

# Birds in Avon

## An annotated checklist



A checklist of species in the Avon recording area  
with details of how their status has changed over time

6th edition, November 2023

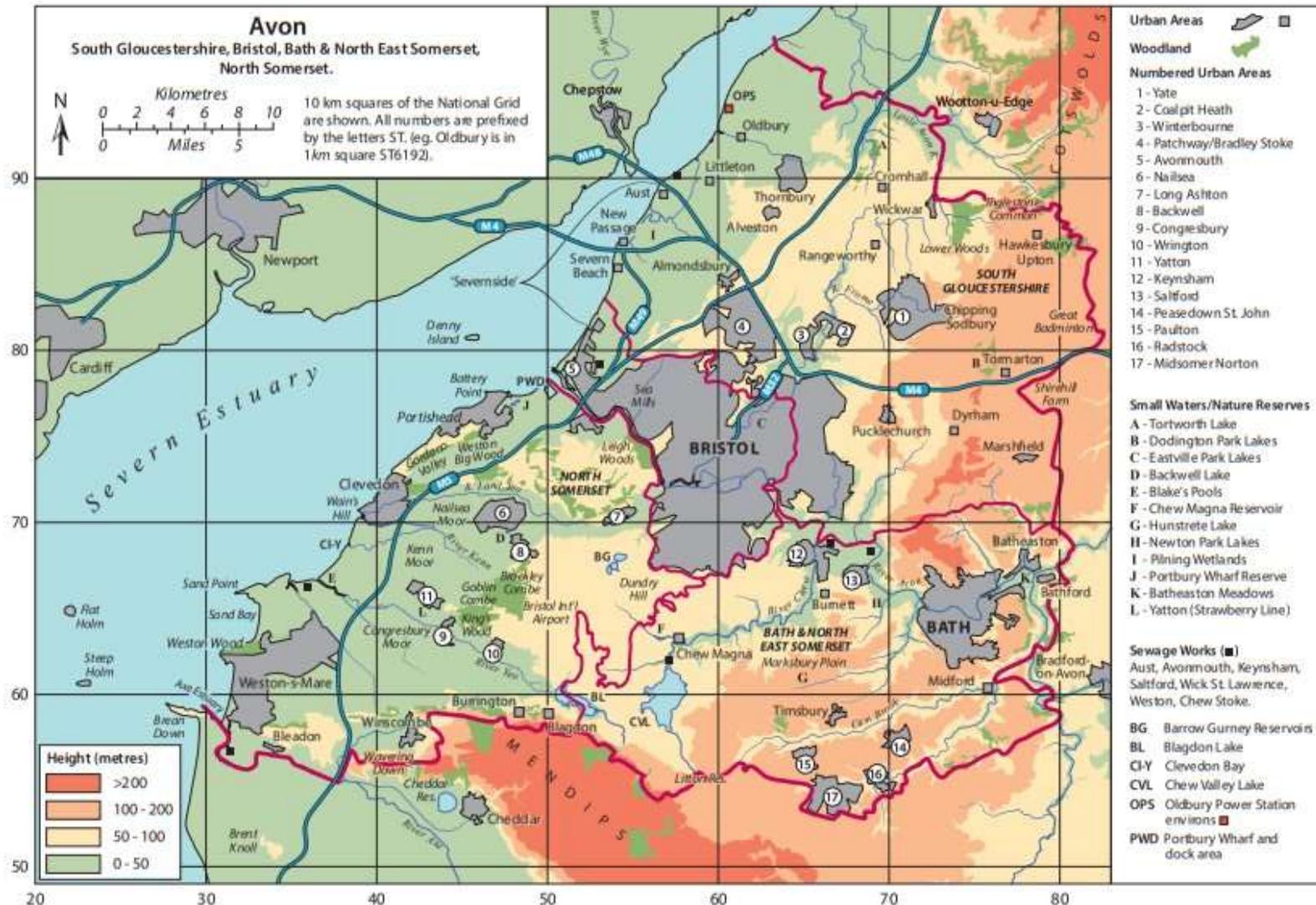
This edition of this checklist has been updated to the end of 2022 and includes additional information and several corrections. There are now three appendices that detail various contentious species that are not included on the Avon list

I need to thank Rich Andrews for allowing me to use his line drawings to illustrate the text. I also need to thank various people for allowing me access to their reference material, in particular Nigel Milbourne for access to his archive of Somerset Bird reports back to 1924, Martyn Hayes for his input on the birds of south Glos, both Harvey Rose and Andy Davis for answering numerous queries, and various others for helping clarify individual records.

Richard Mielcarek  
November 2023

## The Avon Recording area

The county of Avon was created in 1974 but disbanded 22 years later. The current Avon recording area covers the four unitary authorities, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset, that replaced the county of Avon.



## The Avon List

By the start of 2023, and the move to IOC taxonomy, the Avon list stood at 346 species, with another three only identified to genus (a *Fregatta* storm-petrel, a Tropicbird sp and one of the Subalpine Warbler complex). However, seven of those have not been recorded for at least 100 years and a further eight not for at least 50 years.

### Not recorded for over 100 years

Baillon's Crake (1840)  
Ivory Gull (c1864)  
White's Thrush (1871)  
Sooty Tern (1885)  
Pallas's Sandgrouse (1888)  
Two-barred Crossbill (1895)  
Red-breasted Goose (1909)

### Not recorded for over 50 years

Black Grouse (1922)  
Great Snipe (1950)  
Bridled Tern (1958)  
Gyr Falcon (1962)  
Arctic Warbler (1965)  
Little Crake (1967)  
Nutcracker (1968)  
Pied-billed Grebe (1968)

A further 18 species have not yet been recorded this century:

Rough-legged Buzzard (1974)  
Roller (1976)  
Greater Sandplover (1979)  
Melodious Warbler (1979)  
Lesser Grey Shrike (1982)  
Marsh Sandpiper (1984)  
Terek Sandpiper (1986)  
Broad-billed Sandpiper (1988)  
Wilson's Phalarope (1988)

Cirl Bunting (1991)  
Black Stork (1992)  
Icterine Warbler (1992)  
Black-winged Pratincole (1993)  
Yellow-rumped Warbler (1994)  
Killdeer (1996)  
Black-throated Thrush (1996)  
Taiga Bean Goose (1998)  
Aquatic Warbler (1999)

This century 312 species have been recorded, with an average of 224 species a year (highs of 237 in 2011 and 2012 and a low of 215 in 2018) but only 171 species have been recorded every year.

Various other species have been recorded in Avon but there was doubt about whether the bird was of a wild origin. There is now a Supplement to this document that includes these records.

## **Guides to the local avifauna**

A number of 'checklists' of local birds have been produced over the years.

The first was Wheeler (1874) in the BNS Proceedings: this does not define the 'Bristol district' covered although it mentions the estuaries of the rivers Avon and Severn, and Steep Holm.

The next was Charbonnier (1899) again in the BNS Proceedings, a list compiled by members of the ornithological section. This defined the boundaries as follows; "on the north, a line drawn eastward from Aust Cliff to the boundary of the county of Gloucester near Badminton, on the east a line drawn from Badminton to Wells so as to include Bath; on the south the River Axe, on the west that part of the coastline of the Bristol Channel which stretches from the mouth of the Axe to Aust Cliff".

The current Ornithological Section of the BNS started in late 1922 and an annual bird report, initially called the Ornithological Notes, was included in the BNS Proceedings from 1936.

The next formal checklist was Davis (1947), again in the BNS Proceedings. This covered a larger area, bounded to the north by a line between Slimbridge and Tetbury, in the east by the Wiltshire border, and in the south by a line between Frome and Wells and then the River Axe to the coast.

From 1955 the title of the annual report in the BNS Proceedings was changed to the Bristol Bird Report. Copies of the old BNS Proceedings are available online from the Biodiversity Heritage Library.

For simplicity all these earlier reports are called the ABR in this document.

The Somerset Bird Report, which started in 1911, also covered the southern area of the current recording area until sometime after 1974 and Palmer and Ballance (1968) is a useful summary of early records from that area.

The Gloucestershire Bird Report, which started in 1963, covered the northern part of the current recording area until 1974.

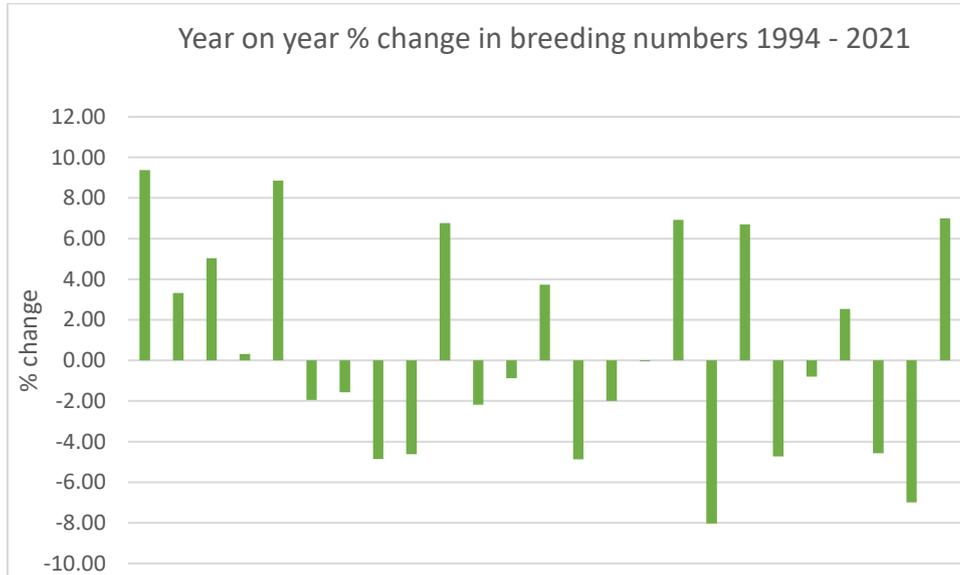
From 1974 the annual report in the BNS Proceedings was renamed the Avon Bird Report, to reflect the creation of Avon as a separate county that year. This report became a separate standalone publication in 1983 when the Avon Ornithological Group was formed. Although the county of Avon was disbanded in 1996 there is still an Avon recording area and an annual Avon Bird Report. Since 1990 the annual report has included a brief status line for each species.

More recently Harvey Rose published a series of summaries of the Avon list in the standalone Avon Bird Report, Rose (1985), Rose (1995) and Rose (2000), while Mielcarek (2021) brings these up to date.

In addition two local atlases have been published, a breeding atlas, Bland and Tully (1991) and a full atlas, Bland and Dadds (2012), both based upon local data compiled for various BTO national surveys. These give extensive local distribution and population data for the commoner species, although both use the BTO Avon region which uses full 10km squares and thus includes part of the Mendips that is in Somerset rather than Avon.

## Breeding species

For the commoner resident and migrant breeding species I have included a chart showing how their breeding success has changed, in percentage terms, year on year since 1994. The example below is for Blackbird;



These charts have been constructed using information from the local annual Breeding Bird Survey, kindly supplied by Dave Stoddard. Although the Survey has been running since 1994 the number of squares covered varies each year, with the total increasing over the years. The figures have been calculated using those squares that have been surveyed by the same observers in the previous year to the year in question - so variance should not be caused by differences in observer/square surveyed - and using the highest of the two counts made. The survey does not record actual breeding numbers, just the numbers of individuals recorded as present during the visit.

These charts show the percentage change from the previous year, so an upward bar shows an increase in number, and a downward bar a decrease. The charts omit 2001 due to Foot and Mouth disease restrictions and the penultimate entry shows the change between 2019 and 2021 due to the restrictions in 2020 from Covid-19.

## Migrant dates

For migrant species the earliest published arrival date and the latest published departure date are shown. Some of these dates have been taken from Bland (1992) or Hale (1991), both of which used data from the monthly Bird News published by the Bristol Ornithological Club but which was not published in the ABR. Bland (1992) also consulted the original submitted records but mentions no sites for any of his records.<sup>1</sup>

An 'average arrival/departure date' is also given; this average has been calculated over the last 30 years. This average is often compared with the averages given in Bland (1992) which were calculated over the period 1962 - 1991.

<sup>1</sup> The concern here is how carefully these records were vetted, even when published in Bird News

### Sources used for 'published' records

For rare species, where the site is in the current Avon recording area, all published records are given. The ABR only publishes records of unusual species after receipt of confirmatory notes; the following list of the species that required such notes was included in the 1964 report.

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## BRISTOL BIRD REPORT

important. To assist contributors we follow the practice of the London N.H.S. in appending a list of species for which descriptions should be supplied:

Divers	Swans (except Mute)	Little Gull
Grebes (except Great Crested and Little)	Birds of Prey (except Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel)	unusual Terns
Petrels and Shearwaters	Crakes	Auks
Shag	Little Ringed Plover	Wryneck
Hérons & Egrets (except Common Heron)	Kentish Plover	Golden Oriole
Bittern	Sandpipers (except Green and Common)	Willow Tit
Red-crested Pochard	Stints	unusual Warblers
Scaup	Phalaropes	Firecrest
Ferruginous Duck	Stone Curlew	unusual Pipits and Wagtails
Long-tailed Duck	Pratincole	Waxwing
Scoters and Eiders	Skuas	Shrikes
Red-breasted Merganser	Glaucous Gull	Twite
Geese (except White-fronted)	Iceland Gull	Redpolls (except Lesser)
		unusual Buntings

and any other rare or uncommon species and out of season migrants.

The list was not republished until 1983, but little had changed, with only Common Scoter, Canada Goose, Bewick Swan, Little Stint and Little Gull being removed in the intervening years. Thereafter the list was published annually, with regular amendment, often linked to changes in the species considered at national level.

Also included are records that have been published in the Somerset Bird Report, marked [*SBR*], the Gloucestershire Bird Report, marked [*GBR*], in various articles in Bristol Ornithology, or in the annual reports of the British Birds Rarities Committee, marked [*BBRC*]<sup>2</sup>.

Accurate records are hard to find prior to 1936 and there is often conflict between various sources. Records have been taken from the following sources (with the source stated in the text); Davis (1935), Davis (1947), Palmer and Ballance (1968), Swaine (1982), Wheeler (1874) and Yarrell (1843).

<sup>2</sup> those asterisked mean we hold the original description locally

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<sup>3</sup> I am unclear where this was published, Martyn Hayes was kind enough to supply me with copies of a few of the pages

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the more recent claims mentioned have either never been submitted to, or were found 'not proven' by, the Recorder's Committee

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<sup>5</sup> I have excluded a number of the old records mentioned as the sites are outside of Avon; 1851 – Alpine Swift at Axbridge, 1859 – Rose-coloured Starling at Axbridge, 1867 – Squacco Heron at Slimbridge, 1875 – Crane at Brent Knoll, 1901 – Baillon's Crake at Axbridge and 1955 – Black-throated Diver at Cheddar

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<sup>6</sup> This later expanded edition is available online at the Biodiversity Heritage Library

**THE  
SPECIES  
ACCOUNTS**

## Definitions

The species accounts use the following definitions to describe the local status.

Status	Level of abundance	Population counts
Very rare	Five or fewer records in the Avon area	Per abundance level
Rare	Less than annual, several years may pass between sightings	
Very scarce	Less than annual, typically recorded every two or three years	
Scarce	Very small numbers recorded virtually every year	1 – 10
Uncommon	Low numbers recorded every year	11 – 100
Fairly common	Occurs in reasonable numbers in suitable habitat	101 – 1000
Common	Occurs regularly in good numbers in most suitable habitats	1001 – 10000
Abundant	Large numbers occur in all suitable habitats	10000+

**Resident** – This applies to 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** – This applies to a species that occurs during the late spring and/or summer after having migrated from its wintering areas.

**Winter visitor** – This applies to a species that occurs during the winter months after having migrated from its breeding areas. These include species that do not occur during the summer (for example Fieldfare), or that already have a separate resident population (for example Starling).

**Passage migrant** – This applies to a species that appears on spring and/or autumn migration to or from its breeding/wintering ranges. Some 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** – This applies to a species with a self-supporting population derived from escapes from captivity or deliberately released individuals (BOU Group C).

**Storm/Wind-blown visitor** – This is used mainly for 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** – This applies to a species occurring only irregularly often in big numbers (mainly Waxwing).

**Local rarity** – a species, or subspecies for which supporting notes are required to be assessed by the Recorder's Committee

**National rarity** – a species or subspecies for which supporting notes are required and assessed by the British Birds Rarity Committee (BBRC)

## Site Abbreviations

The following site abbreviations have been used.

ASW	Avonmouth Sewage Works
BG	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
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 R. Yeo
CVL	Chew Valley Lake
OPS	Oldbury-on-Severn Nuclear Power Station lagoons and their surrounding areas
PWD	Portbury Wharf and Dock, including Portbury Wharf NR, St George's Wharf with Chapel Pill, the Royal Portbury Dock area and the bank of the R. Avon north of the Avon Bridge
RPD	Royal Portbury Dock
Sevenside	Severn shore and its environs, including Pilning Wetlands, between Aust and Chittening Warths inclusive
SGW	St George's Wharf, which is now part of Portbury Wharf. Some older records marked as this site were in Royal Portbury Dock
Weston STW	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and its surrounding areas

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

An uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor which is very scarce inland.

Over the last decade the average bird-days per winter is 64, while the largest published count is of 115 at Severn Beach on 31st January, 2009 with a largest inland count of 32 at BL on 26th January 1985.

The average arrival date is 10th October, the earliest is one at OPS on 8th August, 2011 and the average departure is on 17th April, with the latest departure one at Weston STW on 2nd June, 2015.

In the past it was considered a local rarity, with records requiring supporting notes, until 1985.

In 1874 it was 'rare winter visitor, Avonmouth' but by 1899 it was clearly more regular and described as 'occurs on the Severn coast in winter'. Davis (1947) describes it as a 'winter visitor, recent records suggest occurs regularly in very small numbers'. He mentions a party of 13 near Avonmouth in February, 1937 while the SBR for that year mentions 11 seen on March 6th one mile above Avonmouth.

Pale-bellied Brent *B. b. hrota*

This form is much rarer locally, the first record was overlooked at the time, and all records still require supporting notes. The accepted records are as follows:

1995 – Northwick Warth on February 12th [2005 and 2009 ABRs][photo in 1995 ABR]

2005 – a first-winter at CI-Y from November 14th until December 14th

2006 – two at CI-Y on October 30th and 31st and on November 9th

2007 – New Passage on January 25th, CI-Y on December 30th

2009 – Severn Beach and Chittingen Warth on April 8th, 18 at Severn Beach on September 1st

2010 – Severn Beach on March 23rd

2012 – five at Severn Beach on September 11th and 12th, a juvenile at CI-Y from October 10th until 22nd and an adult there on 17th, a first-winter at North Wick on November 18th

2015 – Dowlais Farm on March 26th and Sand Point on April 17th

2020 – three at Dowlais on April 15th

2022 – OPS from December 26th until 29th

**Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis*

A national rarity with just one local record of an adult shot at Oldbury-on-Severn on 18th November, 1909 [British Birds vol 3 page 376]

More recent records have all been treated as escapes – in 1976, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011/12, 2014/15, 2015 (3), 2016 and 2022.

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

A fairly common introduced resident, mostly on the coast and at CVL and BL where numbers increase during the summer moult.

The largest count is 905 at CVL on 30th June, 1996.

It is also an uncommon breeder, with Bristol Water taking measures to control breeding at the reservoirs, see Vinicombe (2020). However, pairs are scattered widely, Bland and Dadds (2012) say breeding was proved in 43 tetrads and estimated at least 100 pairs.

This status is only quite recent, with Davis (1947) describing it as 'occasional winter visitor, eight were shot near Bleadon during severe weather in 1916, a party of nine reported from BL in 1935' and the species was still being treated as a local rarity in 1963.

All published records prior to the first modern successful local breeding are shown below:

1831 – shot at Kingston Seymour on January 1st Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1860s – bred at East Clevedon Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1935 – nine at BL [SBR]<sup>7</sup>

1956 – one with Whitefronts at CVL from March 4th until 25th

1957 – bred unsuccessfully at CVL<sup>8</sup> Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1959 – SGW on June 9th

1962 – up to 48 at CVL from January 6th until 21st, one at BL on January 9th

1963 – Yeo Estuary on February 17th, two at CVL on various dates between early March and mid-April, three at CVL on April 30th

1964 – CVL on September 20th [SBR]

1965 – 16 on Claverham<sup>9</sup> Moor on October 26th

1966 – three at R. Axe on April 24th

1968 – three at Horseshoe Bend on R Avon on October 23rd<sup>10</sup>, three at CVL on December 29th

1969 – BL on April 1st [SBR]

1971 – three at CVL from July 25th until April 1972 with two there into 1973 when three young reared; all five remained into 1974 when four young were raised

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<sup>7</sup> Treated as escapes as species not then on British List

<sup>8</sup> SBR says two from April 13th until May 26th

<sup>9</sup> SBR gives site as Kenn Moor

<sup>10</sup> SBR gives date as 25th

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

An uncommon introduced resident which has bred occasionally since 1998.

It is also a very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant and was considered a local rarity until 1998.

The largest count is of 80 at OPS on 7th December, 2010.

It is difficult to establish the origin of many with certainty, given the large feral flock in Gloucestershire, but wild birds have probably occurred, particularly some of the early records listed below, for example Palmer and Ballance (1968) state that the 1945, 1963 and 1964 records 'seem to refer to wild birds'. The 1995, 1996 and 2016 ABRs mention additional records that might relate to wild birds

1945 – seven at Ladye Bay on January 27th

1959 – one possibly wild at BL on November 7th, CVL on 8th and BL again on 13th. A party of five at CVL from December 1st were initially considered to be wild. However, what was presumed to be the same birds were seen again, from early January until the third week of February 1960, and of four then watched closely three were carrying Wildfowl Trust rings

1963 – four with 200 Whitefronts at Sand Bay on January 12th<sup>11</sup>

1964 – CVL from September 26th until October 20th

1970 – Woodspring Bay on January 11th, eight at Clevedon from December 26th until 29th

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<sup>11</sup> Although Palmer and Ballance (1968) and SBR give the date as 2nd

### **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

An uncommon introduced resident and former summer moult migrant, with a largest count of 43 at CVL on 16th June, 1996. It was also treated as a local rarity until 1987.

It is assumed that most if not all belong to the naturalised population of the western race *A. a. anser*.

It was rarer in the past, Davis (1947) considered it to be a scarce winter visitor with very few authentic records, 'though perhaps more frequent than is supposed'. In the late 1800's it had been considered as a 'rare winter visitor, Avonmouth' by Wheeler (1874) and 'occurs on the Severn coast in winter' in 1899.

Early published records include the following:

1954 – two adults and an immature at CVL from March 21st until April 13th

1956 – one, apparently this species, amongst 14 Whitefronts at Clevedon on February 12th

1968 – five at R Kenn on December 15th

1969 – two at Sand Point on February 9th, Sand Point on April 27th

1972 – Sand Bay on January 30th, CVL on May 7th and 22nd [*both SBR*]

1974 – CVL from November 16th until 27th April, 1975,

1975 – a pair raised five young at Tortworth Park Lake, one at CVL from early July until September 3rd, one at CVL from September 24th until October 13th



**Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

A local rarity with just two twentieth century records:

1990 – ten at BL from February 10th until 25th [*fabalis* per 1996 ABR]

1998 – one at OPS on March 1st was thought to be *fabalis*

**Tundra Bean Goose** *Anser serrirostris*

A local rarity with three records this century:

2006, four adults with nine juveniles at BL on October 18th and again on 20th were thought to be *rossicus*

2011, three individuals – two at CI-Y on November 17th, Weston STW from December 10th until 18th

2020, 11 at OPS on December 5th, 10th, 11th and 12th

There are also two twentieth century records:

1993 – Yeo Estuary on December 5th and 6th [*rossicus*<sup>12</sup> per 1996 ABR]

1996 – BL on January 27th relocated to CVL the next day and remained until March 21st having visited BL a few times

**Bean Goose sp** *Anser sp*

There are a couple of earlier records which were not assigned to race

1879 – two shot out of seven, Nailsea on November 2nd [1990 ABR], Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1958 – one with Whitefronts in fields at north end of CVL on January 26th with two on February 2nd, 8th and 9th

In addition, one at CVL from May 16th until early June 1987 and another at BG on March 22nd and CVL from 25th until 11th August, 1990, were treated as escapes

Wheeler (1874) listed the species as 'occasional, Avonmouth' whilst Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurs on the Severn coast in winter'. However, Davis (1947) said that 'most records in former years doubtful owing to confusion with Pink-foot'.

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<sup>12</sup> Before the Bean geese were split into two species the tundra race was ssp *rossicus*

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A local rarity with six records this century:

2002, one at BL between May 31st and June 9th visited CVL on June 6th and 8th

2011, four, two adults and two first-winters, at BL from December 10th (visiting CVL on 27th) until 23rd February, 2012 then relocated to CVL where they remained until March 22nd

2013, two adults at CVL from November 22nd until December 28th when they started moving between CVL and BL; one remained until March 2nd or 3rd while the other departed on 4th April, 2014



2019, an adult at BL from November 24th until 26th and then briefly at CVL<sup>13</sup>

2021, an adult at New Passage on January 23rd and 24th<sup>14</sup>

2022, a flock of between 20 and 30 flew over Whitchurch on October 3rd

There are 13 twentieth century records involving 22 individuals:

1940 – two shot from a small party near Avonmouth and three shot from a flock of grey geese on Horfield Common on January 30th. Six or seven amongst White-fronts along the river bank between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on February 1st and 2nd

1958 – a ringed bird with Whitefronts at CVL on January 26th and February 2nd

1961 – in field near Kingston Seymour on October 15th

1973 – CVL on February 18th

1974 – two at CVL on December 9th

1979 – CVL from November 22nd until 10th February, 1980

<sup>15</sup>1986 – one at BL on February 8th and 9th then moved to CVL and remained until May 13th with presumably the same in flight over BG on May 16th

1988 – a sick juvenile caught by a dog at Littleton Warth on November 29th died soon after

1996 – a first-winter at Aust from February 26th until March 10th; one briefly at CVL on March 2nd

1999 – an adult at BL from October 22nd and then moving between here and CVL until 13th February, 2000

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<sup>13</sup> An adult at CVL occasionally during June, August and September, and also seen over Chew Magna, was considered to be an escape

<sup>14</sup> An adult at CVL on June 8th was considered to be an escape

<sup>15</sup> one at CVL on June 19th and 20th 1985 is listed under Escapes

**White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

European White-fronted Goose *A. a. albifrons*

This is now an uncommon passage migrant and/or winter visitor with a strong decline over the past few decades. This decline is in line with the decline in numbers at Slimbridge.

Clearly it was commoner in the past, the largest count was of 400 at Clevedon Bay on 31st December, 1963 [Rose (1992)], while Davis (1947) described it as a 'winter visitor, frequently reported from both coastal and inland areas' and at the end of the 1800's it was said to 'occur on the Severn coast in winter, this is the most abundant of the four species of geese which visit the district'

Greenland White-fronted Goose *A. a. flavirostis*

A local rarity with just four records:

1964 – CVL on December 21st

1993 – a first-winter at BL on November 6th<sup>16</sup>

2010 – two adults at OPS<sup>17</sup> on October 17th

2019 – a party of six at OPS on March 4th

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<sup>16</sup> Vinicombe (2001) says this bird was present at CVL on November 2nd but it is not included in Vinicombe (2020); the ABR says a first-winter Whitefront present at CVL on 2nd and a Whitefront seen in flight at BG on 6th *may possibly* have been this bird

<sup>17</sup> But Hayes (2020) gives the site as Littleton

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

A fairly common resident with most now wintering just inland from the coast in North Somerset and summer moulting flocks occurring principally at CVL, from where the largest single count, of 190 in July 2018, comes.

There used to be a wintering flock in the Floating Harbour but this has declined since feeding ceased in the early 2000's.

Davis (1947) said it was 'resident in a semi feral state though many pairs are entirely wild. Frequent at the docks and reservoirs and not uncommon wherever there are suitable waters'. In the 1800's neither Wheeler (1874) nor Charbonnier (1899) included the species, presumably as any present were not considered wild.

According to Bland and Dadds (2012) there were probably less than 20 breeding pairs in the area prior to 1955, but this increased to 33 pairs by 1983, 40 by 1998 and 90 by 2012. They also give a population estimate of between 500 and 600.

**Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*

An uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant, with a largest count of 141 at CVL on 2nd January, 1977.

The average arrival is on 2nd November, six days later than given by Bland (1992) with the earliest arrival on 11th October in both 1991 (two adults at CVL) and 2004 (three adults at BL). The average departure is 11th February, over a month earlier than the March 13th given by Bland (1992) while the latest departure was on 26th April, 1966, one at CVL.

It was considered a local rarity until sometime after 1963 which ties in with Davis (1947) who described it as an 'irregular winter visitor'.

Early records include:

1879 – one shot from a flock of 13 on the coast near Clevedon. The date of this record is unclear as Davis (1947) gives it as December while Palmer and Ballance (1968) give it as January/February

1920 – a party of 'wild swans' at BL which may have been Bewicks Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1941 – four at BL on January 12th [SBR]

1942 – four at BL on 11th January 11th [SBR]

1945 – four at BL on February 20th [SBR]

1946 – six at BL on January 27th [SBR]



**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

A local rarity with 59 individuals recorded this century:

2000, an adult flew NE at OPS on December 23rd

2005, four individuals – two at Northwick Warth from January 13th until 16th and two adults at CI-Y on November 19th

2008, three individuals – an adult flew SW at Severn Beach on March 29th, an adult at CVL on October 28th and 29th and a first-winter at CI-Y from November 5th until 7th

2009, nine individuals – three adults at CVL on February 21st, three adults around Weston-super-Mare on March 19th, 22nd and 29th, three adults at BG on October 8th



2010, three individuals – two adults flew past OPS and Northwick Warth on October 16th, an adult at CVL from November 14th until 25th

2011, an adult at CVL on December 23rd was seen in flight later the same day at BL

2012, five individuals – two adults at CVL on January 19th, three adults at BL on November 18th

2013, four individuals – an adult flew over New Passage on November 3rd, three adults flew past Sand Point on 4th

2015, six individuals – four adults at CVL on November 21st, two adults at Weston STW on December 31st

2016, three individuals – two adults at CVL on November 7th, an adult at BG on 9th

2017, four individuals – an adult at BL on December 5th, three at OPS on 9th

2018, four individuals – two adults at Northwick Warth on January 7th, two adults flew over Northwick Warth on October 29th

2019, two individuals – an adult at Newton Park from October 31st until 14th April, 2020, an adult at CVL on November 18th

2020, five individuals – an adult on Kenn Moor from March 23rd until April 1st, four adults at OPS and then Pilning on December 8th

2021, four individuals – an adult in flight at CI-Y and later at PWD on October 24th, two adults at the mouth of the R Banwell from November 3rd until 19th, an adult at BL on November 4th

2022, an adult flew over OPS on December 15th

At least 90 were recorded in the twentieth century:

1901 – Avonmouth Davis (1947)

1956 – BL from February 9th until April 8th

1959 – adult at CVL on January 3rd

1961 – two adults and three juveniles at CVL on January 29th, two at BL on December 20th [both SBR]

1962 – 12 at BL on January 14th, four at BL on November 3rd, 20 on 4th, 18 on 11th and 11 on 18th, eight at CVL on November 11th

1963 – two adults at CVL from March 10th until 24th

- 1965 – four at BL on February 7th, two adults at CVL on November 20th  
1968 – four in flight at Clevedon, R Yeo on January 14th  
1969 – two at CVL on December 9th  
1970 – two at CVL on January 13th  
1973 – two at BL on January 18th, an adult at CVL from November 17th until 25th  
1974 – party of eight (three juveniles) at BL on December 7th  
1983 – over the Yeo Estuary on January 2nd, OPS silt lagoon on October 30th, five over Northwick on November 13th, two at Tortworth Lake on December 4th  
1988 – two adults and three juveniles at the Yeo Estuary on December 18th  
1992 – two adults in flooded fields at Stanton Drew on December 20th and 21st  
1995 – four adults and two first-winters flew W over the Yeo Estuary on November 5th  
1997 – an adult at Weston STW and Bleadon Levels from December 13th until 22nd<sup>18</sup>

Prior to that the only reference is in Wheeler (1874) who described the species as 'rare, Avonmouth'

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<sup>18</sup> see 1998 ABR for date correction

### **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

A very scarce visitor either from the UK feral population or direct escapes from captivity, but with a significant increase in reports since 2013 when started breeding locally.

Bred at CVL in 2013, 2014 and 2015 (and probably nearby in 2017 with two juveniles present at the lake in April) and in the Woodspring Bay area in 2022. At least one pair of released birds bred<sup>19</sup> at an ornamental pond in Bitton in 2015

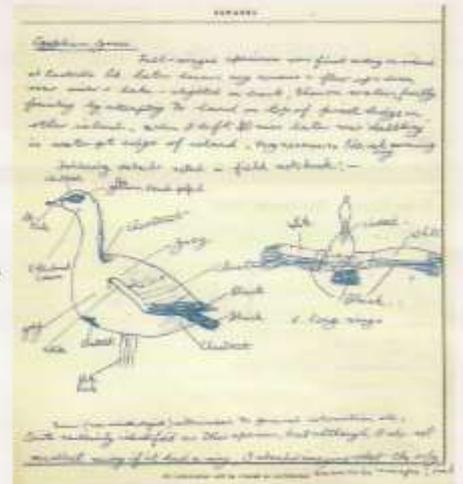
Early records are few and far between, possibly because records were thought to relate to escapes:

1901 – bred in Bath, mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1955 – Eastville Park on March 20th, see Waterbirdnews issue 39, Autumn 2023

## Historical inputting

The ongoing work of digitising our historic paper forms has unearthed some gems from WeBS counts of old. Here you can see a field sketch of an Egyptian Goose from the 20th March 1955 at Eastville Park, Bristol. At this time, Egyptian Geese were not as common to see as they are now; they were introduced to the UK as part of private collections in the 17th century and slowly spread into the wild, only being added to the British Bird List in 1971. So you can understand why this counter had to be sure they were correct with their ID!



1957 – an unringed bird at CVL on April 6th, 18th and 20th [1959 ABR and SBR]

1959 – an unringed bird at CVL on December 20th

1984 – three at CVL on May 30th and again on December 31st

1991 – two adults and two immatures at BL on February 24th

1994 – BL on January 26th

Records from CVL in 1988 and 1989 were treated as escapes.



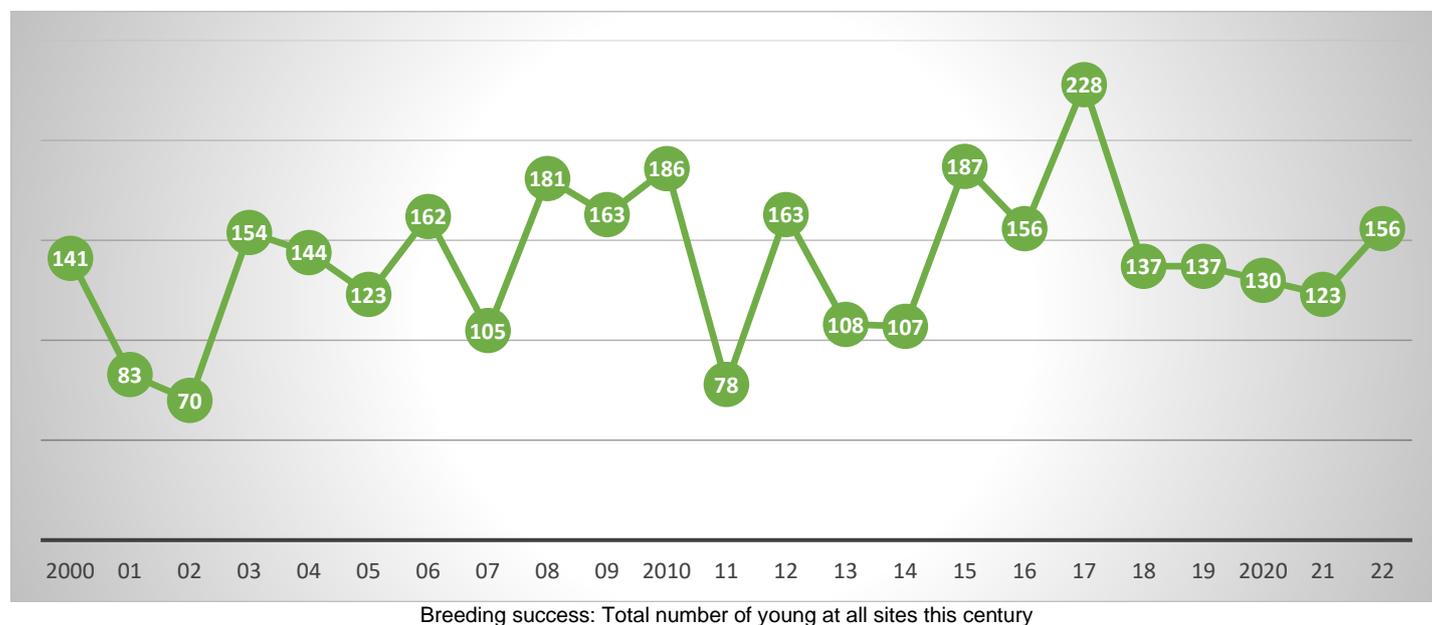
<sup>19</sup> It is unclear how many of the pairs present bred, nor how many young were reared

### Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A fairly common resident; most migrate to moult. Uncommon inland (except at CVL).

The largest count is of 1,100 at Sand Bay on 18th November, 2007 *Higgins (2017)*. The largest inland count is of 48 at CVL on 31st May, 2013<sup>20</sup>

An uncommon breeder which has declined in the last five decades, see *Rose (2011)*. *Bland and Dadds (2012)* estimated the current breeding population at 20 pairs and the table below shows the number of young raised each year this century.



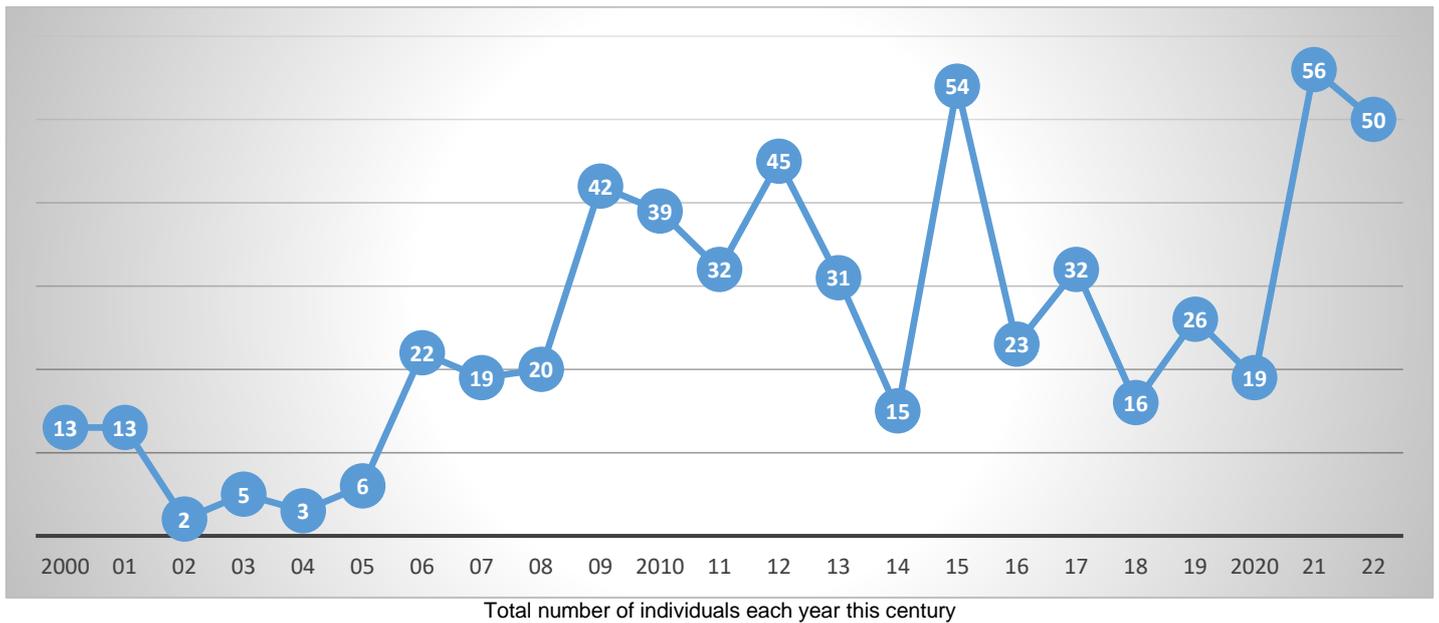
This status has not really changed over time, for example *Wheeler (1874)* gives it as 'not uncommon, banks of Severn, BG' while *Charbonnier (1899)* says 'resident, breeds in fair numbers near the Severn coast' and the 1929 SBR says 'common on the coast, breeds Woodspring, Sand Bay etc. Occasional at BL where has nested once'.

*Davis (1947)* says it is 'resident, common and well known as a breeding species at Woodspring, along the Severn reaches and elsewhere in coastal areas. Also breeds on Steep Holm and nesting has been reported from Denny Isle. Occasional on inland waters in winter.' According to *Bland and Dadds (2012)* there were 50 pairs on Steep Holm in 1922 but that has now fallen to almost zero, perhaps as a result of the collapse of the rabbit population and the growth in breeding gulls there.

<sup>20</sup> ABR incorrectly gives the May maximum as 43

**Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*

An uncommon introduced resident, the chart below shows the number of individuals this century.



It is also an occasional breeder, with the first local breeding confirmed at Tortworth Lake in 1996 and the latest in 2022 at Nailsea, Moored Spout.

It was considered a local rarity until 2005. Early published records are as follows:

1974 – a female at CVL on April 1st and 3rd

1976 – a male at CVL on December 19th [SBR]

1978 – a tame female at Victoria Park, Bath on November 19th

1980 – a male at Dyrham Park in January until February 17th, a male at Victoria Park, Bath on March 16th, a male at CVL from November 16th until 30th



**Garganey** *Spatula querquedula*

A scarce passage migrant and summer visitor mainly seen at CVL and BL.

The largest count is of 34 at CVL on 2nd September, 1978. It has bred locally but not recently. Breeding was reported from BL in 1910 [*British Birds*, vol. 4, number 12, page 367] without any definitive evidence, a pair probably bred there in 1947, and in 1949 two nests with eggs were found there in May and four young were seen in June and July. At CVL pairs bred in 13 years between 1955 and 1992, see Vinicombe (2020) while Bland and Dadds (2012) mention a recent proven breeding at an undisclosed site.

The average arrival date is currently April 5th and that average has hardly changed in the past 50 years, although Bland (1992) says arrival was earlier when the species regularly bred locally. The earliest published arrival is 8th March, 1961, a pair at CVL, although Bland (1992) mentions March 4th, 1969 and March 5th, 1970 without a source or location.

The average departure date is currently October 15th which is more than two weeks later than mentioned in Bland (1992) while the latest departure was on 13th December, 1992, a first-winter male at CVL. A female wintered at CVL and BL in 2011/12 and a first-winter male was at PWD from 24th December 2019 until 2nd January 2020.

It was less common in the past, Davis (1947) describes it as a 'passage migrant in small numbers, occurring chiefly in spring, sometimes remains in summer. In the last decade has been reported from Kenn Moor (twice) and BL on various occasions. Only two or three autumn records'. Neither Wheeler (1874) nor Charbonnier (1899) include the species.



### Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*

A national rarity with three records this century:

2003, an adult female at CVL from August 12th until 26th and again on 30th [BBRC]

2009, a female at Weston STW on September 28th [2012 BBRC][2012 ABR]

2011, a female at CVL from June 5th<sup>21</sup> until 24th [BBRC]

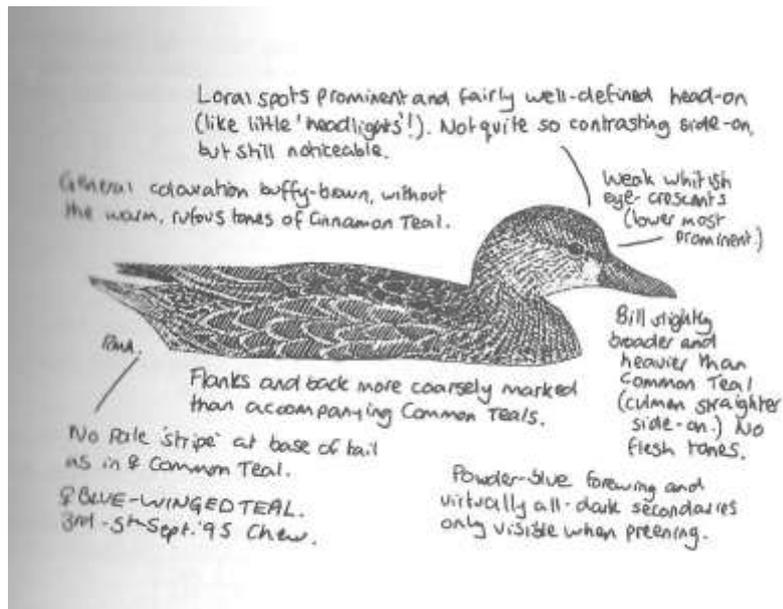
There are five twentieth century records:

1979 – CVL on 18th November [BBRC] [1980 ABR but with incorrect date]

1992 – an adult female at CVL from July 29th until August 13th [BBRC]

1993 – a female at BL on May 1st was paired with a Shoveler and remained until October 10th [BBRC, see 2013 ABR for clarification], a first winter male at CVL from October 9th until 11th [BBRC]

1995 – an adult female at CVL from September 2nd until 5th [BBRC]



<sup>21</sup> A photograph taken on this date, and previously unidentified, has recently come to light [2021 ABR]

### Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

A fairly common, but generally local, winter visitor and autumn passage migrant; usually common at CVL and BL in autumn/early winter.

The largest published count is of 1,138 at CVL on 1st January, 1961, although there is some doubt as to the accuracy of this figure, see Vinicombe (2020) for a possible explanation of why it may involve some double counting. Higgins (2009) gives the highest WeBS count for CVL as 865 in November 1995, and the 1995 ABR gives the maximum figure for that month as 875.

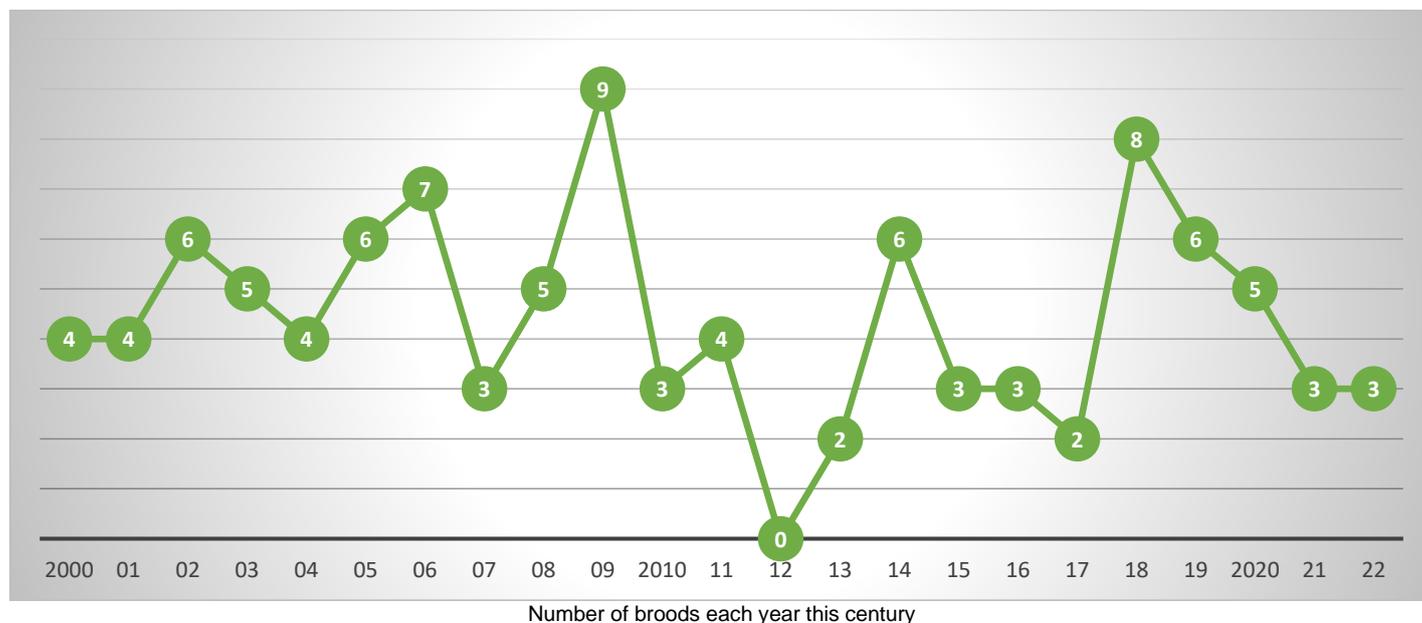
Davis (1947) described the species as a 'winter visitor to suitable inland waters, usually in moderate but sometimes in considerable numbers. Small parties often occur in coastal areas'. Conversely Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare winter visitor, Portishead'.

Although it is scarce in summer, it used to breed regularly at CVL and BL, with the last record in 2016. It possibly bred at PWD in 2019. Davis (1947) said 'a few remain in summer and nesting has been reported on various occasions from BL. Has probably bred on Kenn Moor and perhaps elsewhere' and this ties in with Charbonnier (1899) which said 'a few pairs breed on the moors of North Somerset'.

### Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

A fairly common resident, winter visitor and late summer/autumn moult visitor, most numerous in autumn with a largest count of 740 at CVL in November 2022.

It is also a scarce breeding species with half a dozen or so pairs each year. It used to breed at CVL in some numbers, peaking at 29 broods in 1970 but since 1994 the number of broods there have crashed, see Vinicombe (2020).



It was much rarer in the past, neither Wheeler (1974) nor Charbonnier (1899) include it while the 1929 SBR said it was a 'rare winter visitor with a female shot at BL on 22nd December, 1915'. Davis (1947) said it was a 'scarce winter visitor, little known formerly but now reported at intervals in very small numbers. Has been noted at the reservoirs the latest records being those of three at BL April 1942 and a pair April 1946'

**Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*

A common winter visitor and passage migrant, with a largest count of 7,000 between Aust and New Passage on 24th January, 1987; rare in summer

Wheeler (1874) gave it as a 'rare winter visitor, Portishead, Ashton' but Charbonnier (1899) said it was 'common on the Severn coast in winter' and the 1929 SBR said it was a numerous winter visitor to BL, while numbers at BG vary and it was a regular visitor to the coast. Davis (1947) said a 'winter visitor, occurring commonly on the coast and on suitable inland waters'

**American Wigeon** *Mareca americana*

Now a local rarity, but a national rarity until 2002. There are just three records this century:

2009, a female at Weston STW on June 6th

2017, a male at Littleton Warth on January 2nd

2018, a female at CVL from October 25th until the end of the month

There are five twentieth century records:

1946 – a male at BL from January 27th until February 5th [*British Birds vol 39 p219-220*][SBR]

1976 – two males at the confluence of the Rivers Frome and Avon on the Wilts border on August 30th [1977 BBRC]

1977 – an adult male at CVL on April 2nd [BBRC][*in addendum*]

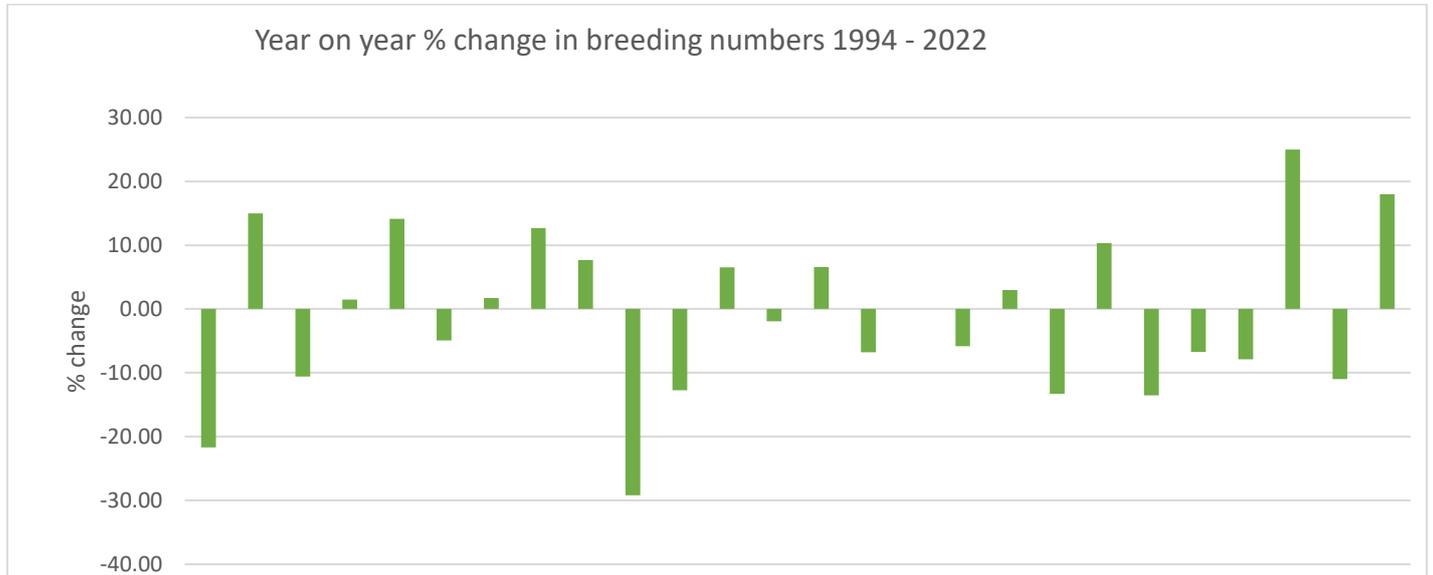
1978 – an adult male at CVL from December 10th until 20th January, 1979. [BBRC\*]

1988 – a male at Chew Magna Res on May 13th [BBRC]

### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

A common and widespread resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor with largest counts of 2,300 at CVL on 2nd October, 1966 [SBR], 2,160 at CVL in August 1980.

Also, a fairly common breeder (by far our commonest breeding duck), Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated a local breeding population of 1500 pairs. The chart below shows the percentage changes over the last 25 years.



Although Wheeler (1874) described it as 'not common, ponds and marshes' Charbonnier (1899) said it was 'resident, nests in suitable localities' while the 1929 SBR said 'abundant winter visitor at BL where a good many breed in the vicinity. Frequent in pairs or small parties at BG where occasionally 15 or 20 in autumn but rarely more and no evidence of breeding'. By the 1940s, Davis (1947) described it as 'resident, also an abundant winter visitor. As a breeding bird is common and widely distributed. Often numerous on the coast, at the reservoirs and other suitable haunts'

### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

An uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor; most occur at CVL in autumn with a largest count from there of 188 on 23rd November, 1976. Winter visitors start to leave from mid-February with an average last date of 17th April with autumn arrivals having an average date of 4th August.

It's status in the past was clearly different with Wheeler (1874) calling it a 'rare winter visitor, Avonmouth' while Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs on the Severn coast'. The 1929 SBR said 'occasional at BL, BG and Litton' while Davis (1947) said 'winter visitor, regular in small numbers on the coast and at suitable inland waters'

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

A common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant to the coast and the reservoirs, with a largest count of 5,600 at CVL on 15th December, 1984, present in small numbers elsewhere.

A few usually over-summer at CVL but it has not bred there. A nest with eggs was found at Clevedon on 22nd May, 1952, while Palmer and Ballance (1968) give breeding records at BL for 'before 1907', 1915, 1926 (the SBR says three or four young, hardly able to fly, were seen with a duck in June), and probably other years to 1939.

Although Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, Clevedon, Portishead' Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs commonly on the Severn coast in winter'. The 1929 SBR gave it as 'abundant in winter at BL where has bred occasionally. Occasional at BG, usually singly or in couples or small parties up to 12 or 15, rarely in larger numbers. Not uncommon on the coast' while Davis (1947) said 'chiefly an abundant winter visitor to the coast and inland waters but a few remain in summer'.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis*

Now a local rarity but a national one until 1991, and only treated as a full species by the BOU from 2001. This century 19 individuals have been recorded:

2000, two individuals – Yeo Estuary on April 8th and CVL from April 8th until 15th

2001, OPS from January 4th until 13th

2002, two individuals – a first-winter at PW from January 6th until 19th, BL on December 27th

2007, Axe Estuary on March 2nd, 4th and 11th

2010, three individuals – Axe Estuary on January 17th, 30th and 31st, OPS on January 27th, CVL on December 17th

2012, CVL on April 17th and 18th with it or another there on 30th and May 1st

2013, two individuals – Weston STW on December 7th, New Passage from December 27th until 29th

2014, two individuals – BL on November 9th, New Passage on November 22nd and 23rd

2015, three individuals – New Passage/Aust from January 1st until February 21st, Axe Estuary on February 5th and 15th until 18th, Severn Beach on April 5th

2019, CVL from November 13th until December 6th

2021, CVL intermittently from November 23rd until December 13th and seen at BL on December 6th and 7th

Only six individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1949 – BL on December 18th [*British Birds vol 43 p303*]

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** *Anas crecca carolinensis*

**S.** Adult male among common Teal, Blagdon reservoir, Dec. 18. Viewed with telescope at fifty yards' range, when the following characters as compared with males of *A. c. crecca* were noted—white, vertical breast-band immediately fore of the wing; absence of white, horizontal band above wing; ill-defined and scarcely perceptible creamy-white line separating chestnut crown from green eye-band; warmer ground-colour of lower breast (B.K. and D. Taylor). No previous record for the district or for County of Somerset, and, as P.S. reports all captive Green-winged Teal in the British Isles as being permanently pinioned, it seems evident that the bird was a genuinely wild visitor.

1977 – CVL from November 17th [*in addendum*] until 26th January, 1978 [*BBRC\**]

1986 – CVL from October 28th until November 13th [*BBRC\**]

1989 – 95, one at CVL from November 26th until December 7th [*BBRC\**], again on 3rd February, 1990 [*BBRC\**] and then from September 29th intermittently until 23rd February, 1991 [*BBRC\**]. It returned on November 9th until 7th March, 1992 and again from September 22nd until 5th December, 1992 and then on 23rd January, 1993 and again from October 3rd until 22nd January, 1994 (visiting BL on January 6th). It reappeared from October 3rd until 1st April, 1995 (visiting BG on February 22nd)

1991 – a first-winter at CVL on January 13th, 19th and February 23rd<sup>22</sup>

1997 - 98 – a distinctive male at Newton Park Lakes from mid-February until March 29th was again present from January 27th until February 14th and then seen at CVL on 21st and 22nd March, 1998<sup>23</sup>

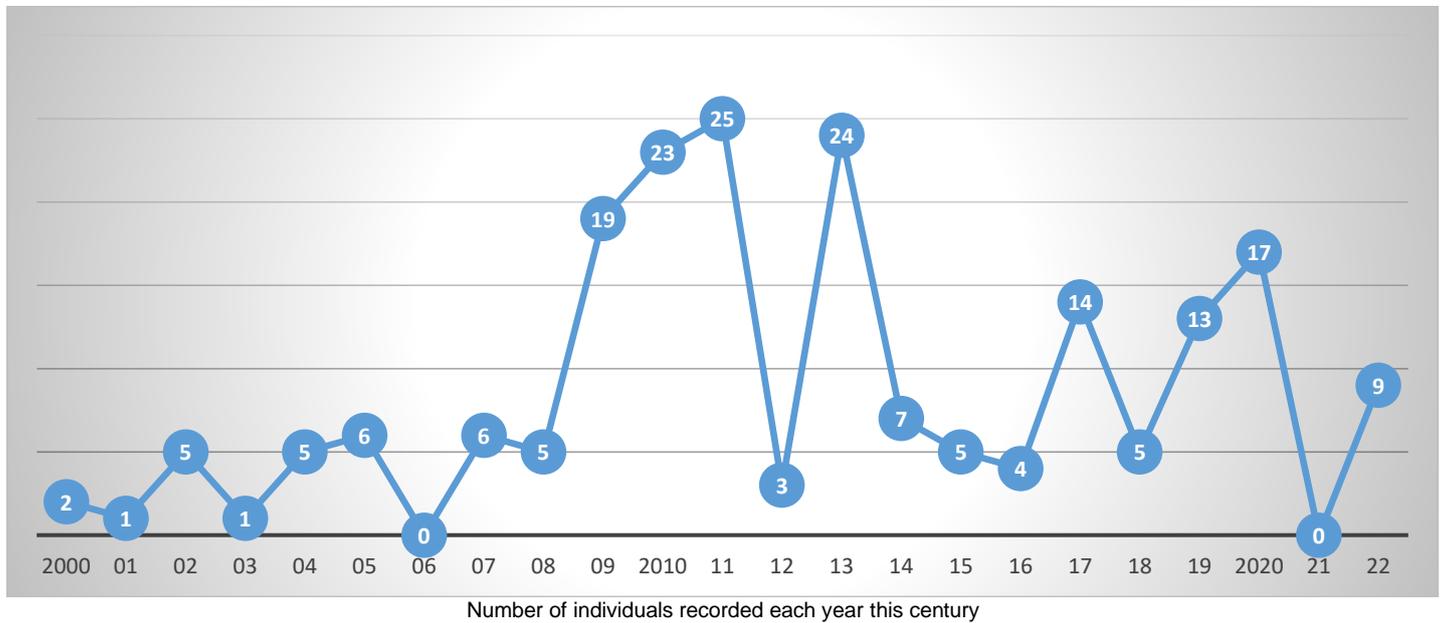
<sup>22</sup> Different Common x Green-winged Teal hybrids were also present on January 19th and 26th respectively

<sup>23</sup> According to the 1998 ABR that was its fifth consecutive winter. It was distinctive in that it showed faint horizontal scapular lines as well as prominent vertical breast stripes.

### Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

A scarce visitor, most often in autumn with a largest count of 12 at CVL on 25th December, 2020. It's true status as a continental visitor is obscured by feral birds (there is a large population at the Cotswold Water Park) and escapes.

It was considered a national rarity until 1963 and a local rarity until 2008, and the table below shows the number of individuals recorded annually this century.



The earliest published local records are as follows:

1953 – a male at BL on October 11th

1959 – a female or immature at BL on December 27th [BBRC]

1961 – two males and a female at BL on November 19th and December 19th [BBRC]

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

A fairly common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant. The largest published counts are 3,093 for the mid-month CVL duck count in January 1977 [SBR] and 'counts or estimates of 610 – 5,000' early in 1977 [ABR]

Uncommon in summer, it is a scarce breeder at CVL (in 43 of the years between 1959 and 2017 per Vinicombe (2020), and has bred at BL.

Wheeler (1874) gave it as an 'occasional winter visitor, Nailsea' although Palmer and Ballance (1968) say it was regular at Weston-super-Mare in the 1860s. Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurs yearly on BG' while the 1929 SBR says 'abundant winter visitor to BL, where normally outnumbers Tufted Duck, and has remained into the breeding season but no evidence of breeding. Present at BG from autumn until spring in varying numbers, usually about 12 – 50 but occasionally up to 200 or more'. Davis (1947) says 'winter visitor, common and often abundant on suitable inland waters, occasional in small parties on the coast. A few sometimes remain in summer and nesting was reported from BL in 1931 and 1933 but the records lack conclusive details. Breeding proven at BL when a nest and eggs taken early July 1936'. A nest with eight eggs were found at BL on 4th June, 1949 but the nest was found 'wrecked' two weeks later [SBR].

### **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

A national rarity with 18 individuals recorded this century:

2000 - 04 – a female at CVL from March 22nd until April 15th and then again from June 23rd until July 10th [BBRC][drawing]. It reappeared to CVL in 2001 on May 19th and 25th and from June 19th until 28th [BBRC] and again in 2002 on August 22nd and September 14th [BBRC]. In 2003 it was at CVL between April 10th and 21st, on June 11th and 27th, on July 13th, August 27th and September 3rd [2008 ABR]. In 2004 she was present between February 20th and September 15th [2008 ABR]

2003 – 06 – an adult male was at CVL from April 18th until September 2nd; he returned in 2004 on February 23rd and joined the adult female [2008 ABR]. It is thought the pair probably nested<sup>24</sup>. In 2005 the adult male was at CVL on March 25th, a pair on July 3rd and the adult female from September 6th until 27th [2008 ABR]. In 2006 a pair possibly bred at CVL with the pair seen mating on June 12th, an adult male seen on August 24th and November 16th and an adult female from August 13th until November 4th and also seen at BL in October.

2006 – 11 – a juvenile male was at CVL from October 18th until November 5th. This was presumably the first-summer male seen at CVL between June 6th and 10th November, 2007 and in 2008 at CVL, BG, Weston STW and BL between May 10th and December 21st. It was thought to have returned in 2010 to CVL, being seen between February 4th and December 15th [2010 ABR for additional dates]. It also returned in 2011 being seen at CVL, Publow and BL between February 12th and November 5th

2007, two individuals – a male at BL on June 16th and an adult female at CVL on June 20th and August 19th and 20th

2008, an adult female at CVL on November 3rd

2009, two individuals – an adult male at CVL from March 18th until November 28th with a second male on May 17th

2010, three individuals – a first-summer male at CVL from September 12th until October 11th with a second from September 23rd until November 22nd while a female was present from October 25th until November 8th

2012, two individuals – an adult male at BL from July 12th until August 19th was then at CVL on August 30th and 31st and September 1st, 14th, 18th and 22nd, an adult female at CVL from September 8th until 12th and on 18th and 22nd and October 1st, 4th and 18th

2013, three individuals – an adult female at BG on April 19th, an adult male missing an eye was at CVL on various dates between May 13th and November 16th, an adult female at CVL from August 28th until September 24th



<sup>24</sup> See an article on the possible breeding attempts at CVL in the February 2011 edition of British Birds

2015, a female at CVL from August 28th until September 10th

2016, an adult female at CVL on October 17th and 18th

Just six individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1922 – an immature obtained at BL on November 4th [*British Birds vol 18 page 301*]

1923 – what may have been a drake at BG on November 26th<sup>25</sup> [*British Birds vol 17 p188-189*]

1929 – a female shot on the R Axe, near Lympsham, February 14th<sup>26</sup> see Davis (1947), Palmer and Ballance (1968) and *British Birds vol 22 p374*

1955 – CVL on January 2nd

1968 – a male at CVL from December 29th had previously been at Orchardleigh in Somerset [*BBRC*]; it remained until 30th March, 1969, visiting BL on January 12th [*SBR*]

1976 – one, probably an immature male, was at CVL from January 6th until 17th

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<sup>25</sup> See also 'The Birds of Barrow Gurney Reservoirs' by A C Leach in the 1934 Proceedings which states 'A Ferruginous Duck was once reported'

<sup>26</sup> Although Lympsham is in Somerset the river forms the county boundary

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*

A national rarity until 1994 and a local rarity since with 27 new individuals recorded this century:

2001, a new male probably arrived at BL on July 15th and was subsequently seen at CVL and BG until August 25th

2002, a second male at CVL from August 4th until September 14th

2003, a second male at CVL from June 16th until September 21st

2005 – 06, three individuals – two first-winter males and a female at CVL on November 5th and 6th with the female and one of the males remaining until 22nd April, 2006

2008 – a total of eight (six first-winter males and two females) at CVL on November 9th, with three (two males) the next day and a female on the 11th.

2009, an adult male was at BL from October 4th until 31st and then at CVL intermittently until December 3rd before being seen at BL again on 12th

2010, an adult male at CVL from September 13th until December 5th

2011, three individuals – an adult male at CVL from May 6th until 9th, an eclipse male at BL between August 17th and 24th and then at CVL until November 4th, a first-winter male at CVL on November 7th, then at BL until 25th and at Weston STW from December 3rd until 12th

2012, three individuals – two adult males at PWD on February 27th, an adult male at CVL on October 14th and again from November 1st until 28th

2013, an adult male at CVL on April 20th and 21st and again from May 13th until 16th

2016, an adult male at CVL from October 15th visited BL on November 2nd and remained at CVL until 7th February, 2017

2019, a male at CVL from April 17th until 30th

2020, an adult male at CVL from March 13th until 15th with possibly the same male there again on November 29th and 30th

2022/23 – an adult male at CVL on November 10th and 11th moved to BL on 12th and 13th before going missing. It reappeared at BL from December 11th into 2023

A total of 12 individuals were seen in the twentieth century, some of which returned for several years:

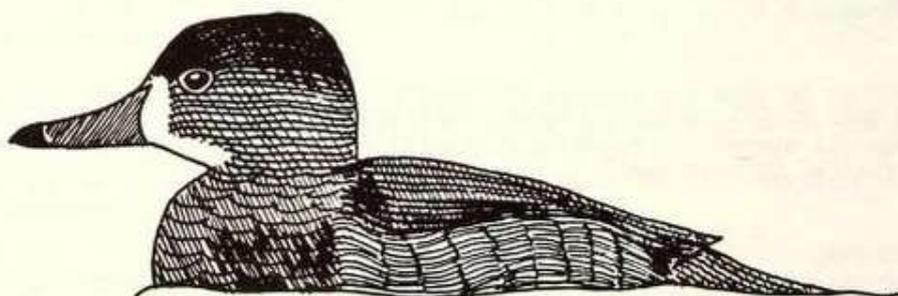
1971 - 73 – an adult male at BL from April 4th until 24th and at CVL on May 2nd and 23rd [SBR][BBRC]. It returned in 1972 when at BL from March 26th until April 15th, at CVL on May 29th and at BL from June 30th until August 23rd [SBR]. In 1973 it was at BL from March 16th until April 16th and again on June 4th and at CVL from May 9th until 27th and again on June 10th [SBR]

1976 – 77, four individuals – an immature male at CVL from December 19th with two adult males there from December 29th [BBRC]. The immature visited BL in early 1977 but then returned to CVL where it was joined by a fourth male from February 6th until 12th, with two remaining until 27th and one until March 27th.

1980 – an immature female at CVL from June 15th until August 9th [BBRC]

## RING-NECKED DUCK

SA An immature female of this N. American species was found at CVL on 15 June by KEV. It stayed to 9 August, seen by many observers, then moved to Cheddar Res., Somerset, where N&LT found it on 17 August (BBRC). A second female was found at CVL on 3 August; it carried a coloured ring so was considered an escape. It was last seen on 21 September and underwent complete wing moult while present. (BBRC). Neither bird showed the tear line behind the eye or the prominent white bill band usually described as characteristic of the species. KEV's sketch is reproduced below.



1985 - 87 - a male at CVL from May 18th until June 30th [BBRC][drawing] with what was assumed the same individual at CVL in 1986 from April 26th until 29th, May 22nd until July 1st and August 10th [BBRC] and again at CVL in 1987 from April 25th until May 5th [BBRC]

1988 - two males at New Passage on April 2nd [BBRC]

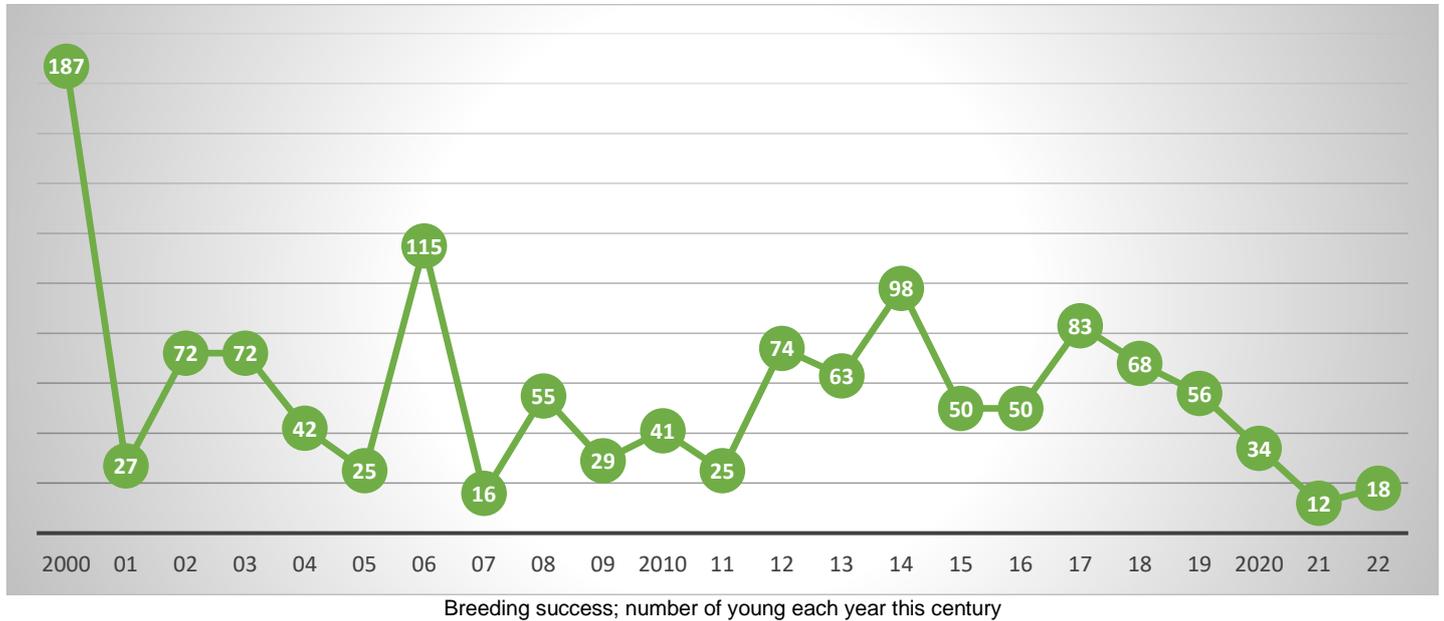
1989 - a male at CVL on December 8th [BBRC]

1998 - 2005 - a male at CVL from May 27th until June 13th and then at BG from November 1st until 3rd January, 1999. It was then seen at various local sites until November 10th. It was seen again in 2000 at various sites between February 17th and November 2nd. It returned in 2001 from April 11th and again in 2002 and 2003. In 2004 it was only noted at CVL and BG between June 10th and August 21st. In 2005 it returned on February 27th and was noted mainly at PW and ASW and was noted at various local sites until 18th February, 2008.

### Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

A common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant with a largest count of 3,145 at CVL in September 2021.

Now a scarce breeder, see chart below. Breeding numbers have declined significantly at CVL since the early 1970's, see Vinicombe (2020).



Wheeler (1874) did not list the species while Charbonnier (1899) says 'has occurred on BG'. The 1929 SBR said 'abundant winter visitor to BL where a pair attempted to breed in 1906<sup>27</sup> and two pairs bred in 1910<sup>28</sup>. Present at BG from autumn until spring, usually about 12 – 30 but sometimes 40 or 50 and occasionally many more. A few at Hunstrete most winters' while Davis (1947) says 'known chiefly as a common winter visitor to inland waters. A few remain in summer and breeding has been reliably recorded from BL on various occasions since 1906. A pair nested, unsuccessfully at Litton 1932. A few visited the docks at Cumberland Basin during the severe frosts of January 1940 and February 1947. Exceptional on the coast'

<sup>27</sup> See Zoologist 1908 page 114

<sup>28</sup> British Birds vol 4 page 367

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Now a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor which is most frequent at the reservoirs.

The largest modern count is of 24 at CI-Y on 30th October, 1988 but the largest historical count is from 1908 with c150 in Sand Bay on January 9th and c200 in Weston Bay on January 15th [*1908 Zoologist page 73*] although Blathwayt (1906) mentions flocks of up to 300 from 'the bays near Weston-super-Mare'.

Although there are records from all months the average departure date is 16th April and the average arrival on 24th September.

Prior to 2008 it was considered a local rarity.

Wheeler (1874) listed it as a 'rare winter visitor, Portishead' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'has occurred on the Severn coast'. The 1929 SBR said 'regular in the Bristol Channel off Weston etc, rare at BL (4th January, 1908, December 1914, nine on 20th December, 1923) and BG (5th January, 1925 with four on 19th)'. Davis (1947) says 'winter visitor chiefly to the coast. Used to occur in gatherings of several hundred at Weston-super-Mare but now much scarcer. The only recent record from the Severn reaches above Avonmouth is of one off Severn Beach in April 1938. Fairly frequent at the reservoirs but usually no more than a bird or two.'

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*

A national rarity with 14 individuals recorded, all this century:

2000, two individuals – a male at BL from April 22nd until May 7th and a female there on October 22nd [BBRC] see Milbourne (2000) for more details

2007, two individuals – adult males at BL from March 11th until 20th and from September 30th until November 21st [BBRC]

2008, a mobile adult male was seen at BL from March 15th until 20th, at BG from 21st until April 5th and at CVL from 7th until May 1st



2010, a first-winter male at CVL on March 7th and from March 17th until April 8th [BBRC] [2011 ABR for date corrections]

2011, an adult male at CVL on November 3rd and 4th [BBRC]

2012, two individuals (+ a third long stayer) – a first-winter male at CVL on February 23rd, an adult male at CVL from October 11th until 30th [BBRC].

2012 – 16 – an adult male on March 11th until 23rd returning there from August 28th until November 16th before moving to BL from 7th December until 31st January, 2013; it returned to CVL from 4th until 20th November, 2013; in 2014 it was at BL and CVL between June 29th and September 3rd while in 2015 it was at BL/CVL between July 12th until September 28th and again at CVL from November 12th until 7th January, 2016

2017, an adult male at CVL on November 12th,

2017 – 2022 – a second male at CVL from December 8th until 1st February, 2018 and again from November 26th until 18th January, 2019. It was seen there again on March 13th and 14th and from October 25th until 7th November, 2019, from October 23rd until at least 4th November, 2020, from October 24th until 8th, November 2021 and from 13th April, 2022 until 23rd April

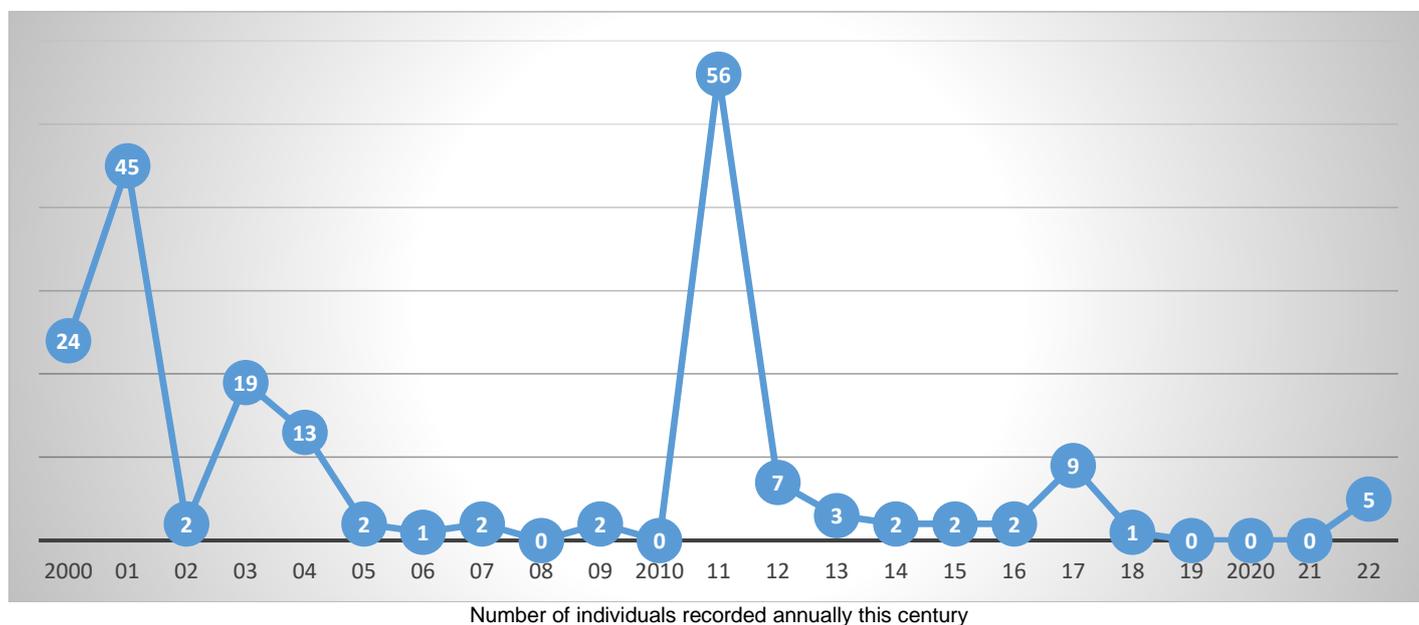
2018, a female at CVL from September 28th until October 8th

2019, a male at BL from March 16th until May 6th

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

This is a scarce winter visitor and scarce/uncommon passage migrant, but may occur in any month. The largest counts are of 19 at Sand Pt in late December 1971, although the 1972 ABR describes it as a 'flock of 20' which remained until May 1972, and 18, including five adult males, flying down river at OPS on 31st October, 1993.

The table below shows the numbers this century



It was considered a local rarity until 1995 and is still very rare inland, with records requiring supporting notes – the only such recent records were in 1979 (BG on February 16th), 1988 (R Avon, Keynsham on November 20th) and 1993 (CVL on November 2nd).

Charbonnier (1899) says it occurred at BG on 30th October, 1889 but as this was in the January 1899 edition of the Zoologist, which says it was a female shot, it seems the year was in fact 1888, as stated by both Davis (1947) and Palmer and Ballance (1968). Davis (1947) says it is a 'rare vagrant' and the only other record he mentions is of 'a male on the Severn below Aust Cliff February, 1902'. The only other early records I can find are as follows:

1953 – an immature male off Steep Holm on April 26th

1956 – an adult female off Steep Holm on May 6th

1963 – a female Sand Bay on August 2nd

1966 – an immature male Weston Bay from February 20th until March 19th, two Sand Bay from July 27th until September 18th

1969 – an immature Sand Point on March 25th

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

A local rarity with 20 individuals recorded this century:

2004, a female at BG on December 12th and 15th

2005, three first-winters at CVL from October 19th until November 9th with one first-winter from November 18th until December 9th

2007, five juveniles/first-winters at CVL on December 16th

2008, two juvenile males at CVL on December 6th

2012, flew past Sand Point on December 1st

2013, four first-winters (two males two females) at CVL on April 12th

2016, three juveniles (a male and two females) at CVL on November 28th

2017, a female/immature at CI-Y on April 9th

At least 45 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1923 – ‘a scoter with white on the wing’ near the mouth of the Axe on September 9th [1929 SBR]

1926 – male and female at Barrow Gurney reservoirs, January Davis (1947)

1939 – an immature male at BL January 22nd until March 26th<sup>29</sup>

1942 – an immature male at BG from March 29th until April 12th

1956 – five, including at least three males, between Yeo Est and Clevedon on February 12th

1963 – an immature male at BL from December 15th until 28th<sup>30</sup>

1966 – a male at BL on Jan 29th [SBR]

1969 – an adult male off Sand Point on October 26th<sup>31</sup> [1973 ABR]

1972 – four in flight past Sand Point on December 27th

1976 – a pair close off Chittening on October 31st

1977 – to NE past Brean Down on December 17th

1980 – a male off Clevedon on September 28th, a male past Chittening on November 9th

1983 – a male flew upriver past Severn Beach on November 7th, a pair at CVL on November 12th

1984 – an adult male at CVL on January 21st, a female flew upriver past New Passage on April 26th, five immatures at CVL on November 10th

1985 – a male at Clevedon seen on November 3rd, 6th, 7th, 17th and December 22nd

1987 – seven at BL on January 18th, a pair on Severnside from January 25th until March 20th

1993 – a pair off Sand Point on December 19th with a first winter male on January 1st 1994 and the pair from January 8th until 30th 1994

1996 – Severn Beach on November 16th [1997 ABR for date correction]

There are only two definite nineteenth century records, although Charbonnier (1899) says ‘has occurred occasionally on the Severn coast’:

1882 – male caught alive at Midsomer Norton on April 11th, mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1892 – adult male at New Passage, March, see Davis (1947)

<sup>29</sup> See also British Birds vol 33 page 26

<sup>30</sup> The record of an adult male at CVL on October 15th 1964 was recently withdrawn by one of the observers

<sup>31</sup> 1973 SBR says 27th

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

An uncommon spring, summer and autumn passage migrant and a scarce winter visitor; normally a few inland records each year, mainly at CVL. The largest count is 115 at CVL on 31st October, 2002.

It was not mentioned in Wheeler (1874) but Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurs every winter on the Severn coast'. Published early records are as follows:

1869 – Bath in April Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1911 – pair shot at BL on December 29th [1929 SBR]

1920 – wintered at BL into 1921 [1929 SBR]

1924 – adult male at BG on April 20th [SBR and British Birds vol 18 page 267]

1926 – female at BG on April 3rd and 5th

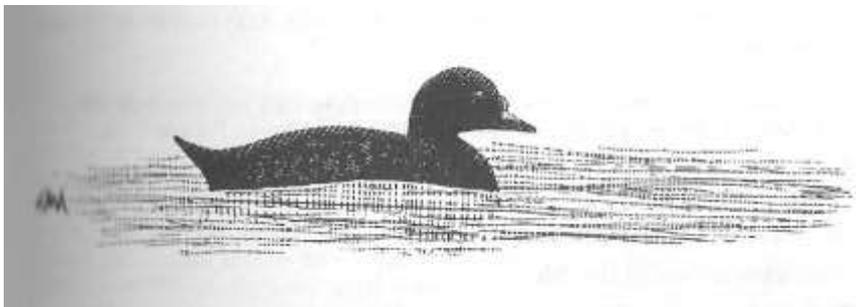
1927 – female or immature at BL on December 27th [1929 SBR]

1929 SBR – single birds are not very rare on the reservoirs and certainly occur too often to be dismissed as accidental. Occasionally seen on the coast at Sand Bay etc

1937 – adult male between Sea Mills and the horseshoe bend on April 18th [SBR], a male off New Passage in July Davis (1947)

Davis (1947) calls it a 'winter visitor, uncommon but has been reported occasionally from Weston-super-Mare and is perhaps more frequent in the Channel and Estuary than records suggest. Occurs in most years at the reservoirs, usually single but party of five at BG September 1945.'

It was considered a local rarity until at least 1964.



**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

A local rarity with 32 individuals recorded this century, including a regularly returning adult male:

2000, three individuals – a male at Hoar Gout from October 8th until 15th, a female at OPS from November 3rd until December 3rd, a juvenile at BG from November 4th until December 3rd

2001, OPS in early January, see Middleton (2006),

2001/02, a first-winter pair at CVL from November 10th until 15th April, 2002

2003, two individuals – a male on Severnside on May 5th, a female at BG from July 17th until 21st

2006/07, a juvenile at CVL from December 4th until 16th February, 2007

2008, a female/immature at CVL from October 19th until 31st

2009/10, a juvenile female at CVL from November 6th until January 2nd and again from April 21st until 9th May, 2010

2011/12, a juvenile/first-winter female at BL from October 13th into 2012 when it started moving between BL and CVL and was last seen on 13th May, 2012

2013, two individuals – a first-summer male at CVL from April 28th until May 6th, a juvenile at CVL from November 11th until December 17th

2014, five individuals – a first-winter male at BG from January 1st until April 6th visited CVL on a couple of dates, Sand Point on February 15th and 22nd, an immature at CVL on March 14th and two first-year males at BL from March 16th until May 3rd visited CVL on three dates, a juvenile at CVL on November 3rd

2015, a female at CVL from March 7th until April 6th

2016, two adult males at BL on November 9th

2017, four individuals – a first-winter male at BG from January 10th until April 23rd, an immature at CI-Y on July 23rd, an immature at CVL on October 21st, an adult male at BG on November 4th and 5th

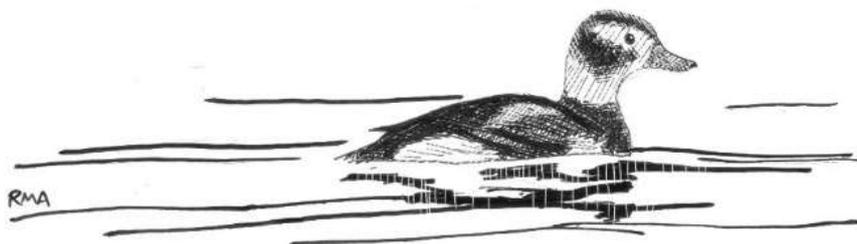
2017 – 23 – an adult male at CVL from November 11th until December 29th and then at BG until 29th April,

2018 – it returned to CVL from November 19th until 26th and then moved to BG from November 30th until 22nd April, 2019 returning again to CVL from November 3rd until 13th before moving to BG on 17th until 23rd April, 2020; it returned to BG on November 7th, 2020 until April 18th, 2021; it returned to CVL from November 17th until December 12th, 2021 before moving to BG on December 21st and remaining until 16th April, 2022. It returned to CVL on 12th November, moving to BG on 13th and into 2023

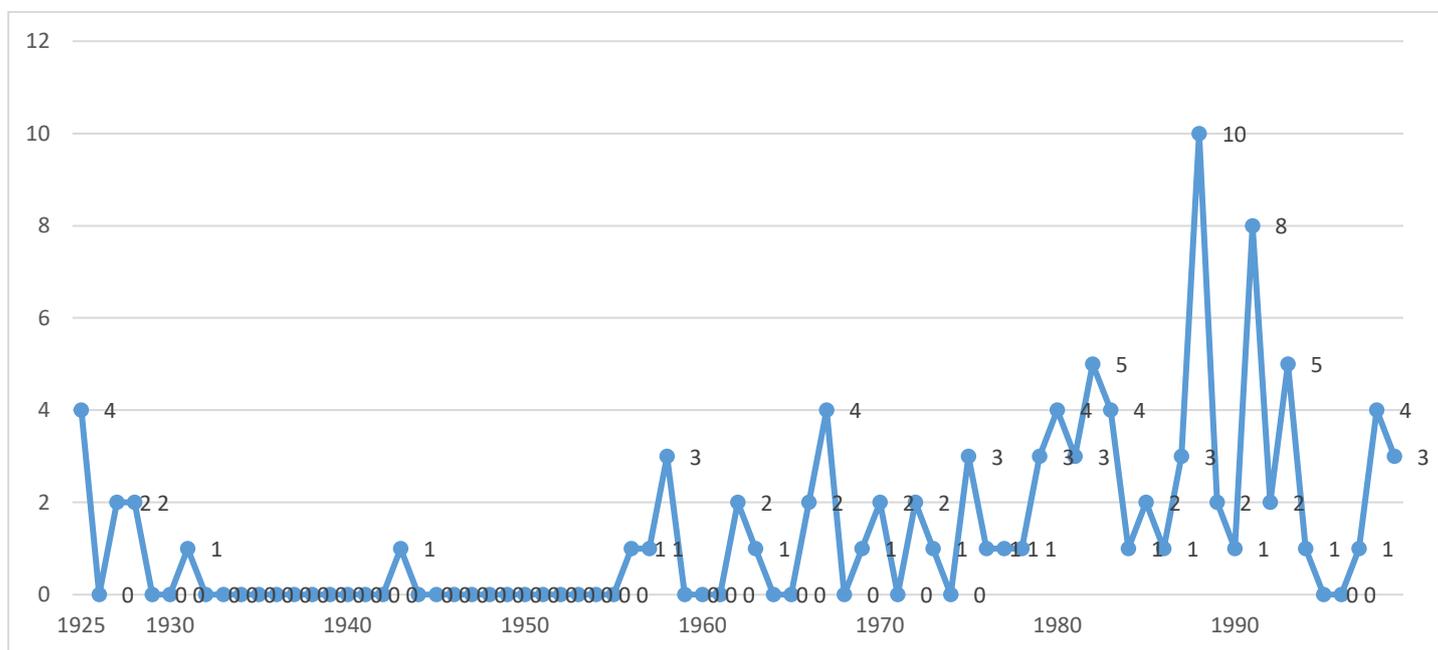
2019, a juvenile at CVL on December 12th and 16th

2021, a pair at PWD from June 18th until 23rd.

2022, two individuals – a juvenile at CVL on 31st October, a juvenile male at CVL from November 11th until December 13th



Approximately 100 were recorded in the twentieth century, the full details are given in Appendix 1 but the graph below gives a summary:



The only nineteenth century record is of one shot at Weston-super-Mare on 16th December, 1890, see *British Birds* vol 18 page 301 and *Zoologist* 1890 page 66.

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

A fairly common winter visitor and spring passage migrant; numbers peak in late March and early April with a largest count of 210 at CVL on 26th March, 1999.

It is scarce away from the main reservoirs, and scarce/very scarce in summer although it bred at CVL in 2008, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2021 and 2022.



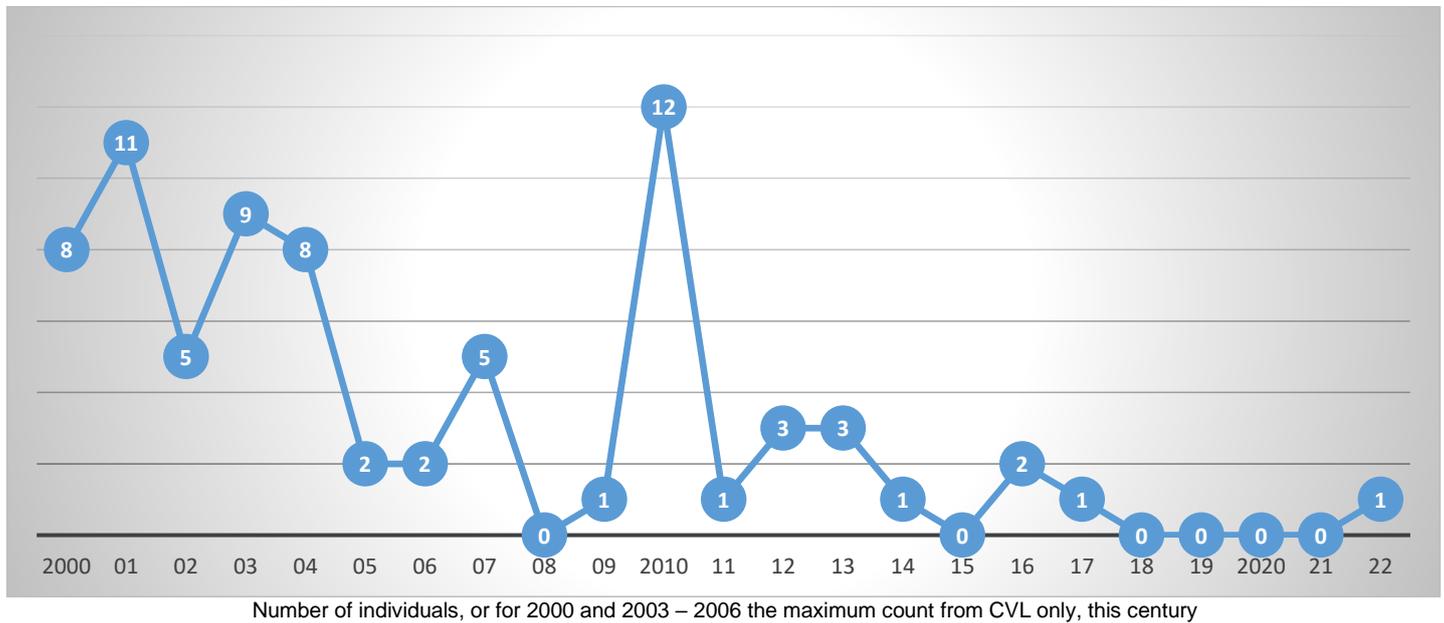
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare winter visitor, near Banwell' while Charbonnier (1899) said it had 'occurred on the Severn coast and at BG'. The 1929 SBR said 'regular winter visitor at BL in small numbers. At BG small parties of up to ten frequent. No records from other inland waters but occasional on coast, seen at Woodspring in hard weather' while Davis (1947) said 'winter visitor occurring regularly in small numbers at the reservoirs. Scarce elsewhere'



### **Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

Since 2019 this has been a local rarity, with one accepted record since then, a female at CVL from November 16th into 2023.

The graph below shows the decline in the last ten years



The largest count, of 21 at CVL, was as recently as 11th February, 1997. Also notable was a flock of 14, including 10 males, on the R Avon at Somerdale on 20th January, 1985 (Aldridge 1987)

Wheeler (1874) did not include the species but Davis (1947) mentions an adult male shot at Dyrham in 1855. Other early records are as follows:

1892 – Clevedon in January mentioned in Charbonnier (1899)

1908 – a redhead at BL on 4th January, 1908 [1929 SBR], although according to the 1908 Zoologist one was shot there on January 4th (see page 114) and a redhead was seen on the 15th (page 74)

1917/18 – several shot in winter at BL [1929 SBR]

1919/20 and 1920/21 – a few at BL [1929 SBR]

1921 – six shot at BL on December 27th [1929 SBR]

1925 – a redhead on 6th January 6th [1929 SBR]

1927 – a female shot on the R Axe near Weston on December 29th [1929 SBR]

1928 – at BG a redhead on January 3rd and seven on 8th [1929 SBR]

1929 – a few on the Axe in January and February, five (one drake) at BL on February 24th and March 17th, at BG one on February 14th and 25th [1929 SBR]

Davis (1947) calls it a 'winter visitor, regular at the reservoirs in small numbers, most records refer to female or immature birds but adult males not infrequently noted in recent years'

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

A fairly common winter visitor to CVL where the largest count is 283 on 3rd February, 1996. It is increasingly recorded from other sites including CI-Y, but still uncommon away from CVL and scarce in the Estuary.

The average arrival date is 27th September and the average departure is 8th April.

The earliest published records are as follows:

1870 – Wraxall Charbonnier (1899)

1880 – Hinton Blewitt Davis (1947)

1891 – Bitton in January Charbonnier (1899)

The 1929 SBR says 'only one record for BL prior to 1915, then five in December 1921 and six in 1922. At BG a redhead on 5th December, 1927, then two on 9th February, 1928 and three on 13th March, 1928. A pair shot at Litton 'many years ago' with one there in January and February 1929. One shot Bleadon parish on 1st January, 1928 and a few on the Axe in January and February 1929'. Davis (1947) says 'winter visitor. Observations in recent years show that it occurs annually. Recorded in the past from Weston-super-Mare. Has frequently been noted at the reservoirs usually single or in twos but up to five or six on several occasions. One at Avonmouth 1947'

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

A scarce winter visitor and passage migrant and a local rarity until 2009. The largest count is of at least 8, possibly 11, at CVL on 28th December, 1968.

Neither Wheeler (1874) nor Charbonnier (1899) mention the species although Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'several immatures near Weston-super-Mare, probably 1860s'. The 1929 SBR gives the following records – six at BL in the 1920-21 winter with four there on 27th December, 1923, several reported in winter 1924-25, one in the winter of 1927-28 and a single drake there on 3rd and 24th February and 2nd March, 1929. A female at Hunstrete for several weeks in early spring 1929. Davis (1947) says it is an 'irregular winter visitor occurring less frequently than Goosander. As with Goosander adult males seldom met with' and gives additional records of one at BG in April 1936 (a female on 10th per SBR) and one at Hunstrete in 1941.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A once common introduced winter visitor at CVL and BL with a largest count of 1,064 at CVL on 1st March, 1987, but scarce elsewhere. However regular culls by order of Defra means the last recorded local breeding was in 2008 and it is now a rare vagrant.

The first published local record was in 1957 when a young male was at CVL in November but there may have been earlier records as the 1958 SBR states, under Long-tailed Duck 'we know of several instances where birds have been identified as being of this species when they were, in fact, North American Ruddy Ducks, some of which have reached the reservoirs as 'escapes' from the Wildfowl Trust'. Numbers increased to four males during the subsequent winter and they were also seen at BL, with an additional male at BG during the 57-58 winter. All were considered to be escapes from Slimbridge [*12th Annual Report, Wildfowl Trust, pp 167-8*].

In 1960 there were three males at BL and four males at CVL for the greater part of the year and three females or immatures appeared at CVL in December. In 1961 birds were noted at BL and CVL in most months with up to eight at CVL and five at BL and they bred at CVL where a pair with six or seven ducklings were seen on May 18th and June 3rd. In 1962 up to six (4 males) were at CVL between January and May and a pair with fully grown juvenile were present on June 30th.

**Black Grouse** *Lyrurus tetrrix*

This species has been extinct locally for nearly a century, and probably was only ever occasional.

According to Palmer and Ballance (1968) the species was present on the north Mendips in the early 1800's, had died out by 1860 but recolonised again about 1875 and remained until the early 1920's. This is backed up by Charbonnier (1899) which describes the species as 'shot every year on the Mendips'. Although Palmer and Ballance (1968) give the last breeding as 1920, Davis (1947) says there was no definite breeding evidence after a nest and eggs were found on Black Down in May, 1915.

Wheeler (1874) states 'occurs occasionally, Portishead' while Davis (1947) mentions a female in Mr A R Robinson's collection at Backwell House that was killed on Backwell Hill sometime prior to 1900. The only other definite records inside Avon come from 1922 when a male was shot in Mendip Wood at the foot of Black Down (presumably this is what is now called Mendip Lodge Wood) and a female was seen on Dolebury Warren.

The extract from the 1946 SBR below gives details of these last two records and possible reasons for the species demise

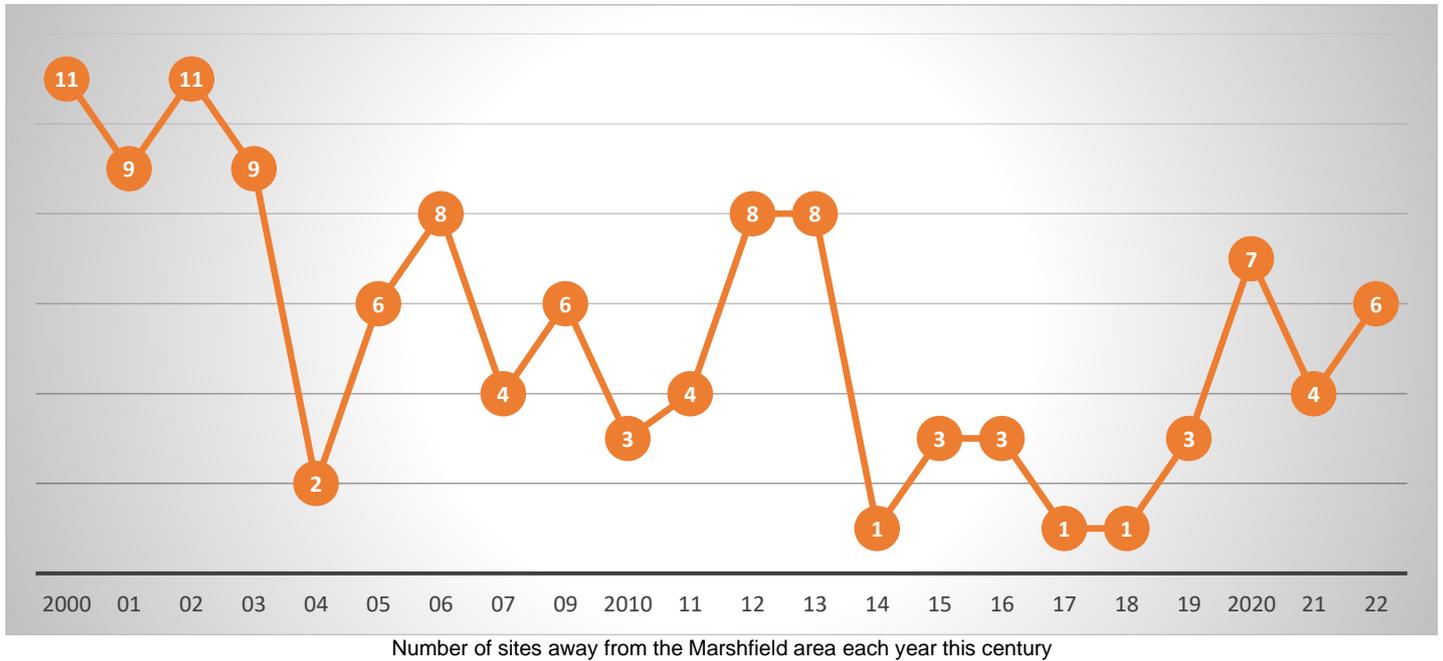
Recorders of bird life in Somerset should take any chance which may come their way of preserving information about species, once perhaps numerous, but now verging on local extinction. A case in point is the status of the Black Grouse on Mendip. It seems probable that they are now extinct in the area. Will observers please report when last they saw or heard of one there? I consider that a letter written on 20 January 1947, to our member, Mr. H. H. Davis, by Mr. Joseph Atwell, keeper, Dolebury Warren, from which some extracts are given below, is of the utmost historical importance: 'Re Black Grouse on the Mendips I should say they are extinct in the Blackdown area. I have not seen or heard of any for over twenty years. The last one I saw shot was in Mendip Wood at the foot of the Down in 1922. It was a very old Black Cock. I saw a Grey Hen the same year on Dolebury Warren. A fire had been burning for a couple of days at the time on the hills; that was the last I saw or heard of Black Grouse in this district. Away back in the 1860's, my grandfather had the sporting rights of Blackdown and lived in the keeper's house on Rowberrow Warren. I have heard my father tell many times of a gentleman killing 8½ brace of Black Grouse besides partridges and hares in one day's shooting over pointers. I can remember the beginning of this century when as a boy I used to walk over the Down and always saw Black Grouse. When the snow was on the ground it was nothing to see ten or a dozen on the top of the barns at Tynings Farm, and also up in the hawthorn bushes which formed the boundary of the Down and Charterhouse.' Keeper Atwell also makes the observation that his grandfather used to let the shooting at so much per head of game killed, and sums up his most interesting letter as follows: 'I will give you some of the reasons I think caused them to die out; first, disease; second people setting fire to the Down in the nesting-season; I remember one season when the keeper found quite a number of

Grey Hens burnt on their nests; third, encroachment of bracken; and fourth, the increase of foxes all over the Mendips.'

### Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

This is a scarce, local and seriously declining breeding resident, with many recent records probably relating to birds released for sporting purposes.

Marshfield is still the main area, the chart below shows how records away from there have slowly declined this century.

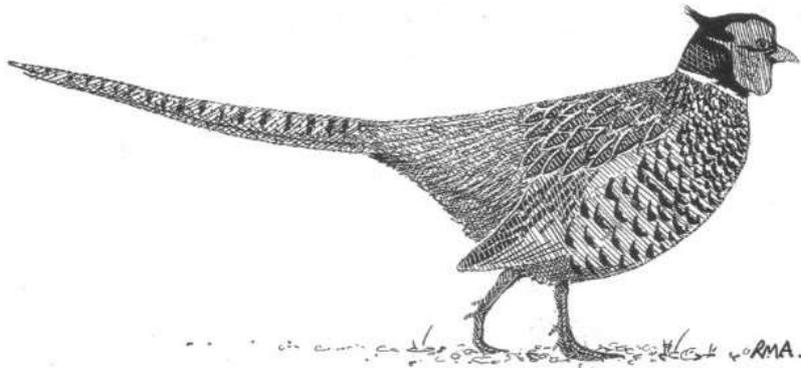


It was much commoner in the past, with Davis (1947) describing it as 'common and widely distributed' while at the end of the 1800's it was described as common.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

This is fairly common but under recorded with very large numbers released for 'sporting' purposes, particularly in the Marshfield/Cotswold escarpment area.

This status does not seem to have changed over time, Davis (1947) described it as 'resident, common in many parts of the district and abundant where preserved' while in the late 1800's it was 'very common' (1899) or 'abundant' (1874)



### Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

This is a scarce summer visitor, and presumed breeder, to the north-east of the area.

The average arrival date is 31st May while the earliest arrival date is 7th May in both 2020, at Weston STW, and 2022, at Compton Dando.

It is rare nationally as a breeding species and the chart below sets out the number of males singing locally each year this century.



To put the above figures into perspective other recent 'Quail years' have involved 18 singing males in 1995, 22 in 1997 and 29 in 1989 (when record numbers were present).

It is also a rare passage migrant with sight records of non-singing birds away from the Marshfield area requiring supporting notes. The only such recent records are from 1986 (BG 16th May), 1991 (Old Sodbury 29th June, Stanton Prior 29th August), 2006 (Severn Beach 16th July), 2008 (Blakes Pool 7th August, Hengrove Park 23rd September), 2009 (Compton Dando on May 17th) and 2018 (Compton Dando 21st May).

Davis (1947) described it as a 'summer resident in fluctuating numbers. Uncommon and though perhaps often overlooked is evidently scarcer than formerly. Some increase noted since 1942, birds being recorded from various places including Abbots Leigh, Hutton, Patchway, Doynton and Pucklechurch and from such Cotswold areas as Marshfield and Cold Ashton. Breeding reported from Stoke Gifford 1944 while there are earlier records of nesting at Chipping Sodbury, Sidcot and South Stoke. Exceptional in winter'.

Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention it has occurred since 1950 at Leigh Woods, Failand, Backwell Hill and Gordano Valley. They also mention it bred at Sidcot in 1876.

Within Bristol itself in the 1800's, Wheeler (1874) gives it as a 'rare summer visitor, Stapleton' while by the end of that century there are also records from Knowle in October 1885 and on Bedminster Down in June 1900.

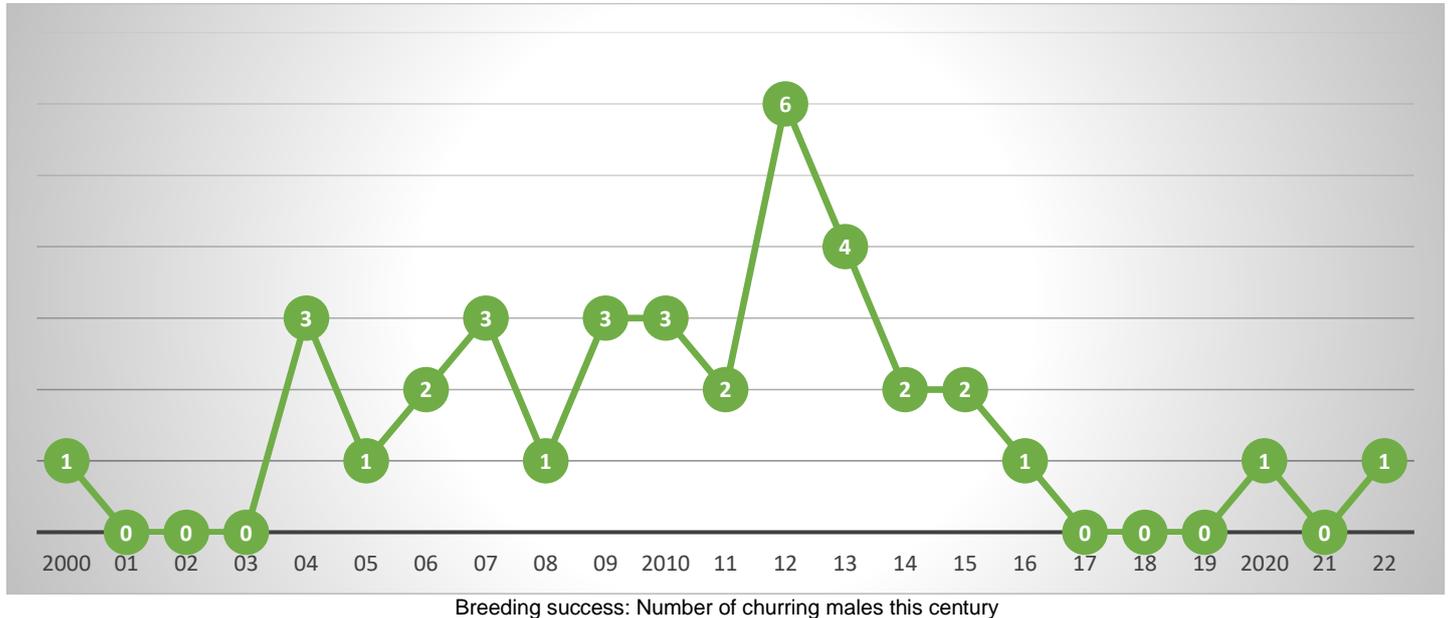
**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*

This is a locally fairly common breeding resident, but large numbers are released for 'sporting' purposes, particularly in the Marshfield/Cotswold escarpment area (eg in 2017 several thousand were released).

At the end of the 1800's it was uncommon, the 1899 assessment mentioning one caught in the streets of Bristol in June 1888, three shot at Frenchay in August 1888 and occurring at Portishead in 1897. The 1932 SBR stated that it 'appears to be absent in the greater part of the district but very frequent on Wrington Warren until at least 1918. Birds spread to Wrington from Mendip about 1885; they then spread to Backwell Hill for two or three years but then disappeared again'. Davis (1947) said it was 'resident, uncommon but probably more widespread than is supposed. Scattered pairs have been reported as breeding in various Mendip localities. Bred Stoke Gifford 1935 and 1936 and doubtless on other occasions. Is said by sportsmen to have been obtained at Horton, Dyrham, Frampton Cotterell and Queen Charlton'

### Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

A scarce passage migrant and presumed regular breeding summer visitor in very small numbers. Breeding is now restricted to sites on the Mendips near the Somerset border and the chart below shows the number of churring males this century.



Birds have been regularly noted on the Mendips since 1995 but prior to that the only local records were in 1986 and 1979 and it was treated as a local rarity between 1987 and 2005.

The last breeding attempt away from Mendip was a pair in Leigh Woods in 1972 (and that was the first breeding attempt in Bristol for 20 years) but the nest was destroyed.

During the 1960's isolated records away of presumed migrants were almost annual. Migrant records now need supporting notes, records since 1972 are as follows:

1973 – a male flushed from the reedbed at CVL on May 19th

1975 – Sneyd Park on June 6th

1977 – Cloud Wood Marshfield on June 3rd, a juvenile ringed on Steep Holm on August 26th

1979 – found exhausted in Keynsham on May 15th, heard at Wraxall on September 8th

1986 – male at Wooscombe Bottom, Compton Dando at dusk on May 30th [1987 ABR]

1996 – a male at Hollow Brook car park, CVL on May 27th

2002 – sat on a post in a Backwell garden on September 8th [addenda in 2014 ABR]

2006 – flushed at Northwick Warth on September 9th

2013 – Worle early morning of August 17th, in a garden at Northwick Warth on September 16th and taken into care, flushed from a Dundry garden on September 18th. Trapped at PWD on September 29th, found below deck on a ship in RPD on October 9th

2017 – seen in flight near Burnett on August 30th

2018 – sitting on a post in a Nailsea garden on September 2nd

2019 – male flushed at Weston STW on May 1st

2021 – at least two females were in the Gordano valley between May 12th and 23rd

Wheeler (1874) notes it as a 'summer visitor, generally distributed in woods' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'summer resident, fairly common' and 1926 SBR 'distribution dependent on suitable woods and bracken-grown slopes; most common west and south-west of Bristol, elsewhere decidedly local'. Davis (1947) says 'summer resident, local but not uncommon in suitable areas. Breeds or has bred at Long Ashton, Leigh Woods, Backwell, Pensford, Cadbury Camp, Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare and elsewhere'.

Kemp (1982) provides a summary of the local population between 1850 and 1982.

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*

A national rarity until 2006 and a local rarity since with just one twentieth century record, briefly at Sand Point on 21st April, 2002 [BBRC\*].

There are six twentieth century records:

1960 – Redcliffe Bay, Portishead on October 2nd [BBRC\*]

**ALPINE SWIFT** *Apus melba*

**S.** One watched by W.A.H. hawking insects, Redcliffe Bay, Portishead, Oct. 2 ; diagnostic features included large size, pale brown upperparts, white belly and broadly forked tail. Record

1967 – off Steep Holm on September 30th [BBRC\*]

1969 – Weston-s-Mare on September 20th [BBRC\*] [SBR]

1993 – over Aust Cliff for ten minutes on April 11th [BBRC\*]

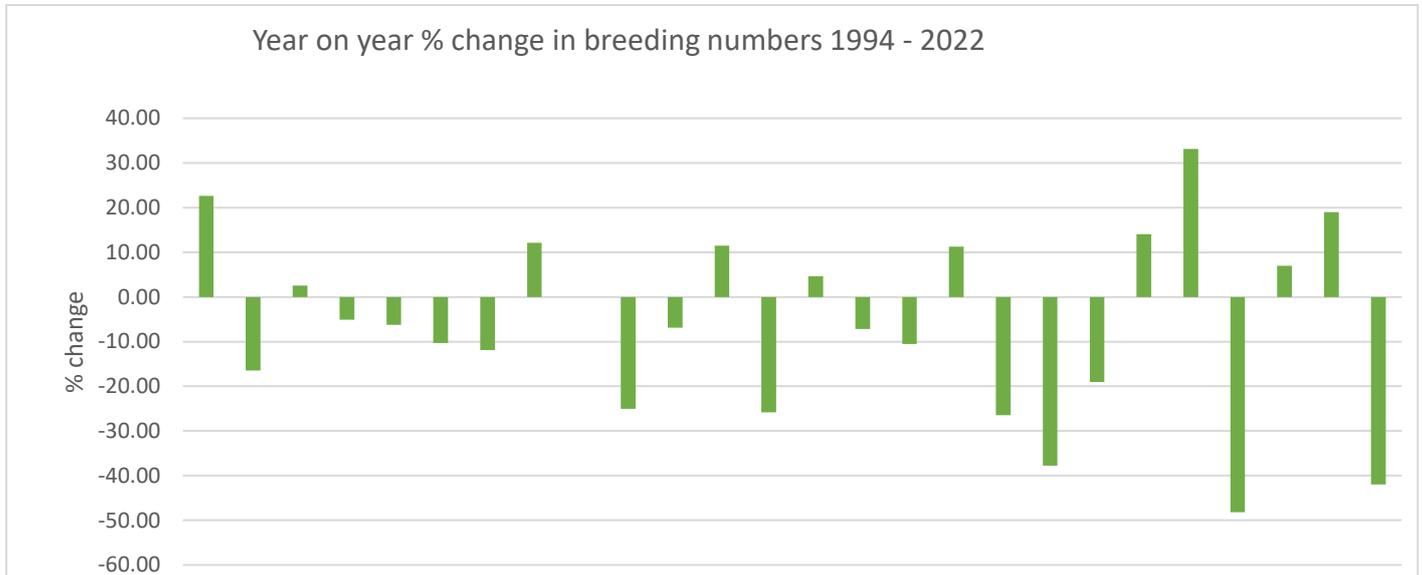
1998 – briefly over CVL on February 18th [BBRC\*]

1999 – Northwick Warth on June 5th [BBRC\*]

**Swift** *Apus apus*

A common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The BBS results show an 90% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest count is of 15,000 at CVL on 2nd June 1981.

The average arrival date is April 17th, five days earlier than given in Bland (1992) while the earliest arrival date is 8th April, 2001, two at CVL. The average departure date is now September 17th, four days earlier than given in Bland (1992) while the latest departures are 15th November, 1974 at Downend and 12th November, 1978 at Littleton on Severn.

The status was similar in the past.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*

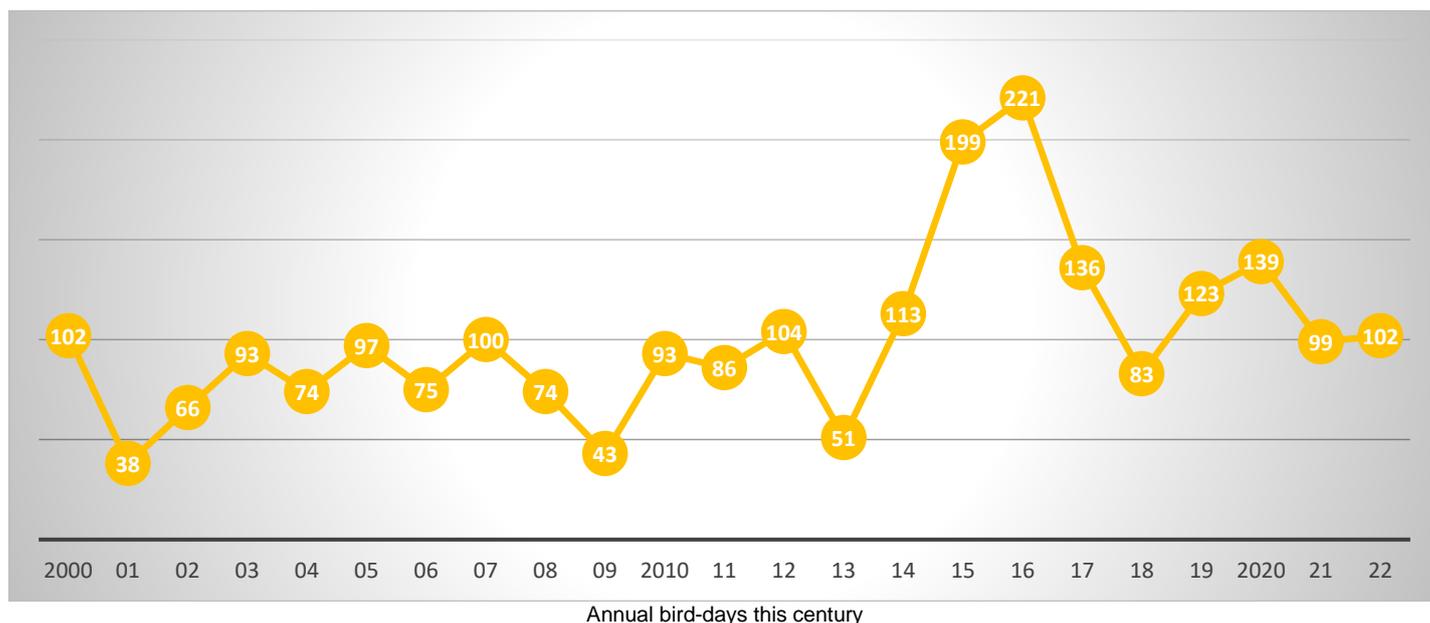
A national rarity with two local record, both this century:

2020, one picked up in Upper Kewstoke on October 22nd was rehabilitated in Somerset and released in Sussex [BBRC]

2022, three at Aust Warth on October 31st [BBRC].

### Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

An uncommon and seriously declining spring migrant and breeding summer visitor in line with national trends. The chart below shows the bird-days each year this century.



It is very scarce after June and recent tracking has shown that most UK adults depart at that time.

The average arrival date is April 13th, a day later than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival of 20th March, 1983, a male at Burrington. The current average departure date is August 14th, substantially earlier than the September 5th mentioned in Bland (1992). The latest departure is 30th September, 2012, a juvenile missing some feathers at New Passage and Severn Beach.



It was commoner in the past with both Wheeler (1874) and Charbonnier (1899) describing it as common while Davis (1947) called it 'common and widely distributed'.

**Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

A national rarity with a few local records from the invasions in the second half of the 1800's.

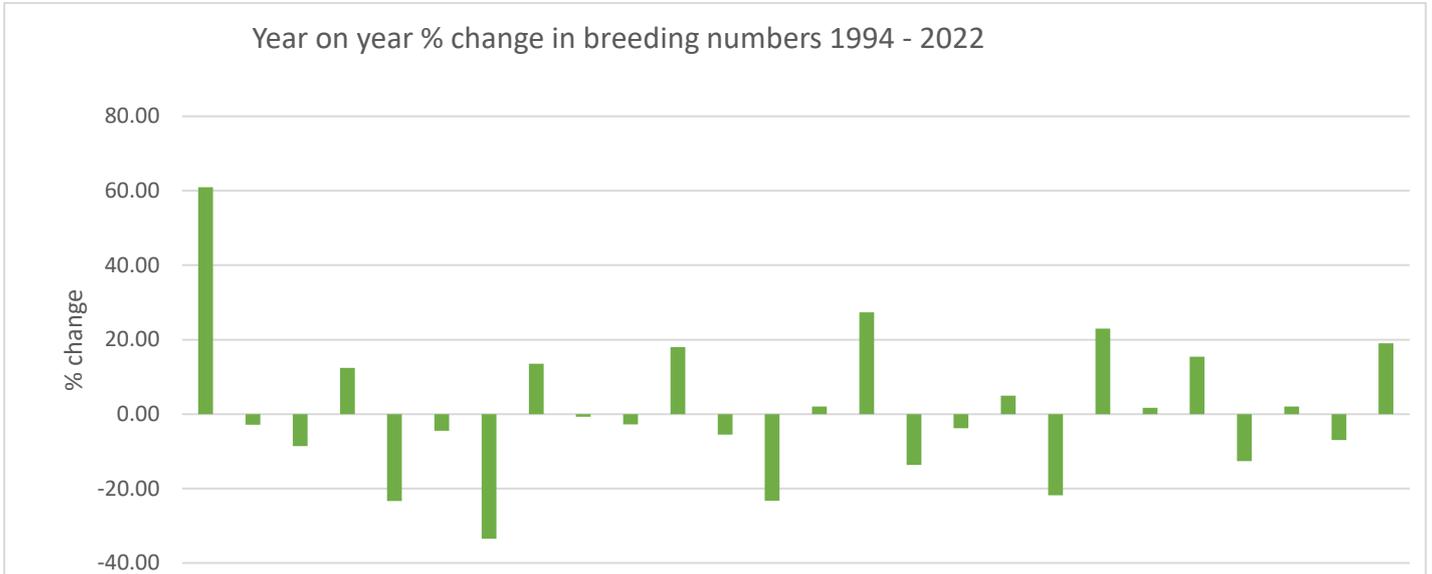
Although Charbonnier (1899) says that 'several were obtained in 1863' I cannot trace any specific records, those mentioned in Davis (1947) are all from the present-day Gloucestershire and page 115 of volume VI of the Bristol Naturalists Proceedings says none occurred 'in our vicinity'.

Davis (1947) says that in the 1888 irruption 'single birds were shot on Kenn Moor and at Portishead and Yate, and two were killed at Hambrook, while a party of 20 was seen at Norton St. Philip. Others were reported from the Weston-super-Mare area'. Volume VI of the BNS Proceedings says, at page 115, that the birds at Yate, Hambrook and Kenn were all shot in July while Blathwayt (1906) says the Norton St. Philip birds were at the end of June. Hayes (2019) mentions eight, possibly ten, at Hambrook on 3rd June, 1888 but does not give a source.

### Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

An introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas with a largest count of 460 at the Floating Harbour on 12th December, 2018.

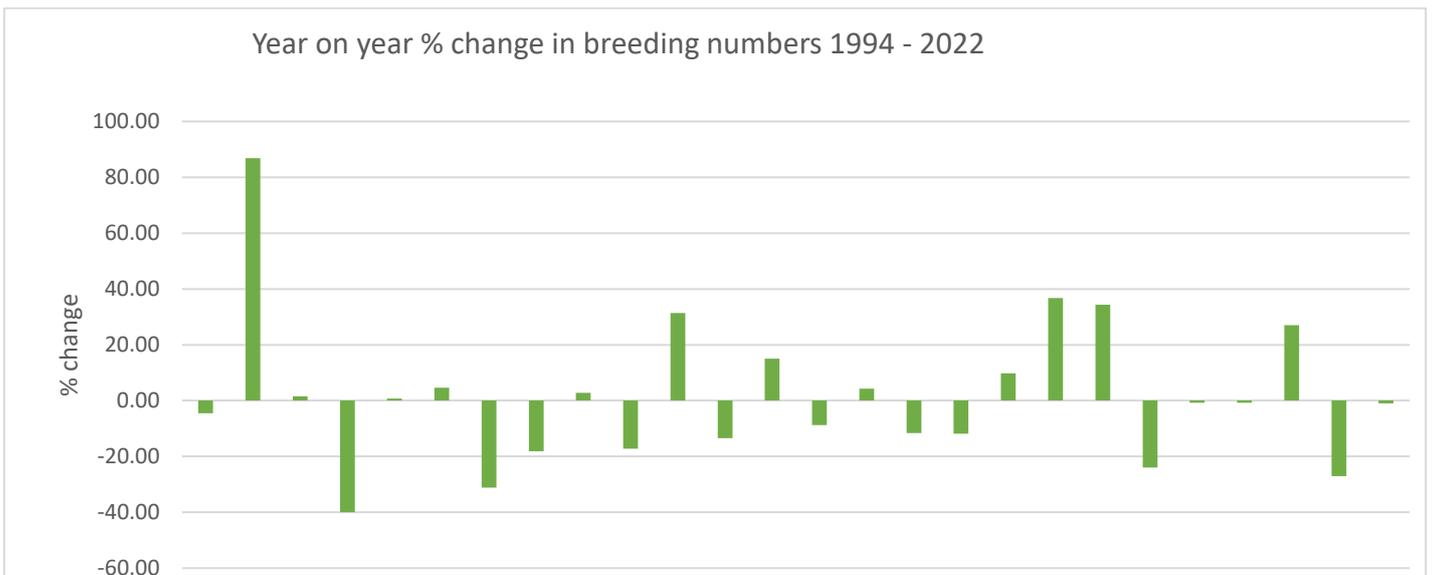
The species shows a 7% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The species was not mentioned in the annual reports until 1992, while Tully (1998) analyses flock size in the 1991/92 winter.

### Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A fairly common breeding resident with a largest count of 800 at OPS on 14th December, 1996. The BBS results show a 27% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.

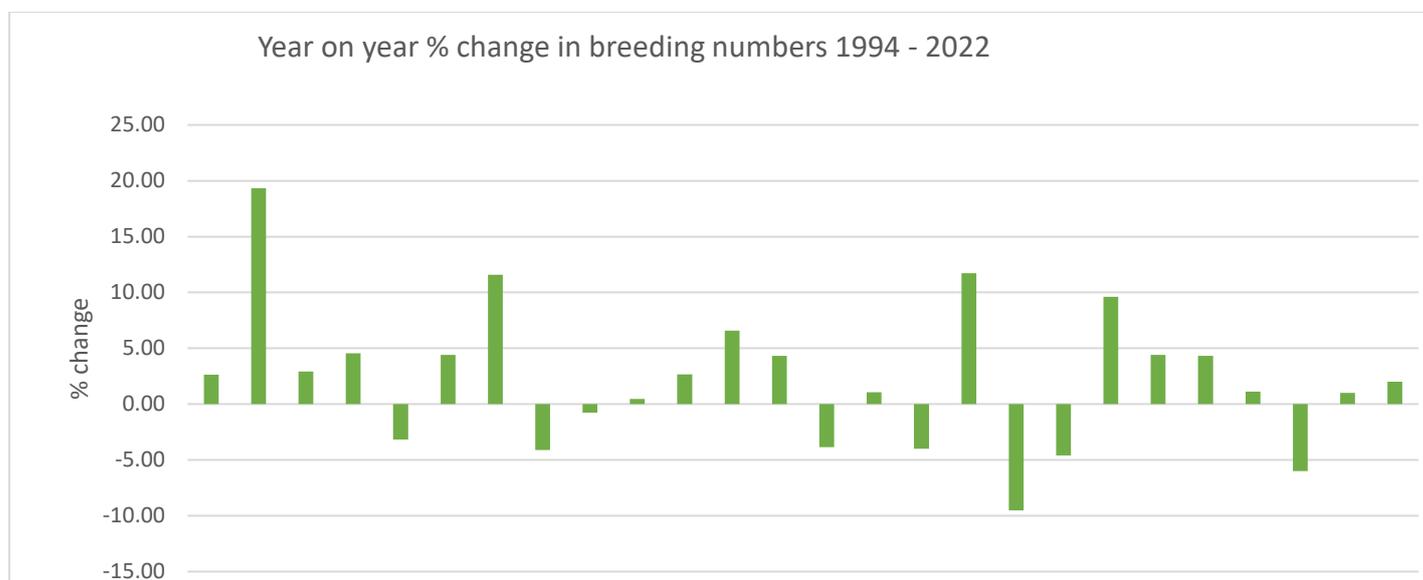


Wheeler (1874) said it was 'generally distributed, woods' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident, not uncommon'. The 1926 SBR said it 'fairly generally distributed wherever suitable old timber occurs, but almost everywhere scarce' while Davis (1947) gives it as 'resident, common and widely distributed but less abundant than Woodpigeon'.

### Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

An abundant breeding resident and migrant, one of our commonest species. The largest counts are of 10,000 moving over Kingswood on 16th November, 2015 (when 6,500 were counted flying south at CVL) and of 5,000 in the Marshfield area on 30th October and 1st November, 2017.

The BBS results show a 71% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) says 'generally distributed, woods and copses' while Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed. Sometimes in very large flocks following winter immigration'

### Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

This was formerly a fairly common summer visitor but it has undergone a steep decline and is now only a scarce passage migrant. Descriptions have been required since 2004 with 22 individuals recorded since then:

2004, in a Keynsham garden from June 22nd until first week of July

2005, in a Weston-super Mare garden from June 4th until 7th with presumed same at Sand Point June 19th

2006, three individuals – OPS on April 22nd, CVL on May 16th, Rangeworthy garden from May 22nd until 26th

2007, two individuals – Marshfield on June 2nd, BG on September 11th

2008, three individuals – Sand Bay on May 29th, Sandford garden in May [2009 ABR], Marshfield on September 12th

2009, two at Cl-Y on June 4th

2011, two individuals – Severn Beach on April 24th, Severn Beach on May 6th

2012, three individuals – Severn Beach on April 23rd, OPS on April 30th, Timsbury garden on June 6th

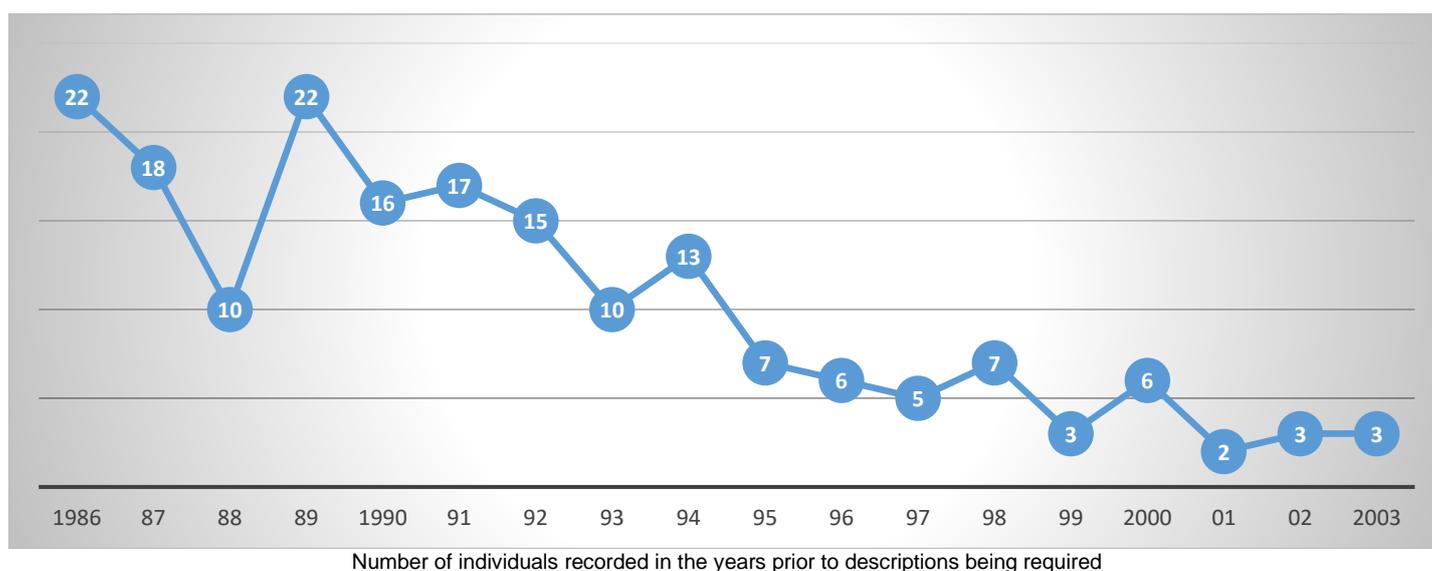
2013, OPS on September 29th

2016, gardens at New Passage from May 11th until 13th

2017, Northwick Warth from October 1st until 7th

2022, two individuals – Wickwar on April 29th, Hewish on October 15th

The table below shows the previous annual numbers since 1986.



The largest count was 61 at Saltford on 17th August, 1969 [SBR].

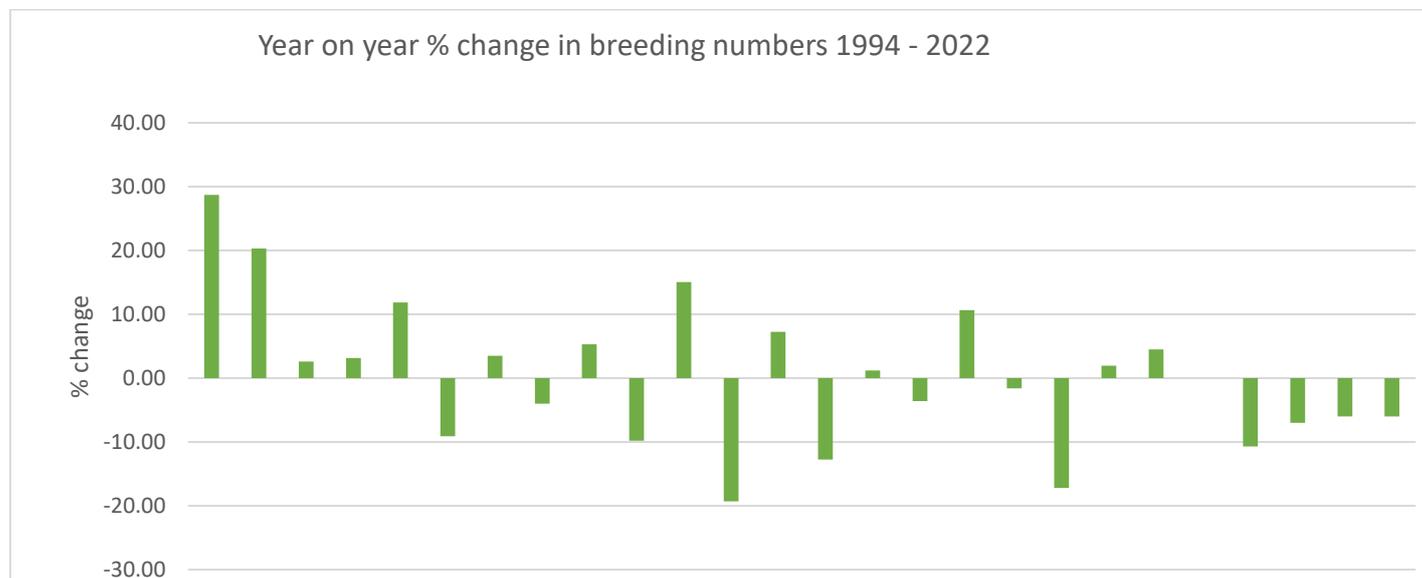
Bland (1992) gave an average arrival date of April 26th and earliest arrival dates of 5th April, 1970 and 10th April, 1988, two at Severn Beach. He also gave an average departure date of September 14th with a latest departure of 17th November, 1962, two with Collared Doves at Avonmouth.

The last locally bred juveniles were seen in 1983 although the last local breeding attempt was in 1991, at Pensford.

Wheeler (1874) says it was a 'summer visitor, not common, Leigh' while Charbonnier (1899) said a 'summer resident, fairly common'. The 1926 SBR says 'unevenly distributed. Common to west and south-west of Bristol and in lower Chew Valley eg at Pensford where numerous. Regular in small numbers to Yeo Valley about Compton Martin and Ubley and the upper Chew Valley below Litton. Frequent Bath district, and seen at Worlebury' while the 1938 SBR said 'widely spread and fairly common. Regular summer migrant in Abbot's Leigh-Failand-Cadbury Camp district'. Davis (1947) says 'summer resident, widely distributed and not uncommon in most parts of the district'. Bland and Dadds (2012) say that in the 1972 breeding atlas breeding was proven in half of the 10km squares surveyed, with a maximum of 56 records.

### Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A common breeding resident with a largest count of 300 at Avonmouth in January and February 1980. The BBS results show a 6% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The first local records were as recent as 1960:

1960 – two, probably a pair, visited a garden in Chipping Sodbury on May 7th [1961 ABR]

1961 – one trapped in a Barbary Dove aviary in same Chipping Sodbury garden on March 25th remained in the vicinity until April 21st when joined by second until 23rd. Up to eight in gardens and cemetery in Shirehampton from August 1st until end of year, with one pair unsuccessfully breeding.

1962 – records from 11 widespread sites with c50 in Avonmouth in July<sup>32</sup>

1963 – three pairs successfully bred and a maximum of 92 at Avonmouth on October 28th

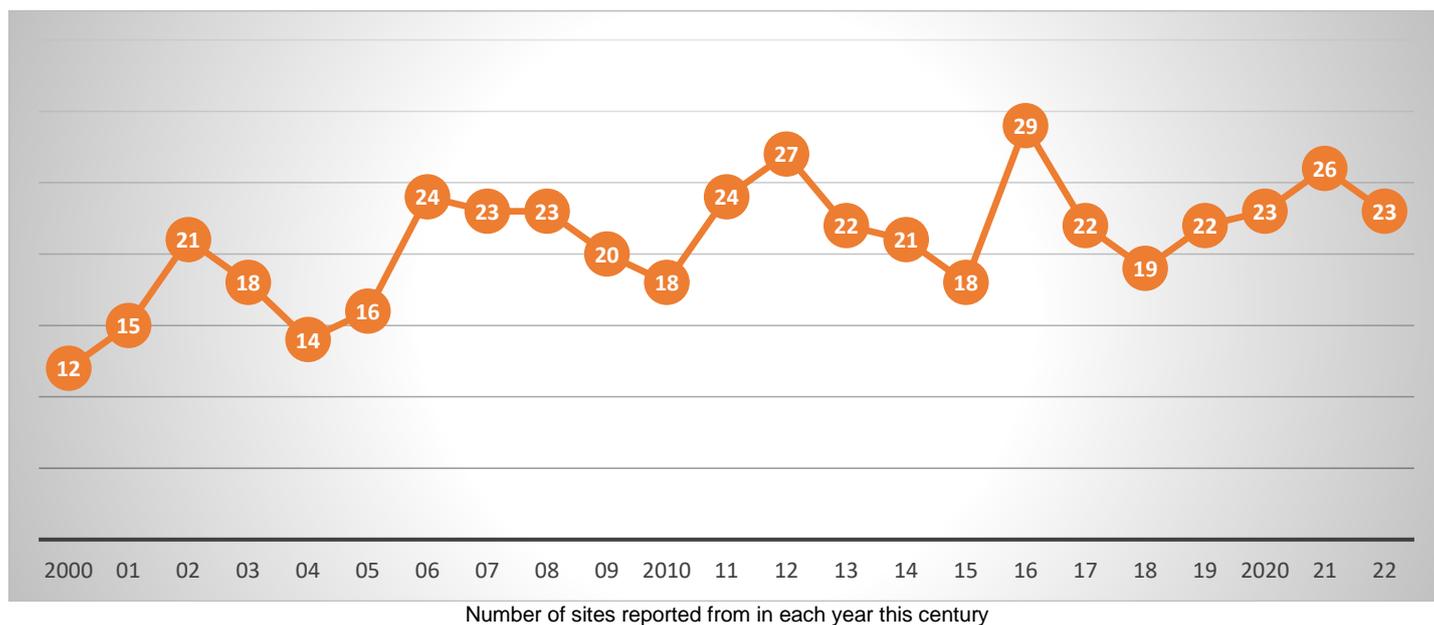
1964 – 35 to 40 pairs probably breeding in Bristol with flocks of 175 – 200 at Avonmouth Docks

1965 – breeding reported from Weston, Clevedon and Bristol. SBR says 'breeding season or breeding records from Pill, Abbots Leigh, Clifton Suspension Bridge, Long Ashton, Clevedon, near Bath, Weston-super-Mare district, Kewstoke and Worlebury

<sup>32</sup> Palmer and Ballance (1968) give the first record for Somerset as 'near Bishop Sutton, 30th April, 1962. In same year appeared on outskirts of Bristol, at Redhill, Kewstoke and Weston-super-Mare'

### Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

An uncommon winter visitor, scarce in summer, and very scarce/scarcely as a breeding species. The table below shows the limited number of sites it is reported from



Wheeler (1874) gives it as 'occasional, Ashton, Stapleton' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, not uncommon in suitable localities, more abundant in winter' and Davis (1947) says 'chiefly a winter visitor occurring not uncommonly in suitable habitats. Scarce as a breeding bird though perhaps overlooked. Has been recorded as nesting at BL'.



**Corncrake** *Crex crex*

This is now a local rarity, with just three twentieth century records:

2002, remains found of a Peregrine kill at St John's church, Bath on October 4th [2008 ABR]

2003, calling at BL on May 27th

2011, calling at Chipping Sodbury common on July 31st

It was much commoner in the past.

Wheeler (1874) says 'common, in fields generally' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'summer resident. Common. Has been found occasionally in mid-winter'. The 1926 SBR states 'scarce and erratic although possibly once more common, perhaps now showing slight tendency to increase. Rather frequent 20 years ago in Bath district'.

Davis (1947) says 'Formerly a widely known summer resident but has greatly decreased since early in the present century and now appears to be scarce over most of the district. No definite breeding information in recent years, though calling has been reported from various localities including Rangeworthy, Saltford, Failand, Nailsea and Tickenham. Noted fairly frequently on autumn passage'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) states 'from 1924 to 1936 heard in six places between Bristol and Weston-super-Mare. Only passage records 1937 - 43. Since then, heard in ten places, most frequently at Saltford and Tickenham. Four passage records'

Specific published records are as follows:

1929 - young bird ringed at Abbots Leigh on July 16th [SBR]

1930 - bred at Abbots Leigh Palmer and Ballance (1968), Failand on May 9th [SBR]

1932 - heard by Beggars Bush Lane, Failand on May 13th, three heard in widely separated fields near Nailsea in May, June and July, a pair in a Wrington garden [SBR]

1933 - one or more round Abbot's Pool during the summer [SBR]

1935 - picked up exhausted at Abbots Leigh on April 12th [SBR]

1938 - killed at Lulsgate Bottom on September 3rd after hitting the windscreen of a car, disturbed from grass near Patchway Common on October 30th

1940 - caught in wire netting at Long Ashton on April 22nd

1941 - shot near Whitchurch on September 2nd

1942 - in a wheat field at Stoke Gifford on August 29th, in a barley crop above Dyrham Wood on September 1st

1943 - found dead at Burnett on August 27th

1945 - one heard at Tickenham on May 7th

1946 - heard at Rangeworthy on several dates in June

1947 - injured bird caught at Abbots Leigh on May 3rd, caught by a cat at Clifton Hill on June 13th, heard by R Avon in St Anne's Park on June 13th and 26th, heard in Saltford on June 22nd<sup>33</sup>. shot at Dyrham in the autumn

1948 - two calling birds, a mile apart, in the Saltford area, one from June 4th until 19th and the other from June 14th until July 15th [SBR], calling heard at Hinton Blewitt and Nempnett in the second half of July

1949 - seen and heard at BL on May 7th, calling at Nempnett in June but no evidence of breeding

1950 - frequently heard at Tickenham in May and June, birds in corn crops at Little Stoke on August 16th and 31st, at Dyrham on August 31st

1951 - frequently heard at Abbots Leigh in May, in corn crop at Little Stoke in early September, shot at BL on October 27th

1952 - Westerleigh on August 18th and Yate on September 14th

1953 - calling at Tickenham on May 31st, both ends of BL on June 5th, dead at Patchway on October 15th. SBR also mentions calling heard at Sidcot

1955 - caught in market garden in Patchway on April 11th, calling at Saltford on May 12th, seen in Long Ashton on May 19th, remains found on tideline near Pill on May 23rd

1956 - calling at Saltford on May 25th, flushed at Wrington on September 1st

1957 - flushed at Long Ashton on April 25th, one calling at Compton Martin from June 9th was killed by mower on 26<sup>th</sup>

1961 - a slightly injured bird on roadside in Clapton-in-Gordano on October 5th

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<sup>33</sup> SBR gives date as 27th

- 1962 – two near Butcombe on May 10th, Sand Point on May 13th, present in Saltford area from June until August<sup>34</sup>, calling at Bitton on September 1st
- 1963 – heard at Saltford on several dates in June
- 1964 – calling at Middle Hope<sup>35</sup> on May 10th
- 1965 – flushed at CVL on October 10th [1984 ABR]
- 1966 – picked up dead on Lyncombe Hill near Sandford on May 11th
- 1970 – calling on Kenn Moor on June 1st
- 1978 – killed by a dog on a farm in Flax Bourton in early June
- 1985 – two at Hinton Charterhouse on June 19th [1986 ABR]
- 1989 – heard at Marshfield on June 21st
- 1990 – beside the B3128 at Wraxall Hill on June 28th

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<sup>34</sup> SBR gives location as ‘between Kelston and Swineford and dates as ‘heard calling early June until Sept 1 and bird actually seen July 31 and Aug 28’

<sup>35</sup> SBR gives the site as Sand Point

**Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*

A local rarity with 20 individuals recorded this century:

2000, CVL on September 6th

2001, two individuals – an exhausted adult found in Portishead in early May was taken into care before being released at CVL on 12th, a juvenile at CVL from August 3rd until 23rd

2003, two individuals – CVL from August 17th until September 4th and a juvenile from September 10th until 27th

2004, CVL from August 23rd until September 24th

2005, a juvenile at CVL on September 3rd

2007, CVL on August 8th

2008, CVL on October 14th

2009, CVL on September 26th and again on October 1st

2012, PWD from August 30th until September 3rd

2013, four individuals at CVL – two on August 14th and 15th with one until 24th, an adult from August 28th until September 9th with two on August 28th and September 4th

2014, two individuals – an adult at Weston STW on July 19th and 20th, a juvenile/first-winter trapped at CVL on September 25th

2016, two individuals at CVL – September 26th and another from October 9th until 26th

2018, a ringed bird at CVL from October 9th until 20th

A total of 49 individuals were recorded in the second half of the twentieth century:

1961 – CVL on October 28th, probably present on 13th and seen again and heard on November 5th

**SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana*

S. One flushed at close range from *Equisetum* bed, Chew Valley res., Oct. 28, and seen under excellent conditions, by R.S.H. who refers to its small size; short bill; medium brown upper-parts with conspicuous patterning and clear, unstriped buffish yellow under-tail coverts. Same observer states that the bird was probably present on Oct. 13, and J.A.McG. records that on Nov. 5 he had a very brief view and heard the characteristic and sustained 'kick' or 'wit' calls close to the same spot.

1963 – an immature at CVL from August 18th until 24th with juveniles ringed on 24th and 25th, an adult there from 24th until 31st<sup>36</sup> with at least three birds present at the end of August. One at CVL on October 10th

1964 – an unringed adult at CVL on August 3rd and 9th, CVL on December 31st

1965 – CVL on July 22nd [SBR], July 25th, August 17th and 22nd, October 24th, November 7th [SBR], 14th and December 4th

1967 – CVL on September 13th, Kenn Estuary on December 21st

1968 – CVL on April 15th, CVL on July 17th, two at CVL from August 17th until 19th [all SBR]

1969 – CVL on September 5th

1971 – CVL from September 4th until 16th, October 3rd and November 3rd [SBR]

1972 – CVL on February 17th

1973 – CVL on September 26th and October 27th

1975 – CVL on July 17th

1977 – CVL on August 29th with probably the same trapped on September 13th

1983 – three at CVL on September 4th (of which two were trapped and ringed) with two until 7th and one until 20th

1984 – CVL from November 17th until 20th

<sup>36</sup> The adult was filmed by the BBC, see SBR

1985 – calling at the Kenn Estuary on December 18th

1986 – CVL on October 28th<sup>37</sup>

1987 – CVL on September 27th and 28th<sup>38</sup>

1988 – CVL on September 10th

1989 – calling at CVL on June 10th

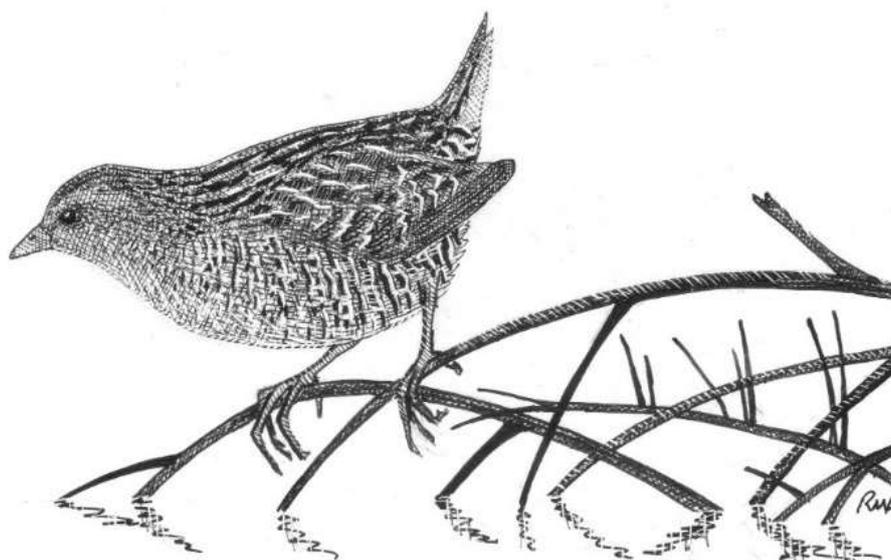
1990 – Wains Hill on November 11th and December 30th

1995 – CVL on August 13th, 16th, 17th and 18th (two), 19th, 20th and 22nd (two), 21st (three), CVL from September 5th until 22nd with two between 7th and 15th

1996 – BL on September 12th with two there from 13th until 15th

1998 – CVL from August 27th until September 3rd, CVL from October 11th until 13th with two on 12th, probably a different two at CVL from October 13th until 15th, CVL from October 18th until 23rd, CVL from November 21st until 25th

The species was commoner in the 1800's. Wheeler (1874) gave it as 'rare, Ashton and Stapleton' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'used to be common at Weston-super-Mare and is still often shot there'. Davis (1947) says 'not reported in recent years but perhaps an overlooked summer-resident or passage-migrant. Appears to have been not uncommon formerly in the Weston-super-Mare area where five were killed during the latter half of December 1890 and remarks by the Rev M A Mathew on young broods in August suggest used to occur fairly frequently as a breeding species there. Obtained on passage at Bath October 1881, Patchway October 1891 and Nailsea September 1904'. Hayes (2019) also mentions one obtained at Stoke Bridge in Stoke Gifford in September 1891.



<sup>37</sup> Also, a Crake sp flushed from spartina at Kenn Estuary on November 20th, given as Spotted in Rose (1992)

<sup>38</sup> Also, a Crake sp at BL on March 14th and 15th

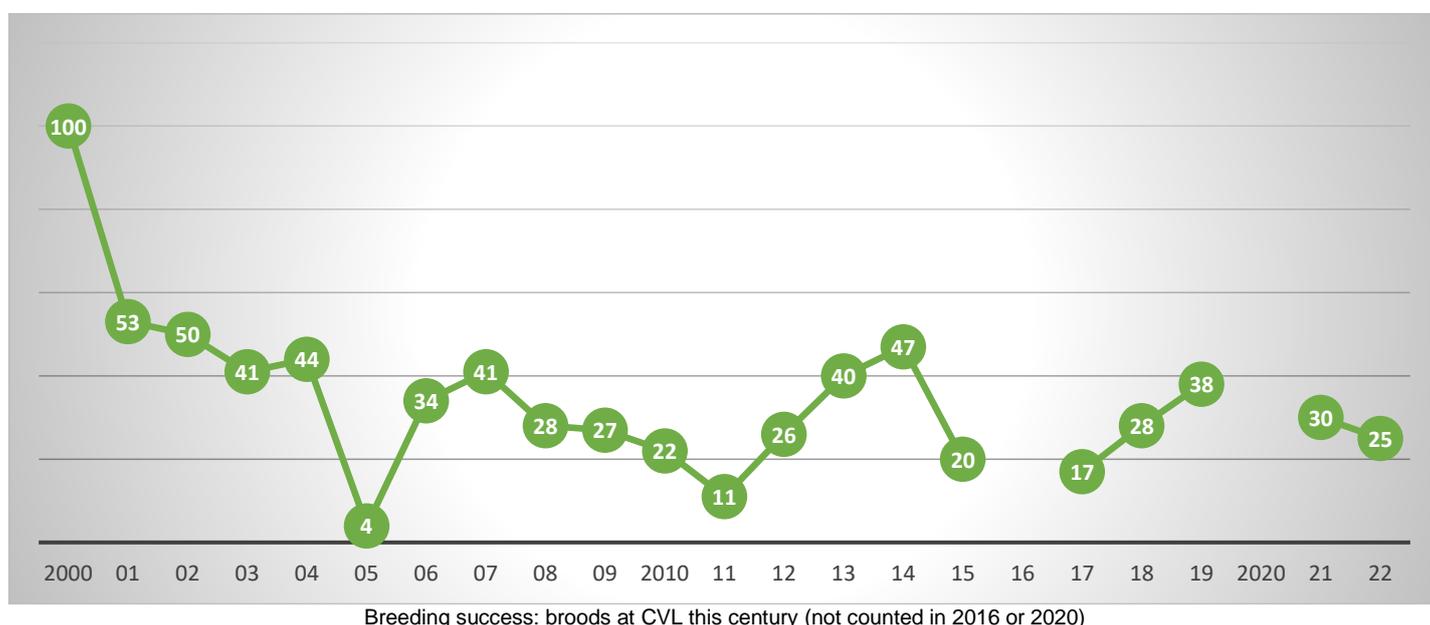
**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

A fairly common breeding resident. Seen in large numbers at the reservoirs in late summer/autumn with a largest count of 245 at CVL in September 2003.

Wheeler (1874) says 'common, Ashton, Stapleton, Leigh, Avonmouth, Henbury', similar to Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

A fairly common and widespread breeding resident, abundant in the autumn at the main reservoirs with largest counts of '3,000 to 4,000' at CVL on 13th and 21st February, 1960 [1960 ABR], or 4,000 at CVL on 21st February, 1960 [SBR] or 5,000 at CVL in 1960 [2002 ABR], and more recently 4,440 at CVL in October 2019.



Wheeler (1874) describes it as 'rare, near Clevedon' but Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, not uncommon in certain localities'. The 1937 SBR said 'occurs at BL and BG. At BL it is common through most of the year and at times in winter in very large numbers. At BG it probably occurs in every month but is less common from April-June while from July until November a considerable movement occurs and the largest numbers are present at this time'. According to Davis (1947) it was 'resident, breeds at most suitable waters. Also, an abundant winter visitor occurring regularly in large numbers at the reservoirs. Occasional on the coast during hard frosts'.

**Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla*

A National rarity, the only confirmed local record is of a female killed at Weston-super-Mare in September 1840 mentioned in Davis (1947). This record comes from Yarrell volume 3 page 154;

in Suffolk (Tr. Linn. Soc. xv. p. 48). In September, 1840, Mr. Francis Edwards, of Brislington, near Bristol, sent up, for the use of this work, an adult female of this species killed on some marshy ground near Weston-super-mare; and two

*Charbonnier (1899) mentions a record from Weston-super-Mare in October 1865, attributed 'British Birds, Yarrell', but not the 1840 record from Yarrell. I can find no details of this 1865 record in Yarrell, other than a mention of 'two more have occurred in Somersetshire since 1869' but Palmer and Ballance (1968) mentions two records from Weston but does not give any dates, other than they were sometime between 1830 and 1912.*

**Little Crake** *Porzana parva*

A National rarity with two local records, both in the twentieth century:

1961 – CVL on November 5th [BBRC]

**LITTLE CRAKE** *Porzana parva*

**S.** A small crake seen twice by M.A.W. at Chew Valley reservoir, Nov. 5, was identified as this species. Field notes: very small size (no larger than Starling); head, neck and under-parts blue-black; under tail dark with some white at sides; short bill, with red spot; and dark legs. Record confirmed by *Brit. Birds Rare Birds Committee*.

1967 – CVL on May 10th [BBRC]

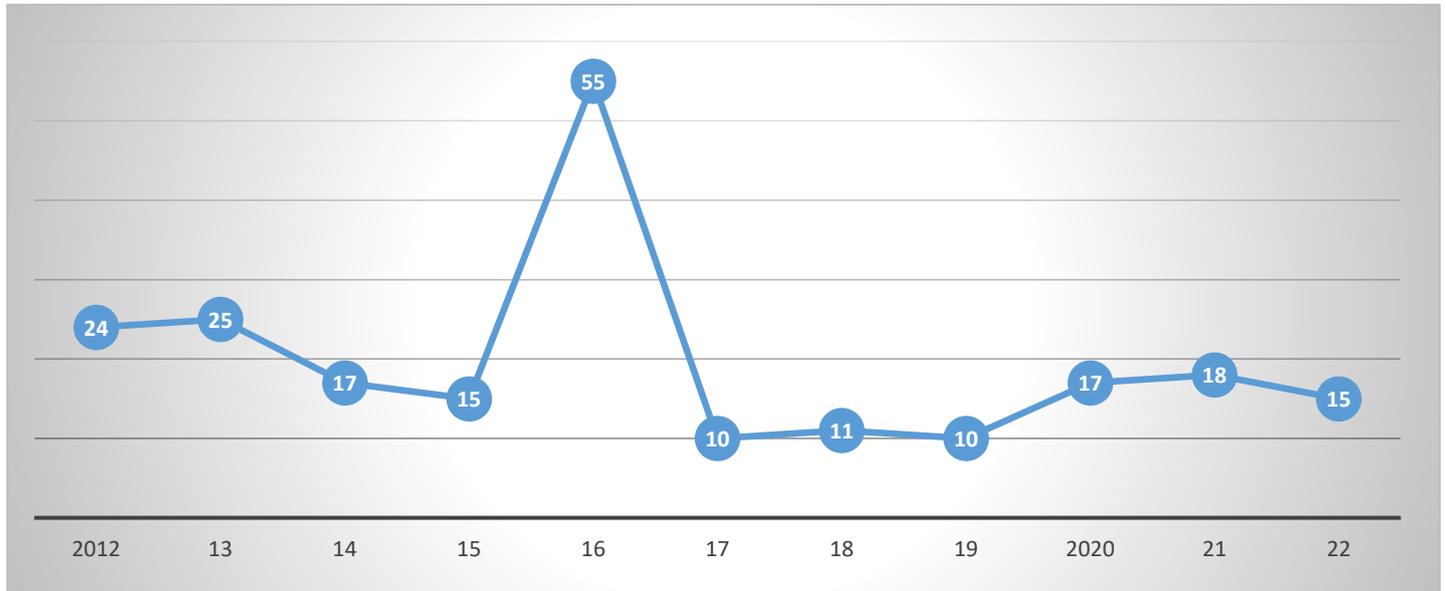
**LITTLE CRAKE** *Porzana parva*

**S.** One, Chew Valley res., May 10, identified by DW at distance of ten feet. Details supplied include: dark grey head, breast and unbarred flanks, dark brown and grey upperparts with paler silver-grey marks, no white or buff beneath tail which was hardly longer than wings. The total impression was of a very dark bird. Record, third for district, accepted by *Brit. Birds Rarities Committee*.

## Crane *Grus grus*

A local rarity if considered to be of wild origin.

However, between 2010 and 2015 a total of 93 individuals from German stock were hand reared at Slimbridge and released on the Somerset Levels as part of the Great Crane Project (GCP). Birds from the project were first recorded locally in 2011. Flocks regularly wander from the release site and breeding occurred in 2015 and 2016. Most of the 'wild bred' young are unringed, so it is not possible to distinguish GCP birds from those that have wandered from further afield, but 'project birds' are thought to vastly outnumber any considered to be of wild origin.



Individuals from GCP seen locally each year

Older records, considered to be of wild origin, are as follows:

- 1971 – flying past Wain's Hill before soaring over the Old Church on March 31st [BBRC\*]
- 1993 – two *Grus sp* seen briefly circling low over field near Burnett on March 29th
- 2000 – two over Severn Beach on January 3rd
- 2003 – five adults at Tortworth from February 25th until March 2nd
- 2008 – over OPS on May 4th
- 2010 – past Aust Warth on March 2nd
- 2011 – over Clevedon on February 11th
- 2012 – over Bishopston on April 2nd
- 2014 – an unringed adult at New Passage on September 22nd
- 2016 – two unringed adults at Northwick Warth on October 7th

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A 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. The largest count is of 180 at CVL on 18th September, 2009

Very scarce in the Estuary.

Wheeler (1874) says 'occasional, on the Avon' but Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, common, breeds regularly' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common, breeding wherever there are suitable waters. Visits the reservoirs in considerable numbers in autumn'

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*

A National rarity with one local record of a returning individual:

1963 – BL on December 22nd [1964 ABR] [BBRC] [British Birds v58 p305 – 309]

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** *Podilymbus podiceps*

**S.** One seen and filmed in colour, Blagdon res., Dec. 22, 1963 by H.A.T.: seen later in day by R.J.P. who has supplied detailed notes which stress the heavy, stubby bill and larger size than Little Grebe—*c.* two-thirds size of accompanying Coot—and these features are confirmed by the film. Record, first for Europe, accepted by *Brit. Birds* Rarities Committee.

1965 – an adult at CVL from August 17th until October 23rd, returning there in 1966 on May 15th and from July 22nd until November 2nd<sup>39</sup>, returning there again in 1967 from May 14th until October 2nd. In 1968 it was at BL from May 14th until June 6th and at CVL on 4th and 5th July [BBRC]<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Article in *British Birds* vol 60 page 295-299

<sup>40</sup> The 1968 BBRC report suggests that only one bird was involved over all five years

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

A local rarity with five records this century:

2002 – a first-winter at CVL from November 23rd until December 21st

2004 – CVL from November 1st until 10th

2006 – CVL on December 7th

2010 – on the River Avon at Sea Mills on November 28th

2012 – an adult at CVL on September 7th and 8th

A total of 32 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century, with records almost annual between 1979 and 1995.

1914 – shot at BL in December mentioned in Davis (1947)

1937 – BG on February 21st<sup>41</sup>

1939 – BG on October 5th [*British Birds vol 33 page 166*]

1947 – BL from February 10th until 16th, R Avon at Saltford on February 23rd and March 9th

1948 – BL on April 25th

1956 – CVL on March 18th

1961 – CVL on April 5th

1965 – CVL on August 4th

1966 – CVL on March 27th

1968 – an adult at CVL on August 24th

1972 – CVL on March 28th

1979 – CVL from February 17th until March 4th, BG from February 21st until March 31st, BL on February 23rd joined by a second on 25th, until April 10th with one until 26th, CVL on October 6th and November 23rd

1981 – a juvenile at BG on September 22nd and one at CVL from December 28th until 1st January, 1982

1982 – a second bird at CVL from January 1st until 7th, with one there from 30th until April 20th

1983 – an adult at CVL from December 23rd until 15th January, 1984

1985 – BG on February 16th

1986 – CVL on March 22nd, a juvenile at CVL on September 1st

1988 – a juvenile at CVL from October 30th until November 20th

1990 – an adult at CVL on April 28th

1991 – a first-winter at CVL from November 9th until 30th then moved to BL from December 1st until 29th

1992 – an adult at CVL intermittently between April 17th and August 25th then moved to BL until December 20th when it returned to CVL until 2nd April, 1993, a juvenile at CVL on September 12th and 13th then moved to BL where it remained until November 22nd

1994 – Woodspring Bay on February 2nd

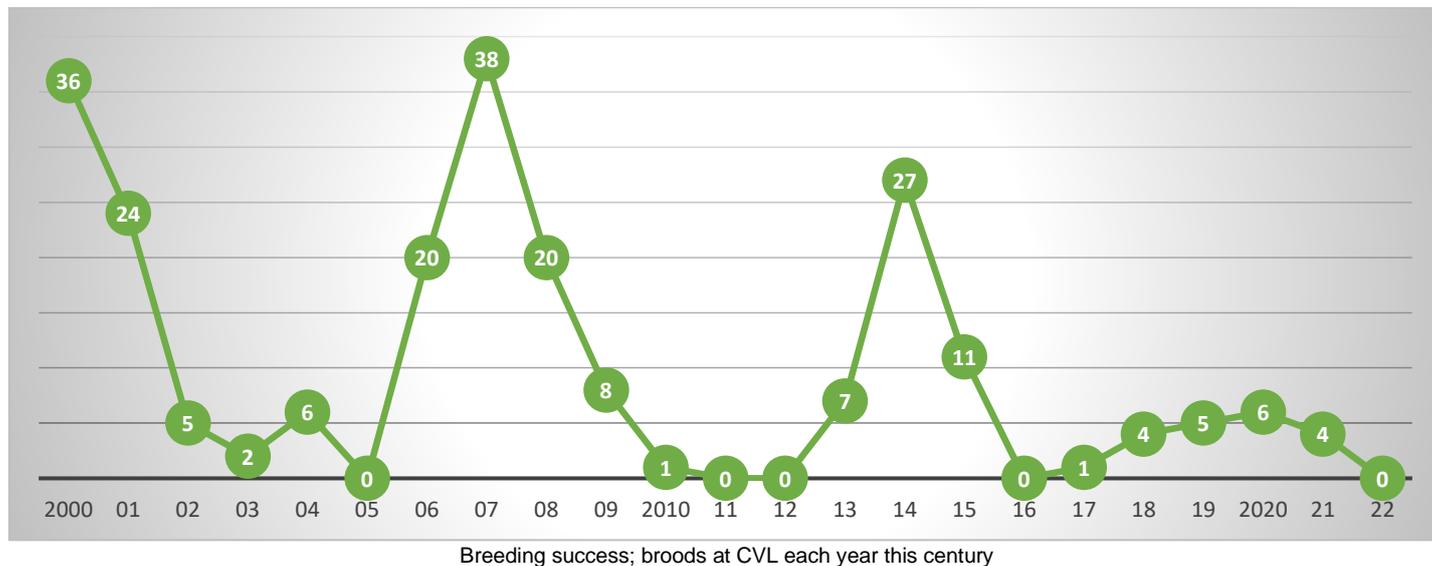
1995 – BG from April 8th until 30th, a first-winter at CVL on November 12th

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<sup>41</sup> See British Birds vol 30 page 370

### Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

An uncommon and highly localised breeding resident, but occurs commonly at the reservoirs, particularly during the autumn moult/passage with a largest count of 690 at CVL in October 2000 and August 2008.



Scarce elsewhere, including the Estuary.

Wheeler (1874) did not include the species while Charbonnier (1899) says 'occurred at BG in April 1897'. However, Davis (1947) says 'resident, known as a breeding species chiefly from BL where several pairs have nested almost annually since 1907<sup>42</sup> (12 pairs reported 1931). Has also bred at Litton frequently since 1925, at BG, Chew Magna, and at Tortworth Court Lake 1934-1936. Common on the larger reservoirs at all seasons but most plentiful in spring and autumn. Occasional elsewhere. Some birds in summer are evidently non-breeders'.

<sup>42</sup> Although British Birds vol 4 page 368 suggests first breeding was two pairs in 1910

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

A local rarity with 32 individuals recorded this century:

2000, three individuals – Severn Beach on April 17th, CVL from June 11th until October 14th, CVL from December 27th until 6th January, 2001

2003 – CVL from April 20th until May 18th

2004 – BG on December 19th [2005 ABR]

2005 – CVL from December 20th until 9th February, 2006

2007 – two first-winters at BL on October 4th

2008, two individuals – BL on November 21st, an adult at CVL from November 28th until 30th

2010, three individuals – BG from January 13th until 15th [dates corrected in 2011 ABR], PW on February 21st drifted to the mouth of Portishead marina, CVL on November 10th

2011 – BL from November 11th until 3rd February, 2012

2012, two individuals – CVL on January 8th, CVL on October 15th

2013, three individuals – BL from February 28th until March 5th, a summer plumaged pair at BG on April 9th

2014 – CVL on February 1st

2015 – CVL on April 5th

2016, three individuals – Pilning Wetland from January 10th until 12th, BG on January 20th, CVL on March 29th and 30th

2017 – CVL on January 13th

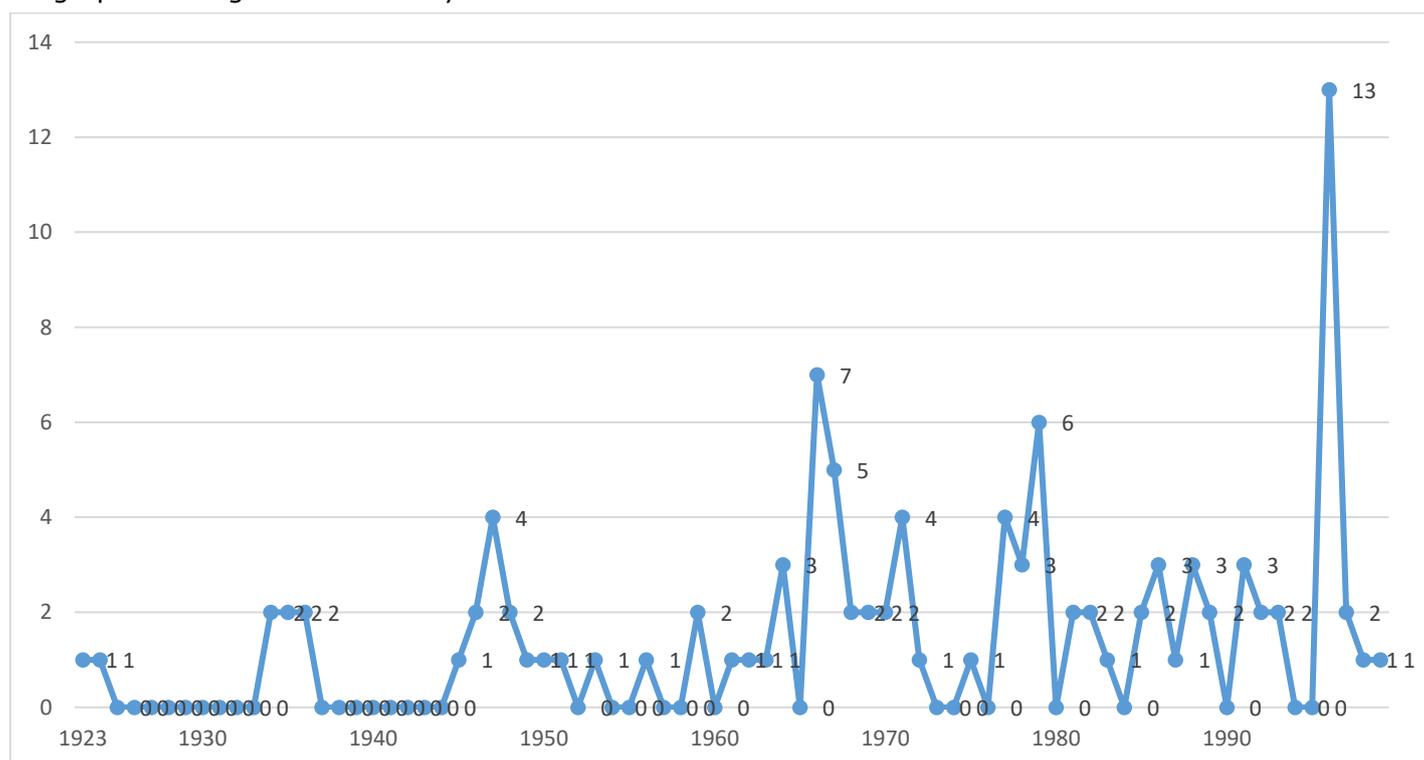
2018 – CVL on November 18th,

2018/19 – CVL from December 29th until 4th January, 2019

2020, three individuals – one at CVL on March 13th and at BL on 14th, BL on November 4th, CVL on November 6th,

2020/21 – one at CVL from December 9th was joined by a second from 25th and both remained until 5th April 2021

Over 100 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century, the full details are given In Appendix 1 but the graph below gives a summary:



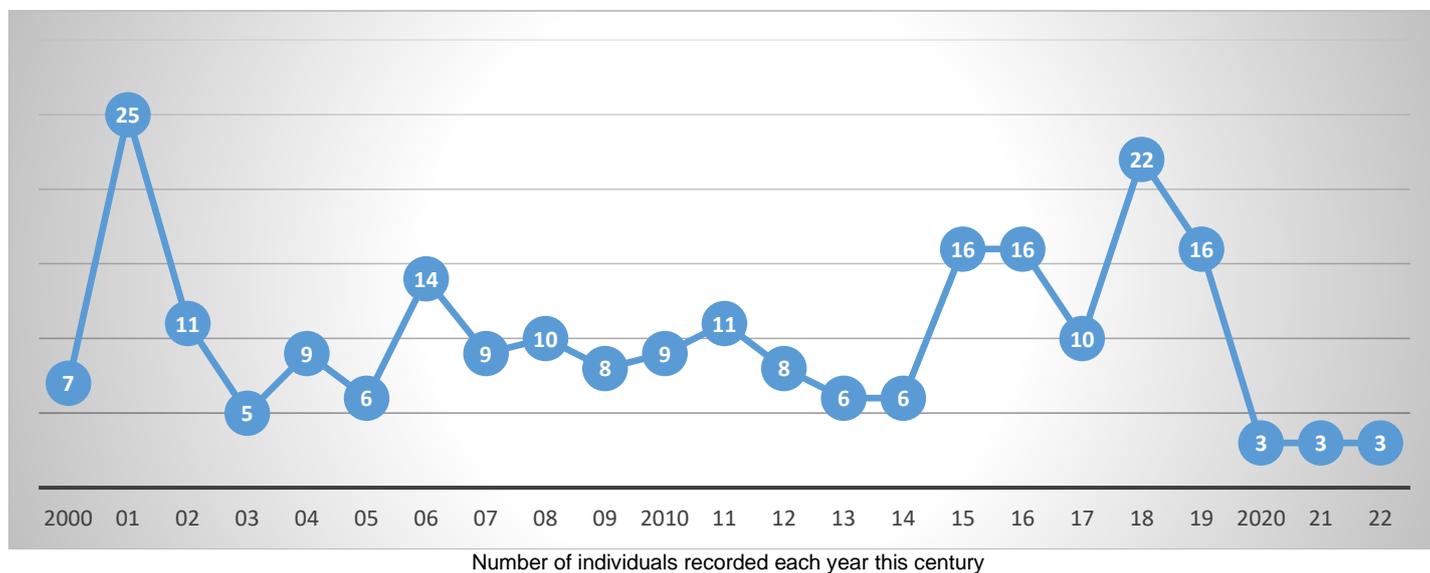


The only nineteenth century records I can find are both from BG, in January 1885, mentioned in Balthwayt (1906) and 1890 mentioned in Charbonnier (1899).

### **Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

An uncommon passage migrant which wintered for the first time in 1998/99 and is becoming increasingly frequent in the winter. Almost always at freshwater sites and rare in the Estuary.

The largest count is of nine at CVL on 17th November, 2018, while prior to 2008 descriptions were required for records away from the reservoirs.



A pair bred at CVL in 1998 but the two young failed to survive, see Vinicombe (2008b).

Davis (1947) says a 'winter visitor, little known formerly but has occurred regularly at the reservoirs since 1930. Reported chiefly from BG where first observed 1924<sup>43</sup> and where it has appeared most years since. Also recorded frequently from BL 1938-1946. Sometimes seen well into spring and has been noted in summer'.

<sup>43</sup> September 19th, 20th, 29th and October 4th – see British Birds vol 18 page 268

**Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

A local rarity with seven records this century:

2006 – Northwick Warth on April 20th

2008 – Cl-Y on April 6th

2011 – Cl-Y on April 10th

2013 – Northwick Warth on March 23rd, a ringed bird at OPS on 29th

2018 – Northwick Warth on April 15th

2020 – Weston STW on April 24th

There are nine twentieth century records:

1925 – two Woodspring Bay on December 3rd [SBR]

1949 – Sandford Hill on April 2nd

1959 – CVL on October 3rd [SBR]

1968 – flushed from a stony field near edge of Weston-super-Mare airfield on September 11th and seen again in the evening

1988 – Yeo Estuary on April 30th

1989 – Yeo Estuary on June 18th, Middle Hope on September 2nd

1991 – at dawn on April 28th at the Kenn Estuary

1999 – New Passage on July 27th

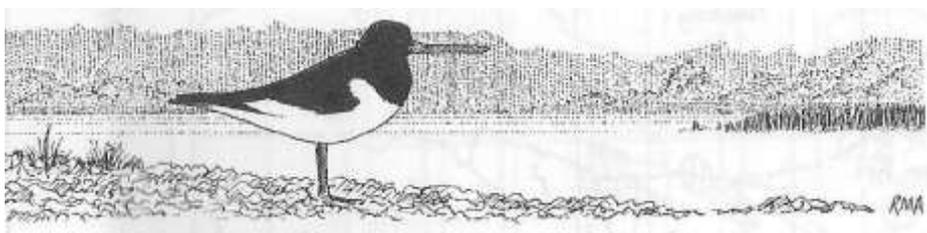
Older records are hard to pin down. Charbonnier (1899) said it had occurred at Avonmouth and on the Mendips while Davis (1947) says 'Now very scarce, but formerly regarded as a not infrequent visitor to the Mendip Hills. Recorded in the past as having been seen or obtained at Avonmouth'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) states 'Mathew had seen single birds near Radstock in turnip fields in August''

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

A fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor with largest counts of 330 at Axe Estuary on 16th October, 2012.

It is also a scarce breeder.

Wheeler (1874) says 'occasionally, banks of Severn' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, common on the Severn coast, nests on Denny Isle'. Davis (1947) gives it as 'resident on the coast, most birds in summer being evidently non-breeders. Usually met with in small parties. Nesting has been reported from Woodspring, also from Steep Holm and Denny Isle. Scarce inland but odd birds occasionally visit the reservoirs'.



**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

A local rarity with four records this century:

2012 – an adult male at CVL on April 10th [BBRC]

2017 – a female at Pilning Wetlands from May 7th until 9th

2021 – a pair at Pilning from June 25th until July 1st

2022 – three at CVL on May 29th

There are also two twentieth century records:

1965 – an adult and immature at CVL from May 22nd<sup>44</sup> until 25th [BBRC]

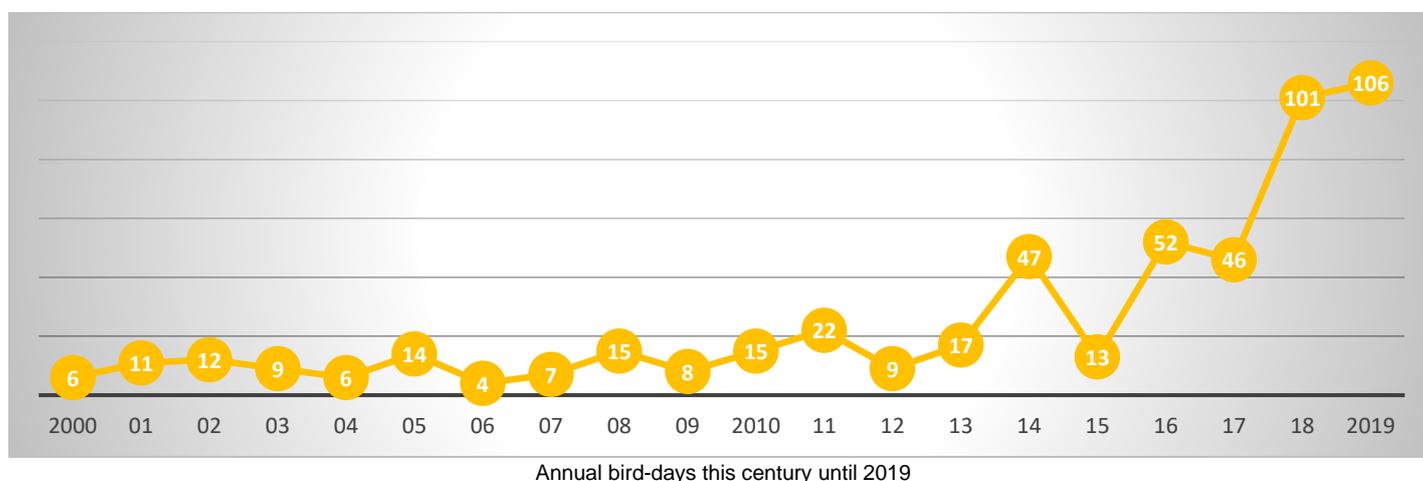
1997 – OPS on May 17th [BBRC]

There is one older record, Davis (1947) says 'very rare vagrant. One was shot many years ago near Thornbury (cf Dillwyn, Fauna and Flora of Swansea, 1848, p.8)'

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

An uncommon but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant that is scarce inland.

The number of bird-days has increased significantly in recent years, as the graph below shows. The figures for 2020, 2021 and 2022 would be significantly higher, but not directly comparable, as there were sizeable wintering flocks and several pairs present during the summer.



The largest count is of 28 in January, 2020 at Cl-Y, where a double figure flock wintered.

It is rare nationally as a breeding species but at least one pair bred successfully locally for the first time on Severnside in 2020.

Davis (1947) gives it as a 'very rare vagrant, one was killed at Thornbury sometime prior to 1900' while the first published records are as follows:

1966 – Sand Bay on December 29th and 30th

1969 – five at Sand Bay on April 8th, four at Clevedon on May 24th and 25th

1970 – Sand Bay on August 5th

<sup>44</sup> SBR gives date as 21st

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

A fairly common and widespread winter visitor and passage migrant which can become common in some winters with largest counts of 6,000 at CVL in January 1976 [CVRS report 76 - 78] and 4,300 at Keynsham in February 1985. Thomas (1979) mentions 'as many as 5,000 may be 'on Severnside during very hard weather.

It is an uncommon and seriously declining breeder/summer visitor.

Wheeler (1874) says 'common resident, Leigh, Portishead, Failand' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common'. The 1927 SBR said 'common and at times abundant in winter. Breeds fairly freely on suitable open ground and even abundantly in certain places eg Ashton Park where some 50 to 60 pairs. Little evidence of any general decrease in last 15 years but some observers of long experience report that it is decidedly less common than it once was'. Davis (1947) says 'resident, common and widely distributed but as a breeding bird has decreased in the last few years. Abundant in winter often occurring in very large flocks'



**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant with most now being seen on the Cotswolds, although the local highest count, of 2,000, comes from CI-Y on 24th January, 2011.

The average arrival date is 19th August with departure on average by 19th April.

Although Wheeler (1874) says 'occasionally, banks of river', Charbonnier (1899) says 'a frequent visitor in spring and autumn'. Davis (Davis (1947)) says it is a 'winter visitor, regular inland and fairly frequent in coastal areas often appearing in considerable numbers at Marksbury and Lansdown and in other favoured localities. Occasional in small parties at the reservoirs. Sometimes met with well into spring'.

In the past two races were recognised; the southern race *P. a. apricaria*, which Davis (1947) attributed local birds to, and the northern, *P. a. altifrons*, of which there are a few published records:

1951 – 'some' at Lansdown on April 9th

1961 – 'several' at Marksbury on March 26th

1963 – 20 or more in the Burnett – Marksbury area on 16th and 17th April

1964 – one at Marksbury mid-April

2006 – one on Severnside on July 5th and 7th

2014 – one on Severnside from July 13th until 22nd Hayes (2018)

However, these races are no longer recognised.

**American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*

A national rarity until 2006 and a local rarity since then with two records this century:  
2003 – a juvenile at BL on November 1st and 2nd [BBRC\*]

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER**

Very rare nearctic vagrant.

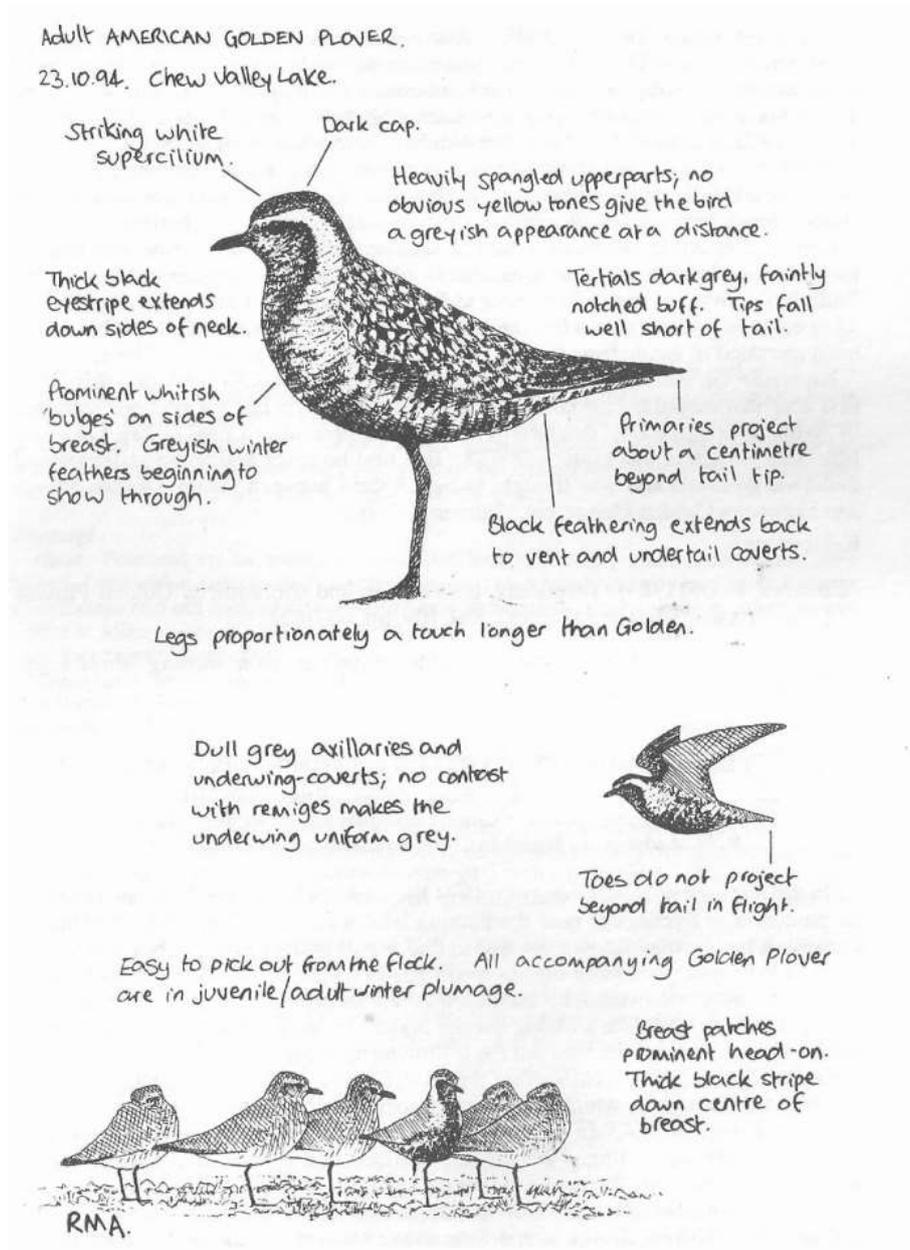
*Pluvialis dominica*

A juvenile at BL on Nov. 1st and 2nd (SI, NRM *et al.*); see photograph after page 64. Note that the Spotted Sandpiper was present at the same time at BG. This individual was noted subsequently at Yoxter, Somerset, on Nov. 5th. Compared with European Golden Plover features noted included smaller slimmer size, longer leg, no golden tones in the plumage, grey underwing coverts and axillaries, breast 'peachy' and finely marked (compared with the heavier markings on the European also present), and relatively long primaries. (BBRC)

This is the second record for the Avon area, the first was an adult at CVL in late October 1994.

2013 – in flight at BL on October 23rd<sup>45</sup>

There is also one earlier record, from 1994 of a partial summer plumage adult at CVL from October 23rd until 27th [BBRC\*] see Preddy and Andrews (1994) for more details.



<sup>45</sup> The main identification points included the important pale grey underwings and the repeated flight call, transcribed as 'kl-ee' having the accent on the clipped 'kl' with the 'ee' level toned

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant with a largest count of 190 at Cl-Y on 3rd October, 1993 with c200 there in February 1994.

It is scarce inland.

Wheeler (1874) says 'occasionally, Avonmouth' while Charbonnier (1899) lists three records; Avonmouth in October 1889, Weston-super-Mare in September 1892 and New Passage in November 1892. However, Davis (1947) says it is a 'winter visitor occurring regularly in small numbers on the coast. Occasionally met with well into spring but the only recent record of birds in full breeding plumage is of three among a party of six or seven at Severn Beach May 1946'.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

An uncommon winter visitor, and fairly common passage migrant which is most numerous in autumn with a largest count of 1,200 on Severnside in August 1973. Small numbers occur inland on passage.

It is a scarce breeder. Roberts (2004) details breeding at Royal Portbury and Avonmouth Docks in 2004. It also bred there regularly until 2014 and then again in 2022.

Wheeler (1874) gives it as a 'common resident, banks of Avon and Severn' as does Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common on the Severn coast'. Davis (1947) says it is 'chiefly a passage migrant but may be met with on the coast in all months. Most abundant in late summer and autumn when numbers up to 500 sometimes reported from the Severn Beach area. Small parties not infrequent at the reservoirs on both passages. Used to breed at Severn Beach where nest and eggs found and young seen May 1912 and three nests and eggs located May 1913.

Most local birds belong to the race *hiaticula* breeding in Canada and N. W. Europe. A few of the race *tundrae* breeding from N. Scandinavia to Siberia may also occur, although there is only one definite record:

1922 – male obtained at Portishead on August 29th and now in the Bristol museum [1937 SBR]

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

An uncommon passage migrant/summer visitor with a largest count of 16 at CVL on 2nd August, 2011.

The current average arrival date is March 26th, 20 days earlier than given in Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival date of 25th February, 2021 at Pilning Wetland. Currently the average departure date is September 17th, a week later than given in Bland (1992), with the latest local departure on 18th October, 1976, when two were at Sea Mills.

It is rare nationally as a breeding species and a scarce breeder locally since 1977.

The earliest published records are as follows:

1954 – CVL on May 9th [notes in SBR]

1956 – BL on April 16th and 22nd [latter date SBR]

1958 – CVL on August 7th and 8th

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferous*

A National rarity with one local record from 1976, at CVL on January 17th [BBRC] see Vinicombe (1979) for fuller details

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

This has been a National rarity since 2019, having previously been one prior to 1963. It was a local rarity in the intervening years. There are four local records this century:

- 2004 – a female at Severn Beach on May 12th
- 2006 – a juvenile at Severn Beach on September 22nd
- 2011 – a male at Sand Bay on May 2nd
- 2018 – a male at Channel View Farm on May 28th and 29th

There are 14 twentieth century records:

- 1947 – a male at Severn Beach on May 4th and 5th [*British Birds vol 40 p254-255*]
- 1949 – a female at Severn Beach on May 10th [*British Birds vol 43 p23*]
- 1966 – a male at CVL on April 13th

**KENTISH PLOVER** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

**S.** Male, Chew Valley res., Apr. 13. Details reported include blackish legs and bill; crown and nape brighter than pale brown wings, and with blackish frontal patch; small black patch either side of breast instead of complete band; narrow white wing-stripe visible in flight (P.C., D.J.P.). Second Somerset record.

- 1967 – an adult at CVL on August 29th [*SBR*]<sup>46</sup>
- 1972<sup>47</sup> – adult male at CVL on September 3rd [*SBR*]
- 1973 – SGW on August 19th<sup>48</sup>
- 1974 – a probable female at CVL on August 19th<sup>49</sup> [*see addendum at end of Systematic List*]
- 1976 – Axe Estuary on October 9th
- 1978 – Chittening on August 11th
- 1980 – a male at Sand Bay on May 5th
- 1984 – a female at SGW on April 28th, a male at Blackstone Rocks Clevedon on May 3rd
- 1993 – OPS on August 16th
- 1998 – a male near the mouth of the Kenn on May 1st and 2nd

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultia*

A National rarity with one local record, in 1979, a first-winter at CVL from November 17th until 10th February, 1980 [*BBRC*]

<sup>46</sup> A previously published record of an adult male at CVL on July 28th [*SBR*] was recently withdrawn by the observer, see 2018 ABR

<sup>47</sup> The 1982 ABR mentions a ringed bird shot 'at Bristol' on August 31st 1972 but this was a misidentification corrected in the 1984 ABR

<sup>48</sup> SBR gives date as 17th

<sup>49</sup> Rose (2013) suggests this, the 1972 and the August 1967 record are now thought to be 'only probable'. However the documentation cannot be found so the records cannot be reviewed.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

A local rarity with just one local record this century, in 2014 over Pilning on September 14th.

At least 30 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

c1929 - a party of 6 or 8 at Burrington in April [1939 SBR] Davis (1947)

1958 - two at Sand Point on September 5th

1974 - Severn Beach from September 14th until 17th, viewable down to four feet

1978 - SGW on May 21st

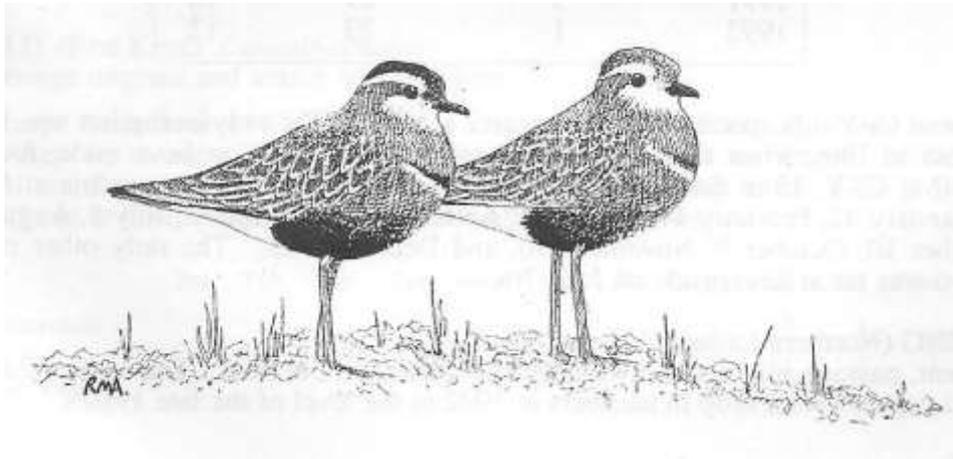
1979 - near Woodspring Priory on August 24th, presumed same at Middle Hope on 26th

1981 - a juvenile at Kenn Estuary on August 19th

1982 - a female ringed at Pucklechurch on May 11th

1992 - twelve near Tormarton on May 8th with 14 next day, one on 10th and two on 11th

1995 - three at Marshfield on May 16th



Wheeler (1874) lists it as 'rare, Flat Holmes' while Charbonnier (1899) says it used to breed on the Mendips. Davis (1947) says it a 'Very scarce visitor on migration, but apparently more frequent in former years.' The only definite records for the nineteenth century that I can find are all for 1869, one shot on Steep Holm in early May and a small party at Weston-super-Mare in the middle of May both mentioned in Blythwayt (1906), and a single seen at Sand Point at the same time mentioned in Davis (1947) without a source.

**Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda*

A National rarity with one local record, in 2005, a juvenile at CI-Y from November 12th until 26th [BBRC] see Hunt (2005) for more details

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

A passage migrant which is fairly common in spring and uncommon in autumn with some decline in the last decade. The largest count is of 250 seen moving upriver very high at Severn Beach on 4th May, 1977. The highest inland count is of 36 flying south at CVL on 5th August, 1975.

The average arrival date is April 10th, only 3 days earlier than given by Bland (1992), while the earliest arrival is on 26th March, 1986 at CVL. The average departure date is October 13th, 20 days later than quoted by Bland (1992), while the latest departure date is 12th December, 2015, six at New Passage, although one wintered at Aust in January/February 1986 and there are winter records in other years, for example 28th February, 2015 at Sand Bay.

All Avon records belong to the nominate subspecies *phaeopus* breeding in Iceland and N. Europe.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'local, occasionally seen, Portishead, Avonmouth' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'an autumn visitor to the Severn coast'. Davis (1947) said it was 'chiefly known as a spring passage migrant though not infrequently reported in autumn. Regular on the coast in small or moderate numbers and sometimes noted at the reservoirs and elsewhere inland'

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant with a largest count of 1,800 at OPS in March 1987. It is uncommon in summer and inland. The highest inland count is of 16 at CVL on 6th September, 1982.

It has bred in the past, in 1958 when a nest with two eggs was found at Walton Moor on May 3rd, and in 1992 and 1993 at West Littleton on the Wilts border [1993 ABR].

Wheeler (1874) gives it as 'common, Avonmouth, Portishead' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'common on the Severn coast throughout the year'. Davis (1947) says it is a 'winter visitor chiefly but present in all seasons and has sometimes been found breeding. Common on the coast and not infrequent inland. Nesting reported from the Mendip Hills on several occasions 1912-1925. May have bred in recent years on the low-lying moors near Clevedon but evidence not entirely conclusive'

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

A passage migrant in varying numbers; usually uncommon but can occur in large numbers on spring passage with a largest count of 1,760 on Severnside on 30th April, 2011. Scarce inland and in winter.

Wheeler (1874) called it an 'occasional winter visitor, Portishead' which ties in with Charbonnier (1899) 'occasionally occurs in winter on the Severn coast'. However, Davis (1947) says 'passage migrant, visits the coast regularly in spring and autumn and sometimes occurs in winter. Most records are from the Severn Beach area but has also been reported from Weston-super-Mare, Woodspring, Clevedon and Littleton-on-Severn. Very occasional at the reservoirs'



**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa islandica*

A fairly common passage migrant and common winter visitor, generally more numerous in autumn. It has increased recently, mainly on Severnside, and the largest count comes from there, 900 at Northwick on 11th November, 2022.

Davis (1935) mentions only one record prior to 1933, from Portishead mud flats in September 1922, while 12 years later, in 1947, he says 'formerly a scarce visitor but in the last 20 years has been frequently reported from both the coast and reservoirs and now appears to be a regular passage migrant chiefly in autumn. Coastal records include those of single birds or small parties at Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Aust and Littleton-on-Severn. Among reservoir records are those of 23 at BL September 1934 and four April 1939 and 18 at BG September 1947.



Davis (1947) treated all records as relating to ssp *limosa* and makes no mention of ssp *islandica* while Palmer and Ballance do not distinguish between the subspecies. The 1988 ABR says 'most birds seen in Avon are of the Icelandic race *islandica*' but it is unclear when in the 40-year intervening period the change in status or treatment occurred or which subspecies the previous records related to.

*L. l. limosa*

A local rarity, although a number of previously published records from CVL, of four on 14th July, 1990, four on 22nd June, 2006 and one on 21st June, 2007 have recently been withdrawn by the observers.

1988 – up to 11 at CVL from June 18th until 30th, three at BG from June 21st until 25th. However current thinking is that this subspecies can only be identified in juvenile plumage, or as a ringing recovery, and it is not clear that these records satisfied either criterion. Two at CVL on June 21st 1989, although not published in the annual report, were considered to be possible candidates; one was ringed above the knee, indicative of a continental origin per Vinicombe (2020).

2017 – a juvenile at Pilning Wetlands on August 5th

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant with largest counts of 500 at Chittening on 9th May, 1968, August 1969 and early September 1972. It is scarce in summer and inland (where the highest count is of 31 that flew through CVL in three groups on 12th September, 2016). There has been some recent decline.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, Avonmouth, Portishead' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs frequently on the Severn coast in winter'. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor to the coast, chiefly August to May but has been reported in all months. Best known from Severn Beach where as many as 150 to 200 have sometimes been counted. The only inland records are of one at BG August 1937 and two there June 1939'.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant but can occur in larger numbers at times with a largest count of c5,000 at Weston Bay on 6th January, 1963 with similar or more on 28th December. It is scarce inland.

Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs frequently in small numbers at Weston-super-Mare' while Davis (1947) said 'chiefly a passage migrant occurring most frequently in autumn but has been noted on the coast in all seasons. Birds in full breeding dress sometimes met with in spring. Numbers usually small but over 100 twice recorded from Severn Beach. One inland record, one at BG September 1935'.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

An uncommon autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and on spring passage. The largest count is of 101 at CVL on 13th March, 1976

Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurred at Weston-super-Mare in 1864, also at Wrington September 1889' while Davis (1947) called it a 'passage migrant chiefly in autumn. Occurs fairly regularly at the reservoirs and not infrequently on the coast. Has also been recorded from Wrington 1888 and Stoke Gifford 1942. Rarely more than two or three together. Once noted on spring passage, one at BL 1938. Three winter records, single birds at Weston-super-Mare January 1864, BL December 1937 and on the R Avon near Sea Mills February 1942'.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus*

A National rarity with two twentieth century records;

1983 – an adult at OPS from August 20th until 22nd [BBRC] see Vinicombe (1983) for more details

1988 – an adult seen on both the morning and evening tides at Severn Beach on May 16th [BBRC]

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*

A National rarity with one local record, in 2011, a juvenile at BL and CVL from November 18th until December 16th [BBRC] see Milbourne (2011) for more details

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

A passage migrant, scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn with a largest count of 56 at RPD in the second half of September 1988. It is very rare in winter.

Charbonnier (1899) said that two were obtained at Weston-super-Mare in the autumn of 1893 while Davis (1947) calls it a 'passage migrant in small numbers occurring regularly on the coast in autumn. Very scarce in spring. In recent years has been chiefly reported from Severn Beach but also from Weston-super-Mare and Portishead. The only reservoir records are of one at BL September 1913 and a party of eight or ten at BG September 1923'.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

A local rarity with ten individuals recorded this century:

2001, a juvenile at BL from October 5th until 9th

2002, a juvenile at CVL from September 22nd until 24th, and again from October 4th until 9th and at BL on October 17th and 21st and November 2nd and 5th until 10th

2004, an adult at Severn Beach on May 13th

2009, two individuals – one in winter plumage at Sea Mills on March 15th, CVL on May 20th [2011 ABR]

2011, a juvenile at CVL on August 26th and 27th

2015, a juvenile at BL from October 18th until 25th

2016, Pilning Wetlands from May 8th until 10th

2017, an adult at Pilning Wetlands from July 19th until 22nd

2019, Pilning Wetlands on May 18th

15 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1943 – BG from September 12th until 19th<sup>50</sup>

1954 – CVL on August 29th

1959 – CVL on September 15th and 19th

1960 – CVL on September 24th [SBR]

1962 – CVL on September 8th and 9th

1963 – CVL on August 10th

1964 – CVL on July 26th and 27th

1972 – a juvenile at CVL from September 12th until 22nd, one at CVL on October 22nd [latter SBR]

1973 – trapped and ringed at CVL on August 28th, one present between September 1st and 19th may have been the same but ring not seen<sup>51</sup>

1977 – CVL on September 19th and 23rd and 24th.

1980 – an adult at CVL on August 30th and 31st [1981 ABR erratum]

1984 – an adult in summer plumage at OPS on April 29th, CVL from October 17th until 22nd

1987 – CVL on May 20th

<sup>50</sup> See British Birds vol 37 page 137

<sup>51</sup> Rose (2013) suggests two were possibly present on September 9th

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

An uncommon passage migrant, more common in spring than in autumn with a largest count of c120 on 20th March, 1967 at Sand Bay and Weston Bay. It is very scarce in winter and inland.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, near Clevedon' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs frequently on the Severn coast, three specimens were obtained at Oldbury-on-Severn October 1st 1900'. Davis (1947) calls it a 'passage migrant usually in small numbers. Regular on the coast and has been reported from the reservoirs in both spring and autumn. Occasional in winter'.



**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

A common winter visitor and passage migrant with a largest count of 16,500 at CI-Y on 21st January, 1989. It is uncommon in summer and small numbers occur inland on passage. It has declined markedly recently.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common, banks of Avon and Severn' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'common on the Severn coast throughout the year, often seen on the banks of the Avon'. Davis (1947) calls it a 'winter visitor and passage migrant. The most abundant coastal wader often occurring in very large flocks and may be met with in all months. Odd birds or small parties visit the reservoirs on both passages'.



Three races occur: *C. a. alpina* which breeds from N. Scandinavia eastwards and occurs mainly in winter and *C. a. schinzii* which breeds in N. W. Europe and Iceland and occurs mainly on passage.

The third race, *C. a. arctica* which breeds in N. E. Greenland, is a local rarity:

1993 – five at CI-Y on June 3rd Martin (2010)

1997 – six at CI-Y on June 1st

2004 – two at CI-Y on June 1st Martin (2010)

2008 – Severn Beach on May 16th, 20th (two) and June 2nd Martin (2010)

2010 – two at Severn Beach on May 23rd with four there on 26th Martin (2010)

2011 – Severn Beach on May 15th and 22nd, CVL on May 14th, CI-Y on June 2nd Martin (2010)

2012 – Severnside on May 19th, CI-Y on June 3rd

2013 – New Passage on May 27th

2014 – CI-Y on May 18th, New Passage on 24th

2017 – two at Northwick Warth on May 14th with three there on 15th, CI-Y on 16th

2019 – three at Northwick Warth on May 8th, CI-Y on June 2nd

2021 – two on Severnside on May 8th and 9th, two at OPS on May 11th, four at Littleton on May 23rd with one next day

2022 – two at OPS on May 12th

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

A scarce extended winter visitor, the largest count is of 11 at Severn Beach on 7th April, 1978. There were no records for the nearly three years between January 2019 and October 2021.

It is very rare inland, with supporting notes required – there are records from 1969 (CVL November 29th), 1979 (CVL December 11th), 1987 (BG November 9th and 10th), 1991 (CVL November 29th September until October 5th), 2005 (CVL November 6th) and 2009 (CVL April 18th).

Charbonnier (1899) said it occurred at Lawrence Weston in November 1888 and at New Passage in January and October 1892 while Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor occurring more or less regularly in small numbers. Has occasionally been reported from the Weston-super-Mare area but records from the N Somerset coastline are very few. At Severn Beach however, birds have been noted fairly frequently in recent years usually with Turnstone and Dunlin and in all months November to May. Several records from New Passage'.

**Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii*

A National rarity with one local record in 2001, a juvenile at BL from September 12th until 23rd [BBRC] see Voaden (2001) for more details

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

A passage migrant, very scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Rare in winter. The largest count is 46 at CVL from 27th until 30th September, 1973 and at BL on 29th September, 1996.

The earliest published record is of one killed at Weston-super-Mare prior to 1888 [1888 Zoologist p 176] but Charbonnier (1899) did not list the species. Davis (1947) said it was a 'passage migrant occurring more or less regularly in autumn and occasionally in spring. Chiefly reported from the coast, usually in very small numbers but party of 15 at Severn Beach September 1943. Recorded from the reservoirs, either singly or in twos on half a dozen occasions 1936 – 1947'. It was treated as a local rarity until at least 1963.

**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

A National rarity until 2006 with just one local record this century, in 2001, an adult at Severn Beach on August 4th [BBRC\*].

