

Supplement to Birds in Avon



This Supplement to the Birds in Avon annotated checklist
covers various additional species
which are not included on the Avon List

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Second edition, November 2021, covering up to end of 2020

**Extra species that have occurred in Avon
(but are not considered to be of wild origin)**

The following species have all occurred in Avon and their identification has been accepted, but there are doubts concerning the origins of the individuals.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Recorded a number of times locally;

2004 – two males in Ladys Wood on November 7th

2011 – Walnut Springs, Bath on February 15th, Avonmouth Docks on October 6th

2014 – a male at Lower Woods on January 30th

2015 – a displaying male in Lower Woods on April 16th, a ringed male in Chew Magna gardens on December 2nd and 8th

Lady Amhersts Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

Recorded twice locally;

2004 – a male in Ladys Wood on November 7th

2017 – a male at West Littleton Down on May 7th

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

A corpse was found on the road in Long Ashton on October 12th 2007

Although the 1885 Zoologist mentions, on page 66, a female Red Grouse being shot 'at Wrington' in September 1884, follow up correspondence on page 147 state it was shot on 'one of the Mendips' and gives a height of 1064 feet which suggests the site was Blackdown; this ties in with the record mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968). However Blathwayt (1906) mentions birds shot near Weston-super-Mare.



Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

One at BL on November 1st and 2nd 2011, and at CVL on 2nd until 5th wintered in Somerset before returning to CVL on 25th March, 2012 until 28th and again on April 15th
[addendum in 2014 ABR]

Although the *BBRC* accepted the identification they did not accept the bird as being of wild origin.



Additionally there are three old records, all from before the species was split from Canada Goose, and all of which were treated as escapes;
1982 – CVL from September 25th until October 31st;
1989 – BG from October 23rd into January 1990 and again on 1st and 2nd December 1990;
1999 – CVL from April 30th until May 15th.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Although there are a number of published local records (listed below), most have been associating with flocks of Canada Geese and all have been treated as 'escapes'.

It is doubtful whether any of the records have been fully assessed as to correct identification.

1975 – CVL in August;

1977 – seven blue phase at CVL on February 12th, three over R Severn near Severn Beach on June 14th and 15th, two white phase at BG on November 6th, all thought to be feral;

1978 – CVL on May 13th, SGW on 14th, Sand Bay and flying past Chittening on 20th, New Passage on September 15th;

1979 – Severn Beach on April 18th [1980 ABR];

1980 – CVL from May 10th until 16th;

1982 – two at CVL from January 14th until 20th, 17 at CVL from October 14th, with 18 in December, dwindled to 13 by 23rd February, 1983;

1989 – two at OPS on May 29th; 1991 – three at Royal Victoria Park lake on February 11th, two 'Lesser blue phased' at CVL from June 16th until July 23rd with one until August 17th, an adult white phase at CVL on December 15th;

1992 – a blue phase at CVL on January 25th and February 1st and 2nd;

1993 – two white phase at Northwick Warth on April 29th were published in the main Systematic List;

1997 – a blue phase at CVL from April 27th until June 1st;

1998 – two in the City Docks on March 15th with three on April 19th and July 13th and four on September 23rd, BL on December 5th;

2001 – Batheaston throughout January, five at Northwick Warth from June 7th until 9th then at Chittening Warth on 12th and at CI-Y on 17th;

2002 – Batheaston from January 29th until 31st;

2007 – BL on October 27th

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

An unringed adult was at CVL from 18th October, 1991 until 15th February, 1992, and visited BL on December 26th. [1992 ABR]

The 1992 ABR mentions that the bird's arrival coincided with that of several others in Britain and the near continent, and suggests that it might have been from the Swedish reintroduction scheme. The record was submitted to BBRC (see comment in the 1992 BBRC report) but was not accepted.

An adult at CVL on 12th and 13th June, 1998 and one at CVL in 2001 (June 5th, 6th, 16th, July 22nd, 29th and August 5th) were both treated as escapes.

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*

One at CVL on 17th February, 2006.

This species is not on the British List.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

This species is no longer on Category A of the British List, meaning that no genuine wild individuals are considered to have been recorded for at least 50 years (probably since the 1940s).

