AVON BIRD REPORT

2015

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP
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CONTENTS

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Front cover: Dipper in Eastville Park photographed by Allan Chard on Oct. 19th.
Line drawings: Robin Prytherch (Grey Heron), Brian Slade (Wigeon).
Rear cover: Map of the Avon area computer generated by Simon Powell, Earth Sciences Dept., University of Bristol.

Editorial

In last year's Report I noted that several structural changes have been made recently to the topography of our area. They mainly affect the coast and involve the construction of scrapes and pools, the material extracted being used for sea/flood defence banks. They create water features that attract a wide range of species, but in most cases only while they remain wet; and they vary considerably in this regard. For example a new, and as yet unnamed, pool near the mouth of the R. Yeo (Clevedon side) appears to hold its water well, but the scrape at Dowlais Farm (Cl-Y) dries out quickly in dry weather. This last site attracts a good range of species while it is wet but becomes almost bird-less when it dries out. The wetlands at New Passage/Pilning suffer from the same problem but not to such a great extent as the water level is being at least partially controlled. It would greatly benefit the bird-life of these and other areas if measures were taken to keep these sites wet for as long as possible.

The changes that the BOU has been making to the taxonomic order of the country's bird species list continues. In 2015 these changes were minor and involved mainly the re-ordering of three species groups: the plovers, the *Sylvia* warblers and the buntings; these re-orderings have been followed in this Report. Full details can be found on the BOU web-site. I am sure that I am not the only birder that finds these changes confusing, particularly when, as with the first of these groups, this is the second change in three years. Hence our alphabetical species index has become an essential part of the Report!

There are no major papers in the Report this year, but as more and more records are received the systematic list grows ever longer. In 1979, the first year this Report was issued as a separate entity, the systematic list took just 34 pages and these were half the size of the current pages. Apart from the usual BBS and ringing reports, we have an update of the Rook status following the regular five-year survey last year, and first and last migration data has been reviewed.

One member of our team, Brian Lancastle, bowed out this year. He had been a member of both the editorial and recorder's committees for more than 30 years; I would like to thank him for the time, effort and expertise that he put in over these decades. The section editors for this Report in 2015 were:

- Chris Craig – near passerines: doves to woodpeckers, and liaison with the local ringing groups;
- Andy Davis – hawks;
- Ken Hall – warblers, finches and buntings;
- Rupert Higgins – divers to grebes, Water Rail to Coot, and the valuable Review of the Year;
- John Martin – skuas to gulls;
- Andy Mears – migrant passerines but excluding the *hirundines* and the warblers;
- Nigel Milbourne – ducks, and photographic editor;
- Richard Mielcarek – falcons, Nightingale, escapes, hybrids and description species;
- Tony Scott – swans, geese, Shelduck, the game birds, and Red/Amber status;
- Dave Stoddard – resident passerines.

I would like to thank these ten authors for their time and expertise. As usual I wrote the wader section, but also this year the *hirundine* and White Wagtail entries. Thanks are also due to Richard Bland for the Weather Report, Dave Stoddard for the BBS Report – a major undertaking, Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt for the Ringing Report, and to all those who worked "behind the scenes" preparing and editing the electronic files we as authors and editors use. These included, amongst others, Steve Hale (Steve is bowing out; so a special vote of thanks is due to him for all his past input), Nick Hawkridge and Richard Mielcarek who is involved in so many aspects of this Report. Jane Cumming, Keith Vinicombe and several members of the editorial team helped greatly with proof-reading. Finally, I should note that the members of the AOG Executive Committee in 2015 were Richard Mielcarek (chairman), Jason Williams (secretary), Jane Cumming (treasurer) and myself, but for 2016 Giles Morris has taken my place on this committee. Comments about this Report, good or bad, should be addressed either to me or the secretary at goldcrest88@hotmail.com.

The executive committee and I are always on the lookout for 'new blood', that is, we would like to get as many local birders as possible involved with the whole process of the production of this Report. So if you think that you might like to help, and have the time, in any one of the following categories do please get in touch with me or any member of the executive committee.

- Preparing and writing a section. New authors are usually offered a fairly small section to begin with. The electronic record files are normally available in late February and we ask for first drafts to be completed by the end of April or soon after. The choice of section is a matter for discussion between me, as editor, and the author.
- Preparation of the electronic record files. We use Excel, so a good working knowledge of this program would be a great help. We receive electronic records throughout the year, and as noted above we hope to be able to complete the files for a particular year by mid February in the following year.

In 2015 these files contained more than 100,000 records.

- Word processing and preparation of the files ready to be sent to the printers. Authors currently produce their texts using various versions of Microsoft Word. We need someone to merge all of these together, finalise the page layouts and produce the files the printers need. At the moment this is all done in Word but ideally we should move to one of the desktop publishing packages to give greater flexibility and quality to the final product. We would still like to hear from you if you only have a working knowledge of a standard Word package.
- Advertising manager, a possible new position. At the moment two companies pay for adverts to be placed in this Report – Lakeside Optics and Wildwings -- and we are very grateful for their continued support. But some county reports are able to attract quite a bit more, for example the latest Hampshire Report has seven full pages of adverts. If we could generate more funds this way then we could improve further the quality of the Report. For example some have suggested that we should go to a full-colour Report, this would cost quite a bit more than we are paying at the present time which could be offset by advertising revenue.

If any of these alternatives seem a bit daunting but you would still like to play your part, do please get in touch as suggested above.

Harvey Rose,
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August 2016.

From the Recorder

John Martin

2015 was not a classic for rarities in our area, indeed the only 'BB rarity' was the splendid adult Red-throated Pipit at Northwick Warth from October 3rd to 4th. This species was removed from the list of species considered by BBRC from 2006 to 2014 and admitted again in 2015, due to a lengthy run of poor returns. It has a huge breeding range: from northern Scandinavia east right across northern Eurasia and just reaching the extreme NW of Alaska. They winter mainly in Africa and the Middle East with a large gap to the other main area in SE Asia. On the Red List they are listed as Least Concern by Birdlife International, based on the massive range, large World population and the lack of any firm evidence of decline. The declines in occurrence in Britain might be related to changes in weather patterns, but they could also indicate a decline in populations, at least in the areas of origin of our vagrants.

One of the rarer birds of the year might well have been a small, dark-mantled adult Lesser Black-backed Gull, a good candidate for nominate *fuscus* ('Baltic Gull'), watched and photographed at Chew on May 23rd by two very experienced observers. In addition to features shown in the photograph opposite page 88, its primary feathers were relatively fresh with small, un-worn white tips (this fits *fuscus* which moult their primaries in their African winter quarters, about five months later than most *graellsii*). This subspecies is a national rarity considered by BBRC and currently they only accept records involving ringing recoveries from the breeding range, or second-calendar-year individuals in spring or early summer showing the diagnostic *fuscus* moult strategy. The problem is that there is overlap in mantle colour with the race *intermedius,* while the moult strategy of adults is less clear cut – some *graellsii* can have a similar late primary moult, suspending until they reach the wintering grounds so showing relatively fresh primaries in spring. A small dark late-moulting female *intermedius* might seem far-fetched, but it is the possibility of such occurrences, which like the CVL individual 'tick all the right *fuscus* boxes' (except bearing the correct ring!), that has persuaded BBRC to take its current stance on these records. Other recent occurrences of possible *fuscus* at CVL were described by Keith Vinicombe in ABR 2003 139-141.

DNA work has revolutionised bird taxonomy in recent decades. Techniques have now been developed that are inexpensive enough to be used to confirm certain difficult identifications. Thus three Siberian Chiffchaffs ringed at CVL early in the year and in late autumn were confirmed as *tristis* by Martin Collinson at Aberdeen University. One of them, trapped on March 6th, looked like a good candidate *tristis* and was likely to have been an individual that had been identified as *tristis* in the field, but it did show what would have been considered slightly 'non-classic' features for *tristis* such as a paler based bill. This bird's DNA was 99.9% identical to *tristis* sequences from core range in the Yenesei River basin and different from all other Chiffchaff taxa. The second, trapped on February 27th was a 100% match with *tristis* in terms of its DNA and was a classic looking individual. Finally the autumn bird from October 31st was also identical to *tristis* sequenced in core Yenesei range. These results clearly place all birds within *tristis*. We normally publish details of this taxon indicating whether they were trapped and ringed, heard to call and/or sing as these each add extra weight to identifications based on plumage alone. These are our first confirmed by DNA evidence. Well done to the Chew ringers including Chris Craig for sending off the shed feathers, and thanks of course to Martin Collinson for this fascinating new evidence. We publish photos of all three confirmed *tristis* here opposite pages 112 and 113, although the photo of the autumn bird is slightly over-exposed.

In a generally poor year for skua passage it was nonetheless once again a good one for Pomarine Skuas. The recent run of annual totals clearly shows this species no longer qualifies as a county rarity so it is removed from the list of taxa that require details to support the identification. Nonetheless it still does need supporting details in order for us to work out how many birds have occurred. Most 'Poms' occur in the estuary in spring, especially at Severn Beach. With the modern rapid transmission of bird news, a better understanding of favourable conditions for skua movements (see Brian Lancastle's paper on seabirds in the upper Severn Estuary in ABR 2000, for example) and the high proportion of retired birders these days, there can be observer coverage at the main site, Severn Beach, through most or all of a good skua day. The problem for recorders is trying to make sense of the records later and decide how many birds are likely to have been involved. In order to do this as well as possible it is important that we have proper details of each sighting including: the time; what the bird(s) was/were doing; the morph and age, presence or not of twisted tail 'spoons'. The great majority of spring 'Poms' do have tail spoons and pale morphs greatly outnumber dark birds, but the more details we have the better. Did the birds fly up river or were they blogging (that is, flying up and down the Estuary and so appearing more than once at any particular view point)? You need to be careful as I've watched skuas go up high over the bridge only to return shortly afterwards, so the risk of over-counting, as well as under-counting, is a real one. Local websites draw their own conclusions from records they glean, and their summary counts are therefore valuable, but it's not always obvious how the stated numbers were calculated and our ideal is always to have the raw

data to work from. The key message therefore is please don't assume someone else is going to submit the record just because other birders were present with you – do send your own sightings in please. Note that, as with all skuas, we still require descriptions for inland records.

As ever, many thanks to the various people who have made my job a lot easier over the past year. In particular Rich Mielcarek who once again took on much of the burden of record management, chasing up 'missing' records, distribution and collation as well as drafting the rarity accounts. I would also like to thank the recorder's committee, namely Rich Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Brian Lancastle (who retires this year after many years of useful input), Rich Mielcarek and Harvey Rose. Dave Stoddard organised BBS locally and provided the local statistics on breeding populations. Tony Scott drafted new updated status summaries. Harvey Rose's keen eye for accuracy and detail as ever significantly improved drafts of various documents.

Thanks of course to all those who sent in records - I make the usual plea that observers submit notes and/or photos in support of the county rarities listed elsewhere in this report without having to be 'chased up'. And if you rely mainly on images please do include at least some basic notes on where and when the photo was taken, what the bird was doing and so on. Note we now assess records as they come in so as mentioned last year, there is no need to wait until the end of the year to submit them – this just creates a backlog of work. Indeed, as suggested previously here, by using Bird Track you should usually 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. This isn't always the case with subspecies, so if in doubt do check the list.

August 2016

References

http://www.gull-research.org/lbbgoct/05cyoct.htm

Lancastle, B., 2000. Seabirds: a review of their status in the Upper Severn Estuary. ABR 2000, 139-167.

Vinicombe, K.E., 2003. Apparent Baltic Gulls at Chew Valley Lake. ABR 2003 139-141

Review of 2015

Rupert Higgins

Several trends detected in 2014 continued into 2015, with a welcome recovery in the populations of several widespread species continuing. Most summer visitors, however, had a poor year, perhaps a consequence of adverse winds in the spring. The fortunes of breeding waders continued to decline, but the Estuary's most important wintering species appear to be doing well. There were some reasonable counts of seabirds, terns and migrant waders but some species, including Black Tern and Little Gull seem to be in long term decline. Rarities were in short supply, with a returning Lesser Scaup and one or two Green-winged Teal the only Nearctic birds recorded, but the autumn was our best on record for Yellow-browed Warbler, and a Common Rosefinch, a party of Bee-eater and a Red-throated Pipit were noteworthy. Numbers of Great White Egret were unprecedented, following their breeding success in Somerset.

First Winter Period

The 2014/15 winter began and ended with south-westerly winds, which were at times strong in the first two weeks of the year, with a slightly colder spell during the second half of January and first half of February. There was no snow, and conditions were never harsh enough to generate cold weather movements.

Heavy rain in December 2014 meant that water levels at the lakes were high and numbers of most wildfowl were correspondingly low. However, high populations of coarse fish were reflected in reasonable counts of Goosander at BL and CVL. Shoveler numbers remained unusually high at CVL throughout the winter. Elsewhere there were several large flocks of Shelduck along the coast and Teal was numerous here. The mild conditions meant that unusual species were few and far between, with no records at all of Bewick's or Whooper Swan, White-fronted Goose, Smew or Long-tailed Duck, and very few of Brent Goose.

Although there were spells of strong winds early in the year far fewer seabirds were seen than in the first two months of 2014. There were no high counts of Red-throated Diver with just one, off Anchor Head on Jan. 14th, and there were small influxes of Kittiwake on 10th and 15th. Mediterranean Gull was noted widely with a record count of 14 at CVL on Feb.13th.

It is encouraging that numbers of our most important estuarine wader species were all good: Curlew, despite international conservation concerns, has shown no decline locally; peak counts of Dunlin included 4,500 at Cl-Y and 2,000 at Severnside; and Redshank was again numerous, particularly at the Axe Estuary and Cl-Y. There were several high counts of Black-tailed Godwit at Severnside and Oystercatcher numbers were high. Eleven Sanderling at Sand Bay was a large count by local standards but numbers of Knot were low. Away from the Estuary numbers of Golden Plover and Lapwing were unexceptional but both Snipe and Jack Snipe seemed to benefit from the wet conditions. The increase in the small wintering population of Common Sandpiper continued but Green Sandpiper was scarce. There were no records of Spotted Redshank and only two Greenshank were seen. A Whimbrel was at Sand Bay on Feb. 28th.

Favourable weather during the last two years was reflected in increased numbers of several widespread passerine species, notably Wren, Blackbird and Pied Wagtail, and as expected insectivorous species such as Stonechat and Cetti's Warbler continued their recovery. Redwing was scarce but Fieldfare counts were higher than usual. The migrant finches were all scarce with very few records of Brambling in particular. Noteworthy counts during the period included 1,000 Skylark at Marshfield on Jan. 14th; 400 Pied Wagtail at a roost in Radstock; 400 Linnet at Marshfield on 28th and 200 at Coalpit Heath on several dates; there were also 120 Yellowhammer near Paulton on 22nd.

The winter was poor for rarities and the only scarce bird remaining from 2014 was a Great White Egret at CVL until March 3rd. A Green-winged Teal was at Severnside throughout January and what may have been the same individual visited the Axe Estuary from Feb. 5th to 18th. At least three Siberian Chiffchaff wintered at CVL and a Reed Warbler rung here on Jan. 30th was exceptional. The rarest bird of the period was a Common Rosefinch, which was seen in a Keynsham garden on several dates from Feb. 24th.

Spring

March and April were mostly dry with frequent north-easterly winds, but strong south-westerlies at the end of March interrupting the pattern. Low pressure systems were dominant in May and although the spring as a whole was warm temperatures dropped markedly in the second half of the month.

The year's only Eider were at Severnside, on March 25th and April 23rd and 24th and a light passage of Common Scoter peaked on 10th. The first Garganey of the year was at CVL on April 3rd and less usually one was at Saltford from 8th to 12th. Departure of winter visitors was evident through May with last dates of Wigeon on 6th, Scaup on 7th and Pintail on 22nd.

Red Kite was again seen widely with a peak on April 16th, and good numbers of Osprey were noted

between 2nd and 16th. Marsh Harrier, by contrast, was scarce with only 18th, and 1st and 5th May producing sightings.

It was a generally poor spring for wader passage, with counts of Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Dunlin and Greenshank all low. There were, however, decent numbers of Sanderling, Knot and Common Sandpiper. The year's first Little Ringed Plover, seen on March 12th, was our earliest on record and the passage of this species peaked on April 8th with 11 noted. Departures of Curlew and Redshank were noticeable on 13th and the spring's best day for waders was 22nd, when there was a marked movement of Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel, and a single Spotted Redshank. Peak counts of Dunlin were on 26th, when the Sanderling passage got underway. Scarcer species included Curlew Sandpiper on May 15th and 19th, and Wood Sandpiper on April 23rd and May 24th, whilst a freshly dead Jack Snipe was an unexpected find at Severnside on May 25th.

There were two pronounced peaks in seabird sightings, in late March and early May, both associated with low pressure systems, and some tern passage was evident in mid-April. March 29th saw a series of Gannet records, a single Great Skua, two Little Gull and 400 Kittiwake at Severn Beach. Tern numbers overall were on the low side but there was some evidence of movement between April 11th and 23rd, including eight Black Tern at CVL on the last of these dates. The few days around May 6th produced the best numbers of seabirds, which included 33 Kittiwake and reasonable counts of Arctic Tern on 5th, a very impressive 28 Arctic Skua, twelve Pomarine Skua and four Great Skua on 6th and another flurry of Gannet sightings on 9th.

The spring saw good numbers of Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Whinchat, Wheatear and White Wagtail, but poor counts of Yellow Wagtail. Passerine migration became evident from March 6th, when the first Sand Martin and migrant Chiffchaff were seen, followed by a very early Swallow on 8th and the first Wheatear on 9th. Meadow Pipit passage got underway on 16th and the first White Wagtail and migrant Blackcap were seen on 19th, with an influx of Sand Martin commencing on the next day. A Reed Warbler on April 1st was also very early and the 8th saw the last Redwing and the first Ring Ouzel and Redstart. Northerly winds then held up passage until 10th, when there were first sightings of Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Yellow Wagtail and peak numbers of Tree Pipit. There was another period of activity from 15th to 18th, producing the first Cuckoo, Swift, Wood Warbler and Garden Warbler, marked influxes of Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Whitethroat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail and White Wagtail and a movement of Goldfinch. There was a further bout of activity around 23rd, a period that also saw influxes of waders and terns, involving Swift, Whitethroat, Whinchat, Wheatear and Yellow Wagtail as well as the year's only Nightingale. Movements of Sedge Warbler were evident in the first few days of May, but the remainder of the month was quiet.

The first unusual bird of the spring was a Long-tailed Duck that stayed at CVL for a month from March 7th, a similar arrival date to one seen in 2014, and further wildfowl interest was added by a Pale-bellied Brent Goose at Cl-Y on 26th followed by a Green-winged Teal and a Slavonian Grebe that both appeared on April 5th, at Severn Beach and CVL respectively. Another Pale-bellied Brent Goose was at Sand Point on 17th. The first new Great White Egret of the year was seen on 10th, followed by further individuals on 22nd and May 2nd and 8th. A White Stork flew over Severnside on April 21st and there were then two Montagu's Harriers, at Weston STW on 25th and at Severnside on May 15th. Finally, a Long-tailed Skua dropped into CVL briefly on 29th, several days after the tern passage peaked. The predominance of north-easterly airflows for much of the spring may be responsible for the noticeable absence of scarce passerines and near-passerines.

Breeding

The breeding season was mixed for wildfowl. After poor seasons in 2013 and 2014 Shelduck had its best year for a decade. Mute Swan also did well and although numbers of Gadwall and Mallard were low productivity appeared to be good. No broods of Pochard were seen, and the season was poor for Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe and Coot. The slow recovery in Grey Heron numbers since losses in the cold winters earlier in the decade continued, although the CVL heronry is in steady decline.

Wet weather in the late spring seems to have affected several raptors adversely, with poor productivity noted for Buzzard and Tawny Owl. There was an increase in breeding records of Sparrowhawk but a continued decline in Kestrel numbers, and it was a poor year for Hobby. Barn Owl numbers were high after a good breeding season in 2014, and productivity was again above average in 2015. There were welcome suggestions that Little Owl recovered slightly after many years of decline.

Breeding waders all had a poor season, probably a consequence of spells of wet and cold weather. The number of Oystercatcher breeding sites fell from six in 2014 to three; there was no definite success by Ringed Plover; no known Little Ringed Plover attempts; a marked decline in Lapwing attempts following a slight recovery in 2014; and a further decrease in Redshank attempts.

Many passerines and near passerines suffered badly in poor weather in 2012 and 2013 but then recovered in the warmer summer of 2014 and mortality has been low over the last two mild winters. These factors were reflected in improved numbers of a variety of species including Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Kingfisher, Stock Dove,

Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper, Wren, Dunnock and Pied Wagtail. This improvement was not universal, however, and Blue Tit in particular continues to suffer poor productivity. Migrants appeared to have a bad year, with strong evidence of declines in Swift, House Martin and Whitethroat populations, and weaker evidence for Blackcap and Lesser Whitethroat. There were encouraging signs for some species of conservation concern, including Cuckoo, Mistle Thrush and Bullfinch and a large increase in Linnet numbers, but no suggestion of improvement in Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher or Greenfinch and evidence of further declines in the Marsh Tit and Starling populations. Chaffinch has undergone several years of small but consistent declines, but the increase in Goldfinch populations shows no sign of abating.

The year was disappointing for the rarer species: as in 2014 there was no evidence that Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale or Tree Pipit bred in our area and, in keeping with the poor year experienced by many more common warblers, Grasshopper Warbler was very scarce. However, a Goldeneye brood was seen at CVL and a single pair of Long-eared Owl bred. Nightjar was again present in very small numbers and Firecrest remained at one site. Yellow Wagtail, which bred at one site in 2014, was again seen at possible breeding sites in and around the Cotswolds. Little Egret may again have nested at Uphill. Following two mild winters a single pair of Stonechat bred and numbers of Cetti's Warbler increased. The most intriguing record involved a White Wagtail seen feeding a juvenile *alba* wagtail at BG, but it was seen only once and may have been a migrant responding instinctively to begging calls from a Pied Wagtail.

Summer

The weather in June and July was largely settled and sunny but temperatures were lower than those in 2014. There was a marked change at the end of July when a depression brought strong south-westerlies and spells of heavy rain.

The summer was, as ever, quiet for wildfowl but a handful of summering Teal was noteworthy and a Wigeon at Backwell Lake on July 14th was unexpected. The usual small Common Scoter passage was evident, with nine at CVL and seven at BL on June 27th and four at BL on July 23rd.

Moderate south-westerlies at the beginning of June produced a few seabirds, including the year's only Storm Petrels, an Arctic Skua and four Great Skua on 2nd, but most activity was during the much stronger winds at the end of July. Records on 27th and 28th included 760 Manx Shearwater at Sand Point, a Pomarine Skua, two Arctic Skua and three Great Skua as well as four Arctic Tern at CVL. Gull movement was evident throughout the season, with Black-headed and Mediterranean returning from June 4th; there was a good series of records of the latter, including an exceptional eight past Severnside on 23rd.

The year's many sightings of Red Kite reached a peak on June 7th and 8th and an Osprey at BL on 22nd and CVL on 23rd was unusual.

Summer wader records always provide a reminder of how small a proportion of the year some of these birds spend on their breeding grounds. The first three days of June saw peaks in the northward passages of Ringed Plover and Sanderling, as well as the spring's last Grey Plover and Dunlin. A Curlew at Marshfield on 18th was close to an area where breeding behaviour has been noted in the past and inland Oystercatcher at BL and Saltford between 14th and 22nd were unusual, as were groups of five Whimbrel at Severnside and Cl-Y and a Spotted Redshank at the latter site on 28th. Return wader passage started with a Green Sandpiper on 6th followed by the first Common Sandpiper on 28th.

A sequence of Bee-eater records, starting with a single bird at Saltford on June 7th followed by six at Woolley, Bath on 9th and 19th, was exceptional. A Great White Egret at PWD on July 3rd was less unexpected.

Autumn

The autumn was generally dry and settled, although a spell of south-westerlies in late August brought some heavy rain. The winds through September were at first northerly, with easterly flows later in the month and in early October, before a series of strong south-westerlies at the end of the month.

At the reservoirs the settled weather led to falling water levels and good water plant growth, reflected in high counts of Mute Swan, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail and Moorhen. Pochard numbers were high at CVL, but those of Tufted Duck and Shoveler were low here and high at BL. Coarse fish populations were exceptionally large and attracted record numbers of Little Egret at both lake and large flocks of Great Crested Grebe and Cormorant at CVL.

Weather conditions were not conducive to sea watching and two Shag at Axe Estuary were rather unexpected. A moderate passage of terns was most evident at the reservoirs on Aug. 23rd when 47 Black, five Sandwich, four Little and 48 Common were seen; the year's largest party of Greenshank and small numbers of Little Stint and Wood Sandpiper were also seen here on the same day. Despite prolonged easterly airflows Little Gull was scarce.

As usual a slight passage of Marsh Harrier, beginning on Aug. 8th and continuing through September, was evident. Fewer Osprey were seen than during the spring, but one lingered at CVL from Aug. 24th to Sept 1st. The last Hobby was seen on Oct. 8th and the year's only Hen Harrier was seen on 18th.

Many waders were seen in small numbers only, with Curlew Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank all less numerous than usual. The Little Stint passage was reasonable and Ringed Plover made a good showing at the reservoirs. Counts of Ruff were reasonable, peaking on Aug. 27th and 28th with an unusually late four at CVL on Nov. 4th. Both Green and Wood Sandpipers were present in good numbers; both peaking on Aug. 17th and 18th when 23 of the former at CVL was impressive. Later in the season there were some good counts of Knot at Severnside between Sept. 20th and 30th. Counts of the more numerous species included 640 Redshank at Axe Estuary on Sept. 30th and 185 Oystercatcher at Severnside on Oct. 25th. Lapwing numbers were low, however, and there was not a single record of Golden Plover at CVL.

Passerine migration became evident from June 24th and 25th, when the first Redstart and Whinchat were seen, but it began in earnest in the last five days of July, when the major exodus of Swift occurred and the main passage of Sand Martin, Swallow, Wheatear and Yellow Wagtail began. Numbers of Redstart, Whinchat and Yellow Wagtail were good, all peaking in the last five days of August. Last dates for summer migrants in September included Garden Warbler on 6th, Tree Pipit on 13th, Swift on 16th and White Wagtail on 27th, whilst the first two days of October saw the last records of Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Redstart and Yellow Wagtail. Better than usual numbers of Ring Ouzel were seen, between Sept. 28th and Nov. 4th with the maximum on Oct. 19th. A large influx of Siskin was evident throughout the season, peaking from Sept. 5th to 17th. The first Redwing was noted on Sept. 30th but they were not widespread until Oct. 15th preceded two days earlier by an influx of Fieldfare, with movements of Song Thrush, Starling, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Lesser Redpoll noted on 18th. Our area shared in national influxes of Firecrest, between Oct. 4th and Nov. 12th, and Coal Tit. Late summer migrants included Swallow on Nov. 3rd and House Martin on 24th.

The autumn was unexceptional for rare birds, but there was a scatter of notable sightings. The returning Lesser Scaup was found at BL on July 12th before relocating to CVL, where a Ferruginous Duck arrived on Aug. 28th. The best bird in an unusually quiet August was a Hoopoe seen briefly at Withywood on 28th. The year's second Long-tailed Skua was at CVL on Sept. 7th. Two Leach's Petrel were seen at Severn Beach on 14th and there were three Grey Phalarope during the month, at CVL on 15th, Severnside on 25th and Portishead on 30th. A Wryneck was seen briefly at New Passage on 16th. Two Great White Egret flew past Sand Point on 28th and numbers gradually rose at the reservoirs from Oct. 1st. October was slightly more eventful, starting with a Red-throated Pipit on 3rd and the first of a record six Yellow-browed Warbler the next day. A Woodlark was over Sand Point and a Temminck's Stint was found at BL on 18th. A Common Redpoll was trapped at CVL on Oct. 25th and there were single Spoonbills at Severnside on 27th and Sand Point on 31st.

Second Winter Period

After five days of easterlies at the beginning of November the rest of the period was notable for strong south-westerlies associated with a sequence of depressions that crossed the country. There was a brief spell of cold weather in late November but December in particular was exceptionally warm and slightly wetter than average.

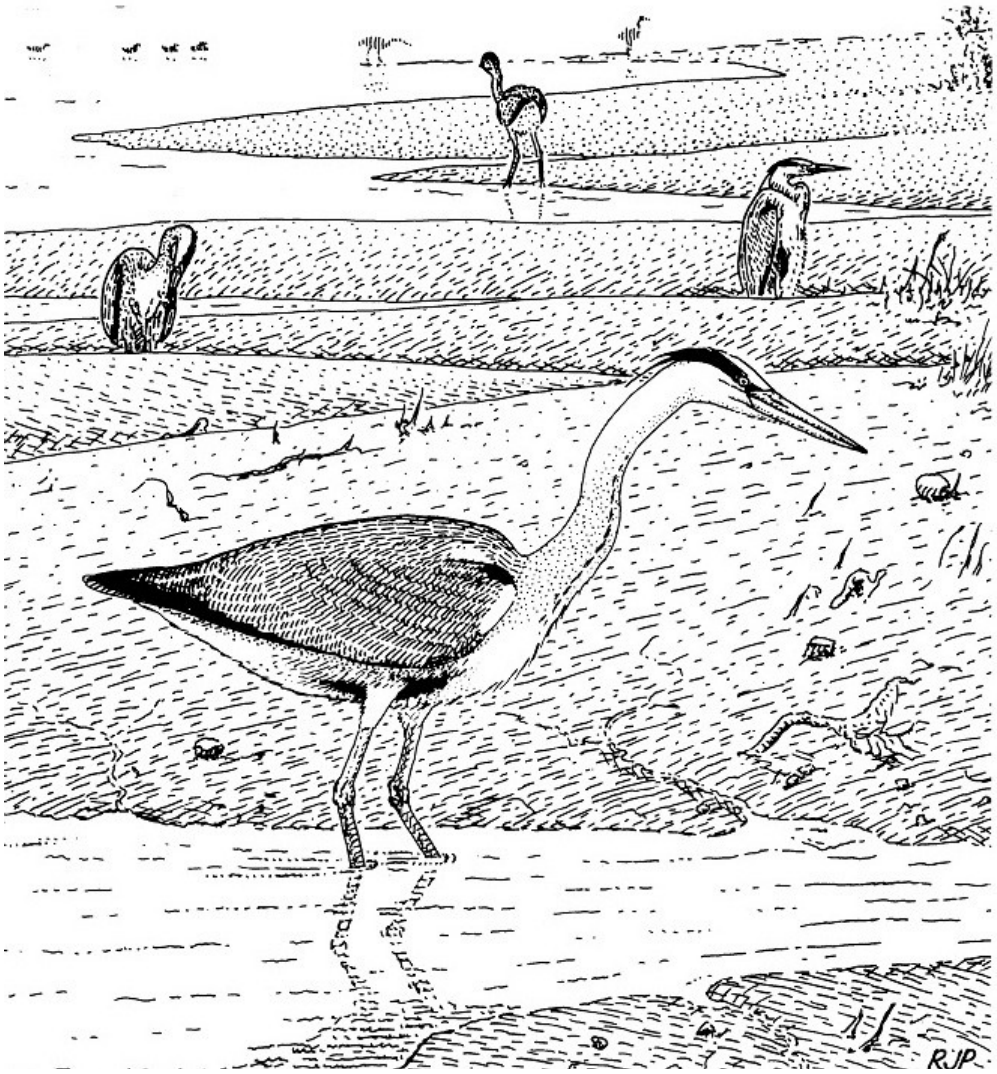
The high coarse fish populations at CVL resulted in good counts of Goosander and Cormorant but smaller than usual numbers of Tufted Duck, whilst strong water plant growth here attracted a large flock of Pochard. There was a small arrival of Bewick's Swan from Nov. 1st and four Whooper Swan visited CVL on 21st, followed by two at Weston STW on Dec. 31st. Dark-bellied Brent Goose was reasonably numerous, particularly at Severnside. Once again Smew was absent.

November was a good month for seabirds, brought in by the frequent storms. The first peak period was from Nov. 13th to 17th, when single Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern Divers, three Leach's Petrel, two Shag, three Pomarine Skua, two Arctic Skua, 19 Great Skua – a good count -- and, exceptionally, a Black Guillemot were seen. In the last three days of the month there were further Black-throated and Great Northern Diver, three Arctic Skua and 220 Kittiwake.

As in the previous winter, counts on the Estuary of the more common wader species were healthy. Peaks of Dunlin were 4,000 at OPS, 2,900 at Severnside and 5,500 at Cl-Y, and Curlew and Redshank were again present in reasonable numbers, Knot was scarce but a large flock of Black-tailed Godwit visited Severnside several times and Ringed Plover was reasonably numerous. Away from the Estuary Lapwing counts were low but numbers of Snipe and Jack Snipe appeared to be average. Amongst the less frequent species Green Sandpiper was scarce, as in the previous winter, but Common Sandpiper was again widespread with a maximum of nine at Sea Mills. Spotted Redshank was seen on two dates at Cl-Y and eight Purple Sandpiper frequented Battery Point. A party of six Whimbrel at Severnside on Dec. 12th was exceptional.

Brambling, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin were all slightly more widespread than in the first winter period and Fieldfare counts were better. Stonechat numbers rose again and a party of Water Pipit was at CVL for the first time in several years. Counts at Marshfield, our most important area for farmland birds, included 400 Linnet and 150 Yellowhammer but Corn Bunting counts were much lower than in recent winters.

The year's excellent series of Great White Egret sightings culminated in November, with peak counts of six at BL and seven at CVL, and a minimum of eight birds present. Glossy Ibis and Nordic Jackdaw were both found at Severnside on Nov. 6th, the latter remaining to 20th. At least five Siberian Chiffchaff were present and a small passage of Hawfinch was detected, with three at Severn Beach on 4th and single birds at Saltford on 8th and OPS on 12th. December was a non-event as regards rare birds, perhaps a fitting finale to a quiet year.


RJP

Weather Report for 2015

Richard Bland

The Bristol Naturalists Society (BNS) began publishing weather data in 1872 with G. F. Burder's paper [Burder 1872] 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 weather data. During this period the BNS, and later this Report, made use of this information. From 2003 I have made use of the temperature data from the website www.afour.demon.co.uk which is based in Totterdown (Bristol). It has also traced records from some other sources back to 1853, and I have used these to fill in the historical gaps. I discovered this year that the official Met Office Bristol temperature data is taken at Lulsgate, and overall this is two degrees colder than that recorded at the Totterdown site. This suggests that the figures after 2002 cannot be directly compared with the earlier ones. Since 2002 I have used my own rain gauge situated in the Clifton/Stoke Bishop area, as Burder [1872] measured rainfall in Clifton. Rainfall figures vary notoriously with location and time, and so a long series is crucial to any understanding of the continuous processes of climate change. I use the term 'long-term average' to mean the average back to 1853. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature as the basic unit, but many sources only quote daily maxima and so I have used these figures throughout.

Summary for 2015

The year was the fourth warmest since 1853. April 2015 was the third hottest April in the past decade, and warmer than May. November was the second warmest for the period 1853 to 2011, and December was the warmest for this period with the same temperature as November. Also, March, April and October were dry, with October the driest since 1978, November and December had less than half the normal sunshine.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Av. Max. ºC	14.7	14.5	13.7	14.6	14.2	15.5	14.7	14.8	16.1	15.4
Ten year av. ºC	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.8
Rainfall *mm*	952	1107	1150	986	747	847	1420	799	1143	870
Ten year av. *mm*	974	997	1005	993	943	945	981	983	975	992

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

Seasons

Winter (December 2014 to February 2015) Average maximum temperature was 8.8ºC, a degree above the long-term average. Rainfall averaged at 80*mm* per month, the same as the long-term average. December was drier than normal, January had 50% more rain and February was average. There were 28 frost nights (October to April), the last on April 26th. The average for the past decade is 29 per winter. No snow fell, but there were 14 days when ponds were frozen.

Spring (March to May) Average temperature was 15.0ºC, two degrees above the long-term average. The 30-year average is now as high as it was in the 1950s. April was four degrees above the long term average, but May began cool and finished as the coolest May since 2005. Both March and April were very dry and overall there was about half the normal spring rainfall.

Summer (June to August) Average temperature at 20.7ºC was much cooler than the previous two years, and very close to normal. June was dry, August was wet although nowhere near as wet as in 2014, so the final figure for the three months was close to normal.

Autumn (September to November) Average temperature at 15.8°C was two degrees above the long-term average, helped by an exceptionally warm November. October was notably dry, but rainfall overall was average at 68*mm* per month. November had half the normal sunshine.

Seasonal Comparisons To put the 2015 seasonal average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, the average since 1853, and the differences between 2015 and the long-term average.

	2015	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Diff.
Winter	*8.8º*	1917 - 2.5º	1920 - 10.6º	7.5°	1.3º
Spring	*15.0°*	1887 - 10.4º	1893 - 16.6º	13.0°	2.0°
Summer	*20.7°*	1883 - 18.0º	1976 - 23.9º	20.3°	0.4º
Autumn	*15.8º*	1915 - 10.6º	1959 - 16.8º	14.0°	1.8º
Annual	*15.4º*	1892 - 12.1º	2014 - 16.1º	13.7°	1.7º

Table 2 -- 2015 seasonal average temperature compared with minimum, maximum and the average since 1853.

Table 3 gives the same detailed information for rainfall. The winter data was heavily influenced by the rain that fell in December 2014, as both January and February were dry months.

	2015	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Diff.
Winter	80*mm*	1964 – 21*mm*	1995 – 154*mm*	79*mm*	1*mm*
Spring	35*mm*	1893 – 17*mm*	1981 – 107*mm*	60*mm*	-25*mm*
Summer	84*mm*	1995 – 11*mm*	2012 – 149*mm*	74*mm*	10*mm*
Autumn	68*mm*	1978 – 26*mm*	1935 – 173*mm*	87*mm*	-19*mm*
Annual	73*mm*	1864 – 49*mm*	2012 – 118*mm*	75*mm*	*-2 mm*

Table 3 -- Average monthly rainfall in *mm* for each season in 2015 showing the maximum, minimum, average since 1853, and the difference between 2015 and the average since 1853.

Monthly percentage deviation in 2015 from the average since 1853

	Temp.	Rain			Temp.	Rain
January	25%	44%		July	0%	26%
February	9%	-8%		August	1%	-7%
March	18%	-48%		September	4%	-23%
April	34%	-74%		October	10%	-60%
May	0%	5%		November	33%	20%
June	5%	-27%		December	71%	36%

Table 4 -- Monthly percentage deviations in 2015 from the norm

Summary April, November and December were unusually warm, and April and October unusually dry.

Monthly summaries for 2015

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Av.
Temp. °C	8.9	8.2	11.6	17.2	16.2	20.4	21.0	20.7	18.7	15.5	13.2	13.3	15.4
Rain *mm*	121	57	32	15	65	45	92	81	61	38	106	122	69.6

Table 5 -- 2015 monthly average temperatures and total rainfall with average for the year in the last column.

January The first fortnight was dominated by westerly winds around Icelandic depressions, three of which were stormy, with temperatures around 11°C. There were six frost nights starting on 15th, and ice on ponds on four mornings as the wind turned northerly and maximum temperatures fell to around 7°C. Unusually the last week was dominated by a low pressure system over the Baltic, giving NW winds and falling temperatures in our area,

February The first ten days were cold, dominated by high pressure, with NE winds, frost at night and ice on ponds. The wind switched to the south on the 13th, and temperatures reached 12°C by the 18th. During the last ten days the winds were westerly and the 27th saw eight hours of sunshine.

March High pressure, mostly over the Baltic, dominated, with light northerly or easterly winds. There were 22 dry days and just half the normal rainfall. Sunshine was average, although there were nine hours on the 18th, and temperatures were close to average. The last four days were stormy.

April Unusually the month was dominated by high pressure throughout, with mostly light easterly winds, 28 days with sunshine and 22 without rain. Temperatures peaked at 17°C on 8th, 16th and 21st, but they started and finished the month at around 12°C.

May This month was dominated by low pressure systems and SW winds, but there was little rain. The first week was cool and overcast, and half the month's rain fell. Temperatures picked up a bit in the second week but then fell to 13ºC on 18th and 19th at the peak of the breeding season. It was also the gloomiest May for more than 15 years. From 20th a high pressure system in the Atlantic raised temperatures to a maximum of 22ºC on 23rd but the last few days were cooler.

June The first week was dominated by warm SW winds, blue skies and a maximum of 23°C on the 4th. After that high pressure and northerly winds dominated with overcast skies but with a maximum of 26ºC on 11th. The second half of the month saw light S or SW winds around high pressure systems, but the weather remained dry and occasionally sunny, ending in a brief heatwave with a temperature of 31ºC on the 30th.

July The month began with the hottest day of the year, 32ºC, on 1st, but by the 8th it was only 19ºC. The second and third weeks were warmer, but overcast and still dry. In the fourth week a substantial slow moving depression saw over 50*mm* of rain fall in three days, and the temperature dropped to 16ºC on 24th.

August The first half of the month was warm and dry with occasional fine sunny days. From 17th temperatures built up with moderate SW winds controlled by high pressure over the Baltic. On 22nd

the temperature reached 28ºC but 23*mm* of rain fell, and the temperature collapsed to 15ºC on 24th and a further 45*mm* of rain fell in four days.

September The month began with northerly winds around high pressure in the central Atlantic, which saw some fine days and dry light winds. Low pressure took over from 11th but winds remained light, and autumn colour developed exceptionally well. From 23rd to the end of the month high pressure brought very light easterly winds, and a series of very fine days

October High pressure and light winds dominated for the first three weeks, with maximum temperatures falling from 18ºC to around 13ºC, and the skies were generally overcast although there was little rain. In the last ten days low pressure systems and stronger winds began to remove the leaves from the trees, but temperatures that had fallen to 12ºC on 17th were back at 19ºC by the end of the month.

November The first few days continued the October pattern but on the 5th strong westerly winds took control, and a series of storms, including the first named one, *Abigail*, swept across Scotland. There was more wind than rain, and temperatures remained above normal, at about 16ºC, to the 17th. A northerly wind saw temperature fall to 7ºC on 21st, bringing the first frost of the winter. However, westerly winds then raised temperatures back to 13ºC, and the month finished as the second warmest November since 1853. It had the least sunshine, at just 1.0 hrs per day, of any month since December 2006.

December This was the warmest since 1853, with an average of 13.3ºC, a massive 5.5ºC above the long-term average. On the warmest day, the 20th, it reached 16ºC, and the coldest was only 10ºC, on 11th. A series of storms with high winds swept across the country, although Bristol was spared the rainfall that led to flooding in the north of England and southern Scotland. The wind was always from the SW, often originating close to the tropics. Rainfall was above average at 122*mm*, half of it falling in the final week that included the wettest day of the year, 30th, when 28*mm* of rain fell.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for the extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the events of 2015 to be put into perspective. It is often claimed that extreme weather events are becoming more common, but without a clear definition of an 'extreme' event this is very hard to demonstrate. Flooding is often caused by human factors, such as house building on former flood meadows, or draining of upland moors for sheep rearing, and storm fatalities are often more an indication of population density and poverty rather than the scale of the storm. None of the figures below show any significant trend over the past 15 years. I have added a column for the maximum 'extreme', and another for the average 'extreme' since 2000, in order to put 2015 into perspective. The only measure in which the year was at all unusual is the number of days with a wind speed of over 30mph (Row 10, Storms, in the table). This figure is derived from the Times newspaper's daily weather report, and the wind experienced in Bristol may have been very different.

		2006	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	2015	Max.	Av.
Hottest day	ºC	35	27	28	28	26	29	30	32	31	32	35	30
Coldest day	ºC	0	2	2	-1	-5	1	1	0	4	5	-5	1
Wettest day	*mm*	39	40	35	36	36	40	72	33	42	28	72	40
Sunniest day	hrs	14.7	14.1	14.9	14.7	15.6	14.7	15	15	13	13.7	15.6	14.5
Longest dry period	days	22	24	16	20	24	23	17	20	17	14	24	20
Longest wet period	days	11	8	8	8	7	5	15	9	7	6	15	8
Nights of frost	days	33	25	44	42	76	22	41	67	15	12	76	38
Snow	days	2	2	1	19	33	0	1	8	0	0	33	7
Storms (30mph+)	days	27	22	16	17	9	24	22	25	28	62	62	25
Hotter than 25ºC	days	27	1	7	5	3	14	19	32	27	5	32	14
Colder than 5ºC	days	39	18	14	37	60	13	16	29	2	5	60	23
More than 10hr sun	days	36	45	29	49	46	44	38	44	39	25	49	40
No sun	days	107	99	95	95	106	104	93	95	82	84	107	96
No rain	days	234	238	228	265	269	253	205	238	203	227	269	236

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

A note on climate

Climate is defined as the normal weather measurements over a period of time, usually taken to be thirty years. Because it is an average it changes only slightly in each particular year. The general pattern of climate in Bristol since 1853 is that the average maximum annual temperature fell until about 1900 when it was 13.2ºC. It rose until 1960, when it was 14.0ºC, fell in 1992 to 13.6ºC, and it has risen since to 14.2ºC today.

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 suggest 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 than this. The climate changes that have occurred since the peak of the last ice age 18.000 years ago have led to continual change in the wildlife that can thrive here, and this process continues. Seasonal change, especially cold winters and cold or wet breeding seasons, can have a dramatic effect on bird populations. The table below shows the climate figures for each season for the past decade. These changes make it clear that over this period spring has warmed more rapidly than the other seasons and that summer has become wetter, but the other seasons have remained fairly stable. The rainfall figures are given as the averages for each month. The difference (Diff) column compares the 30-year averages up to 2006 with the similar averages up to 2015, note that seven out of the eight seasonal figures are positive, as are both annual figures.

References

Burder, G. F. [1872] -- *Twenty years rainfall at Clifton*. Proc. of the BNS for 1872 available to download from the BNS website.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015	Diff.
Temperature											
Winter ºC	7.77	7.81	7.88	7.86	7.87	7.82	7.86	7.9	7.97	7.99	0.22
Spring ºC	12.96	13.03	13.05	13.12	13.22	13.31	13.38	13.32	13.42	13.5	0.54
Summer ºC	20.34	20.19	20.2	20.28	20.35	20.38	20.39	20.47	20.45	20.41	0.07
Autumn ºC	14.40	14.43	14.41	14.4	14.38	14.48	14.48	14.51	14.59	14.63	0.23
Annual ºC	13.87	13.87	13.88	13.91	13.94	14.00	14.04	14.05	14.11	14.15	0.28
Rainfall											
Winter, *mm*	87	89	88	88	86	87	87	87	89	89	2
Spring, *mm*	67	68	69	68	67	64	65	63	64	63	-4
Summer, *mm*	67	68	69	70	70	72	74	74	76	75	8
Autumn, *mm*	91	91	93	95	95	93	94	94	93	94	3
Annual, mm	78	79	79	80	80	80	80	80	81	81	3

Table 7 – Annual average temperature and rainfall calculated over the preceding thirty years

The need for descriptions

This note updates and expands on an article first published in the 2005 Report. It reminds the reader why we ask observers to provide documentation in support of records of locally rare or scarce species. It also gives some guidance as to what we are looking for, and some reasons to explain why some records do not always end up in the Report.

Why is documentation required?

All recorders' committees and bird report editors have a responsibility to ensure that published records are accurate as possible, and this includes the scarce and rare species. If records of scarce species are to stand the test of time then ideally there should be some supporting evidence in the archive for future authors or reviewers to consult.

As our knowledge improves, identification criteria can change over time and having a written description on file allows us to go back and review past records in the light of the latest developments. This could be important in respect of closely related species and sub-species.

A recent development is hoax sightings, with some well publicised ones from other parts of the country, and 2015 saw the first confirmed hoax report from the Avon area.

The onus is on the observer/s to provide a description if the record is to be published – note that to be fair to everyone we require a description of a locally scarce species regardless of whether it is common in another part of the country, easy to identify, or if the observer considers themselves to be very familiar with it.

How much should I write?

Certain species will, by their very appearance, require less describing than others, so for example, one short paragraph may be all that is required for a convincing description of a Great White Egret in flight.

The following is an actual description received:
I noticed two large white birds against the blue sky heading NE up the Bristol Channel. I had about a 30 second view from the track on the southern side of the point before they dipped from my view behind the point. They immediately caught my eye as the slow wingbeats of the birds were more like a Grey Heron than the two smaller egret species. I then scrambled up the bank to get a better view, using my 8x42 binoculars. The closest bird clearly had a striking yellow bill whereas the other was slightly darker. Both birds flew with the neck tucked in and legs training behind. I was able to follow the birds for a couple of minutes as they headed towards the Second Severn crossing.

Although a few details, like leg and foot colour are not noted, there is enough here to get the record accepted.

Conversely very detailed notes, with if possible a photograph, would be required for something like a Rough-legged Buzzard or one of the rarer passerines like Greenish Warbler.

The following is an actual description of a brief sighting of a Hawfinch:
My attention was attracted by a very loud (in part because very close) 'tsziew' call given twice. Knowing that I knew the call but forgetting for the moment what it was, I looked up to see a finch-shaped bird flying past a little over eye-level about 20 feet away, in grey light. It was large (for a finch), front-heavy, relatively short-tailed, generally the colour of freshly dead Bracken and had extensive white in the wings. I recognised it immediately as a Hawfinch (with which I am very familiar from hundreds of bird-days abroad). It being so low, I wondered if it might land and so hastened off in the same direction. About 150 feet on, as I appeared from within some planted young trees, it gave a further call (same type), and flew off from an overmature hedge about 30 feet from me with deep jerky undulations to get going, giving a couple more calls (same type) as it headed off to the west. This view was much better (earlier it had been quickly obscured by the planted trees), showing a massive pointed bill looking like an extension of the (big) head (i.e. no angle or step as it joined the head, above or below); a white tail-tip (but not outer tail feathers); a broad and long bright white wing-bar (much more striking than on Chaffinch); a shape perhaps closest to Greenfinch but more front-heavy, tail far shorter and probably unforked. The wings were far broader; and some dark marks about the bird which of course I know where they are anatomically but did not have time to note objectively and precisely on this sighting. I waited 20 minutes in case it came back but to no avail.

This is honest sounding and authentic *re* the level of detail and views obtained, as well as obviously being the species concerned.

Your description should be detailed enough to prove beyond reasonable doubt that you have identified the species correctly. An 'ideal' description should take us through and describe each part of the bird, although how much detail you can provide depends on how well you saw the bird and for how long. You should also describe, as best you can, any calls you heard or behaviour that you feel may be significant.

Some observers submit an annotated drawing rather than a written description, both are acceptable and an annotated drawing has the advantage of making you think about all parts of the bird.

There is no right or wrong length that a description should be. We have stopped short of dividing our list of description species into 'short notes required' and 'full description required' as some county recorders committees do, because we believe it is up to the individual to provide a description with enough detail to demonstrate they saw the species claimed.

Description format

When sending in a description please do not forget to include details about yourself and your observation as well as what the bird looked like. It helps greatly when evaluating a record if you include the following:

Your name and contact details;
Date, time and length of observation;
Distance from bird/s and viewing including weather conditions, this is important;
Basic details of optical equipment used;
Your previous experience of the species and any confusion species;
Other observers with you and their opinion on the identification.

Can I just send a photograph?

The committee receives a good number of descriptions that are supported by photographs, and these greatly aid the assessment process. However, please ensure that you also provide at least some supporting details, site, date, etc., particularly if you were the sole observer.

Although photographs can be of great help, they do not always show all the relevant features or correctly show colours. If relying mainly on a photograph, it is important that the accompanying notes highlight any additional features that you noted in the field, or plumage colours which are not accurately reflected.

Why do we reject records?

One reason why some records of locally uncommon species do not appear in the Report is simply because no confirmatory details were supplied with them at all.

In the majority of other cases that do not appear the notes supplied are too brief and do not describe the bird in enough detail, and/or fail to eliminate a similar species. It is not because we think the observer has got the identification wrong, just that the information supplied is insufficient. For example, although '*a tiny warbler with two pale wingbars*' may well have referred to a Yellow-browed Warbler, it is not enough to allow us to publish it because other species share these characteristics.

With species that are tricky to identify, or even 'easier' species that have been seen briefly or at long range, the observer needs not just to describe the bird but also to establish that they have considered similar species and eliminated them. It is fine to reel off a string of so-called 'diagnostic features' but what did the rest of the bird look like? Why was it the species you are claiming it was, and not something else? Try not to restrict your description to the bare minimum you think is required to 'get it through' in the hope the committee will contact you should further evidence be required – your submission should include everything from your observations that enabled you to identify the bird. If you leave out any important fieldmarks then the committee does not have the time to chase you up to ask if there is anything you forgot.

If a record is not accepted for publication it does not mean we think you have made a mistake. In most cases there is simply not enough convincing or conclusive detail *in the submitted description* to justify publication. Only a few of the unpublished records relate to birds which we believe were misidentified while in a few others the observer themself was not fully certain of the identification.

Who needs to submit the description?

Ideally we like to receive notes from the original finder and/or identifier of the bird, but we will accept them from anyone who saw it! If the bird remains for a few days we do not need additional notes for subsequent dates unless it has been missing for a period. For popular, long-staying rarities we will often assess the record just from published photographs but we prefer, where possible, to have notes from the initial observers, if only so they can be credited with the find in the Report.

Problems arise from multi-observer, but brief, sightings, such as on a 'sea-watch' where there is no clear 'finder' and everyone assumes someone else is going to submit some notes. In such cases it is better to be safe, and have multiple notes, than sorry and have nothing with the record falling by the wayside. For sightings from sea or migration watches it is useful for the notes to include the time, flock size and direction of flight so that we can try and link your sighting to others in different locations.

Do any species cause particular problems?

Two species stand out as having high rejection rates:

Ringtail Hen Harrier -- Before going into the minutiae you need to explain why the bird was even a harrier. Buzzards with pale rumps are not uncommon.

Goshawk -- A 'difficult' species that is hard to accurately describe. Birds that look like large Sparrowhawks are likely to be just that. The essential reference here is Keith Vinicombe's identification article in the 2004 Report.

Which species qualify as rare or scarce?

The list of species set out overleaf is reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. Species in

italics have not yet been recorded in the Avon area but are on the list because they are not considered as national rarities by the British Birds Rarity Committee (BBRC). The figures in brackets give the number of live individuals recorded in the Avon area between 1983 and 2014.

We also require descriptions for locally rare subspecies – ie any subspecies which is not regularly recorded in Avon. As a guide the list at the bottom of this page shows the 'recognisable' rare subspecies that have been seen in the Avon area.

As well as the species and subspecies listed below, 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.

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 [1] (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

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)

When should I send the description?

As soon as possible, that is while the sighting is still fresh in your mind. Ideally you should make some immediate notes while in the field, type them up later and then submit them. You do not need to save them up until the end of the year. If you submit them promptly it saves us having to chase you up.

Where should I send the description?

If you submit your records online via BirdTrack you will automatically get a description form to complete as part of the submission process; a copy of this form then gets forwarded to the Recorder.

Otherwise descriptions should be emailed to the Recorder at avonbirdrecorder@gmail.com. If you prefer a standard form is available to download at http://bristolornithologicalclub.co.uk/birding/bird-recording/.

Will I be told if my record has been accepted?

In addition to *c.*125 rare bird descriptions each year we receive tens of thousands of standard records; as such the Recorder does not have the time to contact an individual to advise whether a record has been accepted or not. However, should you wish to query a particular record please direct your enquiry to the Recorder.

Submission of Records of Regularly Occurring Species

All records of common, uncommon and scarce species are welcome. 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/, or daily by email to the avonbirding blog address bocbirds@gmail.com or via Twitter @bristolbirding;
- 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@gmail.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.

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 2016. 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	Population Counts
Very rare	Five or fewer records in the Avon area	
Rare	Less than annual; several years pass between sightings	As per level of abundance
Very Scarce	Less than annual; typically recorded every two or three years	
Scarce	Very small numbers noted virtually every year	1 - 9
Uncommon	Low numbers every year	10 - 99
Fairly common	Occurs in reasonable numbers in suitable habitat	100 - 999
Common	Regularly occurs in good numbers in most suitable habitats	1000 - 9999
Abundant	Large numbers occur in all suitable habitats	10000 +

For locally very scarce species the heading shows two figures. The first gives the number of individuals recorded between 1983, the first year AOG was responsible for producing this Report, and 2014, and the second gives the number of new individuals recorded in 2015. If descriptions were first required for the species in question subsequent to 1983, the first figure will be the number of accepted individuals since this 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 away) 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 in this Report. 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 below.

BBS - the BTO **B**reeding **B**ird **S**urvey
The BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) has been conducted since 1994 and is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common breeding birds. BBS is a line-transect survey and surveyors walk two one-*km* transects across randomly selected National Grid squares twice between early April and the end of June. Further squares are self-selected by surveyors in order to increase local coverage and are surveyed on the same basis.

Changes from year to year (e.g. 2014-15) 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 (e.g. 2005-15). **Data presented here relates to the former county of Avon and excludes records from those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset.**

BBS does not monitor nocturnal species, waterbirds or colonial species particularly well. However, it does give a reliable measure of the changes of 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. Results should be used with caution -- changes of a few per cent are not likely to reflect any real significant change while changes of 10% or more, if sustained, almost certainly are significant. Likewise longer periods are more prone to distortion than shorter ones but should still provide evidence of significant increases or decreases.

In 2015 a total of 173 squares were surveyed in Avon, excluding records from those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset. Of these 173 squares, 159 squares were 'repeat squares' and were used in the calculation of percentage change figures as above. A total of 52880 birds of 103 species was recorded. Annual percentage change figures over the past ten years are provided for some of the species most frequently recorded together with summary figures for the changes since 1994 and 2005.

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 2015 there were 47 (48) walks totalling 55 (56) hours and 6100 (5800) birds of 41 (43) species were counted at an overall rate of 112 (96) per hour (2014 figures in brackets). The percentage change from previous years may be quoted as part of individual species accounts.

WGS - the **W**inter **G**arden **S**urvey
This survey began in the 1973/4 winter and involves counts in gardens between October and March. In 2014/15 a total of 30(28) gardens participated, there were 718 (640) weeks of observation and 26,600 (43,000) birds of 40 (46) species were counted. (2013/14 figures in brackets). Percentage changes in WGS numbers present may be used in individual species accounts.

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. The survey publishes a trend survey showing how the English (and other) non-breeding waterbird populations have fared recently. Using this data we give a figure for the change during the decade 2004/05 to 2014/15 with the label 'English 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 2015. 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 December 2015 edition of *British Birds*.

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

1. Species that are Globally Threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened) under IUCN guidelines, as assessed by BirdLife International, the IUCN Red List Authority for birds, in 2015.
2. Historical decline in breeding populations -- Species judged to have declined severely between 1800 and 1995, from an assessment conducted by Gibbons *et al.* (1996), and which have not recovered subsequently.
3. Breeding population decline -- Severe decline in the UK breeding population size (more than 50%) over 25 years or the longer term, defined as the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969. Also non-breeding population decline -- Severe decline in the UK non-breeding population size (more than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term as defined above.
4. Breeding range decline. -- Severe decline in UK range (more than 50%) between the breeding bird atlases in1988–91 and 2007–11 or 1968–71 and 2007–11 as measured by the calculated change in the number of occupied 10-*km* squares.
5. Non-breeding range decline -- Severe decline in UK range (more than 50%) between the wintering bird atlases in 1981–84 and 2007–11 as measured by the calculated change in the number of occupied 10-km squares.

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

1. European Red List status -- Any species on the European Red List (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable).
2. Historical decline recovery. -- As described above, previously Red-listed for historical decline, followed by an increase of at least 100% over 25 years or the longer-term period.
3. Breeding population decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term period. Also non-breeding population decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term period.
4. Breeding range decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) between1988-91 and 2007-11 or1968-71 and 2007-11. Also non-breeding range decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) between1981-84 and 2007-11.
5. Breeding and non-breeding rarity -- Species qualify as rare breeders if the UK breeding population is less than 300 pairs, and as rare non-breeders if the UK non-breeding population is less than 900 individuals.
6. Breeding and non-breeding localisation -- Species are considered localised if more than 50% of the UK population is found at ten or fewer sites in either the breeding or the non-breeding season.
7. Breeding and non-breeding international importance -- Species are considered of international importance if the UK holds at least 20% of the European population in either the breeding or the non-breeding season.

Reference

Gibbons, D.W., Avery, M.I., Baillie, S.R., Gregory, R.D., Kirby, J., Porter, R.F., Tucker, G.M. & Williams, G. (1996) Bird species of conservation concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man: revising the Red Data List. *RSPB Conservation Review* **10**: 7– 18.

Frequently Used Abbreviations

The following definitions and abbreviations are used throughout this Report.