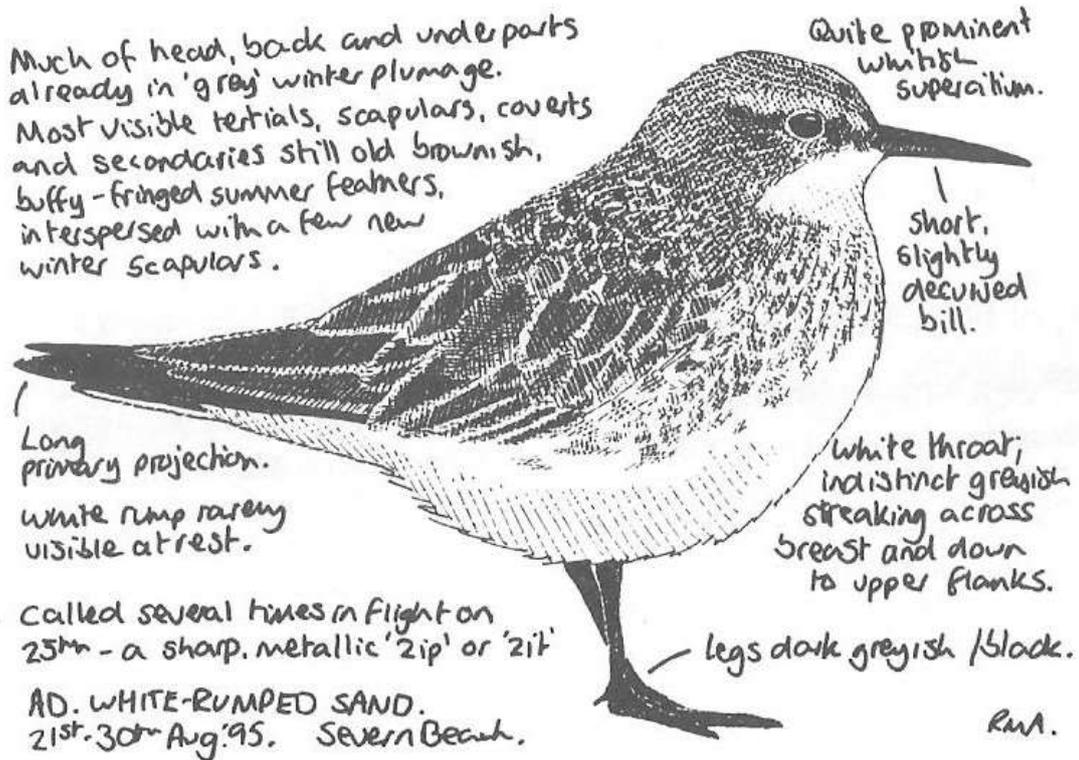
A total of six individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1978, two immatures at CVL on October 27th and 28th with one until November 2nd [BBRC\*] see Davis (1981) for fuller details

1985, an adult at Severn Beach on September 12th and 13th [BBRC]

1991, a juvenile at CVL from October 5th until 19th [BBRC\*]

1995, an adult at Severn Beach from August 20th until 31st [BBRC\*]



1998, a juvenile/first-winter at Aust Warth from November 22nd until 26th [BBRC\*]

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Calidris subruficollis*

A National rarity until 1983 and a local rarity since then with just one record this century, in 2003, a juvenile at Northwick Warth from September 27th until 30th.

There were 14 individuals recorded in the twentieth century:

1973, two individuals – a juvenile at BL from September 15th until 21st [BBRC\*] and one at CVL on October 3rd [BBRC\*] [1975 ABR]

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*

S. One was present at Blagdon reservoir, Sept.15-21 (WGB, PJC, RMC, AHD, AM *et al.*). The record, third for Somerset and third for Bristol district, has been accepted by *British Birds* Rarities Committee.

Described as a small wader, size of Common Sandpiper, with a small buff-coloured head, lighter on cheeks; crown streaked brown; upper-parts buffish grey, with 'scaly' appearance due to pale feather edgings. Breast buff becoming paler on belly and under-tail coverts. Long wings, extending beyond tail, giving long, tapering appearance; no wingbar; dark central tail feathers. Legs light in colour. Flight fast. Trilling call.

52

1975 – two at CVL on September 1st with one remaining until the 12th; another at CVL from September 20th until 22nd and another from September 26th until October 1st [BBRC\*].

1976 – CVL on September 29th and again from October 3rd until 6th [BBRC\*]

1978 – CVL on October 14th and 15th when killed by a Crow [BBRC\*]

1980 – CVL on September 16th [BBRC\*]

1986 – a juvenile at BL from October 5th until 14th

1989 – New Passage on September 30th

1990 – Severn Beach on May 22nd and 23rd and probably the same at the Yeo Estuary on June 7th

1993 – two juveniles on the Avon side of the Axe Estuary on October 6th moved to the Somerset side on 7th and both remained until 9th with one until 13th

<sup>52</sup> The previous two records for the 'Bristol district' were in 1961 at Slimbridge and 1970 at Cheddar Res.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

A local rarity with 29 individuals recorded this century:

- 2001, a juvenile at CVL from October 10th until 23rd  
 2002, a juvenile at CI-Y from September 13th until 17th  
 2003, four individuals – a juvenile at BL from September 19th until 21st, a juvenile at CVL from 19th until October 3rd with two from 23rd until 27th, a juvenile at Weston STW on 21st  
 2004, two individuals – Axe Estuary on May 9th [2005 ABR], a juvenile at BL from September 16th until 18th  
 2005, a juvenile at CVL from September 4th until 9th  
 2006, four individuals – a juvenile at CI-Y on September 14th, a juvenile on Severnside from September 23rd until 26th with two on 25th, a juvenile at BL from October 1st until 11th  
 2008, two individuals – a juvenile at Northwick Warth from September 18th until 23rd, a juvenile at BG from 20th until 27th  
 2011, juveniles were noted at CVL on various dates between September 2nd and October 15th, it was thought that six different individuals were involved  
 2014, a juvenile at New Passage from September 21st until 30th  
 2016, two individuals – a juvenile at Northwick Warth on September 11th and 12th, a juvenile at BL from October 6th until 16th  
 2018, a juvenile at BL from September 19th until 21st  
 2019, at Northwick Warth on September 20th  
 2020, at Pilning Wetland from September 13th until 25th  
 2022, two individuals – an adult at Pilning from April 29th until May 5th, CVL from September 11th until 20th

A total of 33 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

- 1935 – BG from September 28th until October 3rd [SBR], Davis (1935), [British Birds vol 29 p183-185]  
 1964 – BL from August 30th until September 8th [notes in SBR]  
 1967 – BG from September 23rd until 28th [notes in SBR]  
 1969 – CVL on September 29th  
 1970 – CVL from September 7th until 13th with two on 11th and 12th, CVL on October 8th, CVL from October 29th until November 8th [SBR]  
 1973 – two at CVL from September 19th until 30th, CVL on October 13th and 14th  
 1975 – CVL from September 26th until October 21st with two on September 29th, and a visit to BL on September 30th  
 1978 – CVL from September 20th until 26th  
 1979 – Axe Estuary on September 24th and 25th  
 1980 – two at CVL from September 7th until 21st  
 1982 – ASW from September 11th until 19th, CVL from September 14th until 18th with two from 19th until 29th  
 1984 – CVL on September 15th, BL from October 6th until 10th with a second on 9th and 10th  
 1987 – an adult at CVL on August 21st and 22nd, a juvenile at Yeo Estuary on October 16th  
 1988 – an adult at CVL from August 18th until 20th  
 1989 – OPS on September 17th, CVL from September 17th until 24th  
 1990 – a juvenile at CVL on September 13th, 15th and 16th, a juvenile near the Kenn on 16th  
 1992 – a juvenile at BL on October 10th  
 1998 – Yeo Estuary from September 20th until 27th, a juvenile at Northwick Warth from 21st until 26th

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*

A National rarity with two records this century:

2009 – a juvenile at Northwick Warth on September 26th [BBRC]

2011 – a juvenile/first-winter at CVL from November 10th until 20th [BBRC] [photographs]

There is a single twentieth century record, from 1990, an adult at OPS on August 12th and 14th [BBRC] see Vinicombe (1990) for more details

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

A National rarity with two records this century involving three individuals:

2009 – a juvenile at CVL from September 23rd until October 2nd [BBRC]

2011 – two juveniles from October 9th until December 13th commuted between BL and CVL [BBRC]

1977 - two at CVL on September 30th and October 1st then moved to BL where they remained, apart from occasional visits to CVL, until 11th January, 1978 with one until 15th and one at CVL on January 21st [BBRC] see Vinicombe (1980) for fuller details

**Dowitcher sp** *Limnodromus sp*

1977 – Aust Warth on October 16th [BBRC]

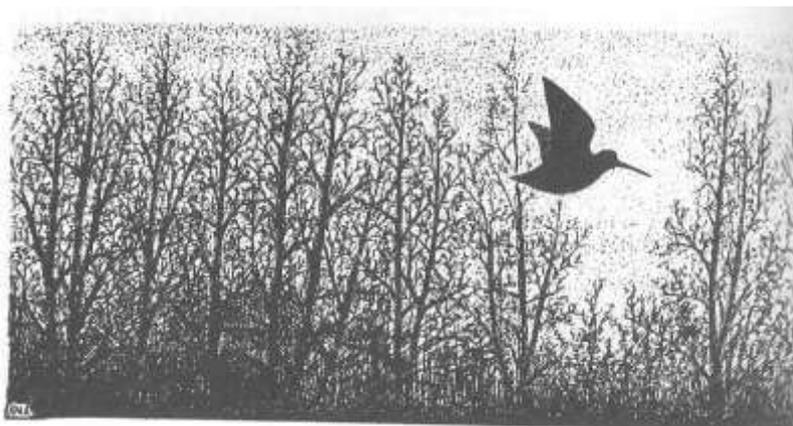
1978 – CVL on October 28th [1979 BBRC report]

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

An uncommon winter visitor, almost certainly overlooked with a largest count of 17 at Clapton-in-Gordano on 27th November, 1965 [SBR].

The average arrival date is 30th October with average departure on 20th March. The earliest recent arrival is on 29th September, 2022 at Bristol Airport while the latest departure is 30th April, 1994 at Weston Moor.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'not uncommon, Leigh, Henbury, Durdham Down occasionally' and Charbonnier (1899) said it was a 'winter visitor, fairly common'. The 1931 SBR said 'as a winter visitor occurs fairly regularly in wooded areas. Reported in Ashton Park and Failand in winter and may be fairly plentiful. Pair watched during March 1922 in likely breeding place near Bristol. Occasional records from Woodspring, Kewstoke etc' while Davis (1947) said 'as winter visitor occurs regularly in suitable areas but numbers are perhaps fewer than formerly. Scarce in summer and evidently very uncommon as breeding species. Has nested in present century on Mendip, also near Clevedon and probably elsewhere'.

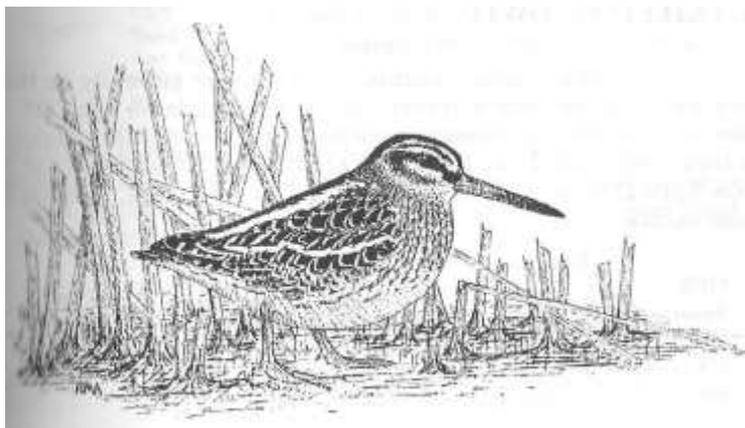


**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

An uncommon or scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, almost certainly overlooked. The largest count is of 17 at ASW on 23rd February, 2005<sup>53</sup>.

The average arrival date is 6th October with the average departure by 10th April.

Wheeler (1874) calls it an 'occasional winter visitor, in marshy places, Ashton, Clevedon' whereas Charbonnier (1899) says it is a 'winter visitor, fairly abundant in some years'. Davis (1947) describes it as a 'winter visitor to suitable ground but much less abundant than Snipe. Recent notices are mostly from the reservoirs but has also been reported from Tickenham, Stoke Gifford, Dyrham and other localities'.



<sup>53</sup> The 1974 SBR mentions 'Nailsea Moor, apparently 51, in 7 groups, SMT'. No date is given and may be a mistake as the same observer is listed as a contributor to the ABR which makes no mention, but does have a count of 52 Snipe from the site in March

**Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*

A National rarity with two twentieth century records, both at Blagdon;  
1949 – flushed three times in quick succession on March 6th

GREAT SNIPE, *Capella media*.

- I. Single bird seen, Blagdon reservoir, Mar. 6; a large snipe with typical bill; head darker than upper parts, with pale brown face and neck; a little white showing on the secondaries; conspicuously white outer tail feathers, and under parts well barred. With a gait half-walking, half-running it was seen on one occasion to waddle in duck-like manner, and to conceal itself in short grass close to the water's edge. At no time did the bird make any call. Mode of flight was somewhat heavy, with no twisting as in Common Snipe. It was last seen gliding into ploughed land well away from the reservoir (B.K. & R. H. Poulding).

1950 - flushed three times on December 27th [*British Birds* v45 n1]

GREAT SNIPE *Capella media*

S. One identified, Blagdon res. (Ubley end), Dec. 27. The bird, flushed three times, was seen by B.K. and M.J.W., who report that on each occasion it rose without calling, and with flight more direct than in Common Snipe. B.K. records that it looked larger than Common Snipe and that the outer-tail feathers were conspicuously white; also that when first flushed it alighted about 35 yds. distant, and in full view, thus enabling both observers to note (with telescope) the heavily barred flanks, and shorter-looking bill than in *C. gallinago*. Detailed pencil-sketches by M.J.W. confirm the identification (cf. *Proc. B.N.S.*, 1949, p. 36 for previous Blagdon record).

Davis (1947) said it was a 'Very rare vagrant. The Rev M A Mathew, in his Revised List of the Birds of Somerset (1893), mentions it as having occurred in autumn near Weston-super-Mare' while Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention one shot at Weston-super-Mare, probably in 1860s

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant with a largest count of 350 in the Gordano Valley during a Pheasant shoot on 31st January, 2013.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'not uncommon, in marshy places, Portishead, Durdham Down, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) said it was 'fairly common in winter'. The 1931 SBR says 'undoubtedly breeds regularly in the lowlands though definite records of nests are rather few, breeds Nailsea Moor and breeding at Yatton in 1920 and in the marshes at Weston-in-Gordano in 1921 and nest with eggs at Clapton-in-Gordano in 1931. Occurs in varying numbers at BL in autumn and winter, and to a greater or lesser extent in all marshy areas. Infrequent at BG but noted occasionally'. Davis (1947) says it is 'resident but chiefly a common winter visitor to suitable ground. Occurs frequently at the reservoirs. Breeds regularly on low lying moors in the Clevedon, Nailsea and Yatton areas and perhaps occasionally elsewhere.'

Bland and Dadds (2012) mention drumming males in the Gordano Valley, 17 in a 1982 survey but only two in 1992 and none in the 2007 Atlas. The last successful breeding locally was in 2005.

Most occurring in Avon belong to *G. g. gallinago* which breeds in the palearctic. *G. g. faeroeensis* breeding in the N. Isles and Iceland probably also occurs – a bird at CVL on 9th February, 2012 was published as possibly belonging to this race.



**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*

A National rarity with one local record, in 1986 at RPD on September 19th and presumed same at Severn Beach on 20th [BBRC], see Vinicombe (1986) for more details

**Wilsons Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*

A National rarity, not recorded yet this century but with seven twentieth century records: 1967 – CVL from September 8th until 25th. [BBRC]

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus tricolor*

**S.** One, Chew Valley res., Sept. 8–25 (many observers), was one of nine or so of this Nearctic species recorded in British Isles after early September Atlantic gales—cf. *Brit. Birds*, 60, p. 516, 1967. (Another was present at Durleigh res., nr. Bridgwater, same time). Record, first for area, accepted by *Brit. Birds* Rarities Committee.

Digest of descriptions: a small, long-legged, longish-necked wader, with relatively small round head and long straight bill. Size: 'c. size of Wood Sandpiper,' 'perhaps 50% bigger than Dunlin,' 'dwarfed by Spotted Redshank but nearly twice size of Little Stint.' Upper-parts dark grey, with brownish tinge in some lights. Tail pale grey, not contrasting with white, squared-off rump. Wings long—almost to tip of tail—and narrow, looking darker in flight than at rest. Bill dark, needle-like, perhaps twice length of head; crown dark grey; face white with dark mark through black eye. Neck white in front, greyish at sides, dark grey at back and nape. Under-parts clear white; legs dull yellow, long, extending in flight beyond tail.

Associated much with Little Stints and Ringed Plovers. Flight rapid with powerful wingbeats. Fed on mud or in shallows, not swimming but constantly in motion, sometimes spinning round and round (as do other Phalaropes when feeding while swimming); never probed, but picked food delicately from surface, moving head from side to side, with legs flexed and body held horizontal or tail-up. Once seen to jump in air with neck outstretched to take insect.

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1975 – CVL on September 17th and 18th [BBRC]

1979 – CVL on September 20th and 21st and a first winter there from September 29th until October 4th [BBRC]

1980 – a juvenile at CVL from September 13th until 23rd [BBRC]

1985 – a first-winter at CVL from October 16th until 18th [BBRC]

1988 – a first-winter at CVL on September 11th and 12th [BBRC]

<sup>54</sup> See also Lesser Yellowlegs present at same time

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

A local rarity with six records this century:

- 2002 – a first-winter at Wick St Lawrence STW on October 29th
- 2008 – a moulting adult at Weston STW from August 23rd until 25th
- 2010 – a juvenile at BL on October 4th and 5th
- 2014 – a juvenile at Pilning Wetlands on August 18th
- 2020 – an adult female at CVL on June 7th
- 2022 – a juvenile at CVL from August 26th until 29th

Nine individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

- 1921 – shot at BL on September 21st <sup>55</sup> [*British Birds vol 15 page 158*]
- 1931 - a phalarope, said to be of this species, visited BL in the autumn according to Davis (1935) and the 1932 SBR
- 1965 – an immature at BL from September 18th until 27th [*notes in SBR*]
- 1969 – an adult female at CVL on August 24th

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus lobatus*

**S.** Ad. ♀ in partial moult, Chew Valley res., Aug. 24 (RJL).  
Bird retained much red on neck. Dark vermiculated markings on back. Underparts very white. Bill long, fine, dark. Legs dark.

- 1978 – a male at CVL on May 28th
- 1979 – Bucklands Pool, Backwell on May 26th
- 1996 – a juvenile at BL from September 21st until 31st
- 1999 – two juveniles at BL on August 25th and 26th



<sup>55</sup> Davis (1935) mentions two being present of which one was shot

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

A local rarity with 59 individuals recorded this century:

2000, three individuals – CVL on October 27th, Severn Beach on October 31st, Severn Beach on December 14th

2001, three individuals – a first-winter at ASW from October 5th until 8th, a first-winter at CVL on October 6th, a first-winter at BL on October 12th

2004, a first-winter at CVL on November 6th

2005, six individuals – CVL on October 19th, CVL on November 4th and then at BL from 5th until 8th, Ashton Court from November 9th until 13th, BL on November 12th and 13th [2007 ABR], BL on November 15th and 16th, a first-winter at CVL on November 26th

2006, a juvenile/first-winter at Severn Beach on October 7th

2007, partial remains found at Severn Beach on December 31st

2008, three individuals – CVL on September 4th, CVL from October 4th until 6th, Portishead on November 20th

2009, four individuals – Severnside on August 31st, Weston STW on September 4th, CVL on September 4th, CVL on November 20th

2010, three individuals – two first-winters at CVL from September 15th until 20th, an adult at the R Yeo on November 10th

2011, twelve individuals – BL from September 7th until 9th, Weston STW on September 8th and 9th, PW on September 12th, Sand Point on September 12th, Anchor Head and Uphill beach on September 13th and at Weston STW on 14th and 15th, BL on September 13th and 14th, CVL on September 13th, three at CVL on September 15th, Severn Beach on September 17th, CVL from November 1st until December 2nd

2012, a juvenile/first-winter at CI-Y from November 23rd until 26th

2013, two individuals – a juvenile/first-winter at New Passage on September 18th, a first-winter at Littleton Warth on September 21st

2015, four individuals – a juvenile/first-winter at CVL on September 15th, a juvenile at New Passage on September 25th, a juvenile/first-winter at Portishead on September 30th, New Passage on November 21st

2017, four individuals – Severn Beach on September 11th, Anchor Head on September 11th, Severn Beach/Northwick Warth from October 8th until 10th, CVL on November 12th

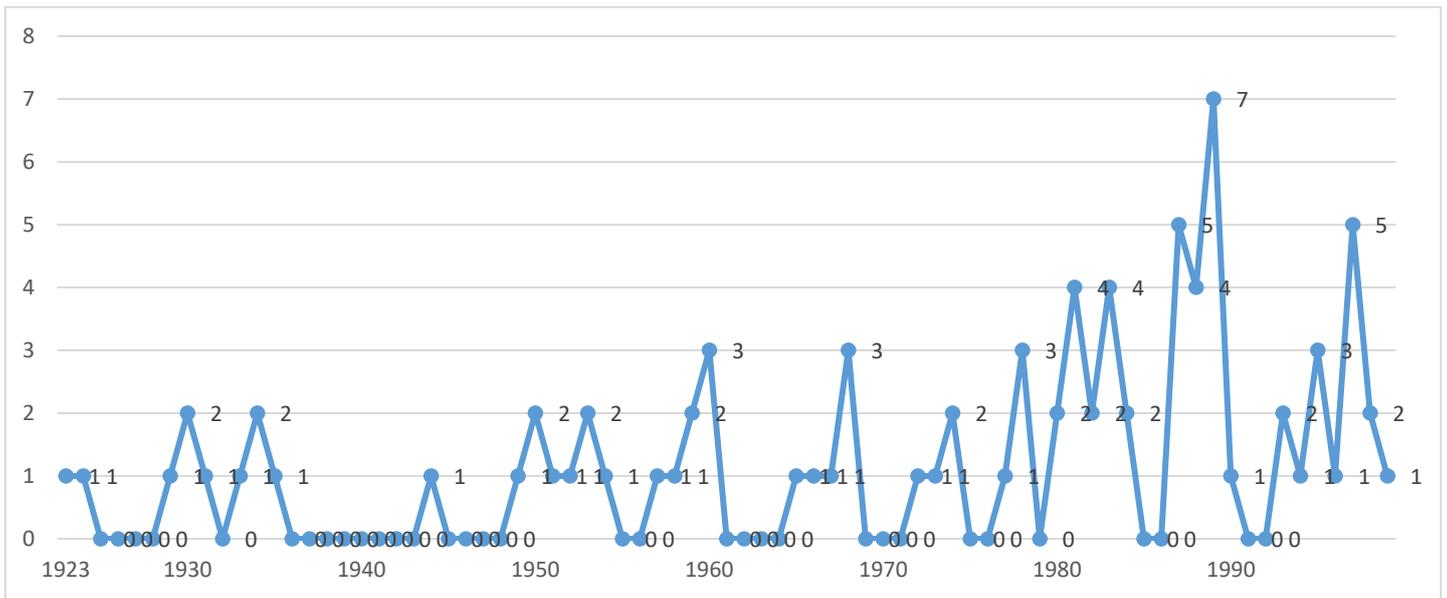
2018, a series of records in September involving probably seven individuals - at Northwick Warth an adult on 20th, an adult and a juvenile on 21st, and adult and two juveniles on 22nd and 23rd with the adult and one of the juveniles on 24th, a juvenile at Severn Beach on 21st and 22nd, an adult and juvenile at CVL on 21st and 22nd, an adult at BL on 22nd and an adult at OPS on 25th, PWD on 29th

2020, two individuals – two, 20 minutes apart, flew past Ladye Bay on August 22nd, Severn Beach on August 25th

2021, CI-Y on January 25th

2022, two individuals – New Passage on October 3rd, CVL on November 1st

About 85 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century, all the published records are listed in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the graph below:



The only nineteenth century records that I can find are as follows.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare winter visitor, Clevedon'.

1886 – at BG mentioned in Charbonnier (1899)

1896 – three obtained at Avonmouth in September mentioned in both Charbonnier (1899) and Davis (1947) although Davis (1935) says 'two obtained and two others seen'

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

An uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor with a largest count of 51 at CVL in August 1978. Although Bland (1992) quoted extreme migration dates of April 1st and November 23rd there have been regular wintering records since at least 1950.

Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention a breeding record for BL 'about 1911', the 1972 SBR mentions breeding at PWD, and the 1981 and 1982 ABRs says a pair bred there in both years with young being seen; however Rose (2013) casts doubt on the PWD records.

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'occasional summer visitor, Portishead, banks of Avon' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said 'appears in fair numbers every spring on migration and is occasionally seen during the summer but there seems to be no certain evidence of its nesting. 1939 SBR said 'a regular spring and autumn migrant at BG, BL and along the R Avon between Bath and Bristol'.

Davis (1947) called it a 'passage migrant occurring in all months, April to October and sometimes as late as November. Common on the coast, along rivers, at the reservoirs and a not infrequent visitor to small streams and ponds. Some probably remain through summer but no definite evidence yet of breeding'.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*

A National rarity with four records this century;

2003 – at BG on November 2nd [BBRC]

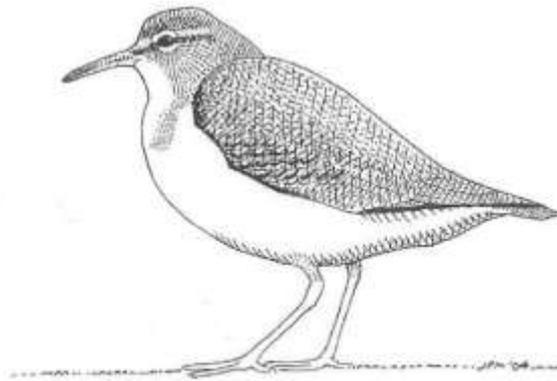
**SPOTTED SANDPIPER**

Very rare nearctic vagrant

*Actitis macularia*

One was discovered by CJS at BG during the afternoon of Nov. 2nd. Following a telephone call, KEV was then able to confirm CJS's suspicions as to its identity. It was seen subsequently by a number of observers but, surprisingly, it had gone by the following morning. The main differences between Common Sandpiper *A. hypoleucos* were its bright yellow legs, flesh coloured base to the bill, short tail, plain tertials, prominent white eye-ring and fore-supercilium, and restricted breast patches. It was clearly not a juvenile and, although probably in first winter plumage, the possibility of it being a winter adult was not eliminated. (BBRC)

This is the second record for the Avon area although there have been a number of records in Somerset. The first Avon area record was for CVL in October 1982.



2007 – a summer-plumaged adult at CVL from August 7th until 9th [BBRC]

2011 – an adult at CVL from September 24th until April 21st 2012 [BBRC]

2018 – a summer-plumaged adult at PWD from May 11th until 13th

In addition there is one twentieth century record;

1982 – an adult at CVL on at least October 10th [BBRC]

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

An uncommon autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and spring with a largest count of 39 at CVL on 3rd August, 1962.

Wheeler (1874) says it is a 'rare summer visitor, near Yatton' while Charbonnier (1899) mentions it occurred at Clevedon September 1887. Davis (1947) describes it as a 'passage migrant occurring regularly in autumn. Fairly frequent in spring and has been reported in all months. A familiar species at the reservoirs and not uncommon in coastal areas and at inland streams and ponds. Usually found singly but several together by no means exceptional'.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*

A National rarity until 2019 and now a local rarity with three records this century:

2006 – a juvenile/first-winter on the Axe Estuary from October 7th until 11th [BBRC]

2011 – an adult at CVL on July 8th [BBRC]

2020 – CVL from October 1st until November 2nd

There are two twentieth century records

1967 – CVL on September 9th [BBRC]. Although Rose (2013) cast doubt on this record (because there was a Wilson's Phalarope at the site at the same time) there is no evidence to support this stance – the 1967 report published both a summary of the description

Summary of RJJ's description: bird seemed slightly smaller and neater than Redshank; bill straight, rather slender, a little longer than head; legs bright yellow, long and slender, projecting in flight beyond tail. Entire upper-parts fairly dark grey-brown; back and folded wings well-marked with pale spotting and flecking; head similar grey-brown; prominent white supercilium from bill to behind eye, and pale eye-ring. Folded primaries a little darker than rest of upper-parts. In flight, wings dark and unmarked—no trace of wing-bar. Rump white, squared-off, not extending to back; tail dark, barred and contrasting with rump. Underparts generally dull white, with neck and upper breast lightly streaked greyish. Flight fast, direct. Call a rather thin *cu-cu*, softer and less strident than Greenshank's but audible at a distance.

as well as a comparison with the Wilson's Phalarope present at the same time, see below

RJJ and ETW, who saw both birds within a short time, noted that, compared with the Lesser Yellowlegs (q.v.), the Wilson's Phalarope looked smaller; was differently shaped, with small head and heavy body compared with neat shape of former; was greyer and more uniform on upper-parts, lacking spotting, and paler and whiter about head; had gleaming white underparts with no grey streaking; had far less bright yellow legs, and an odd galloping gait; had an even thinner bill; and its tail was much paler and unbarred when seen in flight.

1984 – a juvenile at ASW from September 30th until October 5th [BBRC]

**Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

A fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; the largest count is 'flocks of 700 – 1,000' in late August and early September 1973. It has increased recently, especially at CI-Y. Scarce inland where the highest count is of 18 at BL in October 2001.

It is uncommon in summer and now a very scarce breeder. A 1982 survey found 45 pairs while a 1992 survey estimated 20 pairs and the 2007 Atlas only found one confirmed pair per Bland and Dadds (2012)

Wheeler (1874) said it 'occasionally occurs in winter, Avonmouth' whereas Charbonnier (1899) says it is 'fairly common on the Severn coast except in the breeding season'. The 1931 SBR says that 'two pairs nested at BL in 1911. In succeeding decade bred with some regularity, usually two pairs, but in recent years rather more erratic and in some years absent. On coast has bred regularly at Woodspring since at least 1925. Also occurs at BL on migration and occasional at BG. Common on the coast outside the breeding season and often present in winter in Avon Gorge as far up as the suspension bridge'. Davis (1947) describes it as 'resident but chiefly a winter visitor and passage migrant occurring commonly on the coast and not infrequently inland. Breeds on suitable ground in the Portishead, Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare areas and has bred at BL on various occasion but not apparently since 1939. Some evidence of nesting in recent years at Oldbury-on-Severn.

Two races occur, *totanus* breeding in UK and W. Europe and *robusta* breeding in Iceland. Wintering birds no doubt include many *robusta* - one trapped at Pill on 6th March, 1961 had wing measurements in range of *robusta* per Palmer and Ballance (1968)

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

A National rarity with two twentieth century records;

1982 – a probable adult at CVL on October 3rd and 4th moved to BL from 5th until 12th [BBRC]

1984 – a juvenile commuting between BL and CVL from August 20th until 27th [BBRC]

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

A passage migrant, scarce in autumn and rare in spring; most frequent at CVL with a largest count from there of 'up to eight' from 28th July until 30th September, 1967.

Up until 2005 it was treated as a local rarity, particularly away from the reservoirs, or in spring.

The earliest local records are as follows:

1943 – at a small pool on the S Glos side of St Catherine on 13th August Davis (1947)

1951 – BL on September 9th

1952 – BL on August 31st



**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

A scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor to the Estuary, very scarce in spring with a largest count of 36 at CVL on 21st September, 1980

Davis (1947) described it as an 'irregular visitor on autumn passage. Formerly known only from Weston-super-Mare where two were shot sometime prior to 1893<sup>56</sup>. Reported at intervals in recent years, usually singly and chiefly from the reservoirs, BG 1933, BL at least nine times 1923 – 1944. Single birds identified on the R Avon at Hotwells 1945 and on the R Axe 1946. Twice met with in winter on the R Yeo at Woodspring, one January-February 1935 and two November 1935'

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<sup>56</sup> Palmer and Ballance say 'autumn in 1860s'

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

An uncommon passage migrant, more numerous in autumn and scarce in winter. It is declining. the largest count is 72 at CI-Y on 27th August, 1997 in two flocks of 24 and 48.

Davis (1947) described it as a 'passage migrant, seldom reported in former years but now known as a regular visitor in autumn usually to the reservoirs. Has also been noted at Severn Beach and New Passage. Several spring records from the reservoirs and one from the R Axe. Most reports refer to single birds though two or three together by no means unusual. Two winter records lack corroborative details'.

**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincole*

A National rarity with one record this century, from 2020 at Pilning Wetlands from May 21st until 25th [BBRC]

There is an old nineteenth century record, of one shot on 'the Mendips near Weston-super-Mare' [*Zoologist* 1881 p309 and 1888 p 220]. Davis (1947) says it was shot 'on the northern slope of Mendip' while Palmer and Ballance (1968) say 'N. Mendips' and give the date as before 1858.

**Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni*

A National rarity with no records yet this century;

1964 – CVL from September 6th until 9th [BBRC]

1988 – between Clevedon and Yeo Estuary from June 10th until at least 15th [BBRC]<sup>57</sup>

1993 – a juvenile at BL on August 28th was seen briefly at CVL later in the day [BBRC]

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<sup>57</sup> Rose (2013) gives the dates as June 9th until 17th

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Usually a storm-driven visitor, it is uncommon, but flocks occur in the Estuary but with declining regularity now. Also occurs in anticyclonic conditions in early spring as a presumed migrant. The largest count is of 1,029 from Sand Point on 26th March, 1972. It is scarce inland, usually only at CVL.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'occasional, Avon and Severn' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said 'fairly common, except in the breeding season'. Davis (1947) said it was 'apparently no more than an uncommon and irregular visitor to the Channel and Estuary. Storm driven birds sometimes occur at the reservoirs and elsewhere inland. Recorded in past years as appearing in considerable numbers in winter on the coast at Weston-super-Mare but now seems to be much scarcer. Has been referred to as breeding formerly on Steep Holm but the statement lacks corroborative details'

**Ivory Gull** *Pagophila eburnea*

A national rarity with just one old, rather contentious, record from 1864 of one taken alive at Weston-super-Mare mentioned on page 9470 of the 1865 Zoologist. The letter is dated January 1865 and says the bird was caught 'a year or two ago' and kept alive in a garden for some months. However Blathwayt (1906) says it was taken in the winter of 1864. It is not mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968) who say 'early records seem to us unsatisfactory'.

**Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

A national rarity until 1963 and a local one since with at least 16 individuals this century:

2001, at least two individuals – either first-summer or adult winter at Severn Beach on August 12th, juveniles at RPD on October 7th, Ladye Bay on 8th and Severn Beach on 9th

2004, two individuals – an adult flew NE past Severn Beach on May 4th, adult at CVL on August 26th

2005, a juvenile at CVL from September 16th until 18th

2007, two individuals – an adult at CVL on August 22nd and a juvenile there on October 9th

2011, a juvenile at Severn Beach on September 6th, 12th and 13th and at Sand Bay from 8th until 10th

2012, an adult at Severn Beach on June 9th

2016, an adult at Severn Beach on September 8th

2017, five juveniles, at Sand Bay on September 12th and Severn Beach on 13th, RPD on 17th, Avonmouth Docks on 26th, Severn Beach on October 22nd, Sea Mills on November 22nd

2021, an adult at Severn Beach on May 21st

There are 36 twentieth century records:

1954 – an adult at Weston-super-Mare on August 12th<sup>58</sup>

1957 – a juvenile at Weston-super-Mare on September 23rd

**SABINE'S GULL** *Xema sabini*

**S.** Juvenile, feeding with Black-headed Gulls on mudflats (also seen in flight), Weston-super-Mare, Sept. 23 (R.A.). Descriptive details supplied include: small size, white forehead, black primaries and grey-brown leading edge of rest of wing, white triangular patches on secondaries, and slightly forked tail.

1970 – an adult at CVL on September 6th

**SABINE'S GULL** *Larus sabini*

**S.** Adult, Chew Valley res., Sept. 6 (RH). First record for 13 years, and eighth for Bristol area. Details supplied mention: white head with dark mark behind eye; very conspicuous black, white and grey triangular wing patterning; and forked tail.

1973 – an adult at CVL on September 27th with an immature there on October 3rd

1980 – juvenile flying south at New Passage on September 13th, juvenile at CVL on 13th and juvenile on Axe Estuary on 14th

1981 – a juvenile at SGW on October 4th

1982 – CVL from September 12th until 20th

1983 – three at New Passage on September 3rd with five or six there on 4th and two on 5th, Oldbury-on-Severn on 6th

1984 – an adult at Littleton Warth on September 13th

1987 – an adult heading NE off Sand Point on October 18th with it or another later at RPD, an adult at CVL on 18th with a juvenile there on 19th, an adult at Severn Beach on October 25th, another at CVL from November 1st until 3rd

1988 – a first-summer on Severnside on May 30th with a juvenile there on September 23rd and 28th, a juvenile at CVL from August 29th until September 11th (with two on September 1st, 6th, 8th and 9th), a juvenile at BL on September 3rd and 4th

1990 – an adult off Severnside on April 28th

1991 – two juveniles briefly at CVL on October 15th

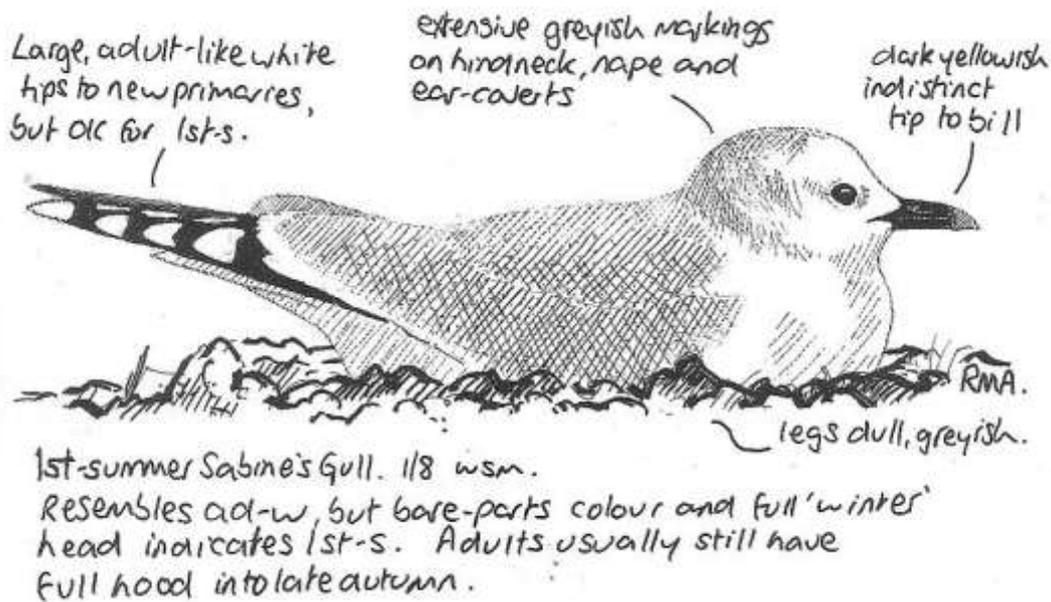
<sup>58</sup> See British Birds vol 48 page 83

1992 – an adult off New Passage on April 29th

1996 – an adult at BG on August 18th, a juvenile at OPS on November 3rd and 4th

1997 – a juvenile at Severn Beach on August 29th with an adult there on October 10th, juveniles at CVL on August 29th and 30th, September 17th, October 11th

1999 – a first-summer at the Yeo Estuary during the morning of July 31st was then at Weston STW on the evening of August 1st



There are a number of nineteenth century records;

Prior to 1863 – an immature shot as Weston-super-Mare, see page 8692 of the 1863 Zoologist

Prior to 1865 – shot at Weston-super-Mare, see page 9470 of the 1865 Zoologist

1867 - one shot from a party of five at the mouth of the R Axe on September 14th mentioned in both Davis (1947) and Palmer and Ballance (1968). The source of this record is page 992 of the 1867 Zoologist

1896 – an immature caught alive at Tickenham on September 24th mentioned in both Charbonnier (1899) and Davis (1947),

**Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

A National rarity with two records this century:

2013 – a summer plumaged adult at CVL on April 27th [BBRC] see Vinicombe (2013) for more details

2017 – a first-winter at Portbury Wharf on May 6th [BBRC]

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

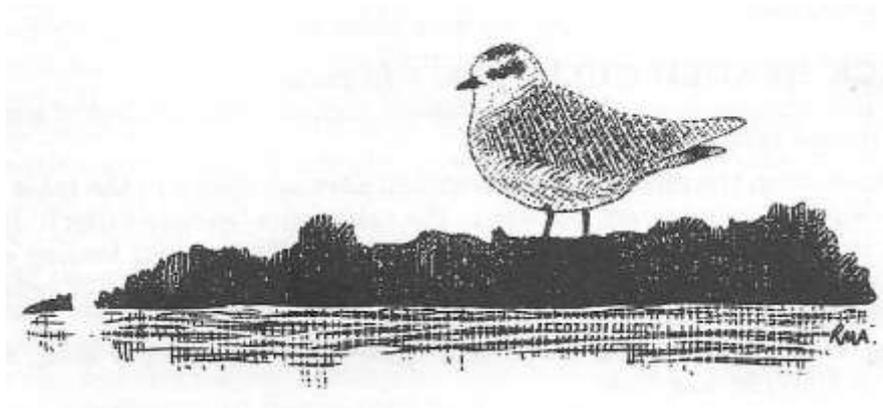
An abundant but steadily declining winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers of non-breeders remain throughout the summer. There is a huge winter roost at CVL with a largest count of 36,350 on 23rd January, 1993.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'not common, Severn, Rownham Ferry' whereas Charbonnier (1899) says 'very common about the coast especially in winter. At low tide considerable numbers come close to the city to obtain food from the river'. Davis (1947) says it is 'clearly an abundant winter visitor to the coast and inland but some present in all months. Most plentiful July to March. A familiar bird along the R Avon and around the city docks and often numerous at the reservoirs'.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

An uncommon passage migrant usually with more in spring and a largest count of 74 at CVL on 1st May, 1984; scarce in winter. It was treated as a local rarity until at least 1963.

Wheeler (1874) listed it as a 'very rare occasional visitor, one shot at Portishead in 1850'. The 1863 Zoologist mentions an immature shot at Weston-super-mare 'a year or two since' and the 1869 Zoologist mentions one shot there in the 1868/69 winter. Although Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurred at Clevedon in October 1889' as this is mentioned in the January 1889 edition of the Zoologist, an immature shot, it is likely the year is 1888. Davis (1947) called it an 'occasional visitor, usually on spring or autumn passage. The first recorded occurrence is that of one killed at Weston-super-Mare January 1851 with single birds shot there c1863 and c1869. Reports in recent years are of single birds at BL September 1940 and 1945'



**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla*

A national rarity with three records this century:

2006 – an adult at CVL on April 17th [BBRC]

2012 – a second-summer/ adult past Severn Beach on May 1st [BBRC]

2020 – a first-winter at CVL from March 10th until 15th [BBRC]<sup>59</sup>

There is also one twentieth century record from 1999, a summer-plumaged adult on the R. Avon in Bedminster on June 28th and July 7th [2001 BBRC]

**Franklins Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan*

A national rarity with two records this century:

2000 – a second-winter/second-summer at Somerdale, Keynsham on April 10th and 11th [BBRC]

2008 – a mobile second-winter at CVL on January 19th and 20th, 29th until 31st, February 12th until 17th and March 23rd, 24th, 27th and 28th; it was also at RPD on March 15th and 16th, Somerdale, Keynsham from March 18th until 23rd and at BL on March 26th [BBRC]

There are also two twentieth century records

1984 – a second-summer/adult at Severn Beach on May 19th [BBRC] see Lancaster (1984) for more details

1988 – an adult at Chittening Warth on June 12th [BBRC]

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase with a largest count of 14 at CVL on 13th February, 2015.

A national rarity until 1963 and a local rarity, at least away from the reservoirs, until 2000, the earliest local records are as follows:

1966 – CVL on July 9th<sup>60</sup>, an adult winter at Clevedon on August 7th was seen at Yeo Estuary on 14th [both August records SBR]

1967 – immature at CVL on 2nd July, immature at Yeo Estuary on October 15th [both SBR and 1968 BBR]

1968 – first winter flew past Clevedon on November 17th

<sup>59</sup> BBRC report gives first date as March 11th which is an error as bird was photographed on 10th before being identified in the field

<sup>60</sup> ABR and SBR differ on the ageing

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

A common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Largest flocks usually on upland or flooded fields and are often thinly spread elsewhere. Huge winter roost at CVL, with a largest count of 18,710 on 23rd January, 1993, and significant one on the Estuary that is even more difficult to count.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common, Avon and Severn' while Charbonnier (1899) listed it as 'frequently to be seen about the Severn coast and up the river Avon'. Davis (1947) says 'winter visitor from late July or August to the coast and inland and may be seen in all months. Occurs frequently, sometimes abundantly, along the R Avon and at the docks and reservoirs. Great numbers visit the Cotswolds daily in autumn and winter returning to the Severn sandbanks to roost'. Vernon and Walsh (1965) studied the birds in the Severn Estuary.

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*

A national rarity until 1988 and a local rarity since with 49 individuals this century;

2001, three individuals – an adult at CVL on January 3rd, an adult at CVL on January 7th, a first-year at CVL on January 13th, February 24th and 25th

2002, two individuals – a second-winter at Somerdale on February 6th, an adult at CVL on December 25th

2003, four individuals – an adult at CVL on February 22nd, adults in the CVL roost on March 1st and 21st, an adult at BG on March 12th, a first-summer at CVL from April 15th until 22nd

2004, three individuals – an adult at CVL on February 8th and 15th, two adults at CVL on March 13th with one on 16th

2006, three individuals – an adult in the roost at CVL on January 12th, adults in the roost at CVL on March 12th, 16th, 17th, 21st and 22nd, a second-winter at CVL on March 29th and 30th

2007, three individuals – an adult in the CVL roost on February 2nd, 3rd and 4th, an adult in the CVL roost on March 24th, an adult in the CVL roost on December 31st

2008, five individuals – an adult in the CVL roost on January 6th, an adult in the CVL roost on February 17th, an adult at Shortwood landfill on February 27th and 28th, an adult in the CVL roost on November 23rd, CVL on December 20th

2009, four individuals – an adult at CVL on January 3rd, 4th and 5th, an adult at CVL on January 24th, an adult at Sea Mills on March 14th, an adult at CVL on December 19th [2011 ABR]

2010, two individuals – an adult at CVL on January 16th and 19th, an adult at CVL on December 29th

2011, four individuals – an adult at Somerdale on January 17th, an adult at CVL on February 19th, an adult at CVL on February 26th, 28th and March 5th, an adult in the CVL roost on December 12th

2012, two individuals – an adult at CVL from January 3rd until 21st and again from February 13th until 23rd, an adult at BL on January 18th



2013, an adult at CVL on January 15th

2014, three individuals – an adult at CVL on January 24th, a summer-plumage adult at CVL on February 2nd and 4th, an adult at CVL on December 23rd

2016, two individuals – an adult at CVL on January 12th and 21st, a second-winter at CVL on January 21st

2017, four individuals – an adult at CVL on January 18th, an adult at CVL on January 20th, an adult at CVL from February 6th until 12th, an adult at CVL on February 14th, 15th and 21st

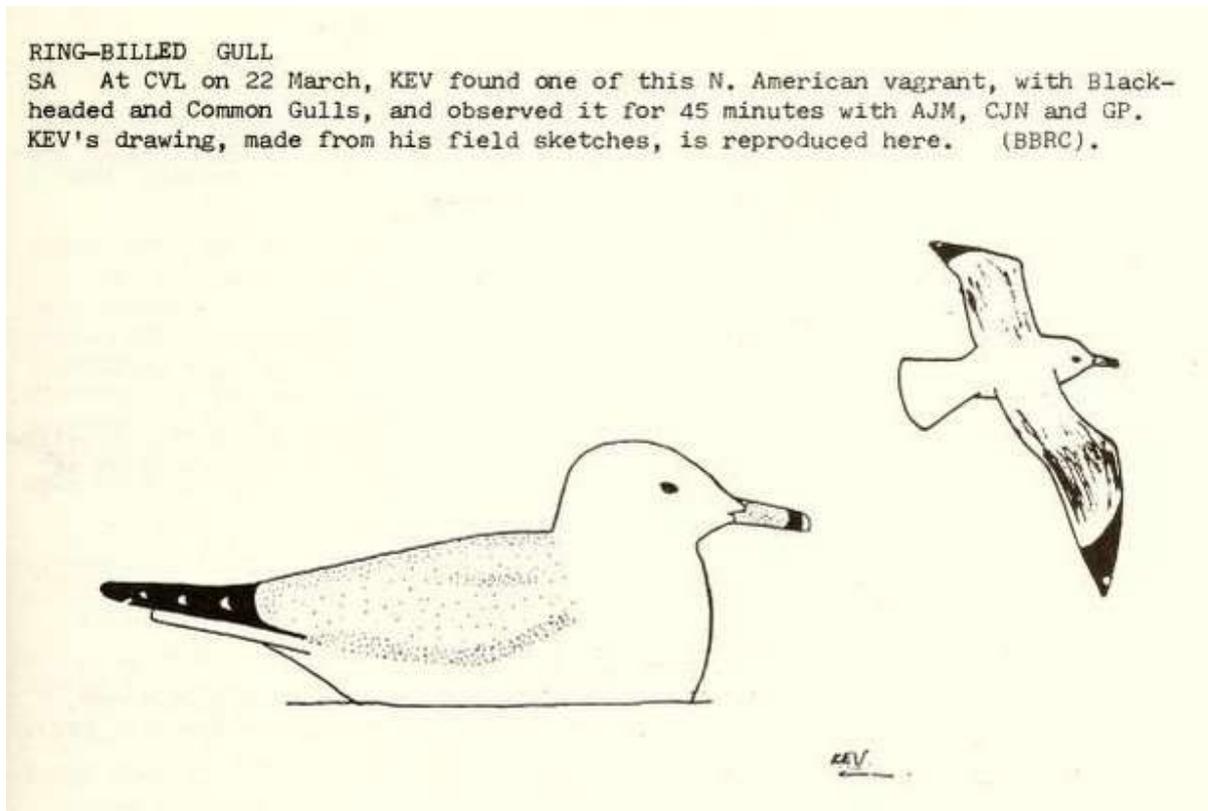
2018, an adult at CVL on February 19th

2019, two individuals – an adult at CVL on February 25th, a second-winter at CVL on November 27th

2022 – a first-winter at CVL intermittently between February 14th and March 21st

There were 42 individuals recorded in the twentieth century:

1980 – an adult at CVL on March 22nd [BBRC], a first-winter at CVL on March 30th [BBRC][1981 ABR]



1982 – an adult at CVL on January 2nd and 3rd and March 14th with probably a different bird on March 20th and 25th [BBRC]

1983 – an adult in the CVL roost regularly between January 22nd and March 30th, CVL on December 29th [both BBRC]

1984 – an adult at CVL on April 8th [BBRC]

1985 – a second-year bird at BG on February 16th, a first-year at CVL on March 10th, an adult at CVL from March 16th until 20th, a second-year at CVL on March 27th [all BBRC]

1986 – an adult at CVL on January 26th, a second-year at CVL from March 8th with a second from April 1st and a third from 9th, all three on 10th with two still on 11th, an adult at CVL on April 19th,<sup>61</sup> a first-winter at CVL from December 26th until 13th May, 1987 and again from November 13th until 6th April, 1988 returned as an adult from November 12th until 25th March, 1989 and again from November 18th until 25th March, 1990, reappearing again on November 18th until 6th April, 1991 and again from November 16th until 1st April, 1992 [all at CVL BBRC]

1987 – an adult at CVL on January 3rd, February 22nd and March 17th, a first-year at New Passage on February 28th, a first-summer at Chittingen Warth on May 10th, an adult at CVL on December 26th was seen again on January 27th and 12th and 19th March, 1988

1988 – an adult at CVL on March 19th

1989 – an additional adult at CVL on January 2nd

1990 – a first-winter at CVL on January 14th and February 4th and 5th, another at CVL on March 25th

1991 – an adult at ASW on February 3rd

1992 – an adult at BG on February 2nd, an adult at CVL on March 21st

1994 – two adults roosting at CVL on February 12th and April 3rd with one on February 13th and 26th, March 12th, 13th, 16th and 19th and April 4th, 5th and 10th, a second-winter at OPS on October 2nd, a second-winter at CVL on December 3rd

1995 – an adult at CVL on January 21st, a second-winter at CVL on February 12th, an adult at CVL on February 18th, an adult at CVL on March 13th

1996 – an adult at CVL on March 23rd, 24th and 26th, an adult at CVL on December 5th

<sup>61</sup> Although published in the ABR, a claim of first-summer at Sand Point/Weston Bay on June 1st, 15th and 26th seems unacceptable; the records for 15th and 26th were rejected by BBRC and I cannot see the June 1st record was ever accepted

1997 – a first-winter at Northwick Warth on October 12th [1999 ABR]

1998 – a first-winter at CVL on February 14th and 15th, a second-summer at BL on May 9th was at BG later in the day, a first-winter at BG on September 26th [1999 ABR]

1999 – an adult at CVL on February 14th

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

An uncommon breeding resident - nests in small numbers on Steep Holm and has bred at CVL. Generally uncommon elsewhere but recorded in increasing numbers at the reservoirs throughout the year with a largest count of 36 at CVL on 13th September, 2011.

Wheeler (1874) described it as 'occasional, Portishead, Avonmouth' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'fairly common about the Severn coast'. Davis (1947) said 'resident in comparatively small numbers. Chiefly on the coast but odd birds, sometimes several, often occur well up the R Avon and at the reservoirs. Breeds regularly on Steep Holm were two pairs first proved in 1923 and where it has since increased to nine or more pairs breeding'. Poulding (1955) mentions 33 pairs on Steep Holm in 1949 and that ringed young are largely sedentary.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

A local rarity with 12 records this century;

2000 – a juvenile/first-winter at CVL on December 26th

2001 – a first-year at the Axe Est. on April 7th

2002, two individuals – a juvenile in the roost at CVL on March 5th, 23rd and 24th. It was seen during the day on 26th and then on eleven dates until April 28th; a juvenile at Northwick Warth on December 31st

2006 – an immature in the roost at CVL on December 23rd

2008 – a juvenile/first-winter in the roost at CVL on February 9th and 15th

2012, two individuals – a second-winter that flew past New Passage on January 5th was seen again there on 8th and then later that day over PWD, and close by at SGW the next day; a first-winter at CVL on March 24th

2014 – a first-winter in the CVL roost on February 22nd and 24th

2018, two individuals – a first-winter at Severn Beach on January 3rd, a first-winter in Weston on February 23rd

2021 – a first winter at OPS on January 6th<sup>62</sup>

There are 22 twentieth century records;

1938 – an immature between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on December 27th and 30th

1939 – a second-winter in the Cumberland Basin from December 27th until 11th January, 1940

1950 – Severn Beach on January 8th, R Avon in Bedminster between February 15th and March 3rd<sup>63</sup>, with probably the same at City Docks on March 3rd

1955 – a fourth year at CVL on March 13th

1957 – the remains of an immature found at Clevedon on December 12th

1969 – a first-winter at CVL on February 16th

1974 – an adult at Kingston Seymour on February 27th and March 20th

1976 – Axe Estuary on May 1st, Sand Point on July 10th<sup>64</sup>

1977 – a first year at CVL on December 11th

1978 – a first winter in the CVL roost on January 30th

1981 – a first-winter at Portishead on February 25th

1982 – a first-winter off the Axe Estuary on December 10th

1983 – CVL on December 26th

1984 – a second-winter on Severnside between January 11th and February 25th, an immature at Oldbury-on-Severn on January 22nd, an adult at CVL between February 4th and 18th, a second-winter at CVL on February 19th [*last in 1985 ABR*]

1986 – CVL on March 13th

1991 – an adult flew SW at Aust Warth on March 21st

1995 – a second winter at CVL on March 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th and also seen near BL on 16th

During the nineteenth century four individuals were recorded:

1840 – an adult shot in the winter on the Severn Yarrell (1843)

1870 – two obtained at Weston-super-Mare<sup>65</sup> and one on Steep Holm Davis (1947)

<sup>62</sup> It is unclear whether one seen from OPS on February 21st was actually in Avon

<sup>63</sup> SBR gives dates as February 15th until 21st and again on March 3rd with an apparently different immature at Bedminster Bridge on February 23rd

<sup>64</sup> Completely off-white gulls at CVL on April 25th and May 1st could not be specifically identified

<sup>65</sup> One in January per Palmer and Ballance (1968)

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

A local rarity with 25 individuals recorded this century:

2000, six individuals – a juvenile/first-winter at CVL on several dates between January 8th and April 12th, juvenile/first-winter at Northwick Warth on January 23rd, a juvenile/first-winter at Filton from February 1st until 13th, a juvenile/first-winter at OPS on five dates between February 17th and March 3rd with a second on 17th and 18th, a juvenile/first-winter at Axe Estuary on March 11th

2002, three individuals – a juvenile at CVL on January 5th with another on 12th, 13th and 23rd and a third on March 17th

2003, a juvenile in the roost at CVL on March 7th and 9th

2005, an adult in the roost at CVL on January 30th and March 8th, 12th, 13th, 17th and 18th

2007, a juvenile in the CVL roost on February 11th

2008, two individuals – a juvenile/first-winter at CVL on May 2nd, a second-winter at Severn Beach on November 3rd

2012, an adult at CVL on January 25th was at BL the next day

2013, a second-winter in the roost at CVL on March 13th

2014, a series of records of immatures from CVL between January 25th and April 18th involved at least three different individuals, one of which was at BL on March 17th

2017, an immature at PWD on March 20th

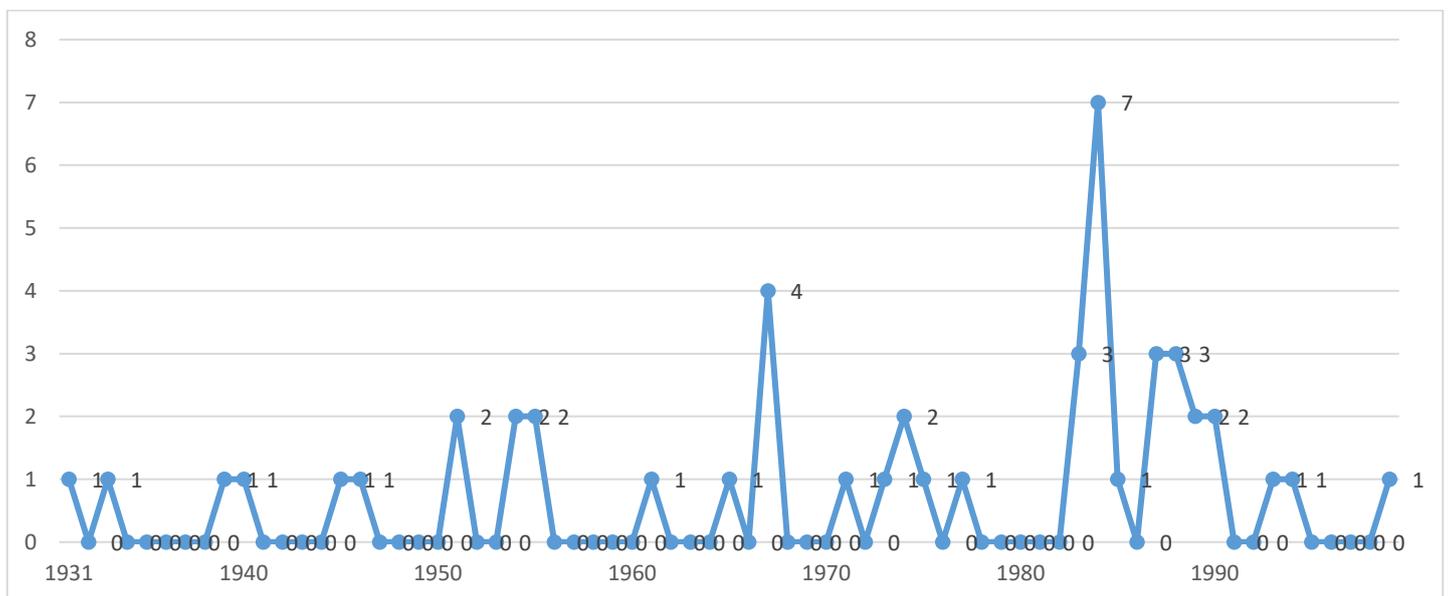
2018, two individuals – a second-winter at PWD on March 17th, a first-winter at Dowlais Farm from April 6th until 8th

2019, an adult at CVL on March 11th

2020, a juvenile at CVL on November 29th

2022 – a first-winter seen twice at CVL, on March 23rd and April 14th

All published records for the twentieth century are given in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the graph below:



There are only two nineteenth century records:

Prior to 1860 – killed at Weston-super-Mare mentioned in Davis (1947)

1870 – killed at Weston-super-Mare on December 24th [1871 Zoologist p2488]

Kumlien's Gull *L. g. kumlieni*

A national rarity until 1999 and a local rarity since with six individuals this century;

2000 – second-winter at CVL on March 8th and 15th, see Vinicombe (2002)

2002/2006 – an adult at CVL on January 12th, see Vinicombe (2002) returned to CVL on February 1st and 8th, 10th and 17th March, 2003, on February 28th and 29th, March 15th, 24th and 27th and 12th December, 2004, February 6th and 11th and 24th December, 2005 and January 21st and 22nd and 18th February, 2006

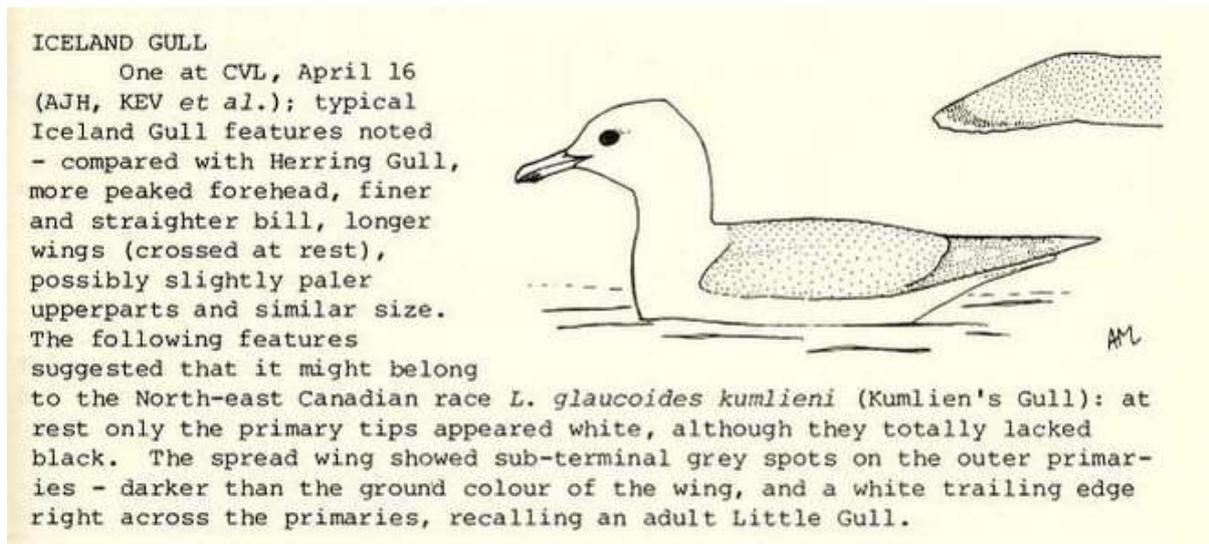
2006 – an adult at CVL on March 19th

2011 – an adult at CVL on February 21st and March 4th, 5th and 12th

2014 – an adult at CVL on March 19th

2017 – an adult at CVL on January 29th

The only twentieth century record accepted by BBRC was in 1982, an adult at CVL on April 16th [BBRC]



Vinicombe (2002) mentions three other twentieth century records;

1990 – a juvenile at CVL on February 4th, which was submitted to BBRC as a Thayer's Gull but not accepted

1996 – a first-summer at OPS from June 30th until July 17th

1997 – a second or third-winter at CVL on December 13th and 31st. The 1999 ABR says that the BBRC had accepted this record 'in principle, it is awaiting a final decision by their subspecies committee'

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

Two races occur locally, the Western subspecies *L. a. argenteus* is a common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, around Bristol and Bath and at the CVL roost where the largest count is 3,400 in January 2004. Apart from the Steep Holm colony, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath (239 pairs in 2009 per Rock (2009), and smaller ones in other towns.

Wheeler (1874) described it as 'frequent, Avon and Severn' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'common, nests on Steep Holm' Davis (Davis (1947)) lists it as 'resident, abundant on the coast at all seasons also along the R Avon and at the docks. Common at the reservoirs and a frequent visitor elsewhere inland. Breeds only on Steep Holm where much increased during last 50 years and now perhaps 500 pairs nesting. A pair nested unsuccessfully at the foot of Aust Cliff 1942'. Poulding (1955) gives a count of 1,250 pairs on Steep Holm in 1949.

The Northern race *L. a. argentatus* has been a local rarity since 2019. There had been no records since 2012, when it was described as a 'scarce but doubtless overlooked winter visitor. Not all individuals are safely identifiable, especially immatures.'

2019 – a third-calendar year at CVL on February 18th

2020 – a near adult on the R Avon near Sea Mills on November 11th

2022 – an adult at Pilning Wetland on March 7th

Davis (1947) treated all local birds as being of this subspecies and no subsequent reports give subspecific details until the 1984 ABR. It seems to have been regular by that time, Vinicombe (1984) stating 'as many as a dozen have been noted at the CVL gull roost, mainly in mid-winter'. Records are then almost annual, with multiple records in many years until 2012.

**Caspian Gull** *Larus caccinnans*

A national rarity until 2000 and a local rarity since with 14 individuals recorded, all this century.

2002, two individuals – a second-summer/third-winter at CVL on September 25th [2006 ABR], an adult at Harnhill Tip on November 16th and again on December 6th see Martin (2002) for more details

2004 – an adult at CVL on September 26th [2006 ABR]

2006, three individuals – a third-winter at CVL on January 4th, 14th and 28th and an adult there on January 17th and February 9th<sup>66</sup>, a first-summer at Severn Beach on August 5th [2013 ABR]

2007 – a first-winter at CVL on January 13th and 20th and February 24th

2008 – a first-winter in the CVL roost on October 12th<sup>67</sup>

2013 – a first-winter in the CVL roost on January 11th

2016 – a third calendar-year at CVL on August 9th

2017, three individuals – a first-winter in the CVL roost on January 17th and 26th, an adult at Shortwood on March 2nd, a second-winter at CVL on November 14th<sup>68</sup>

2019 – a third-calendar year at CVL on March 21st

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<sup>66</sup> The ABR gives the wrong day and year for this record

<sup>67</sup> ABR gives wrong date of 10th

<sup>68</sup> A second-calendar year at CVL on 31st May, 2018 was possibly this species but a hybrid origin could not be eliminated

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

An uncommon passage migrant, summer visitor and winter visitor; most occur in the late summer and autumn at CVL, scarce but increasingly recorded elsewhere. The largest count is of 15 at CVL on 15th June, 2002.

Although the 1948 ABR included notes on a possible seen on the R Avon on February 20th the earliest published records are as follows:

1979 – two at RPD on April 9th Upton (1984)

1980 – CVL on February 3rd

1981 – RPD on June 14th *Upton (1984)*, two at CVL on August 12th with one on November 22nd, 29th and December 5th, Weston-super-Mare beach on November 22nd

1982 – CVL on February 6th and 10th, July 22nd and September 9th



**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

Two races occur locally, the commonest is the Western subspecies, *L. f. graellsii*, which is a common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident with a largest roost count of 7,015 at CVL in January 2004. In addition to the colony on Steep Holm, there are urban colonies in Bristol and Bath (668 pairs in 2009 per Rock (2009) and smaller ones in other towns.

Wheeler (1874) described it as 'occasional, Avon and Severn' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'seen about the coast in small numbers'. Davis (1947) listed it as 'summer resident February or March to early November but records show that a few usually remain to winter. Occurs abundantly along the R Avon and at the docks, also at the reservoirs and not infrequently elsewhere inland. Much less common on the coast than Herring Gull. Breeds, in about the same numbers as Herring Gull only on Steep Holm where it has also greatly increased in the last 50 years'. Poulding (1955) gives a count of 750 pairs on Steep Holm in 1949 and showed how the young disperse down the Atlantic coast of Europe.

The dark-mantled Scandinavian race, *L. f. intermedius*, is a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant but almost annual at CVL. It is probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage. This subspecies was not recognised in early reports, all dark mantled birds being treated as *L. f. fuscus*, although in practice they are much more likely to have been this subspecies. The 1984 ABR is the first report to mention the *intermedius ssp.*

Davis (1947) said dark mantled birds were 'occasional visitor, perhaps occurring more often than records suggest'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) state 'detailed observations in 1965 and 1966 on flocks of Lesser Black-backed Gulls visiting CVL for roosting or bathing show that some of these passage-migrants from mid-March to early April are of this race (B King in litt). Largest number so far identified is 65 (20th March, 1966) but over 100 suspected at peak migration period.' However local birds vary in mantle shade quite considerably and as long ago as 1966 the ABR was highlighting the difficulties of judging mantle shade while the 1966 SBR says 'observers are urged to exercise extreme caution before assigning birds to this race, particularly when light conditions are less than perfect and in the absence of birds of the British race for comparison'.

Early records of dark-mantled birds are as follows:

1934 – Sea Mills on July 21st Tetley (1935) [*September 1934 British Birds p117*]

1937 – Sea Mills on April 20th [*July 1937 British Birds p 54*], BG on August 22nd [*November 1937 British Birds p199*]

1938 – Sea Mills in April Davis (1947)

1942 – Sea Mills on October 22nd

1956 – two at BL on April 2nd

1963 – CVL on April 6th and Weston Bay on November 28th

1966 – three at Weston-super-Mare on February 21st with 'several' there on April 23rd, CVL on September 4th, four at CVL on September 11th [*all SBR*]

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*

A National rarity with three individuals recorded this century;

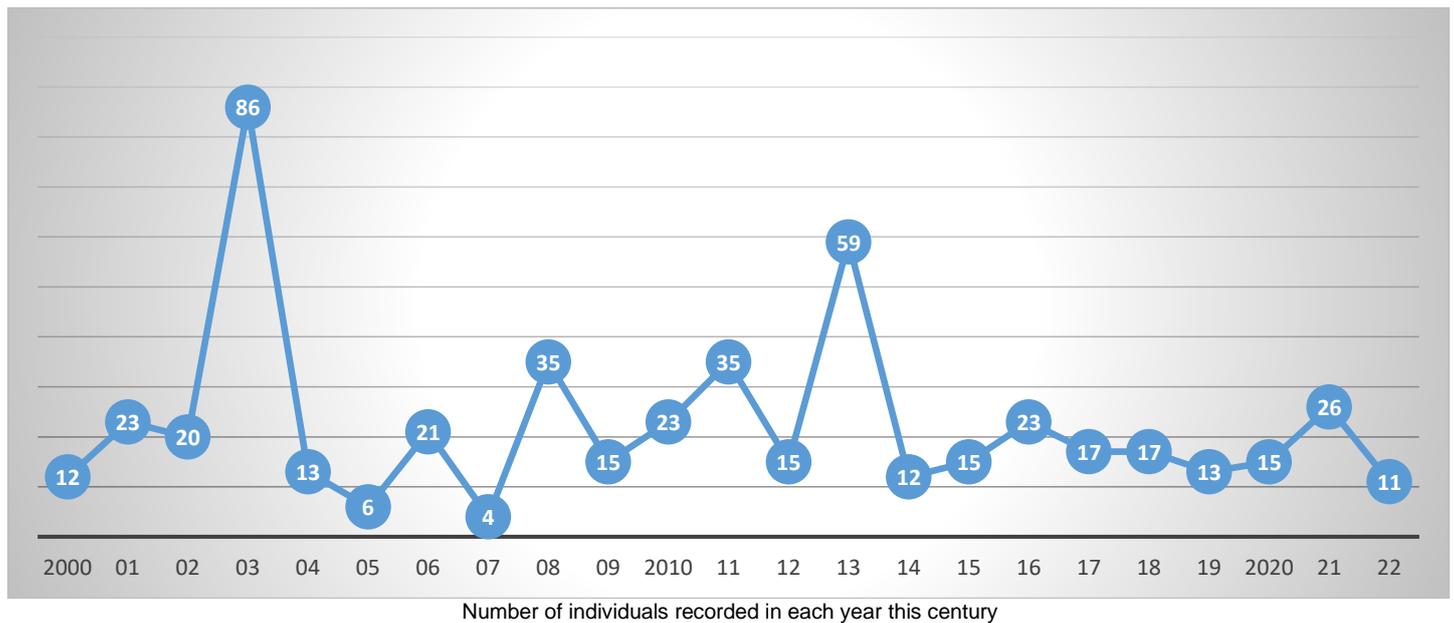
2016 – two at Royal Portbury Dock and Portbury Wharf on May 11th [BBRC]

2017 – CVL on July 2nd [BBRC][2018 ABR]

The only other local record is from 1988, at CVL on August 13th [BBRC]

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

An uncommon passage migrant, most are recorded on the coast.



The largest count is of 19 at New Passage on 5th May, 1989. The average arrival date is April 11th with an earliest arrival on 18th February, 2012 at ASW. The average departure is September 11th with the latest departure on 30th October, 1993 at Axe Estuary [SBR][1994 ABR].

Davis (1947) described it as a 'scarce visitor on migration'. Early records include

1890 – shot at Clevedon on April 22nd Blathwayt (1906)

1936 – Severn Beach in September<sup>69</sup>

1938 – two large black-billed terns at BL on September 23rd were probably this species [SBR]

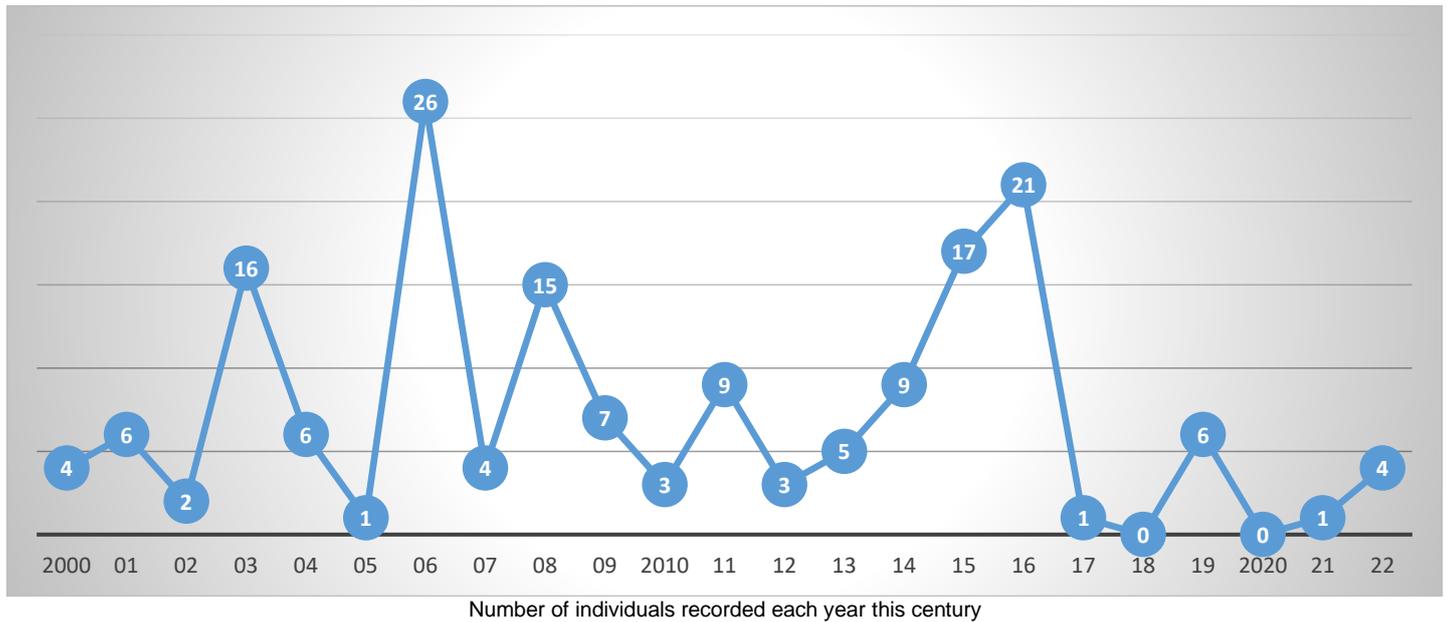
1947 – two at BL in April 1947 [see 1948 ABR for correction]

1955 – CVL on June 20th

<sup>69</sup> Lancaster (1989) says these were at Chittening Warth on 30th

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

A scarce passage migrant and declining; generally, the scarcest of the five 'common' terns. Prior to 2008 it was a local rarity with that status reinstated from 2023.



The largest count is of 34 off Severnside on 1st May, 1990<sup>70</sup>. The earliest arrival date is 16th April, in 2003 with birds on Severnside and Ladye Bay and two in the evening at CVL, and in 2015 with three at CVL. The latest departure date is 31st October, 1964 at CVL.

Davis (1947) says it was 'an uncommon visitor on migration though probably more frequent than is supposed. Most records refer to spring passage. An early notice is that of five shot at Weston-super-Mare May 1866, while recent reports are of two at Severn Beach May 1945, and single birds at BL May 1930, Clevedon April 1934 and R Axe July 1945. Not known as having remained to breed within the district'. Apparently, it bred at Steart, Somerset in 1920s.

**Bridled Tern** *Onchyoprion anaethetus*

A National rarity with one local record from 1958, an adult found dead in Sand Bay on October 17th, with identification confirmed by the British Museum [BBRC][January 1960 British Birds p32]

**Sooty Tern** *Onchyoprion fuscatus*

A National rarity with one local record from 1885, caught alive after gales three miles from Bath on October 4th or 5th, mentioned in Charbonnier (1899), Davis (1947) and Palmer and Ballance (1968)

<sup>70</sup> Although Lancaster (1989) mentions 'a remarkable 74 in spring 1990', this is the total for the whole of the May passage

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

A local rarity with four individuals recorded this century;

2001 – an adult at Sand Point on May 20th

2016 – an adult and juvenile at Northwick Warth on August 28th

2019 – an adult at CVL and then BL on May 21st

Following a review in 2016 several claims were removed leaving four twentieth century records;

1962 – a breeding plumage adult found dead at Clutton on May 10th<sup>71</sup>

1977 – off Brean Down on the Avon boundary on April 23rd (overlooked in the 2016 review)

1990 – a breeding plumage adult off New Passage on May 1st

1997 – a first-winter at Severn Beach on October 7th, 8th and 9th

There is one nineteenth century record, from Clevedon. Charbonnier (1899) gives the date as April 1897 but this should probably be 1898, an individual mentioned in Blathwayt (1906) as having been examined by himself.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

A regular passage migrant with a few throughout the summer. It is generally uncommon, but large flocks have occurred in some years especially on the Estuary in spring or at CVL in autumn. The largest counts are as follows: the vast majority of 2,170 'commic' terns off Severnside on 1st May, 1990 were thought to be Commons. The highest definite count seems to be 575 off Ladye Bay on 2nd May, 2011. The highest inland count is a flock of 139 at CVL on the morning of 22nd September, 2010 which moved on to be replaced by 13 in the evening giving a day count of 152.

The average arrival date is April 10th, 5 days earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the earliest arrival is 30th March, in 2006 on Severnside and in 2017, seven at OPS. The average departure date is currently October 1st, two weeks earlier than given by Bland (1992) with a latest departure of 28th November, 1982 a juvenile at BG.

Wheeler (1874) says it is 'occasional, Severn, has been shot at Rownham Ferry' and Charbonnier (1899) says 'an uncommon visitor, three specimens occurred at Litton in September 1896'. Davis (1947) describes it as a 'passage migrant usually in small numbers. Occurs chiefly in autumn but has been noted in all months April to October. Sometimes reported from the coast though most records are from the reservoirs. 25 terns, either Common or Arctic were seen over flooded pastures at Stoke Gifford September 1935. Not always separable in the field from Arctic Tern to which some records may refer'.

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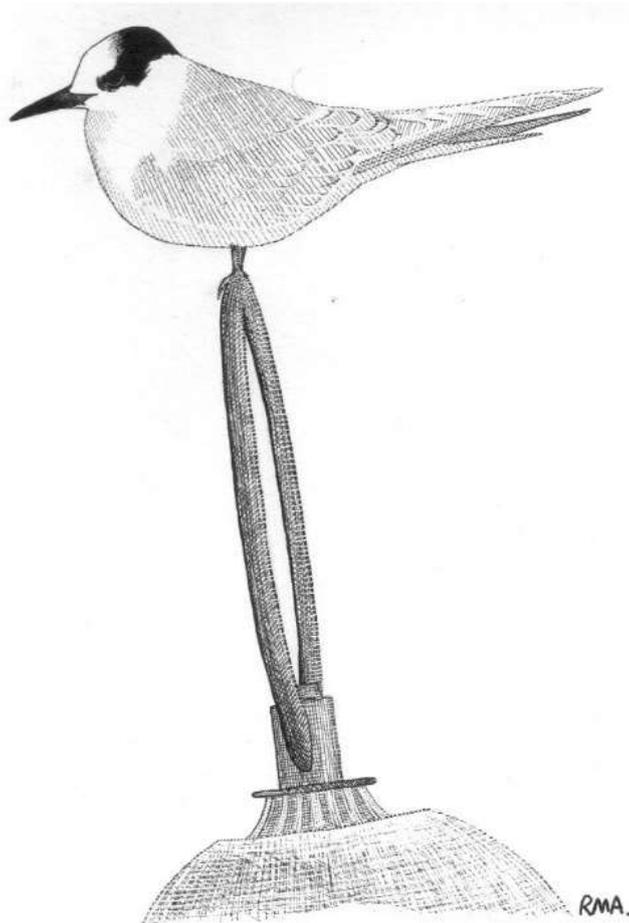
<sup>71</sup> Specimen still in Bristol Museum

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but can occasionally occur in large flocks in the Estuary under favourable conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often appears after westerly gales. The largest count is of 2,460 at Sand Point on 2nd May, 1998. The highest inland count is of 130 at CVL on 18th April, 2013.

The average arrival date is April 16th with an earliest arrival on 29th March, 2015, photographed at Severn Beach. The average departure date is October 2nd with a latest departure on 21st November, 1996, two juveniles at CVL.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, Portishead' but Charbonnier (1899) says 'an occasional visitor. In Yarrell's British Birds is an account of the appearance in the city of great numbers of this and Common Tern in May 1842'. Davis (1947) says it is a 'passage migrant, may occur fairly frequently but owing to close resemblance in the field to Common Tern is seldom definitely recorded. Great numbers of both this and Common Tern appeared in the Channel and Estuary in early May 1842, many of them visiting the Bristol docks where due to their tameness two or three hundred were killed and others taken alive. A considerable invasion of Common and Arctic Terns, mostly Arctic, was reported from the reservoirs April – May 1947, up to 100 or more being seen on several occasions at BL and a few were noted at BG and the Duchess Pond, Stapleton'. The large numbers in May 1842 were reported in the local newspapers of the time, see page 152 on the 2015 ABR.



**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

A National rarity with four individuals recorded this century;

2006 – a second-summer at CVL on April 28th and 29th [BBRC]

2013, two individuals – a summer plumaged adult at CVL on April 23rd with a different individual on 25th [BBRC]

2016 – an adult past OPS on May 10th [BBRC]

Three individuals were recorded in the twentieth century

1959 – CVL from June 23rd until 25th [BBRC]

**WHISKERED TERN** *Chlidonias hybrida*

**S.** One flying, and at rest, Chew Valley res., June 24, 25— first seen and identified by H.H. and later by H.H.D., B.K., G.S. and M.A.W. Field notes supplied include: pronounced black cap reaching to nape; pure white of cheeks extending down throat and blending into grey of underparts; grey upper-parts and tail (only slightly forked); white outer tail feathers and under-tail coverts; thick, deep crimson bill, and legs same colour. First record for Somerset.

1983 – a first-summer at CVL from May 29th until 31st and an adult there on 29th only [BBRC]

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

A National rarity until 2006 and a local rarity since then with just three records this century;

2001 – a second-summer at BL from August 4th until 10th [BBRC\*]

2005 – a juvenile at Axe Estuary and Weston STW from September 7th until 12th [BBRC\*]

2014 – a juvenile at CVL from September 10th until 13th

It was commoner in the past with 27 individuals recorded in the second half of the twentieth century;

<sup>72</sup>1949 – an adult at BG on September 9th and 10th [British Birds vol 43 p161-162]

**WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

**S.** An adult in moult was seen, hawking with two immature Black Terns, over No. 2 reservoir, Barrow Gurney, Sept. 9 (M.J.W.,

1966 – a juvenile at CVL from August 24th until 27th, although the dates given in the BBRC report are 27th – 30th.

1967 – an adult at CVL on September 10th [BBRC\*]

1969 – a first year at BG on September 7th. [BBRC\*]

1970 – juvenile at CVL from August 13th until 17th, juvenile at CVL from September 12th until 16th [BBRC\*]

1974 – an immature at CVL on September 11th [BBRC\*]

1975 – two at CVL on June 14th and an adult from August 8th until 12th [BBRC\*]

1977 – an immature at CVL from September 25th until 28th [BBRC\*]

1978 – a juvenile at CVL from September 9th until 17th [BBRC\*]

1979 – a juvenile at CVL from September 7th until 10th with a second from 8th until 10th, a juvenile at Yeo Estuary on August 19th [BBRC\*]

1980 – a juvenile at CVL on August 24th [1981 BBRC\* and omitted from the ABR]

1981 – a juvenile at CVL on August 13th [BBRC\*]

1982 – three records from CVL, an adult on July 20th, an adult in winter plumage on September 18th and a juvenile from September 20th until 23rd, all [BBRC\*]

1983 – a juvenile at BG on October 1st was seen at CVL later the same day [BBRC\*]

1984 – an adult at CVL on July 8th [BBRC\*], a juvenile at CVL from August 28th until September 1st [BBRC\*]

1987 – an adult at CVL on September 1st [BBRC\*]

1990 – an adult in a flock of Black Terns off Aust on May 3rd [BBRC\*]

1991 – an adult/second-summer at CVL on July 29th [BBRC\*]

1996 – a second-summer at CVL from June 9th until 11th [BBRC\*]

<sup>72</sup> A young tern at BG on September 23rd, 1935 with two adult Black Terns was possibly this species as it lacked a dark mark on the flank per SBR

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*

An uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn with occasional influxes. Most records are from CVL. The largest counts are of 732 on Severnside on 1st May, 1990, at least 600 at CVL on 11th August, 1965 and 480 at CVL on 21st September, 1957.

The average arrival date is April 24th, just one day later than given by Bland (1992), with an earliest arrival on 4th April, 1980<sup>73</sup>, when four were at BL. The average departure date is now October 2nd, 14 days earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the latest departure is 23rd November, 1986 at New Passage.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare summer visitor, Avonmouth' and Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurred at Avonmouth in September 1896'. Davis (1947) – passage migrant, regular at the reservoirs usually in both spring and autumn. Very few records from the coast though sometimes reported in former years from Weston-super-Mare and once from Avonmouth'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) say that records at BL 'date back to 1905'



American Black Tern *C. n. surinamensis* 0, 1

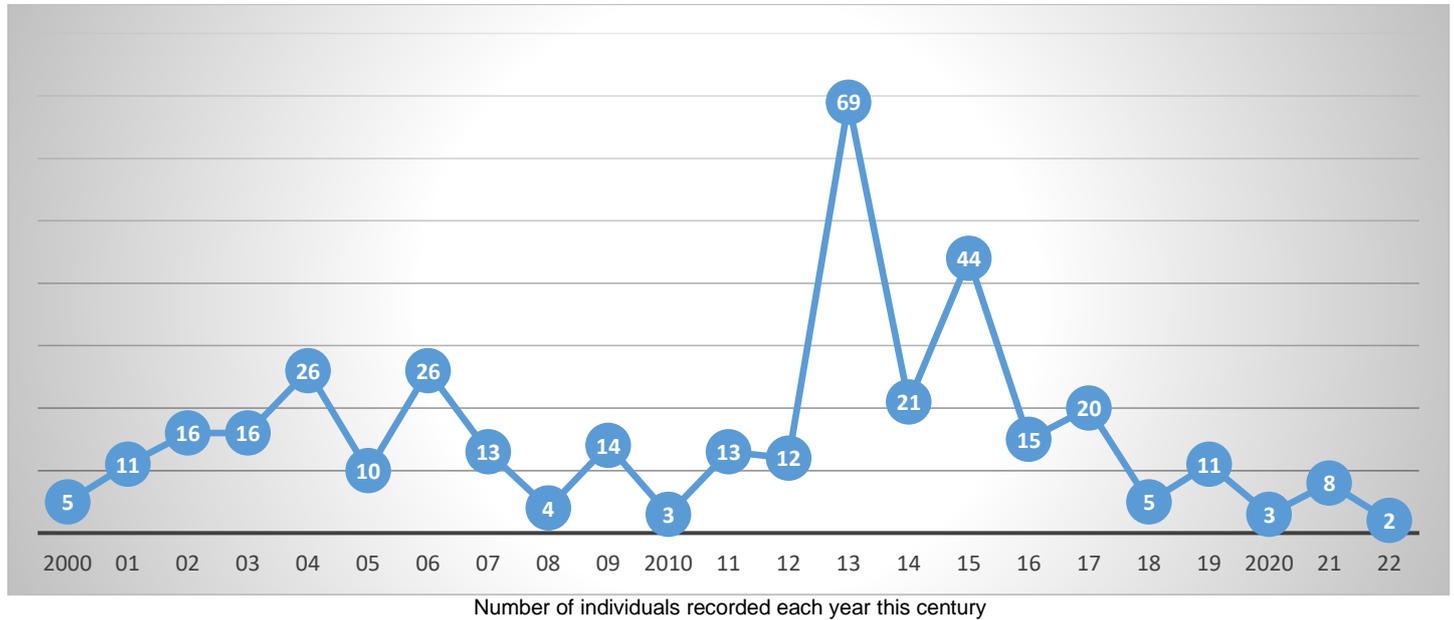
A National rarity

1999 – a juvenile at Weston STW from October 3rd until 11th [BBRC] see Andrews, Higgins and Martin (1999) for more details

<sup>73</sup> Bland (1992) mentions an earlier date of April 2nd, 1982 but the 1982 ABR gives the earliest record for that year as April 21st.

### Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

A scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and storm-driven visitor at almost any time of year. It was a local rarity until 1996.



The earliest local records are:

1960 – Middle Hope on September 11th

1967 – Sand Bay on September 4th

1968 – an oiled bird Sand Bay on September 29th, Sand Point October 13th

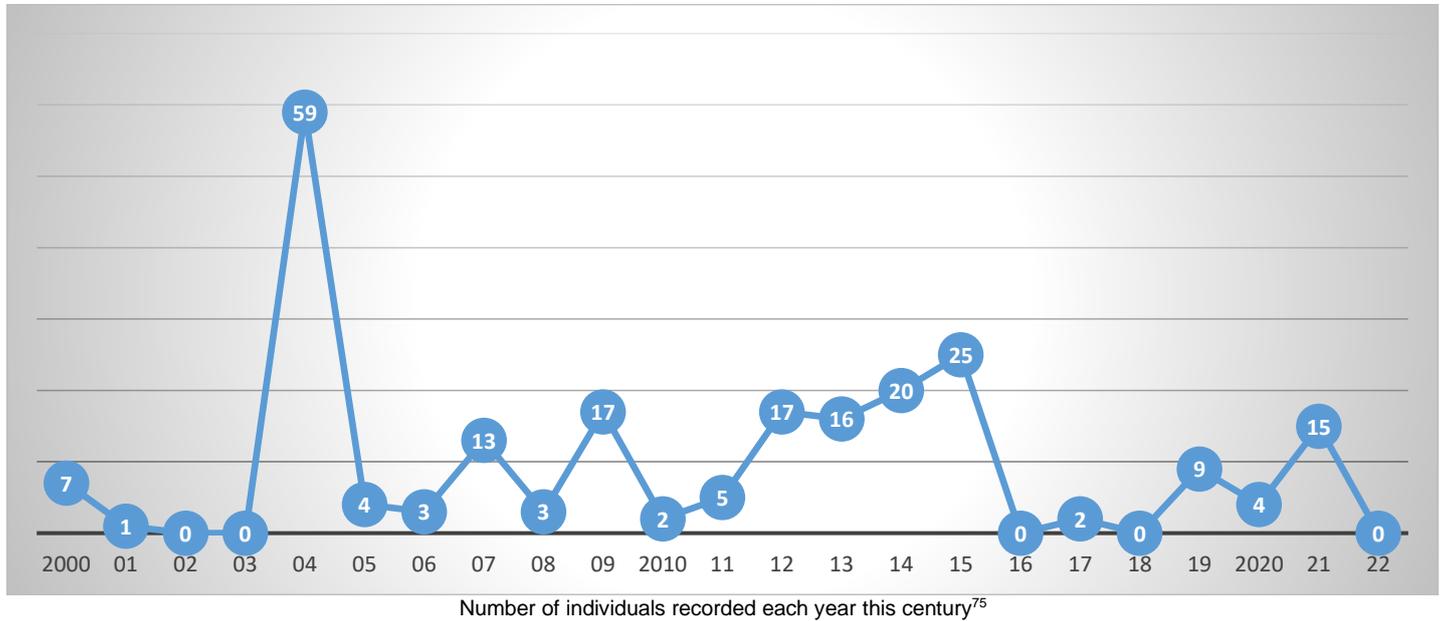
Supporting notes are required for inland records, with records from 1969 (CVL September 13th and 14th), 1977 (CVL two on September 16th), 1981 (CVL dead on November 28th), 1982 (CVL October 16th and 17th), 1983 (CVL September two on 4th and one on 5th), 1984 (CVL September 27th), 1998 (CVL July 13th), 2001 (CVL August 2nd), 2005 (CVL September 30th, CVL October 14th), 2006 (BG December 9th), 2009 (CVL September 4th, CVL October 20th), 2011 (BL September 17th), 2013 (CVL 18 on September 26th), 2014 (CVL September 3rd, CVL October 15th until 19th), 2016 (Saltford<sup>74</sup> February 8th), 2017 (CVL September 27th), 2018 (CVL September 23rd and 24th).

<sup>74</sup> Not Keynsham as stated in ABR, confirmed by observer

### **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor with a largest count of a flock of 28 at Severn Beach in the evening of 4th May, 2004 (a flock of 8 had flown through in the morning).

It was considered a local rarity until 2014, with records for 25 of the last 30 years; the chart below shows the number of individuals each year this century.



Very rare inland with supporting notes required. There are five inland records, all from CVL, from 1999 (2 individuals together), 2009 (2 records), 2012 and 2013.

The earliest published records are as follows:

1879 – an adult shot at Weston-super-Mare on October 17th [*page 19 of 1880 Zoologist*], six were obtained in November 1879, four at Clevedon, one at Chew Magna and one at New Passage Charbonnier (1880)

1887 – a skua, stated to be this species, was found dead near Hawkesbury Upton in December Davis (1947)

1963 – freshly dead second summer female found at the mouth of R Kenn on November 17th<sup>76</sup>

1978 – a light phase off Brean Down on May 7th was moving into Avon waters

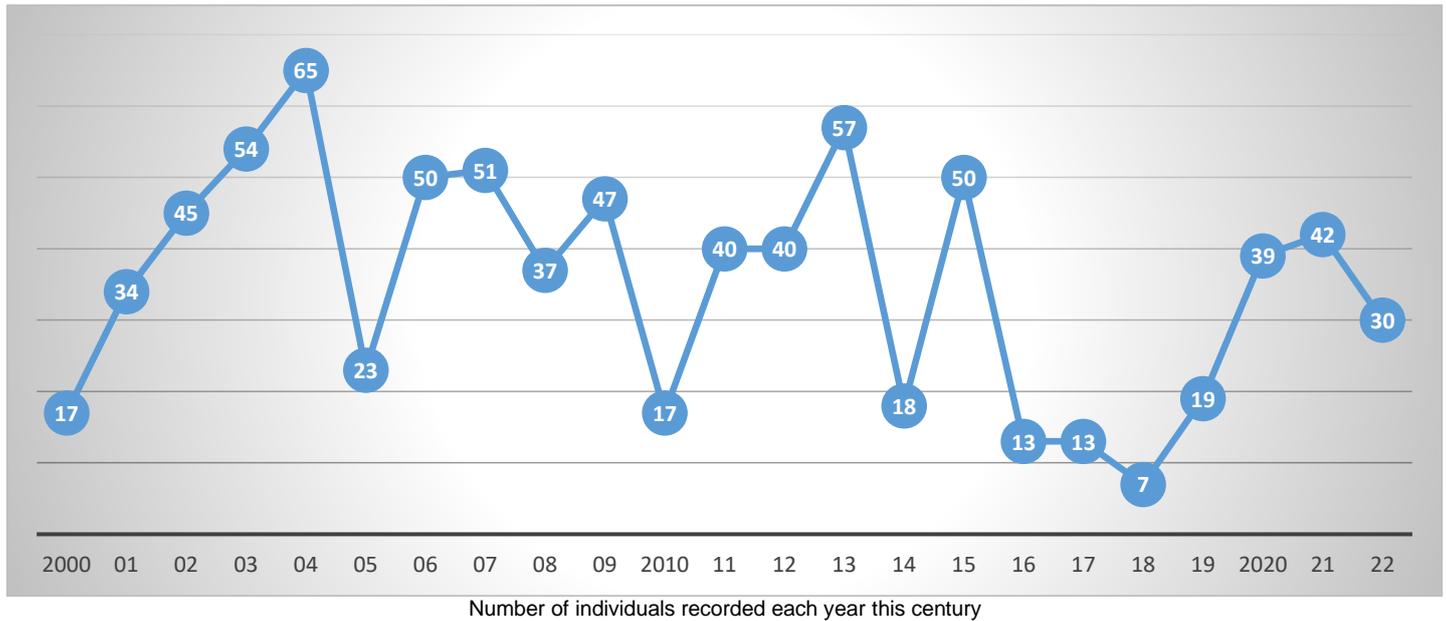
1983 – Portishead on September 4th, New Passage on October 16th and 17th, Chittening on October 31st, all dark phase

<sup>75</sup> 2020 records omitted from ABR in error

<sup>76</sup> Skin in City Museum, Bristol

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

An uncommon and declining spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn).



The largest count is of at least 100, possibly as many as 120, in a single flock at Severn Beach on the evening of 13th April, 1998.

It was a local rarity until 1996 with supporting notes still required for inland records, with records from 1963 (CVL September 19th<sup>77</sup>, CVL October 26th), 1968 (corpse at BG October 2nd [SBR]), 1974 (two CVL September 11th, CVL September 30th), 1975 (CVL October 7th), 1976 (CVL August 31st), 1977 (four CVL September 9th), 1978 (three CVL September 16th), 1979 (CVL August 24th), 1980 (two CVL May 31st, CVL August 31st), 1982 (BL August 17th, three CVL September 11th, CVL September 22nd, CVL October 9th), 1983 (CVL September 4th), 1986 (CVL August 10th), 1987 (over Charlcombe August 18th, CVL August 16th), 1988 (two CVL August 21st, four CVL September 25th), 1990 (CVL October 6th and 7th, CVL October 31st), 1994 (three CVL September 10th), 1999 (CVL October 17th), 2000 (CVL September 16th), 2001 (CVL December 7th – 11th), 2003 (five CVL September 21st), 2005 (two CVL October 14th), 2006 (two BL September 17th), 2008 (two CVL April 20th), 2010 (three CVL August 26th [2011 ABR]), 2012 (two CVL October 9th, CVL October 11th), 2013 (three+ CVL September 26th), 2017 (four CVL September 14th), 2019 (two CVL August 25th) and 2022 (Warmley April 27th).

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'very rare winter visitor, once shot at Clevedon' while Davis (1947) called it an 'irregular visitor chiefly on autumn passage. Perhaps occurs more frequently than records suggest'. Early published records are as follows:

1873 – an adult shot at Clevedon in December Blathwayt (1906)

1891 – Clevedon in October Charbonnier (1899)

1903 – BL Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1914 – BL on September 2nd Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1917 – a dark phase adult shot at the mouth of the R Axe, Weston-super-Mare on June 4th [*British Birds vol 11 page 68*]

1923 – BL on September 23rd Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1941 – dark-phase at Littleton-on-Severn on June 1st

1942 – a dark-phase off Severn Beach on October 15th

<sup>77</sup> SBR gives date as 18th September

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

A national rarity until 1980 and a local one since, with just six individuals this century:

2002 – an adult flew inland over Chittingen Warth on May 14th

2008 – a juvenile off OPS on September 6th

2015, two individuals – a sub-adult at CVL on May 29th and a juvenile there on September 7th

2019 – an adult at CI-Y on October 16th

2021 – an adult seen at Severn Beach on March 11th, then at Bristol Airport on 12th, 14th and 17th and at CVL on 16th

Fifteen individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1912 – seen near Weston-super-Mare in June *Davis (1947)*, Yeo Estuary on June 23rd *Rose (1992)*

1971 – an immature off the end of Brean Down on September 27th may possibly have been in Avon waters

**LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

**S.** One off end of Brean Down, Sept. 27, seen by BR in varying light conditions down to 50 yds. in flight and on water.

Very small, with more graceful, buoyant flight than Arctic Skuas seen same day and on 26th; deep, almost tern-like wing-beats. Slender wings; greyer and less rufous or yellowish than Arctic Skuas.

1976 – a light-phase adult at CVL on June 19th [*BBRC\**]

1981 – a juvenile off New Passage on October 4th [*1982 ABR*]

1982 – an adult at CVL on August 10th

'Appeared slightly larger than Sandwich Tern; short, straight bill; uniformly dark brownish upperparts including dark head-cap and very long tail (as long as body); underparts, throat and cheeks light, appearing white. Flight very buoyant, purposeful and tern-like'.

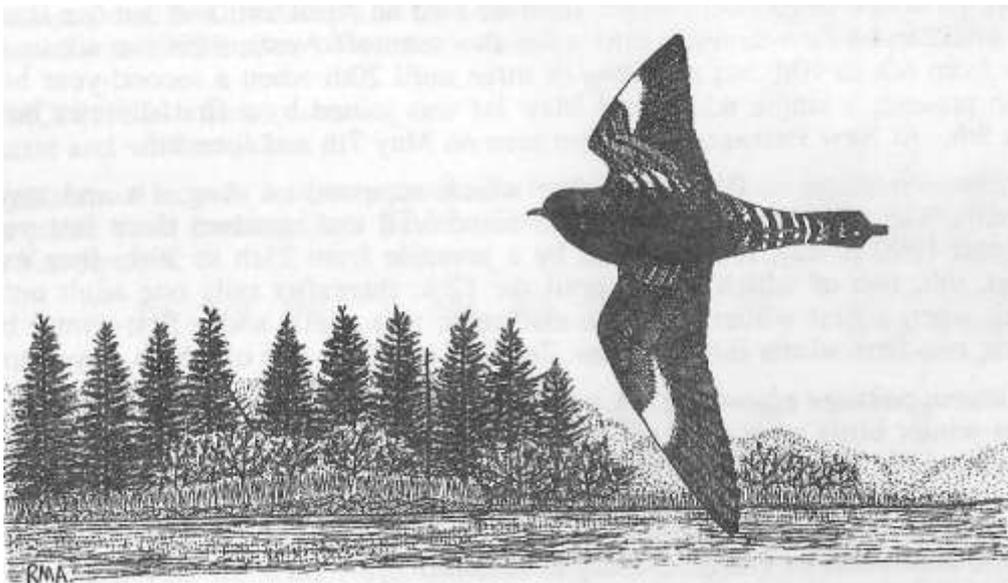
1983 – Severnside (New Passage) on September 3rd [*p157 of 2000 ABR*]

1984 – flew NE off Brean Down on September 9th

1988 – an adult at Severn Beach on September 26th

1990 – an adult off New Passage on September 20th

1991 – an adult flew NE off New Passage on May 5th, a dark-phase juvenile at CVL from September 6th until 17th



1994 – an adult between the Horseshoe Bend and Sea Mills and also at Ham Green from April 6th until 9th, at New Passage on November 25th and 26th before moving to Severn Beach on 27th [*photograph in 2000 ABR*]

1999 – a juvenile at CVL on August 24th

The only nineteenth century record is of one shot at Clevedon in October 1891 following severe gales mentioned in Davis (1947)

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*

A local rarity with just eight records this century;

2001 – Severn Beach on October 25th

2002 – head and wings were found at St John’s Church, Bath on November 21st having been killed by a Peregrine

2006, two individuals – Severn Beach on October 22nd, Chittening Warth on December 6th

2007 – Severn Beach on November 17th

2009 – Severn Beach on November 26th

2010 – Severn Beach on November 12th

2016 – Weston-super-Mare on January 4th

During the twentieth century 39 individuals were recorded, although nearly half of those were in a 1950 wreck:

1950 – alive at Woodspring Priory on February 11th<sup>78</sup>, others found dead at BL on February 11th and 20th and at Tickenham on March 11th, near Weston on 8th February, a flock of twelve landing on a wet road near Bristol on 11th February [*last two in April 1952 edition of British Birds*]

1953 – in estuary below Aust Cliff on October 4th

1955 – found alive at Locking on October 19th and released on the coast

1960 – a headless corpse found at BL on November 6th

1962 – found alive at Charfield on January 12th and released at Slimbridge

1966 – one picked up alive on the bank of the R Severn near Oldbury February 6th later died

1970 – an adult female found in ‘S Glos’ on November 12th subsequently died

1972 – one found alive in Hanham on January 26th was taken to Bristol Zoo where it died next day

1975 – BL on February 1st

1979 – one found exhausted at Tockington on December 17th died the next day

1981 – flying to NE off Severn beach on November 28th

1984 – seen flying downriver at Aust on January 13th with possibly the same seen later in the day off New Passage, one found dying at OPS on January 18th

1988 – two off New Passage on February 10th

1990 – an adult found under a hedge at Marshfield<sup>79</sup> on November 4th was then released at CVL, New Passage on December 27th

1991 – birds noted off New Passage on January 5th, 6th, 9th and 10th, an ailing bird found in a Severn Beach garden on January 6th died on the 10th, New Passage on November 2nd, found dead at Weston-super-Mare on November 13th

1998 – Severn Beach on January 2nd, another there on October 28th

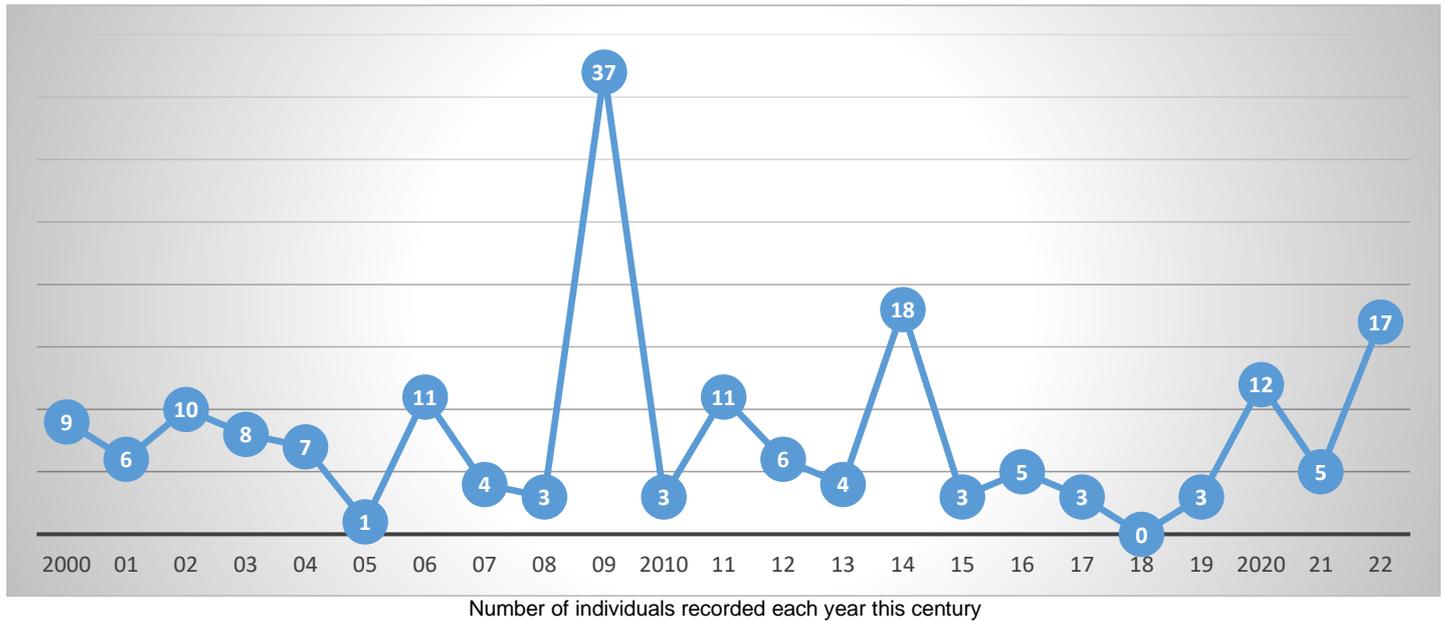
The situation for the nineteenth century is unclear, Davis (1947) says ‘Very occasional storm driven visitor in winter. Specimens have been found in both coastal and inland areas but there seems to be no record for recent years’ and Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention records from Bath and Weston-super-Mare sometime between 1836 and 1912. However, the only early record I can find is of ‘some recovered ‘at Bristol and other parts near the Severn’ after a storm in October 1841 as part of a national ‘wreck’ *Yarrell (1843)*

<sup>78</sup> SBR says caught and ‘flew strongly out to sea when released’

<sup>79</sup> Hayes (2019) says ‘picked up unharmed from a chicken run in the back garden of a house on the High Street’

### Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A scarce usually storm-driven visitor throughout the year.



