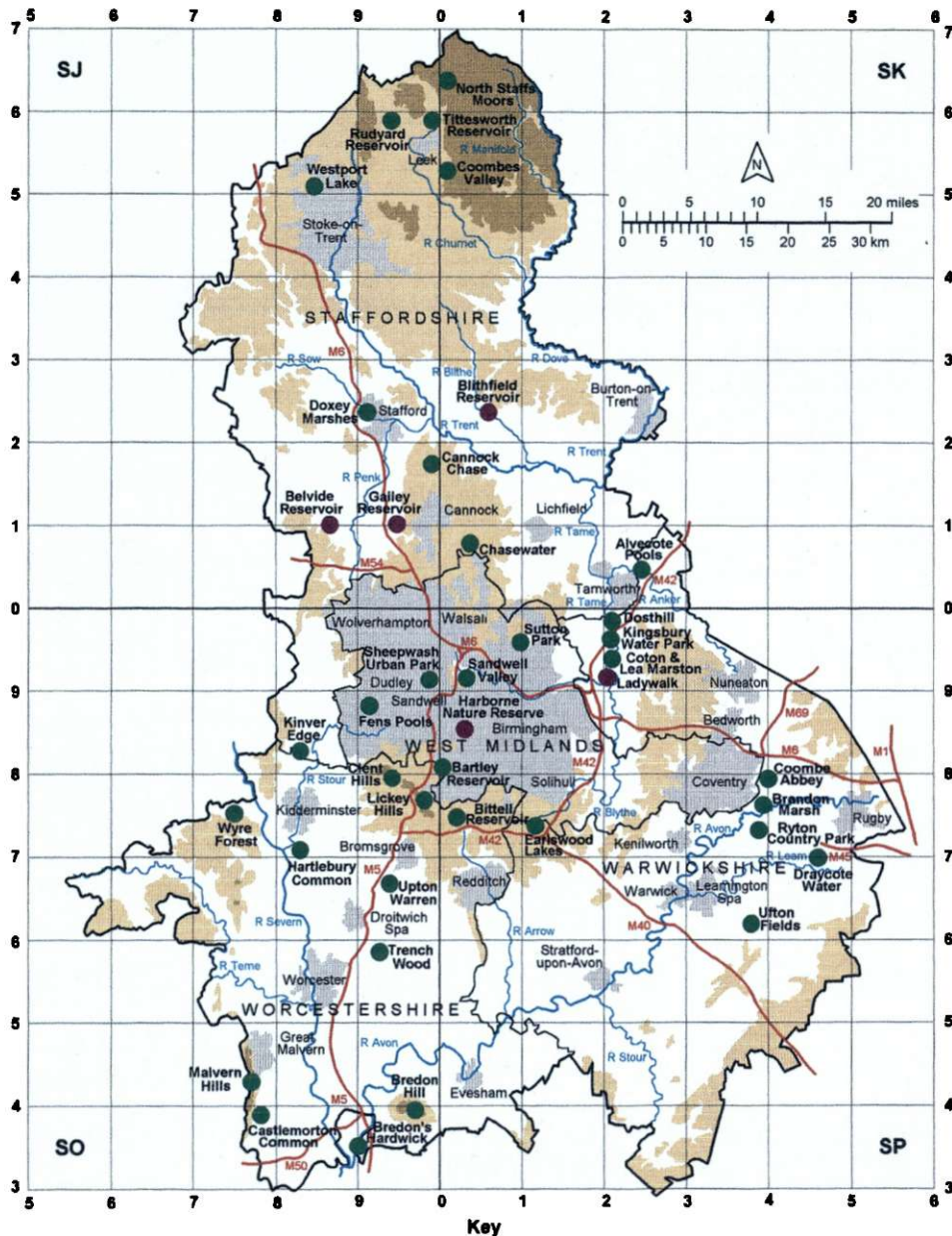


# **West Midland Bird Club**

*Annual Report No. 65*

1998







# West Midland Bird Club

## Annual Report No. 65

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*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.*

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*(Front Cover Photo) Common Kingfisher (Keith Stone)*

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<i>Records Committee</i>	J J Bowley, R E Harbird, S M Haynes, T C Hextell, Mrs G N Jones, W J Low

\* Officers serving on the Executive Council

## Editorial

Since few readers, I'm sure, will have looked at the preceding list of officers and committee members, I thought I should draw attention to some important changes following the Annual General Meeting. Firstly, our President, Tony Norris, stood down after 22 years. Tony joined the Club in 1936 and subsequently served with distinction as Secretary (1947-1953), Editor (1947-1952), Chairman (1953-1962) and Vice President (1967-1976) before becoming President in 1977. We are sorry to lose him, but delighted that Bill Oddie has accepted the invitation to become our new President. Secondly, Alan Richards retired as Chairman after 16 years. Alan has been a Club member for fifty years and, like Tony, has filled several offices including Secretary, Bulletin Editor and Public Relations Officer. Jim Winsper has taken over as Chairman, with Alan becoming a Vice President as well as continuing as Public Relations Officer. Finally, our Honorary Secretary, Hugh MacGregor, decided to stand down after ten years exemplary service. On behalf of the membership, I should like to express our sincere thanks and best wishes to them all.

Sadly, I also have to record the deaths of our Bulletin Editor, Paul South, and of Eric Harvey and Tom Leach. In their own special ways, they gave so much of their time and energy to the service of the Club and we shall miss them all. Obituaries have appeared in the Club's Bulletins.

Once again the editorial team's aim to get the Report out before Christmas has been thwarted as one or two people overran deadlines. However, the challenge remains. If everyone would let the County Recorders have **their records on the appropriate forms/slips by the end of January** at the latest, it would be a great help. Too many records are still being received in mid-summer! It would also help if everyone were to submit their records of **Category A species** (those marked \* in the *Submission of Records and County Lists*) **as soon as possible after the sighting**, rather than waiting until the end of the year. This year the **list has been reviewed** and made more objective by conforming with the *very rare, rare* and *scarce* status categories. This means that from 1999 descriptions will no longer be required for *Smew, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Common Quail, Mediterranean Gull* and (in Worcs and Staffs only) *Common Raven*, but they will be required for *Little Tern*.

I should like to thank everyone who has helped me to produce this Report. I am especially grateful to those who contributed records, articles and short notes; to Bert Coleman for a fascinating Ringing Report; to the artists, Phil Jones and Terry Parker, and photographers, Keith Stone, Phill Ward and Rob Skeates, for making their work available; and above all to the County Recorders and their teams:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Warwickshire:</i>   | Jonathan Bowley for compiling the section and Steve Haynes, John Judge, Simon Roper and Carl Bagott for helping with the collation and adjudication of records. |
| <i>Worcestershire:</i> | Richard Harbird, Terry Hinett and Gavin Peplow.   |

*Staffordshire:* Gilly Jones, Neil Carter, Eric Clare, Dave Emley, Ray Jennett, Andy Lawrence, Bill Low and lastly Ben Reavey who retired this year after several years of writing.

*West Midlands:* Tim Hextell.

Finally, I should like to thank Jim Winsper and my wife, Janet, without whose help and support this Report would not have come to fruition.

Graham Harrison

**European Nightjars and other breeding birds of Cannock Chase**

Due to an unfortunate error on my part, this article in last year's Report failed to acknowledge Frank Gribble as a joint author. My sincere apologies Frank.

Graham Harrison

## Birds and Weather in 1998

1998 will go into the record books as the year of the floods. Birdwise it was uneventful, with few weather-related movements and no large-scale invasions or new species, though Black Kite and Yellow-browed Warbler were recorded in the West Midlands County for the first time. Just 219 species were recorded compared to an average of 229 over the last decade – the lowest total since 1984.

**January** was milder, but wetter, than average as a succession of Atlantic depressions swept across. It began with a vengeance, as four days of strong south-westerlies culminated in a ferocious gale which brought heavy rain and widespread flooding. Conditions were worst in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, with the R. Severn reaching its highest level for 30 years at Worcester. Floodwater drew good flocks of dabbling duck, particularly on Longdon Marsh where **Common Teal** totalled 650 and **Northern Pintail** reached a regional record of 475. Remaining from 1997 were three **Great Northern Divers**, **Slavonian Grebe**, two **Great Bitterns**, two **Whooper Swans**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Black Redstart**, while four **White-fronted Geese** were New Year's Day discoveries. The severe storms drove several **Great Skuas** into the Bristol Channel and one penetrated inland to Fens Pools on the 3rd. The next day brought eight **Kittiwakes**, while the same evening at least 16 **Yellow-legged Gulls** roosted at Draycote. One of the year's two **Bohemian Waxwings** frequented a Pelsall garden from the 2nd-12th and a skein of 15 **White-fronted Geese** arrived on the 6th. Following snow in Staffordshire on the 5th, an anticyclone from the 9th-11th brought sunny and unusually mild weather, with a near-record temperature for January of 14°C on the 9th. The mild weather even tempted some birds into early nesting activity. After a **Red-breasted Merganser** on the 16th, another very wet day on the 18th heralded the onset of a week's colder weather, with the wind turning northerly on the 19th before high pressure brought a return to calm, settled conditions and more normal temperatures. A third **Great Bittern** was discovered at Ladywalk and a party of ten **Whooper Swans** appeared on the 24th. In a cold end to the month, a keen east wind on the 25th brought the first of three **Hen Harriers**, while **Slavonian Grebe** was new on 26th and the second **Bohemian Waxwing** appeared on the 29th. Also notable during the month were up to seven **Long-eared Owls** roosting at Park Hall and at least eleven **Smew** in the Middle Tame Valley.

Light, mild winds and settled weather brought the warmest **February** on record, with temperatures during the 7th-27th often 5°-7°C above average. This advanced plant growth by three-four weeks. It was also the third sunniest February on record and uncharacteristically dry. During the first week, days were sunny, but nights cold, with temperatures falling to -7°C overnight on the 1st. Next day a **Wood Lark** was at Westport, while unseasonal waders included a **Little Stint** on the 3rd and the arrival at Bredons Hardwick of a long-staying **Spotted Redshank** on the 5th. More typically, the herd of **Tundra Swans** at the same locality peaked at 26 the next day and more **Whooper Swans** arrived on the 4th. Two **Hen Harriers** were hunting on Cannock Chase on the 7th before humid, southerly winds brought hail storms that afternoon and then an exceptionally mild spell which persisted until the 15th. A **Red Kite** on the 13th

came on a day when the temperature at Worcester soared to a new February record of 19.6°C. The mild weather brought early returns of **Oystercatcher**, **Eurasian Curlew** and **Common Redshank**, but the outstanding bird of the month was a **Dartford Warbler** in sub-song at Devils Spittleful on the 14th. A fresh westerly made the 16th cool, but mild, sunny weather remained the norm for much of the month. A herd of 31 **Tundra Swans** – the largest of the year – was noted on 17th, while another **Slavonian Grebe** appeared in a chilly, blustery SW wind on 21st. Most unexpectedly, the year's first **Northern Wheatear** arrived on the very early date of the 25th. **Smew** then reached their winter peak of 16, at Barton, before a fresh NW wind brought snow flurries and a taste of winter on 28th.

True to tradition, **March** came in like a lion, with snow and ice on the 1st, but went out like a lamb. Between times it was a couple of degrees warmer than average, but very cloudy and at times very wet as Atlantic depressions were swept across on westerly winds. Up to 150 **Common Crossbills** were on Cannock Chase during the month and the **Common Goldeneye** flock at Chasewater reached 149. A **Firecrest** found on the 4th delighted many observers during its four day stay, the first **Little Ringed Plover** arrived on the 11th, a small passage of **Rock Pipits** began with three (two of them of the Scandinavian race) on the 14th, a **Red-breasted Merganser** appeared on the 15th and the month's star bird – a **Black Kite** – showed briefly on the 17th. Southerly winds then brought a warm end to the month, with temperatures reaching 15°C on the last two days. Another **Firecrest** was found on the 20th, while the 22nd saw the first **Garganey**, an early **Grey Plover** and the start of a passage of **Ruff** which brought 25 birds in five days. An early **Sanderling** on the 23rd was followed by **Red-necked Grebe**, **Black Redstart** and an excellent flock of 200 **Brambling** on 24th. **Red Kites** were seen on the 23rd and 27th and the first **Osprey** of the year passed through on the 28th, as did four **Sandwich Terns**. The start of a modest passage of **Little Gulls** began on the 26th, while the 29th brought a further **Osprey** and another wandering **Wood Lark**, this time in Valley Park. The highlights next day were **Spotted Crake** and **Ring-billed Gull**, but equally impressive was a herd of 282 **Mute Swans** at Whitemoor Haye.

**April** was the wettest for a century. A stationary depression over the south Midlands on the 9th unleashed an absolute deluge, with 75mm of rain recorded at both Malvern and Pershore. Rivers rose quickly, and the nests of many riparian species were washed away in the worst floods for 100 years along the Avon and Severn on Good Friday (10th). From Birmingham northwards snow was the problem, with falls of 10cm on the 10th and 6cm on the 12th leading to mortalities, particularly amongst unfledged **Grey Herons**. An early **Pied Flycatcher** appeared on the 3rd, but raptors stole the show early on, with three **Red Kites** between the 3rd-12th, a **Northern Goshawk** over Fens Pool on the 7th and a passage of seven **Ospreys** between the 8th-18th. A good find for one lucky birder was an adult **Night Heron** on the 10th. More rain fell on the 11th, then northerly winds brought further light snowfalls to Staffordshire on the 14th and 15th. Passage continued nevertheless, with two **Black-necked Grebes** on the 10th and 11th respectively; a small movement of seven **Common Scoter** and a **Spotted Redshank** on the 15th; and a **Dotterel** on 17th. From the 19th the wind turned



southerly, bringing milder but unsettled conditions as bands of rain passed over. The change brought an influx of migrants from the 22nd, notably **Yellow Wagtails**, a small passage of **Whimbrel** and a **Spotted Redshank**. The third **Black-necked Grebe** of the month arrived on 22nd, **Marsh Harriers** moved through on the 26th and 29th and another **Red Kite** drifted across on the 30th. For one observer, though, the spectacle of the month was a male **Hen Harrier** mobbing a **White Stork** on the 28th.

In contrast to April, **May** was warmer and drier than usual, with only around half the average rainfall. Migration began slowly, with many birds held back by adverse weather in the Mediterranean. Early highlights were two flocks of **Black-tailed Godwits**, totalling 27 birds, on the 1st; and the passage of **Arctic** and a few **Black Terns** moving though with weak fronts between the 1st-3rd, though numbers were small by comparison to those in the East Midlands. These aside, the first week brought two **Red Kites** on the 2nd, five **Ring Ouzels** to Clent on the 3rd, and two **Spotted Redshanks** and the first of four **Curlew Sandpipers** on the 4th. Temperatures began to climb from the 8th, bringing thundery weather, with heavy rain across north Warwickshire on the 10th and more generally on the 14th. Associated with this was a small passage of **Little** and **Black Terns** between the 9th-14th. Typically, waders were involved too, with an obliging pair of **Dotterel**, a party of five **Bar-tailed Godwits** and three **Whimbrel** all on the 10th; and five **Grey Plovers** plus a few **Sanderlings** and **Turnstones** during 9th-17th. Four **Marsh Harriers** also passed through in this period and a strong movement of **Barn Swallows** occurred on the 11th. During a gloriously hot, sunny spell from the 15th-20th, three **Black-necked Grebes** arrived on the 17th and a **European Nightjar** was churring in the Wyre Forest on the 19th. Finally, a cool spell, with heavy rain on the 25th-26th, saw another **Osprey** on the 22nd, **Red Kites** on the 24th and 29th, a **Montagu's Harrier** on the 28th, a small passage of **Sanderling** which peaked between the 22nd-26th, two **Wood Sandpipers**, a very late **Water Pipit**, further sightings of **Dotterel** and **Turnstones** and more **Black Terns** on the 30th.

With cool spells and torrential downpours, **June** was the wettest ever. Frequent northerly winds made the first half particularly chilly and overall the breeding season was poor, although some species benefited from the high water levels. Sadly, only one **Marsh Warbler** was heard, **Black Grouse** slumped to their lowest level yet and both **Ring Ouzels** and **Twite** were scarce. On the positive side, the slender population of **Common Sandpipers** held up, **Wood Larks** maintained a continuing presence on Cannock Chase, **Common Terns** had an excellent breeding season at Kingsbury and at least 16 **Common Quail** were heard. More rain fell on the 2nd than in the whole of May and thundery showers then followed on the 3rd and 6th. Meanwhile the last few **Sanderlings** trickled through and both **Kittiwake** and **Little Tern** appeared on the 2nd. After **Red Kite** and **Marsh Harrier** on the 7th, a **Grey Plover** brightened up a miserably wet day on the 8th, an **Osprey** moved through on the 9th and nine **Black-tailed Godwits** visited Branston on the 10th. A quarter of the month's rain then fell on the 13th, bringing yet more localised flooding. A flock of 17 **Common Scoter** passed through Draycote on the 15th, while a **White Stork** drifted over Bredons Hardwick the same day and then appeared at Droitwich on the 18th. A brief, warm interlude from

20th-21st saw temperatures climb to 24°C, but unsettled, wet weather soon returned, with thunderstorms on the 27th. A county record of **23 Black-tailed Godwits** at Upton Warren on the 29th brought the month to a close.

Worldwide **July** was the hottest ever, but here it was the duller for thirty years as recurring cyclonic conditions brought cool, unsettled weather and we waited until the 25th for a real summer's day. Nonetheless, it was the driest July since 1979. The temperature on the 2nd failed to climb above 16°C in a chilly northerly wind, yet next day it soared to 21°C. The birds were mostly as dull as the weather, though a couple of **Common Scoter** on the 3rd, **11 Black-tailed Godwits** on 5th, two **Black-necked Grebes** on the 8th, **Ospreys** on the 8th and 14th and a migrant **Black Redstart** on the 15th provided some interest. After passing depressions had brought heavy rain on the 10th and 13th, the second half of the month saw the return wader passage bring peaks of **16 Black-tailed Godwits** (at Belvide) and **24 Common Sandpipers** (at Blithfield). The year's second **Montagu's Harrier** showed on the 16th, two more **Common Scoter** were noted on the 20th and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was an exciting find late on the 21st. An early **Wood Sandpiper** then showed on the 25th and, following more rain on the 26th, the first of an exceptional influx of **Little Egrets** arrived on 28th.

After a faltering start with thundery showers, **August** brought the first real spell of hot, summer weather, but low pressure with vigorous Atlantic depressions returned later in the month. A wet and windy day on the 3rd brought a **Common Scoter**, then from the 4th-15th the weather became hot, reaching 26°C on the 6th and 27°C on the 11th. Among the better birds at this time were the first of three **Red Knot** on the 5th, **Red Kite** on the 7th, three **Little Terns** between the 8th-12th, a party of **21 Bar-tailed Godwits** over Tittesworth on the 9th, **Black-necked Grebes** on the 12th and 15th, and a regional record of seven **Little Egrets** at Marsh Lane GPs on 12th. Meanwhile, wader passage continued with four adult **Curlew Sandpipers** on the 10th, **Spotted Redshank** on the 11th, **Wood Sandpipers** on the 12th and 16th and a peak of **20 Green Sandpipers** (at Brandon). With unsettled weather returning on the 12th, three **Marsh Harriers** passed through between 12th-27th, while another **Wood Sandpiper** and a **Eurasian Spoonbill** were seen on the 21st. Despite being very wet, the 23rd was an exciting day with an **American Wigeon** for the second consecutive year, **Grey Plover**, the month's third **Wood Sandpiper**, six **Kittiwakes** passing through and the first of three **Spotted Crakes** to arrive in a week, two of which proved very obliging long-stayers. These were followed by a small movement of **Turnstones** around the 26th. Finally, in a brief settled spell, **Spotted Redshanks** arrived on the 30th and 31st, with the latter day also producing two more **Black-necked Grebes** and two **Grey Plovers**.

Sunshine and showers were a feature of **September**. The month began with three warm, sunny days before a depression brought widespread rain on the 4th. Three **Ospreys** passed through between the 4th-7th, a small movement of **Black Terns** occurred in the first week, a **Ferruginous Duck** dropped into Netherton Res on the 4th,

two **Spotted Redshanks** arrived on the 5th with another on the 9th, and half-a-dozen **Wood Sandpipers** moved through. Strong SW winds and heavy rain during the 7th-12th (the aftermath of Hurricane Danielle) resulted in two **Great Skuas** and a **Shag** on the 15th and the rescue of an exhausted **Manx Shearwater**. A good discovery on the 10th was an unusually early **Great Bittern** at Ladywalk. A **Temminck's Stint** on the 11th was followed next day by a **Pectoral Sandpiper** and a massive SW movement of hirundines, especially **House Martins**. There were also a few **Turnstones** and a scattering of six **Black-necked Grebes** during the month, plus an early **Red-necked Grebe** on the 18th. Ten **Grey Plovers** passed through between the 5th-27th, while there was a good passage of **Little Stints**, with a peak of 29 at Blithfield, and a modest one of **Curlew Sandpipers** during the 4th-21st. By mid-month, the first passage **Ring Ouzels** were also appearing on the Malverns and **Common Coot** reached a new regional record of 2,305 at Blithfield around this time. During a warm spell which persisted until the 21st, another **Wood Sandpiper** and a party of seven **Sandwich Terns** showed on the 17th, a **Wryneck** was an interesting garden visitor on 18th and a **Common Scoter** came on the 21st. Next day another **Spotted Redshank** appeared. Heavy thunderstorms on the 26th then brought a **Purple Sandpiper**, followed on the 27th by a **Red-breasted Merganser**, three **Grey Plovers**, a **Red Knot** and around 32 **Sandwich Terns**, including parties of 12 and 17. From the 28th-30th, strong winds and heavy rain (the remnants of Hurricane Karl) moved northwards, bringing a **Great Skua** on the 28th and causing localised flooding for the fourth time in the year. The month closed with an impressive 1,753 **Tufted Duck** in the Middle Tame Valley.

**October** continued the theme of the year, being the wettest for eleven years. It began with warm days, but cool nights, with temperatures down to 3°C. **Common Scoter** and **Osprey** passed through on the 1st, while yet another **Great Bittern** appeared on the 4th. In a good month for wildfowl, **Gadwall** reached a new regional record of 251 at Belvide. The 6th brought a late **Sandwich Tern** and the first of the month's five **Grey Plovers**. Two **Great Grey Shrikes** then appeared on the 8th and 11th respectively, while a **Garganey** arrived at Belvide on the 9th and stayed until the end of the year. From the 10th onwards, a succession of depressions and passing fronts brought wet and windy weather for the rest of the month. Two **Hen Harriers** showed on the 10th, while a stormy 11th-12th brought a party of six pale-bellied **Brent Geese**, two **Common Scoter** and a small flock of 26 **Pink-footed Geese**. A **Firecrest** on the 12th was a good garden bird. Interest then reverted back to waterfowl, with a **Red-breasted Merganser** on the 17th, a scattering of **Greater Scaup** from the 19th onwards into December and a **Black-necked Grebe** on the 22nd. Following 60mm of rain during SW gales on the 23rd-24th and almost 50mm on the 27th, the year's fifth and final flood once again created ideal conditions for **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Common Teal**. Between appearances by **Great Bitterns** on the 23rd and 27th, the 25th brought **Common Scoter**, a brief visit from a **Bar-tailed Godwit** and a superb, if at times frustratingly elusive, **Yellow-browed Warbler** in Valley Park. A **Red-breasted Merganser** then arrived during a westerly gale on the 28th, followed by three immature **Great Northern Divers** and a **Shag** on the 31st.

**November** started cold, with the daytime temperature on the 4th only 4°C and nights barely above freezing. Another small movement of nine **Common Scoter** occurred between the 2nd-8th and the first **Whooper Swans** returned. **Shag** was new on 4th as was **Slavonian Grebe** on 6th. **Red-breasted Mergansers** arrived on the 2nd and 7th and a moribund **Little Auk** was also found on the latter day. A strong passage of **Fieldfares** and **Redwings** also occurred during a rainy 6th-8th, **Long-eared Owls** arrived on the 9th and 27th, the only **Red Kite** of the autumn appeared on the 10th and six **Red Knot** on the 12th were followed by three more later in the month. The only sizeable movement of **Pink-footed Geese** occurred on the 15th, which coincidentally was the first night below freezing. With high pressure over Scandinavia blocking approaching fronts, the arrivals of the first **Smew** on the 17th, **Slavonian Grebe** on the 18th and **Red-necked Grebes** on the 21st and 22nd were perhaps predictable, but two **Firecrests** on the 19th were unexpected. Three more **Slavonian Grebes** and a **Grey Plover** also appeared on the 22nd followed by seven **Bar-tailed Godwits** on the 23rd. A **Common Scoter** on the 28th coincided with colder air moving south and a frosty 29th saw the month's third **Firecrest**. Finally, a **Hen Harrier** returned to the Moors on 30th.

Like November, a windy **December** began with a cold week with temperatures only around 4°C. From the 7th the dominant anticyclone gave way to milder south-westerlies and rain. Wildfowl provided the highlights, with **Common Pochard** in the Tame Valley topping 1400 – their highest level for nine years; **Common Goldeneye** reaching a new Staffs record of 175 at Chasewater and the **Mute Swan** herd along the Lower Tame again reaching an impressive 282 birds. More exciting were the two Tundra **Bean Geese** which appeared with a flock of 28 **White-fronted Geese** at Bredons Hardwick on the 4th, to be followed by five more on the 24th. A **Red-breasted Merganser** arrived on the 6th, when no fewer than four **Great Bitterns** were at Ladywalk. On the 11th and 13th, daytime temperatures were lower than those at night, but on the 15th the temperature rose to 15°C – the warmest December day since 1974. Another **Great Northern Diver** appeared on the 11th, a **Brent Goose** on the 13th and a further **Great Bittern** on the 15th. With cold air moving south again on the 18th, the temperature fell almost to freezing on the 20th, with a heavy overnight frost, only to climb again to 11°C by Christmas Day. Two **Common Scoters** were seen on the 20th, a **Red-necked Grebe** arrived on 21st, six **Long-eared Owls** were back in the Park Hall roost and a **Chiffchaff** at Westport was positively identified as a *tristis* race bird. Another **Red-breasted Merganser** showed on the 27th, while four **Whooper Swans** at dusk on the 29th were followed by three more the next day, including one which had been ringed in Iceland. Finally, as the year drew to its close, two **Water Pipits** returned to the Tame Valley on the 31st.

Graham Harrison

## **Survey of Breeding Waders in Staffordshire 1998**

### **Introduction**

During the spring and summer, members were encouraged to record breeding waders throughout the county. Attention was focussed on the wet grassland habitats along the Rivers Trent and Tame, and their major tributaries, and around the reservoirs and gravel pits. The objective was to obtain an up-to-date overview of the current wader populations in view of the concern, both nationally and locally, at the decline of some species, especially Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe and Common Redshank.

No attempt was made to cover the important populations of the Peak District portion of Staffordshire, as these had been adequately assessed by three surveys carried out by the RSPB in 1985, 1990 and 1995. No information was received for the Stour Valley in south-west Staffordshire, where Northern Lapwing and Eurasian Curlew occur in small numbers.

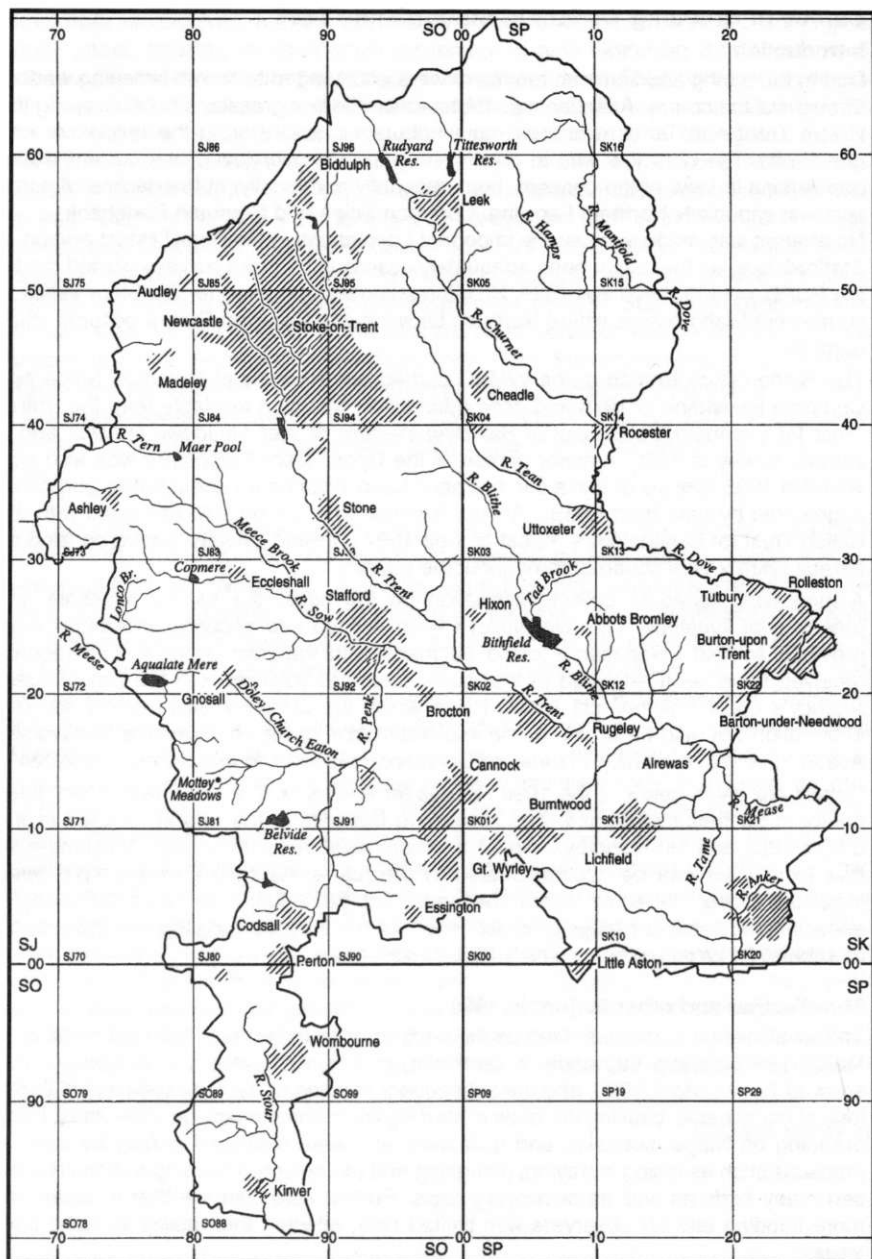
The Staffordshire Branch of the WMBC carried out a survey of Common Snipe and Common Redshank in 1978 and good information was also available from the British Trust for Ornithology's *Survey of Breeding Waders of Wet Meadows* in 1982 and a sample survey in 1989. A major portion of the Upper Trent Catchment was also surveyed in 1993. Details of these surveys have been included for comparative purposes, augmented by data from WMBC Annual Reports. The survey also coincided with the British Trust for Ornithology's repeat of their 1987 Lapwing Enquiry, based on random tetrads (2km x 2km squares) throughout the country.

