# AVON BIRD REPORT

# 2014

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP
October 2015

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Typeset in WORD 2007 and printed by Oxuniprint Ltd, Oxford

ISSN Number – 0956-5744

Front cover: Red-flanked Bluetail photographed by Rich Andrews.
Line drawings: Brian Lancastle (Puffin), Robin Prytherch (Lapwing), Mike Bailey.
Rear cover: Map of the Avon area computer generated by Simon Powell, Earth Sciences Dept., University of Bristol.

# Editorial 2014

After twenty years we decided it was time to update the Avon map that appears on the back cover of this Report, the new one has been drawn for us by Simon Powell of the Earth Sciences Dept of the University of Bristol. Some more ecological features have been included, for example the major woodlands. For future editions of this Report it is possible to 'edit' this map, so any suggestions or corrections would be welcome; to me please. But note that there has to be a compromise between readability and the inclusion of even more detail.

One reason for the new map was to illustrate some of the major structural changes that have occurred to several sites in our region over the past few decades. These changes have had a considerable influence of our bird-life. Many are situated on or near the coast, several were constructed to improve the sea defences in the Severn Estuary whilst others were constructed 'in compensation for the loss of habitat elsewhere', for example at Royal Portbury Dock. Some were completed a few years ago whilst others are ongoing, major work is being undertaken around the lower reaches of the R. Yeo as I write, and the map will need to be edited to include the new features once the work is finished. Two of these new sites are worthy of mention as they are referred to in many of the entries in the systematic list of this Report. They are in the New Passage/Northwick Warth area – the Pilning Wetlands, and at Portbury – Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve, they both include several ponds and scrapes behind the sea wall with access paths and bird hides. The first is very 'open' with several wet features which unfortunately dry out if rain has been in short supply, whilst the second which has been adapted from older habitat, has more trees and hedges, and the ponds are deeper and so are less likely to dry out.

In last year's editorial I reported on the on-going changes that the BOU is making to the taxonomic species order following on from the DNA revolution. Several further changes were made for 2014, two of which we have applied in this Report. The most important is the splitting of the raptors with the 'hawks' – buzzards, harriers, etc. – staying put, while the 'falcons' – Kestrel, Peregrine, etc. – have been moved to be close to the owls and nightjars, are now placed between the woodpeckers and the parakeets just before the start of the passerines. The orders within the hawk and the falcon groups have not changed but probably will later. The other change to affect us is to the finches. The position of this group has not changed but they have been reordered as follows: Brambling, Chaffinch, Hawfinch, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Twite, Lesser Redpoll, Common Redpoll, Crossbill, Goldfinch and Siskin; I have only included those species that occur reasonably regularly in our area. Full details relating to these changes can be found on the BOU website: www.bou.org.uk

It is a pleasure to acknowledge all the photographs that we have been able to include in this Report. We received about 250 from seventeen photographers, and some 15% appear in the following pages. For 2014 I, as editor, made the choices, but for 2015 we are hoping to be able to appoint a new photo editor. So I would like to encourage all those with cameras, whether they are expert or just average, to get out into the field with their equipment, take some shots of the birds they see, and let us have the best at the end of the year. In the first instance low resolution versions should be e-mailed to me at the address given on the next page.

Papers included in this Report following the systematic list are as follows: The second instalment of the survey of the Avon wader populations over the past sixty years; a survey by Richard Bland of the changing fortunes of Bristol's birds since the millennium; papers describing the circumstances of the sightings of two species new to the Avon area – Red-flanked Bluetail (by John Barnett) and Greenish Warbler (by Paul Bowyer); and the 2014 edition of the BBS survey (by Dave Stoddard). A somewhat curtailed ringing report has been produced by its usual authors Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt. Up to quite recently we had thought that no report would be forthcoming because the BTO had been reorganising its computer systems and this work was running late. But it has just been partially completed in the last few weeks and so Mike and Ed have had only a short time to produce a limited report; for recoveries only those involving CVL were available.

Many birders have given unstintingly their time and expertise to make this Report what it is, and I would like to give them all a vote of thanks. I have mentioned the work of the photographers above, also sincere thanks are due to all those who submitted records by whatever means. The preferred submission methods are discussed on page 8. For those without access to electronic systems, old-fashioned pen and paper is still acceptable although where possible the modern methods should be used, it is easier for us and is less prone to errors. Paper records for the next Report should be sent to me or the Recorder to arrive not later than the end of January 2016.

I should also like to thank the members of my committee; even with the new recording methods it still takes a very long time out of busy life schedules to produce the entries in the systematic list. In 2014 they were, in alphabetical order

- Richard Bland – Skylark, the hirundines, Waxwing to Tree Sparrow, and the weather;
- Chris Craig – near-passerines: doves to woodpeckers;
- Ken Hall – warblers, finches and buntings;

- Rupert Higgins – divers to grebes, Water Rail to Coot, and the as always excellent Review of the Year;
- Brian Lancastle – raptors including both hawks and falcons;
- John Martin – skuas to gulls;
- Richard Mielcarek – escapes and hybrids;
- Nigel Milbourne – ducks;
- Tony Scott – swans, geese, Shelduck and the game birds;
- Dave Stoddard – crows to tits, and the pipits and wagtails.

Andy Davis and Keith Vinicombe with several of the editorial members listed above helped with the important task of checking the systematic list and the papers both for grammatical and observational errors, their help was and is invaluable. Thanks are also due to Nick Hawkridge, John Martin and Richard Mielcarek for the arduous task of preparing the electronic files for both the editor's and the recorder's committees. But my biggest vote of thanks must again go to Richard for all the hours he spends in front of his computer screen getting the efforts of the section editors and the paper authors into proper shape for publication.

In 2014 the members of the AOG executive committee, who represent our sponsoring organisations, were Jane Cumming (treasurer), Richard Mielcarek (chairman), Jason Williams (secretary) and myself. If you have any comments – praise or brickbat – on any aspect of this Report, you can address them to any member of this committee. Members of either Bristol Naturalists' Society or Bristol Ornithological Club receive a copy of this Report with their subscription, details of which are given on the inside front cover. A number of copies are sold to non-members, at £9.50 including postage, and back numbers are available from me at a reduced cost. Do please e-mail me (or use the post) if you are interested in receiving back numbers – the more we can sell, the more finance we will have to spend on improving the Report in the future.

Harvey Rose
E-mail address: h.e.rose@bris.ac.uk

# From the Recorder

If 2014 is remembered for one bird it must surely be the Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* featured on the cover of this Report. This stunning Asian passerine was once a highly desired mega rarity in Britain and famously huge crowds descended on Winspit in Dorset to see one there in late autumn 1993, at the time the first 'twitchable' mainland record. Since then it has been getting more frequent, coinciding with a major increase in the nearest breeding population in Finland (the Finnish Breeding Bird Atlas gives an estimate of 300-1500 pairs). As long ago as 1973, British Birds readers' attention was drawn to the westward expansion of this species. This has continued during the intervening four decades, as has the overall upward trend in both numbers and range, albeit with a good deal of fluctuation (Mikkola and Rajasärkkä, 2014). The vast majority of British records have been in autumn with only a few in spring but none in winter until the Avon bird (see page 161 of this Report). The other new bird for our recording area during the year was the Greenish Warbler at Sand Point, found by a dedicated patch worker on June 2nd. It was first noticed by it song, but unlike the Bluetail it only gave relatively poor views, see photograph opposite page 104, and was only present for a few hours. This essentially Asian *Phylloscopus* warbler is a regular autumn visitor to the East Coast of the UK from Shetland southwards but remains as rare as hen's teeth in the southwest. In spring they are much scarcer but more widespread. The date is entirely typical of a spring overshoot -- eastern European breeding Greenish Warblers arrive late on their breeding grounds. An account of this occurrence appears on page 162 of this Report. Apart from the Red-flanked Bluetail the only other BBRC rarities recorded in our area during the year were a Great Reed Warbler at CVL in May and a returning Lesser Scaup and BL and CVL.

During the year the recorder's committee considered 137 records of county rarities, 108 of which were accepted, 22 were found not proven with a few others either pending for further information or were accepted to a species group only; see Harrier Sp. in the systematic list for example. This is a slightly lower acceptance rate (*c.* 84%) than has been the norm recently, with the non-acceptances for a wide variety of reasons including: rather obvious birds seen by either very inexperienced or non-birders and hence inadequately described or in some cases with contradictory features suggesting a mistake; more difficult species seen by experienced observers but under very difficult circumstances not allowing adequate views and so full confidence in the record; and records with essentially no description. This was the first year a record was tracked down from Twitter – the Yellow-browed Warbler photographed in Bath on March 22nd. But our preferred methods of submission remain unchanged -- records should be submitted either via BirdTrack, or by the BOC (Nick Hawkridge) website. But if this is not possible and you wish to submit them directly can you please use either Excel or a Word file. Further details on the submission of records can be found on page 8.

Making judgements about which identifications are considered safe is one thing but even when that has been cleared up there is still room for problems to occur. We all learn to count from an early age but counting birds can be extremely difficult. Published counts do matter as they form part of the evidence that informs decisions about conservation priorities and so on, hence they should reflect reality as far as possible. This Report includes hundreds of such counts and for many species often only the highest count of the month is shown. But in some cases this might not be typical of the usual number present at the site or it could even be an over-estimate. Consider site A, which observer X visits several times a week counting the Mallard flock on each visit, and suppose at this entirely fictional location (which is evidently good for Mallard) his/her counts range between 325 and 460 during November, say. Secondly, suppose observer Y visits this site only once during the month and submits a record of 1000 Mallard. It seems likely that observer Y saw that there were loads of Mallard at the site but did not really count them properly and made a rather inaccurate guesstimate of the numbers, possibly on returning home. But it is just conceivable that observer Y got really lucky and hit the peak day for Mallard, there really were 1000 there and he/she counted them accurately. But this is not really very likely, is it? So in such cases we would normally use the peak count of 460 for this site as the monthly maximum in the published account. It is often not so clear-cut though, and it is really difficult to know which counts are accurate and which are not. We rarely question counts, so we would just make a plea for them to be as carefully done as possible and also for observers to continue submitting them. If as described above 1000 Mallard did actually occur at site A, then it would help if when recording this count some note was added to the effect that the high count was accurate, or it was surprisingly high, or something similar.

Accurate ageing of birds can be very useful in some cases, for example in the identification of small waders of the genus *Calidris.* It can also help in determining the number of different individuals involved in a series of records. Ageing is not always straightforward and in some cases it is downright difficult. The remarkable series of Iceland Gull records at CVL in late winter is a case in point with many reports of a second-winter bird or birds, but most photographs showed birds in their first winter (that is hatched the previous summer). One pale individual was responsible for many of the reports of second-winters, and it is suspected that its paleness alone led some to age it as such. But Iceland Gulls in their first winter are very variable and many can

become extremely white by February or March through a combination of individual variation, plumage wear and bleaching. This individual showed some second generation scapulars, whereas many young Iceland Gulls do not moult much if at all during the winter and remain in juvenile plumage. But such a limited moult is actually not that unusual in this species, while other features such as the typically juvenile patterned wing coverts, tail and primary coverts indicate that it was actually in its first winter.

As usual I need to thank the many people who have made my job a lot easier over the past year. In particular Richard Mielcarek who once again took on much of the burden of record management, distribution and collation as well as chasing up a minority of 'missing' descriptions. I would also like to thank the members of the recorder's committee, namely Rich Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancastle, Richard Mielcarek and Harvey Rose. Dave Stoddart provided the statistics on breeding and wintering populations, and Richard Bland provided the migrant arrival and departure statistics and 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, please keep them coming. I make the usual plea that observers submit notes and/or photos in support of the county rarities listed opposite 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 at the time 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, by using Bird Track you should be prompted for descriptions of the relevant rarities anyway, and if you use the form that pops up then we get them in a good organised format.

**References**

Finnish Breeding Bird Atlas, accessed 19 July 2015 *http://atlas3.lintuatlas.fi/results/species/red-flanked%20bluetail*

Mikkola, H. and Rajasärkkä, A. (2014) *The Red-flanked Bluetail in Europe: range expansion and population trends*. British Birds **107**, September 2014, pp. 561-566

John Martin, August 2015

# 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 2013. Species in italics have not yet been recorded in the Avon area.

Whooper Swan (53)
Bean Goose (29)
Pink-footed Goose (12)
American Wigeon (2)
Green-winged Teal (14)
Ring-necked Duck (28)
Ferruginous Duck (9)
Lesser Scaup (10)
Eider [1] (2)
Long-tailed Duck (53)
*Surf Scoter*
Velvet Scoter (39)
Quail[2] (6)
Red-throated Diver (63)
Black-throated Diver (13)
Great Northern Diver (47)
*White-billed Diver*
Fulmar [1] (9)
Cory's Shearwater (2)
*Great Shearwater*
Sooty Shearwater (0)
Manx Shearwater [1] (12)
Balearic Shearwater (1)
*Wilson's Petrel*
Storm Petrel [1] (13)
Leach's Petrel (201)
Shag (73)
Night-heron (5)
Cattle Egret (10)
Great White Egret (14)
Purple Heron (3)
White Stork (13)
Glossy Ibis (12)
Spoonbill (41)
Red-necked Grebe (17)
Slavonian Grebe (50)
Honey-buzzard (20)
Black Kite (3)
White-tailed Eagle (0)
Hen Harrier (90)
Montagu's Harrier (10)
Goshawk (46)
Rough-legged Buzzard (0)
Spotted Crake (37)
Corncrake (6)
Crane[3] (11)
Stone-curlew (10)
American Golden Plover (3)
Kentish Plover (7)
Dotterel (17)
Temminck's Stint (9)
Purple Sandpiper [1] (4)
White-rumped Sandpiper (5)
Buff-breasted Sandpiper (6)
Pectoral Sandpiper (34)
Red-necked Phalarope (6)
Grey Phalarope (76)
Pomarine Skua (205)
Arctic Skua [1] (38)
Long-tailed Skua (10)
Great Skua [1] (27)
Puffin (3)
Black Guillemot (1)
Razorbill (42)
Little Auk (18)
Guillemot [1] (1)
White-winged Black Tern (9)
Roseate Tern (3)
Sabine's Gull (38)
Ring-billed Gull (69)
Caspian Gull (9)
Iceland/Kumlien's Gull (40/5)
Glaucous Gull (15)
Turtle Dove (24)
Long-eared Owl (127)
Nightjar[4] (8)
Alpine Swift (4)
Hoopoe (26)
Bee-eater (9)
Wryneck (50)
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Red-footed Falcon (1)
Golden Oriole (16)
Red-backed Shrike (7)
Great Grey Shrike (14)
Woodchat Shrike (6)
Chough (1)
Hooded Crow (7)
Penduline Tit (2)
Willow Tit (49)
Bearded Tit (85)
*Short-toed Lark*
Woodlark (20)
Shore Lark (9)
Red-rumped Swallow (3)
Greenish Warbler
Pallas's Warbler (1)
Yellow-browed Warbler (33)
*Radde's Warbler*
Dusky Warbler (2)
Wood Warbler in autumn (9)
*Barred Warbler*
Dartford Warbler (39)
Subalpine Warbler (1)
Icterine Warbler (1)
Melodious Warbler (1)
*Blyth's Reed Warbler*
Marsh Warbler (3)
Waxwing
Rose-coloured Starling (8)
Bluethroat (4)
*Red-breasted Flycatcher*
Citrine Wagtail (2)
Richard's Pipit (22)
*Olive-backed Pipit*
Hawfinch (86)
Common Rosefinch (3)
Twite (37)
Common Redpoll (17)
*Arctic Redpoll*
*Parrot Crossbill*
Serin (2)
Lapland Bunting (50)
Cirl Bunting (3)
*Ortolan Bunting*
Little Bunting (3)

[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-front *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (3)
Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (34)
*Arctica* Dunlin *Calidris alpina arctica* (30)
'Continental' Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa l. limosa* (24)
'Nordic' Jackdaw *Monedula monedula monedula* (4)
Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* (18)
Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* (16)
Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flave thunbergi* (1)
Scandinavian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus littoralis* (12)

As well as the species and subspecies listed above, we also require descriptions for;

- all 'British Birds' rarities (see the BBRC website http://www.bbrc.org.uk for a list of such species and details of how to submit these), and
- out-of-season migrants (for example a Whimbrel in January, or a Goosander in July)
- in the event of queries regarding any record.

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

# Submission of Records

All records are welcome. For unusual or rare species and subspecies, including out of season migrants, see the previous page. 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 or a Word table, with each record on a separate line and dates in a dd/mm/yyyy format;
- BTO WeBS counts and other BTO and local survey data are 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.

# Review of 2014

Rupert Higgins

In many respects 2014 was a much improved year for birds. Following several years of decline caused by extreme weather earlier in the decade, the more settled conditions of late 2013 and throughout 2014 meant that populations of many species recovered and breeding success was good. However, the same settled weather meant that wildfowl and many other winter visitors were unusually scarce. The outstanding rarity was our first ever, and Britain's first wintering, Red-flanked Bluetail, which coincided with an unprecedented series of Siberian Chiffchaff sightings. Another first for the area, a Greenish Warbler, followed in early June. On a more sombre note, this was the first year since records began with no indication that Nightingale bred and with a complete absence of acceptable records of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. More welcome news, although hardly unexpected, was provided by our first nesting Little Egrets.

**First Winter Period**

The winter was mild and exceptionally wet, with little frost and no snow. Winds were from the south-west almost throughout and were very strong at times.

Water levels at the reservoirs rose quickly in the new year, meaning that numbers of most dabbling ducks were low, although Mallard was reasonably numerous. Counts of both Pochard and Goldeneye were also low, reflecting national trends in recent years, but at CVL Goosanders were numerous by the standards of recent years. In the mild conditions there were no Bewick's Swans or White-fronted Geese, only one Smew, and very few Brent Geese.

The first week of the year saw a small movement of Kittiwakes and a Shag at Eastville Park. There were two periods of particularly strong south-westerlies, both of them producing good influxes of seabirds. The first, from Jan. 9th to 19th, was dominated by Guillemots also with two Red-throated Divers and two Shag. Guillemots, including an exceptional inland bird on the Little Avon, also featured in the second influx between Feb. 6th and 16th, along with three Razorbills, a Puffin, 16 Great Skuas and several sizeable parties of both Kittiwake and Little Gull.

The mild weather meant that numbers of Lapwing and Golden Plover were low but Snipe were locally numerous in flooded fields. The conditions also suited Common Sandpiper, which was unusually numerous at inland sites, but Green Sandpiper was scarce. Counts of the commonest coastal species were encouraging: Redshank numbers were again very high, Curlew counts were also good; and there were signs of a recovery in Dunlin populations. There were no significant records of the less common wader species, but a Little Stint was noteworthy.

Short-eared Owl and Merlin were both scarce, probably due to the lack of cold weather, whilst low counts of Barn Owl reflected the poor 2013 breeding season.

Several insectivorous passerines, notably Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Stonechat, were plentiful in the mild winter. Water Pipit, however, remains rare at the reservoirs following recent cold winters. As might be expected given the weather winter thrush numbers were low and migrant finches were also uncommon, with Lesser Redpoll, Siskin and Brambling all unusually scarce. There were some high counts through the period, including a roost of 10,000 Starlings at OPS and a feeding flock of 3,000 of this species at Yatton, both in mid-February; 280 Pied Wagtail at Saltford in late January; and 4,000 Jackdaw roosting at CVL in early February. As usual farmland birds were most common in the Marshfield area, where maxima of 300 of both Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting, in early January and February respectively, were in line with peak counts in recent winters.

Scarce species remaining from 2013 were two Pink-footed Geese at CVL and BL; a Long-tailed Duck at BL; a Dartford Warbler at Sand Point; and a small group of Twite at Aust Warth. The first of a total for our area of at least eight Siberian Chiffchaffs was at CVL on Jan. 3rd where a Bearded Tit appeared on the 17th. There was a good sequence of uncommon gulls here, starting with a Ring-billed on 24th and another on Feb. 2nd; many sightings of Iceland from Jan. 28th, peaking at three on Feb. 23rd; and a Glaucous on 22nd and 24th. The exceptional rarity of the year, a Red-flanked Bluetail, was found close to the Wiltshire boundary at Shire Valley, Marshfield, on Feb. 3rd; it remained until March 9th. Other records in the month were more mundane, involving a Slavonian Grebe at CVL on the 1st and a second Dartford Warbler at Sand Point on the 28th.

**Spring**

The spring was generally warm and southerly winds prevailed until mid-May when a period of strong south-westerlies was followed by north-easterlies. The end of May was the only period of the spring with above average rain.

Some wildfowl passage was evident in the spring. The only White-fronted Geese of the year were seven to the north-east past Aust on March 10th and there were 17 Brent Geese at nearby Northwick on 22nd. The first Garganey was seen on April 6th and there were two sightings of Eider, on the 13th and

May 7th. Final dates of departing wildfowl included Brent Goose on April 21st, Pintail on the 27th and Scaup on May 3rd.

Red Kite passed through our area in exceptional numbers throughout the spring, reaching a maximum on May 19th. Osprey numbers were average, after the exceptional spring of 2013, with the passage lasting from March 20th to April 21st, whilst Marsh Harrier was decidedly scarce.

The passage of several wader species was poor, with only low numbers of Ringed Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper and Greenshank noted, and no Little Stint. The first Little Ringed Plover was on March 27th and the first Whimbrel on April 5th, followed by successive peaks of Bar-tailed Godwit on April 19th and 30th; Common Sandpiper from April 16th to 30th; Whimbrel from May 1st to 10th; and Ringed Plover from 11th to June 4th. Less common species included single Spotted Redshank on April 15th and 30th and three Curlew Sandpiper on May 5th.

Kittiwake passage was extended through the spring, with peaks on March 18th, April 4th and May 6th and 10th. The first Common Tern of a very poor passage was on March 31st, a day that also saw good numbers of Little Gull, and the first Arctic Skua appeared on April 4th. South-westerly winds around May 10th produced records of Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel, Gannet, Pomarine and Great Skua and Little Tern. Numbers of Pomarine Skua were good, in contrast to Arctic Skua, which has become increasingly scarce in recent years.

Unlike 2013, when many passerines appeared in exceptional numbers, counts of most species were closer to average. First dates of some species were slightly earlier than usual, but the warm weather through March and April did not have as marked an effect on arrivals as might have been inspected. Early March produced the first migrant Chiffchaffs on 4th, Sand Martin on 7th and Wheatear on 10th, followed by early Swallows on 15th and House Martin on 19th. The first major arrival, of Chiffchaff and Sand Martin, was on 21st and numbers of the latter species were high through the spring. The first Willow Warbler was seen on 22nd, followed by the first White Wagtail the next day. Wheatear, Meadow Pipit and Linnet moved through in numbers on the last two days of the month and the first two days of April. The last Fieldfare and Redwing were seen, on 1st and 6th respectively, and the normal flurry of arrivals occurred in mid-month, when the first Reed and Grasshopper Warblers were seen on 9th; Lesser Whitethroat on 10th; Whitethroat on 12th; Cuckoo on 15th; Nightingale and Whinchat on 16th; Pied Flycatcher and Garden Warbler on 17th; and Swift on 20th. The largest movement of the spring, featuring in particular Sand Martin, House Martin, Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Redstart, Whinchat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit, peaked on 21st. Overall, Wheatear numbers were average whilst those of Ring Ouzel, Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Whinchat were low.

The spring was not exceptional for rare birds, probably a consequence of the generally settled weather. Iceland Gulls continued to be seen at CVL until April 18th and a Kumlein's was here on March 19th. A Long-tailed Duck appeared here on 14th and was joined by another two days later, and a Spoonbill was at BL on 22nd. A Yellow-browed Warbler at Bath, also on 22nd, was much less expected. A Glossy Ibis commenced a month long stay at Weston STW on April 5th but the rest of that month was quiet. A Richard's Pipit at Northwick on May 5th was unusual for spring and was followed by a Hoopoe at Chipping Sodbury on 14th, a Great Reed Warbler at CVL on 24th and a Spoonbill at PWD on 29th.

**Breeding**

Most wildfowl enjoyed a good season, probably a consequence of the wet winter producing high water levels that stayed stable through the dry spring and summer. Shelduck was an exception, with low levels as in 2013, but Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe and Coot all bred in much improved numbers. Two broods of Shoveler at CVL were good by recent standards and an intensive survey of Water Rail here suggested that 15 pairs were present.

The fortunes of raptors were more mixed. Some species, such as Buzzard and Peregrine, bred in good numbers but had low levels of fledging success. Kestrel remained at a low ebb but Sparrowhawk was more plentiful than in 2013 and Hobby had an average year. Barn Owl recovered from a poor 2013 with a very good season, and the decline in the Little Owl population appears to have halted, although not reversed.

The wet winter weather benefitted Lapwing, a species that had appeared to be in terminal decline, and increased markedly this year and Oystercatcher also had a good season. Little Ringed Plover and Redshank numbers were comparable to those of recent years, but there was an apparent decline in the small Ringed Plover population.

The previous two years had been exceptionally poor for many passerine species, so a marked improvement in 2014 was extremely welcome. Increases were detected in the populations of Stock Dove, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Wren, Blackbird, Robin, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Bullfinch and Goldfinch. The populations of some other species, notably Blue Tit, were low but high productivity in 2014 bodes well for the future. Fewer species declined over the year, but slightly lower populations of Great Tit, Sedge Warbler, Mistle Thrush, Dunnock, Chaffinch and Linnet were noted.

Species of particular concern due to large declines this year were Swift, House Martin, Starling and Greenfinch. Three migrants that have become particularly uncommon in recent years had mixed fortune: there was a slight increase in records of Cuckoo and Spotted Flycatcher, but no recovery in the Willow Warbler population was evident.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale and Tree Pipit are, if not actually extinct as breeding species in our area, very close to this unhappy landmark and Grey Partridge is heading in a similar direction. Nightjar was present in very small numbers in the Mendips and Yellow Wagtail bred at one and possibly more sites in the Cotswolds. On a positive note Firecrest bred again and for the first time Little Egret was confirmed breeding, at Uphill.

**Summer**

The weather in June and July was settled, with light winds, fairly high temperatures and low rainfall throughout.

The summer passage of Common Scoter was again poor. Two Teal, a pair of Garganey and three Goldeneye spent the summer at CVL, but there was no indication that breeding was attempted.

In the light winds seabirds were exceptionally uncommon and there were no records at all of Fulmar, Gannet, Storm Petrel or Kittiwake through the period and very few of Manx Shearwater. There were, however, three Arctic Skuas at Severn Beach on June 27th. The first Mediterranean Gull of the season was seen on 19th and the first Common Gull on 26th.

Low levels of wader passage, either northwards or southwards, were evident throughout the season. The last Sanderling was on June 2nd, a Curlew Sandpiper was seen on 3rd, the last Ringed Plover was on 4th and a Knot lingered until 22nd, whilst a Grey Plover at Cl-Y in June was probably summering here. Returning waders included the first Common Sandpiper on 17th and Ruff on 26th, with Golden Plovers appearing at the end of the month. A Spotted Redshank on July 19th was early.

Autumn passerines began to appear earlier than usual, with first records of Yellow Wagtail on June 6th, Stonechat on 28th and Redstart on 29th.

The summer was more eventful than usual in terms of rarities. A Long-eared Owl was seen in North Somerset on June 1st but the outstanding bird of the season was a Greenish Warbler in song at Sand Point the next day. A Lesser Scaup returned to BL on 29th, and a Honey Buzzard was photographed in flight over Weston-super-Mare on July 1st, see opposite page 48.

**Autumn**

August was generally dry and warm, but there was an exceptionally wet spell in mid-month, associated with north-easterlies. September was extremely dry in largely easterly winds and a switch to south-westerlies in October only brought average rainfall. The middle of the month was cool, but temperatures rose again at the end of the season.

After the very wet winter water levels at the reservoirs were slow to fall and weed growth at CVL in particular was very poor. This meant that counts of Mute Swan, Gadwall, Wigeon and Coot were much lower than in several recent years and those of species such as Teal were unexceptional. Shoveler numbers were good, however, and Tufted Duck was again numerous. Great Crested Grebe was more common after some poor years, but Little Grebe counts were low and Black-necked Grebe was very scarce. Numbers of Garganey were fairly good at CVL, and returning winter migrants included Pintail from Aug. 21st, Brent Goose from Oct. 9th, Scaup from 18th and Red-breasted Merganser from 31st.

Seabirds were generally uncommon in the settled weather but the spell of stormy weather in mid-August brought several Storm Petrels, including four at Severn Beach on 12th and a movement of Common Tern. The Black Tern passage was average by the standard of recent years, but much smaller than in the past, peaking between 27th and 31st. Little Gull was very scarce and recorded only on Oct. 14th and 15th.

There was a good scatter of Marsh Harrier sightings and a very good passage of Osprey, which lasted from Aug. 26th to Oct. 11th. The first returning Merlin was seen on Aug. 31st and the last Hobby on Oct. 1st. Two Hen Harrier were seen in what was a very poor year for this species: at CVL on 15th and at Sand Point on 22nd.

Despite the gradual fall in water levels at the reservoirs wader passage was generally unexceptional. As has often been the case in recent years only Black-tailed Godwit was more numerous than usual, reaching peaks of 52 at CVL on Aug. 13th and 224 at Northwick on Sept. 20th. The latter site proved to be good for Wood Sandpiper, which were present between July 24th and Sept. 8th, reaching three on July 28th. Species appearing in notably low numbers included Ringed Plover, Knot, Ruff and Greenshank. However, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank were all reasonably frequent. There was no marked peak of any of these species but the highest counts were generally between Sept. 8th and 20th. The first returning Jack Snipe was unusually early on 26th, and the last Little Ringed Plover was seen on the next day.

The autumn passage of several passerine species was good, with Redstart, Whinchat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit all recorded in higher numbers than usual. The passage started with few marked peaks through most of August, but movements of Sand Martin, House Martin and Swallow on 21st and Redstart, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit in the last ten days of the month were evident. Wheatear numbers remained high until Sept. 7th and the last Swift and Cuckoo were seen, on 9th and 11th respectively. There was a flurry of last dates at the end of the month, which included Willow Warbler on 21st, Whitethroat on 22nd, Redstart on 25th, Tree Pipit on 27th and Garden Warbler on 28th, coinciding with the first Siskin on 25th, Fieldfare on 26th and Redwing on 27th. There was then a marked movement on Oct. 15th when the last Yellow Wagtail and the first Water Pipit, Brambling and Lesser Redpoll were seen; there was a peak in the passages of Song Thrush, Redwing, Pied Wagtail, Linnet, Goldfinch and Siskin; and some evidence of movement in species often considered sedentary, including Mistle Thrush and Bullfinch. Another significant passage occurred over the last three days of the month when there were peaks in numbers of Wood Pigeon, Skylark, Fieldfare, Stonechat and Chaffinch. As usual, the last sightings of several summer visitors were in November: Swallow on 2nd, Blackcap on 3rd, Wheatear on 9th and Ring Ouzel, the only one of the autumn, on 15th.

The autumn brought its usual scatter of rare and scarce birds, without anything exceptional. A Spotted Crake at Weston STW on July 19th was early but August was quiet, with the best records being a Red-necked Phalarope at New Passage on 18th, a Great White Egret at CVL on 24th and a Wryneck also at New Passage on 31st. Another Wryneck was at Sand Point on Sept. 2nd and a flurry in mid-month saw a White-winged Black Tern at CVL from 10th, a Dotterel over Pilning on 14th, a Red-backed Shrike at Sand Point from 15th and a Rose-coloured Starling at BG on 20th, all consistent with the north-easterly winds at the time. As the winds switched to south-westerlies the year's only Nearctic wader, our first Pectoral Sandpiper since 2011, arrived at New Passage on 21st. A second Great White Egret reached CVL on 22nd, Spotted Crake was found here on 25th and a Purple Heron was seen in the Gordano Valley on 29th. October 11th then saw a flurry of activity, three Bearded Tits arriving at CVL and the autumn's first Yellow-browed Warbler at Cl-Y. A Red-footed Falcon at Northwick Warth coincided with the major movement of more common species, and further Yellow-browed Warblers then followed at Sand Point on 19th, Wellow Brook on 20th and CVL on 25th. Another Great White Egret appeared at CVL on 23rd and at the end of the month there were a Great Grey Shrike at Marshfield on 27th and a Dartford Warbler at Sand Point on 29th.

**Second Winter Period**

The weather was mild throughout the final two months of the year. Winds were generally from the south-east in November, before switching to the south-west in December and there was little rain and virtually no frost throughout.

The mild weather meant that water birds were generally unexceptional but high populations of fish, particularly perch, at CVL led to record counts of Cormorant and good numbers of Goosander here. Otherwise, Pochard was again scarce, but Shoveler remained unusually numerous at CVL. There were no Smew or White-fronted Geese, and three records of Bewick's Swan, the best involving eight at CVL on Dec. 28th. A count of 960 Shelduck at Sand Bay on 9th November was exceptional.

There were no marked influxes of raptors, but Short-eared Owl and Merlin were both slightly more numerous than in the first two months of the year.

Recent trends in wader numbers on the Estuary continued: Dunlin showed sustained signs of recovery; Oystercatcher numbers were high; and Curlew and Redshank continued to be numerous. Grey Plover and Knot, however, were uncommon. Small numbers of Common Sandpiper were again widespread, as was Greenshank.

As in the first winter period Brambling, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin were all extremely uncommon. Fieldfare counts were also low, but Redwing had a better winter. Stoncechat clearly benefits from the mild winters, with much improved numbers recorded, but Water Pipit was scarce and not seen at all inland. The most significant counts tended to be made in the Marshfield area, where they included 400 Stock Dove on Nov. 11th and 500 Corn Bunting on both Oct. 31st and Dec. 22nd.

Most of the scarce species recorded were water birds. A Long-tailed Duck was at CVL on Nov. 3rd and on 9th a Green-winged Teal visited BL briefly and a Bittern in the Fishponds area of Bristol was unusual. Another Great White Egret that arrived at CVL on 14th stayed into 2015. The predominant easterly winds and the mild weather were reflected in records of Rose-coloured Starling in Bristol from 13th; Redstarts in Bath and Bristol, on 15th and 30th respectively; and a Lesser Whitethroat at CVL on 29th. December was quiet, seeing a Nordic Jackdaw at Northwick on 11th and a Ring-billed Gull at CVL on 23rd.

# Migration Summary

Richard Bland

In Bristol, 2014 was the hottest since records began in 1853. Every month except August was roughly two degrees warmer than the long term average, and the mean maximum temperature was 16.1°C compared with the average over the past 25 years of 13.6°C. Hence it was no surprise in spring that several species were earlier than usual (marked * in Column 4 below), they were Common Tern, Hobby, Lesser Whitethroat, and Ring Ouzel, with one – Spotted Flycatcher -- later than usual (marked + ). It might also be anticipated that last dates would be extended on the grounds that insect populations in particular would have been available for longer. In the main this was so with three species (Common Tern, Swift and Sand Martin) leaving early, and nine leaving late. Seven of these were Garganey, Little Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Cuckoo, Reed Warbler, Ring Ouzel and Whinchat, whilst the final two, Lesser Whitethroat and Redstart, were both exceptionally late reported over seven weeks after the normal last date. But it should be noted that last dates are subject to considerable variability.

The table below lists species in the order of their average first spring arrival date over the past two and a half decades, and also gives their average last leaving date, and the first and last dates in 2014 (Columns 2 and 5). The differences from the norm are illustrated in Columns 4 and 7, here * stands for early arrival or departure (more than a week), and + for late arrival or departure (also over a week), with more symbols in the extreme cases. For further details see the individual accounts in the systematic list.

| Summer migrants | Arrival | Average | Difference | Departure | Average | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sand Martin | March 7th | March 8th | o | Sept. 14th | Oct. 4th | ** |
| Wheatear | March 10th | March 10th | o | Nov. 9th | Nov. 8th | o |
| Swallow | March 15th | March 19th | o | Nov. 2nd | Nov. 7th | o |
| House Martin | March 19th | March 23rd | o | Oct. 22nd | Oct. 25th | o |
| Willow Warbler | March 22nd | March 24th | o | Sept. 21st | Sept. 24th | o |
| Ring Ouzel | March 16th | March 29th | * | Nov. 15th | Oct. 24th | ++ |
| Little Ringed Plover | March 27th | March 30th | o | Sept. 27th | Sept. 17th | + |
| Tree Pipit | April 4th | April 2nd | o | Sept. 27th | Sept. 30th | o |
| Garganey | April 6th | April 4th | o | Nov. 5th | Oct. 10th | ++ |
| Redstart | April 3rd | April 4th | o | Nov. 30th | Oct. 11th | +++ |
| Yellow Wagtail | April 6th | April 6th | o | Oct. 15th | Oct. 10th | o |
| Common Tern | March 31st | April 8th | * | Sept. 20th | Sept. 30th | * |
| Sedge Warbler | April 3rd | April 9th | o | Oct. 5th | Sept. 28th | o |
| Whimbrel | April 5th | April 10th | o | Oct. 30th | Oct. 9th | ++ |
| Whitethroat | April 12th | April 12th | o | Sept. 22nd | Sept. 26th | o |
| Reed Warbler | April 9th | April 12th | o | Oct. 18th | Oct. 4th | + |
| Pied Flycatcher | April 17th | April 12th | o | No record | -- | -- |
| Garden Warbler | April 17th | April 13th | o | Sept. 28th | Sept. 24th | o |
| Cuckoo | April 15th | April 13th | o | Sept. 11th | Aug. 26th | + |
| Grasshopper Warbler | April 9th | April 14th | o | Sept. 14th | Sept. 18th | o |
| Swift | April 20th | April 16th | o | Sept. 9th | Sept. 17th | * |
| Hobby | April 4th | April 17th | * | Oct. 1st | Oct. 6th | o |
| Lesser Whitethroat | April 10th | April 18th | * | Nov. 29th | Oct. 8th | +++ |
| Whinchat | April 16th | April 20th | o | Nov. 1st | Oct. 13th | + |
| Wood Warbler | April 21st | April 21st | o | No record | -- | -- |
| Nightingale | April 16th | April 23rd | o | No record | -- | -- |
| Black Tern | April 22nd | April 26th | o | Oct. 6th | Oct. 7nd | o |
| Spotted Flycatcher | May 11th | May 2nd | + | Sept. 22nd | Sept. 26th | o |
| **Winter migrants** | **Departure** | | | **Arrival** | | |
| Jack Snipe | March 30th | April 9th | * | Sept. 26th | Oct. 2nd | o |
| Redwing | April 6th | April 9th | o | Sept. 27th | Sept. 28th | o |
| Fieldfare | April 1st | April 15th | * | Sept. 26th | Oct. 6th | * |
| Brambling | April 21st | April 15th | o | Oct. 15th | Oct. 8th | o |

Migration – First arrival and last departure dates


RJP

# Weather Report for 2014

Richard Bland

The BNS began publishing weather data in 1872 with G. F. Burder's paper on rainfall in Clifton since 1853, and this led me to search for temperature data back to that date. From 1920 until its closure in 2002 the Long Ashton Research Station published this data, and since then I have used The Times daily report for Bristol, although since 2000 I have used my own rain gauge. There is an excellent website at www.afour.demon.co.uk which has also traced records from some other sources back to 1853, and I have used these to fill in the gaps. A long series is crucial to any understanding of the continuous processes of climate change, which is normally defined as the average of the previous thirty years' data. I use the term 'long-term average' to mean the average back to 1853. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature as the basis, but many sources only quote daily maxima and so I have used these figures throughout.

**Summary for 2014** The year was the warmest since 1853, beating the previous record set in 1921 by half a degree. January and February were the wettest since 2002, July was the driest since 1999, and September was the driest since 2003. Several months were hotter than usual; January was the hottest since 2008, March since 2003, June since 1976, September was the second hottest since 1865, and overall the autumn was the hottest ever recorded. The year as a whole was slightly wetter than normal.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Av. Max. ºC | 14.4 | 14.7 | 14.5 | 13.7 | 14.6 | 14.2 | 15.5 | 14.7 | 14.8 | 16.1 |
| Ten year av. ºC | 14.2 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.4 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 14.7 |
| Rainfall *mm* | 896 | 952 | 1107 | 1150 | 986 | 747 | 847 | 1420 | 799 | 1143 |
| Ten year av. *mm* | 956 | 974 | 997 | 1005 | 993 | 943 | 945 | 981 | 983 | 975 |

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

## Seasons

**Winter** (December 2013 to February) Average temperature was 9.9ºC, two degrees above the long-term average. Rainfall averaged 139*mm* per month, 75% above normal, all three months being very wet. There were 16 frost nights (October to April), the fewest since 2006, the last on March 24th. The average for the past decade is 29 per winter. No snow fell and ponds were never frozen.

**Spring** (March to May) Average temperature was 15.3ºC, the same as 2012, two degrees above the long-term average. Rainfall was average at 65*mm* per month.

**Summer** (June to August) Average temperature at 22.5ºC was similar to 2013, two degrees above the long-term average. Rainfall at 87*mm* per month was a little above average, but August was very wet.

**Autumn** (September to November) Average temperature at 17.0°C was slightly above the previous record set in 1921. Rainfall at 80*mm* per month was average.

**Seasonal Comparisons** To put the 2014 seasonal average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes in degrees Celsius, with their year, the average since 1853, and the difference between 2014 and the long term average. Table 3 overleaf gives the same detailed information for rainfall.

| | *2014* | Min. | Max. | Av. since 1853 | Diff. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winter | *9.9°* | 1917 - 2.5 | 1920 - 10.6 | 7.5° | 2.4° |
| Spring | *15.3°* | 1887 - 10.4 | 1893 - 16.6 | 13.0° | 2.3° |
| Summer | *22.5°* | 1883 - 18.0 | 1976 - 23.9 | 20.3° | 2.2° |
| Autumn | *17.0º* | 1915 - 10.6 | 1959 - 16.8 | 14.0° | 3.0º |
| Annual | *16.1º* | 1892 - 12.1 | 1921 - 15.6 | 13.7° | 2.4º |

Table 2 -- Seasonal average temperatures for 2014 compared with minimum, maximum and average since 1853

| | 2014 | Min. | Max. | Av. since 1853 | Diff. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winter | 139*mm* | 1964 – 21*mm* | 1995 – 154*mm* | 79*mm* | 60*mm* |
| Spring | 66*mm* | 1893 – 17*mm* | 1981 – 107*mm* | 60*mm* | 6*mm* |
| Summer | 87*mm* | 1995 – 11*mm* | 2012 – 149*mm* | 74*mm* | 13*mm* |
| Autumn | 80*mm* | 1978 – 26*mm* | 1935 – 173*mm* | 80*mm* | 0*mm* |
| Annual | 87*mm* | 1864 – 49*mm* | 2012 – 118*mm* | 75*mm* | 12*mm* |

Table 3 -- Average monthly rainfall in *mm* for each season in 2014 showing the maximum, minimum and average since 1853, and the difference between 2014 and the average since 1853

## Monthly percentage deviation in 2014 from the average since 1853

The temperature in January and February was notably warmer than average, and the rainfall in January, February and August was also notably above average while March, July and September were drier.

| | Temp. | Rain | | | Temp. | Rain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 32% | 101% | | July | 19% | -59% |
| February | 31% | 105% | | August | -2% | 117% |
| March | 27% | -54% | | September | 23% | -80% |
| April | 23% | 19% | | October | 18% | -6% |
| May | 9% | 65% | | November | 22% | 52% |
| June | 17% | -34% | | December | 20% | -31% |

Table 4 -- Monthly percentage deviations in 2014 from the norm

## Monthly Summary 2014

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Temp. °C | 9.4 | 9.9 | 12.5 | 15.7 | 17.6 | 22.6 | 24.9 | 20.1 | 22.1 | 16.6 | 12.1 | 9.3 | 16.1 |
| Rain *mm* | 169 | 127 | 28 | 68 | 102 | 41 | 31 | 189 | 16 | 189 | 134 | 62 | 75 |

Table 5 -- Monthly average temperatures and total rainfall for 2014 with averages for the year in the last column

**January** A succession of depressions swept across the Atlantic bringing frequent strong SW winds, temperatures were two degrees above normal, and rain fell on all but nine days. There were three frosty nights**.**

**February** The January pattern continued, with rain falling on 22 days, SW winds, and average weekly temperature rising from 7ºC to 11°C over the month. There were three frosty nights.

**March** High pressure set in on 7th and dominated for the rest of the month, with light winds bringing 24 dry days with sunshine peaking at 11 hours on 16th. Temperatures were two degrees above average.

**April** The month was dominated by high pressure throughout with mostly light southerly winds and 19 days without rain, temperatures were around 16ºC, peaking at 20°C on 19th, and rainfall was average.

**May** Low pressure dominated from 5th to 14th with strong SW winds, a heat wave from 14th to 19th culminated in a temperature of 26ºC. This was followed by a low pressure system that brought NE winds, a fall in temperature to 12°C on 24th, with some recovery by the end of the month. There were 15 dry days, but above average rainfall, half of which fell between 21st and 24th.

**June** High pressure took control from 9th and dominated for the rest of the month, with very light N or NE winds, clear skies, and temperatures that reached 27ºC on 23rd. Rainfall was below average with 24 dry days.

**July** For much of the month there was very little pressure gradient across the country, winds were light and variable, and the weekly average temperature rose steadily to reach 31°C on 24th and 25th. Very little rain fell and there were 21 dry days. Ten days had over ten hours of sunshine and only two were overcast, although total sunshine was less than in this month in 2013.

**August** The first week was fine and warm, but low pressure settled over the Baltic bringing ten days of NW winds, falling temperatures and between 9th and 14th over a month's worth of rain, with 42*mm* on 11th alone, the wettest day of the year. There were, however, 14 days without rain, and sunshine and temperatures were average.

**September** The first three weeks were dominated by high pressure over the Baltic, bringing light NE winds, generally overcast skies, and 27 days were without rain. Day-time temperatures remained in the twenties throughout, and it was the driest September since 2003. The wind switched to the west on 22nd, but brought little other change.

**October** A sharp contrast with September, the month was dominated by low pressure over Iceland or the central Atlantic, moderate W or SW winds and a sharp fall in temperature in the first two weeks reaching 12ºC on 14th, after which there was a recovery reaching a record 22°C on the last day of the month. There were 12 dry days and nine

overcast, average rainfall but the temperature was still 2ºC above the October average.

**November** The warm pattern continued, with temperatures between 10°C and 14°C throughout, and no frosts. The month was dominated by high pressure over the Baltic, with light SE winds from a still warm continent.

**December** A large high pressure area developed over the Azores, and kept depressions sweeping well north of the UK. Moderate westerly winds, little rain and only six frost nights ensured that maximum temperatures remained around 10°C all month until the last weekend of the year.

**Weather Extremes**

The table below gives figures for the extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the events of 2014 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 (about 65%) have no rain at all although in 2014 this dropped to about 55%.

| | | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Temp. of hottest day | °C | 30 | 35 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 26 | 29 | 30 | 32 | 31 |
| Temp. of coldest day | °C | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | -1 | -5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Rainfall on wettest day | *mm* | 47 | 39 | 40 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 40 | 72 | 33 | 42 |
| Hours of sun on sunniest day | Hours | 14.8 | 14.7 | 14.1 | 14.9 | 14.7 | 15.6 | 14.7 | 15 | 15 | 13.3 |
| Longest dry spell | Days | 14 | 22 | 24 | 16 | 20 | 24 | 23 | 17 | 20 | 17 |
| Longest wet spell | Days | 7 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 9 | 7 |
| Number of night frosts | Nights | 32 | 33 | 25 | 44 | 42 | 76 | 22 | 41 | 67 | 15 |
| Number of days with snow | Days | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 19 | 33 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Number of stormy days (30mph+) | Days | 20 | 27 | 22 | 16 | 17 | 9 | 24 | 22 | 25 | 28 |
| Number of days hotter than 25°C | Days | 14 | 27 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 19 | 32 | 27 |
| Number of days colder than 5°C | Days | 26 | 39 | 18 | 14 | 37 | 60 | 13 | 16 | 29 | 2 |
| Number of days with 10+hr sun | Days | 38 | 36 | 45 | 29 | 49 | 46 | 44 | 38 | 44 | 39 |
| Number of days with no sun | Days | 89 | 107 | 99 | 95 | 95 | 106 | 104 | 93 | 95 | 82 |
| Number of days with no rain | Days | 248 | 234 | 238 | 228 | 265 | 269 | 253 | 205 | 238 | 203 |

Table 6 -- Summary of weather extremes for the past decade

## A note on climate

Climate is defined as the normal weather measurements taken over a time period, usually thirty years. Because it is an average it changes only slightly from one year to year. Weather varies much more widely from year to year than climate does in centuries, and birds like all other wildlife respond to the changing conditions they experience on a daily basis. Data gathered over the last decade on the Downs in Bristol suggests that as a general rule a change of one degree Celsius 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 more quickly than this. The climate changes that have occurred since the last ice age have led to continual change in the wildlife that can thrive here, and this process continues. Seasonal change, such as the very warm spring and summer in 2014, can have a much more dramatic effect on yearly bird populations, and the table below shows the climate figures for each season for the past decade. They make it clear that over this period spring has warmed rapidly and that summer has become wetter, but that the other seasons have remained stable.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winter, ºC | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 7.9 | 8.0 |
| Spring, ºC | 13.0 | 13.1 | 13.1 | 13.2 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.5 | 13.4 |
| Summer, ºC | 20.3 | 20.3 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 20.4 | 20.4 | 20.5 | 20.5 |
| Autumn, ºC | 14.3 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 14.6 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Winter, *mm* | 86 | 87 | 89 | 88 | 88 | 86 | 87 | 87 | 87 | 88 |
| Spring, *mm* | 65 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 64 | 65 | 63 | 64 |
| Summer, *mm* | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 70 | 72 | 74 | 74 | 76 |
| Autumn, *mm* | 92 | 91 | 91 | 93 | 95 | 95 | 93 | 94 | 94 | 94 |

Table 7 -- Annual average temperature and rainfall for the past thirty years

# 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.

A Adams, T Adams, J & J Aldridge, S Allison, R M Andrews, D J Angell, J Angell, K Ashbrook, A Ashman, C D C Avanti, D V Avis, P Baber, L Bailey, M Bailey, K Bainbridge, K Balch, R Barclay, J R Barker, J Barnett, P Barnett, J Baron, N Barrett, R Beale, N Beamson, V R Beaney, M Benson, G R Bentley, D Best, T J Best, R W Billingsley, R & P Bingham, J Birkett, P Black, S Black, S Blackmore, B Blake, P Blanchard, R L Bland, G M Blockley, G T Blowfield, W G Blumsom, K Boberski, C Boddy, C F Bollen, L J Bond, T Bond, S A Boswell, A Bourne, P Bowdler, B Bowerman, P D Bowerman, R Bowerman, A Bowers, D W Bowring, P A Bowyer, C T Boyce, B R Boyland, S Bradfield, B Bray, M T Breaks, E Brett, M Breward, R Brewer, M Brierly, B D Briggs, L Brittain, A Britton, J Brodie-Good, M Brolly, D Brooke-Taylor, G Brown, R & R Brown, D Buckingham, R Buckley, J Budd, K Burford, P J Burston, J F Burton, O Burton, J R Butcher, C Caldwell, G Campbell, S Carey, S Carder, A Carlisle, P M Carter, V Castle, B R Catlin, S Cave, P Chadwick, P Chambers, R Chance, B & M Channon, A Chapman, C B Chapman, P Chapman, S E Chapman, A Chard, K Charity, A Chastney, Chew Valley Ringing Station, F C Clark, T Clark, C Clarke, D W J Clarke, M Clarke, G Clarkson, J Claxton, J Clear, N Clatworthy, J Cliffe, A Cobley, N Coldicott, M Coller, M Collis, R Collis, J G Connolly, A Cook, P Cook, P Cooke, D C Coombs, J F Copeland, P J Coslett, S Cost, D Cottle, D Cox, B Crabb, C Craig, J Croxton, J Crutchley, D & N Cullen, J Cumming, M J Cumming, L Cunningham, R M Curber, S Curtis, M Dadds, B D'Arcy, G Davies, S Davies, S Davies, T Davies, A H Davis, M Davis, L & P Delve, M Dewhirst, G Dicker, I Dickie, T Dingwall, E H Dodd, P Dolton, T Doman, P Dommett, M Dowie, P Down, E Drewitt, G Dring, J W Duckworth, J Duffy, N Duggan, C Durbin, L Dutton, P Dyke, R Eagles, W Earp, B Edge, R Edmondson, G Elliott-Moustache, D Ellis, D Elves, D Emery, S D Emery, R J Emery, S England, D Esam, P Etheridge, G Evans, L G R Evans, P Evans, S Evans, T Evans, J Evry, R Facey, P G Farmer, K Farrell, C Fayers, M Feetham, T Fenton, A W Flannagan, R Fleetwood, A Ford, R Ford, T Ford, D Freeman, S French, C W Gale, D Gale, L Gardiner, L Garner, J Garrigan, S George, A Gibb, C Gibb, B Gibbs, D Gibbs, R Giles, M Gillett, J Gilliard, A Goldsmith, A Goodall, D Goodliffe, A Goodwin, M Gorely, M G Grant, T Grant, B M J Gray, P Green, T Green, C Greenfield, M C Greenish, P A Gregory, J Griffiths, L Griffiths, T Grubb, A C Gutteridge, M Hale, S Hale, K D Hall, K J Hall, S Hall, C Halpin, R J Halsey, S A Halsey, M Hamzij, P Hancock, J Hannam, J Hansford, G Harris, J Harris, M Harris, R Harris, J Hatch, D Havercroft, N & A Hawkridge, P Hawkins, R Hawley, I Hayes, M Hayes, J Hazell, P J Hazelwood, S J Healey, M Hedges, L Hellier, R Henson, A Herring, Y Heward, K Hewitt, R J Higgins, D Hill, M J Hill, P Hilton, M R Hipkin, J Hirst, M Hitchings, M Hitchins, M Hobbs, M P Hobson, A Hockey, R Holbrook, G Honey, D Horlick, H Horrocks, K Horrocks, C Horsley, P House, S Howe, G Hudd, D Hughes, G Hughes, T Hughes, A Huish, R Humphreys, D J Humphries, C Hunt, J Huntley, R Hurding, R Hutchinson, C Hynam, M Hynam, C Inghams, C Ingram, L Ingram, , P Insole, S Irving, S Isgar, B Ives, A G Jackson, M A Jackson, R James, S Jarrett, T Jeal, M Jenkins, R Jewell, R J John, M A Jackson, T Jeal, Ch Johnson, Co Johnson, M Johnson, R Joliffe, A Jones, C D Jones, C J Jones, C M Jones, G Jones, K A Jones, S Judd, D Julian, R Keel, N Kempson, P Kempster, W King, H Kington, D Knowles, D Labuschagne, H & D Lack, R Lambert, B Lancastle, C S Lane, J Lanfear, R Langley, A Langson, J Latham, R Laughton, A Leggatt, M Leivers, A Levinson, C Lewis, M Lewis, C Lews, D Littleton, H & M Lloyd, N Lloyd, S J Lockhart, D Long, R Lowery, J A Lowes, A Lucas, S Mackie, J H Marchant, J Margetts, P Marsdon, M Marshall, P Marshall, B Martin, J P Martin, M J Martin, P D Masters, J Matthews, H Maynard, G McCarthy, M McCartney,J McDonald, T McGrath, J D McGreal, M J Mcgill, G McLaren, D McLaughlin, A McLellan, R W McMurrough, A Mears, S Mears, P Merry, I Metzler, W Middlemist, A J Middleton, R G Mielcarek, N R Milbourne, R Miles, D Miller, J Mills, O Mockridge, G Moore, K J Morgan, G Morris, S Morrison, K Mortimer, J Mortin, S Moss, C Mott, R Musgrove, F Neate, D Nevitt, M Newstead, D Nicholson, D Northover, J Oakley, D Oakley-Martin, M&C O'Connor, C O'Neill, C Oliver, J Oliver, K Oliver, J A Olver, R Ormerod, J Packer, S Padfield, N Page, R Palmer, S Pannell, J Parker, P Parmenter, J Parry, M Parsons, M Patch, D M Pearce, M Pearce, H Pedder, N Penn, A S Perry, C Perry, A L Phillips, T J Phillips, G Pictor, B Pilecka, M Plenty, V Polley, A Pomroy, M S Ponsford, G Poole, M Poole, S Poole, D Pope, D Poulton, J & M Powell, L Presland, J & S E Prince, D M Pritchard, L Pryce, R J Prytherch, G Pudney, R Purveur, R J Pyrah, P Quinn, E Quinto-Ashman, D Ramsbottom, M Ramsbottom, G Rankin, C Rapsey, P Raven, B Rawlings, R Reader, C Reed, D Reeves, A R Rhodes, K Rhodes, M Rhodes, P Rich, C Riches, J Rickard, T Riddle, L Ritchie, L F Roberts, D I Robertson, R Robinson, A L R Robjohns, K Robson, D I Rogers, M Rogers, S Rogers, H E Rose, C M Ross, J Rossetti, RSPB Enquiries Team, C Ryall, L Ryan, K Rylands, S Sammonds, J Sanders, S N Sanins, G Sapsed, V Savery, R Scantlebury, N Scarborough, A D Scott, M Scott, E Shaw, E M Shilland, T Simpson, A C Sims, G Sims, P A Sketch, L Skorka-Brown, A P Skull, A M Slade, D & J Smith, J Smith, K Smith, M Smith, R H Smith, V Smith, M Soldner, M Southam, C P Sperring, G Stacey, R & G Stanton, R & J Staples, I & C Stapp, J Starr, F T Steuck, D R Stoddard, P G Stoddart, C J Stone, N Strickland, G Suter, J L Swallow, B Sweeting, L Sweetland, R W Swift, H Taffs, P Tainton, A Taylor, P Taylor, A Teague, C Teague, R Teague, R Terry, G Thoburn, C Thomas, G Thomas, J Thomas, M Thomas, B Thompson, C Thompson, J Thorogood, J Toller, J Tonkin, J R Tottle, P Treen, M Trew, L Tucker, N Tucker, W Tucker, C E Tudge, B Tully, R Turner, G Uney, J Unsworth, G Upton, D Usia, J Vickers, D J Viles, C Vines, K E Vinicombe, N Voaden, E Wall, D Warden, G Warren, T Warren, G Watkins, A Waygood, D Webb, R Webber, A Webster, R Werran, S Westerberg, T Weston, A V Wheatcroft, M J Wheeler, T Whitby, D White, I White, R White, A Whitelee, J Whitfield, M Wightman, N Wilcox-Brown, I Wilkinson, C Williams, J Williams, N P Williams, P Williams, R Williams, S Williams, P Wills, P Wilmot, I Wilson, R Winn, D Winnie, G Woodberry, N Woodman, P Woolams, H Wright, G Youdale, C A Young, S F Young, P Zaltowski 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,
Birding South Gloss – www.thebirdsofsouthgloucestershire.co.uk,
Newton-St-Loe Birding - http://newton-st-loe-birding.blogspot.co.uk/
Severnside Birds – www.severnsidebirds.co.uk,

# 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 -- BANES (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 January 2014. The nomenclature follows that given by 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, firstly the number of individuals recorded between 1983, the first year AOG was responsible for producing the Report, and 2013 and secondly the number of new individuals recorded in 2014. If descriptions were first required for the species in question subsequent to 1983, the first 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 first one or two names of the observer(s) who found the bird, or who 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 or summer 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. The details are given overleaf.

**BBS** - the BTO **B**reeding **B**ird **S**urvey

In 2014 a total of 178 squares was surveyed in the Avon area, excluding those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset, and 54,154 birds of 103 species were recorded. Changes from year to year 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. Many 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 2004. In some cases this is not given if the population is stable and very little change was noted.

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 163, 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 **C**lifton **A**rea **B**ird **S**urvey

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 2014 there were 48 (48) walks totalling 56 (56) hours and 5800 (5400) birds of 43 (41) species were counted at an overall rate of 96 (96) per hour (2013 figures in brackets). For common species accounts the percentage change in this data from the previous year is displayed.

**WGS** - the **W**inter **G**arden **S**urvey

This survey began in the 1973/4 winter and involves counts using gardens between October and March. In 2013/14 a total of 28 (32) gardens participated, there were 640 (740) weeks of observations and 43,000 (33,200) birds of 46 (52) species were counted (2012/13 figures in brackets). Percentage changes in WGS numbers present are displayed in the status chart of the relevant species account.

**WeBS** - the **We**tland **B**ird **S**urvey 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 is based. Locally it covers the whole of the Severn shore, the lower reaches of the main rivers flowing into the Severn, 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. This survey now publishes an annual trend summary showing how the populations of the UK's non-breeding waterbirds have fared over the past decade, 2002/03 to 2012/13; this is given in the WeBS data line and is denoted by: Nat. 10-year trend.

## 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 2014. 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 imply that 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 |
| **Cl-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 and other pools 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 169. |
| **Severnside** | Severn shore and its environs between Aust Warth and Chittening Warth inclusive |
| **Weston STW** | Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and surrounding areas |

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

## MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

*Fairly common resident; most winter just inland from the coast around Kenn Moor, the Bristol City Docks wintering flock is now much smaller (feeding no longer takes place). Summer moulting flocks occur principally at CVL.*

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 26th site of National Importance in 2013/14. Nat. 10-year trend: -6%.

There was a small increase from 2013 in the number of sites where this species was recorded. The largest single count was for Weston STW, now one of the best Avon sites, and the wintering flocks were in the Kenn Moor/Kingston Seymour area (often close to the M5 motorway) and CVL. The CVL moult count was considerably smaller than in 2013. The first two tables summarise the data for the past ten years.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70 | 80 | 85 | 72 | 85 | 80 | 64 | 22 | 11 | 18 |

Numbers wintering in Bristol City Docks - Maximum count (ten-year average = 59)

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 117 | 115 | 98 | 107 | 115 | 125 | 187 | 140 | 145 | 92 |

Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average = 124)

There were non-BBS records from 66 sites which compares with 60 in 2009, 74 in 2010, 68 in 2011, 70 in 2012 and 64 in 2013. Apart from the 13 tabulated sites most of the remaining 53 held five or fewer individuals. 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 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Keynsham R.Avon | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 3 | | | 4 | 8 | 7 |
| Portishead Lake | 4 | 4 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | | | 4 |
| Portishead Marina | 11 | 10 | | 11 | 5 | 10 | 16 | 13 | | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| PWD | 4 | | 2 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 15 | 4 | 7 |
| Cl-Y | 4 | 4 | 21 | 26 | 21 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 16 | 9 |
| Kenn Moor | 45 | 60 | 52 | 30 | | | | | | | 56 | 10 |
| Backwell Lake | 27 | 25 | 26 | 20 | 25 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 28 |
| BG | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | |
| CVL | 40 | 35 | 60 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 90 | 95 | 80 | 80 | 60 | 45 |
| BL | 6 | 6 | 18 | 21 | 28 | 22 | 24 | 48 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 4 |
| Axe Estuary | | 30 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | | | 6 | 10 |
| Weston STW | 87 | 51 | 49 | 62 | 17 | 24 | 9 | 31 | 125 | 104 | 53 | 76 |

Monthly maxima of adults at the main sites

*Mute Swan cont*. Counts of 20 or over not included in the above table were as follows:

Kingston Seymour -- 40 on March 13th, 34 on 30th and 31st, and 25 on April 5th, 6th and 7th;

Hewish/Kingston Seymour -- 22 on Jan.18th, 24 on 26th and 30 on March 20th;

Bourton -- 20 on March 29th.

*Survey Data* The local BBS survey recorded this species in 16 squares (23 in 2013), which represented 9.0% of those surveyed. The total counted was 136.

*Breeding* A much better year with 23 successful broods recorded (13 in 2013). Breeding was confirmed at the following sites: Oldbury Power Station (pair with three cygnets), Orchard Pools, Severn Beach (pair with six cygnets), Portishead (pair with three cygnets), Weston STW (three pairs with a total of 12 young). Kensington Meadows, Bath (pair with seven cygnets), Prior Park, Bath (female with six cygnets), Saltford (pair with one cygnet), Tickenham Moor (pair with three cygnets), Chelvey (pair with six cygnets), Backwell Lake (pair with four cygnets), Congresbury, Silver Spring Lakes (pair with two cygnets), Whitley Batts (adult with two cygnets), CVL (eight broods with 27 cygnets). At BL five pairs successfully raised broods of 6, 6, 4, 6 and 4, and another pair failed.

The table below summarises the data for the past two decades.

| 1995/04 Av. | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 115 | 144 | 121 | 123 | 121 | 88 | 120 | 124+ | 44 | 57 | 106 |

Number of cygnets per year (ten-year average = 105)

*Ringing data* Three colour-ringed records from CVL.

(a) The first was at Herriott's Pool on Jan.10th with ring ND9, it had been ringed at West Hatch on Feb. 5th, 2012 and released at the lake.

(b) The second, a juvenile, had a green ring with the letters VT9 on its left leg and was seen on Jan.14th. It had been taken injured to the RSPCA Wildlife Centre at West Hatch, near Taunton on Oct.18th, 2013, it weighed 7.9*kg*. After a veterinary examination, treatment and rehabilitation it was ringed and released at Charlton, Somerset (ST682524), along with several other juveniles and weighed 9.2*kg* at release.

(c) The third individual with an orange ring and the black letters K4A was seen on March 21st and April 21st. It had been ringed as a cygnet on Sept.14th, 2013 from a brood of nine on the lake in the Moors Valley Country Park, Ashley Heath, Dorset.

## **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 the fourth site in the UK of International Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2013/14. Nat. 10-year trend: -8%.

Another poor year with records noted in the second winter period only as follows:

OPS -- three on Dec. 2nd;

Aust -- two flew over on Dec. 28th;

Severn Beach -- three adults and two juveniles on Dec. 30th;

CVL -- two on Nov.10th, and a party of eight including one juvenile on Dec. 28th.

The table below shows the estimated number of individuals recorded in each winter over the last 20 years.

| 1995/04 Av. | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12./13 | 13/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | 23 | 18 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 41 | 37 | 41 | 5 | 40 |

Number for each of the last ten winter periods (average 23) with previous decade average

## **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus* (12, 0)

*Rare winter visitor.*
Descriptions required.

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: 25%.

The two adults from December 2013 remained until March 1st, predominantly at CVL but visiting BL on Feb. 17th and 18th. One then disappeared on March 2nd or 3rd with the other remaining at CVL from the 4th until April 4th.

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

*Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.*

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the seventh site of National Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2013/14. Nat. 10-year trend: -38%.

A very poor year, the only record being of seven seen flying NE over Aust Cliff on March 10th.

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

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7+ | 28 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 31 | 22 | 8 | 35 | 9 |

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.*

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: 28%.

Reasonable numbers were recorded, mainly in ones and twos but with a maximum count of 30 over OPS on Aug. 31st. The table below summarises the counts during the last decade.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sites | 5 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 12 | 10 | 18 | 20 | 17 | 15 |
| No. Individuals | 11 | 32 | 74 | 33 | 27 | 80 | 102 | 49 | 58+ | 69 |

Sites and numbers each year

The details are as follows (all were single birds unless otherwise stated), there were no records of successful or attempted breeding:

OPS -- two on March 8th flew SW, a flock of 30 in V-formation flew low over to the south on Aug. 31st, one on Oct. 9th, 10th and 24th;

Littleton Warth – Aug. 14th and 22nd;

Northwick Warth / New Passage / Pilning Wetland -- three on March 30th, four on April 19th and then one on many dates from July 31st through to Nov. 23rd with two more on 11th;

Severnside -- four on April 19th and one on Aug. 19th (almost certainly the same individuals as above);

PWD -- several dates in each month from Jan. 9th to May 18th. Last recorded on July 29th;

Portishead Marina -- July 4th;

Portishead Lake -- Jan. 2nd and on several dates through to Feb. 20th, May 14th, July 8th (assumed to be the same as the Portbury Wharf and Portishead Marina individual), and on several dates from Dec. 1st to 30th;

Walton Bay – four in flight on Nov. 11th;

Cl-Y -- two on April 23rd, 27th, 28th and 30th, and five on Nov. 29th;

Weston STW – Aug. 31st;

Saltford -- Feb. 21st (in flight), March 8th, and April 14th (also in flight);

Sea Mills reach -- three on May 31st;

CVL -- Jan. 8th and 21st, Feb.17th, March 11th, 26th and 30th, April 15th, 16th and 25th, two on May 3rd, six on June 20th and 21st and one on Aug. 21st;

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

## GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

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

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: 7%.

The now regular flock at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands saw a considerable increase in 2014, monthly counts of which appear in the table of regularly counted sites overleaf. Good numbers continue to winter at CVL and BL but the numbers moulting at CVL were down for the third successive year and were below the long term average, see ten-year tables. An individual with an orange neck collar marked JR was noted at Bathampton Meadows during March and April. During September and October large numbers were seen on a stubble field at Lower Langford and were assumed to be wanderers from the CVL/BL flock.

*Greater Canada Goose cont.*

| | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL | 72 | 61 | 51 | 65 | 84 | 229 | 110 | 206 | 167 | 144 |
| BL | 278 | 124 | 192 | 241 | 315 | 221 | 348 | 404 | 355 | 300 |

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (Sept. to March), ten-year average = 119 (CVL), (BL) 278.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 572 | 507 | 415 | 295 | 385 | 440 | 500 | 417 | 318 | 250 |

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average = 409)

The number of sites where this species was recorded rose sharply from last year's figure of 51 to 75.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 26 | 28 | 53 | 48 | 50 | 48 | 55 | 51 | 75 |

Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average = 46)

The monthly maxima 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 | 27 | 29 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 15 | 18 | 110 | 114 | 147 | 90 | 45 |
| Severnside | 56 | 58 | 41 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 75 | 119 | 250 | 80 | 140 | 68 |
| PWD | 7 | 31 | 22 | 17 | 21 | 54 | 58 | 1 | 28 | 11 | 20 | 24 |
| Cl-Y | 104 | 24 | 18 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 74 | 18 | 8 | 110 | 52 |
| Backwell Lake | 29 | 22 | 18 | 21 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 12 | 26 | 6 | 28 | 51 |
| Weston STW | | 34 | 17 | 24 | 7 | 17 | 10 | 148 | 26 | 66 | 80 | 74 |
| R. Avon, Keynsham | 39 | 40 | 14 | | | | | | | 6 | 17 | 27 |
| CVL | 192 | 100 | 70 | 40 | 30 | 225 | 175 | 275 | 50 | 2 | 1 | 205 |
| BL | 198 | 21 | 6 | 13 | 56 | 139 | 100 | 365 | 487 | 400 | 211 | 323 |

.Monthly maxima of adults at the main sites

*Other sites* The only counts (of adults) over 25 not included in the above table were as follows:

Portishead Lake -- 29 on Dec. 30th;

Frampton Cotterell -- 31 to NW on Aug. 3rd;

Longwell Green -- 28 over on Oct. 17th;

Batheaston / Bathampton, R. Avon -- 94 on Jan.26th, 61 on April 25th, and 36 on May 27th;

Saltford -- two on several dates from April 10th to 29th but four on 19th; 43 on Oct. 3rd, and 38 on14th;

Abbotts Leigh - 28 over on Oct. 8th;

BG -- 35 on Sept.12th, 28 on 15th,17th and 26th, 22 on Oct 5th, and 32 on 10th;

Wrington - 77 on Oct. 31st;

Lower Langford -- 340 on Sept. 17th, 95 on 29th, 180 on Oct.15th and 216 on 16th;

Kenn Moor - 12 on Feb. 20th.

*Survey Data* The local BBS survey recorded this species in 20 squares, which represented 11.2% of those surveyed. The total counted was 166 and the best count was 163.

*Breeding* A very successful breeding season with a particularly large number of young raised at Bathampton/Batheaston, R. Avon. The number of confirmed sites was nearly double that of 2013 with nests/broods noted at the following ten: OPS (pair with three goslings), Pill (two pairs nesting), Portishead (pair with four young), Kingston Seymour (two pairs, with 11 young), Bathampton/Batheaston (R. Avon) ten nests on April 25th and 32 young on June 28th, Stockwood (pair with four young), Chelvey (pair with eight young), Backwell Lake (pair with four young), ), Congresbury, Silver Spring Fishing Lakes – three pairs, with broods of seven, seven and one, and CVL (seven broods, 27 young), and BL (pair with four goslings).

The table summarises the data for the last decade, observers are asked to report all breeding attempts. (*Eds*.).

