, BG and BL in December involved birds from CVL, also the spring coastal records probably all refer to the same adult that finally arrived at CVL on April 11th; hence the range of figures given in the table below.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	1*	0	1	1	0	0	1	5+	2	6-11

Numbers each year (* treated as escapes)

The records for all sites are given below.

Northwick Warth - one on March 1st;

Severn Beach - one on Dec.14th;

Portishead Lake - one present from March 3rd to April 3rd, five on Oct. 6th, and four from Dec. 8th to 31st;

Battery Point - one on March 19th;

Weston STW - one flew south on March 31st;

BG - four juveniles on Dec. 7th;

CVL - as above but with the pair and their five young being seen until Oct. 4th, family of six noted until Dec. 4th, four on Dec. 5th and 6th and two until 28th;

BL - an adult and four juveniles on Oct. 2nd.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

[Amber 6, 7]

Fairly common resident; most migrate to moult. Uncommon inland (except at CVL). Uncommon breeder – has declined in the last five decades.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in the list of sites of International Importance for 2012/13.

Again good numbers wintered but it was a very poor breeding season.

First winter period There was an increase in the winter counts north of the Avon with 67 in February and 140 in March (at Severnside on 10th) bringing numbers above the ten-year winter average of 97; but note that the March count probably included some spring migrants. South of the Avon the highest count was 490 at Sand Bay on Feb.12th, below the ten-year average of 531. See tables below.

	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
North of R. Avon	116	90	104	117	130	90	40	80	140	67
South of R. Avon	470	360	650	415	630	500	479	862	490	540

Highest winter count at a single site (Oct. – Feb.). N. of Avon ten year average = 97. S. of Avon ten year average = 531.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
152	203	105	147	120	90	142	262	308	278

Winter records at CI-Y - Average of the three highest counts (October – February). Ten year average = 180

Breeding The local BBS survey recorded this species in nine squares, 5.1% of those surveyed. The total counted during the two visits was 128. Generally it was a poor year, broods noted at the coast were as follows:

Shepperdine - one of ten;

OPS - one of two and another of seven but with broods / crèches of ten and twelve on June 22nd;

Littleton Warth - one brood of four;

Aust - one brood of three;

Northwick Warth - the first brood of three on June 18th, then one of nine on 21st and another of eight on 30th;

Portbury Wharf - one brood of nine;

CI-Y coast - two broods at least with a total of 34 young;

Weston STW – two broods, of four and nine.

Breeding was also reported inland at CVL with three broods on Herriott's Pool (17 young, of which only two fledged, the rest were thought to have been predated).

The table below shows the number of young fledged in the Avon area in the last decade.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
127	144	123	162	116	181	163	186	78	163	108

Breeding - Total number of young (Average of last ten years is 142)

Second winter period Very low numbers were recorded north of the Avon with a maximum count of 28 at Severn Beach / Northwick Warth on Dec. 27th, but good numbers were noted to the south, the highest count being 450+ at the Axe Estuary on Nov. 11th.

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	25	40	35	50	44	17	4	4	2	1	20	5
Littleton Warth	47	34	47	25		52					7	15
Severnside	60	67	143	90	70	62	90	10	9	3	20	28
CI-Y	200	195	230	185	170	110	50	45	280	350	175	195
Sand Bay		87	160	63	8	2	5		21	180	240	365
Axe Est.	58	40	83	24		28	19	11	350	140	450+	91
Weston STW	18	14	22	26	26	27	12	5	1	7	1	4
CVL	22	25	13	30	43	42	7	2		3	9	16

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Recorded at a further 29 sites (17 in 2008, 12 in 2009, 20 in 2010, 18 in 2011 and 21 in 2012).

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.

The number of records reported compared favourably with the upturn of recent years, but unlike the last two seasons, no breeding was reported. The table summarises the past two decades, the average is 17 per year.

The records are as follows:

Falfield (Heneage Court) – five males and four females on March 9th;

Cromhall (Tortworth Park Lake) - two males and seven females on Feb. 3rd;

Hawkesbury (Lower Woods) – a pair on April 1st, two on the 18th and four on the 20th;

Yate – a drake on March 18th;

Tormarton – a female on April 15th;

Dodington Park – four on March 30th;

Walton-in-Gordano – a single on April 16th;

Bitton (Field Grove Farm) – one on Jan. 26th;

Saltford – a drake on numerous dates from July 19th to Nov. 15th.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
10	17	11	1	1	5	13	13	2	5	3	6	22	19	20	42	39	32	45	31

Total number of individuals each year

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

[RBBP] [Amber 6, 7]

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

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 15th site of National Importance, after four of International Importance, in 2012/13.

Status table.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	744	169	113	342
2011/12	860	728	129	572
2012/13	617	72	73	254

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

Wigeon continued

It is clear that the Estuary is the most important site for this species in the Avon area, particularly Severnside, but the winter of 2012/13 saw another fall in numbers following hard on the heels of last year's drop; see status table above. This may just reflect the fact that they did not arrive due to freezing conditions elsewhere, but the State of the UK's Birds 2012 Report suggests there has been a significant *increase* in the number wintering in lowland England since 1983/84. So, local birders could usefully be looking for reasons why Avon is bucking the trend because the species is Amber listed. Peak counts at the two major inland sites were made during the autumn passage period from late September into November, but few stayed in either the first or second winter periods, suggesting a general decline at both sites. The lakes are less favoured than a decade or so ago as they are now more 'reed-fringed' rather than 'grass-fringed', also increased disturbance may affect counts.

A single individual noted on May 26th at BG was unusual here. Also a drake was at CVL throughout May, with two adult males from May 31st throughout June, and also a female was seen from Stratford Hide on June 28th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	July	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	300	75	197	162			2	20	175	200	243
Littleton Warth	410	85	105					18	170	125	220
Severnside	900	453	500	260		5	15	700	1000	1000	1100
PWD	300	160	160	3		3	7	55	125	145	150
CI-Y	750	340	335	115			7	25	225	200	310
Woodspring Bay	180	22	70	20					43	83	84
Axe Est/Weston STW	73	71	16				10	96	88	90	112
CVL	85	22	9	5		6	43	430	590	110	25
BL	66	49	32	33			2	85	619	164	99

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Other sites There were records throughout the area, as usual, including at BG, Backwell Lake, the R. Avon at Sea Mills, Keynsham and Saltford, Clapton Moor and Chew Magna Res., but no count exceeded 20.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

[Amber 1, 7]

Fairly common resident, winter visitor and late summer/autumn moult visitor, most numerous in autumn. Uncommon as a breeding species.

WeBS status: CVL was the 21st English site of National Importance in 2012/13.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	117	39	78
2011/12	447	65	256
2012/13	26	27	27

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2004 – 2013 Av.	261	83	172
2012	125	4	64
2013	403	79	241

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

The top status table shows the number of wintering birds at the main reservoirs was down in the first winter period compared with last year and well below the ten-year average. The CVL moult counts (second table) were up significantly and well above the ten-year average. The table below gives the monthly maxima.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	5	8		1						2	2
Severnside	11	18	37	22	9	2	9	15	2	4	6	7
ASW/Hoar Gout	10	14	22	10	2		1	6	6	8	18	23
PWD	10	18	15	12	4	8	7	26	43	58	38	55
CI-Y	10		3	2		1			4	6		
Weston STW	11	8	9	4	3			2	9	14	22	33
Backwell Lake	8	7	6								6	6
BG	5	2	2								2	30
CVL	16	16	5	30	30	148	65	435	370	370	290	150
BL	29	9	6	7	5	3	27	54	103	208	58	27

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Reports from other sites in the first winter period included a pair at Kingsgate Park, Yate, in January and February, three at Tortworth Lake on Feb. 3rd and seven at Heneage Court on March 9th. Later in the year, a lone individual was reported at Kingsgate Park on Christmas Day.

Breeding Two records: a brood of seven juveniles at PWD in June, and a brood of nine at CVL, of which four fledged, continuing the low number of broods here as shown in the table below.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Broods	2	4	4	1	3	5	1	3	0	1

Number of broods at CVL each year

TEAL *Anas crecca*

[Amber 7]

Common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant to the coast and reservoirs, present in small numbers elsewhere. A few usually over-summer at CVL.

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 12th site of National Importance in 2012/13.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	270	1200	514	661
2011/12	223	1932	1198	1118
2012/13	383	277	35	232

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

High water levels meant that few were attracted to the reservoirs during the first winter period but large numbers appeared in the second period when water levels were low. Counts appear to be holding up along the Estuary, but note the high numbers on Littleton Warth in the second winter period: WeBS counts produced 655 on Nov. 16th and at least 570 on Dec. 21st. A duck and two drakes noted at Severnside on June 5th, and others at CVL throughout early June were potential breeders, but no young were seen. At CVL, 11 on June 18th were the first to return, with five at Pilning Wetlands the following day. The October CVL figure of 3220, made during a WeBS count, was high but not the record which stands at 5600 recorded in December 1984.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	230	90	129	100			1	14	13	20	400	300
Littleton Warth	190	90	90	37				40	75	65	655	570
Severnside	320	194	130	125	1	5	10	151	305	340	300	160
PWD	310	550	55	5				17	110	165	12	7
CI-Y	700	380	450	230	1	1		60	55	250	60	300
Axe Est.	322	436	87	89				47	61	172	150	291
Weston STW	86	74	104	61			3	46	49	46	90	203
BG	48	38	1	1					12	76	30	20
CVL	125	125	15	18		23	40	1145	2800	3220	1490	825
BL	29	30	42	22	2			38	759	1749	810	294
Chew Magna Res	18	4		3							18	21

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Other sites A number of other inland sites recorded a few, but the only count of 50 or more was at:

Weston Moor – 50 on March 17th.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis* (1, 13)

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

Descriptions required.

Two records on the Estuary, probably both relating to the same male:

Weston STW/Axe Estuary – on Dec. 7th roosting amongst the reeds on the wildfowl lagoon (R Halsey, P A Bowyer *et al.*, photographed.). The arrival date at this site coincided with the highest count of Teal for the year;

New Passage – from Dec. 27th to 29th (P D Bowerman *et al.*, photographed), the first for Severnside.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	1

Numbers over the last 10 years

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

[Amber 3]

Common and widespread resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. Fairly common breeder (by far our commonest breeding duck).

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked ninth in importance in 2012/13.

This species produced a mixed series of reports in 2013. At CVL and BL winter numbers were below average, as predicted in the last Report, due to the high water levels. However, moult counts held up at both sites, particularly at the second, with the flocks staying on well into the second winter period as low water levels produced excellent feeding conditions, this is shown in the tables below.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	538	231	385
2011/12	730	375	553
2012/13	458	75	267

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2004 – 2013 Av.	908	402	655
2012	610	112	361
2013	1273	694	983

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below, they and the reports from the other sites are fairly typical when compared with those of the last few years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	190	60	33	19	34	67	86	140	128	175	183	173
Littleton Warth	28	5	20	10		53	45	75	82	28	50	61
Sevenside	70	60	38	29	39	70	91	110	135	50	50	80
Sea Mills	36	14	12	14	11	6	32	18	18	33	41	22
CI-Y	40	120	25	40	60	110	90	90	120	80	75	40
Axe Estuary	44	29	12	14		72	125	84	180	73	73	62
Weston STW	22	15	53	29	20	65	144	106	181	62	5	11
BG	58		33	25	14	29	46	42	30	14	33	
CVL	470	455	450	350	335	425	830	1230	1315	735	725	745
BL	46	75	34	33	27	129	336	709	678	755	409	196
Aztec West	75	40		25	29	59	88	94	110	94		
Backwell Lake	58		36	23	33	137	89	185	96	112	66	168
Eastville Park Lake	60+	46	55	41					71	91	64	86
Keynsham Park	98	111	63	48	55	76	58	91	99	137	134	136
Three Brooks NR	41	32	32	15	25	56	84	73	48		20	

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Other sites Counts of 50, or over, were received as follows:

Avonmouth – 60 on Jan. 14th, 110 on July 18th, 78 on Sept. 8th and 58 on Sept. 21st;

R. Yeo Estuary south – 90 on Jan. 13th, 76 on Sept. 22nd, 66 on Oct. 20th and 56 on Dec. 8th;

Bath (Newton Park) – 63 on Nov. 21st;

Bath (Royal Victoria Park) – 62 on Sept. 14th

Chew Magna Res. – 63 on Nov. 1st;

Compton Dando – 50 on Jan. 1st;

R. Avon (Saltford) – peak monthly counts of 52 on Feb. 21st, 60 on July 21st, 62 on Aug. 21st, 58 on Sept. 12th, 90 on Oct. 29th, 51 on Nov. 10th and 59 on Dec. 14th and the 20th;

R. Avon (Conham) – 60 on Oct. 30th;

R. Avon (Avon Gorge) – 50 on Sept. 28th;

Walton Moor – 74 on Apr. 7th;

Yate (Kingsgate Park) – 106 on Aug. 25th;

Yatton (Kenn Moor) – 60 on Nov. 17th.

Breeding Aside from CVL data given in the second table below, 54 broods with 220 young were reported, indicating productivity was down on last year (same number of broods but with 271 young). The earliest was noted at Severn Beach on April 10th. Notably, a brood was recorded on Steep Holm on June 1st (*per* warden J. Smith). On the other hand the BBS breeding data given in the first table shows a notable improvement compared with the last few years, but actual breeding success is not recorded in this survey.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-32%	-33%	8%	-29%	-13%	7%	-2%	7%	-7%	0%	-6%	30%

BBS percentage changes

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Broods	16	17	22	29	21	38	24	31	21	27
Young	93	93	100	176	130	213	115	176	130	129

Number of broods and young at CVL during the last decade

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

[Amber 1, 5, 6, 7]

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.

Low water levels at the reservoirs in the autumn attracted good numbers during mid-October, but counts were at, or below, average on the coast except for 40 off Anchor head on Oct. 23rd. The last spring record was of two on April 27th at CI-Y, and the first to return were two at CVL on July 8th with another at Weston STW on 13th. All major sites are tabulated, otherwise there were two PWD on Oct. 4th and one at BG on Dec. 9th:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1	1							3
Severnside	4	1	4	3		1	5	1	4	3
CI-Y	4	2		4				3		5
Sand/Weston Bays	1	1		2				40	5	5
CVL	16		2			1	61	110	6	9
BL	1						49	109	20	

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

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

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
47	140	77	60	29	70	65	57	37	110

Maximum single count in the Avon area each year

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

[Amber 1, 5]

Scarce spring passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon autumn passage migrant at CVL and BL, scarce elsewhere. Has bred.

WeBS status: CVL was ranked fourth, and the English coast of the Severn Estuary ninth, in importance in 2012/13.

There was a handful of spring records, with more from late July to mid-October, especially from Weston STW and CVL. All records are listed below.

Spring and summer

OPS – a drake on April 3rd and 4th, and again from 6th to 20th, was the first of the year;

Severn Beach, Western Distribution Park – a drake on May 30th and 31st;

CI-Y – reported on April 8th;

CVL – a drake on April 8th and one on May 13th.

Autumn

OPS – an eclipse drake on July 23rd;

Severnside – a juvenile from Sept. 24th to Oct. 17th;

PWD – a juvenile Sept. 28th to Oct. 17th;

Weston STW – an impressive series of records, including the first multiple occurrence, with one from Aug. 19th to 31st, two on Sept 1st, rising to three on the 4th, four from 5th to 7th, three from 9th to 15th, two on the 18th and 19th, and what was probably a new individual on Oct. 6th, the latest date for the site;

Garganey continued

CVL – the first returning bird was an adult female from July 18th to 24th, an eclipse drake from Aug. 6th, with three from 12th to 14th, two from 16th to 19th, and one from Aug. 21st to Sept 7th, two juveniles on Sept. 11th, one on the 14th, three juveniles on the 16th, two juveniles from 18th to 20th and a juvenile female from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 9th.

BL – one on Aug. 9th, two juveniles on the 10th, a single juvenile from 12th to 22nd, and one from Sept. 22nd to Oct. 4th.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors* (0, 7)

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

1993 – A female paired with a Shoveler at BL between May 1st and Oct.10th, 1993 was, according to the 1993 Report, “accepted by BBRC but not as a wild bird”. It has now emerged that this was based on an incorrect interpretation of a comment in the BBRC annual report; the BBRC secretary has recently confirmed that this record was fully accepted by BBRC as wild. The local doubts at the time were in part due to the presence nearby of a presumed escape female Cinnamon Teal, also paired with a male Shoveler.

At the time the BL individual was the third local record, after the first in 1979, and BBRC have now accepted a total of eight local records, with the last in 2011.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

[RBBP] [Amber 1, 7]

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.

WeBS status: CVL was the eighth English site of importance in 2012/13.

As with some other species the status tables below show poor first winter and good moult period counts.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	203	66	135
2011/12	287	90	188
2012/13	34	13	24

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2004 – 13 Av.	314	188	251
2012	253	5	129
2013	265	518	391

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

Main sites The winter counts at both major reservoirs were well below average, but the moult count at BL was exceptional thanks to a site record noted on the October WeBS count day. Tallies at the other main sites were also either average or below. able gives monthly maxima, also there were 14 at Weston STW on March 14th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside	22	10	14	15	2	2	1	5	6	7	4	23
ASW	17	16	5	4					6	8	9	7
PWD	30	16	15	10	2			1	6	9	14	18
CI-Y	22	8	2	4				2	2		1	
Backwell Lake	18		2	7					2	22	36	30
BG	4		5	4	1	2			3	5	5	40
CVL	21	26	35	16	3	28	25	165	275	255	95	20
BL	8	15	9	26	2	2		65	366	669	212	6

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Breeding Two pairs bred at CVL raising 16 young to fledging – an excellent season (per K E Vinicombe).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce visitor, most often in autumn. Likely status as a rare continental visitor obscured by feral birds, notably from the growing population at the Cotswold Water Park (Glos./Wilts.), and escapes.

Numbers bounced back to normal in 2013 with a particularly strong showing at BL. The details are as follows:

OPS – the drake from 2012 was noted on Jan. 1st only;

BG – a female on Dec. 17th;

CVL – six drakes on July 13th, a first-winter drake on Nov. 11th, and a duck and two drakes on Dec. 29th;

BL – two first-winter drakes from Nov. 11th to 14th were joined by another on the 13th (from CVL) which stayed until Dec. 18th. A record flock of nine (four adult and two first-winter drakes, and an adult and two first-winter ducks) arrived on Dec. 12th bringing the total to ten for the day.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
5	6	0	6	5	19	23	25	3	24

Total number of individuals each year

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

[Amber 1, 3, 7]

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

WeBS status: CVL was sixth, and the English coast of the Severn Estuary 11th, in National Importance in 2012/13.

During the winter of 2012/13 numbers at the main reservoirs were well below average for the last decade. There has been a 21% winter range contraction in Britain and Ireland since the early 1980s, the reasons for which are still unclear. Short stays, food availability and disturbance are all mooted as possible causes.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	746	211	97	358
2011/12	930	238	75	415
2012/13	433	118	31	194

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

The table below summarises the counts from the main sites, but there were records from six other sites, including eleven at CI-Y on Feb. 26th, an unusual occurrence at this site.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weston STW	1		13	2							2	2
Backwell Lake	10	2	3								2	29
BG	25	19	2	1	1	1	3	6	4	4	40	82
CVL	600	195	55	22	32	85	70	70	310	450	400	480
BL	137	97	5	10	3	8	36	78	47	117	257	586

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Breeding It was another poor year at CVL with just a single brood of two resulting in one fledgling.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of broods	2	1	4	6	2	2	2	0	3	1
No. of young	9	4	14	35	9	4	8	0	8	2

CVL breeding records for the past decade

Another individual with a nasal saddle, marked blue FLH, was recorded at CVL on Feb. 1st. It was a female that had been trapped at Saint Philbert de Grand Lieu, France, on May 6th, 2011 (*per* A Caizergues).

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris* (1, 27)

Scarce Nearctic vagrant.

Descriptions required.

One record: an adult male at CVL on April 20th and 21st (S Davies *et al.*, photographed) and again from May 13th to 16th.

Most records for the last two decades 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, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca* (2, 7)

[RBBP]

Formerly a rare vagrant but now scarce, annual since 2000, and possibly bred in 2006.

Descriptions required.

Three records, details as follows:

BG – a bright adult female on April 19th (A Adams *et al.*);

Ferruginous Duck continued

CVL – an adult male with a missing right eye was present from May 13th to 15th (R J Higgins *et al.*), from June 7th to 29th, between Aug. 9th and Sept. 27th and on Oct. 29th and Nov. 16th; it was not seen in the intervening periods. An adult female was present from Aug. 28th to Sept. 24th (A H Davies *et al.*, photographed) was presumed to be the individual from 2012.

Records have been annual since 2000, mainly at CVL, although it is hard to ascertain how many individuals are involved; records in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010 (2) and 2012 were considered to relate to new arrivals.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

[Amber 1]

Common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant. Now a scarce breeder.

WeBS status: CVL was ranked eighth in National Importance, and BL 22nd, in 2012/13.

The past year, 2013, appears to have been a good one for this species.

Combined totals at the two main sites during the autumn and early winter months suggest a continuing increase in the numbers visiting the area. Sightings at the other main sites were similar to 2012. Status tables for these sites are given below.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	1144	366	755
2011/12	1347	435	891
2012/13	1215	619	917

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2004 – 2013 Av.	1029	653	841
2012	1485	656	1071
2013	1440	866	1153

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

The main table below gives the monthly maxima for the well-watched sites which once again shows a huge count at CVL in September and, like 2012, seems to reflect a post-moult movement here from BL. It would be interesting to know why this happens.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
ASW	41	20	18	9		7	13	11	13	13	18	7
PWD	16	36	12	17	33	24	6	10	11	8	11	12
Weston STW		6	23	18	7	3	1	2	4	4	10	12
Backwell Lake	16	25	12	14					1	3	7	5
BG	65	28	59	37	16	16	165	284	51	37	66	57
CVL	565	395	460	465	145	115	490	780	2100	1135	955	610
BL	453	472	220	189	88	62	443	1288	279	543	1098	300
Chew Magna Res	7	22	13	17	2	4	10	1		4	19	6

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

Other sites Recorded at a further 23 sites with no single count exceeding 25.

Breeding This was widespread as usual, but the number of recorded broods was well down on 2012, and although the number of young was high, most succumbed to predation. There were one, or possibly two, broods (nine young) at OPS, two broods at PWD (well down on 2012, with only four young seen), single broods at Portishead (five young), and BG (seven young), only four broods at CVL (27 young, of which 18 fledged), and one brood each at BL (eight young) and Hunstrete (three young).

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13
No. of sites	4	5	6	4	5	4	4	5	6	7
No. of broods	8	6	20	4	8	9	7	7	22	11
No. of young	42	25	115	16	55	29	41	25+	74+	63

Breeding success in the Avon area

The adult drake with a blue nasal saddle (34) was noted at BL on Jan. 1st, then twice back in France at Juvigné (Mayenne) in the summer, before returning to BL from Oct. 20th to Nov. 6th. It was also noted at BL in 2008, 2009 and 2012, and was ringed at Marolles-sur-Seine in France on Nov. 19th, 2007 (*per* A Caizergues).

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

[Red 3]

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

Another good year at CVL as illustrated in the table below.

	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
CVL	0	3	2	0	1	1	1	4	3	5
BL	0	0	0	0	6	4	2	4	0	1
Max flock	1	4	3	1	7	6	3	5	3	9

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

The 2013 Estuary total tabulated below is also better than the recent average.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
1	0	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	3

Number of individuals on the Estuary each year

The latest date in the first winter period was at CVL on May 6th, and an adult female at CVL on June 26th was the first to return. Full details are as follows:

First winter period

PWD – a first-winter drake from the beginning of the year until Feb. 24th with it, or another, from April 10th to 26th;

Portishead (Boating Lake) – the first-winter drake relocated from PWD from Feb. 28th to April 9th, and put in another appearance on 12th;

Weston Moor – one on Feb. 21st to 23rd;

CVL – two first-winters (a male and female) from the beginning of the year were joined by the female from BL on Jan. 31st, there were four on Feb. 3rd (three females), five on the 4th (including a new first-winter drake), three from 5th to 6th, two until the 15th, a female until March 6th when it was joined by two drakes until April 26th, then a pair until 30th with the female remaining to May 6th;

BL – a first-winter was noted on Jan. 31st and an adult drake from March 11th to 17th.

Second winter period

CVL – an adult female on June 24th, and from 27th to Aug. 28th, an eclipse male on Sept 30th, a juvenile male from Oct. 14th was joined by an adult female on the 19th until Nov. 20th, the last date the male was seen, with the female staying until the year end;

BL – an adult female June 26th from CVL and what was presumed to be the same on July 7th.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis* (0, 10)

[BBRC]

Rare Nearctic vagrant with the first local record in 2000.

Two accepted records as follows, both relating to the individual previously seen in 2012 that commuted between the Avon reservoirs and sites around Cardiff Bay:

BL – one from Dec. 7th, 2012 (N R Milbourne *et al.*) remained until Jan. 31st;

CVL – one from Nov. 4th until 20th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*) visited BL on 9th (P Delve, N R Milbourne).

This species was first recorded in the Avon area at BL in 2000, in both the spring and the autumn, and it has been almost annual since 2007.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

[Amber 3]

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

Another year during which a few spring migrants were the only birds seen in the area:

Severn Beach – three (two drakes) on April 29th.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
13	2	1	2	0	2	0	56	7	3

Total number of individuals each year

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* (2, 51)

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

Descriptions required.

Two records, both from CVL, details as follows:

A first-summer male showed very well in Stratford Bay and off Wick Green Point from April 28th until May 6th (photographed) and again on May 14th; unusually it spent much of the time picking insects off the surface of the water.

A juvenile was at the north end of the lake from Nov. 11th to Dec. 17th (C J Stone *et al.*, photographed).

The table below shows the records for the last decade.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2

Number of individuals seen (July – June)

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

[Red 3]

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

It was another average year, with the majority of records in the peak migration period during November. The first came from CVL on March 2nd, with another inland at Bathampton Meadows on 10th – an unusual site for this species, and the last of the year was on Dec. 27th at both Ladye Bay and Sand Point possibly referring to the same individual.

The records are as follows:

OPS – a female drifting downriver on Oct. 6th;

Severnside – five (two drakes) on April 29th, one on May 4th, an adult drake at New Passage on the river from June 20th-22nd, eleven birds on Nov. 12th and a female on Dec. 27th;

CI-Y – one on Dec. 17th with it, or another, reported at Ladye Bay on Dec. 27th;

Middle Hope – one downriver on April 5th and nine upriver the following day;

Sand Point – five on April 20th, four on the 11th, 13 south on the 12th, one north on the 14th, another north the 25th, three north on the 27th and one each on Dec. 21st and the 27th;

Weston Bay (Anchor Head) – four Oct. 28th, one north on Nov. 3rd, three on 5th and two on the 9th;

Batheaston – one from March 10th-13th was very unusual at this site;

BG – a single on July 21st;

CVL – an adult drake from March 2nd to 14th, ten (three adult drakes) on June 4th, two adult drakes on July 2nd, four adult drakes on Sept. 26th, another four (two each males and females) on Oct. 13th, 14 (all female-types) Nov. 11th, one female on 12th and a pair on the 23rd.

The table below summarises the records for the past decade, the ten-year average is 94.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
58	129	145	85	75	53	59	51	206	83

Total number of individuals each year

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca* (4, 35)

Rare/ very scarce winter visitor, very rare inland.

Descriptions required.

One record: four first- winters, two males and two females, were present at CVL all day on April 12th (S Davies *et al.*).

The table below summarises the Avon area records for the past 20 years.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	5	2	0	0	0	1	4

Total number of individuals each year

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

[RBBP] [Amber 5]

Fairly common winter visitor and spring passage migrant; numbers peak in late March and early April. Scarce away from the main reservoirs, and scarce/very scarce in summer although bred at CVL in 2008.

The status table below shows that the average number at BG in the 2012/13 winter was down again on recent years, but numbers at CVL and BL were in line with the long term average.

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2003/04 – 2012/13 Av.	92	20	13	125
2011/12	123	27	8	158
2012/13	95	19	1	115

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

Main sites The monthly maxima at the three main sites are given in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	2	1										2
CVL	75	130	160	55		3	3	2	2	10	22	50
BL	17	23	18	9	1			2		2	9	10

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

The next table summarises the CVL spring counts over the past decade, it shows numbers holding up.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
85	178	175	162	170	105	135	155	145	160

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Other sites Recorded at only three sites as follows:

Severn Beach – one on Jan.13th;

Backwell Lake – one on Nov. 23rd;

Weston Moor – one from Feb.17th to 19th.

Breeding Bred at CVL for the third time, a female and two well-grown juveniles (*circa* four weeks old) being noted on June 26th by M Jenkins *et al.* The family party was seen together for the last time on Aug. 15th when the two young were both adult-sized.

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

[Amber 1, 5]

Scarce winter visitor, mainly to CVL and BL.

This species has become an increasingly scarce visitor, none staying for more than a few days. It is thought that this is due to changes in weather patterns, resulting in a number of winter migrants 'short-stopping' as shown by Nilsson (2008), who reported that the number wintering in Sweden rose from 400 in 1971 to 3800 in 2004. Noted at two sites in 2013:

Portbury Warth NR – one on Feb. 27th;

CVL – a redhead on Feb. 2nd, and another from Dec. 26th to 29th were the only records for this site.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
8	2	2	4	0	0	3	4	3	1

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.

It was a very poor year on the coast, with just a single record. What is assumed to be the regular wintering drake at CVL was seen again in both winter periods.

First winter period.

CVL – the regular drake, first seen in 1981, was present from Jan. 7th to March 13th, with a first-winter from Jan. 2nd to Feb. 12th. Two were noted on March 2nd and a flock of four was seen from Sutton Wick on April 7th;

BL – a female photographed on Feb. 24th.

Red-breasted Merganser - Second winter period

Sand Point – a drone on Nov. 6th and a female on Dec. 31st;

CVL – the regular wintering drone returned on Oct.17th and stayed until Nov.17th, then reappeared on Dec. 4th and stayed until the year end, as did a female from Oct. 28th;

BL –the regular wintering CVL drone was here from Nov.18th to Dec. 4th.

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 2012/13 winter counts were much the same as the previous year and again below average for the last decade. The second table gives the yearly maxima for the past decade.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
55	27	22	24	54	32	26	80	25	25

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

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
52	17	28	43	65	21	95	65	31	40

Maximum counts at CVL each year

The main table below summarises the counts at the well-watched sites, otherwise they were recorded as follows, although there may be some duplication because this species often roosts on the reservoirs and flies out to feed elsewhere. None lingered into April and the first to return was noted on Oct. 23rd at CVL.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	4	2	1			3	1
Backwell Lake	5	6	5				2
BG	1					1	4
CVL	20	30	22		1	11	40
BL	3	5	2			5	11

Monthly maxima at regularly counted sites

The remaining records are as follows:

First winter period

Aust Warth – a drone in flight on Jan. 23rd;

PWD – a drone on March 30th;

Portishead – a drone on Jan. 20th, Feb. 3rd and the 21st;

Sand Point – a drone on Feb. 9th;

Weston STW/R. Axe – two females on March 2nd at the STW were presumed to be the same on 10th and 17th on the river;

R. Avon (Saltford) – max. of seven on Jan. 11th, two in February and five March 2nd, with the last three seen on March 5th;

R. Avon (Swineford) – two on Feb. 14th;

R. Avon and R. Chew (Keynsham) – maxima of six on Jan.13th, two in February and three on March 13th;

R. Avon (Sea Mills) – four on Nov. 4th;

Nailsea (West End) – two on Jan. 21st and one on March 3rd.

Second winter period

Littleton Warth – three redheads on Nov. 16th;

Severn Beach – three (a drone and two females) on Nov. 24th;

PWD – one on Nov. 4th and two redheads on Nov. 30th;

Axe Estuary – four (a male and three redheads) at Bleadon Sluice on Dec. 10th;

R. Avon (Saltford) – one redhead on Dec. 20th;

R. Avon and R. Chew (Keynsham) – one on Dec. 8th.

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 was in 2008.

WeBS status: CVL was ranked second in importance in 2012/13.

As usual, most records came from CVL and BL, but one at Weston STW was the first record here since 2006.

Weston STW – an immature drake on Nov. 23rd;

CVL – ten on Jan.15th, the WeBS count which dropped to six on the 25th with up to two until May 15th, a drake on June 9th, two on July 19th, three on and off from Aug. 18th to Nov. 4th, when six were recorded, rising to eight later in the month, seven on Dec. 13th and just three by the 29th;

BL – up to five were present from the beginning of the year, peaking at six on March 23rd, with just a single drake last noted on April 5th. A drake on Aug. 19th was the first to return with three from Aug. 20th to Sept. 29th, two on Oct. 12th and the last (a female) seen on Oct. 31st.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

[RBBP] [Amber 1, 2]

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

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

Another poor year with only eight records, all from the Marshfield area between June 11th and July 13th. See table below for the number of singing males recorded each year for the last decade.

The first was heard on June 11th. Four were noted on 15th, one on 16th, two on 20th, three on 26th, two on July 9th, and one on 11th and 13th.

1994/03 Av.	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
9	16	5	5+	3	5	10	10	14+	4	4

Number of singing males each year

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

A poor year with records from only 13 sites away from ST77, and then only in small numbers except for a good count of 150 at Marshfield on Nov. 4th. A further five double-figure counts were received from this area. The only other site with regular records was Saltford, with a maximum count of 12.

First winter period (January – March) Reported from four sites (*cf.* eight in 2010 and 2011, and five in 2012). The highest counts in the Marshfield area (ST77) were of 35 on Jan.7th and March 5th. Away from ST77 the records were as follows: Saltford with four on Feb. 7th and 19th, six on 15th and one on 17th and 27th; one was at Burnett on March 19th and one at CVL on Feb.13th and 19th.

Breeding season (April – June) Reported from nine sites (*cf.* 11 in 2011 and five in 2012) but no evidence of breeding was received. There were eight records from the Marshfield area: eight on April 15th, two on 18th and 30th, two on May 19th, one on 26th and 29th and one on June 7th and 26th.

In SG away from ST77 there were records of one near Oldbury Sailing Club on April 1st, two at Glenworth Farm on 15th, one at Ayleburton Wharf on 27th, one at Camp Lane (ST 7676) on May 31st, one at each of two sites at Hawkesbury Upton on June 1st, and one at Iron Acton on 2nd.

In BA there were no breeding season records at Saltford but there were records from Burnett of two on April 2nd and 7th, and also on May 6th.

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) In ST77 there were seven records, with several present on Oct. 4th and 8th and a high count of 150 on Nov. 4th. One was at Saltford on Aug.1st. Twelve were present here on Aug.8th and again on Sept. 22nd, Oct. 2nd and Nov.10th, with two on 15th. In North Somerset there were two records: ten at Newton Park on Dec. 19th and eight at Winthill, Banwell on 29th.

The table below shows the number of sites away from the Marshfield area where they were recorded.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites - SG	3	n/a	6+	1	7	3	2	3	4	4
No. of sites - NS	0	4	4	2	2	1	4	8	0	1
No. of sites - BA	14	8	12	19	12	18	17	5	6	4

Number of sites away from ST77

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

[Red 3]

Uncommon, local and declining breeding resident. Some are probably hand-reared and released.

Records were received from eight sites but there was no evidence of breeding at any of these. There were four records from the Marshfield area this year (none in 2012). All records are given below and the table summarises the records for the past decade.

SG – records from four sites: Badminton, two on June 4th, Lygrove Farm, Old Sodbury, two also on 4th, Marshfield (ST7874), one on July 1st, (ST7775) 18 on June 18th, two on 20th and seven on Aug. 6th.

BA – Bannerdown Common, Batheaston, present on Nov.11th, and Langridge, one on May 26th.

NS – Cl-Y, two on March 26th, and two on Oct. 17th, and Congresbury Moor, one on Sept. 2nd.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites - SG	1	2	5	2	3	1	1	1	4	4
No. of sites - NS	1	2	2	1	2	3	2*	2*	2	2
No. of sites - BA	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	2

Numbers of records at sites away from the Marshfield area, * implies that feral birds are excluded

Breeding Not recorded in the BBS Survey this year – 2001 was the only other year when it was not recorded, although in most years counts are in single figures.

Observers are encouraged to submit every record of this species, with six figure grid references, in order that its declining status can be monitored. Local knowledge about hand-reared birds would also be useful. (*Eds.*)

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Breeding data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 88 squares, which represented 50% of those surveyed. The total counted during the two counts was 531.

The table below shows the BBS percentage changes in population from 1994 to the present.

Since 1994	last decade	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
27%	-10%	2%	0%	14%	-7%	-6%	-3%	0%	-2%	-9%	3%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, 19 singing males were noted in the breeding season (*cf.* 34 in 2011 and 23 in 2012) but no chicks were seen this year. The only other breeding report was of two juveniles with an adult female at OPS on Oct.10th.

Other data Non BBS reports were widespread with records from at least 80 sites, all but three having single figure counts. The largest count was 128 in one field at Walton Bay on Oct. 23rd most of which were likely to have been either feral or hand reared. Counts of 100 or more were noted here into November. Very low numbers were seen in the Marshfield area with a maximum of five on April 18th.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata* (28, 35)

Formerly a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes storm-driven, but in recent winters numbers have been noted in the lower Estuary.

Descriptions required.

There was again a good series of records from Sand Point in November and December; all observed by P A Bowyer unless stated otherwise. Large numbers were also noted off the north-west Somerset coast at this time. Both of these increases are likely to be related to the recent increase in the local sprat fishery in the Severn. The details are as follows:

Nov. 25th – 11 down channel in two and a quarter hours of observation;

Nov. 26th – 28 to N, including a flock of 14 (see photograph opposite page 136), and one to S in three hours;

Nov. 27th – one down channel (A Hockey);

Nov. 28th – four, direction not given;

Dec. 1st – two, direction not given;

Dec. 5th – one to S in three hours;

Dec. 27th – one to S in three hours.

There was also one spring record, from Middle Hope – one close in on April 6th (P A Bowyer, P Gregory).

There were no reports from any other Avon site, but see accounts below for the other diver species seen in the Estuary at this time.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica* (1, 12)

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor; sometimes storm-driven.

Descriptions required.

One record: A confiding juvenile at CVL from Nov.16th until Dec. 24th (C J Stone *et al.*) was very popular and well photographed, see opposite page 40.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* (5, 42)

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.

A good year with five or more individuals.

CI-Y – one on Jan. 1st flew downriver towards Sand point (H E Rose *et al.*);

Sand Point – one flew downstream on Jan. 1st (see above, photographed by P A Bowyer), one flew to north on Nov. 20th and 25th (P A Bowyer), one photographed as it flew downstream distantly on Dec. 21st;

Anchor Head – an adult still in summer plumage flew downstream on Nov. 3rd (P A Bowyer);

CVL – a second-calendar-year was photographed on April 16th (R Palmer *et al.*);

Between 1983 and 2012 records were split equally between the coast and inland, 21 each.

DIVER sp

Two records, both from Sand Point; one on Nov. 5th was probably a Great Northern, whilst one on Dec. 24th was probably a Black-throated (both P A Bowyer).

Divers in the Avon area

	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
Red-throated			1		2	1	1			9
Black-throated										1
Pacific							1			
Great Northern		1	1	5	3	5	2	3	3	5+
Diver sp.	2	1	1		3	1	3	1		2

Numbers seen in each winter during the past decade

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

[Amber 3, 6]

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

This year saw a reasonable scatter of records, without any repeat of the exceptional numbers seen in 2012. The sightings followed the pattern set in recent years: a small number in January, presumably birds wandering as they prospect for nest sites, then several during spells of strong winds between April and June but none in the second half of the year. The table below shows all records received.

	Jan			Apr					May				June				
	1	29	31	12	14	18	25	29	6	9	10	11	12	13	15	22	23
Sevenside		1	1			1				2		1	1	11	2	2	1
Ladye Bay															2		
Sand Point	1			1	1	3	1	1	3		4	1			2		6
Anchor Head		1															

All records for the year

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

[Amber 1, 4, 6, 7]

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.

Strong south-westerly winds in mid to late June produced large numbers at several coastal sites, repeating the pattern of recent years. Far fewer were seen during the gales in September. For the third year running there were no inland records. The table below shows all records.

	May				June				:	Sept	
	4	9	11	12	13	15	22	23		15	17
Severnside		2	1	1	19	60	400				
PWD											1
Ladye Bay	1										
Sand Point			107		57	200		500		6	
Axe Estuary								8			

All records for the year

Data for the past decade is given on page 41.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

[Amber 6]

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

There was a reasonable scatter of sightings during spells of strong winds in May, June and October, all involving single birds as follows:

Severnside – May 12th, June 22nd and 23rd, and Oct. 28th;

PWD – June 23rd;

Ladye Bay – June 23rd.

See table on page 41 for data from the past decade.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (3, 198)

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

Only seen at Severn Beach on two consecutive days in October; one photographed on 27th (many observers) with at least three, probably six or more, on the next day (many observers and photographed).

See table on page 41 for data from the past decade.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

[Amber 6, 7]

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

There was a good scatter of records through April, May and June, although there was no marked peak in June as with Fulmar and Manx Shearwater, and a small number of sightings in October and November. The autumn produced the year's only inland record: an adult at CVL on Nov. 20th.

The table below shows all coastal records and data from the past decade in given on page 41, the total number of bird-days, at 271, was slightly above the ten-year average of 210.

	Apr							May							June				Oct	Nov
	2	5	12	14	18	27	29	5	9	10	11	12	13	25	15	22	23	27	28	3
OPS											1									
Severnside			5		2				2		11	1	1		4	2			1	
PWD																	1	1		
Portishead											12									
Ladye Bay															4		1			
Sand Point	1	1	4	20	16	2	3	27	90	9	43				1					
Anchor Head											1			3						1

All coastal records for the year

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

[RR]

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..

As the table below shows, the year saw a dramatic increase in numbers at CVL, presumably linked to an improvement in populations of suitably-sized coarse fish (cf. Great Crested Grebe). The dynamics of fish populations depend on multiple often interdependent factors, so it is not easy to tease out the reasons for such peaks.

1998/08 Av	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
133	197	203	145	73	321

CVL January to December average maximum counts

The November count at BL, made on 25th, was a site record. It included many disturbed by pike fishing at CVL, which may also account for the high maximum at BG in December. Numbers on the R. Avon at Saltford were much lower in the second winter period than the first, probably because of the improvement in conditions at CVL. As in 2012 there was some suggestion of passage in September, when nine were noted over Saltford on 8th and past OPS on 22nd, with 14 past CI-Y on 27th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	2	2	6	2	3	4	14	7	8	3	2
Littleton	1					2			7	2		
Severnside	2	1	2	4	4	4	1	2	13	1	1	2
PW					5	1						
CI-Y	1	4	4	6	2	2	1	6	14	1	2	1*
Weston STW	6	18	7	4	3	1	1	3	15	5	4	6
Bristol Docks		5	4	3	1	2	2		3	2	4	5
R. Avon at Bath	3	7	4	3								
R. Avon at Keynsham	3	3	1	1					2	3	3	3
R. Avon at Saltford	26	17	5					10	9	1	3	3
BG	8	34	47	18	11	13	7	13	8	6	18	169
CVL	120	88	32	23	12	12	20	90	165	270	332	360
BL	119	47	8	5	7	6	15	9	7	120	344	92
Loxton			3	1	2		5		4		10	5

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

*A record of 75 flying downstream past CI-Y on Dec. 17th has not been included in the table.

The continental race was noted at CVL on two dates in February, each time with two birds, on 19th and 26th.

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

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (1, 72)

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

Descriptions required.

The only record was of an adult photographed drifting south at Sand Bay on April 16th (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

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Fulmar	55	139	16	272	79	62	40	26	112	192	49
Cory's Shearwater		1									
Manx Shearwater	403	1920	40	1600	1216	1680	380	100	1015	2811	1363
Storm Petrel	4	8		28	27	25	1		9	108	6
Leach's Storm Petrel	2	2	2	115	2	1	24	1	2		4
Gannet	26	152	46	570	195	172	57	267	240	134	271
Shag	2	3	5	3	2	5	2	3	6	3	1

Scarce seabirds – Annual bird-day totals

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

[Red 2]

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

Despite the burgeoning Somerset Levels population this species was recorded at only three sites in 2013 (*cf.* eight in 2011 and six in 2012) and all sightings involved lone birds. Recorded as follows:

PWD – one on Jan. 24th;

CVL – in the first winter period one was reported on many dates from Jan. 26th to March 13th and in the second winter period one was seen on seven dates between Oct. 1st (an early date) and Dec. 2nd;

BL – one on Feb. 25th.

See page 44 for data from the past decade.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

[Amber 6]

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.

The record maximum of 59 counted at the roost near CI-Y in December 2012 was surpassed with 68 on Jan. 27th. The roost site near Kingston Seymour noted in last year's Report moved to a site nearer the coast in the 2013/14 winter and held considerably fewer birds. The coastal WeBS count records far lower numbers so birds at this roost must gather from largely unrecorded parts of the surrounding levels. On the other hand numbers at the lakes were much higher than in 2012, presumably a consequence of improving populations of coarse fish and low water levels.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	2	4	2	1	2	1	3	4	3	3	
Littleton Warth									1	2	3	
Severnside	2	2	1	6	3	7	6	8	7	6	4	2
RPD/PW		1		1	1	2	2	1	4	7		
CI-Y and environs	68	56	6	5	6	9	15	17	16	14	6	16
Sand Bay				3				4	1			
Axe Est	3	4	5	4	5	2	2	20	5	4	2	4
BG	1						2	4				2
CVL	7	8	6	4	1	1	12	12	23	21	11	12
BL			1	1				2	2	4	9	11
Backwell Lake	4	2	3	3	1					1	1	2

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

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

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	20	2013
13	15	27	39	31	32	24	21	23	59	68

Maximum count each year from CI-Y and environs

Other sites Reported, mostly in small numbers from the levels and moors of North Somerset; the maxima from here were 17 on Kenn Moor on Nov. 28th and five on Congresbury Moor on Feb. 5th. Noted elsewhere, with single birds unless stated otherwise, in the region as follows:

Chipping Sodbury Common –April 14th;

Yate Common –April 2nd and 15th;

Frampton Cotterell – July 10th;

Marshfield – Aug. 15th;

Willsbridge – Nov. 26th;

Western Distribution Park –monthly maxima on this temporary wetland of five in March and April, one in May and three in June;

Avon Gorge – Aug. 14th, Sept 7th and Dec. 9th;

Saltford – July 11th and Sept. 6th.

Breeding There was no evidence of breeding, but five were seen to enter an NS heronry on May 5th.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba* (3, 10)

Rare vagrant first recorded in 2002.

Descriptions required.

With this species now regular in numbers on the Somerset Levels we had another year of multiple occurrences, although strangely all arrived during a three day autumn period. The details are as follows:

Yate – a remarkable record of one flying to SW over houses at 13.15 on Sept. 26th (G Youdale);

Northwick Warth – one that flew from inland and headed up-river at 10.20 on Sept. 28th (B Lancaster, J P Martin *et al.*, photographed) was the first record for Severnside;

BL/CVL – a juvenile found at BL on Sept. 27th (N R Milbourne *et al.*, photographed) then commuted between here and CVL until Oct. 4th.

2012 – Late acceptance of one seen in flight at PWD on March 26th, 2012 (A Middleton) takes that year's total to four.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species.

The status table shows a recovery in numbers at CVL, due to a combination of low water levels and improved populations of coarse fish. Counts at Sea Mills remained low. The second table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

	1999/08 Av.	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
CVL	18	28	32	35	16	25
Sea Mills	18	8	12	13	8	7

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	1	2	1	2	2	4	6	4	4	5	3
Littleton Warth								3	5	1	1	1
Severnside	1	1	1	2	2	3	8	4	5	4	4	4
CI-Y	3	1	4	5	3	2	5	4	5	4	4	4
Axe Est./Weston STW	3	5	5	4	5	5	9	3	4	4	3	1
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	6	6	2	1		1		4	7		5	5
R. Avon at Saltford	2	5	2				7	7	4	3	3	2
BG	5	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
CVL	6	2	5	3	3	1	25	14	18	21	16	15
BL	6	9	3	7	5	3	7	20	16	33	25	14

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding BBS recorded 95 from 24% of the squares surveyed, a 21% reduction year-on-year. The table below giving details from the main colonies shows no recovery from the losses caused by recent cold winters. In fact, our largest and best-monitored heronries at CVL and Cleeve Wood both declined. It might be that weather-related mortality was greatest amongst first-winter birds, and as lower numbers of these cohorts are enlisted to colonies as they reach breeding age the size of heronries falls.

	Grid Ref	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Widcombe Manor	ST761633						2				
Dodington Lakes	ST753802						3		4		
Newton Park	ST692640			8	4		2			3	
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	25	25	25	25	34	25	25	17	16	17
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761			1	1	2	1	1			
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	29	29	25	36	51	39	30	31	32	27
Easter Compton	ST560811	7	8	0	0	0	0	0			
Pill	ST530739		5	5	5		7	6	7	3	12
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	45	45	33	48	42	45	40	42	43	37
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582			4	8	4	4		4		3
Total		106	112	101	127	133	128	102	105	97	96

Occupied nests each year

Grey Heron - Other non-breeding records These were received from a wide scattering of other sites, often as single birds in flight. The maximum counts not in the table above were: ten at Hanham on Jan. 27th and five at Congresbury Moor on Feb.14th and 21st, March 31st and April 7th.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* (4, 8)

Rare vagrant first recorded in 2007.

An excellent year with four records, the details are as follows;

Weston STW/Axe Estuary – one was seen on both sides of the Axe on Sept. 21st (R Giles, F Neate). The next day it was seen on the Somerset side but in the evening it roosted on the UV pools at the sewage works (P A Bowyer, M S Ponsford, photographed). What is presumed to be the same bird flew out from the reeds around the UV pools at dusk on Oct. 4th and departed to south (M S Ponsford);

CVL – a juvenile seen in flight three times during the morning of Sept. 27th (R Brewer *et al.*) relocated to BL early afternoon; it was seen again at CVL on Oct. 15th (D Hughes, photographed). On Nov. 26th a pair were seen in flight dropping down behind Denny Island (K E Vinicombe); despite searching they could not be relocated but one very approachable individual, possibly one of this pair, was found on 28th and remained until 30th (R Mielcarek, I Stapp *et al.*, photographed – see opposite page 40);

BL – the CVL individual relocated to here early afternoon on Sept. 27th and then remained until Oct. 16th (N R Milbourne *et al.*, photographed). It was the first record for the site.

There are five previous records from our area – from CVL in November 2007, September 2009 (two records, one involving four birds), Severnside in October 2009, and near Hoar Gout, Severnside in September 2010.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia* (2, 39)

Scarce passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

Two flight records from the western part of the coast, details as follows:

Sand Point – one to NE on April 19th (A Hockey);

Wick St. Lawrence – one flying low over the village at 09.45 on June 23rd (G Butler).

Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bittern	3	3	3	1	3	6	11	10	9	4
Cattle Egret		1		1		6	1		1	
Great White Egret			1				1	3	4	3
Purple Heron						1				
White Stork		1	1				2		5	
Glossy Ibis				1		6	1			4+
Spoonbill			1	1	1	4	2	10		2
Spotted Crake	1	1		1	2	1			1	4

Annual totals

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

[Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, which occurs widely in rhynes and small to medium-sized pools. Numbers peak in late summer at the reservoirs before dispersing. Very scarce in the Estuary.

WeBS status: CVL was ranked fifth in National Importance in 2012/13.

As shown below counts at CVL improved, probably due to lower water levels, although they remained below those of some recent years.

1999/08 Av	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
68	135	123	92	38	63

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

Away from CVL there was some sign of a recovery in numbers after four years of falling counts probably caused by a succession of cold winters. The table on the next page gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	1	1	3	2	6	3	4	10	12	8	4	1
PWD	15	7	9	8	6	5	5	10	10	8	12	9
CI-Y	6	2	1								2	
Axe Est./Weston STW		5	2	5	6	12	12	29	33	21	7	2
Tortworth Lake		1	2							9		
Three Brooks LNR	4	3	1	2	2	2	1		2			
ASW and environs	1			2			2	18		3		1
Kenn Moor	6	8	10	6					4	8	4	
R. Avon at Saltford	1	1									2	
BG	13	7	4	2			3	3	13	7	10	13
Chew Magna Res.	4			1			4	8	10	12	3	6
CVL	10	2	10	6	6	3	20	48	74	67	35	10
BL	6	5	5	4	6	4	13	24	24	14	31	9

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites Reported from a wide scatter of other sites. The maximum counts were of six at Litton Resrs. on April 4th and eight here on Dec. 15th and four at Pill on April 26th.

Breeding The BBS only recorded three from 1% of the squares surveyed. There were no signs of any recovery in the CVL breeding population: three pairs were present but there was no evidence of any breeding attempt. As in 2012 reports were received from another eight sites as follows:

Grebe Pond, Northwick Warth – three broods and a total of five young;

PWD – one brood of three young;

Three Brooks LNR, Bradley Stoke – one brood of two young;

ASW environs – two broods totalling five young on the Vosa pool and two broods of two each on the Accolade Wines lake;

Weston STW – six broods totalling 16 young;

Chew Magna Res. – three broods totalling five young;

BL – one brood of one.

The tables below show how this species has fared over the past decade.

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Broods	15	9	2	6	6	3	3	0	0	2	0
Young	24	13+	3	10	9+	4	5	0	0	0	0

CVL broods and young

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Sites	8	12	6	5	8	6	4	4	4	8	7
Broods	16	18	14	18	15	14	10	12	9	21	19

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 was ranked seventh in National Importance in 2012/13

Although counts at CVL remain low by historical standards they showed a significant improvement on those of 2012, presumably due to an improvement in populations of suitably sized coarse fish (*cf.* Cormorant).

1999/08 Av	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
463	565	355	195	93	267

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

The table overleaf shows the monthly distribution at the three main sites.

Great Crested Grebe continued

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	13	14	28	24	28	31	49	26	25	14	19	13
CVL	20	20	15	35	40	70	165	270	310	220	185	90
BL	6	10	12	8	8	12	32	21	29	20	52	67

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Records were received from fewer non-tabulated sites than in 2012, probably because conditions at CVL improved. The records below refer to single birds unless stated otherwise:

OPS – two on Aug. 23rd;

Severnside – April 17th, 19th and 24th, Sept. 24th and two on Nov. 10th;

PWD – on many dates from Feb. 2nd to April 10th, with two on March 30th, three on May 8th, then one until July 6th and another on Sept. 29th;

CI-Y – Jan. 1st;

Sand Point – Nov. 26th;

Yate, Cooper's Lake – Feb. 28th and March 2nd;

ASW – March 19th and April 5th and 10th;

Chew Magna Res. – one or two recorded on many dates between April 3rd and July 19th.

Breeding The BBS recorded 13 from 2% of the squares surveyed. After two blank years at CVL seven pairs produced 11 young, of which nine fledged; see table below. Elsewhere reported as follows:

BL – one young;

Chew Magna Res. – one brood of two.

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Broods	26	6	0	20	38	20	8	1	0	0	7
Young	44	9	0	43	62+	26+	12	2	0	0	11

CVL broods and young

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* (3, 47)

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

Descriptions required.

Two records as follows. This is about normal, see table below for previous records in the last decade.

BL – one from Feb. 28th until March 5th (N R Milbourne *et al.*);

BG – a summer plumaged pair on April 9th (A Bone *et al.*, photographed).

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

[Amber 5]

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.

This was another poor year for this species, with most records relating to long-staying individuals at BL. The autumn period at CVL, which usually produces the bulk of records, was notably poor.

BG – one on May 2nd was joined by another from 3rd to 5th.

CVL – the BL individual on April 3rd; one on June 2nd; another on Oct. 13th; and on Nov. 18th (from BL)..

BL – one remaining from 2012 was present until April 14th, apart from a brief break on 3rd when it moved to CVL; then one from Nov. 9th to the year-end, which also visited CVL for one day, on Nov. 18th.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Red-necked	1		1				1		1	
Slavonian	1	1	1	2	1		3	1	2	3
Black-necked	9	6	14	9	10	8	9	11	8	6

Annual totals

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.

The year, 2013, was the best to date with a total of 108 bird-days. Most were in the period March to July, only two records were received for September and none for December, see table below. Recorded at 58 sites (*cf.* 46 in 2011 and 47 in 2012), 20 in *SG*, 24 in *BA & NS*, and 14 in *Bristol*. In April five were seen together in the Gordano Valley and in July a group of four were seen at Frampton Cotterell.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	5	12	16	22	28	11	5	2	5	1	0	108

Monthly distribution of bird-days

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

January – in the Gordano Valley on 1st;

February – at Severnside on 9th and 25th, at Widcombe Hill, Bath on 15th, over Bristol at Berkeley Square on 21st and Henleaze on 25th;

March – at Severnside on 6th, 8th and 31st, at Filton, over Bristol at Queens Road, Clifton and Brentry on 8th. In the Gordano Valley on 17th and at Clifton College, Bristol two days later, at Abbots Leigh on 24th and at Cromhall two days after that, at Marshfield on 30th and PWD the next day;

April – over Bishopston, Bristol on 2nd, at Severnside on the same day, then on 7th and 27th, at CVL on 18th, at Pilning, Weston-s-Mare and five in the Gordano Valley on 20th, at Chipping Sodbury the next day, at Ingleston Common on 27th, Bower Ashton, Bristol two days later and CI-Y on 30th;

May – at Marshfield on 3rd, three on 29th and the next day, at OPS on 6th and at Thornbury and Yate two days later, at Sand Point on 12th and Pill the next day, Gordano Valley on 16th and Kenn Moor the following day, Portishead and Nailsea on 19th. At CVL on 20th, at Burnett and Compton Dando the following day, three at Chipping Sodbury Common on 26th, and the last of the month was at West Littleton Down on 31st;

June – over Sneyd Park, Bristol, CVL and Old Sodbury on 2nd, at the latter two site on 21st, at Sand Pont on 3rd, at Thornbury and two at Wick the next day, also at the latter site on 18th, at Lansdown on 7th and two on 9th. In the Gordano Valley and at BL on 8th, and at the latter site the next day. At Severnside, Falfield, Willsbridge and over Bristol at Stoke Bishop and Temple Back on 9th. At Clutton on 18th, over Bath the next day, over Bristol at Clifton and Shirehampton on 20th, at Yate on 25th and at Severnside and Temple Cloud the following day;

July – at BG on 2nd, at Filton, Yatton and Saltford on 5th, at the latter site on 11th, at BL, Gaunt's Earthcott, two at Coalpit Heath and four at Frampton Cotterell Heath on 7th, and at Severnside the following day;

August – over St. Werberg's, Bristol on 5th, at Severnside on 27th and two on 31st, and at Nailsea Moor on 28th;

September – at Weston-s-Mare and CVL on 27th;

October – in the Gordano Valley on 6th, at Severnside on 11th and 12th, at Temple Meads, Bristol on 12th, at CI-Y on 30th;

November – at Hallen on 19th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

[Amber 5, 6]

Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL.

The bird-days total for 2013 was 26, a somewhat average tally for the Avon area. Most reports were from CVL with a total of 12 bird-days (*cf.* eight in 2010, 17 in 2011 and 12 in 2012), the majority in March, April, August, September and November.

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

Littleton Warth – to NE on April 21st;

Northwick Warth – March 22nd;

Severn Beach – May 8th;

Chittening Warth – to NE on April 8th;

Weston STW – March 23rd and April 24th;

Marshfield – April 12th;

CVL – March 27th and 31st, during April on 3rd and 30th, May 2nd.

BL – April 30th;

Marsh Harrier - Second half-year

Northwick Warth – Aug. 25th;

PWD – during October on 20th and 21st;

CI-Y – Sept. 3rd and Oct. 20th;

Marshfield – Aug. 30th;

CVL – Aug. 20th and 21st, during September on 4th, 14th and 30th, and Nov. 16th and 26th.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus* (2, 88)*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly to the coast.*

Descriptions required.

Another poor year with just two records (*cf.* 17 in 2010, 13 in 2011 and two in 2012). The details are as follows:

Ringtails were on Weston Moor on May 19th (B Dixon) and at Sand Point on Dec. 24th (P A Bowyer).

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis* (5, 41)

[RR]

Very scarce visitor and resident.

Descriptions required.

By recent standards a good showing with five records, the details are as follows with single birds in all cases:

At Lower Woods on Jan. 24th (N Lodge); a freshly dead first calendar year male at Portishead on July 13th, see below; at Chipping Sodbury on Aug. 21st (M Coller); and a juvenile during September at OPS on 5th (A Middleton) and 15th (F Steuk).

Ringling recovery A freshly dead first calendar year male was found at Portishead on July 13th, it had been ringed as a nestling at an undisclosed site in Gwent five weeks earlier.

In addition a number of reports were received without accompanying notes. This species continues to have one of the lowest acceptance rates for descriptions received; observers are referred to the paper in the 2004 Report.

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

Year	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Honey Buzzard	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0
Black Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Red Kite	3	3	17	11	24	31	62	70	54	90	108
Marsh Harrier	7	2	11	8	6	29	52	14	28	19	26
Hen Harrier	3	3	3	3	4	14	1	17	13	2	2
Pallid Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Montagu's Harrier	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Goshawk	3	0	0	1	0	3*	0*	0*	1	1	5
Osprey	7	4	10	6	12	13	14	13	13	25	59

Annual bird-day (* excludes records from a SG site)

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus**Fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant.*

A good year with 645 records received and the second best year since 1997 when the total was 695, 2012 was the best to date with 786 records received. The spread across the year was reasonably even but the highest numbers were in January, April, August, September and November, fewest in May and June.

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2013 and the previous five years:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2013	72	40	57	66	32	34	47	71	61	51	64	50	645

Monthly distribution of record

Breeding The assessment of the number breeding was average but lower than the preceding two years, 2011 was the best year since 1997 when the total was 74. Following increases in SG in 2011 and 2012, the 2013 number fell to just below that of 2011. The 2013 area totals were 16 in SG, 29 in BA & NS and 11 in and around Bristol.

	1994-03 Av	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
SG	10	16	10	16	11	24	13	14	17	20	16
BA & NS	34	30	29	36	34	35	32	29	45	34	29
Bristol	13	6	13	11	10	9	10	8	10	13	11
Total	57	52	52	63	55	68	55	51	72	67	56

Breeding sites

Located at three sites at CVL (*cf.* one in 2010, three in 2011 and one in 2012) where two of these were successful and at least three juveniles fledged. At one of these sites young were calling from late July until early September.

Other observations Noted on Steep Holm on March 29th and a corpse was found here on April 24th, the latter being the remains of a Peregrine kill.

Prey species There were very few reports but those noted included Collared Dove, Starling and two Jackdaw.

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.

The total number of records received, 1097, was the second highest after 1169 in 2012, the records were spread reasonably evenly across the year except for the display period in March and April. On the other hand breeding success was poor. The first table gives the monthly distribution for 2013 and the previous five years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2013	111	95	146	153	80	69	70	66	88	82	63	74	1097

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding R J Prytherch's study area, which covers some 75km² of Failand and Gordano had a poor year, 106 pairs held territories, one more than in 2012 which was a record year. Of the 36 nests checked only 20 were successful, 31 young fledged. Brood success ratio was average but a high proportion of pairs failed to breed.

The table set out below gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2013 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1994 to 2003. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area.