It was a local rarity until 2000, with supporting notes still required for inland records with only three published records, in 1913 (caught at BL June 19th), 2008 (seen alive on R Avon under Clifton Suspension bridge October 12th but found dead later in the day) and 2014 (Little Avon near Charfield, February 11th).

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'occasional, Weston-super-Mare' whereas Charbonnier (1899) says 'common in the channel during the summer'. Davis (1947) says 'occasional visitor to the Channel and Estuary. Former records from the Channel and Estuary also mention Guillemots as appearing in autumn and winter. There appears to be no conclusive evidence in support of statements that Razorbills, Guillemots and Puffins bred formerly on Steep Holm'

#### Northern Race *U. a. aalge*

1988 – Severnside on December 11th Lancaster (1989)

An individual of the bridled form was found dying at Chittingen on 19th December, 1984

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

A local rarity with 35 individuals recorded this century, although 60% of those were from two years (2019 and 2020);

2001, two individuals – Severn Beach on April 28th, Steep Holm on May 26th [2008 ABR]

2002, two individuals – Cl-Y on February 5th, Severnside on October 25th

2004 – Chittingen Warth on July 2nd

2005 – Severn Beach on January 17th

2006, two individuals – Steep Holm on June 15th [2008 ABR], Severn Beach on September 2nd

2011 – Avonmouth Docks on May 26th

2014, four individuals – an exhausted adult taken into care at RPD on February 6th, a first-winter at Severn Beach and New Passage on 10th, an adult at RPD on 21st, an adult at Sand Point on 21st

2015 – Sand Point on November 30th

2019, nine individuals – a single then a flock of eight past Ladye Bay on November 2nd

2020, twelve individuals – up to four at Severn Beach on May 24th, a flock of eight past Sand Point on June 28th

There are additional records, published as Auk sp., thought by the observers to be this species for 1992, 2001 (11, possibly 16), 2003 and 2014

During the twentieth century 80 individuals were recorded;

1925 – picked up in Chew Stoke on January 16th having been seen two days previously on a duck pond [SBR]

1929 – reported at Weston in December [SBR]

1935 – two close to Steep Holm on June 23rd [SBR] [2008 ABR]

1936 – two Steep Holm on June 12th [SBR][2008 ABR], one at Steep Holm on June 14th [SBR]

1951<sup>80</sup> – Steep Holm on May 12th

1957 – freshly dead adults on shoreline at Sand Bay on March 18th and 31st, a dead juvenile at Clevedon on August 30th

1959 – an immature off Steep Holm on August 16th, a corpse of a first-winter at Sand Bay on October 29th

1961 – off Steep Holm on May 28th

1963 – a corpse at Sand Bay on October 13th

1964 – an adult off Steep Holm on June 27th and 29th, a corpse at Uphill on July 11th, an adult at New Passage on September 17th

1965 – Steep Holm on October 2nd [2008 ABR]

1966 – corpses at Weston Bay on December 10th and Sand Bay on 11th

1967 – an adult dead in Weston Bay on May 21st, three off Steep Holm on June 11th with one there on July 2nd, one flying up channel off Clevedon on September 23rd

1969 – a headless corpse washed up in Sand Bay on April 20th

1971 – Steep Holm on September 26th

1972 – dead birds in Sand Bay on April 12th and 14th and May 27th [all SBR], Steep Holm on July 1st [2008 ABR]

1973 – Sand Point on May 13th and June 13th with corpses in Sand Bay on June 13th [SBR] and July 29th

1975 – between Sand Point and Brean Down, two on April 16th, a corpse on May 11th, one on June 9th and four on October 12th, probables off Sand Point on May 18th and 25th

1978 – an oiled corpse on the tideline at Weston-super-Mare on March 25th

1979 – two Steep Holm on July 26th [2008 ABR]

1981 – a corpse at Weston-super-Mare on October 24th

<sup>80</sup> The 1950 SBR states ‘ a bird found dead near Blagdon some years ago is preserved at the reservoir Inspection House

1983 – Aust on March 21st

1984 – corpses found at Weston Bay on January 18th and February 7th, Sand Bay on January 26th and Kenn Estuary on February 12th

1985 – Portishead on August 2nd, New Passage on November 5th, Severn Beach on 6th

1986 – two off SGW on January 19th, three off New Passage on May 11th

1988 – Clevedon on January 4th, Axe Estuary on February 6th, Portishead on December 3rd

1989 – two off New Passage on October 29th with singles there on November 4th and 7th and December 17th

1990 – New Passage on February 11th and 21st and December 27th

1991 – CI-Y on January 6th, New Passage on 9th

1994 – a first-winter off Sand Point on December 30th

1996 – one picked up alive at Portishead on February 21st subsequently died, Sand Point on May 5th, Severn Beach on May 31st and June 1st, Battery Point on October 22nd

1997 – Severn Beach on February 18th and 26th

The situation for the nineteenth century is confused; Wheeler (1874) said it was occasional, Weston-super-Mare' whereas Charbonnier (1899) says 'common in the Channel during the summer'. However Palmer and Ballance (1968) dismiss Charbonnier's claims but say Mathew saw 'small parties off Clevedon and Portishead in autumn and winter, with the 1892 Birds of Devon, by D'Urban and Mathew as the source. In addition, they state 'at least three found dead, Weston-super-Mare, before 1900'.

Davis (1947) says 'occasional visitor to the Channel and Estuary, perhaps more frequent than is supposed. Recorded formally as occurring in small parties during autumn and winter. Storm driven birds sometimes reported from the coast and inland'.

**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*

A local rarity with just one record this century, a first-winter at Severn Beach on 15th November 2015. There are just single records from both the twentieth century, at Severn Beach on 27th October 1998, and the nineteenth century, shot off Weston-super-Mare on 3rd Decembe, 1896 and now in American Museum of Natural History in New York, mentioned in Davis (1947)

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

A local rarity with just five individuals (one dead) this century:

2002, two individuals – a winter plumaged adult at Severn Beach on February 5th, a first winter there on 9th

2014, two individuals – a first-winter at Severn Beach on February 9th, a dead adult in Sand Bay on 16th

2020, past Sand Point on May 4th

There are nine published records for the twentieth century

Davis (1947) says 'occasional visitor to the Channel and Estuary. Perhaps occurs more frequently than is supposed. Most winter notices refer to remains of storm driven birds, either on the coast or inland'.

1922 – Steep Holm May 25th until 30th mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1935 – Steep Holm on May 5th [SBR], found on roof of Bristol Aeroplane Co works at Filton on October 25th mentioned in Davis (1953)

1945 – found dead on Kenn Moor on October 30th

1951 – found dead at Severn Beach on February 25th

1959 – young birds found dead at Weston-super-Mare on August 15th and Sand Bay on November 1st

1972 – an adult close inshore at Sand Point on April 8th

1997 – Severn Beach on February 25th with presumably the same the next day

There are no published nineteenth century records I can find although Charbonnier (1899) says it is 'seen in the Channel during the summer'.

**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

A local rarity with at least 57 individuals recorded this century, although most of those were in 2013.

2000, an immature at Severn Beach on May 8th

2002, Ladye Bay on January 24th

2005, a juvenile at CVL on November 4th

2007, two individuals – an oiled bird at CVL from November 24th until 26th, Severnside on December 14th

2008, Ladye Bay on November 9th

2009, CVL from November 25th until December 8th

2012, a series of counts off Sand Point and Anchor Head between December 4th and 30th involving at least eight individuals

2013, Middle Hope on April 6th, a series of counts from Sand Point between November 25th and December 27th involving at least 28 individuals and including a flock of 14 on November 26th

2014, two individuals – Sand Point on January 11th and 19th, Anchor Head on April 8th

2015, five individuals – Anchor Head on January 14th and May 9th, a juvenile at CVL from November 9th until December 9th, PWD on November 16th, Severn Beach on November 18th

2018, two individuals – Northwick Warth on April 18th, Sand Point on November 29th

2019, a juvenile at CVL from November 3rd until 28th

2022, two adults flew past Severn Beach on April 29th

There are at least 42 twentieth century records, see below, but I cannot find any for the nineteenth century.

Davis (1947) says it is an 'irregular winter-visitor but perhaps the most frequent of the divers. Has been noted at the reservoirs, either singly or in pairs at least a dozen times in recent years'.

1924 – a pair, probably this species, at Litton reservoir early in the year with one until mid-March [SBR]

1927 – BL on December 4th, BG in December [both SBR]

1929 – BL on March 17th, picked up alive on sands near Weston-super-Mare on December 8th but subsequently died [SBR]

1937 – one, oiled on the flanks, at BL from March 20th until at least April 4th [SBR]

1938 – an oiled bird in the harbour at Mardyke, Bristol from January 30th until February 9th when caught and taken to Bristol Zoo where died

1944 – a corpse found in a field by BG on March 9th

1946 – BG on March 5th and 7th, BL on March 10th [BL SBR]

1955 – BL in the first half of February, then found dead

1958 – CVL from March 16th until April 2nd

1960 – Shepperdine on January 6th

1961 – one found in a field at Chipping Sodbury on March 15th was released at Pill the next day

1962 – an adult female found dead on Uphill beach on February 17th

1963 – an oiled individual at CVL on March 24th with another found dead on Weston-super-Mare beach on December 27th

1966 – CVL on February 26th

1977 – a probable off Sand Point on December 31st

1979 – an oiled bird at RPD from February 1st until 5th

1980 – CVL on March 2nd and April 1st

1983 – an oiled bird at CVL from February 19th was caught on 21st but died in care, an adult at CVL from February 25th until March 27th, an adult at CVL from November 13th until 27th

1986 – CVL on March 12th

1987 – probably a juvenile or first-winter at CVL on January 16th, an oiled individual on R Avon at St Philips on 17th

1991 – New Passage on January 5th and 10th, five in winter plumage there on May 6th

1992 – a juvenile at Yeo Estuary on October 25th

1993 – New Passage on January 15th, a summer plumage adult off Severn Beach on May 6th

1995 – one in winter plumage at CVL on March 14th and 15th

1996 – an oiled individual at Tucking Mill Lake from January 28th until February 2nd when taken into care

1997 – a summer-plumaged adult at CVL from September 18th until October 12th, Axe Estuary on October 5th [*SBR*][1998 *ABR*]

1998 – a first-year at BL on April 25th

There are additional records, published as *Diver* sp., but thought by the observer to be this species for 1996 (2), 2003 (2), 2006, 2011 and 2014

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

A local rarity with just nine records this century;

2000, an adult off Severn Beach on December 1st

2003, two individuals – a first-winter briefly at CVL on January 11th and a second calendar-year bird on May 31st

2012, off Sand Point on December 9th

2013, a juvenile at CVL from November 16th until December 24th

2015, two individuals – a juvenile at Sand Point on November 13th, Severn Beach on November 27th

2019/10, a juvenile at BG from 17th November, 2019 until 29th March, 2020

2021, an adult at CVL from December 14th until 31st.

There are 16 published records for the twentieth century since the first in 1946

1946 – BL from April 1st until at least the 9th

and D.A.W. Among field characters particularly noted were the pale, greyish-brown head, the conspicuously white foreneck and breast and the almost uniformly blackish-brown mantle. Apart from a few large white spots in the region of the scapulars, there was little evidence of summer plumage being assumed. Compared with Great Northern Diver, the bird was slighter in build, while its bill was less massive and noticeably more pointed. This is the first record of a Black-throated Diver for the district.

1950 – an adult in winter plumage at BL from February 5th until at least March 20th<sup>81</sup>

1964 – BG from April 6th until 16th

1966 – BL on March 4th

1971 – CVL on January 17th [2018 ABR]

1974 – CVL from November 21st until December 8th

1975 – BL on March 9th

1982 – CVL on January 18th

1985 – CVL from November 1st until 9th

1986 – two at CVL on January 17th

1988 – CVL on April 7th and another on October 22nd

1991 – two breeding plumage adults off New Passage on May 6th

1994 – a juvenile at CVL from November 13th until December 4th

There are additional records, published as Diver sp., but thought by the observer to be this species for 1996, 1997, 2000 [2001 ABR], 2013 and 2021

**Pacific Diver** *Gavia pacifica*

A National rarity with just one local record, an adult briefly at Severn Beach on 27th November, 2009 [BBRC] see Hayes (2009) for more details

<sup>81</sup> Although Vinicombe (2020) gives a 1957 record that individual was published as a Great Northern Diver

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

A local rarity with 52 records this century, 24 of which were inland.

2000, four individuals – an immature at Severn Beach on May 8th, an adult off Anchor Head on October 29th [2001 ABR], two at Severn Beach on December 13th one of which was also seen at OPS

2002, three individuals – two juveniles at Yeo Estuary on November 23rd, a juvenile at CVL on December 14th and 15th

2005, at CVL on January 9th,

2005/06, a juvenile at BG from 4th December, 2005 until 20th January, 2006

2006, five individuals – Ladye Bay on December 5th, Severnside on 6th, a juvenile on Clevedon boating lake from 14th until 17th, another on Severnside on 25th, Cumberland Basin on 28th

2007, two individuals – a summer plumaged adult at BG from October 21st until 28th, an adult at CVL from November 27th until December 12th,

2007/08, a juvenile at CVL from 15th December 2007 until 24th March, 2008

2008, five individuals – an adult in Weston Bay on October 5th, a juvenile at CVL on October 26th with another from November 9th until 11th and a third on 24th which then moved to BL on 26th and 27th, Severn Beach on November 15th

2009, a juvenile at CVL on November 23rd,

2009/10, a juvenile at BL on from 30th December, 2009 until 1st January, 2010

2010, three individuals – Severn Beach on November 12th, two at CVL on 12th with one next day

2011, three individuals – Sand Point on November 27th, a juvenile at CVL on 27th and 28th, RPD on December 9th

2012, one around the Weston-super Mare area between November 20th and 29th when found dead

2013, five individuals – CI-Y and then Sand Point on January 1st, a second-calendar year at CVL on April 16th, an adult off Anchor Head on November 3rd, Sand Point on November 20th and 25th, Sand Point on December 21st

2014, a summer plumaged adult at BL on October 19th and 20th,

2014/15, a juvenile at CVL from 10th November, 2014 until 17th April, 2015



2015, three individuals – Sand Point on November 16th, Severn Beach on 30th, Aust Warth on December 6th

2016, one over Portbury village on January 13th

2017, two individuals – a summer plumaged adult at Severn Beach on October 21st, CVL on November 11th and 18th

2018, at Anchor Head on December 8th

2019, at CVL on November 10th and 11th,

2019/20, a juvenile at BG from 26th November, 2019 until 27th March, 2020

2020, in flight past Severn Beach on November 2nd,

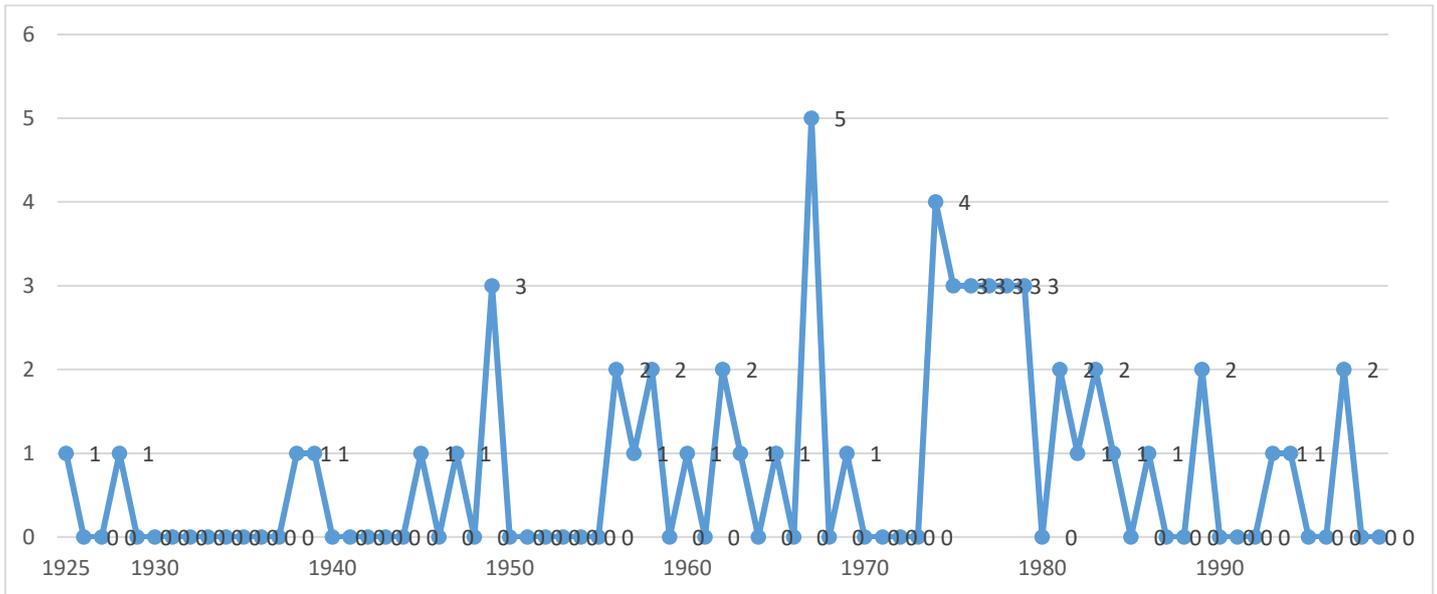
2020/21, a juvenile at BG from 13th November, 2020 until 22nd February, 2021

2021, two individuals – Aust Services in flight on November 7th, OPS on November 29th

2022, an adult at CVL on November 11th

There are additional records for this century, published as *Diver sp.*, but thought by the observer to be this species for 2009 (4), 2013, 2014, 2015 (2) and 2022.

There were at least 57 individuals recorded during the twentieth century, the details are given in Appendix 1 and summarised in the graph below:



There are only a handful of published records for the nineteenth century

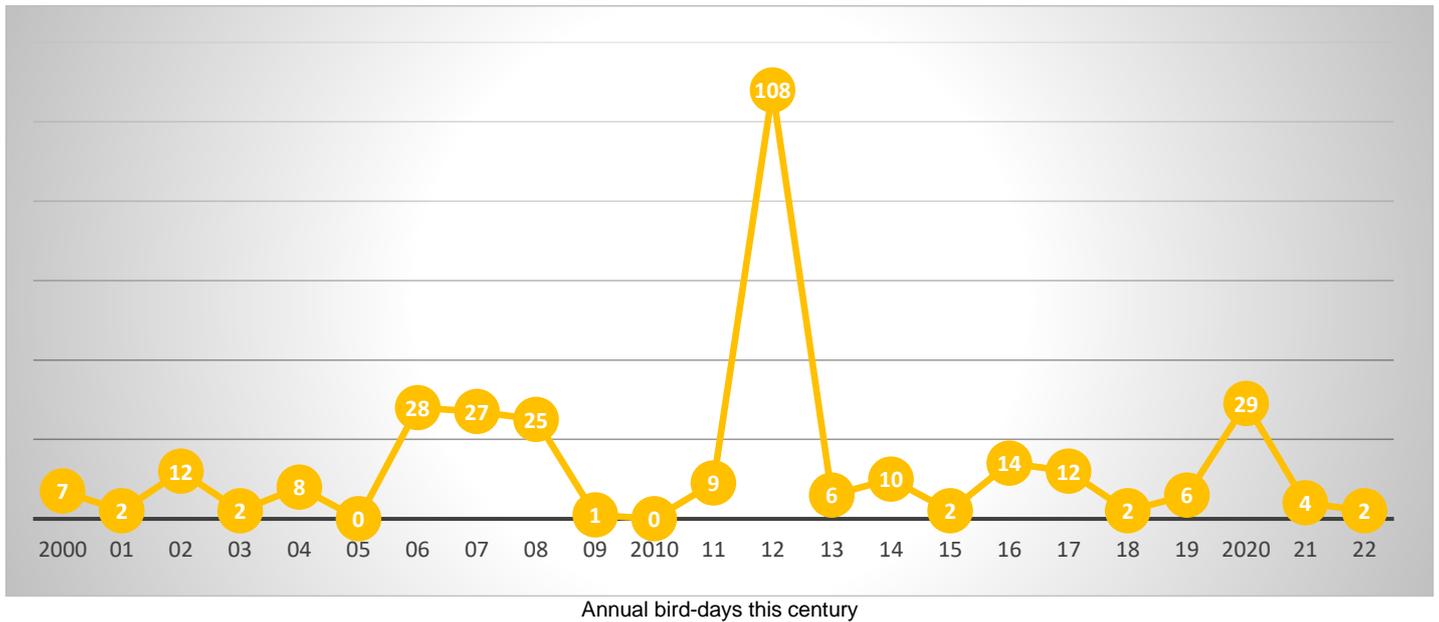
c1825 – killed at Bath, mentioned in Davis (1947)

1881 – a young bird shot at BG on January 20th mentioned in Blathwayt (1906)

While Wheeler (1874) says 'winter visitor, very rare, two in Floating Harbour some years since' and Charbonnier (1899) 'two were shot some years ago in the floating harbour'.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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



It was a local rarity until 2009 with supporting notes still required for inland records, with recent records from 1977 (CVL November 13th), 1983 (two CVL, one BL both September 3rd, CVL September 5th), 1997 (Nailsea garden October 22nd), 2000 (three CVL October 30th) and 2012 (two at BL, three at CVL June 9th).

Wheeler (1874) says 'rare, Portishead' while Davis (1947) says 'occurs very occasionally as a storm driven visitor'.

Published early records are as follows:

1824 – Alveston on October 31st Hayes (2020)

1876 – picked up in Post Office Lane, Small Street in November Charbonnier (1899)

1929 – picked up in Exeter Road, Weston-super-Mare on December 11th [SBR], Clevedon, Uphill (2) and Clarence Park, Weston-super-Mare in December [British Birds vol 23, page 280]

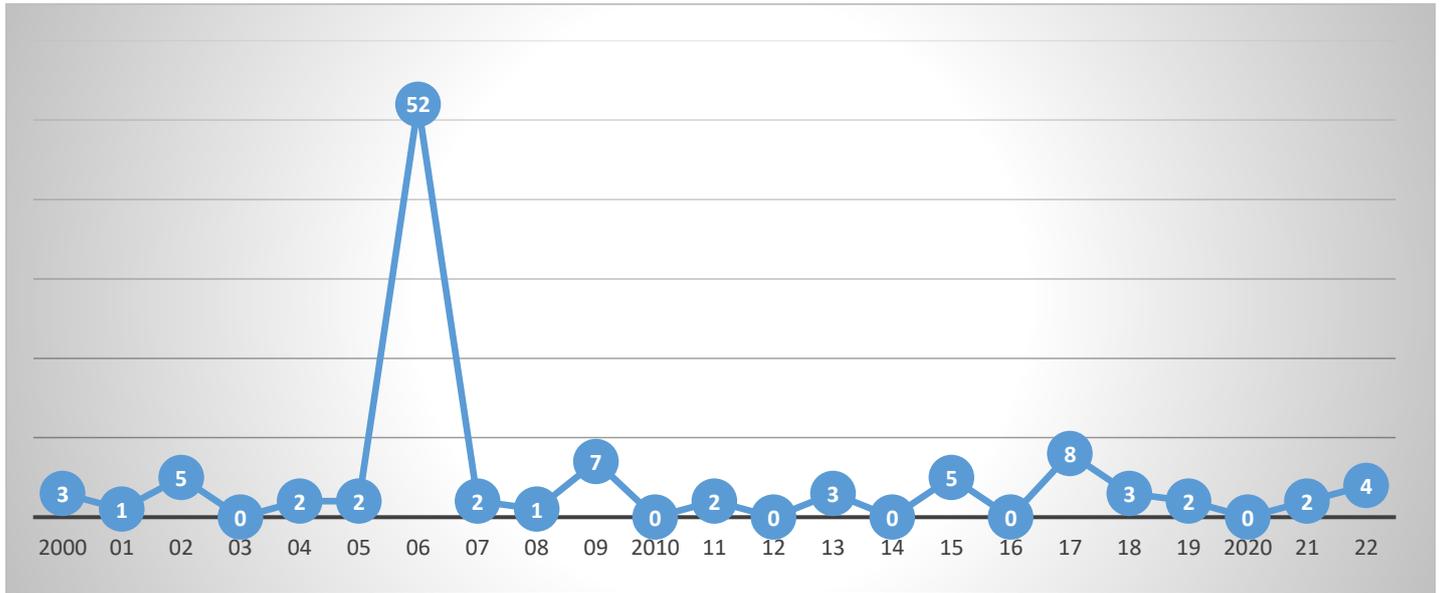
1935 – one found, long dead, at Weston sands on November 26th [SBR]

1938 – picked up dead at Chitting Warth on October 16th Lancaster (1989)

1946 – picked up in Weston-super-Mare on November 26th [SBR]

### Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

A local rarity with 111 individuals recorded this century, 104 of which were on the coast, and 52 of those in 2006.



Coastal individuals this century

Inland records this century are as follows:

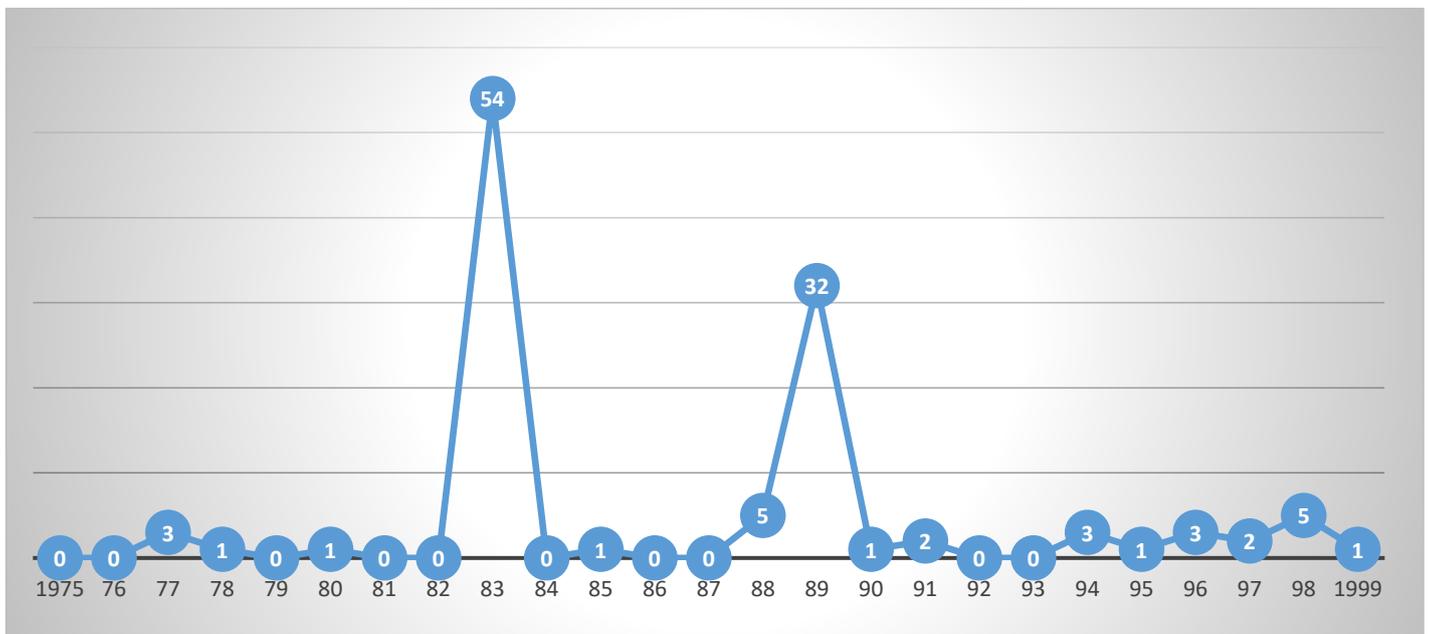
2000, two at CVL on October 30th

2006, three individuals – found dead at BL on 4th, found dead in Yatton on 7th, and at CVL on 7th

2010, a corpse was found in Emersons Green on November 7th

2018, at CVL on September 21st

In the last quarter of the twentieth century there were 130 individuals recorded of which 115 were from the coast



Coastal individuals between 1975 - 1999

Inland records in that period were as follows:

1978, at CVL on September 30th

1983, ten individuals – seven at CVL on September 3rd, at BL on September 3rd, at CVL on October 16th, and at CVL on December 29th and 30th

1987, at CVL on October 19th

1989, two individuals – at CVL on September 27th, and at CVL on December 17th

1993, at CVL on December 6th

All published records after 1975 are given in Appendix 1. Prior to that published records are sparse, other than for 1952;

<sup>82</sup>1883 – shot flying up the R Avon beneath Clifton Suspension Bridge in October [*1884 Zoologist page 145*]

1886 – found dead in the Avon mentioned in Charbonnier (1899)

1933 – one at BL [*1934 SBR*]

1938 – Aust Cliff on October 7th

1952 – a huge 'wreck' starting on October 26th with c250 seen at Aust<sup>83</sup>. The SBR mentions 15 found dead on Weston sands on 27th, with two in flight there, and one dying in Sand Bay, on 28th, c20 at Weston and four, with another two corpses, at Uphill on 29th, and three found dying at Weston on 31st. Seen inland at BL (2) and BG and found dead at Alveston, Doynton, Congresbury, Stanton Drew, and Temple Cloud plus various parts of Bristol. The SBR also mentions reports, although unclear if dead or alive, from Backwell Station, Banwell, Bath, Bleadon, Saltford, Sandford Hill, Wetmoor and Worle One in flight at Stoke Gifford on 30th See an article on page 343 of the 1952 BNS Proceedings.

1957 – Severn Beach on September 15th

1966 – Clevedon Bay on October 3rd, mentioned in Rose (1992)<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Rose (1992) mentions a pre-1868 record for Clevedon Bay

<sup>83</sup> Boyd (1953) says 'a passenger on Aust – Beachley ferry saw 200-300 flying over the river during a crossing in mid-afternoon'

<sup>84</sup> Article says 'identified first as a Storm Petrel' so presumably the bird published as Storm Petrel in 1966 ABR and SBR, both of which give date as December 3rd

### **Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

An uncommon visitor, scarce in winter. Usually storm-driven, but occasionally occurs in calm conditions in mid-summer. The largest count is of 100 at Ladye Bay on 19th May, 2006.



A dark phase bird was noted off Steep Holm on 27th and 28th August, 1967.

Since 2003 supporting notes have been required for inland records, with records in 1970 (CVL May 31st), 1975 (CVL April 4th), 1978 (CVL August 6th), 1980 (Hallen June 16th), 1981 (CVL April 26th – 29th), 1989 (Kenn Moor in poor condition August 26th), 1992 (over M4 May 8th, Avon Gorge June 18th, BG August 11th), 1993 (centre of Bath June 10th), 2003 (over Westbury-on-Trym June 28th), 2007 (CVL July 4th), 2008 (CVL May 26th and 27th, CVL May 30th), 2012 (CVL two April 5th, CVL April 29th).

Charbonnier (1899) said it occurred at Weston-super-Mare in 1869 (but the letter on page 1644 of the 1869 Zoologist suggests it was the 68/69 winter) and at Avonmouth in August 1878, while Davis (1947), who called it a 'very scarce visitor' said single birds were obtained at Weston-super-Mare on two occasions prior to 1870. Other early records are as follows:

1948 – a fresh corpse of a male found at Severn Beach on February 1st

1951 – at least three on Steep Holm on April 22nd with one on June 3rd and one between there and Weston on 23rd

1957 – an oiled bird found dead at Clevedon on September 14th

1958 – Steep Holm on June 8th

**White-bellied or Black-bellied Storm-petrel** *Fregetta sp*

A National rarity, with the first European record of the genus off Severn Beach on 25th November, 2009 [BBRC][articles in 2013 ABR and February 2014 British Birds]

**Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis*

A national rarity until 1983 and a local rarity since with two records, both this century:

2000, one off Severn Beach early on November 26th was tracked down the Estuary, see Lancaster (2000) for more details

2004, off Severnside on January 13th

**Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea*

A local rarity with just one record this century, up-channel off Anchor Head on 3rd August, 2017.

There are three twentieth century records

1962 – Sand Point on September 17th [1971 ABR]

1971 – one flying upstream off Brean Down on June 19th is presumed to have been in Avon waters

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Procellaria grisea*

**S.** One flying upstream off Brean Down, June 19 with party of ten Manx Shearwaters. An all-brown bird, with typical shearwater flight, larger-bodied and longer-winged than Manx (RA).

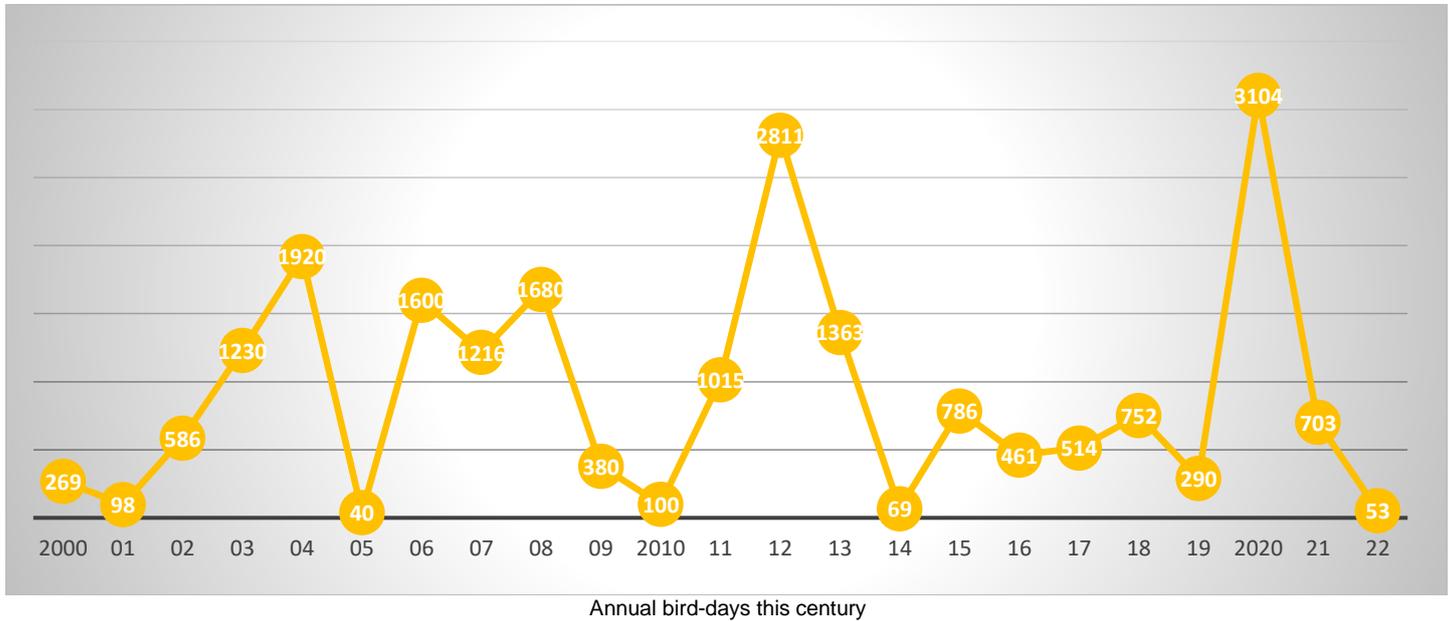
(A previous sighting, off Sand Point, Sept. 17, 1962 (NJC) was considered at that time to be a highly probable record of this species, but not 100% conclusive. The details have been re-assessed, and the B.N.S. and Somerset Editorial Committees have independently agreed that the record should be accepted. It becomes the first for the County, with the 1971 record as the second).

1974 – Aust for three hours on September 7th

### Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

An uncommon summer and autumn visitor, usually storm-driven, although large feeding flocks have occurred in calm anti-cyclonic conditions in mid-summer, with a largest count of 1,000 off New Passage during the morning of 6th June, 1977.

It is seldom recorded NE of the Second Severn Crossing.



Supporting notes are required for inland records, with records from 1935 (found at Fishponds and Clutton September 18th), 1953 (four found alive in Bristol between August 31st and September 5th, one found Claverton Down late August), 1955 (found alive on the outskirts of Bath in early October), 1966 (three found inland around Yate and Gloucester September), 1974 (CVL September 29th), 1978 (found at Little Stoke September 26th, Bristol City centre September 27th, Bath September 29th), 1980 (found Coley September 11th), 1981 (found on steps of Weston-super-Mare Technical College October 9th), 1983 (CVL September 5th, CVL September 17th), 1985 (found Lockleaze August 22nd), 1986 (CVL August 27th), 1987 (oiled bird found at Pucklechurch September 2nd), 1990 (found Royal Victoria Park, Bath September 22nd), 1995 (CVL October 9th), 1997 (found at Portbury August 29th, Pill August 31st, Yate September 6th), 2011 (BL September 7th), 2015 (found North Yate September 25th), 2016 (corpse in Clifton September 12th), 2017 (two CVL September 11th).

Charbonnier (1899) says 'has occurred at Clevedon and at Ashton. On a stormy day in June 1897 several were seen over the water off Avonmouth' while Davis (1947) says 'normally a very scarce visitor but may occur in the Channel and Estuary more often than is supposed. About 30 between Weston-super-Mare and Steep Holm July 1928. Storm driven specimens have been found in various inland localities

**Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

A local rarity with four records this century involving five individuals:

2017, at Sand Point and then Anchor Head on September 11th

2018, at Sand Point on September 21st with presumed same off Anchor Head the next day

2021, two records – two at Sand Point on August 6th, and at Anchor Head on August 8th

The only other local record is from New Passage on 24th September, 1988, see Merritt (1988) for further details, although it incorrectly gives the date as the 12th.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

A National rarity with two records

1988, at CVL on April 10th and watched for nearly 40 minutes [BBRC]

1992, an adult to SE over western edge of Bath on June 13th [BBRC]

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

A National rarity until 1983, and a local rarity since then, whose true status is confused by the likelihood of escapes from captivity or, more recently, birds from a reintroduction scheme at Knepp in Sussex which has in excess of 150 free flying individuals and released a further 24 juveniles in August 2019.

There are eight records this century that are thought to relate to wild birds:

2000, at CVL on May 28th

2005, at Weston STW on July 23rd

2006, at Bleadon Level on March 26th<sup>85</sup>

2010, two over Northwick Warth on September 12th

2012, five individuals – at Combe Down on April 21st, and four over the Avon Gorge on June 9th

2015, at New Passage on April 21st

2018, at Northwick Warth on April 22nd

Three local records in 2019, one in 2020, three in 2021 and two in 2022<sup>86</sup> were thought to be of reintroduced birds.

The only other local records are as follows:

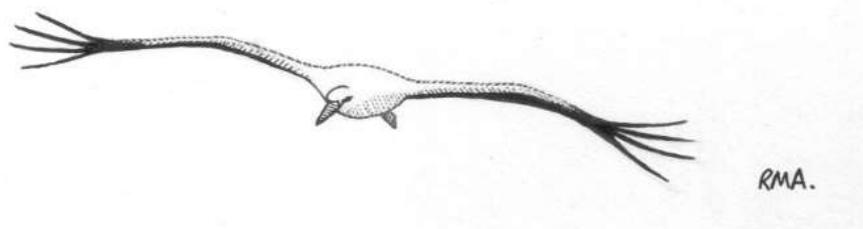
1971 – three ringed juveniles of Danish origin at Combe Down on September 9th, one of which was caught after falling down a chimney and taken to Rode bird gardens where it remained until about 18th August, 1972 [BBRC]. An article in the January 1972 British Birds gives a full account<sup>87</sup>

1972 – one over Rode Bird gardens on July 14th was in addition to the 1971 captive bird [1973 BBRC] [1973 SBR]; one flying south over Keynsham on September 24th was considered by BBRC\* to be the 1971 ringed captive bird

1973 – Paulton on August 10th [BBRC\*] [SBR]

1993 – three over Knowle on April 27th

In addition there were two escaped birds in 1974, at Kingston Seymour in April and at CVL for most of August, see 1975 ABR, and two birds that escaped from Bristol Zoo were seen locally in 1996



<sup>85</sup> Although present from 25th until 28th this is the only date it was seen on the Avon side of the border

<sup>86</sup> An individual in 2022 was a known escape

<sup>87</sup> 'Recent reports' in the August 1971 British Birds mentions one at Hallen in May but this is not mentioned in any BBRC report so I can only assume it was never submitted. Hayes (2020) gives the date as 23rd.

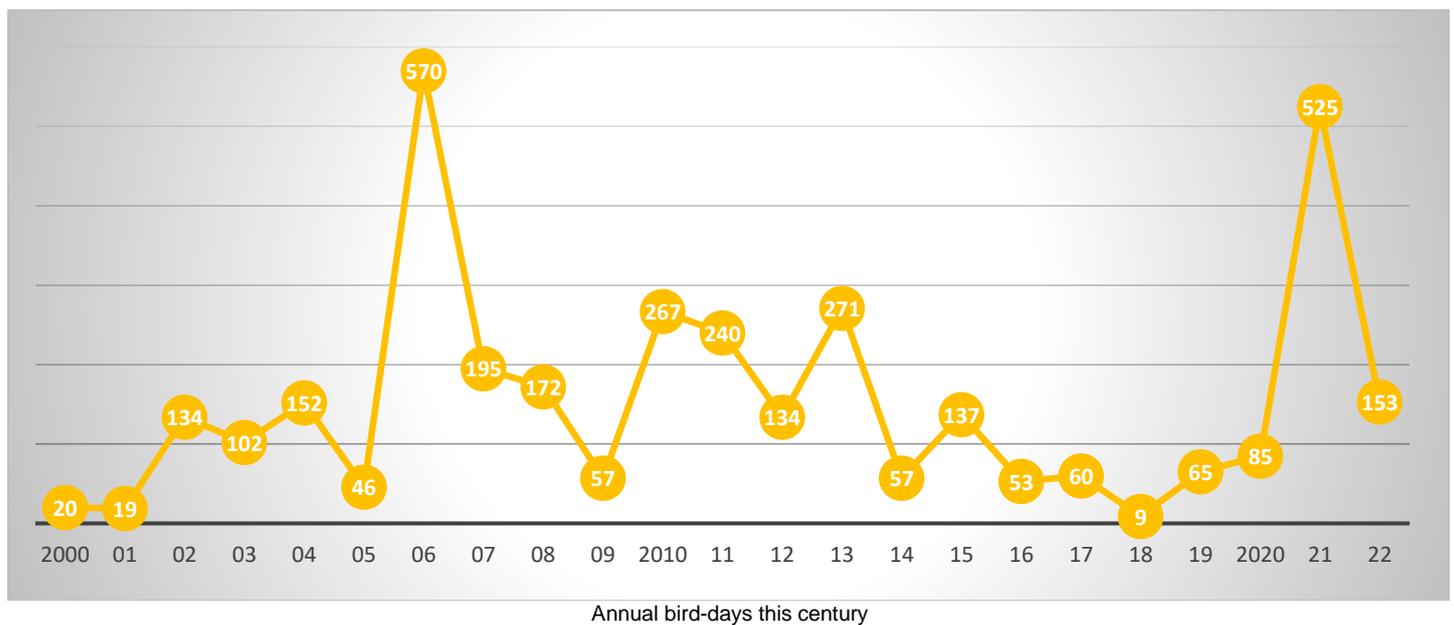
**Frigatebird sp** *Fregata sp*

A National rarity with one local record, an adult male flying over Flat Holm on 6th November, 2005 was seen to enter Avon waters [BBRC]

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

An uncommon storm-driven visitor, mainly in spring and summer with a largest count of 'at least 300' together at Severn Beach and 325 moving downstream at Battery Point, both on 11th March, 2021. Prior to that the highest count was 120 at Ladye Bay on 19th May, 2006.

The chart below shows the number of bird-days each year this century



It is rare inland, such records requiring supporting notes prior to 2009.

Wheeler (1874) did not include it on his list while Charbonnier (1899) says 'a party of four or five was seen on Denny Isle on 3rd September, 1893'. Davis (1947) described it as 'normally a very occasional visitor to the Channel and Estuary but storm driven or washed-up birds not infrequently reported from the coast. 12 were noted off Weston-super-Mare July 1924. Storm driven examples have been found inland at Old Sodbury and Radstock'

### **Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A fairly common resident and winter visitor, especially to the main reservoirs which breeds in small (double digit) numbers on Steep Holm. The largest count is of 540 at CVL in October 2014.

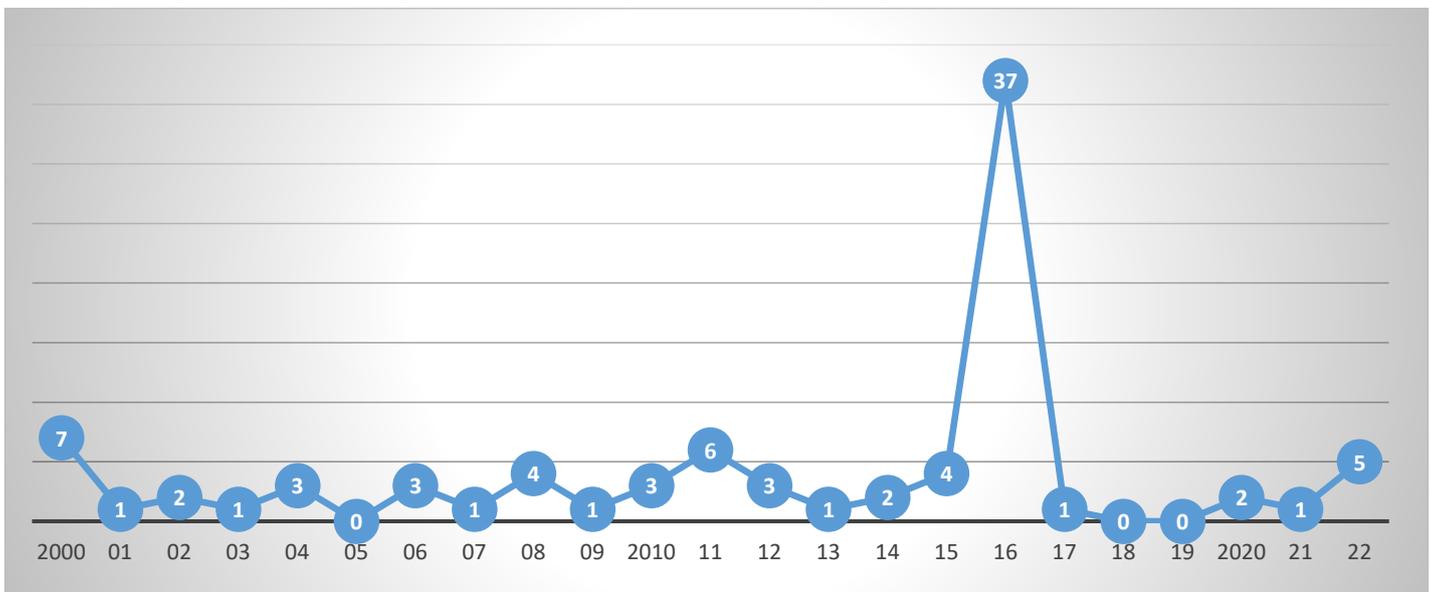
Two races occur: *P. c. carbo*, which previously dominated all records and probably still accounts for all breeders and *P.c. sinensis* which is now fairly common amongst non-breeders.

Wheeler (1874) said it 'occasional, Weston-super-Mare' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'in 1896 observed sitting on the tower of St Mary, Redcliffe and was photographed'. Davis (1947) says it is 'resident, breeds only on Steep Holm, a colony of some 15 to 20 pairs. Nesting first proved 1934 though the birds were probably breeding there earlier. Not uncommon on the coast often occurring as far up the Severn as Slimbridge. Frequent at the reservoirs, usually singly but sometimes in small parties'.

### **Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

A local rarity with nearly 200 individuals recorded.

It is mainly now recorded from the coast – of the 97 individuals recorded this century 90% were from the coast (although that percentage is bolstered by two unusually large flocks recorded in 2016).



Individuals recorded from the coast this century

Inland records this century are as follows:

2005, five juveniles at CVL on August 31st with one on September 1st

2008, a first-winter at BG on August 18th

2009, at CVL on November 26th

2014, at Eastville Park about January 4th

2017, a juvenile at CVL from October 5th until 17th

During the last quarter of the twentieth century about a third of the 79 individuals recorded were inland, and half of the records from earlier in the twentieth century were inland

All published records are given in Appendix 1.

Wheeler (1874) called it 'occasional, Weston-super-Mare'. Charbonnier (1899) mentions one seen at Shirehampton some years ago but Davis (1947), who calls the species a 'very occasional visitor usually in autumn or winter', said that record 'lacks essential details' and similarly dismisses a party of three at Steep Holm in May 1919.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

A National rarity until 2013 and a local rarity since then with at least 27 individuals recorded, all since the first in 2007:

2007, a first-winter at CVL on November 2nd and 3rd [BBRC] see Davis and Thoburn (2007) for more details

2009, six individuals – at CVL from September 6th until 12th, four, including two ringed birds, there on 26th, and on Severnside on October 14th [all BBRC]

2010, a Spanish ringed immature at Hoar Gout, Severnside from September 17th until 26th

2013, four individuals – at Weston STW/Axe Estuary from September 21st until October 4th, a juvenile at CVL and BL on September 27th remained until October 16th, and a pair in flight over CVL on November 26th with one there from 28th until 30th



2014, an immature at Weston STW from April 5th until May 6th

2015, a first-winter at Pilning Wetlands from November 6th until 20th

2016, at CVL on January 11th

2017, in flight over CVL on May 27th

2018, a juvenile at BL on September 1st and 2nd

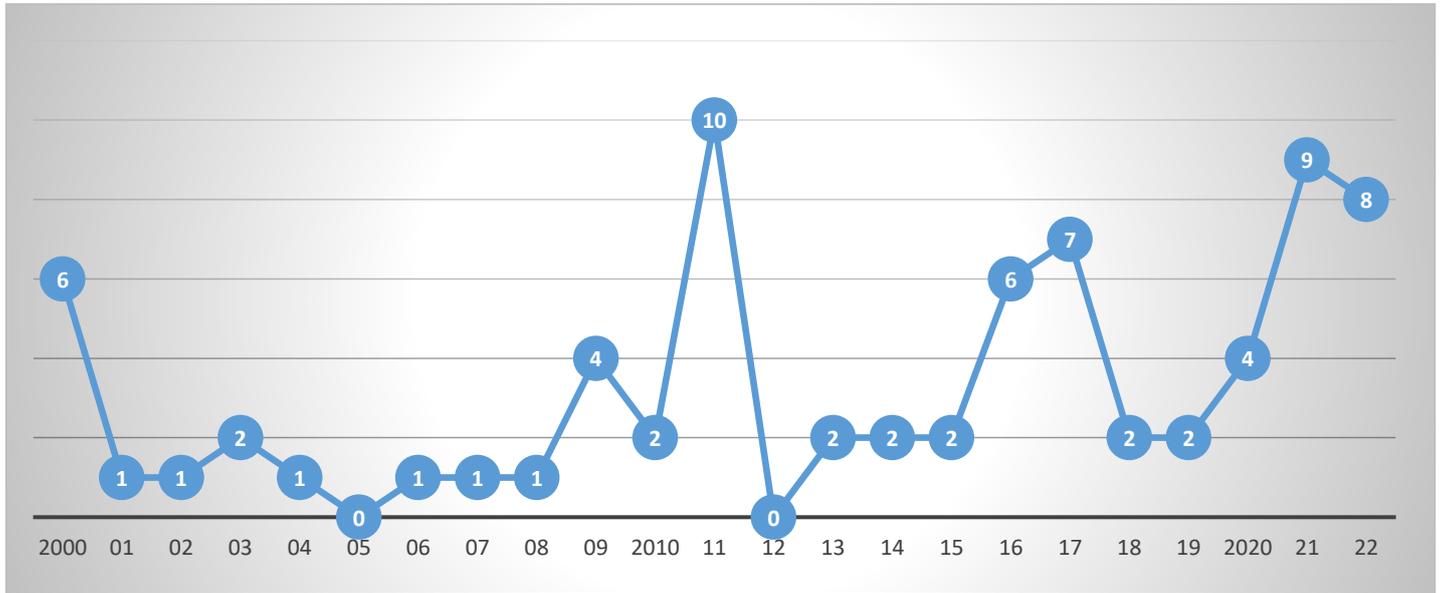
2019, two individuals – over Tytherington on April 11th, and at Northwick Warth on July 5th

2021, five individuals – at Cl-Y on March 7th, an immature at Weston STW on September 2nd with it or another again 8th until 11th, two at Channel View Farm on September 14th, and an immature at CVL from October 12th until 25th

2022, at least three individuals – Pilning Wetland on February 5th, Blake's Pool on May 5th with presumed same at Wick St Lawrence on 17th, CVL on November 2nd

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

A local rarity that has increased in recent years with just two blank years and 74 individuals recorded this century:



Individuals each year this century

All the published records this century are given in Appendix 1.

In comparison there were just 15 individuals recorded during the twentieth century:

1946 – reported from the R Axe on May 3rd [SBR]

1954 – an adult at CVL on May 2nd

1969 – CVL from April 13th until 21st

1973 – an immature at CVL from September 29th until October 10th

1976 – an adult at CVL on July 28th

1982 – Axe Estuary on November 7th and 13th

1984 – an adult at CVL on September 5th and 6th

1987 – in flight over CVL on May 13th

1990 – an adult at CVL from June 19th until 23rd had been ringed on Texal, Holland, an unringed adult at CVL from August 13th until September 2nd

1992 – a colour-ringed first-summer at CVL on July 30th

1994 – CVL on October 7th and 8th

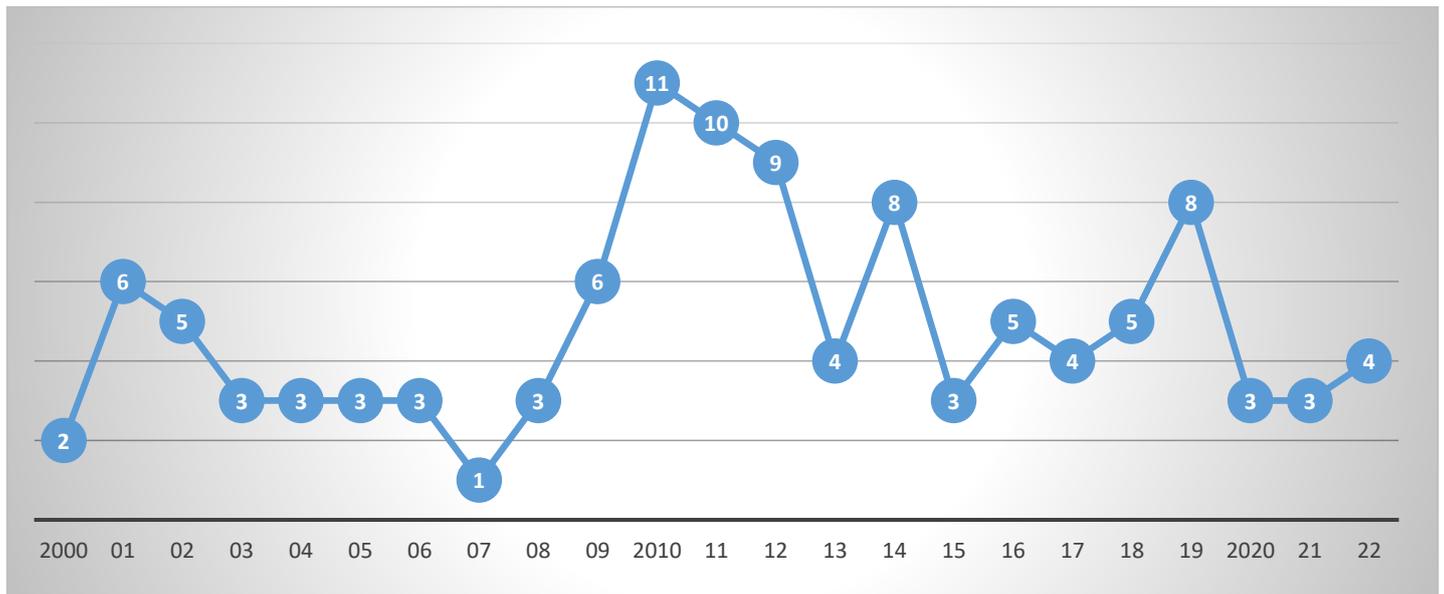
1997 – a first-summer at Weston STW on July 6th

1998 – two first-summer at Chittingen Warth on April 18th with one at Northwick Warth on May 2nd and Axe Estuary on 12th with one or two on 17th and one on 18th and one at CVL on May 27th and 28th

And there is just a single record from the nineteenth century, shot on Kenn Moor in October 1865 mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

A scarce winter visitor, mainly to CVL and occasionally recorded in the summer months. It was a local rarity from 1963 until 2005, particularly away from CVL.



Number of individuals each year this century

A pair bred at CVL in 1997 and probably again in 2000 according to Vinicombe (2008a). Booming males were also heard at CVL in 2001, 2015, 2016 and 2020<sup>88</sup>.



Wheeler (1874) listed it as a 'rare summer visitor, sometimes resident, near Clevedon and Portishead, while Palmer and Ballance (1968) state 'apparently fairly common around Weston-super-Mare in 1860s'.

<sup>88</sup> Heard on seven dates between 13th march and 27th April, but not mentioned in ABR.

Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurs nearly every winter. At Hambrook July 1891, Portishead December 29th 1891, Clevedon 1892, Novers 1892, Ashley Down January 1900. British Birds vol 11 page 283 mention that in 1917 birds were shot at Kenn Moor in latter half of December and at Locking Moor on December 26th and the subject of a prosecution. Davis (1947) lists it as a 'scarce winter visitor though not infrequent during severe frosts. Among old records are those of birds at Hambrook, Ashley Down, Portishead, Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare. Reported in recent years from various localities including Bleadon 1925, Hallen 1931, Nailsea 1933, 1945 and 1947 and BL 1947'.

### **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

A National rarity with just one local record this century, seen and heard at dusk at BL on 27th May, 2020 [BBRC]

There are four twentieth century records:

1912 – caught by a dog between Puxton and Banwell on May 20th now in the Exeter Museum [*British Birds vol 6 p123*]

1916 – seen at Ubley, winter, 1916-17 in Davis (1947), although Palmer and Ballance (1968) give the date as November and December 1916

1958 – an immature by the R Avon, Keynsham on September 28th [BBRC][1959 ABR]

1993 – a male seen and heard at CVL on June 23rd [BBRC]

In addition there are two old records:

1789 – R. Avon near Bath in autumn in Palmer and Ballance (1968)<sup>89</sup>

1864 – Bleadon in mid-October mentioned in both Palmer and Ballance (1968) and Davis (1947)<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Newman, 1866, A Dictionary of British Birds given as a source

<sup>90</sup> Birds of the Bristol District (1899) states 'obtained at Weston-super-Mare in October 1865' but I presume this to be the 1864 record

**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A national rarity until 2002 and a local rarity since with two records this century:

2001, an adult/second year seen briefly in flight at CVL on May 10th<sup>91</sup>

2020, heard calling in flight over Weston-super-Mare on April 11th

There were five records in the last third of the twentieth century:

1971 – an immature found at ICI works on Severnside on November 19th was cared for and then released at CVL on November 28th and last seen on December 19th [BBRC\*] see Standring (1971) for fuller details

1983 – a juvenile at CVL from November 6th until 30th [BBRC\*]

1986 – an adult near the R Avon in Keynsham from May 2nd until 5th<sup>92</sup> [BBRC\*]

1992 – a second-summer or adult at CVL on June 4th [BBRC]

1999 – a first-summer at CVL from June 10th until 12th [BBRC\*]

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

A National rarity with just one record this century, a summer plumaged adult at CVL and BL from 2nd until 17th May, 2012 [BBRC]

There are two earlier records, both in the 1970's:

1973 – an adult at CVL on May 26th [BBRC]

1977 – Hutton Ponds, Weston-super-Mare on June 1st [BBRC]

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<sup>91</sup> Although still under consideration by the BBRC in the 2001 report I cannot find it being published as accepted, or rejected, it just seems to disappear. The BBRC pended the record on the first circulation but further notes (which we have) were submitted in April 2006

<sup>92</sup> Although the BBRC report gives this as an adult, Aldridge (1987) says it was a sub-adult (second or third-year) and that it perched in a willow at the end of Durley Lane. Aldridge (1987) also mentions another, seen briefly at Saltford sewage works on 3rd September, 1987 but I cannot find a BBRC decision on this report. This was an adult (per observer) so could well have been the Keynsham bird

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

A national rarity until 2009 and a local rarity until 2021, but now considered to be a scarce visitor, particularly away from the Chew valley. This follows a massive increase in numbers since 2017.

At CVL it is often recorded in flocks, the record count being 45 seen on 2nd November, 2022.

2005	07	09	10	12	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	2022
1	1	3	1	1	2	2	11	29	10	41	38	45

Maximum single count each year this century when present

All records prior to 2021 are shown below:

[1963 – one, unringed, feeding in orchard at Portbury from October 29th until November 15th] [*BBRC\* but as an escape*<sup>93</sup>]

1993 – one in summer plumage at Littleton Brick Pits from April 24th until 27th [*BBRC\**]<sup>94</sup>

2005 – Kingston Seymour from January 4th until April 17th [*BBRC\**]

2007 – CVL from October 11th until 13th [*BBRC*]

2009 – one in summer plumage at BL on June 8th, two adults and a juvenile at CVL on July 30th with the juvenile on 31st, one adult and the juvenile from August 1st until 6th with the juvenile until 11th, CVL from December 27th until 3rd January, 2010

2010 – CVL on November 5th

2012 – a juvenile at Northwick Warth on September 9th

2016 – probably five, Barrow Gurney on November 19th, Weston STW from 19th until 22nd, CVL on 19th and 30th, Toghill, Wick two from December 17th until 11th March, 2017

2017 – an influx with at least 16 birds involved. Records from CVL (up to 11), Stanton Drew, Sandford, Backwell Lake, Northwick Warth. One at CVL remained until 24th February, 2018

2018 – another influx at CVL in the autumn from August 31st, peaking at 29 on September 21st and 23rd with numbers remaining until 3rd February, 2019. Four at BG on September 15th [*2019 ABR*], two at Channel View Farm on September 3rd, at least four at BL on December 10th

2019 – three at Bleadon Levels on January 4th and 8th, Backwell Lake on February 21st, CVL on April 22nd, a small influx into CVL with ten on August 23rd slowly reducing until November 24th, Pilning Wetland on October 21st and 22nd, Channel View Farm on October 24th, Tickenham on November 7th

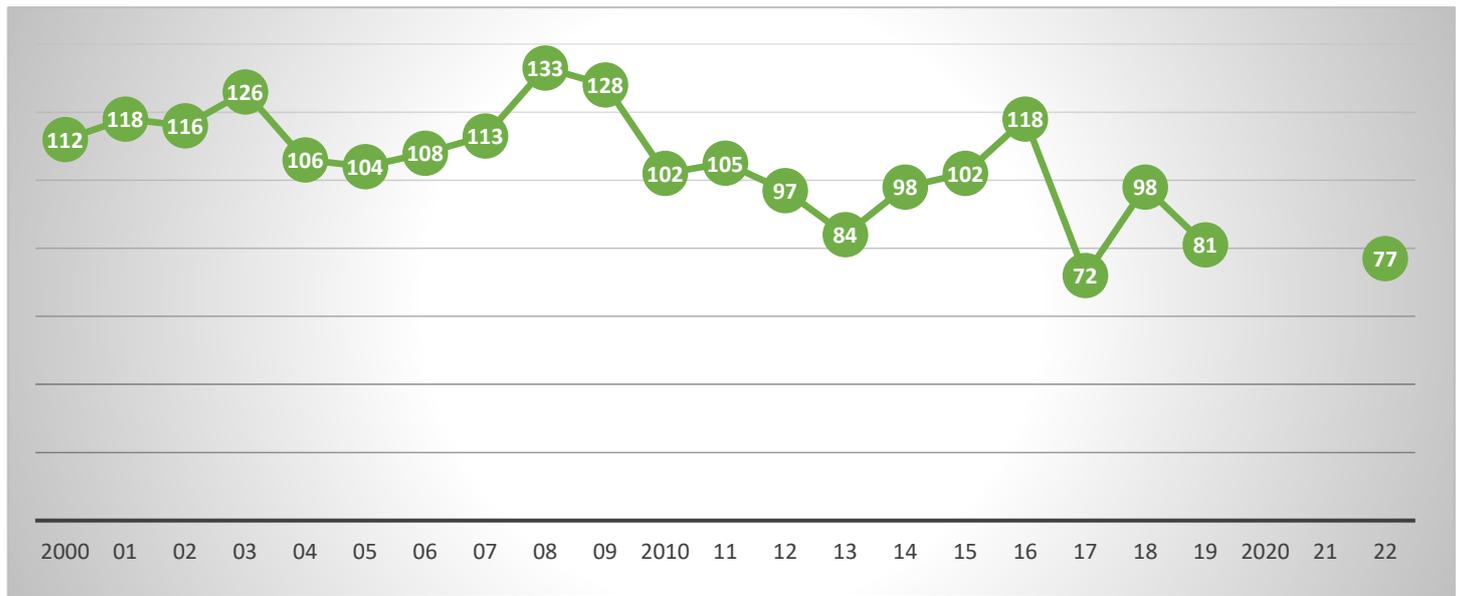
2020 – in the Chew valley one seen between January 1st and March 19th, CVL on May 21st, present at CVL and surrounds from July 23rd into 2021 with a maximum count of 41, two at Yeo estuary on July 20th, three at Pilning on July 31st, Pilning on September 1st, Pilning on September 21st and 22nd, Saltford in flight on October 20th, Pilning on October 23rd, Littleton-on-Severn on October 31st, Pilning on November 1st, two at Bleadon Levels on November 6th

<sup>93</sup> Two were discovered missing from Whipsnade Zoo during the annual census at the end of the year, although the SBR says these were pinioned and the Portbury bird was fully winged. At that time there were only four accepted records for the UK

<sup>94</sup> An eastern race ringed bird was around CVL from July 17th 1994 until 1st May, 1995 and again on July 16th. Another was there on 7th July, 1997 [*2016 ABR*]

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

A fairly common resident although uncommon as a breeding species.



Breeding success: Number of occupied nests this century (there were not complete counts in 2020 and 2021)

If you compare the figures above with those in Bland (1988), which analyses local heronry censuses between 1954 and 1988, the number of nests this century are higher than those in his 35 year survey.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'not uncommon, banks of Severn, occasionally on Avon, Leigh, Abbot's Pond' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, fairly common'. Davis (1947) said 'resident, frequent on the coast and at inland waters and not uncommon in most lowland areas. Continues to occupy the well-known breeding sites at Brockley and Banwell and since 1935 a few pairs have bred annually at Uphill. Small colony re-established in Warleigh Woods Claverton 1944 after a lapse of about twenty years. Odd pairs recorded as nesting near Winscombe 1919 and Uphill 1923'.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

A National rarity until 1983 and a local rarity since then with six individuals recorded this century:

2001, a sub-adult at CVL on May 12th

2009, a sub-adult at CVL on May 10th

2014, a juvenile in flight near Walton-in-Gordano on September 29th

2017, an adult at PWD from April 25th until May 10th

2019, a first-summer at CVL on May 17th was later seen in flight past Stanton Wick

2020, a second calendar year seen in flight at CVL on March 21st

In addition there are seven records all from the second half of the twentieth century:

<sup>95</sup>1963 – an immature at BL from May 12th until 17th [BBRC\*]

1970 – an immature at CVL from April 20th until May 3rd [BBRC\*]

**PURPLE HERON** *Ardea purpurea*

**S.** One, Chew Valley res., Apr. 20–May 3 (RA, AH *et al.*). Deep neck pouch noted in flight; light brown wings with dark primaries; dark streak on yellow-brown neck (RA). Record, second for County, accepted by *Brit. Birds* Rarities Committee.

1975 – CVL on September 28th [BBRC\*]

1977 – in flight at CVL on April 23rd, Gordano Valley on September 29th [*in addendum*]. Both [BBRC\*]

1981 – an adult in the Gordano Valley on May 10th [BBRC\*]

**PURPLE HERON**

SA An adult, Gordano Valley, May 10 (AFS). [BBRC]

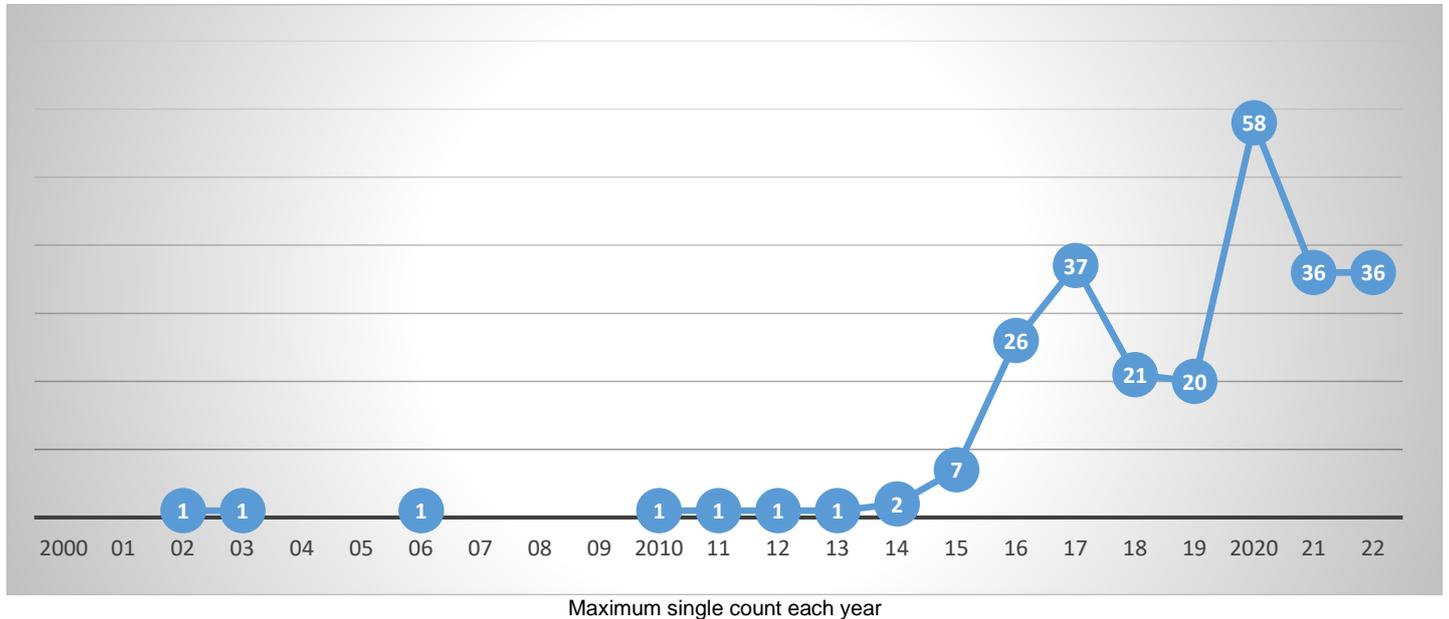
Description mentioned its slightly slimmer shape and smaller size than nearby Grey Heron; dark crown; lack of dark eyestripe; purplish neck with long black line running down from head and dark grey back. Latter also noticeable in flight, as was the "dark neck, with bulge hanging below body"

1983 – a sub-adult at CVL from June 25th until July 2nd

<sup>95</sup> The 1983 ABR says the first Avon record was in 1939 but I cannot find any details or source for this. In particular Davis (1947) does not mention the species and the 1963 ABR say the Blagdon record is the first for Somerset.

### Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Local records have increased rapidly in recent years, partly linked to a national increase but also as a result of regular breeding in Somerset. The table below shows the increase in numbers since the first in 2002; as recently as 2014 the maximum 'flock' was two. Since 2015 it has not been easy to calculate the number of individuals present in a year, with birds moving between sites: in 2017 it was thought possible there were as many as 65. The table below shows the maximum single count for each year.



A national rarity until 2006, and a local one until 2016, early local records are shown below:

2002 – one seen from Flat Holm on September 22nd flew into Weston Bay [BBRC][2006 ABR]

2003 – CVL on June 20th and 21st and again on July 11th and 12th [BBRC\*] see Davis (2003) for more details

2006 – in flight at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on April 6th

2010 – BL on December 31st [2012 ABR]

2011 – BL on June 11th, at CVL on October 14th and at CI-Y on November 7th

2012 – in flight at PWD on March 26th, past Portishead on April 8th, at Yeo Estuary on May 12th and at CVL on August 20th

2013 – over Yate on September 26th, over Northwick Warth on 28th, a juvenile at BL on 27th then commuted between BL and CVL until October 4th

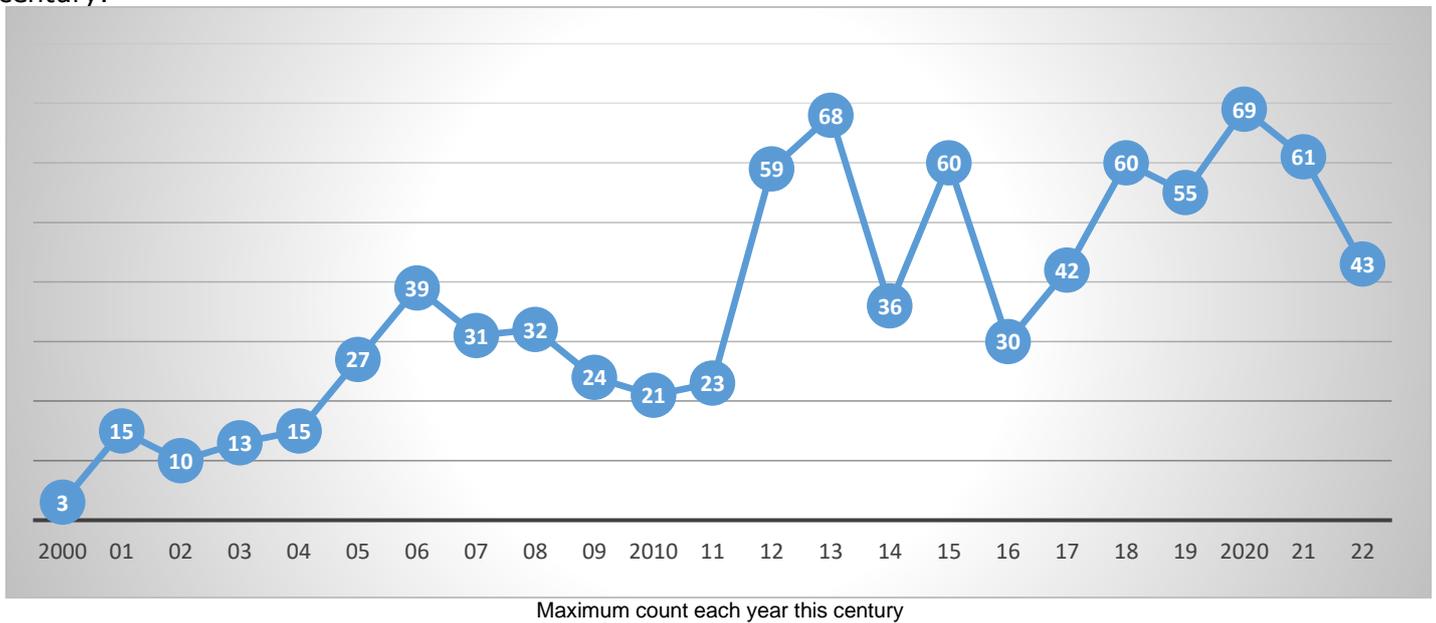
2014 – probably five different birds, all at CVL; August 24th, September 22nd/23rd, October 23rd, November 14th/15th, a different individual on 16th, from November 18th until 3rd March, 2015

2015 – possibly 17 recorded with a flock of at least seven at CVL/BL in the autumn; recorded in every month except June

2016 – probably 41 recorded with a peak flock at BL/CVL in the autumn of 26

### Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

An 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. The largest count is of 69 at Kingston Seymour on 23rd December, 2020 and the table below shows the maximum count each year this century.



It is rare nationally as a breeding species but a pair raised two young locally in 2014 and pairs have been seen either on the nest or displaying at the same site each year since.

It was a national rarity until 1991 and a local one until at least 1995, the early local records are as follows:

1965 – watched for 30 minutes down to 35 yards on the Axe Estuary on May 22nd [SBR] [BBRC]

1968 – Axe Estuary on August 28th [BBRC]

1989 – near Kingston Seymour on August 14th and in Yeo Estuary area until 22nd [BBRC]

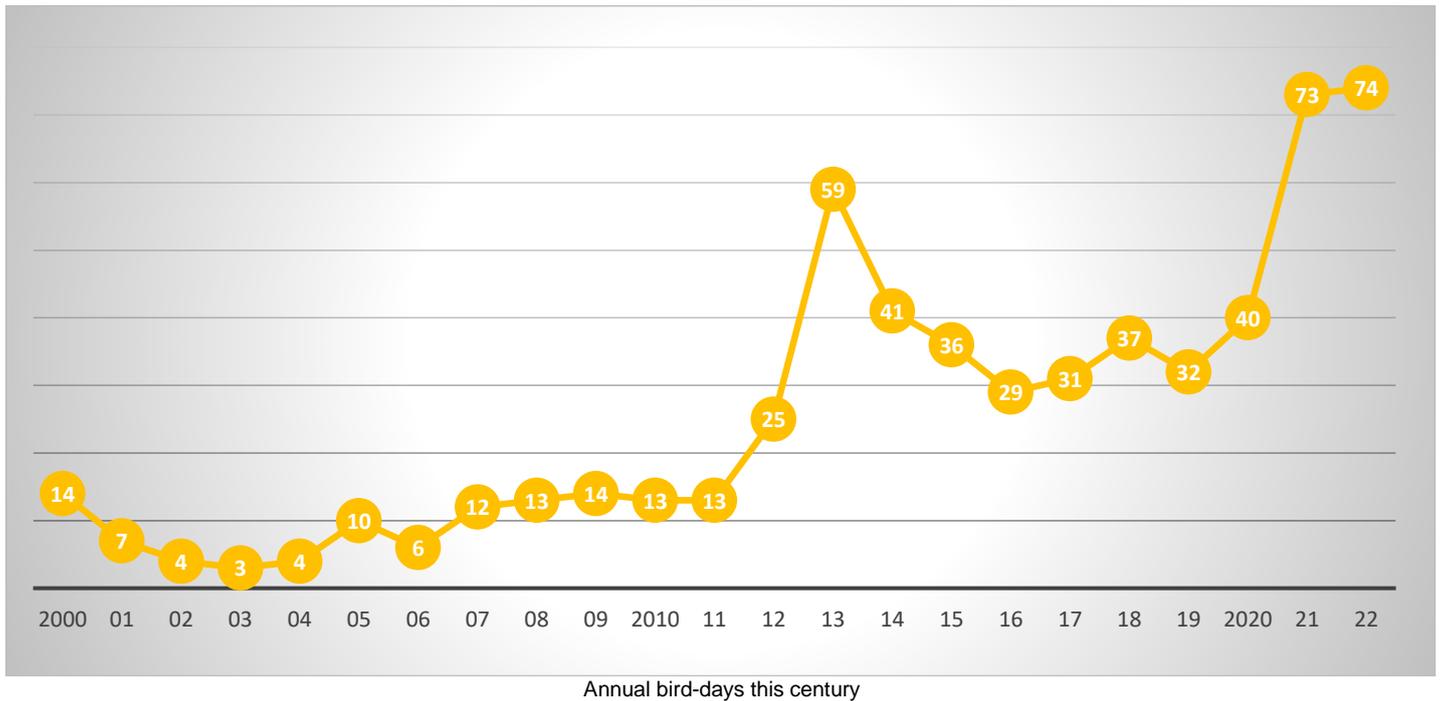
1990 – a juvenile at CVL from October 10th until 21st [BBRC]

1992 – two at Axe Estuary from January 7th until 11th, a juvenile at CVL on August 9th



### Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

A scarce passage migrant which is usually seen at the reservoirs but more sightings have come from the coastal strip recently.



The earliest arrival date is 20th March, 2014 over Westbury-on-Trym although the average arrival date is April 8th. The latest departure is 6th November, 1988, a bird present since October 19th and commuting between CVL and Litton: the average departure is on September 17th.

Up until 2008 it was considered a local rarity while Davis (1947) called it an 'occasional visitor in spring or autumn. One was shot at Tortworth Court Lake sometime prior to 1860 and another was taken alive in the Channel 1887'.

Other early records include

1887 – an immature female captured on a boat in the Bristol Channel on September 22nd [1887 *Zoologist* page 433]

1914 – BL on September 4th Davis (1947) Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1936 – BL in May Davis (1947)

1938 – BL on September 8th [SBR]

1946 – BL on May 23rd [SBR with notes]

**Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

A local rarity with 12 individuals recorded this century:

2000, four individuals – over the Gordano Valley on July 30th; two at CVL on September 28th, and over Nailsea on September 29th

2008, three individuals – at Cl-Y on September 15th, a juvenile over Trooper's Hill on 16th, at North Stoke on 18th

2010, two individuals – over CVL on June 1st, at Weston STW on August 22nd

2011, over Northwick Warth on May 7th

2014, a male over St George's, Weston-super-Mare on July 1st

2017, at Walton Bay on September 11th

There are 13 individuals recorded in the last third of the twentieth century:

1970 – CVL on May 22nd [*notes in SBR*][1971 ABR]

1981 – to SW past Battery Point, Portishead on May 17th, to W over Hursley Hill, Whitchurch on September 4th

1985 – over Ashton on May 31st

1991 – flew west across the Severn estuary from New Passage on May 26th

1994 – over Bishopston on June 13th, a juvenile over Sand Point on October 1st

1995 – Weston Moor in Gordano Valley on May 5th, near Winford on May 31st

1997 – BG on May 10th

1998 – three over Tickenham on October 1st



The only definite report for the first part of the twentieth century is of a female obtained in Ashton Park, in June or earlier 1917 and held in the City Museum mentioned in Davis (1947).

Wheeler (1874) mentions 'two at Leigh, no record of date' while Davis (1947) says 'Very scarce visitor in spring or summer. Mr Charles Green reports (in litt) that two killed in the Tortworth area, c1879, (cf Mellersh, *Birds of Glos*, 1902, p15) were for some time in the Gloucester Museum. A record of one at Blagdon reservoir, 1912, lacks essential details'.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant.

Wheeler (1874) called it a 'summer visitor generally distributed, frequent occurrence, breeds at Leigh and Henbury, becoming scarce from continual destruction' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, fairly common'. The 1927 SBR said it 'breeds in practically all the larger woods and many of the smaller, especially in conifers. Scarcer than Kestrel but naturally more common where game preservation is least strict' while Davis (1947) says 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

A local rare breeder with at least 30 individuals recorded this century and breeding in South Glos in 2008, 2009, 2021 and 2022:

2000, at least five individuals – three females and a male at Leigh Woods on March 4th with a pair on 12th and 19th, and a female at BL on April 22nd

2001, a female at West End, Nailsea on March 16th

2002, two individuals – at Avon Gorge on February 10th, and at Milton on November 24th

2003, a male at Milton on February 22nd and April 17th

2004, at OPS on February 28th, see Middleton (2006)

2006, a female at Chittening Warth on November 9th

2008, two individuals – at Wrington on February 9th, and a juvenile at Charlcombe on September 14th and October 27th,

2008 – 10, a pair regularly reported from a site in South Glos in 2008, 2009 and 2010 [2009 and 2010 ABR]. Hayes (2019) says they bred in 2008, raising two young, and 2009, raising three young

2009, an adult between Tickenham and Clevedon on April 19th [2015 ABR]

2011, a first-calendar year female at Northwick Warth on September 14th

2012, at Bradley Stoke on November 3rd

2013, four individuals – in Lower Woods on January 24th, a freshly dead first calendar year male at Portishead on July 13th that had been ringed in Gwent, at Chipping Sodbury on August 21st, and a juvenile at OPS on September 5th and 15th

2014, two individuals – at Walton Common on June 14th, and at Marshfield on September 9th

2016, at Anchor Head on November 30th

2017, two individuals – a male at Marshfield on February 8th, and a juvenile at Cold Ashton on March 28th

2019, at Tortworth on January 30th

2020, two individuals – at OPS on April 2nd, and at Lawrence Weston Moor on May 2nd

2021, a pair bred in South Glos but the single chick was found dead under the nest

2022, a pair again bred in South Glos with two young seen in the nest. One was seen over Saltford on October 16th

Following a review, all published records prior to 1980 were considered to be either escaped falconers' birds, or not adequately documented [2019 ABR] leaving 30 individuals recorded in the twentieth century:

1981 – Bucklands Pool on November 1st

1983 – a female at BG on August 13th

1985 – a probable male at ASW on October 26th, Clevedon Court Wood on November 22nd

1986 – a male at Clevedon on February 17th

1988 – a female at BG on September 10th, a female at Chapel Pill, Ham Green on September 10th

1989 – Thornbury on June 25th, Leigh Woods on October 29th

1990 – a female over Leigh Woods on May 26th

1991 – a pair displaying over Leigh Woods on March 23rd and 28th with a male there on 24th, a female at Yeo Estuary on December 11th

1992 – a pair over Leigh Woods on March 27th and 28th with the female (wearing jesses) again on April 4th, a male at Yeo Bank Farm on August 16th and 23rd

1993 – BG on May 3rd, Dolebury Warren on September 23rd

1995 – ASW on March 4th

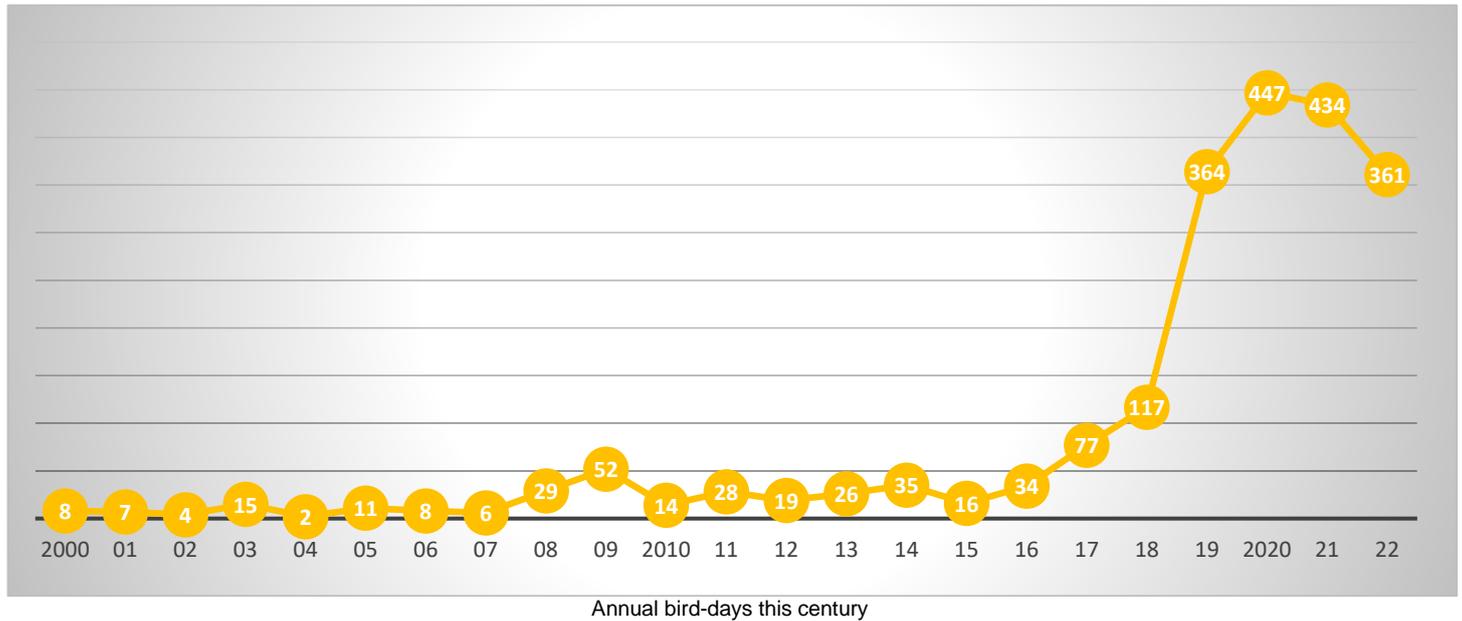
1997 – an adult at Flax Bourton on February 21st, a female at Weston Wood on February 22nd, a male at the Avon Gorge on April 10th, a male at Severn Beach on July 6th, an adult at Brandon Hill on July 24th

1998 – Sand Point on May 3rd, a juvenile male at Severn Beach on August 15th

1999 – OPS on 26th March, see Middleton (2006), a male at Leigh Woods on March 27th, 28th and April 1st with two on April 27th, a male at BL on April 2nd, Worle on July 25th, Milton on August 25th

### Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

An uncommon but increasing visitor and passage migrant that has wintered at CVL and some other sites



Although Davis (1947) says 'evidently no more now than a very scarce visitor' I cannot find any 18th century records. The earliest records are as follows:

1931 – a raptor, most probably a Marsh Harrier, at Combe Down seen on four occasions between July 5th and August [SBR with notes]

1954 – a juvenile at CVL from August 16th until at least 31st, a different female or immature at CVL on September 19th

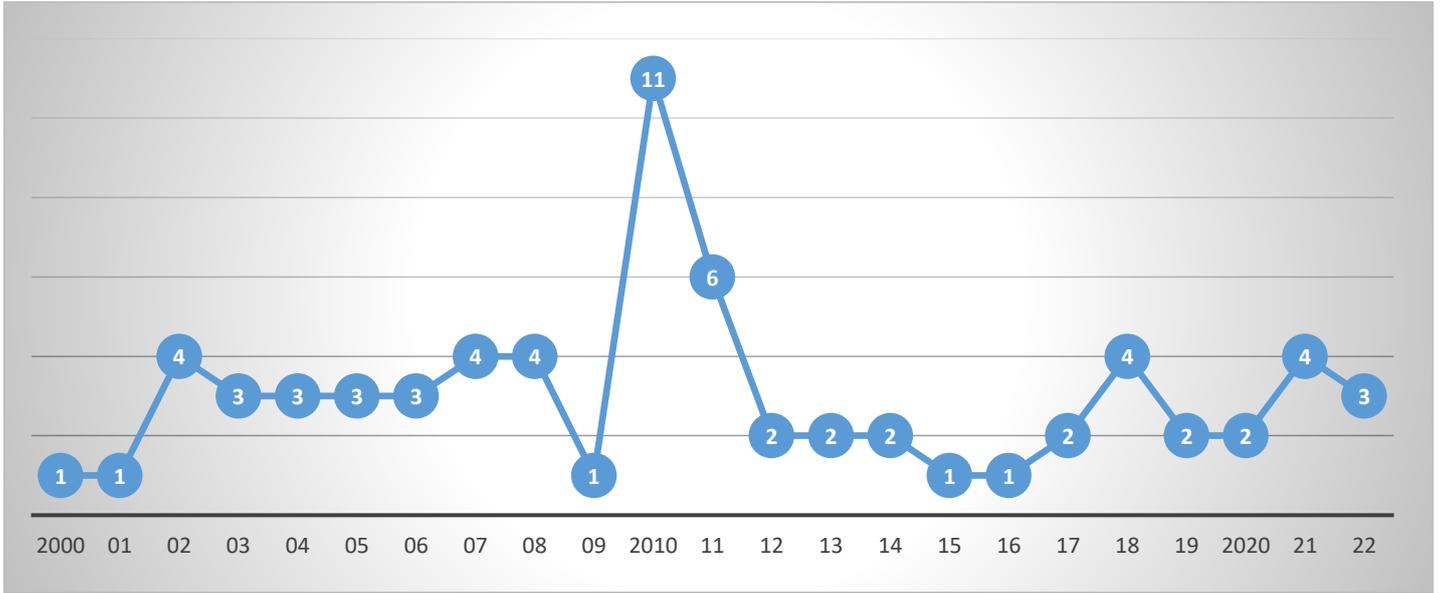
1960 – female or immature at CVL on October 22nd and 23rd [latter date SBR]

It remained a local rarity until 2008.



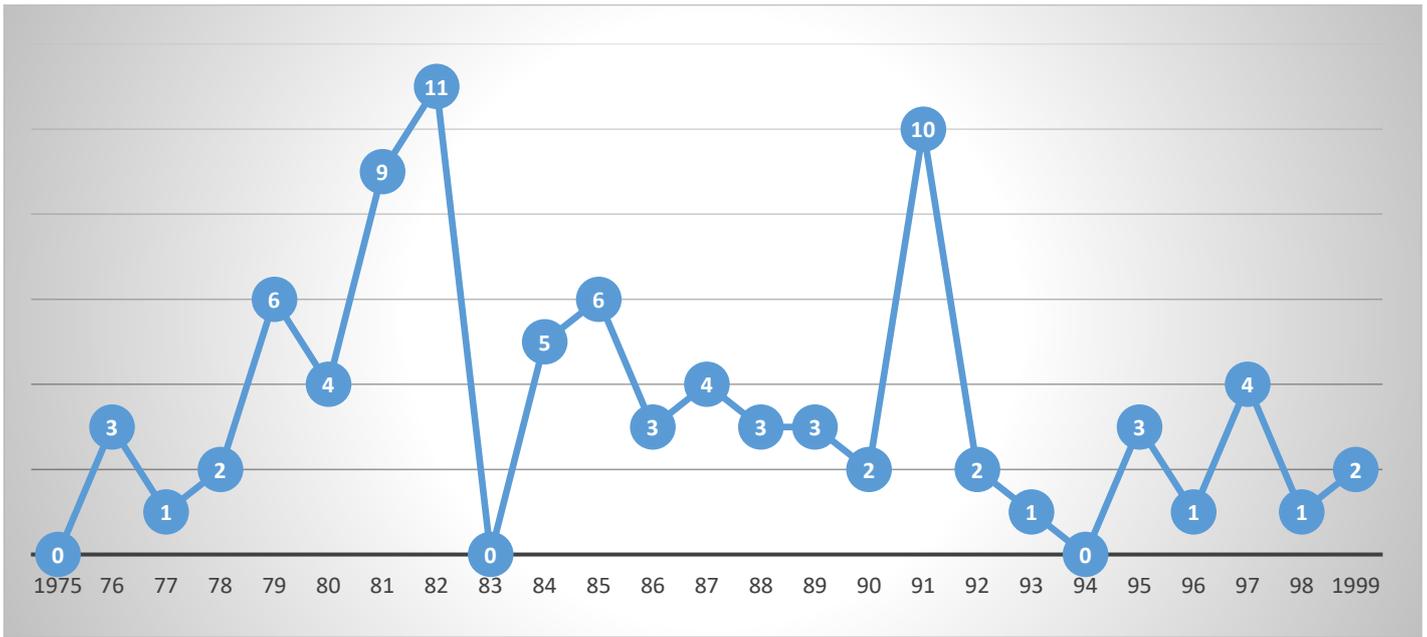
**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

A local rarity recorded annually since 1995 and a total of 69 individuals this century, a third of which relate to males.



Individuals each year this century

There were 86 individuals recorded in the last 25 years of the twentieth century:



Individuals each year between 1975 and 1999

In addition there were records for 13 years in the first 75 years of the twentieth century.

All published records are shown in Appendix 1

Wheeler (1874) described it as 'rare, has occurred some years since, while Davis (1947) says 'very occasional winter visitor but perhaps more frequent than is supposed'.

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus*

A National rarity with two local records, both this century:

2011, a juvenile male on the Mendips, mainly Black Down, flew into Avon briefly on September 30th [BBRC]

2016, a second-calendar year male at Marshfield on April 12th [BBRC][2017 ABR]

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

A local rarity with seven individuals recorded this century:

2004, a male on Wavering Down crossed briefly into Avon on May 10th<sup>96</sup>

2005, a second calendar-year male at Marshfield on June 21st and 22nd

2006, a second calendar-year female at Chelwood on May 6th [2007 ABR]

2008, a female/immature near Tormarton on May 12th

2011, a second calendar-year male at Marshfield on July 3rd

2015, two individuals – at Weston STW on April 25th, and at Northwick Warth on May 15th

In addition, there are a few records, published as Harrier sp, that the observers thought were Montagu's: CVL on 13th October 2001 thought to be either a Montagu's or a Pallid, Portishead on 15th July 2003, Portishead on 28th July 2012

There are ten records from the twentieth century, although a few are not definite:

1947 – a female, probably this species, flushed from marshy ground at Walton-in-Gordano on May 19th [SBR]<sup>97</sup>

1958 – a ringtail at Marshfield on May 25th was probably this species

1962 – an immature at CVL on August 4th

1968 – a female or immature at Sand Bay on May 31st, assumed on date to be this species

1982 – a female or immature near Marshfield on August 3rd

1991 – a female flew in from the estuary and then east over Aust Warth on October 16th

1994 – first summer female at Yeo Estuary from May 19th until 23rd, a female/immature near West Littleton Down on June 11th

1995 – a first summer at Wavering Down on May 3rd

1996 – a first-summer female at Cl-Y on May 12th

Again there are a few records, published as Harrier sp, that the observers thought were Montagu's: CVL on 22nd August, 1965 [SBR], BL on 26th September, 1965 [SBR], Sand Bay on 31st May, 1968 [SBR], Lansdown on 20th May, 1989, Norton Malreward on 26th August, 1993, and Axe Estuary on 29th May, 1994

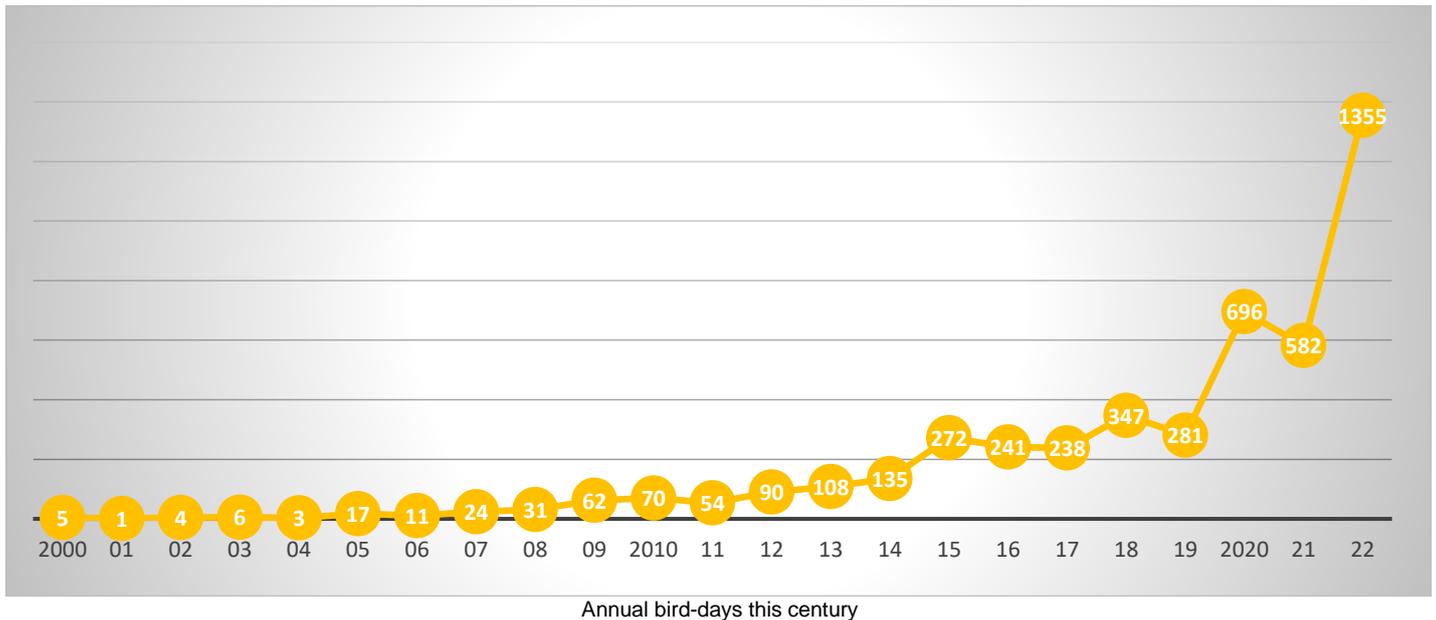
There is just one nineteenth century record, from Tickenham in 1891 mentioned in both Charbonnier (1899) and Davis (1947)

<sup>96</sup> ABR gives date, incorrectly, as 8th

<sup>97</sup> A 1955 record of a pair near Rowberrow were almost certainly outside Avon

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

A passage migrant and an increasingly frequent visitor, as can be seen from the chart below showing the bird-days for each year this century. The highest count is of 12 at Hawkesbury on 20th December, 2022.



A pair bred in the Cam Valley area in 2020, see Carlisle (2020).

Wheeler (1874) says 'rare one shot some years since' while Charbonnier (1899) says it 'occurred at Chewton and at Wraxall August 1888' and Davis (1947) says 'long extinct as a resident and now a very rare vagrant'. Rogers (2004) gives a full review of the historical status in Avon and Somerset. Early records are as follows:

1858 – one shot at Claverton Rogers (2004)

1888 – Cleeve Wood, near Yatton Blathwayt (1906)

1890<sup>98</sup> – trapped at Chewton Keynsham in August Davis (1947)

1913 - one noted on five occasions in the hilly country between Flax Bourton and Wrington from December 20th until 30th Davis (1947) [*British Birds vol 7 page 299*]

1957 – Tockington on March 3rd

1967 – near Hunstrete on November 1st

1978 – Clevedon on December 31st

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

A National rarity until 2006 and a local rarity since then with two records this century:

2010, at Severn Beach on March 18th, see the note in ABR species account about the possible subspecific identity of this individual

2019, at Compton Martin on April 23rd

There are two prior records:

1983 – Weston-in-Gordano on August 8th [*BBRC\**]

1994 – Walton-in-Gordano on May 14th [*BBRC\**]

<sup>98</sup> Blathwayt (1906) gives the year as 1888

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

A National rarity until 1999 and a local rarity since then with just one modern record, a juvenile/first-winter at BL on 28th October, 2016.

However, the situation is complicated by a five year reintroduction programme, led by Forestry England and the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation, which released six individuals on the Isle of Wight in summer 2019, and again in 2020, and aims to release at least six young birds each year. A bird from the project was seen locally in 2020, three were seen in 2021, and one in 2022.