ASW	Avonmouth Sewage Treatment Works and surrounding areas
BA	Bath and North-east Somerset
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
CI-Y	Severn shore and its environs between the western outskirts of Clevedon and the mouth of the R. Yeo (sometimes called Clevedon Bay), including Blake's and other pools and the tidal part of the Yeo
CVL	Chew Valley Lake
NS	North Somerset
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 157.
Severnside	Severn shore and its environs between Aust Warth and Chittening Warth inclusive
SG	South Gloucestershire
Weston STW	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and surrounding areas

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

The Systematic List

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* [RR] [Amber 7]

Fairly common resident; most winter just inland from the coast in N. Somerset or in Bristol City Docks. Summer moulting flocks occur principally at CVL.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 22nd site of National Importance in 2014/15. English 10 year trend -8%

This species was recorded at a similar number of sites to that in 2014. The largest single count was for the CVL moulting flock which was considerably larger than in 2014. The wintering flocks were in the Kenn Moor / Kingston Seymour area (often close to the M5 motorway), Weston STW and at CVL. The first two tables summarise the data for the past ten years, and show a slight improvement in the counts at Bristol City Docks.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
80	85	72	85	80	64	22	11	18	33

Numbers wintering in Bristol City Docks - Maximum count (ten-year average 55)

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
115	98	107	115	125	187	140	145	92	155

Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average 127)

There were non-BBS records from 66 sites which compares with 60 in 2009, 74 in 2010, 68 in 2011, 70 in 2012, 64 in 2013 and 66 in 2014. Apart from the 14 tabulated sites most of the remaining 52 held 20 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
Portishead Lake	13	24	20	3	3	2	2	2	14			18
Portishead Marina	-	24	23	11	14		10	19	15	19	8	8
PWD	5	4	6	10	2		7	9	14	35	19	23
Cl-Y	5	62	7	9	16		4	2		2	7	14
Axe Estuary	5	4	4	10		2	6		7	9	13	17
Weston STW	103	89	4	49	50	9	13	17	63	73	33	93
Keynsham, R. Avon	6						7		8	11		
Eastville Park, Bristol	2	2	10	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	6
Hewish/King.Seymour	43	52	50									
Kenn Moor	70	70	75	42	7	5					45	72
Backwell Lake	23	21	20	16	12	11	10	10	9	9	12	20
BG				8	2	3	2	2	2	-	-	2
CVL	45	42	42	45	48	90	155	155	90	105	125	95
BL	5	9	13	17	22	26	43	46	47	45	56	10

Monthly maxima of adults at the main sites

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 20 squares (16 in 2014), which represented 11.6% of those surveyed. The total counted was 97. Best count 75.

Breeding A good year with 27 successful broods recorded (23 in 2014). Breeding was confirmed at the following 18 sites, in all but the last two a single pair was involved, the number of cygnets reported is listed: At OPS - one; Portishead - five; Kingston Seymour - one; Kensington Meadows, Bath - three; Prior Park, Bath - four; Newton Park - four; Keynsham - eight; Saltford - six; Chelwood - eight; Three Brooks NR - two; Eastville Park - five, three of which fledged, one was predated by a fox and the other died after swallowing fishing tackle; Temple Quay, Bristol Docks - three; BG - one; Chelvey - five; and Backwell Lake - seven. On Nailsea Moor, a pair raised five cygnets which failed to fledge; at CVL nine broods produced 31 cygnets; and at BL three pairs raised broods of eight, five and five, 11 of which fledged. Nest building and attempted breeding at 'Grebe Pond, Pilning Wetland resulted in failure.

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

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
123	121	123	121	88	120	124+	44	57	106	103

Number of cygnets per year (ten-year average 101)

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus* [Amber 1, 3, 6, 7]

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.

WeBS status: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the third site in the UK of International Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2014/15. English 10 year trend -60%

Low numbers were reported, with records in the second winter period only as follows:

Redland, Bristol -- an unusual record of two flying over on Nov. 24th, they were identified on call as an adult and a juvenile by ex-WWT Welney Warden Tim Cox.

CVL – eight on Nov. 2nd and five on 9th plus a further two adults and a juvenile seen flying west high over Morton, all were probably strays from the BL flock;

BL – noted throughout November and December as follows:

Three adults on Nov.1st were joined by another eight including two juveniles on 2nd. Two more adults arrived on 5th, all remaining until 24th. Two of the adults are known as 'By-Brook', a male ringed at Slimbridge, in 2000 with yellow ring ZBN, and 'Keynell' an un-ringed female recorded by Slimbridge in 2010. This pair was seen on several dates with a juvenile that was found dead near Slimbridge in February 2016. Another male, 'Winkey' ringed at Slimbridge, in 2001 with white ring BCL was also seen on many dates. From Nov. 25th numbers gradually reduced to five by 30th. There were just three in December up until 3rd when they were last seen.

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

1996/05 Av.	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12./13	13/14	2014/15
30	18	11	7	6	41	37	41	5	40	20

Number for each of the last ten winter periods (average 22) with previous decade average

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (53, 6)

Very scarce winter visitor.
Descriptions required.

There were two records in the second winter period after a blank 2014/15, see table below. Details as follows:

CVL – four adults flew in from NE at 14.55 on Nov. 21st before landing on Herriott's Pool where they remained until after dark (R Kelsh *et al.*, photographed);

Weston STW – two adults on Dec. 31st were only the second site record (M S Ponsford, photographed).

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
2	0	1	8	3+	3	3	3+	4	0

Numbers seen in the last ten winters

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser* [Amber 6]

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 English 10 year trend 23%

Reasonable numbers were recorded, mainly in ones and twos but with a maximum count of ten at Herriott's Pool, CVL on March. 23rd. The table below summarises the counts during the last decade, it shows that the species appears to be becoming more widespread in our region.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Sites	9	11	7	12	10	18	20	17	15	24
No. Individuals	32	74	33	27	80	102	49	58+	69	73

Sites and numbers each year

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

OPS -- two on March 8th and 21st, one on April 17th and another on Dec. 7th;

Littleton Warth – April 18th;

Northwick Warth / New Passage / Pilning Wetlands – Jan. 27th and 31st, April 2nd, 4th, 6th 7th and 21st, and two on 24th, and one on Nov. 7th;

PWD – March 7th, 13th and 23rd, three on April 7th, one on 14th, 18th, 19th and 20th, two on May1st;

Portishead Marina – June 28th;

Greylag Goose con't

Battery Point - Redcliff Bay – Dec. 15th;

Portishead Lake – on many dates between Jan. 3rd and March 23rd, two on April 19th and 29th, one on Sept. 22nd, Nov. 26th, and Dec. 8th and 31st;

Portishead (Windmill Inn area) – Jan. 8th and 9th, Sept. 14th and 17th and Nov. 31st;

Cl-Y (Dowlais) -- two on April 13th and 16th;

Weston STW – Feb. 7th, Aug.15th and 28th, and Sept. 20th;

Saltford – one flew over on April 21st;

Tortworth, Old Court Farm – six on May 25th;

Chipping Sodbury Common – two on March 20th, three on April 2nd and two on 5th and 23rd;

Little Sodbury – four on May 21st;

Dodington – five on April 25th;

Doynton – two on March 24th;

Bath (ST7464) – Nov. 5th;

Batheaston – Sept. 4th;

Aztec West – three on Dec. 13th

Eastville Park – four on April 6th and Dec. 31st;

Wick – March 15th.

Backwell Lake – Feb. 15th and four on March 29th;

CVL –a single bird was first noted on March 6th, this increased to two or three on various dates until 23rd when ten were present. There were five on 25th and up to three on many dates from April through to Aug. 9th but with five on April 5th;

BL -- Feb. 15th, March 4th and 24th, Sept. 29th and 30th, and Oct.1st to 3rd.

GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis* [RR]

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

WeBS English 10 year trend 1.0%

The now regular flock at Northwick Warth / Pilning Wetlands maintained numbers similar to those in 2014, monthly counts of which appear in the table of regularly counted sites below. These birds are most likely to be the same as those which frequent Littleton Warth and OPS. Fairly good numbers continue to winter at CVL and BL but the numbers moulting at CVL more than doubled from 2014 and are well above the long term average, see ten-year tables below.

	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
CVL	61	51	65	84	229	110	206	167	144	141
BL	124	192	241	315	221	348	404	355	300	257

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the period (Sept. to March), ten-year average 126 (CVL), (BL) 276.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
507	415	295	385	440	500	417	318	250	547

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average 407)

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	69	40	22	11	6	33	34	278	285	311	134	60
Severnside	40	27	29	13	11	7	111	200	240	198	65	97
PWD	29	10	6	11	30	60	57	-	5	7	-	12
Cl-Y	110	62	11	4	2	3	3	74	48	5	38	66
Backwell Lake	26	18	19	19	12	12	8	2	37	35	1	16
Weston STW	118	46	37	24	5		18	206	59	51		
R. Avon, Keynsham	45	40			14					9	19	39
CVL	170	3	70	55	30	285	510	585	200	6	13	52
BL	200	304	39	19	85	101	121	407	466	310	323	231

.Monthly maxima of adults at the main sites

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

Portishead Lake -- 39 on Jan. 17th;

Frampton Cotterell -- 40 flew over on Oct. 1st;

Winterbourne -- 40 at least flew over on Aug. 11th;

Batheaston, R. Avon -- 96 on Feb.15th and 110 on April 15th;

Saltford -- 29 on Aug. 23rd;

Chew Magna – 150 flew over to SW on Sept. 21st and 27th;

BG -- 35 on Sept. 13th, 28 on 22nd, 60 on 23rd, 55 on 26th and 27th, 83 on 30th, 85 on Oct. 5th, 128 on 8th and 140 on 14th;

Kenn Moor -- 37 on Nov. 26th and 25 on Dec. 2nd;

Axe Estuary – 28 on Nov. 14th.

The number of sites where this species was recorded remained the same as last year's figure of 75.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
26	28	53	48	50	48	55	51	75	75

Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average 50)

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 19 squares, which represented 11% of those surveyed. The total counted was 126 and the best count was 108.

Breeding Another very successful breeding season was reported with the number of confirmed sites and nests/broods being slightly larger than that of 2014. The number of reported fledged young was slightly down as shown in the table below.

Nests / broods were noted at the following 13 sites: OPS - a pair with four goslings, three of which fledged; Batheaston - nine nests but outcome unknown; Winterbourne Down - pair with six young; Abbey Wood - nest with one egg; River Avon at St. Philip's - pair with two young; Eastville Park - pair with nine young; Keynsham - pair with three young; Queen Charlton - pair with four goslings; PWD - pair with two young; Portishead Lake - pair with seven young; Backwell Lake - two pairs, with broods of one and two; CVL - eight broods, 55 young; and BL - two pairs, with broods of three and one.

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

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Confirmed sites	8	3	10	12	6	7	4	6	10	13
Nests/broods	14+	7	19+	18+	12	18	10	13	27	30
Young	39	16+	72	73	52	49	40	36+	97 +	85

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 7th site of National Importance in 2014/15. English 10 year trend 55%.

Numbers were similar to those of 2014 and were recorded at CVL / BL and three further sites. The first table summarises the data from the past decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Sites	4	0	1	2	6	4	3	0	5	3
Number	8	0	1	2	250	4	6	0	31	6

Number of sites and individuals (adults) away from CVL/BL

Reports away from CVL / BL are noted below

OPS – four on Aug. 27th and 28th were assumed to be the same four that were seen at Littleton Warth on the same dates.

Eastville Park Lake / Colston Weir on the River Frome on May 2nd.

Barnacle Goose con't

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL numbered 17 at the beginning of the year and 15 at the end, none were seen at BL from mid-February to late September. Present throughout the summer at CVL with maximum counts of 13 in March,12 in April and 10 in August.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
11	11	17	19	20	23	23	17	17	17

Maximum count from CVL/BL

Breeding At CVL one pair produced three young, one of which attached itself to a nearby Canada Goose brood. It is not known how many fledged. Breeding was first noted here in 1998 and has been attempted in each year since then as shown in the table below. A pair with seven goslings was seen between Eastville Park Lake and Colston Weir on the River Frome on May 2nd.

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Pairs	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	1
Goslings	3	0	0	6	1	7	0	3	0	5	6	5	4	1	2	6	4	3
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 6, 7]

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

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

English 10 year trend 33%

Numbers of bird-days for the last decade are given in the table below and show that 2014/15 was a good winter compared to that of 2013/14. Counts in December at Severnside are likely to boost the 2015/16 total higher still.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
127	147	38	226	144	24	88	98	34	108

Bird-days October-March (ten-year average 103)

Counts were low in the first winter period but much higher in the second. The largest single count was of eight at Northwick Warth / Pilning Wetlands in November. The records are given below, single birds unless stated otherwise.

First winter period (23 bird days)

Northwick Warth / Pilning Wetlands -- Jan.1st, 4th, 6th to11th and 15th, and May 4th;

Severn Beach – Jan.10th;

Sand Bay/Point – Jan.18th and March 30th;

Weston STW – Feb. 2nd, two on March 30th, one on 31st, May 6th and June 2nd;

CVL – March 5th and April 24th;

BL – March 3rd and 4th, see photograph opposite page 40.

Second winter period (94 bird days)

Littleton Warth – Dec. 13th;

Aust Warth – one Nov. 2nd and five to SW on 3rd during migration watch;

Northwick Warth / Pilning Wetlands -- six on Oct. 11th, eight on Nov. 2nd, five on 3rd and one on 4th, 6th, 7th, 28th, Dec. 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th and 8th. Two from Dec 11th to 31st;

Sand Bay/Point – Oct. 19th and Dec 29th;

Weston STW – Nov. 1st, 10th and 19th with two on 11th, Dec. 8th and 13th with two on 12th;

BL – three on Oct. 28th.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (34 since first in 1995, 2)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

Two records, the first since 2012, see table below.

Cl-Y – one was photographed at Dowlais Farm on March 26th (L Lincoln);

Sand Point – one flew downriver on April 17th (D Nevitt).

1994/95	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	12/13	2014/15
1	1	3	1	2	19	8	2

Pale-bellied Brent Goose -- Number of individuals in winters when seen

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Very scarce visitor either from the UK feral population or direct escapes from captivity but with a significant increase in reports since 2013.

English 10 year trend 55%

It seems probable that most reports of this species from the Saltford / Keynsham / Bitton area since 2012 have been of badly pinioned birds from an ornamental pond at Bitton. It is known that a pair bred on this pond in 2015 but the number of successfully fledged chicks, if any, was not recorded. There was just one other breeding record – an adult with two chicks was at CVL No. 1 picnic site on May 1st. As there were no subsequent reports it must be assumed that no young fledged. Up to six birds were seen at a further six sites as follows:

Eastville Lake to Colston Weir – one on Dec. 26th;

Field Grove Farm near Bitton – two on Dec. 31st were probably the same birds that frequented the banks of R. Avon at Saltford and Keynsham (see below);

Saltford -- one on April 19th, two on Sept. 20th, Oct. 5th and 15th, and one on Dec. 14th;

Keynsham -- one on Jan. 8th and March 25th, two on Nov. 24th, one on Dec. 8th, three on 19th and one on 23rd;

CVL -- up to three were seen on many dates between Jan. 2nd and Nov. 30th, also four on Sept. 7th, five on Jan. 7th and Oct. 13th, and six on Oct. 17th;

BL – up to three on many dates from Jan. 5th to Dec. 29th, with four on Dec. 4th, 5th and 31st. There was a report of a possible unsuccessful breeding attempt.

Note. It has been assumed that the CVL and BL individuals are the same ones using both sites.

The table below gives the number of adults seen in the Avon area during the past 14 years. There were none recorded prior to 2002. The total for 2015 includes a number of possible UK feral and escaped birds in the Avon Valley.

2002	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	1*	1*	0	1	1	0	0	1	5+	2	11	8	10

Numbers recorded each year (* treated as escapes)

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 eighth site of National Importance after nine of International Importance for 2014/15. English 10 year trend -39%

North of R. Avon the 2014/15 wintering number was higher than the ten-year average and to the south very much higher due to an exceptional count of 930 at Sand Bay in November 2014. Numbers at CI-Y were above the ten-year average for this site and for the total recording area the number of young fledged was the highest for the last decade.

First winter period (January to March). There was a slight increase in the numbers wintering north of the R. Avon with a highest count of 160 at Severnside on Feb. 26th, and March 3rd and 4th. There were reasonable numbers south of the Avon for this period, the highest count being 235 at Sand Bay on Feb.11th.

Breeding The local BBS survey recorded this species in 14 squares which represented 6.9% of those surveyed. The total recorded was 146, nearly three times the 2014 count. Best count 83.

Overall 2015 was a much better year than 2014 with high numbers of young produced at Royal Portbury Dock and CI-Y. Broods noted at or near the coast were as follows:

OPS -- three broods, of one, seven and seven;

Aust Warth – brood of two on June 10th;

Northwick Warth -- two broods, with 15 young;

Royal Portbury Dock -- eight broods with at least 70 young;

CI-Y coast -- seven broods, with a total of 59 young.

Shelduck con't

Breeding was also reported inland at CVL with four broods producing 36 chicks, 26 of which fledged. Despite heavy mortality at Herriott's pool due to gulls, nine juveniles were seen to have survived by July 21st.

The table overleaf shows the number of young fledged/reported in Avon in the last decade.

1995/04 Av.	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
116	162	116	181	163	186	78	163	108	107	187

Breeding - Total number of young at all sites (Average of last ten years is 145)

Second winter period (September to December) Low numbers were recorded north of the R. Avon with a maximum count of 41 at Northwick Warth on Dec.16th. To the south 365 at Sand Point on Nov. 29th was the maximum count.

The tables below summarise the winter period numbers over the past decade.

	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
North of R. Avon	104	117	130	90	40	80	140	67	146	160
South of R. Avon	650	415	630	500	479	862	490	540	450	930

Highest winter count at a single site (Oct.– Feb.). N Avon ten-year average 107. S Avon ten-year average 595.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
105	147	120	90	142	262	308	278	198	253

Winter records at Cl-Y - Average of the three highest counts (Oct. – Feb.). Ten year average 190

The monthly numbers of adults at the main sites in 2015 are set out in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	16	18	50	35	34	27	16	4	2	10	5	2
Littleton Warth	18	23	50	53	33	16	1	1				8
Severnside	94	160	160	70	35	39	14	14		7	28	41
Cl-Y	125	220	190	195	115	40	72	25	305	200	175	220
Sand Bay/Point	210	235	18	20	11	23	17	9	63	250	365	295
Axe Est.	220	228	151	61	344	43	42	27	300+	181	7	68
Weston STW	12	28	36	38	27	15	6	6			22	17
CVL	21	23	17	20	23	12	8	6	2	2	5	14

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Recorded at a further 21 sites, (12 in 2009, 20 in 2010,18 in 2011, 21 in 2012 , 29 in 2013, 28 in 2014).

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.

WeBS: Nat. 10-yr trend: 36%.

The number of individuals dropped dramatically in 2014 but this year saw a welcome bounce back in numbers. However, we are in receipt of information from W. Duckworth that there have been a number of escapes from a private pond in the Saltford area in 2009 and again in 2015. Individuals that were pinioned walked to the river from the pond and are presumably responsible for sightings between Bristol and Bath on the Avon, as well as some local ponds/lakes in the south of the area (see table below for increase noted since 2009). Note that the national trend is steadily upward and we might expect birds from local breeding populations, such as the Forest of Dean, to spread into the north of our area. As with last year, no breeding records were received. The details are as follows:

OPS – an eclipse drake from Aug. 10th to 13th, and a drake in breeding plumage on Nov. 2nd;

Portishead (Boating Lake) – one (sex not recorded) from Feb.16th to 19th;

Tortworth Lake - four drakes and a duck reported on Feb.1st, a pair on June 7th, and two on July 5th;

Yate (Kingsgate Park) – one (sex not recorded) on Sept. 8th;

Dodington Park Lake – two males and two females on March 1st, and 20+ on Dec. 6th;

Clapton-in-Gordano – nine on Nov. 17th;

Bath (Newton Park) – a pair on May 19th;

R. Avon (Saltford) – a drake (known local release) throughout the year;

R. Avon (Keynsham) -- a drake on Feb. 3rd, and presumed same in Memorial Park from Oct. 28th to Nov. 23rd;

Hunstrete Lake – a drake on Jan. 6th;

CVL (Herriott's Pool) – one (sex not recorded) on May 30th, a juvenile male on June 29th, and a female on Nov. 21st.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
11	1	1	5	13	13	2	5	3	6	22	19	20	42	39	32	45	31	15	54

Mandarin Duck -- Total number of individuals each year

WIGEON *Anas penelope* [Amber 6 & 7]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.

WeBS: The Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked seventeenth English site, and classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: -18%.

The main status table is as follows and shows a big drop from the previous winter. The Estuary seems to be consistently the main site for this species in winter with occasional high counts from the two main reservoirs in ideal feeding conditions, or due to cold weather movements. For example, the traditional wintering flock at BL that used the dam to graze no longer occurs, and high numbers are only present during the fishing season in low water conditions when weed growth prevents angling activity at the Top End. CVL influxes occur during autumn in years when there is abundant macrophyte growth too, Note however, that although the Estuary is of National Importance for this species, only a proportion of the peak monthly count (in January) is in our area.

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	805	197	125	376
2013/14	1033	377	294	568
2014/15	750	66	72	296

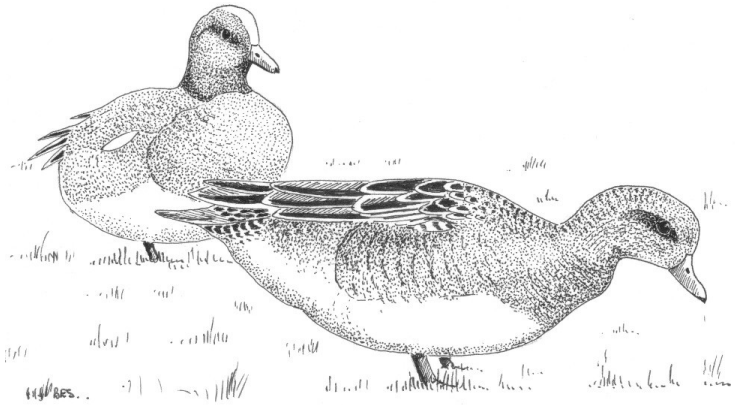
Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the winter period (September to March)

The last in spring was seen on May 6th at PWD and the first returned on Aug.13th at CVL, although a single bird was noted at Backwell Lake on June 14th. The table below gives the monthly breakdown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	304	153	81	15		3	25	80	128	300
Littleton Warth	230	305	170	2			2	185	415	329
Severnside	800	500	200	9		20	210	600	840	840
PWD	300	270	188	8			15	200	150	200
CI-Y	500	390	130	60			6	145	500	585
Woodspring Bay	115	77	18				4	102	56	132
Axe Est	44	102	65				4	54	28	58
Weston STW	16	29	32				19	83	58	8
BG	4	1		2			2		3	2
CVL	36	4	2	2		18	51	100	24	38
BL	19	16	10			7	42	384	359	51

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites There were records from Sand Bay, Backwell Lake, Eastville Park, Frampton Cotterell, Litton Res. and unusually at Wick Quarry, with a high count of six at the latter site on March 22nd.



GADWALL *Anas strepera* [Amber 7]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked the fifteenth English site, and classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: 15%.

The main status data is as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	132	46	89
2013/14	270	98	184
2014/15	33	96	65

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2006 – 2015 Av.	274	58	166
2014	188	54	121
2015	340	120	230

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

Counts at CVL during the first winter period were especially low. Moult counts were up at both main site and numbers remained high until the year end in the low water conditions. The monthly maxima were as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	2	2						2		2	
Severnside	20	31	13	17	5	2	2	2	8	12	35	27
Chittening/Avmouth		6	13	8	3	2					37	6
PWD	16	14	32	20	6	2	12	42	40	30	22	35
Axe Estuary	25	2	11						1	6		6
Weston STW	18	40	16	7	4	2		3	5	15	9	15
Backwell Lake	10	7	5						1		5	11
BG		2	3	3					1		2	2
CVL	16	10	30	60	78	155	50	270	410	375	265	85
BL	2	9	6	8	4			60	180	265	314	156

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Reports from other sites included small counts at Tortworth Lake, Kingsgate Park, Yate and Sutton Court.

Breeding It was an average year at CVL with 27 young from just three broods (*per* K E Vinicombe). Historically, it was poor, but it was on a par with recent years as the table below shows.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
4	1	3	5	1	3	0	1	6	3

Number of broods 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 Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked as eighth English site, and classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. CVL remained just below the threshold for National Importance. Nat. 10-yr trend: 12%.

The status data is as follows:

Year	Severnside	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	274	1314	533	686
2013/14	315	2503	1106	1308
2014/15	497	720	214	477

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

The Estuary proved more attractive during the first winter period than the previous winter, with numbers well above the ten-year average, perhaps due to the development of wetlands along the coast. CVL and BL hosted lower than average numbers in the first winter period, but as is usual with low water levels, both lakes proved very attractive in the second winter period and good numbers built up, favouring CVL in the early autumn and BL later in the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	380	234	67	42		1	1	3	13	55	160	206
Littleton Warth	375	140	105	39	1			8	55	210	260	392
Severnside	375	232	170	136	4	3	5	131	590	300	210	280
PWD	100	27	56	28	1		3	7	30	100	140	115
CI-Y	350	185	70	80				16	22	60	60	325
Woodspring Bay	45	64	24	38					19	67	72	126
Axe Est.	485	21	63	5				4	10	40	96	131
Weston STW	190	100	103	6				13	27	37	87	39
BG	81	56	25	13			1	5	24	72	28	38
CVL	370	60	30	110	1	23	91	505	1295	1100	500	240
BL	19	30	20	12				3	331	1482	908	411

Teal -- Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites A few were present at other inland sites, but the only counts of 50 or more were as follows:

Weston Moor – 200+ on Feb. 5th;

Weston Bay – 120 on Nov. 9th.

Ringing records A total of 29 was ringed by the CVRS during the year; nine first calendar year (cy) and one 2+ cy drakes, plus twelve first cy and three 2+ cy ducks, with four not aged or sexed.

Breeding: A few well scattered sightings were noted in May and June but, as usual, there was no evidence of breeding in the area.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis* (16, 2+)

Rare Nearctic vagrant.
Descriptions required.

A number of reports of a male from the Estuary, details are given below. There have been at least ten in the last decade as shown in the table at the end of this entry.

New Passage – one on Jan. 1st (J P Martin *et al.*, photographed) was seen again either at Northwick Warth or Aust Warth on three dates until 31st (P D Bowerman *et al.,* photographed*),* and again at Aust Warth on Feb. 21st (B Thompson *et al.*, photographed);

Severn Beach – one on April 5th (P D Bowerman, photographed) was possibly a different individual from that at New Passage/Aust;

Axe Est. – one on Feb. 5th (R Halsey) was recorded again from 15th until 18th.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	1	0	0	3	0	1	1	2	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 Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked seventh English site, and CVL 20th, in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: -10%.

The status data for the main reservoirs shows the usual fluctuations.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	569	197	383
2013/14	690	231	461
2014/15	688	118	403

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2006 – 2015 Av.	926	378	652
2014	948	243	595
2015	1238	400	819

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

Mallard con't

Moult counts showed a big increase at CVL and BL with peak counts well up on last year, while the first winter average at BL was well down on last year and the 10-year average was also down, as shown above. Counts at most other local sites appeared to be much the same as last year, although counts in the northern section of the Estuary appeared up while the southern sites were down. The monthly breakdown at the main sites is given below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	117	59	20	40	31	136	111	213	120	121	85	68
Littleton Warth	70	50	15	27	27	46	47	38	35	50	55	43
Severnside	120	80	46	34	55	79	66	200	200	110	110	120
R. Avon Sea Mills	15	14		6	4	2		32	31	39	46	60
Portbury Wharf / PWD	21	10	4	10		5	32	41	5	7	151	34
Portishead		68	40		20	18						86
Cl-Y	100	90	10	50	30	120	75	110	180	130	95	105
Woodspring Bay	43	29	6	14					59	57	2	51
Axe Estuary	79	50	10	10	11	66	60	63	84	51	27	16
Weston STW	40	27	18	23	26	47	153	116	32	31	15	12
Aztec West	39	57	39	33	42			92	71	64	67	57
Three Brooks LNR	34	50	22	18	22				42		39	
Bristol Avon (Saltford)	55	60	50	43	37	32	47	51	46	63	66	59
Keynsham	169			48	61			147				107
Eastville Park Lake	68	64	37	47	56	15		31	25	32	70	54
BG	22	19	19	17	14	36	49	44	55	47	37	35
Backwell Lake	25	84	15	44	82	112	80	200	76	56	93	74
Chew Magna	4	7	4	4	2	19	14	13		40	5	
CVL	485	460	470	295	220	575	890	1405	1070	810	675	640
Litton Reservoirs	59	16			7						40	
BL	77	74	42	45	68	39	255	413	387	588	441	241

Monthly maxima at the main sites

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

Severn Estuary (Battery Point to Redcliffe Bay) – 72 on Aug. 18th and 67 on Dec. 15th;

Bath (Prior Park) – 54 on Aug 6th.

Breeding Productivity seemed to be good, 107 broods with at least 569 young reported (not all observers gave counts of young), and this was mirrored at CVL (see table below). The earliest brood was noted at Saltford on April 14th. The standardised BBS data is as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-35%	-16%	-13%	7%	-2%	7%	-7%	0%	-6%	3%	-13%	10%

BBS percentage changes

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Broods	22	29	21	38	24	31	21	27	35	27
Young	100	176	130	213	115	176	130	129	174	158

Number of broods and young at CVL each year

Ringing A total of 20 was ringed at the CVRS in 2015. There were three recoveries all of individuals ringed at CVL and found there two years after being ringed; one read in the field, and two found dead (hit wires or struck by a car).

PINTAIL *Anas acuta* [Amber 3, 4, 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 Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked nineteenth English site, and classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. Nat 10-yr trend: -100%.

The Estuary attracted reasonable numbers by local standards during autumn passage but low water levels at the two main reservoirs proved equally favourable, and was suggestive of migration on a broad front. The last

spring record was on May 22nd at Portishead (boating lake), and the first to return was a juvenile at CVL on Sept.1st. All major sites are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1					1			2
Severnside	4	2	11				22	8	4	2
Cl-Y	6	6	2						1	21
CVL	8	3	6	1			35	38	9	6
BL	4						9	50	23	2

Pintail -- Monthly maxima at the main sites

2015 appeared to be fairly typical as shown in the table below:

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
77	60	29	70	65	57	37	110	49	50

Maximum single count in the Avon area each year

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* [RBBP] [Amber 5]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked third and the Severn Estuary (English counties) eleventh English sites based on numbers and trends. Nat. 10-yr trend: -24%.

The national trend is downward at present, but does show wide fluctuations over a longer period. It appears that the Somerset Levels is a more favoured site than those in this area in recent years. Unusually, there was a spring record of a female on the River Avon at Saltford. Most records received were from CVL, although no breeding evidence was received, with a handful each from BL and Weston STW in the autumn. All records are listed below:

Spring and summer

R. Avon (Saltford) – a female from April 8th to 12th;

CVL – the first record of the year was a pair noted from April 3rd to 11th with the drake last seen on 15th, then a drake from May 15th to 28th with two on 15th and 16th;

Autumn

Weston STW – one Sept. 26th and 27th, with the latest ever site record on Nov. 7th;

CVL – two appeared on Aug. 9th, rising to three on 16th, and seven on 30th. Up to four were noted in September, on the 1st and 14th with just a single bird by the end of the month, followed by a last record of two on Oct. 19th;

BL – a drake on Sept.17th probably until the end of October, and joined by a second bird (sex not recorded) on Oct. 6th, 12th and 13th.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
5	2	2	4	5	4	3	3	6	7

Maximum single count at CVL each year

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata* [RBBP] [Amber 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 ranked eighth English site, and classified as being of International Importance, while the Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked 21st and BL 25th, each of which were classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: 7%.

The main status tables are as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	186	72	129
2013/14	43	74	59
2014/15	286	23	154

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

The moult table is given at the top of the next page.

Shoveler con't

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2006 – 15 Av.	320	173	246
2014	470	36	253
2015	280	306	293

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

Winter counts at CVL were well above average with numbers remaining steady throughout. Moult numbers at BL were also over the average, perhaps at the expense of CVL.

Elsewhere sightings seemed to show a small influx along the Estuary in December, and especially poor numbers at BG in the second autumn/winter period.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	16	12	9	9			1	6	90	50	47	60
PWD	43	15	15	11				2		8	15	55
Weston STW	6	6	11	2					1	6	20	28
Backwell Lake	13	11	6	5					4	18	42	25
BG	59	37	58	34				3	5	9	1	10
CVL	280	280	297	36	2	9	11	170	325	235	130	20
BL	6	12	8	9				4	151	460	62	36

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites There were three other double figure counts as follows:

OPS – 13 on Nov. 22nd;

Cl-Y – 26 on Dec. 28th at the mouth of the Congresbury Yeo;

Axe Estuary – 18 on Dec. 14th.

Breeding At CVL a pair with four fully grown juveniles on July 21st was noted in an area where two pairs had been present earlier in the summer (*per* K E Vinicombe).

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of broods	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
No. of young	0	8	0	8	0	0	0	16	2	4

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.

WeBS: Nat. 10-yr trend: 66%.

The only records were from CVL and BL, with just a single record in the first winter period and perhaps as few as five individuals moving between the reservoirs later in the year. Note, however, that the national population is increasing fairly significantly, so we might expect to see more of these lovely ducks in the future. The details are as follows:

CVL – a first-winter drake on Oct.19th until Nov. 5th was joined by a female on Oct. 31st;

BL – the only bird reported in the first winter period was an adult female on Jan.19th. What was perhaps the female from CVL was noted at BL on Nov. 7th where it was joined by an adult drake on 8th, with both staying until 23rd and the female until 25th. It, or another, reappeared on the lake from Dec. 7th until the year end.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	6	5	19	23	25	3	24	7	5

Total number of individuals each year

POCHARD *Aythya farina* [Red 1 & 3]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked fifth and the Severn Estuary (English counties) ninth English sites, with each classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. BL was ranked as the seventeenth English site. Nat. 10-yr trend: -86%.

Numbers locally may be starting to reflect the catastrophic decline that has been observed nationally, although there was a large December count at CVL; see the status table at the top of the next page..

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	726	243	80	350
2013/14	443	320	48	270
2014/15	345	260	23	209

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

The table below summarises the counts from the main inland sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Backwell Lake	7	12	2							3		2
BG	22	18	6	2			3	12	8	25	64	24
CVL	310	125	50	15	27	75	65	105	290	730	795	1180
BL	180	87	11	9	4	22	19	42	14	110	242	175

Monthly maxima at the main sites

There were records from eight other sites with no counts exceeding ten: OPS, Severnside, Avonmouth, Portbury, Portishead, Axe Estuary, Weston STW, and Chew Magna Res.

Breeding Disappointingly as in 2011, there were no broods at CVL this year.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of broods	4	6	2	2	2	0	3	1	4	0
No. of young	14	35	9	4	8	0	8	2	22	0

Breeding success at CVL each year

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca* (9, 1)

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

One record, a female at CVL from Aug. 28th until Sept. 10th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*, photographed).

Records had been annual between 2000 and 2013, mainly at CVL, with individuals in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010 (2) and 2012 considered to relate to new arrivals.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked the fourth English site, and classified as being of National Importance in 2014/15. BL was ranked sixteenth English site just below the threshold for National Importance. Nat 10-yr trend: 11%.

The main status tables are as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2005/06 –2014/15 Av.	1127	476	801
2013/14	900	647	774
2014/15	600	723	662

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

There was an error in the 10-year moult averages published in the table below for last year (2014), so the correct figures are included here for completeness:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2005 – 2014 Av.	1119	696	907
2006 – 2015 Av.	1154	707	931
2014	1470	860	1165
2015	1223	655	939

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

Given the figures above, there is some indication that CVL is declining as a wintering site with numbers down to half the 10-year average and down again from the previous winter, although the site remains of National Importance. On the other hand, BL seems to be showing a steady increase. The most notable difference between the two sites is the level of disturbance, but other factors such as food supply could also be at work. CVL counts remain extremely high by historical standards, where numbers are controlled by prey availability, rather than disturbance.

Tufted Duck con't

There is considered to be an inverse relationship between counts of this species and those of fish-feeding species; presumably the fish, mostly roach, eat a high proportion of the available invertebrates. Trends need to be monitored carefully, owing to the importance of both sites in a national context. Moult counts at the two main sites were about average.

The table below gives the monthly maxima for the main sites, with the largest count at CVL in September. Treating the three reservoir sites as one 'mega site' the numbers seemed fairly constant with about 1100 as the build-up started in July, to 1800 in August through to September (mainly males), then increasing again with the later arrival of females to around 2000 until the year-end.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
OPS	5	9	20	8	7	16	16	4		6	1	2
Severnside	20	13	10	10	5	3	15	8	10	13	17	15
PWD	20	31	22	44	6	6	8	11			2	8
Portishead lake	14	18	8	8	4	11	8	3				
Weston STW	6	2	8	6	2	1				1	1	
Tortworth Lake		51					14			34		
Backwell Lake	20	12	11	4	4	2				2	5	11
BG	53	50	45	32	18	64	260	309	65	36	24	51
CVL	310	615	595	270	75	90	250	820	1625	1160	1080	1420
BL	676	486	251	362	34	182	654	655	180	949	1062	543
Chew Magna Res	3		10		2	5	3	4	1		1	
Litton Res.	28	25				5	13		2	1		4

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites Numbers at the other sites were insignificant by comparison with the reservoirs, with only one count exceeding 50 (at Tortworth in February). Aside from the sites shown in the table above, this species was recorded at another seven sites with no single count exceeding 18. However, it is worth pointing out that a number of the smaller sites do appear to be important for nesting, at least in a local context.

Breeding At OPS two broods of four and nine were reduced to just two and three, respectively, within three weeks, while at Pilning Wetlands a single brood of seven saw six successfully brought to fledging despite being walked from the Grebe Pond to the first Sentry box pool and back. At PWD, two broods were reported, one of seven young, but the outcome was not clear. At Portishead Boating Lake there were two broods, one of nine that were both down to three each when last reported a month later. Litton had two, of four and seven, respectively. No breeding was reported from BG, BL or CVL, for this last site 2015 was the first blank year for several decades. So, in summary, it was a very average breeding season.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites	6	4	5	4	4	5	6	7	7	5
No. of broods	20	4	8	9	7	7	22	11	20	9
No. of young	115	16	55	29	41	25+	74+	63	98	50

Breeding success in the Avon area

Three females were ringed at CVRS during the first winter period. There were two recoveries of females ringed the previous winter at CVL, which shows a degree of site fidelity.

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: The Severn Estuary (English counties) was ranked fourteenth and CVL nineteenth English sites. Nat. 10-yr trend: -496%.

All bar one of the records were from the two main reservoirs in 2015. The tables below and on the next page put this into context.

	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
CVL	2	0	1	1	1	4	3	5	1	1
BL	0	0	6	4	2	4	0	1	0	0
Max flock	3	1	7	6	3	5	3	9	2	2

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

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
4	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0

Scaup -- Number of individuals on the Estuary each year

In 2015 the latest date in the first winter period was May 7th, while the first arrival of the second winter period was on Aug. 1st which subsequently visited the three main reservoirs. Full details are as follows:

First winter period

CVL – an adult female from Jan. 5th to May 7th, and a second summer-plumaged female on April 13th;

BL – a pair of adults on March 4th.

Second winter period

BG – a drake from Aug. 1st to 3rd;

CVL – an adult drake from Aug. 9th to 12th, an adult female from Sept. 10th to 24th, a juvenile female on 29th and again various dates from Oct. 6th to 25th, juvenile drake and female from 29th to Nov. 26th, with the drake remaining together with an adult female from Nov. 9th and a second first-winter drake from Dec. 7th, to the year-end;

BL -- an adult drake on Aug. 6th and 7th was followed by a juvenile male and female from Oct. 20th to 23rd with the drake staying until 27th, a juvenile female from Nov. 3rd to 16th, and a drake on 21st.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis* (10 since first in 2000, 0)

Rare Nearctic vagrant.
Descriptions required

The adult male seen annually since 2012 returned for a fourth year.

BL – present from July 12th until Aug. 27th (N Milbourne *et al.*);

CVL – present from Aug. 30th until Sept. 28th (S Davies *et al.*, photographed) and again from Nov. 12th into 2016 (photographed).

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 1]

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

WeBS: Nat. 10-yr trend: 38%.

As with last year, there were just two records in the spring. The table shows the data for the past ten years:

Severn Beach – single females were reported on March 25th, and April 23rd and 24th.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	2	0	2	0	56	7	3	2	2

Total number of individuals each year

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* (58, 1)

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

An average year with just a long staying female at CVL in the spring: found on March 7th (D Nevitt *et al.*) it was photographed and remained until April 6th.

The table below shows the records for the last ten winters.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	5	2

Number of individuals recorded (July – June)

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra* [Red 3 & 4]

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

WeBS: Nat. 10-yr trend: 48%.

It was an average year (see table below), with records from inland as well as the coast. The first was at BL on Jan. 6th, and the last of the year on Dec. 28th at Cl-Y. The records are as follows:

OPS – a drake drifting upriver on Aug. 1st;

Severnside – a drake downriver on Jan. 28th, and three drakes on March 17th at Severn Beach, three adult drakes and four juvenile/female-types on April 3rd at New Passage, with 12 on Nov. 22nd at Severn Beach;

Cl-Y – three on Jan. 9th, an immature drake on Nov.16th, and a female on Dec. 28th;

Sand Point – two on April 16th and one downriver on Nov. 28th (no age or sex recorded);

CVL – a good series of records with a female on April 6th, four first-summer males on May 27th, eight males and a female on June 27th, a male on Aug. 3rd, five males and three females on 30th, a single female on 31st and two males and a female on Oct. 7th;

BL – there was also a good series of records from here, with an early female from Jan. 6th to 16th, seven adult drakes on passage on June 27th (perhaps the same as CVL), and three adult drakes and a duck on July 23rd.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
145	85	75	53	59	51	206	83	103	71

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.

WeBS: CVL was ranked thirteenth English site in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: -59%.

The number wintering appears to be dwindling:

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2005/06 – 2014/15 Av.	89	22	11	122
2013/14	53	19	3	75
2014/15	62	15	2	79

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

It appears that there might be the potential for a local breeding population to get established, with up to three females noted during the breeding season. One female with a brood of five was seen from June 14th to 16th, the brood then dropped to four and to three from 25th to at least July 19th, two were present throughout August with just one remaining into September.

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	2	2	2							1	1
CVL	50	85	90	54	4	8	6	5	4	7	51	60
BL	17	18	17	11	1					2	7	14

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The spring count at CVL was little more than half of those typically made a decade ago.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
175	162	170	105	135	155	145	160	110	90

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Other sites Records were received from at two other sites as follows:

OPS – a drake on Aug. 31st;

Severnside – one on Nov. 13th.

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: -21%.

There were just four records, all from the coast, apart from those at CVL, details as follows:

First winter period

OPS – three down river at 07.20 on April 5th;

Severnside (New Passage) – a drake on Jan. 23rd;

Severnside (Severn Beach) – presumed same as OPS on April 5th;

CVL – the regular drake, and a female from 2014 were present until Feb. 4th, with the drake staying until March 3rd, then a first-winter drake from March 8th to 21st. A photograph of the regular male taken on Feb. 8th appears opposite page 40.

Second winter period

Severnside (New Passage) – a female/immature from Dec. 10th to 16th;

CVL – the regular wintering drake in eclipse plumage was present from Oct. 29th to the year-end. Also present, but both un-sexed and un-aged, were one on Nov. 29th, three on Dec. 7th with probably one of these on 11th and 12th.

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 24th English site in 2014/15. Nat. 10-yr trend: -6%.

Despite the mild weather counts made during the first winter period at CVL were unexpectedly higher than those made in recent years. The following table gives count details for the past decade:

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
22	24	54	32	26	80	25	25	35	76

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

The highest count of the year was 81 on Jan. 31st at CVL and the table shows how these maxima have varied over the past decade.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
28	43	65	21	95	65	31	40	70	81

Maximum counts at CVL each year

The next table summarises the monthly maxima at the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
Backwell Lake	1	3	1					4
CVL	81	33	32	2		7	35	29
BL	4	31	1				2	5

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Very few were seen along the Estuary during the year. The last date in spring was a female at OPS on April 10th, and the first returning individual was noted on Oct.12th at CVL. None were seen at BG at all during the year, while the February count at BL was the highest since 2011. Reports made away from the three main sites were as follows:

First winter period

OPS – drake upriver on April 4th and female downriver on 10th;

PWD – female on Jan. 1st and one April 4th;

Portishead – a drake on Jan. 3rd and 6th;

Weston STW – maximum counts of four in February and two in March;

R. Avon (Saltford) – a pair on Feb. 17th and March 2nd, with an extra drake on 4th and 5th;

R. Avon (Keynsham) – a pair on Jan. 20th and 30th, Feb.1st to 4th, with three on 3rd, two drakes and three females on 11th, and a pair on 21st, and March 12th.

R. Avon (Willsbridge) – one on Feb. 2nd.

Second winter period for Goosander

Severnside – two to N on Oct. 18th, drake downriver on Nov. 17th, two west on 25th, one each on Dec. 7th and 11th;

Portishead – three on Nov. 26th;

Cl-Y – one on Nov. 8th;

Bath (Newton Park.) – eight on Dec.14th, ten on 15th, four on 20th, one on 22nd, three on 26th and six on 28th;

R. Axe / Bleadon – drake and four redheads on Dec. 18th, and four (no age or sex given) on 29th;

R. Avon (Saltford) – one on Dec.10th and a brownhead fly-by on 14th;

R. Avon (Keynsham) – one on Dec.14th and a drake on 30th.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL and scarce elsewhere, now very scarce. Continues to be regularly culled by order of Defra, the last recorded local breeding was in 2008.

WeBS: Population given as a maximum of 22 in 2014/15 after an intensive eradication programme.

The dwindling numbers of records were all from the two main reservoirs, CVL and BL, most of which were the result of a handful of individuals moving between the two. The details are as follows:

CVL – up to nine present until Feb. 8th, down to two by March 28th and a lone drake until April 19th; a single bird was noted during the WeBS count on Aug. 23rd which may have moved to BL and returned on 29th. Further sightings of a drake occurred on Sept.17th and Oct.17th to 19th. A single bird was noted on Nov.16th; two on Dec.15th rose to four on 23rd and dropped to one at the year end.

BL – there were no sightings until July 25th when an adult drake appeared, two were noted from Aug. 26 to 29th, with one remaining until Sept.14th. The last individual was a drake from Nov. 2nd to 15th.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix* [RBBP] [Amber 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.

A further decline this year was noted with reports of calls from only three sites, two of which were close together (four last year with calls only heard from three), apart from this no breeding evidence was received. The records are given below.

Marshfield – calls heard on June 21st, 22nd and 23rd, and July 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 15th. Where specified most of these records came from the Down Road area, but that for July 10th one came from the Tormarton Road area, so probably at least two were present;

Saltford -- one heard calling in the early hours of Aug. 19th.

The table below gives an estimate of the number of calling males noted over the last decade.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
9	5+	3	5	10	10	14+	4	4	3	3

Estimate of the number of calling males each year

Where possible observers are asked to give six-figure grid references for all records of calling birds, this will help us to monitor the population better. (*Eds*.)

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Locally fairly common breeding resident but large numbers released for 'sporting' purposes, particularly in the Marshfield area.

The number of one *km* squares in which this species was recorded rose to 38 (six in 2014), including 13 in the Marshfield area. But the overall numbers outside the Marshfield area were low, the only site reporting regularly was Saltford with a maximum count of 25 in both January and November. South Gloucestershire holds the greatest number of squares for this species, mainly due to counts in the Marshfield area.

First winter period (January – March) Reported from nine sites (one *km* squares); (*cf*. eight in 2010 and 2011, five in 2012, four in 2013 and five in 2014). The details are as follows:

Marshfield area (up to a radius of approximately two *km* from the village centre): 300+ on Jan. 23rd due to a very large release for shooting purposes, 40+ on 29th, 11 on Feb.11th and five on March 30th.

Away from the Marshfield area the main records are as follows: Chipping Sodbury Common, three in January and two in March; Ozelworth, eight in January, Saltford -- 14+ on Jan. 7th, 25 on 11th, 15+ on 19th, and 22 on Feb. 9th, and the West Littleton area, eight in January and 30 in March.

Breeding season (April – June) The local BBS survey recorded this species in 12 one *km* squares, which represented 6.9% of those surveyed, the total counted was 32. Otherwise reported from 22 sites (one *km* squares); (*cf*. 11 in 2011, five in 2012, nine in 2013 and four in 2014). No actual breeding was proved although there were 20, mainly juveniles, at Saltford in August. The details are as follows.

Seven squares (one *km*) in the Marshfield area: Rownham Farm - 60 on April 9th; Shire Valley - six on April 16th, present on May 1st and 21st with two on 11th, Various squares – two on April 27th, six on May 4th, two on 5th and 12th, seven on 27th and one on June 14th;

Away from the Marshfield area recorded from the following 15 sites with no count over three: (*S.Glos.*) Chipping Sodbury Common, Dunkirk, Horton, OPS, New Passage, Tormarton (two squares), Tresham, West Littleton and south of Wetmoor; (*BANES*) Burnett (Elm Farm), Peasedown St. John, Radford, and Stony Littleton; and (*N. Som.*) Weston STW.

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) Reported from 15 one *km* squares, 13 in *SG* including seven in the Marshfield area, and two in BANES. The maximum counts were as follows:

Marshfield area: Shire Valley, two in August and 30 in October; Rushmead Lane, present in October, 55 in November and 30+ in December; ST7773, two in August; Down Road, 12 in December; and Shire Hill, 35 in October.

Away from the Marshfield area (counts of three or less unless stated): (*S. Glos*.) Acton Turville in October; Bitton in December (eight), Chipping Sodbury Common in July; Frampton End in July, and Saltford recorded between July 3rd and Dec. 28th with the following monthly maxima; nine in July, 20 (mainly juveniles) in August, 28 in September, 17 in October, 25 in November and 19 in December; and (*BANES*) Folly Farm and Paulton (four) both in October.

The table below gives the number of sites away from the Marshfield area over the last decade, it shows some improvement compared with the poor showing in the past three years.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites - SG	6+	1	7	3	2	3	4	7	3	14
No. of sites - NS	4	2	2	1	4	8	0	1	0	1
No. of sites - BA	12	19	12	18	17	5	6	4	3	7

Number of sites with reports away from ST77

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix* [Red 3]

Scarce, local and declining breeding resident.

Still a very poor picture but 2015 produced a slight improvement on 2014 with reports from four sites and a total of 22 seen. The 14 reported at Saltford (see below) are known to be local releases. No breeding was reported.

Survey Data The local BBS recorded this species in a single square which represented 0.6% of those surveyed: one was noted on each of the two visits (ST 6562 - east of Compton Dando).

Details of all reports are as follows: Two records from the Compton Dando area mentioned above: one on April 10th and another on May 24th. There were 14 at Saltford on Nov.1st and at least one here on Dec. 20th. Four were at Middle Lane Farm, Kingston Seymour on Dec. 18th.

The table below shows the slow but continuing decline over the past decade.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites - SG	5	2	3	1	1	1	4	4	1	0
No. of sites - NS	2	1	2	3	2*	2*	2	2	0	1
No. of sites - BA	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	2	0	2*

Number 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 where possible, so that its declining status can be monitored. Local knowledge about the release of feral birds would also be useful. *(Eds.)*

To give some context to these records we summarise here those for 1990. In that year in *SG*, mainly the Marshfield area, there were breeding season reports from eight locations, and in the south of our region through the year there were reports from 11 sites. The largest coveys recorded were in November with nine on Marksbury Plain and eight at Pensford.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

The overall picture is of a decline, with very few one *km* squares having double figure counts, and these higher counts were mostly below 25.

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 90 squares, which represented 52.0% of those surveyed. The total counted was 588 (excluding Walton Common). The table below shows the BBS percentage changes in population since 1994.

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
26%	-12%	14%	-7%	-6%	-3%	0%	-2%	-9%	3%	3%	-1%

BBS percentage changes

Non-BBS reports were widespread with records from 70 different one *km* squares, all but 14 having single figure counts. The largest count away from the Walton Common area was 25 at Priston Wood on April 29th. Again, very low numbers were seen in the Marshfield area with a maximum of 17 on April 27th, and 20+ at Shirehill on Oct. 21st. The largest count from the Walton Common feral population was 65 in late September.

Breeding The only breeding records were as follows: During the early summer 15 calling males were reported from CVL. A female was noted with a juvenile at BL on June 18th, three juveniles at OPS on Aug. 7th and one juvenile at Lower Badinton on Sept. 5th were also seen. A number of pairs were hand-reared or bred ferally in the woods on Walton Common, no exact count was available but it was probably between 50 and 100.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata* (66, 5)

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.

The only records in the first winter period came from the Weston area but again in much smaller numbers than previously. For historical data see table below. The details are as follows:

Anchor Head – one on Jan. 14th and one on May 9th.

Three records in the second winter period in date order, including a long stayer at CVL:

CVL – a juvenile from Nov. 9th until Dec. 9th (C J Stone *et al.*, photographed on Nov. 14th, see opposite page 41) was the 14th inland record since 1983;

PWD – one flew downriver on Nov. 16th (C J Stone);

Severn Beach – one flew upriver and over the Second Severn Crossing at 10.28 on Nov. 18th (P D Bowerman *et al.*).

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica* (13, 2)

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

Two records, both in November: for historical data see table below, 2015 details as follows:

Severn Beach – one was watched as it drifted downstream on the falling tide on Nov. 27th (P D Bowerman);

Sand Point – a juvenile flew downstream on Nov. 13th (P A Bowyer, D Nevitt).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* (49, 3)

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.

An average year with three autumn records, see table below, details as follows in chronological order:

CVL – the juvenile from 2014 remained until April 17th;

Sand Point – one flew downriver during the morning of Nov. 16th (P A Bowyer);

Severn Beach – one on Nov. 30th (A D Scott *et al.*, photographed);

Aust Warth – one flew high to W late afternoon on Dec. 6th (G Jones *et al.*).

DIVER Sp.

A record from Sand Point in November: two on 30th were submitted as Great Northern but without any confirmatory notes.

Divers in the Avon area

	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
Red-throated	1		2	1	1			9	31	2
Black-throated								1		
Pacific					1					
Great Northern	1	5	3	5	2	3	3	3+	3	2
Diver sp.	1		3	1	3	1		2	3	1

Numbers seen in each winter during the past decade

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis* [Amber 1, 6]

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

As in 2014 there were no prolonged periods of strong winds during the summer months and numbers were low. The seasonal pattern was typical, with a handful of records at the start of the year, a small peak in the late spring and early summer and a smaller number seen in the second winter period. There were no inland records in 2015. The individual seen on Severnside on Nov.16th was photographed, see opposite page 41.

	Jan	May			June	July	Nov			
	2	5	6	18	2	27	16	18	29	30
Severnside	2		3	3	4	1	1	1		1
Ladye Bay									1	
Sand Point		2								
Anchor Point	2		1							

The Nov.16th individual at Severn Beach (Severnside) was taken into care.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* [Amber 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 total of bird-days for the year was average, although all but 26 were at Sand Point on July 27th. As usual virtually all were seen between May and July.

For the first time in five years there was an inland record, involving one found by a patio door in a back garden in North Yate on Sept. 25th. It was picked up by a volunteer from Secret World Wildlife Rescue and taken to the RSPB at West Hatch where it was rehabilitated and later released back into the wild (E Lambert). All other records are listed below:

Severnside – single birds on May 8th and June 2nd, nine on 6th and further single birds on July 27th and Sept.14th;

Sand Point – five on June 6th and 760 on July 27th;

Anchor Head – seven on May 6th.

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.

As with the other seabirds there were very few records, as follows:

Severnside – two on June 2nd (P D Bowerman, J P Martin).

Details about records for the last two decades are given in the table on page 47.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (201, 5+)

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

A good year with eight records involving at least five different individuals, details below. For historical data see table on page 47.

Severn Beach – two were seen together at 19.20 on Sept. 14th (P D Bowerman). On Nov.15th two lingered between 08.00 and 10.00 (J P Martin *et al.*, photographed) and a third was taken into care after being found in a patch of brambles; it recovered and was released at dusk the next day. On Nov.16th what were assumed to be same individuals as the previous day moved downstream at 08.05 and 09.20 (R Hearn);

Sand Point – one flew east at 11.00 on Nov. 16th before zigzagging away to NNE (P A Bowyer), assumed to be one of those seen earlier at Severn Beach.

There were additional records without any confirmatory notes.

PETREL Sp.

One seen very briefly at some distance from Sand Point on Nov. 17th was thought to be a Leach's Petrel (D Nevitt).

GANNET *Morus bassanus* [Amber 6, 7]

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

This was the only sea bird species to be recorded in reasonable numbers in 2015. There were two inland records, both relating to juveniles, at CVL on Oct.13th and Dundas Aqueduct, near Bath on 20th; interestingly there were no coastal records in October.

As usual most were seen in the first half of May but there was a wide scatter of records through the year. The table below shows all coastal records:

	March	May				June		July	Nov							Dec
	29	5	6	9	29	2	6	8	13	15	16	17	18	19	23	12
OPS						1										1
Severnside	3	7	16	4		7				1	7	2	1	1		
PWD	17															
Cl-Y	18						1	1		2	1					
Sand Point				40			1		1						1	
Anchor Head													1			
Axe Est.					3											

The last two of the year, at Sand Point on Nov. 23rd and at OPS on Dec. 12th, were found dead.

CORMORANT *Phalocrocorax carbo* [RR]

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

WeBS Nat. 10-year trend: +6%

The counts at CVL were slightly down on the record numbers recorded in the previous year, but were still exceptionally high. Once again they were feeding on the abundant shoals of coarse fish, largely in the northern part of the lake.

The main data is given in the following tables below and at the top of the next page.

1999/09 Av	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
143	203	145	73	321	477	447

CVL January to December average maximum counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	2	17	4	3	4	14	11	5	28	10	5
Littleton		1	1			2	1	1			2	2
Severnside	2	1	3	6	2	2	1		5	9	6	
Cl-Y		3			2			4	3	1		
Weston STW	5	7	5	5	6		2	3	1	7	5	8
R. Avon at Keynsham		6						1				7
R. Avon at Saltford	3	9	1	3	4	2	3	3	3	7	3	7
BG	211	72	80	15	6	6	6	21	155	120	34	150
CVL	335	70	110	70	15	4	15	65	450	230	510	380
BL	10	70	44	13	2	7		31	28	53	39	46
Loxton	5	8			2			1				1

Cormorant -- Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

BG again attracted some large flocks, probably involving individuals from CVL. The OPS totals include two small flocks seen flying to SW: eight on Aug. 25th and six on Nov. 21st.

Other sites Small numbers were as usual recorded from many other sites, most involving over-flying birds. The largest totals not in the table above were: 25 on the R. Avon at Lamplighters, Bristol on Dec. 16th and ten at Batheaston on March 8th and at PWD on June 14th and 19th.

Breeding Nesting presumably took place on Steep Holm, our only breeding colony, but unfortunately no records were received; a special boat trip is needed to accurately count the nests.

SHAG *Phalocrocorax aristotelis* (76, 4)

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

An above average showing with three autumn records of four individuals, details as follows:

Severn Beach – a juvenile flew upriver on Nov. 17th (D Nevitt *et al.*);

Sand Point – flew close past the Point late morning on Nov.16th (P A Bowyer, photographed);

Axe Estuary – two juveniles perched on Black Rock on Sept. 13th (R Halsey).

Tubenoses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Fulmar	60	272	79	62	40	26	112	192	49	31	22
Manx Shearwater	403	1600	1216	1680	380	100	1015	2811	1363	69	786
Storm Petrel	5	28	27	25	1		9	108	6	10	2
Leach's Petrel	2	115	2	1	24	1	2		4		5+
Gannet	45	570	195	172	57	267	240	134	271	57	137
Shag	3	3	2	5	2	3	6	3	1	3	4

Scarce seabird records – Annual bird-day totals

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris* [RBBP] [Amber 2, 5]

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

Despite the burgeoning population on the Somerset Levels there were few records of this species in our area, following a much better showing in 2014, when records came from six sites, but there was a similar paucity of sightings in 2013. Recorded, as single birds unless stated, as follows:

CVL – Jan. 2nd, 6th and 9th but then none until May 7th to 9th, when one was heard booming. Much more frequently seen in the second winter period, when present from Oct. 13th until at least Dec. 17th, but probably to the year-end;

BL – Oct. 25th and Nov. 6th.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta* [RBBP]

Uncommon 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. Breeding has occurred since 2014.

WeBS Nat. 10-year trend: +46%

The annual maximum count at Cl-Y rose to just below the all time maximum after a slight fall in 2014 but numbers here through the late summer and early winter were lower than those in the previous year.

2005	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
27	39	31	32	24	21	23	59	68	36	60

Maximum count each year from Cl-Y and environs

Once again a roost formed at Backwell Lake. There were record counts at both BL and CVL; these involved much duplication, as the highest counts at the latter site were of birds gathering to roost, which doubtless included most if not all of the individuals using BL during the day.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS and environs	4	2	8	2	3	2	3	3	5	5	3	4
Littleton Warth		2	2	3					6	2	1	3
Severnside	4	3	4	6	6	2	2	2	3	4	3	2
RPD/PW		1		4	1	3	3	2	3			
Cl-Y and environs	26	10	12	15	8	7	11	15	16	11	27	60
Sand Bay				5			2	7	5			
Axe Est	3	7	5	10	9	4	6	5	3	2	1	2
Backwell Lake	12	18	13	3			2	1	1	1	3	5
BG	1	1	1				2	3	3	1		1
CVL	22	7	7	5	6	8	10	23	12	12	22	27
BL		1	1	1	3		5	2	5	23	21	8

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

Other sites Many reports were received of small numbers scattered across the levels and moors of North Somerset. Noted elsewhere, single birds unless stated otherwise:

Tockington – two on Sept. 6th;

Easter Compton – small numbers seen feeding in fields on several occasions during the year, the peak count being seven on Jan. 19th;

Chipping Sodbury Common – Oct. 17th;

Emersons Green – Oct. 12th, 15th and 16th;

Abbey Wood – June 25th;

R. Avon at Pill – May 1st;

Avon Gorge – July 25th;

ASW – April 17th;

Marshfield – June 14th, Aug. 1st, two on Oct. 8th and single birds on 20th and 30th;

R. Frome at Frampton Cotterell – throughout July, on Aug. 4th and Sept. 12th and two on Oct. 13th;

Yanley – May 31st,

Queen Charlton – May 25th;

Saltford – May 7th, July 16th, Oct. 15th and 24th with four to SW on 26th;

Bristol Airport – Nov. 26th;

Chew Magna – March 6th;

Rickford – July 25th;

Litton Resrs. –March 7th and Sept. 24th;

Swineford – Nov. 26th.

