

West Midland Bird Club

Annual Report No. 64

1997





Key

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|--|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | Land between 400-800ft (122-244m) | | Rivers |
| | Land over 800 ft (244m) | | Motorways |
| | Main towns and cities | | West Midland Bird Club Reserves |
| | County boundaries | | Other principal birdwatching sites |



West Midland Bird Club

Annual Report No. 64

1997

The Annual Report of the West Midland Bird Club on the birds in the counties of Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire and the former West Midlands county.

Contents

2	Officers and Committee
3	Editorial
5	Birds in 1997
11	European Nightjars and other breeding birds of Cannock Chase
28	Classified Notes
172	Short Notes
174	Ringling in 1997
179	Submission of Records
180	County Lists
187	Gazetteer
194	Key to Contributors

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*(Front Cover Photo) **Black-tailed Godwit** at Blithfield Reservoir (Phill Ward).*

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Editorial

Little did I think, when I last edited the Annual Report, that twelve years later I would be doing so again. But members are understandably dissatisfied with its increasingly late publication and certainly those who take the trouble to submit records promptly, whether members or not, deserve better. So I agreed to help the county recorders to catch up. Theirs is not an easy task, as I know better than most, but they are dedicated workers who do a demanding job extremely well. It can also be a very rewarding job and I would strongly urge anyone keen to see an earlier or better Report to come forward and help them achieve it.

Lateness apart, the Club's Annual Report is highly regarded for its high standard and, in the role of temporary editor, I have not sought to make many changes from last year's excellent edition. There are, however, two changes of significance. Earlier this year, the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) published *The British List: The official list of birds of Great Britain* (1998) and the status, sequence of species and scientific names in the Classified Notes follow this new list. In practice, most readers will notice little change from previous years, except perhaps for Yellow-legged Gull reverting to a sub-species.

Of greater significance was which English names to adopt. With so many variations, some new-comers to birding are becoming confused. Consistency is therefore paramount and it makes sense for the Club to follow the lead of an authoritative national body. The English names used in *The British List* are intended to avoid any possible confusion world-wide. Consequently they involve a great many changes to the names in common use. The Club has therefore decided to adopt the names used by *British Birds* (1993), together with subsequent amendments. Since these seek to avoid confusion only within the Western Palearctic, there are fewer name changes. Many of the new names are the same as those in *The British List* anyway, but there are some differences. I know opinions over the new names are sharply divided and many readers will disapprove of this change, but mixing some new names with the old, as in recent reports, merely adds to the confusion and is untenable. For those who prefer them, the commonly used English names are shown in brackets where they differ from the new.

Returning after such a long time, three things have struck me. Firstly, the number of contributors to the Report has steadily risen over the years and I should like to say a special thank you to those who submit their records. As well as helping us to present a more informative and complete account of the Region's birdlife, you also assist us and others in fighting the conservation cause whenever important species or sites are threatened. Secondly, the range of coverage is now much wider, with contributors visiting many more sites and turning up some exciting finds in unexpected places. Lastly, I'm glad to say that more attention is now being paid to the commoner birds as well. Regrettably, this may be because they are common no longer, but it is a welcome trend nonetheless. Invariably, the conservation case hinges on the strength of the commoner species that regularly use a site and not on the rarities that turn up from time-to-time by pure chance.

I should also like to express my thanks to Richard Harbird and Frank Gribble for their European Nightjar report: to Bert Coleman for his informative ringing report: to Loyd Berry, Andy Lawrence and Jim Rushworth for their contributions to the Short Notes:

to the artists; Nigel Baskerville, John Broadbent, Rob Hume, Phil Jones, Alan Richards, Brett Westwood and Jim Winsper: to the photographers; Keith Stone, Neil Stych and Phill Ward: and to the county recorders and their teams:

Warwickshire: Jonathan Bowley, Steve Haynes, John Judge, Simon Roper and Carl Baggott.

Worcestershire: Richard Harbird, Terry Hinett, Gavin Peplow and Andy Warr.

Staffordshire: Gilly Jones, Neil Carter, Eric Clare, Dave Emley, Andy Lawrence, John Martin and Ben Reavey. Also Mark Sutton who has now stepped down after helping for several years.

West Midlands: Tim Hextell.

To achieve an earlier publication, tight deadlines had to be set, but through everyone's best endeavours these were nearly achieved. I know this required a lot of hard work on their part and I sincerely hope they will be rewarded by this standard being maintained, or even improved upon, in the future. Finally, I should like to thank Jim Winsper and my wife, Janet, for their much needed support with the editorship.

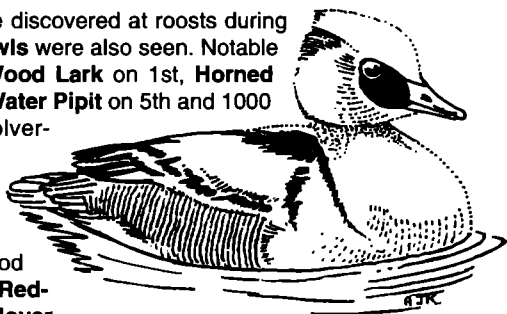
Graham Harrison

Birds in 1997

Following last year's record 242 species, it was perhaps inevitable that 1997 would be something on an anti-climax. Yet 229 species were recorded, which was just one below the ten-year average, while **Citrine Wagtail** was an addition to the regional list and **Icterine Warbler** to the Warwickshire list. By deciding to conform with *The British List*, published by the BOU in 1998, Yellow-legged Gull has been removed from the regional list as a separate species, but Hume's Warbler has been added.

With high pressure to the north-west of Britain, the cold weather of late December 1996 continued until **January** 10th, bringing easterly winds and temperatures below freezing during the day and down to -7°C overnight. This provoked a major influx of wildfowl from the Continent, which was experiencing its coldest winter for years. Sawbills and **Eurasian Wigeon** were especially involved. Among the birds from 1996 that were still present in the New Year's snow were **Shag**, **Tundra** and **Whooper Swans**, **White-fronted Geese** and **Twite**. With regular waders largely frozen out, an over-wintering **Little Stint** and the discovery of **Common Greenshank** on the 1st and **Common Redshank** on 2nd were most surprising. A **Great Bittern** on the 1st was also a cold weather wanderer and two **Red-breasted Mergansers** arrived at this time. Over a thousand **Goosanders** were also present along rivers and the larger, unfrozen waters, with a record 237 at Blithfield alone, but it was the impressive influx of at least 40 **Smew** – a total similar to last year's – that really attracted attention.

At least 27 **Long-eared Owls** were discovered at roosts during the month and four **Short-eared Owls** were also seen. Notable amongst the passerines were a **Wood Lark** on 1st, **Horned Lark** and two more **Twite** on 2nd, **Water Pipit** on 5th and 1000 **Pied Wagtails** roosting in Wolverhampton during the month. With south or south-west winds from 11th-17th, daytime temperatures rose, though the nights remained below freezing. During this period another **Great Bittern**, a further **Red-breasted Merganser**, a **Grey Plover** and one or two parties of **Bohemian Waxwings** were found. Strengthening



Smew (Alan Richards)

westerly winds then pushed a weather front across the Region on 17th/18th, allowing mild, unsettled weather to take hold until 24th. During this time two more **Great Bitterns** were discovered and a **Red Knot** was noted on 23rd. High pressure then persisted for the rest of the month. The winter's only significant movement of **Pink-footed Geese** occurred on 25th and a **Slavonian Grebe** on the same day was followed by three more the day after. Finally, a few more **White-fronted Geese** arrived on 27th. The month finished the driest January for 200 years.

The dominant high pressure began to fall quickly at the beginning of **February**, giving way to a mild, but unsettled month, with strong westerly or south-westerly winds. **Red-throated Diver**, **Tundra Swans** and **White-fronted Geese** were all new on the 2nd and a very unseasonal **Barn Swallow** was seen in Worcestershire on 7th. Two very

large flocks of 250 **Siskin** were also noted at this time, while an unseasonal **Common Sandpiper** and two **Firecrests** were found on 8th. The highlight of the month, though, was the discovery of an **American Wigeon** on 9th. Between more **Bohemian Waxwings** on 12th and 18th came a further **Wood Lark** on 13th, the first **Oystercatchers** on 15th and a second **Red-throated Diver** on the latter date. A second **Common Sandpiper** showed during a gale on 19th, a flock of 40 **Kittiwakes** on 20th provided the year's only sizeable movement and next day another **Red-breasted Merganser** arrived. Raptors then dominated the rest of the month, with three **Hen Harriers** between 23rd-27th and a **Red Kite** on 28th.

March proved to be the warmest and driest since 1990, with rainfall only a third of the average. It began unsettled, but mild, before pressure began to build on 5th, bringing spring-like weather on 6th, when **Dartford Warbler** and **Firecrest** fittingly arrived. They were followed by the first **Northern Wheatear** on 7th and the first **Sand Martin** on 8th. There was also a small movement of five **Rock Pipits** between 4th-26th, **Tundra Swans** began to return north and another **Red Kite** was noted on 7th. The high pressure then began to slip southwards over Europe, drawing mild winds in from the south-west during 12th-17th. **Grey Plover** and an early **Osprey** arrived on 11th, followed by an equally early pair of **Garganey** on the 13th, an early **Sanderling** and another **Firecrest** on 16th and a **Little Egret** on 17th. Variable winds from 18th-21st then brought cooler air and showers, before south-westerlies returned again from 22nd-27th. These provided a window for the main passage of **Meadow Pipits** to begin and for **Slavonian Grebe**, an early **Dotterel** and the first **Ring Ouzel** to put in appearances on 23rd. A mild day on 26th saw the first migrant **Barn Swallow** heading north, straight into a cold front which moved south on 27th bringing fresh north-westerly winds. As the front cleared and the wind abated, so a small movement of **Water Pipits** occurred between 27th-31st. With pressure building once again, the month closed with a **Red Kite** on 29th, another **Osprey** on 30th and **Little Egret** and an incredibly early **Garden Warbler** on 31st.

High pressure was dominant throughout much of **April**, bringing dry, settled weather, with rainfall only a quarter of the average. It began with two **Ospreys**, the first of seven that were to pass in the next sixteen days. A **Little Egret** on 2nd was followed by **Black-necked Grebe** and **Snow Bunting** on 4th, the latter being quite unusual at this time. A **Ring-billed Gull** was a nice find on 5th and the good raptor passage continued with three **Hen Harriers** between 3rd-8th. Light, easterlies and south-easterlies between 6th-9th brought another **Red Kite** on 9th and the first **Sandwich Tern** on 10th. The wind then turned northerly until 22nd, bringing cold nights. During this time there was a **Hoopoe** on 12th, the first **Common Swifts** arrived on 14th, another **Hen Harrier** was seen on 15th, **Bohemian Waxwings** were noted for the last time on 18th and further **Red Kites** were seen on 18th and 20th. The passage of **European Golden Plover** on the moors peaked on the 19th/20th, when birds were seen displaying, and the last **Redwing** was seen on 21st. The settled pattern was then broken for a short while as a series of fronts brought rain across between 24th-28th before high pressure once again became established. This was a classic weather situation for bringing down passing migrants, especially waders and terns, though numbers were small. Seven **Sanderling**, a **Bar-tailed Godwit**, 12 **Whimbrel**, a **Wood Sandpiper** and at least 40

White Wagtails appeared in heavy rain on 25th, including a regional record of 36 at Draycote. The next day brought another **Sanderling**, more **Whimbrel**, a **Little Tern** and three **Black-necked Grebes**, while 27th saw **Osprey**, **Red Knot** and **Sandwich, Arctic, Little** and 46 **Black Terns**. Another **Hoopoe** also appeared on the 27th, but the highlight was an **Alpine Swift** on the blustery 28th. Finally, another **Bar-tailed Godwit** arrived on 28th, while 29th brought a second **Wood Sandpiper** and saw the last **Fieldfare** depart.

May began with three days of very warm southerly winds which brought a party of 13 **Whimbrel** on 1st along with **Grey Plover**, **Bar-tailed Godwit** and a couple of **Spotted Redshanks**. Passing fronts then arrived from the west on 3rd, producing ahead of them an impressive movement of **Black Terns**, with 38 on 2nd and around 350 on 3rd. Caught up in the same system were one or two **Grey Plovers**, a party of 11 **Sandwich Terns** on 3rd and, perhaps, the **Ring-necked Duck** which was discovered on 2nd. The first of what was to prove a good influx of **Common Quail** was also discovered on 3rd. Largely unsettled weather then persisted until 21st, during which time there were further reports of **Black-necked Grebes**, **Little Egrets** and **Ospreys**. Another **Red Kite** passed through during snow and hail storms on 6th, to be followed by a further 11 **Whimbrel** and a strong movement of hirundines during a day of northerly winds and squally snow showers on 7th. The 11th brought south-west winds and heavy showers, during which two **Pomarine Skuas** passed through. A spell of south to south-easterly winds from 15th-19th, which brought warm, thundery weather and several Continental species into the country, was perhaps responsible for the appearance of the Region's first **Citrine Wagtail** at Brandon on 18th. A **Spotted Crane** was then heard calling early on the next day. Finally, a cold front moved south on 21st/22nd, bringing the first birds in what was to prove the Region's largest ever irruption of **Common Crossbills**. More settled conditions followed on behind and the month closed with an influx of six **Black-necked Grebes** on 25th and **Red Kite**, **Wood Sandpiper**, a further 16 **Black Terns** and a **Golden Oriole** on 31st.

What was to prove the wettest **June** since 1860 began with a cool start in moderate north-easterly winds. Two more **Red Kites** arrived during an easterly gale on 1st and another **Wood Sandpiper** showed on 2nd. A day of light south-easterlies on 4th then heralded a change to humid, thundery weather from 5th, during which a **Honey-buzzard** passed through on 8th, a **Hoopoe** came on 15th and **Common Crossbills** continued to flood in. Two unseasonally vigorous depressions then swept across the country, firstly on 19th/20th following which a party of six **Common Scoter** appeared on 22nd, and secondly between 25th-27th, during which time the first **Curlew Sandpiper** showed on 27th. In between, **Siskin** began arriving from 24th in unprecedented numbers for mid-summer, frequently being seen with **Common Crossbills**. Many nests were lost to floods following heavy rain on 7th and 11th, so the breeding season was one of mixed fortunes. Amongst waterfowl, fewer **Common Shelduck** and no **Common Teal** or **Northern Shoveler** bred, but **Goosander** nested successfully in both Worcestershire and Staffordshire. **Common Buzzards** continued to consolidate their position and at least four pairs of **Hobbies** and one of **Peregrine Falcon** bred successfully. Amongst the waders, there were no breeding records of **Common Snipe** or **Common Sandpiper** and **Northern Lapwing** had a very poor season on the Moors.

Conversely, at least four pairs of **Oystercatcher**, four or five pairs of **Great Ringed Plover** and thirteen pairs of **Little Ringed Plover** successfully bred, though others failed through predation and flooding. The **Black Grouse** lek was down to just three males and only one **Marsh Warbler** returned to sing this year, but seven **Wood Larks** sang, **Cetti's Warblers** maintained their position and there was a hint of better success for **Spotted Flycatchers**.

Low pressure at the beginning of **July** kept conditions cool and showery. Two more **Sandwich Terns** passed through on 3rd, then high pressure re-established itself and warmer weather returned from 5th-12th bringing a flock of seven **Common Scoter** on 5th, a party of 13 **Black-tailed Godwits** on 6th and **Little Terns** on 8th and 12th. A **White Stork** on 14th arrived just as unsettled conditions returned. These then persisted until 17th, after which it was hot and sunny until 23rd. By now there was a flock of 200 **Common Crossbills** on the Lickey, the largest ever in the Region. Another notable feature at this time was several **Common Quail**, while the return wader passage was marked on 23rd by the arrival of the first of two **Wood Sandpipers** in four days. The month drew to a close with a dominant south-westerly airstream that saw **Little Egret** on 29th and **Sanderling** on 31st.

August was the second hottest on record, reaching 33°C at Worcester on 10th. It began with rain as a frontal system moved through on 1st, though no significant arrivals were associated with it. This was quickly followed, however, by a deepening low to the west of the country on 4th in the wake of which came **Red Knot**, two **Wood Sandpipers**, **Kittiwake** and **Little Tern** on 5th; **Shag**, another **Wood Sandpiper** and **Sandwich Tern** on 6th; and **Grey Plover** on 7th. The ensuing three weeks were then largely hot and settled, with **Black-necked Grebe** on 9th; **Shag**, **Little Egret** and **Red Kite** on 11th; **Wood Sandpiper** on 13th; **Little Tern** on 16th; **Spotted Crake**, **Grey Plover** and the rediscovery of a **Ferruginous Duck** on 17th; and **Grey Plover** again on 19th. Thundery weather then brought the heatwave to an end on 22nd, a day during which 40 **Black Terns** passed through. **Osprey**, **Spotted Redshank** and **Wryneck** then arrived on 23rd, followed by **Black-necked Grebe** again and **Sanderling** the next day. More low pressure systems then moved across from the west during the last few days of the month, bringing a significant movement of birds which began on 25th with **Wood Sandpiper**, **Grey Phalarope**, a party of five **Arctic Skuas**, **Sandwich Tern** and the Region's third **Icterine Warbler**. The next day was quiet, but 27th brought **Red Knot** and at least 117 **Black Terns**, while six **Whimbrel** arrived on 28th. Six **Curlew Sandpipers** and 21 **Arctic Terns** then arrived with easterly winds on 29th and, finally, another party of five **Arctic Skuas** moved through during torrential thunderstorms on 31st.

High pressure to the west in early **September** brought a north-westerly airflow. A party of seven **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 2nd, a **Great Skua** on 3rd, **Pectoral Sandpiper** on 4th and 24 **Red Knot** on 7th may all have been a residue of the stormy weather of late August. **Spotted Redshank**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Osprey** and **Common Quail** also appeared around this time and there was a strong passage of **Barn Swallows** on 7th. A strengthening westerly wind on 8th/9th brought a small passage of **Yellow Wagtails** and the first significant movement of **Meadow Pipits**, but its aftermath was more

interesting with **Leach's Storm-petrel** on 11th, **Manx Shearwater** the next day, more **Red Knots** from 12th-16th and another party of seven **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 13th, all of which arrived during a week of mild, unsettled weather as the wind backed to south-west. High pressure then built up to the north again, settling over the North Sea on 19th-20th and bringing light easterly winds until 28th. This resulted in more significant movements, with eight **Red Knots**, two **Bar-tailed Godwits** and two **Arctic Skuas** on 19th; and **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Spotted Redshank**, **Grey Phalarope**, **Sabine's Gull** and another passage of **Meadow Pipits** on 20th. Also seen around this time were **Black-necked Grebe**, **Hen Harrier** and **Osprey**. The easterly winds finally abated on 29th and gave way to a westerly airstream once again. The change was marked by a small movement of **Sandwich Terns**, three **Rock Pipits** on 27th and movements of departing **House Martins** and arriving thrushes on 28th, the latter mainly **Blackbirds** but also including a **Ring Ouzel**. **Little Stint** passage also peaked around this time, **Grey Plovers** were noted on 27th and 28th and a **Red-backed Shrike** showed on 30th.

The sunniest **October** on record began with north-westerly gales on 2nd, which brought a strong seabird passage around the coast. Two **Northern Gannets** on 3rd and 4th respectively and the year's second **Leach's Storm-petrel**, picked up on 6th, were resultant casualties. During the series of fronts which continued to sweep across the country for the next week, there was another influx of **Blackbirds** on 3rd, a late **Garden Warbler** and a **Black-necked Grebe** on 5th, and a **Grey Plover** on 10th. Another fast moving depression then tracked south-eastwards on 11th, bringing a couple of days of strong northerly winds in its wake. Caught up in these were the second **Sabine's Gull** of the year on 11th, a **Laughing Gull**, which appeared on 12th, and movements of **Meadow Pipits** on 11th, **Sky Larks** on 13th and **Redwings** between 11th-14th. Eleven **Rock Pipits** also arrived between 11th-18th, a **Snow Bunting** came on 12th and the first **Short-eared Owl** the next day. The wind backed westerly on 14th and then south-easterly from 15th, allowing a few Continental migrants to slip in, with **Black-throated Divers** on 15th and 16th and **Red-throated Diver** and **Red-necked Grebe** on the latter date too. **Chaffinches** moved through from 13th-17th, followed by **Bramblings** from 16th-18th, while **Sky Lark** passage was again evident on 18th-19th. Around this time, numbers of **Common Crossbills** began to rise again as a second wave of immigrants moved into the Region. There were also small falls of **Goldcrests** on 18th-19th and a late **Pied Flycatcher** on the latter date. A party of five **Whooper Swans** arrived during a brief shift to a north-westerly wind on 20th. However, easterlies quickly reasserted themselves as frontal systems stalled over south-east England between 20th-22nd, once more bringing ideal conditions for a fall of migrants. **Common Starlings** began to arrive in strength for the rest of the month, another **Short-eared Owl** appeared on 20th and the first of two **Great Grey Shrikes** arrived on 21st. As the wind backed northerly from 23rd-25th, a **Slavonian Grebe** arrived on 24th and **Black-necked Grebe** and **Great Grey Shrike** on 25th. The first significant influx of **Fieldfares** also occurred between 24th-26th. With high pressure centred over the Continent a spell of quieter weather then followed, with temperatures plummeting to -7°C on 28th/29th to give the coldest October night ever. During this spell the first **Tundra Swan** of the autumn arrived on 28th and there was a good passage of **Ring Ouzels**, with seven on 28th and eight on 30th. A **Red-breasted**

Merganser also arrived on 29th and the month closed with a very late **Spotted Flycatcher** which was present from 29th-31st.

November was the second mildest this Century as low pressure systems sucked in southerly airflows and this encouraged a few migrants to linger late. **Tundra Swans** continued to arrive, the last **Northern Wheatear** was seen on 1st and further small falls of **Goldcrests** followed misty nights on 1st-2nd. Five **Common Scoters** also appeared on 1st, as did the first of a dozen **Snow Buntings** to arrive in the next fortnight. There were further influxes of **Fieldfares** between 2nd-8th, resulting in good flocks by the middle of the month, and the last **Ring Ouzel** was seen on 6th. Three **Red-necked Grebes** then arrived between 7th-9th, two **Great Northern Divers** on 9th and 10th and two more **Whooper Swans** on 11th. A **Great Bittern** on 11th was followed by others on 22nd and 23rd, with **Slavonian** and **Red-necked Grebes** on the latter date as well. A **Little Stint** was discovered on 15th and then seen intermittently until mid-December and a **Common Greenshank** was also present through to December. Also of interest were **Grey Plover** on 18th and **Hen Harriers** on 20th and 28th. Most surprisingly, as low pressure moved across on 29th bringing cold northerly winds, **House Martins** at three widely scattered localities were evidence of an extremely late movement.

December started with a cold snap during which another **Great Bittern** was found on 4th. Milder, unsettled weather then became dominant from 5th-13th as winds came in from the west and south-west. During this time, up to ten **Smew** returned, five **Pink-footed Geese** and a **Red Knot** were seen on 5th, a huge flock of 6000 **Northern Lapwings** had gathered at Draycote on 12th and two more **Great Northern Divers** and three **Water Pipits** arrived on 13th. Colder air, swept in by easterlies and north-easterlies, then brought a brief taste of winter between 14th-17th. Temperatures quickly rose again, however, as Atlantic fronts reasserted themselves. Damp, mild weather then set the pattern for the rest of the month, with a south-westerly gale on Christmas Eve. **Tundra Swans** continued to pass through during the month, six **Long-eared Owls** were at a roost and up to six **Chiffchaffs** lingered at Westport. New arrivals were 11 more **Smew** on 20th with others soon following, a **Snow Bunting** on 21st and the first two **White-fronted Geese** on 24th. Boxing Day brought two more **White-fronted Geese** and a skein of 40 **Pink-footed Geese**, 188 **Goosander** were at Belvide on 27th and eight **Mealy Redpolls** appeared on 28th. Finally, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Firecrest** and the corpse of a drake **Common Eider** were discovered on 29th, while 1200 **Pied Wagtails** roosted in Worcester on 30th.

Graham Harrison

European Nightjars and other breeding birds of Cannock Chase 1997

Introduction

With the co-operation and assistance of English Nature, The Friends of Cannock Chase, Staffordshire County Council and Forest Enterprise, the West Midland Bird Club carried out a comprehensive survey of certain species of bird on Cannock Chase during the spring and summer of 1997.

The survey was intended as a follow up to work carried out by Nigel Baskerville on behalf of the West Midland Bird Club in 1992. The principle aim, therefore, was to assess the changes in bird distribution and populations which had taken place since the earlier survey. Consequently the methodology adopted in the earlier survey was followed as closely as resources permitted. The 1992 survey had placed a good deal of emphasis on the status of the European Nightjar, since the catalyst had been the British Trust for Ornithology's National Nightjar Survey, which was taking place at the time.

That survey had established that the population of European Nightjars on Cannock Chase was a healthy 28 to 33 churring males, distributed fairly evenly between the natural heathland areas and the commercial forestry parts of the Chase. The 1992 survey itself followed on from work carried out on the species in 1981 (Gribble 1983). That survey had estimated a population of 31 churring males across the Chase.

Several recommendations were made as a result of the 1992 survey, which it was believed would improve the habitat for European Nightjars on the Chase. All of the following suggestions were acted on to some degree: for the heathland, churring posts were created for male birds, pine/birch invasion of the heathland was controlled, mature birch around the edge of areas like Brocton Coppice was coppiced in order to create a larger integrated area with characteristics of both heathland and woodland, and bare areas were maintained within the heathland by controlling the spread of bracken and other invasive plant species. The Forestry Commission (now Forest Enterprise) created suitable breeding areas for European Nightjars by a regime of planned felling, which created a mosaic of different aged plantations so that there were always young plantations for birds to move into when existing ones became too mature to be of use.

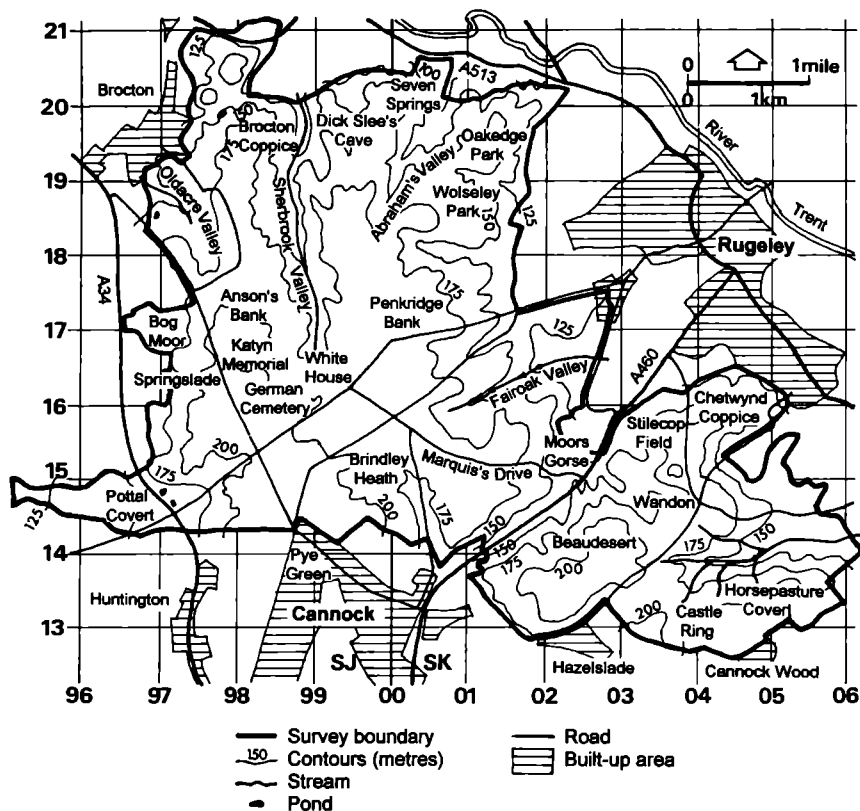
Any habitat changes which resulted from these recommendations would clearly have an effect on other species breeding on the Chase, so the number of species surveyed in 1997 was increased. It was also decided that the area covered would be increased, with the addition of Chetwynd Coppice, Pottal Covert, and Stilecop Field.

Site Description

Cannock Chase lies on a plateau, which rises to 143 metres above sea level at its highest point, and is part of a chain of uplands which runs north to south along the spine of the UK.

Human activity on the Chase is quite considerable due to its close proximity to the West Midland Conurbation a few miles to the south. Figure 1 shows the network of roads and footpaths crossing the Chase which allows visitors with such diverse interests as mountain-biking, horse-riding and dog-walking to take advantage of the open space on offer. Balancing their interest with that of the wildlife is a challenge being undertaken by the staff of Forest Enterprise and the Ranger Service employed by Staffordshire County Council.

Figure 1: Map of Cannock Chase



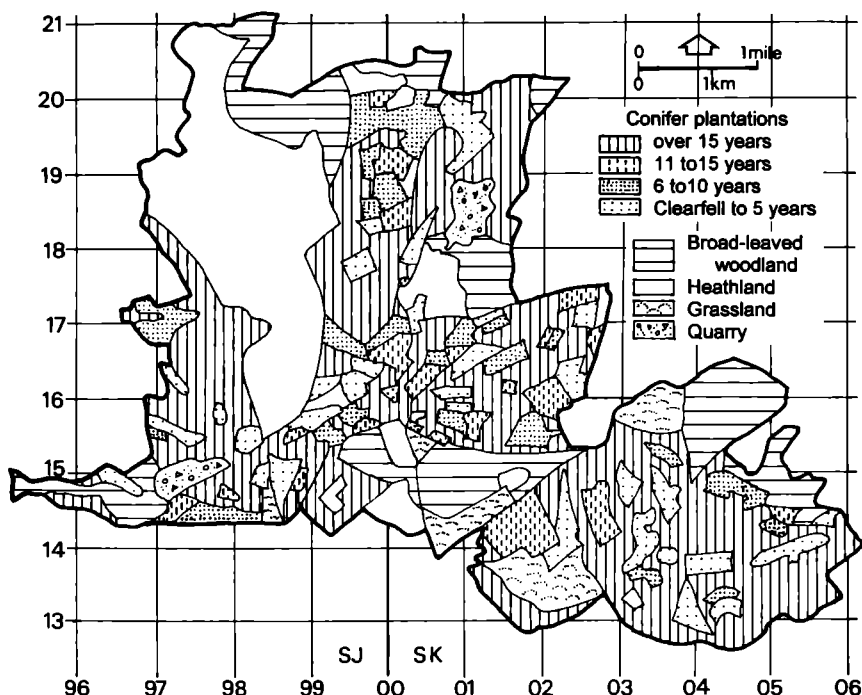
Glacial activity in the last ice age is responsible for the undulating landscape, which consists of a series of steep sided valleys running mainly in a south-west to north-east direction. The soil is poor in quality, tending to be thin on the ridges and peaty in the valley bottoms. The whole area is underlain by bunter pebbles which have attracted the interest of quarrying companies. Two large quarries are currently scarring the Cannock Chase landscape.

Since 1920 just over half (26 km²) of the area of Cannock Chase has been planted with conifers. That area is currently managed by Forest Enterprise and forms a patchwork of plantations containing trees of different ages. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the different types of habitat across The Chase.

There are approximately 6 km² of lowland dry heath, a habitat which was more extensive on the Chase in the past. It nevertheless represents the largest area of lowland heath in the Midlands and is thus of critical regional importance. Through the main

section runs the Sherbrook Valley. Water no longer flows along its upper section, and the resultant drying out of the upper part of the valley is likely to affect the character of that part of the Chase. Though the heathland areas contain a large amount of heather, some of the slopes bordering the Sherbrook Valley are dominated by bracken, the legacy of a large fire in the 1960s. In addition to this main section, there are several smaller areas of heathland at Seven Springs, Penkridge Bank, Moors Gorse, The White House and Brindley Heath.

Figure 2: Habitats on Cannock Chase in 1997



The most important area of deciduous woodland is Brocton Coppice. Here the woodland consists mainly of sessile oaks, many planted over 200 years ago. The understorey contains a mixture of heather, bilberry and bracken. Elsewhere, there are several stands of beech trees, whilst birch is common, particularly at the edge of the dry heathland.

Method

Cannock Chase was divided into 32 areas, including the outlying commons of Shoal Hill and Gentleshaw Common. This increase from the 22 sections of the 1992 survey was only partly accounted for by the addition of new areas. The other cause was the

sub-division of some of the larger sections. Apart from the few additions and sub-divisions, the sections were largely identical to those surveyed in 1992.

The definition of the different habitat types was deliberately kept similar in the 1992 and 1997 surveys. However, one difference was that in 1997 no attempt was made to distinguish between clear-felled areas and plantations between one and five years of age.

A total of 87 visits was made by seven observers during the summer. In addition a number of people supplied casual records, with grid-references, in response to an appeal in the Club's Bulletin. Although this implies that the previous survey's remarkable record of every section being visited at least once in May, June and July appeared almost attainable, in practice a shortage of manpower coupled with a wet June and an increased survey area meant that some of the less promising European Nightjar areas may have been visited less frequently than would have been ideal. However, all of the areas previously holding the species, or with the most promising potential habitat for it, were regularly checked.

Survey work started in mid-April and gathered pace during May. All singing birds, or identifiable males, were logged onto base maps. Up until late May, nearly all the visits were made during the morning, but by late May the emphasis gradually switched to evening recording as the European Nightjars arrived to take up territory. Searching for nests was not encouraged as it would be quite impossible to determine the population of any species based on the number of nests located.

Results

European Nightjar

A total of 38 territories was determined by the recording of churring males. This compares favourably with the 28 to 33 discovered in 1992 and the 31 estimated in a 1981 survey.



European Nightjar (Nigel Baskerville)

The first arrival was at the top of the Sherbrook Valley, near the German Cemetery, on May 9th. However, it was not until late May that most territories were occupied. A comparison between Figures 3 and 4 shows that birds were distributed quite widely across Cannock Chase in both 1992 and 1997.

The only area to be devoid of European Nightjar records in both years was the extreme south-east, around Castle Ring/Horsepasture Covert. In 1992 this area contained few open

areas which looked suitable for them, but the same cannot be said for 1997. One possible factor was that the clear-fell areas here, unlike in many other parts of the Chase, appeared to be well grassed, lacking a high proportion of bare earth. This may have restricted the number of nest sites available.

Figure 3: European Nightjar distribution in 1997

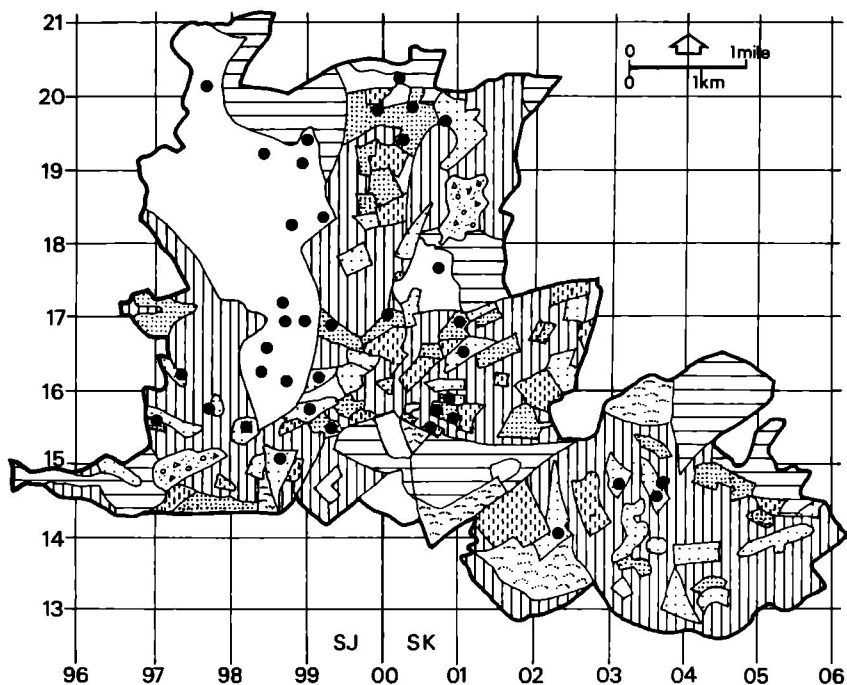


Figure 4: European Nightjar distribution in 1992

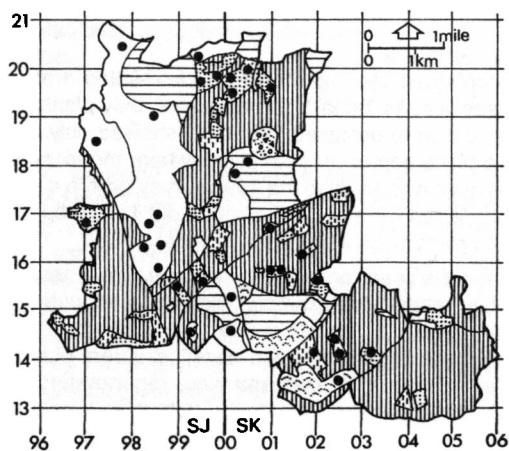


Table 1 shows the habitat used by European Nightjars in 1992 and in 1997. It is interesting that, although the number of territories grew between the two years, the proportion using heathland as opposed to plantations remained constant. This suggests that the conservation measures carried out by Staffordshire County Council in respect of the heathland, and by Forest Enterprise in the plantation areas, have been equally beneficial to the species.

Heathland European Nightjars

The most significant changes in the heathland distribution were the upsurge in records from the Sherbrook Valley and the disappointing negative return from Brindley Heath.

In 1992 most records had been in the upper Sherbrook Valley and, indeed, the lack of European Nightjars in the more open, lower parts of the valley was highlighted. By 1997 there appears to have been a consolidation of the situation in the upper valley, around the Katyn Memorial and between there and the war cemeteries, with one or two extra churring birds. More spectacular was the increase in the lower valley, from one churring male in 1992 to five in 1997. It remains true, however, that the presence of scattered trees is an essential component of any European Nightjar territory on Cannock Chase.

In 1992 there had been three churring birds on Brindley Heath and it had been highlighted as looking especially suitable for the species. So what went wrong in 1997? One possibility is that the optimism of 1992 had been misplaced. Even then, the comment was made that in the past records from the area were rather sporadic. Against that view is the fact that conservation measures to encourage European Nightjars were particularly vigorous at Brindley Heath, so they should have been there. Another possibility is that they were overlooked. The poor weather in June had a detrimental effect on survey work right across the Chase and it has to be admitted that Brindley Heath was not checked for them until July. It would be a useful exercise for observers to visit this area to look for European Nightjars in future years to try to establish which scenario is correct.

Plantation European Nightjars

The 1997 survey confirmed the importance of clear-felled areas and young conifer plantations for the species. As Table 1 demonstrates, only plantations where the trees were up to 10 years old were occupied, and birds showed only a slight preference for clear-fell/very young plantations over plantations where the trees were between 6 and 10 years old. This is quite a contrast to the 1992 survey, where a strong preference was shown for plantations which were under five years old. No European Nightjar territories were associated with plantations older than 10 years.

The distribution within the commercial forestry areas was closely associated with the availability of suitable habitat. For example, the area west of the Brocton-Pye Green road was composed largely of mature conifers in 1992 when the only churring bird was in the Bog Moor area, where the trees were just a year old. By 1997 at least four large areas of forest had been cleared and were regenerating, attracting four churring birds. Ironically, the Bog Moor plantation, which still looked just suitable, was deserted.

As mentioned earlier, a considerable area of regenerating clear-fell in the south-east of the Chase, near Castle Ring and Horsepasture Covert, was completely devoid of European Nightjars. The reason for this may be accounted for by a difference in the ground vegetation, which appeared grassier than similar areas elsewhere. Another possible explanation might be the area's distance from the species' core areas, which are further west and north. The survival rates for juvenile birds have not been studied, but if these are relatively low then the spread of European Nightjars beyond the core areas could be restricted.

The outlying commons of Shoal Hill and Gentleshaw Common were checked for birds, as in 1992, but were found to contain none. However, a juvenile bird was seen feeding over farmland just south-west of Pottal Covert. It has been established in studies elsewhere that European Nightjars occasionally feed some distance from their breeding sites. This record has been omitted from Figure 3.

Table 1. Habitat used by European Nightjars on Cannock Chase

	Dry Heath	Broad-leaved Woodland	Habitat type		Total
			Clearfell-5years	Conifer Plantations 6-10 years	
1992					
Number of males	12	2	16	3	19
% of total population	36	6	48	9	58
1997					
Number of males	14	0	13	11	24
% of total population	37	0	34	29	63

Hobby

Hobbies were often seen on the Chase during the summer months, but in the past proof that they bred there had always been lacking. Nevertheless a nest was found in 1997, the site having also been occupied in 1996 *per M Furber*. The location of the nest site will not be disclosed.

The Partridges

A number of species not surveyed in 1992 were looked at in 1997. These included Red-legged and Grey Partridges. Small numbers of both species have long been present on the Chase, despite the fact that the habitat on offer to them would not appear particularly typical for either species. In the event, both species were detected and Figure 5 shows their distribution. Red-legged Partridge proved to be the commoner. Breeding was proved near Oakedge Park and this area seemed to contain most birds. Wherever they were found, they appeared to be associated with clear-felled areas of conifer plantations. Grey Partridges were only found at Stilecop, although they had been recorded in the past at Oakedge Park *per J Montgomery*. They are currently declining alarmingly on farmland and there appears to be no grounds for optimism that the situation is any better on the Chase.

Figure 5: Partridge and Woodcock distribution in 1997

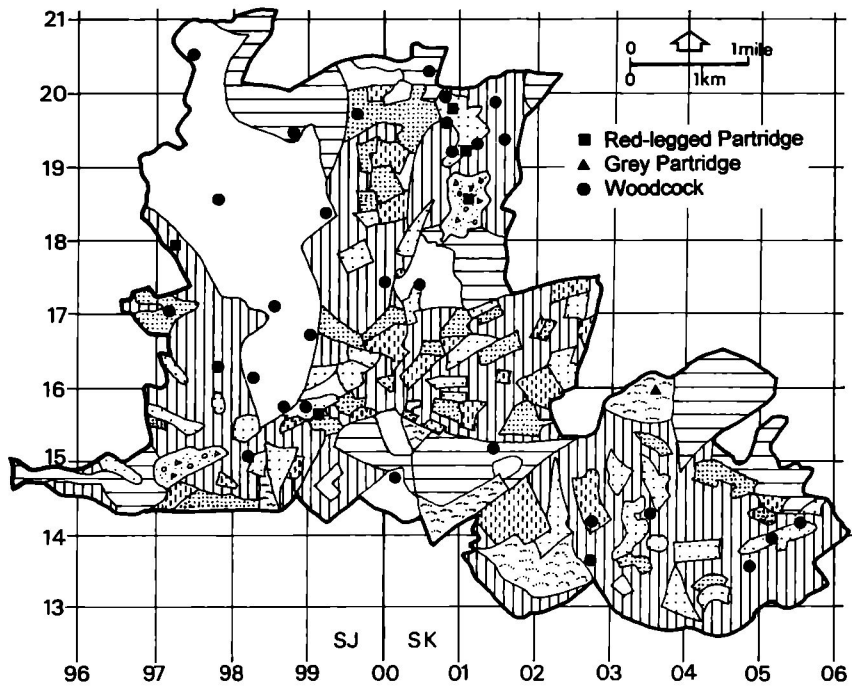
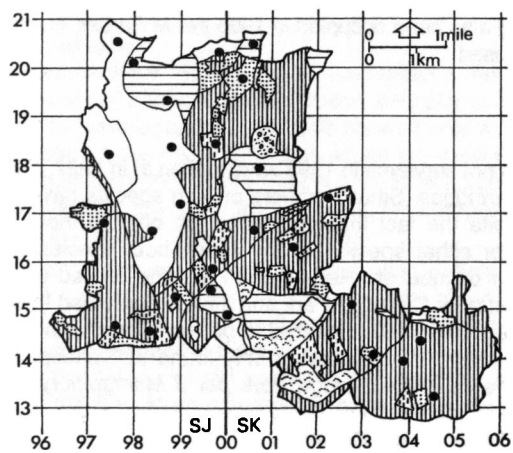


Figure 6: Woodcock distribution in 1992



Woodcock

The point was made in 1992 that Woodcocks are extremely difficult to survey accurately by counting roding males. Unfortunately, in a general survey such as this, there is no other way to do it. The total number of roding birds in 1997 was estimated as 30, which is similar to the 1992 estimate of 27 males. Figures 5 and 6 show that Woodcocks are distributed fairly evenly across the Chase.

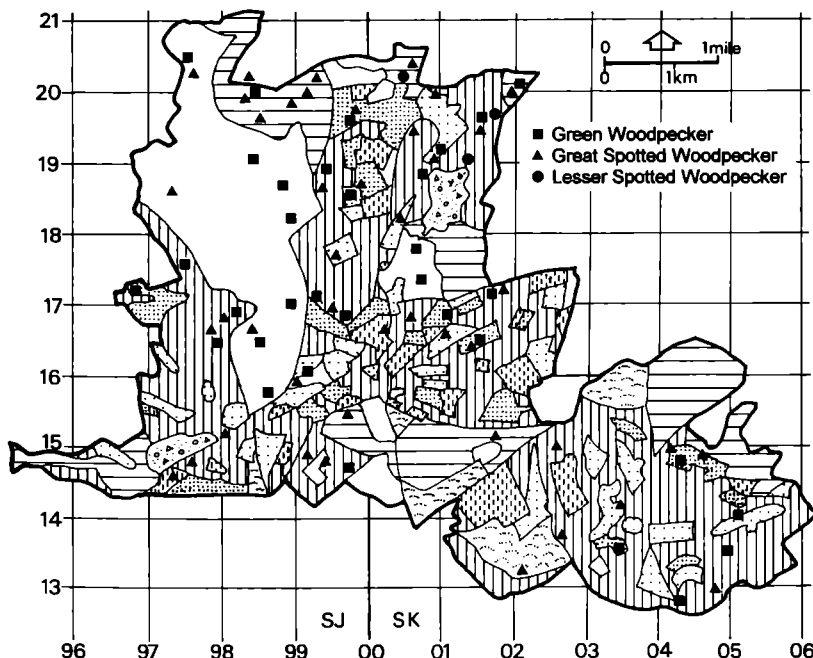
Long-eared Owl

One pair was proved to have bred in the traditional area near Katyn Memorial. Four owlets left the nest, but one of these did not get very far, being found dead beneath the nest. The other three fledged successfully. One other pair was indicated by the discovery of a single bird in the Wolseley Park area.

The Woodpeckers

An attempt was made to survey all three species of woodpecker known to breed on the Chase. The total numbers counted indicated that Great Spotted Woodpeckers were the most common, with 43 birds recorded. Green Woodpeckers came next with 33 and the least common by a long way were Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, with just three birds located. Figure 7 shows the distribution recorded. All Lesser Spotted Woodpecker records came from the north-east of the Chase (Seven Springs and Wolseley Park).

Figure 7: Woodpecker distribution in 1997



Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were spread throughout the Chase, although the former showed a stronger affiliation with the heathland areas of Sherbrook Valley. One problem with surveying the woodpeckers is that, with European Nightjars being the primary motivation behind the survey, the bulk of the field work was carried out from May onwards. Woodpeckers, of course, are much easier to detect in March and April when they are attempting to establish and defend territories. It is therefore likely that, although the figures may be of some use in demonstrating general distribution and the population ratios between the three species, the total number recorded underestimates the true population by an unknown degree.

Wood Lark

The comments made about the difficulty of surveying woodpeckers accurately from May onwards apply equally to this species. In 1992 Wood Larks did not occur on Cannock Chase and indeed, apart from the fact that there had been a single singing bird in 1979, there appeared to be no reason to believe that they would ever colonise. Since then, however, the fortunes of this attractive little lark have turned around nationally and in 1994 a pair was found in a clear fell area of the Chase. The species has been recorded in roughly the same area every year since then and it was hoped that the 1997 survey might establish whether the species had spread to other areas of the Chase.

In the event, the results seemed to suggest that they had, but confusing the issue was the fact that some birds were seen at sites where they could not be found when looked for subsequently. This implied that perhaps the local population moved around to some degree in mid-summer. One of these one-day sightings was at least four miles from the core area.

It is not proposed to map the distribution of Wood Larks, but the results suggest that in 1997 there were at least seven singing males at four sites, with potentially a further two pairs at two different locations. All of the records were in or adjacent to areas of clear-fell, or very young, conifer plantations.

Tree Pipit

The results for this species were quite astonishing. A total of 179 territories were found on Cannock Chase, with an additional three territories on the outlying commons of Shoal Hill and Gentleshaw Common. The species has been undergoing a steady decline within the Region, but evidently not on Cannock Chase, as 1992 had produced only 95 singing males, so the population had increased by almost 100% between the two surveys.

A clue to the reason for the change can be seen in Figures 8 and 9, which show a significant increase in the forestry dominated areas of the Chase, and in Table 2, which compares habitat use between the two years.

Table 2. Comparison of Habitats used by Tree Pipits in 1992 and 1997

Habitat Type	Singing males 1992	Singing males 1997
Dry Heath	52	63
Heath/woodland edge	13	16
Conifer Plantations less than 10 yrs old	10	62
Woodland glades	20	38
Total	95	179

Figure 8: Tree Pipit distribution in 1997

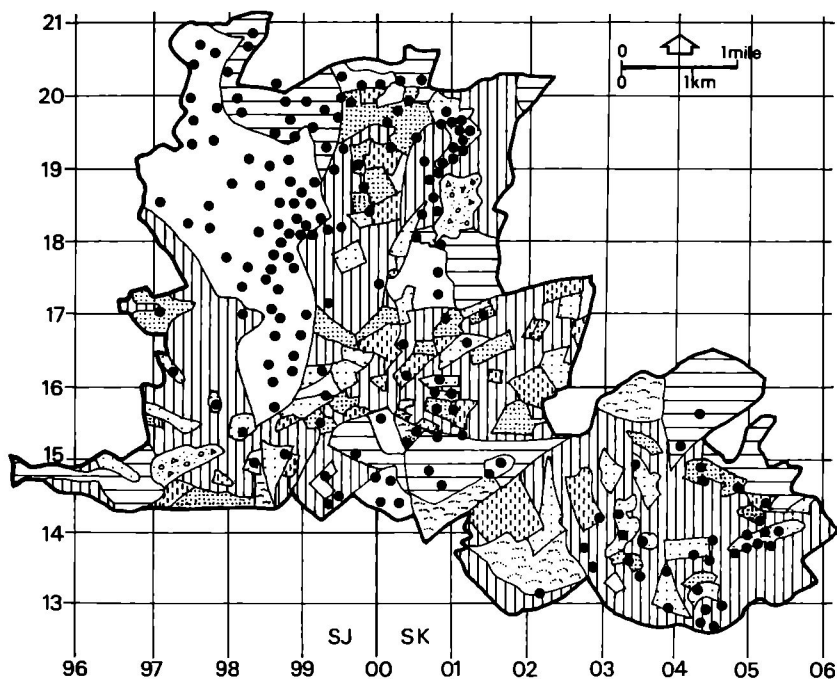
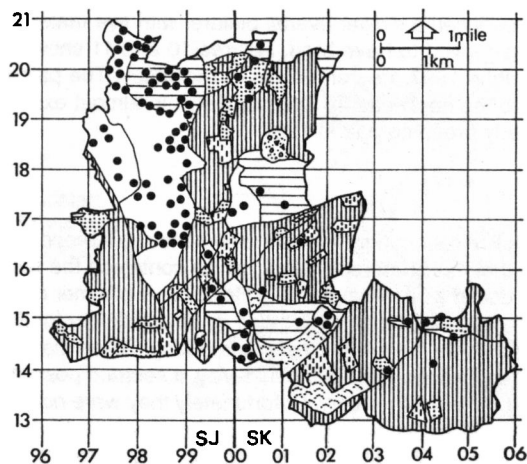


Figure 9: Tree Pipit distribution in 1992



What seems to have happened is that, although the species' population has increased in all habitats, by far the greatest change has come in the conifer plantation areas. Clearly, Tree Pipits are very quick to exploit new habitats when they occur and the change in management practices adopted by Forest Enterprise, *i.e.* creating a patchwork of different aged plantations has benefited the species tremendously.

One noticeable feature about the territories in the forested areas was that birds were most abundant where the plantations contained isolated deciduous trees, usually beech, which were used as song perches. Particular concentrations occurred in the Oakedge Park and Horsepasture Covert areas, whilst other areas, such as Lady Hill Coppice and Rainbow Valley, were not used. The only obvious difference between the occupied and unoccupied rejuvenating forestry areas seemed to be the presence or absence of song-post trees.

Common Redstart

Recent BTO Breeding Bird Survey figures suggest that between 1994 and 1996 this species increased nationally by 44%. On Cannock Chase, the 35 territorial males located in the 1997 survey represented a more modest, but still significant, 30% increase between 1992 and 1997. Figures 10 and 11 show that the distribution is quite similar between the two surveys. The main difference is that more birds were located to the south-west of Brocton Coppice, on what the maps suggest is dry heath. In fact the heathland in the north part of Sherbrook Valley and in Oldacre Valley is characterised by a high proportion of trees, particularly birch. This was the habitat in which the "extra" Common Redstarts were found.

Common Stonechat

This species has maintained a presence on Cannock Chase for a good many years, with all the records in 1992 coming from Sherbrook Valley. In that year three pairs were confirmed to have bred, though an unpaired male was located near Katyn Memorial. The 1997 survey produced a similar overall picture, with five males holding territory, of which only one was proved to have bred. Figures 10 and 11 show that the birds were located further south in 1997, nearer the top of the valley. The pair which was proved to have bred was to the north-east of Anson's Bank, in almost exactly the same place as the most southerly breeding pair in 1992.

Whinchat

Whinchats have declined alarmingly across the Midlands as a breeding species, so it was no surprise to find that the Sherbrook Valley, which contained the only two pairs on the Chase in 1992, produced a nil return in 1997. However, a glimmer of hope came from an unexpected source. Brindley Heath, which was so disappointing for European Nightjars, was found to contain three male Whinchats in late May. Given that most passage birds move through the region from late April to mid-May, it seemed possible that at least one of these birds might remain on territory. Unfortunately they were not seen during June or July, so presumably they were just on passage. It may, however, be worth keeping an eye on the situation on Brindley Heath in future, just in case they return.

Figure 10: Common Redstart, Common Stonechat and Grasshopper Warbler distribution in 1997

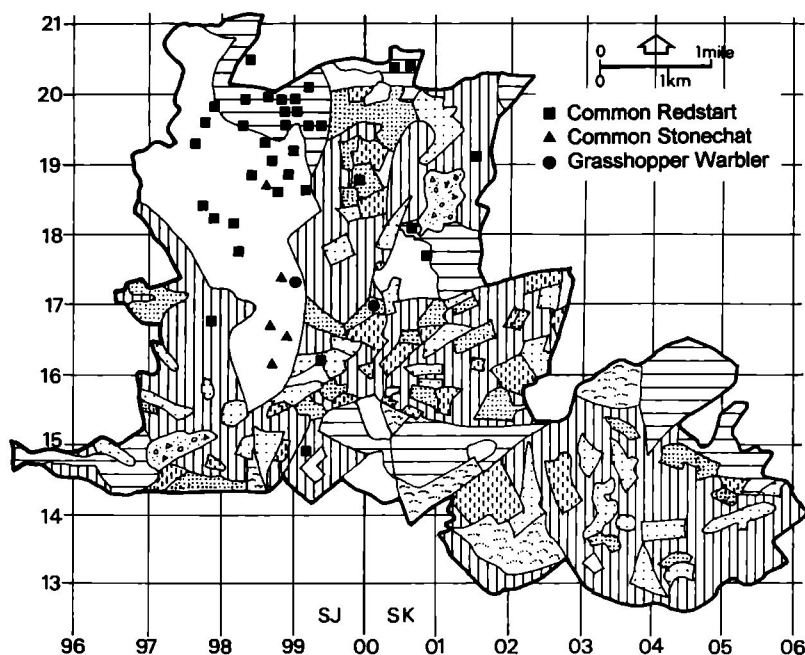
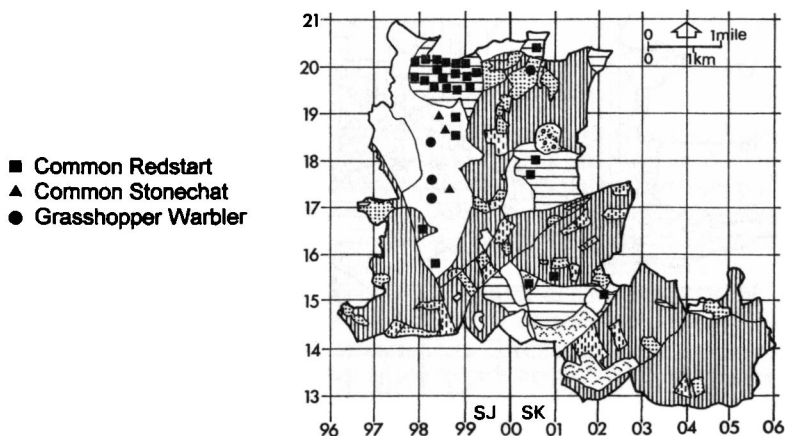


Figure 11: Common Redstart, Common Stonechat and Grasshopper Warbler distribution in 1997



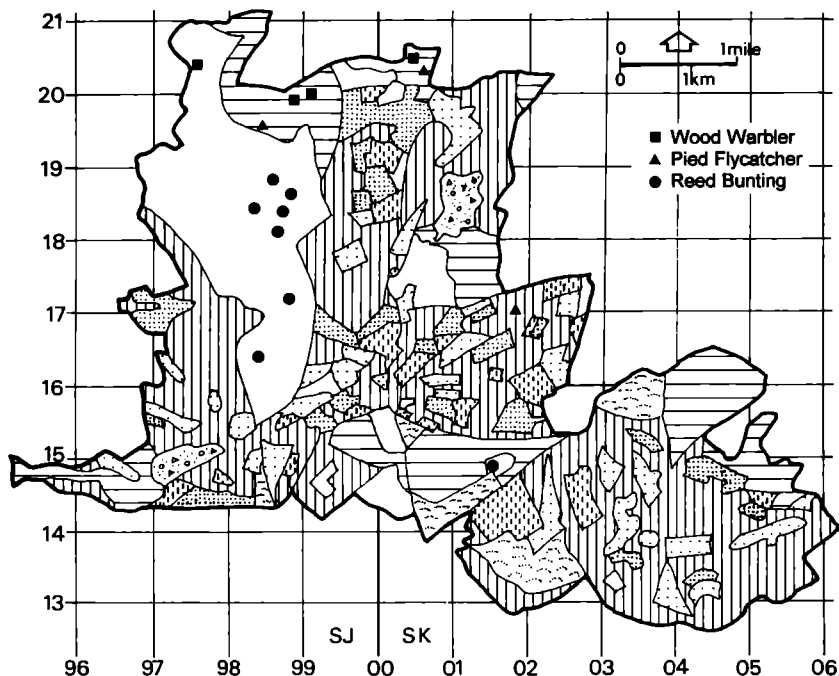
Grasshopper Warbler

Like Whinchat, this species has been in decline across the West Midlands for some years and its presence on Cannock Chase was therefore anxiously sought in 1997. Figures 10 and 11 show that there has been a decline from four singing males to two, but the species is at least still with us. The core area in 1992 was the dry heath of Sherbrook Valley and all four pairs had been singing from stands of mature heather. In 1997, although the Sherbrook Valley male was reeling from heather, the other bird was found in a bramble patch in the corner of a young plantation. Both birds remained on territory for the summer.

Wood Warbler

This is another species to show a significant decline in the period between the two surveys. Figure 12 shows that in 1997 four territorial males were located in three locations in the broad-leaved woodland along the northern edge of the Chase. Single singing males at Shoal Hill and Katyn Memorial have not been included as they were considered to be passage birds. In 1992 this northern area had also accounted for most of the records, but others had been found at Jockey Hill and near Wandon Cross, so

Figure 12: Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and Reed Bunting distribution in 1997



that the total in 1992 had been 10 pairs. This decline has been mirrored elsewhere in the Region and nationally, so, as with Whinchat and Grasshopper Warbler, it seems likely that the decrease has not been caused by local factors.

Pied Flycatcher

Just three territorial males were found in 1997, one of which definitely bred. Figure 12 shows that, whilst two males sang from typical broad-leaved woodland habitat in the northern part of the Chase, the other male was found singing in the grounds of the Forest Enterprise headquarters, in an area dominated by conifers! That bird was at first assumed to be a passage bird, but it was found to be still present over a month later and its territory seemed centred around a nest-box put up by the rangers. In 1992 seven males had been found, all in the northern broad-leaved woodland belt which includes Brocton Coppice, Dick Slee's Caves, and Seven Springs. From 1987 until 1992 between two and four pairs bred annually on the Chase, so as was pointed out at the time, it is possible that 1992 was a particularly good year. 1997 could thus represent a return to the normal population level.

Siskin

This species was surveyed successfully in the 1992 survey, when two nests were found, one on 24th April and one on 8th May. The early dates of these discoveries posed something of a problem for the 1997 survey. In mid-April the Chase was awash with hundreds of Siskins, some of which had no doubt wintered in the area, and probably others which were migrants. By late April most of these had gone, but several singing birds at this time could either have been birds on territory, or migrants getting in some singing practice before heading off to breeding grounds further north. For the record, single birds were seen in Abraham's Valley on April 20th (a singing male), near Marquis's Drive on April 21st, at Fair Oak Lodge on April 29th (a singing male), over Sherbrook Valley on May 9th and at Springslade Wood on May 12th. Most interesting of all, a party of five was at Wandon Spur Plantation on May 22nd. These birds could have been a family party, but were too distant to age accurately. By early July the picture was further complicated, as small parties were associated with the big Common Crossbill invasion.

Common Crossbill

The early part of the 1997 survey coincided with the tail end of a long Common Crossbill drought, which had left the species almost totally absent from the region. Hopes were raised when John Montgomery mentioned that a party had been present around the Forest Enterprise headquarters during March. From then on, however, fieldwork failed to produce a single bird until May 22nd, when a party of six was seen and heard flying high over Wandon Spur Plantation. Subsequently, two flew over Springslade cafe on June 1st and a single bird was found at nearby Beaudesert Golf Course on June 2nd. In the days that followed it became apparent that a major irruption was taking place, with hundreds in the Horsepasture Covert area and almost as many at Springslade Wood. It seems likely that all the records from late May onwards relate to the Common Crossbill influx and that only the March record gives any grounds for believing that the species bred on the Chase in 1997.

Reed Bunting

This species was not surveyed in 1992. Figure 12 shows that eight pairs were discovered to be breeding on Cannock Chase. These were overwhelmingly found in heather in the Sherbrook Valley. The lower valley was favoured and it may be no coincidence that breeding records were concentrated on the slopes above the part of the Sherbrook along which water still flows. The only other record came from an isolated patch of heathland at Moors Gorse.

Summary

A survey of 20 species of breeding birds took place on Cannock Chase and two nearby commons during 1997. A particular effort was made to target species which were surveyed in a similar undertaking in 1992.

Special attention was paid to the distribution of the European Nightjar, with a view to assessing the impact of conservation measures put into place following recommendations made at the conclusion of the 1992 survey. The species was found to have increased by 15%, even if the upper estimate of numbers in 1992 is taken. It was remarkable that the proportion of birds occupying the forestry and heathland areas of the Chase was almost identical in 1992 and 1997. It is suggested that this is a testament to the efforts made by Staffordshire County Council, English Nature and Forest Enterprise to take on board the recommendations made after the previous survey.

A spin off of the habitat changes, particularly in the forestry areas, has been an astonishing increase in the Tree Pipit population and the recolonisation of the Region by Wood Larks. Changes in the population of other species are not believed to be directly linked to habitat change. Common Redstarts have increased broadly in line with national trends, whilst Grasshopper Warblers, Wood Warblers, and Whinchats are declining nationally as well as on Cannock Chase. Other species surveyed in both 1992 and 1997 appear not to have significantly changed their status, or could not be surveyed in sufficient detail to produce meaningful results.