There are a number of old records:

1694 – shot at Ashton Court in late December in Rogers (2008)

1811 – killed on Mendip in Davis (1947)

1833 – shot at Claverton in Blathwayt (1906)

1861 – obtained at Weston-super-Mare in January in Davis (1947), [*Zoologist* 1861 p7380 and 7381]

1871 – an immature male shot at Dodington Park in late December in Davis (1947), [*Zoologist* 1872 p2991]

1919 – probably this species reported from Steep Holm on March 9th in Davis (1947), [*British Birds* vol 13 p219]

1927 – an eagle sp near Weston-super-Mare on December 18th came in off the sea [*SBR*]

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

A local rarity with just four old records and two from the 1970's:

1906 – Clevedon in November, see Davis (1947)

1910 – Clevedon, found dead in October, see Davis (1947)

Prior to 1950 - records from Blagdon and Shiplate (near Bleadon)<sup>99</sup> in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1971 – White Hill, Hinton Blewitt on September 17th [*SBR with notes*]

1974 – CVL on November 9th [*SBR*]

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<sup>99</sup> Rose (2000) mentions a 1909 record that I cannot trace

**Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

A fairly common breeding resident, possibly also an uncommon passage migrant, the population has steadily increased since the late 1980s, now widespread and regularly seen over suburban areas.

Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 1,500 pairs. In a 38-year study by R J Prytherch, covering a 75 square kilometre site, the number of occupied territories increased from 13 to 119.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, two shot at Leigh' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, although uncommon and local has much increased during the present century. Now occurs over a considerable part of N Somerset and breeds, perhaps more frequently than is supposed, in the Mendip area. Has recently been reported from various localities in S Glos, including Clifton, Henbury, Stoke Gifford, Dyrham, Rangeworthy and Wootton-under-Edge'. Bland and Dadds (2012) say that in 1954 there was just one pair in S Glos and nine pairs on Mendip but by 1983 there were around 50 breeding pairs.

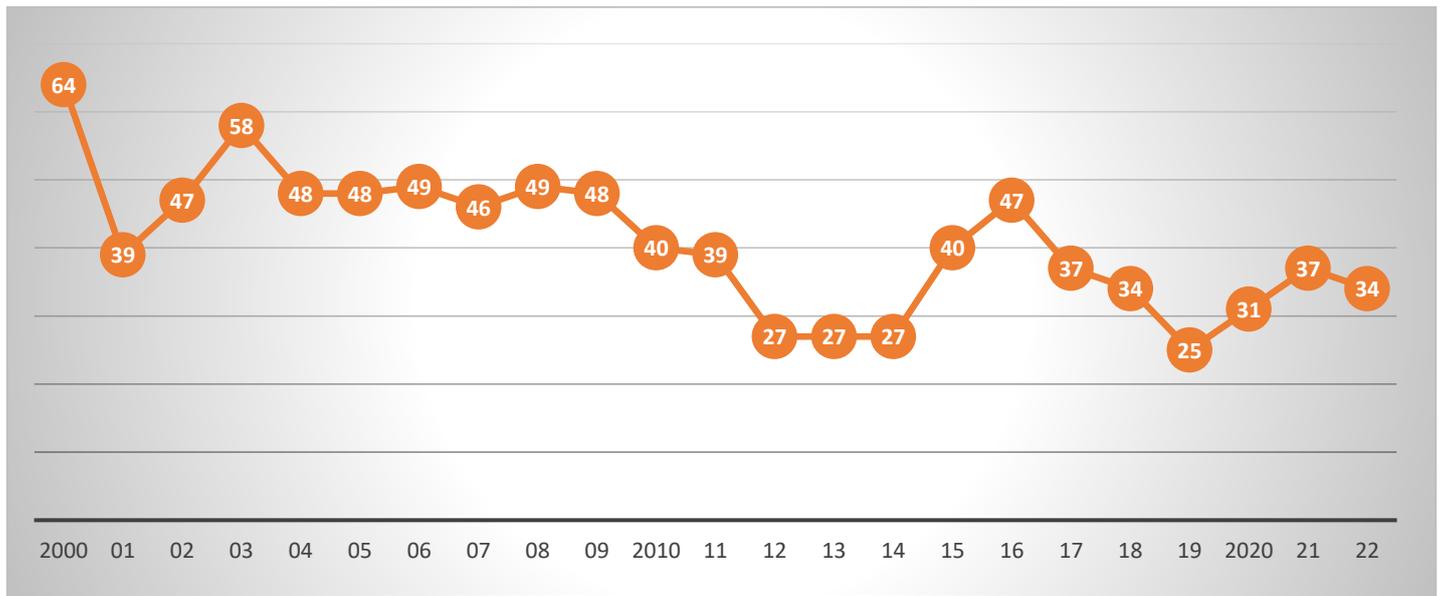
**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

A breeding resident, uncommon after a long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation efforts in several areas. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 50 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'generally distributed, Leigh, Kingsweston, not common' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident, fairly common'. The 1928 SBR said it was 'everywhere scarcer than Tawny owl but quite frequent and in some localities even rather common' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, widely distributed but less common than Tawny Owl'

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

An uncommon breeding resident that is declining.



Early records are of single specimens obtained at Batheaston in 1834 and Clevedon in 1878 [*1879 Zoologist p 32*]

The 1928 SBR says it spread from the north being first recorded from Tickenham in 1907 and that breeding was first proved at Pensford in 1910. 'Now uniformly common throughout district' while the 1936 SBR says 'common in all suitable places, especially well-timbered open country like Ashton Park. Plentiful at Winscombe but no great increase noted for the past few years'. Davis (1947) says 'now a common resident and widely distributed. Following the rapid spread from the centres of introduction (Northants and Kent) colonisation began early in the present century.

A Little Owl killed at Winscombe in 1859 and now in the Somerset County Museum, Taunton was until recently regarded in error as a Tengmalms Owl. *Davis (1947)*

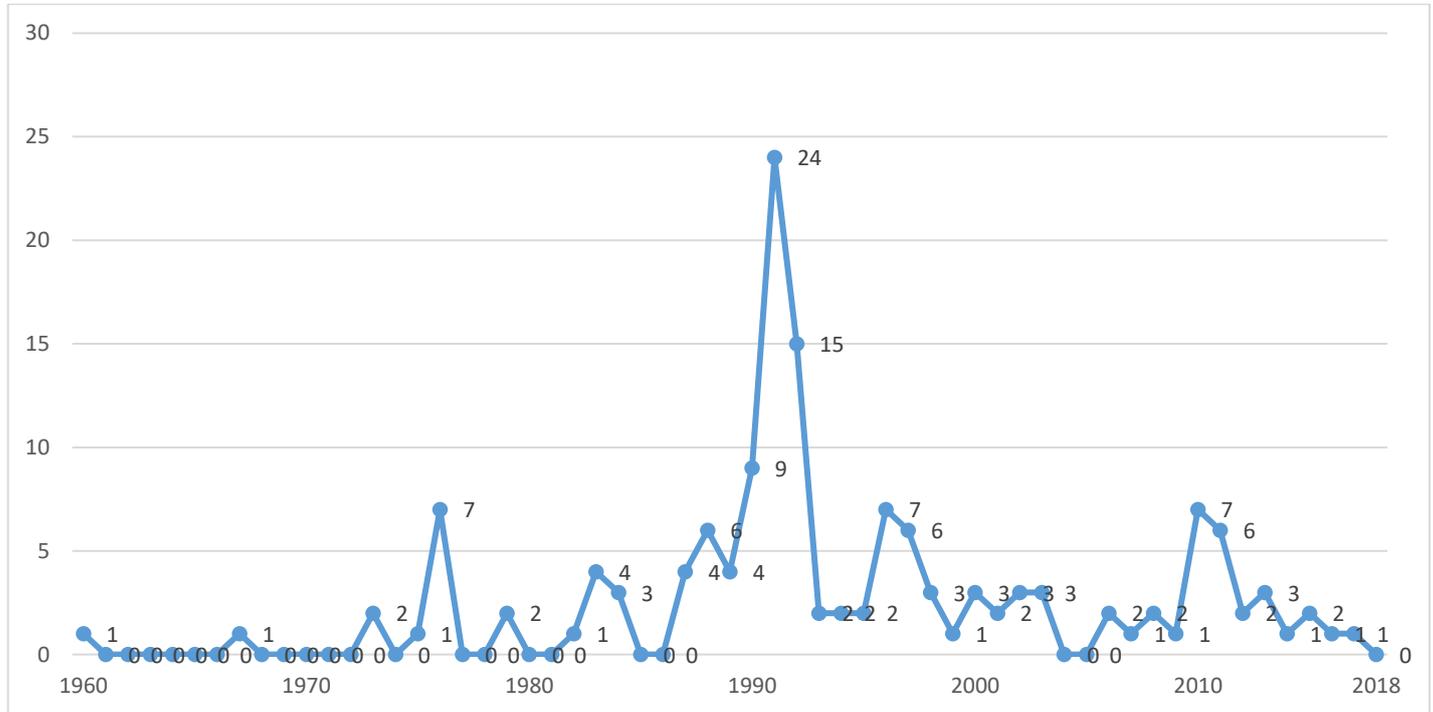
### Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

A rare local breeder and winter visitor.

Pairs bred locally in 1991, at Compton Dando, in 2010, near Hunstrete and in four years between 2010 and 2015 at a site in North Somerset, with birds wintering at the NS site until 2018.

During the 1980's and 90's there were winter roosts at a number of sites. The species was recorded annually between 1987 and 2003 and between 2006 and 2018. The only record since then was a fresh corpse at Chittingen on 7th February, 2021.

All published records between 1960 and 2018 are given in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the graph below:



It was rarer in the first half of the twentieth century, Davis (1947) says 'apparently no more than a scarce and very local resident, perhaps also an occasional winter visitor or passage migrant. No breeding information for nearly 20 years' and I cannot find any published records between 1947 and 1960. The 1928 SBR said it was 'uncommon. In most places occasional vagrant only but reported in past years from Portishead, Radstock and near Ubley while a specimen from Bathford is in the Bristol museum'.

There are few records for the nineteenth century, Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, Portishead' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'reported occasionally, probably resident'.

c1890 - shot at Stapleton in Davis (1947)

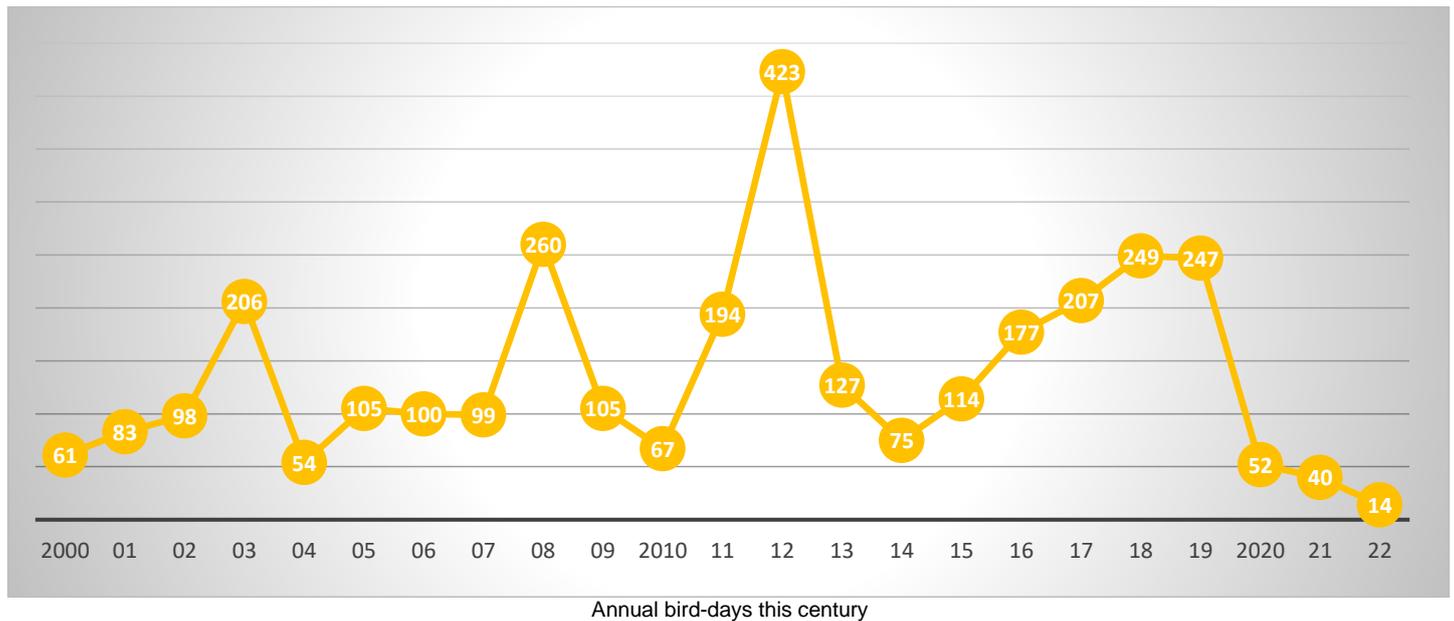
1895 - killed in Ashton Park in December in both Davis (1947) and Charbonnier (1899)

1897 - two shot at Frampton Cotterell in both Davis (1947) and Charbonnier (1899)

Prior to 1906 - obtained at Bathford in Davis (1947)

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.



The average arrival is on 21st September, ten days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the earliest arrival date on 3rd August, 2011 at Aust/Northwick Warths. The average departure is 30th April, a day earlier than Bland (1992) with the latest on 5th July, 2012 at CI-Y

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'occasional, Leigh, Portishead' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'occurs occasionally in autumn, Ashton 1891'. The 1928 SBR says it is an 'irregular and uncommon autumn and winter visitor. Has been flushed occasionally on Backwell Hill where probably as frequent as anywhere. Reported in past years from Leigh, Portishead, Long Ashton, and Warleigh'. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor, uncommon but probably occurs in most years. Recorded from various coastal areas including Avonmouth and Clevedon. Has also been noted on Mendip and other inland localities'.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

A fairly common breeding resident that is under-recorded. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 250 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) says 'generally distributed, Leigh, Stoke Bishop, Stapleton, Kingsweston' and Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, fairly common'. The 1928 SBR says it was 'common throughout district, most so where there is an abundance of suitable timber' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'.



**Hoopoe** *Upapa epops*

A local rarity with 26 individuals recorded so far this century:

2002, at Norton Hawkfield on September 4th

2003, near Weston STW on May 30th

2004, at Yate from August 18th until 23rd

2008, two individuals – at Dyrham on April 11th and 12th, and at Aust Warth and Severn Beach on April 27th

2009, two individuals – at Bourton on April 16th, and at Doynton on 22nd

2010, near Thornbury on March 28th

2011, three individuals – at Clevedon on March 15th, at OPS on May 3rd, and at Weston-super-Mare on May 9th

2012, at Sand Bay from October 25th until November 4th

2014, at Chipping Sodbury on May 14th

2015, at Withywood on August 6th

2016, six individuals – at Sand Point on April 12th, at Hanham on May 9th and 10th, at Weston-super-Mare on June 24th, at Langford on July 3rd, at Tortworth on October 10th, and at Burrington on 28th

2018, two individuals – at Yate on April 15th, and at Marshfield mid May

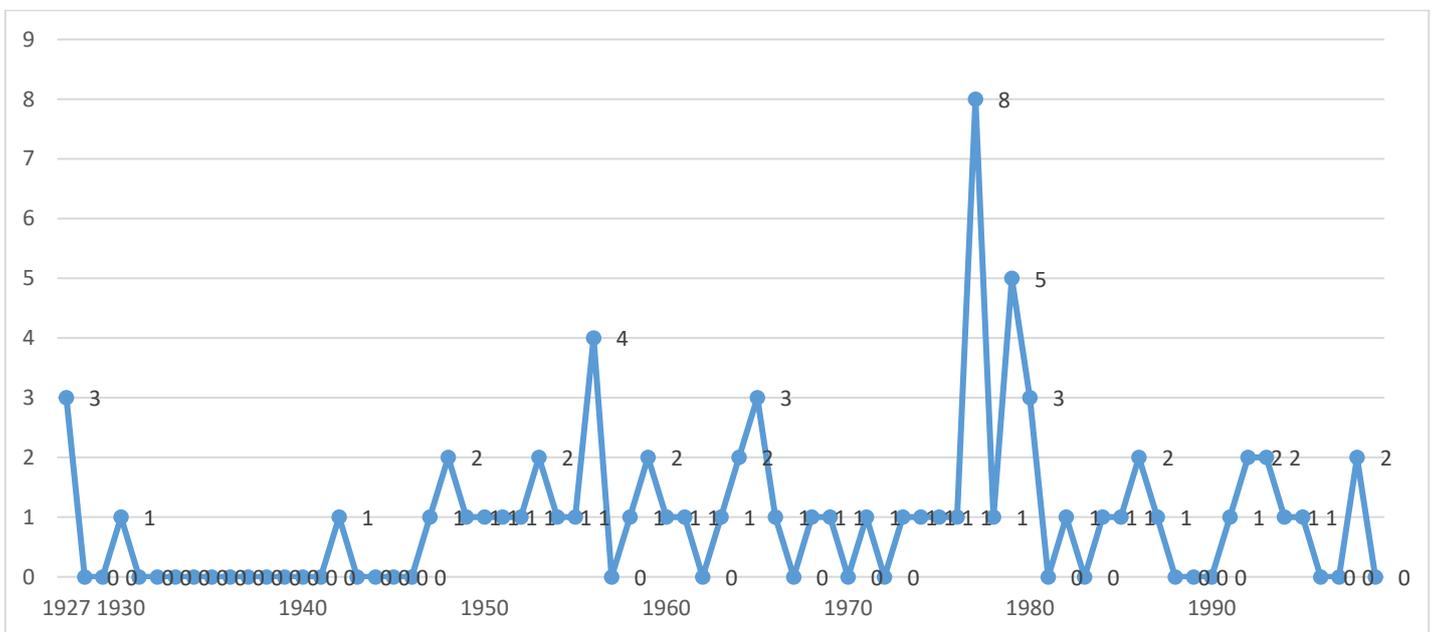
2019, at Paulton on November 12th

2020, two individuals – at Saltford on May 2nd, and at Coalpit Heath on June 14th

2021, in an Arnos Vale garden on May 3rd

It was almost annual in the middle of the twentieth century and a pair bred in a large garden at Midsomer Norton on the Somerset border in 1977; three young hatched of which two fledged, see Eley (1977) for further details. Breeding was also suspected near Bath in 1927.

All published twentieth century records are given in Appendix 1 and summarised in the graph below:



It seems to have been rarer in the nineteenth century, Wheeler (1874) said it was 'very rare, two shot some years ago' and Charbonnier (1899) said 'occurred in the spring of 1870, 1892 and 1895'. The only published records I can find are:

1850 – Bath, in Davis (1947)

1858 – Weston-super-Mare, in Davis (1947)

1860 – shot at Weston-super-Mare on October 20th [*Zoologist*, 1892 page 410]

1862 – shot at Keynsham on May 1st [*Zoologist*, 1892 page 410]

c1870 – Redland in Davis (1947)

1878 – Charfield in Davis (1947)

1888<sup>100</sup> – New Passage in Charbonnier (1899)

1895 – Bleadon in summer and Flax Bourton in April in Blathwayt (1906)

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<sup>100</sup> Although Davis (1947) says 1889

**Roller** *Coracias garrulus*

A National rarity with a single local record, at Kenn Moor on 16th August, 1976 [BBRC]

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

A fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 100 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'local, not common, Stapleton, Ashton, Avonmouth, Sea Mills' and Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident, not common near the city'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'quite frequent on streams. Also, at Litton and BL, occasional at BG' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, widely distributed and not uncommon on suitable streams. Fairly frequent at the reservoirs and sometimes reported from the coast'.

**Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

A national rarity until 1991 and a local rarity since with eight records involving 14 individuals this century:

2000, at Sand Point on May 7th

2002, at Wraxall CP on June 16th

2007, heard only at Severn Beach on May 13th [2020 ABR]

2008, at Ladye Bay on May 3rd

2015, seven individuals – over Saltford on June 7th, and six at Woolley, Bath from 8th until 10th<sup>101</sup>

2016, heard only at Aust Services on July 31st

2022, two at Nailsea on June 6th

There were three records involving ten individuals in the second half of the twentieth century:

1963 – three over Weston Woods on April 23rd [BBRC\*]

**BEE-EATER** *Merops apiaster*

**S.** Three, Weston Woods, Apr. 23, seen by R.A. who refers to long glides and flaps while circling over trees, short single ‘croo’ calls every few seconds and pale grey underparts. Record confirmed by *Brit. Birds Rarities Committee*.

1966 – CVL on August 15th [BBRC\*]

1994 – a party of six watched for ten minutes at Radford near Camerton on May 1st

The only other record is of four<sup>102</sup> obtained from a small flock which visited Stapleton in May 1866. Of these, three are mounted in the City Museum, see Davis (1947)

<sup>101</sup> ABR incorrectly gives date as 19th

<sup>102</sup> Wheeler (1874) states ‘three of which were shot by him’ but an article by Harding in the 1868 Proceedings, page 9, states he shot four

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

This is a rare passage migrant, mainly in the autumn, with 56 individuals recorded so far this century, and 2017 the only blank year:

2000, two individuals – at Yatton on September 2nd and 3rd, and at Uphill on October 1st

2001, at Tytherington on September 20th

2002, two individuals – at Channel View Farm from August 24th until 26th, and at Saltford from September 2nd until 4th

2003, three individuals – at Northwick Warth on August 31st, at Thornbury on September 3rd, and at Severn Beach on September 7th

2004, at Cameley on September 9th

2005, at Sand Point from September 10th until 12th

2006, three individuals – at Warmley from April 23rd until 25th, at Keynsham on September 15th, and at Sand Point on October 9th

2007, at East Dundry on September 5th

2008, seven individuals – at Portishead on August 31st, at Keynsham on September 4th, at Kenn on September 5th, at Charlton Field from September 12th until 19th, at Cl-Y from September 12th until 16th with two on 13th and 14th, and at Sand Point on September 16th and 21st

2009, three individuals – at Thornbury on April 26th, at Kingston Seymour on September 20th, and at Kewstoke on September 20th and 21st

2010, two individuals – trapped at Northwick Warth on August 30th and seen on September 3rd, at Nempnett Thrubwell on September 26th

2011, three individuals – at Bishop Sutton on September 10th, at Sand Point on October 2nd, and at RPD from October 7th until 13th

2012, two individuals – at RPD on September 25th, and trapped at CVL on September 29th

2013, two individuals – at Tytherington on April 16th and 17th, and trapped at PWD on August 31st

2014, two individuals – at New Passage on August 31st, and at Dolebury Warren from September 2nd until 5th

2015, at New Passage on September 16th

2016, four individuals – at Hinton Blewitt on August 30th and 31st, two in Yatton on September 2nd, and at Thornbury on October 1st

2018, two individuals – in a Brislington garden on August 25th, and at Chipping Sodbury Common on September 5th

2019, three individuals – at Cl-Y on August 29th and September 2nd, at Chipping Sodbury Common on September 15th, and at BG from September 29th until October 15th

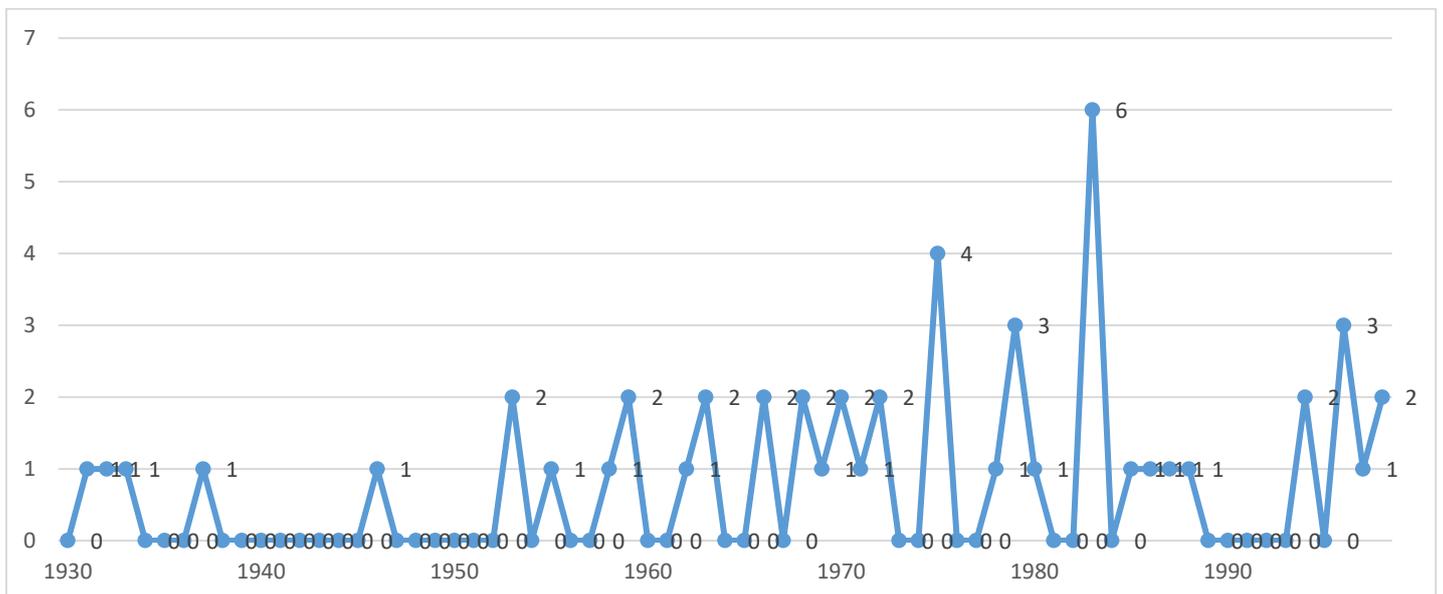
2020, three individuals – in an Elberton garden on September 12th, at Saltford on September 16th, and at OPS on September 20th

2021, five individuals – in a Dundry garden on September 4th, at CVL on September 18th, at Avonmouth on September 18th, at Troopers Hill on September 20th, and at Keynsham on September 20th

2022, three individuals – Burrington Ham on August 23rd, ringed at Littleton Brick Pits on September 15th, Sodbury Common on September 20th



It was probably less than annual during much of the twentieth century judging by the published records since 1930 which are given in Appendix 1 and summarised below:



The last local breeding records were probably from Blagdon in 1920, which Palmer and Ballance (1968) attribute to the report of the Wells Natural History Society, and Clevedon in 1916, which Palmer and Ballance attribute to Lewis (1955).

The 1925 SBR called it 'rare. Seen in some years in Brockley Combe. Winscombe' and Davis (1947) says it was 'formerly known as a not uncommon summer resident but has greatly decreased since the end of the last century and now appears to be no more than a scarce visitor on migration. Often used to be seen on the wooded slopes of Cadbury Camp ... while for more recent years there are spring passage records from various localities including Backwell'. Palmer and Balance (1968) say it was 'fairly common around Bath until 1907 and around Bristol until 1920'. It was clearly commoner in the nineteenth century, Wheeler (1874) called it a 'generally distributed summer visitor' while Charbonnier (1899) said it was a 'summer resident, fairly common'.

1829 – Alveston mentioned in Hayes (2020) as the first published record for South Glos

1889 – nested at Failand mentioned in Davis (1947)

c1895 – nested in Keynsham, mentioned in Davis (1947)

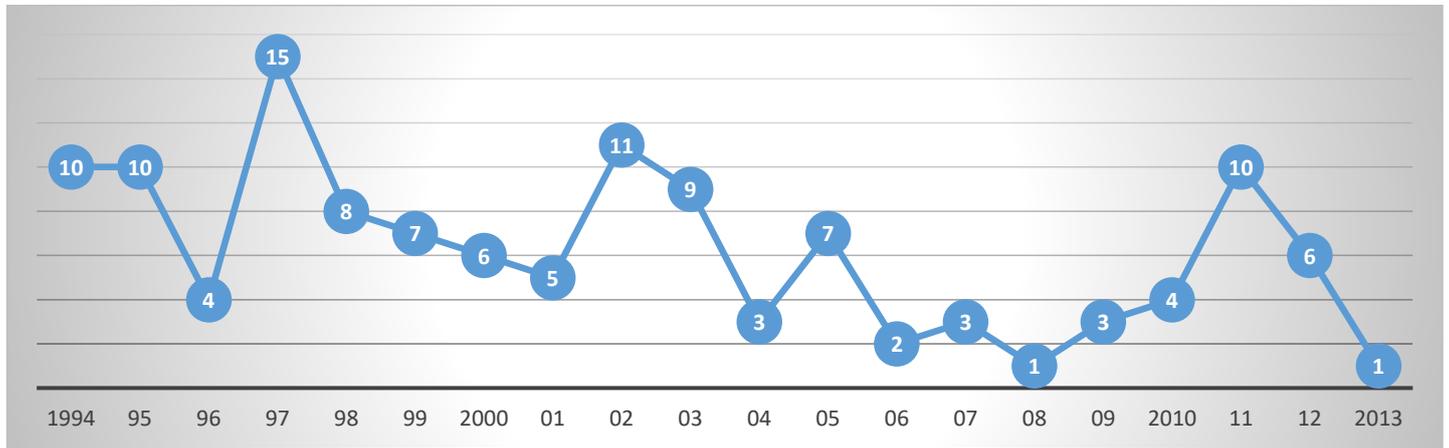
**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor*

A local rarity since 2014 with accepted record since then from:

2019 – CVL on March 5th

2021 – Prior Park, Bath on January 9th, Shire Valley, Marshfield on March 5th

The chart below shows the number of individuals in the 20 years prior to 2013, when it was classed as a 'scarce and elusive resident'. The last proven breeding was in 2003 when a pair raised three juveniles at a site near Bath.



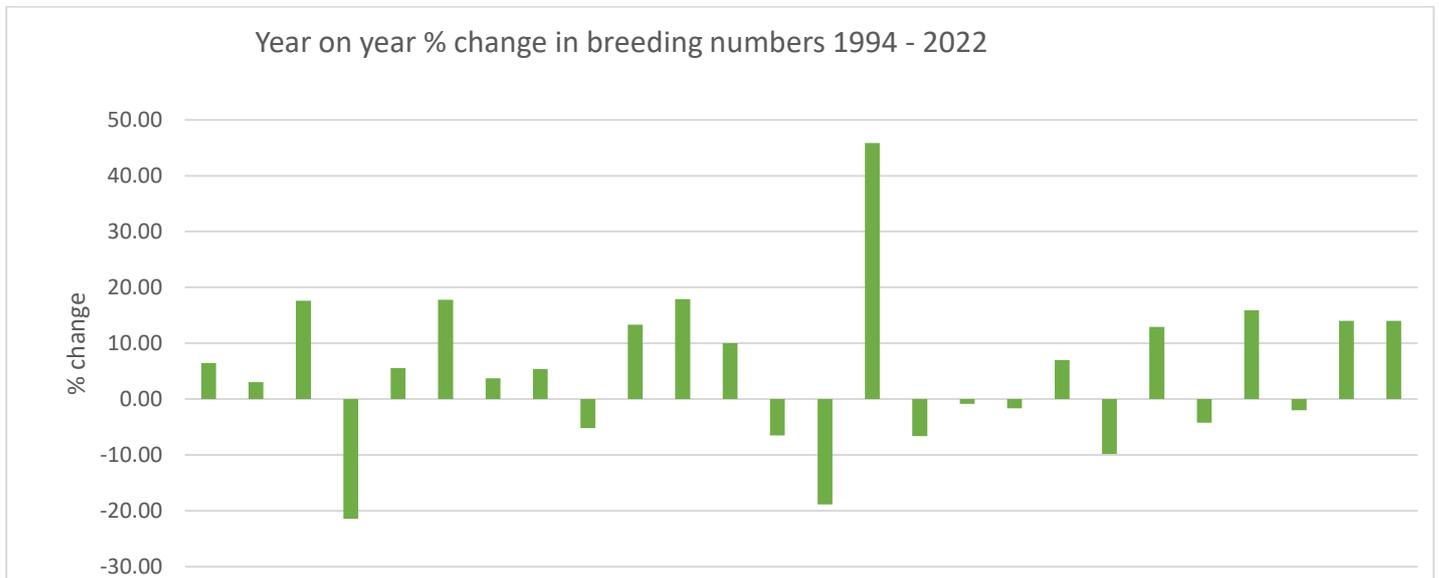
Number of individuals recorded in the 20 years prior to descriptions being required in 2014

Wheeler (1874) listed it as 'occasionally met with, Leigh, Ashton' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident, fairly common'. The 1925 SBR mentions 'apparently scarcer than Great Spotted. Has bred in the Chew Valley. Weston-super-Mare' while Davis (1947) said it was 'resident, widely distributed and not uncommon in most areas. Less frequently reported than Great Spotted but, owing to its small size, is perhaps often overlooked'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention breeding records since 1950 for Leigh Woods, Cleeve Woods, Chewton Keynsham, Blagdon, Ubley, Bishop Sutton and Stanton Drew.

### Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

The BBS results show a 161% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.

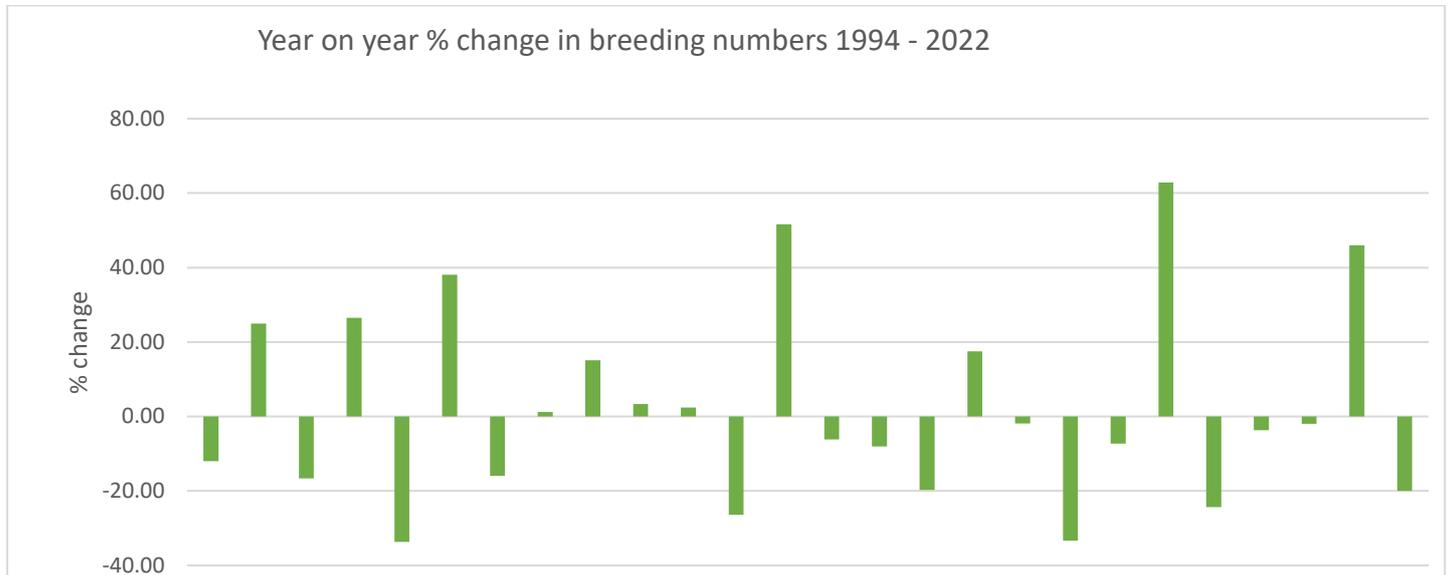


Wheeler (1874) said it 'occasionally met with, Leigh, Ashton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, a few pairs nest every year in the immediate neighbourhood of the city'. The 1925 SBR said it had 'increased considerably of late and now almost common in well-timbered country' and the 1935 SBR 'well distributed in parks, woodlands and timbered districts round Bristol, Numerous in Leigh Woods. Has certainly increased round Winscombe in the last few years, is not confined to woods and often frequents gardens'. Davis (1947) said it was 'resident, less abundant than Green Woodpecker but fairly common in well-timbered country'.

### Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

A fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally.

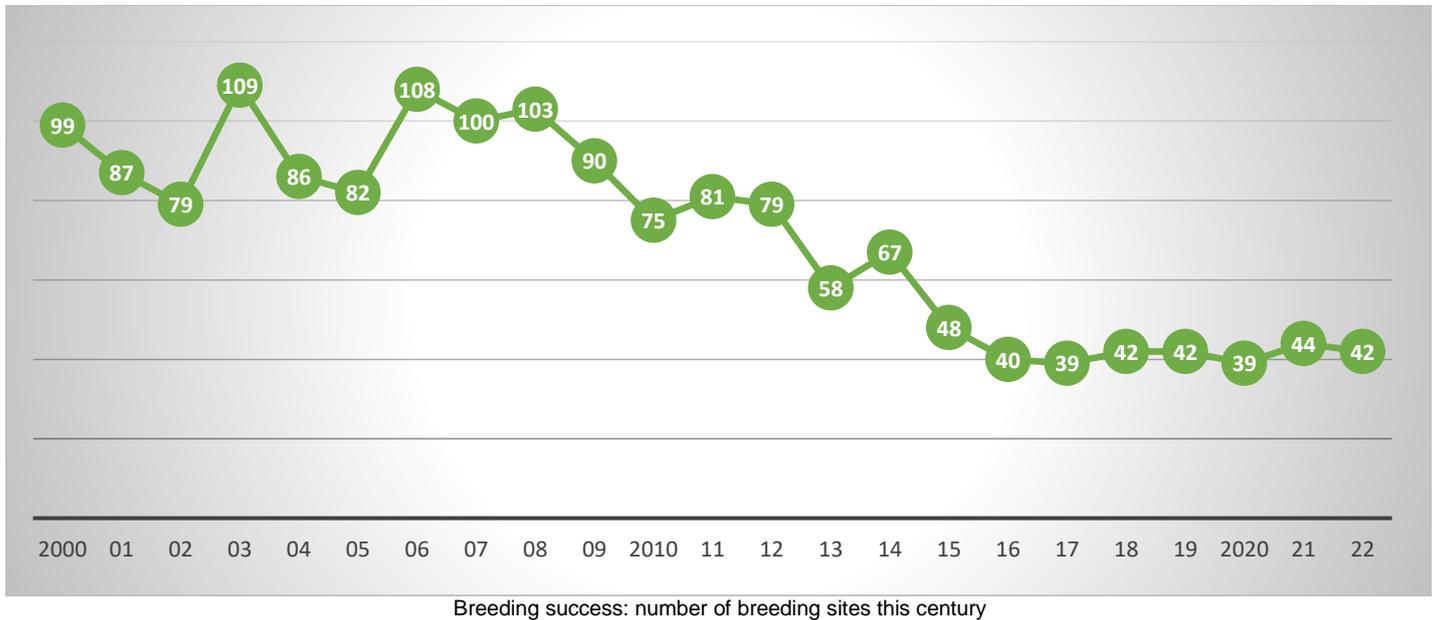
The BBS results show a 18% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'generally distributed, Leigh, Clifton Downs, Stapleton, Ashton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1926 SBR said it was 'common everywhere except where hedgerow timber is scarce. Especially numerous Chew Valley where it has probably increased in recent years. Possibly a little less common than formerly at Backwell' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'

### **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

A fairly common but declining breeding resident, the chart below shows the number of breeding sites each year this century. The figures in the chart are significantly lower than the estimate of 400 breeding pairs made by Bland and Dadds (2012), but more than the 50 pairs in Taylor (1966). The 1990 ABR called it 'our commonest raptor'.



Wheeler (1874) said 'summer visitor generally distributed, frequent occurrence, breeds at Leigh and a year or two since in St Vincent Rocks' while Charbonnier (1899) listed it as 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) as 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*

A National rarity until 2006 with just one local record this century, a female at Northwick Warth briefly on 15th October, 2014.

There are four previous records:

1967 – a male near Farrington Gurney on August 18th. [BBRC\*]

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*  
**S.** Male, nr. Farrington Gurney, Aug. 18 seen by MHT who refers to uniform slate-grey plumage except for rusty under tail-coverts and bright red legs. Record, first for district, accepted by *Brit. Birds Rarities Committee*.

1973 – BG on October 4th [BBRC], [SBR], [1992 ABR]

1974 – an adult male flying across the Glos border near Severn House Farm, south west of Berkeley on September 16th [BBRC] [GBR], Swaine (1982)

1992 – a first summer male at Stanton Wick from May 30th until June 3rd [BBRC\*]

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

An uncommon and erratic by year passage migrant and winter visitor. Most are recorded on the coast and it is scarce inland (until 2008 supporting notes were required for inland records).

The average arrival date is 8th September with the average departure on 22nd April.

Wheeler (1874) said it was n 'occasional summer visitor, two or three have been shot at intervals' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said 'taken nearly every autumn by birdcatchers, these are often immature birds'. Davis (1947) says 'winter visitor, uncommon but probably occurs in most years. Chiefly met with in coastal areas. Recent records are of one at Stoke Gifford October 1945 and two, evidently on passage, at Clevedon late April 1946'

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

An uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor. It is rare nationally as a breeding species and the chart below shows the number of local breeding pairs this century.



The current average arrival date is April 16th which is 13 days earlier than quoted by Bland (1992), while the earliest arrival date is 30th March, 1990 at Winscombe. Currently the average departure date is October 11th, 17 days later than given in Bland (1992) while the latest local departure is 11th November, 2005 at Dundry.

The largest count is of at least 13 at BL on 12th May, 2021.

Wheeler (1874) listed it as an 'occasional summer visitor, first occurred some years ago' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'occurred at Chewton in 1885 and at Wrington on November 6th 1896'. Davis (1947) described it as a 'summer resident, uncommon though perhaps often overlooked. In recent years has frequently been noted at Stoke Gifford and Blagdon and has also been recorded from Dyrham and Severn Beach. Reported in former years as being seen or obtained at Tortworth, Burnett, Wrington and elsewhere. Probably breeds in several localities but no definite records'.

It was treated as a local rarity, particularly away from the reservoirs, until 1990.

**Gyrfalcon** *Falco rusticolis*

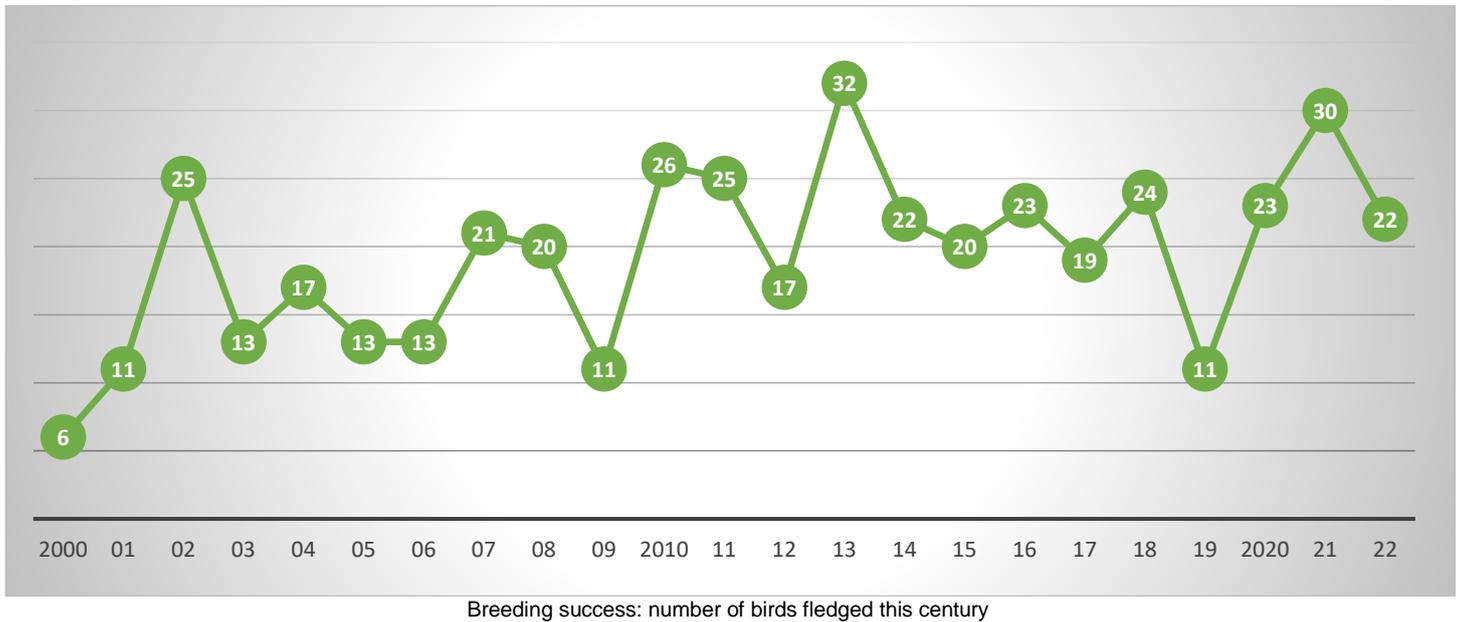
A National rarity with one local record, at CVL from 5th November, 1961 until 13th January, 1962 [BBRC]

**GYR FALCON** *Falco rusticolus*

**S.** A falcon, too large for Peregrine, seen in flight and perched at Chew Valley res. by P.J.C. and M.A.W. on Nov. 5 was considered to be a Gyr Falcon; bird, subsequently identified on frequent occasions by G.S., remained until close of year and was seen by W.A.H., J.A.McG., H.W.N., the original observers and others. Field notes include: large size; broad, rather bluntly pointed wings; long tail; lack of distinct facial pattern and moustachial stripe; slow, powerful wing-beats and when at rest, wing-tips falling considerably short of tail. Identification confirmed by *Brit. Birds* Rare Birds Committee. First record for Bristol Area and Somerset. (A large falcon seen by R.S.H. at Downside Abbey, Nov. 6, was possibly the Chew Valley bird.)

### **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

An uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder which has increased in the last two decades. It is still rare nationally as a breeding species and the chart below shows the local breeding successes this century.



It was considered a local rarity, particularly records away from the coast, until 1990.

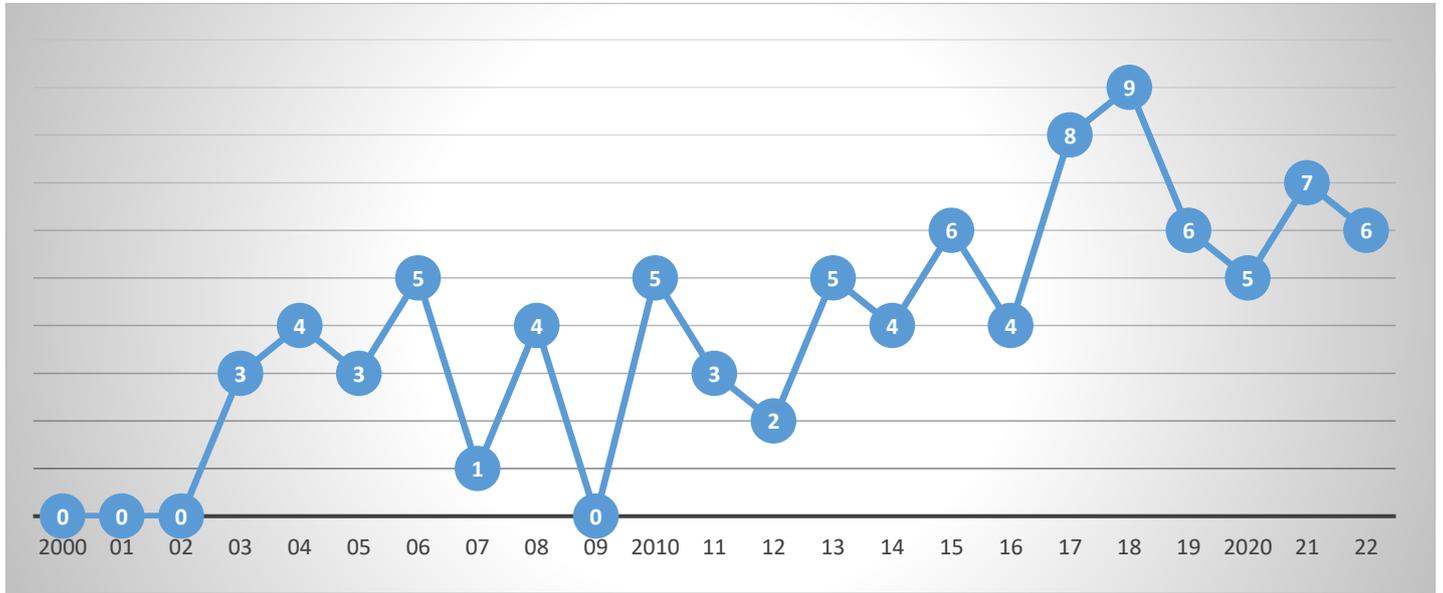
Tully (1997) analyses the diet of the pairs that nest in the city.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'very rare, shot some years ago' whereas Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs fairly often'. Davis (1947) says 'resident, local and chiefly confined to coastal areas but fairly frequent inland outside the nesting season. A pair bred annually in the Avon Gorge 1928-1934 (Glos side except 1933). Two eggs taken from a nest on Denny Isle April 1927'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) state that it bred on Steep Holm from 1901 until 1940 when the eyrie was destroyed; they also mention breeding on Sand Point in 1928.

**Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

A regular visitor, some records may refer to wanderers from the substantial home counties feral population whilst others probably refer to escapes (in fact until 2006 all local records were treated as referring to escapes).

In recent years the number recorded has slowly increased with some of the individuals remaining in an area for some time.



Number of individuals each year this century

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

A local rarity with nine individuals recorded this century:

2003, two individuals – an adult male at Corston on June 16th, a first-winter at Severn Beach on August 30th

2006, two individuals – males at Winford on May 4th and at CVL on May 29th

2008, a female at Portbury Wharf on May 29th

2014, a first-winter at Sand Point from September 15th until 23rd

2017, a male at Horton on May 29th

2020, a juvenile at Marshfield from September 5th until 9th

2021, a male at Chipping Sodbury Common on June 6th

There were no records in the 1990's and only two in the 1980's:

1985 – a singing male at Spaniorum Hill near Easter Compton on June 20th

1988 – a male briefly in a garden at Frampton Cotterell on June 16th

Prior to that it had been much commoner. Although the last local nesting was in 1975, the previous nesting had been in the 1950's when it occurred or was attempted in at least five years. Nesting was regular before that.

All published records up to 1976 are given in Appendix 1.

**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*

A National rarity with a single local record, at RPD on 15th May, 1982 [BBRC]

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

A local rarity with nine individuals recorded this century:

2004, a first-winter at Chittening Warth on January 10th and 11th and February 8th

2005, at Lansdown on March 28th

2008, at CI-Y on October 10th

2009, two individuals – at Lower Woods on November 23rd, and at Flax Bourton on December 12th

2010, at CI-Y on October 30th

2011/12, near Chewton Keynsham from November 23rd until 8th January, 2012 and again from March 15th until 23rd

2014, at Marshfield on October 27th and 28th

2016, at Sand Point on October 25th

There are 20 records from the twentieth century:

1901 – female shot near Bath on November 30th [Volume 10, page 61 of BNS Proceedings]

1920 – Wraxall in November, mentioned in Davis (1947) and presumably the female shot 'six miles south of Bristol on November 1st' mentioned in British Birds vol 14 page 237

1928 – half a mile east of East Harptree on December 8th [SBR]

1952 – sea wall at Clevedon on October 12th

1962 – Lansdown, Bath on October 18th [1963 ABR] [SBR]

1964 – Ubley on November 28th<sup>103</sup>

1971 – Sand Bay on October 27th

1972 – Long Ashton bypass on October 19th

1973 – CVL on January 3rd, Dolebury Hill on November 2nd, BL (Holt Farm) on November 14th

1974 – Sandford on January 19th

1975 – Stockwood<sup>104</sup> on March 26th

1979 – between Clevedon and the Kenn Estuary on October 28th

1982 – Filton Golf Course on November 26th

1983 – Clevedon on March 6th Rose (1992), Filton Golf Course on April 6th<sup>105</sup>

1985 – Sand Point on October 21st

1986 – SGW on November 15th

1987 – CVL on November 8th

1988 – Clevedon on October 6th in Rose (1992)<sup>106</sup>

1991 – Blakes Pool on January 24th

1999 – a first-winter at ASW from January 24th until April 2nd visited Chittening Warth from February 14th until 19th. It reappeared at Chittening on 2nd February, 2000 and remained in the area until March 27th

There are also a handful on nineteenth century records:

1840 – two at Claverton mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1871 – Nailsea mentioned in Davis (1947)

<sup>103</sup> SBR gives the date as 22nd

<sup>104</sup> ABR says this is Stockwood, Bristol but SBR says Stockwood (Mendips), which I am unable to locate

<sup>105</sup> Hayes (2019) says this was the 1982 bird which had overwintered

<sup>106</sup> The source is given as (pers comm) but the record was never submitted

1883 – Clevedon in Davis (1947)

1888 – Clevedon in Davis (1947), *also* shot at Abbots Leigh in December [Volume VI, page 115 of the BNS Proceedings]

1891 – at Dyrham Park in January in Charbonnier (1899)

Steppe Grey Shrike *L. e. pallidirostris*

A nationally rare subspecies with one local record, at Chipping Sodbury Common on 29th August, 2022  
[BBRC]

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*

A National rarity until 1991 and a local rarity since then with three records this century (plus one record of the *badius* subspecies):

2011, a first-summer female on Sodbury Common from July 30th until August 21st

2013, a first-summer on Widcombe Common from April 21st until 30th



2017, a first-winter at Chipping Sodbury Common from August 30th until September 19th

There are three records from the late twentieth century:

1989 – an adult at Marshfield on July 23rd [BBRC\*]

1993 – an adult male at Prospect Stile, Lansdown on April 30th

1994 – an adult near Thornbury on April 22nd

There are also two old nineteenth century records that were probably in Avon:

c1860, at Hale Well, Winscombe or Cheddar Wood, mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968) who give their source as Compton. T (1882); Winscombe Sketches

prior to 1887, killed in North Somerset (near Bristol) mentioned in Davis (1947) who gives Smith, Birds of Wilts., p123 as the source. An article on page 221 of the 1888 Zoologist quotes Smith as giving the location as 'Somerset, within a short distance of Bristol'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) says 'generally accepted as Somerset record, though perhaps not within present boundaries' while the 2011 and 2013 ABRs both incorrectly state the site as the Marshfield area. Birds of the Bristol District (1899) states 'has occurred twice, in 1852 and 1892 (Zoologist)' although the dates refer to the editions of the Zoologist rather than the records; the 1852 reference (p 3474) says 'adult killed in Somersetshire' with no location; the 1892 reference (p 345) is an article by O V Aplin 'The status of the Woodchat in Great Britain' which mentions 'one shot near Bristol, in Somerset' and gives the same reference to Smith Birds of Wiltshire

*L. s. badius*

A nationally rare subspecies with one local record, a first-summer male at Uphill from 11th until 13th June, 2005 [BBRC]

**Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

A rare passage migrant in spring with seven individuals recorded this century:

2003, heard at CVL on May 25th

2005, a male at Sand Point on May 4th and a female there on 11th

2016, song heard at Pilning Wetlands on May 26th

2018, two individuals – at Walton Bay on April 19th, and a male in song at Leigh Woods on May 13th

2022, a male in song at Henbury on May 20th

It was slightly commoner in the twentieth century with at least 22 individuals recorded, mainly after 1950:

1910 – a male at BL on May 28th [*Report of Wells Natural History Society (1910)*<sup>107</sup>]

1954 – an adult male seen and heard in Leigh Woods on May 22nd (and still present following morning according to SBR), two calling first summer males at Littleton-on-Severn brickworks from June 11th until July 2nd

1958 – a calling bird in Blaise Castle wood on July 5th

1962 – a male at CVL on May 4th [*1963 ABR + notes in 1962 SBR*]

1963 – a male at Leigh Woods on June 1st

1966 – a male at Cleeve on June 16th

**GOLDEN ORIOLE** *Oriolus oriolus*

**S.** One, Cleeve, June 16 (*Field*, 30.6.66): “A yellow bird about size of Blackbird with black wings and reddish-brown beak.”

1971 – seen and heard at CVL on June 12th

1979 – a female found dead at Tockington on May 31st

1983 – two quite independent but unsubstantiated reports of a male in the Dapps Hill/Bath Road area in the summer per Aldridge (1987)

1984 – a male seen at Shockerwick near Bath on May 27th

1985 – heard calling in Leigh Woods on May 28th

1986 – a male seen from the coastal path south of Clevedon on May 4th, Leigh Woods on May 30th

1988 – a male tracked in Blaise Woods for three hours on May 21st

1990 – a male in Clifton on May 2nd, a male elsewhere in north Avon on May 17th

1991 – at Blaise Woods a male heard on May 30th and 31st with two males heard and seen briefly on June 1st, heard briefly at New Passage on June 2nd.

Although Brown and Grice, in ‘Birds in England’ state ‘Gloucestershire, near Bristol, pair reared one young in 1991 ref RBB Panel’, the secretary of the RBBP has confirmed that the undisclosed site was almost certainly in Somerset, not Avon or Gloucestershire

1992 – a male in the Gordano Valley on May 16th and 17th

1993 – a male at Pucklechurch from June 25th into early July

1995 – a male at Sand Point on May 6th

There are only a couple of published records for the nineteenth century, although Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention a record from Leigh prior to 1910 which I cannot trace.

1893 – a pair at South Stoke in June mentioned in Davis (1947)

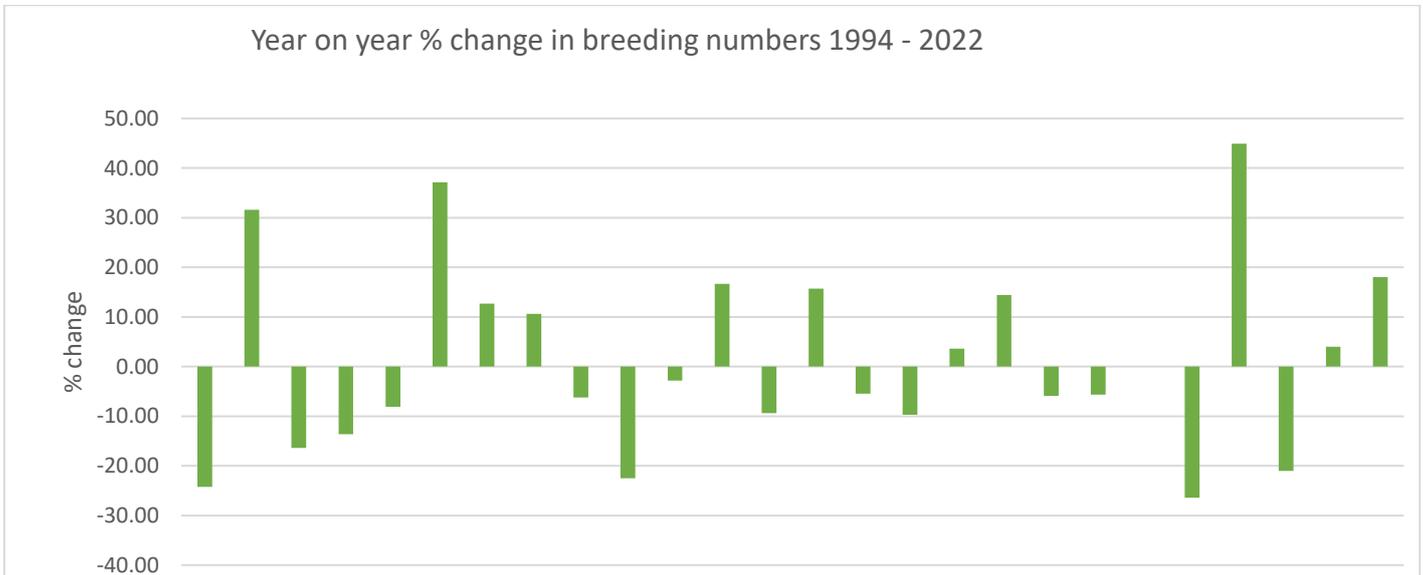
Prior to 1900 – obtained at Wraxall, again in Davis (1947), ‘in Mr A R Robinson’s collection at Backwell House’

<sup>107</sup> Per [www.blagdonlakebirds.com](http://www.blagdonlakebirds.com)

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

A fairly common breeding resident. Small irruptions have occurred in the past.

The BBS results show a 9% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.

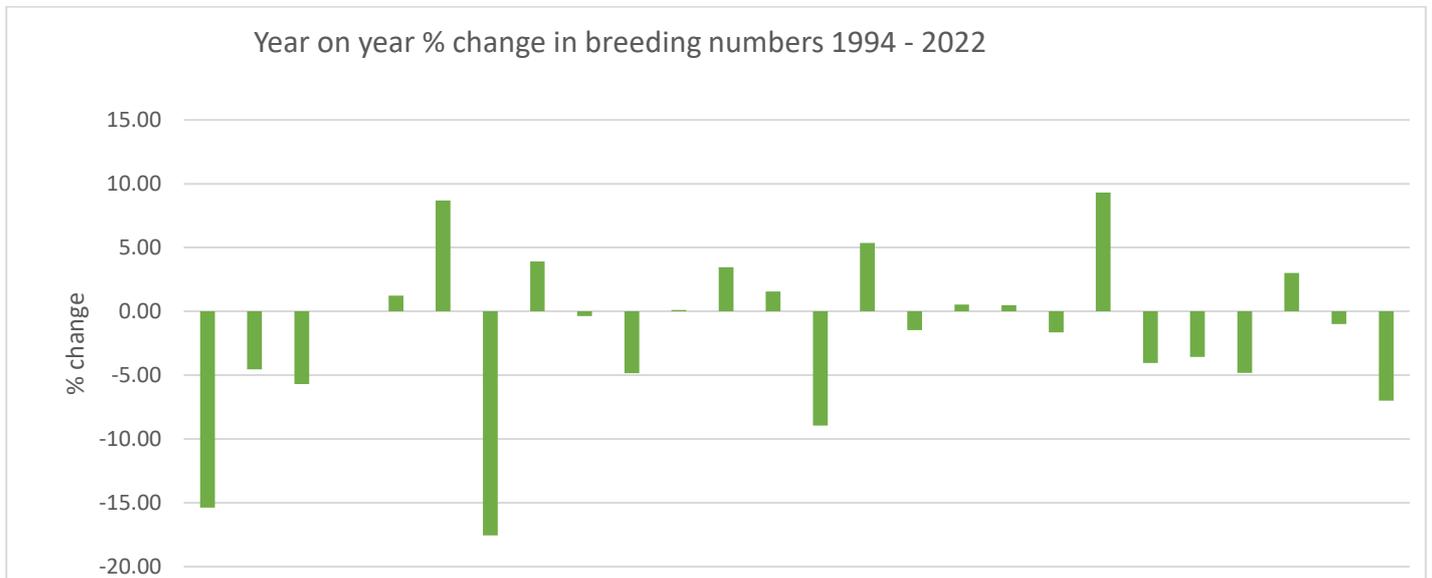


Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common in woods' while Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1926 SBR described it as 'common in practically all the woods and in well-timbered areas like the Chew Valley, frequently seen in the hedgerows' and Davis (1947) says 'resident, common in woodland areas'.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

A common breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 39% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest counts are of 170 roosting at Stockwood in December 1999, split between two sites and 120 roosting at Leap Valley on 26th December, 2005

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'generally distributed' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1926 SBR described it as 'common in all but the open and poorly timbered areas inland and also common and conspicuous on the coastal lowlands. Increased markedly during the war and is probably still well above pre-war strength' while Davis (1947) says 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

A National rarity with four old records:

1887, one shot near Wrington during summer of the Thick-billed race (ssp *caryocatactes*) and acquired by the City Museum, mentioned in both Davis (1947) and Palmer and Ballance (1968)

Before 1893, in Bath mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)<sup>108</sup>

1925, at Leigh Woods on April 28th [1926 SBR] Davis (1947)

1968, at Portishead (Power station area) on September 11th

NUTCRACKER *Nucifraga caryocatactes* See p. 495.  
 S. One, Portishead (Power Station area), Sept. 11 (SEH).  
 Size of Jackdaw. Crown brown; shoulders, throat and breast dark, spotted white. Wings, bill and tarsi black; tail black with white tips.

**Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* 2, 2

A local rarity with two records this century:

2006, a Welsh bred bird was at Sand Point on April 19th and 20th

2016, at Uphill on January 27th

There are two old records from the first half of the twentieth century:

1900, one flew along the edge of the cliff on Durdham Down on July 13th Charbonnier (1899), Davis (1947)

1941, at Sandford in the winter of 1941-42<sup>109</sup> [1943 SBR]

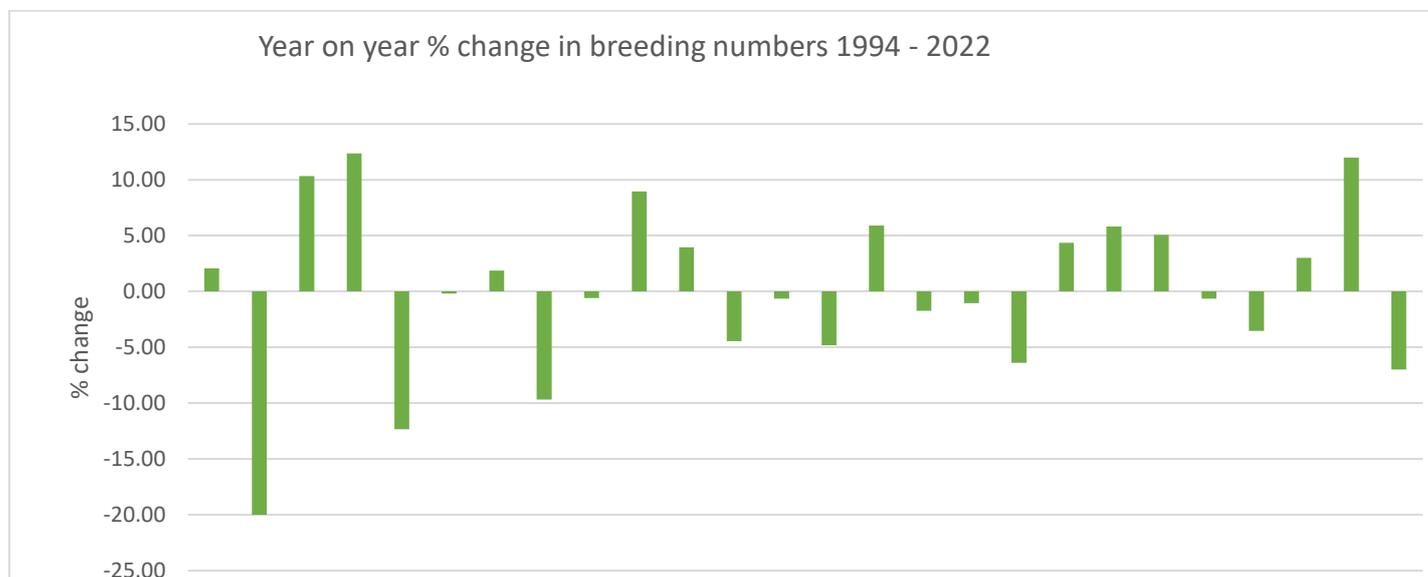
<sup>108</sup> who give Mathew (1893), 'A revised list of the birds of Somerset' as source

<sup>109</sup> 2006 ABR says December 1941 staying into 1942

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

An abundant breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant.

The BBS results show an 5% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest count is of an estimated 5,000 roosting at CVL on 13th January, 2013

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'common resident, St Vincent's Rocks and Leigh' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' while Davis (1947) said 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

Nordic Jackdaw *C. m. monedula*

This migrant race is a local rarity with a number of records, probably involving no more than nine individuals, all this century:

2008, four individuals – at Somerdale, Keynsham from January 14th until 22nd with two there on 22nd and presumed same at R Chew in Keynsham on January 23rd and March 3rd, at Marshfield on January 25th, February 10th and March 1st, at West Harptree on February 6th and 7th and March 18th and 29th, and presumed returning individual at Keynsham on November 26th, see Davis (2008) for more details

<sup>110</sup>2014, at New Passage on December 11th

2015/16, at New Passage on November 6th with what was presumed to be the same individual again on April 22nd and 23rd and 1st and 9th June, 2016

2016, at Tockington on April 23rd

2018, at Severn Beach on December 13th and 17th

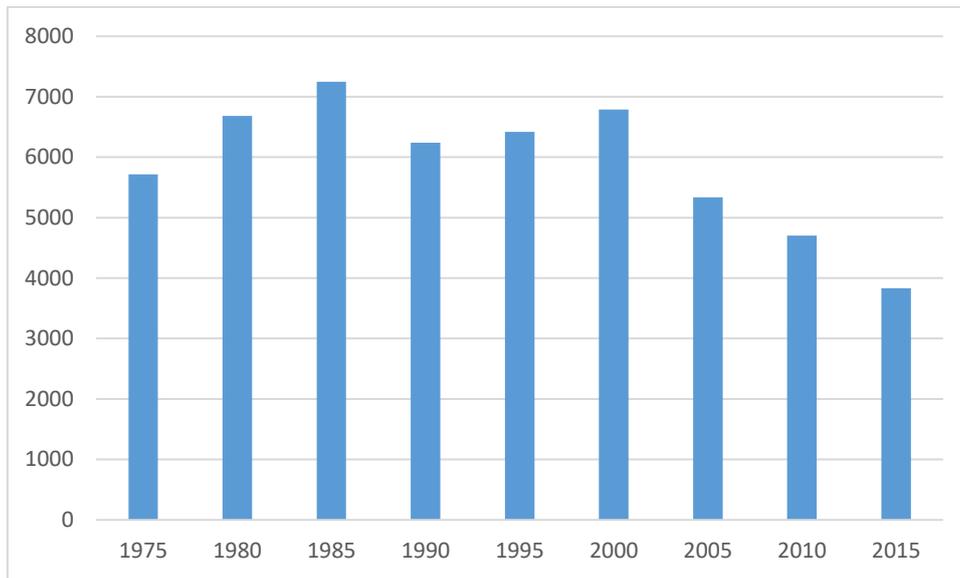
2019, at Tormarton on November 13th

<sup>110</sup> See 2013 ABR for a record of a bird superficially resembling this race

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

A common breeding resident which has declined recently.

The table below is taken from the results of the 2015 rookery survey, see page 153 of the 2015 ABR.



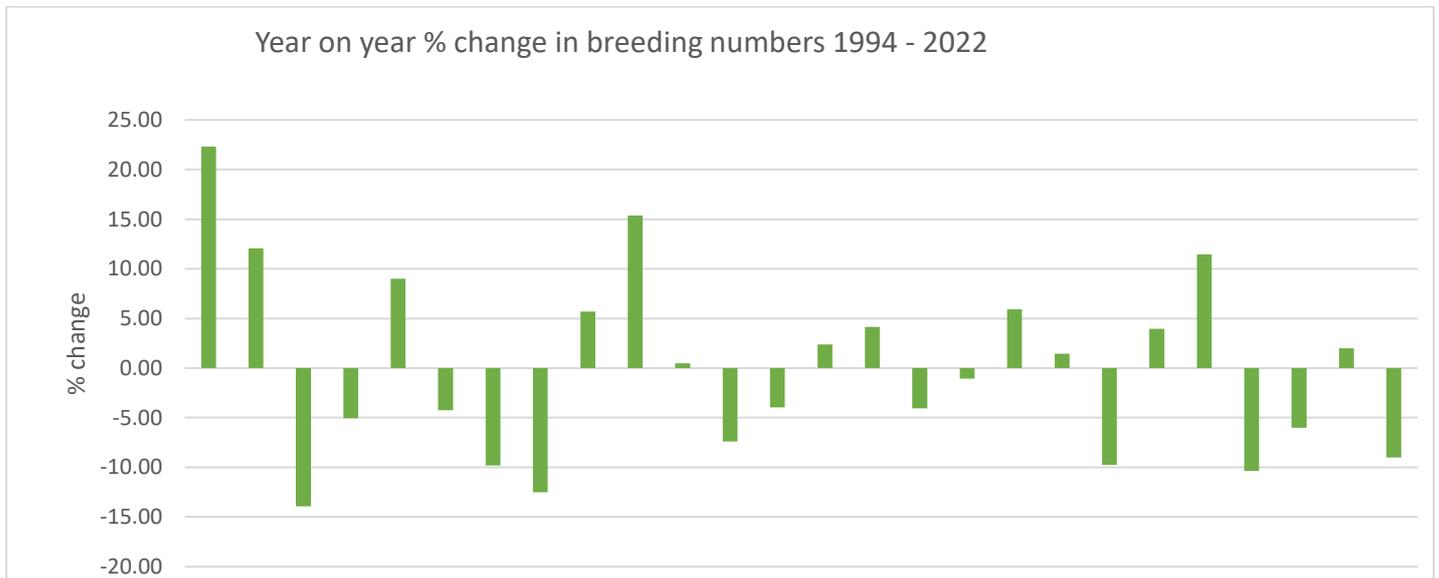
Avon Rook nest counts 1975-2015

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common everywhere' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' while Davis (1947) said 'resident, common and widely distributed'

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

A common breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 11% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'local resident, common on banks of Avon' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, breeds regularly'. The 1926 SBR said it 'varies from scarce to fairly common. Increased during the war' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

A local rarity with just one record this century, at BL on 7th November, 2003.

There were about 25 individuals recorded in the twentieth century:

1917 – near Kingston Seymour in December [1943 ABR]

c1920 – Stoke Gifford [1943 ABR]

1941 – Winscombe on 25th October [SBR][1943 ABR]

1943 – seen from a train on west side of Bathford on 1st December

1948 – Saltford sewage farm from February 21st until April 19th at least, two frequenting a large garden in Clevedon for c10 days in spring [SBR]

1952 – an adult at Hambrook on November 11th

1959 – Axe Estuary from July 12th until 15th

1963 – Hallen Marsh on April 7th

1964 – amongst Jackdaw flock at Wraxall from March 29th until 31st, Ubley on April 19th

1969 – SGW on December 14th, 21st and 24th

1970 – SGW January 18th and March 8th [SBR]

1971 – Chittening on April 4th

1976 – on Durdham Down on December 26th, Chew Stoke on December 28th

1984 – near Kingston Seymour, by M5, on January 4th

1987 – Axe Estuary in a flock of Crows on April 9th

1988 – New Passage on October 23rd

1989 – Axe Estuary on March 22nd and April 20th

1992 – New Passage on May 2nd

1994 – New Passage on April 13th with another on 24th

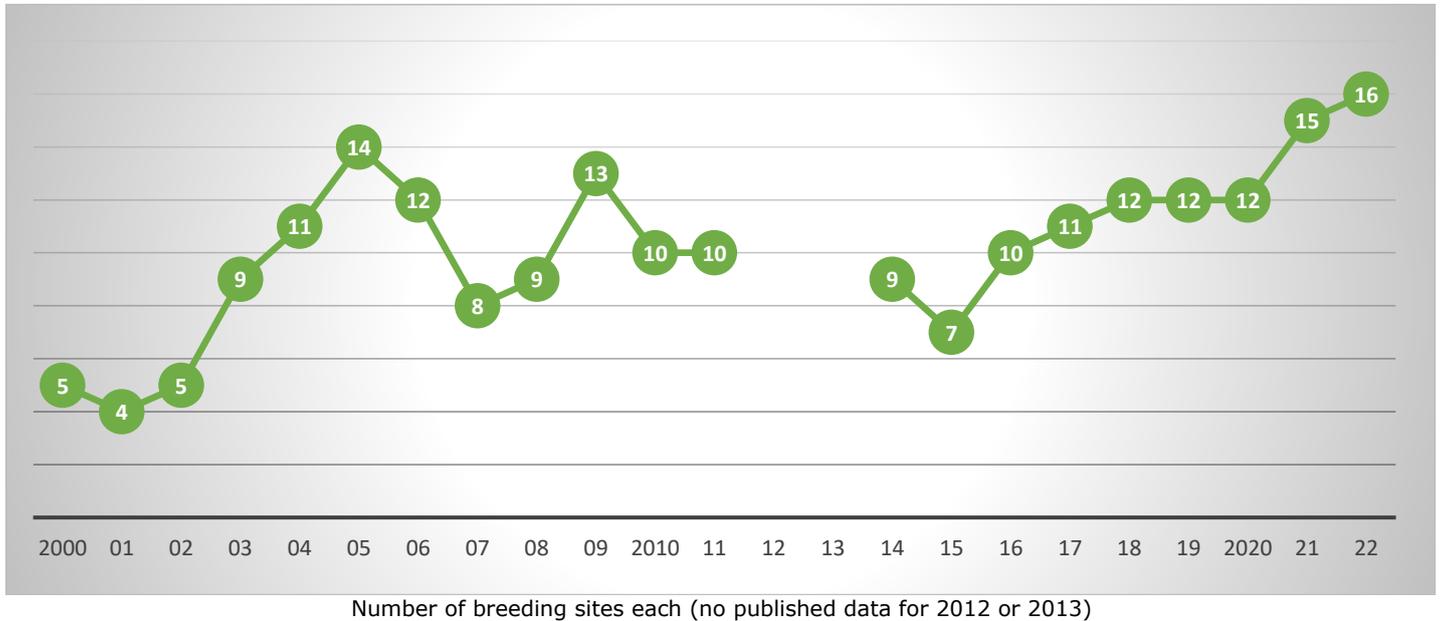
The only specific published record for the nineteenth century I can find is of one at Puxton in the winter of 1897 mentioned in Charbonnier (1899). Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, has occurred once or twice, but no exact locality known' while Charbonnier (1899) also says it was reported in the winter of 1883. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention records from the North Mendips and between there and Bristol from 1861 – 1917'.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

An uncommon but widespread breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant which has increased in the past two decades.

The largest count is a flock of at least 97 at Black Rock Quarry, near Portishead, on 10th April, 2022.

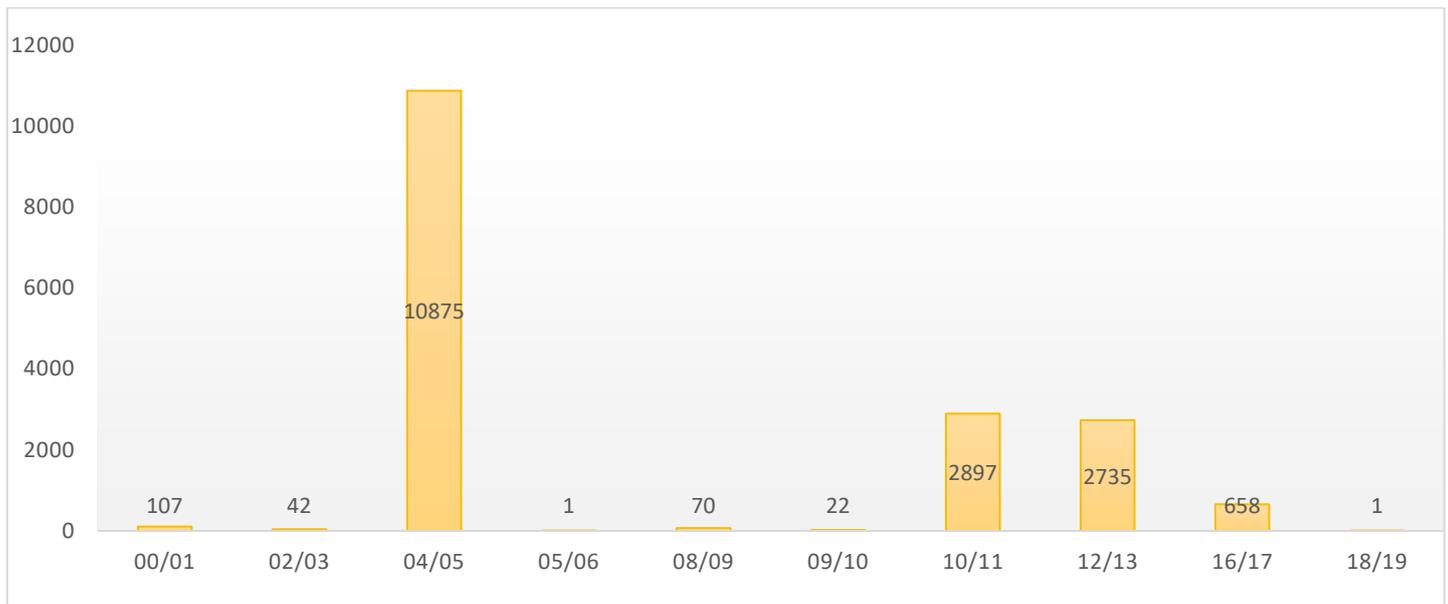
Breeding in the Avon Gorge resumed in 1993 and the graph below shows the number of breeding sites each year this century.



Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare resident, occasionally at Leigh and Stapleton' while Charbonnier (1899) said it used to nest at Dyrham Park. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, local and chiefly confined to coastal areas. Breeds regularly on Steep Holm and, in some years, Sand Point. A pair nested annually in the Avon Gorge 1936-1940 (Glos side except 1940). Formerly bred at Badminton and Dyrham'

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

A rare winter migrant with large flocks for periods in 'irruption' years.



Total bird-days for each winter in which Waxwings were seen in Avon this century

2001, reports from two sites – six in a Clevedon garden on January 9th, with one in the area on February 10th and four from 12th until March 8th, and two at Odd Down on January 18th and 19th

2003, reported from one site – two first-winters in a Nailsea garden from January 26th until February 15th and again on March 13th

2004/05, 36 at Thornbury on December 30th were the start of an invasion in early 2005 with about 10,900 widespread bird-days up to April 26th with a maximum flock of 377, see Bland (2005) for full details

2008/09, nine at Nailsea on December 23rd and 24th with two there on 27th and 28th. A flock of up to 14 were seen in the same area on five dates between February 16th and 15th March, 2009

2010, reports from two sites – two at Clifton on January 6th, 20 at Shirehampton on 7th.

2010/11, birds were recorded from October 26th until 4th April, 2011, a total of 2897 bird-days with a maximum flock of 112.

2012/13, recorded from November 10th until 14th April, 2013, a total of 2735 bird-days and a maximum flock of 60

2016, reported from three sites – Redland on November 14th and 16th, Worle on 19th, and Clevedon on December 5th

2017, a total of 654 bird-days between January 4th and March 4th with a maximum flock of 17

2019, Westbury-on-Trym on February 16th

Numbers were much lower in the twentieth century with only a couple of counts in double figures. Davis (1947) called it an 'occasional winter visitor. Has been recorded from various localities including Long Ashton, Butcombe and Winscombe'.

1918 – shot at Banwell on January 3rd [*British Birds vol 11 page 210*]

1943 – Clifton on October 30th

1947 – five at Henleaze on January 5th and then up to eight until February 17th, four or five in Stoke Bishop/Westbury-on-Trym/Horfield in the first ten days of February, c12 at Redland on February 9th, one at Filton on 23rd, Odd Down on February 5th with two on 11th, two at Bathampton on February 16th with one on March 12th, Walton-St-Mary, Clevedon on March 2nd

1957 – three in a Clevedon garden on December 15th, Royal Victoria Park, Bath on December 8th and 15th

1958 – Aust on January 14th, two in a Fishponds garden on February 8th

1959 – Shirehampton garden on November 14th

1961 – six at Winford Hospital on November 20th [*SBR*]

1962 – two or more in Bath from mid-February until late March being seen at Lansdown, Victoria Park, Upper Weston etc

1965 – two in Stoke Bishop on December 9th, three Wrington Warren on November 21st, two at Clevedon on December 11th, Hartcliffe in December

1966 – ten at Long Ashton on January 3rd, Downend Wood on February 13th

1970 – up to three at Frampton Cotterell on November 17th, Clifton Down on December 31st, two at Cleeve<sup>111</sup> on December 4th, Southville on December 31st

1971 – Hallen on December 5th

1978 – Filton garden on February 10th and 11th

1981 – three at Keynsham on November 28th and 29th

1988 – Nailsea garden on October 11th

1996 – between eight and 20 birds between February 7th and April 4th with records from Portishead, Clevedon, Worle, Farrington Gurney, Mangotsfield and Yatton

1999 – a first-winter at Thornbury from February 7th until 9th

It seems to have been even rarer in the nineteenth century, Wheeler (1874) said it was 'very rare, has occurred at intervals, Ashton' and Charbonnier (1899) called it a 'winter visitor, has occurred several times but of late years its visits have been rare'.

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<sup>111</sup> Presumably the birds reported from Goblin Combe in SBR

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

A fairly common breeding resident, probably also an uncommon passage migrant. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 3,000 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local resident, Leigh Woods, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1926 SBR said it was 'frequent, prefers admixture of conifers to purely deciduous woods' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, widely distributed and common in coniferous woodlands but generally less abundant than either Great or Blue Tits'.

**Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris*

An uncommon breeding resident. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 250 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'generally distributed resident' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common, the least abundant of the Titmice. The 1926 SBR said it was 'commoner than Coal Tit though both are frequent. Perhaps outnumbered by Coal Tit in Clevedon-Wraxall district' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed but much less abundant than either Great or Blue Tits'.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

A local rarity with 21 individuals being recorded this century:

2001, three individuals – two near Flax Bourton on January 1st, one at BL from March 17th until 24th

2002, at Abbots Leigh on December 17th

2003, two at Cameley on March 19th

2004, at Inglestone Common on April 21st

2005, a juvenile in Lower Woods on July 3rd and 5th

2009, at Lower Woods on November 29th

2010, two in Lower Woods on June 13th and July 25th

2011, five individuals – at Inglestone Common on January 30th, two in song at Lower Woods on April 20th with a third on 25th, and one there on July 30th

2015, two at Lower Woods on December 23rd with one on 28th

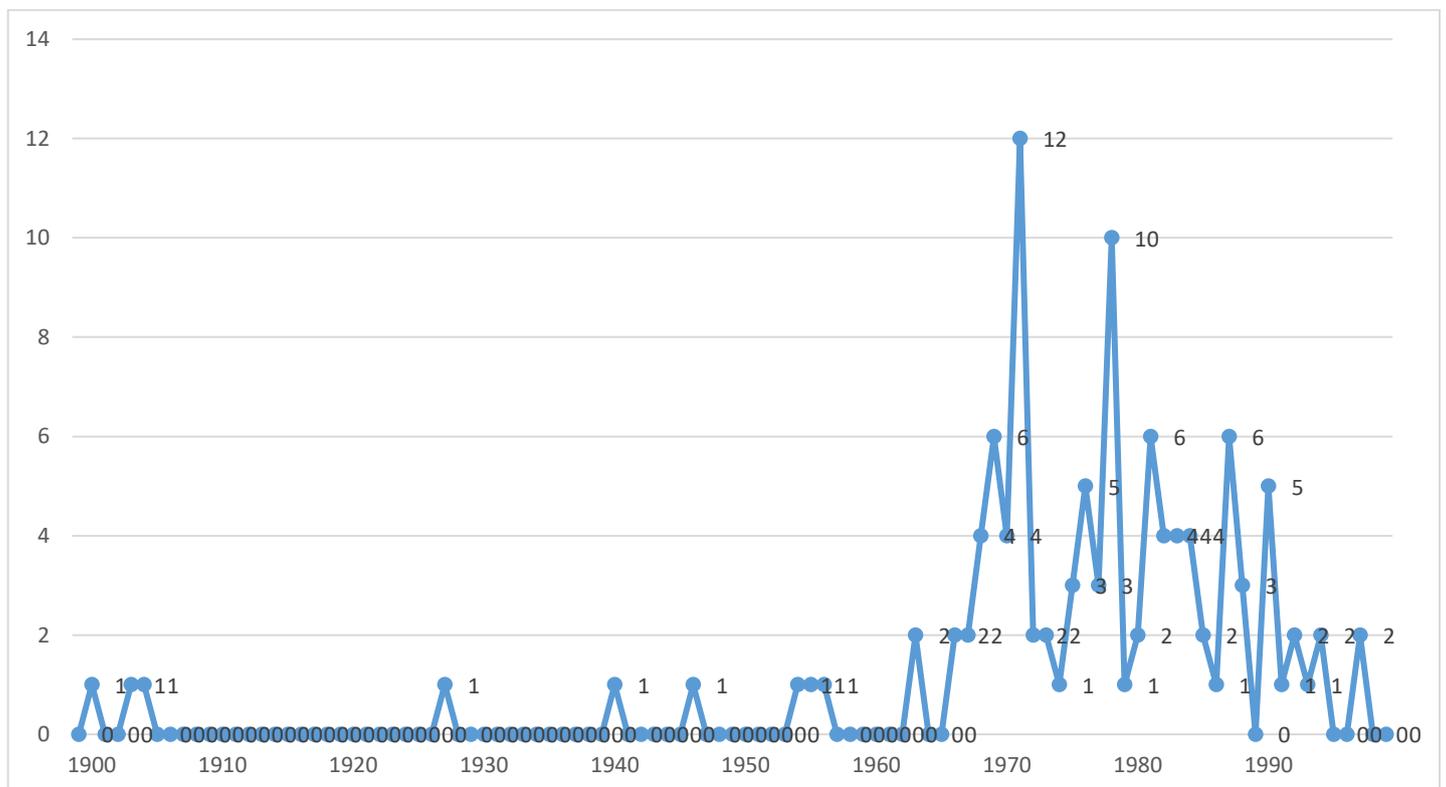
2019, at Wetmoor on April 16th

2020, at Lady's Wood, Wetmoor on April 20th

2022, a male in song at Freshford on March 5th

It has occasionally bred, in 1963 at Abbots Leigh, in 1971 at Inglestone Common and in 1987 at Cadbury Hill, Yatton. Bland and Dadds (2012) state that the 1968-72 breeding atlas found breeding proved in three 10 km squares and possible or probable in another four.

Over 110 individuals were recorded in the twentieth century, all the published records are given in Appendix 1 and summarised in the graph below:

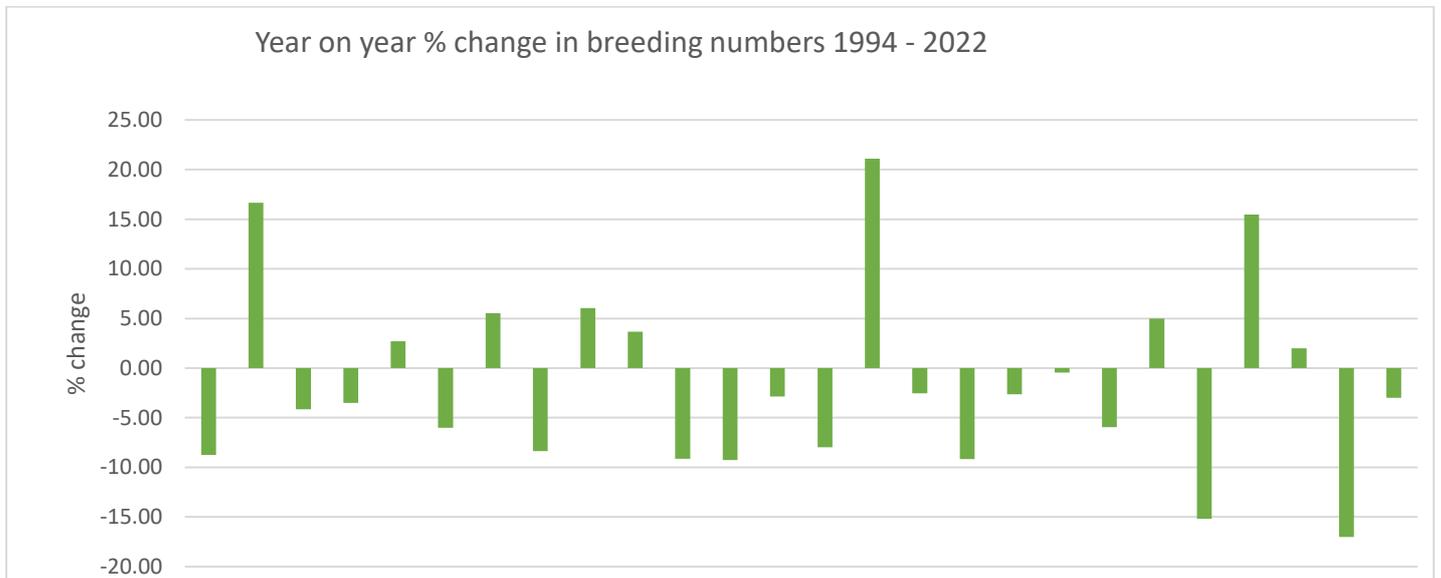


I cannot find any nineteenth century records, neither Wheeler (1874) nor Charbonnier (1899) mention the species and Palmer and Ballance (1968) give no records before 1900.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

An abundant breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 38% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.

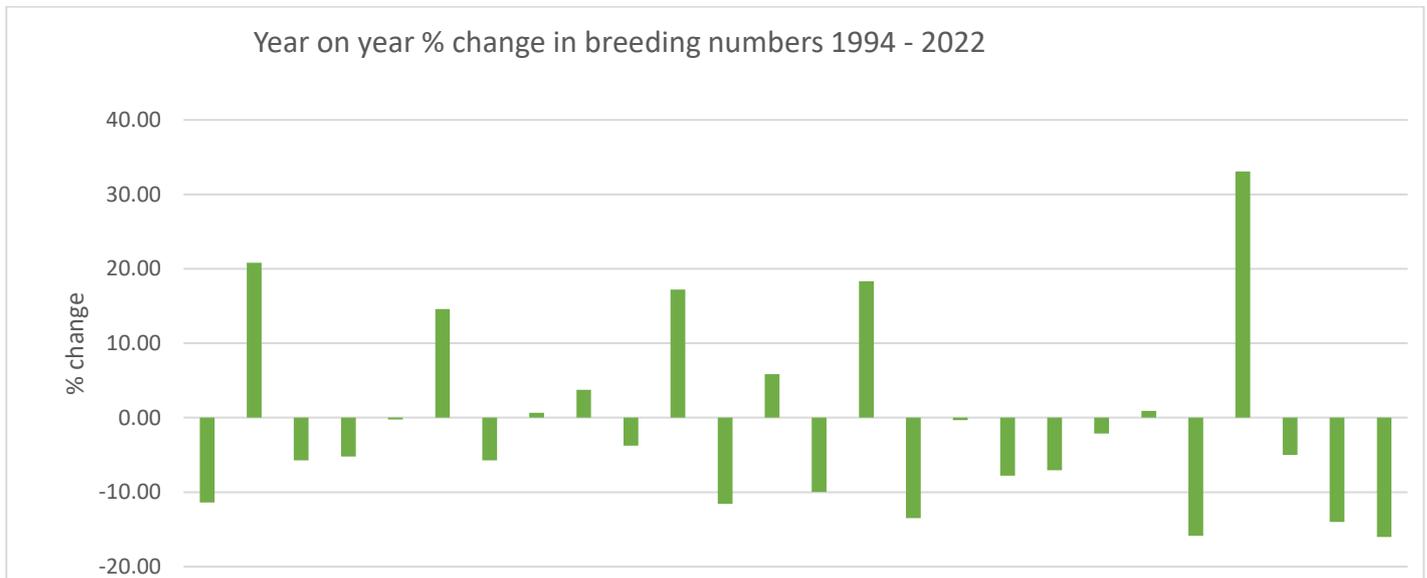


Wheeler (1874) said it was 'resident, abundant everywhere, woods, gardens, etc' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

An abundant breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 32% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'resident, abundant everywhere, woods, gardens, etc' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common, the most abundant of the Titmice' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Continental Great Tit** *P. m. major*

1938 – one found dead in Cotham Park on February 4th had been ringed as a nestling at Bautzen, Saxony on 20th May, 1937

This was the first British recovery of a continental ringed Great Tit (*British Birds* vol 31, page 352).

**Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*

A National rarity until 2015 and a local rarity since then with records from two sites locally.

2012, two at Portbury Wharf on January 15th [BBRC]

2021/22, three at Weston airfield from March 6th until April 14th and again from December 21st until 20th March, 2022 with two remaining until 31st March

### Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

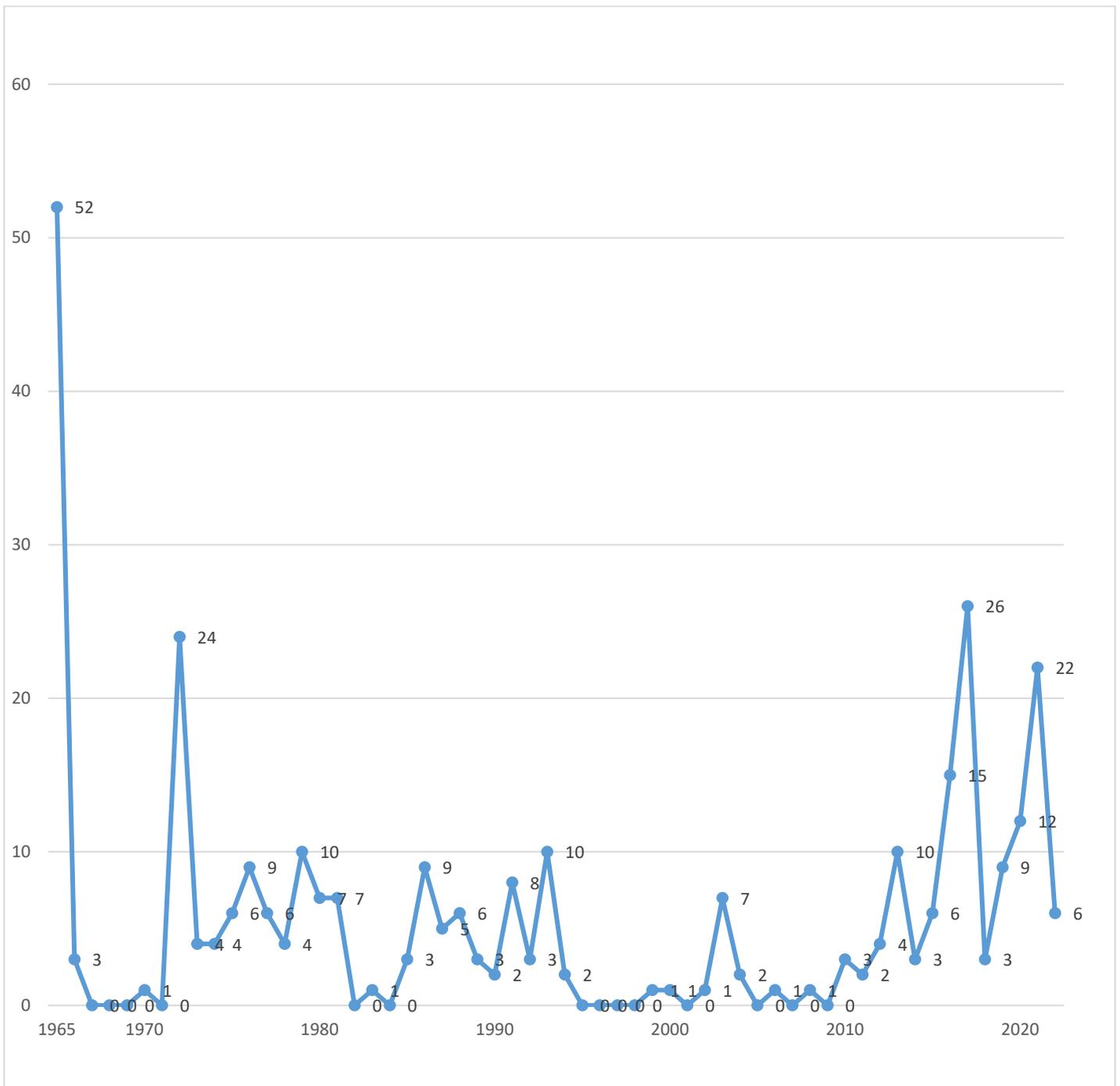
This species, which was first recorded locally in 1965, was a local rarity until 2023. By that time at least 320 individuals had been recorded, the majority at CVL.

The initial records in 1965 were part of a national irruption but after that it was recorded in 25 of the remaining 34 years of the twentieth century. This century it has been annual since 2010 with an average of 11 individuals annually over the last ten years.

Two thirds of all the individuals this century have been recorded at CVL; in the twentieth century it was nearly 85% of the individuals. Although there are records from 14 sites away from CVL none of these host the species regularly; the most popular are BL (three years), Sand Point (three years although the last was in 1988) and Weston STW (with records from four years),

At least one pair bred at CVL in 1991.

All the published records while it was a local rarity are given in Appendix 1 and summarised in the graph below:



**Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*

This is now a local rarity with 28 individuals recorded this century, mainly as passage migrants in autumn.

2001, flew south over Chittening Warth on October 7th

2003, seven individuals – six at Long Ashton from November 7th until 10th, and one at Severn Beach on November 26th

2006, four during a migration watch at Axe Estuary on October 27th

2007, at PW on November 5th [2008 ABR]

2010, flew over Northwick Warth calling on October 15th

2012, at Sand Point on October 27th

2015, at Sand Point on October 18th

2016, sound recorded at Churchill on July 13th

2017, at New Passage on October 29th

2018, two individuals – at Severn Beach on June 1st, and at Northwick Warth on October 7th

2020, four individuals – two in flight at Middle Hope on April 9th, in flight at Aust Cliff on October 14th, in flight at Saltford on October 16th

2021, at Sand Point on March 30th

2022, three individuals – Wain's Hill on April 11th, CVL on July 11th, Saltford on October 7th

It was much commoner in the first half of the twentieth century with records during the breeding season until at least 1960. Davis (1947) said it was 'local and in the breeding season confined to Backwell Hill and the Cheddar, Bleadon Hill and other Mendip areas. Has also nested at Clevedon, Failand, Worlebury and doubtless elsewhere. Probably not infrequent, and perhaps breeds, in the southern Cotswolds'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'most regular in woods and heaths from Leigh and Backwell to Tickenham and Wrington; NW and S Mendips from Bleadon to Wells. Most are sedentary, spreading to stubbles in late autumn and winter with some autumn passage and local movement in winter. The 1925 SBR says 'widely scattered in western half of district, not common but hardly rare and is increasing. Occurs at Weston-super-Mare. Seen at Chew Stoke, Winford and Cleeve and has become more general in the Backwell district where parties of eight or ten together are frequent in spring' and the 1930 SBR 'still decreasing about Winscombe but a few pairs still left. It is still quite frequent in the area, showing a preference in the breeding season for the bush sprinkled slopes of the hills rather than the tops'.

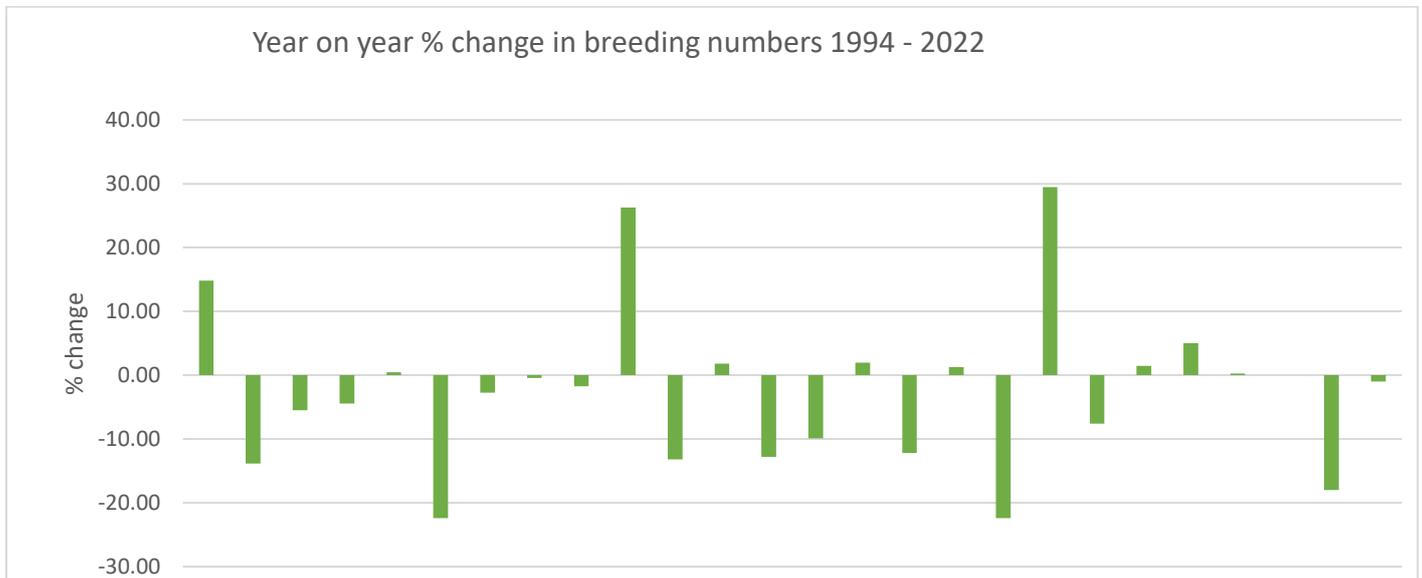
However it then declined, with 59 individuals recorded in the 39 years after 1960 but in the 1980's there were only three individuals recorded and two in the 1990's. All the published twentieth century records are given in Appendix 1.

I cannot find any specific records published for the nineteenth century but Wheeler (1874) said it was 'local, Leigh, Shirehampton' and Charbonnier (1899) said 'regularly found in the district but has become rarer during the last few years. There seems to be no record of its nesting'.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

A common breeding resident in appropriate habitat, also a passage migrant and winter visitor.

The BBS results show a 57% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest count is of 2,000 at Marshfield on 17th December, 2010

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'abundant resident' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed and often in great abundance following winter immigrations'.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

A local rarity, with four records involving five individuals this century:

2004, at Severn Beach on January 24th and February 11th

2010, three individuals – two at OPS on January 8th, and one at BG on April 24th and 25th

2017, at New Passage on October 28th

Ten individuals were recorded in the twentieth century:

1960 – a male on the foreshore at Severn Beach from January 31st until March 4th

1963 – CVL from February 3rd until March 10th, Sand Point on November 6th Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1964 – an adult male at Sand Point on October 18th

1977 – Severn Beach from December 5th until 11th.