There are numerous local records as follows;

1942 – Aust Ferry from April 18th until 25th and at Severn Beach on June 2nd and considered likely to be an escape;

1976 – Bristol Bridge on April 6th and Bathampton Weir on 8th and treated as escapes (see Introduction to Systematic List);

1977 – Hoar Gout on March 30th and April 1st and treated as an escape;

1978 – two at CVL on March 19th, Axe Estuary on March 28th;

1982 – a female at CVL from July 18th into 1983;

1987 – a male at CVL from June 21st until mid-November and at BL on August 29th and September 5th, Aust Warth on December 13th, RPD on December 28th;

1988 – Severnside from January 10th until February 7th, a female at CVL from July 12th until October 19th returned from August 5th until December 15th 1989, RPD on September 9th, Severnside on November 13th and December 13th, 28th and 29th, RPD on December 22nd;

1989 – a female on Severnside on January 28th, 30th and February 9th;

1990 – a female on R Avon in Keynsham on January 2nd, a female at CVL on July 26th, a female on Severnside (which 1991 ABR says 'first noted in 1987) from November 10th until March 1991 and then at CVL intermittently until August 10th, again at CVL from June 17th until 12th September, 1992 and again July 2nd until 17th September, 1993;

1993 – a second bird at CVL from August 21st until September 17th;

1994 - two at CVL on June 20th with a third next day and two more on July 16th with all five until July 23rd and a pair until August 14th;

1995 – two at CVL on May 31st, a female there on June 18th until 21st when joined by a second, two females and a male from July 1st with another female from 5th, all four remaining until August 3rd with two until 5th;

1996 – two at CVL on June 27th with one present intermittently between 29th and August 10th and two again on July 20th and 21st, CVL on October 12th;

1997 – two females at CVL on May 30th and 31st and again on June 14th, 15th, 21st, 23rd and 28th when joined by a male and another female all four remaining until July 27th with one female until August 7th, two females at Weston STW on June 12th and 17th, two on Severnside from November 25th until April 5th 1998;

1998 – two females at CVL on June 12th with intermittent sightings of a male and three females up until July 31st, a female at Weston STW on June 13th;

1999 – two at CVL on June 21st with two pairs next day and then various combinations during July until the last female on August 2nd, a female at various sites on the coast from July 28th until April 2000 and again from start of 2001 until February 15th and from June 6th until 21st, 2001;

2000 – a pair at CVL from July 5th until August 20th were joined by a second female from July 22nd until August 18th, a female at CI-Y from June 4th until 9th, on October 29th and between December 5th and 26th, a female at Weston SYW from September 10th until October 15th;

2001 – a female at CVL from July 5th until 29th, a female at Weston STW on September 8th;

2002 – two over the Axe Estuary on April 15th, two females (one very tame) at CVL from June 25th until July 31st with one until August 31st;

2003 – a female at CVL from August 16th until September 21st was thought to be an escape, a female on Severnside from September 19th until 27th, RPD on October 5th with two on November 7th and 23rd, ASW on November 15th with two on December 13th, two on Severnside on December 10th;

2004 – various records of two ringed birds in the early part of the year with an unringed bird and a different ringed bird during the summer into the second winter, records between January 2nd and November 30th;

2005 – a ringed bird at three sites between February 1st and April 10th, an unringed bird at ASW on May 10th, one at Sea Mills on March 26th [2006 ABR] was considered an escape;

2010 – two at OPS on January 8th, Swineford on April 15th;

2011 – two at Saltford on March 24th;

2012 – CI-Y on April 8th, a female at OPS on May 5th and 19th

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

One at CVL and BL from 24th August, 1984 until 5th January, 1985 [1993 BBRC]

This species is not on the British List.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

There are four local records, as follows;

1985 – a female at CVL on June 9th and 19th;

1995 – a second-winter/adult male at CVL from November 11th until December 25th;

2003 – a juvenile at CVL from August 26th until September 3rd with the same or another juvenile there on October 12th;

2019 – a male at Eastville Park on May 28th.

This species is not on the British List.

