

AVON BIRD REPORT

2017

AVON ORNITHOLOGICAL GROUP

October 2018

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Front cover – Great White Egret, photograph taken by Alex Carlisle at CVL on Nov.13th

Inside front cover – Adverts for NHBS and Wildwings

Inside back cover – Avon Ornithological Group details

Back cover – Avon area map drawn by Simon Goggins, Dept. of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol

Editorial – 2017

We are all aware of the fact that over the past half century there have been marked and in some case catastrophic reductions in our farmland bird populations, but the extent and reasons for these falls were less clear. An important new book: *Farming and Birds* by Ian Newton, *New Naturalist* 135, published by HarperCollins in London in 2017 aims, and succeeds brilliantly, to delineate this fall and explain the causes and possible remedies. The author begins by noting that over the past half century, although UK bird populations have generally fallen by about 15%, most of those on farmland have fallen by at least 50% -- a massive fall over such a short time. He discusses this in great detail, both causes and effects, and comes up with the following nine reasons for this decline (pages 567ff).

- Massively increased use of fertilisers and pesticides ¹,
- Change from spring-sown to autumn-sown cereals,
- Removal of hedges and other uncultivated areas ²,
- Extensive land drainage,
- Improved grassland management with large areas of rough grassland now cultivated,
- Earlier harvesting dates for both grass and cereals,
- Reduction in habitat diversity with fewer weeds, increased specialisation, etc,
- Increased stocking densities,
- Reduced occurrences of outside (as opposed to undercover) stock-feeding.

[1 – Although the amounts have declined recently, their toxicity has increased probably making the effects worse. 2 – Some agri-environmental schemes planted new hedges and the set-aside scheme did provide some uncultivated land for a while.]

Clearly these changes have, in the main, greatly benefited the farmers, farming costs and food production, but to the considerable detriment of the game birds, waders, raptors, larks, thrushes, sparrows, some finches and buntings that breed, feed and/or roost on UK farmland. In our area Grey Partridge, Turtle Dove and Tree Sparrow, amongst others, have all but disappeared, and others including Lapwing and Yellow Wagtail now only breed, if at all, at a very limited number of sites. Some doves/pigeons and *corvids* have bucked this trend. Newton suggests that one reason for this is the open provision by the game bird industry of large quantities of various grains to sustain their quarry over the winter. One other problem that he lists concerns woodlands which clearly have close associations with farmland. Here he notes that the recent great rise in the deer populations (both native and introduced) means that much new woodland growth, which would provide food for many birds, is not available because the deer consume it before it gets a chance to develop. As compared with our area it is thought that this is more of a problem in the eastern parts of the country.

As to remedies Newton is less sure. He notes that for the foreseeable future we are unlikely to get back to anything like the situation that prevailed in our grandparents' time. A number of agri-environmental schemes have worked for a while, he speaks highly of the value of the Higher Level Stewardship schemes that have been developed recently. Some UK species have benefited, these include Corncrake, Stone-curlew, Cirl and Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge and Montagu's Harrier, all discussed in the book. But his main point is the following: these schemes need sponsors and cost money; so are we, that is the country and the taxpayers as a whole, willing to support and pay for these conservation programmes? Also, schemes that last for only a few years are helpful but what happens when they come to an end? So at this time of great and up-coming change for our country, he, I and I hope all of the readers of this Report will need to put maximum pressure on our government and politicians to come up with extensive and long-term schemes to support our wildlife, the land it occupy, and the bird and other wildlife populations that live there. In the Avon region, the area around Marshfield is an important farmland area, and one that would benefit from conservational support. Hence I would recommend that you, and our politicians, read Ian Newton's book. This will give a much deeper and greater understanding of the problems and rewards surrounding this subject.

During the last decade the editors of this Report have used ever-increasing amounts of electronic data. To give some idea about this increase the table below details the number of individual electronic records that we have received in the past seven years.

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
51,000	78,000	82,500	85,000	95,000	128,000	132,300

Table – Total number of records for the Avon area received since 2011

To put this data into context the number of records received in the year 2000 was probably between ten and 15 thousand, and further back in 1970 it was almost certainly less than 3000. But apart from the sheer amount, the use of this data does have its problems. The first is duplication, for example we received many reports of Great White Egret at CVL in 2017, but how many individuals were actually present? Secondly, unfortunately there were a number of omissions to the systematic list in the 2016 Report which can partly, but only partly, be explained by a lack of understanding of these systems. The species involved included White-fronted Goose, Pallid Harrier and Water Pipit. We apologise for these errors and we have included the relevant missing items in the list below.

Apart from the systematic list this Report contains the following items. (a) A thorough-going paper by Rupert Higgins discussing the wildfowl that occur on the Severn Estuary, (b) an update on an ongoing series of papers by Andy Davis delineating the important Avon ornithological events of the past few years, (c) a report by Mark Collar on the first recorded occurrence of an Iberian Chiffchaff in the Avon area, (d) a note by Andy Davis and Richard Mielcarek reporting on an unusual ‘invasion’ of Common Gulls to the southern parts of CVL in the early part of the year, (e) Dave Stoddard’s usual account of the BBS survey for the preceding year, (f) a ringing report by Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt, and (g) Richard Bland’s regular account of the weather for the past decade. I would like to thank all authors of these papers/reports for their input. As usual I am also most grateful to the following who wrote the systematic list, sometimes in difficult circumstances.

- Ken Carruthers – the migrant passerines except hirundines and warblers,
- Chris Craig – the near passerines, doves to woodpeckers, liaison with local ringing groups,
- Ken Hall -- the warblers,
- Robert Hargreaves – falcons, migrant winter thrushes, wagtails, pipits, finches and buntings,
- Rupert Higgins – divers to grebes, rails, and his excellent ongoing Review of the Year,
- John Martin – skuas, auks, terns and gulls,
- Nigel Milbourne – the ducks and our photographic editor,
- Richard Mielcarek – description species, escapes and *aythya* hybrids,
- Tony Scott – swans, geese, game birds, hawks, and the Red/Amber status data,
- Dave Stoddard – most of the resident passerines and BBS/AWBS coordinator.

As usual I wrote the wader and the hirundine sections, and dealt with the editing and ‘technical stuff’ (including page making) associated with the production of this Report. If any of you feel able to help with any of these matters in the future please let me know using the e-mail address given below. It would be good if someone would like to offer to take on the final production of this Report using one of the many semi-professional packages that are now available rather than me struggling (as I do) with the vagaries of the Microsoft package ‘Word’.

Thanks are also due to the following. Here, although this is mainly a repeat of that given in last year’s Report, it is no less heart-felt: Nick Hawkrige for managing the BOC and other electronic files, Richard Mielcarek for managing the electronic files, Jane Cumming and Andy Davis for checking and proof-reading, Mike Bailey, Ed Drewitt and Dave Stoddard for their reports, members of the AOG executive committee (Jane Cumming, Richard Mielcarek, Giles Morris and Jason Williams) for general support. Finally, and most importantly, thanks are due to all those who submitted records, either electronically, our preferred option, or by paper using the post.

From the Recorder, 2017

John Martin

New Avon species

2017 was rather more low-key for rarities than 2016, but there was a single addition to our species list in the form of an Iberian Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus ibericus*, in Yate for two days at the end of March. An account of this rare, but not totally unexpected, new Avon species appears on pages 175 and 176 with a photograph opposite page 176. There have been a couple of scares before in our area with mixed singing *Phylloscopus* warblers mooted as possible Iberians, but this was the real deal with the right three part song recorded and 'sonogramed' as well as typical structural and plumage features all properly documented.

Taxonomy

In last year's piece I mentioned the future change to the order we use for our species list. From Jan. 1st, 2018 the BOU will follow the IOC World List as the most widely accepted taxonomic authority and so we shall also be using this list in our next Report for 2018.. In setting out how it might affect our list it was mentioned that the redpolls would be reduced from three species to two: Common (*Acanthis flammea*) and Arctic (*A. hornemanni*). IOC updates are pretty regular, however, and in Version 7.3 of their World List (July 31st, 2017) the split of Lesser Redpoll (*A. cabaret*) (formerly part of Common, *A. flammea*) was announced, with comments indicating that it was at least in part following the BOU split (Knox *et al.*, 2001). So by the time we adopt IOC taxonomy in the 2018 Report (the official starting date for this change is Jan. 1st, 2018) our usual (since 2001) redpoll taxonomy will be in place again (unless further changes occur – which certainly might in this case!). The IOC World List is freely available at the link in the reference section below. The last web site listed gives a clear but briefer version of the list.

Larid

For further identification and taxonomic conundrums one can always turn to the gulls as a reliable source of interest and confusion. Common Gull (*Larus canus*) comprises four subspecies. 'Our' birds are nominate *canus*, which breeds across northern Europe intergrading in NW Russia with *heinei* ('Russian Common Gull'), which occurs east of the White Sea and in the Moscow region. *heinei* has a wide range breeding across northern Asia, intergrading in the Russian Far East with *kamtschatschensis* ('Kamchatka Gull'). In western North America, *L. c. brachyrhynchus* ('Mew Gull' or 'Short-billed Gull') occurs and is sometimes split as a full species, but is currently lumped by IOC. Of these three extralimital subspecies only *heinei* is on the British list. Biometrics showed that (at least) three out of 250 trapped recently in Kent were *heinei* but their identification is difficult due to variation within the subspecies and intergradation between them. We can reasonably expect that *heinei* occasionally occurs here, but proving it is a different matter. *kamtschatschensis* comes from so far east that they are likely to be very rare in Europe, although they are also perhaps likely to occur occasionally. Any claims would have to be thoroughly documented and relate to typical individuals showing the full range of features of the form.

Andy Davis and Richard Mielcarek describe some unusual looking Common Gulls they observed at CVL during a large influx to the Herriott's Pool area; see page 177. While all would agree they cannot be definitely assigned to a particular subspecies their observations should spur observers to familiarise themselves with the combinations of features that these subspecies can show (e.g. see the gull research website listed below), to look more closely at winter Common Gulls and attempt to fully document any unusual individuals.

Changes to the list of description species

Great White Egret has become so regular at the main reservoirs, especially in the second half of the year, that we are no longer asking for descriptions to support such records. We would like to continue with some documentation of records from elsewhere for the time being as they remain scarce away from the main reservoirs especially on the coast. They should be obvious, being the size of Grey Herons, but lone Little Egrets are still mistaken for them, especially in flight when displaying slow deliberate wing-beats as they sometimes do. As with any records, do make sure you are 100% certain of the identification before submitting records.

Acknowledgements

Of necessity this has to be a virtual repeat of last year's thanks. In particular Rich Mielcarek continued his sterling work on many aspects of record management, chasing, review and distribution that really should be the recorder's job. Thank you also to the recorder's committee, unchanged from last year and namely Rich Andrews, Andy Davis, Rupert Higgins, Rich Mielcarek and Harvey Rose. Dave Stoddart again organised BBS and AWBS locally and provided the local statistics on breeding populations – Tony Scott kept the status information up to date. Harvey Rose's keen eye for accuracy and detail as ever significantly improved the whole Report. Thanks are due of course to all those who sent in records – especially those who submitted notes and/or photos in support of local rarities without having to be 'chased up'. Most claims now have supporting images but please do not forget to include at least some basic details on where and when the photo was taken, what the bird was doing and so on.

We continue to assess records as they come in so it really helps if you submit them promptly. By using Bird Track you should usually be prompted for descriptions of the relevant local rarities, a useful form pops up and emailing them in is very easy (but note that this is not always the case with subspecies, so if in doubt do check the list on page 202). There should be a new improved system on Bird Track by the time this Report is published, which I am looking forward to using. Happy birding!

References

Knox, A. G., Helbig, A. J., Parkin, D. T. and Sangster, G., 2001. *The taxonomic status of Lesser Redpoll*. British Birds **94**, pp. 260 to 267.

<https://www.bbrc.org.uk/subspecies-information/skuas-to-terns>

<http://gull-research.org/canus/pages/commongull52.html>.

<http://www.worldbirdnames.org/>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ibi.12536>

Review of the Year

Rupert Higgins

For much of the year rainfall was low and temperatures were on the low side, but there were cold spells in the second winter period. There were notable influxes of Waxwing and Hawfinch in the first and second winter periods, respectively. Terns, skuas, Kittiwake and Little Gull were all notably scarce. Few striking trends were evident in the breeding season but the long term declines of several species appear to be continuing. There was no evidence that Grey Partridge, Nightjar, Grasshopper Warbler or Tree Pipit bred. The spring was the best season for rarities, which included our first Iberian Chiffchaff, with Serin, Bonaparte's Gull, Purple Heron and Black-winged Stilt also noteworthy; the autumn was far quieter although records of two scarce shearwaters were also noteworthy.

First Winter Period

The first winter period was particularly mild and dry, although there were cold spells in the first five days of the year and from Jan.19th to 31st before February settled into a pattern of overcast skies, little rain and southerly or westerly winds.

Water levels at the reservoirs remained low during the first half of January meaning that numbers of some waterfowl species, notably Bewick's Swan and Teal, were reasonably high here. Large growths of water plants survived from 2016 at CVL, attracting exceptional flocks of Coot and reasonable numbers of Pochard. The most notable wildfowl species here was Scaup, with a marked influx reaching a maximum of 21 on March 25th; there were also smaller numbers at Weston STW and it appears that birds were moving between our area and Cardiff Bay. The mild weather may have been responsible for the scarcity of Brent Goose and White-fronted Goose, but Wigeon counts were within the normal range. On the Estuary there were noteworthy counts of Shelduck at Cl-Y and Sand Bay; good numbers of Goosander at the former site; and of Shoveler at PWD. Scarcer species included a Smew at Chipping Sodbury golf course on Jan. 2nd and a female Eider at Weston-s-Mare, where it favoured the marine lake, from Jan. 2nd to March 20th.

Divers were, as in the previous two years, notably rare. Westerly winds were sufficiently strong to bring Kittiwakes into the Estuary on Feb. 23rd whilst a Gannet at CVL on 5th was very unusual. Although concentrations of over 1000 Mediterranean Gulls are now recorded in Dorset this species has not become any more numerous with us, and the maximum count in the period was only six. A Little Gull was seen at PWD between Jan.13th and Feb. 3rd, and at OPS on 6th.

Short-eared Owl was fairly numerous, with notable concentrations at Aust Warth and the Axe Estuary, but Merlin was scarce. Marsh Harrier has become far more frequent in recent years, but a record of one at Bradley Stoke on Feb. 1st is still noteworthy.

The recent trends shown by our most abundant estuarine wader species continued: Oystercatcher remains numerous; Curlew numbers were stable; Dunlin showed another small improvement; and there were some exceptional counts of Redshank. Grey Plover and Black-tailed Godwit numbers remained high from 2016 and a count of 1120 Knot at Northwick Warth was exceptional. It was, however, a poor winter for Ringed Plover, Purple Sandpiper and Sanderling. Away from the Estuary the mild and dry conditions were probably responsible for poor numbers of Lapwing and Golden Plover, but those of Snipe were average and Jack Snipe was more numerous than usual. Less common species included a Little Stint that remained at BL until Jan.13th and approximately 12 of both Common and Green Sandpipers. A Greenshank at Severnside on March 10th was probably a wintering bird rather than a migrant; there were no records of Spotted Redshank.

The mild weather appeared to favour most of the expected species of passerine, including Black Redstart and Stonechat, but Water Pipit was scarce and there were no Firecrest sightings. Redwing

numbers were about average but Fieldfare was less numerous than usual and Brambling, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin were all extremely uncommon. Several species of conservation concern, including Skylark, Starling, Chaffinch and Yellowhammer, showed evidence of ongoing declines. As usual the first two months of the year produced some impressive passerine counts, especially at Marshfield where maxima included 400 Stock Dove and 200 Corn Bunting. Elsewhere high counts included 1500 Jackdaw gathering to roost at CVL, 63 Blackbirds at OPS, 41 Song Thrushes at Sandford, 51 House Sparrows at New Passage and 76 Reed Buntings at Weston STW.

Rarities lingering from 2016 were a Ring-necked Duck, which was last seen at CVL on Feb. 7th; two Cattle Egrets at Toghill until March 11th; and up to 12 Great White Egrets at BL and CVL. Several birds were found during the cold weather early in January, starting with an American Wigeon at Littleton Warth on 2nd, followed by the season's only Siberian Chiffchaff, at Hour Gout on 6th. A large influx of Waxwing got underway from 4th and small flocks remained throughout the period. Notable winter water birds included a Long-tailed Duck, which remained at BG for over three months from 23rd, and a Slavonian Grebe, which was a one-day only bird at CVL on 13th. This site then produced a flurry of good gull records: Caspians on 17th and 26th; a Kumlein's on 29th; and a sequence of Ring-billed, starting on 18th and 20th, then from Feb. 6th to 12th, with different individuals on 14th and 15th, and another sighting on 21st. Sand Bay has become our best site for Dartford Warbler, and one was present here from Jan. 18th to Feb. 8th. A Goshawk was found near Marshfield on 5th, the same day that a Cattle Egret arrived at CVL. Further Cattle Egrets were seen at Sandford on 10th and at Backwell Lake from 20th to 24th. It seems astonishing that the next two species must now rate as more noteworthy than Cattle Egret: a Long-eared Owl at an undisclosed site in North Somerset on 16th and March 2nd; and a Hen Harrier at OPS on Feb. 24th and 25th.

Spring

Dry and warm, occasionally hot, weather continued through most of the spring and there were several spells of southerly winds, starting on March 10th but interspersed with north-easterlies between 22nd and 25th, and April 25th to May 11th.

There were records of three duck species that have become much less frequent in recent years, for different reasons: the Smew reappeared at Chipping Sodbury Common on March 2nd and between April 11th and 24th; a Red-breasted Merganser at Cl-Y on April 3rd and a Ruddy Duck at Backwell Lake on May 20th were the only records of these species in 2017. It was a poor spring for Garganey after the first of the year that was seen on April 8th. Eight Eider were noted at Severn Beach on the following day. Shortly afterwards a White-fronted Goose was seen on the Axe Estuary on 11th and 19th, and on May 3rd; it or another arrived at CVL on 22nd.

The first Ospreys were seen on March 27th and the first Hobby on April 17th and there was a small passage of Marsh Harrier in April. Less usual was evidence of Buzzard passage at BL on March 28th. A Hen Harrier was over Northwick Warth on April 30th.

It was largely a poor spring for waders, with low or moderate numbers of most and only Common Sandpiper having a good season. The year's first Little Ringed Plover was early, on March 17th, followed by the first Whimbrel on April 7th but the first major movement came between 14th and 18th when the first Bar-tailed Godwit and Greenshank were seen and the Common Sandpiper passage peaked. There was then another pulse of movement around 24th as winds swung round to the north producing maxima of Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit and Dunlin. Similar winds in early May produced a further minor peak involving Grey Plover, Greenshank and the spring's only Wood Sandpiper, at the Pilning Wetlands on 5th. Other less common species recorded included Little Stint, with three sightings between April 29th and May 24th, but no Curlew Sandpipers were seen.

The spring was poor for all skua and tern species and for Kittiwake and Little Gull, as was the rest of the year. Passage began during a spell of cool and wet weather in mid-March, with a single Little Gull on 15th, the year's first Sandwich Tern on 18th, and an influx of Kittiwake on 19th. The first Common

Terns, seven at OPS on 30th, were early and the same day produced Sandwich Terns also at OPS and, more notably, Newton Park. There was some evidence of a very small passage of Black Tern and Arctic Tern between April 22nd and 28th. There were only two skua records in spring, both single birds: an Arctic at New Passage on May 5th and a Pomarine at Sand Point on 15th. The year's only Little Tern was at OPS on 30th.

Passerine migration began in early March, with first records of Sand Martin on 5th and Swallow and Wheatear on the 6th, before a major influx as temperatures rose around 10th produced the first migrant Chiffchaffs and White Wagtail. There was then a slight lull as easterly winds dominated until the last two days of the month, when Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler arrived in numbers and the season's first Redstart and last Fieldfare were seen. The first ten days of April saw a steady arrival of migrants, including first records of Cuckoo, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Yellow Wagtail and Tree Pipit, and the last of Brambling and Water Pipit, without any major influxes. A marked rise in temperatures around 14th coincided with large arrivals of Swallow, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat and Reed Warbler and the first sightings of Swift and Garden Warbler. A Redwing on 25th was exceptionally late. Winds in the early part of May came largely from the north-east but this did not prevent a large movement of House Martin, Swallow, Spotted Flycatcher and Yellow Wagtail on 6th. The spring was poor for several of the less common migrants, including Ring Ouzel, Pied Flycatcher, Wheatear and Yellow Wagtail, but better than average for Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher.

The spring produced some excellent rarities, including a first for our area and our second and third records of two other species. Gulls, as is often the case, were prominent in March starting with a Caspian at the Shortwood Tip on 2nd, followed by an Iceland at PWD on 20th. Two Spoonbills were at CVL on 12th. There was a multiple arrival of Cattle Egrets, starting with one at CVL on 18th, two on 22nd and another three on 23rd. The outstanding bird of the period was a singing Iberian Chiffchaff at Kingsgate Park, Yate on 25th and 26th. Early April produced three Tree Sparrows at Sand Point on 3rd and a Serin at New Passage on 6th: the latter was our third ever and the first since 1986, although in the 1970s this species was widely predicted to colonise southern Britain. There was then a lull until 25th when a Purple Heron began a 15 day stay at PWD, unfortunately in an area with no public access. The same site was then visited by our second ever Bonaparte's Gull, on May 6th followed by a Black-winged Stilt on the Pilning Wetlands from 7th to 9th. Mid-month produced a small flurry of interest, with *arctica* Dunlin being identified at Severnside on 14th and at CI-Y on 16th, and a Blue-headed Wagtail at Severnside on 17th. Finally, a Glossy Ibis made a brief visit to CVL on 27th.

Breeding

Shelduck had a very good year, particularly at PWD and CI-Y, but overall the year was rather poor for wildfowl. There were no broods at all of Shoveler and, for the third successive year, Pochard, and it was a poor year for Gadwall and Great-crested Grebe. Amongst the more widespread species Mute Swan also had a poor year; there was also ongoing evidence of a gradual decline in both the Mallard and Coot populations; Little Grebe and Moorhen appeared to suffer poor productivity; and the number of Grey Heron nests at CVL was much reduced.

Trends in raptor populations were generally similar to those seen in the previous two years, although Sparrowhawk fell back after an increase in 2016. Kestrel and Hobby both continued their fall, but Peregrine had an average year. Buzzard remained fairly stable, as did Tawny Owl, but the Little Owl decline continued.

The most significant event as regards breeding waders was that at least 14 Lapwing young were seen at the Pilning Wetlands. This once widespread species is now effectively extinct as a farmland bird in our area, but can still utilise new wetlands. Four other species cling on at various coastal sites: Oystercatcher was present at three sites and four well-grown young were seen at OPS; five Ringed Plover chicks were reared at PWD; Little Ringed Plover pairs were seen at Severnside and PWD; and Redshank was present at four sites, but with no evidence of success.

Population levels of many passerines were little changed since 2016, but some trends were evident. Some of these are particularly concerning. Ongoing declines in populations of Rook, Blue Tit, Chaffinch and Yellowhammer continued, although there was some evidence of improved productivity in Blue Tit. Species that have declined very strongly in recent years had mixed fortunes: Cuckoo declined slightly after two years of modest improvement; Greenfinch and Reed Bunting also showed a slight decline; Willow Warbler, Starling and Mistle Thrush showed little change; and Spotted Flycatcher, Bullfinch and Linnet improved slightly. Amongst the few more abundant species showing any change Wren declined significantly; Song Thrush numbers increased slightly but productivity was poor; Robin appeared to become slightly more common; and Goldfinch, after several good years, declined slightly.

There were, unusually, no records in our area of churring Nightjar and neither was there any evidence that Grasshopper Warbler bred. Tree Pipit records were restricted to two one-off sightings and Stonechat fell back after a good year in 2016. Cetti's Warbler, however, continued its strong comeback after the decline caused by cold winters early in the decade. There was no proof that Firecrest bred in 2017, but three sightings in June suggest that our area may have an extremely small population. A single Goldeneye chick was seen at CVL, but did not survive to fledging, and two pairs of Little Egret were seen in the Uphill heronry. Up to five singing Quail were heard in the Marshfield area, but there was no evidence that Grey Partridge bred in our region.

Summer

June was fairly dry and temperatures were generally moderate, apart from a brief hot spell around 21st. July was hot and dry until the month's last ten days, which were cool and wet.

The summer months are often our best for Common Scoter but numbers this year were poor, with the exception of five at CVL on June 29th and nine both here and at BL on July 3rd. A Scaup at Litton Resrs. on June 16th was entirely unexpected and a pair of Wigeon that were seen several times across the months at PWD was also unusual.

Earlier in the decade mid-summer gales became regular, and invariably resulted in a series of seabird sightings; this now seems to have been a temporary phenomenon and seawatching has become less rewarding, and probably also less popular. Numbers of all the regular species were low with, for example, only two Storm Petrels and one Kittiwake seen, but there were small flurries of interest around June 6th, 11th and 25th. In view of its current scarcity the most notable records were of Arctic Skua at Severn Beach: one on June 6th, two on 11th and one on 29th. The now customary late summer influx of Mediterranean Gull began on 22nd. CVL was visited by a Little Gull from 30th.

As usual any lull in wader passage was very short-lived and both north- and south-bound birds were seen in the summer months, along with lingering Whimbrel, Turnstone and Common Sandpiper. The spring's last Snipe was on June 10th and the autumn's first on July 23rd. The year's largest total of Little Ringed Plover was 11 on June 28th, and Green Sandpipers returned from 15th followed by Redshank from the end of the month.

Some notable concentrations of passerines were recorded in June. These included 500 Rooks at Stanton Wick on 14th and 30th; 1100 House Martins at CVL on 6th; 185 House Sparrows at Worle on 24th; and 20 Siskin at BL on 30th. There were no reports at all of Crossbill, but a White Wagtail at Litton Resrs. on 16th was unusual.

There were no outstanding rarities over the period, but a trickle of scarce visitors provided some interest, mostly involving wetland birds. A Spoonbill was at Northwick Warth on June 2nd and the now-expected Great White Egret influx began with one at BL on 8th. A Hawfinch over Saltford on 9th was most unexpected, but presaged things to come, and a Long-tailed Duck at CI-Y was also unseasonable, unlike the two Spoonbills seen here on 27th. The early autumn wader passage was enlivened by a Temminck's Stint at Pilning Wetlands from July 19th to 22nd.

Autumn

The season was very dry. Winds were generally light and from the south or west, with the exception of a spell of northerlies around Sept.19th and a more prolonged period of easterlies in early October.

Water levels at the reservoirs fell rapidly over the autumn, resulting in high numbers of Teal, Shoveler, Pintail and Mallard at CVL in particular. The generally settled conditions also allowed good growths of water plants to develop here and these attracted large flocks of Mute Swan, Wigeon, Gadwall and Coot; Tufted Duck was also numerous, the environmental conditions presumably also suiting its invertebrate prey. Counts of both Little and Great-crested Grebe were low, however. Elsewhere, a total of 1000 Shelduck in the Axe Estuary / Sand Bay area was exceptional.

As in the spring tern passage was poor and that of Kittiwake and Little Gull even worse. There were minor peaks in Common Tern numbers between Aug.19th and 23rd and inland records of Sandwich Tern on 25th and 28th. A spell of brisk south-westerlies around Sept.11th brought two Manx Shearwaters to CVL, and good numbers of this species, Storm Petrel, Leach's Petrel, Arctic Skua and Great Skua to the Estuary. There was a further influx of seabirds as winds swung from easterly to westerly from Oct.15th; this brought further Leach's Petrels, a Pomarine Skua, more Arctic Skuas and a reasonable number of Great Skuas.

Marsh Harrier was recorded widely in our area in August, with 11 records from CVL. A good Osprey passage lasted from 14th to Sept. 29th, and the first Short-eared Owl was also seen on Aug. 14th.

Wader passage was mixed. Green Sandpiper had a good year, particularly at CVL, as did Ruff whilst a count of 575 Ringed Plover at CI-Y in late August was noteworthy. However, numbers of Grey Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, and Greenshank were low. An early Spotted Redshank on July 27th was followed by the main passage that was better than in most recent years from Sept. 3rd to Oct. 24th. Numbers of Little Stint and Wood Sandpiper, between Sept.17th and Oct. 20th, and July 10th and Sept.13th respectively, were average. One species that has become markedly more common in recent years is Black-tailed Godwit. This year saw a major influx from Aug. 23rd and, as in 2016, a large flock took up residence at Severnside, reaching a maximum of 700 on Oct. 1st.

There were good passage numbers of several passerine species, although much improved coverage in recent years of key sites distorts any comparisons with earlier years. However, some scarce species had very poor years with, for example, only four records of Grasshopper Warbler, two of Ring Ouzel and one of Pied Flycatcher in 2017. The first definite signs of passage came between July 3rd and 5th when the first Redstart, Whinchat and Yellow Wagtail appeared, all three then being recorded in exceptionally high numbers. The first Wheatear was seen on 13th and House Martin passage became evident from 19th. There were peaks in Willow Warbler records on Aug. 8th and of Sand Martin around 14th, with the year's last Cuckoo on 15th. Migration was most evident from 23rd to 28th, when there were influxes of Redstart, Whinchat and Wheatear and the season's largest counts of Tree Pipit. Yellow Wagtail numbers peaked from Sept.1st to 6th but the month was generally rather quiet. Some departure was evident, with last records of Garden Warbler on 5th, Whinchat on 6th, Lesser Whitethroat on 19th, Swift (apart from an isolated sighting of a swift species on Oct. 20th) on 21st, Sand Martin on 22nd, Willow Warbler on 28th and Redstart on 30th. There were also arrivals through the month, including Firecrest from 7th, Siskin from 17th, Lesser Redpoll from 24th, Brambling on 27th and Redwing on 29th. As the easterly airflow tailed off from Oct.14th there were peaks in movements of Starling, Robin, Pied Wagtail, Lesser Redpoll, Siskin and Reed Bunting and the first Fieldfare on the rather late date of 15th. The autumn's most striking movement involved Chaffinch, peaking at an estimated 12,500 on 24th. Late lingering summer visitors included Tree Pipit to 12th, House Martin and Wheatear to 27th, and Swallow to Nov.17th.

The autumn saw a good scatter of scarce migrants rather than any major rarity, and several of the better records involved fly-past birds. It is striking how scarce Nearctic waders have become: since the bumper year of 2011 the only autumn arrivals in our area have been two Pectoral Sandpipers and an American Golden Plover; 2017 was another blank year for these popular birds. The season began with a Sooty Shearwater passing Anchor Head on Aug. 3rd, which was our first since 1974; a Shag at

Severn Beach on the next day was less exceptional. A *limosa* Black-tailed Godwit was identified at Pilning Wetlands on 5th and a record influx of Great White Egret began on 7th. The month was then quiet until the last few days, when records of four Tree Sparrows at Chipping Sodbury Common on 27th and a Nightjar at Burnett on 30th were of some note. A Woodchat Shrike, also at Chipping Sodbury Common, from 30th to Sept.19th (although it may have been present earlier) was the season's most popular rarity. The small influx of common seabirds on 11th was accompanied by a Balearic Shearwater at Sand Point and Anchor Head and Grey Phalarope at Severn Beach and Anchor Head. There were four sightings, all of them coastal, of Sabine's Gull over the next two weeks. A Honey Buzzard flew past Walton Bay on 11th and a small influx of Cattle Egret began on 17th. One Yellow-browed Warbler in the season, at New Passage on 24th, represented at very poor showing by recent standards. October got off to a quiet start, with a Turtle Dove at New Passage from 1st to 7th, a Shag at CVL on 5th and at least two Long-eared Owls at Saltford on 6th. A minor influx of Bearded Tits began on 8th, gaining strength from 15th but paled into insignificance compared to a major influx of Hawfinch beginning on 14th. A Common Rosefinch flew over Northwick Warth on the same day. The autumn's second seabird movement mid-month produced a Grey Phalarope at Severnside from 8th; Long-tailed Duck at CVL and Great Northern Diver at Severnside on 21st; and a Sabine's Gull here on 22nd. The same area was visited by Shore Lark on 28th and Woodlark on 29th.

Second Winter Period

November began and ended with cold, frosty weather either side of a period of warmer, wetter and windy weather. December got off to a warm start but frosts, accompanied by some snow returned from 8th before temperatures rose from 12th. They then fell back with further snow on 26th.

Duck numbers remained high at the reservoirs until sustained rain in December sent the water levels higher and up to seven Bewick's Swans were present from Nov.10th. Pochard counts at CVL were particularly low but Tufted Duck remained numerous and there were good numbers of Shoveler at PWD. Neither Brent nor White-fronted Goose was recorded during the period.

Although there were several spells of windy weather, notably around Nov. 22nd, seabirds were rare. A Little Gull was at CI-Y on Dec. 12th and a total of 32 Kittiwake at Severn Beach on 29th was, by the standards of recent years, noteworthy.

Counts of Dunlin were low but otherwise numbers of the frequent wader species were similar to those in the previous winter with Redshank particularly numerous until the cold weather late in December provoked a departure. Away from the coast there were good numbers of Golden Plover, but Lapwing, Jack Snipe and Snipe were all scarce. Populations of Woodcock are difficult to estimate but it appeared to be unusually numerous in November; a count of 30 at Weston Big Wood on 16th emphasises how much it is under-recorded. Scarcer waders included a Little Stint at BL and CVL from Dec.1st to 19th; around nine each of Common and Green Sandpiper; and a Spotted Redshank at CI-Y from 5th with two from 17th.

This period was much better for winter passerines than was the previous winter with improved numbers of Fieldfare, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin and, by recent standards, large numbers of Brambling. Amongst the less frequent species around 15 Firecrest was a good showing, Water Pipit was reasonably numerous and Stonechat showed another improvement. There were signs of declines in the populations of Starling, Blackbird, Linnet and Reed Bunting. Noteworthy counts in the last two months of the year included 34 and 38 Song Thrush at Saltford and Weston STW, respectively, and 300 Skylark at Marshfield.

The winter was rather quiet in terms of rarities. The year's largest Great White Egret count was 35 at CVL on Nov. 3rd and a male Long-tailed Duck visited the reservoirs from 4th. The year's only Snow Buntings were two at OPS on 5th. CVL was visited by a Great Northern Diver on 11th, both Lesser Scaup and Grey Phalarope on 12th, and a Caspian Gull on 14th. A Sabine's Gull was seen at Sea Mills during the windy weather of 22nd. There was only one Siberian Chiffchaff, at Hoar Gout on Dec. 9th and Whooper Swans were seen on 5th and 9th. Hawfinches became gradually more widespread as the winter wore on, with the largest count in the period being five at Newton Park on 26th.

Weather Report for 2017

Richard Bland

The Bristol Naturalists Society (BNS) began publishing weather data in 1872 with G. F. Burder's paper (in the BNS proceedings for 1873) on rainfall in Clifton since 1853, and this led me to search for weather data back to that date. From 1920, until its closure in 2002, the BNS was able to use data gathered by the Long Ashton Research Station. From 2003 I have made use of the temperature data from the website www.bristolweather.org which is based in Totterdown (Bristol). It has also traced records from some other sources back to 1853, and I have used these to fill in historical gaps. The official Meteorological Office Bristol temperature data is taken at Lulsgate, and overall this is two degrees colder than that recorded at the Totterdown site. This suggests that the figures after 2002 cannot be directly compared with the earlier ones. Since 2002 I have used my own rain gauge situated in the Clifton/Stoke Bishop area, as Burder measured rainfall in Clifton. Rainfall figures vary considerably with location, and a long series is crucial to any understanding of the continuous processes of climate change. I use the term 'long-term average' below to mean the average back to 1853. Most meteorologists use the mean daily temperature as the basic unit, but many sources only quote daily maxima, and so I have used this figure throughout.

Summary for 2017

The year had an average maximum temperature of 15.3°C, warmer than in 2016, and well above the average, since 1853, of 13.7°C. It was the fourth successive year with an average temperature over 15.0°C. Prior to 2011 there had only been four years that had reached this figure. It was a very dry year; the annual rainfall total of 744mm was the lowest since 1978, and eight months had below average values. April had only one-mm of rain, the record low was set in 1854 when there was no rain at all. May, and the mean maximum temperature at 19.1°C was the third hottest on record, beaten only by 1896 at 19.3°C and 1901 at 19.6°C.

The two charts below show how the 2017 monthly data compares with the corresponding monthly long-term averages. It is worth pointing out that while the data represented in the rainfall chart were largely negative, the data for temperature were wholly non-negative.

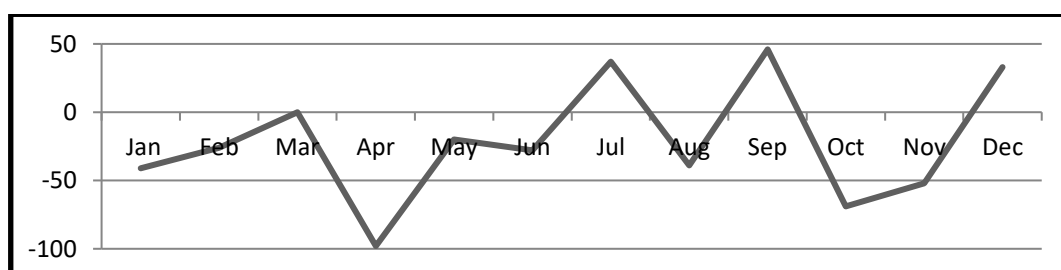


Chart 2 -- Percentage difference between the 2017 monthly rainfall and the average since 1853

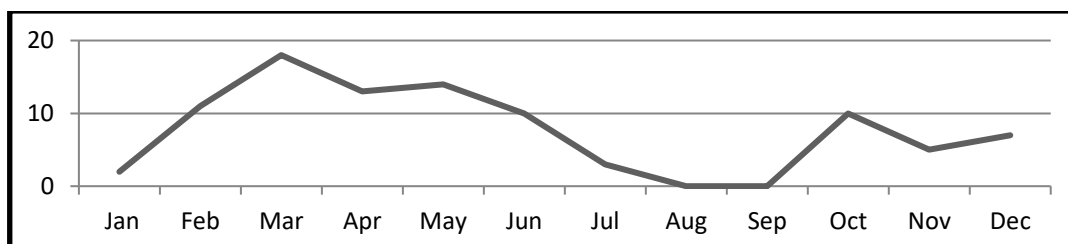


Chart 3 -- Percentage difference in monthly temperature between 2017 and the thirty-year average

Table 1 shows the annual average temperature and rainfall for the past decade, and the thirty-year average, the normally accepted definition of climate.

Year	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Ann. av. Max. in °C	13.7	14.6	13.7	15.5	14.7	14.8	16.1	15.4	15.0	15.3
30-year av. in °C	13.9	13.9	13.9	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.1	14.2	14.3	14.3
Rainfall in <i>mm</i>	1150	986	747	847	1424	801	1056	870	855	744
30-year av. In <i>mm</i>	958	959	953	946	961	959	964	962	971	974

Table 1 – Annual average maximum temperature and rainfall. The second and fourth rows give the average for the thirty years up to and including the year referred to

Seasons

Winter (December 2016 to February 2017) -- Average maximum temperature was 9.1°C, a degree and a half colder than in 2016 but still half a degree above the ten-year average. Rainfall averaged at 50*mm* per month, half the figure for 2016, and December 2016 had only a third of its normal rainfall. There were 23 frost nights (October to April), compared with an average 32 over the past decade. No snow fell, but there were 15 days when ponds were frozen.

Spring (March to May) -- Average temperature was 15.8°C, the second warmest since 1853 and only beaten by 2011; this was almost three degrees warmer than the long-term average. The 30-year average is now 13.7°C, just higher than the previous peak in 1960. It was a dry spring because of the April drought.

Summer (June to August) -- Average temperature at 21.4°C was a degree above the long-term figure, and the same as for 2016. The 30-year average, 20.5°C, was the same as in 1880 and 1955. Rainfall was close to average as July was one of the three wettest months of the year.

Autumn (September to November) -- Average temperature at 15.5°C made it the fourth autumn in a row to exceed 15.0°C. Both October and November were two degrees above average. September was a wet month, and had more rain than October and November together.

Seasonal comparisons -- To put the 2017 seasonal average temperatures into perspective, Table 2 shows the seasonal temperature extremes, with their year, the average since 1853, and the differences between 2017 and the long-term average, Table 3 provides the same data for rainfall.

	2017	Minimum	Maximum	Av. since 1853	Diff.
Winter	9.1	1917 - 2.5	1920 - 10.6	7.5	+1.6
Spring	15.8	1887 - 10.4	1893 - 16.6	13.0	+2.8
Summer	21.4	1883 - 18.0	1976 - 23.9	20.3	+1.1
Autumn	15.6	1915 - 10.6	1959 - 16.8	14.0	+1.6
Annual	15.4	1892 - 12.1	2014 - 16.1	13.7	+ 1.7

Table 2 -- 2017 seasonal average temperature (in degrees centigrade) compared with minimum, maximum and the difference between 2017 and the average since 1853

	2017	Min.	Max.	Av. since 1853	Diff.
Winter	50	1964 – 21	1995 – 154	79	-29
Spring	38	1893 – 17	1981 – 107	60	-22
Summer	68	1995 – 11	2012 – 149	74	-6
Autumn	58	1978 – 26	1935 – 173	87	-29
Annual	62	1864 – 49	2012 – 118	75	-13

Table 3 -- 2017 seasonal average rainfall, *mm* per month, compared with the maximum, minimum and average figures

Monthly summaries for 2017

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Av.
Temp. °C	8.2	9.4	12.9	15.2	19.2	21.5	21.9	20.8	18.6	16.3	11.3	8.8	15.3
Rain mm	60	52	61	1	52	46	104	53	105	30	51	129	62

Table 4 -- 2017 monthly average temperatures and total rainfall with the average for the year in the last column

For each month I have included the monthly average maximum temperature, and the range of this figure over the past decade. This helps to put the 2017 figures into perspective, and emphasizes the very large range of temperatures that wildlife has to cope with annually.

January (Average 8.2°C, decadal range 4.1°C to 9.8°C; rain 60mm, range 60mm to 169mm). The month began with a cold snap, northerly winds and ice on ponds, but winds turned to the south on the 5th, and temperatures reached 11°C on 8th and 13th. On 19th winds swung to the east, ponds froze again, and temperatures remained low until the very end of the month, reaching 13°C on 31st. It rained on only eight days of the month, and the total, was the lowest since 2010.

February (Average 9.4°C, decadal range 6.7°C to 10.1°C; rain 52mm, range 27mm to 127mm). The first week had southerly winds, but temperatures fell from 11°C to 3°C from 8th to 12th, but climbed back to 11°C on 15th and stayed there for the rest of the month, with west winds, cloudy skies, but no rain at all for 18 days. It was a gloomy month with half the normal sunshine.

March (Average 12.9°C, decadal range 7.6°C to 14.9°C; rain 61mm, range 15mm to 118mm). Low pressure and southerly winds saw temperatures rise to 16°C on 10th and 11th, and it remained warm to the 17th, then cool and wet to 22nd when easterly winds took charge, after this temperatures rose to 18°C on 26th. The last week saw bright sunshine with over 11 hours on three days and temperatures staying high.

April (Average 15.2°C, decadal range 12.3°C to 18.7°C; rain 1mm, range 1mm to 156mm). The warm bright weather continued for the first week with 12 hours of sunshine on 8th when temperatures reached 22°C, the weather was dominated by high pressure and southerly winds. The second week was cooler and duller, but no rain fell, and the third week was also dry with temperatures around 16°C. Finally, on 25th, a single millimeter of rain fell, and temperatures dropped back to 11°C with north winds until the end of the month.

May (Average 19.2°C, decadal range 16.2°C to 19.2°C; rain 52mm, range 36mm to 102mm). The first ten days were dominated by north-easterly winds, bright sunshine, and no rain. Temperatures averaged between 16°C and 18°C in the second week. On 12th the wind switched to the south-west, temperatures rose, and rain fell for the next six days. By 22nd the temperature reached 25°C and 28°C on 26th with over twelve hours of sunshine, and it remained warm and bright until the end.

June (Average 21.5°C, decadal range 18.6°C to 22.6°C; rain 46mm, range 37mm to 190mm). The month was dominated by south-west winds and temperatures of around 20°C, but with cloudy conditions until 14th. From the 16th there were six days of full sunshine and high pressure, and temperatures reached 34°C on 21st, the warmest day of the year. The last week saw more normal conditions and cloudy skies. It was the sunniest month of the year with 6.4 hours a day, and the sunniest month since June 2015.

July (Average 21.9°C, decadal range 20.3°C to 26.2°C; rain 104mm, range 19mm to 193mm). The first ten days saw a lot of sunshine, temperatures reaching 29°C on 5th and 6th, and no rain. The second week was cloudier but dry and the temperature reached 28°C again on 18th. Much needed rain began to fall on 18th, and continued for the rest of the month, with south-west winds and cooler conditions. It was the third wettest month of the year.

August (Average 20.9°C, decadal range 19.2°C to 22.5°C; rain 53mm, range 25mm to 189mm). The temperature remained around 20°C throughout the month. Although it rained on and off for the first 18 days, the total rainfall was a third below average. Winds tended to be light westerlies. From the 19th it was dry and in the last week there were three days with more than 12 hours of sunshine. It proved to be the sunniest August since 2007.

September (Average 19.3°C, decadal range 17.2°C to 22.1°C; rain 105mm, range 16mm to 130mm). South winds kept temperatures up for the first two weeks, but north winds pushed it down to 16°C on the 19th, although it recovered to around 20°C for the last ten days. There were no gales and, although it was the wettest month since March, there was no rain at all on half of the days.

October (Average 16.3°C, decadal range 13.7° to 17.3°C; rain 30mm, range 30mm to 159mm). An unusually dry month, it was dominated for the first two weeks by high pressure over the Baltic, and light easterly winds. These produced a spectacular bird migration onto the country's east coast, but the Bristol area saw nothing. There were some bright days and sunshine totals were greater than in any year back to 2008. There was no rain until 15th, and autumn colour was dramatic, despite the lack of frost. Total rainfall was a third of normal. Temperatures remained high for the first two weeks before falling to around 14°C by the end of the month.

November (Average 11.3°C, decadal range 8.7°C to 13.5°C; rain 51mm, range 51mm to 252mm). North winds on 5th brought the first frost of the winter, earlier than the previous three years, and the temperature fell to 8°C on 8th before recovering to 14°C by 15th. Low pressure brought a week of rain between 16th and 22nd, producing 30mm, and the temperature fell to 7°C for three days. Two very windy days on 21st and 22nd swept most of the remaining leaves off trees. Cooler conditions with north winds began on 24th bringing bright sunlight and three frosts.

December (Average 8.8°C, decadal range 3.4°C to 13.3°C; rain 129mm, range 37mm to 185mm). The first week was warm, but temperatures fell abruptly on 8th, and there was a dusting of snow on 10th, the first since March 2014, and three frost nights. Westerly winds brought warmer weather on the 25th when the temperature reached 12°C, followed by a second cold spell with snow on the night of 26th, but it was all gone by the new year. It was the wettest month of the year.

Weather Extremes

The table below gives figures for the extreme annual events over the past decade, enabling the events of 2017 to be put into perspective. It is often claimed that extreme weather events are becoming more common, but without a clear definition of an 'extreme event' this is very hard to demonstrate. Flooding is often caused by human factors, such as house building on former flood meadows, or draining of upland moors for sheep rearing. There is little evidence of a trend in these figures presented below. I have added two columns on the right-hand side, one for the maximum 'extreme' and a second for the average 'extreme' since 2000. I have removed the row formerly labelled "Storms" because the data I was using, which was wind speeds in the Irish Sea, were of little relevance to what is experienced in the Avon area.

		08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Max	Av.
Hottest day	C°	28	28	26	29	30	32	31	32	34	34	34	30
Coldest day	C°	2	-1	-5	1	1	0	4	5	5	3	5	2
Wettest day	mm	35	36	36	40	72	33	42	28	30	34	72	39
Sunniest day	Hrs	14.9	14.7	15.6	14.7	15.0	15.0	13.3	13.7	12.8	14.8	15.6	14
Longest dry	Days	16	20	24	23	17	20	17	14	15	24	24	19
Longest wet	Days	8	8	7	5	15	9	7	6	7	10	15	8
Frost, no. of nights	Days	44	42	76	22	41	67	15	12	25	29	76	37
Snow, day count	Days	1	19	33	0	1	8	1	0	0	3	33	7
Hotter than 25°C	Days	7	5	3	14	19	32	27	5	13	22	32	15
Colder than 5°C	Days	14	37	60	13	16	29	2	5	5	7	60	19
10+ hr sun	Days	29	49	46	44	38	44	39	25	16	33	49	36
Days with no sun	Days	95	95	106	104	93	95	82	84	74	85	106	91
Days with no rain	Days	228	265	269	253	205	238	203	227	230	223	269	234

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

Guide to the Systematic List

The County of Avon, as an administrative unit, ceased to exist on April 1st, 1996. It was replaced by four 'unitary authorities' - South Gloucestershire (SG), Bristol (BR), Bath and North-east Somerset -- BANES (BA), and North Somerset (NS). The area covered by these four administrative units corresponds almost exactly to the old County of Avon, and the area covered by this Report is also unaltered -- the term 'Avon area' is used to describe this region. To aid comparisons with older Reports 'North Avon, NA' corresponds to SG and BR north of the R. Avon, and 'South Avon, SA' corresponds to BA, NS and BR south of the river.

The systematic list given below this guide follows the species order first proposed by Prof. H K Voous in 1971, with several major adjustments made by the British Ornithological Union, the latest in December 2016. The nomenclature follows that given by the BOU on their website at www.bou.org.uk using the 'British (English) Vernacular Name' and 'Scientific Name' lists.

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

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

For locally very scarce to very rare species the heading also shows two figures. The first gives the number of individuals recorded between 1983, the first year that AOG was responsible for producing this Report, and 2016, and the second gives the number of new individuals recorded in 2017. If descriptions were only required for the species in question subsequent to 1983, the first figure will be the number of accepted individuals since this later date. Where the Report has stated that an individual is likely to have been the same one as that seen in a previous year, it has not been counted for a second time. For description species we normally give the first one or two names of the observer(s) who reported the record, or who submitted descriptions and/or photographs.

Definitions

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 (e.g. Fieldfare), or that already have a separate resident population (e.g. 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 immatures 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).

Vagrant – This applies to a species well away from its normal range.

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).

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

Average count – This is used for waders and is the average of the monthly maxima for the season in question.

Bird survey data used

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

BBS – Breeding Bird Survey

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

Changes from year to year (e.g. 2016 to 17) are calculated by comparing the best of the two counts in each year in those squares that were surveyed in consecutive years by the same observer, and the result is expressed as a percentage change figure. These changes may be combined together to determine the change over longer periods (e.g. 2007 to 17). **Data presented here relates to the Avon area (the former County of Avon) and excludes records from those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset.**

The BBS does not monitor nocturnal species and also does not monitor waterbirds or colonial species particularly well. However, it does give a reliable measure of the changes of many of the common species of the town and the general countryside, including many of the farmland species which have fared so poorly over the past twenty years. Results should be used with caution -- changes of a few per cent are not likely to reflect any really significant change, while differences of 10% or more are, if sustained, almost certainly significant.

In 2017 a total of 209 (173 in 2015 and 190 in 2016) squares was surveyed in Avon, excluding records from those BTO Avon Region squares which lie in Somerset. Of these 209 squares, 173 were 'repeat squares' and were used in the calculation of percentage change figures as described above. A total of 67,308 (52,880 in 2015 and 60,934 in 2016) birds of 109 (103 in 2015 and 110 in 2016) species was recorded. Annual percentage change figures over the past ten years are provided for the most frequently recorded species together with summary change figures for the period between 1994 and 2007.

WBBS -- Waterways Breeding Bird Survey

This survey works in a similar way to the BBS except that instead of transects across a square, a route along a river is followed. There are only two WBBS sites in Avon. Records are merged with those of the BBS for the purpose of establishing trends.

AWBS -- Avon Winter Bird Survey

This survey was launched in November 2016 and follows the BBS methodology except that it runs from November to February. It aims to monitor the changes in the populations of our common winter birds using the same methods as for our breeding birds with the BBS. In the first season, 2016/17, a total of 102 one-*km* squares were surveyed in Avon, excluding those from the Avon BTO region which lie in Somerset. A total of 45,957 birds of 89 species was recorded. In the 2017/18 season a total of 128 one-*km* were surveyed and a total of 53,918 birds of 96 species was recorded.

WeBS -- Wetland Bird Survey

This is a national project, run jointly by the BTO, JNCC, RSPB and WWT, which monitors all waterbirds in the UK, it provides the principal data on which the conservation of these species and their wetland habitats is based. Locally it covers the whole of the Severn shore, the lower reaches of the main rivers flowing into the Severn, the major reservoirs and many of the minor local waters. The species accounts incorporate all available WeBS data and, for those waterbirds whose Avon area populations are of International or National Importance, their WeBS status. It publishes a trend survey showing how the English (and other) non-breeding waterbird populations have fared recently. Using this data we give a figure for the change during the decade 2007/08 to 2016/17 with the label 'English ten-year trend'. These data are only provided if the species in question occurs at a site in Avon which is in the top 30 in the UK.

Data from the CABS and WGS surveys were not available this year, it is hoped that the second will be reintroduced next year.

Red and Amber List species

It was felt desirable to include some indication of the national conservation status of the species that occurred in the Avon area in 2016. Hence, for all species listed in this Report except for those that are locally or nationally rare (that is require a description), the species header gives a classification of its *national* conservation concern - **Red** for serious concern, and **Amber** for less serious concern, with a figure defined below indicating the reason for this concern. The lack of a Red or Amber entry in the species header implies that the species is of **Green** conservation concern, that is its current status is stable with no major anxiety. Further details and evidence about this classification can be found in the December 2015 edition of *British Birds*.

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

1. Species that are Globally Threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened) under IUCN guidelines, as assessed by BirdLife International, the IUCN Red List Authority for birds, in 2015.
2. Historical decline in breeding populations -- Species judged to have declined severely between 1800 and 1995, from an assessment conducted by Gibbons *et al.* (1996), and which have not recovered subsequently.
3. Breeding population decline -- Severe decline in the UK breeding population size (more than 50%) over 25 years or the longer term, defined as the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969. Also non-breeding population decline -- Severe decline in the UK non-breeding population size (more than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term as defined above.
4. Breeding range decline. -- Severe decline in UK range (more than 50%) between the breeding bird atlases in 1988–91 and 2007–11 or 1968–71 and 2007–11 as measured by the calculated change in the number of occupied 10-km squares.
5. Non-breeding range decline -- Severe decline in UK range (more than 50%) between the wintering bird atlases in 1981–84 and 2007–11 as measured by the calculated change in the number of occupied 10-km squares.

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

1. European Red List status -- Any species on the European Red List (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable).
2. Historical decline recovery. -- As described above, previously Red-listed for historical decline, followed by an increase of at least 100% over 25 years or the longer-term period.
3. Breeding population decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term period. Also non-breeding population decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) over 25 years or the longer-term period.
4. Breeding range decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) between 1988-91 and 2007-11 or 1968-71 and 2007-11. Also non-breeding range decline -- As for Red-list criterion but with moderate decline (more than 25% but less than 50%) between 1981-84 and 2007-11.
5. Breeding and non-breeding rarity -- Species qualify as rare breeders if the UK breeding population is less than 300 pairs, and as rare non-breeders if the UK non-breeding population is less than 900 individuals.
6. Breeding and non-breeding localisation -- Species are considered localised if more than 50% of the UK population is found at ten or fewer sites in either the breeding or the non-breeding season.
7. Breeding and non-breeding international importance -- Species are considered of international importance if the UK holds at least 20% of the European population in either the breeding or the non-breeding season.

Reference

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

Frequently used abbreviations

The following definitions and abbreviations are used throughout this Report.

BA	Bath and North-east Somerset
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee. This is used to imply that the (national) committee has accepted the record or records mentioned
BG	Barrow Gurney Reservoirs
Bird-days	This gives the cumulative daily total for a given period; so for example 25 on day 1, followed by 100 on day 3 and 30 on day 7 gives 155 bird-days for the seven day period
BL	Blagdon Lake
CI-Y	Severn shore and its environs between the western outskirts of Clevedon and the mouth of the R. Yeo (sometimes called Clevedon Bay), it including Blake's and other pools and the tidal part of the R. Yeo, but not Woodspring Bay
CVL	Chew Valley Lake
NS	North Somerset
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
RBBP, SM	Rare Birds Breeding and Scarce Migrant panels. These are used when details of a breeding or migrant record has been passed to one of these panels, they collect data on the rarer UK breeders/migrants
RR	Used to indicate that a ringing recovery is listed in the report on page 191
Severnside	Severn shore and its environs including Pilning Wetlands and the coast between Aust and Chittening Warths inclusive
SG	South Gloucestershire
Weston STW	Weston-s-Mare Sewage Treatment Works and its surrounding areas

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

A note from the Recorder's Committee entitled 'The need for descriptions' which includes the list of 'description species' is given on page 199 and a second note detailing what records are required for the commoner species is given on page 203.

The Systematic List

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

[Amber 7]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 16th of National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -5%.

This species was recorded at slightly more sites than in 2016. The largest single count was for the CVL moulting flock which was 21% larger than last year. This year the main wintering flocks were in the Kenn Moor area (often close to the M5 motorway), at CVL, and at Weston STW / Axe Estuary, the latter site having counts approximately three times bigger than in 2016. The largest count in Bristol Floating Harbour was nine (in May).

The table below summarise the data for the moulting flock at CVL for past ten years

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
107	115	125	187	140	145	92	155	145	175

Numbers moulting at CVL - Average of the maximum counts for July and August (ten-year average 137)

There were non-BBS records from 72 sites which compares with 70 in 2012, 64 in 2013, 66 in 2014 and 2015 and 69 in 2016. Apart from the 14 tabulated sites only nine had counts above ten (*cf* eight in 2016), notably Nailsea Moor and West Hewish, which had maxima of 57 on Dec.16th and 50 on March 31st, respectively. The table below shows the monthly maxima at the main regularly counted sites. (Note. There were no reports from the Kingston Seymour area).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Northwick/Pilning Wet.	8	3	5	8	8	6	5	6	6	6	4	3
Portishead Lake	4	4			5	3	3	2	2		2	3
Portishead Marina	4	10		8								
PWD	4	3	4	5	9	11	25	20	22	16	28	17
CI-Y	14	21	3	24	8	22	30	30	20	20	26	35
Axe Estuary	98	73	66	25				1			19	23
Weston STW	56	77	84	68	12	17	39	14	10	7	39	90
Keynsham, R. Avon		2	2					2	4			9
Eastville Park, Bristol	1	1	1	1					1	2	3	2
Kenn Moor	50	56	86	27	15	2	2	6		20	30	82
Backwell Lake	15	24	17	18	8	2	2	2	2	2	2	5
BG				4	6	10	2	2		4		4
CVL	145	105	75	70	75	110	170	180	185	155	135	120
BL	9	14	30	32	30	27	51	54	54	83	68	48

Monthly maxima (adults) at the main sites

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 32 squares (20 in 2016), which represented 13.4% of those surveyed. The total counted was 256.

A North Somerset Levels breeding survey was undertaken by the RSPB Weston-s-Mare local group in seven separate areas to the east and south of Clevedon. Two visits were made, one in April or May, and another in June. The largest count was 16 at Kenn Moor on June 26th.

Breeding A poor year with 14 broods reported (25 in 2016). Breeding was confirmed at the following nine sites with cygnet numbers given: Prior Park, Bath – nine eggs in nest; Newton Park – six; Portbury Wharf NR – two broods, of two and seven; Portishead Lake -- seven; Backwell Lake -- five; and Nailsea Moor – six. At CVL two broods of six and seven cygnets, at BL two pairs raised broods of five and seven, and at Weston STW there were three pairs, three broods, and 15 young.

Mute Swan cont. The table below summarises the breeding data for the past two decades.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
121	121	88	120	124+	44	57	106	103	117	73

Number of cygnets per year (ten-year average 95)

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

[Amber 1, 3, 6, 7]

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and autumn passage migrant.

WeBS: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked third in National Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -37%.

Very slightly above average numbers for the 2016/17 winter period were reported (see table below). The 2017 records are as follows:

First winter period

The five from 2016 were at CVL/BL on Jan.1st, and then eight on various dates from Jan. 2nd to Feb 2nd at CVL. Last seen at CVL on 8th (three). At BL there were eight on various dates between 2nd and 16th. The group of eight consisted of five adults, two of which are known as 'By-brook' and 'Keynell' plus three juveniles. One of the other adults had a white Darvic ring on its right leg.

Second winter period The records for this period (October to December) are given below.

CVL – two adults from Nov. 10th to 30th. From Dec. 1st there were four adults and a juvenile on various dates until 26th.

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

1998/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12./13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
26	7	6	41	37	41	5	40	20	13	25

Number for each of the last ten winter periods (average 24) with previous decade average

2016 The following record is in addition to those published last year.

Aust Warth – Two flew north over the warth on Nov. 25th.

WHOOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (62, 4)

Scarce winter visitor.

Descriptions required.

There were two records, both in December, involving four individuals, this is about average for the last decade as shown in the table below. The details are as follows:

OPS – three drifted upstream at 09.00 on 9th before flying off northeast (P J Hazelwood *et al.*);

BL – an adult was seen during the afternoon of 5th (N R Milbourne *et al.*).

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
1	8	3+	3	3	3+	4	0	6	3

Numbers seen in the last ten winters

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon and declining winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance (mainly due to Slimbridge) in 2016/17.

A poorer year with a total of six, this compared with 11 in 2016. Details below:

Axe Est./Weston STW/Bleaton Levels – a juvenile was present on Feb.17th and 27th, April 11th and 19th, and May 3rd the latest date in the past 30 years;

Northwick Warth – two flew over to the northeast on March 15th;

CVL – one, presumably the individual seen earlier in the year in the Axe Est. area, on May 22nd and 26th to 31st, and June 1st, 2nd, 23rd and 30th.

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

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
3	8	31	22	8	35	9	0	10	13

Numbers each winter

2016 The entry for this species was missed out of last year's Report, it is included below.

Another very poor year (2016), the records are as follows:

First winter period:

One was at PWD on April 16th and 17th.

Second winter period:

Three flew north over Littleton Warth on Oct. 23rd, four flew over Northwick Warth on Nov. 25th and three were at Dowlais Farm, CI-Y, on 30th.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

[Amber 6]

Uncommon introduced resident and former summer moult migrant. Possible rare winter visitor/passage migrant but any wild birds now impossible to detect unless ringed. Our birds belong to the western race A. a. anser.

Better numbers than last year but the same number of sites. The largest counts were of 26 at Saltford on Oct.8th and 15 at OPS on Dec.16th. The table below summarises the counts for the last decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites	7	12	10	18	20	17	15	24	20	20
No. of individuals	33	27	80	102	49	58+	69	73	56	85

Sites and numbers each year in the last decade

One or two were noted at Littleton Warth, Aust Watrh, PWD, CI-Y, Tortworth Lake, Kingsgate Park (Yate), Almondsbury Golf Course, ASW and Eastville Park (Bristol), and the larger groups or more regular sightings were as follows

OPS – present on March 11th and Sept. 22nd, four from 30th to Oct. 3rd, five on 5th and 8th, ten on 22nd , seven on Dec. 9th, three on 12th and 15 on 16th;

Northwick Warth area -- March 20th, two on May 8th and 9th, eight on 30th, Oct. 2nd, and two on Nov. 25th;

Battery Point/Portishead Lake – Jan. 2nd, 16th and 17th, Feb. 24th and 26th, March 10th, May 11th, July 2nd, Sept. 17th and Nov. 12th (see page 156);

Chipping Sodbury Common – three op Feb. 22nd and March 1st, two on 14th, four on April 8th, two on 10th and 17th and two on Aug. 2nd;

Whiteshill (Hambrook) – five on May 27th;

St. Annes Park (Netham Lock) – three on May 1st;

Saltford – March 4th, four on 31st, eleven on Aug. 24th and 26 on Oct. 8th;

BG – one present on many dates between May 1st and Dec. 16th;

CVL – two on Jan. 14th, Feb. 6th and 7th, up to three on various dates until Oct. 30th but with four on Feb. 20th, March 6th and April 28th;

BL – five on Jan. 20th, Feb.13th, two from April 6th to 8th, 16th, two on 17th and 18th, three on 20th, two on 25th, four on 26th, three on 29th and May 3rd and one on 26th.

Greylag Goose -- Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in four squares which represented 1.7% of those surveyed, total counted ten. No nests were reported in any survey.

GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

RR

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

Reports throughout the Avon area were as usual, widespread and numerous with records coming from 82 separate sites. The size of the summer moulting flock at CVL/BL increased to around 400 (c. 300 in 2016). Counts at other sites were similar to those in 2016 and the number of sites with 25 or more was also similar.

In the second winter period Oldbury/Littleton Warth had three times as many than in 2016 and, apart from September, Severnside had double the number than in 2016 as shown in the main table below.

The 2016/17 wintering numbers at CVL more than doubled while those at BL decreased slightly (see table immediately below).

	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
CVL	65	84	229	110	206	167	144	141	122	270
BL	241	315	221	348	404	355	300	257	392	324

Average of the three highest monthly maxima in the period (Sept. to March), ten-year average 154 (CVL), (BL) 316.

The number moulting at CVL was larger than in 2016 but is still below the long term average, see ten-year table below.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
295	385	440	500	417	318	250	547	280	333

CVL – Average of the two highest monthly maxima in the moult period June to August (ten-year average 377)

The monthly maxima at the main sites are set out in the table below. As noted above both Oldbury/Littleton Warth and Severnside had improved counts, but although they are listed separately in the table a single large flock was involved which commuted between these sites during this time, a feature of the past few autumns.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/ Littleton Warth	42	41	21	11	7	28	14	136	114	373	300	125
Severnside	55	15	17	8	24	52	137	290	180	164	100	48
PWD	4	18	22	5	2	47	54	20	4	4	27	3
CI-Y	62	66	28	12	15	1		88	10	82	85	129
Backwell Lake	10	11	19	24	5	1	8	29	2		9	8
Weston STW	86	35	22	11	7	13		88	39	262	86	113
R. Avon, Keynsham	70	44	28	15	10						57	67
CVL	150	64	85	60	85	265	400	186	405	165	280	80
BL	237	202	79	47	118	323	277	451	36	224	194	206

.Monthly maxima at the main sites

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

North of R.Avon

Badminton Park – 44 on Nov. 5th;

Tortworth Lake – 28 on Oct. 28th;

Frampton Cotterell – 105 on Aug.11th

Coalpit Heath – 31 on Jan.10th;

Chipping Sodbury Common – 29 on Feb. 22nd, 26 on June 25th, 25 on 26th and 30 on Aug. 2nd;

Aztec West – 27 on Feb 25th, 29 on May 27th, 38 on 29th, 26 on July 2nd and 6th,40 on Sept. 2nd, and 26 on Nov. 26th;

South of R.Avon

Axe Est. – 30 on Jan.15th and 37 on Oct. 9th;

Uphill/Bleadon – 100 on Oct.17th and 20th;

Bathampton Meadows – 58 on April 18th;

Saltford – 35 on Feb. 19th, 26 on Aug. 7th, 30 on 9th and 45 on Dec 28th;

BG -- 164 on Sept. 9th, 131 on 17th, 175 on Oct. 14th;

Congresbury Moor – 25 on Nov. 13th;

Kenn Moor -- 65 on Jan 3rd, 50 on 25th, 50 on Feb. 13th, 65 on Nov 15th, 60 on Dec. 5th, 55 on 11th, 85 on 18th and 132 on 19th;

Kenn – 100 on Aug. 24th, 113 on Nov. 4th, and 50 on Dec. 28th;

Weston airfield – 40 on Oct.13th and 110 on 29th, this flock was probably the same as the Uphill one above.

For the last ten years the number of sites where this species was recorded is shown below.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
53	48	50	48	55	51	75	75	86	82

Number of sites recorded from each year (ten-year average 62)

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 27 squares (31 in 2016) which represented 11.3% of those surveyed. The total counted was 189.

Breeding Another poor season with the number of confirmed breeding sites similar to 2016. The site counts are shown in the table below. *Note:* there were no reports of fledged young.

Nests / broods were noted at the following 11 sites:

OPS - a pair with six goslings were seen on April 21st, Aztec West – seven goslings on May 14th, Stoke Park – a juvenile on July 25th, Southmead Swimming Lake- a nest was noted on April 9th, Portishead Lake – three goslings on May 22nd, Portbury Wharf – six goslings on May 22nd, Marshfield (NE of village) – nine goslings from two pairs on April 24th, Marshfield (Shire Valley) – six goslings from one pair, Blagdon Lake – five goslings first seen on May 6th and noted as juveniles up to June 12th, CVL – 13 nest records by CVRS but none were successful.; three goslings on June 1st., Weston STW - two pairs, two broods eight young.

The table below summarises the past data, observers are asked to report all breeding attempts.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Confirmed sites	10	12	6	7	4	6	10	13	8	11
Nests/broods	19+	18+	12	18	10	13	27	30	11+	24
Young	72	73	52	49	40	36+	97+	85	58	54

Breeding details

An individual with an orange neck collar marked JX was noted at CVL on July 23rd and 27th, Sept. 7th and Oct. 2nd, and at BL on Aug. 5th. This female was ringed by Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust at age of at least one year on July 5th, 2012 at Pit 9, Cotswold Water Park, Gloucestershire.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

[Amber 6]

Uncommon introduced resident; very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. It is often difficult to establish the origin of many with certainty, although wild birds have probably occurred.

WeBS – Naturalised: English coast of Severn Estuary ranked 14th in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 72%.

Numbers were down again in 2017 and were recorded at CVL/BL and two further sites. The first table summarises the data from sites other than CVL/BL for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Sites	1	2	6	4	3	0	5	3	2	2
Number	1	2	250	4	6	0	31	6	19	3

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

Reports from sites away from CVL/BL are given below:

New Passage/ Northwick Warth – two on Oct.12th and one on 22nd;

OPS – probably the same individual that was seen on Severnside was noted on Oct. 22nd.