Species surveyed for the first time include Hobby, the partridges, the woodpeckers and Reed Bunting. Hobbies were confirmed to be breeding on the Chase for the first time in 1996 and 1997. Partridges were found to be generally scarce, particularly Grey Partridge. It was considered that it would have been better to have started surveying woodpeckers from March, but that the results at least provide information about the distribution and a comparison of the population sizes of the three species.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank English Nature for encouragement and financial support; Forest Enterprise and their rangers, John Montgomery and Peter Purseglove, for assisting with maps for habitat assessment, allowing vehicular access to many of their forestry tracks and supplying their bird records; Staffordshire County Council rangers for their encouragement and support; the Association of the Friends of Cannock Chase for overnight accommodation; Tony Fairfield for allowing access to Beaudesert Golf Course; and the following observers who either took part in the survey or supplied casual records: Martin Furber, John Gulley, Eddie Howard, Ray Jennett, H J Miller, Eric and Pauline Roberts, Sue Sheppard, Derek Simkin, Debbie Smith and Alan Hateley.

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Richard Harbird



Great Spotted Woodpecker (Rob Hume)

Classified Notes

The sequence of species and the scientific names follow those of 'The British List' (British Ornithologists' Union, 1998). The English names are those published in 'British Birds' (Vol 86:1), with subsequent amendments. Where these names differ from those most commonly in use, the common name is included in brackets. Records of distinctive subspecies are listed separately immediately after the commonly occurring race, their commonly used English names appearing in *italics*. All records of species within Categories A-C of 'The British List' appear in the main section, even if suspected of being of captive origin. All other species (i.e. Categories D and E) appear under *Exotica*; these mainly refer to escapes from avicultural collections. In the case of hybrids, the species listed first is that deemed by the observer to have contributed the dominant characteristics. Records of National rarities are only published if they have been accepted by the BBRC, with the only exceptions being well-documented records which are still being assessed due to late submissions.

The status comments are based on current knowledge and must therefore be highly subjective, although not beyond modification in future reports. The figures in brackets after these comments in species recorded less than annually are a measure of frequency and refer to the number of calendar years in which they have appeared during the previous ten years, i.e. not including the current year.

The average arrival and departure dates given for migrants are based on first and last dates (excluding freaks) shown in the Annual Reports up to 1997. Figures in brackets denote the number of years on which the averages are based.

A list of contributors to these notes appears at the back of this Report.

The following status categories have been used:

Very rare	=	fewer than ten records ever.
Rare	=	ten or more records but less than annual (recorded in nine or less of the last ten years). Breeding less than annually.
Scarce	=	fewer than 20 birds occurring per annum or 10 pairs breeding.
Uncommon	=	20–100 birds occurring or 10–50 pairs breeding.
Frequent	=	100–500 birds occurring or 50–250 pairs breeding.
Fairly common	=	500–5000 birds occurring or 250–2500 pairs breeding.
Common	=	5000–20000 birds occurring or 2500–10000 pairs breeding.
Very common	=	20000–50000 birds occurring or 10000–25000 pairs breeding.
Abundant	=	50000+ birds occurring or 25000+ pairs breeding.

The following abbreviations have been used:

CBC	=	Common Bird Census	R.	=	River
CES	=	Constant Effort Site	Res	=	Reservoir
CP	=	Country Park	SF	=	Sewage Farm
GC	=	Golf Course	STW	=	Sewage Treatment Works
GP	=	Gravel Pit(s)	UP	=	Urban Park
NP	=	Nature Park	WP	=	Water Park
NR	=	Nature Reserve			

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

A below average showing for the second year running.

- Worcs** One at Bredons Hardwick for a few hours in the early morning of February 15th *FH, SJH, AW et al* was the first for the locality.
- Staffs** Singles were at Gailey on February 2nd *ESC* and at Tittesworth on October 16th *DK*.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica**Rare winter visitor (6/10).*

Another below average showing.

- W Mid** An adult was at Bartley on October 15th-16th *SPR* before flying north-east at 17.00 on the latter date *REH*.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer**Rare winter visitor (8/10)*

Following two poor years, four in a year was about average. As last year, the coincidence of arrival dates is noteworthy.

- Warks** A first-winter at Draycote from November 10th *AC et al* was joined by a second on December 13th, with both remaining into 1998. Another first-winter was at Dosthill from December 13th into 1998 *PDH, CJL et al*.
- Worcs** An immature picked up near Monk Wood on November 9th was successfully released at the coast by the RSPCA. It was identified as this species from a photograph taken shortly after capture *SJD, SMW*.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis**Fairly common resident.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coton	16	9	10	1	—	—	—	2	10	6	9	17
Dosthill	1	2	6	—	—	—	—	30	—	35	—	10
Ladywalk	0	1	2	7	6	3	8	8	7	12	8	—
Bishampton Vale	—	—	6	6	6	—	—	11	8	14	13	6
Pirton	—	—	2	6	6	9	19	32	27	9	1	1
Upton Warren	—	2	7	8	6	5	12	18	17	8	3	1
Westwood	—	2	6	4	2	2	5	6	11	6	1	1

- Warks** Breeding pairs at Ashorne, Charlecote GP (three), Coombe, Coton (three), Frog Hall GP, Ladywalk (four pairs, but only one or two young), Lower Radbourn (two), Napton Res, Newfield Pool (two), Packington (four) and Stoneton Moat. Parties of up to five were located at a number of other sites outside the breeding season, including along several stretches of the R. Avon.
- Worcs** Breeding reported at Beckford (three pairs), Bishampton Vale Pool (five pairs), Church Lench Pool, Grimley, Shortwood Roughs, Upton Warren (unsuccessful), Westwood, and Wilden. Small numbers at other seasons at Bittell, Bredons Hardwick, Bushley, Diglis, Droitwich Canal, Fladbury, Kempsey, Kinsham, Langdale Wood Pool, Larford, Lindridge, Lower Moor, Mythe Bridge and Strensham.

Staffs Bred at Mere Pool, Brocton, for the first time. Also bred at Blithfield and Coldmeese, where two well-grown chicks were being fed in late August. At Barton GP numbers peaked at a massive 44 in September, while at Blithfield the peak was 17 in August.

W Mid Breeding noted in the Bradnock's Marsh area and at Clayhanger (up to three pairs), Fens Pools LNR (one pair raised three broods), Goscote Valley, Marsh Lane GP, Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP (at least four pairs). Also reported from Bumble Hole in the breeding season, where eight in July was perhaps a family party. Winter records came from Bartley (although a bird noted here in early April too), Hydes Road Pool, Park Lime Pits and Valley Park, where 12 were along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in January.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	3	10	17	22	18	17	14	6	8	7	15	5
Colton	14	10	18	13	—	16	16	66	35	10	11	23
Dosthill	5	3	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	—	21
Draycote	40	30	35	20	21	42	41	55	46	54	93	120
Shustoke	4	—	—	—	—	—	17	30	—	64	20	28
Bittell	2	25	45	20	21	16	15	8	13	11	16	30
Bredons Hardwick	—	5	2	10	10	17	—	—	10	13	10	3
Larford	1	1	13	7	8	—	—	—	—	3	1	1
Lower Moor	—	6	9	6	5	5	5	2	—	2	2	2
Upton Warren	—	3	8	6	6	7	4	3	2	3	1	2
Westwood	1	6	15	15	9	5	10	13	12	8	4	3
Aqualate	0	9	13	27	31	36	20	48	73	68	29	13
Belvide	5	5	10	4	5	4	12	14	20	25	—	44
Blithfield	148	24	55	84	—	56	52	58	65	105	105	53
Tittesworth	0	4	8	8	8	9	16	24	23	22	9	5
Westport	0	11	12	7	6	4	6	15	5	7	10	0
Sandwell Valley	6	7	15	16	8	8	6	5	8	6	10	7

Warks Breeding pairs at Alvecote (three), Brandon, Chesterton area (six), Compton Verney (two), Coombe, Earlswood (six), Farnborough Park, Kingsbury, Ladywalk (two), Lower Radbourn, Napton Res, Shustoke and Wormleighton Res. In addition, a pair probably attempted to breed at Temple Pool. Elsewhere, the best count was 22 at Earlswood Lakes on March 28th.

Worcs Bred at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell (four pairs), Bredons Hardwick, Grimley, Ladies Pool, Lodge Pool and Lower Moor. Small numbers seen outside the breeding season at Hewell Grange, Lenchford, Norton Pool, Ripple and Trimley.

Staffs Bred throughout the county and was even successful at Blithfield, which is unusual. Largest broods were four at Tittesworth and three at Croxall. A good count of 57 at Barton on August 24th.

W Mid Breeding noted at Edgbaston Reservoir, Fens Pools LNR (four pairs raised seven broods totalling 18 young), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (three pairs of which one failed due to vandalism), Stubbers Green and Sutton Park. Highest counts were 12 at Bartley on January 5th and 27 at Edgbaston Reservoir on March 21st. One on Dunstall Park Lake on August 19th was only the second to be recorded there in recent years.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, rare though increasing in summer.

Four is slightly below average for a normal year.

- Staffs** Single first-winter birds were at Westport on October 16th *WJL et al*, Tittesworth on November 7th *MB*, Chasewater on November 8th-9th *ESC*, *MJI* and Blithfield from November 23rd-December 24th *ESC*.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Another good year, with almost double the annual average of four, though the heavy Warwickshire bias was unusual.

- Warks** An excellent year, with seven individuals. A single bird remained at Draycote from January 25th-March 23rd *RKn et al* and was joined by a second bird in partial summer plumage on the last date *MJI*. Three were present on the R. Avon at Stratford from January 26th-February 2nd, with one still there on 5th *SMH*, *RMM et al*. Later in the year there were singles at Draycote on October 24th *AC* and from November 23rd-December 31st *PDH et al*.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor which has bred. Rare in winter.

Sadly, last year's breeding success was not repeated, but numbers were again above the annual average of 16.

- Warks** A poor year. A winter-plumaged bird at Coton on April 4th *ICW* was the only spring record. A summer-plumaged adult commencing moult was at Dosthill on August 24th *ARD*. Singles at Coton on October 5th *per SMH*, Shustoke the next day *SMH*, *BLK* and Dosthill from October 8th-26th and on November 1st, 15th *SMH* and 23rd *per SR* possibly involved just one first-winter bird.
- Worcs** Three adults in summer plumage at Upton Warren on April 22nd *TMH et al*; single juveniles at Wilden from August 9th-26th *PT et al* and from September 19th-21st *PT et al*; and an adult at Westwood from October 25th-November 11th *TMH et al*.
- Staffs** At Barton GP, three adults from April 26th-27th *ICW*, *MY* were followed by six on May 25th *AGJ* and then singles on June 15th *MY*, July 6th *AGJ* and August 2nd *MY*. At Branston GP there were four adults on May 5th *ESC*, then singles on May 21st, July 13th *ESC* and 14th *RP*. Elsewhere, an adult was at Chasewater on April 7th *RS*, while a first-winter remained at Belvide from September 26th-October 18th *SN*, *HJM*.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Rare, mainly storm-driven autumn vagrant (7/10).

- Worcs** One picked up at Hallow on September 12th *per SJD*.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Rare, mainly storm-driven autumn vagrant (3/10).

The first records since 1989.

- Warks** A bird spent the whole day at Shustoke on September 11th *ARD*, *BLK et al*.
- Worcs** One was picked up at Kidderminster on October 6th *per SJD* and taken to a seabird rehabilitation hospital in Somerset by the RSPCA.

Northern Gannet (Gannet) *Morus bassanus*
Scarce passage migrant and storm-driven vagrant.

Warks An immature was watched swimming and plunge-diving at Coton on October 3rd TL, a day of strong westerlies.

Worcs An immature was at Upton Warren from October 4th-5th *MIW et al.* Originally discovered sitting forlornly underneath willows at the side of the Moors Pool, it was clear all was not well. It was captured and taken into care, but died before it could be released. The autopsy revealed the cause of death to be necrotising enteritis.

Great Cormorant (Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.
 Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	20	20	55	4	6	17	13	35	24	45	250	100
Kingsbury	15	4	51	38	4	4	13	4	10	4	42	40
Ladywalk	0	20	24	11	12	14	21	18	3	67	19	127
Bredons Hardwick	30	35	25	33	13	10	—	10	5	5	22	25
Lower Moor	32	18	6	1	2	—	3	4	5	8	8	11
Westwood	90	98	85	30	2	2	1	2	7	20	10	60
Aqualate	14	26	36	19	6	12	8	48	27	47	26	25
Belvide	1	8	16	3	—	2	14	21	13	—	53	107
Blithfield	314	253	14	18	—	4	22	35	44	25	60	77
Westport	2	1	8	18	4	3	0	15	16	1	0	0

Warks Two occupied nests were found at Kingsbury in May *BLK*, the first indication of breeding in the county. The outcome was not recorded, though a pair and two barely flying juveniles at Shustoke in early August may have been from there. There were no accurate counts from Coombe this year, but it was apparent that far more are now staying the day here, with fewer flying out to Draycote to feed. In the Tame Valley, the roost at Kingsbury apparently shifted over to Ladywalk during the autumn and early winter. The largest counts in the south of the county were 41 at Abbots Salford Pool and 24 flying north along the R. Avon at Marcliff, presumably from the former site, both on January 25th.

Worcs Well reported on the R. Severn in the early part of the year, when low water levels at Bewdley were considered to have been responsible for the presence of up to 40 there throughout January. The same month also saw a peak of 43 at Ripple on 8th, 55 flying north at Ribbesford on 14th and 37 at Larford on 27th. Elsewhere, smaller numbers (up to 12) were seen during winter and autumn at Birlingham, Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell, Chadbury, Croome Court, Droitwich Sewage Works, Elmley Castle, Grimley, Grovely Dingle, Holt Fleet, Norton Pool, Pirton, Strensham, Trimpey, Upton Warren and Warford Pool.

Staffs The Kings Bromley roost peaked during February at over 150 and more than 20 remained during the breeding season. At Chasewater, 117 on February 22nd was a locality record. One with an orange ring on its right leg was at Blithfield on September 13th.

W Mid Again the majority of records concerned birds 'seen in flight'. In Sandwell Valley, birds were recorded on 31 dates between January 7th and December

27th, with a peak count of seven on November 6th; Bartley had singles on January 2nd and June 1st; and two flew over Bradnock's Marsh on January 19th. Eight were at Edgbaston Reservoir on January 30th, but flew out at around 1300 hours; and two visited Buckpool/Fens Pools LNR on April 6th. A good series of records from Sheepwash UP, with birds reported on 14 dates between March 6th-October 26th and peak counts of 14 on September 2nd and 22 on 28th. At Dunstall Park/ Valley Park there were six on April 6th and singles on 27th, May 6th and June 8th, followed by two on October 7th and one on 18th. One was seen briefly at Park Lime Pits on September 15th and one flew over on 17th, with a further bird on October 3rd and three over on December 12th. One was at Clayhanger on September 23rd, seven flew over West Bromwich Police Station on November 3rd and nine flew over Olton Mere on December 27th.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

A scarce visitor in all months, with occasional autumn and winter influxes.

Warks

An adult on Packington Great Pool on August 6th *NPB*.

Staffs

At Blithfield, the bird from 1996 remained until January 12th *several observers*. One was at Westport from August 11th-12th *WJL*.

Great Bittern (Bittern) *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce winter visitor. Rare in summer.

Probably at least eight individuals were involved in the following records, which is twice the annual average and makes this the best year since 1993.

Warks

A good year. One was flushed by a dog-walker from a small pond at Wolston on January 19th *per SMH*. At Ladywalk, one was seen on January 4th *per SC* and then on March 7th-8th and 22nd *per SMH*. This site was again favoured in the autumn, with one from November 11th to the end of the year *SC et al* and a second bird from at least November 22nd *SMH et al*. Both birds were seen again early in 1998. One was seen at Brandon on November 23rd *JMR et al*.

Worcs

One on the R. Avon at Wyre Piddle from January 1st-2nd *GHP, WFP, SMW* was relocated at nearby Lower Moor where it was seen from February 8th-15th *RAP et al*. Meanwhile one was flushed by hunters from the banks of the R. Severn at Uckinghall on January 11th *per LAB*.

Staffs

Singles were at Chasewater on January 18th *GJM* and Penkridge on December 4th *JPS*.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A rare, though increasing visitor, mainly in spring and summer (6/10).

Continues to become more widespread and numerous, with twice as many birds as usual and records from all four counties for the second consecutive year.

Warks

A good year, with singles in spring at Astley Pool on May 18th *KWn et al* and Earlswood Lakes on 27th *Bsm*. One was seen at Ladywalk on four occasions between August 11th-24th *SC, DC*, with probably the same bird at Shustoke on 23rd *IB, DWJ*.

- Worcs** After an unsubstantiated report from the Droitwich Canal on April 2nd, what was clearly the same bird appeared on garden ponds in the Redditch area from April 3rd, when it was at Upper Bentley *JH*, to May 11th, when it was last seen at the Old Yarr, Feckenham, *SMW et al.* In the intervening period it had been photographed, video-recorded, and reported by amazed residents at Callow Hill *per JWM*, Crabbs Cross *RH* and Oakenshaw *ABu JCh*. Although very approachable, it was unringed and in full summer plumage. Attempts to find evidence that it had escaped from local collections drew a blank, so it was presumed to be wild.
- Staffs** Singles were at Copmere on January 30th *ESC* and Croxall on March 17th *ICW* and May 18th *ESC, DJA*.
- W Mid** A summer plumaged adult at Withymoor Pool on March 31th *SCr* was unusually confiding. A sub-adult was at Marsh Lane GP from July 29th-August 6th at least *NPB, PMH et al.*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident.

Good breeding numbers were maintained across the Region.

- Warks** The largest heronry, at Coombe, increased again to 57 nests. There were also ten nests at Wootton Wawen and two in Chesterton Wood. Parties of up to ten were seen during the year at Brandon, Draycote and in the Tame Valley, but the only larger concentration was 22 at Ladywak on March 2nd.
- Worcs** A good year for breeding records, with new sites being established at Bittell and Hewell Grange, though each involved just one or two nests. Along the R. Severn, the site north of Worcester contained 35 pairs and a second location, south of the city, contained 32 breeding pairs. Outside the breeding season, the largest concentrations were 16 at Bittell on June 7th, 10 at Bishampton Vale Pool on August 10th and 13 at Westwood on August 29th. An albino was at Grimley on May 31st.
- Staffs** With 369 proven nests and possibly as many as 377, the county maintains healthy breeding levels. Details of the heronries are: Bagots Wood 106, Gailey Lower Reservoir 56, Aqualate 53, Statfold 40, Pendeford Mill 31, Trentham 27, Leek 17, Enville 15, Radford 11, Castle Mere (Eccleshall) 10, Churnet Valley two and Ford Hall and Hamps Valley one each. There were no nests at Chillington or Checkhill Bog this year. Away from the heronries there were no large gatherings, the most being 17 at Blithfield on August 24th.
- W Mid** Breeding again noted in Sandwell Valley, where two pairs raised two young. Regularly noted throughout the year at Clayhanger, Dunstall Park/ Valley Park and Marston Green, whilst late spring birds were reported from Sutton Park. Records outside of the breeding season came from Aldridge, Buckpool/ Fens Pools, Bumble Hole, Castle Vale, Darlaston (along the Walsall Canal), Harborne Nature Reserve, Newbridge, Stubbers Green, Valley Park and Whitmore Reans.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Very rare vagrant (4/10).

Incredibly, the tenth regional record followed closely on last year's eighth and

ninth. For Warwickshire to have had four birds in two years after an absence of a hundred years is quite remarkable.

Warks One flew over Draycote on July 14th *JW*, the fourth county record and the second year in succession at this site.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common and increasing resident.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	24	8	3	20	31	10	22	12	10	55	52	13
Coton	35	7	9	9	—	90	102	232	48	20	17	36
Draycote	60	4	4	2	5	37	79	74	85	64	62	20
Kingsbury	80	17	4	—	—	—	44	—	38	49	—	10
Shustoke	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	66	78	99
Pirton	1	3	3	3	4	6	6	11	25	17	5	4
Upton Warren	—	1	2	7	4	4	5	3	3	3	5	—
Westwood	2	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	12
Aqualate	3	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0
Belvide	6	5	2	2	21	36	42	45	44	38	7	2
Blithfield	3	2	2	2	4	131	133	133	71	66	7	5
Chasewater	68	24	49	50	59	62	59	63	51	58	58	62
Croxall	85	112	0	0	0	0	19	17	20	0	0	0
Kettlebrook Lake	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	11	15	12	6
Westport	41	38	50	43	32	46	53	52	41	26	24	23
Whitemoor Haye	201	163	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
Sandwell Valley	21	9	22	17	—	12	—	—	24	14	5	—

Warks Breeding pairs at Alvecote (three), Ashorne, Brandon, Charlecote GP, Compton Verney, Coombe (two), Draycote fishery, Farnborough Park, Lady-walk (two, but one flooded out), Long Itchington, Lower Radbourn, Middleton area (three), Napton Res, Newfield Pool, Stoneleigh, Stoneton Moat, Warwick Park and Wormleighton Res. No counts came from the R. Avon at Stratford this year, while the only other site to report more than 15 was Abbots Salford Pool, with 18 on October 16th.

Worcs Breeding pairs at Bishampton Vale Pool, Eckington, Feckenham, Kinsham, Lower Moor (two), and Oddingley. Small numbers throughout the year at many localities, with maxima of 170 on the R. Severn at Worcester on July 19th, 16 at Bredons Hardwick on September 16th and 17 at Larford on November 27th.

Staffs Breeding pairs reported from Belvide, Betley Mere, Branston (two), Brookley Lake, Chasewater (two), Elford (three), R. Dove (three) and Wychnor. Elsewhere, 30 on the R. Trent at Burton January 6th and 89 at Barton GP on December 22nd were the highest counts. At Chasewater, over 120 ringed birds were recorded throughout the year.

W Mid Bred at Bradnock's Marsh, Clayhanger, Fens Pools LNR (one pair raised two young with a second pair raising eight young on the nearby Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal), Noose Lane in Willenhall, Park Lime Pits, Prouds Lane in Bilston, Stubbers Green (though sadly at least one of the cygnets was killed by a car) and Sutton Park (pairs on Longmoor and Wyndley Pools). 17 were counted on Netherton Reservoir on January 9th and one or two were seen along the Staffs and Worcs Canal in Valley Park outside the breeding season.

Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan) *Cygnus columbianus*
Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently declining.
Average: October 23rd (8) – March 28th (8)

The last and first for the two winter periods involved singles at Tittesworth on April 18th and Draycote on October 28th respectively, with the main autumn influx concentrated around November 20th.

Warks A party of eight visited riverside meadows at Hampton Lucy on January 3rd and 5th, while up to four were at Coombe during January and early February. At Draycote, a herd of 31 moved south on January 1st, followed by 24 more next day, with two adults from 17th-19th and up to eight on March 10th and six on 15th. Autumn records involved a single at Draycote on October 28th; two at Ladywalk on November 1st; herds of 19 over Baginton and ten over Brandon on 20th; three over Brandon again on 27th; and three at Dosthill on December 20th-21st.

Worcs Just two records represents a new low for the species in the county. Three adults were at Bredons Hardwick on March 7th and 10 appeared at the same locality on November 22nd.

Staffs Good numbers early in the year around the favoured confluence of the R. Trent and R. Tame, with some movement between sites. A flock at Whitemoor Haye increased from 15 on January 1st to 38 by the 5th; numbers then remained at this level until 26th, after which they declined to 14 by February 14th – the last day birds were present here. A flock of 38, presumably the same, was also at Alrewas on January 14th, while at nearby Croxall numbers increased from 20 on January 21st and 29th to a peak of 35 on February 15th (perhaps including some birds from Whitemoor Haye) before reducing to nine by February 23rd. Elsewhere, two adults and two immatures were at Belvide from January 1st-February 9th; thick fog grounded 17 on a small patch of open water at Westport on January 15th (including presumably the bird mentioned in the Ringing Report as being present the previous day); a mobile group of seven adults and four immatures visited Belvide, Chasewater and Gailey on January 25th; four adults were at Blithfield on February 2nd and a single bird was seen at Tittesworth on April 18th. The first returning birds were four at Belvide on November 18th-19th, with two present on the 21st. Birds were also heard flying over Byrkley Pool on November 23rd and a flock of 12 flew east over Tittesworth on December 29th.

W Mid An adult with a blue neck collar was in Sandwell Valley on January 21st *HJM*, *RW*: it had originally been ringed north-west of the Yangtze River in Siberia on August 10th 1996 before being reported at various locations in Holland between November 15th and December 31st 1996, returning to Holland after its visit to Britain from February 8th-March 4th. 11 adults flew into Sheepwash UP in thick fog on December 20th and flew out mid-afternoon the following day *DW*, *AGW*. Five were reported flying over Langley on March 10th, but unfortunately no further details have been supplied.

1996 Addendum

W Mid A party of six stayed in the Clayhanger area from January 4th-6th *CMA*, *AS*.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in Staffs. Also a recent feral visitor.

A poor year, with only half the average number of records and birds.

Warks A party of five (two adults and three juveniles) stopped briefly at Draycote on October 20th *SMH*. Later that day they were seen at Daventry Res in Northants.

Staffs Three adults from 1996 remained in the Catholme area until March 31st, with two still on April 1st *PDH*. During this time they also visited Croxall and Whitemoor Haye *several observers*. Two adults returned to Catholme on November 11th *ESC*, forming the nucleus of a party which built up to five adults from December 4th-6th *ESC et al*. Two then moved to Whitemoor Haye, with three staying at Catholme, and all were present until the year's end. Elsewhere, a tame feral adult at Westport on April 17th moved to Tittesworth the next day in the company of three Westport-ringed Mute Swans. All four birds were back at Westport the following day, where this particular individual remained until April 28th and then reappeared again from May 1st-23rd *several observers*.

W Mid Eight flew east over Sandwell Valley on January 2nd.

Wild Swans

Warks A herd of 33, probably Tundras but too distant for positive identification, were seen flying north-west over the Radbourn valley on January 5th.

Whooper x Mute Swan

Warks Up to five birds (see Short Notes for origin) were in the Packington area all year, with three of these visiting Kingsbury in May and a single seen occasionally at Coton thereafter.

W Mid Some at least of the Warks birds also appeared in the Marsh Lane GP area.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor to Staffs, but normally rare further south. Also a scarce feral visitor.

A poor year, especially considering the possibility that just one skein accounted for the two records on January 25th at Whitacre Heath and Sheepwash UP.

Warks A skein of around 50 flew north over Whitacre Heath on January 25th *KW*. Singles of more dubious origin were seen in company with three Greylags at both Ladywalk and Shustoke on January 18th, and at Draycote on April 27th and Great Aine on August 18th.

Worcs One at Bredons Hardwick from March 5th to May 3rd, joined by a second on April 3rd. Singles at Upton Warren on June 14th, at Pilton from June 22nd to August 24th, and at Westwood (with Greylags) from October 30th to December 3rd. It is increasingly difficult to judge the status of this species in the county as numbers have increased nationally over recent years, but it is possible that all of the above were feral or escaped birds.

Staffs A poor year, with five at Croxall from December 5th-6th *ESC et al* probably

the only wild birds to occur. The following records probably all refer to feral birds: one at Dosthill North Pit on January 14th, one with Greylag Geese at Drayton Bassett on February 2nd, two with Canada Geese at Doxey on March 25th, two with Canada Geese at Rudyard on April 12th and one at Trentham Gardens on December 1st.

W Mid A skein of 60 flew over Sheepwash UP in a westerly direction on January 25th DW, AGW and approximately 40 flew north over Fens Pools LNR on December 26th DD, AP.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Also scarce feral visitor.

Warks A skein of unknown number was heard passing over Bishop's Itchington on January 5th JJB, MJL.

Worcs Four at Bredons Hardwick on January 27th SJH and two adults there from December 24th-26th SJH *et al* were certainly wild. The origin of one at Batchley Pond on November 8th RAH is rather less clear cut.

Staffs Ten at Whitemoor Haye from 1996 remained until January 2nd *several* observers. Four, consisting of two adults and two immatures, were then at Blithfield from February 2nd-16th ESC, WJL, GJM. Two adults flew south at Croxall on December 26th PDH.

W Mid One in Sandwell Valley from January 21st-25th was presumably feral.

Grey Goose sp. Anser sp.

Worcs A skein of 40 over Throckmorton on January 12th was too distant for certain identification.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Frequent feral resident, mainly in the northern half of Warks but increasing and spreading elsewhere.

Warks Bred successfully at Brandon (two pairs with 16 young), Coombe (five pairs) and Packington. The Tame Valley flock reached a peak of 193 at Dosthill on September 23rd, while the Packington flock peaked at 120 on December 24th. The maximum at Ladywalk was 90 flying over in December. Other counts included 40 at Brandon and 55 at Coombe. Further south, records of small numbers came from BAD Kineton, Draycote, Farnborough Park, Great Aine, Napton Res and Wormleighton Res, with 17 flying over Oversley Wood on October 12th.

Worcs Noticeably commoner this year. Noted at Bredons Hardwick regularly from January 18th to June 5th, usually singles, but including parties of five on April 26th, and three from May 6th to 22nd. A similar story at Upton Warren where, after one on February 20th, small numbers appeared quite regularly until April 27th, the peak being four from April 1st to 3rd. Up to three irregularly at Bittell between March 28th and April 14th, then one on September 13th. One or two were at Pirton from April 7th to October 1st, two at Beckford on August 25th, one at Wilden on August 30th, up to three at Lower Moor from October 2nd to 25th and 12 at Westwood from October 30th to December 3rd.

Staffs Breeding was reported from Byrkley Park and Trentham Gardens, where 18

young were produced; other counts from this site were 23 on April 19th, 16 on May 17th and 57 on December 1st. At Belvide, there were singles on February 27th and March 30th, three on April 1st, seven on April 19th and five on June 8th; while Blithfield had 25 on January 1st, two on April 1st and four on the 21st, eight on July 11th, up to five from August 1st until the 29th, seven on September 17th and 11 on the 19th, nine on October 2nd and one on November 30th. Also reported from the Benton Canal, 45 on February 11th; Betley Mere, two on April 6th; Braken House, 55 on March 30th; Branston, four on July 14th, 24 on September 1st and 43 on November 1st; Chasewater, one from January 1st to the 23rd, one on April 7th and 26th, and four on April 28th; Croxall, five on March 31st; Dosthill, 85 on January 18th, 40 on September 6th and 85 on October 2nd; Elford, two on April 1st and May 25th; Holly Bush, four on March 30th; Needwood House, four on March 8th and two on the 28th; and Tittesworth, singles on May 2nd, April 11th and May 11th.

W Mid A pair bred in Sandwell Valley, but the goslings were quickly predated. Two over Dunstall Park on April 21st were followed by three over there on May 2nd and two on 25th, while two were noted on the lake on September 2nd, 11th and October 19th. One was at Sheepwash UP on April 6th; five flew over Tettenhall Ridge on May 11th; one was in Mary Stevens Park on July 7th; and 29 were at Marsh Lane GP on July 29th, followed by an impressive 110 on November 2nd (presumably the Blythe Valley/Packington flock).

Greylag X Canada

Worcs One accompanied a pure Greylag at Bittell on September 13th.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Scarce feral visitor

Warks A white-phased bird at Wormleighton Res on December 13th.

Worcs Singles at Lower Moor on January 19th and Norton Pool from July 11th to August 17th.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common and increasing feral resident.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	210	27	24	30	26	21	25	45	7	31	-	154
Brandon	30	56	65	89	72	113	47	138	108	-	1	2
Chesterton	269	150	155	80	125	-	136	103	12	70	233	76
Draycote	180	20	13	10	3	7	51	670	256	675	130	275
Ladywalk	0	31	8	25	60	47	63	120	1	-	27	-
Bittell	-	29	37	4	7	34	40	354	307	29	1	35
Larford	-	-	36	21	28	-	-	-	-	80	-	12
Lower Moor	120	66	43	25	40	30	96	147	230	244	144	60
Pirton	31	59	3	98	81	339	215	462	178	700	18	29
Upton Warren	150	91	75	67	76	58	66	205	52	8	2	5
Westwood	253	60	21	3	20	56	74	71	263	116	67	186
Aqualate	1	41	9	17	27	19	38	0	0	15	0	44
Belvide	139	111	65	60	60	161	-	237	-	143	241	80
Blithfield	597	20	29	5	-	36	70	305	850	249	293	209
Chasewater	190	104	31	18	16	16	25	115	288	115	18	62
Westport	40	46	41	16	50	95	87	68	54	51	50	84
Fens Pool LNR	70	-	16	-	-	-	30	-	-	133	82	108
Sandwell Valley	-	-	-	208	232	343	326	-	244	278	238	117

Warks Fourteen broods in the Chesterton area was the largest concentration and at Ladywalk only one gosling survived from three broods. Control of nests by egg-pricking now goes on at some waters, such as Coombe. The only substantial count in the Kingsbury area this year was 517 in January, while other counts included 400 at Coombe in June, 217 at Compton Verney in September and 132 at Wormleighton Res in December.

Worcs Breeding was attempted at Bittell, Dodford, Lower Moor (four pairs), Shortwood Roughs, Strensham and Upton Warren. Numerous flocks were reported away from the sites tabulated, the largest being 337 at Grimley on January 5th, 116 at Abberton on August 24th and 530 over Defford on October 1st. Small individuals were at Upton Warren on January 2nd and Bredons Hardwick on February 1st, but the exact race involved was not recorded.

Staffs Breeding pairs were noted at Brocton Quarry, Byrkley Park, Chasewater, Holly Bush, Tamworth, Trentham Gardens and Westport. The largest counts away from the tabulated sites were: Whitemoor Haye 450 on January 11th; Tittesworth 102 on July 6th; Branston 350 on July 30th; Elford 533 on September 20th; and Broadfields 311 on December 7th.

W Mid Breeding reported from Clayhanger, Fens Pools LNR (two pairs), Park Lime Pits, Prouds Lane and Ladymoor Pool in Bilston, Sandwell Valley and Stubbers Green. Largest counts away from tabulated sites were 193 at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge on January 6th, 150 at Stubbers Green on January 7th, 40 at Bartley on February 2nd, around 200 on stubble at Park Lime Pits on August 25th (a new site record), an impressive 325 in Dunstall Park on September 8th and 180 in Sutton Park in October. One present in a Whitmore Reans street on March 17th was unusual.

Cackling Goose B.c. minima

Staffs One noted at Blithfield with Barnacle Geese on January 1st and again on December 14th.

Canada Hybrids

Worcs A *Canada X Barnacle* was at Beckford on March 1st.

W Mid Singles noted at Park Hall Pool, in south Walsall, and at Walsall Arboretum, both on February 27th.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon feral visitor.

Warks All were likely to be of captive origin. At Draycote, there were three on January 23rd, ten on April 19th, six on May 5th, four on 19th and lastly 12 on December 22nd. After one on February 8th, two were with Canada Geese in the Dosthill/Kingsbury area on March 9th, with one remaining in the area until at least July 12th, but with four on June 7th. Two were seen at Brandon on March 2nd and 8th, with singles at Chesterton on March 6th, Farnborough Park on May 10th and BAD Kineton on May 18th.

Worcs After one on the ice at Pirton on January 4th, which was described as very wary, further birds (singles unless otherwise stated) appeared at Arrow Valley

Lake on January 6th; Beckford on March 1st, August 25th and December 20th (two); Bittell on April 28th and December 4th and 14th; over Shortwood Roughs on June 10th (two); and Bredons Hardwick on November 9th and December 4th.

Staffs At Blithfield one was present on January 2nd and 4th, nine on January 12th, a single from August 10th until October 20th and finally five, which arrived on October 29th and remained until December 14th. Tittesworth had one on March 6th; two from May 24th to August 26th, with a third bird present from August 5th to 22nd; and a single from September 9th to December 14th. Belvide recorded three on April 8th and May 10th, with one being noted as present all year. Elsewhere, birds (singles unless otherwise stated) were at Byrkley Park on April 10th, September 21st, October 27th, October 31st (three), November 6th and 15th, November 23rd (two), and December 13th and 26th; Chasewater on April 13th; Drayton Bassett on February 2nd; Dunstall on October 20th (four); Holly Bush on December 31st (four); and Trentham Gardens on 19th April (three).

W Mid Feral birds were reported from Edgbaston Pool (a single bird throughout the year with three present on September 17th); Sandwell Valley (single present throughout the year with four noted from April 19th to 23th and two on October 30th); Sheepwash UP on January 6th and June 13th; Hydes Road Pool on January 14th, 18th and 26th; Valley Park on February 5th (one flying over); Bradnock's Marsh on March 1st (two); Mary Stevens Park on July 7th; and Bartley from November 24th to 27th.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks One was seen at Ladywalk on November 22nd *per SC*.

Worcs One was found grazing on a football pitch at Arrow Valley Park on February 3rd *NE*.

Staffs One was at Belvide on March 22nd *HJM*. In the second winter period, an immature was found at Branston GP and remained in the area from November 23rd-December 22nd *GJM, MJI et al*, being seen at several other sites nearby *several observers*. An adult was also at Blithfield from December 20th-24th *GJM, MJI et al*.

W Mid A dark-bellied bird was at Stubbers Green on March 26th *PPN*.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Scarce feral visitor or escape.

Staffs A single at Blithfield on August 17th.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Scarce feral visitor and possible rare vagrant.

Warks The usual male was in the Dosthill/Middleton area from at least March 9th-June 7th *JAA, NDG et al*, frequently displaying to the resident Common Shelducks. Two birds were seen to fly in from the west towards Dosthill Pit on April 19th *DJS*.

Staffs The now regular female that spends its time in the Blithfield/ Branston GP

areas remained at Alrewas GP from January 1st-21st *ESC*. It was then at Branston GP on July 13th-14th *ESC*, *RP* before moving to Blithfield from August 3rd-August 31st *ESC et al*. It then paid another brief visit to Branston GP from September 4th-8th *RP* before returning to Blithfield again, where it remained from September 20th-October 2nd *AGJ et al*. It was last seen at Branston GP on November 24th *RP*. A male remained at Drayton Bassett from March 16th-May 7th *JAA*.

Tadorna hybrid

Warks A male showing mixed characteristics of both Ruddy and Australian (*T. tadornoides*) Shelducks was in the Dosthill/Middleton area from April 24th-May 11th *JAA*.

Common Shelduck (Shelduck) *Tadorna tadorna*

Frequent summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor. Also uncommon breeder, mainly in the Tame and Trent Valleys of Staffs and north Warks.

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	4	18	13	21	22	10	1	2	-	-	-	-
Draycote	3	1	5	6	-	-	1	5	8	-	4	6
Kingsbury	5	6	14	38	15	5	2	-	3	1	-	2
Bittell	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Bredons Hardwick	1	4	3	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Kinsham	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	1
Upton Warren	-	-	2	2	2	-	10	2	1	-	1	1
Westwood	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	6
Alrewas	11	-	12	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aqualate	-	-	3	7	2	11	-	-	1	-	1	-
Barton	-	2	12	3	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	2
Belvide	3	-	6	8	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	2
Blithfield	1	-	2	7	7	-	-	1	2	1	1	2
Branston	-	-	-	-	6	-	8	-	6	-	-	-
Chasewater	4	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-
Tittesworth	-	1	-	5	8	1	-	-	-	-	3	1

Warks Broods were noted at Alvecote, Kingsbury (two) and Middleton, but apparently with fewer young raised than usual. A peak of 14 in June was recorded from Ladywalk, while a few were also seen at Brandon and Shustoke. A pair at Baginton Lagoons on May 4th was the only other record.

Worcs Two at Strensham on May 18th, three at Wilden on September 20th, one at both Bishampton Vale Pool and Throckmorton on November 2nd, and three at Lower Moor on December 20th.

Staffs The only breeding record was of a pair with a brood of nine at Aqualate, whilst the largest count away from tabulated sites was 55 at Rough Hay on April 2nd. Elsewhere Betley, Brakenhurst, Chasewater, Crossplains, Croxall Dosthill, Gerrards Bromley and Westport all reported small numbers.

W Mid Two were in the Cornets End/Marsh Lane GP/ Meriden GP area in March and April; one was on Dunstall Park Lake from March 1st-5th; two were at Sheepwash UP on March 18th and August 8th; three were in Sandwell Valley on April 20th; and singles appeared at Bartley on November 20th and December 1st. The bird at Edgbaston Reservoir in 1996 remained throughout 1997 and is suspected of having a somewhat dubious origin.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata**Uncommon, but increasing, feral resident and visitor.*

- Warks** A pair first noted in Packington Park on April 2nd subsequently bred, rearing at least one juvenile successfully, with birds present throughout the summer months. The only other records involved a male on the partially frozen Canal Pool at Kingsbury WP on January 3rd and one at Draycote on February 19th.
- Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Beckford, where numbers peaked at 12 on December 20th, and Kinsham. One on the R. Avon between Lower Moor and Wyre Piddle on January 5th; one on the R. Severn at Mythe Bridge on January 6th; a pair at Bewdley on January 19th and November 2nd, with probably the same pair along Dowles Brook from April 7th to at least the end of May; and four at Kemerton Pool on September 11th.
- Staffs** Numbers at the free-flying colony at Trentham Gardens were noted as being much lower in spring than previous years, with just three on April 11th and four males on May 17th, but had recovered to 22 by December 1st. On Cannock Chase, near Hednesford, a male was present on January 15th, 18th and 25th when it was seen flying off to the west. Three males were on the river at Victoria Park, Stafford, on March 8th, while on the moors a female was seen flying along the stream at Swallow Moss on April 19th. At Blithfield, a male was seen on May 30th and 31st, with another male reported on October 31st.
- W Mid** A female was at Park Hall Pool, south Walsall, on January 2nd and 22nd, and February 12th and 25th. Two were at Meriden Quarry on January 5th and a male was at Ladymoor Pool, Bilston, on April 5th.

Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon) *Anas penelope**Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.*

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	6	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	260	105	85
Coton	237	142	186	3	—	—	—	1	—	108	83	131
Dosthill	1000	890	650	16	2	2	1	—	46	231	550	600
Draycote	1500	430	240	2	—	—	—	1	300	400	410	827
Ladywalk	—	135	12	—	—	—	—	—	150	134	212	—
Shustoke	200	—	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	34	80	9
Bredons Hardwick	1000	600	380	4	1	1	1	—	42	220	400	1100
Lower Moor	29	32	12	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	12	60
Pirton Pool	92	48	—	—	—	—	1	—	8	24	3	26
Westwood	8	63	51	11	3	—	—	—	11	28	29	97
Aqualate	50	—	112	3	—	—	—	—	6	—	9	35
Belvide	125	200	68	6	1	1	3	6	74	116	72	221
Blithfield	566	578	594	32	2	2	7	8	86	134	123	514
Chasewater	55	57	29	2	—	—	—	—	—	8	51	32
Croxall	300	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	3	30	72
Tittesworth	280	350	122	1	2	—	1	—	8	35	100	160
Westport	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	40	19	2
Marsh Lane GP	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	42	54
Sandwell Valley	35	15	26	8	—	—	—	—	8	40	47	29

- Warks** A male was at Brandon during May, while a pair remained in the Dosthill/Middleton area until June 8th, with one on July 13th. Other maxima included 64 on the R. Avon at Hampton Lucy on January 11th, 70 at Blyth Hall on March 16th, 62 at Brandon on October 31st and 22 at Napton Res on

November 4th. Small numbers were also noted at Earlswood, Packington, Salford Priors GP and Wormleighton Res.

Worcs Cold weather in January led to good numbers on the R. Severn, with peaks of 65 at Bushley on 8th, 250 at Ripple on 11th, and 40 over Kempsey Lower Ham on 12th. Elsewhere, the peak at Chateau Impney was 103 on February 15th and smaller numbers were at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell, Grimley, Thorngrove, Upton Warren, Wilden and Wyre Piddle.

Staffs Maxima at non-tabulated sites included: Bateswood CP, Halmer End, 39 on March 11th; Little Wyrley 30 on January 30th; Branston 58 on September 26th; and Byrkley Park 28 on November 6th. Small numbers were also recorded at Aqualate, Betley, Coombes Valley, Doxey Marshes and on the R Dove.

W Mid One was at Ladymoor Pool, Bilston, on January 5th; three at Bartley on January 26th, with a single present on December 21st; 20 at Meriden on February 2nd; and up to three at Clayhanger between March 2nd-11th. In the autumn, singles were at Dunstall Park Lake on September 26th and 28th, Sutton Park on October 19th, Fens Pools LNR between October 25th and November 1st and Park Lime Pits from November 11th to 18th; and eight were at Stubbers Green on December 19th. Also reported from Clayhanger in March. The four at Marsh Lane GP in March were the first recorded at the locality, but were soon followed by others which were present throughout the autumn and winter, with a rapid October/November build up.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Very rare vagrant (2/10)

Only the fourth regional record, but the second in four years from Staffordshire, the previous one having been at Belvide in 1994. Prior to that, recorded in Warwickshire in 1985 and 1987.

Staffs A male at Blithfield Res from February 9th-23rd *PDH, WJL et al* was one of at least seven in the country at that time.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Frequent and increasing winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species.

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	6	8	8	19	0	—	—	—	—	32	42	10
Coton/Kingsbury	60	29	21	14	—	6	8	41	4	31	33	38
Draycote	140	31	5	16	8	6	—	7	20	12	70	130
Ladywalk	—	20	4	3	4	—	6	34	61	55	75	—
Bishampton Vale P	6	6	4	3	2	—	—	3	7	9	8	14
Bittell	4	6	6	1	2	1	—	—	3	2	6	3
Bredons Hardwick	—	6	2	6	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	8
Larford	16	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	3
Lower Moor	5	2	2	—	—	2	—	—	4	2	4	3
Westwood	24	40	11	6	4	2	—	6	14	16	15	22
Belvide	2	18	34	70	32	—	24	79	81	63	4	16
Blithfield	2	20	—	3	2	2	2	26	20	—	—	6
Branston	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	—	21	—
Chasewater	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	3	4

Warks Single broods were reported from Coton (six young) and Draycote (three young). A count of 37 at Shustoke on November 4th was the highest ever

from that locality, but at Brandon numbers were again low with not more than five reported during the year. Maxima on other waters included 15 at Lower Radbourn on March 9th, nine at Napton Res on November 4th and 12 at Packington Great Pool on November 25th, with small numbers also at Blyth Hall, Earlswood, Salford Priors GP, Seeswood Pool and Worm-leighton Res.

Worcs No reports of breeding this year. Small numbers seen at Bushley, Grimley (including six on November 27th), Kinsham, Pirton, Strensham, Upton Warren and Wilden.

Staffs Breeding noted at Belvide, where 30 young were successfully fledged. Elsewhere, the highest count was 63, at Elford on November 22nd. Smaller numbers of less than ten were reported from Aqualate, Barton, Byrkley Park, Croxall, Dosthill, Eland Brook and Tittesworth.

W Mid A pair was present in Sandwell Valley from January 1st to February 11th, with a pair again on March 5th and April 20th: these were followed by a singleton on June 15th, two drakes from June 17th to 22nd, a pair on September 17th and further singles on September 23rd and from December 17th to 19th. One was at Bartley on January 2nd, while Stubbers Green, where this species is unusual, held three on January 12th and two the following day. Two were also at Meriden on February 2nd and 23rd; one at Clayhanger on February 2nd was followed by three on 23rd, two on March 10th and two pairs on 14th; a female was at Park Lime Pits on September 22nd; three were at Bumble Hole on October 19th; and a pair at Marsh Lane GP on November 4th. Lastly, a very respectable 14 (seven males and seven females) were at Sheepwash UP on November 20th.

Common Teal (Teal) *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor. Uncommon in summer and a scarce breeding species.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	30	50	34	26	2	—	—	6	38	140	200	240
Brandon	350	105	115	35	4	9	22	90	62	57	120	121
Dosthill/Kingsbury	282	77	74	32	—	1	—	3	23	44	67	127
Draycote	170	125	105	39	—	1	1	26	67	94	410	198
Ladywalk	70	200	14	49	—	1	4	16	37	69	266	—
Bittell	2	8	3	7	1	3	1	11	12	3	25	11
Bredons Hardwick	8	40	15	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	1	300
Lower Moor	60	50	30	6	—	—	—	5	8	12	50	50
Upton Warren	82	84	47	43	1	2	5	72	100	150	125	156
Westwood	38	31	12	12	—	—	—	20	10	44	43	30
Wilden	40	31	12	16	—	—	—	12	30	21	40	31
Aqualate	91	—	—	2	—	2	—	1	3	1	55	42
Belvide	580	351	200	136	7	3	1	70	317	432	570	680
Blithfield	390	803	654	114	—	1	4	384	382	642	1326	1281
Branston	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	172	—	—	—
Chasewater	22	26	7	5	—	—	—	6	8	13	26	16
Little Wyrley	36	40	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	60	—	50
Pool Dam Marsh	—	—	14	5	—	—	1	3	15	20	24	37
Tittesworth	35	100	30	6	4	4	3	8	30	78	30	30
Westport	3	—	—	2	—	—	—	1	5	16	15	—
Goscote Valley	32	8	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Sandwell Valley	50	29	16	20	—	2	4	14	30	47	62	—
Stubbers Green	4	6	8	—	—	—	—	13	25	34	—	4

- Warks** Birds were present during the breeding season at several tabulated waters and at Baginton Lagoons, but with no proof of nesting. 100 were at Baginton Lagoons on September 16th. Numbers in the south were smaller than usual, with maxima of only 16 at Chesterton on January 16th and 11 at Wormleighton Res on November 18th.
- Worcs** Away from the tabulated sites, there were maxima of 30 on the R. Severn between Bushley and Ripple on January 8th, 30 at Kinsham on January 25th, 21 at Pirton on October 6th and 55 at Grimley on November 1st. Smaller numbers were at Frankley, Ipsley Alders, Oakley, Ryall, Strensham and Witley Court.
- Staffs** No breeding attempts were reported. Small numbers occurred at Barton, Betley Mere, Byrkley Park, Calwich Lake, Crossplains, Croxall, Eland Brook, Holly Bush, Needwood House, R. Dove and Yoxall Park.
- W Mid** An impressive 97 were at Wychall Reservoir on January 1st, 30 were at Cornets End on January 26th, up to 35 at nearby Meriden Quarries on March 22nd and at least 60 at Clayhanger in March, followed by 80 there in December. Up to ten were reported from Dunstall Park/ Valley Park, Fens Pools LNR, Hayhead Wood, Marsh Lane GP, Ladymoor Pool in Bilston and Park Lime Pits.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident and very common winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	75	80	69	28	24	33	82	61	76	128	160	110
Brandon	55	21	33	18	19	60	76	135	18	33	31	22
Chesterton	150	80	35	–	–	–	–	15	90	150	220	185
Draycote	360	155	41	37	38	130	218	700	391	210	215	347
Kingsbury	283	97	111	24	–	20	44	–	130	192	158	149
Ladywalk	150	142	22	44	41	52	89	112	48	35	135	–
Bishampton Vale P	67	–	12	13	25	52	67	90	69	62	45	69
Bittell	29	43	14	7	18	62	93	152	25	96	68	61
Lower Moor	75	116	31	19	16	30	74	83	66	70	94	124
Pirton	29	11	12	11	20	62	48	123	47	129	70	33
Upton Warren	250	31	22	40	81	105	144	400	44	107	57	128
Westwood	115	53	15	10	12	198	175	261	221	90	50	99
Wilden	90	103	40	50	60	60	110	200	100	70	70	120
Aqualate	600	82	24	34	27	222	134	111	500	102	638	240
Belvide	395	175	60	45	50	100	64	302	300	–	300	375
Blithfield	781	288	103	218	–	320	500	1238	451	988	674	847
Branston	–	–	–	–	–	–	58	–	181	–	–	–
Chasewater	241	165	90	65	72	75	88	163	189	213	166	91
Croxall	–	–	–	–	–	–	25	44	208	–	169	–
Kettlebrook Park	87	77	–	64	57	81	78	96	88	94	74	72
Tittesworth	250	80	40	30	60	70	80	120	–	180	110	170

- Warks** There were six broods at both Coombe and Earlswood Lakes (62 ducklings), five at Ladywalk and four at both Alvecote and Ashorne. Maxima away from tabulated waters were rather lower than usual, with 165 at Earlswood Lakes and 140 at Shustoke in January, 41 at Salford Priors GP in May, 210 at Coombe in June, 93 at Middleton Hall in September, 66 at Farnborough Park and 53 at Seeswood in October, and 55 at Napton Res and 49 at Wormleighton Res both in November.

- Worcs** Bred at Bishampton Vale Pool (nine broods), Bittell (seven broods), Bredons Hardwick, Lodge Pool, Lower Moor (10 broods), Oddingley, Offerton, Ryall, Shortwood Roughs, Upton Warren and Wilden. Peak counts outside the breeding season included 55 at Grimley on January 5th, 80 at Bewdley on February 3rd, 170 at Kinsham on August 23rd and 62 at Hewell Grange on September 5th.
- Staffs** Maximum counts away from tabulated sites include: Brookleys Lake 200 on January 1st; Needwood House 200 on January 12th; Holly Bush 130 on September 14th and Betley Mere 45 on September 20th. Broods reported from Brookleys Lake, Chasewater (seven) and Coombes Valley/ R. Churnet (five).
- W Mid** Breeding records came from Fens Pools LNR (two broods), Ladymoor Pool and Prouds Lane in Bilston, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot), Park Lime Pits (seven broods along the Rushall canal), Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green, Sutton Park and Valley Park. Interestingly, a female was noted incubating in a bush beside West Bromwich Ringway in May, oblivious to traffic and pedestrians: the ducklings were hatched out, but outcome is unknown. 190 were in Mary Stevens Park on January 6th, 126 in Sandwell Valley in September, 100 at Stubbers Green on October 13th, 208 in Sutton Park on November 16th and 95 at Bumble Hole on the same date.

Northern Pintail (Pintail) *Anas acuta*

Frequent winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce in summer.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	5	1	2	—	—	—	3	—	1	14	—	4
Bredons Hardwick	3	9	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	9	18
Westwood	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	1	2
Belvide	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	2	—	3
Blithfield	17	26	18	—	—	—	—	6	17	30	23	17

- Warks** Away from Draycote most records came from Alvecote, where there were two on January 13th, one on 26th, two on February 16th, one on September 14th and two on 21st, singles on October 29th and November 16th, and finally two on December 10th. The only others were one at Coton on January 2nd, five at Dosthill on February 9th, two at both Kingsbury on March 16th and Brandon on March 20th, six at Ladywalk on September 27th followed by a male on November 1st, and nine at Dosthill on December 14th.
- Worcs** Singles over Belbroughton on January 5th and at Ripple on January 8th, a pair at Bittell on January 25th, seven at Upton Warren on September 12th with smaller numbers remaining until October 10th, one at Pirton on September 21st and one at Bishampton Vale Pool on November 29th.
- Staffs** At Blithfield the maximum for the first winter period occurred on February 9th, whilst the autumn maximum of 30 occurred on October 13th. Away from the tabulated sites, one was at Needwood House Lake from January 4th-12th, a pair at Tittesworth Reservoir from January 19th-29th and one at Holly Bush on February 2nd. At Westport Lake, a male on January 15th was followed by a pair on February 28th, while two were on the R. Sow at Victoria Park,

Stafford, on March 8th. Later in the year, a probable immature was reported from Chasewater on July 20th; Tittesworth Res held a pair on September 29th and four on November 9th; and Westport had three females on October 10th and a single female on the 16th. At Branston, two were present on November 16th, a single on the 23rd and two females on the 24th; and two were at Croxall on December 22nd.

W Mid A male was in Sandwell Valley on January 1st-2nd and again on March 4th, with what was thought to be the same returning bird also noted intermittently from September 9th to the end of the year. A pair was at Bartley on January 25th; a female on Dunstall Park Lake on August 19th-21st (the first site record); and a male, which may well have been the Sandwell Valley bird, in Hayhead Wood with Mallard on December 12th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor, occasionally breeding. Very rare in winter.

Average: April 1st (54) – September 28th (53)

As last year, a good spring passage began early, with a pair at Bredons Hardwick on March 13th which, coincidentally, was the same date as the first arrivals last year. An average autumn passage, with the last at Bittell on October 9th.

Warks In spring there was a pair at Dosthill on April 2nd, a female at Draycote from April 24th-May 1st, and single males at Dosthill on May 10th-11th and Brandon on 22nd-25th. A male at Draycote on June 7th-8th was joined by a female from 9th-11th. In autumn, a female/immature arrived at Ladywalk on August 24th and was joined by an eclipse male on August 31st, with both birds staying until September 3rd. A juvenile was at Draycote on August 29th and September 15th.

Worcs A good run at Bredons Hardwick began with a pair on March 13th, followed by a male from May 16th to 17th, another on 27th, a female on June 18th and a final bird on September 4th. A male was at Upton Warren from May 24th-25th, with another on July 21st. A male moulting into eclipse was at Bittell on June 15th and a late individual was there on October 9th. Finally, an eclipse male was at Kinsham from August 28th to September 29th, with perhaps the same bird on October 7th.

Staffs First reported from Belvide, where a male on April 15th was followed by single males from May 7th-9th and May 19th-28th. At Tittesworth Res, a male was present on April 22nd and a pair on May 3rd. Other May records came from Branston GP (two males on 21st), Elford North Pit (single male on the 25th) and Barton GP (one male on the 25th). At Blithfield, summer records started with two birds on June 22nd, one of which stayed until the 23rd: these were followed by a male on July 25th and then a regular series of reports of one to three birds between August 3rd and September 13th, with five on September 2nd. Other late summer/autumn records came from Belvide, where an eclipse male stayed from August 18th to October 6th and two birds were present on September 20th; Chasewater, where a female or immature was noted on August 31st; and Tittesworth Res, where a female was present on September 14th.

W Mid Single drakes were present at Stubbers Green on April 20th and June 8th, while a male and a female were at Clayhanger on September 8th.

Northern Shoveler (Shoveler) *Anas clypeata*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce and probably decreasing as a breeding species.

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	4	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	34	81	20	33
Brandon	1	18	23	6	—	—	6	38	—	—	—	1
Colton	38	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	32	4	10	23
Draycote	—	—	4	2	2	—	2	3	4	5	5	2
Kingsbury	17	12	42	—	4	2	—	—	—	27	45	—
Ladywalk	—	53	60	9	—	—	9	3	22	24	67	—
Bittell	2	1	2	2	—	—	1	8	10	3	9	7
Upton Warren	38	52	62	12	3	4	6	13	52	71	53	24
Westwood	93	55	62	8	—	—	—	3	43	120	151	132
Wilden	60	30	9	2	—	—	—	21	16	19	27	30
Aqualate	—	3	0	22	1	—	0	6	50	48	10	10
Belvide	10	8	6	10	3	3	2	85	154	130	24	31
Blithfield	0	2	8	12	1	8	6	215	436	197	16	7
Bransdon	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	32	—	50	—
Chasewater	1	1	3	0	2	1	2	3	2	4	3	6
Sandwell Valley	30	17	19	11	2	2	1	4	17	15	20	7
Sheepwash UP	5	5	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	7	8

Warks A poor year. Several present during the breeding season at Coombe and in the Kingsbury area, but with no proof of breeding. Shustoke held a peak of 25 on November 2nd, with small numbers also noted at Napton Res, Salford Priors GP and Seeswood Pool.

Worcs Away from the tabulated sites the maximum count was just 10 at Lower Moor during December. Small numbers at Arrow Valley Lake, Bredons Hardwick, Grimley, Norton Pool, Pirton, Ripple and Strensham.

Staffs No reports of definite breeding in 1997, although the summer months' occurrences at Chasewater were considered to be of a possible breeding pair. The excellent count of 436 at Blithfield on September 21st was the highest in the Region since 1991 which, coincidentally, was at the same locality. Away from the main sites, smaller numbers were reported from Amington, Brookleys Lake, Croxall GP (10 on November 11th), Dosthill, Doxey Marshes, Kettlebrook (10 on January 19th), Little Wyrley, Tittesworth, Woodmill and Holly Bush.

W Mid Three were at Ladymoor Pool, Bilston, on January 12th. Regularly seen at Bradnock's Marsh in the first winter period, with four in February and seven in early March, and reported from Dunstall Park Lake in January, March and September. At Clayhanger, four on January 29th had dwindled to two by February 2nd and just one by 5th, then in autumn there were two on September 8th and three on December 26th. Two were at Fens Pools LNR on February 1st, with birds then regularly present from October 25th to the end of the year, reaching a peak of seven on November 1st. Bartley produced a pair on April 18th and three on December 21st.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Scarce visitor, with most records probably of feral origin.

Warks The male at Draycote from 1996 remained until January 25th *JJB, REH, SMH, DJS et al.* A female there on September 28th *GIG* was then followed by up to three (male, female and leucistic bird) from October 7th-November 11th *GIG, REH, JW et al.* A female was present at Shustoke, where previously unrecorded, from November 12th into 1998, apart from a short spell at Kingsbury at Christmas *BLK et al.* It was joined by a second female on December 31st *BLK*.

Worcs A very good autumn began with an eclipse male at Larford from August 14th to 26th *TMH et al.* Next came a female at Kinsham on September 11th *WFP*, with another there on December 20th *GHP*, one at Bredons Hardwick on October 15th *SJH*, with a pair there on December 26th *GHP SMW*; a female at Lower Moor from October 28th to November 5th *RAP et al*; four (two pairs) at Bittell on November 9th *KGC RAH*; a female at Westwood from November 22nd to December 28th *SMW et al*; and a female at Pirton from December 6th to 14th *RAP*.

W Mid A female at Marsh Lane GP on November 8th *PFA*.

Red-crested Pochard hybrid

W Mid A male in Valley Park on April 4th, 5th, 10th and May 17th was also noted on Dunstall Park Lake on April 27th.

Common Pochard (Pochard) *Aythya ferina*

Fairly common winter visitor. Scarce and recently declined as a breeding species.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	85	51	9	2	1	1	1	2	2	10	12	32
Coton/Lea Marston	896	73	225	2	1	7	34	63	36	146	320	1023
Draycote	120	33	2	-	-	2	1	-	4	32	155	95
Kingsbury	17	42	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	112	-	113
Shustoke	900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	172	420	600
Bishampton Vale P	64	33	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	13
Bittell	22	25	9	-	-	-	3	5	8	10	20	46
Bredons Hardwick	40	25	13	2	2	-	-	-	-	6	-	10
Lower Moor	18	22	12	-	-	-	-	-	4	7	17	28
Pirton	7	25	21	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	14	35
Upton Warren	38	34	26	2	-	-	7	4	38	10	14	27
Westwood	91	95	43	3	-	-	9	8	38	150	214	140
Wilden	48	52	42	2	-	-	-	-	1	9	30	65
Aqualate	40	105	31	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	46
Belvide	17	31	44	-	1	-	1	6	21	42	108	131
Blithfield	110	51	16	1	10	31	40	42	8	9	13	22
Chasewater	82	42	50	1	0	0	3	3	22	41	42	40
Croxall	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	18	-
Holly Bush	75	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	15	20
Tittesworth	60	60	28	-	2	-	6	1	1	6	12	11
Westport	144	108	20	1	1	0	2	4	13	31	66	72
Bradnocks Marsh	62	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
Fens Pools LNR	5	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	18
Sandwell Valley	42	44	45	-	-	-	-	5	41	70	80	68
Stubbers Green	15	21	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	23

- Warks** A pair reared two young at Coombe. Maxima from elsewhere were low, with only 47 at Abbots Salford Pool, 22 at Brandon, 23 at Chesterton, 33 at Earlswood Lakes, 14 at Napton Res and 28 at Seeswood Pool, all during January-February. The high counts at Shustoke involved birds moving over from the Coton area.
- Worcs** Counts on the R. Severn in January peaked at 25 at the Mythe Bridge on 6th and 20 at Ripple on 8th. The maximum at Larford was 21 on December 2nd and smaller numbers were noted at Hewell Grange and Kinsham.
- Staffs** Away from the main sites, other records were received from Barton Village Pit, Betley Mere, Branston, Brookleys Lake (40 on December 27th), Byrkley Park, Gailey Reservoir, Rocester (JCB North Lake), Kettlebrook Park, Needwood House Lake and Woodmill.
- W Mid** A least one pair lingered into late May at Witton Lakes, where well in excess of 20 are known to winter though no specific counts were received. A respectable 90 were at Meriden Quarry on December 19th and small numbers, less than 20, were reported from Shard End Lake, Sutton Park and Valley Park.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Very rare vagrant (2/10).

The eighth record for the Region and the sixth for Warwickshire, the last having been in 1992.

- Warks** A female was seen intermittently at Dosthill from May 2nd-8th *SR et al*, the dates being almost identical to those of a male at nearby Kingsbury in 1979.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Scarce visitor, many probably being of feral origin.