A form was issued to collect information on the birds, the habitat available and presence of livestock. The river valleys were divided into sections and maps were provided so that comparisons could be made with the past surveys. The records received have been analysed in four basic areas, to coincide with the Environment Agency's Local Environment Action Plans which are currently being produced. The information will also be of use in the implementation of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and, hopefully, in other conservation measures to protect these species.

Details are given below of the 1998 records for each site. The sites have been given numbers for future reference. The number in brackets is the reference used in the BTO's 1982 and 1989 surveys. Spare numbers have been left in each catchment so that extra sites can be accommodated in the future. All sites covered have been included, though in some cases they may not be suitable in future for waders, especially Northern Lapwings on arable sites. Of the 74 sites suggested or covered by members, 64 were visited, of which 16 held no waders.

### **The Weather and other factors in 1998**

The weather had a marked effect on the birds and the observers. The mild weather in March saw Northern Lapwings, in particular, making early attempts at nesting. The snow at Easter (April 10th), and the subsequent flooding of the river valleys, led to the loss of many nests, causing the birds to start again, in some cases on other sites. Birds breeding on tillage, set-aside and reclaimed land were disrupted in May by farming practices such as rolling, spraying, ploughing and re-seeding. These operations dispersed many birds as well as destroying nests. Further cold, wet weather in June saw more flooding and for observers with limited time, affected their ability to make later visits.



## Summary of Results

### *Oystercatcher*

In 1998 a total of 15 pairs was located, of which four pairs were considered to be non-breeders. In addition, two birds were noted on passage or prospecting. The main area for these birds has been the Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment, where eight pairs were located in and around the gravel pits, but the species is clearly spreading further north. In future, observers should be aware that this species is not confined to the gravel areas, but will nest on grassland and arable land more usually associated with Northern Lapwings.

### *Little Ringed Plover*

While the major breeding sites in this country have been newly excavated gravel pits and the shores of reservoirs when water levels are favourable, it does occur on river gravel shoals in the Dove Catchment as well as at a variety of sites on waste ground, opencast coal and industrial sites, including car parks and even flat roofs. A total of 16 or 17 pairs was located at 11 sites in this survey, but this undoubtedly only represents a proportion of the total county population.

### *Great Ringed Plover*

Since this species first bred in the county in 1979 it has clearly established itself as a regular breeder with mixed success, especially in the Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment, with occasional breeding records further north. Some six or seven pairs were located in 1998, possibly the best year so far. Though mainly attracted to gravel pits, the possibility of this species breeding at sites attractive to Little Ringed Plovers should not be overlooked in the future.

### *Northern Lapwing*

The BTO *Lapwing Survey* of 1987 covered 24 random tetrads throughout the county (including the Peak District National Park) and located 108 pairs. The repeat surveys of these same tetrads in 1998 found only 80 pairs, a reduction of 26%.

In 1998, some 182 pairs were found in 41 sites out of the 57 surveyed. However, for the 37 sites for which comparable data were obtained, only 92 pairs were found in 1998 where 212 pairs had been located in 1982, a decline of 57%. This confirms our fears of recent years that a considerable decline in the numbers of breeding Northern Lapwings has taken place. The 57% decline is considerably worse than the national decline of 48% between 1987 and 1998. However, due to early nesting birds being disturbed by spring flooding and moving to other sites, it is difficult to ascertain the true extent of the decline. Also, the species does tend to congregate on suitable fields – spring corn, beans, sugar beet and potatoes – as well as set-aside and reclaimed land, often away from the flood plain and subject to agricultural practices.

Breeding success was considered low by several observers and the high success rate of 2.5 young per pair from 12 pairs at Apedale (Site 24) was considered exceptional. Unfortunately, as this area is designated as a Country Park, it is unlikely to be suitable in the future.

### ***Common Snipe***

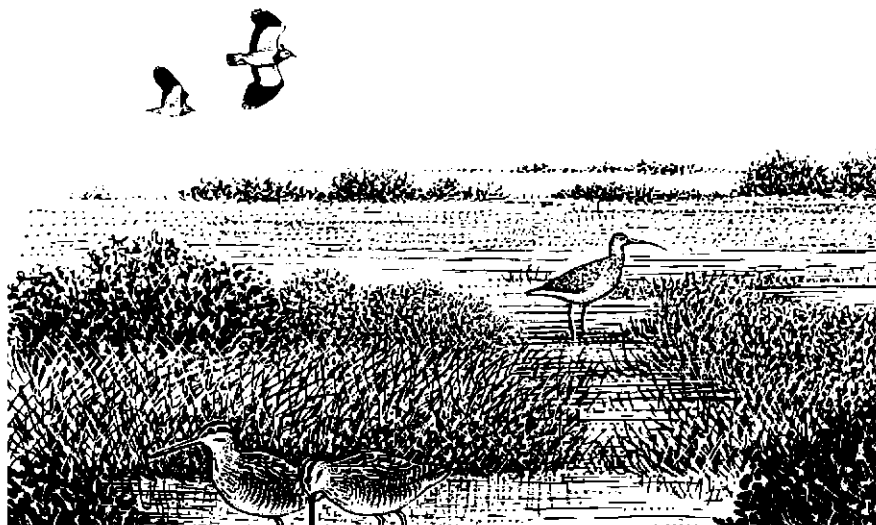
In the 1978 survey we estimated 100 pairs were breeding in over 50 1km<sup>2</sup> outside the Peak District National Park and the area north of Tittesworth Reservoir, which is similar in character. In 1998 in the comparable area only 25/26 drumming birds, nests or young were located at 10 sites. Allowing for sites not covered, and most known good sites were, we estimate a total of 40 pairs. For the 23 sites covered in 1978, 1982 and 1998, numbers declined by 40%, from 35 to 21 or 22.

In the Upper Trent Valley Catchment, where a survey was held in 1989, numbers appear to have declined markedly since then. In west Staffordshire (Tern Catchment), small numbers continue to breed at Aqualate NNR and the surrounding wet meadow areas on the border with Shropshire. In the Dove Catchment, the Common Snipe is now virtually unknown as a breeding bird in the lower half of the catchment. Sadly, on the Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment, no birds were located at the four sites which had held seven pairs in 1978 and 1982. Here a considerable number of sites were in areas that are now gravel pits or have been drained for agriculture or development and so are no longer suitable.

As numbers decrease, this species may be harder to detect as less 'drumming' occurs. It can also breed late, witness the late young and nest with eggs found at Aqualate in June/July (Site 52).

### ***Eurasian Curlew***

In 1998 a total of 28-32 pairs was recorded on 17 sites, but in many cases birds were considered to be nesting on arable or set-aside away from the flood plain areas, which they used primarily for feeding. On the 11 sites covered in 1982 and 1998, numbers



*Waders in a wet meadow (Phil Jones)*



were similar at 14 or 15 pairs. None were recorded in the Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment and they are virtually absent from the flood plain of the Dove below Uttoxeter.

### ***Common Redshank***

In the 1978 survey we recorded 30-32 pairs on 26 sites in the county, including one site in the Peak Park from which they have long since disappeared. We estimated the county total at that time at no more than 40 pairs allowing for sites that were missed. The BTO's *Waders of Wet Meadows Survey* in 1982 found 36 pairs on 15 sites. Most birds were in the Upper Trent Catchment (22+) and Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment (10+).

The 1998 survey found a total of 25 pairs on 15 sites, but on the 19 sites covered in both surveys numbers had dropped from 36 to 18 or 19 – a decline of almost 50%. The decline was most marked in the Upper Trent Catchment, with a reduction from 22 to 14 pairs. Here they are dependent on meadows, which are better drained now than twenty years ago, with less standing water even after floods. Flooding itself is a hazard at times and stocking levels of cattle and sheep also pose an added hazard. In the Lower Trent/Upper Tame Catchment the species is holding its own, having adapted to the gravel pits and their surrounds which themselves change in character over time.

### ***Common Sandpiper***

The only regular breeding site in Staffordshire is now Tittesworth Reservoir (Site 71), with six or seven pairs. The only other record was of a pair present on the River Dove (Site 61) on May 25th, but with no evidence of breeding. Birds also occur at Rudyard Reservoir (Site 72), but have not been proved to breed.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank English Nature for financial support towards this survey and its staff for their encouragement. Various landowners gave permission to visit sites. Bevan Craddock produced four computer drafts and gave advice and Andy Lawrence produced the map of Staffordshire's rivers.

The following members assisted with recording in the field: M Arnold, J Aspinall, Mrs C Balance, D Bate, M Boote, S C Brown, P Burton, R J Burton, J Cameron, B and Mrs S Cartwright, R Clinton, A E Coleman, T Coleshaw, N Greatholder, G Hayes, Miss M Holley, J E Howard, J A Lawrence, J A Longshaw, W J Low, J Macmillan, G Moss, S Nuttall, M W Painting, R Randall, G Richardson, J B Roberston, P Rollin, R L Russon, D Simkin, V Smith, the late P South, G Stewart, G Summers, R Taylor, A G Thompson, D Tideswell, N Unwin, P Wain, D I M Wallace, M Waterhouse and T Wynn.

Our thanks go to all the above. We trust we have omitted nobody, as without such assistance this survey could not have been accomplished.

We hope this report will encourage the regular monitoring of the more important sites, including those not covered in 1998 that have potential. We also trust it will help efforts to conserve our breeding waders for future generations of birdwatchers to enjoy.

Frank Gribble  
Ray Jennett

## Table of Sites

### **A Upper Trent Catchment**

#### **Site No 1 (-): River Trent and Fowlea Brook, north of Hanford A34**

- Habitat: Grassland (no stock) and gravelly waste area, former tip near Brindley Ford
- 1998: Little Ringed Plover 1 pair  
Northern Lapwing 6 pairs
- History: Both species have bred near Stoke Incinerator site, but neither were recorded this year.  
Little Ringed Plover 1 pair near Westport 1992

#### **Site No 2 (ST28): River Trent, Hanford to Trentham**

- Habitat: Wet meadows
- 1998: No waders recorded
- History: Northern Lapwing several pairs 1978  
1 pair 1982  
Common Snipe 1 drummer 1978  
Common Redshank 1 pair possibly bred 1982

#### **Site No 3 (ST27): River Trent, Trentham to Meaford (Darlaston Island)**

- Habitat: Wet meadows (cattle)
- 1998: No waders recorded
- History: None

#### **Site No 4 (ST30A): River Trent, Meaford to Aston Bridge, A51, Stone**

- Habitat: Wet meadows (cattle). Some disturbance in urban area.
- 1998: No waders recorded
- History: Northern Lapwing 5+ pairs in N half of site 1982

#### **Site No 5 (ST30B): River Trent, Aston Bridge to Sandon**

- Habitat: Wet meadows, some still rushy (cattle and sheep). Some arable on higher ground.
- 1998: No waders recorded
- History: Northern Lapwing 23+ pairs 1982  
2 pairs 1989  
8 pairs 1993  
Common Snipe nil 1982  
3 drummers 1989  
Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982  
1 pair 1989  
Common Redshank 1 seen 1978  
2 pairs 1982  
nil 1989  
1 pair 1993

#### **Site No 6 (ST14A1): River Trent, Sandon to Weston**

- Habitat: Mainly improved grass (cattle and sheep)
- 1998: Not covered
- History: Eurasian Curlew recorded 1978

#### **Site No 7 (ST14A2): River Trent, Weston to Great Haywood, includes Pasturefields SWT Reserve (SSSI)**

- Habitat: Rough wet meadows and salt marsh, semi-improved and improved grassland, some arable east of canal
- 1998: Oystercatcher 2 on passage  
May 5th only  
Northern Lapwing 5 pairs  
Common Snipe 1 pair  
Common Redshank 2 pairs
- History: Northern Lapwing 13 pairs 1982  
10-11 pairs 1989  
6 pairs 1993  
Common Snipe 4+ recorded 1978  
1 pair 1982  
3 pairs 1989  
2 pairs 1993  
Common Redshank 2+ recorded 1978  
4 pairs 1982  
3+ pairs 1989 (19 birds present on May 4th after floods)  
1 pair 1993

#### **Site No 8 (ST23): River Trent, Great Haywood to Rugeley**

- Habitat: Semi-improved pasture (sheep). One area herbicided, ploughed and re-seeded
- 1998: Northern Lapwing 5 pairs on dead grass. All deserted after cultivation in mid-May
- History: Northern Lapwing 4 pairs in 1982  
2 pairs in 1987

#### **Site No 9 (ST23A): River Trent, Rugeley to Pipe Ridware**

- Habitat: Wet meadows, semi-improved pasture (sheep), plus waste land of Rugeley Power Station site.
- 1998: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs (on Power Station site)
- History: None

### Table of Sites (continued)

**Site No 10 (ST23B): River Trent, Pipe Ridware to Yoxall Bridge (includes Kings Bromley Gravel Pit)**

Habitat:	Wet meadows, semi-improved pasture, active gravel pit (sheep and cattle) some arable.
1998:	Oystercatcher 1 pair on gravel pit
	Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs on gravel pit
	Northern Lapwing 1 pair
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair
History:	Oystercatcher 1 pair 1982
	Northern Lapwing 15 pairs 1982
	Common Snipe 1 drummer 1982
	Eurasian Curlew 2 pairs 1982
	Common Redshank 2 pairs 1982
	1 pair 1993

**Site No 11A (ST23B): River Trent, Yoxall Bridge to confluence with Tame, north bank (including River Swarbour south from Woodmill)**

Habitat:	Wet meadows with some rushes, semi-improved grass, hay and silage fields (sheep, cattle and horses)
1998:	Oystercatcher 1 pair
	Northern Lapwing 4 pairs on damp pasture, 5 pairs on maize fields NE of Yoxall
	Eurasian Curlew 3 pairs in hay meadows and damp pastures
	Common Redshank 1 pair in silage
History:	Northern Lapwing 5 pairs 1982
	Common Snipe 1 pair 1982
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982
	Common Redshank 3 recorded 1978
	nil 1982
	1 pair 1989

**Site No 11B (ST24): River Trent, Yoxall Bridge to confluence with Tame, south bank (including Airewas Gravel Pit)**

Habitat:	Wet meadows, improved grassland (sheep and cattle), gravel pit and rough grazing
1998:	Oystercatcher 1+ pair on gravel pit
	Little Ringed Plover 1 pair on gravel pit
	Great Ringed Plover 2 pairs on gravel pit

Northern Lapwing	3+ pairs
South of the A513 road a further 6 pairs at Common Lane Farm, Kings Bromley (SK137154) 1 pair successful; 1 pair near The Sale (SK151143) successful; 1 pair at Curborough (SK123125) successful.	
Eurasian Curlew	1+ pair
Common Redshank	1 recorded, no evidence of breeding
History:	Little Ringed Plover 4 pairs 1989
	3 pairs 1993
	Northern Lapwing 5 pairs 1982
	Common Snipe 3 recorded 1978
	1 pair 1982
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982
	Common Redshank 3 recorded 1978
	nil 1982

**Site No 12 (ST3): River Blithe, upstream of Blythe Bridge**

Habitat:	Wet meadows and rough grazing (cattle and horses)
1998:	Not covered
History:	Northern Lapwing 5 pairs 1982
	5-6 pairs 1989
	Common Snipe 2 pairs 1982
	2-4 pairs 1989

**Site No 13 (ST16D): River Blithe, Blythe Bridge to Upper Leigh**

Habitat:	Improved pastures with a few wet rushy areas (sheep and cattle)
1998:	Northern Lapwing 5 pairs
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair
History:	Northern Lapwing 8 pairs 1987 (BTO Survey Tetrad Z)

**Site No 14 (ST16C): River Blithe, Upper Leigh to Field**

Habitat:	Semi-improved pasture (sheep and cattle)
1998:	Not covered
History:	None

**Site No 15 (ST16B): River Blithe, Field to Burnhurst Mill A518**

Habitat:	Wet meadows, some rushes, semi-improved pasture (sheep and cattle). Some arable west of flood plain.
1998:	Northern Lapwing 9+ pairs on arable west of flood plain. Meadows not covered.

# Table of Sites (continued)

History:	Northern Lapwing	5 pairs 1982		<b>Site No 20 (ST22A): Bourne Brook, Lea Heath to Colton</b>
	Common Snipe	2+ recorded 1978		Habitat: Mainly improved grass (cattle)
		5 pairs 1982		1998: No waders recorded, but only viewed from road
		1 pair 1989		History: Northern Lapwing 8 pairs 1982
<b>Site No 16 (ST16A): River Blithe, including Stoney Brook, Burnhurst Mill to Blithfield Reservoir</b>				<b>Site No 21 (-): Chartley Moss south to Drinton (SK0227)</b>
Habitat:	Mainly improved pasture, small areas of wet meadow with rushes, some arable (sheep and cattle)			Habitat: Small semi-improved grassland
1998:	Northern Lapwing	3 pairs		1998: Not covered
	Common Snipe	2-3 drummers in Stoney Brook area		History: None
	Eurasian Curlew	1, possibly, 2 pairs		<b>Site No 22 (-): Stowe by Chartley, Hixon former aerodrome and surrounds (SJ9926)</b>
History:	Northern Lapwing	14 pairs 1982		Habitat: Former aerodrome, now mainly arable with some semi-improved grassland (sheep) and rough grazing (cattle)
<b>Site No 17 (ST17): Tad Brook, Broomfield to Blithfield Reservoir</b>				1998: Northern Lapwing 1 pair on rough grazing
Habitat:	Mainly improved pasture			2 pairs on grassland west of Stowe, subsequently cultivated, probably failed
1998:	No waders recorded			Common Redshank 1 pair on rough grazing west of Hixon
History:	Northern Lapwing	3 pairs 1982		History: None
<b>Site No 18 (ST18): Blithfield Reservoir (SSSI)</b>				<b>Site No 23 (ST4): Snapehall, Nr Whitmore (SJ7841)</b>
Habitat:	Improved grass, sheep grazed around reservoir. Water level determines whether there is good wader habitat available.			Habitat: Was rough grazing, but re-drained in 1982. Improved grass
1998:	Oystercatcher	1 pair, no evidence of breeding		1998: No longer suitable habitat, substantially drained
	Northern Lapwing	1 pair Blithe Bay, 1 possible pair Tad Bay.		History: Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1982
	Common Redshank	1 bird seen, no evidence of breeding		Common Snipe 1 pair 1982
History:	Little Ringed Plover	1 pair 1982, unsuccessful		<b>Site No 24 (-): Bateswood (SWT Reserve) and Apedale CP (SJ7947 and 8047)</b>
		2+ pairs 1993 (six young reared)		Habitat: Former opencast areas, now rough grazing, nature reserve and country park
	Northern Lapwing	up to 16 pairs 1982		1998: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs Bateswood
<b>Site No 19 (ST19A): River Blithe and Little Blithe, Blithfield Reservoir to Hamstall Ridware</b>				12 pairs Apedale on reclaimed opencast site, re-seeded but still bare – reared c30 young
Habitat:	Mainly improved grassland (sheep and cattle)			History: Little Ringed Plover & Northern Lapwing several pairs at Bateswood since it was reclaimed and has bred
1998:	Northern Lapwing	a few birds in late May/June – no evidence of breeding		
History:	Northern Lapwing	2 pairs 1982		
		1 pair 1993		
	Eurasian Curlew	1 pair 1982		

## Table of Sites (continued)

**Site No 25 (-): 1 mile SE of Keele (SJ8144)**

Habitat: Cereal crop just emerging

1998: Northern Lapwing 1 pair

History: None

**Site No 26 (-): Seighford Aerodrome (SJ8625)**

Habitat: Former airfield now improved grassland (sheep), arable and part used by gliding club

1998: Northern Lapwing none nested

History: Northern Lapwing usually 4 or 5 pairs

**Site No 27 (-): River Sow, Copmere End to Pershall**

Habitat: Improved and semi-improved grassland (sheep and cattle), some arable

1998: Northern Lapwing 1 pair

Eurasian Curlew 1 pair

History: None

**Site No 28 (ST5/6): River Sow and River Meece, A519 Pershall to Chebsey (confluence of Sow and Meece)**

Habitat: Improved and semi-improved grassland

1998: Not covered

History: Northern Lapwing 6 pairs 1982  
2-3 pairs 1989  
nil 1993Common Snipe 1 drummer 1982  
nil 1989  
nil 1993Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982  
nil 1989**Site No 29 (ST6): River Sow, Chebsey (confluence with Meece) to M6 Stafford and Gamesley Brook to Seighford to confluence with Sow**

Habitat: Improved and semi-improved grassland (sheep and cattle) and fishing pools

1998: Eurasian Curlew 1 pair

History: Northern Lapwing 5 pairs 1993

**Site No 30 (ST7): River Sow and Darling, M6 to Broadey, Stafford, Doxey Marshes SSSI**

Habitat: SWT Reserve, rough grazing with rushes and pools (cattle)

1998: Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs (unsuccessful due to flooding)

Northern Lapwing 13 pairs

Common Snipe 8 pairs

Common Redshank 4 pairs

History: Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs 1989

Northern Lapwing 1 pair 1993

5 pairs 1982

9 pairs 1989

10 pairs 1993

Common Snipe recorded 1978

6 pairs 1982

13 pairs 1989

9 pairs 1993

Eurasian Curlew has bred

Common Redshank recorded 1978

2+ pairs 1982

3 pairs 1989

1 pair 1993

**Site No 31 (-): River Sow, Stafford Broadey to St Thomas' Mill**

Habitat: Improved and semi-improved grassland (sheep and cattle)

1998: Northern Lapwing 7 adults and two small chicks in late May – 1 pair+ bred

Probably displaced birds from Site 32 after April flood.

Common Snipe 2 noted in May – no evidence of breeding

History: Northern Lapwing occasional records of 1 or 2 pairs

**Site No 32 (ST13C): River Sow, St Thomas' Mill to Tixall Bridge (includes Baswich Meadows SSSI)**

Habitat: Mainly rough grazing with semi-improved grassland (sheep, cattle and horses), some arable

1998: Northern Lapwing 23 birds present in mid-March. Any early nests lost to flooding in early April. 5+ pairs in mid-April

Common Snipe 1 drummer

Common Redshank 2 pairs

History: Northern Lapwing 11 pairs 1982

4 pairs 1993

Common Snipe 3+ recorded 1978

3 pairs 1982

1+ pair 1989

2 pairs 1993

Common Redshank 2+ recorded 1978

2 pairs 1982

3 pairs 1993

### Table of Sites (continued)

**Site No 33 (ST29): River Sow, Tixall Bridge to Great Haywood (includes Rawbones Meadows SSSI)**

Habitat:	Rough grazing with rushes, improved grazing and arable (cattle and sheep)
1998:	Common Snipe 1 drummer
History:	Northern Lapwing 25 pairs 1982
	4-9 pairs 1989
	6 pairs 1993
	Common Snipe 5 pairs 1978
	2 drummers 1982
	3+ drummers 1989
	6+ drummers 1992
	Common Redshank 2/3 pairs 1978
	3 pairs 1982
	1 (possibly 2) pairs 1989
	2 pairs 1993

**Site No 34 (ST13A): River Penk, Cuttlestone Bridge, Penkridge, to Acton Bridge**

Habitat:	Improved grazing, small areas of rushes (cattle and sheep), some arable
1998:	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs on potato field (Acton Trussell)
History:	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1982, on meadows
	6 pairs 1989, all on arable
	4 pairs 1993, all on arable

**Site No 35 (ST13B): River Penk, Acton Bridge to confluence with Sow, St Thomas' Mill**

Habitat:	Rough grazing and semi-improved grazing, arable (sheep and cattle)
1998:	Little Ringed Plover 1 bird on passage
	Northern Lapwing 3-4 pairs in spring corn, Radford, reared 8 chicks
History:	Northern Lapwing 6 pairs 1982 (most lost to flooding)
	7 pairs 1989
	9 pairs 1993
	Common Snipe recorded 1978
	1-2 drummers 1982
	1-2 drummers 1989
	1 drummer 1993
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1989
	(possibly bred) recorded 1978
	Common Redshank 1 pair 1982
	2 pairs 1989
	nil 1993

If suitable arable fields – spring corn, beans or sugar beet – are available, these are preferred due to excessive cattle numbers (Deepmore) and dog walking on the Rickerscote side of the River Penk in recent years.

**Site No 36 (–): Doley Brook, Doley Common SSSI to Gnosall**

Habitat:	Rough grazing, <i>Molinia</i> grassland and rushy pasture, arable on higher ground
1998:	Northern Lapwing 6 pairs
	Common Snipe 1 bird in April only, no drumming
	Eurasian Curlew 2 pairs (on nearby arable)
	Common Redshank 1 pair
History:	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1993. Not counted previously
	Common Snipe nil 1989
	Eurasian Curlew 2+ pairs 1993
	1+ pair 1989 breeding on arable nearby. Recorded 1993 breeding on nearby arable
	Common Redshank 1 pair 1989
	1 bird 1993

**Site No 37 (ST11A): Doley/Church Eaton Brook, Gnosall to Milton Manor**

Habitat:	Semi-improved grazing (sheep and cattle), arable
1998:	Northern Lapwing 4 pairs
	Eurasian Curlew single birds
	? breeding on arable
History:	None

**Site No 38 (ST12A): Marston and Whiston Brook, Wheaton Aston Shropshire Union Canal east to confluence with Penk**

Habitat:	Rough grazing, semi-improved grazing (sheep and cattle), arable
1998:	Not covered
History:	None

**Site No 39 (ST12B): Marston Brook, Motte Meadows NNR, Wheaton Aston (west of Shropshire Union Canal)**

Habitat:	Wet meadows and rough grazing (cattle)
1998:	Common Snipe probably 2 pairs
	Eurasian Curlew 1 pair
History:	Northern Lapwing recorded 1978
	2 pairs 1982

### Table of Sites (continued)

Common Snipe	2+ recorded 1978	<b>Site No 42 (-): Mansty, near Penkridge (SJ9512)</b>
Eurasian Curlew	2 drummers 1982	Habitat: Bare weedy field, cultivated in May
	1+ pair 1978	1998: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs – probably failed
	2 pairs 1982	
	1 pair 1989	History: None
Common Redshank	has nested occasionally	
<b>Site No 40 (-): Belvide Reservoir SSSI</b>		
Habitat:	Rough grazing around reservoir (cattle). Water level determines if habitat suitable	<b>Site No 43 (ST15): Saredon Brook, Wedges Mills to confluence with Penk</b>
1998: Little Ringed Plover	birds present April, but did not nest due to high water level	Habitat: Rough grazing (cattle), arable
		1998: Northern Lapwing 15 birds present late April, but no evidence of breeding
Northern Lapwing	10 pairs bred	History: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs 1982
Eurasian Curlew	odd birds feed, but do not nest	Eurasian Curlew recorded 1978
Common Redshank	2 pairs bred, rearing 1 and 3 young. Up to 12 birds present in April, but most dispersed birds occur on passage, but no evidence of nesting	Common Redshank 3 pairs 1978
History: Oystercatcher		1 pair 1978 – doubtfully bred
Little Ringed Plover	1 pair 1982 (unsuccessful)	
	3 pairs 1993.	
Northern Lapwing	several pairs 1978	
Ruff	10 pairs 1993	
Common Snipe	birds displaying in April 1995	
	2 drummers 1978 (1 pair reared young)	<b>B West Staffordshire River Tern Catchment – Coley Brook and River Meese</b>
	1 pair 1989, possibly bred	<b>Site No 51 (ST10): Coley Brook, Great Chatwell to Coley Mill</b>
Eurasian Curlew	2 pairs bred nearby 1978	Habitat: Some rough, wet grazing, improved grassland (sheep and cattle) and arable
Common Redshank	2/3 pairs 1978 (1 pair reared young)	1998: Northern Lapwing recorded just prior to breeding season, but not surveyed adequately afterwards
	6 pairs 1982 (4 pairs had broods)	History: No previous survey data, but Northern Lapwing and Common Redshank bred formerly, before it was more thoroughly drained
	1 pair 1989	
	2 pairs 1993	<b>Site No 52 (Part ST8): Coley Brook and Aqualate NNR, East Fields</b>
<b>Site No 41 (-): Staffs and Worcestershire Canal, Otherton/Rodbaston</b>		
Habitat:	Rough grazing	Habitat: Wet meadows/rough grazing, rushes (cattle and Exmoor ponies)
1998: Northern Lapwing	3+ pairs. Broods of young seen	1998: Northern Lapwing 1 pair
History: None		Common Snipe 1 drummer
		Eurasian Curlew present, but nesting to south in arable area c 2/3 pairs
		History: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs 1982
		4 pairs 1989
		4/5 pairs 1996
		Common Snipe recorded 1978
		2 drummers 1982
		2/3 drummers 1989
		3/4 drummers 1996

Table of Sites (continued)

<p>Eurasian Curlew 2 pairs 1982 2/3 pairs 1989 2 pairs 1996 – nesting in set-aside to south Common Redshank recorded 1978 nil 1982 nil 1989 1 pair 1996</p>	<p><b>Site No 55 (ST9): Sutton Area, north of Aqualate (SJ7621)</b> Habitat: Wet meadows and ditches near former canal (cattle) 1998: Oystercatcher 1 recorded, but did not breed Northern Lapwing 5 pairs Eurasian Curlew 1/2 pairs Common Redshank recorded, but did not breed History: No previous survey information, but Northern Lapwing and Eurasian Curlew known to be present</p>
<p><b>C River Dove Catchment</b></p>	
<p><b>Site No 53 (Part ST8): River Meese and Aqualate NNR – West Fields</b> Habitat: Wet meadows and rough grazing, rushes (cattle), small area of arable 1998: Northern Lapwing 3/4 pairs Common Snipe 3 pairs (1 pair 2 young 28/6 and 2 nests/eggs 4/7) Eurasian Curlew recorded – no evidence of breeding, probably on nearby arable Common Redshank recorded, but no evidence of breeding History: Northern Lapwing 3 pairs 1982 4 pairs 1989 5 pairs 1996 Common Snipe recorded 1978 1 drummer 1982 2 drummers 1989 1 recorded 1996 – no drumming or display Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982 1 pair 1989 1 recorded 1996, but no evidence of nesting Common Redshank recorded 1978 2 pairs 1982 nil 1989 nil 1996</p>	<p><b>Site No 61 (ST21A): River Dove, Rocester to Dove Bridge</b> Habitat: Water meadows (cattle and sheep) 1998: Northern Lapwing 5 pairs Eurasian Curlew 1 pair at Crakemars Common Sandpiper 1 pair on 25/5, but no evidence of breeding History: Northern Lapwing 1 pair 1982 Common Snipe recorded Eurasian Curlew usually 2 pairs Crakemars</p>
<p><b>Site No 54 (-): Broomhill Fields, Nr Newport (Part Shropshire) (SJ7517)</b> Habitat: Wet meadows, rough grazing, rushes (cattle) 1998: Northern Lapwing 10+ pairs Common Snipe 2+ drummers Common Redshank 2 pairs History: Northern Lapwing 12+ pairs 1996 Common Snipe 2/3 drummers 1996 Common Redshank 1 pair 1996</p>	<p><b>Site No 62 (ST21B): River Dove, Dove Bridge to Aston Bridge</b> Habitat: Improved water meadows (cattle and sheep) with a small flooded gravel pit near Aston Bridge 1998: No waders recorded on the flood plain Oystercatcher 1 pair present, no proof of breeding on gravel pit Little Ringed Plover 1 pair on gravel pit History: Little Ringed Plover 1 recorded 1989 Northern Lapwing 1 pair 1982 2 pairs 1989</p>
<p><b>Site No 63 (ST21CDE): River Dove, Aston Bridge to Scropton</b> Habitat: Water meadows, improved grassland, shingle banks (cattle and sheep), some arable behind flood banks 1998: Oystercatcher 2 pairs, but no evidence of nesting Northern Lapwing 1 pair</p>	



# Table of Sites (continued)

	Eurasian Curlew	2+ pairs
	(Partial survey from 1 mile below Aston Bridge to Scropton)	
History:	Little Ringed Plover	has been recorded, but dependent on shingle banks
	Northern Lapwing	6 pairs 1982
	Common Snipe	1 drummer 1982
	Common Redshank	2 pairs 1982

## Site No 64 (ST21B): River Dove, Scropton to Clay Mills

Habitat:	Water meadows, improved grazing (cattle and sheep)
1998:	No waders recorded during several visits to study Mute Swans
History:	Northern Lapwing 1 pair 1982 Eurasian Curlew 1 pair 1982

## Site No 65 (ST21G): River Dove, Clay Mills to confluence with Trent

Habitat:	Water meadows, improved grazing (cattle and sheep)
1998:	No waders recorded during several visits to study Mute Swans
History:	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1982

## Site No 66 (ST20A): River Tean, Lower Tean to Beamhurst

Habitat:	Water meadows, rough grazing improved grassland (sheep and cattle)
1998:	Not covered
History:	Northern Lapwing 9 pairs 1982 Common Snipe 1 drummer 1982

## Site No 67 (ST20B): River Tean, Beamhurst to Uttoxeter (confluence with Dove)

Habitat:	Water meadows, rough grazing, improved grassland (sheep and cattle)
1998:	No records
History:	No previous survey record, but Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe and Eurasian Curlew have bred in the area around Spath in recent years, but daily horse riding near the river disturbed them in 1998.