Year	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
SG	30	44	25	49	39	45	46	47	56	37	39
BA & NS	144	196	196	206	213	202	211	172	226	210	213
Bristol	4	12	16	14	12	9	8	11	10	9	9
RJP's Study Area											
Active nest sites	68	85	88	90	92	97	99	103	103	105	106
Chicks fledged	61	107	92	50	80	47	73	87	43	27	31
Successful nests	39	60	56	37	52	33	47	60	27	27	20
Brood success ratio	1.57	1.78	1.64	1.35	1.54	1.42	1.55	1.43	1.59	1.00	1.55

Breeding data

At CVL, nine pairs were found and six of these were successful (*cf.* five in 2010, nine in 2011 and eight in 2012).

Large groups/counts All counts in double figures are listed overleaf, many were at CVL, most of these were in April and elsewhere all were for this month.

Buzzard continued

CVL During April there were eleven on 2nd, 13 on 25th and 46 on 30th, and 14 on June 27th; the large group on April 30th had been attracted to a freshly ploughed field;

Elsewhere During April there were 30 at BL on 7th, ten at Weston Moor on 20th and the same number the next day at Nempnett Thrubwell.

Bristol Often noted over the outer suburban areas of the city. Elsewhere at Floating Harbour, City Centre on Jan.25th, Arnos Vale Cemetery on Feb.12th, during March at Eastfield Road, Westbury-on-Trym on 5th, Eastville Park on 13th, Hotwells the next day and Westbury-on-Trym on 23rd. To E over Montrose Avenue, Redland on April 29th and May 5th, at Bishopston on June 21st and two day later, at Fishponds on Aug. 18th and two at Eastville Park on Sept. 8th.

Other notes Seen on Steep Holm on March 29th and 30th. Also pale morphs were at Shirehampton on April 20th and CI-Y on June 6th, both of these were described as being very pale.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

[RR] [Amber 1, 5]

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

An excellent year and the best to date with a total of 59 bird-days. Most were during March and April at CVL and BL (see article on page 161) with 16 and 32 bird-days respectively. The records given below refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

CVL – the first record of the year was on March 21st, subsequently reported from 25th to the month end, absent on 28th and 30th, in April noted on all dates from 1st to 8th, with two on 2nd and 3rd, a total of 16 bird-days (*cf.* 12 in 2012);

BL – first reported on March 23rd, two days later than at CVL, then from 24th to the month end, two present on 24th, 27th, 28th and 29th, three on 25th, 26th and 31st, and four on 30th, in April there were three on 1st, two on 2nd and 3rd, single birds on 5th and 8th. In the second half of the year one to S on Sept. 1st, a total of 32 bird days (*cf.* 4 in 2012);

Elsewhere – in March at Lulsgate on 27th and to N at Severn Beach on 30th, during April to N over CI-Y on 2nd and 6th, at Keynsham and Bitton the next day, at Northwick Warth on 7th (first seen perched on a metal post, it flew off to N), in the Avon Gorge on 13th and at CI-Y on May 3rd. Also noted on autumn passage at Saltford on Aug. 8th and Marshfield on Oct. 8th.

The record for CI-Y on April 2nd was of a satellite-tagged female called 'Beatrice' which passed over heading north. Her full life history and migration details are available and can be found on the *Highland Foundation for Wildlife's* website at www.roydennis.org. The 2009 Report gave details of Beatrice's spring migration for that year and she has continued to winter in the Rio Guadiaro area on the SE coast of Andalusia in Spain. Her northward migration in 2013 saw her roosting near Saint-Lo-d'Ourville on the Cherbourg Peninsula, France on April 1st. The next day she left the roost and headed north across the English Channel, four hours later she was approaching Portland, Dorset. Her journey continued over Yeovil, Somerset then across the Bristol Channel from CI-Y to Newport finally roosting near Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. Poor weather delayed her onward progress through Wales and England, and she eventually arrived at her Speyside nest site on 10th. In 2009 she arrived at her nest site on April 5th.

Ringling recoveries At BL, one was found trapped on three occasions under netting surrounding a fish holding cage on March 23rd, 30th and 31st it had been ringed as a nestling at Ynys Fer-Las, Afon Glaslyn, Gwynedd on June 17th, 2007, the colour rings on another were seen and read on March 28th, it had been ringed as a nestling at Bridge of Cally, Tayside in July 1998, so was at least 15 years old!

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

[RR] [Amber 1]

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

A very poor series of records was noted for this species with breeding activity from only 58 sites (*cf.* 81 in 2011 and 79 in 2012). Records received totalled 714, a relatively high number, and as was stated in last year's Report a possible explanation for the increase is the expansion in the use of electronic recording systems making it easier for observers to submit records.

The table on the next page gives the monthly totals for 2013 and the previous five years. Records were quite evenly spread across the year but with more in January, April and October and fewer in August and September.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2013	72	54	68	79	52	47	64	39	36	78	68	57	714

Monthly distribution of records

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

	1984	1985	1988	1989	1993	1994	2008	2012	2013
Total records received	738	720	750	736	721	723	754	1198	714

Best years in the last thirty

Breeding A very poor year in the Avon area, noted in the breeding season, the decline was conspicuous in *BA & NS* with only 30 sites (cf. 52 in 2012). In the four years from 2006 to 2009 a total of 90+ sites were 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 but the numbers improved slightly in 2011 and 2012. The distribution of nest sites in 2013 were 23 in *SG*, 30 in *BA & NS* and five in *Bristol* (so 58 in total); notes on some of these are set out below.

SG Four juveniles were seen at OPS on July 27th. A nest box was used for the second successive year at the Rolls Royce site at Filton, the pair was still feeding young on July 19th. It is not known if they fledged (cf. two fledged in 2012). At a nearby site at Abbey Wood, Filton, three chicks were seen on June 25th then four, including one that was much smaller, on July 9th, the smaller chick was believed to have hatched a week later than its siblings, all four fledged successfully.

BA & NS Nest boxes were used at the following sites: Gordano Valley, near Portbury where three chicks were noted on June 19th, also at Weston STW but the outcome was unknown, two nest boxes were used at Burnett, five chicks were noted, two and three respectively, all were ringed on June 29th.

Bristol One of the Bonded Warehouses at Hotwells was believed to have been used but the outcome of any breeding attempt was unknown.

	1994-03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
SG	22	24	17	29	25	36	31	22	23	21	23
BA & NS	60	57	60	72	68	63	53	45	51	52	30
Bristol	9	5	5	7	7	4	6	8	7	6	5
Total	91	86	82	108	100	103	90	75	81	79	58

Breeding sites

Ringing recoveries A nestling ringed at Keynsham on June 29th was found freshly dead at Le Fort, Ravenoville Manche, France on Nov.25th. Another nestling ringed at Dewshill, Strathclyde on June 3rd, 2012 was found freshly dead having been hit by a car at Radford, near Timsbury on March 3rd. A further nestling ringed at Rossall School, Lancashire on June 7th, 2012 was found freshly dead in a building at Felton on March 17th.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

[Amber 2]

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

A reasonably good year for this species in the Avon area with a total of 113 bird-days (cf. 143 in 2012), the bird-day total being similar to that for 2011. During the year there were 61 bird-days in the first half-year and 52 in the second half (cf. 98 and 45 in 2012). Most were in March, April, October and November with 23, 17, 16 and 20 bird-days, respectively. As usual many of the records were from Severnside with 43 bird-days (cf. 60 in 2012), 12 bird-days in the first half-year and 31 in the second half (cf. 47 and 13 in 2012). There were a reasonable number of reports from CI-Y with 23 bird-days (cf. 40 in 2012), 12 in the first half year and 11 in the second (cf. 25 and 15 in 2012). The details are as follows, records refer to single females or immatures unless stated otherwise, and give sites and dates when present:

Coast - First half-year

OPS – Jan. 22nd and during April on 6th and 11th;

Severnside – reported on twelve dates from Jan. 21st to May 6th, most in March and two were present on 12th;

CI-Y – noted on twelve dates from Jan.1st to April 15th, many were in April;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – Jan.1st, then on six dates in March from 4th to 30th and four dates in April from 8th to 21st;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Jan. 26th, a male on Feb. 2nd, and March 26th.

Merlin on the coast - Second half-year

Sevenside – reported on Aug. 25th and 26th, Sept. 21st and 26th, then on 27 dates from Oct. 6th to Dec. 29th, ten in October, nine in November and eight in December;

CI-Y – noted on 11 dates from Oct. 12th to Dec. 9th, most in November and December and on just two dates in October, a male and female were present on Nov. 19th and Dec. 9th, two were noted the previous day;

Anchor Head – Nov. 3rd and 9th.

Inland - First half-year

Marshfield – Jan. 5th and 10th, Feb. 6th and 14th, during March on 5th, 9th and 17th;

Congresbury Moor – Feb. 4th, March 26th and 31st, April 4th and 15th;

Elsewhere – at CVL on Jan. 2nd, Feb. 19th, April 9th and 14th, Kenn Moor on Jan. 3rd and April 16th, Thornbury on Feb. 27th and March 18th.

Inland - Second half-year

Marshfield – Oct. 3rd, 20th and Nov. 18th a male present on the former date;

Elsewhere – at Saltford on Oct. 15th and Nov. 15th, and Nailsea Moor on Nov. 10th.

Year	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Avon area	61	127	101	93	76	143	84	84	111	143	113
Sevenside	27	98	53	57	69	93	65	47	45	60	43
Bird-days per year											

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

[RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

An average year for this species following a couple of poor years in 2010 and 2012. Records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

Arrival The first records of the year were at Thornbury and BL on April 17th, noted the next day at CVL, then at the following sites during April.

SG – at OPS on 27th;

NS – at BL on 23rd, then daily from 25th to 29th, two on 27th and three present on 26th and 29th, at CI-Y on the last day of the month;

BA – at CVL on 25th, 26th, 29th and 30th, two present on 26th and 29th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April: 17th in 2008, 19th in 2009, 13th in 2010, 15th in 2011 and 25th in 2012.

Breeding Confirmed at just one site in BA, one young fledged.

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

	1994-03 Av	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
SG	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	2
NS	3	4	4	4	6	3	6	3	6	4	6
BA	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	2	2	3	3
Total	10	10	10	10	12	10	13	6	10	7	11
Breeding status both confirmed and suspected											

Other sightings From April 17th to Oct. 15th reported from only 29 localities, nine in SG, 18 in BA & NS, and two in Bristol: over Bishopston to N on May 6th, over Montrose Avenue, Redland to N on May 24th and June 26th, and to W on July 15th.

CVL Regularly reported at this site with one or two often seen, three on May 31st, Aug. 26th and Sept. 16th, and four on 27th. The first report was on April 18th, seven days earlier than in 2012, then again during April on 25th, 26th, 29th and 30th, noted on 17 dates in May, ten in June, nine in July, 17 in August, 19 in September and four in October. The last record of the year here was on Oct. 7th, 16 days later than in 2012.

Departure There were seven reports in October, all in BA and the late records were as follows:

BA – CVL (as noted above) on Oct. 1st, 2nd, 4th and 7th, two present on 2nd, at Saltford on 1st, Charlton Fields on 6th and Marksbury on 15th.

The table below gives a summary of all records for 2013.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	2	4	2	1	5	3	0
Bristol	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
BA & NS	1	2	4	2	2	2	4
Total	3	8	7	4	7	5	4

Number of localities per month where birds were observed (including CVL)

The latest dates for the Avon area, all but one in October, are as follows: 14th (Nailsea 1979, Severnside 2007), 15th (Severnside 2007, Marksbury 2013), 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*

[RBBP] [RR]

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.

An excellent year and the best to date for this species.

Breeding A total of 28 chicks fledged, the previous 'best year' was 2010 when 26 fledged.

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested on the Clifton/Durdham Down side and four chicks fledged (*cf.* five 2011 and three in 2012). Five fledged here in 2008, 2010 and 2011, this is a large number and the most to date. Bred on the Leigh Woods side of the Avon Gorge in 1996 and 2005.

Of particular interest was a report of another pair attempting to breed nearby on the Clifton/Durdham Down side of the Avon Gorge, two eggs were laid but failed to hatch, they were collected and sent away for analysis.

Year	1994-03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of juveniles fledged	2.5	2	2	3	3	5	1	5	5	3	4

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge

On Steep Holm three chicks fledged from one nest (*cf.* one fledged in 2012), prior to 2012 the last report of breeding success on the island was in 2004 when two fledged. Other reports were of a pair present here on Feb.17th, and March 16th, 17th and 29th.

St. John's Church, Bath was used for the eighth consecutive year, and two chicks fledged (*cf.* three in 2011 and two in 2012).

Castlemead Tower, Bristol was used for the first time, a pair raised three chicks using an old Raven's nest.

Wick Quarry, four juveniles were noted here on June 15th (*cf.* four in 2010, 2011 and 2012).

Undisclosed sites

SG Present at four sites (*cf.* three in 2011 and two in 2012, none fledged in either of these years). All were on man-made structures and one juvenile fledged. There was no evidence of breeding at the other three sites but a juvenile was heard calling at one of them late in the breeding season;

NS Located at three sites and five fledged (*cf.* three in 2011 with seven fledged, and three in 2012 with three fledged), two of these produced three juveniles and two juveniles, respectively, there was no evidence of breeding at the third site;

BA Reported from two sites and four fledged (*cf.* one site in 2011, three fledged, and one site in 2012, one fledged), four fledged successfully from one site, the outcome of the other was unknown;

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge Apart from the site mentioned above a pair nested at another site in the city fledging two young. In both 2011 and 2012 two pairs fledged three chicks in each year in the city.

Year	1994-03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites occupied	6.3	9	14	15	12	11	13	13	12	12	16
No. of birds fledged	12.1	17	13	13	21	20	11	26	25	17	28
No. of successful nests	4.9	8	8	7	9	7	6	9	8	8	10

Breeding success

Peregrine - 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 bird-days at these sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sand Point/Sand Bay	1		1	1	1								4
Weston-s-Mare		1								1	1		3
Weston STW	1		4	5	3	1	3		4	1	2	1	25
Axe Estuary/Uphill	2		1	1			2		1	1	1	1	10
CVL	2		1	2	3	1	2	11	6	10	4	3	45
BL	4			1				2	6	3	3		19

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

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

First half-year

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge In January at Bishopston and Speedwell on 18th and Fishponds on 24th, during February two at the Wills Memorial Building on 2nd and 24th, at Hotwells on March 27th and May 1st. Over Southmead on May 24th and during June at Redland on 26th and Bishopston two days later;

Bath away from St. John's Church At Widcombe Hill on Feb.15th and March 3rd;

SG At Patchway on the Jan.17th, Swineford on Feb. 14th and at Marshfield on April 3rd and May 4th. During June two at Bradley Stoke on 6th, Chipping Sodbury Common on 9th and nearby at Westerleigh Common on 24th;

NS In January at BG on 18th and Kenn Moor on 26th, at Yatton on Feb. 12th and Kenn Moor again on March 6th, during April at Nailsea Moor on 18th and at BG two days later, in May at Hewish on 17th and Nailsea Moor for the second time on 31st, and at Winscombe on June 6th;

BA At Saltford noted on nine dates from Jan. 18th to March 4th, two present on Feb. 17th, and at Bathampton on April 3rd.

Second half-year

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge During July at Blaise Castle Estate on 12th, Montpelier on 20th, Hotwells two days later, a pair over Bishopston on 27th, at Eastville Park two days later and two at Hotwells on the same day. Over Redland on Aug. 7th, during September at Hotwells on 4th, Henbury the following day, and at Seamills on 14th. At Fishponds on Nov. 23rd and over Eastville Park on Dec. 8th;

Bath away from St. John's Church At Victoria Park on Aug. 6th and Green Park on Oct. 9th and 13th;

SG At Chipping Sodbury Common on Aug.18th and nearby at Yate Rocks on Sept.12th;

NS At Yatton reported on the following dates, Aug. 5th, Sep. 27th, Oct.13th and Nov.10th and 30th, at BG on Aug.31st and Oct. 5th, and at Kenn Moor on Oct. 30th;

BA At Saltford noted on eight dates from July 14th to Dec.19th, there were no reports in November.

Other notes One found at Keynsham on Aug. 28th, it had been shot and was taken into care.

Ringling recoveries In June one was ringed as a nestling at a *NS* site on 7th, it was found at Portishead on 24th in a poor condition. Another ringed at a Bristol site on July 2nd was found alive at Keynsham on Aug.7th, it had been hit by a car.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

[RBBP]

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

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked sixth, and CVL eighth, in 2012/13.

A slight reduction in the number of sites was noted, possibly due to decreased dispersal in the milder winter weather, this is shown in the table below

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
16	14	16	24	23	23	20	18	24	27	22

Number of sites reported from each year

The monthly distribution of records is given in the table on the next page.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	5	2	4	3	1					1	4	3
Severnside	2	1	1	2					1	2	2	11
PWD	1	3	3	1			1		2	1	1	2
CI-Y	2	1	2	1	1					2	2	3
Weston STW	3	1	2	2	1				2	2	3	2
Backwell Lake	1		1									1
CVL	12	3	3	1	2	3	4	4	4	6	6	8

Monthly maxima at the main sites

At CVL birds were recorded at 25 locations around the lake between January and March and at 27 between October and December. The Severnside count of 11 was made on Dec. 9th when roosting Starlings flushed the birds from cover at Orchard Pools; the contrast between this count and the other, much lower, counts doubtless reflects the extent to which this species is under-recorded. Away from CVL the last in spring was at OPS on May 17th and the first in autumn was at PWD on July 31st.

Breeding Nesting activity was recorded at six sites at CVL, with juveniles being seen at three of these. On Steep Holm two dead fledglings were found on Aug. 1st. Breeding may also have been attempted at Weston STW.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
2	3	4	6	3	4	2	2	5	2	4	5	3	0	2	6	4	1	3	6

Number of nest sites detected at CVL each year

Other records The wide scatter of records below almost certainly under represents the winter distribution of this species. A slight upsurge in sightings in mid-March is apparent and later in the year there was some suggestion of an influx around Nov. 10th. The records, of single birds unless stated otherwise, are as follows:

Littleton Warth – March 16th;

Sea Mills – Oct. 29th and Dec. 7th;

Sand Point – Jan. 1st;

Marshfield (Shire Valley) – Dec.1st;

Three Brooks LNR – from Feb. 23rd to 26th, two on March 17th and April 2nd, one on Nov.12th;

Knowle (Bristol) – Dec.12th;

Chewton Keynsham – one on March 14th;

Keynsham – a tame bird in the Memorial Park from 2012 until March 24th and from Nov. 21st into 2014;

R. Avon at Saltford – Jan. 11th and 21st and March 5th and then in the second winter period Oct. 4th, 7th and 12th, with two on 29th, Nov.10th and Dec. 23rd;

Portbury – Oct. 7th;

Clapton Moor – Jan. 27th;

Weston Moor – two on Jan. 20th, singles on Feb. 17th and March 17th;

Yatton – three on Jan. 15th, two on Feb. 11th and March 3rd and another two on Dec. 17th;

Congresbury Moor – Jan. 20th, March 27th and 31st and April 4th;

Worle – March 23rd;

BL – April 5th, two on 9th, and Nov. 9th.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana* (4, 33)

Scarce passage migrant; most records come from CVL in August and September.

Descriptions required.

Two records, both from CVL and both involving two individuals, for ten-year data see page 44.

Two juveniles were seen from the Stratford hide on Aug.14th and 15th (M Jenkins, D Nevitt *et al.*) with one then being seen intermittently until 24th;

Two were seen in the Hollow Brook area on Aug. 28th and again on Sept. 4th (C J Stone *et al.*) – one, an adult, was present on the intervening dates and until 9th.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

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

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked second, and CVL 24th, in 2012/13.

Counts at both CVL and BL showed a welcome recovery, no doubt at least in part due to the low water levels, which make counting this species much easier. The mild 2012/13 winter may also have led to better survival rates. The inclusion in the table of a series of counts from Bristol Zoo, revealing the importance of this site, is particularly welcome.

Year	1994/2003 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
CVL	158	125	80	90	55	70	180	125	75	35	170
BL	68	46	105	82	30	21	38	33	27	20	92

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	3	4	3	2	3	5	7	6	12	11	12
Sevenside	6	5	8	7	4	3	6	15	12	12	7	10
PWD	14	11	8	8	6	9	8	16	22	13	21	14
CI-Y	6	6	14	10	8		7	4	7	8	4	6
Weston STW	4	2	4	6	5	3	7	8	19	26	5	7
ASW and environs	1	4	7		2		2		1		2	
Three Brooks LNR	6	4	6	5	5	4	4	8	8		4	
Bristol Zoo		13	36	24	20	12	11	25	32	32		
Duchess Park		6	4	3					1	7	6	8
Eastville Park	4	6	3	6					7	6	6	5
Backwell Lake	28		14	12	1	2			3	4	7	
Saltford	9	8	9				2	6	13	19	10	13
CVL	15	25	15	10	4	5	25	160	170	105	90	65
BL	13	18	34	28	6	3	21	81	78	92	71	50
Chew Magna Res.	2	4	4	4		8	3	5	9	3		11

Monthly maxima the regularly watched sites

Recorded from a wide scatter of other sites. The largest numbers were at Keynsham Memorial Park, reaching maxima of 13 in January and 11 in December.

Breeding Several broods were reared at CVL, but no count was made. At BL two broods of one and two, respectively, were located. Elsewhere recorded at 11 sites, which is almost certainly a marked under-estimate, (cf. ten in 2009, 12 in 2010, 12 in 2011 and 18 in 2012) as follows:

OPS – two broods of one and two;

New Passage – a brood of one;

PWD – a high total of 12 broods (cf. three in 2012);

Weston STW – another high total: five broods totalling 12 juveniles (cf. three broods totalling seven in 2012);

Three Brooks LNR – five nests were located;

Bristol Docks – one brood of one;

Stockwood Vale, Bristol – a brood of three;

R. Avon at Saltford – three broods totalling seven young;

Keynsham Memorial Park – one brood of four;

Clapton Moor – two broods of two each seen on the main rhyne;

Chew Magna Res. – one brood of three.

COOT *Fulica atra*

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

WeBS status: CVL was ranked eighth in sites of National Importance in 2012/13.

Aquatic plant growth at both CVL and BL was good as a result of the settled summer weather and feeding numbers at both lakes were high. The two most important coastal sites, PWD and Weston STW, produced a good series of records in the second winter period. Ten-year summary and monthly maxima tables are given on the next page.

Year	1994/2003 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
CVL	2541	3335	2210	2360	2095	2020	3050	2880	3110	2475	3190
BL	1311	2080	3151	1400	2323	1403	970	678	1247	1070	1213

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	3	4	5	4	7	7	7	5	4	4	5
Severnside	9	6	10	10	11	7	15	17	22	22	16	14
PWD	47	22	9	9	11	17	36	52	44	64	85	66
Weston STW	12	19	12	12	8	6	17	41	53	51	49	43
Tortworth		33	18							32		
ASW and environs	5	20	3	4		3	1	18	18	15	6	29
Backwell Lake	44		24	15	10	12	8		14	28	18	36
BG	84	58	46	32	21	13	151	149	86	36	45	41
Chew Magna Resr.	4	4	5	8	7	3	4	9	2	2	2	4
CVL	345	270	155	200	155	625	1750	3050	3190	2945	1990	1405
BL	463	195	223	138	122	388	953	731	492	1213	675	557

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other records Recorded from a wide scatter of sites. The highest counts not in the table above were 18 at the temporary wetland at Western Distribution Park on May 1st and seven at Stoke Park on Feb.17th.

Breeding At CVL there were 40 broods, totalling 110 juveniles, a welcome improvement on the low levels of recent years and the best season in the last decade. At BL, 18 broods were seen, totalling 35 juveniles (cf. ten broods and 17 juveniles in 2012, when many nests were flooded out). Elsewhere recorded as follows: OPS (three broods, 11 young); New Passage (five broods, 13 young); PWD (one brood); Weston STW (nine broods totalling 26 young); Clapton Moor main rhyne (two broods, three young); Backwell Lake (five broods); Prior Park, Bath (one brood of three); and Chew Magna Res. (one young).

Year	1994/2003 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of nests		121	n/c	112	91	96	67	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
No. of broods	69	44	4	34	41	28	27	22	11	26	40
No. of young	190	102	9	70	91+	61	77+	46	n/c	50	110

Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedichnemus* (2, 8)

Rare vagrant.

Descriptions required.

Two March records on the North Avon coast: on 23rd on Northwick Warth, Severnside (B Lancaster) and on 29th at OPS (P J Hazelwood *et al.*, photographed – see opposite page 137). The OPS individual had at least one coloured ring but it had either lost some other rings or the full set was not observed; in any event it had probably been ringed in Wiltshire as might be expected. No ring was seen at Northwick, and so these were almost certainly different. During the cold spring a number were reported out of place in southern England some of which succumbed to the severe conditions. See page 139 for the historical data.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

[Amber 6]

Uncommon winter visitor/passage migrant. Rare inland.

By recent standards there was a reasonable showing, 17, as can be seen from the table on the next page where the 2004/13 average is 12 per year. All but two of the 2013 records were for the period early March to mid-April, and about half were from the OPS/Littleton area. The details are as follows:

OPS – five on March 4th and four on April 16th;

Littleton Warth – one on Jan. 22nd – the only winter record;

Severnside – one at Severn Beach on March 20th, two at New Passage from April 10th to 13th, and another on Oct. 25th;

Cl-Y, Yeo Estuary – single birds on March 3rd and 5th, and on April 21st;

Sand Bay – one on March 28th and 29th.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
7	6	14	4	8	15	8	15	22	9	17

Yearly totals

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

[Amber 6, 7]

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce breeder

Year	Severnside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Estuary	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	63	17	15	69	164
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	68	27	23	90	208
2011/12	75	40	22	67	204
2012/13	86	38	23	144	291

August to February average counts

Records of this species in the Avon area, both breeding and wintering, continue to increase; but it should be noted that it is still much less common than in some other UK estuaries. The status total above is the best ever noted for this species, this is in part due to record Axe Estuary counts (up to 330) in the autumn of 2012 not repeated in 2013 when the best was 224 on Sept. 22nd. The table below gives the monthly maxima at all sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	12	8	3	7	2	8	10	2	3		
Littleton Warth		5	1	1		1	6		3			1
Severnside	104	63	40	36	35	35	50	80	110	120	90	90
Avonmouth/PWD	2	3	4	8	8	8	10	35	54	20	45	14
Sea Mills (R. Avon)		2	6	4								
CI-Y	28	29	22	23	19	15	16	40	43	57	62	38
Sand Bay		49	97	14	14						28	56
Axe Estuary	41	60	76	31		4	8	37	224	147	83	93
CVL							3	3				1
BL								3	1			

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding Noted at four coastal sites, by recent standards a fairly normal result, the details are as follows:

Avonmouth Docks – a total of seven pairs nested at various sites in the dock area, outcomes were only recorded from one which produced three chicks;

PWD – two pairs were present in April and one was sitting on a nest in May, outcome unknown;

CI-Y – up to four 'pairs' were present in April and May but no further evidence was forthcoming;

Weston STW – a pair was nesting on the Visitors Centre roof on May 1st, and two pairs were present on June 29th.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica* (1, 2)*Very rare vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

One record: one was seen in flight only at BL on Oct. 23rd (N R Milbourne). The main identification points included the important pale grey underwings (as opposed to white for the next species) and the repeated flight call which was transcribed as 'kl-ee' having the accent on the clipped 'k' with the 'ee' level toned. See page 140 for the historical data.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

[Amber 7]

Fairly common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
1530	3310	1475	2460	3340	1790	1965	1590	3455	2720	2340

Yearly totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

The status figure in the table above is slightly down on the past two years but in line with the ten-year average of 2445. This is mainly because although flocks were quite widespread in the first winter period, counts in the second period were poor probably as a consequence of the mild weather. Present in numbers up to April 18th and from Sept. 24th with four coastal records of single birds in the interim. The details are given overleaf, only sites that recorded at least one count in double figures are included and the figures give the monthly maxima at the site in question. There was a large general cold weather movement on Jan. 18th (see Lapwing, Fieldfare, etc.) and this species was also involved. In the list given overleaf these counts are marked with an asterisk *.

OPS – January 100*;

Sevenside – January 95*, February 16, March 23, June, July and September one, and October seven. The February and March records were for the temporary Western Distribution Park site just inland from the coast;

CI-Y (see below) – January 22, February four, August and October one, and December 24;

Sand Bay and Worle (not usually recorded here) – January 45*, February 11, March 70, and December 40;

Weston STW – January 76, March four, September one and December eight;

Marshfield area – January 100, February 35, March 200, April 300, October 210, November 300 and December 100;

West Littleton – March 80, April 70, September one and October 250;

Stanton Wick – January 63;

Saltford – January five, February 16, March 56, and October 30;

Bristol International Airport – January 35, February 25, March 39, and November 20;

Congresbury Moor – January 75*;

CVL – September ten with single birds in April and from October onwards.

There was also a verbal report not included above for CI-Y on a Saturday in early March (precise date not recorded) of 'many hundreds' both in flight and on the ground around the mouth of the Kenn; further large migratory flocks have also been recorded here at this time of year including 190 in 2004, 500 in 2007 and 2000 in 2011.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

[Amber 6, 7]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce inland.

Year	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	8	31	39
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	8	28	36
2011/12	1	42	43
2012/13	4	31	35

September to March average counts

No major changes in the sightings of this species have occurred in the past few years; see table above. In 2013 higher counts were noted at Sand Bay than recently, but it seems likely that the regular CI-Y flock which often leaves the site at high tide was spending more of its time at this second site than in the past. It is also possible that the same was occurring between Sevenside and OPS. Noted up to June 10th and from Sept.18th, with one in Sand Bay on July 11th, and the table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. The only other records were of one at the Axe Estuary on March 16th and eight at Weston STW in December (no date given).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1	2	2	5	1				2	18	6	1
Sevenside	1		13	2	2				7	12	5	1
CI-Y	27	48	39	44		4			2	33	40	42
Sand Bay	40	41	36	19	2		1			3	30	40
CVL				1						4	1	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

[Red 3]

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

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 12th in National Importance.

The status table below shows an encouraging improvement in the winter flocks possibly related to the cold weather.

Year	Sevenside	CI-Y	CVL	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	356	280	332	968
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	267	388	236	891
2011/12	223	797	319	1239
2012/13	326	933	105	1364

August to February average counts

Lapwing continued

Even apart from a notable event in January, counts were generally up on those of recent years as shown on the previous page, but breeding records were again very limited. On Jan.18th, a cold and snowy Friday, there was a major cold weather movement with large flocks moving S or SW to avoid the severe conditions. Reports were received from 28 sites and about 14,800 were counted. There was probably some overlap in these counts, but as it was a weekday and the weather was poor, it is likely that several flocks were missed, for example there were no reports from the east of our area or from CVL on this day. The main sightings were as follows:

Axe Estuary/Weston	3000	OPS	1000
Bishopston (Bristol)	420	Pilning	580
CI-Y	4000	Sevenside	1700
Congresbury Moor	1000	Yatton Moor	1300

Major cold weather movements have been recorded in the past but none as large as this since December 1997. Reports of 2000 at Kingston Seymour (between CI-Y and the M5) and 2500 at East Hewish both on Jan.31st probably involved a return movement after the cold spell.

Below we present our usual two methods for monitoring this species. The first table gives estimates of the total counts in January and December over the past decade. Both 2013 totals are well up, the January figure reflects the cold weather movement mentioned above. The second table gives the standard monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. The December figure for CI-Y included a flock of about 1800 moving SW; some quite large movements can occur at this time of year without the stimulus of very cold weather. Apart from those mentioned above and in the table, counts of 100 or more were also noted in January at Claverton Down, Little Stoke, Puxton, Radstock, Savage Wood and Stanton Wick; in February at Burrington and Swineford; in November at Alveston; and in December at Charlfield.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013	2004/13 Av.
January	8300	8800	7400	3520	4840	7760	3710	3000	3550	16780	6770
December	6200	6900	3200	3640	2770	3450	3950	3800	2100	5380	3810

January and December Avon totals at all sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1000	100	160	20	1			1	38	225	1000	1240
Sevenside	1700	112	95	35	4	12	41	10	22	41	240	360
Western Dist. Park		130	28	26	16							
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	80	90						2	20	12	20	60
Avonmouth/PWD	150	62	14	4	1					7	18	38
CI-Y(incl. K.Seymour)	4000	1500	61	16	16	48	28	19	10	150	275	2050
Sand Bay		20	1							11		1
Axe Estuary	3000	700	225						21	86	158	472
Marshfield	250	14	18				1	1		8	100	
Saltford	81	50									4	
Keynsham	100	80									13	
Kenn Moor	300											156
CVL	170	150	75	1		5	50	47	80	115	175	415
BL	140	4					14	6	6	95	203	455

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding Three sites recorded successful broods, two 'new'. Otherwise display was noted at OPS and one or two were seen at CVL in May. Similar counts have been recorded recently but as noted previously this is very poor compared with two or three decades ago. The details of the successful broods are as follows:

Western Distribution Park, Sevenside – a new temporary site – two birds were sitting on separate nests in May and a brood of four was seen late in the month, see the Recorder's report on page 5;

Dowlais Farm, CI-Y – an artificial scrape, the best site in recent years – up to 12 were present in April, at least three were sitting on nests in mid-May, and five chicks were seen on 25th;

Yeo Estuary area, CI-Y – a 'new' natural farm site – one pair were displaying and probably laid eggs in late April, these were lost as the field was sown with Maize, but the pair began again and re-laid a clutch which hatched successfully producing four chicks that were still present into July. The Maize growth provided excellent cover for the nest as it grew.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

[RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant, generally more common in autumn. Scarce breeder.

A good series of sightings was reported from several sites on or near Severnside, including the new scrapes on the old rifle range behind Northwick Warth ('Pilning Wetlands'), and a temporary site inland from Severn Beach at the Western Distribution Park. There was no suggestion of breeding at the former site but much courtship and display was noted at the latter. The July Northwick Warth influx was mainly of juveniles, perhaps from the Western Distribution Park site (if nesting did take place here it would have been on inaccessible parts of the site). Also one nest was recorded and photographed under licence not too far away. In Avon as a whole it was noted from March 24th to Oct.1st at seven sites. The main counts are tabulated below, those for the two Severnside sites are the best ever for this part of the Avon coast. Reports were also received from three non-tabulated sites (note that none came from BG this year): Littleton Warth (which is not far from Northwick), single birds on April 6th and July 27th; PWD, two on March 24th; and Weston STW, one on 26th.

	March	April		May		June	July		August		September	
	24-31	1-15	16-30	1-15	16-31		1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30
Northwick Warth	5	2	9	4	3	3	12	7	7	7	2	1
Western D. Park	6	14	12	3	1							
CI-Y	1	2	1	1	1	1		1				
CVL		2	3	3			1	3	1	1	2	2
BL		1						1		2		

Fortnightly (or monthly) maxima

Breeding On June 4th a nest with three eggs was located inside Avonmouth Docks, and on 13th two chicks were noted. This is the first recorded successful breeding in Avon since 2010 (at BG). Considering the numbers seen at Northwick, which in July included a flock of seven juveniles, it seems highly likely that one or more extra unrecorded pairs also bred in this general coastal area of North Avon.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

[Amber 3, 7]

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

Two races: Most belong to the race *hiaticula* breeding in Canada and N. W. Europe. A few of the race *tundra* breeding from N. Scandinavia to Siberia may occur.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in International Importance.

Year	OPS		Severnside		CI-Y		Totals	
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	17	118	14	247	19	112	50	477
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	6	65	14	242	15	207	35	514
2011/12	4	62	12	82	30	280	46	424
2012/13	9	18	17	90	21	230	47	338

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

The reports of this species were variable with some improvements noted, especially in Sand Bay which appears to be returning to its former position as a major Estuary site. Several other sites posted poor counts for at least part of the year. It was noted in both winter periods with Severnside taking a major share of the total; in spring from the beginning of April to June 9th with a good range of sightings but mainly modest counts (for breeding see below); and in autumn from Aug. 4th to Nov. 2nd with again mainly modest counts. The highest were noted at Sand Bay with 345 on Aug. 19th, and at CI-Y with 340 on 25th (possibly the same flock), but only 12 were seen at Severnside during this period. The table below gives the fortnightly or monthly maxima, otherwise noted at the Western Distribution Park (five on April 22nd), and BG (one on Aug. 9th and 24th).

	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	1-15	16-31		
OPS/Lit.Warth	5	3	34	3	10	15	8			18	21	14	18	28	7	5	5
Severnside	22	10	16	18	35	16	18	13	2	39	70	110	42	60	19	16	17
PWD	4	1	5	11	6	1	5	6	2	150	175	55	24	34	6	32	
CI-Y	5	1	5	15	45	60	38	42	2	150	340	80	50	34	4	1	5
Sand Bay	7		30	40	28	14	17	14			345	50	11		8		
Axe Estuary		12	30			40			1	3	22	42	1		1	2	1
CVL				1		3	5			2	11	13	40	19	25		
BL										2	8	11	23	14			

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the well watched sites

Ringed Plover - Breeding As has become regular recently nests and chicks were seen in the Avonmouth/PWD area, seven chicks were reported, the detail are as follows:

Avonmouth Docks – three pairs bred producing a brood of three chicks, and two broods each with two chicks;

PWD – one pair was nesting in May, outcome unknown; this site has reported better results in the past.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

[Red 3]

Passage migrant, common in spring and uncommon in autumn. Scarce in summer and has occurred in winter.

Two races: It is assumed that all Avon records are of *phaeopus* race breeding in Iceland and N. Europe. The race *hudsonicus* breeding in Canada has occurred on the Welsh side of the Estuary.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in Importance.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1994 – 2003 Av.	30	34	79	143
2004 – 2011 Av.	20	46	56	122
2012	23	12	104	139
2013	25	60	108	193

April/May average counts

The status table above shows counts increasing over the past few years, the 2013 increase was mainly a result of a good figure for Sevenside; this was high because of a single count of 80 on April 28th, the next highest here in the corresponding period was 27. Also the spring passage was more extended than usual and included counts of 38 at Sand Bay on May 13th and 14th, and 44 at CI-Y on 15th. Present from April 10th to Oct. 2nd, with an extra exceptionally early record of one at Northwick Warth on March 25th. Other early records include sightings on March 26th in 1986 at CVL, and 29th in 2002 at OPS; there are even earlier sightings but they were thought to involve over-wintering birds.

As usual the autumn passage was much smaller, the largest count being 13, also at Northwick Warth, on July 24th. The table below summarises the fortnightly maxima at the main sites. The only other records were of six at Rushmead Lane, Marshfield on May 4th and two at BL on 19th.

	April		May		Jun	July		Aug		Sep	Oct
	10-20	21-30	1-10	11-30		1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31		
OPS/Littleton Warth	3	15	35	10			1	2	2		
Sevenside	6	80	40	10		3	13	4	1	1	
PWD	8	7		4		1	4	1			
CI-Y	6	105	110	44	4	1	2	7	3	5	1
Sand Bay	12	14	38	38	1	4	9	1	3		
Axe Est/Weston STW	2	1		4							
CVL		9	2		1			1	1		

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the well watched sites

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

[Amber 1, 3, 7]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. Uncommon inland. Has bred.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in (National) Importance.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	475	194	163	67	899
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	199	156	147	40	542
2011/12	199	177	321	26	723
2012/13	454	209	334	35	1032

August to February average counts

The status table above shows a high total for the 2012/13 winter, the main cause being better counts at OPS. Quite large (1000+) flocks have roosted here at night in the past and it is assumed that this was also occurring in 2013 although in most cases no times of day were given in the records; there is also likely to have been some overlap with the close-by Littleton Warth records. Otherwise the counts were in line with those of the recent past. The table on the next page gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Single birds were also seen in flight over Redland (Bristol) in January, Sandford Wood and Wrington in April, and Abbots Leigh and West Kingston in June; breeding has occurred in the general area of this last site in the past.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	520	375	550	224	9	14	650	100	600	350	600	600
Littleton Warth	220	6	70	78		5	40		200	40	155	155
Sevenside	280	210	110	45	4	40	200	250	270	170	140	180
Sea Mills (R.Avon)		2	1	1					1			
PWD	29	34	58	24	3	30	18	78	72	63	8	10
CI-Y	310	370	190	105	28	55	145	315	255	290	235	275
Sand Bay	100	155	68	120	24	30	115	130	20	14	75	145
Axe Estuary	62	55	12	11			8	13	36	48	23	24
CVL	1		2	1		2		1	3	1	1	1
BL										2	4	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

[Red 2]

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, generally more numerous in autumn.

Two races: Most records refer to *islandica* breeding in Iceland and N. Scotland, a few of the race *limosa* breeding in W. Europe have occurred in June and July. The *limosa* race is a description subspecies.

As last year a large flock appeared at Northwick Warth (Sevenside) late in the year, probably displaced from Slimbridge. This year they arrived in late November (late October in 2012). Mainly as a consequence of this, the status figures for 2012 and 2013 in the second table below are roughly the same and twice the average (512) for the past decade. On the other hand it is surprising that the first record for the year (one) was not until March 1st, and the first flock of any size (15) did not appear until 24th. Also effectively there were no records for June, the figure in the table refers to single birds seen on 1st and 29th. The table summarises the monthly maxima at all sites, the large Sevenside flock was present from Nov. 23rd to Dec. 12th with 165 on the first day rising to 208 two days later, 237 on Dec. 1st, and 200 were still present on the 4th. Note also 21 were reported from the nearly Western Distribution Park site on April 14th.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth		2	1		1	11	6	31		
Sevenside	15	26		1	18	20	85	80	208	237
PWD					13	2		5		1
CI-Y	1	22	3		2	12	6	1		3
Sand Bay		18				8	2			
Axe Est/Weston STW		1			1	6		6	1	6
CVL			6		22	17	19	8	2	
BL					3	1	16	6		

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

The next table gives the totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for the two godwit species.

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bk-t Godwit	499	769	686	338	224	431	279	179	263	972	982
Bar Godwit	197	434	75	202	1344	74	115	181	2521	781	170

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

[Amber 6, 7]

Passage migrant in varying numbers; usually uncommon but can occur in large numbers on spring passage. Scarce inland and in winter.

Compared with the previous two years there was no large spring passage in 2013, and so the status line figure given above dropped back close to the average figure (179) for the seven years in the last ten with no noticeable spring movement. Present up to June 9th and from Aug. 18th onwards, there were only three counts in double figures: 20 at CI-Y on April 15th, 45 in flight NE past New Passage on 21st, and 15 at OPS on May 6th. The table overleaf gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Other records included: five at Avonmouth on April 6th, one on Sept. 8th, two on 10th and one on 11th at CVL, and another at BL on Dec. 19th.

Bar-tailed Godwit continued

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	3	1	1	4	15				3	3		1
Sevenside	2	2	5	45	7	4		2	4	4	1	3
CI-Y	3	1	5	20		6		1	4	2	2	2
Sand Bay	1		1	5	2				2	1	1	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

[Amber 7]

Fairly common winter visitor/ passage migrant, scarce in summer and inland.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 16th in Importance.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	54	125	21	200
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	40	126	36	202
2011/12	43	103	53	199
2012/13	45	126	55	226

August to February average counts

After a run of years with little change, counts improved slightly in 2013 as shown in the status table above. Present up to May 23rd and from July 21st onwards, with an extra sighting of one at CI-Y on June 23rd. The main table gives the monthly maxima at most sites except for the two figures with asterisks. Much larger counts were made at these sites but in both cases it was thought likely that the main Sevenside flock had wandered away from its normal feeding and/or roosting areas; these records were: 150 at the mouth of the Avon at Avonmouth on April 15th and 120 (made up of 90 on Blackstone Rocks and the regular 30 between the Kenn and the Yeo) at CI-Y on Dec. 9th. There were two non-tabulated records: one at Weston STW on April 24th (the first record for the site), and another at BG on Aug. 2nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	45	70	35	21	2		2	37	31	60	20	55
Sevenside	110	120	150	185	30		8	60	67	120	180	120
PWD	32		10	1*	12		3	25		50	20	8
CI-Y	44	52	53	39	4	1		9	18	38	42	38*
Sand Bay					2		3	1				
CVL					1			8	1			

Monthly maxima at the main sites

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

[Amber 1, 6, 7]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce inland.

Two races: *islandica* (Nearctic) and *canutus* (Siberian) occur in N. W. Europe. Research suggests that almost all UK birds belong to the race *islandica*, hence it is assumed that this also holds for Avon populations.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
502	411	1520	172	595	293	462	2133	1073	876	823

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

The status line above shows that 2013 was a normal year as the 2004/13 average of the total yearly counts is 836, but there were reports from only six sites. Several quite large flocks were seen (mainly in flight) in January at CI-Y, and so the count of 300 in the table below is probably an underestimate for the largest gatherings. Big flocks (1000+) occur both at Steart (Somerset) and on the Welsh coast at this time of year, and sometimes they cross into Avon. It is perhaps also worth mentioning that two seen in January at Sevenside formed a part of the major cold weather Lapwing movement on 18th. Present up to May 31st and from Aug. 21st onwards with one at PWD in late July; the table lists the monthly maxima at all sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	2	2		2						11		
Sevenside	2	1	6	50	20			4	40	50	3	1
PWD							1	1	30			
CI-Y	300	65	25	15	28			4	12	9	8	8
Sand Bay	10	20	32	33					3		2	1
Axe Estuary		2		1	1				2	1		15

Monthly maxima at all sites

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

[Red 3]

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

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 20th in Importance.

The main component of the high monthly maxima total (57) for 2013 given in the *calidrid* summary table on page 67 was a stronger than usual autumn passage at CVL; note that the corresponding 2004/13 average is 26. Other sites recorded normal or poor numbers. One or two were reported during the winter periods at Severnside and CI-Y, and only single birds were noted at these sites and nowhere else in spring. The better than average autumn passage was from July 10th to Oct. 23rd, details for the whole year are as follows:

Littleton Warth – one on Sept. 21st;

Severnside – two on Jan. 18th seen during the major cold weather movement that day involving Lapwing and several other species; one on March 10th, April 1st to 5th, July 10th to 16th, 21st and 22nd, Aug. 26th, Sept. 6th and 18th with three on 21st rising to five by Oct. 1st and dropping back to one up to 14th;

CI-Y – single birds on Jan. 31st, Feb. 17th, May 15th, two on Oct. 2nd and Dec. 4th with one until 8th;

BG – one on Aug. 28th;

CVL – three arrived on Aug. 18th and this increased to nine on 27th, then eight or nine were present throughout September but with 11 on 21st, six remained until Oct. 9th and four until 23rd, all were juveniles except for a second-winter from Oct. 2nd to 9th;

BL – one on Aug. 19th, then one or two throughout September with six on 10th and one on Oct. 15th and 16th.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea**Passage migrant, scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Very rare in winter.*

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was third in Importance.

Counts were slightly above average, see summary table on page 67 which has a 2004/13 average of 37 for this species. Apart from single birds in May at Sand Point on 10th and New Passage on 15th, all sightings were on Aug. 11th or from 24th to Oct. 26th, and the highest count was 12 on Severnside in the last week of September. Autumn details from all eight sites are as follows:

OPS – three on Sept. 9th and one on Oct. 1st;

Severnside – one on Aug. 28th until Sept. 9th when two were present until 17th. After this date counts rose to ten on 22nd, 12 on 26th, 11 on 28th and eight on 29th, then two were present on Oct. 4th and 5th, four on 6th and seven on 9th with one remaining until 26th (the last record);

PWD - four on Aug. 11th and Sept. 7th, three on 11th and two on 28th;

CI-Y – one on Aug. 24th and Sept. 2nd, three on 8th, eight on 10th, one on 24th, 25th and Oct. 2nd and three on 23rd;

Sand Bay – four on Sept. 3rd, one on 6th, and two on 10th;

Axe Est/Weston STW – one on Sept. 14th, 19th and 20th;

CVL – single juveniles on Sept. 3rd, 9th, 10th and Oct. 1st to 4th with two from Sept. 20th to 23rd;

BL – one on Sept. 24th.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba**Uncommon passage migrant, more common in spring than in autumn. Very scarce in winter and inland.*

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 24th in (National) Importance.

A big drop in flock sizes was noted compared with the last three years as shown in the scarce *calidrid* table on page 67 where the 2004/13 average for this species is 85 (see also page 137). This was mainly as a consequence of a very poor spring passage. In the past few years spring maxima at Severnside have often been in the range 20 to 30, in 2013 the highest count here was five. Up to four were seen in both winter periods in the Sand/Weston Bay area, spring passage was from April 7th to June 6th, and the autumn passage was from July 13th to Oct. 19th; the details are as follows:

OPS – one on April 7th and May 10th, two on 15th, four on 18th, three on 27th, and one on Aug. 8th;

Severnside – five on May 7th, two on 10th, four from 11th to 15th, two on 26th and July 13th, one on 21st and 22nd, and three on Sept. 7th;

PWD – one on May 17th and two on Aug. 4th;

CI-Y – one on April 25th, two on May 4th and 15th, one on June 6th, eight on Aug. 9th, two on 20th, three on 23rd, 25th, and 31st, and one again from Sept. 21st to 25th;

Sanderling continued

Sand Bay – three on April 9th, 10th and May 14th, one on 23rd, four on Aug. 17th, two on 21st, one on 23rd, then four on Sept. 8th, two on 10th and finally four again on Dec. 24th;

Axe Estuary – four on Jan. 5th, two on May 11th, one on Oct. 19th, and two on Dec. 20th and 22nd;

BG – six (a good inland count) on April 18th with one close by at Dundry on the same day;

CVL – an adult on July 17th, one on 26th with four adults on Aug. 12th.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

[RR] [Red 3]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage.

Three races: *alpina* breeding from N. Scandinavia eastwards occurs mainly in winter, *schinzii* breeding in N. W. Europe occurs mainly on passage, and *arctica* breeding in N. E. Greenland is rare and only recorded in late May and June.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in (International) Importance.

Year	OPS		Severnside		CI-Y		Totals	
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	856	172	2769	421	2494	140	6119	733
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	579	76	2001	346	1438	263	3918	685
2011/12	1014	47	1900	75	1936	225	4850	347
2012/13	562	26	1720	290	2170	513	4452	829

Winter (October to February) and the following autumn (August and September) average counts

Both passage and winter numbers were more or less in line with the recent past and all counts were below 4000 – an average maximum figure for the past decade but well down on those of a quarter of a century ago. Autumn counts were not high but were more consistent than usual with reasonably sized flocks present throughout the period except at Severnside in August; see the tables below and on page 73. At most sites winter counts were possibly a bit low, noticeably so at OPS whilst those at Sand Bay continued their recent upward trend. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, they were present up to June 16th and from July 2nd onwards; as usual those seen in July were mostly adults (and probably mostly from the race *schinzii*) but counts were poor. The only non-tabulated records were of one at the Memorial Park in Keynsham in January (!), at BG with four in May, one in August and ten in late October, and at the Western Distribution Park (inland from Severnside) with two in April and one in May.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	265	300	700	90	23			29	35	250	1200	650
Littleton Warth	610	275	150	14			20		45	91	600	100
Severnside	2400	1000	600	140	160	3	27	79	500	1000	2000	3000
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	1	15	12									20
PWD/Avonmouth	600	480	600	500	43		25	645	100	75	1000	150
CI-Y	2850	2150	1500	325	325	24	110	500	525	450	2500	3900
Sand Bay	400	150	450	315	31	12		350	235	3	2000	890
Axe Estuary	920	152	285	32	255		6	11	30	40	900	370
CVL	2			2	8	1	4	21	15	16	3	1
BL								5	3	5	14	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Arctica Dunlin *Calidris alpina arctica*

Rare passage migrant only recorded in late spring. Probably under recorded but 29 published records.

Descriptions required.

One record: one was photographed with 11 *schinzii* Dunlin at New Passage (Severnside) on May 27th (J P Martin). The past history of this subspecies was summarised up to 2009 in the Report for 2010, three were seen that year and two in 2012.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

[Amber 3, 5]

Scarce winter visitor, very rare inland.

Descriptions required for inland records.

Counts up to late spring were normal but those for the second winter period were below average especially at the Birnbeck Pier site. For historical data see table below (which for this species has a total monthly maxima average of 65 for the decade 2004/13) and page 144. The details are given on the next page.

New Passage, Severnside – one from Jan. 19th to 25th;

Battery Point, Portishead – nine in January, seven in February and March, nine again in April up to 26th, five on May 12th and one until 28th also seen at PWD on 25th, then two on Oct. 31st, four in November and seven in December;

Sand Point – two on March 24th;

Birnbeck Pier, Weston-s-Mare – six in January, four up to Feb. 14th, one on Nov. 7th, 9th and 21st with two on Dec. 6th.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Rare in winter.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in Importance.

There was a better showing in 2013 compared with those for the last decade, see the table below where the 2004/13 average for this species is 17. In 2013 no count was over four but it was fairly widely reported. None were seen on spring passage, autumn passage was from Aug. 30th to Oct. 30th, and there were two winter records. Unless stated otherwise it is assumed that all autumn records refer to juveniles.

Severnside – two on Sept. 5th and 6th, one until two again on 11th, then one until Oct. 2nd, and on Dec. 19th and 20th;

PWD – one from Sept. 2nd to 9th;

CI-Y – one on March 28th and Sept. 7th, two on 8th, one on 10th and 12th, four (one adult) on 25th, one on Oct. 1st, two (one adult) on 6th, and one on 8th;

Sand Bay/ Axe Estuary – one noted at both sites on Sept. 12th;

CVL – one on Sept. 8th to 10th, three from 20th to 23rd, one on 27th, three again from 30th to Oct. 4th, two on 9th and one until 15th, then two from 19th to 23rd and finally one on 30th;

BL – two on Aug. 30th, one until Sept. 4th, two on 21st and 22nd, one until Oct. 5th, two on 23rd and finally one on 25th.

Scarce *Calidrid* waders in the Avon area

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Ruff	34	10	35	11	35	3	12	29	43	25	57
Curlew Sandpiper	45	14	37	22	19	20	9	95	64	33	56
Sanderling	53	80	72	68	72	53	61	105	129	143	72
Purple Sandpiper	30	58	48	51	64	75	64	75	61	80	70
Little Stint	48	13	21	20	17	14	15	13	18	13	27
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	2	1	4	0	2	0	0	6	0	0

Totals of maximum monthly counts at all sites for the year

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius* (2, 74)

Scarce wind driven visitor in autumn, rare at other times. Records are about equal inland and coastal.

Descriptions required.

Two coastal records from the north of our area: a juvenile/first-winter at New Passage on Sept.18th (P D Bowerman, J P Martin *et al.*), and a first-winter at Littleton Warth on 21st (J P Martin *et al.*). Both were seen and photographed on the water, although they looked superficially very similar it was thought that they were distinct as the eye patch was more extensive on the second individual. For historical data see the table below and page 146.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
1	3	1	5	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	6	1	1	3	4	3	11	1	2

Total number of individuals per year

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

[Amber 1, 3]

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was sixth in Importance and CVL 20th.

Compared with some others, this wader species only fared moderately in 2013, the status line figures given overleaf are down on those for 2012 especially so in the autumn suggesting a poor breeding season; the 2004/13 totals average for spring is 68 and for autumn it is 177. Also the largest count during this period was 12 which compares unfavourably with the 2012 maximum figure of 27. Winter sightings seem to be becoming more widespread as it was recorded at six sites in both winter periods. One was at BL in both winter periods and at CVL in the second period. There were also records at CVL for the first winter period (usually rare here at this time of year) – two in January and one in mid March – which probably relate to wandering from BL.

Common Sandpiper continued

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	59	65	57	29	38	93	65	88	73	94	74
Autumn	184	178	136	139	141	184	186	197	205	237	162

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for spring (April and May) and autumn (July to October)

The spring passage started on April 10th, most had passed through by the first week of May with a few until June 4th, and the autumn passage began on 23rd and was mostly completed by mid-September with a few remaining into October. The table below gives the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites. It was recorded at seven further sites in April: Backwell Lake (four), Bitterwell Lake, Henfield (one), Chew Magna Reservoir (one), Congresbury Moor (two), Eastville Park Lake (two) and Western Distribution Park, near Severnside (one); and with one was at Bath in August.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		May		Jun	Jul		Aug		Sept		Oct	Nov	Dec
				1-15	16-30	1-15	16-31		1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30			
OPS/Littleton				1	5	1				3	2	2	1				
Severnside				1	3	1		5	3	6	9	12	5	2			
PWD/Pill					3	1			4	9	3	4	1				
Sea Mills	6	1	4	4	2				1		8	3	3	3	3	1	4
CI-Y		1		7	7	2	1		9	12	12	12	4	1		1	
Sand Bay				2	1	2											
AxeE./Weston STW			2	7	2	6				2	2	1	3			1	
Saltford									1	3	1		1				
BG	2	1	1	11	9	3			9	5	7	5	4		2		
CVL	1		1	11	17	4	2	1	10	3	10	9	5	2	2	1	1
BL	1	1	1	3	3	3		1	4	7	5	6	6	2	1	1	1

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

[Amber 5]

Fairly common autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and spring.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 21st in (National) Importance.

Totals fro the past decade are given in the status line table below.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
87	70	76	76	51	62	94	110	121	90	121

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

The status line above shows good numbers in 2013 partly as a consequence of a strong and extended autumn passage at CVL, the 2004/13 average is 87. No counts were received from ASW, a site that recorded several high counts in the past; see page 137. Present up to April 28th and from June 20th onwards, the table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. The remaining records were: in August, three calling in flight to NE over Bishopston (Bristol) on 8th – an unusual record – and single birds at Marshfield on 3rd, at Chipping Sodbury Common on 5th, OPS on 9th, Littleton Warth on 13th, and on Dec. 14th at Chew Magna Reservoir.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside			1	2		1	4	5	1		1	
PWD							3	1	1	1		
CI-Y	2	2	1				1	5	1		1	
Axe E./Weston STW	1		1					1				
Saltford	2						1	2	2	2	1	2
Congresbury Moor	1		2	2								
BG	1									1	1	
CVL	1	2	3	3		3	10	14	14	5	7	6
BL	1							2	3			1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

[Amber 1, 5]

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

Only a handful of records was received, all were of single birds, four in winter, none in spring and eight in autumn. This is similar to several recent years but down on the previous three; see the table below. The sites and dates are as follows:

OPS – Aug. 28th;

Sevenside – Nov. 23rd;

CI-Y – Nov. 4th and Dec. 4th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Jan. 1st, Aug. 3rd and 21st, Sept. 5th, 7th, 11th, 15th, 19th and 22nd;

CVL – Oct. 29th.

	1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	0	0	4	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Autumn	5	10	7	10	4	11	6	2	3	4	3	24	6	3	3	2	12	36	9	3

Spring and autumn passage, totals of the maximum site counts

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia**Uncommon passage migrant, more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter.*

Sightings were about normal compared with the past few years, see the second table below where the 2004/13 averages were four for CI-Y and six for CVL suggesting some recent improvement at the second site. But see also page 149. One was seen as usual at Sea Mills in both winter periods (up to April 20th and from Aug. 14th onwards), there was a very small spring passage, and it was recorded at nine sites in autumn with a maximum count of 13 at CVL on Aug. 16th and 17th with ten still present on 19th. The first table below summarises the monthly maxima, some more detailed autumn breakdowns for the main sites are given on pages 72 and 73. The March record for CI-Y was of one seen on eight occasions at the mouth of the R. Banwell on the western edge of the site between 2nd and April 8th. The records for the four non-tabulated sites were of single birds as follows: at OPS on May 15th and Aug. 7th; at PWD on July 4th and 6th; at Sand Bay on Aug. 25th, Sept. 2nd and 12th; at the Axe Estuary on Sept. 5th and Weston STW on Aug. 31st, Sept. 6th and 9th. The May Sevenside entry below relates to sightings at the Western Distribution Park on 1st and New Passage on 22nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside				1	1		4	5	1			
Sea Mills	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1
CI-Y			1	3	1	1	4	1	3	2		
CVL						1	1	13	6			
BL								2	2	1		

Monthly maxima at the main sites

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
CI-Y	14	5	3	4	3	4	4	6	6	5	4
CVL	9	4	5	1	2	1	7	10	11	2	13

Maximum single count at CI-Y and CVL

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

[Amber 1, 5]

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

All records were of single juveniles for the period Aug. 8th to 26th only, and almost all were seen at the main reservoirs. The exception was one in flight past Aust Warth on 9th. It was thought that about four individuals were involved altogether, and this is in line with the recent past as can be seen from the table below. The reservoir sites and dates in August were as follows:

CVL – 9th, 13th to 17th, 19th to 21st, 23rd and 26th;

BL – 8th and 11th to 16th.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
5	6	7	7	7	8	8	4	1	7	8	8	1	2	2	9	4	7	4	4

Total number of individuals per year

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

[Amber 1, 3, 7]

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

Two races: *totanus* breeding in UK and W. Europe and *robusta* breeding in Iceland. It is likely that both occur but there is no definite evidence either way.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 15th in (National) Importance.

Year	OPS	Sea Mills	CI-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	45	82	105	189	421
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	44	82	148	199	473
2011/12	33	88	325	275	721
2012/13	29	72	301	260	662

August to February average counts

The strong showing of the past few years continued into 2013, and at least one pair bred successfully. As last year the highest count (655) came from the Axe Estuary in September. Good counts continue to be recorded at CI-Y and the October Severnside count (245 on 17th) was high for this site, but some counts at Sea Mills have been larger in the past. The table below gives the monthly maxima at all ten sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	12	32	35	25	5		1	15	47	45	45	23
Littleton Warth	47	35	48	41			5		27	70	45	90
Severnside	150	80	70	40	5	6	48	70	130	245	200	150
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	70	95	70	60				30	70	125	80	80
Avonmouth/PWD	42	213	156	75		32	100	210	145	150	120	140
CI-Y	310	315	310	235	4	24	105	150	220	255	380	430
Sand Bay		15	50	20	1				2		73	28
Axe E./WestonSTW	119	265	220	310	3	12	107	505	655	300	160	330
CVL			1	2	1	2	4	14	1	1	1	
BL				1			1	3		1	3	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding Only proved at Dowlais Farm, CI-Y. Two pairs were present and displaying in May and at least two chicks were seen in early June. This is the first definite breeding record since 2001 when a chick was seen at PWD; three large young were reported at Weston STW in 2005 but it could not be proved that they had hatched at the site. A few pairs were noted at some other coastal sites in May but no breeding activity was reported.

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, probably overlooked.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in Importance.

Records were similar to those of the past few years (see page 151) although the second winter period sightings were a bit on the low side. Reported up to April 16th and from Sept. 28th onwards, the highest count was seven at the temporary Western Distribution Park site just inland from the coast at Severnside on Feb. 27th. The table summarises the monthly maxima. Other sightings included in January: five in the Gordano Valley (noted during a Pheasant shoot) and one at Marshfield, and in March single birds at BL and Rockhampton with two on Chipping Sodbury Common on 6th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	2		2				1		2
Severnside area	4	7	2	2		1	4	1	1
PWD		1		1				1	
CI-Y	3	2	2	1				1	4
Sand Bay	5							1	
Weston STW	1	3	2	3			2	1	1
Yate	4	2	4						
Bradley Stoke	1		1						
Congresbury/Kenn Moor	3							3	1
CVL		2	1	3		1	1		1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

[Amber 1]

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

The year 2013 was one of two halves with 46 records in the first winter period up to April 10th, but only six in the second from Oct. 20th onwards. Up to 25 were noted during Pheasant shoots in late January in the Gordano Valley. See page 152 for some historical data. Otherwise most records were of one or two, the larger counts were: eight at Rocks Wood East (Marshfield) on Jan.11th, five at Dolebury Warren Reserve on Feb.12th and seven in Midger Wood on March 9th. Apart from these sites, reports were received for the first winter period from Abbots Leigh, Avonmouth, BL, Burrington Ham, Charlton Hayes, Clevedon, Cloud Wood (Marshfield), Congresbury Moor, Corston, CVL, Dundry, Kenn Moor, Kingsweston Down, Leap Valley (Downend), Northwick Warth/Pilning, PWD, Saltford, Shortwood, Weston Moor, Weston Wood, Wetmoor and Wooscombe Bottom.