- Warks** An adult male at Lea Marston on August 17th and 24th *ARD* and at Kingsbury WP from December 6th-31st *IB, DWJ, BLK et al.* was presumably the regularly returning male from previous years, although nothing had been seen of it after December 25th 1996.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

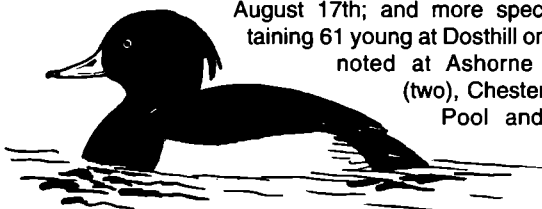
Common winter visitor and frequent breeding resident.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	60	32	20	1	—	5	7	1	2	18	22	35
Coton/Lea Marston	1099	401	535	622	—	240	506	1012	1410	1283	1298	855
Dosthill/Kingsbury	242	82	68	120	150	—	130	145	—	259	—	653
Draycote	400	301	230	55	25	175	102	47	291	750	645	635
Ladywalk	—	81	32	44	17	22	36	12	29	17	18	—
Shustoke	130	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	37	105	277
Bishampton Vale P	15	24	22	17	10	2	4	4	9	13	13	20
Bittell	6	29	40	36	7	19	43	68	15	25	42	18
Bredons Hardwick	43	35	16	40	—	17	—	35	84	24	40	30
Larford	49	34	12	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	12	8
Lower Moor	38	52	35	40	19	20	25	17	37	31	36	46
Pirton	4	21	35	42	37	26	22	38	25	7	14	30
Upton Warren	15	12	34	41	37	30	35	39	40	24	14	14
Westwood	110	125	48	74	8	2	25	36	74	96	74	146
Wilden	2	3	67	108	50	51	30	37	17	15	60	7

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Aqualate	31	58	64	59	19	28	34	63	3	48	20	31
Belvide	60	68	81	101	10	30	18	60	109	-	70	100
Blithfield	56	41	141	215	-	222	769	506	216	78	46	43
Brookleys Lake	10	-	30	20	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	-
Chasewater	274	308	208	23	10	36	101	124	735	844	877	744
Croxall	20	-	-	-	-	-	110	106	52	-	67	-
Kettlebrook Park	43	39	20	12	8	3	4	1	-	2	8	-
Tittesworth	7	6	15	24	14	14	14	10	7	8	18	6
Westport	33	33	32	46	6	18	40	37	55	55	40	50
Fens Pools LNR	95	36	44	12	-	4	20	-	35	50	72	59
Sandwell Valley	94	45	-	31	18	29	16	40	52	39	18	-

Warks An excellent breeding season, with a record 21 broods noted at Draycote; at least 15 containing 90 young in the Kingsbury area on August 17th; and more specifically, 12 broods containing 61 young at Dosthill on July 26th. Other broods noted at Ashorne (two), Charlecote GP (two), Chesterton, Ladywalk, Newfield Pool and Packington (at least two). Winter maxima away from the main sites were rather low, with only 31 at



Tufted Duck (John Broadbent)

Abbots Salford Pool on January 25th, 49 at Napton Res on 29th,

31 at Brandon on February 9th and 36 at Lower Radbourn on March 11th.

Worcs Bred at Beckford, Bittell (two broods), Bredons Hardwick, Grimley (two broods), Kinsham, Lower Moor, Strensham (three broods), Upton Warren (eight broods, which was exceptional for the locality) and Wilden (two broods). Outside the breeding season, maxima of 70 on the R. Avon at Fladbury on January 1st and 47 on the R. Severn at Holt the same day; 45 at Ripple on January 8th; 140 at Grimley on January 9th; and 65 at Lenchford on January 30th. Small numbers at Bewdley, Mythe Bridge, Stanford Court, Trimpley, Warford Pool, Witley Court and Wyre Piddle.

Staffs Breeding was reported from Aqualate (three broods totalling 20 birds on July 22nd), Blithfield Reservoir (one brood on July 11th), Wolseley Bridge Pool (two broods on 31st July), Elford North Pit (three broods on August 18th), Byrkley Park, Kings Standing, Woodmill, Betley Mere, Denstone and Barton Village Pit. An earlier than usual build up was noted at Chasewater, culminating in the November 1st maximum of 877: this was a new county record, just exceeding the January 1994 maximum, and sustained the increase noted here in recent years. However, numbers had reduced to 440 by November 9th, possibly due to the disturbance caused by a local fireworks display. Smaller numbers were reported from a further 13 sites.

W Mid Breeding noted at Clayhanger (one pair), Ladymoor Pool in Bilston, Marsh Lane GP, Meriden Quarries area, Park Lime Pits (two pairs), Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green and Ward End Park. Highest counts from elsewhere included 21 on Park Hall Pool on February 12th, 22 at Park Lime Pits also in February, 65 at Meriden on March 2nd, 21 at Stubbers Green on 3rd and 54 in Sutton Park on October 19th.

Greater Scaup (Scaup) *Aythya marila*
Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Warks The first-winter female present in December 1996 at Shustoke remained there until April 30th. A party of 12 (including two males) at Draycote on January 1st, dropped to three on 2nd, with one until 6th. Single females were again here on January 25th and from March 22nd-25th. At Coton there was a male on January 10th and a female/immature on 18th. Dosthill produced a female on February 8th, a first-winter male on March 2nd and a late adult female from April 29th-May 3rd. The first autumn record was of a female at Draycote on October 13th, followed by an adult female at Shustoke from November 9th-19th, with a male at Coton on 23rd and a party of three (including a male) on 30th. The male subsequently remained here into 1998 and was joined by a first-winter male on December 13th and 19th. Kingsbury attracted a male on December 10th and a first-winter male on 20th, the latter at least was thought to be a different bird from the one at Coton. Lastly, a female was at Draycote on December 20th and 24th.

Worcs A first-winter male at Westwood on December 15th was the only record this year.

Staffs Two adult females were present at Chasewater on January 1st (staying from 1996), three birds on the 2nd and 3rd and a single first-winter male on January 4th- 5th. A male remained at Elford from February 1st until March 1st; a first-year male was at Drayton Bassett on February 2nd; and a female at Chasewater on February 15th was followed by an adult drake and a duck on the 22nd and March 1st. No further reports until August 24th, when a female was at Blithfield, followed by a female at Westport Lake on September 22nd and an immature female at Belvide on October 12th. Finally, a male was at Tittesworth Reservoir on November 24th and an immature male frequented Chasewater from November 23rd to at least December 29th, being joined by an adult male from December 22nd to 25th.

W Mid An immature male was at Netherton Reservoir on January 9th and 14th, with presumably the same bird then at Fens Pools LNR from January 14th-March 8th. A female was at Bartley on May 13th.

Aythya Hybrids

Common Pochard x Tufted Duck

Warks A male at Draycote on February 1st.

Staffs An immature at Belvide Reservoir from April 3rd-25th

Tufted Duck x Common Pochard

Warks Single males were at Draycote from November 15th-22nd and Coton from November 30th-December 31st.

Common Eider (Eider) *Somateria mollissima*

Rare winter visitor (2/10).

The first in the Region since the exceptional influx of 1993, when birds occurred in all four counties.

Worcs An adult drake was found dead at Oldington Sewage Works on December 29th SM. This, the sixth county record, was donated to Worcester Museum.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.*

An unusually lean year, with no significant movements reported.

Warks A very poor year, with just singles at Draycote on April 6th (male), October 13th and 16th, and November 5th (male); and single females at Shustoke on July 23rd and November 30th.

Worcs The only record concerned seven drakes at Bittell on July 5th.

Staffs A female at Blithfield on January 4th-5th was followed by a single male next day. Spring reports came from Chasewater, with three drakes and a duck on April 18th which were apparently quite tolerant of water-skiing activity; and Blithfield Reservoir, where a single male was present on April 26th-27th. A male and a female were at Tittesworth Reservoir on June 22nd and a flock of six males at Blithfield on the same day stayed until the 23rd. Autumn records started with an immature female at Belvide on September 25th, then a male at Blithfield on October 12th, a female at Belvide on October 26th-27th and a group of five males there on November 1st. Finally, a female was present at Blithfield between November 26th-30th

Common Goldeneye (Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula**Fairly common winter visitor. Rare in summer.*

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coton	65	7	13	116	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	14
Dosthill	38	5	30	2	-	-	-	-	-	16	20	25
Draycote	139	100	60	1	-	-	-	-	-	20	90	105
Bittell	5	11	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	3
Bredons Hardwick	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Upton Warren	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Westwood	3	4	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	7
Belvide	30	37	33	15	-	-	-	-	-	10	17	-
Blithfield	56	57	55	71	0	0	0	0	0	20	28	19
Chasewater	136	131	136	12	0	0	0	0	0	45	114	143
Tittesworth	2	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Westport	10	16	13	5	0	0	0	0	0	11	13	14
Bartley	5	4	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	4

Warks Away from the main localities, there were odd birds at Alvecote, Blyth Hall, Brandon, Chesterton, Ladywalk (max of four in December), Napton Res, Seeswood Pool and Shustoke, while a male at Packington Great Pool from November 25th-27th was only the second there in 14 years!

Worcs One was on the R. Severn at Mythe Bridge on January 8th, with three there on 12th; one at Bushley on 11th; and one at Lenchford on 21st. Two were at Lower Moor from January 25th to February 28th, with one remaining until March 24th. Pirtton also had two on February 9th, with two again on October 30th and from November 8th-16th. Singles were at Grimley on October 26th and November 27th, followed by two on December 2nd; while Wilden had one on November 15th, two from December 6th to 14th, then one to the end of the year. One was at Captain's Pool on December 26th.

Staffs The count of 143 at Chasewater on December 27th set a new county record. Apart from a pair at Tittesworth Res on May 17th, the last spring record came from Blithfield, where 14 birds were still present on April 25th. Two late

summer reports from Belvide Res, where an immature male was present on August 6th and a female on August 10th. The first autumn record was of a single female at Westport Lake on October 12th. Other reports came from Alrewas GP (31 on January 5th), Aqualate, Barton GP, Brookleys Lake, Coldmiece Pools, Copmere (11 on December 14th), Croxall and Rocester (JCB North Lake).

W Mid At Fens Pools LNR, up to three were present in the first winter period until March 15th, then up to two again from December 6th to the year's end. Two were on Netherton Reservoir on January 4th, then one on March 13th. Singles, unless otherwise stated, were in Sandwell Valley on January 15th, October 17th, November 4th (three), 6th (two), 7th, 8th, 15th, 30th (two) and December 6th-29th (one or two). Singles were also noted at Bradnock's Marsh on October 23rd and Stubbers Green on 26th. Three were at Marsh Lane GP on November 2nd, with four at nearby Meriden Quarry on December 19th.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor. Very rare in summer.

An exceptional influx into the Region occurred during the cold weather of early January.

Warks The January influx was concentrated in the Tame Valley, especially the Dosthill/Kingsbury WP area, where there were maxima of nine on January 12th, 12 on 18th and 25th, and ten on 28th *MAA, PDH, SMH, RJT et al.* Two of this flock were adult males. Up to nine remained here during February, with two redheads at Dosthill until March 16th. Elsewhere in the north of the county there was a good spread of records, possibly involving some of the above. Birds were seen as follows: Alvecote, a redhead on January 5th *SMH*, two on 13th and one on 26th *MAA, RJT*; Coton, single redheads on January 4th *ARD*, 28th-29th, February 18th and 27th, and March 3rd *BLK*, with two on February 8th *SMH*; Shustoke, a redhead on January 10th-11th, with two on 12th *GRH, JVH, BLK et al.*; and Ladywalk, where single redheads were seen on five occasions between January 13th-March 7th *per SC*. Draycote had a male on January 8th, with two males and a redhead from 25th-February 2nd, one male and the redhead until 10th, with the latter staying until 17th *JJB, RKn, JW et al.* Single redheads were also at Abbots Salford Pool on January 25th *REH, DJS* and at Brandon on February 16th-17th *JMR*. The first back at the end of the year were two redheads and an immature male at Dosthill on December 6th *SMH, MJI, BLK*. The latter was replaced by an adult male on 13th *SMH, MJI*, with numbers subsequently increasing to ten (including the male) on 23rd-24th *SR et al.* These birds also occasionally visited nearby Kingsbury WP. The first back at Draycote was a redhead on December 20th *REH, DJS*, with numbers increasing to a maximum of four (including a male) from 26th-31st *JJB, GIG, PDH et al.* A redhead was also at Ryton-on-Dunsmore GP (Steetley Meadows CP) on December 21st *per SMH* and at nearby Brandon Marsh *JMR* and Jubilee Pools *per SMH* on 24th.

Worcs The January influx produced good numbers in particular on the lower Severn and Avon. The following records all relate to redheads, unless otherwise

stated. Singles were at Grimley on January 1st *MJI GJM* and 9th *AFJ*; and Westwood from January 1st-2nd *RAH et al* and 9th *AFJ*, which may have related to the same bird. One at Bredons Hardwick on January 5th *SJH*, followed by three on 11th *SJH et al*, six (including one male) from January 12th to 13th *GS et al* and one discontinuously from February 11th to 28th *SJH*. One on the R. Severn at Mythe Bridge on January 5th *SJH*, preceded up to eight (including two males) on the Severn between Bushley and Ripple from January 6th to 12th *GHP WFP SMW et al*. Singles at Trimpley on January 5th *BW*, 11th *GB* and 18th *JHS*; one on the R. Avon at Eckington on January 11th *RJW*; and a pair at Larford from January 13th to 22nd, the female until 25th *SM*. The autumn produced four redheads at Bredons Hardwick on December 4th *SJH et al*; and three (including a first-winter male) at Westwood on December 16th and 20th *SMW*.

Staffs

An excellent series of records from the Croxall area in both winter periods. The initial influx in January was concentrated at Alrewas GP, Junction Pit at Croxall and Blithfield Res. By mid-January almost all records, and the largest counts, were coming from Croxall Lake, where birds remained until March. At Alrewas GP there was one on January 1st *ESC*, three (one drake) on 4th *MJI* and six (all brown-heads) the next day *RP*, with five remaining until 12th *sev obs*. Junction Pit had four (one drake) on January 2nd and six (two drakes) on 5th *DJA*. At Blithfield Res there were four (two drakes) on January 3rd *ESC*, five (two drakes) the next day *PDH, MJI, GIG, WJL* and thereafter occasional records until 29th *sev obs*. There were also three (one drake) at Barton GP on January 18th *ICW, MY* and two (one drake) on February 2nd *ESC*. At Croxall Lake, 12 (three drakes) on January 18th *ICW, MY, ESC* increased to 17 (four drakes) on 26th *GIG, PDH, DJA*. Numbers then varied daily into February and March, with peaks of 12 (three drakes) on February 9th *PDH* and 11 (three drakes) on March 11th *RP*. Elsewhere in the first winter period birds were reported from Dosthill North Pit between January 11th- March 8th, though supporting details were only received for five (one drake) on February 6th *PAH*; one was at Westport Lake from January 29th-30th *DK, AK et al*; and one was at Chasewater on February 2nd *ICW*. In the second winter period, Croxall Lake was again the focus, with ten (three drakes) on December 20th *MJI, DJA* increasing to 12 (five drakes) on 23rd *DJA*. Smaller numbers then remained until the end of the year *sev obs* and a drake was seen on 26th at Junction Pit, Croxall *PDH*.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Probably bred Staffs in 1994.

With 14 birds at least, this was an average year for the species, which is occurring with increasing regularity.

Warks

A female was at Alvecote on May 18th *ARD*, the first there for some years, and a redhead at Draycote from November 10th-December 12th *AC et al*.

Worcs

Single redheads were on the lower Severn at Mythe Bridge from January 5th-15th *SJH et al*, at Ripple from January 6th-8th *GHP SMW et al* and at Bushley from January 9th-11th *WFP, SMW*. It is probable that at least two individuals were involved. A drake at Westwood on January 12th *TMH*, followed by a

redhead there on November 2nd *RAH*. The autumn also brought two redheads to Bredons Hardwick, one from October 29th-30th *SJH et al* and the other from December 29th-31st *SJH et al*.

Staffs Single redheads were at Blithfield from January 4th-12th *GIG, PDH, WJL* and from March 12th-16th *ESC, RP*, with a single drake there on December 14th *WJL, ESC*. A redhead was at Westport from February 21st-27th *several observers*.

W Mid Singles at either end of the year, with a male at Bartley on January 5th *ICW, MY* and a redhead in Sandwell Valley from November 24th-December 6th *TCH et al*.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Frequent and increasing winter visitor. Scarce in summer and rare breeding bird in Staffs and Worcs since 1990.

Exceptional numbers early in the year, with monthly maxima at main sites as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	64	13	7	3	1	1	1	1	-	-	3	9
Dosthill/Kingsbury	46	74	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Draycote	174	126	56	4	-	-	-	-	-	3	26	78
Earlwood	10	13	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Shustoke	40	67	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bittell	31	50	11	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	14
Bredons Hardwick	60	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2
Larford	50	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upton Warren	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Westwood	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Aqualate	14	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Belvide	103	41	70	7	1	-	-	-	-	22	92	188
Blithfield	237	184	82	7	0	0	0	0	0	15	72	59
Chasewater	75	72	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	29
Copmere	30	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Holly Bush	23	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	32
Tittesworth	56	82	30	1	-	2	-	-	2	1	12	17
Westport	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bradnocks Marsh	6	14	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sandwell Valley	35	52	44	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	17	53

Warks Exceptional numbers were present during the early months, with many sites holding record numbers, including 174 at Draycote on January 27th which more than doubled the previous county record of 77 set last year. Away from tabulated waters, other counts in the north included 11 at Whitacre Pool on January 4th, seven on the R. Blyth near Coleshill on 6th, eight at Blyth Hall on 28th, nine at Ladywalk in February and 36 at Coton on April 6th, with up to six at Brandon, Coombe and Packington. In the south, there was a peak of 47 at Napton Res on January 21st, but the only other records were of a pair flying along the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton on January 12th, one flying along the R. Avon at Bidford on 25th and up to two at BAD Kineton from February 19th-March 13th. Of note was a summering redhead at Alvecote. The first autumn bird returned to Draycote on October 13th.

Worcs Bred successfully in the Teme Valley, a redhead with four well-grown young being seen at a locality on the river on August 4th. At least three other



Goosander (Alan Richards)

localities in the Teme Valley also produced singles or pairs in May and June. Another very strong winter showing, with maxima of up to 24 on the R. Severn between Mythe Bridge and Ripple from January 5th-8th, 40 on the R. Avon at Eckington and 150 on the Severn at Kempsey Lower Ham on January 9th, 50 on the Severn at Clevelode on January 11th, 32 on the Avon at Birlingham on January 12th and 45 on the R. Teme at The Standbatches on February 9th. Three were at Bittell on the unusual date of August 30th and smaller numbers were noted at many localities in both winter periods.

Staffs A series of breeding season records came from the R. Dove between Ashbourne (Derbyshire) and Rocester, with broods present at Okeover Mill and near Ashbourne. In the north of the county, a female at Danebridge on May 25th was considered possibly to be a breeding bird. Very high numbers in both winter periods continued the upward trend of recent years, with 237 at Blithfield on January 26th followed by 188 at Belvide on December 27th. Away from the larger water bodies tabulated above, reports were received from 17 other sites. Although these were mainly still-waters, rivers were frequented, with a mobile flock of 27 on the R. Trent at Alrewas on January 11th and birds present in winter around the confluence of the Rivers Churnet and Dove. Nearby, 67 were recorded at Brookleys Lake (Alton) on February 22nd. The first autumn record for the larger water-bodies came from Belvide, where four females were present on October 11th.

W Mid Numbers continue to increase in the county. Bartley records were as follows; January 5th (eight), 12th (seven), 14th (two), 24th (18), 26th (five), 29th (one) and February 6th (two). Seven flew east over Darby's Hill on January 12th and three were at Edgbaston Res on February 23rd. In Sutton Park, four on Wyndley Pool on February 9th were followed by three on Longmoor Pool on March 2nd, with two present there on 7th and then two on December 14th. Two were noted at Meriden on March 9th; and nine at Marsh Lane GP on 10th, with a singleton on 17th. Three were at Sheepwash UP on December 12th and one at Fens Pools LNR on December 26th.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis**Fairly common resident of feral origin.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coton	300	155	149	—	—	6	5	27	260	160	373	269
Dosthill	72	212	180	—	1	1	—	—	—	36	—	188
Draycote	19	9	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	3	2
Bittell	2	—	4	10	8	8	8	11	20	20	19	18
Pirton	—	9	12	8	7	10	15	35	42	37	1	—
Upton Warren	3	5	7	12	15	8	12	2	1	3	2	1
Westwood	14	21	33	27	4	5	10	7	23	32	33	29
Aqualate	0	0	7	15	13	6	2	16	10	10	0	0
Belvide	60	130	27	10	—	1	2	2	6	9	1	5
Blithfield	566	127	176	93	—	17	39	80	202	182	204	279
Brookleys Lake	—	—	2	4	8	—	2	2	—	15	6	—
Chasewater	2	13	2	1	3	1	4	5	5	9	5	5
Tittesworth	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	1	2	1	1	—
Sandwell Valley	1	2	1	3	2	—	—	1	3	2	—	2

Warks Broods were noted at Bedworth Slough, Newfield Pool and Packington Great Pool (at least two). Away from tabulated sites, maxima included 16 at Shustoke in January, ten at Lower Radbourn in May and 15 at Packington in July. Up to five were also noted at Alvecote, Bedworth Hill Res, Charlecote GP, Chesterton, Coombe, Earlswood, Ladywalk, Napton Res, Salford Priors GP, Seeswood Pool, Stoneton Moat and Ufton Fields.

Worcs Bred at Bittell (the first breeding record for the locality), Grimley and Westwood (two pairs). An unexpectedly poor year at Bishampton Vale Pool, where just three displaying males and no breeding attempts. Small numbers at Hewell Grange, Lower Moor, Norton Pool and Wilden.

Staffs Breeding confirmed at Aqualate, Betley Mere (16 on July 20th, but fewer than in recent years) and Brookleys Lake. Away from the above sites, reports were received from Branston, Byrkley Park, Copmere (three males and one female on May 12th), Gailey, Gerrards Bromley, Holly Bush, Wooton (JCB Pools), Westport Lake and Woodmill.

W Mid Breeding reported from Clayhanger, Fens Pools LNR, Sandwell Valley and Stubbers Green. Peak counts included six (four males and two females) at Fens Pools LNR and six adults plus three young at Stubbers Green in August. Further reported from Hydes Road Pool (up to two males and a female in May and June), Sheepwash UP (regular June-August with a peak of three males in June), Sutton Park (two males on Wyndley Pool in June) and Bumble Hole (four on December 14th).

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus**Rare passage migrant and summer visitor (7/10), which occasionally bred in the 19th Century.*

As the national breeding population of this fine raptor increases, so do sightings in the Region. Although only the 14th record this Century, this was the ninth in the last eleven years.

Staffs An adult, which stayed at Beech from June 8th-9th *WJL et al*, was the first in the county since 1994.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

A scarce though increasing visitor, partly from released stock. Bred until the early 19th Century.

Judging from the Warwickshire sightings, it would appear that birds from the reintroduction programme in England are gradually spreading north-westwards along the M40 corridor.

Warks Singles were at Claverdon on February 28th *per SMH* and over Ufton Hill and Harbury on March 7th *KB per JW*. An untagged adult at Fenny Compton on April 9th *JJB* departed to the north, while a first-year bird (also untagged) was in Packington Park on 18th *per NPB* and at nearby Outwoods on 20th-21st *BLK*.

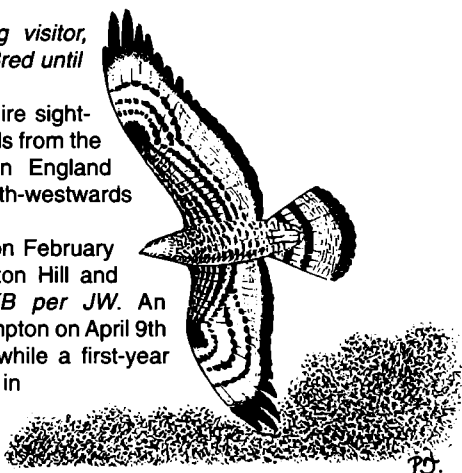
A bird seen briefly near Warwick Park on May 31st

JJB was presumably the immature bird seen at Stoneleigh on June 1st *JMR*, when it was seen to be carrying wing-tags. Again these were just the tip of an iceberg, with a number of others reported during the year from all parts of the county, but lacking sufficient confirmation for publication.

Worcs One over Midsummer Hill on May 6th *LT, TT* and June 1st *MWCW*.

Staffs One flew south-east over Leek on August 11th *MB*.

W Mid One drifted over Park Lime Pits pursued by Carrion Crows on March 29th *AKD*.



Honey-buzzard (Phil Jones)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Bred Staffs in 1974-5 and 1979.

At least ten birds during the year represents an average showing.

Warks A male was watched hunting at Wormleighton Res on April 8th *JJB*, before thermalling for eight minutes and then heading off high to the east-south-east. Another male was south of Ladywalk on May 31st, where a male was observed being mobbed by Carrion Crows on November 20th *per SC*.

Worcs A female at Shatterford Lakes on February 25th *EGP* was almost certainly the bird wintering in nearby south Staffordshire. A ringtail over Tunnel Hill, Worcester, on April 3rd *CS*, with quite possibly the same bird seen at Castle Hill on April 6th *BW*. The most dramatic sighting of year must surely have been the adult male which drifted down Happy Valley on the morning of October 28th *MWCW*.

Staffs Once again very few records received. On the moors, single males, probably the same bird, were at Swallow Moss on February 23rd *DK, AK*; roosting in the same area on March 9th, 22nd and 23rd; and around the Mermaid Inn on March 22nd. A ringtail was in the Starts Green area from February 27th-March 14th *DAE*.

W Mid One flew north over Barr Common on April 15th *GKN*. A ringtail flew over the A452 at Berkswell on September 14th *NPB*.

Harrier sp. Circus sp.

Warks Single ringtails, flying east near Hatton on May 4th *IBI*, *AG* and being mobbed by corvids at Dosthill on September 16th *SMH*, were both thought to be Hen Harriers. An unidentified harrier flew over Earlswood Lakes on May 27th *JAC*.

Northern Goshawk (Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce resident and visitor.

Warks A female was seen at Chesterton Wood on August 23rd *JJB*.

Worcs Noted at two localities in the breeding season. At one traditional site a nesting attempt took place, but the nest was abandoned by late May *observers names withheld*. Singles at Upton Warren on May 11th *PRC*, *SCr* and at Midsummer Hill on October 31st *MWCW*.

Staffs At least one pair bred, raising three young, and pairs were seen at three other widely scattered localities. Singles were also noted during the breeding season at a further four localities and outside it at Sandon on January 20th and Rickerscote on October 27th *observers names withheld*.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparrowhawk) *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common resident.

Warks Again very well reported, with records from around 75 sites distributed throughout the county. Breeding pairs reported from Camp Hill (Nuneaton), Chesterton Wood, Farnborough, Kenilworth Common, Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood and Wormleighton Res, with display noted at Church Pool Covert. The largest number seen together was four, at Chesterton Pools on April 15th.

Worcs Bred at Cooksey Green, Lower Moor and Upper Shooters Wood. Seen in the breeding season at Alvechurch, Arley Wood, Bewdley, Bredons Hardwick, Bromsgrove, Castlemorton Common, Chadwick Manor, Defford, Dodford, Drakes Broughton, Eckington, Evesham, Fillet Wood, Grimley, Hagley, Ipsley Alders, Kinsham, Lickey Hills, Malvern Link, Newbourne Wood, Pirton, Sale Green, Shoots Hill Wood, Sling Common, Southcrest, The Standbatches, Throckmorton, Tiddesley Wood, Timberhonger, Trench Wood, Upton Warren, West Hills, Woodbury Hill and Wood Norton. Noted outside the breeding season at a further 28 localities.

Staffs Recorded from many areas as usual, but with little breeding information. A male regularly in a Rickerscote garden was the main suspect accounting for Blackbird, Great Tit, House Sparrow, Collared Dove and Common Starling – the incriminating evidence being the victims' bills! Another was seen chasing a juvenile Common Cuckoo at Blithfield on August 24th.

W Mid Breeding season records came from Aldridge, Caslon Wood, Clayhanger (at least one pair), Dunstall Park/ Valley Park (up to three pairs), Fens Pools LNR, Harborne, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot), Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Smethwick, Solihull, Sutton Park, Wergs, Willenhall Memorial Park and Woodgate Valley. Outside of the breeding season

reported from a further 25 sites – a good geographical spread including numerous garden records. Prey species included Collared Dove and Mistle Thrush.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Frequent and increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Still increasing rapidly, with records from at least 85 localities distributed throughout the county. Parties of four-six were seen in many areas, with the largest being of eight at both Bentley Woods on February 15th and Shuckburgh on April 12th. The number of pairs attempting to breed is difficult to assess, but from casual records at least 35 were probably present, with nesting evidence coming from 12 of these. In the south-east of the county the number of probable nesting pairs increased from three in 1996 to six this year, indicating a continued spread by this fine raptor.

Worcs The breeding status of this species is the subject of a two year survey which commenced in 1997. By the end of the year breeding had been confirmed in 38 tetrads and was suspected at many more. Full details will be published in the 1998 report. There were several reports of spiralling parties of five or six birds, but the largest counts were seven at Shelsley Beauchamp on February 22nd and nine at Bredon Hill on October 2nd. An exceptionally pale bird (described as 90% white) was near Pirton on November 30th and December 10th *RAP*.

Staffs More breeding records were received for this species than for Eurasian Sparrowhawk and it is now present in most parts of the county. The highest counts were 10 at Aqualate on March 17th, eight at Beech on May 10th and six over Stanton on March 31st.

W Mid Now very widespread, with reports from 35 widely scattered localities and at least one pair present during the breeding season. Most sightings involved just one or two birds, but three were seen at Berkswell, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley and Saltwells Wood; four were over Barrow Hill on May 25th; and five were noted soaring over Hampton-in-Arden in April and over Harborne Walkway in November. Seen most consistently at Sandwell Valley, with reports on 14 dates between March and December, and at Park Lime Pits, where noted on nine dates between March and October. Interestingly, sightings from within Dudley Borough increased from six in 1994 to 14 in 1996 and 20 in 1997.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce, but increasing, passage migrant.

A very good year, with an especially early bird on March 11th marking the start of a strong spring passage.

Warks Singles were in the Dosthill/Kingsbury area on April 1st-2nd *NDG, JL, KW*; and at Packington on May 9th *per NPB* and Draycote on 22nd *JMR*. An adult male was seen briefly at Ladywalk on September 20th *per SC*. Others were reported on both migrations, but with no supporting details available.

Worcs Singles in spring at Bretforton on April 2nd *CET, MET*, Bittell on April 5th *CJL*, Blackpole on April 14th *GDL*, Strensham on April 27th *MWCW*, Upton Warren

on May 11th *SCr*, *PRC*, Hollybush Quarry from May 19th-23rd *MWCW et al* and Sedgeberrow on May 25th *CET*, *MET*. Seen in autumn at Hewell Grange on September 5th *CGf* and Bittell on September 14th *BSm*.

Staffs Singles were at Aqualate on March 11th *JPS* and at Blithfield on April 1st *DJA*, 6th *ESC*, *WJL* and August 23rd-24th. The first ever records for Westport were one flying north on March 30th *WJL* followed by one on May 18th *WJL*, *GJ*.

W Mid One over Sandwell Valley on April 16th was mobbed by Lesser Black-backed Gulls *PMH*, *TCH et al*. A long stayer in the Bradnock's Marsh/Marsh Lane GP area was present from May 10th to at least 27th *JA*, *SC et al*. Another bird was reported over Netherton Hill in May, but no details or description were supplied.

Common Kestrel (Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common resident.

Warks Widely reported, with breeding pairs at BAD Kineton, Chesterton, Fenny Compton, Kenilworth, Knightcote, Ladbroke (two), Lighthorne, Priors Hardwick (two) and Radway.

Worcs Bred at Chaddesley Wood, Holy Cross, and Redditch. Seen in the breeding season at Alvechurch, Beaconhill Wood, Birch Acre Wood, Bredon Hill, Calcot Hill, Castlemorton Common, Drakes Broughton, Grimley, Hollywood, Langdale Wood, Lickey Hills, Lower Moor, North Hill, Rowney Green, Stoulton, Tibberton, Tiddesley Wood, Timberhonger, Upton Warren, Walton Hill, West Hills, Windmill Hill and Worcester cathedral. Noted outside the breeding season at a further 30 sites throughout the county.

Staffs As far as records go, this is the Cinderella species. Bred near the Roaches, near Betley and at Chasewater, where a male found dead in May was wearing a BTO ring. A group of four at Tittesworth was the most seen together.

W Mid The only breeding records received were from Clayhanger, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot), Saltwells LNR (eight pairs with in excess of three successful) and Smethwick (sadly unsuccessful). Probably bred in Valley Park as well. Additionally noted during the breeding season at Anchor Meadow (Aldridge), Birmingham City Centre, Bumble Hole, Burnt Tree area, Dudley Golf Course, Frankley area, near The Leasowes, Marston Green (regularly), Netherton, near Pedmore and Sandwell Valley (where reasonably regular throughout the year), but further breeding information would be welcome. Outside of the breeding season, records came from a further 22 localities. Five which flew past an office building in Sheldon at dusk on February 10th were possibly going to a communal roost.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird on the northern moorlands.

Warks Another good year, but many birds must go unrecorded in the rural south. In the south-east, the overwintering female from 1996 was seen hunting Skylarks at Wormleighton Res on January 2nd *JJB*, raiding an Avon Dassett

feeding station on 18th *MJL* and roosting at Fenny Compton on February 14th and March 14th *JJB*. A male and female were seen sporadically at Draycote on dates during January 1st-March 3rd *JJB et al.* A female/immature was again in the Wishaw area on January 18th *BLK* and February 9th *SMH*, with probably the same bird over set-aside at Dunton on March 2nd *SMH*. A female was at Long Itchington on January 17th *JW* and adult males were at Kingsbury Rifle Range on February 8th *SMH* and flying north over Bentley Woods on March 9th *SMH*. The first autumn record was of an immature at Marcliff on September 20th *CJL*. A male was at Wishaw on November 1st *per SMH* and a female/immature there on December 13th *SMH*. A female was back at Fenny Compton on November 9th *JJB* and was then seen at Wormleighton Res on 12th and 29th *JJB*, with another at Whatcote on November 11th *TP*. Finally, a pair were at Coombe during November-December *per JJB* and a female/immature at Draycote on several dates during November 12th-December 10th *JJB et al*, with the same bird also seen at Kites Hardwick on December 21st *JW*.

Worcs An exceptionally good year began with a female at Lower Moor on January 1st *GHP* and a male there on January 18th, 25th and February 23rd *RAP SMW*. A male was at Mythe Bridge on January 12th *RM*, a male at Stanford Bridge on February 9th *RM*, one at Upton Warren on February 21st *SCR* and another at Bredons Hardwick on February 22nd *RK*. A male was also at Kinsham on March 6th *DO*, with a female at Bretforton on March 31st and April 1st *MET*. After a female at Norton on October 2nd *GHP*, further singles were at Harvington on October 7th *MET* and Tibberton on October 8th *RRH*. These were followed by a male at Cookley on October 12th *BW*, an immature or female at Bishampton Vale Pool on November 6th-7th *WFP*, a male at Stoke Bliss on November 11th *RM*, and another at Westwood on November 25th *JJH* and 30th *GG, TMH*. Finally, there was a male at Pinvin on December 23rd *RAP*, a male at Sneachill and another at Spetchley on December 27th *RRH*, and one at Upton Warren on December 28th *RAH*.

Staffs Just six records were received from the moors, with display noted at one site though no evidence of breeding was received. A male at Alrewas on January 1st *ICW, MY* was followed by a good series of sightings at nearby Whitemoor Haye, where there was an immature/female on January 5th *ICW, MY, DJA* and 21st *ESC*, an immature male on 6th and a male on February 17th *DJA*. Elsewhere, a male was at Worlds End Bank on February 8th *GJM* and an immature/female was at Alrewas on March 30th *ICW*. A male at Morridge on October 19th *NC* and an immature at Blithfield on November 26th *ESC* were the only autumn sightings.

W Mid Birds were present as usual in the favoured Wiggins Hill Road/Wishaw Lane area, with reports as follows: a male on January 24th *BLK*, an immature/female on February 6th *PAH* and a female on 9th *SMH*; a returning female present again on October 17th *BLK*, followed by immature/females on November 8th *SMH*, December 13th-14th and 29th, with a male too on the latter date *SMH*. Elsewhere, a male was noted at Clayhanger on April 3rd *CMA* and one was at Sheepwash UP on December 13th *AGW*.



A first-winter **Great Northern Diver** at Dosthill (Phill Ward).



This **Little Egret** visited gardens in the Redditch area during May (Keith Stone).



As usual, Whitemoor Haye attracted good numbers of **Tundra Swans** in winter (Phill Ward).



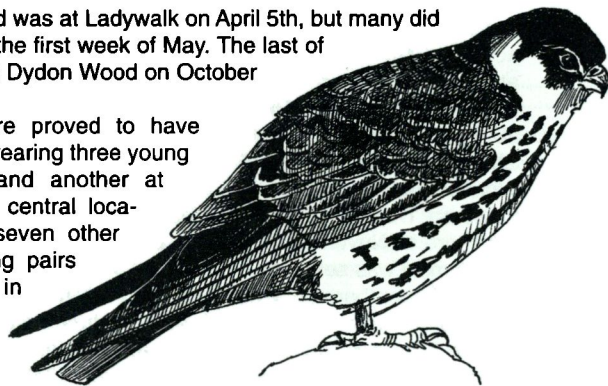
A female **Northern Pintail** photographed at Chasewater (Neil Stych).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo**Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant.**Average: April 23rd (30) – October 3rd (33)*

A very early bird was at Ladywalk on April 5th, but many did not arrive until the first week of May. The last of the year was at Dydon Wood on October 11th.

Warks

Two pairs were proved to have bred, with one rearing three young in the north and another at least one in a central location. At least seven other possible nesting pairs were located in the north and six more in the centre and south of the county, though it is presumably somewhat under-recorded due to its retiring habits while breeding. In all, records came from over 50 sites.

*Hobby (John Broadbent)***Worcs**

Reported from 51 localities, but with no confirmed breeding records. Appears well distributed, being seen in 18 ten-kilometre squares in the county. The majority of localities were to the east and south-east of Worcester. Taking June and July records as a rough guide to where breeding pairs might be, the records suggest there could be as many as 12 pairs in the county. At least 30 records came from the well-watched Upton Warren, far more than any other location.

Staffs

A pair bred successfully again in the east of the county and on Cannock Chase, where three were seen together on July 25th. Away from the Moors and Chase, most sightings were over water, including Alrewas GP, Barton GP, Belvide, Blithfield, Branston, Chasewater, Pool Dam Marsh and Tittesworth.

W Mid

Not thought to have bred at a locality used in the previous three years. One at Marsh Lane GP on May 5th was the first of the year, while one at Sandwell Valley on September 17th was the last. In between, birds were recorded on a further seven dates at the latter locality, with two on May 7th, and also at Aldersley, Barston, Bradnock's Marsh (three on May 26th), Clayhanger, Dunstall Park, Fens Pools LNR, Harborne NR, Meer End, Park Lime Pits, Pelsall North Common, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park.

Peregrine Falcon (Peregrine) *Falco peregrinus**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding species since 1992.***Warks**

In the north of the county, there was one at Ladywalk on January 2nd *per SC*;

a probable male in the Atherstone GC/Bentley Woods area on February 8th *SMH* and at Wishaw next day *SMH*; a bird heading south at Corley on 22nd *SR*; a female at Mancetter on March 9th *SMH*; one at Ladywalk again on March 28th-29th *per SC*; and a male in Packington Park on April 23rd *NPB*. Autumn records began with one at Ladywalk on August 11th *per SC* and an adult on 24th *DC*, an immature at Shustoke on 30th *BLK*, *KW* and a female at Great Packington on September 13th *NPB*, with possibly the same bird in the Middleton area on 14th *ARD* and heading south-east over Blyth Bridge on 23rd *BLK*. Finally, an adult female was seen chasing a Great Cormorant at Shustoke on December 10th *BLK* and a male was perching on pylons at Whitacre Heath on 13th *SMH*. Elsewhere in the county, Brandon had birds on February 17th *JMR* and November 23rd *CHP*, while Draycote produced an immature on November 15th *REH*, *DJS* and an adult male on December 31st *JJB*. A male was seen at Kenilworth on January 26th and March 8th, with two birds together there on November 30th *PFA*. A bird was seen near Chesterton Wood on January 13th *UF*, with an immature male at Wormleighton Res on March 12th *JJB*, an adult female at Chesterton Pools on 26th *JJB*, an immature at Whatcote on September 8th *TP*, an adult male at Fenny Compton on October 6th *JJB*, one at Ilmington Downs on 20th *SMH* and an adult male at Wormleighton Res on November 29th *JJB*, with possibly the same bird again at Warmington next day *ACI*, *TC* and at Radway on December 9th *PD*.

Worcs

At least one pair bred successfully in the county and present in suitable breeding habitat at two other localities all year *observers names withheld*. Now a regular sight in the county, with singles at Bredons Hardwick throughout the year *several observers*, Castlemorton Common from January 12th-June 6th, including a pair on May 25th *MWCW*, Childswickham from January 15th-February 3rd *PFW*, Cookley on January 17th *BW* and Harvington on 21st *MET*. Seen regularly at Upton Warren from February 11th to the end of the year *several observers*. Singles also reported at Timberhonger on February 13th and 22nd *JR* and again on December 27th *JR*; with an adult male at Blakeshall on February 15th *MJI*; another at Lower Moor on February 16th and 25th *RAP*, *BW*; and a pair at Larford on February 18th, one of which was carrying a duck! *BW*. Further singles were at Trimpey on February 23rd and May 11th *BW*, Holt on March 8th *REH*, *DJS* and Abberton on April 6th (an adult female) *WRHP*. An adult male was picked up injured at Walkwood on May 13th and taken into care *per SJD* and one was at Lineholt on May 24th *BW*. Singles were at Westmancote on June 10th *DO*, with two there on October 19th *SJH*, and at Evesham on June 17th *PFW*. One over Midsummer Hill on July 18th *MWCW* and another at West Malvern on August 2nd *PGG* were followed by further singles at Kinsham on September 6th *REH*; North Hill on September 23rd and 28th *TMH*, *AFJ*, *SMW*; Kempsey Common on October 8th *MAS*; and Westwood on October 24th and December 6th-7th *TMH*, *SMW*; while two were at Sedgeberrow on October 30th *PFW*. Yet more singles were noted at Bishampton Vale Pool and Bittell on November 8th *GHP*, *RJW*, Uckinghall on November 12th *SRJB*, and at a Eurasian

Jackdaw kill at Welland on November 29th *LAB*. Finally, singles were at Little Comberton on December 3rd *PFW* and Little Witley on December 26th *REH*.

Staffs Reported to have bred in the north of the county, with the female being found dead on the nest *observers name withheld*. At Belvide, the number of sightings per month was as follows:—

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	9	4	2	2	—	—	—	—	6	8	9	8

These included one which was seen to kill a Common Teal on January 4th *SN*, a pair displaying on February 12th *SN* and three (two males and a female) on December 16th *SN*. At Blithfield, single immatures were seen on January 5th *MJ*; February 1st *MY*, 5th *ESC*, 25th *ESC*; and April 10th *AGJ*. At least four birds were then involved in records on sixteen dates between August 17th–September 30th *several observers*. Single immatures on November 9th and 30th *MJ*, and December 2nd *NU* and 12th *JPS* completed a good autumn. Elsewhere, singles were at Copmere on January 17th *MT* and nearby on February 23rd *JPS*; two immatures were at Swindon on January 23rd *GCW*; an adult was near Rodbaston on January 29th *JPS*; and a male near Bradley on March 9th *RF*. In autumn there were then sightings of singles at Branston GP on July 30th and November 24th *RP*; one at Aqualate on September 29th *per FCG*; an immature male at Barton GP on October 12th *MY*; and finally one at Denstone on December 16th *NU*.

W Mid A male and immature female were present at a possible breeding site in the county from at least April 22nd to the end of the year *PAC et al*. Elsewhere, singles were reported from Eastcote on January 26th *HJM*; Valley Park on April 27th and May 7th *VPB*; Sandwell Valley on May 11th *PMH*, *TCH*, *DW*; Sheepwash UP on October 12th *DW*, *ICW*, *MY* and 29th *AGW*; Bartley on 21st *SR*; Wishaw Lane on November 8th *SMH*; and Park Lime Pits, where a female was seen on an unspecified date in late November *AKD*.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*

Frequent, though declining, resident on the North Staffs Moors.

Staffs Records received from Baldstones (five pairs), Gun Hill (seven birds) and reported from 'most visits' to Boarsgrove, Gib Torr, the Roaches and Swallow Moss. An old farmer told of 200 brace shot in the Three Shires Head area some thirty years ago. He felt the rapid drop in numbers was due to reduced keeping and less heather burning, coupled with too many mammalian and winged vermin.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce and decreasing resident, now restricted to the North Staffs Moors.

Staffs The worrying decline continues, with a maximum of just three males at the lek site at Swallow Moss. However, four males were seen there at the end of the year (December 22nd). The highest count of females was three, on March 9th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa**Common resident.*

- Warks** Fairly widely reported, with records from 51 localities, including several breeding records. The largest covey reported was one of 21 at Chapel Ascote on February 3rd, with smaller ones of 12-14 at Fenny Compton, Kenilworth, Ladywalk and Long Marston Airfield.
- Worcs** Reported from 26 localities, mostly small numbers but maxima of nine at Strensham on October 12th, 17 at Lower Wick on October 20th, 11 at Bredon Hill on October 29th, 22 at Bickley on November 8th and 25 at Stanford Bridge on November 30th.
- Staffs** Bred at Oakedge Park; Crossplains, where a female was accompanying five chicks on May 20th; and near the canal at Cowley, where a family party of six was seen on July 21st. Highest counts were 12 at Allimore Green on February 26th and eight at Wrottesley Old Park on January 19th. One was in company of two Grey Partridges at Little Aston on June 1st.
- W Mid** Little information received – an under recorded species? Presumably bred in the Wiggins Hill/Minworth area, where eight were noted on April 26th, heard calling at Clayhanger in June and seen regularly in the Marsh Lane GP area. Two were near Pedmore in the first winter period; one in the Sheepwash UP area on April 1st and 24th; and two in Sandwell Valley throughout April, with birds again noted on July 11th-12th and October 18th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix**Still common, though much declined, resident.*

- Warks** Reports from 31 localities, including breeding season records from BAD Kineton, Bedworth, Brailes, Broadwell, Brook End (Hurley), Charlecote (bred), Draycote (bred), Dunton, Fenny Compton (bred), Kenilworth, Lawford Heath, Lower Radbourn, Marcliff, Middleton, Oxhill, Priors Hardwick, Priors Marston, Radway, Ratley, Stoneton, Warmington, Whatcote (bred), Wood End (Kingsbury) and Wormleighton. The largest coveys consisted of 11 at Fenny Compton on January 12th, 23 at Priors Marston on 19th and eight at Whatcote on September 25th.
- Worcs** The largest coveys reported were nine at Ryall on January 18th, nine at Lower Moor on November 6th, 13 at Churchill on December 6th and 10 at Larford on December 27th. Smaller numbers were noted at Beckford, Belbroughton, Bishampton Vale Pool, Broadway GP, Norgrove, Peopleton, Powick, Rowney Green, Stoulton, Tibberton and Woodgates Green.
- Staffs** Few reports and no breeding records, though a covey was regularly seen throughout the year at Whitemoor Haye, reaching a maximum of 12 on September 18th and November 16th. Other coveys were 12 between Chesterfield and Lynn in winter and 21 at Rolleston Park on October 13th.
- W Mid** A slightly better showing this year, but all records of this declining species are required and observers are urged to search suitable farmland areas. A pair bred on Pelsall North Common – the first confirmed breeding in the county for some time – and at least one pair was present during the breeding season at Clayhanger. One at Park Lime Pits on February 21st was followed by a pair on April 17th, July 4th, 7th and 10th. A pair was also noted at Bradnock's

Marsh in mid-May; two were on Brownhills Nature Trail on March 27th; a pair off Hobs Hole Lane, Aldridge, on March 31st; and around three on set-aside adjacent to the Marston Green Business Park on October 18th.

Common Quail (Quail) *Coturnix coturnix*

Summer resident in fluctuating numbers, but usually uncommon. Very rare in winter.

Average: May 6th (10) – August 29th (7)

- Warks** A much larger influx than last year began with one at Churchill on the typical date of May 3rd. Last noted at both Corley and Whatcote on September 9th. A much better year, with the first bird flushed by the observer's dog from a field of rank grass at Priors Hardwick on May 9th *JJB*. Subsequently there were up to five calling males in the Charlecote, Wasperton and Wellesbourne area during June/July *GJA, JJB, GIG et al.*, with singles at Little Kineton on June 26th *MGW*, Farnborough on 29th *JJB*, BAD Kineton on 30th *MGW*, near Wormleighton Res on July 9th and August 25th *JJB*, Brandon on July 13th *JMR* and 21st *per SMH*, Long Itchington on 16th *JJB* and Stratford-upon-Avon on 20th *per WWT*. Autumn migrants were seen on September 9th at both Whatcote *PD*, while cutting silage, and Corley *WTJ*.
- Worcs** Calling males were at Churchill on May 3rd-5th and 30th *BW*, near Kyre Pool on May 18th *RM* and at Little Comberton in June (date not supplied) *PFW*. Two were in set-aside at Broome on June 17th, with at least one until July 7th *WFP et al.* Singles were at Beckford on July 5th *ET*, Bishampton Vale Pool from July 9th to 17th *GHP, WFP et al* and Honeybourne on July 21st *AGS*, this last bird being successfully recorded on the observer's dictaphone.
- Staffs** Singles were heard at Whitemoor Haye on May 30th *RP* and June 28th *ESC*, with two then calling regularly from July 11th-23rd *RP et al.* One was calling at Hanchurch on June 8th, with three then heard regularly from June 9th-July 12th *WJL*.
- W Mid** One was calling from barley in Sandwell Valley from July 8th to at least 13th *AJ et al* and up to three were calling from barley near Pedmore in July *KJC*.

Common Pheasant (Pheasant) *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common resident, but mainly in rural areas.

- Warks** The largest concentration was 20 at Ilmington on November 1st. Six breeding pairs were located in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke, while 43 on the BAD Kineton count in May was just above the average number. An unusually late brood of four or five chicks just a few days old was seen at Kenilworth on October 15th.
- Worcs** A few very welcome counts received this year, the larger being 42 at Lower Moor on February 22nd, 35 near Tibberton on October 26th and 30 at Pudford Hill on December 6th. Albinos were seen at Drakes Broughton and Tibberton.
- Staffs** Two records of albino birds; one at Hanchurch Woods on January 12th and the other at Bishops Wood on October 19th. Interestingly, after a live bird never having been recorded there, Westport Lake had a male on July 13th and a female in November.

W Mid Bred at Clayhanger and Woodgate Valley, and present throughout the year in the Wishaw Lane area near Minworth. A female frequented the feeding station in Sandwell Valley from January 11th-March 30th at least. At Harborne NR, a calling male in early April was followed by a female on December 9th and a male again on 24th (when female found dead) and 26th. A female was seen intermittently at Fens Pools during May and June, the first record for the locality in over 30 years! A female was near Pedmore on July 12th and an albino male at Berkswell Park in April.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Frequent winter visitor and uncommon breeding resident.

Warks At least two pairs probably bred at Brandon and other breeding season records came from Alvecote, Coombe, Ufton Fields and Ladywalk, with birds also seen regularly in both winter periods at the latter site. The only records away from these sites were of singles at Chesterton on January 13th, Baginton Lagoons on August 20th and Farnborough on October 11th.

Worcs Present in late spring at Upton Warren and Westwood, but no confirmed breeding reported. The only records of more than one or two birds were three at Lower Moor on January 2nd, three at Ombersley Park on January 19th, four at Westwood in early March, four at Oakley on October 19th and four at Strensham on November 9th. Small numbers noted in winter and autumn at Aston Mill, Bittell, Blackroot Pool, Bredons Hardwick, Grimley, Ipsley Alders, Kyre Pool, Pirton (on the intriguingly early date of August 5th), Upton Warren and Wilden.

Staffs No count received for Doxey, though singles were noted at the Cemetery Pool on January 2nd and on the R. Sow on October 26th. At least two were at Betley Mere, while in the Churnet Valley two were released from a mink trap on October 14th. Elsewhere, singles were noted at Aqualate, Baggeridge CP, Belvide (between August 6th and October 7th), Colwich Lake, Copmere and Crumpwood.

W Mid Noted at Clayhanger, where formerly bred, on June 14th, with further sightings outside the breeding season in March, April, August, October and November. Up to two birds were at Sheepwash UP in early January, with one to two again present from September 28th to the year's end. Singles were in Sandwell Valley on January 12th and 26th, at Bradnock's Marsh on 18th and in Woodgate Valley during the first winter period. The first of the 'autumn' was noted in Sandwell Valley on July 26th, with subsequent reports of two or three birds regularly from October 20th to the end of the year. One was at Fens Pools LNR from November 22nd to the year's end and another was noted at Edgbaston Pool on December 7th and 26th.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor (7/10). Has bred.

W Mid One was heard calling in the early hours of May 19th at Clayhanger CMA. A juvenile was found in Sandwell Valley on August 17th and remained until 23rd DC *et al.*

1995 Addendum

W Mid One was at Clayhanger on September 2nd CMA.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus**Very common resident.***Monthly maxima at selected sites**

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ladywalk	0	9	9	10	8	6	14	31	33	8	20	–
Bittell	15	17	12	4	12	9	11	40	20	13	10	11
Pirton	–	10	10	12	11	17	23	39	45	25	18	10
Upton Warren	10	18	12	12	8	8	11	24	30	26	41	17
Blithfield	0	0	1	4	–	4	9	44	13	1	0	0
Kettlebrook Park	12	23	10	7	9	10	8	–	11	9	10	–
Tittesworth	–	2	10	5	3	1	4	26	17	18	11	5
Bumble Hole	–	–	–	–	35	53	35	38	47	–	46	59

Warks Poorly reported, with maxima of only 21 at Coton in January, 20 at Farnborough Park and 25 at Alvecote in February, 22 at Seeswood Pool in August and 26 at Abbey Fields, Kenilworth, in November.

Worcs Bred at Bittell, Lower Moor, Southcrest, Upton Warren and along the Worcester Canal, where at least 11 pairs were noted between Oddingley and Tibberton. Maxima of 25 at Grimley on January 5th and 15 at Strensham on October 26th.

Staffs Breeding reported from just three localities; Betley Mere, Byrkley Park and Kettlebrook Park. Very few other records, though counts of 33 at Hill Ridware on August 24th and 36 at Mill Pool, Sambrook, were noteworthy.

W Mid Bred at Clayhanger, where apparently quite numerous; in Dunstall/ Valley Park, where at least 80 in winter; at Park Lime Pits, where at least four pairs; and in Sandwell Valley. 19 were counted along one mile of the Staffs and Worcs Canal on January 12th, 30 were in the Meriden STW area on January 5th and 75 was the peak at Bucks Pools/Fens Pools LNR.

Common Coot (Coot) *Fulica atra**Common resident and winter visitor.***Monthly maxima at selected sites**

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	40	90	85	59	44	36	57	156	102	282	170	240
Coton	777	165	203	80	–	72	114	302	355	159	–	677
Dosthill	1000	338	550	–	–	–	60	80	–	442	470	477
Draycote	506	445	185	82	16	75	143	455	926	1225	1430	1500
Ladywalk	–	41	17	12	10	20	30	66	76	104	80	–
Shustoke	289	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	550	520	524
Bittell	64	47	27	16	22	38	102	76	35	45	61	57
Lower Moor	60	53	46	16	14	14	20	25	62	95	101	115
Pirton	44	73	25	52	48	132	168	174	121	73	3	15
Upton Warren	20	38	30	39	29	44	59	55	21	18	21	19
Westwood	27	42	31	45	39	101	177	157	161	55	105	12
Aqualate	5	21	21	24	9	81	156	11	5	6	1	2
Belvide	35	150	110	97	62	137	354	702	839	100	–	56
Blithfield	103	105	79	159	–	430	766	1717	1280	47	25	28
Bransdon	330	245	231	84	63	83	89	144	165	–	–	–

Warks Seven pairs nested at Farnborough Park, but few other breeding records were received. The best counts away from tabulated waters were 140 at Packington Great Pool on September 20th and 100 at Napton Res on November 4th.

Worcs Bred at Bittell (10 pairs), Grimley, Ipsley Alders, Lodge Pool, Lower Moor (seven pairs), Shortwood Roughs, Strensham and Upton Warren. Maxima at

other waters were 23 at Grimley on January 5th, 164 at Bredons Hardwick on September 6th, 37 at Kinsham on the same day and 70 at Larford on December 26th.

Staffs Breeding reported from Barton Village Pit (two pairs), Byrkley Park, Clay Mills (two pairs) and Kettlebrook Park (six pairs). A cafe-au-lait coloured individual was amongst a flock of 288 at Copmere on October 7th.

W Mid Bred at Clayhanger, Marsh Lane GP, Ladymoor Pool, Park Lime Pits (five pairs), Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park and Willenhall Memorial Park. Winter numbers at Fens Pools LNR were lower than usual, peaking at 125. Elsewhere, 26 were in Mary Stevens Park in January, while the peak at Bumble Hole was 86 in July.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird, mainly in the Tame and Trent valleys.

Warks The first to arrive back in the Tame Valley were two at Dosthill on February 15th. Up to two pairs were subsequently present in the Kingsbury area, with one pair rearing at least one young in the WP, while a pair with two juveniles present at Dosthill during July may have



Oystercatcher (Brett Westwood)

been a different pair. The last was seen on August 17th. One at Packington Great Pool on March 17th was joined by two more on 25th, with a pair staying here until April 25th but with no evidence of attempted nesting. One or two were also seen at Ladywalk in April. Draycote had another good year, with singles on January 2nd and April 2nd, three on 19th, singles on seven dates from 30th-May 14th, and then a pair from 22nd-27th with one staying to June 5th. Autumn passage produced one there from August 23rd-25th and two on September 4th.

Worcs A pair at Bredons Hardwick successfully raised three young which all fledged – the first breeding record for the county. The pair was present from March 19th to August 14th, with an additional bird on June 9th. Elsewhere, singles were at Saxons Lode on January 8th; Westwood on March 23rd and December 18th; Upton Warren on May 22nd and December 19th-20th; over

East Moons Moat on July 15th; and at Strensham on November 9th.

Staffs Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alrewas	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	2	4	3	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	3	7	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	1
Blithfield	-	-	2	2	5	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Branston	-	3	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chasewater	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Croxall	-	1	4	5	10	9	4	-	-	-	-	-
Eiford	-	11	10	10	8	8	5	-	-	-	-	-
Kings Bromley	-	-	2	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Successfully bred at Coldmeee, where a pair was seen with one young, and at Croxall, where there were eight adults with two young on May 10th and five adults with three young on May 26th. A pair was on the R. Dove in the Needwood/Anslow area on April 12th, with two pairs present on the 15th and one sitting in a maize field on May 3rd. Elsewhere, spring records came from Catholme (three) on March 28th; Dosthill (two) on March 8th and April 9th; Doxey (three) on April 6th; and Drayton Bassett, where there was one on April 20th, a pair on April 24th and four on May 7th. Wychnor held one on June 6th and three on July 3rd, while two flew over Westport on August 23rd followed by two later in the year on October 1st.

W Mid A pair was present in the early part of the breeding season at a suitable locality, but the outcome is unknown. Singles were at Sheepwash UP on March 7th and April 26th, with two present on the 29th and then a further singleton on December 20th. Singles were also at Dunstall Park Lake on March 9th-10th and September 4th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Frequent summer resident and passage migrant.

Average: March 19th (33) – October 3rd (33)

An early bird was at Brandon on March 8th, but the main arrival did not begin until the last week of March. Few were noted after mid-September, with the last at Belvide on 29th constituting the earliest departure since 1992.

Monthly maxima at selected sites

	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Draycote	4	6	5	4	5	3	1	-
Kingsbury area	2	6	4	4	4	1	1	-
Bittell	-	-	4	4	1	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	-	-	5	-	-	1	2	-
Grimley	-	-	8	2	5	-	4	-
Kinsham	-	2	6	6	-	-	1	-
Upton Warren	-	8	15	12	20	20	4	2
Alrewas	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	9	1	8	6	-	2	-
Belvide	4	11	6	3	-	1	2	-
Blithfield	-	3	-	2	-	1	1	-
Branston	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Chasewater	2	10	6	3	1	0	0	0
Croxall	-	4	8	21	-	-	-	-
Doxey	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-

	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Efford	—	4	2	8	4	—	—	—
Rudyard	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Tittesworth	—	5	5	3	—	—	—	—
Westport	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—
Sandwell Valley	—	4	10	7	6	2	1	1

Warks Two pairs nested unsuccessfully in the Dosthill/Middleton area before moving over the boundary into Staffs. The only successful breeding to be reported was at Packington Great Pool, where a pair reared two young for the first time following low water levels. Other pairs were present during the spring and summer, and possibly bred, at Alvecote, Blyth Hall, Brandon, Draycote (two) and Ladywalk (three), with five in the south-west at Salford Priors GP where again said to have nested. On spring passage there were up to six at Bedworth Nook and five at Shustoke, while a single was at Napton Hill Quarry on April 16th.

Worcs Bred at Grimley, Ryall and Upton Warren (eight pairs), but a breeding attempt at Wilden was curtailed by a stoat with a taste for eggs. Passage birds were noted at Lower Moor, with three on March 30th and two on April 3rd; and Bishampton Vale Pool, with two on April 6th followed by seven from July 14th-16th.

Staffs There were no confirmed reports of successful breeding, but an attempt at Chasewater probably failed due to the rising water level and the cold wet June. Three pairs were reported at Belvide on May 3rd. Otherwise, apart from the tabulated sites, singles were noted at Trentham Gardens on April 19th and heading south-west at Crossplains on September 14th.

W Mid Bred successfully at the former Bilston steelworks and at Sheepwash UP. Around nine pairs were present at Marsh Lane GP, but it was thought that no young were produced owing to poor weather and predation by Common Coots and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Breeding was also attempted at Smithy Lane Marlhole, Pensnett, where two pairs were present in mid-April, but the eggs were predated. Three pairs attempted to breed in Sandwell Valley, but were thought to have been unsuccessful, whilst a pair at Tansey Green Quarry lost their eggs to predators or egg thieves. Three nests were also noted at Dunstall Park Lake, but the young were thought to have perished during flooding in early June. Additionally, display flight was noted at Somers Road Quarry and Meriden Quarries, while up to three birds indulged in display in the Stubbers Green area, where they were present from April 9th to late May at least, but again any breeding success is unknown. One or two birds were also noted at Fens Pools from April 19th-May 19th and again on June 29th and July 1st-2nd; and two at Clayhanger on April 26th were followed by one on June 4th.

Great Ringed Plover (Ringed Plover) *Charadrius hiaticula*

Frequent passage migrant and scarce summer resident. Rare in mid-winter.

Monthly maxima at selected sites

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dosthill area	—	—	4	4	4	2	6	1	9	—	—	—
Draycote	—	3	6	13	6	4	8	24	14	3	—	—
Bredons Hardwick	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Upton Warren	—	1	—	11	6	6	1	11	1	—	—	—

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Airewas	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Barton	-	4	4	4	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	3	18	8	-	-	14	26	-	2	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	96	31	7	-	-
Branston	-	-	1	13	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	2	2	7	1	0	4	1	0	-	-
Croxall	-	3	2	2	-	10	2	-	1	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	1	6	4	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elford	-	-	-	4	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Warks Better breeding success this year, with one of two pairs at Draycote rearing three young and a pair rearing four young at Middleton. A pair also nested twice at Dosthill, but with no recorded success, and a pair was present again at Brandon. Away from the main waters, the only records were of singles at Ladywalk on March 29th, April 1st and 3rd May; and at Packington Great Pool on April 23rd-24th.

Worcs Spring records (additional to those tabulated) were of singles at Bittell on April 25th and 27th, with two on May 11th; singles at Kinsham from May 1st-3rd and August 23rd, followed by three on August 30th; two at Ryall on May 16th, with seven the next day and three on May 28th; and one at Westwood on May 19th, which was unusual for the locality. Return passage noted additionally at Bishampton Vale Pool, where two on August 25th and one from 31st to September 4th; and Grimley, where one on August 31st.