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*

A female/first-winter at BG on 21st December, 1996 was submitted to BBRC, and resubmitted in 2008, but both times was not considered to be of wild origin

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*

A female at CVL from 1st until 3rd May, 2018 was thought by the initial observer to be carrying a ring, although subsequent observers could not confirm this. Although submitted to BBRC as a wild bird they did not consider it to be of wild origin.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

An adult at CVL from 18th until 21st January, 1992 [BBRC category D, see 1995 BBRC]

This species is not on the British List.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

A number of local records, all from the reintroduction scheme on Salisbury Plain

2006 – a wing-tagged female (orange 15) at Bleadon Level from February 9th until March 25th was from the Salisbury Plain reintroduction scheme. In 2008 it was by the R Avon in Keynsham from January 10th until 17th then nearby on 22nd and at OPS on 26th

2009 – a wing-tagged female (red 28) seen in West Harptree on January 30th, North Widcombe on February 7th and Puxton Moor on June 8th was from the Salisbury Plain reintroduction scheme

2010 – a wing tagged bird at Weston STW on January 11th

2017 – East Harptree on August 28th and presumed to be the ringed bird that summered on the Mendips

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

One that arrived at Avonmouth docks in November 1968 aboard the M. V. Picardy was handed to the RSPCA and ended up in Rode Bird gardens. It had boarded the boat on October 29th 550 kms south west of the Azores [British Birds 65, number 10, page 442.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

A third calendar year pale morph at CVL from 11th until 15th February, 2000 having previously been on the Somerset Levels and various other sites in the UK [2001 BBRC] [photograph in ABR]

This species is not on the British List.

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo*

A male roosted in Woodland Road, Bristol from mid-September 2008 [article][photograph] until 10th May, 2009 when it was thought to have hit a window, it died shortly after.

This species is not on the British List.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

One in the Clevedon area from June 26th until 1st July, 2018 [still in circulation with BBRC]

This species is not on the British List.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

One on a feeder at Portbury on May 27th 2003 [*BOURC on Category E*][2006 ABR]

This species is not on the British List.

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*

An adult male singing in gardens at Combe Down on April 23rd 1994 had been present for about 10 days and was killed by a cat on 28th

Identification in doubt

This section covers various unproven 'claims'. Again, some are more contentious than others.

Todd's Canada Goose *B. c. interior*

There are a number of local claims of this race of Canada Goose, although none of them have been properly assessed.

The records are as follows;

2013 – Severnside from April 12th until 26th, three at CVL from June 24th until July 5th, Severnside from August 20th until 16th May, 2014, CVL on September 9th;

2014 – PW on April 25th, 29th and May 1st, RPD on August 4th, again on Severnside from August 17th until September 9th and from November 2nd until 5th April, 2015 with an additional two there in early September, CVL from December 17th until 20th March, 2015 (either *interior* or *parvipes*);

2015 – a second at CVL from January 5th until May and again mid July, PW on January 10th and 13th, RPD on March 7th, PW on April 10th, Severnside on August 13th, CVL on November 26th.

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*

A male, with anomalous pale marks on the bill, at CVL from March 21st until 25th April, 1993 was initially treated as a Canvasback x Pochard hybrid. It was seen again in 1995 from March 18th until 31st and again was treated as a hybrid.

In 1998 it was seen on April 19th and May 14th, 19th and 20th and now treated as a pure Canvasback (albeit in the escapes section). In 1999 it was seen on April 17th and 28th and again treated as a pure Canvasback (but this time listed in the hybrids section).

In 2001 it was present from April 30th until June 17th, visiting BL on July 21st but was now back to being treated as a hybrid after it was discovered a bird with identical bill markings had hatched at Roath Park Lake Glamorgan in c1991 as a result of hybridisation between Canvasback and Pochard

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

One shot at Count Rocks, Shepperdine in November 1912 is mentioned in the Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists Society [vol XLVIII p62]. The record is directly from the wildfowler but no other sources mention this record, in particular neither *Davis (1947)* nor *Rare Birds in Britain 1800-1990* by LGR Evans.

American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus*

'A List of British Birds' published by the BOU in 1915 rejected an undated specimen from Bristol 'said to be in Mr Hart's museum at Christchurch' [*May 2012 British Birds page 238*]

Flamingo sp

Three local records, as follows;

1965 – on coast between Clevedon and Sand Bay from August 11th until September 10th [*SBR*];

1978 – New Passage on April 7th;

1979 – two at Sand Point on July 14th [*1980 ABR*]

Pelican sp *Pelecanus sp*

Two local records as follows;

1971 – CVL on September 9th, reported variously as White and Dalmatian;

1978 – CVL on June 19th and 20th.