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Confirmed sites | 6 | 8 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Nests/broods | 9 | 14+ | 7 | 19+ | 18+ | 12 | 18 | 10 | 13 | 27 |
| Young | 35 | 39 | 16+ | 72 | 73 | 52 | 49 | 40 | 36+ | 97 + |

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: Naturalised. The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 12th site of National Importance in 2013/14.

Numbers were up on those of 2013 and with five records away from CVL/BL. The first table summarises the data from the past decade.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sites | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Number | 1 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 250 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 31 |

Sightings away from CVL/BL

Sites away from CVL/BL

Severnside -- 12 on Jan. 7th, one on several dates from Feb. 21st to March 8th;

Gaunts Earthcott -- five on May 2nd;

Keynsham R.Avon -- 12 on Jan. 11th.

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL remained at 17 as shown in the table below. In 2014 very few were seen at BL between March and July and none at CVL in September or October.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 11 | 11 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 23 | 23 | 17 | 17 |

Maximum count from CVL/BL

*Breeding* At CVL one brood produced four young, three of which fledged. Breeding was first noted here in 1998 and has been attempted in each year since then as shown in the table below. Three broods (7, 7, 1) were seen at Silver Spring Lakes, Congresbury, their status and origin was not known.

| | 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pairs | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Goslings | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Fledged | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 |

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.*

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: 33%.

Numbers of bird-days for the last decade are given in the table below and show that 2013/14 was a poor winter compared to that in 2012/13, both being below the ten-year average.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 228 | 127 | 147 | 38 | 226 | 144 | 24 | 88 | 98 | 34 |

Bird-days October-March (ten-year average 115)

Actual counts were low in the first winter period but higher in the second. The largest was 17 at Severn Beach in March. The records are given below, single birds unless stated otherwise.

*First winter period*

Northwick Warth -- Jan.12th, Feb. 7th, 9th, 10th, 21st, 22nd and 24th, and three on April 21st (see above);

Severn Beach -- Feb. 12th, 17 on March 22nd, three on 29th, and three on April 21st;

*Second winter period*

OPS -- Nov, 2nd and three on 27th and 28th;

Severnside -- two on Oct. 9th, 12 on 15th, one present from Nov.1st through to 15th, and two on Dec. 1st;

Cl-Y -- 12 on Oct. 30th, 11 on Nov. 4th, two on Nov. 9th, and 10th, one on 11th, two on 15th, three on 18th and one on 23rd;

Sand Point -- ten on Oct. 30th.

## EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

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

For the second year running a pair bred at CVL, fledging four young (five in 2013). There was also a report of a second brood late in the year here, the young unfortunately appear to have been trapped on the downstream side of an overflow and were assumed to have perished.

The table below gives the number of adults seen in the Avon area during the past 13 years. There were none recorded prior to 2002.

| 2002 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1* | 1* | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5+ | 2 | 11 | 8 |

Numbers recorded each year (* treated as escapes)

The records for all sites are given below.

Portishead Lake / Battery Point -- four present from Jan. 3rd to 10th;

Saltford -- one on Sept.19th, Oct. 3rd and 25th, and Nov. 3rd and 20th;

Keynsham -- one on Jan. 28th, Feb.18th and 19th, April 26th and Nov. 10th;

CVL -- up to four were seen on several dates up to March 22nd. A pair with four young was reported on 30th and noted as a family group until April 22nd when an additional four adults were seen. Up to ten were present on several dates through to Sept. 7th, and on 8th there were 12. An adult with 6 new chicks was seen on Oct. 11th. Up to seven were noted on various dates until the end of December. A photograph of one of these birds appears opposite page 40;

BL -- one on July 18th and 19th.

## 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: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the fifth site of National Importance after nine of International Importance for 2013/14. Nat. 10-year trend: -26%.

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

*Survey Data* The local BBS survey recorded this species in 10 squares, which represented 5.6% of those surveyed. The total counted was 57 and the best count was 52, fewer than in 2013.

*First winter period (January to March).* There was an increase in the numbers wintering north of the R. Avon with a highest count of 160 at Severnside on March 22nd (which may have included some passage birds as only 123 were seen in February) keeping numbers above the ten-year winter average of 102. South of the Avon the highest count was 200 at Cl-Y on March 4th. This was below the ten-year average of 585. The tables below summarise the data over the past decade.

| | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North of R. Avon | 90 | 104 | 117 | 130 | 90 | 40 | 80 | 140 | 67 | 146 |
| South of R. Avon | 360 | 650 | 415 | 630 | 500 | 479 | 862 | 490 | 540 | 930 |

Highest winter count at a single site (Oct.– Feb.). N. of Avon ten year average = 102. S. of Avon ten year average =585.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 203 | 105 | 147 | 120 | 90 | 142 | 262 | 308 | 278 | 198 |

Winter records at Cl-Y - Average of the three highest counts (Oct. – Feb.). Ten year average = 185

*Breeding* Another poor year with figures similar to those of 2013; broods noted at or near the coast were as follows:

OPS -- two broods, of seven and 14;

Aust/Northwick Warths -- four broods, with at least 30 young;

Royal Portbury Dock -- two broods with 11 young;

Cl-Y coast -- four broods, with a total of 32 young;

Weston STW -- one pair with six young.

Breeding was also reported inland at CVL with two broods, of one and eight, none of which survived, they are thought to have been predated which is often the case at this site.

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

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 116 | 123 | 162 | 116 | 181 | 163 | 186 | 78 | 163 | 108 | 107 |

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

*Second winter period (September to December)* Low numbers were recorded north of the R. Avon with a maximum count of 47 at Northwick Warth on Dec. 27th, but to the south a very large WeBS count was made on Nov. 9th when there were 930 at Sand Bay.

The numbers at the main sites are set out in the table below, the CVL August count refers to juveniles.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 9 | 16 | 46 | 27 | 50 | 20 | 19 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 13 |
| Littleton Warth | 19 | 21 | 23 | 41 | 56 | 49 | 24 | 6 | | | 5 | |
| Severnside | 63 | 123 | 160 | 76 | 75 | 23 | 27 | 34 | 11 | 13 | 30 | 47 |
| Cl-Y | 155 | 190 | 200 | 95 | 80 | 70 | 50 | 130 | 480 | 340 | 200 | 115 |
| Sand Bay | 130 | 107 | 29 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 | | | 31 | 930 | 320 |
| Axe Est. | 107 | 107 | 51 | 43 | 34 | 7 | 20 | 35 | 340 | 611 | 400 | 510 |
| Weston STW | 25 | 29 | 20 | 16 | 18 | 27 | 18 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| CVL | 20 | 15 | 22 | 30 | 25 | 24 | 2 | 6 | | | 4 | 14 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Recorded at a further 28 sites (12 in 2009, 20 in 2010,18 in 2011, 21 in 2012 and 29 in 2013).

## **MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

*Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.*

The number of records was well down on recent years as shown in the table below. No breeding records were received for 2014. The details are as follows:

Tortworth Lake -- a drake and six ducks reported on Feb. 2nd, and four on March 2nd;

Little Avon (Horwood Farm) – a pair on May 4th;

R. Avon (Saltford) – a drake from June 25th to the end of the year;

CVL (Herriott's Pool) – a drake on Oct. 5th.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 13 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 22 | 19 | 20 | 42 | 39 | 32 | 45 | 31 | 15 |

Total number of individuals each year

Given the proximity of the Forest of Dean population, it is surprising that so few are recorded in the Avon area, with no sites appearing on the 2013/14 WeBS list. Tortworth Lake, at least, would seem to be a worthy candidate for regular counts.

## **WIGEON** *Anas penelope* [Amber 6, 7]

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

WeBS: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 12th site of National Importance, after five of International Importance, in 2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: -16%.

| Year | Severnside | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 790 | 195 | 129 | 371 |
| 2012/13 | 617 | 72 | 73 | 254 |
| 2013/14 | 1033 | 377 | 294 | 568 |

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

Numbers bounced back again at the three top local sites, see table above, thanks to counts made in the early winter months, but these dropped over the turn of the year at CVL and BL due to a rise in water levels, leaving the bulk of the wintering population along the Estuary.

A single bird was noted at Severn Beach on the late date of May 17th. The first to arrive after the breeding season was a first-summer male at CVL on July 11th. Autumn numbers at CVL were low due to the lack of extensive growth of the water plants; *cf*. Gadwall and Coot. The table overleaf gives the monthly breakdown.

*Wigeon cont.*

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | July | Aug. | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 200 | 270 | 52 | 7 | | | | 23 | 57 | 200 | 120 |
| Littleton Warth | 42 | 80 | 14 | | | | | 22 | 99 | 135 | 280 |
| Severnside | 700 | 500 | 180 | 6 | | | 1 | 400 | 750 | 700 | 600 |
| PWD | 160 | 60 | 28 | 2 | | | | 20 | 155 | 84 | 190 |
| Cl-Y | 400 | 260 | 115 | 65 | | | | 130 | 195 | 265 | 350 |
| Woodspring Bay | 48 | 72 | 6 | | | | | 5 | 99 | 11 | 70 |
| Axe Est/Weston STW | 4 | 7 | | | | 4 | | 43 | 91 | 48 | 102 |
| BG | 3 | 1 | | | | | | 18 | 10 | 2 | 6 |
| CVL | 48 | 4 | 5 | 18 | | 1 | 9 | 37 | 62 | 30 | 100 |
| BL | 11 | 11 | 7 | | | | 1 | 73 | 87 | 57 | 31 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

*Other sites* Records also came from Sand Bay, Backwell Lake, Batheaston, the Bristol Avon at Saltford and Keynsham, a first site record for Newton Park (Bath), and Publow, 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: CVL was the ninth site of National Importance, after eight of International Importance, in 2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: 20%.

The winter and autumn moult status data are as follows.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 133 | 45 | 89 |
| 2012/13 | 26 | 27 | 27 |
| 2013/14 | 270 | 98 | 184 |

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

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 – 2014 Av. | 259 | 63 | 161 |
| 2013 | 403 | 79 | 241 |
| 2014 | 188 | 54 | 121 |

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

Winter counts were up, but the moult counts were down, at both main sites as shown above. Counts at most sites were in line with those made in 2013 with the notable exception of CVL where numbers were substantially lower and the autumn peak was shorter due to poor water plant growth. Nationally, WeBS data has shown that numbers remain high, but appear to have dropped since the peak of 2011/12. Monthly maxima are as follows.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | 2 | | | | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Severnside | 15 | 24 | 24 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 27 |
| Chittening/Avmouth | 13 | 13 | 16 | 4 | 5 | | | | | 11 | 4 | 24 |
| PWD | 23 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 18 | 13 | 33 | 18 | 30 | 30 | 13 |
| Cl-Y | 4 | | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 2 | 15 | 5 | 1 |
| Weston STW | | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 17 | 20 | 29 |
| Backwell Lake | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 18 |
| BG | 5 | 3 | 4 | | | 4 | | 8 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| CVL | 5 | 6 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 146 | 160 | 270 | 115 | 45 | 25 | 20 |
| BL | 2 | | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 | | 40 | 67 | 108 | 146 | 35 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

*Breeding* It was a better year at CVL as shown below with six broods producing 29 young in 2014.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broods | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 |

Number of broods recorded at CVL each year

## **TEAL** *Anas crecca* [Amber 7]

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

WeBS: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the third site of National Importance, after eight of International Importance, in 2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: -3%.

| Year | Severnside | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 274 | 1314 | 533 | 707 |
| 2012/13 | 383 | 277 | 35 | 232 |
| 2013/14 | 315 | 2503 | 1106 | 1308 |

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

Counts on the Estuary were a little below those made in 2013. It is worth noting that the local count only contributes a small fraction of the number that makes the Estuary a site of National Importance for this species. The two main inland sites attracted large numbers in the early winter period, with low water levels proving particularly attractive to most dabbling duck species. The national WeBS data shows a continuing upward trend in numbers (67% since 1987/88) which has levelled off recently.

The monthly breakdown at the well-watched sites is as follows.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 129 | 110 | 92 | 67 | | | 2 | 2 | 21 | 30 | 290 | 150 |
| Littleton Warth | 295 | 320 | 35 | 2 | | | | 4 | 130 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| Severnside | 300 | 235 | 105 | 80 | 1 | 12 | 8 | 58 | 410 | 380 | 700 | 195 |
| PWD | 378 | 320 | 16 | | | 2 | 3 | 4 | 55 | 40 | 170 | 200 |
| Cl-Y | 400 | 259 | 255 | 110 | | | | 4 | 110 | 75 | 90 | 190 |
| Axe Est. | | 130 | 7 | 3 | | | | 8 | 14 | 55 | 47 | 206 |
| Weston STW | 37 | 64 | 60 | 4 | | | 1 | 9 | 42 | 16 | 29 | 54 |
| BG | 45 | 37 | 17 | 7 | | 1 | | 6 | 59 | 85 | 72 | 158 |
| CVL | 140 | 50 | 45 | 7 | 2 | 38 | 90 | 120 | 985 | 805 | 485 | 685 |
| BL | 88 | 9 | 13 | 2 | | | 4 | 19 | 74 | 189 | 359 | 94 |
| Chew Magna Res | 4 | 10 | 7 | | | | | | | | | |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

*Other sites* A number of other inland sites reported a few, but the only other counts of 50 or more was as follows:

Newton Park Lake – 50 on Jan. 21st;

R. Avon (Saltford) – 90 on Jan.17th and 80 on 25th;

Congresbury Moor – 70 on Jan. 6th and 75 on 13th.

*Ringing records* Three were ringed by the CVRS during the year.

*Breeding* Although present throughout June at CVL, there was no proof of breeding here or anywhere else in the area, as has been the norm for many decades past.

## **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** *Anas carolinensis* (14, 2)

*Rare Nearctic vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

Two records, both males in November:

New Passage – Nov. 22nd and 23rd (P D Bowerman *et al*., photographed);

BL – seen briefly on Nov. 9th (N R Milbourne).

Eight have been reported during the last decade as follows.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Numbers recorded 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: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was eighth, with CVL 18th, in National Importance in2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: -18%.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 547 | 216 | 381 |
| 2012/13 | 458 | 75 | 267 |
| 2013/14 | 690 | 231 | 461 |

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

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 – 2014 Av. | 922 | 376 | 649 |
| 2013 | 1273 | 694 | 983 |
| 2014 | 948 | 243 | 595 |

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

Moult counts were down at CVL and BL, while winter counts were up at both sites and above the ten-year average; see tables above. Counts at most other local sites appeared to be much the same as last year, even though the national WeBS data shows that numbers continue their long-term decline, the monthly breakdown at the main sites is given below.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 171 | 95 | 28 | 31 | 33 | 80 | 98 | 140 | 173 | 100 | 193 | 146 |
| Littleton Warth | 12 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 31 | 37 | 49 | 96 | 86 | 52 | 30 |
| Severnside | 100 | 46 | 35 | 23 | 39 | 48 | 130 | 112 | 75 | 44 | 25 | 40 |
| R. Avon Sea Mills | 9 | 26 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 28 | 14 | 23 | 29 | 19 | 22 |
| Portbury Wharf / PWD | 20 | 6 | 26 | | 16 | 11 | 11 | 38 | | 47 | 16 | 15 |
| Cl-Y | 65 | 45 | 70 | 55 | 65 | 70 | 65 | 135 | 160 | 110 | 95 | 125 |
| Woodspring Bay | 25 | 5 | 20 | 16 | 5 | 35 | 11 | | 132 | 60 | 42 | 25 |
| Axe Estuary | | 30 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 77 | 134 | 165 | 40 | 108 | 63 | 74 |
| Weston STW | 26 | 28 | 22 | 20 | 35 | 37 | 157 | 169 | 76 | 36 | 21 | 36 |
| BG | 21 | 14 | | 20 | 40 | 13 | 49 | 78 | 56 | 47 | 20 | 54 |
| Chew Magna | 2 | 19 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 7 | 13 | 7 |
| CVL | 600 | 370 | 295 | 175 | 280 | 490 | 495 | 985 | 910 | 770 | 785 | 795 |
| Litton Reservoirs | 22 | 78 | 25 | 23 | 90 | 64 | 57 | 39 | 48 | 151 | 53 | 42 |
| BL | 88 | 58 | 46 | 44 | 37 | 122 | 129 | 234 | 251 | 282 | 155 | 121 |
| Aztec West | 35 | 20 | | 33 | | | 85 | | 104 | 122 | | |
| Backwell Lake | 89 | 95 | 31 | 29 | 68 | 83 | 104 | 127 | 128 | 127 | 74 | 121 |
| Duchess Pond | 5 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 47 | | 15 | | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Eastville Park Lake | 70 | 102 | 53 | 51 | 47 | | 57 | | 65 | 77 | 128 | 40 |
| Keynsham | 60 | 29 | 48 | 42 | 48 | 70 | 60 | 113 | 112 | 135 | 108 | 54 |
| Bristol Avon (Saltford) | 50 | 51 | 26 | | 37 | 41 | 42 | 82 | 55 | 76 | 93 | 64 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

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

Avonmouth – 65 on Jan. 22nd;

Portishead (Boating Lake) – 80 on Jan. 5th and 127 on June 30th;

Batheaston – 50 on Jan. 5th;

Congresbury Moor – 55 on Jan. 6th

BBS data: A total of 707 was noted in 84 one *km* squares which is 47% of those surveyed. The first table give the BBS data since 1994.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| -41% | -46% | -29% | -13% | 7% | -2% | 7% | -7% | 0% | -6% | 3% | -13% |

BBS percentage changes

*Breeding* Productivity seemed to be well up, 92 broods with at least 463 young were reported (not all observers gave counts of young), and this was mirrored at CVL (see table overleaf). The earliest brood was

noted at CVL on April 8th, and for the second year, a brood of at least six ducklings was recorded on Steep Holm (*per* warden J. Smith).

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broods | 17 | 22 | 29 | 21 | 38 | 24 | 31 | 21 | 27 | 35 |
| Young | 93 | 100 | 176 | 130 | 213 | 115 | 176 | 130 | 129 | 174 |

Number of broods and young at CVL each year

*Ringing* A total of 28 was ringed by the CVRS in 2014.

## **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.*

WeBS: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 22nd site of International Importance in 2013/14 although, as can be seen in the table below, most occur outside the Avon area. Nat 10-yr trend: -43%.

There was a sparse scattering of records from the Estuary. Draw down of water at CVL gave a longer autumn feeding period than at BL where water levels remained high throughout the year. Surprisingly, the last spring record was on April 27th at Cl-Y, as it was last year, and the first to return was an eclipse drake at CVL on Aug. 21st. All major sites are tabulated below, no records were received from any other:

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 6 | | 3 | | | | | | 5 | 3 |
| Severnside | 13 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | | 4 | 3 | 2 | |
| Cl-Y | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | | | | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Axe Estuary | | | | | | | | 11 | 1 | 3 |
| WestonSTW | | | | | | | 15 | 1 | | |
| CVL | 10 | 5 | 6 | | | 2 | 49 | 47 | 3 | 23 |
| BL | 2 | | | | | | | 25 | 21 | |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The second table gives a 'snapshot' of the occurrences for the past decade, where it can be seen that 2014 saw a return to average numbers after the peak of 2013.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 140 | 77 | 60 | 29 | 70 | 65 | 57 | 37 | 110 | 49 |

Maximum single count in the Avon area each year

## **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula* [RBBP], [Amber 1, 5]

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

CVL apart, there was a poor showing compared with 2013. All records are listed below:

*Spring and summer*

Severnside – a drake on April 23rd was joined by a second from 24th to 26th at Pilning Wetlands, and one on 30th;

Cl-Y – a drake on Dowlais Farm Pool on May 5th and a duck on Blake's Pool on July 31st;

CVL – a long series of records from May 13th with a pair noted intermittently until June 13th, and a drake last seen on 14th;

BL – a pair from April 6th to13th.

*Autumn*

CVL – a female from July 11th to 22nd, a juvenile male noted from 23rd, three on 29th, then five adults from Aug. 4th, a peak of six during the third week of the month, four in the first week of September falling away to a single female seen until the late date of Nov. 5th;

BL – a female from July 21st to 27th.

*Breeding* A pair was present at CVL during the breeding season, but there was no evidence of success.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 |

Maximum single count at CVL each year

## 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: CVL was the ninth English site of International Importance, while the Severn Estuary (English counties) was 13th site, and BL was 15th, of National Importance after the nine of International Importance, in 2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: 1%.

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 185 | 72 | 128 |
| 2012/13 | 34 | 13 | 24 |
| 2013/14 | 43 | 74 | 59 |

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

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 – 14 Av. | 332 | 177 | 254 |
| 2013 | 265 | 518 | 391 |
| 2014 | 470 | 36 | 253 |

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

The tables above show that winter counts at CVL were well down on the norm, although the site remains of International Importance. National WeBS data show that numbers continue their slow long-term upward trend. Moult numbers at BL were well down on last year mainly due to the late drop in water level and subsequent rapid rise towards the year end. Elsewhere sightings were fairly normal as is shown in the main table below, except for Severnside where the creation of the Pilning Wetlands has helped this species to increase here.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | | | | 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Severnside | 29 | 25 | 23 | 14 | | | | 7 | 36 | 37 | 27 | 23 |
| PWD | 21 | 18 | 10 | 6 | | 3 | 12 | | | 12 | 12 | 32 |
| Cl-Y | 3 | | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| Weston STW | | | | | | | 3 | 2 | 10 | 11 | 13 | |
| Backwell Lake | 13 | 26 | 12 | | | | | | 11 | 32 | 22 | 40 |
| BG | 40 | 17 | | | | | | 6 | 79 | 15 | 15 | 57 |
| CVL | 15 | 4 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 7 | 48 | 90 | 435 | 505 | 80 | 250 |
| BL | 5 | | 4 | 7 | 2 | | | 15 | 25 | 46 | 44 | 12 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

*Breeding* Two pairs present at CVL one of which bred raising two young to fledging (*per* K E Vinicombe). .

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of broods | 2+ | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| No. of young fledging | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2 |

Breeding success at CVL each year

## RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

The handful that appeared in the area favoured BL, as they did in 2013, although it is likely that the same group appeared at CVL briefly as well. The details are as follows:

CVL – six (four drakes) on Nov. 25th;

BL – a good series of records with a drake on Jan. 1st, two drakes and a duck on Nov. 8th, rising to four on 9th identified as two adult males, an adult female and a juvenile female all of which stayed until Nov. 24th, then two new males on 29th.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 19 | 23 | 25 | 3 | 24 | 7 |

Total number of individuals recorded each year

## POCHARD *Aythya farina* [RBBP], [Amber 1, 3, 7]

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

WeBS: CVL was fourth, and the Severn Estuary (English counties) ninth, English sites of National Importance, in 2013/14. BL was the 17th English site. Nat. 10-yr trend: -41%.

Counts at BL were above average due to a number made during influxes probably caused by the species susceptibility to sailing / fishing disturbance at CVL and Cheddar Res. Numbers are showing a steady decline

nationally, as indicated in the last report, but this does not appear to be the case on local waterbodies, lending support to the continued importance of this wintering '*mega-population'.*

| Year | CVL | BL | BG | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 748 | 223 | 92 | 355 |
| 2012/13 | 433 | 118 | 31 | 194 |
| 2013/14 | 443 | 320 | 48 | 270 |

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

The table below summarises the counts from the main sites.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weston STW | | | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Backwell Lake | 6 | 1 | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| BG | 45 | 59 | | 1 | | | 4 | 12 | 7 | 18 | 8 | 30 |
| CVL | 265 | 160 | 15 | 25 | 30 | 45 | 40 | 35 | 155 | 295 | 280 | 430 |
| BL | 80 | 89 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 36 | 25 | 36 | 7 | 42 | 11 | 513 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

There were records from eight other sites: OPS, Severnside, Avonmouth, PWD, Portishead, CI-Y, Axe Estuary, and Chew Magna Res.

*Breeding* At CVL two of the young were attached to a Tufted Duck brood, thought to have been the result of interspecific brood parasitism (*per* K E Vinicombe). On Aug. 5th two juvenile males and a juvenile female were present with five juveniles on 11th, it was not clear if there was any overlap between these groups.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of broods | 1 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| No. of young | 4 | 14 | 35 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 22 |

Recorded breeding success at CVL each year

## **TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula* [RR] [Amber 1]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked the fourth English site of National Importance in 2013/14, with BL ranked 16th. Nat 10-yr trend: 5%.

The basic status data is as follows:

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 20113/14 Av. | 1148 | 417 | 782 |
| 2012/13 | 1215 | 619 | 917 |
| 2013/14 | 900 | 647 | 774 |

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

| Year | CVL | BL | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 – 2014 Av. | 1148 | 417 | 782 |
| 2013 | 1440 | 866 | 1153 |
| 2014 | 1470 | 860 | 1165 |

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

Overall wintering numbers were in line with the ten-year average at the two main sites, although there appears to be a slight shift towards BL, where late summer moult counts were again significantly above average; see tables above. It would be interesting to know how important the two reservoirs are, in a national context, as moult sites. This might help to inform ongoing management decisions as the push for increased leisure access and activities continues.

Sightings at the other main sites were similar to 2013. The WeBS data show the numbers remain steady.

The table below gives the monthly maxima for the main sites which once again shows a huge count at CVL in September and seems to reflect, in part, post-moult males moving here from BL when an influx of females arrive to moult at CVL. Although high this count was not a record, this was set in 2012 when 2475 were counted also in September.

*Tufted Duck cont.*

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 4 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 26 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Severnside | 21 | 28 | 14 | 16 | 11 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 19 | 15 |
| PWD | 18 | 15 | 53 | 33 | 40 | 26 | 12 | 14 | | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| Portishead lake | 16 | 16 | 11 | 22 | 8 | | | 4 | | | 5 | 4 |
| Weston STW | 9 | 12 | 10 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 4 | 9 | 9 |
| Tortworth Lake | | 26 | 33 | | | | | 11 | 22 | 44 | | |
| Backwell Lake | 20 | 16 | 15 | 3 | | | | | 1 | 5 | 9 | 18 |
| BG | 77 | 80 | 40 | 54 | 33 | 75 | 283 | 286 | 83 | 77 | 57 | 53 |
| CVL | 315 | 330 | 380 | 310 | 75 | 80 | 585 | 505 | 2355 | 590 | 390 | 500 |
| BL | 215 | 276 | 300 | 159 | 35 | 106 | 605 | 1114 | 300 | 542 | 689 | 804 |
| Chew Magna Res | 19 | 41 | 29 | 7 | | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 4 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

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

*Breeding* As usual this was widespread, but the number of recorded broods was up on last year, and although the number of young was up, a high proportion succumbed to predation. There were three broods (23 young) at OPS, one at Pilning Wetlands (seven young reduced to three, the first Severnside breeding record), two broods at PWD (13 young), single broods at Portishead (three young) and BG (six young), eleven broods at CVL (44 young, the best year since 2000), and one brood at BL (two young). The table below puts the 2014 breeding data in context.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| No. of broods | 6 | 20 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 11 | 20 |
| No. of young | 25 | 115 | 16 | 55 | 29 | 41 | 25+ | 74+ | 63 | 98 |

Breeding success in the Avon area

An adult drake with a blue nasal saddle bearing the number 34 was noted at CVL on Aug.11th and BL from Oct. 26th to Nov. 9th. This individual has been noted locally since 2008. It was ringed at Marolles-sur-Seine in France on Nov. 19th, 2007 (*per* A Caizergues). Note also that CVRS ringed 22 during the year.

## **SCAUP** *Aythya marila* [Red 3]

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

WeBS - Nat. 10-yr trend: -47%.

All records were from CVL during 2014. The tables below put these records into context.

| | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| BL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Max flock | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 2 |

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

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Number of individuals recorded on the Estuary each year

The latest date in the first winter period was May 3rd, while the first arrival of the second winter period was on Oct. 18th. Details are as follows:

*First winter period*

CVL – an adult female from 2013, with a drake and four females noted from March 23rd to 26th, a drake and two females until April 2nd, and two females until 5th, with the wintering female staying until May 3rd;

*Second winter period*

CVL – an adult female arrived on Oct. 18th, presumed to be the individual from the previous winter, it was joined by a first-winter female from Oct. 25th to 30th.

**LESSER SCAUP** *Aythya affinis* (10, 0) [BBRC]
*Rare Nearctic vagrant with the first local record in 2000.*

The adult male, seen in 2012 and 2013, returned for a third year.

BL – present from June 29th until Aug. 17th (N R Milbourne *et. al.,* photographed);

CVL – present from Aug. 19th until Sept. 3rd (K E Vinicombe *et. al.*).

This species was first recorded in the Avon area at BL in 2000, in both spring and 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.*

WeBS - Nat 10-yr trend: -7%.

There were only two records in the area, both spring migrants, the table shows the data for the past ten years:

Severn Beach – females on April13th and May 7th.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 56 | 7 | 3 | 2 |

Total number of individuals recorded each year

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis* (53, 5)
*Scarce winter visitor; some at the reservoirs may stay for several months.*
Descriptions required.

An excellent year with at least five individuals reported, details as follows in chronological order:

BG – a first-winter male was present from Jan.1st until Feb. 15th and again from March 2nd (S Davies *et al*., photographed). Its final date was unclear, the last record received was for March 29th but we understand it remained until April 6th;

Sand Point – one that flew south on Feb.15th (P A Bowyer) was seen again on the 22nd;

BL/CVL – the first-winter male from BG visited CVL on Feb. 16th, and possibly also on 25th. A male was reported at BL on March 12th but no notes were submitted, while an immature, possibly a male, was seen at CVL on 14th (K J Hall). On the 16th two first-year males were found at BL and they remained until May 3rd (N R Milbourne *et al*., photographed), visiting CVL on March 25th, and April 8th and 16th;

CVL – a juvenile was seen and photographed on Nov. 3rd (A H Davis *et al*.).

The table below shows the records for the last decade.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 |

Number of individuals recorded (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 an average year (see table overleaf), but with a good spread of records. The first was on the Estuary on Feb. 24th, and the last of the year was noted on Nov. 27th at Severn Beach.

The records are as follows:

Severnside – a male on April 4th at Northwick Warth, two females on Oct. 8th at Severn Beach and another on Nov. 27th also seen at Northwick Warth;

PWD – three on May 31st;

Cl-Y – four on March 11th, a female April 6th, and one each on Aug. 27th and Nov. 25th;

Middle Hope and Sand Point – two to S on Feb. 24th and 27th, nine on March 10th, four on the 15th and 31st, 45 to N on April 4th, one to S on the 11th, and three on 21st and 24th, then one in the second winter period on Oct. 9th;

Weston Bay (Anchor Head) – two on July 5th;

*Common Scoter cont* CVL – ten on July 7th (including four 'female types'), a female on July 9th and 10th, one reported (no details) Sept. 13th and a male on Nov. 9th.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 129 | 145 | 85 | 75 | 53 | 59 | 51 | 206 | 83 | 103 |

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 and later.*

WeBS: CVL was ranked thirteenth English site in 2013/14. Nat. 10-yr trend: -32%.

It appears that we are starting to see the national winter downward trend beginning to bite locally, as indicated in the table below and by the CVL spring maxima. Short-stopping is postulated as the main reason for lower numbers nationally during the winter months.

| Year | CVL | BL | BG | Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004/05 – 2013/14 Av. | 90 | 21 | 12 | 123 |
| 2012/13 | 95 | 19 | 1 | 115 |
| 2013/14 | 53 | 19 | 3 | 75 |

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

Although up to three females were noted during the breeding season, there was no breeding evidence.

*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 | 4 | 4 | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| CVL | 50 | 60 | 110 | 30 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 50 | 50 |
| BL | 11 | 35 | 17 | 2 | | | 1 | | | 1 | 6 | 11 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The following table summarises the spring counts at CVL over the past decade and shows that numbers may be showing signs of a decline, although numbers are prone to wide fluctuation.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 178 | 175 | 162 | 170 | 105 | 135 | 155 | 145 | 160 | 110 |

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

*Other sites* Recorded at two other sites as follows: OPS – a drake on Aug. 31st, and Severnside – a female/immature at New Passage on Nov. 13th.

## **SMEW** *Mergellus albellus* [Amber 1, 5]

*Scarce winter visitor, mainly to CVL and BL.*

Another poor showing in the area (see table below) with just a single individual at CVL:

CVL – a series of redhead records, all identified as a single first-winter drake and almost certainly only involving one individual, were noted on various dates between Jan. 2nd and Feb. 5th.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 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.*

WeBS - Nat. 10-yr trend: -20%.

This scarce winter visitor remains just that, with just three records away from CVL in 2014:

*First winter period*

R. Axe – one reported on Feb. 16th;

CVL – the returning veteran male was present form 2013 to Feb. 23rd, the returning adult female to March 17th, and a juvenile/first-winter female was noted from Feb. 13th to April 8th.

*Second winter period*

Littleton Warth – one on Nov. 15th;

Severnside (New Passage) – presumed same individual as above on Nov. 29th;

BG – one reported on the WeBS count on Dec. 6th;

CVL – the veteran male had returned by Nov. 3rd and stayed into 2015, and the returning female that had arrived by Dec. 5th also stayed into 2015.

*Note* When 'Mervyn', the veteran returning CVL male, returns in late autumn he is often in eclipse plumage, leading to erroneous claims of females here at this time of year.

## **GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked the 28th English site in 2013/14 - a significant 'demotion'. Nat. 10-yr trend: -32%.

Winter counts at CVL were in line with those made over the past decade, although it should be noted that the site appears to be getting less important as a wintering venue in the national context, even though WeBS data indicate a steady overall population downward trend locally. This may, of course, just be due to the mild winters we have experienced recently. The following tables give the data for the past decade.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | 22 | 24 | 54 | 32 | 26 | 80 | 25 | 25 | 35 |

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

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | 28 | 43 | 65 | 21 | 95 | 65 | 31 | 40 | 70 |

Maximum counts at CVL each year

The table below summarises the counts at the main sites

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | April | : | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cl-Y | 2 | 3 | 2 | | | | | |
| Weston STW | | 4 | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Backwell Lake | 3 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| BG | 5 | 2 | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| CVL | 24 | 30 | 20 | 1 | | 3 | 20 | 70 |
| BL | 4 | 3 | | | | | 1 | 2 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Counts from the less frequented sites were as follows, although there may be some duplication because this species often roosts on the reservoirs and flies out to feed elsewhere. The first returning individuals were two noted on Oct. 14th at CVL. The December count at CVL was the highest since 2010 and although numbers at BL were very poor, most other sites were normal. A photograph of a male at CVL appears opposite page 40.

*First winter period*

Severnside – a female on March 13th;

Portishead (boating lake) – a drake from Jan. 2nd to 23rd was joined by a second (no details) on 6th and 18th;

Cl-Y – two on Jan. 19th, three on Feb. 7th, 19th, one on 20th and 22nd, three on 24th, one on March 2nd and two on 4th;

Sand Point – a female on April 24th;

Weston STW / R. Axe – one on the Estuary and four at STW on Feb. 16th, a female at STW on 22nd, 28th, and March 1st;

Clapton Moor – a female over to SW on March 29th;

R. Avon and R. Chew (Keynsham) – two on Jan. 15th, three on 21st, six on Feb. 6th, one on 15th, seven on 18th, three on 19th and 23rd, two on 24th, one on March 1st, five on 9th and one on April 1st;

R. Avon (Saltford) – a drake from

*Second winter period*

Severnside - a female on Sept. 18th and a drake on Nov. 10th;

Weston STW – a female on Dec. 5th.

## RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

*Once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL and scarce elsewhere, now very scarce. Regular culling by order of Defra continues, the last recorded local breeding in 2008.*

WeBS: CVL was ranked third English site in 2013/14, although only four sites now have a five-year average count in double figures. Nat 10-yr trend: -99%.

As usual, all bar one record came from CVL and BL, the exception being a drake recorded at Weston STW on a single date in November. There was evidence of movement between the two main lakes.

Weston STW – a drake on Nov. 9th;

CVL – present from the beginning of the year with peak counts of eight on Jan. 10th, six on Feb. 16th and three on March 17th, with one or two summering, increasing to three on Aug. 26th, four on Sept. 8th, five on the 18th to 21st, and up to three staying until the year end;

BL – a duck and drake noted intermittently from the start of the year until Feb. 9th, a single drake on July 14th, a peak count of four drakes in August on the 21st, five drakes in September from 23rd into late October with a duck appearing for a day on 11th, then numbers dropping to the last sighting of a drake on Dec. 14th.

## 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 all sight records of non-singing birds away from the Marshfield area.

There was a further decline this year with reports of calling individuals from only three sites, and no evidence of breeding was received.

The records for the three sites mentioned above and one other are given below.

Marshfield -- one on July 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th;

West Littleton -- just a wing of one found on June 16th;

Brentry -- one on May 27th on a site close to the edge of Filton Airfield;

East Dundry -- one on July 20th, 21st, 24th and 28th; and one was seen on the ground and in flight on 27th.

See table below for the number of singing males recorded each year for the last decade.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 5 | 5+ | 3 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 14+ | 4 | 4 | 3 |

Number of singing males each year

## RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Generally it was a poor year with records from only six sites away from the Marshfield area (13 in 2013). There was a good count of 200 at Marshfield on Dec. 3rd, and one of 80 at nearby West Littleton on Jan.1st. The only other site with regular records was Saltford, with a maximum count of 27 on Dec.17th.

*First winter period (January – March)* Reported from five sites (*cf.* eight in 2010 and 2011, five in 2012 and four in 2013).

Marshfield area (up to a radius of approximately two *km* from the village centre) - five on Jan. 7th,14th and 28th with 20 on 11th, nine on Feb. 1st, 17 on 16th and five on March 4th.

Away from the Marshfield area the records are as follows:

West Littleton area -- 80 on Jan. 30th, 69 on Jan 30th;

Shirehill Valley (Broadmead Brook) area -- 27 at Rownham Farm on Jan. 19th, presence noted on Feb. 24th and 25th;

Burledge -- one male singing on March 26th;

Saltford -- six on Jan. 30th, five on March 1st and then three or fewer on several days in March until 19th when there were two; two on April 10th, 17th, 20th and 24th.

*Survey Data* The local BBS survey recorded this species in 11 squares, which represented 6.2% of those surveyed. The total counted was 30 and the best count was 25.

*Breeding season (April – June)* Reported from at least four sites (*cf*. 11 in 2011, five in 2012 and nine in 2013). Actual breeding was only proved at Saltford where 15 downy young were seen on July 29th. There were three records from the Marshfield area: six on April 11th, one on June 3rd and two on 27th. In *SG* away from the Marshfield area there were records of one near West Littleton on April 31st and June 16th. In the Shirehill Valley area presence was noted on April 9th. In *BA* apart from the Saltford record mentioned above, the only other was of presence noted at Newton Park on May 29th.

*Autumn and second winter period (July – December)* In the Marshfield area there were nine records, noted in each month from August onwards, with peaks in October --150 on 30th, November --100 on 5th and 22nd, and in December -- ten on 8th.

West Littleton -- one on Aug. 3rd and 30 on Nov. 2nd;

Shirehill Valley (Broadmead Brook) area – four on Sept. 2nd and 27th, and 200 on Dec. 3rd;

Saltford -- on July 29th there was one adult with 15 downy young and on Aug. 14th one adult with 13 juveniles. Recorded throughout September – max. of 25 on 1st, October - max. of 23 on 31st, November - max. of 22 on 24th, and 27 on Dec.17th.

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

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites - SG | n/a | 6+ | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 3 |
| No. of sites - NS | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| No. of sites - BA | 8 | 12 | 19 | 12 | 18 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 |

Number of sites recorded away from ST77

## GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix* [Red 3]

*Scarce, local and declining breeding resident.*

The run of poor years continued into 2014 which was the worst on record. No breeding was reported. There were just two records both from the Tormarton area: two on May 12th at ST769798 (a BBS sighting), and two on July 26th at ST7779. The table below shows the continuing decline over the past decade.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites - SG | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| No. of sites - NS | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2* | 2* | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| No. of sites - BA | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |

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

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

## PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

*Survey Data* The local BBS survey recorded this species in 96 squares, which represented 53.9% of those surveyed. The total counted was 567 and the best count was 393. The table below shows the BBS percentage changes in population from 2003 to the present.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30% | -9% | 0% | 14% | -7% | -6% | -3% | 0% | -2% | -9% | 3% | 3% |

BBS percentage changes

Non BBS reports were widespread with records from at least 83 sites, all but thirteen having single figure counts. The largest counts were 100 at Rownham Farm NE of West Littleton on Nov. 2nd, 50 at Whiteshill Barn E of West Littleton on the same date and 50+ at Tormarton on Oct. 29th, and 55 were at Walton Common on Oct. 13th. Very low numbers were seen in the Marshfield area with a maximum of 16 on Jan. 5th.

*Breeding* At CVL 19 singing males were noted in the breeding season but only one chick was seen this year (*cf*. 34 in 2011, 23 in 2012, none in 2013). Two other reports: a female with chicks was at Cold Ashton on May 31st, and quite large numbers (50 noted but true count probably much larger) were hand-reared on Walton Common remaining into the autumn. Some of these probably bred ferally, at least one pair attempted to breed in a local garden.

## RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata* (63, 3)

*Formerly a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes storm-driven, but in recent winters sizeable groups have been noted in the outer Estuary.*
Descriptions required.

Again the only records came from the Weston area but in much smaller numbers than in the previous winter. Noted in January and April and all observed by P A Bowyer. The details are as follows:

Sand Point – one to the north on both Jan.11th and 19th;

Anchor Head – one to north on April 8th.

## GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* (47, 2)

*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 poor year by recent standards, with two records, both inland, details as follows:

BL – a summer plumaged adult found late afternoon on Oct. 19th was still present early the next morning but then departed (N R Milbourne *et al*.);

CVL – a juvenile close in to Woodford Lodge on Nov.10th remained into 2015 (A H Davis, R Mielcarek *et al*., photographed).

## DIVER sp

Two records:

Sand Point – one that flew upriver late in the afternoon of April 21st was thought to be a Red-throated;

BL – one seen only in flight on Nov. 9th was probably the Great Northern that was seen at CVL the next day.

### Divers in the Avon area

| | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Red-throated | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 9 | 31 |
| Black-throated | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Pacific | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Great Northern | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3+ | 3 |
| Diver sp. | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 3 |

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.*

In the absence of prolonged periods of strong winds the number of records was the lowest since 2010 and there were no inland sightings. Most were, as usual, seen in the spring but there were two autumn records. One present around Steep Holm daily from May 1st to 5th could possibly have been prospecting nest sites for future years. The table below shows all records received apart from the Steep Holm individual. One of the seven seen at Severn Beach on May 10th was an aberrant very pale, almost white individual. This colour phase was probably a result of a reduction of melanin in its body; see photograph opposite page 80.

| | Jan | Feb | | | Mar | Apr | May | | | | | | Aug | Sept |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 17 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| Severnside | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | | 1 | |
| Ladye Bay | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Sand Point | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | |

## 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.*

The absence of strong winds in June, usually the peak month for this species, meant that very few were seen and the total of 69 (*cf*. 2811 in 2012 and 1363 in 2013) was the lowest since 2005. For the fourth year running there were no inland records. All records are listed overleaf:

Severnside – one on May 8th and three on 10th;

Sand Point – one on May 8th and 16 on July 14th;

Anchor Head – one on May 10th and 47 on July 5th.

## STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus* [Amber 6]

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

This was the only pelagic species to be seen in higher numbers than usual (see page 42), although all but one of the records involved single birds. Sightings were made in two periods, from May 10th to 12th and Aug. 9th to 12th. All records, single birds unless stated, are listed below:

Severnside – May 10th, 11th and 12th and Aug. 11th, with four on 12th;

Ladye Bay – Aug. 9th;

Sand Point – May 11th, feeding on a dead Harbour Porpoise as it floated past.

## GANNET *Morus bassanus* [Amber 6, 7]

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

As with the other sea birds 2014 was a very poor year, in 2013 records came from eight different sites on 21 dates; see table on page 42. The only count over ten was on April 7th, and otherwise the period May 7th to 12th was the most productive. The table below shows all records:

| | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | | | | | July |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | 18 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 20 |
| Severnside | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | |
| Ladye Bay | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Anchor Head | | 1 | 35 | | 6 | | | | 3 |

## CORMORANT *Phalocrocorax carbo*

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

WeBS Nat. 10-year trend: -1%

Record numbers were present at CVL in the last three months of the year, feeding on the abundant shoals of coarse fish, which appeared to be mainly perch. They spent much of time at two roosts, on Denny Island and at Twycross, between bouts of feeding in the northern part of the lake. A count here on Jan. 30th indicated about one-third were *carbo* and two-thirds *sinensis*. The main data is given in the following tables.

| 1998/08 Av | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 133 | 197 | 203 | 145 | 73 | 321 | 477 |

CVL January to December average maximum counts

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| Littleton | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | | | | |
| Severnside | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2* | 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| PWD | 1 | | 8 | | 5 | 3 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Cl-Y | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 4 | 15 | 4 | |
| Weston STW | 9 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| R. Avon at Keynsham | 3 | 7 | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| R. Avon at Saltford | 4 | 6 | 5 | | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| BG | 170 | 27 | 17 | 12 | 1 | | 11 | 10 | 19 | 94 | 105 | 10 |
| CVL | 150 | 55 | 35 | 20 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 60 | 270 | 540 | 470 | 420 |
| BL | 90 | 17 | 11 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 185 | 57 |
| Loxton | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | 4 |

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

*Cormorant cont.* Notes on the table given on the previous page. At BL numbers returned to normal following a record count for the site in November 2013. The high January count at BG followed on from a virtually identical total here in the previous month. Counts were slightly down at several other sites, probably because of the ideal conditions at CVL. The August figure starred in the table below for Severnside does not include a flock of 14 to SW at Aust on Aug.14th.

*Other sites* Small numbers were as usual recorded from many other sites, including counts of 30 over Litton Resrs., presumably on their way to CVL, on Jan. 19th; 22 at Avonmouth Docks on July 18th; and nine at Batheaston in January.

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

## SHAG *Phalocrocorax aristotelis* (73, 3)

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

An average showing with three records in January, all of photographed juvenile/first-winters, as follows:

RPD – on the morning of 19th before flying off to N (C J Stone);

Sand Point – feeding close inshore at the Point on 18th before flying off towards Middle Hope, still present the next day (P A Bowyer);

Eastville Park – around 4th (N Strickland);

Coastal records predominate over those inland, the Eastville Park record being only the 16th inland since 1983.

### Tubenoses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

| | 1995/2004 ave | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fulmar | 61 | 16 | 272 | 79 | 62 | 40 | 26 | 112 | 192 | 49 | 31 |
| Manx Shearwater | 403 | 40 | 1600 | 1216 | 1680 | 380 | 100 | 1015 | 2811 | 1363 | 69 |
| Storm Petrel | 5 | 0 | 28 | 27 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 108 | 6 | 10 |
| Leach's Petrel | 2 | 2 | 115 | 2 | 1 | 24 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Gannet | 40 | 46 | 570 | 195 | 172 | 57 | 267 | 240 | 134 | 271 | 57 |
| Shag | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Scarce seabird records – 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.*

After a poor showing in 2013 there was an upsurge in sightings. It is perhaps worth noting that over 40 booming males were reported in Somerset in 2014. The Bristol records at Stoke Park and Fishponds, presumably involving the same individual, are exceptional. Recorded, as single birds unless stated, as follows:

Severnside -- at Chittening Warth on Nov. 1st;

Stoke Park -- Nov. 9th;

Fishponds -- Nov. 24th and 25th;

Backwell Lake – Jan. 14th to Feb. 2nd;

CVL – Feb. 2nd, March 9th, April 9th, July 18th, 25th and 26th and from Nov. 2nd to year-end with a second individual (in Herons Green) from 18th to year-end;

BL – Jan. 22nd, Feb 13th, 14th and 17th.

## LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta* [RBBP] [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 two decades.*

The highest counts at CI-Y were significantly lower than those in 2012 and 2013 and whilst the maxima in earlier years were at an inland roost site the February total in 2014 involved 25 at the Kenn Estuary and 11 at the Yeo Estuary. Elsewhere, counts at OPS rose and mostly involved sightings one *km* inland at Oldbury Naite. The January, February and December maxima at Backwell Lake were of birds roosting here.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS and environs | 14 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Littleton Warth | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Severnside | 5 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| RPD/PW | | | | | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Cl-Y and environs | 34 | 36 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 22 | 16 | 26 | 25 | 12 | 12 |
| Sand Bay | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 2 | |
| Axe Est | 1 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 3 |
| BG | 1 | | | | | 2 | 4 | | | | | 5 |
| CVL | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 20 | 15 | 9 | 16 |
| BL | 2 | | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Backwell Lake | 10 | 9 | 5 | 2 | | | 1 | | | 2 | 4 | 15 |

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

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

| 2004 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 27 | 39 | 31 | 32 | 24 | 21 | 23 | 59 | 68 | 36 |

Maximum count each year from Cl-Y and environs

*Other sites* Reported, mostly in small numbers from the levels and moors of North Somerset; the maximum from here were six on Kenn Moor on Nov. 28th. Noted elsewhere, single birds unless stated otherwise:

Thornbury – four on Jan. 4th;

Tockington – Jan. 21st, Feb. 6th and two on 8th and Aug. 20th;

Easter Compton – Feb. 19th and two on March 17th;

Westerleigh – April 16th;

Marshfield – Jan. 19th, Sept. 13th to 27th and Oct. 2nd;

Wraxall – four on Jan. 2nd and March 1st, three on April 4th and seven on Dec. 21st,

Saltford – July 8th;

Burnett – Nov. 18th;

Temple Cloud – July 16th;

Litton Resrs. – Feb. 16th, March 16th, ten on Oct. 12th and three on 26th;

Bathampton – Jan. 19th, March 14th and two on May 20th.

*Breeding* The first breeding record for our area involved a pair at the Uphill heronry which raised two juveniles.

## GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba* (14, 5)

*Rare vagrant first recorded in 2002.*
Descriptions required.

An exceptional series of records, all from CVL in the second half of the year culminated in the first local overwintering by this species see photograph opposite page 41, details as follows in date order:

August – one flew south over Nunnery Point at 08.45 on 24th (S Davies). It was watched in flight until it dropped down onto Herriott's Pool, where it was photographed (L Gardiner) before it flew off north;

September – one was seen to arrive from the NW at 11.30 on the 22nd before settling down in the Stratford Bay area where it was photographed (A H Davis *et al*.). It was still present the next day;

October – one in Herons Green Bay on 23rd was constantly chased by a young Grey Heron (R Mielcarek *et al*., photographed);

November onwards – two, possibly three, different individuals. On 14th one was in Villice Bay where it was harassed by Grey Herons before flying to Herons Green Bay where it remained the following day (G Hudd, R Mielcarek *et al*., photographed). On 16th a different individual, with missing primaries, was photographed as it flew over Woodford Lodge late morning (K Horrocks *et al*.). On 18th either the original or another, with a full set of primaries, was found in the channel at Herriott's Bridge where it fed voraciously on perch (P Black, *et al*.). This bird then remained into 2015.

It is unclear how many individuals were involved but for the purposes of the statistics we are assuming that only two were present in November but all other sightings relate to different individuals, giving five in total.

## GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

*Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species.*

Despite high populations of coarse fish at CVL (*cf.* Cormorant) counts here were only moderate. Numbers at Sea Mills were slightly higher than in recent years, as reflected in the first table below. The second table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites.

| | 1999/08 Av. | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL | 18 | 28 | 32 | 35 | 16 | 25 | 20 |
| Sea Mills | 18 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 7 | 20 |

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Littleton Warth | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | | 1 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Severnside | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Cl-Y | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 2 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| R. Avon (Sea Mills) | 3 | 7 | 1 | 20 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 10 |
| R. Avon at Saltford | 2 | 4 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| BG | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| CVL | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 21 | 11 | 15 | 20 |
| BL | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 7 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

*Other non-breeding records*

Reports were received from a wide scatter of other sites, often as single birds in flight. The maximum counts not in the table above were: nine at Marshfield (Shire Valley) on Sept. 24th, seven at Keynsham on March 1st, six at Bathampton Meadows on Feb. 15th, six at Chipping Sodbury Common on April 20th and six at Kenn Moor on Nov. 28th.

The BBS distribution in 2014 was 29%.

*Breeding* The counts from the main sites suggest that numbers remain on the low side following a series of cold winters, with an ongoing decline at CVL. The table below shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region:

| | Grid Ref | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Widcombe Manor | ST761633 | | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| Dodington Lakes | ST753802 | | | | | 3 | | 4 | | | |
| Newton Park | ST692640 | | 8 | 4 | | 2 | | | 3 | | 1 |
| Eastwood Farm | ST635713 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 34 | 25 | 25 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Prior Park, Bath | ST634761 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Denny Island, CVL | ST575607 | 29 | 25 | 36 | 51 | 39 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 27 | 23 |
| Easter Compton | ST560811 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| Pill | ST530739 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | 7 | 6 | 7 | 3 | | 11 |
| Cleeve Wood | ST462662 | 45 | 33 | 48 | 42 | 45 | 40 | 42 | 43 | 37 | 43 |
| Uphill Grange Wood | ST320582 | | 4 | 8 | 4 | 4 | | 4 | | 3 | 2 |
| Total | | 112 | 101 | 127 | 133 | 128 | 102 | 105 | 97 | 84 | 98 |

Number of occupied nests over the last decade

## PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea* (3, 1)

*Very rare vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a juvenile was seen in flight, being chased by a Grey Heron, at 15.10 on Sept. 29th just south of Walton-in-Gordano (R J Prytherch).

This is the tenth accepted record from the Avon area, but only the fourth since 1983, the other three, all from CVL, were for June to July 1983, May 2001 and May 2009.

## GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* (12, 1)

*Rare vagrant first recorded in 2007.*
Descriptions required.

One record: an immature found late afternoon on April 5th at Weston STW remained until May 6th (M S Ponsford *et al*., photographed, see opposite page 41).

This is the fifth year this species has been recorded locally since the first in 2007, see table below.

## SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia* (41, 2)

*Scarce passage migrant.*
Descriptions required.

Two records, details as follows, see table below for details of records over the past decade:

BL – one in flight early morning of March 22nd (A Chastney);

PWD – an adult from 16.30 to 17.20 on May 29th flew off northwards (P Baber, photographed) but was back, and photographed again, the next day.

### Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bittern | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| Cattle Egret | 1 | | 1 | | 6 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Great White Egret | | 1 | | | | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Purple Heron | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| White Stork | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | | 5 | | |
| Glossy Ibis | | | 1 | | 6 | 1 | | | 4+ | 1 |
| Spoonbill | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 10 | | 2 | 2 |
| Spotted Crake | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 4 | 2 |

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.*

CVL is currently ranked fifth in Great Britain for this species. (The Wetlands Bird Survey 2013/14). Nat. 10-year trend: -12%

| 1999/08 Av | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 68 | 135 | 123 | 92 | 38 | 63 | 42 |

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

Counts at CVL were once again poor despite low water levels, which normally produce reasonable numbers. The species was noted on 4% of BBS visits. The main sightings are given in the following table.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 3 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Severnside | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 19 | 9 | 2 | |
| PW | 8 | 8 | 17 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 18 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Cl-Y | 6 | 8 | | | | | | | | 11 | 6 | 6 |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 13 | 17 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 2 |
| Tortworth Lake | | 2 | 2 | | | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | | |
| Three Brooks LNR | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | |
| ASW and environs | 1 | 2 | | | 2 | | | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Kenn Moor | 8 | 3 | 4 | | | 1 | | | | 5 | 8 | 14 |
| R. Avon at Saltford | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| BG | 13 | 13 | 5 | 4 | | | | 5 | 18 | 12 | 8 | 8 |
| Chew Magna Res. | 3 | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 2 |
| CVL | 10 | 3 | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 23 | 55 | 45 | 20 | 20 | 25 |
| BL | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 26 |
| Litton Resrs. | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 21 | 21 | 6 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

*Little Grebe cont.* The table on the previous page gives the main data. Away from CVL several sites saw a slight reduction, *cf.* maxima in 2013 of 33 at Weston STW and 18 at ASW and environs, although numbers continued to improve at Severnside due to habitat creation here.

*Other sites* Reported from a wide scatter of non-tabulated sites. The highest count from a site not in the table above was four at Wick Quarry on March 15th.

*Breeding* At CVL three broods totalling four young represented a significant improvement. Reports were received from another six sites, probably a substantial under representation of the true situation as follows:

Severnside – three broods totalling 11 young on the Pilning Wetlands, and two broods totalling five young on the Orchard Pools;

Pill – one brood of four young;

Tortworth Lake – two broods totalling four young;

Weston STW – five broods totalling seven young;

Chew Magna Res. – four broods totalling nine young;

Litton Resrs. – three broods totalling six young.

| | 1994/2003 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broods | 13 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Young | 22 | 3 | 10 | 9+ | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

CVL broods and young

| | 1994/2003 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sites | 9 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| Broods | 17 | 14 | 18 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 21 | 19 | 20 |

Sites and broods away from CVL

## GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

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

CVL is currently ranked ninth in Great Britain for this species (The Wetland Bird Survey 2013/14). Nat. 10-year trend: -25%

Counts rose slightly at CVL, with the maximum occurring slightly later in the year than usual. However, in view of the record numbers of Cormorant here better numbers might have been expected.

| 1999/08 Av | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 463 | 565 | 355 | 195 | 93 | 267 | 278 |

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BG | 16 | 13 | 13 | 17 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 24 | 22 | 26 | 23 | 8 |
| CVL | 110 | 70 | 65 | 30 | 85 | 105 | 175 | 130 | 190 | 260 | 375 | 200 |
| BL | 11 | 5 | 29 | 19 | 11 | 18 | 27 | 24 | 38 | 33 | 49 | 61 |
| Litton Resrs. | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 4 | | | | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Records were received from a scatter of non-tabulated sites, with an absence of marked dispersal probably due to the lack of hard frosts. Unusually, none was reported from Severnside. The records below refer to single birds unless stated otherwise:

OPS – April 4th, two on May 27th and 28th, and Nov. 15th;

PWD –Sept. 10th and 27th;

Sand Bay – March 11th;

R. Avon at Conham – two on Aug. 15th;

Saltford – Sept. 4th and 5th;

Backwell Lake – from Aug. 9th to Dec. 5th;

Chew Magna Res. – recorded on many dates between March 3rd and Sept 7th;

Litton Resrs. – four on Aug. 5th;

*Breeding* At CVL stable water levels into late summer allowed 27 pairs to produce 48 young, the best year since 2007. Elsewhere reported as follows:

BL – two broods totalling three young;

Litton Resrs. – one brood of four;

Hinton Blewitt – one brood of two.

| | 1995/2004 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broods | 23 | 0 | 20 | 38 | 20 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 27 |
| Young | 35 | 0 | 43 | 62+ | 26+ | 12 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 48 |

CVL broods and young

## SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* (50, 1)

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

A poor showing (see table below) with just one record: an individual seen and photographed from Stratford hide at CVL on Feb.1st (C J Stone *et al.*).

## 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 the third successive poor year for this species (see table below), with most records again relating to a long-staying individual at BL. The autumn period at CVL, as in 2013, was notably poor. Single birds, unless stated otherwise, were noted as follows:

BG – Aug 17th;

CVL – Jan. 28th, Sept. 2nd and 21st, and Oct. 2nd;

BL – the individual remaining from 2013 was present until March 12th, and then two on Oct. 10th and 11th with one, probably the same as in the previous winter, stayed to the year-end.

### Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Red-necked | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Slavonian | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Black-necked | 6 | 14 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 6 |

Annual recorded totals

## HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus* (20, 1)

*Very scarce passage migrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: A male was photographed (see opposite page 48) in flight over St George's, Weston-s-Mare at 09.00 on July 1st (G Pudney). This was the first since 2011 when one was seen over Northwick Warth in May; see table on page 49.

## RED KITE *Milvus milvus* [Amber 1]

*Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.*

As stated in last year's Report, 2013 was the best to date with a total of 108 bird-days. However, 2014 was even better with a total of 135 bird-days. Furthermore, this upward trend is likely to continue as the species becomes established in the neighbouring counties.

Most reports were in the period March to July, there were no records in January, see table overleaf. Recorded at 66 sites (*cf.* 47 in 2012 and 58 in 2013), 27 in *SG*, 33 in *BA & NS* and six in *Bristol*. Large counts included: in May: nine, in two flocks, to SW at BL with a similar number reported at CVL on the same day, and in June: 11 at Lansdown attracted to haymaking activities.

*Red Kite cont.*

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 3 | 19 | 16 | 50 | 27 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 135 |

Monthly distribution of bird-days

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

February – at Compton Dando on 7th, Marshfield on 16th and Portishead on 27th;

March – three at Weston-s-Mare on 4th, at Winterbourne the next day, Portbury and Lower Failand on 8th, two at Charlcombe the next day, at Thornbury and Weston-s-Mare on 11th. Marshfield on 17th, Staple Hill on 20th and 24th, also on the latter date at University of West of England, Lulsgate and CVL. Reported from a number of sites on 29th, in *Bristol* at Southmead and Brislington, in *SG* at Almondsbury and OPS, in *NS* at Gordano Valley, and the last of the month was at Charmy Down on 30th;

April – *SG* at Aust, Cribbs Causeway, Rudgeway and Coalpit Heath and in *Bristol* at Shirehampton on the 2nd. Yate on 8th, Fishponds on 12th, Marshfield on 13th, CVL on 14th, Nailsea and Midsomer Norton on 15th, Bishop Sutton on 16th and at Chipping Sodbury Common the following day. At Saltford on 18th and 22nd, Yatton on 19th, Cl-Y on 21st and Gordano Valley the next day;

May – at Kingswood and Whitchurch on 4th and Dundry the following day. Bishop Sutton on 9th, BL on 13th, CVL on 15th, Weston-s-Mare on 16th, Gordano Valley, OPS and Saltford on 17th, at Thornbury the next day and two at this site on 22nd, Codrington on 18th. There were many reports on 19th, *SG* at Mangotsfield, Iron Acton and two at Horwood Farm, in *BA & NS* at Lulsgate, nine at BL and a similar number reported from CVL, in *Bristol* at Brislington. At Chipping Sodbury, Bath, Upper Weston, Timsbury, CVL and Sandford on 20th, at Severn Beach, five at Hamswell, and Congresbury Moor on 21st. Oldland Common on 25th and 30th, Marshfield, Bannerdown and two at Weston-s-Mare on 26th. At Congresbury on 29th and the following day at Pensford, Charlton Field and Weston-s-Mare;

June – two at Weston-s-Mare and Easton-in-Gordano on 6th, Marshfield on 7th and 9th, at Lansdown, two on 17th and 11 following haymaking activities on 25th. Westbury-on-Trym on 22nd, two at Corston and three at Wetmoor on 22nd, two at Wick and Saltford on 23rd, and at Portbury the next day;

July – at Portishead on 12th and Chipping Sodbury and Fishponds the next day, at Chipping Sodbury Common on the 16th and Walton Bay and Salford the following day, Marshfield on 20th and Pipley Wood, Bath on 25th;

August – at Portishead on 8th, Bath on 25th and Petty France on 29th;

September – at Weston-s-Mare and CVL on 2nd, Northwick Warth on 14th and Yate the next day, and at Cl-Y on 28th;

October – Dyrham Park on 12th and Marshfield on 28th;

November – at Cl-Y on 5th;

December – Severn Beach on 12th and Keynsham two days later.

## **MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus* [Amber 5, 6]

*Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL.*

The bird-days total for 2014 was 35, an average tally for the Avon area. Most reports were from CVL with a total of 19 bird-days (*cf.*17 in 2011, 12 in 2012 and 2103), the majority was in August and September.

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*

OPS – April 15th;

Aust Warth – June 10th;

Northwick Warth – April 29th;

Cl-Y – May 14th;

Weston STW – a male on May 4th;

Westbury-on-Trym – to W at 12.45hrs on May 17th;

Burnett – May 5th;

CVL – March 27th and April 17th.

*Second half-year*

Northwick Warth – Aug. 2nd;

Cl-Y – Jul. 13th, 15th and Aug. 15th;

Sand Point – Sept. 15th;

Weston STW – Jul. 27th and Dec. 5th, the first December record for the site;

Walton Moor – Aug. 24th

CVL – a first calendar year on seven dates from Aug. 11th to 19th and on ten dates from Sept. 5th to 24th;

BL – on Sept. 23rd.

## **HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus* (90, 2)

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

The third poor year succession with just two records received (*cf.* 17 in 2010 and 13 in 2011), both were in October. This showing reflects the national concern about this species which suffers badly from persecution.

CVL – a first calendar year at Stratford Bay from 17.50hrs until dusk on Oct. 15th (B Thompson *et a*l., photographed, see opposite page 48);

Sand Point – a ringtail flew towards the point then to NE at 09.15 on Oct. 22nd (P A Gregory).

## **HARRIER sp.** *Circus sp.*

Three records, as follows:

Priston – one in the evening of May 22nd;

Alveston – one seen at midday on May 23rd from a car on the A38;

Gordano Valley –- a female or immature was seen very briefly also from a car on Sept. 8th.

## **GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis* (46, 2)

*Very scarce visitor and resident.*
Descriptions required.

Two records were accepted and the details are as follows;

Marshfield – one soaring with a Common Buzzard at Rushmead Lane late afternoon on Sept. 9th (M Hayes *et al*.);

Walton Common – one seen briefly perched and then in flight mid afternoon on June 14th (H E Rose).

This species continues to have one of the lowest acceptance rates; observers are referred to the paper in the 2004 Report.

### Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

| Year | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Honey Buzzard | 1 | | | | 3 | | 2 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Black Kite | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Red Kite | 3 | 17 | 11 | 24 | 31 | 62 | 70 | 54 | 90 | 108 | 135 |
| Marsh Harrier | 6 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 29 | 52 | 14 | 28 | 19 | 26 | 35 |
| Hen Harrier | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 17 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Pallid Harrier | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Montagu's Harrier | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Goshawk | 5 | | 1 | | 3* | 0* | 0* | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| Osprey | 1 | 10 | 6 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 25 | 59 | 41 |

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

## **SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

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

An excellent year for records received, the total was 873 and it was the best year to date, 2012 was the second best with 786 records received. The spread across the year was reasonably even but the highest numbers were in March, April and August, with fewest in May, June and July.

*Sparrowhawk cont.*

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2014 and the previous five years:

| Year | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| 2014 | 62 | 79 | 87 | 87 | 42 | 57 | 54 | 92 | 83 | 76 | 74 | 80 | 873 |

Monthly distribution of record

*Breeding* The assessment of the number breeding was average but higher than the preceding year, 2011 was the best year since 1997 when the total was 74. Following increases in *SG* in 2011 and 2012, the 2014 number fell back to that of 2009. The 2014 area totals were as follows: 13 in *SG*, 39 in *BA & NS* and 10 in and around *Bristol*.

| | 1995-04 Av | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SG | 10 | 10 | 16 | 11 | 24 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 20 | 16 | 13 |
| BA & NS | 34 | 29 | 36 | 34 | 35 | 32 | 29 | 45 | 34 | 29 | 39 |
| Bristol | 13 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 10 |
| Total | 57 | 52 | 63 | 55 | 68 | 55 | 51 | 72 | 67 | 56 | 62 |

Breeding sites

Located at one site at CVL (*cf.* three in 2011, one in 2012 and three in 2013) and three juveniles fledged.

*Other observations* Noted on Steep Holm in May from 1st to 5th and again on Aug. 23rd.

*Prey species* There were very few reports but those received included Wood Pigeon, Starling and House Sparrow. Sightings were regularly reported in the vicinity of the Starling roost at OPS during the first two months of the year.

## **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 was 1456, the highest ever, the previous highest number was 1169 in 2012. The records were spread reasonably evenly across the year except for the display period in March and April, and particularly March. However, breeding success was average. The first table gives the monthly distribution for 2014 and the previous five years.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| 2014 | 104 | 122 | 229 | 150 | 110 | 95 | 87 | 109 | 122 | 105 | 104 | 119 | 1456 |

Monthly distribution of records

*Breeding* R J Prytherch's study area, which covers some 75$km^2$ of Failand and Gordano had a relatively poor year, 108 pairs held territories, two more than in 2013 which was a record year. Of the 37 nests checked 26 were successful, and 37 young fledged. For these the brood success ratio was average but eleven pairs failed to breed.

The table set out on the next page gives an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2014 and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1995 to 2004. Included are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand/Gordano area.

| Year | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SG | 32 | 25 | 49 | 39 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 56 | 37 | 39 | 44 |
| BA & NS | 153 | 196 | 206 | 213 | 202 | 211 | 172 | 226 | 210 | 213 | 217 |
| Bristol | 5 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RJP's Study Area | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active nest sites | 72 | 88 | 90 | 92 | 97 | 99 | 103 | 103 | 105 | 106 | 108 |
| Chicks fledged | 67 | 92 | 50 | 80 | 47 | 73 | 87 | 43 | 27 | 31 | 37 |
| Successful nests | 42 | 56 | 37 | 52 | 33 | 47 | 60 | 27 | 27 | 20 | 26 |
| Brood success ratio | 1.60 | 1.64 | 1.35 | 1.54 | 1.42 | 1.55 | 1.43 | 1.59 | 1.00 | 1.55 | 1.42 |

Breeding data

At CVL, nine pairs were found and six of these were successful (*cf*. nine in 2011, eight in 2012 and nine in 2013).

*Large groups/counts* All counts in double figures are listed below, many were at CVL and all of these were in the period April to August, elsewhere they were spread across the year.

*CVL* There were 14 on April 30th and a count of ten during May, in June there were 14 on 9th and 15 on 27th, in July ten on 4th and twelve on 30th, and ten were seen on Aug. 12th.

*Elsewhere* Ten at Shirehill on Jan.19th, 12 at Hinton Charterhouse on Feb.1st, ten at Weston Moor on March 29th, 12 at Lulsgate on April 1st. The highest count of the year was 24, these and 11 Red Kite, were following haymaking activities at Battlefields near Lansdown on June 25th, in the second half of the year there were counts of ten at BG on Sept. 2nd, Marshfield on Oct. 4th and Nov. 30th.

*Bristol* Often noted over the outer suburban areas of the city. Elsewhere at St. Philip's Marsh on Feb.13th, during March over Montpelier on 1st, 15th, 23rd and 30th, Easton on 4th and Redland the next day, at Brandon Hill on April 26th, in September at Netham Park on 11th and Redland on 29th, over St. Werburgh's on Dec. 7th.

*Other notes* Seen on Steep Holm on Aug. 23rd. At CVL one was seen to kill and eat a Moorhen on Oct. 2nd. Pale morphs were noted as follows: at Sea Mills on May 31st, this was described as being sandy coloured, at Easton-in-Gordano on July 22nd and Hick's Gate on Nov. 16th.

## **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus* [Amber 1, 5]

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

A very good year and the second best to date with a total of 41 bird-days, see table on page 49. Most were at CVL during September and October with monthly bird-day totals of ten and 14, respectively. The records given below refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

*CVL* – the spring records were in March on 30th and 31st, and in April on 2nd, 3rd, 15th and 21st. Subsequently reported in August on 10th, 26th and 27th. In September seen on 9th then daily from 20th to 30th with two here on 21st and 25th, in October from 1st to 11th but there were no reports on 8th. Almost all of the September and October records refer to a single juvenile.

*BL* – the bird-day total for the year was just four, the same number as in 2012, this was a poor showing when compared with 32 bird-days in 2014. The first of the year was on April 3rd and then on autumn migration on Aug. 26th and two on Sept. 7th, on the latter date one was seen to fly to W.

*Elsewhere* – the first of the year was seen over Westbury-on-Trym on March 20th, then on autumn passage being mobbed by corvids to W at Bridgeyate on Aug. 26th, in September at Lulsgate on 7th and Marshfield the following day, on 20th over Eastville Park, Bristol at 15.45hrs and BG, these sightings and another at CVL were possibly the same individual.

## **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus* [RBBP]

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

WeBS: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was rated seventh, and CVL 28th, in the UK in 2013/14.