Staffs Bred successfully at Drayton Bassett, where a pair was seen with three chicks on May 13th. The only other sighting away from the main sites was of one along the R. Dove in the Needwood/Anslow area on May 17th.

W Mid One pair bred successfully, with a second pair noted at the same site on May 25th and a maximum of six adults there in late May. One visited Clayhanger on April 27th. Spring passage through Sandwell Valley brought two on May 5th, one on 7th, two again on 12th and one on 16th, whilst autumn saw one on August 20th, three on 23rd-24th and a final bird on 29th. One was at Mercote Lodge GP on May 18th.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce passage migrant (7/10).

Worcs An exceptionally early bird, just starting to moult into summer plumage, was on North Hill on March 23rd until it was flushed from the summit by walkers GJM. The same locality then produced a confiding autumn juvenile on September 9th EC JC.

European Golden Plover (Golden Plover) *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce, and perhaps now erratic, as a breeding species on the North Staffs Moors.

Average: August 11th (49) – April 28th (51)

Away from the North Staffs Moors, last seen in spring on May 3rd at Draycote. The autumn arrival was unusually late, with the first at Bittell on August 24th.

Monthly maxima at selected sites

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dosthill	—	3	500	18	—	—	—	—	1	1102	—	23
Draycote	20	25	2	10	1	—	—	1	—	20	200	400
Fenny Compton/Wormleighton	193	—	170	37	—	—	—	—	2	100	50	120
Bredons Hardwick	—	—	—	400	—	—	—	—	—	70	1100	10
Lower Moor	1	—	1	30	—	—	—	—	—	110	84	60
Alrewas	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barton	—	25	50	—	—	—	—	—	1	13	210	160
Belvide	11	—	263	—	—	—	—	—	2	142	100	—
Blithfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	9
Branston	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	136	11
Chasewater	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	—
Croxall	—	2	—	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	175	88
Park Hall	170	120	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stafford Common	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	200	—	—
Tittesworth	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bowmans Harbour	—	420	805	100	—	—	—	—	21	63	49	200
Hockley Heath	500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90	170
Sandwell Valley	20	100	300	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—

Warks Again poorly reported, though numbers appeared to be well down. In addition to those tabulated, the larger flocks included maxima of 60 near Wishaw on February 9th, 424 at Radway on March 2nd, 65 at BAD Kineton on 6th, 130 at Brandon on October 4th, 100 at Gaydon on 30th, 70 at Chesterton on November 13th and 800 near Longbridge and 120 at Stareton on December 15th.

Worcs Away from the tabulated sites, the largest flocks encountered in the earlier part of the year were 150 at Pendock on February 22nd, 50 over Kinsham on March 13th, 54 at Aston Mill on March 30th, 150 at Strensham on March 30th, 150 at Baughton on April 6th and up to 69 seen by would-be Dotterel finders on Bredon Hill on April 26th. Autumn saw 50 at Kempsey Common on October 12th, 60 at Ryall on November 2nd, 60 at Grimley on November 20th, 40 at High Green on November 21st, 70 at Honeybourne on November 26th and 158 at Defford on December 20th. Smaller numbers were also at Bittell, Holt, Little Comberton, Norton, Powick Ham, Upton Warren and Westwood.

Staffs Away from the main sites, reported in the first winter period from Milton, where 70 on February 6th; the Stoke area, where 80 on February 21st; Apedale CP, where six on February 22nd and eight on March 29th, which increased to 17 by April 3rd and 120 the next day before declining again to 27 on 13th; and Chasetown, where 32 flew over on March 12th. A good spring passage over the Moors, with counts at Morridge of 54 on April 8th, 30 on 13th, nine on 15th, 130 in a field just to the south on 19th, 189 on 20th and 35 on 29th. Two were also seen in flight display on April 13th at Orchard Common, followed by six there on 18th, two on May 3rd, three on 14th and two on June 17th. Noted in the second winter period at Apedale again, where one on October 8th; Trentham Lakes, where 150 were amongst a flock of Northern Lapwings on December 12th; near Stoke City's new Britannia Stadium, where two flocks of 40 and 150 on December 13th had increased to an impressive 800 two days later; Fradley Airfield, where 95, also on December 15th; and Rickerscote, where 600 from December 25th-30th. Smaller numbers were also noted at Elford and Hopton Pool.

W Mid In spring, 400 were on ploughed fields adjacent to the M6 motorway at Water Orton on March 17th, with 200 still present on 24th; 55 flew over Valley Park on March 18th, with 15 there on 24th; 250 were on land adjacent to the Black Country spine road in the Wednesbury area on March 30th; and in excess of 70 were at Clayhanger on April 3rd, with 38 still present on 8th. In autumn, singles (unless otherwise stated) were at Sheepwash UP on August 26th, September 30th, November 15th (nine), December 8th, 9th, 12th (13) and 20th. Approximately 26 flew over Park Lime Pits on October 13th, followed by 17 the following day; two at Marsh Lane GP on November 2nd were followed by regular sightings throughout December, with a peak of 170 on December 15th; 22 were near Hayhead Wood on November 20th; 40 at Stubbers Green on 26th; and one at Dunstall Park on October 18th which was the forerunner of a regular roost that peaked at 1500 in December.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks A poor year with only five seen, of which four were from Draycote where singles occurred on January 19th, May 1st-6th (with two on 4th) and September 28th. The only other was seen over Napton Hill on August 17th.

Worcs Singles at Bredons Hardwick on January 13th and Upton Warren from August 7th to 8th – the latter an adult in summer plumage.

Staffs Just one on spring passage, at Belvide on May 16th. Return passage commenced with an adult still in summer plumage at Blithfield from August 19th-25th. This was followed by one calling at Chasewater on September 27th, which did not land, and singles at Belvide on October 10th and November 18th.

W Mid A calling bird flew over a Bilston garden after dark on March 11th.

Northern Lapwing (Lapwing) *Vanellus vanellus*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Fairly common, though declining, breeding species.

Monthly maxima at selected sites

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	–	195	1	8	6	6	440	550	800	160	150	250
Dosthill	55	–	–	–	–	–	200	–	–	640	–	250
Draycote	250	200	50	–	–	6	300	370	60	60	1800	6000
Bittell	150	284	25	2	4	17	70	34	–	–	70	150
Lower Moor	82	80	2	–	–	–	5	20	65	37	250	250
Upton Warren	–	500	44	–	36	93	310	265	167	320	900	963
Barton	–	510	180	14	2	56	220	590	445	715	240	850
Belvide	3	13	60	30	24	8	8	42	50	–	–	–
Blithfield	–	340	–	2	2	160	614	842	665	263	850	146
Branston	–	312	77	11	2	11	267	235	523	699	340	503
Chasewater	95	186	3	2	6	6	21	11	30	45	260	237
Croxall	28	570	65	10	8	125	540	1500	1100	420	340	620
Dosthill	–	–	–	–	–	–	380	150	750	–	–	–
Doxey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	13	88
Elford	–	16	11	9	16	46	–	85	–	–	–	2
Kings Bromley	–	110	130	2	–	15	–	130	–	–	110	50
Tittesworth	5	120	30	8	9	40	38	70	35	38	80	180
Westport	14	380	–	–	–	–	–	10	–	–	–	120

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dunstall Park	-	-	-	-	-	15	190	260	33	27	90	90
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	23	15	-	60	90	40	200	50	120	400
Sandwell Valley	60	60	34	16	7	43	45	60	18	20	60	80
Sheepwash UP	24	51	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	72
Stubbers Green	-	8	-	2	2	6	111	20	65	47	200	140

Warks Breeding pairs reported only from Alvecote (one-two), Brandon (three), Dosthill area (one-two), Farnborough (ten in area), Kineton, Ladywalk (six) and Packington Park (three), with display noted in a few other areas. Scarce during the cold weather in the early months, with only 300 at Oxhill on January 25th of any note. Following flooding, 150 were at Ladywalk on June 28th. Larger flocks were present in the autumn, including maxima of 500 roosting at Fenny Compton on July 21st; 400 at Napton Holt on August 26th; 750 at Gaydon on October 3rd; 500 at Sherbourne on 21st; 730 by Wormleighton Res on November 25th; and 1500 at Stareton and 2000 in the Longbridge area, both on December 15th. The December count at Draycote on 12th was notable.

Worcs Bred at Boxleys, Bredons Hardwick, Kinsham, The Standbatches and Upton Warren (17 pairs). Considered by one observer to be almost absent from arable land in the west of the county *RM*, whilst another reported no local breeding in the 10km square immediately east of Worcester *RRH*. Outside the breeding season, maxima of 560 at Holt on February 14th, 240 at Wilden on August 30th, 165 at Eckington on September 2nd, 500 at Grimley on November 21st, 52 at Stanford Bridge on November 30th and 50 at Birlingham on December 12th.

Staffs Several reports of breeding received. At Otherton, two broods of two and three were successfully raised. A pair bred at Blackbank and hatched three young. Bred successfully at Bateswood STW reserve, where seven birds on April 7th. A pair with two young were in a barley field at Acton Trussell on June 24th. Two pairs were sitting at Belvide on May 7th and two chicks were subsequently seen on the north shore on May 18th. Three pairs were on territory on the levelled 'Chasewater Heaths' industrial site in late May and two broods were found here in early June. A pair with one young were at Dosthill on June 7th. A female was on a nest at Hazel Barrow on April 1st. Seven chicks reached the free flying stage at Doxey before the June/July flood. Five pairs attempted breeding, but all failed, in the Needwood /Anslow area. Four possible breeding pairs were at Musden Low on May 21st and, finally, three possible pairs were in the area between Prestwood and Ellaston. Winter flocks were small, with maxima of 30 at Denstone Hall on February 3rd, 110 at Halfpenny Green on February 28th, 100 at Kings Bromley on February 9th and 150 at Stoke on February 21st. A flock of 60 post-breeding adults was at Morridge on June 10th, quite an early date for such a gathering suggesting early curtailment of the breeding season *JAL*. (for further details refer to the Short Notes). 1500 were near Croxall Lake on August 28th. The larger autumn/ winter flocks included 600 west of Gnosall on October 17th, 180 on Stafford Common on November 22nd, 50 in winter wheat at Hixon on November 16th, 200 flying over Weeping Cross on December 2nd, 250 at Seven Arches Bridges area, Stoke, on December

12th, 250 at Trentham Lake on December 13th and 1000 at the new Britannia Stadium on December 13th.

- W Mid** Several pairs bred at Clayhanger, where the peak count was 70 on February 2nd. Other breeding season records came from Hampton-in-Arden (two pairs on farmland), Marsh Lane GP (four pairs, but all predated by Lesser Black-backed Gulls), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (no chicks fledged) and Stubbers Green. Small numbers, less than 30, were regularly recorded flying over Fens Pools in both winter periods.

Red Knot (*Knot*) *Calidris canutus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

A notable autumn passage between September 7th-19th.

- Warks** Singles were at Draycote on January 23rd, August 5th and 27th, with two on September 12th-13th. Of particular note was a flock of 21 which circled the Reservoir on September 7th before departing high to the north-east, while three also appeared at Dosthill on the same day.
- Worcs** Singles at Kinsham from April 27th-May 2nd, and at Upton Warren from May 5th-6th and from September 14th-15th.
- Staffs** Reports from just two sites, all during the autumn/second winter period. At Blithfield, two on September 13th had increased to four the following day, with one remaining until the 17th. At Belvide, two were present on September 16th; eight on September 19th; one on November 8th; one from December 5th-11th and another on the 18th. Finally two were at Blithfield again on December 20th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.

Average passage: April 10th (8) – September 27th (8)

- Warks** A good year at Draycote, with spring passage beginning with a very early bird on March 16th. Subsequently there were four on April 25th, two on 26th, singles on 30th and on May 3rd and 10th, two on 11th, one on 13th and 16th, four on 17th, two on 26th, three on 28th and the final bird on 30th. On return passage a single bird remained from July 31st-August 5th, with two on 6th-7th and three on 17th. The only record from elsewhere was of a single at Dosthill on May 25th.
- Worcs** One at Bredons Hardwick on April 26th was followed by one at Kinsham on May 3rd, and two there on May 27th. One at Upton Warren on May 12th completed a fairly typical spring showing.
- Staffs** A good series of spring records, with singles at Tittesworth on April 22nd, Barton GP on May 5th, Westport on May 7th, Drayton Bassett on May 12th, and Blithfield on May 19th. The only autumn passage birds were two in moulting plumage at Blithfield on August 24th.
- W Mid** Three at Marsh Lane GP on April 25th were in the company of 10 Dunlin.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Uncommon autumn passage migrant, in variable numbers. Scarce in spring and rare in winter.

Average passage: May 11th (7) – November 4th (8)

A very poor year, with no spring passage and only a meagre one in autumn. One that remained from last autumn's record passage provided the first winter records since 1989 and the first ever in February.

Warks Noted only at Draycote, where single adults were present from July 14th-19th and on August 10th and 17th, followed by single juveniles on September 3rd-4th, 28th-29th and on October 2nd-3rd and 7th.

Worcs In stark contrast to last year, one at Kinsham on September 28th was the only record.

Staffs A single bird was seen during the winter at both Alrewas and nearby Croxall on January 12th, staying at Alrewas until the 21st. Possibly the same bird was later seen at Barton GP on February 9th, 20th and 21st and back at Croxall again on March 9th. Two early return passage birds were at Alrewas on June 4th. Singles then appeared at Blithfield on the more typical dates of August 17th and October 19th. Finally, a series of late autumn/early winter records came from the Trent Valley, with one at Barton GP on November 15th-16th and again on December 7th and 14th, and an intervening sighting at Branston GP on November 23rd. It seems likely that just one individual was involved, perhaps the previously over-wintering bird.

W Mid One at Sheepwash UP on October 6th.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare passage migrant, mainly in autumn (6/10).

Warks A juvenile was at Brandon from September 4th-7th *MP, JMR et al.*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Uncommon autumn passage migrant in variable numbers. Scarce in spring.

Average passage: May 11th (6) – October 18th (8)

Following last year's influx, a return to more normal numbers.

Warks An adult in full summer plumage was at Draycote from May 3rd-6th. The only autumn record was of a bird in the Dosthill/Middleton area on September 20th-21st.

Worcs An adult at Upton Warren from June 27th-29th.

Staffs One at Tittesworth on May 7th was the only spring passage bird reported. Six at Blithfield on August 29th were the first autumn passage birds. Thereafter, various totals were reported up to September 26th, but none greater than the six seen on the first day. Other sightings, all of single birds, came from Dosthill on September 20th and Branston GP on September 24th and 26th. A late bird was at Blithfield on November 16th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at selected sites

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dosthill/Middleton	–	–	4	11	7	3	2	5	9	4	–	1
Draycote	17	6	11	30	16	4	17	10	10	10	4	2
Bittell	1	1	1	14	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Bredons Hardwick	–	1	2	4	8	–	–	–	–	1	2	–
Upton Warren	2	1	2	20	12	2	7	1	5	2	2	–

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alrewas	13	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	4	9	-	2	-	2	-	3	-	6	4
Belvide	2	3	11	45	22	-	-	5	11	11	9	3
Blithfield	1	2	-	2	3	-	2	28	30	25	35	3
Branston	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	6	1	13	-
Chasewater	0	1	6	2	6	0	1	1	1	4	0	2
Croxall	8	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Doxey	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	3	3	14	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	2	-	-	7	4	-	-	-	-	8	1	-
Westport	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	1	15	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Sandwell Valley	1	-	1	10	2	-	3	3	1	-	-	-
Sheepwash UP	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	2	2	-

Warks Away from the main sites, small numbers of up to four were reported on odd dates at Blyth Hall, Brandon, Coton, Ladywalk, Packington Park and Shustoke, with ten at Baginton Lagoons on August 25th and 30th. Further south, the only records were of singles at Napton Res on January 21st and Wormleighton Res from October 7th-9th.

Worcs One was at Grimley on January 1st, with three there on May 12th and one on August 31st. Two were at Westwood on January 13th and singles there on November 13th and 26th. Singles were also at Lower Moor on March 1st and September 28th. Five at Kinsham on March 8th were followed by singles there from April 26th-29th and on May 11th. One flew over Holt on March 9th, three were at Ryall on May 3rd and one at Throckmorton on August 25th.

Staffs The only report away from the main sites was of five at Dosthill on August 17th.

W Mid Amazingly, one caused a few problems as it dodged traffic in the centre of Walsall on January 3rd! More typically, singles were at Dunstall Park Lake on January 17th and Stubbers Green on March 5th, with two near Mercote Lodge on May 18th. A good spring passage recorded at Marsh Lane GP, with 15 on April 26th being a high count for the county.

1996 Addendum

W Mid One present at Clayhanger on May 12th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Frequent passage migrant, though in variable numbers. Scarce in winter.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dosthill	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	3	9	-	-	-
Draycote	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	5	6	1	1	-
Bredons Hardwick	4	-	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	5	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	4	3	-	1	3	3	-	-	-
Alrewas	-	-	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Barton	-	-	-	5	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	9	18	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	12	4	1	-	-
Branston	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Croxall	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

- Warks** An average year at the two main localities. One at Baginton Lagoons from August 17th-24th and two at Brandon on October 5th were the only other records.
- Worcs** Reported as follows: singles at Kinsham on March 8th and April 8th; two at Grimley on April 14th; singles at Bittell on August 22nd and Bishampton Vale Pool on August 25th; two at Throckmorton the same day; two at Wilden on August 30th, with another two on September 12th; and three at Ryall on August 31st, one of which remained until the next day.
- Staffs** A poor year, with the only report away from the main sites being two at Dosthill on August 27th.
- W Mid** One at Marsh Lane GP on April 6th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor.

Average: September 26th (56) – April 20th (52)

The extreme dates in a disappointing year for this species were April 9th at Upton Warren and September 26th at Sandwell Valley.

Monthly maxima at main sites

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bittell	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Castlemorton Com	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Grimley	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	4	1
Upton Warren	–	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	1	1	3	1
Wilden	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3
Belvide	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	2
Blithfield	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5	3
Chasewater	1	1	1	0	–	–	–	–	0	0	0	0
Croxall	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hill Ridware	–	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–
Pool Dam Marsh	–	–	10	8	–	–	–	–	2	3	3	4
Goscote Valley	4	6	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2
Sandwell Valley	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	2	1
Sheepwash UP	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1

- Warks** A very poor year, with the only records coming from Draycote on January 2nd, Chesterton on 18th, Kingsbury on February 2nd, Earlswood Lakes on 9th, Brandon on 10th (two), Salford Priors GP on March 15th, Draycote on 20th, and in autumn at Brandon on October 5th, Alvecote on 29th, Ladywalk during December, Dosthill on 22nd and The Somers from 24th-31st.
- Worcs** A very poor year. Fewer than usual at the principal sites and elsewhere just singles at Guarford on January 11th and Bredons Hardwick on April 6th.
- Staffs** Reports of a very poor year from Chasewater, despite one or two thorough searches being carried out. Other winter sightings were of one at Kings Bromley on January 12th; two at Drayton Bassett on February 2nd; one at Apedale CP on March 22nd; and one at Rocester JCB Pool on April 4th.
- W Mid** One or two were at Clayhanger on February 2nd and also reported from Wychall Res later in the month.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Frequent, though declining, breeding species.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	3	12	16	2	—	—	—	6	18	23	5	3
Bittell	7	1	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	3	5	1
Castlemorton Com	20	12	11	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	7	16
Lower Moor	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	11	1
Upton Warren	7	30	7	5	—	—	1	8	27	25	40	10
Barton	—	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Belvide	1	4	2	2	1	—	1	3	9	—	2	4
Blithfield	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	35	4	18	5	20
Chasewater	5	9	44	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	8	4
Croxall	4	3	2	5	—	—	—	5	6	3	3	3
Doxey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	300/400	—	—
Ford Green	25	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	—	6	—
Hill Ridware	4	7	3	12	—	—	—	—	6	13	19	26
Kings Bromley	1	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	6
Pool Dam Marsh	—	—	40	45	—	1	1	3	30	35	100	90
Tittesworth	4	12	11	9	2	1	—	6	15	15	52	14
Goscote Valley	12	3	1	—	—	—	—	3	7	1	2	—
Sandwell Valley	14	40	50	12	1	—	1	5	8	14	13	8
Sheepwash UP	6	—	17	2	—	—	—	1	1	5	14	33

Warks The only evidence of continued breeding in the county was a second hand report by two different farmers of a pair nesting in a marsh in the Kenilworth area, a known site from years ago. Passage and wintering numbers continue to decline sharply, with reports from just 23 localities and, apart from 60 at Draycote in January (but no more than ten there in autumn) and 26 at Dosthill on December 14th, maxima of only ten at Fenny Compton on January 9th, 15 at Lighthorne Quarry on March 26th, 13 at Ladywalk during August, seven at Alvecote on September 21st and nine at Eathorpe on December 14th.

Worcs Possibly now lost as a breeding species. Reported maxima were 10 at Kinsham on March 8th, nine at Ashmoor Common on November 30th, 42 at Wilden on December 12th (the highest count there for many years), 54 at Ryall on December 14th and 25 at Grimley on December 26th. Smaller numbers were also seen at Bredons Hardwick, Ipsley Alders, Norton, Offerton (where one was in a wheatfield on January 13th), Shortwood Roughs, Strensham, Warndon and Westwood.

Staffs Three birds were drumming at Knotbury on May 10th and probably bred at Pool Dam Marsh. The count at Doxey October 12th was very high, but at Chasewater numbers were reported as being poor this year. Elsewhere, smaller numbers were reported from Alrewas, Betley Mere, Branston GP, Coldmiece area, Dosthill, Elford, Little Wyrley, Little Stoke, Westport and Wychnor.

W Mid Display was reported from Clayhanger, where 57 were present in late February and March. An impressive 32 was the peak winter count at Dunstall Park Lake, which now appears to be developing into a regular wintering area. At Fens Pools there were 20 on January 12th, with one or two noted on several other dates in autumn and winter. During March, 45 were at Meriden on 2nd, 20 at Meriden Quarries on 12th and around 20 in Brueton Park on

24th. Small numbers began to build up at Dunstall Park Lake from August, peaking at 13 plus in December. Up to five were also reported from Bradnock's Marsh, Marsh Lane GP (including a late bird on May 29th), Park Lime Pits and Stubbers Green during the winter.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Warks Up to five were roding during the breeding season at Bentley Woods, with early spring roding noted also at Itchington Holt (on February 15th) and Chase Wood (Kenilworth), possibly only by wintering birds. Other winter records came from BAD Kineton, Bedworth, Bodymoor Heath, Bowshot Wood, Brandon, Church Pool Covert, Compton Verney, Edgehill Wood, Fenny Compton, Napton Hill, Oakley Wood, Radford Semele, Snitterfield Bushes, Ufton Wood, Weethley Wood, Whatcote, Wood End (Kingsbury) and Wormleighton Res. Most were of singles, but a maximum of five was flushed at Draycote on January 3rd and two or three were regularly present at Ladywalk from January-March with a maximum of seven on January 4th.

Worcs Roding was noted at Arley Wood, Castlemorton Common, Dowles Brook and New Parks. Wintering birds reported from Aston Mill, Beckford, Bittell, Broadway GP, Castlemorton Common (including three in January), Ipsley Alders, Island Coppice, Lower Moor, Mythe Bridge, Oakley, Ripple, Tiddesley Wood, Timberhonger, Trench Wood, Weymans Wood, Wilden (two in December) and Woodbury Hill (two in March).

Staffs Cannock Chase remains a stronghold, with 30 roding birds including the following: Abrahams Valley (four), Badger's Hills, Brocton Coppice, Furnace Coppice, Horsepasture Covert (three), Katyn Memorial (two), Penkridge Bank, Pepper Slade, Rawnsley Hills, Springslade (two), Warren Hill, Wandon Spur (two) and White House. Otherwise roding was reported only from Highgate Common. Birds were also noted in April at Seven Springs and in the Wood Bank -Teddlesley Park area. Winter records, all of single birds unless otherwise stated, came from Aqualate, Belvide, Blithfield, Crumpwood (four), Gib Torr Wood, Sprink and Tittesworth.

W Mid Roding birds were noted at Meriden Shafts. A good series of records came from Sheepwash UP, with one to two birds regularly during January and February, then two present on November 20th and one on December 16th. One at Harborne NR on March 16th, with an unconfirmed report on 12th as well, was interesting as was one in Bradshaw Avenue, Wednesbury on February 22nd. More typically, singles were reported in the winter months at Bartley, Bluebell Park, Cornets End, Fens Pools, Mons Hill, Park Lime Pits, Pelsall North Common and Woodgate Valley.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Uncommon passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

Average passage: March 16th (8) – October 21st (8)

Warks Another good year, with most records from Draycote and the Kingsbury area. Continuing over from December 1996, there were still five at Alvecote on January 1st and two at Draycote on 2nd. In spring, Draycote held one from

March 10th-16th with two on 11th, followed by one at Dosthill on April 19th, three at Draycote on May 1st, one at Kingsbury on 3rd and three at Dosthill on 25th. On return passage there were seven at Draycote on July 14th, one on 20th-21st, four on 29th, one on August 2nd, six on 7th, singles on 12th and 23rd, three on 28th, one on 29th-30th, two on September 2nd and 5th-6th and one from October 12th-18th. The Dosthill/Middleton area had a party of 13 on July 6th, followed by one on August 17th, eight on September 7th and one on 20th; while at Ladywalk, one on July 27th was followed by eight the next day and then an adult in full summer plumage on September 30th. Brandon had one on August 7th, then two on September 8th and 15th.

Worcs Singles at Bredons Hardwick on February 3rd, 8th-9th and 14th-21st were followed by three on April 27th. Return passage then brought further singles on August 12th and 29th-31st. Another excellent year at Upton Warren, with one from June 2nd-9th and eight on 5th, a further two from June 28th-July 1st, one from August 5th-9th, 10 (including five juveniles) from 10th-13th, one on 15th and three on 17th, one of which remained to the next day. Six then arrived on August 25th, followed by one from 31st-September 6th, another six from 9th-17th with seven on 11th, three from 20th-21st with one staying to 23rd, and finally another three on 30th. Elsewhere, one at Bittell on August 2nd, two at Throckmorton on August 25th and singles at both Kinsham and Pilton on August 29th.

Staffs First reported from Belvide, where one on March 7th was followed by ten on 18th. The main spring passage then commenced with singles at Belvide on April 8th and 12th-28th, three on 24th and two on May 9th. At Blithfield, first seen on April 12th, then five on April 20th and single birds on 23rd and 27th. The only other report of spring passage was a single bird at Tittesworth on April 18th. Two early return passage birds were seen Blithfield on June 8th, with probably the same two birds there again on the 11th and 13th. A good series of sightings then followed, with singles on July 30th and August 6th; three on August 8; singles again from August 14th-16th and on 24th and 31st; two on September 2nd; one on 6th; two on 13th-14th; three from 17th-20th; five on 21st; and three from 22nd-24th. Elsewhere there were singles at Tittesworth on August 4th and at Branston GP on August 24th and September 1st; whilst Belvide had three on August 23rd, four from 24th-September 1st, one of which stayed until 6th, and finally one on 9th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Uncommon passage migrant. rare in winter.

Average passage: March 30th (8) – October 6th (8)

Warks Single summer plumaged adults were at Draycote on April 25th, Dosthill on 28th and Draycote from May 1st-6th. Autumn brought two parties of seven, at Draycote on September 2nd and Ladywalk on 13th, then a final single at the latter locality on 17th.

Worcs An adult in summer plumage at Bredons Hardwick from May 17th-21st.

Staffs The only spring passage report was of one at Tittesworth on April 18th. During the autumn two were at Belvide on September 19th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus**Frequent passage migrant.**Average passage: April 11th (8) – September 23rd (8)*

Spring passage peaked at around 30 on April 25th-26th.

Warks A very poor year. In spring there were records at Draycote of one on April 16th, three on 26th and singles on 28th and on May 10th and 13th. Three were in a meadow at Kingsbury on May 18th, with three more at Wormleighton Res on 30th and at least one heard over Arley at 0045hrs on May 9th. The only return records were of six at Draycote on August 28th, three there on September 2nd and one at Ladywalk on 16th.

Worcs A small passage over Upton Warren on April 25th, when parties totalling eight individuals flew over during the day. Singles were also there on May 12th, July 10th-11th, 14th-15th, 18th-24th and 27th. Four flew over Bishampton Vale Pool on April 26th and one was over there on July 31st. Singles were also noted at Kinsham on April 29th, Bredons Hardwick from April 30th-May 9th, Bittell on May 2nd, over Warndon on May 3rd, over Lulsley on August 6th and over Sedgeberrow on August 20th.

Staffs The first spring records were of three birds at Croxall on April 21st and 28th. Then one at Tittesworth on April 25th was followed there by flocks of 13 on May 1st, 11 on May 7th and three on May 9th. One was at Blithfield on May 9th, with two there on 28th, and four were at Belvide on May 11th. Return passage started with single birds flying over Anslow on July 23rd and over nearby Henhurst the following day. Single birds were then at Blithfield on August 8th and 23rd.

W Mid Two at Marsh Lane GP on April 25th were followed by 12 flying over there the following day.

Eurasian Curlew (Curlew) *Numenius arquata**Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. Frequent in winter.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ladywalk	–	15	28	2	2	9	12	16	17	10	1	–
Upton Warren	–	24	24	10	–	16	83	85	98	60	24	9
Aqualate	–	28	36	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Barton	–	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	14	20
Belvide	2	1	15	4	1	2	–	–	1	–	–	–
Blithfield	1	1	–	1	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	–
Branston	6	–	5	–	–	–	8	3	6	14	–	–
Chasewater	1	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Croxall	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Doxey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	–
Kings Bromley	–	–	–	1	2	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Tittesworth	1	26	150	3	10	6	2	3	5	8	–	–

Warks Possible breeding pairs were located at Austrey, BAD Kineton, near Beausale, Gaydon, Maxstoke, Morton Bagot, Newbold-on-Stour, Oxhill, Pillerton Priors, Priors Hardwick, Shelfield, Tysoe and Wootton Wawen. Several regular areas were apparently untenanted. Away from Ladywalk, other parties in the Tame Valley consisted of 11 at Whitacre Heath on March 8th, up to nine at Kingsbury in early April and five at Dosthill on April 10th. Records of up to

three came from a further 12 sites in all months, including a party of 20 at Fenny Compton during severe cold on January 3rd.

Worcs Present in potential breeding habitat during the spring and summer at Bredons Hardwick, Broad Green, Broad Heath, Clows Top, Defford, Eckington (three pairs), Fosters Green, Lower Moor, near Monk Wood, Pensax, Rowney Green, near Birch Acre Wood, near Seven Acres Dingle, Strensham, Timberhonger and near Trench Wood. Singles at several other localities, with larger parties of 12 at Kinsham on March 13th, five over Drakes Broughton on September 9th and up to 24 at Churchill on November 7th.

Staffs No breeding information was received from the Moors, but at lower altitude a pair bred at Barton Gate and at least one other breeding pair was nearby in the Anslow area. Breeding was also suspected to the west of Gnosall, two pairs held territory in the Baldstones area and display was noted to the west of Belvide on May 18th. The roost at Longsdon Mill Pool held 87 on February 27th, 53 on March 2nd and nine on 9th. Elsewhere, up to four were reported at Apedale CP, Baldstones, Bateswood, Brookleys Lake, Croxall, Denstone, Haughton, Hill Ridware, Hixon, near Ingestre, Little Stoke, Lowerfleet Green, Rifle Range, Stanton Dale and Swallow Moss. The only count in double figures was 12, at Walton-on-Trent on October 28th.

W Mid Three flew over Norton Lane, Earlswood, on January 1st, with one in the same area on 5th. Singles were noted in Sandwell Valley on January 1st, February 22nd, July 24th, August 1st and November 25th. One flew over Sheepwash UP on February 24th, one was at Marsh Lane GP on March 13th, two flew over Park Lime Pits on April 30th and four were at Clayhanger on July 21st.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Uncommon passage migrant. rare in winter.

Average passage: April 14th (7) – October 4th (8)

A poor year.

Warks One at Ladywalk on September 13th and heard calling on 17th were the only records.

Worcs Two adults at Kinsham on May 1st and a juvenile at Bredons Hardwick on August 23rd.

Staffs No spring passage birds reported. Autumn passage included an immature at Blithfield from September 3rd-October 20th and a single bird at Belvide from September 20th-22nd.

Common Redshank (Redshank) *Tringa totanus*

Frequent passage migrant. Uncommon summer resident and winter visitor.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	–	–	2	1	1	3	1	–	2	–	–	–
Dosthill area	2	2	10	12	10	2	2	–	–	–	–	1
Bredons Hardwick	–	4	5	12	7	6	2	–	–	–	–	–
Kinsham	–	–	5	6	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Strensham	–	–	9	8	5	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Upton Warren	1	–	8	10	8	6	1	1	1	–	–	–

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Airewas	4	-	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	1	5	3	8	4	5	1	-	-	1	-	1
Belvide	-	1	17	12	8	5	1	1	-	1	3	-
Betley Mere	-	-	-	12	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	4	10	4	6	2	7	1	-	9	2
Branslon	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	2
Croxall	3	3	6	9	11	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dosthill	1	1	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Doxey	-	1	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	1	-	10	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Efford	-	-	-	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kings Bromley	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Titworth	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

Warks Up to five pairs on territory in the Dosthill/Middleton area during the spring did not breed this year, but apparently moved across the county boundary into more favourable habitat in Staffs. Probable breeding was recorded at Alvecote and Brandon (three pairs) and possible breeding at Ladywalk (two pairs), while a pair was again present at Charlecote in the spring. Singles were also seen at Coleshill and Coton in June. On spring passage, small numbers were reported widely in the Tame Valley south to Shustoke, with a peak away from Dosthill of eight at Coton on March 31st, where one was also present on January 2nd. One at Earlswood Lakes on June 9th and three at Baginton Lagoons on August 30th were the only other records.

Worcs Bred at Eckington. Singles were noted at Lower Moor on January 18th and February 23rd, Bittell on January 30th, Larford on March 8th and Westwood on March 16th. Pairs were then at Grimley and Ryall on March 29th, with one being seen on June 5th at the latter site, and at Wilden on April 8th, followed by four at Saxons Lode on April 13th. Bishampton Vale Pool then held one on April 17th, a pair on June 16th, one on July 15th and two on 17th. Finally, one flew over Defford on August 13th.

Staffs One young was raised at Belvide, three broods were raised at Doxey and three pairs were seen at Drayton Bassett on May 14th. Elsewhere, sightings of single birds, unless otherwise stated, came from the west of Aqualate on March 5th, Hill Ridware on March 9th, Catholme (four) on March 28th, Chase-water on April 1st and 3rd, Baswich on April 1st and Westport on July 16th.

W Mid Up to three birds were present during the breeding season in the Marsh Lane GP/Berkswell area, but were thought not to have bred successfully. Sandwell Valley had singles, unless otherwise stated, on March 5th, 16th (two), 23rd, 30th, 31st, April 17th, June 18th-19th and August 24th. Singles were also at Sheepwash UP on March 10th, 18th, 22nd and 31st; and in Dunstall Park on March 20th and August 26th.

Common Greenshank (Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia*

Frequent passage migrant. rare in winter.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	-	-
Dosthill area	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	-	-
Draycote	1	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	-
Ladywalk	-	-	-	1	4	1	-	-	-

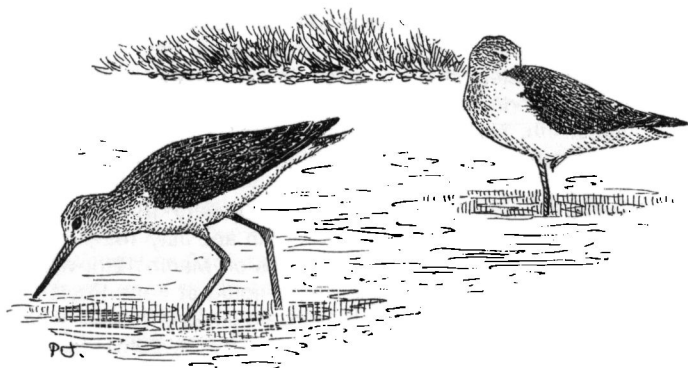
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bishampton Vale Pool	-	-	-	1	3	3	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Kinsham	-	4	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	-	7	5	-	-	-
Barton	-	-	-	1	3	3	-	-	-
Belvide	1	-	-	-	2	6	1	1	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	1	23	20	3	-	-
Branston	-	1	-	2	-	2	1	-	1
Croxall	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-
Doxey	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Elford	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	1	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-

Warks A poor year. There were early spring records at Draycote on April 9th and 12th and at Kingsbury on 16th. On return passage there were up to five at Baginton Lagoons from August 17th-30th, while others involved three at Alvecote on August 10th, and singles at Napton Hill Quarry on August 30th, Wormleighton Res on September 23rd and Chesterton on October 10th.

Worcs Spring records involved singles at Bittell on April 11th, Ryall on May 3rd and Grimley on 10th. Return passage brought singles to Lower Moor on August 18th, 25th and September 5th; Wilden on August 21st and 30th, with two there on September 12th; Bittell on August 24th and 30th; and Strensham from August 28th-30th and on September 4th and 23rd.

Staffs One was at Clay Mills on January 1st. In addition to those tabulated, autumn sightings came from Eccleshall on August 24th, Dosthill on September 6th and Rickerscote on September 22th. A late or wintering bird spent its time visiting the gravel pits along the Trent Valley during November and December.

W Mid Singles were at Marsh Lane GP on April 17th, May 16th, 18th, July 8th and August 25th, with two on 29th. One was at Sheepwash UP on May 18th, with another on August 12th. Two were present in Sandwell Valley on August 10th and again from August 16th-30th, with four on 20th; one then remained until September 4th and a further bird was seen on 23rd.



Common Greenshanks (Phil Jones)

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus**Frequent passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	–	1	2	6	–	1	13	27	4	1	–	–
Dosthill/Kingsbury	4	2	2	3	–	1	8	5	8	2	2	1
Wormleighton Res.	1	1	–	1	–	–	1	4	5	4	5	6
Grimley	–	–	–	–	–	4	5	4	1	3	–	1
Strensham	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	5	3	–	–	–
Upton Warren	–	–	2	2	1	6	13	18	10	3	2	–
Alrewas	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Barton	–	2	1	1	–	2	1	–	2	2	2	1
Belvide	–	–	1	–	1	1	–	3	1	2	–	–
Blithfield	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	6	2	2	2	1
Bransdon	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	1	4	–	2	–
Croxall	1	1	1	1	–	1	3	10	2	–	–	1
Dosthill	2	1	1	1	–	–	2	2	–	–	–	–
Drayton Bassett	1	2	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Efford	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	7	–	–	–	–
Kings Bromley	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	4	2	–
Tittesworth	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–
Marsh Lane GP	–	–	–	2	–	2	1	1	1	3	1	–

Warks In addition to those tabulated, there were eight at Baginton Lagoons on August 17th, a peak of four at Ladywalk on 25th and up to three at Alvecote, Blyth Hall, Chesterton, Draycote, Farnborough, Lighthorne Quarry, Napton Hill Quarry, Packington, Priors Marston and The Somers.

Worcs Singles were reported on a small pool at Warndon on January 8th; and at Aston Mill on June 15th; Bishampton Vale Pool on July 20th, 26th and August 25th and 31st; and Kinsham on August 5th, with three there on September 4th. Two were at Pirton on August 5th, two at Naunton Beauchamp on August 8th and one at Bittell on August 23rd. This species does not normally favour Bredons Hardwick, so five there on August 25th was unusual and these were followed by another bird there on October 30th. Westwood held singles on September 30th, October 4th and 26th, then two on November 10th, one of which remained to 15th. Singles were also at Ryall on October 4th, 25th and November 2nd; and Droitwich STW on October 23rd.

Staffs Other sightings, all of single birds, came from Gailey on February 3rd and 8th, wasteland at Haughton on February 21st and Chasewater, where one flew north on May 3rd. In autumn there were singles at Dunston on August 4th, Norton Bridge on October 2nd, Westport on October 18th, Walton-on-Trent on October 28th and near Kinvaston Hall Park on November 16th.

W Mid Singles were in Goscote Valley on January 18th and August 13th. Two were at Stubbers Green on March 5th and July 14th, with one on October 27th. Three visited Meriden Quarries on March 12th, with two present on 22nd. In April, further singles were noted at Fens Pools LNR on 5th and Sheepwash UP on 7th, while two were flushed from Park Lime Pits on 18th and three were at Somers Road Quarry on 20th. One was in Sandwell Valley from April 21st–24th, with two there on September 3rd; while singles were at Dunstall Park Lake on July 27th, August 17th and October 3rd and 18th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola**Uncommon passage migrant. Has over-wintered.**Average passage: May 1st (8) – September 25th (8)*

Just 13 was well below the average of 21 per annum.

Warks A very poor year, with just singles at Dosthill on May 31st-June 1st, Brandon from July 23rd-25th, Dosthill again on 26th and Wormleighton Res on September 5th.

Worcs Singles at Upton Warren from April 25th-26th and on June 16th. One at Bishampton Vale Pool on August 5th.

Staffs The only spring sighting was of a single bird at Westport on April 29th. Return passage commenced with a single bird at Belvide on June 2nd, followed by singles there on August 5th and 25th. Present at Blithfield from August 6th-29th, with two birds seen on August 6th and 13th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos**Fairly common passage migrant. Scarce summer resident and winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Colton	-	-	-	3	-	-	4	8	2	-	-	-
Dosthill/Kingsbury	-	-	-	3	2	-	3	12	1	-	-	-
Draycote	-	1	-	19	7	1	12	8	8	-	-	-
Bishampton Vale P	-	-	-	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bittell	-	-	-	12	6	1	3	1	-	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	-	-	-	11	3	1	3	9	5	-	-	-
Kinsham	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Lower Moor	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
Strensham	-	-	-	1	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	12	5	1	5	11	9	1	-	-
Westwood	-	-	-	2	3	-	9	7	1	-	-	-
Aqualate	-	-	-	2	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	4	2	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	-	9	2	-	9	18	18	2	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	5	2	-	17	18	20	1	-	-
Branston	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	1	-	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	-	2	2	0	2	3	1	0	-	-
Croxall	-	-	-	2	3	2	3	7	5	-	-	-
Doxey	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elford	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kings Bromley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	12	10	8	8	2	1	1	1	-
Westport	-	-	-	6	3	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	1	1	3	1	-

Warks A fairly poor year. The first spring migrants appeared at both Brandon and Draycote on April 6th. Then, away from the tabulated sites, there were maxima of four at Wormleighton Res from April 23rd-25th, six at Earlswood Lakes on May 15th, five at Baginton Lagoons on August 20th, five at Compton Verney on 23rd and four at Brandon on 24th. At Ladywalk, there was a maximum of six on an unspecified date, while up to three were also seen on passage at Alvecote, Napton Hill Quarry, Napton Res, Packington, Salford Priors GP and Shustoke. The only winter records involved two singles, one on February 8th, which was seen on the Grand Union Canal at Chessetts Wood and around a pool near the Punch Bowl public house near Lapworth, and the other on February 19th at Draycote.

- Worcs** Singles were at Larford on May 4th and Ryall on May 17th. Three were noted at Grimley on July 13th, followed by two there from August 3rd-5th, three on 31st and two on September 7th. At Pirton there were two from August 2nd-5th and three on 24th; while Wilden had four on August 9th, three of which stayed to 10th, and a single on 30th. One at Norton Pool from August 15th-17th, one at Saxons Lode and two at Throckmorton on August 23rd, and one on the R. Severn at Arley on August 30th.
- Staffs** For the second consecutive year, breeding was not reported and information would be welcome. Away from the tabulated sites, spring passage birds, singles unless otherwise stated, were noted at Trentham Gardens (two) on April 19th; Gailey (two) on May 17th; and R. Dove at Brancote on May 28th. Likewise, return passage birds were at Dosthill on July 12th, 26th (three) and August 27th (four); Aston-by-Stone on September 5th, regrettably killed by a cat; Millmeece on September 6th; and Alrewas (three) on September 20th.
- W Mid** At Sheepwash UP, spring passage comprised one or two birds from April 5th until early May. Elsewhere, spring passage birds, singles unless otherwise stated, were at Fens Pools LNR between April 12th-26th, with four on the latter date, and a further singleton on May 16th; Goscote Valley on April 24th; along the Daw End Branch Canal, Aldridge, on 26th and May 2nd (two); at Clayhanger on 26th; and at Dunstall Park Lake on May 6th. Autumn passage was noted at Sheepwash UP from June 23rd-September 25th, mainly singles but four on August 21st and September 5th. One was at Stubbers Green on July 14th, whilst Dunstall Park had three on August 2nd, two on 21st and one on September 2nd.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Uncommon passage migrant. rare in winter.

Average passage: April 20th (8) – September 21st (8)

- Warks** A good year at Draycote commenced with spring records of two on May 1st, one on 2nd, six on 4th and one from 13th-15th. Return passage then brought one on July 15th-16th; two on 17th; singles again on 28th and August 2nd, 20th, 23rd-27th and 29th; two on August 30th; five on September 11th; and finally one on September 28th. Singles at Dosthill on July 7th and 13th-14th were the only ones from elsewhere.
- Worcs** Singles at Bredons Hardwick from May 3rd-8th, Kinsham on May 3rd and Upton Warren on May 15th.
- Staffs** First of the spring passage birds was one at Belvide on March 9th, which was followed by singles on April 29th-30th, May 10th and 18th-19th. Other spring sightings, again of single birds, came from Tittesworth on March 17th and Blithfield on May 16th. Autumn movement began with one at Blithfield on August 6th, followed by three there on 14th with one remaining until the 19th. One was at Barton GP on August 25th, while Belvide had three on August 23rd, just one the next day, then five on 25th and finally two on September 10th.
- Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*
Scarce autumn and early winter visitor, usually storm-driven. Very rare at other times of year.
- Staffs** A first-winter bird was at Belvide on September 20th GJM, SN.

W Mid A moulting adult flew into Sheepwash UP at 09.35 on August 25th and remained all day ICW *et al.*

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Rare autumn and winter vagrant (3/10).

Warks Two adults appeared briefly at Draycote on May 11th RED *et al* during a day of strong south-westerly winds and heavy showers. These were the first in the county since 1985.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Scarce passage migrant. rare in winter.

Warks There were two remarkable records this year, consisting of parties of five at both Draycote on August 25th REH and flying north over Middleton ahead of a storm on 31st ARD. The first group were all dark birds, while the latter consisted of two pale-phase adults and three juveniles.

Staffs Two adults, one pale the other dark phase, landed briefly on the water at Belvide before flying off eastwards on September 19th SN.

W Mid An immature flew through Sheepwash UP in a north-easterly direction at 08.15 on August 25th ICW, providing a red letter day for both the observer and the locality.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Rare vagrant in autumn and very rare in spring (4/10)

The first in the Region since 1994.

Staffs One flew around Belvide for 35 minutes on September 3rd SN.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon, but increasing, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks At least one or two adults regularly joined the Draycote gull roost from January 1st-March 11th JFCJ *et al*, with one assuming summer plumage towards the end of its stay. In addition there were three adults there on January 30th JFCJ and a first-winter on several dates from February 2nd-March 1st SMH, JFCJ *et al*. After a juvenile on August 12th JFCJ, the only later documented record was of an adult on December 24th PDH. In the Tame Valley, there was a second-summer at Dosthill on March 31st PDH, an adult in the Coton gull roost on November 9th ARD and a first-winter in the Dosthill gull roost on December 30th ARD.

Worcs A first-winter bird bearing a BTO ring at Throckmorton on January 26th SMW and an adult at Westwood on February 4th TMH *et al* were the only records for the early part of year. Later, however, Westwood also had a first-winter on eight evenings from November 26th-December 21st GDL SMW *et al*. At Upton Warren, a second-summer bird on July 2nd REH MJI GJM *et al* was followed by a juvenile on August 8th GJM *et al* and then a juvenile moulting into first-summer plumage from August 21st-31st GG *et al*.

Staffs At Chasewater, first-winter birds were seen on January 4th several observers and 11th MY, ICW, with an adult also present from January 4th-5th several observers. The only records from Blithfield were of single adults on February

9th *ESC*, *WJL*, *PDH* and October 1st *ESC*, the latter bird bearing a red ring on its left leg inscribed H131. Elsewhere, a first-winter bird was at Rudyard on November 7th *MB* and an adult at Westport on December 20th *WJL*, *PF*.

W Mid A first-summer bird put in a brief appearance at Marsh Lane GP on May 4th *PFA* before leaving to the south with a small party of Black-headed Gulls.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*

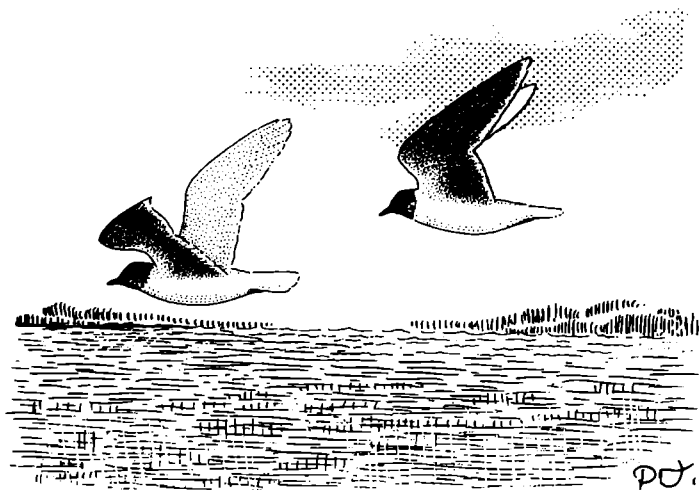
Very rare vagrant (1/10).

The third regional and second county records in what was another good year for this Nearctic gull.

W Mid An adult in winter plumage was found at Bartley Reservoir on the afternoon of October 12th *SR*, *ICW*, *SMW*, *MY*. An excellent find on a local patch and quite possibly the bird which had visited Upton Warren in autumn 1996.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.



Little Gulls (Phil Jones)

Warks A poor year. At Draycote there were two adults and a first-summer on April 9th, an adult on 25th and two on 26th, with an adult and first-summer on May 3rd and a final bird on 14th. In the Tame Valley, there were four adults at Dosthill on April 21st and a first-summer on the unusual date of June 28th. Autumn records were confined to single juveniles at Brandon on August 12th, Draycote on eight dates from August 16th-September 6th (involving perhaps just two or three individuals) and Dosthill on September 15th.

Worcs No spring records and it is interesting that for the third successive year this species was less frequent in the county than Mediterranean Gull. How times

change. At Bredons Hardwick, a juvenile on September 8th was followed by an adult on November 30th, while at Upton Warren a juvenile on September 28th was followed by a first-winter on November 21st. The only other record was of an adult at Westwood on December 22nd.

Staffs The only winter record concerned two at Chasewater on February 2nd. A small spring passage followed, with three first-summer birds at Barton GP on March 22nd-23rd; five at Blithfield on March 22nd, two adults the next day and then one from 26th until April 7th; and finally an adult at Belvide on April 26th. In autumn, single juveniles were at Chasewater on August 9th and Belvide on September 8th, 13th and 20th.

W Mid Juveniles were noted at Bartley on September 24th and Edgbaston Reservoir on 25th.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

Rare autumn vagrant (5/10).

Only the twelfth and thirteenth regional records, but the fourth consecutive year in which this attractive gull has appeared. The dates of both correlate with others along the East Coast and with typical weather patterns.

Worcs Single juveniles at Wilden on September 20th *RJW SMW* and Trimpley on October 11th *SM* constitute the third and fourth records for Worcestershire.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Frequent breeding bird in Staffs and north Warks.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bittell	285	400	250	5	8	14	170	40	200	127	1000	336
Throckmorton	1600	—	200	—	—	—	35	300	10	120	200	100
Upton Warren	266	58	45	1	1	25	800	1000	600	1500	30	150
Westwood	2750	3900	2400	—	—	2	—	300	280	750	4000	4400
Chasewater	10000	6000	4500	49	4	25	1000	2000	3500	9000	9000	12000

Warks About 60 pairs bred in the Dosthill gully, with about 50 flying juveniles and eight still unfledged young counted on July 11th. There were no accurate estimates of the huge Draycote roost, but 6000 were in the Coton roost on January 4th and 1000 at Dosthill on March 15th. Other counts included 150 at Ladywalk on June 28th following flooding, 500 at Brandon on August 28th and a maximum of 1200 on fields at Fenny Compton on March 17th.

Worcs Away from the tabulated sites, maxima were 650 at Lower Moor on February 15th, 82 at Smite on February 23rd, 250 at Bredons Hardwick on March 3rd, 80 at Kinsham on August 10th, 160 at Wilden on August 23rd and 55 at Larford on December 27th.

Staffs The only breeding record received was of 16 adults and three juveniles, plus four nests, at Aqualate on June 19th. Few roost counts were received apart from 3000 at Dosthill Tip on January 17th, 3500 at Belvide on February 16th and 4000 there on October 26th. Other counts included 600 at Aqualate on January 12th, with 500 there on October 19th; 1000 at Dosthill North Pit on

January 18th; 800-900 on floodwater at Rickerscote from July 6th-8th; and 1000 at Blithfield on September 17th.

W Mid Largest counts were 12000 at Bartley on January 5th and 1000 in Sandwell Valley on 13th, with 500 there on August 9th. Other significant counts included a winter peak of 300 at Fens Pools LNR, in excess of 1000 at Dunstall Park in August, 175 at Marsh Lane GP on September 13th and 196 at Stubbers Green on October 28th.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Very rare vagrant (4/10).

The eighth regional record.

Worcs An adult at Bredons Hardwick from April 5th-12th *GHP et al* was the fourth county record and the first since November 1989. Unlike the last two, this bird remained long enough to be appreciated by many local birders.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in the east and south of Warks.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bitell	4	1	—	6	—	—	1	—	—	4	3	3
Bredons Hardwick	—	65	120	53	—	—	—	—	—	100	—	—
Throckmorton	40	12	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	4	4
Upton Warren	3	2	—	—	1	1	3	1	4	3	2	—
Westwood	14	9	2	—	—	—	—	1	4	4	4	11
Chasewater	31	15	5	2	0	2	0	0	4	2	4	11
Westport	20	15	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	5

Warks The only counts from the huge Draycote roost were 3500 on January 1st and 5000 on 31st, while 160 in the Cotton roost on January 4th was the largest count in the north. Feeding flock maxima in the south of the county included 320 at Fenny Compton on January 28th and up to 150 at Radway in March. Later in the year there were counts of 350 flying over Wormleighton Res on November 29th and 250 at Fenny Compton from December 24th-31st, with 200 on pasture by Napton Res on 28th. Birds were absent from the county between May 23rd-July 11th, apart from an adult at Draycote on June 24th.

Worcs Rather a poor year. Maxima of 24 at Castlemorton Common on March 8th, 30 at Aston Mill on March 30th, 22 at Beckford also on March 30th and 20 at Pershore on October 16th were very disappointing totals compared to previous years. Small numbers were also at Larford, Lower Moor, Pirton and Wildmoor Tip.

Staffs 12 were at Tittesworth on January 12th, with 21 there on December 21st. Otherwise recorded at just four other sites.

W Mid A good count for the county of 75 at Bartley on January 5th, with 14 there on October 16th. Otherwise, 34 were at Meriden on March 16th and 28th, with less than 10 reported from Clayhanger, Dunstall Park/ Valley Park, Sandwell Valley (where noted on 15 dates), Sheepwash UP and Stubbers Green.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species in Worcs and West Mids since 1986.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bittell	71	6	1	5	5	2	4	30	60	2	150	18
Throckmorton	1400	—	350	100	500	430	350	650	450	500	1850	2000
Upton Warren	6	2	2	2	1	8	20	80	3	3	9	20
Westwood	800	900	196	—	—	—	—	25	20	500	4200	3600
Chasewater	1200	1200	1050	200	250	270	1500	2000	2500	3000	3000	1000

Warks The only count from the Draycote roost was of 2000 on February 21st. Other large flocks included 450 thermalling south-west over Stoneton on July 21st and maxima on roost flightlines over Fenny Compton of 970 (passing during 15 minutes) on September 18th and 900 on December 12th.

Worcs At least one pair bred on the gravel islands at Bredons Hardwick. Records of roof nesting birds in Worcester and any other towns during 1998 would be appreciated. Outside the breeding season, there were peaks of 850 at Lower Moor on February 15th, 170 at Smite on February 23rd, 400 at Bredons Hardwick on November 30th, 110 at Tibberton also on November 30th and 240 at The Standbatches on December 7th. One was seen to catch a vole from the surface of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal between Oddingley and Dunhampstead on June 15th *RRH*.

Staffs During July, birds had to gather at Bleak House opencast site and wait for boating activities to reduce before they could fly into Chasewater to roost. Heavy weekend boating disturbance during November and December also resulted in the roost counts having to be roughly estimated. The only other roost counts came from Blithfield, with 500 on February 16th and 1000 on September 17th, and Belvide, with 1900 on October 26th. Few other records were received, except for 2000 at Little Wyrley on October 7th.

W Mid Bred in the Birmingham City Centre/Hockley area, whilst a small group at the Land Rover Sports Ground, Solihull, in early June were thought to be possibly breeding on adjacent roof tops. A pair also frequented Sandwell Valley from April through to June. Winter maxima were 400 at Bartley on February 2nd and 125 at Fens Pools LNR on 15th (the latter a site record). Later in the year, birds were noted roosting in winter cereals at Park Lime Pits, with 130 counted in October and 100 in December. Other maxima were 28 in November at Dunstall Park Lake and 21 at Bowmans Harbour on November 10th, with the same number in Sandwell Valley on 17th. Up to 20 were regularly noted during the year at Marsh Lane GP, where they heavily plundered the eggs and young of Northern Lapwings.

'Intermediate' Lesser Black-backed Gull L. f. intermedius

Uncommon (?) passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Six adults of this race were identified amongst 620 *L. f. graellsii* on fields at Fenny Compton on September 21st.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common winter visitor. Uncommon in summer, though nested in Worcs in 1969 and 1993.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Throckmorton	250	80	12	15	4	8	4	4	4	10	8	200
Westwood	130	37	6	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	25	130
Chasewater	1500	400	150	1	2	1	0	0	1	150	500	2000

Warks Few records received. The best counts were of 350 roosting at Coton on January 4th and 240 passing over Fenny Compton on December 31st, the latter part of the post-roost flightline from Draycote. The over-summering pair from 1996 at Earlswood Lakes were back again for at least the period February-April, while a first-summer bird flew over Fenny Compton on the unusual date of June 20th.

Worcs Typically scarce away from the two tabulated sites, with maxima of 12 noted at Bittell on January 12th, Bredon Hill on April 1st and Bredons Hardwick on April 5th.

Staffs Very few reports received. The only summer record was an adult at Belvide on June 8th.

W Mid The highest count received was 50 at Sheepwash UP on January 1st, with smaller numbers here during the remainder of the winter period. One or two were also reported from Sandwell Valley throughout the year, 30 flew west over Park Lime Pits on February 3rd and birds were noted in Sutton Park in March and April. The maximum at Dunstall Park was 10 in February, while at Bowmans Harbour it was 18 on December 19th.

Yellow-legged Gull *L. a. cachinnans/michahellis*

Uncommon, though increasing, late summer, autumn and winter visitor.

The taxonomy of these races and whether they should be regarded as a separate species, or as races of either Herring or Lesser Black-backed Gull, remains to be conclusively determined. Pending clarification, the BOU has decided that neither should be included on *The British List* as a full species.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	4	4	2	7
Bredons Hardwick	1	1	1	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	2	—
Throckmorton	6	1	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	2	—	5
Westwood	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	7	11

Warks Most of the Draycote birds were adults apart from a third-winter on February 25th, a second-winter on March 2nd (the last in the late winter period) and a first-winter on October 13th *many obs.* No records came from the Tame Valley this year and the only other ones were from farmland in the south of the county in September, with a first-winter at Chesterton on 15th *JJB*, and adults at Wormleighton Res on 16th *JJB* and Meon Hill on 28th *ARD*. In each case they were associating with flocks of Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Worcs Single adults were at Wildmoor Tip on January 3rd *TMH*, 7th *REH*, 21st *TMH* and November 29th *TMH*; and at Bredons Hardwick on February 9th *SJH*,

Beckford on March 30th *GHP* and Bittell on November 9th *RJW*. An adult or fourth-winter bird at Westwood from December 7th-10th showed several characteristics which suggested the race *cachinnans* *SMW*.

Of particular note were the dark iris and very long 'broom-handle' bill. The head shape differed from typical *michahellis*, being more oval, while the legs were dull yellow. Unfortunately, the exact wing-tip pattern could not be discerned on the few occasions it was seen to fly.

- Staffs** At Blithfield there was a fourth-winter on January 18th, a second-summer on March 15th, a first-summer on September 6th and single adults on November 9th, 16th, December 7th and 27th *all sightings by WJL*. Elsewhere, single adults were at Branston GP on November 16th *MJI* and Belvide on 23rd *SAR*.
- W Mid** All records were of single adults, at Edgbaston Reservoir on January 1st *TCH*; Bartley on October 12th *MY*, 13th, 16th *REH* and 23th *AN*; and Fens Pools LNR on December 25th *SLH*, *AP*.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

Scarce winter visitor.

- Warks** All records came from the Draycote roost, where single adults were seen on at least 18 nights during January 1st-March 1st *REH*, *SMH*, *JFCJ*, *DJS et al*. Probably only one bird was involved in these records, although two adults were seen on February 13th *JFCJ*. There were also single first-winters on January 2nd, 6th, 19th and on February 2nd and 15th *JJB*, *GIG*, *PDH*, *JFCJ et al*, with possibly the same bird now in first-summer plumage from March 10th-12th *JFCJ*. At the end of the year, an adult was seen on December 13th-14th, 24th and 29th *JJB*, *PDH et al*.
- Staffs** Blithfield held single first-winters on January 4th *WJL*, 10th *GRH*, *JVH*, 18th *WJL*; February 7th *ESC*; and December 29th and 31st *ESC*; while a third-winter was also present on January 10th *ESC*, *RP*. At Chasewater, single first-winter birds were noted on January 8th *PDH*; February 9th *DJA*, 15th *ESC*, *DK*, *AK* and 23rd, with possibly a second bird on the latter date *DJA*. Single second-winter birds were present on February 8th *MY*, *ICW* and 23rd *DJA*; a third or fourth-winter individual on February 9th *DJA*; and single adults on February 7th *PDH* and 23rd *DJA*. A first-winter bird at Cannock Tip on February 15th was followed by two first-winters the next day *PDH*.
- W Mid** A third-winter was at Bartley on January 6th *SR*.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce winter visitor.

A better year after last year's dismal showing.

- Warks** A better year in the Draycote roost, with an adult on January 4th *JFCJ*, a first-winter on February 1st *JFCJ*, a second-winter on 8th *GRH*, *JVH*, *REH*, *JFCJ*, *DJS et al* and a first-winter on December 20th *REH*, *DJS*. In addition, a first-winter was on Dosthill Tip also on February 1st *SMH*.
- Worcs** A first-winter roosted overnight after being found at Westwood on the evening of January 19th *RAH* *SMW*.
- Staffs** Blithfield produced single first-winter birds on January 10th *ESC*, 12th *WJL*, 19th, February 5th *ESC* and 9th *several observers*; and single first-summer birds on March 9th *several observers*, 30th *ESC* and 31st *WJL*. Chasewater had single first-winters on January 5th *MY*, *ESC*, 18th *MJI*, February 7th *PDH*,

JVHo, 8th *ICW*, 15th *MY*, *ICW*, *ESC* and 16th *PDH*; while nearby Cannock Tip produced single first-winter birds on February 14th *DK*, *AK* and 15th *SAR*. Finally, one was at Swynnerton landfill on February 11th *DK*, *AK*.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Fairly common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Throckmorton	12	4	–	1	–	2	–	–	1	–	–	7
Westwood	12	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	4
Chasewater	300	50	18	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	50	400

Warks The best roost counts early in the year were 79 at Draycote on January 1st and 80 on 19th, with 120 at Coton on 4th. Later in the year, 300 were estimated at Draycote on December 31st. The best count away from these two areas was just ten, which flew east over Fenny Compton also on December 31st.

Worcs At least two at Lower Moor and one at Wildmoor Tip on January 1st. A count of 12 at Bittell on January 12th was good for the locality, but an adult on February 18th was the only report received from Bredons Hardwick. Two were at Holt on March 26th.

Staffs 300 gathered at Kingswood prior to roosting at Chasewater on January 5th. Elsewhere, 35 were at Dosthill on January 25th and 12 on March 8th, and 24 were at Blithfield on December 14th. Small numbers were also seen during the winter months at Belvide, Little Wyrley and Aqualate.