## Site No 68 (ST1): River Churnet, Tittesworth to Cheddleton

Habitat:	Water meadows and rough grazing (cattle and sheep)
1998:	Northern Lapwing 1 pair Longsdon Mill Pool
History:	None

## Site No 69 (ST2): Moreton/Endon Brooks, Boot Hall to Cheddleton and stream west of Cheddleton

Habitat:	Water meadows, rough grazing and improved grassland (cattle and sheep)
1998:	Not covered
History:	Common Snipe recorded 1978 west of Cheddleton

## Site No 70 (-): River Churnet, Cheddleton to Consallforge

Habitat:	Wet rushy meadows below Cheddleton/Coombes Brook confluence. Remainder wooded, narrow valley
1998:	Common Snipe 4+ drummers
History:	Common Snipe recorded 1978 3 drummers 1982

## Site No 71 (-): Tittesworth Reservoir

Habitat:	Semi-improved grassland, some rushy areas, muddy shore exposed when water level recedes
1998:	Little Ringed Plover none bred, water level too high 1 pair Northern Lapwing 1 pair Eurasian Curlew 4 pairs Common Sandpiper 6/7 pairs 3 pairs 1982
History:	Little Ringed Plover 1 pair 1989 2 pairs 1993 Common Sandpiper 7 territories, 3 pairs reared young 1993

## Site No 72 (-): Rudyard Reservoir

Habitat:	Semi-improved grassland and woodland, muddy shore exposed when water level low, small rushy areas
1998:	Little Ringed Plover 1 pair successful
History:	Not surveyed previously, but Little Ringed Plovers (2 pairs 1982, 1 pair 1989, 1 pair 1993, 2 pairs 1997) and Common Sandpipers occur, but not proved to breed.

## Site No 73 (-): Cheddle Area Gravel Pits (SK0341 and 0342)

Habitat:	Sand and gravel quarries with pools, poorly vegetated
1998:	Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs
History:	Little Ringed Plover 1/2 pairs known to have bred for a number of years

Table of Sites (continued)

**Site No 74 (-): Crossplains/Needwood  
Aerodrome and surrounds  
(SK150250 radius of 2km)**

Habitat: Semi-improved grassland (sheep),  
arable

1998: Northern Lapwing up to 10 pairs in  
this general area  
Eurasian Curlew up to 4 territories  
in this area

History: Not formally surveyed previously, but  
both species regularly breed.

**D Lower River Trent and Upper  
River Tame Catchment**

**Site No 81 (ST24A): River Trent/Tame confluence  
to Warren Farm, Walton, including  
Barton Gravel Pits west of river**

Habitat: Wet meadows, gravel pits including new  
pumped out pit with pools and islands and  
new marina pits east of Barton village

1998: Oystercatcher 1 pair bred,  
2 young  
Little Ringed Plover 1 pair bred,  
1 young  
Great Ringed Plover 1 pair bred,  
1 young  
Northern Lapwing 1 pair  
Common Redshank 2 pairs

History: No records for 1982

Oystercatcher 1 pair 1993,  
successful  
Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs 1989  
1 pair 1993  
Great Ringed Plover 3/4 pairs 1989  
3 pairs 1993 (1  
young fledged)  
Common Redshank 1 pair 1993

**Site No 82 (ST24B): River Trent, Warren Farm,  
Walton, to Burton Bridge, Burton-  
upon-Trent**

Habitat: River meadows

1998: No waders recorded

History: Oystercatcher 1 pair 1993  
Northern Lapwing 1 pair 1982  
Common Redshank 1 pair 1978

**Site No 83 (-): Newbold Quarry, Barton, to  
Branston Water Park (SK2019, 2020,  
2120)**

Habitat: Wet gravel pits, reclaimed agricultural  
land, recreational water

1998: Oystercatcher 2 pairs, Newbold  
Quarry

Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs, Newbold  
Quarry

Northern Lapwing 4 pairs

Common Redshank 1 pair, Newbold  
Quarry

History: Not surveyed in 1982

Little Ringed Plover 1 pair 1982,  
Branston recorded  
1989, no obvious  
breeding  
3 pairs 1992,  
but no evidence  
1993

Great Ringed Plover 1 pair 1992

**Site No 84 (ST24C): River Trent, Burton Bridge,  
Burton-upon-Trent to Willington,  
including Clay Mills**

Habitat: River meadows

1998: No records

History: No previous records

**Site No 85 (ST25A): River Tame, Wigford  
Cottages to Lady Bridge, Tamworth,  
including Borrowpit Lake**

Habitat: Gravel pits, water meadows, river banks  
(sheep)

1998: Oystercatcher 2 pairs, 1 pair bred  
2 juveniles

Little Ringed Plover 2 pairs

Great Ringed Plover 2 pairs

Northern Lapwing 8 pairs

Common Redshank 4 pairs, 1 pair bred  
2 juveniles

History: Little Ringed Plover 1 pair 1982  
(unsuccessful)

Great Ringed Plover 2 pairs 1982  
(1 pair unsuccessful)

Northern Lapwing 3 pairs 1989  
3 pairs 1989

2+ pairs 1993

Common Snipe 2+ pairs 1978

2 pairs 1982  
1 drummer 1989

Eurasian Curlew 1 possible pair  
1982

Common Redshank 2 pairs 1978

2 pairs 1982

1 pair 1989

1 pair 1993

### Table of Sites (continued)

#### Site No 86 (ST25A): River Anker, Amington to Tamworth

Habitat:	River meadows
1998:	No waders recorded
History:	(includes Alvecote Pools in Staffs)
	Northern Lapwing 2/3 pairs 1982
	1/2 pairs 1989
	Common Snipe 2 pairs 1978
	5 pairs 1982
	1/2 pairs 1989
	Common Redshank 1 pair 1978
	1 pair 1982
	nil 1989

#### Site No 87 (ST25A): River Tame, Lady Bridge, Tamworth to Hopwas Bridge, including Broad Meadow

Habitat:	Water meadows, new houses on site of Waste Paper Factory
1998:	No records
History:	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1982
	2/4 pairs 1989
	Common Snipe 1 pair 1978
	Common Redshank 1 pair 1978

#### Site No 88 (ST25B): River Tame, Hopwas Bridge to Elford Bridge

Habitat:	Arable land with small areas of water meadows, possible disturbance from Clay Pigeon Club at Comberford
1998:	Northern Lapwing 5 pairs, no apparent breeding on set-aside after rolling in May
	1 pair 1982
History:	Oystercatcher 3 pairs 1982
	Northern Lapwing 5/6 pairs 1989
	Common Snipe 1 pair 1978
	nil 1982
	nil 1989
	Common Redshank 1 pair 1978
	3 pairs 1982
	nil 1989

#### Site No 89 (ST25C): River Tame, Elford Bridge to confluence with Trent, including Croxall, Whitemoor Haye, Elford North GP and Stubbylea GP

Habitat:	Arable, hay/silage, gravel pits, reclaimed land (sheep)
1998:	Oystercatcher 3 pairs, 1 pair bred Croxall
	Little Ringed Plover 1 pair

Great Ringed Plover	1 pair present in May, Elford North
Northern Lapwing	2 pairs
Common Redshank	1 pair present in April, Elford North

(A potentially productive site at Elford North, with 2 pairs of Little Ringed Plover, 2 pairs of Great Ringed Plover, 9 pairs of Northern Lapwing and 1 pair of Common Redshank in April was destroyed by earth movers and bulldozers for the purpose of landscaping in May; most waders dispersed, except for 1 pair of Little Ringed Plover and 1 pair of Northern Lapwing)

History:	Oystercatcher 2 pairs 1989 (successful)
	1 pair 1993 (successful)
	Little Ringed Plover 1 pair 1989
	2 pairs 1993
	Great Ringed Plover 1 pair 1989, possibly bred
	2 pairs 1993, failed
	Northern Lapwing 2 pairs 1982
	3 pairs 1993
	Common Snipe 2 pairs 1978
	Common Redshank 2 pairs 1978
	4 pairs 1982
	present 1993

#### Site No 90 (ST26A): River Mease, Netherseal to Clifton Campville

Habitat:	Arable
1998:	No waders recorded
History:	No waders recorded in 1982

#### Site No 91 (ST26B): River Mease, Clifton Campville to confluence with Trent

Habitat:	Arable
1998:	Northern Lapwing 4 pairs, all north of the river in Derbys
History:	Northern Lapwing 3 pairs 1982

## Common Buzzards in Worcestershire

### Introduction

"Scarce and very local as a breeding species, passage migrant or winter visitor". Just 20 years ago, that assessment of the Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* population in the WMBC region as a whole, given in *The Birds of the West Midlands* (Harrison *et al* 1982), portrayed a situation which indicated that the species was struggling to maintain a foothold in the region. The estimate made was just five breeding pairs in the whole of Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

Against that background the current situation in the West Midlands had improved by the late 1990s to such an extent that they are commonly seen throughout much of Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and even Warwickshire. It was decided to conduct a survey during 1997 and 1998 to try to discover the current distribution of the Common Buzzard in Worcestershire. This paper aims to show the results of the fieldwork and to discuss the possible reasons for the turnaround in the species' fortunes.

### History

The Common Buzzard probably occurred over much of the region until the nineteenth century, as it did over the rest of Britain. Subsequently, there seems to have been a dramatic decline and after 1840 no pairs were recorded as having bred in the county until 1944, when a single pair returned.

The first proper survey of an increasing Common Buzzard population came in 1954. This revealed 13 breeding pairs in the county, plus single pairs in Staffordshire and Warwickshire. The Worcestershire birds were largely confined to the west of the county,



Common Buzzard (Phil Jones)

particularly the Teme Valley. The date of the survey proved significant, as it just pre-dated a serious outbreak of myxomatosis which decimated the rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* population. The situation was worsened by the effects of organochlorine poisoning, which were prevalent at the time. The result was a drop in the Common Buzzard population to no more than four pairs by 1958.

Between 1966 and 1968 the WMBC's *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the West Midlands* (Lord and Munns 1970) revealed just one 10km<sup>2</sup> containing breeding Common Buzzards, although by 1972 fieldwork for the national *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Britain and Ireland* (Sharrock 1976) had doubled that.

By the time of *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-91* (Gibbons *et al* 1993) there had been a clear improvement, with as many as ten 10km<sup>2</sup> containing breeding Common Buzzards, and it seems likely that the situation had already improved beyond the 1954 position.

An interesting comparison can be made between the figures for the number of breeding season reports of Common Buzzards reported to the county recorder in Worcestershire from 1984-86 compared to those reported from 1994-96.

*Table 1. Breeding season reports in Worcestershire reported to WMBC in the 1980s and 1990s*

Year	1984	1985	1986	Mean 1984-6	1994	1995	1996	Mean 1994-6
Common Buzzards reported	12	15	17	14.7	45	35	59	46.3

The comparison suggests a percentage increase of 265% over the eight year period separating the two sets of data.

With a population which seems to have been so dynamic in recent years, the current study is an attempt to discover the exact pattern of distribution that the increase in Common Buzzards has produced.

## Method

In order to try to cover the whole county in a survey which was due to last no more than two years, it was decided to divide the county up into seven areas and assign a co-ordinator to each area to involve as many interested people as possible. Given that the task of covering all 487 tetrads in Worcestershire would be difficult in just two seasons, fieldworkers were advised to pay particular attention to areas which looked favourable for the species. This worked reasonably well and a total of 41 observers eventually assisted with the fieldwork.

The tetrad (2 × 2 kilometres) was taken as the mapping unit and observers were encouraged to record all Common Buzzard sightings from mid-March to the end of August within the area they were covering.

Within each tetrad, the status of Common Buzzards was given a code A, B, C or D in accordance with the following definitions:

A	Present	Common Buzzard seen in or over tetrad, but no obvious suitable breeding habitat.
B	Possible breeding	Common Buzzard(s) seen in potential breeding habitat
C	Probable breeding	Common Buzzard(s) holding a territory in suitable breeding habitat. (To qualify the bird(s) should have been seen at the site on more than one date) Courtship and display observed Observed carrying nest material
D	Confirmed breeding	Nest found Recently fledged young seen Adult carrying food for young.

Observers were also invited to use the comments column to enter any other information which might be considered useful. Most took advantage of this option.

## Results

Common Buzzards were seen during the breeding season in 275 of the 487 tetrads surveyed. Although all areas of the county were assigned survey workers, inevitably some tetrads received more attention than others. So, although Common Buzzards were recorded in 52% of the tetrads in the county, it is likely that more coverage would have produced a higher percentage of sightings of wandering birds.

A breakdown of the records into the four categories of breeding proof produced the following data:

*Table 2: Number of Tetrads by category of Breeding Proof*

Breeding Category	Number of Tetrads
A (Present)	100
B (Possible Breeding)	54
C (Probable Breeding)	62
D (Confirmed Breeding)	59
Total	275

Although observers were not asked to try to assess the number of pairs thought to be breeding in each tetrad, a number did so and at least eight tetrads where breeding was confirmed were believed to contain up to three pairs.

It was apparent from the results that the primary method used by observers to establish proof of breeding was the observation of recently fledged family parties containing food-begging youngsters. This is not surprising, given the secretive nature of the species in the season, and it does give some cause for concern because of the possibility that the observation was made in a tetrad neighbouring the one in which breeding actually took place. On the other hand, it seems likely that a number of breeding attempts may have taken place in squares where simple territorial activity was noted.

Taking the figures for confirmed and probable breeding as the most significant, the total breeding population for the county would appear to be between 59 and 121 pairs. Interestingly however, it has been suggested that the number of soaring birds correlates well to the number of Common Buzzard pairs actually breeding. If this is the case, then the number of tetrads containing birds simply in potential breeding habitat becomes more significant, which could raise the upper figure to 175 pairs.

Figure 1: The Distribution of Common Buzzards in Worcestershire in 1997 and 1998

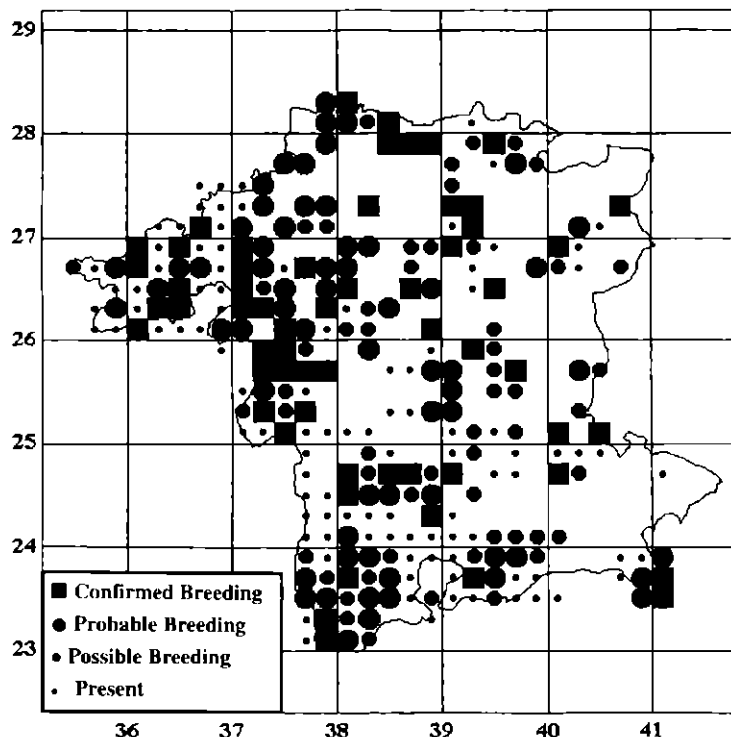


Figure 1 shows that Common Buzzards breed or probably breed in all but three 10 km<sup>2</sup> containing at least five tetrads, with confirmed or probable breeding taking place in 91 tetrads west of the SO900 line of longitude and 30 tetrads east of it.

### Discussion

What factors could be responsible for the resurgence in the Common Buzzard population in Worcestershire? The two most likely causes would seem to be a reduction in levels of persecution and an increase in the availability of a preferred food source.

Looking at persecution levels presents an immediate problem. Along with almost all other birds of prey, the Common Buzzard has been a protected species since 1954. Subsequent legislation has been implemented mainly through the *Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981*, which made it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take, or to attempt to kill injure or take, any wild bird, nest, or egg. The Common Buzzard does not, however, qualify for Schedule 1 of the Act, which would have given it even more protection.

Incidents of persecution against Common Buzzards, principally poisoning, have been monitored annually for many years and it is interesting to compare the three-year averages for the UK as a whole from 1975-89 with the average number of reports of poisoned Common Buzzards from 1995-97, (See table 3).

*Table 3: Incidents involving Common Buzzard deaths throughout the UK*

Years	Number
1975-77	27
1978-80	61
1981-83	50
1984-86	58
1987-89	44
1995-97	47

The average number of Common Buzzard deaths by persecution recorded in the UK as a whole between 1975 and 1989 was 48. The average for 1995-97 was thus almost identical, but since this figure should be taken against an increased population, it could in effect represent some decrease in levels of persecution. The figures unfortunately lump Herefordshire and Worcestershire together as one county, but, out of the above incidents, a total of 10 involved Hereford & Worcester. The point has been made that persecution levels appear higher at the periphery of the species' range in the UK (Elliott & Avery 1991) and it has thus been suggested that this has had the effect of slowing down the colonisation of new areas.

One difficulty with the data is that the number of reports of persecution is likely to represent a small, but unknown, fraction of the actual incidents taking place.

There can be little doubt that, in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, an active and unenlightened proliferation of gamekeepers kept the Common Buzzard population artificially low. The position in 1911, for example, was that Worcestershire had a higher proportion of gamekeepers per square mile than any other Midland county (Brown 1976) and, in Britain as a whole, 20,000 were employed. This number had fallen to around 5,000 by the early 1970s. Counterbalancing this to some extent has been persecution of predatory species considered to take gamebirds following a trebling, since 1961, of the number of hand-reared Common Pheasants in the UK (Elliott & Avery 1991).

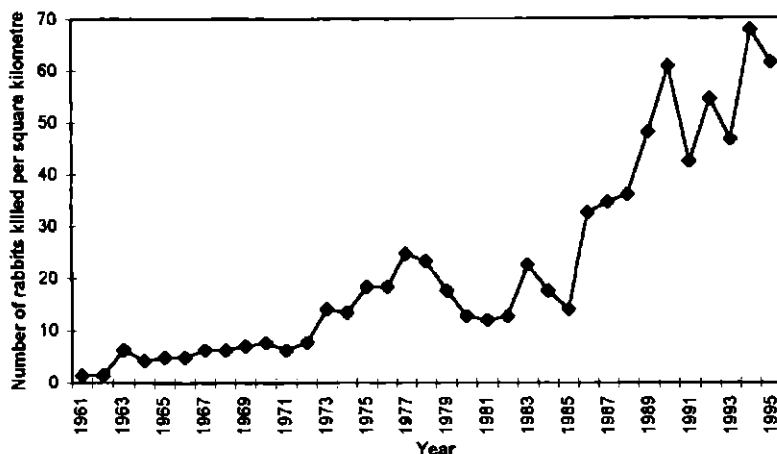
One can perhaps conclude that persecution was once a far more significant factor than it is today.

The second possibility concerns the question of whether there has been a change in the availability of any particular food supply. In the UK the Common Buzzard depends largely on rabbits, particularly during the breeding season. A study of Common Buzzards on Dartmoor from 1956-58, just after the outbreak of myxomatosis, found that the diet contained 345 mammals (120 rabbits and 134 voles), 73 birds, 15 reptiles and some amphibia (Brown 1976). Thus, in terms of body-weight, rabbits formed a very important part of the diet, even at a time of depleted rabbit stocks. Common Buzzards will, of course, also regularly take carrion (often dead rabbits) and even invertebrates.



On a local basis, there appears very little quantitative data which shows when, and to what extent, rabbit numbers started to increase after the problems surrounding myxomatosis subsided. However, a very revealing piece of information has come from figures in the West Country, which looks at the population of rabbits as indicated by the rabbit bags recorded in shoots (*per J Birks in lit*), (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: National Game Census data showing trends in rabbit numbers in the West of Britain, 1961 to 1995.



The graph shows the rabbit population exploding after 1985, which provides an interesting comparison with the evidence presented earlier based on reports in the WMBC's *Annual Bird Reports*. It is important to remember that Common Buzzards do not breed until they are at least three years old, so one would expect a delay of at least three years for more young birds to survive to sexual maturity before they started to form breeding territories of their own. An increase in rabbit availability, coupled with a lower level of persecution, should therefore have resulted in an increase in breeding pairs and perhaps a range expansion from the late 1980s.

The data available from the WMBC *Annual Bird Reports* during the late 1980s and early 1990s is unfortunately rather scanty, but suggests the increase in the number of sites from which Common Buzzards were reported may have gathered pace in the early 1990s.

If the expansion did happen after 1992, rather than around 1988, one possible reason for the delay might be found in the habit young Common Buzzards have of returning to the area in which they were hatched in order to breed. This mirrors the experience of ornithologists working on the reintroduction scheme for Red Kites *Milvus milvus*, where individuals are even more loyal to the natal area on reaching sexual maturity (I Carter *pers comm*). The result would be a slowing down of expansion into new areas. Eventually, however, sheer weight of numbers would drive the population to an eastward expansion of its range.

## Summary

In 1997 and 1998 a survey of Common Buzzard distribution in Worcestershire revealed that breeding was confirmed in 59 tetrads and was probable in a further 62. The Common Buzzard population is thus likely to be at the upper end of the range between 59 and 121 breeding pairs. This distribution is compared with the historical data and the possible reasons for the recent increase in the local population are discussed.

## Acknowledgements

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Richard Harbird

## Population trends in three south Staffordshire Mute Swan herds

### Introduction

This paper attempts to analyse data on Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* accrued between March 1994 and February 1997.

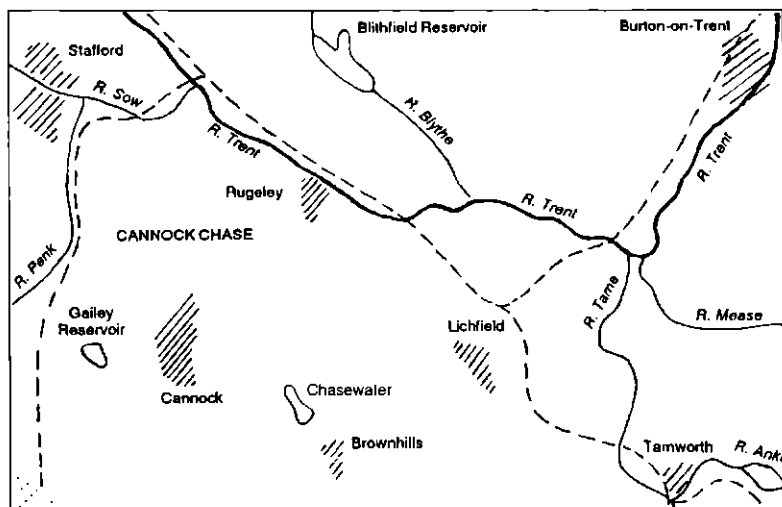
### Methodology

Monthly counts and Darvic ring sightings were taken on the first weekend in the month during the morning period. The age composition of the herds was also assessed in the field and later confirmed by reference to original ringing data.

### Results

Figure 1 shows the geographical location of the three sites in relation to local topography.

Figure 1: Geographical location of the three herds

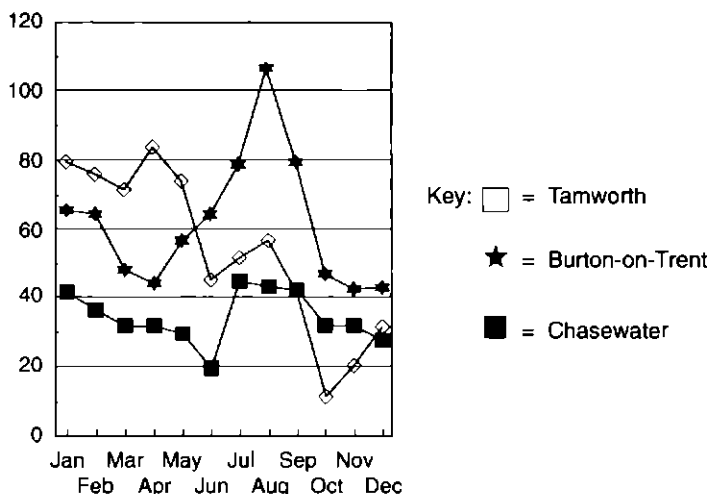


Average monthly totals for the Tamworth, Chasewater and Burton-on-Trent herds are given in Figure 2, while the average monthly age composition of each herd, based on juvenile and adult age categories, is given in Figure 3.

### Discussion

Changing population trends throughout the seasons are reflected in the peaks and troughs of the graphs and Figure 2 clearly shows the Chasewater herd as the more stable of the three.

*Figure 2: Total herd numbers for Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent and Chasewater*



This may be due to the fact that both Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent are situated on river systems which form major flyways for swans, whereas Chasewater is offset from these major flyways.

The Burton-on-Trent and Chasewater herds show a maximum population in late summer as moulting herds build, but the decline of the large Tamworth herd between January and May is not reflected in the pre-moult build up in June and July, indicating that a large number of Tamworth birds are moulting elsewhere.

All three herds show a reduction in population after the moult period as birds leave to explore other areas once they regain their power of flight.

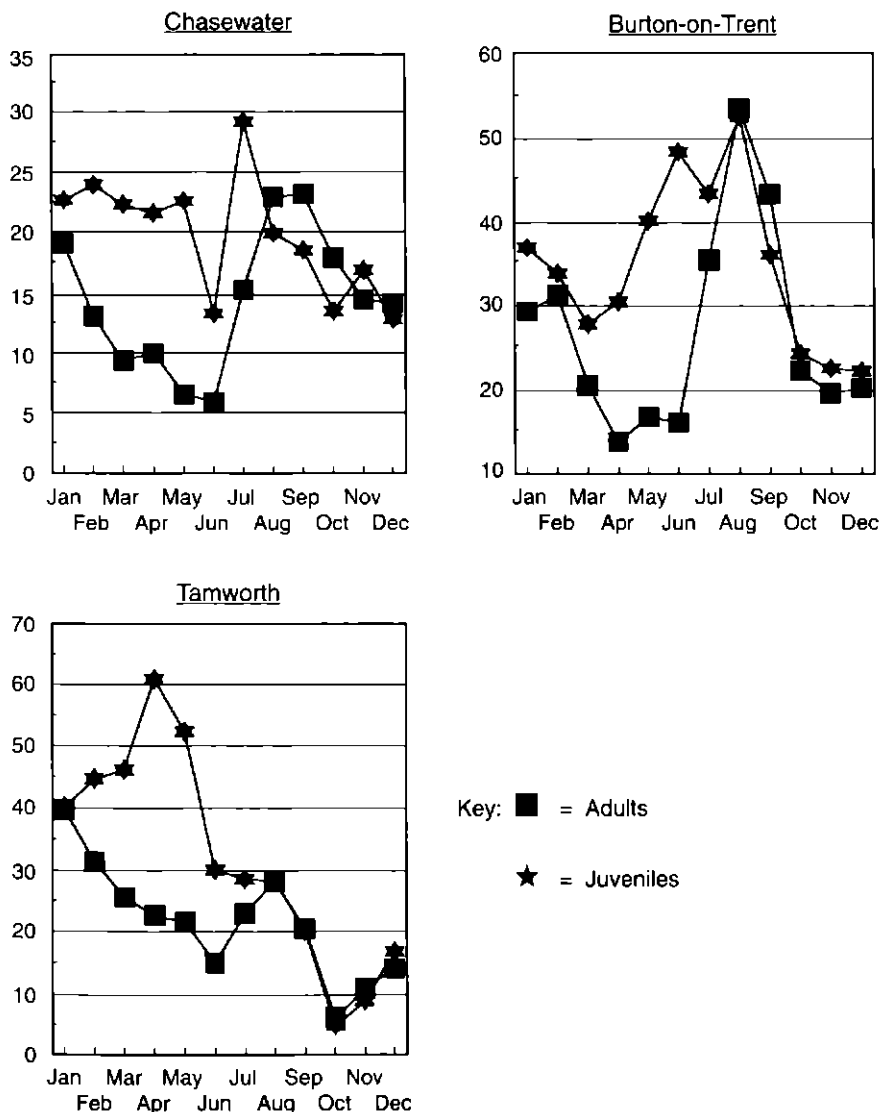
Winter numbers build up quickly between December and January as birds seek the security of herds during the rigours of winter. Winter feeding by members of the public may also encourage birds to enter herds during periods of food shortage.

Changes in the age composition of the herds are shown in Figure 3.

The movements of adults in all three herds reflect the movements described above. Numbers during the early part of the year decline as many of the birds pair in the herds and move out to explore the area for territories and nesting sites, others simply fly between herds or leave the area. The sharp increase in numbers between June and August is due to adults, including some non-breeding paired birds and failed breeders, returning to their moulting sites, while the subsequent decline in numbers after moult is due to birds dispersing along the river systems and between herds.

Movements of fledged cygnets into the wintering herds from their natal sites begins in October and continues throughout the winter and spring.