The number of sites was typical as shown in the table below.

| 2004 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 16 | 24 | 23 | 23 | 20 | 18 | 24 | 27 | 22 | 21 |

Number of sites reported from each year

*Water Rail cont.*

The second table gives the maxima at the main sites, except at CVL they are thought to be underestimates. The CVL totals were calculated by mapping calling birds, and they suggest that at peak times up to 50 were present. Generally speaking the counts were largely unexceptional, except at BL where the species was recorded more often than usual. Of interest, the remains of one at CVL on Oct. 22nd were thought likely to refer to a Sparrowhawk kill.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 4 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 5 | 6 |
| Severnside | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| PWD | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Cl-Y | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Weston STW | 3 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Backwell Lake | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| CVL | 10 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 17 | 8 | 23 | 15 |
| BL | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Presence through the summer at several sites disguised the departure of wintering birds, but arrival seems to have been from Aug. 23rd onwards.

*Breeding* A playback survey at CVL detected 15 pairs and a further 22 single birds, although only one nest were found (see photograph opposite page 49) and juveniles from two broods were seen. At Steep Holm there were three territories. Signs of breeding were detected at BL for the first time: one was singing here on May 26th and records continued through June. There were also May records from suitable breeding habitat at OPS and Weston STW (for the second year running).

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 2 |

Number of nest sites detected at CVL each year

*Other records* As ever this species was under recorded, and coverage of parts of the levels suggests that they were probably present in similar areas. The records, of single birds unless stated otherwise, are as follows:

Sand Bay – three on Jan. 4th, single birds on 5th and 6th and Dec. 24th;

Tortworth Lake – Oct. 5th;

Kingsgate Park, Yate – Nov. 2nd and Dec. 26th;

Yate Common – Jan. 8th;

Three Brooks LNR – two on Jan. 11th and one on March 5th;

Keynsham – in the Memorial Park from 2013 until Feb. 11th;

Saltford – Jan. 17th, two on 30th then single birds on Feb. 6th, 16th, 20th and 204th, March 8th to 17th, Sept. 29th, Oct. 15th, Nov. 5th and 20th, and Dec. 29th;

Weston Moor – March 29th;

Yatton – Jan. 3rd, two on Oct. 12th and Nov. 1st, 12th and 29th, and one on Dec. 14th;

Congresbury Moor – March 10th, Nov. 29th and Dec. 10th;

Newton St Loe – March 12th and 13th;

Batheaston – Nov. 22nd.

## **SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana* (37, 2)

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

Two records, details as follows, for ten-year data see page 45.

Weston STW – an adult, probably a female, on July 19th and 20th was the first site record (M S Ponsford *et al*.);

CVL – a juvenile/first-winter trapped, ringed and photographed (see opposite page 49) on Sept. 25th (M Dadds *et al*.).

There were a number of other reports from CVL but no details were submitted.

## **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

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

The recovery seen at CVL and BL in 2013 was sustained, see table below, although there was a minor fall at the former site probably due to the slightly higher water levels, which make counting this species more difficult. Elsewhere only one count was received from Bristol Zoo, an important site for this species.

| Year | 1995/2004 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL | 155 | 80 | 90 | 55 | 70 | 180 | 125 | 75 | 35 | 170 | 145 |
| BL | 70 | 105 | 82 | 30 | 21 | 38 | 33 | 27 | 20 | 92 | 98 |

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

The main counts from the well-watched sites are as follows.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 4 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 9 |
| Severnside | 7 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| PWD | 18 | 11 | 6 | | 10 | 4 | 10 | 16 | | 11 | 12 | 7 |
| Cl-Y | 10 | 12 | 15 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 20 | 15 | 15 |
| Weston STW | 4 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 16 | 18 | 14 | 23 | 18 | 12 |
| ASW and environs | 6 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Bristol Zoo | 26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Duchess Park | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 5 | | 1 | | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Eastville Park | 5 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Backwell Lake | 8 | 2 | 7 | 5 | | 3 | 4 | 2 | | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| Saltford | 5 | 23 | 9 | | 11 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 18 | 10 | 9 | |
| CVL | 3 | 14 | 15 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 95 | 145 | 135 | 90 | 40 |
| BL | 28 | 21 | 17 | 16 | 12 | 7 | 14 | 55 | 56 | 72 | 98 | 40 |
| Chew Magna Res. | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Litton Resrs. | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly watched sites

Recorded from a wide scatter of other sites. The largest numbers were 15 at Kenn Moor in October; 14 at both Aztec West and Keynsham Memorial Park in December; and 13 at Weston Moor in June.

*Breeding* A minimum of 23 nests was found at CVL: comparison of the number of adults this implies and the counts in the table above reveal the difficulty of detecting this species here when water levels are high. At BL three broods of two, three and two respectively were located. Elsewhere recorded at 20 sites, which is probably a marked under-estimate, (*cf.* 12 in 2010, 12 in 2011, 18 in 2012 and 11 in 2014) as follows:

OPS – two broods totalling three young;

Cl-Y (Blake's Pools) - two broods totalling three young;

Weston STW – five broods totalling 11 young;

Olveston – a brood of five;

Marshfield – a brood of five;

Rocks East Wood – a brood of two;

Duchess Park – a brood of three;

Stockwood Vale, Bristol – a brood of two;

Queen Charlton – a brood of two;

Saltford – four broods totalling 15 young;

R. Avon, West Bath - one broods of five young;

Clapton Moor – two broods totalling five young;

Weston Moor -- two broods totalling nine young;

Congresbury Moor – two broods;

Kingston Seymour – two broods;

Yatton - two broods totalling five young and an additional occupied nest;

Puxton Moor – two broods;

Chilcombe Bottom - two broods totalling four young;

Winford Brook – a brood of two;

Chew Magna Res. – two broods totalling four young.

## **COOT** *Fulica atra*

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

WeBS status: CVL is currently seventh in the list of sites of National Importance (Wetland Bird Report 2013/14). Nat 10-year trend: -16%

Numbers at CVL dropped in the absence of abundant weed growth, probably caused by unsettled spring weather. Birds moving from here were probably responsible for higher than usual counts at BL in the last three months of the year. Elsewhere there were slight declines at PWD and BG. The Avon BBS distribution was 10%.

*Coot cont.*

| Year | 1995/2004 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL | 2761 | 2210 | 2360 | 2095 | 2020 | 3050 | 2880 | 3110 | 2475 | 3190 | 2770 |
| BL | 1468 | 3151 | 1400 | 2323 | 1403 | 970 | 678 | 1247 | 1070 | 1213 | 1098 |

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

The main data is given in the following table.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| Severnside | 12 | 12 | 16 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 16 | 22 | 21 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| PWD | 22 | 20 | 230 | | 12 | 8 | 16 | 28 | 50 | 42 | 52 | 59 |
| Weston STW | 17 | 14 | 17 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 42 | 52 | 48 | 29 | 15 |
| Tortworth | | 14 | | 4 | | 16 | | 32 | 26 | 33 | | |
| Backwell Lake | 23 | 19 | 8 | 9 | | 7 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 18 | 12 | 14 |
| BG | 55 | 53 | 35 | 19 | 14 | 7 | 62 | 95 | 149 | 761 | 30 | 35 |
| Chew Magna Resr. | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| CVL | 235 | 240 | 190 | 180 | 275 | 325 | 1280 | 2770 | 2200 | 570 | 495 | 305 |
| BL | 237 | 168 | 146 | 131 | 118 | 252 | 681 | 1052 | 554 | 1098 | 1070 | 1044 |
| Litton Resrs. | 2 | 9 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 19 | 16 | | 13 | | 1 | 4 |

Monthly maxima at the main well-watched sites

*Other records* Recorded from a wide scatter of sites. The highest counts not in the table above were 13 at Saltford on May 12th, 12 at Coalpit Heath on Nov. 25th and eight at Stoke Park on July 13th.

*Breeding* At CVL 100 nests were found and there were 47 broods, totalling 118 young, continuing last year's improvement. At BL 12 broods were seen, totalling 40 juveniles (*cf.* 18 broods and 35 young in 2013). Elsewhere recorded as follows: OPS (two broods, five young); New Passage (four broods, 13 young); Severn Beach (one brood, seven young); Chittening Warth (one brood, two young); Weston STW (eight broods totalling 13 young); Saltford (three broods, ten young); Weston Moor (one brood, three young); Backwell Lake (one brood, four young); Prior Park, Bath (one occupied nest); Hinton Blewitt (one occupied nest); Chew Magna Res. (three broods, nine young); and Litton Resrs. (eight broods, 16 young).

| Year | 1995/2004 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of nests | | n/c | 112 | 91 | 96 | 67 | n/c | n/c | n/c | n/c | 100 |
| No. of broods | 70 | 4 | 34 | 41 | 28 | 27 | 22 | 11 | 26 | 40 | 47 |
| No. of young | 192 | 9 | 70 | 91+ | 61 | 77+ | 46 | n/c | 50 | 110 | 118 |

Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

## CRANE *Grus grus* (11, 1)

*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.

An adult at New Passage flew in from the north, circled a few times and flew off to SW mid morning of Sept. 22nd. Photographs showed it to be unringed (P D Bowerman, G Hudd *et al*.). See also page 134.

Previous Avon area records of wild birds are as follows: 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.

**Wader counts** For the common wader species our main method for presenting data is via tables of monthly maximum counts at the main well-watched sites, and this has not changed over many years. But it is worth pointing out that these tables are not 'row-additive'. For example, the table given below for Grey Plover in January lists 20 at Severnside, 42 at Cl-Y and 40 at Sand Bay, but this does not mean that 102 were present. This is possible but, because the flocks regularly move up and down the Estuary between tides, the Avon total for this month is likely to be nearer 40 than the higher figure. Also, occasionally flocks from other parts of the Estuary visit briefly maybe just flying through or staying for between a few minutes and a few hours. An example is given in the Dunlin entry below. Due to their exceptional nature, counts for these fleeting visits are usually not included in the monthly maxima tables because to include them would distort the 'picture' given of our regular flocks by these tables.

## **AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta* [Amber 6]

*Uncommon winter visitor/passage migrant. Rare inland.*

WeBS - Nat. 10-yeat trend: 58%.

The year just past, 2014, was a record one for this species with the highest single count (25) and the best overall total, see table below. Recorded in March, May, September and December and, as last year, most sightings were on the coast north of Severn Beach. This area is close to Gwent's Newport Wetlands where a breeding colony is becoming established. The Avon details for 2014 are as follows:

OPS – one on March 16th, four on Sept. 9th and another on Dec.1st;

Severnside – one on March 15th, 13 at New Passage on 30th moved to Aust Warth late afternoon where they were joined by 12 more – a record count, 25, for both this site and Avon as a whole; two on June 1st and Sept. 8th with three on 22nd;

Cl-Y – four on Sept. 8th preening on Blackstone Rocks;

Sand Bay – two on May 19th, see next entry;

CVL – two, a male and a female, on May 19th and 20th.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 14 | 4 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 15 | 22 | 9 | 17 | 47 |

Yearly totals of sightings for the past two decades

## **OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus* [Amber 6, 7]

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

WeBS - Nat 10-year trend: -19%.

| Year | Severnside | Cl-Y | Sand Bay | Axe Estuary | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 68 | 18 | 12 | 70 | 168 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 77 | 33 | 24 | 119 | 227 |
| 2012/13 | 86 | 38 | 23 | 144 | 291 |
| 2013/14 | 103 | 44 | 15 | 100 | 262 |

August to February average counts

Records of this species appear to have stabilised at a relatively high level as shown by the status table above. The figure for the Axe Estuary is slightly down, as the autumn counts in 2013 and 2014 were not as high as in 2012. This may be related to the fact that Sand Bay is hosting larger numbers now; the highest Avon count for 2014, 200, was recorded at this site on Dec.14th, it involved two flocks roosting during a neap high tide, one in the salt marsh near the point and the other at Kewstoke. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. The only other non-breeding records were of single birds in August at Saltford and BL.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 3 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Littleton Warth | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Severnside | 110 | 120 | 97 | 45 | 30 | 18 | 41 | 100 | 75 | 115 | 166 | 167 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | 13 | 24 | 2 | 16 | 8 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 6 | | | |
| Sea Mills (R. Avon) | | 2 | 2 | 7 | | | | | | | | |
| Cl-Y | 32 | 38 | 25 | 18 | 18 | 12 | 26 | 44 | 72 | 66 | 57 | 30 |
| Sand Bay | 11 | 11 | 31 | 30 | 21 | 4 | | 20 | 31 | 60 | 20 | 200 |
| Axe Estuary | 5 | 112 | 22 | 40 | 4 | 7 | | 120 | 131 | 141 | 128 | 103 |
| CVL | | | | 1 | 2 | | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

*Breeding* Some activity was noted at up to six sites (*cf*. three in 2013) and at least four chicks were seen:

OPS – mating was noted on the shore in early April, possibly involving the same pair reported in the next entry;

Littleton Warth – in late March a pair was displaying and copulating on the roof of an industrial building close to the shore;

Severnside – a pair was showing some mating activity in early May;

Avonmouth Docks – four pairs were sitting in May but no further details are available;

PWD – two pairs were displaying in April, a nest was occupied in mid May, three chicks were seen at the beginning of June with another at the end of the month giving a total of four;

Cl-Y – as last year four 'pairs' were present in April and May, no nest was found but at the beginning of June one pair was giving a distraction display suggesting that young were present.

## GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria* [Amber 7]

*Fairl y common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant.*

WeBS - Nat. 10-year trend: -25%.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1438 | 1475 | 2460 | 3340 | 1790 | 1965 | 1590 | 3455 | 2720 | 2340 | 1995 |

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for the past two decades

Most counts in the first-winter period were on the low side with only two in three figures, the mild weather was almost certainly the cause of this poor showing. Counts in the second winter period were at a more normal level. As a consequence the 2014 monthly maxima figure given above is about 15% below the ten-year average (2313). Present up to the first week of April with three single birds at Cl-Y in May, and from the end of June onwards although the first autumn double figure count was not until Sept. 8th. The largest count (470) was for Saltford on March 27th, it involved a single flock at a day-time roost in a field near the village. The table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, the remaining records were: 64 at Sand Bay on Jan. 20th with 50 two days later, 45 on Marksbury Plain on 28th, and 100 south of Hawksbury Upton on April 1st.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Severnside | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 119 |
| Cl-Y | 4 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 20 | 1 | |
| Axe Est./Weston STW | 12 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Marshfield | 70 | | 1 | 41 | | | | | 50 | 100 | 300 | 300 |
| Saltford | | | 470 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 54 | |
| Bristol Int. Airport | | | | | | | | | | 17 | | 40 |
| CVL | | | | | | | | | | 29 | | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

## GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola* [Amber 6, 7]

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

WeBS - Nat 10-year trend: -12%.

| Year | Severnside | Cl-Y | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 7 | 21 | 39 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 7 | 31 | 38 |
| 2012/13 | 4 | 31 | 35 |
| 2013/14 | 7 | 35 | 42 |

September to March average counts

The sightings of this species have been fairly constant now for several years, see the status table above. Cl-Y is the main Avon site, although even here counts were on the low side in the second winter period. It is probable that the Sand Bay and Cl-Y flocks were often the same, and when disturbed they moved to Severnside. Present up to May 19th and from Aug. 26th onwards with one over-summering in June. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. The only other record was of one at the Axe Estuary on April 14th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | : | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Severnside | 20 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 9 | 11 | 3 | |
| Cl-Y | 42 | 70 | 18 | 5 | 3 | 1 | | | 6 | 5 | 18 | 23 |
| Sand Bay | 40 | 40 | 7 | | | | | | | 1 | | 21 |

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 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -26%.

| Year | Severnside | Cl-Y | CVL | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 371 | 284 | 313 | 968 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 235 | 466 | 246 | 947 |
| 2012/13 | 326 | 933 | 105 | 1364 |
| 2013/14 | 165 | 793 | 143 | 1101 |

August to February average counts

Unlike last year there were no major cold weather movements, and as a consequence winter counts were well down. This is shown by both the status table above and the January/December totals table below. The January ten-year average is 6325 and the December average is 3794. This is in line with the national trends, see page 140. It was remarked upon by more than one observer that during the last week of the year not a single member of this species was seen at CVL – thought to be a record!

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 8800 | 7400 | 3520 | 4840 | 7760 | 3710 | 3000 | 3550 | 16780 | 3890 |
| December | 6900 | 3200 | 3640 | 2770 | 3450 | 3950 | 3800 | 2100 | 5380 | 2750 |

Ten-year January and December Avon totals at all sites

The third table gives the monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. Again high counts came from both Cl-Y and the Axe Estuary area, the coastal flocks at these sites are sometimes augmented by flocks from the nearby N. Somerset moors from which few records were received. It is perhaps also worth noting that, apart from the reservoirs and a single record at Keynsham in November of two flocks moving south, no inland count exceeded 80. Non-tabulated sightings included 70 at Charfield and 20 at Newton Park in January, six at Almondsbury in April, 32 at Churchill in November, and 11 at BG in December.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | 620 | 500 | | | | | 14 | | 20 | 135 | 450 | 340 |
| Severnside | 320 | 160 | 30 | 4 | | 23 | 45 | 38 | 5 | 110 | 360 | 400 |
| Sea Mills (R. Avon) | 71 | 40 | | | | | | 13 | 16 | 22 | 30 | 80 |
| PWD | 70 | 95 | 18 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | | | | 100 | 50 |
| Cl-Y | 1700 | 1050 | 50 | 22 | 14 | 15 | 30 | 35 | 14 | 180 | 650 | 625 |
| Axe Estuary | 700 | 600 | | | 1 | | | | 4 | | 265 | 1100 |
| Marshfield | 33 | 30 | | | | | | | | 15 | 80 | 80 |
| Marksbury Plain | 47 | 60 | | | | | | | | | 50 | |
| Saltford | | 8 | | | | 31 | | | | | | 10 |
| Keynsham | 42 | 12 | | | | | | | | | 350 | |
| Kenn/Nailsea Moor | | | | | | 16 | | | | | 75 | |
| CVL | 150 | 90 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 17 | 37 | 72 | 50 | 105 | 130 | 136 |
| BL | 140 | 40 | | 2 | | 2 | 12 | 14 | 7 | 19 | 54 | 26 |

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

*Breeding* There was a notable improvement in breeding activity which is almost certainly a result of the very mild and wet conditions experienced in the early part of the year. Evidence was received from nine sites and at least 17 chicks were reported; in 2013 four sites and 13 chicks were reported. Some late data has recently been received from Nailsea Moor, this is given at the end of this entry; the chart given on page 141 includes this new data. The main details are as follows, also noted during the breeding season at PWD and BL:

New Passage/Northwick Warth – display by two pairs recorded in April, but with no breeding success;

Western Distribution Park (sometimes called Western Approaches), Severnside – three pairs present;

Weston Moor, Gordano Valley – two pairs present;

Clevedon Moor (including Chelvey) – one or two pairs bred, one chick noted – a 'new' site;

Dowlais Farm, Cl-Y – up to five pairs were present, display was noted from early March, three chicks seen in late April from two pairs, and another two at the end of May from a third pair (*cf*. five chicks were also seen last year at this site);

Yeo Estuary, Cl-Y – a pair was nesting in mid June, outcome unknown. It is possible that another pair nested nearby;

Nailsea Moor – three pairs produced 11 chicks (three in one field and eight in another) in early June, late in the month another pair was sitting. See below for earlier records;

Weston STW – some distraction display was noted to a bird of prey, so the pair present may have had young;

CVL – display was noted in May and a pair was incubating in mid June, outcome unknown.

**Late Records for 2010 to 2013**

The following details have recently become available.

Nailsea Moor – in 2010 a pair was seen with four chicks on May 4th, in 2011 display was noted in early May but disturbance during drainage board work put paid to any further nesting activity, no breeding took place in 2012 which experienced a very cold and wet spring, and in 2013 four large chicks were recorded on June 4th.

## LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

*Uncommon passage migrant, generally more common in autumn. Scarce breeder.*

Last year the highest counts came from the Western Distribution Park inland from Severnside, but since then commercial development has effectively destroyed this site as a wildlife habitat; as a consequence only one report from this site was received: an adult on May 3rd. Apart from this, records were similar to those in 2013 with a fairly strong showing at the Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands area. Present from March 27th – a normal first-date – to Sept. 27th, both records from Pilning, the table summarises the fortnightly maxima. The remaining non-tabulated records were as follows: Sand Point, one on April 14th; Pill, one on 15th and 18th (probably from Avonmouth or PWD); two at BG on 16th; and a juvenile at BL on Aug. 8th and 15th.

It is likely that one or more pairs bred in the N. Avon coastal strip but no direct evidence was received. There are a number of possible breeding sites in this area many of which are inaccessible. Most of the records from early July onwards included some juveniles; for example, on July 4th seven were noted at Northwick Warth, five adults and two juveniles. No other record involved more juveniles than this.

| | March | April | | May | June | July | | August | | September | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 27-31 | 1-15 | 16-30 | | | 1-15 | 16-31 | 1-15 | 16-31 | 1-15 | 16-30 |
| OPS | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Northwick W / Pilning Wlds | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | |
| Cl-Y | 5 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | |
| CVL | | 1 | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |

Fortnightly (or monthly) maxima

## 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 also occur.

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 13th in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -42%.

| Year | OPS | | Severnside | | Cl-Y | | Totals | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 16 | 91 | 14 | 223 | 19 | 115 | 49 | 429 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 5 | 68 | 14 | 193 | 15 | 229 | 34 | 490 |
| 2012/13 | 9 | 18 | 17 | 90 | 21 | 230 | 47 | 338 |
| 2013/14 | 8 | 31 | 22 | 145 | 12 | 133 | 42 | 309 |

Winter (October to February) and the following autumn passage (August and September) average counts

Breeding, passage and wintering numbers were all slightly down on the last few years, this is shown in the table above and at the end of this entry. The highest count, 300 at Sand Bay on Aug.16th, was well below some of the maxima recorded in the recent past. Some passage started in the second week of April but the main spring sightings were between May 11th and June 4th, and the main autumn passage was from July 31st to the third week of September. Wintering numbers were normal but sightings were mainly concentrated between New Passage and PWD, the higher counts further south were mainly for one day only and probably involved the PWD flocks temporally displaced from their regular wintering areas. The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the major sites, the only other records were of single birds in flight during May: over Saltford on 13th and at Weston Airfield on 17th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | | May | | Jun | July | | Aug | | Sep | | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1-15 | 16-30 | 1-15 | 16-31 | | 1-15 | 16-31 | 1–15 | 16–31 | 1–15 | 16–30 | | | |
| OPS | 3 | | 1 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | | | 5 | 42 | 20 | | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Littleton Warth | | | | | 10 | | 29 | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Severnside | 10 | 9 | 7 | 12 | 5 | 23 | 80 | 18 | | 12 | 60 | 170 | 120 | 80 | 60 | 21 | 18 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | 14 | 13 | 7 | | 3 | 18 | 15 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 75 | 250 | 119 | 38 | 28 | 25 | 30 |
| Cl-Y | 3 | 15 | 4 | 11 | 10 | 20 | 75 | 5 | 5 | 30 | 175 | 225 | 40 | 25 | 6 | 1 | 9 |
| Sand Bay | | 1 | 2 | | 6 | 51 | 5 | | | | 65 | 300 | | 1 | | | |
| Axe Estuary | | 25 | 1 | 2 | | | 4 | | | 1 | 15 | 50 | 79 | | 9 | 27 | |
| CVL | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | |
| BL | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | 1 | | |

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

*Breeding* Three pairs bred at Avonmouth producing six young (*cf.* seven in 2013), but no breeding activity was seen at PWD, a site that has recorded successful nests in the past; the details are as follows:

Avonmouth Docks – three pairs bred, the first produced two young, and the second four young. For the third an adult was sitting on a nest with four eggs in late May but the outcome was not recorded.

*Ringing Report* A number of colour-ringed individuals were noted on Severnside during the year, the available details as follows:

The first, with a yellow ring, was noted at Severn Beach on May 24th, it had been ringed at the Makkevika Bird Observatory on Sept. 29th, 2012. This observatory is on the southern Norwegian coast near Trondheim 1320*km* NNE of Avon, and is described as one of the most important wader ringing sites in Europe.

There were two further records of colour ringed individuals at nearby New Passage in September: two on 6th and one on 14th.

## **DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus* (17, 1)

*Rare vagrant*.
Descriptions required.

A single record: one was seen and heard in flight low over Cranmoor Green, Pilning on Sept.14th (J P Martin). The observer described the flight call as a musical *crrrrr* descending at the end which he checked against a birdcall website immediately afterwards.

This is the first Avon record for nearly two decades, for further details see page 141 in last year's Report.

## **WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus* [Red 3]

*Passage migrant, common in spring and uncommon in autumn. Scarce in summer and has occurred in winter.*

All Avon records belong of the nominative subspecies *phaeopus* breeding in Iceland and N. Europe. *Hudsonicus*, which breeds in Canada and has occurred on the Welsh side of the Estuary, used to be treated as another subspecies but has now been split and elevated to the status of a separate species.

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in National Importance.

| Year | OPS | Severnside | Cl-Y | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 – 2004 Av. | 28 | 29 | 77 | 134 |
| 2005 – 2012 Av. | 24 | 41 | 67 | 132 |
| 2013 | 25 | 60 | 108 | 193 |
| 2014 | 29 | 38 | 80 | 147 |

Spring (April and May) average counts

The status table counts fell back to normal levels after the improved showing last year (2013). One the other hand there was a better spread of records with some notable counts at all coastal sites except for those south of Birnbeck Island.

The spring passage was from April 5th (one at Chittening) to June 1st (ten at Cl-Y), and the autumn passage, which as usual was much smaller, was from July 8th (four at Sand Point) to Sept. 27th (three on Northwick Warth). Two were noted at both Cl-Y and Sand Bay during June with one at OPS on July 3rd, and there were two October records: one at New Passage on 6th, and another at CVL on 30th – an unusually late inland record.

The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the well-watched sites.

| | April | | May | | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10-20 | 21-30 | 1-10 | 11-30 | | | | | |
| OPS/Littleton Warth | 2 | 33 | 25 | 5 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Severnside | 13 | 20 | 55 | 13 | | 3 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| PWD | 2 | 13 | 20 | 2 | | 3 | 9 | | |
| Cl-Y | 38 | 56 | 95 | 52 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 2 | |
| Sand Bay | 10 | 50 | 29 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | |
| Axe Est/Weston STW | 1 | | 6 | 1 | | 5 | | | |
| CVL | | 6 | 3 | | 1 | 9 | 3 | | 1 |

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main 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 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -13%.

| Year | OPS | Severnside | Cl-Y | Axe Estuary | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 425 | 192 | 162 | 67 | 846 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 235 | 162 | 165 | 40 | 602 |
| 2012/13 | 454 | 209 | 334 | 35 | 1032 |
| 2013/14 | 481 | 200 | 286 | 32 | 999 |

August to February average counts

Counts in 2014 were an almost exact repeat of the previous year, with good numbers at most estuarine sites. As usual the counts at OPS tended to be high tide roost counts whilst those at nearby Littleton Warth were mainly feeding flocks at a mid or low tide. High tide counts at the other five main coastal sites were normal with lower counts at the Axe Estuary as has become the norm recently, see page 143. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the coastal sites and CVL, other records included one at Burnett in March, three at Sea Mills in April, and single birds at BL in late June, over Bishopston (Bristol) in July and at Saltford in October.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 620 | 500 | 500 | 80 | 10 | 90 | 85 | 350 | 100 | 250 | 200 | 380 |
| Littleton Warth | 97 | 35 | 92 | 1 | | 5 | 140 | 46 | 45 | 55 | 55 | 180 |
| Severnside | 240 | 200 | 100 | 90 | 15 | 47 | 210 | 255 | 210 | 110 | 240 | 100 |
| PWD | 43 | 27 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 50 | 70 | 60 | 62 | 75 | 29 | 57 |
| Cl-Y | 295 | 340 | 145 | 95 | 12 | 75 | 250 | 290 | 310 | 215 | 270 | 260 |
| Sand Bay | 87 | 62 | 80 | 74 | 19 | 51 | 96 | 135 | 121 | 22 | 75 | 95 |
| Axe Estuary | | 91 | 3 | | | | | 20 | 13 | 5 | 52 | 30 |
| CVL | | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

## BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* [RR] [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.

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: 49%.

This is one of the few wader species that is increasing in the Avon area at the present time; see page 144. The 2014 monthly maxima given in the second table below is the highest yet recorded. As last year the best counts came from Severnside from August onwards. But compared with last year when the highest count (237) was noted in early December, the highest count in 2014 came in September (on 20th). It is perhaps surprising that in both years very few were recorded here or elsewhere before mid March. CVL also saw a few large flocks but here they did not stay long, the best were 33 on the evening of July 17th and 52 in Villice Bay on Aug.13th. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites, except for those mentioned above these counts were normal. There is one non-tabulated record: nine of March 29th at Sand Bay. The individual seen at CVL in December had been colour-ringed (as an adult) at Suudarkrokur, Iceland in July 2002, so was at least 12 years old, see page 170.

| | Jan | : | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | 2 | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 80 | 40 | 2 |
| Severnside | 1 | | 27 | 2 | | 2 | 12 | 70 | 224 | 150 | 140 | 170 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | | | | 1 | | | 12 | 1 | 10 | | | |
| Cl-Y | 7 | | 5 | | 6 | | 1 | | 2 | 10 | | 1 |
| Axe Estuary | | | | 2 | | | 5 | 1 | 12 | 1 | | |
| CVL | | | | 2 | 18 | | 33 | 52 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 1 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The totals of the monthly maxima over the past two decades for the two godwit species are given below.

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bk-t Godwit | 556 | 686 | 338 | 224 | 431 | 279 | 179 | 263 | 972 | 963 | 1136 |
| Bar-t Godwit | 228 | 75 | 202 | 1344 | 74 | 115 | 181 | 2521 | 781 | 172 | 150 |

Godwit monthly maxima totals at all sites for the past two decades

## **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.*

WeBS – Nat. 10-year trend: -11%.

For the third year running no major spring passage occurred, and so again most counts were in single figures. This is reflected by the 2014 maxima given above. But some were seen moving north in April, the best counts were: 32 at Severn Beach on 19th and 25 at Cl-Y on 30th, in May only one count was in double figures: 13 at OPS on 5th. Otherwise there was as usual no pattern to the records and only five sites were involved, a very small autumn passage occurred between Sept.11th and 15th. The table summarises the monthly maxima.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 13 | | | | 6 | | 1 | 1 |
| Severnside | 1 | 5 | 2 | 32 | 4 | | | | 2 | 2 | | 1 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | | | 1 | 4 | 2 | | | | 2 | | 1 | |
| Cl-Y | | 1 | 1 | 25 | 5 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | |
| Sand Bay | | | 9 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | |

Monthly maxima at all sites

## **TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres* [Amber 7]

*Fairly common winter visitor/ passage migrant, scarce in summer and inland.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 12th in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -11%

| Year | OPS | Severnside | Cl-Y | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 50 | 124 | 21 | 195 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 40 | 108 | 34 | 182 |
| 2012/13 | 45 | 126 | 55 | 226 |
| 2013/14 | 37 | 123 | 33 | 193 |

August to February average counts

Counts were slightly down on 2013 but those at PWD were better than normal. There has been, and continues to be, a considerable overlap between the Severn Beach and Royal Portbury Dock flocks as the tabulated monthly maxima at the two sites tend to occur on different days. This suggests that the counts in the second half of the year were below normal, see page 146. There was an unusual record at Avonmouth on Feb. 2nd when 12 were seen roosting on a log that was floating down-river as the tide fell. Also the tabulated figure for November at Cl-Y excludes a count of 80 on 25th, as last year it was thought that a proportion of the Severnside/PWD flock visited the site on this day. Flocks were present up to the end of May and from July 13th onwards with a single bird in late June at OPS. Tabulated below are the main monthly maxima, there were three further records: one at CVL on May 15th, two at Sand Point on July 20th, and one at BG on Sept. 7th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 60 | | 40 | 21 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 23 | 55 | 70 | 30 | 30 |
| Severnside | 142 | 170 | 175 | 40 | 3 | | 13 | 36 | 100 | 90 | 80 | 120 |
| PWD | 60 | 70 | 25 | | | | 6 | 18 | 40 | 44 | 100 | 100 |
| Cl-Y | 38 | 33 | 40 | 18 | 4 | 1 | 15 | 30 | 34 | 40 | 30* | 35 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites, see above for November at Cl-Y

## **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.

WeBS - Nat. 10-year trend: -9%.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 458 | 1520 | 172 | 595 | 293 | 462 | 2133 | 1073 | 876 | 823 | 653 |

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

Counts were generally on the low side with no large flocks recorded. The monthly maxima total for 2014 reflects this being 25% below the ten-year average (867). And it is remarkable that almost no spring migrants were seen at all. Some were seen on autumn passage but even here the largest count was only 55 (at Littleton Warth on Oct.18th). None were noted between June 22nd and July 27th. The table gives the monthly maxima at the coastal sites, there was just a single inland record: one at CVL on Sept.17th.

*Knot cont.* Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main coastal sites are given below.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | | Oct | | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | 1-15 | 16-30 | 1-15 | 16-31 | | |
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | | | 4 | | 2 | 3 | | | 55 | | 1 |
| Severnside | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | 4 | 30 | 50 | 47 | 50 | 45 | 1 |
| PWD | | | | | | | | 2 | 8 | 1 | | | | |
| Cl-Y | 120 | 135 | 10 | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 6 | 40 | | 35 | 65 | 3 |
| Sand Bay | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Axe Estuary | | | | | | | | 6 | | | | | 1 | |

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at coastal sites

## **RUFF** *Calidris pugnax* [Red 3]

*Uncommon autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and on spring passage.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance.

In contrast to last year the majority of the records came from the coast. As a result the monthly average (33), see the table on page 64, was well down being only slightly above the ten-year average of 28. Noted at seven sites in 2014, there were two first-winter records, six in spring and a reasonable autumn series from June 26th to Oct. 23rd, the maximum count was six on Severnside on Sept.16th. The details are as follows:

Severnside – single birds on April 5th, May 17th and Aug. 8th, then a good series of records from late August to early October including two on 24th, three on 27th, one on 28th, two on Sept. 5th, three on 7th, four from 10th to 15th, six on 16th dropping to four on 20th, three on 22nd, two on 24th and 25th (see photograph opposite page 64) and one on Oct. 1st;

PWD – a juvenile on Aug. 24th and 25th and another on Sept.18th and 21st;

Cl-Y – single birds on Feb.16th, April 20th to 28th (with two on 23rd), June 26th (a Reeve), two on Sept. 24th, one on 28th and Oct. 14th with two on 16th;

Sand Bay – one on Feb. 15th (see above);

Weston STW – one on April 16th and a male on Aug. 8th;

CVL – one juvenile on Aug. 19th and 20th with two on 26th, then three unaged on Sept. 12th and one on 17th;

BL – one on Oct. 23rd, the last of the year.

## **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 sixth in National Importance.

Compared with 2013, counts were well down (maximum monthly total 33) and below the ten-year figure of 39, see the table on page 64. Records only came from five sites, and two of these had sightings on one day only. They include records for May and June with the rest were noted from Aug. 2nd to Oct. 30th. The maximum count was nine at Northwick Warth in late September. Before mid August most were adults but from then on most were juveniles. The details are as follows:

OPS – one on Aug. 25th;

Severnside – as with several other species there was a good series of records here starting with one on June 3rd, seven adults on Aug. 2nd (a good count) and one on 3rd. Then after a month's gap one on Sept. 3rd and 6th, two on 7th and 9th, four on 10th, six on 12th, seven from 13th to 16th, one on 17th, nine on 20th, seven on 21st and 22nd, five on 25th, four until 28th and three until 30th, and single birds on Oct. 2nd and 4th with two from 9th to 11th; see also the ringing report below;

PWD – two on Aug. 23rd, 24th and 29th, and on ten dates up to Sept.18th with three on 4th, 7th, 14th and 18th;

Cl-Y – three on May 5th, two from Aug. 9th to 13th, 30th (one of which was an adult) and 31st, one on Sept. 5th, two on 8th, one on 11th and 21st with a late individual on Oct. 30th;

CVL – two on Sept. 18th.

*Ringing report*

A juvenile with a leg flag marked EEP was seen at New Passage on Sept.13th and 14th (see photograph opposite page 64). It had been ringed at the Revtangen Ornithological Station on the Norwegian coast near Stavanger on 3rd, so it had flown 950*km* between these sites in ten days covering on average 95*km* per day.

## SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

*Uncommon passage migrant, more common in spring than in autumn. Very scarce in winter and inland.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 22nd in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: 4%.

Sightings were much improved with a maximum monthly count of 132 back to the level of 2011 and 2012, see table on page 64 where the ten-year average is 91. Severnside was again the best site with a maximum count of 36 in late May, last year the maximum here was only five! On the other hand counts at Sand Bay were poor but a record from CVL in September was notable. Spring passage was from March 21st to June 12th, and the autumn passage was from July 29th to Sept. 27th with a few second-winter period records from Weston Beach. A photograph of one of the Severnside birds appears opposite page 65. The details are as follows:

OPS – one on March 21st, seven on May 9th and 28 – a good count here – on 27th;

Severnside – as usual the best site in Avon, the sightings included one on May 6th, five on 11th, four on 22nd, 36 on 24th, 30 on 25th, two on 26th, 21 on 29th, two on 31st and one on June 6th. The autumn passage was as usual smaller and included two on Aug. 8th, three on 9th, two on 22nd, one on 24th, 26th, Sept. 9th to 11th with two on 27th;

PWD – three on May 3rd and two on Aug. 25th;

Cl-Y – two on April 30th and May 14th, three on 27th and one on June 12th, with single birds seen during the autumn passage on July 29th, 30th and 31st (two), Aug. 13th, 18th and 22nd, Sept. 25th with four on 27th;

Sand Bay – a fairly poor showing here with eight on May 5th and one on 6th;

Axe Estuary/Weston Beach – one on May 6th, 13 on 18th, one on Oct.10th, Nov. 25th and two on Dec.12th;

CVL – one on May 19th, two on 20th, four on 22nd, one on 23rd and Aug. 14th, with nine in flight moving off south on Sept. 15th – a good count for the site, see page 143 in the 2013 Report;

BL – one on Aug. 11lth.

## DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* [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 mainly occurs in winter, *schinzii* breeding in N. W. Europe including Iceland mainly occurs on passage, and *arctica* breeding in N. E. Greenland is rare that has only been recorded in late May and June.

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was eighth in International Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -24%.

| Year | OPS | | Severnside | | Cl-Y | | Totals | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 840 | 109 | 2791 | 381 | 2287 | 109 | 5918 | 599 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 586 | 76 | 2082 | 295 | 1599 | 279 | 4267 | 650 |
| 2012/13 | 562 | 26 | 1720 | 290 | 2170 | 513 | 4452 | 829 |
| 2013/14 | 433 | 38 | 1860 | 395 | 2815 | 420 | 5108 | 853 |

Winter (October to February) and the following autumn passage (August and September) average counts

There was a slight improvement in the winter flocks mainly at Cl-Y and Sand Bay now getting back to the levels it supported a generation ago. Autumn passage was similar to that in 2013 but with better numbers at Severnside and slightly poorer numbers at Cl-Y. As last year counts were, in the main, not very high but were more consistent over long periods. On Dec. 9th a big flock, probably in excess of 5000, was reported at the mouth of the Yeo (Cl-Y), it only stayed for a few minutes before moving off and is likely to have involved some flocks normally present in other parts of the Estuary; it was not included in the main table. This table gives the monthly maxima at the main sites; the remaining counts were ten at Sea Mills in February, one in April and two in May at BG, and single birds at Saltford in July and BL in June (30th), July and November.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 57 | 10 | 18 | 13 | 2 | | 5 | 30 | 45 | 160 | 600 | 1400 |
| Littleton Warth | 60 | | 10 | 8 | 16 | | | | 1 | 30 | 90 | 1100 |
| Severnside | 1200 | 2100 | 250 | 30 | 75 | 9 | 160 | 340 | 450 | 700 | 2000 | 500 |
| PWD/Avonmouth | 900 | 1400 | 160 | 40 | 210 | 2 | 35 | 300 | 320 | 300 | 500 | 1000 |
| Cl-Y | 3700 | 3550 | 1750 | 25 | 155 | 1 | 35 | 550 | 290 | 450 | 3600 | 2400* |
| Sand Bay | 1800 | 920 | 330 | 14 | 300 | | | 145 | 103 | | 24 | 1350 |
| Axe Estuary | 390 | 900 | 900 | 2 | 2 | | | 6 | 38 | 84 | 550 | 660 |
| CVL | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites, see above for December at Cl-Y

*Ringing report* A marked juvenile/first-winter was noted at Severn Beach on Sept. 6th, it had a white leg ring marked SRC, and had been ringed at a site on the Baltic coast near Gdansk in Poland of Aug.13th. This bird had travelled 1472*km* in 24 days, covering on average 61.3*km* per day.

***Arctica* Dunlin** *Calidris alpina arctica* (30, 2)
*Rare passage migrant only recorded in late spring. Probably under reported; see the article in the 2010 Report.*
Descriptions required.

Two records of single birds: the first was seen at high tide on the sea wall at Cl-Y on May 18th (H E Rose) with a mixed group of small migrant waders – noted as fairly 'non-descript', and the second was seen with a group of Sanderling and other waders at New Passage on 24th (B Lancastle, J P Martin) – noted as rather 'striking'. In the past five years this subspecies was noted three times in 2010, twice in 2012 and once last year.

## PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* [Amber 3, 5]

*Scarce winter visitor, very rare inland.*
Descriptions required for inland records

Up to mid February counts were fairly normal although no records were received from the Birnbeck Pier site at this time or at any point during the year. From then on sightings were unusually thin, with only two records (in December) after mid May. As a consequence the average of the monthly maxima, 39 see table below, was well below the ten-year average of 63. The flocks seem to be moving back to the sites they used to occupy two and more decades ago; see page 144 in the 2013 Report. The details are as follows:

Severn Beach – single birds on Jan. 11th, Feb. 7th to 9th, and March 25th;

Battery Point, Portishead – up to eight during January, three on Feb.1st and four on 11th, then six again on April 15th dropping to three by the end of the month, two on May 15th and one on 17th. The only later record was of five on Dec. 7th;

Sand Point – two on Jan. 4th and 5th, three on 24th and four on 29th, then four again on March 1st, 7th and 17th, with three on Dec. 27th, the last of the year.

## LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

*Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Rare in winter.*

WeBS status: IN 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in National Importance.

There was just one winter record: a single bird at Cl-Y on Jan. 3rd (note, one was on Severnside in late December 2013). Otherwise, all sightings were from Aug.13th to Nov.13th, with a total monthly count (21, see table below) slightly above the ten-year average of 18. Five sites were involved and the maximum count was seven at Northwick Warth in mid September. The autumn details are as follows:

Severnside – a good series of records including one from Sept. 9th to 12th, four on 13th, then three until 16th, seven on 17th and 18th, five until 22nd, three until 29th, one on Oct.1st, 2nd, and 9th to 11th, and another rather late on Nov. 13th;

PWD – one on Aug. 24th, two on most days between Sept. 5th and 13th, the one again on 26th and 29th;

Cl-Y – single birds on Aug.13th, Sept. 5th, 24th, 25th (two), 27th (three), 28th and 30th;

BG – one on Sept.15th;

CVL – two on Sept.12th and 13th with one on 15th.

## PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos* (34, 1)

*Rare vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a juvenile was at the mouth of the pill at New Passage during the morning of Sept. 21st (A. Carlisle). It was seen and photographed, see opposite page 65, with a group of Turnstones. It flew off with them but returned later and stayed at the site until the 30th, although it could be elusive at times. This was the first since six were seen during the exceptional autumn of 2011, and the 54th overall since 1935 about a quarter of which were coastal. Also as has often been the case with this species in the past, it was present for more than a week unlike a number of other vagrants that only stay with us for less than a day.

### Scarce Calidrid waders in the Avon area

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ruff | 31 | 35 | 11 | 35 | 3 | 12 | 29 | 43 | 25 | 57 | 33 |
| Curlew Sandpiper | 43 | 37 | 22 | 19 | 20 | 9 | 95 | 64 | 33 | 56 | 33 |
| Sanderling | 56 | 72 | 68 | 72 | 53 | 61 | 105 | 129 | 143 | 72 | 132 |
| Purple Sandpiper | 36 | 48 | 51 | 64 | 75 | 64 | 75 | 61 | 80 | 70 | 39 |
| Little Stint | 48 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 18 | 13 | 27 | 21 |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Totals of the maximum monthly recorded totals at all sites for the past two decades

## RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phaloropus lobatus* (6, 1)

*Rare vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a juvenile was seen and photographed (see opposite page 73) on the flooded scrapes at Pilning Wetlands, Severnside on the afternoon of Aug.18th (P D Bowerman, J P Martin *et al*.). In the evening it flew off high after being flushed by a Sparrowhawk. This is the first record for Severnside.

Although there have been about 12 previous records since the first in 1921, this is only the third on the coast, the other two were at Cl-Y in October 2002 and at Weston STW in August 2008, for further details see page 146 in last year's Report.

## COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* [Amber 1, 3]

*Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in Importance.

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 60 | 57 | 29 | 38 | 93 | 65 | 88 | 73 | 94 | 74 | 75 |
| Autumn | 188 | 136 | 139 | 141 | 184 | 186 | 197 | 205 | 237 | 162 | 194 |

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for spring (April and May) and autumn (July to October) for the past two decades

During all seasons the records of this species were similar to those for the previous few years. The spring and autumn monthly maxima totals given above are just slightly up on the ten-year averages which are 67 for spring and 178 for autumn. The main spring passage began on April 12th (five at CVL) and lasted until May 23rd, and the main autumn passage began on June 17th (one at CVL) and had mostly finished by the end of September. The maximum count was 20 also at CVL on July 19th. Coastal counts were also buoyant although observer coverage of Cl-Y, often the best site, was poor during the early autumn.

In the past wintering records were usually confined to the R. Avon around Sea Mills, and this site still provides the highest totals. But recently some have wintered at several other inland sites, this is shown in the table below which gives the monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites. Other records, mainly of single birds were as follows: in the first half of April at Kingsgate Park in Yate (two) and Backwell Lake, in the second half of April at the science park in Emersons Green, the Woodlands golf course in Bradley Stoke, Clapton Court farm, Newton St. Loe College lake, and Sand Bay, in May at a pond in Aztec Park, in July at Kensington Meadows in Bath, in August at the West Country Water Park near Thornbury, and in late October four at Litton reservoir some of which were probably overwintering.

| | 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 | 16–31 | | | | |
| OPS/Littleton | | | | | | | | | 5 | 2 | 4 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | |
| Severnside | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 4 | | | |
| Sea Mills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | | | | | | 8 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| PWD/Pill | | | | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | | 1 | |
| Cl-Y | | 1 | | | 4 | 2 | | 6 | 5 | 16 | nc | 12 | 3 | 2 | | 1 |
| AxeE./Weston STW | | | | 1 | 1 | 4 | | | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Saltford | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| BG | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 6 | 7 | | 2 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| CVL | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 13 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 18 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| BL | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

## GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus* [Amber 5]

*Fairly common autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and spring.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was fifth in National Importance.

Inland sightings were normal, but those on the coast were very poor, there were just two sightings at Cl-Y and none at PWD. This is reflected in the status line figures, and is notably different to the records of the previous species. The 2013 figure, 141 (note, not 121 as published in the 2013 Report), was made up of 103 inland sightings and 38 on the coast. In 2014 the corresponding figures were 106 and 18, and five of this last figure refers to a flock seen in flight only over Littleton Warth on Aug. 9th; see second table overleaf.

*Green Sandpiper cont*.

The reason for this poor coastal showing is unclear. Inland the sightings were about average and the highest counts, 13 at CVL on both Sept. 4th and 20th, were also normal. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the well-watched sites, the remaining records are as follows: one at Chew Magna Res. on March 3rd, one in flight over Clifton on Aug. 26th, two at Sandford on Sept.7th, two at Litton res. on Oct.12th, one in the Avon Gorge on Nov.16th, and two at BG on Dec. 6th. A photograph of one at CVL appears opposite page 72.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | | | | 1 | 5 | | | | |
| Severnside | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Cl-Y | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Bleadon/Weston STW | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Tockington | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Saltford | 3 | 3 | 2 | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| CVL | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 6 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| BL | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | 1 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The second table below shows that overall counts have improved over the past twenty years.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81 | 76 | 76 | 51 | 62 | 94 | 110 | 121 | 90 | 141 | 124 |

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for the past two decades

## SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* [Amber 1, 5]

*Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, very scarce in spring.*

WeBS status: In 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance.

The number of sightings was slightly above average compared with the past two decades as shown in the table below. One was noted in both winter periods but on only a few occasions, otherwise two were seen on spring passage and nine during the autumn. The details are as follows, unless stated otherwise all dates refer to single individuals which in autumn were mainly juveniles.

Northwick Warth, Severnside – July 19th and 31st (an adult), and Sept. 14th (a juvenile);

Cl-Y – Feb.16th, April 30th, Aug.18th, Sept. 8th (four, two adults and two juveniles), 11th,14th, 27th, 28th, Nov. 5th and 23rd;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – April 15th to 19th;

CVL – Aug. 27th (a juvenile).

| | 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Autumn | 10 | 7 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 24 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 36 | 9 | 3 | 9 |

Totals of the maximum counts for all sites over the past two decades

## GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

*Uncommon passage migrant, more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter.*

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cl-Y | 14 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| CVL | 8 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 13 | 9 |

Maximum single count at Cl-Y and CVL for the past two decades

This was another species showing below average counts in 2014. The highest count was only nine, at CVL on Aug. 28th. The spring passage was from April 6th to May 16th (both Severnside) and all were seen singly.

There was an extended autumn passage from mid July to mid October, but again most counts were low with only a few of five or more including, unusually, a flock at Littleton Warth on Sept.14th. Wintering was more widespread than usual, all were sighted singly with as usual a number of records from Sea Mills. But other favoured sites were Cl-Y in March and November, Sand Bay and Weston STW also in November, and CVL in February; it is likely that the same individual was involved in many of these sightings.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | : | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | | |
| Severnside | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 3 | | | |
| Sea Mills | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PWD | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Cl-Y | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 3 | 6 | | 1 | |
| Sand Bay | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Weston STW | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| BG | | | | | | | | 3 | 4 | | | |
| CVL | | 1 | | | | | | 9 | 5 | 1 | | |
| BL | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

## **WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola* [Amber 1, 5]

*Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and rare in spring; most frequent at CVL.*

Unusually all records came from a single coastal site – Northwick Warth and the associated Pilning Wetlands Two juveniles arrived on July 24th, they were joined by a third on 28th and all stayed until Aug. 4th with two remaining until 7th. Another juvenile arrived on 28th and stayed until Sept. 8th, it was joined by an adult on Aug. 31st which then moved on. A photograph of one of these appears opposite page 72. The table below shows that the 2014 total counts were fairly typical for this species in Avon, and the timing was also normal.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 5 |

Total number of individuals per year for the past two decades

Most of the records referred to in this table came from the reservoirs, mainly CVL, but when the habitat was more suitable a few were also noted at ASW up to about a decade ago.

## **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. Both occur almost certainly but there are no definite records, the fact that the main wintering flocks do not leave until mid April suggests that many *robusta* occur.

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was sixth in National Importance. Nat. 10-year trend: -26%.

| Year | OPS | Sea Mills | Cl-Y | Axe Estuary | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 43 | 80 | 106 | 189 | 418 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 40 | 85 | 198 | 237 | 473 |
| 2012/13 | 29 | 72 | 301 | 260 | 662 |
| 2013/14 | 52 | 71 | 315 | 321 | 759 |

August to February average counts

Amongst the waders, this is certainly the ‘star performer’ at the present time. Counts are increasing steadily at many sites as shown by the record total given in the status table above; see also the recent history of this species given on page 149. As noted last year, the Severnside counts are improving perhaps at the expense of those at Sea Mills. Present in good numbers up to mid April, the last three figure count was 130 at Cl-Y on 13th, and from mid July onwards with the first three figure count, 110, at New passage on Aug. 7th. The table gives monthly maxima at most sites, otherwise single birds were seen at BG in July and September.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 43 | 32 | 35 | 46 | | | 16 | 6 | 34 | 130 | 37 | 30 |
| Littleton Warth | 65 | 32 | 38 | 3 | | 3 | | | 9 | 140 | 90 | 30 |
| Severnside | 112 | 125 | 170 | 80 | 1 | 2 | 60 | 110 | 180 | 200 | 200 | 95 |
| Sea Mills (R. Avon) | 60 | 50 | 4 | 40 | 2 | | 3 | 6 | 64 | 36 | 100 | 50 |
| Avonmouth/PWD | 45 | 180 | 35 | 52 | 4 | 70 | 70 | 110 | 270 | 104 | 100 | 28 |
| Cl-Y | 380 | 390 | 400 | 210 | 10 | 84 | 85 | 290 | 360 | 405 | 410 | 295 |
| Sand Bay | 20 | 10 | 80 | 28 | | | | 3 | 7 | | | 45 |
| Axe E./WestonSTW | 1 | 290 | 30 | 40 | | 11 | 10 | 315 | 80 | 350 | 205 | 355 |
| CVL | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| BL | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 8 | | | 2 | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

*Redshank cont. Breeding* Some activity was noted at three artificial sites on the coast; *cf.* Lapwing. A pair was displaying at PWD in late April and early May. As last year breeding was proved at Dowlais Farm, Cl-Y, two chicks were reported in early June (*cf*. two also here in 2013). A pair was also present in May at a site near the mouth of the Yeo at Cl-Y.

## **JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocryptes minimus* [Amber 1]

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, probably overlooked.*

WeBS status: in 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance.

Sightings were similar to those of the past few years although there were no April records, present up to March 30th and from Sept. 26th onwards. The table summarises the sightings at the well-watched sites. The best counts came from Severnside which we have split into two sites as there is probably little movement up or down the Estuary between Northwick and Chittening. Records were also received from several other sites as follows: in January at Plumley Park, Worle, in February at the Western Distribution Park, Severnside, in March at ASW and Batheaston (two), in November at Sea Mills, and in December at Winyards Gap, Wrington.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | : | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS/Littleton Warth | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Northwick Warth | 4 | | | | 2 | 9 | 6 | 9 |
| Chittening Warth | 4 | | 1 | | | | 2 | 4 |
| PWD | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Cl-Y | 5 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Sand Bay | 4 | | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| Weston STW | 2 | | | | | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Yate | 5 | | | | | 2 | | |
| CVL | 1 | 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.*

As last year some high counts (for Avon) were received from the Gordano Valley gamekeeper; these included 27 on March 3rd (six had previously been ringed and one had been given a satellite tag), three on Walton Common on Nov. 29th and 15 on Dec. 6th. The Game Conservancy has been undertaking a national satellite tagging operation for this species. It has shown that a high percentage of our wintering birds breed in either the Baltic States or Russia, and one individual tagged in the Gordano Valley was tracked to Russia.

As almost all other sightings were of single birds, the figures for the Gordano Valley suggest that many more are present in winter than the records suggest; there are several other similar areas in Avon which are hardly visited by birders during the winter. All together there were 14 records up to April 4th and 19 from Oct.30th onwards, with an extra unusually early one in late August. The sites and records were as follows. As noted above all refer to single birds unless stated otherwise or were noted in the Gordano area.

January: Aust, Batheaston, Burnett (Elm Farm, two), Dundry, Lower Woods and Marshfield;
February: Aust, Burnett and Rocks East Woods;
March: Almondsbury, Burnett, Saltford as well as Walton Moor (27);
April: CVL;
August: Elm Farm, Burnett put up from a farm hedge on 30th (I Stapp);
October: CVL;
November: Abbots Leigh, Bristol – Bishopsworth and Castle Park, Burnett, Kenn Moor, Saltford, and Walton Common (3);
December: Abbots Leigh, Aust, Bradley Stoke, Clevedon (Swiss Valley), Cl-Y (Blake's Pool), CVL, Kenn Moor, Lower Woods, Walton Moor (15), Wickwar (three) and Yatton.

## **SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago* [Amber 1]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred in the past.

Two races: *gallinago* breeding in the palearctic and *fearoeansis* breeding in the N. Isles and Iceland. Most in Avon belong to the first race but a very small but unknown number of the second race probably also occur.

WeBS status: In 2013/14 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 39th in National Importance; BL was 32nd.

The two decade status table for this species is given at the top of the next page.

| Year | OPS | Severnside | Cl-Y | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 – 2003/04 Av. | 47 | 20 | 20 | 87 |
| 2004/05 – 2011/12 Av. | 18 | 13 | 10 | 41 |
| 2012/13 | 44 | 55 | 43 | 142 |
| 2013/14 | 14 | 11 | 54 | 79 |

November to February average counts

The dramatic rise noted in last year's Report was only partially sustained into the first part of 2014. Sites in the west which were probably considerably wetter produced some high counts in the early part of the year whilst numbers dropped back in the east, they also dropped back in the west in the latter part of the year. Even so counts were still well up of those experienced in the decade up to 2012. The count of 60 at PWD in February (on 6th) was of birds put up by maintenance work at the site.

Present up to April 27th (three at Cl-Y) and from July 17th (one at CVL) onwards, and so again no breeding activity was noted. The highest counts came from PWD, Cl-Y and Kenn Moor in January. The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Records were also received from at least ten other sites, those with five or more were: in January, 20 on Clapton Moor; in February, 19 at the Western Distribution Park, Severnside; in March, 78 flushed from fields opposite ASW, six at Weston Moor and 19 at Batheastern NR; and in December, 60 at Walton Moor – a site that produced a very high count in 2013.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 44 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 20 | 17 |
| Littleton Warth | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | | | | 10 | 29 | 19 |
| Severnside | 12 | 11 | 20 | 10 | | 4 | 12 | 16 | 19 | 19 | 45 |
| Sea Mills (R. Avon) | 2 | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 13 |
| PWD | 110 | 60 | 7 | | | | | 2 | 17 | 12 | 52 |
| Cl-Y | 125 | 33 | 17 | 11 | | 2 | 1 | 16 | 30 | 34 | 45 |
| Sand Bay | 11 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 30 |
| Axe Est/WestonSTW | | 86 | | | | | 1 | 5 | 3 | | 20 |
| Yate/Sodbury Com. | 6 | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Saltford | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Keynsham | 2 | | 5 | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Kenn Moor | 115 | | | | | | | | | | 21 |
| Congresbury Moor | 14 | 32 | | | | | | | | 7 | 2 |
| CVL | 9 | 16 | 10 | 12 | | 6 | 2 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 6 |
| BL | 50 | 79 | 30 | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 30 | |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

## Autumn Wader Migration on the coast

In the last three years counts at Cl-Y have been fairly constant, but during at least part of the autumn of 2014 observer coverage here was poor. On the other hand counts at Severnside have shown a remarkable rise, more than doubling over the period. In 2013 the August counts at this site were poor (even though observer coverage was normal) but this improved in 2014. The ratio figures between the two sites given in the bottom row of first table below have varied considerably, the reason(s) for this are unclear. This method of counting started 2007, hence the start date.

| 2007 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4216 | 3005 | 1858 | 1828 | 2471 | 1914 | 3583 | 5261 |
| 1934 | 1823 | 2983 | 3102 | 5452 | 4231 | 4364 | 4182 |
| 0.46 | 0.61 | 1.61 | 1.70 | 2.21 | 2.21 | 1.22 | 0.79 |

Autumn migrant wader totals, first row Severnside, second row Cl-Y, third ratio Cl-Y/SS

As in the past seven years the table overleaf gives the maximum count for each 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, as last year the migratory *schinzii* Dunlin predominated.

The autumn coastal wader migration table is given below.

| | | 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 | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| | Cl-Y | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 20 |
| Grey Plover | SS | | | | | | 2 | 9 | | 1 | 6 | 11 | 9 |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | | | | | 6 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Little Ringed Plover | SS | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| | Cl-Y | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | SS | | 1 | 4 | 60 | 110 | 170 | 20 | 120 | 80 | 60 | 30 | 13 |
| | Cl-Y | | 5 | 5 | 55 | 175 | 165 | 225 | 19 | 25 | | 6 | 5 |
| Whimbrel | SS | | | 3 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | |
| | Cl-Y | | 8 | 11 | 3 | 12 | 6 | 1 | | 2 | | | |
| Black-tailed Godwit | SS | | 2 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 70 | 143 | 190 | 224 | 115 | 70 | 6 |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | 1 |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | SS | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| | Cl-Y | | 10 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| Knot | SS | | | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 30 | 30 | 37 | 46 | 50 | 40 |
| | Cl-Y | | | | 2 | | 3 | 5 | | 40 | | | 35 |
| Ruff | SS | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | | |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 2 | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | SS | | | | 7 | | | 1 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 2 | |
| | Cl-Y | | | | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Sanderling | SS | | | 1 | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | 2 | | | |
| | Cl-Y | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | | 4 | | | |
| Dunlin | SS | 3 | 20 | 90 | 340 | 68 | 150 | 130 | 355 | 450 | 440 | 500 | 700 |
| | Cl-Y | | 15 | 20 | 550 | 350 | 130 | 400 | 180 | 400 | 350 | 350 | 450 |
| Little Stint | SS | | | | | | | | 7 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | |
| Common Sandpiper | SS | 6 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | |
| | Cl-Y | | 5 | 11 | 16 | nc | 4 | 12 | 3 | 2 | | | 2 |
| Green Sandpiper | SS | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Spotted Redshank | SS | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | 1 | | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Greenshank | SS | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | | | | | |
| | Cl-Y | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 1 | 6 | | | |
| Wood Sandpiper | SS | | | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |

Severnside (SS) and Cl-Y - Maximum counts in ten-day autumn period

## Autumn Migration at CVL

Water levels remained high well into summer and began to drop slowly, due to limited water extraction, during the late summer and early autumn. Some mud was exposed especially in Villice Bay but not enough to produce an exceptional autumn passage. Nevertheless the total number of waders seen as measured by the first table below was only slightly below the ten-year average of 515, and the species count was also only slightly down on its ten-year average of 22. On the other hand the first of these figures was considerably bolstered by two counts of Black-tailed Godwit that were on the high side.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 392 | 834 | 211 | 134 | 108 | 569 | 505 | 1119 | 295 | 912 | 458 |
| 19 | 24 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 25 | 25 | 31 | 17 | 23 | 19 |

Middle row -- Totals of the ten-day maxima for all waders (excluding Lapwing) at CVL between July 1st and Oct. 28th
Bottom row – Total number of species recorded over the same ten-day periods

As in previous Reports the table below gives the maximum count at CVL in each ten-day period between July 1st and 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 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | | | | 1 |
| Lapwing | 25 | 26 | 37 | 72 | 51 | 40 | 36 | 36 | 50 | 105 | 85 | 7 |
| Little Ringed Plover | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 1 | | |
| Whimbrel | | 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Curlew | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Black-tailed Godwit | | 33 | 8 | 9 | 52 | | | 2 | | 3 | | 1 |
| Knot | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Ruff | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | | 3 | | | | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Sanderling | | | | | 1 | | | 9 | | | | |
| Dunlin | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1 |
| Little Stint | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Common Sandpiper | 3 | 20 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Green Sandpiper | 1 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 13 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| Spotted Redshank | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Greenshank | | | | | 2 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Redshank | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 5 | 8 | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| Snipe | | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 4 | | 3 |

CVL - Maximum counts in each ten-day autumn period

## **POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus* (205, 20)

*Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor; very rare inland.*
Descriptions required.

Another good spring passage with at least 20 in a short window between May 6th and 11th, details as follows:

Severn Beach – five late afternoon on May 9th (R James, I Dickie *et al*.) with seven reported the next day, one of which was photographed (P D Bowerman *et al*.);

Sand Point – one on May 6th, two on 10th (09.30 and 11.25, both with full spoons) and two on 11th (all P A Bowyer);

Anchor Head – five on May 7th and four on 9th (P A Bowyer).

Observers are reminded that descriptions or photographs are required for this species; as usual a number of claims had no supporting details so see Skua sp below.

## **ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Inland 39, 0) [Red 3]

*Uncommon spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn). Rare inland, mainly at CVL.*
Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

An extremely poor year for this declining species with a feeble total of up to 14 recorded in April and May. Although we would normally record these records as totalling about 14 individuals, the frequent identical scores from the Weston-s-Mare area and Severn Beach, both with excellent coverage, suggest a high degree of duplication, with perhaps as few as eight involved. The highest day count occurred in June. The autumn passage comprised a single individual. None was recorded inland.

*Spring passage* The first sighting was on April 4th, when one passed Sand Point, followed by another past Anchor Head on 7th. There was only one more April record: two at Severn Beach on 21st. In May there was one at Sand Point and possibly the same, a dark morph, at Severn Beach on 6th; two off Anchor Head and two at Severn Beach next day; two at Sand Point and two at Severn Beach on 11th.

*Midsummer* Two dark and one pale morph headed down channel at Severn Beach in calm conditions at 07.55 on June 27th.

*Autumn passage* One off Northwick Warth on Sept.14th was the only record.

## GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* (Inland 27, 2+) [Amber 6, 7]

*Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor. Rare inland.*
Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A return to more normal numbers after an exceptional showing in 2013, although autumn was rather poor. CVL again produced multiple records. The influx of up to 16 individuals associated with persistent storms and a widespread auk wreck in the first winter period was the most notable event.

*First winter period* The first of the year was one off Sand Point on Jan.16th. An influx in mid-February associated with stormy weather began with one off Battery Point and another up channel at OPS (P J Hazelwood) on 9th. This was followed by five off Severn Beach on 12th; four here and three off PWD on 15th; and the last down channel off Sand Point on 16th.

*Spring passage* This year the passage began with one off Weston-s-Mare on May 7th. On 10th there was another here and one at Severn Beach, with final records of up to three in the Weston-s-Mare area next day off both Sand Point and Anchor Head.

*Autumn passage* Only three individuals this year, remarkably all of them inland as follows:

OPS – one disturbing the gull roost on the evening of Oct.15th (P. J. Hazelwood);

CVL – an adult circling over the lake from 12.30-12.35 on Sept. 3rd then left to S (A H Davis, K E Vinicombe); another adult on Oct. 15th (M. Jenkins, R Mielcarek *et al.,* photographed*)* was still present following morning when it was eating a dead Coot in Stratford Bay. It, or possibly another adult, then remained until Oct.19th (per D. Angell, photographed).

## SKUA sp *Stercorarius sp*

Noted as follows; for records from the last decade see table below.

Severn Beach – one on May 8th, and four on 11th, were reported as Pomarine;

Sand Point. – four upstream late afternoon on April 21st (thought to be Pomarine), six on May 11th (one of which was probably a Long-tailed, although very distant) and one on 12th;

Anchor Head – seven that flew upriver at 12.40 on May 11th were reported as Pomarine.

### Skuas in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pomarine Skua, | 4 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 17 | 2 | 5 | 17+ | 16+ | 20 |
| Arctic Skua | 23 | 50+ | 51 | 37 | 47 | 17 | 40+ | 40+ | 57 | 18 |
| Long-tailed Skua | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Great Skua | 10 | 26+ | 13 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 13 | 12 | 69 | 21 |
| Skua sp. | 11 | 6 | 7 | | 5 | | 9 | 3 | 22 | 23 |

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.

There was a significant auk wreck during the persistent storms in mid-February including more of this species than usual. Working out how many individuals were involved in the influx was problematic, but the record near Charfield at the time is nonetheless remarkable. All records were in the first two months of the year:

Severn Beach – one on Jan. 11th; one on Feb 8th; eight on 9th (six of which drifted up to New Passage later – a sure sign of exhaustion); one on 12th and one on 15th;

PWD – one on Feb. 10th, which fended off an attack from a Great Black-backed Gull before drifting out into the Estuary;

Battery Point, Portishead – one resting on shore on Jan. 9th later swam off;

Ladye Bay – one on Feb. 8th and 9th;

Walton Bay – two adults close in shore on Feb.10th;

Sand Point – one flew down channel on Jan. 9th with another on 20th;

Upstream of the Severn Bridge: one flew upriver at OPS just after dawn on Feb.15th (P J Hazelwood).

*Inland* – a remarkable and genuinely 'inland' record was of an individual photographed on the Little Avon River upstream of Charfield by the Huntingford Engineering Works at ST723929 late on Feb. 11th (V. Polley); see photo opposite page 80. The river forms the boundary between the Avon area and Gloucestershire. This may be only the second truly inland record for our recording region. The first was of one caught at BL on June 19th, 1913 (*per* N R Milbourne). It is thought that it was preserved and displayed for some time in a glass case in the Inspection House at the lake.

## **RAZORBILL** *Alca torda* (42, 4)

*Very scarce storm-driven visitor, rare in summer. Occurs in smaller numbers than Guillemot. No inland records.*

Four records, all in February, the best year since 1996 when there were also four, and the first since 2011. The high percentage of adults involved in this small wreck does not bode well in terms of its likely impact on the population. Details as follows:

Severn Beach – a first-winter on the afternoon tide on 10th was lost to view but was later relocated close inshore at New Passage (A D Scott *et al*., photographed, see opposite page 80);

Royal Portbury Dock – on 6th an exhausted adult was recovered from the quayside by the Dock police and taken into care at Secret World (photographed). Another adult was seen here on 21st (C J Stone);

Sand Point – an adult was photographed on the rocks at the Point mid-morning on 21st (P A Bowyer, J Lanfear).

## **PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica* (4, 2)

*Very rare storm-driven visitor, rarer than Little Auk.*
Descriptions required.

One live record: a first-winter with a group of Guillemots at Severn Beach early afternoon on Feb. 9th (B Lancastle *et al*.).

Also an adult was found dead on the tideline in Sand Bay on Feb. 16th (M Plenty).

These are the first records since two individuals were seen at Severn Beach in February 2002, with one also seen here in February 1997.

## **AUK Sp**

One at Severn Beach on Feb. 8th was thought to be a Razorbill.

### Auks in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guillemot | 1 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 37 | 3 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 18 |
| Razorbill | 1 | 2 | | | | | 1 | | | 4 |
| Guillemot/Razorbill | | | 1 | | | | 6+ | | | |
| Puffin | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| 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.*

An average year by recent standards, with four coastal records in May and a small inland group in late August. The details are as follows including a ten-year summary in the table:

Severnside – one at Severn Beach then New Passage on May 6th; one at Severn Beach on 11th;

PWD – one on May 9th;

Sand Point – one up and three down channel on May 11th;

CVL – one adult and two juveniles on Aug. 28th.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coastal | 1 | 19 | 2 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 6/7 |
| Inland | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

Records for the last ten years

## 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 spring followed by a marginally better autumn compared with the past two years, see table below.

*Spring passage* The first were two at CVL on April 22nd – the only record during the month. In May there was one at CVL on 1st; another at Sand Point on 12th; and four more at CVL on 27th.

*Autumn passage* A moulting adult was at CVL on July 14th and 15th with four more here on 18th. In August there were 13 (ten adults and three juveniles) here on 8th; an adult on 26th; five on 27th which had departed by 09.00; 11 on 28th; 14 on 29th and 30th and five remaining on 31st. The only August record away from CVL was of five at BL on 28th. One was at CVL on Sept. 6th; another at Northwick Warth on 10th and the last of the year were two at CVL on Oct. 6th.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct | 31 | 30 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 43 | 24 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| No of days recorded (total for year) | 17 | 42 | 15 | 14 | 17 | 24 | 40 | 15 | 11 | 18 |

Average counts at CVL

## WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus* (9, 1)

*Rare continental vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a juvenile found at CVL in late morning on Sept.10th remained until the 13th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*, photographed).

This is the first Avon area record of this species since 2005 when one was at Weston STW for six days in September; prior to that one was at BL in August 2001. It was formerly more regular with multiple records in the 1970s and 1980s.

## SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* [Amber 1, 4, 6]

*Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.*

A return to normal after last year's excellent showing with just three records in spring and three in autumn, the latter all from CVL.

*Spring passage* The first was one at CVL on April 1st then up to three were reported at Sand Point on 4th with another at Severn Beach on 28th.

*Autumn passage* One was at CVL on Aug. 2nd with five here on 29th and two on Sept. 5th.

### Scarce Terns in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Little Tern | 1 | 26 | 4 | 15 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| Whiskered Tern | | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | |
| White-winged Black Tern | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Sandwich Tern | 6 | 21 | 4 | 35 | 15 | 23 | 35+ | 15 | 59 | 12 |

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 very poor spring was followed by a reasonable passage at CVL in August. True numbers on the Estuary are masked by identification issues (see under Common/Arctic terns). The first in spring was a very early individual up channel off OPS on March 31st followed by three at Anchor Head and one at CVL on April 8th. The last of the year was one at CVL on Sept. 20th.