W Mid A scarce species in the county – is it overlooked? One in Sandwell Valley on January 16th and single adults at Sheepwash UP on December 9th, 10th, 13th, 28th and 31st were the only records.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Uncommon passage migrant and storm-driven winter visitor.

Warks Another very poor year, with most from Draycote. Records started off well, with at least 40, of which a quarter were first-winters, present there during the afternoon of February 20th. These gradually trickled away to the east during the course of the day, leaving just six by roosting time *GIG*. The only other spring records were of singles at Draycote on March 4th and Dosthill on 6th. Later in the year, birds were again noted at Draycote on August 7th, 22nd (two) and 31st, with a single first-winter there on November 22nd. A first-winter was also at Dosthill on December 27th.

Worcs A fairly typical spread of records, with a small influx at the end of February the main feature. This involved an adult at Larford on February 18th; an adult and a first-winter at Bredons Hardwick on 19th, followed by an adult on 26th; two first-winters, which were picked up in Droitwich on 26th and 27th respectively and handed to the RSPCA; and lastly an adult winter at Westwood on 26th, with two on 28th. Later reports were of an adult at Bittell on April 5th; a first-summer at Bredons Hardwick on the unusual date of August 5th; a juvenile flying north at Larford on October 9th; one at Upton Warren on October 20th; a first-winter at Diglis on November 29th; and single adults at Westwood on November 29th and December 25th.

Staffs All records refer to adults unless otherwise stated. Singles were at Blithfield on February 2nd and 26th; Drayton Bassett (no age given) on March 1st; and Westport on March 15th. These were followed by three at Chasewater on March 22nd; three at Westport on March 24th; singles at Westport again on April 6th and 18th; and four at Blithfield on 26th. In autumn, an oiled first-winter flew east over Cannock Chase on November 9th and another first-winter flew low south over Barton GP following the R. Trent.

W Mid A slightly oiled bird was at Sandwell Valley on January 13th, with an adult present there on November 30th. Two were picked up exhausted in late February, at Great Barr and Turves Green respectively, and taken to Vale Animal Hospital, where one subsequently died.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant

Average passage: April 5th (8) – September 30th (8)

Warks A good-sized party of 11 was at Draycote on May 3rd, with a single there on 4th-5th. On return passage there were again singles at this site, on August 6th-7th and 25th.

Worcs An adult at Bittell on April 27th was the only record for the year.

Staffs One at Chasewater on April 10th was the sole spring record. On return passage, two adults flew south at Westport on July 3rd, three were at Chasewater on September 25th, one flew west at Aqualate on September 26th and, finally, one was at Chasewater on October 1st.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common passage migrant and frequent summer resident, breeding mainly in the Tame and Trent Valleys.

Average: April 12th (13) – October 6th (13)

First noted on cue at Branston on April 12th, with the main arrival beginning about a week later and peaking in May. Most departed during August, leaving only small numbers in September, with the last on 25th at Sheepwash UP.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Bittell	5	5	2	9	16	3	–
Bredons Hardwick	1	4	2	1	1	–	–
Upton Warren	3	5	7	9	18	4	–
Westwood	1	2	–	3	5	4	–
Belvide	2	19	2	6	25	7	–
Blithfield	4	6	12	14	12	3	–
Chasewater	2	15	33	21	13	1	–
Edgbaston Reservoir	–	6	–	14	–	–	–
Marsh Lane GP	–	3	2	4	8	–	–
Sandwell Valley	6	7	2	4	4	–	–
Sheepwash UP	–	3	1	2	2	–	–

Warks Lower numbers were apparent this year at the nesting colonies at Dosthill (up to eight pairs noted sitting, but only three pairs were thought to have raised one young each) and Kingsbury WP (up to 30 birds in June, but no breeding details forwarded). Better success was had at Draycote, where an exposed island held up to seven breeding pairs and at least 11 young fledged. A pair also nested at Brandon again and another pair prospected during the summer

at Packington. Small parties were seen during the summer months at many northern waters, but in reduced numbers eg. a maximum at Ladywalk of six together, while further south there were regular sightings of up to 12 at Earlswood Lakes and up to five at Napton Res, Wormleighton Res and along the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton. Unusual records involved one fishing in a small field pond at Farnborough on July 23rd and six resting with gulls and sheep in a meadow at Stoneton on 27th, on which day another was seen at Walton Hall. Passage numbers were generally low and at Draycote the largest count was only 30 on August 3rd.

Worcs A pair bred on a raft at Upton Warren and two young fledged. Two were over Throckmorton on June 14th, one at Grimley on June 29th, with two there on August 5th, and one at Kinsham on July 10th.

Staffs No breeding records were received, though small numbers were present at most regular sites throughout the summer. Maximum counts elsewhere were six, at Barton GP on May 25th and at Branston GP on April 29th; four, at Croxall GP on May 30th and July 7th; and up to three at seven other sites.

W Mid A pair bred at Marsh Lane GP, but unfortunately the first clutch was predated and the second attempt resulted in the young being taken by unknown predators. Display was also noted at Fens Pools LNR and Sheepwash UP. Bradnock's Marsh and Stubbers Green both had two birds on May 11th, while three flying over Harborne NR on 15th constituted the first record for the locality. Two at Bartley on June 25th were followed by five there on 30th, Clayhanger had singles on June 26th and July 21st and 20 dropped down onto a raft at Fens Pools LNR on August 20th following heavy rain. One was seen in Sandwell Valley on August 19th wearing a blue ring on its left leg and BTO ring on its right leg.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Frequent passage migrant in variable numbers.

Average passage: April 10th (8) – October 10th (8)

A very poor year, though a light spring passage in the last week of April and a return movement at the end of August were discernible.

Warks Spring passage consisted of six at Dosthill on April 21st and 19 there on 25th; one at Earlswood Lakes on 24th; and seven at Draycote on 26th, with two there on 29th. On return passage, single adults at Draycote on July 13th-14th and 28th were followed by a juvenile there on August 29th-30th, three adults on September 5th and two on 7th. Elsewhere, two adults at Dosthill on September 8th was the only report.

Worcs In spring, singles were seen at Upton Warren on April 18th and May 5th; one was at Bittell on April 25th; two at Bredons Hardwick on 25th also, with one the next day; and seven at Westwood on 26th followed by one there on May 5th and two on 11th. On return passage, one at Bredons Hardwick on August 28th heralded an unusual influx of 20 on 29th, followed by one on 31st. An adult, presumably one of the birds seen on 29th, was found dead on September 1st. The state of the corpse suggested it had died several days previously. A juvenile was at Kinsham on August 30th, while Westwood had a single from September 3rd-4th and a juvenile on October 9th.

- Staffs** An exceptionally poor year. Spring movement was confined to one at Westport and four at Chasewater on April 26th; one at Blithfield on May 3rd, with two there on 7th; and singles at Trentham Lakes on May 17th and Belvide on 20th. Autumn passage was equally meagre. Singles were at Westport on August 2nd and Blithfield on August 23rd; while Belvide had three on August 30th, two on September 4th, three the next day and one on October 5th. One was also at Blithfield on September 6th.
- W Mid** Four were at Bartley on April 25th; and a very creditable 50 or so birds on Swan Pool, Sandwell Valley, on the same date were followed by singles there on 26th and 28th. The sole autumn record was of an adult in Sandwell Valley from September 3rd-5th.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Scarce or uncommon passage migrant.

Average passage: May 4th (8) – August 30th (7)

Both passages were well below average.

- Warks** A bird at Shustoke on April 26th was apparently the first ever there. Further singletons were seen at Brandon on July 8th and at Draycote on August 5th and 16th.
- Worcs** Singles briefly at Upton Warren on April 27th and July 12th were the first in the county since 1994.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Frequent passage migrant in variable numbers.

Average passage: April 22nd (8) – October 20th (8)

A strong passage was evident in early May, particularly in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, with return movement peaking around August 27th.

- Warks** Seven at Dosthill on May 2nd heralded an exceptional influx on 3rd, when there were 230 at Draycote, together with maxima of 24 at Dosthill, nine at Coton, eight at Shustoke and one at Earlswood. One or two appeared at Draycote on ten further dates up to June 5th, with nine there on May 15th, when two also appeared at Earlswood. Up to 16 at Dosthill on May 31st was the only other spring record of note. A bird at Shustoke on July 5th then preceded a good autumn. Again most birds were at Draycote, where up to five were seen on at least 24 dates during August 7th-September 20th, with the larger counts being up to 46 on August 27th and 12 on September 11th. The only records for the Tame Valley came from Shustoke, where there was one on August 9th, two from 27th-September 5th and one on 12th; and Middleton, which had three on the latter date.
- Worcs** Noted in spring at Upton Warren, where one on April 25th, eight on May 3rd and further singles on 5th, 21st and 25th; Bredons Hardwick, where singles on April 26th and May 16th were followed by three on 29th and two on June 1st; and Westwood, where one on May 5th. Return passage began with one at Bredons Hardwick from July 2nd-3rd followed there by a juvenile on August 26th, six on 27th, two on 28th and four, including an adult, on 29th. Elsewhere, a juvenile was at Kinsham on August 25th; six at Bittell on September 18th; five at Westwood also on September 18th, with two on 20th; and two at Pirton on September 22nd.

Staffs Spring passage began with one at Belvide on April 25th. Early May then brought an influx, with 38 at Belvide on 2nd followed the next day by 25 there, 55 at Blithfield, six at Tittesworth and five at Chasewater. Movement quickly subsided and only two were recorded on May 4th, one at Blithfield and the other at Tittesworth. Further singles were then at Belvide on May 16th and 28th, with two at Barton GP on 17th. Two were also at Blithfield on May 24th, with three there on 31st and one from June 13th-29th. Autumn passage began with 40 at Blithfield on August 22nd followed by 52 there on 27th, on which day 15 were also at Belvide. One then remained at Belvide from September 13th-17th, eight were at Blithfield on September 20th and the last record was one at Belvide on September 28th.

W Mid One at Fens Pools on August 7th and a juvenile at Bartley on 27th.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Very common resident in urban areas.

Virtually no information was received.

W Mid Regular flocks around the St John Street car park in Wolverhampton included 70 in January and 86 in June.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Common resident.

Warks Ten pairs bred in 1km² of park and farmland at Ladbroke. The largest flocks consisted of 95 at Priors Marston on January 5th, 100 at Fenny Compton on 14th and 75 at Kineton on 19th. Later in the year, there were maxima of 50, at both Ilmington Downs on November 2nd and Chapel Ascote on 10th, 75 at Fenny Compton on December 24th and 70 at Packington on 29th.

Worcs The only significant breeding season record concerned 20 pairs at Midsummer Hill. Several small flocks were reported, the largest being 126 at Strensham on March 30th, 25 at Hill Furze on April 19th, 30 at Castlemorton Common on October 19th, 30 at Nutnell Pool on December 13th and 50 at Stanford Bridge on December 31st.

Staffs Outside the breeding season, reports came from Apedale (nine), Aqualate (two), Barton (10), Blithfield (two), Branston (nine), Crossplains (40), Croxall (two), Drayton Bassett (20), Knotbury (two), Little Wyrley, Pottal Pool (10), Prestwood (three) and Yoxall Park (20). Breeding season records came from Belvide (one pair), Brocton Coppice (six pairs) and Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves (two pairs as in 1996).

W Mid Five territories were noted on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (no change from 1996). Bred at Clayhanger Common; along the Harborne Walkway, with birds noted throughout the year at Harborne NR; and at Saltwells LNR, where over 100 were reported and the species is said to be increasing. At least four pairs bred at Valley Park and several pairs were also noted breeding in the walls of Rushall Hall. Further reported in the breeding season near Pedmore and at Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green and Tansey Green Quarry. Flocks included 40 in the Marsh Lane GP area on January 4th, 18 at both Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP on 12th, 28 near Pedmore on 24th and 51 near Riddian Bridge, Aldridge, on November 17th. Further reported from Clayhanger, Dunstall Park, Fens Pools and Foxcote.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus**Abundant resident and winter visitor.*

- Warks** A total of 37 breeding pairs was located in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke. Huge numbers were present in the county during the severe weather of January-February, including 3000 in the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton area, 1300-1500 at Wroxall, 1200 at Hampton Lucy and 1000 at both Maxstoke and Long Itchington. By contrast, the best autumn flocks were only 550 on Ilmington Downs on November 2nd, 450 at Wormleighton Res on 3rd and 600 at Ladywalk on 16th.
- Worcs** Several flocks up to 200 strong were reported. Maxima notified were 350 at Tibberton on January 4th, 500 at Westwood on January 4th, 500 at Timberhonger on January 10th, 500 at Worcester Meadows on January 25th, 600 at Warndon on January 30th, 544 at Defford on February 3rd, 600 at Strensham on April 6th, 400 at Castlemorton Common on October 19th and 400 at Ockeridge on December 26th.
- Staffs** The largest flocks reported were at Beech (220), Blithfield (400), Brewwood (450), Coombes/Churnet Valleys (4000 – the largest in the Region since 1983), Gailey (130), Hanchurch (320), Hints (300), Horse Paddock Wood (620), Little Wyrley (600), Whitemoor Haye (1000) and Wrottesley Lodge Farm (240). Seventy-eight pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* 74 pairs in 1996).
- W Mid** Little information received. There were 21 territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* 22 in 1996) and six contacts were made at Park Lime Pits during WBBM counts (*cf.* five in 1996). In excess of 200 were on ploughed fields adjacent to the M6 motorway at Water Orton on March 24th; 110 were at Dunstall Park and 80 at Park Lime Pits, also in March; and 122 moved south over Sheepwash UP in small parties in two hours on October 18th.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto**Very common resident.*

- Warks** There were 15 nesting pairs in 1km² at Ladbroke. The best sized flocks were 44 in a Priors Marston garden on January 29th and 35 at Fenny Compton on November 16th.
- Worcs** Several small flocks reported, but the largest were 25 at Tibberton on January 25th, 45 at Offerton on November 23rd, a new county record total of 220 around farm buildings at Ryall on November 25th *RAP*, 100 at Long Green on December 20th and 90 at Abberton on December 25th.
- Staffs** The only records received were of 30 at Kettlebrook Park on January 19th, 36 at Mitton on March 9th, 30 in Newcastle on December 11th and over 70 at Anslow on December 27th.
- W Mid** Relatively little information was supplied on what appears to be a fairly common and widespread species. There were two territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* one in 1996) and at least three pairs bred in Valley Park, while birds were reported as being common at Harborne NR and regularly noted in the Marston Green area. 18 roosted in Aldridge churchyard in December.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

A fairly common, though declining, summer resident and passage migrant, mainly now in the southern parts of Warks and Worcs.

Average: April 25th (62) – September 24th (62)

The first appeared at Porters Mill on the typical date of April 26th with the main arrival following in the first week of May. Most had left by mid-September, with the last at Wormleighton Res on 19th apart from an unusually late bird at Lower Moor on October 4th.

Appears to be still declining and retreating to southern parts of the Region.

Warks Six pairs bred in the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton area, with other probable breeding territories at Bascote, Chesterton (bred), Draycote, Ladbroke, Lawford Heath, Marcliff, Northend, Stockton, Whatcote and Ufton Fields. Eight were located on BAD Kineton on the May count, which was about average for the site. However, only odd birds were noted at previously regular sites at Alvecote and in the Kingsbury district, with no signs of breeding, and the only record from Ladywalk was of one on July 21st. This continues the apparent withdrawal from the north of the county noticed in recent years. It was also apparently scarcer in some central areas, *eg* none seen at all in the Hatton district where previously regular. Reports of apparent passage birds came from a further 12 sites, but again mainly in the south.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Little Comberton and North Littleton, but birds were absent this year from a traditional site at Timberhonger. Three singing males were located between British Camp and The Gullet during the breeding season, up to three were singing at Castlemorton Common, two pairs were at Grimley and a further two pairs at Lineholt. A party of seven at Lower Moor on August 24th probably included locally bred juveniles and the same can be said for four at Ryall on August 23rd. Small numbers were noted at a further 25 localities, mainly in the south of the county.

Staffs The main area appears to be Cannock Chase, with birds seen and heard between May and July at Anson's Bank, Beaudesert, Fair Oak, Haywood Warren (three), Penkridge Bank, Seven Springs and Wandon Spur (two). Belvide had two on May 4th, with others at Anslow, Babbington, Barton GP, Branstons GP and Westport, but none were seen this year at Sittles Farm, which is a normal haunt.

W Mid Present at Clayhanger from April 29th-August 2nd, with copulation noted in July. Singles were at Bradnock's Marsh on May 11th and Marsh Lane GP on 30th.

1995 Addendum

W Mid Two were at Clayhanger on July 30th.

Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked Parakeet) *Psittacula krameri*

Scarce feral visitor which has bred.

W Mid A feral bird complete with rings was in Woodgate Valley on March 13th and one was over Valley Park on June 8th, with an unidentified parakeet sp. noted in the area on January 13th and September 13th..

Common Cuckoo (Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus**Common summer resident, which has declined in recent years.**Average: April 10th (61) – September 4th (60)*

Arrived punctually on April 10th at North Littleton, but the main influx did not begin until the last week of April. As usual, there was little information about departure, but one at Corley on October 2nd was the latest since 1975.

Warks Reports from 44 localities, with maxima of six calling at Kingsbury and four at both Fenny Compton and in the Wormleighton Res area, where a rufous phase female was seen on May 3rd *JJB*. Thought to be scarcer this year in the Hatton/Haseley district; while numbers were again low at BAD Kineton where the May count of 16, although up on last year, was still 23% below average.

Worcs Noted at 29 sites throughout the county, with breeding confirmed at Lower Moor and Shoulton. Most records were of singles, but four were noted at Lower Moor on May 5th, three at Castlemorton Common on 19th and three at Tibberton on 24th. An hepatic female was at Oakley on August 3rd *MJL*.

Staffs Widely reported, with concentrations on Cannock Chase and the North Staffs Moors. At Belvide, juveniles were being fed by Common Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler on June 22nd and 25th. At Blithfield, a juvenile was being chased by a Eurasian Sparrowhawk on August 24th, a case of either a potential meal or a potential rival. In the Knotbury area, a juvenile showing its diagnostic white nape patch was seen on July 19th.

W Mid Calling birds were reported from Bartley (including two on May 13th), Clayhanger, Dunstall Park, Harborne NR, Marsh Lane GP area, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park, and one was seen at Heronfield on May 15th. Late birds were at Sheepwash UP on August 10th and Marsh Lane GP on 15th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba**Frequent, but much declined, resident.*

Warks Five breeding pairs were located in southern and central districts, with birds seen in seven more localities (including two in the north-east) during the breeding season. Away from these sites, there were winter records from Butlers Marston, Compton Wynyates, Coombe, Kenilworth, Knightcote, Longbridge, Loxley, Packington, Salford Priors, Sherbourne, Shotteswell, Stone-ton and Watergall. Most of these were during the colder weather of January.

Worcs Breeding was reported from five localities, three in the north of the county, one in the Teme Valley and one in the south. Birds were also seen at five other sites in the breeding season. Autumn and winter records came from Droitwich, Grimley, Martley, Oldington STW, Peopleton, Pershore, Sedgberrow, Stanford Bridge, Stonebow, Upton Warren and Wychbold. The most remarkable occurrence was a bird, ringed in Holland, which was picked up injured at Broadway on November 10th *per SJD*.

Staffs Breeding season records were received from Aqualate (three pairs) and Cellarhead (one pair). Also seen regularly at Seighford during the year and noted additionally at Denston on April 19th and November 24th, Crumpwood on August 27th, Tittesworth on September 10th-11th, Walton-on-the-Hill during October and Great Chatwell on November 27th.

- W Mid** A pair was thought to have bred at one site in the county, with another possibly breeding in the Coventry area. One was noted in Sandwell Valley on October 12th, but one at Cinder Bank on February 8th was thought to possibly be an escape.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Common resident.

- Warks** Again well reported, with records from 55 localities distributed throughout the county. There was a partial recovery to seven pairs at Fenny Compton, after the population had halved to five in 1996 following severe winter weather. Further breeding records came from Burton Dassett, Corley, Eathorpe, Ladbroke, Radway, Ratley and Warmington.

- Worcs** Present at Astley Burf, Badsey, Bayton, Belbroughton, Besford, Bewdley, Bittell, Calcot Hill, Castlemorton Common, Droitwich STW, Feckenham, Fosters Green, Grimley, Hartlebury, Hollywood, The Knapp, Larford, Little Comberton, Lower Moor, Malvern Wells, Oddingley, Oldington STW, Oldwood Common, Pershore, Romsley, Strensham, Tibberton, Timberhonger, Upper Arley, Upton Warren, Walton Hill, Web Heath and Westmancote.

- Staffs** Continues to be widely reported, with sightings from 35 localities, mainly of single birds but with up to four in the Seighford area and three at Bradley.

- W Mid** Bred at Clayhanger and also reported in the breeding season at Marsh Lane GP, Park Lime Pits (up to three birds present), near Pedmore and Sandwell Valley (one pair bred with a second pair also present). A pellet was found on a garden patio in Dorridge on July 7th. Noted in the first winter period at Marsh Lane GP, Valley Park and Woodgate Valley. One was in an area of set-aside near Marston Green Business Park in August, while second winter period records came from two areas in Aldridge.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Common resident.

- Warks** Records from 27 localities, with breeding recorded from BAD Kineton, Farnborough and Fenny Compton and three holding territory at Ladywalk. Several road casualties were notified.

- Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Bittell, Dodford and Lower Moor. Also present in the breeding season at Arley Wood (at least three), Callow Hill, Chaddesley Wood, Defford, Drakes Broughton, Grimley, Hagley, Happy Valley, Hollybush Quarry, Kinsham, Larford, Little Comberton, Midsummer Hill, Monk Wood, New Parks, Ockeridge Wood, Pershore, Raggedstone Hill, Tiddesley Wood, Timberhonger, Upper Arley, Wast Hills, Weatheroak Hill, West Hagley, West Malvern, Westmancote, Westwood, Weymans Wood and Woodbury Hill.

- Staffs** Calling birds were reported from 26 widely scattered localities. Seven pairs bred at Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves, as last year, and four pairs were around the reserve at Belvide.

- W Mid** Bred in the Harborne Parish Church area, with two juveniles present in mid-July, whilst a bird 'just out of the nest' was at Warwick University on the early date of April 5th. One or two pairs were also reported as breeding at Harborne NR. Birds were present in Bilston Cemetery throughout the year and in

Haden Hill Park during the breeding season. Calling birds were heard during the breeding season at Park Lime Pits in February and July, and at Clayhanger and Sandwell Valley in May; outside it they were also heard at Chadwick Manor, Fens Pools LNR, Hampton-in-Arden, Marston Green, Valley Park and Whitmore Reans.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Uncommon and rather erratic winter visitor and scarce resident.

Warks Up to five roosted at Brandon from 1996 until at least March 2nd. Another roost of five was located in the Kingsbury area on January 12th, while during the same month another of up to 14 was discovered at a site in the north-east. An injured bird was found at Wilmcote about March 20th and taken to a local vet for treatment.

Staffs The now regular roost at Park Hall CP held up to five birds in January and six in December. Single pairs bred at one site on Cannock Chase and a single bird was discovered at another. Also bred in the Coombes/Churnet Valley area. One at Belvide on March 1st-2nd was only the second record for the site.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor in variable numbers. Scarce and erratic breeding species, mainly on the northern moorlands.

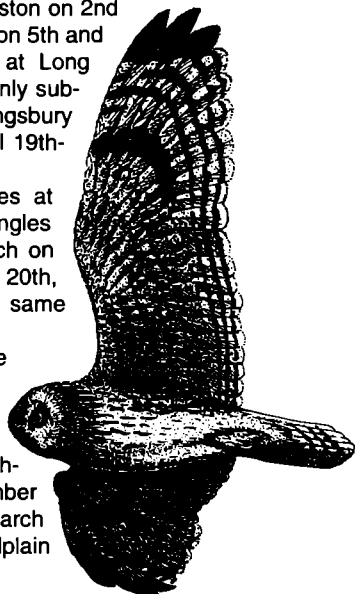
Warks In January, two were hunting at Lea Marston on 2nd and one on 4th, two were at Whitestone on 5th and one was at a reportedly regular site at Long Itchington on 17th, 19th and 21st. The only subsequent records were of singles at Kingsbury on March 22nd and Ladywalk from April 19th-26th.

Worcs One was picked up injured under wires at Wychbold on April 9th. In autumn, singles were seen during October at Atch Lench on 13th, Upton Warren on 15th and Clent on 20th, but these could have all related to the same bird.

Staffs On the North Staffs Moors, two birds were in the Boarsgrove area on April 20th and one on May 24th, while one was at Gib Torr on December 29th. Elsewhere, one remained at Croxall from January 7th-March 2nd, with another there on September 28th; one was at Brindley Heath on March 2nd; and two were on the R. Tame floodplain at Tamworth on November 20th.

1995 Addendum

W Mid One was at Clayhanger on November 14th and 19th.



Short-eared Owl (Rob Hume)

European Nightjar (Nightjar) *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Uncommon and very local summer resident, mainly on Cannock Chase. Rare passage migrant.

Average: May 16th (55) – August 20th (40)

The first report was from Cannock Chase on May 9th and the last from Crumpwood on the unusually early date of July 29th. Presumably birds remained on the Chase after this date, but were not reported.

Staffs A comprehensive survey of this species undertaken on Cannock Chase (see separate article) revealed 38 churring males. In addition, a male was seen in broad daylight between the Katyn Memorial and German Cemetery on May 9th, three were 'churring' at Katyn Memorial on July 8th, three were near Pye Green on June 18th and two were seen at Fairoak Pool and Wandon Spur. Away from the Chase, a bird was reported from Crumpwood on July 29th.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Common summer resident and passage migrant.

Average: April 22nd (63) – September 25th (63)

A slightly early arrival, with one at Alvechurch on April 14th which was quickly followed by others at Earlswood, Sandwell Valley and Upton Warren on 17th. An unusually late end to the breeding season produced several September records, though the last, at Westport on 23rd, was not atypical.

Warks At least 30 pairs bred in Fenny Compton village, whereas in Ladbroke not more than two pairs were present. Summer concentrations were on the low side, with 1200 at Draycote on July 13th the only sizeable count there, while 500 at Shustoke and 300 at Kingsbury were the best in the Tame Valley. In addition, a feeding flock of 350 was seen over Stoneton on July 27th. Birds stayed rather later than usual, with two late broods in Fenny Compton not departing until September 7th.

Worcs The largest counts received were 120 at Upton Warren on May 21st, 500 at Westwood on May 23rd, 100 at Lower Moor on June 15th, 400 at Holy Cross on June 23rd and 160 at Netherton on August 1st. Rather more September reports than usual, although the numbers involved were small.

Staffs The largest gatherings in spring were 1000 plus at Belvide on May 7th, 300 plus at Croxall on June 3rd and 200 at Westport on May 21st. September records came from Black Lake on 1st, Blithfield on 14th, Tittesworth on 17th and Westport on 23rd, while 70 passed through Coombes Valley during the month. It was stated that young were still being fed in September, which could explain these late records.

W Mid Very little breeding data was received. Numbers were reported to be lower than usual in the Aldridge area, but 'excellent numbers' were reported from the Woodwells Road area of Alum Rock, 'many pairs' bred in the suburbs surrounding Harborne NR and breeding occurred as usual in Marston Green. Highest counts included 100 at Sheepwash UP on May 5th, 900 in Sandwell Valley on 7th (when birds were moving through during heavy squalls) and a noticeable movement of between 50-100 birds through Marsh Lane GP on May 23rd-24th. 800 were at Minworth STW on June 5th.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba**Very rare vagrant (4/10).*

The sixth regional record and the fifth in spring. Has now occurred in three of the last four years.

- Worcs** One was seen with House Martins over Cookley for several minutes on the morning of April 28th before heading off west towards Kinver (Staffs) *BW*. This was the fourth for the county, but the first to be watched from a bedroom window! It coincided with another the same day in South Yorkshire.

Common Kingfisher (Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis**Fairly common resident.*

- Warks** Still scarce, with records from just 24 sites during the year and breeding only proven at Ladywalk and Long Marston. May-June records also came from Bidford-on-Avon, Brandon (up to four), Charlecote, Coombe, Coton, Kingsbury and Ufton Fields. Three were seen on the R. Tame at Shustoke on January 18th.
- Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Dowles Brook (two pairs) and birds were seen in the breeding season at Aston Fields, Bittell, Blackstone Rock, Broadwas, Feckenham, Hanley Castle, Kyre Pool, Leigh Brook, Lower Moor, Red Cliff, Strensham, Upton Warren and Witley Court. Noted at a further 15 localities outside the breeding season.
- Staffs** Thinly, but widely, distributed across the county from Kinver to Westport Lake and Doxey to Kettlebrook Park. Bred locally to Westport and a pair was seen mating at Shugborough on March 20th.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Brades Hall, where young thought not to have fledged owing to a flash flood; Bumble Hole; Clayhanger; Park Lime Pits, though not thought to have bred; R. Blythe; R. Stour at Stambermill and near Wollaston; Valley Park; and Walsall Arboretum, where a pair was seen with two juveniles in late July. Displaying birds were also seen along R. Cole at Billesley, where up to six reported in early March may have included duplicates, and breeding possibly occurred in the Saltwells LNR area, where reported from eight sites. More widespread outside of the breeding season, with records from Bourn Brook in Harborne, R. Blythe at Barston and in Brue-ton Park, Staffs and Worcs Canal in Dunstall Park, Edgbaston Pool, Fens Pools (where up to three were regularly seen from early July to the end of the year), Hayhead Wood area, Sandwell Valley and Woodgate Valley, where present on many dates up to May 6th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops**Scarce passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

The two April records were typical dates for overshooting migrants, but that in June was later than usual.

- Worcs** One amazed the residents of Hanley Castle, where it fed in gardens from April 12th-15th *ABa, EH, DH, SS per MBS*. Another was photographed on the grassy verge of a main road at Frankley Hill on June 15th *per JHB*.
- W Mid** One at Dunstall Park on April 27th *AD, DJ, KJC et al*.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce passage migrant. A former summer resident, last breeding in 1941.

- Worcs** One was photographed in a garden at Kemerton, where it remained from August 23rd-25th BPO.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Common resident

- Warks** Breeding records came from Avon Dassett, Farnborough, Fenny Compton, Haseley Knob, Ladywalk, Napton, Packington, Radway, Warmington and Wormleighton Res (two pairs). Well reported, with sightings from around 95 sites during the year, the majority in southern and central districts. The BAD Kineton May count of 12 equalled the highest since counts began in 1987.

- Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Bittell, Dodford, Hadley, Lickey Hills, Lower Moor, Tiddesley Wood, Upton Warren and Wood Norton. Noted at a further 55 localities throughout the county. Most records related to ones and twos, but there were maxima of six at Castlemorton Common on March 8th and seven at Happy Valley/North Hill on November 6th.

- Staffs** Within its stronghold on Cannock Chase, 33 birds were recorded during the breeding season. Also reported from an additional 30 localities elsewhere. Said to be a 'common bird' at Little Wyrley and seen 19 times during January-April by one observer working the Stanton-Mayfield area. Breeding activity is more difficult to ascertain, but it was strongly suspected near Chasewater and at Elford, while three pairs again bred at Coombes Valley. Juveniles were along R. Dove during July and at Branston GP on 22nd.

- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Barr Common, Barrow Hill, Clayhanger, Cuckoo's Nook, Dorridge, Halesowen, Harborne NR area, Illey, Marsh Lane GP, Monkspath, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot – no change from 1996), Norton Lane in Earlswood, Ounty John Wood, Park Lime Pits, near Pedmore, Pensnett Coppice, Saltwells LNR (five pairs), Sandwell Valley (probably three pairs) and Siden Hill Wood. Also recorded throughout the year at Valley Park, but thought not to have bred. Recorded outside the breeding season at Aldridge Golf Course and Rectory areas, Buckpool, Chadwick End, Fens Pools, Haden Hill Park, Harborne NR, Harborne Parish Church, Illey, The Leasowes, Marston Green, Meers Coppice, Penn and Silverdale. Several birds reported on garden lawns.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident.

- Warks** Bred at Alvecote, Baddesley Clinton, Hatton, Itchington Holt, Priors Marston and Wormleighton Res. Records from a healthy 80 sites, which was slightly up on last year. Several records involved parties of three or four.

- Worcs** Bred at Arley Wood, Birchen Coppice, Chaddesley Wood, Dodford, Lower Moor, New Parks, Tibberton, Timberhonger and Worcester City Centre. Noted at a further 59 localities throughout the county. A total of 15 was counted along Dowles Brook on February 27th.

- Staffs** The breeding season survey on Cannock chase revealed 43 birds, while three pairs bred at Coombes Valley and probably two pairs by Chasewater.

Seen in gardens at Little Stoke (two on June 20th), Denstone (one on April 22nd) and Pattingham (adult and two juveniles on June 28th). The most seen together were four, at Oakridge Park on April 9th and Brocton Coppice on 30th.

- W Mid** Reported in the breeding season from Clayhanger, Dorridge Park, Earlswood (along Norton Lane), Harborne NR (two-three pairs), Marston Green (said to be less common than formerly), Mons Hill, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (present from mid-June to the year's end), Solihull (at the Rover Works), Sutton Park, Valley Park and Willenhall Memorial Park. Recorded outside the breeding season at Aldridge Parish Church, Barr Common, Bilston Cemetery, Cuckoo's Nook, the Dunstall/ Valley Park area, Highbury Park, Oldwich Lane and Priest's Park Wood.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Fairly common, but declining, resident.

- Warks** Widely reported, with occasional sightings during the year from Alvecote, Bentley Woods, Brandon, Earlswood area, Farnborough Park, Fenny Compton, Hampton Lucy, Kenilworth, Ladywalk, Lighthorne, Napton Hill, Packington, Princethorpe, Radway, Ryton Wood, Southam, Stratford-upon-Avon, Ufton Wood, Upton, Wappenbury Wood and Wormleighton Res.

- Worcs** Breeding season reports came from Birchen Coppice, Bittell, Deerfold Wood, Dowles Brook, Happy Valley, Hartlebury, Hewell Grange, Larford, Lickey Hills, New Parks, Norgrove Court, Pepper Wood, Pipers Hill, Stourport, Timberhonger, Trench Wood, Trimpey, Wastehill Wood, Welland and Westwood. Seen outside the breeding season at Broadway, Caunsall, Cooksey Green, Grafton Wood, Malvern Wells and Warndon.

- Staffs** Breeding confirmed at Coombes Valley, Ellastone and Seven Springs and also noted in the breeding season at Wolsley Park. Heard drumming at Tittesworth on April 11th and also seen at a further 11 localities, including gardens near Kettlebrook Park.

- W Mid** Bred in the Handsworth Wood area, where two adults and two juveniles were noted in early June. Almost certainly bred close to Harborne NR too, where at least one juvenile was present in the summer. Other breeding season records involved a pair in Valley Park in May (with other sightings throughout the year); and singles in a Balsall Common garden in June, a Norton Lane garden in July and at Earlswood and Alderbrook Road, Solihull. March records came from King's Heath and the Grand Union Canal by Dovehouse Bridge, whilst birds were heard at Dorridge in April and again in September. Singles were also noted in Sandwell Valley on October 28th and December 19th, whilst one was with a large mixed tit flock at Deers Leap Wood on November 17th.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

Resident until early 1960s, but now a rare visitor (5/10).

Records from three counties indicates a continuing spread.

- Worcs** One in fields at Blakeshall on February 13th *BJC*, *ATM* was the first in county since 1992.

- Staffs** At least seven singing males were recorded at four sites, with potentially a further two pairs at two different locations *per REH* (see article on *European Nightjars and other breeding birds of Cannock Chase*).
- W Mid** A well watched bird was present near Clayhanger between January 1st-26th *CMA*, but unfortunately only one description was received, for January 8th *PAH*. This was the first county record since 1985.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Abundant, though much declined, resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

- Warks** Counts of territory holding birds came from 13 sites, but with none of these holding a density of more than five males per 1km². The population along the R. Avon between Bidford-Marlcliff almost halved, from nine to five males, but there was a slight improvement from three to four pairs at The Somers. The BAD Kineton count of 40 was again very poor, being about 35% below average. However, some largish flocks were present in the south-east during the cold weather of January, with maxima of 225 in kale near Wormleighton Res on 2nd, 100 at Southam on 5th and 210 in kale at Fenny Compton on 9th. Elsewhere, though, numbers were low, with one observer commenting on the absence of winter flocks from traditional sites in the north of the county. Autumn passage along the southern scarps peaked at 90 per hour moving west through the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton gap on October 13th and 150 per hour moving south-west on 19th. Autumn feeding flocks were low, with the best being 100 at both Whatcote on October 5th and Bidford-on-Avon on 21st.
- Worcs** With the species on the decline nationally, more birders than usual took the trouble to census their local areas, with interesting results. Long-term studies, such as those in the Malverns, showed that numbers continued to be low, but that there was no particular drop this year. Counts of four singing males between British Camp and The Gullet, and three singing males at Shortwood Roughs bear this out. Elsewhere in spring, 20 sang at Bishampton Vale Pool, five at Bittell, 12 at Holy Cross and six at Tibberton, but just four were heard in the 5km² surrounding Timberhonger and only one on a 15km circular walk from Rowney Green to Alvechurch. Outside the breeding season, the cold weather in January resulted in flocks of 180 at Wolverley on 1st, 90 at Wick on 2nd, 200 at Larford on 5th and 180 at Westwood the same day. In autumn, 90 were at Upton Warren on October 18th and 120 at Bishampton Vale Pool on November 6th. Smaller flocks were reported at 15 other sites.
- Staffs** Birds were noted singing or holding territory at Apedale (10), Bateswood (four), Branston (three), Cannock Chase (10), Dosthill (six), the Weeford-Shenstone-Footerley area (20), Seighford (10), Stanton Dale (10) and Weaver Hills (three). Unlike the other counties, January's cold weather produced no winter flocks and 49 at Apedale on March 29th was the most noted in the early part of the year. The larger autumn flocks were 47 at Apedale on October 10th, 40 west over Blithfield on 18th and 150 on stubbles at both Beffcote on November 5th and Moat Hall on 30th, the latter rising to 210 on December 4th. Up to 80 wintered on stubbles at Seighford.

W Mid Breeding season records came from Birmingham Airport, the former Bilston steelworks, Clayhanger, Coombeswood, Dunstall Park, Foxcote, Illey (at least nine males), Lutley, Park Lime Pits (two territories *cf.* three in 1996), near Pedmore (at least 11 males), Sandwell Valley (at least 10 singing males), Sheepwash UP (three which were reported to have had minimal breeding success), Stubbers Green, Valley Park, Watford Gap (two-four birds) and the Wishaw Lane area in Sutton Coldfield. A flock of about 70 flew over observers as they watched the Horned Lark at Billesley Common in January, but otherwise the largest flocks were 21 in a field off Bosty Lane, Aldridge, on January 20th – the only record of this once ‘common winter visitor’ – and 25 on stubble in Sandwell Valley on December 20th. One flushed from Harborne NR on October 21st was the first record for the reserve. Further recorded outside of the breeding season at Fens Pools and Kingswinford Park.

Horned Lark (Shore Lark) *Eremophila alpestris*

Rare autumn and winter vagrant (5/10).

The Billesley Common bird constitutes the thirteenth regional record.

Staffs The bird at Chasewater from 1996 remained until February 6th *several observers.*

W Mid Another excellent find, being the first county record, and in a most unexpected locality, an area of playing fields at Billesley Common. The bird was present from January 2nd-11th *SH.* Although it was seen by many observers, again only one description was received.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common, though local and much declined, summer resident. Widespread on passage.

Average: March 20th (62) – October 10th (62)

The first of a strong spring passage arrived at Kinsham on March 8th, with others almost daily thereafter. Once again, return passage was very meagre, with the last at Sandwell Valley on October 5th and Upton Warren (two) on 30th.

Warks More information regarding nesting colonies away from Ladywalk was reported this year. Most heartening were newly discovered colonies of 60 holes in the far south-west at Salford Priors GP and 30 holes in a quarry between High Cross and Copston Magna in the north-east. A small colony was also reported from Brinklow Quarry and five-ten pairs were still breeding in Frog Hall GP. Spring migrants were slow to build up, with large flocks only recorded on a few dates. These included maxima of 300 at Draycote and 100 at Kingsbury on April 5th, over 100 at Ladywalk on 10th, 150 at Coton and 350 at Shustoke on 24th, 350 again at Shustoke on 28th and 150 at Packington on May 6th. The best counts in central and southern districts came on April 4th, with 28 at Chesterton and 35 at Earlswood. Autumn passage was again weak, with 40 at Fenny Compton on September 11th and 80 at Dosthill on 15th the best counts.

Worcs The only breeding information concerned 42 occupied nest holes at Kinsham

and a small colony at Ryall. The largest spring gatherings were 100 at Bittell and 275 at Larford on April 25th, 50 at Lower Moor on 26th, 250 at Westwood on May 6th and 65 at Upton Warren on 7th. On autumn passage the most was 60 at Grimley on August 31st.

Staffs 132 nest holes were counted at Branston GP on July 22nd and adults were feeding young in a colony of 20 nests at Basford Bridge Cyclocross Raceway, near Cheddleton, on August 15th. Also bred at Wharf Lane Sand Quarry, near Chasewater, and along the R. Dove at Fauld, where 53 birds were seen but sadly there was some predation by mink. In spring, there were 200 at Blithfield on April 5th; 240 at Belvide on 12th, with 400 there on 28th; and 450 braving a day of snow showers and cold northerly winds at Tittesworth on May 6th. Smaller numbers were at Aqualate, Brookleys Lake, Coombes Valley and Westport. No autumn concentrations were reported.

W Mid Bred again in the 'Meriden Quarries Complex', but no information on numbers was forwarded this year. A reasonable spring passage occurred in Sandwell Valley between March 13th-May 17th, peaking at 40 on April 10th. Elsewhere, the peak count at Fens Pools was 20, on April 17th and again on June 14th, which reflected a protracted, but reasonably good spring passage; around 100 were at Marsh Lane GP on April 22nd and 25th and 50 at Bradnock's Marsh on May 11th. A light spring passage was also reported from Netherton Res, Sheepwash UP and Stubbers Green, where the maximum was eight in early May, and further migrants were reported from Dunstall Park and Tansey Green Quarry. Regularly recorded at Clayhanger, with a maximum of eight on August 22nd. In autumn, over 20 were at Fens Pools LNR on September 3rd and 12 in Sandwell Valley on 10th, but the peak count at Sheepwash UP was only three. Small numbers were also noted at Netherton Res, while one flew low over Harborne NR on September 9th providing yet another first record for the reserve.

Barn Swallow (Swallow) *Hirundo rustica*

Very common, though declined, summer resident and passage migrant.

Average: March 31st (63) – November 2nd (63)

Although one at Broad Green on February 7th was quite exceptional, the trend for earlier arrivals was maintained by two at Whatcote on March 26th and others soon after, though the main passage was in late April and early May. Most departed during late September and there were few October records. The last of the year was at Earlswood on November 2nd.

Warks Six pairs nested in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke and nine pairs at Church Farm, Little Packington. The best spring flocks were 200 at Coton on April 18th, 250 in the Dosthill-Kingsbury area on 19th, 80 at Packington Great Pool on 20th (including two with brick red underparts, resembling the race *H. r. savignii* NPB), 100 again at Coton on 24th and 450 at Draycote on 25th, with 200 there on May 9th. Post-breeding flocks of around 100 were noted at Napton Holt, Radway, Ratley and Whatcote. Autumn passage was again concentrated along the southern scarps, with the largest numbers at both Napton Hill and Fenny Compton/Wormleighton occurring between September 10th-26th, during which period good numbers were also reported

- from the north, at Ladywalk. Maxima at Fenny Compton included a flock of 250 moving west on 11th and 450 moving south in ninety minutes on 21st.
- Worcs** After an exceptionally early bird around farm buildings at Broad Green on February 7th *LCJ*, more typical spring records consisted of maxima of 200, at both Upton Warren and Westwood on May 7th, with 70 at Lower Moor on the same day. Autumn passage brought gatherings of 60 at Bittell on August 23rd, 100 at Bredons Hardwick on 29th, 60 south over Broadway on September 17th and 190 at Tibberton the following day.
- Staffs** Five pairs nested at Denstone Hall Farm, four of which raised three broods and the other two. A pair also bred at the Marquis Drive Visitor Centre on Cannock Chase. In spring, there were 400 at Tittesworth on April 26th, 250 at Belvide on 28th, 150 at Blithfield and Aqualate in late April, 400 at Westport on May 5th when it was cold and raining and 250 at Chasewater on 8th. Highlight of the autumn were 6000-8000 roosting in a reedbed on the island at Chell Heath on September 7th, having moved from their usual site at nearby Ford Green. On the same day 1000 also roosted at Pool Dam Marsh, a total well down on last year, while at Betley Mere there were 150 on September 9th and the tape lure failed to attract any birds for netting. At Belvide, 200 flew south on September 21st, while over 100 were also noted along the R. Dove and at Crossplains. Two late birds were at Little Stoke on October 17th, with two also at Belvide the following day.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Aldridge (Gorse Farm and Nuttalls Farm), Barr Common, Copt Heath, Cuckoo's Nook, the Illey and Lower Illey area, Pedmore area, Sandwell Valley and Valley Park (one pair bred). A pair were nest prospecting in Marston Green in late June, but no further evidence of breeding was received. Spring passage in April brought 60 to Marsh Lane GP on 23rd and 100 to Sandwell Valley on 25th and 26th. These were eclipsed, however, by an estimated 1000 moving north at the latter locality during heavy squalls on May 7th. Other peak counts were 80 at Sheepwash UP on May 8th and 30 at Fens Pools LNR on 9th. In autumn, a notable passage of more than 600 hirundines over Valley Park on the morning of September 26th included a loose flock of around 200 which were mainly Barn Swallows. An impressive 400 also passed through Sheepwash UP in two hours on September 28th and 63 were at Fens Pools on 30th.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Very common summer resident and passage migrant.

Average: April 7th (63) – November 1st (63)

A slightly late arrival by recent standards, with two at Martley on April 5th followed by others the next day, with the main passage early in May. Most left during September, with just a few stragglers until October 21st, then a quite unprecedented scatter of late birds at Byrkley Park on November 29th and Bannams Wood and Cookley the next day.

- Warks** About ten pairs bred at both Ladbroke and Packington. The only sizeable spring flocks were of 300 at Draycote in heavy rain on April 25th and 200 there in a snow and hail storm on May 6th. Post-breeding flocks included 170 at Fenny Compton on August 11th, 250 at Radway on 12th and 180 at

Stoneleigh on 23rd-24th, with 200 also at Ladywalk on the latter date. Between September 3rd-18th there were regular flocks of up to 200 in Fenny Compton, Ratley and Radway, while at Ladywalk 350 moved through in three-quarters of an hour on 20th. A leucistic individual was at Fenny Compton on September 13th.

Worcs The largest counts received were 150 at Lower Moor on May 7th, 200 at Bittell on May 8th, 300 at Westwood on June 26th, 100 at Strensham on August 10th, 100 at Cobley Hill on August 17th and 100 at North Hill on September 14th.

Staffs 20 were gathering mud at Kettlebrook Park on June 3rd, while two pairs were still feeding young at Statfold on September 3rd. The most noted in spring was 150, at Westport on May 23rd, while in the autumn Blithfield had 300 plus on September 6th, 200 were at Westport the next day and 100 at Tittesworth on September 20th. Lesser numbers were also seen at Bromley Bottom, Coombes Valley, R. Dove and Lawneswood. A very late bird was at Byrkley Park on November 29th.

W Mid Little breeding data was received. However, successfully bred at Balsall Common, noted collecting mud at Stubbers Green in May and present during the breeding season around Harborne NR, Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP, with presumably breeding on the periphery of all three areas. Over 100 were counted in Sandwell Valley on several dates in spring, with approximately 2000 moving through during squalls on May 7th (see also Barn Swallow). Elsewhere, 40 were at Sheepwash UP on May 9th, 100 in Marston Green on June 14th, 90 at Sheepwash UP in mid-September, 150 over Hampton-in-Arden on September 15th and 400 moving over Dunstall Park on 28th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Fairly common, though declining, summer resident and passage migrant, becoming increasingly restricted to the northern and western parts of the Region.

Average: April 7th (60) – September 20th (58)

One at Ladywalk on March 31st meant an early arrival for the second successive year, but none followed until April 8th. Last seen on September 18th at Fenny Compton, which was a fairly typical date.

Warks A pair on a traditional territory at Grendon on May 18th and 24th were possibly the first nesting in the county since its demise in 1994. Passage migrants were seen in spring at Fenny Compton on April 24th and Pleasance Farm on May 1st. In autumn there were two at Wormleighton Res on August 21st and one on 29th, two at Napton Hill on 24th-25th, one at Shustoke on 26th and one at Fenny Compton on September 18th.

Worcs Breeding season records came from Arley Wood (three singing males), Bredon Hill, British Camp to The Gullet (where three singing males represented the continuation of a long term decline), Callow Hill (five singing males), Dowles Brook, Midsummer Hill and Swinyard Hill. Passage birds were at Happy Valley and North Hill in spring; and Ashmoor Common, Defford, Happy Valley, North Hill, Walton Hill and Wilden in autumn.

Staffs With 179 territories, the main stronghold is clearly on Cannock Chase, where concentrations of 16 or more singing males were reported from Beaudesert Old Park, Brocton Coppice, Dick Slee's Cave and Oakedge Park. Away from the Chase, three pairs were at Coombes Valley, two males were in song at Kinver Edge on April 30th and birds were seen in suitable breeding habitat at New Haden Lane (Cheadle) and on the moors at Gradbach and Swallow Moss.

W Mid At least one was in song in Sutton Park in late May. A spring migrant was present in Sandwell Valley on April 25th-27th; and autumn migrants were at Sandwell Valley on August 25th and September 6th and 14th; Sheepwash UP on August 26th (two) and September 10th; and Woodgate Valley on August 28th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common resident, though local in lowland districts. Widespread and common on passage and in winter.

Warks Breeding pairs were reported from Gaydon Tip (three), Kingsbury Rifle Ranges (four) and Lighthorne Quarry (eight). Males were also singing in the breeding season at BAD Kineton, Brandon, Fenny Compton and Napton Hill. Said to be absent from Dosthill now due to intensive cattle grazing. Spring passage was relatively light, with maxima of 100 at Draycote on March 25th, 55 at Lighthorne Quarry on 26th, 70 at Fenny Compton on 29th, 35 at Dosthill on April 1st and 60 north over Shustoke on the late date of 30th. Autumn passage in the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton gap began on August 30th, with the first big movement on September 10th when 115 passed south-westwards and a further 45 came into roost in the evening. It then peaked with movements of 225 south on September 21st and 280 south-west on October 11th, both in ninety minute periods. Elsewhere, maxima included 60-70 beside the R. Blythe at Packington on September 20th, 70 per hour moving south-east over Napton Hill on 27th and up to 100 on Ilmington Downs on October 5th and 12th. The best winter flocks were 40 at Chesterton on February 4th, 88 at BAD Kineton from November 1st-17th and 80 at Draycote on 15th.

Worcs No information on breeding status. Several reports of small flocks on passage and in winter, the largest being 62 north over Berrow Hill (Redditch) on March 22nd, 60 at Bishampton Vale Pool on September 11th, 150 at North Hill and 100 at Timberhonger on September 21st, 100 at Bredon Hill on September 30th, 80 at Pershore STW on October 16th and 50 at Castlemorton Common on both October 19th and November 2nd.

Staffs The largest spring passage flocks reported were 45 at Crossplains on February 23rd, 50 at Aqualate on March 22nd, 80 at Dove Leys on March 24th and 200 at Apedale CP on April 4th, with up to 200 at Blithfield and 100 at Ellis Hill on the same day. A survey of Cannock Chase revealed 40 between April and May. Autumn passage was marked by 200 at Baldstones on August 17th, 24 south at Westport on September 20th, 50 south at Mow Cop on September 21st, 61 at Coombes Valley in October, 90 at Anslow on October 7th and 20 at Apedale on October 10th, while up to 100 were at Seighford during the winter.

W Mid Present in the breeding season in Sutton Park and may possibly have bred on the old Bilston steelworks. Spring passage comprised peaks of 16 in Goscote Valley on March 5th, 21 on the old Walsall airfield on 19th, 60 moving north over Sheepwash UP in one hour on 20th, 40 at Park Lime Pits on 29th, 50 at Valley Park on April 2nd, 25 at Marsh Lane GP on 15th (where a small passage was also noted in March) and 60 in Sandwell Valley on the same day. Also noted on spring passage at Dunstall Park. In autumn, 95 moved south-west over Sheepwash UP in three hours on September 28th, 45 were at Goscote Valley on 30th, an impressive flock of around 170 was at Bowmans Harbour on October 11th, 40 were at Marsh Lane GP on November 2nd and one at Harborne NR on December 9th was the first record for the reserve.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Uncommon passage migrant and rare winter visitor.

A disappointing year, with an unremarkable passage of five between March 4th-26th and 11 between October 11th-18th.

Warks A very poor year in comparison to recent times, with the only records comprising two on March 9th at Dosthill and one on 16th at Draycote, followed in autumn by three there on October 14th and one on November 9th.

Worcs Singles at both Bishampton Vale Pool and Upton Warren on October 18th and at Lower Moor on November 2nd.

Staffs A poor year compared with the 12 records in 1996. Two at Dosthill on March 9th (see also Warks) and one at Belvide on March 26th-27th were the only spring records. A slightly better autumn, with two at Blithfield on September 27th; one at Belvide from October 9th-15th, with three present on 16th; and singles at Westport on October 11th, Apedale on 14th and finally Belvide on November 18th.

W Mid One in Sandwell Valley on March 4th and a good series of records from Sheepwash UP, where singles were noted on April 20th, September 27th and October 18th-19th.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit A. p. littoralis

Rare or scarce passage migrant.

Worcs One showing the characteristics of this race coming into summer plumage was at Holt on March 8th *REH DJS*.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Average: October 23rd (8) – April 17th (8)

A very poor autumn, with no reports at all until mid-December.

Warks Up to five were present in the Dosthill/Middleton area from January 1st-March 9th, with two until 15th and one remaining to 31st *JAA, GIG, PDH et al*. Up to three then returned to the area from December 13th-31st *PDH et al*. All of these birds regularly commuted into new pits on the Staffs side of the county boundary. Singles in summer-plumage at Draycote from March 27th-30th *GIG, PDH et al* and at Ladywalk on March 29th *per SC* were the only other records.

Staffs Five were along the R. Tame at Dosthill on January 1st JAA, while at nearby Drayton Bassett there were also five, presumably the same, from January 5th-February 2nd; three on March 1st; two from March 9th-23rd; and finally one on March 31st JAA. One was also at Doxey on March 31st AGJ.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Fairly common summer resident and common passage migrant.

Average: April 1st (61) – October 11th (61)

Seen at Ladywalk on March 31st, but none thereafter until April 8th, when the main arrival began. The last of the year was at Wormleighton Res on October 9th. Still scarce in many districts.

Warks A total of 26 pairs bred in Fenny Compton parish (*cf.* 28 in 1996), but few other breeding records were received, though numbers in the south-east were thought to be generally down. Numbers were 60% down on the BAD Kineton count. In the south-west, four or five pairs were nesting at both Darlingscott and Ilmington. Passage maxima were also well down, with 75 in heavy rain at Draycote on April 25th, and 40 still present next day, the only spring counts to exceed 20. Decent sized post-breeding counts came from only four sites, with maxima of 30 at Draycote on August 22nd, 30 in cattle pasture at Whatcote on 28th, 22 south-west over the Burton Dassett Hills on September 9th and 55 at Fenny Compton on 11th. No other count of more than ten was submitted, and numbers in the north of the county seemed particularly low. A completely white individual, but with black eyes, was seen at Coton on April 18th KW.

Worcs Spring maxima of 12 at Upton Warren on April 20th, 40 at Bredons Hardwick on April 21st and 12 at Kinsham on April 26th, with smaller numbers at Aytons Heath, Bittell, Bredon Hill, Cropthorne, Defford, Kempsey, Lower Moor and Wood Norton. Seen in autumn at Bishampton Vale Pool, Himbleton, Little Comberton, Newnham Bridge, Strensham and Upton Warren, but no autumn count exceeded five birds.

Staffs Probably bred at Acton Trussell, Belvide, Blithfield, Crossplains, Chebsey, R. Dove, Eccleshall, Little Aston and Wychnor, using potato and maize fields as well as the usual cereals. Spring passage brought 40 to Blithfield on April 23rd, with others at Alrewas, R. Dove and Westport. In autumn, 70 were at Blithfield on September 6th, six along the R. Dove on September 9th and smaller numbers at Anslow and Bushton Lane.

W Mid Breeding was confirmed near Pedmore and probably occurred in the Wishaw Lane area of Sutton Coldfield, whilst single males were disturbed from a strawberry field near Barston Ford in early June and at Foxcote on June 18th. The largest spring counts comprised 15 at Marsh Lane GP on April 20th, where there was a regular passage from April 11th-May 7th; 10 at Fens Pools LNR on April 26th, which was a site record; and 40 in Sandwell Valley also on 26th (where noted on 21 dates in spring). One to three birds were also at Sheepwash UP on seven dates between April 15th-June 4th and further spring migrants were reported from Dunstall Park, Illey and Foxcote. As usual, much scarcer in the autumn with small numbers noted at Dunstall Park, Fens Pools, Goscote Valley and Sheepwash UP.

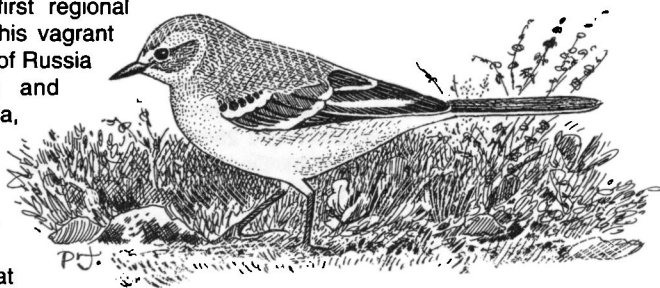
Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava*
Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.

Warks Single female-types were at Coton on April 18th *KW et al* and Shustoke on 30th and May 21st *BLK*.

Worcs A male was at Bredons Hardwick from April 15th-24th *SMW et al*; a female at Kinsham on April 26th *SMW*; and single males at Bishampton Vale Pool on April 29th *GHP, WFP*, Ashmoor Common on May 8th and June 4th *MAS*, and Crophorne on May 25th *GHP*.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
Very rare vagrant (0/10).

This, the first regional record of this vagrant from parts of Russia and West and Central Asia, was one of four to occur in Britain during May.



Warks A female at Brandon on May 18th *AA, LB, JMR et al*

Citrine Wagtail (Phil Jones)

was one of the best records for this reserve. A full account appears in the Short Notes.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Breeding pairs were located at Eathorpe, Little Lawford, Rowington and Wootton Wawen, with May-June records also from Clifford Chambers, Draycote, Earlswood, Southam and Whatcote. Widely reported outside the breeding season, but apparently still at rather a low level after the cold winter of early 1996.

Worcs Breeding proved at Dowles Brook (five pairs) and Westwood. Also seen in the breeding season at Alvechurch, Bishampton Vale Pool, Bromsgrove, Death's Dingle, Feckenham, The Knapp, Middle Quinton, Norgrove Court, Red Cliff, Sling Pool, The Standbatches, Upton Warren and Witley Court. Recorded at a further 31 localities outside the breeding season, including a count of four at Upton-on-Severn STW on October 20th.

Staffs Two pairs bred at Coombes Valley, as last year, otherwise reported from 26 localities.

W Mid Probably bred at Valley Park and noted in the breeding season at several localities adjacent to canal system in Birmingham City Centre and at Edgbaston Res, Harborne NR area, Smestow Brook at Newbridge, Sandwell Valley, Stourbridge, Sutton Park and Tudor Grange Park. First winter period

records came from Clayhanger, Fordhouses (regular in garden), Bourn Brook at Harborne, the Grand Union Canal at Olton, a garden in Penn, Sheepwash UP and Wergs. Autumn/second winter period records came from a garden in Balsall Common, Bartley, central Birmingham, along Bourn Brook where regularly recorded outside of the breeding season between Selly Oak and Woodgate Valley, Clayhanger, Darlaston (a pair around garden pond for two weeks), Dorridge Park, Harborne NR, Marsh Lane GP, Park Lime Pits, Shard End, Sheepwash UP (up to five in late September), Tettenhall and Wergs.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common resident, summer resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Few records submitted. The largest flocks were of only 40 at Lea Marston on January 17th, 56 in a newly-cut hay meadow at Fenny Compton on July 25th, 40 at Draycote on August 22nd and 39 on a playing field at Bidford-on-Avon on September 20th.

Worcs Several reports of flocks, the largest being 53 roosting at Defford on February 4th, 150 at Malvern STW on 9th, 50 at Hopwood on March 1st, 190 at Bredons Hardwick on 2nd, 100 at Upton Warren on August 22nd, 60 at Bishampton Vale Pool on 27th, 60 at Droitwich STW on October 23rd and a huge roost in Worcester City Centre at the end of the year which contained 1200 birds on December 30th *IP*.

Staffs The following roosts were reported: 60 at Stepenhall on March 3rd, 50 at a school in Abbots Bromley on 30th, 50 in the centre of Stone on July 23rd, several hundred on Chesterton Industrial Estate on October 26th and 60 at Wolstanton Retail Park on November 3rd. Non-roosting gatherings included 60 by R. Dove at Calwich on August 28th, 85 at Blithfield on November 9th and 36 at Belvide on 14th.

W Mid Little breeding information was received, although bred in Sandwell Valley and young were seen at Stubbers Green. Notable concentrations included around 100 in Dunstall Park/ Valley Park in January-February, 30 at Fen End on March 8th and in Sandwell Valley on July 18th, 25 on the Aldridge cricket field on October 2nd and 60 roosting in High Street, central Birmingham, on December 31st. These were all overshadowed, however, by as many as a 1000 which roosted in ornamental trees by Wolverhampton Town Centre in mid-January. A large roost was also said to be still present at Russells Hall Hospital.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Frequent passage migrant, mainly in spring.

Warks Spring passage began with early singles at Shustoke on March 23rd and Coton on 31st, followed by further birds at Draycote on April 9th, Dosthill on 13th, Arley on 17th and Brandon on 20th, with three at Middleton and one at Wormleighton Res on 23rd. On April 25th during heavy rain there was a "fall" of at least 36 at Draycote *JJB*, which appears to be a regional record. About 11 were still present here on 26th and four on 27th. There was one autumn record, of two (adult and first-winter) in a Yellow Wagtail flock feeding around sheep at Fenny Compton on September 11th *JJB*.

- Worcs** After an early one at Bittell on March 15th, there were two there on April 22nd, one on 27th and two on May 2nd. One was at Lower Moor from April 6th-8th, two on 11th and one from 21st-22nd; singles were at Arrow Valley Lake on April 7th and at Upton Warren on April 18th and 25th; and three were at Bredons Hardwick on April 20th, with one there on 25th.
- Staffs** A total of 29 birds was recorded in the spring at the following localities: two at Belvide on March 30th, followed by one on April 12th, two on 21st and singles again on 22nd and May 15th. Two were at Barton GP on April 20th; one at Blithfield on April 1st, then four from April 21st-24th; one at Chasewater on March 23rd; 10 at Drayton Bassett on April 20th; one at Tittesworth from April 20th-24th then two from April 25th-29th; and singles at Westport Lake on March 23rd, April 23rd-28th and May 6th-7th and 11th-14th.
- W Mid** A good spring passage at Sandwell Valley began with two early birds on March 21st. These were followed by singles on 24th, 28th and April 17th. At least three were then present from 18th-25th, with a notable 10 on 26th and 29th. Lastly, there was a late bird on May 16th. Otherwise reported only from Marsh Lane GP, where one on March 22nd was followed by two on April 14th and further singles on 22nd and 24th.

Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing) *Bombycilla garrulus*

An erratic and usually rare winter visitor, but occasionally widespread during invasion years (6/10).