Breeding One was seen on a nest at the Uphill heronry, where a pair raised two juveniles in 2014.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba* (19 since first in 2002, 17)

Rare vagrant, local records have increased in recent years, partly linked to a national increase but possibly as a result of breeding in Somerset.
Descriptions required.

Another exceptional year, with an overwintering individual at CVL then a series of records in late spring followed by a gap before an influx to the reservoirs in autumn, which saw a maximum single flock of seven. Details are as follows in chronological order.

The wintering individual at CVL from 2014 remained until March 3rd;

April One at BL on 10th flew to E at 19.45 (M Hynam) while one there early morning on 22nd which flew towards CVL at 08.32 (N Milbourne) was presumably the one found later in the day at CVL (K J Hall *et al.*);

May One at BL on 2nd flew to W at 13.00 (M Hynam) while one flew to NE over Orchard Pools, Severn Beach at 09.00 on 8th (M Hobbs);

July One was photographed at Portbury Wharf on 3rd (C J Stone);

September Two flew up-channel at Sand Point at 11.00 on 28th (A Hockey);

October One was present in Stratford Bay, CVL from 1st (D Angell *et al.*, photographed). On 4th two flew in from the SW and landed at Northwick Warth at 13.30 (D Reeves). From 11th a second bird arrived at CVL (B Brewer *et al.*, photographed) and on 13th one was found at BL (G Stacey *et al.*, photographed). From 19th there were four at CVL and two at BL until the end of the month;

November On the 1st and 2nd there were four at CVL and three at BL. Early on 3rd there were six together at BL before one flew off to CVL; later in the day there were five at BL and three at CVL, simultaneously. On 4th four were reported from BL and five from CVL while on 10th and 14th seven roosted together at Herriott's Pool, CVL. Between 15th and 20th five were regularly noted around CVL but none were seen at BL after 22nd when numbers at CVL started to decline;

December Two were at CVL all month (with three reported on 7th) while at BL one was present on 2nd and 3rd, 6th, 13th to 17th, and from 28th into 2016.

If we take a minimum of eight for the autumn numbers at CVL and BL but treat all other records as relating to different individuals, we obtain a total of 17 during the year, almost as many as the previous 13 years put together.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species.

WeBS Nat. 10-year trend: -1%

Moderately low water levels and high populations of coarse fish at CVL (*cf.* Cormorant) attracted good numbers to feed here, although similar conditions in 2014 were not reflected in high counts. Likewise, counts at BL from August to October were exceptionally high. Numbers at Sea Mills were average, as reflected in the first table below.

	2000/09 Av.	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
CVL	19	32	35	16	25	20	36
Sea Mills	17	12	13	8	7	20	11

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	8	7	7	6	3
Littleton Warth	1	1	1	1	2	1	5	2	4	2	2	5
Severnside	6	4	3	3	2	3	5	2	6	5	7	4
Cl-Y	2			4	2	2	3	4	3	3	4	2
Axe Est./Weston STW	3	2	4	4	4	10	4	5	3		1	1
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	11	8	1	2	1	1		5	1	4	5	2
Saltford	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	8	4	3	3	3
BG	3	2	3			2	3	3	6	6	4	2
CVL	13	4	7	11	6	8	12	36	7	20	18	21
BL	12	5	6	10	5	9	12	31	31	40	19	12

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Grey Heron con't

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 Newton Park on Nov. 26th, eight at Kenn Moor on Dec. 2nd, six at Marshfield on several dates in October and at Tickenham on Sept. 15th, and five at PWD on Aug. 11th and at Widcombe on March 23rd.

Breeding Overall there was a slight increase in occupied nests, suggesting a gradual recovery from a series of cold winters but the gradual decline at CVL continued. Breeding was recorded at two new sites, BL and Gordano Valley NNR, and although the Pill heronry was not counted it remains active. The table overleaf shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region:

	Grid Ref	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Widcombe Manor	ST761633					2						
Dodington Lakes	ST753802					3		4				
Newton Park	ST692640	5	8	4		2			3		1	
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	2	25	25	34	25	25	17	16	17	18	21
Gordano Valley NNR	ST438732											1
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761		1	1	2	1	1					
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	31	25	36	51	39	30	31	32	27	23	22
BL	ST527590											1
Easter Compton	ST560811	7	0	0	0	0	0					
Pill[1]	ST530739	4	5	5		7	6	7	3		11	
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	44	33	48	42	45	40	42	43	37	43	41
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	1	4	8	4	4		4		3	2	6
Total		109	101	127	133	128	102	105	97	84	98	102

Number of occupied nests over the last decade

[1]The historic figure for Pill includes the heronry at nearby Paradise Bottom, Leigh Woods, which was occupied until 2001.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia* (13, 1)

Rare vagrant. True status confused by the likelihood of escapes from captivity.
Descriptions required.

The first record since 2012 (see table below) was of one that flew S high over New Passage at 10.20 on April 21st (D White, photographed).

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* (13 since first in 2007, 1)

Rare vagrant.
Descriptions required.

One record, a first-winter, at Pilning Wetlands from Nov. 6th until 20th (P D Bowerman *et al.*, photographed).

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

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia* (43, 2)

Scarce passage migrant.
Descriptions required.

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

Pilning Wetlands – one in flight on May 15th (P D Bowerman, photographed). A first-calendar year individual from Oct. 27th until 31st (P D Bowerman *et al.*, photographed, see opposite page 56);

Sand Point – one which flew from the direction of Clevedon low over the Point on Oct. 31st heading SW (C Bungay *per* P A Gregory) was thought to be the Pilning Wetlands bird.

Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bittern	4	3	1	3	6	11	10	9	4	8	3
Cattle Egret	0		1		6	1		1			
Great White Egret	0	1				1	3	4	3	5	17
Purple Heron	0				1					1	
White Stork	0	1				2		5			1
Glossy Ibis	0		1		6	1			4+	1	1
Spoonbill	2	1	1	1	4	2	10		2	2	2
Spotted Crake	1		1	2	1			1	4	2	

Annual totals

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

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

CVL is currently ranked eighth in Great Britain for this species. (The Wetlands Bird Survey 2014/15). Nat. 10-year trend: +6%

2000/09 Av	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
75	123	92	38	63	42	57

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

Counts at CVL improved slightly and remain high by historical standards, despite the virtual loss of the breeding population here. It 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	2	2	2	2	1	1	1			1	1	
Severnside	2	3	6	5	5	8	6	5	7	13	3	12
PW	8	8	6	7	1	5	8	10	6	3	4	4
Cl-Y		6						2				8
Axe Est./Weston STW	3	3	3	4	2	7	10	9	18	10	5	1
Tortworth Lake						3	4			4		
Three Brooks LNR		3	1	2	2					1	1	
Wick Golden Valley		2	3	9			2		3		4	3
Kenn Moor	8	11	8								4	10
Saltford	3	1										
BG	9	10	7	1			3	6	14	15	12	8
Chew Magna Res.	2	2	1	1	3	4	8	22	19	11	8	2
CVL	6	4	1	4	2	7	20	75	60	35	20	15
BL	12	12	6	8	8	6		42	44	35	46	21
Litton Resrs.	9	6	3			2		13	12	11	8	5

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The slight reduction at some sites noted in the 2014 Report continued, *cf.* a maximum in 2013 of 33 at Weston STW. However, it is still able to colonise new sites as the habitat becomes suitable, as at Wick where records have only recently been regular, and the maximum in 2014 was four.

Other sites Reported from a wide scatter of non-tabulated sites. The highest count from a site not in the table above was seven at Prior Park, Bath on Nov. 11th.

Breeding At CVL the species continues to teeter on the edge of extinction as a breeder: two pairs were present but only one brood, from which one juvenile survived, was noted. No records of breeding were received from either Litton Resrs. or Chew Magna Res., which between them produced seven broods in 2014. Reports were received from another five sites, probably a substantial under representation of the true situation as follows:

Severnside – one brood of two on the Tesco pool and two broods totalling three young on the Pilning Wetlands;

Weston STW – one brood of one (*cf.* five broods totalling seven young here in 2014);

Weston Moor – one brood of two;

Little Grebe con't

Prior Park, Bath – one brood of two;

Northend, Batheaston – one brood of two;

	1995/2004 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Broods	12	6	6	3	3	0	0	2	0	3	1
Young	20	10	9+	4	5	0	0	0	0	4	1

CVL broods and young

	1995/2004 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Sites	10	5	8	6	4	4	4	8	7	6	5
Broods	18	18	15	14	10	12	9	21	19	20	7

Sites and broods away from CVL

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Uncommon and highly localised breeding resident, but occurs commonly at the reservoirs, particularly during the autumn moult/passage. Scarce elsewhere, including the Estuary.

CVL is currently ranked 14th in Great Britain for this species (The Wetland Bird Survey 2014/15). Nat. 10-year trend: -5%

Numbers rose sharply at CVL, accelerating the gradual recovery from the low in 2012, in line with high counts here of other fish-eating species (*cf,* Cormorant, Little Egret, Great White Egret and Grey Heron).

2000/09 Av	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
480	355	195	93	267	278	463

CVL - January to December average maximum counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	8	6	8	12	13	23	29	35	42	38	18	17
CVL	195	95	95	55	70	130	420	575	395	325	255	175
BL	58	40	12	14	14	34	26	14	21	60	55	50

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Elsewhere there were records from eight sites listed below, they refer to single birds unless stated otherwise:

Severnside – Feb. 7th, March 22nd and April 5th;

Portishead – two on June 15th and single birds on Dec. 28th and 29th;

Weston STW – two on June 16th were presumably the birds seen at Portishead on the previous day;

Tortworth – June 7th;

Wick Golden Valley – July 5th;

Backwell Lake – Feb. 4th;

Chew Magna Res. – May 16th, June 11th and July 18th;

Litton Resrs. – four on Aug. 5th;

Breeding At CVL breeding success was lower than in 2014 due to water levels dropping earlier in the summer. Elsewhere only reported at BL, where a single chick was raised.

	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Broods	22	20	38	20	8	1	0	0	7	27	11
Young	34	43	62+	26+	12	2	0	0	11	48	21

CVL broods and young

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* (51, 1)

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

Another poor showing with just one record: a partially summer-plumaged individual seen and photographed in Spring Bay at CVL on April 5th (S Davies *et al.*).

Details of sightings over the past twenty years are given in the table on next page.

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.

After three poor years for this species (see table below) 2015 saw a distinct improvement, although CVL no longer holds small numbers consistently through the autumn, as it did. Single birds, unless stated otherwise, were noted as follows:

Severnside – one on the Pilning Wetlands on Oct. 17th;

CVL – in the spring on March 6th, 22nd and 27th; in the autumn two on Aug. 2nd, followed by a different two (reported as juveniles) from Aug. 26th until Sept. 1st then single birds on 30th and Oct. 2nd, two on 13th to 17th and one on Nov. 25th;

BL – two on Jan. 1st and then one until March 7th, by which time it was in full breeding plumage. In the autumn from Oct. 1st to 8th, a different one on 19th joined by three others from 21st to Nov. 5th, with three remaining to year end.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Red-necked	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Slavonian	2	1	2	1	0	3	1	2	3	1	1
Black-necked	10	14	9	10	8	9	11	8	6	6	16

Annual recorded totals

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.

As stated in last year's Report, 2014 was the best to date with a total of 135 bird-days. However, 2015 was even better with a record total of 273 bird-days. Furthermore, this dramatic 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 November, see table below. Recorded at 85 sites (*cf* 47 in 2012, 58 in 2013, and 66 in 2014), 35 in *SG*, 35 in *BA & NS* and 15 in *Bristol*. Large counts included: in April, four at CVL on 7th, six at Hanging Hill, Lansdown on 16th; in May, three at Saltford on 23rd, in June, three at Marshfield on 4th, three at Clevedon Court on 7th, six over Clevedon flying towards Portishead on 8th and three at CVL on 14th. In July, four noted at Chipping Sodbury (Frome Valley) on 1st and the same number over Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol on 17th.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2	3	23	50	44	100	27	6	9	5	0	4	273

Monthly distribution of bird-days

Surges in passage occurred on three main dates, two consecutive:

April16th: ten bird-days were noted including six (a group of five to NNW and one to N) at Hanging Hill, Lansdown;

June 7th: twelve bird-days including three at both Clevedon Court and CVL;

June 8th: eighteen bird-days, including six along the Clevedon to Portishead coast.

Of the 15 bird-days over Bristol, most were noted in the north-west of the city but two in St George (Trooper's Hill/Crews Hole) were unusual. The concentration of observers at CVL and environs recorded 30 bird-days during the year at the site.

Most records referred to birds flying north or north-east, rarely to south, south-west or south-east. A possible explanation for this is as follows:

A pattern seems to be emerging whereby individuals, especially first calendar-year birds from the UK population become evident in south and south-western counties in the period March to July. These birds are seemingly "pushed out" of their home territories by the adults who are preparing to breed. They appear to wander widely across south-western counties, even as far as Land's End. The 2015 records, and those in previous years, suggest that they are wandering roughly in a north/north-easterly direction across the region. By the autumn and early winter it is assumed, due to the lack of records, that they are back in the areas where they were born and eventually find their own territories to raise their young.

Red Kite con't

It seems unlikely that many, if any, have come across the English Channel, as the main spring migration period for continental birds wintering in Spain and breeding in Germany, Scandinavia and Poland is late February/early March, and their route is well to the east in France. In fact sightings in the north-west quarter of France, especially along the Channel coast, are still very unusual at any time, and there have been only a handful of records of UK-marked birds anywhere in France or Spain (*per* KJ Hall). There has never been a better time to see a Red Kite over your local patch!

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus* [Amber 2, 6]

Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL.

The bird-days total for 2015 was 16, the lowest total since 2010, *cf*. 35 in 2014. Only seven bird-days were noted at CVL (*cf.*17 in 2011, 12 in 2012 and 2103). There were two in January/February and two in December, but the strongest showing was in August/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 (ordered by date of first appearance)

CVL-- Jan.19th and Feb. 17th;

Chittening Warth (Severnside) -- April18th to NE;

BL -- May 1st (first Avon BBS record for this species);

Lawrence Weston Moor, Bristol – May 5th.

Second half-year (ordered by date of first appearance)

Saltford – to SW on Aug. 8th;

Marshfield (Rushmead Lane) -- Aug.11th;

CVL -- Aug.15th, and Oct. 30th;

Marshfield (Down Road) -- Aug. 21st and 26th, and Rushmead Lane on Sept. 3rd;

Thornbury (Butt Lane) – a male on Sept. 2nd;

New Passage/Pilning Wetlands -- an immature male on Sept.18th;

PWD -- Sept.27th;

OPS -- Dec.12th.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus* (92, 1)

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

The fourth poor year in succession with just one acceptable record. This showing reflects the national concern about this species which suffers badly from persecution.

Marshfield, Down Road – a ringtail photographed as it went to roost in the evening of Oct. 18th was seen at 07.15 the next morning before eventually flying off high to W at 08.05 (P Coslett, *et al.*).

Between 1983 and 2014 there were 177 bird-days, probably involving 92 individuals. Most years there are only a handful of records and they did not linger, but there were double figure bird-day counts in 1991 (50), 2008 (14), 2010 (17) and 2011 (13). Although there are records from all months except July, 70% are in the period October to January with another peak (9%) in May.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus* (10, 2)

Very scarce summer visitor.
Descriptions required.

An excellent year with two records, both in spring, of ringtails moving through the area, details as follows:

Northwick Warth – one flew low over the seawall mobbed by a Buzzard just after 10.00 on May 15th (P D Bowerman) before drifting off high inland;

Weston STW – one, a first site record, drifted in from the south at 09.55 on April 25th, flew low over the fields and headed W towards Brean (M S Ponsford).

There have been three previous records in the last ten years: at Chelwood in May 2006, near Tormarton in May 2008 and at Marshfield in July 2011.

HARRIER Sp *Circus Sp*

A ringtail harrier at New Passage on Sept. 28th was thought to be a Hen Harrier.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis* (49, 0)

Very scarce visitor and resident.
Descriptions required.

No acceptable records were received in 2015 but there was late discovery of an old record of an adult photographed from the B3130 between Tickenham and Clevedon as it soared over the M5 at 08.40 on 19th April **2009** (R Bowerman) – see opposite page 57.

This scarce 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	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Honey Buzzard	1			3		2	1			1	
Black Kite						1					
Red Kite	5	11	24	31	62	70	54	90	108	135	272
Marsh Harrier	7	8	6	29	52	14	28	19	26	35	16
Hen Harrier	3	3	4	14	1	17	13	2	2	2	2
Pallid Harrier							1				
Montagu's Harrier	1	1		1			1				2
Goshawk	3	1		3*	1*	0*	1	1	5	2	
Osprey	6	6	12	13	14	13	13	25	59	41	36

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 974, was the best to date; 2014 was the second best with 873 records received. The spread across the year was reasonably even but the highest numbers were in March, April, August to October and December, June had the fewest.

The table below shows the distribution of records for 2015 and the previous five years:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2015	80	72	94	129	62	31	60	88	98	100	67	93	974

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding Reported from 87 sites, a record number, in March, April, May and June (13 in SG, 56 in BA/NS and18 in Bristol) *cf.* 72 in 2011 which was the best year since 1997 when the total was 74.

	1996-05 Av	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
SG	9	16	11	24	13	14	17	20	16	13	13
BA & NS	34	36	34	35	32	29	45	34	29	39	56
Bristol	13	11	10	9	10	8	10	13	11	10	18
Total	56	63	55	68	55	51	72	67	56	62	87

Breeding sites

Sparrowhawk con't
The BBS for 2015 recorded 14 in 11 squares (6.4% of all squares surveyed). In 2014, 30 were recorded (11.6% of all the squares surveyed).

Located at one site at CVL (*cf.* three in 2011, one in 2012, three in 2013 and one in 2014).

Two records in April, possibly referred to birds migrating: one at OPS on 4th flew up and across the Estuary and another at Brislington, Bristol on 10th was seen flying high to N. In November and December records were fairly evenly spread over the region, urban, non-urban and on the coast.

Prey species One was noted carrying a Goldfinch.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo* [RR]

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 1873, the highest ever, the previous highest were 1169 in 2012 and 1456 in 2014. 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 2015 and the previous five years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2015	169	139	192	252	166	147	112	122	149	151	89	115	1873

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding The BBS counted 144 in 79 squares (found in 45.7% of area surveyed) *cf.* 214 in 2013 (50% of area surveyed), and 184 in 2014 (44.4% of area surveyed). In both 2008 and 2009 they were recorded in 53% of the area surveyed.

Robin Prytherch's study area, which covers some 75km^2 of Failand and Gordano had a record number of pairs with 110 holding territories, *cf.*108 in 2014. Of the nests checked 26 were successful, and 34 young fledged. For these the brood success ratio was below average, perhaps due to the cold wet summer, and 13 pairs failed to breed.

The table below sets out an assessment of the number of breeding sites in the Avon area in 2015 (sites recorded from March to June) and the previous nine years as well as the ten-year average from 1996 to 2005. Included in BA & NS data are the results of RJP's studies in the Failand /Gordano area.

Year	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
SG	32	49	39	45	46	47	56	37	39	44	46
BA & NS	168	206	213	202	211	172	226	210	213	217	196
Bristol	7	14	12	9	8	11	10	9	9	9	18
RJP's Study Area											
Active nest sites	75	90	92	97	99	103	103	105	106	108	110
Chicks fledged	78	50	80	47	73	87	43	27	31	37	34
Successful nests	44	37	52	33	47	60	27	27	20	26	26
Brood success ratio	1.59	1.35	1.54	1.42	1.55	1.43	1.59	1.00	1.55	1.42	1.31

Breeding data

At CVL, juveniles were heard at seven sites (in 2014 nine pairs were found and six of these were successful).

Large groups/counts All counts in double figures are listed below;

CVL -- 14 on Feb. 8th, 12 on April 15th, 17 on 30th, 11 on June 25th, 13 on July 13th, and 11 on Sept. 23rd;

BG – 15 on Jan. 26th, 13 on Aug. 28th and 18 on Sept. 26th.

Elsewhere In the spring 30 at Marshfield (Rushmead Lane) on April 5th was the highest count of the year in the Avon area. Eighteen was seen at OPS on March 25th and 14 were noted at Iron Acton on 22nd. Ten in the Gordano Valley on April 16th and 11 over Chew Magna on 27th were also good counts. In the autumn, 12 were noted at Walton Common on Sept.1st ten were counted at Marshfield on 27th and 11 were noted at Avonmouth (M5 bridge area) on 6th.

Bristol Often noted over the outer suburban areas of the city. Nine over Blackboy Hill, Clifton on April 6th was a good count for the city.

Other notes A strikingly pale individual was seen at CVL (Heron's Green) in late December into 2016. A similar bird was at OPS on Nov.27th. One to N at Aust Cliff on Oct.13th was noted during a migration count. A local individual hit by a car was nearly 22 years old when it died.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* [Amber 2, 5]

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

Another good year with a total of 36 bird-days, the third best since records began after 59 in 2013 and 41 in 2014, see table on page 55. Most of the records were noted in the first half of April and an unprecedented number were seen over Bristol and environs.

The records given below refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

CVL – noted on April 10th, 13th and 15th; on June 23rd, and on July 2nd and 3rd. In August, one on 7th and there were ten bird-days from 24th to Sept. 1st;

BL – noted from April 6th to 8th, 10th and 12th, and on June 22nd (see CVL record above).

Elsewhere – inland records (in date order)

Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol -- to N on April 2nd;

Yate (Kingsgate Park) -- to N on April 6th;

Redland, Bristol -- to N on April 7th;

Cribbs Causeway, Bristol -- to N at 13.50 on April 7th, and to N at 16.05 on April 8th;

Pucklechurch – passed over on April 8th and 9th;

Kingswood, Bristol -- on April 13th.

Hallen, Bristol -- to N on April 15th;

Coastal records (in date order)

PWD – to NW on April 9th;

Severn Beach - to NE on April 10th, and to SE on Aug.18th;

Cl-Y -- to N on April 14th;

OPS -- April 16th.

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 18th, in the UK in 2014/15. Nat. 10 year trend: + 16%

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

2005	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
16	24	23	23	20	18	24	27	22	21	18

Number of sites reported from each year

There are inevitably underestimates: at CVL mapping of calling birds throughout the two winters suggests that approximately 20 were present in the first period and ten in the second; the breeding records show that much higher totals are present during the summer than are revealed by other surveys.

The second table overleaf gives the maxima at the main sites

Water Rail con't

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	5	3	1						1	5	6
Severnside	5	3	4	2			1		2	3	4	5
PWD	5	1	1	1						2		1
Cl-Y	2		2		1					1		
Weston STW	1	1	1	1					2	4		
CVL	9	4	3	2	2	3	3	5	5	8	2	6

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Away from the breeding sites the last recorded in the spring was on May 8th at Cl-Y (Blake's Pools) and the first of the autumn was at Severnside (Northwick Warth) on July 16th.

Breeding The playback survey at CVL was less thorough than in previous years but nonetheless it detected 16 pairs and a further 12 single birds. Detection of nests at CVL is difficult and it is highly likely that undetected nests were present. However, it is probable that the breeding season was poor, as reflected in the proportion of birds caught during the breeding season that were either pulli or juveniles, which was 36% (*cf.* 61% in 2012, 59% in 2013 and 64% in 2014). No reports were received from Steep Holm, where three territories were occupied in 2014. As in 2014 breeding was possibly attempted at BL, where song was heard in May and June.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
4	6	3	4	2	2	5	2	4	5	3	0	2	6	4	1	10	6	2	0

Number of nest sites detected at CVL each year

Other records As ever this species was under recorded. The records received, of single birds unless stated otherwise, are as follows:

Littleton Brick Pits – Oct. 16th and 17th;

Sand Bay – Jan. 23rd and three on Feb. 21st;

Kingsgate Park, Yate – Jan. 22nd, Feb. 8th and Nov. 23rd;

Yate Common – Feb. 10th and Oct. 20th;

Marshfield – Jan. 19th;

Three Brooks LNR – Feb. 8th, three on 9th and four on 14th;

Saltford – Jan. 11th, Feb. 11th, Oct. 14th and 22nd and two on Nov. 3rd;

Yatton – Jan. 16th and 30th, March 3rd and Oct. 10th;

Congresbury Moor – Jan. 14th, Feb. 20th and April 7th;

Backwell Lake – Feb. 6th, 9th and 11th and March 7th;

Batheaston – March 1st and Oct. 3rd;

Worle – Nov. 26th and Dec. 31st;

BL – two on Jan. 13th, several records of one from Feb. 19th to April 16th, singing birds on May 16th, 24th and June 13th, and two on Nov. 16th.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

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

WeBS status: CVL is currently 18th in the list of sites of National Importance (Wetland Bird Report 2014/15). Nat 10-year trend: -19%

Exceptional counts were made at both CVL and BL. Recording this species is always easier when water levels are low, as they were at both sites in 2015, but it is also clear that populations were exceptionally high and that recovery from increased mortality during cold winters earlier in the decade is now complete.

Unfortunately no counts were received from Bristol Zoo, an important site for this species.

Year	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
CVL	145	90	55	70	180	125	75	35	170	145	230
BL	75	82	30	21	38	33	27	20	92	98	167

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

The counts from the main sites are as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	9	1	2	4	4	4	7	7	5	7	5	1
Severnside	16	14	12	10	4	2	4	5	6	8	8	8
PWD	17			9	8	2	9	13	1	2	6	19
Cl-Y	18	25		7	5	3	2		3	10		11
Weston STW	5	17	12	6	4	3	2	8	9	7	5	4
Duchess Park	4	5	2	2	4		1	3	1			4
Eastville Park	4	12	6	5	5	5	2	6	5	7	4	10
Backwell Lake	3	9	1	11	5	7	2	3	4	4	9	8
Saltford	14	15	15	12	11	5	13	10	9	15	11	6
CVL	25	30	10	1	10	10	100	230	125	110	80	35
BL	38	51	90	34	2	4	30	143	167	91	50	50
Chew Magna Res.	2			2	1	1	6	9	1		2	1

Moorhen -- Monthly maxima at the main sites

Recorded from a wide scatter of other sites. The largest numbers were: 25 at Keynsham Memorial Park on Jan. 13th and 20 here on Dec. 19th; 14 on Kenn Moor on Jan. 4th and Feb. 13th; and eight at Three Brooks LNR on Feb. 14th.

Breeding A survey at CVL, covering only the nature reserve, found 14 nests containing a total of 99 eggs; detecting broods of this species here is almost impossible. At BL only one brood of four was located (*cf.* three broods in 2014). Elsewhere recorded at 21 sites (*cf.* 12 in 2010, 12 in 2011, 18 in 2012, 11 in 2014 and 20 in 2015). Although the similarity between the last two years in the number of sites suggests a very stable picture, only five sites are common across the two years, probably reflecting inconsistency of recording rather than shifting populations.

The reports are as follows:

OPS – three broods totalling four young;

Littleton Brick Pits – one brood of one;

Severnside – at least one brood at Pilining Wetlands;

Tortworth – one brood of four;

Three Brooks LNR – a brood of one;

Abbey Wood – an occupied nest, outcome unknown;

R. Frome at Snuff Mills – a brood seen;

Eastville Park, Bristol – one brood raised;

Bristol Docks – a brood of five;

Compton Dando – one brood of three;

Saltford – two broods totalling three young;

Keynsham Memorial Park – two nests, outcome unknown;

Hunstrete – a brood of two;

Backwell Lake – one brood of five young;

Newton St Loe – a brood of two;

Newbridge, Bath – a brood of one;

Prior Park, Bath – a brood of one;

Kingston Seymour – two broods totalling six young;

Winford Brook – one brood of one;

Yatton - one brood of one;

Batheaston – a brood of one.

COOT *Fulica atra*

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

WeBS status: CVL is currently eighth and BL 28th in the list of sites of National Importance (Wetland Bird Report 2014/15). Nat 10-year trend: -17%

Numbers at both main reservoirs were high, due to profuse growth of water plants. Counts peaked unusually late in the year (*cf.* 495 in November 2014), probably because calm weather in the late summer and early autumn allowed water plant growth to continue throughout these months. The good conditions at these sites possibly account for low counts at PWD, Weston STW, BG and elsewhere. The Avon BBS distribution was 10%.

Year	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
CVL	2733	2360	2095	2020	3050	2880	3110	2475	3190	2770	3250
BL	1739	1400	2323	1403	970	678	1247	1070	1213	1098	1426

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

The main data are given in the table at the top of the next page.

Coot con't

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	4	4	4	7	5	7	3	3	3	3	4
Severnside	19	24	24	12	8	8	9	9	11	9	9	14
PWD	44	34		16	12	8	32	27	33	10		
Weston STW	4	15	14	11	8	14	12	8				1
Tortworth		23				12	37			47		
Backwell Lake	16	21	9	5	7	9	6	14	17	22	18	9
BG	40	66	48	15	27	89	114	139	114	124	120	101
Chew Magna Resr.		2	2	3	5	5	2	2				
CVL	265	395	345	390	325	1095	2200	2800	2535	3065	3250	2655
BL	518	433	311	171	136	287	818	996	1407	850	1426	1221

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other records Recorded from a wide scatter of sites. The highest count not in the table above was nine at Litton Resrs. on Feb.14th.

Breeding At CVL there were 20 broods, totalling 44 young, a sharp fall after two good years, probably caused by low water levels. At BL three broods were seen, totalling 12 juveniles (*cf.* 12 broods and 40 young in 2014). Elsewhere recorded as follows: OPS (two broods, five young); Severn Beach, Orchard Pools (one young); Chittening Warth (one brood, five young); Portishead (one young); Tortworth Lake (21 juveniles); Eastville Park (one nest); Saltford (one young); and Backwell Lake (two broods, eight young).

The breeding data at CVL over the past two decades is summarised in the following table.

Year	1996/2005 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of nests		112	91	96	67	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	100	n/c
No. of broods	66	34	41	28	27	22	11	26	40	47	20
No. of young	182	70	91+	61	77+	46	n/c	50	110	118	44

Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

2014 – Tortworth Lake: 27 were noted on March 2nd, also five broods produced 15 young during the summer.

Wader counts For the common wader species our main method for presenting data is via tables of monthly maxima 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', that is the same flock may be at one site on one day and another on the next, or even later the same day, and so appear twice in a table. It is well-known that most flocks move freely around the Estuary during their stay; for example they may be on the English coast for a while and then cross to the Welsh coast only to return to our side later. Flocks may be mainly resident on our coast and visit others occasionally, on the other hand some flocks normally resident on the Welsh or Somerset coasts may visit the Avon coast staying sometimes only a few minutes or a few hours.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta* [Amber 6]

Uncommon winter visitor/passage migrant. Rare inland.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in importance; English 10-yeat trend is 24%.

Sightings were below average after the good showing in 2014. No count was over five and the only pattern to the records was that none were noted in either winter period and all were coastal. It is surprising that the Avon counts are so low considering the numbers occurring at Steart (Somerset) and Newport (Gwent). All records received in 2015 are listed below.

OPS – one on March 12th and 14th;

New Passage (Severnside) – single birds on March 6th and Sept. 11th with two seen swimming on Oct. 14th;

PWD – one on March 6th assumed the same as above;

Cl-Y – five on Aug. 31st;

Axe Estuary – three on Sept. 13th.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
8	4	8	15	8	15	22	9	17	47	13

Yearly totals of individuals for the past two decades

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus* [Amber 1, 6, 7]

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

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English 10-year trend is -23%.

Year	Severnside	Cl-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Estuary	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	73	20	13	70	176
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	78	34	23	91	226
2013/14	103	44	15	100	262
2014/15	132	49	80	134	395

August to February average counts

During the last few years records of this species have increased notably at all sites as shown in the status table above, most spectacularly at Sand Bay although duplication between flocks at this site and at the Axe Estuary cannot be ruled out. The best count in 2015 was 227 noted at the Axe Estuary on Jan.10th although the 185 at New Passage on Oct. 25th was not far behind. The table below summarises the monthly maxima at the main sites. Further non-breeding records came from the following areas: Saltford, one in flight on June 17th; Bristol International Airport, five also in flight on July 24th; BG, one on May 29th; and BL, two on June 14th and single birds from 18th to 22nd, and on Aug. 23rd and 25th. In addition 80, marked ** in the table, were seen at the southern end of Sea Mills on Dec.12th, it is assumed that this flock had been displaced from Severnside.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	12	11	12	14	10	8	11	9	2	5	4	8
Littleton Warth	3	11	3	7	2	5		14	3		12	6
Severnside	138	160	85	76	65	61	31	140	118	185	140	145
Avonmouth/PWD	2	8	9	12	10	6	12	6	2	2	41	18
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	1	2	2	2		1		6				80**
Cl-Y	34	40	39	58	28	12	23	56	75	65	72	70
Sand Bay	67	163	29	35	1	12	19	9	32	83	13	8
Axe Estuary	227	89	42	4	3	4	6	144	99	20	173	nc
CVL	1		1		1	2	5	2				

Monthly maxima at the main sites, for ** see text above

Breeding As with the other breeding waders activity was down compared with the previous year, and only three sites were involved (*cf.* three in 2013 and six in 2014). Also as in 2014 at least one was present at Littleton Warth in June in a suitable nesting area but no actual breeding activity was seen. The following details were received.

Avonmouth Docks – nesting activity, including sitting birds, was noted at two sites, outcome unknown;

Portbury Warth NR – a pair with three chicks was seen in mid-June, the actual nest site was not recorded, and three fledged young were reported at the end of the month. A second pair was noted with a very young chick between July 31st and Aug. 4th, the chick was probably the result of a repeat nest;

Cl-Y – three pairs were present showing some breeding activity (*cf.* four in 2014). In mid June a nest with four eggs was found, outcome unknown. In July two pairs were giving distraction displays suggesting that young might have been present.

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

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce inland.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English 10-year trend is -23%.

Year	Severnside	Cl-Y	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	8	23	31
2005/06 – 2012 /13Av.	6	31	37
2013/14	7	35	42
2014/15	4	22	26

September to March average counts

The status table above shows a slight dip, this is mainly due to later arrival and earlier departure in the 2014/15 winter. Otherwise no major change year-on-year was noted. In 2015 they were present up to June 2nd (one at Severn Beach) and from Sept.18th (one at New Passage) although single birds (possibly the same summering or early returning individual throughout) were noted at Cl-Y on Aug. 3rd and 7th and at CVL on 3rd and 23rd. The flock of 18 at Severn Beach in April were seen on 22nd, the same day that good numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel were also seen in the Estuary. Apart from the two CVL records mentioned above all other records are summarised in the table at the top of the next page.

Grey Plover con't

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	3	1	11	1						18	2	2
Severnside			5	18	2	1			9	2		
PWD				1					2	2		
Cl-Y	51	32	18	3				1	1	22	20	34
Sand Bay	13	17		1							5	21

Monthly maxima at the main sites

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English counties of the Severn Estuary was 24th in importance; English 10-year trend is -64%.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1400	2460	3340	1790	1965	1590	3455	2720	2340	1995	2782

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

Counts as monitored in the summary table above were slightly above the ten-year average of 2443, but this is at least partly explained by the large flock (about 500) which frequented the Marshfield area from the first week of January to the second week of March. Present up to March 29th (250 at Marshfield and 200 on Marksbury Plain) and from Aug.15th onwards (one at Saltford) although the first substantial autumn flock was not seen until early October with 50 at Pennsylvania, near Marshfield on 8th. The monthly maxima for the well-watched sites are tabulated below, the remaining records were in January at Dunkirk (100) and Sand Point (three), in August at Chipping Sodbury Common (two), and in November at BL (four). Unusually there were no records at all from CVL.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Thornbury Pill	2	60					2	1	
Severnside			38		2	2	3	1	1
Cl-Y	2	2	26			15		2	25
Axe Est./Weston STW		6						1	1
Marshfield area	500	500	500		2	1	100	100	200
Marksbury/Lansdown			200				62		
Saltford		5	9		1	1	16	4	
Paulton	8	33					17		40
Redhill/Bristol Int. Airport	52	60					24		46

Monthly maxima at the main sites

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula* [RR] [Red 3]

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 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance; English 10-year trend is -41%.

Year	OPS		Severnside		Cl-Y		Totals	
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	16	84	14	230	18	116	48	430
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	5	67	15	159	16	244	36	470
2013/14	8	31	22	145	12	133	42	309
2014/15	3	55	25	150	5	328	33	533*

Winter (October to February) and the following autumn passage (August and September) average counts; * see paragraph below

The calculation procedure for the status table above is correct but it exaggerates considerably the 2015 autumn total. The problem arose because the count of 315 at Cl-Y was for Sept.1st and the highest later count was only 70, so if the 315 count had been for one day earlier, the Cl-Y autumn passage figure would have been 205 and the Avon total figure would have been 410 (and not 533*). Hence all that can be deduced from this table is that the sightings for 2015 were slightly better than normal, and a definite improvement on those for 2014.

In 2015 the counts in both winter periods were reasonable except that the flocks concentrated at a few sites and mostly avoid others, so Severnside, the coast around the mouth of the R. Avon and the Axe Estuary (including the south-west end of Weston beach) were favoured whilst OPS, Littleton Warth, Cl-Y and Sand Bay were not. Indeed this last site had a very poor year with only two double figure counts (18 on April 16th and 25 on Aug.16th), the reason(s) for this are unclear as it would seem that this site should provide favourable conditions for this species.

There was no obvious spring passage except that some of the best counts came in the first three days of June and involved (it is assumed) birds that breed in the far north. The autumn passage was under way by the beginning of August (18 on 2nd at Cl-Y, for example) and continued to the end of September (90 on Weston beach on 27th being the last of the higher counts).

The table below summarises this data for all sites. It is perhaps worth noting that the two best autumn reservoir counts (30 at CVL and 49 at BL both for Aug. 23rd) were, apart from those for the exceptional year of 2011, the best for at least the last decade.

	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	3	2	3	7	13	6			4	24	60	50	10	10	4	8
Littleton Warth	2									2	14	95					
Severnside	15	13	8	11	20	30	51	50		1	40	170	130	85	35	28	21
Avonmouth/PWD	18	15	13	19	6	4	45	58	3	10	16	130		55	13	15	35
Cl-Y		6	5	14	8	11	15	1	2	8	225	340	315	50	6	6	25
Sand Bay				1	18							25	9				
Axe Estuary	29	32					1				32	59	5	90		4	31
CVL				1	1		3				20	30	10	2	1		
BL						1					9	49	2	2	1		

Ringed Plover -- Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

Breeding A very poor year with no chicks seen. The only definite report was of a nest with four eggs in late June in the dock area of PWD, outcome unknown. It is possible that at least one pair did breed successfully in this general area as a juvenile was seen at New Passage in mid-July. One ringed as a nestling at Portbury in 2004 was still present in the Estuary eleven and half years later.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius* [RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant/summer visitor. Scarce breeder.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English counties of the Severn Estuary was 15th in importance; English 10-year trend is 35%.

Sightings at Pilning and Portbury continue to improve, otherwise sightings were normal.

As in 2014 the site including the warth at New Passage and the scrapes known as Pilning Wetlands proved very attractive to this species with many reports listed on the electronic files. No direct breeding records were received from this site although several of the July and August reports mentioned both adults and juveniles (four). It seems quite possible that one or two pairs did breed nearby but not on the site itself. The coastal strip between Aust and Avonmouth, especially the part to the seaward side of the M49 motorway is mainly commercial set aside for large warehouse developments, several parts are relatively undisturbed with damp areas, pools and old derelict workings that could prove attractive to this species.

A pair arrived at PWD on April 7th and was present at the site until late July. Two juveniles were first noticed here on June 19th and remained until July 25th with one staying for a further two days. In late June six were present, these four and another adult pair using a separate pool to the first pair. Breeding was last confirmed in Avon in 2013 at a site in Avonmouth docks less than a kilometre away.

The table overleaf summarises the counts from the main sites. Present from March 12th (one at Severn Beach, the earliest Avon first-date recorded, see page 147) until Sept.13th (one at Cl-Y). The best spring and autumn counts were both for the New Passage/Pilning area with 11 on April 8th and seven on July 20th. Counts away from the coastal strip between Pilning and Portbury were generally on the low side and involved mostly migrants.

There were three non-tabulated reports of single birds as follows: at OPS on May 16th, at Uphill on April 20th, and nearby on Weston Airfield on 25th (this is another possible breeding site).

Little Ringed Plover con't

	March	April		May	June	July		August		Sept
	12-16	3-15	16-30			1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31	1-13
Northwick W / Pilning Wlds	1	11	8	2	1	6	7	2	2	
PWD		2	2	2	6	3	3			
Cl-Y		1		1				1		1
BG		1				1				
CVL		1	1	1			1	2	1	1
BL							1	1		

Fortnightly (or monthly) maxima

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 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in National Importance; English10-year trend is -69%.

Year	Severnside	Cl-Y	CVL	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	342	292	268	902
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	228	529	232	989
2013/14	165	793	143	1101
2014/15	300	290	140	730

August to February average counts

Except on one count on one day there were again no major cold weather movements or very big flocks reported, hence as a consequence most of the data given in the status table above and the January/December winter table below are on the low side. The exception was a count of 2000 involving a single large flock seen inland between the Yeo Estuary (Cl-Y) and Hewish on Dec.15th, it had dropped back to 1000 by the next day. Large flocks have been seen at this site in the recent past. It should be noted that this single flock accounts for nearly half of the Avon December 2015 figure of 4055 given below.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015	Av.
January	7400	3520	4840	7760	3710	3000	3550	16780	3890	3655	5810
December	3200	3640	2770	3450	3950	3800	2100	5380	2750	4055	3510

Ten-year January and December Avon totals at all sites

The third table gives the monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. Of note, between Feb. 20th, when 100 were seen at Cl-Y, and Oct.19th, when 110 were seen at OPS and 130 at Cl-Y, all Avon area counts were in single or double figures. Also of note is the fact that, apart from the main reservoirs, no autumn records at all were received from any inland site. And although CVL reported up to 40 during this period, 30 years ago this figure would have been in the thousands. The tabulated Cl-Y/Dec figure, 450, was for the regular flock, and it excludes the two high counts (of 2000 and 1000) mentioned above. There were just three non-tabulated reports of note: 400 at Sand Bay on Jan. 21st (a good count for this site), 70 at Dunkirk on 31st, and 200 at Gaunts Earthcott, near Almondsbury on Feb. 2nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Thornbury Pill	680	750		1	1		1		31	130	400	400
Severnside	550	640	2	1		7	28	9	3	125	250	500
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	33	45					2	1	17		40	80
PWD	90	65	10	2			5			5	40	30
Cl-Y	350	175	22	18	14	4	3	3	1	150	450	450*
Axe Estuary	550	780							14	78	400	750
Marshfield	105	90		1		1				7	2	
Saltford										4	6	
Gordano Valley			8	6	4							
Redhill/Bristol Int. Airport	107	90									23	72
N. Somerset Moors	25	130	18	14	6	8				10		
BG	180	165								1	3	
CVL	400	85	1	3	3	8	40	38	28	20	130	80
BL	180	210		1		10	27	16	12	150	250	150

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites, * for Cl-Y/Dec see first paragraph

Breeding After the improvement noted in 2014, nesting activity was disappointing. Although display was reported from five sites (*cf.* four or five in 2013 and nine in 2014), only one successful nest was recorded. A possible explanation is that although several sites were wet in early spring they dried out before breeding could be completed. The main details are as follows, single birds were also seen in display flights in May near Marshfield and at Wickwar but no pairs were seen.

Weston Moor, Gordano Valley – three pairs were present in late April and display was noted;

Dowlais Farm, Cl-Y – up to four pairs were present, display was noted from mid-March and two were on possible nests in mid-April but no chicks were seen;

Yeo Estuary, Cl-Y – one or two pairs were displaying in early April but they deserted due to construction work nearby;

Nailsea Moor – up to six pairs were displaying in early April but only two remained. Two nests failed but a third was successful producing three chicks in the third week of June;

CVL – a 'possible' pair was noted in early May but no nesting activity was seen.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus* [Red 3, 4]

Passage migrant, fairly common in spring and uncommon in autumn. Scarce in summer, 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 a separate subspecies but recently it has been elevated to the status of a full species.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in National Importance; English 10-year trend 48%.

A paper in the latest (June 2016) issue of *Wader Study* is worth mentioning. In a report of migration routes taken the *N. p.* i*slandicus* subspecies breeding in Iceland, it was discovered that on their spring journey from west Africa most made a stop-over in northern France or the UK whilst on their return (autumn) passage the majority flew directly from Iceland to either western Iberia or west Africa (mainly Mauritania) without stopping. This information goes a long way to explain why we see so many more in spring than in autumn.

Year	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Total
1996 – 2005 Av.	28	27	75	130
2006 – 2013 Av.	20	39	68	127
2014	29	38	80	147
2015	8	38	71	117

Spring (April and May) average counts

For the second year running the status total above, 117, dropped back; it was 193 in 2013. In 2015 counts at both OPS and Cl-Y were a bit below normal. On the other hand as last year there was a better spread of reports with both Littleton Warth and Sand Bay showing some improvement. Also unusually there were three winter records: one at Sand Bay on Feb. 28th (A Morgan), one at Severn Beach on Nov.18th and a remarkable six at New Passage on Dec.12th (B Lancastle) – one or two others were noted in the whole Estuary during this period. There have been winter records in the past but this is the first multiple record.

The spring passage began on April 5th (one at Cl-Y) – the same date as in 2014 – and it had mainly ended by May 20th (18 at Cl-Y), up to five summered and the last in autumn was one at New Passage on Oct. 5th. The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. There were six other records: three by the R. Avon at Sea Mills on April 28th, and single birds in flight at Rudgeway on 26th, Chipping Sodbury Common on 29th, Saltford on May 7th (heard at night so possibly more than one present), Tormarton on 23rd, and another at Chipping Sodbury Common on Aug. 23rd.

	Feb	April		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	28	5-20	21-30	1-10	11-30							
OPS		5	10	5	2	1		1				
Littleton Warth		20	6		1			5				
Severnside		21	40	36	7	5	3	3	1	1	1	6
PWD			5	15	2		9	8				
Cl-Y		27	62	80	50	5	3	9	4			
Sand Bay	1	19	22	18	6		2	5	2			
Axe Est/Weston STW			2	9	1			2				
CVL		1	5	1		1		3				

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites

CURLEW *Numenius arquata* [Red 3]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. Uncommon inland. Has bred in the past

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in National Importance; English10-year trend is -12%.

Year	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	386	194	164	67	811
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	267	169	189	29	654
2013/14	481	200	286	32	999
2014/15	267	211	270	43	791

August to February average counts

Recently the BTO has pointed out that amongst breeding species in the UK this one is probably the most threatened, and they have proposed an action plan to try to reverse this trend. The species does not breed in the Avon area now (it does in both Somerset and Wiltshire), and the size of our winter period flocks has not changed markedly over the past few years suggesting that most of the birds in our flocks are of continental origin. Nevertheless it is still clearly important that everything is done to conserve what we have.

Compared with 2013/14 the status table total (791, see table above) was a bit down mainly due to lower numbers from the OPS/Littleton area where four figure counts have been reported in the past. The largest in 2015 was 320 seen feeding off Littleton Warth on Dec. 28th. Counts were normal at the remaining sites, the details are given in the monthly maxima table below. The last three-figure count (120) was for Cl-Y on April 13th (see Redshank) and the first in the second period was 120 also at Cl-Y on July 7th with the same number at Severnside on 19th. The only non-tabulated records were of one at Shire Hill, Marshfield on June 18th (breeding activity has been noted at this border site with Wiltshire in the past), and two at Sea Mills in August, October and December.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	300	290	260	80	2	13	40	100	250	300	290	200
Littleton Warth	160	230	50	50		4	28	29	34	110	200	320
Severnside	360	200	90	86	23	26	130	240	145	180	235	310
PWD	34	50	87	52	3	40	65	66	70	37	47	41
Cl-Y	330	215	130	120	7	24	170	210	260	200	275	265
Sand Bay	30	104	88	63		11	90	120	150	145	33	62
Axe Estuary	64	26	6	1		2	10	3	11	16	63	24
CVL			1		1	2	1	3				

Monthly maxima at the main sites

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* [Red 2]

Uncommon passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor, generally more numerous in autumn.

Two races: Most records refer to *L. l. islandica* breeding in Iceland and N. Scotland, a few of the race *L. l. limosa* breeding in W. Europe have occurred in June and July.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English10-year trend is 22%.

The monthly maxima figure (1432) given in the second table below was the best for at least the past 30 years but this improvement was wholly the result of some high counts at Severnside. Counts elsewhere were normal, indeed the highest count, 32 at CVL on July 8th, was on the low side. Also the large flocks at Severnside were not continuously present, they appeared for short periods and then left; it is thought that they originate from sites in Gloucestershire or further inland. The details of the Severnside three figure counts for 2015 were: in January, 190 to 200 from 1st to 4th; in September, 120 to 160 from 9th to 22nd; in November, 300 from 23rd to 27th; and in December 280 on 13th only.

The first table below summarises the monthly maxima at the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth				1			2	2	1	11		
Severnside	200	68	68	36	1		45	25	180	39	300	280
PWD		1	1	5	3		23	16		1		
Cl-Y	1		2	7	1		1	8	2	3		10
CVL			1		8	1	32	14	19	1		
BL							5	1		6		

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The remaining records were as follows: R. Avon at Sea Mills, three on Aug. 8th; Sand Bay, one on Oct.19th; Axe Estuary, one on Aug.16th and Sept. 13th, and Backwell Lake, two on Feb. 3rd (on the ice!).

The totals of the monthly maxima over the past two decades for the two godwit species, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed, are given below.

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bk-t Godwit	544	338	224	431	279	179	263	972	963	1136	1432
Bar-t Godwit	224	202	1344	74	115	181	2521	781	172	150	153

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 status in 2014/15 – English10-year trend is 5%.

Apart from a single flock noted on one day only, the norm of a few single or occasional low double figure counts continued into 2015, the exception was for April 22nd. On this day 98 were seen at Severn Beach in four groups, two groups passed upstream without stopping while the other two stopped on the tide line and were videoed feeding eagerly - they were mostly in breeding plumage. Other species moving with these godwits included 22 Grey Plover, 28 Whimbrel and eight Little Gulls. Apart from 16 on the following day with 12 on May 13th very few were seen thereafter.

Noted mainly from Feb.10th to June 14th with most records between mid April and mid May, and from July 25th to Aug. 28th. Single birds were also reported on Sept.13th, Oct. 8th and 30th, and Nov. 29th. The table below summarises all counts.

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
OPS/Littleton Warth		3	3				1	1	1	
Severnside	3	12	98	12		1	1			1
PWD			1	1						
Cl-Y			2	2	2		1			
Sand Bay			2							
CVL			1			4				

Monthly maxima at all sites

On Sept. 29th a flock of 33 ‘godwits’ was seen flying down river passed OPS, poor light meant that it was not possible to be sure to which species they belonged.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres* [Amber 3, 7]

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

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 13th in National Importance; English 10-year trend is -42%.

Status table.

Year	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	50	121	20	191
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	41	127	38	206
2013/14	37	123	33	193
2014/15	40	96	35	171

August to February average counts

For the second year running the status total figure above was down – it was 226 in 2012/13. This was mainly due to slightly lower counts at Severnside in the 2014/15 winter. Also as we have noted before, the larger flocks at PWD probably at least in part involve birds displaced from Severnside. The highest counts were between 230 and 240 noted at Severn Beach in the third week of November.

Recorded in every month, but in only single figures between April 25th and July 26th.

The table at the top of the following page gives the monthly maxima at the main well-watched sites.

Turnstone con't

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	20	10	40		4	1	6	20	50	40	30	30
Littleton Warth	3	9		20				3		15	10	
Severnside	170	74	130	120	7	4	30	40	80	190	240	180
PWD		5	20	100	2		3	52	30	1	1	37
Cl-Y	30	40	32	12		2	7	20	33	40	45	42

Monthly maxima at the main sites,

The remaining records were as follows: Sand Bay, one on Aug. 29th and four on 30th; Weston STW, one on 28th, nearby at the Axe Estuary, one on 30th; and CVL, three on 26th and one on Sept. 4th.

KNOT *Calidris canutus* [Amber 6, 7]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant but can occur in larger numbers at times. Scarce inland.

Two races: *islandica* (Nearctic) and *Canutus* (Siberian) occur in N. W. Europe. Research suggests that almost all UK individuals belong to the race *islandica,* hence it is assumed that this also holds for Avon populations.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English 10-year trend is -24%.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
572	172	595	293	462	2133	1073	876	823	653	684

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

Counts were again slightly down, the status line figure of 684 given above being about 10% below the ten-year average of 776. This was mainly a consequence of a very poor showing in the first half of the year, the three double figure counts at Cl-Y were for single days only (Jan. 21st, Feb.10th and May 13th). The autumn passage was a notable improvement and included three-figure counts at New Passage on seven days between Sept. 20th and 30th. A summary of the reports received, occurring up to May 13th and from July 22nd onwards, is given in the table below. The only other sighting was of one at Sand Bay on Feb. 22nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct	Nov	Dec
								1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30			
OPS/Littleton Warth			3	1					2	8	7	76	3	
Severnside	1	2	1				1	2	4	60	143	70	1	
PWD									9		17	7		
Cl-Y	32	25	3		35			16	24	1	40		25	25
Axe Estuary		1							3	4		51	7	

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at coastal sites

RUFF *Calidris pugnax* [Red 3, 4]

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

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance; English 10-year trend is -41%.

Records improved notably in 2015 with the best showing since 1980 (see the uncommon *calidrid* table on page 71) and double figure counts at three sites: New Passage/Pilning Wetlands, CVL and BL. Three were seen on spring passage and the extended autumn passage lasted from July 22nd to Nov.18th but with a month's gap from the end of September to Oct. 28th. The maximum count was 13 (at New Passage in late August), and reports were received from six sites. The details are as follows:

New Passage/Pilning Wetlands (Severnside) – five on July 22nd, then recorded on most days between Aug.16th and Sept. 16th, the main counts being: five on Aug.16th, four on 19th and 20th, five on 23rd, six on 25th, 13 on 27th and 28th, 11 on 29th, nine on 30th, four on Sept. 1st, five on 6th, four from 9th to 11th, three on 12th and 13th, four on 15th, and two on 16th. Then single birds were seen on Sept. 23rd and 30th with five a month later on Oct. 31st;

Cl-Y – single birds on March 17th and 20th, April 13th and 15th, and Aug. 13th, with two on 15th and 27th and one on 29th;

Sand Bay – two on Sept. 1st;

BG – two on Sept. 8th and one on 26th;

CVL – one on May 22nd, two on Aug. 9th, three on 14th, one on 18th and 20th, three on 24th and 27th, five or six from 28th to Sept. 3rd, two until 10th, three from 11th to 14th, five again on 16th, 17th, and 21st, with four on 22nd and one on 23rd. Finally there were four on the late date of Nov.18th;

BL – sightings began with 12 on Aug. 23rd, then two on 28th and 29th, six on Sept.12th, and single birds from the13th to 18th, on 30th, from Oct. 28th to 31st, and on Nov. 4th.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* [Amber 1]

Passage migrant, scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Very rare in winter.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was third in importance.

Unlike Ruff and Sanderling this species had a very poor year with the lowest count since 2009, see the table on page 71. There were one or two in spring and the autumn passage was from Aug.15th to Oct. 4th with no count over six. All but one were seen on the coast.

The details are as follows, it is assumed that all autumn records refer to juveniles although this was only confirmed in a few cases.

Severnside – in spring noted on May 15th and 19th, with possibly the same individual involved on both occasions. Autumn passage was from Sept. 15th to Oct. 4th with one from 15th to 22nd, three on 17th, two on 19th, one on 29th, then two on Oct. 2nd, and one again on 4th;

PWD – single birds on Aug. 31st, and Sept. 14th and 28th;

Cl-Y – six on Aug. 15th, four on 16th, and two on Sept. 19th;

BL – two on Sept. 14th.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii* (9, 1)

Rare vagrant.
Descriptions required.

One record: a juvenile was first seen distantly on Oct.18th at the Ubley end of BL, several observers had better views on 19th when its identification was established. It was seen again on 20th and from 22nd to 25th, for much of the time it was quite distant so not easy to see well (K J Hall, K E Vinicombe *et al.*). A number of photographs were taken but none of the images were large enough to reproduce satisfactorily.

This is the 22nd record for the Avon area since the first at BG in 1943, the two most recent were for CVL, one in May 2009 and a juvenile in August 2011. There have been three previous October records: at CVL in 1984, at BL in 2001, and at both CVL and BL in 2002; this last individual was present for seven weeks leaving on Nov. 9th. Full details can be found in the 2013 edition of this Report.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba* [Amber 6]

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

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 23rd in National Importance; English 10-year trend is 18%.

This is another *calidrid* species that showed well in Avon in 2015. There were more sightings in the winter periods, and an impressive maximum count of 48 at Severn Beach in early June -- not a record, as the highest Avon area count is 80 noted at this site in August 1972. The monthly count at 155, see the table on page 71, was the best for at least the last decade.

Noted at eight sites, six on the coast and two inland, as follows: on the coast in the south-west in January and February, then on spring passage from April 1st to June 19th, on autumn passage which began on July 19th and ended on Sept. 22nd, and there was one record in November at BL. The details are given below.

OPS – one on April 26th and two on May 19th and 23rd with one nearby on Littleton Warth on Aug. 12th;

Severnside, mainly at Severn Beach – sightings began with three on April 26th, then two on May 13th, three on 15th, four on 18th, 11 on 19th, 10 on 20th, eight on 21st, 19 on 31st, 48 on June 2nd, 25 on 3rd, and six until 6th. Then one on July 19th, two on Aug. 5th, with single birds on most days from 12th to 22nd, three on 29th, and one from Sept. 10th to 17th and on 22nd;

PWD – two on April 1st and 6th, and on May 19th and 23rd;

Cl-Y – five on Jan. 24th (see Axe Estuary entry), two on May 13th, six on 17th, one on 20th and Aug. 6th and 7th, then six again on 15th and 16th, three on 18th and Sept. 1st, and one on 12th;

Sand Bay – one on April 16th and nine on May 17th;

Axe Estuary/Weston Beach – one on Jan.10th and 15th with 11 on 23rd, nine on Feb. 8th and one on 22nd. Then one on Aug. 29th, and six on Sept. 18th;

CVL – one on April 12th and May 22nd, three on 28th, one on 31st, June 2nd, Aug. 2nd and 13th with six on 31st,

BL – one on Nov. 6th, the last of the year.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* [RR] [Amber 3, 4, 6]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage.

Three races: *C. a. alpina* which breeds from N. Scandinavia eastwards occurring mainly in winter, *C. a. schinzii* which breeds in N. W. Europe and Iceland occurring mainly on passage, and *C. a. arctica* which breeds in N. E. Greenland and is very scarce having only been recorded between mid-May and early June.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in International Importance; English 10-year trend is -24%.

Year	OPS		Severnside		Cl-Y		Totals	
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	847	87	2919	429	1704	138	5918	654
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	605	76	1979	210	1794	291	4378	577
2013/14	433	38	1860	395	2815	420	5108	853
2014/15	732	38	1440	245	2750	538	4922	821

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

Considering the generally mild conditions which usually depress counts, the records for both winter periods were reasonably good at most sites. Flocks in excess of 4000 were noted at Cl-Y on Feb. 22nd, at OPS on Dec 19th, and Cl-Y again on 16th, 28th and 31st. Counts at Severnside were not so strong, the best being 2900 on Nov. 28th. But these large flocks only stayed for a relatively short periods, the last four-figure count in the first winter period was the February Cl-Y count mentioned above, and the first in the second period were 1800 at New Passage and 1200 at Cl-Y both on Nov. 23rd.

The spring passage, involving as usual mainly individuals from the race *schnizii,* was fairly weak. Most passed through between April 20th and June 4th, and the best count was 250 at Severn Beach on April 26th. The autumn passage, also involving *schnizii* flocks with the adults generally moving through about a month before the juveniles, was average with Cl-Y leading the way. Most adults passed through between July 10th and early August, and most juveniles between early August and the third week of September.

The table below gives the fortnightly or monthly maxima at all sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct	Nov	Dec
								1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30			
OPS	800	700	40	60	40		30	21	10	50	92	150	960	4000
Littleton Warth	400	1160	80	5	1		25	15	45	35		200	100	420
Severnside	2000	2000	70	250	55	25	74	140	125	300	350	800	2900	1900
Sea Mills	6	16						4						19
PWD/Avonmouth	1040	800	74	6	70	22	35	56	175		350	550	500	2000
Cl-Y	2800	4500	550	55	125	2	35	425	320	650	500	300	2750	5500
Sand Bay	550	3000	51	32					50	5			440	250
Axe Est/Weston STW	2100	870	15	2	2		3	26	15	15		13	125	210
CVL			2	2	4	1	9	3	8	13	1	3	12	
BL					23		3	3	2	1	1	6	5	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* [Amber 3, 4, 5]

Scarce extended winter visitor, very rare inland.
Descriptions required for inland records.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English 10-year trend is 8%.

The pattern of occurrences in 2015 was slightly unusual, and also on the low side in the first half of the year. Two were reported in mid January, up to five were on Battery Point for a fortnight in April, then none were seen until November when up to eight were present into 2016 again mainly at Battery Point. The only other record was of one at Severn Beach in November.

Details of all records are given below.

Severn Beach – a single bird was noted between Nov. 2nd and 4th;

Battery Point, Portishead – two on Jan. 14th, up to five between April 8th and 21st, then three appeared on Nov. 6th rising to seven by 13th with up to eight throughout December;

Sand Point – three on Jan. 7th and 10th on the rocks at the end of the point.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Rare in winter.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was third in National Importance.

Sightings were slightly above average compared with those of the last decade as shown in the table below, but there were no records outside the autumn passage period which lasted from Aug.12th to Oct.13th. Noted at six sites, four on the coast and two inland and the maximum count was four; all those specifically identified were juveniles. The details are as follows.