The feral flock that commutes between CVL and BL numbered nine in the first winter period and three in the second. Monthly maxima between April and October were as follows: April four, May two, June five, July and August one, September five and October three, and the table below shows how this has dropped over the past decade.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
17	19	20	23	23	17	17	17	16	9

Maximum count from CVL/BL for the last decade (Av. 18)

Breeding Only noted at CVL as follows -- on June 9th when three goslings were seen. CVRS recorded one nest with four eggs which failed. The last table summarises the CVL data since 2000.

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Pairs	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	3	2
Goslings	0	6	1	7	0	3	0	5	6	5	4	1	2	6	4	3	0	3
Fledged	0	6	0	7	0	3	0	0	6	1	2	1	0	4	3	?	0	?

Breeding at CVL since 2000

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

[Amber 6, 7]

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

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

Numbers of bird-days for the last decade are given in the table below. 2016/17 was the worst winter since 1997/98 which had a count of just eight.

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
38	226	144	24	88	98	34	108	224	20

Bird-days October-March (ten-year average 100)

Details of all records are as follows in date order (First winter period – ten bird-days; second – three).

Portishead – one on Feb. 4th;

Cl-Y – two on Feb.12th and two on March 28th;

Backwell Lake – two on March 25th;

Northwick Warth – one on April 1st;

Severn Beach – two on May 12th;

OPS – three on Sept. 25th.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Very scarce visitor presumably from the increasing UK feral population, with a significant increase in reports since 2013.

The number of sites where this species was recorded decreased from eight to seven (six in 2015). The records are given below, single birds unless stated otherwise:

Northwick Warth – Jan. 20th, various dates between July 21st and Sept.16th;

Aztec West – various dates between Jan.15th and March 12th, May 27th and 29th, June 10th, July 2nd, Aug. 5th and Sept. 2nd;

Saltford -- Feb. 27th;

BG – April 16th, May 11th, 12th and 20th and June 16th;

CVL -- two on several dates between Jan. 25th and Feb. 20th, March 4th to 31st on many dates and four including two juveniles from April 3rd to 18th. There were up to three on many dates from April 26th through to Sept. 28th. Two remained from Sept. 29th until Dec.1st;

BL – one or two were present on various dates in all months except for August. First recorded on Jan.1st and finally on Dec. 11th.

The table below gives the number of adults seen in the Avon area during the past 15 years; none were recorded prior to 2002. (The total for 2015 includes a number of possible feral or escaped birds in the Avon Valley). It has been assumed that the records for CVL and BL refer to the same individuals, although this may not be wholly correct.

2003	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1*	1*	0	1	1	0	0	1	5+	2	11	8	10*	12	10

Numbers recorded each year (* treated as escapes)

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in three squares which represented 1.3% of those surveyed. The total counted was three.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

[Amber 6, 7]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 5th in International Importance, 2016/17. English ten-year trend -28%.

North of R. Avon the number wintering in 2016/17 was low but still near the ten-year average, and to the south numbers recovered a little from last year's low due to much better numbers in the Sand Bay area in the 2016 second winter period. Numbers at CI-Y for 2016/17 are well above the ten-year average for this site, again due to an increase in numbers in the 2016 second winter period. For the total recording area the number of young fledged was the highest ever.

First winter period (January to March). There was a slight decrease in the numbers wintering north of the R. Avon with a highest count of 111 at Severnside in March. Reasonable numbers south of the Avon were noted for this period, the highest count being 250 at CI-Y in February.

Breeding The local BBS survey recorded this species in 14 squares which represented 5.9% of those surveyed. The total recorded was 111.

Overall, 2017 was an exceptional year (see table overleaf) with high numbers of young produced at Royal Portbury Dock for a second successive year. Also the breeding success at CI-Y was very much better than in 2016 - in fact the best year since 1980. Coastal broods were as follows:

OPS area – 21 young at Shepperdine;

Littleton Warth – 13 juveniles;

Aust / Northwick Warths –17 young in crèches of eight and nine were seen on June 2nd at Northwick Warth and twelve young were seen at Aust Warth on 19th;

Royal Portbury Dock -- eleven broods with at least 63 young;

CI-Y coast - a total of 95 young were produced - the largest number since 1980 when there were 96. The first brood was seen on May 16th (an early date) and on June 5th seven broods with 80 chicks were noted all at the mouth of the R. Yeo;

Weston STW – three pairs, three broods and 18 young.

Breeding was also reported inland at CVL with one juvenile seen on June 19th at Herriott's Pool.

Shelduck breeding The following table shows the annual number of young fledged/reported in the Avon area in the last two decade. The average count for the last decade is 156.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
128	181	163	186	78	163	108	107	187	156	228

Breeding - Total number of young at all sites

Second winter period (September to December) Low numbers were recorded north of the R. Avon with a maximum count of 44 at Northwick Warth in December. To the south c.1000 at Axe Estuary in September and 980 in October were very high counts.

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

	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
North of R. Avon	130	90	40	80	140	67	146	160	114	110
South of R Avon	630	500	479	862	490	540	450	930	365	670

Highest winter count at a single site (Oct.– Feb.). N Avon ten-year average 108. S Avon ten-year average 592

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
120	90	142	262	308	278	198	253	213	339

Winter records at CI-Y - Average of the three highest counts (Oct. – Feb.). Ten year average 220

The monthly numbers at the main sites in 2017 are set out in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	10	24	35	58	39	31	31	8	2	15	9	6
Littleton Warth	4	18	30	48	18	19	7				4	1
Severnside	65	110	111	88	101	95	3	2	2	6	18	44
CI-Y	215	250	205	150	125	35	18	60	300	420	350	245
Sand Bay/Point	145	145	82	30	4	6		2	40	100	810	
Axe Est.	30	89	84	64	68	45	16	33	c.1000	980	375	197
Weston STW	16	13	49	48	29	11	23	9	3	2	1	2
CVL	20	16	12	14	16	16	1	1	5	4	8	15

Monthly maxima (adults) at the main sites

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon introduced resident, occasional breeder.

WeBS: English 10 year trend 31%

Sightings made in **SG** probably refer to individuals moving out of the Forest of Dean breeding area, although this widely kept ornamental duck can appear almost anywhere. It is likely that most, if not all, those reported south of the R. Avon were either released, or escaped from captivity, and records probably refer to a few individuals moving around the area. Single sightings (drakes where sex given) were noted at Hanham (R. Avon), Heneage Ponds (Falfield), Hunstrete Lakes, Kingsgate Park (Yate), Newton Park (Bath), Northwick Warth, Paulton and Wick Quarry.

Details of all remaining reports are as follows:

OPS – two drakes on the main lake in the early morning of Oct.12th;

Tortworth Lake – ten on Feb. 5th;

Old Sodbury – two on March 12th;

Wick (Quarry & Golden Valley) – one on March 12th and presumed same on May 2nd;

Keynsham (Memorial Park) – a drake (presumed local escape) on Jan.15th, a pair on May 15th and 16th with just the duck on 17th, then a drake again from Oct.18th to year end, with four noted on 24th;

Saltford – a drake (presumed local escape) noted on various dates from Jan.15th to March 4th then again between May 21st and Sep. 29th, a second drake was noted on July 6th, and two birds on Aug 5th;

CVL – a pair noted on Oct 14th;

The rise in the number of sightings is shown in the table below. The average for the decade 1998 to 2007 is nine, and for the decade just past it is 33.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1	5	13	13	2	5	3	6	22	19	20	42	39	32	45	31	15	54	23	32

Total number of individuals each year

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

[RBBP] [Amber 6 & 7]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare in summer.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 18th in National Importance in 2016/17. English 10-year trend 20%.

The second winter period as a whole saw fairly similar numbers on the coast and at CVL as in the previous winter period, but the early part of this period saw comparatively large numbers at BL. The national WeBS data show a rise in the population over ten years, and the Avon area seems to be following this trend and attracting greater numbers, thanks partly to the provision of new coastal reserves and managed sea defence retreat areas along parts of the Estuary.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	863	209	193	422
2015/16	803	63	265	377
2016/17	867	205	591	554

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	259	450	109	3			17	45	61	61
Littleton Warth	510	650	150					35	210	198
Sevenside	800	950	670	2			100	330	550	650
PWD	130	126	60	2		2	60	120	200	250
CI-Y	615	560	375	40			60	185	510	400
Woodspring Bay	134	120	122						155	72
Axe Est	3	160	75					5	22	2
Weston STW	33	8	25				4	32	127	10
CVL	35	10	22			6	200	355	530	35
BL	25	46	59			1	205	185	76	74

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites Records were received from Chipping Sodbury Common, Yate (Kingsgate Park), Saltford (Avon Farm), BG, Litton Resrs. and Weston airfield. The highest count was just seven, except for the last site where there were 12 on March 11th, and a maximum of 90 on Oct. 29th. Interestingly, a pair remained at PWD throughout June and July, but there was no evidence of breeding as is normal.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana* (2, 1)

Rare Nearctic vagrant.

Descriptions required

One record: a male was at Littleton Warth on Jan. 2nd (B Ofield *et al.*, photographed, see opposite page 40).

This is the eighth individual to be recorded locally and the first since a female was at Weston STW in 2009. The other previous records are as follows: a male at BL in January and February 1946, two males on the Wiltshire border at the confluence of the Rivers Frome and Avon in August 1976, a male at CVL in April 1977, another male here in December 1978 and January 1979, and a male at Chew Magna Res. in May 1988.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

[Amber 7]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked the 21st English site, classified as of National Importance in 2016/17. English 10-year trend 7%.

Winter counts at CVL and BL are increasing, as is the wider population according to the trend inferred from WeBS data. The water level dropped further and earlier at CVL than it did at BL, which probably accounts for the relative abundance at CVL over BL during the autumn period.

The late summer moult counts showed an increase at CVL over last year, and a clear increasing trend is developing here based on ten-year averages. BL, on the other hand, is more of a mixed bag, due to widely fluctuating numbers year-on-year. Low moult counts between 2006 and 2014 have impacted on the ten-year average, but counts are getting back to what they were in the early 2000's.

The main status data is as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	167	81	124
2015/16	242	245	244
2016/17	267	215	241

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2008 – 2017 Av.	305	88	197
2016	285	309	297
2017	398	126	262

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

The main table showing counts at the well-watched sites has been severely reduced because numbers were so low at previously included sites. Severnside counts were much the same as last year, after last year's increase, but CVL was clearly the favoured site during 2017:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	38	20	25	32	21	18	11	31	50	24	20	15
PWD	54	42	34	6	4	14	14	45	63	30	35	40
Weston STW	17	14	1	1	1		2	1	1	1	5	6
CVL	65	25	20	30	35	120	55	215	580	605	355	145
BL	22	47	8	7	5	4	6	61	190	119	130	78

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites

OPS – more records here than in 2016, with sightings of three on Feb. 9th, a drake on the 18th and 24th, a pair noted flying up the Estuary on May 3rd, two on the settling ponds on Sept. 19th, a pair here on 26th, and a lone female from Nov. 11th to 21st;

Avonmouth – 14 on Jan. 16th, six on Feb. 14th, and 15 on April 19th;

CI-Y – two on Jan. 23rd and 25th, four on 26th, and two on 27th were all on the Blind Yeo. The only other records were of two females from May 11th to 14th;

Backwell Lake – monthly maxima of six in January, two in February and four in March, with no further records until four on Oct. 23rd, with numbers fluctuating then between one and five (Dec. 12th) until the end of the year;

BG – there were 15 on Jan. 10th, 13 on 14th dropping to eight by 28th, then just two on Feb. 17th, 18th, and April 9th. A singleton was noted on Aug. 19th, a pair on Nov. 3rd, eight on 18th and 13 on 22nd, were the only other observations here.

There were no other counts in double figures, although nine at Kingsgate Park, Yate, on Nov. 26th, four at St. Bedes School, Lawrence Weston, on March 8th, three at Sand Point on May 1st, two on

Keynsham Park duck pond on Dec. 5th, two at Litton Resrs. on Jan. 6th and Dec. 4th, and a single fully-winged drake at Saltford from Jan. 1st to Feb 15th are perhaps worthy of mention.

Breeding A single brood of nine was noted in Heron's Green Bay, CVL, eight of which fledged:

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
3	5	1	3	0	1	6	3	0	1

Number of broods at CVL each year

Two ducklings were reported at Northwick Warth on the early date of April 16th, while ten seen at PWD on June 16th, twelve on 19th, dropping to seven by 24th and July 7th, were the only reports of breeding success.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

[Amber 7]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked ninth in 2016/17, classified as of International Importance. English. 10-year trend 29%.

It was an exceptional first winter period at CVL and BL, and low water into the second winter period at CVL proved attractive here again. The Estuary counts were unremarkable. The status data is as follows, and the monthly maxima are given in the second table.

Year	Sevenside	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	300	1291	582	724
2015/16	390	967	934	763
2016/17	273	2012	1400	1228

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	154	170	28	15				3	10	7	24	61
Littleton Warth	145	140	75	19					49	28	34	26
Sevenside	130	200	165	49	4	10	5	90	110	170	120	340
PWD	291	450	250	8		3				4	18	42
CI-Y	485	475	190	140	1		3	9	60	50	70	260
Woodspring Bay	160	65	66					7	3		50	51
Axe Est.	91	84	39	2				5		19	47	28
Weston STW	66	100	44	10				5	24	52	21	124
Bath (Newton Park)	32	46	23	11						2	10	39
Saltford	15	10	5	1					7	13	19	25
BG	64	19	9	10				1	6	64	65	40
CVL	1245	165	135	22	3		60	150	1075	2305	1355	1685
BL	1343	369	12	6			5	6	120	379	338	460
Litton Res.	19	8		6								

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites The main counts were as follows:

Tortworth Lake – nine on Feb. 5th and five on March 5th;

Bristol (Lawrence Weston) – 21 on March 8th;

Backwell Lake – two on Jan 14th, three on 27th and one on Oct. 31st;

Kenn (Kenn Moor) – three on Jan. 6th, two on 10th and ten on Feb. 16th;

Yatton (Wemberham Lane) – 30 on Jan. 5th, twelve on Nov. 25th, four on Dec. 1st and one on 27th;

Congresbury (Congresbury Moor) – four on Jan. 26th, 35 on March 6th and ten on Dec. 12th;

Bath (Haycombe Farm) – 16 on Jan. 28th and 14 on March 28th;

Teal cont.

Chew Magna Res. – eight on March 11th, 5 on April 8th, one on Sept. 10th and Oct. 8th, with seven on Dec. 9th;
Weston airfield – 25 on Oct. 29th;

Hutton (Moor Lane) – twelve on March 11th;

Uphill – ten on Oct. 20th and 15 on 27th;

Weston STW – max. was 124 on Dec. 19th, with last of spring on April 13th and first returning on Aug. 17th;

Bleadon (Sluice) – 11 on Jan. 2nd.

Four or less were noted at the following sites mostly on one occasion only: Chipping Sodbury Common, Duchess Pond (Bristol), Forest Park (Warmley), Horton, Lady Farm (Chelwood), Puxton, Three Brooks NR (Bristol), West Littleton (Marshfield) and Woodspring Priory.

Ringing records The following were ringed locally.

Walton-in-Gordano – a second-calendar year (cy) female on March 16th; CVRS – three male first-cy, two male and two female second-cy, a male two+ cy, and one male and a female three+ cy.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

RR [Amber 3]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked eighth and CVL 25th in National Importance in 2016/17. English 10-year trend: -10%.

The status data given below indicate that the first winter period numbers were up on the ten-year average at both main sites, and that the moult counts were also above average.

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	591	203	397
2015/16	588	251	420
2016/17	732	362	547

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2008 – 17 Av.	1002	387	695
2016	883	354	618
2017	1115	400	758

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites were similar to last year, with a few down a little, for example at Saltford, and some up a little, for example at CVL, two tables are given, the first for the coastal sites, and the second overleaf for the inland sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	144	24	32	32	38	50	68	141	99	80	38	58
Littleton Warth	12	16	8	11	22	46	6	52	44	60	59	24
Sevenside	113	69	84	84	95	103	86	142	86	70	37	42
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	24	36	19	17	12	2	12	26	26	23	25	20
PWD	17	11	4	13	15	28	30	60	6	23	40	40
Portishead	121	89	85	4	56	42	73	65	173	118	133	154
CI-Y	70	30	35	35	60	80	60	115	110	70	55	55
Woodspring Bay	67	16	21	27	9	12		5	42		77	60
Axe Estuary	26	7	10	8	10	15	13	22	27	36	25	27
Weston STW	34	23	38	27	25	31	53	31	63	106	52	21

Monthly maxima at the main coastal sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tortworth Lake		7	4		4		15	10	6	44		
Aztec West	52	29	32	22	30	66	49		33	36	69	41
Bristol (Duchess Pnd)	8	8	13	9	12	3	14	7	6		2	40
Bath (Newton Park)	45	45	22	22	20	30	49	40	30	40	39	60
Saltford	47	39	36	31	26	28	30	44	53	54	25	34
Keynsham (Park)	95	68	8	14		48				90		97
Hanham (Chequers)	7	11	6	6	5	6	4	5	11	13	12	7
Eastville Park Lake	82	30	38		60	7	72	52	68	25	67	60
Backwell Lake	58	58	24	20	39	77	162	143	73	83	67	93
BG	42	23	12	32	36	83	80	60	47	70	54	8
Chew Magna Res.	2		22	13	4	5	22	10	60	40	6	27
CVL	685	580	305	275	205	475	715	1005	1225	630	740	690
BL	264	155	42	42	33	75	250	310	490	414	303	237
Litton Resrs.	18	9	14	12	34	56	58	12		32	41	48

Monthly maxima at the main inland sites

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

Avonmouth – 59 on Feb. 14th;

Weston-s-Mare (Bay) – 100 on Oct. 17th, see below;

Weston STW – 94 on Oct. 20th on one lagoon and 106 overall was a site record;

Yate (Kingsgate Park) – 82 on Oct. 8th;

Chelvey – 50 on Oct. 12th;

Priston (Wood) – 90 on Nov.5th (possibly released birds).

Breeding This species was recorded in 41.1% of BBS squares, which gives an indication of how widespread it is during the breeding season, being seen everywhere from large waterbodies to urban gardens. There were 72 broods noted this year and 360 ducklings counted, although some records gave no indication numbers of young seen. This was virtually identical to last year.

The standardised BBS data is as follows, and the second table shows how this species has fared over the last decade at CVL (ten-year averages: broods – 25, young -- 134).

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-47%	-27%	-2%	7%	-7%	0%	-6%	3%	-13%	10%	-14%	-7%

BBS percentage changes

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Broods	21	38	24	31	21	27	35	27	15	13
Young	130	213	115	176	130	129	174	158	51	61

Number of broods and young at CVL each year

Ringing Ringing was carried out at two sites as follows:

Walton-in Gordano – a second-cy male, a two+ cy female and a three+ cy female; CVRS – a male and female first-cy, a male and four second-cy, eight male and three female two+ cy, and two male and female three+ cy.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

[Amber 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7]

Uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor; most occur at CVL in autumn. Winter visitors leave from mid-February to early April with autumn arrivals usually appearing in mid-September.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 17th in 2016/17, and classified as of National Importance. English 10-year trend -21%.

Numbers were down at most sites, with the exception of CVL. The last spring date was April 11th, on the Estuary, and the first to return in the autumn was an eclipse drake on Aug. 29th at CVL. The details are given overleaf.

Pintail cont. The tables give the monthly maxima and a summary for the last decade where the average count for the decade is 59.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside		7	4	4				3	1	2
CI-Y	3	3	4						2	5
CVL	19	15	9			1	51	65	36	27
BL	4	7					13	19	20	2

Monthly maxima at the main sites

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
29	70	65	57	37	110	49	50	53	65

Maximum single count in the Avon area each year

Other sites

OPS – six on Feb. 4th and one on Nov. 23rd;

PWD – two females on Jan.15th;

Woodspring Bay with probably some overlap with the CI-Y records above – two on each of March 14th and April 10th, with six on Dec. 8th;

BG – one on Oct. 31st.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

[Amber 5]

Scarce spring passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon autumn passage migrant at CVL and BL, scarce elsewhere. Breeds in some years.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked fourth and CVL eighth in 2016/17. English 10-year trend: -28%.

Spring passage was very poor, and there was no evidence of any breeding success at any site in the Avon area this year. It was little surprise, therefore, that autumn passage was also rather thin, with just a handful of records from the Estuary, and only one at BL, to supplement those at CVL.

Spring

CI-Y – one on April 10th at Dowlais Farm;

CVL – two on April 8th, with a pair noted on May 9th and 12th and a single bird noted on 10th.

Summer and autumn

OPS – a juvenile/female noted on Sept. 21st;

Severnside – two juveniles from Aug.11th to 31st;

CI-Y – four on Aug. 8th, and a pair on Sept. 5th at Blake's Pool;

CVL – a juvenile female was present from July 13th until Sept. 1st, and was joined by a second individual on Aug. 31st, with two noted again on Sept. 6th, all at Herriott's Pool. Three were recorded during the WeBS count on Aug. 13th. A drake was at Stratford on Sept.15th, and another unsexed bird was recorded on the 4th, 6th, 17th and 20th. A juvenile female was at Heron's Green from Oct.14th to 18th and a juvenile was in the same place from 29th to Nov.1st;

BL – just one sighting of a distant juvenile/female on Aug 24th.

The table below gives some indication how this species has fared at CVL over the past decade, the average for this period is four per year.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
2	4	5	4	3	3	6	7	4	3

Maximum single count at CVL each year

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

[Amber 7]

Fairly common, but generally local, winter visitor and autumn passage migrant; usually common at CVL and BL in autumn/early winter. Scarce in summer; has bred at CVL and BL.

WeBS: BL was ranked 11th, CVL 13th and English coast of the Severn Estuary 16th in 2016/17, and were classified as of National Importance. English 10-year trend 20%.

Having pointed out that CVL had been downgraded from WeBS National Importance last year, it is good to report that BL, CVL and the English coast of the Severn Estuary have all been accorded National Importance status in 2016/17. Averages during the moult period and winter were above the ten year average for CVL and BL.

The main status tables are as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	153	77	115
2015/16	80	43	62
2016/17	157	123	140

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2008 – 17 Av.	306	203	268
2016	130	636	383
2017	413	219	316

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

There was a welcome increase at PWD in both winter periods compared with 2016, while counts in the second winter period at BL were well down.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Severnside	25	33	43	65	2	2	3	10	23	21	30	22
PWD	110	100	41						6	4	35	100
CI-Y	30	8	34	12				6	1	15	26	25
Weston STW	7	5		3					2	6	5	9
BLR	44	30	5	2						7	18	37
BG	2	19	8							6	2	5
CVL	40	9	15	20	10	7	16	55	400	425	190	135
BL	55	26	72	4	2	1		18	168	270	47	37

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites

OPS – just four noted on Feb. 4th;

Littleton Warth – four on Jan.14th, three on 28th, two on March 4th and 11th, one on Oct. 7th and six on Dec. 16th;

Avonmouth STW – 15 on Jan. 6th and six on Feb.16th;

Easter Compton to Dyers Common - two on Jan. 11th;

Litton Res. – two on May 18th;

Weston airfield - two on April 4th;

Hutton Moor, Weston-s-Mare – six on March 11th.

Breeding

There were no reports of breeding this year, the table below shows the varying fortunes at CVL over the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of broods	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	0
No. of young	0	8	0	0	0	16	2	4	6	0

Breeding success at CVL each year

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

WeBS: English 10-year trend 51%.

There were just five sightings, with details as follows:

BG – three, two drakes, on Jan. 25th;

CVL – six, four drakes and two ducks, on Jan. 24th, a female on July 20th and three, two drakes and a duck on Nov. 5th;

BL – a female on Oct. 28th.

The table gives the totals for the past decade with an average 13 per year. This is an improvement on the previous decade when the average was between three and four per year.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
5	19	23	25	3	24	7	5	4	14

Total number of individuals each year

POCHARD *Aythya farina*

[Red 1 & 3]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked seventh, English coast of the Severn Estuary 11th and BL 23rd in 2016/17, all classified as being of National Importance.. English 10-year trend: -62%.

Winter counts at CVL were, once again, above the ten-year average, while BL and BG were down; see below:

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	681	210	77	323
2015/16	902	196	38	378
2016/17	783	128	23	312

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

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Backwell Lake	6	5	5							1	2	2
BG	14	13	2	1		2				8	8	16
CVL	450	90	17	8	7	15	23	95	215	360	390	365
BL	190	102	43	5	6	5	20	29	6	204	392	276

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites where this species was noted included: Northwick Warth, Avonmouth, Portbury Wharf NR, Woodspring Bay, Axe Estuary, and Chew Magna Res. with only one count (of 23 at PWD) exceeding four.

Breeding

For the third successive year there were no broods reported at CVL, the last table shows the details for the past decade. Note that the averages for the previous decade are five broods and 19 young, and the best year was 2000 when 12 broods and 43 young were reported.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of broods	2	2	2	0	3	1	4	0	0	0
No. of young	9	4	8	0	8	2	22	0	0	0

Breeding success at CVL each year

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris* (29, 0)*Scarce Nearctic vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

One record: the adult male from 2016 remained at CVL until Feb. 7th.

Most records for the last two decades relate to a regular male that toured various sites between 1998 and February 2008, with a second male noted in the summers of 2001, 2002 and 2003. New arrivals have subsequently been seen in 2005, 2008 to 2013 and 2016.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula**Common resident, winter visitor and double passage migrant. Now a scarce breeder.*

WeBS: CVL was ranked sixth and BL 23rd in 2016/17 English site, both classified as being of National Importance. English 10-year trend: 6%.

As pointed out in last year's report, autumn numbers at BL were very low in comparison with recent years and, worryingly, this was the case again in 2017. Counts remained buoyant at CVL and well above the ten-year average during both the moult and winter periods. A drake with a red nasal saddle was seen at CVL on July 17th and on two occasions at BL during the autumn.

The status tables are as follows:

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	1211	516	863
2015/16	1220	851	1036
2016/17	2222	231	1226

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

Year	CVL	BL	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	1314	662	988
2016	1655	476	1065
2017	1725	441	1083

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec.
OPS	1	5	5	11	7	23	25	13	1	2	2	1
Severnside	18	25	30	26	28	23	12	6	12	12	23	12
PWD	20	12	28	36	15	10	6	2		1	10	10
Portishead Lake	16	23	4		10	4	8				2	12
CI-Y			11	10	9	4	5	8			8	
Tortworth Lake		16	6		24		7	21	29	26		
BLR	9	14	16	5							4	12
BG	96	69	77	64	14	130	310	250	55	74	69	72
Chew Magna Res	11	21	21				1	1	2	1	1	2
CVL	575	335	730	555	65	110	585	945	2505	2185	780	625
BL	195	186	213	155	20	34	393	488	204	403	1381	1272
Litton Res.	28	27	19	20	13	25	25			2	8	13

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other sites Reports came from Falfield (Heneage Ponds), Chipping Sodbury Common, Yate (Kingsgate Park), Almondsbury (Woodlands Golf Course), Bristol (Eastville Park), Gordano Valley (Fowlers Pool), Woodspring Bay, Chelwood, (Lady Farm), and Paulton, with no counts exceeding 16.

Breeding It was a good breeding season with eight sites used, the highest number in recent years, see table and details given overleaf.

Tufted Duck cont.

OPS – two broods (ten and eight) on June 25th, and a third (three) on July 3rd, just the brood of ten survived;

Sevenside – two broods, a single abandoned juvenile from June 3rd to 7th, at least five on June 12th, six from June 13th to July 20th all of which presumably fledged;

PWD – two broods, three 'young' juveniles and one well grown on July 11th, outcome unknown;

CI-Y (Yeo Estuary Pools) – one brood of seven ducklings noted from Aug. 8th to 14th, outcome unknown;

Tortworth Lake – one brood with a single juvenile seen on Sep. 4th;

Chelwood (Lady Farm) – two broods, twelve tiny ducklings from July 8th to 11th, reduced to eleven by 31st, and reduced further to nine by Aug. 13th when another brood of five was also noted;

CVL - just one brood of eight ducklings on July 11th, reduced to six by 31st;

Litton Resrs. – a brood of five from June 24th to July 23rd, with a second on the latter date, and three broods of six, seven and one on Aug. 6th.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites	5	4	4	5	6	7	7	5	4	8
No. of broods	8	9	7	7	22	11	20	9	9	15
No. of young	55	29	41	25+	74+	63	98	50	50	83

Breeding success in the Avon area

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

[Red 3]

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked 29th in National Importance in 2016/17, English 10-year trend 45%.

The first winter period at CVL saw an influx that resulted in a record count of 21 on March 28th although this is probably less than the total number of individuals involved in the influx, with the last seen on April 26th. BL had just two drakes during this period. There was an extraordinary record of a juvenile female at Litton Resrs. on June 16th that may have moved to CVL in August (see details below). The first arrival in the second winter period was an adult female at CVL on Oct. 16th that was joined by a second the following day. The tables below put the year into context:

	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
CVL	1	1	1	4	3	5	1	1	3	14
BL	6	4	2	4	0	1	0	0	1	4
Max flock	7	6	3	5	3	9	2	2	11	18

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

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	2	3

Number of individuals on the Estuary each year

Full details are as follows:

First winter period

CI-Y – two ducks on April 9th at the mouth of the R. Yeo;

CVL – a drake on Jan. 2nd, rose to 12 (five drakes and seven ducks) on 4th, 14 on 13th, 18 on Feb. 1st, three on 4th, four on 8th, 14 on 15th, 11 on 20th, 15 on 24th, seven on March 2nd, eight on 6th, 20 on 10th, 14 on 24th, 21 on 28th (12 males and nine females), 18 on 30th and 20 still present on 31st, then tailing off through April with ten still present on 12th, and the last three seen on 27th;

BL – two drakes from Feb. 6th until last sighting on March 8th.

Summer

CVL – a female (no age given) from Aug. 1st to 4th, and again on 12th and 13th;

Litton Resrs – a juvenile female on June 16th.

Second winter period

CI-Y – one, neither aged or sexed, at Kenn on Oct. 29th during a BOC walk;

CVL – an adult female on Oct.16th, with two on 17th, a pair of adults on 20th, then an adult female on 22nd, Nov. 5th, 7th, 13th, 14th and 29th, Dec. 3rd, and 7th. Two were noted during the WeBS count on Dec.11th, with possibly the same identified as two drakes on 18th, then an increase to a maximum of five by the end of the year;

BL – a drake seen on Nov. 5th, with two identified as an adult and first-winter the following day, last seen together on 13th, then again on Dec.1st. There was an arrival of three adult females which joined the drake on 3rd, that had gone by the following day, and the drake left on 7th.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis* (10 since the first in 2000, 2)

Very scarce Nearctic vagrant.

Descriptions required

Two records, both at CVL, as follows: an adult male on Nov.12th with a different male from Dec. 8th remaining into 2018 (A H Davis, R Mielcarek *et al.*, photographed).

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

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

The following are all considered to be wild birds, although the exact parentages are not clear and some could just relate to aberrant individuals.

A poor year, particularly at CVL as evidenced by the following table.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
9	19	21	14	12	19	9	15	14+	8

Estimated number of individuals at CVL each year (Average 14)

Details of all records are as follows:

Northwick Warth – a male, thought to be a hybrid between a Ring-necked and a Tufted Duck, had a black mantle and grey flanks with a hint of a spur and a paler line along the upper edge. Present from April 12th to May 27th;

CVL – only two individuals were reported: a female resembling a Scaup but too small with too much black on the bill tip on Jan.14th, and a male Pochard-type on March 10th that had a mantle darker than the flanks;

BL – five individuals, a male Pochard-type but with a dark grey mantle and yellow eye on Jan. 5th; a male Lesser Scaup type with a grey mantle on Aug. 21st and 30th; a male, like a Pochard but with a dark grey mantle and a loose crest, thought to be a Tufted x Pochard present in previous winters, was present from Nov. 5th; a male, thought to be a Ferruginous x Pochard and present in previous winters, was noted on Nov.10th and then from Dec. 4th; and a male, like a large Lesser Scaup but with the bill tip dipped in black and thought to be a Tufted x Pochard, was present from Dec. 5th.

In order to help track individuals it would be very helpful if observers of *Aythya* hybrids could include some descriptive notes of the individual's appearance (*Eds.*).

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

[Amber 1]

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

WeBS: English10-year trend 58%.

This enigmatic duck remains a scarce visitor to the Avon area, so the long-staying individual at Weston-s-Mare was popular with local birders. The details are given overleaf.

Eider cont.

Severn Beach – eight, two drakes and six ducks, on April 9th, were the last of the year;

Weston-s-Mare (Marine Lake & Birnbeck Cove) – an immature female from Jan. 2nd to March 8th, with another sighting from the town beach of what is presumed to be the same individual on March 20th.

The table shows the data for the past ten years:

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
0	2	0	56	7	3	2	2	2	9
Total number of individuals each year									

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* (61, 4)

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

Descriptions required.

A good year with six records involving at least four individuals, details as follows;

CI-Y – an immature was at the mouth of the R. Yeo on the unusual date of July 23rd (H E Rose);

BG – a first-winter male was present from Jan.10th to April 23rd (many observers, photographed); then an adult male on Nov. 4th and 5th (S Davies *et al.*, photographed), and another thought to be the one seen earlier in the month at CVL from Dec. 30th into 2018 (S Davies *et al.*, photographed);

CVL – an immature arrive late on Oct. 21st (R M Andrews *et al.*, photographed); then an adult male, probably different from the second listed above, was noted from Nov.11th until Dec. 29th (S Isgar *et al.*, photographed, see opposite).

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

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
0	1	1	0	1	2	5	2	0	3
Number of individuals recorded (July – June)									

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

[Red 3 & 4]

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

WeBS: English10-year trend: 80%.

Although there was a fair number of sightings at CVL, the low Estuary counts resulted in a drop in the number of individuals noted during the year as shown in the table below.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
75	53	59	51	206	83	103	71	128	45
Total number of individuals each year									

The full details are as follows:

First winter period

Weston-s-Mare – one reported by Birdguides on Jan. 7th, and three off Anchor Head on Feb. 23rd;

CVL – a first-winter and adult drake on Jan.17th, with the latter staying until March 25th. Four females on 30th.

Summer passage

OPS – a female or juvenile on July 15th;

Northwick Warth – a drake from July 10th to 15th;

Sevenside – an adult drake on June 12th, a female on 23rd, and a female/immature on Aug.18th;

CI-Y – a single bird at high tide at the mouth of the R. Yeo on Aug. 23rd;

Anchor Head – one during a two hour sea watch on Aug. 3rd;

CVL – five, four adult drakes and a duck on June 29th, nine, eight drakes and a duck, on July 3rd, five on 31st (no details), a drake from Aug.10th to13th, and an adult female on Nov.14th;

BL – the nine, eight drakes and a duck, seen earlier at CVL on July 3rd.

Common Scoter -- Second winter period

Sevenside – one on Oct.17th;

CI-Y – single birds on Oct. 25th and Dec. 5th at the mouth of the R. Yeo;

Anchor Head – three on Oct. 2nd;

CVL – a drake on Sept. 6th, and a female or first-winter on Sept. 24th.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca* (42, 1)

Very scarce winter visitor, very rare inland.

Descriptions required.

One record: a female/immature at CI-Y on April 9th (H E Rose). It was seen in very misty conditions close inshore before it took flight out over the Estuary.

The table below summarises the Avon area records for the past 20 years (average one per year).

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	5	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	3	1

Total number of individuals each year

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

[RBBP] [Amber 5]

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

WeBS: .English 10-year trend -30%.

Although there was an increase at CVL, the number wintering continues to fall at BL, as does the overall ten-year average for the main sites shown below:

Year	CVL	BL	BG	Av.
2007/08 – 2016/17 Av.	84	23	8	115
2015/16	68	24	1	93
2016/17	78	9	2	89

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

Main sites Monthly maxima at the three main sites are given in the tables below with a summary of the CVL sightings over the past decade (average 124). The only other record was of a female on the R. Avon at Hotwells in Bristol.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	1	1	1	3	2	1	1				1	2
CVL	70	85	80	10	3	1	2	1	1	10	50	35
BL	7	13	13							2	4	17

Monthly maxima at the main sites

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
170	105	135	155	145	160	110	90	90	80

Highest count at CVL in period March - May

Breeding An adult female was seen on June 2nd at CVL, then noted bathing on 15th and 23rd. This was considered to be consistent with an individual just off a nest (K E Vinicombe & A H Davis), then on July 4th and 5th a female with a single duckling was seen. This constitutes the fourth breeding record for the site and the Avon area. Although a pair was seen at BG in May, and an immature was noted in June and July, there was no clear evidence of breeding, although these may have been locally bred in previous years.

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS: English 10-year trend -42 %.

Just one was reported, a redhead that was presumed to be the returning individual to the same site as last year. The details are as follows, and the table summarises the records for the past decade.

First winter period

Chipping Sodbury Common – a redhead on Jan. 2nd, also reported on March 2nd, from April 11th to 14th and again from 22nd to 24th;

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
0	1	12	1	3	3	1	0	2/3	1

Total number of individuals seen each year

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS: English 10-year trend -34%.

One record: One flew upriver past Blackstone Rocks, CI-Y, on April 3rd.

Excluding the individual (Mervyn) that returned to CVL over many winters that has now died, the average count over the past decade is four per year.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

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

WeBS: English 10-year trend 10%.

The following table gives winter count details for the past decade at CVL (average 39).

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
54	32	26	80	25	25	35	76	18	21

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

The highest count of the year was 34 on the Blind Yeo at CI-Y on Feb. 5th, 30 were noted at Newton Park, Bath, on Jan.19th and at CVL on Dec. 11th. The next table shows how the CVL maxima have varied over the past decade (average 52).

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
65	21	95	65	31	40	70	81	26	30

Maximum counts at CVL each year

The table below summarises the main counts; last and first dates were April 8th and Oct. 3rd ignoring the August OPS record. The flocks at CI-Y are mainly seen on the Blind Yeo between the edge of the town and Clevedon Moor, occasionally some are noted on the Estuary near Blackstone Rocks;

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
CI-Y	22	34						5
Bath (Newton Park)	30	21						4
R. Avon (Saltford)	5		2					
BLR	4	5						3
CVL	14	15	8	2		8	25	30
BL	25	5	3				2	2

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Reports made away from tabulated sites above were as follows. Note that the first two sites are close to the CI-Y site mentioned above.

First winter period

Kingston Seymour (Bullocks Farm) – nine on Jan. 8th;
 Congresbury (Moor Lane bridge) – four on Feb.18th and two on 20th;
 Bath (Prior Park) – a female on Feb. 26th;
 Keynsham (R. Avon) – one on Jan.11th;
 Hanham (R. Avon) – one on April 1st;
 BG – one on Jan. 15th and Feb.17th;

Autumn period

OPS – one on Aug 4th;

Second winter period

RPD – a female on Oct. 22nd;
 Bleadon Levels - two on Dec. 5th, five on 17th, two on 18th, one on 24th, eight on 26th, and two on 30th;
 Litton Res. – two on Nov. 23rd.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked second and BL fourth in 2016/17. English 10 year trend -72744%

There was just a single record:

Backwell Lake – a female on May 20th.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

[RBBP] [Amber 2]

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

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

This year the records, the majority of which were of single calling/singing birds, only came from three distinct locations in the Marshfield area -- Rushmead/Northfield Lanes, Down Road and Tormarton Road/Shirehill Lane. Sight records and counts higher than two were as follows:

Down Road -- three were calling on June 2nd and five on July 13th. There was a sight record here of one in flight on June 26th;

Rushmead Farm -- four singing males were noted on July 15th, and there was unusual record of seven, likely to be a family party, which were flushed by farming activities on Aug.18th.

Higher observer coverage this year resulted in a total of 66 bird days (*cf.* 16 in 2016) but analysis of the reports and their locations shows that there was probably a maximum of five singing males. The first record of the year was at Down Road on May 27th with the last at Rushmead Lane on Aug. 31st.

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

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
6	5	10	10	14+	4	4	3	2	5	5

Number of singing males each year

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Locally fairly common breeding resident but large numbers released for 'sporting' purposes, particularly in the Marshfield / Cotswold escarpment area. In 2017 several thousand were released.

The number of one-km squares where this species was recorded was 33 (26 in 2016), including seven in the Marshfield area, eight in SG** (that is SG outside (two km) the area around Marshfield village), 12 in BA and five in NS; see table below. There was also one record from Bristol, one at Stockwood Open Space Reserve on Oct. 27th.

Counts outside the Marshfield area were mainly of one's or two's except for Lansdown, West Littleton Down, Shire Valley / Shire Hill and Drifton Hill. The only site having regular reports was Saltford with a maximum of ten on Feb. 4th.

First winter period (January – March) Reported from nine one-km squares; (cf four in 2013, five in 2014, nine in 2015 and 14 in 2016). The details are as follows:

Marshfield area -- as usual this area held the highest numbers with 45 at Down Road on Jan. 16th, 11 at Rushmead Lane on Jan. 21st. and 20 on March 4th at Down Road.

Away from the Marshfield area records were received from the following four sites (max. counts): Kingston Seymour - four, Paulton - four, and Saltford - ten, and Shire Valley with 50 on Feb. 24th

Breeding season (April – June) The local BBS survey recorded this species in ten one-km squares (five in 2016) which represented 4.2% of those surveyed, the total counted was 29. Otherwise, reported from 17 one-km squares, seven of which were in the Marshfield area. Sites with reports outside this area during the breeding season were as follows. There were no reports of young.

Compton Dando, Dyrham Park, Easton-in-Gordano, East of Stanton Prior, East of Tormarton, Newton Park, Saltford, Stony Littleton, and West Littleton Down.

Autumn and second winter period (July – December) Reported from 22 one-km squares: nine in SG (including six in the Marshfield area with totals of 20 in September, 30 in October, 100 in November and 70 in December), nine in BA, three in NS and one in Bristol. Sites outside Marshfield were:

BL, Bromley Heath Park, Cotswold Way/Dyrham Park, Keynsham (three squares), Kingston Seymour, Langford, Lansdown (18 on Dec. 31st), Newton Park, N of Queen Charlton, Saltford (two squares), Sandford, Stockwood Open Space, and West Littleton Down (30 on Oct. 28th).

The table below summarises the past decade, it gives maximum single counts for the Marshfield area and the numbers of sites with sightings away from the Marshfield area

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Marshfield max.	117	50	60	30	38	35	200	300+	36	100
No. of sites – SG**	7	3	2	3	4	7	3	14	10	8
No. of sites -- BA	12	18	17	5	6	4	3	7	9	12
No. of sites --NS	2	1	4	8	0	1	0	1	0	5

Row one – maximum single count received from the Marshfield area
Rows two to four -- Number of sites with reports away from the Marshfield area

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

[Red 3]

Scarce, local and declining breeding resident.

Another dramatic fall in the number of reports – just four from two sites involving only 17 individuals including ten that were almost certainly from a wildfowling establishment at Kingston Seymour.

Details of all reports received are as follows:

Marshfield -- four at Rushmead Lane on Jan. 3rd, single birds at Down Road on April 13th, June 2nd and 17th;
CI-Y (Blake's Pools area) -- ten on Nov. 21st.

The table below shows the slow and continuing decline over the past decade where SG** stands for SG excluding the two km area around Marshfield village.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Marshfield Max.	27	10	5	2	0	25	3	0	4	6
No. of sites – SG**	3	1	1	1	4	4	1	0	0	0
No. of sites -- BA	1	2	0	1	2	2	0	2*	3	0
No. of sites -- NS	2	3	2*	2*	2	2	0	1	0	0*

First row – Totals of the monthly maxima for the Marshfield area
 Rows two to four -- Number of sites in SG** (SG outside the Marshfield area), BA and NS, * feral birds are excluded,

Observers are encouraged to submit every record of this species, with six figure grid references where possible, so that its declining status can be monitored. Local knowledge about released and/or feral birds would also be useful. (Eds.)

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Fairly common but under recorded. Very large numbers are released for 'sporting' purposes, particularly in the Marshfield Cotswold escarpment area. In 2017 in excess of 10,000 were released.

Despite the many released for shooting in some areas the overall picture is still one of low numbers (albeit double those in 2016), or possibly under-recording.

Non-BBS reports were widespread with records from 171 different one-km squares, nearly double that in 2016, all but 28 having single figure counts (*cf.* 16 in 2016).

The largest three counts were of 150 between South Stoke and Midford on Sept.19th, 91 at Lansdown on Dec. 31st and 52 in the Gordano Valley (another shooting area) on April 1st. All other double figure counts were less than 50. There were regular reports throughout the year from OPS, Saltford and Newton Park with maxima of six, 17 and ten, respectively.

Survey Data The local BBS survey recorded this species in 141 one-km squares (103 in 2016), which represented 59% of those surveyed; the total counted was 963.

Breeding The only report was of a single brood at Saltford.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* (53, 2)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant to the larger reservoirs and the Estuary, sometimes staying for a considerable length of time at the reservoirs. Description required.

After a blank winter in 2016/17 the second winter period produced three records probably relating to just two individuals as follows:

Severn Beach – an adult in summer plumage photographed on Oct. 21st (A Ramesh *et al.*);

CVL – two brief sightings of what was probably the same winter-plumaged individual, on Nov.11th (*per* A H Davis) and 18th (R Kelsh).

The table below summarises diver records for the past ten winters, none were seen in 2016/17.

Divers in the Avon area

	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	2015/16
Red-throated	2	1	1			9	31	2	3
Black-throated						1			2
Pacific			1						
Great Northern	3	5	2	3	3	3+	3	2	4
Diver sp.	3	1	3	1		2	3	1	2

Numbers seen in each winter during the past decade

FULMAR *Fulmarus glarialis*

[Amber 1, 6]

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

For the fourth successive year numbers were low in the absence of prolonged spells of westerly winds in the summer months. There was only one record during the winter, followed by a very small peak in late spring and mid-summer and only two reports in the autumn. There were no inland sightings in 2017 and all records are given in the table below.

	Feb	May	June			Aug			Sept	
	23	1	6	11	25	3	4	12	11	13
Sevenside			2	1		1	1			1
PWD					1					
CI-Y								1		
Sand Point		1								
Anchor Point	2			11		1			4	

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus* (0, 1)

Very rare vagrant.

Descriptions required.

The first local record since 1974 was of one flying up-channel off Anchor Head at 14.40 on Aug. 3rd (P A Gregory).

Previous local records are from Sand Point in September 1962, flying upriver off Brean Down in June 1971, and off Aust Warth for three hours in September 1974.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

[Amber 6, 7]

Uncommon summer/autumn visitor, usually storm-driven, although large feeding flocks have occurred in calm anti-cyclonic conditions in mid-summer. Seldom recorded NE of the Second Severn Crossing. Rare inland.

There was a distinct improvement in the number of records following on from a very poor year in 2016, when this species was seen on only five days, but the number of individuals was low due to the absence of any large counts in mid-summer. Unusually, September rather than June was the best month. It is notable that no records were received from Sand Point in 2017; this has traditionally been our best site but observer effort was significantly lower here. See table on page 49 for past records.

There was one inland record: two juveniles were at CVL on Sept.11th, following strong winds overnight. They seemed lethargic in the early morning but by the evening were flying strongly and are assumed to have left overnight (R.J. Higgins *et al.*). All coastal records are given in the table below:

	June				July	Aug			Sept				
	6	9	11	25	3	3	19	8	10	11	12	13	14
OPS											1		
Sevenside		120	13	80	1			3	2	7	1	10	1
PWD				12				3		25			
Anchor Point	82									132		19	

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus* (1, 1)

Very rare vagrant. Descriptions required.

Our second record was of one off Sand Point (P A Bowyer) then shortly afterwards, at 8.20, off Anchor Head (D Nevitt) on Sept.11th.

The only previous local record was of one off New Passage in September 1988.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

[Amber 6]

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

Severnside, as in 2016, produced the majority of the records of this species and most were in August, when suitable weather conditions (summer gales) occurred.

Recorded as followed:

Severn Beach – single birds on June 6th and 23rd; three on Aug. 3rd, two on 19th; and one on Sept. 11th;

PWD – four on Aug. 3rd.

Details of records for the last two decades are given in the table on page 49.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (206, 8+)

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

Descriptions required.

A good year with eight records, involving at least eight different individuals, in two 'waves', in September between 11th and 13th, and in October between 16th and 22nd, the details are given below. A summary of the records for the past decade is given on page 49.

Severn Beach – at least two during the morning of Sept. 11th (many observers) were photographed, with at least three on 13th (many observers, photographed). On Oct. 16th one was photographed (D White) while next day two were present (many observers, photographed) and there was one on 21st (R M Andrews, P Dalton *et al.*);

Royal Portbury Dock – one off the dock on Oct. 22nd (C J Stone);

Anchor Head – one was watched for five minutes at 08.40 on Sept. 11th (D Nevitt) while on 13th there were four sightings of single birds between 07.30 and 09.30 (D Nevitt *et al.*).

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

[Amber 6, 7]

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

There was a slight improvement from 2016, which was the worst year of the decade for this species (see table on page 49). Also there was one inland record, a sub-adult at CVL on Feb. 5th, which was viewed and photographed at exceptionally close range as it consorted with the tame wildfowl at Herriott's Bridge.

There was only one sighting in May, which produced the most records in both 2015 and 2016, then minor peaks were noted during early June and mid-September. The table below shows all coastal records.

	Feb	May	June					Sept			Nov	
	23	11	6	7	9	10	11	8	11	13	15	22
OPS										1		
Severn Beach			9	2	1		1		2	1		
PWD								1				3
Portishead						1						
Sand Point		1										
Anchor Head	4		31									
Axe Est.											1	

In addition individuals were found dead at Weston-s-Mare on Sept. 12th and Cl-Y on Oct. 5th.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

RR

Fairly common resident and winter visitor, especially to the main reservoirs; breeds in small numbers on Steep Holm. Two races occur:

P. c. carbo - previously dominated all records and probably still accounts for all breeders..

P.c. sinensis - now fairly common amongst non-breeders.

WeBS: CVL was ranked 28th in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 27%.

Numbers at CVL were higher than in 2016, and are high by historical standards. It is likely that both subspecies occurred, the only proved individuals are listed at the end of this entry. Elsewhere there were several good counts at BG in the first three months and at Saltford in both winter periods.

The main data are given in the following tables.

1999/09 Av	2010	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
143	203	145	73	321	477	447	303	445

CVL January to December average maximum counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	4	3	3	7	5	3	5	7	6*	7	5	4
Littleton	3	1	2	1			1	1			1	1
Sevenside	3	3	4	3	7	2	8	2	3	6*	1	5
CI-Y	8	9	6	6	7	4	8	6	4	5	5	10
Weston STW					1						1	3
R. Avon at Bath	5	6			2			3		1	3	3
R. Avon at Keynsham	3	3				1		2				6
R. Avon at Saltford	20	19	11	9	2	4	4	3	1	2	10	17
Kenn Moor	11	3										3
BG	161	19	95	23	8	3	21	51	11	52	17	21
CVL	40	20	25	5	3	8	40	135	410	505	420	50
BL	18	8	36	4	9	4	16	30	49	30	29	25
Litton Resrs.	5	10	3	1	3	4	8	7		4		13

Cormorant -- Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

*Two records of over-flying flocks have been omitted from the table above; both were in the autumn, suggesting migration through our area: 12 over OPS on Sept.12th and ten to S over New Passage on Oct.12th.

Other sites Small numbers were as usual recorded from many other sites, most involving over-flyers. The largest totals not in the table above were: 24 at Chew Magna Res. on Sept.10th and eight here on Nov. 21st; 14 to W over Chipping Sodbury on June 16th; eight at Bristol Docks on Jan. 8th, at Portishead Marina on 15th, at Eastville Park on Oct. 28th and on Loxton pylons on 29th; and seven at Avonmouth Docks on April 18th. Nesting presumably took place on Steep Holm, our only breeding colony, but unfortunately no records were received; a special boat trip is needed to count the nests accurately as they are situated on a sheer cliff facing out to sea.

Identification of the continental sub-species *sinensis* requires careful examination of the gular patch and bill. Reports of this sub-species were received as follows: Cumberland Basin on Feb. 21st (two); CVL on March 15th (four); New Passage on March 28th and April 7th (one); and from Bristol Docks on Aug. 27th (one).

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (117, 2)

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

Descriptions required.

After last year's high counts reports returned to normal with just two records, details as follows:

Severn Beach – an immature photographed at 05.50 on Aug. 4th flew off south later (P D Bowerman);

CVL – a juvenile was seen on several occasions close inshore at Woodford Lodge from Oct. 5th to 17th (many observers, photographed, see opposite page 93).

Tubenoses, Gannet and Shag in the Avon area

	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Fulmar	79	62	40	26	112	192	49	31	22	30	27
Sooty Shear.											1
Manx Shear.	562	1680	380	100	1015	2811	1363	69	786	461	514
Balearic Sh.											1
Storm Petrel	7	25	1		9	108	6	10	2	14	12
Leach's Pet.	13	1	24	1	2		4		5+		8
Gannet	100	172	57	267	240	134	271	57	137	53	60
Shag	3	5	2	3	6	3	1	3	4	37	2

Scarce seabird records – Annual bird-day total

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

[Amber 2, 5]

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

For the third successive year, and despite an expanding population on the Somerset Levels, few records were received, and none was seen in the second winter period; see table on page 53. Recorded as follows:

Severn Beach – one at Orchard Pools on Jan. 21st;

Backwell Lake – one on Jan. 9th;

CVL – from 2016 two were seen intermittently, one each at Herons Green and Herriott's Bridge, until Feb. 13th with further reports on March 6th, 22nd and 31st, and April 6th and 12th.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis* (15, 16+)

Now a scarce visitor, rare until recent years.

Descriptions required.

An exceptional year presumably influenced by flocks remaining in the south west of the country from the national influx in the 2016/17 winter. The most conservative estimate for the number of individuals, 16, is more than the combined Avon total to the end of 2016; see table on page 53! The details are as follows:

The two that arrived at Toghill, near Wick, in December 2016 remained until March 11th.

An adult was photographed in the late afternoon of Feb. 5th on Herriott's Pool, CVL (A H Davis, R M Andrews); it was reported again on 9th and then seen on the evening of 18th. This was presumably the same one that was seen in nearby fields at Stanton Drew on 16th (M Rogers). Also in February one was photographed along the Strawberry Line, near Sandford, on 10th (T Borash), and one roosted at Backwell Lake on 20th, 21st and 24th (P Baber *et al.*).

On March 18th one roosted on Denny Island, CVL (S Davies *et al.*, photographed), there were then two here on the evening of 22nd with three (all different from the one on the 18th) the next morning and evening. Another was seen at Northwick Warth on 25th (I Dickie), and two were noted again on Herriott's Pool, CVL early morning on the 27th.

During April two, in winter plumage, roosted on Denny Island, CVL on 6th, 7th and 8th while on 9th a flock of nine in summer plumage arrived mid-afternoon (R M Andrews, G Hudd, C J Stone *et al.*). They later joined the two others and the eleven roosted. This roost count was repeated on 10th and 11th while a flock of ten was found mid-afternoon on 12th. Three were seen on 14th and 15th with two still roosting on Denny Island on 16th and 19th, but four were present, all in winter plumage, on 22nd. One roosting on Denny on May 9th was seen the next day.

Cattle Egret cont. One flew south over Northwick Warth on July 20th (R J Higgins) and another flew south at CVL in heavy rain on Aug. 30th (A H Davis).

A juvenile was found at CVL on Sept.17th (G Thoburn); it was seen again and photographed on 19th and 20th. On 22nd two juveniles were present and both of these were seen regularly until Oct. 2nd with one still present until 10th.

An adult was seen in Heron's Green, CVL on Dec. 23rd (D Hughes) and 24th (R M Andrews) before being relocated in fields nearby next to Bickfield Lane on 26th (C Craig *et al.*). It remained here, roosting at CVL, into 2018.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

[RBBP]

Uncommon resident, and scarce visitor mainly from late summer to winter. In line with the national trend, numbers have increased dramatically during the last two decades. Breeding has occurred since 2014.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 16th in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 30%.

Numbers continue to be high and the Backwell Lake roost was larger than in previous years, although the maximum at BL was slightly down on the 2016 figure.

98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
13	32	24	21	23	59	68	36	60	30	42

Maximum count each year from CI-Y and environs

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS and environs	2	2		3	4	4	3	6	6	4	9	1
Littleton Warth	1		3	1					4	3	4	
Severnside	3	2	5	4	5	3	14	10	11	3	4	5
PWD			2		1	1	3		2	4		
CI-Y and environs	42	12	24	28	7	11	28	22	20	15	22	33
Sand Bay				2		3	5	8	12	5		
Axe Est		3	2	7	6	10	1	3	7	13	2	2
Backwell Lake	16	20	20	2			1	1			25	33
BG	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		6	1	
CVL	5	2	7	4	4	5	9	16	28	38	24	16
BL	26	1			2	1	4	15	7	5	6	

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

Other sites Many reports were received, mostly of small numbers scattered across the levels and moors of North Somerset. Most of these other reports probably involved individuals included in roost counts given above. High counts from sites not in main table included 12 at Kenn Moor on March 7th, nine at Chelvey on Feb. 25th, eight at Wraxall on March 4th and six at Stanton Drew on Feb.19th.

Breeding Two pairs were seen at nests in the Uphill heronry; the outcome is unknown.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

RR

Local records have increased rapidly in recent years since the first in 2002, partly linked to a national increase but also as a result of regular breeding in Somerset.

The rapid local increase in this species continued unabated with a maximum flock of 37 at CVL in the autumn encouraged by the low water levels. It is also becoming regular at a number of sites away from the main reservoirs, particularly around Weston STW and the North Somerset levels but it is still scarce on the coast and in the summer months. Individuals colour ringed in Somerset were again present suggesting this is the main source of the large autumn flocks.

The flock that was commuting between BL and CVL at the end of 2016 remained into January with five at BL and seven at CVL on 1st and 12 at CVL on 3rd. The last report from BL was of three on the 8th. There were still seven at CVL on the 10th but numbers then dropped off with the final record from here being one on 30th. In addition, what is presumed to be one of the individuals present on Clevedon Moor in December 2016 was noted again from Jan. 21st to 29th.

The only records in February were of one in flight on 12th at the R Yeo about one-*km* inland from the coast (H E Rose), one in flight over Claverham Drove, Kenn Moor on 17th (S Sanins) and another in flight over Herriott's Pool, CVL on 26th while the only March record was of one at CVL on 11th.

Records increased in April with three at CVL on 6th and one at Weston STW the next day. The latter, thought to be an immature, remained in the general area until May 14th and is presumed to be the individual seen at Weston Airfield, Locking on 23rd. One was seen flying inland at OPS on April 11th (P J Hazelwood) and one was seen at CVL on 23rd and 30th. Another was at BL from April 30th to May 17th, with two here, one in breeding plumage, on May 10th and 11th.

The only additional May record was one at the mouth of the R Yeo, Clevedon on 11th while the only June record was of one at BL on 8th and CVL the next day, and the only July record was of two photographed at CVL on 7th.

The autumn flock at CVL started with two on Aug. 7th, then three on 8th and four from 13th. Numbers increased during September with seven on 3rd, eight on 5th, 12 on 11th, 13 on 15th, 15 on 22nd, 16 on 24th and 18 on 27th. The flock continued to build during October with 20 on 1st, 25 on 6th, 30 on 27th and 32 on 29th with 37 on Nov. 1st and 35, all together on 3rd. These numbers continued with 34 roosting on 12th and 34 again counted on 17th but thereafter there was no count over 20 (on 27th). As water levels rose during December numbers continued to decline, with ten still on 8th but after that no count exceeded four (on 26th) with only one or two present into the new year.

Numbers at BL were lower than in 2016 with no count over nine (compared with 24 in 2016). The first was on Aug. 22nd and then one intermittently from Sept. 8th to 22nd with two on 9th and 15th, and two again on Oct. 16th. In November there were two on 2nd with nine next day and four on 5th and 6th. One was seen on 7th, 8th and 10th, then five on 13th and 14th, four on 15th and 16th, two on 18th, three on 19th and two on 21st and 25th. Two were present on Dec. 1st, and again on 17th and 27th with just one noted on eight other dates.

In the Weston STW/Bleadon Levels area one was present from Sept. 12th being seen on two dates in September (M S Ponsford *et al.*), three dates in October, six dates in November and four dates in December. Individuals seen only in flight in the second half of the year were as follows;

Lower Littleton – flying east along the Winford Brook on Aug. 13th (R Mielcarek);

Nibley – to south on Sept. 17th (W King);

St George's, Weston – Oct. 15th (G Pudney);

Clevedon – two photographed over the Blind Yeo on Oct. 28th (P Chapman);

Weston – two over Old Town quarry on Nov. 8th (D Gibbs).

The table below shows the rapid increase in numbers since the first in 2002. As recently as 2014 the maximum 'flock' was two. Recently it has not been easy to calculate the total number of individuals present in a year, in 2017 this was thought that it might be as high as 65, so we have tabulated the maximum single count for each year in question. It now seems pointless asking observers to submit descriptions and so this species has been removed from the 'unusual species' list.

2002	03	06	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	7	26	37

Maximum single count each year

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident; uncommon as a breeding species.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 12th in importance in 2015/16. English ten-year trend -12%.

There was a slight improvement in numbers at CVL, presumably due to an increase in the fish populations (*cf.* Cormorant) but it is noteworthy that the annual maximum of this species here was below those of Little Egret and Great White Egret ! The Sea Mills population continued to decline. The maximum count here was less than half the long term average. The BL January count was high, following record numbers late in 2016, but there was no repeat in the second half of 2017.

	2000/09 Av.	2010	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
CVL	19	32	35	16	25	20	36	31	33
Sea Mills	17	12	13	8	7	20	11	8	4

Maximum counts at CVL and Sea Mills – Averages for 2010 to 2017: 29 and 8

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	2	5	3	5	4	6	7	7	6	6	6
Sevenside	4	4	1	3	3	4	3	6	13	4	6	2
CI-Y	2	6	3	3	2	5	3	8	4	7	5	4
Axe Est./Weston STW		3			1	1	1		1		2	3
R. Avon (Sea Mills)	3		1				1	2	4	3		1
Saltford	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	1	2
Newton Park		11	13	10	12	6	6	5		5		10
BG	3	5	2	2	5	2	5	5	4	4	2	4
CVL	17	9	3	2	4	4	6	14	33	25	25	15
BL	27	5	3	2	6	1	7	10	5	10	9	5
Litton Resrs.	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	1		2	5	3

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Reports were received from a wide scatter of other sites, often as single birds in flight. The maximum counts not in the table above were all in the Shire Valley, Marshfield, where there were ten on Aug. 15th, 12 on Sept.10th, 11 on Oct. 2nd and nine on 11th, all in excess of any previous count here.

Breeding The number of occupied nests largely remained stable but there was a significant reduction in the CVL heronry, the missing birds do not seem to have moved to any other known site in our area. The Pill and Uphill heronries were not counted but remain active. The table shows the number of occupied nests recorded at known heronries in our region.

	Grid Ref.	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Widcombe Manor	ST761633			2								
Dodington Lakes	ST753802			3		4						
Newton Park	ST692640	6		2			3		1		3	4
Eastwood Farm	ST635713	5	34	25	25	17	16	17	18	21	12	11
Gordano Valley NNR	ST438732										1	
Prior Park, Bath	ST634761		2	1	1							
Denny Island, CVL	ST575607	32	51	39	30	31	32	27	23	22	39	16
BL	ST527590										1	2
Pill ¹	ST530739	3		7	6	7	3		11		23	
Cleeve Wood	ST462662	44	42	45	40	42	43	37	43	41	39	39
Uphill Grange Wood	ST320582	1	4	4		4		3	2	6		
Total		109	133	128	102	105	97	84	98	102	118	72

Number of occupied nests over the last decade

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

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea* (4, 1)*Very rare vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

One record: an adult in a private part of PWD from April 25th until May 10th (C J Stone, photographed, see after page 108).

This is the 11th accepted record for the Avon area, since the first at BL in 1963, and the fourth this century.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* (15 since first in 2007, 1)*Rare vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

One record: one was seen in flight over Stratford Bay, CVL on May 27th (J. Horsey).

The most recent records are for Weston STW from April to May 2014, at Pilning Wetlands in November 2015, and in flight at CVL in January 2016; see table below.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia* (51, 7)*Scarce visitor.*

Descriptions required.

A good series of records, see table below, were reported involving probably seven individuals, details as follows:

OPS – one flew downriver at 06.20 on May 23rd and was relocated at Northwick Warth ten minutes later;

Northwick Warth – a series of records in the spring involving probably three individuals as follows: on April 21st (B Ofield *et al.*, photographed), an adult arrived at 12.15 on May 13th and was still present the next day (R Hargreaves, A Crowe *et al.*, photographed see after page 108), a different adult present from 23rd to 29th (many observers, photographed), and an adult for a few minutes around 11.00 on June 2nd (B Lancaster);

CI-Y – two adults were seen on the morning of July 27th on the new scrape (managed retreat) on the western the bank of the R. Yeo (H E Rose);

CVL – two adults seen on March 12th (many observers, photographed).

Scarce wetland birds in the Avon area

	98/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Bittern	4	3	6	11	10	9	4	8	3	5	4
Cattle Egret	0		6	1		1				5	16+
Great White Egret	0			1	3	4	3	5	17	41	65
Purple Heron	0		1					1			1
White Stork	0			2		5			1		
Glossy Ibis	0		6	1			4+	1	1	1	1
Spoonbill	2	1	4	2	10		2	2	2	6	7
Spotted Crake	0	2	1			1	4	2		2	

Annual totals (the figures for Cattle and Great White Egret in 2017 are estimates)

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked 20th and the English coast of the Severn Estuary 35th in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -8%.

Numbers were once again low at CVL, but were within the normal range, they were slightly higher at both BG and BL than in 2016. It was noted on 1.4% of BBS visits (*cf.* 4% in 2016). The main sightings (monthly maxima) and a CVL summary for the past two decades are given overleaf.

Little Egret cont.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sevenside	3	4	6	6	7	11	13	16	14	5	7	2
PWD	2	4	12	11	10	13	10	14	8	6	5	8
CI-Y	7	8	2	2	2	1		1	2		5	2
Axe Est./Weston STW	2	2		1				1	2		5	2
Tortworth Lake		1					3	2	5	3		
Kenn Moor	12	12	4								8	12
Saltford	6	2	2	1							2	3
BG	19	14	2	1	1		7	21	30	26	18	15
Chew Magna Res.	8		3	2		3	9	13	13	10	4	5
CVL	25	15	5	4	2	2	30	48	30	45	35	20
BL	7	8	8	10	2	2	6		27	38	33	13
Litton Resrs.	19	13	12	5	5	9	8	17	16	16	10	14

Monthly maxima at the main sites

2000/09 Av.	2010	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
75	123	92	38	63	42	57	48	43

CVL - average of the three maximum counts

Other sites Reported from a wide scatter of sites not in the table above, the highest counts being five at Weston Moor on Nov.19th and four at Wick on March 21st, Hinton Blewett on April 7th and Paulton on July 30th.

Breeding As in 2016 two broods raised four young at CVL, this is well below past levels probably as a result of predation by pike. Reports were received from another ten sites (*cf.* five in 2015 and 11 in 2016) as follows:

Sevenside – eight broods totalling 19 young on the Pilning Wetlands, a significant improvement on 2016;

PWD – six broods produced an unknown total of young;

CI-Y – one brood of one young;

Uphill Marina – one brood of one young;

Tortworth Lake – one brood of one young;

Kingsgate Park, Yate – one brood of one young;

Chelwood – one brood of one young;

Paulton – one brood of two young;

BL – two broods totalling six young;

Litton Resrs. – two broods totalling three young.

Most of the broods listed above consisted of one young only, suggesting poor productivity (*cf.* Moorhen). The drop in numbers at CVL, and the national trend of an 8% decline in WeBS counts over the past decade, suggest that careful monitoring of this species may be justified.

The tables below summarise the data for the past two decades at CVL and away from CVL.

	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Broods	10	3	3	0	0	2	0	3	1	2	2
Young	16	4	5	0	0	0	0	4	1	4	4

CVL broods and young

	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Sites	10	6	4	4	4	8	7	6	5	11	10
Broods	19	14	10	12	9	21	19	20	7	25	24

Sites and broods away from CVL

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked seventh in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -2%.

A slight decline was again evident at CVL, but numbers here remain much than earlier in the decade.

2000/09 Av.	2010	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
480	355	195	93	267	278	463	433	365

CVL - average of the three maximum counts

The main table below summarises the monthly maxima at the reservoirs.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BG	9	13	18	27	31	22	30	38	30	19	9	7
CVL	20	30	45	60	40	160	260	405	430	245	190	105
BL	19	6	18	14	18	24	30	9	50	55	35	33
Litton Resrs.		1	3	3	4	4						

Monthly maxima at the main sites

This species is usually very scarce away from the four sites listed above, unless freezing weather forces an exodus. This year was no exception, with records only from the three sites shown below,

OPS – two on March 13th and one on Oct. 7th;

Severnside – two on Feb. 4th and March 13th and single birds on Oct. 8th and Dec. 2nd;

PWD – one on Nov. 21st.

Breeding -- CVL again had a very poor year, with just one chick noted. This species is well known for dramatic fluctuations in breeding success, and its ability to recover from poor years, but the medium term trend at CVL is very worrying. The causes of the apparent decline are unknown, but may include changes in lakeside vegetation and the introduction of pike to the lake. Elsewhere reported at BL, where three pairs raised five young, and Litton Resrs. where there were broods of two and three.

	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Broods	16	20	8	1	0	0	7	27	11	0	1
Young	23	26+	12	2	0	0	11	48	21	0	1

CVL broods and young – Averages for 2008 to 2017: 8 and 12

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* (55, 1)

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

Descriptions required.

One record: one seen distantly at CVL in the afternoon of Jan.13th (R J Higgins *et al.*). This is a below average showing; see the decadal table on the next page.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

[Amber 5]

Scarce passage migrant; wintered for the first time in 1998/99 and becoming increasingly frequent in the winter. Almost always at freshwater sites and rare in the Estuary. Has bred.

This species had a good year in 2017, particularly early in the year at CVL, most sightings were during the two winter periods; in the past winter records were rare, and the overwhelming majority were seen on autumn passage. Single individuals, unless stated otherwise, were noted as follows:

CVL, first winter period - from Jan. 15th to 20th, then three on 21st, four from 22nd to 30th with three until Feb. 5th and four again from 8th to 13th, and on March 4th and 5th, rising to six on 6th, then two on 9th and 10th, and one from 11th to 20th.