In the Estuary, after the early sighting at OPS and those at Anchor Head on April 6th there were no more until May when six were at Sand Point on 6th, then single birds at OPS and Northwick Warth, and seven at Severn

Beach on 9th, at least one at Severn Beach next day, two up river off Sand Point on 11th and one here on 12th. There was just one autumn record on the coast, a single individual at Northwick Warth on Aug. 9th.

At CVL spring numbers were well down on last year. After the first three on April 8th the only other record in this month was of two on 17th. In May one or two were noted on seven dates with five on 23rd; in June three on 17th with one on 19th and 21st; and in July single birds on 7th and 12th with eight on 18th. August started with nine on 5th, one on 6th and two on 8th. These figures were eclipsed by a strong passage which began on 10th with 29, and possibly as many as 71, moving through. At CVL it is hard to determine whether terns have actually left the lake area or are just moving around between different parts. A lull ensued with three on 14th but the big passage resumed from 25th to 28th. At least 28 on 25th were followed by up to 30 on 26th, 45 on 27th (with possibly up to 109, see comment above), and at least 40 on 28th. Eight to twelve remained to the end of the month. After eight on Sept.1st, low single figures were recorded on most days through to the last on 20th with an isolated peak of 12 on 10th and 15 on the following day. The table below summarises this data.

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of days recorded | 2 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 14 |
| Maximum count over the month | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 45 (109) | 15 |

CVL summary with minimum counts and possible maxima in brackets

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun | 11 | 20 | 5 | 17 | 5 | 23 | 14 | 55 | 40 | 3 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov | 9 | 35 | 6 | 38 | 38 | 80 | 20 | 20 | 29 | 38 (73) |
| No. days recorded (total for year) | 32 | 44 | 53 | 61 | 44 | 61 | 47 | 35 | 47 | 42 |

Average counts at CVL over the past decade; see above for figure in brackets

The only other inland records were from BL, which as usual had much leaner pickings than CVL with single individuals from May 11th to 14th; on July 12th and 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.*

There was no repeat of last year's spring influx and autumn numbers were also modest. As with Common Tern the true situation is clouded with identification difficulties, especially on the Estuary where many are best recorded as Common/Arctic. The table below summarises the records for the last decade.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Max count for year | 1000+ | 80 | 45 | 43 | 13 | 25 | 150 | 25 | 130 | 35 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts | 378 | 44 | 33 | 42 | 9 | 16 | 135 | 20 | 115 | 24 |
| No. days recorded during year | 14 | 19 | 32+ | 26 | 25 | 19 | 40 | 22 | 31 | 18 |

Annual details for the Avon area

*Spring passage* The only April record was of 16 at Severn Beach on 20th. The next were 21 to NE at Sand Point on May 6th then two off Anchor Head the next day, and CVL recorded its first two of the year on 8th. Strong SW winds on 10th brought reports of five at OPS; at least one (but see Common/Arctic Tern) at Severn Beach; five at Ladye Bay; two at Anchor Head; and one at CVL. Next day winds remained strong and there were reports of two at Severn Beach; one at PWD; 35 off Sand Point and three at BL that remained here until 13th. The 12th also saw one at Ladye Bay and eight off Sand Point. A first-summer at CVL on 14th was notable and five more were here on 23rd.

*Autumn passage* A juvenile was at CVL on Aug. 21st with it or another here from 25th to 28th. Another was reported at Cl-Y on 30th. There were three adults and a juvenile at CVL on Sept.1st, a further one here on 11th and the last of the year, another juvenile, on 28th.

## 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 – one on May 9th;

Severn Beach – 18 on April 21st; one on May 7th; 23 on 10th; and one on 11th;

Cl-Y – six on May 10th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay/Middle Hope – one on April 7th; five on May 5th; 36 on 6th; four on 9th; 200 on 11th; 13 on 12th; 38 on 13th; and 16 on 14th.

Anchor Head – one on April 8th.

**Tern Passage** Three tables are given below summarising the main tern passages. The first two detail the main passages in 2014, both on the coast and inland, and the third shows how the main spring coastal passages have varied over the past decade.

### Spring Tern Passage

| | April | | | May | | | Jun | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 |
| Black Tern (coast) | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Black Tern (inland) | | 2 | | 1 | | 4 | | | |
| Common Tern (coast) | 3 | | | 14 | 3 | | | | |
| Common Tern (inland) | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 3 | 1 |
| Arctic Tern (coast) | | 16 | | 41 | 43 | | | | |
| Arctic Tern (inland) | | | | 2 | 1 | 5 | | | |
| Common/Arctic Tern (coast) | 2 | | 18 | 64 | 267 | | | | |

Spring -- Maxima of daily counts for each ten-day period at coastal and inland sites

### Autumn Tern Passage

| | Jul | | | Aug | | | Sep | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-9 | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30-8 | 9-18 | 19-28 |
| Black Tern (coast) | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Black Tern (inland) | | 4 | | 13 | | 14 | 1 | | |
| Common Tern (coast) | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Common Tern (inland) | 1 | 8 | | 29 (71) | 3 | 45 (109) | 12 | 15 | 1 |
| Arctic Tern (coast) | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Arctic Tern (inland) | | | | | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

Autumn – Maxima of daily counts in each ten-day period at coastal and inland sites, for bracketed figures see the relevant entry above

### Spring Tern Passage on the Coast

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Common | 142 | 120 | 291 | 561 | 3 | 2 | 593 | 103 | 61 | 20 |
| Arctic | 1134 | 136 | 131 | 201 | 21 | 14 | 524 | 41 | 461 | 100 |
| Common/Arctic | 208 | 849 | 485 | 606 | 138 | 240 | 2410 | 352 | 629 | 351 |
| Total | 1484 | 1105 | 907 | 1368 | 162 | 256 | 3527 | 496 | 1151 | 471 |

Totals of the highest recorded 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.*

A good series of records in the storms early in the year was followed by a reasonable spring passage, but none were seen in the summer and there was a very poor autumn. Recorded on 38 dates (23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, 11 in 2010, 26 in 2011, 33 in 2012, and 40 in 2013).

*January/February* The first were 14 at Sand Point on Jan. 3rd, then one at Northwick Warth next day. Records came from three sites on five dates during the rest of the month with a maximum 30 at Severn Beach on 25th, see table below. The storms that produced the auk wreck also produced regular records of this species through February, as shown below, with Severn Beach recording most regularly, but the highest count was 178 up river at OPS on 9th.

| | January | | | | | | | February | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 20 | 25 | 28 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| OPS | | | | | | | | | | | 178 | | | | | 5 | | | | | 3 |
| NP-NW | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Severn Beach | | | | | | 30 | | | 20 | 30+ | 100 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 6 | | | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Ladye Bay | | | | | | | | 11 | | 35 | 30 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sand Pt | 14 | | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 18 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | | |

Coastal counts in the first winter period

*Spring passage* Only three sightings were noted in March: 50 off Anchor Head on 18th with 70 here next day and an adult at CVL on 22nd. In April there were just 74 off Sand Point on 4th; eight off Anchor Head on 8th and 19 at Severn Beach on 22nd, the birds passing upstream over the bridge. In May Severn Beach produced 40 on 6th; seven on 7th; five on 8th; and 40 on 10th. At Sand Point there were 37 on 6th; three on 7th; and 19 on 11th. The last record of the month was of one, almost certainly a second-summer, at CVL on 27th.

*Autumn and second winter period* The next records were of one at Severn Beach on Oct. 7th with it or another here with an immature at Aust Warth on 9th. There was just one more record: a second-winter at CVL on Nov. 9th and 10th.

The table summarises the Severnside records for the past decade.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Av. of 3 highest counts | 166 | 416 | 88 | 170 | 233 | 92 | 200 | 83 | 108 | 80 |
| No. of dates recorded | 29 | 22 | 27 | 23 | 19 | 5 | 15 | 14 | 19 | 21 |

Severnside – Data over the last ten years

## 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 17th most important site in 2013/14 (CVL was not listed due to lack of counts).

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.

The huge (five-figure) CVL roost was again not counted this year. The large winter numbers typically tailed off rapidly in March and remained low during April and May this year with no major movements detected in the Estuary, although 70 flew up river at OPS and 51 did so at New Passage in typically hazy conditions with a gentle NE breeze on March 30th.

Small numbers were noted throughout June with the first to return hard to pin down but numbers increased during the month with, for example, 78 at Sand Bay on 11th. A trickle was noted heading to W at this time and the first juvenile was reported from OPS on 21st.

The largest counts away from the sites tabulated below were of 900 at Avonmouth on Jan.22nd and 500 at Kenn Moor on Jan.1st; Woodspring Bay on 19th; and Marshfield on Dec. 3rd. The tabulated January count from Cl-Y (3000) was of birds lingering before leaving a regular roost on the Estuary early in the morning of 5th. Large numbers evidently use various parts of the Estuary for roosting, depending on the weather conditions, but are usually very difficult to count.

A leucistic individual was at OPS on July 4th. Another at CVL on, and for a few days after, Sept. 5th was described as having a squeaky tern-like call.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 250 | 550 | 70 | 17 | 15 | 205 | 515 | 370 | 500 | 500 | 500+ | 350 |
| Littleton Warth | 210 | 400+ | 24 | | | 5 | 375 | 450 | 190 | 75 | 40 | 20 |
| New Passage | 320+ | 450+ | 51 | 10 | 5 | 50 | 550 | 500+ | 225 | 380 | 140 | 450+ |
| Severn Beach | 18 | | | 28 | 10 | 70 | | 220 | | 359 | | 60 |
| Cl-Y | 3000+ | 725 | 1000 | 25 | 15 | 180 | 1100 | 1175 | 750 | 650 | 600 | 650 |
| Sand Bay | 337 | 665 | 72 | 15 | 24 | 185 | 450 | 1450 | 775 | 360 | 205 | 18 |
| Axe Estuary | 50 | 30 | 45 | 1 | 2 | 22 | 330 | 133 | 125 | 180 | 40 | 30 |
| Weston STW | 162 | 272 | 116 | 1 | 5 | 100 | 954 | 1049 | 1394 | 517 | 276 | 238 |
| R Avon, Sea Mills | 100 | 180 | 12 | 10 | | | 20 | 50 | 108 | 99 | 300 | 100 |
| R Avon, Keynsham | 500 | 300 | | | | | 1 | | | | 30 | 32 |
| Saltford | 400 | 590 | 221 | | 8 | 3 | 225 | 51 | 50 | 300 | 365 | 350 |
| BL | 275 | 2000+ | 275 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 50 | 35 | 250 | 31 | 19 | 25 |

Monthly counts at the regularly counted sites

*Ringing Report* A pullus was ringed and given a second yellow ring with the label K745 at Radzu Res., Jekabpils, Latvia on June 25th, 2013. It was seen at CVL on April 4th and two days later at Hoecklingsdam, Amsterdam, Holland. A further three sightings of adults colour-ringed in the Baltic area in 2006, 2009 and 2014 were noted at CVL in August and December; for details see page 170.

## LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus* [Amber 1]

*Uncommon passage migrant; scarce in winter.*

WeBS status: the English coast of the Estuary was the 40th most important in 2013/14.

A good number in the first winter period, associated with the frequent storms. There followed a reasonable spring passage with the highest count at CVL which was the best for several years at this site. The autumn passage comprised just of birds at CVL for two days in mid-October.

*Winter 2013/14* A first-winter at CVL on Jan. 6th was followed by one (unaged) at Severn Beach and an adult, possibly the same, going to roost on the river at New Passage on Feb. 9th; two at Cl-Y on 13th; one at CVL and one or two adults at Severn Beach on 15th; an adult at CVL from 23rd to 26th; one at Cl-Y on 24th; one at CVL on March 1st and four first-winters in the roost here on 3rd.

*Spring passage* Most records came from CVL where there was an adult on March 3rd, one on 29th increased to two on 30th (on which date four were at BL) and seven on 31st. In early April four were at CVL on 1st and 2nd; three on 3rd then an exceptional 20 on 4th; seven on 5th; two on 6th; four on 7th, two (first-winters) on 8th and one on 9th. One on the tidal reservoir at OPS on 16th was attacked by a Carrion Crow but escaped unscathed. Later in the month one was at BL and one, perhaps the same, at CVL on 25th. The only May records were of one at CVL on 5th and another at Sand Point on 11th.

*Autumn passage and second winter period* Four at CVL on Oct.14th with three remaining the following day.

A summary of the year's records, and a 'snapshot' of the CVL sightings for the last decade, are given below.

| | Jan. | Feb. | Mar | April | May | Oct. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Days recorded at CVL | 1 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| Maximum CVL count | 1 | 1 | 7 | 20 | 1 | 4 |
| Days recorded elsewhere | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Max. Count elsewhere | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Summary of all records

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 6 | 15 | 3 | 11 |
| Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

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.*

Despite large increases in some nearby areas this species appears to have stalled with us, or even suffered a slight decline. It might be slightly less thoroughly reported but does seem to be genuinely slightly scarcer at some consistently well-watched sites; see first table below. Formerly regular sites of OPS and Sea Mills produced few records in 2014.

CVL was by far the best site early in the year with up to four (24th) on 18 dates in January; up to six (16th) on 18 dates in February (and three to five on eight dates); then up to four (4th) on eight dates in March to 19th. Elsewhere seen singly in January as tabulated below, with a slight increase in February reflecting spring passage, but fewer in March and just one in April at PWD on 7th. The only May record was of a first-winter with Kittiwakes at Severn Beach on 12th.

The first to return, an adult, was hawking insects over Easter Compton on June 19th, followed by up to three at PWD later in the month. July numbers were lower than in some recent years with the first juvenile reported at PWD on 18th. A second-summer here on 27th had been ringed at the Elbe Delta, Hamburg, Germany.

None were then seen at CVL from mid-March until the arrival of four juveniles on July 19th with records on just three more days in the month and five first-summers on Aug. 2nd. There were then none here until Oct. 12th, followed by one or two on six more dates during the month plus four on 24th. One or two on six dates in November and up to four on nine dates in December ended the year.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 14 | 17 | 23 | 23 | 20 | 21 | 18 | 19 | 23 | 17 |
| Max count | 11 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 6 |

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below, with records from the following six sites contributing to the summated monthly maxima in the bottom row: Banwell Estuary; BG; Bleadon; Bristol; Easter Compton; and Marshfield. A photograph of a juvenile seen at New Passage in August appears opposite page 81.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| New Passage | 1 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| Severn Beach | | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| PDW | 1 | 3 | | 1 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Portishead area | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| CI-Y | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sand Point and Bay | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Weston STW | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Sea Mills | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Saltford | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| CVL | 4 | 6 | 4 | | | | 4 | 5 | | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| BL | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| Six other sites | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings, giving ages if possible, of this 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 even more difficult to count.*

Regular counts were received from somewhat fewer sites than in 2012, and numbers appeared lower than usual, but there were some good counts from Marshfield at the end of the year and the main site, the hard to assess CVL roost, was not counted again this year. The tabulated sites were the only ones where regular counts were made.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS | 100 | 100 | 50 | 50 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 15 | 100 | 100 | 80 |
| Littleton Warth | 5 | 25 | 83 | 10 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Aust Warth | 94 | 80 | | 6 | | | | | | | 15 | |
| New Passage | 31 | 10 | 10 | 10 | | | 3 | | 1 | 5 | 48 | 70 |
| Severn Beach | 40 | 25 | | 6 | 10 | | | | | | | 70 |
| Sand Point & Bay | 32 | 97 | 50 | 31 | 2 | | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| Marshfield | | | | | | | | | | 2000 | 750 | 2500 |
| Saltford | 8 | 100 | 6 | | | | | | | 100 | 20 | 500 |
| Backwell Lake | 30 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | 5 | 40 | 23 |
| BL | 100 | 2000 | 28 | 1 | | | | | | 5 | 26 | 41 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Most reports from elsewhere were of 40 or fewer with larger counts as follows:

Somerdale – 500 on Jan. 11th;

The Windsurfing Lake, near Bradley Stoke – 97 on Jan. 4th;

PWD – 44 on Jan 6th.

More were reported in early May than last year with regular reports of small numbers along the coast until 12th and the last at CI-Y on 18th. None was then seen until June 26th when there were three at OPS and a first-summer arrived at CVL, the latter staying to July 2nd when it was joined by a third. There was also one at OPS on 2nd but then no more until mid-month after which small numbers were regular at CVL and OPS with up to five at the latter site and similar numbers through August. A slight increase occurred from mid-September with 15 at OPS on 12th and the first returning adult at CVL on 19th. Hundreds had arrived by the end of the month.

## RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis* (69, 3)

*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.

At least three individuals were recorded, all adults at CVL, details as follows:

January – an adult was on Herriott's Pool for a few minutes from 15.15 on 24th before flying into the roost (A H Davis). This may have been the individual reported from the roost on 12th, although no supporting notes were submitted;

February – a different adult, in full summer plumage, was seen in the roost on 2nd (A H Davis *et al*.) and from Nunnery Point at 15.45 on 4th still visible at 16.00. (K E Vinicombe);

December – an adult in the roost at 15.40 on 23rd which remained visible for half an hour. (K E Vinicombe).

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past decade is given on page 83.

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* [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 Severn Estuary was 56th in Importance in 2013/14 (CVL is not listed due to a lack of counts).

The table below shows the maximum counts from the regularly recorded sites, many of which hold only modest numbers but do show a seasonal pattern of passage and summer peaks. CVL holds the largest numbers but full counts are difficult here and none was made this year. 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 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 26 | 35 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 40 | 5 | 5 |
| Littleton Warth | | 2 | 15 | 4 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | |
| New Passage | 3 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Cl-Y | 10 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 5 |
| Axe Estuary | | 3 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 4 |
| Weston STW | 9 | 5 | 41 | 41 | 102 | 53 | 57 | 62 | 39 | 8 | 4 | |
| Sea Mills | 3 | 5 | 25 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| BL | 15 | 10 | 100 | 2 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 48 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 10 |
| Saltford | 30 | 14 | 11 | | 15 | 8 | 16 | 34 | 16 | 50 | 13 | 9 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Other high counts included many spring movements up the Estuary from Sand Point the first being 42 in 40 minutes as early as Jan. 17th but with the peak between Feb. 19th and April 4th including three figure counts of 275 in an hour on Feb. 19th; 210 in three hours next day; 114 in 1.5 hours on 25th; 109 in 2.25 hours on 27th; 311 in three hours on March 6th; 166 in 3.5 hours next day; 101 in 3.25 hours on 8th; 109 in 4.5 hours on 15th and 200 in five hours on April 4th. The only other high counts away from the sites tabulated above were: 200 at Marshfield on Sept. 9th and 160 at Queen Charlton on April 5th.

The first juveniles appeared at CVL on July 18th but as usual there was very little information from the breeding colonies in the cities or on Steep Holm. A report of 48 at BL on Aug. 14th comprised an adult and 47 juveniles. A total of 56 victims of Peregrine attack was logged on Steep Holm between April and May.

A white first-winter with a dark eye (leucistic) was at CVL on April 14th. One attempted to swallow a dead Coot at Prior Park, Bath on May 20th.

### *L. f. intermedius*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; annual at CVL. Probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage.*

There was only one record, an adult at CVL on Aug. 29th. The table below gives the numbers reported during the last two decades.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

Number of individuals recorded each year

## HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus* [Red 3]

**Western subspecies** *L. a. Argenteus*

*Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, or around Bristol and Bath. Apart from the Steep Holm colony, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath, and smaller ones in other towns.*

WeBS status: The English coast of the Severn Estuary was 46th in National Importance in 2013/14.

The table below shows the maximum counts from the regularly counted sites. Counts for most sites were broadly similar to last year but they do depend on the time of day and, for coastal sites, the stage of the tide; so such apparent declines may not be real. WeBS counts around high tide produce low counts compared with low tide counts at a number of coastal sites. Roosts or pre-roost gatherings are much larger than the numbers present at the reservoirs during the day. The CVL roost holds the largest concentrations but is hard to count and was not counted again this year. Numbers at BL early in the year were much lower than last year but high counts later in the year included an impressive 735 in Holt Bay on Oct. 21st. 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 | 4 | 20 | 18 | 30 | 50 | 31 | 8 | 2 | 15 | 50 | 18 | 3 |
| Littleton Warth | 2 | 15 | 45 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | |
| New Passage | 37 | 13 | 18 | 95 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 18 | 9 |
| Cl-Y | 90 | 70 | 130 | 145 | 325 | 65 | 55 | 110 | 45 | 100 | 200 | 55 |
| Axe Estuary | | 5 | 45 | 28 | 2 | 22 | 2 | 50 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 37 |
| Weston STW | 273 | 111 | 83 | 198 | 303 | 28 | 113 | 314 | 41 | 40 | 131 | 161 |
| Saltford | 26 | 12 | 70 | | 25 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 25 |
| BL | 30 | 5 | 5 | | | 7 | | 3 | 8 | 735 | 13 | 131 |

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The only counts in three figures from other sites were as follows: 176 at Avonmouth at low tide on April 9th; 147 at Sand Point on March 6th (up channel in three hours) with 100 on April 4th; 200 at Marshfield on Sept. 2nd with 100 on Oct. 4th; and 157 at BG on May 18th.

Three were killed by Peregrines at Steep Holm in April and May – again far fewer than the preceding species.

## 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 fourth most important site in 2013/14, and the Severn Estuary was 26th.

An average year at the main site, CVL, with a typical late summer peak, but with records in every month of the year. A second-winter lingered here through January to at least April 17th and accounted for the vast majority of the records in the first three months. The first juvenile was back at CVL on Aug. 7th. Numbers peaked in July and August as usual but with maximum counts somewhat below those of last year. The number of individuals in the late summer months are clearly underestimates as ages were not reported for a most at this time. The first table below summarises the records for the past decade and the second gives the main monthly breakdown.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 7 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 11 |
| Max count | 9 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 3+ | 10 | 7 |

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 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 10+ | 5+ | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| CVL - daily maximum count | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| BL – estimate of individuals | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | |
| Summated maxima elsewhere | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |

Monthly breakdown

As tabulated above (line 4), recorded from nine other sites, an upsurge on last year. All were single birds, unless stated otherwise, and the details are given overleaf.

The minor entries from the table above were: an adult at Royal Portbury Dock on Jan. 5th; Sand Point on 22nd; adult at Sea Mills on March 14th; adult at PWD on March 31st, April 1st, May 22nd, June 27th and July 21st;

*Yellow-legged Gull cont*.
juvenile at Northwick Warth on July 28th; an adult at Litton Resrs on Aug 13th; first-winter at New Passage on Sept. 4th; BG on Oct. 31st; and Cl-Y on Nov. 10th.

As ever observers are urged to report the ages of all individuals and carefully consider hybrids between Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull, which are relatively frequent in the mixed colonies in Bristol, when reporting this species, especially away from the main reservoirs. White headed first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gulls can also be a trap for the unwary. *(Eds.)*

## ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* (40, 3+) [Amber 5]

*Very scarce winter visitor; occurs more frequently than Glaucous Gull.*
Descriptions required.

A remarkable series of sightings was reported from the reservoirs involving at least three different individuals, at least two first-winter and one second-winter, with two being present on a number of occasions. Two were clearly in their first-winter (in terms of age – such birds are still largely or completely in juvenile plumage, that is still with their first set of feathers after fledging, although a few scapulars can be replaced along with less conspicuous head and body feathering). A second-winter was photographed on Feb. 2nd but at least some later reports of this age class refer to a pale first-winter so the full picture is somewhat confused.

CVL – the first sighting was of a first-winter at Herriott's Pool on Jan. 25th (R Turner *et al*.) with it or another first-winter in the roost on 28th (R Mielcarek). A second-winter was photographed on Herriott's Pool on Feb. 2nd (G Jones) and then seen in the roost later that evening while what was considered to be the original first-winter was in the roost on the 18th. Two first-winters were in the roost on 22nd (R M Andrews) and what was considered to be a third individual, a somewhat darker first-winter, was in the roost on 23rd (K E Vinicombe *et al*.).

In March what were considered probably to be the first two individuals were both found independently on the lake around midday on 17th, one of which then flew onto Herriott's Pool where it was photographed; both of these were then seen in the roost on 19th with one or other in the roost on 22nd and 28th. A bleached and faded first-winter was then seen on Herriott's Pool most days between April 1st and 18th (many observers, photographed, see opposite page 81);

BL – a first-winter, presumably one of those from CVL, was watched for 20 minutes on the morning of March 17th (P Delve *et al*.).

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past decade is given on the next page.

### Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* (5, 1)

*Rare Nearctic winter visitor, many of the records are believed to relate one returning individual.*
Descriptions required.

An adult was in the roost at CVL on March 19th with two Lesser Black-backed Gulls (K E Vinicombe *et al*., photographed).

This is the first record of this race since 2011, so perhaps it is likely to have been a new individual rather than the returning bird, see the table of rare gulls on the next page.

## GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus* (15, 1)

*Very scarce winter visitor.*
Descriptions required.

One record, a first-winter in the roost at CVL on Feb. 22nd (R M Andrews) and 24th (C Craig, R Mielcarek).

The last records were of a second-winter at Severnside and PDW in January and a first-winter at CVL in March, both in 2012, for earlier data see the table on the next page.

## 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.*

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 51st in Importance in 2013/14.

Not quite as widespread at last year (partly depending on the definition of a site, which is problematic on the coast). Numbers remained high at CVL and the parallel increase at BL was also maintained. Three ringed individuals at BL came from a colony on nearby Denny Island in the Bristol Channel with a fourth a returning individual from a French colony present in April and October.

The first table summarises the data for the past decade and the second gives the monthly maxima for 2014.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 12 | 15 | 20 | 17 | 15 | 18 | 24 | 27 | 24 | 22 |
| Max. count | 18 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 21 | 19 | 36 | 26 | 35 | 28 |
| Steep Holm pairs | 9 | 10 | 11 | n/c | 13 | n/c | 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 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| Littleton Warth | | 5 | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| New Passage | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| PWD | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Cl-Y | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Sand Bay | 9 | 6 | 3 | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | 2 | 1 |
| R. Avon, Sea Mills | | 2 | 2 | | | | | 3 | | | 5 | |
| BG | | 8 | | 8 | | | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | |
| CVL | 4 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 24 | 28 | 20 | 12 | 10 |
| BL | 2 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| Nine other sites (total) | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

Monthly maxima at the regular sites

Occasional records came from a further nine sites, five of which were inland, and all relating to one or two individuals (summarised in the final line of the table).

*Breeding* Again there were no reports from Steep Holm and none directly from Denny Island in the Bristol Channel but pulli were ringed at the latter site this year and also in 2013 (with individuals colour ringed here reported from both BL and CVL). Given recent events at CVL a pair displaying at BL in February was noteworthy. At CVL a pair was back on the island in Herriott's Pool from February and was seen mating in April but no further breeding activity was noted.

## Rare Gulls in the Avon area

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sabine's | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1+ | 1 | | |
| Bonaparte's | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Laughing | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Franklin's | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Ring-billed | | 3 | 2+ | 3+ | 3+ | 2 | 4+ | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Caspian | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| Iceland | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | 3+ |
| Kumlien's | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Glaucous | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 2 | | 1 |

Total numbers for the past ten years

## FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia var.*

*Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.*

Most data showed a decline in 2014.

*Survey data* This species was recorded by BBS from 66 squares, which represented 37% of those surveyed, a decline from 41% in 2013. The total counted over two BBS visits was 985. Avon BBS data is as follows:

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-35%** | **-26%** | -3% | 18% | -6% | -23% | 2% | 27% | -14% | -4% | 5% | -22% |

BBS percentage changes

WGS data gave presence in 31% of gardens surveyed, with the counts showing an increase of 1% from the previous winter; the long-term change over 40 years is an increase of 31%.

CABS counts recorded a further 9% decrease in numbers from the previous year. These counts represented an 86% decrease since 1995.

*Feral Pigeon cont*. There were eight reports of three-figure flocks, the highest, 200, was noted at Sand Point on May 11th, otherwise the records came from the major conurbations, as might be expected. In Bristol flocks of between 100 and 150 were noted in January, March, August, October and November, there were 120 in Weston-s-Mare on Aug. 9th and 100 in Bath on Oct. 28th.

## **STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas* [Amber 7]

*Fairly common but declining breeding resident.*

BBS data showed a 37% increase from 2013 to 2014 following on from a 10% increase from 2012 to 2013, the ten-year change was more modest (20% since 2004). Over the year 2013 to 2014, this species was the most successful of the *Columbidae* with all other species down -- Woodpigeon by 5%, Feral Pigeon by 22% and Collared Dove by 17%.

*Survey data* This species was recorded by BBS in 52 tetrads, which represented 29% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 171. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-20%** | **20%** | -17% | 31% | -13% | 15% | -9% | 4% | -12% | -12% | 10% | 37% |

BBS percentage changes

The number of sites where this species was recorded seems to show remarkable variation between years, although the upward trend over the last three years perhaps reflects improving fortunes.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 33 | 90 | 73 | 64 | 73 | 94 | 68 | 75 | 86 |

Number of sites in Avon

*Flocks* Sizeable flocks of 100+ were noted at Marshfield on 12 occasions, in February, June, October and November, the highest count being 400 on Nov.11th. Away from here, 102 were recorded at Weston STW on Dec. 31st and at OPS flocks of 80 and 92 were noted on 24th and 31st, respectively.

*Breeding* Potential breeding activity was reported as follows: One was recorded in display flight in the Shire Valley at Marshfield on Jan. 21st; two were in display flight at Clapton Moor on March 29th; one was heard calling in Priors Park (Bath) on May 20th, two flew from a hollow ash near West Harptree on Aug. 30th. At CVL there were regular records throughout the summer, with at least four calling males around the lake, a nest with two eggs was found on March 19th but was subsequently predated and, as in 2013, one was heard calling in December this time on 29th. At New Passage two pairs were present all summer and at BL a pair was noted on April 7th and May 29th.

With many sites having records throughout the summer, presumably breeding is more commonplace than these records suggest.

Observers are again encouraged to submit all breeding records *(Eds)*.

## **WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

*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 178 squares, which represented 100% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 5721. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **46%** | **3%** | 0% | 3% | 7% | 4% | -4% | 1% | -4% | 12% | -10% | -5% |

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 100% of participating gardens, as in the previous five years with an increase in the number of gardens occupied of 89% over the last 40 years.

CABS recorded a 37% increase on 2013, with the counts representing a 43% increase over 20 years.

*January to May* There were 11 records of three-figure counts (eight in 2012 and 45 in 2013). The only report of a flock involving over 350 was of 500 at Weston STW in January.

Spring migration was noted on the coast as follows: flying to N at Sand Point – 62 on Feb.16th, 147 on 18th, 43 on 23rd and 27 on 26th. In March there were 35 on 5th, 51 on 6th, 55 on 9th and 32 on 16th; movement to the NE was noted at Aust Cliff in March with 292 on 10th, 64 on 16th and 49 on 26th; at New Passage, on the 9th, 112 were seen heading NE with 39 heading SW on the same day.

*Breeding* As usual, breeding activity was not well reported. Eight pairs were present at Weston STW and one was seen carrying sticks to an apple tree in a Frampton Cotterell garden on March 12th. At Stowey a nest contained two young, one of which was ringed on June 6th.

A summer flock of 150 at Bannerdown on July 27th was notable.

*Autumn migration* The first significant passage of the autumn was 100 flying SW over Wain's Hill on Oct. 20th, with subsequent passage from here being 125 on 23rd, and 755 on 28th; 250 were reported over Clevedon itself on 27th.

*Late October to December* A sizeable movement occurred on Oct. 31st with 5500 passing through Sand Point including a single flock of 2500, 1200 heading SW at Wain's Hill (Cl-Y), 500 at Ham Green and 250 over BL. This movement continued on the next day with 1900 to SW at New Passage, 1054 heading W over Bristol, 390 to SW at CVL, 200 to S at BL and 100 to SW at Wrington; 700 were seen on 2nd at Marshfield with 100 again heading SW at Wrington and 150 also here on 4th. The next significant movement, of 3000, was SW over Longwell Green on 6th with 100 heading east at OPS on the same day. A further flock of 850 was recorded at Cl-Y on 10th. In December a flock of 100 headed E on 6th at OPS.

*Winter Flocks* In the Marshfield area a flock of up to 1000 was recorded on several dates from Nov. 18th through to 30th.

Additional three figure counts were recorded as follows: 127 at Compton Dando on Oct. 4th, 100 at Cl-Y on 10th; 115 at New Passage on 25th, In November 100 were at Burnett on 3rd with 180 on 10th; flocks of 108 and 294 were in the Nailsea West End Pond area on 24th and 25th respectively; and 150 at Cl-Y on 25th and 100 on Congresbury Moor on 29th. In December 300 were at PWD on 14th and 150 on the Axe Est. were seen on the same day building up to 1000 by 28th with 660 at Weston STW on 31st possibly being from the same flock.

## COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

*Common breeding resident.*

This is another species whose population is relatively stable.

*Survey data* This species was recorded by BBS in 108 squares, 61% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 720. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **20%** | **-31%** | -10% | 15% | -19% | 7% | -13% | 1% | -4% | 11% | -2% | -17% |

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 81% of participating gardens (88% in 2012 and 76% in 2013). The percentage of gardens recording this species was up by 5% on the previous year and by 42% over the last 40 years.

CABS recorded no change on the previous year, and counts represent a 73% decrease since 1995.

There were 47 double-figure counts (42 in 2012 and in 2013). Those of 15 or more were: 21 at Staple Hill on Jan. 4th. In the second half of the year there was a series of records from the Backwell Lake area with 21 on June 1st, peaking at 36 on Aug. 23rd and culminating with 26 on Nov. 29th; at New Passage there were 19 on Aug. 2nd and 17 on 25th; and 20 at ASW on Sept. 23rd; also 18 were roosting together in a willow at BL on Oct. 23rd and 28 were at Awkley on Dec. 3rd.

Small numbers were recorded moving north on several dates between March 18th and May 15th, perhaps indicating a light passage, with a maximum of seven on April 14th and May 14th. One was reported flying upriver on March 30th at OPS.

*Breeding* Just three records received. A nest with a one chick and one unhatched egg was discovered in a garden in Bishop Sutton on the very early date of Jan. 16th. The chick was subsequently recorded freshly dead under the nest on Feb. 16th. The long fledging period was presumably attributable to a nesting attempt at this time of year. Also two were reported calling, in Westbury-on-Trym on May 3rd and at Banwell on June 7th.

## **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 some indication of the declining status of this species over the last twenty years as shown in the table below. There was an improvement on 2013 (three in three squares) with a total of eight records in seven squares.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994 | 34 * recorded in 25 squares (41% of the area surveyed) | 2004 | 9 * recorded in 9 squares (5 % of the area surveyed) | 2014 | 8 * recorded in 7 squares (4% of the area surveyed) |

Avon BBS records - Numbers quoted are "best counts" avoiding any double counting of territorial birds.

The first report for 2014 was from PWD on April 15th (*cf*. 12th in 2009, 13th in 2010, 11th in 2011, 12th in 2012 and 20th in 2013).

A substantial increase in both bird-days and the number of records after many years of decline was noted. Records of more than one were as follows; at Weston STW with two on May 4th, 16th and 31st; two at Sand Bay on 14th and June 3rd; and Cl-Y with two on May 16th and June 1st and three on May 19th which included a potential pair. Sites to have records for more than four days were Sand Bay/Point (13 dates), CVL (11 dates), Cl-Y (ten dates), Weston STW (nine dates), OPS (eight dates) and PWD (six dates).

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of bird-days | 97 | 75 | 100 | 74 | 43 | 93 | 86 | 104 | 51 | 113 |
| No. of records | 78 | 63 | 98 | 70 | 43 | 73 | 76 | 58 | 48 | 103 |

Bird-days and records each year

A record of a juvenile in Saltford on July 27th and 29th, and Aug.1st may indicate local breeding. Juveniles were also recorded in Redland on Aug.1st and Lansdown on Sept. 11th. The table below shows the breakdown of records during the year and comparisons with 2013 in brackets.

| | April | May | June | July | August | September |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 9 (9) | 83 (26) | 17 (12) | 2 (2) | 2 (1) | 1 (0) |
| Records | 9 (9) | 75 (25) | 15 (10) | 2 (2) | 2 (1) | 1 (0) |
| Sites | 8 (8) | (14) | (4) | 1 (2) | 2 (1) | 1 (0) |

Month-by-month breakdown of 2014 bird-days, records and sites (2013 in brackets)

## **BARN OWL** *Tyto alba* [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 knock-on impact from the very poor breeding season in 2013 was clear to see, with no records at all in January and both the number of records and of sites significantly down on the previous two years.

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.

The number of non-breeding records received saw a sharp decline on 2013, with a 43% decrease. Also the number of sites was down by 47% as shown in the table below.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 94 | 119 | 91 | 115 | 137 | 95 | 110 | 161 | 224 | 128 |
| No. of sites | 43 | 44 | 26 | 35 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 54 | 66 | 35 |

Number of records and sites per year

*Breeding* Whilst starting from reduced numbers after the poor breeding season the previous year, the 2014 season appears to have been exceptional, and noticeably protracted with at least two young still in the nest in early November. A recent on-line BTO article noted that this species nationally had its best nest productivity in living memory in 2014. The Avon details are as follows with number of owlets and sites given:

*SG*

Marshfield - three ringed on June 22nd and another three on Sept. 22nd;

Dyrham area - five ringed on May 5th and six on Sept. 9th;

Siston area - four on June 5th with three more nearby on Sept. 30th;

Upton Cheyney area - four ringed on 29th May and two on the late date of Nov. 2nd.

*BA*
North Stoke -- on May 29th there were four young here;

Batheaston -- six on May 31st;

Elm Farm, Burnett -- five chicks were ringed at a nest box on June 2nd and a second brood of six, from the same pair but in a different box, were seen on Aug. 27th;
Compton Dando -- on June 10th five were ringed and on Aug. 27th a second brood of six was ringed;

Saltford area -- two were ringed on Oct. 9th, again a relatively late date.

CVL -- on June 23rd one was inadvertently flushed from a nest box and on July 9th five were ringed;

*Cam Valley* The ongoing survey of this area recorded 15 pairs that produced 43 chicks in all. Only four of the nest sites were in Avon and they produced 16 chicks; details below. The first, third and fourth were new sites, and several of the others were only just outside the Avon area. Note that in some past Reports the distinction between Avon and non-Avon sites in the Valley has not been made.

Hassage Manor (close to the Avon-Somerset border) – three well-grown chicks were seen on June 18th;

Paulton – four well-grown chicks were seen in an Oak tree nest hole on July 23rd;

Priston -- five close to fledging were in Gardiners Barn on June 21st;

Priston Mill – four in tree box also close to fledging on June 27th.

*NS*
PWD -- six chicks were ringed on June 12th;

Congresbury Moor -- four were ringed on June 16th and a second brood of five was ringed on Aug. 14th;

Yatton (Strawberry line area) - on June 23rd a pair was watched with three recently fledged young;

Kenn Moor – 5 chicks still in the box on Oct. 9th again demonstrating the protracted breeding season;

Plaster's Green – two chicks on Sept. 1st;

Bleadon Level -- two broods ringed on June 3rd, no chick count given;

Weston STW -- one was seen carrying food to a nest box on June 9th;

BL - two pairs; two juveniles were peering out of a nest box on July 13th, and a second pair, the male of which was caught and ringed, had eight eggs on 17th.

As past data is not directly comparable, no ten-year table will be given. It was noted above that in the past it was not clear whether the published Cam Valley data included non-Avon records or not, also it was not clear if some data referred to chicks seen in the nest or fledged birds. In 2014 the number of sites used and the number of chicks reported were as follows: *SG* – four sites and 30 chicks; *BA* excluding the Cam Valley – five sites and 37 chicks; Cam Valley – four sites and 16 chicks; and *NS* – six sites and 20 chicks, for various reasons this last figure is probably a considerable underestimate. This was a vast improvement on 2013 when the comparable figures appear to have been: *SG* – one site and no chicks, *BA* – one site where breeding may have occurred, Cam Valley – eight sites but with chicks fledging (four) at only one; and *NS* – one site and four chicks.

Breaking down the records received into months (see below) gives a picture of the low numbers at the start of the year, then shows the significant increase over the summer months when adults often fly during daylight hours to feed their young, and nest box monitoring is at its most intensive.

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Records | 0 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 29 | 21 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 13 |

Monthly breakdown

Unusually, one was reported from Steep Holm on Oct.11th.

## LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

*Introduced in the 19th century. Uncommon breeding resident, declining.*

With many records coming from a few known pairs, the number of sites, perhaps, gives a better indication of how this species is faring; see the table below. It is welcome to note an apparent stabilisation of the number of sites compared with last year after the on-going decline of this species. Clearly this needs continued monitoring.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 114 | 147 | 134 | 139 | 87 | 91 | 98 | 192 | 132 | 185 |
| No. of sites | 48 | 49 | 46 | 66 | 49 | 48 | 40 | 39 | 27 | 27 |

Number of records and sites per year

*Little Owl cont.* Only recorded regularly at Newton Park (maximum of four, including two young on Aug. 24th), PWD (maximum of four on March 23rd), and Saltford (up to three throughout the year).

*Breeding* Juveniles were recorded as follows: at Saltford, one on June 29th and one on Aug.1st with an adult; another adult plus a juvenile on July 1st at Frampton Cotterell; a juvenile at Winford Manor on the same day and one at Newton Park on Sept. 8th. Reports during the breeding season (between April and June) came from just 11 sites (16 sites in 2012 and 12 in 2013).

Observers are again encouraged to submit all records. (*Eds*).

## TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

*Fairly common breeding resident.*

Both the number of records and number of sites were within the typical annual variation for this species; see table directly below. It is worth noting that a single site, at Saltford, accounted for at least 100 of these records.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 220 | 235 | 293 | 213 | 276 | 206 | 186 | 256 | 216 | 287 |
| No. of sites | 89 | 57 | 95 | 81 | 111 | 79 | 78 | 84 | 59 | 71 |

Number of records and sites per year

*Breeding* The number of reported owlets with the sites and dates are as follows. Two at OPS on April 21st; two broods at Doynton, both with two juveniles, were ringed in late April; in May, broods of three, two and three at Siston Long Wood, Cold Aston and Batheaston, respectively, were ringed. At CVL, two were seen on May 4th, one successfully fledged from a tree hole nest but a nest box with two eggs was predated; the species was noted at seven sites around the lake during the breeding season. Two were ringed at Yatton on 7th and one was seen at Chipping Sodbury on 7th and 8th. A series of records from BL between May 24th and July 25th confirmed three nests with young around the lake. At Saltford juveniles were noted on five dates between May 27th and July 27th; two were heard 'squeaking' in Bath on May 30th; at Winford Manor one was seen on June 1st, and at Clevedon a young bird was noted on 20th with two the following day. A pair successfully raised two young in Bishopsworth both of which fledged on July 10th and were still present on 31st; juveniles were recorded calling at Troopers Hill on 18th; and finally, four young successfully fledged from two pairs at Congresbury Moor on the late date of Oct. 11th.

These records show that at least 37 owlets were recorded during the year which is probably a considerable underestimate of the true numbers present in the Avon area in the summer of 2014.

High counts were noted as follows: seven at Wraxall on Aug. 30th and at Saltford on Sept.11th and Nov.5th; with six around BL on Oct. 29th.

## LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* (127, 1) [RBBP]

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer but bred successfully in 1991, 2010 and 2011.*
Descriptions required.

The only record was of one photographed (see opposite page 96) hunting at dusk in N. Somerset on June 1st (S Williams). The table shows the varying fortunes of this species in the Avon area during the past two decades.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 7 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7* | 6* | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Number of individuals recorded each year (* includes successful breeding)

## SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus* [Amber 1]

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.*

A relatively low number of both records and bird-days were reported in 2014, although the high February tides at Aust produced a peak count of five on two consecutive days. A good scattering of reports in the second winter period included a notable number of inland records. The table below summarises the year's data.

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | : | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | 2014 (2013) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Records | 6 | 4 | 6 | 2 | | 2 | 7 | 15 | 4 | 46(90) |
| Bird-days | 9 | 14 | 10 | 2 | | 2 | 7 | 25 | 6 | 75(126) |
| Max. count | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5(3) |

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 four were recorded on three dates in January; four dates in February, including five on 1st and 2nd on very high tides; and three on two dates up to March 3rd;

Cl-Y – single birds on Jan. 22nd, four dates in March and April 13th and 15th;

Weston STW – one on Jan.19th;

Inland record:

Marshfield – one on Jan. 17th.

*Second winter period*

Coastal records:

OPS – noted on three dates in October;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands - Up to two were recorded on four dates in November with three on Dec. 24th;

Severn Beach – single birds on Nov. 16th and 24th;

Cl-Y – one on Sept. 2nd and Oct. 9th and up to four on seven dates in November;

Sand Point – one on Oct. 30th;

Weston-s-Mare – one on Oct. 18th;

Weston STW – one on Dec. 29th.

Inland records:

Marshfield – one on Nov. 2nd;

Leigh Woods – one on Sept. 21st;

Montpelier – one in St. Andrews Park on Oct. 19th;

Yatton – one on Nov. 11th;

Kenn Moor – one on Dec. 24th.

The table below summarises the data since 2007.

| | 2007 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 100 | 260 | 105 | 67 | 194 | 423 | 127 | 75 |
| Records | 102 | 186 | 100 | 48 | 113 | 222 | 91 | 46 |

Bird-days and records each year

## **NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus* [Red 4]

*Scarce passage migrant and presumed regular breeding summer visitor in very small numbers.*
Descriptions are required for records away from the Mendips.

In contrast to the exceptional run of records in 2013 away from the Mendips, there were just two reports this year, both from traditional breeding areas:

Burrington Rod's Pot – two males and a female were reported on July 5th. A recently fledged female was ringed on 26th which flew off strongly afterwards, two churring males were also heard on the same evening at this site. The trapping and ringing of this juvenile with its wing and tail feathers still 'in pin' proves that successful breeding occurred in the area. This site is in Avon but within 100*m.* of the border, hence, as the actual nest was not found, it cannot be conclusively claimed that this was an Avon breeding record.

The table below shows how this species has fared in Avon over the past decade.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Churring males | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Reports | 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 |

Number of churring males and reports each year

It would be helpful to receive all records from the regular Mendip sites, where the species maintains a small toehold in the Avon area.

## **SWIFT** *Apus apus* [Amber 3]

*Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The Avon population would appear to be in decline.

*Arrival* The first of the year were four at CVL and two at BL on April 20th. The following day BL had four; there was two at Cl-Y and three over Redland (Bristol). The first double-figure count was 40 at CVL on 24th, and the same site accounted for the first three-figure count of 100 on May 1st with 160 here on the 2nd.

*BBS data* This species was recorded by Avon BBS in 69 squares, representing 39% of the area surveyed; the total number counted over two BBS visits was 462, the declining Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

| since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-79%** | **-74%** | -25% | -7% | 11% | -26% | 5% | -7% | -11% | 11% | -26% | -38% |

BBS percentage changes

*Summer flocks* There were four counts in four figures, all from CVL and all in May: 1000 on 7th, 2000 on 8th and 10th, and 1000 on 25th.

*Breeding* Active nests were reported from Hanham (Bristol) in July and two nest boxes were successfully used in Redland (Bristol). Birds were also seen entering nest holes at the church and in cottage roofs in Marshfield.

*Departure* Reports indicated a general departure in the closing days of July and the first week of August. The last three-figure count was of 126 at BG on the late date of Aug. 29th. The final few departed in early September with four at Weston-s-Mare on 9th being the last of the year.

## **HOOPOE** *Upupa epops* (26, 1)

*Very scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn.*
Description species.

One record: one was photographed in a Chipping Sodbury garden on May 14th (A Jones).

The table below summarises the records for the past 20 years. It is worth noting that from the 1950s to the 1990s this species was noted almost annually with multiple records in some years, in 1977 up to eight were present and at least one pair bred hatching three young.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Number of individuals recorded each year

## **KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis* [Amber 1]

*Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.*

Avon BBS recorded 13 over two BBS visits. The six squares in which they were found represented 3.4% of the area surveyed. Overall reports were received from 97 sites, a slight peak for the last ten years, see table below.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 86 | 74 | 80 | 95 | 75 | 96 | 82 | 96 | 96 | 97 |

Number of sites each year in the last decade

During the first winter period, January saw 51 records from just 15 sites (*cf.* 30 in 2005, 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 26 in 2008, 19 in 2009, 23 in 2010, 17 in 2011, 21 in 2012 and 18 in 2013). February saw 47 records from 12 sites with March showing an increase to 56 records from 21 sites.

*Breeding* Four juveniles were reported from Saltford on May 14th with three adults and two juveniles reported here on 12th and 26th. At CVL there were three sites, with individuals noted in the breeding season around inflow/outflow streams. One carrying a fish past Stratford Hide on April 22nd and six young ringed between May 25th and Aug.12th suggest successful local breeding.

*Post-breeding dispersal* As usual this created a rise in the number of records. August then saw a modest long-term rise to 55 from 17 sites (72 from 26 sites in 2013). September saw the peak at 110 records from 30 sites (76 records from 26 sites in 2013), thereafter declining until the end of the year with 95 records from 25 sites in October (61 from 29 in 2013), 65 records from 21 sites in November (45 from 19 in 2013) and 45 records from 20 sites in December (38 from 16 in 2013). Batheaston recorded the highest count with eight on July 30th. Six were recorded at Saltford on five dates throughout the year. Regular reports came from Backwell Lake, CVL, Eastville Park, New Passage (incl. Pilning Wetlands), Saltford and Winford Brook.

## WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla* (50, 2)

*Scarce autumn passage migrant, very rare in spring.*
Descriptions required.

An average year with two records, details as follows:

New Passage – one in a garden near the seawall on Aug. 31st (B Lancastle *et al*., photographed, see opposite page 96);

Dolebury Warren – a rather elusive individual found late afternoon on Sept. 2nd was last seen in the morning on the 5th (N Voaden *et al*.).

The table below shows the distribution of records over the past 20 years.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Number of individuals recorded each year

## GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis* [Amber 1]

*Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally.*

A rather surprising decrease of 33% compared to 2013 was recorded by BBS, although the number of sites and number of records reported were similar to the previous year.

*Survey data* This species was recorded by BBS in 60 squares, which represented 34% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 100. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-35%** | **-37%** | 3% | 2% | -26% | 52% | -6% | -8% | -20% | 17% | -2% | -33% |

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 27% of gardens surveyed. The count decreased by 9% on the previous winter's figures but showed a 27% increase since the 1974/75 winter.

Given that the number of sites is relatively stable currently, perhaps the increase in reports over the last two years reflects an increase in reporting rates rather than population size.

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Records | 333 | 231 | 529 | 524 | 453 | 458 | 413 | 516 | 621 | 642 |
| Sites | 127 | 93 | 235 | 227 | 209 | 197 | 180 | 151 | 162 | 154 |

Records and sites each year

*Breeding* There were 149 records from 66 sites during April, May and June (*cf.* 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, 139 from 70 sites in 2012 and 188 from 85 sites in 2013), representing a 21% decrease in records and 22% decrease in sites from 2013. The sites recorded were distributed as follows:

| | 2006 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| April | 30 | 67 | 63 | 47 | 71 | 57 | 39 | 67 | 39 |
| May | 21 | 54 | 67 | 65 | 53 | 49 | 26 | 27 | 26 |
| June | 14 | 58 | 53 | 52 | 35 | 29 | 21 | 17 | 23 |

Number of sites with records during the breeding season

After the higher number of sites recorded in April 2013, this year more closely mirrored 2012 and showed a significant reduction in sites occupied during the breeding season compared with the previous five years (2007 to 2011).

At CVL numbers seemed to be down with only three calling males in the vicinity of the lake (*cf.* six in 2007, seven in 2008, five in 2009, six in 2010, eight in 2011, five in 2012 and seven in 2013). In Avon as a whole, records of fledged young were as follows: four noted in Portishead and Overscourt Wood, Siston in June; at OPS, up to two in June and one in August; two at Newton Park and one at BL in July and one in a Banwell garden in August.

## GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

*Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.*

The recent increase in sightings of this species continued in 2014.

*Survey data* This species was recorded by BBS in 77 squares, which represented 43% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 169. The BBS data since 1994 is summarised below.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **107%** | **58%** | 13% | 18% | 10% | -7% | -19% | 46% | -7% | -1% | -2% | 7% |

BBS percentage changes

WGS data recorded presence in 42% of gardens surveyed. The number counted was down by 3% on 2013 but up 42% since the 1974/75 winter.

A significant increase in the number of records was again noted but a similar number of sites were reported to the last three years (2011 to 2013); see below:

| Year | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Records | 339 | 193 | 415 | 372 | 317 | 402 | 423 | 590 | 666 | 749 |
| Sites | 173 | 80 | 191 | 172 | 181 | 182 | 197 | 200 | 199 | 193 |

Records and sites per year

*Breeding* Drumming was recorded from 13 sites (*cf.* 14 in 2005, 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009, four in 2010, 12 in 2011, 14 in 2012 and 21 in 2013). At CVL 12 were reported drumming with six nests subsequently found (*cf*. seven in 2006, ten in 2007, seven in 2008, 13 in 2009, nine in 2010, ten in 2011, ten in 2012 and eight in 2013). Other breeding records were: a pair nested at Abbots Leigh producing one juvenile; another pair reared two young in Banwell; a pair reared two juveniles in Marshfield and one juvenile was seen in Littleton; a pair nested in a new nest hole in Nowhere Wood, Nailsea; a pair was seen with one juvenile in both Portishead and Wotton. Also one was at a nest hole in Eastville Park and one was carrying food in Keynsham.

The highest count was of eight at Warmley on March 30th with six counted at Wrington on Feb.16th and CVL on Sept. 29th. Although there were many records from the coast, the only records noted as being of migrants were one out over the water at OPS heading SW on Sept. 27th and one seen at Aust Cliff during visible migration recording the next day.

An unusual record relates to fresh wood chippings on Steep Holm on May 4th and 5th, which were attributed to this species even though no bird was seen.

## KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus* [Amber 1]

*Fairly common but declining breeding resident.*

Another poor year for this species with breeding activity reported from only 67 sites *(cf.* 79 in 2012 and 58 in 2013). This contrasts with the national picture where the BTO reported very good productivity overall in 2014. Records received totalled 1121, a very high number, but as noted in the 2012 Report a possible explanation for this increase is the expansion in electronic recording making it easier for observers to submit records.

The table below gives the monthly totals for 2014 and the previous five years. Reports were quite evenly spread across the year, January and February were lower and April, August and September higher.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| 2014 | 63 | 76 | 101 | 112 | 80 | 93 | 75 | 117 | 111 | 98 | 102 | 93 | 1121 |

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 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total records received | 738 | 720 | 750 | 736 | 721 | 723 | 754 | 1198 | 714 | 1121 |

Best years since 1984

*Breeding* A very poor year in the Avon area, activity was noted in the breeding season at 67 sites, there was a increase in *BA & NS* to 43 sites (c*f.* 30 in 2013) and a slight decline in *SG* to 20 sites (c*f.* 23 in 2013). In the four years from 2006 to 2009 a total of 90+ sites was recorded (*cf.* 108 in 2006, 100 in 2007, 103 in 2008 and 90 in 2009). However, in the four years from 2010 to 2013 there was a decline (75 in 2010, 81 in 2011, 79 in 2012 and 58 in 2013), and there was no significant improvement in 2014. The distribution of nest sites in 2014 was 20 in *SG*, 43 in *BA & NS* and four in *Bristol* (so 67 in total); notes on some of these are set out below.

*SG* Three juveniles were seen at OPS on July 2nd and two at Northwick Warth on 12th. A nest box was used for the third successive year at the Rolls Royce site at Filton, one fledged on June 10th, and at Shirehill Farm five juveniles were ringed on 22nd.

*BA & NS* Nest boxes were used at the following sites: Weston STW, the brood was ringed on June 3rd; on 6th at Ashton Court five juveniles were ringed; at Congresbury, three were ringed but two eggs had failed to hatch; and at Langford five were ringed. For the second successive year two nest boxes were used at Burnett, each contained five chicks and all were ringed on June 10th. Other breeding season notes included three juveniles which fledged at Folly Farm and a family group was seen at Newton St. Loe on July 11th.

*Bristol* In the Avon Gorge three juveniles were reported on June 25th.

| | 1995-04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SG | 22 | 17 | 29 | 25 | 36 | 31 | 22 | 23 | 21 | 23 | 20 |
| BA & NS | 60 | 60 | 72 | 68 | 63 | 53 | 45 | 51 | 52 | 30 | 43 |
| Bristol | 8 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Total | 91 | 82 | 108 | 100 | 103 | 90 | 75 | 81 | 79 | 58 | 67 |

Breeding sites

*Large groups/counts* The only counts in double figures were from the Marshfield area where ten were recorded on the following dates, Aug. 30th, Nov. 5th and 20th, and Dec. 7th.

*Ringing recoveries* A nestling ringed at Keynsham on June 29th was found freshly dead at Le Fort, Ravenoville, Manche in the Normandy area of 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.

## **RED-FOOTED FALCON** *Falco vespertinus* (1, 1)

*Very rare vagrant.*
Descriptions required.

One record: A female at Northwick Warth at 11.00hrs on Oct. 15th was seen briefly perched, it then flew to S (K Bainbridge, A D Scott).

This is the fourth record to be accepted for the Avon area, the others were as follows: a male at Farrington Gurney in August 1967, a male at BG in October 1973, and a first-summer male near Stanton Wick from late May to early June 1992; so the 2014 individual was the first female recorded in the Avon area.

## **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius* [Amber 2]

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

An average year for this species in the Avon area with a total of 107 bird-days (*cf.* 113 in 2013), the bird-day total being the lowest since 2010; see table at the end of this entry. During the year there were 30 bird-days in the first half-year and 77 in the second half (*cf.* 61 and 52 in 2013). Most were in October and November with 29 bird-days in each. Many of the records were from Severnside with 39 bird-days (*cf.* 43 in 2013), seven bird-days in the first half-year and 32 in the second half (*cf.* 12 and 31 in 2013). There was a reasonable number of reports from Cl-Y with 22 bird-days (*cf.* 23 in 2013), nine in the first half-year and 13 in the second (*cf.* 12 and 11 in 2013). 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. 25th;

Severnside – reported on seven dates from Jan. 5th to April 6th, two dates each in January, February and March;

Cl-Y – noted on eight dates from Jan.1st to March 31st, five were in March with a male and female on Feb.19th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – March 24th;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – reported on six dates from Feb. 8th to April 12th, a male was reported on the first date and on three dates in March.

*Merlin cont. Coast -- Second half-year*

OPS – Aug. 31st and Oct. 23rd;

Severnside – reported on 30 dates from Aug. 31st to Dec. 30th, noted on just one date in September but most were in October, November and December with ten, 13 and seven dates, respectively. In October a male and female were present on the 4th and two on 17th;

PWD – Oct. 14th;

Cl-Y – noted on 12 dates from Sept. 28th to Dec. 29th, most in October and November with just two dates in December, two were present on Oct. 11th;

Sand Point/Sand Bay – reported on four dates from Oct. 17th to the month end and on Nov. 2nd;

Axe Estuary/Weston STW – Sept. 14th, Oct. 20th and 21st, Nov 9th and Dec. 13th.

*Inland - First half-year*

Marshfield – Jan. 7th and 10th, and March 8th;

Elsewhere – at Cribbs Causeway on Jan. 6th, Marksbury Plain on 28th, and Congresbury Moor on Feb. 2nd.

*Inland - Second half-year*

Marshfield – on eleven dates from Oct. 23rd to Dec. 24th with the majority in October and November;

Elsewhere – in October at Compton Martin on 14th and Saltford on 18th, during November at Hewish on 5th, CVL on 20th and 27th (an adult male, rare at the lake), at Congresbury Moor on 29th and 30th, and over Pilning on 13th.

| Year | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon area | 70 | 101 | 93 | 76 | 143 | 84 | 84 | 111 | 143 | 113 | 105 |
| Severnside | 36 | 53 | 57 | 69 | 93 | 65 | 47 | 45 | 60 | 43 | 36 |

Bird-days per year

## **HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo* [RBBP]

*Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.*

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

*Arrival* The first records of the year were in April at Clapton Moor on 4th and CVL on 18th and 30th, then at the following sites during May:

*SG* – at Old Sodbury on 19th;

*NS* – at PWD on 2nd, Weston STW two days later, and BL on 19th and 29th;

*BA* – at CVL on 17 dates from 1st to 31st, two on seven dates, and three on 20th and 31st; at Saltford on 3rd, 30th and 31st; and at Keynsham on 14th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April as follows: 19th in 2009, 13th in 2010, 15th in 2011, 25th in 2012 and 17th in 2013.

*Breeding* Confirmed at seven sites; one in *SG,* two young fledged, five in *NS* with a total of 14 fledged (one site producing four young), and one site in *BA* from which two fledged. Breeding was suspected at a further four sites, two in *NS* and two in *BA*. A summary of the data for the past 20 years is given below.

| | 1995-04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *SG* | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| *NS* | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| *BA* | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 11 |

Breeding status both confirmed and suspected

*Other sightings* From June 1st to Oct.1st reports were received from a further 31 localities, six in *SG,* 21 in *BA & NS*, and four in *Bristol* as follows: in June over Hengrove Park on 9th and Whitchurch on 20th, Redland on July 7th and Aug.1st, and a juvenile at Sea Mills on Aug. 31st.

*CVL* Frequently reported at this site with one or two often seen, there were three on May 20th and 31st, Aug. 15th, 20th, 22nd, 27th and 28th, four on Aug. 21st and 24th, Sept. 3rd and 4th, and five on Aug. 23rd. The first report of the year was on April 18th, the same date as in 2013, then again during April on 30th, noted on 17 dates in May, nine in June, eight in July, 23 in August and 23 in September. The last record of the year here was on 29th, eight days earlier than in 2013.

*Other notes* A second calendar-year individual was found at Moreton, CVL on Sept. 6th. It was subsequently taken into care at CVRS but died, seemingly from a trauma to the head, before it could receive treatment.

*Departure* There was just one report in October, this was at Banwell on 1st; all of the other late records were in September as follows:

*SG* – Oldbury Naite on 28th

*NS* – Tickenham on 30th

*BA* – Saltford on 17th and CVL on 29th

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

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SG | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Bristol | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| BA & NS | 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 13 | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 7 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 1 |

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 (Cl-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]

*Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.*

A poor year for this species.

*Breeding* A total of 14 chicks fledged (*cf*. 28 in 2013, the 'best year' to date).

In the Avon Gorge a pair nested on the Clifton/Durdham Down side but only one chick fledged (*cf*. three in 2012 and four in 2013), it was ringed when 19 days old on May 28th. In the last twenty years there were only two occasions when only one fledged, 1997 and 2009. Five fledged here in 2008, 2010 and 2011, this is a large number and the most to date:

| Year | 1995-04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of juveniles fledged | 2.4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 |

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge

Wick Quarry, two young fledged (*cf*. four in 2010, 2011, 2012 and two in 2013);

St. John's Church, Bath was used for the ninth consecutive year, but only one chick fledged (*cf*. three in 2011, two in 2012 and 2013);

Castlemead Tower, Bristol, a pair was present here but failed to breed (*cf.* three fledged in 2013, the first year the building was used successfully);

On Steep Holm two chicks fledged (*cf.* one in 2012 and three in 2013). Prior to 2012 the last report of breeding success on the island was in 2004 when two fledged.

*Undisclosed sites*

*SG* -- Present at three sites, but none fledged (*cf*. two in 2012 none of which fledged, and four in 2013 with one fledging). All sites were on man-made structures. There was a report of a pair and three juveniles near Abbeywood on July 8th whose the origin was unknown;

*NS* -- Located at three sites. Four fledged from one of these which were all ringed on May 26th (*cf.* three in 2012 with three fledged, three in 2013 with five fledged). There was no evidence of breeding at the other two sites apart from some juvenile calls at one, but no birds were seen;

*BA* -- Reported from two sites one of which held four fledged young that were ringed on May 25th (*cf.* one in 2012 with one fledged and two in 2013 with four fledged). There was no evidence of breeding at the other site;

*Bristol away from the Avon Gorge* Apart from the site mentioned above a pair was present at another within the city boundary, but with no evidence of breeding.

| Year | 1995-04 Av. | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites occupied | 7.1 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 16 | 14 |
| No. of birds fledged | 13.4 | 13 | 13 | 21 | 20 | 11 | 26 | 25 | 17 | 28 | 14 |
| No. of successful nests | 5.6 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 6 |

Breeding success

*Peregrine Cont. Non-breeding records*

OPS, Severnside, PWD and CI-Y – One or two frequent throughout the year at these sites. The table below gives monthly bird-day totals for the other well-watched sites where they are probably under recorded.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sand Point/Sand Bay | | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | | 2 | 4 | | | 11 |
| Weston-s-Mare | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| Weston STW | 2 | 2 | | | | | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 17 |
| Axe Estuary/Uphill | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | | | 1 | 6 | 11 |
| CVL | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 8 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 39 |
| BL | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 4 |

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

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

*First half-year*

*SG* -- At Tormarton on Jan. 30th, two at Marshfield on Feb. 5th and May 4th, at Westerleigh on March 9th and May 18th, in March at Downend on 16th and Abbeywood on 24th, two over Pilning on May 18th, in June at Warmley on 8th and Chipping Sodbury Common on 29th;

*NS* -- In January at Hewish on 10th, over Yanley Lane on 13th, BG the following day and at Banwell on 16th and 25th, at Kenn Moor on Feb. 11th, March 16th and April 25th, during February at Yatton on 13th, Ham Green on 15th and 18th, and Wrington on 28th, in March at Congresbury Moor on 6th and Abbots Leigh on 16th. At Lulsgate on April 3rd and May 2nd, at Dundry on April 8th and Failand on 16th;

*BA* -- At Saltford noted on three dates in January and four in March, and at Keynsham on three dates in January;

*Bristol away from the Avon Gorge* -- At Westbury-on-Trym on Feb.15th and April 12th, during March over Royal Fort Gardens on 14th, Brentry on 18th, Sea Mills on 20th and 29th, Oldbury Court on 24th and nearby at Snuff Mills on 30th, and at Arnos Vale Cemetery on 26th.

*Second half-year*

*SG* -- In July at Chipping Sodbury Common on 10th, Westerleigh on 19th and Patchway on 23rd, at Hanham on Aug. 11th and Oct. 18th. Over Berwick Wood on Sep 9th, at Marshfield on Sept. 21st, two on Nov. 20th and 25th, in December on 6th and 13th, at Winterbourne on Oct. 5th, Cribbs Causeway on Nov. 5th and Frampton Cotterell on Dec. 7th;

*NS* -- At Abbots Leigh on July 8th and Sept. 21st, in July at Wrington on 16th and Easton-in-Gordano on 22nd, at Lulsgate on Sept. 7th and Winscombe on Oct. 7th. At Yatton on 16th, then on three dates in November and six dates in December, in November at Nailsea on 25th, Congresbury Moor the next day and 29th, and Kenn Moor on 30th. The last record of the year at Banwell on Dec. 31st;

*BA* -- At Saltford on July 11th, two on Aug. 29th, on five dates in September, three in October and two in November, at Keynsham on July 14th, Aug. 18th, Oct. 15th, Dec. 1st and 21st. At Chew Magna on July 21st, Stanton Drew on Aug.15th, Compton Dando on 18th and Oct. 10th, at Burnett on Aug. 30th, Oct. 4th and Dec. 7th, at Newton Park on Oct. 6th and 30th, and at Publow on Dec. 5th;

*Bristol away from the Avon Gorge* -- A cluster of records from South Bristol with two at Bedminster Down on July 15th and one on Aug. 6th, noted nearby at Southville on the latter date and Bishopsworth on 8th and 9th, at Hotwells on July 18th and Aug. 29th, at Kingsdown on Nov. 18th and at St. Werburgh's on Dec. 25th;

## RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

*An occasional visitor, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population.*

There were three records involving four birds in 2014 (*cf*. four in 2011, two in 2012, and five in 2013) as follows:

Dundry – one on June 13th;

Blaise Castle Community Garden, Bristol – two on Sept. 3rd;

Aust – one on Sept. 29th.

## RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio* (7, 1)

*Rare passage migrant, formerly bred, most recently in 1975.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a first-winter at Sand Point from Sept.15th until 23rd (A Hockey *et al*., photographed, see page 97).

Other records this century are of one in June and another in August 2003, one or two in May 2006, and one in May 2008.

## GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor* (14, 1)

*Very scarce winter visitor.*
Descriptions required.

One record: one photographed (see opposite page 97) at Marshfield on Oct. 27th and 28th (M Hayes *et al*.).

This is a fairly typical showing as indicated by the table below.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Number of individuals recorded per year

## MAGPIE *Pica pica*

*Common breeding resident.*

Counts of this common species continue to be stable.

*Breeding* A total of 1558 was recorded in the two BBS counts over 163 squares in 2014 representing 92% of the area surveyed. This compares with a distribution rate of 96% of the squares surveyed in 2013. In practice, this species is very successful and adaptable and is able to exploit both urban and rural environments.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-33%** | **-6%** | -5% | 0% | 3% | 2% | -9% | 5% | -1% | 1% | 0% | -2% |

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 2012 when there was a decline of 1% compared with one of 17% for the Avon area. However, the figure for England includes some markedly different outcomes in different regions with declines in the West Midlands (-15%), South West England (-9%) and also in Wales (-33%) over the same period.

*Other records* One was recorded on Steep Holm on Aug. 23rd (one was found dead on the island in 2013) (J Smith). A total of 43 was counted leaving a roost at dawn at Monk's Pool LNR, near Winterbourne on Nov.11th.

## JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

*Fairly common breeding resident.*

This species is regularly noted in small numbers although the population does fluctuate.

*Breeding* The BBS recorded a total of 140 in the two BBS counts over 69 squares representing 39% of those surveyed. There was a 6% decrease compared with 2013. For the period 1995 to 2012 the National BBS figures show an increase of 16%. The equivalent figure for the same period in the Avon area is an increase of 10%. Seven pairs were noted around CVL during the breeding season.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-7%** | **-12%** | -22% | -3% | 17% | -9% | 16% | -5% | -10% | 4% | 14% | -6% |

BBS percentage changes

*Other records* A total of 21 in two groups of ten and eleven was noted moving south at Weston STW on Sept. 30th, a record count for the site. The only other counts of more than ten were 13 in the Shire Valley on Sept. 24th and 11 at OPS on 25th. There was an notable upsurge in records in the autumn, which this year appeared to be particularly marked with 49% of the 780 records received this year relating to the last four months. Some were undoubtedly on the move during this period but their origin remains obscure.

## 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 they are in effect universal.

*Breeding* In the BBS a total of 3714 was recorded in the two counts from 149 squares representing 84% of the area surveyed. BBS results in Avon (see table overleaf) suggest a stable population over the past ten years but with some longer term decline. However, this is at odds with the national picture where the BBS results for England show an increase of 61% between 1995 and 2012 while the equivalent figure for the same period in Avon is -8%. The reasons for this discrepancy are unclear.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-17%** | **3%** | 9% | 4% | -4% | -1% | -5% | 6% | -2% | -1% | -6% | 4% |

Jackdaw BBS percentage changes

*Other records* One was present on Steep Holm between April13th and 17th, and three on Aug. 23rd (J Smith).

By far the largest flock reported was estimated at 4000 in the pre-roost flock on the parkland at CVL on Feb. 4th. Flocks of between 750 and 1000 were reported in the area around Marshfield on five dates between Nov. 27th and Dec.31st. Other large flocks were 400 at Weston STW on Nov. 27th (a site record) and 400 at OPS in the evening roost on Dec. 30th. Also, larger than normal flocks were seen at New Passage in October with 85 on 17th and 125 on 22nd.

**'Nordic Jackdaw'** *Corvus monedula monedula* (4, 1)
*Very rare winter vagrant first recorded locally in 2008.*
Descriptions required.

One record: a striking individual, with an obvious pale patch along the lower edge of the grey neck shawl, was seen briefly at New Passage on Dec.11th before being flushed by the local Jackdaws (J P Martin).

This is the first accepted record since the first four in 2008.

## ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*
*Common breeding resident.*

While it remains a common species it has been subject to significant declines in the past twenty years both locally and nationally.