Littleton Warth – three early juveniles on Aug. 12th – a good count for this site;

Severnside – one on Sept. 9th and 20th, four on 21st, then single birds on Oct. 3rd and 5th, and from 8th to 13th with two on 11th;

PWD – two reported on Sept. 25th, 26th and 28th;

Cl-Y – single birds on Aug. 30th and 31st, four on Sept. 1st, three on 12th, and one on 13th and 17th;

CVL – one on Aug.14th, four on 23rd, and one on 26th and 27th;

BL – one on Aug. 25th.

Uncommon or Scarce *Calidrid* waders in the Avon area

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Ruff	30	11	35	3	12	29	43	25	57	33	73
Curlew Sandpiper	44	22	19	20	9	95	64	33	56	33	22
Sanderling	57	68	72	53	61	105	129	143	72	132	145
Purple Sandpiper	39	51	64	75	64	75	61	80	70	39	26
Little Stint	46	20	17	14	15	13	18	13	27	21	21
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	4		2			6			1	

Totals of the maximum monthly counts at all sites for the past two decades

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius* (76, 4)

Scarce wind driven visitor in autumn, rare at other times. Records are about equal inland and coastal.
Descriptions required.

There were four records in 2015 as follows, in date order:

CVL – a juvenile/first-winter was seen on the water off Woodford Lodge on the afternoon of Sept. 15th (G Stacey, I Stapp *et al.*). It was claimed early the following morning (no details were available) but could not be found later when several observers looked for it;

New Passage (Severnside) – a juvenile seen on the Estuary close inshore on Sept. 25th (K Burford, photographed);

Battery Point, Portishead – a juvenile/first winter was photographed at the point on Sept. 30th (B Telford);

New Passage – one seen and photographed in flight low over the Estuary on Nov. 21st (C Lewis).

About 120 have been recorded in the Avon area since 1950, which suggests an average of about two per year. The table below gives the data for the last 20 years.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	5	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	6	1	1	3	4	3	11	1	2	0	4

Total number of individuals per year

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* [Amber 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was sixth in importance; English 10-year trend is 27%.

We begin this entry with a summary of the records over the past two decades, they are fairly uniform with perhaps a slight improvement recently.

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	60	29	38	93	65	88	73	94	74	75	96
Autumn	187	139	141	184	186	197	205	237	162	194	170

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for spring (April and May) and autumn (July to October) for the past two decades

Common Sandpiper con't

Generally the spring passage was strong, the autumn passage was weak suggesting poor breeding success in North-west Europe, and the slow rise in winter numbers noted over the past few years continued. Reported from 16 sites in spring and the monthly maxima figure (96) given in the status table above is a third higher than the ten-year average of 72. On the other hand although autumn records also came from 18 sites the monthly maxima figure is about 7% below the ten-year average of 181. Also the largest count, 15 at CVL on Aug. 27th, was well below some that have been recorded in the past. Wintering has long been established on the R. Avon in the Sea Mills area but this seems also to have become established at the main reservoirs, notably at CVL, suggesting that the total regularly wintering in the Avon area can now be measured in double figures.

The spring passage began in earnest on April 13th with 13 at BG and the last was seen on May 19th, at CVL. The first to return was one at New Passage on June 26th, and the movement had more-or-less finished by the end of September with five at Severn Beach on 27th and three at CVL on 28th.

The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main well-watched sites. Also noted in spring on the R. Avon at Keynsham, and at Clapton-in-Gordano (two), Backwell Lake (two) and Kenn Moor; and in autumn at Chipping Sodbury Common, Bath (on the R. Avon), Eastville Park (Bristol), Hanham Lock (two), Winford (seen in the middle of a flooded road!) and Litton Res. (twice).

	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					2					2	5	7	1			
Severnside				1	5	2		1	8	7	4	7	5			
Sea Mills area	2	2	2		2	1					3	5	8	2	5	9
PWD/Pill				1	3	2	1		4	3	5	2	1		1	
Cl-Y				3	7	3			4	2	5	6	3			
AxeE./Weston STW			1	1	4	2			6	7	4	4	3	1	2	1
Saltford				1	3	1			1	2		1				
BG	2	2	2	13	16	5			11	10	8	4	4	3	2	2
CVL	2	2	2	5	11	8	1	4	10	8	10	15	7	2	2	2
BL	1	1	1	7	5	6		2	8	7	7	6	4	1	1	1

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus* [Amber 5]

Uncommon autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and spring.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was fourth in National Importance, English 10-year trend is -1%.

As in 2014 although the status total (see second table below) was reasonable it hides the fact that the balance between coastal and inland sightings has been strongly in favour of the latter over the past two years. So in 2015 while the reservoir counts were good those on the coast were poor, albeit with a slight improvement on the previous year, with some noted mainly in August on autumn passage. No clear reason or reasons for this change has emerged but it may just be that the main reservoirs have been particularly favourable to this species recently.

The first table summarises the monthly maxima at the main sites. Present up to May 1st and from June 6th (an early first-return date; see page 147), and the highest count was 23 at CVL on Aug.18th, a good figure but not the record; this stands at 39 noted at this site in August 1962. The WeBS figure for August at this site was 21 recorded on 23rd. There were also a few non-tabulated sightings of single individuals as follows: in the OPS/Littleton area on Aug. 28th, at Tockington on March 9th, 12th, 22nd, 24th and 25th, at Stoke Park on July 7th, and at Chipping Sodbury Common on Aug. 2nd.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside			1	1			1	2	1	1		
PWD							1	5				
Cl-Y							3	2	1			
Bleadon/Weston STW		2			1			2				1
Saltford	1	2		1			2	3	1	1	1	1
CVL	2	2	2	3		2	7	23	11	4	4	3
BL				1		1	1	5	3	2	1	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The second table below shows that overall counts have improved over the past twenty years.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
73	76	51	62	94	110	121	90	141	124	117

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

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* [Amber 5]

Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, very scarce in spring.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance.

The few reports received were similar to those of the past two decades. All records were of single birds, two in spring, six in autumn and two in the second winter period, and they came from six sites, four on the coast and two inland. The sites and dates were as follows:

OPS – April 22nd (in mainly non-breeding plumage);

Severnside area – Northwick Warth on Oct. 6th (a juvenile) and PWD on 25th;

CI-Y – April 23rd (coming into full plumage), June 28th (adult), Aug. 27th (juvenile), Nov. 2nd (heard only), and Dec. 31st;

CVL – July 7th (adult);

BL – Sept. 3rd (seen in flight only).

The table below shows the varying occurrences of this species over the past two decades.

	1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	4	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Autumn	7	10	4	11	6	2	3	4	3	24	6	3	3	2	12	36	9	3	9	6

Totals of the maximum counts for all sites over the past two decades

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia* [Amber 6]

Uncommon passage migrant, more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter.

WeBS status in 2014/15 – English 10-year trend is 18%.

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
CI-Y	14	4	3	4	4	6	6	5	4	6	3
CVL	6	1	2	1	7	10	11	2	13	9	11

Maximum single count at CI-Y and CVL for the past two decades

The general run of lowish counts noted over the past decade or so continued into 2015. The spring passage was weak and the autumn passage, running from June 29th to Oct. 26th, was not much better, the only double figure count being 11 noted during a WeBS survey at CVL on Aug. 23rd. Most counts are summarised in the table below. As usual one was seen at Sea Mills in both winter periods but not as regularly as in the past. Also unusually one was present in the Yeo Estuary area of CI-Y from Feb.10th to the end of April. The only non-tabulated record was of one seen flying over Tockington on April 15th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Aug	Sep	Oct	:	Dec
Severnside				1		1	1	1	3		1		
Sea Mills	1	1		1						1			1
PWD							1	1		1			
CI-Y		1	1	3			1			2			
Weston STW				1			1						
CVL				1			3	5	11	2			
BL							1						

Monthly maxima at the main sites

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola* [Amber 5]

Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and rare in spring; most frequent at CVL.

The records of this species in 2015 were the best for at least the past two decades with the New Passage/Pilning Wetlands area now vying with the traditional CVL site for predominance. There were two spring records which is unusual, the autumn passage lasted from Aug.12th to Sept. 22nd, and the maximum count was four. Where specifically identified all autumn individuals were juveniles, the details are given on the next page,

Wood Sandpiper con't
OPS -- single birds on April 23rd and Sept. 4th;

New Passage/Pilning Wetlands – three on Aug. 16th, four from 17th to 22nd, three on 23rd, two from 24th to 27th, then one from Sept. 5th to 16th. At least five were noted although this may be an underestimate;

CVL -- single birds on May 24th (seen at first light), from Aug. 12th to 15th and 18th to 20th, two on 23rd, and one from 26th to Sept. 1st. The number of individuals passing through in the autumn was thought to be at least four;

BL – one present on Sept. 14th and from 16th to 22nd.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
7	7	7	8	8	4	1	7	8	8	1	2	2	9	4	7	4	4	5	12

Total number of individuals per year for the past two decades

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus* [RR] [Amber 3, 4, 7]

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon in summer and very scarce breeder. Scarce 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 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in National Importance; English 10-year trend is -15%.

Year	OPS	Sea Mills	Cl-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1995/06 – 2004/05 Av.	43	79	108	189	419
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	42	84	220	242	588
2013/14	52	71	315	321	759
2014/15	40	50	344	262	696

August to February average counts

The recent strong showing by this species continued into 2015, the status total given above was down on the previous winter but only marginally. The second table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites and also shows good counts from most sites. Sand Bay counts were higher than recently at least in the first winter period. As is often the case the largest count came from the Axe Estuary area in the autumn with 640 here on Sept. 30th, good counts also came from New Passage, PWD and Cl-Y.

Most had left by mid-April, the count of 250 at Cl-Y on 13th was the last in three figures. The return was as usual less abrupt, 85 were noted at Cl-Y on June 28th and the first three figure count was 110 at Uphill (Axe Estuary) on July 19th. It is worth noting that counts at Sea Mills are between a third and a half of what they used to be, the reason(s) for this are unclear. There were four non-tabulated records of single birds as follows: at BG on June 21st, and at Chipping Sodbury Common, Saltford and Kensingtom Meadows (Bath) all for Nov. 2nd possibly involving the same wandering individual as the conditions were foggy on that day.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	16	25	26	40		3	3	16	43	74	25	25
Littleton Warth	60	32	70	5			4	16	11	60	95	74
Severnside	80	130	124	106	2	7	105	120	115	260	250	140
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	34	57	nc	45		6		30	60	50	60	45
Avonmouth/PWD	64	37	105	42	1	4	54	190	360	120	135	180
Cl-Y	310	340	280	250	6	85	175	230	210	290	470	380
Sand Bay	58	185	2	4								
Axe E./WestonSTW	365	166	260	140		2	110	380	640	340	260	330
CVL					1	3	5	4	1	1	1	
BL			1				2	3		1	1	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Breeding The slow decline continues. Some nesting activity was reported at two coastal sites at Cl-Y, the Dowlais Farm scrape and a new pool near Tutshill's Ear on the R. Yeo. In each case up to four were present, some display was reported but no nests or young were seen.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Uncommon or scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, probably overlooked.

WeBS status in 2014/15 -- English coast of the Severn Estuary was tenth in importance; English 10-year trend -79%.

Due to its elusive nature this species is difficult to survey, so we have little idea of how it is faring overall. Nevertheless, it seems that the first-winter period was better than average whilst the second period was about

normal. The observer at Batheaston on Jan.17th noted his surprise at seeing seven together, a record for the site. Present up to April 17th and from Oct. 3rd, and the only other count of seven was from Aust Warth (Severnside) in December, a site that also reported some good counts in 2014. A game-keeper noted six in the Gordano Valley on Jan. 20th.

The table below gives the monthly maxima at the regularly watched sites. Records were also received from a few other sites as follows: in January at Marshfield (one, twice); in February at Kenn Moor (one); in March at Compton Dando, PWD and Pixash Lane, Keynsham (one each); and in December at Lawrence Weston Reserve (two, twice) and Saltford (one). Finally there was a record (un-tabulated) of one found freshly dead at Pilning Wetlands on the unusually late date of May 25th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	3	1						2
Severnside	4	2	3	1		2	1	7
Cl-Y	3	1	1				1	1
Sand Bay	4	5						
Axe Est./Weston STW	3	1	1			1	3	1
Yate	1	4						2
Batheaston	7	2	1				1	
Gordano Valley	6							
BG	2		1					
CVL		1						2

Jack Snipe -- maxima at the main sites

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola* [Red 4]

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

Counts returned to normal after those of the past two years, with in 2015 none over five. Noted up to March 3rd (an early date, see page 147, in fact only three were seen after January), and from Oct. 21st with the best records coming from the Wickwar/Lower Woods area. The months and sites were as follows, unless stated otherwise all records were of single birds.

January: Abbots Leigh, Compton Dando, CVL, Friary Wood (near Bath), Gordano Valley (three), Lower Woods (four), Marshfield, Saltford, and Rocks East Woods (three);

February: Burnett and CVL on two dates mid-month;

March: Burnett;

October: Gordano Valley, Walton Common and Warmley Forest Park;

November: Cadbury Camp, Congresbury Moor, Gordano Valley, Stowey Reserve (Yatton), Walton Common (three), and West Hill (Portishead);

December: BL (Rugmoor), Kenn Moor, Lawrence Western Reserve, Lower Woods (five on 4th and two on 19th), Saltford, and Yatton.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago* [Amber 4]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred in the past.

Two races: *G. g. gallinago* breeding in the palearctic and *G. g. 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 2014/15 the English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance; English 10-year trend -52%.

Year	OPS	Severnside	Cl-Y	Total
1995/96 – 2004/05 Av.	47	18	19	84
2005/06 – 2012/13 Av.	20	19	18	57
2013/14	14	11	54	79
2014/15	32	30	46	108

November to February average counts

The very wet conditions that we have been experiencing during the past three winters have had a major impact on the sightings of this species. This is shown in the status table above which suggests that reports per year have doubled compared with the period between 2005 and 2012. Whether this is a real population increase or just that the birds are more visible in wet conditions is a moot point.

Snipe con't

In 2015 present up to April 30th (two on Inglestone Common) and from July 10th (one at New Passage) onwards although very few were present in April or before September, the August count of 15 on Severnside was for 30th. This further suggests that the majority of our winter populations breed some considerable distance away and so the majority are probably of continental origin.

It can be seen that the monthly maxima table given below has more rows (20) than for any other wader table pointing to the fact that this species was more widespread than any other wader except possibly Lapwing. It occurs on farmland, damp lowland areas and near ponds as well as the more usual wader haunts of the large reservoirs and the coast. No three figure counts were received but several not far short in the first winter period were noted including one of 92 for Sand Bay where in the past good numbers used to be put up from the foreshore spartina by the incoming tide.

The table below gives the monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. Reports were also received from West Littleton, Stoke Park and Pensford in January, Inglestone Common, Three Brooks LNR, Bourton Lane (St Georges) and Paulton in February, Lansdown (ten) in March, Charlton Fields in October, Hour Gout (Avonmouth) in November, and Lawrence Weston reserve (25) and Pixash Lane, Keynsham in December. All together records were received from at least 32 sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	85	7	12					1	1	4	32
Littleton Warth	2	1	3	1					4	10	9
Severnside	30	24	13	9		2	15	70	32	8	16
Sea Mills (R. Avon)/Pill	30	10	5							7	10
PWD	17	6	7	2				1	1	31	6
Cl-Y	94	10	16	9			1	6	21	12	33
Sand Bay	65	92		1							
Axe Est/WestonSTW	27	47	23	3			3	3	16	38	8
Marshfield area	1	90									
Inglestone Common		8		2							
Chipping Sodbury Com.		1	2					1	2		
Saltford	1							1	2	1	18
Yate	4	4							1		12
Batheaston	26			1					1	12	14
Gordano Valley	50	20	1								
Kenn Moor	28	53	6							1	1
Congresbury Moor	3								3		20
BG	3		2						2	5	6
CVL	30	4	29	3			5	3	15	12	30
BL	40	39	11	11				1	12	36	3

Snipe - monthly maxima at the main sites

Autumn Wader Migration on the Coast

Autumn counts at both main coastal sites were down on 2014, Severnside by about 20% and Cl-Y by about 10% but both were at or above their nine-year averages; see the figures given in the first table below. It should be noted that observer coverage at Severnside is better than at Cl-Y, on the other hand disturbance is probably worse at Severnside, particularly at Severn Beach. There was an additional problem at Cl-Y during the spring and summer months when a lot of disruption was caused by major engineering work on the sea defences around the whole of the tidal Yeo. Part of this work involved the construction of several new pools (the excavated material being used to strengthen the existing sea walls) which should prove interesting in the future provided they remain flooded.

Autumn	2007	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015	07/15 Av
S-side	4216	3005	1858	1828	2471	1914	3583	5261	4310	3156
Cl-Y	1934	1823	2983	3102	5452	4231	4364	4182	3498	3508
Ratio	0.46	0.61	1.61	1.70	2.21	2.21	1.22	0.79	0.81	1.11

Autumn migrant wader totals, first row - Severnside, second row - Cl-Y, third row - ratio Cl-Y/SS

As in the past eight years the table below 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 usual the migratory *schinzii* Dunlins predominated although by October an unknown proportion of *alpina* will also have been present.

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
Grey Plover	S-S								1	9	2		
	Cl-Y									1	1		4
Golden Plover	S-S					2		1	2	1	1	2	3
	Cl-Y								15				
Ringed Plover	S-S		1	1	13	52	140	170	130	40	35	25	25
	Cl-Y	2	1	8	40	340	85	315	75	30	1		4
Little Ringed Plover	S-S	3	7	6	2	1	1	2					
	Cl-Y					1			1				
Whimbrel	S-S	1	3	1	3	4	2	1		1	1		
	Cl-Y		3	3	9	8	4	2	4				
Black-tailed Godwit	S-S	14	45	1	8	5	12	54	160	180	41	8	39
	Cl-Y			1	8	3	4			2			3
Bar-tailed Godwit	S-S			1			1						
	Cl-Y					1	1						
Knot	S-S			1	2	3	4	8	77	143	70	2	
	Cl-Y					16	2	24	1	40			
Ruff	S-S			5		5	13	9	4	1	1		
	Cl-Y					2	2						
Curlew Sandpiper	S-S								3	2	2		
	Cl-Y					6				2			
Sanderling	S-S		1		2	1	3		1	1			
	Cl-Y				1	6	1	3	1				
Dunlin	S-S	5	57	74	140	125	75	70	300	300	500	500	450
	Cl-Y	2	35	22	100	425	90	425	650	80	300	100	130
Little Stint	S-S								1	4	1	2	
	Cl-Y							4	3				
Common Sandpiper	S-S	8	7	4	3	3	7	3	1	5		1	
	Cl-Y	4	3	1	5	6	5	6	2	1			
Green Sandpiper	S-S		1	1	2	1	2	1	1		1		
	Cl-Y			3	2	1			1				
Spotted Redshank	S-S										1		
	Cl-Y						1						
Greenshank	S-S		1	1	1	1	3		1	1	1		1
	Cl-Y							2	1	1			
Wood Sandpiper	S-S					4	4	1	1				

Severnside (S-S) and Cl-Y - Maximum counts in ten-day autumn periods

Autumn Wader Migration at CVL

During the autumn period the water levels dropped to reveal some mud at the western end of Denny Island, in Villice Bay and on the east shore, but generally good feeding areas did exist but were limited; they were better at BL! As a consequence the total number of waders seen, as measured by the first table given at the top of the next page, was noticeably above the ten-year average of 493, and the species count was also slightly up on its ten-year average of 21. In some years virtually no mud is exposed for the whole autumn period and consequently the ten-year average is very low indeed. As in 2014 the total figures were bolstered by above average Black-tailed Godwit numbers, but Ringed Plover and the sandpipers also had a better autumn.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
364	211	134	108	569	505	1119	295	912	458	616
19	18	17	17	25	25	31	17	23	19	22

CVL counts, middle row – Totals of the ten-day maxima for all waders (excluding Lapwing) between July 1st and Oct. 28th
Bottom row – Total number of species recorded each year over the same period

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		1	5			2	2					
Grey Plover				1		1						
Ringed Plover					20	30	21	1	2		1	
Little Ringed Plover		1	1	2	1	1	1					
Lapwing	30	40	36	36	34	38	24	28	27	20	19	35
Whimbrel				3	1	1	1					
Curlew			1	3								
Black-tailed Godwit	32	20	15	15	14	2	19	3	1	1		
Bar-tailed Godwit			4									
Turnstone						3	1					
Ruff				2	3	6	6	5	5			
Sanderling				1	1		6					
Dunlin	2	9	1	3	4	8	5	13				3
Little Stint					1	4						
Grey Phalarope								1				
Common Sandpiper	10	8	4	9	10	15	7	6	4	2	2	2
Green Sandpiper	7	5	6	12	23	21	11	11	10	4	4	3
Spotted Redshank	1											
Greenshank	3	1		4	5	11	2					
Wood Sandpiper					1	2	1					
Redshank	5	3	2	1	4	3	1	1	1		1	
Snipe				3	5	1	3	1	2	15	12	2

CVL - Maximum counts in each ten-day autumn period

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus* (225, 25)

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor; very rare inland.
Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

Although reports at the time suggested another good spring passage unfortunately few observers submitted their records or notes. In the autumn strong winds in the second half of November produced a good series of records; although most probably related to just one pale phase adult, for the statistics given on page 80 we have treated records from the outer Estuary as relating to different individuals. The details are as follows:

Spring passage

Severn Beach – on May 5th there was a dark phase at 11.20 (P D Bowerman), on 6th a pale phase adult with spoons was filmed as part of a lingering group of four (*per* Severnside Birds website), and these are assumed to be part of the build up to a flock of 12 that went over the second Severn Crossing early in the afternoon. On 9th a pale phase flew straight up and over the Crossing (P D Bowerman), and on June 2nd a pale phase adult lingered before flying north over the Crossing (K E Vinicombe) while on July 27th there was a pale phase at 18.55 (P D Bowerman);

Sand Point – pale phase individuals flew upriver over high tide at 09.15, 09.20 and 10.15 on May 9th (P A Gregory).

Autumn passage

Severn Beach – on Nov. 13th and 18th a pale phase adult in primary moult was photographed, while what was possibly the same individual was seen at 10.20 on 29th (J P Martin *et al.*) and again moving downriver at 10.25 on Dec. 1st (D Hughes);

Sand Point – on Nov. 13th two all dark individuals flew upriver (D Nevitt), on 15th a pale phase flew upriver and landed on the water at 08.30, while on 29th a full spooned pale phase adult flew upriver at 08.30 (P A Bowyer, P A Gregory);

Anchor Head – a pale phase was videoed on Nov. 15th (S Williams).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Inland 39, 1) [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.

Another generally poor spring, with records on just four dates in April and May but exceptional numbers (for recent years) reported on two dates in early May (accounting for 40 of the spring total of 43, allowing for some duplication). Autumn numbers were also feeble until the November storms brought a small number, one or two of which probably lingered and were seen at various sites around the Estuary.

Spring passage The first moved up river off Sand Point on April 11th. The vast majority of records came from Severn Beach on just two dates in early May with reports of at least 12 on 5th and a remarkable 28 or more the next day, 24 of them on the evening tide (although most observers reported low single figures – up to six -- at this time), when there were also three off Anchor Head. One at Severn Beach on 9th was the only other report in the month. A late individual was at Severn Beach on June 2nd.

Inland The only acceptable record was a dark phase that flew upriver past OPS just before 18.00 on May 6th (P J Hazelwood).

Autumn passage Two at Severn Beach on July 28th were probably the same as the two at Anchor Head the same day. One was at Ladye Bay on Nov.15th, at Sand Point on 17th and off PWD on 18th (the last a light morph adult or near adult) followed by one at Walton Bay and two at Severn Beach on 29th.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus* (10, 2)
Rare spring and autumn passage migrant, occasionally wind-driven.
Descriptions required.

Two records, both at CVL. The first was a sub-adult, probably a second-summer, which slowly flew to W through Herons Green Bay at 19.05 on May 29th (K E Vinicombe). The second was a juvenile that landed briefly amongst Tufted Ducks in Villice Bay at 15.10 on Sept. 7th before gaining height and flying off WNW (K E Vinicombe).

There have been only three previous records in the past 20 years: a juvenile at CVL in August 1999, an adult on Severnside in May 2002, and another juvenile at both OPS and Severnside in September 2008.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* (Inland 27, 3) [Amber 6, 7]
Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and storm-driven visitor at almost any time of year. Rare inland.
Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

An average year by recent standards with records on only three dates in spring but with a good showing in a stormy November.

First winter period The only record was one moving down channel at Northwick Warth on Jan. 29th.

Spring passage One was at Severn Beach and one, perhaps the same, moved down channel at Ladye Bay on March 29th. On May 6th there were several reports from Severn Beach including four together around noon, three of which went up over the bridge, and two in the evening that repeatedly went high up towards the bridge only to return shortly afterwards (such behaviour not unusual here and can lead to over-counting). Up to four here on June 2nd completed the relatively poor spring passage.

Autumn passage On July 27th there was one off Severn Beach and two at Sand Point, the latter perhaps being the two seen next day at Anchor Head. The bulk of the autumn records came in a stormy November, starting with two at Sand Point on 13th. On 15th there were two at Severn Beach and at Battery Point, Portishead. Next day there was one at Severn Beach, one at PWD and three at Sand Point; on 17th up to eight off Sand Point; and on 18th two at Severn Beach and one at PWD. At the end of the month there were three at Severn Beach and two at Ladye Bay on 29th and two, the last of the year, at Severn Beach on 30th.

Inland There were three inland records, all from OPS. The first was in spring, moving upriver at 12.00 on March 29th (P J Hazelwood). The other two were in November, upriver at low tide on 17th and up the middle of the river at 10.00 on 29th, 15 minutes after one was seen at Severn Beach (both P J Hazelwood).

SKUA Sp. *Stercorarius sp.*

Noted as follows; for records from the last decade see table below.

OPS – two (one dark and one pale phase) that flew upriver at 17.55 on April 17th, two (one dark and one pale phase) that flew upriver at 19.30 on May 5th, and a pale phase that struggled downriver into the wind at 15.45 on Nov. 30th. These were all thought to be Arctics;

Severn Beach – three at 09.50 on May 5th (two dark, one pale) and seven (groups of three, three and one) in the evening of 6th were all reported as Pomarine but without any confirmatory notes;

Sand Point – one on May 5th was reported as Pomarine but without any confirmatory notes;

Anchor Head – one on May 6th and two on 9th were reported as Pomarine but no notes were taken by the observer.

Skuas in the Avon area

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Pomarine Skua,	3	13	3	17	2	5	17+	16+	20	25
Arctic Skua	50+	51	37	47	17	40+	40+	57	18	50
Long-tailed Skua			1							2
Great Skua	26+	13	4	14	3	13	12	69	21	44
Skua sp.	6	7		5		9	3	22	23	19

Total numbers for the last ten years

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cepphus grylle* (1, 1)

Very rare storm driven visitor.
Descriptions required.

One, a first-winter, was seen briefly at *c.*10.00 on Nov. 15th by three people as it flew past Severn Beach towards the second Severn Bridge (B Lancastle, P Marshall, F Steuck); it was seen again by more observers, and photographed (see opposite page 73), a few minutes later as it flew back out into the middle of the Estuary.

It had previously been seen briefly at Goldcliff, Monmouthshire and was later seen and photographed on the rocks at Black Rock, Monmouthshire.

This is only the second modern record after one was seen at Severn Beach on Oct. 27th, 1998.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda* (46, 1)

Very scarce storm-driven visitor, rare in summer. Occurs in smaller numbers than Guillemot. No inland records.
Descriptions required.

One record, of one that flew past Sand Point close in on Nov. 30th (P A Bowyer), it was only the eighth seen in the Avon area in the last decade, see table opposite.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge* [Amber 6, 7]

Scarce storm-driven visitor throughout the year; very rare inland.
Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A poor year, see table below, with just three records, two of them in the November storms, they were in date order as follows:

Sand Point – one on Oct. 28th;

Weston-s-Mare – one to S on Nov. 18th;

Severn Beach – one on Nov. 30th.

AUK Sp

One at Severn Beach on Jan.15th.

Auks in the Avon area

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Puffin									2	
Black Guillemot										1
Razorbill	2					1			4	1
Little Auk	2	1		1	1					
Guillemot	11	4	3	37	3	11	6	4	18	3
Auk sp.		1				6+				1

Total numbers for the past ten years

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons* [Amber 4, 6]

Scarce passage migrant; generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

An average year on the coast, with five records in May. A good series at CVL with an April party and three records in August. The details are as follows including a ten-year summary in the table:

OPS – one on May 5th;

Severnside – two at Severn Beach on May 6th, one at Chittening Warth on 9th and one at New Passage on 11th;

PWD – one on May 12th;

CVL – three on April 16th, an adult and three juveniles on Aug.10th, an adult and a juvenile on 14th and two on 23rd, ages not given.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Coastal	19	2	14	3	1	6	3	4	6/7	6
Inland	7	2	1	4	3	3	0	1	3	11

Total numbers for the last ten years

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn when occasional influxes occur. Most records are from CVL.

Another poor spring with just two records followed by a reasonable autumn with peaks in the last third of August and mid-September and long stayers at CVL and Severnside (one), see tables below.

Spring passage The first was one at CVL on April 16th, followed by eight here on 23rd.

Autumn passage A moulting adult was at CVL from Aug. 3rd to 6th, with two juveniles from 8th to 11th and a moulting adult on 17th. Early morning rain dropped 31 in at BL and 16 at CVL on 23rd. The BL flock quickly moved on but at CVL there were 35 next day then just four on 25th and 26th, one on 27th and six on 30th. A juvenile at CVL on Sept. 2nd was joined by an adult next day, six were here briefly on the 9th and five on the 11th. On 13th there was one at BG and another at CVL followed by seven at the latter site on 14th. The 15th produced one at BL, six at CVL which remained to 18th, and a juvenile arrived at Northwick Warth, having probably been seen earlier at OPS, before spending the next ten days here at the Pilning Wetlands with the sighting on 25th the last of the year. The last at CVL was one on 21st and 22nd.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	1	2	5	3	2	14	2	3	2	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	30	13	10	10	43	24	3	2	13	17
No of days recorded (total for year)	42	15	14	17	24	40	15	11	18	30

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* [Amber 3, 6]

Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

Another below average year with five spring and just one autumn record.

Spring passage The first were four at OPS on April 5th, they lingered over the tidal reservoir before heading up river at 18.30. Two at Severn Beach on May 5th was the only record of the month. June produced one at Severn Beach on 2nd, two at CVL on 7th and one at Northwick Warth on 17th.

Autumn passage Five at CVL on Aug. 23rd was the only autumn record.

Scarce Terns in the Avon area

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Little Tern	26	4	15	7	3	9	3	5	9	17
Whiskered Tern	1							2		
White-winged Black Tern									1	
Sandwich Tern	21	4	35	15	23	35+	15	59	12	15

Total numbers for the past ten years

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo* [Amber 6]

Regular passage migrant, a few occur throughout the summer - generally uncommon, but large flocks have occurred in some years especially on the estuary in spring or at CVL in autumn.

A poor spring was followed by a good passage at CVL in July and especially August. True numbers on the Estuary are masked by identification issues but numbers of all Common/Arctic Terns were very poor this year.

Another dreadful spring showing in the Estuary with two at New Passage on May 3rd, one at Severn Beach on 6th and on 13th. Return passage comprised of one at PWD on July 13th, one at OPS on 25th, six at New Passage on Aug. 6th, six at OPS on 23rd and one at New Passage on 27th.

At CVL spring numbers were poor but August was again much the best month. After the first from April 10th (an average first date) to 13th (two on 12th) there were records on five dates from 21st to 28th -- one or two apart from six on 23rd. In May one was noted on 1st, 3rd and 19th then two on 22nd and 30th and seven on 31st. In June there were two on 6th; one on 13th, 14th and five (including a first-summer) on the 21st. In July one or two were recorded on 14 dates plus three on 4th and four on 16th. As last year, August produced regular records (on 21 dates), with double figure counts of 22 on 6th falling to 16 next day; then 22 again on 10th and 13th, 11 on 14th; 21 on 20th; ten on 22nd; 48 on 23rd; 17 on 28th and 42 on 31st, but otherwise single figure counts indicating much onward movement. September then produced only one or two on five dates from 9th to 17th (14 days earlier than the average last date 1990-2014). The table below summarises this data.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of days recorded	9	8	4	16	21	5
Maximum count over the month	6	7	5	4	48	2

CVL summary with monthly days recorded and maximum counts

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	20	5	17	5	23	14	55	40	3	6
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	35	6	38	38	80	20	20	29	38	38
No. days recorded (total for year)	44	53	61	44	61	47	35	47	42	63

Average counts at CVL over the past decade

Most other inland records were from BL, which as usual had much leaner pickings than CVL with reports on April 22nd (three), 24th, June 13th, Aug 23rd, 31st (nine) and Sept. 14th. More unusual inland records comprised an adult to NW over Saltford on Aug. 14th, and two at the Floating Harbour, Bristol on 21st.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea* [Amber 3, 4]

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but can occasionally occur in large flocks in the Estuary under favourable conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often appears after westerly gales.

A very poor year in terms of numbers with no count higher than ten, but with a good number of records including more June and July records from CVL than usual. The year also produced our earliest and second latest records. As with the previous species the true situation is clouded with identification difficulties, especially on the Estuary where many are best recorded as Common/Arctic but this year was amongst the worst spring tern passages on record. The table below summarises the records for the last decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Max count for year	80	45	43	13	25	150	25	130	35	10
Av. of 3 highest counts	44	33	42	9	16	135	20	115	24	7
No. days recorded during year	19	32+	26	25	19	40	22	31	18	40

Annual details for the Avon area

Spring passage An exceptionally early individual was photographed at Severn Beach on March 29th (P D Bowerman, M Coller); (the previous earliest since 1990 was on April 2nd, 2006). The next was one at New

Passage on April 10th, one at CVL from 11th to 13th, and one to NE at New Passage on 17th. Two were then at CVL on 21st, 23rd and 28th and two at OPS on 23rd. In early May one was at CVL on 3rd then the 5th produced ten here and eight at Severn Beach. After one at BG on 7th there were one or two at CVL on eight dates from 14th to 31st plus three on 19th including a presumed second summer that stayed until 21st when it was also seen at BL. In June there was one at OPS and one at CVL on 2nd, the latter still present next day, then another (or the same) second-summer type here on 7th; three on 14th and four on 28th.

Autumn passage July produced single individuals at OPS on 17th, CVL on 19th, 20th, 26th and 27th and BG on 28th. All August records were at CVL with one on 2nd, 18th, 22nd, four on 23rd, one on 26th and two on 31st. The only September record was of a juvenile at OPS on 15th. Finally an exceptionally late record was of one at CVL in squally conditions on Nov.13th (A H Davis, R Mielcarek) (our latest departure date since 1990 was on Nov. 21st, 1996).

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 – six on Aug. 23rd;

Severnside – one at Severn Beach on May 5th with eight here next day, seven at Chittening Warth on June 2nd, and one at Northwick Warth on July 31st;

Sand Point – two on April 11th and 12th, and two very late individuals down channel in gales on Nov. 7th (P Gregory);

Anchor Head – one on May 6th;

BL – one on July 26th;

CVL – two on April 23rd, one on May 31st, one on Aug. 2nd, and one on Sept. 9th.

Tern Passage Three tables are given below summarising the tern passages. The first two detail the main passages in 2015, 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 (inland)		1	8						
Common Tern (coast)				3	1				
Common Tern (inland)	1	4	11	2	1	11	2	2	5
Arctic Tern (coast)	1	1	2	8			1		
Arctic Tern (inland)		3	6	12	8	6	3	3	4
Common/Arctic Tern (coast)		4		10			7		

Spring – summated 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)								5	4
Black Tern (inland)				8	5	86	9	44	3
Common Tern (coast)				6		7			
Common Tern (inland)	7	9	5	49	58	122	51	8	
Arctic Tern (coast)		1						1	
Arctic Tern (inland)		1	4	1	1	6	2		

Autumn – summated maxima of daily counts in each ten-day period at coastal and inland sites

Spring Tern Passage on the Coast

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Common	120	291	561	3	2	593	103	61	20	4
Arctic	136	131	201	21	14	524	41	461	100	12
Common/Arctic	849	485	606	138	240	2410	352	629	351	14
Total	1105	907	1368	162	256	3527	496	1151	471	30

Totals of the highest recorded counts from any one coastal site for each day in April and May

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla* [Red 3]

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 towards the end of March was followed by a modest movement in early May. After single records in June and September there was an influx in the November gales with reasonable numbers in December. Recorded again on 38 dates (23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, 11 in 2010, 26 in 2011, 33 in 2012, and 40 in 2013, 38 in 2014), the high number being a function of high observer coverage of the Estuary and frequent gales, as the population is in steep decline, at least in southern parts of its admittedly large range.

January/February The first were on Jan.10th, when there were 20 at Severn Beach and three at Sand Point, after which records came on four further dates in January and just one in February from four sites in the Estuary with a maximum of 90 at Severn Beach on Jan.15th. This is detailed in the table below.

	January					Feb.	March						April		May			
	10	12	14	15	19	23	2	25	28	29	30	31	1	17	3	5	6	9
OPS										50				1				
NP-NW					1													
Severn Beach	20	6		90		26	50	45	110	400	4	80	1		7	33	4	1
Battery Point																	1	
Sand Pt	3																	
Anchor Head			39	7													15	

Coastal counts in the first winter and spring period

Spring passage Recorded on six dates in March, five of them in the last week and all but one from Severn Beach where there were 400 on 29th. In April single individuals at Severn Beach on 1st, OPS on 17th and CVL on 18th were noted. In May Severn Beach produced 33 on 5th and one to seven on three other dates, while 15 were at Anchor Head and one at Battery Point on 6th. The only June record was of two off Severn Beach on 2nd.

Autumn and second winter period The next record was of a first-winter at CVL on Sept. 2nd. The gales in November produced a good series of records from the usual coastal locations with a peak of 110 off Severn Beach on 29th (see table below). Additional November sightings came from CVL (first-winter) and Charter Road, Weston-s-Mare on 13th and Eastville Park Lake on 16th (a first-winter taken into care). CVL also produced a first-winter on Dec. 13th.

	November											December			
	7	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	28	29	30	1	5	8	30
OPS				43						10					
NP-NW							1						1		
Severn Beach	60	1	8	90	5		12	7		110	60		29	65	5
PDW					28		10					6	6		
Battery Point				15						10					
Ladye Bay/ Walton Bay						2				25					
Cl-Y							2								
Sand Pt		16			25				17		8				
Anchor Head/WSM							19								

Coastal counts in the late autumn and early winter

The table at the top of the next page summarises the Severnside records for the past decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Av. of 3 highest counts	416	88	170	233	92	200	83	108	80	207
No. of dates recorded	22	27	23	19	5	15	14	19	21	27

Severnside – Data over the last ten years

2014 An additional inland record – an adult at CVL on Feb. 14th and 15th.

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 Severn Estuary was the 13th most important site in 2014/15 with the peak in August (CVL was not listed due to lack of counts).

Our commonest wintering gull. WGS recorded this species in 13% of participating gardens, a low figure probably linked to the mild winter weather.

High winter numbers typically tailed off rapidly in March with several records of small departing flocks moving purposefully up the Estuary from 14th. These movements continued through April with 46 at OPS on 19th but often few or none at all at this time. In May small numbers were reported mainly from the coast with 20 at Severn Beach on 3rd and 24 at Avonmouth on 18th the highest counts.

Small numbers were noted throughout June with four at CVL on 4th, the first to return here, increasing to 15 on 8th. Numbers increased markedly from mid-month with 60 at PWD on 14th then 150 on 19th and 500 by July 5th. The first juvenile was reported from CVL on June 25th.

The largest counts away from the sites tabulated below were (in date order): 360 at Somerdale, Keynsham on Jan.18th, 310 at Battery Point to Redcliff Bay on Sept.14th, 510 at Avonmouth Dock on Nov. 26th; and 370 Lamplighters Marsh, Shirehampton on Dec.16th. It is good to see more sites being counted regularly (see table below), although for some the reported counts undoubtedly under-represent the peak numbers. WeBS counts on the Estuary are mainly conducted around high tide, numbers of this species are usually higher at low tide mainly because more mud is exposed at this time.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1500	2000	150	46	8	130	300	500	500	500	700	1000
Littleton Warth	80	6				6	490	310	370	125	670	1300
New Passage	320	200	135	60	15	46	575	800	570	400	200	280
Severn Beach	273	23		20	20	30	43	450	53	20		
PW/RPD	28	8	9			170	500	300	14	47	565	273
Cl-Y	300	100	300	11		60	375	500	550	180	250	600
Sand Bay	400	40	120	6	1	110	680	600	840	95	240	110
Axe Estuary	70	20	40		1	78	106	187	240	21	215	
Weston STW	232	80	31	4	7	19	301	606	397	639	206	317
R Avon, Sea Mills	295	93		1		1		51	52	101	126	200
Eastville Park	80	150	163	1			3	23	60	102	200	150
R Avon, Keynsham	90										75	200
Saltford	340	370	370	6	2		180	310	44	200	200	180
Backwell Lake	270	250	180				41	50	250	220	440	235
BL	2	6	400	7	1	7	50	300	450	870	1100	2200

Monthly counts at the regularly counted sites

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant usually with more in spring; scarce in winter.

One only in the first winter period was followed an average spring passage with the highest count of seven at CVL. The autumn passage saw more records than last year but numbers remained low.

Winter 2014/15 One at Sea Mills on Jan.11th.

Spring passage The first were two (adult and first-winter) at Severn Beach on March 29th but as usual most records came from CVL where there was a first-winter from April 3rd to 5th, five on 8th, two on 9th, five on 10th,

seven on 11th, six on 12th and three on 14th. There was also one at BL on 5th, perhaps one from CVL, and nine at Severn Beach on 19th. The only May record was of one at Chittening Warth on 9th.

Autumn passage and second winter period A first-summer was at CVL on June 29th. In August there were two at Cl-Y on 6th, a juvenile at CVL from 25th to 30th and one at BG on 28th. In September there was an adult at CVL on 9th with another from 16th to 18th. A first-winter was at BL on Oct. 21st. The November gales produced a first-winter at Severn Beach on 29th joined by a second-winter next day. Finally there was an adult at CVL on Dec.15th.

A summary of the year's records, and a 'snapshot' of the CVL sightings for the last decade, are given below.

	Jan.	Mar	April	May	June	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Days recorded at CVL	0	0	9	0	1	6	4	0	0	1
Maximum CVL count	0	0	7	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Days recorded elsewhere	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	2	0
Max. Count elsewhere	1	2	9	1	0	1	0	1	2	0

Summary of all Little Gull records

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	5	3	6	3	19	6	15	3	11	6
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	2	5	1	3	5	2	1	3	2	1

CVL – average counts for the past decade

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus* [RR] [Amber 6]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase.

After last year's comments about stable or slightly declining recent reports, 2015 saw a significant resurgence with a record count at the CVL roost in early spring, a good return movement from June to August and widespread reports of long-stayers into the mild winter. Formerly regular sites of OPS and Sea Mills produced few records most notably at the second site.

CVL was the most regular site early in the year with one or two here and at five other sites up to the first few days of February. Spring passage probably began at CVL from Feb. 7th when there were three, followed by 14 (12 adults, a first-winter and a second-winter), a site and Avon area record count, in the roost on 13th (A H Davis, K E Vinicombe) then eight next day and on 25th but otherwise no more than seven to the month's end. March produced single individuals on three dates at CVL and up to four at PWD (6th) but otherwise just one or two at three other sites. In April there were three records at CVL and one at PWD. All May records were coastal from New Passage on 3rd, Severn Beach on 6th and Cl-Y on 13th.

A second-calendar-year was at CVL on June 4th and from mid-month birds appeared with returning flocks of Black-headed Gulls at PWD on 14th and 19th, CVL on 16th and 18th; Northwick Warth on 17th and an exceptional flock of eight adults moving down river at New Passage on 23rd (J P Martin). July numbers were well up on last year with records on 14 dates at CVL from 9th with nine on 15th and 16th, New Passage on twelve dates from 2nd with four on 19th and a high turnover of individuals noted, plus one or two at seven other sites. The high turnover continued at New Passage in August with four on 6th and records on 11 dates but only two of them after 11th. Elsewhere in August there were one or two at six other sites.

Numbers dropped off considerably in September but came from eight different sites followed by one or two at just four sites in October. A very mild end to the year might have been partially responsible for a good series of records in November (nine sites with up to three at CVL and PWD), and December (one or two at six sites).

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below, with records from the following ten sites contributing to the summated monthly maxima in the bottom row: Aust Warth; Backwell Lake; BG; Bristol Millennium Square; Clifton Downs; Eastville Park; Filton; Wain's Hill (Cl-Y); Westbury-on-Trym and Weston-s-Mare beach.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1						1	1				
New Passage			1			8	4	4	1			1
Severn Beach			1				1				2	
PDW	1	2	4	1		1	2				3	2
Portbury NR			1				1					
Cl-Y	1				1						1	1
Sand Point and Bay								1	1			
Weston STW								2	1		1	
Sea Mills											1	
Saltford	1	1					1					
CVL	2	14	1	1		1	9	2	1	1	3	2
BL	1	1					1	2	1	1		
Totals, ten other sites	1						1	2	3	3	5	2

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The second table gives an overview of the fairly uniform, up to 2014, series of records for the past decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites	17	23	23	20	21	18	19	23	17	22
Max count	6	8	7	6	4	8	6	5	6	14

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings of this species, giving ages where possible. *(Eds.)*

COMMON GULL *Larus canus* [Amber 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) but rarely counted winter roost at CVL and significant one on the Estuary that is even more difficult to count.

Once again there were some good counts from Marshfield with an exceptional 3500 on Feb.12th. The tabulated sites were the only ones where sizeable flocks occur and regular counts are made.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	100	200	50	10			2	4	60	84	300	40
Littleton Warth	8	9	16	1						4	25	80
New Passage	12	1	4	1	2			2	2	20	35	95
Severn Beach			1	7	15					5	20	30
Marshfield		3500	200	2						500	300	50
Saltford	800	31	9					1		10	130	150
Backwell Lake	12	16	5						1	2	9	4
BG				4							180	900
BL	15		100	2					1	2	100	500

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Most reports from elsewhere were of 100 or less with larger counts as follows:

Keynsham – 235 on Dec.10th;

Weston-s-Mare beach – 113 past in three hours on Nov.18th.

Newton St. Loe – 200 on Dec.15th.

May records included 15 at Severn Beach in gales on 6th; 11 here on 9th with occasional records of one or two at this site, at New Passage and at CVL during the month, the last including an injured adult that remained from April 15th until May 23rd. In June there were first-summers at CVL on 11th and 18th and two with other gulls hawking flying ants at Blaise on 23rd. In July there were presumed returning individuals at OPS from 2nd and CVL from 19th with five here on 20th. In August regular reports in low single figures were noted at OPS and CVL with one at Saltford on 1st and two at New Passage on 8th. Numbers remained low until the end of September when there were 60 at OPS with early October seeing the start of the main arrival at CVL.

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 Severn Estuary was 52nd in importance in 2014/15, although WeBS counts probably under-represent the peak numbers of this species on various sites (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. The CVL roost holds the largest numbers - full counts are difficult here but 900 roosted on Herriott's Pool at dusk on May 29th. WGS produced records from 15% 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	14	15	25	30	10	2	12	4	2	1	1
Littleton Warth		4	8	3	49	2	4	2	1	1	2	18
New Passage	3	4	14	43	17	2	21	6	6	3	4	6
Cl-Y	7	5	6	8	9	16	6	17	12	9	4	5
Axe Estuary	4	2	3	18	15	16	11	8	7	9	1	
Weston STW	1	6	4	21	22	8	11	36	28	17	11	1
Saltford	26	20	3	28	30	4	21	110	2	6	30	5

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Other high counts included 600 at Wick St. Lawrence on March 17th, 126 at Weston-s-Mare on July 9th, 240 at Queen Charlton on Oct.11th and 120 at BL on 26th. Movements up the Estuary in spring were more modest this year but probably because of a lack of intensive coverage at Sand Point. Peak movements up channel were 41 at New Passage on April 4th and 35 at Severnside on May 8th.

A pair bred on the island at Portbury Warth Nature Reserve with chicks noted on June 28th and a juvenile fledged by July 22nd. Again there was very little information from the breeding colonies in the cities or on Steep Holm.

A very worn and bleached second-calendar-year individual at Herriott's Pool on June 21st to 25th superficially resembled a Caspian Gull (*L. cachinnans*). On Sept. 6th one on a roof-top was watched with a dead juvenile Moorhen, presumably from nearby Henleaze Lake.

L. f. intermedius

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; annual at CVL. Probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage.

There were no records of this subspecies, but a very dark adult at CVL on May 23rd was considered to show characteristics of the nominate subspecies *fuscus*, sometimes called 'Baltic Gull', which breeds around the White Sea, the Baltic and in northern Norway (A H Davis, K E Vinicombe). This subspecies is a national rarity considered by BBRC, currently they only accept a record if it is a ringing recovery from the breeding range, or it is a second-calendar-year individual in spring or early summer showing the diagnostic *fuscus* moult strategy for this age and time of year. Some further details about this sighting are given in the Recorder's report on page 5.

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, around Bristol and Bath and at the CVL roost. Apart from the Steep Holm colony, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath, and smaller ones in other towns.

WeBS status: The Severn Estuary was 53rd in importance in 2014/15, although WeBS counts probably under-represent the peak numbers of this species on various sites (CVL is not listed due to a lack of counts).

The table below shows the maximum numbers from the regularly counted sites. At many coastal sites WeBS counts around high tide produce small numbers compared with low tide counts when good feeding and loafing areas are exposed. Roosts or pre-roost gatherings are much larger than the numbers present at the reservoirs during the day but are rarely counted. Very little information was received about breeding numbers or success rates but a pair bred at CVL for only the second time – adults with three chicks were seen on an island on Herriott's Pool on June 15th and 16th but the outcome was unknown. WGS produced records from 40% 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	45	10	20	50	50	3	1	4	1	100	4	5
Littleton Warth	3	10	2	5	44			1	1	6	1	64
New Passage	9	8	14	83	17	2	9	15	13	32	12	27
Cl-Y	60	40	12	95	190	45	12	100	50	55	140	90
Axe Estuary	4	6	2	10	8	6	3	10	6	34		
Weston STW	14	146	61	127	32	30	8	38	59	79	81	139
Saltford	20	18	14	90	140	70	16	40	8	1	15	9

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The only counts in three figures from other sites were as follows: a remarkable 1600 at Wick St Lawrence fields on March 17th (T Riddle), 320 at BL on Oct. 26th, 238 at PWD on April 20th with 140 here on March 31st, 220 at Ashton Court in wet weather on Dec. 21st, 150 at Queen Charlton on Oct.11th, 120 on Kenn Moor on Dec. 2nd, and 100 at BG on July 20th.

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 12th most important site in 2013/14.

An average year at the main site, CVL, with a typical late summer peak, but with records in every month apart from February. The first juvenile was back at CVL on July 13th. Numbers peaked in July and August at CVL as usual with maximum tabulated counts being cautiously conservative, the true numbers, especially of individuals, was likely to be higher. The first table below summarises the records for the past decade and the second gives the main monthly breakdown.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites	7	11	11	9	10	10	8	6	11	10
Max count	5	4	5	6	9	10	3+	10	7	6

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	0	0	1	3	1	2	6	9	2	2	4	3
CVL -- daily maximum count	0	0	1	2	1	1	4	6	2	2	3	3
BL – estimate of individuals	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0
Summated maxima elsewhere	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	4

Monthly breakdown

Away from BL and CVL recorded at eight sites as follows (single birds unless stated): PWD on Jan. 8th; Ladye Bay on 10th; BG on March 12th; PWD on April 10th; OPS from April 13th to July 6th (a long-staying near adult); Marshfield on Aug. 20th (3rd or 4th calendar-year); New Passage on Aug. 26th (juv.), BG on Sept. 8th (two) and 30th, Severn Beach on Nov.18th (first-winter), Longwell Green on Dec.11th (two), and Cl-Y on 31st.

The pattern of records at the main sites fits the national picture of a late summer peak with numbers gradually declining through the autumn into winter with some return passage in spring. Elsewhere records seem to be more or less randomly spread through the year. 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*.)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* [RR] [Amber 3]

Uncommon breeding resident - nests in small numbers on Steep Holm and has breed at CVL. Generally uncommon elsewhere but recorded in increasing numbers at the reservoirs throughout the year.

Once again widespread with many inland records. Numbers remained high at CVL and the parallel increase at BL was also maintained. The presence of significant numbers of Pike (*Esox lucius*) at these sites has been suggested as a reason for the recent increases, with dead fish frequent along the shorelines in late summer providing a good food source. In the upper Estuary both the high counts were of flocks on mudflats exposed at low tide.

Great Black-backed Gull (con't)

The first table below summarises the data for the past decade and the second gives the monthly maxima for 2015.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites	15	20	17	15	18	24	27	24	22	24
Max. count	11	10	9	21	19	36	26	35	28	24
Steep Holm pairs	10	11	n/c	13	n/c	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	12	4	4	5	5	1	3	3	2	2	8	3
Littleton Warth							1				3	12
New Passage/Northwick	3	0	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	3	3
PWD		6		6		3			2		3	2
Cl-Y	2	2				2	1	4	1	1	2	2
Sand Bay	2		2	5	5		1	3				1
Axe Estuary	2	2				2		2	2		1	1
R. Avon, Sea Mills	1			2					2			
BG	6	2	3	2	6		1	2	4	3	2	1
CVL	5	4	5	19	8	12	19	24	23	12	6	6
BL	2	2	3	2	1	4	6	9	18	11	6	1
13 other sites (total)	5	1	1	2	2	3	5		2	4	7	5

Monthly maxima at the regular sites

Occasional records came from a further 13 sites, nine of which were inland, and all related to one or two individuals (summated in the final line of the table).

Breeding No reports of breeding numbers have been received from Steep Holm since 2009, but it is assumed breeding still takes place here. Despite some early positive signs, breeding did not occur at CVL this year.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia var.*

Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.

A rather mixed picture in 2015 with some data indicating an increase whilst other data indicates a decrease.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS from 57 squares, which represented 33% of those surveyed, a decline from 37% in 2014. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1110. Avon BBS data is as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-20%	-7%	18%	-6%	-23%	2%	27%	-14%	-4%	5%	-22%	23%

BBS percentage changes

WGS data gave presence in 20% of gardens surveyed, with the counts showing a decrease of 11% from the previous winter; the long-term change over 40 years is an increase of 20%.

CABS counts recorded a 10% increase in numbers from the previous year. These counts represented an 86% decrease since 1996.

There were only two reports of three-figure counts, in Bristol a flock of 136 on May 2nd and 135 in Bath on Oct. 11th.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas* [Amber 7]

Fairly common and increasing breeding resident.

The last three years have seen a notable increase in the population for this species.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 56 tetrads, which represented 32% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 219. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
7%	95%	31%	-13%	15%	-9%	4%	-12%	-12%	10%	37%	34%

BBS percentage changes

The number of sites where this species was recorded was the highest in ten years and seems to reflect improving fortunes.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
33	90	73	64	73	94	68	75	86	125

Number of sites in Avon

Flocks Sizeable flocks of 100+ were noted at OPS on six dates in January with 130 on 10th being the highest count. Elsewhere a flock of 100 was recorded at Weston STW on 11th.

Breeding At CVL six pairs were recorded around the lake. One pair laid four clutches of eggs in the same nest box, successfully rearing the first three broods but finally abandoning the fourth clutch. At BL up to three pairs were noted.

This species is relatively secretive when breeding and is certainly underreported. 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 the BBS in 171 squares, which represented a 99% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 6217. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
60%	13%	3%	7%	4%	-4%	1%	-4%	12%	-10%	-5%	10%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 100% of participating gardens, as in the previous six years with an increase in the number of gardens occupied of 96% over the last 40 years.

CABS recorded a 15% increase on 2014, with the counts representing a 100% increase over 20 years.

January to May There were 24 records of three-figure counts (45 in 2013 and 11 in 2014). The only four-figure count was a flock of 1000 at Weston STW in January.

Breeding As usual, evidence of breeding was not well reported with just ten records from six locations. The most interesting being a juvenile reported from a Redland garden on Jan.12th.

Summer flocks of 110 at New Passage on July 11th, 200 at CVL on 30th, 150 in Newton Park on Aug. 5th and 31st and 120 at Weston STW also in August, were notable.

Autumn migration The largest movement of the autumn occurred between Nov. 11th and 21st; with 500 heading S over Kenn Moor and 300 over Walton Bay on 11th; 1500 SSW through CVL and 200 at Portishead on 12th; 300 to S at Bradley Stoke on 14th. The peak movement was on 16th when up to 10,000 passed over Kingswood, 6500 over CVL, 3000 recorded over Clifton Down and 1500 over Bishopston, Abbots Leigh and Paulton; whilst a constant stream was reported passing NE at OPS on 21st.

Winter Flocks In the Marshfield area a flock of 1000 was reported on Nov.16th, with 500 to 600 reported on four further dates during November and December; 700 were reported from Yatton Moor on Nov.12th and 600 from Brislington on the same date. Whilst not reported as migrants it seems likely, given the dates, that the November records relate to migration.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident.

The population appears to be relatively stable. The details are given overleaf.

Collared Dove Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 109 squares, 63% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 627. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
22%	-22%	15%	-19%	7%	-13%	1%	-4%	11%	-2%	-17%	2%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 63% of participating gardens (76% in 2013 and 81% in 2014). The percentage of gardens recording this species was down by 18% on the previous year but up by 16% over the last 40 years.

CABS recorded a 15% decrease on the previous year, and counts represent a 75% decrease since 1996.

There were 59 double-figure counts (42 in 2013 and 47 in 2014). Those of 50 or more were: 50 at Marshfield on Jan. 8th; 55 at OPS on 13th, a site record, with 53 seen here on Oct. 27th; 52 were recorded in the Nailsea area on July 5th and 53 were reported passing Sand Point on Oct. 20th.

Migration was reported on four dates in October: Aust Cliff with nine to NE on 16th: OPS with six to SW on 18th: as well as the migration record above at Sand Point there was also six on 25th.

Breeding Just three records were received. One was ringed in the nest at Bristol Zoo on March 15th; a juvenile was on wires at New Passage with an adult on 20th; and a second brood of two was reported from Bedminster on Aug. 9th.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus* [Red 3]

Uncommon 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.

A second consecutive year with a notable increase in numbers hopefully indicates that this seriously declining species has turned a corner locally.

Whilst the numbers recorded by the 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. Records were similar to 2014 (eight records in seven squares) with a total of seven 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)	2015	7 * recorded in 7 squares (4% of the area surveyed)

Avon BBS records - Numbers quoted are "best counts" avoiding any double counting of territorial individuals.

The first Avon area report for 2015 was from Weston STW on April 15th (*cf*. 13th in 2010, 11th in 2011, 12th in 2012, 20th in 2013 and 15th 2014).

Following last year's improvement, a further substantial increase in both bird-days and the number of records was noted in 2015, after many years of decline. Records of more than one were as follows: at OPS where two to four were recorded between April 30th and May 23rd (eight dates); two to four were also recorded at CVL between May 12th and June 28th (14 dates); two were recorded at Silver Street Fishing Lake, Congresbury on May 16th, the Strawberry Line, Yatton to Sandford on May 21st and the Axe Estuary on June 17th.

Sites with records for more than four days were BL (nine dates), CVL (40 dates), Cl-Y (13 dates), OPS (20 dates), PWD (11 dates), Saltford (seven dates), Sand Bay/Point (15 dates), and Weston STW (14 dates).

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of bird-days	75	100	74	43	93	86	104	51	113	199
No. of records	63	98	70	43	73	76	58	48	103	166

Bird-days and records each year

Breeding was recorded at CVL as follows: a Reed Warbler nest with an egg was found on June 9th; on 23rd a few days old, moribund, chick was found on the ground next to the now damaged nest. Despite an attempt to save the nest and chick it had been predated two days later. A second Reed Warbler nest with an egg was found on June 29th. The chick was ringed on July 11th and had fledged by 19th.

A juvenile was recorded at Weston STW on July 29th. The final report of the year was an adult seen on Aug. 12th at Sand Point. The table below gives the breakdown of records during the year and comparisons with 2014 in brackets.

	April	May	June	July	August	September
Bird-days	31 (9)	112 (83)	52 (17)	3 (2)	1 (2)	0 (1)
Records	30 (9)	90 (75)	42 (15)	3 (2)	1 (2)	0 (1)
Sites	13 (8)	25 (14?)	16 (4?)	3 (1)	1 (2)	0 (1)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2015 bird-days, records and sites (2014 in brackets)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba* [RR]

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation efforts in several areas.

Numbers seem to have bounced back following the very productive breeding season in 2014.

This species is not recorded in sufficient numbers, either by the BBS or by any other generic survey, to be able to apply any meaningful statistical analysis.

The number of records received saw an increase on 2014 of 34%, the second highest in the last ten years. Also the number of sites increased by 31% as shown in the table below.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of records	119	91	115	137	95	110	161	224	128	171
No. of sites	44	26	35	41	42	42	54	66	35	46

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding The Avon details are as follows with number of owlets and sites given, none were received from *SG*:

BA

Elm Farm, Burnett – three boxes were occupied with adults on eggs on May 13th, three chicks were ringed at a nest box on July 9th and a further three on 12th;

Compton Dando -- on July 12th four owlets were ringed;

CVL – two nest boxes were occupied with eight young produced. On June 17th seven of these were ringed;

Cam Valley -- the ongoing survey of this area recorded seven pairs that produced 17 chicks within Avon.

NS

PWD -- four chicks were ringed on July 2nd;

Congresbury Moor -- four were ringed on June 17th with three owlets reported on July 2nd;

Yatton (Strawberry line area) -- on July 11th an adult was watched with two young at a nest box;

Redhill – four young were reported on July 4th and two adults and an owlet was reported here on Sept. 2nd;

Strode, near Winford – two young were reported on July 26th;

Kenn Moor – three young ringed on July 2nd;

Weston STW -- one was recorded at a nest box on Aug. 15th.