The second-winter records were of two at Pilning on Oct. 20th, and single birds on Weston Moor in mid-November, and at Compton Dando STW, CVL, Kenn Moor and Saltford in December.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

[Amber 1]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred in the past.

Two races: *gallinago* breeding throughout the palearctic and *feareansis* breeding in the N. Isles and Iceland. Most in Avon belong to the first race, a very small but unknown number of the second race probably also occur.

WeBS status: In 2012/13 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 25th in Importance.

Year	OPS	Severnside	CI-Y	Total
1993/94 – 2002/03 Av.	36	18	20	74
2003/04 – 2010/11 Av.	24	18	14	56
2011/12	3	10	8	21
2012/13	29	35	43	107

November to February average counts

A dramatic rise in the records of this species has been seen over the past year or so. The five-fold increase in the status line total above is the largest over a single-year for any wader species since this method of recording began two decades ago. But in all probability this rise can be attributed entirely to the extremely wet conditions that we have been experiencing in the last eighteen months especially on the N. Somerset moors. The highest count in 2013 was 350 recorded during a Pheasant shoot in the Gordano Valley on Jan.31st. Present up to May 3rd and from July 15th onwards, and noted at a wide range of sites including the temporary Western Distribution Park. Apart from the 15 listed below with their monthly maxima, these sites included: Ashton Vale (ten in January), ASW (26 in January), BG (three in January and September), Patchway (five in March), Saltford, Sand Bay (25 in February and one in November, it is surprising that no more were seen here), Wetmoor (nine in March), and West Littleton (four in December). Not many were reported from the east of our area, perhaps the conditions were dryer here.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	80	15	30	3	1				2	2	6	3
Littleton Warth	15	3	1				2	1	15	4	23	12
Severnside	72	31	34	20			1	5	19	15	9	13
Western Dist. Park		72	100	3								
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	9	2									1	4
PWD	31	22	15	3				2	3	20	17	30
CI-Y	42	14	12	11	1		1	1	20	10	10	52
Axe Est/WestonSTW	33	9	48	1				11	8	12	5	15
Yate/Sodbury Com.	7	4	6	6								
Keynsham	91	26							1			
Stoke Park		6	3	4								4
Kenn Moor	136	12	20						2		46	49
Congresbury Moor	24	44	11	1							22	38
CVL	20	2	3	5			3	8	50	11	5	25
BL	40	73	15	9				10	26	4		2

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Autumn Migration at CVL

Water levels dropped considerably during the autumn exposing good patches of mud and some stony areas. As a consequence large numbers of waders were seen, three times as many as in 2012 and nearly twice the 2004/13 average of 498, see first table below. No species predominated, and although good numbers were present as in 2011, the species count was well down – 23 in 2013 compared with 31 in 2011 (and only 17 in 2012, a year with high water levels) – and there were no vagrants.

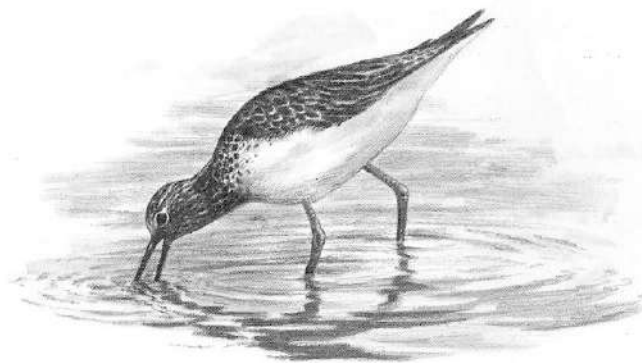
1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
452	281	834	211	134	108	569	505	1119	295	910

Totals of the ten-day maxima for all waders (excluding Lapwing) 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		2	1	3	1	2						
Golden Plover									10	3		1
Grey Plover										1	4	
Lapwing	25	40	50	40	47	45	22	40	80	70	80	115
Little Ringed Plover	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	1			
Ringed Plover				2	3	11	13	23	40	19	6	25
Whimbrel				1		1						
Curlew				1	1	1	3					1
Black-tailed Godwit	22	5	9	11	12	17	16	19	12	8	1	1
Bar-tailed Godwit							1	2				
Turnstone				1		8			1			
Ruff					3	9	8	8	11	6	6	4
Curlew Sandpiper							1	1	2	1		
Sanderling		1	1		4							
Dunlin		4	2	4	3	21	9	15	14	16	15	6
Little Stint							1	1	3	3	2	2
Common Sandpiper	10	5	3	10	7	8	9	1	2	1	2	
Green Sandpiper	4	7	10	11	14	14	14	10	11	5	5	4
Greenshank	1	1	1	3	13	5	6	4	4	1		
Wood Sandpiper				1	1	1						
Redshank	1	2	4	1	3	14		1	1			
Jack Snipe										1	1	
Snipe		1	3	3	5	8	38	50	10	11	11	5

Maximum count in each ten day period



Greenshank

Autumn Wader Migration on the Coast

The fortunes of the two coastal sites changed markedly between 2012 and 2013, see the first table below which gives Severnside and CI-Y totals of the ten-day maxima for all species listed. Although the figures for Severnside and CI-Y in 2013 are relatively high, in both cases about two-thirds are made up by counts for one species, Dunlin. Generally speaking, except for those in August, Severnside reports improved considerably whilst those at CI-Y declined. Since 2007 when this method of counting started, the count ratio between these two sites given below has varied widely; it is not known why.

	2007	08	09	10	11	12	2013	2007/13 Av.
Severnside	4216	3005	1858	1828	2471	1914	3607	2699
CI-Y	1934	1823	2983	3102	5452	4231	4363	3412
Ratio CI-Y/SS	0.46	0.61	1.61	1.70	2.21	2.21	1.21	1.26

Autumn wader migration totals at Severnside and CI-Y

As in the past six years the table below gives the maximum count for selected species in each ten-day period between July 1st and Oct. 28th. Only species that are mainly migratory or have a distinct migratory population are included and as noted above, in 2013 the migratory *schinzii* Dunlin predominated.

		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
Golden Plover	SS			1	1					1	1	1	
	CI-Y				1							1	
Grey Plover	SS								7	3	7	5	10
	CI-Y									3	33	13	30
Little Ringed Plover	SS	9	12	6	3	12	1	1	2		1		
	CI-Y			1									
Ringed Plover	SS	1	2	2	39	34	12	110	30	42	60	20	19
	CI-Y		2	2	150	80	340	80	25	50	34	1	4
Whimbrel	SS	1	3	13	4	3	1	1					
	CI-Y	1	1	2	7	2	3	5	1	1	1		
Black-tailed Godwit	SS	7	13	18	8		20	13	13	85	80	25	5
	CI-Y			2	11	12	4	5	2	6	1		
Bar-tailed Godwit	SS					1	2	2	3	4	4	1	
	CI-Y					1			3	4	2		
Knot	SS						4	1	12	17	50	20	1
	CI-Y							6	10	11	1	2	1
Ruff	SS	1	1	1			1	1	1	3	5	1	
	CI-Y										2		
Curlew Sandpiper	SS						1	2	3	12	8	7	1
	CI-Y						1	3	8	1			3
Sanderling	SS		2	1				3					
	CI-Y				15		3	3		1			
Dunlin	SS	6	19	27	20	79	11	160	150	500	700	400	500
	CI-Y		55	110	500	150	325	220	525	275	250	400	450
Little Stint	SS							2	2	1	1		
	CI-Y							2	1	4	2		
Common Sandpiper	SS	2	3	6	9	9	12	5	2	1			
	CI-Y	4	9	12	11	12	12	4	4	1			
Green Sandpiper	SS	1	2	4	5	4	1	1	1				
	CI-Y		1		3	1	5	1					
Greenshank	SS	2	2	4		2	5	1					
	CI-Y		4	4	1	1	1	3		2			

Severnside and CI-Y - Maximum autumn ten-day counts

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus* (16, 189)

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor; very rare inland.
 Descriptions required.

Another good spring passage, the details are as follows:

Severn Beach – a distant pale morph adult was photographed on May 3rd (*per* Severnsidebirds), with three pale morph and one dark morph the next day (*per* Severnsidebirds). A pale morph adult was photographed at 08.40 on May 10th with further pale morph adults at 09.40 and 10.15 and next day a flock of four pale morph adults was seen (both D Nevitt *et al.*);

Sand Point – two on April 18th, three on May 10th with four the next day, the May sightings presumed to be the same as seen later at Severn Beach (all P A Bowyer), and one on June 15th (L Bailey, P A Bowyer);

CVL – a pale morph adult flew through at 11.05 on Sept. 28th (R Mielcarek).

Observers are reminded that descriptions or photographs are required for this species; a number of claims had no supporting details, see also below under Skua sp.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

[Red 3]

Uncommon spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn). Rare inland, mainly at CVL, with 34 recorded inland between 1983 and 2012.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A total of about 45 was recorded in April and May, which was a slight improvement on last year's showing, this included 29 from May 9th to 11th (with probably some duplication between different sites up and down the Estuary). Another small influx occurred in June. The autumn passage was relatively poor with just four coastal records and a series of sightings at CVL on one day in late September.

Spring passage The first sightings were on April 6th, when one passed Middle Hope and four were at Severn Beach. There were seven more April records as follows: two at Severn Beach on 14th; one at Sand Point on 15th and another on 16th; three at Severn Beach on 18th; one at Sand Point on 23rd and three here on 29th with one at Severn Beach next day. The first week of May produced at a dark morph at Severn Beach on 3rd; two at Ladye Bay, Clevedon next day and one at Sand Point on 5th. Most occurred in a three day period in mid-month with at least two at Severn Beach on 9th; nine (four pale and five dark morph) here next day and seven on 11th when there were also five at Ladye Bay, Clevedon, and six at Sand Point.

Midsummer There was another minor influx associated with inclement weather in June with two at Severn Beach on 13th and perhaps the same at Northwick Warth on 15th; a dark morph at Battery Point on 22nd and a pale morph at Severn Beach next day.

Autumn passage Records from three sites as follows: OPS – a dark morph adult flew upriver on Sept. 16th (A J Middleton), and on 29th a dark morph attacked the evening gull roost (P J Hazelwood); Severnside - one flew down river at New Passage on Aug. 9th and another was at Severn Beach on Nov. 3rd; and CVL - a series of records on Sept. 26th with a dark morph adult late morning (K E Vinicombe), a dark morph juvenile late afternoon (A H Davis, R M Andrews), and dark and pale morph juveniles early evening (R Mielcarek); see full account on page 165.

Note that descriptions are required for records away from the Estuary/coast. (*Eds.*)

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

[Amber 6, 7]

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor. Rare inland with nine recorded between 1983 and 2012.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

More intensive watching of sites in the outer Estuary resulted in a greater number of records from the CI-Y and Weston-s-Mare areas than usual. There is likely to have been some duplication between various sites but equally it is easy for some moving through to be missed, even at well watched sites. The total of up to 55 is the highest for at least a decade and it might be the first time this species has outnumbered the declining Arctic Skua. There was also an exceptional series of records at CVL on one day in late September.

Spring passage Three at Sand Point and two at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on April 14th were the first records of the spring. Later in the month there were two at Sand Point and four at Severn Beach on 18th followed by single individuals at Sand Point on 24th and 29th. In early May there was one at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on 4th, one at Sand Point on 5th and two at Severn Beach on 7th. As with Arctic Skua the three days from May 9th to 11th produced most records: one at Sand Point and three at Severn Beach on 9th; three at Sand Point and five at Severn Beach on 10th; and two at Sand Point, two at Portishead and three at Severn Beach on 11th. Another was at Sand Point on 13th. June produced four at Severn Beach on 13th and one at Northwick Warth on 15th.

Autumn passage Reported at six sites between Sept. 22nd and Nov. 5th as follows, note three on Oct 27th:

OPS – four on Sept. 26th (J Sanders) were clearly part of an overland movement, see CVL below;

Littleton Warth – a juvenile flying down river from OPS on Sept. 22nd (M J Wheeler);

Severn Beach – single birds on Oct. 27th and Nov. 2nd;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – two on Oct. 27th;

Anchor Head – two on Oct. 27th, one on 28th and four, the last of the year, on Nov. 5th;

CVL – an exceptional movement occurred here on Sept. 26th in murky conditions (see also Arctic Skua and the article on page 165) Five, including one with a damaged tail, circled the lake over Twycross at 10.05 and were then lost. They might have been different from five high over Stratford Bay for five minutes an hour later. At 11.30, seven circled over the lake, none of them showing any tail damage. They soon disappeared after which none were seen until 15.15 when another appeared, eventually landing on the water and remaining for some time. Hence the movement almost certainly involved 18 birds – a remarkable total.

Note that descriptions are required for records away from the Estuary/coast.

SKUA sp *Stercorarius sp.*

Noted as follows:

OPS – one on April 18th was thought to be a Pomarine;

Aust Warth – six (four dark morph, two pale morph) on May 10th were reported as Pomarine but with no supporting notes;

Severn Beach – two pale morphs on April 18th and five pale morphs at 06.45 on May 10th were reported as Pomarine but with no supporting notes; another unidentified small skua was noted on May 14th;

Ladye Bay, Clevedon – three on April 15th and another on May 6th. One here on May 4th and another on 11th were reported as Pomarine but with no supporting notes;

CVL – a small skua that flew east to west over the lake at 12.40 on Sept. 25th was thought to be a Long-tailed but the views were insufficient for a conclusive identification (A H Davis, R Mielcarek).

Skuas in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Pomarine Skua,	59	4	3	13	3	17	2	5	17+	16+
Arctic Skua	65	23	50+	51	37	47	17	40+	40+	57
Long-tailed Skua					1					
Great Skua	26	10	26+	13	4	14	3	13	12	69
Skua sp.	58	11	6	7		5		9	3	22

Total numbers for the last ten years

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

[Amber 6, 7]

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; no inland records prior to 2008.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A poor year with just four records as follows:

Upstream of the Severn Bridge: OPS – one was watched fairly close in, drifting slowly downstream on Jan.1st (A J Middleton, M Plenty);

Severn Beach – one on Nov. 2nd;

Anchor Head – one on Oct. 28th and another on Nov. 3rd.

Auks in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Guillemot	8	1	11	4	3	37	3	11	6	4
Razorbill	1	1	2					1		
Guillemot/Razorbill				1				6+		
Little Auk			2	1		1	1			

Total numbers for the past ten years

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

[Amber 1, 4, 7]

Scarce passage migrant; generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

Another rather poor year for this declining species, with four records between mid-April and mid-May, one of them inland (although the CI-Y individual was also not strictly on the coastline itself). The details are as follows including a ten-year summary in the table below:

New Passage – one on April 18th;

CI-Y – one on May 5th, which was at Tutshill's Ear Pool (R. Yeo); it was seen feeding in some typically shallow small side flashes which seemed to be no more than a few centimetres deep;

Severn Beach - two on May 10th;

CVL – one on May 18th.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Coastal	5	1	19	2	14	3	1	6	3	4
Inland	1	0	7	2	1	4	3	3	0	1

Records for the last ten years

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybrida* (2, 3)

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

Two records of summer plumaged adult(s) at CVL in April.

The first was on April 23rd and was initially photographed over Herriott's Pool at 08.25 (T Grant). It was later relocated at Woodford Lodge from where it showed well to many observers for the rest of the day.

The second was on 25th; again initially seen over Herriott's Pool at 09.00 (A Lester) it was then quickly relocated to near Woodford Lodge; again it showed well to many observers for the rest of the day.

Both these sightings are presumed to relate to two adults seen at Shapwick Heath NNR, Somerset on the 21st and 22nd; those birds then separated and were also subsequently seen at a number of sites in Gloucestershire and Somerset.

The CVL individual(s) were photographed on both dates (see opposite page 136). Although the photographs show no obvious differences, and so there is no definite proof, most observers who studied them in flight on both dates considered that the bird seen on 25th was different to the one seen on 23rd; BBRC agreed with this view.

There are three previous records for the Avon area, all from CVL and involving four birds; one in June 1959, two in May 1983 and one in April 2006.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

[Amber 1]

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

Another poor year.

Spring passage The first two were quite early migrants seen at Chittening Warth on April 15th followed by one at Severn Beach on 19th, another at Sand Point next day and four at CVL on 25th and 26th. In May a small movement on 6th produced two at OPS, four at Severn Beach, two at BG and one at CVL. The last of the spring was one at CVL on 15th.

Autumn passage Very poor with the first, a juvenile, at New Passage on Aug.18th then just one more juvenile during the month at CVL on 25th and 26th. After five at CVL on Sept. 5th there was one here on 7th and 8th, another on 16th and 17th, which might have been the juvenile that was then present at BL from 18th to 22nd.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	2	2	1	2	5	3	2	14	2	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	70	31	30	13	10	10	43	24	3	2
No of days recorded (total for year)	46	17	42	15	14	17	24	40	15	11

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

[Amber 1, 4, 6]

Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

An excellent year with records in every month from March to October and a good number of inland records.

Spring passage Four flying to W over the dam at BL on March 31st heralded a good spring for this species. Two more were here on April 4th. On 6th there were four at OPS, ten at Severn Beach and two at Middle Hope. During the rest of the month there was one at CVL on 10th; four at Middle Hope on 12th; one at Severn Beach and three at Sand Point on 14th; one at Sand Bay on 16th and 20th, and one at OPS on 23rd. In May there was one at Severn Beach on 1st and two at Sand Point on 11th.

Autumn passage The first 'autumn' record was of two at CVL on June 26th with another here on July 1st, then two noisy individuals were at New Passage on Aug. 17th. In September there were three here on 3rd and six on 6th; two at BL on 8th; one at Severn Beach on 13th and 15th; and three at BL again on 30th. The final record for the year was of three flying down river past Aust Warth on Oct. 4th.

Scarce Terns in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Little Tern	6	1	26	4	15	7	3	9	3	5
Whiskered Tern			1							2
White-winged Black Tern		1								
Sandwich Tern	13	6	21	4	35	15	23	35+	15	59

Total numbers for the past ten years

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

[Amber 6]

Passage migrant, a few occur throughout the summer - generally uncommon, but large flocks have occurred in some years.

A poor year apart from one good flock at CVL in April and another movement here in August. The first in spring was one at Middle Hope on the fairly early date of April 6th. The last of the year were four at CVL on Sept. 26th.

After the first, the spring coastal passage started in earnest on April 16th, the day of the big influx at CVL, when there were five at Sand Bay, one at Severn Beach and one at OPS. Next day there were nine at Severn Beach followed by ten here and two at OPS on 18th; one at Northwick Warth on 19th; three at Sand Point and another at Northwick Warth on 21st and 12 at OPS on 30th. May produced 12 at Ladye Bay on 4th; two at Severn Beach on 5th; one at OPS on 6th and at Anchor Head on 12th. There were no autumn records from the coast.

At CVL spring numbers were again above average. After the first on April 10th and two on 12th there were 24 on 15th, increasing to an impressive 88 on the evening of 16th. Next day just eight were left after which up to three were regular to the end of the month. In early May there were two on 6th and one on 8th followed by 12 on 15th then four until 18th. After one on June 10th and 11th, up to four were noted on nine days in July plus nine on 22nd. One was here on Aug. 3rd, then no more until an influx of 20 on 11th after which they were almost daily until 26th, mainly small numbers up to six but with 56 on 23rd in flocks eight, 29, and 19 heading W. Three September records involved 12 on 4th, a different group of 12 on 9th and the last, four, on 26th.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of days recorded	14	5	2	10	12	3
Maximum count	88	12	1	9	56	12

CVL summary

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	3	11	20	5	17	5	23	14	55	40
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	37	9	35	6	38	38	80	20	20	29
No. days recorded (total for year)	27	32	44	53	61	44	61	47	35	47

Average counts at CVL over the past decade

Records from the other reservoirs were as follows:

BG – 11 on April 18th and one on May 6th;

BL – 13 on April 16th, three on 17th; one or two on four dates from May 5th to 10th; one on July 13th and three on Aug. 23rd.

Other inland records were of three at Weston STW on April 22nd; one in the Cumberland Basin around the SS Great Britain from May 10th to 13th, and one on the R. Avon at Rownham on Aug. 25th.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

[Amber 4]

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.

A good movement occurred in spring associated with strong westerly winds. There was also a surprising influx in August.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Max count for year	1000	1000+	80	45	43	13	25	150	25	130
Av. of 3 highest counts	580	378	44	33	42	9	16	135	20	115
No. days recorded during year	19	14	19	32+	26	25	19	40	22	31

Annual details for Avon

Spring passage There was a reasonable spring passage during blustery spells of westerly weather in April with a widespread influx to sites along the coast and to the reservoirs as tabulated below. The big day was 18th but it is impossible to know how many moved through that day with both duplication, as birds moved between sites, and under-recording, with the maximum counts underestimating the true numbers passing through. The CVL count this day was a site record. During April reports from unusual sites for this species were: one at Cumberland Basin on 19th; one at Weston Moor on 21st and four at Bath on 22nd. The unusual nature of this influx is highlighted by the fact that the two at Weston STW on April 17th represented only the second record for this site.

Good numbers in early May were confined to Sand Point and then OPS: 110 were at Sand Point on 1st with 54 here next day but then just three on 5th and seven on 6th; four at Severn Beach on 4th was the sole record here for the month but OPS recorded 47 on 6th and four on 10th.

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
OPS	3		34		6							2			
NP			20	5	6	5			1		2				
Severn Beach	4	2	100	1											
PWD			2	2		1									
Sand Pt.	1		77	31	3			43							1
Weston STW		2	92	18	6		4	6							
BG			13												
CVL			130	44	16	18	12	17	8	5	3	3	2	3	3
BL			25	13	2										

April records – maximum daily numbers reported. NP = New Passage/Northwick Warth including the 'Pilning Wetlands'.

Two first-summerers were at CVL on June 13th and 14th.

Autumn passage After one at CI-Y on Aug.6th there were three (two juveniles and a first-summer; A H Davis) at CVL on 17th and an unusual 15 at BL on 23rd. Next day an even more exceptional 59 were reported from Sand Point (P A Bowyer), followed by one at OPS on 31st. Only two were noted in September: a winter adult at CVL on 18th and a first-winter at Littleton Warth on 21st that drifted down river to New Passage later in the day.

A paper by K E Vinicombe which might be of interest to readers discussing the occurrences of these two species both inland and moving up the Estuary appeared in the April 2014 edition of *British Birds*, see also page 5.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

There were a number of reports of unidentified *Sterna* terns that were either Common or Arctic as follows:

OPS – three on April 16th; ten on 18th and five on May 10th;

New Passage – two on April 18th and 12 on 30th;

Severn Beach – 33 on April 16th; six on 17th; nine on 18th; six on 19th; five on 20th; 16 on 30th; 40 on May 2nd; eleven on 5th; 60 on 6th; 400 on 7th; 30 on 9th; three on 10th; four on 11th and three on 13th;

CI-Y – 14 on April 30th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay/Middle Hope – six on April 16th; 30 on May 6th; 43 on 7th and two on 11th;

CVL – five on April 22nd; one on May 6th and four on 15th;

BL – 43 on April 18th and one on May 9th.

The table below gives the ten-day maxima at CVL during the autumn, *cf.* the wader table on page 72.

	Jul			Aug			Sep		
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28
Little Gull									2
Black Tern						1	5	1	
Common Tern	3	4	9	1	20	56	12		4
Arctic Tern		2			1				

Maximum count in each ten day period at CVL

Spring Coastal Tern Passage

A measure of the annual spring *sterna* tern passage moving up the Estuary during the last decade is as follows.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Common	37	142	120	291	561	3	2	593	103	61
Arctic	1982	1134	136	131	201	21	0	524	41	461
'Commic'	2775	208	849	485	606	138	240	2410	352	629
Total	4794	1484	1105	907	1368	162	242	3527	496	1151

Totals of the highest counts from any one coastal site for each day in April and May

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

[Amber 3, 6]

Usually a storm-driven visitor; uncommon, but large flocks regularly occur in the Estuary. Also occurs in anticyclonic conditions in early spring as a presumed migrant. Scarce inland, usually only at CVL.

Another rather good year recorded on 40 dates (23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, 11 in 2010 and 26 in 2011, 33 in 2012), mainly in the spring and late autumn/winter periods, the good influx in May was caused by windy weather which also displaced other seabirds.

January/February The first were on Jan. 27th when there were 200 at Severn Beach, 30 at Battery Point, Portishead and 20 at New Passage, with 200 again at Severn Beach on 29th and 20 here on 31st. The only February record was of four at Portishead Boating Lake on 4th.

Spring passage In March there were 150 at Severn Beach following heavy rain and a NE wind on 15th, then 12 on 17th and 35 on 27th. In April and May most records came from well watched Sand Point, or Severn Beach, where the bridge tends to hold up movement. Counts often peak late in the day (see table). The highest in April came on 6th with 135 at Severn Beach and 35 upstream of the two bridges at OPS. The only inland record at this time was from CVL with an adult on April 27th. May saw 85 at Ladye Bay on 4th then good numbers at the two main sites on five more dates to 13th including 160 at Severn Beach and 71 at Sand Point on 11th. The table below gives details of all spring records.

	April								May					
	3	6	12	14	16	18	23	27	4	5	9	10	11	13
OPS		35									2	1		
Severn Beach	1	135		8	50	7				12	28	24	160	90
Portishead													20	
Ladye Bay									85					
Middle Hope			1											
Sand Point				1		1	8			22	13	1	71	
CVL								1						

Spring passage

Summer More windy June weather produced 20 at Severn Beach on 13th, eight at Northwick Warth on 15th and five at Severn Beach on 22nd.

Autumn and second winter period One up channel at Battery Point on 16th and five inland at CVL on 25th were the only September records. Reports later in the year all came from the Estuary, typically on windy days. Well-watched Severn Beach mustered five records, but most, eleven in total, came from the Sand Point and Weston-s-Mare areas as did the largest count of 197 on Oct. 28th (when 150 were noted at Severn Beach). The increase from the lower Estuary is due to continued intensive winter seawatching mainly by one observer (P A Bowyer). Away from these sites there was just one at Portishead Boating Lake on Dec. 24th (oiled) and one at Ladye Bay on 27th. A summary table is given overleaf.

Kittiwake continued

	October			November					December					
	10	27	28	2	3	5	20	21	5	16	22	24	27	28
OPS	1													
Severn Beach		45	150	50	1								10	
Portishead												1		
Ladye Bay													1	
Sand Point							3		62		29	6	1	10
Anchor Head		107	197		150	66		2		4				

Autumn and winter

The second table summarises the Severnside records for the past decade.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Av. of 3 highest counts	263	166	416	88	170	233	92	200	83	108
No. of dates recorded	30	29	22	27	23	19	5	15	14	19

Severnside – Data over the last ten years

BONAPARTE'S GULL *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

The long awaited first record for the Avon area of this species was of a summer-plumaged adult at CVL during the afternoon and evening of April 27th (C J Stone, K E Vinicombe *et al.*, photographed). An article on page 160 discusses this first record, and a photograph appears opposite page 136.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

[RR] [Amber 3, 7]

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

WeBS status: The English coast of the Estuary was the 25th most important site in 2011/12 (CVL was not listed due to lack of counts).

This is our commonest wintering gull. WGS recorded this species in 27% of participating gardens, the best winter since 2010-11, they were mainly recorded during cold weather.

Much the largest count of the year was c.10,000 roosting at CVL on Feb. 6th (K E Vinicombe), the huge roost here being difficult to count. The large winter numbers typically tailed off rapidly in March but the Estuary saw a strong passage in early April with 800 upriver at OPS in 80 minutes on the evening of 6th and 350 at Severn Beach the same day. Thereafter spring numbers were much smaller, involving mainly immatures on the coast.

Small numbers were noted throughout June with the first returning birds hard to pin down but one at BL on 4th was noted as 'new in' and numbers increased during the month with for example 88 at Sand Bay on 14th, 110 at Northwick Warth on 19th and 24 at PWD on 24th. Numbers increased further in early July with 500 at PWD on 6th and 200 at CVL on 7th. The first juveniles were two at BL on 2nd with four at New Passage on 4th.

The only four figure count away from the sites tabulated below or CVL was of 2000 on Kenn Moor on Oct. 28th. Another notable count was of 875 at Avonmouth on Feb.18th. The tabulated December count from OPS (2000) was of a flock roosting on the tidal lagoon on 1st.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	330	1000	300	800	8	10	1100	700	300	250	150	2000
Littleton Warth	125	2	70	0	0	1	600	375	500	175	60	675
New Passage	250	150	190	48	1	110	400	400	400	220	135	220
Severn Beach	170		80	350	12	6		61	220			100
CI-Y	1800	900	450	150	18	90	1250	850	625	450	275	500
Sand Bay	370		20			88	1350	490	255	155	145	105
Axe Estuary	15	80	50	6		88	510	500	110	280	530	180
Weston STW	277	218	338	27	1	188	767	909	519	268	416	213
R Avon, Sea Mills	210	180	52				124	66	180	72	67	90
R Avon, Keynsham	838	1000								280		350
Saltford	540	480	256				165	162	130	240	310	397
BL	1561	1376	40	6		1	40	211	98	250	60	2250

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce in winter.

WeBS status: The English coast of the Estuary was the 27th most important in 2011/12.

One or two, possibly a returning bird or birds from 2012, in the first winter period were followed by a very modest spring passage. The autumn passage was again rather poor but there were three records late in the year around the Estuary.

Winter 2012/13 The first was one at PWD on Feb.14th followed by one at ASW from March 1st to 5th and again at PWD on 8th (no age was given but might this have been last year's individual returning?).

Spring passage The first record was of one at CVL on March 10th followed by another here on 25th and 26th with four on 27th. In April an adult moved upriver at OPS on 6th with another here on 8th. CVL had an adult from 7th to 13th, which was joined by a first-winter from 11th to 13th. There were three adults here on 15th. Elsewhere in April just two were at Severn Beach on 18th. The only May record was presumably the same first-summer seen at BL on 13th then later in the day at CVL remaining to 14th.

Autumn passage and second winter period The first was an immature at PWD on July 18th. There were no more until Sept. 26th when an adult was at CVL. It stayed until 28th when it was joined by a first-winter. The first-winter remained until Oct. 3rd, and was joined by two adults from Oct. 1st to 3rd. Four were at New Passage on Oct.18th. One was off Anchor Head on Nov. 5th then there were three records of single birds in winter: a first-winter at Severn Beach on Nov. 27th; another at Weston STW on Dec. 14th and one upriver off Sand Point on 22nd.

A summary of the year's records, and a 'snapshot' of the CVL sightings for the last decade, are given below.

	Feb.	Mar	April	May	:	July	:	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Days recorded at CVL		4	8	2				5	4		
Maximum CVL count		4	3	1				2	3		
Days recorded elsewhere	1	5	3	1		1			1	2	2
Max. Count elsewhere	1	2	2	1		1			4	1	1

Summary of all records

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	2	2	5	3	6	3	19	6	15	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	3	1	2	5	1	3	5	2	1	3

CVL – average counts for the past decade

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase.

Records in the first winter period were about average with three at Saltford on Feb. 4th being the most notable record. The expected early spring passage at CVL involved regular reports of four or five on seven dates from Feb. 28th to March 19th then five again on 28th and the last on April 12th. The only May record was of two at Severn Beach on 10th. An unusual June record was of four, three first-summer and a second-summer, high over CVL during a strong south-westerly on 13th. There were also two adults and a first-summer at New Passage on 19th, which could have been the first to return.

The first juvenile was at New Passage on July 14th. Autumn and winter numbers were again modest with three at CVL on Aug. 6th but otherwise no more than two together.

Although widely reported, numbers at the consistently well watched sites remained stable at best. Formerly regular sites of ASW and Sea Mills produced few records. The first of these is now hard to access or view.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites	17	14	17	23	23	20	21	18	19	23
Max count	5	11	6	8	7	6	4	8	6	5

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated overleaf, with records from the following 12 sites contributing to the summated monthly maxima in the bottom row: M32 Eastville Roundabout, Anchor Head, Axe Estuary, Backwell Lake, Cl-Y, Coopers Lake (Yate), Littleton Warth, Nempnett Thrubwell, Sand Bay, Sand Point, ST5789, and Uphill.

Mediterranean Gull continued

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS				2			2	2				
New Passage	1					3	2	2	1	1		1
Severn Beach	1			2	2				1	2		
Avonmouth		1		1								
PWD	2		1			1	2				1	1
Portishead area	1	1								1		1
Weston STW						2	1	1	1	1	1	
Sea Mills		1										
Saltford		3					1	1		1	1	1
CVL	2	5	5	1		4	2	3	1	1	1	3
BL	2						1					1
Twelve other sites	1	2	2	2				2		2	2	2

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings, giving aging if possible, of this slowly increasing species. (*Eds.*)

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

[Amber 1, 7]

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.

Regular counts were received from more sites than in 2012, although meaningful comparisons with previous years remain difficult. One estimate from the CVL roost this year was broadly comparable with historical counts here. The tabulated sites were the only ones where regular counts were made.

The CVL roost was estimated at about 15,000 on Feb. 6th. On the coast south of Portishead, large numbers usually only occur during severe winter weather but up to 156 (on Dec. 19th) were regularly recorded from Sand Point in November and December, all but one of the total of 689 heading down channel in 33.5 hours of seowatching.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	111	500	494	200			21	7	12	15	10	500
Littleton Warth	3	1	130							3	2	11
New Passage	12	6	28	8			2	1	19	11	8	55
Severn Beach	1			20			1			7		12
Sand Point & Bay					2					2	40	156
Weston STW	1		1	2			1					
Marshfield area	400	600	200								1000	200
Saltford	100	8	1000				1	1		14	80	71
Backwell Lake	90	43	10							4	9	46
BL	1000	300	9	5			2			140	5	500

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Most reports from elsewhere were in single or double figures, the only in three-figure counts were as follows:

Nempnett Thrubwell – 800 on Dec. 30th;

Keynsham – 130 by the R. Avon on Jan. 6th and 100 here on Feb. 28th, and 150 on the rugby ground on Dec. 30th;

Shirehill Farm, Marshfield (ST7876) – 104 on Oct. 31st;

PWD – 100 on Dec. 13th.

As usual few were noted between May and July. The only May report received was of two north past Sand Point on 11th. There were no June records this year. The first to return were two at CVL and one at New Passage on July 7th. Again the best site at this time was OPS with regular records of up to 21 from mid-month. The first juvenile was at CVL on 28th.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis* (1, 68)

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.
Descriptions required.

Just one record, from CVL – an adult was watched for ten minutes late afternoon of Jan.15th (R J Higgins) amongst a flock of about 100 Common Gulls.

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past decade is given on page 85.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

[RR] [Amber 6, 7]

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.

WeBS status: The English coast of the Estuary was 16th in Importance in 2011/12 (CVL is not listed due to a lack of counts).

The table below shows the maximum counts from the regularly recorded sites. CVL probably holds the largest numbers but full counts are difficult here. Numbers reported at some sites are lower than last year but in the main still reflect the passage and summer peaks. Good numbers were noted at BL in January but the increase in February may well have reflected the arrival of early migrants. The clear spring peaks at New Passage included a total of 177 to NE on eleven dates from Feb. 23rd to April 11th, which accounted for 78% of all bird-days recorded. Elsewhere the late summer peaks perhaps indicate departing migrants. WGS recorded birds in 24% of participating gardens with their presence considered to be strongly influenced by the type of food provided.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3			50	45	17	6	18	12	7	4	
Littleton Warth	2		1	5		41	2	2	4			1
New Passage	4	7	41	33	7	6	4	4	5	3	2	5
CI-Y	3	4	4	10	9	6	4	6	3	10	3	6
Axe Estuary	1	6	3	21		19	8	4	4	8	8	2
Weston STW	2	6	9	22	18	34	29	71	27	13	5	2
Sea Mills	4		1	2	5	2	1	10			5	4
BL	121	159	50	100	50	4	5	4	6	8	3	10
Saltford	28	16	50	6			130	18	47	8	16	15

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The only other high counts away from the main sites (tabulated above) were: 137 at Horton on Feb. 15th; 130 at Shortwood Lodge on April 4th; 114 at CVL on April 3rd and 100 at Marshfield on 2nd and 5th. A total of 80 Peregrine victims were logged on Steep Holm between March and June – by comparison just six Herring Gulls were taken, the larger species is presumably a less attractive target. An additional three died after becoming entangled in fishing lines during this period.

L. f. intermedius

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; annual at CVL. Probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage.

There were only two records, both from CVL, as follows: adults on Jan. 4th and April 11th. The table below gives the numbers reported during the last two decades.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
2	5	0	0	5	10	5	1	6	5	9	11	7	7	4	8	9	3	4	2

Number of individuals seen each year

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

[RR] [Red 3]

Western subspecies *L. a. argentatus*

Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, or around Bristol and Bath. In addition to the colony on Steep Holm, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath, and smaller ones in other towns.

The table on the next page shows the maximum counts from the regularly counted sites. The CVL roost probably holds the largest concentrations but is hard to count. On the coast, WeBS counts around high tide, for example those for Littleton Warth, give only a poor representation as larger numbers are often more obvious at

Herring Gull continued

low tide when they forage on exposed rocks or loaf on mud and sand banks. Good numbers were again at BL early in the year. Lower numbers were reported later in the year but these relate mainly to ringed birds rather than comparable roost counts. Very little information was received about breeding numbers or success rates. WGS recorded birds in 45% of participating gardens with, as with the previous species, their presence considered to be strongly influenced by the type of food provided.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	10	3		50	100	9	2	9	10	6	9	3
Littleton Warth	5		7	6		3		1	5	33		1
New Passage	13	30	39	37	16	13	3	4	13	25	34	17
CI-Y	105	145	60	125	80	60	65	145	70	75	45	95
Axe Estuary	3	4	13	34		66	9	4	10	30	51	57
Weston STW	26	196	316	194	101	29	85	58	48	42	88	192
Saltford	9	25	6	2			50	9	11	2	11	18
BL	242	209	5	50	4			1	1	1	1	20

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The only counts in three figures from other sites were as follows: 170 at Shortwood Lodge on April 4th and 110 at Avonmouth on 15th. At least six fell victim to Peregrines on Steep Holm in April and May.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon passage migrant, summer visitor and winter visitor; most occur in the late summer and autumn at CVL, but now increasingly recorded elsewhere.

WeBS status: CVL was the 27th most important in 2011/12

A good year at the main site CVL with a typical late summer peak but there were records in every month of the year. A first-winter lingered here from Feb. 26th to at least May 17th, accounting for most of the records at this time. The first two juveniles were back at CVL on July 31st, when a total of ten individuals was noted, there was a similar count on Aug. 9th. The first table below summarises the records for the past decade.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites	5	7	7	11	11	9	10	10	8	6
Max count	1	9	5	4	5	6	9	10	3+	10

Number of sites and maximum count at any one site

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL – min. no. of Individuals	1	1	1	3	2	5	15	13	9	6	3	4
CVL - daily maximum count	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	10	6	4	3	2
BL – estimate of individuals						1	1	2	1	2	2	
Summated maxima elsewhere	1	2			1		1		4	1	1	

Monthly breakdown

As tabulated above (line 4), recorded from four other sites, the fewest since 2004, all were single birds, unless stated otherwise, as follows: an adult at PWD on Jan. 4th with perhaps the same at nearby Royal Portbury Dock on 21st; a first-winter at New Passage on Feb. 9th; a second summer at PWD on May 17th; one (unaged) at New Passage on July 30th; three at OPS on Sept. 4th; and a first-winter noted at New Passage on five dates from Sept. 21st to Nov. 19th.

Hybrids between Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull are relatively frequent in the mixed colonies in Bristol and they rather closely resemble this species. White headed first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gulls can also be a trap for the unwary. One on the R. Avon at Rownham on July 6th was considered to be either a Yellow-legged or such a hybrid. Observers are asked to note and report age classes of all records of this species and take care with identification, especially away from the two regular sites. (*Eds.*)

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans* (1, 8)

Rare/very scarce passage migrant/winter visitor.

One record: a first-winter was seen in the CVL roost on Jan. 11th (K E Vinicombe).

Late record for 2006 – A first-summer was at Severn Beach on Aug. 5th, 2006 (J P Martin).

There are now nine accepted Avon area records since the first two in 2002 (one at CVL in September with another at Harnhill Tip in December). The other records are all from CVL with one in September 2004, two in January and February 2006, a first-winter in January and February 2007 and a first-winter in October 2008.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* (1, 39)

[Amber 5]

Very scarce winter visitor; occurs more frequently than Glaucous Gull.

Descriptions required.

There was just one record this year: second-winter in the roost at CVL on March 13th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*).

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past decade is given below.

Rare gulls in the Avon area

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Sabine's Gull	2	1		1				1+	1	
Bonaparte's Gull										1
Laughing Gull			1						1	
Franklin's Gull					1					
Ring-billed Gull	3+		3	2+	3+	3+	2	4+	2	1
Caspian Gull	1		2	1	1					1
Iceland Gull		1		1	2				1	1
Kumlien's Gull	1	1	1					1		
Glaucous Gull			1		1				2	

Total numbers for the last ten years

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon breeding resident - nests in small numbers on Steep Holm. Generally uncommon elsewhere (perhaps surprisingly so); seldom recorded inland away from the reservoirs.

Not quite as widespread at last year, and the highest count was just below that of 2011, see table below. A pair bred at CVL representing the first breeding attempt here since at least 1976.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of sites	13	12	15	20	17	15	18	24	27	24
Max. count	22	18	11	10	9	21	19	36	26	35
Steep Holm pairs	13	9	10	11	n/c	13	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

Number of sites, maximum count and pairs breeding on Steep Holm

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	5	2	4	3	4	4	5	5	8	5	3
Littleton Warth						3					2	
New Passage	2	3	1	3		1	1	2	1		1	1
PWD		1	2	2			3	3				2
CI-Y	1	3	2	2	1			1	1	2	2	
Sand Bay		2	2	1			1	2		2	4	2
Axe Est.			1			1	1		1	1	1	
R. Avon, Sea Mills											2	
BG	5			2				5	2	2		2
CVL	4	4	10	8	6	11	12	21	35	22	3	5
BL	4	3	1	2	9	1	1	16	8	14	6	2

Monthly maxima at the regular sites

Occasional records came from a further 13 sites, ten of which were inland, and mainly related to single individuals apart from: four at Yatton on Jan.1st; three at Millennium Park, Bristol on 27th; two at the R. Avon, Rownham on Oct. 24th; and two on the Floating Harbour, near Temple Quay on Dec.11th.

Breeding Again there were no reports from either Steep Holm or Denny Island in the Bristol Channel but a pair nested at CVL. This nest was first noted in mid-May with a small chick appeared on June 17th. The single chick survived until the late morning of June 28th but disappeared at some time during the day. The event is not without precedent as a nesting attempt took place here in 1956 when the newly constructed reservoir was more open (Bristol Bird Report), and a pair held territory, but did not breed, in 1976 (Somerset Birds).

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia* var.

Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.

Apart from the BBS most data showed a decline in 2013.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS from 72 squares which represented 41% of those surveyed, significantly up from 32% in 2012. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1125. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-17%	-6%	-1%	-3%	18%	-6%	-23%	2%	27%	-14%	-4%	5%

BBS percentage changes

WGS data gave presence in 30% of gardens surveyed, with the counts showing a slight decrease of 5% from records for the previous winter; the long-term change over 40 years is an increase of 30%.

CABS counts recorded a huge 48% decrease in numbers from the previous year. These counts represented an 89% decrease since 1994.

There was only one three-figure flock noted, 103 in Bristol on Oct. 23rd (there were seven three-figure flocks recorded in 2012). Other flocks over 60 were: 72 in Bristol on Jan. 5th with 70 here the next day, 78 at Cabot Circus, Bristol on April 28th with 63 here on May 27th, 60 over Clifton on Sept. 22nd with 93 here on Dec. 6th and 64 in Bristol on 9th with 68 here on 21st.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

[Amber 7]

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

Although some variation was noted the population appears to be fairly stable.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 47 tetrads which represented 27% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 127. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-42%	-10%	3%	-17%	31%	-13%	15%	-9%	4%	-12%	-12%	10%

BBS percentage changes

The number of sites where this species was recorded seems to show remarkable variation between years, the reasons for which are unknown. The small increase on last year's figure is welcome.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
17	30	33	90	73	64	73	94	68	75

Number of sites in Avon

Flocks Sizeable flocks were not as frequently reported as last year and all counts were under 50 except for one of 200 in the autumn in the east of our area. Those over 15 were: at OPS, 31 on Nov. 24th with 25 here on Dec. 21st and 15 on 26th; 30 at Littleton Warth on Oct.12th; 18 at Weston STW on Feb. 2nd with 23 on Nov. 2nd; 17 at Horton on March 26th; and at CVL 15 on Oct.1st and 40 on Dec.18th. There was also a good run of records from Marshfield with peaks of 25 on March 30th, 35 on April 21st, 30 on May 30th and 200 on Oct.15th.

The only possible migrants were: three to NE over Aust Cliff, Severnside on Oct.12th and one to S at Sand Point on Dec. 9th.

Breeding Potential breeding activity was recorded as follows: a male was calling at Snuff Mills on Feb. 17th; display flight was seen at New Passage on March 1st; at CVL there were regular records throughout the summer, with five singing or displaying males, one nest found and one still calling here on Dec. 2nd.; two were singing at Marshfield on April 7th; one was in a nestbox at Weston STW on April 20th; two pairs were noted at OPS with one using an owl nestbox; one was calling at Badock's Wood, Westbury-on-Trym on July 12th; and a juvenile was seen at Northwick Warth on Aug. 2nd. At this last site, judging by where they display, they nest in old trees but they are not present all year round as they vacate the area in mid-winter.

With many sites having records throughout the summer, presumably breeding is more commonplace than these records suggest. Perhaps a survey of coastal pill-boxes might result in more confirmed breeding records.

Observers are again encouraged to submit all breeding records (*Eds*).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

[RR]

Abundant breeding resident and migrant.

The Avon population of this abundant species appears to be stable.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 176 squares which represented 100% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 5825. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
53%	7%	-1%	0%	3%	7%	4%	-4%	1%	-4%	12%	-10%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 100% of participating gardens, as in the previous four years. Counts were unchanged on the previous year and show an increase of 89% since the 1974/5 winter.

CABS recorded a 2% increase from the previous year, with the counts representing a 38% increase since 1994.

January to May There were 45 records of three-figure counts (only eight in 2012). Those involving 500+ were as follows: 650 at Hewish on Jan.19th and 1000 here on March 6th, at Marshfield 1000 on Jan.17th, 2000 on Feb. 6th and 500 on April 7th, 600 at Sand Bay on Feb. 3rd and 500 at Uphill on Jan. 20th.

Spring migration was noted on the coast as follows: at Middle Hope – 18 to N on March 6th with 150 to N on 28th and 225 to N on 29th, seven to S on April 6th and 175 to N on 10th; at Cl-Y - 300 to NE on March 26th, 1250 to NE on April 8th and 250 to NE on 10th; at OPS 60 to ENE on March 30th. There were also six on Steep Holm from March 14th to 16th.

Breeding As usual, breeding activity was not well reported. The only record was a pair watched building a nest in an ornamental cypress in Westbury-on-Trym on April 11th.

Autumn migration The first movement of the autumn was of three to N over Middle Hope on Oct. 11th with four to N here the next day. At close-by Sand Point there were 24 to N on Oct.13th and 53 to N on 17th.

Nov. 8th marked the start of a sizeable movement with 150 over Abbots Leigh, 'hundreds' over Henbury, Bristol, and 8530 to S in one hour at Severnside. However, this was dwarfed by the passage on 10th when possibly as many as 65,000 were counted moving SW in two hours witnessed from Aust Cliff (M Hobbs). Most of these, however, were moving down the north-west side of the Estuary and therefore outside our recording area. Data was not submitted on the proportion of these birds actually overflying Avon. This passage was not recorded elsewhere in our region, which makes sense if most were moving along the Welsh coast. A similar passage was noted in 2012 but again almost all of the birds were following the Welsh coast.

November and December Thereafter, Sand Point recorded 40 to S on Nov.13th, 1800 to SE at OPS on 15th with 370 to SE on 16th and 70 to E on 24th; 200 went over Wain's Hill, Clevedon on 16th and finally 730 were noted to S over CVL on Dec. 29th.

Additional three figure counts were recorded as follows: at CVL, 300 on Nov. 30th, 125 on Dec. 9th, 150 on 17th, 1400 roosting on 10th and 500 roosting on 30th; at Failand, 100 on Nov. 9th, 100 on Dec. 8th at R. Avon, Keynsham with 200 here on 22nd, and 760 at Weston STW on Dec. 7th.

An unusual observation was made on July 13th at Weston STW when one landed on water for ten seconds before flying off apparently unaffected.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto**Common breeding resident.*

This is another species whose population is reasonably stable.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 126 squares, 72% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 819. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
45%	-12%	5%	-10%	15%	-19%	7%	-13%	1%	-4%	11%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 76% of participating gardens (87% in 2011 and 88% in 2012). Counts were down by 12% on the previous year but showed an increase of 37% since the 1974/5 winter.

Collared Dove continued

CABS recorded a 120% increase from the previous year which was welcome after a dramatic decline in 2012. The counts represent a 58% decrease since 1994.

There were 42 double-figure counts (27 in 2011, 42 in 2012). Those of 15 or more were: 16 in Bristol on Nov. 16th, at Bristol Zoo Gardens there were 17 on May 27th, 19 on both Aug. 28th and Sept. 29th and 18 on Oct. 30th, 16 at Churchill on Nov. 20th, 15 at Saltford on July 13th, 17 to N over Sand Point on May 17th and there was a string of eight records (thought to refer to resident pairs and their offspring) of more than 14 at New Passage from June to October, peaking at 21 on Sept. 28th.

Breeding Three records: a male was singing at Henbury on April 7th, and at Bishop Sutton a pair had a nest on a television aerial on Jan. 31st, and a second nest was noted here on Dec. 31st containing two eggs.

Aside from the flock noted above from Sand Point, three moving upriver at Sand Point on May 2nd and three at Severnside moving SW on Oct.19th were presumed to be migrants.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur* (1, 23)

[Red 3]

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.

Descriptions required.

Another very poor year with just one record from OPS of one seen briefly by the yacht club on Sept. 29th (C Lewis, R Headford). The table below summarises the records for the last decade.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of bird-days	10+	5	7	2	3	2	0	2	3	1
No. of records	1	2	3	2	3	2	0	2	3	1

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 five records in 2013 (six records in 2010, four in 2011 and two in 2012) as follows:

Stoke Bishop, Bristol – one on Jan.11th;

Farrington Gurney – one on July 25th;

Pilning Wetland – one on Aug.1st;

Keynsham Memorial Park – two on Aug.17th;

Keynsham – one on Nov.11th.

This species is now common in the western parts of London but the expected spread towards our area has still to materialise.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

[Red 3]

Scarce and seriously declining spring migrant and breeding summer visitor. Very scarce after June; but recent tracking has shown that most UK adults depart at this time.

Whilst the numbers recorded by BBS in Avon are so low that statistical analysis is not possible, they do give a good indication of the scarceness of this species. The following table summarises the situation:

1994	34 recorded in 25 squares (41% of the area surveyed)	2003	14 recorded in 12 squares (7% of the area surveyed)	2013	three recorded in three squares (1.7% of the area surveyed)
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Avon BBS records - Numbers quoted are "best counts" avoiding any double counting of territorial birds.

The first reports for 2013 were late, coming from PWD and CVL on April 20th (cf. 12th in 2009, 13th in 2010, 11th in 2011 and 12th in 2012, but 6th in 2005).

The decline continues apace. The number of records was down by 20% on 2012 and the only site where more than one was recorded on any day was OPS, and even that was only on two dates, with two on May 30th and at least three on June 1st. The only sites to have records from more than one day were Burrington Combe (four dates), CVL (four dates), OPS (19 dates) and PWD (two dates). Weston STW recorded just a single bird on May 4th, the first time recently that the species has not attempted to breed here. The run of records from OPS,

including a brown female seen on June 1st and 9th, provides hope for the survival of the species as an Avon breeder despite the fact that breeding has been unproven in the recording area for some years.

An interesting observation was of one battling with a Hobby at OPS on May 19th.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of bird-days	74	97	75	100	74	43	93	86	104	51
No. of records	69	78	63	98	70	43	73	76	58	48

Bird-days and records each year

There was just one autumn record, of an unaged individual on Aug. 7th at Wellow Brook, Midsomer Norton. The table below shows the breakdown of records during the year with comparisons with 2012 in brackets.

	April	May	June	July	August	September
Bird-days	9 (16)	26 (66)	12 (14)	2 (0)	1 (1)	0 (7)
Records	9 (13)	25 (34)	10 (9)	2 (0)	1 (1)	0(1)
Sites	8 (12)	14 (30)	4 (8)	2 (0)	1 (1)	0(1)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2013 bird-days, records and sites (2012 in brackets)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

[RR] [Amber 1]

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation efforts in several areas.

The number recorded is steadily increasing but 2013 was a very poor year for breeding.

BBS recorded just one, and as such this species is not recorded in sufficient numbers, either by BBS or by any other generic survey, to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis.

It was a very good year in terms of the number of records received, with a 39% increase over 2012 which was itself the highest for at least 20 years. Also the number of sites was up by 22%, see table below. Last year's good spread of records, in both summer and winter, continued for the first winter period in 2013 but sadly the breeding season was a disaster and the second winter period produced few records - just six in November and four in December.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of records	93	94	119	91	115	137	95	110	161	224
No. of sites	38	43	44	26	35	41	42	42	54	66

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding Contrary to the records discussed above, there were very reports relating to breeding, and only four were successful. It appears to have been a disastrous breeding season in the Avon area, pairs were probably in poor condition after the long cold spring. The details are as follows:

SG – one was observed at a potential nest site at Lyde Green on Feb. 17th;

BA – a nestbox at CVL was occupied on June 4th with fresh droppings and feathers, however no young were observed at any site around the lake. One was seen to fly into a disused barn at Widcombe Common on April 27th.

Cam Valley – eight sites were recorded as having a pair present but only three of these bred, with a total of four young fledging;

NS – four chicks ringed at a nestbox at PWD on July 26th.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
SG	2 (4+)	0	0	0	0	0	6 (11)	0 (0)	0(0)	0(0)
NS	6 (17+)	8 (17)	1 (4)	2 (10)	2 (7)	4 (5)	3 (6)	3 (9)	1(1+)	1(4)
BA	4 (5+)	2(7)	2(2)	1 (5)	2 (5)	4(11)	12 (27)	4 (11)	1(?)	0(0)
Cam Valley	6(15)	9(24)	2(4)*	10(33)	10(18)	11(28)	9(21)	12(38)	21(42)	3(4)
Total	18(41+)	19(48)	5(10)	13(48)	14(30)	19(44)	30(65)	19(58)	23(43+)	4(8)

Numbers of breeding pairs (and number of fledged young in brackets) *= incomplete data due to BSE restricting access.

Breaking down the records (see overleaf) received into months gives a clear picture of the breeding season failure, particularly as all records bar one in June and July relate to the successful breeding pair at PWD.

Barn Owl continued

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Records	56	66	48	12	13	6	6	3	2	3	6	4

Monthly breakdown

It is curious that with good numbers in the early part of the year and so few after March that no corpses were reported during the year.

There were two ringing recoveries – a nestling ringed at Charterhouse, Somerset on July 23rd, 2008 was found sick at Winford on April 9th, and a nestling male ringed near Burbage, Wilts on July 14th, 2009 was found freshly dead at Stoke Gifford on April 28th.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Uncommon breeding resident and declining.

All aspects of analysis of the records received showed serious declines in 2013. The causes are unknown but the decrease in the numbers of large invertebrates, its main prey, is likely to be at least part of the explanation.

There was a significant drop in the number of records from 2012. In comparing the two years, it should firstly be recognised that in 2012, 134 of the 192 records related to just two pairs, leaving 58 other records. In 2013, 87 records related to the same two pairs, leaving just 45 other records. This gives a clearer picture of the actual situation than the bare statistics in the table below. The number of sites decreased by over 30%, this should be setting alarm bells ringing.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of records	128	114	147	134	139	87	91	98	192	132
No. of sites	48	48	49	46	66	49	48	40	39	27

Number of records and sites per year

Only recorded regularly at Newton Park (one or two), PWD (a pair throughout), and Saltford (up to four throughout the year). After a return to regular sightings at OPS in 2012, there were none in 2013.

Breeding Avon BBS recorded just one in each of two squares therefore this species is not recorded in sufficient numbers to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis. The only specific references to breeding were at Kenn where an adult and juvenile were seen together on July 15th, at PWD where a pair was present all year with a juvenile on July 18th, and at Pilning where a juvenile was seen on July 13th. Reports during the breeding season (between April and June) came from just 12 sites (17 sites in 2011, 16 in 2012), even so breeding is probably more widespread than the records suggest.

The maximum count was four at Saltford on Feb. 24th with three here on 22nd, March 2nd and Nov.17th. There were also three at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 1st.

Observers are again encouraged to submit all records. (Eds).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Both the number of records received and the number of sites were down on last year. However, looking back at previous data, there appears to be no cause for concern as fluctuations have occurred in the past.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
No. of records	227	220	235	293	213	276	206	186	256	216
No. of sites	66	89	57	95	81	111	79	78	84	59

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding Just three were recorded by Avon BBS so recording levels are insufficient to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis. At CVL, it was recorded at just two sites in the breeding season. However, five were heard hooting from Nunnery Point on Sept. 29th, and taking account of other known sites located in previous years (there were six territorial males in 2012), a population of perhaps ten pairs around the lake was suggested by one observer (K E Vinicombe). A juvenile was seen at Burrington Combe on May 31st, another was begging by call in Redland, Bristol on June 9th, and juveniles were seen at Nailsea East End on July 8th and Saltford on 10th.

High counts were noted as follows: four at Leigh Woods on May 19th, Saltford on Sept.15th and Wrington on Oct.13th; five at CVL on Sept. 29th and Wrington Warren on Oct. 9th; and the highest of the year was six at Wrington on Nov.17th.

One was being mobbed by other birds at Nailsea Park on Aug. 3rd and another was at BL on Oct. 2nd.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* (3, 124)

[RBBP]

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer but bred successfully in 1991, 2010 and 2011.

Descriptions required.

There were three records of roosting birds photographed in the spring, as follows:

Northwick Warth – one in a hedge on March 4th and 5th (R Jones);

PWD – one on March 23rd (P Down *et al.*);

ASW – one on April 11th (G Trotham).

A pair nested again in N Somerset; one was found sitting in an old Carrion Crow nest on May 2nd and remained until at least 14th but the nest was deserted on 26th. One was found sitting on the ground nearby at 21.50 on June 3rd but could not be relocated on subsequent evening and/or night visits.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
2	2	7	14	3	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1	7*	6*	4	3

Number of individuals each year (* includes successful breeding)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

After a bumper year in 2012, records for 2013 were average. The higher numbers recorded in the second winter period of 2012 started to decline towards the end of that year, and the first winter period of 2013 showed surprisingly static numbers with three wintering right through to April. In contrast to last year, also notable was the almost complete exclusivity of records to the Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Severn Beach area. As spring turned to summer, two were observed on May 1st and a one remained at Aust Warth until 20th. There was no repeat of the 2012 mid-summer records.

In the second winter period, the first was recorded on Oct. 23rd at Aust Warth. Thereafter there was a steady set of records from here until mid-December of up to two birds. One took up residence at Marshfield from Dec. 19th until the year's end; from the dates of records, it is possible that this individual had relocated from Aust Warth. The table below summarises the year's data.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Oct	Nov	Dec	2013 (2012)
Records	9	10	13	20	9		8	11	10	90 (222)
Bird-days	13	17	21	27	10		11	15	12	126(423)
Max. count	3	3	3	3	2		2	2	2	3 (7)

Monthly breakdown

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

First winter period - Coastal records:

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – up to three birds were recorded on seven dates in January, nine dates in February, ten dates in March and 17 dates in April;

Severn Beach – two on March 10th;

PWD – one on March 28th;

CI-Y – single birds on March 12th and April 11th;

Sand Point – one on Jan. 6th;

Weston STW – one on April 15th.

Inland records:

Dundry – one near the A38 on Jan. 19th.

Short-eared Owl - Summer period (May to August) After last year's remarkable run of summer records, normality resumed:

Aust Warth – two on May 2nd were down to one the next day which was recorded on six further dates in May before the last sighting on 20th;

Severn Beach – one on May 12th.

Second winter period

Coastal records:

Aust – the first record of the period was on Oct. 23rd, with up to two recorded on seven further dates in October. Up to two were recorded on eight dates in November and three dates in December with the last record of the year on Dec. 19th;

Severn Beach – single birds on Nov. 12th and 30th;

Sand Point – one in/off the sea on Dec.12th.

Inland records:

Marshfield – one recorded on six dates from Dec.19th to the year's end.

The table below summarises the data since 2006.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bird-days	100	100	260	105	67	194	423	127
Records	79	102	186	100	48	113	222	91

Bird-days and records each year

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

[Red 4]

Scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

Descriptions are required for records away from the Mendips.

There was an unprecedented series of records away from the Mendips, five recorded in date order as follows:

Worle – one hawking insects around a street lamp at 05.00 on Aug.17th (D Reeves);

Northwick Warth – one found in a garden on Sept.16th was taken into care (J Latham). It was released back into the same garden on the 19th and photographed roosting in an apple tree but was found dead the next day;

Dundry – one flushed from the top of a garden water butt on Sept.18th (D Nevitt);

PWD – one trapped and photographed on Sept. 29th (P House);

Royal Portbury Dock – one was found well below deck on a recently berthed car transporter ship from Spain on Oct. 9th (S Hale). It was caught and released into nearby scrubby woodland and it flew off strongly.

To put these records into perspective there are only three other accepted records away from the Mendips in the last 30 years – one flying around Hollow Brook car park CVL in May 1996, one sat on a post in a Downend garden in September 2002, and one flushed from Northwick Warth in September 2006.

The following records were received from the traditional breeding areas:

Burrington/Rod's Pot – three on June 2nd, an adult male trapped and ringed on 16th, and one on both July 16th and 17th;

Burrington Ham – one on May 30th and June 6th.

With records from the main areas where breeding is presumed annually, there is no cause for local concern.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Churring males	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	2	6	4
Reports	6	1	8	5	3	4	3	2	3	6

Number of churring males and reports each year

SWIFT *Apus apus*

[Amber 3]

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The Avon population seems at present to be fairly stable.

Arrival Unusually the first birds were part of a multiple arrival, with two at both BL and Dundry and one at both Shirehampton and CI-Y all on April 15th. The following day BL again had two and there was one at Wain's Hill,

CI-Y. The first double-figure count was 12 at CVL on 18th, and the same site accounted for the first three-figure count of 100 on 25th. More were noted on 26th with 300 at BL and 500 at CVL. By the end of April, numbers were beginning to arrive at breeding sites, but some were not occupied until May 13th.

BBS data This species was recorded by Avon BBS in 77 squares, a 5% increase on 2012, representing 43.8% of the area surveyed; the total number counted over two BBS visits was 689. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-66%	-59%	0%	-25%	-7%	11%	-26%	5%	-7%	-11%	11%	-26%

BBS percentage changes

Summer flocks There were 10 counts in four figures, all from CVL as follows: In May, 1000 on 10th, 2000 on 13th, 3000 on 15th, 1000 on 17th, 5000 on 25th and 1000 on 27th. In June, 3000 on 10th, 2000 on 12th, 5000 on 15th and 2000 on 23rd.