CVL, second winter period – Nov. 26th and Dec. 15th;

BL, autumn/winter period – a juvenile from Sept. 3rd to 17th; one on Dec.15th, then two from 16th into 2018.

The table below summarises the grebe records for the past two decades.

Scarce Grebes in the Avon area

	98/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Red-necked	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Slavonian	1	1	0	3	1	2	3	1	1	3	1
Black-necked	11	10	8	9	11	8	6	6	16	16	10

Annual recorded totals. Averages for 2008 to 2017: >1, 2 and 10

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus* (21, 1)

Very scarce passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

One record: one was watched over Walton Bay, Clevedon at 15.30 on Sept.11th (H E Rose). While in the bay area it was 'accompanied' by two of the resident (Common) Buzzards. It was probably a juvenile as it had a noticeable white rump. See table on page 58 for details of previous records.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and increasingly frequent visitor.

There were slightly fewer records than last year, with 238 bird-days compared with 241 in 2016; see table on page 58. Most reports were in the period from March to the peak in June (see table below). The reports received were from all parts of Avon, including many from 25 locations over urban Bristol and Bath. The distribution of sightings across the four regions within Avon was as follows: South Gloucestershire 38, B&NES 29, Bristol 16 and North Somerset 25.

The vast majority of sightings were of single birds but there were ten of two, three of three, two of four, two of six and one of eight, a record count for the Avon area. The locations and dates of the counts over two are listed below; it is of interest to note that all but one of these was noted in the second half of June.

Three -- at Redland (Bristol) and Upper Weston (Bath) both on June 14th, and at Falfield on 21st;

Four -- at Wraxall on March 26th and at Saltford on June 18th;

Six -- at Inglestone Common and Lower Gurney Farm (CVL), both on June 26th

Eight -- seen and photographed drifting slowly SE in a loose group over Yatton on June 20th (M Salter).

This year's figures show a similar total to 2016 but with the peak number of bird days occurring in June (*cf.* peak count in 2015 was in June but it was in May in 2016). The table below shows the monthly distribution of bird-days for the last three years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2015	2	3	23	50	44	100	27	6	9	5	0	4	273
2016	5	6	31	38	86	31	15	8	5	10	4	2	241
2017	2	10	37	29	49	75	11	6	6	7	3	3	238

Monthly distribution of bird-days for the last three years

The concentration of observers at CVL and its environs resulted in 25 bird-days during the year at this site, the largest from any in the Avon area.

The BBS for 2017 recorded a total of two in two squares (0.8% of all squares surveyed).

Other notes One with a white ring marked P6 on its left leg was seen at Upper Weston, Bath on June 4th, no further details were available.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

[Amber 2, 6]

Uncommon visitor and passage migrant, has wintered at CVL.

A very large increase in the number of records was noted in 2017 with 119 reports (*cf.* 34 in 2016) resulting in 77 bird-days; see also the table on page 58. The vast majority came from CVL with a total of 60 bird-days (*cf.* seven in 2015 and 16 in 2016). A total of 17 reports from 11 other sites outside CVL was received, these are listed below the CVL data.

The monthly distribution of sightings at CVL is tabulated below. All sightings involved single female/immature types except for Jan.10th, and July 17th, 21st, 24th and 27th when two were reported.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	0	2	8	2	1	22	11	3	2	2	4

Monthly distribution of bird-days

The remaining non-CVL sightings are listed below in alphabetical order, again all were of single female/immature types:

Bradley Stoke (Willowbrook Centre) – Feb. 1st;
 Brockley (near Brockly Hall) – March 13th;
 Marshfield (Shire Valley) – Sept. 5th and 9th;
 Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – Jan. 20th and Sept. 27th;
 Norton Malreward – Aug. 20th;
 OPS – Jan. 1st and 27th, Sept. 9th and 29th, and Nov. 9th;
 Pensford, Belluton – March 9th;
 Saltford – Aug. 26th;
 West Hewish area – Sept. 24th;
 Weston STW – May 2nd and Dec. 5th.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus* (94, 2)*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly to the coast.*

Descriptions required.

There were two acceptable records of this species which is under severe conservational pressure at the present time. Unusually both were adult males, details as follows:

OPS – one on Feb. 24th and 25th (P Kimond, P J Hazelwood);
 Northwick Warth – one photographed on April 30th (P D Bowerman).

Data concerning the records for the past two decades is given in the table overleaf.

PALLID HARRIER *Circus macrourus* (1, 1)*Very rare vagrant.*

Descriptions required.

2016 -- This account was omitted in error from last year's Report.

One record: a second-calendar year male was photographed as it drifted slowly north east over Shire Valley, Marshfield and into Wiltshire at around 13.00 on April 12th, 2016 (M. Hayes) [BBRC].

This is the second Avon record following a juvenile male on the Mendips that was seen to fly briefly into the Avon area in September 2011.

HARRIER Sp *Circus Sp*

Two records, both of ringtails and thought by the observers to be Hen Harriers:

Sand Point – on May 11th;

Marshfield – on Oct. 20th.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis* (50, 2)

Very scarce visitor and resident.

Descriptions required.

Two records, both from the eastern part of the Avon area, the details are as follows:

Marshfield – a male seen in flight during the morning of Feb. 8th (J Barnett);

Cold Ashton – a juvenile flew across the road in the afternoon of March 28th (M Coller).

This scarce species continues to have one of the lowest acceptance rates; observers are referred to the paper in the 2004 Report for further details, and the table below for data for the past two decades.

Scarce Raptors in the Avon Area

Year	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Honey Buzzard	1	3		2	1			1			1
Black Kite				1							
Red Kite	7	31	62	70	54	90	108	135	272	241	238
White-tailed Eagle										1	
Marsh Harrier	8	29	52	14	28	19	26	35	16	34	77
Hen Harrier	4	14	1	17	13	2	2	2	2	1	3
Pallid Harrier					1					1	
Montagu's Harrier	0	1			1				2		
Goshawk	3	3*	1*	0*	1	1	5	2		1	2
Osprey	7	13	14	13	13	25	59	41	36	29	31

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

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

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

The total of 1066 sightings received was slightly down on last year. Of this total 619 came from just 12 locations with regular records submitted throughout the year. The locations, with the number of records received, of each of these are as follows:

OPS (66), Severnside (105), Cl-Y and Clevedon (46), Weston STW (12), Saltford (91), in the Bristol area: Eastville Park (45) and Knowle (40), Banwell area (47), Bleadon Levels (36), CVL area (77), and BL area (15).

Monthly reports were very similar to the previous two years, indicating a stable population. High numbers were again noted in April (display), and from August to October (fledging dispersal).

The table below shows the monthly distribution of records for 2017 and the previous five years:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2012	61	65	62	66	64	28	61	63	72	75	75	94	786
2013	72	40	57	66	32	34	47	71	61	51	64	50	645
2014	62	79	87	87	42	57	54	92	83	76	74	80	873
2015	80	72	94	129	62	31	60	88	98	100	67	93	974
2016	110	90	121	146	88	51	46	74	96	107	107	72	1108
2017	70	67	81	101	53	48	78	128	106	134	93	91	1066

Monthly distribution of records

A nest was occupied at Manor Road Community Woodland, Keynsham on June 22nd, the outcome was not reported. Juveniles were noted at the following sites:

OPS - two on July 28th and one on Aug. 28th;
 Littleton upon Severn village - two on Aug. 7th and one on 21st;
 New Passage - one on Aug. 5th and Sept. 10th;
 Sand Bay - one on Oct. 2nd;
 Redland, Bristol - one on Oct. 15th;
 Burnett - three on Sept. 6th;
 Winford Manor - one on Aug. 3rd;
 Chelwood - also one on Aug. 3rd
 CVL - one on Aug. 31st.

An assessment of the number of breeding territories in each of the four Avon regions was made by plotting the geographical locations of the reports received in the period from the beginning of March to the end of June, the results of which are as follows:

South Gloucestershire – 21, Bristol – 11, B&NES – 16, and North Somerset – 18, giving a total of 66 (*cf.* 62 in 2014, 87 in 2015 and 69 in 2016).

The BBS for 2017 recorded a total of 29 in 24 squares (10.0% of all squares surveyed). In 2016 23 were recorded in 20 squares (10.5% of all squares surveyed).

Prey species recorded Wood Pigeon, Swallow and Goldfinch. Also seen chasing a Grey Squirrel.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

RR

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.

The total number of records received was 2440, the highest ever. The records were spread reasonably evenly throughout the year except for a large increase during the display period in March and April. Breeding success was slightly below the ten-year average in R. Prytherch's study area. The table below gives the monthly distribution for 2017 and the previous five years.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2012	83	120	139	112	114	65	73	78	91	116	66	112	1169
2013	111	95	146	153	80	69	70	66	88	82	63	74	1097
2014	104	122	229	150	110	95	87	109	122	105	104	119	1456
2015	169	139	192	252	166	147	112	122	149	151	89	115	1873
2016	178	194	296	300	200	130	138	202	171	174	115	161	2259
2017	187	186	249	314	176	187	180	189	179	194	189	198	2440

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding The BBS counted 247 in 113 squares (found in 47.3% of area surveyed). This compares with 214 in 2013 (50% of area surveyed), 184 in 2014 (44.4% of area surveyed), 144 in 2015 (45.7% of area surveyed) and 178 in 2016 (49.7% of area surveyed).

Nest building was observed at BL on March 27th. CVRS recorded two clutches, one of one and the other of two, both of which were successful.

Juveniles were heard or seen at the following ten sites (single birds unless noted).

Warmley Forest Park (two on Aug. 11th), Wick, Golden Valley (Aug. 22nd), West of Burnett (two calling on Aug. 13th), Blaise Castle (July 18th), Portbury House, Clevedon, (two on July 30th), Winford Manor (June 27th, July 13th and Aug. 7th), Kingdown, Felton (Aug. 21st), Felton Common, (two on Aug. 9th), Regil (July 13th) and Loxton (June 23rd).

Buzzard cont. R. Prytherch's study area, which covers some 75km², from Barrow Gurney in the S to Abbots Leigh in the N to Clevedon in the W held 115 pairs with territories, yet another increase over last year's record number (*cf.* 108 in 2014, 110 in 2015 and 111 in 2016). Of the 44 nests checked 29 were successful, and 44 young fledged; the results are as follows:

Three pairs fledged three chicks, nine pairs fledged two chicks, 17 pairs fledged one chick, and the remaining 15 nests failed.

During the 36 years of the study the number of breeding pairs has risen from 13 to 115, a rise of 884%, and must now be at saturation. The table below shows the number of breeding sites and their success in this study area for the last decade, and the average for the previous ten years.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Active nest sites	82	97	99	103	103	105	106	108	110	111	115
Chicks fledged	71	47	73	87	43	27	31	37	34	46	44
Successful nests	46	33	47	60	27	27	20	26	26	21	29
Brood success ratio	1.53	1.42	1.55	1.43	1.59	1.00	1.55	1.42	1.31	1.33	1.52

Breeding data in RJP's study area (ten year average of successful nests = 32, fledged young = 47)

Large groups/counts Reports of large groups or counts have become a feature in Avon's ornithology and this continued in 2017. All counts of ten or more are listed below; from north to south.

Falfield – 12 on June 21st;

Old Sodbury (Cross Hands) – ten on Feb. 6th;

North Wick – 21 on Jan. 25th;

Marshfield – ten on Feb. 17th (Shire Valley), 20 on Feb. 24th and ten on March 14th;

Compton Dando – 12 on March 26th and 16 on April 8th;

Pensford (Chelwood roundabout) – 21 on Nov. 19th, 12 on 24th, ten on 25th, 16 on 26th, and 12 on 28th;

Stanton Prior – 21 on April 17th;

West Hewish / Bourton (M5) – 11 on Sept. 24th;

BG – 22 on Feb 17th;

Chew Magna – 11 on March 22nd;

CVL – 12 on Feb. 24th, 15 on March 2nd, ten on 10th, 16 on 13th, 12 on 21st (Moreton), 12 on April 3rd, 20 on 18th, ten on 26th (Moreton), 28 on June 26th (Herriott's Bridge);

BL – 21 on March 13th, 'many' on 28th, see the blog entry ** below, ten on Sept. 12th;

Paulton – 13 on March 20th, 12 on May 12th.

** N R Milbourne's BL edited blog entry for March 28th is as follows: "I spent four hours at the site this afternoon, I do not think I have ever raised my bins to as many Buzzards in a day at the lake. One kettle of six I was watching had two Peregrines circling with them, then out of nowhere a third Peregrine flew at them to see them off. It would be no exaggeration for me to say I had over 100 individual sightings, although I realise that many, if not most, will have been the same birds displaying over their territories at a few passing birds. It was an extraordinary afternoon though."

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

[Amber 2, 5]

Scarce passage migrant; most records are from the reservoirs.

Another quite good year with a total of 31 bird-days; see table on page 58 for records from the previous decade. After the first records of the year on March 27th, two over Bristol and one over BL, the spring passage continued steadily through April to the last spring record on 27th over Keynsham. The return began on Aug.14th (Northwick Warth) with the last on Sept. 29th (CVL and BL); all details are listed below, they refer to single birds in all but one case: two at BL in March.

Coastal records in date order

CI-Y – April 3rd and 14th;

Northwick Warth – April 14th;

OPS – April 19th;

Kingston Seymour – Sept. 10th;

Avonmouth – Sept. 22nd;

Elsewhere – Inland records (in date order but with reservoir sightings last)

Avon Gorge – March 27th;

Hanham – March 27th;

Hengrove – March 29th;

Bristol (end of M32) and Eastville Park – both on April 9th (probably the same);

Keynsham – April 27th;

Keynsham Hams – Sept. 9th;

CVL – April 18th, Aug. 14th, 15th, 20th, 21st and 22nd. Sept. 13th, 14th, 22nd to 26th, 28th and 29th;

BL – March 27th (two); April 23rd and Sept. 1st and 29th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

RR [RBBP]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked 8th, and CVL 12th, in importance 2016/17. English ten-year trend 2%.

The number of sites fell after high total in 2016, as shown in the table below.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
23	20	18	24	27	22	21	18	29	22

Number of sites reported from each year

As ever the counts in the table below, which gives the maxima at the main sites, doubtless represent a significant under-estimate of the true population. But there is some indication of a decline, with low counts at CVL and several other sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	3	3	4							3	3	2
Sevenside	7*	3	2	2				1	2	6	2	1
PWD	1									1	1	2
CI-Y	4	2	2		2	1					2	2
Weston STW	3	1	1		3				1	5	3	2
Backwell Lake	1	2								1	1	2
CVL	6	1	7	1		1	4	5	2	3	3	2
BL	1		1			1	1			1	1	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

*The January Sevenside count comprises three at Pilning Wetlands, two at Chittingen Warth, and two at Orchard Pools; although these records cover a period of several days it has been assumed that different individuals were involved.

Breeding Two broods, each with one chick, were seen at CVL. Elsewhere, records at BL on June 8th and July 8th suggest that breeding may have been attempted here. There appeared to be no repeat of success in 2016 at Pilning Wetlands.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
3	2	6	4	1	10	6	2	0	1	2

Number of nest sites detected at CVL each year

Water Rail cont. -- Other records This species was again under recorded but records were received from Backwell Lake, Congresbury Moor, Eastville Park, Haycombe (Bath), Lady Farm (Chelwood), Lawrence Weston Moor, Littleton Warth, Newton Park (Bath), PWD, Saltford, Three Brooks LNR, Worle and Yatton. All involved single birds except for four at Eastville Park on Oct. 9th, and two at Haycombe on Jan. 28th and at Backwell Lake on Dec.17th. None was recorded during the breeding period, with the last record in the spring on April 26th and the first in autumn on Oct. 7th

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

RR

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ranked second, CVL 16th and BL 21st in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -40%.

Counts were again slightly down at CVL and BL following an exceptional year at the two sites in 2015, see table below, and high water levels at BL meant that numbers here were significantly lower than in 2016. It was noted on 16.7 % of BBS visits.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
CVL	136	70	180	125	75	35	170	145	230	150	135
BL	79	21	38	33	27	20	92	98	167	160	111

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

The counts from the main sites were as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	6	5	6	4	7	10	10	8	8	11	8	8
Sevenside	8	9	5	10	6	7	5	10	10	10	16	11
PWD	4	8	8	9	3	3	11	10	4	8	16	9
CI-Y	7	10	8	6	7	1				9	10	10
Eastville Park	12	8	8	4	3		5	7	6	6	6	14
Backwell Lake	6	4	10	5	3	5	9	11	11	7	18	11
Saltford	14	10	12	10	8	11	11	10	10	18	7	11
Newton Park	8	9	8	7	5	3	4	3	2	5	4	7
Chew Magna Res.	4		5	3	3	1	4	6	14	3		6
CVL	70	40	10	10	4	2	70	130	135	115	135	130
BL	66	14	9	8	5	1	32	60	111	108	88	38
Litton Resrs.	6	4	6	4	6	11	13	8		5	5	5

Moorhen -- Monthly maxima at the main sites

Recorded from a wide scatter of other sites. The largest counts were: 13 at Netham, with a further seven on Bristol Docks, on Nov.19th and 18 and four respectively at the two sites on Dec.10th; 15 on R. Avon at Keynsham on Feb. 5th and at Avon Valley Country Park on the same day; and 12 at Kingsgate Park Yate on March 12th.

Breeding At CVL three broods totalling seven young were recorded, although this almost certainly represents an underestimate of the true total. At BL one brood of two young was seen (*cf.* one brood in 2015 and three in 2016). Elsewhere recorded at 12 sites (*cf.* 12 in 2011, 18 in 2012, 11 in 2014, 20 in 2015, 21 in 2016). Recording has improved in recent years, but it is probably too incomplete to draw any conclusions from this apparent decline. However, a decline in average brood size from 2.8 in 2016 to 2.1 in 2017 suggests a poor year for productivity (*cf.* Little Grebe).

The following reports were received, in many cases there are likely to be underestimates.

OPS – six broods with 15 young; Sevenside – one brood of two at Pilning Wetlands; PWD – two broods with three young; Tortworth Lake – one brood of two; Snuff Mills – one occupied nest; Eastville Park, Bristol – two brood with four young; Weston Moor – one broods of three; Nailsea – one brood of five; Yatton, Wemberham Lane – one brood of one; Saltford – five broods with seven young; Litton Resrs. – two broods with three young.

COOT *Fulica atra*

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

WeBS: CVL was ranked sixth in National Importance, and BL 23rd in importance, in 2016/17. English ten-year trend: -25%

The January count at CVL was the second highest on record, exceeded only by 3715 in October 2002. It followed on from 3395 in December 2016: until the 2015/16 winter period numbers fell rapidly in the late autumn. The September count was the third highest on record, the water plant increase due to improved water quality probably explains this. The Avon BBS distribution was 6.7%.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
CVL	2703	2020	3050	2880	3110	2475	3190	2770	3250	3395	3585
BL	1882	1403	970	678	1247	1070	1213	1098	1426	1615	1611

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

The main data are given in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	2	2			1	1					
Sevenside	22	21	20	23	24	32	15	24	45	39	33	31
PWD	30	17	13	10	17	13	21	10	18	31	34	43
Tortworth		41	44		17		26	49	20	29		
Backwell Lake	5	6	12	10	6	9	1	2		4	4	2
BG	157	63	27	17	35	116	216	161	128	101	59	33
Chew Magna Resr.			1		2	5	9	6	3	1	1	1
CVL	3585	915	530	315	170	540	1475	2340	3510	3070	2685	2965
BL	254	341	261	209	206	312	926	1204	1545	1611	1366	1547

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Other records Recorded from a wide scatter of sites. The highest counts not in the table above were at Litton Resrs. where monthly maxima of eight were noted in March, April and June. One in the City Docks, Bristol on Jan. 31st was unusual here.

Breeding At CVL, 17 broods produced 46 young; although this species remains a common breeder here it mirrors the downwards trend shown by other waterbirds. At BL six broods were seen, producing 11 juveniles (*cf.* three broods and 12 young in 2015 and eight broods and 22 young in 2016). Elsewhere breeding records were as follows, they were well down on 2016 when nests were recorded at 14 additional sites:

Pilning Wetlands (four nests and three broods totalling ten young); Badminton Park (one nest, outcome unknown); Kingsgate Park, Yate (one nest, outcome unknown); Chew Magna Res. (one brood of three); and Litton Resrs. (three broods totalling three young).

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

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of nests		96	67	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	100	n/c	47	n/c
No. of broods	56	28	27	22	11	26	40	47	20	n/c	17
No. of young	143	61	77+	46	n/c	50	110	118	44	n/c	46

Nests, broods and young at CVL each year

CRANE *Grus grus*

Between 2010 and 2015 a total of 93 individuals from German stocks were hand reared at Slimbridge and released on the Somerset Levels as part of the Great Crane Project (GCP). 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.

Descriptions are required for individuals considered to be of wild origin.

A poor year, with just six records, only one of which was noted during the normal peak period of mid-March and mid-May. All records are assumed to relate to individuals from GCP, see overleaf.

Crane cont. The records are as follows

New Passage – two flew to N on 25th March, this was the only spring record;

CVL – three flew slowly to SW around midday on Aug.11th;

Tockington – one calling as it took off from fields between Alveston and Tockington on Sept. 29th;

Lower Weston, Bath – three calling as they flew west at 9.00 on Oct.11th;

CVL – an adult arrived from the NE at 10.40 on Oct.11th and slowly drifted down the east shore, it was possibly one of the above;

Bishop Sutton – one on Nov. 18th.

The total of six records involving probably ten individuals makes 2017 the worst year since 2011 when there was just one record of a single bird. There were six records involving 24 individuals in 2012, nine (25 individuals) in 2013, 11 (at least 17 individuals) in 2014, eight (probably at least 15 individuals) in 2015, and 16 records involving probably 55 individuals in 2016.

Historical records considered to relate to wild birds are as follows: one over Clevedon in March 1971, two over Severn Beach in January 2000, five at Tortworth in February 2003, one over OPS in May 2008, one past Aust Warth in March 2010, one over Bishopston in April 2012, one at New Passage in September 2014, and two unringed adults at Northwick Warth in October 2016.

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus* (2, 1)

Very rare vagrant.

One record: a female was seen at Pilning Wetlands early on May 7th (B Lancaster *et al.*). It stayed in the area until 9th feeding on the muddy pools and was photographed; see after page 108.

This is only the fifth record of this species in our area which is quite common in the more southerly parts of Europe. The previous were near Thornbury prior to 1848, at CVL in May 1965 (two), at OPS in May 1997 and at CVL again in April 2012.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

[Amber 6]

Uncommon winter visitor/passage migrant. Rare inland.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 17th in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 26%.

Counts were slightly down on those for 2016 but the long-term trend is clearly positive as shown in the table below. Sightings were noted in April, May, July, and September to December. The highest count was seven, well down on the maximum of 25 recorded in 2014. All records are listed below although there was one further sighting of one in Netham Park, Barton Hill, Bristol on Dec 28th, but this was considered to be a zoo escapee.

OPS/Littleton Warth – two on April 15th, single birds on July 24th, Sept. 1st, 17th and 27th, and on Nov. 1st with seven - the highest count of the year - on 3rd (one in 2015 and nine in 2016);

Northwick Warth (Sevenside) – one on April 2nd, 3rd, and 29th, two on May 3rd and 5th, one on 15th, two on 22nd, and three on Sept.17th and 25th (four in 2015 and 20 in 2016);

PWD (pond near Marsh Lane hide) – single birds on Nov. 11th and Dec. 1st (one in 2015 and 14 in 2016);

Cl-Y – one on May 7th, five on Oct.19th, three on Nov. 11th and two on 13th (five in 2015 and eight in 2016);

CVL – one on May 20th and 21st;

BL – one on Dec. 29th.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
8	15	8	15	22	9	17	47	13	52	46

Yearly totals of bird-days for the past two decades

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

[Amber 1, 6, 7]

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

Year	Sevenside	CI-Y	Sand Bay	Axe Estuary	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	75	23	13	74	185
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	91	38	29	90	248
2015/16	153	61	43	97	355
2016/17	155	52	26	100	333

August to February average counts

The status table above shows that there was very little change between the 2015/16 winter period and the 2016/17 period, and it seems likely that the same will hold for 2017/18 winter period. The tabulated data above for both CI-Y and Sand Bay were slightly down but they were within the normal variation.

The second table gives the monthly maxima at almost all sites, most counts were normal except those at CI-Y in late autumn which were on the high side. One aspect of the Northwick Warth (Sevenside) counts is worth mentioning. In three of the months, starred in the table below, the count on one day was much higher than those for the rest of the month suggesting that an extra flock had chosen to visit the site on these single days, possibly from the Welsh side of the Estuary – otherwise the monthly maxima for these months were as follows: 95 in January, 98 in August, and 90 in October. The first two of these exceptional counts were the highest at any site during the year. The only non-tabulated record was of two heard in flight over Saltford on July 14th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	15	16	16	6	5	8	10	10	5	6	8	3
Littleton Warth	6		5	6	2		4	6	11	3	11	
Northwick Warth	190*	122	100	47	39	49	84	190*	135	145*	110	130
Avonmouth/PWD		7	18	10	4	4	10	1				
CI-Y	38	47	45	54	33	10	44	70	80	85	88	68
Sand Bay	20	60	4					35	50	40	14	
Axe E/WestonSTW	89	89	85	104	6		31	130	94	120	113	66
CVL					1		2	2	2			

Monthly maxima at the main sites; * - see text

Breeding Nesting activity was noted at the same three coastal sites as last year, at least four well-grown chicks were reported (five in 2016). The details are as follows:

OPS/Shepherdine -- a pair was seen in early June with two juveniles but no further details were available;

PWD – two pairs nested as last year and in late June one pair was seen with two juveniles;

CI-Y – as in 2016 three pairs were present during the breeding season at three separate sites between the Kenn and Yeo rivers. Some display was reported early in the season at all three sites, and at one of these some distraction activity was noted in June but no juveniles were seen.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

[Amber 6, 7]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce inland.

WeBS: English coast of the Seven Estuary was 31st in national importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -17%

The status table showing some very high counts in the 2016/17 winter period is as follows.

Year	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	8	25	33
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	4	27	31
2015/16	2	26	28
2016/17	85	31	116

September to March average counts

Grey Plover cont.

In last year's Report we noted that exceptional numbers were present in the upper Estuary in the autumn/second winter period. These flocks stayed into 2017 and as noted above this is reflected in the last line of the status table on page 65, the figure for CI-Y being about normal. Littleton Warth also saw better numbers, as did Sand Bay where flocks roost at high tide, probably moving here from CI-Y. The counts of 55 and 50 for Severnside in the table below refer to a flock that was only present for two days, Feb. 28th and March 1st. A few were noted on spring passage, mainly during the first ten days of May, but virtually none were seen on autumn passage and counts in the second winter period were back to normal or below with as usual the best at CI-Y, the first double figure count in the autumn was 23 on Nov. 9th at this site.

The table below summarises the monthly maxima at the main sites, present up to June 2nd and from Sept. 21st onwards. Eight were reported from CVL during the year which is unusual as were two (not tabulated) at BG on April 30th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	2	2	2	8				1	2	1
Littleton Warth	5	9	15	1							2
Severnside	11	55	50	2	46	1		1	4	5	6
PWD					1						
CI-Y	40	28	45	7	43				2	25	48
Sand Bay	8	38		8						22	
CVL								1	2	1	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 21st in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -2%.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1781	1790	1965	1590	3455	2720	2340	1995	2782	3068	3924

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

The table above shows improved counts this year, these are partly explained by higher and more regular counts from the Marshfield and Saltford areas. As in last year's Report we have separated out (overleaf) the counts for the Marshfield area, our main site for this species. Here the flocks move about over quite a wide area, and the counts vary accordingly, in 2017 no count was over 500.

In Avon as a whole the last in spring were 44 at Saltford on April 5th, and the first in autumn were at OPS (one) and Northwick Warth (two) on Sept. 29th. There were also three reports from CI-Y outside these periods, on May 24th (one), Aug.10th (three) and 14th (one). The table below summarises the main data. Some single reports were also received including in January at Radstock (200) and Paulton (19), in October at BL (14), in November at Burnett (150), and in December at Pucklechurch (40). The results are summarised in the tables below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Thornbury Pill		2				1			17
Severnside	1	1				2	10	4	
CI-Y	7	3	1					8	
Weston STW	5							3	
Lansdown	120		200				130		18
Saltford	19		66	260			111	6	350
Bristol Int. Airport	60						22	40	50
CVL							41	18	

Monthly maxima at sites away from the Marshfield area

The second table gives the fortnightly maxima for the whole Marshfield area.

J1-15	J16-31	F1-14	F15-28	M1-15	:	O1-15	O16-31	N1-15	N16-30	D1-15	D16-31
500	300	100	500	14		60	110	300	380	500	40

Marshfield area – fortnightly maxima

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula* [Red 3]
Uncommon winter visitor, and fairly common passage migrant (most numerous in autumn). Small numbers occur inland on passage. Scarce breeder.

Two races: Most belong to the race *hiaticula* breeding in Canada and N. W. Europe. A few of the race *tundra* breeding from N. Scandinavia to Siberia may also occur.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in International Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -43%

Year	OPS		Severnside		CI-Y		Totals	
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	11	56	16	251	13	106	40	413
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	6	58	15	136	15	243	36	437
2015/16	1	170	22	165	16	51	39	386
2016/17	2	90	20	173	10	303	32	566

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

The status table above gives a snapshot of the numbers occurring in the Avon area over the past 20 years. It shows that the small wintering populations appear to be in some decline with recent losses at CI-Y which are likely to be repeated next year. But the autumn passage populations appear to be doing well, the increase in 2017 was mainly due to some high counts at CI-Y in late August.

The table below summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at all sites. Notwithstanding the above, the winter periods did show some good counts at some sites, including PWD and Weston beach, which are not included in the status table data. There was a normal spring passage with most birds passing through during the middle of May -- 12th to 24th. No second movement was noted in early June as occurs in some years. The autumn passage was particularly strong, especially at CI-Y, with most passing through between Aug. 20th and 25th. The count of 575, the highest of the year, was at CI-Y on 23rd, and was the average of three counts received from this site on this day. The highest Severnside count was made on the following day.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Jun	Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct	Nov	Dec
					1-15	16-31			1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30			
OPS/Lit. Warth	2	3		5	10	1	2	7	30	90	90	20	15	1	2
Severnside	14	19	9	8	68	70	3	15	70	250	95	70	30	25	22
PWD	27			22	14		3	8			140	62	40	12	31
CI-Y	6	6	10	8	57	80	1	4	180	575	30	12	7	6	5
Sand Bay				8							4			1	
Axe.Est./Wes.STW	50	31							4	26					47
BG						4								1	
CVL			1	1	1			2	2	5	20	44	6		
BL										2	5	3			

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

Breeding As in the last two years the only definite evidence came from one site as detailed below. In early June two adults and a juvenile were seen at OPS but it is not known where this pair bred.

Royal Portbury Dock (PWD) – in late June a pair was seen with a juvenile. Two days later a pair was discovered with a nest containing four eggs, and ten days later still two broods of two were reported. Hence at least five were reared at this site which is an improvement on the two noted last year.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

[RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant/summer visitor. Scarce breeder.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 33%.

First reported at both Northwick Warth and Portbury Wharf on March 17th, five days earlier than in 2016 and 11 days earlier than the average first-date for the past 30 years. Reported at seven sites in spring, the highest count was nine at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands on March 27th. The first table below summarises the main ten-day maxima, single birds were also noted at CI-Y on April 17th and at Bristol International Airport, a site where breeding has occurred in the past, on 20th.

	Mar 17-21	Mar 22-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20
Northwick/Pilning W.	1	9	6	6	6	8	5
PWD	1	6	2	2	5	2	2
Weston airfield			1	1	1	1	1
BG		2		1	1		
CVL		1	1		1	1	

Spring ten-day maxima at the main sites

Post breeding numbers began to build up in late June with 11 on 28th at Pilning Wetlands, the highest count of the year. In 2016 the highest count was 20. Single figure counts were noted until the third week of July at the seven main sites as tabulated below. There was then a surprising gap of nearly a month with only three seen during this period. It is probable that most of those seen during the first period were local breeders while most of those seen during the second period were passing through our area having bred further afield. The last of the year were three at CVL on Sept.11th which is five days earlier than average. There were two non-tabulated sightings: single birds at OPS on Aug. 12th and at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 2nd.

	Jun 21-30	Jul 1-10	Jul11-20	Jul 21-24	:	Aug 13-23	A26-S4	Sep 4-11
N.wick/Pilning W.	11	6	6	2			1	1
PWD	1	1	2					
CI-Y		1				1		
Weston airfield				2				
BG		1	1					
CVL		4	3			1	4	3
BL		1	2	3			1	1

Autumn ten-day maxima at the main sites

Breeding As in the last two years pairs probably bred at two sites. Nesting was also described as 'possible' on Weston airfield but no further evidence was received. Remaining details as follows:

Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – Good numbers of adults were recorded at this major site from late March to late August as noted above, and its environs include several areas where nesting could have occurred. On the Wetlands site itself display was noted in April, copulation in May and two pairs were 'sitting' late in the month, it was thought highly probable that these attempts failed;

Portbury Wharf Reserve – In late April a pair and one extra were seen but not later. At the beginning of June display was reported by one bird but again no further reports were forthcoming. The rank vegetation at the site makes direct observation difficult.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

[Red 3]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 11th in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 4%

The data in the status table given overleaf shows only a slight fall but other methods for monitoring the populations also given overleaf show a much larger fall. The status table data was bolstered by some good counts in December 2016 during cold weather.

Status table

Year	Severnside	CI-Y	CVL	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	309	280	233	812
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	224	576	198	998
2015/16	252	445	82	779
2016/17	305	307	152	764

August to February average counts

Our second table which gives an estimate of the total Avon population in January and December presents a different story, the January total was the lowest by some way since this monitoring method was first introduced 23 years ago, and the December total was the second lowest. Another indicator is given by the CVL autumn wader table on page 84, 2017 was the first year since the lake was constructed when this wader species was not commonest during the autumn period, being overtaken by Black-tailed Godwit this year.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
January	4840	7760	3710	3000	3550	16780	3890	3655	3770	2392	5274
December	2770	3450	3950	3800	2100	5380	2750	4055	5360	3025	3664

Ten-year January and December Avon totals at all sites

The third table summarises the main counts. Unusually there was only one in four-figures: 1000+ at OPS on Feb.1st, the next largest being 750 at CI-Y on Dec. 24th and 720 at the Axe Estuary/Weston STW site on 19th. As has become the norm counts were generally quite low outside the two winter periods, especially during the late summer and early autumn. The last in three-figures in the first winter period was 350 at Northwick Warth on Feb.19th and the first in the second period was 150, again at this site on Oct. 20th. Non-tabulated sightings with counts over ten were noted at Bristol International Airport (October and November), Compton Dando (March), Cross Hands (February), Paulton (January), Sand Bay (260 moving NE on Feb. 4th) and Yatton (50 in December).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	300	1000+	2	2	1		5	4	24	93	150	360
Littleton Warth	120	540								15	15	22
Northwick Warth	465	650	9	8	16	36	47	30	40	120	200	450
Sea Mills (R Avon)	20						7				1	
PWD.	110	115	9		1	1				17	20	65
CI-Y	525	500	35	15	12	5		4	3	140	230	750
Axe Estuary	200	500		2						20	300	720
Marshfield	350	140								28	30	60
Saltford			1							2	1	21
BG	40	9								3	3	7
CVL	185	130	1			9	6	11	11	70	105	400
BL	77	120	2				12	16	28	180	265	60

Monthly maxima at the well-watched sites

Breeding Some activity was noted from six sites (seven in 2016), two on the coast and three inland. At least 14 young were recorded (ten in 2016), the details are given below and overleaf.

Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – after some display noted last year this site produced the best results in 2017. The first chick was noted at the beginning of May and by mid July at least eight nests (including a few repeats) had been active and at least seven chicks had been recorded. This is the first time for many years that successful breeding has occurred on Severnside;

Dowlais Farm (CI-Y) – display was first noted in late February, and by the end of April five chicks (one large and four smaller) were recorded. Display was again seen in early May at this site and at another two kms down the coast, but no further nesting activity occurred probably due to the drying out of the sites;

Marksbury Plain -- display was noted in early April but no further reports were received;

Gordano Valley -- three pairs were displaying in mid April and at least one pair was seen mating, the outcome of this activity was not recorded;

Lapwing breeding cont.

N. Somerset Moors including Kingston Seymour -- up to five pairs were noted at several sites in this area including three 'probably nesting' in a field near Kingston Seymour. No further details were available here due to the growth of the maize crop in this field, but it was thought unlikely that any of the nests were successful;

Nailsea Moor -- display was noted from mid March, one pair had a nest in late April and in mid June a pair was reported with four young (eight at this site in 2016).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

[Red 3, 4]

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

All Avon records belong to the nominative subspecies *phaeopus* breeding in Iceland and N. Europe. *Hudsonicus*, which breeds in Canada, has occurred on the Welsh side of the Estuary,

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was sixth in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -131%.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1998 – 2007 Av.	24	55	71	150
2008 – 2015 Av.	20	39	76	135
2016	48	54	103	205
2017	32	17	61	110

Spring (April and May) average counts

After a better showing in 2016, counts dropped well back at all sites this year as shown in the status table above. There were several counts in the 60 to 70 range, but none even approaching three figures and none were seen outside the passage periods. The first in spring were a single bird at Sand Point on April 7th with four at CI-Y on 9th. Passage then progressed steadily until mid May, as usual there was no clear cut-off point but the last double figure count was 22 on 17th at CI-Y. As is normal a few summered and there was a small autumn passage with only one count in double figures, 14 at CI-Y on Aug. 8th. All reports were coastal except for four sightings of single birds at CVL. The last three records were single birds at Northwick Warth on Oct.10th, OPS on 17th and CI-Y on 23rd, two days earlier than last year but 11 days later than average. The table below summarises the main data at most sites, in addition night calls were heard over Saltford on July 22nd.

	April		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
	7 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 30					
OPS/Littleton Warth	8	55	9	4		4		1	1
Sevenside	21	18	16	12	2	7	8	1	1
PWD		65	13			1			
CI-Y	21	60	62	40	3	8	14	3	1
Sand Bay	22	18	9	10			7		
Axe Est/Weston STW		4	4	3					
CVL	1	1				1	1	1	

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

RR [Red 3]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon in summer and inland. Has bred in the past

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance in 2015/16. English ten-year trend is -30%.

The status table is as follows, it shows a minor fall which is probably not significant.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	286	181	162	59	688
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	316	171	226	31	744
2015/16	236	237	233	26	732
2016/17	297	186	167	41	691

August to February average counts

Counts appear to be fairly stable, the problems mentioned last year around the R. Yeo part of CI-Y, are now largely a thing of the past, this area is becoming again an important one for this, and several

other, wader species. The table below summarises the monthly maxima. The last three-figure count in the first period was 105 at CI-Y on April 17th, and the first for the second period was 115 at the same site on July 6th. The largest count was 320 at OPS on Nov.1st at least 27 of which were locally colour-ringed. Non-tabulated reports included three at Easter Compton and one at Sea Mills in January, single birds in the Saltford area in April, June, July and September, and two in August and one in October at BL.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	200	255	165	195	4	24	112	3	200	110	320	150
Littleton Warth	175	140	90	4			31	5	5	230	165	78
Northwick Warth	180	190	130	110	2	51	50	145	60	150	90	120
Severn Beach	80	50	33	30		4	30	90	5	80	38	30
PWD	31	92	50	5	4	11	60	2	67	53	44	63
CI-Y	230	210	170	80	15	110	205	225	180	215	240	190
Sand Bay	45	34	140	12	16	12	84	110	85	55	78	
Axe E./Wes.STW	58	74	12	3		2		5	23	3	17	68
CVL		1	2			1		1			1	

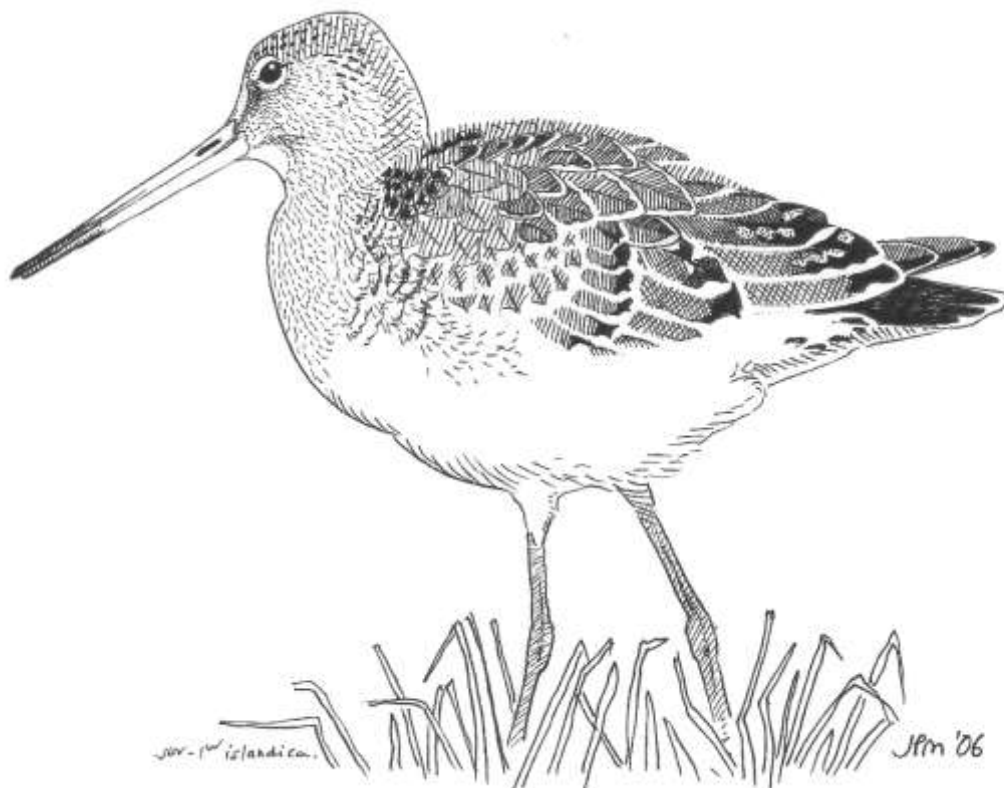
Monthly maxima at the main sites

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

[Red 2]

Uncommon passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor, generally more numerous in autumn.

Two races: Most records refer to the race *L. l. islandica* breeding in Iceland and N. Scotland, a few of the race *L. l. limosa* breeding in continental western Europe, including England, have occurred in June and August.



Black-tailed Godwit, juvenile *islandica*, drawn by John Martin

Black-tailed Godwit cont.

Over the past decade this species has been the 'star wader performer' in the Avon area, since 2010 counts have increased **20-fold** as shown in the second table below. But about four-fifths of these sightings were noted from just one site – Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands. Two points are worth mentioning. Firstly, a few years ago when high counts were reported at this site they tended to be 'one-day affairs' with the flocks moving out of our area, probably into Gloucestershire, for much of the time. But in 2017 good numbers were reported during more than half of the days outside the breeding season. Secondly, in some past years only a few were noted during the first winter period, but in 2017 very high counts were noted in both January and February, this may be due to the generally mild weather this year. Some other sites saw some record counts in 2017, for example at CI-Y the record for the highest count was broken twice during the year, first on March 30th (this flock stayed at the site for at ten days) then again on Aug. 23rd.

The first table below summarises the monthly maxima at all sites. The all-time Avon record count is now 700 seen on Oct.1st at Northwick Warth. The count of 100 at OPS/Littleton on Aug.10th, another record, was of a flock in flight over the brick pits probably disturbed from Northwick.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS/Littleton Warth	1	1	1			1	7	100	2	50	70	
Northwick/Pilning W.	560	300	34	21	16	8	11	185	560	700	180	180
PWD	1		2	2	1	3	3			4		
CI-Y	6		85	95			9	125	24	15	5	1
Sand Bay				10					2			
Axe Est./Wes. STW			6	1				3	2	2	2	16
CVL					1	1	47	24	36	15	36	29
BL				1				32	40	1		25

Monthly maxima at all sites

Black-tailed Godwit (Nominate continental race) *L. l. limosa*

Rare vagrant.

Description subspecies.

One record: a juvenile was seen and photographed at Pilning Wetlands on Aug. 5th (J P Martin *et al.*). The observer noted the larger size, longer bill and legs compared with adjacent adult *islandica*, as well as the buff plumage tones lacking the orange of juvenile *islandica*. This is the first record of this subspecies since 2007 when one was noted at CVL in August.

The totals of the monthly maxima over the past two decades for the two godwit species are given below. The table clearly shows the varying fortunes of these two species in the Avon area.

	98/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Bk-t Godwit	529	431	279	179	263	972	963	1136	1432	2314	3703
Bar-t Godwit	331	74	115	181	2521	781	172	150	153	1078	235

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

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

[Amber 6, 7]

Passage migrant in varying numbers; usually uncommon but can occur in large numbers on spring passage.

Scarce inland and in winter.

In some springs a large passage is reported moving NE through the Estuary, for example in 2011, and in others virtually none are seen at all. For 2017 a small passage was noted between April 18th and May 11th, the largest count being 55 at Severn Beach on April 22nd. As usual very few were seen at other times with just a hint of an autumn passage on Sept. 23rd and 24th. One was present at CVL from Sept. 23rd to Nov. 3rd which is unusual. The details are tabulated overleaf. The only non-tabulated record was of a 'flock' (size unknown) heard in flight just before midnight over Saltford on July 19th; the observers checked the calls on a well-known website immediately afterwards.

Monthly maxima table.

	Feb	Mar	Apr		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
			1-15	16-31	1-10	11-30						
OPS/Littleton W.	1		1	1	1							
Sevenside	1	1	6	55	50	2		1		10	7	
PWD				2	2	10				2		
CI-Y		1	4	24	42	32	1		2	8	6	3
Sand Bay		1									2	
CVL										1	1	1

Monthly maxima at the coastal sites

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

[Amber 3, 7]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was ninth in National Importance; in 2016/17. English ten-year trend is -12%.

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	55	138	29	222
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	36	111	39	186
2015/16	25	166	37	228
2016/17	43	117	33	193

August to February average counts

The status table total given above shows a slight drop, but this is probably not significant because part of the flock at the main site, Severn Beach and Northwick Warth, appears to be choosing to feed in adjacent areas, in particular at the Royal Portbury Dock part of PWD. Counts at the two other sites, OPS and CI-Y, were within normal expectations.

The table below summarises the monthly maxima at all sites. The wintering flocks had mostly departed by mid April, and numbers began to build up again in the last few days of July, no unusually high counts were reported. Apart from three at CVL (one on July 31st and on Aug. 3rd with nine on Sept.15th) there were no reports away from the regularly frequented sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	30	46	55	35	4	1	25	50	50	62	50	45
Littleton Warth	2	9								3	2	
Sevenside	95	160	140	100	16	4	39	70	90	90	70	150
PWD/Portishead*	4				2				50	60	40	35
CI-Y	34	35	36	24	6		4	5	22	40	38	35
CVL							1	1	9			

Monthly maxima at the main sites, * see comment above

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

[Amber 6, 7]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant but can occur in larger numbers at times. Scarce inland.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 28th in national importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 3%.

Two races: *islandica* (Nearctic) and *canutus* (Siberian) occur in N. W. Europe. Research suggests that almost all UK individuals belong to the race *islandica*, hence it is assumed that this also holds for Avon populations.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
589	293	462	2133	1073	876	823	653	684	1192	1865

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites

As in 2016 although the yearly total given above is relatively good, most of this was made up by high counts at the Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands site during the first winter period, the largest count here being 1120 on Feb. 5th which was calculated using a photograph of the flock.

Knot cont.

After this period counts were distinctly poor, and came from just seven sites four of which only produced a single record. As usual virtually no passage, spring or autumn, was noticeable, and the highest count in the second half of the year was just 48 again at Northwick on Nov.10th. The table below summarises the main counts. The remaining ones were: three at Sand Bay on Feb.12th, and in September, one at CVL on 10th and Axe Estuary on 12th with two at PWD on 16th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		15		5	2	9			1			
N.wick Warth/Pilning	255	1120	180		6		1	3	3	31	48	8
CI-Y	8	65	42	1	3		2	2	5	1	4	

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

[Red 3, 4]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 18th in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend 5%.

Although the annual total shown in the table on page 77 is good, much of this was made up by better than average late autumn counts at the Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands site and CVL. Before mid September there was only one count over one, and this was of two at CI-Y on Aug.14th. The best count at Northwick, 15, was noted on Sept.16th and the best count at CVL, 18 on Oct. 9th, was the WeBS count for the month. Nov. 9th saw the last sighting of the year, two at CVL. The table below summarises all counts.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep		Oct		Nov
									1-15	16-30	1-15	16-31	
OPS		1										1	
N.wick/Pilning W.		1	1	1			1	1	3	15	11		
PWD				1									
CI-Y				1				2					
Axe Estuary	1								1		2		
CVL					1			1	10	15	18	8	2
BL											1		

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

RR [Amber 1]

Passage migrant, scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Very rare in winter.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was third in importance in 2016/17.

This species had a poor showing, all sightings were in the period Aug.10th to Oct. 8th at just five sites, and the bird-month count at 20 was well down on the figure for 2016 of 74 but in line with some previous years; see the table on page 77. Again most records came from the well-watched Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands area, but even here there was only one record before Sept.16th and the highest count was nine on 26th. The table below summarises the weekly data.

	Aug	Aug	Sep		Sep	Oct	Oct
	10 - 13	24	2 - 8	9 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 30	1-7
OPS			1				
Northwick Warth		1			4	9	5
Avonmouth/PWD					1	1	
CI-Y	2						1
CVL			1	2			

Weekly maxima at the coastal sites

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii* (11, 1)*Rare vagrant.*

Description required.

One record: for the second year running an adult was at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands, from July 19th to 22nd (J P Martin *et al.*). It was photographed several times.

This is the 24th Avon record since the first at BG in September 1943. The records for the last decade were at Sea Mills in March 2009, at CVL in May 2009, at CVL again in August 2011, at BL in October 2015 and at Pilning Wetlands in May 2016.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

[Amber 6]

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

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 27th in National Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -38%.

Counts of this species were well down on those of the last three years, see table on page 77. As in the last year or so small flocks were seen at the Axe Estuary end of Weston beach in both winter periods, the maximum count being 11 on Jan. 26th. The small spring passage was from April 24th (two at Royal Portbury Dock) to May 30th (two at CI-Y) and the highest count – only half the value recorded in 2016 – was 18 on May 24th at Severn Beach. The small autumn passage was from July 15th (three at OPS) to Sept. 23rd (two at the dock again). All records are tabulated below.

	Jan	Feb	:	Apr	May		:	Jul	Aug	Sep	:	Dec
					1–15	16–30						
OPS						8		2	3			
Severnside					2	18		3	3			
PWD				2	1					2		
CI-Y					7	2		3	3			
Weston/Axe E.	11	7							2	1		7
CVL									1	1		

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at all sites

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

RR [Amber 3, 4, 6]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer. Small numbers occur inland on passage.

Three races occur: *C. a. alpina* which breeds from N. Scandinavia eastwards occurring mainly in winter, *C. a. schinzii* which breeds in N. W. Europe and Iceland occurring mainly on passage, and *C. a. arctica* which breeds in N. E. Greenland and is very scarce, only recorded in single figure counts between mid-May and early June.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was fifth in International Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend is 5%.

Year	OPS		Severnside		CI-Y		Totals	
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	742	99	2133	480	1233	210	4108	789
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	650	68	1654	204	2269	300	4573	572
2015/16	1492	245	1680	900	3170	95	6342	1230
2016/17	1540	85	2865	445	1870	359	6275	889

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

The status table above shows that both the 2015/16 and 2016/17 winter periods were good for this species in the Estuary, but the indications so far suggest that the counts for the 2017/18 period will be lower. The status figure for autumn passage in 2017 was down, and even this figure was bolstered by a single count of 750 at CI-Y on Aug. 23rd three times higher than any other autumn at this site

The second table, given overleaf, presents the fortnightly or monthly maxima at all sites. It shows a good spread of counts but the highest, at around 3000, were lower than normal; these were reported at Northwick Warth on Feb. 16th (2600 were noted at OPS on the following day), and at CI-Y on Dec. 23rd. The table also shows a fairly weak spring passage, the best count being 175 at CI-Y on April 23rd. In 2016 the best spring count was 750.

Dunlin cont. Main fortnightly/monthly maxima table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct	Nov	Dec
								1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30			
OPS	2000	2600	100	25	50	5	35	50	80	90	40	210	800	1000
Littleton Warth	1100	550	350	15	1							57	750	1200
Severnside	2000	3000	1000	35	130	2	90	300	260	500	550	350	2200	1500
Sea Mills	15	10	1											2
PWD/Avonmouth	50	130	200	90	26	7	155		30		60		20	250
CI-Y	1650	1800	265	160	75	3	240	230	675	42	35	170	2050	2750
Sand Bay	700	1600		5	30					7			1	
Axe Est/WesSTW	2000	1900	245		15			13		3		8	1770	320
BG			1	1	1									
CVL		1	2	30	3		12	10	10	9	5	6	10	6
BL	1							1				5	6	1

Monthly maxima at the main sites, figures in brackets are estimates

Arctica Dunlin *C. a. arctica* (32, 2)

Rare passage migrant only recorded in late spring; probably underrecorded.

Description subspecies.

Three records: two were photographed at Northwick Warth on May 14th with three on 15th (J P Martin), and one was at CI-Y on 16th (H E Rose). These are the first records since 2014 when two were also seen in May, one at each of these sites.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

[Amber 3, 4, 5]

Scarce extended winter visitor, very rare inland.

Descriptions required for inland records.

After two reasonable years this species had a poor showing in 2017; there were just eleven records in total with only one from the Anchor Head area of Weston-s-Mare. Noted at its other regular sites in January, March, November and December, the details of all records are as follows.

Battery Point, Portishead – one on Jan. 2nd and three on 15th, then three again on Nov.19th, one on 26th with four or five between 29th and Dec.14th;

Sand Point – one on March 13th;

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare – one on Jan. 16th.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and uncommon in autumn. Rare in winter.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in importance in 2016/17.

Counts were similar to those of 2016 and again about average for the past decade, see the table at the top of the next page. The individual that was present at BL in December 2016 remained here until Jan.13th. Three were noted on spring passage, at CI-Y on April 29th, at PWD on May 2nd and at Northwick Warth from 22nd to 24th. Then one was at CI-Y in August, and the main autumn passage was between Sept.17th to Oct. 20th at four sites. Finally one was at BL on Dec.1st and at CVL from 5th to 19th. These details are summarised in the table below.

	Jan	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sep	Oct		:	Dec
		29 - 2	22 - 29		24 - 31	16 - 30	1-15	16-22		
Northwick Warth			1			5	4			
PWD		1					2			
CI-Y		1			1					
CVL						4	2	3		1
BL	1						1	1		1

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at all sites

Uncommon or Scarce *Calidrid* waders in the Avon area

	1998/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Ruff	28	3	12	29	43	25	57	33	73	44	79
Curlew Sandpiper	39	20	9	95	64	33	56	33	22	74	20
Sanderling	56	53	61	105	129	143	72	132	145	144	85
Purple Sandpiper	48	75	64	75	61	80	70	39	26	56	15
Little Stint	32	14	15	13	18	13	27	21	21	32	26
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	2	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	2	0

Totals of the maximum monthly counts at all sites for the past two decades

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce wind driven visitor, usually in autumn, rare at other times. Records are equal between coastal and inland. Description species.

There were four records after a blank year in 2016, three on the coast and one inland. The details are as follows in date order, all were of single birds and all were thought to have been juveniles.

Severn Beach – seen off the beach in stormy weather on Sept.11th (many observers), it may have been present up to five days prior to this date;

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare – seen in flight past the head moving out of the Estuary at 10.40 during a sea-watch also on Sept. 11th (D Nevitt);

Severn Beach/Northwick Warth – noted at these sites on several occasions between Oct. 8th and 10th (many observers), it probably arrived at the site on 6th;

CVL – one was present and photographed on Nov.12th (P Marshall *et al.*).

The table below summarises the records for the past twenty years, it shows that the 2017 total was slightly above average.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
2	1	3	3	0	0	1	6	1	1	3	4	3	11	1	2	0	4	0	4

Total number of Avon individuals

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was sixth in importance in 2016/17. English 10-year trend 12%.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	54	93	65	88	73	94	74	75	96	176	111
Autumn	173	184	186	197	205	237	162	194	170	214	201

Totals of the monthly maxima at all sites for spring (April and May) and autumn (July to October) for the past two decades

This species had another good year but counts were not as high as in 2016. The spring total given above is well above the ten-year average of 95 while the autumn total is very close to the ten-year average. The best spring and autumn 2017 counts were also below record levels, they both came from BG – as is often the case -- with 16 on April 16th and 22 on July 11th.

The main table overleaf summarises the fortnightly or monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. Wintering was noted at six sites as has become the norm recently. The main spring passage began with nine at CVL on April 10th and most had passed through by May 11th. The autumn passage got going in early July with six at BG on 3rd and the last double figure was also from this site with 14 on Aug. 27th. Non-tabulated reports came from a further nine sites (15 in 2016), mostly involving ones or twos in April, including Backwell Lake (three here on April 19th), Chelwood, Hunstrete, Prior Park (Bath), Sand Bay, Severn Beach, Walton Bay, Weston airfield and Yate.

Common Sandpiper cont. Main monthly maxima table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		May		Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				1-15	16-30	1-15	16-31		1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31				
OPS/Littleton					1	1	1	3	3	3	1	4	2			
N.wick/Pilning				3	4	3	1	1	6	3	5	5	4	2		
Sea Mills area	4	4	3	4		1				4	4		5	2	3	2
PWD				2	4	2			4	9						
CI-Y	1			1	7	1	2	1	16	10	9	19	2	2		
AxeE./W.STW	2	2	2	3	10	8				2	4	3	2	2	1	
Saltford						1		1		2		1	1			
BG	2	2	2	3	21	9		3	22	8		14	8	6	1	2
CVL	3	1	1	9	13	5	1	1	4	4	16	11	8	5	3	3
BL	1	1	1	5	6	2		2	4	5	6	2	1	1	1	1
Litton Res.										3	1					

Monthly or fortnightly maxima at the main sites

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter and spring.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was fifth in National Importance in 2016/17. English 10-year trend 3%.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
69	62	94	110	121	90	141	124	117	95	112

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

Counts were up on those of 2016, so the decline noted in the past few years may have stabilised. This slight rise was due to some good counts at CVL – one observer was surprised to see a single flock of 15 here on Aug. 25th -- which was larger than the Northwick Warth area losses. Again in general the coastal records were poor compared with those of a decade or so ago.

Present up to April 30th and from June 15th (both single birds at CVL), and the maximum count, made on a WeBS day, was 17 also at CVL on Aug. 25th. The table below details the monthly maxima at the main sites. Single birds were also reported at Badgers Lane, Almondsbury, in April, Weston airfield in June and July, Yate in August, and Pill (R. Avon) in November, with two at Chew Magna Res. in September.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
OPS/Littleton area								1		1		1	
N. Warth/Pilning Wlds						1	1	5	1	1			
CI-Y										1			
Chipping Sodbury								3	1				
Saltford		1	1	1	1			2					
Yatton/Sandford		1										1	
BG								2				1	
CVL		4	2	2	3		1	5	17	15	7	6	4
BL		2	2		1			1	2		1		1

Monthly maxima at the main sites

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

[Amber 5]

Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, very scarce in spring.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was 20th in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -38%.

Apart from an adult seen in late July all sightings were for the last four months of the year with a better than average showing; see table. Except where stated otherwise, all sightings up to early November were of juveniles. The details and the 20-year table are given on the next page.

OPS – one seen by the pill on Sept. 21st and on one of the lagoons on 24th, with another here on Oct. 2nd;
Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – two on Sept. 23rd, then one almost daily from 24th to Nov. 4th with two again from Oct. 4th to 6th;

Royal Portbury Dock (PWD) – one on Sept. 3rd;

CI-Y – an adult on July 27th, then one on Dec. 5th and 9th with two on 17th seen again into 2018;

CVL – two on Sept. 4th, 8th to 15th with one on 16th, and finally one on Oct. 24th; the individual seen on Sept.15th carried orange and red leg rings.

	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
First half	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0
Sec. half	4	11	6	2	3	4	3	24	6	3	3	2	12	36	9	3	9	6	5	8

Totals of the maximum counts for all sites over the past two decades, January to June and July to December

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

[Amber 6]

Uncommon passage migrant, more numerous in autumn. Scarce in winter.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
CI-Y	6	4	4	6	6	5	4	6	3	4	4
CVL	4	1	7	10	11	2	13	9	11	4	5

Maximum single count at CI-Y and CVL for the past two decades

The poor run of records noted over the past few years shows no sign of reversing. With one exception all counts were of five or less (as in 2016), in fact more than half of the counts were of single birds. The exception was a flock of 12 which landed on the Estuary mud as the tide rose just north of OPS on May 4th. There was one early spring record, at Aust Warth (on the northern edge of Northwick Warth) on March 10th, otherwise the spring passage was from April 15th (two at BG) to May 18th (one at CVL) and the autumn passage was from July 6th (one at CI-Y) to Oct.19th (also one at CI-Y), and it was noted at eight sites (seven in 2015 and nine in 2016), the details are given below.

	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug		Sep		Oct
						1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30	
OPS		1	12		1	.				
Northwick Warth	1	3	2		1	2	4	3	3	
PWD								2	2	
CI-Y		1	1		1	1	4	1	1	1
AxeE./Weston STW		2			1	1	1	1		
BG		3					1			
CVL		1	1			3	5	5	1	
BL					1					

Fortnightly or monthly maxima at the main sites

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

[Amber 5]

Passage migrant, scarce in autumn and rare in spring; most frequent at CVL.

One in spring and five in the autumn is a normal showing for this species, the details are given below. We are assuming that three different individuals occurred at CVL because of the four day gaps in the records but it always difficult to be sure about this.

Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – two on May 5th with one remaining until 7th;

CI-Y – a juvenile was seen at the mouth of the R. Yeo on July 10th;

Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare – one seen in flight past the head at 06.30 on Sept. 13th;

CVL – single juvenile(s) seen on Aug. 23rd, from 27th to Sept.1st, and from 4th to 7th.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
7	8	8	4	1	7	8	8	1	2	2	9	4	7	4	4	5	12	7	6

Total number of individuals per year for the past two decades

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

[Amber 3, 4, 7]

Fairly common passage migrant/winter visitor, uncommon in summer and very scarce breeder. Scarce inland.

Two races: *totanus* breeding in UK and W. Europe and *robusta* breeding in Iceland. Wintering birds no doubt include many *robusta*.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was seventh in International Importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -10%.

Year	OPS	Sea Mills	CI-Y	Axe Estuary	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	36	86	112	230	464
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	46	73	270	260	649
2015/16	31	48	338	362	779
2016/17	61	57	322	297	737

August to February average counts

Excellent counts for this species continue to be reported as shown by the status table above. The counts for one of these status sites, CI-Y, are probably an underestimate for the following reason. Due to its size and topography Clevedon Bay, the stretch of coast between Wain's Hill (Clevedon) and St. Thomas's Head (Middle Hope) is difficult to count as a whole, and the flocks move freely between the various roost and feeding sites it encompasses. But during the November WeBS count (on 19th) coordinated counts of the roosts were possible giving a total present on that day of 740 made up of 120 at Kenn mouth, 330 along the R. Yeo and 290 near the mouth of the R. Banwell. This suggests that the status figure for this site given above should be increases by at least 30%.

The main table below gives the monthly maxima at most sites. For the first time we have given counts for Northwick Warth and Severn Beach separately, it is likely that some overlap occurred between these data. Most flocks had left our area by mid April, the last three-figure count 145 at CI-Y on 13th. They began to return in late June as usual, the first three-figure count (115) was also at CI-Y on July 10th. Apart from the count mentioned above, the best was 480 at the Axe Estuary on Oct. 9th. Finally it is worth noting that most December counts were down suggesting that a good proportion moved out of our area in the cold weather. Non-tabulated sightings of single birds were at Easter Compton and Yatton in January, Chipping Sodbury in March and September and at BG in July.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	20	47	90	17		3	8	35	85	55	58	45
Littleton Warth	48	45	22	35						77	70	27
Northwick Warth	140	150	170	120	2	15	80	135	250	155	190	80
Severn Beach	20	60	2	7		2		9		4	20	40
Sea Mills (Avon)	60	35	45	14			2	70	80	90	97	36
Avonmouth/PWD	52	48	102	3	2	20	130		300	80		
CI-Y	290	350	340	295	6	42	185	240	270	350	510*	480
Sand Bay	1	43						1	1	1	10	
Axe E./Wes.STW	300	150	220	420			145	42	165	480	325	175
CVL			2			3	4	9	7	1	1	
BL							1	3	1			1

Monthly maxima at all sites, * see text

Breeding As in 2016 some activity was noted at four coastal sites but no pair was known to have bred successfully, the details are as follows.

OPS -- a pair with one juvenile was noted in late June; Pilning Wetlands -- one was said to be 'singing' on April 19th; PWD -- a pair was recorded with a nest with one of the pair sitting on June 22nd;

Dowlais Farm (CI-Y) -- up to three pairs were noted at this 'wet' site from late March. But as in previous years it dried out quickly becoming unsuitable for breeding before any nesting could be successfully completed. As a consequence no juveniles were seen this year.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus**Uncommon or scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, probably overlooked.*

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was eighth in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -4%.

The year was one of two halves for this species with twice as many noted in the first winter period than in the second. As a consequence the total number of records received was down being noted at

15 sites compared with 18 in 2015 and 19 in 2016, and with 86 bird-months compared with 86 in 2015 but 101 in 2016. Present up to April 3rd and from Oct. 8th onwards, this compares with April 12th and Sept. 26th in 2016.

The table below gives the monthly maxima at the main sites. Single records were also received from the following sites: in January at Marshfield and Yate (two), in February at BG and in March on Congresbury Moor (YACWAG reserve).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	:	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1	1	1					2
Littleton Warth	3	3						
Aust/Northwick Warths	7	4	4			1		3
Royal Portbury Dock (PWD)	1	1						
CI-Y	6	5	1			1	2	2
Axe Est./Weston STW	5	2	2	1		4	5	5
Chipping Sodbury Common			1	1				
Lawrence Weston Res		2						
CVL	2	2					1	2
BL	2							

Maxima at the main sites

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

[Red 4]

Uncommon winter visitor, almost certainly overlooked. Has bred in the past.

Counts were improved from last year mainly because some more precise data was available from one of our main winter sites in the Gordano Valley. The bird-month count was 86 (with 29 records) which compares with 39 in 2015 and 35+ in 2016. The Gordano Valley records were mainly from the Weston Big Wood area and included 30 on Nov.16th and 15 on Dec.19th. Present up to March 16th and from Nov.1st, with an extra record at BL on April 25th which may have been a local breeder. The months and sites of the remaining records are as follows, single birds unless stated otherwise.

January – Avonmouth Sewage Works, Chittening Warth/Orchard Pools (two records), Marshfield (three records including one of two), Old Sodbury, Saltford (two records), and Westerleigh Common near Yate;

February – Hutton Moor near Weston-s-Mare, Lansdown, Lime Breach Wood just outside Tickenham (three), Saltford, and Western-in-Gordano;

March – Bradley Stoke and Walton-in-Gordano;

November – Victoria Park in Bath, Cleeve, Wickwar's Lower Woods (five), St. Phillips in Bristol, and Saltford;

December – Ashton just outside Bristol, Aust, a garden in Backwell Hill, Entry Hill Golf course in Bath, Newton Park, Stockwood on the southern edge of Bristol and Walton Down.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

[Amber 4]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred in the past.

Two races: *G. g. gallinago* breeding in the palearctic and *G. g. fearoeensis* breeding in the N. Isles and Iceland. Most occurring in Avon belong to the first race, a small but unknown number of the second probably also occur.

WeBS: English coast of the Severn Estuary was third in importance in 2016/17. English ten-year trend -11%.

The status tables is given below, it shows that counts dropped back to more normal levels after the previous winters big count bolstered by a very high count at OPS in February 2016. In 2017 the best

Year	OPS	Sevenside	CI-Y	Total
1997/98 – 2006/07 Av.	48	16	15	79
2007/08 – 2014/15 Av.	20	21	27	68
2015/16	85	20	20	125
2016/17	29	37	27	92

November to February average counts

Snipe cont.

counts were only in the mid sixties – 65 at Sand Bay on Jan.5th and 67 at Lawrence Weston reserve on Feb.14th, but these refer to isolated counts suggesting wandering flocks moving about seeking food or shelter. As with many other wader species in 2017 counts in the first winter period were noticeably better than those in the second.