*Breeding* A total of 1078 was recorded in the two BBS visits over 68 squares (representing 38% of the whole area surveyed). This is a 27% decrease compared with the previous year (see the table below) although BBS is not ideally suited to measuring colonial species such as this. The Avon Rookery Survey in 2010 suggested a decline of about 30% from the previous survey in 2005.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-70%** | **-46%** | 5% | -22% | 17% | -9% | 21% | -25% | -20% | -10% | 31% | -27% |

BBS percentage changes

Post-breeding flocks are evident from late May as the species disperses away from the rookeries. However, very few large flocks were noted in 2014. The largest count was of 300 at West Littleton on Jan.11th. Counts of 100 or more were made at OPS on a number of dates with the largest, of 200, being made on both Jan. 9th and Dec. 30th in the evening roost. The only other counts of 100 or more were 200 at Marshfield on Nov. 24th and 100 at Marksbury Plain on 29th. As recently as 2010 flocks of between 500 and 900 were seen regularly, and in 2006 there was one of 1500. This presumably reflects a significant recent decline in the breeding population.

We welcome all records of this species, particularly those of flocks later in the year. *(Eds.)*

## CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*
*Common breeding resident.*

The local population remains stable. The National BBS figures for England show an increase of 25% between 1995 and 2012 well in excess of the Avon figures but there is considerable regional variation. It is found throughout the Avon area with records from all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas when significant numbers were recorded in both urban and rural areas.

*Breeding* The species was counted in 173 squares during the 2014 BBS representing 97% of the squares surveyed with a total of 3376 noted during the two visits.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9%** | **12%** | 15% | 0% | -7% | -4% | 2% | 4% | -4% | -1% | 6% | 1% |

BBS percentage changes

The largest flocks reported were 340 at OPS on Aug. 3rd, 220 at Littleton Warth on July 7th and 210 at Weston STW on June 21st. Up to four were recorded on Steep Holm on Aug. 23rd and it was also recorded here on various dates in April.

## **RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

*Uncommon but widespread breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.*

The local population has increased steadily since 1994.

*Breeding* The increase of the last ten years has continued. In the BBS a total of 76 was counted in the two visits over 38 squares, which represent 21% of the area surveyed by the Avon BBS. This compares to 67 in 31 squares (18%) in 2013. See the table below which shows the more or less steady expansion in distribution of this species over the past decade or so. Breeding was confirmed in nine instances including a pair on Steep Holm where three young fledged.

| Year | 2004 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of squares surveyed | 2.8 | 8.4 | 8.7 | 10.9 | 7.7 | 14.4 | 15.1 | 16.3 | 12.7 | 17.6 | 21.3 |

Percentage of Avon BBS squares in which this species was recorded

More than 1000 records were received, a 30% increase over 2013. As in that year it was recorded from every ten *km* square in the Avon area. There was a total of 2608 bird-days over the year and the highest count was from Marshfield with 30 on Oct.1st. Two were observed to kill and eat a Curlew at New Passage on Nov. 13th.

## **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

*Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

This species is a common but elusive breeding resident that may be found in both woodland and urban areas. The sedentary breeding population is swelled considerably by migrants although our knowledge of their movements is very incomplete.

*Breeding* The Avon BBS recorded a total during the two visits of 137 from 48 squares (27% of the area surveyed). This is a welcome improvement over last year's count of 97 from 43 squares but still well behind the 200 counted in 62 squares (37%) in 2012. This species does fluctuate markedly as a result of adverse weather conditions and the late cold spring of 2013 will have reduced the breeding population. However, although its elusive nature and the consequent small numbers recorded make it difficult to establish a trend, the records of the past ten years clearly show that it can recover quickly from steep declines.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **24%** | **-36%** | -7% | -30% | 17% | -1% | -47% | 13% | 21% | 38% | -47% | 60% |

BBS percentage changes

Nationally, the BBS recorded a 13% increase in England for the period 1995 to 2012 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area was 2%. However, there is considerable regional variation and the figure for the SW Region (including Avon) for the same period was -14%.

The numbers recorded fall off markedly during April and reached a low point in July (18 sightings out of a total of 636 in 2014). Numbers increased again from September and into October when they reached a maximum of 85 sightings. Around half of the records during September and October were from coastal locations and presumably relate to migrants.

## **FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapilla* [RBBP] [Amber 5]

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

This species is both a regular winter visitor, albeit in very small numbers, and a passage migrant. A total of 23 bird-days was recorded from 11 sites. This is broadly in line with 2013 when 19 bird-days were recorded from nine sites (both site figures exclude the pair that bred in North Somerset). Most were recorded in March (four) and from the end of August to the end of October (seven) and are likely to have been migrants. The records from Portbury Wharf, Tyntesfield and CVL (Nov. 1st) were of birds that were trapped and ringed. The sightings in date order are as follows and refer to single birds except in the case of Bath on Nov. 9th where two were present. No site details were available for the Sept. 20th record.

Bradley Stoke - Jan. 11th;
Redcliffe Bay - March 2nd to 5th;
Sand Point - March 26th. and April 2nd;
Portbury Wharf N R - Aug. 30th;
Tyntesfield - Aug. 30th;
Bristol - Sept. 20th;
Sand Point - Sept. 27th and Oct. 19th;
Eastville Park - Oct. 4th, Oct. 6th and Oct. 7th;
CVL - Oct. 25th and Nov. 1st;
Bath - Nov. 9th (two);
Worle - Nov. 17th.

*Breeding* At least one pair bred again at a site in North Somerset with two young fledging.

## **BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

*Abundant breeding resident.*

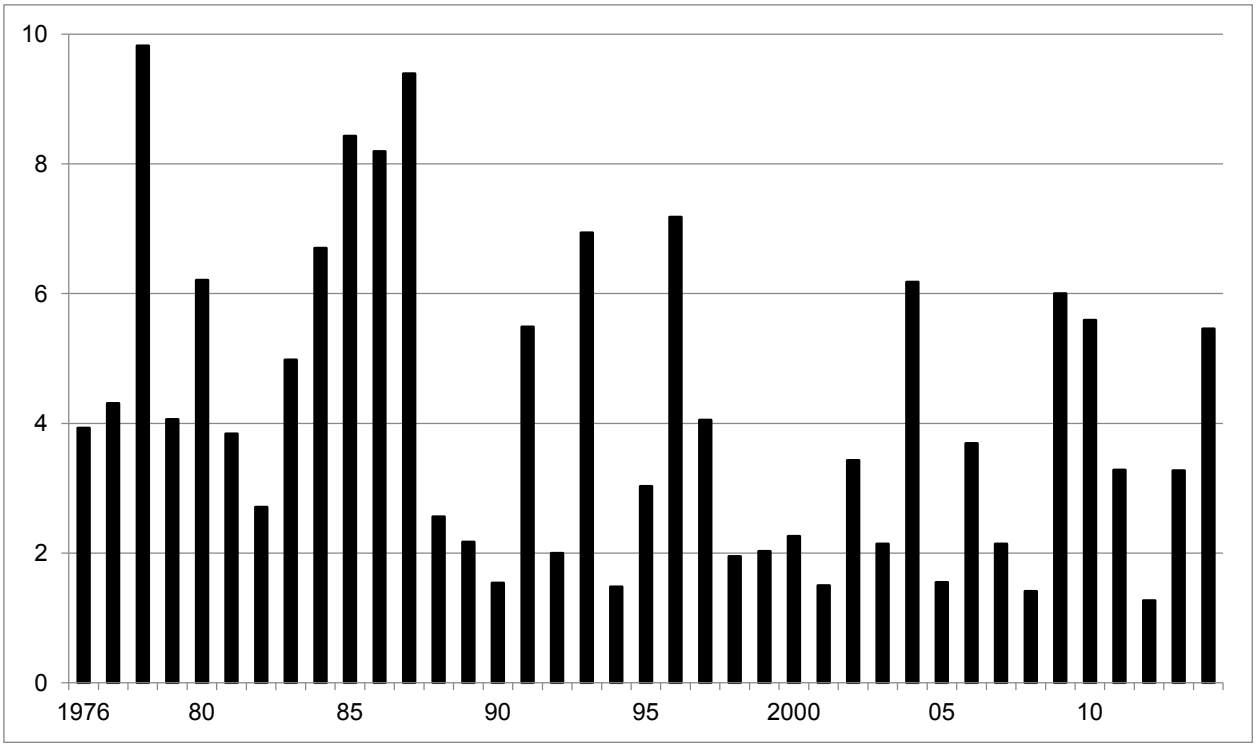
This still very common species continues to decline, probably as a result of a number of poor breeding seasons. It was present in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas, and in winter it was present in 97% of gardens in the WGS.

*Breeding* A total of 2012 was recorded in the two BBS visits over a total of 172 squares representing 97% of those surveyed in the Avon area. Nationally the BBS figures for England show an increase of 4% for the period 1995 to 2012 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is -13%.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-23%** | **-21%** | 4% | -9% | -9% | -3% | -8% | 21% | -3% | -9% | -3% | 0% |

BBS percentage changes

At CVL the chick survival rate, both in the nest and post-fledging in 2014, showed a further improvement over the very poor results in 2012. 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 2014. It is calculated by comparing the juvenile to adult ratio for birds that were alive between August and December during this period. In 2014, 5.46 juveniles were recorded for each adult which is a welcome improvement on the 1.27 in 2012 and 3.27 in 2013. However, it is still evident that since 1986 there have been more poor breeding seasons than good ones.




Productivity 1976 -2014

## **GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

*Abundant breeding resident.*

This common species, which was recorded in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas, had another poor year in 2014.

*Breeding* A total of 1335 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 163 squares representing 92% of the total area surveyed. A decrease of 7% from 2013 (when the species was present in 98% of squares) was recorded.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-10%** | **-17%** | -4% | 17% | -12% | 6% | -10% | 18% | -13% | 0% | -8% | -7% |

BBS percentage changes

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 in England shows an increase of 36% over the period 1995 to 2012 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is an increase of 17%.

## COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

*Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.*

This species is widely but thinly distributed around our area.

*Breeding* The BBS recorded a total 115 in the two visits over 48 squares which represented 27% of those surveyed. This compares to 112 in 42 squares representing 24% of those surveyed in 2013. The numbers counted in the BBS are rather too small to make meaningful estimates of population change but the National BBS has recorded an increase in SW England of 4% from 1995 while Avon BBS figures indicate a change of 1% over the same period and would thus seem to be broadly in line.

A total of 11 singing males was recorded around CVL during the breeding season (*cf*. six in 2013).

The table below shows the percentage of BBS squares in which the species was recorded.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32% | 26% | 32% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 27% | 28% | 24% | 27% |

Percentage of BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Records were received from 131 squares (including BBS) and were spread fairly evenly throughout the year.

## MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris* [Red 3]

*Uncommon breeding resident.*

A locally and nationally declining species.

*Breeding* In 2014 the species was noted in 43 one *km* squares (compared to 42 in 2013), including five BBS squares (six in 2013). Five were recorded in Lower Woods on Jan.11th and four here on Feb.18th but otherwise no count was greater than two. It was recorded from gardens in Banwell, Compton Martin, Easton-in Gordano and Sea Mills on multiple dates. This species can be elusive but is also very sedentary and it is noteworthy that although the numbers recorded are very similar to those of 2013 it was only recorded from 13 of the squares in which it was recorded in that year.

The species has experienced significant declines both locally and nationally in the past 20 years probably caused by changes in their woodland habitat. The National BBS shows a decline of 31% for England in the period 1995 to 2012 but too few are counted in the BBS locally to provide a meaningful measure for the local decline. The highest number of squares in which it has been recorded in the BBS was 12. This figure was last reached in 2002 (7.5% of the squares surveyed that year) with 25 individuals. 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 the population may now have stabilised albeit at a lower level.

| BBS | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Squares | 10 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| % of area surveyed | 5.6 | 2.6 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 5.2 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 3.4 | 2.8 |

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

## BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus* (85, 3)

*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.

The only records with notes came from CVL in both winter periods, details as follows:

*First winter period* A lone female was noted on the west side of the lake which was probably part of the group that was present in November and December 2013. She was seen in flight in front of Moreton hide on Jan.17th, then heard and seen along Moreton Bank on Feb.10th (R Mielcarek, I Stapp), heard near the bank on 20th, and ringed and photographed by CVRS on March 1st.

*Second winter period* Three were heard and seen briefly as they flew into the reeds at Herriott's Bridge at 13.35 on Oct.11th (R & J Staples), calling was heard from Stratford hide on 18th (G Jones) and a male was heard and seen briefly from here on 20th (G Hudd, C J Stone *et al*.).

The majority of local records come from CVL, with 68 of the 85 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2013.

## SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis* [Red 3]

*Common breeding resident in appropriate habitat, also a passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A normal year.

*First Winter* In January and February up to 300 were recorded at Marshfield, with 'huge numbers' on Feb. 21st. Otherwise flocks of up to 30 were reported from twelve coastal sites and, inland, from Charlton Fields, Easton-in-Gordano, Kenn Moor, Keynsham and Saltford. There were 180 records and a total of 1416 bird-days was counted. Singing was noted on six dates from Jan. 9th.

*Spring Passage* In March 534 were reported from 25 sites, although there were only three counts of apparent migration. The maximum was 100 from Marshfield, and there was one of 47 on 3rd at Cl-Y pushed up by a big tide. Otherwise most counts were of less than 20.

*Breeding Season* The BBS has shown a decline of 47% since 1994, but most of this apparently occurred in the first ten years. In 2014 a total of 653 was counted in 38% of the squares surveyed, a proportion unchanged since 2005. This was an encouraging 29% above the figure for 2013, but this is only a little greater than normal annual fluctuation.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-47%** | **-20%** | 26% | -13% | 2% | -13% | -10% | 2% | -12% | 1% | -22% | 29% |

BBS percentage changes

In addition total of 602 bird-days was recorded from 40 sites in small numbers.

*Autumn passage* Between July and the end of October 4016 bird-days were counted but this included counts of 1000 at Marshfield on both Oct. 29th and 31st. Passage was recorded on 30 occasions, in small flocks with the majority going SW, the rest S and about 30 NE, and the bulk of the records were from the last four days of October.

*Second winter* At Marshfield in November and December they were described as too numerous to count. Of the 3744 bird-days actually counted in Avon, 2900 (max. 1500) were counted here. Other counts were of very small numbers and came from 27 sites, 11 of them coastal.

## SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia* [Amber 1]

*Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.*

A very heavy spring passage.

*Arrival and passage* The first was seen at Severn Beach on March 7th, the normal first arrival date, then four at CVL on 12th, and daily thereafter. The total passage of 8225 bird-days was 6000 greater than in 2013. The main records came from CVL where there were estimates of 1000 on March 21st, 400 on 22nd and 900 at BL on 28th, and in April 300 on 10th and 200 on 12th. Numbers then fell, but on 23rd 1000 were again estimated to be present at CVL. Records from the coast were generally of small groups of fewer than 50. The last on passage were three at Sand Point on May 15th. The passage is summarised in the table 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 | 1 | 1270 | 4000 | 950 | 600 | 1300 | 105 | 15 |
| Max count | 1 | 100 | 1000 | 150 | 200 | 1000 | 20 | 3 |

Spring passage

*Breeding* Drainage holes at Keynsham were in use from May 25th, but there were no detailed counts. At the bank at BG there are 42 holes of which 12 were occupied, two were still in use on July 23rd. This occupancy is about normal for the past decade but lower than that seen in the 1990s as is shown by the table below. The BBS counted 23 from four squares (2% of the total), a figure that is too small for any meaningful statistical inferences to be made.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 28 | 23 | 23 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 9 | 15 | 14 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 20 | 18 | 15 | 12+ |

Total number of breeding pairs 1995-2014

*Autumn Passage* Total passage was 1620 bird-days, greater than last year, but just 20% of the spring passage, it is summarised in the table below. Last year the proportion was 48%. This rather reinforces the idea that the autumn passage follows a different route from that in spring. A flock of 14 on June 27th was regarded

as the first autumn migrants at CVL, and they were recorded here in small numbers throughout July. Numbers picked up in August; 100 were present here on 5th, 150 on 12th, 200 on 13th and 250 on 21st, the peak count. Very few were seen on the coast. In September there were regular reports of less than ten until the 14th when there were 12 at Cl-Y, and six at New Passage. This was three weeks earlier than the normal last date, and the earliest since 1990.

| | June | July | | | Aug | | | Sept | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 20-30 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 |
| Bird-days | 52 | 55 | 0 | 10 | 290 | 800 | 440 | 10 | 15 |
| Max | 14 | 35 | 0 | 6 | 100 | 200 | 250 | 5 | 12 |

Autumn passage

## **SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica* [RR] [Amber 1]

*Common passage migrant and common breeder.*

A smaller spring passage but a much large autumn passage than last year.

*Arrival and spring passage* The total passage of 7400 bird-days was almost exactly half that recorded last year, and with a few notable exceptions numbers counted were below 100.

The first record was two at Clevedon on March 15th, a week earlier than average, and unsurprising given that temperatures were two degrees warmer than normal. One was seen at Lansdown on 19th and at CVL on 20th. After this there were daily records of small numbers and a count of 25 was first recorded on April 7th, and 50 on 8th, 500 on 12th, a total that was not surpassed until May 5th. On that day 800 were recorded in four hours at Sand Point, and the same number was estimated at BL on 8th brought down by poor weather, a day that also saw 350 at PWD. This was effectively the end of the passage although a few continued to be reported from Sand Point until June 6th.

| Date | Mar 11-20 | Mar 21-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 4 | 24 | 280 | 1470 | 1700 | 3750 | 280 |
| Max count | 2 | 10 | 50 | 500 | 250 | 800 | 85 |

Spring passage

*Breeding* The BBS counted 1036 from 119 squares which represents most of the non-urban squares that are covered by the survey, and the proportion, 67%, has altered little since 1994. Also no overall population trend is evident, although there have been a few sharp annual fluctuations some of which relate to counts undertaken during passage in late April and early May. It is probable that figures for the second BBS count undertaken after May 15th would show less fluctuation, and would be a more reliable indicator of population change.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **11%** | **-25%** | 1% | 23% | 34% | -45% | 10% | 5% | -22% | 25% | -24% | -4% |

BBS percentage changes

There were two records from Steep Holm which suggested they may have bred there.

*Autumn passage and departure* Total passage was 17000 bird-days, double the spring passage, implying a good breeding season, and also double the 2013 figure.

The first autumn passage record from Sand Point was of 30 on July 8th and 300 were roosting at New Passage on 29th. At CVL 1000 were estimated on Aug. 21st with 50 at Steep Holm on 23rd and 800 at Cl-Y on 27th. There was then a lull until Sept.10th and 11th when 1000 were estimated at OPS and 125 in a stream along the coast at Walton Bay, although strangely they were flying NE. Weston STW had 500 to SE on 11th, OPS had 800 on 12th with a continuous stream heading NE on 13th, a direction was also recorded at Northwick Warth and Aust. A total of 500 was seen at Sand Point on 20th and on 21st a steady passage was recorded at BL with also 500 at Weston-s-Mare travelling SE; 400 were roosting at CVL on 26th, and Weston STW saw almost 700 to E on the 27th at a rate of 350 an hour with a further 500 to SW on Oct.1st. Much smaller numbers were recorded daily to 20th, but there was a report of 500 at Steep Holm on 11th. One was seen at Wains Hill, Cl-Y on 23rd, another at Marshfield on 31st and finally two at PWD on Nov. 2nd, a normal last date. The whole passage is summarised in the table below.

| July | | | August | | | September | | | October | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 1-10 | 11-10 | 21-31 |
| 46 | 350 | 250 | 460 | 400 | 3550 | 2700 | 5600 | 2250 | 800 | 670 | 3 |
| 30 | 100 | 150 | 125 | 100 | 1000 | 100 | 1000 | 600 | 500 | 500 | 1 |

Autumn passage – top row shows bird-days, bottom row the maximum count

## HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum* [Amber 1, 3]

*Common passage migrant and breeder.*

A very large autumn passage.

*Arrival and passage* Total passage was smaller than last year at 1950 bird-days, and half came in the last ten days of April with most of the rest in the first ten days of May.

Five were seen at New Passage on March 19th and perhaps the same five at Cl-Y on the same day, a date that is a week earlier than the 25 year average. There were three more March records but daily sightings did not start until April 6th. Numbers remained very low until 30 were reported from Sand Point on 21st and there were 400 at CVL on 25th. On May 8th poor weather brought 40 to PWD, 200 to CVL and 150 to BL. The last record came from Sand Point on May 31st.

| Date | Mar 21-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 | May 21-31 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 9 | 12 | 190 | 890 | 645 | 100 | 100 |
| Max count | 8 | 5 | 35 | 400 | 200 | 21 | 80 |

Spring passage

*Breeding* The BBS counted 370 from 51 squares, which, at 29%, is the lowest figure for distribution since 1994, although this has been caused partly by an increase in the proportion of urban squares covered by the survey. Since 1994 there has been a more or less continuous population fall, in total 61%, although this fall was briefly interrupted in 2007. Numbers have been more or less stable since 2009 and there was a tiny, 4%, increase in 2014. Colonies sometimes change sites, and the numbers counted may bear little relationship to the number of active nests.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-61%** | **-40%** | -4% | -7% | 76% | -42% | -17% | -5% | 14% | 13% | -38% | 4% |

BBS percentage changes

Otherwise during the breeding season there were records from 14 sites. Sea Mills recorded nine active nests, *cf*. 18 in 2013, and Wrington had seven, the last brood fledging on Sept.10th. Breeding was also reported from following the sites, those marked * also recorded breeding in 2013: Banwell*, Burnett*, Chew Magna, Clevedon*, Compton Dando*, Hinton Blewett, Hotwells*, Larkhall (Bath), Longwell Green, Marshfield, New Passage village, and Walton-in-Gordano*.

*Post-breeding and departure* A very large autumn passage occurred, many times larger than in 2013.

In August 500 were estimated at CVL on both 11th and 13th, then 2000 on 21st – the largest single count of the year. On Sept. 4th 80 were reported gathering around the towers of OPS. On 9th two were seen moving to S with Swallows at Cl-Y and 100 were going to S at Sand Point on 11th. Passage peaked again between 15th and 18th, with a strong fast passage at Northwick Warth on 15th and 'thousands' again being recorded at CVL on 17th. There was a record on the 30th of 200 moving NE at Cl-Y. On Oct.1st a total of 250 was recorded from five widespread sites, the last flocks were 100 moving down river at Aust on 4th and 200 at Steep Holm on 11th. A total of 19 individuals was seen on the coast up to 14th and the last record came from OPS on 22nd, an average last date. The autumn passage recorded total was in excess of 10,500 bird-days, see table below. This is roughly five times the figure for spring passage and four times the figure for autumn 2013, and is a welcome increase especially as some concern has been expressed recently about the long-term status of the populations of this species in the UK.

| Date | Aug 11-20 | Aug 21-30 | Sep 1-10 | Sep 11-20 | Sep 21-30 | Oct 1-10 | Oct 11-20 | Oct 21-30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 1000 | 2000 | 400 | 6600 | 50 | 0 | 200 | 205 |
| Max. count | 500 | 2000 | 400 | 900 | 35 | 0 | 200 | 200 |

Autumn passage

**A note on hirundine passage**

Hirundine passage is often composed of very large mixed flocks, and estimating the size of these flocks is difficult. The total estimated size of visible hirundine spring passage was around 18,000 bird-days and similar to last year, but Swallows formed only 42% compared with 77% last year, and Sand Martins represented 47% compared with just 12% last year. A third of the total came in March, earlier than last year which had an exceptionally cold March, and a half between April 21st and May 10th. Larger numbers were also reported in 2012, see the spring migration paper in the Report for that year but, as the counting methods were different, no direct comparisons are possible. In 2014 the size of the autumn passage was over double that in spring, whereas in 2013 it had been half as big, also it was over two and a half times the size of the 2013 passage. It

was composed of 52% Swallows, 43% House Martins and 5% Sand Martins. A third of the passage had passed through by the end of August and 40% came through in the ten days from Sept.11th to 20th. It is not clear how far the difference recorded between 2013 and 2014 reflects a real population change, or the chance impact of a few large flock size estimates. These data are summarised in the table below.

| | Spring 2013 | Spring 2014 | Autumn 2013 | Autumn 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sand Martin | 2300 | 8200 | 1100 | 1600 |
| Swallow | 13500 | 7400 | 7900 | 17000 |
| House Martin | 2700 | 1900 | 2300 | 14800 |
| Total | 18500 | 17500 | 11300 | 33500 |

Visible hirundine passage, 2013 and 2014

## CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti* [RR] [RBBP]

*Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.*

With a species mostly only recorded by sound it is difficult to estimate the true population, but there were signs of an upturn in numbers after a mild if wet winter.

Reports were received throughout the year at the following sites: OPS (two singing on many dates), Severnside (three or four pairs in the general area but probably only two breeding, at Orchard Pools and Chittening), PWD (between three and six) and Cl-Y (two on many dates). At least three were noted at Weston STW in most months, with a maximum of six during the summer, while at CVL up to four singing males was a slight increase from the three in 2013. The Strawberry Line at Yatton was another site with birds present on many dates, with up to four in May. Elsewhere, there were a few records from the R. Avon near Pill (up to three), in the Gordano Valley (July 6th, Sept. 21st) and two or three were noted at Sandford in September. The only record from BL, where they have yet to establish themselves, was of one on Jan. 23rd.

The table below shows the varying fortunes of this species during the last two decades.

| | 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL singing males | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 15 | 17 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 28 | 31 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Other singing males | | | | | | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 14 | 21 | 32 | 33 | 41 | 13 | 19 | 18 | 24 |
| Number of sites | | | | | | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 11 |

Singing males at CVL, and breeding season singing males from other sites

## LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

*Common breeding resident.*

A typical year, reported in good numbers throughout the region, usually in small groups of up to ten, but some counts were well into double figures, particularly in the late summer and autumn.

BBS surveyors counted a total of 261 over their two visits, the data indicating a welcome increase of 9% in numbers as compared with 2013; this is shown in the table below. The species was found in 75 squares representing 42% of those surveyed. Although locally the BBS results indicate an overall population decline of 50% since 1994, nationally records for this species have increased by about 10% in England as a whole over the same period.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-50%** | **-45%** | -23% | 2% | 26% | -9% | -2% | 10% | -33% | 1% | -25% | 9% |

BBS percentage changes

The WGS recorded this species from 81% of surveyed gardens in the 2013/14 winter, 7% down on the previous winter but clearly still very widespread. It could be that the mild weather meant they stayed in the wider countryside rather than needing to come into gardens for sustenance.

## GREENISH WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (0, 1)

*Very rare vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

The first record for the Avon area was of one heard in song at 08.20 on June 2nd at Sand Point (P A Bowyer). It was elusive, feeding deep within Hawthorns but was eventually seen, and photographed (see opposite page 104), by about a dozen observers over the next 90 minutes or so. See article on page 162.

## YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus* (33, 3)

*Scarce or very scarce autumn visitor since the first in 1986; rare in winter.*
Descriptions required.

An excellent year with five accepted records including, unusually, one in spring. Details as follows:

Bath – one photographed from the Beechen Cliff viewpoint, near Alexandra Park at midday on March 22nd (T Chantabusan);

Cl-Y – one watched at close range, and heard calling, near Blake's Pools for about ten minutes on Oct. 11th (S Sanins);

Sand Point – an elusive calling individual on Oct.19th (P A Gregory *et al*.);

Wellow Brook – a calling individual watched for an hour from 09.30 on Oct. 20th (V Smith);

CVL – one trapped and ringed on Oct. 25th (CVRS *et al*., photographed, see opposite page 104).

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years. Five were also seen in 1986, the first year they were recorded in the Avon area.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 |

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.

Spring migrants were noted at OPS on April 21st, on Clifton Down on 26th and at Weston-s-Mare on 27th. In May, records came from Wain's Hill on 3rd and from BL and Sand Point on 15th. All were noted singly, with some in song, but all were clearly just passing through, as is usual now. There were no autumn records.

The table below shows the numbers recorded on spring passage in each of the last ten years.

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 6 |

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.*

Breeding numbers bounced back, and good counts were reported in both winter periods in many places.

*First winter period* The true wintering population is hard to estimate, but a minimum of 41 individuals was counted in January and 22 in February. Sewage treatment works (Avonmouth, Aust, Keynsham, Banwell, Chew Stoke) were favoured locations with up to eight at some, while up to six were seen at CVL. There was some indication that those seen within Bristol early on in the year either moved out or did not survive, urban gardens being sub-optimal habitat for this insect-eating warbler.

They continued to be seen at wintering sites through March, but sightings at Portishead on 4th and at Sand Point on 6th probably indicated the start of migration. Within a few days small numbers were increasingly reported from the coast and inland sites, with 21 at OPS on 21st the first large count. There were 29 at BL on 30th, 20 at Middle Hope on April 1st and 15 at Aust Cliff on 2nd, giving some indication of the peak of what seemed to be a long migration period, but it is hard to be sure with a species which continued to be widely reported in good numbers well into the breeding season (there were 18 singing at BL on May 5th, for instance).

*Breeding* The Avon BBS survey found this species in 154 squares, representing 86.5% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1071, the data indicating an increase of 26% in numbers as compared with the similar sized slump in 2013; this is shown in the table below. Locally the population seems to be reasonably stable, against a background of an increasing population in England as a whole.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4%** | **-28%** | -41% | -9% | 21% | 8% | -6% | 6% | 15% | -5% | -25% | 26% |

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, which is surveyed on a regular basis, the number of singing males increased to 67 from the unusually low 48 in 2013, although still below the record 83 in 2012.

*Autumn and second winter period* Most counts were in single figures through July and August, although from a wide variety of sites. There were 29 at BG on Aug. 29th with 27 at Saltford on the same date, then several counts between 20 and 30 through to mid September at various sites, with 45 at Aust Warth on 21st the highest total at any one spot. Smaller numbers, usually less than 10, were then seen to the end of October. There were still some migrants around in November, and 34 (presumed different) individuals were seen at potential wintering sites, with maybe as many as 46 in December, including a 'best-guess' of 20 at CVL.

**Siberian Chiffchaff** *P. c. tristis* (19, 11)
*Scarce or very scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.*
Descriptions required.

An unprecedented influx early in the year involved at least eight individuals, most of which lingered, allowing a number of observers to become familiar with this sub-species. The details, in chronological order of discovery, are as follows:

St. Werburgh's City Farm – one from Jan. 3rd until the 20th (J Parry *et al*., photographed);

Chew Stoke STW – one on Jan. 20th (K E Vinicombe *et al*.) was joined by a second from at least the 23rd (R Mielcarek *et al*., photographed), and both remained until March 10th;

CVL – one was watched at close range for a few minutes, and heard calling, on the Bittern trail on Jan. 21st (R Mielcarek); on Feb. 27th two were found close by (C J Stone *et al*., photographed) and both were seen daily until March 4th. Thereafter they were only seen together intermittently up until March 29th with one remaining until April 10th by which time it had completed its moult. They were only occasionally heard calling. A photograph of one of these appears opposite page 104.

Saltford STW – one, probably from Feb.10th, was seen well with snatches of song heard on 26th; it was in full song by March 4th and continued to sing during the month, it was last seen on the 29th (W Duckworth *et al*.);

Keynsham STW – one in song on March 2nd was seen until the 7th (J Aldridge *et al*.).

Eastville Park, Bristol – an individual in heavy body moult was watched for 20 minutes and heard calling on March 11th (L Gardiner, photographed).

In the autumn there were three records, taking the total for the year to 11. All were at CVL; the first was trapped and ringed on Nov. 29th (CVRS, photographed); a second on the Bittern trail was seen poorly on Dec. 16th but better views were obtained on 18th, 19th and 20th (R Mielcarek, A H Davis); and finally the third was at Nunnery Point on 31st (K E Vinicombe).

**Late record 2012** – One was seen, and heard singing, at Saltford STW on April 11th (W Duckworth).

The table below gives the number of accepted records of this subspecies reported in the past 20 years.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 11 |

Records each year

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus* [Amber 3]
*Common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor.*

No sign of any increase in numbers, either on passage or during the breeding season.

*Spring passage* After the first one at PWD on 22nd and 23rd, the next March record came from Saltford (one on 28th) with a flurry of one to three on 29th at Chittening and Northwick Warths, PWD, Cl-Y, Middle Hope, Keynsham and CVL. From then on into April the arrival was widespread, higher counts coming from Sand Point (20 on 1st, 30 on 10th and again on 21st), BL (eight on 4th), PWD (13 on 6th), Marshfield (ten on 10th) and Cl-Y (15 on 21st). Numbers in late April were mostly in single figures, this pattern continuing into May as migrants moved through.

*Breeding period* In June and July, there were records from just ten sites. The BBS survey showed only a minimal change in numbers from 2013 and out of a total of 79 recorded in the survey only 25 were recorded on the late visit (that is from mid-May to the end of June) so presumably many of those recorded on the earlier visits were migrants with few remaining to breed.

*Autumn passage* They were slightly more evident in August (five at Saltford on 8th, six at PWD on 30th, otherwise ones and twos). In September, ringing records came from CVL on 6th (two) and 7th and GVRS on 3rd (two), 7th, 12th with the last one here on 21st. There were also sight records on most days through to the 12th when five were reported from BG.

## **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.*

A relatively early arrival of migrants this year, and it continues to be one of our more successful passerines.

*First winter period* The year started with at least 16 individuals reported on Jan.1st, and wintering birds continued to be noted in gardens, often at bird-tables, through to the middle of March, and rarely anywhere that could be said to be non-urban. Mostly seen in ones and twos, six in Stoke Bishop on Jan.12th being the highest count, with five in Churchill on 10th the next highest. The WGS recorded this species from 90% of all survey gardens in the 2013/14 winter, heading back towards to the peak of 93% in 2010/11. Full song was heard from one on Feb.16th in Stoke Bishop, with others heard singing not long afterwards.

*Spring passage* Apparently wintering birds were noted to early April, but one singing at Sand Point on March 19th was likely to have been a migrant as was another at Dundry on 22nd. There were five singing at CVL on 24th, and thenceforth small numbers were seen at a wide variety of sites to the end of the month. The peak occurred in early April, with 20 at PWD and ten at Warmley on March 30th, 20 at Sand Point on April 1st, 12 at OPS on 3rd, 20 at BL on 4th and 12 at PWD on 6th being some higher counts at this time. Birds were clearly setting up territory in April, although migrants were also still passing through. It is worth noting that the first migrants in 2013 did not appear until around April 6th, with an apparent peak around the 20th, both significantly later in that year.

*Breeding* During the Avon BBS survey for 2014, the species was found in 150 squares, representing 84.3% of those surveyed, much the same as last year, and showing how widespread this species is as a breeder. A combined total of 1092 was counted over two visits, the data indicating an increase of 17% in numbers as compared with 2013, as shown in the table below. BBS results indicate an overall population increase of 71% locally since 1994, and they have increased by about 113% over the same period in England as a whole.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **71%** | **41%** | 0% | -3% | 11% | -11% | 9% | 20% | 17% | -1% | -17% | 17% |

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, 69 singing males were located, up from 66 in 2013, and apart from Reed Warbler, this is now the commonest warbler seen around the lake. Not to be outdone, 32 were heard singing at BL on May 5th, clearly another significant breeding site.

*Autumn passage and second winter period* Passage was most evident through September, with 58 ringed at CVL over the weekend 6th/7th, 41 seen at PWD on 13th, 45 at Aust Cliff on 14th and 35 here on 28th being among the higher counts. Smaller numbers were noted throughout October, with up to four at a time from mid-month onwards. One at CVL on Nov. 3rd was unusual here so late in the year. The first wintering birds started to reappear in gardens from mid November onwards, when almost all records once again came from towns or the larger villages. Six on 12th was a good count at Banwell where they were seen feeding on *Cordyline* berries.

Two recoveries, including one from Portugal, are listed in the ringing report on page 171.

## **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin* [RR]

*Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

The first of the year were single birds seen or heard at CVL and OPS on April 17th. There was one at Ham Green on 19th and at Arno's Vale on 20th, with then a steady trickle of sightings from 21st onwards, both coastal (Northwick Warth, Walton Bay, Sand Point) and inland (Lawrence Weston, Bradley Stoke, BL, Dolebury Warren) through to the end of the month. Mostly just ones and twos were involved, this pattern continuing throughout May at 15 widely spaced spots. It is hard to distinguish migrants from breeding birds at this time but one singing in Bishopston on 21st was at an unusual location, and presumably still on the move. No further breeding data was available.

At CVL, where there is a significant concentration of breeders, 44 singing males were located, down from the 51 in 2013. Elsewhere they were elusive in June and July once they had stopped singing, but from early August records increased, with elder, bramble and dogwood berries being taken by birds stoking up for migration. Records at this time came from OPS, Severnside, PWD, Redland, Saltford, and CVL. In September singles were reported from CVL on 12th, at PWD on 13th, and on several dates on Severnside through to 20th. One was then seen at Sand Point on 28th, a fairly typical last date.

Of note, a juvenile ringed at CVL on July 6th had travelled 802*km* before being retrapped on Aug.15th at the Étang de la Mazière, Lot-et-Garonne, in south-west France.

## LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

*Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

A slightly earlier arrival, and later departure, but otherwise a typical year.

The first arrival was one at Weston STW on April 10th, closely followed by another at Sand Point on 11th, slightly ahead of the average for recent years. On 12th, one or two were noted from OPS, Severnside, Cl-Y and CVL and from then on they became increasingly widespread. Many of the mid-April records were coastal migrants, but one was seen at Chipping Sodbury Common on 16th, with 11 here on 21st, so breeding sites were quickly occupied during the month. Counts of four or more in April came from OPS, Northwick Warth, Severn Beach, Cl-Y, Pill and Yatton.

In May and June, presumed breeders were noted from about 20 widely spaced sites. At OPS, 10 on May 3rd was a site record, with up to four here through to June. At CVL, the population remained at three pairs, as in 2013 while four singing males held territory at Weston STW. BBS surveys found them present in 25 squares, slightly up on last year.

Records continued on a regular basis from breeding sites through to the end of August and into early September when migrants were on the move. The last of these were at Aust Cliff (one on 20th and 21st), Sand Point (two on 27th) and OPS (one on 28th, lingering until Oct. 23rd). One was ringed at CVL on Nov. 29th – a DNA analysis of a dropped feather undertaken by Prof. M Collinson, University of Aberdeen, proved that this individual belongs to the nominate race *curruca,* and so is normal for our area if rather late.

## WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis* [Amber 3]

*Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

A welcome increase in breeding numbers.

Two at OPS and one at Weston STW on April 12th were the first of the year, followed by one at Strode (near Nempnett Thrubwell), and two at Almondsbury the next day. From the 14th sightings became more widespread, mainly on the coast but also at a scattering at inland sites over the next week. By the end of the month many breeding sites had been occupied, but migrants were still on the move, with higher counts including 11 at Sand Point on 29th, 18 at Cl-Y on 30th, 21 at OPS on May 3rd with 16 at Severn Beach the same day.

During the breeding season counts of singing males at regularly surveyed sites included 11 at CVL (up from eight in 2013) and up to 19 at Weston STW. Newly fledged young were seen at OPS in early June, and at Blake's Pools (Cl-Y) in mid-July. BBS surveyors counted a total of 436 over their two visits, the data indicating a welcome increase of 28% in numbers compared with 2013, as shown in the table below. The national picture also indicated a modest increase in England over the previous year. The species was found in 102 squares, this representing 57.3% of those surveyed.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **52%** | **36%** | 10% | 5% | 5% | -16% | 21% | 10% | 34% | -38% | -5% | 28% |

BBS percentage changes

They could continue to be found at or near breeding sites through to mid-September, but more obvious migrants were also seen along the coast and inland (max. four at PWD and OPS, both on 6th). The last few records, all of single birds, came from Saltford (18th), Aust Cliff (19th) and Chipping Sodbury Common (22nd), an earlier than average departure.

## DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata* (39, 2)

*Formerly rare, now a scarce visitor. Has bred.*
Descriptions required.

The only records came from Sand Point. The immature from 2013 was seen intermittently up until Jan.11th, again on Feb. 26th, and on 28th it was joined by an adult (P A Bowyer). In October one was present on 29th and 30th (P A Gregory *et al*.).

The Avon area records for the past 20 years are summarised below.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2* | 6* | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

Total annual records; * indicates a breeding record.

## GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia* [Red 3]

*Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.*

A slight drop in spring and summer numbers, and only five on autumn passage all from GVRS.

The first to occur was one at Weston STW on April 9th, followed by single birds at CVL and New Passage the next day. The 10th also saw two at Sand Point, with records here of one on 11th, three on 15th and 17th, seven on 21st and one on 29th. Other April records came from Cl-Y (one on 14th, four on 21st), Yatton (one on 23rd), PWD (single birds on 13th, 16th, 18th, 20th and 22nd), Weston STW (two on 16th, one on 17th), OPS (two on 17th, one on 18th) and Uphill (one on 18th). Apparent migrants were noted at Cl-Y (one on 12th) and Sand Point (one on 21st).

Possible breeders were one noted on several dates from May to June at Weston STW, and one or two 'reeling' at OPS on July 20th and 21st. The only other summer sighting came from Saltford with one on June 18th. At one regularly covered site, Lower Knole Farm (Almondsbury), none were seen this year for the first time since 2006 (M Dadds).

The autumn records were all from GVRS: two on July 27th, one on Aug. 24th and 31st, and on Sept. 14th.

The table below summarises the counts for the past decade. .

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 37 | 47 | 32 | 29 | 67 | 74 | 105 | 53 | 52 | 44 |
| Breeding season | 2 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Autumn | 29 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 5 |

Avon spring and autumn passage bird-days and breeding season territories

## SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* [RR]

*Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

A fairly typical showing.

The first of the year was along the Strawberry Line (Yatton) on April 3rd, a bit earlier than average. The next was at Weston STW on 9th, and from then on through to the end of the month they were recorded at the following places (first date in brackets): OPS and Severnside (both 10th), Tockington (15th), CVL (17th), Pill (18th), PWD (18th), Cl-Y (21st), BL (21st), Sand Point (21st), Gordano Valley (22nd), Lawrence Weston (23rd), Langford (25th) and Batheaston (27th). The majority of records were between one and five, but 15 at Chittening Warth on 27th indicates an influx in late April/early May, with eight at PWD on May 2nd and six at OPS on 3rd.

Reports continued from most of the above sites through May and into June, coastal sites, the reservoirs and moors being particularly favoured. Breeding is hard to prove, but one was seen at a nest in Saltford, and there appeared to be three territories at BL. At Weston STW, 30 were heard singing in May, some at least would have been breeding. The estimate of eight pairs at CVL was well down on the 14 in 2013.

They were less obvious in July and August, and were on their way in September, up to six being seen on Severnside to the 17th, with odd birds at PWD, CVL, Saltford and Chipping Sodbury in the first half of the month. The last in September were at Weston STW (one on 27th) and CVL (three on 28th), with a juvenile trapped at CVL on Oct. 5th bringing up the rear. One ringed at CVL on July 26th took no longer than nine days to travel 802*km* before being retrapped on Aug. 4th at the Étang de la Mazière, Lot-et-Garonne, in south-west France. A second recovery in the opposite direction is listed on page 171.

**2013** – A late record gives the first in that year as occurring on April 7th on Walton Moor.

## REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* [RR]

*Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

A fairly typical year.

The first of the year was at Weston STW on April 9th, followed by one at CVL on 12th and at Cl-Y on 13th. From then on breeding sites were quickly reoccupied, although two at Sand Point on 21st were no doubt still on migration.

Apparently occupied sites included OPS, Severnside, PWD, Pill, Cl-Y, Weston STW, Lower Knole Farm (Almondsbury), Gordano Valley, Strawberry Line (Yatton), Batheaston, Saltford, CVL and BL with birds regularly reported from most of these through to the end of August. Few counts reached double figures, although estimating the population of reedbed species is notoriously difficult, but at Weston STW there were up to 19 singing males at this regularly covered site. At CVL, D Warden found 121 nests, of which 54 were successful, fledging 316 pulli from 476 eggs laid, a survival rate of 66%, considerably better than average, and the best level here since 2009.

Single birds at BG on Sept. 3rd and 13th indicated that migration was underway, but the fact that 65 were ringed at CVL on the weekend of 6th/7th shows that good numbers were still present at the lake. However, some from here had already reached ringing sites in the Loire valley and south-west France before the end of August, one near Bayonne on 20th having travelled 879*km* from CVL. Records from breeding sites continued through most of September, the last sightings in the field coming from Pilning and Weston STW on the 27th followed by two caught at CVL on Oct. 4th and one on the 18th, these three all being juveniles.

*Ringing report* Two continental recoveries of birds ringed at CVL, one from Spain and one from France were of note, for details see page 171.

## GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (3, 1) [BBRC]

*Very rare vagrant.*

A male was found in the early morning of May 24th singing on the north side of Herriott's Bridge at CVL (S Davies *et al.*); it was seen by many observers and photographed, see opposite page 105, and was still present the next morning. On the 26th it was singing, and seen briefly, in the main reed bed of the lake (M Dadds, sound recorded).

This is the fourth Avon record and the third for CVL, where song was also recorded in May in 1992 and 2008. One singing at Weston STW in 2012 was the first to stay for more than one day.

The table below shows the varying fortunes of the common warblers (except Reed Warbler) at CVL over the past decade.

### Warblers at CVL

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chiffchaff | 25 | 30 | 38 | 38 | 45 | 57 | 73 | 83 | 48 | 67 |
| Willow Warbler | 6 | | 7 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Blackcap | 23 | 31 | 35 | 45 | 49 | 47 | 70 | 76 | 66 | 69 |
| Garden Warbler | 14 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 37 | 40 | 58 | 46 | 51 | 44 |
| Whitethroat | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 11 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Sedge Warbler | 11 | 11 | 7 | 41 | 20 | 41 | 31 | 16 | 14 | 8 |

Counts of singing males of selected warblers made by K E Vinicombe within the CVL perimeter using a standardised method

## NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

*Fairly common breeding resident.*

A normal year.

The BBS counted 77 from 29 squares (16% of the total surveyed), which was a slight fall in both distribution and numbers after the high figures in 2013.

Since 1998 there have been records from 334 one *km* squares in the region. This year they were recorded in 93 one *km* squares, 36 of them new since 1998; see table below. The impact of the use of Bird Track has been apparent in the past three years and has added about 30% to the known distribution of this species in the Avon area.

During the breeding season records came from 45 sites, and breeding was proved at Abbots Leigh, CVL, Prior Park and Saltford. In the first winter season there were 41 records and in the second 58.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total squares | 87 | 34 | 54 | 42 | 65 | 83 | 81 | 68 | 86 | 93 |
| New squares | 26 | 9 | 13 | 6 | 22 | 31 | 23 | 32 | 38 | 36 |

Total number of one *km* squares in which species was reported each year

## TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

*Fairly common breeding resident.*

A normal year.

Since 1998 there have been records from 290 one *km* squares, and this year they were recorded in 65 of them, 25 of which were new, see table below.

The breeding season produced 33 reports from 17 sites. A single nest failed at CVL, although six pairs were recorded around the perimeter of the lake, two more than last year but down from 15 in 2012. In addition the BBS counted 39 from 15 squares (8% of the total surveyed), both of which are typical for recent years.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total squares | 61 | 26 | 41 | 36 | 44 | 57 | 69 | 71 | 72 | 65 |
| New squares | 27 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 14 | 13 | 22 | 22 | 36 | 25 |

Total number of one *km* squares in which the species was reported each year

## WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Abundant breeding resident.*

An encouraging year.

BBS counts since 1994 show an increase to 2002, and then a slow decline by a third to 2013. This year there was a sharp 18% increase, so overall there has been little change since 1994. In 2014 this survey counted 3218 from 171 squares, 96% of the total as has been normal since 1994. CABS data suggested a similar pattern, but with a peak in 2004 followed by a decline to 2014

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-2%** | **-1%** | 3% | -19% | 10% | 3% | -3% | -2% | -7% | 13% | -11% | 18% |

BBS percentage changes

On Steep Holm 15 were recorded in April, and ten in August. A standard walk around Weston STW counted a maximum of 22 and around BL a maximum of 56. Regular walks around Backwell Lake had a peak count of 35 on June 26th and counts of over 25 in both October and November. CABS recorded a maximum of 16 in June compared with 18 in May in the two previous years. Song commenced on Jan.19th encouraged by the warm conditions compared with March 17th in 2013 during cold conditions. Continuous song ended as usual in the last week of July.

CVRS trapped large numbers of juveniles in July, August and September.

## STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* [RR] [Red 3]

*Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; also passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A year with some large roosts, impressive displays and large feeding flocks.

*First winter period* An impressive roost was noted at OPS, with an estimated 5000 in January building to 10,000 in mid-February and falling to 2000 by the end of the month. Large feeding flocks included 3000 at Yatton on Feb.10th, 1400 at Pilning Wetlands on 21st, 1000 were recorded at Kenn Moor on 6th, 1000 at Cl-Y on 19th and at Congresbury Moor on 25th. There were also pre-roost gatherings at Severn Beach on 20th and 28th. These counts continued into the first week of March.

The WGS recorded them in 69% of gardens, the highest proportion since 2008/09 and in higher numbers than any winter since 1999/2000. During March, 17 hours of migration watches from Sand Point and Aust Cliff recorded a mere 27 all travelling north.

*Breeding season* The BBS counted 2052 from 103 squares which, at 58%, is the lowest proportion yet recorded. Before 2005 this proportion never fell below 80%. Since 1994 the survey has recorded an 84% fall in numbers, although this year showed a 7% increase, the first of any significance since 2006. Little research has been undertaken into this continuing decline.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-84%** | **-54%** | -12% | 10% | -16% | -21% | -9% | 1% | 2% | -16% | -14% | 7% |

BBS percentage changes

*Post breeding* The first fledglings were recorded on May 14th and, unusually, there was a record of a second brood in Redland on June 26th. Small groups of young were recorded in June and July with a maximum of 200 at Marshfield on July 15th. Flocks of five and more were recorded right through August and September, the maximum being 290 at New Passage on Aug. 3rd.

*Migration* Visible migration was first recorded on Oct.15th when 95 were seen heading SW at Aust. At Wains Hill 650 travelled SW in 2.5 hours on 20th and 300 in 3.5 hours on 23rd, 1000 on 27th, 2650 in five hours on 28th, and 515 in 3 hours on 30th, all travelling SW. An unusually late passage record was of 4600 in small groups again moving SW at Cl-Y on Nov.10th. A feeding flock of 2000 was seen at Marshfield on 30th, and 1000 were reported at Congresbury on 31st.

*Second winter period* A roost of 2000 was recorded at OPS on Nov.15th building to 8000 on 24th and 10,000 by Dec. 5th but this roost had been abandoned by 23rd. A photograph of part of the flock appears opposite page 128. Another roost developed at Weston STW with 5000 on Nov. 24th and 4000 on Dec. 5th. Large feeding flocks of 3000 were recorded at Marshfield and there were another 3000 at Thornbury on 20th, 3500 at Cl-Y on 18th and 5500 here on 28th, and 1000 at Congresbury on 29th. On Dec. 2nd flocks totalling 8500 were seen flying west at Cl-Y. A record of 20,000 at CVL on 6th may have been roosting. At 08.00 on 9th 8250 were recorded at Channel View farm, Cl-Y with 3000 on 23rd and 6000 on 31st.

*Ringing report* One ringed at CVL late in 2011 was found dead near Tallinn, Estonia in May, see page 171.

## ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Pastor roseus* (8, 2)

*Rare vagrant, with no 20th century records.*
Descriptions required.

A good year with two records, details as follows:

BG – a juvenile, initially seen in flight over the car park early morning on Sept. 20th, was relocated in fields to the north west of the site where it remained on and off until 26th (T E Bond *et al*., photographed);

Bishopston – an adult was seen in a private back garden on Nov.13th, 17th, 21st and 24th (P Cook, N Lloyd, photographed). On 25th it was seen from Friary Road and it was then noted daily from here until Dec. 5th (many observers, photographed, see opposite page 128). On 9th it was seen at the allotments behind Horfield prison (J Budd), on 19th it was seen again in flight over Berkeley Road, and on 24th it was photographed on Kings Drive.

This is the sixth year since 2000 with records of this species, see table below. None were recorded during the whole of the 20th century.

| 2000 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

Number of individuals recorded each year

## DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

*Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers.*

A normal year.

In the past 20 years this species has been recorded from some 65 sites, and this year from 26, three of them new. In the breeding season there were records of 69 bird-days from 18 sites, and breeding was proved at nine. The BBS recorded single birds from two squares.

In March nest building was recorded on the R. Chew at both Pensford and Publow and on the Frome by Eastville Park, and young were being fed on the R. Boyd at Wick on 29th. In May four chicks were being fed at Compton Dando and also at the Keynsham Memorial Park. They also bred at a new site, the tiny Regil Brook near Chew Stoke. They were present in the breeding season on the Somer at Radstock, on the R. Boyd at Willsbridge, on the R. Frome at Oldbury Court and Hambrook, around Bath at Lambrook, on the By Brook, and on the R. Avon at Freshford and Saltford.

During the two winter periods there were 52 bird-days from ten sites, including the Trym at Westbury-on-Trym, the Wellow Brook at Wellow, and in November the Winford Brook which was a regular breeding site.

The remainder of the records, from June to October totalled 18 bird-days from eight sites.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 51 | 89 | 77 | 84 | 173 | 201 | 205 | 125 | 135 | 139 |
| Sites | 10 | 13 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 23 | 25 | 26 | 26 |

Total bird-days and number of reported sites

## RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus* [Red 3]

*Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast.*

A normal year after the exceptional spring in 2013, see table below.

*Spring passage* All records are listed. One was at Middle Hope on March 16th, this was the third earliest Avon area record, the earliest being March 9th in 2011. (The average temperature in both February and March 2014 was 2ºC above average). Another was at Middle Hope on 31st, and the remaining were a male at Chipping Sodbury Common on April 2nd; another male at Dundry on 6th and 7th; three to N at Sand Point on 16th, with one on 18th and the last on 19th.

*Autumn passage* One record: a single bird at PWD on Nov.15th. This is also the third latest last date in the Avon area. The latest of all was on Nov. 20th in 1986.

| | 1994/05 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 8 | 3 | 10 | 20 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 20 | 12 | 64 | 10 |
| Autumn | 1 | 19 | 1 | | 2 | 4 | 2 | | | 5 | 1 |

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

## BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

*Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.*

A recovery was noted this year.

*First winter period* WGS recorded them in every garden, as usual, but in sharply lower numbers, although well within the normal fluctuation limits. The nine sites that were counted regularly reported falling numbers through January and February.

*Breeding season* The BBS records since 1994 show an overall increase of 19%, but the pattern was one of steady increase to 2002 followed by small fluctuations, including a fairly sharp fall in 2013 following the wet summer of 2012, which has been reversed this year. A total of 4681 was counted from 177 squares, 99% of the number surveyed.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **19%** | **5%** | 7% | -2% | -1% | 4% | -5% | -2% | 0% | 7% | -8% | 7% |

BBS percentage changes

In 2014 song was first recorded on March 4th and was continuous from 23rd to June 14th. Numbers reported from nine regularly counted sites grew rapidly from an average of five in March to 13 in June. Also up to 12 were recorded on Steep Holm in April and May.

In July and August counts from the well-watched sites fell very rapidly to around three in August and September. In October, although there were no specific passage counts, numbers on the coast rose and the average from well-watched sites reached eight.

*Second winter period* In November there was an abrupt leap in the numbers seen at the well-watched sites to an average of 17, and on 15th there was an exceptional count of 50 at OPS grounded by fog. There was a slight fall on the analysed sites to an average of 14 in December.

*Other sightings* The CABS records since 1994 show a peak in 2002 followed by a steady decline to 2013, and a 20% increase in 2014, which was a good breeding season.

## FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.*

Small numbers present in both winters.

*First winter period* During January there was a fairly large flock at Marshfield, which was variously estimated to contain between 400 and 800. There were 13 other records of more than 100 from seven sites totalling 1700 bird-days. Otherwise daily records of smaller numbers were noted from some 37 sites across the region, totalling some 2000 bird-days. Just six nights were frosty during this two month period, and the average temperature was two degrees above normal. This may account for the low numbers. In March there were daily records totalling some 1500 bird-days, culminating in 200 at Marshfield on March 28th and the last were 100 at

Hawkesbury Upton on April 1st. This was two weeks earlier than the 25 year average departure date. The huge cold weather movement on Jan.18th, 2013 prevents any meaningful comparison between the two years.

*Second half-year* Two were seen in flight over Sneyd Park on Sept. 26th, the earliest since 1999, and one flew over Hanham on 28th. Five were seen on Oct.3rd at Aust, and unusually 20 were reported from Steep Holm on 11th. Eight more were reported until 23rd when 20 were seen moving SW over Wain's Hill, then 40 were flying over at CVL on 28th; there were daily records thereafter.

In November and December records were received of 29 flocks of between 100 and 300, eight at Marshfield, and six of them in flight, totalling 5100 bird-days. Smaller flocks recorded amounted to 2900 bird-days. The temperature during these two months was also two degrees above normal. These totals are very similar to those of 2013.

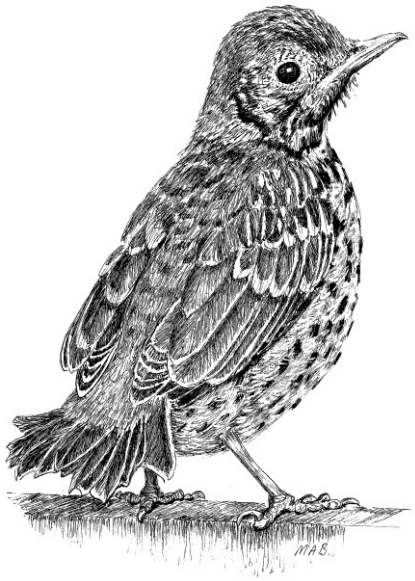
## **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos* [Red 3]

*Common breeding resident.*

A normal year.

*First winter period* Song was heard from the start of the year, and continued through to mid-May.

*Breeding season* The BBS counted 728 from 140 squares (79% of the total surveyed), a distribution unchanged for many years. It is striking that the total shows a ratio of one Song Thrush to six Blackbirds, despite the fact that their song is loud and far-carrying. Contrary to popular belief there has been virtually no change overall since 1994. The past decade has seen small but trendless fluctuations, and 2014 it was up by 6% on 2013. There were 22 singing males around CVL, down from 29 last year.



| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-5%** | **-18%** | -4% | -5% | -9% | 20% | -9% | 2% | -14% | 11% | -13% | 6% |

BBS percentage changes

*Second half year* In October there were counts of ten feasting on berries at OPS on 11th and of 45 migrating NE in 2.5 hours at Aust on 15th with 14 to SW here on 17th. Autumn song was heard on 26th, and continually from Nov.16th to the year's end. On 24th there was a count of 32 on a standard walk in Saltford. The CABS whole year rate was the same as for the previous three years.

## **REDWING** *Turdus iliacus* [Red 3]

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.*

A very small October passage.

*First half-winter* The largest flock recorded was 400 at Congresbury Moor on Jan. 21st and 250 were still here on Feb. 27th. Also 250 were noted from Kenn Moor on 17th, possibly involving the same birds. Twenty-five flocks of more than 100 were reported representing some 3000 bird-days, and records of smaller flocks totalled another 3000 bird-days. In 2013 a huge cold weather movement on Jan. 18th prevented any meaningful comparison between the two winters.

In March 300 were reported at Cl-Y on 5th, and smaller numbers were noted daily right through the month totalling some 1500 bird-days. In April ten were seen at Hawkesbury on 1st, four at Aust going NE, and 12 were at CVL on 4th with the last five on Durdham Down in Bristol on 6th. This was a little earlier than the average departure date probably related to the exceptionally high March temperatures.

*Redwing cont. Second half-year* Two were reported from Cl-Y on Sept. 27th, and 11 were over Redland on Oct.1st. Passage began in earnest on 15th when 5550 were seen going NE at OPS in half an hour and 460 at Aust in 2.5 hours. On 17th, 245 were moving SW at Aust in an hour. There were widespread reports of small numbers by the end of the month. In November 645 were noted at Saltford travelling S on 13th, and 500 were reported at Cl-Y on 25th.

In December a flock of 600 at Cl-Y was noted on 2nd with 400 on 9th, and a similar number at nearby Kingston Seymour on 4th. Congresbury Moor held between 250 and 350, and there were 22 other reports of flocks of over 100 from 13 sites, totalling some 3000 bird-days. Records of smaller flocks totalled 5000 bird-days. Thus there were apparently roughly equal numbers of Fieldfares and Redwings present late in the year. These totals are more than double those of the second half of 2013, when just 3000 bird-days were recorded.

## MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus* [Amber 3]

*Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.*

*First winter* Song was reported from the start of the year to the end of March, and sightings were noted of one's and two's from 26 sites.

*Breeding season* There were records from 40 sites, but proof of breeding was only received from one. Additionally, the BBS counted 71 from 37 squares, at 21% the lowest proportion yet recorded. This species sings and nests before the BBS survey begins, but there has been a 63% decline in counts since 1994. In 2014 there was a 13% rise, but numbers seen are now so low that a fall in the proportion of occupied squares is a better indicator of change than the numbers seen. Five singing males were noted around CVL, one more than last year.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-63%** | **-22%** | 31% | -23% | -13% | 11% | -27% | 11% | -22% | 28% | -12% | 13% |

BBS percentage changes

There were twelve counts of more than six at Saltford from June to September, it was not clear whether the counts were of individuals or groups. A flock of ten at Swineford on July 29th, a count of 20 from Newton Park on Aug. 24th and one of 12 from Siston on Sept.12th were also noted.

*Migration* At Aust 22 were recorded on Oct.15th, they may have been grounded by the weather.

*Second winter* Ones of twos were recorded from 34 sites.

## SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* [Red 3]

*Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.*

A more encouraging year, and certainly better than 2013.

*Arrival* In all 53 individuals were counted during May, which is back to a normal level after the poor passage total in May 2013. Fifteen different individuals were seen on 11th at OPS, Keynsham, Warmley, Stockwood Open Space (nine of the 15 were noted here on a BBS visit during poor weather) and Newton St. Loe. This is nine days later than the recent average first arrival date. Six more were seen on 12th and 15 at Sand Point on 15th over four hours. One was at Portbury that day, seven on 16th, one on 17th, four on 18th, eleven on 19th, and one on 25th and 30th completed the arrival.

In June and July breeding was proved at four sites: Marshfield, Chipping Sodbury, Backwell, and BL. Also on July 23rd an adult and a juvenile were on the Parkland at CVL, they may have bred at the lake or may have dispersed from a nearby site. There were 18 records totalling 34 bird-days from 12 sites. The table below shows that this is typical for recent years. The BBS counted 14 from five squares (3% of the total surveyed), double the number in 2013, but this includes the nine seen at Stockwood mentioned above.

In August 38 bird-days were reported from 15 widespread sites, four of them family parties, and in September 56 bird-days from 18 sites. Records were almost daily until Sept.14th and the last was seen on 22nd at Chipping Sodbury. This is very close to the normal last date.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 108 | 109 | 58 | 98 | 97 | 100 | 81 | 92 | 114 | 164 |
| June and July records | | | | | 18 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 26 | 18 |
| June and July sites | | | | | 14 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 16 | 12 |

Total bird-days, and breeding season records and sites where available

## ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

*Abundant breeding resident.*

A small increase was noted.

The 2013/14 winter saw a slight fall from the high levels of the previous winter, probably as a consequence of the severe weather in March 2013. The BBS has shown a 29% increase since 1994, although a peak was reached in 2010, as they were affected by the exceptional cold of December 2010, and again by the very poor breeding season in 2012 and the cold weather in March 2013. In 2014 the survey counted 2463 from 172 squares (97% of the total surveyed), representing a small but welcome increase on 2013.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **29%** | **17%** | 2% | 2% | 7% | 9% | 2% | -12% | -6% | 11% | -1% | 2% |

BBS percentage changes

Over the whole year the CABS counts were slightly higher than in 2013, but are still running 38% below what they were twenty years ago.

There was a report of an exceptional 60 at Aust Cliff on Sept.28th, apparently grounded. There was also a number of exceptional counts at the well-watched sites in October and November as newly moulted juveniles established their winter territories. A total of 84 was counted on a standard walk around Nailsea Moor on Oct.10th and 76 on Nov. 23rd. OPS held 30 on 15th. A record count of 51 was recorded at Weston STW on Sept. 27th. Four were seen on Steep Holm on May 5th and ten on Oct.11th.

The ringing report (see page 169) shows that 284 were caught and ringed, and 152 of them were re-trapped, one seven times!

## NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos* [Amber 3]

*Very scarce breeding summer migrant, and scarce or very scarce passage migrant.*

The only records received were as follows. A male was singing at a traditional breeding site at Horwood Farm on April 16th, and a presumed female was reported here in May 12th; a nest was constructed, contents unknown, but it was lost and the breeding attempt failed. The high failure rate at this site in recent years is probably linked to the overall decline here. A male was present in song at Severn Beach from April 16th to May 5th, but it failed to attract a mate. With just one failed breeding attempt and one territorial male elsewhere this species appears to be on the brink of extinction in our area.

| 1995/04 Av. | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4-5 | 5 | 1-4 | 1 |

Estimate of number of pairs attempting to breed each year

**2013** -- Last year's account for this species did not include a number of records also from the Horwood Farm area where two males arrived on April 18th and 23rd, respectively. Then a female arrived on May 6th and built a nest which contained five eggs on 23rd, it was predated in early June. A second nest contained four eggs on 13th all of which hatched and had fledged by July 7th. A further male was heard singing in Frith Lane on May 22nd but there was no evidence of breeding here. This means that for 2013 there was one definitely successful breeding pair, and a further three attempts.

## RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL *Tarsiger cyanurus* (0, 1) *[BBRC]*

*Very rare vagrant.*

A first-winter male was found in the Shire Valley at Marshfield, on the Avon/Wiltshire border, late afternoon on Feb. 3rd; it remained here, visiting both counties, and showed well to many observers and photographers until March 9th (J Barnett *et al*.). For full details of this unprecedented occurrence, and first local record, see article on page 161. Photographs appear on the front cover of this Report and opposite page 105.

## PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* [Amber 3]

*Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.*

Another very poor year for this species with only three records. The table overleaf shows that this species has had a varied showing in Avon over the past two decades with 2003, 2007 and 2009 being similar to 2014. The 20-year averages are 12 in spring and five in autumn, the 2014 records are given on the next page.

*Pied Flycatcher cont*. A male was at OPS on April 17th, a female was at Cl-Y on the 21st, and another female was noted on May 11th at Stockwood Open Space seen on a BBS visit with a group of Spotted Flycatchers.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 19 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 20 | 18 | 22 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 22 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 30 | 3 |
| 4 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

Passage numbers recorded per year: spring : middle row -- and autumn : bottom row

## BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros* [Amber 3, 5]

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently.*

A disappointing year, this is delineated in the table below where the total bird-day average is 60 for the past decade. No breeding was attempted.

*First winter period* The records are as follows: one at PWD on Jan. 5th; a male at Sand Point on 15th; one at Severn Beach on Feb. 6th to 7th; a female at Clevedon from 8th to 15th; one at Anchor Head on 25th; a male in a garden in Weston-s-Mare from March 7th to 15th and a female at the same site on 29th; and one at Hengrove, Bristol, on 22nd. A total of 16 bird-days from seven sites was noted altogether.

*Second winter period* Again all records are listed. On Nov.1st one was seen at Merlin Park, Portishead, and was also recorded here on 2nd and 9th; a female type was at Weston STW on 9th and 14th; a male was reported from Kingswood, Bristol, on 3rd; at OPS there was a first-winter male from 15th which was also recorded on 27th, Dec. 12th and 22nd; on Nov. 29th two first-winter females appeared at the same site; on 20th a male was seen at Anchor Head; one was at Royal Portbury Dock on Dec.7th; another at Keynsham on 15th and 22nd; and on 29th noted at from Clevedon and Kenn giving a total of 18 bird-days from eight sites.

| 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 16 | 12 | 33 | 45 | 111 | 88 | 63 | 125 | 71 | 34 |

Annual bird-days.

## REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* [Amber 1]

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

A small spring and large autumn passage were recorded, also there were two very late records.

*Spring passage* The first was seen at Sand Point on April 3rd, a normal first date, and the next at Aust on 5th. There were almost daily records thereafter, with a peak on 21st when 11 were seen at six sites including five (four males and a female) at PWD. The last record was on May 15th when one was ringed also at PWD. Altogether it was a very poor passage compared with last year. Yearly comparisons are given in the third table given overleaf.

| Date | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 10 | 27 | 17 | 2 | 3 |
| Max count | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

Spring passage

*Autumn passage* This was by far the largest passage recorded since 1984, see table below, and implies a good breeding season. The first to return was seen at OPS on June 29th and there was another at Northwick Warth on 30th, and two records on July 2nd. Nine further records through July were noted, and 15 in the first three weeks of August. Then a substantial peak was reported during the last ten days. In particular there was a series of records from Chipping Sodbury Common totalling 21 bird-days in August and 36 in September, with a maximum of seven on four separate occasions. It is not clear whether these were the same individuals feeding-up throughout, or successive arrivals, but these records provide 43% of the total. The last record from here was on Sept. 22nd and there was a record for OPS on 25th.

Finally there were two exceptionally late records, also most unusually they were both seen in city gardens. The first was in Montpelier, Bristol, on Nov.15th (I Metzler) and the second was in Oldfield Park, Bath, on 30th (J Clear, photographed); they were both males and neither stayed for more than a few minutes. The previous latest last record was of two on Nov.12th in 1972 at PWD (St. George's Wharf).

| Date | July 1-10 | July 11-20 | July 21-31 | Aug 1-10 | Aug 11-20 | Aug 21-31 | Sep 1-10 | Sep 11-20 | Sep 21-31 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 48 | 26 | 27 | 2 |
| Max | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 1 |

Main autumn passage

The final table summarises the records for the past two decades.

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 24 | 34 | 65 | 18 | 26 | 28 | 24 | 37 | 138 | 136 | 59 |
| Autumn | 28 | 26 | 36 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 29 | 78 | 18 | 71 | 130 |

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

## **WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra* [Amber 3]

*Uncommon passage migrant. .*

A normal spring passage was followed by a spectacular autumn one.

*Spring passage* The first record came from Aust Warth on April 16th, and two were here on 19th. There were then daily sightings to May 6th from 11 mostly coastal sites, the highest count being five seen at Cl-Y on April 21st. A pair engaged in song flight at Dowlais Farm, Cl-Y, and one was here on May 6th, but there were no breeding season records. The last in spring was one at Sand Point on 12th.

| Date | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 3 | 22 | 8 | 3 |
| Max count | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

Spring passage

*Autumn passage* The total of 273 is much larger than any recorded since 1994, see the second table below.

A juvenile was reported on July 25th at Pilning Wetlands, and another at Aust Warth the following day. In the first three weeks of August there were six further records, then reports totalling 69 bird-days, including nine at Cl-Y on 24th, were received. In the first ten days of September records totalling 138 bird-days were noted from 20 widespread sites, with a maximum count of 23 from eight sites on 6th. Daily counts continued until Oct. 2nd. Nine bird-days in October ended on the 18th, but the final record (not tabulated) came on Nov.1st at Cl-Y, seventeen days later than the 25 year average. This is the fifth latest date, equalled by 1990. The first table below summarises the autumn passage.

| Date | Aug 1-10 | Aug 11-20 | Aug 21-31 | Sep 1-10 | Sep:11-20 | Sept 21-30 | Oct 1-10 | Oct 11-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 2 | 4 | 69 | 138 | 41 | 18 | 5 | 5 |
| Max count | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Autumn passage

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 43 | 41 | 48 | 31 | 24 | 18 | 37 | 34 | 89 | 58 | 36 |
| Autumn | 117 | 90 | 138 | 33 | 127 | 88 | 92 | 77 | 44 | 114 | 273 |

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

## **STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*

*Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant, and scarce breeder.*

A third year with no reports of proved breeding, and the BBS only counted one from one square. On the other hand numbers were high in the first winter period with quite exceptional counts in October, and the second winter period was the best since 2008.

*First winter period* In the first two months a maximum of 35 individuals (average for the past decade 38, see table below) generated 166 bird-days from 18 sites, eleven of them coastal. However, the bird-day total includes an apparent influx of 13 at Sand Point and 18 at Cl-Y on Feb. 24th; no other unusual records were noted on this day. There were regular pairs at OPS, Aust Warth, Cl-Y, Sand Point and Weston STW and records inland from Purdown and Stoke Park in Bristol, Stockwood Open Space, and Kenn and Congresbury Moors.