Breeding Four pairs were nesting under one roof in Hanham on May 16th; 12 were seen near a nesting colony in Nailsea on 19th. There was a good series of records from Redland (M J Hill) involving three active nests by the end of May, two of which fledged young. Numbers were down here by 25% on the 13-year average in both the first and second halves of May, then in the second half of July numbers were 50% above the average with groups of over 30 seen on 17 days during the month. There was also an active nest site near Backwell Lake in July, and young were heard calling from a nest in Frampton Cotterell on 22nd.

Departure Reports indicated a general departure in the closing days of July and the first week of August. Some commented on an earlier departure than normal but quantitative data to support this is lacking. The last three-figure count was of 200 at CVL on July 11th which was followed by a steady stream of records into the second week of August. The last double-figure count was of 20 at CVL on 14th followed by a trickle of records until the end of the month. There was a single record in September: one over New Passage on 9th. The average last departure date since 1972 is Sept. 23rd.

There then followed a record of a very late swift sp. over Avonmouth on Oct. 26th during a modest national influx of Pallid Swifts (four accepted records (Hudson *et al.* 2014 in prep) but with several others being reported on Birdguides as well as more Common/Pallid swifts (but no unequivocal Common Swifts). The bird was submitted as a Common Swift and described as always looking blackish, which is more suggestive of Common, but to see the true brown tones of Pallid requires a cooperative bird and a dark or neutral background.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

[Amber 1]

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.

Avon BBS recorded just seven over two BBS visits. The four squares in which they were found represents 2.3% of the area surveyed. Overall reports were received from 96 sites, on a par with last year and at the peak from the last ten years, see table below.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
56	86	74	80	95	75	96	82	96	96

Number of sites each year in the last decade

During the first winter period, January saw 26 records from 18 sites (*cf.* 23 sites in 2004, 30 in 2005, 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 26 in 2008, 19 in 2009, 23 in 2010, 17 in 2011 and 21 in 2012). February saw just 17 records from 11 sites with March showing the usual increase, to 32 records from 23 sites.

Breeding Surprisingly there were no reports referring to breeding, and only two records of juveniles, one at New Passage on June 20th and two with an adult at Eastville Park, Bristol, on Aug. 28th. The first of these almost certainly came from a nest on an inaccessible part of the local pill.

Post-breeding dispersal As usual this created a rise in the number of records. August saw them rise to 72 from 26 sites (39 from 17 sites in 2012). September saw the peak at 76 records from 26 sites (65 records from 28 sites in 2012), thereafter declining until the end of the year with 61 records from 29 sites in October (51 from 23 in 2012), 45 records from 19 sites in November (32 from 23 in 2012) and 38 records from 16 sites in December (26 from 17 in 2012). Saltford recorded the highest counts with six on Oct. 29th and Nov. 4th, and five here on Sept. 12th, and Oct. 7th and 17th. There were five at CVL on July 23rd. Regular reports came from Backwell Lake, BL, CVL, CI-Y, Congresbury Moor, Eastville Park, Frome Valley, Keynsham, New Passage, Northwick Warth (incl. Pilning Wetlands), OPS, PWD, R. Avon in Bath, Saltford, Severn Beach, Snuff Mills, Three Brooks NR, Weston STW and Winford Brook.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla* (2, 48)

[Red 2, 3]

Scarce autumn passage migrant, very rare in spring.

Descriptions required.

An average year with two records, although unusually one of these was in the spring, details as follows:

PWD – one trapped and ringed on Aug. 31st (P House, photographed);

Tytherington – one in a garden on April 16th and 17th (W Hatch, photographed).

The table below shows the distribution of records over the past 20 years.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	2	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	7	3	2	3	2	2

Number of individuals each year

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

[Amber 1]

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally.

At the present time this species seems to be on the increase.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 88 squares which represented 50% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 177. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-2%	8%	15%	3%	2%	-26%	52%	-6%	-8%	-20%	17%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 36% of gardens surveyed. The count increased by 9% on the previous winter's figures and showed a 36% increase since the 1974/75 winter.

2013 continued the upward trend in records that was noted last year, and the number of sites showed the first annual increase since 2007 as shown below.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Records	236	333	231	529	524	453	458	413	516	621
Sites	103	127	93	235	227	209	197	180	151	162

Records and sites each year

Breeding There were 189 records from 85 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, 164 from 107 sites in 2011 and 139 from 70 sites in 2012), representing a 34% increase in records and 21% increase in sites from 2012. The sites recorded were distributed as follows:

	2005	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
April	61	30	67	63	47	71	57	39	67
May	53	21	54	67	65	53	49	26	27
June	36	14	58	53	52	35	29	21	17

Number of sites with records during the breeding season

This table shows a major bias of early summer records during April, and a paucity in June, compared with previous years, the causes of which are unknown but they may indicate a poor breeding season.

At CVL there were seven calling males in the vicinity of the lake (*cf.* five in 2006, six in 2007, seven in 2008, five in 2009, six in 2010, eight in 2011 and five in 2012). One was excavating a new nest hole at Redcliff Bay, Portishead on April 25th; the only other records concerning breeding were of fledged young as follows: up to three from July to September at OPS, two at Easton-in-Gordano on July 19th and two at Saltford on Aug. 6th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major**Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.*

The recent increase in sightings of this species continued in 2013.

Survey data This species was recorded by BBS in 83 squares which represented 47% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 174. The BBS data since 1994 is summarised overleaf.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
93%	40%	-5%	13%	18%	10%	-7%	-19%	46%	-7%	-1%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

WGS data recorded presence in 45% of gardens surveyed. The number counted was up 6% on 2012 and up 45% since the 1974/75 winter.

After last year's increase in the number of records, 2013 saw a further rise as shown below:

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Records	149	339	193	415	372	317	402	423	590	666
Sites	77	173	80	191	172	181	182	197	200	199

Records and sites per year

Breeding Drumming was recorded from 21 sites (*cf.* seven in 2004, 14 in 2005, 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009, four in 2010, 12 in 2011 and 14 in 2012) up until May 15th, and then again on June 9th but not subsequently. At CVL there were eight pairs (*cf.* six in 2005, seven in 2006, ten in 2007, seven in 2008, 13 in 2009, nine in 2010, ten in 2011 and ten in 2012). Other breeding records were: a pair reared two young in Banwell (a site which recorded an impressive 504 bird-days throughout the year (J Thorogood)); a pair nested in last year's nest hole in Nowhere Wood, Nailsea; a pair with young was in Prior's Wood, Portbury; a pair nested in Keynsham Memorial Park; pairs reared at least two juveniles in both Dundry and Nailsea East End; a nest containing juveniles was at Wraxhall Hill; and a nest was noted on Kelston Manor.

The highest counts were of eight at Saltford on Jan. 24th and around BL on April 6th, followed by five here on May 1st and 6th, and CVL on Dec. 9th. Other sites to record up to four were OPS and a Banwell garden.

Although there were many records from the coast, the only ones noted as being of migrants were two present on Steep Holm on March 14th and 16th, with one here from April 24th to 26th; one in-off the sea at Sand Point on 20th, with one to N here on Nov. 13th and one to N over Middle Hope on Oct. 12th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

[Red 3]

Scarce and elusive resident, last proven to breed in 2003.

After two years of double-figure bird-days, the single record this year is a major blow to any hopes of a recovery.

Severn Beach – a male on Jan. 26th, possibly the individual recorded in the previous month at this site.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bird-days	3	7	3	3	2	10	4	13	10	1
Individuals	3	7	2	3	1	3	4	10	6	1

Bird-days and individuals each year

This species has been added to the list requiring descriptions. (*Eds.*)

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator* (1, 5)

Rare vagrant.

Descriptions required.

A popular first-summer female was found on Widcombe Common, near CVL on April 21st (C Hunt *et al.*) and was seen by many observers until 30th – see photograph opposite page 81.

The only previous records are of one shot at Marshfield prior to 1887, one at the same site in July 1989, one at Prospect Stile in April 1993, one at Thornbury in April 1994, one of the Mediterranean race *L. s. badius* at Uphill in June 2005, and one on Chipping Sodbury Common in July and August 2011.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

Counts of this common species continue to be stable.

Breeding A total of 1525 was recorded in the two BBS counts over 169 squares representing 96% of the area surveyed. This compares with a distribution rate of 94.6% of the squares surveyed in 2012. In practice, this species is very successful and adaptable and is able to exploit both urban and rural environments, it was recorded in every tetrad during the 2007-11 Avon Atlas surveys. See overleaf for historical BBS data.

Magpie continued

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-32%	-5%	0%	-5%	0%	3%	2%	-9%	5%	-1%	1%	0%

BBS percentage changes

The local population remains stable although there appears to have been a more significant decline in the longer term. The National BBS figures for England show very little change between 1995 and 2011 when there was a decline of 1% compared with one of 20% for the Avon area. However, the figure for England includes some markedly different outcomes in different regions. In the WGS the species continued to be recorded in all participating gardens. CABS recorded a 10% increase over 2012 (but since 1994 a decline of 26%).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident.

This species is regularly noted although the population does fluctuate.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 165 in the two BBS counts over 73 squares representing 41.5% of those surveyed. This was a 14% increase compared with 2012. Counts have fluctuated locally over the years, but although the numbers recorded are modest the local experience is in line with the National BBS figures for England. For the period 1995 to 2011 these show an increase of 7%. The equivalent figure for the same period in the Avon area was an increase of 10%. Eight pairs were noted around CVL during the breeding season.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-1%	-12%	-6%	-22%	-3%	17%	-9%	16%	-5%	-10%	4%	14%

BBS percentage changes

In the WGS the species was recorded in 82% of gardens and showed a 28% increase between 2012 and 2013. However, CABS recorded a decline of 30% over the same period.

The only count of more than ten was 12 at Snuff Mills on April 6th.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant.

This is an adaptable species, at home wherever there are suitable nest sites for example in trees or in suburban chimneys. They were present in 98% of tetrads surveyed during the summer for the 2007-11 Avon Atlas, and so are in effect universal.

Breeding In the BBS a total of 3174 was recorded in the two counts from 155 squares representing 88.1% of the area surveyed. BBS results in Avon (see table below) suggest a stable population over the past ten years but with some longer term decline. CABS noted an 8% decline compared to 2012 and one of 71% since 1994. This is at odds with the national picture where the BBS results for England show an increase of 53% between 1995 and 2011.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-20%	-2%	-1%	9%	4%	-4%	-1%	-5%	6%	-2%	-1%	-6%

BBS percentage changes

The species was recorded in 61% of gardens in the WGS showing a 3% increase over 2012.

By far the largest flock reported was estimated at 5000 in the roost on Denny Island, CVL on Jan.13th (K E Vinicombe), and 2000 were counted in this roost on Dec. 2nd. Also 750 were noted flying into this roost on 29th. Other large flocks were recorded at Rushmead Farm, Marshfield with about 500 on Jan. 6th and 11th, and BL also with 500 on April 7th.

An individual with a pale neck collar was photographed on Stratford Lane, CVL on Feb. 26th (K E Vinicombe); although similar in appearance to some continental birds ('Nordic Jackdaws') it was thought that a local plumage anomaly was more likely.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident.

This species seems to have had a successful year in 2013, the details are given on the next page.

This *corvid* remains common and was recorded from 50% (summer) and 76% (winter) of the tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas. This suggests some dispersal from rookeries to feed more widely outside the breeding season with large post-breeding flocks being obvious from late May, particularly on lowland arable farmland. It is noticeably absent from the more densely populated urban areas.

Breeding A total of 1247 was recorded in the two BBS visits over 57 squares (representing 32.4% of the whole area surveyed). This marked a welcome reversal in the trend for this species providing a 31% increase over the previous year which was in contrast to most other species in 2013 (see the BBS table below). However, the species has declined in the Avon area by some 58% since 1994 in line with the national BBS results which show a decline of 56% between 1995 and 2011. The Rookery Survey in 2010 suggested a decline of about 30% from the previous survey in 2005.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-58%	-29%	-5%	5%	-22%	17%	-9%	21%	-25%	-20%	-10%	31%

BBS percentage changes

Very few large flocks were noted. The only counts of 100 or more were: c.250 at Earthcott Green on July 17th, 100 at Wickwar on Oct. 2nd, and 102 at Keynsham on Dec. 5th.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

The local population remains stable although there have been some long-term increases in line with increases at the national level – the National BBS for England shows an increase of 20% between 1995 and 2011. It is found throughout the area with records from all tetrads in the 2007 –11 Avon Atlas and significant numbers were counted in both urban and rural areas.

Breeding The species was counted in 172 squares during the 2013 BBS representing 97.7% of the squares surveyed with a total of 3702 noted during the two visits. The historical BBS data is tabulated below.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
8%	17%	6%	15%	0%	-7%	-4%	2%	4%	-4%	-1%	6%

BBS percentage changes

It was recorded in 76% of gardens by the WGS with a decline of 5% since last year. CABS noted a larger decline, one of 11% from 2012.

The largest flock noted was one of 220 at OPS on Sept. 27th. Other flocks of 100 or more were 150 at Sand Point on March 24th, 100 at OPS again on Sept. 28th, and 100 at Burnett on Dec.15th, the latter being the largest inland flock.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

The local population has increased steadily since 1994.

Breeding The increase during the last ten years has continued and it was one of the few species to show a rise over 2012 in the BBS. In 2013 a total of 67 was counted in the two BBS visits over 31 squares representing 17.6% of the area surveyed by the Avon BBS. This compares to 52 in 21 squares (12.7%) in 2012. See the table below which shows the more or less steady expansion in distribution of this species over the past decade.

Year	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
% of squares surveyed	2.8	8.4	8.7	10.9	7.7	14.4	15.1	16.3	12.7	17.6

Percentage of Avon BBS squares in which this species was recorded

A pair raised two young on Denny Island at CVL.

More than 800 records were received and it was recorded from every ten *km* square in the Avon area. The highest count was from Marshfield with 30 on Oct.1st.

The local population was estimated by the 2007-11 Avon Atlas to be at least 100 breeding pairs.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

[RR]

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is a common but elusive breeding resident. During the 2007-11 Avon Atlas it was found in 92% of tetrads with woods, and 83% of urban tetrads. The sedentary breeding population is swelled considerably by migrants although our knowledge of their movements is very incomplete. As usual numbers recorded fall off markedly during April and reached a low point in June (13 were recorded in a total of eight sightings in 2013). Sightings increased again from September and into October reaching a maximum of 159 in November (54 reports). Many records during September and October were from coastal locations and presumably relate to migrants.

Breeding The Avon BBS recorded a total during the two visits of 97 from 43 squares (24.4% of the area surveyed). This is a marked decrease from the 200 counted in 62 squares (37.3%) in 2012, and was presumably a reflection of the cold and late spring in 2013 affecting the breeding population, see table below. This species does fluctuate markedly as a result of adverse weather conditions. Although its elusive nature and the consequent small numbers recorded make it difficult to establish a trend, it is clear from the records of the past ten years that it can recover quickly from steep declines.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-23%	-61%	-4%	-7%	-30%	17%	-1%	-47%	13%	21%	38%	-47%

BBS percentage changes

Nationally the BBS recorded a 15% increase in England for the period 1995 to 2011 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area was -23%. However, nationally there is considerable regional variation and the figure for the SW Region (including Avon) for the same period was -15%.

The species was recorded from 42% of the gardens in the WGS, an increase of 7%.

There were a few ringing recoveries: one ringed at CVL on Dec.12th, 2012 was recovered in Hereford & Worcester on Oct.18th, and another ringed at Portbury on April 19th was recovered in Surrey on Nov. 17th.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

[RBBP] [Amber 5]

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is a regular winter visitor, albeit in very small numbers, also an unknown number occur on passage in March/April and October. Sightings were at a higher level than for the past two years, with records in January, February and March, and five possible passage migrants in April. Six were recorded from October onwards, those in October were probably migrants, while those seen later probably wintered in the area. Three of the records came from various areas of Bristol. The details in date order are as follows and refer to single birds except in the case of Sand Point on April 20th, and OPS on various dates in November when two were present:

Mangotsfield – Jan.15th;
 Kingsdown, Bristol – Feb. 23rd;
 Sand Point – March. 5th, and April 6th and 20th (two);
 Aust – April 16th;

Cl-Y – Oct. 14th;
 Worle – Oct. 17th;
 Bishopston, Bristol – Nov. 5th;
 OPS – Nov. 13th, 15th to 17th and 30th (two), and Dec. 7th;
 Uphill – Dec. 7th.

Breeding At least one pair bred at a site in North Somerset, with two juveniles seen in June; this, remarkably, is the first breeding record for the Avon area.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus**Abundant breeding resident.*

This still very common species continues to decline, probably as a result of a number of poor breeding seasons. It was present in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas, and in winter it was present in 97% of WGS gardens.

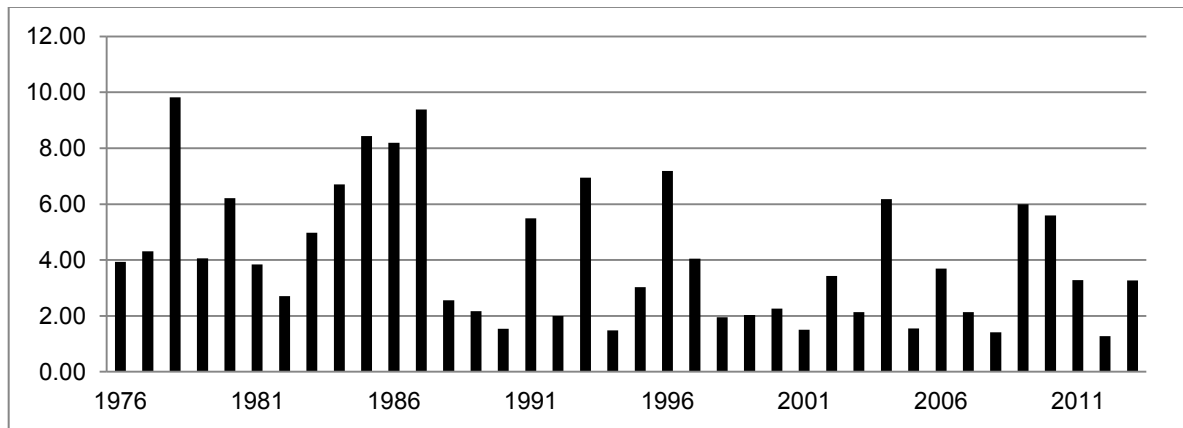
Breeding A total of 2005 was recorded in the two BBS visits over a total of 171 squares representing 97.2% of those surveyed in the Avon area. In 2012 it was recorded in 98.2% of the squares surveyed that year. A small decline of 3% was noted and this is the third successive year of decline (see the BBS table below). Nationally the BBS figures for England show an increase of 6% for the period 1995 to 2011 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is -4%.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-22%	-15%	6%	4%	-9%	-9%	-3%	-8%	21%	-3%	-9%	-3%

BBS percentage changes

Nest records from Folly Farm and CVL (D Warden) show that a total of 276 eggs were laid and 192 young fledged giving a 65% success rate very similar to that in 2012 of 64%. The average number of eggs laid per breeding attempt was 6.9 which compares to an average over the period 2004-13 of 7.9.

At CVL the chick survival rate, both in the nest and post-fledging in 2013, showed an improvement over the very poor results in 2012 but was still well below average. The chart below, provided by CVRS, shows productivity around CVL in the period from Aug. 1st and Dec. 31st in each year from 1976 to 2013. It is calculated by comparing the juvenile to adult ratio for birds that were caught alive between August and December during this period. It is evident that since 1986 there have been more poor breeding years than good ones.



Productivity at CVL, 1976 -2013

The CABS survey recorded a decrease of 8% between 2012 and 2013.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident.

[RR]

This common species had another poor year.

It was recorded in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas. In winter it was present in all of the WGS gardens.

Breeding A total of 1447 was recorded in the two BBS visits in a total of 169 squares representing 96% of the area surveyed. A decrease of 8% from 2012 (when the species was present in 97.6% of squares) was noted.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-4%	-7%	4%	-4%	17%	-12%	6%	-10%	18%	-13%	0%	-8%

BBS percentage changes

Nest records from Folly Farm and CVL (D Warden) reveal a poor season with a total of 233 eggs laid and 180 young fledged giving a 61% success rate (only the year 2010 at 47% was lower in the period 2004-13). The average number of eggs laid per breeding attempt was 5.3 which is the lowest in the past ten years and compares to an average over the same period of 6.5.

As with the previous species a long-term increase both nationally and locally has given way to a succession of years where there has been a decline. The national BBS shows an increase of 38% over the period 1995 to 2011 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is an increase of 18%.

There is one interesting ringing recovery where a first-year individual ringed at Portbury on March 24th, 2012 was recovered on Bardsey Island, in Wales, on April 20th, 2013; it had travelled a distance of 199km.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.

This species is widely but thinly distributed around our area, the details for 2013 are given below and overleaf.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total 112 in the two visits over 42 squares which represented 24% of those surveyed. This compares to 114 in 47 squares representing 28% of those surveyed in 2012. The species is widely but thinly distributed and the numbers counted in the BBS are too small to make meaningful estimates of population change. There were six pairs around CVL during the breeding season.

Coal Tit continued

The table below shows the percentage of BBS squares in which the species was recorded during the last decade. This indicates that there may have been some recent decline following several cold winters and the cold spring of 2013.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
36%	32%	26%	32%	26%	30%	34%	27%	28%	24%

Percentage of BBS squares in which this species was recorded

During the winter they were present in 79% of the gardens covered by the WGS and a decline of 7% was noted since 2012.

The national BBS has recorded an increase in England of 29% since 1995.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

[Red 3]

Uncommon breeding resident.

A locally and nationally declining species.

This species was noted in 42 one *km* squares, including six BBS squares during 2013 but no count was larger than two. Recorded throughout the year from a garden in Banwell and multiple records were also received from the Marshfield and Cleeve areas. The large majority of these squares were in North Somerset (20 squares) and B&NES (14 squares) which reflects the dependence of this species on mature deciduous woodland.

In the past 20 years the species has experienced significant declines both locally and nationally probably caused by changes in their woodland habitat. The 2007-11 Avon Atlas gave a population estimate of 250 breeding pairs for the Avon BTO Region compared to 1000 pairs estimated in the 1988-91 Atlas. The national BBS shows a decline of 26% for England in the period 1995 to 2011. Too few have been counted in the BBS locally to provide a meaningful measure for the local decline. However, 25 were counted in nine BBS one *km* squares compared with a total of 68 that were surveyed in 1994 (14.8% of the area surveyed) while in 2013 nine were counted in six squares (3.4% of the area surveyed). In 2012 six were counted in three squares (1.8% of the area surveyed). The table below shows the number of squares in which it has been recorded by the BBS in the past ten years and seems to indicate that the decline is not ongoing and that the population may now have stabilised.

BBS	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Squares	6	10	5	7	4	5	9	3	3	6
% of area surveyed	3.4	5.6	2.6	3.8	2.6	3.1	5.2	1.7	1.8	3.4

BBS yearly distribution

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus* (10, 75)

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor with the majority recorded from the extensive reedbeds at CVL, where breeding took place in 1991.

Descriptions required.

A good autumn with a number of records, the details are as follows:

Orchard Pools, Severn Beach – two, initially heard and then seen in flight to SE on Oct. 23rd (T Scott, W Middlemist);

Weston STW – four on Oct. 30th (G Warren). A male was seen perched and heard calling with three others seen and heard in flight over the reeds;

CVL – four, two males and two females, around Moreton Bank from Nov.13th until at least Dec. 2nd (S Isgar *et al.*), see photograph opposite page 137.

The species is surprisingly rare on the coast, although there has been an increase in records in the last few years. The only coastal records are 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 Point in April 1988, two at Chittering Warth in March 2004, one at OPS in April 2008, one at Weston STW in April 2010, one at PWD in September 2012, with another here and two at Northwick Warth in October 2012.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

[Red 3]

Declining but still common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A normal year, the details are given overleaf.

First winter period Up to 200 were present at Marshfield in January and February, rather fewer than in the previous two years. There was a substantial cold weather movement on Jan.18th (see Lapwing and Fieldfare) after the snow when a total of about 700 were recorded flying W or SW including at OPS (100), Severn Beach (80), CI-Y (20), Westwood (30), Saltford (40), and Congresbury/Yatton (200 – assumed the same), and smaller groups were recorded on the same date from Pilning, BG, CVL and BL.

Spring passage The largest group recorded during March was 14 heading east at OPS.

Breeding season First song was recorded on Feb.14th from both CI-Y and Marshfield. This was a day of bright sunshine and warm temperatures after four days of northerly winds, frost and total cloud cover. In the breeding season 73 records came from sites fairly evenly distributed between the coast, the Cotswolds, and the lowland farmland areas. The local BBS results largely exclude the coastal strip, and the figures depend substantially on the number of Cotswold squares that happen to be surveyed, so they are not a good indication of changing status. In the 1990s when the number of squares surveyed was building up they were found in over 50% of squares, but since 2000 the increase in urban squares has reduced this to around 40%.

Autumn passage The first passage record came on Sept. 21st and on 25th CI-Y recorded 60 moving SW, and 75 were here on Oct. 2nd. There were records of 60 moving south between 11th and 13th, 31 on 17th and steady movement over both CVL and BL on 24th. A total of 17 hours of migration watch on Oct.11th produced just 56 at a rate of three per hour.

Second winter period The only significant flock recorded was 750 at Rushmead Lane, near Marshfield on Nov.7th (M Hayes), note that 2000 were recorded here in December 2011. All other groups were of 50 or fewer, and most were from the coast.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

[Amber 1]

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.

A late spring passage.

Arrival and passage The first arrivals were of three at CVL on March 7th, the normal first date, but the subsequent cold weather kept numbers down to ones or twos, although 14 were seen at CVL on 10th, and 50 on 23rd, despite continuing frosts. By April 10th just over a third of the final total passage had appeared, but in the next ten days over 1300 bird-days were recorded from the coast as well as the lakes, culminating on 15th when 590 were counted at seven sites. At CVL 200 were also noted on 18th, and passage continued to 25th, after which time single digit numbers were reported from the coast to May 13th. In all some 2300 bird-days were recorded, fewer than in 2012, the records are summarised below.

Date	Mar 1-10	Mar 11-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	25	30	316	478	1323	115	5	2
Max count	14	7	50	60	200	30	2	1

Spring passage

Breeding Nationally, the BTO Atlas showed a 14% fall in distribution since 1972, mostly in the midlands and the south. Locally it has always been a scarce breeder, although in 1972 it was estimated that there were about 50 pairs. In the recent Avon Atlas breeding was proved in just four tetrads, three on the R. Avon at Keynsham, Somerdale and near Batheaston, and at an artificial site at BG. In 2012 a new site was built by the Bristol City Council on the Feeder Canal (it was an arts funded project!) where a few pairs had been breeding, but there were no records from this site in 2013. Ten pairs were recorded at BG and five at Batheaston. The table below gives estimates of the number of breeding pairs during the last two decades.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
18	30	28	23	23	15	14	14	14	9	15	14	4	7	5	7	7	20	18	15

Annual number of breeding pairs 1994-2013

Autumn passage Two returning migrants were seen at CVL on June 20th with the last here on Oct. 2nd, and the total Avon area passage was 1100 bird-days, strikingly fewer than in spring. The passage lasted over 100 days, but 70% of the total took place in just twelve days in three waves. One third of this total was seen on July 8th and 9th when 330 were recorded from OPS, Northwick Warth, New Passage and PWD on the coast, and CVL inland. A second wave came through in mid-August when 180 were recorded between Aug.12th and 19th from New Passage, CVL and BL. A final wave ran from Sept.16th to 18th when some 200 were recorded inland at Saltford, CVL and BL, and at Northwick Warth and PWD on the coast; these are summarised overleaf.

Sand Martin continued

	June	Jul			Aug			Sep		
	20-30	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30
Bird-days	26	379	35	64	29	174	43	105	228	4
Max	13	80	20	10	20	50	15	50	100	3

Autumn passage

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

[Amber 1]

Common passage migrant and common breeder.

A late arrival.

Arrival and spring passage The first sighting was of one at Kenn Moor on March 22nd which is remarkable given the fact that the maximum temperature that day was only 6°C. This date is identical to the average first arrival date over the past 25 years. Despite freezing conditions that continued until April 7th a total of 39 were seen up to 6th at the reservoirs. On 7th they were seen at six widespread sites, and passage proper got under way.

A total of at least 13,500 was counted or estimated during the rest of April and throughout May. The largest number of records was for the period April 12th to 16th as observers noted their first sightings, but the passage peaked between 21st and 30th. Counts totalling 9000 were made during this period, but in addition 'uncountable' numbers were reported at the reservoirs on 25th and 26th almost certainly related to the fact that the wind switched abruptly from south to north on the first of these dates, and the flocks presumably stopped moving and concentrated on feeding. On May 9th, and again on 14th and 15th, when the wind also abruptly switched to the NW, thousands were recorded at BL feeding over the lake. It is not clear whether these were migrants feeding up, or local residents seeking a good food source in inclement conditions. Records of movement north both on the coast and through the suburbs of Bristol continued to the end of May. The table below gives a breakdown of the spring records but it excludes the large 'uncountable' reservoir counts for April 15th and 16th.

Date	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-30
Bird-days	15	329	3465	8931	642	2876	1020
Max count	5	60	500	1000	500	1000	1000

Spring passage excluding reservoir counts for April 25th and 26th.

Breeding BBS records showed a sharp fall in 2013, but this simply reflected the fact that the 2012 figures were exceptionally high because very large numbers of migrants were noted in the first week of May when many of the early BBS counts were done. A better value might be obtained using the second visit data only. The figures since 1994 have shown a slight rise, but they are very erratic. The BBS figure for distribution has remained unaltered. They do not breed in the major urban areas, but otherwise they are universal.

Autumn passage and departure The start of the autumn passage is always hard to judge but there were several records of movement in July including 391 caught by CVRS on 26th, and thousands present in August on Steep Holm on visit days. By 28th a steady stream flying south was recorded at CI-Y. The majority of passage took place between Sept.1st and Oct.10th. The peak was around Sept.15th when 600 were recorded at 11 sites, and the 17th when thousands were present at CVL. Numbers dropped off very rapidly in October. Oddly, there were records of birds flying NE and even N at Aust and Sand Point on Oct.11th, 12th and 13th, three days when the wind switched from SW to NW. Counts or estimates totalled 7900, about half the spring passage total, but the large numbers present often made accurate estimates impossible. The table below gives a breakdown of the autumn period records.

Date	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10	Oct 11-10	Oct 21-30
Bird-days	460	1000	125	155	860	2010	2460	740	13	14
Max	400	1000	125	155	200	600	300	130	5	8

Autumn passage

BL recorded one on Nov. 2nd, their latest date ever, but there were seven other November records from OPS, Aust, Sand Point, and the Axe Estuary to the end of the month. The final record came on Dec. 17th from New Passage. This was one of a number of national records during December, reflecting the fact that the average maximum temperature in this month was, unusually, the same as November. This is the latest date for the Avon area, beating the 1970 date of Dec.16th and that of 2001 of Dec. 3rd. There are November records in 1977, 1980 and 1997.

2010 – A mummified juvenile was found dead on a sandy bank near the golf course at Uphill on Feb. 15th, 2010 by P. F Whitehead. Its feathering was in generally good condition but the internal organs were largely absent. The observer speculated that it might have been one that stayed very late in autumn 2009, as did several in Somerset, the last at Chilcombe on Dec.16th. This date saw the onset of a long spell of severe cold that could have served to preserve the corpse to some extent.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*
Common passage migrant and breeder. Amber.

[Amber 1, 3]

A late arrival.

Arrival The first sighting at BL on April 5th was twelve days later than average, and was the latest first arrival since 2007. Passage had been delayed by strong NE winds, which continued until the 10th, but despite night-time frosts, daytime temperatures began to pick up from 5th. There were further records on 8th and 9th, and on the 10th a total of 13 was recorded from six sites. The first decent flock, 80, was seen at Sand Bay on 15th, and on the 17th a mixed hirundine flock at BL was too big to count. For the remainder of the month rather small groups were recorded from the coasts and reservoirs. Despite good conditions there were few records from the first week of May but on 9th, 14th and 15th thousands of hirundines were present at BL. The last record from Sand Point of northward movement was on 17th; 750 were present at CVL on 24th and thousands were present at BL on 28th. The total counted was 2700 as tabulated below.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	16	450	330	20	1060	850
Max count	5	80	60	14	1000	750

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS results show a further fall both in the percentage of squares occupied and numbers counted, but early counts often coincide with migrants, and consistent counts of colonies are rare. Nationally, a 44% decline has been estimated from BBS results, and the local results are in line with this, but the mobility of nesting colonies makes population change hard to measure accurately. They were present in 75% of tetrads in the Avon Atlas, but breeding was not assessed on a tetrad basis. During the 2013 breeding season, omitting all reports from the reservoirs and the coast, they were recorded in 39 one-km squares and breeding colonies were positively identified at western edge of Clevedon, Hotwells, Inglestone Common, Nailsea, Pill, Sea Mills, Severn Beach, Walton-in-Gordano, and Winthill near Banwell.

Post-breeding and departure There were records from Sand Point in mid-August that may have been migrants, although no movement was noted, and on Sept. 4th about 80 were reported gathering around the towers at OPS. On Sept. 9th two were reported moving to S with Swallows at CI-Y and 100 going south at Sand Point on 11th. Passage peaked between Sept.15th and 18th, with a strong fast passage at Northwick Warth on 15th and "thousands" being recorded at CVL on 17th. There was also a record on the 30th of 200 moving NE at CI-Y. On Oct.1st a total of 250 were recorded from five widespread sites, and the last flock contained 100 moving down river at Aust on Oct. 4th. A total of 19 individuals was seen at the coast up to 14th and the last record came from OPS on 22nd, an average last date. The recorded total, tabulated below, was 2300, surprising, fewer than that for spring.

Date	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct 1-10
Bird-days	325	760	415	530
Max counts	110	300	200	100

Autumn passage

A note on hirundine passage

Hirundine passage is often composed of very large mixed flocks, and estimating the proportions of the different species is sometimes difficult. This year on spring passage, House Martins and Sand Martins constituted about 22% of the totals, and Swallows about 77%. Because of the exceptionally cold weather in March which was associated with E or NE winds that continued until April 10th, 65% of the passage occurred between April 11th and 30th. There was a lull in the first ten days of May, which in 2012 had seen an extraordinary passage surge, and the final 25%, also associated with Swifts as last year, was during the last 20 days of May.

The size of the autumn passage was half that in spring, and was composed of 71% Swallows, 18% House Martins and 10% Sand Martins. About 55% of the total passed through between Sept.11th and 30th, and a further 24% in the first ten days of October.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

[RBBP] [RR]

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

At CVL, only three singing males were noted, a further decrease on the previous year's six, no doubt the result of yet another cold winter.

Elsewhere, noted in the breeding season from Severnside, PWD, Weston Moor, Pill, Blake's Pools (CI-Y), Yatton (Strawberry Line), Congresbury Moor and Weston STW, with birds present at all of these sites during most of the year. In many cases, just one or two individuals were heard singing, but up to six were noted at PWD. In the second winter period one or two were singing at OPS to the end of the year and one was noted at BL on Nov.13th, hopefully the first signs of a pick-up in numbers.

	1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
CVL singing males	1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28	31	14	6	3
Other singing males						3	2	4	3	7	14	14	21	32	33	41	13	19	18
Number of sites						3	2	4	3	5	13	10	8	18	19	17	8	10	8

Singing males at CVL, and breeding season singing males from other sites.

Ringling report One ringed at CVL as an adult on Oct. 21st, 2012 was retrapped on Nov. 28th at Betley Mere, Staffs, 190km to the north-east.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus**Common breeding resident.*

A fairly typical year, with small parties reported widely at all seasons, many from observers' gardens, the WGS recording this species from 88% of surveyed gardens in the 2012/13 winter, just 1% down on the previous winter.

Adults were seen feeding young in the nest from mid-May, and the first family parties on the wing were reported from mid-June onwards. BBS surveyors counted a total of 217 over their two visits, the data indicating a drop of 25% in numbers as compared with 2012; this is shown in the table below. The species was found in 86 squares, this representing 49% of those surveyed. Although locally the BBS results indicate an overall population decline of 54% since 1994, nationally records for this species have increased by about 24% in England over the same period.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-54%	-44%	13%	-23%	2%	26%	-9%	-2%	10%	-33%	1%	-25%

BBS percentage changes

Six or seven were seen at Steep Holm on March 14th to 16th, and 55 were counted at Wain's Hill, CI-Y, on Oct. 14th, indicating that the species is not entirely sedentary.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus* (1, 32)*Scarce or very scarce autumn visitor; rare in winter since the first in 1986.*

Descriptions required.

A poor year by recent standards with just one record; a vocal but elusive individual by the R. Frome in Chipping Sodbury from Sept. 30th until Oct. 2nd (G Thoburn, D Pearce, G Youdale *et al.*).

2012 – The individual at OPS was present between Nov.17th and 29th, not October as stated in the 2012 Report.

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years. It was first recorded in the Avon area in 1986 when there were five.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	5	0	1	3	4	1

Records each year

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

[Red 3]

Uncommon spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996.

Descriptions required for autumn records.

Single birds on passage were reported at BL on April 20th, at Folly Farm and BL again on 25th, at CVL on 27th, at Aust STW and Kensington Meadows (Bath) on 29th, at Mangotsfield on May 6th and in Bourton Combe from May 15th to 17th. This last is a potential breeding site but there were no subsequent records from here.

The table below shows the numbers recorded on spring passage in each of the last ten years.

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
9	8	10	5	3	7	8	2	7	8

Passage totals in spring 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.

Good numbers in the first winter period, but a significant drop in breeding numbers.

First winter Birds that were undoubtedly wintering were noted in January and February from PWD, Aust STW, Saltford, Keynsham, CVL, BL, Avonmouth STW, New Passage, Eastville Park, CI-Y, Bath and Weston STW. Many counts were of just one or two individuals, but up to seven were noted at Saltford and CVL. The first song was heard in mid-February.

Spring passage The first seen away from the above sites appeared early in March (for example OPS on 2nd, Sand Point on 9th), indicating the start of spring passage. Although small numbers were increasingly widespread through March, counts into double figures only started to be made at the end of the month, with 20 at both CVL and Severnside on 31st. Passage peaked in the first fortnight of April, with 33 at BL on 6th, 40 at Middle Hope on 10th and 45 at OPS on 16th being among the higher counts.

Breeding Widely reported during the breeding season. The Avon BBS survey found the species in 149 squares, this representing 84.7% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 846, the data indicating a drop of 25% in numbers as compared with 2012; this is shown in the table below. However, as the table also shows, there are quite large variations from year to year, and nationally numbers in England seem to be steadily increasing.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-18%	-32%	19%	-41%	-9%	21%	8%	-6%	6%	15%	-5%	-25%

BBS percentage changes

At one regularly surveyed site, CVL, the number of singing males dropped by 42% from the 83 in 2012 (admittedly a record high) to 48 in 2013, possibly due to the cold winter and early spring.

Autumn passage and second winter From mid-August numbers started to build up in various places, both inland and on the coast, with 27 at OPS on Sept. 11th being the highest of several double-figure counts around this time. Smaller numbers of migrants continued to be seen through to the end of November, particularly along the coast, but by December most of the records came from known wintering sites such as Aust Warth, Avonmouth STW, Saltford and CVL, where reedbeds and filter beds at STWs seem to be the preferred habitats.

Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis* (2, 16)

Scarce or very scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.

Descriptions required.

Two records, both from CVL:

One, heard calling and seen, on the east side of Herriott's Pool on Jan. 2nd was subsequently seen in the same area on 4th, 11th and 31st (K E Vinicombe *et al.*). It was trapped by CVRS, ringed and photographed on 6th. It was also seen at the back of Herriott's Pool on Feb. 17th.

One amongst a small 'fall' of Chiffchaffs at Herriotts Bridge, CVL on March 25th; although closer to *tristis* than *collybita*, it was not a classic individual – it was predominantly a dull grey and had a faint yellow wash on the undertail.

The table below gives the number of accepted records of this subspecies reported during the past 20 years.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	2

Records each year

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

[RR] [Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor.

Continues to decline as a breeding species, but remains widespread on migration.

Arrival The first record was of one at Northwick Warth on March 31st, five days later than the average 'first date', the next records being of two at each of Aust and Stanton Drew on April 6th. These headed a steady arrival from then on, both on the coast and inland, with 20 at CVL on 11th and 21 at BL the next day, when 60 were also counted at Middle Hope. Passage seemed to peak around 19th when a total of 84 was noted at 15 widely scattered sites but by the end of the month they were mostly being seen in ones and twos.

On April 16th, a rather grey individual was noted at Aust STW, possibly of the northern race *acredula*. One that was plumage-wise this species seen near Chew Stoke on April 19th was heard to incorporate Chiffchaff song into its normal one. Sometimes it gave about four *chiffs & chaffs*, then stopped. At other times it did the same thing and then finished off with a typical Willow Warbler series of descending notes, and sometimes it just gave the Willow Warbler song, although perhaps not sounding quite as long and full as is typical for this species (K J Hall). Mixed singing is widely, if uncommonly, reported in Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff and although hybridisation is one possible explanation, it is more likely that this behaviour is the result of anomalies in the song learning process.

Breeding During the BBS survey for 2013, the species was found in 35 squares, this representing only 19.9% of those surveyed, a further decrease on the 38 squares where it was found in 2012. Many of these were likely to have been migrants, as there was a large drop between the early and late season survey visits, and some of them would have been outside Avon 'proper', on the Mendips. There were no confirmed breeding records as such and a measure of how thinly spread the species is in summer can be seen by the number of bird-days when it was recorded: 46 in May, 20 in June and only six in July.

Departure Autumn passage appeared to start at the end of July, when single birds were noted at new sites inland (Saltford, 26th) and on the coast (Sevenside, 28th). There was then a steady trickle of records through the first half of August, ten at OPS on 10th and eight at Chipping Sodbury Common on 18th being the highest counts, with smaller numbers on most days through to Sept. 12th. One trapped at Portbury on Aug. 25th had been ringed only 23 days earlier, 667km to the north, at Castle Stuart in the Highland Region of Scotland.

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.

Continues to be recorded widely both in summer and winter.

As is now usual, reported from many gardens in the first winter period from January through to early April, mostly in ones and twos, but five in Redland on Jan. 9th, seven in Stoke Bishop on 20th and five in Yate on Feb. 21st were higher garden counts. The WGS recorded this species from 82% of all survey gardens in the 2012/13 winter, much the same as in the past few years. Song was heard from March 16th in a few places, from what were presumably still wintering birds. It is worth noting that very few records came from non-urban sites during this period.

Although noted in gardens through to mid-April, single birds at BL on 6th and at New Passage on 7th indicated the start of the arrival of summer visitors. Three at Sand Bay on the 9th and the same number at CVL on 10th would also have been migrants and from then on numbers and distribution became steadily bigger. Peak numbers occurred around 20th when 20 were counted at OPS, 30 at Sand Point, and the same number at BL the next day, plus several double-figure counts at other sites at the same time.

Breeding During the Avon BBS survey for 2013, the species was found in 150 squares, this representing 85.2% of those surveyed. A combined total of 922 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 17% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below. However, BBS results indicate an overall population increase of 46% locally since 1994, and nationally they have increased by about 108% over the same period, so things still look encouraging as far as this species is concerned.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
46%	38%	14%	0%	-3%	11%	-11%	9%	20%	17%	-1%	-17%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, 66 singing males were located, slightly down on the record 76 in 2012, but still a remarkably healthy population.

The highest numbers on autumn migration occurred in September, with 15 at OPS on 10th, 25 at Northwick Warth on 12th, 12 at PWD on 21st and ten at Chittening Warth on 30th among the larger counts. Single-figure maxima were noted throughout October, and with mostly just ones and twos from mid-month to the end of the year. The first wintering birds started to reappear in gardens from early November onwards, when almost all records once again came from urban sites.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first arrivals were two on Chipping Sodbury Common on April 20th, with single birds at Northwick Warth, BL and Marshfield the next day, well after the average first arrival date of 14th. Relatively few were noted at obvious migration sites such as New Passage (one on 27th), Backwell Lake (one on 28th) and Sand Point (two also 28th).

One at Sand Point on May 7th was also presumably a migrant, as were two at CI-Y on the same date and again on 11th, but most other May to July records were at known breeding areas, mostly in small numbers although at CVL 51 singing males were noted during the breeding season, up on the 46 in 2012. There are not enough BBS squares recording this species (15, or 8.5% of the total) to give a significant picture of breeding performance locally, but juveniles were seen in early August at OPS and PWD.

Autumn migrants were noted in the first twelve days of September from Severnside and PWD, but there were no more sightings until one was seen at OPS on Oct. 5th. The average 'last date' is Sept. 25th, but there have been records in the past through to Nov. 21st (in 1993 at Winscombe).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Numbers appear to be reasonably stable.

The first arrivals in spring were single birds at Weston STW on April 13th, then at Northwick Warth and PWD on 16th, somewhat ahead of the recent average date of 20th. On 18th one was seen at Castlemead in central Bristol, with one not far away in St. Philips the next day, presumably both grounded migrants. On the 21st, 13 individuals were noted at eleven widely spaced sites, the start of the main arrival. The species is rarely found in numbers at any one spot, but higher counts included five at OPS on 25th and near Pill on 26th, six at CI-Y on 30th and seven at Severn Beach on May 1st, all indicating a main arrival in late April/early May.

From mid-May to mid-June, when breeding sites can reasonably be expected to be occupied, ones and twos were noted from 32 widely spaced places. On July 6th young were seen being fed at Northwick Warth and juveniles were seen at OPS on 30th and on Inglestone Common on Aug. 11th. Up to eight were reported from Chipping Sodbury Common through to September, clearly a productive site with much ideal habitat. The species was only noted in 11.9% of BBS squares surveyed, slightly down on the figure for 2012 and too few from which to draw many conclusions, but nationally the population appears to be reasonably stable.

Small numbers were recorded through to mid-September at various localities, mostly coastal, although the last record in the month was of one at CVL on 16th. The last was one seen at OPS on Oct. 5th. The average 'last date' for Avon is Sept. 28th, but records into October and November seem to have increased recently.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

[RR] [Amber 3]

This species seems to be holding its own at the moment.

The spring arrival this year was apparently very sudden, on April 16th, when up to three were noted at eleven widely spaced spots ranging from OPS and Aust Warth to Weston STW on the coast, and several sites in and around Bristol as far out as Charlton Fields (Keynsham). Some larger counts from then on included 14 at OPS on 20th and ten at Sand Point on the same date, then seven at both PWD and CI-Y on 27th, but there were plenty of ones and twos elsewhere. By the end of April, they had arrived at known breeding sites but 19 at Severn Beach on May 6th presumably included at least some migrants.

By May 13th one was on eggs near Almondsbury, five pulli being ringed here on June 6th. Up to 11 were noted at OPS during May and June, with young seen here from June 12th onwards. Young were also reported from CI-Y in early June, and they were thought to be particularly numerous near Marshfield this year, while eight singing males were heard at CVL during the breeding season (12 in 2012).

Whitethroat continued

BBS surveyors counted a total of 331 over their two visits, the data indicating a drop of 5% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below. The species was found in 92 squares, this representing 52.3% of those surveyed, and the Avon Atlas confirms that the species is indeed widely distributed. The BBS results indicate an overall population increase of 20% since 1994, and nationally they have increased in England by about 38% over the same period, although there are significant fluctuations from year to year and from one part of the country to another.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
20%	19%	12%	10%	5%	5%	-16%	21%	10%	34%	-38%	-5%

BBS percentage changes

Birds were still present at some breeding haunts into September, with others on passage noted in small numbers at a variety of sites through to mid-month (the highest counts were at least eight at OPS on 2nd and seven at Weston STW on 9th). The final records for the year were one at PWD on 21st, three at Chittingen Warth, Severnside on 30th and one at PWD again on Oct. 5th. This last date is in line with the average last date recorded in recent years.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata* (1, 38)

Formerly rare, now a scarce visitor. Has bred.

Descriptions required.

One record, the first since 2010: one at Sand Point from Nov.10th and seen intermittently into 2014 (P A Bowyer, *et al.*, photographed).

The cold winter of 2008/09 saw the loss of the recently established population just across the border on Mendip, presumably the source of most of our recent records. A second cold winter in 2009/10 further reduced the Somerset population. The Avon area records for the past 20 years are summarised below.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	1	2*	6*	2	2	3	0	1	2	1	9	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	1

Total annual records; * indicates a breeding record.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.

A fairly typical year, although with a species that primarily seems to sing in the hours of darkness, it is hard to be sure of its true status.

The first to occur were two at Middle Hope on April 12th, followed by single birds at New Passage, PWD and Weston STW the next day. Sightings (or probably 'listensings') of probable migrants continued to be reported through to April 22nd, when one was noted at Sand Point. During this period a total of 20 bird-days was recorded at eleven sites, with another 32 through to mid-May, although most of the latter can be accounted for by individuals apparently holding territory.

Through the rest of April to May 9th, reeling individuals were noted at two sites, OPS and Aust Warth, with up to three at the former and one at the latter, although there was no proof of breeding at either. There were also records from Weston STW during April, May and on a couple of occasions in July, this being another possible breeding site.

Song was still being heard at OPS through to July 30th, but the only subsequent records were of one on Chipping Sodbury Common on Aug. 28th and three trapped by GVRs on Sept. 5th, this being well ahead of the average last departure date of Sept. 19th.

The table below summarises the counts for the past decade. The spring average (at 55) and the breeding season average (at 4.3) are close to the values for 2013, but the autumn average (at 9) is twice the 2013 figure.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	2012	2013
Spring	39	37	47	32	29	67	74	105	53	52
Breeding season	2	2	7	11	4	6	6	0	1	4
Autumn	6	29	6	3	6	7	16	9	4	4

Avon spring and autumn passage bird-days and breeding season territories

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

[RR]

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Another normal year.

The first of the year was one at CVL on April 13th (as per the average first arrival date), but then, as for Whitethroat, several appeared on 16th, with up to three at OPS, Northwick Warth, Severn Beach, CVL again and Weston STW. From 19th to the end of the month between one and seven were noted at the following sites, most of which have potential nesting habitat and so it is hard to separate migrants from breeders: OPS, Severnside, Avonmouth STW, PWD, Pill, CI-Y, Weston STW, St Philips Marsh, Congresbury Moor, BL and CVL. On May 5th, the ringing station at CVL caught 49, still with fat levels that indicated that they were on migration and 12 were noted at BL the next day, significantly more than the normal number of breeders here. One in a Chew Stoke garden on May 16th was also clearly a migrant.

Small numbers continued to be noted at many of the above sites through May and June, with up to ten at OPS where young were seen being fed on June 18th. They continued to be regularly reported from here through to the end of August, with few records elsewhere, but they are easily overlooked once they stop singing. At CVL, 14 singing males were located, slightly down on the 16 noted in 2012.

There were records from five sites in early September, with a maximum of six at GVRs, the last being single birds at Saltford and CVL on 18th, and finally one at Weston STW on 30th, in line with the average last departure date of Oct. 1st.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

[RR]

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Better early summer weather resulted in much improved breeding success as compared to 2012.

The first was one at PWD on April 15th, followed by single birds at Northwick Warth, Yatton and Weston STW and two at BL the next day, fairly typical first dates. On 19th they were present at Weston STW, at CVL on 20th and at Aust STW, CI-Y and BL the next day. Up to eight were seen at a scattering of sites through the rest of April, with 14 at CVL on 29th and 15 at BL on May 1st indicating the main arrival.

Breeding sites occupied in May and June included OPS, various sites around Severnside, PWD, CI-Y, Weston STW, Three Brooks NR (Bradley Stoke), the Strawberry Line near Yatton, CVL and BL. However, one at Sand Point on May 5th and another in a Winscombe garden on 18th were presumably still on migration. At Lower Knole Farm, Almondsbury, one nest contained three eggs on May 21st, with two pulli ringed from it on June 3rd and fledged young were noted nearby on 10th. Song continued to be heard through to mid-July, up to 16 were present in Saltford during this month and there were regular reports from breeding sites throughout August.

At CVL, where D Warden has been ringing this species since 1964, survival rates were close to the long-term average, as shown in the table below, and a big improvement on the previous year's results. Note that the number of nests found varies widely from year to year (see for example the 2012 and 2013 columns), as the lake's water level has a big influence on how easy they are to locate, and so the totals in the table are not a true indication of the actual population, although there is not much doubt that numbers have increased considerably in recent years, as the reedbeds have spread around the lake shore. Figures from CVRS's Constant Effort Sites also indicated an increase in productivity, with the proportion of juveniles to adults trapped in 2013 as compared with 2012 rising from 0.83 to 1.32, respectively, although still below the norm of at least two juveniles for every adult. Of note also, one ringed in the nest at CVL on June 21st had already travelled 1338km to Portugal (Lagos, Figuera da Foz) by Aug. 24th, where it was re-trapped by a ringer.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013	1964/13 Av.
Nests located	282	132	141	54	105	79	70	164	124	33	94.7
Total eggs	1010	486	487	199	379	294	241	607	395	116	341.8
Eggs/nest	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.2	3.5	3.6
Total pulli ringed	557	339	178	124	245	223	149	492	122	63	184.2
Total pulli fledged	463	284	150	118	227	200	134	458	99	58	159.6
Eggs to pulli survival	55.1%	69.8%	36.6%	62.3%	65.3%	75.9%	61.8%	81.1%	30.9%	54.3%	53.9%
Pulli to fledging survival	83.1%	84.4%	84.3%	95.2%	91.8%	89.7%	89.9%	93.1%	81.1%	92.1%	88.6%
Eggs to fledging survival	45.8%	58.9%	30.8%	59.3%	59.9%	68.0%	55.6%	75.5%	25.1%	50.0%	47.8%

CVL ringing totals and survival rates (figures from D Warden)

In September, there were six at GVRs on 5th, the last reports were from OPS on 11th, from CVL on 18th and from Weston STW on 21st, this being the final record, quite early relative to the average last date of Oct. 4th.

Warblers at CVL

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Sedge Warbler	7	11	11	7	41	20	41	31	16	14
Garden Warbler	15	14	28	27	29	37	40	58	46	51
Blackcap	23	23	31	35	45	49	47	70	76	66
Chiffchaff	29	25	30	38	38	45	57	73	83	48
Willow Warbler	6	6	0	7	9	3	0	6	1	2

Excluding Reed Warbler, counts of singing males made by K E Vinicombe within the CVL perimeter using a standardised method

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce irruptive winter visitor. Erratic locally with a big influx in winter 2004/05.

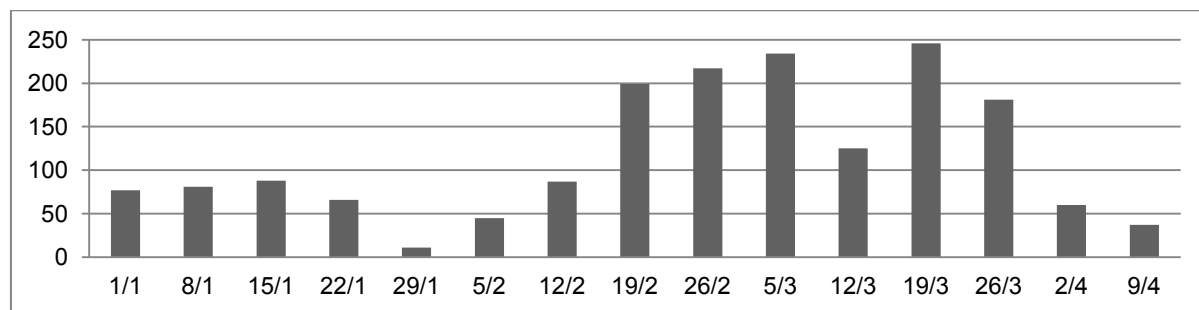
The 2012/13 winter saw the third largest irruption locally in the last thirty years.

The irruption in the first winter period began on Nov.10th, 2012 and reached a maximum daily total of 135 at seven sites on Dec. 9th, but numbers then fell back to the end of the year. The first of 2013 were 35 seen at Wick St Lawrence STW on Jan. 5th, and there were almost daily sightings from then until April 14th when the last 17 were seen in Stoke Bishop. Some 1785 bird-days were recorded which, added to the 950 from the last two months of 2012, gave a total of 2735 very similar to the 2010/11 irruption. It is clear that these events, once very exceptional, are becoming more common as is shown in the table below.

	1981/82	88/89	95/96	98/99	00/01	02/03	04/05	05/06	08/09	09/10	10/11	2012/13
Bird-days	6	1	c.75	3	c.107	c.42	10875	1	c.70	22	2897	2735
Max. flock	3	1	5	1	6	2	377	1	14	20	112	60

Winters with Avon area records

In 2013 the largest single count was 38 at Weston-s-Mare on March 1st, and the largest day count was 94 on March 22nd from four sites. In all they were seen at 50 widely scattered sites across the region, including twelve in Bristol and several in Weston. A well visited flock of around 30 were present at a supermarket at Worle for the first three weeks of March. The bar chart below summarises the 2013 counts. None were seen in the second winter period.



Weekly total bird-days January to April

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A normal year.

The BBS counted 117 in 43 squares, which represented a 30% increase on the previous year in numbers, and the highest proportion of squares, 21%, since the survey began. This proportion has been increasing since its nadir of 11% in 2008. Individual records came from 86 one-km squares, 38 of them new since 1998.

Nationally its distribution has been increasing for some years, and the national BBS has shown a 90% increase in numbers since 1995. Locally it has been more stable.

In the breeding season it was recorded from 37 sites, although positive breeding evidence came from only two, in Nailsea and at Folly Farm. In the first winter season there were 60 records but in the second only 15.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Total squares	80	87	34	54	42	65	83	81	68	86
New squares	28	26	9	13	6	22	31	23	32	38

Total number of one-km squares in which species was reported each year

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris**Fairly common breeding resident.*

A normal year.

The BTO 2007-11 Atlas recorded presence in 75% of all ten-km squares in England both winter and summer, compared with the local figure of 35% of tetrads, and the national BBS shows a stable population. Since 1998 there have been records from 327 one-km squares, and this year they were recorded in 72 of them, 38 of which were new. The table below shows the improving trend in the Avon area.

The breeding season produced reports from 26 sites, but only one record of proved breeding, from BG. There were four pairs around CVL, down from 15 in 2012, suggesting that the cold March weather affected them. But BBS recorded presence in 13% of squares, the highest proportion since 1998, and there was no sign of a significant fall in numbers.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Total squares	26	61	26	41	36	44	57	69	71	72
New squares	13	27	11	14	10	14	13	22	22	36

Total number of one-km squares in which the species was reported each year

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

[RR]

Abundant breeding resident.

A poor breeding season in 2012, and the cold March in 2013 have surprisingly made almost no difference, numbers continue to be at the lowest level since 1996 when they had suffered a severe winter. The warmth of the 2013/14 winter should help survival, and should enable a recovery in 2014. The last peak in numbers was in 2007. Also CABS has shown a 33% fall since that time.

A series of counts on Steep Holm between February and August gave a maximum of 25 present. A BBS survey at BL produced a high count of 62 on May 6th.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

[Red 3]

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; also passage migrant and winter visitor.

The slow decline of this species shows no sign of stopping.

First winter period The largest roost count was 2000 at Nailsea on Jan.11th, and a feeding flock of 2000 was attacked by a Merlin at Thornbury on Feb. 27th. Feeding flocks of 1000 or more were recorded at CI-Y, Congresbury, CVL, Kenn Moor, Kingston Seymour, Sand Bay, and Yatton during this time.

The WGS noted them in only 58% of gardens, the lowest proportion since the survey began in 1975, but the numbers recorded were slightly up on the previous winter; they have remained stable during the past decade.

In March records of large numbers (1000+) of possible migrants were seen at CI-Y on 5th, 11th and 30th.

Breeding season The BBS recorded this species in 58% of the squares surveyed, the lowest proportion since 1994, and the counts showed an 8% fall on 2012, to the lowest level since 1994. Nationally, the BBS has shown a decline of 58% between 1995 and 2011, but in Avon it is 70%.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-85%	-53%	9%	-12%	10%	-16%	-21%	-9%	1%	2%	-16%	-14%

BBS percentage changes

Post breeding The first fledglings did not emerge until May 22nd, a week later than normal and flocks of juveniles soon formed. The largest flock was 80 in June, and this was the largest count until 100 on Aug. 3rd at Marshfield. Some 200 were present at New Passage on Aug.14th and on Sept.15th at Cribbs Causeway, also 300 were seen coming out of a roost at Temple Meads at 06.45 on 9th. Forty years ago this site held an important winter roost. Roosting on pylons at PWD was recorded on Sept. 30th.

Migration Visible migration was first recorded on Oct.11th when 15 were seen heading N at Middle Hope and eight going NE at Aust. On 13th at Sand Point 261 headed to N in four hours, 100 at New Passage and 48 at Wains Hill, CI-Y. Visible migration peaked on 19th when 995 were recorded going SW at Severnside in 2.75 hours. By 23rd, 1500 were recorded flying in to a roost at OPS and on 25th "large numbers" were recorded passing through Severn Beach.

Starling - Second winter A roost estimated to hold 5000 developed at the Pilning Wetlands in November and there was an estimated 10,000 here on Dec. 9th, 5000 were roosting at New Passage on Nov. 30th, and still here on Dec. 12th. A flock of 2000 were recorded at a roost at OPS on Dec. 24th which was attacked by a Peregrine, the roost was still occupied on 31st. 3000 were also noted at Weston STW on Dec.1st. Feeding flocks of 1000+ were noted at Marshfield, Cl-Y and Kenn Moor, with some smaller groups mainly on the coast.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers.

A normal year.

The table below suggests an expansion in the distribution, but it may well be that there has been an increase in both the number and accuracy of the records submitted, stimulated both by the Atlas observations and improving recording technology. Nationally the BTO Atlas suggests a small, 11%, decline in distribution, mainly on the eastern fringe of the distribution, and this includes Avon. However, our population of perhaps 20 pairs seems to be healthy.

In the past twenty years they have been recorded from 47 sites, and this year from 26, about seven of which were new. In the breeding season there were records of 51 bird-days from 14 sites, and breeding was proved at seven of them. A pair that nested at Compton Dando hatched three young on April 3rd. They also bred on the Winford Brook at Lower Littleton; on the R. Chew at Pensford and Albert Mill, Keynsham; on the R. Frome at Snuff Mills; on Siston Brook at Willsbridge; and on the R. Boyd at Wick. They were present in the breeding season on a further seven rivers: on the Chew at the Memorial Woodlands in Keysham; on the Trym at Combe Dingle, on the Somerset Frome at Freshford; on the Wellow at Single Hill, on the boundary with Somerset; on the unnamed stream at Newton Park; and on the Somer at Radstock.

In the two winter periods there were 46 bird-days from 14 sites, of which seven were different from the breeding season: on the R. Chew at Chew Stoke and a different site near Pensford; on the R. Cam at Hallatrow; on the R. Somer at a different site at Radstock; and on the R. Frome at Chipping Sodbury and Easton.

The remainder of the records, from June to October were of 42 bird-days from 12 sites, of which four were different from the other two seasons, they were the R. Frome at Eastville Park and at Frenchay, the Bye Brook at Batheaston and on the R. Avon at Saltford.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bird-days	56	51	89	77	84	173	201	205	125	135
Sites	14	10	13	12	8	9	18	23	25	26

Total bird-days and number of reported sites each year

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

[Red 3]

Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast.

There was an unprecedented spring passage three times the size of that for any previous year, many noted in the Sand Bay area, good numbers were also seen on the Mendips across the county line in Somerset. The autumn produced the first records for this period since 2010.