1983 – Sand Point on October 23rd

1994 – Kenn Estuary on November 21st and 23rd

1997/98 – CI-Y on November 19th with two on December 17th and three<sup>112</sup> from 20th until 6th January, 1998, with two until 10th and one until 16th

Four individuals were recorded in the nineteenth century:

1866 – at Ashton, mentioned in Charbonnier (1899)

1873 – caught near Bedminster and retained in the Zoological Gardens in Wheeler (1874)

1874 – at Wraxall in Blathwayt (1906)

1894<sup>113</sup> – shot at Avonmouth in October, in Davis (1947)

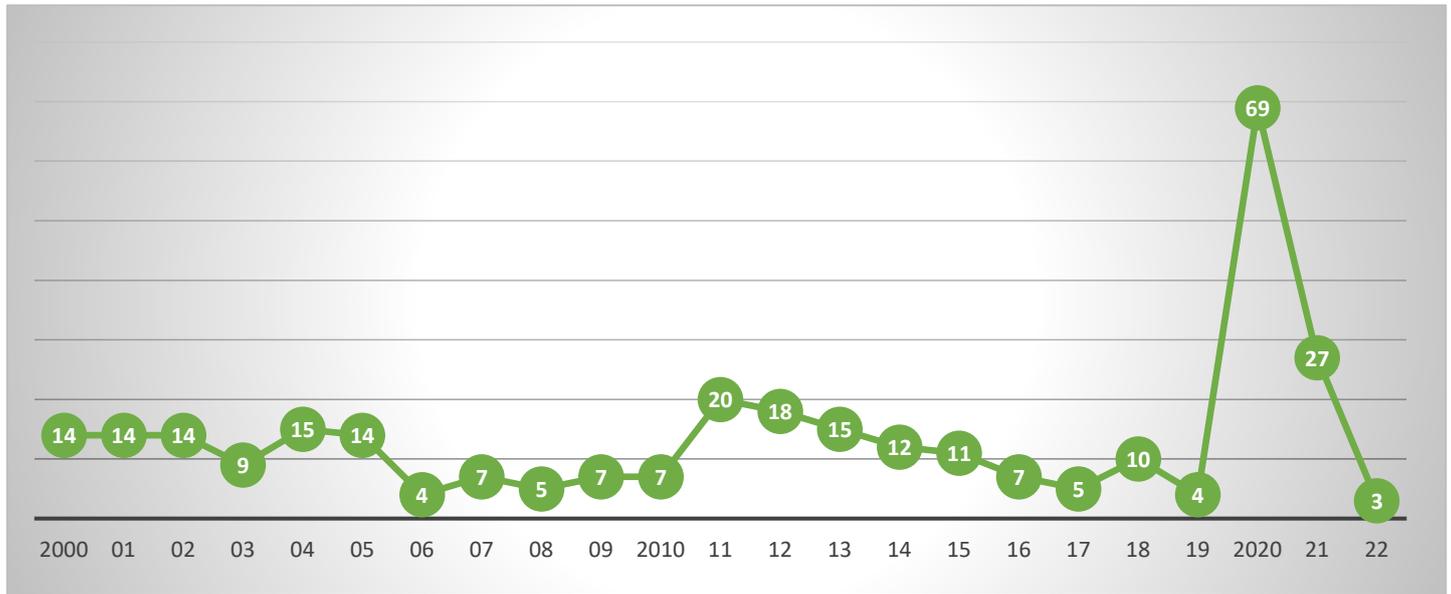
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<sup>112</sup> 2004 ABR suggests four were present and they remained into February

<sup>113</sup> Not 1884 as suggested by 1994 ABR

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

A fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.



Breeding success: Estimate of the number of breeding pairs this century

The largest count is of 7,000 at CVL on 7th April, 2008.

The average arrival date is now March 7th, 11 days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 20th February, 2021 at CI-Y. The average departure is October 6th, three days earlier than given in Bland (1992) who gives a latest departure of 18th November, 1976, although more recently the latest was 29th October, 1991, when five were at BG and one at BL

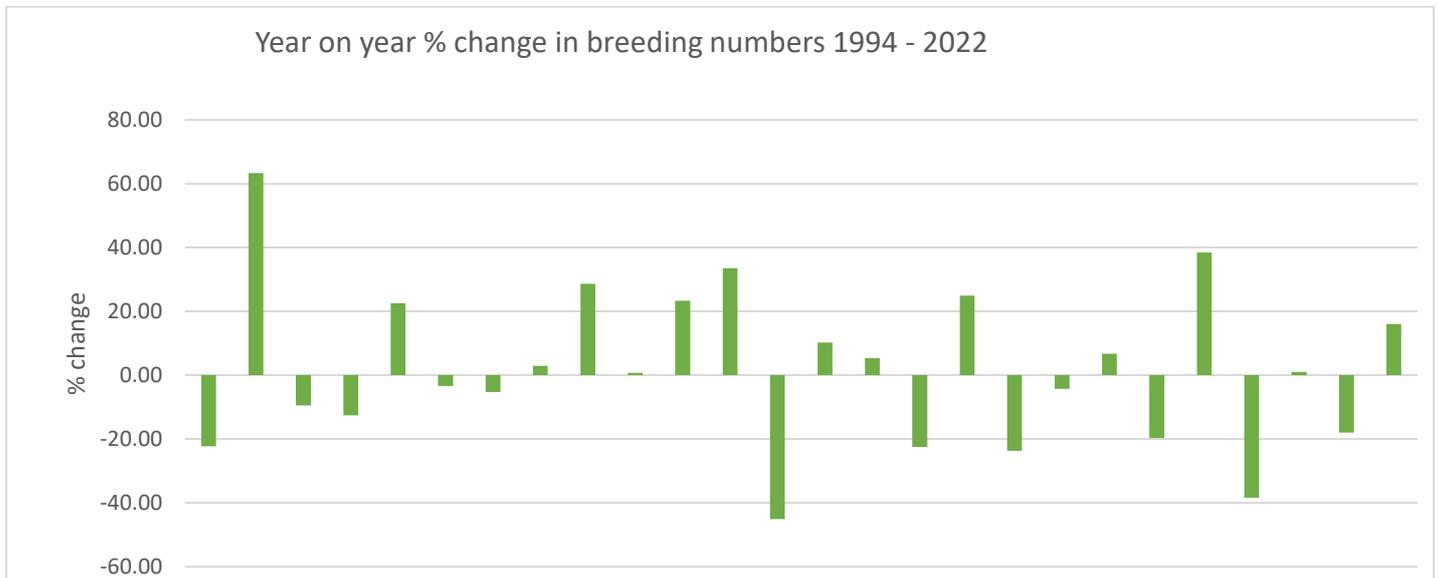
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local summer visitor, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common, nests in the city'. The 1928 SBR said it was 'not common as a breeding species owing to lack of suitable banks, gravel pits etc. A few small colonies, chiefly in drainage holes of walls eg at Pensford, Clutton, Brislington and Keynsham. Often abundant during passage seasons at BL and to a less extent at BG and Litton'. Hellyar (1927) mentions several colonies in Bristol.

Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident locally, but chiefly a passage migrant often occurring in considerable numbers at the reservoirs and similar places. In the absence of normal breeding sites small colonies nest in drainage holes of retaining walls and embankments. Such colonies have for long been known within the city boundary and have been reported from Keynsham, Long Ashton, Backwell, Radstock and elsewhere'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'regular breeding in wall drains between Bristol Temple Meads and Parson Street stations, Batheaston and Keynsham. Since 1955 has also bred Pensford, CVL, Saltford, Bath and Litton. Bred in 1920s and 1930s also at Radstock, East Harptree, Clutton, Long Ashton and Backwell, no colony exceeds 10 pairs'

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

A common passage migrant and common breeder.

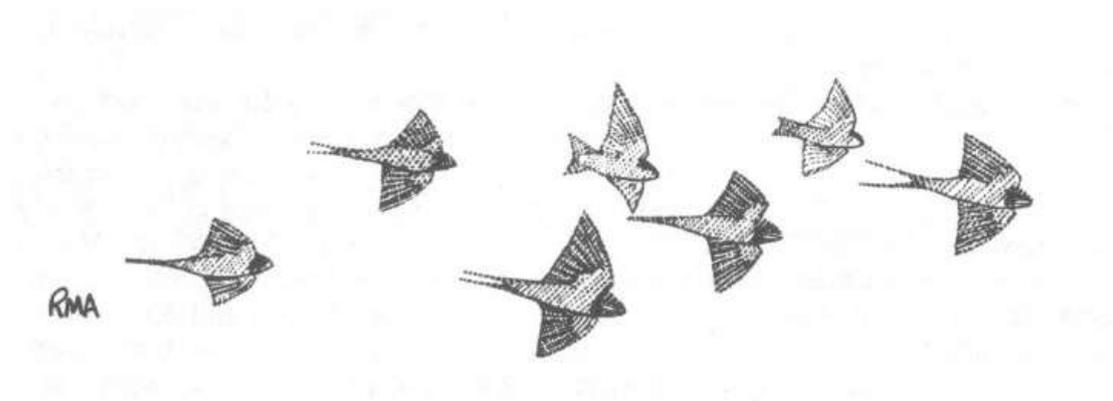
The BBS results show a 22% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The average arrival is now on March 17th, ten days earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the earliest arrival is on 7th February, 1967 at Weston [mentioned in the Introduction to the 1967 ABR]. The average departure is on November 9th, six days later than given by Bland (1992) while the latest departure was on 17th December, 2013 at New Passage.

The highest count is of 14,000 moving S?SE in 2.5 hours from 10.30am at CVL on 1st October, 2000.

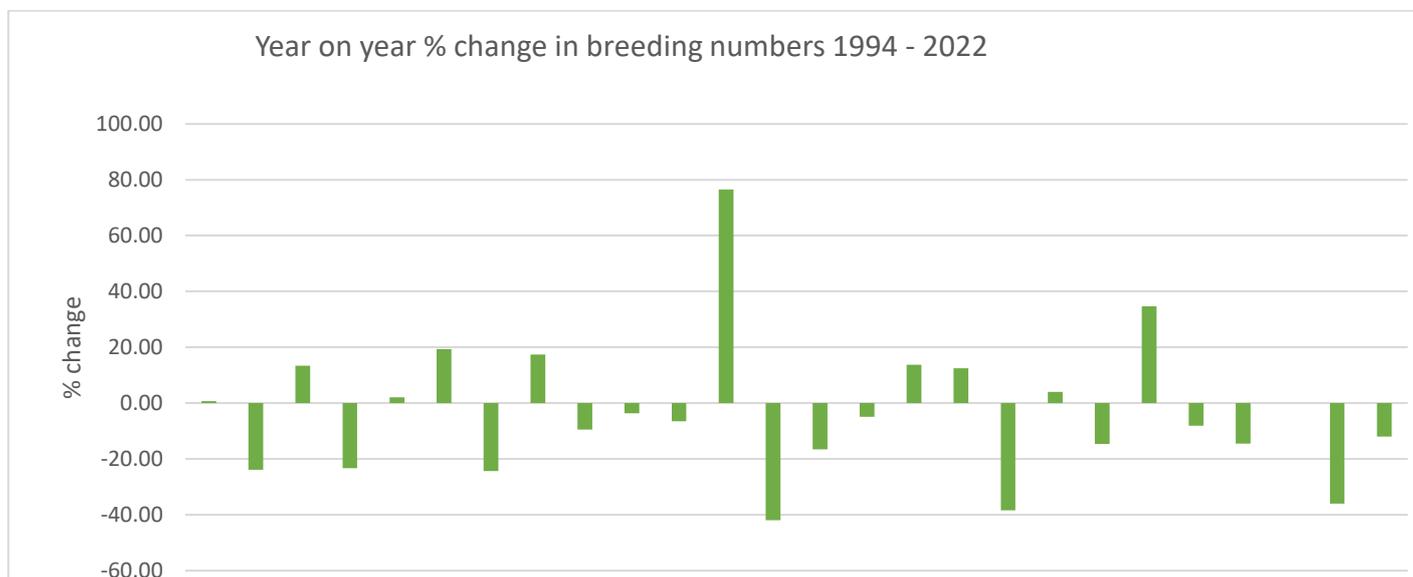
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'common summer visitor, everywhere' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common' while Davis (1947) said 'summer resident, common and widely distributed'.



**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

A common passage migrant and breeder which is declining.

The BBS results show a 80% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest counts are of 5,000 at CVL in mid-September 1986, on 9th, 10th and 14th September, 1989, 23rd August, 1992 and 6th and 7th September, 2008.

The average arrival is March 23rd, eight days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 4th March, 1997, three at CI-Y. The average departure is October 28th, nine days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 5th December, 2004, four at Bathampton.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'common summer visitor, everywhere' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common' while Davis (1947) said 'summer resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*

A National rarity until 2006 and a local rarity since then with two records this century:

2012, perched on wires over an Alveston garden on May 1st

2022, flew past Severn Beach on April 29th

There are four previous records as follows:

1970 – SGW on June 7th [BBRC]

1977 – New Passage on September 16th [BBRC\*]

1988 – New Passage on April 22nd [BBRC\*] [1992 ABR]

1990 – CVL on October 20th [BBRC\*] [1992 ABR]

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

An uncommon resident at suitable sites that first definitely bred locally in 1995. It was a national rarity until 1977, and a local rarity if away from established breeding sites, until 2008. Local records prior to the first proven breeding are listed below:

1975 - CVL from February 25th until April 20th, trapped and ringed<sup>114</sup> [BBRC]

1982 - CVL ringed on December 29th remained until 20th February, 1983

1983 - CVL on October 6th

1989 - a female ringed at BG on April 23rd and still present on 24th. It was retrapped on July 30th at Littleton brick works where a juvenile had been trapped on 23rd<sup>115</sup>; both were still present on 30th, suggestive of successful breeding

1990 - trapped at CVL on April 1st [1992 ABR]

1992 - three at CVL on October 31st with four next day; a male was heard in song in December, with four birds still present on and a male and two females were ringed by CVRS on 23rd; two were seen from 29th until March 28th 1993 with a male in song on January 16th

1993 - a male in song at CVL in March, see Vinicombe (2001), a male in song at RPD from April 12th until May 29th, an immature female ringed at CVL on September 26th, heard at Blake's Pool on November 7th, CVL on November 11th

1994 - at CVL on January 9th and 23rd, heard calling at Littleton Brick Pits on April 24th, male in song at Channel View Farm on April 29th, juvenile trapped at CVL on July 23rd<sup>116</sup>, heard at Blake's Pools from September 11th, heard at CVL on October 11th

1995 - breeding confirmed at CVL where a male and three females raised at least 20 young, nine of which were ringed, one at Blake's Pool in October and November with four on November 4th

Bailey (2018) provides details of how the population at CVL built up.



<sup>114</sup> SBR says trapped on February 25th, 'apparently same bird briefly seen and heard' on April 11th and 28th

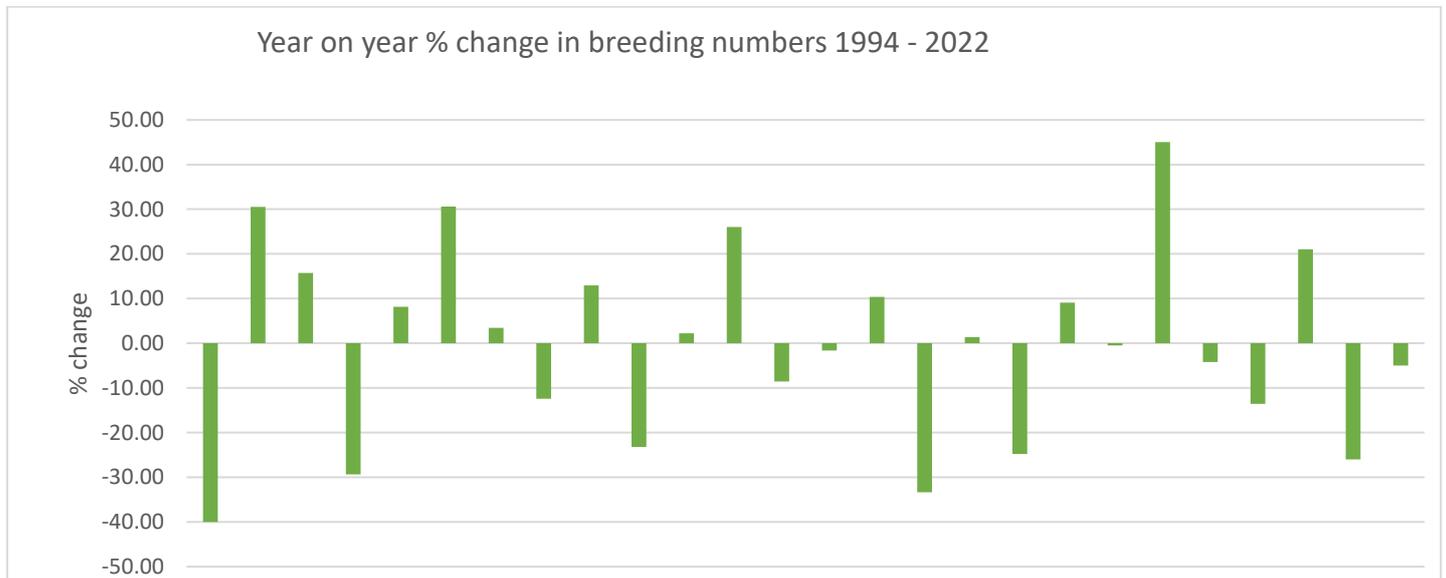
<sup>115</sup> Ringing dates different from those quoted in ABR, dates confirmed by ringers.

<sup>116</sup> Although the ABR says 'certainly not reared at this site' the source of this certainty is unclear

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

A common breeding resident.

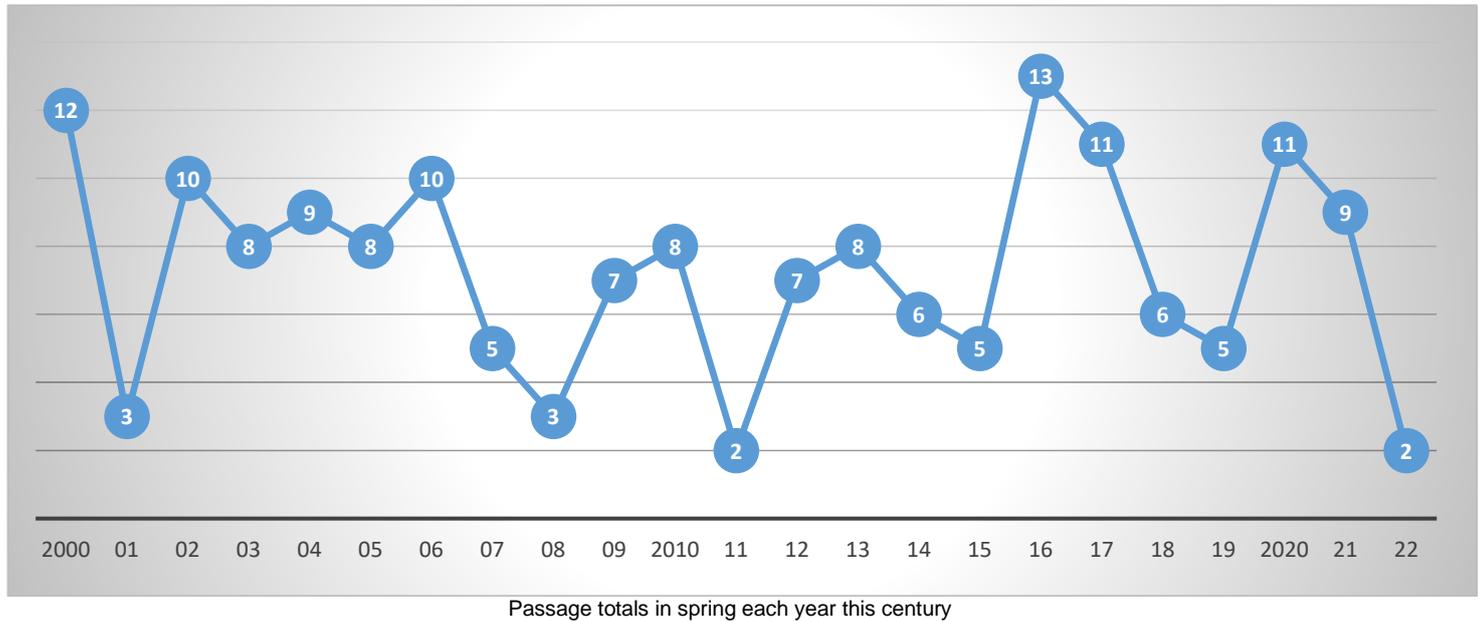
The BBS results show a 49% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'tolerably common resident' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1926 SBR said it was 'common and increasing. Suffered very severely winter 1916-17 but some survived in more sheltered parts' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed, numbers sometimes much reduced following severe winters'.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A scarce spring passage migrant with the last recorded breeding in 1996.



The average arrival date is April 20th, one day earlier than given by Bland (1992). The earliest arrival is on 31st March, 1968 (the introduction to the 1968 ABR mentions them being in song by this date but without a location).

Bland (1992) mentions there only being eleven autumn records with an average departure date of August 25th and he gives a latest departure of 18th September, 1977. Since 2003 supporting notes have been required for autumn records as they are so scarce, with published records from 1986 (Eastville Park on August 17th), 1987 (near Leigh Woods on September 1st), 1993 (OPS on July 17th), 1997 (Sand Point on August 12th), 1998 (Gordano Valley on August 13th), 2000 (New Passage on August 28th), 2003 (Gordano Valley on August 14th and CVL on August 21st), 2008 (Emerson's Green on July 7th), 2009 (Almondsbury on August 2nd and PWD on August 24th) and 2016 (Sand Point on August 8th and Knowle on August 9th).

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'summer visitor, tolerably common, in woods' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, local, common in Leigh Woods'. The 1925 SBR said 'frequent in wooded districts but local. Common in Leigh Woods and breeds some years at Compton Martin. Regular in small numbers to woods in Farrington Gurney and Clutton district. Sparingly in Backwell district and a pair or two annually at Pensford. Fairly frequent Weston-super-Mare. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident locally, uncommon but nests more or less regularly in most suitable woodlands'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) states 'breeds in scattered pairs in Leigh Woods, area from Ashton Park to Clevedon, Bourton Combe, Cleeve, Brockley Woods, Wrington, valleys around Bath and Weston Wood'

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

A local rarity with 76 individuals recorded this century so far:

2001, a juvenile at Old Passage on October 12th [*drawing*]

2003, two individuals – at Clifton Down from October 23rd until 27th, and at Cl-Y from November 4th until 7th

2004, at Wains Hill on October 29th and 30th [*2005 ABR*]

2005, two individuals – at CVL on September 24th, and at Sand Point from October 6th until 8th

2006, two individuals – at PW on September 22nd, and at Sand Point on October 24th and 27th

2007, two individuals – at Filton on February 4th, and at Sand Point on October 7th

2008, five individuals – at Chew Stoke STW from January 29th until February 21st, trapped on Steep Holm on September 26th, trapped at Cameley on 27th, at Sand Point on October 11th, and at Dundry on 27th

2010, trapped in the Gordano Valley on November 14th

2011, two individuals – at Worlebury on October 22nd, and at Dundry on 27th,

2011/12, trapped at CVL on December 29th, retrapped on January 1st and remaining until 12th February, 2012

2012, three new individuals – at Bedminster on September 29th, at OPS from November 17th until 29th [*2013 ABR*], and at Midsomer Norton on December 19th

2013, at Chipping Sodbury from September 30th until October 2nd

2014, five individuals – at Bath on March 22nd, at Cl-Y on October 11th, at Sand Point on 19th, at Wellow Brook on 20th, and trapped at CVL on 25th



2015, six individuals – two at Sand Point on October 4th with one on 20th and 28th, at Weston-super-Mare on 5th, at Yate on 13th, at Chew Magna on 23rd, and at Wains Hill on 28th

2016, nine individuals – at Aust Services from October 7th until 9th, one trapped at CVL on 8th and retrapped on 16th, at Milton on 9th, at CVL on 13th, at Saltford on 17th, at Severn Beach on 21st and 22nd, at Worle from 28th until 30th, at Bath on December 2nd, and at Eastville Park from 18th until 20th

2017, New Passage on September 24th

2018, nine individuals – at Sand Point on October 16th and 17th, at Rownham Hill on October 16th, at Saltford on October 18th, at Wains Hill on October 19th, in a Horfield garden from October 20th until 25th, at Prior Park Bath on November 2nd, in a Thornbury garden on November 10th, at PWD on November 10th and 11th, and at PWD on November 18th

2019, three individuals – at Weston-super-Mare recycling centre on October 15th, and two at Sand Point on October 19th

2020, fourteen individuals – in a Kingswood garden on September 30th, at Blake's Pool on October 1st, at Weston STW on October 1st, trapped and ringed at Littleton Brick Pits on October 7th, at Sand Point from October 9th until 11th, heard at Milton, Weston-s-Mare on October 11th, heard at Wain's Hill on October 11th, at Clevedon Pill on October 16th and 17th, at Chew Stoke on October 17th, at Sand Point on November

6th, at Sand Point on November 18th, at Royate Hill, Bristol on December 2nd, at Saltford on December 23rd and 24th, and in a Bradley Stoke garden on December 28th and 30th

2021, at Willsbridge Mill on January 25th

2022, five individuals – Weston-super Mare garden from January 13th until February 20th, Pilning Wetland heard on September 25th, Eastville Park on October 16th, Saltford on November 18th, Yate garden on December 29th

There are nine prior records as follows:

1986 – Uphill on September 27th, Steep Holm on September 27th and 28th and another from October 2nd until 4th, CVL on November 15th, Charlcombe, Bath from December 11th until 13th see Merritt (1986) for more details

1988 – CVL on October 9th

1993 – Brandon Hill from September 22nd until 24th

1996 – along Malago Brook, Bedminster from October 9th until 12th

1998 – Wains Hill on October 18th

### ***Phylloscopus sp***

2000 - a bird at RPD from November 23rd until 25th was either a Yellow-browed or Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler

#### **YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER species *Phylloscopus sp.***

A warbler seen at Marsh Lane, RPD, from Nov. 23rd to 25th by BA was either a **Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) or a **Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler** (*P. humei*). The description received was not conclusive either way, although the dark legs and late date suggested that it was most likely to have been a Hume's. The following was noted: 'very distinct creamy supercilium, greenish upperparts, two distinct creamy wing-bars, white underparts, greying on the flanks, dark legs, size appeared slightly smaller than a nearby Chiffchaff'. There are nine previous Avon area records of Yellow-browed Warbler.

### **Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus***

Recorded in three years this century:

2016, at Saltford on October 23rd

2019, at Sand Point on October 19th

2020, at Sand Point from November 25th until 27th

There is one previous record, at Wains Hill from November 16th until 18th in 1996, see Rose (1996) for more details

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

There are four local records, all this century:

2004, two individuals – at RPD from March 6th until at least April 13th, see Stone and Vinicombe (2004) for more details, and at BG on May 1st [both BBRC\*]

2020, trapped and ringed by CVRS on November 28th and retrapped the next day

2022, at Sand Point from October 20th until 25th



**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A common passage migrant and declining breeding summer visitor.

The average arrival is on March 24th, four days earlier than given in Bland (1992) who gives earliest arrivals on 9th March, 1972 and 12th March, 1976. More recently the earliest arrival was on 13th March, 2011 at Northwick Warth. The average departure is on September 24th, two days later than given by Bland (1992) who gives latest departures of 25th October, 1981 and 16th October, 1972. More recently the latest was on 11th October, 1994 at Somerdale, Keynsham.

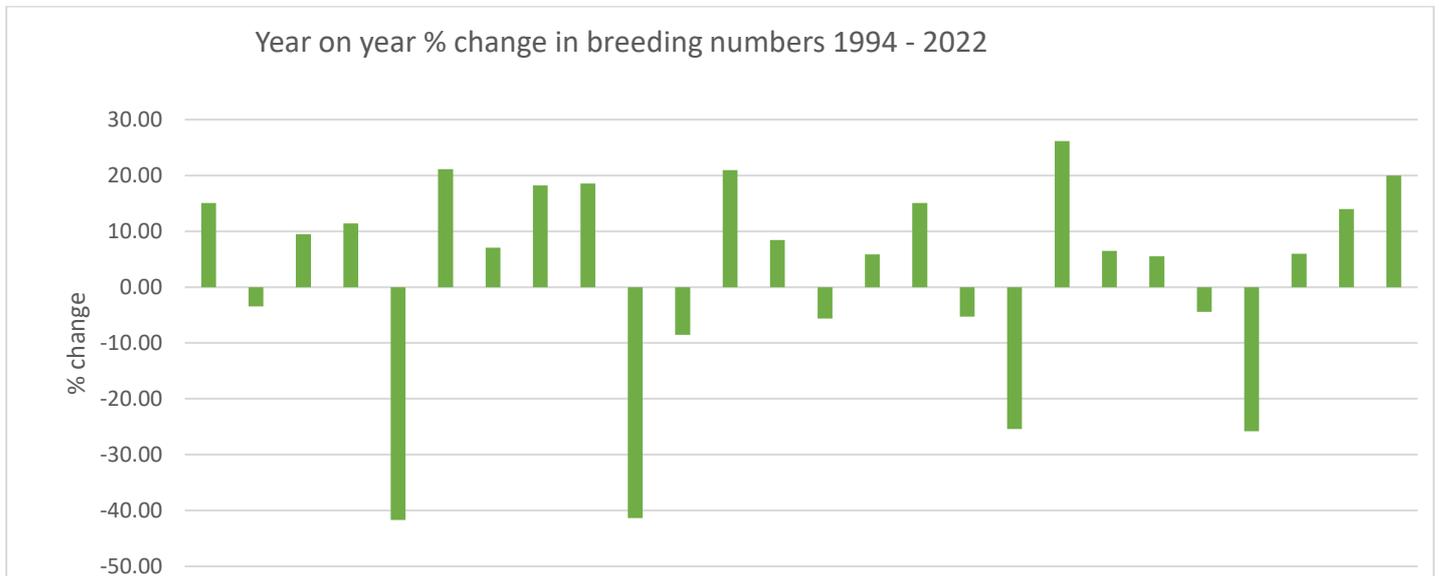
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'summer visitor, local, not common, Stapleton, Ashton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'summer resident, common and widely distributed'.

Claims in Davis (1947) of northern Willow Warblers (*P. t. acredula*), killed at Cowhill in May 1913 and mounted at the City museum, and shot near Stoke Gifford in April 1932, have been omitted as this subspecies is not currently thought identifiable.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita**P. c. collybita*

A common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Also, an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident.

The BBS results show a 19% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant summer visitor' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'summer resident, common and widely distributed, occasionally reported in winter'.

Scandinavian Chiffchaff *P. c. abietinus*

A local rarity only safely identifiable by DNA with two recent records.

2016, trapped and ringed by CVRS on December 3rd, identification confirmed by DNA

2017, trapped and ringed by CVRS on November 25th and confirmed by DNA [2018 ABR]

Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis*

This local rarity has been annual since 2011 with a total of 74 individuals seen so far this century. Individuals now regularly winter:

2001, at Bishopston on January 16th [review in 2015 ABR]

2003, at CVL on February 15th [review in 2015 ABR]

2005, four individuals – at Emersons Green from January 1st until March 28th, at New Passage on February 6th [2016 ABR], at Weston Moor on October 7th, and at New Passage on October 9th [2016 ABR]

2006, one at Chew Stoke STW on January 12th and again on February 16th

2007, two individuals – at Northwick Warth on March 11th, and at Keynsham STW on December 21st [review in 2015 ABR]

2008, at CVL on December 16th [review in 2015 ABR],

2008/09, another at CVL from December 28th until 2nd January, 2009

2009, at least three individuals – at Keynsham STW from March 11th until 15th, at BG on November 18th with it or another on December 21st [review in 2015 ABR], and at Avonmouth on December 17th [2010 ABR]

2011, two individuals – at Saltford on January 11th and again on March 8th and 15th, trapped at CVL on December 4th [2012 ABR]

2012, two individuals – at CVL on February 6th and 9th, and at Saltford STW on April 11th [2014 ABR]

2013, two individuals – at CVL on January 2nd, 4th, 6th (when trapped), 11th, 31st and February 17th, a different bird at CVL on March 25th

2014, ten individuals – at St Werburghs City Farm from January 3rd until 20th, at Chew Stoke STW on January 20th with a second from 23rd until March 10th, at CVL from January 21st with a second from February 27th until March 29th and one until April 10th, at Saltford STW from February 10th until March 29th, at Keynsham STW from March 2nd until 7th, at Eastville Park on March 11th, trapped at CVL on November 29th, a different bird at CVL on December 31st

2014/15, at CVL from December 16th until 28th March, 2015

2015, four new individuals – at CVL on January 16th, February 3rd and 17th and trapped on March 6th when DNA tested, a different individual at CVL from January 19th until February 27th when trapped and DNA tested, trapped and DNA tested at CVL on October 31st, at CVL from November 26th until December 8th

2015/16, three individuals – a ringed bird at CVL from December 8th until 22nd February, 2016, at Chew Stoke STW from December 14th until end of January 2016, and at Saltford STW from December 18th until 2nd April, 2016

2016, eight new individuals – a second bird at Chew Stoke STW from January 6th with a third from 13th until end of month with two on February 10th and one on 23rd, at Keynsham STW from January 15th until February 18th, four trapped at CVL on October 23rd, October 29th, November 5th, and December 3rd, at Keynsham STW on December 5th



2017, two individuals – at Hoar Gout on January 6th and 7th, at Hoar Gout on December 9th and 18th

2018, at Milton, Weston-super-Mare on March 21st,

2018/19, at Chew Stoke STW from December 26th until 1st January, 2019

2019, at least three new individuals – two new birds at Chew Stoke STW on January 18th with one still on 20th, a possibly different individual at Chew Stoke STW on February 5th and 6th, at Stoke Park on March 18th,

2019/20, two individuals - at CVL from December 16th until 8th January 2020, at Chew Stoke STW from December 18th until 5th January, 2020

2020, three new individuals – two at CVL from January 8th until 15th with one until 17th, singing at Saltford on April 14th,

2020/21, at CVL from November 4th until February 5th, 2021

2021, seven new individuals – a different bird at CVL on January 18th, at Weston airfield from March 15th until April 10th, at Saltford on April 11th, three ringed by CVRS in November, at RPD from November 14th until December 12th,

2021/22, two individuals – at Saltford from December 13th until 16th January, 2022, and at CVL from December 20th until 4th February, 2022

2022, six individuals – two at Chew Stoke STW from January 25th until February 3rd, CVL from February 11th until 24th, Saltford from October 27th until November 3rd, trapped and ringed at Littleton Brick Pits on December 2nd, Northwick Warth on December 24th

Older records are harder to assess with many previously recorded merely as Eastern Chiffchaff *abietinus/tristis* although a review of old records in 2015 cleared out many of these with the following 20 individuals remaining acceptable:

1949 – a probable on Steep Holm on September 24th [SBR][*British Birds* vol 43 page 187-188]

1969 – trapped on Steep Holm on October 6th

1976 – CVL on November 5th

- 1983 – Chittening Warth on January 2nd [*see review in 2015 ABR*], CVL on December 16th<sup>117</sup>
- 1988 – two at CVL on November 27th
- 1990 – CVL on December 1st
- 1991 – Parkhouse Farm, Keynsham on November 17th [*review in 2015 ABR*]
- 1992 – CVL on November 15th, two at BL from November 29th until 13th February, 1993 [*review in 2015 ABR*]
- 1993 – CVL on March 28th, CVL on December 4th [*review in 2015 ABR*]
- 1994 – CVL on January 16th [*review in 2015 ABR*]
- 1996 – BL on March 24th [*review in 2015 ABR*], CVL on December 14th
- 1997 – Bishopston on January 3rd
- 1998 – CVL on November 2nd and 30th
- 1999 – Keynsham STW on February 7th, 21st and 28th [*review in 2015 ABR*]

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<sup>117</sup> A published 1984 record from Saltford has recently been withdrawn by the observer

**Iberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus ibericus*

The only record of this National rarity is of one in song at Kingsgate Park, Yate on 25th and 26th March, 2017 [BBRC], see Collar (2017) for more details

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

The only local record is of one at Sand Point on 2nd June, 2014, see Bowyer (2014) for more details

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*

The only local record is of one watched for 30 minutes down to 10 yards at Sand Point on 17th August, 1965 [BBRC]

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*

S. One, Sand Bay, Aug. 17 identified by C.G.B. who describes it as Wood Warbler size, very active, with dark greenish suffused grey brown upperparts, very long prominent white eye-stripe, off-white underparts, single narrow whitish wing bar and pale legs. Record accepted by *Brit. Birds Rarities Committee*.

A warbler at SGW on 19th September, 1971 'appeared to be either an Arctic or a Greenish Warbler (the BBRC considered the evidence inconclusive)' per the 1971 ABR

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

A National rarity with three local records this century:

2008, a singing male at CVL on May 12th [BBRC]

2012, a singing male at Weston STW from May 19th until June 2nd [BBRC]

2014, a singing male at CVL from May 24th until 26th [BBRC]

The only other record is of a singing male at CVL on 18th May, 1992 [BBRC], see Aldridge (1992) for more details

**Aquatic Warbler** *Acrocephalus paludicola*

There are no records this century.

It was regular in the second half of the twentieth century with 17 individuals recorded between 1963 and 1999:

1963, seen and heard at BL on May 13th [BBRC]

1965, trapped at CVL on August 15th and released on 16th [BBRC]

1966, a juvenile trapped at CVL on August 13th [BBRC]

**AQUATIC WARBLER** *Acrocephalus paludicola*

**S.** Juv., trapped Chew Valley res., Aug. 13 (C.V.R.S.). Full description mentions resemblance to Sedge Warbler, but with buff stripe down centre of crown, heavily streaked upper parts including rump, black streaks on flanks and prominent rictal bristles. Record, third for area, accepted by *Brit. Birds Rarities Committee*.

1969, trapped at BL on August 24th [BBRC]

1971, an immature at Sand Bay from September 15th to 20th was joined by a second on 16th only. [BBRC]

1972, trapped at CVL on August 20th [1973 BBRC]

1976, two individuals – an adult trapped at Littleton-on-Severn on August 14th [1977 BBRC], and at CVL on August 16th [BBRC]

1977, a juvenile trapped at CVL on August 3rd [BBRC]

1984, three trapped at CVL on August 12th, 13th and 21st, the latter a juvenile seen on 20th

1990, one trapped at CVL on August 14th had been ringed in Poland

1994, a juvenile trapped at CVL on August 13th

1995, a juvenile trapped at CVL on August 9th

1999, a juvenile seen at CVL on September 3rd

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 600 pairs.

The average arrival date is April 9th, six days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 30th March, in 2007 with two on Severnside, and in 1967 [see 2007 ABR and Bland (1992)]. The average departure is on September 28th, unchanged since Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 16th October, 1976 at CVL, see Bland (1992) and SBR.<sup>118</sup>

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'very local summer visitor, near Nailsea, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common in suitable localities'. The 1925 SBR said 'Chelvey and Yatton and other places in the lowlands. Breeds at BL. Elsewhere rarer than might be expected and unaccountably absent from some seemingly suitable spots eg in the Chew Valley'. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, local but nests fairly commonly on suitable ground – chiefly in lowland areas. Occurs widely on migration'.

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<sup>118</sup> A record for 28th October, 1986 mentioned in Bland (1992) is erroneous per the observer

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

A fairly common passage migrant and localised breeding summer visitor in good numbers. Warden (2003) describes an ongoing study of breeding at CVL which has an estimated breeding population of 900 pairs.

The average arrival date is now April 10th, 13 days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 24th March, 1973 at CVL [*introduction to 1973 ABR*], The average departure is on October 6th, 12 days later than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departures on 16th December, 2007 at CVL [*2019 ABR*] and 26th December, 2019, at CVL. In addition, one was trapped and ringed at CVL on 30th January, 2015 (see photo below).

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'very local summer visitor, Stapleton occasionally' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, nests sparingly in a few localities such as Nailsea and Saltford'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention '24 nests found along R Avon, especially near Bath, June/July 1881 (Zoologist 1883)'. The 1925 SBR said it 'breeds Chelvey and Yatton and some other localities in the lowlands. A pair or two some years at BL. Otherwise rare' while Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident locally, nests in suitable reed beds'.



**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

This is a local rarity with just one record this century, one in song at Littleton Brick Pits on 12th June, 2022<sup>119</sup>

There are only other recent records as follows;

1979, two individuals – a singing male at CVL from May 19th until early July<sup>120</sup>, and a singing male in the Gordano Valley on 20th May

1986, two seen and heard at BG on August 9th<sup>121</sup>

1994, trapped at CVL on June 5th

It was commoner in the past, with the last local breeding in the late 1940's, at Charlton Bottom, mentioned in Aldridge (1987). However that seems to have been an exception, with just one published record after the 1920s, of a passage bird seen and heard in June 1935 at Stoke Gifford mentioned in Davis (1947). It seems that regular breeding had ceased by 1920 as evidenced by the following sources:

O. V. Aplin, in a letter in the 1901 Zoologist, page 106, suggests it may have bred near Bath in the 1840s.

Playne (1895) says he found nests 'between Bristol and Bath' in June 1894 and 1895 although the 1925 SBR says the 'spot now built over with bungalows'.

Charbonnier (1899) says a 'summer resident, arriving late in May. Has nested in four localities in the neighbourhood during the last six years.

A clutch of three eggs previously in the City Museum and obtained from a bean crop at Patchway in June, 1909 are mentioned in Davis (1947)

Davis (1947) says 'formerly a regular, though very local, summer resident, but of late years has been extremely scarce or entirely absent. H C Playne writes (in litt) that nests recorded annually, 1894 – 1898, from the Bath area were in an osier bed at Saltford, also that breeding was proven at Avonmouth and Portishead, 1898. Dr L H Mathews reports (in litt) that the Saltford site, now deserted, was still occupied in 1919.'

Palmer and Ballance (1968) says 'bred Wellow 1880; near Saltford and Keynsham 1894 – 1919; Portishead and Clevedon before 1905'

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<sup>119</sup> The Severnside Birds website mentions one trapped at New Passage on 22nd August, 2009; conflicting reports were received as to the identification of this bird in the hand from experts consulted at the time and the record was never formally submitted. The website also mentions a record from ASW in the 1970s which I cannot trace

<sup>120</sup> 1979 ABR only gives first date but 1994 ABR gives full period

<sup>121</sup> Although the ABR only says seen the field notes describe the calls heard which played a large part in the identification being confirmed

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*

A National rarity until 1963 and a local rarity since then with three old records as follows:.

1961 – a first winter trapped on Steep Holm on September 27th [BBRC\*]

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** *Hippolais polyglotta*

**S.** First-winter bird trapped and ringed, Steep Holm, Sept. 27 (Res. Stn.). Bird examined and identified by D.M.C., P.J.C. and M.A.W. who report that it was a dull pale specimen lacking the bright yellow underparts usually featured in reference books. Upper parts hair-brown with olivaceous tinge; underparts grey-white tinged with yellow especially down centre of belly; yellow chin and throat, and short yellowish eyestripe and orbital ring; tarsus blue-grey on front surface but pale brown behind. The most striking feature was the broad, long, horn-coloured bill (lower mandible orange-yellow). Record (first for Bristol Area and Somerset) accepted by *Brit. Birds Rare Birds Committee*.

1967 – one trapped on Steep Holm on August 28th

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** *Hippolais polyglotta*

**S.** One trapped, Steep Holm, Aug. 28 (s). Details included: upper-parts greyish-brown with greenish tint; wings brown with greenish-white fringe on secondaries forming faint wing panel. Heavy, long, dark brown bill—lower mandible yellowish-orange beneath with pink tinge at base. Yellowish superciliary stripe and underparts. Tail brownish-grey with pale fringe on outer feathers. Legs bluish. Three rictal bristles. Wing length 63½ mm. with 3rd primary longest, 4th ½ mm. shorter and 2nd 5 mm. shorter. Second record for area, cf. *Proc. B.N.S.*, 1961, p.265.

1979 – seen at Sand Bay on September 29th <sup>122</sup>

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*

The only record of this local rarity is of a singing male in a garden in Brentry on 15th May, 1992, see Dadds (1992) for more details

<sup>122</sup> A previously published record from CVL in 1984, and a record of a *Hippolais* sp from there in 1972, were, on review, found to no longer be acceptable [2019 ABR]

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*

A National rarity prior to 1983 and since 1998 and a local rarity in the intervening period. There is a single record this century, a male in song at CVL from the evening of 9th and 10th May, 2001.

There are three previous records, all from CVL

1960 – seen and heard at CVL from July 24th until 30th [BBRC]

SAVI'S WARBLER *Locustella luscinioides*

**S.** One in marshy growth, Chew Valley res., late July; first seen, on 24th, by B.K., who in a detailed description refers to the uniformly drab brown upper parts, the noticeably graduated tail, and the reeling song—lower in pitch and mostly of shorter duration than in Grasshopper Warbler; seen also, down to 15 yds. range, on 30th (B.K., K.B.Y.). Identification confirmed by *Brit. Birds* Rare Birds Committee. No previous record for Somerset.

1980 – a male at CVL on April 16th [BBRC]

1986 – ringed at CVL on August 31st

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

An uncommon passage migrant and a scarce breeding summer visitor that is probably overlooked.



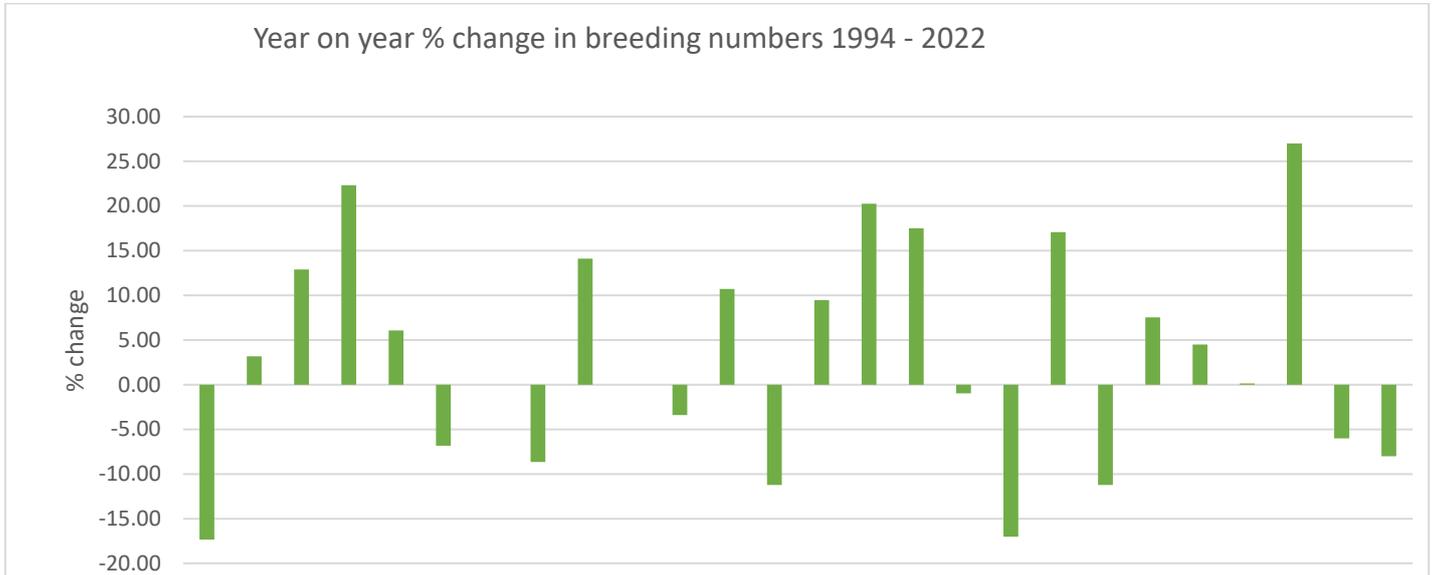
The average arrival is on April 12th, three days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 28th March, 1997, trapped and ringed in the Gordano valley. The average departure is on September 17th, three days later than given by Bland (1992), who gives a latest departure on 28th October, 1973. There are also late departures on 10th October, 1970, mentioned in the 1997 ABR, and 15th October, 2021, trapped at Littleton Brick Pits.

Wheeler (1874) said 'summer visitor, not common, seldom seen, sometimes heard, Leigh, Portishead, Knowle' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, nests every year but is not common'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'local but probably overlooked. Observed Portishead and about four pairs breed regularly some four miles south west of Bristol. Ubley and Compton Martin and some years Weston-super-Mare' Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, uncommon and local though well known in suitable habitats. Occasionally noted on migration in areas where it does not breed'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) state 'most frequent Leigh Woods, Gordano Valley, Backwell Hill to Wrington Warren, CVL'

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

A common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. It is now also a fairly common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

The BBS results show a 87% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'generally distributed summer visitor, may be heard almost everywhere' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common, has been obtained during the winter'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'wintering noted before 1840 near Bristol (Yarrell, 1871-4) and shot near Bath 1st January, 1873 (Field)'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'on the whole common but not evenly distributed and scarce in some places for no obvious reason' while Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, common and well distributed in woodland areas, sometimes reported in winter'.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

A fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the breeding population as 500 pairs.

The average arrival date is April 15th, unchanged from Bland (1992) who gives an earliest arrival date of 24th March, 1974, at Doynton according to Hale (1991). However the GBR mentions one at Littleton-on-Severn on 19th February, 1966. The earliest recent record is 29th March, 1990, three at Whitchurch.

The average departure is on September 28th, two days later than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 21st November, 1993 in a garden at Winscombe.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'generally distributed summer visitor, plantations, gardens etc, less frequent than Blackcap' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, not so common as Blackcap'. The 1925 SBR said 'general distribution coincides pretty closely with Blackcap but more erratic in its occurrence, being common in certain places in some years and absent, or nearly so, in others. It quite often outnumbered Blackcap at Hunstrete. More numerous than Blackcap Weston-super-Mare'. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, occurs in similar haunts to Blackcap but is, perhaps, less abundant and in some years tends to be more local'.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

A fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the breeding population as 1,000 pairs. The average arrival date is April 17th, five days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 7th April, 2020 at CI-Y.

The average departure is on October 6th, ten days later than given by Bland (1992). One wintered in a Brislington garden from 9th December, 2009 until 5th January, 2010, while other late records (and thus potentially involving eastern races) are as follows:

1991 – Parkhouse Farm, Keynsham from November 15th until 17th

1998 – a juvenile trapped at BG on November 16th and retrapped on 22nd, see photo on right

2009 – Bristol Docks on December 4th

2012 – Sand Point from November 11th until 23rd (photographs suggested it was of the nominate race)

2014 – trapped at CVL on November 29th and confirmed as nominate from DNA (see photo below)



Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'summer visitor, not common' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, fairly common'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'fairly common on the whole, particularly in the Chew Valley' while Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, not so abundant or as widely distributed as Whitethroat but fairly plentiful – particularly where thick hedgerows occur'.

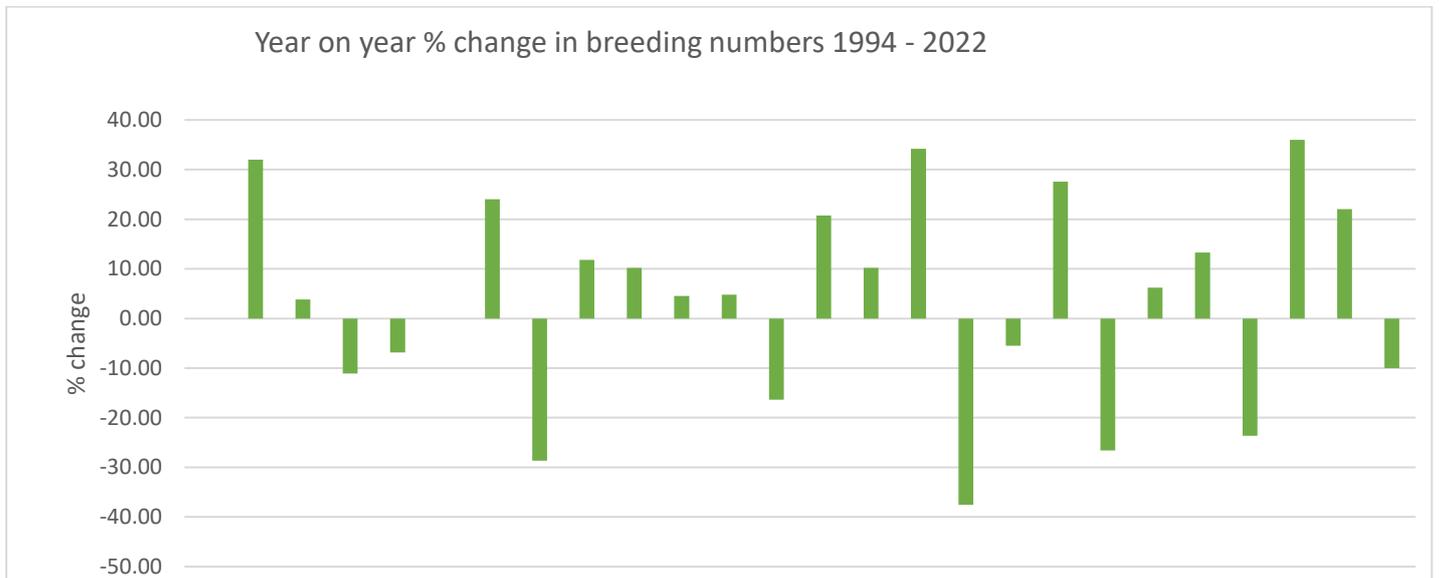
**Subalpine Warbler sp** *Sylvia cantillans/iberiae/subalpina*

A National rarity recently split into three species. The only local record was a female at Severn Beach on 2nd May, 2004 [BBRC] that was not ascribed to subspecies, see Martin (2004) for more details.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

A common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The BBS results show a 54% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The average arrival date is April 11th, five days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with earliest arrival dates of 26th March, 2019 at Stockwood open space and 31st March, in 1961 at Sand Point and in 1988. see Bland (1992). The average departure is on September 27th, a day later than given by Bland (1992) who gives a latest departure date of 22nd November, 1987. However, there is also a record from a Bishopston garden on 31st January, 2001, the only record of one overwintering locally

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'generally distributed summer visitor' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'summer resident, common, widely distributed and may be found in almost all types of country'.



**Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata*

A local rarity which bred on the Mendips near the Somerset boundary in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

Records have been regular since 1992 although in some years it is hard to be sure how many individuals are involved, as birds are seen intermittently at a site.

1992 – at RPD on November 8th and 15th

1993 – at CI-Y on April 24th and 25th

1995, two individuals – at Sand Point on April 2nd, a female/juvenile near Crook Peak on September 5th and 6th

1996 – males on territory at two sites on the Mendips with a juvenile on July 5th

1997 – bred again at a site on Mendip with three juveniles on July 22nd

1998 – bred again at site on Mendip with an adult and juvenile seen on August 11th, also PW on February 7th, and a female type at CI-Y on December 16th

1999, two individuals – a Chew Magna<sup>123</sup> garden on March 14th, Sand Point on October 23rd

2000, three individuals – on Mendip on August 31st, two at Uphill on October 15th

2002, on Mendip on June 19th

2003, two individuals – Sand Point on October 12th, PW on November 15th, 23rd and December 12th

2004, CI-Y on October 17th

2005, ten individuals – Sand Point from August 30th until September 16th with two on 10th, Middle Hope on October 3rd, New Passage area from October 5th until 12th, Sand Point on October 9th, Sand Point from 16th until 28th, Severn Beach on October 31st and November 1st, Sand Bay on 17th, PW on December 10th, Sand Point on 17th and 19th

2006, five individuals – Sand Point on January 2nd, Severn Beach on April 1st, Sand Point on October 16th and 17th, Sand Point on 29th, Sand Point on November 2nd and 5th

2008, two individuals – Marshfield on October 10th and 11th, Flax Bourton on December 10th

2009, two individuals – BG on January 2nd and 3rd and found predated on 4th, PW on 7th

2010, Uphill on December 12th

2013/14 – an immature at Sand Point from November 10th until 28th February, 2014

2014, two individuals – an adult at Sand Point on February 28th, Sand Point on October 29th and 30th

2015, three individuals – Sand Bay on September 28th, a female at Severn Beach on October 20th and November 1st, Sand Point from November 1st until 4th

2016, six individuals – one at Sand Bay on January 6th was joined by a second from 9th with three present at one stage and the last record on April 20th, Sand Point singing on April 9th, Sand Bay on October 11th and 12th, Sand Bay on December 3rd

2017, Sand Bay between January 18th and February 8th

2020, two individuals – mouth of R. Yeo on November 4th, Middle Hope on December 1st

2022, four individuals – Weston STW on February 25th and March 14th, Middle Hope from October 25th until 30th, Wraxall on November 11th, Weston Airfield on December 1st

2022/23 – Troopers Hill, Bristol from October 25th into 2023

The only previous records are as follows:

1960 – probably an adult male, in the coastal strip near Walton-in-Gordano on October 16th

1978 – Portishead on March 4th

<sup>123</sup> Although ABR says Winford, the site, the author's garden, is actually in Chew Magna parish

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

A scarce passage migrant and winter visitor with some recent increase. It bred successfully at BG in 2013 and 2014, and probably in 2015.

It was a local rarity until 2009, having been a national rarity until 1963. Early published records are as follows:

1913 – Clifton on February 16th [*British Birds vol 6 page 343*]

1914 – corpse found in Clifton in autumn Davis (1947)

1950 – Ubley end of BL on December 10th

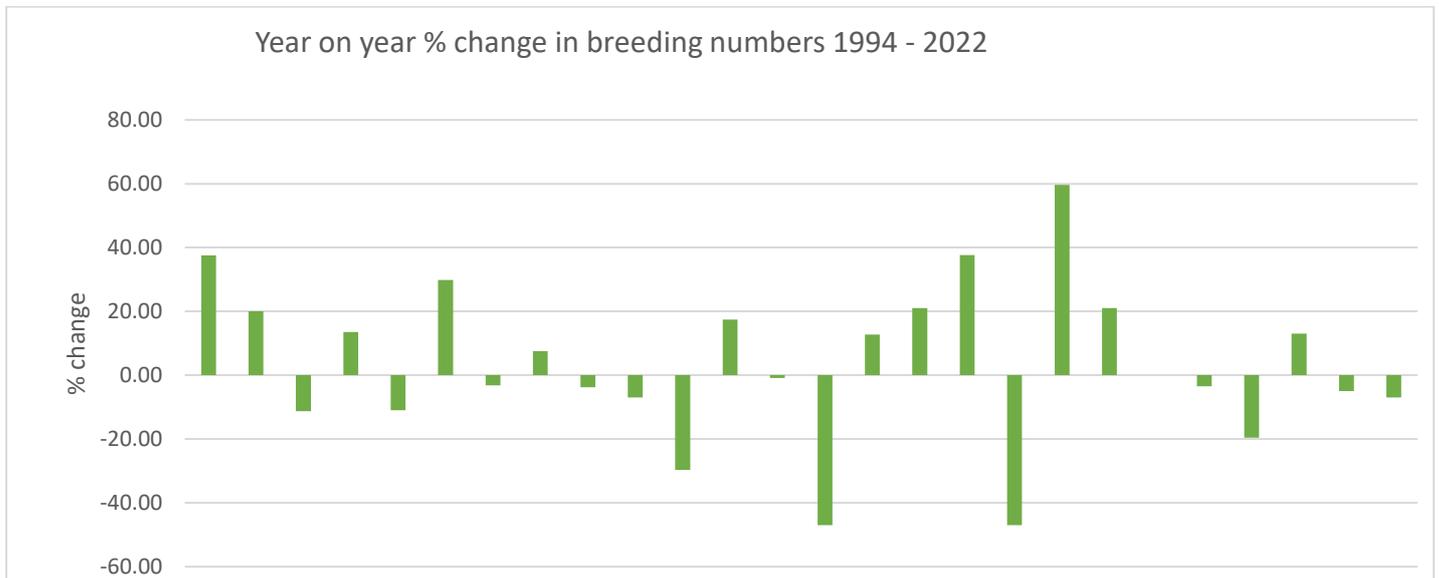
1960 – adult male trapped on Steep Holm on October 4th



**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

A fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The BBS results show a 16% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.

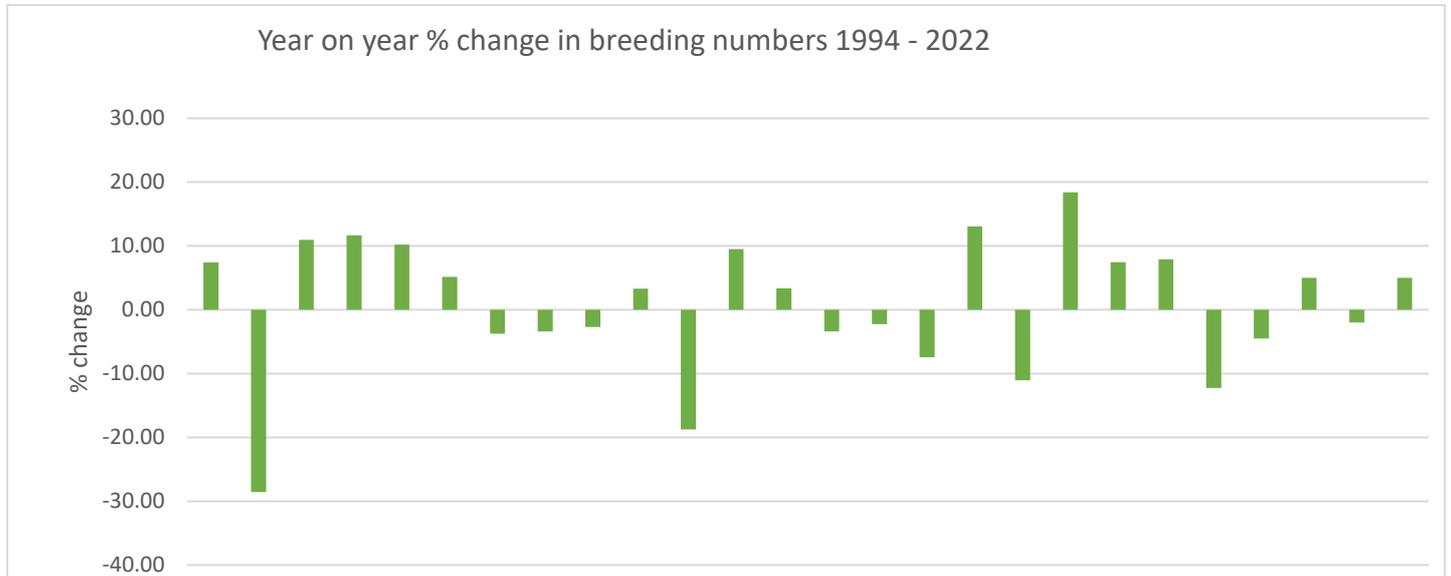


Wheeler (1874) said it was 'generally distributed resident, woods, plantations' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, fairly numerous, more abundant in winter'. The 1927 SBR said it was 'now common in conifer plantations etc. Suffered very severely in winter 1916-17 but some survived' while Davis (1947) called it 'resident and widely distributed, as a nesting bird found chiefly in coniferous woods and gardens but in winter occurs fairly commonly in purely deciduous growth'.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

An abundant breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 3% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common, everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

A fairly common breeding resident. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 1,000 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'tolerably common, in woods' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'common and resident in well-timbered country in most parts of the district' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, local but fairly common in suitable woodland areas'.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

A fairly common breeding resident. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the local breeding population as 700 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'tolerably common, everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus*

A National rarity until 2002 and a local rarity since then. So far this century 18 individuals have been recorded as follows:

2000, an adult male in gardens at Hanham from December 14th until 26th January, 2001 [BBRC]

2002, three adults at Wain's Hill on June 8th

2003, two individuals – a juvenile at Keynsham from September 10th until 20th, and a juvenile at Weston STW from November 14th until 16th<sup>124</sup>

2004, a juvenile at New Passage on September 2nd

2012, a first-summer at Severn Beach on June 10th and 11th

2014, two individuals – a juvenile at BG from September 20th until 26th and an adult at Bishopston from November 13th until December 5th

2018, three individuals – an adult at Sand Bay on June 10th, a juvenile at Severn Beach on September 1st, and an immature on Lansdown on September 14th

2020, three individuals – a first-summer in Whitchurch on June 16th, one in a Stokes Croft garden on June 17th, and a juvenile at Pilning from August 23rd until 26th

2021, two individuals – an adult at OPS on June 4th, and an immature at Cl-Y on September 14th and 15th

The only other records, four, are all from the late 1800's:

1862 – obtained at St Philips Marsh Davis (1947), Wheeler (1874)

1871 – Batheaston on July 29th [2000 ABR], Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1890 – Clevedon in early September Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1895<sup>125</sup> – Clevedon in September Charbonnier (1899)<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> ABR incorrectly only gives 15th and 16th

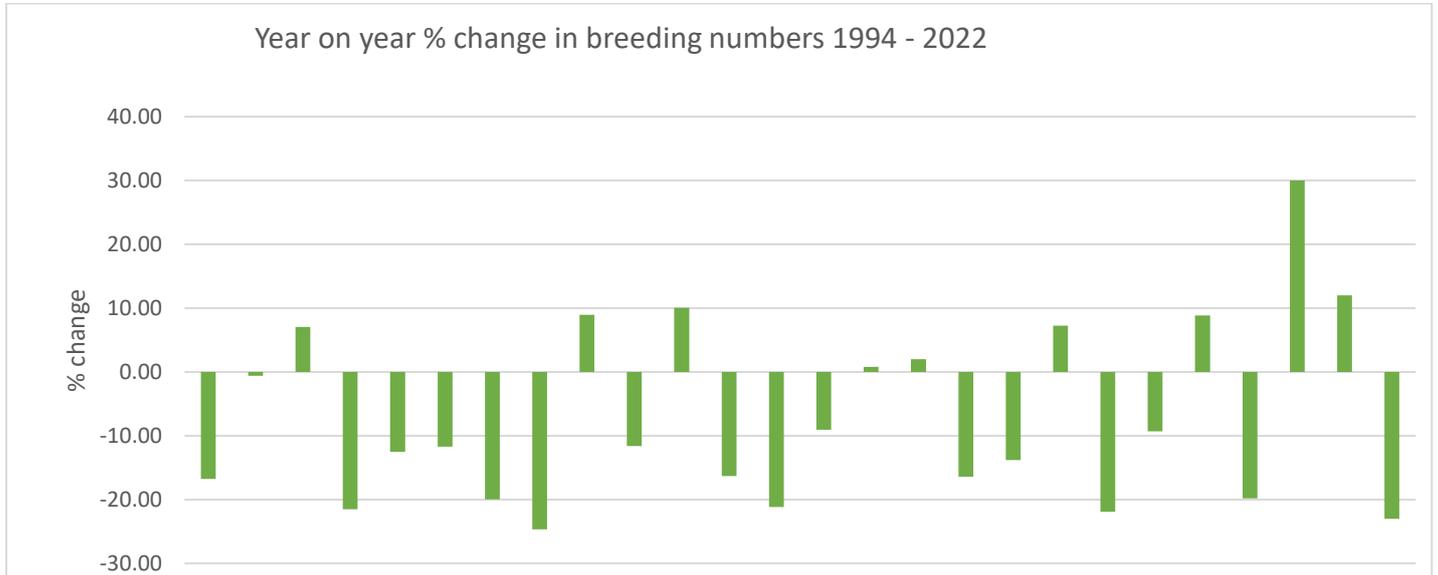
<sup>125</sup> 2000 ABR incorrectly gives year as 1893

<sup>126</sup> The original source for both this record, and the 1890 record, are given as 'Field' without any volume or page details so it could be that that there was only one record and confusion over the year. So far I have failed to find an online archive of the Field magazine.

### Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A still abundant breeding resident which is declining rapidly; it is also a passage migrant and winter visitor. The largest count is of a 'million or more' roosting on Sodbury Common in the late 1930s [1989 ABR].

The BBS results show an 89% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Tully (1993) investigates roosts in the city in the 1992/93 winter.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common everywhere' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed, often in great abundance following winter immigration. Reported in recent years as roosting in very large numbers at Chipping Sodbury, Rangeworthy, Patchway, Failand, Long Ashton, Marksbury and elsewhere. Some thousands roosted in the spire of St Mary, Redcliff November-December 1929'.

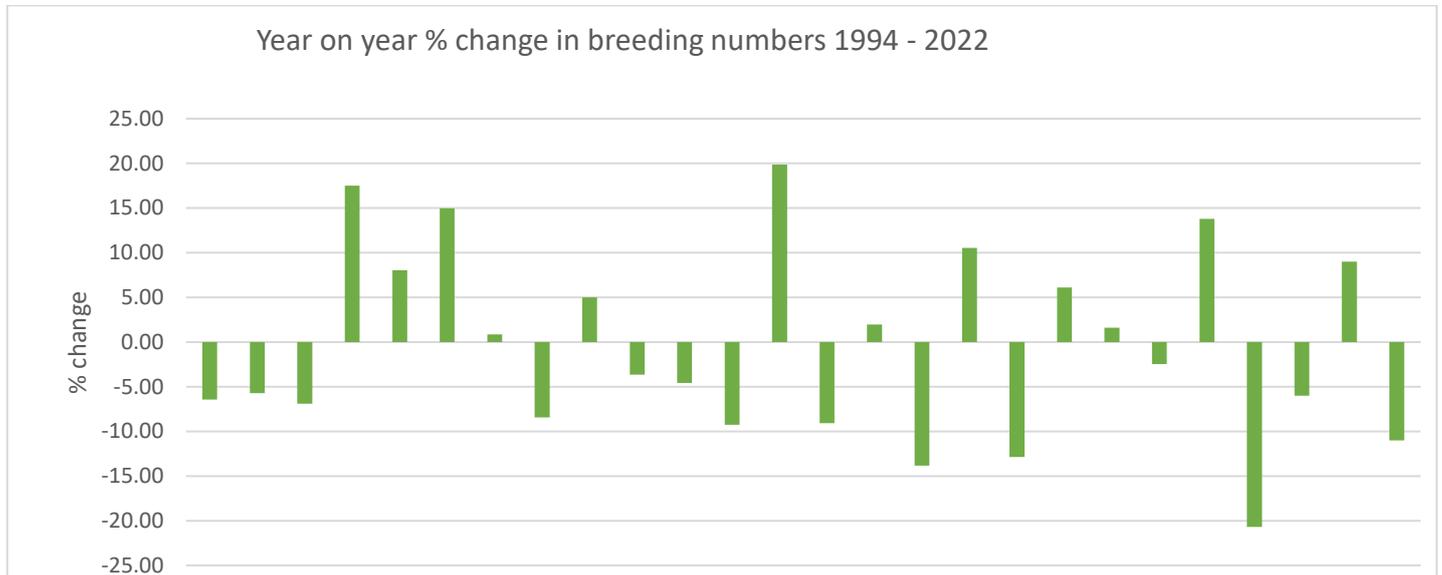
### White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea*

The only local record of this national rarity is from 1871, killed at Langford, close to the northern slope of Mendip, on January 6th mentioned in Davis (1947) and the Zoologist 1871 (p 2607)

### Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos clarkei*

A common breeding resident and possibly also an uncommon passage migrant.

The BBS results show a 23% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Bland (1993) analyses the local decline of the species after 1970.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'abundant, well known everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

### Continental Song Thrush *T. p. philomelas*

There are just two local records of this migratory race, both trapped. It is likely that others are overlooked.

2020 – trapped and ringed in a Brentry garden on October 16th

2022 – a male trapped and ringed at Littleton Brick Pits on April 26th

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

An uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

Bland and Tully (1991) estimated the local breeding population as 2,000 pairs but Bland and Dadds (2012) reduced this to 1,000 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'tolerably common, frequent of Downs and Leigh' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1928 SBR said it was 'not evenly distributed as a breeding species. Common coastal lowlands and Bristol district. Apparently quite common Bath district'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

A common winter visitor and passage migrant. It can occur in large numbers in hard winters with a largest count of 3,500 at Long Ashton on 12th January, 1985.

The average arrival is on 29th September, a day earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the earliest arrivals are on 7th August, 1979, 'an experienced observer gave a full description' and 15th September, 2004 on Steep Holm. The average departure date is 10th April, a day earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the latest departure is on 8th May, 2022 at Yate.

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant winter visitor, more numerous than Fieldfares and usually arrives earlier' and Charbonnier (1899) 'winter visitor, occurs regularly in abundance'. The 1927 SBR said it was a 'regular visitor usually more numerous than Fieldfare in most places inland though possibly reverse in the case on lowlands near coast. In general, rather less addicted to elevated ground than Fieldfare. Usually, common near Bristol and in Chew Valley etc. Large influxes of this and Fieldfare probably mainly dependent on hard weather elsewhere but occasional appearances of some numbers towards close of winter, apparently irrespective of weather conditions, are probably cases of local movements preparatory to actual migration'. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor, common and widely distributed'.

Icelandic Redwing *T. m. coburni*

The only record is from 1899, obtained at Clevedon on November 17th and now in Liverpool Museum<sup>127</sup>  
[SBR] [*British Birds* vol 30 page 32]

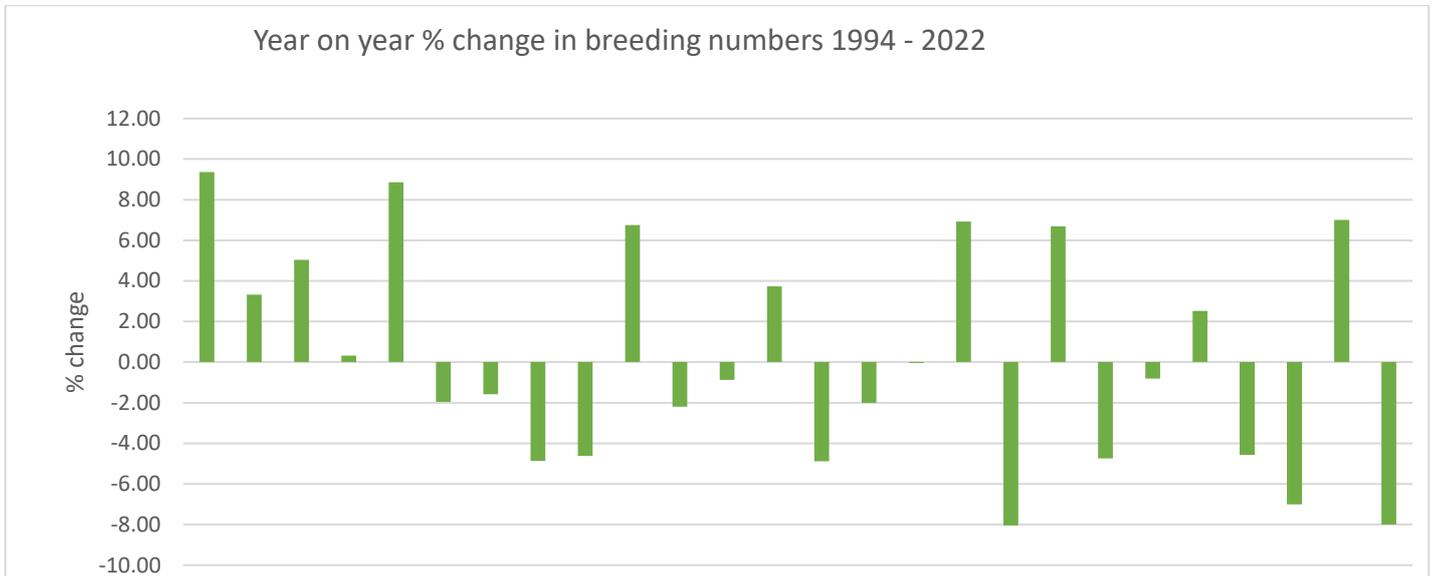
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<sup>127</sup> Described as 'rather dark, wing 126mm'

### **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

An abundant resident, passage status uncertain.

The BBS results show a 1% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



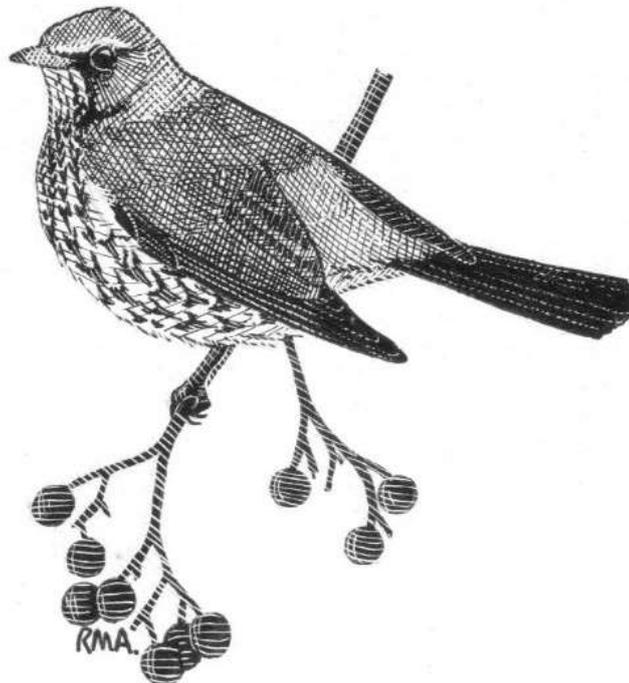
Wheeler (1874) said it was 'abundant everywhere, pied varieties occasionally occur' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

A common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters. The largest flock is of 4,000 at Abbots Leigh on 17th - 19th January, 1985 while a large movement of Fieldfares and Redwing at Aust on 23rd October, 1955 counted 10,200 birds in 5 hours.

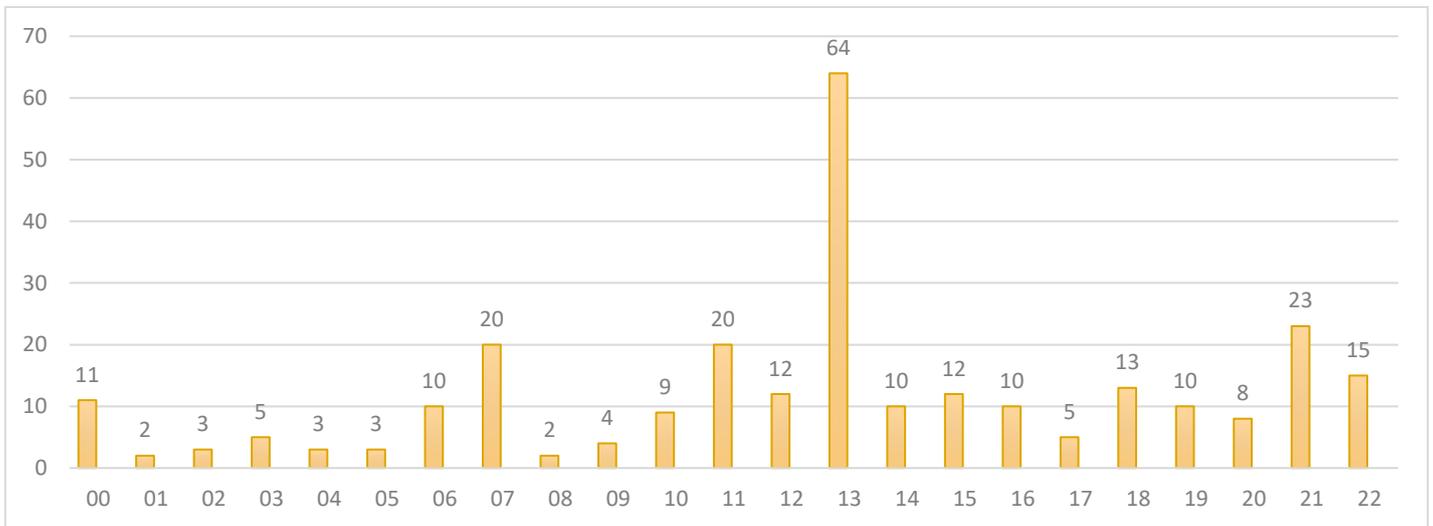
The average arrival is on 5th October, a day later than given by Bland (1992) with the earliest on 29th August, 1994 at Charlton Field. The average departure date is 16th April, six days later than in Bland (1992) with the latest on 8th May, 1982 (no site given) although Charbonnier (1899) mentions 'sometimes stays until the end of May'.

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant winter visitor, commoner some winters than others' and Charbonnier (1899) 'winter visitor, occurs regularly'. The 1927 SBR said it was a 'regular winter visitor. In some localities, such as Chew Valley, occurs every winter though in varying numbers. Often numerous on levels near sea. Usually pretty common in the Bristol district' and Davis (1947) 'winter visitor, common and widely distributed'.



### Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

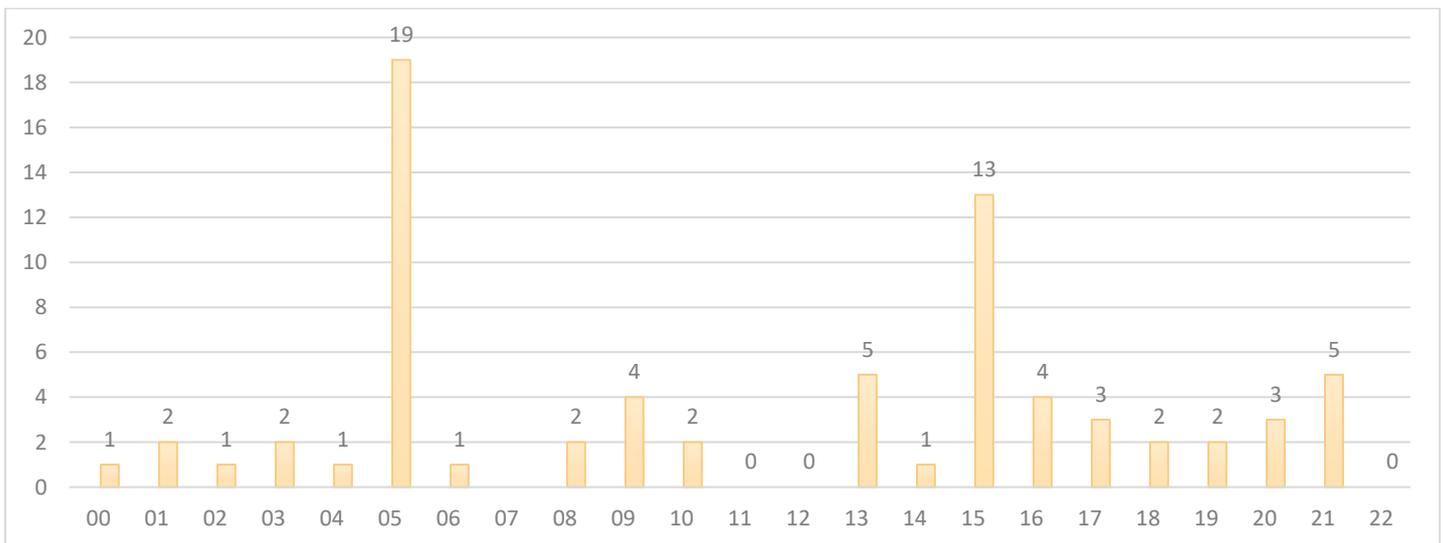
A scarce passage migrant, mostly on or near the coast, with a largest count is of 34 on Wavering Down on 3rd April, 1971.



Total bird-days for spring passage this century

The average arrival date is March 28th, two days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 9th March, 2011 in Failand. In addition, a male was present at Ham Green from 9th February until 27th, 2008 and had possibly been first seen in early January, while Hale (1991) mentions a record from Whiteladies Road in January 1971 and Hayes (2019) gives a record for 10th February, 2011 from Rangeworthy but this was never submitted to AOG.

It is scarcer on autumn passage.



Total bird-days for autumn passage this century

The average departure is on October 26th, eight days later than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 20th November, 1986 at Charlcombe.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare summer visitor, occurs occasionally at Leigh woods and Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) said 'occasionally seen on passage in the spring', while Davis (1947) who says 'passage migrant in small numbers, recorded fairly regularly in both spring and autumn. Occurs chiefly on high ground, though not infrequently in lowland areas'.

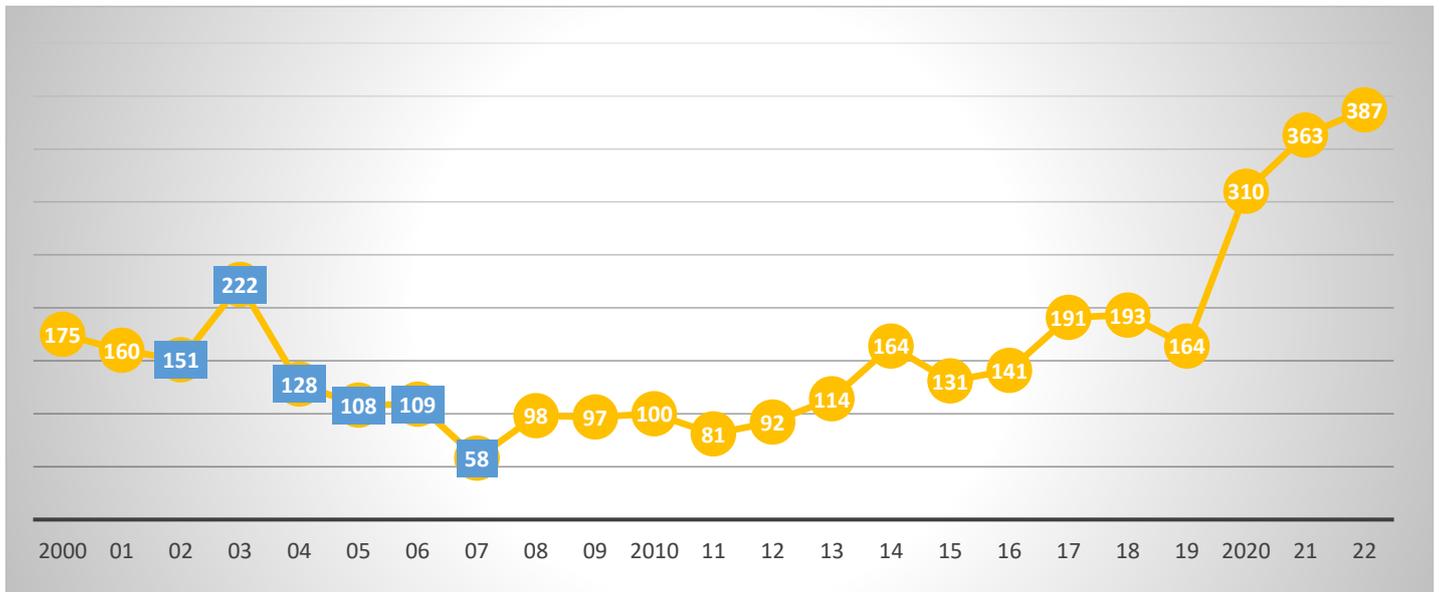
Although Charbonnier (1899) said it nested at Almondsbury in 1899 and the young birds were drowned in the nest, this was largely dismissed by Davis (1947) who says the record is without any corroborative details. However Davis also says 'has once or twice been found breeding'.

### **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis*

A National rarity with a single local record, a first-winter at Victoria Park on 8th and 9th February, 1996 [BBRC], see Elliott (1996) for more details

### **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

An uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.



The average arrival is on May 1st, a day earlier than given by Bland (1992) who gives the earliest arrivals as 16th April in 1966 and 1983 and 17th April in 1972. More recently the earliest is on 20th April, in 2016 at CVL and in 2019 at Kingston Seymour. The average departure is on September 28th, seven days later than Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 27th October, 1987, trapped and ringed on Steep Holm.

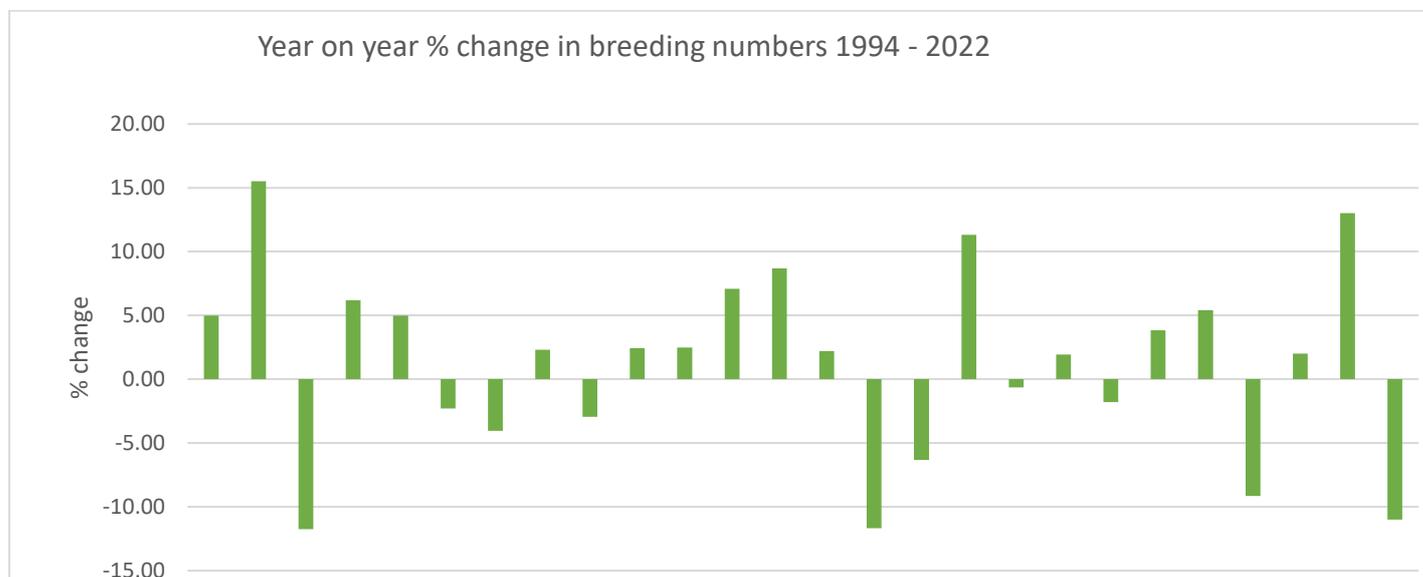
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'summer visitor, generally distributed, frequent at Leigh Woods, orchards, gardens and plantations' and Charbonnier (1899) a 'summer resident, common'. The 1927 SBR said it was a 'generally distributed and quite common breeding species' while Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, common and widely distributed'.

There was a significant decline locally in the late 1980's – in 1985-87 birds were found in 30% of the tetrads surveyed, in 1988 this had dropped to 15% and in 1989 to 6%. Recent BBS surveys found it in less than 2%.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

An abundant breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 29% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

A local rarity with a single record this century, a singing white-spotted male in a small garden in Staple Hill on 19th June, 2010.

There are five previous records:

1968, an immature male trapped at CVL on September 22nd [SBR]

1971, a first winter male trapped at BL on August 30th

1985, a first year visiting a Clevedon garden on October 19th and 20th

1988, a male briefly at Portbury Wharf on May 17th

1998, a male of the red-spotted race near Marshfield on May 14th

**Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

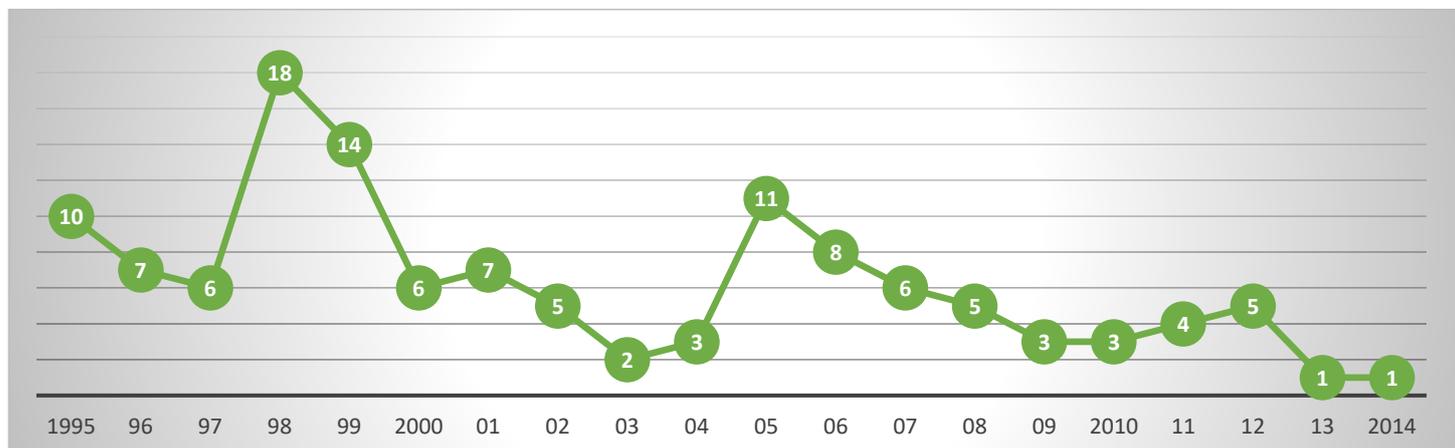
This has been considered a local rarity since 2017 with three individuals recorded since then as follows:

2018, at Kingsgate Park, Yate on May 21st

2019, a singing male on Severnside from April 19th until May 25th

2021, at Yate Common on May 9th

The last local breeding was in 2014 and the chart below shows breeding numbers over the previous 20 years.



The final 20 years of Nightingale as a local breeder - Estimated number of pairs attempting to breed

It was a very scarce breeding summer migrant, and scarce or very scarce passage migrant. Bland (1992) gave average arrival and departure dates of April 22nd and August 24th respectively: the earliest arrival dates recorded are 7th April, 1961 [2002 ABR] and 8th April, 2002, in song at Aust Warth and Bland (1992) gives a latest departure of 12th September, 1977.

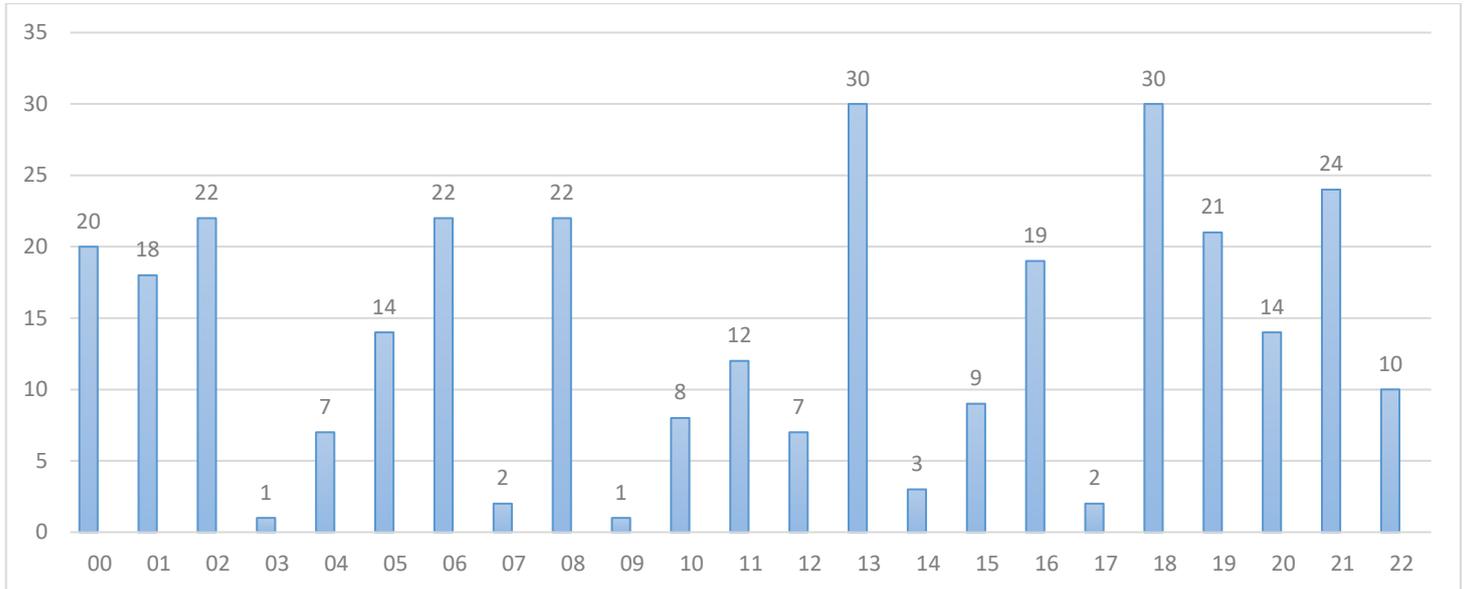
It was much commoner in the past, Wheeler (1874) listed it as 'generally distributed summer visitor, in woods, commoner than formally, Clifton Down, Leigh', Playne (1895) mentions it nesting on the Downs and Charbonnier (1899) says 'summer resident, nests in most parts of the district, and on Durdham Down'. The 1925 SBR gives it as 'local but quite common in parts of Bristol district, breeding Leigh Woods, Cadbury Camp, Wraxall and Backwell. Scarce and somewhat uncertain Yeo Valley. Rare and erratic Bath district. Heard near Weston-super-Mare'. Gait (1945) says it has increased in the Patchway, Stoke Gifford area and mentions finding nests in Saltford and Almondsbury. Davis (1947) says it is a 'summer resident, not uncommon in suitable wooded habitats. Widely distributed in lowland areas but scarce on high ground'

**Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*

A National rarity until 2017 with one local record, a first-winter male in the Shire Valley, Marshfield from 3rd February until 9th March, 2014 [BBRC], see Barnett (2014) for more details

### Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

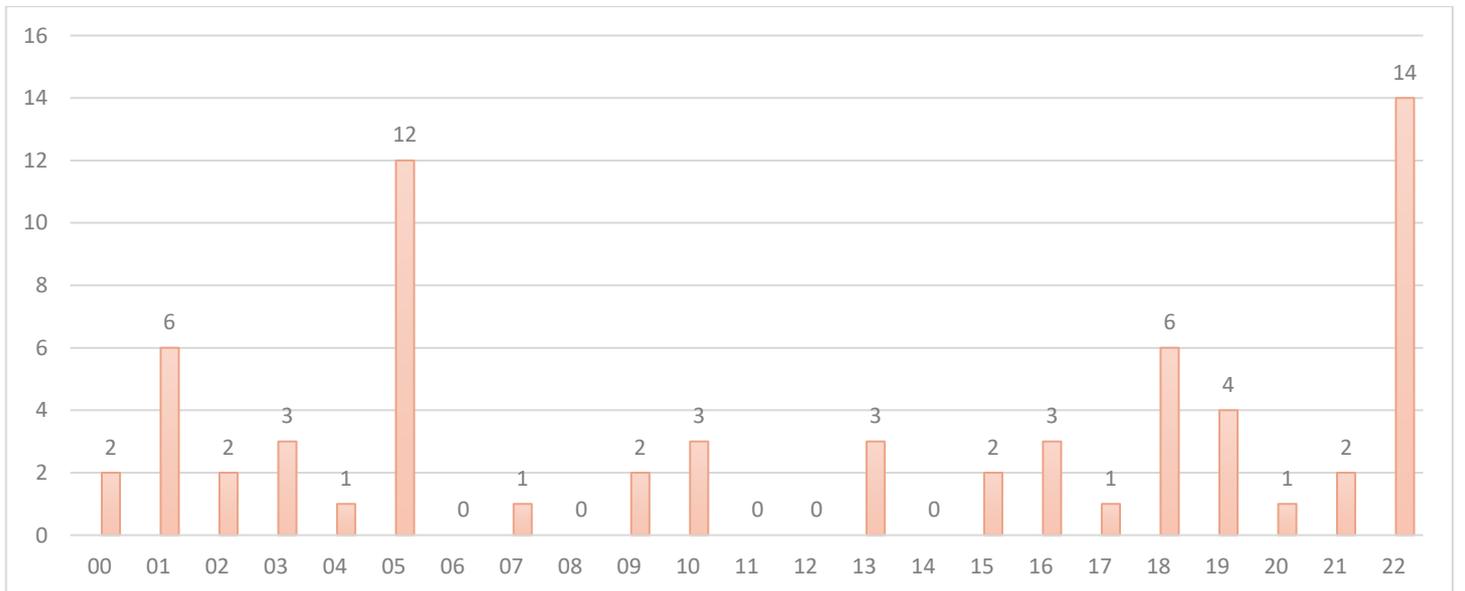
An uncommon passage migrant, commoner on spring migration. The average arrival is on April 12th, four days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the earliest on 30th March, 2002 at BG.



Spring passage numbers recorded this century

It is a rare summer visitor which bred in 1988 in Weston Woods.

It is scarce in autumn, the average departure is on August 31st, eleven days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 14th October, 2005 at Dundry.

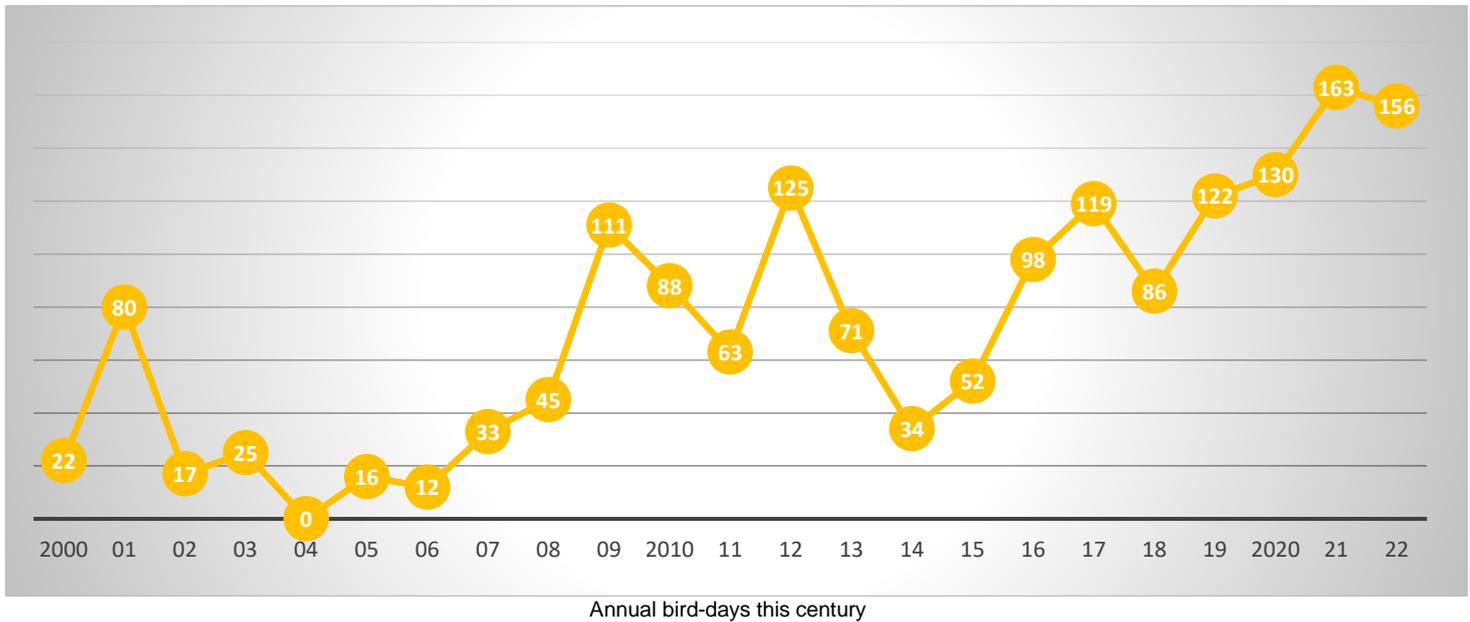


Autumn passage numbers recorded this century

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare summer visitor, one only at Ashton many years since' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'summer resident, rare, nested within half a mile of the city boundary in 1899'. Davis (1947) called it a 'passage migrant, uncommon but has frequently been reported – usually in spring, when it doubtless occurs regularly in small numbers. Scarce on autumn passage but has been noted at Tortworth 1936 and at Stoke Gifford 1934 and 1944. Recorded as having nested at Henbury 1885, and close to the city boundary 1899'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) also mention nesting at Flax Bourton in 1908.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

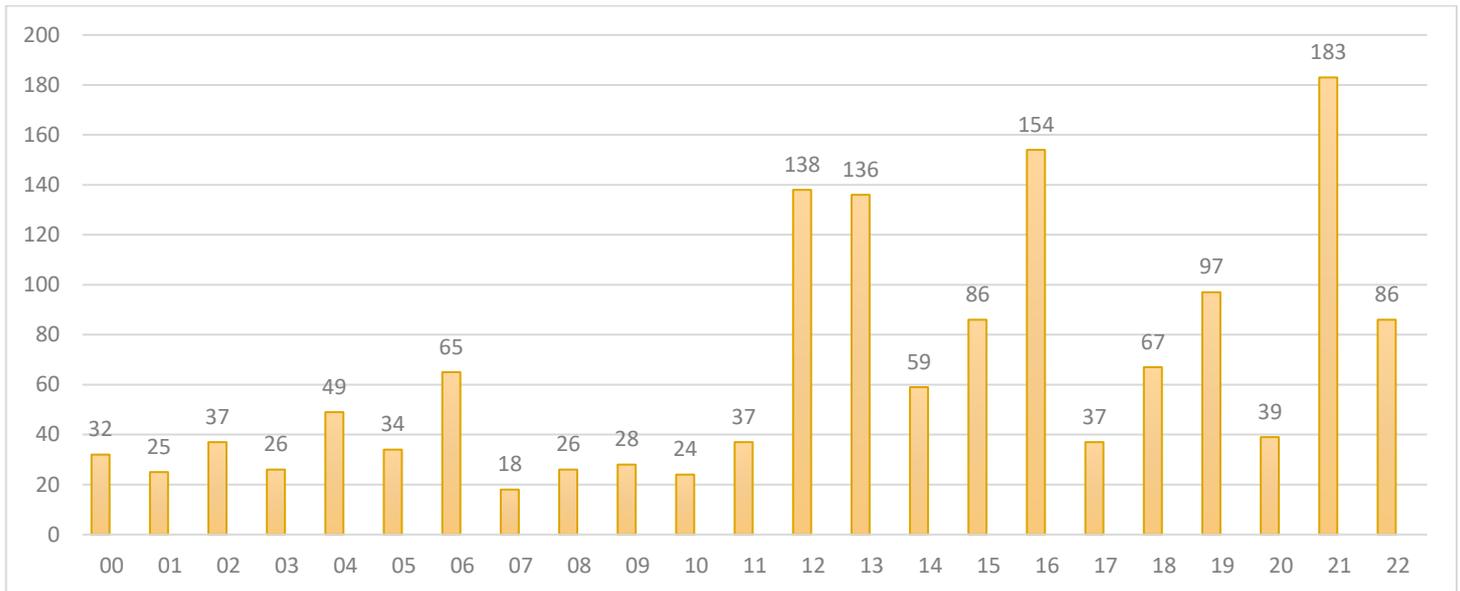
An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant mainly coastal. Rare in summer but bred at RPD in 2008 Roberts (2008) and Avonmouth Docks in 2010.