*Figure 3: Numbers of adult and juvenile birds for the Tamworth, Burton-on Trent and Chasewater herds*



The high Tamworth population during the winter and spring is due chiefly to the presence of these fledged cygnets and second-year juvenile birds. From April, the

number of young birds drops dramatically and it may be that large numbers of these birds actually move from Tamworth to moult elsewhere, thereby accounting for the small moulting herd at this venue. The Chasewater herd shows a decline in juvenile birds just prior to the moult build-up and it may be that these birds are making random movements prior to finally settling into the pre-moulting herd. Burton-on-Trent is unusual in that juvenile birds in the herd show two increases, one between October/November and January, and the other from March to May. The first increase may be due to birds fledged in the near vicinity entering the herd and the second may be birds from Derbyshire taking longer to enter the Trent Valley after fledging and travelling down the River Derwent.

Interestingly, Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent have their highest numbers at different times of the year: Tamworth in early April, after large numbers of fledged cygnets and second-year birds enter the herd, while maximum numbers at Burton-on-Trent are a result of an influx of both adults and juveniles which undoubtedly come from Derbyshire and other points along the Trent flyway. All three herds show a dispersal of juvenile birds after moulting.

A. E. Coleman  
J. T. Coleman  
T. Clifton



*Mute Swans (Terry Parker)*

## Systematic List

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.*

Numbers continue to decline from the 1984-88 peak. No records this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	6	10	30	19	14

**1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** An adult remained at Chasewater from February 25th-March 23rd and was joined by a second bird on March 22nd-23rd *GE*.

**1997 Corrigendum**

**Staffs** The bird at Gailey was first seen on February 1st *KMC*.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica**Rare winter visitor (5/10).*

Numbers have increased from the slump of 1989-93 and the annual average is now two, though there were none this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	5	16	6	2	10

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

The long-term trend continues to fluctuate.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	12	12	5	18	12

**Warks** The three immatures from December 1997 remained into the new year, with the bird at Dosthill staying to at least January 11th *SMH et al*, and the two at Draycote until February 16th *many obs*. In the autumn, three more immatures arrived at Draycote on October 31st *REH, MJI, DJS* and were then seen by many observers into 1999, being joined by a fourth bird from December 11th *JFCJ et al*.

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

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Charlecote GP	-	12	16	8	8	8	8	5	-	6	4	4
Coton	11	11	8	-	-	-	-	6	4	12	8	12
Dosthill/Kingsbury	10	8	12	3	6	4	-	1	12	12	11	6
Draycote	-	-	8	1	-	2	2	5	17	16	16	4
Ladywalk	6	8	14	10	10	12	-	-	-	5	15	6
Bishampton Vale P	8	6	11	8	10	12	12	20	24	14	10	7
Kinsham	-	1	3	-	4	2	8	4	-	4	6	2
Pirton	-	-	-	2	4	6	2	14	18	7	9	8
Upton Warren	1	2	6	6	6	6	10	13	20	8	4	1
Barton	15	17	11	3	6	2	6	31	47	28	12	11
Belvide	0	0	3	5	3	5	7	9	12	3	2	-
Branston	2	2	1	2	-	8	7	2	21	-	-	-
Brookleys	-	4	6	-	2	-	-	3	-	4	4	8
Chasewater	3	0	4	3	2	1	3	4	4	7	1	2
Croxall	4	2	5	3	-	2	2	12	14	14	4	3
Gailey	-	5	-	-	-	4	4	4	10	-	6	4



- Warks** Bred successfully at Abbots Salford, Draycote (possibly for the first time), Ladywalk (five, but only two young reared), Lighthorne Pools, Packington Park (at least four of the six pairs present), Stoneton Moat (four, rearing at least 12 young) and Ufton Fields. Pairs were suspected of breeding at Alvecote, Charlecote GP (four, but no young seen), Dosthill (two), Lower Radbourne (two) and Ryton Pools CP (four), with odd birds at several other sites in the spring and summer. Fewer than usual were at Dosthill in the autumn, but more appeared at Draycote.
- Worcs** Bred at Bishampton Vale Pool (six pairs), Grimley (two pairs), Kinsham, Stockingmill Pool and Upton Warren (three pairs). Small numbers were at Beckford, Bittell, Bredons Hardwick, Feckenham, Hindlip Pool, Langdale Wood Pool, Lower Moor, Oakley, Ryall, Strensham, Westwood and Wilden.
- Staffs** Breeding was confirmed at only five sites, including Doxey, where one pair fledged two young. The 1997 breeding at Chasewater was not repeated this year. The post-breeding concentration in the Trent Valley was again evident, with 47 at Barton GP during September the most recorded in the county for at least two decades. Further reported from 26 untabulated sites.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from the Bilston/Coseley area (two or three pairs along the Birmingham Canal), Bumble Hole, Edgbaston Pool (three pairs), Fens Pools, Langley (Titford Canal), Marsh Lane GPs, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (two pairs), Tudor Grange Park and Valley Park (Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal). Also present on the Dudley Canal beneath Netherton Hill, but almost certainly unsuccessful, and noted outside the breeding season at Park Lime Pits. The larger concentrations were 12 at Sheepwash UP in June and 14 at Marsh Lane GPs in September.

### **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	16	15	11	—	4	5	—	—	—	4	11	7
Colan	16	10	15	15	22	20	37	24	25	29	18	15
Dosthill/Kingsbury	20	15	9	13	8	6	22	24	37	65	29	42
Draycote	105	70	75	14	18	14	15	20	65	75	133	110
Shustoke	47	15	52	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	22	2
Bittell	45	51	24	15	16	13	9	15	14	17	50	75
Bredons Hardwick	—	5	3	—	4	2	—	5	1	6	—	1
Kinsham	—	—	2	2	1	—	—	2	1	2	7	3
Lower Moor	5	5	5	5	4	4	6	6	3	—	5	3
Upton Warren	2	5	12	11	5	8	3	5	2	2	3	2
Westwood	1	2	4	—	8	6	4	—	—	—	2	2
Aqualate	7	11	20	31	28	28	19	15	18	—	2	0
Barton	11	8	20	17	21	25	29	19	22	16	11	21
Belvide	43	31	8	10	28	24	30	31	33	53	65	23
Blithfield	20	44	27	38	80	32	47	198	191	146	97	61
Chasewater	20	11	16	28	28	29	21	32	27	38	74	74
Chillington	18	18	18	20	8	14	14	16	14	—	—	—
JCB Pools, Rocester	3	—	—	8	6	19	17	22	15	—	9	—
Kings Bromley	27	12	47	21	19	18	27	26	19	18	31	23
Westport	22	14	13	9	5	3	3	9	9	15	15	9

- Warks** Successful breeding pairs were noted at Abbots Salford, Alvecote (two), Brandon (five), Compton Verney, Coombe (five), Draycote, Farnborough

Park, Kingsbury WP (two), Lower Radbourn, Packington Park (at least four of six present), Stockton Res, Temple Pool (Upton) and Walton Hall. It was a poor year on some waters with all the young perishing from nests at Ladywalk (two), Napton Res and Wormleighton Res, while the pools at Chesterton (formerly a stronghold) were abandoned during the early summer, possibly due to mink predation. Away from tabulated sites, 15 at Napton Res on February 23rd was a good total for such a small water.

**Worcs** Bred at Bittell (five pairs), Grimley, Holt, Kinsham (two pairs), Kyre Pool, Lower Moor (three pairs), Tardebigge, Upton Warren, Westwood and Witley Court. The count of 75 at Bittell on December 6th *REH* was a new county record. Away from the tabulated sites, there were 10 at Hewell Grange on February 15th and single figure counts at a further 12 localities.

**Staffs** Breeding confirmed at 11 sites, with three pairs at Doxey CBC as in 1997. High water levels at Blithfield resulted in the best year for some time, with at least eight broods and possibly up to 12 pairs present. At Belvide, two pairs reared broods of three and two, but at Westport the two pairs which attempted to breed both failed. Outside the breeding season, Blithfield continues as the county's only nationally important site (*i.e.* one regularly holding over 100 birds): during January-March the maximum count of 44 was lower than in recent years, but the post-breeding maximum of 198 was well above average, perhaps reflecting the good breeding season. Up to 15 were recorded throughout the year at Branston, Copmere, Croxall, Elford/Fisherwick and North Pit and Tittesworth, whilst wintering birds were reported from a further eight sites.

**W Mid** Breeding was noted, with varying degrees of success, at Brookvale Park, Clayhanger, Edgbaston Pool (two pairs), Edgbaston Res, Fens Pools (three pairs), Marsh Lane GPs, Mary Stevens Park, Netherton Res, Sandwell Valley (up to four pairs), Sheepwash UP (two pairs: one failed due to vandalism), Stubbers Green (two pairs), Sutton Park, Titford Pool, Walsall Arboretum and Witton Lakes. The highest counts were 20 at Edgbaston Res in February and 18 in Sandwell Valley during April and December. Further reported from Bartley Res, Bumble Hole and Small Heath Park.

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

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

After the slump of 1989-93, the latest five-yearly total was the highest ever.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	5	30	30	19	35

**Warks** A juvenile was at Draycote from September 18th-23rd *PDH, REH, DJS et al*, and a first-winter at Shustoke on November 21st *SMH*.

**Staffs** An adult in breeding plumage remained at Chasewater from March 24th-26th *GE*. At Belvide, a first-winter bird on November 22nd *SN* was followed by an adult on December 21st *SN*.

### **1996 Addendum and Corrigendum**

**Staffs** The Chasewater entry should have been: one from January 30th-February 2nd *GE*, an adult and a first-winter from 21st-28th, with the adult staying until March 7th *GE*.

**1997 Corrigendum**

**Staffs** The first-winter bird at Chasewater from November 8th-9th remained until 12th GE.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

The past five years were the best ever, with an average of nearly six a year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	14	13	24	15	28

**Warks** The bird at Draycote in December 1997 remained until February 15th *many obs.* Another appeared there on November 6th and was joined by three more on 22nd, with two of these four present until the end of the year *JJB, PDH, JFCJ et al.*

**Worcs** One was at Bittell from November 18th-19th *GHP et al.*

**Staffs** A winter plumaged bird was at Blithfield from January 26th-February 13th *ESC et al* and a first-year at Chasewater from February 21st-April 1st *ICW, MY et al.*

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

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

Coincident with the expanding British breeding population, numbers have increased dramatically from the 1974-78 trough.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	11	22	43	54	81

**Warks** An excellent year, with unusually more in autumn than spring, when the only records were of three adults at Dosthill on May 17th *per SMH* and one on 21st *SMH* and 23rd *REH, SMH, DJS*. Return passage brought one to Draycote on August 12th-13th and then two or three from September 6th-25th. Only one bird was then reported until October 22nd, when again a second bird appeared, with both staying to November 8th and one to 13th *JJB, AC, PDH, JFCJ et al.* At Coton, there was one from September 19th, increasing to two on 24th and three on 27th and October 4th, with two staying to 17th and one until 25th *SMH, BLK et al.* Perhaps one of these was the bird that visited Shustoke on October 11th *SMH, BLK*. At both of these sites a Slavonian Grebe was also reported during September, but at least at Draycote the sightings seemed to be of a rather confusingly plumaged Black-necked Grebe with a straighter-than-average bill.

**Worcs** A summer plumaged adult on floodwater at Upton-on-Severn from April 11th-16th *GHP et al*, was a rather unexpected find. More typical was the run of autumn juveniles at Westwood, with singles from August 15th-21st *SMW et al*, August 31st-September 1st *TMH et al*, and September 4th-10th *SMW et al*.

**Staffs** Birds in breeding plumage were recorded at Westport (two) from April 10th-11th *WJL et al*, Chasewater (one) on April 22nd *GE, NS* and Blithfield (two) on July 8th *ESC*. Records of a winter-plumaged bird at Blithfield on August 31st *ESC, PDH* and September 11th *ESC* and 27th *ESC, WJL, PDH* possibly involved just one individual.

**1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** The bird at Gailey on April 14th was also present on 13th and one was at Belvide on May 9th *KMC*.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

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

**Warks** A bird picked up in the extreme north at No Man's Heath sometime in early September was taken into care at RSPB Sandwell Valley and subsequently released on the coast *per PMH*.

**Shearwater sp.**

**Warks** One flying east over Hartshill on September 9th *TL* was probably a Manx Shearwater, but the description received did not rule out other species.

**European Storm-petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

*Rare, mainly storm-driven autumn vagrant (2/10)*

**1983 Addendum**

**Warks** A bird found dead at Draycote on October 15th is now in the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery, Coventry, *per SL*. This was the sixth county record within the current boundaries, and the most recent.

**Northern Gannet (Gannet)** *Morus bassanus*

*Scarce passage migrant and storm-driven vagrant.*

For a vagrant species, the five-yearly averages are incredibly consistent. There were none this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	5	5	6	5	6

**Great Cormorant (Cormorant)** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon breeding species.*

Monthly maxima at main sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	75	35	42	2	3	1	1	3	10	30	20	50
Kingsbury area	78	37	—	16	18	—	40	—	23	53	78	—
Ladywalk	132	132	58	—	—	—	—	—	150	148	135	—
Blithfield	7	1	2	1	2	—	—	1	5	3	6	5
Bredons Hardwick	—	45	25	25	4	2	26	12	23	45	9	25
Lower Moor	17	8	5	3	1	1	2	6	10	8	9	9
Pirton	1	4	1	—	—	—	1	4	5	2	3	1
Upton Warren	6	10	5	8	3	1	4	5	2	17	4	3
Westwood	60	65	67	21	3	1	4	6	11	21	60	81
Aqualate	14	43	23	21	19	12	8	27	46	39	46	85
Barton GP	15	12	5	18	7	7	22	10	19	11	2	62
Belvide	16	8	24	3	—	2	14	21	13	9	53	107
Blithfield	9	10	17	12	6	8	16	66	92	65	70	72
Bransdon	19	25	8	—	—	—	10	3	10	3	23	44
Chasewater	56	11	12	5	1	0	0	4	26	62	144	129
Croxall	44	18	2	14	—	12	16	25	27	25	26	35
Elford North Pit	14	10	8	1	—	—	1	2	48	14	7	8
Kings Bromley	25	33	32	17	4	8	16	17	49	37	40	30
Marsh Lane GP	3	10	35	21	4	—	3	—	—	—	—	10
Sandwell Valley	2	—	1	5	—	—	1	1	2	2	1	—

- Warks** Following reports of the first nests in the Tame Valley last year, eight pairs reared at least two young each in the heronry at Coombe *JJB*. Two nests were again reported from Kingsbury *WP BLK*, while a nest was built in an alder at Ladywalk *SLC*, though in both cases the outcome was not reported. No winter counts came from the large Coombe roost again this year, but the Ladywalk roost continued to grow and probably now holds most of the birds using the Tame Valley. Draycote again attracted dwindling numbers. Small numbers continued to visit most larger waters throughout the county, often regularly, and it is now regular along much of the R. Avon. A roost of 15 was reported from Abbots Salford Pool on February 22nd.
- Worcs** Reported in small numbers throughout the county, mainly in autumn and winter. The smaller sites generally held fewer than half a dozen, but there were eight at Bushley and six at Tardebigge on February 1st, six over Broadway on October 6th and six at Strensham on December 13th.
- Staffs** Bred at Aqualate, where there were seven nests. The January/February numbers at Blithfield were much lower than last year's unusually high level. In the second winter period, numbers everywhere appeared similar to those of recent years, although 144 at Chasewater on November 7th was again a site record. The only roost count was 85 at Aqualate on December 2nd. Up to 15 were also reported from a further 21 untabulated sites. Birds believed to be of the continental race *sinensis* were noted at Belvide on January 2nd and March 1st (four), Chasewater on 7th and on R. Dove (Tutbury area) on March 9th and again on December 6th, 27th and 28th.
- W Mid** Recorded throughout the year, mostly between January-April and August-December, with maxima of 11 at Fens Pools on November 28th and six at Sheepwash UP on August 10th. Smaller numbers, usually ones and twos flying over or staying only briefly, were reported at Bartley Res, Clayhanger, Dunstall Park/Valley Park, Earlswood (Norton Lane), Edgbaston Res, Netherton Hill and Res, Park Lime Pits, Saltwells LNR and Stubbers Green.

### **Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

*A scarce visitor in all months, with occasional autumn and winter influxes. After the 'wrecks' of 1992 and 1993, a return to more typical numbers.*

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	30	22	16	59	19
No. of birds	53	39	19	119	22

- Warks** Single immatures were at Draycote on September 15th *JJB* and from 19th-25th *PDH, MJI et al.* Possibly only one bird was involved.
- Staffs** The only report was an immature at Branston WP on November 4th *ESC*.
- W Mid** An immature was at Sheepwash UP on October 31st *DW*.

### **Great Bittern** (Bittern) *Botaurus stellaris*

*Scarce winter visitor. Rare in summer.*

A welcome increase, with the current average of five a year the highest ever. Seventeen of the 1994-98 birds have occurred in the last two years.



*Great Bittern (Terry Parker)*

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	10	12	22	17	26

**Warks** Ladywalk continues to be the premier site, with at least two from January 1st-March 7th and three on January 18th and from February 14th-21st *SLC*, *BLK et al*. The latter observer noted display on several visits and suspected on plumage differences that four individuals were present in February. After an early bird here on September 10th *JVH*, *WEO* and 11th *BLK*, there was one on October 23rd *BLK*, at least one in November increasing to four on December 6th *SLC et al*, and then up to three on various dates to the end of the year *SLC*, *BLK et al*. Elsewhere, one was flushed at Brandon on October 4th *BMCG* and another circled a new pool at Priors Marston one evening about December 15th *DN*.

**Staffs** One remained at Belvide from October 27th-November 6th *SN et al*.

**1985 Addendum**

**Warks** A bird found dead by the canal at All Oaks Lane (Brinklow) on March 9th is now in the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery in Coventry *per SL*.

**1997 Addenda**

**Warks** The bird at Brandon in November was first seen there on 14th *BMCG*.

**Staffs** One at Chasewater on February 7th was almost certainly that seen in January *GE*.

**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax**Rare vagrant, mainly in spring (3/10).*

- Warks** An adult roosted in willows at a small pond on private land at Calcutt from April 10th-16th *DEB, JW*. This was the fourth county record, with the last at Kingsbury in May 1995, apart from a probable escape at the same place in October-November 1996, which is not included in the total.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta**A rare, though increasing visitor, mainly in spring and summer (7/10).*

- In an unprecedented late summer influx affecting all four counties, 14-17 individuals arrived between July 28th-August 17th.
- Warks** A small invasion produced one at Draycote on July 30th *MFO*, two at Napton Res from August 13th-17th *JJB et al*, one at Brandon on 15th *BMCG*, two at Alvecote on 17th and 20th *MWP, AW* and one in Packington Park on September 25th-26th *per NPB*.
- Worcs** One was at Bredons Hardwick from August 12th-17th *SJH, TMH, RAP, SMW et al*. Other reports of birds at Kinsham and Strensham were not substantiated by written descriptions.
- Staffs** An adult at Blithfield on July 28th flew off north *ESC, RJJ, GNJ*. Two adults at Belvide on August 13th were seen displaying to one another *FCG*.
- W Mid** Seven were found at Marsh Lane GPs on August 12th *SMH*, with six present early the following day *NPB* reducing to two later in the day: these remained until 15th *NPB, BLK*, with one staying until 22nd at least *NPB, BLK*. What may have been one of the original seven was then present at the same locality from September 17th-27th at least *PFA, NPB, PAH*. This is easily the largest flock recorded in the Region and the third consecutive year that birds have been at this site.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea**Fairly common resident.*

- Warks** Little information on heronries apart from 55 nests at Coombe and possibly only one in Chesterton Wood, both slightly down from last year. The larger counts were 23 at Ladywalk on February 15th, 17 at Brandon on August 8th and 14 at Draycote on October 9th. An aberrant bird with a wholly black head and neck was reported from Brandon on March 15th.
- Worcs** At least two pairs bred at Bittell, 34 pairs at Grimley, one pair at Hewell Grange and 36 pairs near Severn Stoke. Elsewhere, the larger parties were nine at Lower Moor on February 7th and eight at Upton Warren on June 20th. One landed briefly on the roof of a house at Wyre Piddle on May 5th.
- Staffs** The breeding population in the county remains healthy, with 368-383 nests. Nest counts were as follows:  
Aqualate 58, Bagots Wood 92, Castle Mere 10-12, Checkhill Mill six, Churnet Valley three or four, Enville Park 17, Ford Hall one, Gailey Lower Res 45-55, Hazelstrine 17, Longsdon Wood 18-20, Pendeford Mill NR 32, near Tamworth 43 and Trentham Gardens 26. Despite the large number of nests, many colonies experienced high mortality amongst unfledged young due to the April snow and cold snap. Widely reported throughout the county, the larger

gatherings away from heronries being 13 at Croxall in February, 18 at Blithfield in March, seven at Tittesworth in May, 13 at Belvide in November and, in December, 13 at Barton, 11 at Kings Bromley and eight at Chasewater.



*Great Bittern (Phil Jones)*

**W Mid** The small heronry in Sandwell Valley continues to grow slowly, with at least three nests (*cf.* two in 1997) from which 12 young fledged. Also bred at Berkswell, but no counts were received. Good numbers were present throughout the year in Sandwell Valley (max. 20 in June) and Sheepwash UP (max. 12 in August). Reported from a further nine sites, with maxima of five at Park Lime Pits and Valley Park.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

*Very rare vagrant (5/10).*

**Worcs** One was seen from the M5 as it drifted slowly north from Bredons Hardwick on June 15th HT, with presumably the same over Droitwich on 18th SJD.

**Staffs** One found circling low over Chillington on April 28th was watched for half-an-hour SN. As it gained height, it was mobbed by a male Hen Harrier.

**1996 Addendum**

**Warks** Following partial reading of the ring by JFCJ *et al*, the bird which roosted overnight at Leamington Hastings on April 20th-21st is now known to have originated from a Dutch ringing scheme. It was one of two found first at Holkham (Norfolk) on April 16th, then seen on the Ouse Washes from 18th-20th and tracked across Northants during the early afternoon of 20th.



**Eurasian Spoonbill (Spoonbill) *Platalea leucorodia****Rare summer visitor (6/10).*

Allowing for a party of four in 1996, numbers remain fairly consistent.

No. of birds	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
	5	9	7	5	9

**Staffs** One was at Belvide for half-an-hour on August 21st SN.**Mute Swan *Ocygnus olor****Fairly common and increasing resident.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	8	8	25	56	67	-	-	-	51	60	70	18
Coton	31	41	34	26	50	77	141	135	62	46	21	42
Draycote	14	3	2	5	14	68	98	116	44	35	15	4
Kingsbury	8	13	4	10	17	10	31	14	14	37	28	24
Ladywalk	23	40	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	5
Pirton	3	2	2	2	4	2	6	4	14	18	31	32
Upton Warren	2	2	2	7	9	7	8	6	7	2	6	5
Westwood	4	-	11	-	15	6	6	10	9	3	2	2
Aqualate	2	0	1	1	11	11	2	3	3	28	9	64
Barton	107	35	65	9	18	48	45	37	45	34	85	21
Belvide	7	5	2	8	23	42	51	52	52	-	10	9
Blithfield	4	6	12	30	74	129	170	133	116	113	6	4
Chasewater	57	52	56	61	60	73	92	87	89	88	59	55
Croxall	10	25	7	103	-	49	62	42	39	7	8	2
Elford GP	160	227	126	9	5	63	78	25	6	12	157	282
Hill Riddware	8	16	1	2	30	8	12	13	13	1	60	49
Tamworth	102	25	46	42	45	37	53	34	48	37	-	55
Westport	20	35	29	44	45	48	55	58	52	36	25	35
Whitemoor Haye	124	250	282	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	251	-
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	20	23	-	-	-	13	15	-	25	15
Netherton Reservoir	4	4	10	10	7	13	13	13	13	5	11	11
Sandwell Valley	9	11	12	12	15	15	7	6	8	-	-	-
Sheepwash UP	5	8	9	4	8	6	4	2	6	4	2	9

**Warks** Bred successfully at Alvecote, Brandon, Coombe (two pairs), Draycote, Lighthorne, Long Itchington, Lower Radbourn, Ryton Pools CP, Stoneton Moat, Temple Pool and Wormleighton Res. Unsuccessful breeding, or complete absence, was noted at a number of regular sites in central and southern districts. In addition to tabulated sites, up to 76 were at Shustoke in January, but with very few there for the rest of the year. Again there was no count from the major concentration on the R. Avon at Stratford, where well over 100 are now present for much of the year.

**Worcs** Bred at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bushley, Croome Court, Eckington, Grimley, Kemerton, Kinsham, Lower Moor, Pirton, Porters Mill, Tibberton, Upton Warren, Westwood and along the Worcester Canal. Small numbers were at many sites, with maxima of 28 at Bredons Hardwick on February 10th and 20 at Kyre Pool on December 20th.

**Staffs** Bred at Aqualate, Belvide (three pairs), Brookleys Lake, Chasewater (eight nesting attempts), Doxey (four pairs as in 1997), Kettlebrook Lake (two broods) and Westport, while single pairs were at Betley and Woodmill during the breeding season. Counts of 282, at Whitemoor Haye in March and Elford in December, were county records: the Elford count having increased almost fourfold since 1993. Other notable counts were 80 on the river at Burton on

December 31st, 36 at Fisherwick in April and Kings Bromley in May, 25 at Needwood on November 19th and 20 on fields north of Blithfield in February. Less than 20 were seen throughout most of the year at Borrowpit, Branstons, Gailey, Kettlebrook and Tittesworth.

**W Mid** Breeding pairs were noted at Bilston (Bradley Arm Canal), Bumble Hole, Clayhanger, Fens Pools, Fowler's Park, Grapes Pool, Ladymoor Pool, Nether-ton Hill (Dudley Canal), Netherton Res, Perry Barr Park, Perry Hall Park, Redhouse Park, Sandwell Valley (three pairs), Sheepwash UP, Stubbers Green, Sutton Park and six further localities in the Black Country. Also attempted to breed at Park Lime Pits and present in the breeding season at Titford Pool. Regularly recorded at Edgbaston Res throughout the year (max. nine in April), and reasonably regularly in the Dunstall Park/Valley Park areas, while 22 in October was the peak count in Sandwell Valley.

**Tundra Swan** (Bewick's Swan) *Cygnus columbianus*  
Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently declining.

*Average: October 24th (9)–March 27th (9)*

The last in spring were at Blithfield on March 21st and the first in autumn at Dosthill on November 6th.

**Warks** A poor year. In January, nine were at Brandon on 18th, with 13 flying east there on 22nd, and seven were at Dosthill on 25th. The only record from Draycote was a good-sized flock of 31 on February 17th. A party of 23 was at Dosthill on November 6th, with four more there briefly on 23rd.

**Worcs** Seven appeared on floodwater at Longdon Marsh on January 10th, increasing to eight from 11th–15th. A flock of 13 flew north over Kempsey Lower Ham on January 26th and two were at Ripple the same day. A good run at Bredons Hardwick began with two on February 3rd, increasing to four on 4th, 14 on 5th and 26 from 6th–7th, then declining to 20 from 8th–10th and finally four on 23rd. The second winter period brought five to Longdon Marsh on November 7th and six south over Grimley on 21st, with the same six, which included four immatures, at Bredons Hardwick from 22nd–27th. The same site then had seven on 29th and two from December 7th–9th.

**Staffs** Few records were received and no large flocks were reported. In the first winter period, four were at Ford Green on an unspecified date in January, two adults and two immatures briefly visited Belvide on 25th and three were at Blithfield on March 21st. In the second winter period, four were at Belvide on November 23rd, a juvenile was caught and ringed at Chasewater on 21st as it associated with Mute Swans and a juvenile remained at Whitemoor Haye from 29th until the end of the year.

**W Mid** Three were at Fens Pools on January 26th, but flew out to the north-east.

#### **1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** Seven adults and an immature were at Gailey on January 6th, with five adults there on December 28th.

#### **1997 Addendum and Corrigendum**

**Staffs** On January 18th, a third immature was with the two adults and two immatures at Belvide, while two adults and three immatures were at Gailey on February 1st.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

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

Following the demise of the small, but regular, wintering herd in north Staffs, numbers have declined slightly.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	36	29	30	28	28
No. of birds	104	110	79	131	100

**Warks** Four adults were at Coton until dusk on December 29th *SMH*.

**Worcs** Three adults, which spent several hours at Upton Warren on December 30th *PRC, SC, REH, SMW et al*, included one which had been colour-ringed in Iceland in 1994. It had been present at Welney in Norfolk in November 1998 and turned up again, with its two companions, at Ashleworth Ham in Gloucestershire a few weeks after leaving Upton Warren.

**Staffs** The two adults at Whitemoor Haye from 1997 remained until January 28th *DJA*. The largest flock was of ten adults at Kingswood on January 24th *AC*. At Blithfield, three adults on fields north of Blythe Bay on February 4th were joined by a fourth on 6th, with the group remaining until March 15th *ESC et al*. Two adults, thought to be the 1997/98 over-wintering birds, were at Alrewas on November 1st *MC, ICW*; they then moved to Whitemoor Haye from November 6th-22nd *DJA, ESC, ICW*.

**W Mid** An adult at Sheepwash UP on July 19th *DW* was undoubtedly a feral bird.

**1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** The two adults at Catholme on April 5th were still present the next day *KMC*.

**1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Four adults at Chasewater on January 1st were followed by a single adult on December 22nd and 23rd *GE*.

**Wild Swans**

**Worcs** Two flew north over Barnards Green on December 21st.

**Whooper x Mute Swan**

**Warks** Singles were at Coton on January 31st and on Abbey Fields from at least April 26th to the end of the year.

**W Mid** The three hybrids were seen intermittently in the Marsh Lane GPs area throughout the year.

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

*Rare winter visitor (6/10)*

**Worcs** Two, with White-fronted Geese, at Bredons Hardwick on December 4th and 6th *SMW et al* were followed by a further five from 24th-31st *SJH SMW et al*. The same flock also visited the Severn Valley near Mythe Bridge on December 27th *SMW*. These were only the fifth and sixth county records and were all of the race *rossicus*, sometimes called Tundra Bean Goose.

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

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

The huge increase in the five-yearly totals since 1974-78 can be attributed to movement between the growing populations in Lancashire and Norfolk. The 1994-98 total is distorted by an exceptional passage of c 2,500 over Stoke in 1996.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	10	44	34	60	36
No. of birds	35	1188	2209	2111	3910

**Warks** The feral bird at Brandon from December 1997 (see below) was seen there intermittently with Canada Geese until June 15th. Presumably the same bird was at Coombe on March 14th.

**Worcs** Probable feral birds were at Westwood on February 15th and with Greylag Geese from September 29th-December 31st, Bittell on February 22nd and Pirton on September 1st. Definitely wild, however, was a flock of 26 at Wilden from October 12th-13th, when they departed to the west shortly after dawn *SMW et al.* More difficult to categorise was one at Grimley from December 5th to the end of the year.

**Staffs** The only large movement noted was two flocks totalling 280 birds, which flew south-east over Tittesworth on November 15th *AGJ*. Three were at Elford North Pit on January 17th *DJA*. Singles at Longsdon Mill Pool from March 1st-15th *NC* and Whitemoor Haye from November 29th-December 19th *DJA* were possibly feral birds.