The main table below summarises the monthly maxima at the well-watched sites. Present up to June 10th and from July 23rd onwards. One or two were reported between early May and early June at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands on four dates, PWD on two dates, and CI-Y, Bleadon levels and CVL with one date for each. Although these reports were made doing the breeding season at or near possible nesting sites, no breeding evidence was reported. Apart from the 16 sites tabulated below, reports were received from a further 12 as follows, in alphabetical order: Avonmouth Sewage Works, Chew Stoke, Dundry, Gordano Valley (one record of one only), Ham Green, Kenn, Marshfield (only two records in January), Paulton, Stoke Park (Bristol), Tickenham (five on Jan. 3rd), and Yate.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	35	58	79	3				1	1	5	15	13
Littleton Warth	7	13	1								15	8
N.Warth/Pilning W.	54	25	42	5	2	1	2	18	22	3	3	3
Severn Beach		12	22	1						2		
Sea Mills (R. Avon)	9	14								1	8	6
PWD	25	50	6	4		1					9	40
CI-Y	55	20	12	1	1		1	1	2	12	21	24
Sand Bay	65											
Axe Est/W.STW	4	56	45		1			2			3	2
Sodbury Com./Yate	2		1	1	1				1	1	1	
Saltford		1								2		1
Lawrence Weston		67	25									
Congresbury Moor	3		29								29	24
BG	13	5	2	2							2	1
CVL	43	45	16	3	1			6	3	3	22	15
BL	10	2	9	3				1		1		10

Monthly maxima at the main sites

Autumn Wader Migration on the Coast

During the autumn of 2016 the upper part of the Estuary, mainly the Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands complex, reported a major increase affecting especially Grey Plover, Knot and Dunlin with the result that the total numbers rose nearly three-fold compared with the previous year. In the 2017 autumn although numbers dropped by about 40% they were still at record levels boosted this year by high counts of Black-tailed Godwit. Counts at CI-Y more than doubled between these two years back to average levels, at least in part because the site is recovering from the major construction work undertaken in 2015. These data are summarised in the tables below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
S-side	3005	1858	1828	2471	1914	3583	5261	4310	11353	716	4072
CI-Y	1823	2983	3102	5452	4231	4364	4182	3498	1532	3136	3459
Ratio	1.6	0.62	0.59	0.45	0.45	0.82	1.3	1.2	7.4	2.3	1.18

Autumn migrant wader totals, first row - Severnside, second row - CI-Y, third row - ratio SS/CI-Y

As in the past ten years the table below gives the maximum count for each species in each ten-day period between July 1st and Oct. 28th. Only species that are mainly migratory or have a distinct migratory population are included. Usually the migratory *schinzii* Dunlins dominate with by October an unknown proportion of *alpina* Dunlins also present, but in 2017 the largest count (700) was for Black-tailed Godwit.

The coastal autumn wader migration summary is as follows.

		Jul			Aug			Sep			Oct		
		1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28	29-8	9-18	19-28
Grey Plover	S-S									1	4	2	
	CI-Y										1		2
Golden Plover	S-S										4	1	10
	CI-Y					3							
Ringed Plover	S-S	7		5	150	140	250	95	55	70	25	22	16
	CI-Y		1	2	150	225	575	30	8	12	7	1	3
Little Ringed Plover	S-S	6	6	2				1					
	CI-Y	1					1						
Whimbrel	S-S		2	7	5	8	4			1		1	
	CI-Y	1	4	8	14	8	2	3					1
Black-tailed Godwit	S-S	10	5	11	93	115	185	210	180	470	700	350	380
	CI-Y			9	21	15	125	23	24	17	2		15
Bar-tailed Godwit	S-S	1							4	10	7	2	1
	CI-Y					2		1	4	8	2		6
Knot	S-S			1		1	3	18	19	30	31	13	27
	CI-Y			2	1	2		5					1
Ruff	S-S	1					1	1	15	8	11	2	
	CI-Y					2							
Curlew Sandpiper	S-S	1					1		1	9	7	1	
	CI-Y					2					1		
Sanderling	S-S			2	3				1	2	1		
	CI-Y			3	3		2						
Dunlin	S-S	27	51	90	300	300	260	500	300	550	300	250	350
	CI-Y	18	240	100	230	200	675	14	42	35	38	250	100
Little Stint	S-S								1	5	5	1	
	CI-Y						1						
Common Sandpiper	S-S	3	6	3	5	4	5	2			4	1	
	CI-Y	3	16	10	9	6	19		1	2	1	1	2
Green Sandpiper	S-S	1	1			4	5	1					1
	CI-Y										1		
Spotted Redshank	S-S									2	2	1	1
	CI-Y			1									
Greenshank	S-S	1	1			2	4	3	2	3			
	CI-Y	1			1		4			1		1	1
Wood Sandpiper	CI-Y	1											

Sevenside (S-S) and CI-Y - Maximum counts in ten-day autumn periods

Autumn Wader Migration at CVL

The autumn wader count at CVL was more than twice that recorded in 2016 (the ten-year average is 558). Water levels (provided by Carl Gilbert of the Bristol Waterworks Company) were lower which only partly explains this increase. Another cause was the strong showing by one species: Black-tailed Godwit, *cf.* the coastal wader migration table above -- just under one-third of the total (205 out of 713) was made up by this one species. It is also of interest to note that, for the first time since the lake was constructed in the 1950s, Lapwing was not the commonest wader present during the autumn being overtaken in 2017 by this godwit – its ten-day count was 170 which is at least 90% lower than the totals that have been recorded in the past. Although a reasonable number of species (23) was seen, this list did not include Golden Plover, Jack Snipe or any rare species.

CVL autumn wader migration The next table summarises the data for the past two decades.

1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
111cm	63cm	153cm	171cm	218cm	-4cm	179cm	121cm	151cm	123cm	183cm
346	108	569	505	1119	295	912	458	616	311	761
19	17	25	25	31	17	23	19	22	21	23

CVL counts: Second row – Average water levels measured DOWNWARDS from a datum line.

Third row – Totals of the ten-day maxima for all waders (excluding Lapwing) between July 1st and Oct. 28th.

Fourth row – Total number of species recorded each year over the same period

The table below presents the maximum count data at CVL for each ten-day period between July 1st and Oct. 28th. As noted above a total of 23 reported species was slightly above normal but it did not include any vagrants from N. America or Siberia.

	Jul			Aug			Sep			Oct		
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28	29-8	9-18	19-28
Oystercatcher	2	1		1	2				2			
Grey Plover									1			2
Golden Plover										41		1
Ringed Plover	2	1		2	2	5	6	20	44	3	6	
Little Ringed Plover	4	3			1	4	4	3				
Lapwing	6	6	3	8	10	11	6	11	8	12	19	70
Whimbrel			1	1			1					
Curlew					1							
Black-tailed Godwit	47	9		1	10	24	12	36	24	15	6	6
Bar-tailed Godwit									1	1	1	1
Turnstone				1				9				
Knot								1				
Ruff						1	1	10	15	17	18	8
Curlew Sandpiper							1	2				
Sanderling								1				
Dunlin	1	12		5	10	1	1	10	5	2	1	6
Little Stint							1	1	4	3	2	
Com. Sandpiper	3	4	1	9	13	11	8	6	2	5	4	3
Green Sandpiper	2	5	3	8	17	17	15	13	4	2	5	7
Spotted Redshank							2	2	1			1
Greenshank					3	4	5	4		1		
Wood Sandpiper						1	1					
Redshank	2	4	1	1	1	9	4	7		1		1
Snipe						6	6	3	3	3	2	2

CVL - Maximum counts in each ten-day period during the autumn

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce spring passage migrant and storm-driven autumn/winter visitor. Very rare inland.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A poor year by recent standards but there were none in 2016. Details as follows:

Spring passage One off Sand Point on May 15th;

Autumn passage A light morph adult photographed at Severn Beach on Oct.15th.

A summary of the records for the past two decades is given on the next page,

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Inland: 41, 4)

Uncommon and declining spring passage migrant and storm-driven visitor (mainly spring or autumn). Rare inland, mainly at CVL.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

Another really poor year for this declining species (see table below) with four spring records from Severnside and three in autumn including an inland record from CVL.

Spring passage The first was a dark morph up river at New Passage on May 5th. There were no more until June when Severn Beach produced one on 6th; two (one dark and one light morph) on 9th and two dark morphs on 11th.

Autumn passage Just two records: two at Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare on Sept.11th and one at Severn Beach on 13th.

Inland Four flew west through CVL on Sept.14th (M Hayes, N Warren).

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* (Inland: 33, 4)

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and storm-driven visitor at almost any time of year. Rare inland.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

A poor year (see table below) with none in either the first winter period or on spring passage, and records on just five autumn dates between Sept.11th and Oct. 22nd.

Autumn passage The first was one at Battery Point on Sept.11th, a day that saw several unusual seabird records in the Estuary. The other records were in October with two at Anchor Head and one at nearby Sand Point on 2nd; three at Anchor Head and at least five at Severn Beach on 21st; and six at Anchor Head and one at Severn Beach on 22nd.

Inland Three inland records were received: one at CVL at 14.00 on Sept. 27th (D J Angell), then two records at OPS in October coinciding with others further down the Estuary: two on 21st and one next day (P J Hazelwood).

SKUA Sp *Stercorarius sp*

Three records as follows; for records from the last decade see table below.

One moved up river past OPS on May 30th, and a dark juvenile was at Royal Portbury Dock on Sept. 8th, it was thought to be an Arctic. Another was reported harassing a gull at Battery Point, Portishead, on Oct. 4th.

Skuas in the Avon area

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Pomarine Skua,	3	17	2	5	17+	16+	20	25		2
Arctic Skua	37	47	17	40+	40+	57	18	50	13	13
Long-tailed Skua	1							2		
Great Skua	4	14	3	13	12	69	21	44	15	20
Skua sp.		5		9	3	22	23	19	1	3

Total numbers for the last ten years

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Scarce usually storm-driven visitor throughout the year; very rare inland.

Descriptions required for records away from the Estuary, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge.

Another rather poor year, see the table, with just five records, which could have involved even fewer individuals. The details and the ten-year table are given overleaf.

Guillemot cont.

OPS – one floated upriver on the incoming tide, close inshore at Shepperdine, at 11.35 on Sept.13th and presumably the same individual floated back down at 09.00 next day (P J Hazelwood, A J Middleton);

Sevenside – all were single birds at Severn Beach, dates as follows: June 11th, Sept.12th (likely to be the individual seen in the OPS area on the following days), and Oct 21st and 22nd.

AUK SP.

One record of an unidentified auk at Royal Portbury Dock on Sept. 11th.

Auks in the Avon area

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Puffin							2			
Black Guillemot								1		
Razorbill				1			4	1		
Little Auk		1	1						1	
Guillemot	3	37	3	11	6	4	18	3	5	3
Auk sp.				6						1

Total numbers for the past ten years

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

[Amber 4, 6]

Scarce passage migrant; generally the scarcest of the five 'common' terns.

A poor year with just a single sighting, the average for the past decade is about nine per year as shown in the table on the next page.

OPS – one on May 30th was the only record, 18 days later than the previous latest arrival date in 2005.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Coastal	14	3	1	6	3	4	6/7	6	7	0
Inland	1	4	3	3	0	1	3	11	16+	1

Total numbers for the last ten years

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant; most frequent in the autumn with occasional influxes. Most records are from CVL.

A poor spring with perhaps as few as eight individuals reported. A below average autumn followed. At CVL there was just one double figure count, although some groups did linger here for a few days. There were only two records from the Estuary all year. The details are as follows:

Spring passage The first was one at CVL from April 26th to 28th, with it or another on 30th. May began with three at Sand Point on 1st, followed by one at CVL next day, two at BG on 7th and three at CVL on 8th.

Autumn passage All August records came from CVL where one appeared on 23rd, then five (two adults and three juveniles) next day, one on 26th and up to six on 28th. CVL dominated sightings in September: present daily from 3rd to 8th with up to ten on 3rd then dwindling numbers between two and four to 8th; up to three daily from 11th to 15th; four on 24th, two on 27th and finally one on 29th. Elsewhere during September single juveniles were at BL on 7th and Severn Beach on 8th. October then produced eight, mainly adults (a late date for this many), at CVL on 19th with two remaining on the next day; and the last reported was one at CI-Y on 23rd, another late date by local standards.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	5	3	2	14	2	3	2	3	9	3
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Oct	10	10	43	24	3	2	13	17	14	8
No of days recorded (total for year)	14	17	24	40	15	11	18	30	23	28

Average counts at CVL

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

[Amber 3, 6]

Uncommon passage migrant – most are recorded on the coast.

A rather good March but otherwise an unremarkable year.

Spring passage The first was early for the Avon area with a single individual at Axe Estuary on March 18th and possibly the same at Uphill boatyard on 21st. The 30th produced a mini influx with six downriver at OPS and, more unusually, three well inland at Newton Park, Newton St. Loe (W & L Tucker). Another individual was at OPS on April 1st followed by a long wait for the only other spring record, one at Severn Beach on June 6th. Although March arrivals are the norm along the south coast of England (and wintering is now well established), our arrivals have tended to be later than this so the preponderance of March records is unusual.

Autumn passage An adult and a begging juvenile were at CVL on Aug. 25th with two adults at BL on 28th were the only records.

Scarce and rare terns in the Avon area

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Little Tern	15	7	3	9	3	5	9	17	21	1
Whiskered Tern						2			1	
White-winged Black Tern							1			
Sandwich Tern	35	15	23	35+	15	59	12	15	23	17
Caspian Tern									2	

Total numbers for the past ten years

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

[Amber 6]

Regular passage migrant, a few occur throughout the summer - generally uncommon, but large flocks have occurred in some years especially on the Estuary in spring or at CVL in autumn.

A very poor spring was noted both inland and on the coast apart from one exceptional March record. Also a very poor year at CVL with the worst showing for at least a decade, and a return to a more normal autumn on the coast after last year's good numbers.

Coast After an exceptional and very early report of seven at OPS on March 30th (P J Hazelwood) it was yet another feeble spring showing in the Estuary with just a single individual at Northwick Warth and it or another at PWD both on April 30th.

Return passage started with one at Northwick Warth on June 28th. No more until August which produced single individuals at OPS on 3rd, 16th and 22nd; 13 at Northwick Warth on 19th and an adult fishing and feeding its attendant juvenile at Littleton Warth on 27th. In September one was at Severn Beach on 11th; two at Northwick Warth on 13th and 12 here on 25th. Finally a late individual was photographed at Severn Beach on Oct. 21st.

This last is three weeks later than the average last date but not a record which stands at Oct. 28th

Inland - CVL The first, one on April 27th, was the only record of the month. In May one was present from 19th to 21st and on 24th. Recorded on four dates in June: 9th; 12th; 20th (two) and 28th. In July recorded on just three dates: three on 19th, one on 22nd and 31st. August produced one or two on four dates from 3rd to 8th, two on 21st, 17, the highest count of the year, on 23rd, reducing to nine next day and five on 25th. September then began with two on 1st, three next day, seven on 6th and finally 13 on 24th. The tables below give the monthly data and a summary for the past decade.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No. of days recorded	1	4	4	3	8	4
Maximum count over the month	1	1	2	3	17	13

CVL summary with monthly days recorded and maximum counts

Common Tern cont.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Av. of 3 highest counts Apr - Jun	17	5	23	14	55	40	3	6	29	1
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Nov	38	38	80	20	20	29	38	38	25	12
No. days recorded (total for year)	61	44	61	47	35	47	42	63	42	24

Average counts at CVL over the past decade

Most other inland records were from BL, with one on May 11th, another on 27th, two on Aug. 21st and five on 23rd. BG produced one on June 9th and another on July 19th.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

[Amber 3, 4]

Usually an uncommon passage migrant, but can occasionally occur in large flocks in the Estuary under favourable conditions in spring; otherwise generally occurs in smaller numbers than Common Tern. Often appears after westerly gales.

Another poor spring but with some isolated records of larger flocks on the coast in the late April to early May peak period. The autumn passage was also rather thin and records were received on the fewest days for at least a decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Max count for year	43	13	25	150	25	130	35	10	100	30
Av. of three highest counts	42	9	16	135	20	115	24	7	68	25
No. days recorded during year	26	25	19	40	22	31	18	40	24	17

Annual details for the Avon area

Spring passage The first were 18 at OPS on April 22nd, then 30 up river past Northwick Warth on 28th and single individuals here, and at Severn Beach and PWD, on 30th. In May there were 26 at Sand Point on 1st, 14 at Severn Beach on 5th, two at CVL on 8th and another at Sand Point on 15th. The final record of the spring was of one at Severn Beach on June 6th.

Autumn passage These records were mainly of first-winters with two at CVL on Aug.19th, one on Sept. 6th, one from 10th to 11th, two on 13th with one remaining to 15th. One at BL on Sept.12th was the only inland record away from CVL. On the coast there were seven, unusually all reported as adults, at OPS on 13th, and single first-winters at Severn Beach on 11th and 13th.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

There were a number of reports of unidentified *Sterna* terns that were either Common or Arctic (Commic) as follows:

OPS – one Sept. 13th; Severn Beach – 60, the largest tern flock of any species noted in 2017, on April 30th with one on May 8th; and CVL – one on April 29th and another on Aug. 25th.

Tern Passage Three tables are given below and on the next page summarising the tern passages. The first two detail the main passages in 2017, both on the coast and inland, and the third shows how the main spring coastal passages have varied over the past decade.

Spring Tern Passage

	April	May			Jun		
	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30
Black Tern (coast)		3					
Black Tern (inland)	4	6					
Common Tern (coast)	2						
Common Tern (inland)	1		3	3	1	3	1
Arctic Tern (coast)	51	40	1		1		
Arctic Tern (inland)		2					
Common/Arctic Tern (coast)	60	1					

Spring – summated maxima of daily counts for each ten-day period at coastal and inland sites

Autumn Tern Passage

	Jul			Aug			Sep		
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-9	10-19	20-29	30-8	9-18	19-28
Black Tern (coast)							1		
Black Tern (inland)						13	24	9	9
Common Tern (coast)				1	14	3		3	12
Common Tern (inland)	0	3	2	6		40	12		13
Arctic Tern (coast)								12	
Arctic Tern (inland)			1		2		1	7	

Autumn – summated maxima of daily counts in each ten-day period at coastal and inland sites

Spring Tern Passage on the Coast

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Common	561	3	2	593	103	61	20	4	28	1
Arctic	201	21	14	524	41	461	100	12	265	90
Common/Arctic	606	138	240	2410	352	629	351	14	177	61
Total	1368	162	256	3527	496	1151	471	30	470	152

Totals of the highest recorded counts from any one coastal site for each day in April and May

Ten-year averages: Common – 138, Arctic – 173, Common – 498; total - 808

SABINE'S GULL *Xema sabini* (39, 5)

Very scarce autumn passage migrant, most occur during or after westerly gales but has occurred in calm weather. Very rare as a spring passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

Six records were received, all of single juveniles along the Estuary in the autumn. Conceivably they could all have related to the same individual, but this seems most unlikely given the long gaps with no sightings and the distinct separate influxes of seabirds into the Estuary during gales in September and October. The Sand Bay individual occurred at the same time as one at nearby Berrow (Somerset) so the Severn Beach sighting the next day might have related to either of these two or another. The most likely duplication concerns the Royal Portbury and Avonmouth Docks sightings in late September where there is little observer coverage. The Sea Mills bird was exceptionally late, prompting thoughts that it could have been an individual that had lingered around the docks or the lower reaches of the Avon, but this is very speculative and it is treated as new here. Details below.

Sand Bay – Sept.12th (P Bowyer *et al.*, photographed);

Severn Beach – Sept.13th (N Warren *et al.*, photographed);

Royal Portbury Dock – flying up the R Avon on Sept.17th (C J Stone);

Avonmouth Docks – photographed on Sept. 26th (B Laughton);

Severn Beach – Oct. 22nd (many observers, photographed);

Sea Mills – swimming on the R. Avon just north of the old harbour on Nov. 22nd (A D Scott).

A summary of the sightings for the past decade is given on page 97.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

[Red 3]

Usually a storm-driven visitor; uncommon, but large flocks regularly occur in the Estuary. Also occurs in anticyclonic conditions in early spring as a presumed migrant. Scarce inland, usually only at CVL.

A very poor year with records from just three sites in the Estuary on ten dates (compared with 21 dates in 2016, which was the least since 2010; the previous totals were 23 in 2008, 33 in 2009, 11 in 2010, 26 in 2011, 33 in 2012, 40 in 2013, and 38 in both 2014 and 2015). Details as follows.

February The first were seen on a blustery Feb. 23rd, when there were 80 at Severn Beach and 25 at Anchor Head, Weston-s-Mare.

Kittiwake -- Spring passage Recorded on just three dates in March, with a first-winter at OPS on 1st, 17 at Severn Beach on 5th and 30 here on 19th, and finally one on June 6th at Anchor Head.

Autumn and second winter period The only records later in the year were of one at Anchor Head on Sept.11th with another at OPS on 13th, one at Severn Beach on Oct. 21st and 32 here on Dec. 29th.

The table below gives all records.

	Feb.	March			June		Sept.		Oct.	Dec.
	23	2	5	19	6	25	11	13	21	29
OPS		1						1		
Severn Beach	80		17	30		2			1	32
Anchor Head	25				1		1			

All records by site

The table below summarises the Severnside records for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Av. of 3 highest counts	170	233	92	200	83	108	80	207	170	47
No. of dates recorded	23	19	5	15	14	19	21	27	17	6

Severnside – Data over the last ten years. Ten-year averages: 139 and 17

BONAPARTE'S GULL *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* (first in 2013, 1)

Very rare vagrant.

Descriptions required

A first-winter was photographed at Portbury Wharf reserve on May 6th (R Richardson) [BBRC].

This is the second record for Avon, the first was an adult at CVL in April 2013.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* RR [Amber 3, 7]

Abundant but steadily declining winter visitor and passage migrant; small numbers of non-breeders remain throughout the summer. Huge winter roost at CVL.

WeBS: the English coast of the Severn Estuary was the 15th in importance in 2016/17, English ten-year trend -40%.

Our commonest wintering gull but WeBS counts nationally show a steady long term decline. AWBS recorded this species in only 51% of 102 monads surveyed in 2016/17 (3145 counted) and 50% (by area) in 2017/18 but with 1974 counted (down 54% on the previous winter). It will be interesting to see how these trends develop in the longer term.

As usual most had departed by mid-March with 450 at Littleton Warth on 11th the highest count and only two counts in three figures after mid-month: 150 at CVL on 18th (although presumably more would have occurred in the roost at this time) and 100 at CI-Y on 28th. Again there were several records of small flocks moving to NE, especially in the Estuary (max. 80 at OPS on 25th) in the last week of March, but also at Saltford. In April there were regular counts in single and low double figures around the Estuary, some of these moving NE, and from the reservoirs but few records elsewhere. Movements up the Estuary increased in early May with 45 to NE past Severnside on 6th. There was another count of 45 from PWD on 8th. In the second half of the month 150 at Avonmouth on 22nd stands out, as otherwise only three double figure counts were made.

A white individual, perhaps the same one noted in 2016, was reported from PWD from Jan.19th to Feb. 20th.

As last year, it was difficult to distinguish the first returners from lingering birds but the first juvenile was at Northwick Warth on June 14th. Numbers increased from mid-month with three figure counts reported from 23rd onwards (see table on the next page).

The only counts exceeding 250 away from the tabulated sites were as follows (in date order): 2500 at Kingston Seymour on Jan.17th (the highest count anywhere by some margin, J R Tottle); 300 at Newton Park on 31st; 1000 here on two dates in December and 300 on Tickenham Moor on 31st. Once again regular counts were available for a good selection of sites (see table below). On the Estuary, casual counts at mid or low tide tend to be higher than high tide WeBS counts in at least some of the sectors.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	1000	500	300	16	12	67	420	320	700	69	500	500
Littleton Warth	460	95	450	11			410	170	590	635	390	19
Northwick Warth	280	160	250	10	25	100	610	640	300	250	50	200
Severn Beach	90	170	95	14	14	5	800	350	150	45	36	
PWD/RPD	14	35	36		45	202			57	125	43	
CI-Y	525	625	250	4	15	150	900	300	400	600	500	1300
Sand Bay	170	140	128	6		23	470	140	270	400	170	
Axe Estuary	60	47	16		1	22	580	145	74	390	40	124
Weston STW							497		487			
R Avon, Sea Mills	197	120	80				37	58	140	100	530	108
Eastville Park	200	278	100				8	40	50	120	112	120
Saltford	570	470	100	1		4	120	163	80	230	250	700
Backwell Lake	230	760	110				45	95	85	185	340	175
BL	1000	1000		1		5	125	70				

Monthly counts at the regularly counted sites

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant usually with more in spring; scarce in winter.

A lingering adult in the first winter period was followed by a very poor spring passage with just two individuals. The autumn passage was also extremely poor with as few as five individuals and another in December. The details are as follows:

First winter period An adult at PWD on five dates from Jan.13th to Feb. 3rd may have been the same as an adult at OPS on Feb. 4th.

Spring passage The first was an adult at PWD on March 15th and 16th (presumably different to the wintering bird given the length of the gap between sightings). The only other record was of a second calendar year at Northwick Warth on May 28th.

Autumn passage/second winter period A second calendar year was at CVL from June 30th to July 4th with it or another on 13th. A juvenile appeared at CVL on Aug. 28th and 29th. The next was an adult at CVL with some Black Terns on 19th, a first-winter was at Severn Beach on 22nd and another first winter was at CVL on 27th. The only later record was of one at CI-Y on Dec.12th

The monthly maxima, and a summary of the CVL sightings for the last decade, are given below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Days recorded at CVL	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	0	2	0	0
Maximum CVL count	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Days elsewhere	3	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Max. no. elsewhere	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Summary of all records

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Av. of 3 highest counts Jan - Jun	6	3	19	6	15	3	11	6	5	0
Av. of 3 highest counts Jul - Dec	1	3	5	2	1	3	2	1	1	1

CVL – average counts for the past decade

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

RR [Amber 6]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, stable after a period of increase.

Another rather average year with six in the CVL roost in mid-February, the largest count during the usual February to early March peak spring movement. This was followed by a modest return movement by recent standards peaking in July and a few remaining into the winter, with PWD the most regular site.

In January one or two were recorded on four days at both BL and CVL and one to three on four dates at PWD. Elsewhere in January, one was recorded at three other sites. CVL then produced records on 12 days in February: one to three plus five on 4th and 19th, and six on 16th. Otherwise there were one to four on four dates at PWD, and one or two at eight other sites in the month with individuals at Aztec West Lake on 12th, and Newton Park on 26th, being unusual for these sites. March then produced up to five (on 6th) at CVL until the 10th; one to three at PWD on four dates to 21st; and single individuals at four other sites to 19th including one at Eastville Park on 4th. In April there were two at PWD on 2nd and a first winter at Littleton and OPS on 29th. The only May record was of one at Northwick Warth on 5th.

Two at Severn Beach on June 22nd heralded a wide spread of records in July. One or two noted on eleven July dates at CVL, seven of them from 21st with most reported as juveniles after the first on the 7th. Otherwise, Northwick Warth had the most records in July with one or two on eight dates while there were four including three juveniles at Severn Beach on 7th. Elsewhere there were single individuals at four other sites in July. In August one or two were at Northwick Warth on eight dates but there was only one other record, from Weston STW on 15th. There was a scatter in September with one or two at five sites.

They remained rather scarce in October with eight records from five sites, all single individuals apart from four first-winters at CVL on 22nd. They also remained infrequent in November with one or two at five sites but with records on seven dates at CVL. PWD dominated in December with one or two on eight dates and only one other record from Northwick Warth on 5th.

The monthly maxima at the main sites are tabulated below, with records from the following eight sites contributing to the summated monthly maxima in the bottom row: Avonmouth Dock, Aztec West Lakes, Eastville Park, Marshfield, Newton St Loe, Pill, Sheppardine and Weston-s-Mare beach.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS		1		1			1					
Northwick Warth	1	1			1		2	2	1	1		1
Severn Beach	1		1		1	2	4					
PWD incl. Nature Reserve	3	3	3	2			1		1	1	1	2
CI-Y		2										
Weston STW		1					1	1	2	1		
Sea Mills									1		1	
Saltford	1									1		
CVL	2	6	5				2		1	4	2	
BL	2	1	1									
Totals, eight other sites		3	2	1			1				2	

Monthly maxima at the main sites

The second table gives an overview of the fairly uniform series of records for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites	23	20	21	18	19	23	17	22	17	19
Max count	7	6	4	8	6	5	6	14	8	6

Sites and maximum single counts in last 10 years

Observers are encouraged to continue to report all sightings of this species, giving ages of all individuals where possible. (*Eds.*)

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

[Amber 7]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Largest flocks usually on upland or flooded fields and are often thinly spread elsewhere. Huge (c.18000) but rarely counted winter roost at CVL and significant one on the Estuary that is even more difficult to count.

The Cotswolds are an important feeding area for this species, as reflected in the occasional high counts from Marshfield including 1500 on Nov. 9th. Otherwise the best regularly counted site was Saltford, with fewer big counts from OPS this year. The tabulated sites produced regular counts and significant numbers. This species tends to be scarce in the more westerly parts of our region, especially on the Estuary except in very cold weather. One estimate was received for the CVL roost of 12000 on Jan. 27th (L Bailey).

For about six weeks from mid January unusually large numbers (1000+) were noted during the daytime at the southern part of the CVL area (Herriott's Pool and nearby fields at North Widcombe). This movement was considered to be related to farming activities. On three occasions it was thought that individuals from unusual races were present (*heineis* on Feb. 6th and March 6th, and *kamchatka* on Feb. 16th) but no absolute proof of these identifications was available. A paper with photographs describing the activity of these unusual individuals can be found on page 177.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	500	29	15	20	3		1	5	6	20	162	80
Littleton Warth	18	30	140	2					1	4	4	
Northwick Warth	4	7	17				2	1	4	12	4	11
Marshfield	300	23	200							140	1500	400
Newton Park	200	20									15	11
Saltford	350	650	3				1		8	750	17	400
BG	106	230	5	4						12	40	6
Backwell Lake	10	11								3	17	4

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

Most reports from elsewhere were of 100 or less with the larger counts as follows:

BL – 500 on Jan. 13th before heading towards CVL;

Greenway Lane, Cold Ashton – 105 on Nov. 26th.

April records were again sparse from eight sites with 20 at OPS on 6th but with no other double figure count. May produced up to three in the first week and then just one adult at CVL on 20th. No more were noted until the end of June with one at CVL on 26th and two on the next day. In July there were three records from CVL and OPS, and one each from the Northwick Warth area and Saltford. There were regular records in August at OPS with up to five at the end of the month but otherwise just one juvenile with an injured wing at Northwick Warth from 23rd to 30th and an adult at BL on 11th. Numbers remained low to mid-September then increased slightly with eight at Saltford on 27th the highest count. October numbers gradually increased until mid-moth with the tabulated peak counts all in the second half of the month.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis* (74, 3+)

Scarce Nearctic vagrant. Most records are from CVL; occasionally in winter, but nowadays one or two are expected to appear during spring passage in February or March. Very rare on the coast or in summer.

Descriptions required.

A series of sightings of adults was noted at CVL in January and February. It is hard to be sure how many individuals were involved but there were at least three, possibly four. Details as follows:

An adult on Herriott's Pool amongst a huge gathering of Common Gulls on Jan. 18th (R Mielcarek *et al.*, photographed);

A different adult seen briefly, again on Herriott's Pool, on Jan. 20th (I Stapp, photographed);

Continued overleaf

Ring-billed Gull cont.

A popular adult was at the 'tea rooms' car park intermittently from Feb. 6th to 12th (L Gardiner *et al.*, photographed, see opposite page 93);

A different adult was on Herriott's Pool on Feb. 14th (A H Davis *et al.*, photographed) with what the observers considered to be a fourth adult in the same place on the next day (A H Davis, R Mielcarek), and one of these was here on 21st (K E Vinicombe).

A summary of the Avon area sightings for the past decade is given on page 97.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

RR [Amber 6, 7]

Western subspecies *L. f. graellsii*.

Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident. In addition to the colony on Steep Holm, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath and smaller ones in other towns.

As last year the table below shows counts from the rather few sites where regular counts are made, some of which hold small numbers but do show a seasonal pattern of passage and summer peaks. BL has fewer full counts plus a number of unrepresentative casual ones. The CVL roost is rarely counted for practical reasons, but Herriott's Pool held 140 on May 1st and 120 on 26th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	2	10	7	50	50	8	3	11	50	1	2	
Littleton Warth	1	15	4	2	2	26	3		5	1	2	
Northwick Warth	3	6	12	8	13	7	6	5	4	3	1	2
CI-Y	8	18	55	115	110	70	40	2	1	15	10	9
BL*		490		120	26	4	16	17				
Saltford	19	16	9	35	4	14	6	77	2	47	10	6

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites, * counts for BL are incomplete

The highest count elsewhere was of 315 roosting at PWD on Feb. 20th. There were multiple three figure counts in early March, perhaps arriving migrants, with 200 at Newton Park on 2nd; 100 at Bath Racecourse on 4th; and 200 at the Strawberry Line, Congresbury on 6th.

Display was reported again at Portbury Wharf NR in March but no further details about nesting numbers or success were received. There was very little information from the breeding colonies in the cities but breeding was reported from Clifton and from Locking Road, Weston-s-Mare. No counts were made of the large colony on Steep Holm.

L. f. intermedius

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; almost annual at CVL. Probably overlooked, particularly in non-adult plumage.

There were more records of this subspecies in 2017 than in any previous year but this was presumably due to more reporting of dark birds of this race rather than a genuine increase, although how many individuals were involved in the series is unknown. Recorded at CVL, mainly at Herriott's Pool, and all single adults unless stated as follows: on Jan. 8th and 18th; March 1st and 8th (two); May 1st (three, one a third-calendar-year) and 10th; June 29th; July 3rd, 12th and 20th; Aug. 11th and 14th, and finally on Oct. 7th.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

RR [Red 3]

Western subspecies *L. a. argentatus*

Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding resident; largest numbers occur near the coast, around Bristol and Bath and at the CVL roost. Apart from the Steep Holm colony, there are large urban colonies in Bristol and Bath, and smaller ones in other towns.

It was good to receive records from more sites with regular counts this year. Counts from the reservoirs are either very incomplete or partial in the case of pre-roost gatherings but 1000 at the dam at BL, outnumbering Black-headed Gulls, on Sept. 9th was exceptional (N R Milbourne). The main table is given on the next page.

The main monthly maxima table is as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	10	7	6	250	100	19	2	4	300	6		2
Littleton Warth	8	10	6	4	5	58			1	6	1	
Northwick W.	18	11	35	33	11	55	2	12	38	10	4	8
CI-Y	185	185	230	150	260	90	140	12	60	85	230	240
Axe Estuary	5	15	10	66	117	11	12	1	1	12	84	28
Saltford	86	50	49	100	60	100	30	43	2	33	35	38
Newton Park	2	100	300	3	4			1	8	5	2	21
BL		81		15		4	9	20	1000			

Monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites

The only counts in three figures from other non-tabulated sites were as follows: 150 at Castle Park, Bristol on Jan.16th; 300 at Newton Park on March 2nd; 100 at Bath Racecourse on 4th; 140 at Chittingen Warth on April 8th with 170 on Nov. 6th; 135 near Pucklechurch on 8th and 250 roosting at PWD on Dec. 23rd.

Reports of breeding activity were as follows: four nests noted at Portishead Marina (Hall and Woodhouse pontoons) on May 7th, while three were seen here with at least one chick on June 15th; nearby in Newfoundland Way there were two nests with chicks and another adult brooding on 23rd; and on Locking Road, Weston-s-Mare on July 14th there were three sitting adults and at least one chick. Breeding is greatly under-reported and we have little real idea how many pairs nest in the towns, or even on Steep Holm where again no information was forthcoming.

HERRING x LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

A third-winter individual, well-watched and photographed (see opposite page 93), was at CVL between Feb. 8th and May 25th. It reappeared on Dec.19th and stayed into 2018.

The table below gives the number of bird-days since 1998, the first year this hybrid was reported. The annual figures are skewed by long-staying individuals. This taxon is likely to be under-recorded.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1	6	1	1	1	0	0	9	4	6	29	6	7	7	3	5	1	2	1	19

Bird-days recorded per year since 1998

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon passage migrant, summer visitor and winter visitor; most occur in the late summer and autumn at CVL, but now increasingly recorded elsewhere.

Another poor year at the main site, CVL, but again there was the typical pattern of a late summer peak and records in every month. The first juvenile was at CVL from July 6th, with three on 20th. A long staying third calendar year was at Herriott's Bridge from about April 18th to Aug. 3rd and accounted for all of the April and May records. The numbers of individuals each month is likely to be an underestimate as only about half the records are of aged individuals. At BL it was also a poor year with all records referring to single adults apart from two on Feb. 28th. The first table below summarises the records for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites	11	9	10	10	8	6	11	10	12	9
Max count	5	6	9	10	3+	10	7	6	4	4

Number of sites and maximum count at any one site

The second table given overleaf provides the monthly breakdown.

Yellow-legged Gull cont. Monthly maxima table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CVL – min. no. of Individuals	2	3	3	1	1	2	5	3	3	3	1	1
CVL -- daily maximum count	2	2	2	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	1	1
BL – estimate of individuals		2							1	1	1	1
Summated maxima elsewhere	1	2		2		2	1	1	1			

Monthly breakdown

Away from CVL and BL recorded at ten sites as follows in date order (single birds unless stated): PWD, adult on Jan.15th and 29th; BG, on Feb.17th; PWD on March 7th; Avonmouth (Philblack Works site) on April 3rd (immature); OPS also on 3rd (adult); PWD on 20th; BG, third calendar year on 23rd; PWD another third calendar year on 30th; Littleton Warth, a second calendar year on June 10th, with perhaps the same at Severn Beach on 12th; juvenile at Weston-s-Mare on July 30th; Northwick Warth first calendar year on Aug. 28th; and OPS, adult on Sept.17th.

The pattern of records generally fits the established national picture of a late summer peak with numbers gradually declining through the autumn into winter. There was no sign of spring passage this year and overall numbers do seem to be slightly reduced on those recorded five or so years ago – closure of tips and the more rapid covering of waste could perhaps be a factor.

Again observers are urged to report the ages of all individuals and carefully consider hybrids between Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, which are relatively frequent in the mixed colonies in Bristol, when reporting this species, especially away from the main reservoirs. (*Eds.*)

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans* (10, 3)

Very scarce passage migrant/winter visitor since first in 2002.

Descriptions required

An excellent year with three records as follows:

Shortwood, Bristol – an adult, probably a female, was at the Civic Amenities Site on March 2nd (P Rock);

CVL – a first winter in the roost on Jan.17th and 26th (K E Vinicombe) was photographed, and a second winter was on the exposed Little Denny Island on Nov.14th (K E Vinicombe).

A summary of the sightings for the past decade is given overleaf

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides* (43, 1)

Very scarce winter visitor; occurs more frequently than Glaucous Gull.

Descriptions required.

One record: a pale immature, either a first or second winter, was at PWD for five minutes at 16.45 on March 20th (B Pepper, photographed).

This is the first local record since 2014, see table overleaf.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni* (6, 1)

Rare Nearctic winter visitor, many of the records are believed to relate to one returning individual.

Descriptions required.

One record: an adult was in the roost at CVL on Jan. 29th (A H Davis).

This is the first record of this race since 2014, see table overleaf.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* RR [Amber 3]
Uncommon breeding resident - nests in small numbers on Steep Holm and has breed at CVL. Generally uncommon elsewhere but recorded in increasing numbers at the reservoirs throughout the year.

Once again widespread with frequent inland records. Numbers remained high at CVL with a maximum of 33 on Sept. 9th (R M Andrews) and, for a briefer period, at BL again with the peak in September. In the upper Estuary the high February count at Littleton was made at low tide.

The first table summarises the data for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites	17	15	18	24	27	24	22	24	21	23
Max. count	9	21	19	36	26	35	28	24	23	33
Steep Holm pairs	n/c	13	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

Number of sites, maximum count and pairs breeding on Steep Holm where known

The second table summarises the sightings at the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPS	5	4	7	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	5
Littleton Warth	6	14		3								
New Passage/Northwick	2	2	5	4	3	2	2	2	5	1	5	2
PWD	2		1	1	1	1				1	1	
CI-Y	2			2	2	1		4	3	6		
Bristol (city centre area)		2	2	1	1		1	1		1		
BG	2	4	3	2	2	1		1		1		
CVL	2	6	6	5	7	9	13	13	33	16	3	2
BL	5	1	4	6	5	3	3	16	21	1	1	
14 other sites (total)	9	4	8	6	2	3	2	5	4	2	5	1

Monthly maxima at the regular sites

The last row of the table summarises counts from 14 sites, five of which were inland, and all related to between one and three individuals.

Breeding No reports have been received from Steep Holm since 2009, but it is assumed breeding still takes place here. At CVL this year a pair was seen with a nest from June 22nd but there was no subsequent sign of any young. The regular presence of individuals in the city centre during the breeding season suggests that there might be one or more pairs amongst the roof-nesting Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gulls here.

The table below summarises the data for the past decade for the scarce and rare gulls, note that none were recorded in 2015, and 2017 was the best year in the last decade for unusual gulls

Rare Gulls in the Avon area

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	:	16	2017
Sabine's				1+	1				1	5
Bonaparte's						1				1
Franklin's	1									
Ring-billed	3+	3+	2	4+	2	1	3		2	3+
Caspian	1					1			1	3
Iceland	2				1	1	3+			1
Kumlien's				1			1			1
Glaucous	1				2		1			

Total numbers for the past ten years

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia var.*

Introduced, common resident, mostly found in urban areas.

A slight contraction in the distribution in 2017 was countered by an apparent population increase in both the breeding and winter seasons compared to 2016.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS from 69 squares, which represented 33% of those surveyed, a decrease from 35.6% in 2016. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1409. The Avon BBS data is as follows:

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-6%	-2%	-23%	2%	27%	-14%	-4%	5%	-22%	23%	2%	15%

BBS percentage changes

AWBS for the second winter period recorded an increase of 32% compared to the previous winter in those 91 (out of 128) squares that were counted in both periods.

The largest count came from the Floating Harbour area in Bristol with a flock of 450 on Nov.19th. Further reports of flocks greater than 100, again all from Bristol were: 150 on Nov.14th and Dec.1st, 125 on Nov.17th and 105 on April 12th.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

[Amber 7]

Fairly common and increasing breeding resident.

After a significant decrease in the breeding population in 2016, data for 2017 indicated a more stable situation. The number of sites fell back to the 2015 level.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 69 squares, which represented 28.2% of those surveyed, an increase from 26% in 2016. The total counted over two BBS visits was 178. The Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-19%	30%	15%	-9%	4%	-12%	-12%	10%	37%	34%	-24%	-1%

BBS percentage changes

The number of sites where this species was recorded was comparable to 2015 after having peaked in 2016. The last three years indicate a significant increase in sites over the previous seven years:

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
73	64	73	94	68	75	86	125	143	120

Number of sites in Avon. Ten-year average - 92

Flocks Sizeable flocks of 100+ were noted at Marshfield with 400 on Feb. 24th, 150 on both March 13th and 26th, and 250 on Oct. 30th. Also exceptional numbers were at the Northwick Warth area in the autumn with 21 going to roost on Oct. 6th building to 75 on Dec. 2nd and 82 on 30th; these flocks were feeding on the dry salt marsh with abundant *Amaranthaceae* in fruit.

Breeding A pair was recorded displaying at Newton St. Loe on March 6th. In contrast to the 13 nesting attempts at CVL in 2016 only three attempts were recorded, seven eggs were laid, and three young fledged from a single nest. There was a nest with two young at Folly Farm on July 20th and a juvenile was seen with an adult at Banwell on July 17th.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident and migrant.

The Avon population of this abundant species appears to be stable.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 208 squares, which represented a 99.5% distribution. The total counted over two visits was 8069. The Avon BBS data is summarised on the next page.

The Avon BBS data is as follows.

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
74%	12%	4%	-4%	1%	-4%	12%	-10%	-5%	10%	4%	4%
Woodpigeon - BBS percentage changes											

AWBS in the second winter period recorded an increase of 35% compared to the previous winter in those 91 (out of 128) squares that were counted in both periods.

January to May 20 records of three-figure counts were recorded (*cf.* 11 in 2014, 24 in 2015 and 40 in 2016). Spring migration was noted on just a single date, with 100 heading NW on March 14th at Sand Point.

Breeding As usual, evidence of breeding was not well reported. A juvenile was noted in Keynsham on March 27th. There were three young in two nests at Littleton Brick Pits in May and September, two young in a nest at CVL on Sept.10th, and an adult was feeding two fledged young on Oct. 29th in Top Sutton, near Bishop's Sutton.

Summer flocks included 150 at CVL on July 20th, 130 at Paulton on 15th with 100 here on 22nd and Aug. 26th, and 160 at Newton St. Loe on 22nd.

Autumn migration The first movement was recorded on Oct.15th at both CI-Y and New Passage with 49 and 30, respectively, moving SW. A further SW movement was noted on 25th with 250 at CI-Y and 80 at OPS. The largest movement of the autumn was 900 reported at CVL on 27th, with 500 heading SW on 28th at Chelwood, and 300 heading W at Sand Point on 29th. A further 110 headed N at CVL on Nov. 24th and 250 headed SW at CI-Y the following day.

Winter Flocks There were 49 reports of 100 or more. Flocks of 1000+ were reported as follows: an estimated 5000 were noted on Oct. 30th and Nov.1st in the Marshfield are with 2000 on Oct. 31st and 1000 on Nov.19th; 4000 were at Marksbury on 16th with 2000 here on Dec.1st, and 1000 were at BG on Oct.16th.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident.

The population appears to have declined, if only slightly, during the last decade.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 137 squares, 65.6% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 797. Avon BBS data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
28%	-12%	7%	-13%	1%	-4%	11%	-2%	-17%	2%	5%	0%
BBS percentage changes											

AWBS in the second winter period recorded a decrease of 11% compared with the previous winter in those 91 (out of 128) squares that were counted in both periods.

There were 48 double figure counts (59 in 2015 and 44 in 2016). The highest count was 30 at Marshfield on Aug. 22nd.

Breeding Just a single record was received: two were ringed in the nest at Littleton Brick Pits on June 10th.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur* (25 since 2002, 1)

Formerly a fairly common summer visitor, has undergone a steep decline and our last breeding record was in 1983. It is now only a scarce passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

As in 2016 there was just one record from the Severnside area. A first-winter frequented Northwick Warth from Oct.1st to 7th (M Hobbs *et al.*, photographed). See picture following page 108.

Turtle Dove cont.

The table below summarises the records for the last decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of bird-days	3	2	0	2	3	1	0	0	3	7
No. of records	3	2	0	2	3	1	0	0	1	1

Bird-days and records each year

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

[Red 3]

Uncommon and seriously declining spring migrant and breeding summer visitor. Very scarce after June; but recent tracking has shown that most UK adults depart at this time.

A disappointing reduction in the number of records and bird-days recorded compared to the previous two years; however, 2017 was still the third best year in the last ten for both measures.

The numbers recorded by the BBS in Avon are now so low that quantitative comparison is not possible. Records were slightly up on 2016 (four records in three squares) with a total of five records in four squares.

The first Avon area report was from Regil, west of Chew Stoke, on April 10th (*cf.* 12th in 2012, 20th in 2013, 15th in 2014, 15th in 2015 and 5th in 2016).

Records of more than one were as follows: at CVL two were recorded between April 24th and May 29th on just five dates compared to 22 last year; two were also recorded at OPS on May 10th and June 16th, at CI-Y on May 24th, and at Weston STW on 3rd. Sites with records with four or more days were: OPS (17), Northwick Warth (5), PWD (5), CI-Y (6), Weston STW (22), CVL (32) and BL (26).

The table below gives the breakdown of records during the year and 2016 comparisons in brackets.

	April	May	June	July	August
Bird-days	24 (28)	82 (127)	25 (64)	1 (0)	4 (2)
Records	23 (27)	75 (90)	24 (48)	1 (0)	4 (2)
Sites	11 (10)	17 (27)	9 (12)	1 (0)	2 (2)

Month-by-month breakdown of 2017 bird-days, records and sites (2016 in brackets)

No confirmed breeding this year and just a single juvenile was recorded, on Aug. 6th at Litton Resrs.

The final report of the year was of one seen on Aug.15th at Northwick Warth.

The second table gives the basic data for the last decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
No. of bird-days	74	43	93	86	104	51	113	199	221	136	112
No. of records	70	43	73	76	58	48	103	166	167	127	93

Bird-days and records each year

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Breeding resident, uncommon after long-term decline, but slowly recovering locally in recent years and benefitting from conservation efforts in several areas.

Another average year, similar to 2016, for records, but the number of sites was well down.

This species is not recorded in sufficient numbers, either by the BBS or by any other generic survey, to be able to apply any meaningful quantitative comparison. A decrease, both in the number of records and the number of sites, when compared to 2016 was noted, this is shown in the table below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
No. of records	115	137	95	110	161	224	128	171	148	139	142
No. of sites	35	41	42	42	54	66	35	46	53	37	45

Number of records and sites per year

Barn Owl cont. Breaking down the reports received into months (see the table below) indicates a similar picture to 2016 with a reasonable start to the year and good winter survival followed by another rather average breeding season. The number of records was stable in September and October when they generally increase as the young disperse.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Records	16	14	18	24	15	21	18	18	16	18	12	15

Monthly breakdown

Breeding The number of owlets produced (48 to 50) was only slightly down on 2016 when 56 were noted, but the spread between the regions (SG, BA, NS) was quite different: 0, 48 to 50 and 5 in 2017 compared with 23, 22 and 11 in 2016. The details (generalised site and owlet count) are as follows:

BA -- Elm Farm, Burnett – two owlets were ringed on July 3rd;

CVL – three nest boxes were occupied, two of which were successful, with five young ringed on July 1st;

BL – two nest boxes occupied with three young produced in each. Two of three owlets from one box were ringed on July 26th the other still being too small;

Chew Stoke – an owl box on farmland successfully produced young for the first time. Two owlets were recorded on Sept. 3rd with one still there on 28th and an owlet and adult was recorded on Oct. 6th;

Compton Dando – three owlets were ringed on June 16th and a further three on July 3rd;

Cam Valley -- the ongoing survey of this area recorded 24 pairs with nine in the Avon area although in one case only a single bird was seen. The remaining eight each produced between two and four owlets with a total of 25 to 27 (*cf.* in 2015 seven pairs produced 17 owlets and in 2016 five pairs produced ten owlets).

NS -- Tickenham – of five young that hatched in May three fledged successfully.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced in the 19th century. Uncommon breeding resident, declining.

Again, many of the records come from a few known pairs, therefore the number of sites, perhaps, gives a better indication of how this species is faring; see the table below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
No. of records	87	91	98	192	132	132	185	240	197	193	155
No. of sites	49	48	40	39	27	27	27	40	47	37	38

Number of records and sites per year

Ten or more reports came from the following sites (number of reports in brackets); Marshfield (20), Northwick Warth (26), Saltford (62) (maximum of five on one date) and Winford Manor (15) (maximum of four on two dates).

Breeding Juveniles were reported as follows: one on June 16th in Tytherington, a single bird on 20th with two on July 3rd in Winford and two on 20th in Compton Dando, see photograph opposite page 110. Reports during the breeding season (between April and June) came from 17 sites (21 in 2015 and 17 in 2016).

Observers are again encouraged to submit all records. (*Eds.*)

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

[Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident.

The number of records was the second highest in the last ten-years, however, the number of sites was within the typical annual variation for this species; see the table below. It is worth noting that 56 of these records came from a single site, Saltford.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
No. of records	213	276	206	186	256	216	287	309	352	327	263
No. of sites	81	111	79	78	84	59	71	81	89	87	82

Number of records and sites per year

Tawny Owl -- Breeding The number of reported owlets with the sites and dates was as follows: on May 11th two were ringed at Yatton, three were ringed at CVL and one was seen at Folly Farm. A single bird was noted at BL on June 24th with two on July 4th, one was noted at Walton in Gordano on June 4th and 15th, and another was at Strode on Aug. 9th. Nine records of owlets in 2017 compares to eight in both 2015 and 2016; so it is likely that it was another poor breeding season although nesting is still seriously under-recorded.

The highest count of the year was six at Wickwar on Feb.14th.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* (131, 3+)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; very rare in summer, bred successfully in 1991, 2010, 2011 and 2015.
Descriptions required.

One seen roosting at an undisclosed site on Feb.16th and March 2nd was assumed to be the bird seen in December 2016.

In the autumn two, probably three, were accidentally flushed at Saltford on Oct. 6th (J W Duckworth).

The table shows the varying fortunes of this species in the Avon area during the past two decades.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
3	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	1	7*	6*	4	3	1	2*	1	3+

Number of individuals recorded each year (* includes successful breeding)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

[Amber 4]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly on the coast.

Above average numbers were recorded in 2017 (see the table on the following page), with a peak count of six on the Axe Estuary in January. The first table, given below, summarises the year's data.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	:	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2017 (2016)
Records	11	15	29	35	18		2	0	3	10	17	140 (133)
Bird-days	23	24	40	56	24		2	0	3	11	24	207 (177)
Max. count	6	3	4	4	2		1	0	1	2	2	6 (4)

Monthly breakdown

The records are as follows, with single birds unless otherwise stated, the last in spring was on May 24th and the first in the autumn was on Aug.14th.

First winter period

Coastal records:

OPS – one on Feb. 2nd; one on April 21st;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – a single bird was reported on Jan. 21st and Feb 25th; then noted on ten dates in March (maximum of four); 14 dates in April (maximum of four); and six dates in May up to the 9th (maximum of two);

Severn Beach – one on April 8th;

Cl-Y – one on March 13th and April 2nd;.

Axe Est. – noted on nine dates in January (maximum of six); 11 in February (maximum of two); 12 in March (maximum of two); 13 in April (maximum of four); and six in May up to 24th (maximum of two).

Inland, one was seen at Shepperdine on April 21st and another was at Marshfield on May 11th.

Second winter period

Coastal records:

OPS – one was noted on Oct 10th, on two dates in November and on Dec. 22nd;

Aust Warth/Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands – seen on six dates in November (maximum of two, first on 1st); and 13 dates in December (maximum of two);

CI-Y – one on Aug. 14th was the first returning individual of the autumn, then one on Oct. 23rd, and two records in both November and December;

There were three inland records as follows: at Saltford on Aug. 28th and at Marshfield on Oct. 28th and Dec. 31st (two).

The table below summarises the data since 2008.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
Bird-days	260	105	67	194	423	127	75	114	177	207	175
Records	186	100	48	113	222	91	46	98	133	140	118

Bird-days and records each year

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

[Amber 4]

Scarce passage migrant and presumed regular breeding summer visitor in very small numbers.

Descriptions are required for records away from the Mendips.

Just a single migrant recorded with no reports from the traditional sites in the south of our region. This was the first year in the last ten when no *churring* males were recorded in Avon. Again we include some Somerset records from just south of the border where records were noted on five occasions.

The single record was as follows: One was watched for a minute or so in flight at 12.25 on Aug. 30th at the 'Two Headed Man' junction between the B3116 and the A39, near Burnett (D J Angell). This is only the ninth record away from the Mendip breeding sites in the last 30 years, five of these were in 2013, the other three being in May 1996, September 2002 and September 2006.

The table below shows how this species has fared in Avon over the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
<i>Churring</i> males	1	3	3	2	6	4	2	2	1	0
Reports	3	4	3	2	3	6	2	2	2	1

Number of churring males and reports each year in Avon

The five Somerset records are as follows. They all came from Rod's Pot (ST 473584), a site south-west of Burrington within a few hundred metres of the Avon-Somerset border.

May 3rd – two males;

June and July – two or three recorded on four occasions.

It would be helpful to receive all records from the regular Mendip sites, where the species maintains a small toehold in the Avon area. (*Eds*)

SWIFT *Apus apus*

[Amber 3]

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The last two years have seen an increase in numbers recorded by the BBS, however, in line with that of the country as a whole, the Avon population is in long-term decline.

Arrival The first of the year was one at CVL on April 16th, one day earlier than last year. The first away from the reservoirs was a single bird over Keynsham on 19th, and the first three-figure count was of 200 at CVL on 25th.

BBS data This species was recorded by Avon BBS in 83 squares, representing 39.7% of the area surveyed; the total number counted over two BBS visits was 702. For the second year in a row there seemed to be an upturn in the fortunes for this species. However, the Avon BBS data indicates a long-term decline. It is summarised as follows, overleaf:

Swift cont. BBS data

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-74%	-60%	-26%	5%	-7%	-11%	11%	-26%	-38%	-19%	14%	33%

Swift -- BBS percentage changes

Summer flocks Three flocks estimated to be in excess of 1000 were recorded from CVL: 1500 on May 17th and June 6th, with 1000 reported on May 20th. A flock of 500 at Marshfield on June 26th was notable.

Breeding The Bath Swift Group reported that at least 34 buildings in the Bath area were occupied. Also one observer (M Glanville) has gone to great lengths to make his property in Stoke Bishop, Bristol, 'Swift-friendly'. He installed 17 'Swift' boxes equally spaced on the north, west and south sides of his house and his efforts have been rewarded. In 2017 (data for 2015 and 2016 given in brackets) 11 nests were occupied (six and eight) with three further pairs present, 32 eggs were laid (17 and 22), and 20 chicks fledged (13 and 14). The first bird arrived at the site on May 1st and the last departed on Aug. 23rd. As at some other local sites, Pilning Wetlands for example, this shows what can be achieved when the right 'bird-friendly' conditions are provided; see the Editorial on page 3.

Otherwise the following reports were received. Three juveniles fledged from their nest site in Chew Magna on July 6th, four or five pairs bred in an old chapel in Blagdon village, whilst in Bleadon five screaming birds were noted around a house on July 2nd which had three occupied nests last year. Nesting continues to be seriously under-reported, observers are asked to submit all observations of breeding activity. (*Eds.*)

Departure The last three-figure count was of 100 at CVL on Aug. 3rd with smaller numbers up to the end of the month as usual. More unusually, there were 26 reports during September with a final flock of 15 over Bristol on 21st.

For the second year running a very late swift species (either Common or Pallid) was noted at New Passage, on Oct. 20th.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

[Amber 1]

Fairly common breeding resident, distributed in small numbers on waters throughout the area.

The population appears to have been stable over the last three years.

Avon BBS recorded nine over two BBS visits. The seven squares in which they were found represented 3.3% of the area surveyed. Overall, reports were received from 121 sites in Avon, the second highest number for ten years, see the table below. Salford reported the highest count, seven on Sept. 1st, with six still present on Oct. 9th.

A summary of the data for the past decade is given below.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
95	75	96	82	96	96	97	117	125	121

Number of sites each year in the last decade. Ten-year average - 100

During the first winter period, January saw 92 records from 28 sites (92 from 27 in 2016). February saw 71 from 33 sites (66 from 27 in 2016) and March showed 70 from 25 sites (72 from 30 in 2016).

Breeding A juvenile was reported from Eastville Park, Bristol on three dates in July and one in August, and at CVL, two young ringed on Aug. 15th indicated successful local breeding.

Post-breeding dispersal with 2016 data in brackets As usual this period records an increase in the number of sightings. The peak being in August which saw a rise to 115 from 38 sites (90 from 33 sites). In September 86 records came from 31 sites (100 from 35 sites), with 89 records from 30 sites in October (87 from 30), 73 records from 34 sites in November (92 from 27 sites) and 79 records from 32 sites in December (89 from 29 sites).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident, increasing nationally.

A slight decrease in the number of sites and records reported compared with the high counts for both 2015 and 2016.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 78 squares, which represented a 37.3% distribution. The total counted over two BBS visits was 141, Avon data can be summarised as follows:

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-26%	-8%	52%	-6%	-8%	-20%	17%	-2%	-33%	-7%	63%	-24%

BBS percentage changes

AWBS in the second winter period recorded this species in 32.8% of the squares surveyed.

Annual totals for number of records and sites are given below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Records	524	453	458	413	516	621	642	940	1261	1195
Sites	227	209	197	180	151	162	154	224	282	266

Records and sites each year. Ten-year averages – 702 and 205

Breeding A total of 350 records was received from 157 sites during April, May and June, a reduction when compared to 2016 but still the second highest figures for both in the last ten years; The ten-year averages are 238 and 118, respectively.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Records	241	191	202	164	139	188	149	299	454	350
Sites	130	121	131	107	70	85	66	122	186	157

Records and sites during the breeding season

A survey was undertaken in the Siston Common/Overscourt Farm/Shortwood area on March 11th when a total of at least 11 territories was noted spread fairly evenly (A Goodwin). Otherwise the number of sites recorded during the early summer period are listed in the table below. 2017 saw a reduction in the number of sites compared to 2016 for April and May but the highest number of sites recorded for June in the last ten years. Given that no juveniles were recorded until June this may indicate a late breeding season.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
April	63	47	71	57	39	67	39	74	123	94	67
May	67	65	53	49	26	27	26	54	86	64	52
June	53	52	35	29	21	17	23	51	46	60	39

Number of sites with records during the breeding season by month

At CVL, noted at four sites in the vicinity of the lake (*cf.* five in 2009, six in 2010, eight in 2011, five in 2012, seven in 2013, three in 2014, two in 2015, and six in 2016). In Avon as a whole, records of fledged young were noted as follows: in June two at BL and one at OPS, and in July, up to three at Dolebury Warren, Kenn, OPS, and Warmley.. Also reported from Banwell, Burnett, Chelwood, Cromhall, Keynsham, Nailsea, Paulton and Walton Bay; with single birds at Bleadon, New Passage, OPS and Paulton in August; two from Cromhall, and single birds from the Cam Valley, Redland (Bristol) and Winford in September.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

RR

Fairly common breeding resident increasing both nationally and locally.

Whilst the number of records was similar to 2016 there was a notable reduction in the site count.

Survey data This species was recorded by the BBS in 95 squares, which represented 45.5% of those surveyed. The total counted over two BBS visits was 198. The BBS data since 1994 is summarised overleaf.

Great Spotted Woodpecker cont. BBS data.

Since 1994	2007/17	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
102%	5%	-7%	-19%	46%	-7%	-1%	-2%	7%	-10%	13%	-4%

BBS percentage changes

AWBS in the second winter period recorded this species in 53.9% of the squares surveyed.

A notable reduction in the number of sites was recorded after a ten-year high in 2016, see below (the ten-year averages are 740 and 219):

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Records	372	317	402	423	590	666	749	1021	1435	1421
Sites	172	181	182	197	200	199	193	258	322	286

Records and sites per year

The highest count during the year was of seven at Saltford on Oct. 31st.

Drumming was recorded from 20 sites (*cf.* 23 in 2008, 13 in 2009, four in 2010, 12 in 2011, 14 in 2012, 21 in 2013, 13 in 2014, 13 in 2015 and 21 in 2016). At CVL, 11 pairs were reported with at least two successful nests. A number of other breeding records are given below:

Nests containing young were reported in May at Dolebury Warren, Keynsham and OPS. In June single juveniles were reported from Banwell, Bath, Chelwood, CVL, OPS and Walton-in-Gordano. In July, young were reported from Almondsbury, Banwell, Bath, Bishop Sutton, Bristol at Fishponds and Brentry, Chelwood, CVL and OPS.

Migration was noted in the autumn at Sand Point on Oct. 15th and 27th when the migrant successfully evaded a Peregrine, and at Northwick Warth on 23rd.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

RR [Amber 3]

Fairly common but declining breeding resident.

Prior to 2012 a count of 700 or more records in a year was considered to be high, with this figure only being exceeded seven times since 1984. However, in five of the last six years this figure has been easily exceeded, with the 1590 received in 2017 the highest to date. It is perhaps unclear why the number of records suddenly increased but as noted in recent Reports, electronic recording is making it easier for observers to submit records and this declining species is now being more diligently monitored, see the data given in the Editorial on page 4.

The table below gives the monthly distribution for 2017, showing a high of 179 in April and lows of fewer than 90 in February (78) and December, it also gives the data for the previous six years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2011	36	50	67	59	59	84	35	49	40	62	69	40	650
2012	79	78	125	129	101	113	67	79	103	119	103	102	1198
2013	72	54	68	79	52	47	64	39	36	78	68	57	714
2014	63	76	101	112	80	93	75	117	111	98	102	93	1121
2015	98	82	116	154	129	111	92	99	123	116	72	60	1252
2016	123	77	143	175	112	110	146	90	121	155	90	67	1409
2017	91	78	144	179	97	160	159	157	158	166	115	86	1590

Monthly distribution of records

Breeding This year the breeding season extended to early July, although a group of five juveniles was reported Aug. 12th. There were ten confirmed pairs whose progress was monitored, with 37 young hatched, of which 29 were ringed, and 31 are presumed to have fledged. In addition, juveniles were reported from another 14 sites but without further details. Pairs were reported in the breeding season (April – July) from another nine sites and unsexed counts of two in the breeding season were received from a further six. This suggests a total of 39 possible pairs, continuing the decline over the last decade as is shown in the table on the next page.

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

	1998-07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
SG	23	36	31	22	23	21	23	20	8	10	8
BA & NS	62	63	53	45	51	52	30	43	36	26	27
Bristol	7.5	4	6	8	7	6	5	4	4	4	4
Total	93	103	90	75	81	79	58	67	48	40	39

Breeding sites

The distribution of breeding sites in 2016 was ten in SG, 11 in BA, 15 in NS and four in Bristol and in 2017 there were eight in SG, 13 in BA, 14 in NS and four again in Bristol, some notes on this data are set out below.

SG Juveniles were seen at OPS, Severnside, Marshfield and Chipping Sodbury Common. There were no reports from Shepperdine, Filton or the north-east of this region.

BA For the fifth successive year nest boxes were used at Burnett, on June 16th six chicks were ringed. Four were ringed at CVL on 18th. Juveniles were also seen at Corston. Chew Stoke, Salford and Paulton. Three were regularly seen at Newton St Loe in July.

NS On June 9th five were ringed at Langford and four at both BG and Congresbury; on 19th four were ringed at Butcombe and three at Lulsgate; and on 29th juveniles were seen at Felton Common and Winford. In addition two juveniles were seen in Portishead on July 6th. There were no reports from Sidcot School this year.

Bristol In the Avon Gorge four fledged juveniles were seen on June 24th and three on 29th, also a family of five was seen on Durdham Down on July 8th, and three were at Stoke Park on 25th.

MERLIN *Falco columbasius*

[Red 2]

Uncommon and erratic by year passage migrant and winter visitor; most recorded on the coast; scarce inland.

Counts for the Avon area were slightly lower than last year with 96 bird-days, and they were under the ten-year average; see table below.

	98/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Avon area	80	143	84	84	111	143	113	107	93	100	96
Severnside	50	93	65	47	45	60	43	39	38	33	38

Bird-days per year. Ten-year averages – 107 and 50

There were 38 bird-days in the first half-year, compared to 76 last year (*cf.* 61 in 2013, 30 in 2014 and 55 in 2015). This total was made up by five in January, ten in February, 15 in March and six in April. The last two records came from New Passage on May 5th and CI-Y on 8th (the latest spring record is May 27th in 1993). Notably these low numbers followed a poor second half in 2016.

However, the second half of the year was better with 59 bird-days. This compares with 46 in 2012, 52 in 2013, 77 in 2014, 38 in 2015 and 24 in 2016. There were no August records and only two in September, at Yate on the 20th and at New Passage on the 26th. October had 21 bird-days, November 23 and December 13. The details are as follows:

Coastal records

Over half of the 67 coastal records came from Severnside, mainly between Aust Warth and New Passage (Northwick Warth), with 38 bird-days during the year (*cf.* 43 in 2013, 39 in 2014, 38 in 2015 and 33 in 2016), 14 in the first half-year and 24 in the second half (*cf.* 12 and 31 in 2013, seven and 32 in 2014, 22 and 16 in 2015, and 29 and four in 2016). There were fewer reports from CI-Y in 2017 with only seven bird-days (*cf.* 23 in 2013, 22 in 2014, 13 in 2015, 20 in 2016), three of which were in the first half-year and four in the second (*cf.* 12 and 11 in 2013, nine and 13 in 2014, eight and five in 2015, 13 and seven in 2016).

Other coastal sites with records were: OPS (nine), Littleton Warth (three), Walton Bay (one on Nov. 25th), Sand Point (one on April 8th and 15th), Uphill/Weston STW (seven). Notably Severnside had three on Nov. 1st and Weston STW had two on Oct. 23rd.

Merlin -- Inland records

The main site was Marshfield with 11 bird-days (five in the first-half of the year, last on Feb.11th, and six in the second, first on Nov.18th), followed by three singletons at both CVL (Feb. 5th and Oct. 6th and 11th) and Congresbury Moor (Nov.13th and 28th, and Dec. 12th). Other inland sites all with one were as follows. In the first half year noted at Wick on Feb. 22nd, then at Backwell on March 13th, Iron Acton on 20th, Bristol International Airport on 21st, BL on 23rd, with the last at Winford on April 15th, and in the second half year the first was at Yate on Sept. 20th, then at Saltford on Oct. 25th, Dundry on Nov.10th, BG on 19th with three sightings in the Congresbury Moor/Kenn Moor/Yatton area in December on 3rd, 12th and 13th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

[RBBP]

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

Arrival and departure were average. Numbers are dropping and again it was a poor year for breeding. Records refer to single birds unless stated otherwise.

Arrival The first reports were from CI-Y on April 17th, Severn Beach on 20th, OPS on 21st, Sand Point on 23rd, BL on 24th, CVL on 25th, Backwell on 27th and Tockington on 29th. The earliest arrival dates in the preceding five years were all in April as follows: 15th in 2011, 25th in 2012, 17th in 2013, 4th in 2014, 11th in 2015 and 6th in 2016.

Breeding

Pairs successfully raised and fledged two young in both BA and NS. In addition juveniles were seen being fed at three further sites and were presumed to have come from nearby nests (one in SG, and two in both BA and NS).

	1998-07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
SG	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	1
NS	3.6	3	6	3	6	4	6	7	3	2	2
BA	5.4	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	2
Total	11	10	13	6	10	7	11	11	6	4	5

Breeding status (pairs) both confirmed and suspected

The Reservoirs Frequently reported at CVL with one or two often seen, occasionally three and the maximum count was four on May 18th. Notably three were present daily from Aug. 28th to Sept.1st. The last record of the year was on 30th, probably the second calendar year individual that had been present since at least Aug. 28th. Reported at BL between April 24th and Oct.1st with a count of three on the last day. Two juveniles were reported in a sighting of three on Aug. 21st.

Other sightings Away from the breeding sites and reservoirs, reports were received from a further 49 (55, figures in brackets give the data for 2016) widely scattered localities, 18 (12) in SG, 13 (ten) in BA, 18 (31) in NS, and none in Bristol. The table below gives a monthly summary of these regions for 2017.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
SG	3 (5)	4 (7)	4 (2)	1 (3)	6 (5)	5 (3)	3 (1)
(Bristol)				(1)	(1)		
BA	1 (1)	2 (3)	5 (2)	5 (3)	6 (6)	4 (2)	1 (2)
NS	4 (6)	6 (8)	2 (3)	2 (6)	8 (3)	4 (10)	2 (4)
Total	8 (12)	12 (18)	11 (7)	8 (13)	20 (15)	13 (15)	6 (7)

Number of localities per month where individuals were observed, 2016 data in brackets

Departure There were four reports in October, between 1st and 8th, with one in Bath on the 11th and a final one on the 15th at CI-Y. The three latest dates for the Avon area since 1990 are Oct. 23rd (Weston-s-Mare, 2016), Oct. 29th (Backwell, 1998), and Nov.11th (Dundry, 2005).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrines*

[RBBP]

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and breeder.