Breaking down the reports received into months (see below) indicates at the start of the year a reasonable winter survival after the good breeding success of 2014, then it shows an 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. The high numbers in September and October may well relate to good survival rates amongst young birds as they disperse.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Records	7	10	9	14	7	18	22	10	21	30	11	12

Monthly breakdown

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Uncommon breeding resident, declining.

Again, many of the records come from a few known pairs, therefore 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 increase in this figure compared with the last three years after the recent decline. Clearly this needs continued monitoring.

Little Owl (con't)

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of records	134	139	87	91	98	192	132	132	185	240
No. of sites	46	66	49	48	40	39	27	27	27	40

Number of records and sites per year

Only recorded regularly at Marshfield, Newton Park (maximum of three on Feb. 3rd), PWD (maximum of four on June 23rd and Aug. 8th), and Saltford (maximum of six on four dates).

Breeding Just a single report of juveniles: two on July 3rd at Hounsley Batch, Winford. Reports during the breeding season (between April and June) came from 21 sites, a welcome increase (12 sites in 2013 and 11 in 2014).

Observers are again encouraged to submit all records. (*Eds*).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco* [RR] [Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident.

Both the number of records and number of sites were within the typical annual variation for this species; see the table below. It is worth noting that two sites, Saltford and CVL, accounted for over a third of these records.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of records	235	293	213	276	206	186	256	216	287	309
No. of sites	57	95	81	111	79	78	84	59	71	81

Number of records and sites per year

Breeding The numbers of reported owlets with the sites and dates were as follows: at CVL, two were ringed on May 1st and had successfully fledged by 21st and one was seen on July 25th; the species was noted at four sites around the lake during the breeding season. Two were seen at Chipping Sodbury Common on May 4th. Single birds were noted at Winford Manor on June 15th, July 7th and Sept. 3rd. Another was at BL on June 29th. On July 8th a single bird was noted at Litton Reservoir, and at Brandon Hill one was seen on 24th and 25th. With only nine records of owlets in 2015 compared to at least 37 in 2014 it would appear that it was a poor breeding season although the 2015 count was probably a considerable underestimate of the true numbers of owlets hatched.

High counts were noted as follows: six at Lower Woods, Wickwar on Jan. 8th; five at Abbots Leigh on Aug. 31st and at Saltford on Sept. 2nd and 10th.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* (128, 2) [RBBP]

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer but bred successfully in 1991, 2010 and 2011.
Descriptions required.

A pair bred successfully at an undisclosed site, two fledged young seen mid July.

The table shows the varying fortunes of this species in the Avon area during the past two decades.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
7	14	3	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1	7*	6*	4	3	1	2*

Number of individuals recorded each year (* includes successful breeding)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus* [Amber 4]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

A below average number of both records and bird-days were recorded in 2015, with a peak count of three on two consecutive days at Cl-Y, and the Axe Est. on one date, all in November. The table below summarises the year's data.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2015 (2014)
Records	16	8	9	14		4	15	22	12	98(46)
Bird-days	19	8	12	14		4	15	31	13	114(75)
Max. count	2	1	2	1		1	1	3	2	3(5)

Monthly breakdown

The records are as follows, with single birds unless otherwise stated:

First winter period

Coastal records:

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands –recorded on eight dates in January (maximum of two); three in February; one in March; and two in April;

Severn Beach – one date in January and February; two in March; and one in April;

PWD – one on Feb. 24th and March 21st;

Cl-Y – four dates in January, two in February; five in March (maximum of two birds); and eight in April with the last in the Avon area in this period recorded on the 30th;

Sand Point – three dates in April;

Axe Est. – one on Jan.19th;

Inland one was seen in the Gordano Valley on Jan. 20th.

Second winter period

Coastal records:

OPS – noted on two dates in November; and three in December;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – one on Sept. 22nd was the first of the autumn in Avon, then seen on nine dates in October, three in November; and six in December;

Severn Beach – three dates in November;

PWD – one on Nov. 16th;

Battery Point, Portishead – one on Nov. 8th;

Cl-Y – first recorded Sept. 27th; then two in October; and eight in November (maximum of three);

Sand Point – two dates in October;

Axe Est. – first recorded Sept. 26th; then one report in October; three in November (maximum of three); and three in December (maximum of two).

There were three inland records of single birds as follows: at North Yate on Sept. 27th, Ham Green on Oct. 19th and Kingswood on Nov. 19th.

The table below summarises the data since 2007.

	2007	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bird-days	100	260	105	67	194	423	127	75	114
Records	102	186	100	48	113	222	91	46	98

Bird-days and records each year

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus* [Amber 4]

Scarce passage migrant and presumed regular breeding summer visitor in very small numbers.
Descriptions are required for records away from the Mendips.

As in 2014, there were just two reports, both from the traditional breeding area:

Burrington – two were caught and ringed on June 16th and two were recorded churring on July 7th.

The table below shows how this species has fared in Avon over the past decade.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Churring males	2	3	1	3	3	2	6	4	2	2
Reports	8	5	3	4	3	2	3	6	2	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 14 at CVL and three at BL on April 17th. The first away from the reservoirs were 12 at Golden Hill, Bristol and two at Saltford on 21st. The first three-figure count was around 300 at CVL on 28th, with 120 recorded here on 30th and over 100 recorded at BL on the same day.

BBS data This species was recorded by Avon BBS in 59 squares, representing 34% of the area surveyed; the total number counted over two BBS visits was 363, the declining Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-83%	-72%	-7%	11%	-26%	5%	-7%	-11%	11%	-26%	-38%	-19%

BBS percentage changes

Summer flocks There were eight counts in excess of 1000, seven from CVL between May 7th and June 1st; and one from BL on June 6th.

Breeding Visits to nest sites were reported from Nailsea in May and June; Hanham (Bristol) in June; Easter Compton in June; and Marshfield in July. A juvenile was picked up from Chew Magna High Street on July 23rd after an unsuccessful maiden flight. It was subsequently released from a first-floor window and flew off to the south-east.

Nesting was and is clearly seriously under-reported, observers are asked to submit all observations of breeding activity. (Eds.)

Departure The last three-figure count was of 100 at New Passage on July 27th. Numbers reduced after the first week of August indicating a general departure had taken place. There were ten reports from early September with the final sighting of the year over Chittening Warth on 14th.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops* (27, 1)

Very scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn.
Descriptions required.

An average year with one record: one perched on wires by Broadoak Hill, Withywood at 13.00 on Aug. 6th (N Roberts).

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.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	1	0	1	1

Number of individuals recorded each year

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster* (9, 7)

Rare summer vagrant
Descriptions required.

Two records in June, possibly both involving the same individuals; details as follows:

Saltford – one flew SSW over a Boyd Road garden calling at 14.25 on June 7th (C Vines);

Woolley, Bath – first noted around Mill Farm early evening on June 8th; the next morning two were heard and seen at 10.30 in Ash trees being mobbed by Goldfinchs and at 13.00 there were six perched on power lines and feeding before flying off S at 14.30. On 19th two were seen at 10.00 and six were again in flight up and down the valley between 11.15 and 11.30 (L Hodgkin *et al.*, photographed, see opposite).

These are the eighth and ninth Avon area records. The last was one in May 2008 at Ladye Bay.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis* [Amber 1]

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.

Avon BBS recorded eight over two BBS visits. The five squares in which they were found represented 2.9% of the area surveyed. Overall, reports were received from 117 sites in Avon, whilst this is a relatively crude measure of distribution it does seem to reflect a genuine increase; see table below. OPS reported the highest count with six on March 20th, also five were recorded at Saltford on Aug. 7th and 13th, and at Eastville Park on 18th.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
74	80	95	75	96	82	96	96	97	117

Number of sites each year in the last decade

During the first winter period, January saw 64 records from 25 sites (*cf.* 31 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 26 in 2008, 19 in 2009, 23 in 2010, 17 in 2011, 21 in 2012, 18 in 2013 and 51 in 2014). February saw 47 records from 21 sites with March showing a decrease to 38 records from 15 sites.

Breeding Two juveniles were reported from Snuff Mills on May 16th. Single juveniles were reported from Compton Dando on July 20th and at New Passage on Aug.1st. At CVL four young ringed between July 31st and Aug. 9th suggested successful local breeding, also one or two pairs were reported from BL during this period.

Post-breeding dispersal with 2014 data in brackets As usual this created a rise in the number of records. August saw a rise to 64 from 22 sites (55 from 17 sites). September saw the peak at 101 records from 37 sites (110 records from 30 sites), thereafter declining until the end of the year with 83 records from 31 sites in October (95 from 25), 53 records from 22 sites in November (65 from 21) and 51 records from 17 sites in December (45 from 20).

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla* (52, 1)

Scarce autumn passage migrant, very rare in spring.
Descriptions required.

A relatively poor year with just one brief sighting at New Passage at 09.15 on Sept. 16th (K Bainbridge).

The table below shows the distribution of records over the past 20 years.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	7	3	2	3	2	2	2	1

Number of individuals recorded each year

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally.

Whilst a further decrease of 7% compared to 2014 was recorded by BBS, the number of sites and number of records reported were significantly up on the previous year suggesting an overall improvement in fortunes.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 56 squares, which represented a 32% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 102. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-40%	-44%	2%	-26%	52%	-6%	-8%	-20%	17%	-2%	-33%	-7%

BBS percentage changes

WGS recorded presence in 23% of gardens surveyed. The count decreased by 4% on the previous winter's figures but showed a 15% increase since the 1975/76 winter.

As shown below there was a significant increase in both the number of records and the number of sites compared to 2014.

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Records	231	529	524	453	458	413	516	621	642	940
Sites	93	235	227	209	197	180	151	162	154	224

Records and sites each year

Green Woodpecker Breeding A total of 299 records was received from 122 sites during April, May and June (*cf.* 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, 188 from 85 sites in 2013 and 149 records from 66 sites in 2014), representing a 101% increase in records and 85% increase in sites from 2014 during this early summer period.

The sites recorded during this early summer period are listed in the table below, it shows a significant improvement in the number of sites occupied during this period with the highest number since 2010.

	2007	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
April	67	63	47	71	57	39	67	39	74
May	54	67	65	53	49	26	27	26	54
June	58	53	52	35	29	21	17	23	51

Number of sites with records during the breeding season

Contrary to the apparent trend in Avon, at CVL numbers were at an eight-year low with only two calling males in the vicinity of the lake (*cf.* seven in 2008, five in 2009, six in 2010, eight in 2011, five in 2012, seven in 2013 and three in 2014). In Avon as a whole, records of fledged young were as follows: one noted in May in Westbury-on-Trym; in July, up to three at both OPS and Burnett; two at BL and New Passage and one near Cold Ashton and reports of single birds from Old Down and Weston SWT in August; and from the Cam Valley in September.

The highest count of the year came from Overscourt Wood, Siston where 12 were recorded on two dates in December.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major* [RR]

Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

The decrease in winter garden records perhaps reflects a milder winter rather than a population decrease given the significant increase in both reported number of records and of sites in 2015. The year-on-year decrease in the BBS figures is more difficult to explain, however, as long term figures all indicate an increasing population.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 73 squares, which represented 42% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 150. The BBS data since 1994 is summarised below.

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
86%	26%	18%	10%	-7%	-19%	46%	-7%	-1%	-2%	7%	-10%

BBS percentage changes

WGS data recorded presence in 30% of gardens surveyed. The number counted was down by 12% on 2013/14 but up 26% since the 1975/76 winter.

A significant increase in the number of records and sites was noted; see below:

Year	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Records	193	415	372	317	402	423	590	666	749	1021
Sites	80	191	172	181	182	197	200	199	193	258

Records and sites per year

Breeding Drumming was recorded from 13 sites (*cf.* 19 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009, four in 2010, 12 in 2011, 14 in 2012, 21 in 2013 and 13 in 2014). At CVL ten pairs were reported during the early summer. Young were seen on May 24th and June 25th. Other breeding records were: a pair at a nest hole in Eastville Park, Bristol on May 7th; and adult and juvenile at Nightingale Valley, St. Annes on 23rd; one at a nest site at Tortworth on 25th; a nest was reported from Yate on 28th; In Nowhere Wood, Nailsea juveniles were reported on 30th and also June 3rd when two adults and two juveniles were present; also on 3rd an adult and juvenile were at Portishead; a juvenile was at Abbots Leigh on 5th and 6th; another juvenile was present in a Banwell garden on 7th, 22nd and July 15th; a family party of two adults and two juveniles visited a Nailsea garden between 10th and 30th. There were eight reports of young birds from the Cam Valley between June and August with a maximum of three together; an adult and juvenile were together at OPS on July 26th; and a report was received of breeding from a Bishop Sutton garden on Aug. 28th.

The highest count during the year was of 12 at OPS on March 28th with nine counted at Abbots Leigh and CVL on Feb.11th. Although there were many records from the coast, the only records noted as being of migrants were single birds at OPS heading NE on Oct.18th and E on 22nd.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus* [Amber 3]

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

Prior to 2012 a count of 700 or more records in a year was considered to be high, with that figure only being exceeded seven times since 1984. However, in three of the last four years this figure has been easily exceeded, with the 1252 records received in 2015 the highest to date. It is unclear why the number of records suddenly increased but, as noted in recent Reports electronic recording is making it easier for observers to submit records, although that does not explain the low count in 2013.

The table below gives the monthly distribution for 2015, showing a marked tailing off in records in the final two months, it also gives the data for the previous five years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
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
2015	98	82	116	154	129	111	92	99	123	116	72	60	1252

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding There were 13 confirmed pairs whose progress was monitored, with 49 young hatched, of which 28 were ringed, and 43 are presumed to have fledged. In addition juveniles were reported from a further 13 sites but without any further details, pairs were reported in the breeding season (April – June) from another 15 sites and counts of two or more (but with no details of sex) in the breeding season were received from a further seven sites. This suggests a total of 48 possible pairs, continuing the decline over the last decade as is shown in the table below.

	1996-05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
SG	22	29	25	36	31	22	23	21	23	20	8
BA & NS	59	72	68	63	53	45	51	52	30	43	36
Bristol	8	7	7	4	6	8	7	6	5	4	4
Total	89	108	100	103	90	75	81	79	58	67	48

Breeding sites

The distribution of breeding sites in 2015 was eight in SG, 17 in BA, 19 in NS and four in Bristol; notes on some of these are set out below.

SG A nest box was used for the fourth successive year at the Rolls Royce site at Filton, three fledged on June 19th.

BA For the third successive year nest boxes were used at Burnett, three in 2015, one contained four chicks and the others three each, and seven were ringed on June 14th. A pair with two juveniles was seen at Saltford on July 3rd.

NS Nest boxes were used at the following sites: at Ashton Court, five juveniles were ringed on May 15th with two recently fledged on the ground near the box on June 18th; at Congresbury, four were ringed on June 4th with another egg having failed to hatch; at Langford, three were ringed on June 9th with two recently dead young in the box and two recently fledged juveniles seen near the box on July 1st; at Butcombe four were ringed on June 9th with three fledged on 29th and the corpse of the fourth under the tree; at BG five were ringed on June 23rd. In addition a pair with five fledged young was seen at Redhill on June 24th.

Bristol In the Avon Gorge two fledged juveniles were seen on July 6th while in Hotwells two fledged juveniles were being fed on July 3rd.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius* [Red 2]

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

A poor year by recent standards with 93 bird-days, the bird-day total being the lowest since 2010; see table below.

Year	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Avon area	74	93	76	143	84	84	111	143	113	107	93
Severnside	38	57	69	93	65	47	45	60	43	39	38

Bird-days per year

Merlin (con't)
There were 55 bird-days in the first half-year, an increase on the 30 in the same period of 2014 but down on the 61 in 2013, with 21 in January, 12 in February, 14 in March and seven in Aprill. The last records came on April 29th from both Yate and New Passage, and May 1st from Walton Common.

In the second half of the year there were 38 bird-days, which is well down on the 77 in 2014 and 52 in 2013, with a series of records in late August from CVL (27th), Sand Bay (28th) and New Passage (30th) before a gap in sightings until one was seen at New Passage on three consecutive days from Sept. 22nd. In October there was a total of 11 bird-days, starting with one at Saltford on 10th, with six bird-days in November and 15 in December.

Many of the records were from Severnside, mainly between Aust Warth and New Passage, with 38 bird-days during the year (*cf.* 39 in 2014 and 43 in 2013), 22 in the first half-year and 16 in the second half (*cf.* seven and 32 in 2014 and 12 and 31 in 2013). There were fewer reports from Cl-Y in 2015 with just 13 bird-days (*cf.* 22 in 2014, 23 in 2013), eight of which were in the first half-year and five in the second (*cf.* nine and 13 in 2014, 12 and 11 in 2013). Other coastal sites with records were OPS, Littleton Warth, Battery Point Portishead, Middle Hope, Sand Point and Bay and Weston STW.

Inland the main site was Marshfield with 13 bird-days (11 in the first-half of the year, eight of which were in January, and just two in the second) followed by CVL with seven (three in the first-half of year and four in the second) and Saltford with six (four in the first-half). Other inland sites not already mentioned were BL, Kenn Moor, Tormarton, Walton Common and West Littleton Down.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo* [RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

A poor breeding year for this species, similar to the poor years in 2010 and 2012. Records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

Arrival The first reports were from Aust Cliff on April 11th and Barton Camp, near Weston-super-Mare on 15th. The first to linger was one at CVL on 21st with two here next day, three on 25th, four on 28th and a pair displaying with much calling on 30th. Away from CVL there were records from Black Rock Quarry, Portishead and Cl-Y on 22nd, BL, Weston Moor and Weston STW on 26th, OPS on 28th and Portbury Wharf NR on 30th.

The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April as follows: 13th in 2010, 15th in 2011, 25th in 2012, 17th in 2013 and 4th in 2014.

Breeding Confirmed at five sites; one in SG where two young fledged, three in NS where a total of five fledged and one site in BA from which one fledged. Breeding was suspected at a further site in BA where three juveniles were present in September. A summary of the data for the past 20 years is given below.

	1996-05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
SG	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	1
NS	3	4	6	3	6	3	6	4	6	7	3
BA	5	4	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	2
Total	10	10	12	10	13	6	10	7	11	11	6

Breeding status both confirmed and suspected

Other sightings Away from the breeding sites reports were received from a further 52 localities, 13 in SG, eight in BA, 23 in NS, and the following eight in Bristol: Redland (May and June), Shirehampton (June), Durdham Downs (July), Withywood (July), Cleeve Wood, Hanham (August), Fishponds (August), Hanham Lock (August) and Abbey Wood (September).

The table below gives a summary of the locations for all records for 2015.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	2	5	5	4	4	4	
Bristol		1	2	2	3	1	
BA	1	3	5	4	5	2	
NS	7	5	6	5	10	13	1
Total	10	14	18	15	22	20	1

Number of localities per month where birds were observed

CVL Frequently reported at this site with one or two often seen, the maximum count was seven on Aug.26th with six on May 7th and Sept. 7th with five between May 20th and 24th and on Aug. 26th and Sept. 1st. The last record of the year here was on Sept. 24th, five days earlier than in 2014.

Other notes Quite a few were aged as second calendar-year, for example of five together at CVL on May 20th most were thought to be this age. A soaking wet second calendar-year individual was found sat on the track near Moreton Cottage, CVL on June 22nd, see photograph opposite page 97. One at CVL from July 23rd was in aberrant plumage, essentially brown and white lacking any buff or blue tones. One at BG on Sept. 26th was pursued by a Peregrine, it took shelter for a time but when it emerged it was again pursued.

Departure As in 2014 there was just one report in October, from BG on 8th.

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* [RR] [RBBP]

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.

It was an average breeding year. Although the number of occupied sites was high, the eight nests that were successful in raising young, and the 20 chicks that fledged, were both average (see table below for details of the last two decades).

Year	1996-05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of sites occupied	8.3	15	12	11	13	13	12	12	16	16	16
No. of successful nests	6.2	7	9	7	6	9	8	8	10	8	8
No. of birds fledged	14.3	13	21	20	11	26	25	17	28	19	20

Breeding success

The details for 2015 are as follows:

Avon Gorge – a pair nested on the Leigh Woods side and fledged three chicks (*cf*. three in 2012, four in 2013 and one in 2014) which were ringed on May 21st;

Year	1996-05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. of juveniles fledged	?	3	3	5	1	5	5	3	4	1	3

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge

Wick Quarry – although birds were present no reports of breeding were received (*cf*. four fledged young in 2010, 2011, 2012 and two in 2013 and 2014);

St. John's Church, Bath – used for the tenth consecutive year, with three chicks fledged (*cf*. three in 2011, two in 2012 and 2013 and one in 2014). The first egg was laid on March 25th and the chicks were ringed on May 26th.

Undisclosed sites

SG -- pairs were present at two sites, but there was no evidence of any breeding (*cf*. two in 2012 none of which fledged, four in 2013 with one fledging and three in 2014 but no fledglings);

BA **–** reported from two sites, one of which held two young chicks on May 13th but both were dead by 20th (*cf.* one in 2012 with one fledged, two in 2013 with four fledged and two in 2014 with four fledged). There was no evidence of breeding at the other site;

NS -- located at seven sites. From three of these a total of nine young fledged. At another at least one young was present, at the fifth a pair were present with a juvenile calling on July 12th while at the sixth eggs were laid but did not hatch. At the seventh a pair was seen food passing on May 10th;

2014 – additional information has been submitted in respect of breeding in North Somerset during 2014; there were three successful nests fledging a total of nine young plus two juveniles were noted at a fourth site on July 26th, although no nest was located, and a pair made a food pass at a fifth site on July 22nd;

Bristol away from the Avon Gorge **–** noted at two sites. A pair, which fledged three young in 2013, nested on a nearby building and fledged three chicks in June but only two were present in July. At the other site a pair was present but with no evidence of breeding.

Non-breeding records

One or two were frequent throughout the year at OPS, Severnside and Cl-Y. The table below gives monthly bird-day totals for the other well-watched sites, where they are probably under recorded.

Peregrine (con't)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Portishead and PWD			5	7	2	2	2	6	1	1		1	27
Sand Point and Bay	1			1				1	1				4
Weston STW	5	4	1	1	1		1	1		1	2		17
Axe Estuary/Uphill	2	2	1	2	1		2	3	1	1			15
CVL	7	2	1	4	2	1	3	8	16	3	12	7	66
BL	2			2	1			1		2	1	1	10
Saltford	1			1			1	3	5	5		1	17
Yatton	5	2								5		3	15
Marshfield	2	2		3		2				2	2	2	15

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

Records were received from a further 73 widely scattered sites (11 in SG, 14 in BA, 18 in NS and 30 in Bristol). The high number of sites in Bristol suggests there is quite a bit of duplication with the breeding pairs which presumably range quite widely.

Ringing recoveries

A nestling colour ringed in the Avon Gorge in May 2012 was seen in Bishops Cleeve, Glos on 31st December, 2014 and from a site in Staffordshire on June 27th. A female nestling colour ringed at St Johns, Bath in May 2013 was seen in Norwich on April 17th and again on Nov. 13th.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

A scarce visitor, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population.

An increase in records in 2015 was noted with ten records, although it is at least possible that some of these records refer to the same individual moving about (*cf*. two in 2012, five in 2013, and three records involving four birds in 2014). The details are as follows in date order:

Nailsea – one on Feb. 10th;

CVL – two on April 25th;

New Passage – one on Aug. 9th:

Severn Beach – one on Aug. 13th, 15th, and 16th;

Langford – one on and off between Aug. 23rd and Sept. 9th;

Sand Point – one on Oct. 20th and Nov. 23rd.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

This common and adaptable species continues to thrive.

Breeding A total of 1501 was recorded in the two BBS counts over 163 squares in 2015 representing 94% of the area surveyed. This compares with a distribution rate of 92% of the squares surveyed in 2014. In practice, this species is very successful and adaptable and is able to exploit both urban and rural environments. It was recorded from all tetrads in the Avon Atlas 2007-11 and there is no reason to think that the situation has changed. There was an increase of 9% compared to the BBS results for 2014 and this is the highest figure in the past ten years (see table below) although in the longer term there does appear to have been a significant decline.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-26%	**8%**	0%	3%	2%	-9%	5%	-1%	1%	0%	-2%	9%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the WGS this species was recorded in 93% of gardens in the winter of 2014/15 compared with 89% the previous winter while the average weekly number per garden surveyed per week increased by 6%. There were 40 records of over 20 during the year, the large majority being post-breeding and winter records. At OPS 23 was a site record while 74 on Jan.16th was the highest count from a survey around Saltford and 37 were recorded in Horfield on Dec. 5th.

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 132 in the two BBS counts over 66 squares representing 38% of those surveyed. There was a 6% decrease compared with 2014 which follows a similar fall the previous year. Nesting was confirmed in Bishopston while about eight pairs were recorded around CVL.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-12%	**7%**	-3%	17%	-9%	16%	-5%	-10%	4%	14%	-6%	-6%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the WGS this species was recorded in 57% of gardens in the 2014/15 winter period, an increase of 9% over the previous winter. CABS reported no change from 2014 but shows a decrease of 54% over the past ten years. There was again some evidence of migration with groups of six and eight being recorded heading NE at New Passage in April and 18 recorded at Clevedon on 14th. Three quarters of the records were of one or two but 12 were noted at Ashton Court on Oct.18th, ten at Easton on 15th and 12 at Saltford on 8th.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula* [RR]

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 3843 was recorded in the two counts from 146 squares representing 84% of the area surveyed. BBS results in Avon (see table below) suggest a stable population over the past ten years but with some longer term decline. However, this is at odds with the national picture where the BBS results for England show an increase of 60% between 1995 and 2013 while the equivalent figure for the same period in Avon is -2%. Furthermore CABS indicates a decline of 65% over the same period. The reasons for this are unclear and require further investigation.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-12%	0%	4%	-4%	-1%	-5%	6%	-2%	-1%	-6%	4%	6%

BBS percentage changes

Other records By far the largest flock reported was an estimated 4000 roosting on Denny Island at CVL on April 18th and 25th. At OPS 1500 were flushed from the roost on Dec. 28th which was a site record, the previous highest count being 500. Other large flocks included 1000 at ASW at dusk on Feb. 3rd, 1000 at Aust Cliff on the same day, and 1200 at BL on Oct. 29th.

Nordic Jackdaw *Corvus monedula monedula* (5 since first in 2008, 1)

Very rare winter vagrant.
Descriptions required.

One record: one at New Passage on Nov. 6th was photographed the next day amongst a flock of 55 Jackdaws (P D Bowerman, M Hayes, J P Martin).

The last record of this subspecies was from this site in December 2014.

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; see the paper on page 153.

Breeding A total of 1399 was recorded in the two BBS visits over 65 squares, representing 38% of the whole area surveyed. This is a 39% increase compared with the previous year (see the table below). The BBS is not ideally suited to measuring a colonial species such as this and the picture can be further muddied by the appearance of post-breeding flocks during the period of the survey. However, the Avon Rookery Survey in

2015 which counts nests in rookeries suggests a decline of about 43% from a similar survey in 1995 and would seem to broadly confirm the BBS picture of a significant decline.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-58%	-28%	-22%	17%	-9%	21%	-25%	-20%	-10%	31%	-27%	39%

Rook BBS percentage changes

Other records Post-breeding flocks are evident from late May as the species disperses away from the rookeries. There was an increase in reports of flocks over 100 in 2015 compared to 2014. However, again few really large flocks were noted. The largest count was 1000 at Marshfield on Oct. 26th while the next largest was 250 also at Marshfield on July 20th. The only other counts of more than 100 were: 200 at Weston STW on Jan.18th, 160 at OPS on June 24th, 110 at Hay Wood on April 30th, 117 at East Wrington on May 24th, 110 at Newton Park on Nov. 4th, and 150 at Paulton on Dec. 3rd. As recently as 2010 flocks of between 500 and 900 were seen regularly, and in 2006 there was one of 1500. While records of some flocks of mixed corvids in winter have not been broken down to species the main cause is likely to be the significant recent decline in the breeding population.

We welcome all records of this species, particularly those of post-breeding and wintering flocks. *(Eds.)*

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

This adaptable species is found throughout the Avon area with records from all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and significant numbers are recorded in both urban and rural areas. The National BBS figures for England show an increase of 24% between 1995 and 2013 well in excess of the Avon figures but there is considerable regional variation and the local population has been stable over the past twenty years despite a decrease of 10% in 2014/15 (see table below).

Breeding The species was counted in 168 squares during the 2015 BBS representing 97% of the squares surveyed with a total of 3060 noted during the two visits.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-1%	-12%	0%	-7%	-4%	2%	4%	-4%	-1%	6%	1%	-10%

BBS percentage changes

Other records The largest flocks noted were 350 at OPS on March 30th, 250 at Weston STW during July, 165 at OPS on Aug.16th and 185 at Heron's Green, CVL on Oct.16th. In Keynsham one was observed on several days in October dropping walnuts from a height onto the road in an attempt to break them, while at OPS on March 3rd a pair was observed stealing a fresh carcass from a Peregrine's food cache.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon but widespread breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

The local population has increased steadily since 1994.

Breeding See the table below which shows the more or less steady expansion in distribution of this species over the past decade or so. In the BBS in 2015 a total of 60 was counted in the two visits over 32 squares, which represent 18% of the area surveyed. This compares to 76 in 38 squares (21%) in 2014. While this represents a decrease, the numbers involved are too small to create a convincing trend. Breeding was confirmed in seven locations.

Year	2005	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
% of squares surveyed	8.4	8.7	10.9	7.7	14.4	15.1	16.3	12.7	17.6	21.3	18.5

Percentage of Avon BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Other records More than 1000 records were received as in 2014. As in that year it was recorded from every ten *km* square in the Avon area. Most records (845) were of one or two and only 11 related to counts of more than ten with 15 at CVL on July 18th and 24 at Saltford on Dec. 20th. There was a total of 2174 bird-days over the year but this marks a reduction when compared to the 2608 bird-days recorded in 2014.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* [RR]

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 A total of 189 from 61 squares (35% of the area surveyed) was recorded in the two BBS visits. This is another welcome improvement following on from last year's count of 137 from 48 squares. This species fluctuates dramatically and is taking advantage of the succession of mild winters that have followed the cold late spring of 2013 which led to a major decline and from which it is now recovering. 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. Nationally, the BBS recorded a 23% increase in England for the period 1995 to 2013 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is broadly in line with this at 16%.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
50%	-16%	-30%	17%	-1%	-47%	13%	21%	38%	-47%	60%	21%

BBS percentage changes

The improved status of this species is also reflected in the greatly increased numbers in 2015 with 1017 records covering at least 3072 individuals, compared to 2014 when there were 621 records and at least 1447 individuals. Records fell off in mid-summer reaching a low point of 28 records in July before picking up again in the autumn with 88 in September and increasing to a maximum of 162 in October. Many of the autumn sightings (47% in October) were from coastal locations and presumably reflect migration.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla* [RBBP]

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.

Excluding records from the breeding site (see below), a total of 23 bird-days was recorded from 11 sites in 2014, and so the respective totals of 58 and 17 in 2015 represent a significant increase. This was largely due to a run of autumn records that reflected a country-wide movement between late September and early November. Non-breeding bird-day totals are summarised in the two tables that follow, the data were largely recorded from coastal sites.

Jan	Feb	Mar	:	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	2	2		1	25	20	6

Oct 1-10	Oct 11-20	Oct 21-31	Nov 1-10	Nov 11-20	Nov 21-30
3	10	12	13	5	2

Three sites recorded three or more bird-days during the year and one of these included a count of four on one outstanding date. These records are as follows.

OPS – Single birds on March 17th and Nov. 3rd, 12th and 28th;

Severnside – 12 bird-days between Oct.16th and Nov. 9th;

CI-Y – One on March 18th then four bird-days between Oct. 3rd and 28th;

Sand Point – 18 bird-days between Oct. 4th and Nov.12th with four individuals on the last date;

Saltford – Single birds on Nov. 3rd and 12th, and Dec. 14th;

CVL – Single birds on Sept. 3rd, and Oct. 11th and 31st with first two at the ringing station.

Single birds were recorded on several consecutive days at both Sand Point and Severn Beach, and these may have involved just one or more individuals at each location. Other bird-day totals were as follows:

PWD	1	Worle	2
Gordano Valley	1 (ringed)	Weston STW	1
Clevedon	2	Frampton Cotterell	1
Banwell	2	Bristol	4 from four widely spread sites

The winter trend data given below will undoubtedly rise sharply when records for 2015/16 become available.

Firecrest (con't)

Winter	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
No. seen	2	10	10	19	18	4	3	11	14	15

Estimates of the number of individuals seen each winter, October to March

Breeding Again present at a site in North Somerset during the breeding season (the first breeding record in the Avon area was at this site in 2013): watched collecting nesting material in early April.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus* [RR]

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.

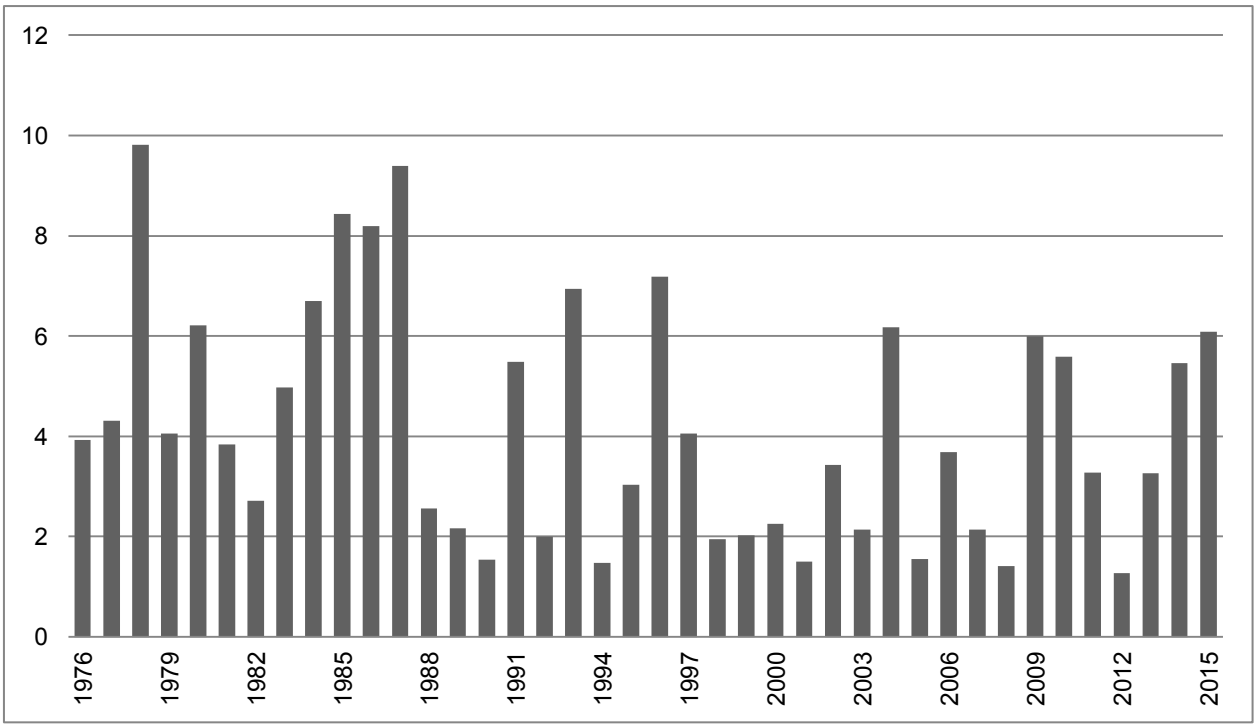
Breeding A total of 1812 was recorded in the two BBS visits over a total of 167 squares representing 97% of those surveyed in the Avon area, but the survey indicates a further decline. Nationally the BBS figures for England show an increase of 2% for the period 1995 to 2013 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is-18%. Most of the decrease in the Avon area is attributable to the last ten years. A succession of mild winters will have helped over-wintering survival rates but this has been offset by some poor breeding seasons. CABS shows a decrease of 3% over 2014 and a 57% decrease over ten years.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-27%	-28%	-9%	-9%	-3%	-8%	21%	-3%	-9%	-3%	0%	-6%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL the 32 nests that were monitored produced 268 eggs from which 238 young hatched. Of these 32 nests 23 were successful. At Folly Farm 42 hatched from ten nests.

At CVL the chick survival rate, both in the nest and post-fledging in 2015, 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 2015. It was calculated by comparing the juvenile to adult ratio for birds that were alive between August and December during this period. In 2015, 6.09 juveniles were recorded for each adult which is a further welcome improvement on the low point of 1.27 in 2012. However, it is still evident that since 1986 there have been more poor breeding seasons than good ones.



Productivity at CVL 1976 - 2015

Other records It was present in all gardens in the WGS in the winter of 2014-15 but the annual change in the average number per garden per week since 2013/14 was a decrease of 8% with a decrease of 33% over ten years, and these results seem to broadly tie in with the BBS results.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident.

This is a common species, which was recorded in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas.

Breeding A total of 1314 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 162 squares representing 94% of the total area surveyed. A decrease of 2% from 2014 was noted. 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 30% over the period 1995 to 2013 while the equivalent figure for the Avon area is an increase of 15%. The recording rate in CABS was down 35% in 2015 compared to 2014 while the ten year figure indicates a decrease of 67%.

At CVL the 45 nests that were monitored produced 290 eggs from which 236 young hatched. Of these 45 nests 35 were successful.

At Iron Acton a nest was recorded with seven young fledged by the end of May and, unusually, a second brood hatched on July 3rd and another seven young fledged by July 21st.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-12%	-15%	17%	-12%	6%	-10%	18%	-13%	0%	-8%	-7%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

Other records The species was recorded in 97% of gardens surveyed in the WGS in the winter of 2014/15 and the annual change in the average number per garden per week was a decrease of 7% with a decrease of 35% over ten years.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.

This species is widely but thinly distributed around our area. There was a large increase in the records received for this species this year with 654 records and a total of over 1000 individuals compared with 376 records and a total of less than 500 individuals in 2014. Much of the increase relates to the autumn and may reflect a poor tree-seed crop, causing this normally sedentary species to venture further afield.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 85 in the two visits over 45 squares which represented 26% of those surveyed. This compares to 115 in 48 squares representing 27% of those surveyed in 2014. The numbers counted in the BBS are too small to make confident estimates of population change.

Four pairs were located around CVL during the breeding season.

The table below shows the percentage of BBS squares in which the species was recorded in the past ten years.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
26%	32%	26%	30%	34%	27%	28%	24%	27%	26%

Percentage of BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Other records There was an increase in records in the autumn with 48% of records (at least 481 individuals) relating to the period from Sept.1st to the end of the year. In the WGS in the winter of 2014/15 the species was recorded in 73% of the gardens surveyed which is in line with the last two years but still some 25% below their peak in the winter of 2002/03 when it was recorded in 97% of gardens.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montana* (49, 2) [RBBP]

Apparently a very scarce resident.

Descriptions required.

Two records, from Lower Woods in December, were the first since 2011. At 09.15 on 23rd two were heard calling for a few minutes, with one seen, while on 28th one was briefly heard singing at 09.00 (both J Rowe).

The table below gives the numbers recorded in the past two decades.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	2	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	2

Records each year

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris* [Red 3]

Uncommon breeding resident.

A locally and nationally declining species.

In 2015 this species was noted in 40 one *km* squares (compared to 43 in 2014), including four BBS squares (five in 2014). This is a sedentary species but also very elusive and it is worth noting that it had not been recorded in 17 of the 40 squares in which it was recorded in 2015 in either of the previous two years. The highest counts were of six at Lower Wetmoor on Sept. 27th and five at the same site on Dec. 27th. Most other counts were of one or two. An adult was recorded carrying food at Lower Woods on June 6th but no other confirmed breeding evidence was noted. However, two first-calendar year birds caught and ringed in a garden in Compton Dando on Oct.28th and Nov. 22nd are indicative of local breeding.

Breeding 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 32% for England in the period 1995 to 2013 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.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
BBS Squares	5	7	4	5	9	3	3	6	5	4
% of area surveyed	2.6	3.8	2.6	3.1	5.2	1.7	1.8	3.4	2.8	2.3

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Other records The species was recorded visiting gardens in Banwell, Barrow Gurney, Combe Dingle, Compton Martin and Easton-in-Gordano. In the garden in Banwell it was recorded on 174 days up to June 16th and after Sept. 4th and this compared to a total of 105 days in 2014.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus* (88, 6)

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor with the majority recorded from the extensive reedbeds at CVL, where breeding took place in 1991.
Descriptions required.

A good spread of records.

First winter period One was heard at Weston STW on Feb.11th (A Hockey).

Second winter period There were a series of records from both OPS and CVL, details as follows:

OPS – an adult male was seen and photographed at 09.55 on Oct. 14th (P J Hazelwood), a female was photographed at 14.00 on 20th (P Zaltowski). One was heard calling for ten minutes at 16.20 on Nov. 22nd (P J Hazelwood);

CVL – two reported on Oct. 23rd but without confirmatory notes are assumed to relate to the three, two males and a female, which were trapped, ringed and photographed on 25th by CVRS. Two were seen and heard from Stratford hide on 31st (A H Davis) and there were unconfirmed reports from here up until Nov. 24th.

The majority of local records come from CVL, with 71 of the 88 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2014.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea* (20, 1)

Very scarce late autumn migrant.
Descriptions required.

One record: one flew east during a migration watch at Sand Point on Oct. 18th (P A Gregory). The last record, in October 2012, was at the same site in similar circumstances.

The table below gives the numbers seen during the past two decades. It is likely that this species is under recorded as a good sighting and/or clear calls are needed to be sure of its identification.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1

Individuals each year

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis* [Red 3]

Common breeding resident in appropriate habitat, also a passage migrant and winter visitor.

A normal year.

First winter During January and February 3105 bird-days were recorded out of a total of 8301 for the whole year. The highest count was 1000 at Rushmead Farm, Marshfield on Jan.14th while 150 were recorded at Paulton on the same date. At Weston STW the count of 69 on Feb. 7th was the highest for the year but most other records were of small groups of fewer than 20 from a variety of coastal and inland locations. Song was first noted on Feb. 8th at Lulsgate Bottom.

Spring Passage Numbers recorded dropped off markedly in March with only 231 bird-days noted during the month from a total of 31 sites. The highest counts were 20 at CI-Y on 11th and at Newton Park on 16th. However, a number of references to the Marshfield area, where the highest count was ten, refer to 'good numbers' and 'lots of' so it may well be that the submitted records understate the actual position. There was no specific evidence of migration. However, bird-days increase dramatically in April with a total of 844 recorded during the month.

Breeding Season In 2015 a total of 573 was counted during the two BBS visits in 71 squares representing 41% of the squares surveyed.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-51%	-42%	-13%	2%	-13%	-10%	2%	-12%	1%	-22%	29%	-8%

BBS percentage changes

During April and May a total of 1277 was recorded falling to 238 in June. Counts were all of small numbers with 22 being the highest, but mostly single figures. The species was reported from a total of 114 squares, of which 71 were the squares surveyed by the BBS. At CVL no singing males were noted in their usual area close to the lake as result of changed agricultural management and the species may have been lost from this locality.

Autumn passage Records dropped away sharply in July with 65 bird-days and only 45 in August. Numbers picked up again and peaked in October with 1621 bird-days. Visual migration was noted from Sept. 23rd in groups of less than 20, peaking in mid October and continuing into November, most were heading NE. With the build up of records it is not always easy to distinguish between passage migrants and those that have arrived to over-winter. Inland counts included 200 at Marshfield on Oct. 27th and 94 at Saltford on the 14th.

Second winter period There were 1479 bird-days in November and December, that is half the number noted in January and February. The only counts of 100 or more were 100 at Paulton on Nov. 30th and 200 at Rushmead Farm, Marshfield on Dec.10th.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.

An average year with no exceptionally high counts is either passage period.

Arrival and passage The first reports came from CVL on March 6th two days earlier than average, two were noted with three on 7th and 28 on 8th. The first on the coast were two at OPS also on 8th. For the next month there was a steady flow of single or double figure counts slightly more inland than on the coast, the best being 81 at OPS on 20th. In mid April CVL reported some three figure counts including 550 on 12th, 815 (the largest spring count) on 14th, 500 on 17th and 150 on 22nd, the best coastal count during this period was 200 at PWD on 14th. Passage continued to mid May with a few double figure counts until mid month. Overall the passage, as summarised in the table below, was about average with more recorded than in 2013 but only half of that in 2014, see the table on page 113.

Date	March			April			May	
	6 - 11	12 - 21	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	62	180	190	305	2630	850	305	70
Max count	28	81	50	67	815	150	120	50

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS counted 63 (23 in 2014) from four squares (2% of the total), a figure that is too small for any meaningful statistical inferences to be made.

Sand Martin (con't)
As usual nesting reports were received from Keynsham and BG. Some of the drainage holes at the first site were again occupied, five in mid-May, only two at the beginning of June and four at the end of the month. So probably at least five pairs attempted to breed with possibly two repeat nests. At BG 11 were reported actively investigating the artificial nest holes at the beginning of May and six of these were occupied at the end of the month. This suggests an Avon total of about 11 pairs which is average for the past decade; see table below.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
28	23	23	15	14	14	14	9	15	14	4	7	5	7	7	20	18	15	12+	11

Estimate of the total number of breeding pairs 1996-2015

Autumn Passage The first report in the autumn was of 20 at Tortworth Lake on July 3rd. After this the passage developed slowly until the last week, and the highest counts were 12 at New Passage on 12th, 30 at CVL on 16th and 22 at BL on 22nd. CVL saw some notable counts in the last week, the best being 500 on 26th. The passage continued throughout August, and again CVL reported the largest counts with 100 on 7th and at least 100 on 26th. During this time the coastal counts were mostly in single figures. This passage continued through to the third week of September, with one unusual sighting when 150 were noted in flight over Paulton on 6th. The last four records were: 15 at CVL on 24th, three at New Passage on the same day with one on the next, and 12 at Sand Point on 28th. This final record was nine days earlier than the average last date since 1990. The data are summarised in the table below, and are a notable improvement on both 2013 and 2014.

Date	July			Aug			Sept		
	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 8	9 - 18	19 - 28
Bird-days	38	110	1025	155	87	365	385	205	84
Max count	20	30	500	100	30	100	150	100	15

Autumn passage

2014 Data

A problem arose with the data for all three hirundine species in last year's Report, many were correct but some were corrupted. So it has been decided to give all the main, now correct, data for 2014 in this Report.

The first three records were: one at Severn Beach on March 7th, four at CVL on 12th with one here on 13th; and the last three were: three at New Passage and one at CVL on Sept.13th, and five at the first of these sites the following day. The tables below summarise the main 2014 migration data.

Date	March		April			May	
	11 - 20	21 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	1285	4060	940	720	1390	125	20
Max count	1000	1000	300	200	1000	50	5

2014 spring passage

Date	July			Aug			Sept	
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20
Bird-days	100	35	55	260	800	520	19	14
Max count	35	14	10	100	200	250	5	12

2014 autumn passage

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common passage migrant and common breeder.

Both spring and autumn passages were on the low side; no records were broken.

Arrival and spring passage One was noted (during a WeBS count!) at Woodspring Bay on March 8th, this is the earliest for the past 25 years and eleven days prior to the average. Another was seen at Lansdown on 10th. The next were single birds at PWD and CVL on 19th and the first double figure counts came from Congresbury Moor (10), CVL (15) and BL (40) at the end of the month. Passage was continuous until mid May with mainly single or double figure counts, the exceptions were about 400 (part of a mixed flock of 750 hirundines) at CVL on April 18th, 140 at New Passage and 600 at Sand Point on 21st with 160 here on the following day, 300 at CVL on May 6th, 180 at Severnside and 300 at Cl-Y on 8th, and 250 at CVL on 18th with 200 on the following day. The table below summarises the passage which was similar to that for 2014 but only half of that for 2013. It is perhaps also worth noting that in just the first three days of May in 2012 four times as many were reported than during the whole of the 2015 spring passage.

Date	April			May		
	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20	20 - 30
Bird-days	440	1440	2080	2150	1200	450
Max count	40	*c.* 400	600	300	250	24

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS counted 1021 (1036 in 2014) from 116 squares which represents most of the non-urban squares that are covered by the survey, and the proportion, at 67%, has altered little since 1994.

Since 1994	2004/14	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
19%	**-21%**	23%	34%	-45%	10%	5%	-22%	25%	-24%	-4%	7%

BBS percentage changes

This species breeds widely in our local farms and at other rural sites but few records are received. Recently an attempt has been made to ring pulli from the successful nests in the general areas around the Cam Valley, CVL and elsewhere in the south-east of the region. In the Cam Valley in 2014, 28 pulli (seven broods) were ringed and in 2015, 61 pulli (11 broods). In the area around CVL (farms near Chew Magna and Stowey) in 2014, 107 pulli (20 broods) were ringed and in 2015, 34 pulli (nine broods). Also in 2015 nine pulli (two broods) were ringed at Brentry north of Bristol and four nests were reported in Compton Dando. It should be noted that these figures do, in part, reflect ringer effort. So far there has been one recovery: a pulli ringed at Hinton Blewitt on June 6th, 2013 was retrapped two years later on July 18th by CVRS.

Autumn passage Some passage was evident by mid July with several counts from Saltford including 82 on 16th, 135 on 23rd, 84 on Aug. 7th and 128 on 13th. Cl-Y also recorded some three figure counts with 160 on 13th and 175 on 18th, and 100 was recorded at both OPS and CVL at this time. The first large autumn count, and the largest of the year, was of at least 1000 forced down by poor weather at CVL on 25th. Saltford was again reporting three figure counts with 110 on 25th and 150 on 27th. A similar range of sightings was noted throughout September with the best counts from New Passage (200), Cl-Y (220), Sand Point (200), Weston STW (265), Saltford (210), Burnett (225), Paulton (150), BG (200), CVL (500) and BL (400).

The last three figure count was of 100 at Weston STW on Oct. 8th and the last two figure count was 30 at Cl-Y on 10th. They were reported on every day up to 23rd, and the final three sightings were: two on Chipping Sodbury Common on 30th, and single birds at Aust on Nov. 3rd and at CVL on 8th, a date equal to the average for the past 25 years. The table below summarises the autumn passage, it was about 20% larger than that in 2013 but only two-thirds of that in 2014.

Date	August			September			October	
	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 8	9 - 18	19 - 28	29 - 8	9 - 18
Bird-days	640	1600	2020	1490	3010	1670	370	100
Max. count	84	175	1000	200	500	265	100	30

Autumn passage – top row shows bird-days, bottom row the maximum count

2014 Data

As noted above the 2014 data appeared partly corrupted in last year's Report, the correct data is given below. The first three records were: two at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y on March 15th, one at Lansdown on 19th and another at CVL on 20th; and the last three were: single birds at Cl-Y on Oct. 23rd, Marshfield on 31st and PWD on Nov. 2nd. The tables below summarise the main 2014 migration data.

Date	March	April			May	
	21 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	24	205	1540	1525	3850	485
Max count	10	50	500	245	800	85

2014 spring passage

Date	July		August			September			October	
	11 - 20	21 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21-31	1-10	11 -20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	590	925	710	510	3740	2800	5170	2080	330	740
Max count	100	300	150	100	1000	1000	1000	500	50	500

2014 autumn passage

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum* [Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and breeder.

After a late start both passages produced slightly above average counts.

Arrival and passage The first reports came a week later than average with two on April 1st at CVL, four here on 2nd and ten on 4th. The first on the coast were noted on 6th with single birds at both New Passage and Sand Point. There followed a steady flow of mainly single or double figure counts for the next six weeks with none specifically referring to this species above 150. Mid May produced some higher counts with 200 at BL on 12th and 'hoards' here on 18th, 400 at CVL on 19th, and a mixed hirundine flock of 500 at BG on 29th was described as consisting of mainly this species. The passage is summarised in the table below, the overall count of about 3700 was a notable improvement on those for either 2013 or 2014.

Date	April			May		
	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30
Bird-days	41	410	830	775	1400	500
Max count	10	100	150	100	400	350

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS counted 355 (370 in 2014) from 50 squares which, at 29%, is the lowest figure for distribution since 1994 but virtually the same as in 2014. This partly reflects the fact that there has been an increase in the proportion of urban squares covered by the survey. As the table below shows numbers have dropped by two-thirds in the last two decades including a 15% drop between 2014 and 2015.

Since 1994	2005/15	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-67%	**-47%**	-7%	76%	-42%	-17%	-5%	14%	13%	-38%	4%	-15%

BBS percentage changes

Nests were reported from the following seven sites (with nest count in brackets): Compton Dando (six), Felton (13 in Coombe Dale), Frampton Cotterel (at least one with two chicks being fed), Keynsham (11 in Queen's Road), Chew Stoke (three on Pagan's Hill), Paulton (15), Sea Mills (eight), and Walton-in-Gordano (six). Birds were widely reported during the breeding season so this list by no means covers all sites.

Autumn passage The passage began slowly in mid July with some double figure counts at New Passage including 42 on 11th and 55 on 19th, and 'good numbers' in the Shire Valley, Marshfield on 14th. The first three figure counts were noted inland at CVL (150 on Aug. 13th) and Saltford (200 on 14th). On both 19th and 25th CVL reported counts of at least 1000 forced low over the lake by rain. Most other counts during the month were in single or double figures, and this continued until mid September. Away from CVL the best counts in the second week were: 200 at New Passage on 11th, 230 at Saltford on 12th and 300 at OPS on 13th. The middle of September saw the highest counts of the year with 500 at BL on 14th and 1500 at CVL on 15th, and 750 here on 24th. Numbers tailed off markedly into October until a late surge with 300 at BL on 5th and 200 at CVL on 6th. Except for one very late sighting, the last records were as follows: six at Saltford and two at Sand Point on Oct.10th, and 20 at Iron Acton and four at Cl-Y on 11th. The exception was a record of four at Uphill on Nov. 24th, a full four weeks later than the 25-year average. Later sightings have occurred in the past; see page 147.

The table below summarises the autumn passage. As can be seen from the second, general hirundine passage table on the following page it was much stronger than that in 2013 but slightly below the 2014 figure.

Date	July	August			September			October
	21 - 30	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 8	9 - 18	19 - 28	29 - 8
Bird-days	420	390	1850	1840	1530	3600	2050	690
Max. count	122	95	1000	1000	160	1500	750	300

Autumn passage

2014 Data

As noted above the 2014 data appeared partly corrupted in last year's Report, the correct data is given below. The first three records were: five at New Passage and four at Cl-Y on March 19th with five at New Passage again the following day; and the last three were three at Aust on Oct. 8th, a remarkable 200 (with 500 Swallows) passing over Steep Holm on 11th, and five at Kenn (near Cl-Y) on 16th. The tables below summarise the main 2014 migration data.

Date	March	April			May		
	21 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 31
Bird-days	9	12	190	880	645	145	660
Max count	8	5	30	400	200	31	300

2014 spring passage

Date	July		August		September		
	21 - 30	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 8	9 - 18	19 - 28
Bird-days	220	330	1750	3220	1250	7640	520
Max. count	50	95	500	2000	400	2800	35

2014 autumn passage

A note on hirundine passage

Recorded visible hirundine passage is only, in most years, a relatively small proportion of the total passage. It has been estimated that, as a rough guide, the total Swallow passage through the Avon area in both spring and autumn is at least 50000 with Sand and House Martin figures probably considerably lower (see the Spring Migration paper in the 2012 edition of this Report). But it is still worth while recording the data each year as an indicator of the general health of the populations. The table below gives a summary of the data for the past three years, it shows the expected variability: reports for spring 2015 were a bit low with Swallow numbers well down, while those for autumn were about average. Note that the 2014 figures have been amended to fall into line with the new 2014 tables given above.

There is an extra problem with this data. We receive many reports of mixed hirundine flocks with no indication of the relative proportions of each species and words like “huge” or “hoards” to record the numbers present. Most of these records have not been included in the data presented in this Report which is a pity. So in future observers are asked, where possible, to give at least some idea of the numbers present – for example, hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands; and also with mixed hirundine flocks some idea of the proportions – for example, about half-and-half, or mostly one species. This will enable the editors to obtain some idea of the totals numbers passing through. *(Eds.)*

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Autumn 2013	Autumn 2014	Autumn 2015
Sand Martin	2300	8550	4300	1100	1820	2470
Swallow	13500	7630	6760	7900	17600	10900
House Martin	2700	2540	3700	2300	15150	12400

Visible hirundine passage, 2013 to 2015

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti* [RR] [RBBP]

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

As ever, it is difficult to ascertain the true population of a species that is frequently heard but very rarely seen. However, numbers are now clearly recovering after a run of cold winters.

Reports of singing males were received on a regular basis from OPS (up to three), Severnside (at least three, but probably more), PWD (up to eight), Cl-Y (one or two) and Weston STW (estimated at six territories). Up to three were noted on many dates from the Strawberry Line, Yatton, but there could well be more along this extensive route. Similar counts came from the River Avon near Pill in the first half of the year, and Littleton Pits recorded up to four between May and October. CVL remains the site with the highest numbers, 14 singing males being the best estimate of the population, which is well distributed round the lake. A total of 61 was ringed here during the year by CVRS, of which 28 were juveniles.

Away from the main sites, there was one in Worle on Feb. 21st, one at Sand Point on Oct. 4th and 28th (new to this site), and one at Saltford on several dates between Oct. 14th and the end of the year.

The table below, showing the number of singing males at CVL, is a reflection of the population changes for this species in the wider area.

1995	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	2	4	8	12	10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28	31	14	6	3	4	14

Singing males at CVL

One ringed as a juvenile at Marsworth Reservoir (Herts) in June, and still there on Oct. 25th, was retrapped at CVL on Nov. 1st, having moved 147 *km* in no more than seven days.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident.

Once again widely reported in good numbers throughout the year, often in parties of up to 20 at a time, and it appears that this species continues to flourish locally, although numbers fluctuate from year to year.

WGS records came from 87% of surveyed gardens in the 2014/15 winter, 6% up on the previous winter. During the breeding season, BBS surveyors counted a total of 260 over their two visits, with the population unchanged from 2014, as shown in the table below. The species was found in 78 squares representing 45% of those surveyed.

since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-50%	-29%	2%	26%	-9%	-2%	10%	-33%	1%	-25%	9%	0%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, 56 were ringed on May 24th, including many juveniles, and it was noted that numbers were up on those of the previous two years, and that young were out of the nest two weeks earlier.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus* (36 since first in 1986, 6)

Scarce or very scarce autumn visitor; rare in winter.
Descriptions required.

Another excellent year with at least six individuals, all in October, details as follows:

Cl-Y – one watched on Wain's Hill for 15 minutes on 28th (S Sanins);

Sand Point – one heard calling in the car park at 07.50 on 4th was seen about an hour later and a second was seen shortly afterwards in a different part of the car park (P A Gregory). The same, or another, was seen and heard calling in the car park at 13.00 on 20th (C Holman) and seen at 07.15 and again at 08.45 on 28th (P A Gregory);

Weston-s-Mare – one was heard calling twice on Clarence Park East in the morning of 5th (W Blake);

Yate – one heard calling repeatedly in Kingsgate Park on 13th (D Pearce);

Chew Magna – one watched for a few minutes in a garden at 14.30 on 23rd (A H Davis).

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years. Five were seen in 1986, the first year they were recorded in the Avon area.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	5	0	1	3	4	1	5	6

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.

Just five individuals this spring, all on classic dates in April. Two were at BL on 16th, there was one in Saltford on 21st, another in Hanham on 26th, and finally one in Hallatrow on 27th. As usual, there were no autumn records.

The table below shows the numbers recorded on spring passage in each of the last ten years.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
10	5	3	7	8	2	7	8	6	5

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.

A typical year, both in winter and summer.

At least 56 wintering individuals were noted from 21 different spots in January, with at least 44 counted at 18 sites in February, nearly 30 places seemingly supporting at least one individual over those two months. The

maximum counted at any one site was 17 at CVL on one day in January, with 20 being the best estimate of the number wintering here. Counts at other sites varied between one and six and as usual, wetland sites were favoured, such as rivers, lakes and sewage works.

Singing was increasingly heard through February, and from early March there were sightings from places like Pill (6th) and Litton (7th) where there had been no records earlier, but it was not until the middle of the month that migrants became widespread away from known wintering sites. Some larger counts included ten in Eastville Park on 13th, 12 at BL on 15th, 13 at OPS on 18th and 20 at CVL on 21st, indicating the start of the main arrival. Good numbers continued to be seen at many places throughout April, 18 at OPS on 6th, 21 at Saltford on 8th, 25 at Sand Point on 9th and 16 at Cl-Y on 16th including many migrants, although by now some were clearly back at breeding sites.

The Avon BBS survey found this species in 150 squares, representing 87% of those surveyed and reflecting the species' widespread distribution throughout the breeding season. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1112, the data indicating a small increase of 6% in numbers as shown in the table below. Locally the population remains reasonably stable, against a background of an increasing population in England as a whole.

since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
10%	31%	-9%	21%	8%	-6%	6%	15%	-5%	-25%	26%	6%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, which is surveyed on a regular basis, the number of singing males dropped slightly to 60 from the 67 in 2014, but still a healthy population.

Post-breeding, many places recorded good numbers in August and September, ranging from 33 at Saltford on Aug. 7th, 35 at OPS on 11th, through 30 at Chipping Sodbury Common on 31st and 40 at CVL on Sept. 3rd, to 70 at Littleton Pits on 10th, 60 here on the 20th and 21 at Sand Point on 28th. There were still plenty of records, mostly in single figures, through October and on to the end of the year. One at Sand Point on Nov. 12th was presumably still on migration, but by December most records came from known wintering sites, such as CVL, where ten on 10th was the highest count at any one spot.

Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis* (48, 7)

Scarce or very scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.
Descriptions required.