**W Mid** One at Sheepwash UP with a flock of Greylag Geese on February 24th *IC* was of unknown origin.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One or two feral birds were at Brandon from April 8th-June 12th, with one again in December.

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

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Also scarce feral visitor. A better showing after the decline during 1989-93.*

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	32	48	49	51	49
No. of birds	398	442	444	231	353

**Warks** A single bird at Dosthill on January 10th *SMH* was the only record.

**Worcs** A party of four, including a juvenile, flew south over Grimley on January 1st *REH* and 15 flew south-west over Lower Moor on January 6th *RAP*. A flock of 28 was at Bredons Hardwick on December 4th, with 27 of them present again on 6th *REH*, *TMH*, *SJH*, *RAP*, *SMW et al* and another four there, including two juveniles, on 31st *RAP et al*.

**Staffs** One at Elford North Pit on September 17th *DJA* was considered to be probably feral due to the early date. The only other record was one at Tittesworth on December 4th *SG*, *JO*.

*Grey geese sp. Anser sp.*

- Warks** Three geese, thought to be probably Pinkfeet, flew along the river at Ladywalk on February 19th.
- Staffs** 48 flying south-west over Stapenhill on January 13th were thought almost certainly to be Pink-footed Geese *DJA*.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

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

- Warks** Broods were reported from Brandon (where six nests failed due to the Easter floods), Coombe, Dosthill and Kingsbury WP (two). The Tame Valley stronghold produced a record count of 300 at Dosthill on September 27th, while other maxima included 100 over Ladywalk and 80 over Shustoke in January, 113 at Brandon on 9th, 90 at Packington Park on February 3rd, 91 at Coombe on March 14th and 91 at Seeswood Pool on October 11th. In the south, small numbers were noted at Draycote, Farnborough Park, Great Alne, Napton Res, Stratford-upon-Avon and Wormleighton Res.
- Worcs** Recorded regularly at Bredons Hardwick from January-early May, with a peak of nine on April 2nd. Bittell had two on February 14th and a flock of 12 on 22nd: the latter party having also been at Westwood on 15th. In spring and summer, small numbers were at Kempsey Lower Ham, Kinsham, Lower Moor, Naunton Beauchamp, Norton Pool, Pirton and Upton Warren. Far fewer in autumn, but a flock of 16 at Westwood from September 29th-October 12th was a locality record.
- Staffs** Bred at Byrkley Park, where nine goslings fledged. A flock of 41 at Westport on December 12th was most unusual and was considered (along with most of the other Westport sightings) to have come from the free-flying flock at Trentham Gardens. Flock maxima at other sites were 42 at Blithfield in October, 39 at Byrkley Park in January, 35 at Kings Bromley in November and 32 at Branston in January and August. Smaller numbers were also noted at Barton, Belvide, Chillington, Croxall and Rugeley Power Station.
- W Mid** Up to seven adults were at Sandwell Valley in April and breeding was again attempted, but the two goslings quickly succumbed. Regularly recorded at Marsh Lane GPs, with impressive peak counts of 60 in October and 130 in December. Eleven very wary birds, plus a single Pink-footed Goose, dropped into Sheepwash UP on February 24th, with further birds noted on April 5th and 19th (four). Ones and twos were also reported from Bartley, Dunstall Park, Fens Pools, Netherton Res and Stubbers Green.

**1997 Addendum**

- Warks** The maximum at Brandon was 67 on December 31st.

*Greylag X Canada*

- Worcs** One at Pirton from February 14th-September 11th later moved to Lower Moor, where it stayed from October 11th-15th.
- Staffs** A hybrid was in a flock of Canada Geese at Belvide on September 25th.

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens**Scarce feral visitor.***Worcs** One was at Lower Moor on August 31st and from September 20th-21st.**W.Mid** One was on Stoke Floods on October 23rd.**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	191	32	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	307	200
Brandon	88	102	108	114	107	100	101	300	422	350	25	221
Chesterton	85	200	20	25	-	-	-	77	-	26	1	17
Draycole	85	35	40	25	20	-	4	445	120	84	132	120
Kingsbury	386	200	92	236	84	157	593	515	370	453	433	430
Bittell	2	26	46	18	8	22	28	237	321	31	1	64
Lower Moor	150	85	35	21	18	7	56	85	375	200	160	8
Pirton	52	127	106	108	117	475	376	326	380	62	35	54
Upton Warren	54	90	60	47	36	45	61	366	357	5	75	8
Westwood	25	15	15	-	7	27	43	27	251	384	216	30
Aqualate	99	21	4	20	37	39	36	20	31	24	53	195
Barton	109	85	73	26	23	69	117	422	226	26	153	47
Belvide	225	231	59	51	-	219	-	413	200	279	146	323
Blithfield	115	202	52	6	15	46	73	902	210	1120	480	520
Branston	17	66	68	63	53	127	273	221	223	114	5	2
Chasewater	62	75	44	10	22	19	19	203	294	261	35	54
Croxall	288	225	109	110	-	281	329	199	550	125	319	238
Doxey	274	157	72	67	56	56	28	37	278	240	470	298
Eford North Pit	83	73	72	47	26	8	3	-	-	248	3	103
Kings Bromley	306	266	205	186	115	565	614	804	641	277	358	417
Tittesworth	133	124	80	65	92	134	156	260	153	57	182	159
Fens Pools	69	21	12	14	37	-	-	-	260	21	15	26
Netherton Reservoir	41	25	16	12	28	10	-	20	2	10	53	48
Sandwell Valley	230	204	196	179	194	313	372	355	81	-	-	-

**Warks** Few counts received, but flocks appear to be genuinely smaller at some sites, eg Chesterton where mink predation seems to be taking its toll. No young were seen here at all in August, whereas 14 broods were reared in 1997. At Brandon, the number of nests dropped again, to 15, with many washed out by the Easter floods. Away from the tabulated waters, there were up to 300 at Coombe, 200 on the R. Avon at Stratford and flocks of 80-160 at Bishop's Itchington, Compton Verney, Leamington Spa, Napton Fields, Napton Res, Shustoke, Seeswood Pool and Walton Hall.

**Worcs** Breeding reported at Dodford, Strensham, Throckmorton and Upton Warren, although undoubtedly under-recorded. Many flocks were noted, the larger being 85 on stubble at Little Comberton in January, 86 at Arrow Valley Lake in March, 205 at Holt and 83 at Bredons Hardwick in August and 308 (probably the Holt flock) at Grimley in October.

**Staffs** Breeding pairs were reported from Aqualate, Belvide, Brookleys Lake, Byrkley Park, Chasewater, Doxey (13 pairs: cf. 16 in 1997) and Westport. The October count of 1,120 at Blithfield was a county record. Maxima away from the tabulated sites were 260+ at Kingswood in January; 84 at Great Haywood in February; 68 at Fisherwick in July; 94 at Gailey Pools and 80 at Westport in August; 100 at Byrkley Park and 160 at Woodmill in September; 141 at Copmore and 205 at Crossplains in October; and 140 at both Burton Town Centre and Stapenhill in December. Widely reported in smaller numbers elsewhere.

**W Mid** Breeding pairs were reported from Birmingham City Centre, Ettingshall (Birmingham Canal), Fens Pools, Grapes Pool, Ladymoor Pool, Leasowes Park, Nechells/Saltley area (5+ broods on the Grand Union Canal), Park Lime Pits, Perry Barr Park, Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP, where Carrion Crows heavily predated the very young goslings. Elsewhere, the higher counts comprised 200 in Sutton Park in February, 372 in Sandwell Valley in July, 310 at Bartley in August, 150 at Park Lime Pits and 133 at Stubbers Green both in September, 140 flying south over Dunstall Park on October 1st, 64 at Marsh Lane GPs and 150 in Mary Stevens Park in November and 150 at Sheepwash UP in December.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** At Brandon there were 21 nests (*cf.* 15 in 1996), but productivity remained low. The post-breeding flock reached 400 in August.

**Cackling Goose** *B. c. minima*

**Staffs** Singles were at Doxey on January 18th; and Blithfield on August 24th, 28th and October 7th, the latter associating with six Barnacle Geese within a large flock of Canadas.

**1997 Addendum**

**Staffs** The bird at Blithfield was also present on December 6th.

**Canada x Barnacle Goose**

**W Mid** One was noted in Sandwell Valley on July 14th and August 16th.

**Canada X Whitefront hybrid**

**Staffs** One was reported from Doxey on November 8th.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

*Rare winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon feral visitor.*

**Warks** All records probably relate to feral birds. Draycote produced parties of 14 on January 3rd, five from February 4th-9th, four on May 3rd-4th and 11 on December 6th-7th. A single bird was in the Kingsbury area on various dates from April 16th-August 9th and again on November 8th and 22nd, with seven at nearby Coton on July 16th and six on August 9th. One was at Brandon on March 20th and one visited both BAD Kineton on May 17th and Farnborough Park on 20th.

**Worcs** Single feral birds were at Bittell from January 2nd-24th, Bredons Hardwick on January 11th and February 8th, Pirton from January 30th-April 28th, Beckford on February 7th and Upton Warren on February 14th and 24th. A party of seven was at Bishampton Vale Pool on May 17th, with presumably the same flock at Bredons Hardwick on May 31st, while 10 flew west near Alvechurch on June 7th. Autumn saw two at Beckford on August 29th followed by singles there in September and December. Singles were also at Bittell on September 6th and November 5th and Bredons Hardwick on November 8th, with two at Kinsham from December 13th-28th.

**Staffs** Several records from Blithfield, where four on January 14th and two on

February 19th were followed by one on August 16th, increasing to six by 27th and seven on September 12th, with six again on October 7th. Six were also at nearby Kings Bromley on an unspecified date in September. One associating with 400+ Canada Geese at Elford on January 17th had been present for sometime and was often seen at Croxall. Singles were also at Barton in January and March, Doxey from May 2nd-5th, Drayton Bassett on the August 9th and Belvide on October 3rd.

**W. Mid** A pair bred at Edgbaston Pool, with six young noted on June 6th. Singles were also seen intermittently at Sheepwash UP from January 15th until February 8th and on April 21st and June 3rd; Sandwell Valley on January 31st, February 5th, June 30th and August 31st; Bartley on February 13th, March 31st and August 23rd; Edgbaston Res on April 21st; and Mary Stevens Park on June 7th. One, paired with a Bar-headed Goose, remained at Stubbers Green from at least June 24th-August 25th, with the same pairing also noted at several other localities including Clayhanger and Sandwell Valley.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** Singles were also at Brandon on January 5th and April 2nd-3rd.

#### **Brent Goose *Branta bernicla***

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

The last five years have seen an inexplicable decline.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	1	2	20	38	27
No. of birds	1	2	86	109	74

**Worcs** A dark-bellied *B. b. bernicla* adult grazed with Common Coots at Larford from December 13th to the end of the year *BS et al.*

**Staffs** Seven dark-bellied birds circled Blithfield for five minutes on January 1st *SD* and single adults of the same race were seen at Armitage on January 27th *ESC* and Tittesworth on April 11th *SG, JO*. More unusually, six pale-bellied birds *B. b. hrota*, five adults and a juvenile, were at Chasewater on October 11th *JKH, NS*. They were described as:

Small, black geese, the only white on the head and neck being the small white neck patch on the adults. There was a very clear contrast between the black neck and upper breast and the lower breast and flanks, which were very pale.

#### **Hybrid geese**

**Warks** A bird resembling an Emperor x Lesser White-fronted Goose visited Brandon and Draycote on various dates during the year. It was first seen at Draycote in January 1997.

#### **Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus***

*Scarce feral visitor or escape.*

**Warks** Two free-winged birds were deliberately released by an unknown person at Brandon on the evening of April 27th, with one or both of these birds noted here regularly until the end of the year. Singles were also at Ladywalk on April 1st and 16th and at Dosthill on August 1st.



- Staffs** An adult, presumably the same bird, was at Drayton Bassett on August 9th *AGJ* and September 28th *BKL* and earlier at Dosthill (*Warks*).
- W Mid** One reported at Wyken Slough on June 8th was presumably one of those released at Brandon (*Warks*).

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

*Scarce feral visitor and possible rare vagrant.*

- Warks** The usual long-staying male was at Alvecote on January 24th *SMH* and 25th *MAA*, Dosthill on February 21st *SMH*, on a small farm irrigation reservoir at Middleton village on April 4th *SMH* and 6th *LJD*, and then fairly regularly in the Middleton Hall, Kingsbury and Dosthill area from April 23rd-June 13th and again on October 11th *LJD*, *SMH*, *DJS et al.* On several dates it was in company with a Paradise Shelduck.
- Staffs** The regular female was at Branston GP from April 12th-June 10th *ESC*. As usual, it then moved to Blithfield on July 7th, where it was joined by a second bird. Both remained until August 24th, when the second one departed. It then returned again on 30th and stayed until October 2nd, whilst the original bird remained until October 30th *NU*, *JCT*.
- W Mid** A female at Stubbers Green on July 2nd *GKN* was presumed to be the one that has returned to this locality every autumn since 1993.

**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	5	21	8	4	10	6	-	-	-	-	-	1
Brandon	1	2	2	3	2	7	-	1	-	-	-	1
Draycote	4	-	-	2	2	-	-	3	-	1	-	3
Dosthill/Kingsbury	9	14	11	12	12	13	9	1	-	-	-	5
Ladywalk	5	10	11	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Bitell	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Bredons Hardwick	4	6	4	6	4	-	4	1	2	1	1	-
Kinsham	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Upton Warren	4	-	3	2	2	-	6	1	-	-	3	1
Westwood	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aqualate	-	4	8	10	10	18	-	-	9	-	1	-
Barton	1	4	6	9	17	8	8	1	-	-	1	1
Belvide	2	2	5	3	2	-	3	1	1	4	-	1
Blithfield	5	-	-	6	1	-	1	9	8	6	1	1
Branston	21	13	40	13	31	16	15	4	-	2	-	5
Croxall	4	2	2	6	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	-
Elford North Pit	1	-	-	16	5	5	2	-	2	1	-	-
Titesworth	-	-	-	2	12	-	-	-	-	-	2	1

- Warks** Single broods were noted at Alvecote (six young reducing to four), Coton and Kingsbury WP (five young reducing to four). Other records from the north included up to 11 during spring and summer at Coton, seven on a farm reservoir in Middleton village on April 6th, four at Shustoke on January 11th and a prospecting pair in Packington Park on April 18th. Further south, singles were at Black Hill Pool on April 2nd and Napton Res on September 17th.

- Worcs** Good numbers were on floodwater at Kempsey during January, with two on 18th, 15 on 26th and 10 on 27th. Spring produced four on floodwater at Longdon Marsh on April 12th, six at Wilden on 19th, two at Ryall from May 4th-14th and two at Grimley on 15th. A small passage of juveniles occurred in late-summer, with Grimley having two from July 27th-August 2nd, five on 17th and one on October 8th and Ryall one from August 15th-29th. Later, two flew south over Lower Moor on October 24th, four were at Upton-on-Severn on November 8th and a pair were at Holt on December 1st.
- Staffs** Bred for the fourth successive year at Aqualate (brood of eight reducing to six). Also bred at Branston (brood of nine) and a pair was reported as nesting on a gravel pit east of Cheadle, but no young were seen. The only notable count away from the tabulated sites was 16 at Drayton Bassett in April. Small numbers were reported at seven other sites.
- W.Mid** One pair was present in suitable habitat during the breeding season. The bird first seen at Edgbaston Res in 1996 remained until early April. Further April records then came from Stubbers Green on 6th, Sandwell Valley (two) on 19th, Marsh Lane GPs (three) on 20th and Fens Pools (two over) on 30th. Three immatures were on Dunstall Park Lake on August 24th, with two remaining intermittently until September 3rd. Bartley had one on September 12th and two on October 27th, Sheepwash UP two from December 3rd-5th and Sandwell Valley two on 9th and singles on 10th, 12th, 20th and 21st.

**Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*

*Uncommon, but increasing, feral resident and visitor.*

- Warks** The only records came from Packington Park, last year's breeding place, where a male was seen on March 23rd and a pair on April 20th.
- Worcs** Breeding was proved at Dowles Brook and Kemerton Pool. Interestingly, a female flushed from a tree-lined brook near Madresfield on May 4th may indicate possible first-time breeding in the Malvern area. Outside the breeding season, a new county record of 23 occurred at Beckford on February 7th. SMW and small numbers were noted during the year at Broadway GP, Fladbury, Grafton, Kinsham, Kyre Pool, Lower Moor, Snuffmill Pool, Strensham and Westwood.
- Staffs** Bred at Greenway Bank CP (three ducklings seen). At Chillington there were 14 in January and February, two in March, one in April, three in July and five in September, but no breeding was reported. The free-flying colony at Trentham Gardens appeared much reduced, with only three males and one female noted on April 11th, while a female flying over Beech on May 18th was probably from this colony. Elsewhere, a pair appeared on a stream at Dydon Wood on March 18th; a male was at Tittesworth on April 22nd followed by single females from August 24th-30th and on October 10th; and a male was at Belvide on 11th and 17th, with two on 21st.

**1996 Addendum**

- Staffs** A drake at Chasewater on December 14th was the first record for the site.

**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	38	80	16	—	—	—	—	—	38	100	2	205
Charlecote GP	100	136	91	—	—	—	—	—	6	1	14	80
Coton	167	138	68	—	—	—	—	—	7	48	80	158
Dosthill/Kingsbury	889	300	150	4	1	—	—	—	8	50	266	370
Draycote	855	440	670	180	—	1	1	1	35	70	500	630
Ladywalk	155	207	156	—	—	—	—	—	40	50	101	110
Bredons Hardwick	200	1100	750	—	—	—	—	2	25	250	320	720
Kinsham	4	6	—	—	—	1	—	—	3	20	60	40
Lower Moor	30	8	1	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	8	6
Pirton Pool	2	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	53	57	73
Westwood	80	92	59	1	—	—	—	—	4	22	16	52
Aqualate	230	—	134	—	—	—	1	—	8	35	170	177
Barton	346	300	259	—	—	—	—	—	14	18	166	272
Belvide	255	288	168	19	4	1	7	12	98	170	168	224
Bliithfield	1601	877	1110	5	4	4	6	20	96	630	596	678
Chasewater	39	56	10	2	—	—	—	2	24	49	27	75
Croxall	567	674	460	1	—	—	—	—	12	21	271	268
Kings Bromley	23	34	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	6	71
Tittesworth	225	190	182	7	—	1	—	2	24	34	130	161
Marsh Lane GP	43	31	42	2	—	—	—	—	5	59	—	45
Sandwell Valley	36	34	22	—	—	—	—	—	19	35	24	28

**Warks** Away from tabulated waters, peaks in the north were 140 at Shustoke on January 1st and 59 at Brandon on October 20th. In the south, apart from Charlecote which seems to be the only regular site, there were 27 at Abbots Salford Pool on February 22nd, 13 on floodwater by the R. Itchen at Knightcote on November 29th and less than 10 at Lower Radbourn, Napton Res (including a female on July 18th) and Wormleighton Res.

**Worcs** During January, numbers on floodwater reached 40 at Grimley on 2nd, 98 at Upton-on-Severn on 13th and 450 at Longdon Marsh on 14th. A flock of 80 at Chateau Impney on January 26th no doubt involved the birds from nearby Westwood. Summer records concerned a female at Strensham on May 31st and a male at Kinsham on June 20th. Floodwater in November produced 300 at Longdon Marsh on 1st. Smaller numbers were reported at eight other localities, with a maximum of 15 at Upton Warren in October.

**Staffs** At Westport, nine on July 4th was a remarkable number for the first July record: a peak of 13 then followed in September. Branston had a peak of 26 in October and small numbers were noted at a further 10 sites.

**W Mid** One at Sheepwash UP on September 4th was followed by seven flying over on 27th and two on November 23rd. Netherton Res had two on September 20th, one on November 5th and three on 23rd, whilst up to three birds were at Fens Pools between September 20th-November 18th with possibly some movement between the two sites. Five were at Stubbers Green on November 4th and four on 14th, while a single drake was reported from Bartley for 'many months', with three present on November 17th.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** At Brandon, the May male remained until June 6th, while the winter peaks of 350 on January 12th and 250 on November 2nd were exceptionally high.

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana**Very rare vagrant (2/10).*

Only the fifth in the region, but recorded in Staffordshire for the second year running and the third time in the last five years.

**Staffs** An adult male was at Blithfield from August 23rd-October 23rd *REH et al.*

**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	8	8	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	12
Brandon	8	7	2	2	2	4	—	3	5	7	12	4
Coton	25	27	14	4	3	8	2	7	15	14	17	31
Dosthill/Kingsbury	45	18	26	5	4	3	2	10	40	14	52	50
Draycote	55	20	25	2	6	3	—	4	11	11	11	7
Ladywalk	37	63	24	5	1	—	—	—	—	50	14	15
Bishampton Vale P	10	—	8	—	—	—	1	4	3	7	6	8
Bredons Hardwick	16	1	2	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	8
Grimley	36	19	14	8	8	2	—	—	10	14	22	25
Westwood	15	31	6	—	1	1	—	6	4	13	18	47
Aqualate	—	2	—	11	6	—	—	—	—	10	5	6
Belvide	68	70	78	42	—	38	—	150	196	251	202	105
Blithfield	0	2	4	9	12	7	2	16	50	84	10	2
Branslow	15	11	10	—	4	—	—	—	27	6	7	4
Chillington	12	9	10	—	—	5	8	6	8	—	—	—
Efford North Pit	31	12	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	10	—	4
Fisherwick	—	28	11	3	—	—	—	—	4	12	18	30

**Warks** A brood of nine at Ladywalk in May was the only evidence of breeding. Wintering numbers were down at most localities, particularly at Draycote. Earlswood Lakes had 11 on December 31st, which was notable for that site, while up to five also occurred at seven additional sites.

**Worcs** A pair bred at Bredons Hardwick. The only additional count of significance was 29 at Oakley on November 26th. Otherwise, up to 10 were at Bittell, Kinsham, Lower Moor, Pilton, Ryall, Upton Warren and Wilden.

**Staffs** Belvide is the regional stronghold, with 14 broods totalling 127 young and a regional record of 251 in October. Five on February 18th was an excellent record for Westport, where this species is now considered very scarce. Small numbers were also reported from eight untabulated sites.

**W Mid** At Marsh Lane GPs, two drakes were located on January 26th, single pairs on March 7th and 19th and then a pair intermittently during December. Pairs were also at Netherton Res on January 27th and December 7th, while five drakes were on Forge Mill Lake in Sandwell Valley on November 21st.

**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	35	166	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	64	10	27
Brandon	166	200	100	75	9	7	10	128	225	175	192	335
Coton	35	63	34	2	—	—	—	2	3	24	15	66
Dosthill/Kingsbury	30	29	8	2	2	—	—	1	4	9	34	34
Draycote	320	96	80	70	1	—	—	5	90	100	250	120
Ladywalk	61	81	75	—	—	—	—	—	—	56	81	207

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bredons Hardwick	100	430	250	-	-	2	-	-	20	13	12	50
Kinsham	15	33	4	-	-	-	2	10	24	60	120	42
Lower Moor	42	21	8	-	-	-	-	1	1	6	12	72
Strensham	-	9	8	-	-	-	-	7	40	29	3	40
Upton Warren	180	32	62	50	2	6	7	41	130	170	152	131
Westwood	31	26	14	13	-	-	-	14	18	27	54	107
Wilden	60	20	12	9	-	-	-	15	35	78	60	40
Aqualate	92	40	7	2	-	-	-	-	8	28	3	177
Barton	112	147	57	4	-	3	1	-	38	37	100	136
Belvide	516	448	236	178	4	11	6	59	337	568	518	843
Blithfield	918	126	6	10	-	-	9	37	392	1090	694	582
Bransdon	187	41	18	-	3	-	-	-	53	193	35	204
Chasewater	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	11	37	53	21	43
Croxall	289	188	98	12	-	2	-	-	21	22	120	93
Doxey	220	121	74	28	3	7	2	38	110	117	148	364
Hill Ridware	10	64	52	-	-	-	-	1	26	48	13	10
Kings Bromley	3	16	33	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	56
Tittesworth	30	48	42	8	4	11	15	17	19	40	40	71
Sandwell Valley	20	40	21	12	-	3	1	16	36	52	60	45
Sheepwash UP	27	20	20	6	2	2	3	6	22	30	32	40

**Warks** Maxima from elsewhere included 55 at Charlecote GP on February 17th and 31 on floodwater by the R. Itchen at Knightcote on November 29th, while 10-15 were at Calcutt, Earlswood Lakes, Napton Res, Seeswood Pool and Ufton Fields, but numbers were generally low.

**Worcs** Floodwater at Longdon Marsh attracted 650 on January 10th. In autumn, up to 60 were at Grimley from September 6th-October 2nd, 80 at Longdon Marsh on November 1st and 120 at Kinsham on November 28th. Smaller numbers were also at seven untabulated sites.

**Staffs** Bred at Tittesworth (brood of six), while two pairs were present in the breeding season at Doxey (cf. none in 1997). The December count of 177 at Aqualate, when the Mere was 80% frozen, was notable. Away from the tabulated sites, 30-40 were at Eland Brook, Fisherwick and Pool Dam Marsh in January; 60 at Little Wyrley in January and 50 in December; and 21 at Westport on November 23rd, where the species is an infrequent visitor. Also reported from nine other sites.

**W Mid** Peak first winter period counts were 17 at Marsh Lane GPs and up to 18 at Park Lime Pits between February 4th-March 13th. Second winter period maxima included up to six at Marsh Lane GPs and 12 at Park Lime Pits in December. Seen regularly at Fens Pools in both winter periods, with a peak of 10 in January. Five or less were also reported from a further five sites.

#### 1997 Addendum

**Warks** Autumn numbers at Brandon were higher than tabulated, with maxima during September-December of 232, 234, 200 and 170 respectively.

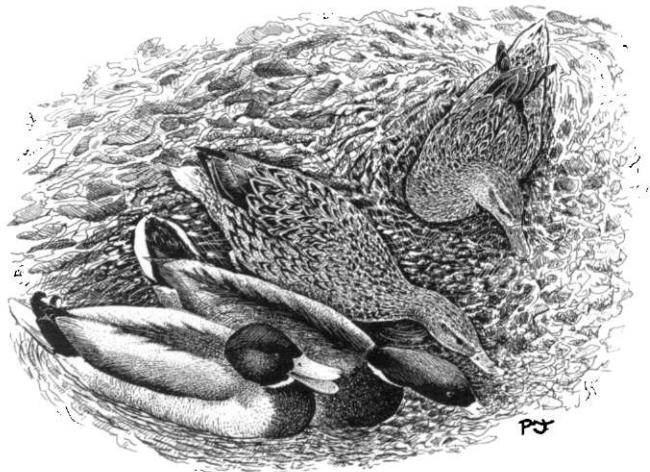
#### Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

*Common resident and very common winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecoote	80	44	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	152	21	23
Brandon	104	65	24	8	50	77	65	160	79	44	47	102
Chesterton	80	16	-	-	-	-	-	65	-	86	115	120
Doshill/Kingsbury	83	87	30	53	46	30	204	288	335	330	371	85

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	285	110	90	20	103	117	150	163	250	270	140	165
Ladywalk	85	191	73	—	—	—	—	—	—	86	138	258
Bittell	90	62	22	10	30	37	77	88	131	104	67	139
Kinsham	20	48	—	5	6	—	—	310	29	32	45	50
Lower Moor	156	31	18	10	10	23	65	72	80	75	78	86
Upton Warren	150	49	36	52	74	270	300	413	275	57	130	160
Westwood	80	20	18	—	20	34	81	101	123	66	52	216
Wilden	60	80	120	60	60	80	80	100	120	120	80	90
Aqualate	117	50	17	89	59	164	353	248	355	416	39	737
Barton	268	162	117	64	82	95	143	162	258	273	230	214
Belvide	400	137	73	45	—	—	125	470	343	—	340	576
Blithfield	660	123	51	65	185	402	483	1467	1442	1070	998	621
Branston	103	50	52	13	62	36	59	139	118	37	81	119
Byrkley Park	43	15	8	7	5	5	9	40	100	45	60	20
Chasewater	71	87	56	57	32	62	150	148	283	238	237	364
Copmere	1	6	4	3	—	35	145	45	92	42	60	127
Croxall	394	154	121	78	—	116	67	426	351	349	472	375
Doxey	223	183	82	63	59	66	94	137	139	96	148	190
Hill Ridware	135	116	72	61	86	79	112	287	386	210	444	363
Kettlebrook Lake	82	105	88	67	62	70	102	93	93	92	96	77
Kings Bromley	287	178	98	60	58	127	96	120	434	286	321	253
Tittesworth	170	65	—	—	—	—	—	50	—	50	10	63



*Mallards (Phil Jones)*

**Warks** Six broods were reared at both Ashorne and Brandon, with four at Cherterton, Coombe and Ladywalk. Wintering numbers were low compared with recent years and the only post-breeding assemblage to exceed 300 was in the Tame Valley. Away from tabulated waters, numbers were also unremarkable, with peaks of only 77 at Coton in January, 120 at Coombe in June, 80 at Walton Hall in August, 135 at Napton Res and 64 at Wormleighton Res in September, and 75 at Lower Radbourn and 69 at Shustoke in December. Flocks of 40-60 were also seen at Charlecote GP, Farnborough Park, Snitterfield and Temple Pool.

**Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell (five broods), Grimley, Hindlip Pool, Kinsham, Laughern Pools, Little Comberton, Lodge Pool, Porters Mill, Strensham, Tibberton and Upton Warren (10 broods). Noted at a further 28 localities, with maxima of 30 at Highstank Pool on January 11th, 38 at Arrow Valley Lake on March 8th, 75 at Bishampton Vale Pool in September and October, 63 at Pirton in October, 45 at Bredons Hardwick on 3rd and 85 at Mill Pond on November 1st.

**Staffs** Breeding pairs were reported from Belvide (four), Betley, Brookleys Lake (three), Byrkley Park, Calton Moor, Chasewater (10), R. Churnet, R. Dove, Doxey (28 cf. 22 in 1997) and Westport. Away from the tabulated sites, the higher counts were 129 at Greenway Bank CP in January, 83 at Chillington in September, 72 at Westport in October, 70 at Fisherwick in November and 307 at Brookleys Lake and 60 at Elford North Pit both in December. 500 birds were released at both Hollybush and the Betley area (*per* gamekeeper), but no exact dates were given.

**W Mid** Broods were reported from Bilston, Birmingham City Centre, Fens Pools (two), Grapes Pool, Heath Town, Ladymoor Pool, Leasowes Park, Marsh Lane GPs, Mary Stevens Park, Mons Hill, Mushroom Green Marsh (five), Nechells/Saltley area (Grand Union Canal), Park Lime Pits, Netherton (Dudley Canal), Netherton Res, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (at least 10) and Stubbers Green (at least two). Peak counts outside the breeding season included 71 at Tiford Pool in January, 100 in Sutton Park in March, 90 at Sheepwash UP in September, 120 at Bumble Hole in both September and November, 50 in Mary Stevens Park and 110 in Sandwell Valley.