It was an average year for breeding records.

There were 14 occupied sites, nine of which were successful fledging 19 young. The averages for the past decade are: number of occupied sites 13, number of successful nests eight, and number of fledged young 19, so the 2017 data was average on all counts; see table below.

	1998-07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. of sites occupied	10	11	13	13	12	12	16	16	16	10	14
No. of successful nests	6.9	7	6	9	8	8	10	8	8	9	9
No. of birds fledged	15.5	20	11	26	25	17	28	19	20	23	19+

Breeding success

The details for 2017 are as follows:.

Avon Gorge – a pair went through all the rituals, stayed in the Gorge throughout the summer but nothing came of this activity. This was the first failure at this site since 1993, see table below;

1997-06 Av.	2007	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
2.3	3	5	1	5	5	3	4	1	3	3	0

Breeding success in the Avon Gorge with number of fledged juveniles given

Finzel's Reach, Bristol – a pair, which fledged three in 2013, and two in 2015 and 2016, again fledged two;

St. John's Church, Bath – this site was used for twelfth consecutive year; four chicks were raised matching 2006 and 2010 as the best years here since breeding began in 2006, see table below.

2006	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
4	2	2	1	4	3	2	2	1	3	3	4

Breeding success at St John's Church in Bath with number of fledged juveniles given

*Undisclosed sites***SG**

A pair at a regular site fledged two young, while at another site a displaying pair was present and mating was seen but there was no evidence of nesting. (*cf.* two sites in 2012, no breeding noted; four sites in 2013 with one young fledging; three sites in 2014, no fledglings; and two sites in 2015, no breeding noted);

BA

A pair at a regular site raised four chicks that were ringed on May 21st and at least three fledged. A pair was present at a second site but their progress was not monitored. (*cf.* one site in 2012 with one young fledged, two in 2013 with four fledged, two in 2014 with four fledged, two in 2015, no young fledged, and one in 2016, with two fledged) ;

NS

Pairs were seen to breed successfully at two sites and a total of six young fledged. At least five young were seen at two further sites but the views of the nest areas were obscured and so it is not known how many of the young fledged. Pairs were present at another two sites but did not nest.

BR

A pair raised two chicks in an old Raven's nest, a male chick was ringed on June 15th.

Non-breeding records

One or two were frequent throughout the year at OPS and Severnside, with annual bird-day totals of 253 (three on two occasions) and 119 (three on three occasions), respectively. The table overleaf gives monthly bird-day totals for the other well-watched sites, where in many cases they are probably under recorded.

Peregrine cont. Monthly maxima data.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
PWD	4			1	2		5	2	1	2	4	7	28
CI-Y	2	2	2	2	6	3	14	4	6	12	2	2	57
Sand Point and Bay	1		1	3	1	1	2		1	7		1	18
Weston STW area	2	1	2	6	1	6	1	8	6	3	3		39
CVL	3	2	4	8		6	4	6	8	14	12	9	76
BL	8	5	6	1	1			1		2		1	25
Saltford	3	3	1		2	2	2	5	4	4		4	30
Yatton	2	2	2	1	1	1		1	1	1	3	5	20
Marshfield	2	1	2						2	1			8

Monthly bird-days for well watched sites

Records were received from a further 76 widely scattered sites, with a high number in Bristol suggesting quite a bit of duplication with the breeders that presumably range quite widely.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

A scarce visitor, most records now likely to refer to wanderers from the substantial and increasing home counties feral population. Appears poised to become established

An increase from 19 records in 2016 to 50 in 2017. These came from possibly only 18 (or even 12) individuals moving about (*cf.* two in 2012, five in 2013, six in 2015 and nine in 2016). The details in date order are as follows:

Brentry, Knowle Lane – one on Feb. 26th and 27th;

Gordano Valley and Portishead – one from May 16th to 22nd;

Bristol (Dundridge Lane, St. George) – one female July 3rd to 5th, and possibly at Claverham on 6th;

Bristol (Lulworth Crescent, Downend) – two on Aug. 29th;

Yate, Cherington – two on Sept. 18th;

Bristol (Bedminster, Windmill Hill, Henleaze and Fishponds) – up to two Sept. 18th to Oct 14th;

Saltford – one on Sept. 28th;

Aust Village – one on Oct. 18th and 19th;

Saltford – one male on Oct. 27th;

Bristol (Kingswood, Greville Smyth Park and Mangostfield) – up to three Oct. 29th to Dec. 23rd;

Portishead – one from Dec. 5th to 15th;

Keynsham – two on Dec. 16th.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio* (8, 1)

Rare passage migrant, formerly an uncommon summer visitor, the most recent breeding occurred in 1975.

Descriptions required.

One record: a male at Vinney Lane, Horton on May 29th (D Poulton *et al.*, photographed).

The other records this century are of one in June and another in August 2003, two in May 2006, one in May 2008, and one in September 2014.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator* (6, 1)

Rare vagrant.

Descriptions required.

A first-winter was present at Chipping Sodbury Common from Aug. 30th to Sept. 19th where it was photographed; see opposite page 109 (D Poulton *et al.*). It had probably been present earlier as the remains of a small bird had been found impaled on thorns on 27th. This is the second record for this site, the other was in July and August 2011.

Woodchat Shrike cont. The only other recent records are of single birds at Marshfield in July 1989, at Prospect Stile in April 1993, at Thornbury in April 1994, at Uphill (Mediterranean race *L. s. badius*) in June 2005, and at Widcombe Common in April 2013. There is an old record, prior to 1887, of one shot in 'Somerset within a short distance of Bristol'; the exact location is not known but the 2011 and 2013 Reports incorrectly stated it was Marshfield.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

This adaptable species is able to exploit both urban and rural environments, and remains common although there is some evidence of a long term decline. It was recorded from all tetrads in the Avon Atlas 2007-11 and there is no reason to think that the situation has changed.

Breeding A total of 1729 was recorded in the two BBS counts from 209 squares in 2017 representing 92% of the area surveyed. This compares with a distribution rate of 95% of the squares surveyed in 2016. There was a decrease of 4% compared to the BBS results for 2016/17 which is the same result as for the previous year (see table below), while BBS figures for England 2016/17 show no change. In the medium term the species appears to be stable showing a decline of 4% over 10 years. However, in the longer term there does appear to have been a significant decline locally.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-32%	-4%	2%	-9%	5%	-1%	1%	0%	-2%	9%	-4%	-4%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS (Avon Winter Bird Survey) season 1079 were counted in 93 squares representing 91% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1273 were counted in 120 squares representing 94% of the squares surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed a decrease of 8% in 2017/18 over the previous season. However, in the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 the second survey reported 31% more than the first, possibly indicative of a successful breeding season.

There were 29 records of over 20 during the year compared to 40 in 2016, the majority being post-breeding and winter records although 28 were counted on a BBS visit at Lockleaze on May 1st. The highest count was 40 at Horfield on Jan.16th while 36 were recorded around Saltford on Aug. 25th.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding resident.

This species is widespread in small numbers although the population does fluctuate.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 135 in the two counts from 74 squares representing 35% of those surveyed. A significant decline of 26% was noted against 2016. Although this figure must be treated with caution as the sample size is rather small it does tie in with a decrease of 9% noted by the BBS for England over the same period.

Breeding was noted at three sites around CVL.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-35%	-31%	-9%	16%	-5%	-10%	4%	14%	-6%	-6%	0%	-26%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 100 were counted in 47 squares representing 46% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 127 were counted in 61 squares representing 48% of the squares surveyed.

Records were highest in January and April before picking up again in September. Most records were of one or two, and the highest counts were of eight at Aust Cliff on Feb. 22nd, Saltford on Sept. 28th and subsequently here on several dates in October.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula**Abundant breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant.*

This is a versatile species that is equally at home in quarries, chimney pots or old woodland, wherever there are holes for nesting. They were present in 98% of the tetrads surveyed during the summer for the 2007-11 Atlas period and there has been no significant change to their status since then.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 4782 in the two counts from 185 squares representing 89% of those surveyed. BBS results in Avon showed a 1% decline from 2016 to 2017 which is not statistically significant (see table below) and suggests a stable population over the past ten years but with some longer term decline. However, this is at odds with the national picture where the BBS results for England show an increase of 9% between 2016 and 2017 and a long-term increase of 68% between 1995 and 2016. The reasons for this are unclear.

Ten nests were recorded around CVL but seven of these failed.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-8%	5%	-1%	-5%	6%	-2%	-1%	-6%	4%	6%	5%	-1%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 3215 were counted in 89 squares representing 87% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 4308 were counted in 113 squares representing 88% of the squares surveyed. Of the squares surveyed, 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed a decrease of 8% in 2017/18 over the previous season. However, in those 115 squares that were surveyed by both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 the counts overall were 44% higher on the AWBS visits. These figures will include young from the previous breeding season and the flocks noted below will help to make the species more conspicuous and countable.

There was a welcome increase in the number of records of flocks of over 1000 for 2017. In the first winter period at CVL 1000 were noted roosting in trees on the south side of Villice Bay on Jan. 23rd and on March 2nd while 1500 were noted in a pre-roost gathering at Twycross on Jan. 25th. At BL 1000 were noted on Jan.13th and 19th. In the second winter period at CVL 1500 were noted roosting on Denny Island on Nov. 7th and 1000 at pre-roost gatherings in woods on the south side of Villice Bay on 29th and Dec. 18th. Away from CVL and BL the largest count was of 700 at Marshfield on Oct. 30th.

At the coastal locations there was evidence of migration in the autumn with 420 recorded heading SW on Oct. 28th at Northwick Warth noted by the observer as the largest movement he had seen here. On 29th at Weston STW 355 were noted moving south at dusk while the highest count of the year for this site was 370 on Nov.1st.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus**Common breeding resident.*

While it remains common this species has been subject to significant declines over the past 20 years both locally and nationally, and 2017 was another poor year.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 1924 (compared to 2135 in 2016) in the two counts from 89 squares representing 43% of those surveyed. A decline of 32% was noted against 2016 although this does follow two years of substantial increases (see table overleaf). This survey is not ideally suited to measuring a colonial species such as this, and the picture can be further muddied by the appearance of post-breeding flocks during the period of the survey. However, the most recent Avon Rookery Survey in 2015 (see this Report for 2015), which counts nests in rookeries, recorded a decline of 43.5% since 2000 and this would seem, broadly, to confirm the BBS picture of a significant long-term decline. Nationally the BBS figures for England show an increase of 5% for 2016/17 but there is much regional variation and they show a decline of 25% between 1995 and 2016 for SW England.

The BBS data is as follows.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-66%	-36%	-9%	21%	-25%	-20%	-10%	31%	-27%	39%	20%	-32%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 1430 were counted in 37 squares representing 36% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1637 were counted in 50 squares representing 39% of the squares surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and these revealed a decrease of 9% in 2017/18 over the previous season. However, in the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 some 16% more were counted on the AWBS visits. The AWBS figures will include young birds from the previous breeding season and the flocks noted below make the species more conspicuous and countable.

While the number of records of the larger flocks (over 100) was, at 21, very similar to 2016 (23), the flocks were larger with seven in excess of 200. The largest counts were of 500 at Stanton Wick on June 14th and 30th, obviously post-breeding flocks. Other large counts were of 260 at East Wrington on May 31st, 250 at Pensford on the same day and 200 at Marshfield on Jan. 21st.

Observers are encouraged to submit flock counts to improve our knowledge and understanding of this species which appears to be struggling in Avon at the present time. (*Eds.*)

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

This adaptable species is found throughout the Avon area with records from all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and significant numbers are recorded in both urban and rural areas. The local population is stable and shows an increase over the past two decades.

Breeding The species was counted in 208 squares during the 2017 BBS representing 99.5% of the squares surveyed with a total of 4363 (3398 in 2016) noted during the two visits. The National BBS figures for England show a small decrease of 2% between 2016 and 2017 whereas in Avon an increase of 11% was recorded, but in the country as a whole there are considerable regional variations.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
14%	9%	-4%	2%	4%	-4%	-1%	6%	1%	-10%	4%	11%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 2599 were counted in 98 squares representing 96% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 2917 were counted in 128 squares representing all those surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed a decrease of 5% in 2017/18 over the previous season. However, in those 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 at least 8% more were counted on the AWBS visits which will have included young birds from the previous breeding season.

The largest flocks reported, all of 200, were at CI-Y on May 30th, Sand Bay on Nov.19th and Marksbury on Dec.15th. On Nov. 7th two were noted at OPS attacking a Water Rail floating on the water, they took turns to pick it up and try (unsuccessfully) to carry it to shore. One of the Crows then picked up two dead small rodents which it had cached while attacking the rail.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon but widespread breeding resident, and possibly an uncommon passage migrant.

The local population has increased steadily since 1993 when the species returned to breed in the Avon Gorge. See the table overleaf which shows the distribution expansion as reflected by the number of BBS squares in which it has been recorded.

Raven -- Breeding In the BBS in 2017 a total of 87 was counted during the two visits in 41 squares which represent 20% of the area surveyed. This is very similar to the 82 recorded in 41 squares in 2016, see table below. Breeding was noted at eleven locations. However, of the three nests recorded around CVL, two failed.

	1998	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Squares recorded	1	12	23	26	28	21	31	38	33	41	41
% of total surveyed	1.0	7.7	14.4	15.1	16.3	12.7	17.6	21.3	18.5	21.5	19.6

Percentage of Avon BBS squares in which recorded

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 72 were counted in 29 squares representing 28% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 130 were counted in 54 squares representing 42% of those surveyed. It is notable that the distribution rates (percentage of squares surveyed) are significantly higher in the winter season compared with those recorded by BBS.

More than 1500 records were received in 2017 and again it was recorded from every ten-*km* square in the Avon area. Over two-thirds of the records were of just one or two but there were 22 records of ten or more, mostly post-breeding and mostly from the Marshfield area. The largest groups recorded were 30 in Shire Valley on Oct.11th and 27 at the same location on Nov. 22nd

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is a fairly common breeding resident in both woodland and urban areas, especially where there are conifers. Its high-pitched song and call can be difficult for some observers to hear and this may well mean that it is under-recorded. The sedentary breeding population is swelled by migrants although our knowledge of their movements is very incomplete.

Breeding A total of 250 from 71 squares (34% of the area surveyed) was recorded in the two BBS visits compared to 216 from 79 squares (41% of the area surveyed) in 2016. A small decrease, that is not significant, was recorded indicating that the population has remained stable following its recovery from the weather-related decline in 2013 (see table below). This species fluctuates dramatically and is benefiting from the succession of mild winters since 2013. Around CVL during the breeding season one nest was recorded but at least two pairs were seen. Other evidence of breeding in the form of juveniles seen was reported at Saltford on June 13th, at OPS on July 25th and a family party at Chelwood on Aug. 5th.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
44%	-2%	-1%	-47%	13%	21%	38%	-47%	60%	21%	0%	-3%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 130 were counted in 42 squares representing 41% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 189 were counted in 71 squares representing 55% of those surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed an increase of 31% in 2017/18 over the previous season. Also in those 115 squares that were surveyed by both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 at least 10% more were counted on the AWBS visits. The species seems on this evidence to be in a healthy position.

The overall numbers recorded were similar to those noted 2016 with 1463 records and at least 3600 individuals. Records reached their lowest level in July (with just 54 records) before increasing again to reach a maximum of 173 records in December. Most were of one or two, and over 90% were of five or fewer. However, the following larger counts were noted: 30 at Lord's Wood on Aug.10th and 20 at Backwell Hill on Feb. 24th.

At Sand Point 20 were noted on Sept. 25th and also on Oct. 29th, whilst the same number was noted at Severnside on 18th. These latter records presumably reflected migration.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

[RBBP]

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.

A good series of autumn migrants were noted, some remaining to winter.

There were no records of wintering birds early in the year, the first records, from CVL on March 25th, from Wain's Hill, Clevedon on April 1st, and near Alveston on 7th presumably being migrants. One seen in Leigh Woods on 23rd was not reported subsequently, and so must be classified the same way. There were three records in June from three different sites, but all on one day only. Nevertheless, the UK population seems to be increasing, so it is always worth listening for singing males in summer.

Autumn commenced with one trapped at CVL on Sept. 7th, followed by single birds at Sand Point on 17th, 19th and 29th, then Oct.1st and 29th, and finally two on Nov. 4th, presumably at least four different individuals being involved at this latter site. Further apparent migrants in October were seen at Walton-in-Gordano (a juvenile male trapped on 12th), Banwell and Worle (both on 25th).

In November there was a series of records, as in the previous autumn, from Eastville Park, with up to three seen on various dates through to early December. Single birds were also seen at Brandon Hill on one date in November and two in December. Other evidence of wintering at urban or semi-urban sites came from sightings of singletons in the last two months of the year at five more sites in Bristol, two in Bath and two in Weston-s-Mare, as well as from Abbots Leigh and Nailsea. Elsewhere, other individuals seen in November were a second juvenile male trapped at Walton-in-Gordano on 5th and single birds seen at CVL on 10th (see photograph opposite page 125) and 19th.

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
10	19	18	4	5	11	14	15	18	8

Estimates of the number of individuals seen each winter, October to March. Ten-winter average - 12

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

RR

Abundant breeding resident.

This very common species showed a further decline this year. The species has endured a succession of poor breeding seasons and numbers are significantly down on those of a decade or so ago. It was present in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and it remains abundant.

Breeding A total of 2156 was recorded in the two BBS visits over 197 squares representing 94% of those surveyed, and the survey shows a significant decrease of 15% year on year. Nationally the BBS figures for England show a decrease of 5% for the year, and a decline of 22% over the past decade. A succession of mild winters will have helped over-wintering survival rates but this has been offset by some poor breeding seasons.

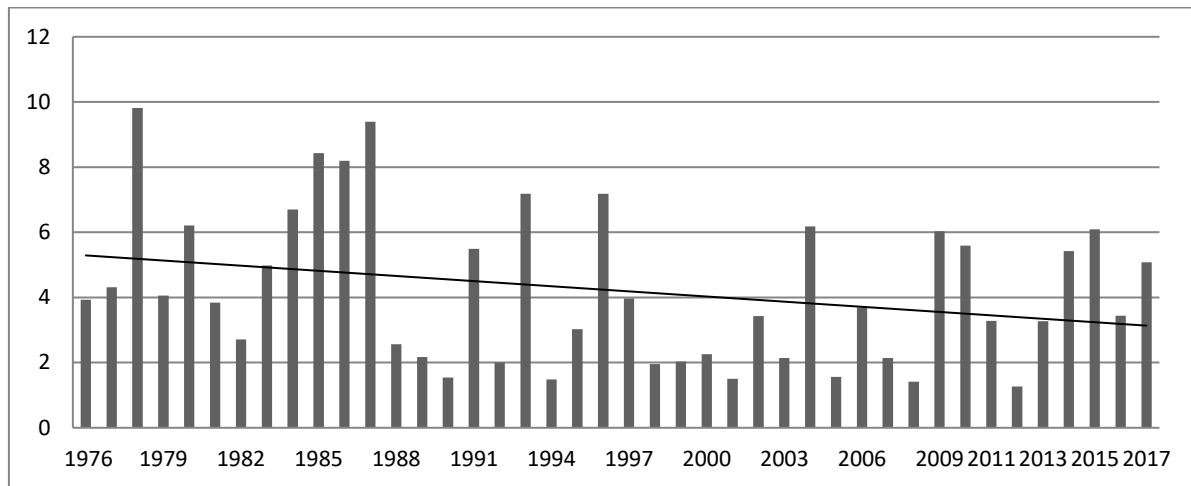
Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	2015/16	2016/17
-35%	-22%	-3%	-8%	21%	-3%	-9%	-3%	0%	-6%	5%	-15%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, of the 61 nests that were monitored 46 were successful.

The chick survival rate at CVL showed a marked improvement over 2016. The chart overleaf provided by CVRS shows productivity around the lake in the period from Aug.1st and Dec. 31st in each year from 1976 to 2017. It was calculated by comparing the juvenile to adult ratio for individuals that were alive between August and December during this period. In 2017 the juvenile to adult ratio was 5.08 to 1 which compares with a figure of 3.44 to 1 for the same period in 2016. Although this is a welcome improvement, it is evident that since 1987 there has been far more poor breeding seasons than good ones, and that even the good years are far behind the most productive years prior to 1987.

Blue Tit cont. CVL data for the past four decades.



Productivity at CVL 1976 to 2017, see paragraph at the bottom of the previous page

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 1402 were counted in 101 squares representing 99% of the area surveyed which is a little higher than the distribution recorded in BBS. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1864 were counted in 125 squares representing 98% of the area surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed an increase of 6% in 2017/18 over the previous season. In the 115 squares that were surveyed by both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 more than 34% were counted on the AWBS visits compared with the BBS visits which may indicate a relatively successful breeding season in 2017.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*
Abundant breeding resident.

This is a very common species, it was recorded in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and remains abundant. However, it has experienced some decline over the past decade.

Breeding A total of 1330 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 189 squares representing 90% of the area surveyed. There was a substantial decrease of 16% over 2016 (see table below) compared to an increase of 1% in the previous year, presumably the result of a poor breeding season in 2016. Nationally the BBS figures for England show a 7% decline for the year 2016 to 2017. This species has endured a succession of poor breeding seasons from which it is slow to recover as it is normally single-brooded. At CVL, 40 of the 56 nests that were monitored were successful.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-26%	-31%	6%	-10%	18%	-13%	0%	-8%	-7%	-2%	1%	-16%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 822 were counted in 96 squares representing 94% of the area surveyed which is slightly higher than the distribution recorded in the BBS. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1103 were counted in 123 squares representing 96% of the area surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and revealed an increase of 17% in 2017/18 over the previous season. In the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 the second survey counted 31% more than the first which may indicate a relatively successful breeding season in 2017.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*
Fairly common breeding resident, probably also a passage migrant.

RR

This species is widely but thinly distributed around our area. Numbers in the first quarter of the year remained above average and in the last quarter there was again a large increase in records. It is believed that these influxes were caused by a failure of the national Sitka spruce crop.

Breeding The BBS recorded a total of 147 in the two visits in 56 squares which represented 27% of those surveyed. This compares to 129 in 49 squares representing 26% of those surveyed in 2016. The numbers counted in the BBS are too small to make confident estimates of population change but judging from the number of squares in which it is recorded the breeding population is stable; see the table below. Seven singing males or pairs were located around CVL during the breeding season, compared to eight pairs in 2016, and three nests were recorded here all of which were successful. Recently fledged juveniles were noted in May and June at Almondsbury, Bath, Cam Valley, OPS, Paulton, Winford and Worlebury.

The table shows the percentage of BBS squares in which it was recorded in the past ten years.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
26%	30%	34%	27%	28%	24%	27%	26%	26%	27%

Percentage of BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Other records A total of 280 records of at least 415 individuals was recorded in the first quarter of the year spread fairly evenly over the three months. This compares to 342 records of 531 individuals in the same period of 2016. There was no evidence of spring passage and numbers were maintained into April but then dropped off markedly in May. They then picked up again from August and the last quarter saw another influx with 355 records with at least 564 individuals noted.

In the 2016/17 AWBS season 108 were counted in 37 squares representing 36% of the area surveyed which is higher than the distribution recorded in BBS. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 154 were counted in 51 squares representing 40% of the area surveyed. In the 115 squares that were surveyed by both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 more than 50% were counted on the AWBS visits reflecting the autumn influx.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*
Uncommon breeding resident.

[Red 3]

Locally this species is showing some evidence of a decline but has been stable recently.

In 2017 this species was noted in 55 one-km squares (compared to 50 in 2016), including five BBS squares. In total there were 147 records in 2017, the same as in 2016, with at least 217 individuals (compared to 195 individuals in 2016). This is a sedentary easily overlooked species, 29 of the 55 squares in which it was recorded in 2017 had not reported it in the previous four years.

Breeding This species has experienced significant declines both locally and nationally in the past 20 years possibly caused by changes in their woodland habitat which are only poorly understood. The National BBS shows a decline of 43% for England in the period 1995 to 2016 but too few are counted in the BBS locally to provide a meaningful measure for the local decline. The highest number of squares in which it has been recorded in the BBS was 12. This figure was last reached in 2002 (7.5% of the squares surveyed that year) with 25 individuals. The table below shows the number of squares in which it has been recorded by the BBS in the past ten years.

Two nests were recorded at CVL, one in a bat box where nine pulli were ringed. Two adults were observed feeding recently fledged young at Dolebury Warren on May 26th and juveniles were noted at Wickwar on June 17th and Backwell on July 7th.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
BBS squares	4	5	9	3	3	6	5	4	5	5
% of area surveyed	2.6	3.1	5.2	1.7	1.8	3.4	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.4

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS eight were counted in four squares representing 4% of the area surveyed which is a little higher than the distribution recorded in BBS. In the 2017/18 AWBS season nine were counted in five squares also representing 4% of the area surveyed. The species was reported visiting gardens in Backwell, Banwell, Bath, Clifton, Compton Martin, Hawkesbury Upton and Yate. At Compton Martin four juveniles were trapped and ringed. The record for Yate was of one in a garden on a new housing development on Jan. 21st.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus* (109, 26)

RR

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor with the majority recorded from the extensive reedbeds at CVL, where breeding took place in 1991.

Descriptions required.

An excellent autumn with parties arriving at two sites. At CVL, a total of 22 was trapped and ringed in late October and early November, with no ringed individuals being retrapped, while a sighting of four at Weston STW was only the second site record. Details as follows:

CVL – the first record was of five seen on Oct. 8th and then one was seen and heard at Herriott's End on 12th. Nine (four males) were seen here on 15th with up to 11 reported on 17th and calling birds reported here on 18th, and 22nd to 24th. On 20th two were reported from Moreton hide and on 26th CVRS trapped and ringed 11 (five males), with a further seven (three males) trapped on 27th and two more on 29th – all new so a total of 20 in all. On 30th a single male was seen at Moreton hide.

On Nov. 2nd at least three (two males) were seen at Moreton and photographs show that at least two of these were ringed. On 5th four were reported at Stratford (see photograph opposite page 140), while on 8th a couple were heard calling here. Two at Stratford on 8th with three noted from here the next day. On 6th five were reported at Picnic Site 2 with ten from Picnic Site 1 on 8th. On 9th a further two new individuals were trapped and ringed. On 15th at least eight were reported from Herriott's while on 24th a ringed pair was seen at Stratford with a ringed male noted here the next day.

On 28th a brief 'pinging' call was heard at Stratford while on 29th a male was seen in the reeds with a second individual briefly in flight. These remained into December with a pair, at least one of which was ringed being seen on 4th, one on 6th and calling heard on 12th. A pair was seen at Moreton in December on 4th, 12th and 14th with calling heard here on 8th. Calling was also heard from the main reeds at Herriott's on 5th. Reports were still being received into early 2018.

Weston STW – there were at least two on Oct. 27th with at least one the next day, and four (two males and two females) on 30th. There were three on Nov.1st, at least two on 2nd and at least one on 5th (all M S Ponsford).

The majority of local records come from CVL, with 89 of the 109 individuals recorded between 1983 and 2016 at this site.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea* (22, 1)

Very scarce late autumn migrant.

Descriptions required.

One record: one flew past New Passage on Oct. 29th (P D Bowerman *et al.*).

The table below gives the numbers recorded during the past two decades showing that about one per year is the norm although several years can pass with no records at all.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
0	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1

Individuals each year

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

[Red 3]

Common breeding resident in appropriate habitat, also a passage migrant and winter visitor.

A normal year.

First winter During January and February 1184 bird-days were recorded out of a total of 8921 for the whole year -- considerably lower figures than in 2015 (3105 bird-days out of 8301) or 2016 (1961 bird-days out of 7351). The highest counts were 150 at Marshfield on Jan.1st and 74 at Cl-Y on 3rd. Most other records were of small groups of fewer than 30 from a variety of coastal and inland locations. Song was first noted on 28th at Marshfield. In the 2016/17 AWBS season 160 were counted in 22 squares representing 22% of the area surveyed.



Skylark -- Spring Little change in overall numbers was recorded during this period with a total of 564 bird-days in March, 675 in April and 600 in May. The highest counts were 30 at Saltford on March 11th and also at CI-Y on 31st. However, there was no specific evidence of migration.

Breeding Season In 2017 a total of 739 was counted during the two BBS visits in 81 squares representing 39% of the squares surveyed and showed a modest increase of 5% over 2016 (see table below). The National BBS figures for England in 2017 show a decrease of 3% from 2016. At Weston STW 16 territories were noted compared with ten in 2016.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-48%	-30%	-13%	-10%	2%	-12%	1%	-22%	29%	-8%	1%	5%

BBS percentage changes

Numbers decreased in June to 467 bird-days - a less sharp drop than in the past two years. Counts were again almost all in single figures but 30 were noted at Marshfield on June 10th. Records dropped away further in July with 260 bird-days and 140 in August.

Autumn passage Numbers picked up again in the autumn and reached 2347 bird-days in October. Visible migration was noted from Sept. 26th, peaking in mid-October, and continuing until the end of the month. However, it is not always easy to distinguish between passage migrants and over-winterers. A count of 167 at Saltford on Oct. 8th included 74 flying over to the south. On the same day 48 at New Passage were mostly flying SW while 53 flew east over CVL. Inland counts included 100 at Marshfield on Oct. 6th and 200 here again on 20th.

Second winter period There were 2160 bird-days in November and December, that is over 50% more than the number noted in January and February and also significantly more than the 859 bird-days noted in the same period in 2016. The highest counts were of 300 at Marshfield on Dec. 11th and 200 at Saltford on 16th.

In the 2017/18 AWBS season 190 were counted in 33 squares representing 26% of the area surveyed. Of the squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and comparison of the results revealed no change over the previous season. In the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18 the second of these surveys reported 43% less than the first.

SHORE LARK *Eremophila alpestris* (9, 1)

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant, exceptional inland.

Description species.

One record: one was seen and photographed (see after page 108) at New Passage on Oct. 28th (B Lancaster, *et al.*).

This is the first record since 2010, when there were two (at OPS in January and at BG in April), and it was only recorded in two of the years in each of the previous two decades.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant; local and uncommon breeding summer visitor.

Spring and especially autumn passage numbers were good but almost no local breeding was reported.

Arrival and passage As usual the first reports came from CVL in early March with two on 5th and three on 6th, dates which are only slightly earlier than average. The first on the coast was one on 10th at Sand Point. Numbers built up steadily with the best noted during late March and the first half of April, most had passed through by May 3rd. The highest count was 600, a lowish figure, recorded at BG on April 18th. There was one notable feature of this passage: during March about three-quarters of all of the bird-days came from just one site – BL; the reason for this is unclear. The table below summarises the spring passage, and the table on page 122 shows that counts were about normal, less than in 2016 but more than in 2015.

	March			April			May	
	5 - 11	12 - 21	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	66	1420	2410	2230	1910	720	310	16
Max count	40	300	450	450	600	250	100	5

Spring passage

Breeding Very little evidence of actual breeding was received, this probably suggests a poor breeding season rather than a lack of observer effort. The only definite reports were: central Bath – one nest, Batheaston (near the Fat Friar) – two or three nests, and BG where mating in a nest hole was noted in early May, otherwise up to 14 were seen here during BBS visits (25 were reported here in 2016). There were no reports at all from the Feeder Road site in Bristol or from the R. Avon in Keynsham.

The BBS counted 60 (63 in 2015 and 52 in 2016) from three squares (1.4% of the total), but most of these reports would have been of passing migrants rather than local breeders.

The table below shows how the recorded breeding number has varied over the past two decades, the average over this period is about 12 per year.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
23	15	14	14	14	9	15	14	4	7	5	7	7	20	18	15	12+	11	7+	-5

Estimate of the total number of breeding pairs 1998-2017

Autumn Passage This passage was a notable improvement of that for 2016; see table on page 122. Numbers began to build up in mid July, the first sizeable count being 80 at CVL on 13th. There was then a steady passage through to mid September with as usual most being recorded at CVL, the last flock of any size being 170 here on Sept.11th. The table below summarises the main counts. The best on the coastal was 150 at New Passage on Aug. 7th. The last of the year were one at Weston STW on Sept. 20th, and five at CVL on 22nd.

	July		Aug			Sept		
	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 8	9 - 18	19 - 22
Bird-days	790	360	680	845	265	670	290	8
Max count	370	90	200	200	90	450	170	5

Autumn passage

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common passage migrant and common breeder.

Spring passage was normal and the autumn passage was an improvement on that for the past two years. As usual almost no actual breeding evidence was received although the BBS figure was 40% higher than for the previous year. The details are given on the next page.

Arrival and spring passage One was noted at CVL on March 6th, a remarkable 13 days earlier than average. This is the earliest date for at least the last thirty years and two days earlier than the previous record for this period. Another, or perhaps the same, was seen at BL on 7th, 8th and 12th, and the first coastal sighting was at Aust Warth on 15th. Seen daily from 23rd, the best counts during the last week of this month were ten at Aust again on 25th and 12 at OPS on 28th, and several counts including one of at least 100 near the mouth of the R Yeo, CI-Y on 31st.

Passage was continuous throughout April with mainly single figure counts interspersed with some of three figures including 300 at CVL on 9th with 400 on 14th and 500 on 16th, 120 at BG and 145 at Sand Point on 15th, and at least 200 at BL on 25th. This continued through to mid May except for 6th when a large movement was noted along the coast. One observer just north of Clevedon recorded at least 1800 passing NE during a nine hour period. Others had similar counts suggesting that this figure may have been an underestimate of the total moving up the Estuary coast on this day. The last spring count of any size was 100 at CVL on 16th. The table below summarises the main data.

	March	April			May	
	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20
Bird-days	140	535	2195	1240	4820	700
Max count	20	300	500	200	1800	100

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS counted 1434 (1021 in 2015 and 959 in 2016) from 151 squares, 72.2% of those surveyed, this is a notable improvement on the previous years' surveys. The species breeds widely in farm buildings, stables and suitable open sheds in large gardens.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
32%	-46%	-45%	10%	5%	-22%	25%	-24%	-4%	7%	-20%	38%

BBS percentage changes

The only actual breeding evidence received was from Elm Farm (Burnett), Compton Dando, and Walton-in-Gordano village (some House Martins also breed closeby). On May 12th at Warmley one flew into a living room, did a few circuits and then flew out again through the open door!

Autumn passage Post breeding flocks began to built up in early July, the first of any size being 56 at Saltford on 6th and the first in three figures was 150 at CI-Y on 22nd. Numbers continued to increase slowly throughout August but no large counts were noted. Visible migration NE along the Estuary coast in September included 550 at CI-Y on 5th, 1200 on 17th (steady movement past Walton Bay over a four hour period), 350 (grounded by the weather at Northwick) on 21st, 400 at OPS on 22nd and 150 at Sand Point on 25th -- the last three figure count of the year. Small numbers were noted through most of October including 20 on 20th and one, the last for the month, on 24th at CVL. There was one November sighting: a single bird at Locking, Weston-s-Mare on 17th which was nine days later than the average last date for the past 30 years. The table below summarises the autumn data.

	July		August			September			October	
	12 - 21	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 9	10-19
Bird-days	470	985	975	1005	1675	1520	3360	3020	105	23
Max. count	50	150	150	200	260	550	1200	400	24	8

Autumn passage

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum* Common passage migrant and breeder.

[Amber 3]

Both spring and autumn passages were normal with a good spread of records but few high counts. Breeding numbers seem to have stabilised at a level which is much lower than that of a decade ago.

Arrival and passage This passage was extended, lasting for about three months. A few were noted in March, the first being two at Frampton Cotterell on 13th (11 days earlier than average), one on 16th and another on 21st at BL.

House Martin cont. The passage built up slowly during April with the first double figure count on 4th (12 at CVL) and the first in three figures on 16th (120 at BL). May saw some higher counts including 360 at New Passage on 6th (visible migration over a period of five hours) and 350 at CVL on 27th. But the best count during this period was 1100 at CVL on the remarkably late date of June 6th presumably involving birds heading for the far north. The records are summarised below.

	March	April			May			June
	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 9
Bird-days	16	38	270	320	975	895	740	1460
Max count	5	12	120	100	360	300	350	1100

Spring passage

Breeding The BBS counted 579 (355 in 2015 and 564 in 2016) from 61 squares, being a 31.6% distribution, so the improvement noted last year held up in 2017. The table below shows large declines since 1994, but the slightly higher counts in 2016 and 2017 have reduced the deficit a little.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-59%	-60%	-42%	-17%	-5%	14%	13%	-38%	4%	-15%	35%	-8%

BBS percentage changes

Actual nest sites were as usual not well recorded. Nesting was reported at the following 19 sites (in alphabetical order with numbers indicating nest counts where given and at least two): Barrow Gurney village, Bickfield Farm (near CVL, five, four young seen), Bath area (12 on two houses at Broadway and three at Burnham Road), Bishop Sutton, Bristol harbourside, Chew Magna (several), Clevedon (western edge of town), Elm Farm (Burnett), Frampton Cotterell (20 on two adjacent houses), Littleton brick pits (several, young seen), Newton St. Loe (eight), (Oldbury-on-Severn village (three, young seen), Portishead, Sea Mills (one, main building here was not used this year), Severn Beach village, Twerton, Walton-in-Gordano (at least five), Winford Manor (three) and Winscombe (five).

Autumn passage In July the first counts of 50 or more were at CVL on 19th and Ashton Court on 21st signalling the start of this passage. As with the spring passage it built up fairly slowly with no large counts during August. The second week of September saw the best numbers, mostly at CVL with the maximum of 1500 on 11th. The last substantial sighting was of 500 at BL on 22nd. In October 26 were at CVL on 2nd and 20 near Compton Martin on 4th, the last were single birds at CI-Y on 15th and CVL on 27th two days earlier than average. The table below summarises the main autumn data.

	July	August			September			October
	22 - 31	1 - 11	12 - 21	22 - 31	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	1 - 15
Bird-days	755	730	780	960	1485	3770	785	49
Max. count	100	150	100	150	350	1500	500	26

Autumn passage

A note on hirundine passage

These passages include a large number of mixed flocks. Estimating the proportions of the three species in the flocks is often difficult. In 2017 the totals reported in mixed flocks amounted to between a quarter and a third of those noted overall. Observers are asked, where possible, to give at least some idea of the proportions present in these mixed flocks. (*Eds.*)

The table below gives estimates of the totals reported on both spring and autumn passage for the past four years, but as noted above mixed flocks whose constituent species were not counted are not included. Most of the data for 2017 was within the normal variation although the autumn Sand Martin figure was high suggesting a better than average breeding season.

	Spr 2014	Spr 15	Spr 16	Spr 2017	Aut 2014	Aut 15	Aut 16	Aut 2017
S.Martin	8550	4300	12700	8080	1820	2470	790	3900
Swallow	7630	6760	8800	9630	17600	10900	10300	13120
H.Martin	2540	3700	3860	3740	15150	12400	6200	9265

Spring and autumn counted hirundine passage, 2014 to 2017

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

RR

Uncommon resident. First definitely bred in 1995.

A continuing increase in numbers and distribution.

As can be seen from the table below, the recovery continues at CVL – the 2017 count was the second highest since 2000. Birds were noted throughout the year, this increase being matched by the many reports from elsewhere. Sites recording sightings in almost every month included OPS (three), Littleton Brick Pits (two), Severnside (six), PWD (eight), and CI-Y (five), the figures in brackets being the maxima recorded, all similar to or above the equivalent totals in the previous year. At Weston STW the population was estimated at five singing males, although as many as nine were reported in November.

2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
10	12	14	18	15	17	22	21	21	28	31	14	6	3	4	14	22	28

Singing males at CVL. 18-year average - 17

Other sites where singing males were noted in the spring included Backwell Lake, Congresbury Moor (at least six here), the Gordano Valley, the Strawberry Line near Yatton, Weston airfield and Wick Warth.

From September onwards, there were isolated records from BL, Chipping Sodbury, Saltford, and even the Sand Point carpark, presumably birds on post-breeding dispersal. At least some of these sites contained potential breeding habitat, so are worth checking in future.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus**Common breeding resident.*

A popular species, well reported throughout the year, often in double figure groups. One of the best counts was of 19 seen at Saltford on Oct. 31st during a BOC walk. On the coast, for example at OPS, the highest numbers were between August and November, when there must be a bit of dispersal before winter set in, but in general there was no real pattern of movement.

During the BBS survey a total of 452 was counted over two visits. Not surprisingly, the strong increase of the previous year could not be maintained, but the table below indicates that the local population is more or less stable. The species was found in 115 squares representing 55% of those surveyed, similar to the previous year.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-30%	-24%	-9%	-2%	10%	-33%	1%	-25%	9%	0%	45%	-4%

BBS percentage changes

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus* (51 since first in 1986, 1)*Scarce autumn visitor; rare in winter.*

Descriptions required.

A poor year by recent standards (the average for the past decade is 3.5 per year) with just one record, from the copse at Chestle Pill, New Passage, on Sept. 24th (A D Scott *et al.*).

The table below shows the numbers recorded in each of the last 20 years (average between 2 and 3). The first recorded in our area was five seen singly during the autumn period of 1986 from late September to mid December,

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	5	0	1	3	4	1	5	6	9	1

Records each year

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

[Red 3]

Scarce spring passage migrant. Rare on autumn passage. Last bred in 1996.

Descriptions required for autumn records.

Again, a good spring passage by current standards, all were single birds and all were within a 17-day period; the details are as follows.

The first report was from Marshfield on April 21st, followed by one at CVL on 23rd. Eastville Park, Bristol was the location for the next, on 26th, then one was at Salford on 29th. Once into May, there was quite a flurry on 4th with singletons at OPS, the Whitehall area of Bristol, Salford and CVL. The next day saw one at Northwick Warth, with a presumed new one at OPS on 6th. The last was located on Sand Point on 7th. There were no autumn records, as is usual nowadays.

The table below shows the numbers recorded on spring passage in each of the last ten years where the ten-year average is seven.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
3	7	8	2	7	8	6	5	13	11

Passage totals in spring each year

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

RR

P. c. collybita Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. Also an uncommon winter visitor, and therefore possibly an uncommon resident.

Perhaps fewer wintering, but still a widespread and common species.

At least 41 were noted from 16 sites in January, and 32 from 14 sites in February, slightly down on the same period in the previous year, although these figures are very much a rough estimate of the population. However, at favoured sites such as CVL, Salford, and various sewage treatment works there was not much change between the two months, indicating a reasonable survival rate. From March 11th there was a distinct increase in numbers and distribution, as migrants started to arrive. For instance on 13th there were five at OPS, the first of the year here, and seven at BL where just the odd one had been seen previously. The highest numbers were reported in the last week of the month and the first few days of April, with up to 30 in several places.

The Avon BBS survey found this species in 184 squares, representing 88% of those surveyed, confirming the species widespread distribution in the breeding season, this was also indicated by the large number of other records received on a more casual basis. The total counted over two BBS visits was 1461, the data indicating very little change over the past three years at least, as shown below.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
11%	19%	8%	-6%	6%	15%	-5%	-25%	26%	6%	5%	-4%

BBS percentage changes

At CVL, which is surveyed on a regular basis, the number singing was 65, the same as in 2016.

The first fledglings were noted at the beginning of June, and records continued regularly, often in double figures, through to the end of September, this being the month with the peak numbers as migrants moved through again. From then on smaller numbers were still being reported from at least 22 sites in October, 12 sites in November and just nine in December, these last involving at least 20 individuals, with regular sightings from Littleton, Salford, and CVL.

Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis* (64, 2)

Scarce late autumn migrant and winter visitor, rare in spring.

Descriptions required.

A relatively poor year with just one individual seen in each winter period, both at the same site:

Hour Gout, near Avonmouth – one seen and heard on Jan. 6th (L Roberts) and seen next day (A D Scott);

Another heard here on Dec. 9th, and seen and heard on 18th (A D Scott).

Siberian Chiffchaff cont. The table given below summarises the totals seen over the last decade.

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
1	3	2	1	3	2	8	5	8	6

Numbers seen in each winter during the past decade

This is a subtle subspecies where the plumage tones change with the angle of viewing and the light, so it is important to make careful observations including ideally listening to and recording any calls or song. The identification paper in this Report for 2007 is an essential guide.

IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus ibericus* (0, 1)

Very rare vagrant

Descriptions required.

The first record for our area was of one in song at Kingsgate Park, Yate on March 25th and 26th (M Coller *et al.*, photographed and sonogramed) [BBRC].

This species is increasing in Britain as a vagrant and has even bred. Unlike some other vagrants it has been known to turn up almost anywhere, often away from known vagrant hotspots; see the paper on pages 175 and 176 and the photograph on the following page.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

RR [Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and fairly common breeding summer visitor.

Continues to appear in reasonable numbers on migration, and maintains a stable breeding presence.

The first of the year was one noted at Saltford on March 27th. There were three in the same area the next day, plus single birds at Oldbury-on-Severn, Northwick Warth, PWD, Walton-in-Gordano and Weston STW, with seven singing at CI-Y. The first at CVL were two on 30th, with at least ten at a scattering of other sites on the same day. Thereafter records of migrants became even more widespread, some of the more notable counts being ten at Saltford on 31st, 13 in the Audley Park Road vicinity in Bath on April 1st, ten at CI-Y on 3rd, ten at Sand Point on 8th, eight at Weston STW on 11th and 15 at Sand Point on 20th. Smaller numbers were noted at a variety of other widely spaced sites during this, the main migration period. A good proportion of the May records still appeared to involve migrants, with only about 20 sites with reports in June, although this was much the same as last year. Similarly, the BBS data again indicated presence in about 20% of the squares surveyed with reports from 74 squares on first visits but only 22 on second visits. So as a breeder the species seems to be maintaining a very thin but stable presence at the moment, although very little definite breeding evidence was received. Similarly, at CVL, last year's welcome return was not maintained, all the spring migrants soon moving on, see table on page 129.

In late July, dispersing birds started to appear in new places, such as Littleton Brick Pits where 16 juveniles were trapped on 31st. They were reported widely through August, but apart from 15 at Northwick Warth/New Passage on 8th, numbers were generally in single figures. Late migrants continued to be seen well into September, the last few sightings being from Chipping Sodbury Common on 27th, and from both Newton Park and CI-Y on 28th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

RR

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor. It is now also a fairly common winter visitor, most frequently recorded in gardens.

An earlier spring return than last year, and earlier return to gardens in the autumn.

In January, between one and four were reported from towns and villages, ranging from Bristol and Bath to Almondsbury, Backwell, Frampton Cotterell, Pilning, Portishead, Timsbury and Weston-s-Mare. In February, again the maximum in any one spot was four, from a similar range of places. In January daily totals of up to a dozen on any one day were not uncommon, with up to eight in February. Sub-song was heard from the last week of February onwards.

Blackcap cont.

From mid March records started to come in from a wider range of places, indicating some dispersal at least, but the first at OPS, BL and CVL on 23rd, and five singing at this last site on 24th showed that migrants were on their way. Thereafter song was noted more widely, and on 30th a female at CVL was already collecting nest material. By the first week of April, most urban gardens had been deserted.

During the summer, the species was clearly well distributed in good numbers, as also shown by the BBS survey, where it was found in 177 squares, representing 85% of those surveyed, much the same as last year. A combined total of 1262 was counted over two visits, the data again indicating a slight increase of 4% in numbers as compared with 2016, this is shown in the table below.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
71%	32%	-11%	9%	20%	17%	-1%	-17%	17%	-11%	7%	4%
BBS percentage changes											

At CVL, 65 singing males were located, a drop from the 80 of the previous year, but still a significant population. Other high counts in the breeding season came from BL, with up to 34 singing males in April, and at Stockwood Open Space, with up to 15 in the same month. The first young were reported on May 9th from CVL.

Good numbers were reported through to the end of September, with 29 trapped at Walton-in-Gordano on 6th and 19 still at OPS on 30th being just a couple of the higher counts. From October, single figure totals still regularly came from many places, with odd birds starting to appear in gardens at the end of the month. There were four in Yatton on Nov.17th, and garden records were frequent right through to the end of the year, rather earlier than the position in 2016, although a few continued to be reported in the wider countryside even into December.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

RR

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Arrived at the usual time, but an earlier departure than even last year's.

The first of the year were seen on April 15th, with single birds at CVL and Weston Park, Bath. The 16th saw one at Yate Common and another in Hanham, followed by one at Walton Bay, Clevedon on 18th. There was one at Northwick Warth on 19th, one at CI-Y the same day, and the first at BL on 21st. From then on multiple records were received on a daily basis, mostly just in ones and twos, although there were four at well-watched BL on May 26th. At CVL, 47 singing males were counted, the highest number since 2013. The BBS does not have enough data to show fluctuations reliably, but it was reported from 21 widely scattered sites in May, most of them with suitable breeding habitat.

The first migrant of the autumn appeared on Aug.10th at OPS, followed by one at New Passage on 13th, both presumably dispersing migrants. There were a few more sightings, always of single birds, from both sites almost to the end of the month. The last two at CVL were trapped on 26th, and the last one at Littleton Brick Pits was on Sept. 2nd. The final two records were from Cameley on 4th and OPS on 5th, a much earlier departure date than the long-term average; see page [YYY](#)

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

A typical year, but again a relatively early departure.

The first, at Northwick Warth on April 9th, was followed by two here on 10th, with single birds at Stoke Park, Bristol and at Congresbury the same day. One or two continued to be seen regularly on Severnside during the rest of April. Elsewhere three appeared near Compton Dando on 13th, there was one on Chipping Sodbury Common on 14th, while on 15th widely spaced sightings were seen at Shepperdine, near Nailsea, and at Weston STW, with others at CI-Y on 17th and OPS on 18th.

Through the rest of April and May, small numbers were reported regularly from Chipping Sodbury Common (max. 3), OPS (max. 9), PWD (max. 8), Saltford (max. 5), Severnside (at least 4) and Weston STW (max. 6), among a scattering of other sites with just ones and twos. There is not enough data from the BBS to make a judgement on changes in the local population, but they were reported from 27 squares, up on the 18 last year. However, at CVL only one singing male was noted.

They continued to be reported through to the end of August and into September at their various breeding locations, with no obvious migrants anywhere else. At Chipping Sodbury Common there were still ten on Sept. 2nd, with the last here on 18th when two were seen. Elsewhere, the last few were at Weston STW on 1st (two), at OPS on 7th (one) and at Marshfield on 9th (two), with one at Severn Beach on 19th bringing up the rear.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

A rather protracted arrival, although otherwise a typical year.

The first sighting was of one at New Passage on April 4th, with then a gap until 8th, when one appeared at Sand Point, followed by one at Weston STW on 9th, two here the next day, and one not far away at Weston airfield on 11th. Inland there were two at Blaise Castle on 12th and two at Chipping Sodbury Common on 14th while single birds were seen at Shepperdine, OPS and Sand Point on 15th. Thereafter sightings became steadily more widespread, with the first at CVL on 18th, and then a fall of 20 at Sand Point on 19th, when others were seen at OPS, Severnside, Chipping Sodbury Common, Yatton, Eastville Park, Stoke Park and Stockwood Open Space, indicating a real influx. Because several of the coastal watchpoints are also breeding sites, it is hard to distinguish true migrants, but 15 at the Axe Estuary on April 24th, 14 at OPS and ten at CI-Y on 25th, 14 at PWD and the same number in the Saltford area on 29th, followed by 30 at Sand Point on 30th probably include at least some moving through.

BBS surveyors counted a total of 402 over their two visits, the data indicating another welcome increase of 13% in numbers compared with 2016, as shown in the table below. The species was found in 96 squares, this representing 46% of those surveyed, much as in the previous year.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
35%	-1%	-16%	21%	10%	34%	-38%	-5%	28%	-27%	6%	13%

BBS percentage changes

During the breeding season counts of singing males at regularly surveyed sites included ten at CVL, back up to the number estimated for 2015. The 23 territories noted at Weston STW were down on last year's 35, but numbers here have often fluctuated quite widely. For the moment, it seems to remain reasonably common as a breeding species, although nowhere very numerous.

As in the spring it is hard to distinguish migrants from breeding birds, but it was reported almost daily through to late September, the last few records coming from Chipping Sodbury Common, with three on 22nd, single birds at Siston and Paulton on 24th, one at Saltford on 28th, with the last at OPS on Oct. 2nd, slightly later than average.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata* (47, 1)

Formerly rare, now a scarce visitor. Has bred, last in 1997.

Descriptions required.

As in 2016 one was present at Sand Bay in January and February. It was seen and photographed several times between Jan. 18th and Feb. 8th (many observers).

The Avon area records for the past 20 years are summarised below.

1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
2	2	3	0	1	2	1	9	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	3	3	3	1

Total annual records. 20 year average - 4 per year

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant; scarce breeding summer visitor.

A good spring passage, but once again no evidence of breeding was received.

Sand Point was the most favoured spot in the spring with sightings on nine dates between April 6th and 26th, mostly singly but two on 15th, three on 20th and five on 23rd. At Severnside (Northwick Warth or Severn Beach) one was noted on 9th, 19th, 21st and 22nd. Elsewhere, between 15th and 28th, it was noted at Weston STW (15th and 20th), Yatton (two on 16th), Congresbury (17th), OPS (20th, with two on 22nd and 25th), CVL (20th and 23rd), CI-Y (three on 21st, and two on 23rd and 25th), Tockington (23rd), Weston airfield (two on 23rd), Long Ashton (27th), and BL and Portishead (both on 28th).

Spring passage continued into May with single birds at Hanham (1st, 10th and 11th), BL (1st), Farmborough Common and CI-Y (both on 2nd), Siston (3rd) and Felton Common (8th, and 10th). There were no records during the rest of the breeding season, although several of the above sites have suitable breeding habitat for what is an elusive species.

In the autumn, records came only from Walton-in-Gordano (July 1st and Aug. 6th) and Littleton Brick Pits (Sept. 14th and 17th), so clearly under-recorded.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Av.
Spring	29	67	74	105	53	52	44	29	49	54	56
Breeding season	4	6	6	0	1	4	4	2	1	0	3
Autumn	6	7	16	9	4	4	5	6	15	4	8

Avon spring and autumn passage bird-days and breeding season territories

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

RR

Fairly common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

No major changes to report.

The first three arrived at CVL on April 8th, with one or two on Severnside the same day. On 9th, the first were seen at OPS and Weston STW, with PWD and CI-Y added to the list of sites on 10th. All of these places reported presence, presumably breeding, throughout the summer. Other sites where birds were seen between April and June included BL, Ingst, Littleton Brick Pits, Nailsea Moor, Newton St Loe, the Strawberry Line (Yatton/Congresbury), Saltford, Weston airfield (up to 12 here in May) and Weston-in-Gordano.

However, several caught at CVL on April 29th were probably still on migration, and one at Sand Point on May 7th also indicated that some were still moving through. At CVL, only four singing males were located whereas the same area produced 14 in 2016. However, the 30 territories estimated at Weston STW was another increase from the 26 here in the previous year. The first juveniles were seen at CVL on June 26th and at OPS on 29th.

The last one at OPS was on Aug. 29th, with Sept. 4th the last date at Weston STW. The ringers at Littleton Brick Pits were catching birds through to 14th, while at CVL the last one trapped was on 17th. There was then a gap until single birds were seen at this last site on Oct. 1st and 3rd, a fairly typical last departure date.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

RR

Fairly common passage migrant and localised breeding summer visitor.

A fairly typical year.

The first arrivals were relatively early, with one trapped at CVL on April 1st and another, also caught, at Littleton Brick Pits on 2nd. Numbers at CVL steadily increased over the next few days, elsewhere

the next records came from Portishead on 6th, OPS, Severn Beach, CI-Y and Congresbury on 10th, and Weston STW on 11th. The first at BL was on 16th, by which time they were clearly back at most of their usual haunts, with 17 reported from PWD on 22nd. A count of 20 singing males at BL on May 26th gives an idea of the number at this well-watched site, and 23 territories were estimated at Weston STW, although this is a notoriously difficult species to census. At CVL, the ringing station found 190 nests, from which 350 young were ringed, although these can only represent a fraction of the population at the lake.

The first fledgling was seen at CVL on June 3rd, although *pulli* had started to be ringed in the nest here and at Littleton Brick Pits since mid-May. Regular sightings continued to mid-September, with the last trapped at Littleton on 16th and in the Gordano Valley on 17th. One was seen at Northwick Warth on 27th, and three were caught at CVL on 30th. The only October record also came from CVL, where one was trapped on the late date of 27th, three weeks later than the average last date.

Warblers at CVL

The table below shows the varying fortunes of the common warblers (except Reed Warbler) at CVL over the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Chiffchaff	38	45	57	73	83	48	67	60	65	65
Willow Warbler	9	3	0	6	1	2	1	0	2	0
Blackcap	45	49	47	70	76	66	69	73	80	65
Garden Warbler	29	37	40	58	46	51	44	38	35	47
Whitethroat	6	8	10	12	12	8	11	10	9	10
L. Whitethroat	1	4	2	6	2	3	3	4	2	1
Sedge Warbler	41	20	41	31	16	14	8	12	14	4

Counts of singing males by K E Vinicombe within the CVL perimeter using a standardised method

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce irruptive winter visitor. Erratic locally with a big influx in winter 2004/05 and a smaller one in winter 2010/11.

Descriptions required.

This species was recorded from three sites (Clevedon, Redland and Worle) at the end of 2016 although none lingered. Early 2017 saw an influx and by the end of this period a total of 658 bird-days had been recorded making the 2016/17 winter period the one with third highest bird-day count on record, see table below. None were seen in the second winter period.

81/82	88/89	95/96	98/99	00/01	02/03	04/05	05/06	08/09	09/10	10/11	16/17
6	1	c.75	3	c.107	c.42	10875	1	c.70	22	2897	658
3	1	5	1	6	2	377	1	14	20	112	17

Winters in which this species was seen in Avon.

Top line - total bird-days for the winter in question, second line - maximum flock

Below we summarise all of the 2017 records by site in chronological order of first sighting. Bradley Stoke produced the most sightings. A photograph of one of these appears opposite page 140.

Bradley Stoke – a mobile flock was first found on Jan. 4th in Hawkins Crescent, it consisted of six birds (V Savery *et al.*, photographed). By the 7th the flock had increased to 13, with 14 the next day but only two on 10th and 13th. There was then a gap until 29th when there were 15 in the Tesco car park and these were regularly seen and photographed during February until 28th, when numbers increased to 16, with 17 on March 2nd. There were again only 15 the next day and these remained until 10th. A flock of 15 seen in Stoke Gifford on Feb.18th was assumed to be the same, as was the flock of a dozen in Emerson's Green on March 11th;

Waxwing cont. -- Further sightings in date order

Marshfield – one was photographed at Withymead Playing Fields on Jan. 6th (D Whittle);

Bishopston – seven noted on Jan. 9th with one on 15th (R J Higgins);

Fishponds, Forest Road and Eaton Close – seven on Jan. 14th with 12 on the next day including two colour-ringed, although we have been unable to obtain any details;

Saltford – a small flock was in Stratton Road on Jan. 22nd (*per* J W Duckworth);

Longwell Green – five on Jan. 22nd (B Macdonald);

Weston-s-Mare – seven at the Tesco on Jan. 24th (P Marsh);

Staple Hill – six on Signal Road on Feb. 4th;

Worle – seven were at Morrison's on Feb. 11th with two photographed at Plumley Park on 11th and 12th (A Hockey) with presumably the same on Moor Lane on 13th;

Bath – three at London Road roundabout on Feb. 14th (S Trippier, photographed) and two on Monksdale Road on Feb. 20th and 21st (W Tucker, photographed);

Thornbury – four were at Buckover Hill on March 4th.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

RR

Fairly common breeding resident.

An average year.

Breeding The BBS counted 95 from 37 squares (18% of the total surveyed), this compares with 105 in 51 squares in 2016 (see the table below).

This can be an elusive species at times and the numbers recorded by the BBS are too small to provide a reliable trend. However, the indications are that it is faring well. Since 1998 there have been records from 475 one-*km* squares and in 2017 it was recorded from a total of 151. The fact that in 2017 the species was recorded for the first time since 1998 in 24 of these squares suggests that it remains under-recorded. As it is a sedentary species it is likely that breeding will have been at least attempted in a majority of these squares. One nest was recorded at CVL and a pair was recorded nest-building at Litton Resrs. on May 18th. A family party was noted at Willsbridge on June 1st and a juvenile was ringed at Cam Valley on 17th.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
BBS Squares	18	18	32	28	30	39	29	33	51	37
% of area surveyed	12	11	19	16	18	22	16	19	27	18
Sq. with records	42	65	83	81	68	86	93	142	157	151
New sq. since 1998	6	22	31	23	32	38	36	34	29	24

Number of BBS squares and total of one-*km* squares in which this species was reported each year

A total of 1272 bird-days was recorded during the year, this compares to 1176 bird-days in 2016.

In the 2016/17 AWBS season 98 were counted in 30 squares representing 29% of the area surveyed while in the 2017/18 AWBS season 82 were counted in 22 squares representing 17% of the area surveyed and thus more in line with BBS results.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common breeding resident.

A total of 28 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 17 squares representing 8% of the area surveyed. This compares to 39 from 21 squares in 2016 and is in line with the results from recent years. This is another elusive species that is easily missed on recording visits and numbers are too small to produce a trend.

Treecreeper details

The species was noted in a record 119 one-*km* squares (including the BBS squares). This maintains the advance noted in previous years (see the table below) but as with Nuthatch above it is likely that this is, at least in part, due to an increase in observer effort. As in previous years the species was recorded for the first time since 1998 in many of the squares from which records were received. The fact that in 2017 there were 36 of these squares suggests that it is still a very under-recorded species. It is notable that nine of the squares were in the City of Bristol, including suburban Redland, while in the Breeding Season Atlas of the Birds of Bristol 2000-2008 it was only recorded in four squares although it was estimated that there must have been at least ten pairs in the City.

The table below summarises the records of this species over the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
BBS Squares	14	12	16	13	19	25	15	17	21	17
% of area surveyed	9	7	9	8	11	14	8	10	11	8
Sq. with records	36	44	57	69	71	72	65	97	118	119
New sq. since 1998	10	14	13	22	22	36	25	29	40	36

Number of BBS squares and total of one *km* squares in which this species was reported each year

Three singing males were recorded around the perimeter CVL and two nests were located, one of which was successful. A nest site was reported in Nowhere Wood, just outside Nailsea on April 8th. One juvenile was ringed at Littleton Brick Pits on June 15th but no other positive breeding records were received.

Other records One ringed by CVRS at CVL as a juvenile in 2014 and not recorded since January 2016 was recaptured here on Dec. 2nd. Another noted at Sand Point on Nov. 4th was an unusual record for this site.

In the 2016/17 AWBS season 28 were counted in 15 squares representing 15% of the area surveyed while in the 2017/18 AWBS season 30 were counted in 24 squares representing 19% of the area surveyed.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

RR

Abundant breeding resident.

This very common species was recorded in all tetrads in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and remains abundant in a wide variety of habitats.

Breeding In the BBS a total of 3820 was recorded in 204 squares representing 98% of the area surveyed and a decrease of 12% was recorded compared to 2016 (see table below). This species has benefited from a succession of relatively mild winters and this marks the first downturn since 2013. Song was first noted on Jan.13th (Jan.1st in 2016).

There were 29 territories at Weston STW. The highest counts were of 45 on a walk around BL on May 26th while 58 were counted in the vicinity of Backwell Lake and Nailsea on April 21st. The highest BBS count was 33 noted both in Leigh Woods on May 25th and at Hay Wood on 28th. At CVL 15 nests were recorded, but of these four certainly failed and only seven were confirmed as successful.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
0%	9%	3%	-3%	-2%	-7%	13%	-11%	18%	7%	8%	-12%

BBS percentage changes

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 478 were counted in 89 squares representing 87% of the area surveyed while in the 2017/18 AWBS season 520 were counted in 110 squares representing 86% of the area surveyed. There was a 5% decline between the two seasons.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

[Red 3]

Still abundant breeding resident, declining rapidly; also passage migrant and winter visitor.

While impressive flocks can still be seen in winter there has been a considerable reduction in the wintering population while the breeding population has suffered a massive decline – for England one of 61% for the period 1995 to 2016.

First winter period No records of really large flocks (over 1000) were received. There were 18 reports of flocks of over 100, the largest of which were: 500 at New Passage on Feb. 4th, at CI-Y on 13th, and at CVL (Parkland) on 20th, and 350 south of Felton on Jan. 11th and at CI-Y again on Feb. 17th. In contrast in the same period in 2016 there were ten records of flocks over 1000, including one of 6000. At Weston STW the maximum count in January or February was 210 (February) compared with 1600 (February) in 2015 and 520 (January) in 2016. A winter survey of the North Somerset Levels by the RSPB Weston-s-Mare Group recorded a total of 3860 over the winter of 2016/17 compared to 4775 in the previous winter. This is well below their best count of 10805 in 2014/15.

In the 2016/17 AWBS season 3979 were counted in 71 squares representing 70% of the survey area.

March There was no specific evidence of migration other than that the best count at Weston STW increased to 284. The only other relatively large counts were 200 on March 9th at OPS, and 100 at Kenn Moor on 3rd and Compton Dando on 26th.

Breeding season The BBS counted 2143 from 123 squares which represents 59% of the squares surveyed compared with a proportion of 54% in 2016. A significant 9% increase over 2016 is indicated and this is a welcome improvement after several poor years. However, before 2005 the species was recorded in at least 80% of BBS squares each year and since 1994 the survey has recorded a massive 87% fall in numbers in the Avon area, the most substantial part of which has occurred during the past ten years.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-87%	-56%	-21%	-9%	1%	2%	-16%	-14%	7%	-22%	-9%	9%

BBS percentage changes

Very few records of confirmed breeding were received - the first being a nest with young located at Locking on May 2nd. The first record of fledged young was on 19th at New Passage where a flock of 32 including six juveniles was recorded, and on the same date at OPS where a flock of 12 included two juveniles. There were then numerous records of small post-breeding flocks, mostly in suburban and coastal areas, including 60 at Lower Knowle on May 27th. 80 at Aust Warth on 30th.

Post-breeding From June onwards numbers gradually increased with larger flocks including 500 at New Passage on Aug. 25th while inland counts of 200 were recorded at Marshfield on 2nd, Yatton on Sept. 4th and Marksbury on 9th.

October Numbers were again rather lower than in 2016. Visible migration was noted from 14th when 666 were counted at Sand Point and 730 noted here the following day heading SW. Migration was specifically noted up to the 28th when 550 were recorded at New Passage. At Weston STW 1105 on the 20th was the highest count of the year. Other large coastal counts included 650 at New Passage on the 25th and 250 at CI-Y on the 29th. Inland 1000 were recorded in the Marshfield area on the 23rd and 30th, and 600 were recorded going into a roost at Emerson's Green on the 31st. In the regularly counted Salford area 289 were recorded on the 28th.

Second winter period There was some reduction in numbers recorded in coastal areas in November with 500 at Aust on 2nd and also at PWD on 9th being the highest count. However, in the following month 2000 were counted going to roost in reeds at OPS on Dec.12th and this had increased to 3000 by the 19th. At CI-Y 1500 were counted on 23rd. Inland there was a big increase in numbers with 2500 at Yatton on Nov. 2nd and 3000 around Marshfield on 21st and on Dec.15th. Other counts in four figures were 1600 at Nailsea Moor on Dec. 27th and 1000 at Tickenham on 31st.

In the 2017/18 AWBS season 4486 were counted in 79 squares representing 62% of the area surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and in these squares there was a decrease of 10% over the previous season. The winter survey of the North Somerset Levels by the RSPB Weston-s-Mare Group recorded a total of 750 over the winter of 2017/18 compared to 3860 in the previous winter -- their worst result since the survey started in 2007.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

[Amber 3]

Uncommon breeding resident, present locally on all suitable streams and rivers.

A reasonably good year although counts dropped a little from 2016. The number of sites dropped to 35 but this was still the second highest number recorded (see table below). As in 2016 little evidence of breeding was received.

Breeding The BBS recorded three from three squares which is a reversion to normal after the exceptional nine in four squares of 2016. Nest building was noted at Oldbury Court (R. Frome) on March 6th. A further nest was reported on the R. Chew at Publow on May 26th and 31st. Juveniles were noted at Pensford (R. Chew) on 31st. In addition they were present in the breeding season on the R. Boyd in Golden Valley; the Brislington Brook at Nightingale Valley, St Anne's; the Cam Brook at Paulton; the R. Chew at Chew Magna and Compton Dando; the Corston Brook at Newton Park; the R. Frome at Eastville Park, Snuff Mills and Whiteshill; the Little Avon River near Tortworth; the Siston Brook at Willsbridge; the R. Somer at Midsomer Norton; the Wellow Brook at Norton Radstock, and the Winford Brook at Lower Littleton.

Other records In the final four months of the year records of single birds were received from some additional sites: Clevedon (Blind Yeo West) on Sept. 2nd, the Blaise Castle Estate (R. Trym) on Nov. 23rd, and Keynsham (R. Chew) on Dec.13th.

In the AWBS 2016/17 season two were recorded in two squares while in the 2017/18 season three were recorded in three squares.

The table below summarises tall of the records for the past decade.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Bird-days	84	173	201	205	125	135	139	180	211	189
Sites	8	9	18	23	25	26	26	27	41	35

Total bird-days and number of reported sites

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

[Red 3]

Scarce passage migrant, very scarce in autumn, mostly on or near the coast.

Spring and autumn passage numbers were low.

Spring passage There were five sightings in April involving an estimated four individuals: the first (a male) was at Tortworth on 10th (two weeks later than the first average arrival date), then two on the 12th at Litton and Marshfield, and two further sightings at Sand Point on the 18th and 19th (a male).

Autumn passage Three individuals were recorded on two days in October: one at Cock Road, Kingswood (Bristol) on the 28th and two from the Orchard at OPS on the 31st, a week later than the average last departure date.

The table below shows the data in historical context. The latest ten-year averages for spring and autumn passage are 15 and 3, respectively.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	7	2	4	9	20	12	64	10	12	10	5
Autumn	3	2	4	2	0	0	5	1	13	4	3

Spring and autumn passage, total bird-days

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula**Abundant resident, passage status uncertain.*

A normal year for this abundant species.