Another excellent year, particularly at CVL where DNA from trapped birds confirmed the identification of two individuals. In all seven new individuals were reported during the year.

First winter period At least three individuals present at CVL, details as follows:

(a) The individual found on the Bittern Trail in December 2014 remained until March 28th;

(b) A somewhat anomalous individual, with a pale base to the bill, seen briefly at Herriott's End on Jan. 16th gave better views and was photographed on Feb. 3rd and was seen again on 17th (R Mielcarek, A H Davis, L Gardiner);

(c) A more classic looking individual was found at Herriott's End on Jan. 19th and was seen on 22nd, 26th (when it called and showed very well in response to a tape of the song and call, was photographed), 28th, 29th, 30th and Feb. 17th (R Mielcarek *et al.*);

(d) One was trapped and ringed by CVRS in the main reedbed on Feb. 27th (photographed, see opposite page 112). Subsequent DNA analysis of a dropped feather confirmed a 100% match with the DNA of birds from the core *tristis* range in the Yenesei River basin in western Siberia. It is assumed this was the classic looking individual (c) mentioned above;

(e) Another was trapped and ringed in the main reedbed on March 6th (photographed, see opposite page 113). Again DNA analysis of a dropped feather confirmed the identification, this time giving a 99.9% match with birds from the core range. This individual showed a pale base to the bill and is assumed to be the somewhat anomalous individual (b) mentioned above.

Second winter period Five were noted from late October into 2016, details as follows:

CVL – one trapped and ringed by CVRS on Oct. 31st was heard to call as it flew off (photographed, see opposite page 113). Subsequent DNA analysis of a dropped feather confirmed it was identical to birds from the core range in the Yenesei River basin in western Siberia. One found on the Bittern Trail on Nov. 26th was seen again on Dec. 1st, 3rd, 7th (when photographed) and 8th (K E Vinicombe *et al.*). On Dec. 8th a second ringed bird was also present in the same area; this was seen up until 17th and subsequently in 2016, and was heard to call (R Mielcarek, A H Davis *et al.*, photographed);

Chew Stoke STW – one found on Dec. 14th was seen up until 23rd (and subsequently in 2016) and was photographed (A H Davis *et al.*);

Saltford STW – one watched for about 15 minutes on Dec. 18th was singing (J W Duckworth).

Siberian Chiffchaff (con't)

Up until 2010 we published a number of records where the identification was not clear under the heading Eastern Chiffchaff (*P. c. tristis/abietinus*). However, as there is no evidence that *P. c. abietinus* has ever occurred locally we have reviewed all the records published under that heading (but not those already accepted as Siberian Chiffchaff (*P. c. tristis*) and the following are now accepted as *P. c. tristis* only.

1983 – one at Chittening Warth on Jan. 2nd was heard calling (B Lancastle, R Thomas);

1991 – one was at Parkhouse Farm, Keynsham on Nov. 17th (A H Davis);

1992 – one at Stratford Bay, CVL on Nov. 15th was heard calling (A Merritt). At BL two were present between Nov. 29th and 13th February, 1993 and were heard calling (A H Davis, R M Andrews *et al.*);

1993 – one at the Parkland at CVL on March 28th was heard calling (R M Andrews) while another on the Bittern Trail, CVL on Dec. 4th was silent (R M Andrews). This latter record has not previously been published;

1994 – one on the east shore of CVL on Jan. 16th was heard calling (K E Vinicombe);

1996 – one was at BL on March 24th (A H Davis);

1999 – one at Keynsham STW on Feb. 7th, 21st and 28th (J Aldridge);

2001 – one in Bishopston on Jan. 16th (R J Higgins);

2003 – one at the dam overflow, CVL, on Feb. 15th (K E Vinicombe);

2005 – one at Weston Moor on Oct. 7th (S Hale);

2006 – one at Chew Stoke STW on Jan. 12th and Feb. 16th (R Mielcarek);

2007 – one at Keynsham STW on Dec. 21st (A H Davis);

2008 – one at Hollow Brook car park, CVL, on Dec. 16th (R Mielcarek);

2009 – one at BG on Nov. 18th with it, or another, on Dec. 21st (T E Bond, S Davies).

There is now a total of 55 accepted records of *P. c. tristis* since 1983; the table below gives the numbers for each of the past 33 winters.

1982/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	1992/93
1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	4

1993/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	2003/04
2	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0

2004/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
1	2	1	1	3	3	1	3	2	8	5

This is a subtle subspecies where the plumage tones change with the angle of viewing and the light so it is important to get a decent view. The identification paper in this Report for 2007 is an essential guide.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* [RR] [Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and fairly common breeding summer visitor.

Better numbers on autumn migration, and a relatively late departure.

The first records were from Marshfield on March 27th and Leigh Woods on April 3rd. On 4th records came from Bristol, PWD, CVL, Ham Green and Weston STW, and from then on there were multiple widespread sightings, with 40 at Sand Point on 5th marking a large early fall of migrants. Numbers were mostly in single figures through April, but larger counts came from Cl-Y (14 on 6th, 21 on 20th), Sand Point (50 on 10th, 30 16th), Yate (20 on 12th) and Yatton (10 on 15th, 15 on 23rd), indicating the period when most were passing through.

There was a continuing wide spread of records in May, but in June records came from just 13 areas, indicating that many noted earlier had still been on the move. BBS data showed birds present in only 21% of squares, not enough to give a significant picture of the breeding population. At CVL, no singing males remained into the summer, indicating that none bred at the lake this year, the first blank since 2010.

Records from a wide variety of places, mostly in single figures, picked up through August and into September, with eight at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 9th indicating good numbers still present. One was trapped at Littleton Pits on 20th, with sight records then coming from CVL on 23rd, Saltford on 27th and a final bird seen at CVL on Oct. 7th, a late date relative to the average last date of Sept. 23rd.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. It is now also a fairly common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

Continues to thrive winter and summer.

A total of 19 at various locations on Jan. 1st set the scene for the early part of the year, with up to five individuals reported on a daily basis from some gardens through February and into March. Almost all sightings were in towns and villages, very often at feeders, with up to 31 reported on some days in January, although the total wintering population must be far higher than this. The WGS recorded this species from 84% of all survey gardens, fairly typical of recent years. One in Chew Stoke was singing vigorously on Jan. 20th, but song only became widely reported from early March. Garden sightings continued to the end of that month, but rapidly faded thereafter.

One in Weston-s-Mare on March 19th and another on Middle Hope on 20th look to have been among the first incoming migrants, followed by singles seen at BL and Sand Point on 24th, also away from wintering sites, and the first at well-watched CVL was on 28th. From then on multiple sightings were widespread, with an apparent peak in the middle two weeks of April (15 at Sand Point on 10th, 11 at OPS on 12th, 23 at PWD on 14th, 25 at Saltford on 17th, 25 at OPS on 21st), a little later than in 2014.

During the Avon BBS survey for 2015, the species was found in 143 squares, representing 83% of those surveyed, much the same as last year, and showing how widespread this species is as a breeder. A combined total of 1040 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a slight drop of 11% in numbers as compared with 2014, as shown in the table below, although fluctuations from year to year are quite normal.

since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
52%	25%	-3%	11%	-11%	9%	20%	17%	-1%	-17%	17%	-11%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, 73 singing males were located, up again on the 69 in 2014, reinforcing its position as the commonest warbler at the lake after Reed Warbler. The first young were reported, from Bannerdown, on June 7th.

Good numbers were noted widely through the summer, with some of the higher counts occurring in September, for example. 20 at Sand Point on 6th, 35 at Littleton Pits on 10th, 22 at New Passage on 27th and 19 at Aust on Oct. 3rd, indicating the main departure. Small numbers, four or less, continued to be reported through to early November, with the last from well-watched sites such as Weston STW and CVL being seen on Nov. 1st. The first from gardens, presumably wintering birds arriving, were in Banwell on 11th and Frampton Cotterell on 13th. From then on garden sightings were frequent, mostly ones and twos, but a garden in Stoke Bishop already had five on Dec. 16th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Just as in 2014, April 17th saw the first arrivals, with three at CVL, two at ASW, and single birds at Sand Point, Walton Bay, and Queen Charlton. The next day there were two at Compton Dando and three at Charmy Down, and from then on sightings were even more widespread, both inland and along the coast. In May, records came from at least 17 scattered sites, mostly in ones and twos, but thereafter records fell away once the song period was over.

This species does not feature strongly in the BBS, so it is hard to monitor changes in the numbers breeding, but at CVL, which is surveyed regularly, 38 singing males were located, down from the 44 in 2014.

Records in August came from OPS, Severnside, PWD, Weston STW, CVL, Cameley and Saltford, followed in September by single birds at CVL on 2nd, Pilning on 4th, Saltford on 5th and New Passage on 6th, an early last date (the average departure date is Oct. 1st).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

A typical year.

The first one at PWD on April 12th was followed by another at Severn Beach on 15th, then single birds at Yatton, PWD and OPS the next day. Thereafter, sightings of ones and twos were daily from a wide variety of places, with counts of four or more coming from OPS, PWD, Weston STW, Stoke Park Estate and Chipping

Sodbury Common, where 11 on 29th indicated the importance of this site for the species. They continued to be reported here in good numbers throughout the summer.

Other favoured breeding sites included OPS, Cl-Y and Severnside, although at New Passage, with only one or two singing birds, numbers were noted as down on previous years. At CVL four pairs were recorded, one up on 2014. There was no change at Weston STW, with four territories located. The BBS found them in 20 squares, slightly down on the previous year.

As in the spring it is hard to distinguish migrants from breeding birds, but one at Eastville Park on Sept. 2nd, one at Sand Point on 6th and two on 8th at BG were indicative of some movement. The last records came from Weston STW on 19th, Saltford on 20th and 24th, and Chipping Sodbury Common on Oct. 1st.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Breeding numbers appeared to be down this year.

The first arrival was one at Weston STW on April 10th, followed two days later by single birds at OPS and Queen Charlton. On the 15th there were nine at six sites, with 19 at nine sites on 17th. Thereafter single-figure numbers were reported from a wide variety of sites, but 13 at OPS on 21st and 12 at Sand Point on 23rd indicated more on the move at the end of the month, by which time display flights were being noted, indicating that breeding sites were already occupied.

BBS surveyors counted a total of 321 over their two visits, the data indicating a decrease of 27% in numbers compared with 2014, as shown in the table below, negating last year's welcome increase. The species was found in 84 squares, this representing 49% of those surveyed, again well down on last year's figures. Nevertheless, it was very widely reported throughout the breeding season across the whole of our area, though Chipping Sodbury Common was especially favoured with up to 16 present in early August, while the Saltford area also recorded good numbers.

since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
12%	-10%	5%	5%	-16%	21%	10%	34%	-38%	-5%	28%	-27%

BBS percentage changes

During the breeding season counts of singing males at regularly surveyed sites included 10 at CVL, down one from 2014, but only eight at Weston STW, where there had been up to 19 the year before. As the table shows, this species is prone to inter-year fluctuations, some caused by conditions on the wintering grounds.

During September it was a case of mostly single-figure counts, the majority, though not all, from the coast. The last few records came from Saltford on 20th, Severnside on 23rd, 25th and 26th, Chipping Sodbury on 29th, all singletons. Finally, two were reported from Severn Beach on Oct. 1st, slightly later than the average departure date of Sept. 26th.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata* (41, 3)

Formerly rare, now a scarce visitor. Has bred.
Descriptions required.

Three records, details as follows. The records from Sand Bay and Point are considered to involve two different individuals.

Severn Beach – a female during the afternoon of Oct. 20th in brambles near the pipes just north of Chittening Warth (M Hobbs) and reported as calling again on Nov. 1st;

Sand Bay – one was seen and heard briefly opposite the entrance to Pontins at 08.30 on Sept. 28th (G Warren);

Sand Point – one photographed at the very end of the point on Nov. 1st remained until the 4th (P A Gregory *et al.*).

The Avon area records for the past 20 years are summarised below.

1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
2*	6*	2	2	3	0	1	2	1	9	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	3	3

Total annual records; * indicates a breeding record.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia* [Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.

A poor spring passage, and only two pairs in the breeding season.

The first of the year were at Sand Point on April 10th and 11th, and at OPS and Severn Beach on 13th, all single birds located by their reeling song. One doing the same in a Redland garden on 15th is an illustration that migrants can turn up in unusual spots! At Sand Point there were several more records through to 23rd, one was at Portishead on 15th, two were at CVL on 17th with one on 19th, one was noted at the Kenn estuary (Cl-Y) on 20th and there was one at Severn Beach on 25th, 27th and 30th.

During the breeding season, apart from one at Saltford on June 4th, the only records came from Weston STW where one individual was on territory from April 16th through to at least May 3rd with another from April 18th through to July 15th.

Autumn records came from New Passage on Aug. 8th and Saltford on 30th, with September sightings being one at CVL on 6th (trapped), one at Sand Point on the same date, another trapped at the Gordano Nature Reserve on 13th, and the last bird at Weston STW on 19th.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	47	32	29	67	74	105	53	52	44	29
Breeding season	7	11	4	6	6	0	1	4	4	2
Autumn	6	3	6	7	16	9	4	4	5	6

Avon spring and autumn passage bird-days and breeding season territories

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* [RR]

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

No major changes noted.

The first of the year appeared on April 10th at Weston STW and CVL, the latter having been ringed previously in Sussex as a first-year bird on July 11th, 2011. The next day there were records from Sand Point and Chittening Warth, with one at Keynsham STW on 13th. Subsequent records mostly came from sites where they were likely to breed, such as OPS and Saltford on 14th, the Strawberry Line (Yatton) and Batheaston on 15th, PWD on 17th, BL on 18th, Aust Warth on 19th and Cl-Y on 20th. Most records were of one to four, but seven at BL on May 4th and 13 at OPS on 5th were a couple of higher counts, possibly indicating migrants still on the move. Bearing in mind that it is hard to distinguish singing migrants from breeding birds, the best estimate at CVL was of 12 territories, while at Weston STW it was 14.

Birds were reported at most of the above sites throughout the summer, with the first fledglings at CVL on June 9th and at OPS on 21st. From the end of August most records came from ringing sites, particularly from Littleton Pits, with many trapped until Sept. 20th and from CVL through to 30th, the majority being birds of the year. The final report was of one at OPS on Oct. 2nd.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* [RR]

Fairly common passage migrant and localised breeding summer visitor.

One in mid-winter was remarkable, but otherwise a typical year.

The first record of the year was of one caught in the main reedbed at CVL on Jan. 30th. According to the BTO there is one previous record of this species being ringed in January (a bird in Hertfordshire in 1981) whilst there are two records of birds ringed in December (2000 and 2003), underlining this as an exceptional occurrence. A DNA sample was sent for analysis and confirmed this individual was of the nominate subspecies. The next record also came from CVL, with one on April 1st some way ahead of the recent average arrival date of 12th. However, five were here on 5th, and were followed by one at Cl-Y on 13th, one at Weston STW on 14th and two at OPS on the same date.

From mid April, many breeding sites had been reoccupied, with records coming from OPS, Severnside, Littleton Pits, PWD, Cl-Y, Saltford, Backwell Lake, the Strawberry Line (Yatton), Congresbury and Nailsea Moor among others. At Weston STW, nine territories were noted, down from the 19 in 2014, although this is a difficult species to census from singing males. At CVL, D Warden located 100 nests, which produced 359 eggs (mean 3.6/nest), from which 216 young hatched (mean 2.2/nest), and 203 were ringed (mean 2.0/nest). CVRS monitored another

99 nests which contained a total of 366 eggs (3.7/nest), producing 277 pulli (mean 2.8/nest), of which 246 fledged (mean 2.5/nest).

There were sightings from several breeding sites well into September, with 17 being trapped at CVL on 13th. The last few records came from New Passage on 23rd, Weston STW on Oct. 1st and CVL on 2nd.

The table below shows the varying fortunes of the common warblers (except Reed Warbler) at CVL over the past decade.

Warblers at CVL

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Chiffchaff	30	38	38	45	57	73	83	48	67	60
Willow Warbler	0	7	9	3	0	6	1	2	1	0
Blackcap	31	35	45	49	47	70	76	66	69	73
Garden Warbler	28	27	29	37	40	58	46	51	44	38
Whitethroat	3	3	6	8	10	12	12	8	11	10
Lesser Whitethroat	4	1	1	4	2	6	2	3	3	4
Sedge Warbler	11	7	41	20	41	31	16	14	8	12

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 good year.

Breeding The BBS counted 98 from 33 squares (19% of the total surveyed), compared with 77 in 29 squares in 2014 (see the table below).

This is an elusive species and the numbers recorded by the BBS are too small to provide a confident trend. However, the indications are that it is faring well. Since 1998 there have been records from 368 one *km* squares and in 2015 it was recorded from a record total of 142 one *km* squares, 34 of which were new since 1998. As it is a sedentary species it is likely that breeding will have been at least attempted in a majority of these squares. This is a large increase over previous years (see table below) but this is likely at least in part to be the result of the increased number of Birdtrack records. Breeding was confirmed at CVL, Folly Farm and Nailsea. At Folly Farm two nestboxes were occupied but one was usurped by Blue Tits while the other was successful.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
BBS Squares	25	30	18	18	32	28	30	39	29	33
Percentage of BBS area surveyed	13	16	12	11	19	16	18	22	16	19
Total squares in which recorded	34	54	42	65	83	81	68	86	93	142
New Squares since 1998	9	13	6	22	31	23	32	38	36	34

Number of BBS squares and total of one *km* squares in which this species was reported each year

There were a total of 764 bird-days during the year.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A good year.

Breeding A total of 27 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 17 squares representing 10% of the total area surveyed. This compares to 39 from 15 squares in 2014 and is in line with recent years. This is an elusive species that is easily missed on recording visits and numbers are too small to produce a trend. However, the species was recorded from a total of 97 one *km* squares (including the BBS squares), 29 of which were new since 1998. This is a considerable advance on previous years (see the table below) but as with the previous species it is likely that this is at least in part due to an increase in observer effort. The table below summarises the changing fortunes of this species over the past decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
BBS Squares	18	15	14	12	16	13	19	25	15	17
Percentage of area surveyed	9	8	9	7	9	8	11	14	8	10
Total squares in which recorded	26	41	36	44	57	69	71	72	65	97
New Squares since 1998	11	14	10	14	13	22	22	36	25	29

Number of BBS squares and total of one *km* squares in which this species was reported each year

Six singing males were noted around CVL and breeding was noted at Walton Common, CVL and BL. At the CVL Nature Reserve three nestboxes were occupied by the species, one of which was predated by a Great Spotted Woodpecker and the other two were successful with six fledged in each.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident.

A good year.

Breeding In the BBS a total of 3407 was recorded in 171 squares representing 99% of the area surveyed and a 7% increase was noted (see table below). This species, which can suffer badly in adverse weather conditions, is benefiting from the recent relatively mild winters. Song was first noted on Jan. 27th (Jan. 19th in 2014). In contrast CABS recorded an 8% decrease over 2014 and shows a 37% decline over the ten-year period.

The highest count was of 66 in the Nailsea and Backwell Lake area on May 25th while 60 were recorded on a walk around BL on May 23rd. The highest BBS count was 34 in a square near Long Ashton on May 4th.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
6%	3%	-19%	10%	3%	-3%	-2%	-7%	13%	-11%	18%	7%

BBS percentage changes

In the WGS for 2014/15 this species was recorded in 97% of the gardens surveyed (a 12% increase over the 2013/14 winter) and showed a 33% increase in the average number recorded per garden per week over the previous winter.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* [Red 3]

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; also passage migrant and winter visitor.

While impressive flocks are still seen in winter there has been a considerable reduction in the wintering population while the breeding population has suffered a massive decline - the BBS figures for Avon are in line with a decline for England of 60% in the period 1995 to 2013.

First winter period All the larger counts of over 1000 were from North Somerset. At Weston-s-Mare 1000 were at the Marine Lake on Jan. 4th and the largest flocks were 7000 flying to roost at Worle on Feb. 2nd and roosts of 7000 at Weston-s-Mare on Feb. 7th and 15th. Counts of 5000 were made at Hutton Moor on Jan. 23rd and a roost near the Kenn Estuary on Jan. 21st. At Weston STW the maximum count in January was 645 increasing to 1600 in February and falling back to 1370 in March. A winter survey of the North Somerset Levels by the RSPB Weston-s-Mare Group recorded 1015 on Nailsea Moor on Feb. 27th and 1515 at Kingston Seymour on 25th. This survey's figures for this species in the winter 2014/15 were the highest since the survey commenced in 2004/05 with 10805 recorded compared to 1844 in 2013/14.

The WGS recorded them in 60% of gardens compared to 69% in the winter of 2013/14 but the average number per garden per week was 4.9, the same as the previous winter which were the best since 1999/2000.

March Flocks quickly dispersed with 500 on Congresbury Moor on March 3rd and 400 at Dundry on the 9th being the largest recorded. There was no specific evidence of migration.

Breeding season The BBS counted 1463 from 91 squares which, at 53%, is for the third consecutive year the lowest proportion yet recorded (58% in 2014). Before 2005 this proportion never fell below 80% and since 1994 the survey has recorded an 87% fall in numbers, the most substantial part of which has occurred in the past ten years and appears to be continuing. The indications are that this was not a good year for breeding with a late start ruling out second attempts and high rates of partial brood losses.

Starling (con't)

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-87%	-59%	10%	-16%	-21%	-9%	1%	2%	-16%	-14%	7%	-22%

BBS percentage changes

Post breeding The first juveniles were noted on May 15th. Small groups of young were then recorded with some larger flocks including 270 at New Passage on July 18th and 300 on Sept. 24th; 500 were at PWD on Aug. 6th and 300 at CVL on Sept.17th.

October Visible migration was first recorded on Oct.10th when 22 were seen heading NE at Aust building up to 19th when 1000 were noted travelling NE at Wain's Hill in three hours on 20th and 1000 were also noted passing Portishead on the same date. The last specific record of visual migration was of 293 heading NE at Aust Cliff on Oct. 20th. At New Passage 1500 were noted coming out of a roost at dawn and flocks of 1000 were noted at Marshfield on Oct. 27th, and at OPS and Cl-Y on the 31st.

Second winter period In November and December records were more evenly distributed across the area. The largest flocks were 3500 at Marshfield on Nov. 9th and 3000 at Weston-s-Mare on Dec. 31st while at OPS 2000 were observed coming out of the roost on Nov.15th. The highest count for Weston STW was 1680 on Nov. 1st and flocks of 1000 were reported from Cl-Y, Congresbury Moor and Kenn Moor on various dates in December.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers. [Amber 3]

A normal year.

The species was recorded from 27 sites while the BBS recorded just two from one square.

Nest building was first noted on the R. Chew at Pensford on Feb. 5th and subsequently on the R. Boyd at Wick and the Siston Brook at Willsbridge in March. Breeding was noted at Whiteshill on Bradley Brook where young were being fed on May 14th. During May and June juveniles were also reported at Compton Dando, Eastville Park, Lower Littleton, Pensford, Radstock and Snuff Mills.

In addition they were present in the breeding season on the R. Frome at Frenchay and Ridgewood, the Regil Brook near Chew Stoke, and the Wellow Brook at Wellow.

On Aug. 8th and 10th one was noted at Badock's Wood in Westbury-on-Trym.

The table below summarises the records for the past decade.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bird-days	89	77	84	173	201	205	125	135	139	180
Sites	13	12	8	9	18	23	25	26	26	27

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.

Spring passage fell just below the recent average in terms of bird-days (the 2006 to 2014 average is 17), while the autumn passage was outstanding. An estimated 11 individuals were seen between Sept. 28th and Nov. 4th, the table below puts this data into context.

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	8	10	20	2	4	9	20	12	64	10	12
Autumn	1	1	0	2	4	2	0	0	5	1	13

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

Spring passage All sightings were in April as follows: the first were at Sand Point on 8th (male), and OPS and Sand Point again on 10th (male), then another was at Chipping Sodbury Common on 14th (female). Individuals were noted at Sand Point on 17th (male) and 18th, and single birds were recorded from Severnside on six dates between 21st and 27th (at least one male).

Autumn passage All records are listed. The earliest was at Sand Point on Sept. 28th where there were three on Oct.19th, two on 26th and single birds on Nov. 2nd and 4th – the last of the year. A female/first-winter was

likely to be responsible for records from New Passage/Northwick Warth on Oct. 28th, 29th and 31st. Inland one was at Chipping Sodbury Common on Oct.14th, and another was at Marshfield on Nov.1st.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.

First winter period The WGS recorded them in all the gardens surveyed and there was a 10% increase in the average number per garden per week. The maximum counted at Weston STW during January was 27 increasing to 57 during February.

Breeding season In the BBS a total of 4232 was counted in 173 squares, which was all of the squares surveyed in 2015. A decrease of 5% was recorded substantially offsetting last year's encouraging increase. While the BBS records over the past ten years show a decrease of 6% the results since 1994 show an overall increase of 14% which is broadly in line with the BTO's figure for the 1995 to 2013 period of an increase of 18%.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
14%	-6%	-2%	-1%	4%	-5%	-2%	0%	7%	-8%	7%	-5%

BBS percentage changes

Song was noted as early as Jan. 27th and nest building was recorded on March 8th. Adults carrying food for young were seen from 30th.

Second winter period There were no specific migration records but from the end of October there was an increase in numbers reported particularly at some of the well watched coastal locations, with 32 noted at OPS on Oct. 31st increasing to 45 on Dec.18th. Numbers recorded inland also increased with 40 counted in Warmley Forest Park on Dec.13th and 20 at Stockwood Open Space on 28th.

Other sightings The CABS records since 1994 show a peak in 2002 followed by a steady decline to 2013, and an 8% decrease in 2015, which is in line with the BBS results.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris* [Red 3, 4]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Small to large flocks were present in both winter periods. Although caution is needed when comparing year on year bird-day statistics, it seems clear that numbers were significantly up on 2014 in both periods. Total bird-days for the first winter period were 8531 and for the second, 11638.

First winter period Bird-day numbers peaked during the first half of February (see table below) and dropped progressively through early spring with the last on April 14th. Flocks of 100 or more were seen at Cl-Y, CVL, Dunkirk, Gaunts Earthcott, Kenn Moor, Marshfield, OPS and Paulton. Peak counts of 300 were recorded at both Marshfield (Feb.1st and 17th) and Kenn Moor (Feb. 6th and 17th). The last were two seen at Weston STW on April 8th, and two again at Chipping Sodbury Common on 12th and 14th, which is almost identical to the 25-year average first-winter period last date.

Date	Jan 1-15	Jan 16-31	Feb 1-15	Feb 16-28	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-15
Bird-days	1021	1550	2778	1187	1061	790	144
Max count	100	250	300	300	100	200	40

First winter period

Second winter period The first of the period were recorded on Oct.13th at three sites involving 60 birds: Aust, OPS and on the Avon/Somerset border at Wavering Down. This was a week later than the long-term average first-arrival date. Bird-day numbers peaked during the second half of October with a second peak in late December (see table below). Despite this, the maximum bird-days total recorded on any single day was 826 across seven sites on Nov. 21st.

Date	Oct 1-15	Oct 16-31	Nov 1-15	Nov 16-30	Dec 1-15	Dec 16-31
Bird-days	680	2769	2167	1775	1489	2758
Max count	200	333	200	600	400	500

Second winter period

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos* [Red 3]

Common breeding resident.

A normal year.

First winter period Song was noted from Jan. 4th, and continued through to July. In the WGS this species was noted in 53% of the gardens surveyed which represented a 15% increase, but the average number per garden per week was only 0.1. The maximum count at Weston STW in February was 43 compared with 19 in January.

Breeding season The BBS counted 724 from 145 squares, 84% of the total surveyed, a distribution rate that has been remarkably constant over the past twenty years. There was a small increase over 2014 (see the table below), and 22 males were singing around CVL, the same number as last year.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-4%	-14%	-5%	-9%	20%	-9%	2%	-14%	11%	-13%	6%	2%

BBS percentage changes

Migration Visible migration was noted in small numbers from Oct.10th. However, 30 were seen passing ENE in two hours at OPS while a further 26 were seen here also passing NE in six hours on 18th.

Second winter period At Severn Beach 20 were noted on Nov. 4th but after that all counts both coastal and inland were in single figures.

Other records The CABS whole year rate was an improvement of some 40% over the previous three years.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus* [Red 3]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Numbers overall were not great in either winter period except for a dramatic early autumn passage.

First winter period Numbers were consistent in January and February but dropped steadily during March. The last was recorded at Keynsham on April 8th (see table below). Large flocks were not widespread and counts of 250 or more were only recorded at Congresbury Moor and Pilning. The following table summarises the data.

Date	Jan 1-15	Jan 16-31	Feb 1-15	Feb 16-28	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-8
Bird-days	2612	3810	2981	1927	1060	470	3
Max count	200	300	225	250	107	70	1

First winter period

Second winter period The first was noted at Saltford on Sept. 30th. Numbers were then reasonably consistent throughout the period after a sudden arrival in mid-October (see table below). On 15th, a remarkable 3262 bird-days was recorded across 12 sites. This included 1300 counted between 09.30 and 11.30 mostly flying NE or E at CVL; and counts of 500 at OPS, Portishead and Clevedon. In addition to the sites mentioned above, counts of 250 or more were only recorded during this period at Aust and Saltford. This is summarises in the table below.

Date	Sep 30	Oct 1-15	Oct 16-31	Nov 1-15	Nov 16-30	Dec 1-15	Dec 16-31
Bird-days	1	4253	3295	2152	1044	1286	1842
Max count	1	1300	461	412	200	350	250

Second winter period

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus* [Red 3]

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

This species has been subject to significant declines in the past 20 years both nationally and locally. In England the decline has been calculated as 41% for the period 1995 to 2013 while in Avon the decline has been 59% since 1994. It is however, still a widespread species with over 1200 bird-days recorded from 166 sites across the Avon area with most records being of ones and twos.

Breeding season Song was reported from the start of the year to late April. A total of 90 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 41 squares, which represent 24% of the total area surveyed. This indicates an increase of 12% and follows a 13% rise in 2014 but, notwithstanding this, a decline of 33% over the past ten years is indicated.

Numbers seen are so low that a change in the proportion of occupied squares may be a more reliable indicator of change in future than the numbers seen. Tables showing the normal percentage changes and also the number of birds recorded and squares surveyed over the past ten years are given below.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-59%	-33%	-23%	-13%	11%	-27%	11%	-22%	28%	-12%	13%	12%

BBS percentage changes

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
No. Recorded by the BBS	107	97	99	72	78	64	73	61	71	90
BBS Squares	56	49	45	41	41	37	43	36	37	41
Percentage of area surveyed	29	27	29	26	24	21	26	20	21	24

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Nest building was recorded at Sutton Court in February and OPS in March while a nest in St. Andrews Park was abandoned. Only one record of confirmed breeding was received which was from OPS where it was said to be the first breeding record since 'possible' breeding in the late 1990s. Four singing males were noted around CVL (compared to five in 2014).

Other records Post-breeding records included 13 at Ashton Court on June 13th, 17 here on Oct. 8th and 15 on Nov.13th. A flock of 18 was noted at Coalpit Heath on July 13th and 24 were counted on a walk in Saltford on 16th. Visible migration between Oct.10th and 28th was as usual minimal with only ones and twos recorded except for ten counted migrating to W in 2.5 hours on 28th at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y.

In the WGS this species was only recorded in 13% of gardens in the winter of 2014/15 although this was an increase of 5% over the previous winter.

Song had recommenced by Dec.14th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* [Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Spring passage was poor. Both the breeding season and autumn passage were more typical and similar to 2014, however see table and details below.

Arrival The first two were at Bishops Knoll (Sneyd Park) and OPS on April 26th, which is a week earlier than average. The next were four at PWD on May 5th, further records then occurred evenly throughout the month with a total of 22 bird-days recorded from 11 widespread sites. This total compares with 15 during May 2013 and 53 in May 2014. Only two additional sites recorded more than a single bird on any May date: two at Marshfield on 25th and two at Sand Point on 27th.

In June and July breeding was proved at just two sites: CVL and Pensford. Nesting was also observed at BL. There were 27 records totalling 34 bird-days from 13 sites, which overall are similar totals to those of 2014. The table below shows that this is typical for recent years. The BBS counted three from three squares (1.7% of the total surveyed).

In August, 41 bird-days were reported from 15 widespread sites, while in September 32 bird-days came from 18 sites. Each of these totals is remarkably similar to that for 2014. Records were spread evenly across the two months until the last two: at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 20th and Henleaze (Bristol) on 27th. Notable daily totals only came from Hillesley with six on Aug.18th and Chipping Sodbury Common with five on 30th.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bird-days	109	58	98	97	100	81	92	114	164	131
June and July records				18	15	14	10	26	18	27
June and July sites				14	11	10	9	16	12	13

Total bird-days, and breeding season records and sites where available

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident.

This common species was recorded in every tetrad in the 2007-11 Atlas. The details are given overleaf.

Robin Breeding In the BBS 2403 were counted in a total of 168 squares which represented 97% of the total area surveyed. A small decrease was recorded since 2014 but the population is stable and indeed shows an increase of 12% over the last ten years. Nationally the BBS has recorded a 15% increase for England in the period 1995 to 2013 while the equivalent figure for Avon is an increase of 22%.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
27%	12%	2%	7%	9%	2%	-12%	-6%	11%	-1%	2%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

Over the whole year CABS counts were slightly lower than in 2014 (-3%) but are running 34% below the rate for 1994 which is in marked contrast to BBS which shows an increase of 27% for the same period.

The first breeding was recorded at CVL by April 15th.

Other records In the WGS this species was, unsurprisingly, recorded in all of the gardens surveyed and the average number per garden per week was at 1.3, an 8% improvement on the winter of 2013/14. A count of 56 was made on a standard walk in the Nailsea and Backwell Lake area on May 2nd and 38 were recorded at Churchill on Feb. 9th. The highest count of the year at Weston STW was 28 on Nov.1st.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos* [Red 3, 4]

Very scarce breeding summer migrant, and scarce or very scarce passage migrant.

The 2014 Report suggested this species was on the brink of extinction in our area; repeated targeted searches of the traditional breeding site at Horwood Farm in 2015 found no sign of any so it looks as if this prediction may be true. As recently as 2005 there were 11 singing males and the table below shows the subsequent decline.

There was one record of a passage migrant, a brief burst of song late afternoon on April 22nd at Walton Common.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
8	8	6	5	3	3	4-5	5	1-4	1	0

Estimate of number of pairs attempting to breed each year

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* [Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.

Counts this year were slightly below average for this species during both passage periods although Sand Point produced a heartening series of spring records and there were sightings at three sites on April 10th. Records are of unsexed individuals unless stated and all records are listed as follows:

Easton-in-Gordano – April 10th;

Portishead – April 10th;

Sand Point – April 10th, 12th (male), 16th (two), 21st (female) and 23rd (two);

Little Sodbury – July 14th;

Frampton Cotterell – Aug. 7th.

Average numbers over the 20-year period for the data in the table below are 12 (spring) and three (autumn).

	1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	19	3	15	4	20	18	22	1	7	14	22	2	22	1	8	12	7	30	3	9
Autumn	12	6	1	4	2	6	2	3	1	12	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	3	0	2

Passage numbers recorded per year: spring : middle row -- and autumn : bottom row

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros* [Red 3]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently.

The total of 52 bird-days recorded during an unexceptional year fell a little short of the latest ten-year average of 63 (see table below). The 2015 total of 52 includes a number of individuals noted on several dates, and an estimate of the actual number involved is 23. Again, no breeding was attempted.

1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
27	12	33	45	111	88	63	125	71	34	52

Annual bird-days

First winter period A total of 18 bird-days was recorded from the following ten sites between Jan. 5th and April 27th: Avonmouth, Broadmead (Bristol), Clifton (Bristol), Ham Green, Hinton Blewett, Keynsham PWD, Severnside, Tickenham and Weston-s-Mare,. These largely comprised single sightings well-spread across the period, apart from records from PWD (March 14th [two males], 15th, 16th and 17th) and Weston-s-Mare (Jan. 5th and 23rd [female], and Feb. 10th [male] and 16th [male]).

Second winter period Seven sites produced a total of 34 bird-days between Oct.11th and Dec. 30th: Cl-Y, Dundry, OPS, Portishead, Severnside, Weston-s-Mare and Wick St. Lawrence. One or two were regularly recorded from OPS between Nov. 5th and Dec.12th (both first-winter). One or two were also recorded on several dates from Portishead between Oct.12th and Nov.19th. Other records were largely of individuals seen on single dates only. Records were generally spread across the relevant October and November period, and only OPS recorded any in December.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* [Amber 1]

Uncommon passage migrant.

Spring passage numbers were well above the recent ten-year average while the total recorded in the autumn was outstanding. Yearly comparisons are given in the third table below, two-thirds of the records came from inland sites and the remaining third from the coast.

Spring passage The first was seen at Sand Point on April 8th, a normal first date. There were then almost daily records to 30th, with an early peak on 10th when 14 were seen at five sites including seven at Sand Point. The last record was on May 9th when one was at Portishead. Only one site in addition to Sand Point and Chipping Sodbury Common produced a daily maximum greater than three, this was Dundry with five on April 15th. The records are summarised below.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	16	43	23	4
Max count	7	5	3	2

Spring passage

Autumn passage This was the largest passage recorded since 1984 and together with this year's spring numbers, may indicate a real upturn in the species' fortunes (see table below). The first to return was seen at New Passage on June 25th and there was another at Compton Dando on 30th. Eleven were noted in July on six dates, but August and September then produced an excellent series of records bettering even those of 2014. Chipping Sodbury Common again provided a significant proportion of the total with 122 bird-days recorded and a daily maximum of 20 on Aug. 30th. As in 2014, it is not clear whether these were the same individuals feeding-up throughout, or successive arrivals. The last seen, and the only October record, was at OPS on 2nd. The records are summarised below.

Date	July 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20
Bird-days	8	11	30	69	30	28
Max count	6	5	9	20	10	7

Main autumn passage

The final table puts the 2015 records into context over the past two decades.

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	25	65	18	26	28	24	37	138	136	59	86
Autumn	28	36	16	20	17	29	78	18	71	130	183

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* [Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant.

An excellent spring passage was followed by another spectacular autumn which exceeded that of 2014 by some 13% in terms of bird-days. Annual summary data is given in the table below. Little data was provided regarding sexing and ageing of those recorded.

Whinchat (con't)

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	43	48	31	24	18	37	34	89	58	36	88
Autumn	114	138	33	127	88	92	77	44	114	273	309

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

Spring passage The first was seen in the Gordano Valley on April 14th and records were then all but daily up to May 13th. The last was at Cl-Y on May 20th. Peak days were April 23rd and 29th, both of which produced bird-day totals of nine. On 23rd, records were widely spread and from eight locations, six coastal; on 29th however, just three locations were involved and two of these were inland (Chipping Sodbury Common and CVL). The highest daily total at a single site was seven at Chipping Sodbury Common on April 29th. The next table summarises the data.

Date	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	14	52	18	4
Max count	3	7	6	1

Spring passage

Autumn passage The total of 309 bird-days is much larger than any recorded since 1994. The first was at Pilning Wetlands on June 24th but only six more were seen up to Aug. 8th. From 9th however, records were near-daily until Oct. 2nd. The only record after this date was of one seen at OPS on 10th. Four sites produced daily bird-day totals of more than five as listed below:

Chipping Sodbury Common - one spring and 12 autumn dates (max. 12)
Marshfield - three autumn dates (max. eight)
Cl-Y - one spring date (max. six)
Sand Bay - two autumn dates (max. six)

The last table summarises the records for the main autumn passage period.

Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sept 21-30
Bird-days	9	21	100	64	100	7
Max count	5	6	12	8	11	3

Main autumn passage

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant, and scarce breeder.

One pair bred, and counts recorded throughout were significantly higher than in 2014, this is shown in the table below.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Jan. – Feb.	57	44	55	51	22	17	30	22	35	93
Breeding pairs	12	7	15	2	2	3	0	0	0	1
Nov. – Dec.	55	63	69	50	16	19	29	50	72	89

Summary of data for the last decade: number of breeding pairs and counts of individuals in the winter periods

First winter period In the first two months an estimated maximum of 93 individuals (average for the past decade 38) generated 376 bird-days from 24 sites, 11 of them coastal. Sites that recorded more than four individuals on any one day were PWD, Sand Bay, Weston STW, Marshfield, Stoke Park (Bristol), Nailsea Moor, and Weston Moor. Notable series of records were recorded from six sites: OPS (records on 25 days), Aust (records on 18 days), New Passage (records on 18 days), Cl-Y (records on 21 days), Marshfield (records on 22 days) and CVL (records on 19 days).

Spring passage Bird-days recorded in March totalled 203. Counts greater than six were recorded from OPS (20 on 10th, and 12 on 12th), Aust (13 on 8th), PWD (11 on 6th), Weston STW (11 on 7th) and Weston Moor (26 on 6th). Just 13 bird-days were recorded in April, the last on 23rd at Sand Point. This data is summarises in the table below.

Date	Mar 1-10	Mar 11-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	April 11-20	Apr 21-30
Bird-days	140	61	2	16	2	3
Max. count	26	13	2	8	1	2

Main spring passage

Breeding season One pair bred on Felton Common. Noted on May 13th and from June 26th to Aug. 7th, one young bird was present from July 23rd. This is the first proven breeding since 2011. Immatures were also noted

at Sand Point on Sept. 2nd and Uphill on 8th, it is not known if they bred locally, or not. None were reported by the BBS, however, and a single pair remains well short of the breeding numbers recorded as recently as 2008.

Autumn passage Excluding breeders, bird-days recorded in July were just seven and in August 23. Sand Bay recorded 15 on Aug. 28th, however. September and October records are summarised in the table below. Sites recording counts greater than seven were Severn Beach (ten on Oct. 20th) and Marshfield (11 on 3rd and eight on 31st).

Date	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sept 21-30	Oct 1-10	Oct 11-20	Oct 21-31
Bird-days	11	29	49	81	128	102
Max. count	5	6	5	11	11	8

Main autumn passage

Second winter period A total of 321 bird-days was recorded from 28 sites, involving an estimated 89 individuals (average for the past decade 49). Sites that recorded more than four on any one day were OPS, Severn Beach, Cl-Y, Uphill and Kenn Moor. Notable series of records were reported from seven sites: OPS (records on 22 days), Aust (records on ten days), New Passage (records on 13 days), Severn Beach (records on 13 days), Cl-Y (records on 15 days), Marshfield (records on 11 days) and CVL (records on 11 days).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly on the coast and at traditional inland sites.
Both nominate O. o. oenanthe and O. o leucorhoa (Greenland Wheatear) *occur and both are probably common migrants, albeit hard to distinguish with certainty in the field.*

A good spring passage was followed by a normal autumn passage. Autumn numbers overall were lower than last year and the usual mid-September peak was later by some two weeks. See the summary tables below.

Spring passage The first record came from PWD on March 9th. This was just earlier than the long-term average first arrival date of March 11th. Records were then all but daily, peaking in the second half of April (as in 2014) but with some very high counts. For the whole Avon area more than 50 bird-days were recorded on five dates, all in April: 6th (81), 9th (51), 14th (70), 15th (90) and 23rd (62); and counts of more than 14 came from the following five sites: New Passage (20 on May 11th), Cl-Y (19 on April 6th, 17 on 20th, 16 on May 4th and 15 on 7th), Sand Point (17 on April 6th), Chipping Sodbury Common (17 on 29th) and Dundry (31 on 13th and an impressive 75 on 15th). The first table below summarises the main spring data.

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	May 21-31
Bird-days	3	59	21	212	312	252	96	77	8
Max count	1	9	4	19	75	17	16	20	1

Spring passage

The BBS counted 12 from seven squares, which is 4% of the total number of squares surveyed. Additionally, a pair attempted breeding at Weston Moor, where mating and apparent nest building was observed on April 6th. The pair were absent during subsequent visits by the observer, however.

Autumn passage Just five were seen in June and none between 21st and July 18th when the autumn passage appears to have really started with one seen at OPS. The next was at New Passage on 24th and records were thereafter virtually daily until Oct. 20th. September accounted for the highest day counts with bird-day totals ranging from 16 to 31 on ten dates between the 1st and the 21st. The highest site counts were from New Passage (11 on Aug. 23rd), Cl-Y (12 on Sept. 1st and 14 on 12th) and Marshfield (ten on 4th). The next table summarises this data.

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	33	46	66	94	164	58	44	25	5
Max count	3	8	6	11	12	14	5	4	4	2

Autumn passage

The relationship between the spring and autumn passage counts varies widely. Presumably in part this variation reflects the success or otherwise of the breeding season. The table below shows how these counts have varied over the past two decades. The spring and autumn averages for the past decade are: 1063 and 594 respectively (18:10, denoted s/a), a complete reversal of the ratio for the previous decade (1:2 s/a). 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. The ratio for 2015 was 19:10 and hence very similar to the ten-year average for the past decade.

Wheatear (con't)

	1996/05 Av.	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	470	2036	450	496	418	296	980	2273	1920	728	1037
Autumn	832	560	332	670	495	482	842	617	624	767	546

Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis* [RR] [Amber 3]

Abundant breeding resident.

This is a ubiquitous species within Avon. The BBS figures for England show an increase of 15% for the period 1995 to 2013 whereas the equivalent period for Avon shows a decrease of 13%. The population is stable albeit subject to fluctuations as a result of adverse weather in the breeding season.

Breeding In the BBS 991 were counted in 168 squares which was 94% of the total area surveyed. The survey revealed a modest increase of 4% which goes some way to reversing the declines of the previous two years caused by a poor breeding season in 2012 followed by a late and cold spring in 2013.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
0%	-14%	-1%	-6%	-3%	1%	8%	-3%	1%	-10%	-5%	4%

BBS percentage changes

The whole year CABS survey showed no change in the rate per hour from 2014.

Other records In the WGS this species was recorded in 97% of gardens surveyed which was a slight fall back from the previous winter when it was recorded in all gardens. However, the average number per garden per week remained unchanged at 1.2.

A total of 58 counts of more than 10 was received, being the product of walks around a district rather than flocks. Of these 42 were noted in the 'environs' of OPS on Feb. 9th and 32 in Nailsea and the Backwell Lake area on Feb. 22nd.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* [Red 3]

Still abundant but declining breeding resident.

This species suffered massive declines in the last quarter of the 20th century and the BBS figures for England show a decline of 15% in the period 1995 to 2013. However, it has fared relatively well in Avon and remains a very common species being the sixth most abundant species in the BBS in Avon.

Breeding In the BBS 2815 were counted on the two visits in a total of 113 squares which was 65% of the area surveyed. A further small decrease was experienced which marks the third consecutive negative year for this species although there was evidence of a good breeding season in 2014.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
14%	-6%	-10%	-1%	1%	-2%	1%	11%	9%	-10%	-2%	-2%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the WGS for the winter of 2014/15 this species was recorded in 67% of gardens surveyed, an increase of 13% over the previous winter. This compares to the winter of 1975/76 when it was recorded in 96% of the surveyed gardens. An average number per garden per week of 4.3 was recorded in 2014/15 which was an increase of 16% over the previous winter.

In the second half of the year there were 27 counts of 40 or more from 12 locations although only one exceeded 100 - at the Nailsea and Backwell Lake area where 172 were counted on July 5th. Other records included 82 at New Passage on July 10th, 75 at OPS on Aug.1st, 50 at Montpelier on 19th, 50 at Marshfield on Sept.13th, 40 at Horton on 20th, 55 at Saltford on Oct.1st and 42 at Severn Beach on Dec. 29th.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus* [Red 3]

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species.

The total seen was unexceptional but the number of sites increased on 2014 as did the decadal average; see the table below. All records received are listed below and are of individuals unless stated otherwise.

OPS – Jan. 1st (two), March 8th and 17th;

Sand Point – April 4th (two), 16th and 18th;

CVL – Nov. 23rd.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Bird-days	18	5	2	5	8	8	2	4	13	9
Sites	4	3	2	2	1	5	1	2	2	3

Bird-days and sites recorded each year

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* [Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeding summer visitor.

Spring passage was poor but the autumn passage was good. The long-term average number of bird-days for the spring is 124, and 98 in 2015 is significantly lower; and it is also well down on recent years' totals. The long-term average number of bird-days for the autumn is 242, and 343 in 2015 is significantly higher whilst remaining well below the numbers recorded in both 2013 and 2014.

Spring passage The first four of the year were seen on April 10th, a slightly late date, at New Passage (two), Sand Point and Weston STW. Records were then all but daily until May 8th. Two sites recorded more than four: Northwick Warth/New Passage (six on April 16th, five on 21st and 23rd, and nine on May 2nd), and Cl-Y (seven on April 22nd). Between May 9th and 31st, just three birds were seen.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Bird-days	4	22	42	28	2
Max count	2	6	7	9	1

Spring passage

Breeding Evidence of breeding was scant. Two singing males were noted in an arable field west of Bodkin Hazel Wood, near Horton on June 4th and other mid-summer records came from Tormarton, Iron Acton and Lansdown. These are included in the BBS counts of six from three sites (2.3% of the total surveyed), which is perhaps more encouraging.

Autumn passage Small numbers were recorded in the first half of July, but from 23rd records were all but daily through to Sept. 29th. The only record after this date was of one at Saltford on Oct. 2nd, a rather early last date for this species. The autumn peak was clearly during the second half of August and counts of more than seven were recorded at Littleton Warth (18 on 27th and 12 on 28th), Northwick Warth/New Passage (eight on 18th and 31st) and Chipping Sodbury Common (eight on 31st). Eight were also recorded at Saltford on Sept. 5th. The next table summarises the autumn counts from all sites.

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	8	11	27	39	117	64	53	16
Max count	2	3	4	8	18	8	7	3

Autumn passage

The final table which summarises the spring and autumn records for the past two decades puts the 2015 records into context. However, note that much larger numbers were recorded in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, on just one day in April 1966, and at just one site, CVL, over 200 were recorded.

	1996	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	155	72	49	131	118	78	62	59	121	67	125	86	164	25	42	165	439	203	198	98
Autumn	195	91	88	273	188	279	72	132	386	160	125	156	102	147	404	258	278	723	534	343

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage over the past two decades

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* [Red 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Another good year.

A total of 1590 bird-days (including BBS records) was recorded during the year at 162 locations - see table below. This compares with 1322 bird-days and 154 locations in 2014. Most records were of ones and twos with some family groups during the breeding season.

Grey Wagtail (con't)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total Bird-days	124	103	146	118	153	89	125	110	255	179	91	96
Coastal Bird-days	25	18	23	23	8	0	8	12	66	42	19	22

Total bird-days, and bird-days recorded at coastal locations

First winter period and spring migration The year started with a relatively high level of sightings with 124 bird-days in January (65 bird-days in January 2014) following on from the higher numbers experienced at the end of 2014. A peak of 146 bird-days was reached in March while counts at coastal locations remained at the same level averaging 22 per month. The highest counts were of nine at Paulton on Feb. 24th and nine at BG on March12th.

Breeding In the BBS a total of 32 was counted in 14 squares which compares to 38 in 15 squares in 2014 (see table below). The numbers reported are too small to provide a reliable trend but do indicate that the species has recovered from the low point experienced in 2010 after a hard winter. Evidence of breeding was noted at 11 locations, with a nesting pair at BL on April 9th being the first. The first juveniles were noted on May 23rd at St Anne's and BL, and the last record of the season was of one carrying food on July 17th in the Lox-Yeo valley. During the breeding season the species withdrew rapidly from the coastal sites, reducing from 23 bird-days in April, to eight in May and none at all in June (see table above).

BBS	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Number counted	27	38	25	23	14	16	16	18	38	32
Squares	17	20	12	13	9	10	11	10	15	14

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Autumn migration and second winter period Records peaked with 255 bird-days recorded in September followed by 179 in October after which they fell back sharply in November and December. These presumably include a number of migrants. There was also a sharp spike in records at coastal sites with a quarter of the bird-days recorded coming from the coast in September and October. In line with the rest of the region coastal records fell back markedly again in November and December and to a rather lower level than in 2014. Larger counts were: 21 at BG on Sept. 5th, 11 at BL on Aug. 24th and ten at Paulton STW on Sept.18th.

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 4536 bird-days was recorded during the first three months of the year compared to 3982 in 2014. The largest flock recorded was at Radstock where 370 were noted going into a roost on Feb. 24th with 400 at the same location on March 3rd. Other large flocks were 161 at Saltford on Jan.1st, 150 here on 8th and 120 at New Passage on 26th. Counts in single or low double figures were received from a wide variety of other locations - urban, coastal and rural.

Spring passage There was a marked reduction in numbers from mid-March. At CVL 12 on March 12th were assumed to be migrants and small parties, the largest being 25 on 19th were noted here until mid-April. Coastal counts included 45 at New Passage on March 30th but most counts were of less than 20. At Northwick Warth 18 were counted on April 17th and there was no evidence of any migration after 22nd.

Breeding A total of 119 was recorded in the two BBS visits from 49 squares representing 28% of those surveyed in the Avon area. This compares with 94 in 56 squares (31% of those surveyed) in 2014 and shows a 24% increase over 2014 (see table below). Nationally the BTO has recorded a 13% decrease in England between 1995 and 2013 while over the same period the Avon area has shown a 25% increase although these numbers are at the low end for producing a reliable trend. Breeding evidence was recorded from Marshfield, Portishead, BG and CVL. At Hengrove an adult was feeding two fledged juveniles on Aug.16th.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
8%	-20%	-35%	38%	4%	-12%	1%	-17%	1%	-27%	26%	24%

BBS percentage changes

Autumn passage Numbers began to increase again at coastal sites in the second half of July with 37 noted at New Passage on 18th and then 80 here on 21st. The largest count was of 192 at Weston STW on Sept. 28th. The maximum counts at this site reduced to 68 in October and 29 in November. At Aust Cliff 125 were observed migrating in one hour on Oct. 13th and 73 in four hours on the 17th. After mid-October it is difficult to distinguish passage migrants from those that have arrived to over-winter.

Second winter period There were 2770 bird-days during November and December. Good numbers were present in the New Passage area throughout the period, with a maximum of 110 on Nov.12th while at PWD 50 were noted on 8th. In contrast to last year only one large roost count was recorded: 200 were noted going into roost at the South Gate shopping centre in Bath on Dec.19th. Other inland records were 81 at Blagdon on Nov. 11th, 46 at Keynsham on Dec.1st and 63 at Saltford on 28th.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba* [RBBP]
Uncommon passage migrant.

The spring passage was the second best in the last 20 years but two-thirds of the records came from one site with some probably staying for several days; the autumn passage was slightly above average although there were no records after late September. Some possible breeding activity was noted.

Spring passage Two March records of single birds: at Middle Hope (Sand Bay) on 19th and BG on 31st; these dates are about average although in some years more are reported during this month. The 2015 spring bird-day total at 252 was well above the average since 1997 of 75, but two-thirds (168) were for just one site: New Passage (Severnside). Here double figure counts were reported on every day between April 11th (11) and 20th (12) with a maximum of 27 of 15th. The remaining spring records came from PWD (max. one), Cl-Y (max. eight on 13th and 16th), Sand Bay (max. three on 21st), BG (max. four on May 9th), CVL (max. four on April 13th and 14th) with single records of one at BL on 17th and two at Paulton on 29th. The last in spring were one at BG on May 19th and another at PWD on 26th.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-26
Bird-days	16 (21)	188 (31)	29 (25)	12 (13)	7 (2)
Max count	5 (4)	27 (6)	9 (5)	4 (2)	1 (1)

Spring passage with 2014 data in brackets

Possible breeding activity The following observations were made by C J Stone: one at BG on May 14th and the morning of 15th was photographed, feeding recently fledged juveniles whose subspecies status was not determined. It was gone by the afternoon of 15th but the juveniles remained with a Pied Wagtail. There are two possible scenarios: either it was actually one of the parents; or, perhaps more likely, it was a migrant responding to begging calls from the juveniles of a Pied Wagtail brood.

Autumn passage Two reports were received for August: at least one with some Pied Wagtails at Cl-Y on 16th and two at BG on 28th. As usual the autumn passage was much lighter than that in spring with 31 bird-days in total (13 records received). This total was above the average since 1997 of 17, but it was bolstered by a count of ten at Marshfield on Sept. 2nd. On the other hand there were no sightings from Severnside or PWD. The remaining autumn records, also for September, came from Cl-Y (max. four on 12th), Sand Bay (max. one), BG (max. three on 8th), CVL (max. two on 17th) and BL (max. one). The last two records came from BG with one on 23rd and two on 27th, an early 'last date'.

Date	Aug 16-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 20-27
Bird-days	3	18	7	3
Max count	2	10	4	2

Autumn passage

The last table puts the 2015 records 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	14	2015
Spring	67	144	81	51	34	46	29	64	81	34	43	64	67	39	59	67	277	95	252
Autumn	12	7	2	7	2	4	11	74	24	9	7	15+	6	5	43	32	26	15	31

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis* [Red 3]
Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.

Spring passage numbers were distinctly lower than in the previous three years but still higher than the ten-year average of 75. The autumn pattern was similar, with numbers lower than in 2013 and 2014 but higher than the ten-year average of 29. See the summary table at the end of this entry.

Spring passage The first of the season was at Middle Hope on April 6th. Sightings were then made on an almost daily basis with the large majority of records coming from either Severnside or Sand Point. The latter site accounted for a total of 51 bird-days with high counts on April 10th (14), 16th (10) and 21st (eight).

Tree Pipit (con't)
Severnside accounted for a total of 16 bird-days with the highest count being three on April 10th at New Passage. A notable inland record was of five seen at Dundry on 15th. Unsurprisingly, where details are provided, the records usually involved calling birds flying over. Although the dataset is small, these were predominantly moving to the NE. The last record was on May 3rd at New Passage, a very early date.

Date	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10
Bird-days	27	32	22	5
Max count	14	10	8	2

Spring passage

Breeding There is now very little habitat in the Avon area that is to this species' liking and it is probably confined to a small area on the northern slopes of the Mendips. No breeding evidence was reported at all however in 2015. This species must be 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. An isolated record on July 31st came from New Passage and another was at Saltford on Aug. 7th. Records were then broadly spread throughout the period with the last few seen at Chipping Sodbury Common (three) and Saltford (two) on Sept. 13th. The only concentrated period of passage was between Aug. 30th and Sept. 7th when 22 bird-days were recorded from seven sites. The details are summarised in the table below.

Date	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sept 1-10	Sept 11-20
Bird-days	1	2	14	14	5
Max count	1	1	5	2	3

Autumn passage

The final table 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.

	2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
Spring	111	55	48	25	33	44	119	118	120	87
Autumn	30	25	23	12	35	30	15	51	40	36

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 a relatively weak autumn passage.

January and February During this first winter period a total of 2299 bird-days was recorded. This is a large increase on the 1272 in 2014. Of this number 865 were recorded at a variety of inland locations mostly in small groups but including 60 near Cold Ashton on Feb.1st, 50 at Keynsham on 3rd, 50 at CVL on 9th and 60 near Yatton on 12th. Similarly, on the coast most counts were small with the highest count being 51 at Aust Warth on Jan. 5th and a series of counts from the Yeo Estuary culminating in 125 on Feb. 6th.

Spring Passage This passage took longer to get under way in 2015 than in the previous year but it was ultimately somewhat stronger - see the table below which summarises the records received in 2015 compared to 2014.

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 2015	278	312	1056	254	2976	1334	1056	24
Max count 2015	100	63	200	40	788	450	210	9
Bird-days 2014	394	1438	1097	2603	403	96	113	33
Max count 2014	100	340	340	520	105	21	30	15

Spring passage

The first evidence of migration occurred in mid-March with ten moving NE at Wain's Hill on 16th and 100 counted at Aust Warth on 17th. The highest count in this month was one over 200 at Aust Cliff on 20th but there was then a lull in the last week before the main wave of migrants arrived in the first half of April. An interesting inland record was of 250 at Charmy Down on 3rd. April 4th marked the peak of the spring passage with a total of 2144 noted from various coastal locations, heading NE up the Estuary. These counts included

390 at OPS, 320 at New Passage, 500 at Wain's Hill and 790 at Sand Point. The last big counts were on 22nd with 100 at OPS and 145 at Cl-Y after which numbers dropped off dramatically.

Breeding season The species is mainly a coastal nester in Avon, and then only in low numbers. During May and June 18 records of small numbers (between one and four) were received from OPS, Littleton Warth, New Passage and Cl-Y. Inland, four were noted north-west of Marshfield on May 27th and one east of Tormarton on June 7th. Recently fledged juveniles were noted on July 10th and 21st at New Passage but no other evidence of breeding was received.

Autumn Passage As in spring the autumn passage was later than in 2014 but it also appears to have been considerably weaker (see the table below). There were very few counts of 100 or more.

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 2015	66	287	381	283	574	1240	518	584
Max count 2015	12	150	130	35	100	292	80	100
Bird-days 2014	471	669	667	1616	253	1320	889	962
Max count 2014	100	150	160	250	60	325	250	170

Autumn passage

Numbers began to build up gradually from the second week of September primarily at coastal sites but with a series of records from Saltford including 40 on 23rd. Most counts were of less than 40 with the exception of a count of 150 from Cl-Y on 12th and 130 at New Passage on 20th. The main wave of migrants then built up rapidly in October with 100 noted at New Passage on 1st and 14th, and 110 at OPS on 10th. Inland there was an exceptional record of 292 at Saltford on 10th while other notable inland records were 50 in the Shire Valley on 7th and 70 at BL on 3rd. In the last ten days of the month counts gradually reduced. At Cl-Y 100 were counted on 28th and 65 on 31st but otherwise counts were of 50 or less.

November and December Noted on 1279 bird-days compared to 2162 in 2014. Most of the higher counts relate to the first week of November and are likely to include the last of the migrants. The highest count was of 100 at Cl-Y on 2nd with 50 at OPS on 3rd and 45 at New Passage on 7th. After that counts were of 40 or less with most in single figures. Notable inland records were of 35 at BL on 3rd and 53 at Saltford on Dec. 31st.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus* (1, 1) [BBRC]

Very rare vagrant.
Descriptions required.