- Worcs** One feeding in a rowan tree at Wribbenhall on February 18th *BW* was typically very confiding and oblivious to people standing at a nearby bus-stop.
- Staffs** One stayed at Newcastle from January 14th-15th *WJL et al.*
- W Mid** Five first appeared in the Paxford Way area of Northfield on January 13th and up to 14 were subsequently present, albeit intermittently, until February 23rd *AWH et al.* Three were in Moss Grove, Kingswinford, on February 12th *BMM*; six were at Wren's Nest on March 19th and at nearby Woodsetton on 20th, 21st, 25th and 27th *KJC*; and up to five frequented the Dorchester Road area of Solihull from April 12th-18th *PMG, HJM*. There were also reports of around 50 in Walsall Road (Great Barr) and in Handsworth Wood, both in January, and of six at the junction of the A41 and B4102 in Solihull in March, but no descriptions or further details were forthcoming.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

An uncommon and declining resident, becoming increasingly restricted to north Staffs and north-west Worcs.

- Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Dowles Brook, where four pairs held territory and two successfully bred. Also noted in the breeding season on the R. Rea at Howney Coppice. The strangest record was of a juvenile discovered at the side of the road leading to Bittell Res on July 7th *MJI et al.* It was miles from any stream and allowed itself to be picked up and released on the outflow stream between the upper and lower reservoirs. Sadly, it was found dead later the same day. Singles were also seen on the R. Severn at Trimpey on January 5th, on a stream in Wissetts Wood on January 16th, on the R.

Salwarpe at Upton Warren on November 25th (the first record for the reserve) and at The Knapp during the autumn for the first time in several years.

Staffs No information on breeding, but birds were recorded at Black Bank, Basford Green, Danebridge, Bearda Hill, Gradbach, Mill Dale to Ilam (seven), Dove-dale (two), Dove Leys, Ousley Cross, R. Dove at Norbury Bridge and Toad Hole Bridge (three) and Three Shires Head.

W Mid One pair is known to have bred in the county.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident.

Warks Numbers generally appeared to have recovered well after last year's freeze-up, with, for instance, the BAD Kineton count almost doubling to 48, which was nearly average for this site. There were 30 territories in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke. The population at Brandon was also thought to be stable, with a maximum of 36 counted across the reserve on October 31st.

Worcs A large increase was noted at Shortwood Roughs, where the population doubled to 15 pairs, and there were much smaller improvements at both Southcrest and Web Heath.

Staffs Ninety pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* 93 in 1996), while at the Betley Mere CES a total of six adults and six juveniles was ringed (*cf.* four and 11 respectively in 1996). On Cannock Chase, 15 males sang at Wandon Spur and 12 at the Rifle Range. The maximum monthly count at Lawneswood was seven in May.

W Mid There were 43 territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill CBC (*cf.* 34 in 1996); 24 territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (*cf.* 19 in 1996); and no change in status was reported from Harborne NR. One was noted regularly in and out of a House Martins nest in Marston Green in April.

Hedge Accentor (Dunnoch) *Prunella modularis*

Abundant resident.

Warks There were 15 territories in 1km² at Ladbroke. The May count at BAD Kineton revealed 27, which was three times larger than last year and more than 30% above average, while Brandon held 28 across the reserve on October 31st. The importance of winter set-aside to this species is shown by 12 which were flushed from an area of only half an acre at Upper Kingston on December 7th.

Worcs A big decrease to just 13 pairs was reported at Alfrick, following the record high of 20 pairs in 1996. However, the census plots at Shortwood Roughs, Southcrest and Web Heath all recorded no change in the numbers of breeding pairs.

Staffs Twelve pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* 11 in 1996), while at Lawneswood the maximum monthly count was seven in March.

W Mid There were 13 territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* 12 in 1996) and 12 territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (*cf.* four in 1996). Reported as common on Harborne NR.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant resident.*

- Warks** A total of 24 territories was located in 1km² at Ladbroke. Brandon held 33 on October 27th and 31st, while a substantial increase was noted at BAD Kineton, where 63 was the second-highest count since census work began in 1987 and almost 50% above average.
- Worcs** There were just 22 pairs at Alfrick, which represented the lowest figure there since 1987. Fortunately, other regularly monitored sites at Shortwood Roughs, Southcrest, Tibberton and Web Heath showed no decline on the previous year.
- Staffs** On Cannock Chase, 13 were counted at Wandon Spur and 14 at the Rifle Range, both on May 22nd. In the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves, 79 pairs bred (*cf.* 88 in 1996) and a maximum of 54 birds was counted during July. At Lawneswood the maximum monthly count was nine in October.
- W Mid** 35 territories were counted on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* 36 in 1996) and eight territories at the Park Lime Pits CBC plot (*cf.* 13 in 1996). A very white bird was observed at Illey on March 3rd.

Rufous Nightingale (Nightingale) *Luscinia megarhynchos**Uncommon and declining summer resident to the southern parts of Warks and Worcs.**Average: April 19th (63) – July 31st (17)*

Very late arriving, with the first at Marsh Common on April 27th and none thereafter until May 1st. As last year, there were no reports after early July, with the latest at Upton Warren on 6th. The tendency for late arrivals and early departures presumably mirrors the overall decline of this species.

- Warks** A slight increase in numbers this year was very welcome, with five singing males at BAD Kineton, three more in the Bowshot Wood/Fosse Rides area and singles at Radway and Warmington. A male heard singing at Brandon on May 17th at 0330hrs was presumably a passing migrant.
- Worcs** Singing males were at Langdale Wood (five on May 2nd), Marsh Common (two on May 1st), Old Hills Common, Strensham and Wadborough. An unpaired male at Upton Warren from May 3rd-20th was the first for the reserve.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros**Scarce summer resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

- Warks** A rather poor year, with just single females at Packington Hall on March 11th *NPB* and in a Hatton garden on April 18th *GRH, JVH*, and a first-winter male at Draycote from December 28th-31st *CDB, JJB, GIG et al.* The most interesting record concerned a juvenile found dead on the road in Stratford-upon-Avon on June 15th, outside the district council offices *per JO'D*. However, there is a strong possibility that this bird entered the town as a corpse attached to a car radiator.
- Worcs** One at West Malvern on March 11th *PGG* was followed by singles at North Hill/Happy Valley on April 18th *SMW MWCW*, October 25th *SMW* and November 13th *SMW*.

- Staffs** An immature male was at Blithfield on November 12th *ESC*.
- W Mid** A pair bred in the Bordesley/Digbeth area *PAC* and males were noted in the favoured Hockley area as follows: Lionel Street on May 9th-10th and June 19th *PAH*; Charlotte Street on May 10th *PAH*; Regent Place on June 4th *RRH*; Camden Drive also on June 4th *RRH* – said to be a different bird to the one at Regent Place; and Albion Street/Tenby Street on June 14th *PAH*. Migrants were reported from Dunstall Park on April 19th-20th and 27th *KJC* (a first-summer male) and Sheepwash UP on April 23rd-24th *AGW, ICW*.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A fairly common, though localised and much decreased, summer resident, now restricted as a breeding bird to Staffs and Worcs. Widespread on passage.

Average: April 9th (61) – September 25th (60)

First noted on April 2nd at Sandwell Valley, with the main passage beginning in the middle of the month. Generally a good year, with an especially strong autumn passage. Most had left by the end of September, but a late bird was in Happy Valley on October 18th.

- Warks** There were spring records of single males at both Brandon and Wormleighton Res on April 12th and Long Marston on 15th. After an early female at Whatcote on July 7th, there was an outstanding autumn passage lasting from July 20th-September 28th and involving about 34 individuals. Ones and twos were seen during this period on nine dates at Napton Hill, six dates at Wormleighton Res, four dates at Alvecote, three dates at Fenny Compton and on single dates at Arley, Bedworth Woodlands, Bentley, Draycote, Ladywalk, Lighthorne Quarry, Lillington, Meon Hill and Nuneaton.

- Worcs** Bred along the Malverns, including eight pairs between British Camp and The Gullet, and at Calcot Hill, Callow Hill, Dowles Brook (six singing on May 27th), Happy Valley, Midsummer Hill (10 singing on June 1st), New Parks (four singing on May 23rd) and probably at Walton Hill. One sang by the Laugharne Brook at Shoulton on July 4th. Seen on spring passage at Shelsley Walsh and Upton Warren, and in autumn at Abberton, Bredon Hill, Bredons Hardwick, Little Comberton, Lower Moor, Malvern Link, Romsley, Upton Warren and Walton Hill, where a count of 10 was made on August 17th. An unusually late individual was at Happy Valley on October 18th *MJI, GJM, SMW*.

- Staffs** Coombes Valley, with 41 pairs, remains the regional stronghold. Good numbers were also on Cannock Chase, with 35 territorial males including 18 in song at Brocton Coppice on April 30th, eight in song at Dick Slee's Cave on May 15th and others singing at a further eight sites. Other breeding season records came from Chartley Moss, Crumpwood, R. Dove (near Three Shires Head), Dydon Wood, Hanchurch, Knotbury, near Knar, Stanton Dale (five singing on May 4th) and Tittesworth. Passage birds were noted in spring at Belvide on April 27th and Basford Green on May 3rd. In autumn, singles were at Betley Mere on July 26th (trapped), Blithfield on August 10th (immature male), Pool Dam Marsh on September 4th (female), Bushton Lane on 5th and Belvide on 11th (male), with another there on 21st and 26th.

W Mid Spring migrants were reported from Sandwell Valley on April 2nd and 15th; Saltwells LNR on 9th; Fens Pools on April 12th, 19th-20th and May 4th; Woodgate Valley on April 14th and 16th; Bartley on 23rd; Valley Park on 26th; Sheepwash UP on 28th and Lutley on 29th. First birds in the autumn were two young near Pedmore on July 12th, which were not thought to have been bred locally, with another here on August 22nd. Further birds, singles unless otherwise stated, were also noted at Brownhills NT on July 14th; Clayhanger on the same day; Bartley on 16th and 17th; Fens Pools LNR on 27th and 29th, followed by two on September 23rd and a further singleton on 28th; Woodgate Valley on August 3rd and 12th-19th; Sheepwash UP on 10th; Fishley on 11th; Sandwell Valley on 13th, 25th (two), 27th (two), 29th-31st and September 5th, 7th (two) and 12th; Dunstall Park on September 1st; Park Lime Pits from 2nd-5th; Harborne NR on 9th; Pelsall North Common on 27th; and Goscote Valley on 30th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly in north Staffs. Widespread on passage.

Average: April 22nd (61) – October 6th (57)

A characteristic arrival and departure, with the first on April 22nd at Belvide and the last at Kenilworth on October 10th.

Warks A poor year, with no evidence of breeding at BAD Kineton. In spring, just five individuals were recorded, with single males at Draycote on April 25th-26th and Grandborough on May 1st, females at Priors Hardwick on 9th and Coton on 11th, and a singing male at Lighthorne Quarry (but not subsequently) on 13th. A total of 21 individuals were recorded on return passage from July 17th-October 10th, with ones and twos only at Brandon, Draycote, Fenny Compton, Ilmington Downs, Knightcote, Ladywalk, Lighthorne Quarry, Napton Hill, Pleasance Farm (Kenilworth), Seeswood Pool, Shustoke and Wormleighton Res.

Worcs Undoubtedly the best place to see this species in the county is Upton Warren, with records from there on five dates in spring and a staggering 47 in autumn. The spring records ranged from April 25th-May 4th and were all singles, apart from a pair on April 29th. Seen in autumn from July 20th to September 27th, mainly in ones and twos, but with a peak of three from September 1st-3rd. Elsewhere, noted on passage at Bishampton Vale Pool from August 31st-September 9th, with a peak of eight on September 5th; Bredon Hill; Castle-morton Common, where the peak was just three this year on September 14th and 21st; Hollybed Common; Larford; Lower Moor; Rous Lench; Throckmorton; and Timberhonger.

Staffs Birds were seen in probable breeding areas at Goldsitch Moss, Hazel Barrow, Knotbury and Swallow Moss (where six were present on May 25th, but only one on June 14th). Three on Cannock Chase in late May raised hopes of breeding, but were not seen subsequently so presumably were migrants. Spring passage birds were also at Aqualate (three on April 24th), Belvide, Bushton Lane, Chasewater, Denstone Hall Farm, Sideway and Tittesworth. Return passage birds were at Blithfield, Crossplains (three on August 30th), Levedale (a juvenile) and Whitemoor Haye (a pair in mid-August).



*This moulted adult **Grey Phalarope** was a good find at Sheepwash UP (Keith Stone).*



*This well watched **Wood Lark** at Clayhanger was another excellent find for an urban area (Keith Stone).*



A **Common Redstart** photographed at Milldale. This was a good year, with an especially strong autumn passage (Phill Ward).



This singing **Grasshopper Warbler** at Chasewater was one of very few to be found again this year (Neil Stych).

W Mid Spring passage birds were reported from Sandwell Valley on April 23rd, 26th, 28th (two) and May 8th-9th and 16th; Marsh Lane GP on April 25th; Dunstall Park on April 25th, 27th, May 2nd (two) and 4th; Sheepwash UP on April 28th, 29th (two) and May 4th (three); Bartley on April 30th; Pelsall North Common on May 1st; Park Lime Pits also on 1st and again on 9th; Valley Park on 4th; and Clayhanger on 4th and 7th (two). A good autumn passage in Sandwell Valley began with four on August 27th followed by three on 29th, six on 30th, three on 31st and singles on September 6th, 11th, 22nd and 26th. Singles were at Clayhanger and Fishley on September 1st; while Sheepwash UP had two from 11th-13th then singles from 14th-16th and on 28th and October 1st. Others were noted at Park Lime Pits on September 9th and 23rd, Goscote Valley on September 10th, Pelsall North Common also on 10th (three) and Dunstall Park on 12th.

Common Stonechat (Stonechat) *Saxicola torquata*

Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce as a breeding bird.

Warks A very poor year, with all records possibly relating to passage migrants. In spring, there was a male at Dosthill on February 23rd and a female on March 2nd and 12th, singles at Draycote on March 3rd, Whitacre Heath on 8th and Brandon during the same month, and a male at Kinwalsey on April 10th. The only autumn records came from Ladywalk, where an adult male on September 27th was followed by another bird on October 25th, and Fenny Compton, where a male was present on October 6th.

Worcs At least three pairs bred successfully in the Malvern area, but an occasionally used site in the north of the county was unoccupied this year. Outside the breeding season, seen at Bredon Hill, Castlemorton Common (up to six in October), Happy Valley, Hollybed Common, Holt, Lower Moor (where a male was killed by a bird of prey in February), North Hill, Strensham, Sugar Loaf, Upton Warren and Walton Hill.

Staffs Five males held territory on Cannock Chase and one pair bred in Sherbrook Valley, with birds from that family being seen to the end of the year. Three males were also in Upper Sherbrook on May 9th, with three juveniles at Anson's Bank next day. Outside the breeding season, two were at Croxall on January 1st, a male was at Dosthill on 5th and a female on February 28th. Further females were then at Tittesworth on September 27th and Belvide on 29th and lastly a male was at Doxey Marshes on November 22nd.

W Mid In the first winter period, the bird from 1996 remained in the Sheepwash UP area until early March, but sadly this regular wintering area is currently threatened by an extension of tipping. Singles were noted in Sandwell Valley on February 15th, 22nd, 26th-28th and March 2nd-3rd, with a second bird on February 28th. Singles were along the Rushall Canal at Aldridge on March 1st and at Bartley on April 2nd. In the autumn, one again returned to the Sheepwash UP area on September 15th, remaining to the end of the year. Singles were also seen at Sandwell Valley on September 23rd, October 13th, 17th and November 17th; Pelsall North Common on October 9th; and Park Lime Pits on October 28th.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly on the northern moorlands. Fairly common and widespread on passage.

Average: March 19th (60) – October 16th (61)

A strong spring passage, which began early with two at Baginton and one in Sandwell Valley on March 7th. Widespread by late March, though the main movement came in April. Fewer in autumn, with the last at Draycote on October 18th apart from a late bird at Blackbank Hill on November 1st.

Warks Noted at 19 localities on spring passage during March 7th-May 17th, with site maxima of five at Bermuda on April 5th, four at Dosthill on 6th, three at Kenilworth on 8th, nine at Ilmington Downs on 12th, three at Ladywalk on 26th, six at Kineton on 28th, four at Grandborough Fields on May 1st and five at Draycote on 5th. A late bird was seen at Draycote on May 28th. Autumn passage was unusually widespread and ran from July 30th-October 18th, with records from 15 sites and maxima of three at Wormleighton Res on August 29th, four at Draycote on September 4th and 29th, and three at Fenny Compton on October 6th.

Worcs A pair bred successfully at the usual site on the Malverns. Recorded at 19 localities in spring and 12 in autumn. Multiple arrivals in spring included 12 at North Hill on March 31st, 11 at Bredon Hill on April 13th followed by a peak count there of 30 on May 1st, five at Bishampton Vale Pool on April 22nd and five at Larford on April 24th. Peak autumn counts were five at Bredons Hardwick on August 25th, five at Bishampton Vale Pool on September 1st and five at Bredon Hill on September 28th. A leucistic individual at Upton Warren on October 10th caused a few palpitations amongst birders hoping to add one of the rarer Wheatear species to their county lists.

Staffs In the main breeding area of North Staffs there were 15 in a field at Morridge on May 6th, a colony of 12 on a hillside in the Manifold Valley on June 12th, 10 at Musden Low on July 7th, six at Knotbury on May 25th and reports from a further four sites. On spring passage, reported from 10 localities with maxima of 31 at Blackbank Hill on April 26th and five at Chasewater on 27th. Not so widespread in autumn, with reports from just five localities and maxima of five at Crossplains on September 7th and four at Blithfield on September 5th. One at Belvide on October 5th and a late bird at Blackbank Hill on November 1st.

W Mid Spring passage was recorded in Sandwell Valley on 23 dates between March 7th-May 16th, with a peak of 12 on April 26th; Sheepwash UP on seven dates between March 22nd-May 2nd, with a peak of eight on April 27th; Dunstall Park, with at least 34 individuals passing through between March 30th-May 15th and a peak of four on April 28th; and the old Aldridge airfield throughout April, with a peak of nine on 29th. Also noted at Clayhanger on five dates between March 31st-May 9th, with a maximum of five on April 29th; Marsh Lane GP on March 31st and April 26th; Stubbers Green (two) on March 31st; Sutton Park also on March 31st; Bartley on April 2nd; Park Lime Pits on 7th (two); Hampton-in-Arden on 11th; Fens Pools LNR on 12th and 26th (two); Goscote Valley on 24th; Valley Park on 26th; Fisley on 27th and May 5th (two); the former Bilston steelworks on April 30th (two); Clayhanger on May

7th; and Harborne NR on 12th. As usual, somewhat scarcer in the autumn, but five were noted at Dunstall Park during August, with a further five in September, while at Sandwell Valley birds were present on seven dates between August 14th-September 27th, with a notable peak for autumn of 10 on August 31st. Also seen at Goscote Valley, Pelsall North Common, Stubbers Green and Sheepwash UP, all on August 10th; at Dunstall Park on 13th (two), September 6th and 10th; at Sheepwash UP again on August 25th; and Edgbaston Reservoir on October 16th. A few were also reported on autumn passage during August/September from the old Walsall airfield.

Greenland Wheatear *O. o. leucorrhoa*

Rare, though probably overlooked, passage migrant (8/10).

Birds showing the characteristics of this race were seen as follows:

Warks A male at Kingsbury on April 29th KW.

Worcs One at Bredon Hill on April 23rd followed by a pair there on May 5th SMW.

W Mid A female at Marsh Lane GP on April 27th.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

An uncommon, and declining, summer resident to the North Staffs Moors.

Uncommon passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

Average: March 30th (41) – October 24th (35)

First reported from the Malverns on March 23rd, with the main passage being in April. A good late autumn passage through the Malverns, where the last two were seen on November 6th.

Warks Single males were at Brandon from April 4th-6th, Kingsbury on 18th and in the churchyard at Napton Hill on September 28th.

Worcs A good year in the Happy Valley/North Hill area of Malvern. Reported there in spring from March 23rd-April 20th, mainly in singles or pairs, but including five on April 2nd and 18th. Even better in autumn, with small parties regularly from September 21st-November 6th. The largest counts were six on September 27th, seven on 28th, six on October 3rd, seven on October 28th-29th, eight on 30th and five on 31st. Away from the Malverns, a male was at Bittell on April 28th and a female at Bredon Hill on September 24th.

Staffs A species which is in rapid decline, with probably a maximum of no more than five pairs on the North Staffs Moors this year. A male was seen at Drystone Edge on March 29th, one at Ramshaw Rocks on April 6th, a pair at Orchard Common on April 13th, a pair at Middle Hills on May 14th and a pair mobbing a Little Owl at the far end of the Roaches on July 1st. The only passage record was of a male at Hanbury on April 26th.

W Mid A female was in Sandwell Valley on April 26th and a male at Dunstall Park on 26th-27th. In autumn, a very elusive individual remained in the Sheepwash UP area from September 4th-14th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Territory counts included ten at both Alvecote and Ladywalk, 41 in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke and 27 on about 80ha between Piccadilly and

Wood End (Kingsbury). A total of 88 on the May BAD Kineton count was back to average numbers after last year's crash. A "prolific" breeding season was noted at Lillington, where two pairs in the observer's garden reared 11 young from five attempts. Several autumn influxes were noted, including 20 at Napton Hill (with a Ring Ouzel) on September 28th, followed by 85 there on October 3rd; 35 on Burton Dassett Hills on September 30th; and an increase at Brandon to a maximum of 33 on October 31st.

Worcs Census returns revealed no obvious trends, with small increases at Southcrest and Web Heath balanced by a decrease at Alfrick and a stable situation at Shortwood Roughts. Several autumn flocks were reported this year, the largest being 40 at Walton Hill on November 1st and 50 at Happy Valley on 13th.

Staffs At the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserve, 37 pairs nested (*cf.* 52 in 1996). In the Anslow area 74 frequented fields in December and at Lawneswood the monthly maximum was 12 in May.

W Mid 28 territories were noted on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* 35 in 1996) and 16 on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (*cf.* 15 in 1996). Enjoyed better breeding success than usual in a Four Oaks garden and reported as very common on Harborne NR, with no change in status. A notable influx into Sandwell Valley was observed on October 16th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Bred North Staffs Moors 1974-77, 1980 and 1985.

Average: September 30th (62) – May 2nd (61)

A return to more normal numbers in the first winter period, following last year's huge influx. Most departed during March, but moderately-sized flocks were still being reported into the third week of April and the last report was of four birds at Napton Hill on 29th. First noted in autumn on October 2nd at Dosthill, with the major influx commencing between 15th-24th and building up to substantial numbers once again during November.

Warks Large numbers were again present in the south-east of the county during the cold weather, including site maxima of 500 at Chapel Ascote and 1000 at Wormleighton Res on January 5th, 800 at Fenny Compton on 17th, 300 at Compton Wynyates on 18th, 300 at Gaydon and 1850 in one meadow alone at Chesterton on February 4th, 600 at Bishops Itchington on 18th and 550 at Knightcote on March 5th. Elsewhere in the county, flocks were much smaller and typically fewer than 100. The larger ones included 250 at Draycote on January 19th, 300 in Packington Park on February 5th, 150 at Shuckburgh Hills on March 16th, 200 at Alvecote on 28th and 120 at Arley on April 17th. The first large autumn influx involved 650 at Fenny Compton on October 24th and 200 at both Ladywalk and Napton Hill on 26th, with later maxima of 500 on Ilmington Downs and 300+ at Ladywalk on November 2nd, 800 roosting at Wormleighton Res on 7th, 1000 roosting on the Burton Dassett Hills on 8th, 1200 at Fenny Compton on 9th and 1300 at Knightcote on 10th. There were also smaller flocks of 2-400 during the final two months at Alvecote, Chesterton, Dosthill, Draycote, Long Marston Airfield, Napton Hill and Packington.

Worcs Reports of 42 flocks were received, with little difference between the two winter periods. Those exceeding 200 birds included 500 at Dodford on January 9th, 300 at Upton Warren on 19th, 2000 at Tanwood Cross on 23rd, 250 at Tiddesley Wood on 26th and 280 at Hanbury on February 2nd. In the second winter period there were 400 at Bredons Hardwick on October 30th, 250 at Longdon Marsh on December 26th and 30th, and 1000 at Strensham on December 26th.

Staffs Among the larger late-winter flocks were 300 plus at Gailey on January 23rd, 400 along the R. Dove on February 16th, 1300 at Crossplains on 23rd, 300-400 at the Sheepwalks on March 18th, 500 at Calton on 25th and 350 at Thorncliffe on April 1st. On January 5th, 30 were eating apples in a garden at Weeping Cross, but all had disappeared a week later with the onset of milder weather. In the second winter period, significant flocks included 300 flying SW along the R. Dove at Norbury on October 17th, 200 at Blithfield on November 2nd, 2000 at Belvide on 4th, 500 at Coombes Valley in November, 1500 in the Croxall/Whitemoor Haye area in mid-November and 1400 at Chasewater late in the month.

W Mid Highest counts in the first winter period comprised 60 at Park Lime Pits on January 3rd, 40 in Valley Park on 12th, 105 near Hayhead Wood on February 22nd, 125 in Sandwell Valley on March 9th and in excess of 100 on ploughed land near Water Orton on 24th. Lastly, a spring flock of 40 was at Cuckoo's Nook on April 20th. Autumn/second winter peaks included 50 at Marsh Lane GP on October 15th, 60 at Park Lime Pits on November 5th, in excess of 250 at Clayhanger on 8th, 50 in Sandwell Valley on 27th and 65 on winter wheat in Aldridge on December 4th. Flocks were also reported on a daily basis heading west over Darlaston in the early mornings during the first week of November. Reports of less than 25 were received from Dunstall Park, Fens Pools LNR and Harborne NR.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Much declined, though still very common resident. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks Territory counts included 12 on the reserve area at Brandon, ten in 1km² at Ladbroke and six on 80ha between Piccadilly and Wood End (Kingsbury). Still scarce in many northern and central districts, eg only one was seen during the year in a Hatton garden where breeding was formerly regular. Along a 3km stretch of the Greenway path at Long Marston only two were detected in comparison with 20 Blackbirds. However, numbers in the south-east seem to be holding up well, eg the count of 28 at BAD Kineton was well up on last year and almost 36% above average. There were influxes of 18 on September 26th and 30 on October 3rd at Napton Hill, and one of 20 at Wormleighton Res on November 3rd.

Worcs Breeding numbers decreased at Alfrick, Shortwood Roughts and Tibberton, but increased at Southcrest and Web Heath. A few small parties were seen in autumn, but the only double-figure count was 12 at Happy Valley on October 19th.

Staffs A total of 21 singing birds was noted at six sites on Cannock Chase in April

and May, seven were in the Chasewater area and 15 pairs bred on the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves (*cf.* 11 in 1996). No further significant records were received.

W Mid Six territories were located on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* four in 1996) and six also on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot, where numbers have doubled since 1995. Four breeding pairs were at Fens Pools LNR, at least three breeding pairs at Harborne NR and at least seven pairs in Valley Park, while 10 or more territory holding males were reported from Sandwell Valley. Said to be 'definitely increasing but still scarce-ish' at Saltwells LNR, but a decline noted at Willenhall Memorial Park where two or three pairs formerly bred but now only odd singletons occur. Five birds, thought to be of the continental race *T. p. philomelos*, were at Marsh Lane GP on October 3rd, as were singles at Harborne NR on 9th and December 9th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor.

Average: September 26th (63) – April 17th (62)

Many moved away during the hard weather in early January and flocks in the first winter period were quite small. Last seen on April 21st at Harborne NR and Upton Warren. The first autumn bird, at Napton Hill on September 29th, was followed by a trickle of others before a heavy passage around October 11th-14th heralded a good autumn influx.

Warks Generally present in relatively small numbers during the late winter, the largest flock being in Fenny Compton where a peak of 380 was reached on March 1st. Other flocks included a peak of 120 feeding on cotoneaster in a Lillington garden during the cold weather on January 9th, 250 at Compton Wynnyates and 100 at Shipston-on-Stour on 18th and 100 at Chesterton on February 4th, followed by 140 at Bishops Itchington, 120 at Lower Tysoe and 100 at Stoneton on 8th. A good autumn influx began on October 12th, with two flocks of 50 at Ladywalk followed by 590 moving west over Fenny Compton in an hour on 13th, 400 north-west over Wormleighton Res on 14th and 100 on Napton Hill on 19th. Subsequently there were flocks of 400 at Ladywalk on October 26th, 300 at Farnborough on 30th, 550 at Wormleighton Res on November 3rd and 400 at both Napton Hill on 4th and Knightcote on 10th, but with relatively low numbers after mid-November.

Worcs Many reports of flocks up to 200 strong, mainly in the second winter period. The largest count for the first winter period was 1000, at Tanwood Cross on January 23rd. Autumn brought a heavy passage in mid-October, with 800 over Cookley in three hours on 12th and 300 at Upton Warren the same day; 220 over Little Comberton on 13th; 500 over Happy Valley and 1000 at Hewell Grange on 17th; 400 at Westmancote on 19th; and 250 at Upton-on-Severn on 20th.

Staffs The hard weather early in the year brought 200 to feed on *Pyracantha* berries at Hockley on January 8th, while a similar number fed on berries in Newcastle Town Centre on 5th. Up to 20 also fed on apples in a Weeping Cross garden on January 5th and nine on berries at Porthill Bank on 14th. Later, 200 flew north over Ellastone on January 22nd and 550 gathered at Bereswood CP, near Newcastle, on March 12th. In autumn and early winter, 5000 passed

through Coombes Valley between October 11th-13th, 50 were at Gilberts Cross on 23rd and 200 were at Croxall on December 24th.

- W Mid** Again the hard weather of early January forced birds into the urban areas, with 38 in a Four Oaks garden on January 1st, 30 in an Aldridge garden on 5th and around 200 on a busy traffic island in Ladywood on 11th. Several others were also reported in gardens about this time. At least 100 were in Valley Park on January 6th, followed in February by 150 at Braggs Farm, 100 at Dunstall Park and 150 in Sandwell Valley, whilst 40 congregated behind Aldridge Rectory on March 5th. Autumn passage began in earnest on October 12th, when 850 moved west over Park Lime Pits in two hours, followed by around 630 in two and a half hours the next day, when over 100 were also in Valley Park. Other notable counts around this time consisted of 50 over Berkswell on 14th and 300 at Sheepwash UP on the same day, followed by 300 moving south-west in one hour on 17th. Later, 300 were at Fens Pools LNR on November 1st, 40 at Aldridge on December 14th and 50 in Sandwell Valley on 25th. Reported as being very common at Harborne NR during the winter.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident.

- Warks** There were four breeding pairs in 1km² at Ladbroke, with one or two pairs reported from 12 further localities, though generally under-recorded. Apart from 40 at Ladywalk in September, post-breeding flocks were small, with 26 in Burton Dassett churchyard on July 8th, 15 at Hodnell on 16th, 17 at Ratley on September 15th and 16 in Farnborough Park on October 30th.
- Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Bredon village, Bredon Hill and Tibberton. Several small parties recorded, the largest being 35 at Norton on August 27th, 25 at Arley on August 30th and 37 at Bredon Hill on September 24th.
- Staffs** Three pairs bred on Black Bank NR, 15 singing males were counted on Cannock Chase in April and May and four pairs nested in Coombes/Churnet Valley NR (*cf.* three in 1996) where 28 birds were counted in September.
- W Mid** Breeding pairs were reported from Bilston Cemetery, Handsworth Wood, Harborne NR/Walkway (several), Hayhead Wood, Mons Hill (where there were two territories on the CBC plot as in 1996), Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP, Sutton Park and Valley Park (at least four pairs). Post-breeding flocks included 15 in Sandwell Valley on August 18th, 21 in Dunstall Park on 21st and 27 at Sheepwash UP on September 27th.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Scarce resident, breeding only since 1993.

Continues to consolidate its position.

- Warks** Probably bred again at Brandon, where at least three males were singing on territory throughout the year *many obs* and a maximum of six were in song on March 4th *CHP*.
- Worcs** A pair bred successfully at Upton Warren, fledging a brood of four juveniles, and birds were present throughout the year, with an extra male on May 12th and from October 5th-16th at least *FH, AW*.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Frequent, though much declined, summer resident and passage migrant.

Average: April 17th (61) – August 26th (50)

The first arrival was at BAD Kineton on April 11th, with the next appearing about a week later. Little meaningful information on departure, but noted in early September at Stoke Floods.

Warks A pair bred successfully at Fenny Compton, where three reeling males were present at two sites in May. Other reeling birds were located at BAD Kineton (two), Brandon, Dosthill/Kingsbury (three), Draycote, Knightcote, Ladywalk, Middleton and Radway.

Worcs It is never easy to distinguish between passage birds and potential breeders, but indications of the latter came from long-stayers at Castlemorton Common, where there had been two on April 30th, and along the Droitwich Canal, where one remained throughout the summer after three had been found on April 26th. Elsewhere, there were singles in April, May and July at Abberton, Arrow Valley Lake, Cleeve Prior, Eckington, North Hill, Throckmorton, Timberhonger, Upton Warren and Wyre Piddle. Of these, only the Upton Warren bird reeled for more than two days and that sang from July 1st-11th.

Staffs Reeling birds were heard in spring at Abbots Bromley, Aqualate (two), Belvide (two), Betley Mere (two), Branston GP (two in the same area of scrub as in 1993 and 1996), Coombes Valley, Hamstall Ridware, Pepper Slade, Sherbrook Valley and Sideway. Reeling during the second period in late June and July was heard at Byrkley Park, Chasewater, Crumpwood Waterworks, R. Dove, Marston and Pool Dam Marsh (two on July 8th and breeding probably occurred).

W Mid Probably bred in Sandwell Valley (two pairs), at Stoke Floods (seen until early September) and at Whitley. Three also held territory at Clayhanger, while reeling birds were heard in the 'summer' along the R. Blyth near Barston and at Lutley, where two on July 9th may also have indicated successful breeding. Elsewhere 'reeling' birds, presumably on passage, were reported from Brades Hall on April 27th, Sheepwash UP on 29th, Clayhanger on May 3rd and 7th, and Bradnock's Marsh on May 10th (two).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common, though declining, summer resident.

Average: April 15th (61) – September 28th (55)

An early bird was again at Upton Warren, this time on April 9th, and others quickly followed over the next few days. Most left during September, but a late bird was at Barton GP on October 5th.

Warks Breeding season territories were held at Alvecote (six-eight), BAD Kineton (seven), Bidford-Marcliff (ten along R. Avon), Brandon, Chesterton (two), Compton Verney, Draycote (four), Earlswood, Fenny Compton (three), Kingsbury (ten), Ladywalk (only two), Lower Radbourn, Napton Res (four), Northend, Stoneton (two), Warmington, Whatcote (three-four) and Wormleighton Res (two). Numbers were generally well down this year. Believed to have bred for the first time at sewage works (Fenny Compton and Northend) holding the new reed filter systems *JJB*. In time these new

reedbeds could considerably increase the species' range within the county as many small works now have them.

Worcs Small numbers (up to six) were singing in spring at Ashmoor Common, Bittell, Bredons Hardwick, Cleeve Prior, Crophorne, Defford, Eckington, Feckenham, Grimley, Lower Moor, Oakley, Offerton and Sernal Green. The highest counts were 14 at Upton Warren on April 26th and 12 at Strensham on May 18th.

Staffs Breeding was confirmed or suspected at Barton GP, Belvide Res (17 singing on May 1st), Branston GP and WP (three), Clay Mills, Croxall (six), Doxey Marshes, Elford, Radford, Tittesworth, Westport (two pairs bred) and Wychnor. Six adults and 10 juveniles were ringed at Betley Mere CES, another decrease, and none bred on the R. Dove this year.

W Mid Five pairs were present at Bradnock's Marsh, one at Pelsall North Common and at least five in Sandwell Valley. Two or three singing birds were also at Clayhanger, where almost certainly bred. However, there was no evidence of breeding at Sheepwash UP, which was once a favoured locality, but where just one or two passage birds were noted in spring and autumn. One or two were also in song at Valley Park, but breeding was not suspected. At Fens Pools, also a former breeding locality, the sole records were two on April 26th and May 4th, with one on 7th and two again on 8th. Two were at Saltwells LNR in spring and also reported from Bumble Hole on July 15th.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Scarce and declining summer resident, now only in south Worcs and seemingly no longer breeding.

Average: May 27th (47) – July 8th (3)

Worcs Sadly the demise of this delightful songster continues, with just a single male singing in the Avon Valley from May 29th-June 15th *SMW et al.* This bird had been colour-ringed at the same site in 1991.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer resident.

Average: April 23rd (57) – September 26th (51)

Early arriving, with the first on April 12th at Westwood and others during the last week of April. Most had left by the end of September, but two were at Betley Mere on October 5th.

Warks Breeding season territories were held at Alvecote (ten), Bedworth Hill Res (two), Bidford-Marcliff (14 along R. Avon *cf.* seven in 1996), Brandon, Chesterton, Coombe, Draycote, Fenny Compton (in new STW reed filter bed, see also Sedge Warbler), Kingsbury (three), Lower Radbourn (three), Napton Res, Packington (two), The Somers, Ufton Fields (two) and Wormleighton Res (eight *cf.* four in 1996). A few more were recorded on passage, including a bird in a Wellesbourne garden on May 17th.

Worcs Small numbers (up to 10) were singing at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell, Defford, Eckington, Feckenham, Grimley, Lower Moor, Oakley, Strensham, Thorngrove, Tibberton, Upton Warren and Westwood. Particularly interesting was the comparison, in May, between a nine mile stretch of the Worcester

and Birmingham Canal from Shernal Green to Tolladine, which contained 35 singing males *RRH*, and a five mile section of the disused Droitwich Canal, which hosted 61 singing males *GDL*.

Staffs At Aqualate there were at least 12 singing males (probably an underestimate) and young were still being fed there on August 24th. Also noted at Barton GP (two singing), Belvide (six breeding pairs), Branstons GP (three on July 14th), Elford GP (three on May 26th) and Westport (two pairs bred and young were still being fed on August 9th). At Betley Mere CES, 66 adults and 61 juveniles were trapped, including two late birds on October 5th. Totals would have been much higher, but for the heavy rain in late June.

W Mid Breeding was reported from Clayhanger and Sandwell Valley (probably three pairs at each) and Sheepwash UP (up to five in song in early July), but no records were received from Fens Pools LNR, where last bred in 1994. Passage birds were in Dunstall Park on April 20th and September 10th.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Very scarce vagrant (1/10):

The third regional record, following the last in 1993. Its arrival coincided with a scatter of others along the East Coast.

Warks One at Napton Hill on August 25th *PDH* with a large influx of migrants was the first county record. See Short Notes for description and further details.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Only the third confirmed regional record this century.

Worcs One at Castlemorton Common on March 6th *WFP, WRHP*. Perhaps the most exciting find of the year, this bird was found by birders searching for a Firecrest discovered nearby earlier in the day. The second county record this century, but only 15 months after the first was seen on the Lickey Hills in December 1995.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common summer resident.

Average: April 21st (61) – September 20th (61)

Arrived punctually, with the first in the unlikely environs of Birmingham City Centre on April 21st, but not widespread until early May. Appeared to be a generally poor year, with very little evidence of autumn passage. Last noted on October 2nd at Wormleighton.

Warks Singing males were noted at 27 sites during the breeding season, with four at Fenny Compton (*cf.* six in 1996) and three at both Draycote and Lighthorne Quarry. The BAD Kineton count of 17 was slightly down from last year, but still the third highest since 1987. Several observers, however, noted continued scarcity or absence from their areas. Breeding was proved only at Alvecote and Wormleighton Res. Ten were on Fenny Compton Hills on September 9th.

Worcs Several observers commented that it was a noticeably poor year for the species. Recorded at 36 localities, but only Southcrest (three) and Tibberton (six) had more than a couple of singing males.

Staffs Bred at Blithfield, where a bird was

seen carrying food on June

15th, and at Coombes

Valley. Also present

in the breeding

season at Belvide,

Croxall Mill, Haughton,

Lawneswood, Tittesworth

and Warwickshire Moor

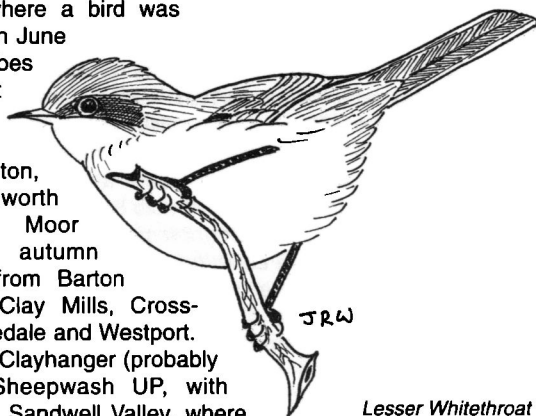
(Tamworth). During autumn

passage, reported from Barton

GP, Byrkley Park, Clay Mills, Cross-

plains, R. Dove, Levedale and Westport.

W Mid Successfully bred at Clayhanger (probably three pairs) and Sheepwash UP, with probable breeding in Sandwell Valley, where there were two pairs. One held territory on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits and one was in song at Fens Pools LNR from mid-May, but with no definite proof of breeding. Noted on both spring and autumn passage at Marsh Lane GP. Two spring migrants were also reported from central Birmingham, at Dartmouth Circus on April 21st and St Chad's Circus on May 2nd; with others at Dunstall Park on May 3rd and 14th (two) and at Harborne NR on May 20th.



Lesser Whitethroat
(Jim Winsper)

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Very common summer resident.

Average: April 14th (63) – September 26th (63)

First noted on April 10th at Park Lime Pits, with the main influx about two weeks later. Return passage was mainly in August, with few reports for September, though the last was on October 4th at Fenny Compton.

Warks A substantial increase was noted at BAD Kineton, with 77 being the third highest count since 1987 and 37% above average. Numbers were also up in the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton area, with 53 in Fenny Compton parish and 11 in the Wormleighton Res area (cf. 46 and eight respectively in 1996). Other territory counts included ten at Brandon and eight at both Ladywalk and in the replanted section of Oversley Wood. On autumn passage, there were counts of 17 in a patch of scrub by the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton on August 16th and nine at Lighthorne Quarry on September 1st.

Worcs Widespread as usual, with the largest accumulations of singing males tending to occur in early May and probably including a considerable passage element. The best counts were 24 along the Malverns from British Camp to The Gullet (a big increase cf. 14 in 1996), eight at Lower Moor, 11 at Two Tree Hill and an impressive 35 at Castlemorton Common on May 5th (though a count of 15 on 30th was doubtless a better reflection of the breeding strength there).

Staffs During the breeding season reported from 20 sites, with a concentration on Cannock Chase, where the largest numbers were 20 singing at Anson's Bank

on May 10th and 12 along the Sherbrook Valley on May 9th. At Belvide there were 13 singing males, while six pairs bred at Westport and three at Coombes Valley. During autumn passage, 25 were noted below the dam at Chasewater on August 10th, large numbers were on the railway embankment at Croxall Mill on August 24th and further records came from Blithfield, Brocton Coppice, Crossplains, R. Dove and Westport.

W Mid Breeding season records came from Aldridge, Barr Common, Bradnock's Marsh (six in late May), Bumble Hole, Dunstall Park/ Valley Park (at least 10 pairs), Fens Pools LNR (three pairs), Foot's Hole, Foxcote, Harborne NR (two pairs), Hobs Hole Lane, near Illey (three pairs), Lutley, Marsh Lane GP and area, Marston Green Recreation Ground, Park Lime Pits (13 territories on the CBC plot *cf.* nine in 1996), Pedmore area, Saltwells LNR (apparently now 'common'), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (seven in song in May), Sheldon, Small Heath (on railway embankment) and Sutton Park (where apparently quite numerous).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Common summer resident.

Average: April 21st (60) – September 12th (59)

An incredibly early bird in Sandwell Valley on March 31st was the earliest ever by four days, though the main passage was typically in late April and early May. Most slipped quietly away in August and early September, but a late bird was reported from Sandwell Valley again on October 5th.

Warks A substantial rise reported at BAD Kineton, following a crash last year, with 24 singing males logged which was more than 60% above average. Otherwise, widely reported with the best territory counts of four between Edge Hill-Piccadilly (Kingsbury), four at Fenny Compton along 1km of the Oxford Canal and six (*cf.* three in 1996) around Wormleighton Res. Nine were at the latter site on July 30th.

Worcs Reported from just 25 localities this year. Most records related to no more than one or two singing birds, but three were at Bittell and Blackstone Rock, 10 along the Malverns between British Camp and The Gullet, and three at Dowles Brook, Lower Moor and Trench Wood. Seen on passage at Tibberton and Upton Warren.

Staffs During the European Nightjar survey on Cannock Chase, singing birds were noted at 21 localities, with 10 at Haywood Warren on May 15th and five each at Beaudesert Golf Club, Brindley Heath, Oldacre Valley and Pottal Covert. Singing birds were also heard at 11 other localities in the county, including six at Belvide on May 19th, while 23 pairs bred at Coombes Valley and two at Westport. There were just two autumn passage records, from Tittesworth and Westport, both on August 30th.

W Mid There were two territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (as in 1996) and four on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (*cf.* two in 1996), whilst breeding was confirmed on Harborne NR (two pairs) and in Valley Park. Probably bred in Sandwell Valley (two pairs) as well, while singing birds were at Meer End on May 1st and Bartley on 9th. Noted on passage at Clayhanger.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Very common summer resident. Frequent and increasing winter visitor.

- Warks** The best territory counts were 35 at BAD Kineton (*cf.* 19 in 1996), nine at Brandon, eight along 1km of the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton, 11 in Itchington Holt, ten at Ladbroke in 1km², eight in Oversley Wood, six at Snitterfield Bushes, ten at Wood End (Kingsbury) and nine in the Wormleighton Res area. Late winter records came from gardens at Fenny Compton, Ladbroke, Lillington, Longbridge, Radway and Southam. The first spring migrant was singing at Compton Verney on March 23rd, followed by several more during the next few days. Autumn passage included ten on Meon Hill on August 9th and 11 at Napton Hill on September 28th. Early winter records came from gardens at Kenilworth, Lillington (where five different birds were trapped during November-December), Red Hill, Rugby and Stratford-upon-Avon.
- Worcs** Singing males were reported from 44 localities and information from survey sites suggested little change from 1996, although at Alfrick numbers doubled to six pairs. Other peak counts of singing males included nine around Alvechurch in mid-April, 13 along the Malverns between British Camp and The Gullet and eight at Upton Warren on April 26th. Widely reported from gardens outside the breeding season, with birds at 21 localities in the first winter period and 12 in the second. Many records involved more than one bird, but the prize for the most this year was shared by gardens in Malvern Link and St Johns, each having a minimum of four individuals.
- Staffs** Singing males and breeding pairs were reported from 44 widely scattered localities. The larger concentrations were at Anslow (41 in mid-June), Beaudesert Old Park (12), Coombes Valley (21 pairs bred), Fair Oak Pool (eight on April 21st), Wandon Spur (eight in mid-May) and Westport (seven males on May 19th and three breeding pairs). During the winter, birds were reported from gardens at Birchall, Bucknall, Newcastle, Rickerscote and Weeping Cross.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Bartley, the Worcester and Birmingham Canal by Birmingham University, Brades Hall/Sheepwash UP area, Fens Pools LNR (four pairs thought to have bred), Four Oaks, Harborne NR (around eight pairs), Illey area, Marston Green Recreation Ground, Mons Hill (nine territories on the CBC plot – no change from 1996), Park Lime Pits (five territories on the CBC plot – no change), Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park, Valley Park, Willenhall Memorial Park and Woodgate Valley. Noted on spring passage at Deers Leap Wood. Reported in the first winter period, mostly in gardens, at Aldridge, Balsall Common (two), Bilston, Dorridge (two), Earlswood, Erdington, Four Oaks, Great Barr, Harborne, Knowle, Penn (two), Solihull, Shirley, Streetly, Tipton, Tyseley, Valley Park (two), Wall Heath (up to three) and south Walsall (two). In the second winter period records, again mostly of birds in gardens, came from Balsall Common, Berkswell (in woodland area), Dorridge (two), Four Oaks (two in November), Marston Green, Newtown School adjacent to Sheepwash UP (up to two) and Valley Park. A female-type in the Hampton area during April/May was giving a full song, which was likened to a cross between a Garden Warbler and Blackcap.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei**Very rare vagrant (0/10)***1994 Addendum**

This is a new species to *The British List*, having previously been regarded as a race of Yellow-browed Warbler *P. i. humei*, so the following constitutes the first regional record.

Staffs One was at Westport Lake on December 20th at least *WJL*. A full description of this individual is contained in the *WMBC Annual Report No 61 pp142-143*.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly confined to the north and west of the Region.

Average: April 21st (61) – August 25th (48)

No indication of any improvement in the fortunes of this species. Arrived and left promptly, with the first on April 21st at Alton Towers and the last on August 25th at Napton Hill.

Warks An autumn migrant on Napton Hill from August 22nd-25th was the only record.
Worcs Numbers remain at a low level, with singing males at Arley Wood (three), just one between British Camp and The Gullet, Callow Hill, Dowles Brook (10), Happy Valley, Knowles Coppice and Lickey Hills. Birds presumed to be spring passage migrants were present at Abberton, Beaconhill Wood, Bewdley, Bredons Hardwick, Monk Wood, Vilts Wood and West Malvern.

Staffs On Cannock Chase, singing males were noted at Brocton Coppice, Dick Slee's Cave, Katyn Memorial, Satnall Hills and Seven Springs, where two pairs probably bred. Towards the north of the county, recorded at Alton Towers Wood, Basford Green, Coombes Valley (eight pairs bred), Crumpwood, Danebridge, Dydon Wood, Gradbach and Tittesworth.

W Mid One found in a few tall trees adjacent to the Gower Branch Canal at Brades Hall on April 24th remained until 27th. Single migrants were also noted at Harborne NR on May 1st and 21st.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Very common summer resident and uncommon winter visitor.

Warks Territory counts included 24 at BAD Kineton, seven in Hay Wood, seven in Itchington Holt, 14 in Oversley Wood, four in Poors Wood, five at Wood End-Piccadilly and four at Ladywalk and around Wormleighton Res. Singles during January-February at Brandon, Chesterton, Draycote and Ladywalk were followed by a very early arrival of summer migrants from March 2nd. Autumn passage included maxima of 20 at Fenny Compton Hills on August 28th, 30 at Wormleighton Res on 29th and 25 at Napton Hill on 30th. During the final two months, there were three at BAD Kineton from November 1st-17th; singles at Napton Hill on 4th, Draycote and Wormleighton Res on 7th and Coton on 9th; up to two at Ladywalk from 22nd into 1998; and one at Draycote on December 28th.

Worcs Reported at 52 localities throughout the county in spring, with counts of 16 singing males between British Camp and The Gullet and 19 in Trench Wood. Increased numbers were reported from the census plots at Alfrick, Castle-

morton Common, Shortwood Roughts and Southcrest. The only evidence of any significant autumn passage came from Happy Valley, where numbers reached 20 on September 13th. Noted in the first winter period only at Lower Moor, but more records later in the year, with reports from mid-November onwards at Bredons Hardwick, Happy Valley, Kempsey and Lower Moor.

Staffs During spring and early summer, a survey on Cannock Chase showed birds to be present at 25 localities, with 10 at Haywood Warren and Seven Springs, nine at Fairoaks Pool and Pottal Covert, and eight at Oakedge Park the more significant totals. Apart from the Chase, seen and heard at 30 other localities, with 10 breeding pairs at Coombes Valley, six in song at Belvide on March 28th, nine at Chasewater on April 6th, six at Betley Mere in April and six (including four juveniles) at Blithfield in September. During the second winter period, singles were at Chasewater in November and at both Coombes Valley and Tittesworth in December, while up to six were at Westport in late December.

W Mid Breeding season records came from Brueton Park, Clayhanger, Close Wood (three), Cuckoo's Nook, Deers Leap Wood, Fens Pools (at least two pairs bred and seven present on March 29th), Harborne NR (three or four pairs), Marston Green Recreation Ground, Meriden area, Mons Hill (four territories on the CBC plot *cf.* five in 1996), Park Lime Pits (five territories on the CBC plot *cf.* three in 1996), Sandwell Valley (at least seven in song), Sheepwash UP (where its presence for the first time during the breeding season is an indication of the maturing habitat), Sutton Park (12 noted in song on April 8th), Valley Park, Walsall Arboretum, Wergs and Willenhall Memorial Park (two in song). The peak count of autumn migrants at Sheepwash UP was 22, on September 13th. Singles were reported from Valley Park and a Chelmsley Wood garden during January, then in the second winter period there were up to two at Sheepwash UP and, in December, one at Fens Pools LNR.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant summer resident, though with some recent decline.

Average: March 26th (63) – October 5th (63)

First arrivals were noted at Castlemorton Common and Sandwell Valley on March 29th, with passage then building to a peak in mid-April. Last seen at Sheepwash UP on October 8th.

Warks Still in rather small numbers in many districts, with the largest territory counts being nine in the Wormleighton Res area and 15 from Edge Hill-Piccadilly (Kingsbury). However, there was a slight recovery to 85 at BAD Kineton, though this was still 10% below average. Spring passage maxima included 36 at Brandon on April 19th and at least 40 at Wormleighton Res on 23rd. Autumn passage included maxima of 30 at Napton Hill on August 1st and 35 from 22nd-25th, with 35 at Wormleighton Res on 8th.

Worcs Reported from 34 localities. Ironically, the largest concentration of singing males, 32 along the Malverns from British Camp to The Gullet, represented a small reduction on the previous year. Other double-figure counts of singing males in spring were 14 at Castlemorton Common, 25 in Happy Valley and 10 at Lower Moor.

- Staffs** A survey on Cannock Chase showed this species to be widely distributed, with records from 24 localities including 40 at Brocton Coppice, 30 at Haywood Warren, 28 in Oldacre Valley and 22 around the Fair Oaks Pool area. Away from the Chase, recorded in 22 areas, with 137 pairs in Coombes Valley (*cf.* 128 in 1996), 12 breeding pairs but few young at Westport and 11 around Trentham Park Lake on April 19th. At Betley Mere CES, 14 adults and two juveniles were ringed and at Weeping Cross up to two were coming to feeders during July and August.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Aldridge cricket field, Bradnock's Marsh (nine counted on April 13th), Branton Hill Quarry, Cuckoo's Nook, Deers Leap Wood, Fens Pools LNR (around 10 pairs), Harborne NR (approximately six pairs), Marston Green Recreation Ground, Mons Hill (three territories on the CBC plot as in 1996), Park Lime Pits (nine territories on the CBC plot, which was a slight increase), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (where passage peaked at 25 on April 23rd), Sutton Park (where fewer were present on the Four Oaks side because of scrub clearance), Valley Park and Willenhall Memorial Park (several pairs). Passage birds were reported from Tudor Grange Park and Small Heath.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Common resident and winter visitor.

- Warks** Breeding was widely reported, with a substantial recovery in some areas after the losses during the hard weather of early 1996, *eg.* 20 at BAD Kineton was four times higher than last year's May count. The largest late winter party was 20 in Oakley Wood on February 9th. A good autumn immigration resulted in "falls" of 30 in scrub on the Burton Dassett Hills on September 18th, Draycote on October 18th, Napton Hill on 19th and Ilmington Downs on November 2nd, while at least 90 were estimated in one small section of Oversley Wood on November 1st.
- Worcs** Breeds in suitable habitat throughout the county, including Worcester City Centre. More noticeable outside the breeding season, with counts of 25 at Happy Valley on November 6th, 30 at Chase End Hill on October 27th, 20 at Walton Hill on November 1st, 20 at Kingsford on December 14th and 20-30 in Chaddesley Wood on December 30th.
- Staffs** Sixteen pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* 19 in 1996), with a maximum of 60 there in November. Fourteen singing males were counted at Beaudesert, five at Pottal Pool and usual numbers were widely reported from elsewhere in the county.
- W Mid** Successfully bred at Harborne NR and almost certainly at Handsworth Wood. Also present in the breeding season at Marston Green, Mons Hill, Sandwell Valley, Valley Park and Wergs. Reported as a regular visitor to a Dorridge garden. Autumn/winter records came from Clayhanger, Cuckoo's Nook, Deers Leap Wood, Fens Pools LNR (from September 20th onwards with a peak of six in early October), a Fordhouses garden, Park Lime Pits, Sheepwash UP (where a small influx of up to 10 noted in late September), Sandwell Valley (also a small influx with 10 in the Hill Top area alone on September 27th), Tettenhall, Valley Park (up to six in October) and central Wolverhampton.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Bred 1975 and possibly in several other years up to 1989.

Six in a year is about average.

Warks One seen briefly at Hartshill Hayes on December 29th *SMH* was the only record.

Worcs One was at Ribbesford from February 15th-March 1st *IRM* and another hid amongst the gorse on Castlemorton Common from March 6th-8th *BT et al.*

W Mid Two, thought to be a pair, were in Sutton Park from February 8th-March 3rd at least *several observers* (the one present in Sutton Park in late December 1996 was presumably one of these birds). One at Fens Pools LNR on March 16th *DD, AGw, AP* coincided with an influx of Chiffchaffs into the area, but it quickly moved on.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common, though declining, summer resident.

Average: May 2nd (61) – September 27th (61)

First noted on May 1st at Little Comberton and Upton Warren, with others quickly following in the next few days. An equally typical departure, with the last at Fens Pools LNR on September 30th, apart from an exceptionally late individual in Fort Royal Park, Worcester, on October 31st, which was the latest in the Region since 1984.

Warks At last a noticeable increase in the breeding population was registered, although this seemed mainly confined to south-eastern districts. Breeding season records came from 23 sites, with proved pairs at Compton Verney, Coombe, Farnborough Park (four *cf.* two in 1996) and village, Fenny Compton (eight *cf.* four in 1996), Kinwalsey, Ladbroke (three), Lighthorne, Middleton Hall, Napton village, Packington Park (at least six, with two double-brooded), Pailton, Upton Fields and Wormleighton. Passage records came from a further 13 sites, particularly from Napton Hill where high numbers were present on a number of dates in autumn reaching a peak of up to 35 on August 25th. Other good counts included eight on Meon Hill on July 26th, eight at Fenny Compton Hills on August 28th, ten at Upton Wood on 30th, 12 at Lighthorne Quarry on September 1st and eight at Upton on 14th.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Abberton, Bittell, Broadway GP, Craycombe, Hadley, Newbourne Wood, Sling Common, The Knapp (where two pairs were both unsuccessful due to the wet June weather), Tibberton and Upton Warren. Seen at a further 27 localities around the county. Autumn passage included a party of 12 at Bredon Hill on September 6th. One at Fort Royal Park in Worcester from October 29th-31st *GHP* was exceptionally late.

Staffs Probably bred at Belvide (where two young on August 6th), Blithfield, Coldmece, Coombes Valley (four pairs), Crumpwood Waterworks, Haughton Cemetery, Ousley Cross and Out Mill, while a nest at Lawneswood was deserted. Noted on autumn passage at Anslow, Belmont Common, Blithfield, Chasewater, Keele University, Tittesworth and Westport.

W Mid Bred at Berkswell and in a garden nest-box in Whitley, where four young fledged from the first brood, but the second brood was predated. Also noted

in June at Barston (a pair), Valley Park and a Knowle garden, where probably bred in previous years. Spring migrants were noted in May at Frankley Res, Harborne NR, Fens Pools LNR (two), Sutton Park and Willenhall Memorial Park – a sorry state for this latter site, where four pairs once bred in the 1980s. Autumn migrants were more numerous, with 11 records of one to two birds at Sheepwash UP between July 20th-September 26th; one to two at Fishley between August 11th-September 23; records from Sandwell Valley on nine dates between August 13th-September 26th, with a peak count of 10 on August 31st; and others in September at Fens Pools LNR on four dates, Park Lime Pits on three dates, Blakenall Heath (two), Harborne NR, Valley Park and Wren's Nest.

Pled Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Frequent and increasing summer resident and passage migrant, though breeding regularly only in Worcs and Staffs.

Average: April 20th (51) – September 8th (32)

An early bird was at Edgbaston Pool on April 15th, with the main arrival beginning about a week later. Most left in August and early September, with the last on 20th at Napton Hill apart from a late bird at the same place on October 19th – the latest in the Region by 12 days.

Warks A bumper year for this usually scarce passage migrant, with spring records consisting of one in a Napton garden on April 25th-26th, single singing males beside the canal at Kingsbury on 29th and at Earlswood Lakes on May 1st and 11th, and a pair in Lighthorne village on May 3rd-4th. Autumn passage began with one at Meon Hill on July 26th, followed by singles at Brandon on August 17th and Napton Hill on August 1st, 24th-25th and September 20th, with an extremely late bird by the quarry on October 19th *SMH*.

Worcs Singing birds were at Arley Wood, Dowles Brook (10), Lickey Hills, Midsummer Hill and The Knapp (five). Failed to breed at Alfrick for the first time since 1993. Singles at Bredon Hill, Stoke Bliss, Upper Doddenhill and Upton Warren in the spring related to passage birds. Seen in autumn at Bredon Hill and Upton Warren.

Staffs Breeding confirmed or suspected at Alton (two pairs occupied nest-boxes in a garden), Brocton Coppice (one pair successful and a male seen near the new nest-boxes), Coombes Valley (51 pairs *cf.* 47 in 1996), Dimmingsdale, Seven Springs (bred in box 18) and Warden Lodge (pair feeding young on June 5th). Males sang at both Belvide and Blithfield, but no females appeared, and birds were also seen in the breeding season at Basford Green, Birches Valley Forestry Centre, Dydon Wood, Greenway Bank CP, Hanchurch Woods and Tittesworth. Passage birds were noted at Chasewater on May 4th and Anslow on August 30th.

W Mid A female at Edgbaston Pool on April 15th was the only record.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident.

Warks Numbers were down again in several areas following the severe cold in January, but conversely up in other districts. The best flocks were 30 at

Brandon on January 13th, 33 at Ashorne on July 14th, 40 at Ufton Fields on 19th, 35 in Oversley Wood on 21st and 30 at Wormleighton Res on 30th and again on November 7th.

Worcs Several localities reported up to three pairs breeding, but the most interesting concerned a surprising decline at Alfrick from four pairs in 1996 to just one. Small parties were reported from several places, the largest being at Trench Wood where an impressive 40 on January 5th was exceeded by 60 there on July 20th. Elsewhere, flocks up to 18 were at Castlemorton Common on July 6th and November 23rd, 17 at Upton Warren on September 14th and 23 at Lower Moor on December 31st.

Staffs Widely reported, with the maximum flock size being 20 at Westport Lake on February 9th and 20 at Ashwood on October 12th. The Betley CES recorded increased numbers, with 11 adults and 12 juveniles (*cf.* three adults and three juveniles in 1996). This was also mirrored by an increase to 14 breeding pairs on the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves (*cf.* nine in 1996) where there was a maximum of 89 birds in November.

W Mid Reported as very abundant at Clayhanger and noted in the breeding season at Aldridge, Cuckoo's Nook, Fens Pools LNR (six pairs), Harborne NR, Marsh Lane GP, Mons Hill (two territories on the CBC plot *cf.* four in 1996), Park Lime Pits (two pairs), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (two or three pairs in the area), Valley Park and Wergs. Some large flocks were reported outside of the breeding season, the highest being 34 at Marsh Lane GP in June; 28 at Deers Leap Wood and 36 in Sandwell Valley in October; up to 40 at Valley Park in December; and a similar number at Harborne NR in the autumn and winter. Garden records were received from Aldridge, Dorridge, Fordhouses, Four Oaks and south Walsall, with several observers reporting birds on nut feeders. Further records came from Hayhead Wood, Marston Green and Whitmore Reans.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Fairly common resident.

Warks Reported from 23 localities, as usual virtually all in southern and central districts. Breeding was suspected or proved at Avon Dassett, BAD Kineton, Bowshot Wood, Burton Dassett, Chesterton Wood (two), Coombe, Edgehill Wood, Farnborough area (five), Ilmington Downs, Itchington Holt, Oakley Wood (two), Oversley Wood (at least eight), Snitterfield Bushes, Wappenbury Wood, Wormleighton Res (two) and Yarningale Common. The largest winter count was at least 15 in Oversley Wood on November 1st.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed only at Arley Wood and in the Wyre Forest. Also noted at Abberley Hill, Bickley, Bredon Hill, Castlemorton Common (where one on January 12th was unusual), Elmley Castle, Grimley, Hangmans Hill, Kingsford, Kyre Pool, Larford, Lower Moor (where one on February 8th was also unusual), Ockeridge Wood, Raggedstone Hill, Shrawley Wood, Stanford Court, Tiddesley Wood, Trench Wood, Westwood, Windmill Hill, Wissetts Wood and Woodbury Hill. As usual, no count reached double figures, the largest being eight at Trench Wood on March 31st.