*Spring passage* During March a total of 32 bird-days was recorded from eight sites, all but two of them in the first week. There was one April record, a male at Aust Warth on 28th.

*Autumn passage* Apart from a juvenile in Cl-Y on June 28th, the first autumn records came from New Passage with one on July 19th at the Pilning Wetlands and two juveniles at Aust on 26th. There was a single record in August. Passage proper began on Sept. 3rd with six at Uphill, and there were 55 other bird-days recorded during the month. In October 240 bird-days were generated from ten sites, six of them coastal, including three on Steep Holm on 11th. There were daily records with peak numbers on 31st when 31 were recorded from seven sites. This total is six times larger than that noted in 2013.

*Stonechat cont*.

*Second winter period* A total of 475 bird-days was recorded from 22 sites, involving at least 72 individuals. Apparently resident pairs were noted at: OPS, Aust, Severn Beach, Chittening, PWD, Cl-Y, and Weston STW on the coast, and inland at Marshfield where there were three pairs, Stoke Park, Saltford, and Kenn and Congresbury Moors. The average over the past decade is 48 individuals.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. – Feb. | 48 | 57 | 44 | 55 | 51 | 22 | 17 | 30 | 22 | 35 |
| Breeding pairs | 11 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nov. – Dec. | 62 | 55 | 63 | 69 | 50 | 16 | 19 | 29 | 50 | 72 |

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 distinguish with certainty in the field.*

A much smaller spring passage than last year was followed by a normal autumn passage.

*Spring passage* On March 10th one was seen at Aust and another at Middle Hope. This is very close to the long term average first arrival date of March 11th but, given that the temperature of both January and February was two degrees above the average, it is perhaps surprising that the arrival was not earlier, poor weather further south in Europe may have been the cause. There was a male at CVL on 14th and three at Cl-Y on 17th, and daily records from 19th, 15 were counted at Sand Point on 29th. The pace of the passage slowed in the first ten days of April, but increased rapidly mid-month when, on 16th, 20 were seen at Sand Point and 16 on Dundry. The peak was reached on 24th when 45 were counted at seven sites. Daily records continued to May 16th and included one on Steep Holm on 5th and 23 seen at Cl-Y on 14th. One at New Passage on 10th was recorded as a Greenland individual, and two at Cl-Y on 15th were felt to be the same, as was the very last record from PWD on 31st. The table below summarises the records.

| Date | Mar 11-20 | Mar 21-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 | May 21-31 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 11 | 141 | 51 | 170 | 201 | 76 | 69 | 6 |
| Max count | 4 | 15 | 6 | 20 | 15 | 9 | 23 | 2 |

Spring passage

The BBS counted 18 from 9 squares which is 5% of the total number of squares surveyed.

*Autumn passage* The first autumn sighting was at Pilning Wetlands on Aug. 5th, but although there were daily records thereafter numbers only began to pick up in the final ten days of the month. On 23rd there was one on Steep Holm, on 25th a total of 22 was recorded from six sites, and 24 from seven sites on 26th. On Sept. 7th 36 were reported at Cl-Y, but numbers then fell back a little for the rest of September, a few more were noted in the first ten days of October, and there were daily records from the coastal sites for the rest of the month, including two on Steep Holm on 11th. In November six bird-days were recorded in the first week, and the last was for New Passage on 9th, a normal last date.

The relationship between the spring and autumn passage counts varies widely, presumably in part reflecting the success or otherwise of the breeding season. The second table below shows how these counts have varied over the past two decades. The spring and autumn averages for the past decade are: 1041 for spring and 604 for autumn (17:10 spring to autumn, denoted s/a), a complete reversal of the ratio for the previous decade (5:10 s/a). For the past few years the ratios for both 2012 and 2013 were over three s/a, whilst the ratios for 2011 and 2014 were close to one s/a.

| Date | Jul | Aug | | | Sep | | | Oct | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 |
| Bird-days | 11 | 29 | 67 | 228 | 129 | 69 | 100 | 68 | 51 | 15 |
| Max count | 3 | 6 | 24 | 27 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 15 | 3 |

Autumn passage

The final table summarises the data for the past two decades.

| | 1995/04 Av. | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 432 | 814 | 2036 | 450 | 496 | 418 | 296 | 980 | 2273 | 1920 | 728 |
| Autumn | 852 | 651 | 560 | 332 | 670 | 495 | 482 | 842 | 617 | 624 | 767 |

Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

## **DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis* [Amber 3]

*Abundant breeding resident.*

Little change in numbers, but some evidence of a good breeding season.

The WGS for the 2013/14 winter showed a fall from the peak level reached in the winter of 2009/10, probably caused by the very poor breeding season in 2012 and the cold March of 2013, but numbers remain well above those recorded between 1975 and 1995. The whole year CABS survey recorded the lowest numbers since the survey began in 1994. But the BBS records since 1994 show a steady rise from 1994 to 2003, and then a fall to 2008, and a more or less stable population since then at a level similar to that in 1994. In 2014 the survey counted 979 from 158 squares, (89% of the squares surveyed) which was a slight fall on 2013.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-5%** | **-17%** | 1% | -1% | -6% | -3% | 1% | 8% | -3% | 1% | 10% | -5% |

BBS percentage changes

On Steep Holm, where it is the commonest passerine, 20 were counted in April, a substantial increase on the 12 noted last year.

There were also some exceptional counts at regularly recorded sites in the autumn including, at Nailsea Pond, 26 on Oct.12th and 18 on Nov. 25th, also 23 on 2nd at New Passage, and 15 on 15th at OPS, all of which imply a good breeding season and/or an element of immigration.

The ringing report, see page 169, shows that of 410 caught, 203 were new and 207 were re-traps, one of them was re-trapped nine times between June 15th and Dec.13th.

## **HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus* [Red 3]

*Still abundant but declining breeding resident. .*

Numbers were down a little in 2014.

The WGS recorded this species in 54% of gardens, just above the 52% in which they were recorded in the 2009/10 winter. Numbers recorded have risen by 26% since the previous winter and 87% since the nadir of 2009/10, but they are still 72% below the peak in 1975/76.

The BBS figures show a very different story although it is hard to interpret because of the addition, after 2001, of a number of Bristol squares to the total being surveyed. They are notoriously difficult to count, and in many areas they now live in small groups that can easily be missed. Overall there seems to have been a 16% increase since 1994, but almost no change in the past decade. In 2014 the survey counted 3175 from 118 squares which is 66% of the squares surveyed, and this was a 2% fall on the previous year. This total, despite it being a red-listed species as a result of a steep fall at the end of the last century, makes it the fourth commonest species after Wood Pigeon, Blackbird and Wren.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **16%** | **1%** | 6% | 10% | -1% | 1% | -2% | 1% | 11% | 9% | 10% | -2% |

BBS percentage changes

In 2014 breeding was well reported and a number of large flocks was noted in the autumn including, in date order: 60 at Kensington Meadows in Bath on July 13th, 200 at OPS on Sept.13th, 70 at New Passage on Oct. 4th, 50 at Newton Park pig farm on 6th, 132 at Backwell Lake on 12th, 45 at Churchill on Nov.11th, 65 in a Brentry garden on Dec. 6th, and 100 at North Worle on 30th. These are very encouraging counts.

## **TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus* [Red 3]

*Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species.*

All records received are listed below. Two were noted at Saltford on Sept. 5th and Oct. 31st. In December one was seen in Nupdown Lane, Shepperdine on 13th; one was nearby on 20th; three were on the Severn Way, also close by, on 21st; and two were at Hill Pill on 22nd and 27th. It is possible that all these records refer to the same individuals as they were all noted in the same one *km* square. Hence it is likely that the slight improvement shown in the table below does not represent any real change overall.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 40 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 13 |
| Sites | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

Bird-days and sites recorded each year

## YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* [Red 3]

*Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeding summer visitor.*

There was good spring passage with numbers very similar to 2013. The autumn passage was also good and although there were rather fewer sightings than in 2013 (see the table at the end of this entry) it was otherwise the best autumn since 1995.

*Spring passage* The first record was at CVL on April 6th, a normal first arrival date. There was then a trickle of records of ones and twos from mainly coastal locations until 21st when a total of 47 was recorded at seven locations including 13 at both Northwick Warth and Sand Point. Sightings were then daily for the rest of the month with records from Cl-Y, CVL, Chittening Warth, Compton Dando, Northwick Warth, OPS, PWD, Sand Point, Tormarton and Weston-s-Mare. The highest count was 20 at OPS on 25th. Records then declined in May with the last coastal record of the main spring migration period being one at Sand Point on 19th. The table below summarises the records.

| Date | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 2 | 22 | 134 | 14 | 22 |
| Max count | 1 | 3 | 20 | 3 | 8 |

Spring passage

Single birds were also noted at OPS on June 7th, 14th, 15th and 27th and at Pilning Wetlands on 6th.

*Breeding* Inland records were received during the breeding season from Chipping Sodbury, Marshfield, Saltford and Tormarton. However, the only evidence of breeding was of a pair near Tormarton in a maize field, first noted on April 30th and then on several occasions in June and July until the pair were seen with three juveniles on July 27th (N.Hawkridge). This is the first confirmed breeding since 2010 although it is likely that breeding has been at least attempted in the Tormarton area in the intervening years. The only BBS records were of the successful breeding pair.

*Autumn passage* The return passage started with single birds at both Littleton and Aust Warths on July 12th. Passage then developed very gradually with sightings on most days during August but only single figures noted. The first larger flock was of 19 at Northwick Warth on Aug. 28th and double figures were then reached every day at this location until Sept. 2nd when at least 50 were present. OPS was the only other location where a significant flock was noted, 17 were recorded here on 5th. After ten at Northwick Warth on 13th, records declined to ones and twos for the remainder of the month. The last record, and the only one in October, was a juvenile at OPS on Oct. 15th -- a normal last date for the species. 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 11 | 17 | 46 | 26 | 183 | 179 | 51 | 20 |
| Max count | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 21 | 50 | 20 | 3 |

Autumn passage

The final table which summarises the spring and autumn records for the past two decades puts the 2014 records into context. However, note that much larger numbers were recorded in the 1960s and 1970s.

| | 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 157 | 155 | 72 | 49 | 131 | 118 | 78 | 62 | 59 | 121 | 67 | 125 | 86 | 164 | 25 | 42 | 165 | 439 | 203 | 198 |
| Autumn | 735 | 195 | 91 | 88 | 273 | 188 | 279 | 72 | 132 | 386 | 160 | 125 | 156 | 102 | 147 | 404 | 258 | 278 | 723 | 534 |

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage over the past two decades

**Channel Wagtail** A male with a pale blue head photographed at New Passage on April 23rd (G Jones *et al*.) was accepted as a 'Channel Wagtail', that is a hybrid between the *flava* and *flavissima* subspecies, this was the second successive year this hybrid has been reported locally.

## GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* [Amber 3]

*Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A good year with a significant increase in records.

A total of 1322 bird-days (including BBS records) was recorded during the year at 154 locations - see table overleaf. This compares with 779 bird-days and 106 locations in 2013. Most records were of ones and twos with some family groups during the breeding season. The largest counts were of 12 at BG on Aug. 22nd and 23rd, and again here on Sept. 12th.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Bird-days | 65 | 122 | 195 | 50 | 79 | 65 | 60 | 83 | 198 | 157 | 111 | 107 |
| Coastal Bird-days | 13 | 20 | 28 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 66 | 65 | 24 | 36 |

Total bird-days and bird-days recorded at coastal locations

*First winter period and spring migration* Sightings built up from 65 bird-days in January to 195 in March, and with this increase there was an increase in sightings at coastal sites; the best count was seven at Sand Point on March 9th providing some evidence of migration. After the end of March very few sightings came from coastal locations.

*Breeding* In the BBS a total of 38 was counted in 15 squares which compares to 18 in ten squares in 2013. While the numbers counted are too small to provide a reliable trend they do provide some evidence that 2014 was a reasonably successful year for the species. Evidence of breeding was noted at 11 locations, with a nesting pair at Newton St. Loe on March 25th being the first. A nest at Lower Littleton, by Winford Brook, containing five newly laid eggs was lost to predation on April 5th; it was in a flower tub close to the observer's house! The first fledgling was noted on May 1st at Easton Sluice, and the last record of the season was of a pair feeding young in the nest at Marshfield on July 10th.

| BBS | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number counted | 30 | 27 | 38 | 25 | 23 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 18 | 38 |
| Squares | 16 | 17 | 20 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 15 |

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

*Autumn migration and second winter period* The build up of records in September was more notable than in the spring as was the dramatic increase in records from coastal sites where 131 bird-days were recorded in September and October out of a total of 355. Nine were reported at Northwick Warth on Sept. 4th but most records were in low single figures. Sightings dropped off again in November but continued at a higher level than in 2013, and numbers encountered in coastal locations, which presumably included some winter visitors, remained at a relatively high level.

## PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

**Pied Wagtail** *M.a yarrelli*

*Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant.*

A normal year.

*First winter period* A total of 3982 bird-days was recorded during the first three months of the year. However, 2306 of these come from a series of records around Saltford where a maximum of 280 was counted on Jan. 30th. The last count in three figures at this location was 130 on March 4th and thereafter counts were mostly in single figures to the end of the month. Other large flocks in the period were recorded at Bristol International Airport on Jan. 20th where 200 were counted in the evening roost, and at OPS. Here 200 were reported in the evening roost on building roofs and there were subsequent counts of 100 in a pre-roost flock here on March 7th, and 65 again going in to roost on building roofs on 21st. Counts in single or low double figures were received from a wide variety of other locations - urban, coastal and rural.

*Spring passage* Movement was first noted during March while flocks of winter visitors had still not finally dispersed. The sightings included 36 observed passing to N at Sand Point on March 8th and 42 heading to NE at Aust Cliff on 26th. At CVL 13 on the dam on 26th were assumed to be migrants as were 50 on Weston Golf Course on 11th, 50 at Aust on 13th, and 38 at Weston STW on April 14th. There were no obvious indications of passage after mid-April.

*Breeding* A total of 94 was recorded in the two BBS visits from 56 squares representing 31.5% of those surveyed in the Avon area. This compares with 83 in 44 squares (25% of those surveyed) in 2013. This shows a 26% increase over 2013 - a reflection of the difficult conditions breeding birds experienced in that year. Nationally the BTO have recorded a 17% decrease in England between 1995 and 2012 while over the same period the Avon area has shown a 1% increase although the numbers produced in the Avon area are at the low end for producing a reliable trend. Breeding evidence was recorded from CVL, Marshfield, New Passage, and Bishop Sutton where two pulli fledged from a total of three eggs.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-13%** | **-13%** | 35% | -35% | 38% | 4% | -12% | 1% | -17% | 1% | -27% | 26% |

BBS percentage changes

*Pied Wagtail cont*. *Autumn passage* Migration became obvious in the latter part of July with 52 noted at New Passage on 28th.followed by 100 at Northwick Warth on 30th. Numbers built up in the Severnside area reaching a peak of 75 on Sept. 6th with 156 passing north east on Oct. 15th. At Weston STW a count of 378 on 19th was a site record while 75 were recorded at OPS on 24th. Sightings were made from a variety of locations both coastal and inland but as the month progressed it became more difficult to distinguish between migrants and over-wintering birds. However, on 28th 22 were recorded passing to the south-west in an autumn passage migration watch of just over three hours at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y.

*Second winter period* As noted above over-wintering became evident during the latter part of October. On 21st an impressive total of about 700 was recorded in the roost at Cabot Circus in Bristol city centre. Other roost counts were of 100 at Bristol International Airport on 19th and 250 here on Dec. 31st while 100 were observed roosting in Heron's Green Bay at CVL on Oct. 31st. A significant number of records were received from Saltford as in the first winter period with numbers building up from mid-October to reach 190 on Nov. 5th and 187 on Dec. 28th. On the coast the highest count was 100 at New Passage on Nov. 23rd, and inland 76 were noted at Compton Dando on Oct. 26th. A total of 3190 bird-days was recorded during November and December of which 338 related to the Saltford series of records.

## White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

**2013** A review of the records used to compile the account for this species in the 2013 Report has revealed that a number of significant counts recorded by the observers as 'alba wagtail' (that is, unidentified but either Pied or White) were used in the White Wagtail account. If we remove all of these records, the first occurrence for 2013 becomes one at Northwick Warth on March 29th, and the last an adult male at New Passage on Nov.12th, while the figures for the spring and autumn passages break down as follows:

| Date | Mar 29-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 8 | 40 | 124 | 91 | 14 |
| Max count | 2 | 6 | 17 | 9 | 3 |

2013 -- Spring passage

| Date | July 16 - 31 | Aug 1-15 | Aug 16-31 | Sep 1-15 | Sep 16-30 | Oct 1-31 | Nov 1 - 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Max count | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

2013 -- Autumn passage

The grand total of 277 bird-days in spring is more than double any previous spring passage and more than five times the average for the ten preceding springs, while the autumn total of 26 bird-days was also above average. The table at the end of this entry summarises the records since 1997 (no details are available for 1995 or 1996) and shows how remarkable 2013 was for this subspecies in Avon. The upsurge in spring is partly due to records from the new site called Western Distribution Park (Western Approaches) which accounted for 59 bird-days peaking with 12 on April 19th. In addition daily coverage at the Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands site resulted in a further 81 bird-days with a peak of 17 (the highest single count in 2013) also on 19th. In total it was an excellent spring passage with 137 bird-days away from these two sites, a third of which came from CVL.

In autumn an early adult was at CVL in late July and early August but the main passage began at the end of August with a typical September peak. Much smaller numbers were reported than in spring at a scatter of the same sites. A very late individual was at New Passage on Nov.12th (J F Burton).

**2014** Although numbers were only a fraction of those recorded in 2013 it was by any other standard a good year. The bird-day total in spring was the third best recorded while autumn figures were again above average.

*Spring passage* A total of 95 bird-days was recorded, the first being one at CVL on March 23rd. Most sightings, as usual, were at coastal locations: 40 bird-days recorded from the Severnside area with a maximum of five at Northwick Warth on April 22nd. Other records were received from Sand Point (one on April 14th), Weston STW (six on 15th), PWD (maximum two on May 11th) and Cl-Y (various dates with a maximum count of four on April 30th). Further records were received from CVL bring its total of bird-days to 20 with a maximum count of five on April 14th while other inland sites were Dundry (up to two from 15th to 17th), BL (one on 12th) and BG (on various dates). The last record was of two at Cl-Y on May 14th.

| Date | Mar 23-31 | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 5 | 21 | 31 | 25 | 13 |
| Max count | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 |

Spring passage

*Autumn passage* This is always much lighter than in spring and 2014 was no exception; see table below. A total of 15 bird-days was recorded and the first autumn record was of one at CI-Y on Aug. 30th. Thereafter ones and twos were noted at Northwick Warth, BG, CVL and BL up to Sept. 24th. Late records came from CVL on Oct. 18th and BG on 31st. The last record of the year was of one photographed at CVL on the late date of Nov. 20th and 23rd. This is the latest date for the sub-species in Avon equalling the record of one at PWD in 2003.

| Date | Aug 30-31 | Sep 1-15 | Sep 16-30 | Oct 1-15 | Oct 16 - 31 | Nov 1 - 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Max count | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Autumn passage

The last table puts the records for 2013 and 2014 into context by showing the long-term variation in numbers.

| | 1997 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 67 | 144 | 81 | 51 | 34 | 46 | 29 | 64 | 81 | 34 | 43 | 64 | 67 | 39 | 59 | 67 | 277 | 95 |
| Autumn | 12 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 74 | 24 | 9 | 7 | 15+ | 6 | 5 | 43 | 32 | 26 | 15 |

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

## RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi* (22, 1)

*Very scarce autumn migrant, exceptional in winter.*
Descriptions required.

An average year, with one record, but unusually it was in spring as follows. At Northwick Warth one was seen in a field with grazing cattle and then in flight to NE calling several times on May 5th (J P Martin).

The only other recent spring record was in 1995, all others in the last 20 years have been in autumn apart from one in winter 2004/05 and one in January 2013. The table below summarises the sightings since 1995, the average is just over one per year.

| 1995 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3/4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |

## TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

*Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.*

Numbers noted on spring passage were similar to those of the previous two years and good numbers were seen in autumn albeit rather lower than those for 2013.

*Spring passage* The first of the season was one at Sand Point on April 4th and the following day fly-overs were also noted at Wain's Hill and Clifton Down as well as two more at Sand Point. The next record was of two again from Sand Point, and from then until the first week of May sightings were made on an almost daily basis with the large majority of records coming from Sand Point and Severnside. Inland two were noted at Dundry on April 15th and another on 17th while one was seen at Chipping Sodbury Common also on 17th. The highest count was 14 at Sand Point on 21st. A late migrant was reported from CI-Y on May 27th.

| Date | Apr 1-10 | Apr 11-20 | Apr 21-30 | May 1-10 | May 11-20 | May 21-31 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 7 | 48 | 39 | 14 | 11 | 1 |
| Max count | 2 | 11 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Spring passage

*Breeding* There is now very little habitat in the Avon area that is to this species' liking and it is confined to a small area on the northern slopes of the Mendips. No breeding evidence was received but one was noted at Burrington Ham on April 27th and it, or another, was singing here on June 8th. This species is on the verge of extinction as an Avon breeder although it was quite widely recorded fifty years ago.

*Autumn passage* This was on a much smaller scale than in spring with a tally of 40 bird-days only a third of that in spring, but it was still the second highest autumn total in the past ten years. There was a rather early record of one at Sand Point on July 20th. The next record was another single at Saltford on Aug. 7th. The main migration period was from 21st to Sept. 12th with sightings being almost daily but with no count greater than six (Dolebury Warren on Sept. 2nd). Sightings were made at the traditional coastal points but over half (24) of the records were received from inland sites - Chipping Sodbury, Dolebury Warren and Saltford - in contrast to spring. The last record was one at Sand Point on Sept. 27th. The records are summarises overleaf.

*Tree Pipit cont*.

| Date | Aug 1-10 | Aug 11-20 | Aug 21-31 | Sept 1-10 | Sept 11-20 | Sept 21-30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 2 | 2 | 14 | 16 | 4 | 1 |
| Max count | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 |

Autumn passage

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.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 61 | 111 | 55 | 48 | 25 | 33 | 44 | 119 | 118 | 120 |
| Autumn | 37 | 30 | 25 | 23 | 12 | 35 | 30 | 15 | 51 | 40 |

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 normal year but with rather lower numbers on spring passage.

*January and February* During this first winter period a total of 1272 bird-days was recorded. The majority of the records came from coastal locations but some 390 were noted inland - mostly on farmland. The largest counts were 30 at Portishead on Jan. 3rd, 50 at Cl-Y on 7th with 75 here on 19th, and 40 at Aust STW on 28th. Inland there were again very few around the reservoirs with a maximum count of five at CVL on Jan. 6th and 20 at BL on 7th and 8th. The most notable inland counts were 32 at Banwell on Jan. 2nd and 60 at Saltford on 25th. By the last week of February migration was beginning to be evident at Sand Point with 26 moving north on 24th followed by 12 on 25th and 51 on 26th.

*Spring Passage* The migration that had commenced at the end of February continued with 100 at Aust Warth on March 3rd. On 6th 79 were recorded at Sand Point and from then numbers built up rapidly with counts of 148 on 9th, 192 on 10th reaching 342 on 17th. Other notable counts from coastal locations were 340 at Aust on 10th with 520 here on 26th, 250 at Littleton Warth on 29th and 450 heading NE at Cl-Y on 31st. In April numbers fell away rapidly (see the table below) and the last three figure count was 105 at Aust on 2nd although there was a steady succession of smaller counts throughout the month. Most migration was as usual along the coast but 10 were noted at CVL on March 13th, 25 at Congresbury Moor on 19th, 46 at Compton Dando on 21st and 37 at Saltford on 28th. Three were noted on Steep Holm between April 13th and 17th.

| Date | Mar 1-7 | Mar 8-15 | Mar 16-23 | Mar 24-31 | Apr 1-7 | Apr 8-15 | Apr 16-23 | Apr 24-30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 394 | 1438 | 1097 | 2603 | 403 | 96 | 113 | 33 |
| Max count | 100 | 340 | 340 | 520 | 105 | 21 | 30 | 15 |

Spring passage

*Breeding season* The species is mainly a coastal nester in Avon, and then only in low numbers. During May and June records were received from various locations at OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside and Sand Bay, and two were present on Steep Holm between May 1st and 5th. A total of 11 was noted at Aust Warth on June 6th and three at OPS on 15th - all other counts were of ones and twos. Territorial behaviour was noted at New Passage on May 18th and 24th indicating probable breeding and song was noted at OPS and Littleton Warth. No other evidence of breeding was received.

*Autumn Passage* The first notable movement was 40 at Sand Point on Sept.1st and this was followed by a pre-roost gathering of 95 at Northwick Warth on 2nd. Numbers then built up gradually during September reaching a climax in the last ten days or so of the month. Larger counts included 150 at Saltford on 11th, 110 at Aust Warth on 14th, 160 at Northwick Warth on 22nd, 250 at Wain's Hill on 24th, 100 at Sand Point on 27th and 220 at Cl-Y also on 27th. There was then something of a hiatus in the first week of October before numbers built up again later in the month. The largest counts in this later period were at Cl-Y with 325 on Oct. 11th and 250 on 16th. Movement continued but with generally smaller numbers through the month although a migration watch on Wain's Hill on 30th still recorded 75 in just over three hours. The most notable inland records were 150 at Saltford on Sept.11th and 100 at Marshfield on 27th.

| Date | Sept 1-7 | Sept 8-15 | Sept 16-23 | Sept 24-30 | Oct 1-7 | Oct 8-15 | Oct 16-23 | Oct 24-31 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bird-days | 471 | 669 | 667 | 1616 | 253 | 1320 | 889 | 962 |
| Max count | 100 | 150 | 160 | 250 | 60 | 325 | 250 | 170 |

Autumn passage

*November and December* Noted on 2162 bird-days during the second winter period from a variety of locations, predominantly on the coast. There were very few larger flocks -- 160 at Cl-Y (130 on the Kenn Estuary and 30 on the Yeo Estuary) on Nov. 11th and 100 also at Cl-Y on 12th were the only counts in three figures during the period. The highest inland counts were 44 near Nailsea on Nov. 29th and 30 at Congresbury Moor on Dec. 24th. It may well be that it is an under-counted species outside the main migration periods.

## ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

*A. p. petrosus - Uncommon breeding resident on the coast. Fairly common and more widespread as a coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce inland on spring or autumn passage.*

A fairly typical year but it does seem to have been a successful breeding season.

*First winter period and spring passage* Records were received from the usual coastal wintering sites in the first three months of the year with a total of 207 bird-days. The peak count was 25 at Sand Bay on Jan. 6th. Further records were received from OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside, Portishead, and Cl-Y. All other counts were in single figures.

*Breeding* During the breeding season records were received from OPS, PWD, Portishead, Cl-Y, Sand Point and Weston-s-Mare. Breeding was proved at Royal Portbury Dock (brood of four), Portbury Wharf (two broods), Cl-Y (family parties noted on May 27th, June 16th and July 15th), and Weston-s-Mare (adults carrying food). Up to four were present on Steep Holm in April and two were recorded in June but no evidence of breeding was received.

*Autumn passage and second winter period* One noted on July 31st at BG marked the beginning of the autumn migration period. Other inland records were two further sightings at BG on Oct. 25th and 31st, and one at CVL on 15th. Records from non-breeding coastal locations were received from OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside (various sites), Cl-Y, and Weston STW. Most records were of one or two individuals but there was something of a peak between Oct. 25th and 31st. The largest count during this week was ten, at OPS on 28th, and the total of all of the bird-days recorded during this week was 51.

In the final two months of the year 183 bird-days were recorded with all records in single figures at various coastal locations and a maximum of eight at OPS on Nov.15th.

### Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis* (12, 0)

*Wintering Rock Pipits are assumed to include an unknown proportion of this subspecies, some of which become identifiable in spring.*
Descriptions required.

The colour-ringed individual at Battery Point, Portishead in December 2013 remained until Jan.11th.

Not surprisingly, all other local records of this subspecies have been between the beginning of March and mid April when they are in summer plumage. The first was from Cl-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 normal year on the coast but another rather disappointing one at CVL.

*First winter period* A total of ten was recorded with the first sighting on Jan. 3rd at Sand Bay remaining until 7th. Two were present on 5th. Other coastal records included: one at Cl-Y on 7th, one at Northwick Warth on 4th and 17th, and on Feb. 7th, and one at Weston STW on 16th. The only inland record, and the last of the period, was one seen at CVL on March 5th; this species is now quite rare here in winter.

*Second winter period* The first record of the period was of one on Oct.15th at Weston STW. Thereafter the records were dominated by Severnside. In the New Passage/Northwick Warth area single birds were noted on Nov. 13th, 24th and 27th and then on a series of dates from Dec. 9th to the end of the year. Other sightings were one at Littleton Warth on Oct.18th, two at Chittening Warth on Nov.16th and two at Aust Warth on Dec. 5th. Away from Severnside one was seen at the Axe Estuary on Dec. 28th. There were no records from CVL or elsewhere inland during the period.

The table on the next page summarises the data for the past decade.

*Water Pipit cont.*

| | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CVL max | 17 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Coastal | 11 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 28 | 14 | 11 |
| Other inland | | | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Maximum counts at CVL and estimated numbers at coastal and other inland sites each winter

## **BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

*Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Very few noted in either winter period.

Following on from a thin autumn in 2013, almost all the records in early 2014 were of coastal migrants, apart from one at Ashley Down on Jan.1st, another in Chew Magna on the 7th and a third in Whitchurch from Feb.16th to 18th. On the coast single birds were seen at Portishead on 18th and Sand Point on 26th, then one or two were noted from the latter site on six dates in March and April, the last being one on 21st.

During the second winter period sightings were equally scarce, the first migrant being one over Aust Cliff on Oct.15th, then another at New Passage on 17th, four at Sand Point on 27th and two at Cl-Y on 28th and 30th. The highest count was eight over Sand Point on 31st, then there were one or two reported from Cl-Y, Sand Point and Saltford on four dates in November with the final record being one at OPS on Dec. 27th.

## **CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

*Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Widespread, but few large flocks.

As usual widely reported in small numbers early in the year, but there were relatively few substantial gatherings. The largest groups were seen at Marshfield (200 on Jan.11th, 400 on 28th, 150 on Feb. 2nd), OPS (100 on Jan. 2nd and 25th), Weston STW (290 on Jan. 11th with 100 at nearby Walborough Reserve on Feb. 8th) and Saltford (74 on Feb. 9th). At BG, 50 on Jan.16th was a good count here. From mid February onwards, however, even these seemed to have dispersed. The WGS recorded this species from 77% of all survey gardens in the 2013/14 winter, down from the 88% in the previous winter and the lowest for at least a decade, possibly reflecting the mild conditions.

A few migrants were seen in March including 74 to NE on 9th at Sand Point and 30 to N at OPS on 29th -- the highest counts -- with lower numbers elsewhere along the coast.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 153 squares, this representing 86% of those surveyed, slightly down on the position in 2013. A combined total of 1375 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 6% in numbers as compared with the previous year, as shown in the table below. Conversely, the CABS data indicated a big increase (52%) in the numbers recorded in Clifton between the two years. Although the long-term trend locally seems to show a downward trend, nationally numbers in England as a whole seem to be reasonably stable.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-50%** | **-44%** | -7% | -3% | -5% | -1% | -15% | 1% | -10% | 4% | -11% | -6% |

BBS percentage changes

The summer picture of widely scattered breeding pairs in small numbers continued right through to late September when migrants started to be seen on the coast, 28 to SW at OPS on Sept. 25th being among the first reported.

As usual, however, the largest numbers were in the second half of October, when several coastal sites reported good numbers. At Aust Cliff there were 665 to NE on 15th, with 87 to NE at OPS on the same day. Wain's Hill was the most productive site, with 1200 on 19th, 875 on 20th, 1325 on 23rd, 4100 on 26th, 2650 on 28th, 1600 on 30th and 140 on 31st, all to SW. Just down-river at Sand Point there were 200 on 19th, 300 on 23rd, 300 on 26th, 1940 on 27th, 100 on 30th and 500 on 31st, again mostly moving SW.

During November and December no major concentrations were reported, the largest just making it into three figures, with 200 in stubble-fields near Coalpit Heath on Dec. 28th the only significantly higher figure.

## **HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (86, 1)

*Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred.*
Descriptions required.

Only one record: one seen in flight at Sand Point on April 10th (P A Bowyer).

The table below summarises the records for the past decade, it shows a very varied picture.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 23 | 2 | 1 | 41 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 3 |

Number of individuals seen (July to June)

## **BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* [Amber 3]

*Fairly common breeding resident.*

This species, being both popular and colourful, is frequently and widely reported throughout the year, often in pairs, although also in small groups of up to eight. Quite a few records came from gardens, including at feeders.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 61 squares, this representing 34% of those surveyed, an increase from the 26% in 2013. A combined total of 132 was counted over two visits, the data showing an increase of 16% in numbers as compared with 2013; this is shown in the table below. These figures indicate a reassuring bounce-back from the significant decline noted the year before. Similarly at CVL, which is regularly surveyed, 11 pairs were noted this year, back up from just six counted in 2013.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-46%** | **-22%** | 15% | -19% | 4% | 10% | -15% | 17% | -5% | 4% | -35% | 16% |

BBS percentage changes

Most movements were probably just local ones, but five at Aust Cliff on Oct.15th and eight at OPS the same day appeared to be moving NE, while on 28th nine at Wain's Hill and five at New Passage also on the move.

## **GREENFINCH** *Chloris chloris*

*Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.*

Another drop in breeding numbers, but not much change at other times.

In the early part of the year small numbers were reported widely, the WGS finding this species in 77% of all survey gardens in the 2013/14 winter, about the same as in 2012/13. A few small flocks were noted, mostly up to a maximum of 25, and some minor movements were seen on the coast, for example 22 to S on Jan. 22nd and 48 to N on Feb. 18th, both at Sand Point. In March, 37 to NE on 10th at Aust Cliff and 39 to NE on 26th at the same place were the highest number of migrants seen, with just odd ones and twos on the move here and elsewhere on other dates.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 123 squares, this representing 69% of those surveyed, down from 81% in 2013, a steep drop in distribution after several years of steady decline. It will be interesting to see if this is just a one-off occurrence, or whether it indicates something more significant. A combined total of 681 was counted over two visits, the data indicating another small decline of 6% in numbers compared to 2013. CABS data also indicated a drop (17%) in the numbers recorded in Clifton between the two years.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-45%** | **-67%** | -8% | 6% | -20% | -33% | -2% | -12% | -26% | 11% | -5% | -6% |

BBS percentage population changes

The second BBS table shows how the number of occupied squares has declined over the past decade.

| | 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Squares in which recorded | 174 | 191 | 172 | 132 | 139 | 146 | 139 | 128 | 142 | 123 |
| Squares as % of squares surveyed | 98 | 98 | 94 | 85 | 87 | 85 | 81 | 77 | 81 | 69 |

The first fledged young were noted on May 15th, in the Cl-Y area.

Double-figure counts started to increase from mid-August, with 62 near Saltford on 29th the highest. However, from then to the end of the year numbers rarely exceeded 20 at any one site, apart from a group of 60 to 90 in the Channel View Farm area (Cl-Y) on various dates in October and November. There were a few records of up to 30 along the coast during the autumn migration season, the 157 to SW at Aust Cliff on Oct. 17th standing out as an exception.

## **LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina* [Red 3]

*Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.*

Another decrease in breeding numbers, but good winter flocks at favoured spots.

As in 2013 the largest flocks in the first winter period were in the Marshfield area, with several counts of 400+ from January through to the end of March, and as high as 800 on some occasions. Other sites that attracted good numbers included: OPS (50 on Jan. 2nd), Sand Point/Bay (50 on 16th), Weston STW (100 on Feb. 2nd), Littleton Warth (80 in stubble on 15th), PWD (50 on 22nd) and Saltford (56 on March 13th). Single-figure numbers were noted at a few scattered places elsewhere.

*Linnet cont.* Although a few had been seen on the move at Sand Point from early March (for example 68 to N on 9th), late March/ early April saw a flurry of migrant activity with 105 to NE over Wain's Hill on March 31st and 82 to NE at Aust Cliff on April 2nd. Smaller numbers were seen on the move along the coast on a few other days throughout April.

The BBS survey found the species in 48 squares, this representing 27% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2013. A combined total of 252 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a drop of 22% in numbers as compared with 2013, as shown in the table below. The national picture as far as England as a whole is concerned is one of a long-term decline of around 25%, although numbers do fluctuate markedly from year to year.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-65%** | **-60%** | -13% | -25% | -38% | 169% | -54% | 22% | 7% | 22% | -35% | -22% |

BBS percentage changes

In general, the picture through the summer was mostly of small numbers at scattered places, then in the last few days of July post-breeding flocks started to appear (130 at Northwick Warth on 27th, 120 at Cl-Y and 135 at Weston STW on 28th, 78 at Saltford on Aug. 7th, 215 at Cl-Y on 9th). Other notable gatherings in September included 55 at Compton Dando on 1st, 45 at PWD on 4th, 150 at Marshfield on 5th, 120 at Saltford on 6th, 105 at Weston STW on 20th and 100 at Easton-in-Gordano on 30th.

Small numbers were seen on the move at the usual coastal locations through October, 87 to NE in 2.5 hours at Aust Cliff on 15th being the highest total. The second winter picture was of good numbers at Marshfield in November and December, with several counts of 200, but some over 500. Smaller groups could be found elsewhere, with 77 at Saltford on Nov.14th, 80 at Cl-Y on 28th, 100 at Easton-in-Gordano on 29th and 100 at OPS on Dec. 20th among the more significant ones.

## **TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris* (37, 0)

*Now rare winter visitor, formerly more regular.*

Descriptions required.

The two individuals noted at Aust Warth in December 2013 were seen again from Jan.13th to Feb. 2nd with one remaining until March 23rd, even being heard to sing on the 13th. A photograph appears opposite page 129.

The species has now been recorded in three consecutive winters following a 14-year period with no records.

## **LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret* [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.*

Continuing low numbers both in winter and on migration.

Following an equally thin previous autumn, the picture in the first three months of the year was of single-figure numbers, mostly just ones and twos, at a wide scatter of places including PWD, Sand Point, Marshfield, Yate, Compton Dando, Stockwood, Saltford, CVL and BL with 11 at this last site on Jan. 30th the highest count. April was not much different as far as numbers were concerned, most of the records coming from the coast, with ten migrants heading NE at Aust Cliff on 2nd and eight upriver at Sand Point on 11th and again on 16th the highest counts.

They were seen on four dates in May, one in June, one in July, then none until the first autumn migrants were noted on Oct.15th, when one was seen heading SW at OPS. A few more, mostly single birds, were then seen at OPS, Aust, Cl-Y, Sand Point, Saltford and BL to the end of the month. The only sightings in November and December came from Severnside, Weston STW, CVL and BL again mostly just one or two at a time, the highest count being six at Saltford on Nov. 24th.

## **CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

*Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary sharply from year to year.*

Very few records, mostly just transient birds flying over.

The highest count of the year was six at Stockwood on Jan.11th, but on one day only. There was then a small flurry in March: one in Leigh Woods on 9th, one to N over Middle Hope on 11th, four to S over Bishopston on 18th, five over Walton Common on 25th with one here on 28th, and two over PWD on 29th. Single birds at Sand Point on April 18th and 28th and two over Walton Moor on May 22nd rounded off the first half of the year. The only subsequent sightings were single fly-overs at BL on July 19th and Severn Beach on Sept.14th.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 130 | 1 | 0 | 90 | 47 | 96 | 120 | 146 | 140 | 26 |

Bird-days each year

## **GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

*Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.*

Widespread all year, but the spring passage was less marked than in 2013.

As usual, small groups were reported widely, including coming to feeders, during the early part of the year. Most counts were in the 5 to 20 range, and there were no obviously large concentrations, although more could be found by observers spending more time in the field and covering a wider area. The WGS showed the species present in 96% of all survey gardens in the 2013/14 winter, back up from last year, and in fact equalling the previous high of 2011/12.

Spring migration kicked off in March, rather earlier than last year, 39 to N at Sand Point on 8th and 57 to N the next day followed by 79 to N at Aust Cliff on 10th. Both sites produced a series of modest counts from then on, the highest at Sand Point being 75 on 18th, 113 on April 5th and 110 on 12th, while counts at Aust included 74 on March 24th, 211 on April 2nd, while 89 here on 21st marked the end of the main passage. As normal the direction was mostly up-river.

The BBS survey found the species in 144 squares, this representing 81% of those surveyed, similar to the position in 2013. A combined total of 1500 was counted over two visits, the data indicating an increase of 16% in numbers as compared with 2013, as shown in the table below. The first juvenile was seen on May 7th in Brentry.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **149%** | **89%** | -2% | 24% | -13% | 18% | 4% | 5% | 11% | 18% | -8% | 16% |

BBS percentage changes

Post-breeding gatherings were seen in many places, the most favoured spots being Severn Beach and the Kenn Estuary (Cl-Y). In September flocks of 50 to 100 were noted at several places including OPS, Littleton Warth, New Passage, Cl-Y, Chipping Sodbury Common, Saltford and CVL, while 105 at Weston STW on Oct.1st was the highest number seen here during the year. Among migration counts in the second half of October were 214 to NE at Aust Cliff on 15th, 75 at Wain's Hill on 25th and 40 at Sand Point on 27th, with smaller numbers on other dates during this period.

From then to the end of the year, small groups and parties were noted on an almost daily basis, with 50+ counts made at OPS, Severnside, Cl-Y, Saltford, Keynsham, Congresbury Moor, the Strawberry Line (Yatton), Nailsea, Kenn Moor, CVL and Paulton.

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce breeding species.*

In relatively low numbers all year, particularly during the second winter.

In the first couple of months of the year, single-figure numbers were noted at a sparse scattering of sites, 50 along a ten *km* stretch of the R. Chew, near Publow on Jan. 7th being the highest count, with 30 at CVL on 20th, 35 near Saltford on 30th and 20 at Batheaston on 31st also coming from waterside habitats. There were very few individual records from gardens, and the WBC indicated them present in only 19% of those surveyed, a drop of 26% over the previous winter.

*Siskin cont.* Throughout the whole of the first six months small numbers were seen occasionally on the move at regularly watched Sand Point, but counts were rarely into double figures, and with no obvious pattern, 18 on March 5th being one of the highest totals. In the same period, 15 to NE over Aust Cliff on 10th and ten here on 26th indicated a small peak during that month, with odd birds on other dates also here into April.

One in Banwell on May 1st, four in Goblin Combe on 6th and one at Tyntesfield on 11th were the only records from sites where breeding was at least conceivable, but no more than that.

*Siskin cont*. One over OPS on Sept. 25th was the first in autumn, then small numbers were seen on the move along the coast through October. Few counts were into double figures, 17 at Aust Cliff on 15th, 12 at New Passage on 17th, eight over Wain's Hill on 23rd and eight at Sand Point on 27th being the highest reported.

They were particularly scarce in the second winter period, with no count exceeding four, even at traditional sites such as Saltford, CVL and BL.

## SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* [Amber 5]

*Scarce winter visitor.*

After just five transitory sightings during the previous autumn, there were no records in the new year and only another three short-stayers in the autumn.

One at OPS on Oct.17th was seen at 11.00 and then flew to S, while one at BG on 23rd, found in the afternoon, only remained until dusk. This appears to be only the fourth sighting here, and the first since Nov. 7th, 1998. Inland records are rare and fleeting, with only three at CVL in the last ten years, all one-day occurrences in late autumn. One was at the Axe Estuary on Dec.13th with presumably the same bird seen again on 17th.

| 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5-6 | 15 | 16 | 12 | 5 |

Individuals seen each winter

## YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella* [Red 3]

*Common but declining breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.*

A slight increase in breeding numbers after two years of decline.

As usual, Marshfield was the only site to report any significant flocks in the first winter period, with a maximum of 300 on Jan.10th, 100 on 19th and 50 on Feb.10th. Thereafter, 30 on March 15th was the highest count here. Elsewhere, numbers were generally quite low, although Elm Farm, Burnett attracted a small group, with 42 on April 5th the highest of a series of smaller counts.

Throughout the summer the picture was of scattered pairs usually in areas where at least some arable land was available. During the BBS survey, the species was found in 46 squares, this representing 26% of those surveyed, much as normal. A combined total of 239 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a small increase of 7% in numbers as compared with 2013, as shown in the table below.

| Since 1994 | 2004/14 | 2004/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-29%** | **15%** | 21% | 11% | -19% | 13% | -13% | 16% | 11% | -3% | -21% | 7% |

BBS percentage changes

From late August, the Saltford area produced regular numbers of five to ten through to the end of the year. At Newton Park, 11 was the highest of several counts through September. There were 12 at Elm Farm, Burnett on Nov. 18th, while 31 at Nailsea West End on Nov. 25th was a good flock attracted to stubble and set-aside fields. At Marshfield numbers between 20 and 30 in September and October rose to 70 at the end of November and into December, with 200 estimated on the 31st.

## REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* [RR] [Amber 3]

*Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.*

A typical year.

The higher counts in the first winter period were all at coastal wetlands sites: ten at OPS on Jan. 4th, 12 at Aust Warth on 5th, 15 at Sand Bay on 6th and 43 at Weston STW on 11th, with smaller numbers at Portbury Wharf N R, Cl-Y, CVL, Keynsham STW and Burnett. Very few were seen in gardens, with none from WGS

Up to seven were noted at Sand Point on various dates through March, this being some slight evidence of migration at this time, but most records in April and May came from known breeding sites. Nine singing males at BL on May 14th was an indication of the nesting population here, while the equivalent figure at CVL was 44; see table below. The count at Weston STW was 30 singing males, up on the 21 noted last year. During the BBS survey, the species was found in just nine squares, this representing 6.2% of those surveyed, but not enough from which to draw any conclusions.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 36 | 43 | 51 | 53 | 44 |

Singing males at CVL each year

The pattern of single-figure numbers from coastal and inland wetland sites continued into the autumn, with 14 at Northwick Warth on Sept. 27th, ten at PWD on Oct. 15th, 11 at Saltford on 17th, ten at Cl-Y on 25th and 11 at OPS on 28th indicating a build-up ahead of the winter. Once again, OPS, Aust Warth, PWD and the Axe Estuary were favoured wintering sites, up to 35 being the maximum at any one spot, although usually fewer. Inland, a few counts of small flocks were made in the Marshfield area, but hardly any were reported from gardens.

### **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.*

The usual pattern of large winter flocks and a few remaining to breed was noted.

The majority of the records came from the Marshfield/Tormarton area, as is usual. In the first winter period there were several counts of 200 between January and mid-March, with 375 reported on Jan. 28th and 300 on Feb.10th. The flock apparently dispersed earlier than in 2013, when large numbers were present to the end of April.

From March through to the end of July, up to ten were noted at various places in the Marshfield area, with up to five near Hawkesbury Upton where there seems to be another small breeding population. Although there are not enough BBS records to provide any convincing statistical trend, it is worth noting that they were recorded in 11 squares, the highest number to date. The table below summarises the estimated number of territorial males, almost all from the Marshfield area, during the last decade.

| 2005 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | 12 | na | na | 40 | 32 | 37 | 19 | 15 | 11 |

Estimated number of singing males each year

On Aug. 8th there were at least 50 in the Marshfield area, and from then until the end of the year many counts of 100 were received, with estimates of 500 on Oct.31st and Dec.22nd. Clearly there are currently good numbers present here in winter, and on the face of it this must be one of the more significant concentrations of this declining species in the UK. It would be useful, therefore, if possible, to have some coordinated counts to ensure that no duplication is involved.

## 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.*

CVL and BL – the individual from 2013 was seen intermittently at both sites until Aug. 20th;

Bathampton Meadows – one on the south bank of the R. Avon on May 27th was assumed to be from CVL/BL.

### **BAR-HEADED GOOSE** *Anser indicus*

*A high altitude native of central Asia often kept in collections.*

Two at Backwell Lake on March 22nd and 23rd.

## RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

*A possible winter vagrant from arctic Siberia, this ornamental small goose is often kept in collections.*

CVL – a vocal adult was seen and heard intermittently on Herriott's Pool between May 19th and June 13th. An adult, possibly the same but now with a damaged flank, was present around the lake from Dec. 6th into 2015.

## 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:

Severnside – the individual from 2013 was seen intermittently on Northwick Warth until May 16th, again between Aug. 17th and Sept. 9th, and from Nov. 2nd into 2015. In early September two other dark-breasted individuals were also noted in the flock of Canada Geese;

Portbury Warth – one on April 25th and 29th, and on May 1st;

Royal Portbury Dock – one on Aug. 4th;

CVL – one from Dec. 17th into 2015 showed characters of both *interior* and *parvipes* (known as Lesser Canada Goose).

The taxonomy of this species is complex and individuals can be hard to attribute to a subspecies.

## MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

*Native to Central and South America.*

Eastville Park – one from Sept. 30th into 2015;

Backwell Lake – one noted on Feb. 16th, June 16th, Oct. 26th and Nov. 4th, 9th and 24th;

CVL – up to ten on March 17th and 18th, seven of which were a pale grey, with one still present on April 20th.

## GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysoluptus pictus*

*An ornamental pheasant indigenous to the mountains of central China, introduced in Britain since the late 1800s.*

Lower Woods – a calling male was photographed on Jan. 30th.

## 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 individuals considered to be of wild origin.

An excellent year with a total of 11 records, which involved at least 17 individuals. This is the highest annual number of records to date; after one record of a single bird in 2011, there were six records (involving 24 individuals) in 2012 and in 2013 there were 9 records (involving 25 individuals).

All the records this year came between early April and mid June, and are listed below, in chronological order. It was thought likely that they all relate to the Great Crane Project, the Somerset reintroduction project that uses chicks hand reared at Slimbridge and released in the levels.

Castle Farm, Marshfield – three mobbed by a Sparrowhawk on April 9th;

OPS – three on April 10th, two of which landed and were seen to be ringed;

Walton-in-Gordano – one flying towards Portbury at 13.20 on April 15th;

OPS – seven flew low to SW on April 25th (see below);

Henbury – seven in flight at 18.00 on April 25th (see above):

CI-Y – four at 07.00 on April 27th seen in flight over the Yeo Estuary heading SW;

OPS – two flew upriver at 17.00 on April 27th, one of which was seen to be ringed;

Whitchurch – one to NE at 11.15 was presumed to be the same as one to N over Kingswood at 11.25;

Portbury – one circling over the A369 Portbury Hundred at 14.15 on June 13th with possibly the same over the M5 junction 19 Gordano roundabout at 10.00 on the 16th.

See also page 54 for records relating to individuals that were considered to be of a wild origin.

### PARAKEET sp

Westbury-on-Trym – one heard on Aug. 7th.

### COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

*Native to Australia, probably the most frequently recorded escaped cagebird.*

BL – a male sunning itself on the dam on Sept. 30th.

### BLUE-and-YELLOW MACAW *Ara ararauna*

*A large South American parrot.*

Somerdale – one on May 10th.

### BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undalates*

*A commonly kept cagebird native to Australia.*

Bishopston – one on Feb. 4th.

### HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

*Native to Africa but held as a free range poultry species.*

Chewton Keynsham – one on Oct. 26th. Individuals were recorded from this area between 2011 to 2013;

Bathford – one running along the road on June 10th.

### COMMON BULBUL *Pycnonotus barbatus*

*A resident of North Africa.*

Thornbury – a ringed individual in Charles Close, reported from Nov. 11th to 14th, was later relocated a few miles further north in a garden in Cam, Glos.

## 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, on the monthly WeBS counts, from Jan. 17th until March 17th;

BL – one, considered to be the individual seen in previous years, was seen on June 9th and a further eight dates until the end of the year.

### BARNACLE x CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis x Branta canadensis*

CVL – an individual from 2013, with lots of white peppering in the black of the face and neck and seen again on Jan. 28th, Feb. 6th and Sept. 2nd, was possibly of this hybrid origin.

### *AYTHYA* HYBRIDS

At CVL numbers were much reduced on recent years, details as follows:

1. The female from 2013 with a large facial blaze around the bill and a peaked head, and considered most likely to be a Pochard x Ring-necked Duck, was seen again on Jan. 2nd. What was presumed to be the same individual reappeared on Aug. 19th and was then seen intermittently into 2015;
2. A male Lesser Scaup type and considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, from Aug. 19th to Sept. 3rd;
3. A female in heavy wing moult on Aug. 20th resembled a Ferruginous Duck but the belly and undertail were heavily mottled with dark feathers;
4. A first-winter male, considered to be a Tufted x Scaup, on Nov. 18th;
5. Hybrids were recorded on the WeBS counts on Sept. 8th and Dec. 9th.

The only reports away from CVL came from BL where there were probably five different individuals as shown overleaf:

Aythya hybrids at BL:

6. The male considered to be a Tufted x Pochard from 2013 on Jan. 3rd and 4th;
7. A male, considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, from June 28th to Aug. 7th;
8. A male Lesser Scaup type with an orange eye from Dec. 12th to 31st;
9. A pair considered to be Paget's Pochards, the hybrid between Ferruginous Duck and Pochard, from Dec.13th to 19th.

In order to help track individuals it would be very useful if observers of *Aythya* hybrids could include some descriptive notes of the bird's appearance (*Eds.*).

## RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE x CHUKAR *Alectoris rufa x Alectoris chukar*

Saltford – two on April 20th.

## HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

Only recorded from CVL – an adult on Oct. 27th.

The table below gives the number of bird-days since 1998, the first year this hybrid was reported.

| 1998 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 29 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 1 |

Bird-days recorded per year since 1998

## Addendum to the 2002 Report

**Nightjar** -- The site and observer published in this Report was wrong. This bird was reported by D A Strong from his garden in Backwell on Sept. 8th. The caption of the photograph following page 80 of that Report also needs to reflect this change.

## Addendum to the 2012 Report

**Cackling Goose** – This individual was at Herriott's Pool, CVL, from March 25th to 28th not 15th to 28th.

**Little Ringed Plover** – The following records were omitted from the series of records from Severnside: in April two on 22nd, 26th and 30th with one on 28th, in May three on 2nd, 4th, 7th, 10th and 12th, with two on 3rd and 16th and four on 9th.

**Little Stint** – In addition to the records listed for OPS there was also one on Oct. 2nd.

**Ruff** – The two individuals at BG in February were also present on the 11th.

**Kittiwake** – The table of January and February records omitted 25 at Severn Beach on Jan. 4th.

## Addendum to the 2013 Report

**Mallard** – The entry in the BBS percentage changes table for 2012/13 should be 3% not 30%.

**Water Rail** – The table of the number of nest sites detected at CVL each year has an error in the entry for 2012, this should be 10 not 3.

**White Wagtail** – The entry for White Wagtail in the Migration Summary on page 12 of this Report needs amending. The revised first date of March 29th was five days later than average while the revised last date of Nov.12th was 38 days later than average.

# WADERS IN AVON, Part 2 -- The Common Species

Harvey Rose

## Introduction

This is the second half of a survey of Avon's wading birds since 1950. The first part appeared in last year's Report [Rose 2014] and dealt with the uncommon, scarce and vagrant species. This part deals with the common species: Oystercatcher, Golden and Grey Plover, Lapwing, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Curlew, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Knot, Dunlin, Redshank and Snipe. As noted last year, the published data is patchy for the period between 1950 and 1970, and sometimes later, this applies especially to the common species. The reader is referred to the first half of this study published last year for a more detailed discussion of the methods used and a summary of site details. In general we shall see that for the common species the wintering and passage populations have either kept up reasonably well or have declined slowly, but the breeding populations have in most cases suffered badly. The decline in some of the wintering populations, although small on a year-by-year basis, has over the decades mounted up and is now a cause of considerable and growing concern.

At the beginning of each entry we have included an 'Avon Status' figure. For each common species this gives an indication of how the size of the Avon flocks compares with those on the coasts of Great Britain generally where 100% is 'average', that is occurrences on the Avon shore are about as common as those on the coasts of Great Britain as a whole. These figures vary very widely, from 5% (for the poorly represented Knot) to 2620% (for Whimbrel, the Estuary is an important UK site for this species). More details on how these status figures were calculated are given in the Discussion Section at the end of this paper. As with the first part of this study our sources are mainly the 1936 and 1947 papers by Howard Davis [Davis 1936 and 1948], the 1975 Estuary Report by Peter Ferns [Ferns 1977] and the local bird reports published since 1950. Data has also been gleaned from the WeBS records held by the BTO; we wish to thank those concerned, especially Heidi Mellin, for this help. Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Richard Mielcarek and Keith Vinicombe also provided data and many helpful comments and suggestions.

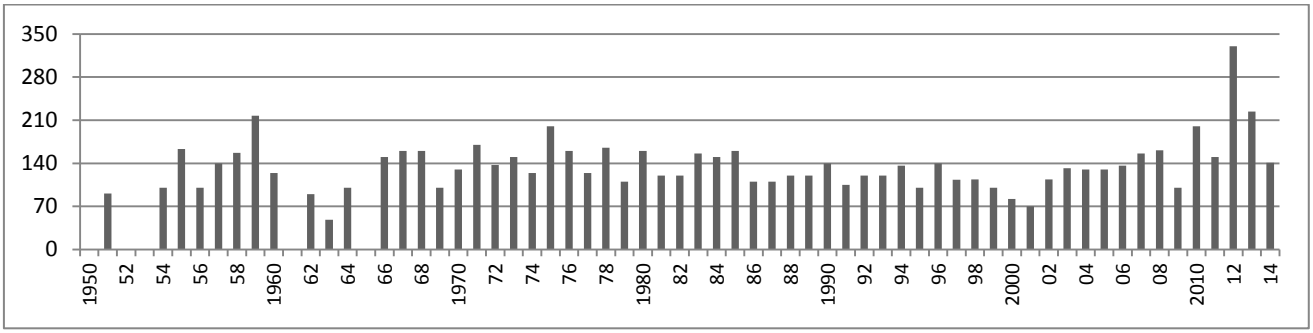
## Systematic list

The list below gives details of the 14 common wader species that are recorded in the Avon area, as last year it follows the new 2013 BOU order. Ideally, the study period would have been from 1950 to the present but, as noted above, very little data is available prior to 1970 for the majority of the common species. As the WeBS survey started in the early 1970s reasonable amounts of data are available for the past four decades in almost all cases. We use the same descriptions and conventions as in the rest of the Report including place names and abbreviations. The term 'Estuary' always refers to the Severn Estuary as a whole of which the Avon coast forms an important part.

### Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Avon Status 12%

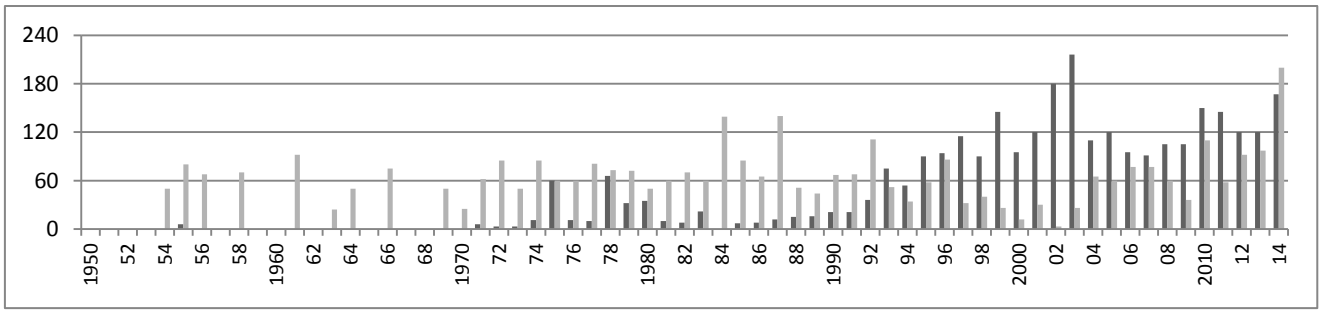
A number of the common Avon area wader species are effectively resident for most of the year only being absent during the breeding season, and this species is one of these; a few stay to breed in some years, more so recently. Compared with the other main sites around the UK coast, the Severn Estuary counts are quite low, and the Avon Status figure of 12% reflects this. A count of 100 in Avon is considered 'good', but counts of fifty times this (5000+) are only considered 'normal' at several other sites, the nearest being Burry Inlet on the South Wales coast. The generally muddy conditions in the inner Estuary provide only poor feeding opportunities for this species whose favoured foods are mussels, limpets and periwinkles, although a range of soft-bodied invertebrates are also taken.

Until recently most Avon area records came from the coast in the west but some changes have occurred during the study period. The main site is Weston Bay and counts here have hardly varied over the study period, this is illustrated in the first chart given on the next page which provides the maximum yearly count since 1950 (average: 125 per year), the gaps at the beginning of the period are almost certainly due to a lack of observations; even in 1935 Davis [1936] described this species as 'numerous' here.




Oystercatcher yearly maxima in Weston Bay, some early data are not available

Two other sites have hosted good flocks but with varying success. Up to about 1990 counts at Sand Bay were fairly similar, if a bit lower, to those for Weston Bay (average maximum count 50 per year), but the sand dredging activities here at this time had a detrimental effect which is only slowly being mitigated now. On the other hand very few were seen on Severnside before 1970, then some started to use the site, this gathered pace during the 1990s, and for the past 15 years it has become the second most important site for this species in the Avon area. The average maximum at this site for the whole period is about 46 per year but for the past twenty year period it is double this figure. The reason(s) for this change are unknown but are unlikely to be related to those in Sand Bay. These changes are illustrated in the second chart which was constructed as above; here the grey bars refer to Sand Bay and the black bars to Severnside.




Oystercatcher yearly maxima: Sand Bay – grey, and Severnside – black, some early data are not available

Maximum counts at CI-Y have risen fairly consistently during the period ranging from about ten in the 1950s to 40+ during the last decade, the highest count is 72 in September 2014. Some also occur inland, mainly at CVL. In most cases counts are of five or under; some larger flocks were noted at CVL, all in August, these included 17 in 1973, 15 in 1979, 21 in 1980 and 20 in 1984; all counts since then have been in single figures.

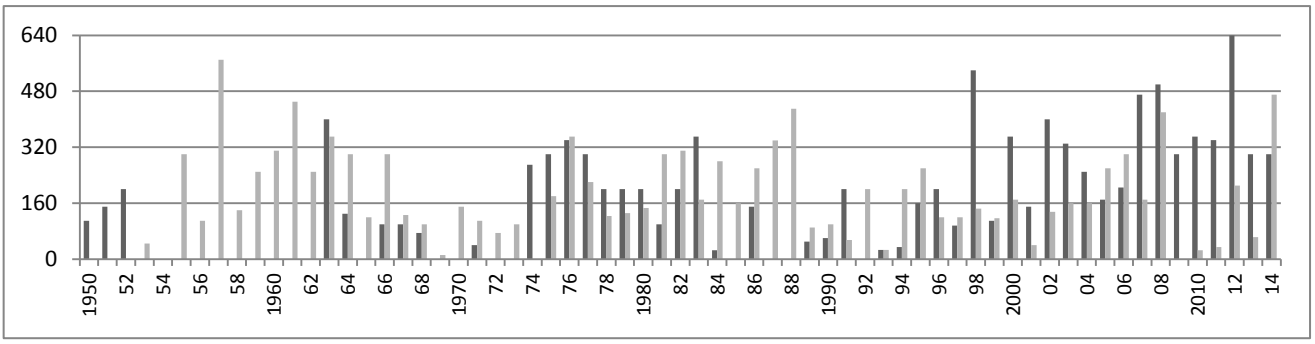
This species breeds regularly in quite small numbers on the coast. Davis's 1935 Report records nests at CI-Y and the 1947 Report records nests at CI-Y and on Steep Holm. In the 1970s breeding activity was reported from PWD and CI-Y, during the 1980s activity increased, so by 1989 five pairs nested at three sites including OPS, and chicks were seen. Since then numbers have increased further with in some years up to 13 pairs nesting at five sites: OPS, PWD, CI-Y, Weston STW (sometimes on the roof of the visitor's centre!) and Steep Holm. Breeding display has also been reported from Sea Mills but no nests have been found, and the PWD colony has sometimes spread across the river to Avonmouth Docks, in 2010 this joint site hosted six pairs. Over the years quite a few pairs have attempted to breed but the success rate has generally been very low, predation of both eggs and chicks by gulls and crows being a major problem.

### **Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* Avon Status 18% -- 270%

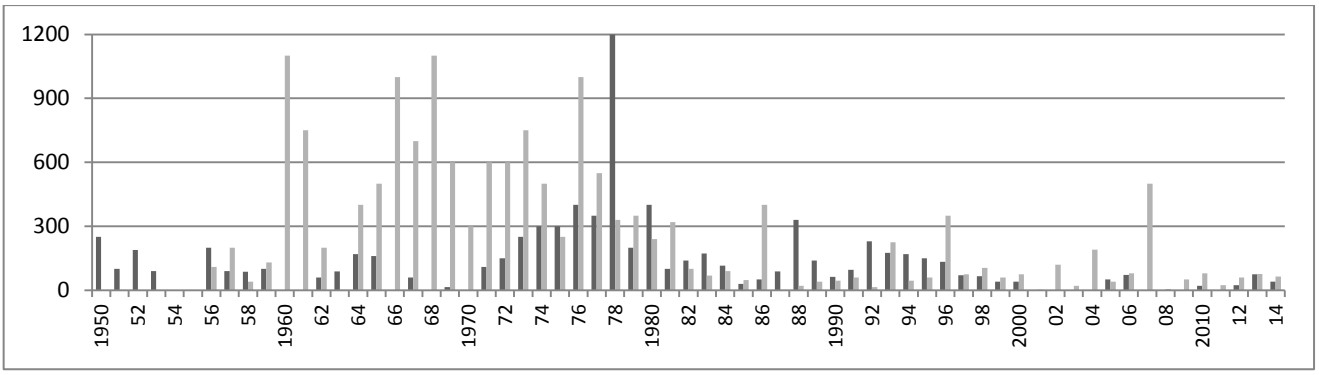
Common and widespread in winter, nevertheless this is one of the more difficult species to assess properly even though the published data is fairly extensive. It occurs on farmland, the moors and the coast but does not often form big roosts. The larger coastal gatherings usually occur during very cold weather. The one-percent threshold for UK National Importance is 4000, no Avon area count has come close to this. Our two highest counts are 1700 seen in foggy conditions at Lansdown in November 1963, and 2000 at CI-Y in late January 2011 when several flocks were seen moving north after an extremely cold spell; these two exceptional counts have *not* been included in the charts below but several four-figure counts from the Axe Estuary in the 1960s and early 1970s are included. For much of the time the Avon Status figure is quite low, just occasionally large flocks pass through as happened at CI-Y in 2011 giving the exceptional Status figure of 270% above, these data were calculated only using the 2010/11 counts.

The charts below attempt to delineate the Avon populations. As the flocks roam quite widely, four fairly large regions were chosen and yearly maxima are given. The first region is the area north of Bath including Lansdown and Marshfield (upper chart, black); the second is the area south and south west of Bath including Marksbury Plain, CVL and BL (upper chart, grey); the third is the moors and higher ground west of Bristol including Nailsea and Kenn Moors, and Lulsgate [Bristol International Airport] (lower chart, black); and the fourth is the western coastal fringe including Cl-Y and the Axe Estuary and its environs (lower chart, grey). It is likely that the lack of 'black' data in the early part of the upper chart is due to a lack of records rather than a lack of birds, but the lack of data in the latter part of the second chart is 'real'. The flight authorities take steps to control flocks at Lulsgate and this may be one cause of the decline. It should be noted that flocks sometimes start using a new area and only a few years later stop. This happened at BL, groups started appearing in 2000 and reached 445 in 2004, but after 2006 very few were seen. Over the study period the average counts were: 161 for the first region ('black', north of Bath), 179 for the second ('grey', south-west of Bath), 123 for the third ('grey', moors) and 243 for the fourth ('black', western coast).

We have treated all records as winter visitors. Clearly this is not entirely correct but it is often difficult to determine whether a particular group is really on passage or just moving a relatively short distance between feeding sites. A small peak in the counts sometimes occurs in April suggesting spring passage, but no peaks occur in autumn. These plovers do not breed in Avon, a nest with four eggs was found 'on Mendip' in 1901.



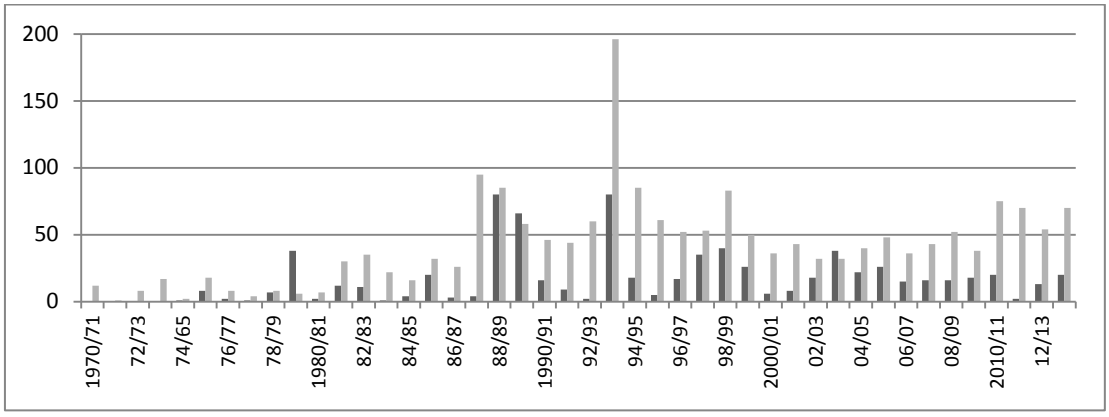

Golden Plover maxima: Black – north of Bath; grey – south and west of Bath; some early data unavailable




Golden Plover maxima: Black – Lulsgate and N. Sonerset moors; grey – coastal areas in the west (see text).

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Avon Status 20%

There is evidence to suggest that this species was quite scarce at the beginning of the study period, but numbers increased in the early 1980s especially at Cl-Y, now the main site. They feed mainly on surface dwelling invertebrates at the top of the shore. This may explain why Cl-Y is favoured, the slope of the foreshore is slightly steeper here than at other sites, and so the low tide mud is thinner and less extensive. The counts are in line with the national picture, those in the southwest part of the UK have improved over the past half century; even so our flocks are quite small compared with the best in the country; see the Avon Status figure. In the Avon area during the 1950s no count was over seven, this is also true for the 1960s except that several higher counts were noted at Cl-Y including 35 in October 1960 and 42 in January 1964. For the early part of the 1970s the best counts came from Sand Bay (for example 52 in January 1973), and from 1975 onwards flocks occurred at both Severnside and Cl-Y and these are illustrated in the chart on the next page. The flocks regularly move up and down the coast. Counts at one site can be quite variable but the evidence indicates that the sum of the counts from the two main sites varies much less suggesting that the same birds are present throughout. So the chart gives the Severnside (in black) and the Cl-Y (in grey) counts when their sum was at a maximum for the year in question, it shows that this species has occurred in reasonable numbers at Cl-Y over the past two decades. Over the whole period the Severnside average is 17 per year and the Cl-Y average is 43.