The fourth Avon record: an adult with a red throat found at Pilning Wetlands at 10.40 on Oct. 3rd was still present the next day and seen by many observers (B Lancastle, C Vines *et al.*, photographed, see opposite page 121).

The previous records were at BL in September 1973, CVL in December 1979 and Northwick Warth, close to the above site, in April 2012.

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 typical year.

First winter period and spring passage There was a total of 210 bird-days in the period January to March with single-figure records from OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside, Chittening Warth, PWD, Portishead, Cl-Y, Sand Point and Weston STW. The highest count was of eight at Royal Portbury Dock .

Breeding season Evidence of breeding was received from Royal Portbury Dock (two pairs breeding), Portishead (family party on July 9th), Cl-Y (family party on Aug. 6th), Sand Bay (adult carrying food on June 2nd) and Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare (adults carrying food on April 27th). The highest count was of eight at Royal Portbury Dock on July 9th.

Autumn passage and second winter period At Weston STW the first of the winter appeared on Sept.19th. and away from the coast one was located at Heron's Green, CVL on Oct. 2nd while one appeared at BG on 5th where it was joined by a second on 14th. Non-breeding sites along the Severn at OPS, Littleton Warth and Severnside were re-occupied in October and records were also received from Royal Portbury Dock, Portishead, Clevedon and Cl-Y. Most counts were of single figures but 12 were located at Littleton Warth on Nov. 28th. In

the final two months of the year 185 bird-days were recorded, almost identical to last year's 183 for the same period.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis* (12, 1)
Wintering Rock Pipits are assumed to include an unknown proportion of this subspecies, some of which become identifiable in spring.
Descriptions required.

One record of one seen briefly at New Passage on March 6th (J P Martin). It was reported again on 8th but without any supporting notes.

Other than a colour-ringed individual, all local records of this subspecies have been reported between the beginning of March and mid April when they are in summer plumage.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta* [Amber 5]
Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant primarily to CVL and the coast.

A normal year on the coast but a resurgence of records from CVL during the second winter period was welcome, with two also recorded at BL.

First winter period Only one was seen at CVL, on March 5th, thus mirroring 2014 precisely. The first coastal record of the year was of one at Sand Bay on Jan. 2nd with another here on Feb. 21st. One was recorded from PWD on eight dates between Feb. 24th and April 9th, with two seen on March 15th. Individuals were seen at New Passage on 15 dates between Jan. 4th and April 5th with the last being in summer plumage. Also seen at Chittening Warth on March 21st, at Cl-Y on Feb. 28th, on the Axe Estuary on Feb. 2nd and nearby at Weston STW on March 10th.

Second winter period The first record of the period at CVL was of five on Oct. 29th. Between one and six were then seen regularly until the last record of one on Dec. 27th. Two were at BL on 1st. On the coast, the first record was of one on Oct.17th at New Passage followed by two here on 28th and three on 29th. Severnside in general then produced further records on 27 dates throughout November and December with an average of two per day and a maximum of five. Also seen on the Axe Estuary on Dec. 17th.

The table below summarises the data for the past decade.

	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
CVL max	6	5	7	6	20	2	1	3	1	1
Coastal	6	6	7	7	5	10	28	14	11	16
Other inland			1	0	0	1	0	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, although numbers vary considerably from year to year.

Another year with few sightings.

Not surprisingly, after very few in late 2014, only three were seen in the early part of the year, at Marshfield on Jan. 10th, Abbots Leigh on Feb. 10th and in Victoria Park, Bath on 14th.

The autumn was a little more productive, two at New Passage on Oct. 11th being the first migrants, with up to four seen on the move at Severnside on many dates through to mid-November, 13 on Oct. 29th being the peak count. Elsewhere along the coast, ten at Sand Point on 23rd was the highest of several counts made there during the same period, with six over Wain's Hill on the same date and nine at OPS on 18th, again with smaller numbers on other occasions. The only inland migrants were odd single birds seen at Saltford, with four there on Nov. 1st. One was at CVL on various dates from 12th to the end of the year and six were at BL on Nov. 22nd, both with Chaffinches. There were a few records from Weston-s-Mare, while three at Saltford on Dec. 31st rounded off another almost blank winter period.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs* [RR]
Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

No sign of an upturn in breeding numbers. The details are given overleaf.

A scattering of small flocks was noted in the first months of the year, mostly in double figures, the count of 100 feeding under beech trees at Banwell on Jan. 4th being particularly noteworthy. At Weston STW, 172 on Jan. 11th was a site record, and there were still 150 here on 18th. As usual Marshfield held good numbers in January, with 200 on 14th and 400 on 28th, while 100 were counted at Cl-Y on 21st. Counts from February onwards were lower, but 200 at OPS on March 17th possibly indicated that migration was underway. However, there were few records of very obvious movement, just small numbers at some coastal sites in late March and early April, the highest count being 20 heading NE at Wain's Hill on April 4th and 15 at Sand Point the same day.

The first song was heard on Jan. 19th at CVL, and breeding season records were widespread. During the BBS survey, the species was found in 149 squares, this representing 86% of those surveyed, much the same as 2014. A combined total of 1325 was counted over two visits, the data indicating another drop of 6% in numbers as compared with the previous year, as shown in the table below. CABS data showed stable numbers in Clifton between the two years.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-53%	-43%	-3%	-5%	-1%	-15%	1%	-10%	4%	-11%	-6%	-6%

BBS percentage changes

Although there were a few sightings of birds on the move from mid-September, the main passage started in October, when 30 over the dam at CVL on 9th was quite a good count for an inland site. But, as usual, the largest numbers were on the coast, starting with 321 at Aust and 200 at Sand Point on 10th. Migration watches took place at several spots along the coast in October the following illustrates the pattern of movement: OPS (1325 on 18th), Aust (660 on 16th), New Passage (690 on 11th, 1350 on 18th, 2000 on 19th), Cl-Y (600 on 11th, 1135 on 14th, 998 on 18th, 450 on 23rd, 300 on 28th) and Sand Point (535 on 18th, 1300 on 19th, 400 on 23rd, 300 on 28th, 200 on 31st). Smaller numbers continued through to mid-November, with 941 at Aust on 3rd being a notable exception.

Larger flocks in the second winter period included up to 200 at Marshfield on several dates, 100 at OPS on Dec. 6th and 200 at Weston STW on 28th, with smaller numbers widely scattered elsewhere.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (87 since 2003, 3)

Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred.
Descriptions required.

Three records, all in November, details as follows:

OPS – one flew SW on 12th (P J Hazelwood);

Orchard Pools, Severn Beach – three, with a small group of Redwings, flew from a hedge in the morning of 4th (M Hobbs);

Saltford – one moved through quickly to W on 8th (J W Duckworth).

The table below summarises the records for the past decade, it shows a very varied picture. This species was much commoner in former times, see the historical note in the 1986 edition of this Report.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
23	2	1	41	0	2	3	12	3	0

Number of individuals seen (July to June)

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus* (3, 1)

Very rare vagrant.
Descriptions required.

A female or first-winter was photographed (see opposite page 136) at a feeder in a Keynsham garden on Feb. 24th, and March 1st and 7th. It was identified retrospectively (M Laban).

Previous local records came from Stantonbury Hill (August 1985), Gordano Valley (September 1999) and Sand Point (May 2006).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* [Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident.

A typical year. The details are given overleaf.

Bullfinch (con't)
As usual, there were many records of pairs and small groups throughout the year from a variety of scattered locations, with larger gatherings mostly in the winter months, when counts of up to 14 came from CVL and Saltford on several occasions.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 47 squares, this representing 27% of those surveyed, a decrease from the 34% in 2014. A combined total of 95 was counted over two visits, the data showing a decrease of 23% in numbers as compared with the previous year, as shown in the table below. Clearly this is a species where numbers seem to fluctuate from one year to the next, as borne out from counts at CVL, which is regularly surveyed, where five pairs were noted this year, whereas there were 11 in 2014, but only six in 2013.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-58%	-48%	-19%	4%	10%	-15%	17%	-5%	4%	-35%	16%	-23%

BBS percentage changes

Apparent migrants were noted in small numbers at the usual well-watched sites along the coast on a few days between mid-October and early November, 16 on Oct. 20th at Severnside, nine at Sand Point on 22nd and 15 at Aust on Nov. 1st being the highest seen on any one day.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*
Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

Continues to be at a low ebb.

Apart from pre-roost gatherings of 80 at Paulton on Jan. 5th with 65 here on 26th, and *c.* 200 at Castle Park, Bristol, on 15th, few counts in the first three months of the year made it very far into double figures, although they were well distributed. At Cl-Y, 45 on Feb. 11th was one of the higher counts. However, the WGS still found them present in 77% of all survey gardens in the 2014/15 winter, much the same as in the previous two years. Spring migrants were equally scarce, with 35 on April 4th at Sand Point and 25 at Cl-Y on 6th being the maxima from anywhere at this time.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 130 squares, this representing 75% of those surveyed, a slight increase on the 69% the previous year. A combined total of 652 was counted over two visits, with the data indicating a certain stability at the moment, although well down over the longer term. CABS data also indicated a marginal increase in the numbers recorded in Clifton between the two years.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-45%	-64%	6%	-20%	-33%	-2%	-12%	-26%	11%	-5%	-6%	1%

BBS percentage population changes

Post-breeding, up to 38 were found in the Saltford area in July and August, but elsewhere they were only noted in single figures, while migration counts peaked at 30 on Oct 10th at Severnside, with the same number counted at Wain's Hill on 14th and at OPS on 18th.

It was a similar picture right though to the end of the year, apart from at Cl-Y, where 200 on Oct. 15th was the highest of several counts here in the autumn with 170 still present on Dec. 2nd.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina* [Red 3]
Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

An apparent increase in breeding numbers, welcome if maintained.

The largest flocks in January were at Coalpit Heath (200 on 17th), OPS (100 on 22nd), Paulton (150 on 25th) and Marshfield (400 on 28th), with smaller counts from elsewhere. Numbers dropped away during February, although there were still 200 at Coalpit Heath on March 8th and 130 at OPS on 15th.

Migrants were seen on the coast from late March (15 NE at Wain's Hill on 22nd) through to late April (65 NE on 20th, also at Wain's Hill). Between these dates most counts were 30 or less, the peaks coming in April from OPS (max 50 on 8th), New Passage (max 76 on 19th), RPD (max 80 on 2nd) and Sand Point (max 32 on 6th). The 183 noted at Weston STW on 15th were presumably also on the move.

From late April on, all counts through the summer were in single figures. The BBS survey found the species in 66 squares, this representing 38% of those surveyed, an upturn from 2014. A combined total of 449 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a remarkable increase of 80% in numbers as compared with 2014,

as shown in the table below. Whether this is a one-off or not remains to be seen, as numbers have fluctuated quite widely in the past, and the long-term trend remains downward, as it does in the country as a whole.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-38%	-17%	-25%	-38%	169%	-54%	22%	7%	22%	-35%	-22%	80%

BBS percentage changes

Numbers started to increase from mid-July (e.g. 50 at Cl-Y on 12th, 80 at New Passage on 18th), but early autumn counts were usually below 40, with 150 at Cl-Y on Aug. 6th, 132 at Weston STW on 28th, 100 at Marshfield on Sept. 13th and 150 at Paulton on 16th all standing out. Migration counts were mostly quite low, movement being noted in late September and through to the end of October from the usual coastal watchpoints, as well as inland at Saltford. They were seen on most days through that period, but 30 was the usual maximum, the 64 going NE at Aust Cliff on Oct. 10th being the highest count.

By Oct. 11th there were already 200 at Marshfield, with 400 there on Nov. 16th. Huntingford also held good numbers, with 150 on 4th and 200 on Dec. 2nd. There were 145 at Burnett on 9th, but otherwise most groups were in the 20-40 range in the second winter period.

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.

An upturn in records, if not in numbers.

In the first winter period there were 15 at BL on Jan. 4th and 5th, with a few remaining to 18th. Elsewhere, one at OPS on 2nd, four in Thornbury on 8th, one at CVL on 16th and singles at Saltford on three dates in January and February were the only other records until migrants started appearing on the coast in March. Between 11th and 16th, small numbers, up to seven, were seen at New Passage, Worle and Sand Point, while one at BL on 18th was also a transient.

There were then no more reports until the first autumn record of one at CVL on Sept. 2nd. Single birds were noted at Winterbourne on 6th and at Chipping Sodbury Common on 13th, with 13 at Sand Point on the latter date. From then on sightings were on an almost daily basis through to mid-November, although mostly just one or two at a time. Records came from OPS, Littleton Pits, Severnside, PWD, Cl-Y, Sand Point, Weston STW, Saltford, CVL and Marshfield among others, with no obvious pattern, the largest count being 30 at OPS on Oct. 18th. Between one and four were then reported from a variety of spots through to the end of the year, the impression being of birds being extremely mobile rather than settled at any one place.

COMMON REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea* (17, 1)

Mealy Redpoll *C. f. flammea*

Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly rare, but more regularly recorded in recent times. This species hybridises with Lesser Redpoll, so intergrades are possible which should be considered in any write up.

Descriptions required.

One record: a first-calendar year trapped and ringed at CVL on Oct. 25th was identified from photographs (see opposite page 137) and supporting biometrics (CVRS).

Recent records came from CVL in March 2001, Thornbury GC in February 2004, Severn Beach two in April 2004, a Stapleton garden in December 2005, Sand Point in May 2006, Keynsham in February 2008, Severn Beach in April 2008 and in January 2009, a Yatton garden in April 2009, Chittening Warth in May 2009, BL in November 2012, CVL in April 2013 and Sand Point in May 2013.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary sharply from year to year.

Again very few records, just transients flying over.

The only record in the first half of the year was one to NE over OPS on April 4th. One on June 26th at Severn Beach was followed by six in Combe Dingle on July 27th and one at Saltford on 30th. There was then a gap until two over Wain's Hill on Oct. 11th presaged a small flurry of migrants through to late November. At Aust Cliff the highest numbers were eight on Oct. 16th and ten on Nov. 3rd, with smaller numbers on Severnside on other dates. OPS had two on Oct. 18th and one on Nov. 10th. There were two over Sand Point on Oct. 18th with five the next day, three on 27th and two on 31st. The last record was of three at Wain's Hill on Nov. 18th.

Crossbill (con't)
Away from the coast there was one at Walton Common reserve between Oct. 18 and Nov. 1st and two over Saltford on 8th, but clearly again only birds moving through.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
1	0	90	47	96	120	146	140	26	59

Bird-days each year

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*
Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.

A typical year, with another increase in breeding numbers.

The pattern in the first three months was the usual one of small parties of up to 20 or 30, birds being found in both the countryside and town gardens. In fact the WGS found that 100% of gardens surveyed recorded this species during this period! The only larger concentration was 110 counted at Walcott, Bath, on March 1st, but this was of birds coming to a communal roost.

Spring passage started in mid-March, with up to 15 heading NE over Wain's Hill on a few days in the second half of the month, but the first three weeks of April saw the main numbers on the move. Some larger counts included 215 on 17th and 223 on 19th at New Passage, 105 on 4th, 30 on 8th and 55 on 20th at Wain's Hill, while Sand Point recorded 90 on 4th, 100 on 16th and 57 on 22nd, with smaller numbers on several dates at other coastal locations during this period.

The BBS survey found the species in 154 squares, this representing 89% of those surveyed, an increase on the position in 2014. A combined total of 1582 was counted over two visits, the data also indicating an increase of 8% in numbers as compared with 2014, as shown in the table below. Clearly this species continues to flourish in our area, and was widely reported throughout the summer. At regularly surveyed CVL, ten pairs were located.

Since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
169%	107%	24%	-13%	18%	4%	5%	11%	18%	-8%	16%	8%

BBS percentage changes

Increasing numbers were recorded at Saltford from mid-July onwards, 200 on Aug. 7th being one of the higher counts, while 250, mostly juveniles, feeding on thistles at Heron's Green Pool, CVL, on 13th was a record count for the lake. Smaller groups were noted from Severnside and Cl-Y during the same period, while 102 at Weston STW on Sept. 19th was the highest count of the year there.

Autumn migration was marked by small numbers along the coast through October, with 227, mostly to SW, at Aust Cliff on 16th and 251 to NE on Nov. 3rd being the only large counts received. From then until the end of the year, small groups of up to 50 were again reported from a wide range of sites, but with no large concentrations.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus* [RR]
Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce in summer.

Low numbers early on, but an influx in the autumn.

Following on from the low numbers at the end of 2014, the picture in the first half of the year was of very small, widely scattered groups and wandering birds, the largest counts being 20 at BL on Jan. 13th and 11 in Bath on Feb. 28th. Not surprisingly, the WGS found them present in a mere 3% of gardens. The bird-day totals for January to June demonstrate the general picture and none were in likely breeding sites.

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
52	29	15	29	5	5	117	78	1033	721	732	747

Monthly bird-day totals

However, the bird-day count for July indicates that things were about to change, movement being noted from OPS, Severnside, Chew Magna, BL, Clifton and Compton Dando, with 31 at Saltford, mostly to W, on 10th being the highest number on any one occasion.

In August the picture was similar, but there was a marked influx in September, with the highest numbers being between 5th and 17th. At Saltford, 58 on 6th was the highest count of several there around that time, but although most were just flying over, the preferred direction varied both within and between days. Other counts

came from a wide range of sites: OPS, New Passage, Cl-Y, Sand Point, Thornbury, Stoke Bishop, Frampton Cotterell, Lansdown, Chew Magna, CVL and BL.

In October/November, there was no obvious spike in numbers, although 177 at Aust Cliff, mostly NE, on Nov. 11th stood out as particularly notable. As the table above shows, numbers were then fairly stable to the end of the year, and continued to be well distributed. The best counts came from Huntingford where there were 50 on Dec. 2nd and CVL with 150 on 14th. Smaller groups, up to 40, were noted at BL, Saltford and Warmley.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* [Amber 5]

Scarce winter visitor.

None in the early part of the year and just one in the autumn, a migrant at Wain's Hill, Cl-Y on Oct. 31st. The table below shows the varying fortunes of this species in the Avon area over the past decade.

2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
0	0	1	0	5-6	15	16	12	5	3

Individuals seen each winter

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra* [Red 2, 3, 4]

Local and uncommon breeding resident, confined to arable areas in the east of the region. Rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor.

Fewer noted in winter, but breeding numbers seem stable.

As usual, the vast majority of records came from the Marshfield/Tormarton area, both in winter and during the breeding season. Counts early in the year peaked at 375 in three flocks on Jan. 28th, with 50 to 100 seen on several other dates through to mid March. There were 90 on 20th, but thereafter numbers fell to the summer level. Up to 15 were regularly counted during this period, while a circuit of the area produced 24 singing males on April 23rd. Post-breeding, there were 20 on Sept. 13th, 30 on Nov. 1st and up to 150 in a mixed flock with other finches and buntings on Dec. 9th.

Away from here, there is a small pocket in the fields south and east of Hawkesbury Upton, a BBS survey counting 11 here on May 4th, with smaller numbers on other dates. A winter count of 19 at nearby Horton on Dec. 4th presumably relates to this population.

The estimated number of territorial males has varied between 11 and 40 over the past decade, although without a systematic survey it is hard to be sure of the exact population. But from this year's figures, it does appear that the breeding population is currently at least maintaining itself.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella* [Red 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.

Breeding numbers stable, and winter flocks in the usual places.

During the first winter period, 100 were noted at Marshfield on Jan. 2nd, and again on Feb. 8th, with 'good numbers' reported here through to mid-March. Counts near Paulton were regularly into double figures during this period, 120 on Jan. 22nd being an exceptionally high number, with 80 still here on March 10th, and 60 on April 24th. Elm Farm, Burnett, was another favoured spot, with 65 on Feb. 1st, 70 on 15th and 77 on April 13th. Small numbers could be found in a variety of other places, and that was the picture through the summer once the winter flocks had dispersed by late April.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 43 squares, this representing 25% of those surveyed, a typical picture. A combined total of 221 was counted over two visits, the data indicating another small increase in numbers over the past couple of seasons, as shown in the table below.

since 1994	2005/15	2005/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	2014/15
-27%	-3%	11%	-19%	13%	-13%	16%	11%	-3%	-21%	7%	3%

BBS percentage changes

From July onwards there were many counts from Saltford of up to ten, with 40 here on Dec 31st. Away from the usual breeding and wintering sites, just the odd bird was noted on the coast and at CVL on Oct.19th, providing some minimal evidence of movement, but by Nov. 16th there were 100 back at Marshfield, rising to 150 on 27th. Other than that, up to 20 at Paulton, Backwell Common and Saltford were the highest groups reported.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* [Amber 3]
Localised breeding resident, and passage migrant.

No very significant change.

Double-figure counts, up 30 or so, in the first two months of the year mostly came from coastal locations such as OPS, Severnside, PWD, Cl-Y and Weston STW, but inland sites such as Coalpit Heath with 23 on Jan. 4th and Saltford with 15 on Feb. 9th also attracted small groups. On the whole, however, it was a picture of single-figure counts from a variety of rough and/or damp areas through the winter. The WGS indicated a few visiting gardens, after a blank the previous year, and ringing activities in one garden in Chew Stoke found individuals present through to early March, but not beyond. The fact that 20 were ringed at CVL on Feb. 21st may also indicate a return to breeding sites at around this time.

There was no real evidence of spring migration and the summer picture was of scattered pairs at suitable breeding sites across the area, many of them also wintering sites. The BBS locally does not include enough squares to come up with a significant picture of population change, but counts at CVL show that the population here remains at a healthy level. The count at Weston STW was 26 singing males, down on the 30 noted last year, but still above the 21 noted in 2013.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	2015
31	32	31	30	36	43	51	53	44	41

Singing males at CVL each year

Small numbers on the move, eight the maximum on any one occasion, were noted at the usual well-watched sites along the coast during October, and counts in the second winter period were also in single figures apart from 26 at OPS on Dec. 18th and 14 at PWD on 23rd.

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 – one was present between Feb. 12th and 28th.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*
A high altitude native of central Asia often kept in collections.

An interesting series of records in the spring, details in chronological order.

PWD – two were here on Feb. 26th with one on March 8th;

Backwell Lake – two were seen here on Feb. 28th, March 3rd and 31st, April 2nd, 7th and 26th. There were two noted here in March 2014, possibly the same birds;

Bristol Docks – two were by the Thekla on March 17th:

New Passage – one on May 17th and 18th.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*
A possible winter vagrant from arctic Siberia, this ornamental small goose is often kept in collections.

An apparent influx, although all clearly escapes.

CVL – the adult with a damaged flank from 2014 remained until Jan. 19th. Two different adults, both with narrow blue rings, were present between March 13th and 17th;

New Passage – a different ringed individual was present between March 13th and April 15th.

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 present intermittently since 2013 remained until at least April 5th with another report on Aug. 13th;

Portbury Warth – one on Jan. 10th and 13th, and April 10th;

Royal Portbury Dock – one on March 7th;

CVL – the individual from 2014 remained and was joined by a second one from Jan. 5th. Both were still present up to March 20th with at least one still being reported during April and May and again mid July. There was then a report of one on Nov. 26th.

The taxonomy of this species is complex and individuals can be hard to attribute to a subspecies.

FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolour*

Native of central and northern South America, south and central Africa and the Indian subcontinent. Often kept in ornamental collections.

CVL – one present from Sept. 17th until Dec. 3rd at least.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

Native to North America, commonly held in collections.

Winterbourne – a male on Flaxpits Lane from Jan. 24th until March 7th.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Native to Central and South America.

Eastville Park – one from 2014 was present until April 19th, with it or another seen on Nov. 26th and Dec. 14th;

Backwell Lake – one noted on Dec. 28th.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysoluptus pictus*

An ornamental pheasant indigenous to the mountains of central China, introduced in Britain since the late 1800s.

Lower Woods – a displaying male on April 16th (*cf.* with one seen here in 2014);

Chew Magna – a ringed male was seen, and photographed, in gardens on Dec. 2nd and 8th.

CHUKAR *Alectoris chukar*

Native of eastern Mediterranean.

Saltford – two on May 12th in the same fields as in 2014.

HARRIS' HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Widespread resident of Central and Southern America, commonly kept in captivity.

Langford – one in a garden on Sept. 21st.

CRANE *Grus grus*

Between 2010 and 2015 93 birds from German stock were raised and released in the Somerset Levels and flocks have started to wander from the release site.
Descriptions are required for individuals considered to be of wild origin.

An average year with eight records involving probably at least 15 individuals. After one record of a single bird in 2011, there were six records (involving 24 individuals) in 2012, nine records (involving 25 individuals) in 2013 and 11 records, which involved at least 17 individuals, in 2014.

The majority of records this year came between mid March and early May. The records 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.

Easton-in-Gordano – two flew to NNW over Happerton Farm at 12.45 on March 18th;

Olveston – five flew to NE at 13.55 on March 18th;

New Passage – one flew to E in the morning of March 27th;

Portbury Wharf – four flew to NW at 16.15 on April 7th;

Sneyd Park, Bristol – four flew over late afternoon on April 7th. Others were heard, but not seen, in flight at 11.00 on 12th;

OPS – two flew from upriver, heading SW about half a mile inland of the Estuary at 11.05am. They then headed over OPS, and Littleton, and to W out over the Estuary, over the central span of the old Severn Bridge and disappeared SW inland of the far bank at 11.40 on May 4th. They circled several times during this manoevre, to gain height;

BL – two flew over at 14.00 on Aug. 7th.

REGENT PARROT *Polytelis anthopeplus*

Native of Australia

Worle – a male photographed coming to a garden feeder between April 26th and May 2nd.

MONK PARAKEET *Myispsitta monachus*

Resdident of southern South America but introduced in many areas, especially North America and Europe.

Bristol Downs – two flew from Upper Belgrave Road towards the gorge at 13.00 on Jan. 20th.

JAVA SPARROW *Padda oryzivora*

A common cagebird, originally native to Java but widely introduced in Asia.

Hanham – one on Sept. 1st.

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*

BL – one, probably the individual seen in previous years, was present between Jan. 14th and Feb. 12th, although it visited CVL from Jan. 29th to 31st.

BARNACLE x CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis x Branta canadensis*

CVL – two Canada Geese with lots of white peppering in the black of the face and neck, seen on Jan. 16th and 29th and Feb. 2nd, 18th, 20th and 26th, were possibly of this hybrid origin. A different individual, considered to be this parentage was present on June 17th and July 14th.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

At CVL numbers were again much reduced on recent years. Details of all records from all sites, in chronological order, are as follows:

1. A male, considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, was at BL from Jan. 5th until Feb. 12th;
2. The pair of Paget's Pochards, the hybrid between Ferruginous Duck and Pochard, remained at BL from 2014 with the male seen on Jan. 14th and the pair on 20th;
3. The female from 2013 and 2014, 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, at BG, on Jan. 23rd and 28th, and Feb 3rd, while on 4th it was with a second, similar individual at CVL;
4. A male, considered to be a Tufted x Red-crested Pochard was at BL on April 20th;
5. A male Lesser Scaup type and considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, was at BL from June 23rd to Aug. 28th;
6. A male, considered to be a Scaup x Tufted, was at BL on July 5th;
7. A hybrid was recorded on the WeBS count at BG on July 20th;
8. A male, Lesser Scaup type, was at CVL on Sept. 2nd and 7th;
9. A male seen distantly at CVL on Sept. 24th was thought to be a Ferruginous x Tufted;
10. What were presumed to be the same two individuals as in 3. above were seen again at CVL on Sept. 28th when one was noted as having a peaked head and the other a rounded head;
11. A male, considered to be a Ferruginous x Pochard, was at BL from Nov. 8th until Dec. 29th;
12. A female Pochard type at CVL on Nov. 17th had a steeply peaked head and pale brown flanks suggesting some influence from Ring-necked Duck;
13. A female noted at CVL on Nov. 29th and Dec. 23rd was described as having a Scaup like head on a Pochard body and was possibly the round headed bird mentioned in 10. above;
14. A male, considered to be a Tufted x Pochard, was at BL from Dec. 6th until 8th;
15. A male Lesser Scaup type was at CVL on Dec. 23rd.

In order to help track individuals it would be very useful if observers of *Aythya* hybrids could include some descriptive notes of the bird's appearance (*Eds.*).

HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

Two records, both of adults.

Saltford – May 2nd;

CVL – Dec. 29th.

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	14	2015
1	6	1	1	1	0	0	9	4	6	29	6	7	7	3	5	1	2

Bird-days recorded per year since 1998

PIED x WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

An intermediate individual present with both Pied and White Wagtails on Stratford Lane, CVL on April 13th and 15th was thought to be an intergrade (K E Vinicombe).

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Avon Migration Data for the Past Quarter-Century

Harvey Rose

More than half of the species regularly occurring in the Avon area are migrants, and their first-arrival and last-departure dates have been noted in this Report for many years. Some leave to spend the winter in warmer areas of the world, others winter here and move to more northerly parts in the spring/summer to breed, whilst a third group are double-passage migrants passing through in both spring and autumn in varying proportions. To begin with these dates were mainly recorded for the spring arrival of common passerines, but over the years this has been extended to include some non-passerines and the departure dates for many species. In this paper we wish to extend this further to include all regularly occurring species that vacate our area more or less completely for some substantial part of the year.

The data used relates exclusively to first-arrival and last-departure dates. For many species the spring first-arrival dates have been getting earlier over the past few decades and the analysis discussed in this paper gives some measure of these changes; see below. But right from the start it should be noted that this analysis does not include all migrant species. For some winter visitors a few stragglers usually spend the summer with us, Wigeon and Dunlin are examples, and some common local breeding species have a component that winters here, Blackcap and Chiffchaff being obvious examples. This is unfortunate for the study of migration as a whole, but the concentration on first and last date data makes it unavoidable. Most scarce and rare species have also been excluded as their arrival and departure dates are not statistically significant. We have also excluded all weather dependent visitors, this includes the pelagic seabirds. Further, it should be noted that arrival dates tend to be more reliable than those for departure – a negative is always more difficult to prove than a positive.

The changing fortunes of the species occurring in our area also need to be noted; some positive and some negative. For example 2015 was the first year since recording began with no reports of either White-fronted Goose or Turtle Dove, and there was only one record of Nightingale. On the other hand some species that used to be classed as migrants now occur in varying numbers throughout the year. Common Sandpiper was a double passage migrant but for some time now a few have wintered with increasing regularity, also Marsh Harrier was until very recently classed as a summer visitor/passage migrant but one or two have wintered in the past year or so, hence this last species will have to be removed from the lists from now on.

For our study period we have taken the last 25 years from 1990 to 2014, inclusive. Many records prior to 1990 have been published in the past and the majority are clearly valid, but in a number of cases it has proved difficult or impossible to confirm the data, and so for this paper it was decided to consider only post-1989 records. It is proposed to reinstate at least some of the records in a follow-up paper. The main reason for this choice of start date is that the pre-1990 predecessors of this Report did not include details (dates and sites) for many commonly occurring species. The lists given in Tables 1 and 2 include 60 species – 39 summer visitors/passage migrants and 21 winter visitors. But as noted above owing to their changing fortunes this list will have to vary with time, some joining but more leaving if current trends continue. Cuckoo, Wood Warbler, Nightingale and Pied Flycatcher will probably have to be added soon to the growing list of species that can no longer be classed as regular visitors, and so would be excluded from these lists.

In 1992 Richard Bland published a paper in this Report detailing the changes that had occurred during the previous quarter century. He noted that, in general, spring migrants were arriving earlier while the autumn data was inconclusive. This process has continued. Column 6 in Table 1 gives the difference in days between the average of the first-arrival dates between 1962 and 1992 given in Bland [1992], with those for the period 1990 to 2014 given in the paper. A blank in this column indicates that no relevant data was given in the 1992 paper. It can be seen that in 22 cases the spring figure is negative, that is the migrants/summer visitors are now arriving earlier, while only six are positive arriving later. These six mainly occur in small numbers and involve species that are in serious decline at the present time. To put this more precisely, the 28 species given in both the 1992 and the 2014 tables are, on average, arriving in spring 3.1 days earlier now than in the early 1990's. The corresponding figure for the 1962 to 1992 period given on Bland [1992] was two days earlier. Bland used data from Palmer and Ballance [1968] for base data for the early 1960s, and records he had collected from many sources over the intervening years for the 1992 data.[1] To give some context to this data a survey on the Farne Islands reported that the spring arrival there of Arctic Terns in 2006 was on average 13 days earlier than it was in 1971, and that for Sandwich Terns was 20 days earlier over the same period; see Cabot and Nisbet [2013], page 327.

The departure data for the period 1992 to 2014 is much less clear cut, and as noted above it is also less reliable. The number leaving later is only slightly larger than those leaving earlier and the overall average difference is about half a day.

[1] Note that these figures treat each species equally, that is no account of the relative sizes of the various species populations was taken into account.

Apart from data given in local bird reports not much has been published nationally on migration dates recently but two BTO publications are worth studying. The first is Hudson [1973] which gives considerable detail on records up to the early 1970s and refers back to data given in Witherby [1938–41], see the Appendix below. The second is Riddleford and Findley [1981], again much detail is given but they only used data from nine UK bird observatories including Portland and Skokholm, both of which are relatively close to the Avon area.

The data for summer visitors and double passage migrants is given in the following table.

Species	Season	Earliest since 1990	Latest since 1990	**Average**	Diff. 1992/2014	2015 Early/late
Garganey	Spr	**Mar 13, 93**	May 5, 00	**April 4th**	-2	April 3rd
	Aut	Aug 29, 07	**Dec 13, 92**	**Oct. 13th**	14	Nov. 7th
Quail	Spr	**May 8, 96**	Jun 29, 91	**May 31st**		June 21st
	Aut	No data	No data			No data
[Marsh Harrier]	Spr	**Mar 8, 10**	May 24, 93	**April 20th**		All year now
	Aut	Aug 23, 02	**Dec 1, 10**	**Oct. 1st**		All year now
Osprey	Spr	**Mar 20. 14**	May 19, 94	**April 9th**		April 2nd
	Aut	Jul 29, 90	**Oct 26, 94**	**Sept. 16th**		Sept. 1st
Little Ringed Plover	Spr	**Mar 14, 09**	Apr 30, 94	**March 31st**	-15	**March 12th**
	Aut	Aug 26, 91	**Oct 15, 12**	**Sept. 16th**	6	Sept. 13th
Whimbrel	Spr	**Mar 29, 90/02**	Apr 18, 98	**April 10th**	-3	April 5th
	Aut	Sep 16, 93	**Nov 19, 97**	**Oct. 10th**	17	**Dec. 12th**
Curlew Sandpiper (A)	Aut 1	Jul 31, 08	Sep 11, 92	**Aug. 14th**		Aug. 15th
	Aut 2	Sep 26, 09	**Nov 20, 10**	**Oct. 25th**		Oct. 4th
Sanderling	Spr	**Mar 21, 14**	May 5, 93	**April 18th**		April 1st
	Aut	Sep 3, 97	**Oct 27, 90**	**Oct. 1st**		**Nov. 6th**
Wood Sandpiper (A)	Aut 1	Jul 6, 98	Aug 23, 93	**Aug. 2nd**		Aug. 12th
	Aut 2	Jul 17, 08	**Oct 8, 00/06**	**Sept. 6th**		Sept. 22nd
Little Tern	Spr	**Apr 16, 03**	May 12, 05	**April 27th**		**April 16th**
	Aut	Jul 12, 97	**Oct 28, 96**	**Aug. 27th**		Aug. 23rd
Black Tern	Spr	**Apr 15, 03/06/13**	May 14, 09	**April 24th**	1	April 16th
	Aut	Sep 9, 08	**Nov 3, 00**	**Oct. 4th**	-12	Sept. 25th
Sandwich Tern	Spr	**Feb 18, 12**	May 29, 95	**April 14th**		April 5th
	Aut	Jul 21, 09	**Oct 30, 93**	**Sept. 14th**		Aug. 23rd
Common Tern	Spr	**Mar 30, 06**	Apr 21, 98	**April 10th**	[-15]	April 10th
	Aut	Aug 25, 04	**Oct 28, 09**	**Oct. 1st**	[-15]	Sept. 17th
Arctic Tern	Spr	**Apr 2, 06**	Apr 26, 95	**April 15th**	[0]	**March 29th**
	Aut	Sep 9, 08	**Nov 21, 96**	**Oct. 5th**	[-11]	Nov. 13th
Turtle Dove	Spr	**Apr 22, 06**	Jun 22, 04	**May 12th**	16	No records
	Aut	Jul 2, 94	**Oct 20, 96**	**Sept. 5th**	-9	No records
Cuckoo	Spr	**Apr 6, 05**	Apr 20, 94/97	**April 13th**	1	April 15th
	Aut	Jun 13, 04	**Sep 30, 12**	**Aug. 12th**	-24	Aug. 12th
Swift	Spr	**Apr 8, 01**	Apr 27, 90	**April 17th**	-5	April 17th
	Aut	Aug 27, 99	**Oct 29, 04**	**Sept. 18th**	-3	Sept. 14th
Hobby	Spr	**Mar 30, 90**	Apr 28, 91	**April 18th**	-11	April 11th
	Aut	Sep 24, 90	**Nov 11, 05**	**Oct. 10th**	16	Oct. 8th
Sand Martin	Spr	**Feb 23, 08**	Mar 21, 06	**March 8th**	-10	March 6th
	Aut	Sep 14, 14	**Oct 29, 91**	**Oct. 7th**	-2	Sept. 28th
Swallow	Spr	**Mar 9, 90/97/11**	Mar 28, 98	**March 19th**	-8	**March 8th**
	Aut	Oct 16, 07	**Dec 17, 13**	**Nov. 8th**	5	Nov. 8th
House Martin	Spr	**Mar 4, 97**	Apr 7, 07	**March 24th**	-7	April 1st
	Aut	Oct 9, 11	**Dec 5, 04**	**Oct. 28th**	-8	Nov. 24th
Wood Warbler	Spr	**Apr 8, 98**	May 2, 08	**April 21st**	0	April 16th
	Aut	No data	No data			***
Willow Warbler	Spr	**Mar 13, 11**	Apr 1, 07	**March 24th**	-4	March 27th
	Aut	Sep 5, 92	**Oct 11, 94**	**Sept. 23rd**	1	Oct. 7th
Garden Warbler	Spr	**Mar 29, 90**	Apr 28, 91	**April 16th**	1	April 17th
	Aut	Sep 9, 95/03	**Nov 21, 93**	**Oct. 1st**	5	Sept. 6th
Lesser Whitethroat	Spr	**Apr 10, 10/14**	Apr 27, 91	**April 18th**	-4	April 12th
	Aut	Sep 12, 04	**Dec 25, 09**	**Oct 8th**	12	Oct. 1st
Whitethroat	Spr	**Apr 2, 12**	Apr 24, 90	**April 12th**	-4	April 10th
	Aut	Sep 11, 07	**Oct 27, 03**	**Sept. 26th**	0	Oct. 1st
Grasshopper Warbler	Spr	**Mar 28, 97**	Apr 24, 96	**April 13th**	-2	April 10th
	Aut	Aug 13, 91	**Oct 7, 97**	**Sept. 16th**	2	Sept. 19th

Sedge Warbler	Spr	**Mar 30, 07**	Apr 18, 98	**April 9th**	-6	April 10th
	Aut	Sep 16, 00	**Oct 6, 07**	**Sept. 27th**	-1	Oct. 2nd
Reed Warbler	Spr	**Apr 1, 12**	Apr 28, 91	**April 12th**	-11	**April 1st**
	Aut	Jul 28, 90	**Nov 16, 08**	**Oct. 2nd**	8	Oct. 2nd
Ring Ouzel	Spr	**Feb 9, 08**	Apr 28, 99	**March 26th**	-4	April 6th
	Aut	Oct 10, 08	**Nov 15, 14**	**Oct. 24th**	6	Nov. 4th
Spotted Flycatcher	Spr	**Apr 21, 03/06**	May 17, 09	**May 2nd**	0	April 26th
	Aut	Sep 6, 98	**Oct 15, 04**	**Sept. 27th**	6	Sept. 27th
Nightingale	Spr	**Apr 8, 02**	May 7, 08	**April 22nd**	0	April 22nd
	Aut	No data	No data			***
Pied Flycatcher	Spr	**Mar 30, 02**	May 19, 07	**April 13th**	-3	April 10th
	Aut	Aug 5, 07	**Oct 14, 05**	**Sept. 2nd**	-9	Aug. 7th
Redstart	Spr	**Mar 17, 11**	Apr 21, 90	**April 3rd**	-7	April 8th
	Aut	Sep 13, 09	**Nov 30, 14**	**Oct. 12th**	-3	Oct. 2nd
Whinchat	Spr	**Apr 14, 09**	Apr 28, 90	**April 21st**	4	**April 14th**
	Aut	Sep 3, 95	**Nov 14, 12**	**Oct. 11th**	-4	Oct. 10th
Wheatear	Spr	**Feb 28, 98**	Mar 25, 06	**March 10th**	-2	March 9th
	Aut	Oct 14, 92	**Dec 12, 94**	**Nov. 7th**	10	Nov. 4th
Yellow Wagtail	Spr	**Mar 21, 92**	Apr 20, 90	**April 7th**	1	April 10th
	Aut	Sep 19, 09	**Nov 1, 02**	**Oct 7th**	-10	Oct. 2nd
White Wagtail	Spr	**Mar 1, 07**	Apr 9, 97	**March 22nd**	-9	March 19th
	Aut	Sep 8, 90	**Nov 23, 03/14**	**Oct. 8th**	15	Sept. 27th
Tree Pipit	Spr	**Mar 16, 92**	Apr 27, 91	**April 3rd**	-4	April 6th
	Aut	Sep 11, 99/05	**Oct 21, 90**	**Sept. 28th**	-4	Sept. 13th

Table 1 – Data for summer visitors and double-passage migrants

Notes on Table 1

The table above gives the data for the 'summer visitors' including the double passage migrants, that is those species that leave the Avon area completely for some part of the autumn/winter/spring period; and there are two rows for each species. The first of these (labelled Spr) gives the first-arrival data, that is the earliest (in bold) and the latest dates that the corresponding species was first reported in the Avon area during the period 1990 to 2014 inclusive – Columns 3 and 4 in Table 1. Column 5 gives the average (that is the arithmetic mean) of the 25 dates over this period. So for example, between 1990 and 2014, Garganey first arrived in the Avon area between March 13th (in 1993) and May 5th (in 2000), and the average (mean) first-arrival date for this period was calculated as April 4th. For each species the second row (labelled Aut), which was calculated using the same procedure as the first row, gives the last-departure data with in this case the latest last-departure date in bold; for Garganey this was Dec.13th (in 1992).

Some double passage migrants are only reported scarcely or very scarcely in spring and so the data given for them refers to their autumn passage only. These are marked (A) in the table, and in Column 2 (for seasons) Aut 1 and Aut 2 refer to their first-arrival and last-departure during the autumn period.

Column 6 was referred to above. The 1992 study (Bland [1992]) gave an average first-arrival date for 28 of the species listed in the table, plus one other, for the period 1962 to 1991, and Column 6 gives, for each species, the difference in days between the 1992 date and that shown in Column 5. The 1992 list included Common Sandpiper which we have excluded as it now occurs in all months of the year. On average the dates up to 2014 are 3.1 days earlier than those for 1992, but see the footnote above. The entries for both Arctic and Common Tern are in square brackets because in Bland [1992] these two species were lumped together as 'Commic Tern'.

Column 7 gives the relevant data for the current year 2015. Dates set in bold indicate that the record was exceptional. They were eight (!) for 2015, all but two for the period from early March to mid-April, but in three cases (Little Tern, Reed Warbler and Whinchat) the date equalled the previous record. The others, Little Ringed Plover, Arctic Tern and Swallow, were one to three days earlier than any since 1990. There was also an exceptionally late Whimbrel record; one or two winter sightings have been reported in the past but this species may be becoming more common in winter, and if so it would have to be removed from the list; up to 100 do winter regularly in the UK and Ireland, see Frost *et al*. [2016].

In a few cases the rule that a species must completely vacate the Avon area for part of the year to be included in the lists was not kept to. Whimbrel was mentioned above. Chiffchaff and Blackcap have long been removed from the list due to their changing habits but some other warblers may have to treated similarly, recently there have been winter records for both Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, and (in 2015) Reed Warbler.

Two species will need to be removed from this table from this year onwards. The first is Marsh Harrier as mentioned above; there are now too many winter records of this species for meaningful first and last

dates to be calculated. The second is Turtle Dove which has now become very scarce indeed; for the first time since recording began there were no sightings at all in 2015.

Finally, a caveat needs to be added to the last dates for Swift. For the UK as a whole it has been noted recently that some late records possibly refer to Pallid (*Apus pallidus*) rather than Common (*Apus apus*) Swifts, and an unknown, but probably quite small, number of earlier last-departure Swift records may refer to this first species. The latest record given in the table, for Oct. 29th in 2004, does refer to a (Common) Swift.

Secondly the data for the winter visitors is given in the following table.

Species	Winter period	Years-no record	Earliest	Latest	**Average 1990/2014**	2015
Bewick Swan	1st	2	Jan 3, 05/07	**Mar 28, 92/96**	**Feb. 12th**	No records
	2nd	1	**Oct 11, 91/04**	Dec 13, 08	**Nov. 1st**	Nov. 1st
White-fronted Goose	1st	3	Jan 1, 02	**Apr 30, 00**	**Feb. 23rd**	No records
	2nd	7	**Oct 15, 92**	Dec 19, 04/06	**Nov. 23rd**	No records
Brent Goose	1st	1	Jan 12, 90	**May 26, 02**	**April 12th**	**June 2nd**
	2nd	1	**Aug 8, 11**	Dec 28, 08	**Oct. 8th**	Oct. 11th
Pintail	1st		Feb 27, 94	**May 20, 05**	**April 15th**	**May 22nd**
	2nd		**Jun 10, 95**	Sep 4, 04	**July 31st**	Sept. 1st
Scaup	1st	2	Jan 7, 99	**May 20, 95**	**April 14th**	May 7th
	2nd	1	**Jun 24, 13**	Nov 11, 95	**Sept. 25th**	Aug. 1st
Goosander	1st		Mar 3, 03	**May 19, 08**	**April 7th**	April 10th
	2nd		**Aug 8, 90**	Nov 2, 09	**Sept. 27th**	Oct. 12th
Golden Plover	1st	1	Apr 1, 02	**May 15, 92**	**April 19th**	**March 29th**
	2nd		**Jun 28, 14**	Sep 24, 13	**Aug. 19th**	Aug. 15th
Purple Sandpiper	1st	3	Jan 10, 93	**May 28, 13**	**April 28th**	April 21st
	2nd		**Aug 28, 91**	Dec 29, 92	**Nov. 10th**	Nov. 2nd
Green Sandpiper	1st		Mar 29, 96	**May 5, 98**	**April 18th**	May 1st
	2nd		**May 30, 03**	Jul 2, 12	**June 18th**	June 7th
Spotted Redshank	1st	2	Jan 1, 13	**May 6, 91**	**April 9th**	April 23rd
	2nd		**Jun 24, 94**	Sep 16, 09	**Aug. 4th**	June 28th
Jack Snipe	1st		Mar 17, 91	**Apr 25, 11**	**April 10th**	April 17th
	2nd		**Sep 13, 98**	Oct 30, 99	**Oct. 7th**	Oct. 3rd
Woodcock	1st		Feb 15, 01	**Apr 30, 94**	**March 19th**	March 3rd
	2nd		**Oct 9, 90**	Dec 29, 92	**Nov. 1st**	Oct. 21st
Little Gull	1st		Apr 12, 94	**Jun 9, 91**	**May 11th**	May 9th
	2nd		**Jun 30, 09**	Oct 14, 14	**Aug. 8th**	June 29th
Short-eared Owl	1st		Mar 3, 94	**Jul 5, 12**	**April 28th**	April 30th
	2nd		**Aug 3, 11**	Oct 23, 13	**Sept. 22nd**	Sept. 22nd
Merlin	1st		Mar 31, 91/09	**May 27, 93**	**April 18th**	May 1st
	2nd		**Aug 5, 06**	Oct 20, 91	**Sept. 9th**	Aug. 27th
Firecrest	1st	1	Jan 24, 99	**Apr 27, 12**	**March 15th**	April 10th
	2nd	3	**Aug 26, 11**	Dec 5, 99	**Oct. 14th**	Oct. 10th
Fieldfare	1st		Mar 22, 05	**May 1, 09**	**April 16th**	April 14th
	2nd		**Aug 29, 94**	Oct 27, 00	**Oct. 4th**	Oct. 13th
Redwing	1st		Mar 17, 01	**Apr 21, 12**	**April 7th**	April 8th
	2nd		**Sep 15, 04**	Oct 9, 91/00	**Sept. 28th**	Sept. 30th
Water Pipit	1st		Mar 2, 11	**Apr 17, 92**	**March 31st**	April 9th
	2nd		**Sep 10, 95**	Nov 16, 13	**Oct. 20th**	Oct. 17th
Brambling	1st	1	Jan 30, 01	**May 8, 11**	**April 11th**	Feb. 14th
	2nd		**Sep 17, 13**	Oct 22, 95	**Oct. 8th**	Oct. 11th
Snow Bunting	1st	14	Jan 1, 94	**Apr 10, 05**	**Feb. 17th**	No records
	2nd	4	**Sep 28, 03**	Dec 2, 90	**Oct. 22nd**	Oct. 31st

Table 2 – Data for winter visitors

Notes on Table 2

Most of the comments given above for Table 1 also apply to Table 2. This table treats the winter visitors, most stay in the area throughout the winter period but some move further south for part of the time especially if the weather is very cold. Each species again has two rows, here labelled “1st” and “2nd”, referring to the first and second winter periods, respectively; and the main data is given in Columns 4 to 6 with the 2015 data in Column 7. There is no comparison with the 1965-92 data as very little was given in the earlier paper for winter visitors. Unlike the summer visitor records, there were a number of years when some species were not recorded at all in the first, or second, or both, winter periods. The

number of these 'absent' winter periods is given in Column 3. It is perhaps of interest to note that up to 2014 no such column was needed in Table 1.

As with the summer visitors given in the first table, the species included in this list will vary with time. Very recently Firecrest has begun to breed in the Avon area, and so this species will have to be deleted from Table 2 in the future, and a small number of some wildfowl species, Goosander for example, have lingered into the summer perhaps because of some injury. Doubt has also been expressed about the presence of Little Gull on this list, the gap between last spring and first autumn sightings can, in some years be quite short. Also soon Snipe will probably have to be added to this table, the last year in which any breeding activity was noted for this species in Avon was 2005. Since 2006 the last first-winter departure dates for this species have ranged between April 16th (in 2009) and May 12th (in 2012), with an average of May 2nd, and the first second-winter arrival dates have ranged between July 10th (in 2015) and Aug. 3rd (in 2009), with an average of July 21st.

Three winter records for the period 1990 to 2014 were broken in 2015: two late wildfowl records and an early departing plover. The last first-winter record for Golden Plover (March 29th) was earlier than in any year since 1990, whilst those for Brent Goose and Pintail were the latest ever. Also there were no records in the first winter period for either Bewick's Swan or Snow Bunting, and as noted above for the first time since records began none in either period for White-fronted Goose.

Appendix

We reported above that in 1973 the BTO published a guide to the early and late dates for summer migrants recorded up to the end of 1972 – Hudson [1973]. This was a national survey dealing with 50 species all either summer visitors or double passage migrants. It gave an indication of the normal first-arrival and last-departure dates that were current in the early 1970s, and listed the national extreme records, with usually about 30 for each species. As is to be expected not many refer to the Avon area, but there are at least thirteen and, as many of these have not been recorded in earlier editions of this Report and all were carefully checked before publication, it seemed worthwhile to republish them here, see below. It is also of interest to quote the following paragraph from this 1973 guide.

"Even allowing for the fact that larger samples will tend to throw up more extremes, the range of dates [given in this 1973 guide] show, conclusively to the mind of the present writer [Hudson], that over the past 30 years or so [that is 1940s to 1970s; he was using Witherby [1938-41] for the earlier data] first arrivals have tended to be earlier and departures later; while during the same period January records, though still in the vagrant class for most species have also shown a slightly increased incidence. .... The only species which have shown a decline in the incidence of out-of-season records are Corncrake, Stone Curlew and Ring Ouzel; for these the drop has been apparent since the 19th century, and may reasonably be attributed to a decline in ranges and numbers of their British breeding populations."

The table below lists the eleven extreme date records given in Hudson [1973] that refer to species that regularly occur in the Avon area.

Little Tern – CVL on Oct. 31st, 1964

Black Tern – BG on April 8th, 1952

Sandwich Tern – CVL on March 12th, 1960

Arctic Tern – BL on Nov. 20th, 1949

Willow Warbler – Stoke Gifford on Dec. 7th, 1931

Garden Warbler – Littleton-on-Severn on Feb. 19th, 1966

Whitethroat – Mangotsfield on Nov. 16th, 1953

Pied Flycatcher – Patchway on April 8th, 1944

Whinchat – Long Ashton on Dec. 8th, 1949

Yellow Wagtail – CVL on Dec. 23rd, 1968

----- Chittening Warth on Jan.1st, 1971

Five further records from this document should be mentioned. Two Avon records of very scarce or rare species were listed: Stone Curlew (two), Cl-Y (Woodspring Bay) on Dec. 3rd, 1925, and Savi's Warbler, CVL on July 30th, 1970. There is a record of Nightjar from Shipham on April 13th,1946; this village is on the current Avon/Somerset border so this may have been an Avon record. Finally, two records are listed as 'Somerset' with no further site details given, so again may refer to Avon records, they were: Arctic Tern on Nov. 7th,1923 and Hobby on Nov. 6th,1896.

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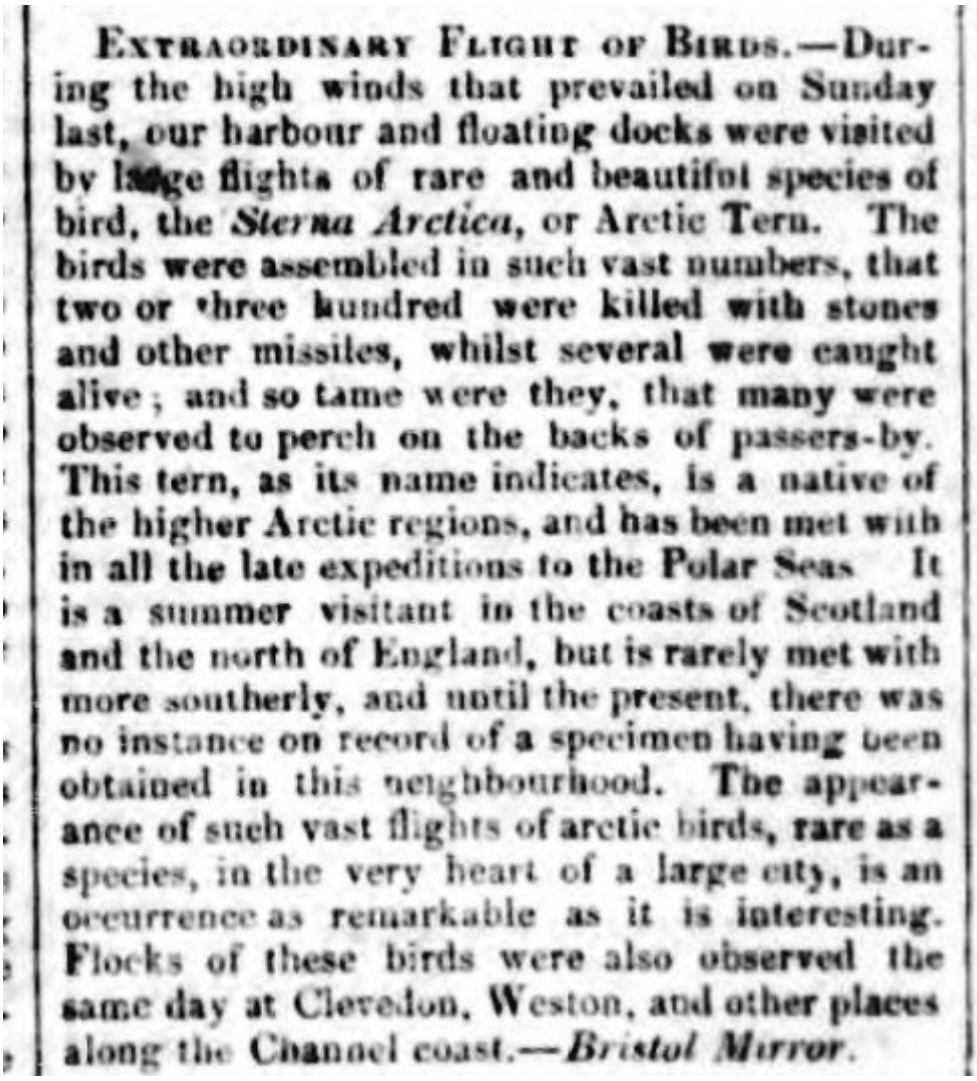
A remarkable historical record

A birder from Shropshire, John Tucker, has been scouring old newspapers for interesting or unusual bird sightings from the past and he found the following paragraph in the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* for May 27th, 1842. It was a report from a publication called "*Bristol Mirror*", the actual date of the occurrences described was not given but it is reasonable to assume that they took place in May 1842



EXTRAORDINARY FLIGHT OF BIRDS.—During the high winds that prevailed on Sunday last, our harbour and floating docks were visited by large flights of rare and beautiful species of bird, the *Sterna Arctica*, or Arctic Tern. The birds were assembled in such vast numbers, that two or three hundred were killed with stones and other missiles, whilst several were caught alive; and so tame were they, that many were observed to perch on the backs of passers-by. This tern, as its name indicates, is a native of the higher Arctic regions, and has been met with in all the late expeditions to the Polar Seas It is a summer visitant in the coasts of Scotland and the north of England, but is rarely met with more southerly, and until the present, there was no instance on record of a specimen having been obtained in this neighbourhood. The appearance of such vast flights of arctic birds, rare as a species, in the very heart of a large city, is an occurrence as remarkable as it is interesting. Flocks of these birds were also observed the same day at Clevedon, Weston, and other places along the Channel coast.—*Bristol Mirror*.

AVON ROOKERY SURVEY, 2015

Richard Bland

Background

Rooks were first counted in the Bristol region in 1933, and there was a national count in 1944/45, which was partially undertaken with the help of the Boy Scouts. Locally, some counts were made in the Severnside area and west of the A38 between 1935 and 1947, and several within the City of Bristol in the 1950s. In 1972/73 a complete count of the whole region was made for the first time, and this was repeated in 1975 as part of a national survey which was organised by Rae Vernon, a local ornithologist. This has been repeated every five years since, with many of the same observers responsible for the same ten *km* square throughout. There was also a national count in 1996, and locally an annual survey in the next three years to try to resolve some of the mysteries of the changing pattern. In 2015 there were good surveys in 15 of the 18 ten *km* squares and two squares, ST46 and ST77, were surveyed in April 2016. There were no counts from ST76.

Methodology

The Rook is an important species. The UK holds about 30% of the European population outside Russia, and it is also one of a small number where more or less accurate counts of its numbers can readily be obtained. It thus serves as a check on the accuracy of BBS counts, which are more designed for territorial singing species than for colonial ones. Rookeries are discrete gatherings that are easy to miss on both standard BBS surveys and in an Atlas tetrad survey. They survive for a fairly long time, large rookeries tend to last far longer than small ones, and they are often associated with parkland which, because they are not cultivated (that is, not ploughed every year) tend to have large worm populations which are one key to their success. The main cause of population change appears to be alterations in land use, in particular between arable and pasture. Rookeries can often be spotted at considerable distances, but accurate counts can be difficult. A further problem is that older birds tend to occupy the centre of a rookery, and nest early, while immature birds are attracted to the periphery and their nests are often added late in the season. Also, once trees are in leaf rookeries are very difficult to count accurately, and some are in Pines or Holm Oaks, that is in species that do not drop their foliage during the autumn and winter periods, which will almost certainly be undercounted. Nests are built or refurbished from late winter, egg laying begins at the start of April, juveniles appear from early May and by the end of this month most rookeries are abandoned.

Observers choose a ten *km* square within the border of the Avon area, they are sent a list of the known rookeries from the previous survey and are asked to check all the sites. This ensures that when a rookery is no longer in use this is recorded. The weakness of the method is that new rookeries can readily be missed, as there is an inevitable temptation to cover the known sites and not waste time looking for new ones. In 2015/16 some 1191 km^2 out of the total area of 1290 km^2 was surveyed.

Results

Between 1975 and 2000 the total number of nests counted in the area covered in the latest survey fluctuated between 5700 and 7200, giving an overall density of roughly five nests per square kilometre. This density is typical of southern England, although it is only half that in some areas of Scotland. Since 2000 the number of nests has fallen from 6790 to 3834 now. This confirms the findings of the Avon BBS survey, which covers some 10% of the area, and shows a 50% fall in numbers counted, from a rate of 5.5 birds per hour in 2002 to 2.3 per hour in 2014. Table 1 below provides details of the counts for the Avon area since 1975. The final column shows the percentage change in each square between 2000 and 2015/16. ST47 has increased because the largest rookery in this square was not counted in 2000. Otherwise the fall in numbers is spread fairly uniformly.

Observers

I am very grateful for the efforts of the following observers upon whom the whole burden lay. ST35 and 36 Trevor Riddle; ST45 and 55 Nigel Milbourne; ST46 Jan Pridie, Lois Pryce and Trevor Riddle; ST47 Jan Pridie and Lois Pryce; ST56 Richard Mielcarek; ST57 Richard Bland; ST58 Brian Lancastle; ST65 and 75 Martin Hunt; ST66 Paul Farmer; ST67 Geoff Suter; ST68 and ST77 Dave Stoddard; and ST78 David Trump.