#### *Anas hybrid*

**Warks** A male hybrid duck resembling a Mallard x Falcated Duck was seen at Draycote on October 1st JJB.

#### **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
Bredons Hardwick	18	57	27	2	-	-	-	-	2	5	12	20
Belvide	5	12	5	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	8	2
Blithfield	18	33	21	0	0	0	0	1	20	26	38	9

**Warks** A poor year. Up to six were at Draycote from January 1st-March 13th; six were also at Dosthill on January 10th, with two on 11th; one was at Alvecote on February 10th; and two were at Brandon on February 22nd, with one on March 4th. Hopes for a breeding attempt were raised by a pair on floodwater at Dosthill on April 11th, which were joined by a third bird next day: the original pair stayed in the area until early June, with the male being seen last on 13th. A very poor autumn began with a single at Brandon on August 22nd, followed by another at Alvecote on September 20th, then three there and one at Coton on 27th and two at Draycote on 28th. Alvecote had three again on October 7th and Kingsbury one on 17th. A party of four then visited Dosthill and later Coton on November 23rd and one was at Brandon on 24th. Finally, two visited Kingsbury on December 27th and Ladywalk on 28th-29th.

- Worcs** Record numbers built up on floodwater at Longdon Marsh in January, the peak being a new regional record total of 475 on 9th *SMW*. A locality record of 54 followed at Pirton on February 18th. The only substantial autumn flock concerned 23 at Longdon Marsh on October 31st. Small numbers were seen at both ends of the year at Bishampton Vale Pool, Kinsham, Lower Moor, Upton Warren and Westwood.
- Staffs** Noted at Blithfield until March 22nd (nine) and from August 30th, with the tabulated maxima occurring on February 15th and November 1st respectively. Away from the tabulated sites, 25 were at a flooded Barton GP on January 10th, while pairs were at Copmere on January 19th, Branston on March 31st and Drayton Bassett on April 4th, plus a single female at the latter on May 28th. Late summer records began with one at Doxey on August 6th, but the main autumn return started on 29th at Belvide. During September, an immature was at Chasewater on the 1st and a female at Westport on the 25th. A female was at Tittesworth from October 1st-5th; three males and two females at Doxey on November 5th, with the females staying to 8th; and finally, two were at Branston GP on December 31st.
- W Mid** What was presumably the drake first seen in 1995 was again noted in Sandwell Valley intermittently between January 8th-April 22nd. One was also seen there on October 2nd and 24th.
- 1995 Corrigendum**
- Staffs** The maximum count at Blithfield in February was 52 *not* 43.
- 1997 Addenda**
- Warks** There were also two at Brandon on March 18th, four on April 2nd and two on September 26th.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

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

*Average: April 1st (55)–September 29th (54)*

The first spring arrivals were pairs at Belvide and Packington on March 22nd whilst the last, excluding a wintering bird, was one at Upton Warren on October 25th. Having recovered from the decline of the 1980s, numbers now appear stable.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-86	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	175	132	98	235	243

- Warks** An average spring and a poor autumn passage, although records from three seldom visited localities were most welcome. Single pairs were at Packington Park on March 22nd-23rd and Coton on April 2nd. A female was at Charlecote GP on April 14th, followed by single males at Draycote on May 2nd and Brandon on 15th. Another male, which was seen at Ladywalk on May 22nd, Kingsbury on 26th and Middleton on 28th, was probably the bird found going into eclipse at nearby Dosthill on June 13th. The only autumn records were of singles at Abbots Salford Pool on August 16th, Brandon from 16th-18th and Draycote from September 17th-19th.
- Worcs** First of the spring was a male at Upton Warren on March 25th, followed by a





	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Upton Warren	34	35	63	17	2	9	5	21	80	70	97	31
Westwood	119	30	34	4	2	-	1	6	45	86	103	115
Wilden	42	68	16	2	-	-	-	20	35	26	38	22
Aqualate	12	6	2	5	2	0	0	2	26	40	47	16
Barton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	24	14	5
Belvide	16	19	45	25	8	8	24	111	182	187	25	21
Blithfield	1	1	5	5	10	8	7	13	266	232	38	14
Branston	5	29	15	1	4	2	-	-	19	20	5	4
Doxey	11	9	1	-	2	-	-	-	9	26	26	1
Fens Pools	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	7	7
Sandwell Valley	11	15	15	4	2	1	-	-	28	46	23	23

**Warks** A pair bred at Ladywalk, rearing two young. A pair also summered at Coombe, with additional birds at Brandon, Dosthill, Draycote and Kingsbury in May-June, but with no evidence of breeding. The largest assembly was in the newly-filled Cliff Pool at Kingsbury WP, where the peak of 191 occurred on October 17th. Elsewhere, there were 12 at Lower Radbourn on September 6th, eight at Draycote in November and up to five at eight other sites, mostly during August-September.

**Worcs** Away from the tabulated sites, the only double figure counts were 16 at Beckford on February 7th, 10 at Bredons Hardwick on October 27th, 23 at Longdon Marsh on November 1st, 12 at Beckford on December 6th and 18 at Grimley on December 12th. Small numbers were at seven other sites.

**Staffs** Bred at Belvide (five chicks noted), while two pairs were on the Doxey CBC plot *cf.* one pair in 1997. No other breeding reports, although birds were also noted during spring as tabulated above. Maxima during the first winter period suggested no major changes. Numbers in the second winter period built up quickly in early September to reach 266 at Blithfield on 6th and 187 at Belvide on October 11th, numbers which, if maintained, would render both sites of national importance for this species. Aqualate, with a previous five-yearly average maximum of 169, held fewer birds this year, with a maximum of 47 occurring on November 8th. Small numbers were also noted at 11 other sites.

**W Mid** Singles, unless otherwise stated, were at Hydes Road Pool on February 1st (two) and December 26th (two); Bartley on March 20th and 29th (two); Marsh Lane GPs from April 7th-11th followed by four on September 28th and November 11th, two of which remained until the end of November; and Netherton Res on November 21st.

#### 1997 Addenda

**Warks** Numbers at Brandon were higher than tabulated, with spring maxima of 33 in February-March and an autumn peak of 74 on August 30th.

#### Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

*Scarce visitor, with most records probably of feral origin.*

The sharp increase in numbers over the past ten years can be attributed to the feral breeding colonies in Gloucestershire.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	33	21	15	71	75

**Warks** A good year in the Tame Valley area. The two females from the end of 1997

were again at Shustoke on January 1st *JJB, KMC, BLK*, with a single female on 18th *ARD, SR* and 22nd *BLK*. A male then appeared at Coton from January 18th-31st *SMH et al* and also visited Kingsbury WP on the last date *DJS*. A pair was at Shustoke on February 7th *BLK*, with a male on 8th and a pair on 21st *SMH*, which then transferred to nearby Ladywalk from February 22nd-March 4th *SLC, PDH et al*. It seems likely that only three birds were involved in all these records. In the autumn, a bird was at Ladywalk from October 11th-16th *SLC*, with possibly the same female at Dosthill on November 7th *SMH*, which moved to Coton next day *PDH*, and was then in the Coton/Lea Marston complex until the end of the year *SMH et al*. Elsewhere, single females were at Dravcote on July 2nd and August 23rd *DL*.

**Worcs** Single females were at Beckford from January 13th-February 27th *RAP et al* and at Bredons Hardwick on March 9th (a leucistic bird) *SJH*, with an eclipse male at Piton on September 6th *WFP, MAS*.

**Staffs** At Belvide, female-types on July 18th (a leucistic bird) *KMC* and September 27th were followed by a male from September 30th-October 7th; November 14th-29th *KMC*, *FCG* and December 6th *KMC*. Elsewhere, a female was at Blithfield on September 11th *ESC* and a male at Chasewater on November 7th and again on December 23rd *GE*.

## 1997 Addendum

**Staffs** A female at Belvide on December 6th was the only county record *KMC*.

*Red-crested Pochard hybrid*

**W Mid** A male, believed to have come originally from West Park in Wolverhampton, was again along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in the vicinity of Valley Park on at least May 30th and June 9th.

**Common Pochard (Pochard)**    *Aythya ferina*

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

**Monthly maxima at selected sites:**

[illegible]

- Warks** A pair nested at Coombe again, but reared no young. Away from the tabulated sites, a bird summered at Seeswood Pool and there were two males at Black Hill Pool on May 16th and a male at Newfield Pool on July 16th. The wintering flock in the Coton/Lea Marston complex (which also uses nearby Shustoke) reached its highest level since November 1993. Elsewhere numbers were very low, with the only other sites to hold more than 15 being Packington Park and Brandon, where the respective maxima were 56 on January 6th and 36 in December. Ladywalk usually held no more than eight, but a flock of 250 flew over there on November 29th, presumably after being disturbed from Shustoke or Lea Marston.
- Worcs** Away from principal sites, maxima of 39 at Bishampton Vale Pool in January, 20 at Longdon Marsh on 14th, 41 at Lower Moor in February, 17 at Hewell Grange on 15th and 27 at Grimley on December 11th. Small numbers at Larford and Spetchley.
- Staffs** Bred at Belvide, where four chicks had been reduced to three by July 6th. Other sites with summering birds are tabulated. Numbers in the first winter period suggested little change, but those in the second period were below average, except at Chasewater and Westport. Away from the tabulated sites, flocks of 20-40 were at Barton, Betley Mere, Brookleys, Elford North Pit, Hollybush and Tittesworth, with smaller numbers at nine other sites.
- W Mid** Successfully bred at one locality – quite possibly a county first? Away from the tabulated sites, very few were reported during the winter period, with peaks of 18 at Marsh Lane GPs, around 20 in Small Heath Park, 25 at Witton Lakes and smaller numbers at five other sites.

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

*Scarce visitor, many probably being of feral origin.*

- Warks** The long-staying male was seen intermittently in the Coton/Lea Marston area up to March 22nd *SMH et al*, when it was seen displaying to a group of Common Pochard. It did not return in autumn.
- W Mid** A female/immature was at Netherton Res on September 4th *CJT*. The last county record was also at the same locality in March 1991.

### **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
Coton/Lea Marston	915	1167	786	374	96	101	476	1195	1753	1277	1261	1371
Dosthill/Kingsbury	896	140	64	91	34	36	67	94	72	51	228	60
Draycote	110	70	215	150	125	20	44	24	310	340	880	1010
Ladywalk	76	142	83	93	–	–	–	–	–	9	28	–
Shustoke	190	20	28	–	–	–	–	–	–	33	44	18
Bishampton Vale P	27	–	17	16	8	11	26	33	21	31	30	37
Bittell	20	36	26	14	11	12	34	53	43	40	35	63
Bredons Hardwick	–	60	26	11	13	8	–	13	8	26	35	24
Kinsham	36	50	7	–	16	–	–	17	–	10	16	50
Lower Moor	58	33	37	24	16	19	24	20	30	22	85	31
Pirton	33	54	36	19	26	22	20	26	4	14	43	32
Upton Warren	20	29	47	58	45	48	30	30	18	15	12	10
Westwood	151	90	30	–	31	5	34	22	12	29	75	90
Wilden	9	32	67	103	18	12	10	30	30	20	6	5

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Aqualate	30	62	40	72	66	17	26	26	34	71	130	100
Barton	73	68	119	77	101	92	121	122	169	105	89	87
Belvide	51	102	122	74	—	30	172	178	164	225	166	129
Blithfield	89	55	73	146	91	187	292	520	312	135	151	161
Bransdon	93	95	70	27	16	3	34	30	34	35	54	47
Brookleys Lake	50	—	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	73	50+
Chasewater	438	185	106	56	15	20	117	312	515	570	702	613
Copnere	81	68	43	7	—	23	26	60	94	71	90	80
Croxall	106	63	115	55	—	91	221	319	134	82	79	135
Elford/Fisherwick	149	26	37	7	6	14	15	14	25	28	23	32
Hill Ridware	19	78	29	22	21	25	28	25	52	30	24	31
Kings Bromley	9	—	4	4	4	—	4	6	16	5	3	70
Westport	19	22	34	10	2	6	32	19	34	52	61	121
Fens Pools	66	54	38	10	—	—	—	—	27	45	60	56
Marsh Lane GP	22	26	35	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50
Sandwell Valley	55	80	73	40	34	42	18	27	43	45	74	—

**Warks** Broods were noted at Abbots Salford Pool, Alvecote (two), Ashorne (five), Brandon, Charlecote GP (three), Dosthill (four-six with creches of 28 and 24 *SR*), Draycote (two), Kingsbury (two-three), Ladywalk, Packington Park, Salford Priors GP, Shuckburgh Park, Stoneton Moat and Walton Hall. The September 27th count of 1753 in the Coton/Lea Marston complex of pools *SMH* was the highest since 1989. On smaller waters, 67 were on floodwater at Charlecote GP on April 12th, 43 at Alvecote on December 20th, 42 at Brandon on 29th and counts mainly below 20 elsewhere. A leucistic female was in the Coton/Lea Marston complex on September 27th and from December 28th-31st.

**Worce** Bred at Bishampton Vale Pool (two broods), Bittell (three broods), Grimley (two broods), Kinsham (three broods), Lenchwick, Lower Moor, Strensham (two broods), Upton Warren and Wilden (two broods). Maxima outside the breeding season included 78 at Grimley on January 30th and 56 at Kyre Pool on December 19th. Smaller numbers were noted at nine other sites.

**Staffs** Breeding was confirmed at Aqualate (broods of five, five and two), Belvide (brood with two young), Byrkley Park (broods of five and three), Rocester JCB North Lake (brood of six) and Woodmill (broods of eight, three and one). Also present in the breeding season at Crakemarsch Pool, Ivetsey Bank, Kettlebrook Park, the R. Dove at Calwich and on the R. Trent at Rugeley Power Station. Numbers in the second winter period suggested no marked changes from those of recent years. Chasewater continued to be the main wintering site, with numbers reaching national importance in November and December. Maxima away from tabulated sites were 86 at Betley Mere in January; 53 at Elford North Pit in March; 28 at Tittesworth in April; and 56 at Chillington and 48 at Gailey, both in September. Small numbers were reported from a further 16 sites.

**W Mid** Single broods, unless otherwise stated, were reported from Ladymoor Pool, Marsh Lane GPs, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley (at least two), Sheepwash UP and Stubbers Green. Smaller parties of note were 26 in Sheepwash UP and 27 on Titford Pool in January; 68 in Sutton Park in March; 22 at Park Lime Pits in November and 31 at Netherton Res in December.

***Aythya Hybrids******Tufted Duck x Scaup***

**Worcs** An immature drake was at Grimley from November 22nd-December 11th.

***Ferruginous Duck x Common Pochard***

**Warks** An adult male was at Lea Marston on December 28th J44.

***Pochard x Tufted Duck***

**Warks** A male was at Draycote on January 29th.

***Tufted Duck x Pochard***

**Warks** A male was at Coton/Lea Marston Pools on February 8th and 22nd.

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

**Warks** During the early months there was an adult male at Lea Marston on January 1st and at Dosthill from 11th-20th, an immature male at Coton on 24th and then probably the first adult male again in the Coton/Lea Marston area on dates from January 31st-April 4th, with two on February 21st and on March 14th and 27th. On spring passage, single females appeared at Draycote on March 28th and Charlecote GP on April 14th, with a male at Dosthill and two at Draycote on 19th. In autumn, single females at Draycote on November 3rd and Coton on 14th heralded a small influx, with Draycote receiving the lion's share. Here there was a female on November 21st, a female and an immature male on 22nd, two females on 28th, single females on December 1st and 4th, two females on 10th, three females on 12th which were joined by two immature males on 13th, then three females and an immature male from 23rd-31st, which were joined by a fourth female on 27th. The only records from the Tame Valley during this period were of a female at Lea Marston on December 12th and two on 19th, with possibly the same two females again from 27th-31st.

**Worcs** Two males were at Westwood from July 10th-11th, with one remaining to 12th. Another male was at Bredons Hardwick from October 19th-25th, whilst a first-winter male appeared at Grimley on December 31st.

**Staffs** An immature male, probably the 1997 bird, was at Chasewater on January 10th and a similar one was at Belvide on January 14th. Spring passage was confined to a male and two females at Chasewater on April 16th. The only summer sighting was of a single female at Tittesworth on August 30th. In the second winter period, October 25th saw two females arrive at Blithfield and a male at Chasewater, with the latter staying until November 1st. A female/immature was then at Blithfield on November 7th, with a similar bird again at Chasewater from the same day until the end of the year. A male at Belvide from November 27th-December 5th was followed by two males on the 8th and then three males from the 11th-20th, one of which stayed until the year-end.

***1996 Addenda and Corrigenda***

**Staffs** In addition to the published records, Chasewater also had a male on January 28th, single immatures on October 19th and from November 3rd-December 1st and an immature male from November 8th-17th, whilst the two immatures on December 28th stayed until 30th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Staffs**  
**W Mid**

A female was also present at Chasewater on February 9th.  
An immature male was present on Netherton Res from January 1st until March 8th.

**Common Eider (Eider) *Somateria mollissima***

*Rare winter visitor (3/10).*

Setting aside the exceptional influx of 1993, the 1994-98 figures are typical.  
There were no records this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	1	4	0	16	1
No. of birds	1	6	0	48	1

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

*Rare winter visitor, with occasional summer records (7/10).*

Has become noticeably rarer since c1992, with the latest five-yearly total the lowest for fifty years. No records this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	9	16	10	21	3

**Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks**

Three (including a male) were at Shustoke on April 15th and a flock of 17 (16 males) at Draycote on June 15th. A November influx began with a female at Shustoke and up to seven females/immatures at Draycote on 1st. Draycote then held two males on November 2nd-3rd, four long-staying females/immatures from 7th-20th, with one until 23rd, another on 28th and finally two more on December 1st. Also part of this influx was a male that was picked up injured in Great Aine on November 7th, but later died.

**Worcs**

Single females were at Trimpley on July 20th, Westwood from August 3rd-4th, Bittell on September 21st and Larford from October 4th-5th, with a male at Wilden from October 12th-13th.

**Staffs**

A male at Blithfield on February 25th was the only first winter period report. Spring passage comprised two males and a female at Tittesworth on April 15th, one at Belvide on the same day and a male at Blithfield from May 17th-29th. A pair was at Westport on July 3rd. During the second winter period, single males were at Belvide from October 1st-6th, Blithfield on the 11th and Chasewater on the 25th, with two females at Tittesworth on December 20th.

**W Mid**

A female/immature was at Fens Pools on July 20th, with presumably the same bird at Netherton Res on the same day.

**1996 Addenda**

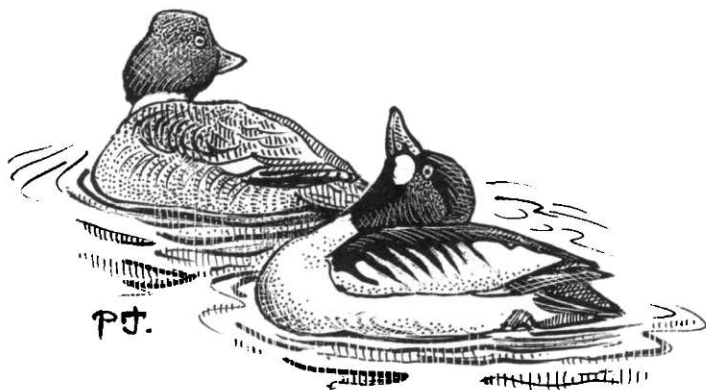
**Staffs**

Additional reports from Chasewater comprised a male and two females on February 22nd, a male on March 9th, a pair on April 7th, four drakes on August 7th, a drake on November 8th and a female/immature on November 17th, 23rd and December 1st and 4th. A male was also at Gailey on April 13th.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca**Rare winter visitor (6/10)*

As with Long-tailed Duck, there have been very few in the last decade, with none again this year.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	9	5	6	3	2
No. of birds	14	6	16	5	5

**Common Goldeneye** (Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula**Fairly common winter visitor. Rare in summer.**Common Goldeneye (Phil Jones)***Monthly maxima at main sites:**

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coton/Lea Marston	14	18	10	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	9
Dosthill/Kingsbury	55	30	91	12	-	-	-	-	-	2	25	24
Draycote	120	100	36	8	-	-	-	-	-	6	80	157
Ladywalk	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	10
Bittell	3	10	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Westwood	6	5	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	15
Barton	38	81	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	19
Belvide	37	51	61	27	3	0	0	0	0	10	33	65
Blithfield	26	34	25	23	0	0	0	0	0	8	39	26
Chasewater	147	138	149	38	0	0	0	0	0	10	135	175
Copmere	22	11	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8
Croxall	15	3	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
Kings Bromley	11	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Westport	17	11	11	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	21
Barley Reservoir	8	7	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Fens Pools	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	3
Sandwell Valley	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	4

**Warks** Extreme dates were April 26th (Kingsbury) and October 7th (Dosthill). Up to three were also reported from six other sites.

**Worcs** Singles were at Bredons Hardwick, Grimley, Lower Moor and Upton Warren



between January-April, with two at Wilden on January 1st, three on flood-water at Kempsey Lower Ham from January 20th-23rd and three at Kyre Pool from March 1st-April 3rd, one of which remained to 17th. In autumn, further singles appeared at Larford, Lower Moor, Pirton and Upton Warren in November and December, with maxima of four at Wilden on November 16th, three at Kinsham on December 13th, and two at Bredons Hardwick on December 31st. The count of 15 at Westwood on December 15th was a new locality record *SMW*.

**Staffs** Another good year at Chasewater, with the 1997 numbers increasing to 149 by March and a new county record of 175 in December. A female at Belvide on May 5th was the final spring record. A summer bird was reported at Gailey on July 21st. The first returning birds, a female at Belvide and two birds at Blithfield, arrived on October 7th. Small numbers were also reported from 11 other sites, with a maxima at Tittesworth of five in April.

**W Mid** Singles were at Marsh Lane GPs on January 1st, March 18th and regularly from November 10th to the year's end. Also reported from Sutton Park, but with no further details.

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

*Uncommon winter visitor. Very rare in summer.*

The table shows a threefold increase in numbers during the last five years, much of which has occurred since the hard weather influx of 1996 and may be the result of strong site fidelity.

	1974-76	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	31	41	107	82	254

**Warks** Another good year in the Tame Valley with a peak of at least 11 on January 31st (*cf.* 10 in December 1997), though movement between waters complicated any overall estimates. Regularly seen at Dosthill from January 1st-February 7th, with peaks of six (one drake) on January 16th *PDH*; seven (one drake) on 25th *ARD* and 31st *AC*; and eight (two drakes) on February 7th *SR*. The Coton/Lea Marston area was also favoured, with birds on several dates between January 1st-March 21st and maxima of five redheads on January 25th *MJI* and seven on February 14th *KMC*. Occasional sightings also came from Kingsbury WP, where four (one drake) circling on January 1st *KMC* was the maximum, Ladywalk and Shustoke. Away from the Tame Valley, three (one drake) from 1997 remained at Draycote until about January 14th *MJI*, *JW et al*, whilst the 1997 redhead at Brandon stayed until January 1st *BMCG*. Single redheads returned to the Tame Valley (at Coton, Dosthill and Kingsbury WP) on November 22nd, building up to a peak of five (one drake) at Dosthill on December 29th *SMH*, *BLK*. Some were again seen at Coton, Shustoke and Kingsbury WP during this time, including two drakes at the latter on December 26th *SMH*.

**Worcs** Single redheads were at Bittell from January 17th-February 9th *RAH*, *SMW et al*, Pirton on January 30th *RAP et al* and Westwood from February 23rd-March 1st *SMW et al*. Unusually, there was a stronger showing in late autumn beginning with two females at Bittell on November 17th *KGC et al*,

followed by two at Bredons Hardwick on December 7th *SJH et al*, two at Westwood on December 13th *BS et al* and one over Grimley on December 24th *RM*.

**Staffs** Another excellent year, again centred on the Barton/Croxall area, but with most records this year coming from Barton GP, where there were at least 22 individuals (eight drakes) in the first winter period and 12 (five drakes) in the second. At Croxall, three from 1997 (one drake) were still present on January 1st *ESC* followed by intermittent reports until February 2nd, when a maximum of five *ESC*. Records at Barton began with two (one drake) on January 10th *MY* after which there were five (two drakes) from February 3rd-7th *ESC* increasing to at least 10 (four drakes) from February 15th-March 16th, with maxima of 11 on February 15th *MY*, *ICW*, 12 on 21st *ICW*, 16 (five drakes) on 26th *DJA* and 14 on March 14th *MY*, *ICW*, *DJA*. Elsewhere, single redheads were at Blithfield on January 1st *MY* and intermittently between February 4th-21st *ESC*, *KMC*, *WJL*, *PDH*; and Alrewas on January 13th *ESC*. In the second winter period, a drake returned to Barton GP on November 28th *MY*, *ICW*, followed by eight (three drakes) on December 12th *DJA*, up to five of which (including one or two drakes) stayed to 31st. Elsewhere, one at Drayton Bassett on November 22nd *MJL* and a peak of five (one drake) at Dosthill on December 31st were presumably birds from Warwickshire. Single redheads were also at Chasewater on November 29th *MY* and December 12th *JA*, *PJ*; Doxey between 12th-31st *several obs*; and Tittesworth on 29th *PAW*, *MPH et al*.

**W Mid** A drake was reported at Wyken Slough on January 29th *JSJ* and a redhead was at Bartley on December 21st *SPR*.

### 1997 Addenda

**Warks** A male and redhead were at Brandon on December 19th, with the latter bird on five more dates up to 31st *BMCG*.

**Staffs** Three redheads as well as a male were at Alrewas GP on January 1st *KMC*. Two redheads were also at Belvide on December 24th *KMC*.

### Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

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

After the 1989-93 slump, numbers have reached their highest ever level.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of records	29	31	43	31	61
No. of birds	35	37	66	44	75

**Warks** Single redheads were at Draycote from January 16th-25th *SMH et al* and at Dosthill on November 7th *SMH*.

**Worcs** The single female at Bredons Hardwick from the previous year stayed to January 11th *WFP*, *RAP*, *SMW et al*, an immature was found at Upton Warren on September 27th *GG*, *TMH*, *RAP*, *SMW et al* and a female was at Westwood on November 2nd *TMH et al*.

**Staffs** Redheads were at Blithfield from March 15th-April 1st *WJL*, *MY*, *ESC* and December 6th-13th *WJL*, *ESC*; Alrewas on October 17th *ICW*; Chasewater from October 28th-31st *CM*, *GE* and Belvide on December 27th *KMC*.



*One of several **Great Northern Divers** that wintered at Draycote (Keith Stone).*



*A **Dotterel** on the North Staffordshire Moors (Keith Stone).*



*This **Pectoral Sandpiper** was a welcome autumn visitor to Blithfield (Keith Stone).*



*There was a small September passage of **Curlew Sandpipers** at Chasewater (Phill Ward).*

### 1996 Addenda and Corrigendum

**Staffs** At Chasewater, the birds recorded on November 16th were also present the following day. In addition, a pair was there on January 7th and a female/immature flew south on October 21st GE.

### 1997 Addendum

**Staffs** Two females at Belvide on April 26th were followed by a male on December 24th KCM.

### Goosander *Mergus merganser*

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

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Alvecote	34	11	15	6	1	1	1	1	1	2	-	18
Dosthill/Kingsbury	40	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Draycote	90	35	17	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	22	35
Ladywalk	21	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Shustoke	40	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Bittell	19	14	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	29
Bredons Hardwick	5	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kinsham	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6
Westwood	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
Belvide	138	58	26	6	0	0	1	0	1	12	35	79
Blithfield	146	85	65	16	-	-	-	-	1	9	52	81
Brookleys	22	30	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	30
Chasewater	22	17	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	65
Chillington	25	23	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Copmere	23	10	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10
Doxey	9	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	40
Kings Bromley	6	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Tittesworth	25	13	8	7	2	1	-	-	2	0	17	18
Sandwell Valley	66	57	36	10	-	-	-	-	-	5	36	43

**Warks** Good numbers were still present from the record 1997 influxes. During January-February there were also up to 11 at Napton Res, with four or less at Brandon, Coton, Earlswood Lakes and Wormleighton Res. Six at Alvecote on April 25th were the last birds in spring, apart from a single summering female again. Autumn birds started arriving from October 9th, with four at Brandon on November 19th, though most did not appear until December and numbers remained low. Up to four at Earlswood Lakes and one at Napton Res in December were the only other records.

**Worcs** Bred successfully at a site in the Teme Valley. Generally a poor year. The larger counts away from Bittell were seven on the R. Teme near Berrow Hill (Martley) on February 15th and 12 at Trimpey on March 20th. Smaller numbers were reported from 11 other sites.

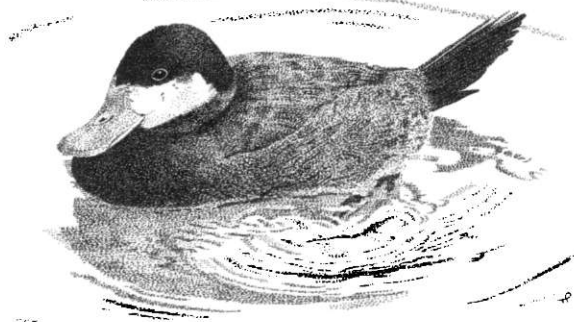
**Staffs** A female with three young in Dovedale on September 19th was the only suggestion of breeding, though birds were observed in spring at several sites along the Churnet and Dove and on the Trent at Wolseley Bridge. The recent trend for high numbers continued in the first winter period, with both Belvide and Blithfield having counts of national significance. Small numbers were noted during the early months on the Trent and Dove, with 15 at Rugeley on March 11th. First noted during the latter part of the year on July 21st at Belvide, but elsewhere not until September 15th when a single female was at

Blithfield. By the year-end numbers had increased again, approaching those of previous years. Away from the tabulated sites, small numbers, up to six were reported from seven sites.

*W Mid*

In the first winter period up to three were in Sutton Park on various dates between January and March, whilst singletons were reported from Fens Pools on January 16th; Sheepwash UP on January 18th and March 29th; Bartley on February 1st and March 14th; and Clayhanger on February 17th. A spring drake was in the Bradnock's Marsh/Marsh Lane GPs area between April 13th-20th. The second winter period saw records of two on Longmoor Pool on December 4th, one at Fens Pools on 7th and one at Stubbers Green on 12th.