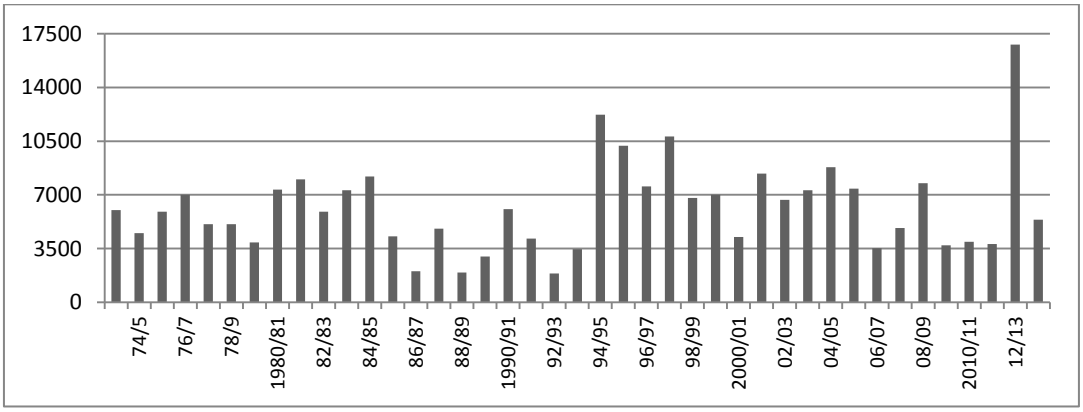



Grey Plover maxima: Severnside (black) and Cl-Y (grey) counts; see text

All data given above refer to the winter period on the coast, October to March. Some are seen on passage. For the autumn this is often quite weak or almost non-existent, but occasionally large flocks pass through, an example was one of about 100 noted one evening on Severnside in September 1970. Variable numbers are reported on spring passage in May often in their smart breeding plumage. During the past two decades the average count was about ten per year, but this ranged from one (!) in 2003 to 40 in 2012, with over 100 in 2000 when 80 were recorded in one flock at Cl-Y. Inland this species is quite scarce with sightings on average every other year, usually only one or two and mainly at CVL. Nine were recorded here in October 1975 and 1982, five for three week period in December 1978, an unusual date, and six in flight in August 1980.

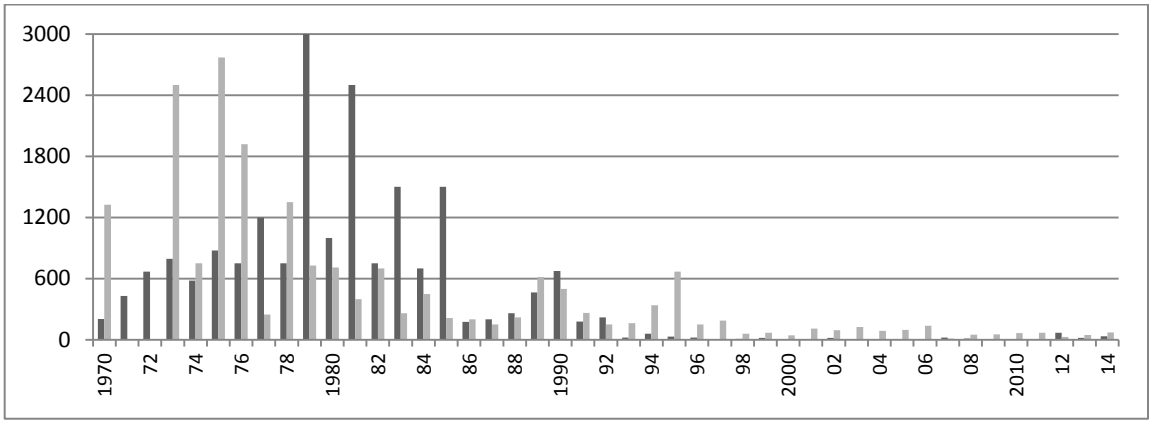
**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Avon Status 76%

In the Avon area this species has undergone several adverse changes over the study period mainly related to breeding. These changes mirror similar declines noted in southern Britain as a whole over the same period beginning in the far south-west. In the 2010/11 WeBS Report the Estuary it was 12th in National Importance but this position is likely to fall in the coming years, also the Avon Status figure is slightly below par. Large flocks occur inland, the coast mainly being used for roosting and during cold weather. It is worth noting that the Somerset Levels immediately to the south of the Avon area are top of the WeBS rankings by a wide margin. At the present time this species breeds in very small numbers, and occurs in large flocks as a winter visitor, on passage, and during severe weather movements. Up to the early 1970s the non-breeding published records referred almost exclusively to this last type of occurrence, this has been less common in the past two decades probably because recent winters have tended to be on the mild side. The first chart gives the sum of the maximum winter counts from all major sites; that is, an estimate of the total Avon population for each winter beginning with 1973/74. Apart from a slight dip from the mid 1980s to the early 1990s it shows no great variation over the last forty years, the average winter population in our area being about 6200.




Lapwing estimated total Avon population per winter

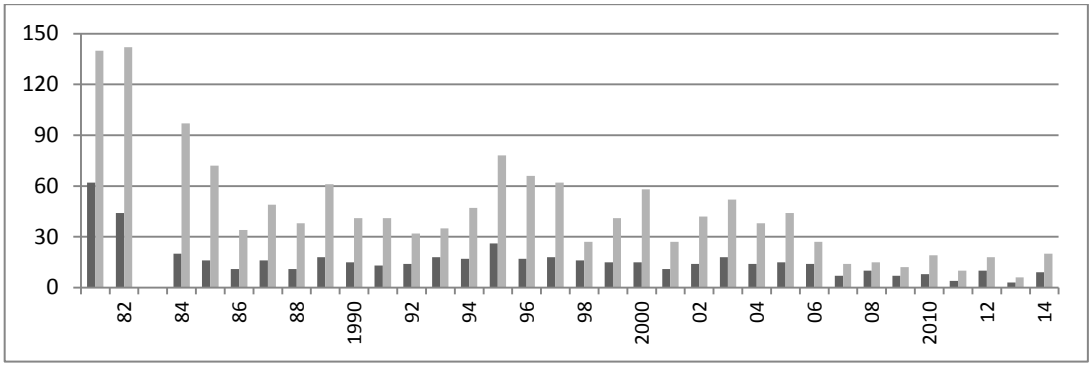
Most wintering birds leave between mid February and early March to go to their breeding grounds, and virtually no spring migration is recorded. Half a century ago large numbers were noted in late summer and early autumn but these flocks have now virtually disappeared, a remarkable change over such a short period of time. The second chart below illustrates this fall by giving the maximum August count at two sites, one inland – CVL (in black), and one on the coast – Cl-Y (in grey). A fall from 3000 in 1979 to zero in 1997 (at Cl-Y) is clearly one that needs emphasising. It is assumed that the main cause of this fall is related to the breeding collapse discussed in the next paragraph.




Lapwing August maxima, CI-Y – black, CVL – grey

One of the major recent losses to the avifauna of the Avon area over the past half century has been the demise of this species as a breeder, its distinctive display flights used to be a common sight in spring in many rural parts. This demise seems to have started many years ago for even in 1947 Davis [1948] commented: 'as a breeding bird [this species] has decreased considerably in the last few years'. The 1968-72 BTO Breeding Atlas reported 'confirmed' or 'probable' nesting in every 10*km* square except central Bristol but no density or other data was given. General concern in the late 1970s led to a BTO project on 'Wet Meadows', and the basic data from this survey is given in the chart below for 1981 and 1982. Details for 1981 are as follows: 16 pairs in NE Avon, 23 pairs in SE Avon, ten pairs on the moors (Kenn, Nailsea), and 91 pairs in the coastal strip stretching from Avonmouth and PWD to CI-Y including Woodspring Bay giving a total of 140 pairs for Avon as a whole. Counts in the first three of these regions had been much higher in earlier times, but by 1990 breeding had completely ceased in all of them.

Recently, and occasionally in the past, nesting by one or two pairs was reported from CVL and a few other sites. The third chart below illustrates the data for the past 30 years, the black bars give the number of individual sites, and the grey bars the number of pairs where in some cases 'pair' may denote no more than that two birds were present at a suitable site during some part of the breeding season, no data is available for 1983. In the past two years successful nests have only been reported from artificial nature reserve sites at CI-Y and CVL. At this latter site nests are often in the lakeside fields which sometimes are destroyed during farming activities. There was a slight upturn in 2012, a very 'wet' year, and this may suggest one of the main reasons for the demise – the general drying out of the local farmland; it improves yields for farmers but does not help the waders. Due again to the 'wet' conditions 2014 also showed some improvement; see page 57.

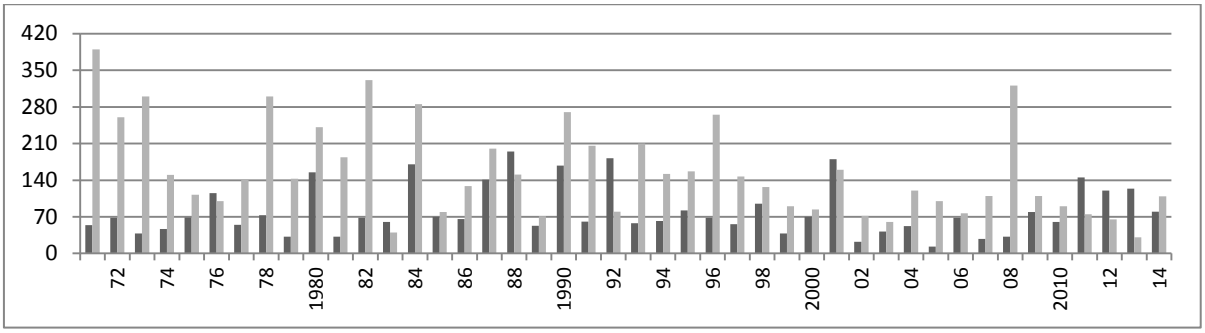



Lapwing estimate of the number of breeding sites (black) and pairs (grey), no data is available for 1983

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* Avon status 172%

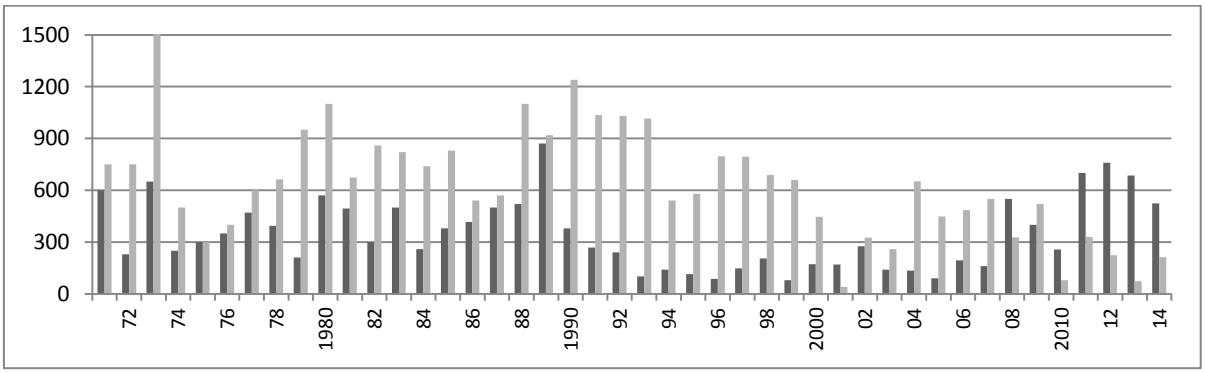
A common spring and autumn migrant, this species also occurs as a scarce winter visitor. A few pairs breed in some years, more so recently. The Estuary as a whole is amongst the ten most important in the UK for this species, and so a count of 500, say, is of especial note both in Avon and in the country as a whole; the Avon Status figure also bears this out. This species is exclusively a surface feeder and so its Estuary distribution is mainly restricted to the sandy and/or shingly parts. The two charts on the next page give a snapshot of spring and autumn passage over the past forty years. There is no reason to suppose that anything changed around 1970. Regular data are not available before this date, and the earlier data that are available are in line with the later material. It is worth noting that in some years the best spring counts are for the first week of June, in the main these refer to passage flocks that are heading for the high Arctic breeding grounds (mainly N E Greenland) that are usually not snow and/or ice free before the end of the month.

The spring chart was constructed as follows. First, for each year maximum spring (May or early June) counts for OPS and Severnside were added together and the result is illustrated in grey (average 157 per spring), then the same was done for Cl-Y and Sand Bay (average 81) given in black. In the main the chart shows that the N. Avon counts have declined appreciatively in the last decade or so.




Ringed Plover spring passage – OPS plus Severnside, grey; Cl-Y plus Sand Bay, black

An exactly similar procedure was carried out for autumn passage (August/September) and the second chart gives the details with averages 635 per autumn for the N. Avon sites and 346 for the S. Avon sites. This chart shows a similar decline in the N. Avon (grey) counts since about 1990 whilst those for S. Avon (black) show a marked decline over the same period with some improvement during the past five years.




Ringed Plover autumn passage – OPS plus Severnside, grey; Cl-Y plus Sand Bay, black

Nowadays, much smaller numbers occur on the coast in winter. Before 1970 counts of 100 or more were not uncommon at Severnside, these were even noted in the 1935 Report [Davis 1936]. But by 1975 peak counts had dropped to half this figure and there has been a slow further decline since then so that at present a count of ten is regarded as a reasonable total. Inland most of the records have come from CVL with a few from BG and BL in some years. CVL only holds reasonable numbers when the water level is low, even so counts generally have dropped since 1970 in line with those in North Avon. This is borne out by looking at the averages of the CVL maximum counts for each five-year period since 1971 which are given in the following table:

| 1971/75 | 76/80 | 81/85 | 86/90 | 91/95 | 96/00 | 01/05 | 06/10 | 2011/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 49 | 39 | 38 | 32 | 2 | 16 | 7 | 39 |

Ringed Plover maxima at CVL over five-year periods since 1971

The maximum in the exceptional year of 2011 was 110 but in 2012 it was only two. The best year ever was 1989 when the maximum CVL count was 150.

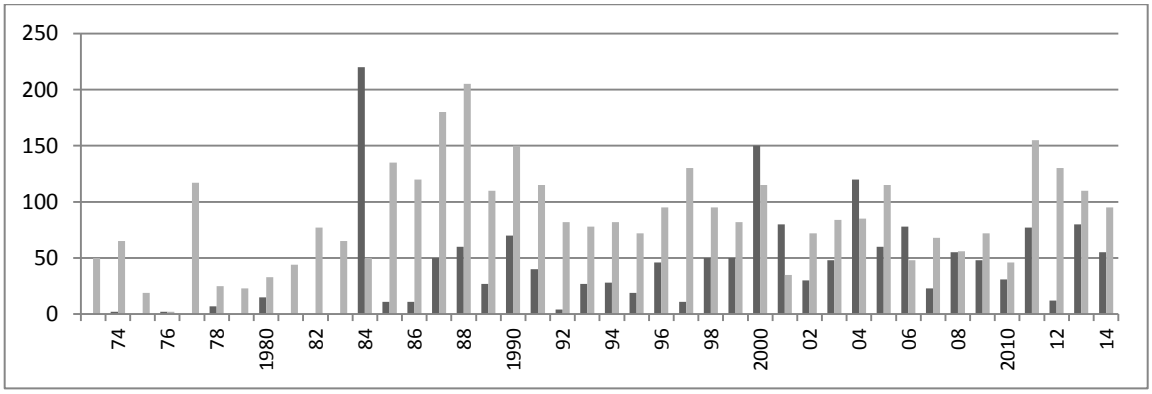
Amongst the Avon breeding waders this one has improved markedly over the study period, Oystercatcher is the only other to show any upward movement. From about 1980 pairs began nesting at a few sites on the coast including PWD and around the mouth of the Yeo (Cl-Y) and they had some success, for example six chicks fledged at the first site in 1982. Since 1995 all nest sites have been in the dock areas of either Avonmouth or Royal Portbury Docks. These areas are close to the shore, and so close to feeding areas, the ground is shingly and often damp, and they are relatively undisturbed (often near parking areas for new cars); so provide nearly ideal conditions and nesting has thrived. In every year since 1999 at least one brood has been successful. The best years were: 2004 when nine pairs produced 25 young, 2010 when ten pairs produced 13 young, and 2012 when eight pairs produced 17 young.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Avon Status 2620%

The Estuary is one of the most important sites in the UK for this species, in 2010/11 it was third in the WeBS ratings and the Avon flocks formed a substantial part. As a consequence the Avon Status figure is nearly ten times larger than for any other common wader, a fact that needs to be born in mind when any conservation queries arise. This species mainly feeds in open fields close to the shore which explains its preference for our area. The great majority are noted in spring, autumn counts are now usually about an eighth of those in spring but there is some evidence to suggest that this has not always been the case in the past. Most occur on the coast, with Cl-Y being the main site, or on the moors near the coast mainly those near Kenn and Nailsea. The published data is weak prior to 1973, and so the chart below starts at this point. The data for the 1950s gives a few counts for Kenn Moor (maximum 54) and some CVL records, and for the 1960s and early 1970s it gives spring counts ranging between 20 and 64 at Cl-Y and some for the moors.

During this time two other points are worth noting. First the highest ever Avon area count was made in early May 1977 when 250 were seen flying up the Estuary past Severnside. Also during this period there were a number of high autumn counts, much larger than any noted recently. These included: 90 at Cl-Y in August 1966, 64 here in late September 1972, 127 at Sand Bay in August 1973, 36 at CVL in August 1975, and 60 at PWD in September 1981.

The chart below illustrates the maximal coastal spring counts since 1973 at Cl-Y (grey) and Severnside (black), the main sites, although recently some better counts have come from OPS perhaps at the expense of Severnside and, in the last year or so, Sand Bay has seen some notable flocks (for instance 71 in May 2012). The Severnside count of 220 in 1984 was associated with the major Bar-tailed Godwit invasion of that year, a result of persistent easterly winds. For the period since 1973 the average counts were 94 per spring for Cl-Y and 48 for Severnside, counts at the first site have declined slightly recently but this has been compensated for by slightly improved counts on the N. Avon coast.

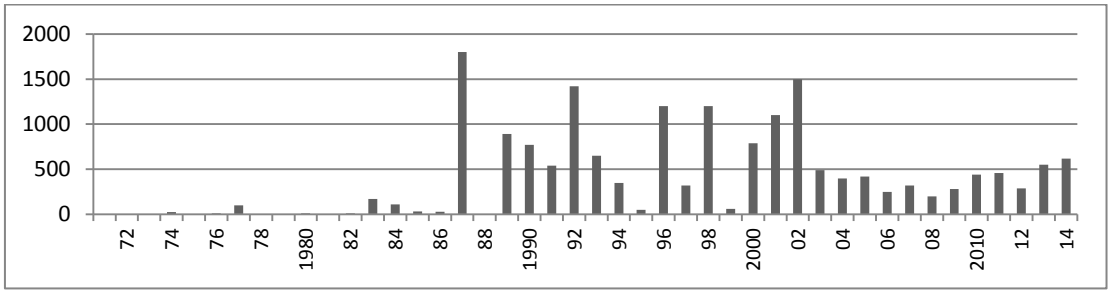



Spring passage, Severnside – black; Cl-Y – grey

As noted above flocks have often been reported on either Kenn or Nailsea Moor in spring with counts ranging between 20 and 100, but not recently, the last record from either of these sites was in 2003. Since 1980 the autumn passage has been much weaker than that in spring, during this period the average of the autumn maxima at Cl-Y was about ten per year, and at Severnside about five. A few usually spend the summer on the coast and very occasionally single birds have been recorded in winter including, for example: at Aust in January and February 1986, at OPS in January 1995 and at Cl-Y in December 1998.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata* Avon status 139%

As with Whimbrel above the Estuary is an important site in the UK for this species (sixth best in 2010/11 – WeBS). Avon accounts for a reasonable proportion as shown by the good Avon Status figure. Most sightings are coastal and cover the period between July and April, the charts below give a summary. It feeds on worms (mainly *Arenicola*), medium sized bi-valves (mainly *Macoma*) and crabs, but also inland on earthworms when the fields are wet. The main site in Avon is the region including OPS and Littleton Warth, that is the part of the Estuary northeast of the older Severn Bridge. Large numbers occur, sometimes roosting on the Avon shore but at other times on the opposite shore between Chepstow and Lydney, also more recently similar numbers have sometimes been recorded feeding on the mud in the middle of the river at low tide. The first chart on the next page illustrates this, for each year it gives the maximum count received from OPS or Littleton between January and March (average 406), the main winter period. Large flocks were not recorded here prior to the mid 1980s, it is not known if this is just a lack of observations or correctly describes the actual numbers present; the power station lagoons were first constructed in the 1960s.



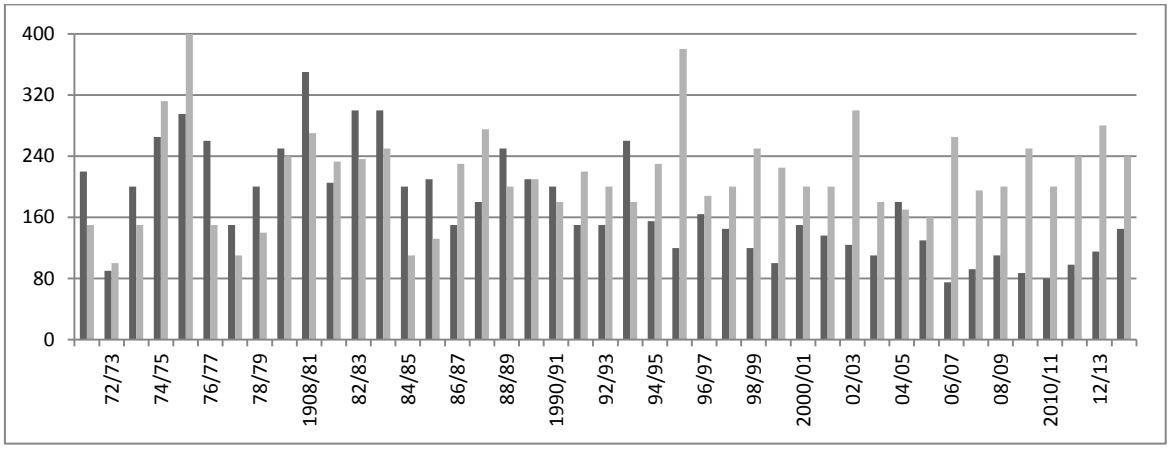

Curlew winter counts (January to March) at OPS/Littleton

The second chart gives similar data for two other main coastal sites: Severnside/PWD (average 221 per winter), and Sand/Weston Bays (average 174). This second chart shows a healthy population which overall has not varied greatly during the past 40 years. Counts for Severnside/PWD have been relatively stable over the period but those for Sand/Weston Bays have declined recently. This decline has been partially compensated by better counts lately at Cl-Y not given in the chart, this is shown by the following table of average winter maxima:

| 1974/75-79/80 | 80/81-84/85 | 85/86-89/90 | 90/91-94/95 | 95/96-99/00 | 00/01-04/05 | 05/06-09/10 | 09/10-2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 141 | 139 | 162 | 179 | 187 | 198 | 182 | 282 |

Curlew - Cl-Y, average winter maxima over five year periods

In the UK as a whole, some recent decline has been reported but not for the Estuary (WeBS Report 2010/11). Also a few flocks occur on passage but this is not obvious from the data except that in some years the highest counts are for the August/September period suggesting some south-westerly movement. A small number of non-breeders are usually present during the summer.




Curlew winter counts – Severnside in grey and Sand/Weston Bay (max.) in black

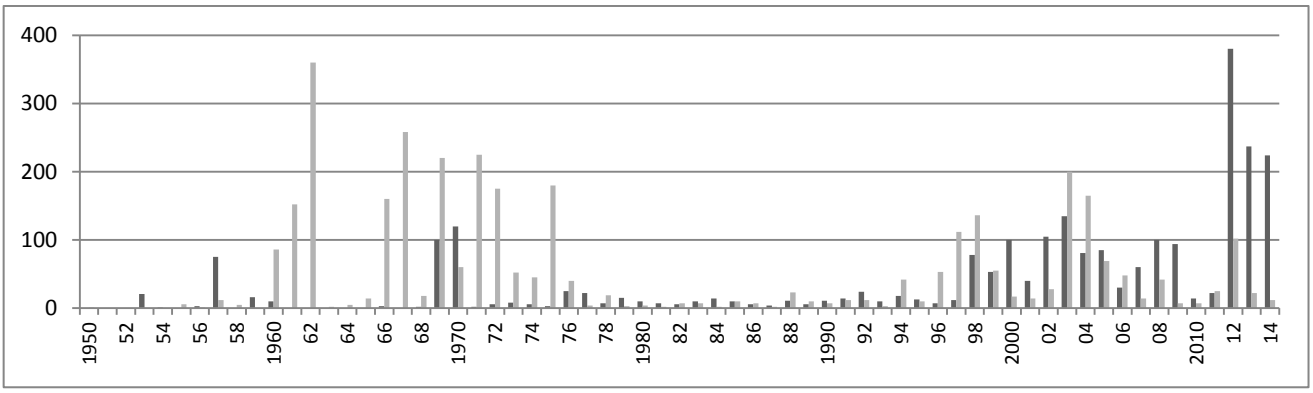
As noted above most occur on the coast, but some have been reported inland. Small groups are sometimes seen at Sea Mills or CVL, in most cases these are less than five but 16 were noted at this second site on one day in September 1966. Also some migrants have been seen, or heard, in flight over various sites including the major conurbations. This species breeds in the adjoining counties, Wiltshire and Somerset, but Avon breeding records are very sparse. Between 1912 and 1925 some breeding was recorded on the Mendips, but it is not clear whether this was on the Avon or Somerset side of the border. Also between 1958 and 1963, nesting was proved on Walton Moor at least once, and in the 1990s and 2003 some breeding activity was reported in the Marshfield area on the Avon/Wiltshire border but no nest was found on the Avon side.

### **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Avon Status 7%

The fortunes of this species in the Avon area have varied more than most during the past century. In the 1935 Report [Davis 1936] it was described as ‘scarce’ with only three records all after 1920, but by the late 1940s it was being reported in most years sometimes in double figures. Then starting in 1960 very good numbers occurred mainly in the Sand/Weston Bay area with a maximum of 360 at Sand Bay in April 1962. From the late 1970s to the mid 1990s only a few were seen, but then the situation changed again with three figure counts being recorded both on the south Avon coast (Cl-Y to Axe Estuary) and on the Severnside/OPS coast. Currently, the best counts come from the N. Avon coastal sites but flocks sometimes only stay for a few days, they are thought to be part of the larger concentrations occurring in Gloucestershire and further north. The Avon Status figure (7%) is the second poorest and although it has shown some increase recently the Avon flocks are

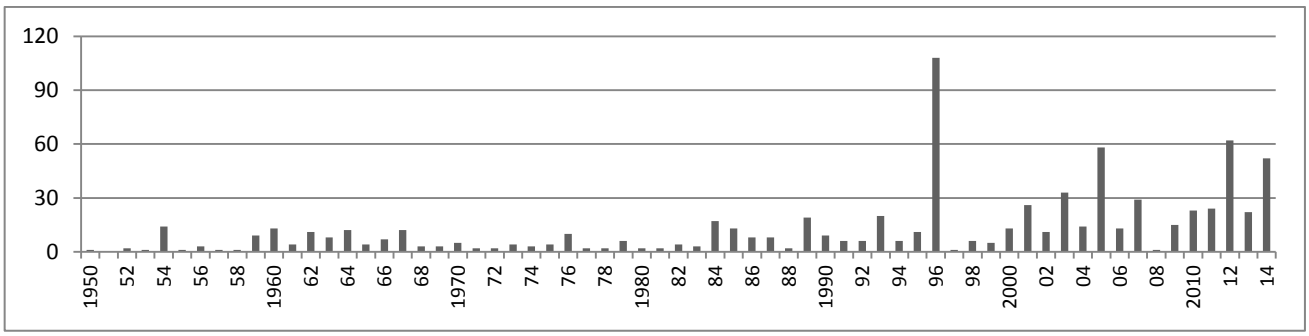
still very small compared with the average for Great Britain as a whole. Also it is worth noting that the Estuary is only 32nd in National Importance for this species in the UK (WeBS).

The first chart below illustrates this data (N. Avon in black, average 38 per year; S. Avon in grey, average 52) but there are a number of caveats. First, no account has been taken of the seasons, in some years they are only recorded on passage but in others the best counts are made in winter. Also, recently several large flocks have been recorded just passing through, or only staying for a day or so, not necessarily during recognised spring or autumn passage periods. For example, in 2009 a flock of 94 was seen on Severnside on one day in late October but all other counts for this year were under 16. This implies that more caution is needed when using the maximum chart data for this species compared with those for many others.




Black-tailed Godwit maximum yearly coastal counts, grey – S. Avon; black – N. Avon

Quite good numbers also occur inland, this is shown on the second chart which gives the maximum yearly reservoir count (average 12 per year). It indicates a recent increase which is similar to that recorded on the N. Avon coast. The peak count was for BL in October 1996, at least part of this flock stayed for about a month. Almost all seen either inland or on the coast belong to the race *islandica* which mainly breeds in Iceland, but a few from the race *limosa* (breeding on the European mainland with a handful in the UK mainly in the east) have definitely been recorded. These include, in June 1988, 11 at CVL and three at BG; in July 1990, four at CVL; in June 1998, four at Cl-Y; in June 2006, four at CVL with another here a year later.




Black-tailed Godwit maximum yearly counts at the reservoirs

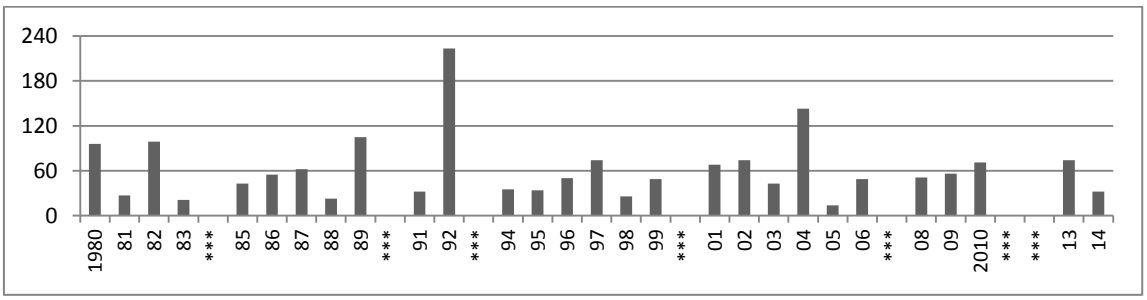
**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Avon Status 25% -- 196%

The WeBS monitoring system does not accommodate short-term occurrences well because the counts are done monthly. This explains the range in the Avon Status figures given above as the sightings in May 2011 (one of the months used to calculate this data) were exceptional. In a 'normal' year this species occurs in much lower numbers than it does at many other estuary sites around the country, and this corresponds to the lower Avon Status figure given above. In the exceptional years large numbers are recorded on spring passage often during a short period just before or just after May day (WeBS counts are normally undertaken mid-month). These large flocks occur when the wind is from the east or north-east forcing them to take a more westerly route, crossing England rather than following the continental European coast, when migrating NE from the wintering grounds on the West African coast. Although no large spring counts were recorded in Avon prior to 1984, it seems likely that they did occur but went unobserved. For instance, on one day in late April 1962 over 750 were reported including 730 at Slimbridge (Glos.), 45 at Sand Bay and three at CVL. The table below summarises these exceptional Avon sightings over the past forty years, the second row lists the totals of the maximum single counts at the main Estuary sites for the spring in question. The sightings in 1984 and 2011 were truly spectacular as many of the birds were in full breeding plumage at the time. It is worth noting that no exceptionally high counts have ever been reported in Avon during autumn passage.

| 1984 | 1990 | 1993 | 2000 | 2007 | 2011 | 2012 | Average for 'normal' years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3195 | 838 | 359 | 598 | 920 | 2410 | 650 | 70 |

Bar-tail Godwit spring maxima in years with a major passage, also the average since 1980 for years with no major passage

Away from these special events counts are usually low or very low both in spring and throughout the year. Sometimes several months can pass without a single sighting, and counts in double figures are unusual except in spring. The chart below illustrates the spring maxima for the non-exceptional years calculated as above with an average of about 62 per non-exceptional year, the 1992 maxima was high because of a single record of 190 at OPS on one day in mid May.




Bar-tailed godwit spring maxima for years with no major passage (major passage years are marked ****)

There is some suggestion that prior to the early 1970s more occurred during the winter period than is the case currently. For example the published data includes the following for the Sand Bay/Axe Estuary area: 43 in March 1955, 25 in February 1961, 40 in December 1964, 85 in September 1969 and 130 in October 1970; but it is not clear if these flocks were seen on one day only or stayed for an extended period. At all times of year most occur on the coast, a few are sometimes noted at the reservoirs, generally under five but two largish flocks have been recorded passing through CVL without stopping: 31 in September 1975 and 80 in early May 2006 during bad weather.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Avon Status 224%

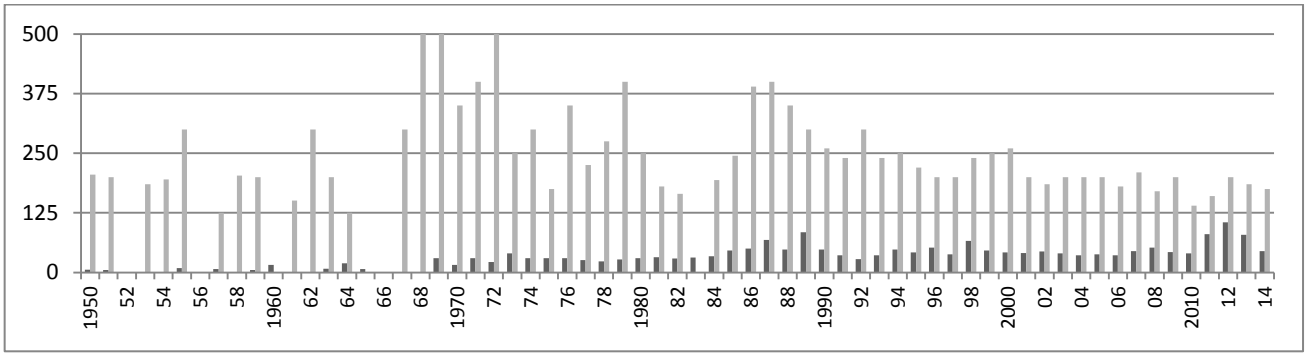
The records of the species at Severnside represent one of the longest more-or-less continuous series for any species in the Avon area. The 1935 Report [Davis 1936] states that 'it is regularly seen at this site with counts of 150+', the 1947 Report [Davis 1947] gives a similar status with counts in the 150 to 200 range, and the chart of yearly site maxima overleaf shows counts ranging between 125 and 500 from 1950 to the present. It feeds on molluscs and crustaceans mainly found under stones or seaweed on the rocky or sandy parts of the Estuary, hence it preference for Severnside with the site known as the English Stones just off-shore and exposed at low tide. The highest counts were made in the 1970s and there has been a notable decline since then. There is a similar series of records for Cl-Y but starting around 1950. Numbers at this second site have slowly increased since then, it is possible that very few occurred here prior to this date but there is no direct evidence.

Flocks usually arrive back in July or August and remain until April but it is now known that more than one population is involved. No regular peaks are noted, in some years August is a 'good' month but in others March counts can be high. During passage periods most are moving through en route between their breeding grounds in Scandinavia, N. Russia or further east and their wintering grounds in W. Africa, whilst most seen during the winter months are of Greenland or eastern Canadian origin; see Delany *et al*. [2009]. Apart from the coastal strip west of Steart and sites to the north east of Sand Bay, no other site in the Estuary regularly hosts more than a handful, and as a consequence the Estuary is not of (WeBS) National Importance for this species. But as individual sites go, Severnside is significant in the UK and as a result the Avon Status figure is relatively high. The chart on the next page gives the yearly maxima for these two main sites. Quite good numbers are also recorded at OPS, maxima for the six decades since 1950 are tabulated below.

| 1950-59 | 1960-69 | 1970-79 | 1980-89 | 1990--2000 | 2000--10 | 2011--14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | 43 | 140 | 100 | 110 | 135 | 68 |

Turnstone at OPS. Average yearly maxima for each decade up to 2010 and for the last four years

Recently these maxima have been lower, the average for the past four years is shown. Another site producing good counts is PWD, notably more so recently, but it is likely that many of the larger flocks seen here have been displaced from nearby Severnside; nevertheless counts in the 40 to 100 region are regular. As noted above very few are recorded south of Cl-Y, a count of 16 at the Axe Estuary in October 1999 was exceptional. Inland almost all records are for CVL with most counts in single figures, the two best here were ten in October 1984 and 12 in August 2005. The chart overleaf gives the yearly maximum count at Severnside (average 225) and Cl-Y (average 31).



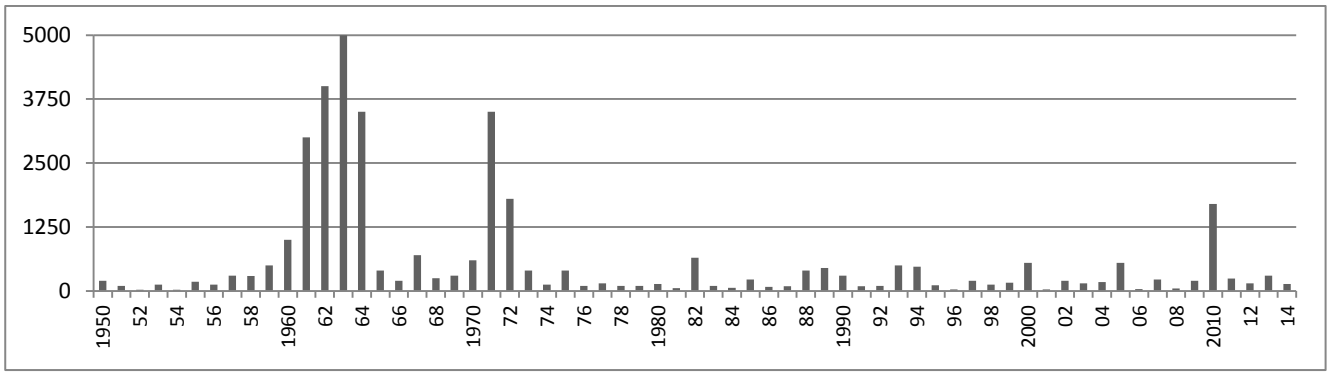

Turnstone yearly maxima for Severnside (grey) and Cl-Y (black), some early data are not available

**Knot** *Calidris canutus* Avon Status 5%

In the UK as a whole this wader occurs more commonly than any other, in some years six figure counts are recorded, in the Wash for example. It also commonly and regularly occurs in the Estuary which was 17th in National Importance in the WeBS list for 2010/11. But the situation in the Avon area is quite different as is shown by its Avon Status figure. Months can pass with none seen at all, but on the other hand quite large groups sometimes pass through and occasionally stay for a month or more, there appears to be very little pattern to these occurrences although it may be weather related. The main food item consumed is the bi-valve *Macoma* which has a very restricted distribution in the Estuary and is virtually absent from the Avon coast.

We have included one chart giving the maximum Avon count in each year since 1950. These counts range from 28 in1996 and 2001 to 5000 in 1963 with an overall average of 559 per year, and appear to be fairly random. It is worth noting that during the period 1960 to 1964 large flocks were recorded in the Sand/Weston Bay area. The reason(s) for this upsurge are unknown, a few later observers have suggested that some of the flocks may have been misidentified. But as the records cover a four year period this surely cannot wholly explain the sightings; it is worth noting that large numbers of Black-tailed Godwit were also recorded at this site in the mid 1960s. The high counts reported since then have mainly been 'one-day wonders'. For example the count of 1700 in 2010 was of a flock seen on Weston Beach on just one day in January which was probably moving between the main Estuary sites on the Welsh shore and in Somerset.

On the coast they are seen in all months outside the breeding season. Spring passage is virtually non-existent in some years but in others small groups pass through, the highest count being 80 at Cl-Y in 2000. They are more evident during autumn passage, some being reported in most years, the highest count was 500 on Severnside in 2005 when good numbers were recorded throughout the period. They also occur inland at the reservoirs being noted in most years, usually in ones or twos; the only inland counts over ten were: 14 at BG in September 1963, and at CVL, 21 in October 1987 and 15 in September 1995.



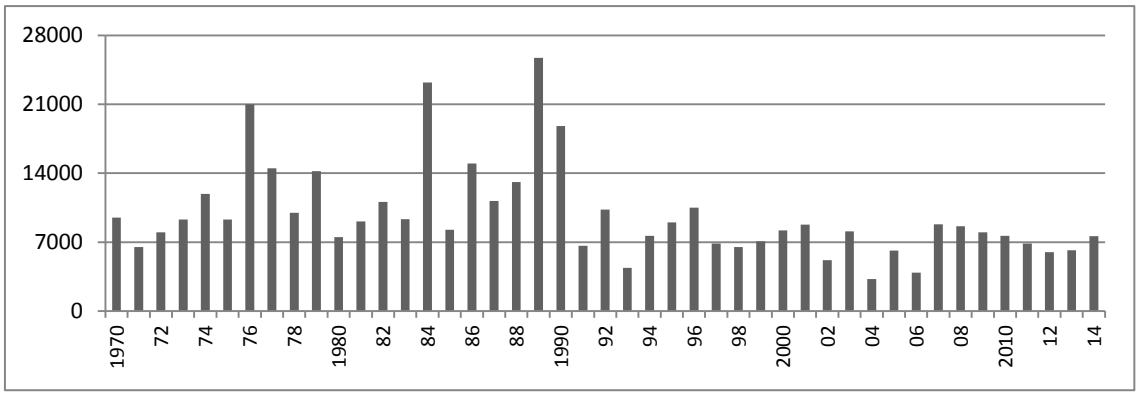

Knot maximum single count per year

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Avon Status 229%

This is the only wader species that has occurred in the Avon area in 'Internationally Important' numbers, that is on a few occasions at least 1% of the total NE Atlantic flyway population (about 1.3 million) was present in our area. This is also indicated by the relatively high Avon Status figure of over twice the norm for Great Britain. Unlike the previous species it feeds on a wide range of invertebrates and so its distribution is not as so food-restricted. The species ranges widely throughout the holarctic region breeding in the more northern parts,

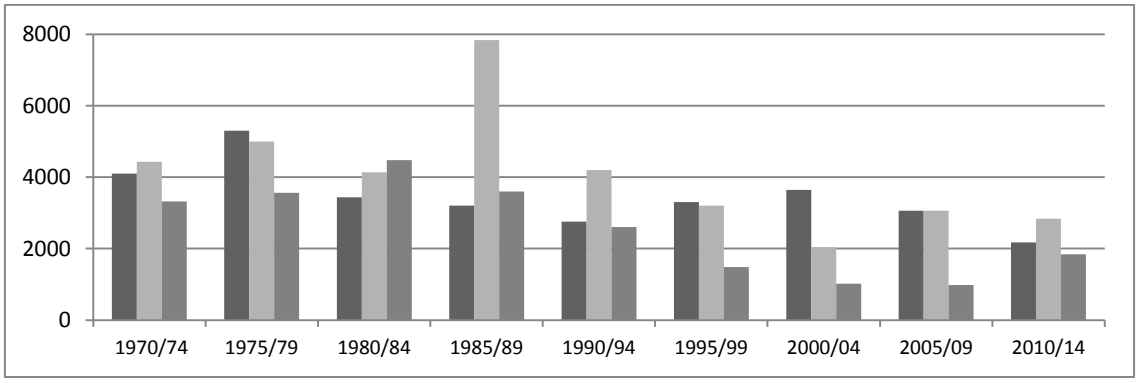
including small numbers in the northern half of the UK. About eight subspecies are recognised three of which occur in our area; these are *alpina* – most birds in the winter flocks belong to this race; the slightly smaller and shorter billed *schinzii* – the spring and autumn migrants mainly belong to this race, and the smallest of the three, *arctica,* which breeds in the high arctic. In the Avon area an unknown but probably very small number of this last subspecies (it is likely to be fewer than ten) occur on passage each year, the only definite records being from mid May to early June when they are in breeding plumage and so they are more easily distinguishable in the field from the other subspecies; see the paper in this Report for 2010 [Martin 2010].

The largest flocks are present on the coast in winter; as noted above almost all of these belong to the race *alpina,* and they can occur in huge numbers. In fact one of the most spectacular ornithological sights in our region is of a flock of thousands 'wheeling about overhead in unison' above a coastal roost site. The highest single count is 16,500 noted at Cl-Y in January 1989, and counts in five figures were not uncommon in the past. But for reasons that are not fully understood, counts have generally been lower recently, in 2012 the largest was 2800 but it was 3700 in 2014. This is illustrated in the first two bar charts below; the first gives the sum for each year of the maximum counts made during the January-February period for the three main sites: Severnside, Cl-Y and Sand/Weston Bays, these figures ranging from 3260 (in 2004) to 25700 (in 1989) with an average of 9755. As can be seen from the chart, counts for the period 1976 to 1990 were noticeably better than those recorded in the last two decades.



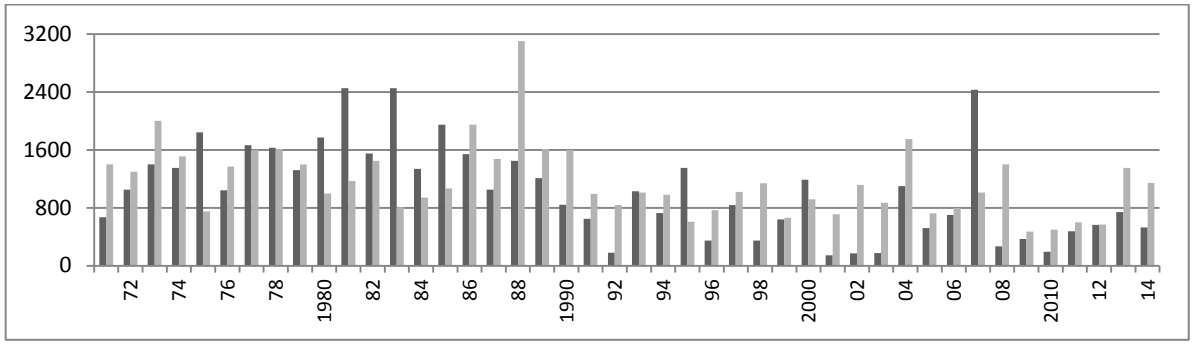

Dunlin total of winter (Jan/Feb) coastal maxima for Severnside, Cl-Y and Sand/Weston Bays

The chart above obscures the differences between the three main sites over the period, so the second chart below gives the five-year averages for these sites separately. The Severnside and Sand/Weston Bay counts have decreased over the period while those for Cl-Y have been erratic; changing feeding conditions in the Estuary related to the movement of the mud banks may partly explain these variations. It should be noted that good numbers do also occur at both OPS and PWD.



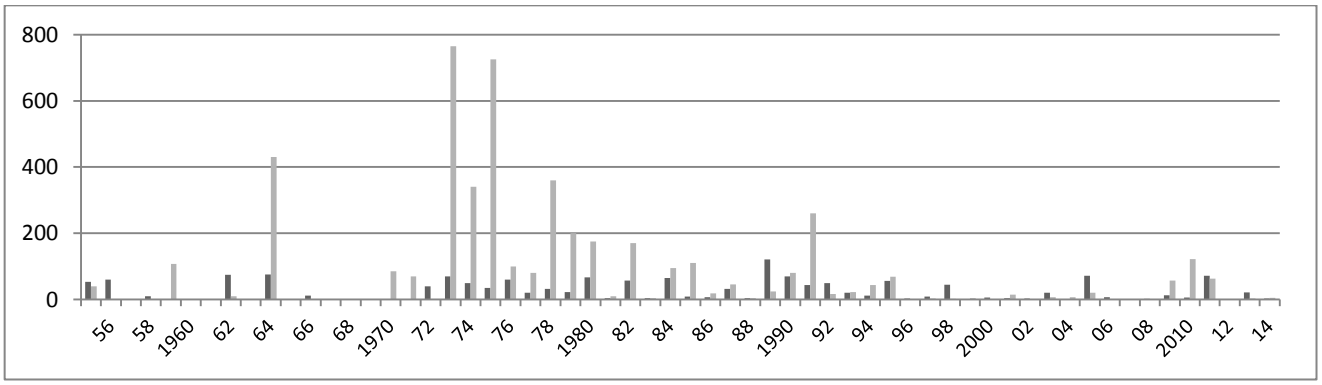

Dunlin five year winter averages for S-side (black), Cl-Y (pale grey) and Sand/Weston Bays (mid grey)

Next we consider passage. The third coastal chart given overleaf was constructed similarly to the first, with black bars for spring (that is May maxima, average 1030) and grey bars for autumn (August/September maxima, average 1160). With one or two exceptions the spring (black) counts show a similar drop since 1990 compared with those noted in winter, but this is not so evident for the autumn (grey) counts. In some recent years counts have been very low indeed (note that 2001 was the 'foot-and-mouth' year). On the other hand the best autumn count was for 1988 when 1200 were recorded at both Severnside and Sand Bay with 700 at Cl-Y, giving an autumn total of 3100 that year. As noted above most birds in these flocks belong to the subspecies *schinzii* (breeding in SE Greenland, Iceland, Britain and east to the Baltic), but a small proportion of *alpina* and probably also a few *arctica* (breeding in NE Greenland) also occur.




Dunlin coastal passage counts produced as in first chart with spring in black and autumn in grey

The great majority of Avon records are coastal but there have been some notable sightings inland, again mainly before 1990. Most were for CVL, but they have occurred at all main reservoirs, on the R. Avon at Sea Mills (up to 90 at times) and in the Saltford/Keynsham area. Two unusual sites have also hosted sizeable flocks probably when they were wet or flooded; these were: Marksbury Plain with 90 in January 1988, and Kenn Moor on several occasions including November 1971 (150) and February 1978 when a remarkable 1000 were present. The fourth chart below illustrates the CVL records, the black bars give the autumn maxima (average 31) and the grey bars those for winter (average 99). As can be seen from the chart during the 1970s quite large numbers wintered here, the record being 765 in December 1973 with 725 exactly two years later. These were years when the water level was low but it has been low in several years since then with no repeat of these high counts. BL also hosts sizeable flocks on some occasions, the largest were both in December: 80 in 1964 and 63 in 2011.




Dunlin maxima CVL – autumn passage in black and winter in grey

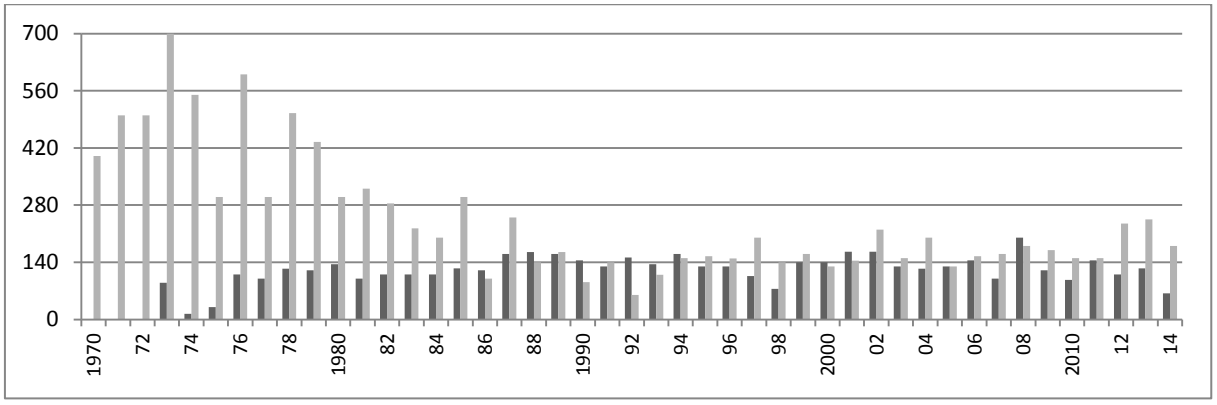
**Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Avon Status 193%

Two distinct populations occur which have experienced very different fortunes. The resident breeding population is currently at a very low ebb whilst the wintering population breeding in northern Europe and Iceland has shown some notable recent increases. The UK population as a whole has declined by about 20% over the last decade but in the Estuary the opposite is true with an increase of about 25% over the same period; it has been suggested that many of our birds breed in Iceland – hence the difference. The species is now 12th in National Importance according to the latest WeBS data, Avon accounting for a good proportion; see also the Avon Status figure. It feeds on a wide range of invertebrates including polychaete annelids (mainly *Nereis* and *Nephthys*), molluscs (including *Macoma* and *Hydrobia*) and crustaceans (*Corophium* and *Bathyporeia*). These are most common in the central part of the Estuary reflecting the good Avon counts.

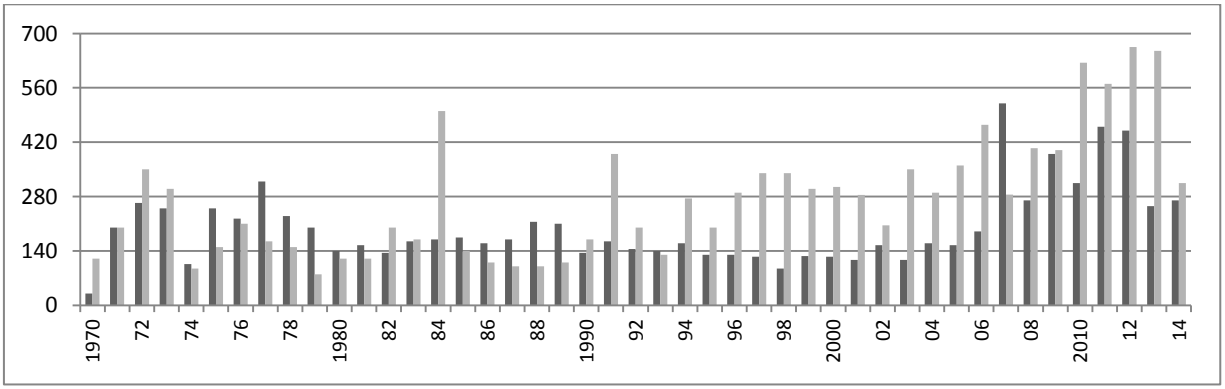
The two charts given on the next page illustrate the changes since 1970; little organised non-breeding data is available prior to that date. The charts give the maximum autumn counts at four sites, three on the coast and one slightly inland. They are Severnside (grey, average 245 per year) and Sea Mills (black, average 114) in the first chart, and Cl-Y (black, average 202) and the Axe Estuary (grey, average 273) in the second. The upper chart is the only one to include data from the banks of the R. Avon at Sea Mills, this species being the main wader occurring here, good sized flocks (150+) being regular. The three coastal sites have shown differing fortunes, Severnside used to host large flocks (maximum 700 in August 1973) but these flocks have reduced considerably since about 1985. On the other hand the Axe Estuary, and more recently Cl-Y, have seen large increases, the maxima are: Cl-Y – 520 in October 2007 and Axe Estuary – 665 in September 2012; better feeding conditions, sometimes provided artificially, may be one cause.

The other three main coastal sites have also reported variable numbers. Since about 1980 OPS maxima have been in the 100 to 150 range; PWD counts have often been below 100 but 650 were noted here in January

1974, 400 in September 1985 and 300 in the autumn of 2010. The Sand Bay count maxima were often above 200 prior to 1980 with 900 recorded in October 1977, they had dropped to nothing by 1990 but since then flocks of around 100 have been reported spasmodically. Small numbers, usually between one and five, also occur at the reservoirs, mainly in autumn at CVL; maxima here were 17 in September 1989 and 1992, and July 1998, but 37 were recorded in July 1973; also 18 were noted at BL in early October 2001.




Redshank autumn maxima: Grey – Severnside, black – Sea mills




Redshank autumn maxima: Black – Cl-Y, grey – Axe Estuary

Up to 1962 there was a thriving breeding population in the Avon area with between 20 and 50 pairs regularly recorded at sites including: OPS (max. two), PWD (max. ten), Cl-Y (max. nine), Sand Bay (max. two), Axe Estuary (max. three), CVL (max. 14) and several other sites including Kenn and Nailsea Moors. Breeding had apparently seized at BL by 1939. None were recorded in 1963 or 1964 (the 1962/63 winter was very severe). In 1965 nesting began again but it never returned to the earlier level and it was mostly restricted to PWD, the Gordano Valley, Cl-Y and the N. Somerset moors. By the 1980s nest counts had increased to between ten and 20 with most at PWD. In the best year here, 1982, a total of 13 pairs produced 41 young. Since then numbers have dwindled to almost zero, no nests were recorded inland after 2005, and although pairs have been present in April and May at both PWD and Cl-Y most failed to breed. One measure of this decline can be seen at Cl-Y; here the late May total count dropped from 35 in 1980 to four in 2014. But on a slightly more encouraging note a pair did breed successfully here in 2013, at Dowlais Farm some parts of which stayed wet throughout the spring period. This was the first proved breeding in Avon since 2001; see page 68 for 2014 data.

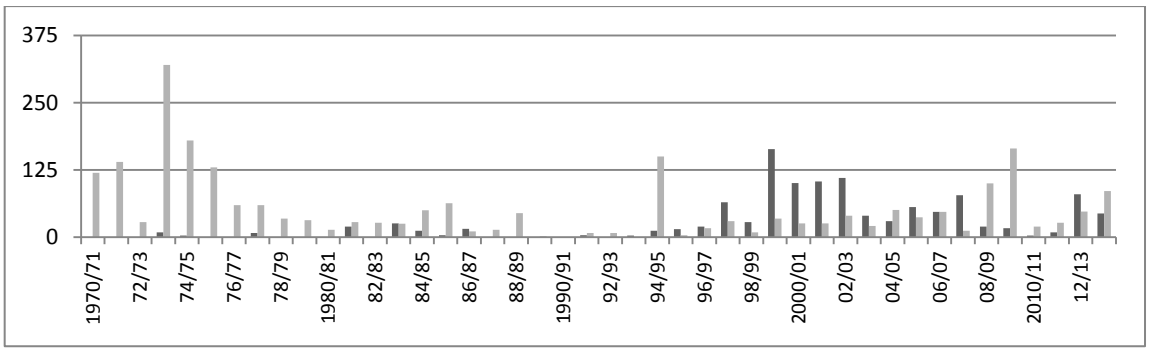
**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Avon Status 120%

There is a general impression that this species has declined dramatically in the Avon area over the past half century, but although there have been some notable declines the evidence is not entirely conclusive. Certainly at the present time it no longer breeds. There has also been some recent decline nationally. The Estuary does not and has never featured on any list of national importance, this is also true for many other coastal sites in the country and this is reflected by the Avon Status figure given above. Currently in the Avon area this species is mainly a winter visitor occurring on salt marshes and other damp areas, some passage is noted but this is usually not very evident. One problem monitoring this species is that it also occurs quite widely inland, more so than most other waders, being recorded especially on the low-lying moors, but also on farmland, along the rivers and at the reservoirs. Also it seems to favour a particular site for a few years and then desert it for no apparent reason.

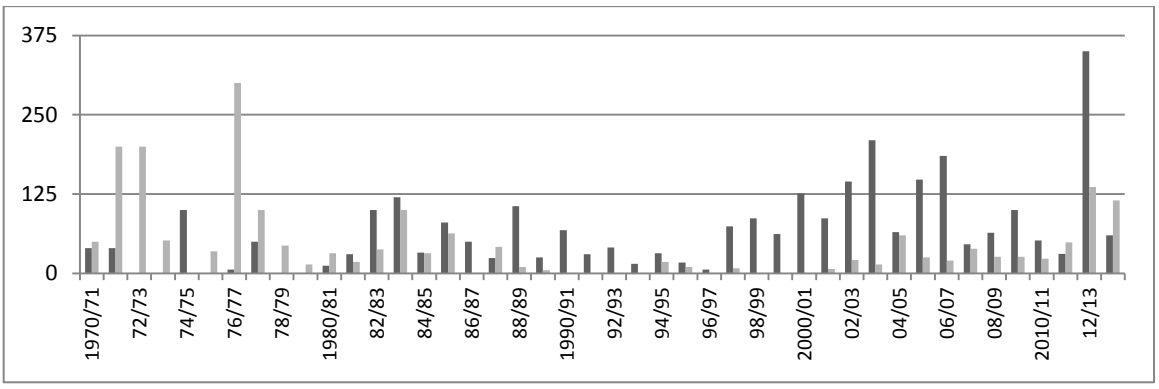
To illustrate the records over the study period we chose five regions and the charts overleaf give maximum winter counts for the site in question. This species was common at the beginning of the study period so

unfortunately not much data is available prior to 1970. Consequently, we have taken this as the start date for the charts. The five regions chosen are: OPS/Littleton (black in the top chart, average 26 per year), Sand Bay/Axe Estuary (grey in the top chart, average 53), Gordano Valley/PWD (black in the middle chart, average 66), the N. Somerset moors including Congresbury, Kenn, Nailsea and Yatton (grey in the middle chart, average 44), and CVL (bottom chart, average 69). These charts show that three of the sites, Sand Bay/Axe Estuary, the N. Somerset moors and CVL, recorded good numbers during the 1970s with lower numbers after about 1980, whilst the remaining two sites, OPS and PWD/Gordano Valley, began the period with poor numbers, but since 1998 these have improved considerably giving record counts in the last few years. For example in January 2013, 80 were reported from OPS and 350 from the Gordano Valley. Recently there has been a general upsurge in the counts which coincided with the very wet conditions experienced during the past two winters, this suggests that one of the causes of the changing fortunes of this species may be related to rainfall.

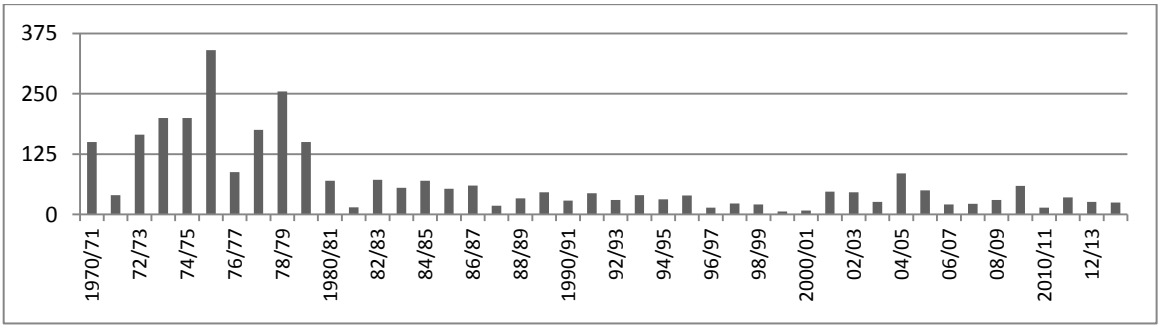
The breeding season position is unfortunately quite different. Half a century ago this species bred at several sites in the Avon area, mostly but not exclusively on the moors including the Gordano Valley. Specific counts are not available but for example six nests were reported in 1967, so the number of pairs was probably in double figures. Reports slowly declined and by the 1990s breeding was mainly restricted to the low lying parts of the Gordano Valley. In 1999 up to four pairs were present and in 2000 breeding was suspected. There was then a gap until 2005 when a pair bred in the Valley on Weston Moor. 'Drumming' was noted the following year, but no breeding has occurred since then. This decline mirrors the situation in much of the country although the Somerset levels to the south of our region do seem to be bucking this trend at the moment, perhaps because they retain many wet areas throughout the spring and early summer.




Snipe winter counts: Grey – OPS, black – Sand Bay/Axe Estuary




Snipe winter counts: Grey – N.Somerset moors, black – PWD/Gordano Valley




Snipe winter counts at CVL

## Discussion

We shall start with the breeding populations. At the beginning of the study period in 1950 reasonable numbers of Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe bred in the Avon area but detailed estimates are not available. A few Oystercatcher pairs also bred but Curlew which had probably only bred on a few occasions prior to that date did not. The evidence for Ringed Plover is inconclusive and Little Ringed Plover was yet to appear.

Since 1950 breeding by the first three of these species has declined dramatically to a point teetering on extinction. One of the main reasons for this is the general drying out of local farmland, this is apparently good for crop yields but definitely not helpful for breeding waders. The much larger colonies on the Somerset levels to the south of our region have also experienced some considerable declines, see Archer [2014]. This paper refers to drying out of the Levels farmland as one cause of the decline and notes that much of the breeding activity there is now concentrated on reserves managed (that is kept wet) for the waders. It also suggests that predation -- mainly by foxes -- is also a serious problem, and the Somerset levels and moors with the best results now have their main breeding sites fenced off against these predators. There is no direct evidence, but mammalian predation may also have been a problem in the Avon area; in addition, predation by crows and large gulls has been noted at coastal sites.

On the positive side two recent events have shown potential. In late 2012 and up to mid 2013 a site inland from Severn Beach (Western Distribution Park, sometimes called Western Approaches) was accidently flooded, and left 'wild' and undisturbed, before development started in early summer. A good number of waders were reported here during this quiet period, at least two pairs of Lapwing bred and Little Ringed Plover were displaying; see last year's Report for details. Also in 2014 after another very wet winter and early spring more Lapwing (and some Redshank) display was seen, and the number of successful broods increased. So if the conditions are right, breeding birds are quick to take advantage of them.

Some pairs of Oystercatcher continue to breed on or near the coast with the best results from the dock areas around the mouth of the R. Avon; counts are usually in the low single figures. Also on the coast the two small plover species have bred in the past and continue to do so now with counts sometimes in double figures for Ringed Plover. Currently, all nests are found in the same dock areas, although some other coastal sites have been used in the past. The management of these dock sites (mainly for storage of imported vehicles) has inadvertently provided good breeding conditions; that is mostly undisturbed areas close to the Estuary that are flat, damp and shingly. Again, if the habitat and conditions are right, and the sites are left undisturbed, then the birds will breed.

We come now to the much larger non-breeding populations. Here, although some major declines have been noted, generally speaking the situation is nowhere as bleak as it is for the breeding species. The first question to consider is: how do the Avon populations compare with those in the rest of the country? On average, approximately 1 in 110 of the waders occurring on the coasts of Great Britain are seen on the Avon coast. (This ratio was calculated using WeBS data.) Applying this ratio and data for the 2010/11 season (the last survey where detailed WeBS counts are available -- we used data for September, January and May and compared the totals for Avon with those for Great Britain as a whole) shows that for the species discussed in this paper, four – Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Black-tailed Godwit and Knot – are much less common on the Avon coast than nationally, three – Lapwing, Curlew and Snipe – are about as common, another four – Ringed Plover, Turnstone, Dunlin and Redshank – are noticeably more common, and the Estuary is nationally important for Whimbrel. The data for Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are inconclusive, in most years these species belong to the first less common group, but occasionally when the conditions are right they turn up in the third, more common, group. Detailed percentage figures, for the 2010/11 season – labelled Avon Status -- are given in the first line of the entries in the systematic list section of this paper where 100% indicates that in general the species in question is currently about as common on the Avon coast as it is on the coasts and estuaries of Great Britain as a whole.

The non-breeding populations occur mainly on the coast. Golden Plover, Lapwing and Snipe also occur widely inland, but the WeBS surveys coverage is probably not as good here as they are on the coast. Reasonable flocks of two other species also occur inland: Black-tailed Godwit with some notably higher counts recently in line with the increases on the N. Avon coast and nationally, and Dunlin which was seen in quite big numbers at the reservoirs during parts of the 1970s and 1980s but since then counts have usually been in single figures.

The double table at the top of the next page summarises the coastal counts for the past forty years. The first half of the table gives a brief summary of the WeBS data for Great Britain as a whole whilst the second half of the table gives the same data for the Avon coast. Species are listed in increasing order as shown by the Avon Status figures discussed above.

| Species | Great Britain | | Avon Status | Avon | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Last forty years | Last five years | | Last forty years | Last five years |
| | | | | | |
| Knot | Stable | Stable | 5% | Stable after 1975 | Stable (low) |
| Black-tailed Godwit | Continuous rise | Sharp rise | 7% | Variable, few 1975 to 1995 | Sharp rise |
| Oystercatcher | Slight fall since 1990 | Stable | 12% | NE: Rise since 1995 | Stable |
| | | | | SW: Stable | Rise |
| Golden Plover | Rise to 2005 then fall | Steep fall | 18+% | Low counts since 1980 | Stable (low) |
| Grey Plover | Rise to 1995 then fall | Slight fall | 20% | Rise to 1995 then fall | Stable |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | Fairly stable | Rise | 25+% | Stable | Stable |
| | | | | | |
| Lapwing | Rise to 1995 then fall | Steep fall | 76% | Slight rise | Stable |
| Snipe | Better since 1990 | Stable | 120% | No trend | Stable |
| Curlew | Rise to 2000 then fall | Slight fall | 139% | NE: Stable | NE: Stable |
| | | | | SW: Fall since 1980 | SW: Rise |
| | | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | Rise to 1990 then sharp fall | Steep fall | 172% | Slight fall both spring and autumn | Variable |
| Redshank | Variable to 2000 then fall | Fall | 193% | NE: Fall since 1980 | NE: Stable |
| | | | | SW: Stable | SW: Sharp rise |
| Turnstone | Fall since 1985 | Slight fall | 224% | NE: fall since 1970 | Stable |
| | | | | SW: Slight rise | Stable |
| Dunlin | Variable to 1995 then fall | Variable | 229% | Stable to 1990 then fall | Slight fall |
| | | | | | |
| Whimbrel | No data | | 2620% | Slight fall since 1985 | Slight rise |

Summary comparing the records of the common Avon wader species with those for the whole of Great Britain

The first group of six in the table, Knot to Bar-tailed Godwit, mainly occur much less commonly on the Avon coast than nationally. All we can be safely deduce from the data is that the Avon flocks have, in the main, followed the national trends. These have been reasonably stable for all but Black-tailed Godwit which has shown a notable rise recently -- both nationally and locally. In the second group Lapwing and Curlew often occur in quite large flocks (1000+) whilst flocks of Snipe can be in three figures at times. Over the long term the national and local trends for these three species have been similar but they have diverged to some extent recently. Notwithstanding breeding failures in the past few years, the winter Lapwing and Curlew flocks have fared better locally than nationally whilst Snipe has shown no trend, but their long-term fates have not diverged by much. The true status of the Snipe is difficult to assess owing to its secretive nature and wide ranging habits.

The next group of four, Ringed Plover to Dunlin, is perhaps the most important; very large flocks can occur and they are proportionally more common on the Avon coast than elsewhere. In Avon, Turnstone has followed the national slow downward trend although recently this has not been so marked. Similarly Redshank numbers have followed the national slow decline but recently they have also bucked this trend with some notably better counts. The latter rise is to be welcomed, it is probably at least in part related to environmental changes providing better feeding conditions, for example with the construction of Blake's Pools and its associated muddy areas at Cl-Y and more recently the Pilning Wetlands on Severnside. The remaining two species in this group, Ringed Plover and Dunlin -- important species in Avon's avifauna -- have also tended to follow the national slowly declining trend. Although year by year these changes are only slight, over forty years the declines add up, in Avon both of these species are between a third and a half down with total losses in the thousands. For example, on average some 2000 Dunlin are now 'missing' in winter compared with 40 years ago. The run of mainly milder winters over the past twenty years may have something to do with this but it is not the only factor, global warming is another possibility. The last species, Whimbrel, is special on several counts, it is mainly a spring migrant and the Estuary is nationally important for it. Nevertheless, locally it has again followed the trend of the previous two species with slowing declining counts, on average a drop of about 30% over the past 30 years.

In summary the Avon wader populations are only faring moderately, many have shown a slow decline over the past forty years but there are some exceptions. This is in line with the trends for the uncommon species noted in the first part of ths paper where some information was available for the period 1950 to 1970. Unfortunately very little is available for the common species during this period. Long-term this slow decline is of major concern for the avifauna of the Avon area for, unless major changes are made, the pressures that brought it about are only likely to increase in the coming decades. When the environmental conditions are right the flocks will return as we have noticed recently with some breeding species.

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Avon and Somerset Bird Reports published by the AOG, BNS and the Somerset Ornithological Society since 1950.

## Appendix

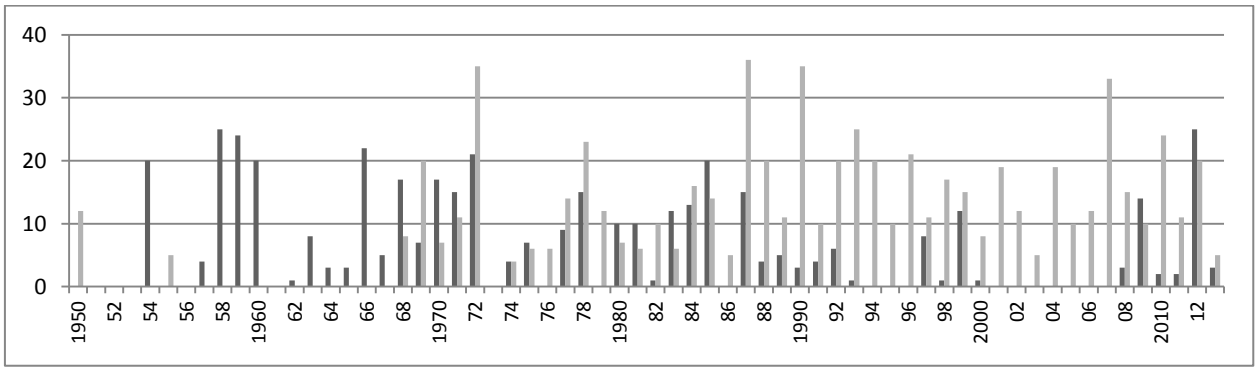
Since last year a few extra facts and high counts for the uncommon waders have come to light, these are listed below with a puzzling non-proven record.