Square	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015/16	% change since 2000
35	396	307	256	324	363	336	184	127	242	-28.0
36	194	171	174	125	182	270	208	142	105	-61.1
45	139	245	279	177	163	248	207	117	116	-53.2
46	255	271	367	433	436	549	478	536	527*	-4.0
47	62	51	49	42	75	63	145	150	97	54.0
55	383	330	397	456	493	437	324	284	254	-41.8
56	544	481	503	527	637	508	454	316	270	-46.8
57	181	199	233	200	225	299	267	222	116	-61.2
58	350	354	502	499	592	632	324	287	235	-62.8
65	66	364	289	186	238	315	257	216	139	-55.9
66	338	680	621	438	527	586	524	467	266	-54.6
75	194	342	403	315	200	225	254	209	132	-41.3
67	344	306	238	75	175	419	366	259	271	-35.3
68	659	595	597	478	307	322	373	487	289	-10.2
77	759	1170	1497	1236	1214	941	566	627	540*	-42.6
78	774	745	766	583	478	524	329	227	215	-59.0
88	78	73	77	145	113	116	78	31	31	-73.3
Total	5716	6684	7248	6239	6418	6790	5338	4704	3834	-43.5

Table 1 -- Avon Rook nest counts 1975-2015, * indicates count undertaken in 2016

The changes are shown graphically in Chart 1 below.

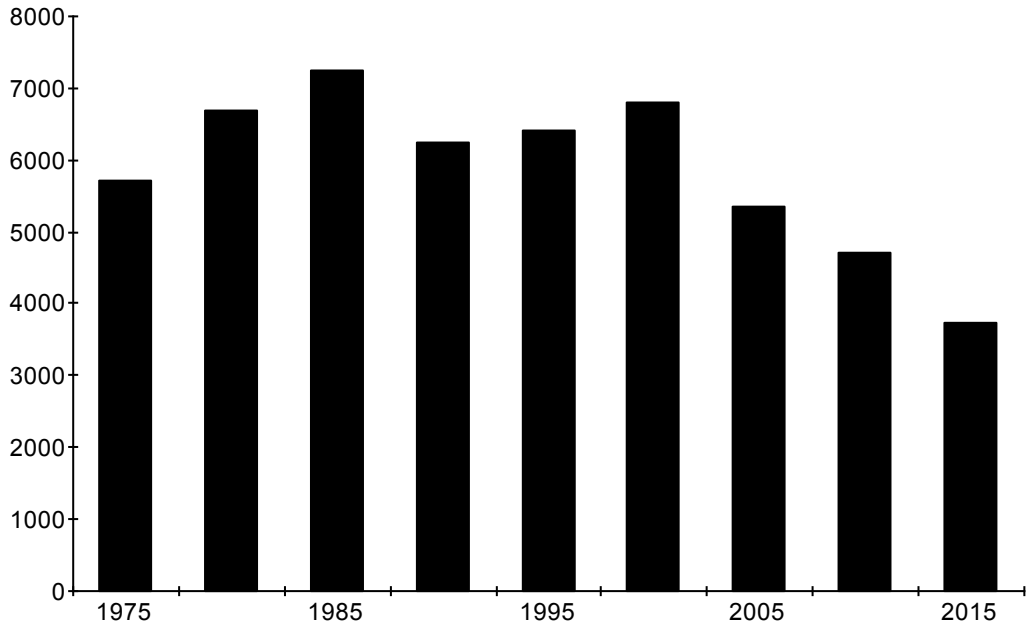


Chart 1 -- Total number of nests, 1975-2015

In the seventeen ten *km* squares of the Avon area a total of 3834 nests was counted in 2015/16 from 181 rookeries. This continues a process of decline that began in 2000, and is the lowest total since the present run of surveys began in 1975. It shows a fall of 20% in five years and 43.5% since 2000. The cause(s) of this decline is unclear, although the areas undergoing the fastest urbanisation, especially ST58 north of Bristol and ST36 around Weston-s-Mare, show the sharpest declines. But rural areas, such as ST66 around Pensford, and ST77 and ST78 -- the barley areas of the Cotswolds -- have also shown similar rates of decline. The most urbanised squares, that is Bristol ST57 and ST67, Portishead ST47 and Weston-s-Mare ST36, have the lowest nest densities, probably due to low earthworm density. Conditions for Rooks, especially during the dreadful summer of 2012, may have made the period difficult, but the trend since 2000 is disturbing. The density figures, for 2000 and 2015/16, in nests per square kilometre are shown in Table 2 below.

Square	Area in square *km*	Nest density 2000	Nest density 2015/16
35	37	9.1	6.5
36	61	4.4	1.7
45	23	10.8	5.0
46	100	5.4	5.1*
47	70	0.9	1.4
55	34	12.9	7.5
56	100	5.1	2.7
57	100	3.0	1.2
58	60	10.5	3.5
65	57	5.5	2.4
66	100	5.9	2.1
75	36	6.3	3.7
67	100	4.2	2.7
68	100	3.2	2.9
77	100	6.3	5.4*
78	100	5.2	2.2
88	13	8.9	2.4
Total	1191	5.7	3.1

Table 2 -- Nest density in nests per square kilometre in each ten km square in 2000 and 2015/16

Rookery structure

Table 3 below gives the rookery structure by nest count. It shows that 20% of the rookeries, the largest ones, hold a third of all nests. At the other end of the scale a third of the rookeries have fewer than ten nests per rookery and account for just 9% of total number of nests in the area.

Nests per rookery	Number of rookeries	Percentage of rookeries	Total nests	Percentage of nests	Nests/rookery
1 - 10	57	31.5	345	9.0	6.1
11 - 20	54	29.8	855	22.3	15.8
21 - 30	33	18.2	847	22.1	25.7
31 - 40	17	9.4	629	16.4	37.0
41 - 50	8	4.4	368	9.6	46.0
51 - 60	6	3.3	331	8.6	55.2
>60	6	3.3	459	12.0	76.5

Table 3 -- Rookery structure by number of nests

Rookery age

The number of rookeries found during the current survey was 181 of which 39 (22%) were new since 2010. At the same time 130 of the rookeries that existed in 2010 have vanished. The average nest count of new rookeries was 15, this compares with the overall average of 21. The rookeries that have ceased to exist since 2010 had an average of 13 nests per rookery in that year. The figures for new and defunct rookeries, and the overall average, are more or less the same as in 2010. There is a continuing and rapid turnover of rookeries. However, there are seven at sites that held rookeries in 1933, but only two, Bower Ashton and Rowberrow Manor have been occupied continuously. The average age of all Avon rookeries is 20 years. There is a clear trend for older rookeries to have a larger number of nests, this is shown in Table 4.

Date of first record	Rookery count in 2015/16	Percentage of total 2015/16 rookeries	Total nest count in 2015/16	Percentage of total 2015/16 nests	Nests per rookery in 2015/16
1975 and earlier	38	21.0	1037	27.0	27.3
1980 or 1985	25	13,8	813	21.2	32.5
1990 or 1995	29	16.0	641	16.7	22.1
2000 or 2005	20	11.0	298	7.6	14.7
2010 or 2015	69	38.1	1050	27.3	15.2

Table 4 showing the date of apparent active rookery origin in 2015

It is our intention to continue these surveys with the next one on 2020 when it is hoped that more evidence will become available that will help us to understand better the causes of the worrying and substantial declines that have occurred over the past decade and a half.

The following note has been provided by Richard Bland, a lifelong friend and colleague.

In memoriam: Hugh Boyd

Hugh died on July 3rd, 2016 at the age of 91, he had been ill for some considerable time. He was much the most important naturalist to have belonged to the Bristol Naturalists' Society in the past sixty years. He was a lifelong member, and his earliest paper, one of hundreds, was a study of Coots at Blagdon (BL); and one of his last, a joint paper published in this Report for 2010, was an historical study of migration recorded at Little Stoke between 1931 and 1947. He joined the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge in its earliest days, founded a duck counting scheme which became the present WeBS scheme run by the BTO. He was also the warden on Lundy for a while. Having spent some time in Scotland he moved, in 1967, to Canada to work in their Wildlife Service. There he was responsible for the North American Waterfowl management plan, and his observations were some of the first to demonstrate the impact of climate change in the Arctic. Further details about his life and achievements can be found in the Times newspaper, where he merited a full page obituary, the September 2016 edition of British Birds, and the forthcoming issue of Nature in Avon.

Avon Ringing Report, 2015

M. Bailey and E. Drewitt

Over 2600 ringers operate in the UK and while ringing continues to play a role in studying movements, it is also important for monitoring breeding success, longevity and the recruitment of young birds into subsequent years. In the Avon area around 40 BTO members are qualified to take part in the ringing scheme, or are under training.

During 2015 a total of 9,797 birds was ringed in the Avon area, a small increase on the 2014 total of 9,560. Nationally the total fell below the one million mark to 983,887, and this is thought to be due to wetter than average conditions, especially in northern England and Scotland. The main contributors in Avon were: CVL 4,681 (48%), Gordano Valley 1,626 (17%), Littleton Brick Pits 849 (9%), Cam Valley 474 (5%), Pilning Wetlands 402 (4%), Portbury Warth Nature Reserve 375 (4%), and others (11%). Ringing has ceased at Portbury Warth due to vandalism and the fact that Avon Wildlife Trust no longer manages the site.

The successful season in 2014 and a sunny winter, that remained dry until April, meant a high survival rate amongst the residents although some sub-Saharan migrants fared less well. This gave a favourable start to the breeding season. Data from the two CVRS Constant Effort Sites (CES) gave the second highest count of adults present compared with the previous ten years as shown in Chart 1 below.

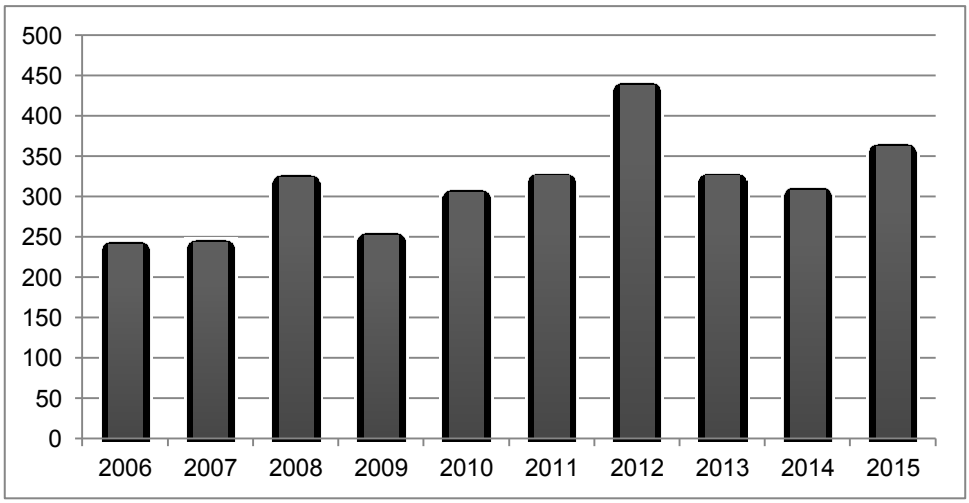


Chart 1. Number of breeding birds present 2015 from Constant Effort Site (CES) data, CVL 2006 – 2015

However, as usual, the weather was the main driver that affected breeding success and apart from a generally fine June, the months of May, July and August were unsettled with some heavy rain. The ratio of adult to juvenile was 1:2 which is slightly above the average over the previous ten years. Although not as high as in 2014, when the ratio (productivity) was 1:2.7, the figures for 2015 represent a reasonably successful year. This is in contrast to 2012 when the adult to juvenile ratio fell to 1:1 and to 2013 when it was below 1:1.5.

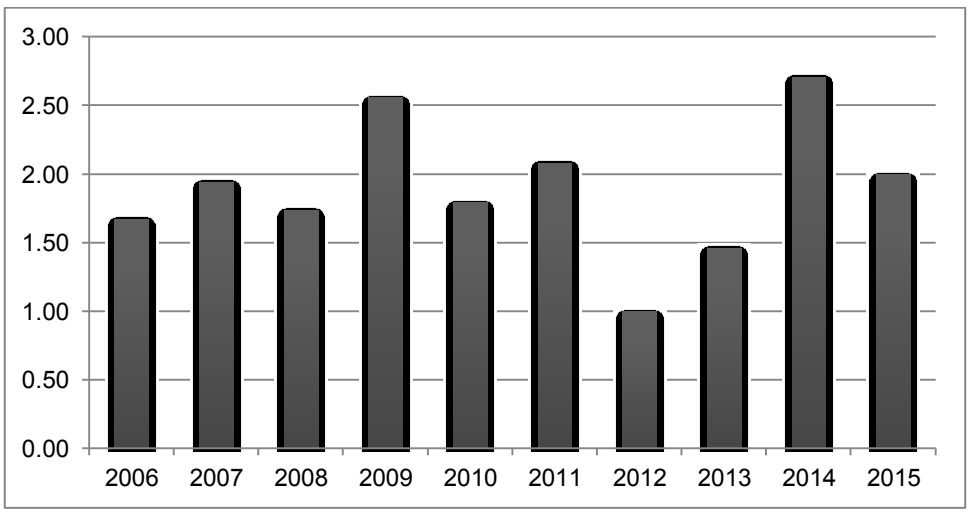


Chart 2. Productivity (Adult to juvenile ratio) from Constant Effort Site (CES) data, CVL 2006 – 2015

Top Twenty Totals

Table 1 below shows the top 20 species ringed in the Avon area in 2015 (2014 positions shown in brackets), and the percentage change in the ringing total between 2014 and 2015, note that some year-to-year changes were definitely affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and catching opportunities. Eighteen of the top 20 species remain the same although, as usual, there was some change in their relative positions. Reed Warbler remained in the number one spot while Goldcrest and Coal Tit joined the list, and Bullfinch and Canada Goose dropped out. Reed Warblers had a reasonable breeding season but the high numbers ringed reflect the dedicated nest recording at CVL. Despite having a poor breeding season in 2014, the increase in the number of both Blue and Great Tits is reflected in the ringing effort, particularly the ringing of young in the nest, as well as birds being attracted to feeders. Coal Tit and Goldcrest showed a large increase in numbers ringed suggesting a good breeding season. Greenfinches continued to drop in numbers as a consequence of *Trichomoniasis*, a disease affecting their digestive system. After a bumper year for Barn Owls in 2014, 2015 was a much poorer year and the Barn Owl Conservation Trust reports that the number of young in nests was 18% below average; despite this numbers ringed in Avon still remained high. Long-tailed Tits were caught in increasing numbers. With plenty of adults in the local environment, the mild, dry early springs have allowed this species to successfully rear many chicks to fledging; subsequent roving flocks have been abundant along hedgerows and the edges of the reedbeds.

Position	Species	2015	%
1(1)	Reed Warbler	1507	+2
2(3)	Blue Tit	1293	+31
3(2)	Blackcap	1068	-8
4(4)	Chiffchaff	847	+3
5(6)	Great Tit	658	+14
6(7)	Goldfinch	372	0
7(15)	Long-tailed Tit	297	+63
8(10)	Robin	290	+2
9(8)	Swallow	263	-28
10(13)	Wren	255	+34

Position	Species	2015	%
11(9)	Sedge Warbler	247	-18
12(12)	Chaffinch	222	+12
13(23)	Goldcrest	217	+250
14(5)	Greenfinch	216	-65
15(11)	Dunnock	197	-3
16(14)	Blackbird	170	-7
17(17)	Reed Bunting	146	+18
18(16)	Willow Warbler	121	-21
19(20)	Canada Goose	104	+33
20(26)	Coal Tit	102	+89

Recoveries

The records in Table 2 below are listed because of the distance travelled and/or longevity. Most local recaptures have been omitted. The first line of each entry gives details of the original ringing, subsequent lines provide details of the recovery, including the distance travelled and the time elapsed from the original ringing date. The effects of colour ringing are particularly noticeable in the recovery / sightings of the gulls and waders. Several of the larger gull histories have been shortened following multiple sightings within the same area.

No records were broken in 2015 but a number of recoveries are worth mentioning. The oldest was a Buzzard involved in a road accident nearly 22 years after it was first ringed, also a Ringed Plover still going strong in its 12th year and a Tawny Owl that died in a storm at 14 were notable. Many of the long distance migrants appear to be on a roughly NE-SW axis, the northern sites being in the general area of the southern Baltic – the furthest away being a Black-headed Gull from Riga some 1,850*km* to the north-east, and the southern sites in western France or Iberia – the furthest south being a Reed Warbler that had arrived from southern Portugal nearly 1,600*km* to the south-west.

Mute Swan

Ring Number	**U2777**	
First-year Female	20/09/1999	Harry Stoke, near Bristol
Alive (ring read in field)	14/02/2002	Filton, 2*km*, 2y 4m 25days
Caught by ringer	22/01/2006	Southall, Greater London,150*km*, 6y 4m 2days

Canada Goose

Ring Number	**5228556**	
Adult Male	01-07-2003	CVL
Caught by ringer	29-06-2004	CVL, 11m 28days
Caught by ringer	30-06-2009	CVL, 5y 11m 29days
Caught by ringer	29-06-2010	CVL, 6y 11m 28days
Alive (ring read in field)	27-03-2015	CVL, 11y 8m 26days

Ring Number	**5251877**	
Adult	27-06-2006	CVL
Freshly dead (shot)	22-09-2015	Chew Valley, 2*km*, 9y 2m 26days
Ring Number	**5251834**	
Adult	27-06-2006	CVL
Caught by ringer	30-06-2015	CVL, 9y 0m 3days
Ring Number	**5274050**	
Adult Female	28-06-2014	Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-12-2015	Pillhead Gout, near Thornbury, 307*km*, 1y 5m 21days

Cormorant

Ring Number	**5267105**	
Nestling	08-06-2014	Denny Island, Bristol Channel
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-07-2014	CVL, 24*km*, 26days
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-06-2015	CVL, 24*km*, 11m 29days

Buzzard

Ring Number	**GF27415**	
Nestling	19-06-1993	Flax Bourton
Freshly dead (hit by car)	14-04-2015	Beggar Bush Lane, Abbots Leigh, 7*km*, 21y 9m 26days

Peregrine

Ring Number	**GC46068**	
Nestling Female	29-05-2013	Site Confidential, Bath
Alive (colour rings seen)	17-04-2015	Norwich, Norfolk, 288*km*, 1y 10m 19days
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-11-2015	Norwich, Norfolk, 288*km*, 2y 5m 15days
Ring Number	**GC46051**	
Nestling	21-05-2012	Site Confidential, near Avon Gorge
Alive (colour rings seen)	31-12-2014	Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire, 65*km*, 2y 7m 10days
Alive (colour rings seen)	27-06-2015	Site Confidential, Shropshire, 125*km*, 3y 1m 6days

Ringed Plover

Ring Number	**NW21720**	
Nestling	30-05-2004	Royal Portbury Dock
Caught by ringer	14-12-2015	West Usk Lighthouse, Newport, 19*km*, 11y 6m 14days

Dunlin

Ring Number	**JT46330**	
First-year	13-08-2014	Ujscie Wisly, Swibno, Poland
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-09-2014	Severn Beach, 1,480*km*, 24days
Ring Number	**DD84918**	
Adult Male	29-09-2012	Harty, Kent
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-07-2013	Pilning Reserve, 247*km*, 9m 9days
Alive (colour rings seen)	25-07-2013	Keyhaven, Lymington, Hampshire, 188*km*, 9m 26days
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-08-2013	Oare, Kent, 3*km*, 10m 17days
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-08-2014	Oare, Kent, 3*km*, 1y 10m 15days

Redshank

Ring Number	**DE00504**	
Adult	12-09-2014	New Passage, Redwick
Caught by ringer	17-10-2015	Thorney Island, West Sussex, 145*km*, 1y 1m 5days

Black-headed Gull

Ring Number	**FN45053**	
Nestling	26-06-2002	Recz, Poland
Alive (ring read in field)	05-01-2015	CVL, 1,253*km*, 12y 6m 10days

Ring Number	**EY45642**	
Adult	08-03-2014	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-07-2015	Northwick Warth, 218*km*, 1y 4m 7days
Ring Number	**EY45518**	
Adult	22-02-2014	Rainham Tip, Greater London
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-07-2015	Northwick Warth, 197*km*, 1y 4m 27days
Ring Number	**EX00707**	
Nestling	12-06-2009	Pylewell Lake, Lisle Court, Hampshire
Sick (pollution)	20-10-2015	Pill, Bristol, 116*km*, 6y 4m 8days
Ring Number	**EY83213**	
Nestling	13-06-2015	Hosehill Lake, West Berkshire
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-07-2015	CVL,110*km*, 1m 9days
Ring Number	**EY83247**	
Nestling	13-06-2015	Hosehill Lake, West Berkshire
Alive (colour rings seen)	05-08-2015	CVL, 110*km*, 1m 23days
Ring Number	**S7602**	
Adult	20-04-2009	Riga, Latvia
Alive (ring read in field)	02-09-2015	CVL, 1,848*km*, 6y 4m 13days
Ring Number	**FS07378**	
Nestling	05-06-2014	Kiszkowo, Poland
Alive (colour rings seen)	11-08-2014	CVL, 1,371*km*, 2m 6days
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-12-2015	CVL, 1,371*km*, 1y 6m 14days

Mediterranean Gull

Ring Number	**E236774**	
Nestling	27-06-1998	Lillo, Solvay, Belgium
Alive (colour rings seen)	25-07-1998	CVL, 481*km*, 28days
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-01-2000	Site Confidential, Devon, 603*km*, 1y 6m 12days

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Ring Number	**GN49125**	
Nestling	05-07-2002	Bath
Alive (colour marks seen)	26-03-2003	Playa de San Lorenzo, Spain, 907*km*, 8m 21days
Alive (colour rings seen)	10-01-2012	Lower Farm Gravel Pits, W. Berks, 76*km*, 9y 6m 5days
Alive (colour rings seen)	17-12-2015	Lower Farm Gravel Pits, W. Berks, 76*km*, 13y 5m 12days
Ring Number	**FP86154**	
Second-year	29-10-2005	near Hempsted, Gloucester
Alive (colour marks seen)	24-11-2007	Pantin Beach, Valdovino, Spain, 1,011*km*, 2y 0m 26days
Alive (colour marks seen)	29-11-2008	Ancora Beach, Portugal, 1,223*km*, 3y 1m 0days
Alive (colour marks seen)	23-05-2010	Bristol, 50*km*, 4y 6m 24days
Alive (colour marks seen)	17-12-2010	Boca Do Rio, Spain, 1,142*km*, 5y 1m 18days
Alive (colour marks seen)	20-07-2011	Shortwood Landfill Site, 43*km*, 5y 8m 21days
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-08-2015	Bristol, 50*km*, 9y 9m 5days
Ring Number	**FP86525**	
Adult	03-02-2007	near Hempsted, Gloucester
Alive (colour marks seen)	03-01-2008	Shortwood Landfill Site, 43*km*,11m 0days
Alive (colour marks seen)	05-11-2008	Shortwood Landfill Site, 43*km*, 1y 9m 2days
Alive (colour marks seen)	29-12-2009	Amailloux Landfill, France, 584*km*, 2y 10m 26days
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-10-2015	Lyde Green, near Emersons Green, 42*km*, 8y 8m 5days
Ring Number	**GR62677**	
Nestling	26-06-2013	Bath
Alive (colour rings seen)	12-05-2014	Matosinhos, Portugal, 1,233*km*, 10m 16days
Alive (colour rings seen)	17-08-2015	The Lizard, Cornwall, 255*km*, 2y 1m 22days

Herring Gull

Ring Number	**GN84056**	
First-year	29-10-2005	near Hempsted, Gloucester
With many sightings in the Hemsted and Shortwood area		
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-10-2015	Shortwood Landfill Site, 43*km*, 9y 11m 9days

Ring Number	**GC22758**	
Adult	16-12-2006	near Hempsted, Gloucester
Followed by many sightings in the S. Gloucester area, last report		
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-08-2015	Northway, Viridor Transfer Station, Filton, 42*km*, 8y 7m 19days

Ring Number	**GR62522**	
Nestling	29-06-2012	Bristol
Alive (colour rings seen)	31-12-2013	Beddington Sew Wks, Greater London,169*km*, 1y 6m 2d
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-05-2014	Gravesend, Kent, 205*km*, 1y 10m 8days
Alive (colour rings seen)	01-04-2015	Dungeness, Kent, 254*km*, 2y 9m 3days

Great Black-backed Gull

Ring Number	**MA30855**	
Nestling	16-06-2013	Denny Island, Bristol Channel
Alive (colour rings seen)	30-04-2015	CVL, 25*km*, 1y 10m 14days

Ring Number	**MA30868**	
Nestling	16-06-2013	Denny Island, Bristol Channel
Alive (colour rings seen)	29-04-2014	CVL. 26*km*, 10m 13days
Alive (colour rings seen)	25-04-2015	CVL, 26*km*, 1y 10m 9days

Barn Owl

Ring Number	**GV28565**	
Nestling	03-08-2015	Great Gate Farm, near Rocester, Derbyshire
Dead	10-12-2015	Clevedon Moor, 180*km*, 4m 7days

Ring Number	**GV22208**	
Nestling Male	26-06-2015	Sheylor's Barn, Wiltshire
Dead (hit by car)	14-10-2015	Tormarton, 13*km*, 3m 18days

Tawny Owl

Ring Number	**GM69000**	
Nestling	06-05-2001	Blagdon Lake, Blagdon
Freshly dead (storm)	29-07-2015	Blagdon, 2*km*, 14y 2m 23days

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Ring Number	**CT90523**	
Second-year Female	04-05-2008	Cam Valley, Cameley
Freshly dead	24-06-2015	Cam Valley, Cameley, 7y 1m 20days

Jackdaw

Ring Number	**ER37639**	
First-year	17-03-2007	CVL
Caught by ringer	05-12-2015	CVL, 8y 8m 18days

Goldcrest

Ring Number	**HRL131**	
First-year Male	28-10-2015	Neatham Farms, Wyck, Hampshire
Caught by ringer	01-11-2015	CVL, 122*km*, 4days

Blue Tit

Ring Number	**V389523**	
Juvenile	29-07-2007	CVL
Last Capture	08-02-2015	CVL, 7y 6m 10days

Ring Number	**L006030**	
First-year Male	16-01-2010	Cam Valley, Cameley
Caught by ringer	22-11-2015	Cam Valley, Cameley, 5y 10m 6days
Ring Number	**X297832**	
Nestling	19-05-2009	CVL
Last capture	06-03-2015	CVL, 5y 9m 15d

Cetti's Warbler

Ring Number	**Z040947**	
Juvenile Male	07-06-2015	Marsworth Reservoir, Tring, Hertfordshire
Caught by ringer	21-06-2015	Marsworth Reservoir, Tring, Hertfordshire, 14days
Caught by ringer	25-10-2015	Marsworth Reservoir, Tring, Hertfordshire, 4m 18days
Caught by ringer	01-11-2015	CVL, 147*km*, 4m 25days
Ring Number	**Y103125**	
Full-grown Female	02-09-2011	Walton in Gordano
Caught by ringer	07-04-2015	Bude Marshes N. R., Cornwall, 139*km*, 3y 7m 5days
Caught by ringer	23-05-2015	Bude Marshes N. R., Cornwall, 139*km*, 3y 8m 21days

Chiffchaff

Ring Number	**EYX485**	
First-year	13-08-2014	Arrow Valley Culvert, Worcestershire
Caught by ringer	21-03-2015	CVL, 120*km*, 7m 8days

Willow Warbler

Ring Number	**X611310**	
First-year Female	13-08-2009	CVL
Caught by ringer	07-06-2015	CVL, 5y 9m 25days
Ring Number	**D421286**	
First-year Male	30-10-2013	Sandwich Bay Estate,(Kent
Freshly dead (cat)	16-04-2015	Clevedon, 296*km*, 1y 5m 17days
Ring Number	**L773732**	
First-year Female	06-10-2013	Orfordness, Suffolk
Freshly dead	16-04-2015	Bath, 283*km*, 1y 6m 10days
Ring Number	**Z480772**	
Juvenile	11-07-2015	Burnham Market, Norfolk
Caught by ringer	19-09-2015	Littleton Brick Pits, 269*km*, 2m 8days
Ring Number	**D966419**	
First-year Male	13-09-2014	CVL
Caught by ringer	12-05-2015	Orlestone Forest, Kent, 243*km*, 7m 29days

Sedge Warbler

Ring Number	**Y000048**	
First-year	11-07-2011	Pett Level, East Sussex
Caught by ringer	10-04-2015	CVL, 235*km*, 3y 8m 30days
Ring Number	**Z723503**	
Juvenile	01-07-2015	Teifi Marsh, Ceredigion
Caught by ringer	21-07-2015	CVL, 162*km*, 20days

Reed Warbler

Ring Number	**Z234430**	
First-year	11-07-2015	CVL
Caught by ringer	18-08-2015	Pett Level, East Sussex, 235*km*, 1m 7days
Ring Number	**D970602**	
First-year Female	07-08-2014	Litlington, East Sussex
Caught by ringer	05-07-2015	CVL, 204*km*, 10m 28days

Ring Number	**D561616**	
Adult Male	09-06-2014	Arreton, Isle of Wight
Caught by ringer	03-08-2014	CVL, 122*km*, 1m 25days
Caught by ringer	20-07-2015	CVL, 122*km*, 1y 1m 11days
Ring Number	**7475386**	
Second-year	18-08-2014	Marais-Moisan-Ouest, Messanges, France
Caught by ringer	22-07-2015	CVL, 841*km*, 11m 4days
Ring Number	**A391106**	
First-year	18-09-2014	Lagoa de Santo Andre, Setubal, Portugal
Caught by ringer	04-06-2015	New Passage, 1,573*km*, 8m 17days

Dunnock

Ring Number	**X610967**	
Juvenile Female	06-08-2009	CVL
	7 other recaptures between 2010 and 2014	
Last capture	12-02-2015	CVL, 5y 6m 6days

Chaffinch

Ring Number	**X232903**	
Full-grown Female	17-04-2010	Watchet, Somerset.
Caught by ringer	11-11-2015	Cam Valley, Cameley, 57*km*, 5y 6m 25 days

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Siskin

Ring Number	**Z280400**	
Adult Male	06-09-2015	Walton in Gordano
Caught by ringer	14-09-2015	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent, 293*km*, 8days

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2011 – 2015

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2011 to 2015 are given in the table below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the previous four years, 2011 to 2014, in the right-hand column.

Black-headed Gull was the only new species added to the list of birds ringed in the previous four years.

Of some note were 29 Teal, 61 Barn Owl, 217 Goldcrest, and 102 Coal Tit. The 81 Yellowhammer arose from the mark and recapture study to estimate the size of the flock at Elm Farm, Burnett, near Bath that is provided with food under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

Species	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Four Yr Av.
Mute Swan	1	2	0	4	1	1.8
Canada Goose	144	0	63	78	104	71.3
Egyptian Goose	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Teal	15	10	10	2	29	9.3
Mallard	17	22	18	29	19	21.5
Garganey	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Tufted Duck	0	0	2	20	1	5.5
Manx Shearwater	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Sparrowhawk	4	7	2	3	5	4.0
Buzzard	0	3	1	0	0	1.0
Water Rail	0	29	38	27	12	23.5
Spotted Crake	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Moorhen	26	59	79	51	29	53.8
Coot	5	5	2	14	4	6.5
Lapwing	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Ringed Plover	2	9	0	0	0	2.8
Dunlin	0	0	0	31	11	7.8
Common Sandpiper	0	0	0	1	2	0.3
Green Sandpiper	0	0	1	1	0	0.5

Redshank	0	0	0	6	2	1.5
Snipe	0	0	0	2	1	0.5
Woodcock	0	0	0	5	1	1.3
Herring Gull	33	61	49	38	55	45.3
Stock Dove	2	1	1	0	6	1.0
Wood Pigeon	6	12	3	7	16	7.0
Collared Dove	1	1	2	5	3	2.3
Cuckoo	0	0	0	1	2	0.3
Barn Owl	38	43	12	78	61	42.8
Little Owl	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Tawny Owl	15	12	3	22	3	13.0
Nightjar	0	0	2	1	2	0.8
Swift	0	8	0	0	0	2.0
Kingfisher	5	8	13	7	8	8.3
Wryneck	0	1	1	0	0	0.5
Green Woodpecker	2	3	5	2	4	3.0
Great Spotted Woodpecker	15	21	10	22	24	17.0
Peregrine	17	13	12	14	11	12.5
Kestrel	30	28	35	29	16	30.5
Jackdaw	4	0	6	12	27	5.5
Rook	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Carrion Crow	0	1	2	1	2	1.0
Raven	3	5	3	5	2	3.75
Goldcrest	99	67	19	62	217	61.8
Firecrest	0	0	0	2	5	0.5
Blue Tit	983	709	545	984	1293	805.3
Great Tit	694	545	331	575	658	536.3
Coal Tit	84	63	23	54	102	56.0
Bearded Tit	0	0	0	1	2	0.3
Marsh Tit	1	0	0	2	3	0.8
Sand Martin	192	6	13	11	14	55.5
Swallow	314	214	954	365	263	461.8
House Martin	1	13	3	4	0	5.3
Cetti's Warbler	19	24	21	40	61	26.0
Long-tailed Tit	177	195	138	182	297	173.0
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	0	0	1	0	0.5
Chiffchaff	755	454	428	825	847	615.5
Willow Warbler	140	172	175	153	121	160.0
Blackcap	916	591	512	1166	1068	796.3
Garden Warbler	42	53	42	76	42	53.3
Lesser Whitethroat	17	19	35	25	30	24.0
Whitethroat	43	53	83	68	35	61.8
Grasshopper Warbler	12	5	9	6	3	8.0
Sedge Warbler	545	96	212	301	247	288.5
Reed Warbler	1,440	428	788	1475	1507	1032.8
Nuthatch	11	23	11	12	20	14.3
Treecreeper	32	19	12	38	41	25.3
Wren	154	147	146	190	255	159.3
Starling	145	7	56	41	64	62.3
Blackbird	111	162	125	183	170	145.3
Fieldfare	9	10	5	2	4	6.5
Song Thrush	31	57	47	51	84	46.5
Redwing	16	6	2	12	37	9.0
Mistle Thrush	1	5	0	0	0	1.5
Spotted Flycatcher	1	2	1	1	1	1.3
Robin	167	178	154	284	290	195.8
Nightingale	1	0	1	0	0	0.5

Pied Flycatcher	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Redstart	0	12	5	11	10	7.0
Whinchat	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Stonechat	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Wheatear	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Dunnock	139	133	106	203	197	145.3
House Sparrow	22	38	42	56	60	39.5
Grey Wagtail	0	1	2	3	3	1.5
Pied Wagtail	7	21	6	4	6	9.5
Tree Pipit	0	0	1	1	0	0.5
Meadow Pipit	0	15	4	16	22	8.8
Water Pipit	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Chaffinch	93	131	105	198	222	131.8
Brambling	25	2	0	0	0	6.8
Greenfinch	157	176	223	616	216	293.0
Goldfinch	148	146	165	373	372	208.0
Siskin	3	25	51	25	12	26.0
Linnet	1	47	8	6	34	15.5
Redpoll (Lesser / Common)	132	36	4	14	24	46.5
Bullfinch	95	66	33	79	78	68.3
Yellowhammer	0	0	0	52	81	13.0
Reed Bunting	88	87	98	124	146	99.3
TOTAL	8,566	5,766	6227	9560	9797	7529.8

Table 1 -- List of birds ringed between 2011 and 2015 with 2011-14 average

Chew Valley Ringing Station Report

The eighteenth Report, for the years 2013 to 2015, of the Chew Valley Ringing Station (CVRS) Report was published recently. It provides a detailed account of the station's activities and a number of papers discussing ornithological topics related to the Avon region; these are listed below. It also provides a detailed list of recoveries over the period. Copies are available from the editor Mike Bailey at CVRS, Herriott's Bridge, Bath Road, West Harptree, Bristol, BS40 6HN.

The main papers presented are as follows, they all add to our general understanding of the birds occurring in the Avon area.

- The movement and survival of colour-ringed Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus* and Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* following rehabilitation at the Secret World Wildlife Rescue Centre, East Huntspill, Somerset – *Mike Bailey*.
- Materials used in the construction of Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* nests, with a particular focus on bryophytes – *Patrick Hancock.*
- Barn Owl prey items at CVL – *Ed Drewitt.*
- Nest recording 2013-2015 – *Mark Dadds*. [Species discussed include Water Rail, Stock Dove, Cuckoo, Blue Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Reed Warbler and Treecreeper.]
- Breeding season surveys of Water Rail at CVL 2013, 2014 and 2015 – *Mark Dadds*.
- Site fidelity of breeding Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* at Chew Valley Ringing Station – *Patrick Hancock.*
- The changing fortunes of the Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* at Chew Valley Ringing Station – *Patrick Hancock*.

THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN THE AVON REGION, 2015

Dave Stoddard

INTRODUCTION

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is organised on a national basis by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and it is the main scheme for monitoring the population trends of the UK's common breeding birds. The survey is organised on a regional basis and the BTO Avon Region includes the four unitary authority areas that formerly constituted the county of Avon, namely: Bath & North East Somerset, City of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, 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 is extended 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.

METHOD

The survey is conducted by birdwatchers able to recognise all species likely to be encountered by both sight and sound. This year 108 observers participated in the survey, many of them are members of the Bristol Ornithological Club, or 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. In addition data is included from the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS -- three locations) where the methodology is similar except that the transects follow the course of a river.

2015 RESULTS

A total of 203 squares, including 122 for the National BTO schemes, was surveyed. These 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 whole area. Unusually three species were recorded by the Avon BBS for the first time this year, namely: Gannet, Marsh Harrier and Water Rail (at two sites).

In the 2015 survey, 63,851 birds were recorded in 203 squares at the rate of 118 per hour. This is very similar to 2014 when 65,229 were recorded in 207 squares also at the rate of 118 per hour. Indeed the numbers recorded have continued at the rather depressed level noted first in 2013 (64,457 in 204 squares at a rate of 117 per hour) when there was a very truncated breeding season. In contrast in 2000 a total of 52,513 was recorded in 142 squares at a rate of 140 per hour.

Unitary Authority	Squares surveyed	Percentage of UA area surveyed	Birds recorded	Percentage of total birds recorded
Bath & NE Somerset	42	12.0	12803	20.0
City of Bristol	38	33.3	10474	16.4
North Somerset	49	14.7	15067	23.6
Somerset (BTO Avon)	30	9.3	10971	17.2
South Gloucestershire	44	10.1	14536	22.8
BTO Avon Region	203		63851	

Table 1 – Breakdown by unitary authority of the squares surveyed

Table 2 overleaf lists all the species recorded in the survey in 2015, and gives the overall count and the percentage of the total number of squares surveyed in which they were encountered.

Table 3 on page 169 provides the percentage change figures for the more commonly recorded species while Table 4 on page 170 lists the 20 commonest species recorded in the survey in 2015, ranked in order of abundance, and their comparable positions in 2005 and 2010.

No attempt has been made to provide figures for the gulls as most of those recorded will have been non-breeders. The percentage changes over the year from 2014 to 2015 are given together with the equivalent figures from 2013 to 2014 as a comparison. In order to provide some context, the most recent BTO BBS change figures (for the period 2013 to 2014) for England (as opposed to the UK) are also included. Finally, figures showing the percentage changes in Avon over the ten years from 2005 to 2015 are provided as an indicator of the medium term trend.

Species	Number Counted 2015	Distribution in area surveyed 2015 Squares in which recorded	Percentage of squares surveyed	Species	Number Counted 2015	Distribution in area surveyed 2015 Squares in which recorded surveyed	Percentage of squares
Mute Swan	282	26	12.8	Rook	1946	84	41.4
Canada Goose	169	24	11.8	Carrion Crow	3861	197	97
Egyptian Goose	2	1	0.5	Raven	78	44	21.7
Shelduck	146	14	6.9	Goldcrest	217	71	35
Gadwall	19	4	2.0	Blue Tit	2064	196	96.6
Teal	2	1	0.5	Great Tit	1506	191	94.1
Mallard	992	98	48.3	Coal Tit	98	49	24.1
Shoveler	6	2	1.0	Marsh Tit	12	5	2.5
Pochard	3	2	1.0	Skylark	754	89	43.8
Tufted Duck	44	10	4.9	Sand Martin	65	5	2.5
Red-legged Partridge	53	17	8.4	Swallow	1432	143	70.4
Grey Partridge	2	1	0.5	House Martin	453	64	31.5
Pheasant	746	115	56.7	Cetti's Warbler	24	5	2.5
Gannet	1	1	0.5	Long-tailed Tit	313	92	45.3
Cormorant	28	14	6.9	Wood Warbler	1	1	0.5
Little Egret	20	7	3.4	Chiffchaff	1303	179	88.2
Grey Heron	107	54	26.6	Willow Warbler	156	51	25.1
Little Grebe	9	3	1.5	Blackcap	1187	169	83.3
Great Crested Grebe	27	5	2.5	Garden Warbler	28	17	8.4
Red Kite	3	3	1.5	Lesser Whitethroat	54	27	13.3
Marsh Harrier	1	1	0.5	Whitethroat	404	103	50.7
Sparrowhawk	16	13	6.4	Grasshopper Warbl	1	1	0.5
Buzzard	171	94	46.3	Sedge Warbler	91	14	6.9
Water Rail	2	2	1	Reed Warbler	127	21	10.3
Moorhen	125	44	21.7	Nuthatch	106	38	18.7
Coot	164	16	7.9	Treecreeper	29	19	9.4
Oystercatcher	27	6	3	Wren	4066	201	99
Lapwing	20	6	3	Starling	1537	102	50.2
Ringed Plover	1	1	0.5	Dipper	2	1	0.5
Whimbrel	44	4	2	Blackbird	4840	203	100
Curlew	29	2	1	Song Thrush	845	173	85.2
Common Sandpiper	2	2	1	Mistle Thrush	112	50	24.6
Redshank	28	4	2	Spotted Flycatcher	3	3	1.5
Black-headed Gull	21	4	2	Robin	2762	197	97
Common Gull	1	1	0.5	Whinchat	1	1	0.5
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1773	134	66	Stonechat	15	4	2
Herring Gull	1591	133	65.5	Wheatear	13	8	3.9
Great Black-backed Gull	3	3	1.5	Dunnock	1143	189	93.1
Feral Pigeon	1134	62	30.5	House Sparrow	3281	132	65
Stock Dove	267	66	32.5	Yellow Wagtail	8	5	2.5
Wood Pigeon	7117	201	99	Grey Wagtail	34	16	7.9
Collared Dove	717	125	61.6	Pied Wagtail	155	63	31
Cuckoo	19	15	7.4	Tree Pipit	17	3	1.5
Little Owl	3	2	1	Meadow Pipit	104	13	6.4
Tawny Owl	6	5	2.5	Rock Pipit	2	1	0.5
Swift	393	67	33	Chaffinch	1836	179	88.2
Kingfisher	12	8	3.9	Bullfinch	114	56	27.6
Green Woodpecker	113	65	32	Greenfinch	742	148	72.9
Great Spotted Woodpecker	172	89	43.8	Linnet	679	81	39.9
Kestrel	57	42	20.7	Goldfinch	1897	179	88.2
Hobby	1	1	0.5	Siskin	5	2	1
Peregrine	3	3	1.5	Yellowhammer	298	49	24.1
Magpie	1687	190	93.6	Reed Bunting	65	24	11.8
Jay	146	73	36	Corn Bunting	63	9	4.4
Jackdaw	4375	168	82.8				

Table 2 – Numbers of birds recorded by the BBS in 2015

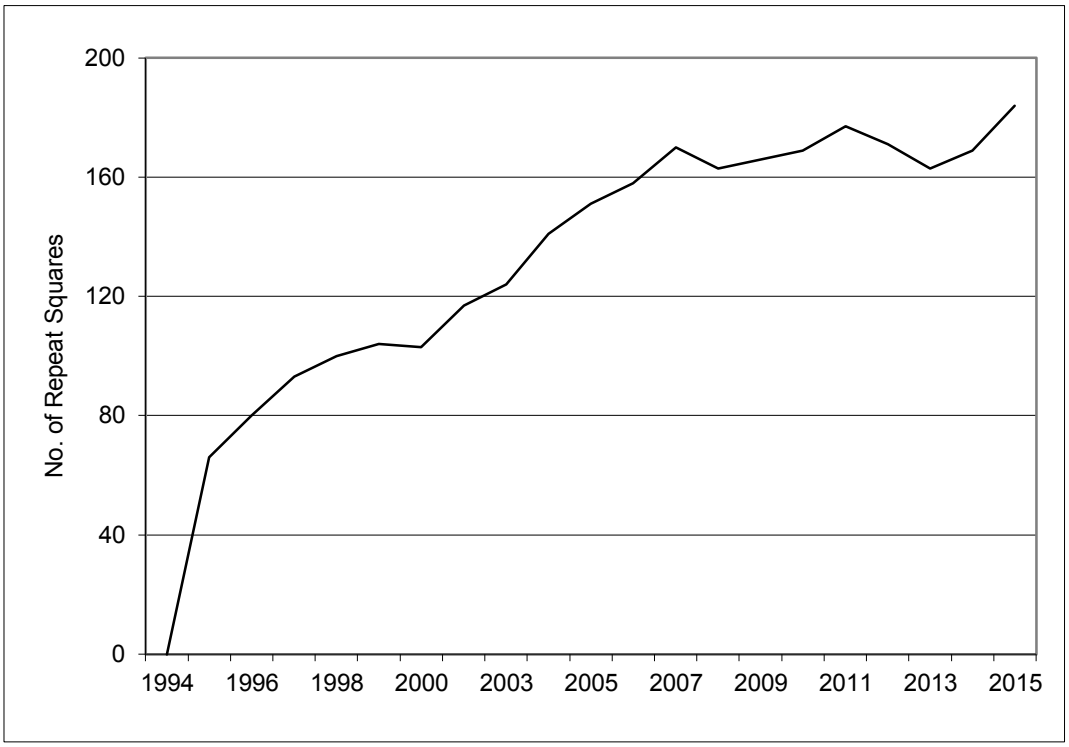
Species	Avon percentage change 2014--15	Avon percentage change 2013--14	BTO Trends in England BBS 2013 –14 Percentage change *	Avon percentage change 2005--15
Mute Swan	-10	57	4	-17
Mallard	10	-5	-6	-8
Pheasant	-1	4	-1	-6
Grey Heron	-15	13	11	-15
Moorhen	6	2	0	5
Feral Pigeon	23	-22	-4	-9
Stock Dove	22	57	10	87
Wood Pigeon	8	-3	-12	14
Collared Dove	1	-13	-9	-18
Swift	-18	-43	-20	-68
Green Woodpecker	-12	-32	-13	-48
Great Spotted Woodpecker	-7	5	-2	30
Magpie	8	-2	4	6
Jay	-7	-6	-17	3
Jackdaw	7	1	2	6
Rook	20	-39	3	-44
Carrion Crow	-7	2	3	-9
Goldcrest	22	58	21	-17
Blue Tit	-5	-2	-1	-26
Great Tit	-1	-8	-7	-15
Skylark	-13	31	15	-38
Swallow	6	-5	4	-16
House Martin	-14	-9	4	-49
Long-tailed Tit	6	16	14	-21
Chiffchaff	8	23	21	34
Willow Warbler	11	-1	-7	-30
Blackcap	-10	17	9	31
Whitethroat	-22	12	13	-13
Nuthatch	3	-35	6	21
Wren	8	19	29	6
Starling	-25	3	8	-62
Blackbird	-3	5	5	-4
Song Thrush	2	4	8	-10
Mistle Thrush	29	5	5	-18
Robin	0	1	3	12
Dunnock	4	-3	1	-15
House Sparrow	-1	-2	0	- 4
Pied Wagtail	4	31	21	-13
Chaffinch	-6	-5	-6	-38
Bullfinch	-22	21	12	-37
Greenfinch	4	-12	-13	-64
Linnet	59	-14	1	-41
Goldfinch	13	10	3	107
Yellowhammer	-4	3	3	-12

Table 3 – Percentage changes recorded by the BBS

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 groups such as pigeons, corvids, tits or thrushes. The period 2005 to 2015 is a reasonable period to show developing trends (for example, the explosive increase of the Goldfinch) and a reasonably consistent number of squares was surveyed during the period (196 in 2005, and also an average of 196 squares per annum during the period). The BTO trend data, * in Column 4, was taken from Table 3 – Trends in England – which appears in a 2015 BTO publication (Research Report **673**) by S. J. Harris *et al*. and called "*The Breeding Bird Survey, 2014*".

The percentage change figures above are based on the 184 squares that were surveyed by the same observer in both 2014 and 2015. This was the highest number of 'repeat' squares since the survey began, the previous highest being 177 in 2011, and this level of commitment by observers adds immensely to the value of the data. See the graph

below showing the steady increase in the number of 'repeat squares'. No figure is shown for 2001, the year of the Foot & Mouth outbreak; for the purposes of the survey the results for 2002 were compared with those for 2000. Referring to Column 5 (Table 3) it is perhaps worth noting that three species have declined by more than half since 2005 – Swift, Starling and Greenfinch, and a further seven by between a quarter and a half – Green Woodpecker, Rook, Skylark, House Martin, Willow Warbler, Chaffinch, Bullfinch and Linnet. During this same period three species have increased by between a quarter and a half – Great Spotted Woodpecker, Chiffchaff and Blackcap, and two by more than a half – Stock Dove and Goldfinch.



Species recorded in the Survey ranked by abundance 2005 - 2015

2015 Rank	Species	**2015 Count**	**2010 Rank**	2010 Count	2005 Rank	2005 Count
1	Woodpigeon	**7117**	**1**	6789	1	6395
2	Blackbird	**4840**	**2**	5040	2	5339
3	Jackdaw	**4375**	**4**	4043	7	3250
4	Wren	**4066**	**6**	3205	6	4173
5	Carrion Crow	**3861**	**3**	4494	5	4260
6	House Sparrow	**3281**	**5**	3653	4	4540
7	Robin	**2762**	**9**	2494	11	2457
8	Blue Tit	**2064**	**8**	2604	8	2787
9	Rook	**1946**	**13**	1922	9	2774
10	Goldfinch	**1897**	**18**	1267	-	
11	Chaffinch	**1836**	**10**	2177	10	2773
12	Lesser Black-backed Gull	**1773**	**15**	1746	13	2048
13	Magpie	**1687**	**16**	1640	15	1762
14	Herring Gull	**1591**	**11**	2099	20	1192
15	Starling	**1537**	**7**	2772	3	4910
16	Great Tit	**1506**	**12**	1956	16	1604
17	Swallow	**1432**	**14**	1765	17	1425
18	Chiffchaff	**1303**	**19**	1242	-	
19	Blackcap	**1187**	**-**		-	
20	Dunnock	**1143**	**20**	1165	18	1273
-	Greenfinch				12	2340
-	Feral Pigeon		**17**	1458	14	2023
-	Collared Dove				19	1254

Table 4 -- Species recorded in the survey showing their percentage distribution in the squares surveyed

Table 5 below lists the 20 most widespread species based on the percentage of surveyed squares in which they were recorded.

1	Blackbird	100%	10=	Chaffinch	88.2%
2=	Woodpigeon	99%	10=	Chiffchaff	88.2%
2=	Wren	99%	13	Song Thrush	85.2%
4=	Carrion Crow	97%	14	Blackcap	83.3%
4=	Robin	97%	15	Jackdaw	82.8%
6	Blue Tit	96.6%	16	Greenfinch	72.9%
7	Great Tit	94.1%	17	Swallow	70.4%
8	Magpie	93.6%	18	Lesser Black-backed Gull	66.0%
9	Dunnock	93.1%	19	Herring Gull	65.5%
10=	Goldfinch	88.2%	20	House Sparrow	65.0%

Table 5 -- The twenty most widespread species

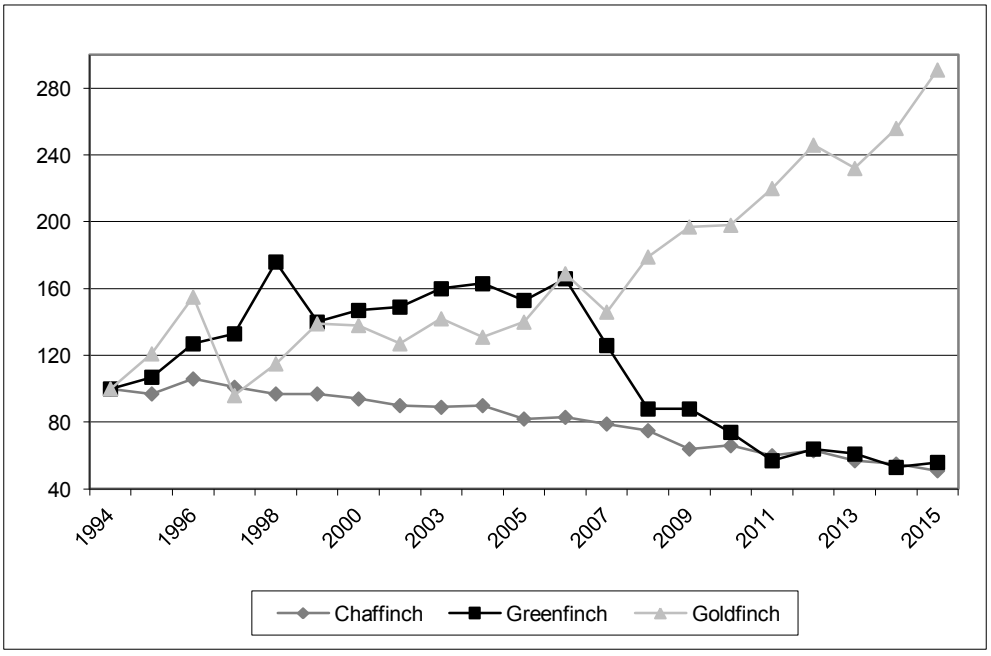
FINCH TRENDS 1994 -- 2015

Our three most common finches, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinch, have all experienced significant changes since the inception of the BBS in 1994 - see the graph below which is based upon indices standardised with a value of 100 in 1994. Please note that limited data is given for 2001, the year of the Foot & Mouth outbreak when we were only able to survey squares in the urban areas.

Greenfinch enjoyed a rapid increase up to 1998 and then levelled off at 70% above 1994 levels until 2006. However, it then experienced a very rapid decline which is attributable to the disease *Trichomonosis* and the species is now 44% below its level in 1994. In contrast Goldfinch after fairly steady progress to 2007 has increased dramatically and is now an astonishing 191% above its level in 1994.

Chaffinch has experienced a very gradual decline since 1997 and although it is still a common and widespread species (see Tables 4 and 5 above) it is now 49% below its level in 1994. There is some evidence of a contraction in the distribution in Bristol. It was recorded in every kilometre square in the noughties, see *'The Breeding Season Atlas of the Birds of Bristol* (2000-08)' by R. L. Bland and J. Tully which was published in 2010 in *Bristol Ornithology* **30.** But it was recorded in only 58% of the squares surveyed in 2015. The reasons for this decline are at present unknown.

The results for Chaffinch are considerably at odds with the BBS results for England. The BTO results for the period 1995 to 2013 (the most recent available at time of writing) show an increase of 5% as opposed to a decline of 41% for the same period in Avon. However, there are substantial regional variations with figures of a 7% decline for SW England (including Avon) and a decline of 24% in the West Midlands for the same period.



Finch trends in the Avon area between 1994 and 2015

Gazetteer

Most of the major local sites are shown on the map on the rear cover; this gazetteer lists many of the others that are mentioned in the Systematic List.

Each site has a four figure map reference (in the 100-*km* square ST), showing the one-*km* square in which it stands and a two letter code showing the Unitary Authority in which it lies: BA for Bath and North East Somerset, BR for Bristol, NS for North Somerset and SG for South Gloucestershire. Sites that are part of Bristol but outside the Unitary Authority area have the word 'Bristol' placed after their main names.

Abbey Wood, Bristol	6178	SG
Abbots Leigh	5373	NS
Alveston	6388	SG
Anchor Head	3062	NS
Arnos Vale	6071	BR
Ashton Park	5572	NS
Aust Cliff/Warth	5689	SG
Avon Gorge	5673	BR
Avon Wildlife Park	6768	BA
Avonmouth Docks	5178	BR
Badocks Wood, Bristol	5777	BR
Banwell	3958	NS
Barrow Hill	5167	NS
Bath University	7764	BA
Bathampton Meadows	7766	BA
Batheaston Reserve	7867	BA
Bathford	7966	BA
Bedminster	5871	BR
Bishop Sutton	5859	BA
Bishopston, Bristol	5875	BR
Blackberry Hill, Bristol	6177	BR
Blaise Woods	5678	BR
Bleadon Hill	3657	NS
Blind Yeo	3969	NS
Bloomfield, Bath	7463	BA
Brandon Hill, Bristol	5772	BR
Brentry	5879	BR
Brislington, Bristol	6270	BR
Bucklands Pool	4769	NS
Burledge Hill Reserve	5858	BA
Burnett	6665	BA
Butcombe	5161	NS
Cadbury Camp	4572	NS
Cameley	6157	BA
Camerton	6857	BA
Castle Green, Bristol	5973	BR
Chapel Pill	5376	NS
Charfield	7292	SG
Charlton Field	6366	BA
Charmy Down	7670	SG
Chelvey	4867	NS
Chelwood	6861	BA
Chew Stoke	5661	NS
Chittening Warth	5382	SG
Churchill	4459	NS
Clapton Moor Reserve	4573	NS
Claverham	4466	NS
Claverton	7864	BA
Cleeve Wood Reserve	4666	NS
Clifton Down, Bristol	5673	BR
Clutton	6259	BA
Compton Dando	6464	BA
Denny Island, CVL	5760	BA
Dolebury Warren Reserve	4558	NS
Downend, Bristol	6577	BR
Doynton	7274	SG
Dundry	5566	NS
Dunkerton	7159	BA
Durdham Down, Bristol	5674	BR
Dyers Common	5583	SG
East Harptree	5655	BA
Easton-in-Gordano	5175	NS
Emerson's Green, Bristol	6776	SG
Englishcombe	7162	BA
Failand	5773	NS
Falfield	6893	SG
Farmborough	6660	BA
Felton Common	5265	NS
Filton, Bristol	6079	SG
Fishponds, Bristol	6376	BR
Flax Bourton	5069	NS
Folly Farm Reserve	6060	BA
Frampton Cotterell	6682	SG
Frome Valley	6377	BR
Hall End	7086	SG
Hallatrow	6357	BA
Hanham	6472	SG
Happerton Farm	5274	NS
Hawkesbury Upton	7687	SG
Haydon Hill	6953	BA
Henbury, Bristol	5678	BR
Hengrove Park, Bristol	6069	BR
Henleaze, Bristol	5876	BR
Hicks Gate	6369	BA
High Littleton	6458	BA
Hinton Blewitt	5956	BA
Hinton Charterhouse	7758	BA
Hoar Gout	5380	BR
Horfield, Bristol	5977	BR
Horton	7584	SG
Horwood Farm	7387	SG
Hotwells, Bristol	5772	BR
Hursley Hill, Whitchurch	6165	BA
Iford	7959	BA
Iron Acton	6883	SG
Jubbs Wood	5174	NS
Kendleshire	6679	SG
Kenn	4169	NS
Kewstoke	3364	NS
Kingsgate Park, Yate	7181	SG
Kingston Seymour	4066	BA
Ladye Bay	4072	NS
Langford	4560	NS
Lansdown	7268	BA
Leap Valley, Downend	6577	BR
Littleton Warth	5890	SG
Locking	3659	NS
Longwell Green	6571	BA
Lower Knole Farm	5884	SG
Lower Littleton	5563	BA

Lower Woods	7487	SG
Lulsgate	5065	NS
Marksbury	6662	BA
Middle Hope	3366	NS
Montpelier	5974	BR
Moorgrove Wood	5578	SG
Newbridge, Bath	7165	BA
Northwick Warth	5587	SG
Orchard Pool	5485	SG
Over	5982	SG
Oxbow Reserve, Bath	7766	BA
Parks Farm, Tormarton	7879	SG
Pill	5276	NS
Pilning	5585	SG
Portbury	4975	NS
Portbury Wharf NR	4877	NS
Prior Park, Bath	7663	BA
Publow	6264	BA
Puxton Moor Reserve	4063	NS
Redhill	4963	NS
Redland, Bristol	5875	BR
Redwick	5585	SG
Regil	5363	NS
Rickford	4959	NS
Rowberrow	4658	NS
Royal Portbury Dock	5077	NS
Sand Bay	3365	NS
Sea Mills, Bristol	5576	BR
Severnside	5383	SG
Shepperdine	6295	SG
Shirehampton	5376	BR
Shirehill Farm	7876	SG
Siston	6674	SG
Sneyd Park, Bristol	5575	BR
Snuff Mills, Bristol	6276	BR
St Andrews Park, Bristol	5975	BR
St Annes, Bristol	6272	BR
St George's Wharf	5376	NS
St Phillips Marsh, Bristol	6072	BR
Stanton Drew	5963	NS
Stanton Prior	6762	BA
Stantonbury Hill	6763	BA
Stockwood Reserve	6269	BR
Stoke Bishop, Bristol	5676	BR
Stowey	5959	BA
Stup Pill	5282	BR
Sutton Hill	5958	BA
Swineford	6968	BA
The Niatts	5985	SG
Tickenham	4571	NS
Totterdown	6071	BR
Tunley	6959	BA
Tyntesfield	5171	NS
Tytherington	6788	SG
Ubley	5358	NS
University of West of England	6277	BR
Uphill	3259	NS
Walborough	3157	NS
Walton Common Reserve	4273	NS
Warmley	6773	SG
Welton Vale	6755	BA
West Harptree	5656	BA
West Littleton	7675	SG
Westerleigh	7080	SG
Weston Moor Reserve	4473	NS
Whitchurch	6167	BR
Wick	7072	SG
Wick Warth	3566	NS
Willsbridge Reserve	6670	SG
Winford	5465	NS
Woodspring Bay	3566	NS
Woollard	6364	BA
Wooscombe Bottom	6365	BA
Worlebury Hill	3162	NS
Yeo Estuary	3666	NS

Alphabetical Index of Species Accounts