Staffs Recorded only at Blithfield, Coombes/Churnet Valley NR (six), Ecton, Little Stoke, Needwood/Anslow area, Starts Green, Tittesworth and Wrottesley Old Park. Surely it is more widespread than this?

W Mid One on Brownhills Common on January 29th and one reported from Sandwell Valley on April 27th were the only two records received.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Fairly common resident.

Warks Reported from 22 localities, with breeding suspected or proved at Alvecote (one-two), Avon Dassett, BAD Kineton, Brandon, Chesterton Pools, Draycote, Edgehill Wood, Fenny Compton (four), Itchington Holt, Knightcote, Ladbroke, Ladywalk (where four or five pairs), Oakley Wood, Packington, Temple Pool, The Somers, Ufton Fields and Wormleighton Res (two).

Worcs Seen during the breeding season at Arley Wood, Beacon Hill, Bittell, Grimley, Ipsley Alders, Holt, Kingsford, Lower Astley Wood, Newbourne Wood, Roundhill Wood, Shortwood Roughs, Trench Wood, Wast Hills and Westwood. Also recorded outside the breeding season at Tiddesley Wood (where unusual) and Upton Warren.

Staffs Reported from Aqualate (one), Ashwood (one), Belvide (one), Brakenhurst (one), Byrkley Park (pair), Chasewater (five), Coppice Hill (one), Croxall (two), Elford (three), Lawneswood (one), Little Wyrley, Oldacre Valley (one), Sheepwalks (one), Warren Hill (pair) and Westport (pair).

W Mid Recorded in the breeding season at Clayhanger (at least one pair bred), Marsh Lane GP, Mons Hill CBC plot (two territories represented no change from 1996), Fens Pools LNR, Park Lime Pits (bred successfully), Sandwell Valley and Valley Park (probably four pairs bred). Recorded at Brades Hall throughout the year, except during June and December. One was singing in Woodgate Valley in March, with another there in October.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident and eruptive winter visitor.

Warks Appears to be doing very well at present, though few meaningful records were submitted. BAD Kineton registered its largest ever May count, with 14 logged. At least six singing males were located in the 100ha Hay Wood in late April, while three pairs bred in the deciduous Itchington Holt. The largest flocks consisted of 65 in Oakley Wood on February 9th, 20 in Farnborough Park on October 30th and 40 in Oversley Wood on November 1st.

Worcs Remains widespread, but no indication of any population trends or whether it was a good breeding season. The only counts to exceed double figures concerned 15 at Callow Hill on June 24th, 12 at Eymore Wood on July 5th and 10 in Happy Valley on October 5th.

Staffs Breeding numbers were down at Coombes Valley, with 28 pairs compared to 32 last year.

W Mid Little comparative data was received, but several pairs bred at Harborne NR and there was one territory on the CBC plot on Mons Hill, the same as in 1996.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus**Abundant resident.*

- Warks** There were 23 breeding territories in 1km² of mixed habitats at Ladbroke, while the BAD Kineton count was again low, with just 29 logged. Two large flocks were reported, consisting of 75 at Wormleighton Res on September 5th and 50 in Farnborough Park on October 30th.
- Worcs** Breeding numbers were similar to those of 1996 at Shortwood Roughs, The Knapp and Web Heath, but may have decreased at Southcrest. Four pairs fledged 28 young from nest-boxes at Dodford, only three out of 30 boxes failed to produce young at The Knapp and five pairs produced 34 young at Timberhonger. There were several reports of good numbers in tit flocks during the year, the largest counts being 40 at Castlemorton Common on February 2nd, 41 at Trench Wood on July 20th and 70 at Chase End Hill on December 31st.
- Staffs** Data from the two regular survey sites suggest that it was a better year than last. At the Betley Mere CES, 16 adults and 19 juveniles were trapped compared with just three adults and seven juveniles in 1996, while at Coombes Valley 146 pairs bred (*cf.* 134 in 1996).
- W Mid** There were 19 territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* 15 in 1996) and 10 territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits. A large mixed flock of both Blue and Great Tits, estimated at around 100 birds and consisting primarily of juveniles, was noted at Marsh Lane GP on June 29th. The only other significant count was 38 at Deers Leap Wood on November 17th.

Great Tit *Parus major**Abundant resident.*

- Warks** The BAD Kineton population was slightly above average, while 11 territories were located in 1km² at Ladbroke. The largest flocks reported were 25 juveniles at Rowington STW on June 10th and 30 feeding with other tits on beechmast in Farnborough Park on October 30th.
- Worcs** The number of breeding pairs at Alfrick, Shortwood Roughs and Southcrest decreased, but there was an increase at Web Heath. Good breeding success emanated from the nest-box schemes at Dodford, where 20 young fledged from three boxes; The Knapp, where only three out of 25 boxes did not have any young fledge; and Timberhonger, where 21 young fledged from four boxes. Outside the breeding season, there was an outstanding count of 200 feeding in a loose flock of tits at Chase End Hill on December 31st *MWCW*.
- Staffs** Seventy-two pairs nested at Coombes Valley compared with 65 in 1996, indicating a better year.
- W Mid** The CBC plot on Mons Hill had 18 territories, the same as in 1996, and there were 12 territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits. The largest count was 21 at Deers Leap Wood on October 22nd. A bird ringed at Harborne NR in March had elongated upper and lower mandibles, giving it the appearance of a Common Crossbill.

European Nuthatch (*Nuthatch*) *Sitta europaea**Fairly common and increasing resident.*

- Warks** Widely reported, with ten breeding pairs estimated in the Avon Dassett/Farnborough area, and others suspected or proved at Baddesley Clinton,

BAD Kineton, Bowshot Wood, Chesterton Wood, Combrook, Compton Verney (four), Coombe, Edgehill Wood, Fenny Compton, Hatton, Itchington Holt, Kenilworth, Kingsbury Wood (four), Ladbroke, Lighthorne Rough, Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood, Packington, Upton, Wappenbury Wood (four) and Warwick Priory Park. Ten were counted in Farnborough Park on October 30th, in two parties.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Alfrick, Bewdley, Bredon Hill, Trench Wood and Wood Norton. Also noted at a further 44 widespread localities, including at least six pairs on the Lickey Hills and a count of 15 individuals along Dowles Brook on February 27th.

Staffs Reported from 30 localities, with a maximum of 10 at Knypersley Res. Six pairs bred in Coombes/Churnet Valley NR as last year.

W Mid Bred at Valley Park and further noted in the breeding season at Cuckoo's Nook, Dorridge Park, Mary Stevens Park, Sandwell Valley and Sutton Park. A bird at Sheepwash UP in early June was a first locality record. More were recorded outside of the breeding season, with birds at Aldridge, Barr Common, Brueton Park (three), Chadwick End, Dorridge, Harborne NR, Highbury Park (three), Moseley, Swanshurst Park, Tettenhall and Wergs.

Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident.

Warks Breeding pairs were reported from Burton Dassett, Charlecote, Chesterton Wood, Coleshill Woods, Coombe, Farnborough Park (three), Fenny Compton (two), Ladbroke (four), Oakley Wood, Upton Fields, Wootton Wawen and Wormleighton Res (two) and village. Thought to be much scarcer in recent years than previously in the Hatton district.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Langdale Wood, Lower Moor and Wood Norton. Also noted at a further 40 localities throughout the county, including Worcester City Centre.

Staffs Reported from 26 widely scattered localities. Breeding pairs were noted at Alton Towers (one), Beacon Park (one), Belvide (one), Brookleys (four), Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves (19 cf. 17 in 1996) and Dydon Wood (one).

W Mid Breeding season records emanated from Hayhead Wood, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot cf. two in 1996), Sandwell Valley (two or three pairs), Sutton Park and Wergs. Outside the breeding season, reported from Cuckoo's Nook, Dorridge Park, Hampton-in-Arden, Harborne NR, Highbury Park, Marston Green Recreation Ground, Park Lime Pits and Valley Park.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare passage migrant (5/10).

Worcs/Staffs A female at Starts Green Farm near Arley Wood on May 31st *SMW* was first detected by its strange calls, described as being half-way between those of a cat and a Eurasian Jay. Once spotted, the bird looped from tree to tree, managing to cross the border between Staffordshire and Worcestershire several times in the process. It thus became the first in Worcestershire since 1993 and the first in Staffordshire since 1988.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio**Rare passage migrant (1/10).*

This was the first regional and county record since a spring migrant appeared at Frankley in 1988.

Worcs An immature visited a garden at Norton on September 30th *MS*.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A welcome return to an average showing following a blank year in 1996.

Worcs One was on Bredon Hill on October 25th, but could not be found the next day *GRM*.

Staffs One was in the Sherbrook Valley on Cannock Chase on October 21st *JPS*.

Eurasian Jay (Jay) *Garrulus glandarius**Common resident.*

Warks Widely reported in very small numbers, but with no more than a pair or two in any locality and no party greater than six. Breeding was proven at Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood, Stoneton and Ufton Fields.

Worcs Remains widespread, but no accumulations reached double figures. The largest count was just eight, on the Lickey Hills on April 10th.

Staffs Noted at 18 localities, but with no unusually large numbers reported. Seven pairs bred on the Coombes/Churnet Valley NR (*cf.* six in 1996).

W Mid Breeding was reported from Dorridge Park, Harborne NR (an estimated five pairs), Hayhead Wood, Mons Hill CBC plot (two territories *cf.* one in 1996), Valley Park (at least two pairs) and Willenhall Memorial Park (the first breeding record); whilst breeding season records also came from Cuckoo's Nook (two pairs), Marston Green, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP (with an abandoned nest at the latter locality). Further reported from Aldridge, Clayhanger (a peak of five on July 27th) and Wergs, with regular visits to a Dorridge garden feeding station.

Magpie *Pica pica**Very common resident.*

Warks The largest flocks were 24 at Priors Hardwick on March 11th, 19 at both Fenny Compton on 23rd and Lighthorne Quarry on September 15th and 20 at Ladywalk in December.

Worcs Very few reports were received this year. The largest party was a flock of 20 at Dodford during November and December.

Staffs Reported to be much scarcer in the Needwood/Anslow area, with no flocks above seven all year. Up to 30 were at Coombes Valley in January, with five pairs breeding as last year; a flock of 25 was between Mitton and Bradley on March 9th; and a maximum of 14 were at Lawneswood in March.

W Mid Little comparative breeding data was received, although there were four nests within a very small residential area of Four Oaks and 14 young birds were seen nearby on a small area of grassland in August and September. There were seven territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* six in 1996); one territory on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (results reported to be 'treated

with caution'); and at least six breeding pairs within Sheepwash UP. 90 roosted at Sheepwash UP in January, 24 were at Park Lime Pits on January 24th, 40 in Sandwell Valley on March 6th, 24 at Galton Bridge in May and 80 roosted at Dunstall Park in December. One was seen attempting to catch a weasel in Sandwell Valley on May 2nd.

Eurasian Jackdaw (Jackdaw) *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident.

- Warks** Appears to be most abundant in south-central and south-eastern districts, where sheep farming is most prevalent, with maxima of 200 at Priors Marston on January 19th, 250 at Farnborough on February 15th, 450 at Wormleighton on March 1st, 450 at Chesterton on August 6th and 700 roosting in woodland at Fenny Compton on December 10th. There were 25 breeding pairs in 1km² of parkland and farmland at Ladbroke.
- Worcs** Plenty of small flocks were reported, but larger ones were 250 at Dodford on January 9th, 240 at Quarry Hill on February 9th, 420 at Tibberton on May 31st, 200 at Eastham on August 4th, 500 at Castlemorton Common on October 19th, 500 at Woodgates Green on November 8th, 350 at Haws Hill Wood on November 12th, 200 at Stoke Bliss on November 18th and 200 at Little Witley on December 26th. Birds showing albinism in their plumage were seen at Drakes Broughton and Oldwood Common.
- Staffs** The following flocks were reported: 60 at Hints on January 1st, 340 at Model Farm, Hanchurch, on January 3rd, 50 at Betley on February 8th, 280 at Swynnerton landfill site on February 11th, 250 over Brewood on July 30th, 50 over Hockley on October 24th, 322 at Kingswood Bank, Trentham, on December 1st and 150 at Ashwood on December 31st.
- W Mid** Breeding was reported from the Harborne area, Park Lime Pits (where several pairs nested in the walls of Rushall Hall) and on the edges of Valley Park (an estimated 20 pairs) and Sandwell Valley (including Handsworth Wood and Great Barr). Also present in the breeding season on the Mons Hill CBC plot. The largest flocks were 40, moving east at Sandwell Valley on March 6th and at Park Lime Pits on October 14th (in the grounds of Rushall Hall), and 25 moving west over Foxcote on 29th. Up to 10 were also reported at Clayhanger and, outside the breeding season, at Sheepwash UP, where the species is believed to be increasing. At least 400 were amongst a flock of 5000 corvids roosting at Wightwick in late August.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident.

- Warks** Rookery counts included 120 at Chesterton, 160 in two rookeries at Drayton (near Stratford), 14 at Ladbroke and 30 at Whateley. The largest flocks were 300, at Fenny Compton in February, Wormleighton in March, Chesterton in August and Farnborough in October; and 350 at Drayton in the latter month.
- Worcs** The small rookery at Alfrick finally disappeared this year, but elsewhere rookeries contained 23 nests at Ditchford Bank, 52 at Elmbridge Green Coppice, 44 at Fosters Green, 43 at Hewell Grange and 35 at Upper Bentley. Several substantial flocks were seen, the largest being 226 near Oddingley

on July 27th, 222 near Crowle on August 16th, 284 at Tibberton on August 23rd, 250 at Astwood Bank on October 13th and 650 at Castlemorton Common on November 2nd.

- Staffs** The rookery at Beckwood held 144 nests (*cf.* 148 in 1996). Other rookeries counted included Whiteswood (30), Swinscoe (34), Parkgate (16), Denstone (16) and Stanton Dale (19). In the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves, 54 pairs nested (*cf.* 52 in 1996) and a maximum of 331 was counted in January. Over 800 flew over Hockley to roost on October 24th, 250 were feeding at Anslow on June 8th and 150 were on stubbles at Moat Hill on November 23rd.
- W Mid** Rookeries were reported from Bosty Lane, Aldridge (an increase to 11 nests), Ounty John Wood (13 nests), Sandwell Valley and Valley Park (22 nests each) and Dunstall Park (one pair with a second single bird noted nest-building). Outside the breeding season, 220 were on Aldridge Golf Course on October 25th and up to 10 were reported from Blacklake in West Bromwich, Clayhanger and Sheepwash UP, where the species is increasing. One visited a Dorridge garden in March and June and at least 220 were amongst the 5000 corvids roosting at Wightwick in late August.

Carion Crow *Corvus corone corone*

Very common resident.

- Warks** Appears to be still increasing. Ten pairs bred in 1km² at Ladbroke and a count of 118 across BAD Kineton in May was by far the largest ever since counts began in 1987. The largest flocks reported were 150 at Priors Marston on January 19th and 75 at Bishops Tachbrook on November 1st. One was seen to take a Common Snipe at Brandon on March 10th.
- Worcs** As usual, very few reports were received. The only significant counts were 150 at Dodford on January 9th and 150 feeding on cut maize at Castlemorton Common on October 19th.
- Staffs** Twenty-three were at Belvide on March 16th and 27 at Apedale on April 18th. As last year, five pairs bred at Coombes Valley, where the maximum count was 61 in July. Elsewhere, 75 were at Tittesworth on July 19th and 85 on the shore at Belvide on September 27th.
- W Mid** There were three territories on the Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* two in 1996) and on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (*cf.* four in 1996). Largest counts were 25 in Highbury Park on January 24th, 79 in Willenhall Memorial Park on August 11th, 45 at Park Lime Pits on October 15th and 33 in Dunstall Park on 25th. At least 200 were amongst the 5000 corvids roosting at Wightwick in late August and a large roost also formed in Sandwell Valley, but there were no reports from St. Margarets in Great Barr, where another large roost is known to be present.

Common Raven (Raven) *Corvus corax*

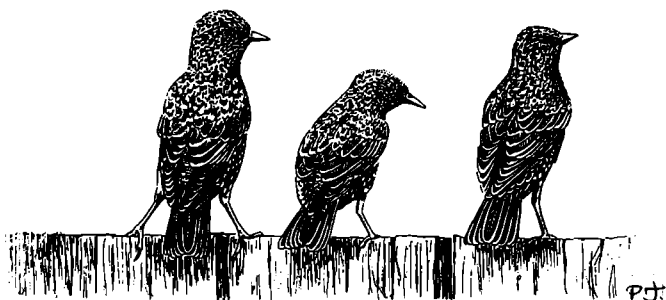
An uncommon visitor and scarce, though increasing, resident in Worcs and Staffs. Very rare elsewhere.

- Warks** Two were seen on Ilmington Downs on July 5th *per* WWT and August 9th SMH, with one again on September 28th ARD. Possibly these were the same birds that were seen at Ilmington in October 1994.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Abberley, a site along the Malverns and at Shelsley Walsh. Remains widespread in the west of the county, with reports from 13 sites in the Teme Valley; 17 sites in the Malvern area, including a remarkable count of 16 over Sugarloaf Hill on December 23rd PGG; and 11 localities in the north-west of the county. A pair remained on Bredon Hill all year and singles, or pairs, were also recorded at Chaddesley Wood, Clent, Dodford, Grimley, Kempsey, Kempsey Common, Pirton, Timberhonger and Westwood.

Staffs Few descriptions were received. One was at Lawneswood on February 6th DAE; two at the Sheepwalks on January 12th ICW and February 15th RF, with one also there on March 16th ICW; and two at Gailey on February 2nd ICW, MY. Two were over Newcastle on June 7th, four were at Keele University on August 23rd and two were at Apedale CP on October 31st WJL. Two were at Baldstones on July 6th and two at Tittesworth on November 16th NC.

Common Starling (Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris*
Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.



Common Starlings (Phil Jones)

Warks A further decline was noted in the summer population at BAD Kineton, with only 25 logged, this being almost 80% below average! The largest flocks occurred in autumn, with 600 at Barford on October 20th, 950 feeding in arable at Gaydon on 22nd, and 700 doing likewise at Fenny Compton on November 11th, with over 1000 roosting in scrub on the nearby Burton Dassett Hills the same evening. Heavy visible autumn migration was noted over the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton gap on October 19th, with up to 500 per hour moving south-west.

Worcs The largest flocks reported were 500 at Lower Moor on January 2nd, 250 at Lea End on March 1st, 110 at Tibberton on March 2nd, 400 at Strensham on March 23rd, 2000 roosting at Ronkswood Golf Course on June 5th, 500 at Bishampton Vale Pool on July 5th, 180 at Castlemorton Common on October 19th, 230 at Stanford Bridge on November 30th and 150 at Longdon Marsh on December 30th.

Staffs The following flocks were reported: 300 at Hockley on January 31st and up to 800 on October 5th, 120 on pasture near Leek on February 2nd, 115 at Jacks Wood, Chasewater, on April 5th and 240 on winter cereals at Bishops Wood on October 10th. The summer/autumn roost at Betley Mere held around 3500 birds until late September, whilst the maximum count at the Coombes/Churnet Valley reserves was 2500 in December.

W Mid Very little information was received – do any large roosts occur in the county any more? Just one territory was found on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* two in 1996) and the largest flocks were around 200 on freshly cut hay at Park Lime Pits on June 4th, around 100 feeding on a playing field in Sheldon on July 16th and at least 500 on Dunstall Park racecourse on August 1st.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Abundant, though declining, resident.

Warks Over 30 pairs were estimated to be present in 1km² of farmland and gardens at Ladbroke. The largest flocks occurred during the cold weather of late winter, with maxima of 150 around a grain storage barn at Fenny Compton on January 9th and 80 at a feeding station near Wormleighton Res on 23rd.

Worcs Considered to be more numerous around Hagley than in recent years *LRB*. Counts received included 35 at Southcrest on May 11th, 80 at Kyre on December 9th and 50 at Offerton in December.

Staffs A flock of 70 was seen at Little Wyrley on October 7th, around 20 were in gardens at Hockley during January-March and October-December and 400 were on stubble at Moat Hill on November 23rd.

W Mid Eight territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill was the same as in 1996. Around 40 were attracted to ripening wheat at Park Lime Pits on July 22nd and 50 were around Forge Mill Farm in Sandwell Valley on August 10th. One observer from Dorridge reported 'not having recorded a single bird in the garden in 1997', whilst the species is said to have 'virtually disappeared from Willenhall Memorial Park since 1990'.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common, though declining, resident.

Warks A drastic fall in breeding pairs was detected at Fenny Compton, with only 21 located (*cf.* 60 in 1996), and declines were noted elsewhere in the south-east, but with no obvious cause. Small colonies of three-six pairs were located at Chesterton, Farnborough, Itchington Holt, Knightcote, Priors Hardwick, Upper Kingston, Watgall and Wormleighton, all located in the same general area; with scattered pairs north to Southam and Shuckburgh and south-west to Warrington, Radway and Kineton. Elsewhere in the county, occasional pairs were reported in the breeding season at Brandon, Charlecote, Coombe, Coton, Curdworth, Lea Marston, Shustoke (three) and Walsgrave Hill. Numerous flocks of up to 30 were recorded from the south-eastern heartland during the early months, with maxima of 99 at Priors Marston on January 19th, 65 near Wormleighton Res on February 11th, 100 at Gaydon on 18th and 40 at Knightcote on March 5th. Autumn flocks were much smaller, with only 20-30 at Burton Dassett, Chesterton, Farnborough, Fenny Compton,

Knightcote and near Wormleighton Res. Away from the south-east, flock size in either winter period was negligible, with maxima of only 12 at Packington and 13 at Coleshill. One at Ladywalk on November 15th was unusual.

Worcs Breeding was confirmed at Bittell and Defford. Also noted in the breeding season at Belbroughton, Berrow Hill (Redditch), Besford, Broome, Hagley, Mount Segg, Ombersley, Rowney Green, Stoke Bliss, The Thrift, Throckmorton, Tibberton, Two Tree Hill, Upton Warren and Wythall, but not seen at Lower Moor by one observer for the first time since he began recording there in 1982 *RAP*. The largest flocks were 35 at Caunsall throughout January and February, 20 at Tibberton on January 1st, 50 at Grafton Lane, Bromsgrove, on January 26th, 40 at King's Norton Golf Course, Weatheroak, on August 17th, 95 at Throckmorton on August 29th and 20 at Cookley throughout October.

Staffs Reports received from 40 localities, with counts of over 10 birds coming from Aston-by-Stone (16), Belvide (75), Blithfield (30), Chillington Farm (10), Chasepool Farm (12), Elford (40), Hutts Farm (50), Iwerley (60), Marston (30), Stanton Dale (10) and Stoneydelph (12).

W Mid Breeding was noted alongside the Rushall Canal at Aldridge and Park Lime Pits (one pair), at several locations in the Barston/Temple Balsall area, at Bradnock's Marsh (a pair with young), the Pedmore area (where, from a successful nest-box scheme in co-operation with the owner and tenant farmer, 54 young probably fledged from 16 broods in nine boxes), Sandwell Valley and the Wishaw Lane area. Possibly bred in the Bumble Hole area, too, where birds were regularly noted from April to mid-June (peaking at 15 on June 14th), and also seen in May at Clayhanger. The largest flocks recorded outside the breeding season included over 60 near Pedmore in July; 40 in Sandwell Valley on September 8th; 70 in a mixed flock with House Sparrows adjacent to the Rushall Canal in Aldridge on 12th (with 20 Tree Sparrow also noted on July 26th); and 36 along Hobs Hole Lane, also in Aldridge, on October 25th. Up to 10 were also noted at other sites.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Warks 35 territories were located in 1km² at Ladbroke and 24 found in 80ha of Kingsbury Wood. Numbers appeared stable at BAD Kineton, with 110 counted. Some large flocks were found during the cold weather early in the year, including 250 in game cover at Wormleighton Res on January 2nd, 100 around barns in Fenny Compton on 9th and 200 on farmland at Coleshill on February 6th. Autumn passage along the southern scarps peaked on October 13th, with 120 south-west over Fenny Compton in ninety minutes. Later flocks included 70 under beeches in Farnborough Park on October 30th and on Ilmington Downs on November 2nd, 100 in stubble at Fenny Compton on 17th and 70 at Warmington on 30th.

Worcs Decreased at Alfrick, where only 13 pairs compared to 18 in 1996, and at Shortwood Roughs, where just eight pairs compared unfavourably with 12 in 1996. These were counterbalanced, however, by modest increases at other sites, with seven pairs at Southcrest (*cf.* 4 in 1996), six-10 pairs at Tibberton

(cf. two in 1996), and 13 pairs at Web Heath (cf. 12 in 1996). The largest winter counts were 100 at Lower Moor on January 4th, 230 at Larford on 5th, 400 at Grafton Lane, Bromsgrove, on 19th and 125 at Bockleton on February 7th. A post-breeding flock of 130 at Tibberton on August 16th was then followed in autumn by 520 over Happy Valley on October 17th, 100 at Summerfield on November 21st and 250 at Strensham on December 21st.

Staffs Eighty-eight pairs bred at Coombes Valley compared with 84 in 1996, while on Cannock Chase on May 22nd there were 19 males at Wandon Spur and 25 at the Rifle Range. The only winter flock reported was 100 at Sheepwalks on February 15th, while in autumn similar numbers were at Ashwood on November 12th and Holly Bush on 28th. Surely this species is more widespread and numerous than this?

W Mid Seven territories were reported on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (cf. six in 1996) and four territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (no change). Also present in the breeding season on Harborne NR, in Sandwell Valley and at Sutton Park. The largest gatherings were 60 on farmland in Sandwell Valley on March 10th, 40 moving south-westwards over Sheepwash UP in one hour on October 8th and 60 in stubble at Bradnock's Marsh on December 13th.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, but in variable numbers.

Average: October 9th (62) – April 18th (61)

Outside Worcestershire, there were only modest numbers in the first winter period, though spring passage was evident in mid-April, with the last on 18th at Avon Dassett and Cannock Chase (flock of 30). An early migrant over Napton Hill on September 26th preceded the main passage, which peaked around October 18th. This heralded a better autumn, during which some moderately-sized flocks fed on beech mast.

Warks Widely distributed during the early months in very small numbers, with mainly one-three at Alvecote, an Avon Dassett garden (max. six on March 22nd), Brandon, Chase Wood (a male in song on March 31st), a Coleshill garden, Coombe, Corley (max. five in March), Draycote, a Hatton garden, Ladywalk (four in March and April), Packington (max. six in game coverts on January 18th), a Stratford garden, Wasperton and Wormleighton Res. After an early bird south over Napton Hill on September 26th, there were several good-sized flocks in the county during October-November, including maxima of 45 at Farnborough Park on October 30th, 50 at Ilmington Downs on November 2nd and 23 at Brandon Hall on December 28th, all feeding on beech mast. Small numbers were also recorded at Bentley, Coombe, Fenny Compton (max. ten on November 9th), Ladywalk, Napton Hill, Warmington, Watergall and Wormleighton Res.

Worcs Reported at 25 localities in the first winter period and 36 in the second. Most records involved no more than a dozen birds. The largest flocks occurred in winter, with 80 at Cookley on January 12th; 140 at Grafton Lane, Bromsgrove, on January 19th; 500 at Blakeshall from January 20th-27th, with numbers there only slowly decreasing in February; 25 at Hartlebury Common on February 4th; and 100 at Bewdley on March 1st. In autumn, the usual

passage through Happy Valley peaked at 27 on October 18th, there were 15 on the Lickey Hills on October 21st and numbers at Stoke Wharf had built up to 86 by December 8th.

Staffs Noted at 12 localities in the early part of the year, with the more significant numbers being 20 at both Hanbury on January 11th and Iwerley on 24th; nine on the bird table at Marquis Drive Visitor Centre on 22nd; 10-15 at Rue Barn farm near Eccleshall on February 2nd; and 16 in a Newcastle garden on March 29th. As usual, occurred on Cannock Chase in spring, with 20 plus at Seven Springs on April 9th and 30 at the German Cemetery on 18th. Seen at eight sites in the autumn and early winter, with 20 at Apeford on October 25th, 75 near Gun Hill on November 16th and 57 at Holly Bush on December 28th the most reported.

W Mid Garden records in the first winter period came from Aldridge, Four Oaks (one or two noted on eight dates between January 1st-March 19th) and King's Heath (two on March 10th). Further winter records came from Sheepwash UP on January 12th, Bartley on March 6th (three) and Edgbaston Pool on 26th, while one was along the Bourn Brook in Harborne on April 17th. More widespread in the autumn/second winter period, with records from Marsh Lane GP on October 14th, Sheepwash UP on 17th (five) and 19th, Park Lime Pits on 28th-29th and December 7th, Brownhills Common on November 12th, Warley Woods on December 27th (14) and a Four Oaks garden on 30th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*
Abundant resident.

Warks 23 territories were located in 1km² at Ladbroke, while 28 on the BAD Kineton May count was only one short of the highest count since 1987. The largest flocks were all in the post-breeding period and included 150 in allotments at Cubbington on August 31st, 100 at Wormleighton Res on September 5th, 70-80 in rape at Honiley on 9th, up to 100 in game cover at Packington throughout September/October and 160 in set-aside at Fenny Compton on November 17th. Again there was a welcome increase in flocks of around 40-60 in size, while up to 170 gathered around the feeding stations at Ladywalk.

Worcs No evidence of any change in breeding status was received and there were relatively few reports outside the breeding season. The highest winter counts were 40 at Bockleton on February 7th and 60 at Blakeshall on 8th. Post-breeding and autumn flocks were larger, with 350 in the Tibberton/Crowle area on September 13th, 500 at Bredons Hardwick on November 3rd, 80 at Abberton on 8th, 120 at Lindridge on 23rd, 50 at Strensham on December 21st and 100 at Longdon Marsh on 26th.

Staffs Five pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* three in 1996) and the largest count there was 60 in December. The only other records consisted of 20 at Brewood on January 1st, 40 at Kettlebrook Park on 31st, 70 at Anslow on October 7th, 40 at Blithfield on 19th, 70 at Broadfields on December 7th and 30 at Needwood on 30th. As with Chaffinch, this species must surely be more widespread and numerous than this?

W Mid There was just one territory on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* three in 1996).

During the cold weather in January, 100 roosted at Valley Park, a very impressive 425 did likewise in evergreen bushes in Dudley and up to 33 visited a feeding station in Sandwell Valley. The largest gatherings were 24 on stubble at Park Lime Pits on March 9th, 140 feeding in a newly harrowed field at Aldridge on October 25th and at least 130 at Aldersley Stadium on December 31st.

Goldfinch x Greenfinch

Warks A free-flying and singing hybrid came for seed put down for other finches in Radway on May 9th PD.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident and partial migrant.

Warks Six nesting pairs were located in 1km² at Ladbroke. The biggest post-breed-ing flocks comprised 105 at Lighthorne Quarry on September 15th, 100 at Marcliff on 20th and 90 at Napton Hill on November 4th, all feeding on thistle-down. Other flocks were widely reported, mainly during August-October, with maxima of 40-60 at Cubbington, Fenny Compton, Honiley, Ladywalk, Radway, Shustoke and Wormleighton Res. Birds are increasingly being noted coming to peanut holders in gardens and this year there were "first" records from Arley and Coleshill.

Worcs There were 14 reports of charms numbering between 20 and 40 birds, but the largest flocks comprised 50 at Tiddesley Wood on January 18th, 120 at Blakeshall on February 13th, 80 at Upper Ridney on 16th, 100 at Castle-morton Common on October 3rd, 50 at Holt on 11th and 100 at Strensham on December 21st.

Staffs As last year, five pairs bred at Coombes Valley. Monthly maxima at Westport, with 1996 for comparison, were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1996	30	54	4	6	6	2	4	8	12	3	62	80
1997	120	20	40	4	9	3	3	3	1	8	30	12

This species is certainly doing well these days, with 18 flocks in excess of 20 reported in contrast to only seven last year. The 18 flocks were as follows: Belvide (50), Blithfield (60), Bradwell Wood (80) which were part of the same flock as at Westport, Calwich (30), Chasewater (25), Croxall (40), Denstone (50), Elford/Fisherwick (40), Elford North Pit (40), Goldsitch Moss (60), Hints (24), Iverley (140), Kettlebrook Park (40), Little Wyrley (60), Norton Bridge (20), Ousley Cross (30), Sheepwalks (60) and Wychnor (30).

W Mid Bred in Sandwell Valley and Valley Park, possibly did so in the Park Lime Pits area and was present on the Mons Hill CBC plot during the breeding season. Flocks of 40 were noted at Hayhead Wood in February, Fens Pools LNR in August, Sandwell Valley in September and Valley Park during the second winter period, whilst 65 were on the old Walsall airfield on October 11th. Winter records were received from gardens in Aldridge, Dorridge and Four Oaks (two localities). Small numbers, less than 15, were further reported from Harborne NR and Marston Green.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare or scarce breeding species.

Warwickshire and Worcestershire had an unprecedented small scale, but widespread, influx in mid-summer. It began on June 24th and appeared to coincide with the first arrivals of Common Crossbills. Surprisingly, the same phenomenon did not appear to be apparent in Staffordshire.

Warks Remained very local during late winter, with flocks of 60 at Ladywalk; 50 at BAD Kineton, Brandon, Compton Verney and Packington; 40 at Draycote; 30 in Oakley Wood; 23 at Ufton Fields; and 15 in Edgehill Wood the only ones to exceed ten. The exception to this was a flock at Shustoke, which built up from 70 on January 19th to an exceptional peak of 250 on February 7th. Not only was this a site record, it was also the largest flock in the county since 1986 when one of 350 was seen near Warwick. Returned very early, with two over Lawford Heath on June 24th, one or two in Bentley Woods on 29th-30th increasing to 15 by July 7th, a family of five in Oakley Wood on July 12th and seven at Ufton Fields on 19th. Others continued to trickle in during late July with many more during August, giving maxima of 12-15 in Weethley Wood on August 24th and 30 in Hay Wood on 26th. At Oversley Wood, a flock of 20 on August 30th had grown to 100 on September 27th and October 12th. Elsewhere, flocks of up to 30 were widely reported from the beginning of September until the end of the year, with heavy passage noted along the hill scarps in the south-east. Maxima included 45 over Burton Dassett Hills on September 18th and 50 over Fenny Compton Hills on 21st, both flocks moving south; 39 at Draycote on November 22nd, 110 at Brandon on 29th, 100 at Ladywalk in December, 50 at Packington late in the year and, finally, 100-120 along the canal at Kingsbury on December 30th.

Worcs The only breeding season record received was one at Callow Hill on May 26th. The largest flocks in the first winter period were 150 at Bittell on January 1st, 120 and 150 at Horsham and Kingswood Common respectively on February 7th, and 120 at Orleton on 16th. Two at Callow Hill on June 24th were followed by others in late June and July at Coldridge Wood, Devils Den, Doverdale, Dowles Brook, Elmbridge Green Coppice, Grovely Dingle, Kingsford, Lickey Hills, Newnham Bridge, Ombersley Park, Pepper Wood, Shoulton, Stoke Bliss and West Malvern. Although the numbers involved were generally small, the largest flock being 40 at Coldridge Wood on July 19th, the scale of this mid-summer influx was quite unprecedented. The more usual autumn arrival resulted in many large parties, the biggest being 68 at Evesham on October 17th, 190 at Witchbatch on December 21st, 200 at Upton Warren on 27th and 80 at Bittell on 30th.

Staffs During the breeding season a juvenile was trapped at Betley Mere on July 5th, while on Cannock Chase a possible family party was seen at Wandon Spur on May 22nd and five were at Springslade on July 13th. Three juveniles at Maer on June 1st could also have been bred locally. Widely reported in the first winter period, with totals above 50 in January at Denstone (100), R. Dove at Dooleys (70), Ellastone (70); and in February at Copmere (80), Elford (60), Gailey (70), Seven Springs (200 plus), Tittesworth (60) and Westport (250).

During autumn and early winter, 72 were at Coombes Valley in September, 65 at Byrkley Park on October 27th, 100 in Sherbrook Valley on November 19th, 75 at Tittesworth on 15th, 110 at Westport in December and 70 in alders at Whiston Brook on 14th. Seen on feeders and nuts in gardens at Biddulph, Clayton, Denstone, Little Stoke and Newcastle.

W Mid In the first winter period, the largest flocks were over 80 in Hayhead Wood, 35 at Bradnock's Marsh and 25 in Brueton Park during January; 60 in Sandwell Valley and 30 at both Clayhanger and Norton during February; and 50 in Valley Park during March. Autumn/second winter flocks comprised 20 at Marston Green and 15 both in Dorridge Park and along the R. Blythe near The Somers during September; 25 flying over Valley Park on October 3rd; 30 at Sheepwash UP in November; and, in December, 40 at Fens Pools LNR and 30 at Park Lime Pits. Also noted regularly throughout the second winter period at Sandwell Valley, with a maximum of 30 in December. Garden records came from Balsall Common (five), Dorridge, Four Oaks (two sites, with a peak of eight at one), Earlswood (around eight in September), Moseley and Tipton. Up to 10 were also reported from Clayhanger, Harborne NR, Marsh Lane GP and Whitmore Reans.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Very common resident and partial migrant.

Warks Flocks of up to 60 were fairly frequent, particularly during the passage periods March-May and August-October. Larger concentrations included maxima of 80 at Packington in game cover on January 18th, 150 at Draycote on April 25th and 100 on September 16th, 80 roosting at Wormleighton Res on April 17th and 100 in the same roost on August 25th, and 80 at Burton Dassett on October 30th. Visible migration was noticeable over the Fenny Compton Hills on October 6th, with at least 75 moving south-east in one hour during late morning.

Worcs Little breeding season information was received, but 13 singing males on Castlemorton Common on April 13th indicated no change from the number of pairs there in 1995 and 12 pairs breeding on Walton Hill was also a significant concentration. At other seasons, there were several reports of good sized flocks, the largest being 120 at Lower Moor on January 3rd and 150 at Larford on 5th, 300 in linseed stubble at Blakeshall in February and March, 200 at Witley Park on August 24th, 247 at Defford on October 1st and 200 at Holt on 14th, 100 at Bittell on November 1st and 150 at Castle Hill on December 14th.

Staffs No breeding season records were received and information would be welcome. However, there was an increase in the number of flocks reported, the larger of which were 50 at Ashwood on February 5th, 80 at North Pit Elford on 8th, 100 near Kinver Edge on 28th, up to 200 at Apedale during March, 30 at Lawneswood on March 3rd, 40 at Belvide on 16th, 60 at Blithfield on April 4th, 23 at Knotbury on July 19th, 200 at Kettlebrook Park on October 19th and 100 at Iwerley on 31st, up to 100 around Chasewater by December and 60 at Whitmoor Haye on 14th.

W Mid Bred on Netherton Hill (where up to 50 seen) and at Park Lime Pits and probably did so in Sandwell Valley, whilst further breeding season records

came from Foxcote, Lutley and near Pedmore. The largest winter flocks comprised around 75 near Pedmore and 40 in Valley Park during January; and 150 in Sandwell Valley, 50 near Dunstall Park and up to 40 at Fens Pools LNR in February. Later in the year, an impressive 210 gathered on the old Walsall airfield on August 31st and 40 were at Fens Pools LNR again in November. Further reports came from Aldridge cricket field, Harborne NR and Solihull Rover Works.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Frequent, though declining, summer resident to the North Staffs Moors. Scarce and much declined winter visitor elsewhere in the northern half of the Region.

Worcs The bird at Kinsham from 1996 was seen again on January 1st *GHP* and February 2nd *SJH*. A pair found at Lower Moor on January 2nd remained until February 9th, with the male starting to sing towards the end of its stay *GHP et al.*

Staffs Only three records were received, namely two at Baldstones on April 12th *NR, AH* and three at Knotbury on May 25th, which were followed by two there on July 27th *ESC*.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea cabaret*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Frequent, though much declined, breeding species, now mainly in Staffs.

Warks Fairly scarce during the early months, with few parties of more than ten seen. The largest was at BAD Kineton which peaked at 60 on February 11th, while the next best was 25 in birches at Kingsbury Colliery on January 27th. Extreme dates were May 2nd and July 25th, both at Fenny Compton, with an unusually early trickle of autumn migrants associated with invading Common Crossbills and Siskins. Small numbers were common throughout the county from September but with few large concentrations, the best being maxima of 15 south at Napton Hill on October 3rd, 15 at Ladywalk on 19th, 27 at Fenny Compton on 27th, 20 at Draycote on November 22nd and 15 at Itchington Holt on December 7th.

Worcs The only breeding season records received concerned singles on the Lickey Hills and at Upton Warren both on May 2nd. Well reported at other seasons however, with small parties at 28 localities, the largest being 50 at Ombersley Park on January 19th; 40 at Upton Warren from September 28th-October 5th; 40 at Pirton on October 2nd, 70 at Castlemorton Common on 5th and 37 over Happy Valley on 18th; 40 at Westwood on November 1st-2nd; and 42 at Lower Moor on December 28th.

Staffs The monthly maxima at Westport were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	12	10	60	11	6	2	6	12	7	7	3	8

The larger winter flocks all occurred in February, with 30 at Prestwood on 1st, 40 at Ousley Cross on 9th, 120 at Weeford on 19th and 40 at Wilnecote on 25th. These were followed by 20 at Gib Torr on April 4th, while 60 were

counted at 16 sites on Cannock Chase during April and May. The only autumn party of note was 25 at Chasewater on November 23rd. Records of lesser numbers came from 14 other localities.

W Mid The highest counts in the first winter period comprised up to 14 regularly in a Four Oaks garden between January 1st-February 25th, a peak of 12 at Sheepwash UP between January-April, 20 in Valley Park in January and on Aldridge golf course on February 22nd, and around 20 in Sutton Park on March 3rd. Notable autumn movements at Sheepwash UP included 40 in three hours on September 28th and 50 in one hour on October 17th, all passing south-westwards. Up to 15 were then present around Harborne NR from late October to the end of the year, 50 were in Sandwell Valley on November 1st and up to 17 were at Sheepwash UP in late November and December. Up to 10 were also reported from Dorridge, Fens Pools LNR, Hayhead Wood, Marston Green, Park Lime Pits and Wergs.

Mealy Redpoll C. f. flammea

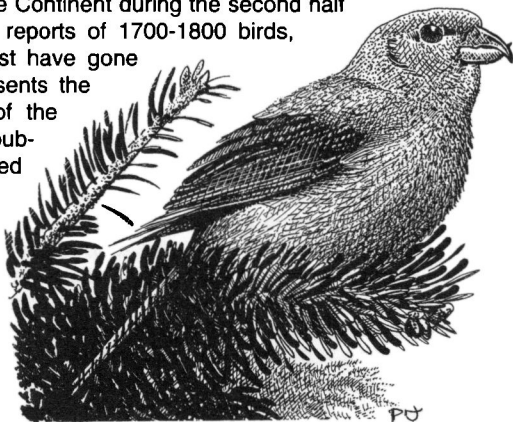
Rare and erratic winter visitor (5/10).

Worcs Reported only from Lower Moor, where numbers rose from two on November 30th to eight by December 28th. *RAP, SMW et al.*

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Frequent, though variable, irruptive visitor. Scarce and erratic breeding species.

A huge irruption from the Continent during the second half of the year resulted in reports of 1700-1800 birds, though many more must have gone unrecorded. This represents the largest ever invasion of the Region, more than doubling the 800-900 recorded in 1990. Although this irruption was unusually widespread, with small flocks in many places, the concentration of 200 on the Lickeys also appears to be a regional record.



Warks The largest invasion to reach the county since at least 1935 began

Common Crossbill (Phil Jones)

on June 28th when a flock of 27 was found in Bentley Woods. Next day this had grown to about 120 *GIG, PDH, SMH*, the largest flock in the county during the Club's history. 46 were found in Close Wood the same day and, over the next week or so, others began appearing throughout the county. Later counts from Bentley included 55 on July 7th and 50 on September 14th,

showing that the initial concentration had soon dispersed leaving perhaps a smaller semi-resident flock. Numbers in the county peaked during July, with a secondary peak in October-November, but some birds remained to the year's end. Maxima at other sites included 55 at Arbury Park on July 12th and 60 on December 13th, 14 at Packington on July 2nd, 20 at Shuckburgh Hills and 50 at Waverley Wood on 12th, 12 in Rugby on 14th, 22 at Ilmington Downs on November 1st, 50 at BAD Kineton on 18th and 21st, 30 in Hartshill Hayes on 23rd (where up to 25 had been present since June 30th) and 20 at Brandon Hall on December 7th and 14th. Smaller parties of ten or less were seen during the period (often regularly) at Avon Dassett, Brandon Marsh and Wood, Burton Dassett Hills, Chesterton Wood, Coombe, Draycote, Ladywalk, Napton Hill, Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood, Shustoke, Ufton Fields and Wormleighton Res, while more flocks were almost certainly missed in the greatly under-watched south-west of the county. Most birds showed a strong preference for larch, but some were noted feeding on beechmast at both Brandon Hall and Ilmington.

Worcs Three at Woodbury Hill on March 30th indicated that the species was not entirely absent from the county prior to the summer's invasion. First indications of the deluge were 12 over Dowles Brook on June 10th and one at the Lickey Hills on June 29th. The latter site then featured strongly in July, with numbers building to a peak of 200 from 15th-16th. Elsewhere that month, there were also significant counts of 15 at Roundhill Wood on 3rd, 50 at Eymore Wood on 4th, 20 at Clent on 13th, 18 at Bewdley on 16th and 10 at Blakeshall on 19th, with smaller numbers at Grovely Dingle, Hagley Wood, Ribbesford Wood, Rock Wood, Shrawley Wood, West Hills and Woodbury Hill. Immigration then slowed down during August and September, although there were still peaks of 20 at Bittell and 30 at Clent on August 3rd, 13 on Bredon Hill on September 3rd and smaller numbers at Beacon Hill, Elmley Castle, Longley Green and Oakley Pool. A second pulse was evident from October onwards, with 10 at Newbourne Wood on 3rd, a new peak of 50 at Clent on 5th, parties totalling 18 over Pound Green on 12th, 10 at Kyre Pool on 16th, a continual trickle through Happy Valley peaking at 23 on 17th, between 20-30 from British Camp to Wyche Cutting on 28th and 30 on the Lickey Hills the same day. Smaller numbers were also at Pirton and Westwood. Later arrivals produced counts of 15 at Woodbury Hill on November 7th and, in December, 24 over Pudford Hill on 6th, 15 at Coldridge Wood on 15th, 10 at Kingsford on 21st and 32 on Bredon Hill on 31st. Smaller numbers at this time were at Bredon village, Deerfold Wood, Fladbury, Stanford Court and over Worcestershire Beacon. A hint of these birds' desperation to find food came from several reports of them feeding in oak and beech trees.

Staffs The 100 on Cannock Chase in mid-April were very early to have been the vanguard of the summer's welcome invasion and it seems likely they were wintering birds already in the country. The invasion proper appears to have begun with six on Cannock Chase at the more typical time of May 22nd, after which birds were still present in the county into December. All sightings are tabulated below.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Aqualate	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	11	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	17	20	5	23	10
Brund Hill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
Chartley Moss	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	-	-
Cannock Chase	-	-	-	100	6	100	100	-	-	-	nk	-
Coombes Valley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	-
Hanchurch	-	-	-	-	-	80	40	-	-	1	-	-
Little Stoke	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-
Needwood	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	nk	-	12
Newcastle	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	2	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	4	-
Westport	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-

Note: nk denotes birds present, but numbers unknown

W Mid Not surprisingly, the marked early summer influx brought a few birds into the county. The first to be seen were 31 at Meriden Shafts on June 29th, after which there were regular records from here until September 13th with a peak of 49 on July 12th. The next were noted flying over Marsh Lane GP on July 11th (at least two), 20th (seven) and 22nd (seven). These were followed by three over Bartley on August 27th. No more were then seen until October, when 20 were in Sixteen Acre Wood on 25th, with 12 still present on 27th, and 25 were in larches at Berkswell on 29th. 13 were then present nearby in woodland to the east of Bradnock's Marsh on November 16th. At Sandwell Valley, three flew north on November 8th and one east on December 29th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident.

Warks The total of 16 logged on the BAD Kineton May count was similar to last year's 17, indicating a stable population. Small numbers were reported from many parts of the county. Ten at Napton Hill on October 23rd was the largest party, while on 31st a total of 28 were counted across the reserve at Brandon.

Worcs Reported from 17 localities in the breeding season, all records involving no more than three pairs. No comments on any change in status were received. Outside the breeding season, several small parties caught the attention, with the larger ones being 12 at Belbroughton on January 5th, 12 at Golden Valley on 7th, 12 at Cleeve Prior on 25th, 17 at Island Coppice on February 7th, 15 at Happy Valley on October 18th, 10 at Broadwas on 31st and 20 at Castle-morton Common on December 22nd.

Staffs As last year, six pairs bred at Coombes Valley and maxima of 18 birds were recorded there in July and August. Again reports came from 27 widely scattered localities, with the largest numbers being six at Brewood on January 1st, 10 at Birches Valley on 10th, six at Chasewater on 20th, eight at Elford on November 22nd, seven at Belvide on December 4th and nine at Lawneswood on 19th.

W Mid There were three territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* two in 1996) and two territories on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits (none in 1996). Many pairs bred on Harborne NR and breeding was also confirmed at Dunstall Park; Sheepwash UP, where at least one pair; Valley Park, where numbers are apparently stable; and Saltwells LNR, where numbers were well up and the species was said to be doing well. In addition, almost certainly bred at

Bumble Hole and Sandwell Valley, while further breeding season records came from Hawne Park, near Illey, Lapal and Stambermill. Reported visiting gardens in Dorridge, where an adult female with three youngsters came to a feeder, and Four Oaks. The larger parties included seven in Sandwell Valley on January 2nd and 12 at Park Lime Pits on 26th, in excess of 20 at Harborne NR in late summer and 14 at Saltwells and 10 at Valley Park in December. Smaller numbers were also noted at a further nine sites. A pale-headed bird was seen at Fens Pools in January and February.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Uncommon and declining resident.

Warks A good year began with two, probably a pair, feeding in hornbeams at Farnborough Park on May 8th, but not subsequently. One was then in a Rugby garden on September 14th, followed by a party of three in beeches on Ilmington Downs briefly on October 27th and one at Grandborough on November 13th.

Worcs A better year than 1996 with breeding proved in the Wyre Forest, where five adults and three recently fledged juveniles were present on July 12th, and singles seen near Dowles Brook on February 27th-28th. Away from the Forest, one was on Castlemorton Common on July 6th, four were at Arley Wood on September 27th, one flew over Happy Valley on November 6th, one was at Stanford Court on November 30th and two were noted at Chase End Hill on December 31st.

Staffs For the second consecutive year, no records were received.

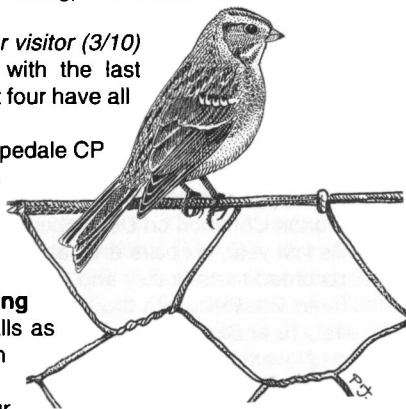
W Mid One was seen twice in Sandwell Valley on December 14th.

Lapland Longspur (Lapland Bunting) *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor (3/10)

The thirteenth regional record, with the last being at Belvide in 1993. The last four have all been in Staffordshire.

Staffs An immature male, first seen at Apedale CP on February 28th *DK, AK*, was re-found and remained at the same site from March 8th-12th *several observers*.



Lapland Longspur/Snow Bunting

Worcs A bird which gave three "teu" calls as it flew over Sugarloaf Hill on September 28th was considered to be a Lapland Longspur by an observer who is familiar with the calls of both species *SMW*.

Unfortunately it was not seen, and did not give the slightly more distinctive "ticky-ticky" part of the call which could have enhanced the record's chance of being accepted as the first Lapland Longspur for the county.

Lapland Longspur (Phil Jones)

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, and winter visitor.

Although not up to last year's standard, this was another good year with the Malverns again producing the majority of the records. The Apedale bird was the first in April since 1983 and maintains Staffs monopoly of spring records.

Warks One on Ilmington Downs on October 12th *DJS* eventually flew off east. A party of six was found in the quarry at Napton Hill on November 4th *JJB*.

Worcs All records came from the Malverns this year. The first was one which flew south over Happy Valley on November 1st *SMW*. This was followed by an immature male at North Hill on November 7th-8th, which may then have moved to Worcestershire Beacon on 9th where it joined another, also present from 8th. Both remained until 11th, with one until 13th *GJM AM SMW et al*. A different bird then appeared from 14th-15th *SMW*, while back on North Hill an immature female was present on 16th *RAP*. Two were then on North Hill on November 22nd *BS* and one on Worcestershire Beacon on 26th *MJH*.

Staffs An immature male was seen in flight at Apedale CP on April 4th *DK*.

W Mid An adult female was at Bartley on December 21st *JHB, AN, SR*.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Very common, though declining, resident.

Warks Appears to be at a low density now in many central and northern districts. May also be decreasing in the south, as at BAD Kineton, for example, only 44 were logged in May, which was 42% below average and the second year running with an unusually low total. Some good-sized flocks gathered during the cold weather of winter, including 100 at Knightcote on January 5th and March 5th, 170 at Fenny Compton on January 9th, 103 at Priors Marston on 19th, 90 at Chesterton on February 4th, 200 at Middleton on 5th and 55 at Gaydon on 18th. Towards the end of the year, there were further maxima of 100 at Draycote on November 15th and 22nd, 80 near Middleton on 30th, 135 at Upper Kingston on December 7th and 60 at Fenny Compton on 24th.

Worcs Little comparative breeding season data was received, but good concentrations of singing males were noted in the Belbroughton/Broome area (20 singing males) and also at Castlemorton Common and Timberhonger, with eight and 12 territorial males respectively. Outside the breeding season, the largest counts were 40 on Bredon Hill on January 5th, 55 at Stoke Bliss on February 2nd, 70 at Bishampton Vale Pool on March 2nd, 50 at Tibberton on October 12th, 70 at Low Habberley on November 13th, 50 at Summerfield on 21st and 40 in a turnip field at Chaddesley Corbett on December 30th.

Staffs Widely reported, with counts of over 10 birds at Apedale (15), Ashwood (20), Blithfield (40), Boddington (20), Crossplains (50), Croxall (40), Kiddemore Green (14), Kettlebrook Park (30), Knutton (18) and Little Wyrley (45).

W Mid Breeding season records came from Barr Common, Branton Hill Quarry, Cuckoo's Nook, Gorse Farm in Aldridge, Hayhead Wood area, Illey area (at least 11 males in song), Marsh Lane GP (at least two pairs), Marston Green,

Park Lime Pits (six territories on the CBC plot *cf.* eight in 1996), Sandwell Valley, Sutton Coldfield (near the Hillwood Television transmitter) and Woodgate Valley. Additionally said to be common in the Clayhanger area and also reported from Fens Pools LNR. Outside the breeding season, the larger flocks comprised 30 between Minworth and Wishaw on January 21st, 15 in Dunstall Park in February, 20 in Sandwell Valley on October 14th, 25 near Barston Ford on December 7th and 45 in Aldridge on 29th. Birds were noted in a Four Oaks garden between January-May 16th, with a peak of 12, while 11 were in the Dorridge area during January and March.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common, though declining, resident.

- Warks** Territory counts included 11 at Brandon, ten at BAD Kineton, nine along the R. Avon from Bidford-Marcliff, seven at Lighthorne Quarry, six each at Alvecote and Knightcote, five at Chesterton, Fenny Compton and Wormleighton Res, and four at both Ladywalk and Napton Res. A flock of 77 at Priors Marston on January 9th was one of the largest to be reported in recent years, while other good-sized parties included 13 at Gaydon on February 13th, 35 at Knightcote on March 5th, 18 at Dosthill on 23rd, 17 in game cover at Wormleighton Res on September 2nd, 20 at Long Marston Airfield on November 1st, 20 at Farnborough on December 6th and 30 at Upper Kingston on 7th. At Ladywalk, over 20 came to feeders during the winter and 40 roosted there on September 20th.
- Worcs** Under-recorded in the breeding season, with records from Bishampton Vale Pool, Feckenham (10 singing males), Ipsley Alders, Lodge Pool, Lower Moor, Oakley, Shortwood Roughts, Strensham, Timberhonger, Upton Warren and along the Worcester Canal. The largest winter concentrations were 15 around bird-feeders at Upton Warren on January 4th, 120 roosting at Grimley on February 9th, 20 at Lower Moor on November 30th and 16 at Castlemorton Common on December 22nd.
- Staffs** Eight pairs bred on Cannock Chase, mainly in Sherbrook Valley. Results from the Constant Effort ringing site at Betley (21 adults, 2 juveniles) suggested little change in numbers compared with 1996. The larger concentrations to be reported were 30 at Croxall on January 2nd, 25 behind the dam at Blithfield on 4th, 80 at Apedale with mixed buntings on set-aside on February 22nd and 30 at Little Wyrley on December 12th.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Bradnock's Marsh (four pairs), Clayhanger (where apparently relatively common), Fens Pools LNR (one in song, but no longer breeding here), Marsh Lane GP (two singing males), Park Lime Pits (four territories on the CBC plot – no change in numbers), Saltwells LNR (two or three pairs), Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green, Valley Park (an estimated five pairs) and Warwick University. Highest numbers comprised up to 20 in Sandwell Valley during January and September and up to eight at Fens Pools LNR in the first winter period. Up to six visited a south Walsall garden in the first winter period, whilst one on a Dorridge bird table in March was a 'garden first'. Also reported from Bumble Hole, Coombeswood and Dunstall Park.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra**Fairly common, though much declined, resident.*

Warks Fewer territory-holding males were reported this year, with just five at Wasperton, three at Marton and one-two at Charlecote, Curdworth, Dunton, Fenny Compton, Ilmington, Ladbroke, Long Itchington, Marcliff, Northend and Walton. The best winter flocks were 21 in a stubble field at Wishaw on January 7th, 52 in stubble at Marcliff on 25th and 25 in set-aside at Dunton on March 8th.

Worcs Breeding season records were received from Bishampton Vale Pool, Blackminster, Bredons Hardwick, Bretforton, Broome (four singing males), Churchill, Cropthorne, Defford, Doverdale, Fladbury (four singing males), Holt, Honeybourne, Kempsey (four singing males), Mustow Green, Peopleton, Ryall (five singing males), Saxons Lode, Shenstone, Stoulton, Throckmorton (six singing males), Torton (four singing males), Wick and Wyre Piddle. Outside the breeding season, seen at nine localities, with most records involving fewer than a dozen birds except for 50 at Throckmorton on November 2nd and 66 at Little Comberton on December 19th.

Staffs Records of singing birds, singles unless otherwise stated, came from Blithfield (two), The Clive, Crossplains, Handsacre, Hixon airfield (three), Iverley, Muckleston (four), Seighford (two), Shenstone Wood – Fotherley (five), Seisdon, Teddesley Park (where not known before), Trescott, Whitemoor Haye (eight) and Whittington Hall. Wintering birds were noted at Belvide (19), Chasewater (26), Shenstone (one) and Weeford (one).

W Mid Singing birds were reported from Hillwood Common Road (at least three and possibly four), Ox Leys Road in Sutton Coldfield, near Pedmore (up to five males) and the Wiggins Hill Road/Wishaw Lane area. One was on Netherton Hill on an unspecified date in April, while one or two birds located in Sandwell Valley on November 29th, December 20th, 21st and 26th were the first to be recorded there since 1989.

1995 Addenda

W Mid Two were at Clayhanger on May 14th, with four there on September 9th.

Exotica

The following species all fall into Category E of The British List (BOU, 1998), as being introductions, transportees or escapes from captivity and whose breeding populations are not thought to be self-sustaining. The sequence followed and the nomenclature used in this section is mainly that advocated by Howard and Moore (1991) in A Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus**Africa south of Sahara to Iran; Madagascar*

Warks A full-winged adult was seen on the R. Avon close to Stratford town centre on May 13th. This bird had also been seen in Northants.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus**Breeds on high plateaux in central and southern Asia and winters mainly in northern India and Burma.*

Worcs One was at Pirton on June 22nd.

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

Breeds on the tundra of central Arctic Canada and winters in western USA and Texas.

Warks Singles were at Salford Priors GP on September 20th and Draycote on October 14th.

Worcs Singles were at Upton Warren on June 6th and Bittell on August 24th and September 13th.

W Mid A full-winged bird without rings appeared in Monkspath Park on January 2nd with an influx of Canada Geese.

Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata*

Coastal and inland waters in New Zealand.

Warks One was reported from Dosthill on May 18th.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Forested woodlands from Canada to northern Mexico; Cuba and Bahamas

Warks Single males were at Coombe for much of the year and at Coton on October 10th.

Chiloe Wigeon *Anas sibilatrix*

Open wetlands in southern South America and the Falkland Islands.

Staffs A male was present at Blithfield Res from July 6th-August 17th.

Speckled Teal *Anas flavirostris*

From coastal lagoons to lakes, marshes and rivers at high altitude in South America.

W Mid One was in Sandwell Valley from May 16th-20th and again from August 2nd-10th and on September 28th.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

Rivers and lakes in open country in Australia and Tasmania.

W Mid A pair was at Edgbaston Res on an unspecified date in May.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Savannah and deserts of south-east Europe, the Middle East and Africa

Warks An immature of unknown origin was reported from Draycote in December.

Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar*

Arid and semi-arid regions from the eastern Mediterranean eastwards to Manchuria.

Warks One was at Ilmington on April 12th.

Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

Widespread in South America and Africa south of the Sahara.

Warks An adult reported in the Draycote roost on September 1st was presumably the escape that has been seen in several parts of the Midlands recently.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus**Open habitats throughout the interior of Australia.***Warks** A yellow bird was at Fenny Compton on August 20th.**Worcs** Singles, perhaps the same individual, were at Little Comberton on August 10th and on Bredon Hill on September 24th.**W Mid** Singles reported flying over Valley Park on January 1st and May 19th, and over a housing estate near Foxcote on October 29th.**Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus**Domesticated forms of a species which, in the wild, occurs in the drier parts of Australia.***Worcs** One was at Little Comberton on October 23rd**Senegal Parrot** *Poicephalus senegalus**Open forest and savannah in West Africa.***W Mid** One was in an Aldridge garden from January 6th-May 31st and again from November 20th to the end of the year. Apparently it was also present in 1996.**Parakeet** *sp.***Worcs** One flying over Upper Welland on April 20th was considered to be probably a Rose-ringed Parakeet.**Canary** *Serinus canaria**Domesticated forms of a species which, in the wild, occurs on Madeira, the Canary Islands and the Azores.***Worcs** One was at Evesham on October 17th.

Short Notes

Hybrid Whooper X Mute Swans

Five birds, originally thought to be a family party of two adults and three juveniles, were present throughout the year between Bradnock's Marsh and Packington Park, with some of party at least venturing to Marsh Lane GP in April, Kingsbury WP in May and Coton thereafter *BLK*. They were described by *NB* as follows:

Two, presumed to be the parents, were white. They appeared nearer to Whooper than Mute, but the deep triangle of yellow on their bills was corrupted by the curve from a Mute and all the colour in their bills was washed out. The other three birds, which still had brown body feathers in amongst the white, were more obviously hybrids, with very long necks that were more like Mute, but thinner. They were also nearer to Mute in size and clearly larger than the two other birds. Their bills were more Mute like, but corrupted by Whooper in being broad but straighter than Mute, with pink and black splotches. The black around the eyes was also more restricted.

For the young to be more like Mute when the adults more closely resembled Whoopers was distinctly odd. However, investigations revealed that when the pen of a captive pair of Whooper Swans at Whale Tankers, Catherine-de-Barnes (W Mids), was killed by a mink, the cob paired with a female Mute Swan (*Michael Fisher, Managing Director, Whale Tankers*). This pair have now successfully raised cygnets (believed nine in total) for the past four years and the five birds reported in the Blythe and Middle Tame Valleys were presumably the offspring from different years, with the two whiter birds being older than their three siblings. The eldest of the hybrids are now of an age to begin breeding and Mr Fisher has been alerted to, and understands, the problems that could arise should any of the hybrid birds prove fertile. This is potentially a worrying situation which needs careful monitoring. All records of hybrid swans should therefore be submitted to the relevant county recorder with as much detail as possible about age and likely parentage.