Spring passage On March 23rd, a week earlier than normal, six were recorded in the Sand Bay/Middle Hope area, and there were almost daily records until April 13th, with a last on April 22nd at Sand Point. The details are as follows. Five were seen on March 24th at Middle Hope, and a further 21 bird-days were recorded by the end of the month including one that stayed at the Rolls-Royce works at Patchway for three days from 26th to 28th, and on 30th eight were at Sand Point with another two at Sand Bay.

During April, 43 were recorded up to the 13th at nine sites, including Aust services, Cotham, Flax Bourton, Burrington on the Mendips (up to five), Nailsea Moor and Redhill. The bulk of the records, 20 bird-days, came from the Sand Point area.

Autumn passage In the autumn on Oct.5th a first-winter was found with Blackbirds at OPS, two were at Aust on 11th, and one was on the north side of Dundry on 17th. The last was seen at Aust on Nov.10th, which is the third equal last date, the same as for 1963. The very latest last date is Nov. 20th in 1986.

	1992/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	8	3	3	10	20	2	4	9	20	12	64
Autumn	1	1	19	1	0	2	4	2	0	0	5

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula**Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.*

A poor breeding season.

First winter period WGS recorded them in every garden, as usual, and in numbers 30% higher than in the previous winter, and 144% higher than in the winter of 1974-75 when the survey began. Numbers increased by a third during the January cold spell. Six sites which record regular counts on bird-track averaged 13 per count. The cold snap from Jan.16th to 25th produced exceptionally high counts from standard walks at OPS, New Passage and Churchill.

Spring Migration On March 17th there was a high count of 38 from New Passage and the highest count of the year was 50 at OPS on April 1st, these were thought to include migrants.

Breeding season The counts from the six standard walk sites maintained the same level as in the winter, implying that there were few migrants during the winter at these sites. BBS recorded a 5% fall on 2012, and numbers were 18% below the recent peak in 2007, but show a 34% increase over 1994, see the index below. However, it was clearly a late breeding season following the cold weather in March and early April, and first clutches probably all failed. The first young were not recorded until May 7th compared with April 15th in 2012. Song was recorded from March 17th to June 16th.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
12%	-6%	-5%	7%	-2%	-1%	4%	-5%	-2%	0%	7%	-8%
BBS percentage changes											

Migration An influx of 21 was noted at New Passage on Oct. 5th and another of ten at Eastville Park on 20th. However, there were no records of diurnal movement on the coast.

Second winter period Counts from the six bird-track sites showed an average of eight over the two months, well below the previous January and February. This suggests a poor breeding season.

Other sightings The CABS record over the whole year showed a 30% decline in numbers over 2012, and the lowest population since 1994 when the survey began. On Steep Holm nine were recorded in February, 15 in March, and seven in May although it was not clear whether these represented territories. A regular survey in Bristol Zoo recorded a maximum of 22 in February and April, and 20 in September, suggesting a very stable population of around ten pairs in a four hectare site, a high density of 2.5 pairs a hectare, although the same as was recorded over 25 years in Blaise Woods.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris**Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.*

A very dramatic cold weather movement in January was the highlight.

First winter period The January cold spell from 13th to 26th saw records from in 45% of gardens in slightly larger numbers than last year, but not as many as in the 2009/10 winter. They left abruptly with the thaw. Similar invasions occurred in 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2010.

There was a huge cold weather movement on Jan.18th (see Lapwing and Skylark) when there were records from 41 sites across the whole area, totalling at least 23,700 of which 19,000 were flying mainly SW. At least 7500 were counted over Congresbury Moor, 4000 over Yatton, 2000 over OPS, also flock of some 4000 mixed thrushes were present at Dowlais Farm, CI-Y, and 2000 were recorded at Severnside (these included 1100 to S at New Passage and a different flock of 700 over Pilning later in the day) . They were records at 14 sites within Bristol totalling 2000. Movement continued on the following day when 8000 were recorded flying south at Saltford, and a further 700 at six other sites. They were recorded as stripping such berries as remained in gardens. Although they vanished from these sites with the thaw, there were no records of a return movement. Counts in January totalled 41,000. This is much the largest cold weather movement recorded in the past 40 years, although in part the much improved recording technology makes comparisons difficult.

In February just under 4000 bird-days were counted, and the largest flock was 360 at Marshfield on 20th. In March 400 were present here on 4th with 300 on 16th, also 350 at CI-Y on 12th and 26th, 300 at Walton Moor on 17th and 300 at Sand Point on 30th; the monthly bird-day total was 5400. The cold start to April ensured that small numbers continued to be seen on a daily basis to the 13th with a bird-day total of 1400. The last were two at Congresbury on 17th, four days later than the 25 year average.

Fieldfare continued

Second half-year Arrival in October was abrupt, on 11th there were records from four coastal sites and Congresbury Moor totalling 114, all moving north. This was a week later than the long term average first arrival date. Similar numbers were seen over the next week, and on 19th some 3300 were recorded on Severnside travelling south over 2.75 hours, and flocks totalling 950 were observed at New Passage

During November the largest flock was 250 at Littleton Wharf on 16th, and the total bird-days was 1865. The situation in December was similar, with a maximum flock of 250 at CI-Y on 9th and a bird-day total of 1200.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

[Red 3]

Common breeding resident.

By recent standards a normal year.

First winter period Song was heard from the start of the year, and the January cold snap produced a trebling of the numbers recorded in the WGS. Three were recorded on Steep Holm in March.

Breeding season The first evidence that young had hatched came on May 22nd, suggesting either that nesting had started late as a result of the cold spell in late March, or that first broods had failed. BBS figures showed no change over 2012, implying that the population had survived the poor weather in March, but that there has been no recovery from the impact of the weather in December 2010 on their population. Song continued to May 26th, but there was a renewed burst in the last week of June and the first of July. A total of 29 singing males were recorded around the perimeter of CVL, two up on the previous year.

Second half year In October there were eight records from migration watches, involving 56 migrants, in the course of at least 17 hours of watching. Song was first heard on Nov.17th and continued into the New Year. On the 6th, 30 were apparently grounded at Aust, and on the 8th, 25 were at Severnside. Otherwise the highest count of 13 came from standard walks in Saltford.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

[Red 3]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

October recorded the largest passage in recent years.

First winter period Surprisingly the WGS recorded no more than usual in gardens during the January cold spell, and overall they were present in the fewest gardens and lowest numbers since 2005/06. However, there was a large cold weather movement on Jan.18th when 8800 were recorded from 26 widespread sites, including 350 to S at New Passage, 1050 over Pilning, 2250 at Congresbury Moor and flocks of over 1000 from OPS, Weston and Worle (see Lapwing and Fieldfare). A further 1200 were seen the following day. Apart from this the largest flock seen in January was 200.

In February the largest flock was 300 at BL on 26th, and the total for the month was just 4000 bird-days. The first three weeks of March recorded similar low numbers although there were 450 at CI-Y on 12th. The last ten days saw almost 3000 bird-days recorded, the largest flock being 250 on Congresbury Moor on 24th.

The cold start to April saw almost 3000 recorded in the first ten days, with flocks of 300 at Backwell and CI-Y, and then numbers fell off sharply as the weather improved, although 200 were seen at BL on 13th, and the last was seen at OPS on 17th which is the fifth latest date recorded for the region (the latest for our area is April 29th in 1967).

Second year period Two were seen in the Avon Gorge on Oct.1st, the normal first date, and seven at OPS on 5th, then 40 were at CVL on 10th. On the 11th there was a massive movement to the NE. A total of 14,500 was recorded at Aust, 9500 at Middle Hope, 2550 in one hour at OPS, "thousands all day" at Weston, and records from eleven other sites. The passage continued on 12th when 21,000 were recorded at Aust, 2670 at New Passage, 1000 at OPS, 700 in two hours at Sand Point, 530 at Littleton Warth, and smaller numbers from 12 other sites; there was clearly some overlap with these counts as the sites involved are quite close to one-another. A further 2500 were seen on 13th. There was then a five-day pause followed by another 2000 that was reported on the 19th. Very few were seen for the rest of the month. In all a passage of around 60,000 bird-days was estimated.

In November the largest flock was 2000 at Pensford, and a total of 5600 bird-days were recorded, and in December the total was 3000, the largest flock being 500 at CI-Y.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

The slow decline continues.

First winter Song was reported from the start of the year, often around dawn or earlier. There was an interesting record from OPS of one hungrily eating Mistletoe berries; it is good to have this habit confirmed. In Banwell another was guarding a Cotoneaster bush, and eating its way through the berries during March.

Breeding season There were records from 67 sites, but proof of breeding was only reported from two. The BBS recorded them from only 21% of squares visited, down from a maximum of 47% in 1997. Numbers were the same as last year, but represented a 67% drop from 1994. There were four singing males around CVL, as last year. High counts on standard walks are often recorded in the late summer. In August 17 were recorded on Kenn Moor, 15 on Nailsea Moor, 13 at Cl-Y and ten at Marshfield, also 21 were noted at Saltford in September.

Migration Watches of 14 hours in October recorded a total of 18, and many recording none.

Second winter Ones of twos were recorded from 31 sites with full song on Dec. 28th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

A very poor spring passage, but total bird-day count was slightly up, see table below.

Arrival The first was at Lower Woods on May 10th, a week later than average. Then one was at CVL on 16th, and on the 17th there were two at Severn Beach, two at Sand Point and one at BL. On 19th and 31st one (assumed the same on both dates) was at Weston STW. The 24th saw one at OPS, with two at BL on 26th, one at Northwick on 29th and at Marshfield on 31st. This is much the smallest spring passage during May yet recorded. There were two June records from the coast, one at Severn Beach on the 1st and four at Sand Point on the 3rd.

In June and July 26 records and 47 bird-days were noted from 16 sites, and juveniles were seen at CVL and Lower Woods. This suggests a slight upturn. In 2009 there were 18 records from 14 sites; in 2010, 15 from 11 sites; in 2011, 14 from ten sites; and in 2012 ten records from nine sites.

In August 39 bird-days were recorded from 16 localities, including seven at Chipping Sodbury Common on 28th. September saw eight records up to 12th, including five (two adults and three juveniles) on Itchington Common. The last, ten days earlier than usual, was seen again on Chipping Sodbury Common on the 15th.

The table below for the past decade shows that overall totals have not moved much during the period.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
128	108	109	58	98	97	100	81	92	116

Bird-days per year

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant breeding resident.*

A small increase was noted.

After three years of falling numbers in the WGS, caused by three cold winters, the 2012/13 winter saw a 20% recovery from the previous winter which had recorded the fewest since 1992/93, and suggests that the dry warm March in 2012 ensured a good breeding season. The data from the BBS, which in 2013 showed a 6% increase on 2012, is additional evidence of a recovery. It is not clear what the impact the very cold March in 2013 had on the breeding season.

The annual pattern of sightings is closely associated with the song pattern, which shows two peaks, one in March and April associated with breeding, and another, higher, in October which is associated with territorial behaviour by both sexes. Song is minimal in June and July, associated with moult, both by adults and juveniles. It was interesting that an analysis of seven sites that recorded counts on a regular basis through the year showed this pattern very precisely.

Over the whole year the CABS counts were almost identical to those of 2012. Also there were records on Steep Holm from February to May of up to four, and one nest was found.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

[Amber 3]

Very scarce breeding summer migrant, and scarce or very scarce passage migrant.

No evidence of breeding was received, the detailed records are given below.

The first record was of one at Bitton on April 18th, an average date, and two were heard at Wickwar on the next day and on 20th. Also on 20th one was trapped at CVRS. Three were found in Lower Woods on May 10th with one on 31st. For the first time no definite breeding evidence was received although the May reports suggest that this was probably at least attempted.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
10	3	11	8	6	5	3	3	4-5	5	0-3

Estimate of number of pairs attempting to breed each year

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.

The best spring passage since 1986, followed by an average autumn.

Spring passage Total passage was 30 bird-days. On April 15th, a normal first date, there were records from Blaise, Newton St.Loe and Portishead. Six were seen on 16th (at OPS, Severnside, Bradley Stoke and Totterdown), a male at CVL on 17th, a female at Bath University on 18th and one at Portishead on 19th. On 20th and 21st nine (mostly males) were noted at CI-Y, three different N. Somerset Moor sites and Sand Point (3), with one at Prior's Wood on 24th. On 27th and 29th four (all females) were at PWD, Walton Common, Willsbridge and CVL, with a final one on May 1st at Severn Beach.

Autumn passage Three records, see table below: the first was seen at BG on Aug.15th, one was at PWD on 28th with a last (male) here on Oct.1st. This is the sixth latest date for the region.

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	13	7	14	22	2	22	1	8	12	7	30
Autumn	5	1	12	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	3

Spring and autumn passage numbers each year

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

[Amber 3, 5]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently.

A normal year by recent standards with counts slightly above the ten-year average, see table below.

First winter period In December 2012 a pair was seen regularly at Portishead, and from Jan.1st there was a male here which was noted regularly in the area up to 21st when it was joined by a female. There were further reports of the female, or an unsexed individual, on Feb. 8th and 20th, March 6th and 20th, from 27th to 31st and on April 6th, a total of 23 bird-days. Also in January and February there were records of individuals from Anchor Head, an Ashton Vale garden, Avonmouth, Axe Estuary, Birnbeck Pier, Bristol City Centre, Langford, OPS, PWD and Sand Point. The total was 18 bird-days, from perhaps 10 individuals.

In March and April there were records from Felton Common, PWD, Sand Point, Severn Beach, and Southmead (Bristol), a total of 13 bird-days.

Second winter period The first, a female, was seen at Bleadon on Oct. 5th, with another at OPS on 15th and 18th. One seen at Avonmouth on the 26th was recorded on five occasions to Dec.13th, and one was at Severn Beach on Oct. 26th and 27th. Another was at Portishead on Nov. 4th, also one at Lulsgate on Nov. 8th and one at Anchor Head on Dec.17th. The total was 17 bird-days from about nine individuals.

1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
28	24+	16	12	33	45	111	88	63	125	71

Bird-days each year

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon passage migrant. National conservation status Amber.

Large passages were noted in both spring and autumn for the second year running, the details including a ten-year summary are given on the next page.

Spring passage Two were seen at CI-Y on April 3rd, a normal first date, but the next records were on 10th coinciding with the onset of warmer weather. Small numbers were recorded daily from then on, with a peak on 16th when ten were seen at OPS and a further 19 at 13 other sites. On the 20th, 29 were recorded at ten sites. Passage continued with daily records as tabulated overleaf, the last was at Aust on May 5th.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	7	101	23	4	1
Max count	2	10	2	1	1

Spring passage

There were two records in June, at CVL on 2nd and at CI-Y on 10th.

Autumn passage Total passage was similar to 2011, and much greater than previous years, which may reflect a good breeding season, or the increased number of records now received. There were four records in July from the Pilning Wetlands and PWD, but passage proper began on Aug.1st when there were record from OPS and Gordano, and records increased slowly to 25th when 11 were recorded at seven different sites. On 28th, six were seen on Chipping Sodbury Common and there were four together here on Sept.8th. The last in September was seen at Northwick Warth on 12th, and there was a final record on Oct. 4th at Kings Weston, a date ten days earlier than the average last date.

Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep:11-20
Bird-days	3	9	45	9	1
Max count	1	2	6	4	1

Autumn passage

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	20	49	34	65	18	26	28	24	37	138	136
Autumn	29	30	26	36	16	20	17	29	78	18	71

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon passage migrant.

A normal spring passage followed by a good autumn one.

Spring passage Began with one seen at Chipping Sodbury Common on April 16th, three days earlier than average. On 20th, five were seen at Sand Point and there were records of single birds at two other sites, and on the following day ten were seen at five sites. There were almost daily records through to May 18th, with the last on 28th at Northwick. In all there were 59 bird-days from 16 sites, the largest number, 15, from Sand Point.

Date	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	8	30	12	8
Max count	5	6	2	2

Spring passage

Autumn passage The total passage of 114, see tables below, from 18 sites began on Aug.16th when three were seen at Pilning Wetlands, and continued to Sept. 29th when the last was seen at New Passage, the earliest last date since 2003. It included a group of 15 noted on Nailsea Moor on Aug. 28th. The peak came in the first week of September when 29 were recorded at eight different sites including ten at Weston STW on 8th. There was a remarkable 20 bird-days from Chipping Sodbury Common, five being seen on two occasions, and there were regular sightings from OPS, Northwick Warth and CI-Y. As shown in the second table below this was the largest passage since 2006.

Date	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep:11-20	Sept 21-30
Bird-days	4	33	50	15	12
Max count	3	15	6	3	2

Autumn passage

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	41	46	41	48	31	24	18	37	34	89	58
Autumn	123	71	90	138	33	127	88	92	77	44	114

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

STONECHAT *Saxicola rubicola*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant, and scarce breeder.

A second year with no evidence of proved breeding, low numbers in the first winter period, but rather more in the second winter period, perhaps indicating a better breeding season.

First winter period In the first two months a maximum of 22 individuals generated 112 bird-days from 14 sites, six of them coastal. Three pairs were regular on Kenn Moor, at least one pair at Marshfield and six were reported from Sand Bay on Feb.17th. There were probably two pairs at OPS, and one each at Aust Warth, Severn Beach and CI-Y.

Spring passage In March and April a total of 92 bird-days was recorded from 17 widespread sites during the six weeks up to April 13th.

Breeding Pairs were seen at Hellenge Hill on May 1st, and at Felton Common on 21st.

Autumn passage The first of the autumn was at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept.15th, and four more were seen by the end of the month. In October 60 bird-days were generated from ten sites, six of them coastal. The peak came on 24th when 11 were counted at five sites. This is very similar to the 2012 records.

Second winter period A total of 176 bird-days was recorded from 17 sites, involving perhaps 50 individuals, a figure that represents an encouraging return to the level of 2009 before the last three cold winters. There were apparently resident pairs at OPS, Aust, Severn Beach, and CI-Y, with occasional second pairs, and inland at Charlton Fields, Marshfield and Kenn Moor. Other records came from the Axe Estuary, Bleadon, Chittening, CVL, PWD, Portishead, Rowberrow, Uphill, and Weston STW.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Jan. – Feb.	44	48	57	44	55	51	22	17	30	22
Breeding pairs	8	11	12	7	15	2	2	3	0	2
Nov. – Dec.	45	62	55	63	69	50	16	19	29	50

Estimated number present in the two winter periods and breeding pairs each year

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

[Amber 1]

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.

A second year with a strong spring passage.

Spring passage The first was seen at Dowlais Farm, CI-Y on March 9th, the normal first date, and two were at Marshfield on 12th, but by 22nd only another 27 had been seen, as the cold NE winds delayed movement. However on 23rd, 36 were seen at eight sites and despite renewed frosts and frozen ponds at the end of March a further 400 had passed through. In the first ten days of April, although there were again some night-time frosts, another 380 were recorded including a flock of 25 at Middle Hope on 10th. On 16th, when temperatures soared to 16°C, 160 were counted at ten sites including 50 at Littleton Warth. In the last ten days a further 556 were counted including an exceptional flock of 200 at Marshfield on April 30th. From May 1st to June 3rd there were daily sightings amounting to 110 bird-days, and the last was seen on June 10th at CI-Y.

The Marshfield count on April 30th was a record for the area (the previous highest single count was 113 on Severnside in April 2006 on a day when over 400 were recorded in the whole of the Avon area), birds were seen on two ploughed fields, with some on the stone walls, near the village feeding nervously and voraciously, the sex ratio was about seven females to three males, and some of the males were heard 'calling' which is slightly unusual (L Gardiner).

There were three records of individuals showing characteristics of Greenland (*leucorhoa*) Wheatear: on May 1st at New Passage, and on the 26th at OPS and 27th at Severn Beach. A paper referred to in the Recorder's report on page 5 suggests that this subspecies is more common in Gloucestershire, and so probably also in the Avon area, than previously thought.

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	463	380	391	556	48	45	13
Max count	3	54	27	50	200	10	8	4

Spring passage

Autumn passage The first in the autumn was seen at the Pilning Wetlands on Aug. 5th, and there were daily records thereafter but numbers only began to pick up in the final ten days of the month. On 25th, a total of 22 was recorded from six sites, and 24 from seven sites on 26th. On Sept. 7th, 36 were recorded at CI-Y, but numbers then fell back a little for the rest of September, a few more were seen in the first ten days of October, and there were daily records from the coastal sites for the rest of the month. In November six bird-days were recorded in the first week, and the last was seen at New Passage on the 9th, a normal last date.

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	Oct 21-30
Bird-days	19	24	129	116	60	75	100	40	61
Max count	4	8	9	36	10	7	10	8	12

Autumn passage

The relationship between the spring and autumn passage numbers varies widely, presumably reflecting the success of the breeding season. In the past two years autumn passage has been just a third of spring, and the long term average is a half, but in 2011 the ratio was very close to one-to-one and in 2010 autumn passage was larger than spring. This is shown in the table below.

	1994/03 Av.	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	493	820	814	2036	450	496	418	296	980	2273	1920
Autumn	415	546	651	560	332	670	495	482	842	617	624

Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

DESERT WHEATEAR *Oenanthe deserti* (1, 1)

[BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.

One record: a confiding first-winter male was at Severn Beach from Dec.11th to 14th (P D Bowerman *et al.*), it proved to be very popular – see photograph opposite page 121.

The only previous record for the Avon area was of another male from CI-Y on one afternoon in November 1997.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

[Amber 3]

Abundant breeding resident.

A normal year.

The BBS figures indicate a very slight fall from 2012, to the lowest levels since 1999. The pattern shown by standard walks demonstrates vividly the fact that this species is rarely recorded when it is not singing. They start singing in January, peak in March, and numbers in song fall slowly to early July. Nothing is heard after this in most years, and this is the pattern revealed by bird-track counts.

On Steep Holm, where it is one of the commonest passerines, there were counts of around a dozen in February, March and May. This is a lower total than in 2012.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

[Red 3]

Still abundant but declining breeding resident.

Numbers were down a little.

The BBS figures showed a drop of around 18% since 2012, which was typical of a number of passerine species as 2012 was a poor breeding season, and the cold snap in March 2013 may well have caused more problems. Since 1994 numbers showed an increase until 2003, and since then they have fallen back to the level of 2000. Such fluctuations are normal, and very different from the earlier period of continuous fall. The WGS figures suggest a recent minimum in the winter of 2010/11, caused by the bitter December of 2010, and a steady increase since then up to the levels seen in the 2007/08 winter.

Counts on standard walks show maximum numbers in July and August, and the largest count was 110 from two flocks at Pilning on Sept.1st. There was a count of 40 at Bristol Zoo on Aug. 28th, this flock is the only one remaining in much of Clifton. Social groups are often very faithful to a particular site, but the numbers counted often vary considerably.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

[Red 3]

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species.

There were just three sightings: one was observed at a feeder in Wrington on Jan. 20th and 21st and one was seen in the village on March 23rd. On July 9th another was reported at New Passage. This is a typical set of records by recent standards as shown by the table below.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Bird-days	52	40	18	5	2	5	8	8	2	4
Sites	3	4	4	3	2	2	1	5	1	2

Bird-days and sites each year

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor..

A normal spring passage was followed by a good (by recent standards) autumn passage.

Spring passage This began with one at BG on April 9th, a normal first date, and lasted to May 25th. Initially there were reports of ones and twos from coastal sites but there were seven at PWD on April 18th, and nine at Northwick Warth on 24th with ten on 26th. The largest count was on 30th when there were reports of 27 at six sites. The only inland reports were of ones or twos at CVL and Chipping Sodbury Common. There were daily records to May 5th, then six more records until the last two on 25th: one at CI-Y and another at New Passage. The table below summarises the records.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-25
Bird-days	6	46	113	31	7
Max count	2	7	10	5	2

Spring passage

The only breeding season sighting was of a pair near Tormarton on an oil-seed rape field on June 9th. Another pair was seen near West Kington, fairly close to Marshfield, on 25th, but these were probably outside the Avon area. One or two pairs probably bred in 2011 but no definite breeding evidence was forthcoming in 2012.

Autumn passage The first to return was seen on July 6th at Pilning Wetlands, and there were three at New Passage on 10th, but with only occasional records for the rest of July. There were daily records from Aug. 6th, often of juveniles in moult, and they were frequent at CVL. The first significant flock was ten at OPS on 21st, and there were 11 on Chipping Sodbury Common on 25th, and 25 were seen at CI-Y on 27th. On Sept. 8th at least 30 were at New Passage and an amazing flock estimated to be 100 was on Chipping Sodbury Common on 9th, feeding among grazing cows together with dozens of Swallows. It is possible that overnight rain had grounded the wagtails. Then 30 were here on 14th, but the peak of movement was past and records dropped off to the end of September. There were reports of ten up to Oct. 7th and a final record of one at BL on 23rd. This was ten days later than average and the latest since 2003. The autumn records are summarised below.

Date	Jul 11-20	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30	Oct1-10
Bird-days	5	14	12	27	160	296	169	26	14
Max count	2	5	3	4	25	100	30	9	4

Autumn passage

The final table puts the 2013 records in context by comparing them with those noted since the mid 1990s. But it should be noted that much larger numbers were recorded in the 1960s and 1970s.

	1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	155	72	49	131	118	78	62	59	121	67	125	86	164	25	42	165	439	203
Autumn	195	91	88	273	188	279	72	132	386	160	125	156	102	147	404	258	278	723

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year since 1996

A male at BG on June 26th had a powder blue head and a white supercilium and throat (C J Stone), features that suggest it was a 'Channel Wagtail', the hybrid between the *flava* and *flavissima* subspecies.

A grey and white individual at BL on Oct. 23rd may have been from one of the eastern races (N R Milbourne, R Mielcarek, C Craig) – see photograph opposite page 136. Such birds typically occur in late autumn but confirmation often requires a DNA sample, as well as good sound recordings and excellent photographs. The eastern races *tschutschensis*, *taivana* and *macronyx* are collectively split by some authorities into a new species called Eastern Yellow Wagtail *M. Tschutschensis*.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

[Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

A normal year.

In all 779 bird-days were recorded from 106 sites across the region. The largest count on a standard walk came from Saltford with 14 on July 23rd and there was a flock of ten at Shire Valley, near Marshfield on Sept.1st.

In January and February 129 bird-days were recorded from 37 widespread sites, *cf.* in 2012 there were 56 from 37 sites.

In March, 59 bird-days were recorded from 23 sites including Middle Hope and New Passage implying migration.

During the breeding season 99 bird-days were recorded from 38 sites (28 in 2012), these included all the main reservoirs, eight sites on the R. Avon including the centre of Bristol, three sites on the R. Chew and three on the R. Frome. The only evidence of breeding came from a female carrying food on the late date of June 27th at Winscombe and from a pair with two juveniles at BL on 26th.

From July to October 378 bird-days were noted from 55 sites, 85 on the coast implying possible migration.

In the second winter period 114 bird-days were recorded from 29 sites including a number of inland and garden sites well away from water, *cf.* in 2012 there were 107 from 30 sites.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

[RR]

Pied Wagtail *M.a yarrelli**Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant.*

A normal year.

First winter period A grand total of 3370 bird-days was reported from 41 sites, of which seven were coastal. Of this total 2900 came from a regular series of walks around Saltford, where a maximum of 260 was counted on Jan. 7th and Feb. 21st. There was a roost of 60 at a Weston-s-Mare shopping centre on Jan.1st and another was recorded on Jan. 31st at OPS when just 20 were seen coming in from the NE. The next largest count was 37 at CVL on Feb. 20th.

March Some 1300 bird-days were recorded, 500 of them from Saltford including 260 on 3rd. The records came from 31 sites, ten of them coastal, and 80 were seen at Bristol International Airport on 6th. A roost was identified at Yate Shopping Centre on the 14th. Some April sightings from the coast may have involved passage. At Severn Beach 30 were reported on 3rd, and 22 on 24th, with 41 at CI-Y on 10th.

Breeding season The BBS recorded them at the same rate as in 2012, which is a little below that recorded in 2008, and in many years prior to that. In the breeding season (April to June) 600 bird-days were reported from 31 sites, although just six of them were recorded as juveniles. There were reports of a roost at Chew Magna on May 5th and June 4th but only 12 were present.

Autumn passage From July to the end on October 4400 bird-days were recorded, from 41 sites, nine coastal, and 400 of them were from Saltford. The largest count was 145 at CI-Y on Oct. 7th and 100 were at OPS on 18th. During migration watches in mid-October 34 were counted at Northwick Warth on 12th, 22 going N at Sand Point on 13th in four hours, and on the same day 35 were at New Passage. The largest numbers were recorded between Oct.11th and 20th. Four roost sites were noted: 145 at OPS on Oct.15th, 300 in the centre of Bath on 17th, 75 at Cabot Circus, Bristol on 22nd and 100 at Cribbs Causeway on 29th.

Second winter period During November and December a total of 1350 bird-days were recorded, no fewer than 780 of them from Saltford where the highest count was 170. The records came from 31 sites, seven of them coastal, but no roosts were reported. The largest count other than from Saltford was of 82 from Northwick Warth on Dec. 9th with 62 here on 12th.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba**Uncommon passage migrant.*

Both the spring and the autumn passage were entirely unprecedented, the cause of this upsurge is unknown.

Spring passage The first record was a flock of 34 at Middle Hope, on March 9th, the fifth earliest arrival date, and there were 21 here on 22nd, 18 on 28th and 100 on 29th. All these records were from P A Bowyer. Such

White Wagtail continued

flocks have not been recorded before in Avon. Passage then slowed, up to 12 being reported from widespread sites on the Estuary and at the reservoirs. The pace quickened in the second ten days of April, with up to 12 at CVL and 17 at Northwick Warth, and some 109 bird-days were recorded in the last ten days with maximum counts of nine. During May ones or twos were recorded, the last from New Passage on 25th. The grand total of 498 bird-days is almost *ten times* any previous spring (or autumn) passage record.

	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-25
Bird-days	147	53	141	109	14
Max count	100	12	17	9	3

Spring passage

White Wagtail - Autumn passage Usually very light, but again, although just a quarter of spring passage, it was four times larger in numbers than in any previous year. It began with one seen at CVL on July 28th. There were four records in August, nine at New Passage on 8th, five here on 16th and eleven on 23rd and then two at CVL on 31st. The first ten days of September produced 12 bird-days, and the remainder of the month 20, including a count of 11 at OPS on 15th. In October 30 were seen migrating on 3rd at OPS and 29 on 29th during a three hour watch on Severnside. The final records were of one at New Passage and another at Sand Point on Nov. 12th, and lastly three at Sand Point going south on 13th. This is the third latest date yet recorded.

Date	Aug 1-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-30	Oct 1-20
Bird-days	15	13	12	2	60
Max count	9	11	2	11	30

Autumn passage

The table below summarises the records for the past two decades showing clearly how remarkable 2013 was for this subspecies in Avon.

	1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	na	na	na	67	144	81	51	34	46	29	64	81	34	43	64	67	39	59	67	498
Autumn	11	na	na	12	7	2	7	2	4	11	74	24	9	7	15+	6	5	43	32	115

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi* (2, 20)

Very scarce autumn migrant, exceptional in winter.

Descriptions required.

Two records, including an apparent wintering individual.

Dowlais Farm, CI-Y – one seen and photographed between Jan. 12th and 17th (H Taffs *et al.*);

Sand Point – one flew to S calling on Nov. 12th (P A Bowyer).

The table below summarises the sightings since 1994, the average is just over one per year.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
4	1	3/4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2

Counts each year (all in autumn except for one in spring 1995 and one in winter 2004/05)

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.

Again good numbers noted on spring passage and there were more in autumn than usual.

Spring passage This started with one at New Passage on April 6th. One was seen here again on 10th, with another at Weston STW on the same day, while on the 11th one was in the trees near Woodford Lodge, CVL, where they are relatively unusual. From April 12th through to May 9th, sightings were made on an almost daily basis, virtually all of them from the usual coastal watch-points, although four were noted inland at the Three Brooks NR, Bradley Stoke on April 4th.

An idea of the migration pattern can be gained from a regular series of counts from Sand Point, some of the more notable being as follows: nine on April 15th, 22 on 16th, five on 25th, four on 28th, seven on 30th and four on May 6th, most heading N. Elsewhere, ones and twos were noted at Aust STW, Severnside, PWD, Weston Moor and CI-Y over the same period. Finally, two were at Severn Beach and three at Sand Point on May 17th.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	3	61	32	13	0	5
Max count	1	22	7	4	0	3

Spring passage

There was just one record from a potential breeding site, one at Burrington Ham on May 17th.

Autumn passage Return migration kicked off on Aug.14th when single birds were reported from Northwick Warth and Saltford. From 18th through to Sept.12th, there was then a fairly steady trickle of sightings, the majority being from OPS and Severnside, and usually just ones and twos, but inland there were further records from Saltford (two on Aug. 18th and 21st, one on Sept. 5th), Chipping Sodbury Common (one on Aug.18th and four on 21st), over Bishopston (one on 19th), and CVL (one on 27th). The highest count was ten at OPS on Aug. 20th, and the final sighting of the year was also from here, one on Sept. 30th, prior to this single birds had been seen at Northwick Warth on 20th and 21st.

The table below shows how this species has fared during the last decade but it should be noted that the recent good series of counts are at least in part as a result of better coverage at the main site – Sand Point.

	2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
Spring	24	61	111	55	48	25	33	44	119	118
Autumn	14	37	30	25	23	12	35	30	15	51

Total number of passage individuals each year

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

[Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species, mainly on the coast.

A strong spring passage was noted but the autumn passage was weak, a few breeding records were received.

January and February In the first two months of the year, good numbers were counted along the coast as well as in some low-lying and arable areas inland. The more notable counts were: 52 at New Passage on Jan.1st, 50 at CI-Y on 3rd and 85 here on 16th, 30 at Kenn Moor on 28th, 70 at Marshfield on Feb. 20th and 40 at OPS on 28th, with smaller numbers in similar habitats elsewhere. However, numbers at the reservoirs were once again low, probably due to high water levels, with 25 at BG on Jan.18th the highest.

Spring Passage Movement was first noted at Sand Point/Middle Hope on March 5th, when 25 were seen heading N, and 265 were counted here on 9th, with larger than usual numbers seen the same day on Dolebury Warren. The first main wave of migrants occurred in the second half of March, the larger counts including 130 at Littleton Warth on 16th, 120 at New Passage on 17th, 250 at CI-Y on 19th with 410 at Middle Hope on 20th, 685 here on 21st and 600 on 28th. There were 190 at OPS on 23rd, and over 100 at Banwell on 29th.

There was a relative lull in the first week of April, although still plenty of counts well into double-figures, while 70 at CVL on 2nd and 150 at BL on 4th was quite a contrast with the winter position at the reservoirs. Migration picked up again from 8th, with 425 moving NE at CI-Y, 3000 heading up-river at OPS on 10th in misty conditions and 1000 at each of Middle Hope and CI-Y the same day. At CVL, 100 on 11th and similar numbers at BL and Northwick Warth the next day were presumably part of the same movement. Passage continued to the end of the month in smaller numbers, primarily on the coast.

Breeding season This species is mainly a coastal nester in Avon, and then only in low numbers, too low for the BBS to give a population estimate. Records came from three sites: Severnside, up to five were noted here in May including a male in song, a male was also in song in April at Weston STW, and Shiplate Slait, Mendip, a family party including three juveniles was seen on July 24th.

Autumn Passage Dispersal and migration started in early September, when up to four were seen heading S over Saltford during the first week, and 40 noted at Northwick Warth on 7th. During the rest of the month, some higher counts included 100 at Northwick Warth on 12th, 300 at CI-Y on 18th, 300 at Littleton Warth on 19th, 267 at New Passage on 21st, 100 over Saltford on 21st, 200 at Sand Point on 24th and 275 at CI-Y on 25th. But in general numbers were relatively low, and the same pattern continued into October, when 200 at New Passage on 3rd and also at CI-Y on 7th, plus 150 at the latter site on 23rd, were the main counts into three figures. In general, small numbers were noted elsewhere during these two months, although 125 at BG on Oct. 5th was a good inland count, and small numbers were seen heading S over CVL on 14th.

November and December Although 50 were at BL on Oct. 31st and 20 at CVL on Nov. 4th, no more than five were seen at the latter site later, the majority of the records coming from the usual sites along the coast from OPS to the Axe Estuary, with up to 50 noted at New Passage on various dates and smaller numbers elsewhere.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

[RR]

A. p. petrosus - Uncommon breeding resident on the coast. Fairly common and more widespread as a coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce inland on spring or autumn passage.

A typical pattern of occurrences, but the presence of a Norwegian-ringed individual was of note; see below.

During the first winter period there were records from OPS, Littleton Warth, Aust Warth, Severn Beach, Portishead, CI-Y and Sand Bay, with between one and five present, the maximum being nine at Severn Beach on Jan.14th. Two were seen moving NE at CI-Y on March 19th and again on 26th, as was one at OPS on 30th, the only indications of possible migration.

In the breeding season, one or two were noted from Steep Holm, RPD/Avonmouth, Portishead, CI-Y and Anchor Head (Weston-s-Mare). At this last site food was being taken to a nest-site on May 31st, with a family party of five noted here on July 16th, while a pair and three young were seen at CI-Y on July 24th.

A single bird at New Passage on Oct. 5th was the first record away from the known breeding sites, and ten were seen at PWD the same day, indicating a small influx. On the 11th one was seen heading NE at Aust Cliff, as was one the next day at Middle Hope, with four also appearing at Littleton Warth at the same time. A morning's coordinated migration watch on 13th produced three at Wain's Hill (CI-Y) and two at Sand Point, while one was seen inland at CVL on the same date. Further evidence of migration at this time came from Sand Point where one was heading NE on 17th. Six at OPS on 20th and the same number at CI-Y on 27th were slightly higher than the normal winter average.

From November to the end of the year, small numbers continued to be seen at wintering sites along the coast at OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside, Portishead, CI-Y and Sand Point. In most cases between one and four individuals were seen, although 12 were noted at Littleton Warth on Dec. 21st.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis* (1, 11)

Wintering Rock Pipits are assumed to include an unknown proportion of this subspecies, some of which become identifiable in spring.

Descriptions required.

A colour-ringed individual at Severn Beach on Oct.19th and 20th (BL *et al.*) had been marked at the ringing station on the island of Giske in south-west Norway but full details of the ring codes could not be read. Probably the same colour-ringed individual was then seen at Battery Point, Portishead on Dec. 9th (L Tucker) when full details were obtained showing it was also from Giske where it had been ringed on Sept.18th. It remained at Portishead into 2014, and represents the first confirmed autumn/winter record of this race in our area; see photograph opposite page 137.

Not surprisingly, all other local records of this race have been between March 2nd and April 8th when they are in summer plumage. 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, Severn Beach in 2006 and CVL in 2012.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to CVL, Scarce on the coast.

A rather thin year, both inland and on the coast.

In the first winter period, sightings were rather sparse, even from the regular coastal spots. Single birds were noted from Severnside on Jan.1st, again on 23rd and 27th, but then not again until March 18th when the last of the season was seen here. At OPS there were a series of records of one on various dates from Feb.14th to March 2nd. Elsewhere one or two were noted on odd dates in January and February from Portishead marina, CI-Y, Sand Bay and Weston-s-Mare. The only inland record during this period was of two with other pipits and wagtails on Feb. 20th at Herons Green Pool, CVL, where the water had been recently drained down exposing some fresh mud. The water levels at all the reservoirs remained high throughout this period.

However, CVL fared rather better in the autumn, when one was seen on Nov.16th, two on 18th and one again on 30th, the lake's water level having now dropped considerably. Single birds on Dec. 21st at Littleton Warth and on 31st at Northwick Warth were the only coastal reports.

	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
CVL max	17	17	6	5	7	6	20	2	1	3
Coastal	3	11	6	6	7	7	5	10	28	14
Other inland	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

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.*

Rather fewer, both in winter and in summer, than in 2012.

Widely reported in the first winter period, with flocks forming at several sites, mostly away from the coast this year, although 300 were in the Middle Hope area on Feb. 24th. Inland, the largest concentration was 1000 at Marshfield on Feb. 9th, with smaller numbers at other times through to the end of March. Around 100 were regularly noted in Saltford during the same period, there were 150 at Compton Dando on Jan. 4th, 150 at Keynsham on 20th, 100 at CVL on 24th, and 200 near Hewish on 31st. The general impression was of lower numbers overall than in the equivalent period of 2012, also borne out by the WGS which recorded this species from 88% of all survey gardens in the 2012/13 winter, much the same as usual, but in numbers were down by 12% on the previous year.

Counts of 170 at Aust Warth on March 29th, with 12 to N over Middle Hope on the same date and 75 at CI-Y on April 8th were perhaps birds moving through, but apart from small numbers in April seen over OPS and Sand Point (maximum 12 on 18th) there was little other evidence of spring migration as such.

Breeding During the BBS survey, the species was found in 163 squares, this representing 93.8% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2012. A combined total of 1503 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 11% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below. The CABS data also indicated a decline (12%) in the numbers recorded in Clifton between the two years.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-46%	-40%	1%	-7%	-3%	-5%	-1%	-15%	1%	-10%	4%	-11%

BBS percentage changes

A few heading SW started to be seen at OPS from Sept. 15th, but as usual the largest numbers were in October. At Aust Cliff, 67 were seen going NE on 11th, with 1215 the next day. The equivalent figures for Middle Hope were eight and 431, these also moving up-river, as were 100 at OPS on the latter date. On 13th, 665 were seen at New Passage, 1485 at CI-Y and 1530 at Sand Point, with 50 at OPS. There were a couple of high counts over the next few days (553 at Sand Point on 17th, 237 on Severnside on 19th) but few were noted on the move thereafter apart from 102 to N over Sand Point on Nov. 13th.

Some larger groups noted in the second winter period were 200 on Kenn Moor on Oct. 30th, 200 at OPS on Dec. 7th and 250 at the Axe Estuary on the same date. Towards the end of the year numbers had built up to 1000 at Marshfield in December while 200 were still present at OPS on 26th, but elsewhere only a few.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Small numbers were seen in spring, but very few stayed after the autumn migrants had passed through.

The pattern of late 2012 carried over into January, with single-figure counts from at least 16 places in the month. Some larger groups included ten at Marshfield on Jan. 1st, 20 near Congresbury on 25th, five on Wrington Warren on March 8th and six at Backwell Lake on April 1st. There were quite a few reports of ones and twos in gardens, and many seemingly stayed right through to mid-April. For instance, there were 12 at Compton Dando on Jan. 4th, with 30 still here on Feb. 8th. At CVL, 11 were counted on Jan. 21st (favouring the orchard near Woodford Lodge), with 12 at the lake on March 19th and the same number still here on April 8th. The last few records were single birds in a Nailsea garden on 19th, at Weston Moor Reserve on 21st, a north-bound migrant over Sand Point on 26th and one near Chew Magna on 30th, ten days ahead of the long-term average departure date.

The first of the autumn was an early migrant at Northwick Warth on Sept. 17th with nearby Aust Warth providing the next record, six on Oct. 11th. The same date produced seven at OPS, three moving N at Middle Hope and one inland at Saltford. Small numbers on the move in late October were noted at several well-watched sites, including OPS (eight on 12th), CI-Y (six on 13th, three on 23rd), Middle Hope (14 on 12th, seven on 17th) and Saltford (ten on 12th). Apart from five over OPS on Nov. 15th, only ones and twos were then seen anywhere to the end of the year, and again mostly transient individuals.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris**Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.*

Last year's slight increase in numbers seems to have been reversed. The details are given overleaf.

Greenfinch continued

Widely reported throughout the year, but relatively rarely did numbers reach double figures at any one spot and as in the previous year one of the higher counts, although still only a dozen, came from Steep Holm on Feb. 17th. Many reports came from observers' gardens, with the WGS finding this species in 76% of all survey gardens in the 2012/13 winter, as opposed to 81% in 2011/12.

Territorial song was heard from Feb. 25th in several places, and a few migrants were noted at Sand Point between early March and mid-April, with seven on March 6th, nine on 8th and 9th, eight on 20th and 18 on 28th being the highest numbers noted. On April 1st, 15 at New Passage were probably also migrants.

Breeding During the BBS survey, the species was found in 142 squares, this representing 80.7% of those surveyed, a slight increase as compared to 2012. A combined total of 521 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 5% in numbers compared to 2012, as shown in the table below. However, CABS data indicated a welcome increase (52%) in the numbers recorded in Clifton between the two years.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-42%	-64%	4%	-8%	6%	-20%	-33%	-2%	-12%	-26%	11%	-5%

BBS percentage changes

A recently fledged juvenile was noted in Banwell on May 23rd and young were seen in Bristol in June.

Movement was noted from Oct. 12th, when 13 were counted at Aust Cliff and one headed to N at Middle Hope. On 13th, eight at New Passage, nine at Wain's Hill, CI-Y and 28 at Sand Point were all going up-river. This last site also reported 26 on 17th, 16 on Nov. 12th and 12 the next day, again all going north. All this is quite a contrast with the picture pre-2006, when *trichomonosis* struck; the maximum day count of 546 passing over Sand Point in 1993 is very much a distant memory. Smaller numbers were reported at other coastal sites, but rarely obviously migrating. The pattern of low counts at scattered sites continued to the end of the year.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.

Well recorded throughout the year with notable numbers on spring passage.

January and February During the first two months of the year, small groups were reported widely, including from observers' gardens. Larger parties included 50 on Kenn Moor on Jan. 2nd, 49 at Saltford on 7th, 34 at Pilning on 10th, 100 at Bradley Stoke (Three Brooks NR) on Feb. 9th and 55 in Bedminster on 26th at a pre-roost gathering. During March, the distribution was equally wide, but numbers appeared to have thinned out, with 30 at Claverton on March 3rd the highest number reported at any one spot. The WGS recorded this species from 88% of all survey gardens in the 2012/13 winter, down slightly but still well-distributed, with numbers also down, by 8%, on the previous year.

Spring Passage The main spring migration started around April 10th, when 24 were seen moving N at Middle Hope and 55 were counted at CI-Y. On 15th, these two sites reported 200 and 150 respectively, while a series of daily counts at Sand Point between 16th and 19th totalled 637, 551, 731 and 347, all heading N. There was a brief lull here until 24th when 381 were seen, with 627 the next day. On 27th, 500 were on the move at New Passage, with 100 at CI-Y on the same day. There were 139 over Sand Point on 29th, and small numbers continued to be noted on the move here through to mid-May. Hence in total a number well in excess of 5000 passed through during this three week period.

Breeding During May and June, ones and twos were noted widely, with the first young seen in early June. The BBS survey found the species in 152 squares, this representing 86.4% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2012. A combined total of 1279 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 8% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
114%	64%	1%	-2%	24%	-13%	18%	4%	5%	11%	18%	-8%

BBS percentage changes

Autumn and Winter Post-breeding flocks started to form from mid-July, 60 at Saltford on 23rd, 125 at CI-Y on Aug. 6th and 120 at Northwick Warth on 9th being higher counts from three favoured spots, with smaller groups in many places elsewhere. On Sept. 15th 100 were finding the teasels at Charlton Fields attractive, and there were 170 at Weston STW on 21st. By now autumn migrants had started to be seen on the coast, with 22 on the move at OPS on the same date. The main movements, however, were in October, between 10th and 26th, with 69 at Aust Cliff on 12th, 162 at Sand Point on 13th, 95 at New Passage on 17th, 100 at CI-Y on 23rd and 150 at

Chittening Warth on 26th among the highest counts. From early November the winter pattern of widespread small parties set in, 50 on Kenn Moor and 70 at Saltford on Dec. 20th being the highest counts.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce breeding species.

Counts in the 2012/13 winter were much higher than in either the previous or the following winter, this is illustrated in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2012	214	137	117	66	45	23	9	5	50	1536	314	350
2013	609	652	464	268	17	19	5	1	82	152	123	86

Monthly bird-day totals

In the first two months of 2013, some larger groups included 40 at CVL on Jan. 2nd, 40 at BL on 4th, 120 on Kenn Moor on 7th, 56 at Saltford on 19th, 35 at Compton Dando on Feb. 11th, 30 in Eastville Park on 13th and 50 on Claverton Down on 25th. There were many records of smaller numbers elsewhere, mostly associated with birches or alders, or seen in the observers' gardens.

By March and April, apart from 60 seen on Bathampton Down on March 27th, most records were barely into double figures, although they were still equally widespread. Small numbers were also noted on the move at coastal watch-points, with six at Sand Point on March 5th, three here the next day, and one at OPS on 9th, all heading up-river, being among the first. From then on, ones and twos were noted on odd dates along the coast through to the end of April, six at New Passage on March 28th, 15 at Middle Hope on 29th, 16 at Northwick Warth on April 1st and 15 at Middle Hope on 6th making a minor peak. Two counts of 16 on April 16th and 17th at Sand Point were the only other migrant counts into double figures.

Singing males were heard at CVL in late March and early April, and there were sightings of ones and twos on 21 dates in May and June, but none of them indicated breeding attempts. A female with a juvenile was seen in a Banwell garden on June 25th and it could well have come from the nearby Mendips.

Just odd individuals were seen in July and August with the first autumn numbers of significance being ten at BL on Sept.12th. From 14th, up to five at a time were occasionally seen moving along the coast at OPS, Severnside and Middle Hope/Sand Point, small numbers continuing to be noted through to mid-October when there was a small flurry of higher counts, 29 at Aust Cliff on 12th, eight at Sand Point on 15th and 13 inland at Saltford on 17th. Apart from some movement in November, the winter picture was of widely scattered mostly single-figure groups, the largest being 15 at BL on Nov. 2nd, 25 at CVL on 15th with 45 here on Dec.16th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

[Red 3]

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

A decrease in breeding numbers, but there are still some good winter flocks at favoured sites.

First winter period Small groups could be found in several coastal haunts, for instance 50 at OPS on Jan.13th, 45 at Sand Bay on 19th and 80 at Aust Warth on 20th. Inland, there were good counts from Saltford (50 on Jan. 3rd), Compton Dando (80 on 13th) and Burnett (106 on 20th), with small parties at several other places. But, as in the previous winter, the highest numbers came from Marshfield, with 200 on Jan. 6th, 150 on Feb. 9th, 200 on March 31st the highest of the monthly counts here. Even on April 28th, 250 were still present here, Rushmead Farm being the favoured spot.

Spring Passage Early April saw the appearance of migrants on the coast, with 125 moving north at CI-Y on 8th, and 110 here on 10th, when 67 were also seen going N at Middle Hope. There were several daily counts of up to 60 at both these well-covered spots through April, with peaks of 174 on 17th and 164 on 25th at Sand Point. During this period up to 48 were counted at OPS and 60 at Severn Beach.

Breeding season Odd migrants were still seen on the move in May, but by now they had mostly settled into their breeding sites, and counts were mainly in single figures during the summer months. The only exceptions were 80 on June 15th at Marshfield and 70 at CI-Y on July 12th.

The BBS survey found the species in 52 squares, this representing 29.5% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2012. A combined total of 272 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 35% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below. This reversed the recent trend of a small increase, but is in line with this year's results for many other passerines. This data is tabulated overleaf.

Linnet continued

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-55%	-51%	-6%	-13%	-25%	-38%	169%	-54%	22%	7%	22%	-35%

BBS percentage changes

Autumn Passage Numbers started to build up again from late July, when 70 were counted at Littleton Warth on 27th while CI-Y, Saltford and Marshfield held between 50 and 100 in August to mid-September, with up to 25 at OPS at this time. Coordinated migration watches on Oct.13th produced 95 at Sand Point and 20 at CI-Y (although 125 were counted here on 14th), with only low numbers at other coastal sites around the same period.

By Nov. 4th, 200 were back at Marshfield with 500 here on Dec.3rd. Elsewhere, 70 at Easton-in-Gordano on Oct. 21st was a good count, as was 32 at BL on 31st. There were 260 at Weston STW on Dec. 7th, 100 feeding in ploughed fields at Queen Charlton on 9th, and OPS regularly hosted up to 60 to the end of the year.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris* (3, 34)

Now rare winter visitor, formerly more regular.

Descriptions required.

Recorded in both winter periods from Aust Warth.

Three were found late morning on Jan. 20th (N C Machin, J P Martin *et al.*) and were seen daily until 24th. What were presumably two of the same were relocated on Feb.18th and were regularly seen until April 7th; they were a male and a female and the male was heard singing near the end of its stay.

Two, possibly the same, were found in the area on Dec. 7th (V Savery *et al.*) and they remained into 2014.

The species has now been recorded in three consecutive winters following a 14 year gap with no records.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

[RR] [Red 3]

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.

Low numbers in both winter periods, and few on migration.

The only double-figure counts early in the year were 15 at CVL on Jan. 6th, 11 at Walton Common on the same date, 20 at Weston Moor on 13th, 20 at Saltford on 24th, 15 near Temple Meads the next day and 20 at PWD on Feb. 3rd. One or two were reported from a scatter of sites including Severnside, Almondsbury, Marshfield, Yate, PWD, Portishead, Winford, Dundry, Bishop Sutton, BL, Congresbury and Keynsham.

A similar pattern continued through March and into April, with single-figure numbers the norm, quite a few records coming from gardens, where *niger* seed was an attraction in some places. Birches and alders near water were another favoured habitat, as at Saltford, Keynsham, CVL and BL. Presumed migrants appeared at New Passage on April 6th and at Sand Point from 7th, with eight heading north at the latter site on 16th. From 21st to May 6th, small numbers (max. 16) were seen here, all heading up-river, and up to three were noted at OPS, Aust Warth and Clevedon during the same period. One to three were reported on six more dates in May through to 18th. One was heard singing at CVL on 6th with another on 17th – both were late migrants, there were no further records during the summer.

The first of the autumn was one over New Passage on Oct. 6th and another was at CVL on 9th. Migration watches in October produced no more than three at OPS, Severnside, CI-Y and Sand Point on any one day between 12th and 30th. The winter picture was equally thin, with single birds reported from Aust Warth, PWD, Sand Point, Weston Moor, CVL and BL on few dates in November and December, five at OPS on Nov. 17th and seven at Saltford on Dec. 20th the only higher counts.

COMMON REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea* (2, 15)

Mealy Redpoll *C. f. flammea*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly rare, but more regularly recorded in recent times. This species hybridises with Lesser Redpoll, so intergrades are possible which should be considered in any write up.

Descriptions required.

Two records, both in late spring, the details are as follows:

Sand Point – one photographed on May 3rd (P A Bowyer);

CVL – one with two Lessers seen for a minute or so down to a few metres on April 17th before flying off (R Mielcarek).

Recent records come from CVL in March 2001, Thornbury GC in February 2004, Severn Beach two in April 2004, a Stapleton garden in December 2005, Sand Point in May 2006, Keynsham in February 2008, Severn Beach in April 2008, Severn Beach in January 2009, a Yatton garden in April 2009, Chittening Warth in May 2009 and BL in November 2012.

For some general comments on these redpolls see the Recorder's report on page 5.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary sharply from year to year.

Continuing the theme from the end of 2012 (see table below), almost all records were of transient birds.

The first of the year were at Walton Common, with three flying over on March 20th, followed by six on April 6th. Single migrants going N were seen at Sand Point on 27th and on May 2nd with another at Worle on 19th. Eleven at Sand Point on May 23rd and three on June 4th were also heading up-river.

The picture of flyovers continued in July, starting with four over Stoke Bishop on 1st. Between one and three were seen from 7th onwards, at Clevedon, Sand Point, Weston-s-Mare, Filton, Saltford and Chew Magna. Eleven over Saltford on 26th was the highest of the mid-year totals and eight over Bishopston, Bristol on 27th was unusual.

In August, five at Cribbs Causeway on 1st, and four going up-river at OPS on 9th were the largest groups noted, with ones and twos elsewhere on nine other dates. One at CVL on 6th was unusual here although single birds were also seen on Sept. 22nd and Oct. 23rd.

The pattern for the rest of the year was of up to five, almost all flyovers, from ten widely scattered sites. Even 12 over Saltford on Oct. 30th were just heading in an easterly direction.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
4	130	1	0	90	47	96	120	146	140

Bird-days each year

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

[Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident.

This species is widely reported throughout the year, mostly singly, in pairs or in very small groups, and this year was no exception. The highest counts were eight in Winterbourne on Jan. 2nd, the same number near Yatton on May 27th, there were also ten at Saltford on Sept.12th and 11 at OPS on Oct.19th, this last site being favoured with good numbers throughout the year.

At CVL, only six pairs were noted this year, down from the 15 in 2012, which was also down on the previous year. During the BBS survey, the species was found in 46 squares, this representing 26.1% of those surveyed, a drop from the 31.3% in 2012. A combined total of 100 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a fall of 35% in numbers as compared with 2012, as shown in the table below. Several other passerines also showed a decline in 2013, so next year's results for all species will be watched with some interest.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-53%	-39%	-10%	15%	-19%	4%	10%	-15%	17%	-5%	4%	-35%

BBS percentage changes

This is not an obvious migrant, but six over New Passage on Oct. 6th and four at Sand Point on Nov.12th provided some minimal evidence of at least local movement.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (2, 84)

Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred. A total of 84 were recorded between 2003 and 2012. Descriptions required.

Recorded at three sites during the year, the spring records were as follows:

Kinsgate Park, Yate – female on Feb. 24th, 25th and 27th (M Coller *et al.*) with the same or another on March 17th.

Hawfinch continued

Goblin Combe – one photographed on March 8th (B Crabb);

There were also two records from OPS in the second half of the year. Both were seen briefly in flight; one on the unusual date of July 31st (P J Hazelwood) and one on Dec.1st (M Coller).

The table below summarises the records for the past decade showing a very varied picture.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
1	0	23	2	1	41	0	2	3	12

Number of individuals seen (July to June)

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

[Amber 5]

Scarce winter visitor.

Several individuals were seen, but none stayed long.

In the first winter period, the only records were of one at Cl-Y on Feb.18th, two along Portishead sea-front on March 7th while one at Severn Beach on 9th remained until the 12th.

It was a similar picture on the coast in autumn. Two at Aust Warth on Oct.11th were seen flying north but did not stay. One was noted at Sand Point on Dec.1st, and one at Cl-Y on 9th could well have been the same seen here again on 14th. Inland at CVL, where they are unusual, one was seen at Picnic Site 1 on Nov. 28th but only seen briefly by a few lucky observers.

2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
18	11	0	0	1	0	5-6	15	16	12

Individuals seen each winter

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus* (1, 49)

Very scarce autumn migrant and very rare winter visitor, mainly on the coast.

Descriptions required.

One record: one seen and photographed at Northwick Warth on Sept. 28th (P D Bowerman, J P Martin *et al.*).

A single record is in line with the average over the past few years, see table below.

1994	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	0	13	0	2	1

Individuals each year

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

[Red 3]

Common but declining breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.

Another drop in breeding numbers, but a few places still attract good counts in winter.

As usual, Marshfield held the largest groups early in the year, with counts of 170 on Feb. 9th and 200 on March 12th. Compton Dando was another favoured site, with 68 here on Jan. 4th and 124 on Feb. 8th being the highest of several counts. Elsewhere, however, most sightings were in single figures at a relatively small number of places, including OPS, Saltford and Burnett.

By early April the flocks had dispersed, although Marshfield remained a site where quite a lot of song could be heard. Odd individuals were seen mid-month on the coast, but migration was not at all obvious. During the BBS survey, the species was found in 41 squares, this representing just 23.3% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2012. A combined total of 186 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 21% in numbers as compared with 2012, this is shown in the table below. In general, the breeding season picture was of well-dispersed pairs wherever there was suitable arable land available.

Since 1994	2003/13	2003/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	2012/13
-34%	-6%	-13%	21%	11%	-19%	13%	-13%	16%	11%	-3%	-21%

BBS percentage changes

Low counts continued well into the autumn, and it was not until Nov.30th that numbers at Marshfield reached the 100 mark, with 200 counted here on Dec. 28th. Elsewhere, counts remained in single figures.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

Status much as usual, the details are given below.

In the first winter period, the general picture was of single-figure numbers at scattered localities, including all the usual coastal sites but also at many spots inland. Small groups were noted at Compton Dando (15 on Jan. 4th, 27 on Feb. 8th), Bleadon (15 on Jan.16th), BL (10 on 18th), OPS (12 on Feb.14th) and Uphill (15 on March 16th), and odd birds were seen coming to garden feeders. Between one and four were noted on the move at Middle Hope, CI-Y and Aust Warth between March 20th and 30th, the only evidence of visible migration.

Breeding During the BBS survey, the species was found in 14 squares, this representing 8% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2012 but not really a representative sample. However, the species was reported from a wide variety of sites where at least some damp habitat was present, with nests found at CVL and Lower Knole Farm, near Almondsbury. At CVL, K E Vinicombe located 53 singing males, up again on last year's 51, while at Weston STW, 21 were logged, down one on 2012.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
20	13	31	32	31	30	36	43	51	53

Singing males at CVL each year

In the autumn, migrants were noted at OPS (six on Sept.15th, one on Oct. 3rd), there were 20 near Blake's Pools, CI-Y, on Oct. 6th and between one and four were seen on the move between 12th and 17th at OPS, Aust Cliff, New Passage and Middle Hope/Sand Point.

The second winter's picture was similar to the first, OPS being the most favoured site with up to 16 regularly present here to the end of the year, there were ten at the Axe Estuary on Dec. 7th and 20 at PWD on 17th.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

[Red 2, 3]

Local and uncommon breeding resident, confined to arable areas in the east of the region. Rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor.

A similar picture to the past couple of years, with large winter flocks and a few remaining to breed.

As usual, the vast majority of the sightings came from the Marshfield area. The highest January count was 300 on 10th and for February, 150 on 9th. Up to 100 were noted on March 17th and there were still 150 present on April 28th, although the flock dispersed rapidly after that.

Up to 15 singing males on any one date were heard here from April to the end of August, but a coordinated count would be needed to ascertain the true population. The only other record came from Dunkirk, about ten km to the north, where five were seen on June 1st. The table below summarises the breeding season records, almost all from the Marshfield area during the last decade.

2004	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	2013
18	23	12	na	na	40	32	37	19	15

Estimated number of singing males each year

Numbers started to increase again at Marshfield from late October, with a record count of 500 on Nov. 7th. There were then several more three-figure counts, with at least 200 noted on Dec. 31st. Such counts have become more regular here in winter only since 2009, but the increase is not matched in the breeding season. The food-supply must play a part, and its precise nature would repay investigation, considering that nationally the species is in serious decline.

ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

A native to Australia commonly held in collections. Although not yet self-sustaining there is an increasing feral breeding population in southern England.

BL – one from Sept. 7th until Nov. 7th;

CVL – presumed same as above on Nov. 14th and from Dec. 9th into 2014.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis interior*

Potential vagrant from North America.

Individuals showing characters of this subspecies, known as Todd's Canada Goose, were recorded as follows:

Sevenside – one from April 12th until 26th, with presumably the same again from Aug. 20th into 2014. Although mainly at Northwick Warth it was also seen at Littleton Warth and OPS;

CVL – three between June 24th and July 5th, with one on Sept. 9th.

A small Canada Goose at PWD on June 25th was possibly the Sevenside individual. The taxonomy of this species is complex and individuals can be hard to attribute to a subspecies.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

Native to North America, commonly held in collections.

Backwell Lake – the male reported since November 2010 remained until at least March 6th.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Native to Asia, commonly held in collections but with a feral breeding population.

Saltford – a released male during December.

CHILOE WIGEON *Anas sibilatrix*

Native to South America, commonly held in collections.

BL – two on Sept. 1st.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Native to Central and South America.

Backwell Lake – one all year;

BL – an adult from Oct. 25th until Nov. 11th when found dead.

CRANE *Grus grus*

A reintroduction project has been in place in Somerset since 2010 and flocks have started to wander from the release site.

Descriptions are required for birds considered to be of wild origin.