Charbonnier (1899) said it was a 'winter visitor, rare, was observed at Sea Mills during the winter of 1893-94 and obtained there on January 8th 1895' and in 1919 an immature male was near Bristol from late January until February 2nd when it died [*British Birds vol 13 page 198*]. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor in very small numbers. Formerly recorded only at intervals but observations over the last ten years show that it now occurs annually. Most records from coastal areas, including Severn Beach, Sea Mills and Clevedon. Has also been seen near Bath, at Blagdon (several occasions), Banwell, and elsewhere. Not yet reported as remaining to nest but single males present, and singing, in the heart of the city June 1945 and July 1947'.

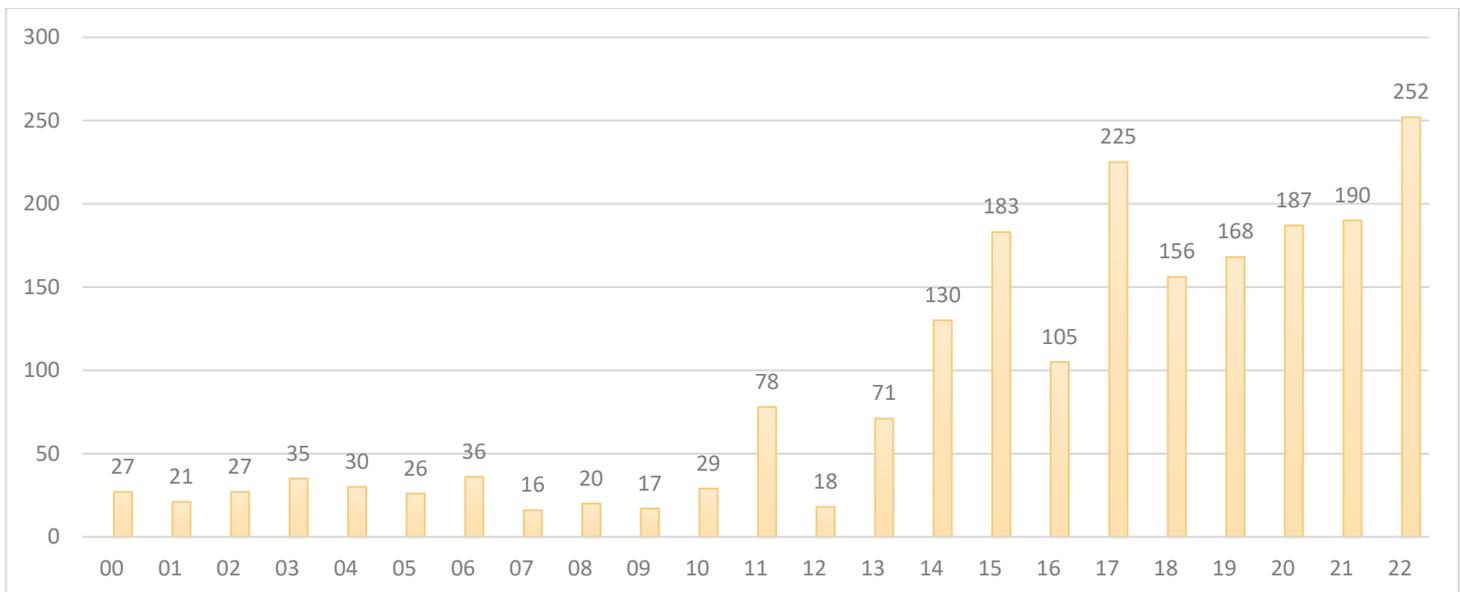
**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Now an uncommon passage migrant. The average arrival is now on April 3rd, a week earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 17th March, 2011 at Clapton-in-Gordano.



Bird-days recorded on spring passage this century

The average departure is October 10th, five days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 30th November, 2014, a male in a garden in Oldfield Park, Bath. There is also a record of a first winter male that overwintered in the Clevedon area, being seen on 28th December, 1969 and again in January 1970 [*British Birds* volume 73, pages 353-4].



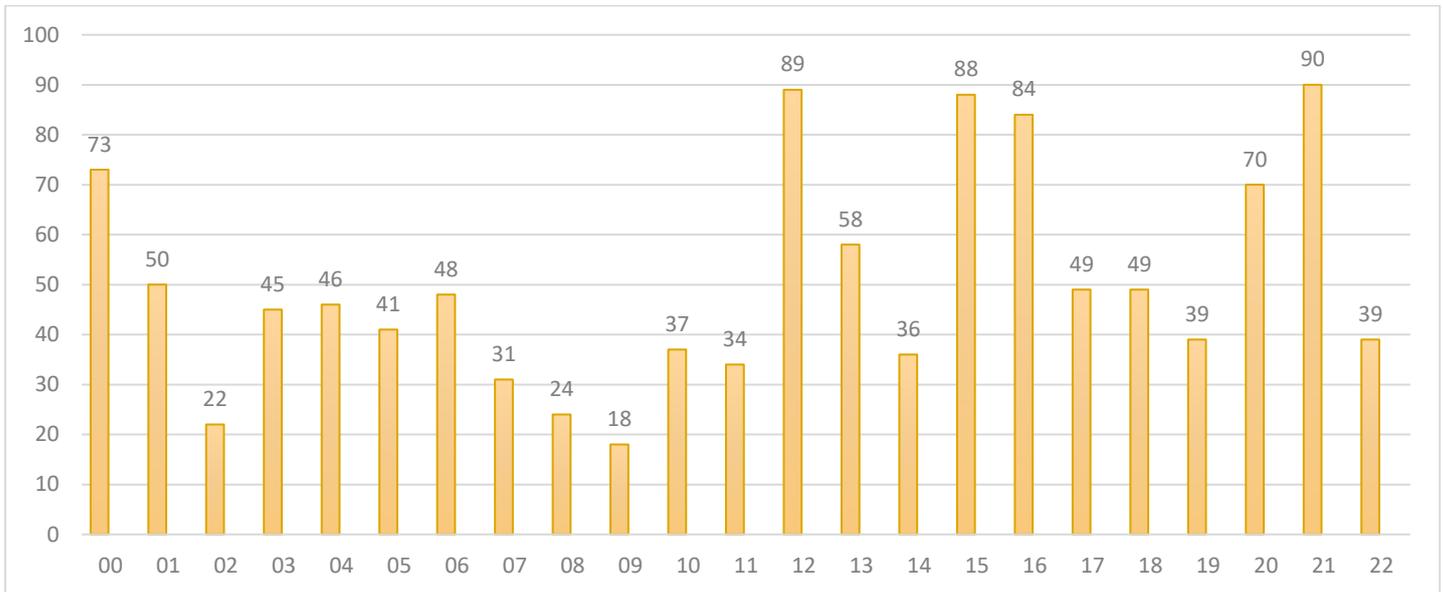
Bird-days recorded on and autumn passage this century

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant summer visitor' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common, a male was caught within the city boundary on 4th February, 1878'. However, the 1925 SBR said it 'has decreased almost everywhere. Not uncommon Winscombe' and the 1935 SBR 'well distributed in the Bristol district where it prefers parks and woodlands such as Leigh Woods, Ashton Park and Brockley Combe'. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, local though fairly common as a nesting bird in suitable woodland habitats or where pollard willows occur. Widespread on migration'.

The last possible breeding attempt was in 1990 when two juveniles were seen at Almondsbury on 1st July and before that in 1982 near Publow.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

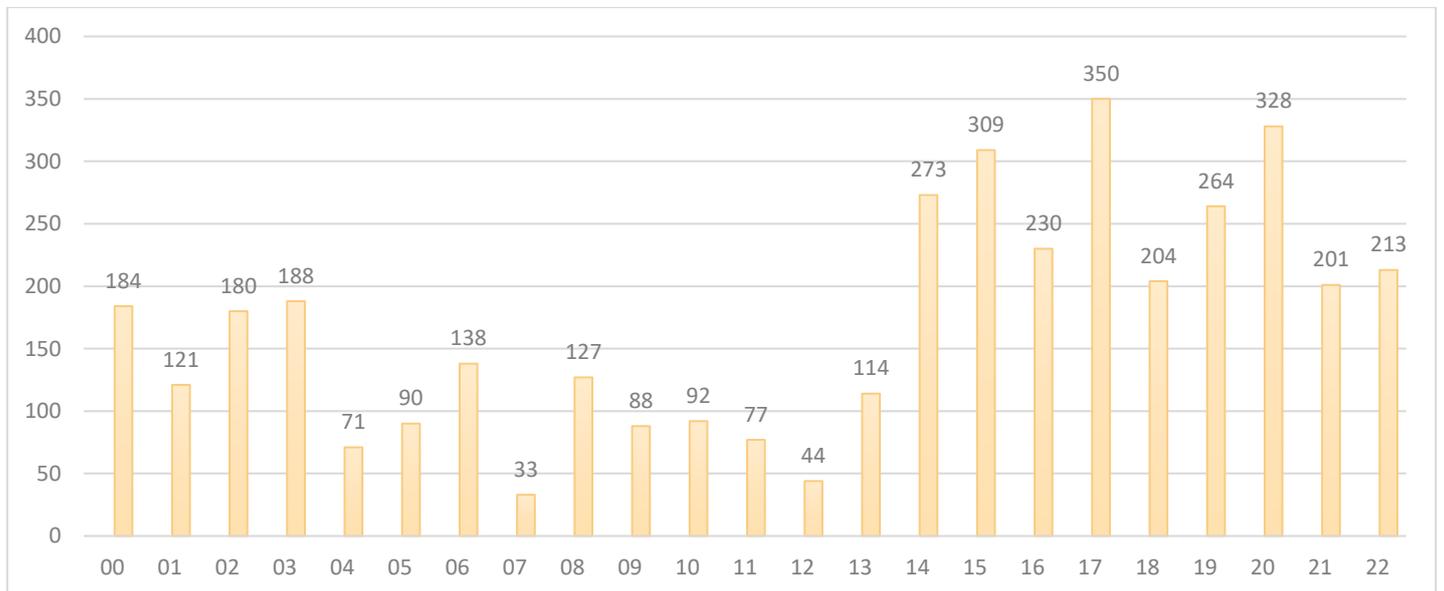
Now an uncommon passage migrant which bred in the past. The average arrival is April 20th, three days later than given by Bland (1992) with the earliest arrival on 19th March, 1974 at Pensford.



Bird-days recorded on spring passage this century

The last proven breeding was in 1975 from Nailsea Moor.

The average departure is on October 12th, three days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 3rd December, 1982 near Hewish, although Bland (1992) omits this published record.

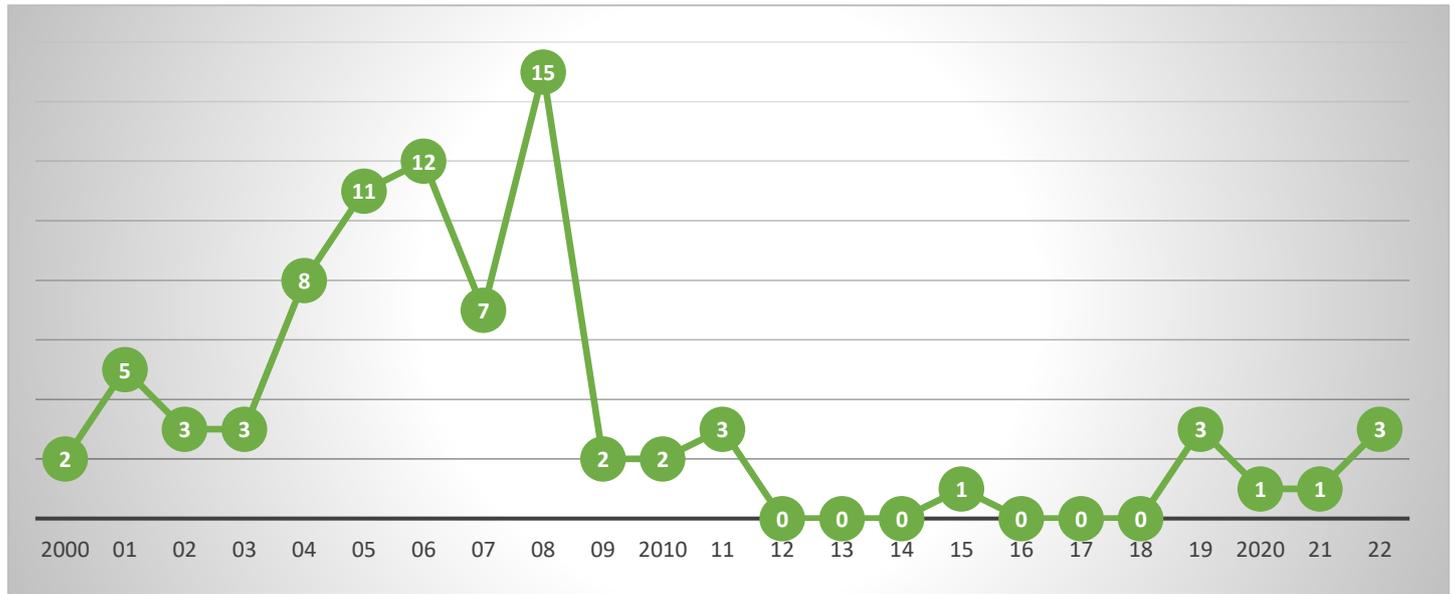


Bird-days recorded on autumn passage this century

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local summer visitor, not common, Ashton, Leigh' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'summer resident, common and generally distributed'. The 1925 SBR said it 'breeds regularly but not common, Chelvey and Barrow. Scarce and somewhat uncertain in its occurrence Yeo Valley. Rare and erratic Bath district'. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, local but nests fairly commonly on rough pastures, along railway embankments and in other suitable habitats. Occurs widely on migration'.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*

An uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant, and scarce breeder.



Breeding decline: number of successful breeding pairs this century

Rose (1986) analyses the decline of the species locally between 1976 and 1986.

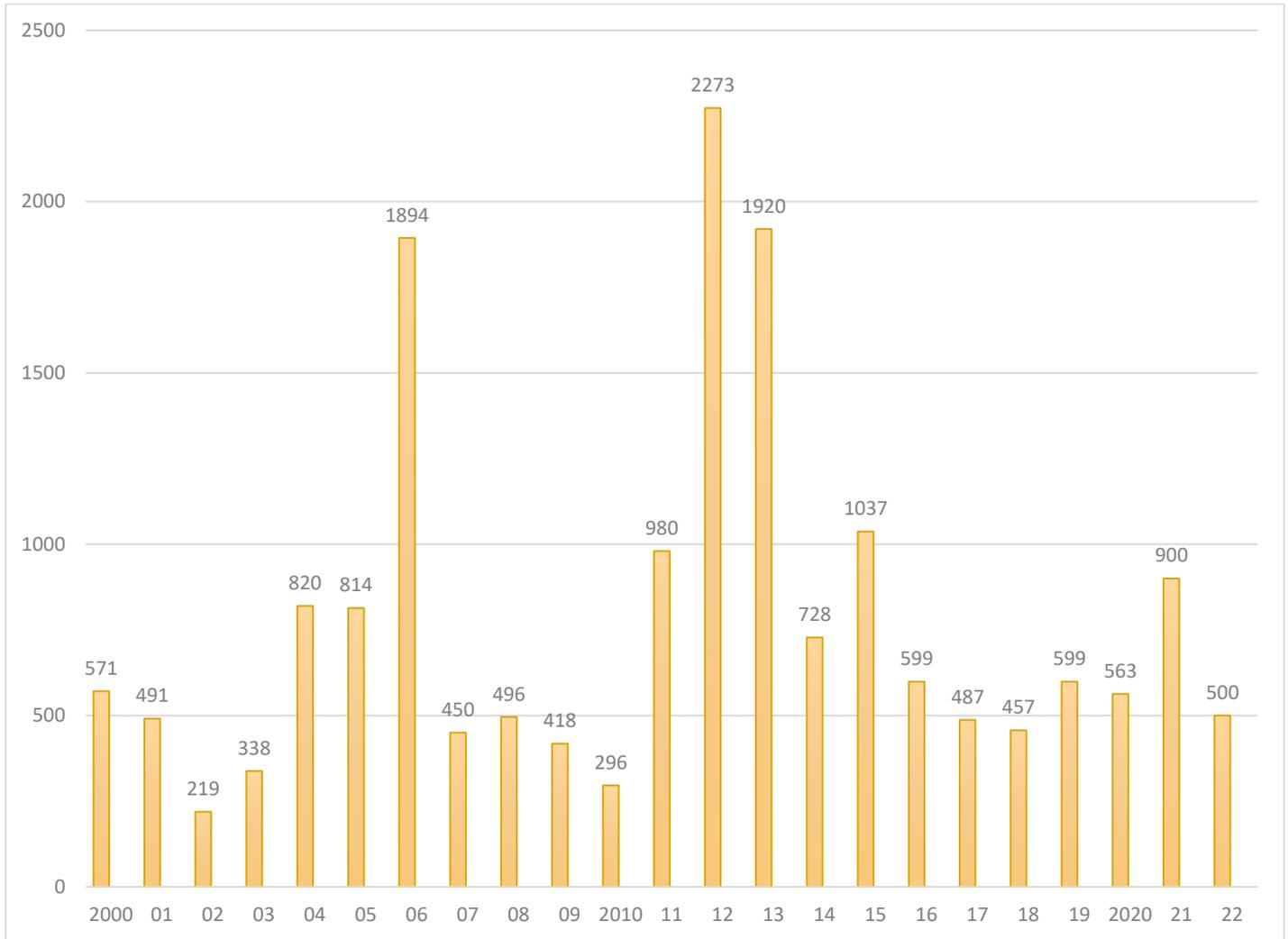
Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local resident, not very common, Downs, Ashton, Leigh' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, breeds in suitable localities'. The 1926 SBR said it was a 'local breeder, most frequent in west where it nests at Weston, Clevedon, Failand, Backwell Hill, Barrow etc; occurs as a vagrant in winter in places where it does not breed'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, as a breeding bird frequents various types of country but is decidedly local. Nests regularly in some coastal areas, also on Mendip and other suitable hill ground. Becomes more widespread in winter'.



### Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

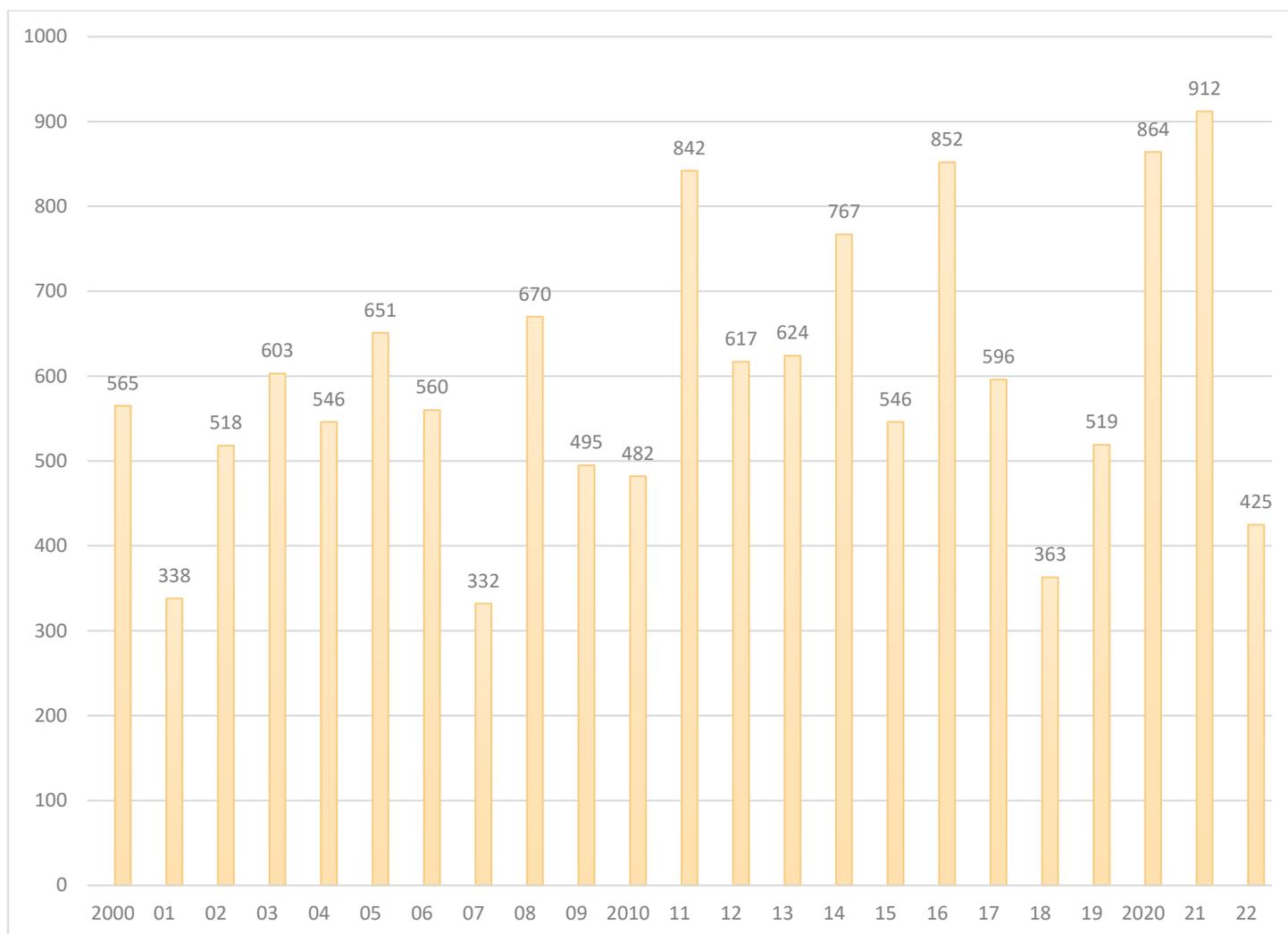
A fairly common passage migrant, mainly on the coast and at traditional inland sites but some recent decline noted. Both nominate *O. o. oenanthe* and *O. o. leucorrhoa* (Greenland Wheatear) occur and both are probably common migrants, albeit hard to distinguish with certainty in the field.

The average arrival is on March 10th, two days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with an earliest arrival on 28th February, in both 1998, at Bristol Airport, and 2019, at OPS. However, Davis (1947) mentions a record from Bedminster in early February 1899.



Spring passage bird-days this century

The average departure is on November 6th, nine days later than given by Bland (1992), with the latest departure on 12th December, 1994 at OPS, present since 9th.



Autumn passage bird-days this century

The last local breeding was at Loxton in 1980.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'generally distributed summer visitor, Downs, Leigh, Avonmouth' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, nests in a few localities such as Dundry. Used to nest on Durdham Down but is now only seen there on migration at the end of March. Sometimes remains during winter'. The 1926 SBR said it 'breeds Backwell Hill and adjacent high ground, also almost certainly at least in some years on hills near Bath. On passage common on the coast, frequent BG and BL, some places in Bristol district and occasional elsewhere'. Davis (1947) called it a 'passage migrant, also summer resident very locally. Has been reported as a nesting bird from the hills near Bath but there seems to be no definite evidence of regular breeding. Used to nest, but not for many years past, on Durdham Down, Clifton and recorded long ago as having nested near Alveston. Occurs widely on migration, spring arrivals appearing three or four weeks earlier than those of the larger Greenland form'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention breeding records, between 1920 and 1950, from Backwell Hill, Goblin Combe and Ashton Park.

Davis (1947) called Greenland Wheatear a 'passage migrant, occurring regularly in both coastal and inland areas. Birds on spring passage, especially brightly plumaged males, are often not difficult to recognise but autumn migrants are rarely separable in the field'.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

A National rarity with two local records, a male at CI-Y on 19th November, 1997 [BBRC], see Hunt (1997) for more details, and a first-winter male at Severn Beach from 11th until 14th December, 2013 [BBRC]



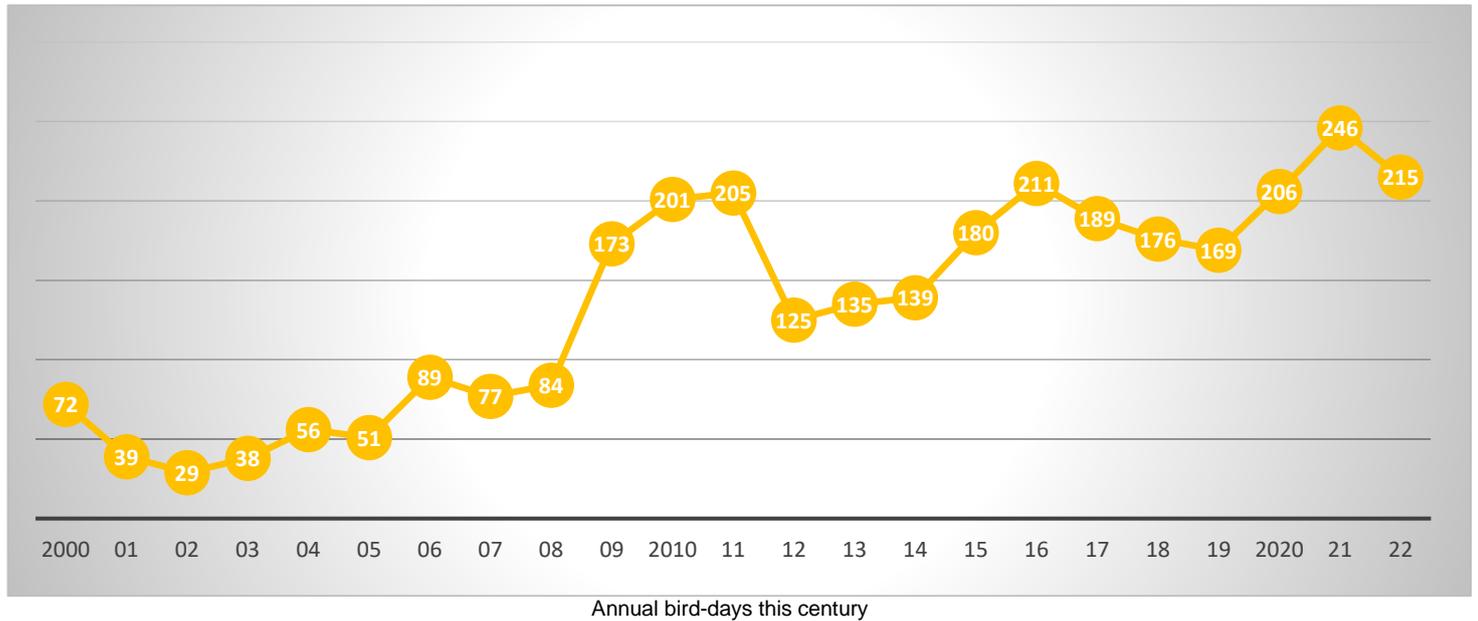
**Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*

A National rarity with one local record, a first-winter female at Thornbury sailing club, Oldbury from 25th until 28th October, 2011 [BBRC], see Spittle (2011) for more details



**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

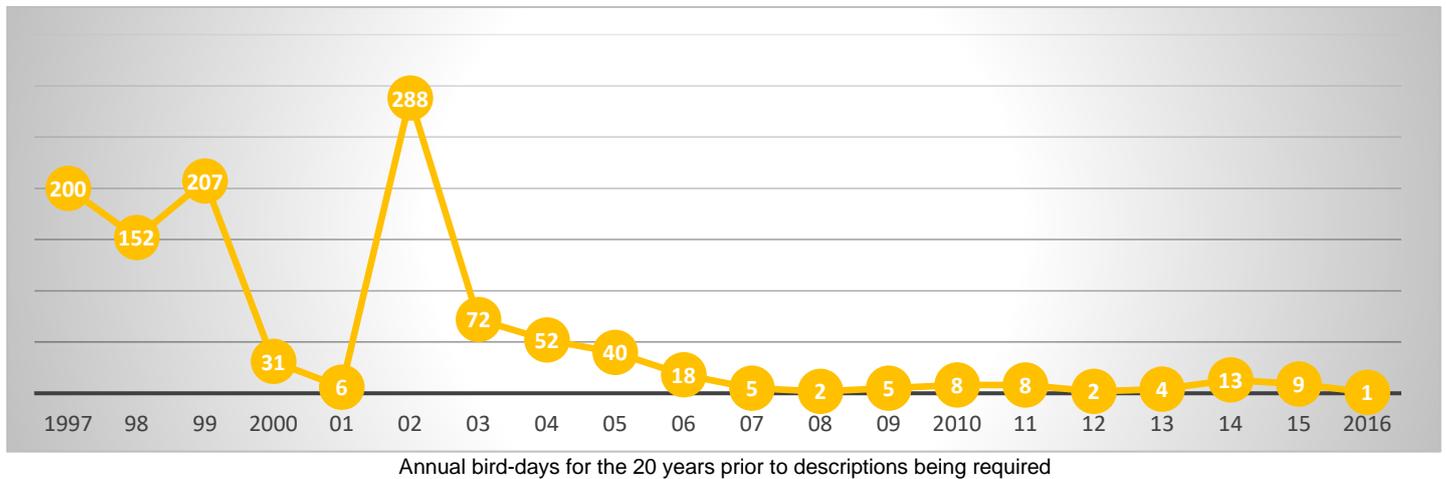
An uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers.



Charbonnier (1899) said it was 'not often found near the city. A pair was seen at Compton Dando, April 1898, also at Frenchay during the summer 1898'. The 1925 SBR said it – breeds regularly, Blagdon (two pairs), Litton and on the Chew. Absent from the slow flowing watercourses of the marshes but decidedly frequent on streams elsewhere, as in Wrington Valley and Pensford. Davis (1947) called it 'resident locally, nests on suitable streams chiefly in Cotswold and Mendip areas. Breeding, or breeding season, records within fairly recent years from various places including Hambrook, Pensford, Blagdon, Litton and Winscombe. Has been seen well within the city boundary – on the R Frome at Stapleton (frequently) and on the R Trym near Henbury (once 1947)'.

### Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

A scarce passage migrant and winter visitor which is now probably extinct as a breeding species. The largest count is of 150 at Severn Beach on 22nd January, 1967 and at CVL on 1st - 4th January, 1976 [CVRS report 76 - 78]



Descriptions have been required since 2017 with records as follows;

2017, ten individuals – Hallatrow garden on January 15th, Nailsea Moor on February 18th, three at Sand Point on April 3rd, four at Chipping Sodbury Common on August 27th, heard on Dundry on October 31st

2020, Severn Beach garden on October 18th

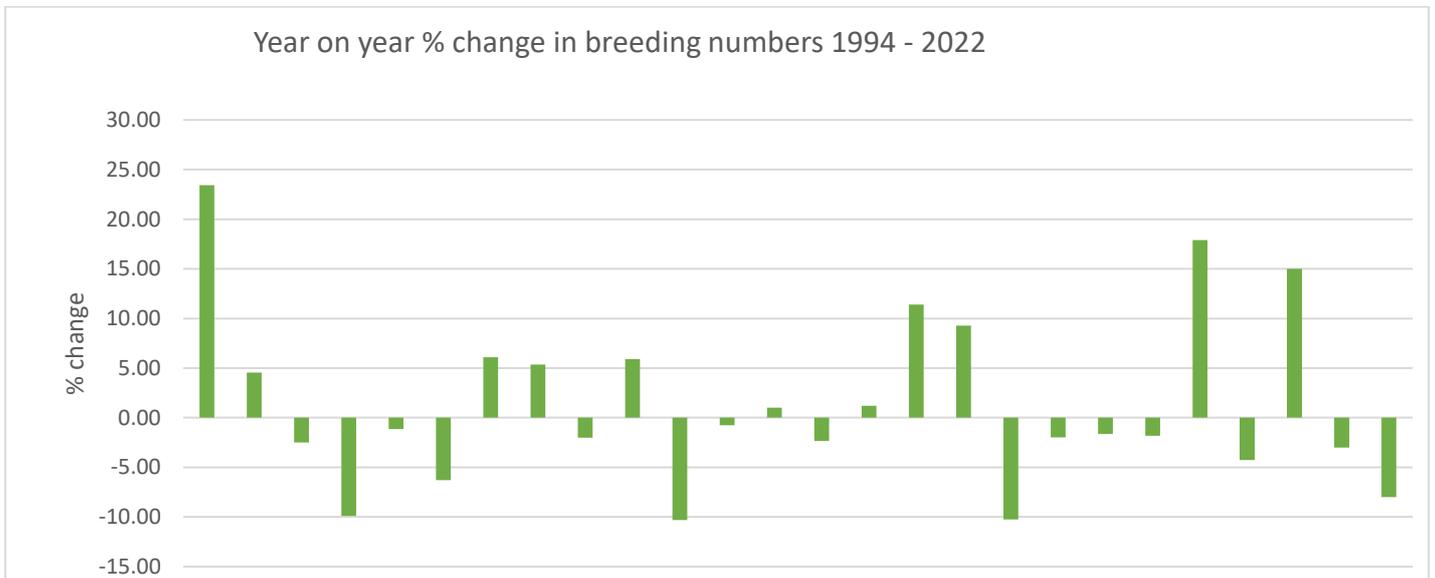
2022, five individuals – three juveniles in a Wickwar garden on August 29th, a juvenile ringed at Aust Services on September 1st, Wains Hill on November 12th

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare resident' although Charbonnier (1899) said it was 'resident, small colonies are to be found in many localities'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'frequent in orchards etc of the lower Chew Valley and in other scattered localities of the Bristol district. Breeds. Never seen higher up Chew Valley than between Chew Stoke and West Harptree though country seems just as suitable'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident but appears to be chiefly a winter visitor often occurring in small parties with other finches. As a breeding bird it is evidently very local though perhaps sometimes overlooked. Has been reported as nesting in the Chew Valley and at Stoke Gifford, Hallen, Sheperdine and Oldbury-on-Severn. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention pre 1915 breeding records for Whitchurch, Chew Magna and Bath. a later breeding record for Saltford (1952), and then between 1957 and 1964 returning to Gordano, Chew Valley, Saltford, Cleve, Bath area and Midsomer Norton. The 1990 ABR said it was a 'scarce resident; passage migrant and winter visitor. BTO data show a catastrophic decline nationally in the last decade; in Avon the species is elusive, and records are too few to show any trend'.

### House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

An abundant breeding resident which has stabilised after a recent national decline.

The BBS results show a 29% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



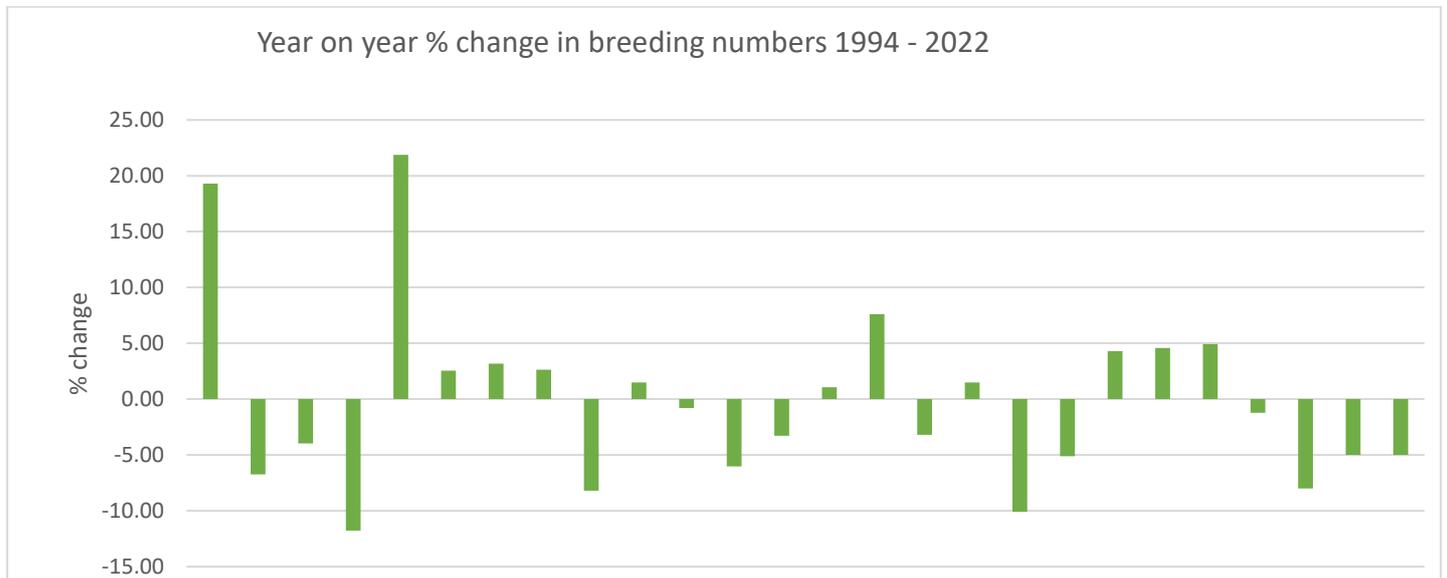
Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed.'

An apparent hybrid, resembling Italian Sparrow, was in gardens in the Fishponds area during 2019 while an aberrantly plumaged individual was photographed in a Yate garden in 2020.

**Dunnoek** *Prunella modularis*

An abundant breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 11% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



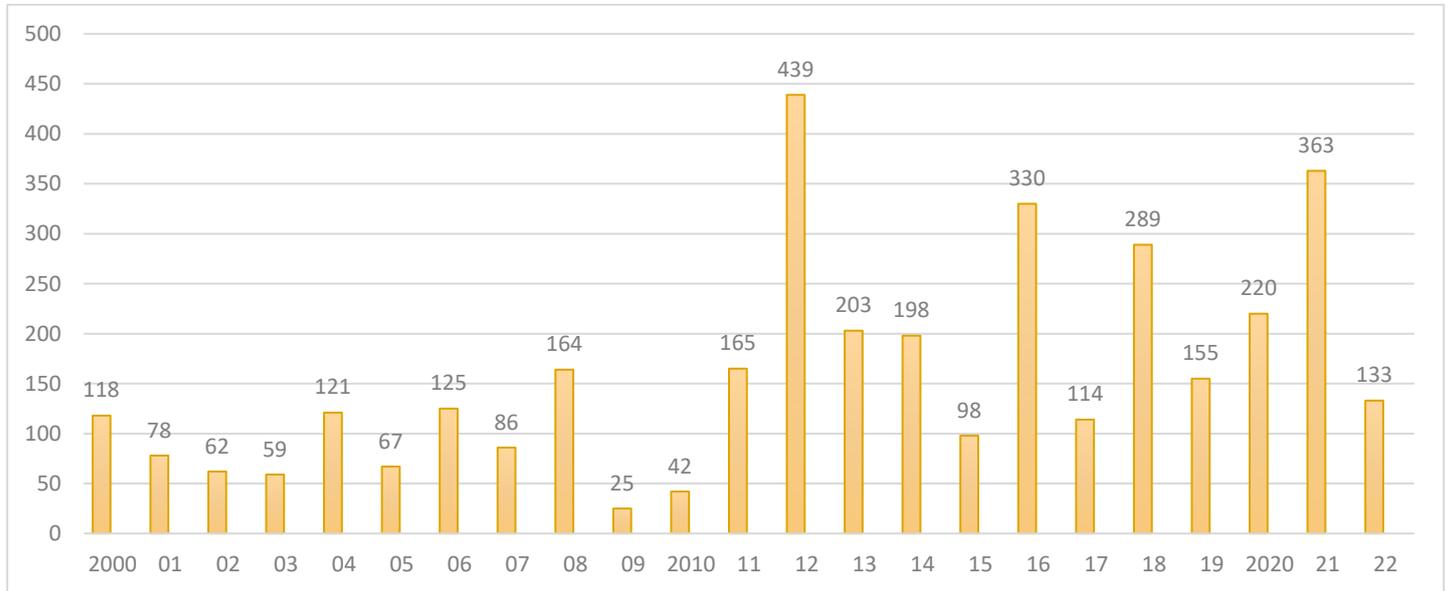
Wheeler (1874) said it was 'common everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

## Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

*M. f. flavissima.*

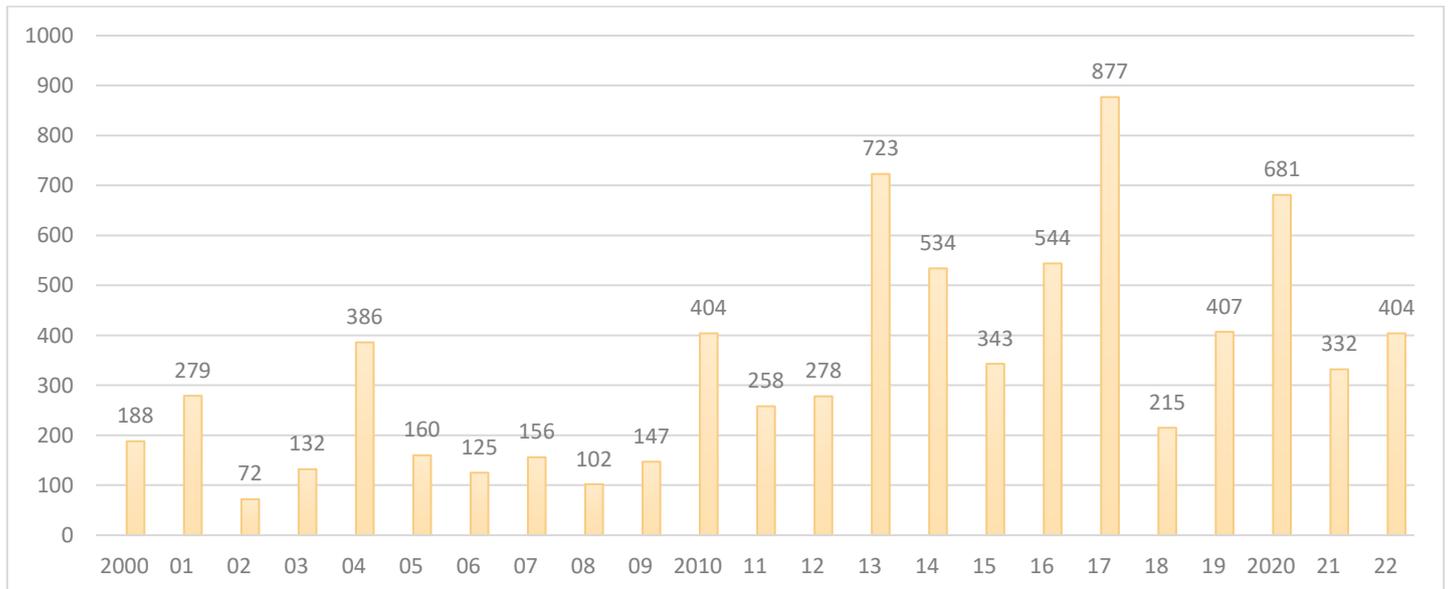
An uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeding summer visitor more common in the past. The largest count is of at least 300 on Woodspring Hill on September 4th, 1930 [SBR].

The average arrival is on April 7th, just one day later than given by Bland (1992) who gives an earliest arrival on 15th March, 1970 with another of 21st March, 1992 at BL.



Bird-days for spring passage this century

The average departure is on October 7th, ten days earlier than given by Bland (1992) while the latest departures are on 23rd December, 1968 at CVL [Introduction to 1968 ABR]<sup>128</sup> and 20th November, 1989 at Winford whilst one wintered at CVL in December 1979/January 1980.



Bird-days for autumn passage this century

Bland and Tully (1991) estimated a local breeding population of 50 pairs but Bland and Dadds (2012) suggests this is now in single figures.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local summer visitor but not uncommon where it occurs, Clifton Down, Avonmouth, Ashton, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer resident, common'. The 1925 SBR said it

<sup>128</sup> Bland (1992) gives 27th December 1968

'breeds in the 'north marsh' and considered quite common in every suitable locality. Seems to have decreased as a nesting species in some places eg Blagdon. Scarce and irregular visitor in the passage seasons at Litton reservoir and not observed elsewhere in the Chew Valley. Commoner at BG especially in the autumn but no definite breeding records. No evidence of breeding east of the Chew and not very likely to do so unless possibly near the Avon'. Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, fairly well distributed nesting chiefly on low lying marshy ground and not uncommonly in cultivated field. Often abundant on migration at the reservoirs and other suitable places'.

Blue-headed Wagtail<sup>129</sup> *M. f. flava*

A local rarity which has occasionally bred, most recently in 2000 at Weston STW with a male seen on April 30th and May 1st, carrying food on June 25th and two juveniles on July 22nd. Since then a further 11 individuals have been seen this century, as follows:

2003, a male at CVL on April 20th

2004, one on Severnside on May 1st

2008, a male at Severn Beach on April 20th

2016, a male at Pilning Wetlands from April 17th until 24th

2017, a male at Pilning Wetlands on May 17th and 18th

2018, a male at Northwick Warth on May 24th

2019, two individuals – Northwick Warth on April 25th, 26th and 28th, and PWD on May 5th

2021, two individuals – Pilning Wetlands on July 24th and 29th, Pilning Wetlands from August 2nd until 4th and again on 12th

2022, a male at CVL on September 9th and 10th

The situation during the 20th century is rather vague as to how many individuals were involved but breeding occurred in at least three years:

1954 – four probables at Severn Beach on April 23rd, another probable<sup>130</sup> at Saltford sewage farm on May 15th and 18th

1960 – a male at CVL on May 1st

1963 – CVL on May 1st and 2nd [SBR]

1965 – a male at CVL on April 23rd [SBR], a male at CVL on May 23rd

1968 – at CVL, a male on April 4th, a pair plus another on May 5th, male and two females on May 9th, one on July 30th

1969 – trapped and ringed at CVL on August 28th<sup>131</sup>

1971 – SGW on May 24th

1972 – a female at CVL on April 30th with one on July 27th and a male on September 19th, at SGW one on June 11th and July 2nd [SBR]

1973 – a pair raised at least 2 young at CVL [SBR]

1974 – a pair raised two broods at CVL, a pair at BG on May 4th [SBR]

1975 – at CVL a male from April 6th until 19th, a male on May 10th, a female on July 29th, males on August 8th and September 3rd [all SBR]<sup>132</sup>

1976 – a male at CVL from April 10th until May 29th [SBR], Yeo Estuary on April 18th [SBR]

1981 – Clevedon on April 18th, the Yeo Estuary on June 14th

1982 – male in song at SGW on May 22nd Upton (1984)

1991 – a female at Yeo Estuary on May 17th<sup>133</sup>

1992 – a male at CVL on April 25th

<sup>129</sup> Although some of the records shown relate to females recent research suggests these cannot be reliably identified, see 2016 ABR  
<sup>130</sup> SBR describes as 'blue-grey head, white superciliary stripe, white line beneath lores, mantle noticeably more greenish-yellow and underparts, including chin, uniformly yellow

<sup>131</sup> SBR says 'birds showing characters of Blue-headed and Sykes's Wagtails in CVL breeding population where variants are frequent

<sup>132</sup> The ABR says 'there were the usual reports of blue-headed forms from CVL'

<sup>133</sup> ABR mentions 'greyish crown, nape and ear-coverts, lacking any green or brown hues'

1993 – CI-Y on May 19th, RPD on May 31st

1995 – a male at CVL on August 26th

1996 – a female at the Yeo Estuary on May 10th

1999 – bred at Weston STW with two males and a female present from June until September, on Severnside on April 19th, 25th and 26th, a female at CVL on April 29th

Davis (1947) called it a 'very scarce visitor. Has occasionally been reported in spring or summer'. Finally there is a record from 1870 of a 'pair shot, Clevedon, late May (Zoologist)', mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968).

Grey-headed Wagtail<sup>134</sup> *M. f. thunbergi* 0, 1

A local rarity. A corpse of probably this subspecies was found in late May 1969 on a boat in Avonmouth Docks that had come from the Baltic – see page 581 of the 1969 ABR.

The only live record is of an adult female at Northwick Warth on 25th September, 2009, see Martin (2009) for more details

Channel Wagtail

This is the assumed hybrid between British *flavissima* and Blue-headed *flava*. It is a local rarity.

At least six individuals have been recorded this century:

2013, a male at BG on June 26th

2014, a male at New Passage on April 23rd

2016, a male at Northwick Warth on April 14th

2018, a male at Northwick Warth on April 27th

2019, at least two individuals – Northwick Warth on April 10th, Northwick Warth on April 26th and 28th

In addition a Yellow Wagtail on Severnside on 18th May, 2009 was described as 'an odd, rather washed out bird with pale greyish ear-coverts, crown and nape suggesting possible influence of nominate *flava*'.

The situation is more complicated in the 20th century, for example the 1969 ABR, page 581, mentions 'aberrant types', probably this hybrid combination as becoming 'more common'. Also Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'variants or mutants attributable to Blue-headed or to Sykes's Wagtail (*M. f. beema*) have twice been found; Female of a pair BG 24th May, 1939 and male, mouth of R Avon, 1951'. I have treated all the records of birds 'showing characters of *M. f. beema*' as more likely to be this hybrid combination, given the similarity of appearance and the unlikelihood of *beema* as a spring migrant.

Other published records are as follows:

1963, at CVL on May 1st <sup>135</sup>

1972, showing characters of *M. f. beema* at CVL on June 11th [SBR]

1973, showing characters of *M. f. beema* at CVL on June 29th [SBR]

1974, showing characters of *M. f. beema* at CVL on April 20th and August 1st [SBR]

1993, a male at Northwick Warth on May 31st showed characters of *M. f. beema*

<sup>134</sup> The 2018 ABR mentions a further two possible subspecies, Ashy-headed and Spanish, from Pilning and CVL respectively in April which the BBRC found 'not proven'. Another possible Spanish was seen at Saltford in April 2021 but not submitted to BBRC

<sup>135</sup> Although published as a probable female Blue-headed the notes, 'blue-grey head and conspicuously white eyestripe and throat' suggest this hybrid

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

A National rarity until 2015 and a local rarity since then. There have been three records this century involving four individuals:

2010, a first-winter at CVL on September 7th [BBRC]

2019, a first-summer female at Pilning Wetlands from April 24th until 28th with an adult male on 25th

2021, a male at Weston STW on April 28th.

There is one prior record, from 1996, a first-winter at CVL on September 15th [BBRC] see Andrews and Vinicombe (1996) for more details

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

A fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Bland and Dadds (2012) estimate the local breeding population as 150 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'resident, not common, chiefly seen in winter' and Charbonnier (1899) 'fairly numerous in winter, remains to breed occasionally e.g., Coombe Dingle 1894, Hambrook 1893'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'frequent on the less sluggish streams, breeding at Litton and other places in the Chew Valley and Pensford. Frequent at BG, seen there in May apparently breeding' and the 1936 SBR said it 'occurs sparingly in suitable places, partly as a winter visitor and partly breeding. Seen usually in winter at BG, in the Avon Gorge and on the zoo lake at Clifton. Has bred at Nailsea and Pensford'. Davis (1947) called it a 'resident, breeds on most suitable streams. Widely distributed in winter'.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

*M. a yarrelli*

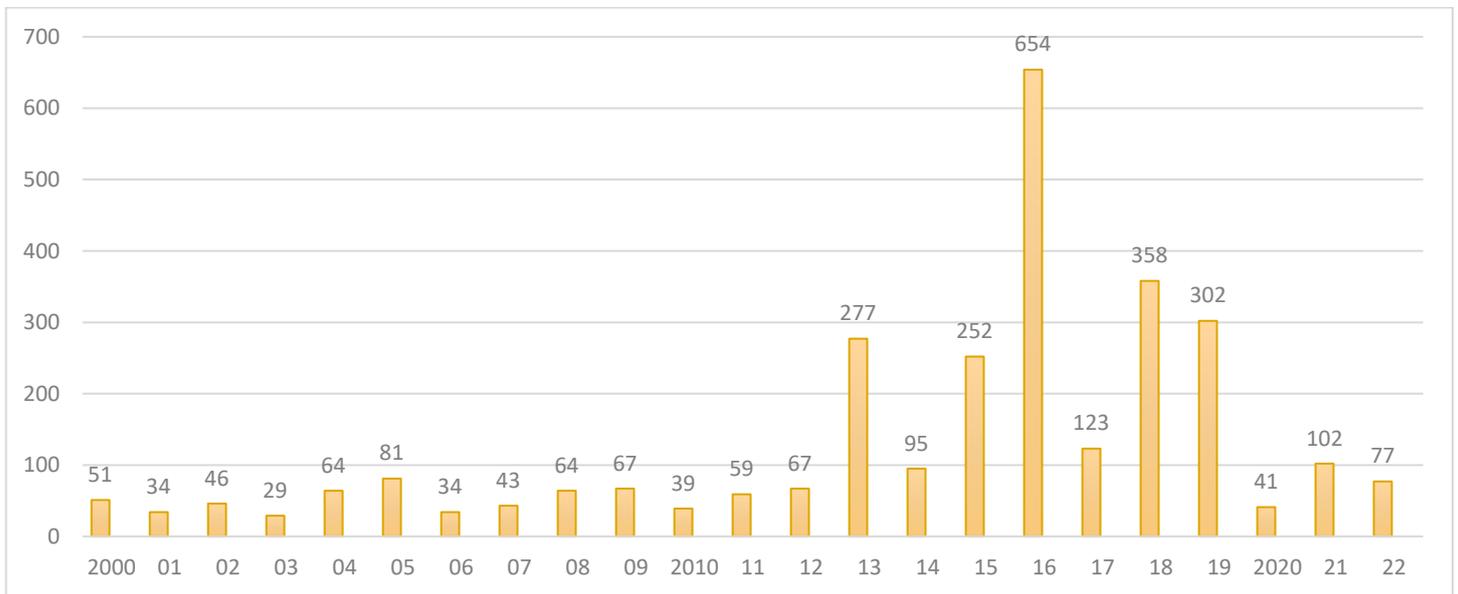
A common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant with a largest count of 5,000 roosting at OPS in January and February 1981.

Both Bland and Tully (1991) and Bland and Dadds (2012) estimate the local breeding population at 1,000 pairs.

Wheeler (1874) said it was 'resident, abundant everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

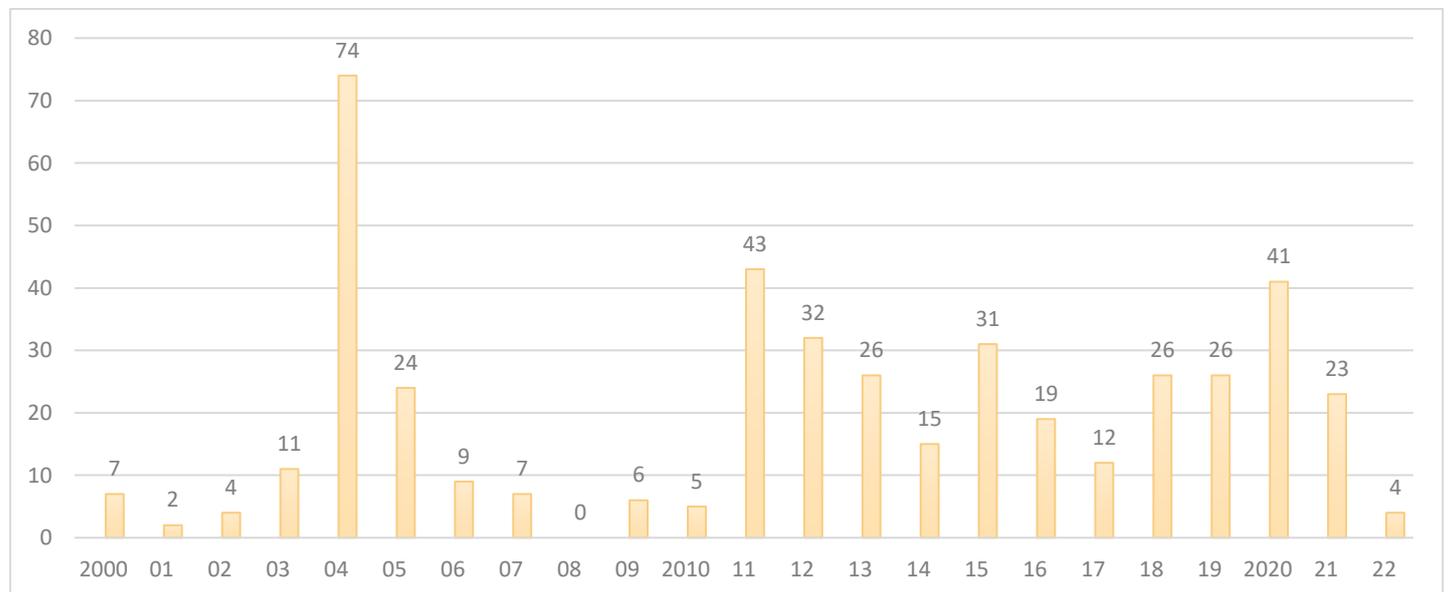
**White Wagtail** *M. a. alba*

An uncommon passage migrant with a largest count of 45 at CVL on 23rd April, 1977. The average arrival date is now March 21st, ten days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with earliest arrivals at CI-Y on 28th February, 2021 and a female at CVL on 1st March, 2007.



Bird-days for spring passage this century

The average departure is on October 10th, 17 days later than given by Bland (1992) while the latest departure is on 23rd November, in 2003 at RPD and in 2014 at CVL



Bird-days for autumn passage this century

Although Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'rare resident, Durdham Downs, Leigh Woods', Davis (1947) called it a 'passage migrant, regular on the coast and at the reservoirs and no doubt occurs in many parts of the district. Most records refer to spring passage - autumn birds being not easily separable in the field from Pied Wagtail'.

**Richards Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

A National rarity until 1983 and a local rarity since then. This century a total of 17 individuals have been recorded so far:

2002, two individuals – at Weston STW on September 26th and at CI-Y on October 31st and November 1st  
2004/05, at Axe Estuary on November 14th and 29th and again from December 31st until 3rd January, 2005

2005, four individuals – at Middle Hope from October 6th until 8th, two in Woodspring Bay on November 19th with one next day, and at Sand Point on December 10th

2009, one flew over New Passage calling on November 14th

2010, one flew over OPS calling on September 30th

2011, one at Northwick Warth on October 15th

2013, two individuals – at Dowlais Farm on January 12th and 17th, and one flew over calling at Sand Point on November 12th

2014, one at Northwick Warth on May 5th

2018, two individuals – at Sand Point on November 6th, and at Pilning Wetland on November 14th

2019, a returning individual at Channel View Farm from January 1st until February 23rd and again from November 1st until 10th January, 2020

2021, one at CI-Y on November 16th

During the 20th century there were 21 recorded since 1968:

1968 – Clevedon, two at Yeo Estuary on October 20th and 26th [*SBR*] and one on November 4th, 10th and 24th [*BBRC\**]

1969 – Kenn Estuary on January 12th and 13th [*BBRC\**]

1970 – Kenn Estuary on November 22nd and 30th [*BBRC*] [*1971 ABR*]

1974 – between Kenn Estuary and Clevedon on December 15th

1979 – Steep Holm on September 17th [*BBRC\**]

1985 – SGW on October 29th and November 3rd, Steep Holm on September 17th [*1993 ABR*]

1986 – Sand Point on November 16th, RPD from October 29th until November 3rd [*1993 ABR*]

1990 – CI-Y on October 26th [*1993 ABR*]

1993 – Aust Warth from November 27th until 30th

1994 – Woodspring Bay from October 24th until 28th with a second from 25th until 27th, Sand Point on October 6th, Sand Point October 25th

1995 – Middle Hope on March 22nd [*1996 ABR*]

1996 – Sand Point on October 18th, two at Sand Point on 26th, OPS on October 22nd

In addition there is a very old record, from 1893, of two at Ladye Bay, Clevedon on May 30th, reported in the 1893 *Zoologist*(p267)<sup>136</sup>

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewski*

A National rarity with one local record, at BL from 14th until 30th December, 2016 [*BBRC*] see Milbourne (2016) for more details

<sup>136</sup> Rose (1992) gives the year as 1892 (the report in the *Zoologist* says 'last May' while Palmer and Ballance (1968) ignore the record

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

A National rarity prior to 1983 and since 2014, and a local rarity in the intervening period. There is only one record this century, from Weston STW on 3rd May, 2010.

There are also three older records, as follows:

1972, in Woodspring Bay on July 29th<sup>137</sup> [BBRC] [SBR]<sup>138</sup>

1982, at CVL on October 2nd [BBRC]

1993, at Axe Estuary on October 7th.

Finally the SBR mentions a possible at Sea Mills on 16th April, 1938 – ‘large and light coloured with a loud call note and song which was delivered from the top of a Scots Pine and was like that of a Tree Pipit but much louder’.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

A common passage migrant and winter visitor. An uncommon breeding species, mainly on the coast. Bland and Dadds (2012) estimated the breeding population at less than 200 pairs and the winter population as 5,000.

The largest counts are of 800 at Northwick Warth on 5th October, 2012 and 3,000 heading upriver at OPS on 10th April, 2013

Wheeler (1874) said it was a ‘very common resident, Leigh, Clifton, Avonmouth, Sea Mills’ and Charbonnier (1899) ‘resident, common in winter’. Davis (1947) called it ‘resident, local as a breeding species though not uncommon in suitable places. Widely distributed and often abundant as winter visitor and passage migrant’.

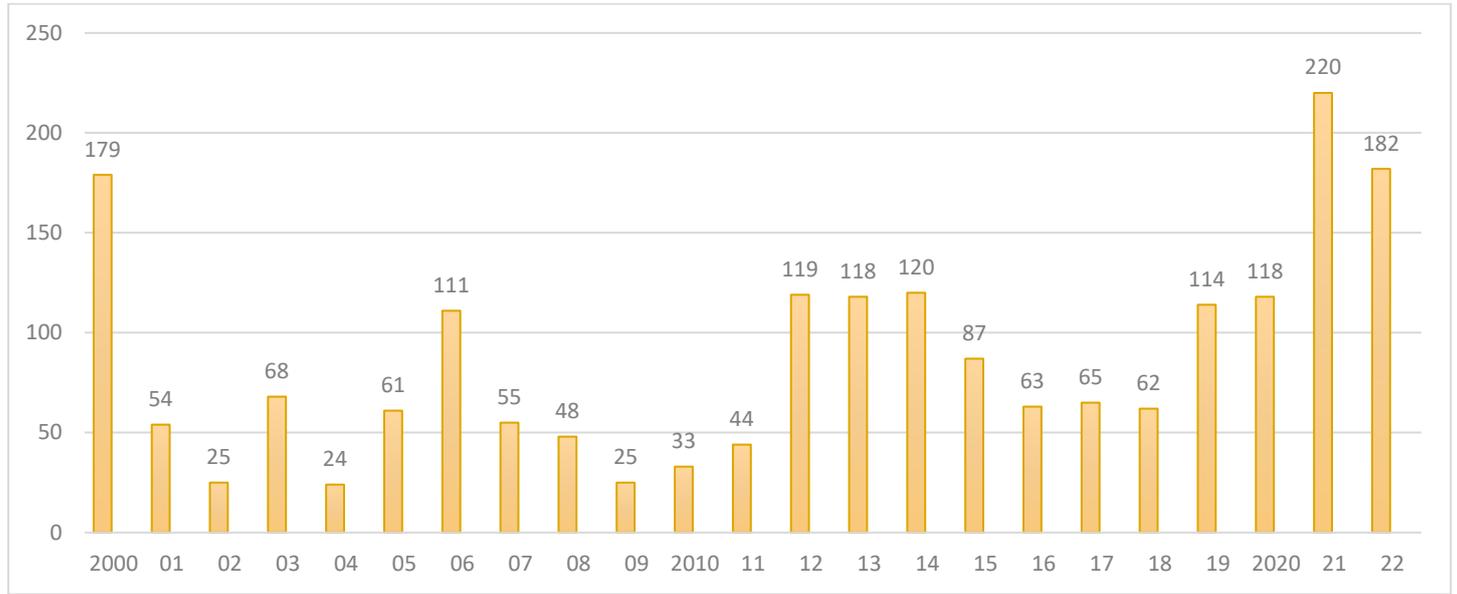
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<sup>137</sup> year incorrectly given as 71 in the 1993 ABR

<sup>138</sup> Rose (1992) gives the site as ‘near Yeo Estuary’

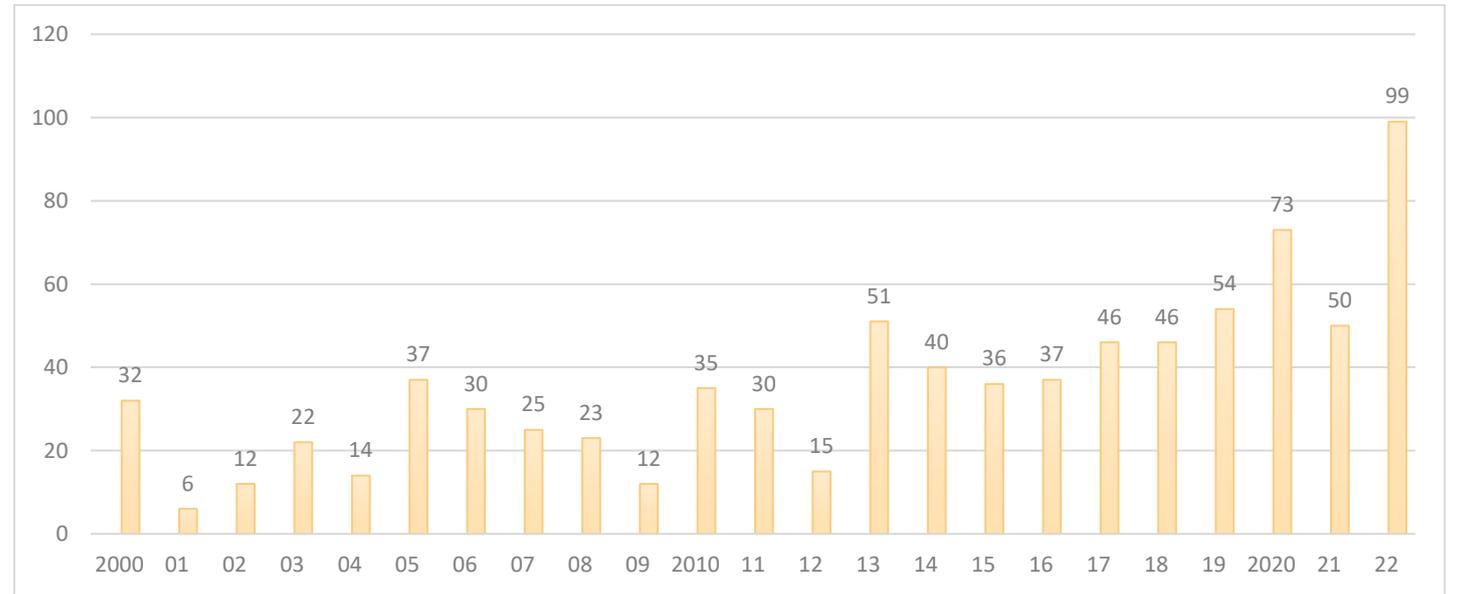
**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

An uncommon passage migrant, commoner on spring migration. The average arrival is now on April 3rd, four days earlier than given in Bland (1992) while the earliest arrival is on 14th March, 2022 at New Passage.



Bird-days for spring passage this century

Numbers are lower in autumn. The average departure is on September 27th, five days earlier than given by Bland (1992) with the latest departure on 24th October, 1971 (no site given).



Bird-days for autumn passage this century

It is a very scarce breeder; both Bland and Tully (1991) and Bland and Dadds (2012) confirm that breeding is restricted to a couple of sites on Mendip.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'tolerably common summer visitor' and Charbonnier (1899) 'summer visitor, common'. The 1926 SBR said it was 'sparingly distributed almost everywhere though nowhere numerous' and Davis (1947) called it a 'summer resident, widely distributed, nesting commonly on rough hillsides, railway embankments and other suitable ground'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) state 'scattered pairs from Leigh Woods to Cadbury Camp and Brockley Combe and at CVL'.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

A National rarity prior to 2006 and since 2014 and a local rarity in the intervening period. There are two records this century, from Northwick Warth briefly on 22nd April, 2012 and an adult at Pilning Wetlands on 3rd and 4th October 2015 [BBRC].

There are also two records from the 1970's:

1973 at BL on September 24th [BBRC], see Wilson (1973) for further details

1979 at CVL on October 4th [BBRC] [1981 ABR]

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant primarily to CVL and the coast that was treated as a local rarity away from the reservoirs from 1986 until 2005.

The largest count is of 21 at CVL on 28th March, 1972 [SBR].

The average arrival date is 18th October with the earliest arrival being five at CVL on 10th October, 1971<sup>139</sup>. The average departure is 3rd April but the latest is 27th May, 2017 at OPS.

Davis (1947) called it a 'very scarce visitor but may occur more frequently than is supposed'. The earliest published records are as follows:

1940 – Hotwells on December 25th and 26th [SBR]

1950 – BL on October 29th

1952 – BG on January 6th [notes in SBR]

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<sup>139</sup> A report of one heard at CVL on 10th September in the 1995 ABR was erroneous (see 1996 ABR). The 1996 ABR says 'reports from Oct. 1st' but a check of the 1996 record slips held by BRERC give a first autumn date of 13th October. Hayes (2019) gives a record for 1st October, 2011 from Littleton Warth but this was never submitted to AOG

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus**A. p. petrosus*

An 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.

Bland and Tully (1991) estimated the local breeding population at 30 pairs, unchanged since the 1968-72 breeding atlas. Bland and Dadds (2012) restated that estimated breeding population and estimated a maximum wintering population of 100.

Wheeler (1874) said it a 'local but tolerably common resident, banks of Avon' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, breeds in the Avon gorge and on the Channel coast'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, breeds in suitable places on the coast, also on Steep Holm and nesting has been reported from Denny Isle. Very scarce inland though occasionally noted at the reservoirs in autumn and winter'.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis*

A local rarity with 13 individuals recorded this century. Only birds in spring are considered to be identifiable. 2001, two individuals – at Sea Mills on March 2nd and at CVL on March 24th, see Martin (2001) for more details

2005, four individuals – at Severn Beach on March 5th, two at CVL on March 23rd and at CVL on April 4th

2006, one at Severn Beach on March 3rd

2012, one at CVL on March 25th, see ABR for notes and photograph

2013/14, a colour-ringed individual at Severn Beach on October 19th and 20th and then Battery Point from December 9th until 11th January, 2014

2015, one at New Passage on March 6th

2016, one at OPS on March 22nd

2020, one at Severn Beach on March 13th

2022, one at OPS on February 28th

There are an additional four published records since 1982:

1982, one at Oldbury-on-Severn on October 6th<sup>140</sup>

1994, one at Cl-Y on March 5th

1997, one at Chittingen Warth on April 8th

1998, one at Axe Estuary on March 16th [*see 1999 ABR for corrected location*]

There is also an old record of one shot between New Passage and Avonmouth on 10th March, 1869 in the 1870 Zoologist (p2222) which Davis (1947) dismissed.

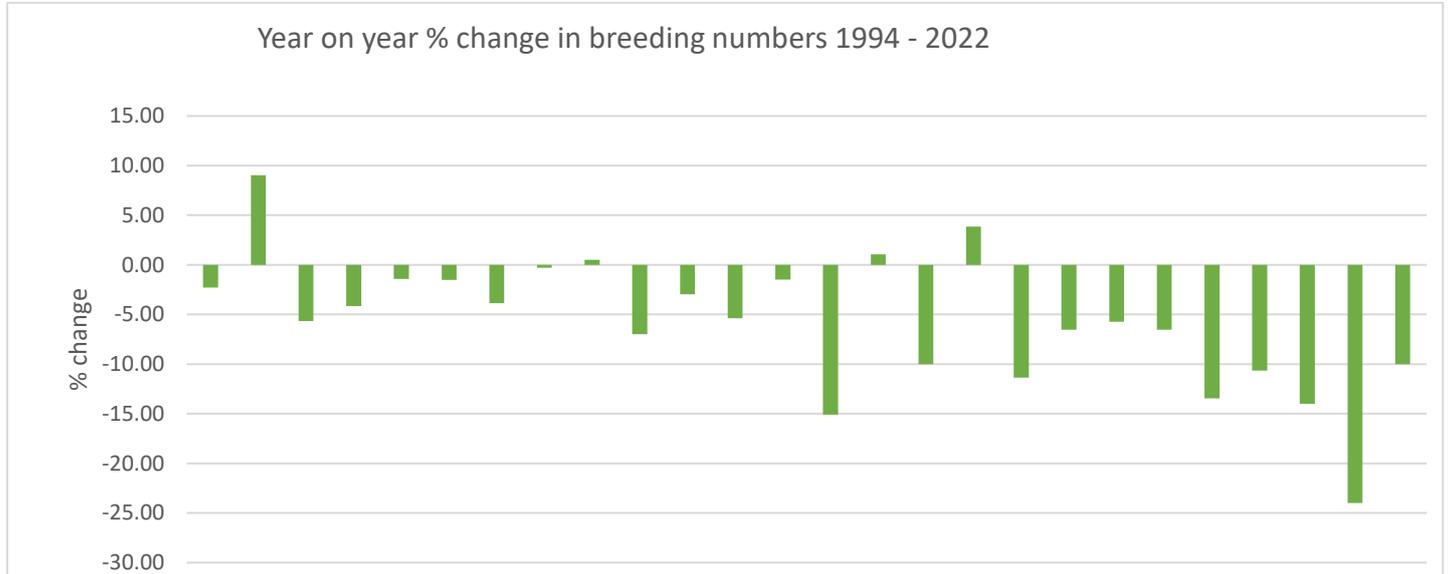
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<sup>140</sup> Currently only birds in spring are considered to be identifiable

### Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

An abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor which has declined recently due to infection. The largest counts are of 2,000 at Wrington between 7th and 21st January, 2006 and of 16,000 moving to NE over New Passage on 25th October, 2012.

The BBS results show a 80% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



Wheeler (1874) said it was 'abundant everywhere', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, although numbers vary considerably from year to year. The largest count is of 2,000 at Northwick and Chittening in January and February 1976.

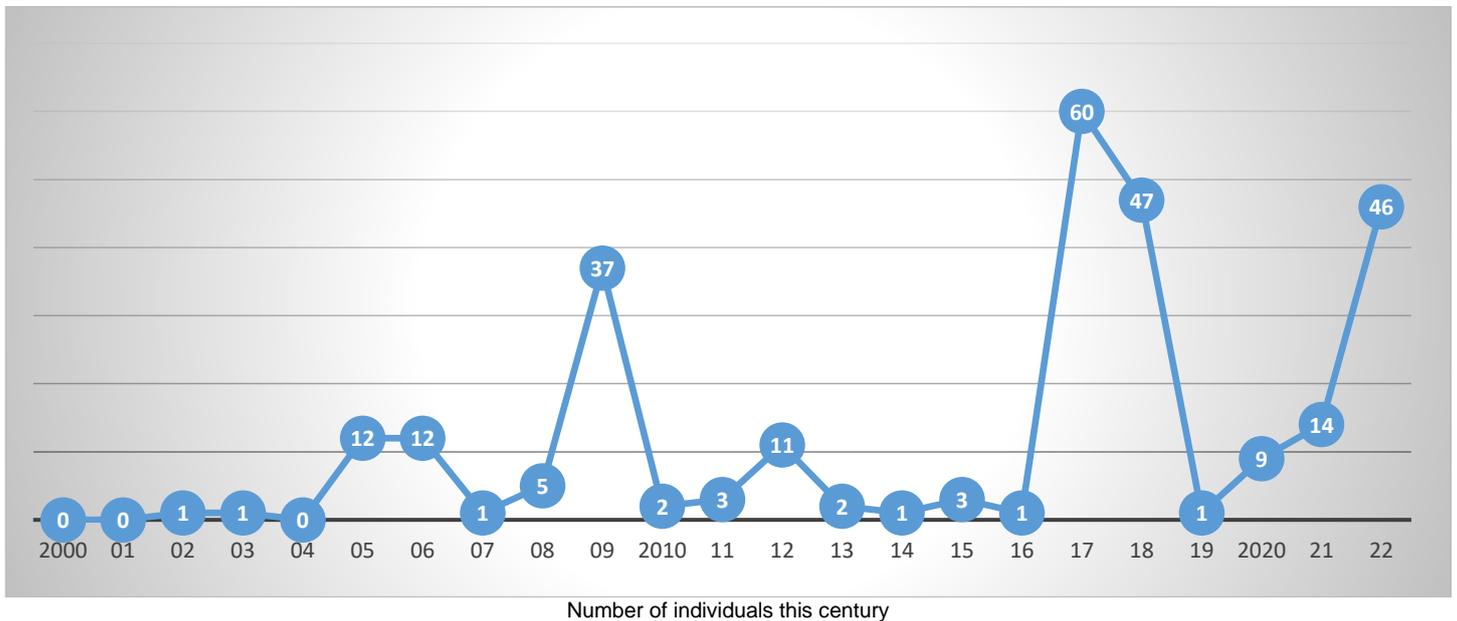
The average arrival date is 7th October, two days earlier than given by Bland (1992) who gives earliest arrivals of 3rd August, 1968 and 11th September, 1962 on Westbury Road in Bristol. The average departure is 8th April, four days earlier than Bland (1992) who gives latest dates of 30th May, 1986 and 16th May, 1981. More recently the latest is 8th May, 2011, two at Downend.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local winter visitor, occurs some years in tolerable abundance, Stapleton' and Charbonnier (1899) 'winter visitor, occurs regularly in fair numbers'. The 1927 SBR said it was 'local and erratic but not uncommon winter visitor, usually in small to moderate and rarely if ever in very large numbers. Prolonged visitations largely dependent on heavy crops of beech-mast. Frequent Backwell'. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor, by no means common but occurs in most areas. Usually met with in small numbers, often among Chaffinches, Greenfinches etc in fields and stackyards'.

### Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, which has greatly declined and formerly bred.

This century most records relate to migrants flying over with the occasional influx (early 2009 and the 2017/18 winter) and the table below shows the number of individuals each year.



The last local breeding was in 1983 at Shirehampton, although they were seen there in 1987 collecting nesting material. The species was regularly seen in Leigh Woods until 1996, but not since, although the last breeding there was in 1982. 1992 was the first year with no local records and there were no records between 1998 and 2001.

Descriptions were required between 2003 and 2023.

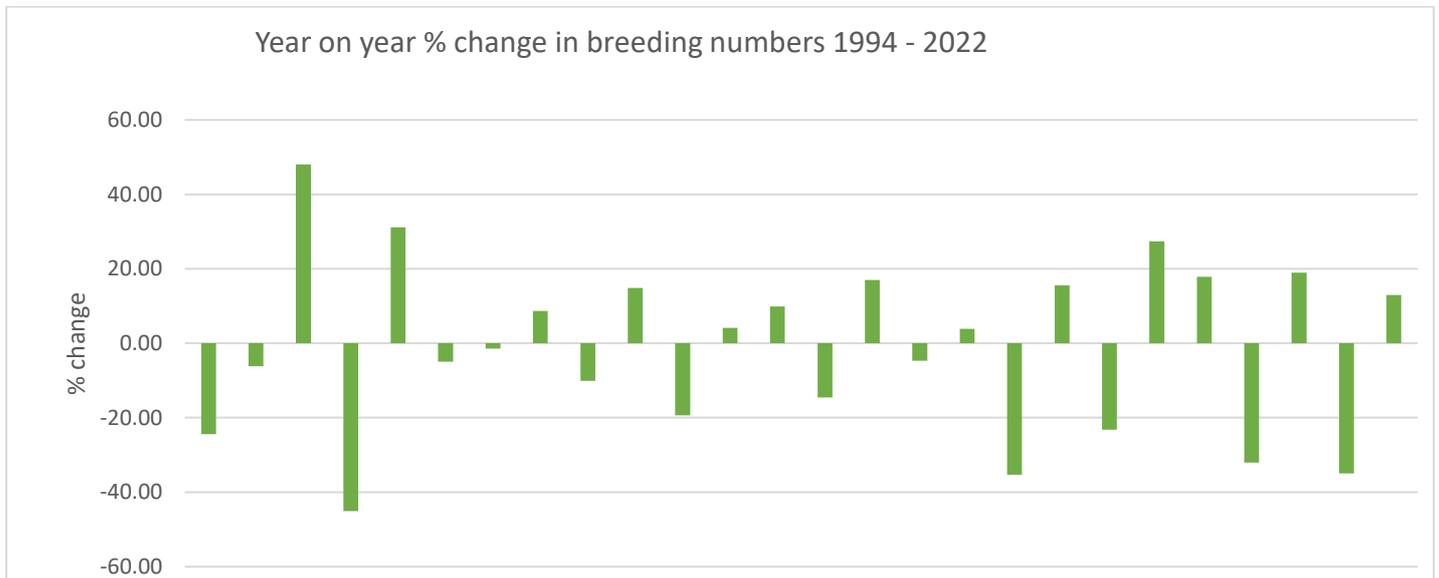
Wheeler (1874) says it was a 'local winter visitor, occurs every winter on Clifton and Durdham Downs and Henbury, some remain to breed' while Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention breeding in Compton Dando prior to 1844. Harding (1896) mentions breeding in Fishpings in 1894 and 1895 and how they were regular in winter on Durdham Down and Brandon Hill. Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, has increased in number during the last few years and is now common in winter. Nests in the immediate neighbourhood of the city' and Munro Smith (1913) mentions finding four nests with eggs on the Downs between Bridge Valley Road and the Promenade in 1913. The 1925 SBR says it was 'widely distributed and not uncommon, breeds Clifton, Backwell, Pensford (but not observed there for some years). Formerly frequent in Bath but no recent data. A pair at Litton in May 1925 evidently breeding. Weston -super-Mare. Family party seen Winscombe on July 1st 1925'.

Taylor (1986), quoting from Morley's Bird Life on Clifton Down published in 1934 says good numbers (30 or 40) used to pass through the Downs in spring while Davis (1947) says 'resident, local but not uncommon in suitable habitats. Breeds in Leigh Woods and nests have been found on various occasions round Clifton and Bath. Has also been reported as breeding, or in the breeding season, from Winscombe, Pensford, Backwell, Henbury, Tortworth and other widely separated localities.'

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A fairly common breeding resident.

The BBS results show a 63% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest count is of 54 at Chittening in January 1971 [*BOC Bird News*].

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'tolerably common resident, Clifton Down and Leigh' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, common'. The 1927 SBR said it was a 'fairly frequent though rather patchily distributed breeding species, rather common Bristol district' and Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrina*

A local rarity with three records this century as follows:

2006, a first-summer male singing at Sand Point on June 9th<sup>141</sup>

2015, a female or first-winter on a feeder in Keynsham on February 24th and March 1st and 7th

2017, one in flight over Northwick Warth calling on October 14th

The only other records are as follows:

1985, an adult female ringed at Stantonbury Hill on August 4th [*article in 1992 ABR*]

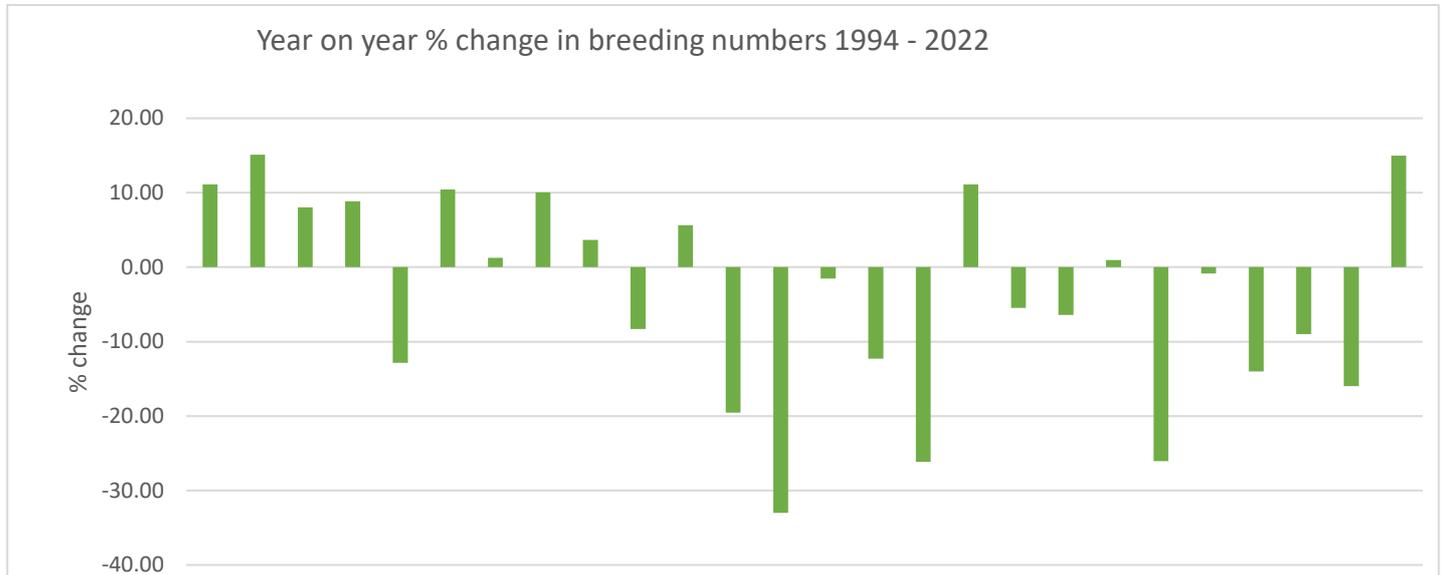
1999, a juvenile trapped in the Gordano Valley on September 13th

<sup>141</sup> ABR incorrectly gives the date as May 9th

### Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

A common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor which has declined recently due to infection.

The BBS results show a 69% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest counts are of flocks totalling at least 1,000 at CVL on 31st January, 1960 and 1,010 moving SW over Wains Hill in three hours on 24th October, 2004.

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant resident'. Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

**Twite** *Linaria flavirostris*

A local rarity. Only eight individuals have been recorded this century, as follows:

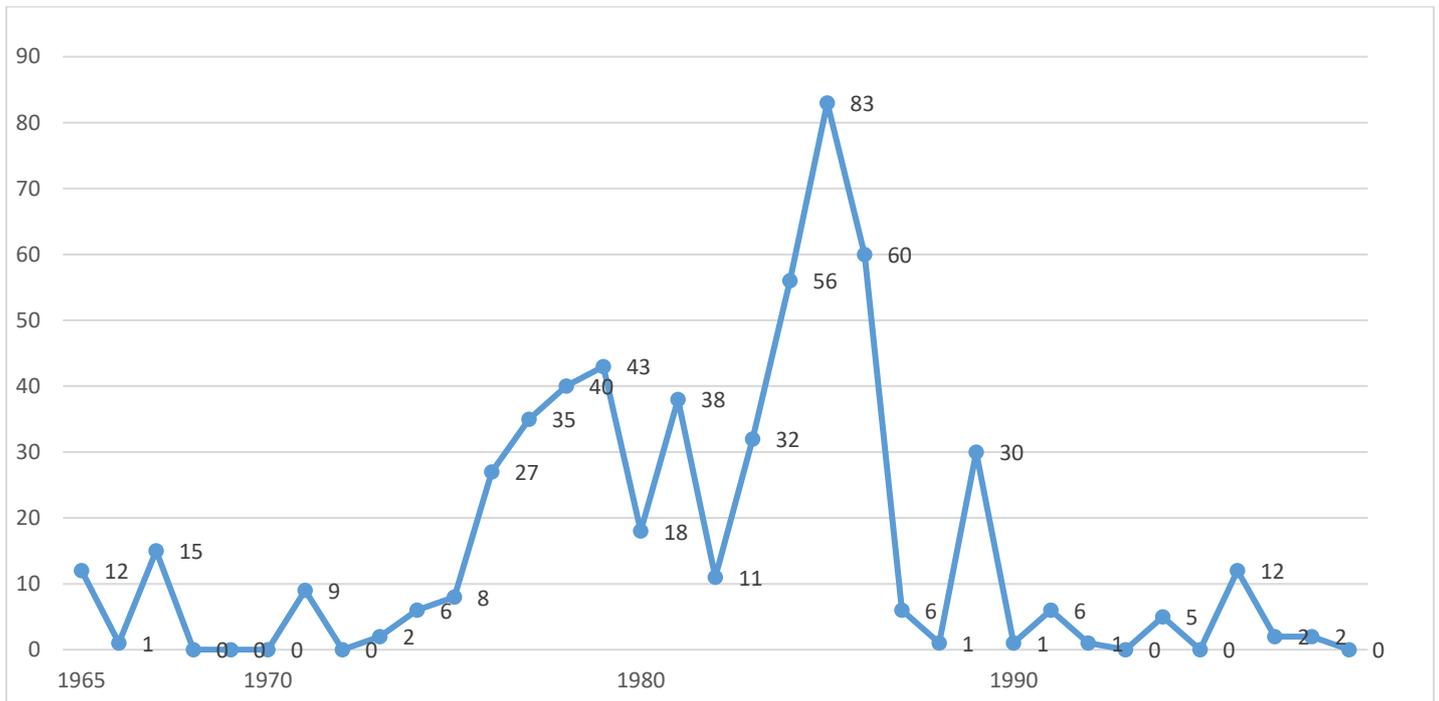
2004 – one at CI-Y on November 9th

2011/12, four individuals – three at OPS on December 20th were refound there on 14th January, 2012 with a fourth joining them next day and remaining until February 13th

2013, three individuals – three at Aust Warth from January 20th until 24th with two there from February 18th until April 7th.

2013/14, two individuals – two at Aust Warth from December 7th intermittently until 2nd February, 2014 with one remaining until March 23rd

Records were almost annual between 1965 and 1998 with c560 individuals recorded, although the details are rather vague for some years. The published records are listed in Appendix 1 and summarised in the graph below:



Earlier twentieth century records are non-existent; Davis (1947) calls it a 'very scarce visitor. No records for the present century but perhaps overlooked' and I cannot find any published records between 1947 and 1965, when suddenly it becomes regular.

There are a handful of records for the 18th century;

c1893 – one at Stapleton in Davis (1947)

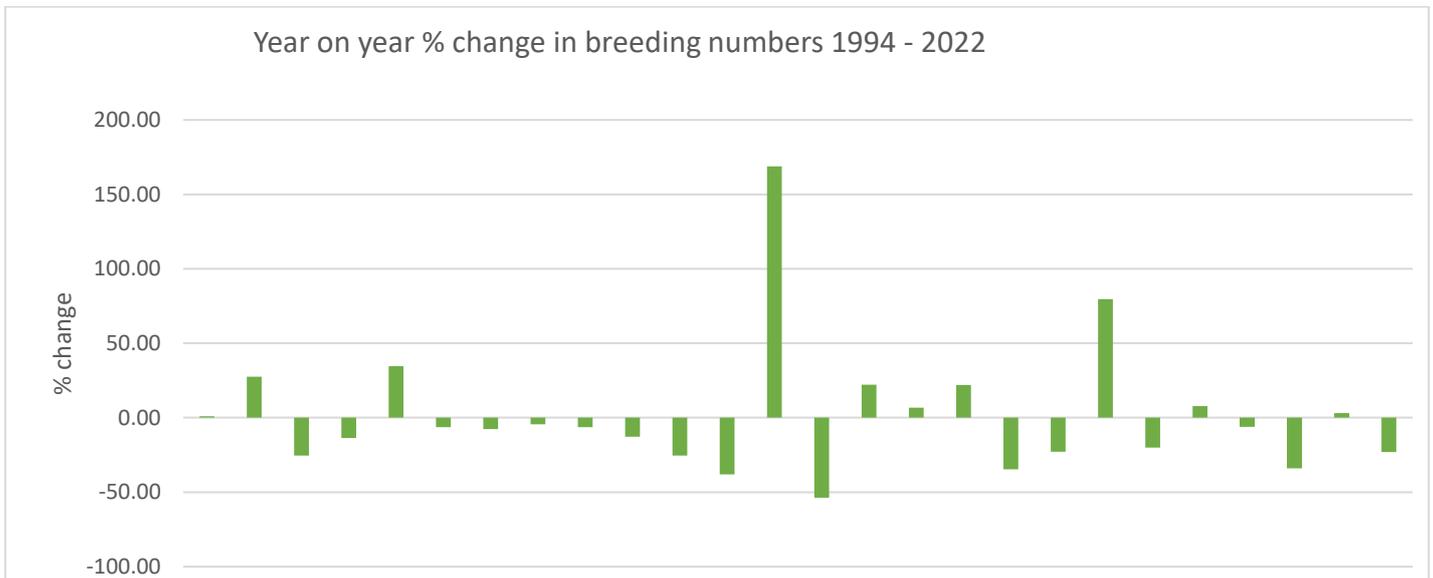
c1896 – one at Avonmouth in Davis (1947)

Charbonnier (1899) said it 'occurs regularly on flight but in very small numbers'. The Rev Matthew says 'seen by me several times on sandhills near Weston-super-Mare' (1888 Zoologist, p219) while Wheeler (1874) said it was 'rare, occasionally at Leigh'.

**Linnet** *Linaria cannabina*

A common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

The BBS results show a 74% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest counts are of 1,800 at Grickstone Farm, Old Sodbury on 8th February, 2012 and 2,000 noted on passage at Steep Holm on the morning of 4th October, 1976<sup>142</sup>.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'common resident', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed. Often abundant in autumn flocks'.

<sup>142</sup> Likely to be exceeded by c3,000 at Tubbs Bottom, Frampton Cotterell on 7th February, 2023 (including 2,400 in one photo)

**Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*

A local rarity which has only been treated as a full species since 2000.

A total of 16 individuals have been recorded this century, as follows:

2001, one at CVL on March 16th

2004, three individuals – Thornbury golf course on February 10th and two at Severn Beach on April 24th

2005, two individuals – BL on January 17th [2021 ABR] and on a feeder in a Stapleton garden from December 10th until 18th

2006, a male at Sand Point from May 4th until 15th

2008, two individuals – Keynsham from February 23rd until 25th and a female/first-winter at Severn Beach on April 20th

2009, three individuals – Orchard Pools, Severn Beach on January 18th, a male at a feeder in Yatton on April 2nd and Chittening Warth on May 3rd

2012, one briefly at BL on November 18th

2013, two individuals – briefly at CVL on April 17th and Sand Point on May 3rd

2015, a first calendar-year trapped at CVL on October 25th

It was recorded in four years last century, a total of eight individuals, as follows:

1962, two at Saltford Sewage Farm on February 10th with one caught and proven from measurements [1963 ABR], remained until April 9th<sup>143</sup> Palmer and Ballance (1968)

1965, one at CVL from October 31st until November 1st<sup>144</sup>, BL on December 14th [SBR], [96 ABR]

1988, a male at Chittening on October 30th

1996, three individuals – two at Ashton Court on March 23rd, CVL on April 12th and 13th

It was not mentioned in Davis (1947).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Acanthis cabaret*

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant with a largest count of at least 70 at Gordano Valley ringing station on 14th October, 2011. It is scarce in summer but has bred in the past, most recently in 1977 at Wrington Warren.

Wheeler (1874) gives it as a 'tolerably common resident, Leigh Woods and Stapleton' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'resident, fairly common and seems to have increased in number lately. Nests on Durdham Down'. Munro Smith (1911) mentions nesting on the Downs and in gardens around Stoke Bishop while the 1926 SBR says 'a local but not uncommon breeding species, recorded nesting at Clevedon, Clifton and Leigh Woods, Flax Bourton, several places near Bath and probably near Weston-super-Mare. Seen in some winters in places where no evidence of breeding eg Chew Valley and Hollowmarsh'.

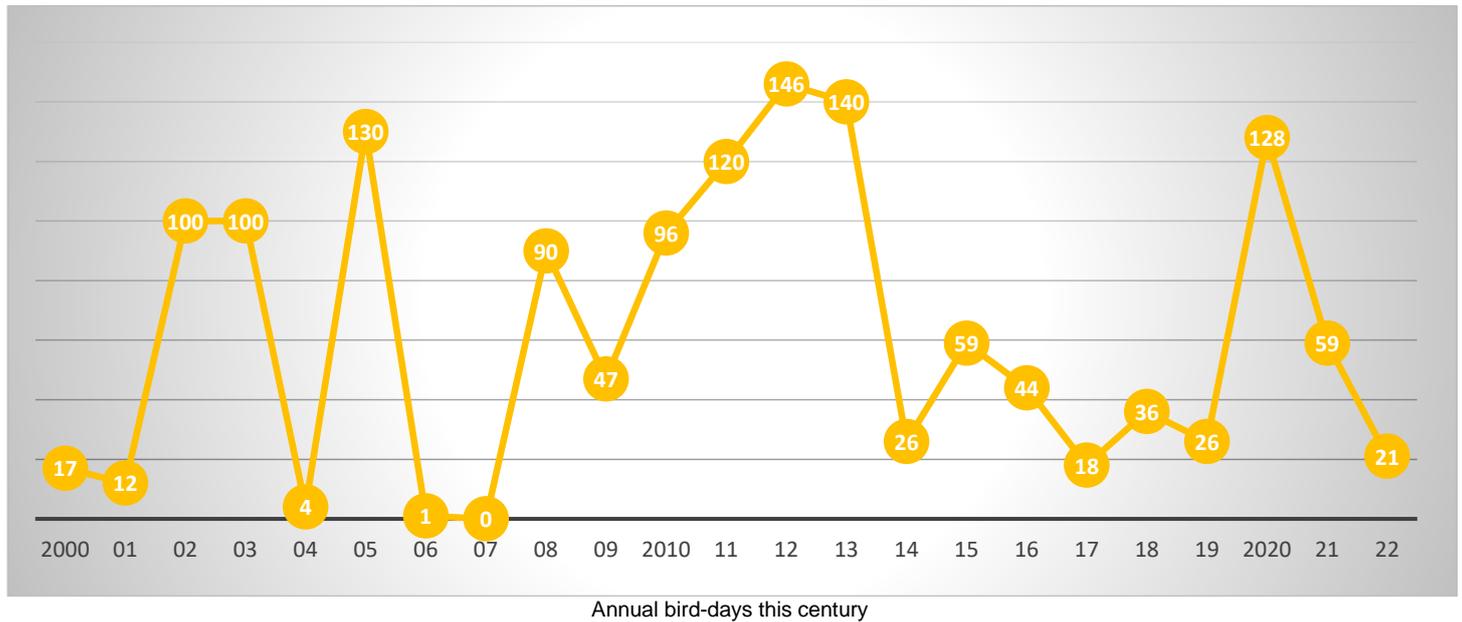
However, Davis (1947) says there is 'no recent breeding information' and calls it a 'winter visitor, occurring not uncommonly over much of the district. Also, perhaps resident in very small numbers'.

<sup>143</sup> SBR states that on April 9th only one of the two birds present was a Common, the other was a Lesser Redpoll. 1963 SBR says both birds present on February 10th were 'noticeably greyish and whitish' and that the trapped bird had a wing measurement of 77mm

<sup>144</sup> The 1965 ABR say, under Redpoll, 'one larger, paler bird on Oct. 31 and another, Nov. 1'

### **Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

A regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary sharply from year to year, see chart below of annual 'bird-days' this century. The largest count is of 60 at Abbots Leigh on 22nd June, 1990.



During the 1990's there were a number of years with three figure bird-day counts, 275 in 1990, 185 in 1991, 234 in 1993 and 344 in 1997. High figures had also been recorded in 1966 and 67.

It was treated as a local rarity in 1983 and 1984.

Wheeler (1874) gives it as 'rare winter visitor, occasionally Henbury' while Charbonnier (1899) says 'winter visitor, occurs irregularly'. Munro Smith (1911) mentions breeding in both Kings Weston and Long Ashton in 1910. Davis (1947) says 'irregular winter visitor, occurring periodically in considerable numbers and occasionally remaining to breed. Nesting reported in the present century from Winscombe 1911, Ashton Park 1930 and Failand 1933. Palmer and Ballance (1968) also mention breeding from Winscombe in 1910 and Wraxall in 1934 while the SBR also mentions they possibly bred at Winscombe in 1930.

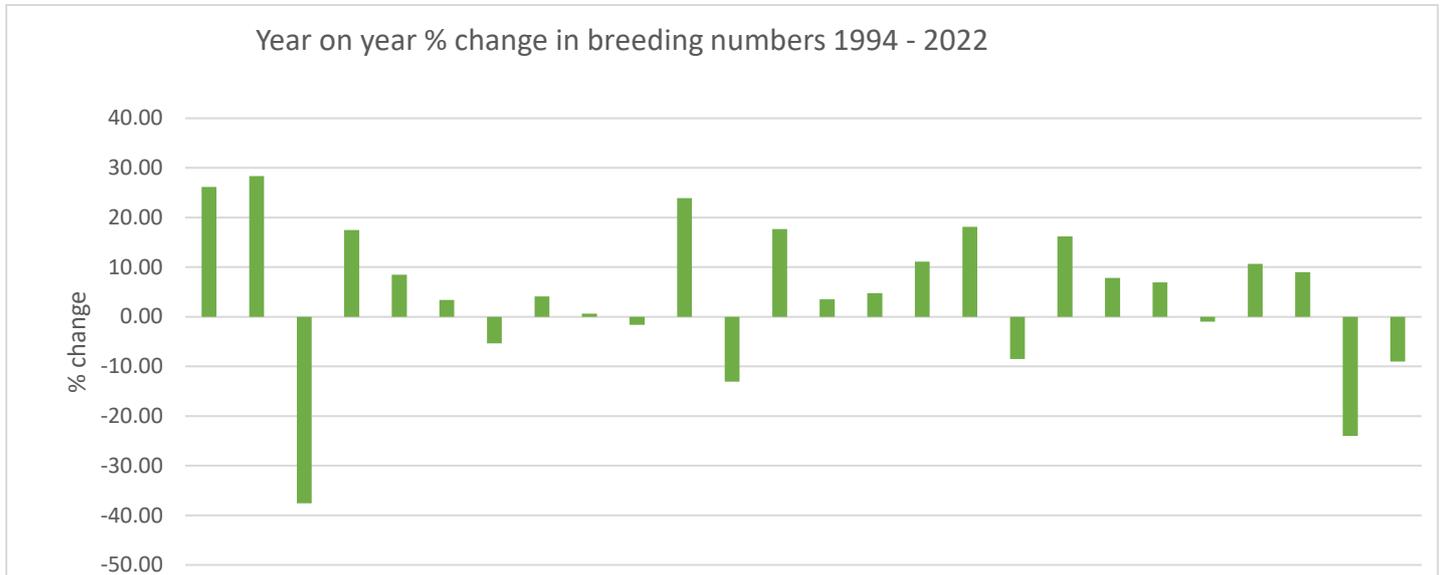
### **Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera*

A National rarity. There is one old record, from 1895, of a male shot from a small flock near Keynsham in the last week of February, that is mentioned in Charbonnier (1899)

### Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia which has increased recently.

The BBS results show a 138% increase since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest counts are of 800 on Steep Holm on 31st October, 2005 and of 3,000 that passed New Passage during the morning of 22nd April, 1990

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local resident, much less frequently seen than formerly' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, gradually decreasing in number, still nests within a small radius but very sparingly'. However, the 1927 SBR said it was a 'fairly frequent breeding species and tends to increase. Apparently rather scarce near Bristol' and the 1939 SBR 'common in suitable areas. Rather uncommon in the district south and west of Bristol though it certainly has increased, especially since 1934'. Davis (1947) called it 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

### Serin *Serinus serinus*

A national rarity until 1983 and a local rarity since with just one record this century, from New Passage on 6th April, 2017.

There are two records from the 1980s as follows<sup>145</sup>:

1983, one seen and heard at CVL on October 22nd

1986, one at Abbots Pool on April 21st and 22nd

<sup>145</sup> A record of four at the Yeo Estuary on 16th February, 1969 was initially accepted by BBRC but was later withdrawn, see 1988 BBRC report

**Siskin** *Spinus spinus*

A winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common although scarce in summer. The largest counts are of 530 along R Chew in early 1986 and a flock of 300 at New Passage on 20th October, 1975.

Although Bland and Dadds (2012) say that breeding was first proved in 2009 the 2009 ABR merely says that there were records of juveniles from Bath, Weston and Cleeve without any further details. A female with a juvenile were seen in a Banwell garden on 25th June, 2013 but these were not thought to have bred locally.