Breeding Northern Lapwings on the North Staffordshire Moors

Northern Lapwings were again the subject of a nest monitoring exercise on the North Staffordshire Moors. At the best studied site, Hazel Barrow, at least 25, possibly up to 32, eggs were laid in nine nesting attempts by what was believed to be four pairs of birds, though birds were not individually identified. From these nests, five chicks were hatched. Later observations suggested that, of these, probably only one chick may have fledged, although there is a possibility that chicks may have moved. Although the habitat appears suitable for the maintenance of chicks, this probably did not happen. In 1994 two pairs (qualified as above) laid 16 eggs in four attempts and hatched three young. In 1995 three pairs laid 22 eggs in seven attempts and hatched three and in 1996 three pairs produced 20-22 eggs in six nesting attempts and hatched seven. In the lower Morridge area, none of the five nesting attempts which were followed were successful. This was unusual, as in the past three years this area has been generally more productive than the Hazel Barrow site. An overview of the breeding season would be that it was not as productive as in the 1996 season, a point made by the ringing totals for the project which in 1997 was half that of the previous year (10 down from 20).

J A Lawrence

Citrine Wagtail – a new bird to the Region

Visiting Brandon Marsh in the early morning of May 18th, I first noticed the bird, which spent most of its time on a vegetated muddy island, at approximately 06.30 hrs.

I viewed it for around 15 minutes, very briefly an hour later, and then for another 45 minutes at closer range approximately one hour after that. By this time other observers were also present and the bird eventually stayed for the remainder of the day, but failed to show the next day.

The bird was originally found by myself and Adam Archer was also present. Having found it, I reported it to Colin Potter, a reserve warden, who then viewed it with a small party of maybe 10-15 other observers, including Jim Rushworth who also provided a full description. Initial observation was from a hide approximately 100m-150m from the bird, though later it was viewed from a closer hide. At first the weather was a bit misty and the quality of light was only fair, but it gradually became brighter and the mist cleared. I had until then had no prior experience of Citrine Wagtail, although I had a fair amount of experience with Yellow, Grey, Pied and White Wagtails. It was this lack of experience that prompted me to seek a second opinion from someone else, which in the event turned out to be a number of observers. All agreed with my identification of the bird as a female Citrine Wagtail.

Loyd Berry

The following is a combination of extracts from the field notes submitted by Loyd Berry and Jim Rushforth:

First impressions were of a very pale Yellow Wagtail, but there was something very different about it. It was about the same size as a Yellow Wagtail, but less compact and resembling a Pied Wagtail in overall shape and jizz. The nape, mantle and back were light grey, this grey continuing onto the crown, where it became slightly darker and also contained the slightest hint of yellow. A very pronounced and quite broad supercilium, which was a light, almost lemon yellow, continued unbroken around the buffish-grey ear coverts thereby containing or enclosing them. This same yellow continued down the throat and breast, then faded into white, or greyish white, for the rest of the flanks, belly and vent. The wings were contrastingly grey and white and one of the most striking features were the white tips to the median and greater coverts which formed two prominent white wing-bars. Broad white fringes to the blackish tertials added to the contrasting appearance of the wings. The tail was black with white outer feathers. The black bill also seemed slightly longer and thicker than a Yellow Wagtail's. The legs were dark, showing a brownish tinge in good light. The call was very similar to a Yellow Wagtail's 'sreep', but if anything somewhat harsher. The flight was typical of a wagtail, but when foraging amongst low vegetation, it seemed less energetic than either Pied or White, though the usual tail wagging was evident. At times it spent short periods almost still, although it remained alert and wary, looking round frequently. The overall impression was of a very neatly marked, clean wagtail.

Icterine Warbler – the first Warwickshire Record

This, the first county record, was discovered amongst a large influx of migrants on Napton Hill on August 25th. The finder, PDH, described it as:

An obvious *Hippolais* warbler, considerably larger and more long-winged than a *Phylloscopus*. It had a peaked crown, sloping forehead and rather hefty-looking, long, pinkish-yellow bill, which was darker on the culmen. The upperparts were generally greenish-grey, with a strikingly conspicuous wing-panel formed by broad, pale whitish edges to the tertials. It had a bland, open-faced expression created by pale lores and just a short, pale supercilium with no defining dark line for emphasis. The underparts were washed with yellowish-white, but with brighter yellow on the throat and upper breast. The legs were blue-grey.

Four Icterine Warblers were also recorded in Norfolk between August 20th-26th, suggesting a small passage which may have resulted from the change in weather on 22nd, when thundery weather brought a long, hot spell to a close.

Ringing in 1997

1997 was another active year for ringers and ringing totals supplied by individual ringers and secretaries of the Ringing Groups within the West Midland Bird Club area show a total of 75 species ringed during the year. The most unusual was an adult Common Buzzard, this species being normally ringed as nestlings rather than adults. Although fewer recoveries were received than in the previous year, 1997 produced two very remarkable recoveries.

Several excellent longevity records were recorded. The 20-year old Mute Swan is very unusual and, of the two 20-year old Canada Geese recorded at Tipton, one was ringed as an adult and must therefore be at least 21 years old. Black-headed Gulls, with ages ranging from 3-15 years, were numerous and the 16-year old Eurasian Curlew is the oldest on record for the area. Small birds tend to have short lives and considering the enormous distances travelled by the tiny Marsh Warbler from Defford, 5.8 years and still going is a remarkable age. The Marsh Warbler record is also an excellent example of site fidelity, the bird being actually hatched in the vicinity of where it was caught. Similarly, the Sand Martin caught at Cornets End in two consecutive years shows how migrant birds may use the same site annually. Black-headed Gulls continue to provide excellent long distance movements, with birds from Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden reaching the West Midland Bird Club area and birds ringed here being recovered in the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Poland. The link between migrants within the area and the south-east coast is well shown by Sand Martins, with 57% of the recoveries relating to Icklesham in Sussex. In the northern parts of their range, Common Starlings are partial migrants and the Common Starling movement to the Grampian Region suggests a northern breeding bird. The 82 kilometre journey of the Common Coot, from Blithfield to Wales, is unusual, although in previous years we have had Common Coot moving to the Continent.

Very few duck are ringed in the West Midland Bird Club area and the records of Common Teal and Mallard show how interesting a ringing programme would be for the *Anatinae*. The 1868 km movement of the Mallard to Belarus is staggering, but what is even more unusual is that only the ring was found - in the pellet of an Eagle Owl!

Neck collars are widely used on Tundra and Whooper Swans, thereby enabling a positive identification of individuals to be made even when the bird is some considerable distance from the observer. The value of these collars is well illustrated by the numerous sightings of the Tundra Swan, both in this country and abroad.

Finally, we think of tits as essentially parochial in habit, never moving more than a few kilometres from their natal site. The three Blue Tit movements of 20, 21 and 29 kilometres are unusual, but there have been many isolated examples of birds travelling considerably longer distances. However, they and most other records received for this report pale into insignificance beside the massive 1009 km movement of the Great Tit from Kidderminster to Denmark - a remarkable movement and one difficult to explain.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Group Secretaries and individual ringers who sent in their 1997 ringing totals and especially Messrs D Brown, J Cameron, D Clifton, F C Gribble, C Griffiths, G Hodson, P Ireland, J A Lawrence, W Low, C McShane, P Stewart, S Watchorn and Dr C D T Minton for sending in the recoveries for this Annual Report.

A E Coleman
Ringing Secretary

Selected List of Recoveries involving the WMBC Area

Entries are arranged by species and, within species, by recovery date. Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery details on the second. This report includes recoveries for 1997 and previously unpublished recoveries for earlier years. All foreign recoveries and movements of greater than 100 km (62.14 miles) are included. Treatment of movements less than 100 km depends on the species involved.

Key:

Age at Ringing:

Pull *Pullus (nestling)*
 Juv *Juvenile (young able to fly)*
 1Y *Bird in its first year*
 2Y *Bird in its second year*
 Ad *Adult (at least one year old)*
 Fg *Full grown (age uncertain)*

Sex:

M *Male*
 F *Female*

Manner of Recovery:

v *Caught and released with ring*
 + *Shot or killed*
 x *Found dead or dying*
 vv *Ring read in the field*
 ? *Manner of recovery unknown*

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
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Mute Swan

Z38044	Pull F	16.08.76	Rugeley (Staffs)	CDTM
	x	24.04.97	Edingale (Staffs)	18kms
Z89041	Pull M	17.08.96	Halmer End (Staffs)	DCo
	vv	13.07.97	Fairburn Ings (W Yorks)	112kms
Z86304	Juv M	13.08.95	Bransford Golf Course (Worcs)	WRG
	v	26.07.97	Abbotsbury (Dorset)	168kms

Tundra Swan

V7738	2Y M	15.08.96	Zelonii Island, Korovinskaya	
	vv	09.11.96	Ribble Estuary (Lancs)	
	vv	10.11.96	Martin Mere (Lancs)	
	vv	08.01.97	Martin Mere (Lancs)	
	vv	10.01.97	Martin Mere (Lancs)	
	vv	14.01.97	Westport Lake (Staffs)	
	vv	02.02.97	Martin Mere (Lancs)	
	vv	28.02.97	Gammelvra Enge, Store Vildmose, Denmark	
	vv	02.03.97	Bolle Enge, Limfjorden, Denmark	
	vv	07.03.97	Bolle Enge, Limfjorden, Denmark	
	vv	11.03.97	Bolle Enge, Limfjorden, Denmark	

Canada Goose

5076281	Pull	01.07.77	Handsworth Park (West Mids)	CDTM
	v	23.06.97	Tipton (West Mids)	8kms
5082344	Ad	05.07.77	Moseley Park (West Mids)	CDTM
	v	01.08.97	Tipton (West Mids)	15kms

Species	Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
Eurasian Wigeon					
FA76840	Ad M	03.03.96 07.01.97	Bredons Hardwick (Worcs) Manche, France	WRG 294kms	
FA76841	Ad M	03.03.96 25.01.97	Bredons Hardwick (Worcs) Friesland, Netherlands	WRG 541kms	
FC63449	1Y M	03.03.96 22.09.97	Bredons Hardwick (Worcs) Ringkobing Fjord, Jylland, Denmark	WRG 812kms	
FA76832	Ad M	10.12.96 30.09.97	Bredons Hardwick (Worcs) Salthouse (Norfolk)	WRG 242kms	
Common Teal					
ES99908	Ad M	10.12.96 28.01.97	Kemerton (Worcs) Shrivenham (Oxon)	WRG 58kms	
Mallard					
GF62470	Ad M x	21.12.96 05.06.97	Blithfield (Staffs) Layahavichi District, Brest, Belarus (formerly USSR)	JCa 1868kms	
Common Kestrel					
EN97167	Pull x	22.06.95 18.02.97	The Roaches, Leek (Staffs) Deux-Sevres, France	JAL 704kms	
Common Coot					
GF24493	Ad x	05.03.94 31.03.97	Blithfield (Staffs) Nr Caergwrle (Flintshire, formerly Clwyd)	JCa 82kms	
Eurasian Curlew					
FS34137	Juv x	09.08.80 27.02.97	Wellington (Salop) Upton Warren (Worcs)	CJW 55kms	
Black-headed Gull					
EN91089	Ad x	17.01.87 10.06.96	Majors Green (Worcs) Tingodden, Jylland, Denmark	PI	
EN91182	Ad x	24.01.87 22.06.96	Majors Green (Worcs) Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	PI	
EK56106	Ad vv vv	04.01.86 11.09.95 08.09.96	Majors Green (Worcs) Wood Green Reservoir (Gtr London) Wood Green Reservoir (Gtr London)	PI 149kms 149kms	
3296981	Pull x	04.07.82 02.11.96	Westeltjk Havengeried, Netherlands Eccleshall (Staffs)	478kms	
EJ19883	Ad vv	17.01.81 09.11.96	Madeley Heath (Worcs) Busum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	PI	
ER42317	Pull vv vv	21.06.93 29.04.94 17.12.96	Baston Fen (Lincs) Hilversun, Netherlands Sutton Park (West Mids)	PNW 379kms 103kms	

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
5T59020	Pull v	25.05.93 04.01.97	Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium Throckmorton (Worcs)	419kms
6151873	Pull x	16.06.94 27.01.97	Bromolla, Kristianstad, Sweden Kingsbury Water Park (Warks)	1117kms
EH96175	Ad v	18.12.82 28.01.97	Madeley Heath (Worcs) Cardiff (Glam)	PI 124kms
EK56055	1Y x	04.01.86 04.02.97	Majors Green (Worcs) Llansantffraed (Ceredigion, formerly Dyfed)	PI 159kms
EP84759	Fg v	22.11.90 22.03.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Wladyslawowo, Gdansk, Poland	SEGG 1384kms
EN91034	1Y vv vv vv vv	17.01.87 15.06.89 26.03.93 03.04.96 06.04.97	Majors Green (Worcs) Ankerplaats, Vlieland, Netherlands Groningen, Netherlands Groningen, Netherlands Groningen, Netherlands	PI
EK56422	Ad x	07.01.87 05.07.97	Majors Green (Worcs) Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	PI

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GG76472	Ad vv	12.01.91 27.07.95	Throckmorton (Worcs) Rogaland, Norway	SEGG 902kms
FA57043	Fg vv	05.12.92 11.10.96	Throckmorton (Worcs) Zeebrugge, Belgium	SEGG 372kms
GG86587	Pull v	06.07.91 21.12.96	South Walney (Cumbria) Throckmorton (Worcs)	226kms
GG91466	Pull v	04.07.92 21.12.96	South Walney (Cumbria) Throckmorton (Worcs)	226kms
FA94143	Fg x	21.12.96 15.06.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Flat Holm (Glam)	SEGG 111kms
FA91412	Fg vv	07.12.96 21.06.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Tichelrijt, Netherlands	SEGG 481kms
FA54774	Ad x	06.11.93 03.07.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Southport (Merseyside)	SEGG 175kms
GJ17081	Ad x	07.01.87 04.08.96	Majors Green (Worcs) Farmoor Reservoir (Oxon)	SEGG 80kms

Herring Gull

GK80399	Ad x	01.01.80 03.10.97	Madeley Heath (Worcs) Hale Head Lighthouse (Cheshire)	PI 113kms
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Sand Martin

A83160	Ad v	10.04.96 08.06.96	L'Eree (Guernsey) Cornets End, Meriden (West Mids)	335kms
F696445	Juv v	25.07.90 25.06.96	Icklesham (Sussex) Kemerton (Worcs)	ABRG 227kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ring Movement
K615360	Juv v	16.06.96 25.06.96	Saredon Hill (Staffs) Kemerton (Worcs)	<i>BS and M</i> 72kms
K779093	Juv v	24.06.96 11.07.96	Coton-in-the-Clay (Staffs) Kimbridge, Romsey (Hants)	<i>JCa</i> 204kms
K201510	Juv v	31.08.96 20.05.97	Icklesham (Sussex) Uttoxeter (Staffs)	<i>RRBG</i> 282kms
J425741	Ad F v	05.07.94 20.05.97	Nr Calceby, Louth (Lincs) Uttoxeter (Staffs)	136kms
K200951	Juv v	30.08.96 14.06.97	Icklesham (Sussex) Cornets End, Meriden (West Mids)	<i>RRBG</i> 233kms
K229363	Juv v	10.06.96 14.06.97	Icklesham (Sussex) Cornets End, Meriden (West Mids)	<i>RRBG</i> 233kms
K140777	Ad M v	29.06.95 22.06.97	Nr Weybourne (Norfolk) Uttoxeter (Staffs)	200kms
F808169	Ad v v	21.08.95 08.06.96 13.07.97	Icklesham (Sussex) Cornets End, Meriden (West Mids) Cornets End, Meriden (West Mids)	<i>RRBG</i> 233kms 233kms
N220196	Juv v	20.06.97 20.07.97	Uttoxeter (Staffs) Icklesham (Sussex)	<i>JCa</i> 282kms
K085528	Ad v	20.05.95 28.07.97	Coton-in-the-Clay (Staffs) Icklesham (Sussex)	<i>JCa</i> 273kms
N220416	Ad v	02.07.97 04.08.97	Uttoxeter (Staffs) East Ness (N Yorks)	<i>JCa</i> 155kms
N069069	Ad v	10.05.97 01.09.97	Uttoxeter (Staffs) Icklesham (Sussex)	<i>JCa</i> 282kms
House Martin				
K193257	Juv v	09.09.95 27.05.96	Copeland Island, Down (N Ireland) Uttoxeter (Staffs)	312kms
Marsh Warbler				
C791766	Pull v	07.08.91 29.05.97	Defford (Worcs) Defford (Worcs)	<i>WRG</i> 0kms
Reed Warbler				
F586411	Juv v	11.07.92 03.05.97	Maer (Staffs) Betley Mere (Staffs)	<i>JAL</i> 10kms
J757336	Juv v	08.08.94 10.05.97	Icklesham (Sussex) Upton Warren (Worcs)	<i>RRBG</i> 246kms
J893477	Ad v	02.06.96 22.07.97	Patrington (Humberside) Nr Bourne Farm (Worcs)	<i>M and M</i> 227kms
Willow Warbler				
1Y6903	Ad v	19.08.96 07.05.97	Betley Mere (Staffs) Austwick (N Yorks)	<i>JAL</i> 120kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
Pied Flycatcher				
K427955	Pull v	20.06.96 24.05.97	Newtown (Montgomeryshire, formerly Powys) Nr Alton (Staffs)	107kms
Blue Tit				
H857570	Juv v	20.06.93 29.09.97	Great Malvern (Worcs) Ashford Carbonell (Salop)	WRG 29kms
K239694	Juv v	12.11.95 12.05.96	Evesham (Worcs) Old Hills (Worcs)	SVRG 20kms
K669223	Juv v	21.08.96 09.03.97	Westmancote (Worcs) Long Levens (Glos)	WRG 21kms
Great Tit				
K772206	Ad F v	07.01.97 22.03.97	Kidderminster (Worcs) Skagen, Jylland, Denmark	JCa 1009kms
Eurasian Jay				
DN32871	Ad x	07.04.96 25.09.96	Westmancote (Worcs) Bredon (Worcs)	WRG 1km
Common Starling				
RP09701	Ad F v	08.02.97 17.09.97	Powick (Worcs) Grampian Region (Scotland)	WRG 585kms

Submission of Records

All contributors are asked to follow the guidelines set out in the booklet *A Checklist of the Birds of the West Midlands and a Guide to Status and Record Submission (second edition 1989)*. All records should be sent to the relevant county recorder as soon as possible after observation. Records received after January 31st of the following year may be too late for publication. Concise, though adequate, field descriptions (including how the species was identified, the circumstances of the sighting and the observer's experience of the species) should accompany records of all species shown in the county tables below with an asterisk. An exception to this are geese which are known to be of feral origin. Species marked with two asterisks are currently considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and a full description of these should be compiled and sent via the county recorder. In addition, descriptions are required for all out-of-season migrants, unusual hybrids and scarce sub-species, including Green-winged Teal, Scandinavian Lesser Black-backed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Scandinavian Rock Pipit, Blue-headed and other *flava* race wagtails, White Wagtail (autumn only), Black-bellied Dipper, Greenland Wheatear, Chiffchaff races, Hooded Crow and Mealy Redpoll. The lack of an acceptable description may lead to records being rejected.

County Lists

The following tables show all species in categories A-C of *The British List* reliably recorded in the four counties of the Region (within current boundaries) since records were kept. The regional total as at December 31st 1997 was 336. The year shown is the latest in which the species has been observed in each county, with C standing for the current year. Bracketed species refer to birds on *The British List* which within the Region are not thought to have occurred except as escapes or releases from captivity and these do not contribute towards county totals: nk refers to reliable, but undated, 19th century records.

Species	Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
* Red-throated Diver	1996	C	C	1996
* Black-throated Diver	1995	1995	1996	C
* Great Northern Diver	C	C	1996	1996
Little Grebe	C	C	C	C
Great Crested Grebe	C	C	C	C
* Red-necked Grebe	1996	1996	C	1996
* Slavonian Grebe	C	1996	1996	1991
* Black-necked Grebe	C	C	C	1996
* Fulmar	1994	1989	1993	1996
* Cory's Shearwater	-	-	1971	-
* Manx Shearwater	1994	C	1996	1990
* European Storm-petrel	1978	1968	1990	1970
* Leach's Storm-petrel	C	C	1989	1987
* Northern Gannet (Gannet)	C	C	1993	1991
Great Cormorant (Cormorant)	C	C	C	C
* Shag	C	1993	C	1996
* Great Bittern (Bittern)	C	C	C	1995
** Little Bittern	1981	1865	1901	<1836
** Night Heron	1996	1983	1987	1994
** Squacco Heron	-	-	1874	-
** Cattle Egret	1994	1993	1987	-
* Little Egret	C	C	C	C
** Great White Egret	1995	-	-	1995
Grey Heron	C	C	C	C
* Purple Heron	1990	1982	1994	-
** Black Stork	-	1956	1985	-
* White Stork	C	1995	1990	1986
** Glossy Ibis	-	-	1840	-
* Eurasian Spoonbill (Spoonbill)	1996	1988	1996	1996
Mute Swan	C	C	C	C
Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan)	C	C	C	C
* Whooper Swan	C	1995	C	C
* Bean Goose	1996	1993	1994	-
* Pink-footed Goose	C	C	C	C
* White-fronted Goose	C	C	C	C
[Lesser White-fronted Goose]	1991	-	1992	-
Greylag Goose	C	C	C	C
[Snow Goose]	C	C	1996	1996
Canada Goose	C	C	C	C
* Barnacle Goose	C	C	C	C
* Brent Goose	1996	C	C	C
[Red-breasted Goose]	1973	1996	1992	-
Egyptian Goose	1995	1989	C	1996
* Ruddy Shelduck	C	1996	C	1996
Common Shelduck (Shelduck)	C	C	C	C

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	C	C	C	C
Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon)	<i>Anas penelope</i>	C	C	C	C
** American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	1987	—	C	—
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Teal (Teal)	<i>Anas crecca</i>	C	C	C	C
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	C	C	C	C
Northern Pintail (Pintail)	<i>Anas acuta</i>	C	C	C	C
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	C	C	C	C
** Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	1989	1989	1996	—
Northern Shoveler (Shoveler)	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	C	C	C	C
* Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	C	C	1996	C
Common Pochard (Pochard)	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	C	C	C	C
* Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	C	1990	1977	—
** Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	C	1993	1992	1991
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	C	C	C	C
Greater Scaup (Scaup)	<i>Aythya marila</i>	C	C	C	C
** Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	—	—	1987	—
* Common Eider (Eider)	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	1993	C	1993	1993
* Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	1992	1991	1996	1991
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	C	C	C	1996
* Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	1986	—	—	—
* Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	1995	1985	1992	1994
Common Goldeneye (Goldeneye)	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	C	C	C	C
* Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	C	C	C	1995
* Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	C	C	C	C
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	C	C	C	C
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	C	C	C	C
* Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1993	1987	C	1996
** Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	—	1986	1991	—
* Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	C	C	C	C
** White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	1891	1945	1905	—
* Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1996	1996	1996	1996
* Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1995	1995	1994	1951
* Northern Goshawk (Goshawk)	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	C	C	1996	1996
Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparrowhawk)	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	C	C	C	C
* Rough-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	1994	1979	1995	1996
* Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	—	—	nk	—
* Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Kestrel (Kestrel)	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	1967	—	1977	1973
* Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	C	C	C	C
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	C	C	C	C
** Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	1852	—	<1844	—
* Peregrine Falcon (Peregrine)	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	C	C	C	C
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	—	—	C	1868
Black Grouse	<i>Tetrao tetrix</i>	—	1915	C	1897
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	C	C	C	C
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	C	C	C	C
* Common Quail (Quail)	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Pheasant (Pheasant)	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	C	C	C	C
[Golden Pheasant]	<i>Chrysolophus pictus</i>	1995	1972	1996	1985
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Spotted Crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	1996	1996	1993	C
** Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>	1974	—	—	—
* Corn Crane	<i>Crex crex</i>	1994	1988	1988	1965

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Coot (Coot)	<i>Fulica atra</i>	C	C	C	C
* Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	1977	—	1991	1903
** Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	—	—	c1899	nk
** Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	—	c1825	—	—
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1987	1986	1995	—
* Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	1996	1996	1995	—
* Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	1853	1996	1956	1991
** Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	1996	1994	—	—
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	C	C	C	C
Great Ringed Plover (Ringed Plover)	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	C	C	C	C
* Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	1993	1940	1995	—
* Dotterel	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>	1993	C	1993	—
** American Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	1991	—	—	—
European Golden Plover (Golden Plover)	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	C	C	C	C
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	C	C	C	C
** White-tailed Lapwing (White-tailed Plover)	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>	1975	—	—	—
Northern Lapwing (Lapwing)	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	C	C	C	C
Red Knot (Knot)	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	C	C	C	1996
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	C	C	C	C
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	C	C	C	C
* Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	1996	1992	1994	1993
** Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	—	1988	1971	—
** White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	—	1996	1989	—
* Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	1996	—	1996	—
* Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	C	1995	1996	1988
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	C	C	C	1993
* Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	1993	1988	1995	1985
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	C	C	C	C
** Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	1985	—	—	—
* Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>	1995	—	1980	—
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	C	C	C	C
Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	C	C	C	C
** Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	1894	—	1954	1995
** Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	1983	1990	—	—
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	C	C	C	C
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	C	C	C	1996
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	C	C	C	1985
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	C	C	C	C
Eurasian Curlew (Curlew)	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	C	C	C	C
** Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	1851	—	—	—
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	C	C	C	1996
Common Redshank (Redshank)	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	—	—	1974	—
Common Greenshank (Greenshank)	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	C	C	C	C
** Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	—	—	1995	—
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	C	C	C	C
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	C	C	C	1994
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	C	C	C	C
** Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	1990	—	1982	—
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	C	C	C	1995

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
** Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	1996	1985	—	—
* Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	1988	1989	1996	1893
* Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	1995	1996	C	C
* Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	C	1995	1991	1985
* Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	C	1996	C	C
* Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	—	1987	1994	1991
* Great Skua	<i>Catharacta skua</i>	1989	1994	C	1994
* Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	—	1996	—	C
Little Gull	<i>Larus minutus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Sabine's Gull	<i>Larus sabini</i>	1989	C	1996	—
** Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>	1992	—	1996	—
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	1991	C	1981	1996
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	C	C	C	C
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	C	C	C	C
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Iceland Gull	<i>Larus glaucoideus</i>	C	1996	C	C
* Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	C	C	C	1990
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	C	C	C	C
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	C	C	C	C
** Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	1899	nk	1989	1896
** Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	1993	1971	1993	1979
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	C	C	C	1996
* Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	1993	1993	1983	—
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	C	C	C	C
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	C	C	C	C
** Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>	—	—	1852	—
Little Tern	<i>Sterna albiglans</i>	C	C	C	1996
** Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	1987	1994	1970	—
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	C	C	C	C
** White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	1996	1992	1992	1977
* Common Guillemot (Guillemot)	<i>Uria aalge</i>	nk	—	1920	1980
* Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	nk	1953	—	1912
* Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	1995	1993	1996	1991
* Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	1953	1963	1983	1963
** Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrhaptes paradoxus</i>	1888	1888	1908	1888
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	C	C	C	C
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	C	C	C	C
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	C	C	C	C
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	C	C	C	C
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	C	C	C	C
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1996	1996	1993	C
(Ring-necked Parakeet)					
Common Cuckoo (Cuckoo)	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	C	C	C	C
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	C	C	C	C
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	C	C	C	C
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	C	C	C	C
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	C	1996	C	1996
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	C	C	C	1995
** Tengmalm's Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	—	1901	—	—
European Nightjar (Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	1989	1996	C	1979
** White-throated	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	—	—	1991	—
Needle-tailed Swift					
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	—	C	1996	1988
Common Kingfisher (Kingfisher)	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	C	C	C	C
* European Bee-eater (Bee Eater)	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	1886	1970	—	1955

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
** European Roller (Roller)	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	—	—	1908	—
* Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1995	C	1996	C
* Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	1996	C	1994	1995
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	C	C	C	C
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	C	C	C	C
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	C	C	C	C
* Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	1976	C	C	C
Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	C	C	C	C
* Horned Lark (Shorelark)	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	1994	1996	C	C
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	C	C	C	C
Barn Swallow (Swallow)	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	C	C	C	C
** Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	1972	1992	—	—
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	C	C	C	C
* Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	—	1967	1994	1994
* Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	—	—	1953	—
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	C	C	C	C
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	C	C	C	C
** Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	1994	—	—	—
Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	C	1996	C	1995
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	C	C	C	C
* Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	C	—	—	—
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	C	C	C	C
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	C	C	C	C
* Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing)	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	1996	C	C	C
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	1996	C	C	C
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	C	C	C	C
Hedge Accentor (Dunnock)	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	C	C	C	C
** Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	1904	—	—	—
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	C	C	C	C
Rufous Nightingale (Nightingale)	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	C	C	1991	1979
* Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	1995	1981	1994	1995
* Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	C	C	C	C
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Stonechat (Stonechat)	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	C	C	C	C
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	C	C	C	C
** Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	—	—	1996	—
** White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	1895	—	—	—
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	C	C	C	C
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	C	C	C	C
** Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>	—	1979	—	—
** Dark-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	—	1996	1978	—
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	C	C	C	C
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	C	C	C	C
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	C	C	C	C
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	C	C	1978	1988
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	C	C	C	C
** River Warbler	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	—	—	1996	—
* Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	1995	1994	1977	—
* Aquatic Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	—	1983	—	—
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	1992	C	1996	1982
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	1979	—	—	—

Species		Warks	Worce	Staffs	W Mid
* Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	C	1942	1993	—
* Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	—	—	1996	—
* Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	1914	C	nk	—
* Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	1979	—	—	—
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	C	C	C	C
Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	C	C	C	C
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	C	C	C	C
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	C	C	C	C
** Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	—	—	1993	—
* Pallas's Leaf Warbler (Pallas's Warbler)	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	1993	1987	1970	—
* Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	1996	1993	1994	—
** Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	—	—	1994	—
** Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	—	—	—	1996
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	C	C	C	C
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	C	C	C	C
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	C	C	C	C
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	C	C	1995	C
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	C	C	C	C
* Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1992	—	—	—
Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	C	C	C	C
* Bearded Tit	<i>Parus biarmicus</i>	1994	1994	1991	1993
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	C	C	C	C
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>	C	C	C	C
Willow Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>	C	C	C	C
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	C	C	C	C
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	C	C	C	C
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	C	C	C	C
European Nuthatch (Nuthatch)	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	C	C	C	C
Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper)	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	C	C	C	C
* Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1994	C	C	1990
* Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	1983	C	1976	1984
** Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	—	1987	—	—
* Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1991	C	C	1986
* Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	—	1893	—	—
Eurasian Jay (Jay)	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	C	C	C	C
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	C	C	C	C
** Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	—	—	1991	—
* Red-billed Chough (Chough)	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	—	1826	—	—
Eurasian Jackdaw (Jackdaw)	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	C	C	C	C
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	C	C	C	C
Carion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	C	C	C	C
* Common Raven (Raven) (*except Worcs)	<i>Corvus corax</i>	C	C	C	1995
Common Starling (Starling)	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	C	C	C	C
** Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured Starling)	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	1890	1855	1987	1890
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	C	C	C	C
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	C	C	C	C
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	C	C	C	C
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	C	C	C	C
* European Serin (Serin)	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	—	1981	1995	—
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	C	C	C	C
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	C	C	C	C
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	C	C	C	C
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	C	C	C	C

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mild
* Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	1992	C	C	1991
Common Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	C	C	C	C
** Arctic Redpoll	<i>Carduelis hornemanni</i>	—	1996	1996	—
** Two-barred Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	—	1838	1980	—
Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	C	C	C	C
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	C	C	C	C
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes</i> <i>coccothraustes</i>	C	C	1995	C
* Lapland Longspur (Lapland Bunting)	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	1981	—	C	1996
* Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	C	C	C	C
** Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	—	1996	—	—
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	C	C	C	C
* Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	1959	1983	1951	1950
** Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>	—	1987	—	—
* Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	1902	1994	1995	—
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	C	C	C	C
Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	C	C	C	C
** Northern Oriole (Baltimore Oriole)	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	—	—	—	1968
County List Totals		291	288	302	258

Gazetteer

The following alphabetical list for each county gives the grid reference (if known) of all localities mentioned in the Report.

Warwickshire

Abbots Salford Pool	SP0749	Coleshill	SP2089	Kenilworth	SP2971
Alvecote	SK2504	Coleshill Woods	SP2086	Kenilworth Common	SP2972
Arbury Park	SP3389	Combroke	SP3051	Kineton	SP3351
Arley	SP2890	Compton Verney	SP3152	Kingsbury	SP2196
Ashorne	SP3057	Compton Wynnyates	SP3341	Kingsbury Colliery	SP2398
Astley Pool	SP3189	Coombe Abbey	SP4079	Kingsbury Rifle Range	SP2296
Atherstone GC	SP3096	Copston Magna	SP4588	Kingsbury Wood	SP2397
Austrey	SK2906	Corley	SP3085	Kingsbury WP	SP2097
Avon Dassett	SP4149	Coton Pools	SP2194	Kinwalsey	SP2585
		Cubbington	SP3468	Kites Hardwick	SP4768
		Curdworth	SP1892	Knightcote	SP4055
BAD Kineton	SP3651				
Baddesley Clinton	SP2071	Darlingstons	SP2342	Ladbroke	SP4158
Baginton	SP3474	Dosthill Pool	SP2098	Ladywalk	SP2191
Baginton Lagoons	SP3573	Draycote Water	SP4669	Lapworth	SP1671
Barford	SP2760	Drayton	SP1756	Lawford Heath	SP4676
Bascote	SP3864	Dunton	SP1893	Lea Marston	SP2093
Beausale	SP2370			Lighthorne	SP3355
Bedworth Hill Res	SP3685	Earlswood	SP1174	Lighthorne Quarry	SP3456
Bedworth Nook		Earlswood Lakes	SP1174	Lighthorne Rough	SP3154
Bedworth Slough	SP3587	Eathorpe Marsh	SP3868	Lillington	SP3267
Bedworth Woodlands	SP3487	Edge Hill (Piccadilly)	SP2398	Little Kineton	SP3350
Bentley	SP2895	Edgehill Wood	SP3848	Little Lawford	SP4677
Bentley Woods	SP2895			Little Packington	SP2184
Bermuda	SP3589	Farnborough	SP4349	Long Itchington	SP4165
Bidford-on-Avon	SP0951	Farnborough Park	SP4249	Long Marston	SP1548
Bishop's Itchington	SP3857	Fenny Compton	SP4152	Long Marston Airfield	SP1748
Bishops Tachbrook	SP3161	Fosse Rides	SP3052	Longbridge	SP2662
Blyth Bridge	SP2189	Frog Hall GP	SP4173	Lower Radbourne	SP4457
Blyth Hall	SP2090			Lower Tysoe	SP3445
Bodymoor Heath	SP2095	Gaydon	SP3654	Loxley	SP2552
Bowshot Wood	SP3053	Gaydon Tip	SP3655		
Brailes	SP3337	Grandborough	SP4965	Mancetter	SP3296
Brandon Hall	SP4076	Grandborough Fields	SP4865	Marcliff	SP0950
Brandon Marsh	SP3875	Great Aine	SP1159	Marlon	SP4068
Brinklow Quarry	SP4178	Great Packington	SP2383	Maxstoke	SP2386
Broadwell	SP4565	Grendon	SP2799	Meon Hill	SP1745
Brook End	SP2594			Middleton Hall	SP1998
Burton Dassett	SP3951	Hampton Lucy	SP2557	Morton Bagot	SP1164
Butlers Marston	SP3150	Harbury	SP3760		
		Hartshill Hayes	SP3294	Napton Hill	SP4561
Camp Hill	SP3392	Haseley	SP2368	Napton Hill Quarry	SP4561
Chapel Ascote	SP4157	Haseley Knob	SP2371	Napton Holt	SP4559
Charlecote	SP2656	Hatton	SP2367	Napton Res	SP4759
Charlecote GP	SP2657	Hay Wood	SP2171	Newbold-on-Stour	SP2446
Chase Wood	SP2572	High Cross	SP4788	Newfield Pool	SP4554
Chessetts Wood	SP1873	Hodnell	SP4257	Northend	SP3952
Chesterton	SP3558	Honiley	SP2472	Nuneaton	SP3691
Chesterton Pools	SP3558				
Chesterton Wood	SP3457	Ilmington	SP2143	Oakley Wood	SP3059
Church Pool Covert	SP2092	Ilmington Downs	SP1942	Outwoods	SP3096
Claverdon	SP1964	Itchington Holt	SP3755	Oversley Wood	SP1056
Clifford Chambers	SP1952			Oxhill	SP3145
Close Wood	SP2584	Jubilee Pools	SP3873		

Packington	SP2384	Shotteswell	SP4245	Walton Hall	SP2852
Pailton	SP4781	Shuckburgh Park	SP4961	Wappenbury Wood	SP3770
Piccadilly	SP2298	Shuckburgh Hills	SP4961	Warrington	SP4147
Pillerton Priors	SP2947	Shustoke Reservoir	SP2291	Warwick	SP2864
Pleasance Farm	SP2672	Snitterfield Bushes	SP2060	Warwick Park	SP2863
Poors Wood	SP2473	Somers, The	SP2282	Wasperton	SP2658
Princethorpe	SP4070	Southam	SP4162	Watergall	SP4255
Priors Hardwick	SP4756	Stareton	SP3371	Waverley Wood	SP3570
Priors Marston	SP4957	Stockton	SP4365	Weethley Wood	SP0455
		Stoneleigh	SP3372	Wellesbourne	SP2755
Radbourn	SP4558	Stoneton	SP4654	Whatcote	SP3043
Radford Semele	SP3464	Stoneton Moat	SP4654	Whateley	SP2299
Radway	SP3748	Stratford-upon-Avon	SP2055	Whitacre Heath	SP2192
Ratley	SP3847			Whitacre Pool	SP2191
Red Hill	SP1356	Temple Pool	SP3744	Whitestone	SP3889
Rowington	SP2069	Tysoe	SP3444	Wilmcote	SP1657
Rugby	SP5175			Wishaw	SP1794
Ryton-on-Dunsmore GP	SP3874	Ufton Fields	SP3861	Wood End (Kingsbury)	SP2398
Ryton Wood	SP3872	Ufton Hill	SP3861	Wootton Wawen	SP1563
		Ufton Wood	SP3862	Wormleighton	SP4454
Salford Priors GP	SP0752	Upper Kingston	SP3656	Wormleighton Res	SP4451
Seeswood Pool	SP3290	Upton	SP3645	Wroxall	SP2271
Sheffield	SP1262				
Sherbourne	SP2661	Walsgrave Hill	SP3980	Yarningale Common	SP1865
Shipston-on-Stour	SP2640	Walton	SP2853		

Worcestershire

Abberley	SO7567	Bishampton Vale Pool	SP0050	Chadbury	SP0246
Abberley Hills	SO7566	Bittell	SP0174	Chaddesley Corbett	SO8973
Abberton	SO9953	Blackminster	SP0745	Chaddesley Wood	SO9073
Africk	SO7453	Blackpole	SO8657	Chadwick Manor	SO9776
Alvechurch	SP0272	Blackroot Pool	SO6264	Chase End Hill	SO9073
Arley	SO7780	Blackstone Rock	SO7974	Chateau Impney	SO9164
Arley Wood	SO8082	Blakeshall	SO8381	Childswickham	SP0738
Arrow Valley Park	SP0567	Bockleton	SO5961	Church Lench Pool	SP0250
Ashmoor Common	SO8446	Boxleys	SO7658	Churchill	SO8879
Astley Burf	SO8167	Bransford	SO7952	Cleeve Prior	SP0849
Aston Fields	SO9669	Bredon	SO9136	Clent	SO9379
Aston Mill	SO9435	Bredon Hill	SO9139	Clevedale	SO8346
Astwood Bank	SP0462	Bredons Hardwick	SO9135	Clows Top	SO7171
Atch Lench	SP0350	Bretforton	SP0943	Cobley Hill	SP0171
Aytons Heath	SO7063	British Camp	SO7640	Coldridge Wood	SO8082
		Broad Green	SO7756	Cookley	SO8480
Badsey	SP0743	Broad Heath	SO8156	Cooksey Green	SO9069
Batchley Pond	SP0267	Broadwas	SO7656	Crabbs Cross	SP0464
Baughton	SO8741	Broadway	SP0937	Craycombe	SP0047
Bayton	SO6973	Broadway GP	SP0837	Croome Court	SO8844
Beacon Hill	SO9876	Bromsgrove	SO9570	Crophorne	SO9844
Beaconhill Wood	SO9776	Broome	SO9078	Crowle	SO9256
Beckford	SO9735	Bushley	SO8734		
Belbroughton	SO9277			Death's Dingle	SO6667
Berrow Hill (Redditch)	SO9962	Calcot Hill	SO9478	Deerfold Wood	SO9147
Besford	SO9144	Callow Hill	SO7473	Defford	SO9143
Bewdley	SO7875	Callow Hill (Redditch)	SP0264	Devil's Den	SO7163
Bickley	SO6471	Captain's Pool	SO8474	Diglis	SO8453
Birch Acre Wood	SP0673	Castle Hill	SO8182	Ditchford Bank	SO9864
Birchen Coppice	SO8073	Castlemorton Common	SO7839	Dodford	SO9373
Birlingham	SO9343	Caunsall	SO8680	Doverdale	SO8566

Dowles Brook	SO7776	Kemerton	SO9437	North Hill	SO7646
Drakes Broughton	SO9148	Kemerton Pool	SO9437	North Littleton	SP0847
Droitwich	SO8963	Kempsey	SO8549	Norton	SP0447
Droitwich Canal	SO8560	Kempsey Common	SO8748	Norton Pool	SP0448
Droitwich Sewage Works	SO8661	Kempsey Lower Ham	SO8449	Nutnell Pool	SO7866
Dunhampstead	SO9160	Kidderminster	SO8376		
		King's Norton Golf Course	SP0674	Oakenshaw	SP0485
East Moon's Moat	SP0768	Kingsford	SO8281	Oakley	SO8960
Eastham	SO6568	Kingswood Common	SO7460	Ockeridge	SO7862
Eckington	SO9241	Kinsham	SO9335	Ockeridge Wood	SO7962
Elmbridge Green Coppice	SO8969	Knapp, The	SO7451	Oddingley	SO9159
Elmley Castle	SO9841	Knowles Coppice	SO7676	Offerton	SO8958
Evesham	SP0343	Kyre	SO8263	Old Hills Common	SO8246
Eymore Wood	SO7779	Kyre Pool	SO6364	Old Yarr, The	SP0163
				Oldington Sewage Works	SO8274
Feckenham	SP0061	Ladies Pool	SO8877	Oldwood Common	SO5866
Fillet Wood	SO9258	Langdale Wood	SO7943	Ombersley	SO8463
Fladbury	SO9946	Langdale Wood Pool	SO7943	Ombersley Park	SO8462
Fort Royal Park	SO8554	Larford	SO8169	Orleton	SO6967
Foster's Green	SO9865	Laughton Brook	SO8158		
Frankley Hill	SO9879	Lea End	SP0475	Pendock	SO7832
		Leigh Brook	SO7652	Pensax	SO7269
Golden Valley	SO7736	Lenchford	SO8964	Peopleton	SO9350
Grafton Lane	SO9469	Lickey Hills	SO9975	Pepper Wood	SO9374
Grafton Wood	SO9756	Lindridge	SO6769	Pershore	SO9045
Great Malvern	SO7745	Lineholt	SO8166	Pirvin	SO9549
Grimley	SO8360	Little Comberton	SO9643	Pipers Hill	SO9565
Grovely Dingle	SP0376	Little Witley	SO7863	Pirton	SO8747
Guarford	SO8145	Lodge Pool	SP0466	Pound Green	SO7378
Gullet, The	SO7638	Long Green	SO8433	Powick	SO8351
		Longdon Marsh	SO8236	Powick Ham	SO8352
Hadley	SO8663	Longley Green	SO7350	Pudford Hill	SO7461
Hagley	SO9180	Lower Astley Wood	SO8167		
Hagley Wood	SO9381	Low Habberley	SO8077	Quarry Hill	SO6967
Hallow	SO8258	Lower Moor	SO9847		
Hanbury	SO9663	Lower Wick	SO8353	Raggedstone Hill	SO7536
Hangman's Hill	SO7639	Lulsley	SO7455	Red Cliff	SO7554
Hanley Castle	SO8342			Redditch	SP0467
Happy Valley	SO7645	Madeley Heath	SO9577	Ribbesford	SO7873
Hartlebury	SO8470	Majors Green	SP1077	Ribbesford Wood	SO7872
Hartlebury Common	SO8270	Malvern	SO7745	Ripple	SO8736
Harvington	SP0549	Malvern Link	SO7847	River Rea	SO6469
Haws Hill Wood	SO6065	Malvern Wells	SO7742	Rock Wood	SO7163
Hewell Grange	SP0069	Marsh Common	SO8942	Romsley	SO9679
High Green	SO8645	Martley	SO7560	Ronkswood	SO8655
Hill Furze	SP0048	Middle Quinton	SO5862	Roundhill Wood	SO9281
Himbleton	SO9458	Midsummer Hill	SO7637	Rous Lench	SP0153
Hollybed Common	SO7737	Monk Wood	SO8060	Rowney Green	SP0471
Hollybush Quarry	SO7637	Mount Segg	SO8675	Ryall	SO8639
Hollywood	SP0777	Mustow Green	SO8774		
Holt	SO8262	Mythe Bridge	SO8833	Sale Green	SO9358
Holt Fleet	SO8263			Saxon's Lode	SO8638
Holy Cross	SO9278	Naunton Beauchamp	SO9652	Sedgberrow	SP0238
Honeybourne	SP1143	Netherton	SO9941	Seven Acres Dingle	SO7656
Hopwood	SP0275	New Parks	SO7475	Shatterford Lakes	SO7981
Horsham	SO7357	Newbourne Wood	SP0472	Shelsley Beauchamp	SO7363
Howney Coppice	SO6569	Newnham Bridge	SP0469	Shelsley Walsh	SO7263
		Norgrove	SO6364	Shenstone	SO8673
Ipsley Alders	SP0767	Norgrove Court	SP0065	Shemall Green	SO9161
Island Coppice	SO6364				

Shoots Hill Wood	SO9257	Tibberton	SO9057	Weatheroak Hill	SP0674
Shortwood Roughs	SP0270	Tiddeley Wood	SO9345	Web Heath	SP0166
Shoulton	SO8158	Timberhonger	SO9170	Welland	SO7940
Shrawley Wood	SO8066	Tolladine	SO8757	West Hagley	SO9080
Sling Common	SO9477	Torton	SO8472	West Malvern	SO7646
Sling Pool	SO9477	Trench Wood	SO9258	Westmancote	SO9337
Smithe	SO8958	Trimley Reservoir	SO7678	Westwood	SO8763
Sneachill	SO9053	Tunnel Hill	SO8656	Weymans Wood	SO7262
Southcrest	SP0366	Two Tree Hill	SO9766	Wick	SO9645
Spetchley	SO8953			Wilden	SO8272
St Johns	SO8354	Uckingham	SO8638	Wildmoor Tip	SO9576
Standbatches, The	SO7164	Upper Arley	SO7680	Windmill Hill	SP0748
Stanford Bridge	SO7065	Upper Bentley	SO9966	Wissetts Wood	SO6772
Stanford Court	SO7065	Upper Doddenhill	SO6569	Witchbatch	SO6668
Start's Green Farm	SO8083	Upper Ridney	SO7067	Witley Court	SO7664
Stoke Bliss	SO6562	Upper Shooters Wood	SO8668	Wolverley	SO8379
Stoke Wharf	SO9567	Upper Welland	SO7841	Wood Norton	SP0147
Stonebow	SO9349	Upton-on-Severn	SO8540	Woodbury Hill	SO7564
Stoutton	SO9049	Upton Warren	SO9367	Woodgates Green	SO6370
Stourport	SO8171			Worcester	SO8454
Strensham	SO9139	Viets Wood	SO6860	Worcester Canal	SO9058
Sugar Loaf Hill	SO7645			Worcester Meadows	SP0750
Summerfield	SO8473			Worcestershire Beacon	SO7645
Swinyard Hill	SO7638	Wadborough	SO9047	Wribbenhall	SO7875
		Walkwood	SP0265	Wychbold	SO9265
Tanwood Cross	SO8974	Walton Hill	SO9479	Wyche Cutting	SO7744
Teme Valley	SO6676	Warford Pool	SO7764	Wyre Forest	SO7475
Thorn Grove	SO8259	Warndon	SO8856	Wyre Piddle	SO9647
Thrift, The	SO9866	Wast Hills	SP0476	Wythall	SP0875
Throckmorton	SO9748	Wastehill Wood	SO7064		

Staffordshire

Abbots Bromley	SK0824	Bateswood		Bog Moor	SJ9616
Abraham's Valley	SK0020	Beacon Park	SK1009	Bradley	SJ8817
Acton Trussell	SJ9318	Bearda Hill	SJ9664	Bradwell Wood	SJ8450
Allimore Green	SJ8519	Beauesert GC	SK0213	Braken House	
Alrewas	SK1715	Beauesert Old Park	SK0313	Brakenhurst	SK1423
Alrewas GP	SK1715	Beckwood	SJ7646	Brancote	SJ9621
Alton	SK0742	Beech	SJ8538	Branston	SK2321
Alton Towers	SK0743	Beffcote	SJ8019	Branston GP/WP	SK2120
Armington	SK2304	Belmont Common		Brewood	SJ8808
Anslow	SK2125	Belvide Res	SJ8610	Brindley Heath	SJ9914
Anson's Bank	SJ9816	Benton Canal		Broadfields	
Apedale CP	SJ8149	Bereswood CP		Brocton	SJ9619
Apelford		(Newcastle)		Brocton Coppice	SJ9819
Aqualate	SJ7720	Betley Mere	SJ7548	Brocton Quarry	SJ9719
Ashwood	SO8668	Biddulph	SJ8857	Bromley Bottom	
Aston-by-Stone	SJ9131	Birchall	SJ9854	Brookleys Lake	SK0943
		Birches Valley	SK0116	Brund Hill	SK0264
Badger's Hills	SJ9714	Bishops Wood	SJ7531	Bucknall	SJ9047
Baggeridge CP	SO8992	Black Bank	SK0164	Bushton Lane	SK2026
Bagots Wood	SK0927	Black Lake	SJ8539	Byrkley Park	SK1623
Baldstones NR	SK0164	Blackbank Hill	SJ8147		
Barton Gate	SK1719	Bleak House	SK0210	Calton	SK1050
Barton GP	SK2017	Blithfield Reservoir	SK0623	Calwich	SK1243
Basford Bridge	SJ9852	Boarsgrove	SK0462	Calwich Lake	SK1243
Basford Green	SJ9951	Bobbington	SO8090	Cannock Chase	SK0017
Baswich	SJ9422	Boddington		Castle Mere (Eccleshall)	SJ8229

Castle Ring	SK0412	Fauld	SK1828	Kingswood	SJ9908
Catholme	SK2015	Fisherwick	SK1709	Kingswood Bank	SJ8540
Cellarhead	SJ9547	Footherley	SK1002	Kinvaston Hall Park	SJ9012
Chartley Moss	SK0130	Ford Green	SJ8950	Kinver Edge	SO8383
Chasepool Farm	SO8589	Ford Hall		Knar	SK0067
Chasetown	SK0408	Fradley Airfield	SK1413	Knotbury	SK0168
Chasewater	SK0307	Furnace Coppice	SK0114	Knutton	SJ8346
Chasewater Heaths	SK0309			Knypersley Res	SJ8955
Cheadle (New Haden Lane)	SJ9942	Gailey	SJ9110		
Chebsey	SJ8528	Gailey Res	SJ9310	Lady Hill Coppice	SK0217
Cheddleton	SJ9752	Gentleshaw Common	SK0511	Lawneswood	SO8787
Chell Heath	SJ8852	German Cemetery	SJ9815	Leek	SJ9856
Chesterfield	SK1005	Gerrards Bromley	SJ7734	Levedale	SO8916
Chesterton	SJ8248	Gib Torr	SK0264	Little Aston	SK0900
Chetwynd Coppice	SK0415	Gib Torr Wood	SK0264	Little Stoke	SJ9132
Chillington	SJ8606	Gilberts Cross	SJ8186	Little Wyrley	SK0105
Clay Mills	SK2625	Gnosall	SJ8220	Longsdon Mill Pool	SJ9554
Clayton	SJ8543	Golditch Moss	SK0164	Lowerfleet Green	SK0561
Clive, The		Gradbach Hill	SJ9965	Lynn	SK0804
Coldmeece	SJ8532	Great Chatwell	SJ7914		
Coldmeece Pools	SJ8432	Greenway Bank CP	SJ8855	Maer	SJ7938
Coombes Valley	SK0052	Gun Hill	SJ9761	Marquis Drive	SK0015
Copmere	SJ8029			Marston	SJ8313
Coppice Hill	SJ9819	Halfpenny Green	SO8291	Mere Pool	SJ9719
Cowley		Halmer End	SJ7949	Mermaid Inn	SK0360
Crossplains	SK1624	Hamstall Ridware	SK1019	Middle Hills	SK0363
Croxall GP	SK1914	Hanbury	SJ9661	Millmeece	SJ8333
Croxall Mill	SK1913	Hanchurch	SJ8441	Milldale	SK1354
Crumpwood	SK0942	Hanchurch Woods	SJ8340	Milton	SJ9050
		Handsacre	SK0915	Milton	SJ8815
		Haughton	SJ8620	Moat Hall	
Danebridge	SJ9665	Haywood Warren	SJ9920	Moat Hill	
Denstone	SK0940	Hazel Barrow	SK0163	Moors Gorse	SK0215
Denstone Hall	SK1040	Hednesford	SK0012	Morrige	SK0257
Dick Slee's Cave	SJ9919	Henhurst	SK2123	Mow Cop	SJ8557
Dimmingsdale	SK0543	Highgate Common	SO8389	Muckleston	SJ7237
Dooleys (Dove)		Hill Ridware	SK0717	Musden Low	SK1150
Dosthill	SP2099	Hints	SK1502		
Dosthill Tip		Hixon	SK0025	Needwood	SK1724
Dove Leys	SK1141	Hockley	SK2200	Needwood House	SK1825
Dovedale	SK1452	Holly Bush	SK1326	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ8445
Doxey Marshes	SJ9024	Hopton Pool	SJ9525	Norbury	SK1242
Drayton Bassett	SK1900	Horse Paddock Wood		Norbury Bridge	SK1242
Drystone Edge	SK0268	Horsepasture Covert	SK0413	Norton Bridge	SJ8730
Dunstall	SK1820	Hutts Farm	SK1244		
Dunston	SJ9217			Oakedge Park	SK0019
Dydon Wood	SK1344	Ilam	SK1350	Okeover Mill	SK1648
		Ingestre	SJ9724	Oldacre Valley	SJ9718
Eccleshall	SJ8329	Iverley	SO8781	Orchard Common	SK0269
Ecton	SK0958			Otherton	SJ9212
Edingale	SK2112	Jacks Wood		Ousley Cross	SK1244
Eland Brook				Out Mill	
Elford GP	SK1809	Katyn Memorial	SJ9816		
Ellastone	SK1142	Keele University	SJ8244	Park Hall CP	SJ9244
Ellis Hill		Kettlebrook Lake	SK2003	Parkgate	SK1044
Envile	SO8286	Kettlebrook Park	SK2003	Pattingham	SO8299
		Kiddemore Green	SJ8508	Pendeford Mill NR	SJ8904
Fairoak	SK0016	Kings Bromley	SK1216	Penkridge Bank	SK0016
Fairoak Pool	SK0116	Kings Standing	SK1624	Pepper Slade	SJ9917

Pool Dam Marsh	SJ8346	Shugborough Hall	SJ9922	Uttoxeter	SK0933
Porthill Bank		Sideway	SJ8743		
Pottal Covert	SJ9514	Sittles Farm	SK1712	Walton-on-the-Hill	SJ9520
Pottal Pool	SJ9614	Springslade	SJ9716	Walton-on-Trent	SK2118
Prestwood	SK1042	Sprink	SK1261	Wandon	SK0314
Pye Green	SJ9814	Stafford	SJ9223	Wandon Spur	SK0414
Radford	SJ9320	Stafford Common	SJ9125	Warren Hill	SJ9715
Ramshaw Rocks	SK0162	Stanton	SK1246	Warwickshire Moor	SK2104
Rawnsley Hills	SK0113	Stanton Dale	SK1048	Weaver Hills	SK0946
Rickerscote	SJ9320	Starts Green	SO8083	Weeford	SK1403
Rifle Range	SK0018	Statfold	SK2307	Weeping Cross	SJ9421
Roaches, The	SK0063	Stepenhall		Westport	SJ8550
Rocaster, JCB Pool	SK1039	Stilecop Field	SK0315	Whiston Brook	SJ8714
Rolleston Park	SK2126	Stoke-on-Trent	SJ8745	White House	SJ9916
Rough Hay	SK2023	Stone	SJ9034	Whitemoor Haye	SK1813
Rudyard Res	SJ9459	Stoneydelph	SK2302	Whiteswood	
Rugeley	SK0418	Swallow Moss	SK0660	Whittington Hall	SO8582
		Swindon	SO8690	Wilnecote	SK2201
Saltnalls Hills	SJ9820	Swinscoe	SK1348	Wolseley Bridge Pool	SK0220
Sambrook, Mill Pool		Swynnerton	SJ8535	Wolseley Park	SK0119
Seighford	SJ8824			Wolstanton	SJ8548
Seven Arches Bridge	SJ8845	Tamworth	SK2003	Wood Bank	SJ9315
Seven Springs	SK0020	Teddesley Park	SJ9415	Woodmill	SK1320
Sheepwalks	SO8185	Thorncliffe	SK1058	Wrottesley Lodge Farm	SJ8301
Shenstone	SK1004	Three Shires Head	SK0068	Wrottesley Old Park	SJ8300
Shenstone Wood	SK1104	Tittesworth Res	SJ9959	Wychnor	SK1716
Sherbrook Valley	SJ9818	Toad Hole Bridge			
Shoal Hill	SJ9611	Trentham Gardens/Park	SJ8640		
Shugborough	SJ9922	Trescott	SO8497	Yoxall Park	SK1521

West Midlands

Aldersley	SJ9001	Bordesley	SP0886	Coventry	SP3378
Aldridge	SK0500	Bourne Vale	SP0699	Cuckoo's Nook	SP0598
Alum Rock	SP1187	Bowmans Harbour	SO9399		
Anchor Meadow	SK0500	Brades Hall	SO9790	Darby's Hill	SO9689
		Bradnock's Marsh	SP2179	Darlaston	SO9697
Baisall Common	SP2476	Bragg's Farm	SP1175	Deers Leap Wood	SP0286
Barr Beacon	SP0697	Branton Hill Quarry	SK0779	Digbeth	SP0786
Barr Common	SP0699	Brownhills Common	SK0305	Dorridge	SP1675
Barrow Hill	SO9189	Brownhills NT	SJ0306	Dudley	SO9390
Barston	SP2078	Brueton Park	SP1687	Dudley GC	SO9688
Barston Ford	SP2077	Buckpool	SO8987	Dunns Bank	SO9285
Bartley Reservoir	SP0081	Bumble Hole	SO9588	Dunstall Park	SJ9000
Berkswell	SP2479	Burnt Tree	SO9590		
Bickenhill	SP1882			Eastcote	SP1979
Billesley	SP0980	Caslon Wood	SO9383	Edgbaston Pool	SP0584
Billesley Common	SP0880	Castle Vale	SP1491	Edgbaston Reservoir	SP0486
Billesley Lane GC	SP0881	Catherine-de-Barnes	SP1780	Erdington	SP1191
Bilston	SO9496	Chadwick End	SP2037		
Bilston Cemetery	SO9597	Chadwick Manor	SP2074	Fen End	SP2274
Bilston Steelworks	SO9395	Chelmsley Wood	SP1886	Fens Pools	SO9188
Birmingham Airport	SP1784	Cinder Bank	SO9388	Fishley	SK0003
Birmingham City Centre	SP0686	Clayhanger	SK0404	Foot's Hole	SO9087
Birmingham University	SP0483	Close wood	SP2584	Fordhouses	SJ9002
Black Lake	SO9992	Coombeswood	SO9785	Four Oaks	SP1198
Blakenall Heath	SK0001	Copt Heath	SP1777	Foxcote	SO9483
Bluebell Park	SO9391	Cornets End	SP2381	Frankley Res	SP0080
Bob's Coppice	SO9385	Coundon	SP3181	Goscote	SK0102

Haden Hill Park	SO9585	Moseley	SP0783	Somers Road Quarry	SP2382
Halesowen	SO9683	Moseley Park	SP0783	Spring Vale	SO9395
Hampton-in-Arden	SP2080			Stamernmill	SO9395
Handsworth Park	SP0590	Netherton Reservoir	SO9387	Stoke Floods	SP3778
Handsworth Wood	SP0590	Newbridge	SO8999	Stourbridge	SO8983
Harborne	SP0284	Noose Lane Pool		Streety	SP0898
Harborne NR	SP0285	(Willenhall)	SO9598	Stubbers Green	SK0401
Hawne Park	SO9584	Northfield	SP0279	Sutton Coldfield	SP1296
Hayhead Wood	SP0498	Norton	SO8982	Sutton Park	SP0997
Heronfield	SP1975			Swanshurst Park	SP0981
Highbury Park	SP0682	Olton Mere	SP1381		
Hobs Hole Lane	SK0601	Old Walsall Airfield	SP0499	Tansey Green Quarry	SO9189
Hydes Road Pool	SO9994	Oldwiche Lane	SP2174	Temple Balsall	SP2076
		Outy John Wood	SO8961	Tettenhall	SJ8800
Illey	SO9881			Tipton	SO9592
		Park Hall Pool (Walsall)	SK0397	Tudor Grange Park	SP1479
King's Heath	SP0781	Park Lime Pits	SP0299	Tyseley	SP1184
Kingswinford	SO8888	Pedmore	SO9182		
Kingswinford Park	SO8989	Pelsall North Common	SK0103	Valley Park	SJ8900
Knowle	SP1876	Penn	SO8996		
		Pensnett Coppice	SO9189	Wall Heath	SO8889
Ladymoor Pool (Bilston)	SO9495	Priest's Park Wood	SP2073	Walsall	SP0198
Lapal	SO9882	Prouds Lane Pool	SO9497	Warley Woods	SP0185
Lawnswood	SO8887			Warwick University	SP 3075
Leasowes, The	SO9783	Rushall Hall	SP0299	Watford Gap	SK1100
Lower Illey	SO9881	Russells Hall Hospital	SO9289	Wednesbury	SO9895
Lutley	SO9483			Wergs	SJ8700
		Saltwells LNR/Wood	SO9387	West Bromwich	SP0091
Marsh Lane GP	SP2180	Sandwell Valley	SP0291	Whitley (Coventry)	SP3577
Marston Green	SP1781	Shard End	SP8815	Whitmore Reans	SO9099
Marston Green		Shard End Lake	SP1588	Wiggins Hill	SP1693
Rec. Ground	SP1685	Sheepwash UP	SO9791	Wightwick	SO8698
Mary Stevens Park	SO8983	Sheldon	SP8415	Wishaw Lane	SP1695
Meer End	SP2474	Shirley	SP1279	Willenhall	SO9698
Meers Coppice	SO9284	Siden Hill Wood	SP2180	Willenhall Memorial Park	SO9698
Mercote Lodge GP	SP1281	Silverdale	SO9382	Withymoor Pool	SO9085
Meriden GP's/Quarry	SP2381	Sixteen Acre Wood	SP2279	Wollaston	SO8884
Meriden Shafts	SP2683	Small Heath	SP0985	Wolverhampton	SO9198
Minworth STW	SP1592	Smethwick	SP0288	Woodgate Valley	SP0083
Monkspath	SP1474	Smithy Lane Marthole	SO9089	Woodsetton	SO9292
Mons Hill	SO9392	Solihull	SP1579	Wren's Nest	SO9391
				Wychbury Hill	SO9181

Key to Contributors

The following observers and organisations have kindly provided information for the Classified Notes, while those marked with an asterisk also contributed to the Ringing Report. Our sincere apologies if we have omitted anyone. It would greatly help compilation if observers could give their full set of initials with their records, as this helps to identify them more uniquely and so cuts down the risk of confusion between similar names or sets of initials.

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C D Baggott	S Croft (SCr)	E Hargrave
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P W Bateman	F Dixon	K Heron
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L Berry	<i>Draycote Log</i>	R A Hill
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J H Brindle	R Evans	P D Hyde
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L A Brown	U Fenton	P Ireland*
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R Knightbridge (*RKn*)

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J A Lawrence*
M J Lewis
J Liggins
W J Low*
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G J Mant
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R M Martin
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per J W Meiklejohn
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