First winter period Most records in January and February were of less than 20 but 63 were recorded at OPS on Jan. 8th, the highest count here during 2017. Other counts over 30 were 36 at New Passage on Jan. 8th, 31 east of Peasedown St John on Feb. 11th and 30 at Portishead on 25th.

In the 2016/17 AWBS season 1844 were counted in 101 squares representing 99% of the survey area.

Breeding season In the BBS a total of 5315 was counted in 209 squares, which were all of the squares surveyed in 2017. An increase of 2% was recorded which is statistically insignificant and appears to indicate that the population is stable. While the BBS records over the past ten years show a decrease of 2% the results since 1994 show an overall increase of 15% as shown below.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
15%	-2%	4%	-5%	-2%	0%	7%	-8%	7%	-5%	-1%	2%

BBS percentage changes

An exceptionally early breeding attempt was recorded in Bath where a female was recorded sitting on a nest in a sheltered courtyard on Jan. 12th. The nest was still occupied with four eggs on 26th but had been abandoned by 29th and the clutch had disappeared, presumably predated, by Feb. 3rd. Song was noted on Jan. 21st at Hanham but not subsequently until March 8th at Brandon Hill. Nest-building was recorded on Feb. 26th at Keynsham but the first fledgling was not seen until April 21st in Redland. At Weston STW a total of 31 territories was counted compared to 27 in 2016. At CVL 21 nests were recorded by CVRS compared with 25 in 2016. However, 12 of these failed and only six were confirmed as successful. This is still a little better than in 2016 when only three nests were confirmed. In contrast at Wick Green, CVL broods of three, four and four fledged from the same nest.

There was no specific evidence of migration in either the spring or the autumn.

Second winter period As in the first winter period, counts were mostly below 20 but there was an increase in counts of over 30 with nine being recorded in the last two months of the year compared with four in the first two months of the year. The highest counts were of 48 at OPS on Dec. 1st and 60 from a walk around Nailsea and Backwell on 17th.

In the 2017/18 AWBS season 2243 were counted in 128 squares representing the whole of the area surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and in these squares there was an increase of 9% over the previous season. However, in the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18, the second of these surveys reported 31% less than the first. The reason for this discrepancy is not immediately clear.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

[Red 3, 4]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Flocks of 200 or more were seen in both winter periods and although caution is needed when comparing year-on-year bird-day statistics, numbers for the first winter period, at 8533, were down from 2016 when 11871 were recorded. The second winter period's total bird-day count was 10138 (9890 in 2016), so about normal.

First winter period Bird-day numbers were similar for January and February, with lower counts in March, and none in April. There were 25 counts of 100 or more, with flocks over 200 seen at CI-Y, CVL, Marshfield, Old Sodbury and OPS. A peak count of over 300 was recorded at CVL (Jan. 6th). Highest daily counts were 472 on Jan. 21st (seven sites) and 399 on Feb. 24th (eight sites). The last two counts of this period were from Saltford: 23 on March 26th, and one on the 30th, more than two weeks earlier than the long-term average last departure date. Data for the whole period is summarised below.

First winter period data.

	Jan 1-15	Jan 16-31	Feb 1-15	Feb 16-28	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31
Bird-days	2191	1466	1646	2307	658	265
Max count	300	250	256	200	126	73

First winter period

Second winter period The first record was of one at CVL on Oct.15th, ten days later than the average first arrival date. Numbers continued to build up slowly with six counts of flocks of 100 or more in October including 350 at OPS on 29th and 375 at Congresbury Moor on the 31st. In November and December there were 15 counts of 100 or more, with four counts of 300 or more from CI-Y, Congresbury Moor, Marshfield and Saltford. Highest daily counts were 1204 on Dec. 23rd (seven sites) and 870 on 30th (five sites). Details are given below.

	Oct 1-15	Oct 16-31	Nov 1-15	Nov 16-30	Dec 1-15	Dec 16-31
Bird-days	1	1836	1402	1724	1924	3251
Max count	1	375	300	132	256	650

Second winter period

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

[Red 3]

Common breeding resident.

A normal year.

First winter period Most records were in single figures but early in January a few higher counts were made at coastal sites with 16 at New Passage on Jan. 2nd, 12 at Weston-s-Mare on 3rd and 10 at OPS on 5th. Inland 22 were counted as part of a regular walk around Saltford, and this had increased to 41 by Feb. 4th. In the 2016/17 AWBS season 287 were counted in 71 squares representing 70% of the area surveyed. Song was reported from Jan.18th at Stockwood Open Space and St George in Bristol, and records of song were received up until mid-July.

Breeding season The BBS counted 1011 from 179 squares, 86% of those surveyed. This compares to 796 from 160 squares in 2016. There was a significant increase of 14% over 2016 (see the table below), while BBS figures for England 2016/17 show a smaller but still significant increase of 4% between the same two years.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
7%	10%	20%	-9%	2%	-14%	11%	-13%	6%	2%	-2%	14%

BBS percentage changes

The first evidence of breeding was of nest-building at Paulton on March 12th and a nest at Abbot's Leigh on April 5th. At CVL a total of 23 nests was recorded, but of these 20 failed and only two were recorded as successful. This compares with 2016 when 20 nests were recorded of which five were successful. This is a similar story to Blackbird and points to another rather poor breeding season for this group of species.

Migration There was no specific evidence of migration during the spring period. In October an increase in numbers at coastal sites was noted with ten at OPS on Oct. 3rd increasing to 20 on 26th. At Severnside 15 were noted on 18th but counts at other sites were in single figures.

Second winter period Most counts were in single figures. However, 24 were recorded at OPS on Dec.1st and 34 at Saltford on 12th, while at Weston STW the maximum count in December was 38 compared with 11 in November. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 272 were counted in 87 squares representing 68% of the area surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and in these squares there was a decrease of 13% compared to the previous season. Song was noted again from Dec.18th.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

RR [Red 3]

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Can occur in large numbers in hard winters.

Numbers were down slightly in the first winter period with a more significant decrease in the second winter period.

First winter period A total of 12311 bird-days was recorded for the whole period, roughly equal to that of 12318 in 2016. There were five counts of 250 or more recorded at OPS, Kenn Moor and on three dates at Saltford. The largest daily totals were 610 on Jan. 23rd (at five sites), 545 on 30th (at eight sites), 537 on Feb.12th (at eight sites) and 587 on the 17th (at five sites). The last was recorded at Saltford on April 25th, four days later than the previous latest date of April 21st set in 2012. The following table summarises the data.

	Jan 1-15	Jan 16-31	Feb 1-15	Feb 16-28	Mar 1-15	Mar 16-31	Apr 1-20
Bird-days	2729	3607	2649	2149	1091	83	1
Max count	216	400	200	300	110	35	1

First winter period

Second winter period The first arrival was on Sept. 29th at Felton Common (in line with the long-term average first arrival date). The total of bird-days for the whole period was 18516, a considerable decrease from the 2016 total of 23585. There were 11 maximum counts of 250 or more with five in October from coastal sites at OPS, Northwick Warth and Sand Point. In December, there were a further six counts over 250 from Congresbury Moor, Easter Compton, Kenn Moor, Marshfield, OPS and Pilning. Total daily counts of 1000 or more were recorded as follows: 1146 on Oct. 29th (at 11 sites), 1019 on Dec.12th (at 13 sites), 1152 on 15th (at ten sites) and 1048 on the 17th (at nine sites). This data is summarised below.

	Sep 16-30	Oct 1-15	Oct 16-31	Nov 1-15	Nov 16-30	Dec 1-15	Dec 16-31
Bird-days	1	667	3689	2462	2763	4488	4446
Max count	1	260	400	200	180	400	800

Second winter period

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

[Red 3]

Uncommon breeding resident, and passage migrant.

This species has been subject to significant declines in the past 20 years both nationally and locally. In England the decline has been calculated as 36% for the period 1995 to 2016. It is, however, still a widespread species with over 1500 bird-days recorded from 191 sites across the Avon area in 2017 with most records being of ones or twos.

First winter period In the 2016/17 AWBS season a total of 89 was counted from 37 squares representing 36% of those surveyed.

Breeding season The BBS counted 112 from 49 squares which was 23% of the total surveyed. The numbers recorded are too low to make confident estimates of change. The table below shows the BBS counts over the past ten years and the numbers of squares in which it was recorded, which may be a better indicator of change for this species. By way of comparison, in 1996 a total of 127 were recorded in the BBS in 43 squares which was 48% of the squares that were surveyed in that year.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. recorded by the BBS	99	72	78	64	73	61	71	90	86	112
BBS Squares	45	41	41	37	43	36	37	41	46	49
% of area surveyed	29	26	24	21	26	20	21	24	24	23

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Song was noted from Jan. 9th up to May 6th. The first nest record was on April 6th on Durdham Downs. Seven pairs were noted in the vicinity of CVL and one was seen carrying food here on April 10th. Recently fledged juveniles were noted at New Passage on 25th.

From the end of June onwards post-breeding flocks were noted although numbers were lower than in 2016. Counts were made of 16 at Saltford on June 26th, 15 at Havyatt Green (Wrighton), 20 at Longwell Green on July 1st, 12 at OPS on 30th, and 20 at Chelwood on Aug. 22nd.

Second winter period In the 2017/18 AWBS season 86 were counted in 37 squares representing 29% of the total surveyed.

Other records Migration was noted in very small numbers from Oct. 25th at CI-Y and New Passage. Song had recommenced by Dec.18th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Spring passage, the breeding season and autumn passage were slightly better than in any of the previous ten years.

Arrival The first to arrival was on May 6th at CI-Y, with further records occurring throughout the month and a total of 30 bird-days recorded. There were two days when total daily counts exceeded two: four on May 12th (at three sites) and five on the 26th (at two sites – one at CVL and four at Lower Woods).

In June and July breeding was confirmed at Marshfield and South Stoke (Bath) with probable breeding at Bath Racecourse, CVL and Winford Manor. There were 33 records totalling 61 bird-days from 18 sites, a slight increase from 2016. The BBS counted seven from three squares (1.4% of the total surveyed).

Departure In August, 68 bird-days were reported from 19 widespread sites including family parties reported from Marshfield and Lower Woods. A notable daily count was a total of 14 on Aug.17th from three sites: Lower Woods, Newton Park and Winford Manor. There were a further 30 bird-days reported in September with daily counts of five on the 18th (at two sites) and six on the 19th (at three sites). The last record was on Oct.1st at CVL, four days later than the long-term average last date.

The table below puts the 2017 data into context showing that the species continues to hold its own.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Bird-days	98	97	100	81	92	114	164	131	141	191
June / July records		18	15	14	10	26	18	27	25	33
June and July sites		14	11	10	9	16	12	13	12	18

Total bird-days, and breeding season records and sites where available

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

RR

Abundant breeding resident.

This common species was recorded in every tetrad in the 2007-11 Avon Atlas and there is no reason to suppose that any change in the distribution has occurred.

Breeding season The BBS recorded a total of 3044 in the two BBS counts from 208 squares representing 99% of those surveyed and a modest increase of 5% was noted over 2016.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
39%	11%	9%	2%	-12%	-6%	11%	-1%	2%	-2%	4%	5%

BBS percentage changes

Robin cont.

Courtship feeding was noted at Nailsea on March 24th. At CVL five nests were recorded, three of which were confirmed as successful while at Weston STW a total of 22 territories was noted. Away from CVL only three nests of this abundant species were reported - at Sandford on May 9th, Filton on 31st, and Henleaze in June. On April 19th the first fledged juvenile was noted at Oldbury-on-Severn.

Other records In the 2016/17 AWBS season 1563 were counted in 100 squares representing 98% of those surveyed. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1715 were counted in 128 squares which was all of the squares surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and in these squares there was a statistically insignificant increase of 1% over the previous season. However, in the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18, the second of these surveys reported 13% less than the first, possibly because it is less easily detected in winter.

There was little evidence of movement along the coast in the autumn with an isolated count of 23 at Northwick Warth on Oct.14th. At OPS the maximum number recorded in the autumn was 18 in October, an increase from five in August. However, the highest counts at OPS were in the first quarter of the year with 25 in January and 27 in March. At Weston STW the highest count of the autumn was 26 in November.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in autumn, and rare summer visitor; bred in 1988.

A very poor year for this species, with only four records: three in spring and one in autumn. The details are as follows.

New Passage – a male on April 18th;

Wain's Hill, Clevedon – one on April 22nd, sex not given;

Marshfield – a female or immature on Aug. 22nd.

Average numbers since 1998 for the data in the table are: 12 in spring and two in autumn.

98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
15	4	20	18	22	1	7	14	22	2	22	1	8	12	7	30	3	9	19	2
1	4	2	6	2	3	1	12	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	3	0	2	3	1

Spring (second row) and autumn (third row) passage numbers recorded per year

Observers are asked, where possible, to give the sex of the individuals reported. (*Eds.*)

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

[Red 3]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare in summer; has bred recently.

The above average total of 119 bird-days recorded (the average for the past decade is 81) includes an estimated number of 22 individuals noted on several dates. No reports of breeding were received.

1998/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
26	45	111	88	63	125	71	34	52	98	119

Annual bird-days

First winter period A total of 82 bird-days was recorded from 13 sites: with records from Portishead, Clevedon (pier area, see photograph opposite page 141), Weston-s-Mare and Uphill accounting for 69 of these. Also noted from OPS, Pilning Wetlands and in Bristol at Kingswood and Temple Meads. In general, records were mainly of individuals, with seven records involving two, and one record of four from Portishead on Jan. 4th. The last was from OPS on April 6th, probably a spring migrant.

Second winter period First reports were on Nov. 6th with individuals at Clevedon and Portishead. Five sites produced a total of 37 bird-days from early November to the end of the year, they were Clevedon, Keynsham, Royal Portbury Dock, Severn Beach, and Yatton, and there were further regular reports from OPS, Portishead, and Weston-s-Mare throughout the period.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

[Amber 1]

Uncommon passage migrant.

Although spring passage numbers were well below the latest ten-year average there was an excellent autumn passage, well above average.

Spring passage The first arrival was seen on March 30th at Chipping Sodbury Common, five days earlier than the average first arrival date. A steady flow throughout April produced a total of 34 bird-days, mainly single individuals, apart from Chipping Sodbury Common (three on 2nd, two on 7th, 10th and 16th) and at Sand Point (two on the 8th). The total spring passage was, therefore, considerably below the total for 2016 of 154, and also well below the latest ten-year average of 71. These sightings are summarised below.

	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30
Bird-days	3	14	14	6
Max count	1	3	2	1

Spring passage

The last records were of single birds at Portbury Wharf NR on May 22nd and Yatton on the 28th.

Autumn passage A total of 225 bird-days was recorded which is well above that of 2016 (105) and the latest ten-year average of 88. The first to return was at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 3rd (same date and site as in 2016), with a steady flow through July and August into early September. Once again, Chipping Sodbury Common provided many of the records with a maximum of ten on Sept.1st and 3rd. The largest daily count was 17 on Aug. 28th from five sites: Chipping Sodbury Common, Lansdown, Marshfield, Saltford and Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands. The last seen was at Horfield (Bristol) on Sept. 30th eleven days earlier than the average last departure date. The records are summarised below.

	Jul		Aug			Sep		
	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30
Bird-days	20	25	22	30	67	48	5	3
Max. count	5	6	6	9	9	10	1	2

Main autumn passage

The final table puts the 2017 records into context over the past two decades. The 2008-17 averages are 71 and 88 so the species appears to be doing well. Some of this year's autumn passage increase may be accounted for by the arrival of a Woodchat Shrike on Aug. 30th at Chipping Sodbury Common with even higher observer coverage than is usual at this site.

	1998/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	31	26	28	24	37	138	136	59	86	154	37
Autumn	26	20	17	29	78	18	71	130	183	105	225

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant.

An average spring passage was followed by an excellent autumn passage, which exceeded the latest ten-year average by 51% in terms of bird-days; see the species above.

	1998/07 Av.	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	46	24	18	37	34	89	58	36	88	84	49
Autumn	111	127	88	92	77	44	114	273	309	230	350

Bird-days recorded on spring and autumn passage each year

Whinchat -- Spring passage The first record was of two at Weston SWT on April 18th (two days earlier than average) and then almost daily to May 14th with the last at CI-Y on the 24th. The highest daily count was on April 26th with six records from six sites. Maximum counts of three were recorded from Sand Bay on April 23rd, and Weston STW on May 6th. The total of bird-days recorded (49) was lower than that of 2016 (84) but in line with the ten-year average of 52, see table below.

	Apr 18-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-24
Bird-days	5	23	15	4	2
Max count	2	3	3	1	2

Spring passage

Autumn passage A total of 350 bird-days was recorded, with the first at Chipping Sodbury Common on July 5th. Reports were received throughout July, mostly from Chipping Sodbury. The main passage was from mid-August with the last record, an individual, from OPS on Oct. 28th, 18 days later than average. Three sites that produced daily totals of more than five and they were::

OPS – Sept. 5th (six);

Horton – Aug. 31st (six);

Chipping Sodbury Common – Aug. 13th, 15th, 26th (12), 27th, 28th and 30th; Sept. 1st (10), 2nd (14), 3rd, 4th, 6th (15), 7th, 10th, 11th, 14th (11), 16th, and 18th. *NB* The arrival of a Woodchat Shrike on Aug. 30th at this site may have resulted in some increased recording.

The following table summarises the records for the main autumn passage period.

	July			August			September			October	
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20
Bird-days	1	25	19	12	16	71	109	64	23	5	4
Max count	1	4	5	4	6	12	15	11	3	1	2

Main autumn passage

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant, and scarce breeder.

Although breeding was suspected at three sites, no proof was received. Counts recorded throughout the year were above 2016 totals, they are shown in the table below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Jan. – Feb.	55	51	22	17	30	22	35	93	94	127
Breeding pairs	15	2	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Nov. – Dec.	69	50	16	19	29	50	72	89	83	100

Summary of data for the last decade: number of successful breeding pairs and counts of individuals in the winter periods

First winter period In January and February, an estimated maximum of 127 individuals (average for the past ten years is 55) generated 418 bird-days from 40 sites, 18 of them coastal. Sites that recorded more than four individuals in any one day were: OPS, Aust Warth, CI-Y, Sand Bay, Weston STW, and Marshfield. There were eight days with bird-day counts of 15 or more: Jan. 3rd (19), 4th (15), and 5th (17); Feb. 4th (16), 16th (15), 17th (43) and 24th (23).

Spring passage March bird-days totalled 180, up slightly on 2016 (151). There were six counts greater than six recorded – 12 on the 1st at Weston STW and 14 on the 7th at OPS were notable. In April, 15 bird-days were noted with the last on the 27th at Felton Common. The passage is summarised in the following table.

	Mar 1-10	Mar 11-20	Mar 21-31	Apr 1-10	April 11-20	Apr 21-30
Bird-days	136	21	23	3	5	7
Max. count	14	2	3	2	2	4

Main spring passage

Stonechat -- *Breeding season* Although no proof was received, the following evidence was submitted. A pair was first noted at Felton Common on March 9th and then with juveniles on June 21st. A pair was noted at Weston STW on the isolated date of Aug. 17th and a juvenile was reported here and nearby at Uphill on 31st — perhaps having wandered from a nearby breeding site, possibly on Brean Down, rather than having bred at the site undetected.

Autumn passage Excluding possible/probable breeders, three bird-days were recorded in July, and ten in August. The total bird-day count for September and October was 386, well below that of 2016 (597) with only one site recording more than seven – Northwick Warth (nine on Oct.1st). The records are summarised in the table below.

	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sept 21-30	Oct 1-10	Oct 11-20	Oct 21-31
Bird-days	15	17	67	92	66	129
Max. count	4	4	7	9	7	7

Main autumn passage

Second winter period A total of 454 bird-days was recorded from 32 sites (415 bird-days from 25 sites in 2016), nine of them coastal, involving an estimated 100 individuals (the average for the past ten years is 50). There were six sites that recorded more than four on any one day: OPS, Portbury Wharf NR, CI-Y, Bleadon Levels (incl. Weston STW), Marshfield and Newton Park. There was a notable series of records from seven sites: OPS (records on 31 days), Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetland (17 days), CI-Y (12 days), Bleadon Levels (incl. Weston STW) (16 days), Marshfield (19 days), Stoke Park (Bristol) (14 days) and CVL (25 days).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly on the coast and at traditional inland sites.

Both nominate O. o. oenanthe and O. o. leucorhoa (Greenland Wheatear) occur and both are probably common migrants, albeit hard to distinguish with certainty in the field.

Another very disappointing spring passage was followed by a below average autumn passage. There was a number of claims of individuals from the Greenland subspecies, but without DNA analysis it is difficult to be sure.

Spring passage The first arrival was at Avonmouth on March 6th, four days earlier than average first arrival date. Records were then received on an almost daily basis with two high bird-day counts on March 22nd (37) and April 11th (38). There were counts of more than 14 from only two sites: Dundry (32 on April 11th) and CI-Y (24 on 25th). The total bird-day count was 487, lower than that for 2016 (599) and well below the average for the last ten years (923). The table below summarises the main spring data.

	March			April			May		
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31
Bird-days	3	26	58	24	167	159	37	10	3
Max count	1	3	13	7	32	24	7	3	2

Main spring passage

The BBS counted eight from five squares, which is 2.4% of the total number of squares surveyed.

Autumn passage The total bird-day count was 596, significantly lower than 2016 (852), but above the latest ten year average (491). The first migrant was at Weston Moor on July 13th. From Aug. 4th onwards, records were on an almost daily basis until Oct. 27th with one at CI-Y, 11 days before the average last departure date of Nov. 7th.

There were ten bird-day counts of over 15 with notable counts on Aug. 23rd (44); Sept 1st (24), 4th (22) and the 9th (26). The highest site counts were from CI-Y (11 on Aug. 8th, 37 on 23rd, and 14 on Sept 5th), Weston STW (12 on Sept. 4th) and Battlefields (Lansdown) (11 on Aug. 28th). The table overleaf summarises the data.

Wheatear cont. Autumn data

	Jul	Aug			Sep			Oct		
	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31
Bird-days	7	47	43	157	144	34	75	39	19	28
Max ct.	2	11	8	37	14	3	8	4	4	5

Main autumn passage

The relationship between the spring and autumn passage counts varies widely. Presumably in part this variation reflects the success, or otherwise, of the breeding season suggesting that 2017 was a below average year. The table below shows how these counts have varied over the past two decades. The spring and autumn averages for the past decade are 923 and 649, respectively.

	1998/07 Av.	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	657	496	418	296	980	2273	1920	728	1037	599	487
Autumn	491	670	495	482	842	617	624	767	546	852	596

Spring and autumn passage bird-days each year

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

[Amber 3]

Abundant breeding resident.

A normal year. This species, which was recorded in every tetrad in the 2007-11 Atlas, remains widespread and common and may be encountered anywhere in Avon. The population is stable albeit subject to fluctuations as a result of adverse weather.

First winter period In the 2016/17 AWBS season 511 were noted in 86 squares representing 84% of the squares surveyed.

Breeding In the BBS 1303 were counted in 193 squares representing 92% of the squares surveyed. There was a further increase of 5% during the 2016/17 season (see the table below).

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
9%	1%	-3%	1%	8%	-3%	1%	-10%	-5%	4%	5%	5%

BBS percentage changes

Song was noted from Jan. 21st. At Weston STW, 11 territories were recorded while at CVL, eight nests were recorded of which five were confirmed as successful. Away from CVL a nest with young was located at Havyatt Green, Wrington, on May 20th. Otherwise the only evidence of breeding was of recently fledged juveniles, the first being noted at Rownham on May 9th.

Second winter period In the 2017/18 AWBS season 591 were counted in 114 squares representing 89% of those surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer in both seasons and in these squares no change from the previous season was noted.

Other records The species is not one that occurs in flocks and larger counts relate to walks around a district, the largest being of 29 around OPS on Jan. 8th, and Nailsea and Backwell on Dec.17th.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

[Red 3]

Abundant breeding resident.

This species suffered significant declines in the last quarter of the 20th century and the BBS figures for England show a decline of 17% in the period 1995 to 2016. However, it has fared well in Avon and remains a very common species being the fifth most abundant species in the Avon BBS although it dropped back to tenth place in AWBS 2016/17.

First winter period Counts of 45 were made at New Passage on Jan. 2nd increasing to 51 on Feb. 5th. Other larger counts were 42 at Portishead on Feb.16th and 45 at Redhill on 17th. In the 2016/17 AWBS season a total of 1571 were counted in 70 squares representing 69% of the area surveyed.

Breeding A total of 4365 was recorded in the two BBS visits in 148 squares representing 71% of the total area surveyed, 20 of these visits produced counts of 40 or more. The year saw a large increase of 18% over 2016 - a welcome change after a succession of negative years although some of those earlier decreases were statistically insignificant (see table below). Nationally the BBS results for England show a statistically significant increase of 8% for 2017 over 2016. It appears to have been a good year for the species. However, very little breeding evidence was recorded locally.

Since 1994	2006/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
32%	22%	1%	-2%	1%	11%	9%	-10%	-2%	-2%	-2%	18%

BBS percentage changes

A number of high counts was received including 160 in a BBS square south of Worle on April 23rd and 185 in Worle on June 24th.

Second winter period In the final three months of the year there were fewer larger counts than in the first winter period with only three above 50 which were: 65 in the Nailsea and Backwell area on Oct. 28th, 50 at Newton Park on Dec.19th and 56 at Redland on 26th. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 1610 were counted in 76 squares representing 59% of the area surveyed. Of the 128 squares surveyed 91 had the same observer as in the previous AWBS season and in these squares there was an increase of 12% over the previous season. However, in the 115 squares that were surveyed in both BBS 2017 and AWBS 2017/18, the second of these surveys reported 23% less than the first.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Now probably extinct as a breeding species.

Descriptions required

An excellent year by recent standards, see table below.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Bird-days	2	5	8	8	2	4	13	9	1	10
Sites	2	2	1	5	1	2	2	3	1	5

Bird-days and sites recorded each year

This is the first year we have asked for descriptions of this species and we received acceptable records as follows in date order:

Hallatrow – one in a garden on Jan.15th (F and S Loughran);

Nailsea Moor – one amongst a small flock of House Sparrows on Feb.18th (J Tottle);

Sand Point – one perched on a bush before flying off east on April 3rd while two arrived from the west an hour later (P A Gregory);

Chipping Sodbury Common – four on Aug. 27th (M Coller);

Dundry – one was heard during a vis-mig watch amongst a passing flock of Chaffinches on Oct. 31st (D Nevitt).

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeding summer visitor.

The spring passage was below average while the autumn passage was the highest in recent times, with peak counts of 50.

Spring passage The first arrival on April 2nd at Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands was five days earlier than average. Dundry had one on the 11th, and from the 14th there were almost daily records until May 21st with a further three records to June 5th.

Only two sites recorded more than three: Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands (notably 18 on May 6th and nine on 9th) and Cl-Y (five on May 2nd). The next table summarises the spring counts.

	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11-20	May 21-31
Bird-days	22	10	69	9	3
Max count	5	1	18	3	1

Main spring passage

Yellow Wagtail -- Breeding No definite evidence was submitted, and the BBS counts were low -- single birds in three squares. On the other hand a few records were received during this period as follows: Littleton Brick Pits (one on May 27th), Horton Common (one on 30th), and Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands (one on June 5th); it is difficult to be sure but these three were almost certainly migrants.

Autumn passage The return passage began at Northwick Warth on July 5th, and then it was almost daily until Oct.1st. The last record was of one on 11th at CI-Y, four days later than average. The autumn peak was from mid August to mid September with notable counts from: Northwick Warth/Pilning Wetlands (23 on Aug. 25th, 28 on 26th, 30 on 27th, 35 on 28th and 29th, 20 on 30th and 45 on Sept.1st) and Chipping Sodbury Common (20 on Sept.1st and 2nd, 40 on 5th, 50, the highest count of the year, on 6th and 9th, and 25 on 10th and 11th). Reports came from five more sites: two inland, Saltford (max. ten on Aug. 27th) and CVL (one), and three on the coast, nine at Weston STW on Aug. 31st and Sept.1st, and two others with one. The following table summarises the autumn counts from all sites, total counts have been over 250 since 2010.

	Jul 1-10	Jul 11-20	Jul 21-31	Aug 1-10	Aug 11-20	Aug 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Bird-days	10	9	18	35	73	291	337	83	19
Max count	2	4	5	7	15	35	50	25	4

Main autumn passage

The final table, which summarises the spring and autumn records for the past two decades, puts the 2017 records into context. The 20-year averages are 134 and 304, respectively.

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	49	131	118	78	62	59	121	67	125	86	164	25	42	165	439	203	198	98	330	114
Autumn	88	273	188	279	72	132	386	160	125	156	102	147	404	258	278	723	534	343	544	877

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage over the past two decades

Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava* (12, 1)

Rare spring passage migrant.

Descriptions required.

As in 2016 the only record was of a male at Pilning Wetlands. Photographed on May 17th (P D Bowerman *et al.*), it was still present on the next day.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

[Red 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 1915 bird-days (including BBS records) was recorded during the year at 187 locations - see table below. This compares with 2147 bird-days and 174 locations in 2016 which indicates a significant reduction in numbers recorded. Most records were of ones and twos with some family groups at the end of the breeding season.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total bird-days	216	176	212	148	110	130	138	95	174	232	137	147
Coast bird-days	27	17	15	12	3	5	4	7	63	49	27	28

Total bird-days, and bird-days recorded at coastal locations

First winter period and spring migration January commenced with an increased level of sightings over the end of 2016 and considerably more than in January 2016 (126 bird-days). Numbers then fell away sharply in the spring to 110 bird-days in May. Counts at coastal locations were also relatively high in January (27 bird-days compared with 28 in January 2016) and then fell quickly reaching a low point of three bird-days in May. There was little evidence of migration - 12 bird-days were recorded along the coast in April falling to only three days in May. The highest count was of 11 around Saltford on March 17th. In the 2016/17 AWBS season 28 were counted in 17 squares representing 17% of the area surveyed.

Breeding In the BBS a total of 36 was counted in 23 squares which compares to 38 in 18 squares in 2016 (see table below). The numbers recorded are too small to provide a reliable trend but do indicate that the species has recovered from the low point experienced in 2010 after a hard winter. An adult was carrying food at Narrowways, near St Werburghs, on March 31st. A nest was noted at Backwell on April 19th which failed, but a second attempt was successful and produced two young.

The first juveniles were seen at Paulton on 30th. Family parties were noted as the season drew to a close including eight at BL on June 30th, 13 at Hinton Blewett on July 4th, 11 at Litton on 7th and eight at CVL also on 7th. As in previous years there was a marked withdrawal from the coastal locations in the breeding season (see the table on the previous page). Evidence of breeding was noted at 18 locations, mostly of recently fledged young.

	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
No. counted	25	23	14	16	16	18	38	32	38	36
Squares	12	13	9	10	11	10	15	14	18	23
% surveyed	7.7%	8%	5.2%	5.8%	6.6%	5.7%	8.4%	7.4%	9.5%	11%

BBS squares in which this species was recorded

Autumn migration and second winter period Numbers recorded increased from September and peaked at 232 bird-days in October, the high point for the year. In contrast to the spring there was also a marked peak in records from coastal locations which increased from only four bird-days in July to 63 in September. Numbers fell back again in November but ended the year with 147 bird-days recorded in December compared to 200 in the same month in 2016. The highest count in the period was ten around Saltford on Dec. 4th. In the 2017/18 AWBS season 31 were counted in 20 squares representing 16% of the area surveyed.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Pied Wagtail *M.a. yarrellii*

Common breeding resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant.

A normal year. Reports from 238 (228 in 2016) one-*km* squares were received from a wide variety of locations - urban, coastal and rural - most in single or low double figures.

First winter period A total of 5672 bird-days was recorded during the first three months of the year compared to 3835 in 2016. Nine counts over a hundred were recorded: 300 at OPS on Feb.17th and March 4th, 200 at the Bath Southgate roost on Jan. 8th with 300 on March 4th, 200 at the Cribbs Causeway roost on 1st with 200 again at New Passage / Northwick Warth on 20th, and 142 at Saltford on Jan. 27th, 110 on Feb. 7th and 120 on 14th. Other sites were Frenchay and Paulton STW with 100, Marshfield with 75, and there were another 17 records over 50.

Spring passage Counts in double figures at Northwick Warth, which saw most of the migration, continued to April 18th when 20 were present. A roost at Herriott's Bridge, CVL, had counts of 50, 70 and 80 until April 23rd. There was no evidence of any migration after April 18th.

Breeding A total of 174 was recorded in the two BBS visits from 79 squares representing 38% of those surveyed in the Avon area. This compares with 148 in 70 squares (37% of those surveyed) in 2016, so shows a 6% increase over 2016 (see table below). Nationally the BTO has recorded a 10% increase in England between 2016 and 2017 while over the same period the Avon area has shown a 25% increase although these numbers are at the low end for producing a reliable trend. Breeding evidence was recorded from OPS, New Passage, Weston STW (3 pairs), Marshfield, Barrow Gurney village, CVL and BL.

The BBS data is as follows

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
27%	5%	4%	-12%	1%	-17%	1%	-27%	26%	24%	10%	6%

BBS percentage changes

Pied Wagtail -- *Autumn passage* Numbers began to increase across the Avon area from July, with the best count, 27, at Litton Resrs. on the 7th. Later in the month CI-Y had 28 on 25th and OPS 23 on 31st. The largest count for the period was 150 at Bristol International Airport on Oct.12th. Two other counts of 100 were at Little Stoke on Oct.13th and CVL on the 18th. The highest number observed migrating was 49 at Aust Cliff on the 15th. After mid-October it was difficult to distinguish passage migrants from those that have arrived to over-winter.

Second winter period There were 2294 bird-days during November and December, down by 650 from last year. The coastal areas were relatively quiet with the best, 57, at New Passage on Dec. 28th. Several roosts were recorded with a maximum of 150+ at Bristol Airport on Nov.11th and 50 at Frenchay UWE on 24th. Although there was a roost in the 100's at Southgate in Bath it was never counted. Other inland large counts included: 174 at Weston STW on Nov.1st, and 70 at Saltford on Dec.8th and 100 on 20th. The main sites were OPS, New Passage, Saltford and CVL.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*
Uncommon passage migrant.

After last year's 654 bird-days this year recorded only 135, the main site was CI-Y with 42.

Spring passage The first March record was a single bird at Marshfield on the 11th, ten days earlier than last year and 12 days earlier than average. This was followed by single birds at PWD on the 17th and 23rd. From the 24th they were seen on most days along the coast at Severnside and CI-Y till April 18th. Some were seen on March 25th when 20 *alba* (Pied or White) were counted during a 'vismig' watch at CI-Y, but seven were seen here on April 17th. The remaining sites recorded single birds at PWD on April 3rd and 14th, CVL on the 5th, 12th, 15th and 18th, two at Lansdown Golf Club on the 11th, three at Kingston Seymour on the 15th, seven at Weston STW on the 14th and 15th, and two at BG on the 16th and 18th. On April 25th records began again through till May 12th, with three at CVL on April 29th. The last record was three at CI-Y on May 17th,

The spring average since 1998 remains the same at 115. Last year the average rose from 84 to 115, and in 2015 from 75 to 84 (**NB.** The **2016** Report showed the 2015 figures)

	Mar 11-31	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-13
Bird-days	31 (6)	32 (41)	36 (483)	9 (102)	8 (22)
Max count	20 (4)	4 (7)	7 (73)	3 (15)	2 (7)

Spring passage with 2015 data in brackets

Autumn passage As usual this passage was lighter than in spring with 12 bird-days in total (11 records received). This total was below the average since 1998 of 17. No reports were received in August. The six reports in September started at CI-Y with two on the 5th and the rest were at CVL with two on the 6th and singletons on 7th, 14th and 21st. The four October sightings occurred at Weston airfield on the 4th, Blagdon on the 5th, CVL on the 12th and at Dundry on the 30th, two days earlier than the latest last year, but three weeks later than average. There were no sightings from Sand Bay, Marshfield or BG, regular sites for this species in the past.

	Sep 5-7	Sep 12-21	Oct 5-12	Oct 30
Bird-days	4	4	3	1
Max count	2	1	1	1

Autumn passage

The last table, given overleaf, puts the 2017 records into context by showing the long-term variation in numbers.

	1998	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	144	81	51	34	46	29	64	81	34	43	64	67	39	59	67	277	95	252	654	123
Autumn	7	2	7	2	4	11	74	24	9	7	15+	6	5	43	32	26	15	31	19	12

Bird-days for spring and autumn passage each year

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

[Red 3]

Uncommon passage migrant and very scarce breeder.

Spring passage numbers rose from last year by two to 65, still below the ten-year average of 72. The autumn numbers were 46, the second highest recorded during the previous ten years and well above the ten-year average of 33. See the summary table at the end of this entry.

Spring passage The first of the year were on April 4th at Aust Warth and New Passage, one day later than in 2016. Between the 7th and 9th Sand Point reported 13 bird-days. The highest count was six on three dates, one from Sand Point and the other two from Severnside in May. Passage continued until the 11th, two weeks earlier than in 2016, when one was at Sand Point.

	Apr 1-10	Apr 11-20	Apr 21-30	May 1-10	May 11	June 11-14
Bird-days	17	19	10	20	1	2
Max count	6	3	4	6	1	1

Spring passage

Breeding Records were confined to single birds on two days, one on June 11th at Dolebury and the other on the 14th at Prior's Wood, Portbury. Again no breeding evidence was reported and it appears to retain the flimsiest of toeholds as a breeder in the Avon area.

Autumn passage The passage was good. The first record was on Aug. 5th and there were regular reports until Sept. 3rd, then a further flurry between 12th and 20th. Saltford had the best count, four on Aug. 24th, and the latest sighting, one to S on Oct.12th, nine days short of the latest record.

	Aug 5-10	Aug 11-16	Aug 21-31	Sept 1-3	Sept 12-20	Oct 12
Bird-days	3	5	25	4	8	1
Max count	1	1	4	2	3	1

Autumn passage

The final table shows how this species has fared during the last decade but it should be noted that the recent good series of counts is at least in part as a result of better coverage at the main sites – Sand Point with 29 and Severnside with 38. Two records came from Bristol, at Henleaze and Stoke Park.

	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
Spring	48	25	33	44	119	118	120	87	63	65
Autumn	23	12	35	30	15	51	40	36	37	46

Total number of passage individuals each year

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

[Amber 3]

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species, mainly on the coast.

A very good year, nearly 20,000 bird-days, with larger numbers in all seasons than in 2016.

January and February During the first winter period a total of 1433 bird-days was recorded, about 200 more than in 2016. The highest count came from CI-Y with 75 on Feb.17th. There were two other counts of 40 or more: Paulton had 55 on Jan. 23rd and Northwick Warth 40 on Feb. 3rd.

Spring Passage Numbers were significantly higher than in 2016, but less than in 2015. They peaked later with nearly 5000 in the last week of March, at least 2000 being seen on migration over Aust on 23rd. April numbers were the lowest in the last three years. The table below summarises the records received in 2017 compared with the two previous years.

	Mar 1-7	Mar 8-15	Mar 16-23	Mar 24-31	Apr 1-7	Apr 8-15	Apr 16-23	Apr 24-30	Total
Bird-days 2017	123	461	514	4896	206	157	194	62	6613
Bird-days 2016	47	1183	1223	554	273	646	259	24	4209
Bird-days 2015	278	312	1065	254	2976	1334	1056	24	7290
Max count 2017	35	90	200	2000	45	30	50	35	2485
Max count 2016	15	700	175	200	80	255	60	4	1489
Max count 2015	100	63	200	40	788	450	210	9	1860

Spring passage

Meadow Pipit cont.

Hundreds seen at Northwick Warth on March 20th were the first evidence of migration, followed by large numbers at Aust Cliff, 1065 passing over on 24th and 2000 on 27th. Numbers during April were very low with 50 at CI-Y on 17th the best count. Inland there were also low counts with 25 at Dundry on 16th being the best.

Breeding season The species is mainly a coastal nester in low numbers. There were records from May to July from sites along the Estuary, with four records of singing from OPS and Northwick Warth, and three of fledglings at the second site. Most records were between one and six, but there were 11 in double figures, mostly on Severnside with 30 at Aust on July 19th the best which would have included family groups. The BBS counted 19 in seven squares.

Autumn passage The autumn passage was stronger than in 2016, particularly between mid-September and late October, except for a quiet first week of October. As in previous years the majority of records came from coastal sites but there were counts of 430 and 290 from Saltford in the last week of September. Other notable inland records came from CVL, with four counts of 50 in October, from Marshfield with 30 on Oct. 21st and from Winford Manor with 20 on Sept. 30th.

The largest overall count was of 445 flying southwest at CI-Y on Oct. 23rd. As with the spring passage the table below summarises the data and gives a comparison with the 2015 and 2016 data.

	Sep 1-7	Sep 8-15	Sep 16-23	Sep 24-30	Oct 1-7	Oct 8-15	Oct 16-23	Oct 24-31	Total
Bird-days 2017	53	255	1140	1660	403	1777	1711	1070	8069
Bird-days 2016	63	197	634	1077	1667	1327	666	427	6058
Bird-days 2015	66	287	381	283	574	1240	518	564	3913
Max count 2017	15	131	200	430	100	315	445	130	1766
Max count 2016	32	25	150	350	210	145	120	120	1152
Max count 2015	12	150	130	35	100	292	80	100	899

Autumn passage

November and December There were 3060 bird-days, an increase of 1223 from the 2016 figure of 1837 (the 2015 figure was 558). 280 at CI-Y and 50 at Newton Park recorded during the first week of November were presumably late migrants, as numbers then dropped until 100 were noted at CI-Y on 21st. A count of 80 at CVL and 65 at Marshfield, both on Dec.12th were the best inland records. The highest coastal count was of 75 at CI-Y on 23rd.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

A. p. petrosus - Uncommon breeding resident on the coast. Fairly common and more widespread as a coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce inland on spring or autumn passage.

Another typical year.

First winter period and spring passage There was a total of 158 bird-days in the period January to March, over 100 less than last year. The maximum count was six (12 in 2016) at four locations, the rest were from one to four. Records came from along the coast at OPS, Littleton Warth, Severnside, Sea Mills, Royal Portbury Dock, Portishead, CI-Y, Sand Point, and Weston-s-Mare.

Breeding season Breeding was recorded at Wain's Hill (CI-Y), Birnbeck Cove (Anchor Head) and Weston-s-Mare. There were regular reports from PWD and Battery Point, Portishead, during the breeding season and the highest number, six, was recorded at PWD on July 8th.

Autumn passage and second winter period The only reports inland were of single birds from CVL on Oct.5th, 17th, 22nd and 31st. The sites recorded in the first winter period were re-occupied with the exception of Sea Mills. The best count, ten, was recorded at Littleton Warth. There were 151 bird-days in November and December, twice the 76 for 2016 but less than the 180's for 2014 and 2015.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

[Amber 5]

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant primarily to CVL and the coast.

A poor year with 146 bird-days, compared to 2016 with nearly double at 278; see the **2016** Report details given below.

First winter period The greatest difference in numbers was in this period, where there were only 40 bird-days compared to 165 in 2016. There were regular occurrences from Jan. 2nd to April 6th. The highest total was six at Severnside on April 1st, with two's on March 31st and April 6th. There were also single birds at PWD on Jan. 22nd, Littleton Warth on March 11th and a very late record at OPS on May 27th which was photographed (P J Hazelwood). The previous latest spring record was for April 17th in 1992. The only inland records were at CVL with two on Jan. 8th, three on the 13th and eight singletons, the last on March 28th.

Second winter period The first records were of two at both CVL and Northwick Warth on Oct. 20th, with regular sightings continuing until the end of the year. Severnside had 17 bird-days with two's on four occasions, PWD one on Nov. 29th and Littleton Warth two on Dec. 9th, but the majority came from CVL with 86 bird-days, the best being six on Dec. 8th, five on Nov. 2nd and Dec. 1st, four on Oct. 20th, Nov. 1st, 27th and 30th. Of 35 records from CVL only ten were of one bird.

The table below summarises the data for the past decade.

	2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
CVL max.	7	6	20	2	1	3	1	1	6	7
Coastal	7	7	5	10	28	14	11	16	11	16
Other inland	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1

Maximum counts at CVL and estimated numbers at coastal and other inland sites each winter

2016 Due to an electronic transfer problem the 2016 entry for this species was incomplete, the correct version is given below. The table above giving a summary of the data for the past decade has been amended and is now correct for both years.

2016 *First winter period* A good period with 165 bird-days, the last sighting was of one at CVL on April 19th. The highest count was six from CVL on Feb. 12th with a further four days with three. However, Severnside had the largest numbers with three or four on 16 dates and five recorded twice in both January and February, and once in March. Another 16 days had three's and four's. Also singletons were recorded from the Littleton Warth, Sand Bay and the Axe Estuary and two at PWD on April 10th.

2016 *Second winter period* The first reports were of three at Axe Estuary on Oct. 25th, one at CVL the next day and two here on Nov. 1st, one at Severnside on 2nd and Littleton Warth on 5th, and by the 7th there were three at both CVL and Severnside. CVL had six on the 10th and seven on the 18th. Sightings continued regularly until the end of the year with a maximum of four at CVL on Nov. 30th, and finally one was seen at BL on Dec. 31st, giving a total of 113 bird-days.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, although numbers vary considerably from year to year.

Another year with very few sightings in spring but a good autumn period.

During the first winter period, a count of five on Feb. 2nd in the Marle Hills, Frampton Cotterell, was first report of the year. The only other record was of one on March 24th flying over Aust Cliff.

The first autumn record was of one at Northwick Warth on Sept. 27th, followed by three at Sand Point on Oct. 14th. Sightings were fairly continuous until Dec. 28th with single birds at CVL and Weston Down. There was a total of 134 bird-days, 46 from Saltford with seven twice, 19 from Marshfield with a high of five, 15 from Severnside with a high of four, 12 at Sand Point with a high of six, and ten from CVL with a high of four. OPS and Portishead both had five bird-days, and BL and Weston Down three. Another six bird-days came from four sites on the coast and inland, nine from seven sites.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

RR

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding numbers are still dropping slowly, and there was a notable autumn passage at one site.

After a quiet January with a maximum of 50 at Kenn Moor on Jan.10th, the largest flock in the first winter period was 100 at Marshfield on Feb. 24th (650 the largest in 2016). Other high counts came from Horton Court, 70 on Feb. 6th, CVL, 50 on 10th and Burnett, 66 on 14th. Elsewhere, there was a scattering of small group and garden sightings, mostly dispersing by the middle of March. The last two counts of 40+ were 44 at Weston-s-Mare on March 21st and 40 at Compton Dando on April 8th.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 179 squares, this representing 86% of those surveyed, not very different from the previous two years. A combined total of 1313 was counted over two visits, the data indicating another drop of 13% in numbers as compared with the previous year as shown in the table below. It is worth noting that the Avon BBS figures have dropped by a half in the last decade and by nearly two-thirds since 1994.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-62%	-50%	-1%	-15%	1%	-10%	4%	-11%	-6%	-6%	-7%	-13%

BBS percentage changes

Single-figure counts from a wide range of sites were the general picture through the summer months although 26 were recorded at BL on May 26th. The next count over 20 was not until Sept. 29th with 40 at Felton. As the migration picked up 790 and 1560 were noted at Sand Point on 14th and 15th, respectively, and at CI-Y 2185 on 19th and 4100 on 23rd. Here on 24th a remarkable movement was noted between 7.00 and 11.00, flocks were all moving SW over Wain's Hill, mainly at a height of between 30 and 50m and in fairly calm sunny conditions. The largest counts, 1500 to 1850 in each quarter-hour period, were noted between 08.45 and 09.45, and the total seen during this morning migration watch was in excess of 12,500 (S Sanins). Although this was the largest Avon count in 2017, very high numbers were also reported passing along the Welsh Estuary coast at this time. Numbers dropped fast with 1250 at CI-Y on 25th, 300 at Sand Point on 26th and 100 by the 27th. The best count from Severnside was 380 at Aust on 18th with 1210 at OPS on 24th.

No large flocks were noted in the second winter period. There were 100 at Marshfield on Oct. 22nd, Nov. 9th, 30th and 110 on Dec. 12th, 110 at Saltford Nov 30th, 115 at Nailsea on Dec. 17th and 150 at Marshfield on Dec. 20th, the highest counts from a widespread scattering of smaller groups.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (91 since 2003, 60+)*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, formerly bred.*

Descriptions required.

There was a remarkable autumn influx, part of a national occurrence, which continued strongly into 2018. Initially at least 60 just passed through, but by the end of the year flocks were remaining. A painting by Andy Davis appears on page 158.

The only record in the first half of the year was on the unusual date of June 9th with one flying to NW over Saltford (J W Duckworth). The autumn influx started in mid-October and there was a total of 33 bird-days in this month, 28 in November and 51 in December, by which time a couple of flocks had settled into sites.

October The first were three flying to SW over Saltford on Oct.14th (J W Duckworth and later at this site) with next day one seen during a migration watch at Aust (D Nevitt *et al.*) and three over Sand Point (P Gregory), and on 16th one flew to S over Saltford. On 18th one flew to SE over Aust while on the 22nd one flew to SW over Saltford. On 24th three flew over OPS (P J Hazelwood and later at this site) and two flew to N over Saltford on 25th. On 26th one flew to S over Saltford, two were grounded by murk at Sand Point (P Gregory) and two flew over OPS, followed by three at Saltford on 27th with three again here on 28th and four on 29th, when there was also one seen at Sand Point (P Gregory). The final October records were one to S over Saltford and one at Kingsgate Park, Yate (M Coller), both on 30th, and one in a Dundry garden on 31st (D Nevitt).

November The first sighting in this month was of two flying over Cribbs Causeway early in the morning of 2nd with four at Lower Woods (B Ofield), one at OPS and one in a Flax Bourton garden (G Jones) on 5th. On 10th one was seen perched in Dundry (D Nevitt) and one flew to N over Balmoral Way, Weston-s-Mare the next day (P Gregory). On 14th two were photographed in Timsbury (A Carlisle) and one was found at CVL (A H Davis) the next day, remaining in the same hedge until at least the 27th. One was seen at OPS on 16th, 17th and 18th, with two at Chipping Sodbury Common on 19th (M Coller). There was then a gap until 28th when there were two at OPS and then one calling at Tortworth Court on 30th.

December During this month there was one at Saltford on 4th, one at OPS on 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th and two at Cloud Wood, Marshfield (J Barnett, M Hayes) on 12th. On 13th three were seen at St Anne's Church, Oldland (R Laughton *et al.*) - these remained into 2018 with numbers peaking at five on 30th – and two were in the Memorial Park in Keynsham (I Stapp). On 15th one was again in Cloud Wood, Marshfield, on 17th two were in the churchyard at Chew Stoke and next day one flew over the nearby Rectory Field. On 26th five were seen at Newton Park (L and W Tucker) and these remained into 2018 when numbers increased.

The table below summarises the records for the past decade going from mid-year to mid-year, it shows a very varied picture. The 2017/18 figure will be computed for the 2018 Report and will of course be the highest since 2008/09. The winters 2005/06 and 2008/09 were the only recent ones when any flocks lingered locally.

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
1	41	0	2	3	12	3	0	3	2
Number of individuals seen (July to June)									

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus* (5, 1)

Rare vagrant.

Descriptions required.

One record: one flew to SW over Northwick Warth calling on Oct.14th (J P Martin *et al.*).

While considering this record the Recorder's Committee also re-examined some previous claims and found the following additional record to be acceptable:

1996 – a female or immature in Victoria Park, Windmill Hill, Bristol on May 20th (M Elliott).

Previous published local records came from Stantonbury Hill (August 1985), Gordano Valley (September 1999), Sand Point (May 2006) and a Keynsham garden (February and March 2015).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

[Amber 3]

Fairly common breeding resident.

A good year.

As usual, this species was widely reported, mostly in pairs or small groups, on an almost daily basis. The best counts in the first half of the year were 20 at Backwell Hill on Feb. 24th, 18 at Claverton Down, Bath on Jan.13th and 17 at Saltford on Feb.19th, with OPS, PWD, Chipping Sodbury Common, Warmley Forest Park and BL all recording ten or above. Counts between seven and nine came from Bath, Bleadon, Churchill, CVL, Filnore Woods, Marshfield, Moorgrove Wood, Sand Point, Stockwood Open Space, and Uphill, mostly in the winter months.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 75 squares, this representing 36% of those surveyed. A combined total of 183 was counted over two visits, the data indicating an increase of 18% in numbers as compared with the previous year, this is shown in the table overleaf where the pattern of fluctuations from year to year is very evident. At CVL six pairs were counted, down from eight in 2016, one nest had five eggs but failed. Three pairs were confirmed at Weston-s-Mare.

Bullfinch cont. BBS data

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-37%	-6%	10%	-15%	17%	-5%	4%	-35%	16%	-23%	27%	18%

BBS percentage changes

During the summer months Warmley Forest Park had counts of 14, 15 and 16. But in September the highest count anywhere was eight at Saltford. The best migration counts were nine at Sand Point on Oct.15th, six at CI-Y on 17th, and five at New Passage on 29th. In the last three months of the year OPS had maxima of 18, 17 and 17, and Saltford had 16 on Dec.1st. Elsewhere, numbers were not significantly different from those in the rest of the year.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

RR

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

Still widespread, but the decline appears to be slowing with some good counts.

Although widely reported throughout the year, numbers in double figures were unusual, only 16 in the first three months. Most high counts were in January, with 34 at Stoke Gifford and 50 at Weston-s-Mare on the 3rd, 26 in Fishponds on the 8th, and 60 in Castle Park, Bristol on the 14th. As in 2016, 25 were at a pre-roost gathering in Bishop Sutton on Feb. 21st. All other counts were below 25, and twelve was the maximum in March and April. The only record of any migration in the spring was of two at OPS on March 25th.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 124 squares, this representing 59% of those surveyed, down from 66% the previous year. A combined total of 550 was counted over two visits, only eight less than in 2016 and, as the table shows, there was hardly any change. Singing was reported from eight sites and juveniles from five.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-59%	-69%	-33%	-2%	-12%	-26%	11%	-5%	-6%	1%	-26%	-1%

BBS percentage population changes

On the coast good double figure counts began at CI-Y with 36 on Oct.10th and counts of 90, 100 and 60 between Oct.19th and 25th, 20 at New Passage and 41 at Sand Point on 15th, 45 at CI-Y on Nov. 6th, but counts at OPS only reached 12. Inland Saltford had 36 on Sept.16th. Double figure counts continued to the end of the year with 14 twice at Newton St Loe, 15 at Warmley, 20 at Oldland and 30 at Portishead on Dec. 14th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

[Red 3]

Common breeding resident, passage migrant, and winter visitor.

A better spring than in 2016 but a poor winter period, although breeding showing some improvement.

In addition to eight counts between 50 and 120 at several places in the first three months, there were counts of 305 at Weston STW on Jan.18th, 250 at Norton Malreward on 21st, 400 at Marshfield on Feb. 6th with 300 on 24th, 250 on March 6th and 200 on 13th.

Spring migration started early with 250 moving through in flocks at Aust on March 6th. Otherwise the only movements noted in April were at OPS, 70's on 4th, 6th, 10th and 30 on 18th, and CI-Y recorded counts of 30 and 45 on 3rd and 10th, respectively.

During May and June, the picture was of smaller numbers, widely distributed, although flocks of up to 40 and 50 were seen. The BBS survey found the species in 72 squares, this representing 34% of those surveyed, the same as in 2016 and the combined total of 451 counted over two visits was up on last year's 398 reflecting the 8% rise indicated in the table on the next page. This could be seen as a 'correction' to the 449 in 2015. As the table shows, numbers have fluctuated quite widely over the years, with an overall downward trend both locally and nationally.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-46%	55%	169%	-54%	22%	7%	22%	-35%	-22%	80%	-20%	8%

Linnet -- BBS percentage changes

In July parties of up to 100 started to form by the 25th, and in August there were larger gatherings of 120 at New Passage on Aug.11th and 12th, 150 at Littleton Warth on 12th and 110 at Saltford on 29th. Visible migration along the coast was not particularly marked, although New Passage with 150 on 10th, 200 on 17th, 140 on 23rd and 200 on Oct. 3rd were good counts during the autumn period.

By Sept. 28th there were 100 at Marshfield with 250 on Oct. 23rd, the highest of several three-figure counts in the winter period (700 max. in 2016). Other high counts in the last three months of the year included 200's at Marshfield on Nov.3rd, 24th and Dec. 9th, 200 at Chipping Sodbury Common on Nov.19th, and 150 at Newton St. Loe during the last fortnight of the year. Apart from a 90 at Saltford on Nov. 29th it was a picture of scattered groups of up to 70, mainly inland.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

RR [Red 3]

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. No other Redpolls reported.

Only present in very small numbers, and just two between May and August.

In the first winter period, there were only six reports, three from BL with a maximum of six on Feb. 6th and single birds from Huntingdon Mill, OPS and Walton-in-Gordano, making only 15 bird-days. March saw singletons at OPS and Yate but a count of 12 at Compton Dando on 26th was the highest of the year. April showed an improvement having 31 bird-days, with four's at New Passage on 7th, Sand Point on 8th and CI-Y on 9th showing some movement. The last in spring was one at New Passage on May 8th. The BBS survey picked up just one bird in 2017.

The autumn period started with one at CVL on Aug. 26th, but the next were not until Sept. 24th with two's at CVL and Sand Point. From then until Nov.19th reports were almost daily, with 187 bird-days, mostly from the coast. The best counts were at Walton-in-Gordano with 11 on Oct.12th and 29th, 11 at CI-Y on 15th and eight on 17th, Sand Point had nine on Oct.14th and ten on 15th, New Passage five on 12th and 28th, and OPS with seven on Nov. 13th. Inland the best count was three at Alveston on Nov. 5th. There were another 22 bird-days in the year, one at Coalpit Heath on Nov. 26th with the rest in December. Littleton Brick Pits had four on 1st and three on 16th, Huntingford three on 7th, CVL two on 9th and three on 18th, and finally two at OPS on 23rd.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular but erratic visitor and passage migrant, whose numbers vary sharply from year to year.

The lowest numbers in the last ten years.

All but one record came from the coast. The only spring records were four at OPS on April 7th and five over Bath on 28th. The other records were all in October as follows: Sand Point with one on 14th and CI-Y with four on 17th, three on 19th and one on the 24th. The table below summarises the data.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
90	47	96	120	146	140	26	59	44	18

Bird-days each year. Ten-year average - 78

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

RR

Common breeding resident, partial migrant, many leaving in winter for France and Iberia.

Breeding numbers have levelled, although spring passage was rather thin.

The pattern in the first four months was, as usual, of parties of up to 15 through to 40 scattered throughout the region, with only 11 counts higher. Kenn Moor had 60 on Jan. 6th and 50 on 10th, Bristol 48 on 6th, Saltford 47 on 10th and 63 on 31st, Marshfield 70 on 13th, Keynsham 56 on 19th, 43 on 22nd, and 60 on Feb. 5th, and Newton St. Loe 50 on 1st. The highest count was 225 on migration at CI-Y on March 31st. Some small movements were also noted at OPS.

Goldfinch cont.

The BBS survey found this species in 192 squares, representing 92% of those surveyed, slightly up on 2016. A combined total of 2162 was counted over two visits, the data indicating a decrease of 1% per square as compared with 2016 shown in the table below. At CVL, 11 pairs were located (eight in 2016). This is still one species that is doing well in our area.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
184%	103%	18%	4%	5%	11%	18%	-8%	16%	8%	7%	-1%

BBS percentage changes

Counts in the summer were rarely far into double figures, so 46 at Severnside on May 6th was an exception. The first large movement was 500 at CVL on Aug. 8th, followed by 225 on the 14th and 325 on the 23rd. Weston STW had 215 on Aug. 15th and 220 on Sept. 4th. The maximum at OPS was 140 on Aug. 22nd and at Saltford 135 on 26th.

Only two other counts reached 100 in September: Brockham End, near Lansdown on 20th and CI-Y on 25th. Counts in October were 99 at Sand Point on 2nd, 125 at CI-Y on 10th, 120 at Uphill on 11th and 145 on Severnside on the 18th, the last sighting over 100 on the coast. Of note inland, Saltford had 99 on Oct. 3rd and 104 on Dec. 20th, Marshfield reported 80 on Oct. 21st and Newton St. Loe 75 on Nov. 5th and 70 on Dec. 30th. Over the year more than 2000 records were submitted.

SERIN *Serinus serinus* (2, 1)

Very rare vagrant

Descriptions required.

One record, the first since 1986 and only the third overall: a single bird at New Passage was seen and heard briefly at 08.25 on April 6th (P D Bowerman). A small unidentified finch with some yellow plumage seen in the same area the previous evening may have been this individual (P Bowdler).

Previous local records of this species, which is common in southern Europe, are from CVL in October 1983 and Abbot's Pool in Abbot's Leigh woods, in April 1986.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers, sometimes common; scarce in summer.

The low numbers in 2016 continued up to midsummer, but improved later.

In the first part of the year January was the best month, with 15 at Pensford on 5th, 20 at Freshford on 9th, 12 in Bath on 15th, 22nd and 31st, 25 at Huntingford Mill on 30th and ten in Chew Magna on Feb. 1st. For the rest of the first half of the year sightings were in single figures except for 20 in Stoke Park, Bristol, on March 22nd, 30 at OPS on April 15th and 20 at BL on June 30th. Coastal sightings were rare and migration numbers only reached four at New Passage. July had three sightings at Saltford and August two, at BL and Walton-in-Gordano, all single birds.

The next record came from BL on Sept. 17th with seven, the numbers remaining low until Oct. 14th with 19 at OPS and 15 at Sand Point, 16 at New Passage on the 15th, 21 at Saltford on the 16th and 102 over Aust Cliff on the 18th. Counts in double figures continued until Oct. 29th and migration until Nov. 8th, after which most sightings were inland in single figures. Paulton produced the best inland sighting with 30 on Nov. 19th, and eight were at Marshfield on 30th. Numbers inland picked up in December with 12 near Long Ashton on 13th, 13 at Nailsea on 17th and ten at Saltford on 24th.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

[Amber 5]

Scarce winter visitor.

The only record this year was of two at OPS on Nov. 5th. Late autumn is the most common period for records of this species in the Avon area.

The table at the top of the next page shows the varying fortunes of this species in the Avon area over the past decade.

Snow Bunting data for the past ten years.

2007/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
1	0	5-6	15	16	12	5	3	1	2

Individuals seen each winter, average 6 per winter

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

[Red 3]

Fairly common breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.

A greater diversification of numbers across sites was noted.

As usual, Marshfield stood out as the best place to find good numbers of this and other finches and buntings during the first part of the year. Counts were lower than last year's maximum of 300, only reaching 100 on three occasions, Jan.1st, March 26th and Nov. 3rd. Marshfield had 75 records with an average of 16. The West side of Bath, including Newton St. Loe, had 51 records, average 11, with most from the winter months and a maximum of 75. At Paulton most of the 29 records were in the summer with an average of seven. Compton Dando, again with most of its 24 records in the summer, had an average of five. Saltford, which had the most records, 138, only had an average of 3.5 with August the busiest month. Other notable counts were 56 and 50 at Burnett in the spring and 30's at Coalpit Heath on Jan.10th, Radstock on 19th and Nibley on Nov. 24th.

During the BBS survey, the species was found in 56 squares, this representing 27% of those surveyed, slightly higher than in 2016. A combined total of 338 (327 in 2016) was counted over two visits, the data indicating a small decrease in numbers per square, as shown in the table below.

Since 1994	2007/17	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17
-22%	15%	13%	-13%	16%	11%	-3%	-21%	7%	3%	16%	-8%

BBS percentage changes

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

RR [Amber 3]

Localised breeding resident, and passage migrant.

Remains thinly scattered apart from a few favoured sites, with reduced numbers.

This year OPS had the best early counts with 40 on Jan. 21st and 20 twice in February, whereas Weston STW had single figures until a maximum of 76 in March, with 23 in April. Few places reported any more than single figure counts on a regular basis. There were 12 at Sand Bay on Jan. 5th, 14 at Aust Warth on 20th and 25 at PWD on March 2nd. The best counts were at sites with damp or rough ground, this included Yatton with seven on March 23rd.

There was no real evidence of spring migration and the summer picture was again of scattered pairs at suitable breeding spots across the area. The BBS locally does not include enough squares to come up with a significant picture of population change, but counts at CVL show a slight decline over the past five years, see table below (with a ten-year average of 40). The count at Weston STW was of 22 singing males, four less than in 2016, and at BL ten males were noted on May 26th.

2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017
31	30	36	43	51	53	44	41	38	36

Singing males at CVL each year

Despite 36 singing males located at CVL the maximum daily count was 12 on Sept. 4th. Counts of 16 were recorded on Kenn Moor on Aug. 29th and ten at Chipping Sodbury Common on Sept. 9th. During the autumn migration 21 were seen at Sand Point on Oct.14th. Generally numbers were down on last year, and most counts in the second winter period were in single figures. Again, Weston STW provided the best counts with 31, 39 and 18 in October, November and December, respectively. The equivalent maxima at OPS were 15, seven and 11 over the same period. The maximum at CI-Y was nine on Nov. 6th and at PWD, 20 on Dec.18th, confirming a bias towards coastal locations as the maximum inland was five, at Marshfield on 12th.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

[Red 2, 3, 4]

Local and uncommon breeding resident, confined to arable areas in the east of the region. Rare elsewhere as a passage migrant/winter visitor.

No major changes to report.

Between January and the end of March, all the records came from the Marshfield/Tormarton area, with 200 reported on Jan.1st and 150 in Rushmead Lane on March 30th. The flocks are generally split into several groups. Between April and the end of June, small numbers were regularly reported, the maximum count being 42, but the precise breeding population remains uncertain. Numbers increased into the winter with 50 on Sept. 28th, 100 on Nov. 3rd and 50 on Dec. 26th.

In the Horton/Hawkesbury Upton area, a maximum of 11 was noted on May 28th, with smaller numbers reported between April and the end of June. There were no records outside the breeding season here this year.

ESCAPED AND RELEASED BIRDS**BLACK SWAN** *Cygnus atratus*

A native of Australia commonly held in collections. Although not yet self-sustaining there is an increasing feral breeding population in southern England.

CVL – one noted on a number of dates between May 9th and Aug. 4th.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Locally an uncommon introduced resident. However, many are also kept in collections or are domesticated.

Portishead Marine Lake – one on Jan. 8th had a little white over the bill base suggesting some domestic ancestry. It was seen again several times through the year; see page 23.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

A high altitude native of central Asia often kept in collections.

A series of records in the spring was noted with a single sighting in November. Previously some records attributed here were not pure Bar-headed Geese and this may also apply here. Observers should take care when identifying this species. The records in chronological order are as follows:

Kenn Moor – two were at Kenn Pier on March 12th with two seen nearby at Claverham Drove on April 3rd;

Backwell Lake – two on March 25th and April 30th were considered to be a pair as display was noted on both occasions. One was present on March 29th. Previously two were noted here in March 2014, spring 2015 and again in spring 2016;

New Passage – one on April 18th;

Nailsea – two on the school playing fields on April 24th;

CVL – two on April 28th before flying west;

PWD – three on May 6th with six on Nov.12th.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

Native to North America, commonly held in collections.

Coalpit Heath – a male on Bitterwell Lake on Nov.15th;

Eastville Park, Bristol – one from Dec.12th to 19th.

CHILOE WIGEON x MALLARD *Anas sibilatrix x Anas platyrhynchos*

CVL – a male, presumably the individual seen at BL in November 2016, was present on Herriott's Pool between Jan. 16th and 23rd. It was then noted on the east shore on Feb. 9th before moving to the Tea Rooms car park on March 10th. On 30th it was joined here by a second male and both were noted into May. On 15th they were joined by a female thought to be the same hybrid combination and she was noted on July 24th, Sept. 30th and Oct. 2nd. The two males remained into 2018.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Native to Central and South America.

Eastville Park, Bristol – one noted on Jan. 29th, Feb. 12th, March 26th, Sept. 9th and Oct. 30th;

Backwell Lake – the individual from 2016 was regularly reported throughout the year.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL *Callipepla californica*

An ornamental North American game bird

Felton – one on Feb. 24th.

LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

A resident of the mountain forests of SW East Asia. Introduced into Britain in the 1900s although the small feral population is now probably extinct.

West Littleton Down – a male on May 7th.

GREAT BUSTARD *Otis tarda*

Currently a few are being released on Salisbury Plain as part of a reintroduction program.

East Harptree – one on Aug. 28th. This is probably the individual that spent most of the summer on the Mendips, a female that was released on Salisbury Plain in 2016.

FALCON Sp

A number of records of unidentified large hybrid falcons were received which all refer to falconry escapees.

OPS – a Lanner-type, with pale top of head and chocolate brown mantle, on Sept. 14th;

CI-Y – a very large pale brown falcon, possibly a Gyr x Lanner cross, was seen near the Yeo Estuary on May 7th and 27th;

Weston Moor, Gordano Valley – a very large and tame sandy brown falcon, possibly a Gyr x Saker cross on Dec. 15th.

WAXBILL Sp *Estrilda sp*

Commonly kept cage bird

OPS – one on June 30th was possibly a Black-crowned Waxbill, *Estrilda nonnula*, a resident of central Africa.



Hawfinch painted by Andy Davis scanned into black and white

TRENDS IN WILDFOWL NUMBERS ON THE SEVERN ESTUARY

R J Higgins

INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of waders on the Severn Estuary was comprehensively reviewed in the 2013 and 2014 editions of this Report [Rose 2013 and 2014]. The wildfowl of the Estuary are of lower conservation interest than the waders but nonetheless significant populations of some species are present. A reasonably complete data set that extends back across several decades allows review of population trends. The presentation of data is similar to that used in earlier papers dealing with wildfowl numbers at CVL [Higgins 2009 and 2010].

METHODS

The species considered here are those wildfowl that occur, or have occurred, regularly along our section of the Severn Estuary and make regular use of estuarine habitats (open water, intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes). This means that some species, for example Tufted Duck, which occurs on pools close to the sea wall but seldom visits the Estuary itself, have not been included whilst others, for example Canada Goose, which may use agricultural habitats but also graze the saltmarsh, have.