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



*Ruddy Duck (Terry Parker)*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coton	208	210	142	—	4	2	6	29	278	260	190	208
Dosthill/Kingsbury	210	163	116	—	10	—	—	—	6	—	8	—
Draycote	2	2	2	—	2	2	2	1	—	5	5	7
Bittell	6	2	3	4	3	8	3	11	14	11	1	8
Pirton	3	7	14	15	10	6	12	18	16	5	2	2
Upton Warren	1	15	15	20	12	5	3	4	2	3	2	1
Westwood	36	52	51	26	2	12	10	20	20	32	49	40
Wilden	1	2	12	6	6	6	6	12	8	10	1	—
Aqualate	3	2	25	27	17	8	0	0	2	6	2	0
Belvide	30	32	45	27	18	2	4	8	3	24	48	38
Betley Mere	3	5	4	—	1	—	5	10	4	—	6	—
Blithfield	327	288	270	15	9	5	15	37	111	374	372	416
Brookleys Lake	—	—	5	—	2	4	6	—	6	22	4	1
Chasewater	7	2	3	7	12	7	7	7	5	4	6	4
Chillington	1	—	—	5	4	3	9	5	7	—	—	—
Sandwell Valley	4	1	4	—	4	1	—	—	—	1	2	2

- Warks** No breeding reports this year, although small numbers were present on various waters during the breeding season, including Alvecote, Bedworth Slough, Brandon, Charlecote GP, Chesterton, Coombe, Ladywalk, Lower Radbourn, Newfield Pool and Stoneton Moat. Maxima away from tabulated waters included 12 at Packington Park in February, nine at Brandon in April and seven at Lower Radbourn in September.
- Worcs** Bred at Grimley (two broods), Kinsham, Pilton, Upton Warren, Westwood (four broods) and Wilden. The count of 52 at Westwood on February 26th set a new record for the county *TMH*. Small numbers were seen during the year at Bredons Hardwick, Grimley, Kinsham and Lower Moor.
- Staffs** Bred at Betley Mere, Chasewater, Holly Bush, Woodmill and Doxey (two pairs on the CBC plot as in 1997). Adults were present during the summer months as tabulated above and also at Aqualate Park Flight Pool, Byrkley Park, Copmere, Elford/Fisherwick, Gerrards Bromley and Hill Ridware. At Blithfield, one of the country's main wintering sites, numbers in the first winter period were below the five-yearly average maximum for the January-March period of 437. For the second winter period, the December maximum of 416 birds closely matched the five-yearly average of 408. Numbers of less than a dozen were also reported from nine other sites.
- W Mid** Broods were noted at Fens Pools, Goscote Valley, Sandwell Valley and Stubbers Green. Further reported from Bumble Hole, Clayhanger, Hydes Road Pool (two pairs in June), Marsh Lane GPs, Netherton Res, Sutton Park and Witton Lakes.

#### **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Only the third regional record and the first for the West Midlands County, the others being seen in Worcestershire in 1986 and Staffordshire in 1991.

- W Mid** One was watched for five minutes as it drifted slowly over Balsall Common on March 17th *NPB*.

#### **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

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

Sightings continue to increase, but as usual with this species a number of records were reported only to the local birdlines and were not followed up by a written description to substantiate the claim.

- Warks** Singles were seen at Whitestone heading south on February 13th *per JO'D*, Oversley Wood on March 23rd *CHP*, Ashorne on 27th *JJB*, Waverley Wood on April 30th *per WWT*, Kineton on May 24th *JL*, *NP*, Wolvey on 29th *per WWT* and at Great Alne sometime in July *per JJB*. One that had been first seen at Boddington Res (Northants) was seen to fly off north and enter the county at Priors Marston on August 7th *JJB*.
- Worcs** One at Hinton-on-the-Green on April 10th *GRM* was probably the bird seen at nearby Broadway GP on April 12th *CC*, *RG*, *MET*. Others were seen at Worcestershire Beacon on May 2nd *PGG* and from a pub car-park at Longley Green on June 7th *MJI*, *RM*. The only acceptable autumn record concerned one at Bredon Hill on November 10th and 14th *TN*, *RAP*.

**Staffs** Singles were at Chillington on April 3rd *SN* and Million Wood (Enville) on May 2nd *JSt, PM*.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One flew high over Brandon on May 1st *BMCG*.

**Staffs** One visited Chasewater on April 10th *GE*.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

*Scarce though increasing passage migrant.*

Numbers have risen dramatically in line with the growing national population.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	15	23	19	32	56

**Warks** An immature male was cruising over fields at BAD Kineton on May 11th *JJB* before drifting off to the north-east. An immature/female was at Brandon on August 19th-20th *BMCG*.

**Worcs** A return to form after two lean years. Single females/immatures were at Upton Warren on May 9th *DJS et al* and June 7th *PRC, RAP et al*; and at Kinsham on May 17th *RAP* and August 27th *LAB*. The last bird was discovered feeding on a recent kill, but the prey could not be determined.

**Staffs** Adult males were at Creswell on April 26th *MDB, DW* and Hixon on 29th *DK*. An immature then visited Blithfield on August 12th and 16th *ESC, WJL*.

**W Mid** A female flew through Marsh Lane GPs on May 16th *MH, TCH, DJ, DSJ*.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** A female visited Brandon on May 3rd *BMCG*.

**Staffs** A juvenile was seen at Chasewater on August 5th and 9th *GE*.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

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

Numbers have been fairly stable over the past decade.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	27	18	23	38	41

A very poor year indeed.

**Staffs** Again, few records were received. All reports from the Moors referred to ringtails at Swallow Moss, on January 25th *NC*, November 30th *ESC* and December 12th (two) *SAR*. One there on October 10th *WJL* had been wing-tagged as a fledgling in the Forest of Bowland (Lancs) in June. On Cannock Chase, a male was at the Katyn Memorial on January 25th *MY*, with presumably the same bird at the Glacial Boulder on February 17th, when it was accompanied by a ringtail, and again on 24th *PJS*. A ringtail was then seen twice on October 10th, at Brocton Field *DK, LK* and at Oldacre *ICW*. Elsewhere, a male mobbed a White Stork over Chillington on April 28th *SN*, a ringtail was at Tittesworth on the same day *BH, JO, SG* and another ringtail attacked roosting Common Starlings at Aqualate on December 2nd *FCG*.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** A male was hunting at Brandon on December 14th-15th *BMCG*. This brings the confirmed total for that year to a notable four, all unusually males.



**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

*Rare passage migrant and summer visitor. Bred Worcs in 1926. (3/10).*

- Staffs** A female was seen at Seighford and then Doxey on May 28th MDB, while an immature was at Aquamoor on July 16th GS.

**Northern Goshawk** (Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis*

*Scarce resident and visitor.*

- Warks** None reported this year, but more information would be welcome.
- Worcs** Reliably reported from four localities in the county, with breeding confirmed at one of them. *Observers names withheld.*
- Staffs** Bred at one site, where young were seen, and suspected at another, where up to two males were displaying. Reported from another six sites during the breeding season and a further five outside it. *Observers names withheld.*
- W Mid** One flew over Fens Pools on April 7th AP.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** (Sparrowhawk) *Accipiter nisus*

*Fairly common resident.*

- Warks** Breeding records came from Brandon, Farnborough, Fenny Compton, Long Itchington, Oakley Wood and Wormleighton Res. Recorded at a total of 64 sites, rather less than the 75 of 1997, though with no real change in status indicated.
- Worcs** Breeding confirmed near Kinsham and breeding season reports from the following 34 sites, the same number as last year: Barbourne, Bewdley, Bittell, Bredon Hill, Broad Green, Broadway GP, Castlemorton Common, Croome Perry Wood, Diglis, Dodford, Drakes Broughton, Dunhampstead, Evesham, Ghelevell Park, Grafton Wood, Hallow, Kempsey Common, Lenchwick, Malvern Wells, Monk Wood, Nipple Coppice, North Hill, Oakenshaw Wood, Offenham, Ravenshill Wood, Spetchley, Strensham, The Knapp, Tibberton, Timberhonger, Upton Warren, Wood Norton, Worcester and Wyre Piddle. Noted at a further 28 localities outside the breeding season. Single males were killed flying into windows at Little Comberton on March 26th and April 4th respectively.
- Staffs** Widely reported, as usual these days, with records being received from 70 localities. Breeding records came from Blithfield, Doxey, Elford, Kingsmead Hospital (Stafford) and Tittesworth. There were also several records of birds visiting gardens, including one at a garden near Denstone which was seen to carry off a Great Spotted Woodpecker!
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from the following 21 localities (cf. 15 in 1997): Acock's Green, Bilston, Chadwick End, Deers Leap Wood, Fens Pools, Harborne, Harborne NR, Hockley, Marston Green, Mons Hill (one territory on the CBC plot), Park Lime Pits, Saltwells LNR (at least two pairs), Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (up to two pairs), Smethwick, Solihull, Sutton Park, Tettenhall, Valley Park/Wergs area, Warley Woods and Woodgate Valley. Outside the breeding season reported from 17 localities (cf. 25 in 1997).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo**Frequent and increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Another huge increase in records, with reports from about 123 sites. There are now probably 50 or more pairs during the breeding season, but only about 16 pairs were proved to have bred. Birds are now being seen regularly throughout the county, even in poorly wooded areas such as Draycote, the Tame Valley and around Rugby. Parties up to six were noted at a number of localities, with larger ones of nine near Preston-on-Stour on March 4th, seven at Shuckburgh Hills on May 24th and nine at Pleasance Farm on September 17th. A bird which was 75% white was seen in the Fenny Compton and Northend area on August 29th and October 4th.

**Worcs** Recorded in the breeding season at 92 sites throughout the county, with breeding confirmed at 20 of these. Noted at 47 additional places outside the breeding season. The larger parties were eight at Bredons Hardwick on February 7th, 14 at Haws Hill Wood on March 1st and nine at Defford on May 4th. Two were discovered, during May, on a road near Shrawley Wood with their talons locked together. They only separated when the observer left his car and approached to within a few metres *SM*.

**Staffs** The spread of this species continues apace. Records were received from 97 localities within 70 tetrads, 55 of these falling during April-September (*cf.* 13 localities and one breeding record in 1988). Singles were seen in 30 tetrads, pairs in 13 and more than two birds in 11 tetrads, while estimates of breeding included five pairs in both the Seighford area and in the Churnet Valley. Parties of four or more were seen at Beech (12), Belvide (eight), Blithfield (four), Brookleys (four), Chillington (eight), Coombes Valley (10), Pillaton (five), Sutton (six) and Yoxall (eight).

**W Mid** A minimum of four pairs appear to have been present in the county during the breeding season. A pair bred at Hampton-in-Arden, one, possibly two, pairs were present at Berkswell and a pair was regularly noted in the Fen End area from July-September. Four were soaring at Hillwood Common in mid-May, two were over Pedmore on June 5th and one over Bartley on 10th. Outside the breeding season, two or more were reported at Dunstall Park/Valley Park (max. four on March 15th), Chadwick End (max. 3 in autumn) and Dorridge, Lutley Wedge, Norton Lane (Earlwood) and Sandwell Valley (very regularly). Singles were noted at a further 12 places, including on ten dates at Fens Pools.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus**Scarce, but increasing, passage migrant.*

Numbers continue to increase, but the rate appears to be slowing.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	28	22	26	65	87

**Warks** An excellent year, with at least seven individuals, began with one fishing unsuccessfully in Packington Park on a day in early April *per NPB*. On April 11th another was seen flying south over Dosthill *per SMH* at 1630hrs and then distantly between Whitacre Heath and Shustoke at 1715hrs *SMH*. This

may have been the same bird that then frequented Packington Park from 11th-19th *NPB*, *SMH*. One was seen carrying a fish at Claverdon on April 16th *per SMH*, with further singles at Packington on May 22nd *NPB*, flying along the R. Avon at Wasperton on July 14th *JJB*, and at Packington again on September 7th and October 1st *per NPB*.

*Worcs* Singles south-east over Eardiston on June 9th *RM* and at Trimpley on several dates from July 8th-19th *BW*, *SMW et al* were the only records.

*Staffs* Spring passage brought singles to Chasewater on March 28th *GR*, Tittesworth on April 12th *RK*, *PAW*, Blithfield on April 13th *WJL* and Westport the following day *WJL*. Autumn passage birds were reported at Tittesworth on September 4th *PAW*, *MH*, *RB*, Blithfield on 6th *PDH*, *MJI*, *GS* and finally Tittesworth again, where a well-watched juvenile remained from October 4th-17th *PAW*, *SG*, *JO et al*.

*W Mid* Spring migrants flew over Wrens Nest NNR on March 29th *DIH*, Mere Green on April 8th *HAD*, *LJD*, Marsh Lane GPs on April 18th *NPB* and northwards over Dorridge on June 14th *NDG*. One was reported to be in Sutton Park for two days in mid-May, but no details or description have been forthcoming.

#### **1995 Addendum**

*Staffs* One flew north through Belvide on April 20th *KMC*.

#### **1997 Addendum**

*Warks* Brandon had one on May 25th-26th and an immature on August 27th *BMCG*.

*W Mid* One flew west over Netherton Hill on May 13th *CJT*.

### **Common Kestrel (Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus***

*Fairly common resident.*

*Warks* Eight chicks were fledged from two of the 11 nest-boxes along the M40 and three more were found dead in the nest *MT*. Also bred successfully at Alvecote, Chesterton, Fenny Compton, Hampton Wood (in nest box), Kingsbury, Ladywalk (on pylon), Priors Marston and Wormleighton. Widely reported from all over the county and apparently doing well at present.

*Worcs* Bred at Bishampton Vale, Croome and Hurcott Wood and recorded in the breeding season from the following 45 sites (*cf.* just 23 in 1997): Barbourne, Bewdley, Bittell, Bransford, Bredon Hill, Broad Green, Brownheath Common, Castlemorton Common, Crowle, Drakes Broughton, Droitwich, Dunhamstead, Eckington, Elmley Castle, Grafton Wood, Grimley, Hallow, Hangmans Hill, Hanley Castle, Hanley Swan, Hewell Grange, Hindlip, Kempsey Common, Kinsham, Lenchwick, Lower Moor, Martley, Monkwood Green, North Hill, Oakley, Peopleton, Pepper Wood, Powick, Stoke Prior, Strensham, The Knapp, Tibberton, Tiddesley Wood, Timberhonger, Upton Warren, Wadborough, Warndon, Whittington, Windmill Hill and Wyre Piddle. Noted outside the breeding season at a further 35 localities.

*Staffs* Widely reported across the county. Breeding records, with the number of chicks in brackets, were reported from Seighford (four); Venable's factory, Doxey (four); the Roaches (four); Swallow Moss (four/five); City General Hospital, Stoke (three); and Tittesworth. Elsewhere, reported from 30 sites.

**W Mid** Breeding season records emanated from the following 13 localities (*cf.* 16 in 1997): Birmingham City Centre, Bowmans Harbour, Clayhanger, Halesowen Abbey area, Kingswinford, Marston Green, Mons Hill CBC plot, Oxley, Sheldon CP, Saltwells LNR (two to three pairs), Sheepwash UP, Smethwick and Valley Park. Despite last year's appeal, it would appear to be still under-recorded as a breeding species. Outside the breeding season, reports came from 18 sites (*cf.* 22 in 1997).

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

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

**Warks** Another good year, with about 17 individuals reported. An adult male was at Wishaw on January 2nd, 11th *SMH* and 31st *AC*, with possibly the same bird in a tree by the canal at Bodymoor Heath *REH*, *DJS* on the latter date, and a female at Ladywalk on February 9th *per SLC*. A pair were in the Coombe area on various dates during January-March *per JJB*. Draycote had single birds on January 25th, and on March 16th and 24th (a male) *JFCJ et al.* A bird seen at Snitterfield on January 6th *per WWT* was probably the male seen at nearby Sherbourne on 17th *JJB*, while a female/immature was at Charlecote GP on February 17th *JJB* and one was at Claverdon on March 20th *per SR*. The first autumn record was of two female/immatures at Wishaw on September 22nd *BLK*, followed by one at Alvecote on October 7th *per SR*. An immature male was then at Kingsbury Rifle Range on October 10th and November 14th, with an adult male there on December 28th *SMH*. Draycote again had birds on October 22nd, December 5th (male), 12th and 16th *sev. obs.* A female was at Wormleighton Res and nearby Fenny Compton on November 6th, and again at the latter place on 11th and 19th *JJB*. Finally, there was a male (possibly the returning Sherbourne bird from January) at Heath End on October 23rd *JJB* and a female near Forshaw Heath on December 24th *ARD*.



*Merlin (Terry Parker)*

**Worcs** Singles were seen in January at Upton Warren on 10th *KM*, Kempsey on 12th *MAS*, Westwood on 17th *REH*, *DJS*, Bredons Hardwick on 21st *SJH* and Lower Moor on 25th *RAP*. Just a handful followed later in the winter, with singles at Bredons Hardwick on February 16th *SJH*, Grimley on March 8th *MJI* and Elmbridge on March 25th *CHR*. Autumn began with an immature male at Kinsham on September 3rd *SMW*, another seen regularly on Bredon

Hill from October 10th-23rd *GHP*, *RAP*, *SMW* and then further singles at Ryall on October 18th *GHP* and Eldersfield on October 25th *REH*. A male at Holt on November 4th *SMW* was followed by a female there on December 3rd *RM*, whilst singles were at Kempsey Lower Ham and Kempsey on November 10th and 12th respectively *MAS*. Grimley played host to a male on December 12th and 14th *TMH*, *BS* and another male was seen on December 13th *SC*, *MIW*.

**Staffs** Again, few records were received. On the Moors, just four breeding season records came from four sites, with no evidence of nesting *obs names withheld*, while outside the breeding season recorded only from Swallow Moss, where there was a female on January 25th *NC*, two (no sex given) during late February *MW* and a male on October 14th *NU*. Away from the Moors, a male was at Whitemoor Haye on February 15th *RJJ* and 21st *ESC*, while in autumn one was seen there on November 3rd *DJA*.

**W Mid** In the first winter period, the Wishaw Lane/Wiggins Hill Road (Minworth) area was again favoured, but details were only received for adult males on January 10th *BLK* and 27th *PAH*. In the second winter period, Wishaw Lane was again visited by two female/immature birds on October 5th *BLK*, with a probable male also present on November 20th *BLK* and a male on December 5th *SMH* and 12th *SMH*. Singles were seen over Chelmsley Wood on November 12th *RJK*, along Bosty Lane, Aldridge, (female) on December 6th *PPN* and in Sandwell Valley (male) on 31st *PMH*.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Chasewater had a male on February 2nd and a female on September 20th.

#### **Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

*Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant.*

*Average: April 23rd (31)–October 4th (34)*

First noted at Upton Warren on April 16th and last seen at both Brandon and Draycote on October 4th.

**Warks** Reported from 46 sites, slightly fewer than last year. Little information on breeding pairs was received, but one pair were feeding young in the nest at a locality in the south-east and a family group was seen at another in the north. Second-hand reports of nesting pairs also came from a site in the east of the county and at another in the south-west.

**Worcs** No proof of breeding was received, but birds were noted in spring at Barnards Green, Bredons Hardwick, Castlemorton Common, Dowles Brook, Feckenham, Flashers Wood, Grimley, Hartlebury Common, Kemerton, Kempsey, Kinsham, Langdale Wood, Little Comberton, Long Covert (three on May 24th), Lower Moor, Pinvin, Ryall, Strensham, Upton Snodsbury, Upton Warren, Wadborough and Westwood. Seen from mid-summer through to the autumn at a further 32 localities, including parties of three juveniles at both Bishampton Bank and Kinsham on September 5th.

**Staffs** Bred successfully in the centre of the county, where a pair raised three young. Also bred again in the south-east, where a pair and one juvenile were seen until early September. Two adults and a juvenile were also reported till late September on the edge of Cannock Chase and two juveniles were noted in

the east of the county. Reported from 26 other localities, with most sightings at well watched areas like Blithfield, Chasewater and Belvide (nine sightings in August and 11 in September). Birds were also seen at the Barn Swallow roosts at Betley Mere and Poolfields (Newcastle) and one caught a Common Starling at Boundary village on May 31st.

- W Mid** Three pairs were known to have bred successfully in the county. Two birds were also noted in September at a site where breeding has taken place in the past. During spring passage between May 5th-June 5th, birds were noted at Clayhanger, Fens Pools (two dates), Harborne NR, Sandwell Valley (three dates), Sheepwash UP and Valley Park, whilst a mid-summer bird was at Park Lime Pits on June 30th. More numerous in late summer and autumn, when seen between July 7th-September 24th at Bartley (several dates: max two), Chelmsley Wood, Fens Pools (two dates: max two), Marsh Lane GPs (four dates: max two), Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (six dates) and Valley Park (two dates).

**1997 Addendum**

- Warks** A very late bird was at Brandon on October 25th.

**Peregrine Falcon** (Peregrine) *Falco peregrinus*

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding species since 1992.*

- Warks** Fewer are now seen in the north of the county, but more in the south. Reports from Hams Hall and Ladywalk on January 10th-30th, February 20th and March 30th *SLC, PDH, SMH, BLK et al*, possibly all referred to the same adult male. An adult male was seen carrying prey over Stockingford on May 25th and one was at Nuneaton on December 7th *DJK*. A female was also seen on prey at Wishaw on October 1st *BLK*, with possibly the same bird at Ladywalk on 5th and 25th *per SLC* and again at Dosthill on November 15th *SMH*. The east of the county produced singles at Draycote on February 12th, March 31st and August 22nd *JJB et al*, a female at Coombe on March 14th *JJB*, and one at Brandon on March 26th *JMR*, April 5th, 8th and October 17th *BMCG*. Southern and central districts had birds at Bishop's Itchington on January 9th *UF*, Marton on 10th *REH, DJS*, Watgall on about 15th *per MA*, Oversley Wood on 17th and again on March 22nd (a male) *JJB*, Lighthorne Quarry (two) on February 8th *per SR*, Northend on 10th *JJB* and at nearby Fenny Compton on 27th (a male) *JJB*, Alderminster on July 10th *per SR*, Napton Res on August 14th *GP*, Idlicote on 19th (an adult female eating a Wood Pigeon on observer's lawn) *GM-K*, Fenny Compton Hills on 27th (female) *JJB*, Pleasance Farm on October 22nd *PFA*, Temple Pool on November 15th (female) *PD* and Warwick Town Centre from December 24th-31st (female) *per JJB*.

- Worcs** Present in suitable breeding habitat at three localities throughout the year. Regularly seen at Bredons Hardwick, Broadway, Cookley, Grimley, Islandpool, Kinsham, Longdon Marsh, Malvern, Throckmorton, Timberhonger, Upton Warren, Westwood and Wyre Piddle *several observers*. Otherwise, singles at Wychbold on January 24th *TMH*, Defford on February 15th and November 14th *KH*; Tibberton on February 15th *RRH*; near Bromsgrove on February 21st *TMH*; Devils Spittleful on February 28th *BW*; Powick on March

2nd *MAS* and November 15th *BS*; Whittington on March 20th *KM*; Stoke Prior, Strensham and Walsgrove Hill all on April 5th *AG*, *MWCW*, *RM*; Besford on April 19th *RAP*; Bishampton Vale Pool on August 29th *GHP*; Blakeshall on August 30th *BW*; Warndon on August 30th (two) *SMW*; Ryall on September 5th *LAB*; Habberley Valley on September 23rd *RL*; Aston Mill on October 1st and November 1st *GHP*; Cotheridge on October 3rd *GDL*; Wilden on October 3rd *BW*; Bredon Hill on October 10th *GHP*; Iwerley on October 10th and November 29th *BW*; Bittell on October 22nd (two) *REH*; Upton-on-Severn on November 8th *SMW*; Caunsall on November 14th and 21st *BW*; Bibbeys Hollow on December 4th *CPR*; and Colliers Knapp on December 30th *MET*. Regular at Belvide and Blithfield, with monthly sightings as follows:

*Staffs*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Belvide	6	4	3	4	1	0	1	4	9	6	9	8
Blithfield	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	3	7	2	0	0

Otherwise singles were reported at Doxey on January 18th *MDB*, *RT* and 29th (adult male) *SAR*; near Boscobel on 24th *RF*; at Orchard Common on February 1st *NC*; Pool Dam Marsh (adult female) on 8th *SJT*; Levedale on 22nd *PS*; Chasewater on 24th *BSm*; Enville (adult male) on 28th *SAR*; Doxey on March 22nd *MDB*; Chasewater (female) on April 24th *GE*; Stafford on May 10th *MDB*; and Barton (adult) in April/May *RJJ*. Reports later in the year (again all singles) came from Stafford on August 27th *GS* and Aqualate on September 6th *FCG* (both immature females); Elford on 17th *DA*; Blackbank on 27th *JAL*; Chasewater on October 3rd *ICW*, *MY*; Morridge on 10th *WJL*; Whitmoor Haye on 25th and November 8th (the latter an adult female) *ICW*, *MY*; Drayton Bassett (immature) on 9th *BLK*; Tittesworth (juvenile) on 13th *AGJ*, *CJ*; Houghton on December 16th *MT*; and Woolaston Fen (adult male) on 20th *RF*.

*W Mid*

Up to three were present at a suitable breeding site throughout the year, but not known whether breeding took place *many observers*. Elsewhere, sightings increased further, with reports from Bowmans Harbour on February 14th *HK*; Sandwell Valley on May 6th *PMH* and November 15th *DW*; Sheepwash UP on June 11th *DW*; Bartley on September 14th *SPR*; Lutley Wedge on 23rd *CPR*; Four Oaks on 30th *HSQ*; Fens Pools on October 4th *AP*; Wiggins Hill Road (Minworth) on 19th *BLK*; and Marsh Lane GPs on 25th *PFA*, *NPB*.

**1996 Addenda***Staffs*

Also noted disturbing the gull roost at Chasewater on February 23rd, April 24th, May 7th and June 1st – the latter three all adults *GE*.

**1997 Addenda***Warks*

A single bird was seen at Brandon on May 5th *BMCG*.

*Staffs*

One was at Cannock Tip on February 2nd *KMC*.

*W Mid*

One was at Netherton Res on March 27th *CJT*.

**Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

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

*Staffs*

Thinly scattered across the North Staffordshire Moors, with three pairs at Baldstones NR, two pairs at Drystone Edge and seven territories at Roach

End/Back Forest. Other counts included three at Goldsitch Moss on January 20th, three at Knotbury on February 1st, four at Middle Hills on November 30th, seven at Gun Hill on October 11th and a maximum of seven at Swallow Moss on October 22nd

### **Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

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

#### **Staffs**

The long, sad decline approaches its inevitable conclusion and this may be the last Annual Report to record Black Grouse in the Region. The 1973-75 survey found 56 males at 13 leks. In 1982 a possible 37 pairs were recorded, but by 1988 this had dropped to 25 birds, with 12 males and nine females at Swallow Moss, which by then was the only lek. The table below gives the maximum reported counts of males at Swallow Moss since 1979:

79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
9	8	12	18	5	15	15	11	9	12	17	9	7	10	12	7	6	6	4	4

The following sightings were reported this year:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Males	2	1	4	2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
Females	2	3	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-

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

*Common resident.*

#### **Warks**

Reported from 36 localities (cf. 51 in 1997) across all parts of the county, including several breeding records. The larger coveys all occurred during the last two months of the year, with maxima of 39 at Ilmington Downs on November 8th, 16 at Fenny Compton on 19th, 15 at Grandborough on December 28th, 18 at Chesterton on 30th and 22 at Ladywalk during the same month.

#### **Worcs**

Maxima of 50 at Aston Mill on October 1st, 25 at Beckford and 300 at Kinsham on October 15th were no doubt the product of local releases for shooting. Small numbers were reported from 31 localities.

#### **Staffs**

Numbers fluctuate due to releases by shooting syndicates and others. Such releases were made at Aqualate Park and Ranton Estate, where over 50 were seen in a maize field in December. Two pairs bred at Seighford. The larger coveys were 13, at Drayton Bassett and Needwood, and 10 at White-moor Haye. Smaller numbers were at eight other sites.

#### **W Mid**

Up to three were regularly seen throughout the year in Sandwell Valley. Dunstall Park/Valley Park held one on March 18th, then two on April 7th, 12th, 23rd and 27th. A male and a possible female were at Harborne NR on April 27th, with the male again on May 29th – the first records for the reserve. A pair was at Bradnock's Marsh on May 8th and a male at Pedmore in mid-July.

### **1997 Addendum and Corrigendum**

#### **Staffs**

The largest covey reported was 17, at Catholme on January 1st.

### **Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

*Still a common, though much declined, resident.*

#### **Warks**

Fewer reports this year, with records from 20 sites (cf. 31 in 1997 and 35 in 1996). Present in the breeding season in the Burton Dassett-Northend area



and at Church Pool Covert (first in the Ladywalk area for three years), Draycote, Dunton, Long Itchington, Marcliff, Priors Hardwick (two pairs), Radway and Tysoe. The larger coveys were of 12 at Maxstoke on October 20th, 14 at Priors Marston on November 11th and 20 near Chadwick End on 16th. Scarcer this year in the east and south-east of the county *JJB*, with none seen at all at Fenny Compton where usually several pairs.

*Worcs* Bred at Tibberton. The larger coveys were 16 at Timberhonger on January 7th, 50 at Bredon Hill on October 10th, 60 at Kinsham during October, 13 at Holt from November 13th-24th and 22 at Overbury on December 22nd, but some of those around Bredon Hill in the autumn were probably the product of deliberate releases for shooting. Small numbers were also seen at a further 17 sites.

*Staffs* A few more records were received than last year, with pairs in the breeding season at Apedale, Belvide, Brockhurst, Chasewater, Crumpwood, Little Wyrley, Marston, Morridge, Needwood, Pottal Pool, Seighford, Swallow Moss and Tittesworth.

*W Mid* Encouragingly, there were more records this year of this fast declining species. Breeding season reports came from the Park Lime Pits area, farmland off Bosty Lane in Aldridge (a pair) and Sutton Park. January saw three on land due for redevelopment at Marston Green and a covey of 10 on set-aside at Bickenhill on 11th. Noted in April at Clayhanger (two), Pelsall North Common and Stubbers Green (two). In the late summer and autumn, birds were noted at Park Lime Pits in August, while up to five were in the Pelsall North Common area during September, suggesting that the farmland and urban 'wastelands' of Walsall are a stronghold for the species.

### **Common Quail (*Quail*) *Coturnix coturnix***

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

*Average: May 7th (11)–August 26th (8)*

Extreme dates were May 17th at Wasperton and August 6th at Hunningham. A poor showing after last year.

*Warks* One heard calling in a field of lucerne and then seen in flight at Wasperton on May 17th *ARD* was followed by further calling males at Priors Marston on June 7th *MJL*, near Beausale on 12th *GRH*, *JVH*, Calcutt during the same month *DEB*, Fenny Compton on August 2nd *JJB* and Hunningham on 5th-6th *per SMH*.

*Worcs* One heard calling at Strensham on May 31st *MWCW et al*, one heard calling in flight over Cookley late on the night of June 1st *BW*, one at Cowsden from June 4th-6th *GHP* and one calling from acid grassland at Iverley on July 4th *BW*.

*Staffs* The highest count was five birds calling at High Offley on June 21st *SAR*. Otherwise, there was one at Beech on May 27th *WJL*; two at nearby Hanchurch from May 30th-June 3rd *WJL*; one at Ivetsey Bank on May 30th *RF*; one at Whitmoor Haye from June 4th-27th *ESC*, which was watched calling from the roadside on June 12th *NU*; and one or two at Lichfield from June 7th-17th *DJA*. No records this year from the usual site at Seighford *NG*.

*W Mid* One heard at Clayhanger on June 15th *CM*.

**1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** One heard calling from a field of barley in Highfield from June 10th-12th GE.