Eastern race Common Gull *Larus canus heinei/kamchatschensis*

Birds possibly of these races were noted at CVL in February and March 2017 [*page 177 of 2017 ABR*] while the 2012 ABR has details of other second winters with residual tail bands.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

There have been three claims from CVL;

2000 – a second-winter at CVL from March 4th until April 1st and again on May 18th¹;

2007 – a fourth-winter at CVL on 29th (see photos on the CVLbirding website logbook) and 30th December and again on 25th January until 8th February, 2008 [*submitted to BBRC but 'not proven'*];

2008 – an adult at CVL from 8th May until the end of July (see article at <http://www.cvlbirding.co.uk/kev/ahg.html>). DNA testing proved the bird was not a smithsonianus, although it was unable to confirm an actual identification, see <http://www.pixelbirds.co.uk/Americanherringgull5.html?LMCL=rsvBoh>



¹ Photographs and discussion on page 61 of the June 2000 Birdwatch

Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*

This subspecies is only on the British List on the basis of a ringing recovery from the breeding range² and older published records for the UK pre-date the full recognition of variability within *intermedius* and are no longer acceptable.

Davis (1947) listed this as 'occasional visitor, perhaps occurring more often than records suggest' with published records from 1934, 1937, 1938 and 1942. However the *intermedius* race was not mentioned even though it had been described in 1922. There were subsequent published records for 1956 and 1963 but the introduction to the 1966 ABR highlighted the difficulties of judging exact mantle shade. Records continued to be published in 1967, 1970, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1982 but the 1984 ABR was the first to distinguish between *fuscus* and *intermedius*. Records continued to be published for 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992 and 1993 but the 1997 ABR stated that 'most previously published records probably now inadequately described'.

There are thus no accepted Avon records although most of these early records undoubtedly related to *intermedius* (they often refer to birds as showing the 'dark Scandinavian-type plumage').

Although claims since 1998 have been more carefully considered, none have been submitted to BBRC other than in 2018. There are possible records from

1998 – an adult at CVL on October 21st [*1999 ABR, article in 2003 ABR*];

1999 – CVL on August 3rd [*article in 2003 ABR*];

2003 – an adult at CVL on April 23rd and 24th [*article*];

2005 – an adult at CVL on November 1st (although published as an *intermedius* the species account mentions it was 'a small dark individual with long 'crossed' wings and all dark primaries);

2007 – an adult at CVL on April 17th;

2010 – an adult at CVL on March 30th (Although published as an *intermedius* the species account mentions it was 'a small, dark, long-winged individual');

2011 – an adult at CVL on March 14th (although published as an *intermedius* the species account mentions it was 'a small, very dark, very long-winged individual');

2015 – an adult at CVL on May 23rd [*photograph*];

2016 – an adult at CVL on August 8th;

2018 – CVL on January 10th [*not accepted by BBRC*]

2019 – CVL on February 28th, CVL on April 18th, CVL on May 17th (all published under *intermedius* but with '(fuscus not excluded)

² Although Vinicombe (2020) lists a 1980 recovery of a bird ringed in Estonia the BTO say the species involved was a Black-headed Gull.

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

One at Engine Common on 13th December, 2000 was not submitted to BBRC.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

One shot at Frampton Cotterel on 14th January, 1908 [*British Birds April 1909 page 382*] was never accepted [*British Birds April 2020 page 211*]

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis*

Three possible records, all before it was split as a separate species (and none submitted to BBRC);

1993 – Aust Sewage Farm from December 16th until 19th January, 1994 [*article*];

2011 – a grey and white first-winter at OPS on December 1st;

2013 – a grey and white first-winter at BL on October 23rd



Spanish Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae*

A 'blue-headed' Yellow Wagtail with a white throat at CVL on 27th April, 2018 was submitted to BBRC as this subspecies even though it was not heard to call, see photo opposite page 145 in the 2018 ABR.

The BBRC felt that a couple of the features shown, plus the lack of a call, meant an intergrade could not be ruled out.

Ashy-headed or Black-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava cinerocapilla* or *feldegg*

A dark-headed Wagtail at Northwick Warth on 15th April 2018, see photo opposite page 145 in the 2018 ABR, was submitted to BBRC as an Ashy-headed.

The BBRC were unable to conclusively rule out a female Black-headed Wagtail (although either subspecies would be a first for the recording area).