Details of early occurrences have been taken from Davis (1947). For subsequent years records published in the Avon Bird Report and in the Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists Society have been used. Many counts for recent decades have been taken from the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) website. WeBS began covering estuarine wildfowl in 1960, with waders being added to the species counted about 15 years later, but counting was sporadic until 1980. For most species the population level pre-1980 is discussed as fully as possible, and precise population figures are given for the period since then. These are generally presented as five year means of annual maxima.

WILDFOWL HABITATS

The dominant influence on the distribution of any group of species is the availability of habitat, which in turn is influenced by geographical, ecological, human activity and historical factors. The extreme tidal flows in the Severn Estuary create several challenges for the plants and invertebrates on which estuarine birds depend. One obvious impact of the tides is very high water turbidity, or cloudiness. Some species of worm and crustacean are able to thrive in these conditions, although their body size is generally smaller than in more sheltered estuaries. However, many molluscs are rare or absent. Sea ducks are therefore scarce with us, whilst fish-feeding species are also uncommon because they cannot locate their prey in the cloudy water.

The most important habitat for estuarine wildfowl is saltmarsh, the grassland that dominates the upper parts of muddy shores as far as the seawall, which marks the upper limit of estuarine habitats. The extreme tidal range limits the development of saltmarsh and the largest in our area, at Northwick Warth, is only 250 *metres* wide. In contrast the saltmarsh along parts of the Dee Estuary in Cheshire is five *km* wide and wildfowl are correspondingly more numerous there.

The Estuary has been subject to dramatic artificial change since prehistoric times. In particular, sea walls have been built to restrict the area of saltmarsh. Adjacent fresh water marshes, which must have been important wildfowl habitats, have been drained from the Roman period until the early 1980s. Conversely, the area of saltmarsh has been increased by the introduction from 1914 of cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*) in order to stabilise the mudflats and facilitate further land claim. This has been partially successful and has improved habitats for most waterfowl, but tidal scour has greatly limited the spread of this grass and there has been some evidence in recent years of die-back.

Table 1 shows some data on the extent of saltmarsh, measured from aerial photographs.

Site	Width of Saltmarsh (metres)					
Year	1940	1946	1991	1999	2009	2012
Chittingen Warth		120				140
Portbury Wharf	170		205	220	220	
Yeo Mouth	80		130	120	90	
Woodspring Bay	0		65	45	45	

Most of our saltmarshes are grazed by either cattle or sheep and this has major implications for wildfowl, benefiting Wigeon by producing short grass suitable for grazing but depriving species such as Teal of both cover and food.

Artificial change became much more drastic from the mid-nineteenth century. The construction of Avonmouth Docks involved the loss of large areas of both freshwater marsh and saltmarsh, and must have had significant deleterious impacts on wildfowl. The development of Royal Portbury Dock to the west of the mouth of the R. Avon from 1977 onwards resulted in the loss of the large area of saltmarsh known as St George's Wharf and its effect on wildfowl is evident in the ornithological record. At OPS the development of the power station led to the impoundment of a tidal reservoir and the creation of silt settling lagoons, which have attracted changing bird populations as they have come into use and been abandoned. Urban development along the Estuary has a long history but it has accelerated greatly since 1990. Large areas of farmland have been lost around Severn Beach and Avonmouth, largely to commercial development, and around Portishead, Clevedon and Weston-s-Mare, largely to residential development.

The coast is important for various forms of recreation, which can have marked effects on wildfowl. Wildfowling pressure was high for 100 years before gradually declining from the mid-twentieth century. The only remaining organised shoot is at the Yeo Estuary. It is likely that disturbance, more than direct mortality, rendered many stretches of coast unsuitable for wildfowl by provoking extreme wariness in the birds. This would have made large areas of otherwise suitable habitat unavailable. It is difficult to identify any other explanation for the increase in numbers of several species in recent decades. At least some shoots, including those that operated at Severnside and the Yeo Estuary released significant numbers of Mallard, and this must have had at least a localised impact on the numbers of this species.

A significant positive development since the 1980s has been the creation of freshwater habitats close to the sea wall. Significant pools have been created (the material removed was used to strengthen the sea defences) at OPS, Yeo Estuary (Blake's Pools), Axe Estuary (Weston STW) and Northwick Warth (Pilning Wetlands), providing substantial additional habitat for several wildfowl species. This process continues, with pools recently constructed around the Yeo Estuary already attracting birds.

Recent years have seen a new trend towards repositioning seawalls inland in order to reduce costs and to accommodate rising sea levels, a process known as 'managed retreat'. There are to date no large scale examples of this in our area but a small area at Uphill attracts a few Teal and an area on the western bank of the Yeo has recently been included in this scheme. The potential for this process to influence wildfowl populations is enormous.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

This species occurs regularly in significant numbers at two sites, CI-Y and Axe Estuary, and sporadically or in small numbers at most other sites. At both main sites it feeds almost entirely on farmland on the landward side of the seawall, but makes occasional use of estuarine habitats, largely to graze on saltmarsh grasses. The table below shows that numbers at CI-Y, the site that has been counted most consistently, rose significantly through the 1980s and have remained stable since.

1980--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000--05	05--09	2010--14
1	4	17	14	19	16	25

Table 2: Mute Swan, average maxima at CI-Y, 1980 to 2014

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 419, the ninth highest of any site in Britain and the highest for an estuary.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

No site has held this species regularly during the period under review. Davis (1947) does not include any mention of the species for the Avon area and published records do not appear until the 1970s: reports in the BNS Proceedings before then refer to Slimbridge (Glos.). The first published records are from 1971, when three were at Chittingen Warth on Jan. 3rd, followed by three further records from Severnside, in March, September and December. Reports continued to be sporadic, and a five year average of total records has been produced for the whole area as follows:

1970--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000--04	05--09	2010--14
5	0	28	9	20	9	22	8	11

Table 3: Bewick's Swan, average number recorded per year, Avon area, 1970 to 2014

Table 3 shows no clear trend in occurrence, there is a correlation with winter temperatures, with virtually no records during the largely mild winters of the late 1970s, but far more in the colder winters of the early 1980s. Notable counts during the latter period include maxima at CI-Y of 15 in January and 14 in December 1981, and at Severnside of up to 19 from mid-January to mid-March 1982. Other long-staying parties included up to ten, also at Severnside, from late December 1992 to mid-January 1993. Although records continue to be almost annual – only two years between 2000 and 2014 failed to produce any – they almost all involve birds flying north-east past OPS and Severnside, presumably relocating to Slimbridge (Glos.).

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 180, the third highest in Britain behind the Ouse and Nene Washes. National figures show a marked decline in western Britain, only partially offset by a smaller increase at some sites in the east.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

This has never been a frequent visitor to the Estuary, Davis (1947) states that it is a “very occasional winter visitor” but quotes very few records, of which only one is coastal: one at Avonmouth in 1900. It remained very rare through most of the twentieth century, and has been recorded since 1970 as follows:

1983: one at CI-Y on Jan. 2nd; one at OPS on Oct. 30th; five at Northwick Warth on Nov.13th;
 1988: five at CI-Y on Dec.18th;
 1995: six at CI-Y on Nov. 5th;
 1997: one at Bleadon Levels from Dec.13th to 22nd;
 2000: one at OPS from Dec. 23rd until “early January” 2001;
 2005: two at Northwick from Jan. 13th to 16th and two at CI-Y on Nov.19th;
 2009: three at Weston-s-Mare on Nov. 22nd and 29th;
 2010: two past OPS and then Severnside on Oct.16th;
 2013: one at Severnside on Nov. 3rd and three past Sand Point on 4th; and
 2015: two at Weston STW on Dec.31st.

It is noteworthy that virtually all these were seen flying past, with only the 1997 birds at Bleadon Levels, the 2000 to 2001 bird at OPS and the two at Severnside in 2005 lingering. The upsurge in records apparent above is reflected in national trends, which reveal an approximately five-fold increase since 1970. The best site in Britain is the Ouse Washes, with an average annual maximum of 6,720. The equivalent figure for the Severn Estuary is five.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Analysis of early records of this species are complicated by the inclusion of Slimbridge (Glos.) in BNS Proceedings recording area. Davis (1947) does not include any records from our area, but 17 were reported from Severn Beach on Jan.15th,1947. There was then a record of 200 at Sand Bay (accompanied by one Greylag Goose *Anser anser* and four Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis*) in January 1963, with 30 at CI-Y the following month. It is noteworthy that both were during extremely cold winters. Subsequently there were four in January 1969 and six in December of that year at CI-Y. Records become more frequent from 1970 onwards, and it has been possible to calculate a five year average of total records for the whole area.

1970--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000--04	05--09	2010-14
20	4	48	33	58	46	2	15	15

Table 4: White-fronted Goose, average number recorded per year, Avon area, 1970 to 2014

There are some similarities with the table for Bewick's Swan, with a comparable trough in the late 1970s and peak in the early 1980s linked to weather patterns. Most records, particularly in recent years, are for one day only, often involving birds flying past. Long staying parties have included:

- 1974: up to 14 in Sand Bay in January and February;
- 1981/82: up to 50 at Severnside in December and January;
- 1983: up to 15 at Severnside in November and December;
- 1992: 11 at Severnside in late December; and
- 2010/11: two at CI-Y in late December and early January.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 180, virtually entirely accounted for by the Slimbridge flock, and the Estuary ranks fourth in the UK for this species. The trend for the Estuary as a whole has been steadily downwards and it is easy to envisage a time when this species no longer occurs here with any regularity.

GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

This species was remarkably slow in utilising estuarine habitats in our area and it was not until the late 1990s that flocks began to be seen regularly. The first to be recorded during WeBS was a one at CI-Y in the freezing conditions of February 1963 and it was an amazing thirty years before the next time this species featured in a WeBS count here, in April 1993. The two sites with the longest history of regular usage have been the Axe Estuary and CI-Y, and although birds regularly feed on nearby farmland and freshwater habitats they also graze the saltmarsh. The first record at the Axe Estuary was not until 1997, but a flock regularly became established here. It built to a peak in 2003 and has since dwindled, with records here now sporadic. It was not regularly recorded at CI-Y until 1998 but is now present here in some numbers and probably uses nearby fishing lakes as well as estuarine habitats. The table below shows the trend at both these sites.

	1995--99	2000-04	05--09	2010--14
CI-Y	3	11	37	70
Axe Estuary	4	47	30	10

Table 5: Greater Canada Goose, average maxima at CI-Y and Axe Estuary 1995 to 2014

The site where this species is most often seen on the saltmarsh is Northwick Warth, where a flock is now regularly present over the winter, although until 2012 they were seen here only sporadically. Annual maxima over the period since 2010 are as follows:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
22	5	3	14	75	197	230	200

Table 6: Greater Canada Goose, annual maxima at Severnside 2010 to 2017

The recent colonisation of coastal sites is an interesting contrast to the species' history at our major inland site, CVL. Here, numbers built gradually from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s before dropping

slightly from 2005. This suggests that there might have been some redistribution from CVL to the coast, for reasons that are not obvious.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 950, the twelfth highest of any wetland site in Britain and the sixth highest for an estuary. As in our area, the trend on the Estuary as a whole is steadily upwards, exceeding the national trend.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

This species has become a familiar sight on many estuaries in southern Britain as the UK wintering population has grown rapidly, but has never established a regular presence on the Severn Estuary. Davis (1947) states that it 'occurs regularly in small numbers, for example 13 at Avonmouth in February 1937'. Review of reports suggests that it became less common through the 1960s and 1970s, with, for example, only two records from 1970 to 1975. Records then became slightly more frequent in the second half of the 1970s, with a flock of 38 at Chittingen Warth in March 1978 being particularly notable. They then became much more regular, with only 1981 and 1987 failing to produce records in the next decade, and Severnside and CI-Y in particular supporting small flocks for periods of several weeks. Since then they have been seen annually, and the table below summarises the records from all coastal sites since 1980.

1980--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000--04	05--09	2010--14
30	20	45	35	62	113	51

Table 7: Brent Goose, average number recorded per year, Avon area, 1980 to 2014

The data in Table 7 are skewed by different reporting styles in bird reports: through for much of the 1990s the Avon Bird Report gave monthly maxima for sites, meaning that multiple occurrences were under-reported. Unfortunately WeBS counts of Brent Goose in our area have been too sporadic to produce any trend. The UK population has changed much more drastically: increasing approximately tenfold between 1970 and 1995, then falling by about 25% to 2005 before recovering almost to its 1995 level. There is little reflection of these changes in the data shown above.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is only 16, and over 60 British sites hold larger numbers. The Thames Estuary, which is significantly smaller than the Severn, is Britain's most important site with an annual average maximum of over 17,000 over three orders of magnitude greater than the Severn Estuary figure.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

Most of the records analysed above were published as being of the nominate sub-species, Dark-bellied Brent Goose. Where the sub-species has not been specified it has been assumed that they refer to this sub-species, which breeds in northern Siberia. There is a small number of published records of Pale-bellied Brent Goose, which breeds in Arctic Canada, Greenland, Svalbard and Franz Josef Land. Records, all single birds unless otherwise stated, in the previous thirty years are as follows:

1995: Severnside on Feb.12th;

2006: CI-Y, two on Oct 30th;

2007: Severnside on Jan. 25th and Dec. 20th;

2009: Severnside on April 8th and 25th and an exceptional 18 on Sept.1st;

2012: Severnside five on Sept.11th and 12th, CI-Y from Oct.10th to 22nd;

2015: CI-Y on March 26th and Sand Point on April 17th.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

A full review of the status of this species was published in the 2011 edition of this Report [Rose 2011]. For the sake of completeness some of the data provided there are summarised and updated overleaf.

Shelduck cont. This species is unique amongst the species considered here in that significant numbers breed along our coast. Its migratory pattern is also very different: there is a large exodus in July of adults heading to moulting sites in the Dutch Waddensee and Bridgwater Bay; most return from September and otherwise the species appears to be largely sedentary. The species' feeding behaviour is also rather different to those of other wildfowl, being heavily dependent on the tiny snail *Hydrobia ulvae*, which it filters from intertidal mud-flats.

The table below shows trends at the better-counted sites.

	1954-59	60--64	65--69	70--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
Littleton W.										44	40	42
Sevenside					39*	54	99	84	107	88	82	80
PWD						42*			89*		59*	56
CI-Y		88*	147	135	162	156	133	105	107	186	150	193
Sand Bay		144						280	316	141	410	402
Axe Est.	176	261	83	78*					447*	262	154	198

Table 8: Shelduck, average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014. * Based on incomplete data

Notable maxima include 1,100 at Sand Bay in November 2007, 930 here in November 2014 and 800 at CI-Y in February 2004.

Counts at several sites, particularly in the southern part of our area, are highly variable. For example, there were 490 at the Axe Estuary in November 1955 but the maximum here in 1956/57 was only 148; the maximum count here in the 1959/60 winter was 542 (in October) but the highest count in any other month was 85. At Sand Bay there were 648 in January 1996 but the maximum in 1998/99 was only 117. These fluctuations are presumably due to variations in food availability.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 3,726, the fifth highest in Britain behind the Mersey Estuary (annual average maximum is 8,659), Dee Estuary, Morecambe Bay and Humber Estuary.

WIGEON *Mareca penelope*

Early records suggest that this species was formerly much less frequent on the Estuary than it is now. Davis (1947) states 'occurring commonly on the coast', although it should be noted that his recording area included Slimbridge (Glos.) and parts of Bridgwater Bay (Somerset). The Avon Bird Report of 1974, although it does not include systematic data, mentions counts at Sevenside of 20 in January and seven in November without commenting that these are low and in 1977 the maximum count from the Estuary was 130, again at Sevenside. As with other species, WeBS counts were not made systematically in earlier decades, but it has been possible to compile the following table:

	1960--64	65--69	70--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
OPS						353*	182	435	193	450	436
Littleton							203*	329	180	205	355
Sevenside					72	1065	178	332	476	569	1005
CI-Y	60*	31*	10*	36*	96*	221	96	160	178	165	386
Axe Estuary	40*	40*	15*			60*		43*	80	105	131

Table 9: Wigeon, average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014. * Based on incomplete data

Cold spells have often resulted in major influxes of this species – for example a count of 2,200 at Sevenside in January 1985 contrasts with counts under 100 in the previous five years. There were then 7,000 and 3,000 here in January and February 1987, but the highest count the following winter was 75. In recent years numbers here have been more consistent with, for example, the mild winter of 2013/14 seeing counts in excess of 1,000 from October to December.

The current annual average maximum on the Severn Estuary is 6,736. At the present time six British estuaries support more Wigeon than the Severn, the most important being Breydon Water with an average maximum of 24,710.

GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

This is not normally considered an estuarine species, but good numbers have been regular at the southern end of Chittening Warth for thirty years. They probably also make use of pools inland at sites such as Avonmouth Sewage Works, but they frequently feed on the saltmarsh edge. This seems to be an unusual occurrence in Britain, but smaller numbers have also been recorded in similar habitat on the Gwent shore of the Estuary.

The first coastal record for our area was of one at PWD on March 8th, 1970, followed by three at Axe Estuary on Jan. 3rd, 1971 and two at PWD on March 16th, 1974. The first published Severnside record was of five at Northwick Warth on Nov. 6th, 1981 and it was not until the end of the decade that this species was being regularly recorded here, as shown in the table below.

	1980-84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
Severnside	1	1	6	12	30	28	23

Table 10: Gadwall, average maxima at Severnside 1980 to 2014

The maximum count at Severnside was 56 in February 2006 and the small decline in numbers here started in 2007.

Elsewhere there have been some high counts at PWD, for example 25 in October 1991, 53 in December 2003 and 58 in October 2013, but most of these have related flocks using freshwater pools rather than estuarine habitats. The same is true at Axe Estuary, where the sewage works pools have held decent numbers, for example 58 in December 2010. OPS and CI-Y have also attracted small parties, but counts of over five have been unusual at both sites.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Davis (1947) reports that this species is 'an abundant winter-visitor to the coast' and it remains a numerous duck with us. The earliest available systematic counts are from the Axe Estuary between 1960 and 1969, the maximum count during this decade being 78 in the freezing weather of February 1963: by contrast there were 2000 here in January 2011. The following table shows average maxima at the main sites:

	1960-64	65--69	70--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
OPS					75*	103*	204	392	415	280	223
Littleton W.							132*	109*	144	207	262
Severnside					205	264	107	199	268	259	317
PWD					487	253*		286*	358	367	269
CI-Y	46*	47	17	10	43*	53	93	122	209	88	333
Axe Estuary	44	17	21*				119	184	273	90	525

Table 11: Teal, average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014. * Based on incomplete data

The Severn Estuary supports more Teal than any other British estuary with an average annual maximum of 6,203.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Early data on populations of this species are sparse; Davis (1947) reports that it is 'often numerous along the coast' but early bird reports include no counts of this common and widespread species. It was not until WeBS counts began that counts were recorded, shown in the table overleaf.

Mallard table.

	1960-64	65--69	70--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
OPS							95*	204	280	257	169
Sevenside					88	342	171	122	108	100	98
PWD					599	522			81	54*	25*
CI-Y	16*	69	21	14	8	23	99	104	105	85	163
Sand Bay	100	94*	152*		134*	112*	93*				
Axe Estuary	45	133	168*		178	278	265*	183	169	94	59

. Table 12: Average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014. * Based on incomplete data

Notable counts include 1200, 1175 and 1250 at PWD in the first three months of 1983, whereas the maximum count here in the 2000/01 winter was 43. At CI-Y, and maybe other sites, quite good numbers occur on the inland rhynes, including an unknown proportion of feral birds.

The current annual average maximum on the Severn Estuary, at 2,618, is the highest of any British estuary.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Davis (1947) reports that this species is 'Regular in small numbers, along the coast' although again it should be noted that his recording area included Slimbridge. Glos, where this species is currently more numerous than it is in our area. Early bird reports include no records from our coast; it is not until the mid-1970s that this species appears and reports remain sporadic throughout that decade. There is a note that none was recorded north of the Avon in 1978, for example. The table below shows average maxima from the two sites at which this species has been most regularly recorded.

	1980--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
Sevenside	2	3	5	5	9	17	8
CI-Y	0	1	4	10	4	1	4

Table 13: Pintail, average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014.

Two counts of flocks that visited Sevenside briefly, 150 in December 2000 and 67 in January 2002, have been excluded from the calculations. The best periods for this species at the two sites are 2005-07 at Sevenside, when monthly maxima of between 25 and 35 were regular; and 1997-98 at CI-Y, when February counts reached 21 and 14. Other coastal sites are occasionally visited by small numbers, with higher counts including five at PWD in February 1987; seven here and five at Littleton in February 1991; and at OPS eight in January and 23 in December 2000, and 18 in February 2007.

The scarcity of this species in our area is in contrast to its status on the Severn Estuary as a whole, where the current average annual maximum is 683. On six other British estuaries it is even more numerous, with average annual maxima on the Dee of 3,928 and at Burry Inlet of 2,077.

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

This species has never been numerous at any of our estuarine sites. Davis (1947) states that 'small parties often occur in coastal areas...'. There are sporadic reports in early bird reports, in 1970, for example, the Bristol Bird Report mentions 70 on the Gloucestershire coast, although this includes Slimbridge so it is likely that relatively few of these were in our area. The 1974 Report includes a record of seven at PWD in July and August, and notes that 'usually only ones and twos are seen on the coast'.

The table overleaf shows average monthly maxima since 1980. There has been a steep decline in numbers at PWD since 1998, whilst those at Axe Estuary rose sharply from 2000, followed by a decline here from 2009.

	1980-84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
OPS	10*	2*	7	16	11	34	5
Severnside	4*	5*	5*	19	14	11	19
PWD	20	23	2*		12*	18*	17*
CI-Y	2*	2	13	23	21	32	24
Axe Estuary			0	4*	32	28	15

Table 14: Shoveler, average maxima at main sites 1960 to 2014. * Based on incomplete data

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 516; the only British estuary regularly supporting greater numbers is the Thames, where the current average maximum is 639.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

None of the other species reviewed here has seen such a dramatic change in status as has this one. Although it is currently no more than a sporadic visitor, in the past it was numerous in winter to the Weston-s-Mare area with, for example 200 reported on Jan.15th, 1908. By the time Davis (1947) was writing such numbers were already a distant memory, he states: 'Used to occur in gatherings of several hundred at Weston-super-Mare, but now much scarcer. No large number reported since that of 150 seen off Brean Down, February 1920.' He goes on to mention a record at Severn Beach in April 1938. It continued to be scarce until an apparent upsurge in the 1980s, although to what extent this improvement was due to better coverage is difficult to gauge. The table below shows the average number of records per year since 1980.

1980-84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010--14
3	14	3	5	4	1	1

Table 15: Scaup, average number of records per year 1980 to 2014

Given the greater level of observer coverage in recent years the decrease in the number recorded probably does represent a real decline in the frequency. Interestingly, the same trend is not evident at the reservoirs, where small parties continue to occur. Most reports relate to single birds present for one or two days only but there are some notable exceptions. The chief of these concerns a flock of 24, the record count in recent decades, at CI-Y on Oct. 30th, 1988. A flock of 11 remained at Axe Estuary from Oct. 31st to Nov. 21st, 1999, gradually declining to one by Dec.12th; they were present on the Weston STW pools and are not known to have used any truly estuarine habitat. Other long-staying birds include the following:

- 1980: three at Severnside from Oct. 26th to Nov. 2nd, with two until Dec. 8th;
- 1983: three at Axe Estuary from April 30th to May 9th;
- 1988: two at CI-Y from Nov. 22nd to Jan. 7th 1999; and
- 2012: one at PWD from Nov. 14th to Feb. 24th 2013.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is only five, in contrast to 2,843 at Solway Estuary.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

There is no evidence that this species was ever regular or numerous in our area. Davis (1947) cites one record only, at Aust in February 1902. Reports then remained sporadic until 1971, when a flock of 20 was off Sand Point from December until mid-May 1972, with eight here in October of the latter year. In 1975 a flock spent several months off Brean Down, Somerset, and in our area three were off Sand Point in January. In 1977 there were 16 at Aust on May 7th, three in Weston Bay on Jan. 4th and one here on May 28th. From 1980 records became more regular, probably as a result of better observer coverage. The average annual totals of records are summarised in the table below:

1980-84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
12	34	19	36	19	1	15

Table 16: Eider, average number of records per year 1980 to 2014

Eider cont. Many of the records summarised above relate to birds seen briefly during the spring migration period. Far better observer coverage means that there is now a much greater chance of such sightings being reported and the data probably mask a far greater decline in actual occurrence than is evident. The upsurge of records in the 2010 to 2015 period is largely due to two sightings in May 2011, of 30 on 12th at Severnside and of 25 at CI-Y on 23rd; without these the annual average would be four.

Reports of birds lingering longer than two days are as follows:

- 1980: one at CI-Y from Nov. 9th to Dec. 28th;
- 1981: at Weston Bay, monthly maxima of five in March, three in April, six in August and four in October;
- 1984: at Severnside five from Jan.1st to 30th, at CI-Y four from May 20th to June 28th with three to Sept. 19th;
- 1988: two at Severnside from Dec. 10th to 29th (*cf.* Common Scoter) and six/seven at PWD from 4th to 27th;
- 1995: two or more off Sand Point intermittently throughout the year, with a maximum of eight in July;
- 1996: birds remaining from 1995 until November, with a maximum of ten in September;
- 1997: 23 at Severnside from Dec. 21st to 31st;
- 1999: a flock fluctuating between four and 10 at CI-Y from Nov. 15th to Jan. 6th 2000.

These records show that this species is capable of surviving in our waters for substantial lengths of time, and also suggest that the 1980s and 1990s were unusual, since there are no comparable reports either before or after these two decades.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is only one, the highest in Britain being 6,667 at the Tay Estuary.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

This species has never been frequent on our coast and Davis (1947) quotes only one record, one shot at Weston-s-Mare in December 1890. Records since 1970, involving single birds unless stated otherwise, are as follows:

- 1978: PWD on Oct. 27th;
- 1980: Severnside on April 20th;
- 1981: Severnside on Nov. 1st;
- 1982: OPS on Nov.7th, Severnside on Dec.17th, Portishead Lake from 22nd until June 29th, 1983;
- 1983: Severnside on Oct. 26th;
- 1984: CI-Y on Feb. 19th;
- 1987: Severnside on Jan. 11th; Steep Holm on May 16th;
- 1988: CI-Y from May 5th to July 17th;
- 1991: four at Severnside on Nov. 2nd, with two on 3rd and one on 13th;
- 1992: two at Severnside on April 18th;
- 1993: CI-Y one on Dec. 1st and then a different bird from 18th to Feb. 19th 1994; at Sand Point on Dec.11th and a different individual on 19th;
- 1994: two at Sand Point on Jan. 16th, 17th and 25th;
- 1998: OPS on May 14th, Severnside on Oct. 11th, and OPS from Dec. 30th until May 9th, 1999;
- 1999: Axe Estuary on Dec. 26th;
- 2000: OPS from Nov. 3rd to Dec. 3rd;
- 2003: Severnside on May 5th; and
- 2014: Sand Point on Feb. 15th and 22nd.

The records above reveal a marked upsurge from 1980 to 1994, with a notable peak from the CI-Y / Sand Point area during the 1993/94 winter, when a flock of scoters and Eider was present. This trend is not evident in either the national figures, which showed a marked peak between 1998 and 2008, or in inland records in our region, which have shown little trend.

Approximately 38% of the birds detailed above arrived during the period Oct.10th to Nov.15th; perhaps more surprisingly a further 21% were first seen in April and May. The most important sites in the UK for this species are in the Shetland Isles, where the average annual maximum is in excess of 1,000; the equivalent figure for the Severn Estuary is two.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Davis (1947) states that this species is 'uncommon, but has been reported occasionally from Weston-super-Mare'. It seems likely that the absence of early records from sites such as Severnside was due to a lack of observer coverage rather than genuine scarcity. Semi-regular occurrence in the western part of our area seems to have continued into the 1970s, including the following:

- 1970: four at Sand Bay on Jan. 4th;
- 1972: several reports in Weston and Sand Bays, with a maximum of 36 at the former on Feb. 9th;
- 1974: up to seven present in Weston and Sand Bays in every month except February and March;
- 1975: reports (of unrecorded numbers) off Weston-s-Mare on 26 dates;
- 1977: seven in Weston Bay on July 23rd; and
- 1978: 40 at Sand Point on April 16th, and 11 other records of up to four.

The same period saw the first evidence of passage through the Severnside area with, for example, one in April and two in May 1977 and three in July 1978.

The pattern of records changed in the 1980s, with few reports of flocks wintering in the Weston-s-Mare area but an upsurge of reports during passage periods. The table below summarises the number of records per year since 1980.

1980-84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
34	9	64	22	20	64	76

Table 17: Common Scoter, average number of records per year 1980 to 2014

Although this table suggests that this species has become more numerous at least part of the upsurge in records must reflect the huge increase in observer coverage as many transient flocks would have been missed in the past but are now reported.

Few have remained with us for any length of time in the last three decades; those that have stayed for ten or more days are listed below.

- 1986: two or three at CI-Y from Feb. 16th to May 18th;
- 1987: one or two at Sand Point from Dec.19th to Jan.13th 1988;
- 1988: at Severnside five from Nov. 5th to 30th, four Dec.10th to 15th, and three 26th to 31st (*cf.* Eider);
- 1993: three at Sand Point from Feb.17th to April 8th, and at CI-Y 30 on Dec.11th, 17 on 18th and 35 on 19th;
- 1994: many reports in January, with a maximum of 29 on 8th, and a last record of six on Feb. 20th;
- 2000: one at Severnside from July 30th to Aug. 16th.

Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 22, the highest in Britain is 19,070 at the Dee Estuary.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Davis (1947) states that this species has 'occurred occasionally on the Severn Coast', although the only published record relates to a male at New Passage on March 1892. Subsequent records are

- 1956: five at CI-Y on Feb. 12th;
- 1969: at Sand Point on Oct. 26th;
- 1972: four past Sand Point on Oct. 26th;
- 1976: two at Severnside on Oct. 31st;

Velvet Scotr cont.

1980: at CI-Y on Sept. 28th and at Severnside on Nov. 9th;
 1983: past Severnside on Nov. 7th;
 1984: past Severnside on April 26th;
 1985: at CI-Y on five dates between Nov. 3rd and Dec. 22nd;
 1987: at Severnside two from Jan. 25th to March 20th;
 1993: two at Sand Point on Dec. 19th;
 1994: two at Sand Point from Jan. 8th to 30th;
 1996: at Severnside on Nov. 16th; and
 2012: past Sand Point on Dec. 1st.

The records at CI-Y in 1985, Severnside in 1987 and Sand Point in 1993/94 are noteworthy in that they involved birds that stayed for lengthy periods. These occurrences coincided with lingering Common Scoters and, at Sand Point, Eiders. In contrast with the 14 coastal records listed above there were 15 inland records between 1900 and 2015.

This species is too irregular in occurrence in the Severn Estuary for WeBS to generate a mean maximum. The best site in Britain, the Forth Estuary has an annual average maximum of 1,045.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Since this species favours marine habitats it might be expected to be more frequent on the Estuary than Goosander, but Davis (1947) describes its status in similar terms: 'Also recorded in former years from Weston-super-Mare.' There has been no indication since then of any regular population. Records in early bird reports are very few, but include four at Sand Bay on Jan. 4th, 1970, before sighting became more frequent from 1980 onwards. The table below summarises the record pattern

1980-'84	'85-'89	'90-94	'95-'99	2000-'04	'05-'09	'10-'14
2	2	2	5	5	2	2

Table 18: Red-breasted Merganser, average number of records per year 1980 to 2014

As with other sea duck, almost all of these records relate to brief sightings. The following are unusual in having remained for more than one day. All are single birds unless otherwise stated.

1980: CI-Y, Feb. 15th to 24th;
 1982: PWD, July 18th to Sept. 2nd;
 1997: CI-Y, most days from Jan. 10th to 29th, with two on 12th;
 2000: Portishead, Dec. 24th to 28th then two on 30th.

Also noteworthy is the record count, of nine at Severnside on April 14th, 1998.

The Severn Estuary annual average maximum is 3,726, the fifth highest in Britain behind the Mersey Estuary (annual average maximum 8,659), Dee Estuary, Morecambe Bay and Humber Estuary.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

This species is almost entirely a freshwater species and it is not surprising that it has never been common along the Estuary. Nonetheless, Davis (1947) reports that it was 'recorded in the past from Weston-super-Mare' and also mentions that 'a few' were seen on the Axe Estuary in 1929 and one was at Avonmouth in 1947. Both years saw exceptionally cold spells, with which these records may have been associated. There then appear to have been no coastal sightings until the freezing conditions of December 1978, when single birds were at Severnside on 24th and CI-Y on 3rd and 24th. The sequence of cold winters in the 1980s then produced a number of records, for instance of 11 at Severnside on Nov. 23rd, 1980 and 26 at CI-Y on Jan. 21st, 1987. The latter site has been regularly visited by a small wintering party since 1998, when 14 were present in January and 15 in December. These birds spend most of their time on the freshwater section of the Blind Yeo, but also feed over the Black Rocks area of the nearby Estuary. The table below summarises counts here:

1995-99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
6	14	10	14

Table 19: Goosander CI-Y, average monthly maxima 1995 to 2014

The last double figure counts here were in 2010, when there were 15 in January and 12 in February. At our best inland site for this species, CVL, there has been a 90% decline in abundance since the mid-1990s, so the much smaller flock at CI-Y has fared well by comparison and has even increased slightly since 2015, for instance to 20 in February 2018.

DISCUSSION

How Does Our Coastline Compare to the Remainder of the Estuary ? By a rough measure the Avon coastline accounts for about 30% of the total along the Estuary. This figure has been used to calculate an 'expected' population for each species in our area: 30% if each species was evenly distributed around the Estuary. This can then be compared to the actual figure, to gauge whether our area is better or worse than expected. The table below shows the outcome for the main species.

Species	Severn Estuary five year average	'Expected' Avon area five year average	Actual Avon area five year average
Shelduck	3726	1118	1293
Wigeon	6736	2021	1543
Teal	6203	1861	1829
Mallard	2618	785	723
Pintail	683	205	12
Shoveler	516	155	38

It must be emphasised that this is a very approximate estimation, but it shows broadly that our area is better than would be expected for Shelduck; roughly the same for Teal and Mallard; slightly worse for Wigeon; and very much worse for Pintail and Shoveler. The relatively low populations of the last three species may be due to the greater widths of saltmarsh along much of the South Wales coast and the contribution to the overall total made by large numbers at Slimbridge.

Trends Table 21 below summarises maxima and number of records, as appropriate, since 1960 where reliable data are available, or more recently if not.

	1960-64	65--69	70--74	75--79	80--84	85--89	90--94	95--99	2000-04	05--09	2010-14
Wh-ftd Goose ¹			20	4	48	33	58	46	2	15	15
Brent Goose ¹					30	20	45	35	62	113	51
Bwk's Swan ¹			5	0	28	9	20	9	22	8	11
Shelduck ²	164	115	107	100	84	116	156	213	144	149	162
Shoveler ²	0	0	0	0	9	8	7	16	18	25	16
Gadwall ³	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	12	30	28	23
Wigeon ²	50	35	13	18	84	425	165	260	221	299	463
Mallard ²	54	99	114		250	314	145	153	149	118	103
Pintail ²	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	8	7	9	6
Teal ²	45	32	19	10	203	168	131	215	278	215	322
Scaup ¹					3	14	3	5	4	1	1
Eider ¹					12	34	19	36	19	1	15
Com. Scoter ¹					34	9	64	22	20	64	76
R- Merganser ¹					2	2	2	5	5	2	2

Table 21: Summary of trends. Figures for the various species were generated as follows: ¹ – average records per year; ² – average of monthly maxima; ³ – average of monthly maxima at Severnside only.

The most significant trend is shown by the dabbling ducks and Brent Goose, whose numbers have generally increased markedly since 1960, with the most marked change occurring in the early 1980s. The likely cause of this is the decline in wildfowling, which has reduced disturbance and also made birds less wary of humans. The main exception to this trend is the Mallard. Although it is now more

numerous than it appears to have been in the early 1960s, it is considerably less frequent than it was in the 1980s. This decline is in large part due to the large numbers that were counted at Royal Portbury Dock, which was then in construction and was mostly free from disturbance but retained substantial habitat. A decline in the release of birds by wildfowlers may also be partly responsible.

The decline in wildfowling together with a sequence of cold winters was probably also responsible for an apparent increase in White-fronted Goose and Bewick's Swan in the 1980s. Both have now become less numerous, perhaps due to climate change and the increase in winter temperatures.

The sea duck species have not shown any comparable or consistent trend. It is clear from comments in early literature, not reflected in the table above, that Scaup has become much less abundant. The area where it was once numerous, around Weston-s-Mare, also appears to have regularly supported smaller numbers of Common Scoter, Goosander and Red-breasted Merganser. The reasons for these declines are unclear. At other sites around Britain large Scaup flocks have been associated with sewage outfalls and other sources of organic pollution. The decline in our area, however, took place during a period when sewage output was rising. It may be that levels of pollution became too high for either the ducks themselves or their prey species. However, subsequent improvements in water quality have not resulted in any increase in numbers. It is also possible that there has been some natural change in water currents and sedimentation, which may have reduced populations of molluscs. This is supported by reports from older residents that beaches in the area have become more muddy: Clevedon, for instance, had a sand beach in the early twentieth century.

Records of sea duck have been too sporadic since then for solid conclusions to be drawn but there is some evidence of decline since 1960. If this trend is genuine it may well be linked to global declines in populations of these species as well as climatic amelioration. There was some speculation in Bird Reports that major oil spills at Milford Haven in February 1996 and in Cardigan Bay in November 2002 may have had some impact on sea duck numbers in our area, either by displacing birds towards us or by reducing populations, but there is little evidence for either effect.

The future for wildfowl populations is very difficult to predict, with influences acting in different directions. Climate change may result in a gradual decline in species towards the southern edge of their wintering range, such as Wigeon. Unmitigated sea level rises would certainly affect most species very badly, but if they are offset by managed retreat and other compensation schemes we could see some positive impacts. Recreational pressure is likely to increase and although the trend towards birds becoming more resistant is also likely to continue novel activities such as drone flying may exert excessive pressure on some species.

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Unusual Ornithological Events in the Avon area, 2013 to 2017

Andy Davis

This paper is essentially a historical reference for unusual ornithological events in our region which is referred to as the Avon area. The first part, from 1945 to 1980, was published in this Report for 2005, the second part from 1981 to 2005, and the third part from 2006 to 2012 were published in the 2012 Report. The aim of this short paper, and that of the previous three is to document in one place the more important influxes, heavy passages, seabird 'wrecks' and other interesting movements of various species by presenting the salient details of the event followed by a reference/s.

2013	It was an excellent autumn for Glossy Ibis with at least four noted.	ABR, 2013
	Best year to date for Red Kite, with a total of 108 bird-days.	ABR, 2013
	It was a record year for Ospreys in the area, with a total of 59 bird-days. Most were noted at CVL and BL during March and April.	ABR, 2013 Milbourne, 2013
	At CVL on Sept. 26th, an unprecedented skua passage was noted which involved 18 Great and four Arctic Skuas. Around the same time a small skua, probably a Long-tailed, was seen here on Sept. 25th and a Pomarine was noted on Sept. 28th.	ABR, 2013 Vinicombe, 2013
	A widespread influx of Arctic Terns was recorded on the Avon coast and to three sites inland during blustery spells of westerly winds in mid April.	ABR, 2013
	An unprecedented series of five Nightjar records were accepted away from the Mendips, noted between Aug.17th and Oct. 9th.	ABR, 2013
2014	Great White Egret: an exceptional series of five records, all from CVL in the second half of the year. Nationally it was the best year ever for this species.	ABR, 2014 British Birds 109 :732
	The numbers of Red Kites exceeded the 2013 total, with 135 bird-days, noted mainly between March and June.	ABR, 2014
	Puffin: two records in February, after strong south-westerly winds. There are only two previous Avon records.	ABR, 2014
	It was an excellent first winter period for Iceland Gulls in the UK and the Avon area. Locally, at least three different Iceland's were noted plus an adult Kumlien's. It was the best year for these Arctic gulls since 1984.	ABR, 2014
	An unprecedented influx of 'Siberian' Chiffchaffs occurred early in the year. At least eight were identified.	ABR, 2014
2015	It was another exceptional year for Great White Egrets in the Avon area; at least 17 were documented.	ABR, 2015
	Red Kite: another exceptional year, with a record number of bird-days (273).	ABR, 2015
	Long-tailed Skuas: two at CVL was exceptional, one was in late May, the other appeared briefly in early September.	ABR, 2015
	It was a record year for Bee-eaters. At least seven were noted in the Avon area in June.	ABR, 2015
	At least six Yellow-browed Warblers, all in October, making this the best year since records began.	ABR, 2015
	It was another excellent year for Siberian Chiffchaffs with three records in the first winter period and five in the period from October to December.	ABR, 2015
	The autumn passage of Redstarts was the largest since 1984.	ABR, 2015
	The autumn passage of Whinchats was also the best since 1984.	ABR, 2015

2016	Shag: record counts, in August, on the coast with a total of 37 bird-days. A flock of 23 was noted on Severnside.	ABR, 2016
	Cattle Egret: five records from Nov. 19th to the end of the year were forerunners of the largest influx ever into the UK and the Avon area during the first four months of 2017.	ABR, 2016
	Another record year for Great White Egrets with 41 noted and a peak count of 26 on Nov.11th. Most records were from CVL and BL but several were seen on the 'Avon' levels and near the coast.	ABR, 2016
	Black-tailed Godwit (<i>islandica</i> race): 556 counted on Severnside on Dec. 5th was a new Avon record.	ABR, 2016
	Hoopoe: six records was the best total for more than three decades.	ABR, 2016
	It was a record year for Yellow-browed Warblers, with at least nine noted including seven in October, as part of a national influx, and two in December.	ABR, 2016 Birdguides
	It was another excellent year for Siberian Chiffchaffs in Avon with eight new individuals, <i>cf.</i> eight in the 2013/14 winter period.	ABR, 2016
	Waxwing: a reasonable influx during the 2016/17 winter from Nov.14th to early March 2017. Good numbers were noted nationally during this winter.	ABR, 2016
2017	There were record numbers of Scaup at CVL during the first-winter period with at least 21 individuals in late March.	ABR, 2017
	Cattle Egret: record numbers during the first-winter/spring period with 11 at CVL in mid-April. The largest influx ever was experienced during the above period, which led to breeding attempts in nearby Somerset and elsewhere.	ABR, 2017
	Another record year for Great White Egrets with a maximum count of 37 in early November.	ABR, 2017
	Bearded Tits were recorded in the highest numbers since the 1965 influx. A total of 22 was ringed by CVRS during the autumn.	ABR, 2017
	From October to the first-winter period of 2018 an unprecedented influx of Hawfinches was noted nationally and in Avon. At least 60 were seen in out recording area.	ABR, 2017

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Iberian Chiffchaff at Yate

Mark Collar with an introduction by John Martin

The breeding range of Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* (formerly *P. brehmii*), a recent split from Common Chiffchaff *P. collybita* (Helbig *et al.* 1996; Clement & Helbig 1998), is almost entirely confined to the Iberian Peninsula. But records in Britain and northern Europe are increasing. The first for Britain, in 1972, was followed by a 20-year gap before the next, but they are now almost annual and have even bred on the Gower (Hunter, 2018). Although it is still rare there are now 52 accepted British records up to 2016 with a current average of about one or two a year (Holt *et al.* 2017). Nearly all records involve males giving the characteristic three-part song, but there are also small but diagnostic differences in plumage and structure. Identification is complicated by mixed singers, some of which might be hybrids. Confident identification needs very careful documentation so if you are faced with a Chiffchaff giving an unusual song, you ideally need to obtain good photos and sound recordings. An interesting feature of this species' British records is that a high proportion are seen inland, well away from the usual vagrant hotspots on the coast.

Mark Coller did just the right thing when he found this bird on his local patch by getting the news out promptly as a putative Iberian, which helped to ensure that it was well documented including the very helpful sound recording made by Paul Marshall; see overleaf. . John Martin

* * * * *

Having moved to the area in December 2016 and with the onset of spring I was eager to check out my local park, Kingsgate Park, Yate, for early migrants, the first three (Common) Chiffchaffs arrived on March 12th and I was hoping for an early Willow Warbler.

Entering Kingsgate Park on the early morning of March 25th there were still two Chiffchaffs singing around the long pond area. I then heard a loud twitter that sounded a bit like the ending of a Cetti's Warbler song. This would have been a first for the area and with Darren Pearce being away it would be a great 'gripper'.

As I reached the end of the long pond the bird sang again from high up in the trees - this was no Cetti's Warbler! I knew the call: 'chiff chiff chiff tee tee tee' followed by a faster 'swee swee wee wee' but it did not register for a few seconds -- Iberian Chiffchaff -- I thought it cannot be, it's still March and this is Yate!

After getting a good enough view I ran back home to get my camera for evidence. Luckily the bird was still there but it had moved to the back of the main pond. I managed to get some photos before having to drive to work. A photograph appears opposite page 176.

There I quickly viewed the photos and listened to the calls on Xeno Canto to be certain of the identification. The song was correct as were the pale legs, paler than those of a Common Chiffchaff, the yellowish wash under the tail and on the throat, the whitish belly, the more greenish-brown back and the bright yellow supercilium in front of the eye.

I then contacted Darren to see when he was back, called Martyn Hayes and tweeted the news out. Martyn quickly arrived at the Park, followed by a trickle of other local birders. Luckily it was still there and it performed well over the weekend, although sometimes difficult to find when it was silent.

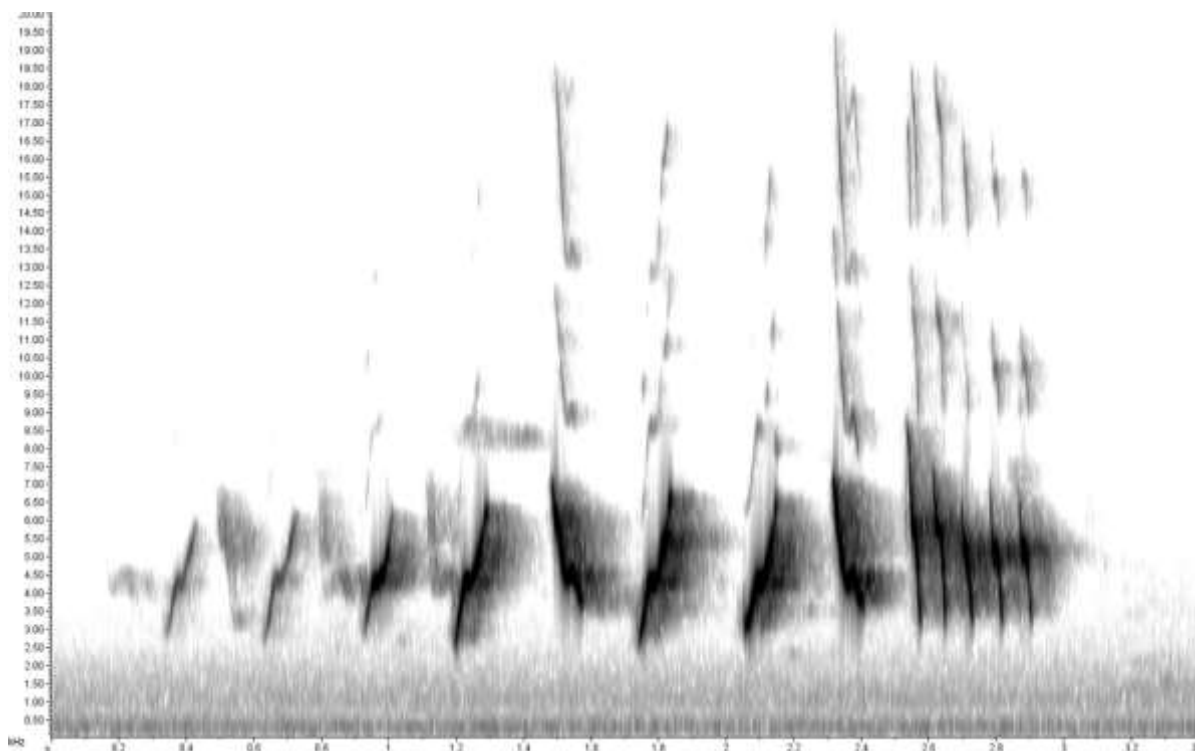
Paul Marshall managed to get a sound recording and sonogram, this with many photographs was sent to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) for consideration and it has now been accepted as the first record for the Avon area. It is also the earliest ever Iberian Chiffchaff for the UK to date.

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Sonogram

This sonogram was made by Paul Marshall from a recording made in the field. It has been ‘cleaned up’ but still some ambient background noise is visible at the bottom. The horizontal scale range is three and a half seconds, and the vertical scale gives the pitch ranging from zero to 20,000 hertz, so much of the top half represents sounds not audible to the (older) human ear! It clearly shows the three part structure of the song.



Unusual Common Gulls at CVL in 2017

Andy Davis and Richard Mielcarek

January 18th, 2017 saw the beginning of an unusual daytime gathering of gulls, mainly Common Gulls to Herriott's Pool, CVL. Grass fields to the south-east of the pool were being sprayed with fertiliser and this work attracted up to an estimated 6,000 gulls to the North Widcombe area, with many bathing and resting on Herriott's Pool in between bouts of feeding. On the first day the whole of the pool was full of gulls, estimated to be in the region of 1,000 birds. Subsequent days saw repeat performances of field spraying which again attracted large numbers of gulls.

Adult Ring-billed Gulls were located on the pool during this period (Jan.18th and 20th, Feb.14th, 15th and 21st) with at least three and possibly four different individuals involved. Three interesting Common Gulls were also noted, a first-winter and a second-winter, both possibly of the east European/west Asian race *heinei* which is considered to be a scarce migrant to the British Isles (sub-species section of BBRC website) and a first-winter which showed several features of the East Asian taxon *kamtschatschensis* known as Kamchatka Gull; photographs appear opposite.

The second-winter was seen in flight only over Herriott's Pool and Bridge on Feb. 6th. It appeared to be a typical second-winter Common Gull with rather dark looking bluish-grey upper parts, blackish wing-tips and primary coverts, a small white mirror on P10 and a weak-looking bill but it showed *circa* seven vestigial black markings in the tail. Ring-billed Gulls at this age often show traces of a tail band but the upper parts are paler than on this bird and the bill is stronger looking, not weak as with this individual. AHD has watched Common Gulls at CVL for over half a century and has only ever noted a second-winter with remnants of a tail band once previously in late February 2012. Olsen (2004) states that second-winter *heinei* have dark markings in the tail more often than *canus*.

On Feb.16th, we located an interesting first-winter Common Gull that stood out from its companions as it was browner with much barring on the underparts, the upper tail and the undertail coverts. It appeared quite bulky with a longish bill having a noticeable hooked tip (see photo opposite page XXX). The underparts were most unusual for a first-winter Common Gull in that the flanks, sides of the breast and upper belly were covered with light brownish barring, there were thick brown crescents across the breast and brown chevrons on the vent. The pale base colour of the under tail and upper tail coverts was also covered with dark spots and bars and the tail was solidly dark brown with distinctive white tips and narrow white outer tail feathers. The neck, especially at the back, had dense brown streaks and spots and the area around the eye was dark. The upper parts were medium grey with a few juvenile type brown feathers remaining, the lesser/greater covert feathers showed dark triangular centres with paler edges, recalling Ring-billed Gull at this age. The greater covert area of the wing was pale and washed out while the tertials were dark with paler outer feathers. The dark brown primaries with very narrow paler tips extended well beyond the tail. The legs were pinkish while the long bill was two-toned with a pink base. RM had previously noted an individual resembling this bird in the mass gathering of gulls on Jan.18th when he thought it was possibly a first-winter Ring-billed Gull before losing it amongst the throng. Interestingly, Olsen (2004) states that *kamtschatschensis* represents the missing link between *canus/heinei* and Ring-billed Gull! This sub-species of Common Gull is not on the British list at present and inter-gradation with eastern *heinei* poses difficulties (see sub-species section of BBRC website). BBRC consider claims but biometrics and/or ringing details are needed to secure admission to the list.

Finally, a striking first-year bird watched and photographed on Herriott's Pool mid-morning on March 6th appeared to show some characteristics of *heinei*. The primaries were unusually long, the grey on the mantle was slightly darker than the other first-year Commons on the pool and the saddle contrasted with the pale and worn coverts. The tertials were brown with narrow pale edges similar to that shown by first-year Ring-billed Gulls.

Reference

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First and Last Avon Migration Data – 2017

Harvey Rose

This Report for 2015 (pp. 147 – 51) provided an account of the first and last migration dates for the migrants occurring in the Avon area, and gave new tables for the period 1990 to 2015; the reader should consult that paper for further details. Here we give up-dated tables for the period 1990 to 2017 using the same methodology as in the previous papers -- Table 1 for summer visitors/double passage migrants and Table 2 for winter visitors.

Table 1 – Summer Visitors

Species	Season	Earliest since 1990	Latest since 1990	Average	Diff. 1992/16	2017 Early/late
Garganey	Spr	Mar 13, 93	May 5, 00	April 4th	-2	April 8th
	Aut	Aug 29, 07	Dec 13, 92	Oct. 15th	16	Nov. 1st
Quail	Spr	May 8, 96	Jun 29, 91	June 1st		May 27th
	Aut	No data	No data			Aug. 31st
Osprey	Spr	Mar 20, 14	May 19, 94	April 9th		March 27th
	Aut	Jul 29, 90	Oct 26, 94	Sept. 16th		Sept. 29th
Lt. Ringed Plover	Spr	Mar 12, 15	Apr 30, 94	March 28th	-18	March 17th
	Aut	Aug 26, 91	Oct 15, 12	Sept. 16th	6	Sept. 11th
Whimbrel	Spr	Mar 29, 90/02	Apr 18, 98	April 10th	-3	April 7th
	Aut	Sep 16, 93	Dec 12, 15	Oct. 12th	19	Oct. 23rd
Curl S.piper (A)	Aut 1	Jul 31, 08	Sep 11, 92	Aug. 14th		Aug. 10th
	Aut 2	Sep 26, 09	Nov 20, 10	Oct. 24th		Oct. 8th
Wood S.piper (A)	Aut 1	Jul 6, 98	Aug 23, 93	Aug. 2nd		July 10th
	Aut 2	Aug 5, 91	Oct 8, 00/06	Sept. 7th		Sept. 13th
Little Tern	Spr	Apr 16, 03/15	May 12, 05	April 27th		May 30th
	Aut	Jul 12, 97	Oct 28, 96	Aug. 27th		No records
Black Tern	Spr	Apr 14, 03/06/13	May 14, 09	April 24th	1	April 26th
	Aut	Sep 9, 08	Nov 3, 00	Oct. 3rd	-13	Oct. 23rd
Sandwich Tern	Spr	Feb 18, 12	May 29, 95	April 13th		March 18th
	Aut	Jul 21, 09	Oct 30, 93	Sept. 13th		Aug. 28th
Common Tern	Spr	Mar 30, 06	Apr 21, 98	April 10th	[-5]	March 30th
	Aut	Aug 25, 04	Oct 28, 09	Oct. 1st	[-15]	Oct. 21st
Arctic Tern	Spr	Mar 29, 15	Apr 26, 95	April 15th	[0]	April 22th
	Aut	Sep 8, 16	Nov 21, 96	Oct. 5th	[-11]	Sept. 15th
Cuckoo	Spr	Apr 5, 16	Apr 20, 94/97	April 12th		April 10th
	Aut	Jun 13, 04	Sep 30, 12	Aug. 13th	-23	Aug. 15th
Swift	Spr	Apr 8, 01	Apr 27, 90	April 17th	-5	April 16th
	Aut	Aug 27, 99	Oct 29, 04	Sept. 18th	-3	Sept. 21st
Hobby	Spr	Mar 30, 90	Apr 28, 91	April 17th	-10	April 17th
	Aut	Sep 24, 90	Nov 11, 05	Oct. 10th	16	Oct. 15th
Sand Martin	Spr	Feb 23, 08	Mar 21, 06	March 8th	-10	March 5th
	Aut	Sep 14, 14	Oct 29, 91	Oct. 6th	-3	Sept. 29th
Swallow	Spr	Mar 8, 15	Mar 28, 98	March 19th	-8	March 6th
	Aut	Oct 16, 07	Dec 17, 13	Nov. 8th	5	Nov. 17th
House Martin	Spr	Mar 4, 97	Apr 7, 07	March 24th	-7	March 13th
	Aut	Oct 9, 11	Dec 5, 04	Oct. 29th	-7	Oct. 27th
Wood Warbler	Spr	Apr 8, 98	May 2, 08	April 21st	0	April 21st
	Aut	No data	No data			***
Willow Warbler	Spr	Mar 13, 11	Apr 1, 07	March 24th	-4	March 27th
	Aut	Sep 5, 92	Oct 11, 94	Sept. 23rd	1	Sept. 28th

Garden Warbler	Spr	Mar 29, 90	Apr 28, 91	April 16th	1	April 15th
	Aut	Sep 6, 15	Nov 21, 93	Sept. 30th	4	Sept. 5th
Lesser Whitethroat	Spr	Apr 10, 10/14	Apr 27, 91	April 18th	-4	April 9th
	Aut	Sep 12, 04	Dec 9, 09	Oct. 7th	11	Sept. 19th
Whitethroat	Spr	Apr 2, 12	Apr 24, 90	April 12th	-4	April 4th
	Aut	Sep 11, 07	Oct 27, 03	Sept. 26th		Oct. 2nd
Grasshop. Warbler	Spr	Mar 28, 97	Apr 24, 96	April 13th	-2	April 6th
	Aut	Aug 13, 91	Oct 7, 97	Sept. 15th	1	Sept. 17th
Sedge Warbler	Spr	Mar 30, 07	Apr 18, 98	April 9th	-6	April 8th
	Aut	Sep 16, 00	Oct 10, 16	Sept. 28th	-3	Oct. 3rd
Reed Warbler	Spr	Apr 1, 12/15	Apr 28, 91	April 11th	-10	April 1st
	Aut	Jul 28, 90	Nov 26, 16	Oct. 4th	10	Oct. 27th
Ring Ouzel	Spr	Feb 9, 08	Apr 28, 99	March 27th	-5	April 10th
	Aut	Oct 10, 08	Nov 15, 14	Oct. 24th	7	Oct. 31st
Spotted Flycatcher	Spr	Apr 20, 16	May 17, 09	May 1st	-1	May 6th
	Aut	Sep 6, 98	Oct 15, 04	Sept. 27th	6	Oct. 1st
Nightingale	Spr	Apr 8, 02	May 7, 08	April 22nd		No record
	Aut	No data	No data			***
Pied Flycatcher	Spr	Mar 30, 02	May 19, 07	April 12th	-2	April 18th
	Aut	Aug 5, 07	Oct 14, 05	Sept. 2nd	-9	Aug. 22nd
Redstart	Spr	Mar 17, 11	Apr 21, 90	April 4th	-6	March 30th
	Aut	Sep 13, 09	Nov 30, 14	Oct. 11th	-2	Sept. 30th
Whinchat	Spr	Apr 13, 16	Apr 28, 90	April 20th	3	April 18th
	Aut	Sep 3, 95	Nov 14, 12	Oct. 10th		Oct. 28th
Wheatear	Spr	Feb 28, 98	Mar 25, 06	March 10th	-2	March 6th
	Aut	Oct 14, 92	Dec 12, 94	Nov. 7th	10	Oct. 27th
Yellow Wagtail	Spr	Mar 21, 92	Apr 20, 90	April 7th	1	April 2nd
	Aut	Sep 19, 09	Nov 1, 02	Oct. 7th	-10	Oct. 11th
White Wagtail	Spr	Mar 1, 07	Apr 9, 97	March 23rd	-8	March 11th
	Aut	Sep 8, 90	Nov 23, 03/14	Oct. 7th	14	Oct. 30th
Tree Pipit	Spr	Mar 16, 92	Apr 27, 91	April 3rd	-4	April 4th
	Aut	Sep 11, 99/05	Oct 21, 90	Sept. 27th	-5	Oct. 12th

Data for summer visitors and double-passage migrants

Notes on Table 1

The table above gives the data for the 'summer visitors' including the double passage migrants, that is those species that leave the Avon area completely for some part of the autumn/winter/spring period; there are two rows for each species. The first of these (labelled Spr) gives the first-arrival data, that is the earliest (in bold) and the latest dates in which the corresponding species was first reported in the Avon area during the period 1990 to 2016 inclusive – Columns 3 and 4. Column 5 gives the average of the 27 dates over this period for each species. The second row (labelled Aut) gives the last departure data. Entries marked (A) in the table, and in Column 2 (for seasons) Aut 1 and Aut 2, refer to their first-arrival and last-departure during the autumn period only. Column 6 gives the difference in days between the 1992 date and that shown in Column 5. The entries for both Arctic and Common Tern are in square brackets because in the 1992 paper lumped these together as 'Commic Tern'.

Column 7 gives the relevant data for the current year 2017. Dates set in bold indicate that the record was exceptional.

Table 2 giving data for the winter visitors is given overleaf.

Table 2 – Winter Visitors

Species	Winter period	No record	Earliest	Latest	Average 1990/2016	2017 Early/late
Bewick's Swan	1st	2	Jan 3, 05/07	Mar 28, 92/96	Feb. 11th	Feb.16th
	2nd	1	Oct 11, 91/04	Dec 13, 08	Oct. 31st	Nov.10th
White-ftd Goose	1st	3	Jan 1, 02	Apr 30, 00	Feb. 25th	May 3rd +
	2nd	7	Oct 15, 92	Dec 19, 04/06	Nov. 24th	No records
Brent Goose	1st	1	Jan 12, 90	Jun 2, 15	April 13th	May 12th
	2nd	1	Aug 10, 11	Dec 28, 08	Oct. 10th	Sept. 25th
Pintail	1st		Feb 27, 94	May 22, 15	April 17th	April 11th
	2nd		Jun 10, 95	Sep 4, 04	Aug. 2nd	Aug. 29th
Scaup	1st	2	Jan 7, 99	May 20, 95	April 16th	April 26th +
	2nd	1	Jun 24, 13	Nov 11, 95	Sept. 23th	Oct. 16th +
Goosander	1st		Mar 3, 03	May 19, 08	April 8th	April 8th
	2nd		Aug 8, 90	Nov 5, 16	Sept. 29th	Oct. 3rd +
Golden Plover	1st	1	Mar 29, 15	May 14, 92	April 20th	April 5th +
	2nd		Jun 28, 14	Sep 24, 13	Aug. 17th	Aug. 10th
Purple Sandpiper	1st	3	Jan 10, 93	May 28, 13	April 27th	March 13th
	2nd		Aug 28, 91	Dec 29, 92	Nov. 10th	Nov. 19th
Green Sandpiper	1st		Mar 29, 96	May 5, 98	April 18th	April 30th
	2nd		May 30, 03	Jul 2, 12	June 17th	June 15th
Sp. Redshank	1st	2	Jan 1, 13	May 15, 16	April 11th	No records
	2nd		Jun 24, 94	Sep 16, 09	Aug. 2nd	July 27th
Jack Snipe	1st		Mar 17, 91	Apr 25, 11	April 10th	April 3rd
	2nd		Sep 13, 98	Oct 30, 99	Oct. 7th	Oct. 8th
Woodcock	1st		Feb 15, 01	Apr 30, 94	March 19th	March 16th +
	2nd		Oct 9, 90	Dec 29, 92	Oct. 30th	Nov.1st
Little Gull	1st		Apr 12, 94	Jun 9, 91	May 10th	March 16th +
	2nd		Jun 29, 09	Oct 14, 14	Aug. 6th	June 30th
Short-eared Owl	1st		Mar 3, 94	Jul 5, 12	April 30th	May 24th
	2nd		Aug 3, 11	Oct 23, 13	Sept. 21st	Aug. 14th
Merlin	1st		Mar 31, 91/09	May 27, 93	April 22nd	May 8th
	2nd		Aug 5, 06	Oct 20, 91	Sept. 9th	Sept. 20th
Firecrest	1st	1	Jan 24, 99	Apr 27, 12	March 17th	April 23rd +
	2nd	3	Aug 26, 11	Dec 5, 99	Oct. 13th	Sept. 7th
Fieldfare	1st		Mar 22, 05	May 1, 09	April 16th	March 30th
	2nd		Aug 29, 94	Oct 27, 00	Oct. 5th	Oct. 15th
Redwing	1st		Mar 17, 01	Apr 21, 12	April 8th	April 25th
	2nd		Sep 15, 04	Oct 9, 91/00	Sept. 29th	Sept. 29th
Water Pipit	1st		Mar 2, 11	Apr 19, 16	April 1st	May 27th
	2nd		Sep 10, 95	Nov 16, 13	Oct. 19th	Oct. 10th
Brambling	1st	1	Jan 30, 01	May 8, 11	April 8th	March 24th
	2nd		Sep 17, 13	Oct 22, 95	Oct. 8th	Sept. 27th
Snow Bunting	1st	16	Jan 1, 94	Apr 10, 05	Feb. 16th	No records
	2nd	4	Sep 28, 03	Dec 2, 90	Oct. 22nd	Nov. 5th

Table 2 – Data for winter visitors

Most of the comments given above for Table 1 also apply to Table 2. Each species again has two rows, here labelled '1st' and '2nd', referring to the first and second winter periods, respectively; and the main data is given in Columns 4 to 6 with the 2017 data in Column 7. There is no comparison with the 1965-92 data as very little was given in the earlier paper for winter visitors. Unlike the summer visitor records, there were years when some species were not recorded at all in the first, or second, or both, winter periods. The number of these 'absent' winter periods is given in Column 3. It is perhaps of interest to note that up to now no such column is needed in Table 1, this will need to change next year. The sign + in the last column indicates that one or more summering records have been excluded.

The Breeding Bird Survey in the Avon region for 2017

Dave Stoddard

INTRODUCTION

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is organised on a national basis by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and is the main scheme for monitoring the population trends of the UK's common breeding birds. The survey is organised on a regional basis and the BTO Avon Region includes the four unitary authority areas that formerly constituted the county of Avon, namely Bath & North East Somerset (BA), City of Bristol, North Somerset (NS) and South Gloucestershire (SG), together with an area of Somerset (c.333 sq km) that covers much of the Mendips and the area around Cheddar. The BBS was first established in 1994 and from the outset Avon birders have also conducted a local survey within the our region using the same methods but in a simplified form. This has enabled us, in particular, to obtain better coverage in the urban areas, but it is extended throughout the region and provides a much better understanding of the fortunes of our local populations. The results of the National and Local schemes are combined here.

METHOD

The survey is conducted by birdwatchers who are able to recognise all species likely to be encountered by both sight and sound. This year 131 observers participated in the survey, many of them members of the Bristol Ornithological Club, the Bristol Naturalists' Society, and the British Trust for Ornithology (or even all three!). The survey consists of visits to one-kilometre squares that have been randomly selected by the BTO (or self-selected by the observer in the case of the local survey). Two recording visits are made to each square, one before the middle of May and one at least four weeks later but before the end of June, making two one-kilometre transects across the chosen square recording all birds seen or heard. In addition data is included from the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS) (three locations) where the methodology is similar except that the transects follow the course of a river.

2017 RESULTS

A total of 239 squares, including 156 for the National BTO scheme, were surveyed. These squares are spread reasonably evenly across the region (**Table 1** below). Overall about 15% of the Avon BTO Region was surveyed which gives a good measure of the varying fortunes of the breeding birds of the region.

In the 2017 survey 79224 birds were recorded in the 239 squares at the rate of 120 birds per hour. This is the highest number of squares surveyed since the commencement of the survey in 1994 and also the bird count was the highest yet recorded.

Unitary Authority	Squares surveyed	% of UA area surveyed	Numbers recorded	% of total recorded
Bath & NE Somerset	51	14.5	16285	20.6
North Somerset	63	18.6	22599	28.5
South Gloucestershire	59	13.5	18644	23.5
City of Bristol	36	31.6	9781	12.3
Somerset (BTO Avon)	30	9.8	11915	15.0
Total			79224	

Table 1 - Breakdown of squares surveyed

Table 2 on the next page lists all the species recorded in the survey in 2017 and gives the number counted and the percentage of the total number of squares surveyed in which they were encountered.