A number of parties were noted in flight (details below in chronological order); although no rings were noted it is thought highly likely that all of these were from the Great Crane Project, the reintroduction project in Somerset that uses chicks hand reared at Slimbridge.

Tickenham Ridge – four heading east at 12.40 on April 2nd (G Watkins) were probably the same as four that flew NE over OPS (photographed by P Raven) and landed at Slimbridge;

OPS – one heading SW at 11.40 on April 22nd (A Middleton);

Regil – eight soaring and calling on May 3rd (J and B Keedwell *per* D Warden);

Weston STW – an adult flew low to N at 09.55 on May 4th (M S Ponsford);

PWD – six heading N at 12.10 on May 16th (P Black);

Butcombe – one flying over calling on Aug. 29th (*per* Great Crane Project website);

CVL – two flew S late afternoon on Oct. 10th (C Craig, M Bailey, M Dadds);

Clapton-in-Gordano – two heading east on Dec. 14th (*per* Great Crane Project website).

In 2012 there were six records (involving 24 birds), with one record of a single bird in 2011, all of which were considered to relate to this release project.

Previous Avon area records of wild birds 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 Bishopston in April 2012.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Native to Australia, probably the most frequently recorded escaped cagebird

Timsbury – one on Jan. 28th;

Keynsham – one flew over Park Road calling on April 28th and one was by the R. Avon on Nov. 7th.

PARAKEET sp

Knowle – one in flight on May 31st.

Frampton Cotterell – one heard calling in flight on Aug. 17th.

WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO *Tauraco leucotis*

A stocky arboreal species native to the highlands of Ethiopia.

Carlingcott – one seen on many dates during the year has been present in this area since May 2011.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

Native to Africa but held as a free range poultry species.

Chewton Keynsham – one on Aug. 25th. Individuals were recorded from this area in 2011 and 2012.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL *Callipepla californica*

An ornamental North American gamebird.

Paulton – one, thought to be a female, from Feb. 12th until at least 27th.

JAVA SPARROW *Padda oryzivora*

A common cagebird, originally native to Java but widely introduced in Asia.

Batheaston – one on Sept. 5th.

HYBRIDS

It should be noted that the parentages reported in this section are what the observer(s) considered to be the most likely.

CANADA x GREYLAG GOOSE *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

Backwell Lake – one was again regularly noted, from Jan. 12th until Nov. 10th;

BL – one from Feb. 20th until 22nd.

BARNACLE x CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis* x *Branta canadensis*

CVL – one from 2011 and 2012, similar to a Canada but with the whole face and top of neck white, was seen on June 30th and Dec. 26th. A second individual, with lots of white peppering in the black of the face and neck, seen on March 1st and 20th and again on Sept. 9th and in early 2014 was possibly of this hybrid origin.

MALLARD x RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Anas platyrhynchos* x *Netta rufina*

CVL – a male on Sept. 16th.

Addendum to 2012 Report

A number of migrant arrival and departure dates, in both the migration summary and the species account, were incorrect in the 2012 Report; the correct dates are shown below.

Sand Martin – the last record was on Oct. 7th, not 8th.

Swallow – the last record was from Sand Point on Nov. 14th.

Wood Warbler – the species account should read as follows:

Seven were reported in spring during a narrow arrival window of nine days that was later than average. The records were as follows (single birds unless stated otherwise): Leigh Woods on April 27th, Yanley Lane on 30th, Frampton Cotterell two on May 1st, ASW singing on 2nd, Aust Cliff also on 2nd and CVL on 5th.

Garden Warbler – the final record, from Severn Beach, was on Oct. 27th.

Lesser Whitethroat – the first record was from Keynsham STW (three on April 10th).

Whitethroat – the first and last records, both from CVL, were on April 1st and Oct. 6th.

Grasshopper Warbler – the autumn record from Chipping Sodbury Common was on Aug. 12th and the last record, three ringed by GVRs, was on Sept. 5th.

Sedge Warbler – the last record, from PWD, was of two on Oct. 1st.

Reed Warbler – the first record came from Weston STW on March 31st whilst the last was at Saltford on Sept. 23rd.

Magpie – the paragraph on large groups should read:

Sizeable flocks included 17 at Keynsham Community Woodland on Jan. 23rd and 30 at Congresbury Moor on Nov. 18th. Regular high counts from Saltford in the autumn culminated in 56 on Dec. 28th.

Jay – the penultimate paragraph should read:

The highest counts were from coastal sites associated with migration during October: 26 on 14th at Aust Cliff/M48 Services, 25 on 7th and 15 on 20th at Northwick Warth, and 20 on 14th and 17 on 17th at Sand Point. Inland, nine were present on April 1st in Montpelier and six on Sept. 29th at Stoke Lodge feeding on acorns in an evergreen oak.

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.

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N Workman, R Yeadon, G Youdale, M Youdale, S F Young, and S Zamze.

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

Avon Birds – www.avonbirding.blogspot.co.uk,
 Birdwatching at Oldbury Power Station – www.phazelwood.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/OPS.htm,
 Blagdon Lake Birds – www.blagdonlakebirds.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.

Waders in Avon, Part 1 – Uncommon, Scarce and Vagrant Species

Harvey Rose

Introduction

An account of the waders that occurred in the Bristol District up to the middle of the 1930s was given in Davis [1936]. Forty years later Ferns [1977] described the first few years of the WeBS survey as it applied to the Severn Estuary, this included a considerable amount of Avon area wader data, especially for the years 1974/75. And so four decades on again it is time for a new survey of these iconic species. The 1936 survey recorded a total of 30 wader species. Currently the Avon area wader data lists 55, or possibly 56 (see the Golden Plover account in Part 2), species. This large increase over nearly 80 years can mainly but not entirely be attributed to the huge increase in the number of birders in the Avon area over the last half century; see the editorial in the 2012 Report. Although many of these 'new' waders are classed as vagrants, some are now fairly regular as passage migrants or even, in one case, as a breeder. At some sites the status of several regularly occurring waders has hardly changed over eighty years, Oystercatchers at the Weston Bay/Axe Estuary site for example, while others have declined drastically, the resident Lapwing population being an example. In this paper and its successor to be published in the 2014 Report we shall give an account of these changes and provide a summary of the current status of all 55 'Avon' wader species.

We have split the Avon waders into four basic groups depending on how regularly they occur. Note that we are using the new 2013 BOU taxonomic wader order; see the editorial in this Report. The first group – the 'common' waders with flocks of 100+ occurring regularly – contains 14 species: Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Knot, Dunlin, Redshank and Snipe. Next are the nine 'uncommon' wader species - those that occur regularly with counts in single or double figures and almost always less than 100: Little Ringed Plover, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Little Stint, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank. The third group are the seven 'scarce' wader species occurring fairly regularly but not necessarily in every year and usually with single figure counts: Avocet, Purple Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Grey Phalarope, Wood Sandpiper, Jack Snipe and Woodcock. The fourth and largest group contains the 25 'vagrants' listed in the systematic list below. This paper will discuss the uncommon, scarce and vagrant species, and the 2014 paper will describe the common species and give an environmental assessment.

While preparing these papers we have mainly used the various local bird reports that have been published over the past century, but this has presented some difficulties. To begin with some of these reports did not cover all species, for example the first Bristol District (Avon) Report published in 1936 discussed just 23 species including six waders. It is only in the past 25 years that these reports have treated every species and given detailed counts. Waders have been covered in reasonable detail since the early 1970s when the WeBS survey started both nationally and locally. For the twenty years prior to that some data was given often in the form of the maximum yearly or seasonal count for the Avon area as a whole, or sometimes for a particular site; and before 1950 even this is either absent or at best patchy. Hence we have taken our 'Study Period' to be 1950 to the present; note that Davis [1948] gives a fairly detailed account of all Avon area species up to 1947. Also it is worth noting that at that time, just after the Second World War, the number of regular 'Avon' observers was very small indeed. For some species maxima are available from 1950 onwards but for others very little organised information was published before 1970. *It follows that we have not been able to give a uniform account of every species, or even every species in any of the four groups.* Rather than presenting the data in a series of tables we have used bar charts throughout, mostly based on maximum counts for particular sites or Avon as a whole, sometimes yearly and sometimes for a particular season. Because as noted above these maxima are available over fairly long periods they provide reasonably uniform actual data that can be used for comparative purposes, and so give some idea of how a species has fared and is faring currently. There are advantages and disadvantages with this type of data. A maximum count may refer to a one-day occurrence that was far larger than normal and so will exaggerate the numbers present overall, on the other hand a large single flock may have occurred at two sites in quick succession and so get counted twice. But these maxima refer to actual observations in the field over the study period and so give at least some real guidance to the numbers present at any given time. *Also it is important to note that the methods used to construct the bar charts vary from species to species, this variation is always related to amount and/or quality of the available data; the aim being to produce charts covering as long a period as possible.* It would be fascinating to see a chart showing how the Avon Dunlin populations, for example, have varied over the past century and more, but the comparative data are just not there.

The Sites

Waders occur at a variety of sites in the Avon area, these are mainly on the coast, on the North Somerset moors, or at the three large reservoir complexes. Below we list the main sites and their basic features that are of relevance to the wader populations using them. We begin with the coast starting in the north-east.

OPS and Littleton Warth – these include Estuary mud at low tide and the power station sludge lagoons which only became important in the 1970s. As each lagoon filled with sludge (over a period of about 20 years) it reverted to farmland, this process will soon stop as the station is decommissioned.

Severnside – this extends from Aust to Chitterning and includes Northwick Warth and Severn Beach; at low tide there are extensive shingle areas, seaweed covered rocks and mud banks. This important site suffers from disturbance at high tide especially at Severn Beach.

PWD – now very ‘developed’ which has both positive and negative points, positive as it includes extensive and undisturbed shingle covered areas as well as Estuary mud exposed at low tide, but negative because mostly it is no longer a ‘natural’ site.

CI-Y – a major site that extends from the edge of Clevedon to Woodspring Bay, and includes the tidal part of the R. Yeo, extensive farmland behind the sea wall, good roost sites and mud banks at low tide. But there is very little shingle or sand, and compared with the other coastal sites the tide here does not go out very far, so the low-tide mud banks are less extensive than at several other sites.

Sand Bay – as the name suggests much of top half of this site is sandy but it suffered greatly during sand dredging activities in the 1980s from which it is only slowly recovering.

Weston Bay and the Axe Estuary – again extensive mud banks and some sandy areas are available at low tide but the site suffers badly from disturbance of all kinds. The sewage treatment works on its south-western edge (Weston STW) is also important.

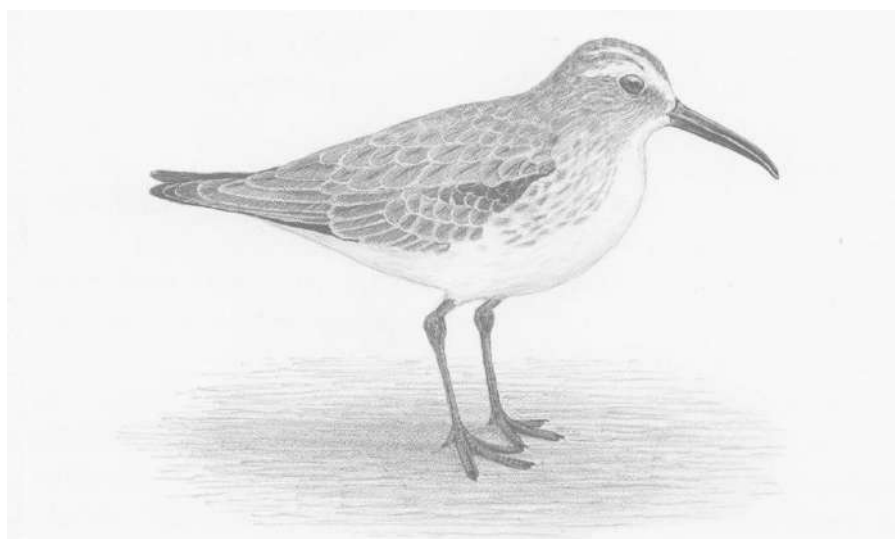
Nailsea, Kenn and the other N. Somerset moors used to be important but they are less so now probably because they have become dryer at all periods of the year.

There are several lakes/reservoirs most of which are artificial. The main sites are:

BG – constructed about a century ago but usually it does not have much in the way of muddy areas if the water level is low, the only exception is when one of its reservoirs or ponds is drained completely.

CVL – constructed in the early 1950s, it only became fully functional later in that decade. It does not attract many waders if the water level is high, but when the level is low large expanses of mud and some stony areas are exposed attracting a good range of species, and as a consequence this site has a very high ‘bird list’.

BL – again constructed a century ago, so it produced some of the early records. As with the above site it suffers if the water level remains high, also at all time birds often commute between these two sites.



Broad-billed Sandpiper

Systematic list

The list given below, and in the next Report, provides details of all 55 wader species that have been recorded in the Avon area, and it follows the new BOU (2013) species order. As noted above the common species will be treated in the next Report with the remainder discussed here. We use the same conventions as in the rest of this Report including place names and abbreviations. The term 'Estuary' with a capital 'E' always refers to the Severn Estuary as a whole of which the Avon coast forms an important part. For the 25 vagrant species the British Birds Records Committee (BBRC) count giving the number of individuals that have been recorded in the UK between 1950 and 2012 is given in the first line of the entry. This provides a measure of the relative rarity of a particular vagrant species in the UK, *** implies that the species is 'too common' for this committee to consider it now, in all cases the count is over 500. Where this is relevant, all 'unusual' or 'rare' records listed below have been accepted and published by the corresponding records committees, BBRC for national records and the AOG or Somerset record committees for local ones. In a few cases this has not been followed where more recent information is available.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus*

BBRC ***

This (mainly) summer visitor occurs in small numbers in southern England, locally it breeds in Wiltshire but not in Avon. It has been recorded on only fifteen occasions in the Avon area since 1900, eight times in spring, six in autumn and once in winter, with all but one of the sightings on or near the coast. Davis [1948] suggested that it may have been commoner in former times. The recent upturn in sightings is in line with the increase in observer activity, also it seems to favour CI-Y as the majority of the sightings have been noted at or near this site. The records are as follows: Woodspring Bay, two in December 1925, then single birds at Sandford Hill on April 2nd, 1949, CVL on Oct. 3rd, 1959, Weston-s-Mare airfield on Sept. 11th, 1968, CI-Y on April 30th, 1988, June 18th, 1989 and April 28th, 1991; Middle Hope on Sept. 2nd, 1989; New Passage on July 27th, 1999 and April 20th, 2006; with more April records at CI-Y in 2008 (on 6th) and 2011 (on 10th). Two March coastal records for 2013, at OPS and Severnside, are listed in the main systematic list of this Report.

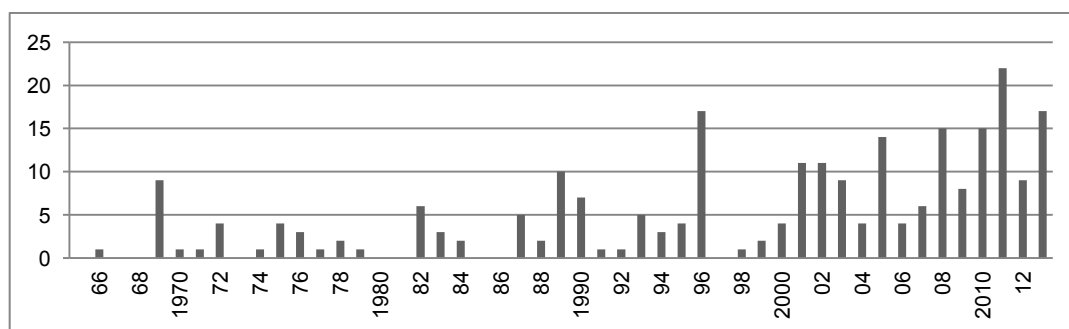
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

BBRC 291

This species is quite common in southern Europe, so it is perhaps surprising that there are only four records (five birds) for the Avon area. One was shot near Thornbury prior to 1848, two (male and female) were present at CVL from May 22nd to 25th, 1965, one flew past OPS on May 17th, 1997, and a male was at CVL on April 10th, 2012.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Apart from one that was shot near Thornbury before 1900, the first modern Avon record was of one in December 1966 at Sand Bay. Nine occurred in 1969 (four at Sand Bay in April and five at CI-Y in May), and there were single coastal records in 1970 and 1971. The next sightings were in 1974 (at CVL and Sand Bay) and it has been more or less annual in the Avon area ever since. This species began breeding in the UK in the 1940s, slowly at first, and it is now a regular breeder at several sites in southern Britain including the Newport Wetlands, and in 2012 there was one in Somerset. So the increase in sightings in the Avon area as shown in the chart below, which gives the numbers seen in each year since 1965, does mirror the national increase although it is perhaps surprising that our numbers are not higher. It was not until 2002 that a double figure count was reported (at the Axe Estuary), and the current (to the end of 2013) highest count, 12, was noted at CI-Y in February 2011. At least 246 have occurred at an average rate since 1965 of about five per year.



Total yearly count for all sites

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

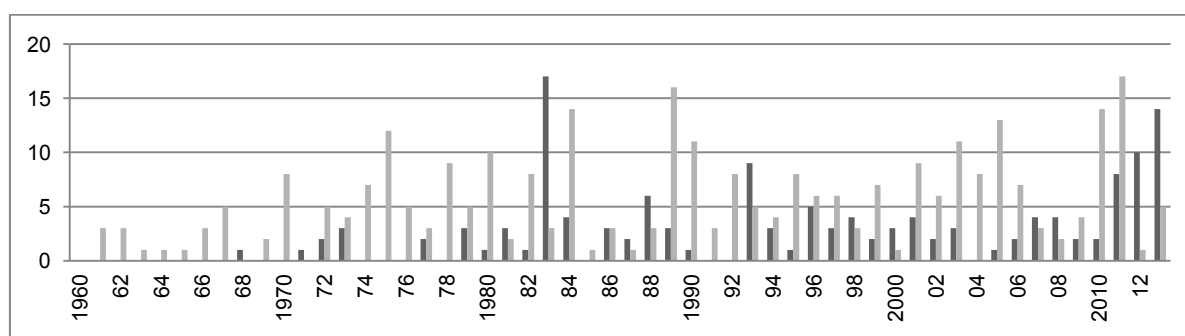
BBRC ***

There are now three records of this vagrant from North America for the Avon area, an adult at CVL from Oct. 23rd to 27th, 1994; a juvenile at BL on Nov. 1st and 2nd, 2003, and another seen briefly also at BL on Oct. 23rd, 2013; more details of this last record are given on page 58. An unusual 'plover' was seen at CVL and on Marksbury Plain in the autumn of 1987, this record will be discussed in the Golden Plover account in Part 2 of this paper.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

It was not until the 1930s that this species started to colonise and breed in the UK, and the first Avon area record was not until 1954 when one was noted at CVL in May, with another at BL in April 1956 and a third at CVL again in August 1958. It became a regular summer visitor to the Avon area from 1961 onwards although the first coastal record was not until 1968 (one at Sand Bay in July) and the first proven breeding record had to wait until 1977. Now, as in the UK as a whole, it is a regular summer visitor in quite small numbers that breeds in some years. Usually the first sightings are in late March and the last juveniles have left by mid-September, the extreme dates being March 14th (in 2010 at OPS) and Oct. 18th (in 1976 at Sea Mills). Breeding sites in Avon are usually on small patches of damp rough ground on building sites or in nature reserves, and pairs appear to be opportunistic making use of some unlikely places, sometimes for just one year only, if the conditions are right. Sites where successful breeding (eggs or juveniles seen) has occurred include: PWD (used in several years), Chittening Warth (Sevenside), and Weston STW (in least three years), but also Bristol International Airport (on a disused waste patch at the back of the airport for three years running), two industrial sites near Stoke Gifford, Saltford STW and BG (for several summers water was drained from various reservoirs or ponds, and the resulting damp exposed floors gave ideal conditions; over a period of about eight years at least 25 chicks hatched successfully). The best year for the Avon area was 1982 when 11 young were reported. But it seems likely that a number of nesting attempts go unrecorded due to their habit of using unusual, and so unvisited, sites because several are seen at the regularly watched sites in spring or early summer.

Since the 1970s a few have been noted either on the coast or inland in spring. Some of these are probably genuine migrants while others are in the process of nest site prospecting, and in many cases it is not clear which was the case. The largest spring count was seven at BG in April of both 2006 and 2007. In most years autumn numbers are larger but not always, and again some are genuine migrants whilst others are perhaps dispersing local breeders. Counts are never high, the largest being 16 at CVL in August 2011. The chart below gives the autumn data since 1960, it was constructed by listing the maximum autumn count at each site. Those for the coast were added together and are depicted in black in the chart, and the inland maxima were treated similarly and are shown in grey. The coastal count of 17 in 1983 was made up by maxima of seven at OPS, nine at PWD and one at CI-Y. Over the period since 1960 the coastal average has been 2.4 per autumn and the inland average has been 5.5 per autumn. Apparently a change occurred in the early 1980s, before then most were seen at the reservoirs but recently counts have been more equal.



Autumn counts, coast – black, inland – grey

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferous*

BBRC 51

There is only a single record in the Avon area for this species which is common in North America: one was at CVL on Jan. 17th, 1976. It was seen in the afternoon feeding with a large group of Lapwing but it was later spooked by a Merlin not to be seen again. There were six UK records during the 1975/76 winter; see Vinicombe [1979] for further details.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

BBRC ***

Breeding in France and further south (as well as many other warmer parts of the world) this species has occurred in the Avon area in spring or autumn on about twelve occasions, always singly and in all but one case for one day only. First recorded in May 1947 at Severn Beach and seen here again in May 1949; it is perhaps surprising that there were no earlier sightings. The remaining records are as follows, none were recorded between 1950 and 1965 inclusive.

1960-69 – CVL: adult male on April 13th, 1966;

1970-79 – PWD: Aug. 19th, 1973; Axe Estuary: Oct. 9th, 1976; and Severnside: Aug. 11th, 1978;

1980-89 – Sand Bay: adult male on May 5th, 1980; PWD: adult female on April 28th and CI-Y: adult male on May 3rd, 1984;

1990-99 – OPS: probably a juvenile on Aug. 16th, 1993; and CI-Y: adult male on May 1st and 2nd, 1998;

2000 onwards – Severnside: adult female on May 12th, 2004; juvenile on Sept. 22nd, 2006; and an adult male on May 2nd, 2011.

There are three further old records all for CVL which are now thought to be only probable (and so do not form part of the current record), the dates were August 1967, September 1972 and August 1974.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultia*

BBRC 16

Another CVL speciality, one present here from Nov. 17th, 1979 to Feb. 10th, 1980 was seen by many observers and constitutes the only Avon area record of this eastern species; it was only the third for the UK. On first sight it looked like a rather pale greatly over-sized Ringed Plover with longer legs and more substantial bill, also it seemed unaffected by the cold winter weather. Using the BBRC data as a measure, this is the 'rarest' wader to have occurred in the Avon area. For further details see Newman and Vinicombe [1980].

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

BBRC ***

Unlike most other vagrants this species has sometimes occurred in sizeable flocks. Also, owing to its preference for higher ground it has probably been overlooked at times. Counts in the UK are mostly small, and some breed on the mountain tops in Scotland (a survey in 1999 suggested a breeding population of between 500 and 750 pairs). In Avon there have been about twelve reports, eight in spring and four in autumn, but none since 1995. The first to be recorded was shot on Steep Holm in May 1869, also at about this time a small 'trip' was noted near Weston-s-Mare and one was seen at Sand Point. The next records were of parties of about seven at Burrington in April 1929 and of two at Sand Point on Sept. 5th, 1958. Single birds were then noted at Severn Beach (in winter plumage) from Sept. 14th to 17th, 1974; at PWD on May 21st, 1978; at Middle Hope on Aug. 24th and 26th, 1979; at CI-Y (a juvenile) on Aug. 19th, 1981; and at Pucklechurch (a female) on May 11th, 1982. The final two records are also for May and from the Marshfield/Tormarton area: up to 14 including one immature in 1992 on 8th and 9th with one or two until 11th; and three in 1995 on 16th.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

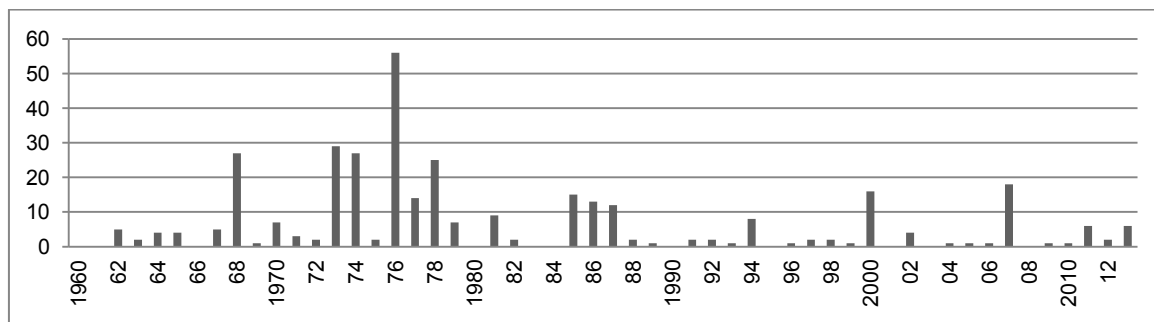
BBRC 37

A juvenile of this North American species was present at CI-Y from Nov. 12th to 26th, 2005, during its stay it was very approachable and did not move far or associate with other waders. It seemed unaffected by the freezing conditions at night. For further details see Hunt [2005].

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

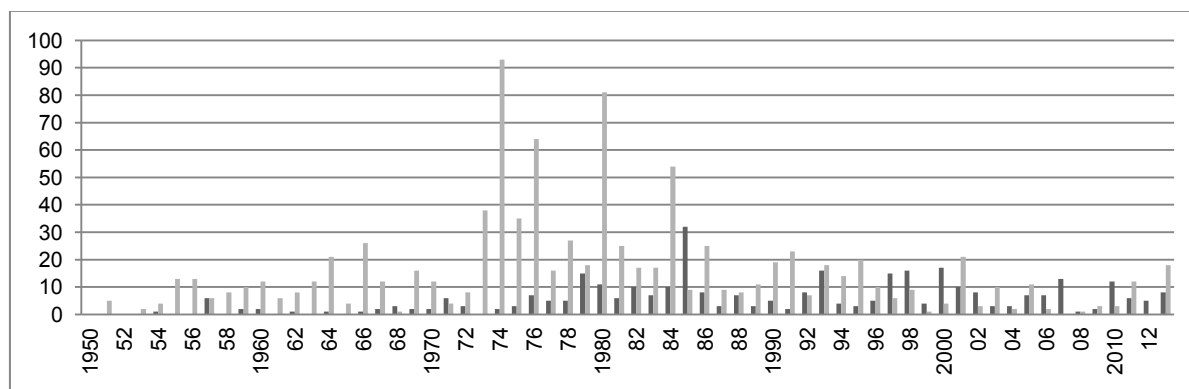
A distinctive species in several ways occurring in two separate populations in the Avon area, it ranges more widely than many of the other uncommon or rare waders, and it has had a rather chequered history over the past half century. In the UK as a whole it is most commonly recorded as a winter visitor and/or passage migrant but it does breed in a few places. In the Avon area it has wintered in varying numbers and also occurs on passage but it is unclear to what extent these groups overlap in spring. In some years counts have been relatively constant between early March and mid-May but in others there were no records between late February and late April. The highest Avon area count, 101, was noted in mid-March 1976 (at CVL during a year of low water levels) suggesting an overlap of the wintering flocks with the early passage migrants, although it is worth noting that flocks of 300+ were reported on the Somerset levels at this time. Note also this count does not form part of the first chart below because this chart only uses data from December to February. Passage in autumn is usually much stronger than in spring, and three quarters of all Avon area records are from the main reservoirs. Most of the rest are coastal, but a few have also been noted at other sites including ASW, Kenn Moor and Marksbyr Plain.

The first chart below illustrates the winter sightings since 1960, and was constructed by adding together the maximum winter (with only records between December and February being used) counts at each site in each year to give the corresponding bar in the chart (average 5.6 per winter). It clearly shows the variation over the period with a good numbers during the 1970s. Almost all of these winter records came from the main reservoirs or their adjacent fields.



Maximum winter (December to February) counts

As noted above, in some years the spring passage merges or even overlaps with the winter sightings but in others there is a gap of at least a month. Spring counts tend to be lower than those in winter but because of possible overlaps it is often unclear how many are genuine migrants. Also as with the winter records, many of the best counts at this time of year were for the period 1965 to 1980, and during the last decade all counts have been in single figures. Much larger numbers are reported in autumn, and the chart below illustrates the data. It was constructed as above except now the inland and coastal records have been split with grey bars for inland and black bars for the coast. Again it shows good numbers during the middle part of the study period but a better range of counts throughout. Also as with some other species inland sightings predominated during the early years whilst latterly the division has been more equal. Over the study period the inland average was 15 per year and the coastal average was just over five per year.



Maximum autumn counts, grey for the reservoirs and black for the coast

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

BBRC 28

The highlight of the remarkable 2011 autumn was a juvenile of this species noted at both BL and CVL from Nov.18th to Dec.16th. Although it breeds in East Asia, it was thought likely that this individual had arrived from the west having crossed North America during the early autumn. During its stay it associated freely with other waders, and only left with the onset of freezing conditions. For further details see Milbourne [2011].

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus*

BBRC 227

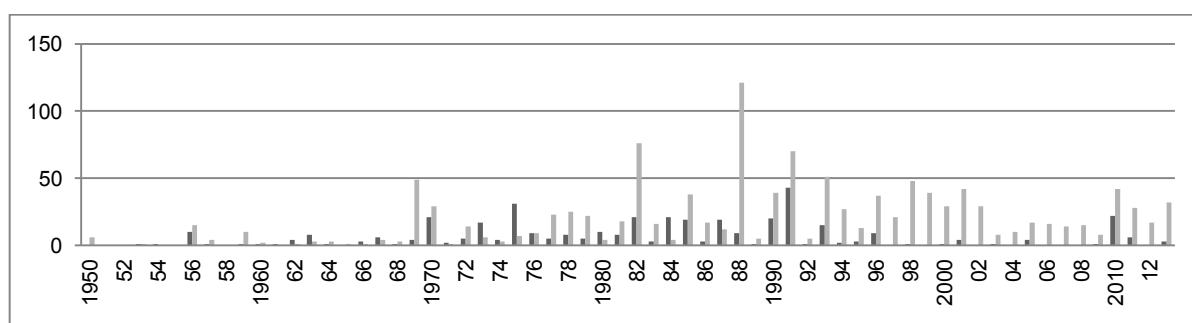
There were two records of this eastern species in the 1980s but none since: one at OPS from Aug. 20th to 22nd, 1983 and another at Severn Beach on May 16th, 1988, both were adults. This is another species that may have been overlooked at times.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

This is a common Palearctic species but the UK is on the western edge of its migratory range. It breeds in the high Russian and far-eastern arctic, and most of those that migrate through Western Europe take different

routes in autumn and spring. In autumn many follow the eastern Atlantic seaboard on their southward migration and so occur or pass over the UK, but in spring they mostly take a more easterly route through the Middle East. This is borne out in the Avon records where it is a regular autumn migrant but only very occasional in spring. Between 1971 and 1994 seven were recorded singly in winter (December to March) but it is possible that some of these were just late migrants as the tail-end of the regular autumn migration often extends into November. It has been recorded in spring in 25 years since 1950, mostly singly but in 1978 up to six were noted over a two-month period; two were reported in seven other years, the last being 2006.

Autumn passage usually begins in August with one or two adults, the juveniles following later. In the Avon area since 1950 the ratio of coastal to inland records has been about three to one, although in the last two decades this ratio was nearer to six or eight to one; see chart below which was constructed as follows: the maximum autumn count at each main site was listed and collected into two sums, one for the coast illustrated in grey in the chart, and the other for inland sites illustrated in black (averages per autumn since 1950 were 19 on the coast and just over six inland). As can be seen from the chart, yearly counts have ranged from almost nothing to quite substantial numbers, the occurrences of this species in the Avon area being more erratic than almost any other. The three best years were 1982, 1988 and 1991 when in each case over 100 were noted, also 1991 saw the best inland counts. The highest individual count was 56 at PWD in late September 1988.



Autumn passage totals, grey – coast, black – inland

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

BBRC ***

It is perhaps not surprising that amongst the vagrant waders reported in the Avon area this species, a few of which breed in the UK, has the most records – 21 in total, the great majority of which were for CVL. It is mainly an autumn passage migrant but recently four have been noted in late winter or spring. The first record was for BG in September 1943. The remaining records are listed below, except where stated they all refer to single birds. None were seen during the 1990s.

1950-59 – CVL on Aug. 29th, 1954; and Sept. 15th and 19th, 1959;

1960-69 – CVL on Sept. 24th, 1960; Sept. 8th and 9th, 1962; Aug. 10th, 1963; and July 26th and 27th, 1964;

1970-79 – CVL, a juvenile from Sept. 12th to 19th, 1972; one trapped and present from Aug. 28th to Sept. 9th, 1973 when possibly two were present; and Sept. 19th to 24th, 1977;

1980-89 – CVL, adult from Aug. 30th to 31st, 1980 [not to Sept. 21st as published previously]; OPS on April 29th and CVL from Oct. 17th to 22nd, 1984; and CVL again on May 20th, 1987;

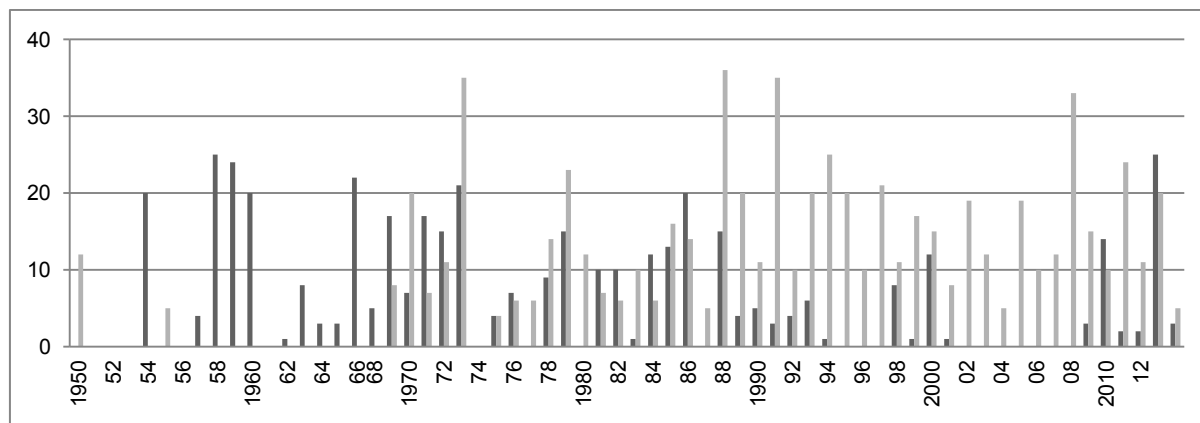
2000 onwards – BL, a juvenile from Oct. 5th to 9th, 2001; another juvenile at both CVL and BL between Sept. 22nd and Nov. 9th, 2002; at Severn Beach on May 13th, 2004; at Sea Mills on March 19th (in winter plumage) and CVL on May 20th in 2009; and finally at CVL again with a juvenile on Aug. 26th and 27th, 2011.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The preferred habitat for this world ranging species is a sandy beach, so it is unsurprising that it is not more common in the Avon area. In the UK as a whole it occurs in good numbers as a passage migrant and in slightly lower numbers as a winter visitor, but it does not breed. Locally, it is now recorded mostly on passage but this may not have been so in the past – the published records are distinctly patchy. During the 1960s and 1970s there were a number double figure winter counts from the coast, indeed our only three figure count was in March 1967 when 120 were reported in the Sand/Weston Bays area. Also reports from Sand Bay included 22 in February 1969, and 14 in February and 42 in November 1974. At the present time some flocks do occur in winter on the Somerset coast, and a few from these flocks occasionally wander into our area.

In Avon, counts made during passage movements tend to be higher in spring than in autumn which is surprising as most seen in autumn are juveniles, so many of the adults passing through our region in spring must use different probably more easterly routes in autumn. Over the study period since 1950 two sites have

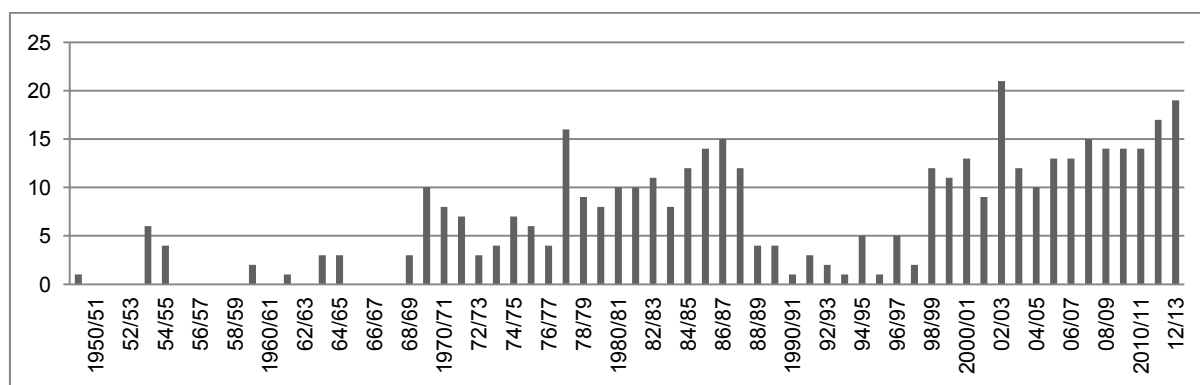
predominated, Severnside and Sand Bay with some using this second site also being noted in Weston Bay. At the beginning of the period Severnside was not favoured but this changed around 1970, on the other hand counts at Sand Bay fell back after the extensive sand dredging activities in the 1980s and they are only now slowly getting back to previous levels. This data is illustrated in the chart below which gives the maximum single spring count in each year during the study period; black bars for Severnside and grey for Sand/Weston Bays. As noted above autumn counts tend to be lower, but not always; for example 54 were seen in Weston Bay in August 1957, 80 on Severnside in August 1972, and 25 at PWD in July 1983. The other main coastal sites, OPS, PWD and Cl-Y, do attract some migrants but counts are mostly in single figures; the largest at Cl-Y, for example, is 17 in May 1996 seen just after heavy rain. Inland CVL does host small numbers (maximum five) on spring and autumn passage but records from the other reservoir sites are scarce.



Spring passage totals, black – Severnside, grey – Sand Bay area

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Even as far back as 1936 this species was regularly reported as a winter visitor in small numbers to the coast. It occurs mainly between October and April although there are a few September and May records. Up to the mid-1980s the main sites in the Avon area were Severnside and, to a lesser extent, Sand Point, with counts almost always in single figures. During this period the maximum single count was 11 at Severn Beach in early May 1978. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s counts in the Avon area were very low, they picked up again around the turn of the century but at two different sites: Battery Point, Portishead and Birnbeck Island, Weston-s-Mare; the reason(s) for this change are unclear. This is shown in the chart below which was constructed by calculating the maxima for each site in each winter period, these were then added together and the results are depicted in the chart which clearly shows the poor counts during the 1990s mentioned above. Using this method of counting 432 have been recorded since 1949/50 at an average rate of 6.7 per winter period. As noted above most reports were from the coast but it was also recorded singly at CVL on five occasions during late autumn in 1969, 1979, 1991 and 1995, and in April 2009.



Winter period maxima, all sites

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

BBRC 247

This North American species has only been recorded once in the Avon area, a juvenile was at BL from Sept. 12th to 23rd, 2001. About seven were reported in the UK in September that year. During its stay it associated with other small waders often feeding on the dryer parts of the foreshore. For further details, a drawing and a photograph see Voaden [2001].

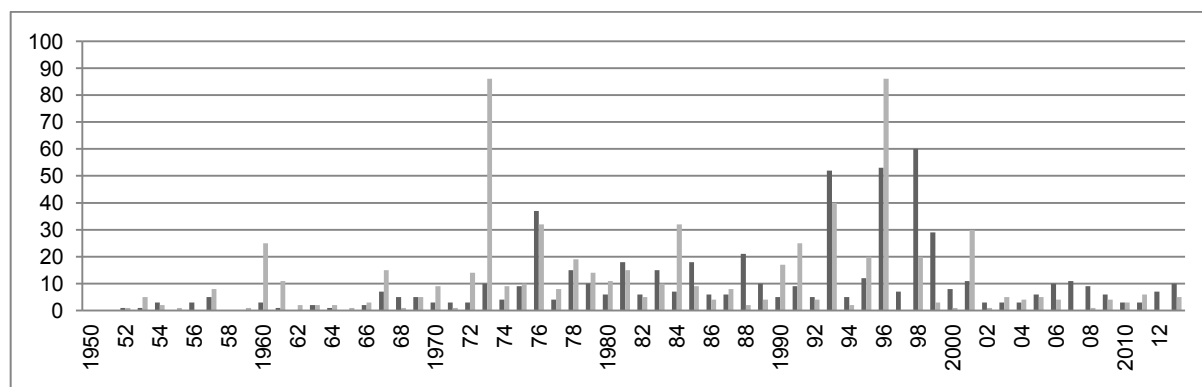
Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

As with some other species, Sanderling for example, this stint is mainly a passage migrant. It occurs both on the coast and at the inland reservoirs in about equal proportions, and often occurs at about the same time of year as the Curlew Sandpiper. Recently it has been quite scarce; see chart below. A few overwinter in some years, probably in about one year in three, usually singly and rarely more than three; the highest winter count was five at CVL in January 1974 (a winter with low water levels when up to 765 Dunlin were noted at the lake). Spring passage sightings are only slightly more regular, again often only noted in ones or twos; the maximum count being five at Severnside in May 1993.

The great majority of our records are of autumn passage migrants with some adults occurring in August and reasonable numbers of juveniles from late August to early November. In most autumns total numbers range from under ten to about 30 but in some years much larger numbers are seen. In fact eleven of the years since 1950 produced good totals, the best being:

96 in 1973, **69** in 1976, **92** in 1993, **139** in 1996 and **80** in 1998.

The chart below shows these details, it was constructed as follows. The maximum count at each main site in each autumn was listed, the sum of the coastal counts is illustrated in black in the chart, the inland records were treated in the same way and are grey in the chart; the bold figures above being the sums of the black and grey values for the year in question (the autumn averages since 1950 are nine per year for the coast and just over ten per year for inland sites). As with all the charts in this paper, the reader should keep in mind the fact that the number of observers has increased considerably during the study period. Nevertheless the chart does give a clear picture of the occurrences of this species since 1950, in particular the poor showing over the past decade. In 1996, our best year, reports were widespread with most of the major sites participating well, the exception being Severnside probably as a result of general disturbance at the site during this period.



Autumn passage totals, black – coast, grey – inland

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

BBRC ***

Noted at just two Avon sites, this Nearctic species has been reported on six occasions involving seven birds as follows: at CVL two juveniles on Oct. 27th and 28th with one until Nov. 2nd, 1978; and a juvenile from Oct. 5th to 19th, 1991; and at Severnside on Sept. 12th and 13th, 1985; an adult from Aug. 21st to 30th, 1995, a juvenile/first-winter from Nov. 22nd to 26th, 1998; and an adult on Aug. 4th, 2001. As with several other vagrant wader species it is worth noting that all sightings occurred over a relatively short time span with none since 2001.

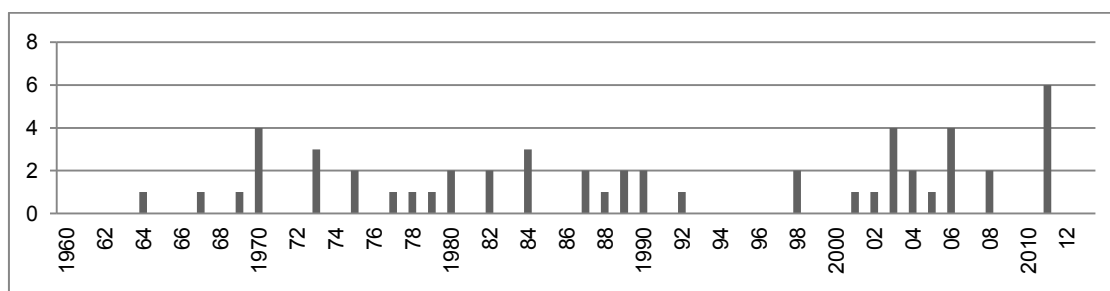
Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis*

BBRC ***

Thirteen members of this North American species were recorded in the Avon area between 1973 and 1993 (all but one in autumn) but none since; see above. Apart from the spring records, all were juveniles; the details are as follows. The first were at BL from Sept. 15th to 21st and at CVL on Oct. 3rd, 1973, then two were at CVL on Sept. 1st, 1975 with one present until 12th; then another from Sept. 20th to Oct. 1st. Single birds were again at CVL from Sept. 29th to Oct. 6th, 1976; on Oct. 14th and 15th, 1978; and on Sept. 16th, 1980; and at BL from Oct. 5th to 14th, 1986. The rest of the records were coastal with one at New Passage on Sept. 30th, 1989, another which was at Severn Beach on May 22nd and 23rd, and CI-Y on June 7th, 1990; and finally two were at the Axe Estuary from Oct. 6th to 9th, with one remaining until 13th, in 1993.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

This is the most frequently occurring North American wader (shorebird in N. America) in the Avon area. It is assumed that most of those seen here have arrived from the west having crossed the Atlantic, but it is also possible that some arrive from the east as this species breeds both in North America and Siberia as far west as the Ural mountains, and some birds from other wader species are known to migrate here from the eastern Russian arctic – Curlew Sandpiper for example; see Lappo *et al.* [2012]. The first Avon area record was at BG in September and October 1935, and the next two were at BL in August and September 1964 and at BG again in September 1967. It has been fairly regular since then but only two (and none at the reservoirs) were seen between 1992 and 2001, see the chart below which gives the numbers seen in each year. The majority of the records are from the main reservoirs but just under a quarter are coastal (the first coastal record was in September 1979 at the Axe Estuary). All but one has occurred between mid-August and early November, the exception being also for the Axe Estuary, on May 9th, 2004 – our only spring record. The highest yearly total was six all noted at CVL during the exceptional year of 2011. At least 53 have been recorded since the first nearly eighty years ago with an average of a little under one per year since 1960; once here they often stay for a few days and sometimes for a week or more. All those in autumn that were aged were juveniles, with the exception of adults at CVL on Aug. 22nd, 1987 and on Aug. 20th, 1988 (perhaps the same returning individual).



Yearly count at all sites

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

BBRC 123

There are three autumn records of this North American 'peep': an adult at OPS on Aug. 12th and 14th, 1990; a juvenile at Severn Beach on Sept. 26th, 2009, and a first-winter at CVL from Nov. 10th to 20th, 2011. Care is needed with the identification of this species as was noted in 2011 when one at CVL in September thought to be a 'Semi-p' was later proved to be a Little Stint.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

BBRC 237

This distinctive North American species was recorded several times at CVL between 1967 and 1988, but not since or at any other site. The dates were as follows (all records relate to juvenile/first-winters): Sept. 8th to 25th, 1967; Sept. 17th and 18th, 1975; Sept. 20th to 21st, and 29th to Oct. 4th, 1979 (it is almost certain that just one individual was present throughout this period), Sept. 13th to 23rd, 1980; Oct. 17th and 18th, 1985; and Sept. 11th, 1988.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

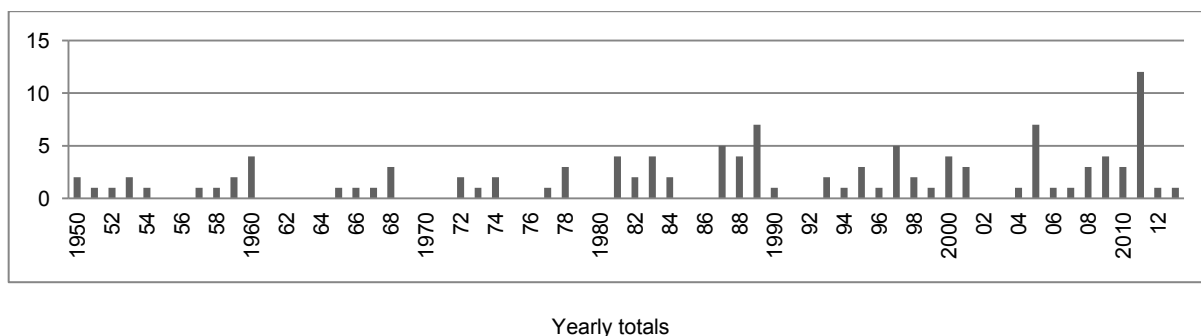
BBRC ***

About twelve of these phalaropes have been recorded passing through the Avon area, all occurring singly except those in 1999. It is also scarce throughout the UK and breeds, in very small numbers, in the Northern Isles; but in some parts of the world it can occur in enormous flocks. The Avon area records are as follows: BL in September 1921 and 1965 (18th to 27th, an immature), CVL on Aug. 24th, 1969 (adult female) and May 28th, 1978 (adult male); Backwell Lake on May 26th, 1979 and BL from Sept. 21st to 31st, 1996 (a juvenile). Then two juveniles were noted at BL on Aug. 25th and 26th, 1999, with a first-winter at Cl-Y on Oct. 29th, 2002, an adult at Weston STW on Aug. 23rd and 25th, 2008, and a juvenile at BL again on Oct. 4th and 5th, 2010.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

This species occurs mainly after autumn Atlantic storms, about half have been noted on the coast and half inland. Most of the inland records are for the main reservoirs, but not all. For example, in October 1959 one spent two days on a small patch of roadside grass near Lansdown Hill, Bath somewhat from the nearest open water! On average about two occur each year but this figure has ranged from zero to 12 (in 2011), see chart below which gives the total number seen in each year; at least 115 have been recorded since 1950. Most were

either juveniles or first-winters occurring between September and December, but there are also at least two January records. Also adults in full breeding plumage were noted at CVL in June 1990 and in Avon waters off Brean Down in May 1993.



Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

BBRC 75

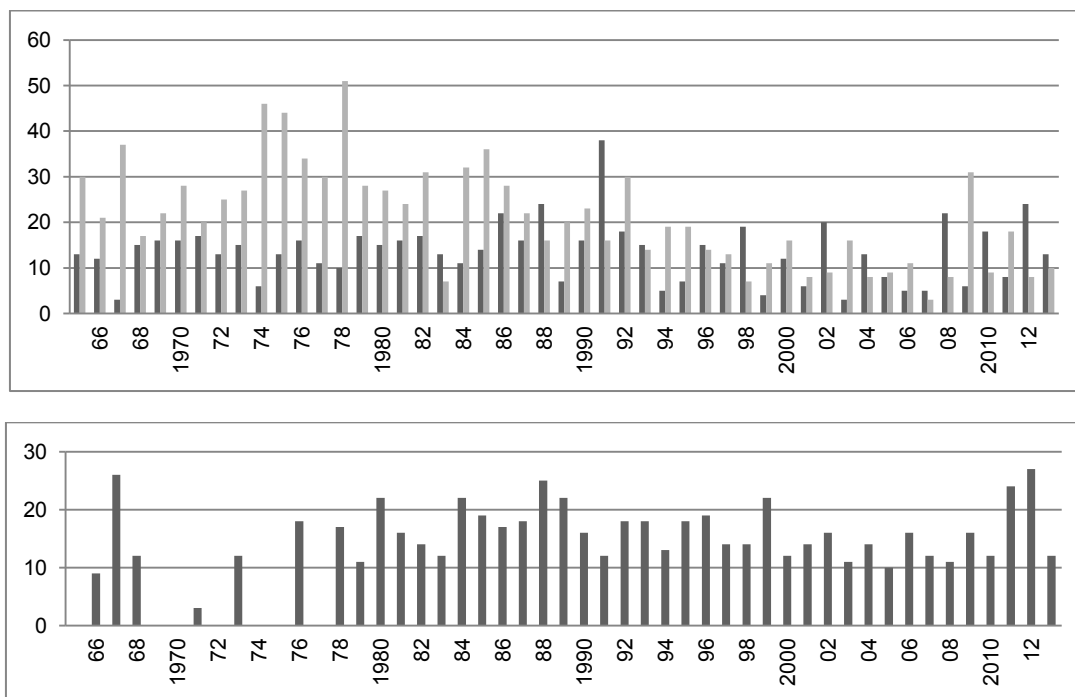
A single individual (probably an adult) of this eastern species was seen in September 1986 at both Royal Portbury Dock (PWD) on 19th and Severn Beach on 20th. When first encountered its loud clear 'Whimbrel like' *whit, whit* call was distinctive, and during its short stay it associated with Dunlins and Ringed Plovers; for further details see Vinicombe [1986].

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A regularly occurring wader which is seen in all months of the year, usually singly or in small groups, but double figure counts are not uncommon on passage. In 2011/12 the English coast of the Estuary was seventh in National WeBS Importance for this species, but it is worth commenting that over the Western Palearctic as a whole the UK counts are tiny – the one-percent importance threshold for the UK is 30, and for the Palearctic as a whole it is 17500! In both the Avon area and the UK wintering used to be quite rare but this began to change around the middle of the last century. The first Avon wintering records involved a small influx that occurred in January 1950, with single birds at BG, BL and Sea Mills, and because of this most of the early published records refer to sightings at this time of year at sites including the reservoirs (mainly BL and CVL) and several along the R. Avon. This species is now quite rare in winter at CVL (and BL), and so it is worth noting that there were several winter reports for this site during the first decade after its construction. It is possible, however, that some of these related to Green Sandpipers, a species that is much more common at the lake in winter and which, even now, is sometimes misidentified here. For much of the time since about 1970 Sea Mills has been the most regularly used site in winter with normally just one or two noted, although up to six have been seen during the last decade. Recently one or two have also been reported at this time of year from BG and CI-Y, and one wintered at CVL in 2013/14.

The great majority of the Avon records are for the passage periods with strong showings in both spring and autumn. The largest counts are from the reservoirs with CVL leading the way but good counts (20+) are also regularly reported from the coast. The first chart below gives the seasonal maxima at CVL since 1965 (spring in black with an average of 13.5 per year and autumn in grey with an average of 21.1 per year). As noted above most of the published records prior to this date refer to the winter period only. This chart shows fairly uniform spring counts but autumn counts that were higher during the 1970s and lower in the 2000s. Owing to the variability of the water level from one year to another at this site, individual years with low counts may simply be a consequence of the height of the water rather than a dip in the population, but in a few years a poor breeding season may also have affected the counts. The largest spring count was 38 in April 1991 and the smallest was three in both 1967 and 2003. The largest autumn counts were 46 in 1974 and 51 in 1978, both in August, and the smallest was five in 2007 when the water level was high throughout. Good numbers also occur at the other main reservoirs including BG with a spring maximum of 24 in 2010 and an autumn maximum of 37 in 1999, and BL with maxima of 14 in spring 1999 and 15 in autumn 1993. Coastal sites also record some good counts usually better in autumn than in spring. To illustrate this we have included an autumn chart for CI-Y (average 13.6 per autumn), it also shows slightly better counts in the 1980s (only a handful of counts are available prior to 1978) and a small dip in the 2000s. The records for Severnside are similar (maximum count 26 in autumn 1999) and good passage counts are often noted at Sea Mills, the maximum here being 31 for autumn 1968.

There are two published breeding records but it is not clear whether they can be taken at face value. Both were for the PWD area. The first, for 1972, is given in the relevant Somerset Report but not in the BNS Report, and the second, for 1982, was seen by one observer only. In almost all years display or any similar activity is unknown in the Avon area, and so these reports remain in doubt.



Seasonal maxima – top chart CVL, spring – black, autumn grey; and bottom chart CI-Y autumn

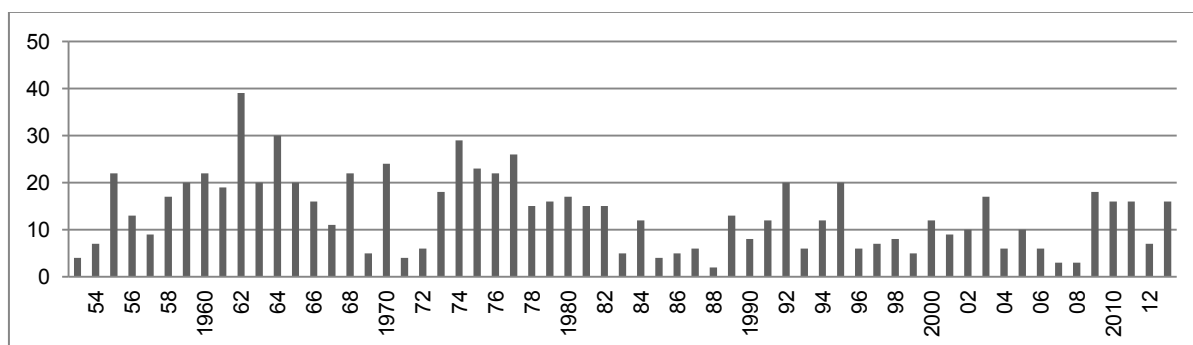
Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

BBRC 183

Four individuals of this North American species have been reported at reservoirs in the Avon area as follows: on Oct. 10th, 1982 at CVL; a winter plumaged adult on Nov. 2nd, 2003 at BG; with two further CVL records, both of summer plumaged adults, between Aug. 7th and 9th, 2007; and on Sept. 24th, 2011 when one arrived, wintered at the lake, and finally left in April 21st, 2012, following an influx of Common Sandpipers. A few have been recorded on the Somerset coast but none on the Avon coast.

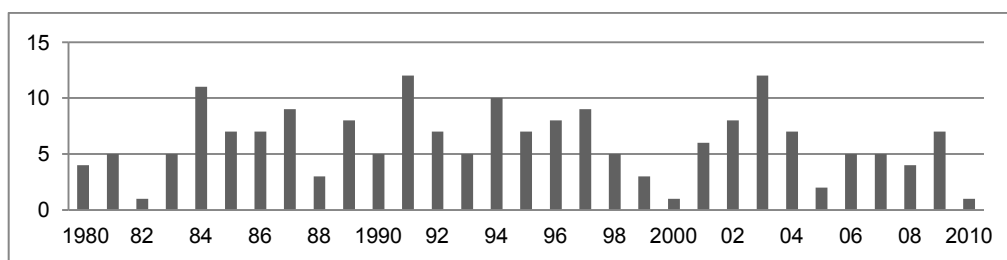
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

In the Avon area there are strong similarities between the records for this species and those for Common Sandpiper two entries above. It is regular on passage in small numbers, a few winter and it does not breed. Also, compared with the Western Palearctic and Africa, both the UK and the Avon counts are tiny, ten is a good count in the UK or Avon but the WeBS International Threshold is 17000. Compared with the Common, it is less widespread, being more concentrated at the reservoirs, and it is slightly more regular in winter, one or two are often noted with ASW, CI-Y and CVL being the most commonly used sites. Also, although the autumn passage is usually quite strong, very little in the way of a spring passage is ever observed and that which is thought to be passage is often the tail end of wintering. Possibly, as with some other species, they use a different route through Europe in spring than in autumn. The first chart below gives the yearly maxima at CVL (average 13.5 per year), the caveat about water levels mentioned in the Common Sandpiper entry also applies here. All of these maxima were for the autumn period, the largest were 39 in August 1962 and 30 in July 1974 and as with several other species lower counts were recorded in the 1990s and 2000s. Winter counts at this site usually range between two and four although five were present in 2008 and six in 2012.



Maximum autumn count at CVL since its opening in 1953

For a thirty year period beginning in about 1980 the sludge lagoons at ASW proved attractive to this species, in fact in a few of these years including 1987 and 1997 the best Avon area counts came from this site. The second chart below gives the annual maxima here, the average per year is about six. At the present time access to this site is very restricted.



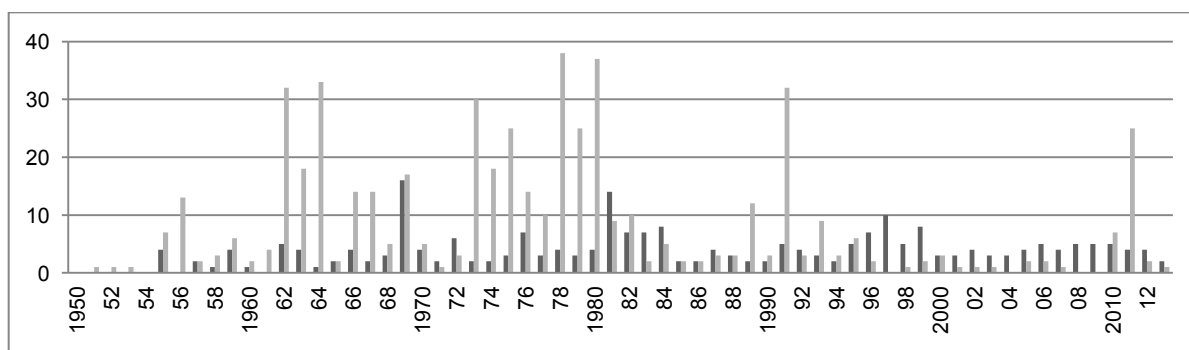
Maximum autumn count at ASW, 1980 to 2010

This species is also well-recorded in small numbers from the other main reservoir sites and from the coast. For example autumn maxima at CI-Y usually range between two and seven, the largest count here was 14 in 1984 when the birds were attracted to muddy patches at the bottom of Blake's Pool as it was being constructed.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Both in the UK and the Avon area this is generally an uncommon species occurring mainly as a passage migrant, a few winter in some years. It is more common further east breeding in sub-arctic regions from Finland to the Russian far-east. Until the last decade winter records were almost always of a single coastal bird noted in about one year in two; a flock of seven at CVL in Dec. 9th, 1973 (with one remaining until Jan. 2nd, 1974) was most unusual at this site. But during the last decade two or three have been reported wintering at separate coastal sites. It is likely that very few individuals were involved as they often return to the same site winter after winter. For example, one first seen near the mouth of the Yeo (CI-Y) in November 1977 was recorded every winter until 2011, no ringing data exists to confirm that the same individual was present throughout but other behavioural evidence suggests that this is highly likely. It is also of interest to note that one of the more unusual sightings reported in Davis [1936] was of one or two wintering at this site in 1935. The spring passage is similar, one or occasionally two are seen in about one year in two; they usually do not stay for more than a day or so which is a pity as they make a striking sight in their full breeding plumage.

Autumn passage is usually stronger with double figure counts being noted in some years. Apart from a few isolated sightings the best inland numbers were for the period between 1962 and 1982. In most years since then coastal sightings have dominated although even these were mainly in single figures. This is illustrated in the chart below which gives the maximum autumn counts at all sites added together with the coastal totals in black and inland totals in grey. The autumn coastal average is just under four per year and the inland average is 8.5 per year. At least four counts over twenty have been recorded: at BL, 24 in September 1962, and at CVL, 29 in September 1978, 36 in September 1980, and 24 in November 2011.