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local winter visitor, occurs most winters at Stapleton and Leigh' and Charbonnier (1899) 'winter visitor, appears with fair regularity'. The 1928 SBR said it was a 'somewhat erratic winter visitor but not uncommon in places where there are alders. Seen at Pensford and Hunstrete. Formerly quite common Leigh Woods but recent observers do not report it. Sometimes seen in former years at Backwell'. Davis (1947) called it a 'winter visitor in varying numbers. Has frequently been reported and is evidently not uncommon wherever Alders occur'.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

A local rarity with 67 individuals since 1965 as follows:

1965 – Yeo Estuary on March 7th and 14th, Sand Point on October 24th

1966 – CVL on February 13th, Yeo Estuary on September 25th and during October and November, Kingston Seymour on December 4th

1967 – near Clevedon on December 26th

1968 – near Clevedon on December 26th [SBR]

1971 – in flight at Sand Point calling on October 5th [SBR]

1975 – Kingston Seymour on September 21st [SBR]

1979 – SGW from January 6th until 13th

1980 – SGW on March 22nd and 29th

1981 – Chittening Warth on November 15th, a first-winter at Severn Beach on December 18th

1983 – an immature/female on the coast between Clevedon and the Yeo Estuary on November 13th and 23rd

1984 – Sand Point on April 29th, an immature/female on the coast at Clevedon on October 23rd, Severn Beach on October 27th, a male on the coast at Clevedon on November 10th, 11th, 21st and 30th

1986 – a probable first-winter female at New Passage on February 9th

1987 – Yeo Estuary on January 20th, 23rd and 31st, Sand Bay on January 31st, Kenn Estuary on October 4th, Axe Estuary on November 6th, RPD on November 22nd

1988 – Severn Beach on October 16th

1989 – Aust Warth on September 2nd, Portbury Wharf on November 12th

1990 – Weston Moor on October 24th, a male at CVL on November 11th, Chittening Warth on November 25th, Chittening from December 12th until 31st

1991 – Chittening Warth on February 17th, CI-Y on October 25th, CVL on November 17th

1993 – Sand Bay on March 25th

1996 – a first-year trapped at OPS on January 29th was retrapped on February 2nd, Northwick Warth on March 17th

1999 – Yeo Estuary on December 3rd and 4th

2001 – a juvenile/first-winter at Portishead on October 9th, 12th, 13th and 17th

2002 – CI-Y on November 22nd

2003 – an adult male and a juvenile near Yeo Estuary from October 3rd until 5th, two juveniles there on November 15th with one until 19th, Aust Warth on November 19th

2007 – Northwick Warth on October 2nd

2008 – a female at Marshfield from March 24th until 27th

2010 – CI-Y on October 11th, two at OPS on 13th, a different two at Oldbury-on-Severn on 13th, Aust on 13th, three at CI-Y from 16th until 24th with four on 20th, two at CI-Y on December 12th, Weston STW on 23rd

2012 – heard at CI-Y on September 28th, CI-Y on October 4th

2013 – Northwick Warth on September 28th

2016 – Sand Point on December 3rd

2019 – Sand Point on October 23rd, CI-Y on December 1st

2021 – Saltford on October 23rd

### Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A local rarity since 2019 with records from each subsequent year as follows:

2019, three individuals – Northwick Warth on September 25th, Sand Point on November 15th and a first-winter at BG from November 18th until 20th

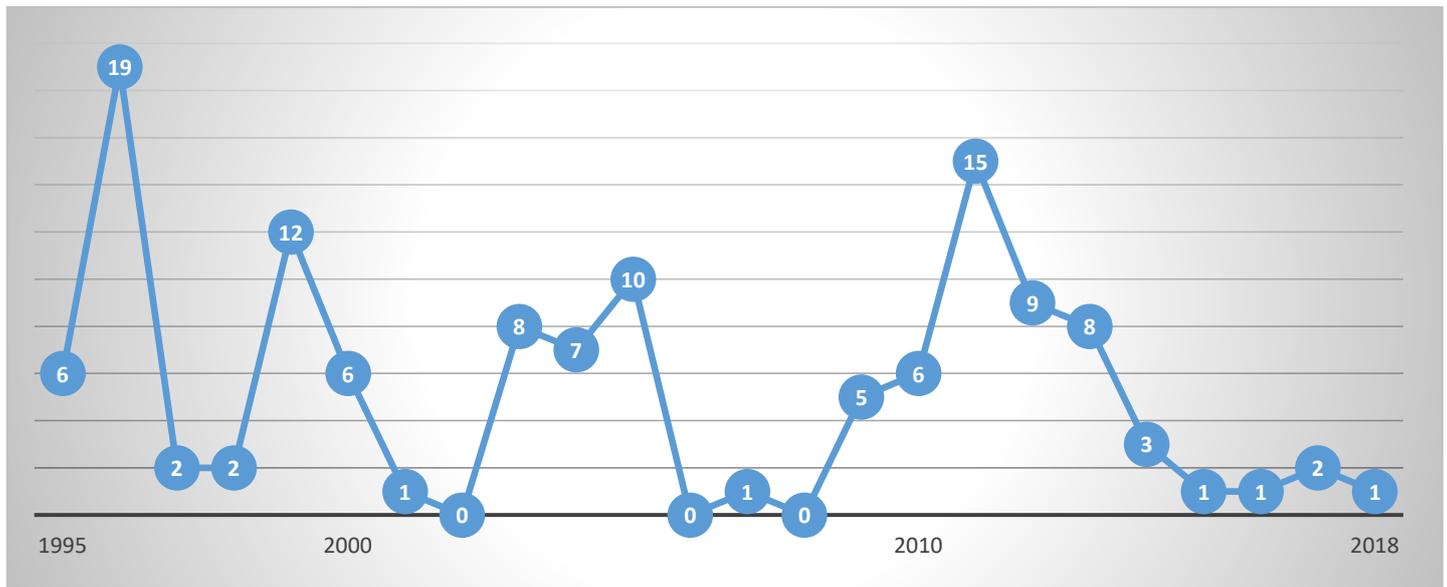
2020, four individuals – two at the Yeo estuary on November 4th, a female at Pilning on November 7th joined by a second on 8th until 13th with one until 15th

2020/21, a female at Aust from December 1st until 2nd January, 2021

2021, three individuals – Sand Point on March 1st, Woodspring Bay on November 8th and Sand Point on November 17th

2022, a first-winter male at CVL on October 23rd and 24th

It had previously been treated as a local rarity, particularly for inland records, until 1995. The chart below shows the number of individuals in the intervening years.



Number of individuals recorded when no descriptions required

The largest count is of 56 at CI-Y on 17th November, 1968 [SBR]. The earliest arrival is 28th September, 2003 at CI-Y (although the 2003 ABR mentions 27th September as being the earliest recorded date but without any further details) and the latest departure is 10th April, 2005 at Chittinging Warth.

Wheeler (1874) listed it as a 'very rare winter visitor, two or three times at Avonmouth' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'winter visitor, occurs fairly regularly'. Davis (1947) called it an 'irregular winter visitor in small numbers. Has been noted fairly frequently, usually in coastal areas or on high ground. Latest records are of a party of six near Severn Beach 1934 and of one at BG in 1936'<sup>146</sup>

<sup>146</sup> November 24th per SBR

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

A local and uncommon breeding resident, confined to arable areas in the east of the region. The largest counts are of 500 at Marshfield on 7th November, 2013 and 31st October and 22nd December, 2014.

It is rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor, supporting notes for such records were required until 2009.

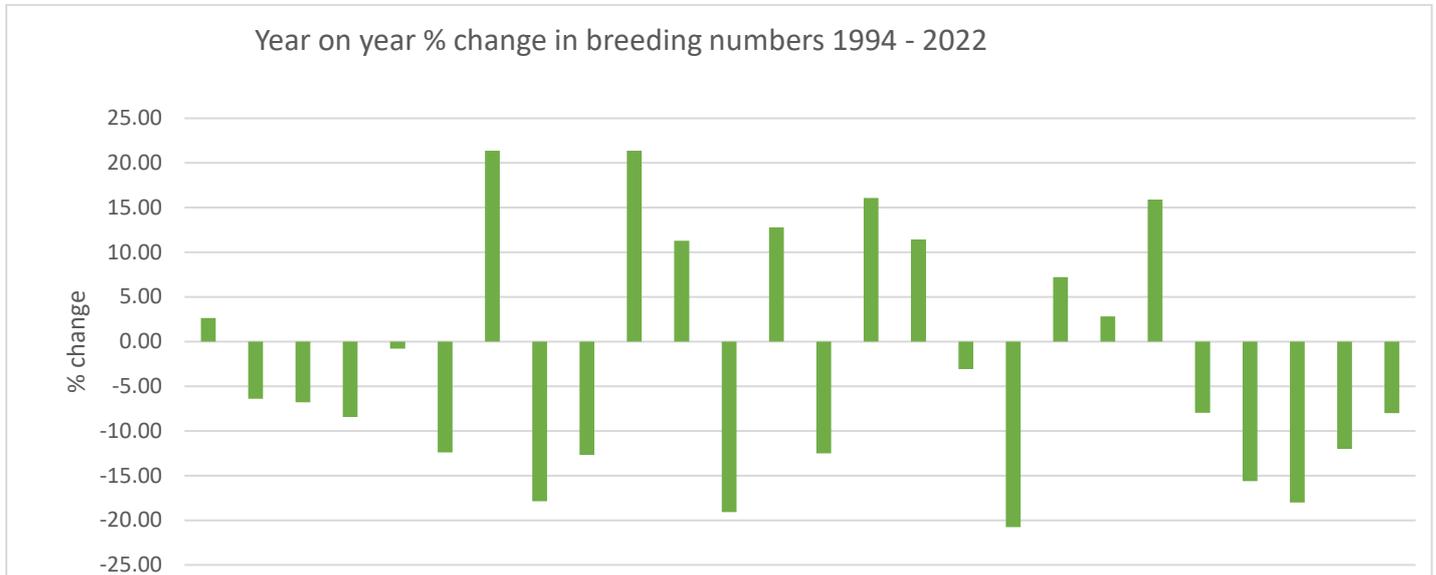
Clearly it was more widely distributed in the past as Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention breeding season records since 1947 from Sand Bay, Failand, Stanton Prior, East Dundry and Norton St Philip; they also mention records from 1900 to 1940 from the Bath area, Weston-super-Mare, Barrow Gurney and Bleadon. Bland (1992a) documents the local decline between 1962 and 1992.

Wheeler (1874) listed it as a 'generally distributed resident, not common' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident, fairly common, more abundant in the Cotswolds'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'rare, a few Weston-super-Mare district. Bleadon Hill 1925 and previously' while Davis (1947) said 'resident, very local being chiefly known from Marshfield, Hawkesbury Upton and other parts of the Cotswolds. Has nested on Bleadon Hill and perhaps elsewhere in coastal areas'.

### **Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

A fairly common breeding resident and an uncommon passage migrant.

The BBS results show a 56% decrease since 1994 and the chart below shows the annual percentage fluctuations.



The largest count is of 300 at Marshfield on 1st January and 3rd February, 2016

Wheeler (1874) said it was an 'abundant resident', Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, very common' and Davis (1947) 'resident, common and widely distributed'.

### **Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*

The only recent records of this national scarce migrant are from 2018 when there were records from Sand Bay on August 24th and Northwick Warth on September 13th.

There is an old record of one shot near Sidcot in 1860 which is mentioned in Palmer and Ballance (1968)<sup>147</sup> but which was dismissed in Davis (1947).

<sup>147</sup> Source given as Knight, F. A. (1902): The Seaboard of Mendip.

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*

Effectively extinct locally, the last record was in 1991, on Wavering Down. It last bred in 1985, at an undisclosed site, and prior to that in 1976 at Wrington.

Kemp (1983) provides a useful summary of the former breeding sites and all published records since 1930 are included as Appendix 1 to this checklist.

Wheeler (1874) gave it as 'rare, occurs occasionally, has occurred at Wrington' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'resident. Not common' but Munro Smith (1911) mentions seeing a nest on the embankment of the R. Avon, at the bottom of the Gully. The 1925 SBR lists it as 'local and uncommon. Compton Martin and East Harptree district in 1907 but not recently. Backwell district. Formerly frequent and nesting near Weston-super-Mare'. Davis (1947) calls it 'resident. Local, but not uncommon in some parts of the district. In recent years has frequently been found nesting in close proximity to Bristol and breeding has been reported from the Weston-super-Mare area and elsewhere'. Palmer and Ballance (1968) mention 'breeds locally along coastal strip between Portishead and Mendip and around Bath; more commonly on lower slopes of NW Mendip and outlying hills (Bleadon, Banwell, Shute Shelve, Winscombe); from Uphill to Burnham.'

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* 0, 5

A National rarity until 1994 and a local rarity since then. There is only a single record this century, at OPS on 13th April, 2021.

There were four records in the 20th century, as follows:

1976 – trapped at CVL on January 4th [BBRC\*]<sup>148</sup>

1986 – Lansdown on October 17th [BBRC\*]

1996 – a first-winter male at CVL from March 31st until April 21st

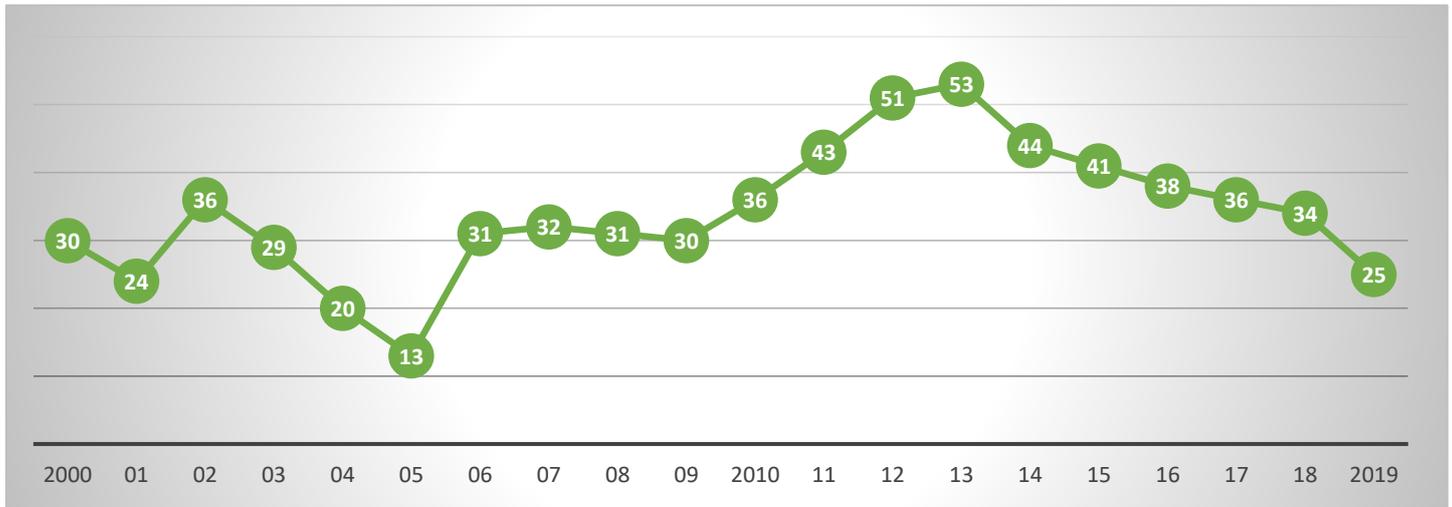
1997 – in a garden at Redland from December 27th until April 15th 1998

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<sup>148</sup> Photo in 1976 BBRC report

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A localised breeding resident, and passage migrant.

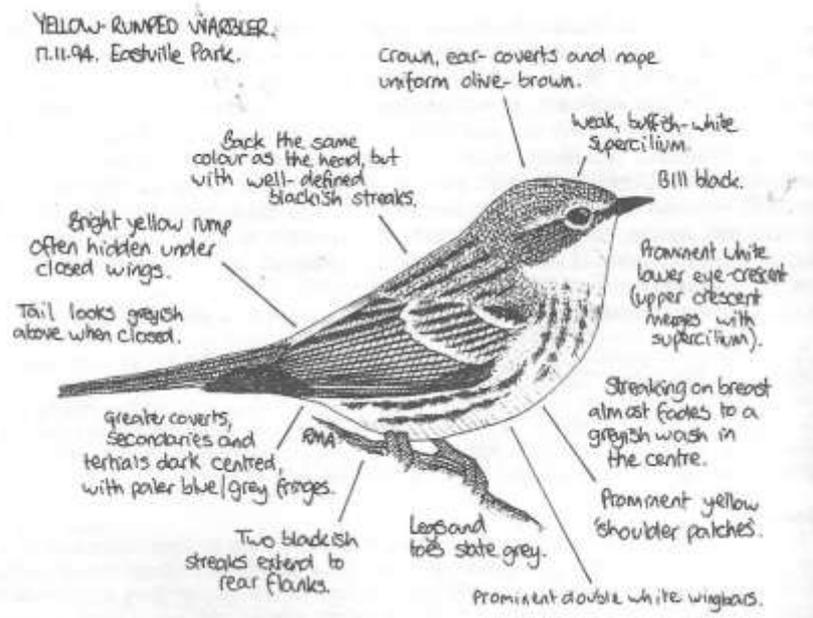


Breeding success: singing males at CVL this century (no surveys since 2019)

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'local resident, not common, Stapleton, Avonmouth' and Charbonnier (1899) 'resident, fairly common in the lower ground'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'local, frequent in swampy places but not always present in seemingly suitable spots. Common at Blagdon and in the lowlands eg Chelvey and Yatton. Seen in winter below East Harptree in the Chew Valley where probably a few breed, never at Litton reservoir. Also, in winter in Hollowmarsh and by swampy stream-sides etc, in some places in the Bath district'. Davis (1947) called it a 'resident, breeds locally in lowland areas, becomes more widespread in winter.'

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*

A National rarity, with a single local record at Eastville Park on 16th and 17th November, 1994 [BBRC] see Martin, Musgrove and Andrews (1994) for more details



## Appendix 1

### Long-tailed Duck, twentieth century records:

- 1925 – two at BL on January 6th [*SBR and British Birds vol 18 page 301*] were subsequently shot [*1929 SBR*]. Another pair of immatures wintered until April 1926 [*1929 SBR*].
- 1927 – pair wintered at BL into 1928 [*1929 SBR*]
- 1928 – immature female at Litton lower reservoir from at least November 22nd until 25th<sup>149</sup> [*SBR*]<sup>150</sup>. Noted at BL in the 1928-29 winter [*1929 SBR*]
- 1931 – shot at BL [*1932 SBR*]
- 1943 – a female or immature at BL from January 26th until at least February 2nd
- Davis (1947) – winter visitor at irregular intervals and has occurred at the reservoirs. Noted at BL either singly or in twos on six occasions
- 1956 – a female or immature at Weston-super-Mare on November 5th and 6th
- 1957 – Weston-super Mare on January 22nd *Palmer and Ballance (1968)*
- 1958 – two males at CVL on March 29th, two males and three females at CVL on April 19th<sup>151</sup>
- 1962 – a female at BG from March 5th until May 2nd, immature at CVL from December 15th until 19th
- 1963 – an immature at the marine lake Weston-super-Mare from December 21st until 21st March, 1964 [*SBR*]<sup>152</sup>
- 1966 – Weston-super-Mare on January 23rd *Palmer and Ballance (1968)*, BG from November 1st until 23rd April, 1967
- 1967 – a female at CVL on March 25th [*SBR*] and from April 30th until May 14th, CVL from November 2nd until 31st May, 1968 with two on November 9th and 15th, BG from November 5th until 13th January, 1968
- 1969 – CVL from May 7th until June 1st
- 1970 – a female at BL on April 12th, CVL from May 5th until 17th
- 1972 – two immatures at CVL from December 10th until 12th, two at BG from December 16th until 22nd with one until 5th May, 1973
- 1973 – a female at CVL from December 26th until 24th March, 1974
- 1975 – an immature male at CVL from November 1st was joined by two other immatures by 28th and all three remained until December 14th<sup>153</sup> with two until 11th January, 1976 but three again until February 22nd and then two until 24th April, 1976
- 1976 – New Passage on October 31st
- 1977 – a female at BG from October 25th until November 13th
- 1978 – SGW on October 27th
- 1979 – CVL on October 27th, BG from November 4th until 8th, three at CVL from November 11th until 18th with one on 24th and 25th, two at CVL on December 16th, BG from December 16th until 24th
- 1980 – a female at CVL from January 27th was joined by an immature male on April 3rd and both remained until May 26th, a male at Aust Warth on April 20th, an immature male at BL on October 26th
- 1981 – immature male at BL on January 4th, CVL on March 16th and 21st and from April 15th until May 16th, BL on April 8th, in flight off Northwick on November 1st
- 1982 – an immature male at OPS from October 16th until November 7th, female at CVL on November 7th, Severn Beach on December 17th, an immature female at Portishead boating lake from December 22nd until 29th June, 1983, an immature female at BG from December 26th until 5th February, 1983
- 1983 – immature male and female at CVL from January 15th, the female until April 24th and the male until May 6th, Northwick on October 26th, an immature male at BL on December 18th
- 1984 – an immature at Yeo Estuary on February 19th
- 1985 – two immature females at CVL from December 27th until 3rd February, 1986
- 1986 – an immature at BL on January 12th
- 1987 – a female in flight past Severn Beach on January 11th, an immature off Steep Holm on May 16th, a female/immature at BG from November 29th until December 8th
- 1988 – an immature male at BL on February 13th and 14th and March 20th and at CVL on February 26th, March 27th, and 30th and from April 2nd until 28th, a male at Yeo Estuary from May 5th until July 17th was seen at Sand Point on July 15th, CVL from November 13th until 20th, six at CVL on November 27th and seven from December 4th until 28th April, 1989
- 1989 – an additional first-winter male at CVL (making a record eight) from April 1st until 28th, female or immature past Anchor Head on October 29th
- 1990 – a female at CVL from December 23rd until 9th February, 1991
- 1991 – four females or immatures at New Passage on November 2nd with two on 3rd and one on 13th, two first-winter males at BL on December 1st with one until 9th, a first-winter female at CVL from December 23rd until 9th February, 1992, see Vinicombe (2001), a female [*correction in 1992 ABR*] at BG from December 15th until 17th April, 1992 when it moved to CVL until May 2nd

<sup>149</sup> See *British Birds* vol 22 p374

<sup>150</sup> *1929 SBR* says it remained for some weeks before being shot by a local farmer

<sup>151</sup> The report, and the *SBR*, warn of confusion between this species and Ruddy Ducks!

<sup>152</sup> What is presumed to be the same bird then relocated to off Brean Down where it remained until April 26th by which time it was identifiable as a first-summer male

<sup>153</sup> *SBR* says the three remained until 18th January 1976

1992 – two at New Passage on April 18th

1993 – a female at CVL from October 26th until 8th May, 1994, a female at CI-Y on December 1st, a male at Sand Point on December 11th, a first-winter male on the Marine Lake, Clevedon from at least December 18th until 19th February, 1994, a first-winter male at Sand Point on December 19th and 16th, 17th and 25th January, 1994

1994 – an extra first-winter male at Sand Point on January 16th, 17th and 25th

1997 – a first-winter male at CVL from November 15th until 20th April, 1998

1998 – a male at OPS on May 14th, a female type at Northwick Warth on October 11th, a first-winter male at CVL from November 15th until 20th April, 1999, see Vinicombe (2001), a female at OPS from December 30th until 9th May, 1999

1999 – a first-winter male at CVL from November 13th until February 12th and subsequently at BL from March 4th until 19th April, 2000, a first-winter female at BL from November 22nd until 19th April, 2000, Axe Estuary in flight on December 26th

**Slavonian Grebe**, twentieth century records:

- 1923 – BG on October 8th [*British Birds vol 17 page 211*]  
 1924 – BG on March 30th and April 2nd [*SBR and British Birds vol 17 page 312*]  
 1934 – two at BG between February 17th and 25th [*SBR*]  
 1935 – BL on January 7th, one at BG on September 28th was suspected to be this species [*SBR*]  
 1936 – one in summer plumage at BG on April 7th and 10th, another at BL on April 11th  
 1945 – BL on December 31st, with presumably the same there from January 4th intermittently until 10th March, 1946  
 1946 – BG on January 14th and 16th, a second at BL on January 5th [*all SBR*]  
 1947 – BG on February 8th with two on 20th, two at BL from February 11th until April 10th  
 1948 – BL on April 7th, BL from October 17th until 31st  
 1949 – BG on September 18th  
 1950 – BL on February 20th  
 1951 – BL on December 10th  
 1953 – one or two at BL on March 6th  
 1956 – CVL from February 12th until March 11th  
 1959 – adult in summer plumage at CVL on March 30th, BL on April 21st  
 1961 – BG from September 3rd until 17th  
 1962 – BL on February 3rd and 11th [*latter date SBR*]  
 1963 – River Avon in Bath from January 24th until 27th  
 1964 – CVL on March 1st, two at BL on March 25th [*SBR*]  
 1966 – CVL from March 13th until April 3rd, two at CVL from April 13th until 17th, CVL on November 6th [*SBR*], BL on November 12th, BL from December 24th until 15th April, 1967, BG from December 3rd until 20th  
 1967 – CVL from February 17th until April 25th with two on March 18th, 19th and 23rd and April 15th [*SBR*], BL on various dates between January 3rd and April 15th [*SBR*], 'probably this species' at CVL on October 14th and November 10th, BL on October 15th [*SBR*], CVL on November 19th [*SBR*]  
 1968 – CVL from January 14th until February 18th, with two on January 29th [*SBR*]  
 1969 – CVL on April 11th, CVL from November 28th until 30th [*SBR*]  
 1970 – CVL on October 18th [*SBR*], CVL from December 19th until 23rd  
 1971 – three at CVL on January 24th [*SBR*], CVL from December 11th until February 14th 1972  
 1972 – BG on March 24th and 25th  
 1975 – CVL from October 4th until 13th  
 1977 – adult at CVL on April 17th, CVL on November 18th, RPD on December 18th, BG on December 30th and 31st  
 1978 – BG on January 6th, BG from October 22nd until November 20th, CVL on November 8th  
 1979 – on the R Avon between Bristol and Redcliffe bridges from January 29th until February 2nd, CVL from February 4th until 25th, BL on March 18th, in breeding plumage at SGW on April 8th, BL on April 14th, CVL from October 27th until November 19th  
 1981 – CVL on November 1st, R Avon near Leigh Woods on December 13th  
 1982 – an adult at CVL on September 18th, BG from December 4th until January 17th 1983  
 1983 – BL from December 17th until 24th [*see correction in 1984 ABR*] and then from January 20th until 26th February, 1984  
 1985 – Cumberland Basin from February 15th until 26th, CVL on December 21st  
 1986 – BL on February 8th, CVL from April 18th, with a pair from 23rd, until May 3rd and one until May 6th  
 1987 – a juvenile at CVL from September 4th until 7th  
 1988 – Yeo Estuary on April 22nd, RPD on October 1st, CVL on November 12th  
 1989 – New Passage on April 27th, CVL from November 19th until December 23rd  
 1991 – three at CVL on November 24th with two until December 6th and one until 9th, one at BL from December 1st until 9th January, 1992 was probably one of the CVL birds  
 1992 – CVL on April 8th, CVL on December 28th  
 1993 – a juvenile at CVL from September 28th until October 4th, CVL on December 24th  
 1996 – CVL on January 1st and 8th, two at CVL on February 12th, PW from February 21st until April 5th, BL from February 24th until April 1st, CVL on April 8th, Severn Beach on August 10th, CVL on October 20th, two at CVL on November 17th, CVL on December 12th, BG from December 21st until 5th January, 1997, CVL on December 28th and 29th  
 1997 – two at CVL on January 28th  
 1998 – OPS on December 4th  
 1999 – BL on November 13th

**Grey Phalarope**, twentieth century records:

Davis (1947) mentions reports in 'former years' from Bath and Weston-super-Mare that I am unable to trace.

1923 – BL on September 6th [*British Birds vol 17 page 211*]

1924 – BL in September [*1925 SBR*]

1929 – one at BL for a prolonged period [*1930 SBR*]

1930 – Litton from September 25th for 'some time and photographed [*SBR*], BL in autumn [*1931 SBR*]

1931 – Litton for a short time in the autumn [*1932 SBR*]

<sup>154</sup>1933 – BL on September 16th [*SBR*][*British Birds vol 27 page 233*]

1934 – Barrow Court from October 27th until November 5th [*SBR and British Birds vol 28 page 244*]<sup>155</sup>, BG mid or late October Tetley (1939)

1935 – BL on October 19th [*SBR*] [*1944 ABR*]

1944 – BL on September 5th

1949 – flooded pasture at Stoke Gifford on October 21st and 28th

1950 – two at BL on September 17th and 18th with one on 21st

1951 – Severn Beach on September 16th

1952 – BG from October 26th until 28th

1953 – BG from September 24th until 28th, Chew Stoke Res.<sup>156</sup> on November 15th

1954 – Clevedon on December 5th

1957 – CVL on November 3rd and 4th

1958 – CVL on October 5th

1959 – an adult in grass beside Lansdown Hill on October 15th and 16th, CVL on October 15th

1960 – CVL on October 6th, two on 9th and 15th and one on 16th, CVL on November 6th

1965 – CVL on September 19th

1966 – CVL on September 5th [*SBR*] and 7th

1967 – CVL on October 2nd [*SBR*] and 29th

1968 – at CVL on various dates from September 22nd until October 5th, with two on 23rd, three birds thought to be involved

1972 – CVL from December 10th until 15th, found dead Weston Bay on December 26th [*SBR*]

1973 – Weston Bay from September 29th until October 4th

1974 – CVL on September 9th, a first-winter at SGW on September 15th

1977 – CVL on September 12th and 13th

1978 – CVL from September 26th until October 1st with two on September 29th, BG on December 26th

1980 – Axe Estuary on October 9th, CVL on October 11th and 12th

1981 – juveniles at CVL on September 20th and 26th with two on October 10th and 11th, found dead at CVL on October 16th

1982 – CVL on September 28th with two on 29th

1983 – three at New Passage on October 17th with two on 18th and one on 19th, BG from October 17th until 19th

1984 – a juvenile at BL on September 22nd and 23rd, a juvenile at CVL on September 30th

1987 – two at CVL on October 17th with five on 18th, four on 19th, two on 20th and three on 21st

1988 – New Passage on January 4th, Sand Bay on September 2nd, CVL on September 3rd and 4th, a juvenile at CVL on October 8th and 9th [*1990 ABR*]

1989 – OPS on September 18th, three juvenile/first-winters at CVL on September 23rd and 24th, two at CVL on September 27th, Severn Beach on September 27th, Axe Estuary on October 4th, CVL on November 11th

1990 – a summer plumage adult at CVL on June 16th and 17th

1993 – in Avon waters from Brean Down on May 16th [*1994 ABR*], a juvenile at OPS from September 11th until 15th

1994 – a juvenile at OPS on September 16th

1995 – OPS on October 8th, Cl-Y on October 8th, the Axe Estuary on October 12th and 13th

1996 – CVL on November 9th

1997 – Severn Beach on August 29th, Weston STW on August 29th and September 1st with a different individual from September 1st until 9th, CVL from August 29th until 31st, BL from August 30th until September 1st

1998 – Severnside on January 4th, a juvenile/first-winter at Weston STW from October 30th until November 4th

1999 – a juvenile/first-winter at Weston STW from October 2nd until 11th

<sup>154</sup> A small bird, evidently a phalarope was seen swimming on the water at BG on September 24th, 1932 [*SBR*]

<sup>155</sup> Davis (1935) wrongly attributes this record to 1935

<sup>156</sup> Presumably CVL

**Iceland Gull**, twentieth century records

1931 – an immature at BG on March 2nd [SBR][*British Birds* vol 24 page 344]

1933/35 – a young bird in the docks at Cumberland Basin from January 27th until 3rd February, 1935 [SBRs], also seen between Avonmouth and Severn Beach on 16th August, 1933 and at BG on 24th December, 1933 and 23rd March, 1934 [all SBR] and at BL on 22nd April, 1934 covered in Tetley (1935)<sup>157</sup>

1939 – an immature at Cumberland Basin on January 31st<sup>158</sup>

1940 – an immature at Stoke Gifford on February 23rd

**ICELAND GULL (*Larus leucopterus*).** An immature bird was identified at Stoke Gifford on February 23. When first seen it was soaring directly overhead in company with a number of young Herring-Gulls with which it corresponded in size but differed noticeably in the entirely transparent appearance of the primary feathers. Later, as the bird heeled over, identification was further confirmed by the creamy-white upper parts and the absence of any black on the wing-tips. This is the first inland record for the Gloucestershire side of the City.

1945 – an adult, presumed to be this species, at BL on September 29th [SBR]

1946 – an immature on the R. Avon at Hotwells between January 6th and 15th

1951 – a first-summer on the R Avon at Bedminster on May 18th and 19th, a possible adult at Bleadon on October 27th and 28th

**ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides***

**G.** One, R. Avon (cf. below).

**S.** An immature, in first summer plumage, viewed at close range, both on water and in flight, R. Avon, nr. Bedminster Bridge, May 18, 19 (P.J.C., R.H.P.). In sending full confirmatory details, P.J.C. records that the bird was similar in size to accompanying Herring-Gulls, though slimmer in build; that its wing-beats were quicker than those of Herring-Gull; and that, when seen at rest, its primary tips extended considerably (at least 1½–2-in.) beyond the tail.

What may have been an Iceland Gull in more or less adult plumage (bird described as being a little larger than accompanying Common Gulls, and having very pale, grey mantle and no black on primaries) was seen by G.G.C. and C.A.L.W. in a field at Bleadon, Oct. 27, 28.

1954 – a fourth year on R Avon at Bedminster from March 1st until 4th, a first year at BG on December 26th

1955 – a first year was at BG on January 9th, then on R. Avon at Bedminster on February 14th and 15th and roosting on Steep Holm on March 20th, a first year at Weston-super-Mare on December 22nd

1961 – an immature at CVL on March 31st and April 1st

1965 – a first-year on the R Avon at Temple Meads roundabout on March 18th and Cumberland Road on 27th

1967 – a first-year at BL on February 26th with possibly the same at CVL on March 14th, a first year on R Avon at Bedminster on March 15th, 16th and 23rd, a first-summer at BG on March 25th [SBR], an immature at CVL on March 30th

1971 – immature in the roost at CVL on March 3rd [notes in SBR]

1973 – a second year at CVL from April 7th until May 28th

1974 – a large subadult<sup>159</sup> in breeding plumage at Kingston Seymour on March 2nd and 3rd, a second year at CVL on December 28th and 29th [SBR]

1975 – Sand Point on May 30th

1977 – Severn Beach on November 5th

1983 – an immature commuting between Yanley Landfill and CVL from February 6th until March 2nd visited Bishopsworth on February 16th, an adult at CVL on February 9th, a third-year on R Avon at Sea Mills on April 12th

1984 – an immature at CVL on January 2nd, an immature at SGW on 29th and 30th, two first-winters and a second-winter at CVL from February 3rd until March 3rd, an adult at CVL on February 7th, an immature at Northwick Warth from February 11th until March 8th, an immature at South Stoke Waste Tip from February 17th until 19th

1985 – an immature at CVL on February 3rd

1987 – an adult<sup>160</sup> on Yeo Estuary on January 25th, a first-winter at BG on November 21st and another at CVL on 28th

1988 – first-winters at New Passage on January 3rd, BG on 30th and CVL on February 21st

1989 – a first-summer off New Passage on May 13th, a first-winter over the Cumberland Basin on December 25th with the presumed same at BG from 30th until 17th January, 1990 and then at CVL on 21st and February 4th and 19th

1990 – an adult at CVL from February 23rd until March 24th with a first-winter there from March 3rd until 17th<sup>161</sup>

1993 – a first-winter roosted at CVL on February 26th

1994 – a first-winter roosted at CVL on January 22nd

1996 – OPS on March 17th, see Middleton (2006)

1998 – OPS on February 15th, see Middleton (2006)

1999 – a juvenile/first-winter at Severn Beach on January 5th, OPS on October 9th, see Middleton (2006)

<sup>157</sup> Notes in 1933 SBR and also see *British Birds* vol 26 page 338 and vol 27 page 170

<sup>158</sup> See also *British Birds* vol 32 page 372-373

<sup>159</sup> Rose (1992) gives it as an adult

<sup>160</sup> Rose (1992) gives it as a second year bird

<sup>161</sup> Considered to be different from the individual first seen in late 1989

**Great Northern Diver**, published twentieth century records;

Davis (1947) says 'occasional winter visitor. Has been seen at intervals on both BG and BL since 1916'.

1925 - BL in January [SBR]

1928 - BG on December 20th [SBR]

1938 - BG from November 24th until December 8th

1939 - BL from January 9th until 22nd

1945 - BL on November 24th

1947 - BG on January 9th [SBR]

1949 - an oiled bird at BL on several dates in April, at BL from November 13th until March 20th 1950 with two on November 20th and 8th January, 1950

1956 - CVL on January 10th, BL from December 29th until 31st March, 1957

1957 - CVL on November 17th

1958 - BL on January 8th and 12th, CVL on January 19th and February 16th

1960 - BL from January 23rd until March 13th

1962 - BL on February 2nd [SBR], CVL on March 3rd and 17th

1963 - CVL on December 7th

1965 - BL from December 4th until 21st [1966 SBR for date extension]

1966 - CVL on December 27th and 30th

1967 - CVL from January 1st [SBR] until April 17th with three on January 14th [SBR] and two on January 29th, BL on January 30th, BL on March 19th [SBR], CVL on November 12th [SBR] and 18th

1969 - CVL on January 4th [SBR]

1974 - CVL from October 26th until 27th April, 1975 with two on November 24th and 28th, three on December 8th and 14th and up to four from December 15th until 29th

1975 - a second at CVL on February 15th, March 1st, 8th, 9th and 23rd and from April 3rd until 26th, BL on March 10th and 15th, CVL on May 10th

1976 - an adult at CVL on November 3rd and 7th, a heavily oiled bird at CVL on 5th and 9th, SGW on November 21st

1977 - an immature at CVL from November 4th with a second from 17th, both (with one visiting BL) until 22nd January, 1978, an adult at CVL from November 18th until 27th

1978 - at BL in early January *Davis (1985)*, Axe Estuary on January 28th, Sand Bay on December 3rd [1979 ABR errata]

1979 - SGW on February 4th and 5th, an immature at BL from December 2nd until January 23rd 1980, BG from December 2nd until 23rd January, 1980 *Davis (1985)*

1981 - a first-winter at BL from November 20th until December 6th, CVL on December 6th and 24th

1982 - a first-winter at BG from November 10th until 25th

1983 - a juvenile at CVL from December 3rd until February 4th, Aust Warth on December 14th and then off the mouth of the R Avon on 23rd

1984 - CVL on November 24th

1986 - a first-winter at CVL from November 14th until December 6th

1989 - an adult at Kenn Estuary on November 1st, New Passage on November 4th and December 17th

1993 - a juvenile at BL from January 17th until February 5th

1994 - a juvenile off Sand Point on December 4th

1997 - a juvenile at CVL on November 11th and 12th, another juvenile at CVL on December 14th

**Leach's Petrel**, published records since 1975:

- 1977 – at New Passage on November 13th, a corpse found at Severn Beach on November 13th, at mouth of R Avon off SGW on November 13th
- 1978 – Axe Estuary on September 28th, CVL on September 30th
- 1980 – Severn Beach/Chittening on October 9th
- 1983 – 40 at New Passage on September 3rd with ten on 4th and three on 5th, two at SGW on September 3rd, seven at CVL on September 3rd, BL on September 3rd, Portishead on September 4th, two at New Passage on September 19th, New Passage on October 8th, eight at New Passage on October 16th with one on 17th and 18th, CVL on October 16th, CVL on December 29th and 30th
- 1985 – New Passage on September 1st
- 1987 – CVL on October 19th
- 1988 – Severnside on January 3rd, two on Severnside on September 2nd, Severnside on September 28th, Severnside on October 8th
- 1989 – CVL on September 27th, New Passage on October 21st, eight at New Passage and three at Kenn Estuary on October 29th, two at New Passage and Severn Beach on November 4th, six at New Passage on December 17th, CVL on December 17th, four at New Passage and one at Severn Beach on December 21st, two at New Passage on December 22nd with circa twelve on 23rd, six on 24th and one on 25th
- 1990 – New Passage on September 23rd
- 1991 – New Passage on January 10th, November 3rd and 13th
- 1993 – CVL on December 6th
- 1994 – three past Anchor Head on September 10th
- 1995 – Severn Beach on September 27th
- 1996 – three or four at Severn Beach on November 6th
- 1997 – Severn Beach on February 26th, Severn Beach on October 7th
- 1998 – Severn Beach on January 5th, Severn Beach on September 10th, about three at Severn Beach on October 27th and 28th
- 1999 – Severn Beach on April 22nd
- 2000 – two at CVL on October 30th, Severn Beach on November 1st, two at Severn Beach on December 13th
- 2001 – Severn Beach on October 1st
- 2002 – Severn Beach on January 28th, four at Severn Beach on February 5th with up to three on 9th and 10th with one still on 12th
- 2004 – Severnside on September 13th, Severnside on October 22nd
- 2005 – Severnside on November 4th, Severnside on November 11th
- 2006 – eight at Severnside on December 3rd with 21 on 4th, ten on 5th, 45 on 6th, 20 on 7th, Ladye Bay on 4th, found dead at BL on 4th, Weston-super-Mare on 5th with three on 6th, found dead in Yatton on 7th, CVL on 7th, three at Severnside with another found dead on 11th
- 2007 – Portishead on December 7th, Severnside on December 29th
- 2008 – CI-Y on October 2nd
- 2009 – Severnside on November 18th, four on Severnside on November 23rd with six on 24th, four on 25th (with one taken by a gull) and four on 26th
- 2010 – a corpse was found in Emersons Green on November 7th
- 2011 – two on Severnside on September 12th with one on 13th
- 2013 – Severn Beach on October 27th with at least three on 28th
- 2015 – two at Severn Beach on September 14th, three at Severn Beach on November 15th with one taken into care and two the next day one of which was later seen at Sand Point
- 2017 – Anchor Head on September 11th and 13th, two at Severn Beach on September 11th with three on 13th, Severn Beach on October 16th with two on 17th, Severn Beach on October 21st, RPD on October 22nd
- 2018 – Severn Beach on January 3rd, Severn Beach on September 19th, Anchor Head on September 21st, CVL on September 21st
- 2019 – Severn Beach on September 27th and October 8th
- 2021 – Severn Beach on March 12th and 13th, Severn Beach on October 31st
- 2022 – Severn Beach on January 3rd, two at Severn Beach on November 1st, Severn Beach on November 11th

**Shag**, all published records

c1913 – BL mentioned in Davis (1947)

1916 – shot sitting on the ridge of a roof in Winscombe on November 9th [*British Birds vol 10 page 188*]

1918 – on the Avon at Bath September Davis (1947)

1923 – BL in September Davis (1947)

1951 – an immature picked up in Cromhall in August and later released at Slimbridge Hayes (2019)

1954 – an immature at BL on November 14th with this or another found dead on 21st<sup>162</sup>, immature on Marine Lake, Weston-super-Mare on December 4th

1955 – a juvenile found dead at CVL on October 3rd had been ringed on Lundy on June 30th

1957 – a juvenile found oiled at Avonmouth on December 31st had been ringed on the Farne Islands [*1958 ABR*]

1958 – one, killed by a car in Pensford on January 27th<sup>163</sup>

1962 – one near Old Bridge, Bath from March 20th into 1963 had been ringed at Bass Rock, adult Weston-super-Mare on May 19th

1963 – an adult at BL on September 21st

1967 – two at Sand Point on September 9th

1968 – Sand Point on August 16th

1970 – an adult at Sand Point on September 10th [*SBR*]

1971 – Sand Point on August 12th

1972 – Sand Point on May 5th [*SBR*] and 27th, Clevedon on December 9th, Sand Point on December 14th

1973 – two adults and a juvenile at CVL on August 7th with the juvenile the next day

1974 – an adult at Clevedon on May 22nd, three at CVL on August 7th [*SBR*], nine off Sand Point on September 6th, two at Axe Estuary on September 8th [*SBR*], BL on September 7th

1975 – two in Weston Bay on September 28th [*SBR*]

1976 – Sand Point on May 23rd

1977 – Severn Beach on July 2nd, Sand Point on November 16th, an immature at Clevedon from November 28th until December 18th with two on December 6th<sup>164</sup>, Severn Beach on December 19th

1978 – two at R. Kenn from January 4th until 12th, Weston Bay on January 4th, Portishead on January 15th, BL on January 30th, a first-winter at CVL on February 26th, a corpse at R Kenn on March 2nd, CVL on March 26th, Sand Point on September 10th, CVL on December 26th

1979 – two at CVL on October 31st, two immatures at CVL on December 2nd and 3rd with one until 15th when found dead

1980 – two at Sand Point on September 9th, an immature at the Axe Estuary on September 14th, an immature on Steep Holm from October 7th until 11th, Clevedon Bay on October 30th *Rose (1992)*, three first-winters at CVL on November 2nd with two until 9th and one until 18th

1981 – New Passage on April 9th

1982 – Clevedon Bay on November 21st *Rose (1992)*

1983 – Cl-Y on January 6th, SGW on March 31st *Upton (1984)*, an immature at SGW on May 10th, New Passage on October 16th, Cl-Y on November 20th

1984 – in flight off Kenn Estuary on January 22nd, perched on house in Portbury from February 13th until 15th when died

1988 – an adult at New Passage on January 5th, a first-winter at Avonmouth on January 9th which died later, an immature at Sand Point on February 26th, three at New Passage on August 20th with one on September 3rd and a juvenile on 24th, a first-winter at CVL on October 8th, two at Uphill on December 28th

1990 – Pulteney Bridge, Bath from December 27th throughout 1991 until November 27th 1992 and reappearing on March 3rd, 18th, 30th and 1st May, 1994

1991 – a first-winter in Bristol City Docks by Bristol Bridge from January 22nd until February 7th

1996 – Severn Beach on May 22nd, a first-winter at Clevedon boating lake on October 31st

1997 – a first-winter at Sand Bay on March 1st, three immatures at Axe Estuary on September 4th, a first-winter at Sand Bay and Point on November 30th

1998 – a sub-adult photographed on a garden wall in Downend in April [*1999 ABR*], a juvenile at BL on September 8th with presumably the same at CVL on 12th, Severn Beach on October 27th, picked up exhausted in Almondsbury on October 29th, a juvenile at BL from November 1st until 4th

2000 – the corpse of a first-summer at Severn Beach on August 23rd, five juveniles at Severn Beach on October 5th, two juveniles at Sand Point on October 6th

2001 – a juvenile at Sand Point on November 2nd

2002 – Severn Beach on February 6th, Sand Point on April 14th<sup>165</sup>

2003 – a juvenile at Severn Beach on August 22nd

2004 – three immatures at RPD on September 19th

2005 – five juveniles at CVL on August 31st with one on September 1st

2006 – a juvenile off Clevedon on September 10th, two first-winters on Clevedon marine lake on December 12th and 13th and again on 16th

2007 – Cl-Y on January 13th and 19th

2008 – an adult on Severnside on May 17th, a first-winter at BG on August 18th, a first-winter at OPS on September 3rd, a first-winter at Axe Estuary on September 3rd, a first-winter at Ladye Bay on September 11th

2009 – Severnside on November 23rd and 24th, a corpse at Severn Beach on November 23rd had been ringed in county Wexford in 1985, CVL on November 26th

2010 – three juveniles at Sand Point on September 9th

2011 – Severnside on May 22nd, Anchor Head on September 6th, a juvenile at OPS on September 8th, a juvenile on Severnside from September 13th until 18th, Severnside on October 10th, a juvenile on Clevedon marine lake on December 22nd and 23rd and at Anchor Head on 24th

2012 – an adult at Severn Beach on May 4th, Cl-Y on June 3rd, Sand Point on June 9th

2013 – an adult at Sand Bay on April 16th

2014 – Eastville Park about January 4th, Sand Point on January 18th and 19th, RPD on January 19th

2015 – two juveniles at Axe Estuary on September 13th, Sand Point on November 16th, a juvenile at Severn Beach on November 17th

2016 – a flock of 23 on Severnside on August 22nd, a flock of 11 at Walton Bay on August 26th, three first-calendar years on Severnside on August 29th

2017 – Severn Beach on August 4th, a juvenile at CVL from October 5th until 17th

2020 – Severn Beach on August 21st, Sand Point on October 8th

2021 – Clevedon on November 9th and 10th.

<sup>162</sup> Had been ringed on Bardsey Island on June 27th

<sup>163</sup> One, either a Shag or Cormorant, found in the street in Kingswood on January 26th was subsequently released at Clevedon

<sup>164</sup> *Rose (1992)* mentions two on the Blind Yeo between 6th December, 1977 and 12th January, 1998

<sup>165</sup> *Rogers (2004b)* mentions an adult at Sea Mills on 15th February, 2002

**Spoonbill**, records this century:

2000 – over Bishopston on May 1st, five over Weston-super-Mare and then at the Axe Estuary on June 6th

2001 – CVL on September 11th

2002 – Sand Bay on October 19th

2003 – an adult and immature at Weston STW on March 1st

2004 – Northwick Warth on February 15th

2006 – Severnside and OPS on April 23rd, CI-Y on May 16th, Weston STW on May 11th and 13th, all assumed to relate to one individual

2007 – CVL on August 7th

2008 – an adult at OPS and then Northwick Warth on September 6th

2009 – two at Shepperdine on April 12th, CI-Y on August 28th, a sub-adult at CVL on September 1st

2010 – an adult at CVL on October 24th was later seen at BL, a first-winter at OPS on December 2nd

2011 – CVL on May 4th, two at CVL on July 25th, five on Severnside on September 14th were later seen at CVL where they remained on 15th, two first-winters on Severnside on October 2nd with one on 3rd and then being seen at PW, CVL, CI-Y and Weston STW until 29th and again on Severnside on November 14th and 16th

2013 – Sand Point on April 19th, Wick St Lawrence on June 23rd

2014 – BL on March 22nd, an adult at PWD on May 29th and 30th

2015 – Pilning Wetlands on May 15th, Sand Point on October 31st

2016 – CI-Y on September 10th, BL on September 19th, two immatures at BL on October 2nd, two at PWD on October 19th

2017 – two adults at CVL on March 12th, Northwick Warth on April 21st, an adult at Northwick Warth on May 13th and 14th, an adult at OPS on May 23rd was later seen at Northwick Warth until June 2nd, two adults at CI-Y on July 27th

2018 – an immature at CVL on September 28th was seen later the same day at BL and the next morning at Sand Point, an immature at CVL on October 19th was seen at BL on 20th and at CVL on 21st

2019 – over Sand Point on April 19th, Pilning Wetlands on August 4th

2020 – Pilning on April 3rd and 4th, an adult at Pilning on May 25th, CVL on September 16th, Pilning in flight on September 17th

2021 – New Passage on April 29th, an immature at RPD on May 13th and at CI-Y on May 15th, Nailsea Moor on August 7th, Littleton Warth on August 15th, an adult and two immatures at CVL (and later BL) on September 21st

2022 – OPS on January 10th, Pilning Wetland a series of records between April 6th and July 2nd probably involving four individuals, an adult at CVL on August 12th, Severn Beach on November 20th, an immature at CI-Y on December 12th

**Hen Harrier**, all published records:

- 1934 – a male at Burrington Combe on December 1st [SBR]
- 1945 – a female at Rowberrow on February 25th almost certainly this species [SBR]
- 1953 – three harriers, two males and a female, almost certainly this species, on Kenn Moor on May 1st and 2nd
- 1956 – a female or immature at CVL on February 21st, 25th and 26th<sup>166</sup>
- 1957 – a female or immature at CVL on January 13th
- 1959 – a female or immature at Sand Bay on December 2nd
- 1962 – a female or immature at Sand Point on December 2nd
- 1964 – a male at St Catherine's Valley on October 19th [SBR]
- 1966 – a ringtail at BL on February 22nd [SBR], juvenile mist-netted on Steep Holm on October 9th, male at Kenn Estuary on November 20th
- 1967 – female or immature at CVL on November 19th and 20th
- 1969 – a female at Sand Bay on December 19th
- 1971 – female or immature at Sand Bay on March 4th
- 1972 – a female or immature over Steep Holm on October 8th [1973 ABR], a ringtail at Sand Point on November 4th
- 1976 – an adult male at the Axe Estuary on January 31st, an adult male at Mendip Lodge on February 1st, an adult male at Clevedon on March 7th
- 1977 – a ringtail at BL on January 7th *Davis (1985)*
- 1978 – a ringtail in the Axe Estuary/Uphill area from March 5th until 18th and on May 6th
- 1979 – a ringtail at CVL throughout January, a ringtail at BL on January 7th, a male at the Axe Estuary in January, a male at Sand Bay on January 7th, a male at SGW from February 10th until 20th, a male at Sand Bay on November 3rd and later the same date at the R Banwell
- 1980 – a female/immature at Sand Bay on October 8th and from 18th until November 23rd with a second on November 15th, ringtail at Clevedon Bay on November 16th *Rose (1992)*, a female/immature at Northwick Warth on November 2nd
- 1981 – ringtail harrier, 'probably this species' at Sand Point on May 2nd, ringtail at Kenn Moor on December 17th, male at SGW on December 19th, male at Woodspring Priory on December 19th, male at CVL on December 24th, ringtail between Severn Beach and Chittening on December 24th and 27th, one or two ringtails at SGW from December 26th until 30th, ringtail at Abbots Leigh on December 28th, Nailsea Moor on December 28th and 29th
- 1982 – ringtail at Clevedon Bay on January 1st, ringtail at Clevedon Bay on January 6th *Rose (1992)*, ringtail at CVL on January 2nd, ringtail at Chittening Warth on January 3rd, ringtail at Stantonbury Hill on January 7th, adult male at Clevedon Bay on January 27th *Rose (1992)* ringtail on Kenn Moor on February 20th and 21st, male at Filton Airfield on March 9th, ringtail at Portishead on May 13th, male at Kingston Seymour on October 27th, ringtail at Northwick Warth on November 6th
- 1984 – ringtail at Kenn Estuary on September 30th, ringtail at Yeo Estuary on October 27th and 28th, ringtail at SGW on October 28th, a male and a ringtail at CVL on December 1st
- 1985 – a ringtail at New Passage on January 13th, a male near Yeo Estuary on January 13th, a ringtail at CVL on January 19th, a male at Sand Bay on January 27th, a ringtail on the Clevedon coast on February 20th and 21st, a male at SGW on October 20th
- 1986 – an adult male at CVL on January 25th, a ringtail at Yeo Estuary on March 18th, adult male over Sand Bay on November 2nd
- 1987 – a ringtail at RPD from January 17th until 24th, at Yeo Estuary on January 23rd and 25th, at Sand Point on January 25th, a male at Yeo Estuary on December 6th
- 1988 – a ringtail at Portbury Wharf on September 12th, a ringtail at Yeo Estuary on October 30th with two on November 4th
- 1989 – an immature male at Yeo Estuary on March 19th, adult male Clevedon Bay on 31st *Rose (1992)*, ringtail at Portbury Wharf on December 3rd, male at Blake's Pool on December 3rd
- 1990 – an adult male at Clevedon Bay on March 29th *Rose (1992)*, a ringtail at Kenn Estuary on May 13th, a ringtail at Sand Bay on October 24th
- 1991 – a ringtail at Chewton Keynsham on February 17th, a ringtail at Portbury Wharf on February 19th and 20th, a male at New Passage on March 29th, an immature at CVL from April 3rd until 11th and at BL on 6th had been wing-tagged in northern Scotland, a male at Compton Dando from April 28th until May 8th, a ringtail at Portbury Wharf on May 26th, a ringtail at Portbury Wharf on October 11th, a ringtail at Kenn Estuary on October 30th, an immature male at CVL on November 9th, 16th and 17th and at BL on December 4th was probably the same Scottish tagged bird, a juvenile male at Compton Dando from November 17th until December 7th and then at Yeo Estuary on December 26th and 27th had been wing-tagged at Pitlochry in Perthshire
- 1992 – a ringtail at Northwick Warth on January 24th, a ringtail at Stanton Prior on October 10th
- 1993 – a male at Prospect Stile, Lansdown on November 7th
- 1995 – a male at BL on January 15th and 23rd was also at CVL on the latter date, a ringtail at Lulsgate Airport on April 21st, a ringtail at CI-Y on November 30th
- 1996 – a ringtail at Axe Estuary on December 26th
- 1997 – a male at Henbury on May 10th, a male at Sand Point on September 10th, a juvenile at Sand Point on October 26th, a male at Portishead on October 27th
- 1998 – a ringtail at CVL on January 18th
- 1999 – a ringtail at CVL on October 24th, a ringtail at Weston STW on November 14th
- 2000 – a ringtail at Weston STW on May 6th and at Middle Hope on 7th
- 2001 – a juvenile at Northwick Warth on October 22nd
- 2002 – a ringtail at Weston STW on January 12th, a male at CVL and BL on April 7th, a second-calendar year at Long Ashton on June 8th, a male at BL on December 8th, 14th and 26th
- 2003 – an immature male at BL on January 17th [2004 ABR], a ringtail at Weston STW on November 9th, a ringtail on Steep Holm from November 24th until 28th
- 2004 – a male at CVL on March 23rd, a male at CVL on April 2nd, a female at CVL on November 1st
- 2005 – a female at Wain's Hill on October 16th, a juvenile male at Chittening Warth on October 20th, a ringtail at Ladye Bay on November 4th
- 2006 – <sup>167</sup>a male at West Littleton on August 26th, a ringtail at Weston STW on October 17th, a male at Ladye Bay on October 22nd
- 2007 – a ringtail at CVL on October 14th, a ringtail at Blagdon on October 21st, a first calendar year at Aust Warth on October 22nd, a ringtail at Marshfield on November 26th
- 2008 – a male at Severn Beach on May 7th, a first calendar year at Marshfield from September 25th until October 1st with two on 2nd and 3rd, a ringtail at Burnett on November 8th and 22nd
- 2009 – a juvenile at Northwick Warth on September 19th
- 2010 – CI-Y and later at Northwick Warth on January 17th, a ringtail at CVL on October 2nd [2011 ABR], Aust Warth on October 13th, Marshfield on October 17th and 18th, Blakes Pool on October 30th, Marshfield on November 14th and 15th, a male at Northwick Warth on December 10th, OPS on December 14th, PW on December 19th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd, Chittening Warth on December 24th and seen later at Aust Warth and at New Passage on December 26th, CI-Y on December 28th
- 2011 – Aust Warth on January 1st, CI-Y on January 9th, CI-Y on February 12th, a male at CVL on March 25th, Wick Quarry on September 14th, CI-Y on October 12th and 15th, November 11th, 17th and 21st and December 6th and 17th
- 2012 – a ringtail at Walton Bay on January 28th, adult male at OPS on March 31st
- 2013 – a ringtail on Weston Moor on May 19th, a ringtail at Sand Point on December 24th
- 2014 – a first-calendar year at CVL on October 15th, a ringtail at Sand Point on October 22nd
- 2015 – a ringtail at Marshfield on October 18th
- 2016 – a male at Monckton Combe on March 5th
- 2017 – a male at OPS on February 24th and 25th, a male at Northwick Warth on April 30th
- 2018 – a male at CVL on April 13th, a juvenile at Marshfield from August 7th until 13th, a male at Northwick Warth on October 21st, a juvenile at New Passage on December 14th
- 2019 – male and ringtail at Weston STW on October 31st
- 2020 – a ringtail at Woodspring Bay on November 8th, a male at CVL on November 30th
- 2021 – an immature male at Middle Hope on April 10th, an adult male at OPS on April 23rd, an adult male at Yatton on October 14th, an adult male at Saltford on November 23rd
- 2022 – ringtails at Marshfield on October 7th, CVL on October 27th and Sodbury Common on December 23rd

In addition, there are a number of records, thought by the observers to be Hen, which are only published as Harrier sp. In the last 20 years these have been in 2003, 2009 (2), 2012 (2), 2015, 2016 (2), 2017 (2). 2018 (3), 2019 and 2021.

<sup>166</sup> A harrier at CVL on March 8th was either Hen or Montagu's

<sup>167</sup> One at Chelwood published in the 2006 ABR was later reidentified as a Montagu's Harrier. See 2007 ABR

**Long-eared Owl**, published records between 1960 and 2018

1960 – Wraxall in late December [1961 ABR]

1967 – CVL on September 5th [SBR]

1973 – heard at two localities, January to March<sup>168</sup>, but no evidence of breeding

1974 – Kenn Estuary on December 15th [SBR]

1975 – near Lawrence Weston on December 22nd

1976 – found exhausted at Frenchay on January 17th and released at CVL on March 31st, hunting Starlings on Steep Holm on January 18th and 19th, two roosting on Severnside in February with one still present in mid-April, found exhausted on M5 Avon bridge on March 8th but later died, Filton Airfield in May, CVL on May 1st

1979 – CVL from April 21st until 28th, Sand Point on October 27th

1980 – a corpse found near the St Georges interchange on the M5 on April 16th

1982 – Kenn Moor from December 6th until 26th

1983 – Chittening Warth on October 29th, up to three roosting at SGW from December 3rd until 10th with two until 26th and one on 27th

1984 – one found injured at Weston-super-Mare on February 28th was taken into care, one killed by vehicle at Chittening on March 8th, near Dyrham on April 20th

1987 – four roosting at Portbury Wharf on January 21st and 25th

1988 – a female, killed by a vehicle, at Chittening Warth on February 7th, two at Yeo Estuary from March 10th until 13th, Portbury on June 17th, two at OPS on November 13th<sup>169</sup>

1989 – two at Kenn Estuary in late January, two at CVL on January 8th, one of which was trapped and ringed, CVL on February 5th and 8th [1990 ABR]

1990 – up to four at Portbury Wharf from February 16th until March 19th with one or two until March 29th, Chittening Warth and Severn Beach on March 18th, corpse at Severn Beach on December 13th, two at Blakes pool on December 15th and three there on 20th

1991 – three at Yeo Estuary on January 27th with one on February 28th, six at RPD from February 27th until March 1st with at least four still on 10th, a pair fledged six young at Compton Dando with up to four noted there from September 8th until January 7th with three on 9th two until 20th and one until 1st March, 1992, male heard at Thornbury on November 16th, six at RPD on December 26th with one or two later in the month until 4th January, 1992

1992 – two at Cribbs Causeway on January 21st and 'several days' thereafter, two at West End, Nailsea during February until March 28th with one until 31st, four near Timsbury in February, one picked up injured at Keynsham about March 24th was later put down, one or two again at West End, Nailsea from November 22nd until 10th March, 1993, with one until 12th returning during the first week of November with a second from 17th December, 1993

1994 – OPS on October 12th, and 16th, see Middleton (2006), Aztec West on October 21st

1995 – roosting at OPS on March 18th with wings and feet found next day, roosting at OPS between March 25th and April 28th, see Middleton (2006)

1996 – up to seven roosting at OPS in December remained until March 28th with three still on 31st, two on April 6th and one still on 22nd April, 1997

1997 – OPS on November 1st and 2nd, PW on December 6th with four on 12th and 13th and one on 28th, two at OPS on December 26th

1998 – OPS on February 14th, one or two near Keynsham on several dates in January, on February 7th and May 8th, OPS on November 13th, see Middleton (2006), near Keynsham on December 7th and 14th, 14th and 31st January and 3rd February, 1999

1999 – at day-time roost near Keynsham from early December until 18th

2000 – Weston STW from July 23rd until August 8th and on September 10th, PW on November 8th, Stockwood Reserve on December 2nd and 3rd

2001 – OPS in January, see Middleton (2006), Severn Beach on March 23rd and 28th, Severn Beach on November 4th

2002 – Hellenge Hill on February 6th with two on 10th, three on 13th, one on 22nd and two on March 2nd and 3rd

2003 – three at a site near Weston-super-Mare on February 8th and 15th

2006 – Northwick Warth on April 21st, CVL on June 10th

2007 – Abbots Leigh on November 17th

2008 – Aust Warth on February 6th and 9th, CVL on June 4th

2009 – Aust Warth on January 1st

2010 – a pair bred in North Somerset with an adult and two juveniles seen on June 10th and 13th, an adult and two juveniles seen in Bath and North East Somerset on August 2nd, Acton Turville on December 4th

2011 – a pair again bred in North Somerset and fledged four young, PW on November 9th

2012 – two in North Somerset on January 7th, Portishead on October 27th, Weston Wood, Bath on December 31st

2013 – Northwick Warth on March 4th and 5th, PWD on March 23rd, ASW on April 11th, a pair nested again in North Somerset but the nest failed

2014 – North Somerset on June 1st

2015 – a pair bred with two fledged young seen mid July

2016 – one on February 15th, 16th, March 29th and December 20th, February 16th and 2nd March, 2017, February 24th, 7th and 26th March, 2018, wing feathers found at OPS on May 14th

2017 – at least one, probably two, at Saltford on October 6th

<sup>168</sup> Heard at BL on February 11th and March 17th per Davis (1985)

<sup>169</sup> Middleton (2006) gives the date as 27th

**Hoopoe**, published records for the twentieth century:

Davis (1947) says 'occasional visitor, chiefly on spring and autumn passage. There are at least ten notices for the years 1907-1944'.

1927 – one near Bath between July 28th and August 27th was frequently accompanied by a second and sometimes a third, suggesting they bred [SBR]

1930 – Woodspring about September 19th [SBR]

1942 – Weston-in-Gordano on June 20th

1947 – Winford garden on April 17th

1948 – Wrington on July 23rd and the next ten days, Ubley on July 28th

1949 – Upton Cheney on June 5th

1950 – Doynton from April 4th until 10th

1951 – Brentry on August 24th

1952 – Whitchurch on April 26th

1953 – Cotham Park, Bristol on April 24th, Portishead Brick Works from August 19th until September 5th

1954 – Ubley on May 2nd

1955 – shot<sup>170</sup> at East Harptree in April

1956 – Hursley Hill on May 14th, Ashley Down on July 31st, Sneyd Park on August 7th and 10th, Syston Court on August 11th and 12th

1958 – accidentally shot on Nailsea Moor on November 12th

1959 – Almondsbury on April 14th, one at Winterbourne Park from August 26th until 29th was reported as present a week earlier

1960 – Compton Dando on June 6th

1961 – Chew Magna on May 25th and 26th with presumed same at Chew Stoke during week ending June 3rd

1963 – King's Weston Down in April [1964 Bristol Bird Report]

1964 – Blagdon Hill on May 17th and Westbury-on-Trym briefly in late June [GBR]

1965 – Sand Point on May 23rd and 24th, Stapleton from July 26th until August 3rd, Sand Point on August 14th, 15th and 17th [SBR]

1966 – Clapton-in-Gordano<sup>171</sup> from June 4th until 8th

1968 – Woodford Lodge, CVL on July 2nd [SBR]

1969 – call notes heard at Rainbow Wood Bath on May 11th were probably this species [SBR]

1971 – Filton Golf course from September 6th until 16th

1972 – Frome Valley near Hambrook on May 31st [GBR]

1973 – Sand Bay on May 16th

1974 – near Thornbury at the end of April

1975 – Chew Stoke garden on July 22nd

1976 – Long Ashton golf course on June 15th

1977 – BL on May 1st, Westbury-on-Trym on May 23rd, Keynsham garden on June 27th, Winscombe on July 12th, Easton-in-Gordano and Clevedon on November 6th. One, possibly two summered in Yatton.

1978 – Rangeworthy in early July

1979 – Uphill on April 13th and 14th, two at Blaise Woods on April 19th with one until 30th, CVL on May 14th, Sand Point on June 4th

1980 – Midland Road, Bristol on April 9th, Clapton-in-Gordano on April 14th and 15th, Barrow Hospital on April 25th

1982 – Uphill on April 11th

1983 – Clevedon on April 26th *Rose (1992)*<sup>172</sup>

1984 – Wraxall on April 20th

1985 – Sandford on September 24th

1986 – Clevedon coast on August 19th, Long Ashton on September 22nd and 23rd

1987 – Bedminster Down on August 21st with presumed same in a Bishopsworth garden from 22nd until 24th

1991 – Portbury Wharf on April 22nd

1992 – Churchill on April 24th, Sand Point from 24th until 28th

1993 – West Littleton on April 26th and 27th, ASW on 27th

1994 – Hallen on May 20th and June 13th and 14th<sup>173</sup>

1995 – Max Mill, Winscombe c May 11th [1996 ABR]

<sup>174</sup>1998 – Little Badminton from April 8th until 13th, Kingston Seymour on 24th

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<sup>170</sup> In error for Jay per SBR

<sup>171</sup> SBR gives the site as West Park, Cadbury Camp ridge

<sup>172</sup> Per Clevedon Mercury

<sup>173</sup> One in Henleaze on December 21st had escaped from Bristol Zoo and was recaptured

<sup>174</sup> A bird in 1996 at Shirehampton had escaped from Bristol Zoo

**Wryneck**, published records between 1930 and 1999

1932 – Dursley in July, see Davis (1947)

1933 – heard at Winscombe on May 5th, 6th and 7th, the first time for three or four years but did not stay to nest as they formerly did [*SBR*]

1934 – Winscombe on April 13th [*SBR*]

1938 – seen and heard at BL on April 20th (or 28th per SBR)

1947 – in a garden at White Cross Court near Whitchurch on August 31st

1952 – calling at Clifton on March 19th

1954 – female found dead at Wrington on August 23rd, a juvenile trapped and ringed at Long Ashton on August 31st

1956 – Leyhill Prison, Tortworth on September 10th and 11th

1959 – Backwell garden on September 18th

1960 – Leigh Woods on April 20th, Long Ashton on August 2nd

1963 – an adult found dead at Wick in August [*1964 ABR*]

1964 – Flax Bourton on April 28th, Backwell on September 5th

1967 – Wraxall on April 27th, Sand Point on October 1st

1968 – Crook Peak on September 22nd

1969 – Sand Bay on September 5th, Sand Point on September 16th and 28th

1970 – Congresbury on September 23rd

1971 – Cromhall on June 20th, West End, Nailsea on September 15th and 16th

1972 – Combe Down, Bath from September 4th until 7th

1973 – heard calling at Downside Estate on March 26th, Wick on September 1st

1974 – CVL on September 8th and 16th [*SBR*]

1976 – Severn Beach on August 29th, Sand Point on August 29th and September 1st, BG on September 3rd, Backwell on September 8th

1977 – Bristol Crematorium on March 12th, CVL on March 12th, one in a garden at Yate on September 1st was taken into care but died on 6th

1979 – Sand Point on April 14th

1980 – Abbots Leigh on September 5th, found injured at Portishead (not Clevedon, see Rose (1992) on September 5th, ringed on Steep Holm on October 4th

1981 – Westbury-on-Trym on September 5th, juvenile trapped at CVL on September 7th, Congresbury from September 14th until 18th

1984 – Whitchurch on May 1st, New Passage on August 28th, Kingston Seymour on August 28th, Blagdon from August 30th until September 7th, Odd Down, Bath on September 1st, Saltford on September 10th

1986 – Lansdown Road, Bath on September 2nd

1987 – Stockwood open space on September 5th

1988 – CVL on August 29th

1989 – Yate on September 7th and 8th

1995 – Aust STW on September 4th, flew into window at Oldbury-on-Severn on September 8th and died two days later

1997 – released from a cat in Bishop Sutton on April 13th but found dead the next day, Compton Hill on September 18th, trapped at CVL on September 20th

1998 – rescued from a cat in Portishead on October 3rd but died

1999 – Tockington on September 7th, Sand Point on October 30th

**Red-backed Shrike**, published records up to 1976:

Wheeler (1874) said it was a 'summer visitor, frequent at Leigh, Hallen, Stapleton' while Charbonnier (1899) said 'summer resident. Fairly common. Nests on Durdham Down'. The 1925 SBR said it was 'not uncommon where suitable thick hedges occur, but local and has certainly decreased in some places. Not uncommon in the Bristol district. Scarce and erratic in the Chew Valley and frequent near Bath'. Davis (1947) said 'Summer resident. Breeds more or less regularly in suitable areas but is decidedly local and has, apparently, decreased in recent years'.

Palmer and Ballance (1968) states that prior to 1920 it was a widespread summer visitor but that it slowly vanished from the north of Somerset between 1925 and 1958 while Aldridge (1987) says 'one or two pairs bred up to about 1947 in the area of Durley Lane, Keynsham. One club member recalls taking an egg from a nest at Dapps Hill in the late 1940's during less enlightened times'.

1924 – two or three pairs in usual haunts at Flax Bourton

1927 – bred near Flax Bourton [SBR]

1929 – bred Flax Bourton. Nest with five eggs at Failand on June 10th with one hatched young on 25th. Woodspring June 10th

1930 – three pairs bred near Flax Bourton raising eight young, a pair near Barrow Gurney church raised four young [all SBR], three nests near Winscombe [1931 SBR]

1931 – male at Cadbury Camp on June 23rd with a pair feeding two young on July 3rd, female feeding two young at Failand on July 21st, male near Failand golf course alarm calling on June 19th, male with fledged young at Clevedon on August 2nd

1932 – a pair bred at Flax Bourton [SBR]

1933 – three males and a female on Backwell Hill on May 30th, pair at Flax Bourton early in May but no nest located, adults and young seen at Saltford station [all SBR]

1934 – male near Backwell Hill on May 24th, nest with one egg at BG on May 29th, probably different nest with five young at BG on June 13th, pair taking food to young at Saltford on June 15th, Clevedon on May 30th [all SBR]

1935 – two pairs nesting at BG on June 1st, pair bred at Saltford, becoming scarcer around Flax Bourton [all SBR]

1936 – two pairs bred at Saltford [SBR]

1937 – two pairs nesting at Saltford on May 27th, both pairs seen with young on July 7th, much scarcer at Flax Bourton, a female at Abbots Leigh on July 3rd, one with a decapitated sparrow in a trap in a strawberry bed at Blagdon during the summer, seen at Uphill station on June 19th

1939 – observed at Hanham Mills, BG, Saltford where pair bred, and Keynsham. One at Bleadon Hill on July 6th [SBR]

1940 – a pair raised young in Yate, seen with young in Failand in July [latter SBR]

1943 – pairs bred near Stoke Gifford on June 11th and Patchway on July 4th, nested at Saltford [SBR]

1944 – again nested at Patchway

1945 – Walton-in-Gordano on May 31st [SBR]

1946 – found around Bath [SBR]

1948 – a pair feeding four fledged young at Clevedon on July 9th

1949 – Clevedon on April 18th, Publow on May 14th

1951 – probably bred at Backwell where pair on June 17th, female July 15th and female and juvenile on August 19th

1952 – bred successfully at Ashton Gate

1953 – a male in Ashton Gate area on May 12th, three at Charlcombe Bay, near Portishead on July 4th

1954 – breeding reported from Monkton Combe, a pair at Combe Down, Bath on May 15th and 19th

1955 – at least three young reared at Monckton Combe [SBR]

1956 – a female near Leigh Woods on June 9th

1958 – a pair attempted to breed at Kewstoke but deserted, a male Redcliffe Bay on June 17th

1959 – a male at Kewstoke from mid-May until mid-June, a male near Banwell on July 8th

1960 – a male at Kewstoke from May 13th until June 18th but no evidence of breeding, a male near Kingston Seymour on June 5th

1963 – a male Horseshoe Bend, Shirehampton on May 31st

1966 – a juvenile at Sand Bay on September 11th

1969 – a male at CVL on August 28th

1971 – near Easton-in-Gordano on May 24th

1972 – Sand Point on May 9th

1973 – a female at Wick Green car park, CVL from July 6th until August 2nd

1975 – a pair bred at an undisclosed locality with a nest found containing young, an immature at Churchill on October 11th

1976 – a pair at Kenn Pier near Clevedon on April 25th, a juvenile trapped at CVL on October 10th

**Willow Tit**, all published twentieth century records

1900 – shot at Clevedon in August Davis (1947)

1903 – shot at Clevedon in September Davis (1947)

1904 – shot at Clevedon in June Davis (1947)

1927 – near Cadbury Camp on April 15th [SBR]

1940 – Stoke Gifford from September 24th until October 23rd with possibly the same nearby on December 11th and again on 15th February, 1941

**WILLOW-TIT.** (*Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti*). One was clearly identified along a water-course at Stoke Gifford on September 24. It was seen near the same spot on the 25th and subsequently on various dates until October 23. Close views were obtained and, as compared with the Marsh-Tit, the following details were noted:— sooty-brown crown with little or no evidence of gloss; well marked light patch on secondaries; greater extent of white on cheeks and the generally less smart appearance. The plaintive and drawn out call—often described as the “tchay tchay” note—was always the same, and at no time was there any suggestion of Marsh-Tit calls. A Willow-Tit, possibly the same bird, was seen and heard on the outskirts of Savage’s Wood, Stoke Gifford on December 11. There is only one previous record for the Gloucestershire side of the City (cf. *British Birds*, Vol. XXX, p. 361).

Davis (1947) said its status was uncertain. ‘Apparently scarce and very local. Not yet reported as nesting, though once noted in the breeding season between Bristol and Aust. A highly probable record is that of one at Clifton, March 1933’.

1946 – Stoke Gifford on September 23rd

**WILLOW-TIT** (*Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti*). **G.** A single bird, identified by the characteristic nasal call-note, was heard by H.H.D. in a hedgerow near Stoke Gifford on September 23. Identification was fully confirmed on the 24th when the same observer obtained excellent views and clearly noted the sooty-brown crown, the light secondary patches and the well marked buffish flanks.

1954 – Little Stoke on December 24th and 27th

1955 – Stoke Gifford on February 23rd

1956 – Oldbury-on-Severn on January 29th

1963 – a pair nested at Abbot’s Pool, Abbots Leigh

1966 – Abbot’s Pool on March 13th, Stowey Sutton on August 24th

1967 – two at Walton Moor on April 16th

1968 – two at Walton Moor on April 15th, ringed at CVL on July 24th [CVRS data], East Harptree on July 31st<sup>175</sup>

1969 – trapped at CVL on April 7th, four at Litton Res. on March 16th with one there on May 3rd [SBR]

1970 – two by road between BL and CVL on January 4th [SBR], Litton Res. on January 20th, Walton Moor on July 20th

1971 – Clutton on January 10th, between BL and CVL on February 14th [SBR], Saltford on March 14th, Yeo Estuary on April 4th [SBR], two at Coalpit Heath on April 10th [GBR], Abbot’s Pool on April 28th, at Inglestone Common on April 7th and 13th with a pair feeding young on May 2nd and one on June 27th [GBR], two at CVL on September 26th and December 5th [SBR], BG on December 24th

1972 – juvenile trapped at SGW on June 26th, CVL on July 27th [SBR]

1973 – reports from Inglestone Common

1974 – two at BL on March 29th [SBR], reports from Inglestone Common

1975 – CVL on July 2nd [SBR], Abbots Leigh from November 2nd until 16th [SBR], reports from BG

1976 – 17 records but none with supporting details. [SBR] gives Loxton in July, CVL on July 18th, BL on September 12th, BL (a different part) on September 14th and Ubley on September 14th

1977 – two at Inglestone Common on August 3rd, Vassalls Park, Fishponds on October 30th

1978 – two at Ashton Park on April 2nd, Leigh Woods on April 6th (and August 6th), Inglestone Common on May 27th (with three on September 3rd), Marshfield on August 11th, two at Wrington Warren on August 17th, ringed at CVL on September 2nd and retrapped there on October 8th and 15th

1979 – Leigh Woods on October 25th

1980 – records from Inglestone Common and Goblin Combe

1981 – records of one or two from Littleton Pits, Inglestone Common, Horton Bushes, Oakford, Claverton and Burrington Combe<sup>176</sup>

1982 – records of one or two from Inglestone Common, Dunkirk, near Colerne and Weston Woods

1983 – single records from each of Inglestone Common, Marshfield, Oakford and Wick

1984 – two at Goblin Combe on February 11th, two at Inglestone Common on 19th

1985 – Midford on April 8th and 12th, at an old breeding site in ST47 on June 28th

1986 – Burrington Ham on June 13th

1987 – a pair on Burrington Ham and a pair with two young at Cadbury Hill, Yatton, both in June

1988 – New Passage on April 11th, Oakford Valley on August 8th, Dyrham Wood on November 6th

1990 – Leigh Woods on April 12th, heard at Inglestone Common on May 12th, ringed at BL on August 25th, Wains Hill on October 11th, Tortworth on November 4th

1991 – Cleeve Wood, Willsbridge on July 7th [1992 ABR]

1992 – Northwick Warth on September 26th, Goblin Combe on November 29th

1993 – Hill on July 11th

1994 – singing at Inglestone Common on March 26th, Tortworth on May 15th

1997 – a juvenile trapped at CVL on July 15th, Yatton on November 15th

<sup>175</sup> SBR gives date as 30th

<sup>176</sup> The published record from Saltford has recently been withdrawn by the observer

**Bearded Tit**, published records while it was a local rarity

1965 – 'at least twelve' at CVL from October 17th with 'at least 50' by November 12th [SBR], at least 30 still on December 24th [SBR]: 35 trapped, two having been ringed at Portland on October 17th<sup>177</sup>, two at BL on November 21st [SBR]

1966 – heard at CVL on January 5th, at least two at CVL on March 5th [SBR], CVL on December 23rd

1970 – CVL on November 8th and male on 18th [SBR]

1971 – heard at CVL on September 12th [SBR], three or four at CVL on November 1st with two on 3rd [SBR]

1972 – ten at Sand Point on October 15th, up to seven in Gordano Valley and CVL from October 15th until December 10th. SBR gives more details of CVL with five on October 28th, two on 29th, two on November 3rd, eight on 5th, two on 12th and one on 19th

1973 – two at CVL on November 14th with four on 25th, one on December 9th, two on 24th, one on 29th and two on 31st [SBR]

1974 – two at CVL from January 10th until March 3rd, up to four at CVL from October 19th until December 31st with four heard in February and April 1975

1975 – four at CVL on February 8th with several heard on 22nd [SBR], two at CVL on March 24th [SBR], two at Sand Point on October 26th, up to four heard at CVL in October and December, two heard at CVL on November 2nd [SBR]

1976 – up to seven at CVL from October 31st until December with up to six from January 8th until 26th February, 1977, two at Hoar Gout, Avonmouth from November 13th and December

1977 – CVL from October 15th until December 17th

1978 – up to four at CVL from November 4th until December 26th

1979 – CVL from January 7th until February 3rd, up to nine at CVL from November 10th until December 24th with eight trapped and ringed

1980 – up to seven at CVL on January 2nd, March 15th, October 18th and 19th and November 27th, five at BL on October 14th, see Vinicombe (1991)

1981 – up to six at CVL from January 24th until March 5th, trapped at Littleton Pits on April 5th

1983 – a female at CVL on October 25th

1985 – up to three at CVL from October 17th until December 14th and again in January and February 1986

1986 – CVL on March 13th, a male at SGW throughout January and on March 1st, 3rd and 9th, five at CVL on November 2nd, with two on 3rd and 17th, two at CVL on December 24th with one in January, 1987

1987 – a pair at CVL in March, a male at CVL in May, maximum of five at CVL on seven dates between October 5th and December 19th

1988 – two at CVL on February 20th, a male at Sand Point on April 3rd, CVL on October 30th and November 6th, two males and a female at CVL on December 31st

1989 – one or two at CVL on three dates between January 1st and February 22nd, a female near Hallen on October 6th [1990 ABR]

1990 – at least two heard at CVL on December 15th

1991 – a female trapped at CVL on March 27th was retrapped on August 12th while a pair there on April 27th and 28th raised six young from two broods with up to three seen until October and one on January 12th and 29th 1992

1992 – two at CVL on March 8th with one on April 21st, CVL on November 8th

1993 – CVL on January 29th, four at CVL on March 24th, three at CVL on November 15th, two at CVL on December 26th

1994 – two at CVL on January 8th, CVL on March 12th

1999 – trapped at CVL on January 27th, CVL on March 14th

2000 – CVL on April 1st and 5th

2002 – CVL on November 16th

2003 – CVL on January 19th, three at CVL on March 22nd, ringed at CVL on June 1st, CVL on July 26th, CVL on October 12th and 26th

2004 – two at Chittening Warth on March 6th

2006 – a male at CVL on April 1st and 8th

2008 – a male at OPS on April 26th [2009 ABR]

2010 – at least two at CVL on March 3rd, a male at Weston STW on April 10th

2011 – a pair at CVL on October 4th

2012 – a pair at Northwick Warth from October 6th until 10th and again on 13th, PWD on September 19th, PWD on October 14th

2013 – two at Severn Beach on October 23rd, four at Weston STW on October 30th, two pairs at CVL from November 13th until December 2nd with a lone female until March 1st 2014 when trapped

2014 – three at CVL on October 11th with a male until 20th

2015 – Weston STW on February 11th, a male at OPS on October 14th with a female on 20th, two males and a female trapped at CVL on October 25th with two still on 31st, OPS on November 22nd

2016 – four at CVL on March 25th, at least four at CVL between October 3rd and November 29th, BL on October 21st, at least six at BL on December 13th

2017 – a total of 22 were ringed at CVL between October 26th and November 9th with birds still being seen at the site until 13th January, 2018, two at Weston STW on October 27th with four on 30th, one still present on November 5th, heard on January 2nd with two on 29th and 8th February, 2018

2018 – a female at CVL on February 4th, one heard at CVL on March 13th and 15th, a pair at CVL on October 19th

2019 – heard at BL on October 22nd, a male and two females at CVL from October 22nd until November 1st and ringed, two pairs at CVL from December 15th until 22nd March, 2020 with a maximum count of eight

2020 – records from CVL from October 22nd until February 8th, 2021 with a maximum count of nine and eight ringed by CVRS, three at Blake's Pool on November 5th and 6th

2021 – two at Weston airfield on February 3rd with up to six there in March. At CVL from October 4th until 20th April, 2022 with a total of 13 ringed. Up to three at Weston airfield during December and until 24th February, 2022

2022 – Littleton Brick Pits on April 16th, CVL on July 8th, August 4th and up to four in October, November and December

<sup>177</sup> A ringed female trapped at CVL on October 24th, a ringed male on November 13th *Palmer and Ballance (1968)*

**Woodlark**, published twentieth century records:

1922 – pair with three young seen at Bleadon in the autumn [*British Birds vol 17 page 59*]

1923 – pair raised two young on Worlebury Hill [*British Birds vol 17 page 59*]

1924 – singing near Winford on April 14th [*SBR*]

1926 – Tickenham on May 16th [*SBR*]

1930 – Worlebury all spring and summer, singing on Hutton Hill, Bleadon on June 22nd [*SBR*]

1932 – one or two pairs at Backwell Hill [*SBR*]

1933 – two or three pairs present on Backwell Hill during the breeding season [*SBR*]

1934 – two on Backwell Hill on March 24th with one singing on April 28th, one singing at Hutton Hill on April 12th and 21st, on west slope of Crook Peak in December, usually two but a flock of seven on December 20th [*SBR*]

1935 – at least two pairs on Backwell Hill on May 26th plus a party of five apparently young birds, Crook Peak on January 15th with two on February 4th

1936 – seen at Hutton Golf course, singing at Winscombe from May 30th until June 1st but not subsequently

1937 – still on Hutton Golf course, nested at Winscombe with singing between March and September, two on Bleadon Hill on August 28th

1938 – Backwell Hill on May 7th, six or more on Hutton golf course on August 25th with a nest found on 27th

1939 – singing during March at Winscombe and Hutton golf course

1941 – six at Severn Beach on November 9th

1942 – Lulsgate Bottom on October 5th [*SBR*]

1943 – two seen and heard at Blagdon on January 26th, at least two pairs bred on Bleadon Hill where a nest with young was found on March 28th and a second with eggs on April 11th

1944 – breeding again confirmed in the Bleadon Hill area, two nests being found at Loxton early in April

1945 – probably bred on The Warren above East Clevedon where a family party of two adults and three young was seen on May 6th<sup>178</sup>

1946 – singing on Backwell Hill on March 23rd [*SBR*], Backwell Hill on March 31st and April 7th, singing at top of Brockley Combe on March 31st with two there on April 7th [*SBR*], two near Barrow Gurney on April 14th and 20th<sup>179</sup>, two at Clevedon on May 26th, two at Long Ashton on May 30th and one heard throughout the summer but no evidence of breeding, breeding proved near Failand, a nest with four or five fledged young on June 11th, with two seen here on August 17th and one on September 2nd<sup>180</sup>, one or two pairs at Cadbury Camp [*SBR*]

1947 – Patchway from February 23rd until 26th, four at North Nibley on September 7th, pair with young in nest at Failand on May 17th, one singing at Long Ashton on several dates between April 26th and June 6th with a pair there on October 3rd, 4th and 5th and one singing on November 5th [*SBR*]

1948 – two near North Nibley on January 18th and March 28th and one on April 15th and 23rd, two at Nibley Hill on February 5th and March 14th, seen most months at Long Ashton where up to six seen in autumn and singing at night in June and one trapped in March. Heard at Churchill on June 5th and Hutton on November 21st. Pair at Sandford Hill on April 14th [*SBR*]

1949 – between Patchway and Stoke Gifford on October 29th, two at Backwell Hill from September until December, nest with five fledged young at Long Ashton on May 18th, heard at Winscombe in early April [*SBR*]

1950 – pair nesting at North Nibley on July 4th with five there on October 15th, resident on Backwell Hill, two nests with eggs in Failand at end of March and a nest with eggs there on April 22nd, seen or heard at Long Ashton throughout year

1951 – again nested at North Nibley where pair with three fledged young seen on July 8th and birds seen in the area during winter, pair with two fledged young on Backwell Hill on June 2nd, breeding season records from Long Ashton, Cleeve, Crook Peak, Bleadon Hill and Wrington

1952 – Long Ashton on February 28th, up to eight at North Nibley in late July, breeding season records from Bleadon on April 11th and May 22nd, Crook Peak on April 11th, two at Hutton on April 25th

1953 – seen at North Nibley between March and December, two in song at Hutton on March 10th and 18th<sup>181</sup>, a pair frequently at Sidcot

1954 – pair at Nibley Hill throughout breeding season with four there on September 5th, breeding season records from Crook Peak, Failand and Sidcot, 12 at Worlebury Hill on November 28th

1955 – two at North Nibley on April 11th with one on May 19th and December 8th, bred at Worlebury where nest with three young on May 12th, heard at Brockley Combe on May 17th

1956 – North Nibley on August 19th, heard at Brockley Combe on March 18th

1957 – an adult with four juveniles at Crook Peak on May 4th, Sand Point on April 19th [*SBR*], Sand Point September 28th [*SBR*]

1959 – recorded in spring from Loxton Hill and Goblin Combe<sup>182</sup>

1960 – noted in breeding season at Blagdon<sup>183</sup>, Brockley Combe<sup>184</sup>, and Wavering Down, juvenile trapped on Steep Holm on October 4th, one in flight at Weston-super-Mare on October 16th

1961 – pair at Crook Peak on March 25th

1963 – in song at Compton Martin on April 15th, BG on October 13th

1965 – Saltford on June 7th, Steep Holm on September 26th, Sand Point on October 25th

1966 – three at Sand Point on November 1st

1967 – CVL on March 10th, three at Sand Point on August 2nd, four at Yatton on October 29th, Yeo Est on Nov 19th [*SBR*]

1968 – two at Sand Point on February 22nd

1969 – one at Sand Point on September 23rd, two at Sand Point on October 5th

1970 – Worlebury on June 18th [*SBR*], two singing at an undisclosed location on July 6th [*SBR*], two at Sand Bay on December 27th

1971 – two<sup>185</sup> on passage at Middle Hope on September 8th

1972 – Ashton Park on June 19th <sup>186</sup>, three at Middle Hope on July 19th, New Passage on October 15th

1973 – up to four in Sand Point area on August 2nd, October 14th, and November 4th and 6th<sup>187</sup>, Clevedon on October 27th

1974 – Sand Bay on May 5th

1975 – two flying east at Middle Hope on January 17th, two at Sand Point on September 17th [*SBR*]

1976 – Severn Beach on April 3rd, calling in flight at Middle Hope on July 29th

1977 – Sand Point on October 29th

1979 – Sand Bay on March 11th, Kenn Estuary in song on May 27th, Portishead on September 17th, two at Portbury Wharf on October 21st

1983 – Clevedon on October 23rd

1989 – Chittening Warth on October 13th, Clevedon on November 12th [*1990 ABR*]

1992 – Axe Estuary on October 8th

1994 – Wains Hill on October 5th

<sup>178</sup> SBR also says a pair and single birds seen there on several dates from April 4th until July 11th

<sup>179</sup> SBR gives location as Barrow Common Hill and date as April 29th and week following but not seen after

<sup>180</sup> SBR gives date as 29th

<sup>181</sup> SBR says 'singing, sometimes at night, Hutton, various dates, March – Sept'

<sup>182</sup> SBR says pair on April 26th with one heard on May 13th

<sup>183</sup> SBR gives 'two singing, Ubley and Blagdon on May 8th'

<sup>184</sup> June 1st per SBR

<sup>185</sup> SBR says 3

<sup>186</sup> A record in SBR of one on the NE shore of CVL on September 26th has recently been withdrawn by the observer

<sup>187</sup> SBR says two on first two and last dates with one on November 4th

**Twite**, published records between 1965 and 1999:

1965 – two at Yeo Est on November 14th, Sea Mills on 17th, nine at Clevedon Marsh on 20th

1966 – Blackstone Rocks, Clevedon on January 16th [SBR],

1967 – Yeo Estuary on January 4th, nine Weston-super-Mare from February 12th until 15th [SBR], five at Sand Bay on February 23rd

1971 – three at Chittening on March 21st [GBR], six at Sand Bay on November 10th

1973 – two at Chittening on March 10th (19th per GBR)

1974 – six at Sand Bay on October 22nd

1975 – eight at Chittening on October 25th

1976 – eight at Locking on February 1st, 11 at Clevedon from March 2nd until 30th, Clevedon/Yeo Estuary on April 18th [SBR], two at Clevedon/Yeo Estuary on October 24th, Sand Point on November 6th, four at Chittening on 13th

1977 – up to 35 between January 3rd and March 20th and November 16th until December 20th at SGW, Portishead, Clevedon, Yeo Estuary and Weston-super-Mare

1978 – up to 40 between January 6th and March 27th and from October 4th along the coast

1979 – up to 35<sup>188</sup> on the coast between Severn Beach and the Yeo Estuary from January until April 8th and from November 11th, two at North Widcombe on January 28th, CVL on February 24th, six at Weston Moor on December 29th

1980 – flocks of up to 18 from January 1st until March 19th and from October 30th until November 29th at Hallen, Portbury Wharf, Portishead and Clevedon

1981 – up to 13 at Portishead until February 26th, Severn Beach on February 11th. From October 31st one at Severn Beach and Chittening, four at St George's Wharf from October 18th, 11 at Portishead and up to eight between Clevedon and the Yeo Estuary

1982 – up to 11 at Severn Beach and Portishead from January 18th until March 13th and from December 11th until 21st

1983 – up to six at SGW and up to 26 between Clevedon and Yeo Estuary up to April 2nd and from November 6th

1984 – 19 records up until April 14th of up to 36 mainly between Clevedon and Kenn Estuary and on Weston Beach<sup>189</sup>. From October 28th 15 records of up to 20 mainly from Aust Warth where up to 11 remained until 11th January, 1985

1985 – at Clevedon a maximum in January of 30 on 26th then up to ten until February 24th, two at Weston beach until March 8th, Sea Mills on January 26th, three at Uphill on February 1st, Northwick on February 16th, SGW on April 14th. In the autumn four at Clevedon on October 16th, 12 at SGW on October 26th, up to 11 at Aust from October 27th, up to eight on the Clevedon coast from November 16th, ten at New Passage on December 29th

1986 – flocks of up to 14 on the coast early in the year with probably 20 on Severnside and another 20 further south in March, two at Aust on November 15th, up to 4 south of Clevedon in December

1987 – Kenn Estuary on January 18th with six there on 20th

1988 – a migrant at Clevedon in October *Rose (1992)*

1989 – RPD on January 8th, c30 at Portishead Lake in October and November

1990<sup>190</sup> – Clevedon coast on November 3rd

1991 – five at Portishead on January 1st, OPS on November 23rd

1992 – Cl-Y on November 22nd

1994 – four at the Kenn Estuary on October 30th, Severn Beach on November 11th

1996 – up to nine at the Axe Estuary from December 18th until 21st with 12 at the nearby Uphill Pill from 21st with eight present in 1997 from January 3rd until 5th, again on 23rd and then February 7th and 8th

1997 – Locking on February 28th, Cl-Y on November 20th

1998 – two at the Axe Estuary on January 19th and February 11th

<sup>188</sup> Upton (1984) gives a count for RPD of 34 on March 18th

<sup>189</sup> Middleton (2006) mentions ten at OPS from February 19th until March 3rd

<sup>190</sup> Prior to 1990 descriptions were only required for records away from the coast

**Cirl Bunting**, published records since 1930<sup>191</sup>

1930 – Walton Bay, Clevedon on February 16th [*SBR*]

1934 – male near Uphill during first half of April, four or five near Crook Peak on December 10th, six near Bleadon December 20th [*SBR*]

1934 – a female at Frampton Cotterell in July *Hayes (2019)*

1935 – three at Sea Mills on January 13th, singing at Crook Peak on February 4th

1935-37 – pairs and singles reported from Patchway, Little Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Almondsbury *Hayes (2019)*

1938 – occasional in spring between Weston-super-Mare and Hutton Hill, a pair near Filton on April 2nd

1939 – a female at Little Stoke on March 27th

1940 – five at Severn Beach on December 22nd

1941 – five at Severn Beach on December 7th with two here on 25th

1942 – a pair at Sea Mills on March 28th, a male at Portishead on June 5th, a pair in Falcondale Road, Westbury-on-Trym on July 18th

1943 – three pairs nesting in the Uphill and Hutton area between June 15th and July 27th, pair with fledged young at Hutton on June 20th, pair at Severn Beach on February 25th, two males on Clifton Downs on March 21st and later, a female at Westbury-on-Trym on June 7th, a male at Brentry on June 20th and August 5th, a male near Henbury on September 5th

1944 – three on Clifton Down on January 30th, a male near Portbury on June 23rd, several pairs nesting May-July in the Hutton and Uphill area, a male at Hallen on December 19th

1945 – a male frequent in spring on Durdham Down, a pair near Charlton on October 14th, two nests in the Bleadon area

1946 – regular on Durdham Down in winter with 12 or more noted on January 3rd, at least four pairs nested in the Sneyd Park area, found around Bath [*last SBR*]

1947 – a male seen and heard at Dyrham on July 22nd, four pairs bred in the Sneyd Park area

1948 – three pairs bred successfully in the Clifton area, Portishead on April 17th

1949 – pair or two in the Clifton area, a male at Rhodgate Hill near Cleeve on April 2nd, near Frenchay on November 19th and December 10th, heard at Henbury as late as December 29th

1950 – heard on Durdham Down on May 18th, reported in breeding season from Cleeve (June 10th per SBR), Clevedon and Long Ashton (two heard on May 30th per SBR), two at BG on October 22nd. SBR also mentions in mixed flock with Yellowhammer at Yeo estuary on February 17th, male at Backwell Hill on March 28th and April 7th, pair at Clevedon on April 27th and heard in Congresbury in June

1951 – two or three pairs nested on Durdham Down where also present in winter, breeding season records from Cleeve and Portishead

1952 – males at Durdham Down on June 29th and July 13th, a pair at Tickenham on May 4th, male at Hutton on May 30th [*SBR*]

1953 – breeding season records from Clifton, Westbury-on-Trym, Henbury, Sea Mills, Tickenham on May 31st, a pair raised young in Portishead, pair at Hutton on November 26th [*SBR*]

1954 – singing at Penpole Point, Shirehampton on July 22nd, bred at Bleadon and Sidcot with breeding season records from Failand (male on April 17th) and Loxton

1955 – bred at Sand Point, a pair with a juvenile on August 6th with one there on November 12th, a male at Penpole Point, Shirehampton on October 30th

1956 – two at Bleadon on May 4th, Sand Point on May 5th, Wrington on May 12th and 26th, probably bred at Monckton Combe. SBR also mentions a pair at Cleeve on April 17th

1957 – reported from Portishead, Kewstoke, Bleadon and Loxton in breeding season

1958 – a male at Penpole Point Shirehampton on May 11th, breeding season records from Bleadon, Hutton and Kewstoke

1959 – singing at Durdham Down on May 24th, noted at all seasons in Kewstoke, Uphill and Bleadon

1960 – reported from many localities in south Avon in all seasons, two pairs bred in a garden at Wraxall, Horseshoe Bend, Shirehampton on June 1st, noted at Kewstoke and Walton-in-Gordano [*SBR*], CVL on August 6th [*Kemp (1983)*]

1961 – noted in breeding season at Shirehampton, Portishead, Wraxall<sup>192</sup>, Worle and Shipham

1962 – reported mostly in breeding season from Nailsea (male in song on July 31st), Portishead and Sand Bay although less common in the Uphill – Bleadon area than several years before, seen or heard at Horseshoe Bend, Shirehampton on several dates in May and June with a female feeding three fledged young on June 24th. SBR gives breeding season records for near Saltford and North Widcombe

1963 – breeding season records from a number of localities, SBR mentions Tickenham, Worlebury and Nailsea, GBR mentions two singing near Shirehampton on April 11th and 21st with a pair seen on 23rd and one singing on May 10th and 31st, male in song at Stapleton May 19th until 21st [*Kemp (1983)*]

1964 – breeding season records from Shirehampton (males at Horseshoe Bend on January 28th and April 4th and 8th per GBR), Kewstoke, Worlebury, Cleeve, Wrington and Shipham<sup>193</sup>. SBR also mentions Woodspring and Goblin Combe

1965 – breeding season records of singing males from Portbury, Sand Point, Weston Woods, Worlebury and Crook Peak, a pair at Horseshoe Bend, Shirehampton on May 15th with three (two males) there on June 8th,

1966 – breeding season records from Worlebury and CVL (May 1st)

1967 – reported in Portishead (where probably bred per SBR), Clevedon, Sand Point, Worlebury and Goblin Coombe

1968 – breeding season records from the R. Avon, Horseshoe Bend in Bristol [male singing and holding territory April 12th – 14th, pair May 27th, male, possibly two, on June 27th per GBR], and Sand Point

1969 – one or two reported, all months, from Aust (March 12th, or 2nd per GBR), Horseshoe Bend, Bristol [a pair bred with one young seen per GBR], Sand Point, Winscombe and Banwell

1970 – four at Bleadon Hill on March 30th, singing males at Horseshoe Bend and Winford (June), up to four at Shirehampton in June [*GBR*]

1971 – up to four at Horseshoe Bend, three singing males at Worlebury Hill where at least one pair bred with juveniles seen at end of June and a male in song again on September 4th [*SBR*], male at Hunstrete in April *Kemp (1983)*

1972 – a pair at Worlebury on May 20th [*SBR*], one or two at Hawkesbury Common, with a male on June 4th, Bleadon Hill and Worlebury

1973 – Sand Point on February 18th and 25th and September 27th, a male at Worlebury on March 29th, May 2nd and 19th with two on July 22nd [*SBR*], resident in a few localities with up to three between February 18th and September 27th at Sand Point, Worlebury and Bleadon Hill

1974 – pairs at Bleadon Hill on February 23rd and at Worlebury Golf course on April 15th

1975 – four near Severn Beach on September 14th, pairs at Worlebury on March 16th and Bleadon Hill on 8th, one near Woodford Hill on 27th, pair at Worlebury on June 1st [*SBR*]

1976 – bred at Wrington, a pair at Bleadon Hill on March 13th

1977 – a pair at Clevedon on February 8th, a singing male at Barrow Gurney on March 16th, female there in July *Kemp (1983)*

1979 – Sand Point on May 6th, pair at CVL in April *Kemp (1983)*

1985 – a pair bred in south Avon

1991 – a male heard singing on the county boundary at Wavering Down from July 17th until 21st

<sup>191</sup> Additional detail for some of these records has come from Kemp (1983) .

<sup>192</sup> Where bred per SBR

<sup>193</sup> Rose (1992) says the last breeding season record for Clevedon was in 1964

## Appendix 2

### Species previously on the Avon List

The following species have, at various times in the past, been included as part of the Avon List but were subsequently removed for a variety of reasons.

**Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*

Listed by Wheeler (1874) as 'rare, Ashton' but, as the article does not include either of the commoner Scoters, I assume this was a mistake; the record was amongst a number excluded by *Davis (1947)*

**Tengmalm's Owl** *Aegolius funereus*

A specimen shot at Winscombe in 1859 [*Zoologist 1888 p176*] and held in the Taunton Castle Museum, was reidentified in the early 1940s as a Little Owl *Davis (1947)*, [*British Birds v35 n1 p18*]

**Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula caparoch*

A specimen shot on Backwell Hill on 25th or 26th August, 1847 and identified as the north American subspecies, see *Davis (1947)*, *Palmer and Ballance (1968)* and *Zoologist 1851, pp3029-3032*, was accepted for years but was removed in a recent review of old Hawk Owl records [*May 2010 issue of British Birds*]

**Ehrenberg's Redstart** *Phoenicurus ] was samamisticus*

A male near Keynsham on 22nd and 23rd September, 1989 was originally accepted by BBRC as being of this subspecies but was later found unacceptable following a review [*2008 ABR*] [*British Birds 102, February 2008, p 84 - 97*]

**Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia pitypsittacus*

Although listed by Cecil Smith in his 'Additions to the list of Somersetshire Birds' on the basis of a specimen shot at Clevedon [*1888 Zoologist p176*] the species was dismissed by *Davis (1947)*

**Black-headed Bunting**

Although the species is listed by Wheeler (1874) the Latin name given is *Emberiza schoeniclus*, that of Reed Bunting. To confuse the issue *Rose (2000)* mentions 'some 19th century records' but gives them a feral status while a male on a bird-table in Yate on 7th June, 2009 [*Hayes (2019)*] never seems to have been submitted to, or accepted by, BBRC.

### Appendix 3 - species 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. Many of the species are not on the British list.

**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, 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

2021 – CVL from June 15th until 18th, considered to be Lesser Snow Goose (*ssp caerulescens*).

**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.

**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

2021 – one at RPD on April 17th and OPS on 21st

**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** *Hieraetus 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

## Appendix 4 – 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:

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 18th<sup>194</sup>;

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 <http://www.cvlbirding.co.uk/kev/ahg.html>  
Subsequent 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>



### Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*

This subspecies is only on the British List on the basis of a ringing recovery from the breeding range<sup>195</sup> 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,

<sup>194</sup> Photographs and discussion on page 61 of the June 2000 Birdwatch

<sup>195</sup> Although Vinicombe (2020) lists a 1980 recovery of a bird ringed in Estonia the BTO say the species involved was a Black-headed Gull.

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)

2021 – individuals at CVL on April 1st and May 25th 'showed characteristics of the race *fuscus*'.

2022 – adults at CVL on March 30th, April 6th, April 10th (two) and April 14th 'showed characteristics of the race *fuscus*'.

#### **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).