Species	Number noted 2017	Distribution in area surveyed 2017		Species	Number noted 2017	Distribution in area surveyed 2017	
		Squares in which recorded	% of squares surveyed			Squares in which recorded	% of Squares surveyed
Mute Swan	256	32	13.4	Carrion Crow	5177	238	99.6
Greylag	10	4	1.7	Raven	137	54	22.6
Canada Goose	189	27	11.3	Goldcrest	272	81	33.9
Egyptian Goose	3	3	1.3	Firecrest	1	1	0.4
Shelduck	111	14	5.9	Blue Tit	2421	225	94.1
Gadwall	10	4	1.7	Great Tit	1587	219	91.6
Mallard	928	102	42.7	Coal Tit	170	63	26.4
Shoveler	2	1	0.4	Marsh Tit	6	5	2.1
Tufted Duck	101	9	3.8	Skylark	905	98	41.0
Quail	1	1	0.4	Sand Martin	144	4	1.7
Red-l. Partridge	29	10	4.2	Swallow	1877	179	74.9
Pheasant	963	141	59.0	House Martin	808	81	33.9
Cormorant	63	29	12.1	Cetti's Warbler	33	12	5.0
Little Egret	29	15	6.3	Long-tailed Tit	486	127	53.1
Grey Heron	106	65	27.2	Wood Warbler	1	1	0.4
Little Grebe	4	3	1.3	Chiffchaff	1686	212	88.7
Great Cr. Grebe	31	6	2.5	Willow Warbler	151	59	24.7
Red Kite	2	2	0.8	Blackcap	1376	201	84.1
Sparrowhawk	29	24	10.0	Garden Warbler	32	16	6.7
Buzzard	247	113	47.3	L. Whitethroat	52	32	13.4
Water Rail	2	1	0.4	Whitethroat	502	115	48.1
Moorhen	96	39	16.3	Grasshop.W'ler	2	2	0.8
Coot	99	18	7.5	Sedge Warbler	96	15	6.3
Oystercatcher	33	6	2.5	Reed Warbler	168	25	10.5
Lapwing	7	2	0.8	Nuthatch	104	40	16.7
Ringed Plover	1	1	0.4	Treecreeper	28	17	7.1
Whimbrel	24	4	1.7	Wren	4463	234	97.9
Curlew	13	5	2.1	Starling	2251	135	56.5
Dunlin	3	2	0.8	Dipper	3	3	1.3
Com. Sandpiper	13	3	1.3	Blackbird	5931	239	100.0
Redshank	3	2	0.8	Song Thrush	1133	206	86.2
Black-hd Gull	10	5	2.1	Mistle Thrush	128	60	25.1
Common Gull	6	4	1.7	Spotted Flycat.	7	3	1.3
L. Bk-backed Gull	2091	156	65.3	Robin	3429	238	99.6
Herring Gull	1671	154	64.4	Redstart	6	3	1.3
G Bk-backed Gull	9	5	2.1	Whinchat	2	2	0.8
Feral Pigeon	1462	74	31.0	Stonechat	14	6	2.5
Stock Dove	260	71	29.7	Wheatear	11	7	2.9
Wood Pigeon	9124	238	99.6	Dunnock	1458	218	91.2
Collared Dove	900	155	64.9	H. Sparrow	4851	167	69.9
Cuckoo	13	9	3.8	Yellow Wagtail	3	3	1.3
Barn Owl	1	1	0.4	Grey Wagtail	36	23	9.6
Little Owl	1	1	0.4	Pied Wagtail	204	87	36.4
Tawny Owl	9	6	2.5	Tree Pipit	9	2	0.8
Short-eared Owl	1	1	0.4	Meadow Pipit	69	14	5.9
Swift	785	95	39.7	Rock Pipit	3	2	0.8

Kingfisher	13	10	4.2	Chaffinch	1701	209	87.4
Gn. Woodpecker	160	87	36.4	Bullfinch	215	87	36.4
Gt Spot Wpecker	220	105	43.9	Greenfinch	607	140	58.6
Kestrel	51	40	16.7	Linnet	719	92	38.5
Hobby	2	2	0.8	L. Redpoll	1	1	0.4
Peregrine	4	4	1.7	Goldfinch	2542	218	91.2
Magpie	1902	220	92.1	Siskin	2	2	0.8
Jay	143	79	33.1	Yellowham.	413	62	25.9
Jackdaw	5697	211	88.3	Reed Btg	71	22	9.2
Rook	2646	111	46.4	Corn Btg	130	12	5.0

Table 2 – Birds recorded in the 2017 BBS

Table 3 below provides percentage change figures for the more commonly recorded species. No attempt has been made to provide figures for the gulls, most of those recorded will have been non-breeders. The percentage change over the year from 2016 to 2017 is given together with the equivalent figure for 2015 to 2016 as a comparison. Finally a figure showing the percentage change over the ten years from 2007 to 2017 is provided as an indicator of the medium term trend.

Species	% Change 2016- 17	% Change 2015- 16	% Change 2007 -17
Mute Swan	22	-24	71
Mallard	-2	-19	-21
Pheasant	17	-9	-7
Feral Pigeon	16	4	-9
Stock Dove	31	-21	87
Wood Pigeon	5	4	15
Collared Dove	3	4	-9
Swift	35	28	-47
Gt Sp. Woodpecker	-6	12	0
Magpie	-3	-7	-6
Jackdaw	3	5	12
Rook	-28	32	-37
Carrion Crow	10	2	11
Goldcrest	0	-6	-3
Blue Tit	-14	4	-20
Great Tit	-11	3	-24
Skylark	0	8	-25
Swallow	26	-14	-51
House Martin	0	37	-50
Long-tailed Tit	-1	21	-24
Chiffchaff	-3	3	21
Blackcap	3	4	34
Whitethroat	14	3	-4
Wren	-12	7	10
Starling	4	-5	-57
Blackbird	2	-2	-2
Song Thrush	11	0	10
Robin	5	4	13
Dunnock	6	3	-3
House Sparrow	17	0	25
Pied Wagtail	-2	19	15
Chaffinch	-14	-4	-46
Greenfinch	-3	-22	-66
Linnet	9	-10	11
Goldfinch	1	4	113
Yellowhammer	-10	17	5

Table 3 - Percentage changes in species recorded in BBS in the BTO Avon in 2017

The percentage change figures above are based on the 197 squares that were surveyed by the same observer in both 2016 and 2017, comfortably beating last year's record of 190 squares. This level of commitment by observers adds immensely to the value of the data.

The one-year figures should of course be treated with a degree of caution, particularly where samples are relatively small. However, differences of more than 5% are likely to reflect a genuine change, particularly for the more widely recorded species. The ten-year period 2007 to 2017 is a reasonable period to show developing trends (e.g. the explosive increase of Goldfinch and the decline of Greenfinch) and a reasonably consistent number of squares were surveyed during the period (216 in 2006 and an average of 199 squares per annum during the period).

Blue Tit and Great Tit show significant reductions after a series of poor breeding seasons. It is to be hoped that the apparently successful 2017 breeding season will provide better news in 2018. Chaffinch continues on a downward path with a decline of 14% while notable increases included Stock Dove at 31%, Whitethroat at 14% and House Sparrow at 17%. Swallow with an increase of 26% was very encouraging after a series of poor years. Swift (35%) also showed a good result but this is a difficult species for this type of survey to monitor and flocks of incoming migrants around the reservoirs may cloud the picture. Following on from a mild winter, the decline of 12% for Wren is surprising and it will be interesting to see if this is reflected elsewhere in the country.

Table 4 - Species recorded in the survey ranked by abundance 2007- 2017

The table below lists the 20 commonest species recorded in the survey in 2017, ranked in order of abundance, and their comparable positions in 2007.

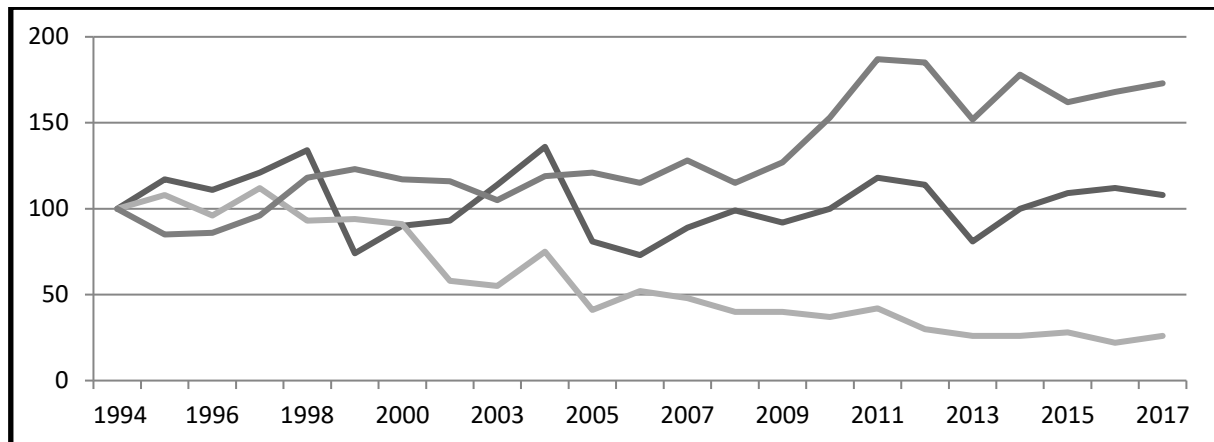
2017 rank	2007 rank	Species	2017 count	2007 count
1	1	Woodpigeon	9124	7382
2	2	Blackbird	5931	5883
3	6	Jackdaw	5697	4043
4	5	Carrion Crow	5177	4345
5	4	House Sparrow	4851	4387
6	7	Wren	4463	4025
7	8	Robin	3429	2881
8	11	Rook	2646	2465
9	-	Goldfinch	2542	894
10	10	Blue Tit	2421	2524
11	3	Starling	2251	5141
12	13	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2091	2221
13	16	Magpie	1902	1892
14	12	Swallow	1877	2355
15	9	Chaffinch	1701	2703
16	21	Chiffchaff	1686	1110
17	17	Herring Gull	1671	1746
18	18	Great Tit	1587	1734
19	15	Feral Pigeon	1462	2039
20	19	Dunnock	1458	1309
-	14	Greenfinch	651	2083
-	20	Collared Dove	853	1219

Table 4 – Species abundance

Trends in the Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler populations

In the first season of the BBS in 1994 the three most commonly recorded warblers were **Chiffchaff** (329 recorded in 83.8% of the squares surveyed), **Willow Warbler** (142 recorded in 63.2% of the squares surveyed) and **Blackcap** (220 recorded in 70.6 of the squares surveyed). The graph overleaf shows how these three species have fared since 1994. It is based upon indices standardised with a value of 100 in 1994 and shows the percentage change each year.

.A cautionary note needs to be added here in that comparatively few squares were surveyed in 1994 (69) compared to the total in 2017 (239). The distribution of the 1994 squares was also a little different with only two surveyed in the City of Bristol (not a core warbler habitat) and only two in the western Mendips (now the main site for Willow Warbler in the Avon Region).



Standard BBS percentage change data for 1994 to 2000 and 2002 to 2017.
Mid grey -- Blackcap; Dark grey – Chiffchaff, and pale grey – Willow Warbler

Chiffchaff (dark grey in the graph above) is an early and short-distance migrant, the majority overwintering in the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco. The graph, which is 'unsmoothed', makes clear the sharp declines in 1999, 2005 to 06 and, most recently, in 2013. As an early migrant it can be vulnerable to late and cold springs and this was certainly the case in 2013. However, the species does seem to be capable of bouncing back from these setbacks. It has fared reasonably well over the past ten years with an increase of 21% while the increase over the whole period is 8%. Nationally, it has fared even better with an increase of 109% over the period 1995 to 2016 but there is much regional variation and the increase is mainly attributable to range extensions (including altitudinal extensions) in northern England and Scotland.

Willow Warbler (pale grey in the graph above) is a sub-Saharan migrant and in contrast to its close relative above has experienced a steady decline over the past two decades. In 1994 when 69 squares were surveyed, a total of 142 were recorded, whereas in 2017 when 239 squares were surveyed only 151 were recorded. There has been a decline of about 74% in the Avon BTO region although annual numbers are now too low to calculate a reliable annual trend for the species. Of the 151 recorded in the Avon Region in 2017, a total of 77 were recorded in the Somerset section of the region of which 33 were recorded on the 'late' visit (that is after mid-May) and had thus probably remained to breed - most late records were from the Mendips, and so outside the Avon area. Of the 74 others counted only 24 were recorded on the 'late' visit and it must be assumed that many of the April birds were simply migrants. The causes of this catastrophic decline remain unclear although a combination of difficulties in its wintering areas in Africa, and habitat deterioration in its breeding areas are both implicated. Nationally there has been a 43% decline in England between 1995 and 2015 but within Scotland and Northern Ireland there have been significant increases, presumably the result of climatic change rendering more habitat suitable.

Blackcap (mid grey in the graph above) is another short-distance migrant with British breeding birds mostly wintering in the Iberian Peninsula and NW Africa. However, it has been more successful locally than Chiffchaff. There has been a 73% increase in the Avon region since 1994. It is a slightly later spring arrival than Chiffchaff (or Willow Warbler) and this may mean that it has been less affected by 'late' springs but even here the effect of the late cold spring of 2013 can be seen in the graph. Nationally it has also experienced a large increase since 1994, much of it attributable to range extensions.

A note on climate

Richard Bland

This note should be treated as an appendix to the Weather Report given on page 13.

Climate is defined as the normal weather measurements over time, usually taken to be thirty years. Because it is an average it changes only slightly each year. The general pattern of climate in the Bristol area since 1853 has been as follows: the average maximum annual temperature fell to about 1900 when it was 13.2°C. It rose to 1960, when it reached 14.0°C, fell to 1992 to 13.6°C, and it has risen since to 14.3°C today. Rainfall fell from 73mm per month in 1880 to 71mm in 1910, then rose to 80mm in 1938, fell back to the 1880 level in 1992 before increasing to the 1938 level today. The total variation in temperature during the past century is 8% and in rainfall 11%

Weather varies much more widely from year to year than climate does over centuries, and all wildlife responds to the changing conditions they experience daily. Data gathered over the last 15 years on the Downs in Bristol suggest that, normally, a change of one degree in average temperature will lead to a ten day change in the average timing of events for both plants and birds, although individual species vary in their response. The climate changes that have occurred since the peak of the last ice age 18,000 years ago, have led to continual change in the wildlife that can thrive here, and this process continues. Seasonal change, especially cold winters and cold or wet breeding seasons, can have a dramatic effect on bird populations. The climate figures below give data for each season a century ago, 50 years ago, and over the past decade. The most striking feature is that the roughly one degree of warming took place between 1917 and 1967, and the past 50 years has seen little change. However, looking at the overall pattern, temperatures fell after 1960 and have recovered in the past decade. The rainfall figures show an increase in autumn and winter in the past fifty years.

The table below shows seasonal thirty-year average temperature and average monthly rainfall for the years 1917, 1967, and for the decade 2008 to 2017. The final column shows the change between the 2017 figure and that for 100 years earlier. Apart for summer rainfall, all the figures show an increase. This increase is less than 10% with three exceptions: autumn temperature, and winter and autumn rainfall.

Temperature													
	1917	1967	2008	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	2017	Diff
Winter °C	7.2	7.6	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.9	7.9	8	8	8.2	8.2	+1.0
Spring °C	12.6	12.6	13.4	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4	13.3	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.7	+1.1
Summer °C	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.4	20.4	20.5	20.5	20.4	20.5	20.6	+0.6
Autumn °C	13.4	14.5	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.6	14.6	14.7	14.7	+1.3
Annual °C	13.3	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	14.0	14.0	14.1	14.1	14.2	14.3	14.3	+1.0
Rainfall													
Winter, mm	78	75	89	88	86	87	87	87	89	89	89	89	+11
Spring, mm	61	58	68	68	67	64	65	63	64	63	63	62	+1
Summer, mm	75	75	68	70	70	72	74	74	76	75	74	75	0
Autumn, mm	79	85	91	95	95	93	94	94	93	94	93	92	+13
Annual, mm	74	73	79	80	80	80	80	80	81	81	81	81	+7

Table 7 – Thirty-year seasonal average figures over the past century, half century and decade

Avon Ringing Report for 2017

Mike Bailey and Ed Drewitt

The number of birds ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2017 was 1,025,914. This is slightly less than in 2016 (1,064,598) but is still the fourth largest total on record, the highest being 1,158,429 in 2011. Nationally Goldfinch (58,875) is now the second most commonly ringed species after Blue Tit (115,243). Fortunately the alert concerning the avian influenza virus H5N8 that was spreading throughout Europe at the beginning of the year did not reach the Avon area and the UK as a whole was declared disease free in September.

Results from the BTO's Constant Effort Site ringing scheme provided information on the year-to-year abundance for the adults and juveniles of 24 common passerine species. There were significantly higher numbers of adult Chiffchaff and a small increase for adult Reed Warbler at the start of the season compared to the five year mean (2012 to 16). In contrast, the remaining five common long-distance migrant warblers (Willow and Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler) continued to show long-term declines. Despite poor productivity in 2016 for most residents, three species (Trecreeper, Robin and Bullfinch) recorded significant increases in abundance in 2017 compared to the five-year mean. However, there were three resident species: Blue Tit (with -13%), Chaffinch (with -46%) and Greenfinch (with -54%) that exhibited significant decreases in adult numbers. In fact both Chaffinch and Greenfinch were recorded by CES in lower numbers than in any previous year since 1983.

Species Top Twenty Totals

During 2017 a total of 9,227 birds was ringed in the Avon area, slightly less than the previous three years but still well up on 2012. Table 1 shows the top 20 species ringed in our area in 2017 (2016 positions shown in brackets) and the percentage change in the ringing totals between 2016 and 2017. As usual, some year-to-year changes were affected by ringing effort, weather conditions and catching opportunities. Seventeen of the top 20 species remain the same although, as usual, there is some movement in their relative positions. Goldfinch numbers have continued to increase, bolstered by the use of Niger seeds and Sunflower hearts at feeding stations. This included a remarkable total of 657 ringed at a single feeding station in Fishpool Hill helping to relegate Reed Warbler and Blue Tit into second and third places, respectively. Coal Tit, House Sparrow and Willow Warbler joined the Top Twenty list whilst Lesser Black-backed Gull, Reed Bunting and Canada Goose dropped out.

Position	Species	2016	2017	% change
1 (3)	Goldfinch	971	1241	+27
2 (1)	Reed Warbler	1311	1193	-9
3 (2)	Blue Tit	1000	1127	+13
4 (4)	Chiffchaff	805	819	+2
5 (6)	Great Tit	577	631	+9
6 (5)	Blackcap	795	574	-28
7 (7)	Swallow	530	306	-42
8 (10)	Robin	284	265	-7
9 (9)	Long-tailed Tit	291	231	-21
10 (16)	Dunnock	196	210	+7
11 (11)	Sedge Warbler	252	205	-19
12 (15)	Greenfinch	199	205	+3

Position	Species	2016	2017	% change
13 (8)	Redwing	439	203	-54
14 (13)	Wren	200	200	0
15 (18)	Blackbird	148	174	+18
16 (14)	Chaffinch	199	156	-22
17 (12)	Goldcrest	208	145	-30
18 (21)	Coal Tit	110	126	+15
19 (31)	House Sparrow	28	120	+328
20 (22)	Willow Warbler	104	101	-3

Recoveries

Since 2007 the BTO have published annual ringing totals and summaries of the most interesting recoveries and longevity records. Searches involving all or individual species can be conducted for the whole of the UK, or at a country or county level. This, of course, has been a tremendous help to the authors in compiling this report. Details about annual ringing recoveries and totals for the British Isles since 2007 can be found on the BTO website at:

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports>

The recovery records, shown in the appendix on page 191, are listed because of the distance traveled and/or longevity. Most local recaptures have been omitted. The first lines of each entry gives details of the original ringing, subsequent lines provide details of the recovery, including the distance traveled and time elapsed from the original ringing date. Several of the longevity records for larger gulls and resident passerine histories have been shortened following multiple sightings within the same area.

Systematic List of Birds Ringed in 2013 – 2017

Species annual ringing totals for the period 2013 to 2017 are given in the table below, together with the average number of birds ringed annually for the previous four years 2013 to 2016 in the right-hand column. There were no new species added to the 'Avon Ringing List' in 2017.

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	4 Yr Av
Mute Swan	0	4	1	18	16	5.8
Greylag Goose	0	0	0	1	0	0.3
Canada Goose	63	78	105	153	52	99.8
Egyptian Goose	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Teal	10	2	29	23	10	16.0
Mallard	18	29	19	13	16	19.8
Tufted Duck	2	20	1	1	0	6.0
Sparrowhawk	2	3	5	2	8	3.0
Buzzard	1	0	0	1	0	0.5
Water Rail	38	27	12	18	18	23.8
Spotted Crake	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Moorhen	79	51	30	17	15	44.3
Coot	2	14	4	1	0	5.3

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	4 Yr Av
Lapwing	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Dunlin	0	31	11	0	0	10.5
Snipe	0	2	1	0	0	0.8
Woodcock	0	5	1	0	2	1.5
Common Sandpiper	0	1	2	0	0	0.8
Green Sandpiper	1	1	0	0	0	0.5
Redshank	0	6	2	0	0	2.0
Black-headed Gull	0	0	1	4	6	1.3
Lsr Black-back Gull	97	61	66	116	86	85.0
Herring Gull	49	38	55	73	30	53.8
Stock Dove	1	0	6	23	5	7.5
Wood Pigeon	3	7	16	18	17	11.0
Collared Dove	2	5	3	5	13	3.8
Cuckoo	0	1	2	0	0	0.8
Barn Owl	12	77	62	29	2	45.0
Little Owl	0	0	0	3	2	0.8
Tawny Owl	3	22	3	5	10	8.3
Nightjar	2	1	2	1	0	1.5
Swift	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Kingfisher	13	7	8	16	10	11.0
Wryneck	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Green Woodpecker	5	2	4	4	5	3.8
Gt Sp Woodpecker	10	22	24	27	38	20.8
Peregrine	12	14	11	11	8	12.0
Kestrel	35	29	16	26	50	26.5
Magpie	8	3	4	3	2	4.5
Jay	3	7	6	9	9	6.3
Jackdaw	6	12	27	11	17	14.0
Rook	0	0	1	0	0	0.3
Carrion Crow	2	1	2	1	1	1.5
Raven	3	5	2	0	0	2.5
Goldcrest	19	62	217	208	145	126.5
Firecrest	0	2	5	0	4	1.8
Blue Tit	545	984	1282	1000	1127	952.8
Great Tit	331	575	658	577	631	535.3
Coal Tit	23	54	102	110	126	72.3
Bearded Tit	0	1	2	0	22	0.8
Marsh Tit	0	2	3	6	15	2.8
Sand Martin	13	11	14	20	2	14.5
Swallow	954	365	263	530	306	528.0
House Martin	3	4	0	0	18	1.8
Cetti's Warbler	21	40	61	43	58	41.3
Long-tailed Tit	138	182	297	291	231	227.0
Yel-browed Warbler	0	1	0	1	0	0.5
Chiffchaff	428	825	847	805	819	726.3

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	4 Yr Av
Willow Warbler	175	153	121	104	101	138.3
Blackcap	512	1166	1068	795	574	885.3
Garden Warbler	42	76	42	35	33	48.8
Lesser Whitethroat	35	25	30	24	6	28.5
Whitethroat	83	68	35	23	16	52.3
Grasshopper Wbr	9	6	3	12	2	7.5
Sedge Warbler	212	301	247	252	205	253.0
Reed Warbler	788	1475	1507	1311	1193	1270.3
Nuthatch	11	12	20	18	16	15.3
Treecreeper	12	38	41	42	35	33.3
Wren	146	190	255	200	200	197.8
Starling	56	41	64	26	34	46.8
Dipper	0	0	0	4	0	1.0
Blackbird	125	183	170	148	174	156.5
Fieldfare	5	2	4	1	2	3.0
Song Thrush	47	51	84	72	47	63.5
Redwing	2	12	37	439	203	122.5
Mistle Thrush	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Spotted Flycatcher	1	1	1	0	1	0.8
Robin	154	284	290	284	265	253.0
Nightingale	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Pied Flycatcher	1	0	0	2	0	0.8
Redstart	5	11	10	3	2	7.3
Whinchat	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Stonechat	0	1	0	0	0	0.3
Wheatear	1	0	0	0	0	0.3
Dunnock	106	203	197	196	210	175.5
House Sparrow	42	56	60	28	120	46.5
Grey Wagtail	2	3	3	3	3	2.8
Pied Wagtail	6	4	6	11	3	6.8
Tree Pipit	1	1	0	0	0	0.5
Meadow Pipit	4	16	22	21	10	15.8
Water Pipit	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Chaffinch	105	198	222	199	156	181.0
Brambling	0	0	0	0	3	0.0
Bullfinch	33	79	78	100	92	72.5
Greenfinch	223	616	216	199	205	313.5
Linnet	8	6	34	9	3	14.3
Redpoll (Lsr / Com)	4	14	24	84	51	31.5
Goldfinch	165	373	372	971	1241	470.3
Siskin	51	25	12	12	12	25.0
Yellowhammer	0	52	81	2	0	33.8
Reed Bunting	98	124	146	124	55	123.0
TOTAL	6227	9564	9798	9978	9227	8891.8

Appendix to the Ringing Report for 2017

Below and on the next few pages are listed the main ringing recoveries reported in the Avon area in 2017. A total of 36 species are listed. Notable recoveries of individuals ringed outside the UK include Cormorant, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Black-headed Gull (from four countries!), Lesser Black-backed Gull and Reed Warbler. There are also a number of notable longevity records including Buzzard (20 years), Black-headed Gull (up to 25 years), Lesser Black-backed Gull (15 years), Reed Warbler (eight years) and Garden Warbler and Reed Bunting (six years). On the other hand the shortest times between ringing and sighting were: 950 km in ten days for Curlew Sandpiper and 1,570km in 12 days for Dunlin which is at least 130km per day.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

5174559 Adult	05-07-1994	CVL:
Unknown (ring only)	08-01-2017	Yeovil: (Dorset) 41km SSE (< 22y 6m 3d?)
5250524 Full-grown	10-12-2008	Slimbridge Swan Pipe: (Gloucestershire)
Caught by ringer	05-01-2016	CVL: 51km SSW 7y 0m 26d
Caught by ringer	10-03-2017	CVL: 49km SSW 8y 3m 0d

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

GR04670 Adult Male	14-12-2010	Slimbridge Swan Pipe: (Gloucestershire)
Freshly dead	21-01-2017	Bristol: 34km SSW 6y 1m 7d

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

9010195 Nestling	03-06-2016	Andijk: The Netherlands
Alive (colour rings seen)	11-11-2016	Blagdon Lake: 565km WSW 0y 5m 8d
9010191 Nestling	01-06-2016	Trintelhaven: The Netherlands
Alive (colour rings seen)	31-10-2016	CVL: 567km WSW 0y 4m 30d
5259470 Nestling	07-06-2015	Denny Island, Bristol Channel:
Alive (colour rings seen)	20-12-2016	Blagdon Lake: 22km SSE 1y 6m 13d
Alive (colour rings seen)	11-08-2017	CVL: 25km SSE 2y 2m 4d
5267185 Nestling	10-06-2017	Denny Island, Bristol Channel:
Freshly dead	27-07-2017	Clevedon: (N. Somerset) 9km SSW 0y 1m 17d

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

1071061 Nestling Male	27-05-2016	Site Confidential: (Somerset)
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-09-2016	Durleigh Reservoir: 19km W 0y 3m 17d
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-07-2017	Site Confidential: (Somerset) 0km 1y 1m 10d
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-09-2017	CVL: 24km NNE 1y 3m 19d

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

GJ28694 Nestling	07-07-1997	near Nailsea: (North Somerset)
Freshly dead	10-11-2017	Abbots Leigh: (N. Somerset) 6km E 20y 4m 3d

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

EY39179 Adult Female 25-09-2014 CVL:
 Caught by ringer 2015 - 2016 3 recaptures at CVL:
 Freshly dead 19-12-2016 CVL: 0km 2y 2m 24d

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

FA64374 Adult Male 05-11-2011 CVL:
 Caught by ringer 2012 - 2016 3 recaptures at CVL:
 Last recapture 30-11-2017 CVL: 0km 6y 0m 25d

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

FP01408 Adult 26-09-2010 Wibdon Wharf: (Gloucestershire)
 Alive (colour ring sightings) 2011 - 2015 7 sightings R. Severn (Gloucestershire) area
 Alive (last sighting) 18-12-2015 Oldbury Power Station: 3km 5y 2m 22d

FP01417 Adult 26-09-2010 Wibdon Wharf: (Gloucestershire)
 Alive (colour ring sightings) 2011 - 2015 8 sightings R. Severn (Gloucestershire) area
 Alive (last sighting) 18-12-2015 Oldbury Power Station: 3km 5y 2m 22d

Curlew Sandpiper*Calidris ferruginea*

8N59338 First-year 03-09-2014 Revtangen, Klepp: (Rogaland) **Norway**
 Alive (colour rings seen) 13-09-2014 New Passage: 950km SSW 0y 0m 10d
 Alive (colour rings seen) 27-09-2014 New Passage: 950km SSW 0y 0m 24d

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

JT61567 Second-year 19-08-2016 Ujscie Wisly, Swibno: (Pomorskie) **Poland**
 Alive (colour rings seen) 31-08-2016 Exmouth: (Devon) 1,568km WSW 0y 0m 12d
 Alive (colour rings seen) 10-09-2016 Oldbury Power Station: 1,469km W 0y 0m 22d

JT64172 Adult 09-09-2016 Ujscie Wisly, Swibno: (Pomorskie) **Poland**
 Alive (colour rings seen) 17-02-2017 Oldbury-on-Severn: 1,471km W 0y 5m 8d

Black-headed Gull*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

648991 Nestling 21-06-1991 Venø, Struer: (Ringk-bing) **Denmark**
 Alive (ring read in field) 27-02-2017 CVL: 936km SW 25y 8m 6d

6152109 Nestling 20-06-1995 Ifo-Verken, Bromolla: (Skåne) **Sweden**
 Alive (ring read in field) 01-12-2017 Bristol: 1,232km WSW 22y 5m 11d

ST180535 Adult 14-07-1996 Turku, Varsinais-Suomi: (Turku-Pori) **Finland**
 Alive (ring read in field) 14-07-2017 CVL: 1,847km WSW 21y 0m 0d

S7602 Adult 20-04-2009 Riga: **Latvia**
 Alive (ring read in field) 02-09-2015 CVL: 1,847km WSW 6y 4m 13d
 Caught by ringer 16-12-2017 CVL: 1,846km WSW 8y 7m 26d

6220147 Nestling 25-06-2011 Askiljeby, Askilje: (Vasterbotten) **Sweden**
 Caught by ringer 16-12-2017 CVL: 1,919km SW 6y 5m 21d

EY45518 Adult	22-02-2014	Rainham Tip: (Greater London)
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-07-2015	Northwick Warth: 197km W 1y 4m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	23-10-2017	Pilning Wetland: 197km W 3y 8m 1d
EY99535 Nestling	26-06-2015	70 Acres Lake, Cheshunt Pit Complex: (Essex)
Alive (colour rings seen)	26-10-2015	Shawell: (Leicestershire) 114km NW 0y 4m 0d
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-11-2016	Blagdon Lake: 189km WSW 1y 4m 11d
EY83213 Nestling	13-06-2015	Hosehill Lake: (West Berkshire)
Alive (colour ring sightings)	2015 - 2017	3 sightings at CVL
Alive (last sighting)	27-01-2017	CVL: 110km W 1y 7m 14d
Mediterranean Gull		
<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>		
FN61903 Nestling	22-05-2007	Zbiornik Przykona, Radyczyzny, Poland
Alive (colour marks seen)	08-08-2009	Instow, Torridge Estuary: 1,581km W 2y 2m 17d
Alive (colour rings seen)	15-03-2012	Confidential: (Hants) 1,385km W 4y 9m 22d
Alive (colour rings seen)	18-02-2017	CVL: 1,467km W 9y 8m 27d
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-04-2017	Confidential: (Avon) 1,467km W 9y 10m 15d
Lesser Black-backed Gull		
<i>Larus fuscus</i>		
GN49102 Nestling	03-07-2002	Central Bristol.
Alive (colour marks seen)	24-09-2002	Leca de Palmeira:(Porto) Portugal 1,233km SSW 0y 2m 21d
Alive (colour marks seen)	07-10-2002	Figueira da Foz: (Coimbra) Portugal 1,346km SSW 0y 3m 4d
Alive (colour marks seen)	09-11-2006	Barra: (Aveiro) Portugal 1,290km SSW 4y 4m 6d
Freshly dead (injury)	16-06-2017	Dorchester: (Dorset) 84km S 14y 11m 13d
FP86226 Adult	31-10-2005	Wingmore Farm, Stoke Orchard: (Glos.)
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2005 - 2017	29 sightings Gloucestershire area
Alive (last sighting)	25-05-2017	Northway (S. Glos) 57km SW 11y 6m 24d
FH21123 Adult	12-04-2008	near Hempsted, Gloucester:
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2005 - 2017	20 sightings Gloucestershire area
Alive (last sighting)	15-07-2017	Shawell: (Leics) 98km NE 9y 3m 3d
GC13194 Nestling	26-06-2006	Central Bristol:
Sick (injury)	03-04-2017	The Strand, London: 170km E 10y 9m 8d
GV03366 Nestling	24-06-2016	Central Bristol:
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-11-2017	The Lizard: (Cornwall) 249km SW 1y 4m 14d
GV42990 Adult	02-06-2017	Dock, Barrow-in-Furness: (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-12-2017	Blagdon Lake: 310km S 0y 6m 1d
D6588 Adult male	22-05-2012	(Guernsay) Channel Islands
Alive (colour ring seen)	24-06-2015	Bath: 210km N 3y 1m 2d
D6806 Second-year	24-05-2012	(Guernsey) Channel Islands
Freshly dead	30-06-2016	Bristol: 217km N 4y 1m 6d

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

GV03439 Nestling	30-06-2016	Bristol.
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-02-2017	Hyde Park: (London) 168km E 0y 7m 9d
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-12-2017	Regents' Park: (London) 168km E 1y 5m 22d
GN75410 Nestling	25-06-2005	Central Bristol:.
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2005 - 2009	7 sightings in Gloucestershire area
Freshly dead (hit by car)	12-08-2017	Mayfield Park: (Bristol) 4km 12y 1m 18d
GN84056 First-year	29-10-2005	near Hempsted, Gloucester:
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2005 - 2017	22 sightings in Gloucestershire area
Alive (last sighting)	30-08-2017	Shortwood Landfill Site: 43km SSW 11y 5m 8d
GC22626 Adult	11-11-2006	near Hempsted, Gloucester:
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2008 - 2017	17 sightings Bath, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire
Alive (last sighting)	18-08-2017	Calne: (Wiltshire) 51km SSE 10y 9m 7d
GN84357 First-year	28-10-2006	near Hempsted, Gloucester:
Alive (colour mark sightings)	2006 - 2017	24 sightings in Gloucestershire area
Alive (last sighting)	08-06-2017	Northway (S. Glos.) 42km SSW 10y 7m 11d
GV03439 Nestling	30-06-2016	Bristol: (Bristol)
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-02-2017	Hyde Park: (London) 168km E 0y 7m 9d
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-12-2017	Regents' Park: (London) 168km E 1y 5m 22d

Great Black-backed Gull*Larus marinus*

MA09120 Nestling	19-06-2004	Denny Island, Bristol Channel: (Newport)
Unknown (ring only)	12-10-2017	Portishead: 4km (<13y 3m 23d?)

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos major*

CT90572 2nd-year Female	29-07-2012	Cam Valley, Cameley:
Caught by ringer	2013-2016	3 recaptures at Cam Valley, Cameley:
Last recapture	13-06-2017	Cam Valley - Cameley: 0km 4y 10m 15d

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

EZ91511 Nestling	17-06-2017	Cold Ashton: (South Gloucestershire)
Freshly dead (hit by car)	09-07-2017	Brislington: (Bristol) 14km W 0y 0m 22d
EZ25466 Nestling	02-06-2017	Yate: (South Gloucestershire)
Dead bird found	16-07-2017	Oldbury Power Station: 16km NW 0y 1m 14d
EZ25460 Nestling	02-06-2017	New Clingre Farm, Cam: (Gloucestershire)
Sick (natural causes)	18-11-2017	Hawkesbury, Yate: 14km SSE 0y 5m 16d

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

L006030 First-year Male	16-01-2010	Cam Valley, Cameley:
Caught by ringer	22 -11- 2015	Cam Valley, Cameley: 0km 5y 10m 6d
Last recapture	06-12- 2016	Cam Valley, Cameley: 0km 6y 10m 20d

L006226 Juvenile Male	02-08-2010	Cam Valley, Cameley:
Caught by ringer	2012 - 2013	3 recaptures at Cam Valley, Cameley:
Last recapture	23-01-2017	Cam Valley - Cameley: 0km 6y 5m 21d
L057335 Juvenile Female	31-07-2010	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2010 - 2016	8 recaptures at CVL
Last recapture	07-01-2017	CVL: 0km 6y 5m 7d
L150737 First-year	17-01-2012	Timsbury, Bath:
Freshly dead (cat)	10-04-2017	Near Timsbury: 2km 5y 2m 24d
Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>		
L006500 First-year male	14-08-2011	Cam Valley, Cameley
Caught by ringer	2012-2015	3 recaptures at Cam Valley, Cameley
Last recapture	24-10-2016	Cam valley, Cameley: 0km 5y 2m 10d
Bearded Tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>		
Z676169 Full-grown Female	25-10-2015	CVL:
Caught by ringer	08-10-2017	Stodmarsh: (Kent) 263km E 1y 11m 13d
Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>		
D676461 Adult Female	04-05-2014	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2014 - 2016	3 recaptures at CVL
Last recapture	14-05-2017	CVL: 0km 3y 0m 10d
S600711 Full-grown	14-04-2017	Littleton Brick Pits:
Caught by ringer	11-06-2017	CVL: 34km S 0y 1m 28d
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		
HXD394 Full-grown	28-09-2015	CVL:
Caught by ringer	14-05-2017	Calf of Man: 338km NNW 1y 7m 16d
JKB800 First-year	29-10-2016	Littleton Brick Pits:
Caught by ringer	28-12-2016	Colyton: (Devon) 104km SSW 0y 1m 29d
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		
HDX298 Full-grown	13-04-2015	Portishead Wharf Lane: (North Somerset)
Caught by ringer	04-04-2017	Portland Bill: (Dorset) 110km S 1y 11m 22d
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		
Y345849 First-year Male	21-04-2012	CVL:
Caught by ringer	16-06-2013	CVL: 0km 1y 1m 26d
Caught by ringer	14-05-2017	CVL: 0km 5y 0m 23d
Y696939 Juvenile Male	15-07-2012	CVL:
Caught by ringer	10-05-2015	CVL: 0km 2y 9m 25d
Caught by ringer	21-05-2017	CVL: 0km 4y 10m 6d

Z676066 First-year Female	28-09-2015	CVL:
Caught by ringer	17-12-2016	Broad Oak: (Devon) 82km SW 1y 2m 19d
S412169 First-year Male	09-09-2016	Cam Valley - Cameley:
Caught by ringer	17-09-2016	Bransbury (Hants) 82km ESE 0y 0m 8d

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

L059203 Adult	01-05-2011	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2011 - 2014	3 recaptues CVL
Last recapture	14-05-2017	CVL: 0km 6y 0m 13d
Y697788 Adult	11-05-2013	CVL:
Caught by ringer	29-04-2017	CVL: 0km 3y 11m 18d
D676655 Adult Female	17-05-2014	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2014 - 2017	3 recaptues at CVL
Last recapture	03-06-2017	CVL: 0km 3y 0m 17d

Sedge Warbler*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Z549111 Adult Female	26-06-2016	Loch Spynie: (Moray)
Caught by ringer	10-05-2017	Littleton Brick Pits: 674km S 0y 10m 14d
Z488477 Adult Female	23-07-2016	Llyn Ystumlllyn: (Gwynedd)
Caught by ringer	12-08-2017	CVL: 210km SSE 1y 0m 20d
Z843040 First-year	11-08-2015	South Milton Ley: (Devon)
Caught by ringer	29-04-2017	CVL: 146km NE 1y 8m 18d
Y697718 Full-grown	21-04-2013	CVL:
Caught by ringer	13-04-2017	Alderney (Ch. Islands) 181km S 3y 11m 23d

Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

V929721 Juvenile	08-08-2008	CVL:
Caught by ringer	29-07-2017	CVL: 0km 8y 11m 21d
V929292 First-year Female	02-08-2008	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2011 - 2016	4 recaptures at CVL:
Last recapture	14-05-2017	CVL: 0km 8y 9m 12d
X297326 Adult Female	10-05-2009	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2015 - 2016	2 recaptures at CVL:
Last recapture	03-06-2017	CVL: 0km 8y 0m 24d
L056162 Adult Male	21-05-2010	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2011 -2016	7 recaptures at CVL:
Last recapture	07-05-2017	CVL: 0km 6y 11m 16d

S180510 First-year	16-08-2016	Pett Level, Sussex: (East Sussex)
Caught by ringer	18-05-2017	Littleton Brick Pits: 241km WNW 0y 9m 2d
Caught by ringer	17-07-2017	Littleton Brick Pits: 241km WNW 0y 11m 1d
Z677988 Juvenile	13-07-2016	CVL:
Caught by ringer	05-08-2017	Pett Level, Sussex: 234km ESE 1y 0m 23d
Z386301 Adult Female	07-05-2015	Portishead Wharf Lane: (North Somerset)
Caught by ringer	06-05-2016	Teifi Marshes: 147km WNW 0y 11m 29d
Caught by ringer	31-07-2017	Teifi Marshes: 147km WNW 2y 2m 24d
D179513 Adult Female	01-06-2013	Portland Bill: (Dorset)
Caught by ringer	06-07-2017	Littleton Brick Pits: 123km N 4y 1m 5d
AKA6349 First-year	10-08-2017	Belvide, near Brewood: (Staffordshire)
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i>		
TE68394 Juvenile Male	21-07-2012	Cam Valley, Cameley:
Caught by ringer	02-12-2012	Cam Valley - Cameley: 0km 0y 4m 11d
Caught by ringer	26-10-2016	Cam Valley - Cameley: 0km 4y 3m 5d
Last recapture	06-12-2016	Cam Valley - Cameley: 0km 4y 4m 15d
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		
HJH176 Juvenile	24-08-2014	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2014 - 2016	5 recaptues at CVL
Last recapture	16-11-2017	CVL: 0km 3y 2m 23d
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>		
RZ49681 First-year	04-12-2016	Walton in Gordano: (North Somerset)
Dead	02-09-2017	Myllarinniitty: Finland 1,960km ENE 0y 8m 29d
9X83649 First-year	27-10-2015	Ruiselede: (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium
Caught by ringer	05-11-2017	Walton in Gordano: 434km W 2y 0m 9d
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		
Y103870 First-year	09-09-2012	Walton in Gordano: (North Somerset)
Caught by ringer	2012 - 2107	6 recaptures at Walton in Gordano:
Last recapture	02-11-2017	Walton in Gordano: 0km 5y 1m 24d
Y697033 Juvenile	22-07-2012	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2012 - 2017	6 recaptures at CVL:
Last recapture	29-07-2017	CVL: 0km 5y 0m 7d
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		
L058522 First-year Male	09-10-2010	CVL:
Caught by ringer	18-02-2012	CVL: 0km 1y 4m 9d
Caught by ringer	16-12-2012	CVL: 0km 2y 2m 7d
Last recapture	21-01-2017	CVL: 0km 6y 3m 12d
S711917 Full-grown Female	14-03-2017	Fishpool Hill, Bristol: (South Gloucestershire)
Caught by ringer	03-11-2017	Dungeness: (Kent) 256km ESE 0y 7m 20d

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

TR61642 First-year Male	08-01-2016	Weston Down: (North Somerset)
Freshly dead	16-04-2017	Portishead: (North Somerset) 0km 1y 3m 8d
TV27275 Juvenile Female	28-08-2016	Littleton Brick Pits:
Caught by ringer	27-11-2016	Fishpool Hill, Bristol: (S. Gloucestershire) 12km S 0y 2m 30d
NY91514 Full-grown Male	28-01-2017	Littleton Brick Pits:
Freshly dead (hit glass)	17-06-2017	Tockington: (South Gloucestershire) 5km 0y 4m 20d
NY77771 First-year Male	29-08-2017	Fishpool Hill, Bristol: (South Gloucestershire)
Freshly dead (cat)	30-09-2017	Brentry: (Bristol) 3km 0y 1m 1d

Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

S200406 Adult Male	23-10-2016	Walton in Gordano: (North Somerset)
Caught by ringer	06-11-2017	Larchant: (Seine-et-Marne) France 524km SE 1y 0m 14d

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

S600656 First-year Male	15-03-2017	Littleton Brick Pits:
Freshly dead (hit by car)	27-05-2017	Dunadry: (Antrim) 417km NNW 0y 2m 12d
S510602 Juvenile	28-08-2016	Llys Athro, Pontrhydfendigaid: (Ceredigion)
Freshly dead (hit glass)	04-03-2017	Lower Langford:130km SE 0y 6m 4d
S510936 First-year	19-11-2016	Llys Athro, Pontrhydfendigaid: (Ceredigion)
Caught by ringer	23-11-2017	Littleton Brick Pits: 115km SE 1y 0m 4d
Z035878 First-year Male	04-11-2014	Portland Bill: 50°30'N 2°27'W (Dorset)
Caught by ringer	12-02-2017	Weston Down: (N. Som.) 109km NNW 2y 3m 8d

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

L059298 Adult Male	22-05-2011	CVL:
Caught by ringer	2012 - 2015	4 recaptures at CVL:
Last recapture	14-05-2017	CVL: 0km 5y 11m 22d

The need for descriptions

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

Why is documentation required?

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

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

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

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

How much should I write?

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

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

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

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

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

Description format

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

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

Can I just send a photograph?

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

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

Why do we reject some records?

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

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

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

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

Who needs to submit the description?

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

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

Do any species cause particular problems?

Amongst others, two species stand out as having high rejection rates:

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

Goshawk -- A 'difficult' species that is hard to describe accurately. A bird that looks like large Sparrowhawk is probably just that. The reference here is Keith Vinicombe's identification article in the 2004 edition of this Report.

Which species qualify as rare or scarce?

The list of species set out overleaf is reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. Species in italics have not yet been recorded in the Avon area but are on the list because they are not considered as national rarities by the British Birds Rarity Committee (BBRC). The figures in brackets give the number of live individuals recorded in the Avon area between 1983 and 2016, except for Tree Sparrow and Nightingale which have only just been added to the list.

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

As well as the species and subspecies listed on the next page, we also require descriptions for:

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

When should I send the description?

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

Where should I send the description?

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

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

Will I be told if my record has been accepted?

In addition to the 100 to 150 rare bird descriptions each year we receive over a hundred-thousand standard records; as such the Recorder does not have the time to contact an individual to advise whether a record has been accepted or not. However, should you wish to query a particular record decision please direct your enquiry to the Recorder.

List of species requiring description

Whooper Swan (62)	Crane ³ (14)	Hooded Crow (7)
Bean Goose (29)	Stone-curlew (10)	Penduline Tit (2)
Pink-footed Goose (12)	Black-winged Stilt (2)	Willow Tit (51)
American Wigeon (2)	American Golden Plover (3)	Bearded Tit (109)
Green-winged Teal (18)	Kentish Plover (7)	<i>Short-toed Lark</i>
Ring-necked Duck (29)	Dotterel (18)	Woodlark (22)
Lesser Scaup (10)	Temminck's Stint (11)	Shore Lark (9)
Eider ¹ (2)	Purple Sandpiper ¹ (4)	Red-rumped Swallow (3)
Long-tailed Duck (61)	White-rumped Sandpiper (5)	Greenish Warbler (1)
<i>Surf Scoter</i>	Buff-breasted Sandpiper (6)	Pallas's Warbler (2)
Velvet Scoter (42)	Pectoral Sandpiper (37)	Yellow-browed Warbler (51)
Quail ² (6)	Red-necked Phalarope (7)	<i>Radde's Warbler</i>
Red-throated Diver (71)	Grey Phalarope (80)	Dusky Warbler (2)
Black-throated Diver (15)	Pomarine Skua ¹ (250)	Wood Warbler in autumn (9)
Great Northern Diver (53)	Arctic Skua ¹ (40)	<i>Barred Warbler</i>
<i>White-billed Diver</i>	Long-tailed Skua (12)	Dartford Warbler (47)
Fulmar ¹ (9)	Great Skua ¹ (35)	Subalpine Warbler (1)
Cory's Shearwater (2)	Puffin (5)	<i>Icterine Warbler</i> (1)
<i>Great Shearwater</i>	Black Guillemot (2)	Melodious Warbler (1)
Sooty Shearwater (0)	Razorbill (47)	<i>Blyth's Reed Warbler</i>
Manx Shearwater ¹ (12)	Little Auk (19)	Marsh Warbler (3)
Balearic Shearwater (1)	Guillemot ¹ (1)	Waxwing
<i>Wilson's Petrel</i>	White-winged Black Tern (10)	Rose-coloured Starling (10)
Storm Petrel ¹ (13)	Roseate Tern (5)	Nightingale
Leach's Petrel (206)	Sabine's Gull (39)	Bluethroat (4)
Shag (117)	Ring-billed Gull (74)	Red-flanked Bluetail (1)
Night-heron (5)	Caspian Gull (10)	<i>Red-breasted Flycatcher</i>
Cattle Egret (15)	Iceland/Kumlien's Gull (43/6)	Tree Sparrow
Purple Heron (4)	Glaucous Gull (16)	Citrine Wagtail (2)
White Stork (14)	Turtle Dove (25)	Richard's Pipit (23)
Glossy Ibis (15)	Long-eared Owl (131)	<i>Olive-backed Pipit</i>
Spoonbill (51)	Nightjar ⁴ (8)	Hawfinch (91)
Red-necked Grebe (17)	Alpine Swift (4)	Common Rosefinch (4)
Slavonian Grebe (55)	Hoopoe (34)	Twite (37)
Honey-buzzard (21)	Bee-eater (17)	Common Redpoll (18)
Black Kite (3)	Wryneck (57)	<i>Arctic Redpoll</i>
White-tailed Eagle (1)	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Parrot Crossbill</i>
Hen Harrier (94)	Red-footed Falcon (2)	Serin (2)
Montagu's Harrier (12)	Golden Oriole (17)	Lapland Bunting (51)
Goshawk (50)	Red-backed Shrike (8)	Cirl Bunting (3)
Rough-legged Buzzard (0)	Great Grey Shrike (16)	<i>Ortolan Bunting</i>
Spotted Crake (41)	Woodchat Shrike (6)	Little Bunting (3)
Corncrake (6)	Chough (2)	

¹ records away from the Estuary/coast, including records upstream of the old Severn Bridge

² sight records of non-singing birds away from established breeding areas

³ claims of wild birds

⁴ records away from the Mendips

Subspecies

Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (3), Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (36), Arctic Dunlin *Calidris alpina arctica* (30), 'Continental' Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa l. limosa* (24), 'Nordic' Jackdaw *Monedula monedula monedula* (7), Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* (64), Scandinavian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita abietinus* (1), Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* (12), Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava thunbergi* (1), and Scandinavian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus littoralis* (14).

Record submission for the commonly occurring species

All records of Common, Fairly Common, Uncommon and Scarce species are welcome. For the uncommon and scarce species we are keen to receive details of all sightings and, where available, any supplementary information. Reports of the abundant, common and fairly common species are also welcome with emphasis on the aspects listed below.

We welcome details of every observation of the following fairly common to scarce species:

Bewick's Swan, all geese and ducks, Red-legged and Grey Partridge, Quail, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Bittern, Little Egret, all grebes, all hawks, Water Rail, all waders, all terns, Little, Mediterranean, Yellow-legged and Great Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove, Cuckoo, all owls, Kingfisher, all woodpeckers, all falcons, Ring-necked Parakeet, Firecrest, Marsh Tit, Sand Martin, Cetti's, Wood and Grasshopper Warbler, Dipper, Ring Ouzel, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, all chats, Yellow and Grey Wagtail, Tree, Rock and Water Pipit, Brambling, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll, Crossbill, Yellowhammer, Snow, Reed and Corn Bunting.

For the common and abundant species we would particularly like to receive the following data:

- Evidence (definite and/or suggestive) of breeding of the following species: Mute Swan, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Moorhen, Coot, Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gull, Swift, Kingfisher, Jay, Goldcrest, House Martin, Willow, Garden, Sedge and Reed Warbler, Lesser and Common Whitethroat, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Goldfinch, Linnets and Bullfinch.
- First and last sightings of all summer and winter visitors.
- Records for Blackcap and Chiffchaff in winter, and Black-headed and Common Gull in summer.
- Timed counts of passage (both spring and autumn) or cold-weather movements.
- Size and site of all roosts at any time of the year.
- Large flock counts.
- Unusual activity, including early and/or late song, display or breeding, individuals at unusual sites or with aberrant plumage.
- Regular counts from well-watched sites including gardens.
- Individuals that have obviously or probably escaped from captivity, or who are considered to be a hybrid.

Records should detail the species, numbers present, date seen and the site with a grid reference if possible, and any further information. Records can be submitted in a number of ways as follows:

- To the BOC, either monthly by e-mail to bocbirdsightings@hotmail.co.uk, or by the 'Contact us' page on the BOC website at <http://bristolornithologicalclub.co.uk>, or daily by e-mail to the Avon birding blog with address bocbirds@gmail.com or via Twitter at [@bristolbirding](https://twitter.com/bristolbirding).
- By putting the details on the BTO's BirdTrack website – for details see <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/taking-part> – we recommend this method.
- Annually, but before the end of January of the following year, by e-mail to avonbirdrecorder@gmail.com or by post. Ideally they should be on an excel spreadsheet with each record on a separate line and dates given in the format: dd/mm/yyyy.
- Note that BTO WeBS counts and other BTO and local survey data are automatically made available to us, and so you do not need to submit them again.

All records are kept at the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) in Bristol. They are properly archived for conservation and scientific enquiries, sometimes of considerable importance to the wild-life of the area.

Systematic list observers

The following list gives the names of the observers whose records have been used while preparing this Report. AOG is very grateful for all of these contributions, the Report could not exist without them. If your name have been misspent, or missed out complete, we apologise and ask you to inform the Editor whose address is given on page 4.

A Adams, M Ames, P Andrews, R Andrews, DJ Angell, J Angell, K Anstey, P Appleton, A Archer, M Aspinall, P Atkey, P Baber, L Bailey, M Bailey, P Bailey, K Bainbridge, C Baker, M Baker, K Balch, Z Banks, A Barclay, J Barnett, P Barnett, N Barrett, R Beale, N Beamson, R Bedwell, L Bellerby, M Benson, V Bergin, S Bilner, R&P Bingham, P Black, S&A Black, S Blackmore, M Blackwell, B Blake, K Blake, PJ Blenkiron, E Blessitt, D Body, P Bonser, T Borash, L Botham, C Bovis, C Bowden, P Bowdler, I Bowering, PD Bowerman, A Bowler, D Bowring, D Bowring, P Bowyer, J Boyd, E Brain, P Brain, P Brennan, B Brewer, D Brooke-Taylor, R&R Brown, B Buckle, R&M Bulmer, C Bungay, K Burford, L Burnus, J Butcher, N Caldicott, C Cape, R Capel, S Carder, A Carlisle, V Carpenter, K Carruthers, JJ Cassidy, V Castle, P Cattermole, L Chalmers, R Chandrasakera, B&M Channon, P Chapman, PB Chapman, A Chard, T Chard, G Chown, A Christopher, P Clack, J Clark, D Clarke, R Clipson, N Coldicott, B Cole, M Coller, PA Collins, M Collis, A Cook, A&B Cook, P Coslett, M Cottis, P Cousins, G Cox, C Craig, C Crew, A Cross, P Crouter, A Crowe, J Croxton, S Cabbage, D&N Cullen, MJ Cumming, L Cunningham, R Curber, S Curtis, M Dadds, G Daniels, As Davies, E Davies, G Davies, K Davies, S Davies, A Davis, AH Davis, E Davis, M Davis, S Davis, A Dawes, K Day, N Delaney, P Delve, L Dennehy, M Dewhurst, W Dickson, C Dodd, P Dolton, A Dommatt, P Dommatt, P Doudney, P Doyle, G Dring, JW Duckworth, JF Duffy, B Dursley, L Dutton, P Dyke, I Dykes, P Dykes, W Earp, D Eccles, B Edge, RJ Emery, S Emery, D Esam, P Evans, S Evans, PG Farmer, M Fenton, J Fiddock, C Finch, R Fleetwood, C Fletcher, A Ford, E Ford, K Ford, R Ford, T Ford, P Foss, I Foster, K Fowler, A Fraiser, P Francis, A Fraser, B Frazer, D French, J Frith, D Gale, J Gale, S Galloway, L Gardiner, N Gate, M George, A Gibb, B Gibbs, D Gibbs, A Gilbert, R Giles, D Godfrey, D Goodliffe, A Goodwin, M Gorely, M Gray, A Gregory, P Gregory, J Griffiths, P Haigh, M Hale, S Hale, T Hale, C Hall, K Hall, O Hambley, A Hamill, P Hancock, N Hankins, D Hanks, J Hanney, J Hansford, R Harding, P Hardyman Richards, R Hargreaves, J Harris, P Harris, S Harris, G Harvey, R Hastings, D Havercroft, P Hawkins, N Hawkridge, R Hawley, M Hayes, B Hayward, J Hazell, P Hazelwood, J Head, R Hearn, ME Hedges, P Hemming, A Hewett, W Hewitt, N Hewston, D Hickey, C Higgins, RJ Higgins, D Hill, M Hill, M Hinch, B Hindle, J Hinton, B Hoare, M Hobbs, A Hockey, H Hockey, C Hodgson, J Holbrook, R Holbrook, N Holden. P Hopkin, D Horlick, K Horrocks, J Hosier, P House, S Howe, DT Howes, L Hrynakowski, G Hudd, J Hudson, D Hughes, G Hughes, C Hunt, M Hunt, J&P Huntley, M Hutchinson, M Hynam, L Illingworth, C Ingham, P Insole, S Insole, A Irving, S Isagar, G Jackson, MA Jackson, R Jackson, C James, M Jenkins, M Johnson, LJ Jolliffe, R Jolliffe, C Jones, G Jones, S Jones, T Jonny, A Jordan, R Keel, R Kelsh, N Kempson, J Killey, R Kinchin, W King, P Kirmond, D Knowles, R Lambert, WA Lambson, B Lancaster, M Landen, D Langford, R Laughton, G Lawlor, RP Lawrence, C Lazenby, M Leighton, G Lemon, C Lewis, A Lipczynski, N Lodge, D Lumkin, S Lynett, I Macfarlane, N Machin, S Mackie, G Maddison, J Margetts, T Marks, P Marsden, T Marsh, F Marshall, P Marshall, B Martin, JP Martin, R Martin, P Massett, P Masters, S Matthews, K Matthewson, R Maud, P Maxfield, H Maynard, I Mcfarlane, T McGrath, J McGreal, D McLaughlin, H MCPhillimy, P McSweeney, A Mears, B Medland, M Meechem, J Mercer, A Middleton, R Mielcarek, N Milbourne, R Miles, L Milner, P Milsom, M Milson, J Minifie, S Monkhouse, A Morgan, G&A Morris, RGW Morris, R Morrison, J Mortin, S&C Mott, M Moxon, L Napier, R Nash, F Neate, D Nevitt, D Newman, M Newstead, D Newton, M Noel-Smith, M&C O'Connor, B Ofield, J Oliver, L Ozsanlav-Harris, J Packer, N Page, K Pailing, R Palmer, S&M Pannell, N Park, E Parker, J Parry, M Parsons, M Patch, J Payne, D Pearce, M Pearce, B Penny, C Perry, G Pictor, G Pictor, B Piercey, A Plant, D Playle, M Plenty, V Polley, G Poole, D Pope, P Poulson, S Poulson, D Poulton, J&M Powell, N Preater, L Presland, D Price, J Pridie, S&J Prince, D&S Pritchett, L Pryce, RJ Prytherch, G Pudney, R Purveur, P Quinn, J Quinell, GH Rabin, A Ramesh, A Rawson, D Reader, S Reese, DM Reeves, A Rhodes, J Rickard, T Riddle, G Roberts, J Roberts, L Roberts, N Roberts, P Roberts, D Robertson, C Robinson, D Robson, K Robson, M Rogers, HE Rose, J Rossetti, S Rowden, C Rushton, M Saffery, M Sage, J Sakel, A Salter, M Salter, J Sanders, E Sandford, S Sanins, G Sapsed, A Sardeman, V Savery, S Sayers, RL Scantlebury, AD Scott, D Scott, M&H Scott, R Scott, S Selwood, R Setter, T Sheasby, M Shersby, S Simmons, D Singleton, R Skipp, A Slade, N Sluman, D Smallshire, C Smith, D&M Smith, H Smith, J&M Smith, K Smith, M Smith, N Smith, P Smith, I Squire, Ge Stacey, Gr Stacey, A Stagg, R&G Stanton, R Staples, I Stapp, S Stevens, CJ Stone, W Stops, G Suter, K Sutton-Spence, L Sweetland, H Taffs, M Tayler, P Taylor, T Taylor, A Teague, C Teague, D Teague, G Thoburn, G&M Thomas, J Thomas, B Thompson, J Thorogood, Z Tinder-Widdess, J&V Tottle, JV Towler, A Town, L&W Tucker, N Tucker, W Turner, J Tye, R Veal, C Vines, KE Vinicombe, D Wareham, N Warren, S Warren, T Warren, T Watson, D Watts, A Waygood, D Webber, R Webber, J&J Wells, H West, T Weston, A White, D White, R White, W White, D Whittle, S Whyte, T Wilkinson, C Williams, J Williams, K Williams, L Williams, P Williams, R Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, J Wilmott, S Wilmshurst, D Winnie, S Wood, P&C Woolams, M Woolley, N Workman, T Worsfold, L Wright, L Wyatt, G Youdale.

Gazetteer

Most of the major local sites are shown on the map on the back cover; this gazetteer lists many of the other sites that are mentioned in the Systematic List. Each site has a four-figure reference number (in the 100km square ST) showing the one-km square in which it is situated, and a two letter code showing the Unitary Authority in which it lies: **BA** for Bath and N E Somerset, **BR** for Bristol, **NS** for north Somerset, and **SG** for South Gloucestershire.

Abbey Wood, Bristol -- 6178 (SG)	Claverhan -- 4466 (NS)
Abbots Leigh -- 5373 (NS)	Claverton -- 7864 (BA)
Alveston -- 6388 (SG)	Cleeve Wood Reserve -- 4666 (NS)
Anchor Head -- 3062 (NS)	Clifton Down, Bristol -- 5673 (BR)
Arnos Vale -- 6071 (BR)	Clutton -- 6259 (BA)
Ashton Park -- 5572 (NS)	Compton Dando -- 6464 (BA)
Aust Cliff/Warth -- 5689 (SG)	Denny Island, CVL -- 5760 (BA)
Avon Gorge -- 5673 (BR)	Dolebury Warren Reserve -- 4558 (NS)
Avonmouth Docks -- 5178 (BR)	Downend, Bristol -- 6577 (BR)
Badock's Wood, Bristol -- 5777 (BR)	Doynton -- 7274 (SG)
Banwell -- 3958 (NS)	Dowlais Farm, CI-Y -- 3868 (NS)
Barrow Hill -- 5167 (NS)	Dundry -- 5566 (NS)
Bath University -- 7764 (BA)	Dunkerton -- 7159 (BA)
Bathampton Meadows -- 7766 (BA)	Durdham Down, Bristol -- 5674 (BR)
Batheaston Reserve -- 7867 (BA)	Dyers Common -- 5583 (SG)
Bathford -- 7966 (BA)	East Harptree -- 5655 (BA)
Bedminster -- 5871 (BR)	Easton-in-Gordano -- 5175 (SG)
Bishop Sutton -- 5859 (BA)	Emerson's Green, Bristol -- 6776 (SG)
Bishopston, Bristol -- 5875 (BR)	Englishcombe -- 7162 (BA)
Blackberry Hill, Bristol -- 6177 (BR)	Failand -- 5773 (NS)
Blaise Woods -- 5678 (BR)	Farmborough -- 6660 (NS)
Bleadon Hill -- 3657 (NS)	Felton Common -- 5265 (NS)
Blind Yeo -- 3969 (NS)	Filton, Bristol -- 6079 (SG)
Bloomfield, Bath -- 7463 (BA)	Fishponds, Bristol -- 6376 (BR)
Brandon Hill, Bristol -- 5772 (BR)	Flax Bourton -- 5069 (NS)
Brentry -- 5879 (BR)	Folly Farm Reserve -- 6060 (BA)
Brislington -- 6270 (BR)	Frampton Cotterell -- 6682 (SG)
Bucklands Pool (Backwell Lake) -- 4769 (NS)	Frome Valley -- 6377 (BR)
Burledge Hill Reserve -- 5858 (BA)	Hall End -- 7086 (SG)
Burnett -- 6665 (BA)	Hallatrow -- 6357 (BA)
Butcombe -- 5161 (NS)	Hanham -- 6472 (SG)
Cadbury Camp -- 4572 (NS)	Happerton Farm -- 5274 (NS)
Cameley -- 6157 (BA)	Hawkesbury Upton -- 7687 (SG)
Camerton -- 6857 (BA)	Haydon Hill -- 6953 (BA)
Castle Green, Bristol -- 5973 (BR)	Henbury, Bristol -- 5678 (BR)
Chapel PII -- 5376 (NS)	Hengrove Park, Bristol -- 6069 (BR)
Charfield -- 7292 (SG)	Henleaze, Bristol -- 5876 (BR)
Charlton Field -- 6366 (BA)	Hicks Gate -- 6369 (BA)
Charmy Down -- 7670 (SG)	High Littleton -- 6458 (BA)
Chelvey -- 4867 (NS)	Hinton Blewitt -- 5956 (BA)
Chelwood -- 6861 (BA)	Hinton Charterhouse -- 7758 (BA)
Chew Stoke -- 5661 (NS)	Hoar Gout -- 5380 (BR)
Chittening Warth -- 5382 (SG)	Horfield, Bristol -- 5977 (BR)
Churchill -- 4459 (NS)	Horton -- 7584 (SG)
Clapton Moor Reserve -- 4573 (NS)	Horwood Farm -- 7387 (SG)

Hotwells, Bristol -- 5772 (BR)
Hursley Hill, Whitchurch -- 6165 (BA)
Iford -- 7959 (BA)
Iron Acton -- 6883 (SG)
Jubbs Wood -- 5174 (NS)
Kendleshire -- 6679 (SG)
Kenn -- 4169 (NS)
Kewstoke -- 3364 (NS)
Kingsgate Park, Yate -- 7181 (SG)
Kingston Seymour -- 4066 (NS)
Ladye Bay -- 4072 (NS)
Langford -- 4560 (NS)
Lansdown -- 7268 (BA)
Leap Valley, Downend -- 6577 (BR)
Littleton Warth -- 5890 (SG)
Locking -- 3659 (NS)
Longwell Green -- 6571 (BA)
Lower Knowle Farm -- 5884 (SG)
Lower Littleton -- 5563 (SG)
Lower Woods -- 7487 (SG)
Lulsgate - 5065 (NS)
Marksbury -- 6662 (BA)
Middle Hope -- 3366 (NS)
Montpelier -- 5974 (BR)
Moorgrove Wood -- 5578 (SG)
Newbridge, Bath -- 7165 (BA)
Northwik Warth -- 5587 (SG)
Orchard Pool -- 5485 (SG)
Over -- 5982 (SG)
Oxbow Reserve, Bath -- 7766 (BA)
Parks Farm, Tormorton -- 7879 (SG)
Pill -- 5276 (NS)
Pilning (village and wetlands) -- 5585 (SG)
Portbury -- 4975 (NS)
Portbury Wharf NR -- 4877 (NS)
Prior Park, Bath -- 7663 (BA)
Publow -- 6264 (BA)
Puxton Moor Reserve -- 4063 (NS)
Redhill -- 4963 (NS)
Redland, Bristol -- 5875 (BR)
Redwick -- 5585 (SG)
Regil -- 5363 (NS)
Rickford -- 4959 (NS)
Rowberrow -- 4658 (NS)
Royal Portbury Dock -- 5077 (NS)
Sand Bay -- 3365 (NS)
Sea Mills, Bristol -- 5576 (BR)
Shepperdine -- 6295 (SG)
Shirehampton -- 5376 (BR)
Shirehill Farm -- 7876 (SG)
Siston -- 6674 (SG)
Sneyd Park, Bristol -- 5575 (BR)
Snuff Mills, Bristol -- 6276 (BR)
St Andrews Park, Bristol -- 5975 (BR)
St Annes, Bristol -- 6272 (BR)
St Phillips Marsh, Bristol -- 6972 (BR)
Stanton Drew -- 5963 (NS)
Stanton Prior -- 6762 (BA)
Stantonbury Hill -- 6763 (BA)
Stockwood Reserve -- 6269 (BR)
Stoke Bishop, Bristol -- 5676 (BR)
Stowey -- 5959 (BA)
Stup Pill -- 5282 (BR)
Sutton Hill -- 5958 (BA)
Swineford -- 6968 (BA)
The Niatts -- 5958 (SG)
Tickenham -- 4571 (NS)
Totterdwon, Bristol -- 6071 (BR)
Tunley -- 6959 (BA)
Tyntesfield -- 5171 (NS)
Tytherington -- 6788 (SG)
Ubley -- 5358 (NS)
UWE -- 6277 (BR)
Uphill -- 3259 (NS)
Walborough -- 3157 (NS)
Walton Common Reserve -- 4273 (NS)
Warmley -- 6773 (SG)
Welton Vale -- 6755 (BA)
West Harptree -- 5656 (BA)
West Littleton -- 7675 (SG)
Westerleigh -- 7080 (SG)
Weston Moor Reserve -- 4473 (NS)
Whitchurch -- 6167 (BR)
Wick -- 7072 (SG)
Wick Warth -- 3566 (NS)
Willsbridge Reserve -- 6670 (SG)
Winford -- 5465 (NS)
Woodspring Bay -- 3566 (NS)
Woollard -- 6364 (BA)
Wooscombe Bottom -- 6365 (BA)
Worlebury Hill -- 3162 (NS)
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Oystercatcher	65	Stock Dove	98
Pallid Harrier	57	Stonechat	140
Peregrine	109	Storm Petrel	47
Pheasant	45	Swallow	120
Pied Flycatcher	138	Swift	103
Pied Wagtail	145	Tawny Owl	101
Pintail	33	Teal	31
Pochard	36	Temminck's Stint	75
Pomarine Skua	84	Tree Pipit	147
Purple Heron	53	Tree Sparrow	143
Purple Sandpiper	76	Treecreeper	130
Quail	43	Tufted Duck	37
Raven	113	Turnstone	73
Red-backed Shrike	110	Turtle Dove	99
Red Kite	56	Velvet Scoter	41
Red-breasted Merganser	42	Water Pipit	149
Red-crested Pochard	36	Water Rail	61
Red-legged Partridge	44	Waxwing	129
Redshank	80	Wheatear	141
Redstart	139	Whimbrel	70
Redwing	136	Whinchat	139
Reed Bunting	155	White-fronted Goose	22
Reed Warbler	128	White Wagtail	146
Ring Ouzel	133	Whitethroat	127
Ring-billed Gull	93	Whooper Swan	22
Ring-necked Duck	37	Wigeon	29
Ring-necked Parakeet	110	Willow Warbler	125
Ringed Plover	67	Wood Sandpiper	79
Robin	137	Wood Warbler	124
Rock Pipit	148	Woodchat Shrike	110
Rook	112	Woodcock	81
Ruddy Duck	43	Woodlark	118
Ruff	74	Woodpigeon	98
Sabine's Gull	89	Wren	131
Sand Martin	120	Yellow Wagtail	143
Sanderling	75	Yellow-browed Warbler	123
Sandwich Tern	87	Yellowhammer	155
Scaup	38	Yellow-legged Gull	95
Sedge Warbler	128		