Autumn passage, coast – black, inland – grey

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

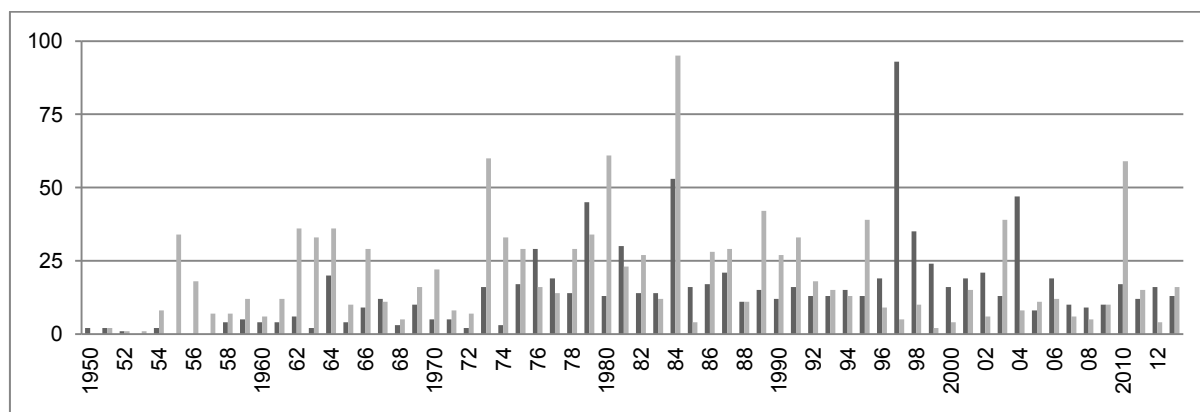
Amongst the uncommon wader species this is the most numerous in the Avon area. One or two winter quite often, there is usually a small spring passage and reasonable but varying numbers occur in autumn. The situation is similar across the UK except that some breed in northern Scotland. In 1947 Davis [1948] stated that it was 'seldom reported in former years, but [it is] now known as a regular visitor in autumn – usually to the reservoirs'. Since that time counts have been higher, see the chart below; hence this is one species whose

fortunes have probably improved over the past century. It is regular on the coast and at the reservoirs but it has also been noted at several other sites including Abbots Leigh, Ashton Vale, Gordano Valley, Kenn Moor, Keynsham, Marshfield and Saltford; and there are a few records of birds in flight over Bristol. In winter since 1950 it has occurred singly in about one year in four, three were noted in 1972 and 1976, and five (at OPS) in 1989. Also since 1990 one, or sometimes two, has spent each winter (except 1996-97) on the R. Avon at Sea Mills usually occurred from September to early April. In line with our comments above spring sightings have also increased since 1950. Maximum single spring counts for each decade since then were:

2 – 1950s, **7** – 1960s, **9** – 1970s, **12** – 1980s, **15** – 1990s and **18** – 2000s,

and two double figure migratory groups were seen in May: 14 at CI-Y in 1994 and 30 at Severnside in 2012.

Autumn passage is usually quite strong both on the coast and at the reservoirs, over the study period the ratio has been about three on the coast to four inland. But this ratio has not been constant. Up to the mid-1970s many more were recorded at the reservoirs than on the coast, since then the coastal numbers have increased and, with two exceptions, in the last decade the inland counts have been quite poor. This is shown in the chart below which was constructed in the usual way: maximum autumn counts for each site and each year were listed, the sum of those for the coast are depicted in black, and the inland sum is in grey. The 'grey' count of 95 for 1984 is possibly a bit high because it may involve some duplication between the maximum counts at CVL (33) and BL (40), but the 1997 coastal count of 93 is sound; its major component, 72, was for two flocks (24 and 48) seen during a substantial wader 'fall' at CI-Y after heavy rain in August that year. Other Avon counts of 40 or more were noted in 1973, 1980 and 2010.



Autumn passage, coast – black, inland – grey

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

BBRC 315

Three or four individuals of this North American species have been reported, two on the coast and one or two inland, as follows: at ASW a juvenile from Sept. 30th to Oct. 5th, 1984; a juvenile/first-winter at the Axe Estuary from Oct. 7th to 11th, 2006; and an adult at CVL on July 8th, 2011. There is a fourth record of another at CVL on Sept. 9th, 1967. Although the published data is fairly detailed it is now thought that there could have been some confusion with a Wilson's Phalarope that was certainly present at the same time, and the foggy conditions on the date in question were not favourable. Hence this report can now only be considered as 'probable', and so it does not form part of the official record.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

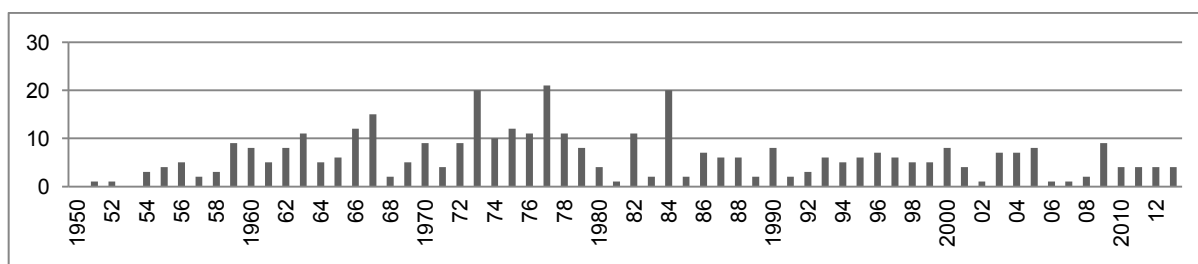
BBRC 132

This elegant eastern species was seen in two years at both CVL and BL during the 1980s as follows: an adult, almost completely moulted into winter plumage, from Oct. 3rd to 12th in 1982, and a juvenile from Aug. 20th to 27th in 1984. So this is another species only seen during the middle part of our study period.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

The first Avon area record of this species was in 1943 when one was seen in August on a small pool at St. Catherine between Bath and Marshfield; it is perhaps surprising that none were recorded earlier but CVL did not exist and the number of active birders was very small. The next was seen at BL in September 1951, and it has been reported in Avon every year since then except 1953. Almost all counts were in single figures, the highest being ten at CVL in August 1967, but in some years just a single bird was noted on one day only. The chart below is for 'bird-months', that is the maximum count for each month at each site was noted and the sum is depicted in the chart. The great majority of the records refer to juveniles at the reservoirs in early autumn;

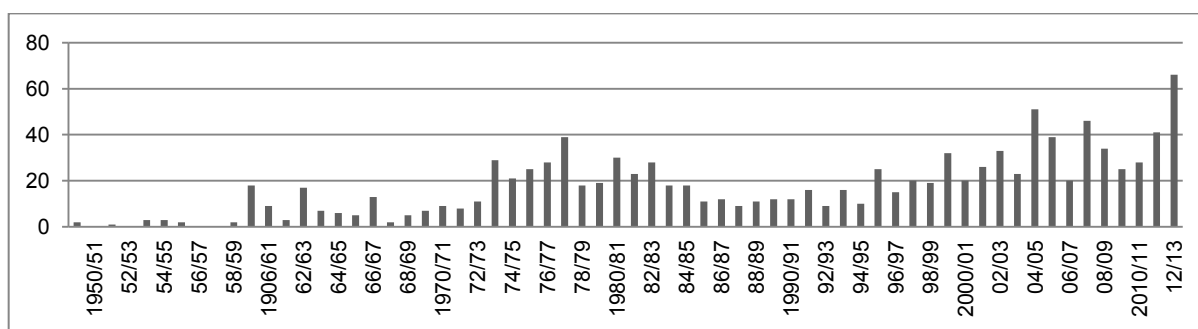
adults occasionally occur in late June but most sightings of adults are in July. About 15% of the records are coastal, and nine have been noted in spring (in 1963, 1965, 1966, 1970, 1973, 1993, 1995, 1996 and 2009). A total of 398 bird-months has been recorded since 1950 at a rate of just over six per year. It is worth noting that, as with a number of other wader species, the best counts were during the 1970s and early 1980s.



Yearly bird-month maxima

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

This is one of the most difficult wader species to monitor. It occurs in quite small numbers but its habit of roosting during the day in rough grassland and/or salt marsh, and of 'sitting very tight' only showing itself when the observer is almost upon it, makes the task of accurately assessing its population virtually impossible. Estimates given by some gamekeepers are that the ratio of (Common) Snipe to Jack Snipe is often about eight to one but, going by actual records, the Avon ratio is probably in a range between 20 and 50 to one. Whether we can deduce from this that many occurring in the Avon area go unrecorded is a mute point. It is strictly an extended winter visitor arriving usually in October and leaving in late March or early April, the extreme dates are Sept. 7th in 1975 and April 25th in 2011 although, in 1974, up to four were reported from a marsh in Ashton Vale up to May 28th but it is possible that these were misidentified and were in fact (Common) Snipes. It is thought that the milder and wetter conditions in recent years, as well as better observer coverage, are mainly responsible for the improved showing during the last decade. A recovery at CVL in January 1968 of one ringed in Finland does suggest the origin of at least some of our visitors. The chart below was constructed as follows. The maximum count at each site in each winter period was noted, and the sum of these counts is displayed in the chart. The bird-winter total since 1949/50 is about 1130 with roughly 17 per winter. Most sightings were of one or two, but some larger groups have been recorded; these include 12 in November 1959 and 14 in January 1974 at Sand Bay, 15 at CVL in October 1962, and 17 at ASW in February 2005 with a large flock of (Common) Snipe. The 1974 Somerset Bird Report states that "apparently 51 in seven groups were noted on Nailsea Moor". Clearly good numbers were present at some time during 1974 at this site but as no further details and/or actual dates were given, this data has not been included in the chart.



Winter period maxima

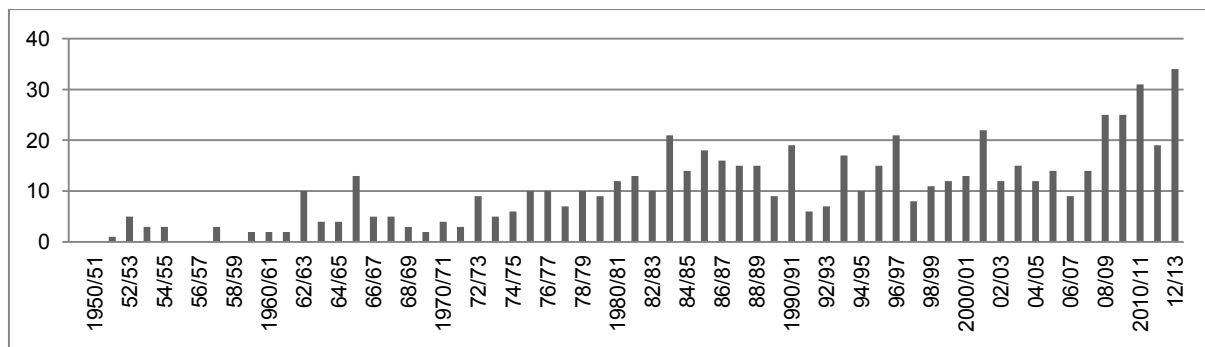
Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

BBRC 232

This North American and Siberian (see Lappo *et al.*, 2012) species was noted several times in the late 1970s and twice recently. Two juvenile/first-winters commuted between CVL and BL from Sept. 30th, 1977 to Jan. 11th, 1978 with one remaining until 21st; another juvenile/first-winter was present at CVL from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 2nd, 2009, and two again commuted between BL and CVL from Oct. 9th to Dec. 13th, 2011. Two further October records accepted (by BBRC) as Dowitcher sp. were for Aust in 1977 (on 16th) and CVL in 1978 (on 28th), it is probable that both of these were in fact Long-billed and not Short-billed as this latter species is very rare in the UK.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

In the Western Palearctic as a whole this is an abundant species with counts in the millions. The northern populations are migratory but only a tiny proportion ever reaches the south-west of the UK. It is now strictly a winter visitor, but a few pairs have bred in the Avon area in the past; there are breeding records for Tockington and near Clevedon prior to 1945, and 'roding' was noted at Abbots Leigh in 1973 and at Hunstrete in 1976. Also one or two recorded in May or August may have been local breeders, although they could have just been out-of-season migrants. Otherwise, all reports are for the period late September to mid-April, and the great majority of the records are of single birds, in a few cases more than one was present. Hence the chart below was constructed as follows: in each winter period the number of *sites* where observations (one or more) were made was noted, and their sum is displayed in the chart. It follows that the chart underestimates the actual number of birds present. Some double figure counts have been reported, these refer mainly to gamekeeper reports during Pheasant shoots, or when individuals were forced out of the woods by extreme weather. The highest 'shooting' count was in 2001 when 30 were noted in the Gordano Valley in November, although it is thought that up to 50 may have been seen on some occasions (pers. com.). Also over 80 were reported (from 40 sites) in both the 2009/10 and the 2010/11 winters mainly during the very cold weather. The bird-site-winter total since 1949/50 is about 665 with an average of about ten per winter, so in all probability the average bird-winter count is in the range 15 to 50. The increase shown in the chart is in line with the increase in the number of observers, and so the population has probably been fairly stable over the study period.



Winter period *site* count

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

BBRC 166

The only Avon area sightings of this rare eastern species were reported more than 60 years ago. Single birds were noted near Weston-s-Mare before 1893, and at BL in March 1949 and on Dec. 27th, 1950. Currently most UK records of this trans-Saharan migrant are for May or August to early October; hence, as these last two records do not correspond with current occurrence patterns, some doubt needs to be expressed about these sightings. On the other hand in both cases the published details do suggest this species emphasising the heavily barred flanks and the conspicuous white outer tail feathers.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

BBRC 71

The only record of this species is of one shot near Thornbury before 1881. As this species breeds in Spain and further east it is perhaps surprising that more have not been seen.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

BBRC 34

In the Avon area there have been three single sightings (*cf.* previous species) of this migratory species, which breeds mainly in southern Russia. They were at CVL from Sept. 6th to 8th, 1964; at CI-Y from June 9th to 17th, 1988, and a juvenile at both CVL and BL on Aug. 28th, 1993.

Discussion

As the wader groups discussed in this paper are generally quite small, detailed conclusions are not possible, but taken together the evidence does suggest a marked and increasing tailing off in the numbers present during the last two decades for many but not all species. This is illustrated in a table below which was constructed as follows. For each of the nine uncommon species discussed in this paper, the averages of the counts given in the charts above for the decades 1954-63, 1964-73, 1974-83, 1984-93, 1994-03 and 2004-13 – that is the decade just past and its five predecessors – are given in the table; and the Uncommon total (UT) row gives the totals for these decades. Up to the mid-1970s the number of Avon observers was much smaller than it is at the present time, also between 1954 and 1963 no passage data is available for Common Sandpiper (the 859 total for 1954-63 in the UT row would probably have been close to 1200 had this, and similar, data been available). Consequently, no conclusions can be drawn from the rise in the totals during the first two decades except that it is roughly in line with the increase in observer activity in the Avon area during this time. But the decrease over the last two decades is significant with the UT row total of about 2800 for the middle two decades dropping to about 1700 now, a decline of roughly 40%.

This decrease is particularly marked for Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint and Spotted Redshank, while Little Ringed Plover bucked the trend with its best showing during the most recent decade. A similar analysis was undertaken for the other two groups, but the population size caveat mentioned above is even stronger here. On average the scarce wader counts did not follow the downward trend, the total numbers of which are given in the the corresponding row of the table. For Avocet, Jack Snipe and Woodcock the current decade, 2004-13, has been their best in the Avon area since 1954 whilst the others - except Wood Sandpiper - showed no strong trend. About 140 vagrants have been recorded since 1954, and these also follow the main declining trend as is shown in the last row of the table below, the final figure (27) includes nine for the exceptional year 2011. Hence, overall, we can say that numbers of most species have dropped markedly over the past two decades and the reasons for this are unclear. Changing weather patterns may be one factor; also the percentage of years when the autumn water levels at the reservoirs were on the high side throughout (and so less mud was exposed for wader feeding) has generally been higher recently than during the middle part of the study period, but water level data prior to 1980 is not available at the present time. We plan to return to this topic in Part 2 of this paper.

Species	1954-63	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-03	2004-13
Little Ringed Plover	8	36	91	93	91	121
Ruff	117	244	606	325	217	153
Curlew Sandpiper	62	171	307	513	314	235
Sanderling	107	191	162	263	160	208
Little Stint	69	176	257	284	359	100
Common Sandpiper		409	566	605	387	391
Green Sandpiper	188	152	183	88	106	101
Spotted Redshank	108	166	242	109	70	81
Greenshank	200	290	476	489	410	307
Uncommon total	859	1835	2890	2769	2114	1697
Scarce total	159	284	334	467	581	919
Vagrant total	7	18	34	37	18	27

Totals for the past six decades of the average counts for the uncommon, scarce and vagrant species

While preparing this paper I have received much help, including details of old records, from several local birders, and especially Keith Vinicombe, for which I am most grateful.

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Birding during the Second World War

Harvey Rose

With much general discussion at the moment about both of the twentieth century's world wars, it is worth noting that not everything was doom and gloom, amongst other hopeful signs some birding was possible. Very little was recorded during the first war, but a Bird Report was produced for each year during the second, and so in memory of those times I will summarise the records of 70 years ago, for

1943. The 1943 Report, published by the BNS, was seven pages long, and it is worth noting that only 13 birders submitted records. A total of some 50 species was discussed but it should be noted that as usual in those days the common and abundant species were not mentioned. Using the species names and taxonomic order current at that time the following are some of the more notable reports.

HOODED CROW One was seen at Bathford in December, it was only the fourth 20th century record.

CROSSBILL Up to 13 were present at BL in late January/early February.

CIRL BUNTING Three pairs nested at Uphill or Hutton and there were records from six other sites.

TREE-SPARROW Reported in both winter periods with 30 near Dyrham late in the year.

WOOD-LARK Two pairs bred near Bleadon in March and April.

GREY WAGTAIL One was noted on 'blitzed' debris in Wine Street, Bristol, in December.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE Two pairs bred; it was noted that, most unusually, much of the nesting material in one nest was feathers but there was a poultry farm nearby.

WAXWING One was seen in Clifton in October, apparently this was the first record for Bristol.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER A nest was seen in a Little Stoke garden in June, it was noted that the male deserted the nest soon after egg-laying, and that this had happened two years previously.

CHIFFCHAFF One was wintering in Fishponds which was thought to be unusual.

PEREGRINE FALCON A pair was present in the Avon Gorge in February.

COMMON BUZZARD Only reported from Brentry with single birds in March and August.

COMMON HERON A Banwell heronry had 25 nests and one at Brockley Combe held 18; it was noted that these were the only heronries that it was possible to visit in 1943.

SCAUP One was at BL in January and February, the first in the area for 20 years.

GOLDENEYE Up to 20 were noted at BL in January.

LONG-TAILED DUCK Unusually, one was also at BL in January and February.

GOOSANDER Five were at BL in March, it was noted that previous records were very few.

SMEW Up to 15 including one adult male were at BL early in the year.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE Two were at BL in January with three here in September and one at BG.

LITTLE GREBE In September there were 25 at BG and 50 at BL.

CURLEW-SANDPIPER Up to three were at Severnside in September.

LITTLE STINT No less than 15 were noted at Severn Beach in September, this was exceptional even then.

TEMMINCK'S STINT One was present at BG for a week in September, only the second record for the area.

WOOD-SANDPIPER One was seen near St. Catherine in August; this was the first record for our area.

COMMON REDSHANK At least 300 were on the R. Axe at Uphill in October.

RINGED PLOVER Of 150 examined at Severn Beach in early October all but four were immature, Dunlin numbers were also high at this site in the autumn.

BLACK TERN There was only a single record in 1943 of one at BL in early September.

WATER-RAIL Two were found dead at BG in the autumn, they had probably struck overhead power lines.

QUAIL Two were noted in the Marshfield area in June.

A *Fregetta* storm-petrel at Severn Beach, a personal account

John Martin

Introduction

A *Fregetta* storm-petrel off Severn Beach on Nov. 25th, 2009 represented the first European record of this genus of storm-petrel. Brief accounts of the occurrence appeared in birding magazines shortly after the sighting and it was finally fully documented in *British Birds* in February 2014. The genus *Fregetta* is currently treated as comprising two species, White-bellied *F. grallaria* and Black-bellied *F. tropica* storm-petrels, both from the southern oceans. Identification to species is complicated by variability and taxonomic uncertainty. This note is based on the *British Birds* paper (the description section being the same), which I co-authored, and my submission to BBRC, but it is a personal account and the opinions expressed here are my own.

Circumstances

Nov. 25th, 2009 was the third consecutive day of strong south westerly winds in the Bristol Channel. These persistent winds had meant that my pre-work seawatching from Severn Beach had produced Leach's Petrels *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* and various other locally interesting seabirds on 23rd and 24th. I arrived at the usual viewpoint, the 'Burger Bar Ramp' at Severn Beach at about 07.55 on 25th, slightly disappointed that the overnight gale had somewhat abated. This sheltered (in these winds) vantage point is close to mean high water mark and faces north towards the corner of the Second Severn Crossing some 700m away. I was soon joined by two birders from Wolverhampton, Allan Gaunt (AG) and Angus Dickie (AD), and then by Richard Greer (RG) and his father Rod (RLG), from Birmingham. They were all hoping to see Leach's Storm-petrel, and were soon rewarded with good views of one, picked up by AG.

At about 08.25 both RLG and AD independently saw a mystery bird flying away from them towards the bridge and respectively alerted RG and AG. I gained the impression they were watching something and after looking in the same general direction was amazed when I got on a storm-petrel with an obvious white belly. I shouted to make sure everyone was on the bird: they were and all of us watched a storm-petrel with a big white belly and white patches on the underwing now passing back down channel in front of us, at perhaps 500 metres range at the closest point and heading slowly into the wind. We called out features and discussed its appearance. We had good views for a few minutes after which it began to head obliquely away towards the middle of the channel, eventually disappearing from view beyond the marker buoys in the deep water channel at least three km away. Initial thoughts that it might be a partial albino of a regular British species were quickly dismissed because of

the bird's distinctive flight and shape – unlike any European species of storm-petrel.

As it became more distant I made a few phone calls to get the news out, while keeping it in view in my scope, although by now just its amazing flight action and basic plumage elements were visible. I called Mashuq Ahmed (MA) of Birdline SW and apparently told him we had a mad storm-petrel in view that I couldn't identify. AG had seen presumed White-bellied Storm-petrel in the S Atlantic and from his knowledge and discussions on the phone with MA and Brian Small we narrowed the identification down to either this or Black-bellied. A little while later Gary Thoburn arrived with a copy of Onley and Scofield's 'Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the World', which appeared to rule out all other storm-petrels. As fanciful as it seemed, we had just seen a *Fregetta* storm-petrel in the Severn Estuary!

Other birders soon began to arrive including Richard Baatsen, Dave Gibbs (a very well-timed 'on spec' visit for Leach's!), Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancaster, Paul Marshall, Mark Ponsford and Dick Reader. About an hour after the initial sighting RG relocated the bird, this time much more distantly towards the marker buoys in the main channel. It was seen by roughly 15 local birders including those listed above. After a few minutes it was lost to view - probably simply too distant to see. It was flying strongly when last seen and it probably moved off down channel too far away for us to see.

I remained until 12.50, by which time a large crowd had gathered, but sadly they were disappointed as, despite the wind picking up and heavy squalls moving through, it was not seen again.

Description

Size

Although there was no direct comparison with any other species, we did see Leach's Storm-petrels at approximately the same range both shortly before and shortly after the initial sighting. We judged the *Fregetta* petrel to be between Leach's and European *Hydrobates pelagicus* storm-petrels in size, but closer to the former (JPM), or similar to the former, perhaps slightly smaller (AG).

Shape and flight

The *Fregetta* was a medium-sized black-and-white storm-petrel with flight actions and shape very different from either European or Leach's. It seemed rather compact, chunky and fat-bodied. The wings gave the impression of being relatively shorter and broader than the longer, more angled and rather more flexible looking wings of Leach's. The leading

edge was curved and the rear edge straight, which somewhat recalled Wilson's to me, and the wing tip rather pointed. AG noted that the arm was short and appeared to narrow slightly adjacent to the body.

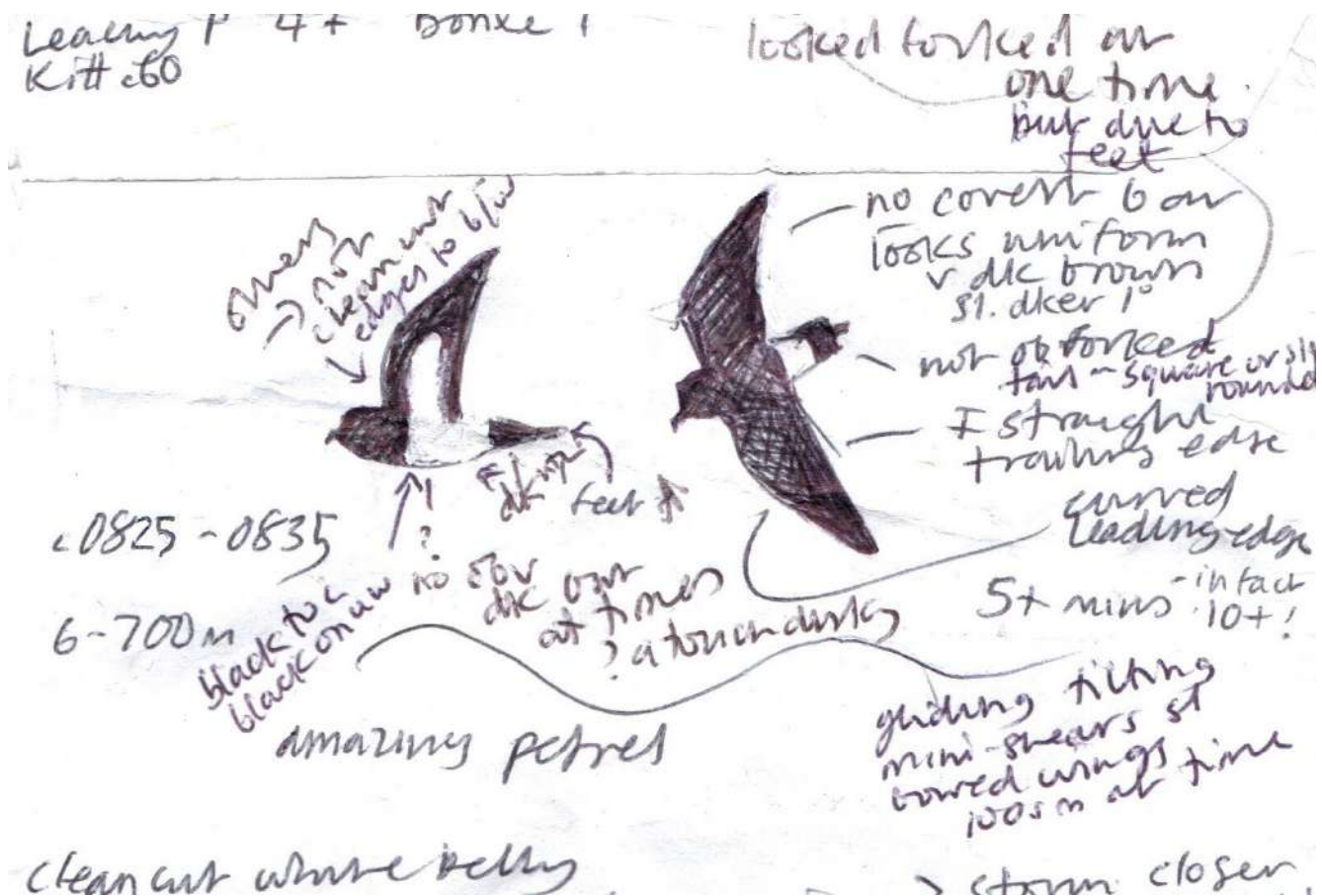
The tail was shorter than that of Leach's (AG), square-ended or slightly rounded when fanned, much like a European. At one point AG wondered if the tail was shallowly forked but after discussing this during observation we concluded that this was probably an artefact of the feet projecting beyond the tail. After further scrutiny we were satisfied that there was some foot projection visible intermittently but we could not quantify it accurately.

The flight was remarkable: gliding and tilting on slightly bowed (JPM), stiff (AG), wings with low banking mini-shears just above the waves, sometimes for long stretches without a wing beat (JPM); twisting and dipping down to the surface and up again, weaving from side to side (AG); zig-zagging, quartering the water with hardly a wing beat like a puppet on strings, keeping low to the water (RG). It did give a couple of bursts of less distinctive flapping flight too, but otherwise it continued with its shearing during most of our period of observation. AG considered that it might have

been feeding, as he thought it appeared to make occasional contact with the water, when it dipped to the surface, and RG saw its feet dangling. All agreed that its course was generally low following the contours of the waves. When it started to go away it was shearing across the wind and kept popping up into view flashing its white belly in the sun then disappearing into the troughs (JPM).

Plumage

Upperparts The upperwing was seen well in good light as it tilted to show alternately its upperside and underside. The upperwing was rather uniform black-brown (AG) or very dark brown (JPM). No pale covert bar/patch was present, while the pale covert patch on Leach's was very obvious at the same distance. There was a slight contrast between the very dark remiges and the subtly paler, dark grey-brown, mantle and coverts. The white rump patch was obvious and similar to that of European Storm-petrel being slightly broader than wide (JPM) or crescent shaped and medium to narrow in width (AG). The tail was contrasting black or black-brown. JPM's sketch made in the field immediately after the first sighting is below.



Field sketch of the *Fregetta* storm-petrel drawn at Severn Beach on the morning of Nov. 25th, 2009

Underparts The underparts were also seen well. The head and upper breast were blackish, not contrasting with the upperparts but forming a hood that contrasted sharply with the unmarked white belly. At one point during the initial observation JPM wondered if there was a hint of dusky shadow in the middle of the breast below the border of the black breast. AG also noted that: 'there was a hint of duskiness about the underparts, which was not visible continuously and which I could not fully resolve'. Despite looking carefully at this area subsequently as the bird tilted and banked to show its underside it continued to look white and we concluded that this suggestion of duskiness here was shadow. The division of black and white on the breast was in line with the division between the black and white on the leading edge of the underwing (RG, JPM). The white belly area was contiguous with the white rump and a large white patch on the underwing. The undertail coverts were black immediately underneath the tail but no further up onto the belly.

The white underwing patch was much more extensive than on any European Storm-petrel, being slightly wider at its base (axillary area), tapering to a blunt point somewhere around the base of the primaries. AG described the underwings as white with a thick black margin forming a dark edge all the way round the wings. JPM had the impression that the black of the leading edge was a touch thicker than that of the trailing edge and drew this in his field sketch. AG and RG described the demarcation between the black and white areas of the underwing as not sharp or slightly diffuse.

Discussion

Ranges and Taxonomy

Black-bellied Storm-petrel has a circumpolar distribution from islands of the Scotia Archipelago, through the southern Indian Ocean to the Antipodes Islands. Outside the breeding season (which is in the Austral summer, from October to April) it migrates north into the subtropical and tropical zones of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, regularly occurring north to the equator. White-bellied Storm-petrel also occurs widely in the southern hemisphere, breeding on islands off Australia and New Zealand; the Austral Islands (French Polynesia) and Juan Fernández Islands, Chile in the Pacific Ocean; Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island (possibly dependant on taxonomy – see below) in the Atlantic Ocean, and Île Saint-Paul (French Southern Territories) in the Indian Ocean (BirdLife International 2012, 1). It also breeds from October to April and Onley & Scofield (2007) suggested it may be largely sedentary, but its non-breeding season movements are poorly understood.

Currently, two races of Black-bellied Storm-petrel are recognised: nominate *tropica* (circumpolar) and *melanoleuca* in the Tristan da Cunha archipelago. Four races of White-bellied Storm-petrel are

recognised including nominate *grallaria* (Tasman Sea), *segethi* (SW Pacific and Juan Fernandez Islands), and two larger forms *titan* (Pacific) and *leucogaster* (Tristan da Cunha, Amsterdam and St Paul) that might represent good species.

The two taxa of *Fregetta* that breed in the Tristan da Cunha archipelago and nearby Gough Island both have white bellies: the *melanoleuca* race of Black-bellied breeds alongside *leucogaster* White-bellied on Inaccessible and probably Gough and Nightingale Islands. They can be separated in the hand but not in the field on current knowledge.

Identification

Of the original five observers only AG had previous experience of the genus *Fregetta*, having seen ten presumed White-bellied Storm-petrels in the South Atlantic between Buenos Aires and the Falkland Islands. Having discussed the sighting with others by phone, and looked through Onley and Schofield on site, we were all happy the Severn Beach bird was a *Fregetta* storm-petrel based on its distinctive plumage, flight, shape and size. Subsequent research strengthened this view but also highlighted the complexities of *Fregetta* identification.

Few of the World's storm-petrels show the combination of a white belly contiguous with the white rump and extensively white underwing, along with otherwise all dark plumage. The recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina maoriana* is perhaps most similar (it is included within *Fregetta* by some taxonomists including IOC), but is smaller with distinct streaking on the mainly white belly. The pale morph of White-throated Storm-petrel *Nesofregetta fuliginosa* is somewhat similar but with a white belly, but has a striking white throat patch and it is larger than *Fregetta* species. White-vented Storm-petrel *Oceanites gracilis* has an extensive pale belly patch, but it is a smaller bird and the underwing is all dark. None of these species seems at all likely to occur in the North Atlantic: New Zealand Storm-petrel frequents the waters around New Zealand with vagrants recently off Eastern Australia at least; White-throated inhabits the tropical Pacific; and White-vented the eastern Pacific from the Galapagos to Chile.

The plumage pattern of our bird fits a *Fregetta* storm-petrel perfectly. The flight pattern matched the evocative description of *Fregetta* petrels' flight in Flood and Fisher (2011) - 'negotiating sea contours like an accomplished windsurfer'. There are no known differences in flight action between the two *Fregetta* species, so this offers no clues to its specific identification. Both *Fregetta* species occur in the South Atlantic and at least Black-bellied is known to move north outside the breeding season, so they are potential vagrants to British waters.

Going beyond *Fregetta* sp. is more difficult than one might think in a genus that currently comprises only

two species. Someone (arriving at Severn Beach too late to see the bird) was overheard to remark: 'you would have thought they would have noticed what colour the belly was' – if only it were that simple! In some ways it is, and if your *Fregetta* has a nice black stripe along the central belly then it must be Black-bellied. If, like our bird, it does not then things are a lot more complicated. It is widely acknowledged that the black belly stripe on a Black-bellied Storm-petrel can be difficult to see in the field, so one possibility must be that it was present on our bird but we failed to notice it. We believe, however, that we would have seen such a stripe had it been present, because of our vantage point close to sea level, because the bird's banking and tilting flight pattern showed both surfaces rather well, and because we did look hard at this area of the bird. There is, however, considerable variation in the strength of this feature within Black-bellied Storm-petrel, with a minority of birds showing poorly marked or broken dark belly stripes or occasionally a white belly (Onley & Scofield 2007, Howell 2012). So a *Fregetta* storm-petrel with a white belly could be a White-bellied, a Black-bellied race *melanoleuca* or an unusually white-bellied nominate Black-bellied!

Howell (2010) reviewed the identification and taxonomy of White-bellied Storm-petrel with particular reference to a record from Cape Verde in 1986 (see below). He noted that various populations of White-bellied Storm-petrel worldwide are quite distinct (and may realistically comprise several species). In particular, Atlantic birds do not necessarily show paler upperparts than Black-bellied and there is complete overlap in the degree of projection of the toes beyond the tail, both previously considered useful features for the separation of the two species. He suggested that the extent of the dark hood is the best feature to separate them. Black-bellied Storm-petrels show a more extensive hood, while it is more restricted on White-bellied Storm-petrel sometimes leading to a 'pin-headed' look (Flood & Fisher 2010, Howell 2012). My field notes and sketches and RG's notes put the division of black and white on the breast in line with that on the leading edge of the underwing, which to me suggests our bird had a fairly extensive hood.

Other North Atlantic records of *Fregetta*

White-bellied Storm-petrel was on the Western Palearctic list for some time based on a sight report made at sea between the Canary and Cape Verde Islands (23.48 N, 22.01 W) on Aug. 17th, 1986 (Haase 1988). This was reviewed by Crochet & Haas (2008) who relegated it to *Fregetta* sp., although Howell (2010) showed that some of the criteria they used do not work with Atlantic *Fregetta* populations and suggested the original identification as White-bellied Storm Petrel, in the conventional sense, should be upheld.

Subsequently the Western Palearctic's first three confirmed Black-bellied Storm-petrel records have been made, two photographed on pelagic trips in

2011 and another in 2012. The first was on Aug. 8th, 2011, approximately 15 nautical miles northeast of Madeira (Correia-Fagundes & Romano 2011); the next only a month later on Sept. 10th was 43 miles northeast of Lanzarote, Canary Islands (Lopez-Velasco & Sagardia 2011) and the third on Aug. 18th, 2012 was in almost the same spot, Banco de la Concepcion, 45 miles NE of Lanzarote. The last was well photographed and had an incomplete belly stripe.

Elsewhere in the North Atlantic, four more Black-bellied Storm-petrels have been photographed during pelagic excursions off North Carolina, USA, on May 31st, 2004, July 16th, 2006, June 27th, 2007 and Aug. 14th, 2010.

Finally, and in terms of the date potentially of most relevance to the Avon bird there was a strong claim of a *Fregetta* sp. off Sheringham, Norfolk, on Dec. 10th, 2007, which was found 'not proven' by BBRC.

Conclusions

Any black-and-white storm-petrel with white underparts in British waters has to be something special, with Black-bellied or White-bellied storm-petrels the best bet, once partial albinos have been ruled out. Given the identification and taxonomic complexities of the genus it might not be easy to go beyond this if your bird does not show a dark belly stripe, though all proven North Atlantic records so far involve photographed Black-bellied Storm-petrels. The late date of our bird, and of the bird claimed off Norfolk, suggest that more seawatching effort in winter might at least occasionally be worthwhile.

Having subsequently studied many photographs and much video footage of *Fregettas*, I am resigned to the fact that our bird must remain unidentified to species. It might have been one of the white-bellied forms from either Gough Island or the Tristan da Cunha group of islands such as that shown in plate S19a5 in Howell (2012). These are currently considered to include both Black-bellied *F. tropica melanoleuca* and White-bellied *F. grallaria leucogaster*, which are inseparable at sea on current knowledge. The possibility of a Black-bellied (in the conventional sense) with a particularly poorly marked belly is, however, hard to exclude and perhaps seems more likely in the context of the other North Atlantic records. Indeed Martin Collinson's comments on behalf of BOURC on the *British Birds* paper notes that: 'the first North American record of Black-bellied Storm-petrel was observed down to 30m from a boat off Cape Hatteras by multiple observers, all of whom failed to see clearly the strong belly line which is readily apparent in the video and photographs'. The best we can hope for is that further records follow, and a pattern of occurrence emerges that provides further clues to the identification of this amazing bird.

I agree with Howell (2010) who suggested that future claims of 'White-bellied Storm-petrel' in the North Atlantic will benefit from good photographs or in-hand examination. I hope the next one is seen and well photographed on a pelagic trip, and that its appearance matches the Severn Beach bird!

Acknowledgements

Steve Howell kindly commented on early drafts of the *British Birds* paper and of course I must acknowledge the considerable input to that paper of the co-authors and *British Birds* Editor Roger Riddington.

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Bonaparte's Gull – New to the Avon Area

Keith Vinicombe

The last three BTO gull roost counts at CVL, in 1983, 1993 and 2004, came up with totals of 43,200, 59,000 and 58,500 respectively, of which 28,800, 36,350 and 29,800 were Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*. Given these huge totals, it has always been a source of amazement that the lake has never produced a record of a Bonaparte's Gull *C. philadelphia*. Of course, the problem is obvious: that of picking out a Bonaparte's from the overwhelming numbers of Black-headed, particularly in the indifferent light and poor weather that we often have to endure whilst 'doing the roost count'. Another factor is that British Bonaparte's records tend to peak in spring, as vagrants that have crossed the Atlantic further south move north. This has led to speculation that we might actually stand a better chance of finding one in spring, a time of year when a lot of first-year Black-headed Gulls feed at the lake on the newly emerging insects, often joined by small numbers of Little Gulls *Hydrocoloeus minutus*. At long last, on Saturday April 27th, 2013, this prediction came true.

At about 14.00hrs, I was walking out to Nunnery Point when I raised my binoculars to scan the lake. I noticed what appeared to be an Arctic Tern flying north off the far shore, nearly a kilometre away. However, almost straight away it stalled, dropped and landed on the water. I was somewhat nonplussed by this behaviour as I had no recollection of seeing an Arctic Tern do this previously. I continued to the Nunnery Hide and started scanning the lake through my 25-60x telescope. After about ten minutes, I suddenly had a thought: white underwing - narrow black trailing edge to the primaries - landing on the water? Could it have been a Bonaparte's Gull?! I immediately started scrutinising the Black-headed Gulls that were feeding in the area where the bird had landed, but there was nothing untoward. A little later Chris Stone appeared and, almost as an afterthought, I recounted the Arctic/Bonaparte's story, adding that I was probably talking rubbish.

There must have been fifty to a hundred first-year Black-headed Gulls spread right across the southern half of the lake, feeding on the newly emerging insects, and I continued to scan through them - just in case. After about ten minutes I suddenly had a huge adrenaline rush: feeding low over the water about 500m to the south of the hide was an adult Bonaparte's Gull in full summer plumage! Chris was soon onto it and we watched it for several minutes

before losing it. We eventually picked it up again, feeding off Moreton Hide, about 700m to the south of where we were sitting. After further distant views, we decided to drive round to Moreton as it would clearly be closer from there and also the light would be better. This proved to be the case and we continued to watch it from there until 17.00hrs, but it never came closer than about 300m. After a number of phone calls, about 20 to 30 people came out to see this long overdue first for Avon.

Description

It was superficially similar to an adult Black-headed Gull but the main differences were as follows:

- Distinctly smaller – maybe seven-eighths the size.
- Head distinctly rounded when on the water.
- Underwings appeared pure white except for obvious clear-cut thick black tips to the primaries, and pale grey shading on the inner primaries and secondaries, usually quite noticeable.
- Jet black hood, extending further down the nape.
- Narrow but noticeable white eye-ring.
- Slim and completely black bill.
- Bright reddish-orange legs, often surprisingly obvious as it took flight.

It fed by picking insects off the water or by hawking them over the surface, but it also fed like a Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, foot paddling on the water with the wings held slightly bowed. Owing to the distant views, it was not possible to obtain good quality photographs, but some record shots are reproduced opposite page 136.

There was an odd twist to this story: as we left Nunnery Point to move to Moreton, I glanced out of the hide and was amazed to see three Arctic Terns sitting on the water, not far off shore. So I still do not know for certain whether my initial sighting really did involve the Bonaparte's Gull or an Arctic Tern; if it was the latter, then it was certainly a strange coincidence! Whatever the answer, the discovery of this individual was extremely satisfying: having found the lake's first Ring-billed Gull (1980), Laughing Gull (2006) and Franklin's Gull (2008), I now had the set!

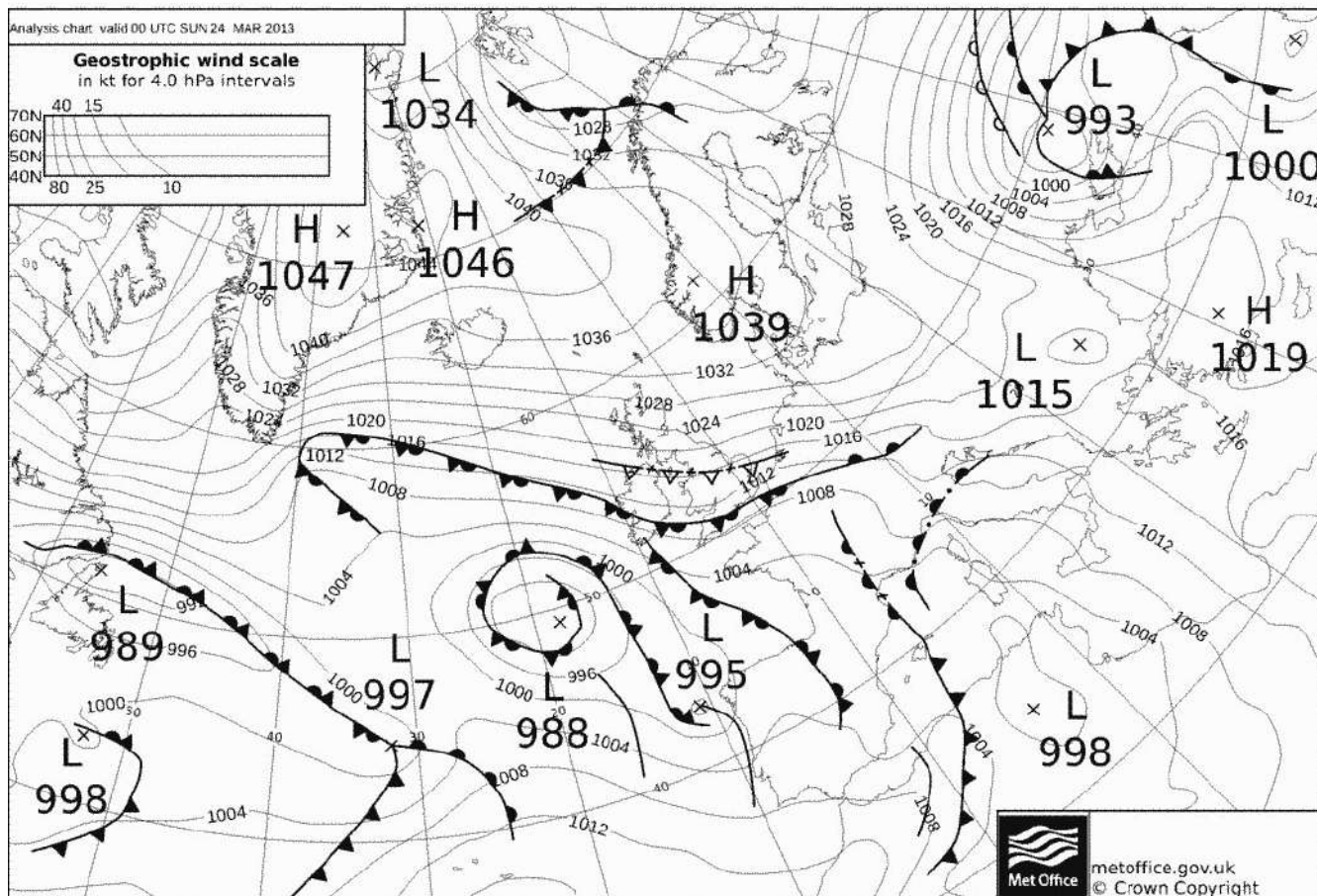
Ospreys at Blagdon Lake in Spring 2013

Nigel Milbourne

Unusual weather conditions in the Midlands, leading up to the Easter 2013 holiday, brought an unprecedented influx of Ospreys to Blagdon Lake (BL).

The pressure chart below for March 24th shows a weakening, high level, cold front lying across the Midlands, and an occluded front lying across the south of England. The occluded front indicated

where the cold front had caught up with the preceding warm front forcing a mass of cold air, moving north to south, towards the ground. This weather pattern stayed in place for four days until 28th, and the cold, sinking air, appears to have produced unfavourable migration conditions for Ospreys, and probably many other species, heading north.



During previous research, I had found 31 documented Osprey records at BL to the end of 2012, plus one for May 1936 given by H. H. Davis in his 'A Revised List of the Birds of the Bristol District' published in August 1948 (subsequently omitted from his later list), and one on March 27th, 2003 (*per* Chris Chapman) reported on the Somerset Ornithological Society website. I have had other sightings reported to me in discussions with anglers, some of which referred to raptors diving into the water, so undoubtedly Ospreys, but precise details were lacking.

Historically, Ospreys declined in Britain until a last breeding attempt was made in 1916, whereupon they became scarce passage migrants until their 're-colonisation' of Scotland in 1954, although Roy Dennis considers that they bred occasionally during the intervening years. Since then, Ospreys have

been re-introduced at Rutland Water, East Midlands in 1996, colonised Glaslyn, Snowdonia, and Welshpool in mid-Wales during 2004, and colonised Northumberland in 2009. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we should have seen a marked upturn in records at BL in recent years, albeit of passage birds, see Appendix on page 164.

The 2013 records

As events unfolded in spring 2013, it quickly became apparent that a record passage was occurring at the lake. On March 22nd I met Pete Taylor who had just driven over from CVL where he had seen an Osprey fly in, from the direction of BL at 14.30. The weather turned colder on 23rd, with a raw north-easterly wind, and it was no surprise when I heard gulls calling excitedly over Bell's Bush to see an Osprey flying over at a height of about 30m. I noted the time

as 14.05. It was still hanging around at 15.05, occasionally diving for fish, unsuccessfully. At the time, I suggested this might have been the individual seen at CVL during the previous day, but that bird flew in a northerly direction towards Woodford Bank watched by Pete, so it may have moved on.

On March 24th, Mike Wilson told me he had dug his car out of a foot of snow before making the trip south from Birmingham to the Bristol reservoirs, where he saw two Ospreys at 11.30 over Green Lawn. The daytime temperature had dropped below zero by now, and on the 25th a few snow flurries blew in over the lake. Simon Isgar watched an Osprey over the dam end at 07.00 and by the time I arrived at 10.00 there were two together sheltering from the piercing wind, low in a bush at The Island. At around midday, I watched another come in high over the Mendips and drop down to the lake where, an hour later, three were hunting off the east end of Green Lawn, a trout stocked area of the lake. Allan Chard and I took some photos of the birds and we managed to read the darvic ring on the right leg of one as 'white YA', which meant it was ringed in either England or Wales. Roy Dennis kindly put me in touch with Emyr Evans at Glaslyn who had ringed this male as a chick on June 19th, 2007. As the sun dropped below the Mendip Hills late in the afternoon and the gull roost gathered, an Osprey flew in over the dam, which I lost sight of in the melee. Then, a few minutes later, either the same bird or possibly another, flew in from the west over the dam causing more consternation among the gull roost. I kept my eyes on this one and watched it fly low towards West Town, where it may have dropped into some trees to roost.

The temperature crept above freezing on the 26th, but the wind-chill factor meant it felt much colder. Simon Isgar reported two or three Ospreys shortly after dawn, and later in the morning there were still two at BL (one of which was 'white YA') with another at CVL (*per* R. Mielcarek and K.E. Vinicombe). During the afternoon one caught a fish off Green Lawn and flew towards Holt Farm where, later on, I photographed a Scottish bird, with an ochre ring, fly down and pick a fish up from a field next to the lake. I could not read the ring but suspect it was the individual roosting at The Island the previous day marked 'white YA'.

On the 27th we had some early morning sunshine before snow flurries set in again during the afternoon. By now, we were witnessing regular low flights along the length of the dam wall, with the Ospreys perching in trees at eye level behind the dam. This attracted lots of birders, locals and holidaymakers who had great views of these magnificent birds through telescopes set up behind the roadside hedge. The Scottish ochre-ringed individual was seen a number of times during the day, but frustratingly it did not give up its identity.

The 28th brought some lovely sunny spells, but it remained cold, and Blagdon resident Dr Mike O'Connor emailed to say he had seen two Ospreys

at 07.45 showing very well at the Pumping Station, one of which was almost certainly 'white YA'. Simon Mackie also got some nice flight shots of the other bird, now identified as 'ochre Z|T', when it flew over the crowd gathered on the dam. Roy Dennis sent me the following information about this individual: "This is an old female - ringed either in 1998 or 1999 by Keith Brockie in Perthshire/Tayside." Keith subsequently contacted me and wrote "This was ringed as a chick 1311981, ochre Z bar T left colour ring, ex brood 3/3, 9th July 1998, at ... Bridge of Cally, Perthshire. Subsequently she has only been seen once visiting an eyrie ... near Dundee, on 24th April 2002."

The story took a new twist that evening when Joanna Dailey emailed from Northumberland to say that she and the Osprey Watch team at Kielder Water in Northumberland had been looking at our pictures and suspected that 'white YA' was probably one that had bred there in 2012.

On Good Friday, the 29th, Karle Burford saw one at the dam early morning and shortly afterwards Simon Isgar saw two. Then, at 11.30 fisheries warden, John Harris, called me to say an Osprey had got under the netting over the compensation channel behind the dam where trout are held before release into the lake. Dave Nevitt and I were on the dam, and luckily he had his ringing gear with him which thankfully included a pair of thick leather gauntlets. We went down and caught 'white YA' and Dave gave him a thorough examination which showed he was very thin with a prominent breast bone. We released him immediately in the Pumping Station grounds. The female 'ochre Z|T' flew overhead while we were carrying out the rescue.

On the morning of March 30th, Ray Bradley and a host of other watchers saw both 'white YA' and 'ochre Z|T' around Butcombe Bay before 'white YA' flew off east along the lake. The female stayed around the dam end of the lake all day, and at dusk both were back in the Pumping Station grounds when a third bird flew in, while a fourth with an ochre/yellow ring was sitting in a tree on the North Shore.

On Easter Sunday, March 31st, I was at the lake with Simon Isgar at 07.00 but we did not see any Ospreys until 08.00 when one flew west up the lake and perched in the Pumping Station grounds. Then we realised there was another bird in the same tree. Both appeared to be females, one of which was ochre 'Z|T' who sat around for a long time. I last saw her at about 10.35 flying behind the trees on Butcombe Bank. In the afternoon, 'white YA' came flying up the lake from Top End at 14.20 and spent some time around the Pumping Station and hunting over the lake. Then, just as I popped home to get some bat equipment at 16.00, Ray Bradley rang to say that 'white YA' had gone under the nets over the compensation channel again. I mobilised the fisheries team, and Dave Nevitt came out to help capture him for the second time. We were going to try and drive him down to the end of the channel

after pulling back the nets, so that he could fly out without having to be handled, but he had other ideas. We caught him after a couple of attempts and released him after Dave had given him a quick check over. He had eaten a whole one kilogram trout while we rolled into action, and Dave said he had more fat on him this time. On release he flew off over the dam looking a bit dishevelled. I was not able to stay after that, but Mike Jenkins let me know there was an Osprey still around until dusk.

It was perishingly cold on the morning of April 1st and only Ian White stuck it out in the hope of getting some pictures. He managed a few shots of a bird that flew over him couple of times, he sent me some which clearly showed a green ring and so it was likely to be the one I photographed later the same afternoon. I saw an Osprey perched in the sheltered side of Holt Copse at lunchtime that I kept quiet about, so that it did not get disturbed; it was looking tired and kept closing its eyes. Unfortunately, it had its back to me so I could not identify it. Things livened up at 16.10 when a new Osprey turned up at the Pumping Station with a green ring on the left leg and BTO ring on the right leg (Scottish origin). I tried very hard to read them through the scope in the windy conditions but failed dismally. At 16.35 we saw another over Holt Bay which the green-ringed individual flew towards. At 16.45 one flew back towards us carrying a large fish, then flew away over the dam and was lost to view. Later, at 17.10 'white YA' flew in to the Pumping Station grounds you can guess the rest! BL ringer Warwick White came to the rescue and we released him from the nets again at around 18.00, within a few minutes, but he did not get the bonus of a free meal this time. So, today April 1st, we had 'white YA' and a new bird.

Melanie Patch emailed on Tuesday April 2nd to tell me that the green-ringed bird was back at the Pumping Station this morning at 07.20 and it flew off along the south shore of the lake hunting at 07.50. I did a stint from 10.00 to 12.45 during which time I saw two Ospreys at 10.30, one of which flew off west. The other appeared to be hanging around; it was hunting at 11.00, and at 12.00 did a circuit of the lake, flew over the Pumping Station and landed on The Island for about ten minutes, before flying back towards Top End at 12.30. I was not able to identify either bird. When I got back to the lake in the afternoon, I had missed one fly-over by an unidentified individual heading east at about 14.00. Then we had a long wait until Simon Isgar spotted a bird at 18.15 back at the dam. It turned out to be 'white YA' who then hung around the Pumping Station until 20.05 before disappearing behind the building. Gareth Jones emailed to say 'white YA' was at CVL at 13.00 this afternoon, which would explain why we did not see him at BL during the day. While we were keeping an eye on him, another Osprey sneaked into the trees at Spinney Point. It sat there until 19.45 before doing a bit of fishing along the south shore, it then flew back to the dam and headed off in the same direction that the green-ringed bird had yesterday, so I am assuming it was the same again. Lauren Tucker posted a picture of

an Osprey that caught a trout at CVL around 16.00; I did not recognise it and as far as I could see it had no rings. I am wondering now if this was the bird that flew high to the east over BL at around 14.00. Lauren said it flew off east from Herriott's Pool where it caught a Brown Trout.

On Wednesday April 3rd 'white YA' was at the Pumping Station early morning before flying east towards Top End (and, perhaps, on to CVL where one was reported at Herriott's at 09.30 by Simon Isgar) and another flew around the lake at around 09.00. During the afternoon I saw an unidentified Osprey (probably 'white YA' with a missing tail feather) circle around the lake between 15.50 and 16.05, and then head back to Top End. I did not see any Ospreys back at the lake this evening between 19.00 and 20.05.

Friday 5th April [Sunny and windy, but less cold] I had a chat with Andy and Tom of the fisheries team, Andy said he had seen an Osprey hovering at Top End at about 07.45. I spent the afternoon by the lake and on my walk back from the entrance gate I spotted what I felt sure was an Osprey over the dam end at about 16.50 'spooking' the gulls. I mentioned this to a birder I met near Home Bay and had a look around from the dam. About ten minutes later I spotted an Osprey hunting in the lee of the Indian Country pine belt, so I drove back along to Top End to see if it had perched up, but I could not find it again. The other birder had seen it at Home Bay Point just after I had mentioned it to him.

Although there may have been two Ospreys (*per* Don Smith) still at CVL on the previous day, we know that one of them was not ringed, so unless the other was 'white YA', perhaps he had set off for Northumberland at last.

On Sunday April 7th [Overcast with sunny spells and a cold SSE wind] 'white YA' touched down at Kielder Water in the afternoon at his nest site! Joanna Dailey emailed: "White YA landed at 2.18pm! He had a wander round his nest, a bit of a shake, said hello to the female who has been around a couple of days and then went off."

This morning, on the way down to the lake, I saw an amazing 'kettle' of Buzzards *Buteo buteo* over the village. I jumped out of the car and counted 16 before I had to move for a car coming up the hill. Warwick White, who was working in his garden, rang me and said he was watching 17 Buzzards overhead too. So I drove along to Rainbow Point to get a better, and wider, viewpoint and during the half an hour between 11.30 and 12.00, at least 30 Buzzards climbed high over the village and went into an easterly glide towards CVL. I assume they were all migrants held up by the extraordinary weather conditions of the last two weeks as well.

So, just how many Ospreys visited the lake during this period? I have been fairly conservative with my estimate, but I reckon there were certainly no fewer than nine different individuals, if we include one

seen on April 8th, but there may have been as many as 14 with a few that just dropped in before pressing on northward, regardless of the adverse headwind. It was a marvellous experience to have witnessed the birds overcoming such adversity, in their drive to be first home to their nest sites, and it produced a spectacle the like of which we probably will not see again for some time to come, unless moves to attract these charismatic birds to breed at the Bristol reservoirs come to fruition. The interest in the Ospreys was pretty phenomenal; I estimated that at least 300 birders visited, and lots of members of the public stopped and had the chance to see their first Ospreys up close and personal through the telescopes we set up on the dam.

I would like to thank Bristol Water fisheries team for their cooperation, all my correspondents for

reporting their sightings, Paul Bowyer for help with weather information, Dave Nevitt and Warwick White for aiding with the rescue of 'white YA', Roy Dennis for his help with ringing data, and Osprey workers Emyr Evans, Keith Brockie and Joanna Dailey for the extra information that helped me put this amazing event into print.

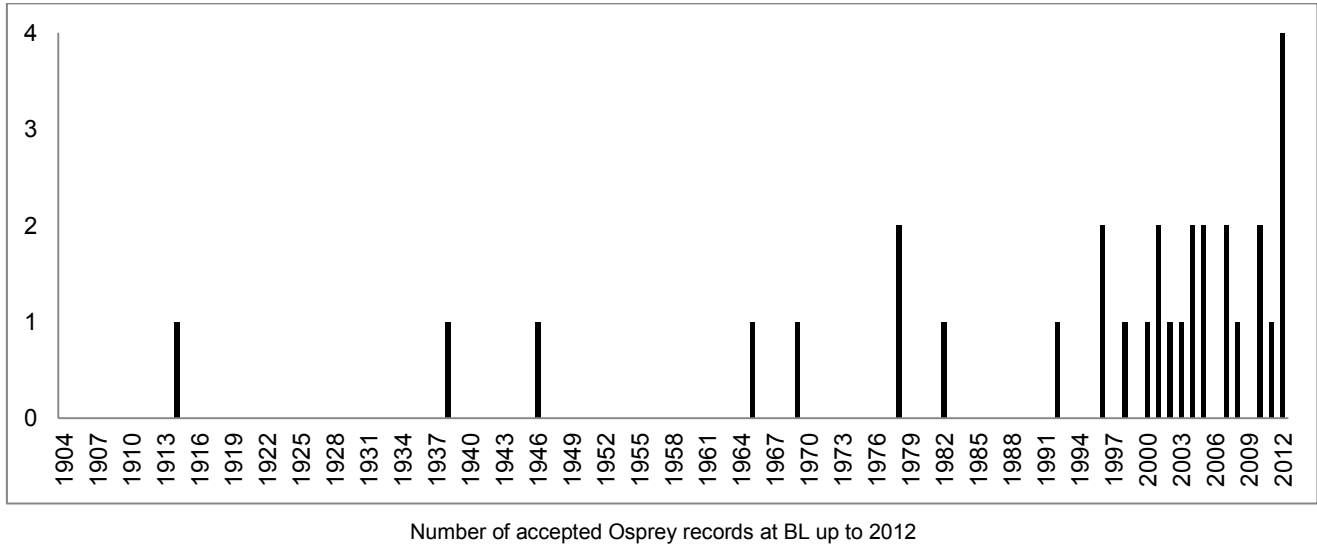
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Wetterzentrale website:
<http://www.wetterzentrale.de/topkarten/tkfaxbraar.htm>

Appendix – Summary of BL data since its opening in 1904



A remarkable skua passage at Chew Valley Lake

Keith Vinicombe

At 10.05 on Sept. 26th I was birding at Twycross, CVL, when I noticed five Bonxies (Great Skuas) *Stercorarius skua* circling over the lake. I watched them for five to ten minutes before they vanished. One of them had a noticeably damaged tail, with quite a deep fork. Conditions were classic for a skua movement: misty with very low cloud, light rain and an easterly wind.

I drove around to Woodford Lodge but, despite a thorough scan of the lake, there was no further sign of them. However, at 11.05, an hour after the original sighting, I picked up another five Bonxies circling high over Stratford Bay but, after about five minutes, they too vanished. At 11.30, I picked up another seven circling over the lake at quite close range. I carefully checked to see if they included the individual with the damaged tail, but they all had pristine tails. They vanished after being joined by a dark phase adult Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. There was no further action until 15.15 when another Bonxie appeared, eventually landing on the water at some distance. After I left, a dark phased juvenile Arctic Skua was also seen, followed by two more (dark and intermediate, ages unknown). Totals for the day were 18 Bonxies and four Arctics. Four Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra* were also seen.

The previous day, A H Davis and R Mielcarek had distant views of what was probably a juvenile Long-tailed Skua *S. longicaudus*, flying west across the lake and, two days later (on 28th), RM saw a pale phase adult Pomarine Skua *S. pomarinus*, also flying west (the lake's sixth record).

This was by far the heaviest skua passage ever recorded at CVL. To put it into perspective, until 2012 there had been ten records of Bonxie (12 individuals), 25 records of Arctic Skua (42 individuals), four records of Pomarine (five individuals) and three records of Long-tailed (three individuals). It is well known that skuas migrate overland and it has been suggested that those occurring at CVL are using an overland short cut from the Wash to the Severn Estuary. Figs 1 and 2 show the autumn occurrence patterns of the two commoner species; for more details on the three less common species see the appendix on the next page.