### [**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*]

In late 1987 and early 1988 a plover, larger than a Ringed Plover but smaller and slighter than a Golden Plover, was noted at both CVL and Marksbury Plain, it caused much debate. It showed many of the characteristics of an East Asian Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, but its underwings were white and not grey, and its greater coverts were notched and not yellow – that is, characteristics of a (European) Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. So its identity was never established, it could have been a hybrid, but as it showed many 'Pacific' features we have included it here in 'square brackets'.

**Curlew Sandpiper** Ferns [1977] referring to earlier literature states that this species was a 'regular winter visitor' to the Welsh part of the Estuary in the late 19th century. It seems highly likely that this was also true for the English part, and so also for Avon.

**Sanderling** At Cl-Y, ten were noted in February 1974 – a good winter count. There have also been three high counts inland: ten at CVL in May 1976 – the inland record, nine were here in September 2014 and nine were noted in flight at BL in late May 2011. The legend in the chart given in last year's report on page 144 was wrong, this has been corrected in the version printed below.




Spring passage totals, black -- Severnside, grey -- Sand Bay area.

**Little Stint** At Cl-Y, 46 were recorded in late September 1973, so the 'black' bar in the chart on page 145 in last year's Report should now be 55, and the maximum for 1973 given a few lines above the chart should now read '141'. Hence the year in question, 1973, was the best since 1950 for this species in the Avon area. The second best is now 1996 when, coincidently, BL also recorded 46 in late September.

# Changes in the Bird Populations of Bristol, 2000-2012

Richard Bland

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was instigated by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) in 1994, but very few squares were counted within the City of Bristol before 2000. Then, as a millennium project, it was decided to try to survey every one-*km* square in the city, and the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 helped to concentrate birding resources away from the countryside in that year. In all 112 squares were surveyed at least twice. Two survey visits were made during the breeding season, a month apart, and they involved standard walks of two parallel one-*km* transects, in theory 300*m* apart. The results were published as a Breeding Atlas in Bland and Tully [2010]. The survey was designed to measure change, so no estimate of population sizes for individual species was given.

There were 1368 visits, in total 2736*km* was covered on foot in 1341 hours at an average speed of just over 2.0*km* per hour, and 233,500 birds were counted. Between 2001 and 2007 over 50% of the city was surveyed each year, and from 2008 to 2012 over 33% was surveyed. At least 40 squares (36%) were visited by the most dedicated individuals in eight or more of the 13 years of the survey, and 30 were visited in every year. It is worth emphasising that this is a 'breeding bird survey' concentrated in spring and early summer, so many common Avon species, for example Black-headed Gull, are not involved at all.

**Abundance**

We used the rate per linear kilometre, hereafter abbreviated as *blk* as a measure of abundance. This was preferred to the rate per hour because, although the average walking speed was 2.0*km* per hour, individual observers varied between 1.1 and 3.8 *km* per hour. There was also a weak correlation between abundance and the total time taken, because the time taken depended on the number of birds present. The average rate over all squares was 83*blk*, but individual squares varied between 35*blk* and 179*blk.* The 40 squares that provided the bulk of the data had abundances ranging from 45*blk* to 179*blk* with an average of 91*blk*. The remaining 72 squares that were also visited had an average abundance of 78*blk*, and 39 of these squares had an abundance rating that was below the overall average -- in other words the survey was marginally biased towards those areas of the city that had greater bird abundance.

**Population structure of the observed bird population**

This article examines the observed population structure and the changes between 2000 and 2012 for the 24 breeding species that provide over 90% of the total count annually. The average rate was 85*blk*. To obtain a broader view they have been split into eight groups. In 2000 Starlings and House Sparrows dominated the structure with over 20% of the totals counted, they were followed by doves and pigeons (that is Feral Pigeon, Wood Pigeon and Collared Dove), and the corvids (Magpie, Jackdaw and Carrion Crow), then the thrushes (Blackbird and Song Thrush), and 'Robins' (that is Wren, Robin and Dunnock) on 10% each. Tits (Blue and Great Tit) and finches (Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinch) were both around 5% and the larger gulls (Lesser Black-back and Herring Gull) on less than 4%. By 2012 doves and pigeons had risen to 22%, corvids to 15%, Starlings and House Sparrows had fallen to 13%, Thrushes, Robins, Tits and Finches were almost unchanged, but the gulls had risen to almost 7% of the total. In terms of percentage change the gulls had risen by 76%, doves and pigeons by 21% and Starlings and House Sparrows had fallen by 35%. These are rapid and dramatic changes in the population structure of the city, Table 1 gives the details.

| | 2000 | 2012 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Doves and pigeons | 17.9 | 21.7 | 21 |
| Corvids | 13.2 | 15.3 | 16 |
| Starling and House Sparrow | 20.5 | 13.4 | -35 |
| Wren, Robin and Dunnock | 10.7 | 11.5 | 7 |
| Thrushes | 10.6 | 10.2 | -4 |
| Large gulls | 3.8 | 6.6 | 74 |
| Tits | 5.5 | 5.7 | 4 |
| Finches | 4.4 | 4.4 | 0 |

Table 1 -- Structure of the Bristol populations; with the percentages of each group observed in 2000 and 2012, and the percentage changes over this period

**Biomass structure**

The change becomes more dramatic when looked at in biomass terms. Biomass is calculated by multiplying the number of individuals of each species observed by their average weight. Biomass matters because it affects the total amount of food consumed. A fall in the biomass of one species will probably make food available to another. Each species occupies a specific ecological niche but, as we see in the competition on our bird tables, there can be substantial species overlap in the

consumption of the same food types. Doves and pigeons are the dominant group and have increased over the period, but the large gulls have overtaken the corvids, and all other species account for less than 10% of the total biomass. The greatest biomass fall was for Starlings and House Sparrows. Essentially the larger scavengers are increasingly taking over from the smaller ones, but the change primarily affects Starlings, as House Sparrow numbers have hardly altered over the period. Looking at the overall changes in numbers and in biomass, we see that numbers have fallen by 10% but biomass has increased by 7%. To put it another way, the larger birds are in part displacing the smaller ones.

| | 2000 | 2012 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Doves and pigeons | 36 | 39 | 8 |
| Large gulls | 17 | 24 | 41 |
| Corvids | 24 | 23 | -4 |
| Thrushes | 5 | 4 | -20 |
| Starling and House Sparrow | 6 | 2 | -67 |
| Wren, Robin and Dunnock | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Tits, Finches | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2 – Biomass structure of Bristol's birds; with the percentages of each group observed in 2000 and 2012, and the percentage change over the period

**Individual species population change**

Total abundance has varied between a maximum of 90*blk* in 2004 and a minimum of 73*blk* in 2008. This variation reflects differences both in the number of survey walks done in a year and real differences in the populations. Over the whole period abundance fell from 89*blk* in 2000 to 80*blk* in 2012, a drop of 10% which is significant.

Of the 24 species surveyed, eight had effectively stable populations, changing by no more than 10% either way. Seven have increased, and nine have decreased. The extremes are Goldfinch which increased by 350% and Herring Gull by 119%, whilst Starling fell by 73%, Swift by 57% and Chaffinch by 50%. Putting this into perspective, the two big gulls have replaced Starlings and to a lesser extent Feral Pigeons as the major scavengers, Wood Pigeons have continued to advance, while Collared Doves have begun to decline. Greenfinches, after growing steadily to 2006, have collapsed to below their 2000 level, and Chaffinches, stable until 2005, have halved since then. Magpies initially declined, but increased from 2005, Blackcaps increased steadily, Collared Doves declined from 2004, and Swifts fell steeply in the first three years and have been stable since then, although the BBS does not survey this species well. The two big gulls are concentrated into specific areas in the breeding season, but detailed evidence shows a steady expansion not reflected in these figures. Mallard numbers similarly fluctuate depending on the extent to which their habitat is visited in any particular year in the survey.

| | Average rate *blk* | Percentage change |
|---|---|---|
| Goldfinch | 0.6 | 353 |
| Herring Gull | 1.8 | 119 |
| Blackcap | 1.2 | 64 |
| Wood Pigeon | 8.9 | 63 |
| LBB Gull | 3.4 | 27 |
| Chiffchaff | 1 | 25 |
| Magpie | 3.3 | 20 |
| House Sparrow | 7.2 | 10 |
| Robin | 3 | 8 |
| Dunnock | 1.5 | 0 |
| Jackdaw | 3.2 | -4 |
| Great Tit | 1.6 | -4 |
| Crow | 4.8 | -5 |
| Song Thrush | 0.8 | -7 |
| Blue Tit | 3.1 | -10 |
| Wren | 5 | -14 |
| Blackbird | 7.5 | -16 |
| Greenfinch | 2.1 | -26 |
| Feral Pigeon | 6.2 | -28 |
| Mallard | 1.4 | -29 |
| Collared Dove | 2.3 | -38 |
| Chaffinch | 1.5 | -50 |
| Swift | 1.7 | -57 |
| Starling | 7.8 | -73 |

Table 3 -- Change in the observed populations of 24 species between 2000 and 2012.

**Causes of change**

All avian populations fluctuate continually depending on many factors, and this fluctuation is in part inter-active because of competition for the same food resources. This is especially true in urban areas where the combination of deliberate feeding of birds in gardens, and the substantial quantities of waste food that can be found on the streets, provide wide opportunities for many species.

The Goldfinch is a vivid examples of change brought about by the popularisation of Niger seed in bird feeders which they alone eat, and which has caused a national increase. The decline of Greenfinch and Chaffinch is related to the spread of the disease *Trichomonosis* from 2006, which may have been assisted by contaminated bird-tables.

The decline of the Collared Dove, probably related to Sparrowhawk predation, may have given more opportunities to the Wood Pigeon which also eats seeds. Feral Pigeons flocks often rely on a specific human feeder, or food source, and there has been a city wide campaign to discourage this habit. In the past 20 years there has been a substantial drop in city centre flocks, and a tendency to spread into the suburbs coupled with an overall decline in numbers. These pigeons are also in direct competition with the big gulls for street food, and are predated by Peregrines in the city. Swifts are not well surveyed by the BBS, but nationally there has been an unexplained decline, although certainly three cold wet summers have not helped. It is also possible that air pollution may be affecting their insect food supply.

The House Sparrow suffered a steep fall in the 1980s, but these results suggest the population in Bristol has stabilised. A detailed four-year study in Bristol (Shaw [2009]) showed that the cause of the decline was the recent change in gardening habits. For adults this was related to the loss of weed seeds, caused by the use of mulches and other low maintenance methods, and for the young this was related to the decline in vegetable gardens, and hence caterpillars. There are still Sparrow-rich areas in Bristol in sharp contrast to Sparrow-poor ones.

The decline of the Starling is also part of a national pattern, which may also be related to a decline in garden lawn space, and the rise of decking, paving and gravel, with a simultaneous decline in soil invertebrates, but more research is needed on this point.

**Areas of the city that are bird rich and bird poor**

It is a widespread assumption that urban development is bad for birds, and there are some common species that find urban conditions intolerable. Skylark, Rook, and Swallow, are the most obvious, and there is a range of less common specialist water and estuarine species that are rarely found breeding in urban areas. But for the most part both the common and the less common species of the countryside are also found in towns if the habitat is suitable. There are also a few species that are specifically adapted to urban conditions, Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gulls, and Feral Pigeon are the most obvious.

The best areas in the city for birds can be defined in three possible ways; by the variety of species found, by the total bird abundance, or by the total avian biomass that they support. The average number of species in each one-*km* square in the city was 35 made up of the 24 species that supply 95% of the numbers and 11 others that are more directly habitat specific. However, the number of species *found* in a square is a function of the total amount of survey time undertaken as the more elusive and less abundant species will only be found after many hours of observation. Species such as Treecreeper and Sparrowhawk are examples of species that may well be widely present, but are easily missed. All of the 40 squares that provided the bulk of the records in this survey had at least 32 hours of observation, enough to find every species present. The highest number of species found was 61, the lowest, despite many survey hours, was only 26. A total of 33 squares held more than the average of 35 species, and seven below. Of the 61 squares that had fewer visits 22, a third, had above average species lists and 39, two thirds, were below.

The number of species is also a function of the variety of habitat available in a square, and water habitats give a range of species that will not be present in dry areas. The two best squares were at exact opposite ends of the city -- the Avonmouth Sewage Works (ST5379) and Stockwood Open Space (ST6269). In order below them were Stoke Park including Duchess Pond (ST6176), Clifton Wood, (ST5772), Ashton Marsh (ST5670), Penpole Point, (ST5377), Arnos Vale (ST6071), Kings Weston tip (ST5378), and Eastville Park (ST6175).

The worst squares with the fewest species were predictable; some bleak squares areas around Avonmouth, densely urbanised areas around Two Mile Hill (ST6474), Horfield (ST5976 and ST5977), Redfield (ST6173), Stapleton Road (ST6074), Hillfields (ST6475), Windmill Hill, (ST5971), and Temple Meads (ST5972). These are all areas, with little or no green space, few trees, and no streams, that were developed in a hurry with little concern for the environment. They also all had few visits, and the species total might well increase if they were studied further. But one such area, Southmead (ST5878), was studied intensively and after 26 visits could only produce 26 species.

If total abundance, and not species variety, is considered the situation is rather different. Only five squares were high in both species number and abundance, and they were in order Combe Dingle (ST5576), Clifton Wood (ST5772), Stockwood (ST6269), Sneyd Park (ST5575), and Hanham (ST6371). Because Starling and House Sparrow

numbers are closely correlated, squares in Muller Road (ST6075), Ashley Down (ST5975), Knowle Park (ST6070), High Ridge (ST5668), Netham (ST6172), and Malago (ST5769), all scored well. At the other end of the scale well studied squares in Southmead (ST5877) and Stapleton (ST6276), had low abundance levels. Avonmouth (ST5179), Bedminster (ST5770), Hillfields (ST6475), Stapleton Road (ST6074), and Kensington Park (ST6171), combined very low abundance and poor species variety.

A third way to look at the best areas for birds is to consider biomass. A high level of avian biomass will indicate areas with a good food supply, but also with the largest numbers of heavy birds. To estimate this I calculated the biomass of Lesser Black-back and Herring Gulls, Feral Pigeons, Wood Pigeons, and the corvids for a sample of years. The corvids and Wood Pigeon are universally distributed, although in varying abundance, but substantial numbers of the large gulls were only found in 17 squares and Feral Pigeons in only ten, and 36 squares had low numbers of all of these species. The maximum biomass was recorded in a number of city centre squares, including Clifton Wood (ST5772), and Castle Park (ST5973), St Phillips (ST6072), and Netham (ST6172), because of their combination of the large gulls and Feral Pigeons. There were high figures from Stockwood (ST6269), where there is a gull colony, and from Eastville Park (ST6175), and Ashley Down (ST5975).

Looking at the 112 one-*km* squares in the city as a whole, no fewer than 49 came out close to the top in one of these three categories of bird richness, and 37 were at the bottom in one or more of them, leaving 26 in the category of being normal. Only five, three at Avonmouth, were poor in all aspects, and none were excellent in all three. The main lesson from this analysis is that birds are vastly adaptable, and will find a niche somewhere in almost any urban area.

**Abundance in Bristol compared with rural areas**

Because BBS covers the whole local region it is possible to compare the abundance measured in urban Bristol with that in a similar sized rural area, and to this end the same calculation method was applied to a comparable number of squares in rural areas of North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. In these rural areas 163,000 birds were counted in 948 surveys taking 1323 hours to walk 1896*km* at an average speed of 1.4*km* per hour between 2000 and 2012. Due to Foot and Mouth disease there were almost no visits in 2001. The overall rate was 86*blk*. (The equivalent figures for Bristol were 233,500 birds counted in 1368 visits taking 1341 hours to walk 2736*km* at an average of 2.0*km* per hour.

Table 4 shows the total numbers counted and their biomass, both given as percentages, in the rural areas of Avon and Bristol.

| | Rural numbers | Bristol numbers | | Rural biomass | Bristol biomass |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corvids | 24 | 14 | | 52 | 24 |
| Doves and pigeons | 15 | 20 | | 34 | 37 |
| Wren, Robin and Dunnock | 15 | 11 | | 1 | 1 |
| Thrushes | 11 | 10 | | 2 | 5 |
| Starling and House Sparrow | 10 | 17 | | 1 | 4 |
| Finches | 10 | 4 | | 1 | 0 |
| Tits | 9 | 6 | | 0 | 0 |
| Large gulls | 3 | 5 | | 7 | 20 |

Table 4 -- The structure in percentages of the observed populations and their biomass for the rural areas of Avon and Bristol between 2000 and 2012

The figures for rural doves and pigeons include Stock Dove, and the rural corvids include Rook, neither of which play a significant part in the numbers counted in Bristol. The main difference in numbers is that, whereas the corvids dominate in the countryside, doves and pigeons dominate in Bristol where there are also far more Starlings and House Sparrows. In terms of biomass the dominance of the corvids in rural squares is even greater, and the role of the large gulls is far more significant in Bristol.

Next we consider biomass. Table 5 shows that the population changes between 2000 and 2012 in Bristol and rural areas were similar. Starlings were falling, and the large gulls and doves and pigeons increasing. A steep fall in Rook numbers caused the overall corvid population in rural areas to fall.

| | Rural change | Bristol change |
|---|---|---|
| Large gulls | 129 | 74 |
| Tits | 28 | 4 |
| Doves | 22 | 21 |
| Thushes | 21 | -4 |
| Wren, Robin and Dunnock | -6 | 7 |
| Corvids | -25 | 16 |
| Finches | -30 | 0 |
| Starling and House Sparrow | -44 | -35 |

Table 5 -- Changes in percentages between 2000 and 2012 in the major species groups,comparing the rural areas of Avon with Bristol

Finally, it is interesting to consider the average rates of the commonest species. Table 6 compares the average rates measured by *blk* in the rural areas and in Bristol, ranking them by order of greatest difference. There are eight species where the abundance in Bristol is a good deal greater than in rural areas, and six where the reverse is the case. That Feral Pigeons, Starlings, House Sparrows and the big gulls should be commoner in Bristol is no surprise, nor is the fact that Magpies, Blackbirds and Collared Doves are. But that Robins**,** Great Tits and Jackdaws should be more abundant in rural areas is more surprising. It is also notable how many of these common species are as much at home in urban areas as in rural ones. And of course this account does not deal with the fifty or so more specialist species: the ducks, raptors, woodland species, warblers, and buntings that make up less than five percent of the population, or any of the non-breeders. They are also threatened by habitat change and provide us with much bird-watching interest.

| | Rural | Bristol | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feral Pigeon | 0.4 | 6.2 | 5.8 |
| Starling | 3.6 | 7.8 | 4.2 |
| House Sparrow | 3.4 | 7.2 | 3.8 |
| LBB Gull | 1.2 | 3.4 | 2.2 |
| Magpie | 1.7 | 3.3 | 1.6 |
| Collared Dove | 1.1 | 2.3 | 1.2 |
| Blackbird | 6.4 | 7.5 | 1.1 |
| Herring Gull | 0.8 | 1.8 | 1.0 |
| Swift | 0.9 | 1.7 | 0.8 |
| Mallard | 0.7 | 1.4 | 0.7 |
| Wren | 4.8 | 5.0 | 0.2 |
| Wood Pigeon | 8.8 | 8.9 | 0.1 |
| Greenfinch | 2.1 | 2.1 | 0.0 |
| Dunnock | 1.7 | 1.5 | -0.2 |
| Blackcap | 1.5 | 1.2 | -0.3 |
| Stock Dove | 0.3 | 0.1 | -0.2 |
| Blue Tit | 3.6 | 3.1 | -0.5 |
| Crow | 5.5 | 4.8 | -0.7 |
| Chiffchaff | 1.7 | 1.0 | -0.7 |
| Goldfinch | 1.3 | 0.6 | -0.7 |
| Song Thrush | 1.6 | 0.8 | -0.8 |
| Robin | 3.9 | 3.0 | -0.9 |
| Great Tit | 2.6 | 1.6 | -1.0 |
| Skylark | 1.5 | 0.0 | -1.5 |
| Jackdaw | 5.4 | 3.2 | -2.2 |
| Chaffinch | 3.7 | 1.5 | -2.2 |
| Swallow | 2.9 | 0.0 | -2.9 |
| Rook | 4.3 | 0.3 | -4.0 |

Table 6 -- Average rates per linear *km*, 2000-2012, for 27 species in rural areas and Bristol, and the absolute difference between them

## References

Bland, R L and Tully, J [2010] -- *The Breeding Season Atlas of the Birds of Bristol, 2000-2008*. Bristol Ornithology **30**, pp. 3-59.

Shaw, L M [2009] -- *Investigating the role of socioeconomic status in determining urban habitat quality for House Sparrow* Passer domesticus. University of Exeter PhD thesis.

# Chew Valley Lake sixty years ago

Perhaps the major change in the ornithology of the Avon area in 1954, six decades ago, was the realisation that the Chew Stoke reservoir was to become a major player in the bird-life of the region, and nationally. Its construction was virtually complete and it began to fill during the year. Its name was changed first to Chew Valley reservoir and then to Chew Valley Lake (CVL). Several of the published records for that year comment on the high counts recorded at the lake; not high by current standards, but high in the 1950s as no other inland site was capable of holding such large flocks. The reports for 1954 at the lake refer almost entirely to water birds, the site's significance for land birds was either not realised, or if it was very little detail was given in either the BNS or Somerset reports, our main sources for this brief note. Listed below are some of the more notable (by the standards prevailing at the time) records for 1954 at the lake using the current (2014) species order.

**Mute Swan** 37 in December.

**White-fronted Goose** 24 in February and 16 in March.

**Greylag Goose** Three in March, this species was uncommon in the Avon area sixty years ago.

**Wigeon** 760 in March and 785 in December.

**Teal** 800 in March and 1300 in December, a very good inland count for that time.

**Mallard** 600 in July and 1000 in December, again described as a high count.

**Pintail** 28 in February and 70 in March.

**Shoveler** Three pairs bred, and there were 60 in March and 145 in December.

**Tufted Duck** Three pairs bred, the first for some years, and there were 340 in December.

**Pochard** 330 in March, a good early spring count, and 1200 in December.

**Spoonbill** One in May, an unusual sighting and one of the first of many to come.

**Marsh Harrier** One in August.

**Coot** Forty nests were recorded and there were 2000 in December.

**Ringed Plover** Up to 14 during the autumn.

**Little Ringed Plover** One in May was the first to be recorded in the Avon area.

**Lapwing** At least 1000 in December.

**Black-tailed Godwit** 14 in April.

**Temminck's Stint** One in August with two **Sanderlings**.

**Little Stint** Two in September.

**Common Sandpiper** 20 in July with up to seven **Green** and two **Wood**.

**Snipe** 100 in August and 76 in November.

**Black Tern** 90 in May and 170 in August, exceptional counts even then.

**Gulls** Counts included 720 **Lesser Black-backed,** 750 **Herring** and 1000 **Black-headed.**

**Swift** 2000 in June and 1000 in August on 2nd with only 30 on 3rd.

**Barn Owl** Two in December.

There were single records of **Hobby**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine.**

As noted above very few passerines were mentioned but those that were included **Stonechat** with four in December and **White Wagtail** with four in May.

# Red-flanked Bluetail in the Shire Valley

John Barnett

I live in Marshfield and spend most of my birdwatching time on my local patch. Normally I go north of the village where the ground is higher, and here in the past I have seen all three harriers, 15 Short-eared Owls two years ago, and Quail are regular in the summer. The site is best known for its population of up to 500 Corn Buntings in winter with dozens of pairs breeding in the summer. It is a wonderful area, with many farmland species that are uncommon or rare elsewhere. Up to February 2014 the most unusual species recorded was a Woodchat Shrike seen at Rushmead Farm in July 1989, and found by another regular visitor to the area, Martyn Hayes.

Having not visited the area for more than a week, on Feb. 3rd I decided to take an afternoon walk down the Shire Valley hoping to see a Kingfisher or a Water Rail which I had noted on one of the farm ponds the previous November. The Shire is a beautiful chalk valley more reminiscent of Derbyshire than the Cotswolds. There was a chilly wind blowing, and I had just passed the Rushmead farmhouse on my right when I heard five or six high pitched calls, rather like a Chiffchaff, but higher, I thought. I stopped to listen to it again – I often find it easier to identify birds by call than by sight – when a bird perched on a branch just ten metres in front of me. I had a look and thought 'Robin, but why has it only got the reddish colour on its flanks? ' I tried to remember if I had ever seen a Robin like this before. It was also flicking its tail which, at this stage, I could not see properly. I thought 'Oh well, Red-flanked, so all it needs is a blue tail', when it turned around and there was the blue tail! I nearly collapsed, my heart starting racing, and I thought 'It really is one!' I did not take any photographs at this time, but it was obvious what it was. I raced up the hill to phone two birders, Martyn Hayes and Jack Willmott, and then waited for them to arrive. It moved up and down a little area by the stream, feeding and then returning to a low perch and back again, flicking its tail all the time and allowing me to be quite close. Occasionally it would rest for a few minutes and then start off again.

Martyn arrived with his camera, and later Jack and five other birders got to see the bird before nightfall. I was happy for the news to get out as it was on a public footpath, and as long as visitors parked on the upper lane off the main road, which is a 'rat run' to the motorway, I was confident that all would be well. The next morning I visited the site, 70 birders were there – surely a record for the Valley in February – and they were all able to get good views without having to wait around or search. In the next few days more than 200 birders visited the site, and many photographs were taken; see the cover of this Report and opposite page 105. Whilst birding in the past I have never felt as I did yesterday finding my own rarity on my own patch, nothing can beat it!

**The following additional notes were written by the Recorder, John Martin**

John Barnett's account, written the day after his remarkable discovery, captures the excitement of finding this amazing bird. As appears to be the fashion nowadays, no written description was submitted, but the many stunning photographs show clearly what a beautiful and distinctive individual this was. The combination, in a small nervy 'chat', of the orange flanks, the olive-grey breast and cheeks framing a neat whitish throat patch, and the whitish eye ring were all distinctive, with the blue on the tail a clincher. Actually, recent taxonomic changes now place this species, along with other 'chats', amongst the Old World flycatchers, *Muscicapidae*. Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* has also been split, with Himalayan Bluetail *T. rufilatus* now considered to be a distinct species by IOC, following Rasmussen & Anderton (2005). The latter looks rather similar but occurs from the western Himalayas to central China and is largely resident so has essentially zero vagrancy potential.

With all the excellent images available, ageing as a first-winter was possible on the basis of, for example, weak buff tips to the greater coverts. First-winter males (but not females) can show hints of blue in the tertials and coverts, and some photos at some angles do appear to show hints of this. More convincing sexing as a male was possible because it was heard to sing towards the end of its stay. It was present from Feb. 3rd to March 9th, but as the site is very close to the Wiltshire border, it only spent a proportion of this period on the Avon side of the border.

There has been a recent upsurge in British records of this species with the majority in autumn on the east coast from Shetland southwards as well as a few spring records. The Avon record is exceptional in several ways – it is the first for Britain in winter, the first inland, the longest stayer, and of course the first for Avon.

**References**

Rasmussen P. C. & Anderton, J. C. 2005. *Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide*, Vols 1 & 2. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Editions, Washington D.C. and Barcelona.

IOC World Bird List Version 5.2 accessed on July 23rd., 2015 http://www.worldbirdnames.org/bow/chats/

# A spring Greenish Warbler at Sand Point -- New to Avon

Paul Bowyer

On June 2nd I arrived at Sand Point on a day when conditions were not particularly notable. The wind was a moderate south-westerly with unbroken mid-level cloud. The walk up onto the point produced no sign of any significant arrivals but just as I got to the clearing before the trig point I heard a distant burst of song that I instantly recognised. I turned and walked closer to the bird's location and it was not long before it sang again by which time I was in no doubt that I was listening to the song of a male Greenish Warbler. I put the news out on the grapevine and set about attempting some photographic evidence which proved extremely difficult, for although the bird was close to the clearing I could not lay eyes on it and had to resort to a sound recording of the song. It took around 20 minutes before I finally glimpsed it as it flitted from one tree to another. Soon after, it flew past me to an area of sparse trees where it stayed until late morning giving occasional good views to the visitors that turned up to see it. Around a dozen or so birders managed to glimpse the warbler including Dave Nevitt who to my knowledge got the best photograph. This photo appears opposite page 104, it is not of high quality but as the bird stayed in deep cover for almost all of its stay it does give a reasonable impression of the occurrence. I myself managed only an obscured photo and a few seconds of video in addition to the sound recording. Although mostly brief views, I was able to make the following notes which may help others if faced with this species in late spring:

*Song:* A repetitive trill somewhat reminiscent of a starter motor turning over. It sounded to me a bit like a Pied Wagtail in quality but higher pitched and weaker.

*Plumage:* It may be down to the overcast morning but this particular individual unlike others I have seen had dark olive green upper parts whereas my first experience of a spring male involved a brighter, greener individual with yellowish tones to the upper parts not unlike that of a Willow Warbler. The underparts were a dull off white colour lacking any yellow tones which could be a helpful feature when eliminating the commoner *Phylloscs*. The next most obvious feature was the long supercilium that looked to stretch almost the whole length of the bird's head when viewed from the side. The greater coverts were tipped whitish but the primary coverts gave it an incomplete wing bar that did not reach the edge of the wing.

*Feeding:* Much of the time I could see that the bird was feeding from within the tree canopy appearing to be looking for food on the underside of leaves, this would account for its apparent secretive nature.

For much of May a meandering jetstream in the upper atmosphere had brought changeable weather to southern Europe giving the UK mixed fortunes for migrants, but a straightening out on the 28th and a low pressure system over the Baltic moving westwards provided just the right conditions for several Greenish Warblers, amongst other species, to make landfall in the south and east of Britain on 29th and 30th. Presumably this one arrived during this window of opportunity and travelled through the country in the following days. Interestingly, I learnt the song from one on Brean Down in Somerset exactly 12 years earlier to the day in 2002, so given this species' change of rarity status I would not be surprised if we see another in the Avon area soon.

# The Breeding Bird Survey in the Avon Region, 2014

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. The BTO Avon Region includes the four unitary authority areas that formerly constituted the county of Avon, namely South Gloucestershire, the city of Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, and North Somerset, together with an area of Somerset (*c*.333 *sq km*) that covers much of the Mendips and the area around Cheddar. The BBS was first established in 1994 and from the outset we have also conducted a local survey within Avon using the same methods but in a simplified form. This has enabled us, in particular, to obtain better coverage in the urban areas, but it extends throughout the region and provides a much better understanding of the fortunes of our local populations. The results of the National and Local schemes are combined here.

The BBS has always been strongly supported in Avon and since the launch in 1994 a total of 259 observers have over the years spent 8,724 hours counting a staggering total of 1,117,738 birds in 6,381 monitoring visits. In 2013 Avon had one of the highest numbers of surveyed squares in the country and had the highest percentage coverage of allocated squares at 87%. In 1994 a total of 69 squares were surveyed and 22,692 birds counted, by 2014 this had been increased to 207 squares with 65,229 birds counted. This is a tremendous contribution to our knowledge of population changes at the national level and also an impressive body of data documenting the fortunes of our own local breeding birds.

## METHOD

The survey is conducted by birdwatchers able to recognise all the species likely to be encountered by both sight and sound. In 2014 a total of 114 observers participated in the survey, many of them members of the Bristol Ornithological Club, the Bristol Naturalists' Society or the British Trust for Ornithology (or even all three!). The survey consists of visits to one-kilometre squares that have been randomly selected by the BTO (or 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 at least four weeks later but before the end of June, making two one-kilometre transects across the square recording all birds seen or heard.

## 2014 RESULTS

A total of 207 squares, including 115 for the National BTO scheme, were surveyed which is the second highest total since the Survey was inaugurated in 1994. Surveyed squares are spread reasonably evenly across the Region (see Table 1 below). Overall about 13% of the Avon BTO Region was surveyed which gives a good measure of the varying fortunes of the breeding birds of the Region.

| Unitary Authority | Squares surveyed | Percentage of U. A. area surveyed | Birds recorded | Percentage of total recorded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bath & NE Somerset | 42 | 12.0 | 12542 | 19.2 |
| North Somerset | 51 | 15.0 | 16349 | 25.1 |
| South Gloucestershire | 45 | 10.3 | 14141 | 21.7 |
| City of Bristol | 40 | 35.7 | 11122 | 17.1 |
| Somerset (BTO Avon) | 29 | 8.7 | 11075 | 17.0 |
| | **207** | | **65229** | |

Table 1 -- Data for unitary authorities and the Mendips

Table 2 overleaf lists all the species recorded in the Survey in 2014 and gives the numbers recorded and the percentage of squares surveyed in which they were encountered.

| Species | Number Counted 2014 | Distribution in area surveyed 2014 % Squares of Squares surveyed | Squares in which recorded | Species | Number Counted 2014 | Distribution in area surveyed 2014 % Squares of Squares surveyed | Squares in which recorded |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mute Swan | 335 | 12.1 | 25 | Raven | 98 | 25.1 | 52 |
| Canada Goose | 195 | 13.5 | 28 | Goldcrest | 160 | 27.1 | 56 |
| Shelduck | 76 | 5.8 | 12 | Blue Tit | 2219 | 95.7 | 198 |
| Gadwall | 24 | 1.4 | 3 | Great Tit | 1500 | 91.8 | 190 |
| Mallard | 876 | 49.3 | 102 | Coal Tit | 125 | 25.1 | 52 |
| Tufted Duck | 36 | 3.9 | 8 | Marsh Tit | 14 | 3.4 | 7 |
| Goldeneye | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Skylark | 871 | 41.1 | 85 |
| Red-legged Partridge | 47 | 7.2 | 15 | Sand Martin | 23 | 1.9 | 4 |
| Grey Partridge | 2 | 0.5 | 1 | Swallow | 1412 | 70.0 | 145 |
| Pheasant | 710 | 58.0 | 120 | House Martin | 482 | 30.0 | 62 |
| Cormorant | 47 | 9.7 | 20 | Cetti's Warbler | 31 | 3.4 | 7 |
| Little Egret | 16 | 2.4 | 5 | Long-tailed Tit | 306 | 42.5 | 88 |
| Grey Heron | 128 | 29.5 | 61 | Wood Warbler | 1 | 0.5 | 1 |
| Little Grebe | 8 | 1.9 | 4 | Chiffchaff | 1249 | 86.5 | 179 |
| Great Crested Grebe | 4 | 1.0 | 2 | Willow Warbler | 151 | 26.1 | 54 |
| Red Kite | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Blackcap | 1238 | 83.1 | 172 |
| Sparrowhawk | 30 | 11.6 | 24 | Garden Warbler | 43 | 9.7 | 20 |
| Buzzard | 184 | 44.4 | 92 | Lesser Whitethroat | 48 | 14.0 | 29 |
| Moorhen | 152 | 20.8 | 43 | Whitethroat | 535 | 58.5 | 121 |
| Coot | 76 | 6.3 | 13 | Sedge Warbler | 78 | 6.8 | 14 |
| Oystercatcher | 21 | 2.4 | 5 | Reed Warbler | 140 | 12.1 | 25 |
| Lapwing | 23 | 2.4 | 5 | Nuthatch | 89 | 16.4 | 34 |
| Ringed Plover | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Treecreeper | 39 | 7.2 | 15 |
| Whimbrel | 17 | 1.0 | 2 | Wren | 3829 | 96.6 | 200 |
| Curlew | 10 | 1.9 | 4 | Starling | 2186 | 55.1 | 114 |
| Dunlin | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Dipper | 2 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Greenshank | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Blackbird | 5233 | 99.0 | 205 |
| Redshank | 82 | 0.5 | 1 | Song Thrush | 851 | 79.7 | 165 |
| Snipe | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | Mistle Thrush | 82 | 20.3 | 42 |
| Black-headed Gull | 7 | 2.4 | 5 | Spotted Flycatcher | 16 | 3.4 | 7 |
| Lesser B'k-backed Gull | 1735 | 59.9 | 124 | Robin | 2757 | 96.6 | 200 |
| Herring Gull | 2397 | 61.4 | 127 | Pied Flycatcher | 1 | 0.5 | 1 |
| Great B'k-backed Gull | 6 | 1.4 | 3 | Redstart | 2 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Feral Pigeon | 998 | 34.3 | 71 | Whinchat | 2 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Stock Dove | 228 | 30.0 | 62 | Stonechat | 11 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Wood Pigeon | 6636 | 100.0 | 207 | Wheatear | 28 | 5.8 | 12 |
| Collared Dove | 804 | 59.9 | 124 | Dunnock | 1129 | 86.5 | 179 |
| Turtle Dove | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | House Sparrow | 3605 | 65.7 | 136 |
| Cuckoo | 17 | 5.8 | 12 | Yellow Wagtail | 4 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Little Owl | 3 | 1.4 | 3 | Grey Wagtail | 41 | 7.7 | 16 |
| Tawny Owl | 7 | 2.9 | 6 | Pied Wagtail | 145 | 34.8 | 72 |
| Swift | 496 | 37.2 | 77 | Tree Pipit | 17 | 1.9 | 4 |
| Kingfisher | 16 | 3.9 | 8 | Meadow Pipit | 79 | 4.8 | 10 |
| Green Woodpecker | 120 | 34.8 | 72 | Rock Pipit | 7 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Gt Spot'd Woodpecker | 188 | 43.5 | 90 | Chaffinch | 1857 | 87.9 | 182 |
| Kestrel | 44 | 16.9 | 35 | Bullfinch | 156 | 34.8 | 72 |
| Hobby | 2 | 1.0 | 2 | Greenfinch | 743 | 68.6 | 142 |
| Peregrine | 8 | 2.9 | 6 | Linnet | 434 | 31.9 | 66 |
| Magpie | 1743 | 90.8 | 188 | Goldfinch | 1711 | 80.2 | 166 |
| Jay | 148 | 35.7 | 74 | Siskin | 9 | 0.5 | 1 |
| Jackdaw | 4554 | 83.1 | 172 | Yellowhammer | 341 | 25.1 | 52 |
| Rook | 1580 | 40.1 | 83 | Reed Bunting | 70 | 9.7 | 20 |
| Carrion Crow | 4142 | 97.6 | 202 | Corn Bunting | 44 | 5.3 | 11 |

Table 2 – Birds recorded by BBS in 2014

Table 3 below provides percentage change figures for the more commonly recorded species (those where more than 200 individuals were counted and/or were recorded in more than 25 squares). No attempt was made to provide figures for the gulls as most will have been non-breeders. The data in Column 4 was taken from Table 3 in the report: *Trends in England* in Harris, S.J. *et al*., *The Breeding Bird Survey 2013*. BTO Research Report **658**. British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford published in 2013.

| Species | Avon percentage change 2013-14 | Avon percentagech ange 2012-13 | BTO Trends in England in BBS 2012 – 2013 percentage change | Avon percentage change 2004 -14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mute Swan | 57 | -22 | -7 | -13 |
| Mallard | -5 | 1) | 0 | -39 |
| Pheasant | 4 | 4 | 3 | -5 |
| Grey Heron | 13 | 0 | -4 | -21 |
| Sparrowhawk | 10 | -9 | -27 | -12 |
| Buzzard | -21 | -13 | -5 | -34 |
| Moorhen | 2 | 11 | 3 | -11 |
| Feral Pigeon | -22 | 6 | 9 | -28 |
| Stock Dove | 57 | -10 | -3 | 43 |
| Wood Pigeon | -3 | -11 | -1 | 3 |
| Collared Dove | -13 | -5 | 1 | -27 |
| Swift | -43 | -8 | -2 | -71 |
| Green Woodpecker | -32 | -6 | -2 | -40 |
| Gt Spotted Woodpecker | 5 | -1 | 0 | 54 |
| Kestrel | 13 | -26 | -35 | -21 |
| Magpie | -2 | -3 | -1 | -6 |
| Jay | -6 | 14 | 15 | -12 |
| Jackdaw | 1 | -13 | -4 | 8 |
| Rook | -39 | 3 | -7 | -48 |
| Carrion Crow | 2 | -2 | 0 | 15 |
| Raven | 12 | 14 | -10 | 260 |
| Goldcrest | 58 | -46 | -32 | -35 |
| Blue Tit | -2 | -2 | -3 | -20 |
| Great Tit | -8 | -8 | 0 | -15 |
| Coal Tit | 8 | -12 | -11 | -39 |
| Skylark | 31 | -23 | -17 | -11 |
| Swallow | -5 | -37 | -20 | -38 |
| House Martin | -9 | -33 | -21 | -47 |
| Long-tailed Tit | 16 | -29 | -26 | -38 |
| Chiffchaff | 23 | -28 | -27 | -26 |
| Willow Warbler | -1 | -14 | -6 | -66 |
| Blackcap | 17 | -18 | -14 | 49 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 16 | -3 | -10 | -5 |
| Whitethroat | 12 | 0 | 6 | 19 |
| Reed Warbler | -18 | -1 | -18 | 43 |
| Nuthatch | -35 | 20 | -9 | 23 |
| Wren | 19 | -9 | -7 | 1 |
| Starling | 3 | -9 | 3 | -57 |
| Blackbird | 5 | -7 | -4 | 4 |
| Song Thrush | 4 | -12 | -6 | -12 |
| Mistle Thrush | 5 | -2 | -2 | -22 |
| Robin | 1 | -1 | 1 | 14 |
| Dunnock | -3 | -13 | -5 | -16 |
| House Sparrow | -2 | -11 | -9 | 2 |
| Pied Wagtail | 31 | -13 | -11 | 9 |
| Chaffinch | -5 | -9 | -6 | -39 |
| Bullfinch | 21 | -35 | -18 | -16 |
| Greenfinch | -12 | -5 | -10 | -67 |
| Linnet | -14 | -34 | -28 | -61 |
| Goldfinch | 10 | -6 | -10 | 96 |
| Yellowhammer | 3 | -11 | -11 | 7 |

Table 3 – Percentage changes in species recorded by the BBS

The percentage change figures above are based on the 169 squares that were surveyed by the same observer in both 2013 and 2014, termed the 'like for like' basis. This method is also used by the BTO. The percentage changes over the year from 2013 to 2014 are given together with the equivalent figure for 2012 to 2013 as a comparison. In order to provide some context, the most recent BTO BBS change figures (for the period 2012 to 2013) for England (as opposed to the UK) are also included. Finally, a figure showing the percentage change in Avon over the ten years from 2004 to 2014 is provided as an indicator of the medium term trend. This latter figure is calculated cumulatively year by year on the same 'like for like' basis as the one-year figures.

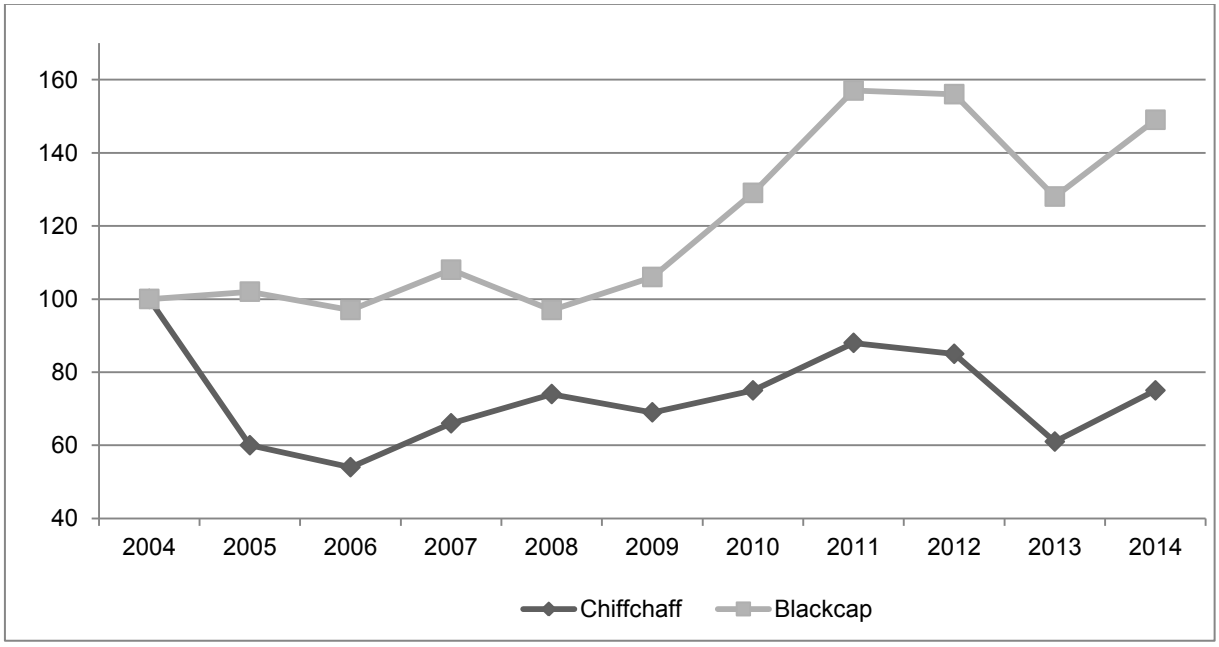
The one-year figures should of course be treated with a degree of caution, particularly where samples are relatively small. However, differences of more than 5% are likely to reflect a genuine change, particularly for the more widely recorded species such as the pigeons, corvids, tits and thrushes. The period 2004-14 is a reasonable period to show developing trends (for example the collapse of the Greenfinch) and a reasonably consistent number of squares were surveyed during the period (196 in 2005 and the average over the decade is also 196).

Recorded overall totals remained at the low level, similar to those experienced in the very difficult and truncated 2013 breeding season. In the 2014 survey, 65,229 birds were recorded in 207 squares at the rate of 118 per hour. This is very similar to 2013 when 64,457 birds were recorded in 204 squares at the rate of 117 per hour, the lowest rate since the survey began (121 birds per hour in 1994 being the closest).

Some resident species showed significant increases, helped by the preceding mild, if rather wet, winter. Goldcrest recorded a 58% increase over last year following a 46% decline in 2013. Long-tailed Tit and Wren also appear to have recovered with significant increases of 16% and 19%, respectively, while among the migrants Blackcap (17%), Whitethroat (12%) and Chiffchaff (23%) all showed significant increases over 2013. However, Swallows (-5%), House Martins (-9%) and Swifts (-43%) registered further significant decreases although this last species is not particularly well monitored by this type of survey. Green Woodpecker was 32% down on 2013 while Great Spotted Woodpecker experienced a small increase.

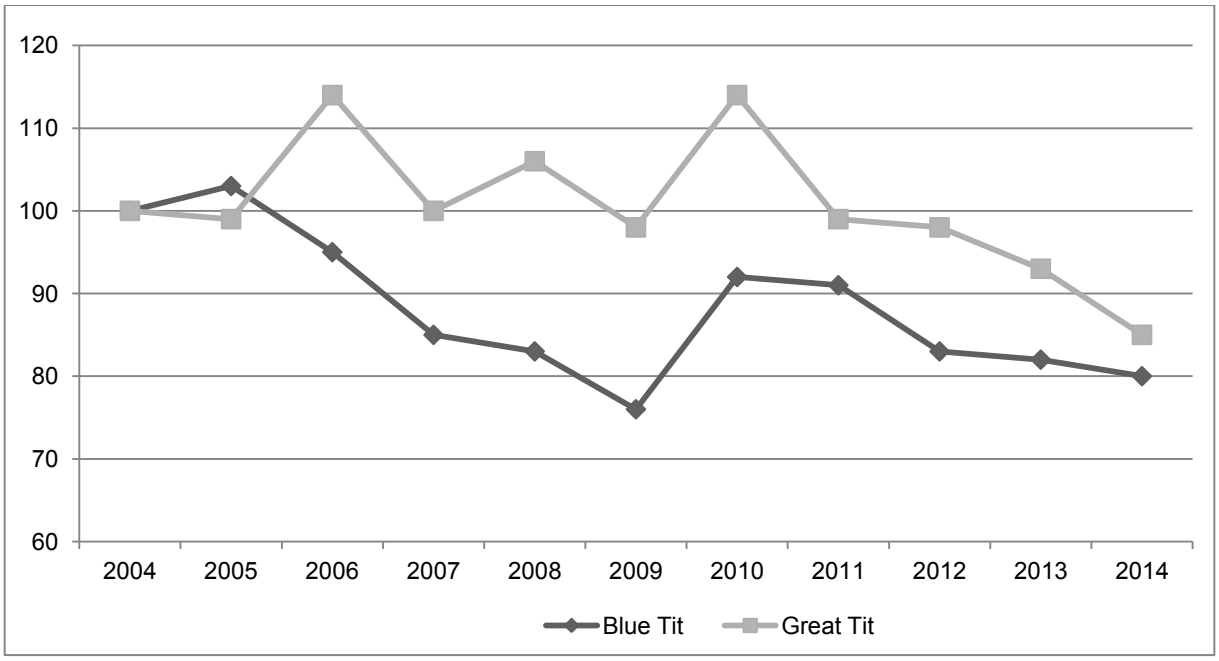
## Some Specific Examples of Species Trends

### Chiffchaff and Blackcap 2004-14



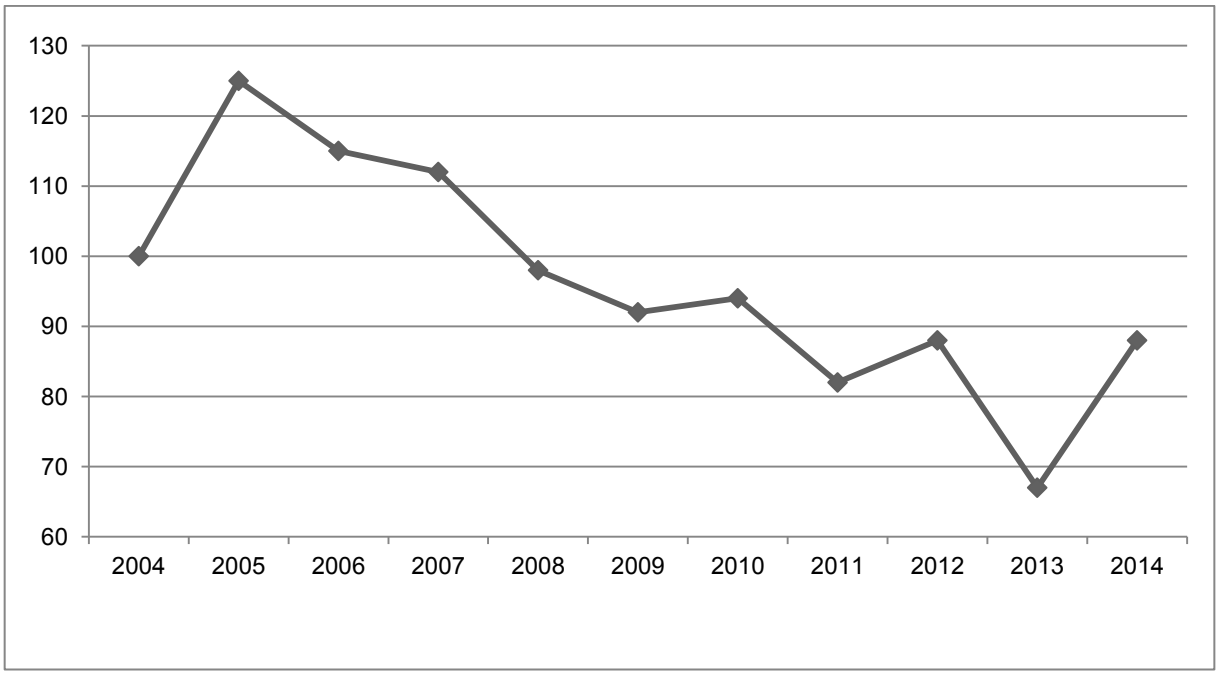

This graph shows the relative percentage changes experienced by our most common warblers over the past ten years. Following a dramatic decline of 40% in 2005, Chiffchaff has struggled to return to its earlier levels and is now 26% below its level in 2004 although still very widespread. In contrast Blackcap has avoided any catastrophic declines and after increasing sharply up to 2012 is 49% ahead of its position in 2004 despite a poor season in 2013.

**Blue Tit and Great Tit 2004-14**



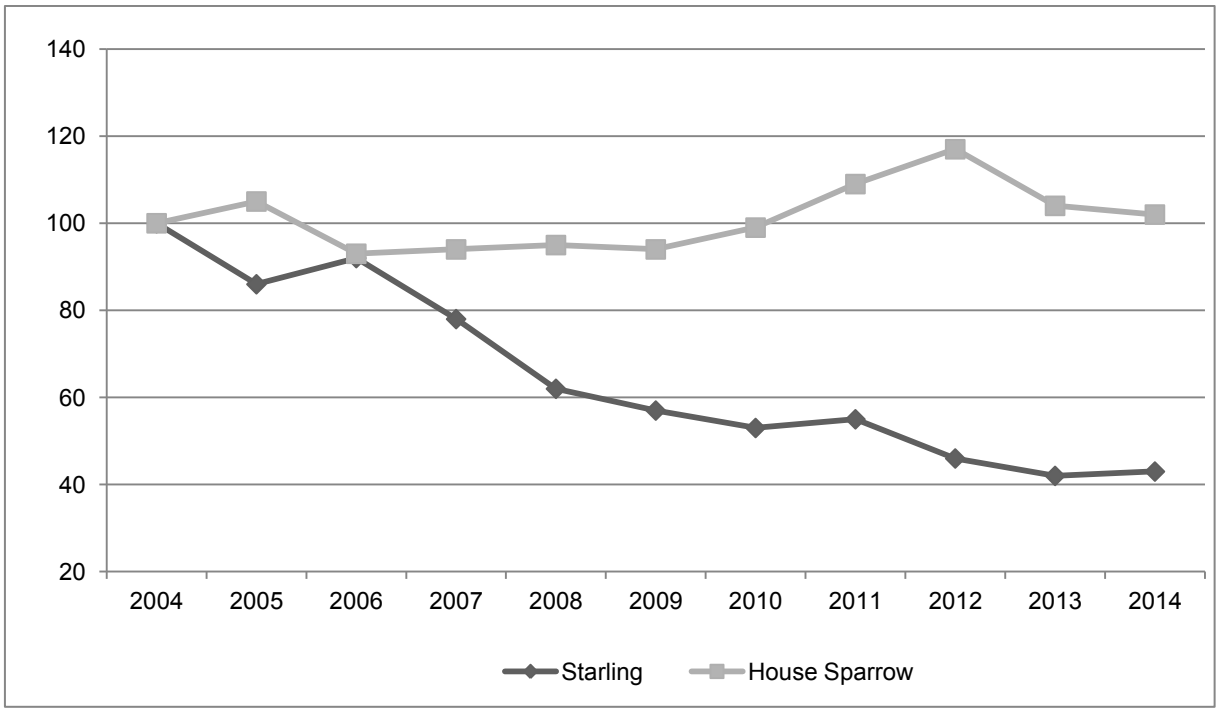

These two common species have been in decline since 2010. Great Tit has declined by 30% in the past four years while Blue Tit is 20% below its position in 2004. Poor breeding success has been an issue, certainly in recent years.

**Skylark 2004 -14**




The graph shows the continuing decline of the Skylark. A significant increase of 31% noted in 2014 cancels out the very poor season in 2013. However, the species is still over 30% below its level in 2005. Agricultural intensification is presumed to be the main problem although adverse weather conditions will also have played a part in the 23% decrease noted in 2013.

**Starling and House Sparrow 2004-14**




Starling has fallen 55% in ten years although it appears to have stabilised somewhat in the last few years. House Sparrow has fared somewhat better but after a significant increase from 2009 to 2012 it has declined again and is now back at the level noted in 2004.

# Avon Ringing Report, 2014

M. Bailey and E. Drewitt

The key feature for 2014 was undoubtedly the high productivity that resulted from a good breeding season. With the increased abundance of juveniles the Avon ringing total rose to 9560, the highest since 2000 (when it was 10,044), and the national total again exceeded one million having failed to do so in 2012 and in 2013. This successful breeding can be seen in both the Constant Effort Site (CES) data from CVL and in the Top Twenty list that is given annually in this Report.

Of the 9560 ringed in the Avon area the main contributing sites were: CVL (CVRS) 4829 (51%), Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve 1441 (15%) and Gordano Valley (GVRS) 949 (10%).

Chew Valley Ringing Station operates two CES sites and the data, which has been combined in the first chart below, plots the productivity for the previous ten years. In 2014, due to the poor weather in 2012 and 2013, the low recruitment meant that breeding began with relatively low adult numbers. However, the ratio of young to adults was 2.70 to 1, this is in stark contrast to 2012 where the juvenile to adult ratio (productivity) was only 1:1 and for 2013 it was below 1.5:1.

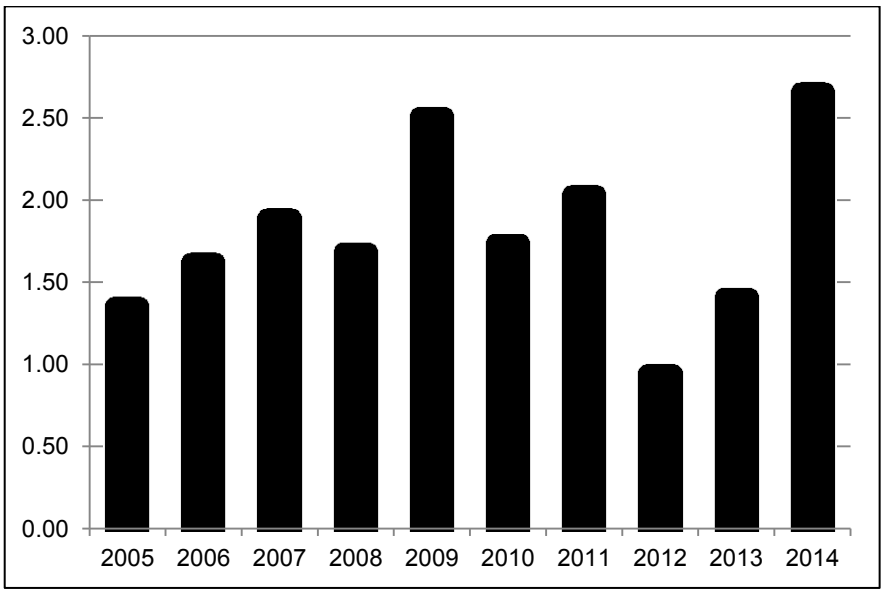



Chart 1. Productivity from Constant Effort Site (CES) data, CVL 2005 – 2014,

## Top Twenty Totals

Table 1 overleaf shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2014 (with 2013 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2013 and 2014. (Note that some year-to-year changes were definitely affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and/or catching opportunities). The top 17 species remain the same although, as usual, there was some change in their relative positions. Reed Warbler regained the number one spot following the dedicated pullus ringing at CVL. Blackcap are often high on this list, mainly as a result of catches during the autumn migration period when they respond well to playback calls. Swallow dropped to eighth purely as a result of lower roost catches rather than lack of breeding success. Bullfinch, Barn Owl and Canada Goose joined the list, replacing Lesser Black-backed Gull, Whitethroat and Moorhen.

Although the year started badly with high winter rainfall and flooding, by March the situation had improved and warm pleasant weather continued into late summer. The large percentage increases for most of the species in the table do reflect a genuine rise in juvenile numbers with that of the Barn Owls monitored by Colin Morris in South Gloucester being the most dramatic. Barn Owls continued to be of interest, not just in Avon, but across the whole of the UK. Despite a poor breeding season the year before and a harsh winter that took its toll, this species saw its best breeding season ever on record. Peak abundances of voles in 2014 meant that these owls were laying earlier with larger clutches, and some pairs bred twice. Many breeders were young, first-year individuals that would not normally nest until the following year. But with vacant nest sites after the cold, wet winter they were able to take advantage of the opportunities available.

| Position | Species | 2014 | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1(2) | Reed Warbler | 1475 | +87 |
| 2(4) | Blackcap | 1166 | +128 |
| 3(3) | Blue Tit | 984 | +81 |
| 4(5) | Chiffchaff | 825 | +93 |
| 5(7) | Greenfinch | 616 | +176 |
| 6(6) | Great Tit | 575 | +74 |
| 7(10) | Goldfinch | 373 | +126 |
| 8(1) | Swallow | 365 | -62 |
| 9(8) | Sedge Warbler | 301 | +42 |
| 10(11) | Robin | 284 | +84 |

| Position | Species | 2014 | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11(15) | Dunnock | 203 | +92 |
| 12(16) | Chaffinch | 198 | +89 |
| 13(12) | Wren | 190 | +30 |
| 14(14) | Blackbird | 183 | +46 |
| 15(13) | Long-tailed Tit | 182 | +32 |
| 16(9) | Willow Warbler | 153 | -13 |
| 17(17) | Reed Bunting | 124 | +27 |
| 18(31) | Bullfinch | 79 | +79 |
| 19(38) | Barn Owl | 78 | +550 |
| 20(21) | Canada Goose | 78 | +24 |

Table 1

## Recoveries

The records in Table 2 given below are included because of the distance travelled and/or longevity. Local recaptures have been omitted. The first line of each entry gives details of the original ringing, and the second provides details of the recovery, including the distance travelled, direction and elapsed time from the original ringing date. The BTO database had a major overhaul in 2015 and so the only recoveries available to the authors were those received by Chew Valley Ringing.

**Tufted Duck**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ring number | FT00408 | |
| Adult | 24/01/2014 | CVL |
| Ring read | 10/02/2014 | Blunham, Bedfordshire, 17 days, 185*km* |

**Black-tailed Godwit**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Colour ring number | RY-RR | |
| Adult | 10/07/2002 | Suudarkrokur, ICELAND |
| Ring read | 14/12/2014 | CVL, 11.4 years, 1900*km* |

**Black-headed Gull**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ring number | ST258656 | |
| Adult | 05/07/2006 | Lohtaja, Keski-Pohjanmaa, Vaasa, FINLAND |
| Ring read | 14/12/2014 | CVL, 8.4 years, 2062*km* |

**Black-headed Gull**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Colour ring number | S706 | |
| Adult | 20/04/2009 | Riga, LATVIA |
| Ring read | 14/12/2014 | CVL, 5.6 years, 1834*km* |

**Black-headed Gull**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Colour ring number | TU3V | |
| Adult | 05/06/2014 | Gneinzo, WIELKOPOLSKIE, POLAND |
| Ring read | 11/08/2014 | CVL, 67 days, 1367*km* |

**Great Black-backed Gull**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ring number | MA26406 | |
| Pulli in nest | 05/07/2014 | Denny Island, near Avonmouth, Severn Estuary |
| Ring read | 08/08/2014 | CVL, 61 days, 26*km* |

**Swallow**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ring number | D136539 | |
| Juvenile | 02/08/2013 | CVL |
| Ring read | 21/12/2014 | Wiscombe Park, Colyton, Devon, 1.4 years, 75*km* |

**Swallow**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ring number | D676264 | |
| Adult | 10/09/2013 | CVL |
| Ring read | 09/06/2014 | Pontcanna Riding Stables, Cardiff, WALES, 9 months, 46*km* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Cetti's Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | D202733 | |
| Juvenile female | 06/07/2013 | The Wilderness Kintbury, West Berkshire |
| Caught by ringer | 30/03/2014 | CVL, 8.8 months, 84*km* |
| **Chiffchaff** | | |
| Ring number | DVK969 | |
| Juvenile | 18/06/2014 | Nr. Wilton, Redcar, Redcar & Cleveland |
| Caught by ringer | 29/11/2014 | CVL, 5.4 months, 376*km* |
| **Blackcap** | | |
| Ring number | D964590 | |
| Juvenile | 28/06/2014 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 19/09/2104 | Icklesham, East Sussex, 83 days, 235*km* |
| **Blackcap** | | |
| Ring number | Y696289 | |
| Juvenile male | 16/09/2012 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 03/10/2014 | Mexilhoera Grande, Faro, PORTUGAL, 2.1 years, 1644*km* |
| **Garden Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | D965058 | |
| Juvenile | 06/07/2014 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 15/08/2014 | Reserve Naturelle de la Naziere, Lot-et-Garonne, FRANCE, 40 days, 802*km* |
| **Sedge Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | D965358 | |
| Juvenile | 26/07/2014 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 04/08/2014 | Reserve Naturelle de la Naziere, Lot-et-Garonne, FRANCE, 9 days, 802*km* |
| **Sedge Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | 6907185 | |
| Juvenile | 23/08/2012 | Tour aux Moutons, Donges Loire, FRANCE |
| Caught by ringer | 05/05/2013 | CVL, 8.4 months, 447*km* |
| **Reed Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | L059073 | |
| Chick in nest | 31/05/2011 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 12/08/2011 | Salburua-Betano, Vitoria, Alava, SPAIN, 73 days, 941*km* |
| **Reed Warbler** | | |
| Ring number | D965463 | |
| Juvenile | 02/08/2014 | CVL |
| Caught by ringer | 20/08/2014 | Urdains Bayonne, Pyrenees, FRANCE, 18 days, 879*km* |
| **Starling** | | |
| Ring number | LB22370 | |
| Juvenile female | 22/12/2011 | CVL |
| Freshly dead | 28/05/2014 | Muuga, Tallinn, ESTONIA, 2.4 years, 1955*km* |
| **Reed Bunting** | | |
| Ring number | X108415 | |
| Adult | 06/12/2013 | Abbotsbury Swannery, Dorset |
| Caught by ringer | 05/01/2014 | CVL, 30 days, 75*km* |

Table 2. CVL recoveries

Thirteen new species were added to the list of birds ringed in the previous four years, these were: Egyptian Goose, Spotted Crake, Dunlin, Common and Green Sandpiper, Redshank, Woodcock, Snipe, Cuckoo, Firecrest, Bearded Tit, Stonechat and Yellowhammer. Spotted Crake was not totally unexpected as a by-product of Mark Dadds Water Rail study. Dunlin, Common Sandpiper and Redshank were caught at evening high-tide roosts at Pilning Wetlands. Yellowhammer was a by-product of a mark and recapture study to estimate flock size at Elm Farm, Burnett, near Bath where flocks are fed under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

## Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2010 – 2014

Annual ringing totals for the period 2010 to 2014 are given in Table 3 below, together with the average numbers ringed annually for the previous four years 2010-2013 in the right-hand column.

| **Species** | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | **2014** | 4 Yr Av. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mute Swan | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0.8 |
| Canada Goose | 94 | 144 | 0 | 63 | 78 | 75.3 |
| Egyptian Goose | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Teal | 0 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 8.8 |
| Mallard | 19 | 17 | 22 | 18 | 29 | 19.0 |
| Garganey | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Tufted Duck | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 0.8 |
| Grey Heron | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Manx Shearwater | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Sparrowhawk | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 3.8 |
| Buzzard | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1.0 |
| Water Rail | 0 | 0 | 29 | 38 | 27 | 16.8 |
| Spotted Crake | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Moorhen | 13 | 26 | 59 | 79 | 51 | 44.3 |
| Coot | 11 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 5.8 |
| Oystercatcher | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Ringed Plover | 13 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 6.0 |
| Dunlin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Common Sandpiper | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Green Sandpiper | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Redshank | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Woodcock | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Snipe | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | 144 | 103 | 129 | 97 | 61 | 118.3 |
| Herring Gull | 31 | 33 | 61 | 49 | 38 | 43.5 |
| Stock Dove | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1.0 |
| Wood Pigeon | 5 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 6.5 |
| Collared Dove | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1.0 |
| Cuckoo | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Barn Owl | 34 | 38 | 43 | 12 | 78 | 31.8 |
| Little Owl | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.5 |
| Tawny Owl | 4 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 22 | 8.5 |
| Nightjar | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Swift | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2.0 |
| Kingfisher | 15 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 10.3 |
| Wryneck | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.8 |
| Green Woodpecker | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2.5 |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | 11 | 15 | 21 | 10 | 22 | 14.3 |
| Kestrel | 20 | 30 | 28 | 35 | 29 | 28.3 |
| Peregrine | 13 | 17 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 13.8 |
| Magpie | 3 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 6.3 |
| Jay | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3.5 |
| Jackdaw | 1 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 2.8 |
| Carrion Crow | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Raven | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.3 |
| Goldcrest | 23 | 99 | 67 | 19 | 62 | 52.0 |
| Firecrest | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Blue Tit | 822 | 983 | 709 | 545 | 984 | 764.8 |
| Great Tit | 562 | 694 | 545 | 331 | 575 | 533.0 |
| Coal Tit | 42 | 84 | 63 | 23 | 54 | 53.0 |
| Marsh Tit | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Bearded Tit | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Sand Martin | 258 | 192 | 6 | 13 | 11 | 117.3 |
| Swallow | 384 | 314 | 214 | 954 | 365 | 466.5 |
| House Martin | 3 | 1 | 13 | 3 | 4 | 5.0 |
| Cetti's Warbler | 41 | 19 | 24 | 21 | 40 | 26.3 |
| Long-tailed Tit | 131 | 177 | 195 | 138 | 182 | 160.3 |
| Yellow-browed Warbler | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Chiffchaff | 466 | 755 | 454 | 428 | 825 | 525.8 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Willow Warbler | 101 | 140 | 172 | 175 | 153 | 147.0 |
| Blackcap | 514 | 916 | 591 | 512 | 1166 | 633.3 |
| Garden Warbler | 50 | 42 | 53 | 42 | 76 | 46.8 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 6 | 17 | 19 | 35 | 25 | 19.3 |
| Whitethroat | 29 | 43 | 53 | 83 | 68 | 52.0 |
| Grasshopper Warbler | 10 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 9.0 |
| Sedge Warbler | 301 | 545 | 96 | 212 | 301 | 288.5 |
| Reed Warbler | 1,182 | 1,440 | 428 | 788 | 1475 | 959.5 |
| Nuthatch | 4 | 11 | 23 | 11 | 12 | 12.3 |
| Treecreeper | 41 | 32 | 19 | 12 | 38 | 26.0 |
| Wren | 115 | 154 | 147 | 146 | 190 | 140.5 |
| Starling | 27 | 145 | 7 | 56 | 41 | 58.8 |
| Blackbird | 145 | 111 | 162 | 125 | 183 | 135.8 |
| Fieldfare | 4 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 7.0 |
| Song Thrush | 33 | 31 | 57 | 47 | 51 | 42.0 |
| Redwing | 28 | 16 | 6 | 2 | 12 | 13.0 |
| Mistle Thrush | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1.5 |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1.3 |
| Robin | 128 | 167 | 178 | 154 | 284 | 156.8 |
| Nightingale | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0.5 |
| Pied Flycatcher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Redstart | 1 | 0 | 12 | 5 | 11 | 4.5 |
| Whinchat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Stonechat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Wheatear | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Dunnock | 118 | 139 | 133 | 106 | 203 | 124.0 |
| House Sparrow | 56 | 22 | 38 | 42 | 56 | 39.5 |
| Yellow Wagtail | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Grey Wagtail | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.0 |
| Pied Wagtail | 48 | 7 | 21 | 6 | 4 | 20.5 |
| Tree Pipit | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Meadow Pipit | 0 | 0 | 15 | 4 | 16 | 4.8 |
| Water Pipit | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Brambling | 3 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7.5 |
| Chaffinch | 175 | 93 | 131 | 105 | 198 | 126.0 |
| Bullfinch | 117 | 95 | 66 | 33 | 79 | 77.8 |
| Greenfinch | 203 | 157 | 176 | 223 | 616 | 189.8 |
| Linnet | 0 | 1 | 47 | 8 | 6 | 14.0 |
| Redpoll (Lesser/Common) | 6 | 132 | 36 | 4 | 14 | 44.5 |
| Goldfinch | 160 | 148 | 146 | 165 | 373 | 154.8 |
| Siskin | 0 | 3 | 25 | 51 | 25 | 19.8 |
| Yellowhammer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 0 |
| Reed Bunting | 105 | 88 | 87 | 98 | 124 | 94.5 |
| **TOTAL** | 6898 | 8566 | 5766 | 6227 | 9560 | 6864 |

Table 3. Annual ringing totals 2010 to 2014

# Alphabetical Index of Species Accounts