Autumn Arctic Skuas have occurred between Aug. 24th and Oct. 26th with a large peak in September, although outside this period there was a very late juvenile from Dec. 7th to 11th, 2001. There have also been two spring records: two dark phase on May 31st, 1980 and a pale phase on April 20th, 2008. Fourteen records related to single birds, seven to couples and three to parties of three, but the largest flock involved five flying west on Sept. 21st, 2003 (two dark phased adults and three dark phased juveniles). All have flown straight through apart from single juveniles on Oct. 6th and 7th, 1988 and Dec. 7th to 11th, 2011. Previous Bonxie records have fallen in the period Sept. 4th to Oct. 17th, with the exception of one found dead on Nov. 28th in 1981 and another on July 13th in 1998, which roosted at the lake overnight. Of the 74% of autumn skuas that were aged, 74% were adults and 26% were juveniles.

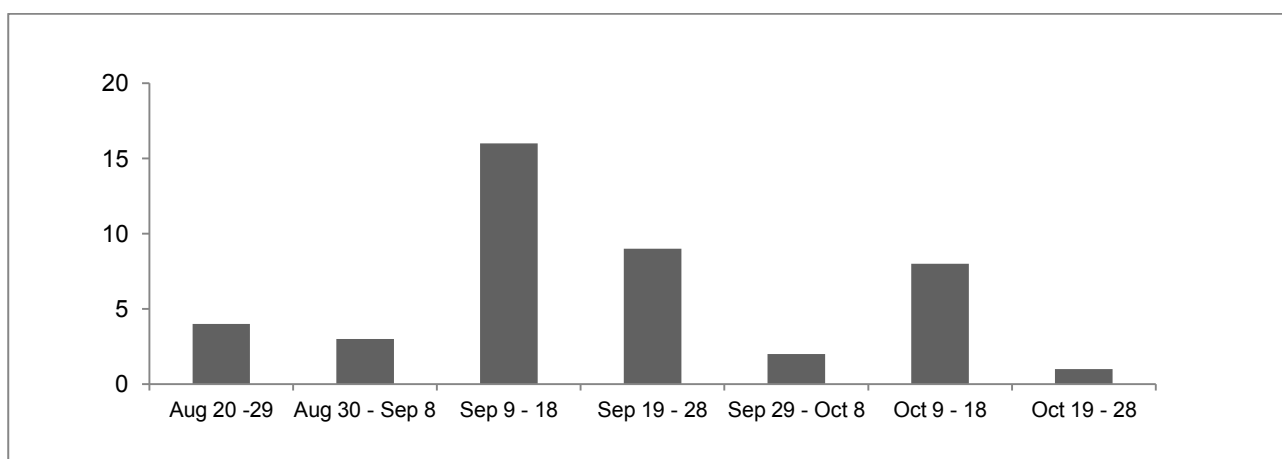


Fig 1 Occurrence patterns of autumn Arctic Skuas at Chew Valley Lake, 1963 to 2013 (records in ten day periods).

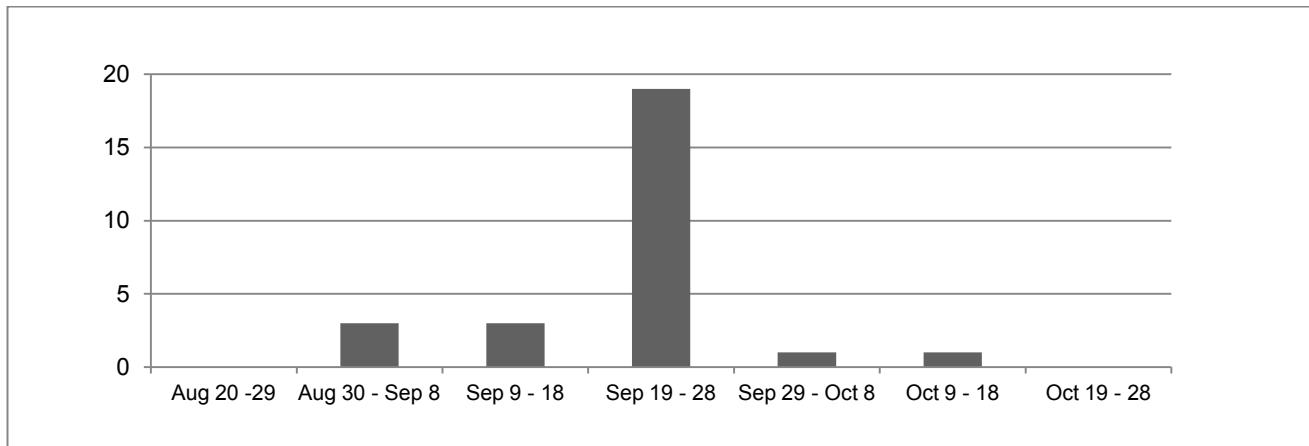


Fig 2 Occurrence patterns of autumn Bonxies (Great Skua) at CVL, 1969-2013 (records in ten-day periods)

Appendix Records of Great, Pomarine, Long-tailed and unidentified skuas at CVL, 1969-2013.

Pomarine Skua

1999: two juveniles flew west over Statford Bay at 15.20 on Dec. 4th;
 2009: adult (pale phase), Nov. 22nd; second-winter, 29th to Dec. 7th;
 2012: adult, May 12th and 13th;
 2013: adult (pale phase), Sept. 28th, eventually flew off west.

Long-tailed Skua

1976: pale phase adult, June 19th;
 1991: juvenile, Sept. 6th to 17th;
 1999: juvenile, Aug. 24th.

There is also a record for August 1982 which now can only be considered as probable because some vital features were not recorded.

Bonxie (Great Skua)

1969: one, Sept. 13th and 14th;
 1977: two, Sept. 16th, left to SW;
 1981: one found dead, Nov. 28th;
 1982: one, Oct. 16th and 17th;
 1983: two to NE, Sept. 4th; one on 5th;
 1984: one, Sept. 27th;
 1998: one, July 13th roosted at lake;
 2005: one, Sept. 30th; another, Oct. 14th;
 2013: 18, Sept. 26th.

Unidentified skuas

1990: Oct. 31st;
 2004: Nov. 2nd;
 2012: Jan. 2nd, either Arctic or Pomarine, most probably the latter on date;
 2013: Sept. 25th, probably Long-tailed.



Avon Ringing Report, 2013

M. Bailey and E. Drewitt

The year in question, 2013, was particularly interesting as a result of the unusual prevailing weather conditions and the previous year's breeding failures. The low productivity experienced by many species in 2012 had a knock on effect into the 2013 breeding season. In comparison with the previous five years the Constant Effort Site (CES) figures published by the BTO recorded lower than average numbers for many breeding birds. This is given in Table 1 where all but Wren, Blackbird, Song Thrush and Goldfinch show a significant fall in adult abundance. This, coupled with the coldest spring since 1962 and a very wet and windy May, led to another poor breeding season. Amongst the passerines it was the early and single brooded species, especially the tits, that were particularly affected.

It is therefore no surprise that for a second year running the numbers ringed in the UK, c. 940,000, failed to reach the record 1.1 million achieved in 2011. The Avon totals, too, were below the previous four-year average and would have been even lower but for three large catches of Swallows coming in to roost at CVL. These jumped Swallow up to first place in the top twenty (Table 2). Although there was some jockeying for position most of the remaining top twenty species were unchanged. Goldcrest and Bullfinch dropped out of the list to be replaced by Whitethroat and Moorhen.

Of the 6215 birds ringed in Avon, CVL accounted for 3835 (62%), Portbury Warth NR 1338 (22%) and the others 1042 (16%). There were 174 recoveries of ringed birds listed by the BTO for Avon in 2013. These exclude local finds within five km and for Mute Swan, Canada Goose and all gulls this threshold is 40km. Most of the recoveries, 146 (84%), as usual came from Peter Rock's long-term colour-ringing study of urban gulls. Colour ringing/tagging also aided some interesting sightings

of Osprey and Black-headed Gull. However, pride of place goes to the Scandinavian Rock Pipit at Portishead where the colour ringed combination on its legs traced it to a Norwegian origin.

The 38 birds ringed as part of Mark Dadds' study of Water Rail at CVL were highlighted on the BTO ringing totals as these represented more than 25% of the national total.

The ringing group at the Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve is well-placed to pick up both spring and autumn movement. Its position on the Estuary allows birds heading north to Wales, Scotland and beyond to drop in during poor weather or before they cross the Severn. With Whitethroat coming from Lancashire and Willow Warbler from the Highlands it is possible to imagine the routes these birds are taking. Other recoveries included Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest and also, rather unusually, a Great Tit which was recovered on Bardsey Island. However, as both the age and sex disagreed between the original ringing and the recovery, we wondered if ring number had been misread.

Barn Owls and Tawny Owls had a very poor breeding season related to the weather and low numbers of voles. On the other hand the number of Peregrines ringed was only just below average and, while some individuals have not been identified, colour-ringed individuals from the 2013 season have since been spotted in Suffolk, Staffordshire and the Wye Valley. One juvenile ringed in Hallen was found shot near Keynsham and despite some rehabilitation it has not recovered enough to be released. However, all other young fledged successfully including three from Castlemead Tower, near Cabot Circus. This was the first time Peregrines have nested on this particular building – the tallest in Bristol – and they made use of an old Raven's nest.

2013 adult abundance vs 5yr average	(%)
Migrants	
Chiffchaff	-20
Willow Warbler	-23
Blackcap	-20
Garden Warbler	-26
Lesser Whitethroat	-34
Whitethroat	-20
Sedge Warbler	-9
Reed Warbler	-8
Resident tits	
Blue Tit	-11
Great Tit	-21
Long-tailed Tit	-25

2013 adult abundance vs 5yr average	(%)
Other residents	
Cetti's Warbler*	-11
Treecreeper*	-19
Wren	6
Blackbird	-1
Song Thrush	5
Robin	-9
Dunnock	-11
Chaffinch	-14
Greenfinch	-17
Goldfinch	-1
Bullfinch	-21
Reed Bunting	-18

Table 1 - Adult abundance for 23 common breeding songbirds from the national CES scheme (published by the BTO).

Species Top Twenty Totals

Table 2 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2013 (2012 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing totals between 2012 and 2013, Note that some year-to-year changes were definitely affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and/or catching opportunities.

Pos.	Species	2012	%	Pos.	Species	2012	%
1(6)	Swallow	954	+346	11(8)	Robin	154	-13
2(5)	Reed Warbler	788	+84	12(12)	Wren	146	-1
3(1)	Blue Tit	545	-23	13(7)	Long-tailed Tit	138	-29
4(2)	Blackcap	512	-13	14(11)	Blackbird	125	-23
5(4)	Chiffchaff	428	-6	15(14)	Dunnock	106	-20
6(3)	Great Tit	331	-39	16(15)	Chaffinch	105	-20
7(9)	Greenfinch	223	+27	17(18)	Reed Bunting	98	+13
8(17)	Sedge Warbler	212	+121	18(16)	Lesser Black-backed Gull	97	-25
9(10)	Willow Warbler	175	+2	19(25)	Whitethroat	83	+57
10(13)	Goldfinch	165	+13	20(23)	Moorhen	79	+75

Table 2 - The top twenty

Notable Recoveries received from the BTO since the publication of the 2012 Report

The records below in Table 3 are included 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 lines of each entry gives details of the original ringing, subsequent lines provide details of the recovery, including the distance travelled, direction and elapsed time from the original ringing date.

Mute Swan

Ring number	ZY5414	
Adult Male	23-07-2011	Abbotsbury Swannery (Dorset)
Alive (predated)	24-01-2013	Currypool, Bridgwater (Somerset) 65km NNW 1y 6m 1d
Caught by ringer	02-02-2013	CVL 75km N 1y 6m 10d

Canada Goose

Ring number	5243610	
Adult	28-06-2005	CVL
Alive (ring read in field)	31-10-2013	Slimbridge (Gloucestershire) 50km NNE 8y 4m 3d
Ring number	5262191	
Adult	28-06-2011	CVL
Freshly dead (shot)	29-09-2013	Heaton Hall Marsh (Lancashire) 301km N 2y 3m 1d
Ring number	5239928	
Adult Female	09-07-2013	CVL
Freshly dead (shot)	02-09-2013	Bideford: 51°1'N 4°12'W (Devon) 116km WSW 0y 1m 24d

Cormorant

Ring number	5258023	
Nestling	27-05-2012	St Margaret's Island (Dyfed)
Dead (on wire or netting)	26-01-2013	River Avon, Bath 166km ESE 0y 7m 30d

Goshawk

Ring number	GR11626	
Nestling Male	07-06-2013	Site Confidential (Gwent)
Freshly dead	13-07-2013	Portishead 25km S 0y 1m 6d

Osprey

Ring number	1311981	
Nestling	09-07-1998	Bridge of Cally: (Tayside)
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-03-2013	BL 591km S 14y 8m 19d
Ring number	1311981	
Nestling	09-07-1998	Bridge of Cally: (Tayside)
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-03-2013	BL 591km S 14y 8m 19d
Ring number	1408626	
Nestling	19-06-2007	Ynys Fer-Las, Afon Glaslyn (Gwynedd)
Alive (in net or cage)	23-03-2013	BL 206km SSE 5y 9m 4d

Kestrel

Ring number	EX74996	
Nestling	03-06-2012	Dewshill (Strathclyde)
Freshly dead (hit by car)	03-03-2013	Radford, near Timsbury 512km S 0y 9m 0d

Ring number	EX63527	
Nestling	07-06-2012	Rossall School: c. 53°54'N 3°3'W (Lancashire)
Freshly dead (in building)	17-03-2013	Felton 281km S 0y 9m 10d
Ring number	EY11713	
Nestling	29-06-2013	Keynsham
Freshly dead	25-11-2013	Le Fort, Ravenoville (Manche) France 229km SSE 0y 4m 27d

Peregrine

Ring number	GC46072	
Nestling Male	07-06-2013	Site Confidential, near Black Rock Quarry
Sick (disease)	24-06-2013	Portishead, near Bristol 2km 0y 0m 17d
Ring number	GC46073	
First-year Female	02-07-2013	Site Confidential, near Avonmouth Docks
Sick (hit by car)	07-08-2013	Keynsham 18km NE 0y 1m 5d

Dunlin

Ring number	BX20632	
First-year	26-09-1973	Spurn Point (Humberside)
Caught by ringer	04-03-1979	Sand Bay 321km SW 5y 5m 6d

Black-headed Gull

Ring number	EP80958	
Adult	20-02-2010	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)
Freshly dead (injury)	13-10-2013	Whitchurch, Bristol 213km W 3y 7m 23d
Ring number	FS63724	FRP
Nestling	13-06-2007	Le Platier, Oye-Plage, (Pas-de-Calais) France
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-03-2010	Shortwood 318km WNW 2y 8m 22d
Ring number	FS63728	FRP
Nestling	13-06-2007	Le Platier, Oye-Plage (Pas-de-Calais) France
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-11-2007	Shortwood 318km WNW 0y 5m 9d
Ring number	FS63730	FRP
Nestling	13-06-2007	Le Platier, Oye-Plage (Pas-de-Calais) France
Alive (colour rings seen)	21-12-2010	Shortwood 318km WNW 3y 6m 8d
Ring number	FS63734	FRP
Nestling	13-06-2007	Le Platier, Oye-Plage (Pas-de-Calais) France
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-11-2010	Shortwood 318km WNW 3y 4m 21d
Ring number	IA144918	DEH
Adult Female	17-05-2013	Riether Werder (Neubrandenburg) Germany
Alive (ring read in field)	25-10-2013	near Thornbury 1,155km W 0y 5m 8d
Ring number	FN34883	PLG
Nestling	01-06-2011	J Rybno Male, Kiszukowo (Konin) Poland
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-01-2013	Thornbury Water Works 1,357km W 1y 7m 14d

Lesser Black-backed Gull

The following birds were among the oldest reported in 2013:

Ring number	GH67124	
Nestling	04-07-1989	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	30-08-1989	Throckmorton Tip (Hereford & Worcester) 85km NNE 0y 1m 26d
Alive (colour rings seen)	24-10-2013	Merida (Badajoz) Spain 1,421km SSW 24y 3m 20d
Ring number	GH67122	
Nestling	04-07-1989	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	03-08-1991	Throckmorton Tip (Hereford & Worcester) 85km NNE 2y 0m 30d
Alive (colour marks seen)	12-08-1991	Marais D'olonne (Vendee) France 547km S 2y 1m 8d
Alive (colour marks seen)	29-03-1995	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempstead 49km NNE 5y 8m 25d
Alive (colour marks seen)	28-04-2003	Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) 69km NNE 13y 9m 24d
Alive (colour marks seen)	08-03-2005	Stoke Orchard, Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) 65km NNE 15y 8m 4d
Alive (colour marks seen)	06-03-2006	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempstead 48km NNE 16y 8m 2d
Alive (colour marks seen)	31-12-2008	Motril (Granada) Spain 1,639km S 19y 5m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-08-2013	Caleta de Velez (Malaga) Spain 1,638km S 24y 1m 24d
Ring number	GF40648	
Nestling	25-06-1994	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	24-07-2003	Calne Sand Pits (Wiltshire) 42km E 9y 0m 29d
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-10-2012	Quarteira (Algarve) Portugal 1,657km SSW 18y 3m 9d
Alive (colour rings seen)	18-09-2013	Quarteira (Algarve) Portugal 1,657km SSW 19y 2m 24d
Ring number	GF40502	
Nestling	19-06-1994	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	15-01-2005	Barbate (Cadiz) Spain 1,717km S 10y 6m 27d
Alive (colour marks seen)	30-11-2005	Barbate (Cadiz) Spain 1,715km S 11y 5m 11d
Alive (colour marks seen)	19-09-2008	Quarteira (Algarve) Portugal 1,657km SSW 14y 3m 0d
Alive (colour marks seen)	16-12-2008	Barbate (Cadiz) Spain 1,715km S 14y 5m 27d
Alive (colour marks seen)	26-08-2010	Faro (Airport) (Algarve) Portugal 1,659km SSW 16y 2m 7d
Alive (colour marks seen)	15-09-2011	L'eree (Guernsey) Channel Islands 223km S 17y 2m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	09-01-2013	la Duquesa (Malaga) Spain 1,693km S 18y 6m 21d

Ring number	GF52358	
Nestling	05-07-1996	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	11-11-1997	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted (Glos) 47km NNE 1y 4m 6d
Alive (colour marks seen)	31-01-2002	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted (Glos) 47km NNE 5y 6m 26d
Alive (colour marks seen)	07-11-2003	Belvide Reservoir (Staffordshire) 140km N 7y 4m 2d
Alive (colour marks seen)	10-12-2009	Gloucester (Gloucestershire) 51km NNE 13y 5m 5d
Alive (colour marks seen)	27-03-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted (Glos) 48km NNE 14y 8m 22d
Alive (colour rings seen)	24-01-2013	Horsehay Pool (Shropshire) 136km N 16y 6m 19d

The following birds moved the greatest distance within Britain & Ireland (more than 100km):

Ring number	GF57192	
Second-year	19-03-2013	Milton Landfill Site (Cambridgeshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	02-04-2013	Great Livermere (Suffolk) 43km E 0y 0m 14d
Alive (colour rings seen)	29-05-2013	Bristol 208km WSW 0y 2m 10d (Map)
Ring number	GN21265	
Nestling	01-07-2000	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	16-06-2003	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 2y 11m 15d
Alive (colour marks seen)	21-07-2003	near Little Marlow (Buckinghamshire) 128km E 3y 0m 20d
Alive (colour marks seen)	12-10-2006	Matosinho, Portugal 1,233km SSW 6y 3m 11d
Ring number	GC13192	
Nestling	26-06-2006	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	08-11-2007	Figueira da Foz, Portugal 1,346km SSW 1y 4m 13d
Ring number	GN21265	
Nestling	01-07-2000	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	04-01-2010	Malaga, Spain 1,644km S 9y 6m 3d
Alive (colour marks seen)	25-03-2010	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 9y 8m 24d
Ring number	GC13192	
Nestling	26-06-2006	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	07-06-2010	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 3y 11m 12d
Ring number	GC13326	
Nestling	11-07-2006	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	31-12-2010	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 4y 5m 20d
Ring number	GN21265	
Nestling	01-07-2000	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	30-03-2011	Chouet Landfill (Guernsey) Channel Islands 217km S 10y 8m 29d
Ring number	GC48361	
Nestling	13-07-2009	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	12-04-2011	Pinto (Madrid) Spain 1,248km S 1y 8m 30d
Ring number	GC13192	
Nestling	26-06-2006	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	09-11-2011	Figueira da Foz, Portugal 1,346km SSW 5y 4m 14d
Ring number	GC48361	
Nestling	13-07-2009	Bristol
Alive (colour rings seen)	12-06-2013	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 3y 10m 30d
Ring number	GR19125	
Nestling	15/07/2010	Bath
Alive (colour rings seen)	05-07-2013	Lixhe (Liege) Belgium 566km E 2y 11m 20d
Ring number	E15417	
Second-year Male	25-05-2009	Rue du Closel (Guernsey) Channel Islands
Alive (colour marks seen)	24-06-2009	Gloucester Landfill 262km N 0y 0m 30d
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-10-2010	BL 205km N 1y 4m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site 262km N 2y 1m 20d
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-08-2011	CVL 204km N 2y 2m 14d
Ring number	D4750	
Nestling	10-07-2009	Burhou (Alderney) Channel Islands
Alive (colour rings seen)	18-03-2012	CVL 182km N 2y 8m 8d

Herring Gull

Ring number	GF40896	
Nestling	24-06-1995	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	02-02-1996	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 49km NNE 0y 7m 9d
Caught by ringer	26-11-2005	near Hempsted, Gloucester 50km NNE 10y 5m 2d
Alive (colour marks seen)	20-12-2005	Stanton Harcourt (Oxfordshire) 88km ENE 10y 5m 26d
Alive (colour marks seen)	30-08-2009	BG 8km SW 14y 2m 6d
Alive (colour rings seen)	29-08-2013	Northway, Viridor Transfer Station 8km N 18y 2m 5d
Ring number	GN44954	
Adult	13-03-2004	near Wingmore Farm, Stoke Orchard
Alive (colour rings seen)	23-10-2013	Oldbury Power Station 46km SW 9y 7m 10d
Ring number	GN31585	
Nestling	21-06-2001	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	20-01-2009	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 7y 6m 30d
Alive (colour marks seen)	04-01-2011	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 9y 6m 14d
Alive (colour marks seen)	23-03-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 9y 9m 2d

The following birds moved the greatest distance within Britain & Ireland (more than 100km):

Ring number	GC13357	
Nestling	21-06-2007	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	15-09-2008	Lodmoor, Weymouth (Dorset) 92km S 1y 2m 25d
Ring number	GN31585	
Nestling	21-06-2001	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	20-01-2009	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 7y 6m 30d
Ring number	GC13357	
Nestling	21-06-2007	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	11-12-2009	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 2y 5m 20d
Ring number	GC48340	
Nestling	08-07-2009	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	05-04-2010	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 0y 8m 28d
Ring number	GN31585	
Nestling	21-06-2001	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	04-01-2011	Beddington Sewage Works (Greater London) 169km E 9y 6m 14d
Alive (colour marks seen)	23-03-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 9y 9m 2d (Map)
Ring number	GC48340	
Nestling	08-07-2009	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	21-07-2011	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted 48km NNE 2y 0m 13d
Ring number	GR62683	
Nestling	26-06-2013	Bristol
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-11-2013	Albion Landfill, Norris Hill (Leicestershire) 163km NNE 0y 5m 2d
Ring number	GR19495	
Nestling	29-06-2012	Bristol
Alive (colour marks seen)	14-03-2013	Albion Landfill, Norris Hill (Leicestershire) 162km NNE 0y 8m 13d

The following bird was found abroad and reported in 2013

Ring number	GR19202	
Nestling	24-06-2011	Bath
Alive (colour marks seen)	05-10-2011	Upton Warren (Hereford & Worcester) 104km N 0y 3m 11d
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-02-2012	Throckmorton, Pershore (Hereford & Worcester) 87km NNE 0y 7m 10d
Alive (colour rings seen)	18-01-2013	Chouet Landfill (Guernsey) Channel Islands 210km S 1y 6m 25d

Woodpigeon

Ring number	FP13886	
Adult	06-05-2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead
Freshly dead (shot)	27-09-2013	Wickwar 27km ENE 0y 4m 21d

Barn Owl

Ring number	GC74903	
Nestling	23-07-2008	Charterhouse (Somerset)
Sick	09-04-2013	Winford 12km N 4y 8m 17d
Ring number	GC70364	
Nestling Male	14-07-2009	Harepath Farm, near Burbage
Freshly dead (injury)	28-04-2013	Stoke Gifford 63km WNW 3y 9m 14d

Goldcrest

Ring number	ENL307	
Full-grown Male	19-04-2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead
Caught by ringer	17-11-2013	Dukes Warren (Surrey) 170km ESE 0y 6m 29d
Ring number	ECX880	
Adult Male	08-12-2012	CVL
Caught by ringer	18-10-2013	New Farm, Besford (Hereford & Worcester) 95km NNE 0y 10m 10d

Great Tit

Ring number	Y134942	
First-year	24-03-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead
Caught by ringer	20-04-2013	Bardsey Island (Gwynedd) 199km NW 1y 0m 27d

Cetti's Warbler

Ring number	Y697405	
Full-grown	21-10-2012	CVL
Caught by ringer	28-11-2013	Betley Mere, Betley (Staffordshire) 190km N 1y 1m 7d

Chiffchaff

Ring number	EKX125	
Juvenile	01-07-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead
Caught by ringer	25-03-2013	Nanjizal, Land's End (Cornwall) 262km SW 0y 8m 24d
Ring number	DXY891	
Full-grown	09-10-2012	Hilbre Island, Wirral (Merseyside)
Freshly dead (cat)	09-04-2013	Clevedon 219km S 0y 6m 0d

Willow Warbler

Ring number	8L6364	
Juvenile	02-08-2013	Castle Stuart, Newton, near Balloch (Highland Region)
Caught by ringer	25-08-2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead 677km S 0y 0m 23d

Blackcap

Ring number	D135093	
Juvenile	07-07-2013	CVL
Freshly dead (cat)	31-08-2013	King's Lynn (Norfolk) 264km NE 0y 1m 24d
Ring number	D179278	
Full-grown Male	21-04-2013	Portland Bill (Dorset)
Caught by ringer	22-04-2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead 110km N 0y 0m 1d
Ring number	Y696724	
Adult Female	09-06-2012	CVL
Freshly dead (cat)	28-04-2013	Nailsea 16km NW 0y 10m 19d
Ring number	Y512772	
First-year Male	18-09-2012	Longham Lakes (Dorset)
Caught by ringer	22-04-2013	Cam Valley, Cameley 77km NW 0y 7m 4d

Whitethroat

Ring number	D551224	
First-year	27-08-2013	Middleton Nature Reserve (Lancashire)
Caught by ringer	22-09-2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead 282km S 0y 0m 26d

Sedge Warbler

Ring number	Y776207	
First-year	30-07-2012	Cauldwell Hall Farm, Hollesley (Suffolk)
Caught by ringer	26-04-2013	CVL 293km WSW 0y 8m 27y
Ring number	6902477	
First-year	10-08-2012	Tour Aux Moutons, Donges (Loire-Atlantique) France
Caught by ringer	21-04-2013	CVL 447km n 0y 8m 11d

Reed Warbler

Ring number	L059848	
Nestling	17-06-2011	CVL
Caught by ringer	10-08-2013	Pett Level (Sussex) 235km ESE 2y 1m 24d
Ring number	L590229	
First-year	02-08-2011	Titchfield Haven, Hill Head, Fareham (Hampshire)
Caught by ringer	16-06-2013	CVL 112km WNW 1y 10m 14d
Ring number	L059704	
Nestling	31-05-2011	CVL
Caught by ringer	16-08-2011	Conchemarche, (Charente-Maritime) France 663km S 0y 2m 16d
Ring number	D135247	
Nestling	21-06-2013	CVL
Caught by ringer	24-08-2013	Lavos, Figuera da Foz Portugal 1,338km SSW 0y 2m 3d
Ring number	L059703	
Nestling	31-05-2011	CVL
Caught by ringer	11-08-2011	Salburua, Vitoria-Gasteiz (Alava) Spain 941km S 0y 2m 11d

Wren

Ring number	DHB233	
First-year	02-10-2010	Waterhay, Ashton Keynes (Wiltshire)
Freshly dead (cold weather)	21-02-2013	Yate 38km WSW 2y 4m 19d

Pied/White Wagtail

Ring number	Y358779	
First-year Female	15-09-2012	Slapton Ley (Devon)
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-04-2013	CVL 137km NNE 0y 6m 29d

Rock Pipit

Ring number	8E25640	
Full-grown Male	18-09-2013	Makkevika, Giske (More og Romsdal) Norway
Alive (colour rings seen)	09-12-2013	Battery Point, Portishead 1,334km SSW 0y 2m 21d

Lesser Redpoll

Ring number	Y103557	
First-year	14-10-2011	Walton in Gordano: c. 51°27'N 2°49'W (Avon)
Caught by ringer	19-04-2013	Llangynidr: 51°52'N 3°14'W (Powys) 55km NNW 1y 6m 5d

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2009-2013

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2009 to 2013 are given in Table 4 below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the period 2009-2012 in the last column. (Note. This table is based on up-dated figures provided by the BTO, there are a few, small, changes to the species and year totals compared with those that appeared in the previous Reports from 2009 to 2012).

Species	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	4 Yr Av.
Mute Swan	2	0	1	2	0	1.3
Canada Goose	162	94	144	0	63	100.0
Teal	0	0	15	10	10	6.3
Mallard	3	19	17	22	18	15.3
Garganey	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Tufted Duck	0	1	0	0	2	0.3
Grey Heron	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Manx Shearwater	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Sparrowhawk	1	2	4	7	2	3.5
Buzzard	0	0	0	3	1	0.8
Peregrine	3	13	17	13	12	13.8
Kestrel	0	20	30	28	35	19.5
Water Rail	2	0	0	29	38	7.8
Moorhen	6	13	26	59	79	26.0
Coot	4	11	5	5	2	6.3
Oystercatcher	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Ringed Plover	0	13	2	9	0	6.0
Green Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Lesser Black-backed Gull	91	144	103	129	97	116.8
Herring Gull	21	31	33	61	49	36.5
Stock Dove	0	0	2	1	1	0.8
Wood Pigeon	3	5	6	12	3	6.5
Collared Dove	0	0	1	1	2	0.5
Barn Owl	9	34	38	43	12	31.0
Little Owl	0	5	1	0	0	1.5
Tawny Owl	0	4	15	12	3	7.8
Nightjar	0	2	0	0	2	0.5
Swift	2	0	0	8	0	2.5
Kingfisher	21	15	5	8	13	12.3
Wryneck	0	1	0	1	1	0.5
Green Woodpecker	1	0	2	3	5	1.5
Great Spotted Woodpecker	14	11	15	21	10	15.3
Magpie	1	3	3	11	8	4.5
Jay	4	2	3	6	3	3.8
Jackdaw	0	1	4	0	6	1.3
Carrion Crow	0	0	0	1	2	0.3
Raven	3	2	3	0	0	2.0
Goldcrest	3	23	99	67	19	48.0
Blue Tit	811	822	983	709	545	831.3
Great Tit	710	562	694	545	331	627.8
Coal Tit	54	42	84	63	23	60.8
Marsh Tit	3	3	1	0	0	1.8
Sand Martin	76	258	192	6	13	133.0
Swallow	242	384	314	214	954	288.5
House Martin	65	3	1	13	3	20.5
Cetti's Warbler	68	41	19	24	21	38.0
Long-tailed Tit	146	131	177	195	138	162.3
Yellow-browed Warbler	0	1	1	0	0	0.5
Chiffchaff	435	466	755	454	428	527.5
Willow Warbler	86	101	140	172	175	124.8
Blackcap	426	514	916	591	512	611.8
Garden Warbler	54	50	42	53	42	49.8
Lesser Whitethroat	16	6	17	19	35	14.5
Whitethroat	21	29	43	53	83	36.5
Grasshopper Warbler	1	10	12	5	9	7.0
Sedge Warbler	253	301	545	96	212	298.8
Reed Warbler	1,090	1,182	1,440	428	788	1035.0

Nuthatch	5	4	11	23	11	10.8
Treecreeper	14	41	32	19	12	26.5
Wren	110	115	154	147	146	131.5
Starling	25	27	145	7	56	51.0
Blackbird	77	145	111	162	125	123.8
Fieldfare	2	4	9	10	5	6.3
Song Thrush	42	33	31	57	47	40.8
Redwing	14	28	16	6	2	16.0
Mistle Thrush	0	0	1	5	0	1.5
Spotted Flycatcher	0	1	1	2	1	1.0
Robin	146	128	167	178	154	154.8
Nightingale	0	0	1	0	1	0.3
Pied Flycatcher	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Redstart	0	1	0	12	5	3.3
Whinchat	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Wheatear	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Dunnock	91	118	139	133	106	120.3
House Sparrow	5	56	22	38	42	30.3
Yellow Wagtail	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Grey Wagtail	1	1	0	1	2	0.8
Pied Wagtail	0	48	7	21	6	19.0
Tree Pipit	0	1	0	0	1	0.3
Meadow Pipit	3	0	0	15	4	4.5
Water Pipit	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Chaffinch	183	175	93	131	105	145.5
Brambling	0	3	25	2	0	7.5
Greenfinch	300	203	157	176	223	209.0
Goldfinch	226	160	148	146	165	170.0
Siskin	55	0	3	25	51	20.8
Linnet	0	0	1	47	8	12.0
Redpoll (Lesser / Common)	6	6	132	36	4	45.0
Bullfinch	58	117	95	66	33	84.0
Yellowhammer	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Reed Bunting	86	105	88	87	98	91.5
TOTAL	6,360	6,898	8,566	5,766	6227	6901.2

Table 4 – Ringing totals, 2009 to 2013

The Breeding Bird Survey in the Avon Region, 2013

Dave Stoddard

Introduction

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is organised on a national basis by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). It is the main scheme for monitoring the population trends of the UK's common breeding birds, and provides an important indicator of the health of the nation's avifauna. The survey is organised on a regional basis and the BTO Avon Region includes the four unitary authority areas that formerly constituted the county of Avon, namely Bath & North East Somerset, City of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (except for the most northerly part near Oldbury), together with an area of Somerset (c.330 sq. km) that covers much of the Mendips and the areas around Cheddar and Bleadon. The BBS was first established in 1994 and from the outset we have also conducted a local survey within the Avon area using the same methods but in a simplified form. This has enabled us, in particular, to obtain better coverage in the urban areas of the region but it extends throughout the region and provides a good understanding of the fortunes of our local bird populations. The results of the national and local schemes are combined here.

Method

The survey is conducted by birdwatchers capable of recognising all species likely to be encountered by

both sight and sound. In 2013 a total of 110 observers participated in the survey, many of them members of either BOC, BNS or BTO (or even all three!). The survey consists of visits to one kilometre squares that have been randomly selected by the BTO, or are self-selected by the observer in the case of the local survey. Two recording visits are made to each square, one before the middle of May and one before the end of June at least four weeks later, making two transects each of one-kilometre across the square recording all birds seen or heard.

Results

A total of 204 squares, including 113 for the national BTO scheme, was surveyed which was the third highest total since the survey began in 1994. This was tantalisingly just behind the second highest, 205 squares that were surveyed in 2007, and a significant increase on the 186 squares surveyed in 2012. The improved coverage included a welcome increase in the squares on the Mendips. Surveyed squares are spread reasonably evenly across the region although with some concentration in Bristol (see Table 1 below). Overall about 13% of the Avon area was surveyed which gives a good measure of the varying fortunes of the breeding birds of the region.

Unitary Authority	Number of squares surveyed	Percentage of UA area surveyed	Number of birds recorded	Percentage of total recorded
Bath & NE Somerset	39	11.1	11679	18.1
North Somerset	52	15.3	11399	17.7
South Gloucestershire	45	10.3	16844	26.1
City of Bristol	40	35.4	13363	20.7
Somerset (BTO Avon)	28	8.4	11187	17.4
	204		64472	100

Table 1 - Unitary authority data

Table 2, see overleaf, lists all species recorded in the survey in 2013 and gives the numbers counted and the percentage change since last year for those species where more than 200 birds were counted (but excluding species like Whimbrel that only occur as migrants in the region). It also includes species that were recorded in more than 20 squares. The 'change figure' (Column 3) is based on the 163 squares that were each surveyed by the same observer in both 2012 and 2013, this is the so-called 'like for like' basis that is also used by the BTO. The percentage change over the period from 2003 to 2013 is also given (Column 4) as an indicator of the medium term trend. This figure is calculated cumulatively year by year on the same 'like-for-like'

basis. The number of squares in which each species was recorded in 2013 is also shown together with the percentage of the area surveyed which these squares represent (Columns 5 and 6).

In order to provide some context, the most recent national BBS change figures (for the period 1995-2011) for England (as opposed to the UK) are also included (Column 7). These show the longer term trend for England as a whole for all recorded species for which a trend is calculated. They were taken from Table 3 in 'Trends in England', by Risely, K. *et al.* (2013). *The Breeding Bird Survey 2012*, BTO Research Report 645, BTO, Thetford. Some species are, of course, normally only recorded as migrants in our area although they may breed elsewhere in the

country. Wheatear is an example, but even this species has, on a few occasions, bred in our part of the Mendips.

The one-year figures should of course be treated with a degree of caution, particularly where samples are relatively small. Also the survey does not deal well with some species, for instance most water birds and the owls. Also, because of the large number of non-breeders involved, the gull figures

are not a reliable indication of breeding numbers. However, differences of more than 5% are likely to reflect a genuine change, particularly for the more widely recorded species such as some pigeons, corvids, tits and thrushes. The period 2003-13 is a reasonable one to show developing trends (for example the collapse of Greenfinch population) and a reasonably consistent number of squares was surveyed during the period, 190 in 2004 and an average of 194 per year during the period.

Species	Number counted in 2013	Percentage change 2012 - 13	Percentage change 2003 - 13	Distribution in the area surveyed in 2013		BTO/BBS trends in England 1995 – 2011 Percentage change
				Percentage of squares surveyed	Number of squares in which recorded	
Mute Swan	206	-22	-9	14.2	29	11
Greylag	10			0.5	1	248
Canada Goose	178	245	197	9.8	20	42
Shelduck	189			5.4	11	25
Mandarin Duck	3			1.0	2	
Gadwall	13			1.5	3	82
Mallard	981	1	-31	46.6	95	29
Pochard	1			0.5	1	
Tufted Duck	49			2.5	5	33
Red-legged Partridge	55			6.9	14	20
Pheasant	640	4	-6	54.4	111	33
Cormorant	41	0	-63	11.3	23	16
Little Egret	11			3.9	8	
Grey Heron	95	0	-21	23.5	48	-15
Little Grebe	3			1.0	2	-4
Great Crested Grebe	13			2.0	4	-8
Red Kite	3			1.5	3	11260
Sparrowhawk	41	59	-9	12.3	25	-4
Buzzard	214	-13	-12	50.0	102	167
Kestrel	45	-26	-57	16.2	33	-15
Peregrine	9			3.4	7	
Moorhen	132	11	31	21.1	43	-10
Coot	91			8.3	17	25
Oystercatcher	32			3.4	7	47
Grey Plover	3			0.5	1	
Lapwing	12			2.5	5	-24
Ringed Plover	10			0.5	1	
Whimbrel	98			2.0	4	
Curlew	17			2.0	4	-39
Dunlin	4			0.5	1	
Common Sandpiper	2			1.0	2	
Redshank	2			0.5	1	-32
Woodcock	1			0.5	1	
Black-headed Gull	35			1.5	3	
Common Gull	5			1.0	2	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1913	-4	-20	69.6	142	
Herring Gull	2131	27	131	65.2	133	
Great Black-backed Gull	3			1.0	2	
Feral Pigeon	1148	6	-9	39.2	80	-23
Stock Dove	147	-10	-8	27.5	56	9
Wood Pigeon	6627	-11	11	100.0	204	46
Collared Dove	886	-5	-10	68.6	140	18
Cuckoo	3			1.5	3	-65
Barn Owl	1			0.5	1	285
Little Owl	2			1.0	2	-42
Tawny Owl	4			1.5	3	-10
Swift	801	-8	-48	42.6	87	-39
Kingfisher	10			2.9	6	-33

Green Woodpecker	202	-6	6	48.5	99	49
Great Spotted Woodpecker	199	-1.0	40	46.6	95	117
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1			0.5	1	
Magpie	1729	-3	-4	96.1	196	-1
Jay	172	14	-13	37.7	77	7
Jackdaw	4241	-13	6	86.8	177	53
Rook	2427	3	-15	37.7	77	-10
Carrion Crow	4427	-2	14	98.0	200	20
Raven	87	14	381	19.6	40	-9
Goldcrest	106	-46	-62	23.0	47	15
Blue Tit	2204	-2	-14	96.6	197	6
Great Tit	1639	-8	-5	96.1	196	38
Coal Tit	137	-12	-39	22.5	46	29
Marsh Tit	10			3.4	7	-26
Skylark	605	-23	-33	41.2	84	-23
Sand Martin	84			2.5	5	11
Swallow	1521	-37	-16	67.6	138	43
House Martin	502	-33	-43	32.8	67	-17
Cetti's Warbler	9			2.0	4	
Long-tailed Tit	237	-29	-42	46.1	94	24
Chiffchaff	975	-28	-29	83.8	171	90
Willow Warbler	135	-14	-53	21.6	44	-29
Blackcap	1033	-18	45	85.3	174	108
Garden Warbler	26			8.3	17	-21
Lesser Whitethroat	38			12.3	25	
Whitethroat	453	0	14	52.5	107	38
Sedge Warbler	73			6.9	14	1
Reed Warbler	172	-1	169	13.4	23	30
Nuthatch	117	20	99	21.1	43	92
Treecreeper	37	-18	20	12.7	26	1
Wren	3025	-9	-17	97.5	199	-2
Starling	2021	-9	-53	58.3	119	-58
Dipper	5			1.0	2	
Blackbird	4929	-7	-5	99.5	203	19
Fieldfare	70			2.5	5	
Song Thrush	845	-12	-16	84.3	172	12
Redwing	5			1.5	3	
Mistle Thrush	75	-2	-47	21.1	43	-38
Spotted Flycatcher	7			2.0	4	-56
Robin	2669	-1	11	97.1	198	13
Nightingale	1			0.5	1	-42
Pied Flycatcher	5			1.5	3	
Redstart	5			2.5	5	12
Whinchat	1			0.5	1	-48
Stonechat	9			2.5	5	7
Wheatear	42			8.8	18	17
Dunnock	1124	-13	-20	92.2	188	17
House Sparrow	3574	-11	5	69.1	141	-12
Yellow Wagtail	4			1.0	2	-45
Grey Wagtail	20			5.4	11	-19
Pied Wagtail	128	-13	-30	29.4	60	-15
Tree Pipit	13			2.0	4	-45
Meadow Pipit	70	-24		6.9	14	-14
Rock Pipit	2			0.5	1	
Chaffinch	1977	-9	-36	94.6	193	12
Greenfinch	842	-5	-62	77.9	159	-15
Goldfinch	1558	-6	64	85.8	175	100
Siskin	8			2.5	5	96
Linnet	413	-34	-54	32.8	67	-19
Lesser Redpoll	1			0.5	1	14
Bullfinch	115	-35	-38	27.0	55	-3
Yellowhammer	269	-11	-5	23.0	47	2
Reed Bunting	96	42	49	12.3	25	0
Corn Bunting	26			3.9	8	11

Table 2 - 2013 data, comparisons with the last decade and UK comparisons since 1995

It should be noted that the record for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker above is for the Somerset section of the BTO Avon region. It is also evident from the results above that many species had a difficult time in 2013 and, indeed, the overall 'birds per hour' rate observed in the survey this year was down to 117 from 133 in 2012. This is the lowest rate since the survey began (121 in 1994 being the closest). It was the coldest spring since 1996, starting with an extremely cold March, and the persistent cold easterly and north-easterly winds meant that the arrival of many migrants was delayed.

Early indications are that many of the resident species, such as Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Blue Tit and Great Tit, also delayed breeding for several weeks, and then with reduced productivity. Chiffchaff, a classic early migrant, showed a fall of 28% compared with 2012, and indeed all of the migrant warblers experienced decreases compared

with 2012, the only exception being Whitethroat which showed no significant change. Willow Warbler continued its downward trend (-14% since 2012) and of course outside the Mendip breeding area many recorded will have been migrants. Swallows (-37%) and House Martin (-33%) were also badly affected. Skylark (-23%) and Linnet (-34%), both species of open cultivated land, experienced sharp falls possibly showing poor winter survival. Goldcrest (-46%) and Long-tailed Tit (-29%) appear also to have been badly hit.

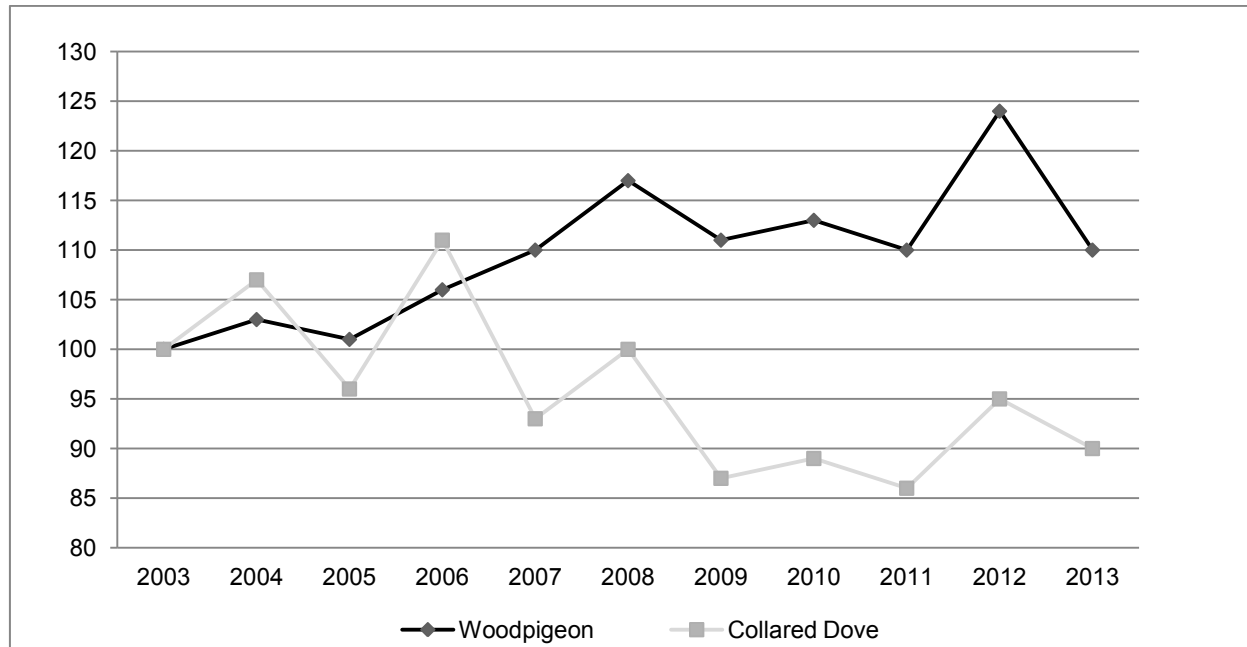
The summer was, by contrast, much better than the recent average and may have given some species the opportunity to catch up in the breeding cycle, but even then the sustained hot and dry conditions may have been disadvantageous to, among others, the thrushes.

Some specific examples of species trends

Woodpigeon and Collared Dove 2003-2013

The first graph below shows the contrasting fortunes of Woodpigeon and Collared Dove over the past ten years. After a rapid and sustained period of expansion over the previous fifty years the Collared Dove has shown a slow decline during the past decade of about ten per cent within the region. This

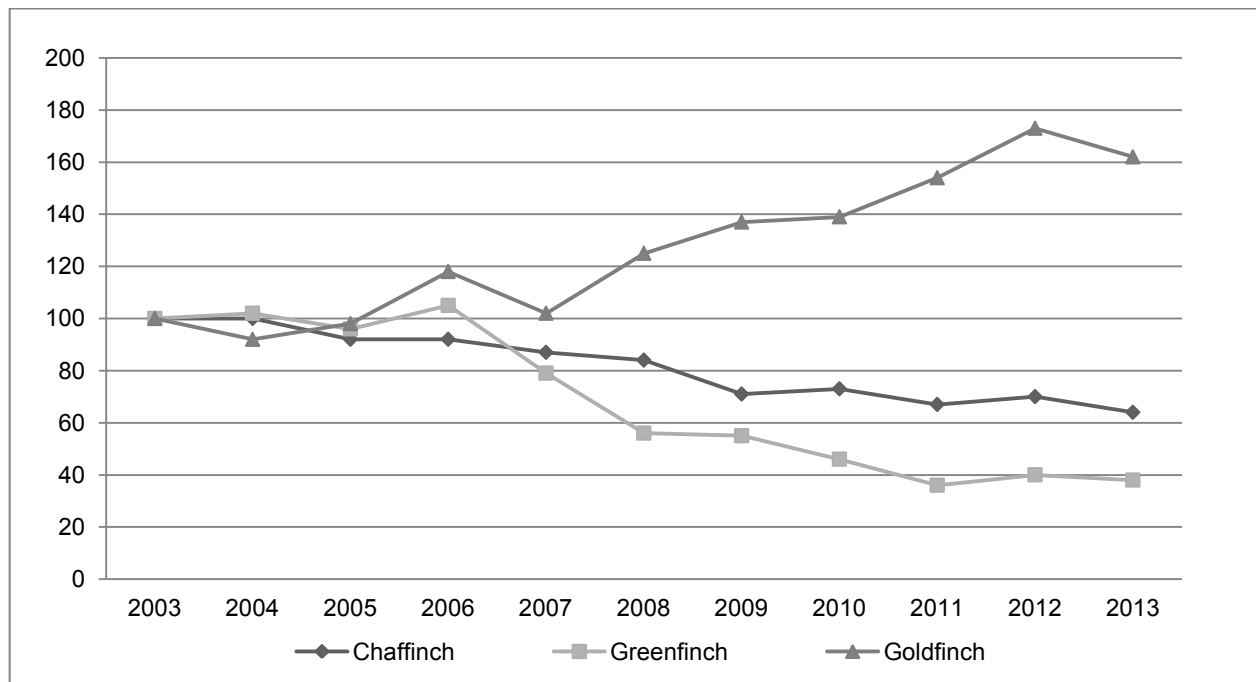
matches a similar decline at the national level. Woodpigeon meanwhile has maintained a more or less steady upward trend, it remains to be seen whether the ten per cent decrease noted this year is maintained or is simply an anomaly.



Finches 2003-2013

Greenfinch (-62%) and Chaffinch (-36%) sustained substantial declines as a result of the disease *trichomonosis*. There does appear to have been some levelling off although it is difficult to detect any

signs of a real recovery. In the same time span Goldfinch has increased by an extraordinary 64%, it is now a common garden visitor.



Highest Counts in Avon 2013 and 2003

The last table, given below, shows the 20 most abundant species recorded during the 2013 Survey and their rankings compared with the same figures for 2003, a broadly comparable year when 183 squares were surveyed. Most striking is the decline of the Starling from the second most abundant species to its current eleventh position with only about 40% of those recorded in 2003. Indeed going back just a year earlier, to 2002, Starling was the

most common species with 5374 recorded, a drop since then of nearly two-thirds. Relegated from the Top 20 in this ten-year period are Greenfinch 25th (was 11th), Collared Dove 23rd (was 16th), Swift 26th (was 17th), and Chiffchaff 22nd (was 20th). As can be seen below these were replaced by Herring Gull 10th, Goldfinch 16th, Swallow 17th and Blackcap 20th.

2013 Ranking	2003 Ranking	Species	2013 Total	2003 Total
1	1	Woodpigeon	6627	5361
2	3	Blackbird	4929	4822
3	6	Carrion Crow	4427	3290
4	7	Jackdaw	4241	2935
5	4	House Sparrow	3574	4061
6	5	Wren	3025	3674
7	10	Robin	2669	2287
8	12	Rook	2427	2029
9	9	Blue Tit	2204	2357
10	-	Herring Gull	2132	551
11	2	Starling	2021	4867
12	8	Chaffinch	1977	2474
13	19	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1913	1185
14	14	Magpie	1728	1679
15	15	Great Tit	1639	1343
16	-	Goldfinch	1558	610
17	-	Swallow	1521	932
18	13	Feral Pigeon	1148	1926
19	18	Dunnoek	1124	1216
20	-	Blackcap	1033	738

Table 3 – The 20 commonest species in 2003 and 2013

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 2012. Species in italics have not yet been recorded in the Avon area.

Whooper Swan (49)	Spotted Crane (33)	Chough (1)
Bean Goose (29)	Corncrake (6)	Hooded Crow (7)
Pink-footed Goose (10)	Crane ³ (11)	Willow Tit (49)
American Wigeon (2)	Stone-curlew (8)	Bearded Tit (75)
Green-winged Teal (13)	Kentish Plover (7)	<i>Short-toed Lark</i>
Ring-necked Duck (27)	Dotterel (17)	Woodlark (20)
Ferruginous Duck (7)	American Golden Plover (2)	Shore Lark (9)
Eider ¹ (2)	Temminck's Stint (9)	Red-rumped Swallow (3)
Long-tailed Duck (51)	White-rumped Sandpiper (5)	<i>Greenish Warbler</i>
<i>Surf Scoter</i>	Purple Sandpiper ¹ (4)	Pallas's Warbler (1)
Velvet Scoter (35)	Pectoral Sandpiper (34)	Yellow-browed Warbler (32)
Quail ² (6)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper (6)	<i>Radde's Warbler</i>
Red-throated Diver (35)	Red-necked Phalarope (6)	Dusky Warbler (2)
Black-throated Diver (12)	Grey Phalarope (74)	Wood Warbler in autumn (9)
Great Northern Diver (42)	Pomarine Skua (189)	<i>Barred Warbler</i>
<i>White-billed Diver</i>	Arctic Skua ¹ (34)	Dartford Warbler (38)
Fulmar ¹ (9)	Long-tailed Skua (10)	Subalpine Warbler (1)
Cory's Shearwater (2)	Great Skua ¹ (9)	Icterine Warbler (1)
<i>Great Shearwater</i>	Sabine's Gull (38)	Melodious Warbler (1)
Sooty Shearwater (0)	Ring-billed Gull (68)	Aquatic Warbler (7)
Manx Shearwater ¹ (12)	Caspian Gull (6)	Marsh Warbler (3)
Balearic Shearwater (1)	Iceland/Kumlien's Gull (39/5)	Waxwing
<i>Wilson's Petrel</i>	Glaucous Gull (13)	Rose-coloured Starling (8)
Storm Petrel ¹ (13)	White-winged Black Tern (9)	Bluethroat (4)
Leach's Petrel (198)	Roseate Tern (3)	<i>Red-breasted Flycatcher</i>
Shag (72)	Guillemot ¹ (1)	Richard's Pipit (20)
Night-heron (5)	Razorbill (42)	Tawny Pipit (2)
Cattle Egret (10)	Black Guillemot (1)	Red-throated Pipit (1)
Great White Egret (10)	Little Auk (18)	<i>Olive-backed Pipit</i>
Purple Heron (3)	Puffin (3)	Serin (2)
White Stork (13)	Turtle Dove (23)	Twite (34)
Glossy Ibis (8)	Long-eared Owl (124)	Common Redpoll (15)
Spoonbill (39)	Nightjar ⁴ (3)	<i>Arctic Redpoll</i>
Red-necked Grebe (17)	Alpine Swift (4)	<i>Parrot Crossbill</i>
Slavonian Grebe (47)	Bee-eater (9)	Common Rosefinch (3)
Honey-buzzard (20)	Hoopoe (26)	Hawfinch (84)
Black Kite (3)	Wryneck (48)	Lapland Bunting (49)
Hen Harrier (88)	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Cirl Bunting (3)
Montagu's Harrier (10)	Golden Oriole (16)	<i>Ortolan Bunting</i>
Goshawk (41)	Red-backed Shrike (7)	<i>Rustic Bunting</i>
Rough-legged Buzzard (0)	Great Grey Shrike (14)	Little Bunting (3)
Red-footed Falcon (1)	Woodchat Shrike (5)	

¹ records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge

² sight records of non-singing birds away from established breeding areas

³ claims of wild birds

⁴ records away from the Mendips

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 180lpine 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.

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	Doynton	7274	SG
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS	Dundry	5566	NS
Alveston	6388	SG	Dunkerton	7159	BA
Anchor Head	3062	NS	Durdham Down, Bristol	5674	BR
Arnos Vale	6071	BR	Dyers Common	5583	SG
Ashton Park	5572	NS	East Harptree	5655	BA
Aust Cliff/Warth	5689	SG	Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS
Avon Gorge	5673	BR	Emerson's Green, Bristol	6776	SG
Avon Wildlife Park	6768	BA	Englishcombe	7162	BA
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR	Failand	5773	NS
Badocks Wood, Bristol	5777	BR	Falfield	6893	SG
Banwell	3958	NS	Farmborough	6660	BA
Barrow Hill	5167	NS	Felton Common	5265	NS
Bath University	7764	BA	Filton, Bristol	6079	SG
Bathampton Meadows	7766	BA	Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA	Flax Bourton	5069	NS
Bathford	7966	BA	Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA
Bedminster	5871	BR	Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA	Frome Valley	6377	BR
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR	Hall End	7086	SG
Blackberry Hill, Bristol	6177	BR	Hallatrow	6357	BA
Blaise Woods	5678	BR	Hanham	6472	SG
Bleadon Hill	3657	NS	Happerton Farm	5274	NS
Blind Yeo	3969	NS	Hawkesbury Upton	7687	SG
Bloomfield, Bath	7463	BA	Haydon Hill	6953	BA
Brandon Hill, Bristol	5772	BR	Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR
Brentry	5879	BR	Hengrove Park, Bristol	6069	BR
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR	Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR
Bucklands Pool	4769	NS	Hicks Gate	6369	BA
Burledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA	High Littleton	6458	BA
Burnett	6665	BA	Hinton Blewitt	5956	BA
Butcombe	5161	NS	Hinton Charterhouse	7758	BA
Cadbury Camp	4572	NS	Hoar Gout	5380	BR
Cameley	6157	BA	Horfield, Bristol	5977	BR
Camerton	6857	BA	Horton	7584	SG
Castle Green, Bristol	5973	BR	Horwood Farm	7387	SG
Chapel Pill	5376	NS	Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR
Charfield	7292	SG	Hursley Hill, Whitchurch	6165	BA
Charlton Field	6366	BA	Iford	7959	BA
Charmy Down	7670	SG	Iron Acton	6883	SG
Chelvey	4867	NS	Jubbs Wood	5174	NS
Chelwood	6861	BA	Kendleshire	6679	SG
Chew Stoke	5661	NS	Kenn	4169	NS
Chittening Warth	5382	SG	Kewstoke	3364	NS
Churchill	4459	NS	Kingsgate Park, Yate	7181	SG
Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS	Kingston Seymour	4066	BA
Claverham	4466	NS	Ladye Bay	4072	NS
Claverton	7864	BA	Langford	4560	NS
Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS	Lansdown	7268	BA
Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR	Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR
Clutton	6259	BA	Littleton Warth	5890	SG
Compton Dando	6464	BA	Locking	3659	NS
Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA	Longwell Green	6571	BA
Dolebury Warren Reserve	4558	NS	Lower Knole Farm	5884	SG
Downend, Bristol	6577	BR	Lower Littleton	5563	BA

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			
St George's Wharf	5376	NS			
St Phillips Marsh, Bristol	6072	BR			

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Bonaparte's Gull	80	Greenfinch	125
Brambling	125	Greenshank	69
Brent Goose	23	Grey Heron	43
Bullfinch	129	Grey Partridge	38
Buzzard	49	Grey Phalarope	67
Carrion Crow	97	Grey Plover	59
Caspian Gull	84	Grey Wagtail	121
Cetti's Warbler	104	Greylag Goose	21
Chaffinch	125	Guillemot	75
Chiffchaff	105	Hawfinch	129
Coal Tit	99	Hen Harrier	48
Collared Dove	87	Herring Gull	83
Crane	132	Hobby	52
Common Gull	82	House Martin	103
Common Redpoll	128	House Sparrow	119
Common Sandpiper	67	Iceland Gull	85
Common Scoter	34	Jack Snipe	70
Common Tern	77	Jackdaw	96
Coot	56	Jay	96
Cormorant	41	Kestrel	50
Corn Bunting	131	Kingfisher	93
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Dunlin	66	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	95
Dunnock	119	Lesser Whitethroat	107
Eider	33	Linnet	127
Egyptian Goose	24	Little Egret	42
Feral Pigeon	86	Little Grebe	44
Ferruginous Duck	31	Little Gull	81
Fieldfare	113	Little Owl	90
Firecrest	98	Little Ringed Plover	61
Fulmar	39	Little Stint	67
Gadwall	26	Little Tern	76
Gannet	40	Long-eared Owl	91
Garden Warbler	107	Long-tailed Duck	34
		Long-tailed Tit	104

Magpie	95	Short-eared Owl	91
Mallard	28	Shoveler	30
Mandarin Duck	25	Siberian Chiffchaff	105
Manx Shearwater	40	Siskin	127
Marsh Harrier	47	Skua sp	75
Marsh Tit	100	Skylark	100
Meadow Pipit	123	Slavonian Grebe	46
Mediterranean Gull	81	Smew	35
Merlin	51	Snipe	71
Mistle Thrush	115	Snow Bunting	130
Moorhen	56	Song Thrush	114
Mute Swan	19	Sparrowhawk	48
Nightingale	116	Spoonbill	44
Nightjar	92	Spotted Crake	55
Nuthatch	110	Spotted Flycatcher	115
Osprey	50	Spotted Redshank	69
Oystercatcher	58	Starling	111
Peregrine	53	Stock Dove	86
Pheasant	38	Stonechat	118
Pied Flycatcher	116	Stone-curlew	57
Pied Wagtail	121	Storm Petrel	40
Pink-footed Goose	20	Swallow	102
Pintail	29	Swift	92
Pochard	31	Tawny Owl	90
Pomarine Skua	74	Teal	27
Purple Sandpiper	66	Tree Pipit	122
Quail	37	Tree Sparrow	120
Raven	97	Treecreeper	111
Red Kite	47	Tufted Duck	32
Red-breasted Merganser	35	Turtle Dove	88
Red-crested Pochard	30	Turnstone	64
Red-legged Partridge	37	Twite	128
Red-throated Diver	38	Velvet Scoter	34
Redshank	70	Water Pipit	124
Redstart	116	Water Rail	54
Redwing	114	Waxwing	110
Reed Bunting	131	Wheatear	118
Reed Warbler	109	Whimbrel	62
Richard's Pipit	122	Whinchat	117
Ring Ouzel	112	Whiskered Tern	76
Ring-billed Gull	83	White Wagtail	121
Ringed Plover	61	White-fronted Goose	21
Ring-necked Duck	31	Whitethroat	107
Ring-necked Parakeet	88	Whooper Swan	20
Robin	115	Wigeon	25
Rock Pipit	124	Willow Warbler	106
Rook	96	Wood Sandpiper	69
Ruddy Duck	37	Wood Warbler	105
Ruff	65	Woodchat Shrike	95
Sand Martin	101	Woodcock	71
Sanderling	65	Woodpigeon	87
Sandwich Tern	77	Wren	111
Scandinavian Rock Pipit	124	Wryneck	94
Scaup	33	Yellow Wagtail	120
Sedge Warbler	109	Yellow-browed Warbler	104
Shag	41	Yellowhammer	130
Shelduck	24	Yellow-legged Gull	84