**1997 Addendum**

**Staffs** One was heard calling east of Iwerley on July 12th, again from barley KMC.

**Common Pheasant** (*Pheasant*) *Phasianus colchicus*

*Very common resident, but mainly in rural areas.*

**Warks** Little information was received, but 36 on the BAD Kington May count was just below average.

**Worcs** Over a hundred were released in autumn at Bredon Hill and Kinsham for shooting. Elsewhere, up to 25 were at Stanley Wood during the year, including a pure white bird. Now very scarce at Upton Warren, where two on October 4th was the only report.

**Staffs** A slack day for raptor watching resulted in a count of 114 at Beech! Unusual sightings came from the middle of Kidsgrove and from Stonnall, while an all black individual was seen at Belvide on November 21st.

**W Mid** Present in the breeding season at Clayhanger, Colton Hills and the Minworth area. A female on Netherton Hill throughout the year was joined by a second bird on November 12th. Noted at Harborne NR in January and March. Males were in Valley Park in April and at Pedmore in July.

**Golden Pheasant** *Chrysolophus pictus*

*Rare feral visitor.*

**Staffs** A male was seen at Rushton Spencer on August 23rd NC.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

*Frequent winter visitor and uncommon breeding resident.*

**Warks** Probably bred at Brandon (two-three pairs), with birds also present in summer at Coombe, Ladywalk and Napton Res. A welcome increase in reports outside the breeding season, especially in late autumn, with birds at Brandon (max. six on March 1st), Charlecote GP (two), Chesterton, Dosthill (two), Draycote, Ladywalk (max. seven on December 6th), Lighthorne Pools, Lighthorne Quarry (two), Napton Res, Seeswood Pool, Ufton Fields, Whatcote and Wormleighton Res (max. four on November 27th).

**Worcs** Bred at Upton Warren and Westwood, and present in the breeding season at Oakley. Winter records came from Bibbeys Hollow, Bishampton Vale Pool, Grimley, Lower Moor, Strensham, Upton Warren (max. six on March 9th) and Wilden.

**Staffs** Doxey remains the county stronghold, with 12 pairs (down from 15 pairs in 1997, but consistent with five-yearly average). May also have bred at Belvide where, following one from January 9th-22nd, a bird was singing on June 17th and singles were noted on July 18th, from August 8th-25th (with a second bird on latter date) and September 27th. One then remained from October 17th to the year's end. Possibly bred at Betley Mere as well, where at least one bird was present all summer. Elsewhere, singles were reported from Aqualate, Belvide, Drayton Bassett, Crumpwood, Hill Ridware, Tixall Wide and Westport.

**W Mid** The first winter period saw up to four at Mushroom Green Marsh during January-March; up to two at Sandwell Valley in January-February and at Sheepwash UP from January- April; and singles at Fens Pools intermittently between January 25th-February 21st and at Goscote Valley on March 19th. A juvenile at Buckpool on August 1st may possibly indicate local breeding. Mushroom Green Marsh again held up to four birds from September-December; while up to three were at Sandwell Valley from September 2nd and at Sheepwash UP from October 4th, both to the year's end. Singles were at Fens Pools on November 14th and 27th and Goscote Valley on December 1st.

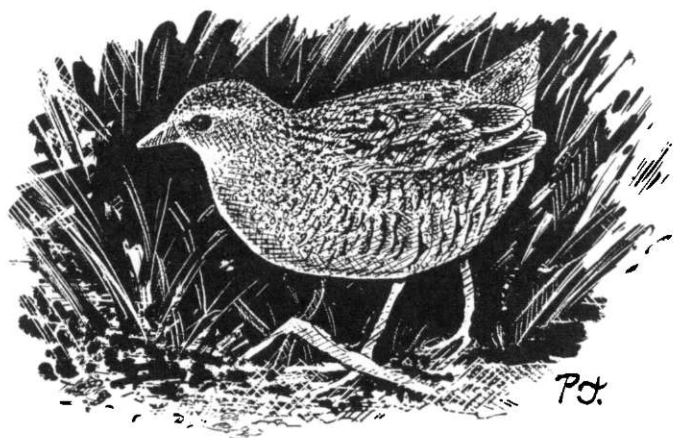
#### **1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Singles were also recorded at Belvide on December 24th and at Chasewater on December 13th, 14th and 29th.

#### **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*

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

A good year, with at least three individuals in autumn.



*Spotted Crake (Phil Jones)*

**Warks** A notable year, with at least three occurring. An adult was glimpsed briefly at Brandon both in the morning and evening on March 30th *DD, MD, JFCJ*. In autumn, a juvenile was well-watched at Brandon from August 23rd-September 9th *JMR et al*, and an adult was at Ufton Fields from August 29th-September 12th *MMC, AJW et al*. Probably a second bird was at the latter site on September 6th, but it was only briefly glimpsed.

**W Mid** An immature bird remained in Sandwell Valley from August 26th-September 16th *PAF et al*.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus**Very common resident.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bittell	10	11	11	—	7	3	6	35	49	17	8	21
Pirton	10	12	11	6	8	6	10	34	26	22	15	14
Upton Warren	17	16	17	14	12	14	12	31	33	41	31	5
Blithfield	1	1	4	5	5	4	14	60	20	2	0	2
Bransdon	7	11	5	6	38	60	69	62	105	—	—	—
Hill Ridware	32	39	32	9	3	7	14	24	13	—	—	—

**Warks** Still a common bird throughout most of the county, though autumn and winter concentrations seem to be smaller than formerly, with few of more than 20 reported. The largest flock was at Napton Res, with a peak of 35 on August 13th.

**Worcs** Bred at Broadway GP, Crowle Green, Lodge Pool, Wilden and the Worcester-Birmingham Canal. Outside the breeding season, maxima of 15 at Howell Grange on February 15th, 24 at Wilden on August 14th, 25 at Strensham on August 30th and 17 at Mill Pond on November 1st.

**Staffs** At Doxey, 19 pairs (*cf.* 21 in 1997 but only five in 1996). Elsewhere, pairs were noted in the breeding season at Belvide, Chasewater (12), Churnet Valley (three), Kettlebrook (three) and Coombes Valley (two), with single pairs at Betley, Byrkley Park, Churnet Woods, Calwich, Needwood, R. Dove and Woodmill. Notable counts away from the tabulated sites were 66 at Belvide on August 25th and 37 at Chasewater on November 7th, while less than 20 were at a further nine sites.

**W Mid** Breeding was reported from Bilston, Clayhanger, the Deepfields/Ettingshall area (Birmingham Canal: at least five pairs), Grand Union Canal (at Acock's Green, Nechells and Saltley: three pairs), Grapes Pool, Heath Town (Wyrley and Essington Canal: two pairs), Ladymoor Pool, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green and Valley Park. The larger gatherings were 75 at Buckpool/Fens Pools in April, 51 at Bumble Hole in May, 24 in Valley Park between Wightwick and Newbridge in September and 18 in a single field at Park Lime Pits on December 13th.

**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
Alvecole	74	42	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	284	221	155
Coton	946	641	242	25	28	51	167	207	258	682	764	853
Dosthill/Kingsbury	205	230	105	49	33	30	32	79	73	237	335	368
Draycote	410	145	200	105	38	72	220	250	900	1000	1200	513
Shustoke	450	56	35	—	—	—	—	—	—	133	52	41
Bittell	27	61	32	19	42	50	74	126	96	67	59	67
Kinsham	40	35	15	—	25	—	—	101	—	146	80	50
Lower Moor	118	121	40	21	12	15	26	32	40	62	92	121
Pirton	42	61	42	26	28	49	68	180	242	170	148	144
Upton Warren	37	20	35	35	26	75	125	104	112	127	121	128
Westwood	55	41	30	—	28	55	165	125	101	15	10	20
Aqualate	4	18	26	21	29	70	244	264	473	115	158	457
Barton	179	115	85	50	48	33	91	142	181	—	—	—
Belvide	150	160	166	117	—	370	931	1496	1369	1317	1146	480

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Blithfield	218	261	195	129	277	351	779	1651	2305	1955	2067	2252
Branston	161	63	55	10	2	1	5	3	21	—	—	—
Chasewater	439	306	201	90	90	154	405	591	701	926	1008	941
Copmere	15	19	9	7	—	34	96	164	181	—	—	—
Croxall	128	125	54	37	—	57	118	194	198	—	—	—
Galley	176	71	—	26	—	47	—	147	186	—	—	500
Hill Ridware	80	69	46	35	33	53	102	154	109	—	—	—
Westport	52	40	22	29	31	34	50	57	93	128	137	153

**Warks** Breeding records included 10 pairs at Coombe, five at both Charlecote GP and Ladywalk, and four at Alvecote and Wormleighton Res. Away from the tabulated waters, the best counts were of 80 at Packington Park on January 17th, 53 at Ladywalk in February and November and 55 at Napton Res on August 13th.

**Worcs** Bred at Bittell (10 broods), Broadway GP, Caldwell Pool, Elmley Castle, Ipsley Alders, Lower Moor, Norton Pool, Ryall, Upton Warren (10 broods) and Wilden (seven broods). Noted at another 20 localities, with maxima of 53 at Kyre Pool on January 10th, 59 at Bredons Hardwick on August 8th and 97 at Wilden on September 19th.

**Staffs** 38 pairs nested at Belvide (with one brood of five), 45 at Chasewater (with a second brood from one nest) and 14 at Doxey (*cf.* 17 in 1997). Elsewhere, juveniles were noted at Betley Mere (11), Brookleys Lake (five) and Byrkley Park, where broods were present from late April-early September. The September flock of 2,305 at Blithfield represented over 2% of the UK population and set a new regional record. Reported at a further 11 sites, with 105 at Brookleys Lake in October the only three figure count.

**W Mid** Breeding was reported from 19 sites, with the most at Fens Pools (22 pairs), Sandwell Valley (at least 10), Mary Stevens Park (eight) and Goscote Valley (six). Counts outside the breeding season included 150 in the Buckspool/ Fens Pools area on numerous dates, 87 at Bumble Hole in July, 100+ at Edgbaston Pool in September and 109 in Sandwell Valley in October.

### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

**Warks** Two pairs were again present in the breeding season in the Dosthill/Kingsbury area, with one pair rearing two chicks in the Water Park. Birds were here from February 15th-August 9th, with up to six in April. Up to four were also present at Ladywalk from April-June, with four at Shustoke on March 25th and a pair again in Packington Park occasionally from February 24th through the spring. Elsewhere, Draycote had singles on ten dates during March 7th-July 31st, with three on July 14th, and Brandon had singles on seven dates from April 18th-May 27th and again on July 4th and August 25th.

**Worcs** Returned to Bredons Hardwick on February 25th, with a pair from March 12th-July 13th and three on March 22nd, from April 14th-15th and again on May 10th. Elsewhere, three at Kinsham on April 5th were followed by singles flying north over Longdon Marsh and Upton-on-Severn on April 12th. Upton Warren had one on May 19th, two on 30th and one on June 13th. Return

passage brought singles to Upton Warren on July 14th, Bittell on 23rd, Grimley on August 17th and Upton Warren again on September 19th.

**Staffs** Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Airewas	-	5	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	2	1	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
Belvide	1	1	3	9	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	1	3	4	4	2	2	1	6	-	-	-
Branston	1	2	2	4	4	5	2	-	-	-	-	-
Croxall	-	2	4	6	4	6	6	8	-	-	-	-
Elford	1	4	7	11	4	7	4	-	-	-	-	1
Kings Bromley	-	-	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	1	-	1	3	22	1	-	-	-	-
Nine other sites	-	1	5	4	6	-	7	-	-	-	-	-

Bred successfully at Croxall, where a pair was seen with one young on May 16th. Pairs were also seen displaying on the R. Dove near Tutbury and at Blithfield.

**W Mid** A pair was present in suitable habitat during the breeding season, but unfortunately did not breed. Singles were at Clayhanger on April 24th and Bartley on August 2nd.

#### **1992 Addendum**

**Warks** One at Coombe on June 24th was the first ever at that site.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One was at Brandon on May 31st.

#### **Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

*Rare passage migrant (7/10)*

#### **1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** One visited Belvide on May 19th.

#### **Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

*Frequent summer resident and passage migrant.*

*Average: March 19th (34)–October 2nd (34)*

An early bird at Charlecote on March 11th was followed by the main arrival about two weeks later. Also an early departure, with the last seen at Belvide on September 20th.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	-	-	2	4	8	10	8	2	1	-	-	-
Dosthill/Kingsbury	-	-	-	3	6	2	2	3	-	-	-	-
Draycole	-	-	-	3	4	2	3	4	-	-	-	-
Ladywalk	-	-	-	1	4	7	21	20	-	-	-	-
Five other sites	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	3	1	-	-	-
Grimley	-	-	-	12	8	7	8	5	-	-	-	-
Kinsham	-	-	2	9	15	5	3	3	4	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	8	16	14	16	22	6	2	-	-	-
Four other sites	-	-	-	3	8	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
Airewas	-	-	-	4	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	1	2	1	4	5	5	3	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	1	1	1	-	7	7	20	-	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	0	6	5	4	2	4	2	0	-	-
Cold Meece	-	-	1	4	-	3	3	3	-	-	-	-
Doxey	-	-	1	4	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Elford	-	-	-	11	7	16	9	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	3	5	3	1	-	-	-	-
Seven other sites	-	-	2	10	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dunstall Park	-	-	4	5	-	-	9	3	1	-	-	-
Sandwell Valley	-	-	3	3	3	2	4	3	-	-	-	-
Sheepwash UP	-	-	2	3	2	3	3	1	-	-	-	-
Slubbers Green	-	-	2	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Two other sites	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Warks** Seemingly a poor year, with a particularly late spring arrival, although there was a notable build-up of returning migrants on the Ladywalk lagoons. Probably nested as usual in the Dosthill/Kingsbury district and at Hams Hall/Ladywalk, but no information on success was received. Two pairs hatched broods at Brandon, with at least one young fledging. Other pairs were present and possibly bred at Black Hill Pool, Salford Priors GP and on the site of the demolished Coleshill Gasworks.

**Worcs** Bred at Grimley, Kinsham (three broods), Ryall and Upton Warren, where two broods hatched despite definite evidence that some clutches were taken by egg-collectors.

**Staffs** Bred successfully at a private fishery at Cheadle, the Coldmiece area (three pairs: three young) and Eford (four adults with three young). Pairs were also at Borrowpit Lake, Chasewater Heath Business Park (up to three) and Cheadle GP (two), but their success is unknown. Two pairs were also at Doxey (*cf.* three in 1997), which suffered extensive flooding in June, but none bred at Belvide.

**W Mid** At least two pairs were present at Dunstall Park, but only one pair bred, and three pairs fledged seven young at the former Bilston steelworks site at Spring Vale. Breeding was also thought to have occurred at the disused Oldbury STW; at Marsh Lane GPs (max, eight birds in April: *cf.* nine pairs in 1997); and at the Meriden quarries complex. Also present throughout the breeding season at Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP, but not thought to have bred. Up to two were at Smithy Lane Marhole from April 4th-May 5th at least and display was noted, whilst further displaying birds were at Bowmans Harbour in late May.

### 1997 Addendum

**Warks** A maximum of six was recorded at Brandon, where a pair probably laid twice, but the only young to hatch quickly disappeared.

### 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/Kingsbury	-	2	2	6	21	1	2	8	6	-	1	-
Draycole	1	3	4	2	7	2	3	7	4	-	-	-
Grimley	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	2	2	1	-	-
Kinsham	-	1	1	-	5	-	-	1	2	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	1	2	15	2	1	2	4	-	-	-
Alrewas	-	-	3	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton	-	15	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	-	1	14	-	1	9	-	5	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	35	30	2	-	-
Branston	-	13	3	4	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chasewater	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	18	32	14	0	0

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Doxey	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	-	1	-	16	-	2	2	7	-	-	-
Elford	-	2	6	7	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

**Warks** Up to three pairs were on territory in the Dosthill area during spring, but with no reports of subsequent breeding success. Attempted breeding was unsuccessful at Brandon, where a maximum of six were recorded on May 30th-31st. A pair also displayed again at Draycote, but high water levels prevented any nesting attempt. Passage was generally poor, due in part to high water levels, with only Dosthill recording double figure counts briefly in spring. The best counts here were 13 on May 10th, 15 on 12th, 10 on 16th, 21 on 17th and 12 on 21st. Away from these sites, there were one or two on four dates at Hams Hall/Ladywalk from March 18th-July 20th, and singles at the Coleshill Gasworks site on April 18th and Napton Res on July 18th. An unusual mid-winter bird occurred at Draycote from January 9th-13th.

**Worcs** Away from the tabulated sites, one was at Clifton-on-Severn on May 2nd, four at Bredons Hardwick on May 11th with another on 25th, two at Ryall on May 27th and one at Bishampton Vale Pool on September 20th. An individual at Kinsham from May 9th-10th appeared to be a juvenile, although perhaps it had simply delayed its moult out of first-winter plumage.

**Staffs** Early returning birds were at Dosthill on March 15th and Chasewater 16th. Bred successfully at Elford, where three adults and one young were present on May 17th followed by four adults with one young on June 13th.

**W. Mid.** A pair stayed at Marsh Lane GPs during the breeding season, but there was no proof of breeding. Spring migrants were reported from Sandwell Valley on April 11th, May 1st and 11th-16th with a maximum of four on 12th; Clayhanger on May 13th; and Sheepwash UP on May 31st. Autumn migrants were in Dunstall Park on July 21st; Sandwell Valley on September 13th (two), 16th, 18th-20th; and Marsh Lane GPs on September 18th.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*  
*Rare passage migrant (8/10).*

**Worcs** Bredon Hill proved once again to be a favoured haunt, with a pair from May 10th-14th *SMW et al.*

**Staffs** A male moulting into summer plumage was at Brindley Ford on April 17th *AS* per *WJL* and a female was at Folly Farm, Boarsgrove, on May 28th *KMC, ESC, WJL.*

**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 (50)-April 28th (52)*  
 Two on Bredon Hill on May 2nd were the last in spring and one at Ryall on August 1st the first returning bird.



## Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bredons Hardwick	50	200	280	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	100	70
Lower Moor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	350	300
Barton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	125	100
Belvide	-	40	-	350	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	4
Britannia Stadium	500	1000	30	200	-	-	-	-	-	200	140	400
Lymedale Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	650	800	83
Park Hall	165	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	100
Stafford Common	350	150	70	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
Bowmans Harbour	193	218	230	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dunstable Park	1050	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	27	570	1000
Hockley Heath	200	1000	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	800	950
Marsh Lane GP	70	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	150
Sheepwash UP	44	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	250	300

**Warks** Winter flocks were again poorly reported, with maxima in the north and east of 400 at Flecknoe on January 4th, 700 at Draycote on 19th, 520 at Hartshill on February 1st, 1270 at Dosthill and 400 at Napton Res on 21st, 700 at Kingsbury on 28th, 150 at Brandon on November 1st, 400 at Draycote on 10th, 195 near Hartshill SF on 15th and up to 450 roosting at Ladywalk in December. Further south, flocks were smaller than usual, particularly in the autumn and early winter when birds were absent from several regular sites. The best were 100 at Fenny Compton on January 18th, 180 at Chesterton on 26th, 110 at Farnborough on February 19th, 250 at Milcote on March 8th, 330 at Burton Dassett on October 24th, 700 at Snitterfield Airfield on November 13th and 150 at Gaydon on December 30th.

**Worcs** Maxima in the first winter period of 80 at both Bittell and Strensham on January 2nd, 76 at Little Comberton on January 9th, 94 at Defford on February 22nd, 500 at Beckford on March 2nd, 280 at Kinsham on March 5th and 109 on Bredon Hill on April 23rd. Fewer flocks in autumn, with peaks of 193 at Ryall on November 21st and 61 at Grimley on November 30th.

**Staffs** Breeding was suspected at Morridge, where a pair engaged in distraction display on June 9th. The larger untabulated counts were 180 at Apedale on February 21st, 80 near Bassett's Pole on March 14th, 90 at Morridge on April 7th, 200 at Brindley Ford on 17th and 700 near Gailey on 18th. Up to 50 were also reported at Apeton, Blithfield, Branston, Chasewater, Crossplains, Doxey, Drayton Bassett, Fauld, Holditch and Rickerscote.

**W Mid** Away from the tabulated areas, the first winter period produced 28 at Stubbers Green on January 17th; 150 in Sandwell Valley on January 19th and 80 on March 8th; and 54 at Spring Vale on February 21st. More widespread in the autumn and second winter period, with between one and ten at Foxcote Pond, Goscote Valley, Lutley Wedge and Park Lime Pits, all on October 1st. Later, 49 were at Stubbers Green on December 10th and 20 at Wednesfield on 12th.

**1995 Addendum**

**Staffs** Four displaying birds were seen at Knotbury on May 13th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Warks** A bird at Brandon on August 11th was the earliest autumn record for the year in the Region, while 220 were there on November 3rd.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** One at Draycote on May 11th, three at Dosthill on 12th and a late bird at Draycote on June 8th were the only spring records. In autumn, singles were at Draycote on October 10th and flying south-west over Shustoke at dusk on 11th.

**Worcs** A fine summer-plumaged adult was at Upton Warren from May 8th-9th and a pair unexpectedly flew over Trench Wood on August 31st.

**Staffs** The only spring record was one still in winter plumage at Branston GP on March 22nd. Autumn passage commenced with a single bird moulting out of summer plumage at Blithfield on August 23rd followed by three which flew through with a Red Knot on September 27th. Singles were also at Belvide on September 13th and October 21st, Alrewas on September 20th (an immature) and Chasewater on October 6th, 12th and November 22nd.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** A single at Brandon on December 1st was the first there since 1985.

**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	200	210	18	9	10	100	262	800	900	500	115	200
Draycote	1000	600	—	—	—	—	14	30	200	43	300	1200
Kingsbury area	1000	1000	—	17	14	7	50	183	369	350	200	1000
Kinsham	—	350	13	9	9	15	—	—	—	150	152	350
Lower Moor	500	20	1	2	—	6	80	5	6	180	22	500
Ryall	—	600	—	—	—	45	140	280	—	190	360	—
Strensham	350	—	—	—	2	—	6	80	100	20	270	—
Upton Warren	1200	850	186	23	20	18	127	200	260	350	650	1200
Barton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1500
Belvide	36	400	44	—	—	70	144	444	85	325	358	316
Blithfield	60	350	—	—	—	—	70	—	—	372	—	—
Branston	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	500
Chasewater	142	120	2	4	4	2	11	31	33	87	160	380
Croxall	600	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Doxey	680	100	50	10	4	4	—	139	—	137	150	250
Drayton Bassett	800	600	—	—	4	6	15	63	—	—	—	—
Westport	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	350
Dunstable Park	140	—	—	—	1	32	200	200	165	120	—	300
Marsh Lane GP	300	170	37	—	—	—	61	130	100	220	—	50
Sandwell Valley	78	100	40	—	—	—	35	60	45	44	—	45
Sheepwash UP	90	17	9	2	4	6	6	16	32	22	24	27
Stubbers Green	600	—	—	—	—	—	70	52	41	—	170	335

**Warks** Breeding pairs at Alvecote (two), Brandon (four), Charlecote (six, but only one hatching young), Chesterton, Dosthill-Kingsbury (four), Farnborough (only one, cf. 10 in 1997), Great Alne, Packington Park (four), Priors Hardwick (two) and Upton Fields. Displaying pairs were also noted at Abbots Salford, Bishops Itchington, Burton Dassett, Fenny Compton, Gaydon, Radway and Sutton-under-Brailes. The worrying decline in breeding pairs continues and all future records are requested. For example, only one bird was seen on the BAD Kineton May count, where breeding numbers have plummeted (cf. a peak of

54 birds in May 1989). Winter flocks are also getting smaller, with maxima away from the tabulated sites of 350 at Fenny Compton on January 10th, over 500 at Flecknoe on February 4th, 250 at Ryton Gardens on August 28th, 200 at Burton Dassett on October 24th, 250 at Little Dassett on December 6th, 400 at Hodnell and 300 at both Walsgrave Hill and Wootton Wawen all on 13th, and 7-800 roosting on the Ladywalk lagoons during the same month. Birds were particularly scarce in the south-east during autumn and early winter, being absent from many traditional sites *JJB*.

*Worcs* Bred at Bredon Hill (three pairs), Kinsham (two pairs) and Wilden, but 10 pairs at Upton Warren produced just one brood, none of which fledged. Pairs were also seen displaying over farmland in spring near Grafton Wood, Huddington, Laughem Hill, Martley, Spetchley, Tibberton (where a breeding attempt was abandoned after ploughing), Tinkers Cross and near Trench Wood. Maxima outside the breeding season included 300 at Grimley on January 1st, 1500 at Longdon Marsh on January 11th, 650 at Bushley on February 1st, 300 at Danemoor on February 7th, 500 at Holt on December 13th and 1900 at Kinnersley on December 31st.

*Staffs* Another dismal season on the Moors, where wet weather from mid-April onwards wiped out some nests and deterred breeding. Seven nests in the usual survey area was only half the normal number and 16 of 28 eggs were lost prior to hatching; the outcome of eight was unknown, but they were probably lost; and one pair lost their three day-old hatchlings, but fledged a single chick. Just three were ringed (*cf.* 20 in 1997 and 1996). Elsewhere on the Moors, pairs attempted breeding at Orchard Common (two), Ready-leech Green (three-eight), Northfield Farm, Flash (three), Hazel Barrow (two-three: no eggs hatched), Royal Cottage, Bottom Hocker (two-three), Round Knowl (possibly two), Cowhay Head area, the Gliding Field area (three-four), Triangle (two), Moortop Morridge (three: one fledgling), south of Upper Moorside, Morridge (*c.* five: two chicks), Peewit Hall, the Pethill-head area (three) and Hollinsclough (seven). Away from the Moors, details of breeding attempts are contained in the article on the *Survey of Breeding Waders*. Additionally, pairs were at Chasewater (two at the Business Park and one with a chick at Highfield Farm), Radford Bank (four), Prestwood (five); and Wootton. Maxima during the first winter period were 300 in the Denstone/Hall area on February 5th, 1000 at Rickerscote on 8th and 600 in the Croxall/Airewas area on 20th. Flocks up to 200 were reported from a further 11 sites. Autumn passage and second winter period maxima comprised 480 at Talke on September 17th, 220 at the JCB Pools area on November 29th, 550 in the Denstone area on December 3rd and 350 at Rickerscote on 12th and 27th. Up to 200 were noted at a further eight sites.

*W Mid* Breeding pairs were reported from Bradnock's Marsh, Dorridge, Goscote Valley (failed), Marsh Lane GPs area (five: probably eight young), Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (one: one young and said to be declining due to habitat loss), Stubbers Green (at least two) and Wednesbury. In autumn, 32 flew over Park Lime Pits on November 13th and 37 over Fens Pools on 21st. Also reported from the Lutley Wedge.

**1997 Addenda and corrigenda**

**Warks** Four broods (*not* three) were reared at Brandon, where the post-breeding flock peaked at 600 on July 21st, 950 on August 26th and 1000 on September 18th and 21st.

**Red Knot** (*Knot*) *Calidris canutus*

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Six at Ladywalk on November 12th was the only record.

**Worcs** Singles were at Kinsham from August 21st-23rd and at Upton Warren from September 11th-12th and again from November 24th-December 19th.

**Staffs** No spring passage, but several reports from the main reservoirs during the autumn passage. This commenced with one at Blithfield on August 5th, followed by another on 31st, two on September 9th, one on 16th, three on 20th and one with three Grey Plovers on 27th. At Belvide, three on September 5th were followed by one on November 14th and 18th. Finally, singles were at Chasewater on September 21st and November 20th.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

*Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

*Average passage: April 8th (9)-September 28th (9)*

**Warks** Dosthill had three on May 10th, two on 24th, four on 25th and singles on 26th and June 2nd. During the same period, there were singles at Draycote on May 12th, 22nd, 24th and June 4th. Return passage was confined to singles at Dosthill on August 1st and Draycote on 13th.

**Worcs** Two at Grimley old workings on May 9th were followed by one at the new workings later the same day. Further singles were at Kinsham on May 16th, 22nd, 25th and 27th, and at Upton Warren on June 4th and from 7th-9th.

**Staffs** Modest spring and autumn passages. All spring reports were of singles, beginning with early records from Drayton Bassett on March 23rd and 29th. During the main migration in May, reports came from Alrewas and Belvide on 23rd and Blithfield on 25th, but there were no spring reports from Chasewater this year due to high water levels. Autumn passage brought singles to Belvide on July 22nd and August 5th, two to Chasewater on August 23rd and September 2nd and one to Blithfield on October 10th.

**W Mid** One was at Edgbaston Reservoir on May 26th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** A good passage through Chasewater in early May, with two on 4th, four on 8th, one on 11th, two on 12th, three on 13th and three different birds on 16th and 17th.

**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 (9)*

None in spring, but a good autumn passage, with maxima at the main sites as follows:

	August 21st-31st	1st-10th	September 11th-20th	21st-30th	1st-10th	October 11th-20th	21st-31st
Draycote	–	1	3	3	2	–	1
Grimley	–	8	4	2	–	–	–
Kinsham	–	1	6	7	–	–	–
Upton Warren	–	14	3	–	–	–	–
Belvide	0	12	1	3	1	1	–
Blithfield	0	11	29	8	6	0	–
Chasewater	2	7	7	5	1	0	–

**Warks** Two were at Dosthill on September 6th and three on 13th, one at Brandon from 10th-12th and one at a new pool at Wixford on 15th, the latter being an excellent record for the far south-west. Single late birds were seen at Draycote on October 30th and Dosthill on November 8th.

**Worcs** A good autumn influx. Two were at Ryall from September 5th-6th, while Bittell, despite high water levels, attracted one on September 6th, five on 7th, two on 8th and one from 9th-10th. Singles were also at Bredons Hardwick on September 6th, 8th, 11th and 14th, and again from October 4th-7th.

**Staffs** A wintering bird was at Barton on February 3rd and 7th. Autumn passage began with two at Chasewater on August 25th, after which birds were recorded at Branston on September 13th and 20th (when 11 present) and again on November 8th; Elford on September 13th; Drayton Bassett, where two on September 18th; Croxall, where two on November 1st; Westport on November 5th and Barton on November 28th.

**W Mid** One stayed at Marsh Lane GPs from September 4th-6th, with possibly the same bird present on 16th. A juvenile was in Sandwell Valley from September 8th-11th, with presumably the same bird on the 13th. One was at Dunstall Park Lake on September 30th.

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

*Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.*

**Staffs** A well-watched bird stayed at Blithfield from September 11th-16th *ESC, JCT et al.*

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

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

**Worcs** An adult at Grimley on July 21st was found too late in the day to allow more than a handful of birders to twitch it *BS et al.* The 14th County record, but the first for the locality.

**Staffs** A juvenile was at Blithfield from September 12th-14th *PDH et al.*

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

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

*Average passage: May 10th (7)-October 18th (8)*

**Warks** Single spring birds were at Middleton on May 4th and Dosthill on 19th. After four adults were at Cliff Pool in Kingsbury WP on August 10th, the only autumn reports referred to five juveniles at Brandon on September 6th and one at Earlswood Lakes with a party of Dunlin on 13th. Both were good records for these sites.

**Worcs** In spring, two adults visited Kinsham on May 14th, while autumn saw three juveniles there from September 2nd-3rd, with one remaining from 4th-8th. Two were also at Ryall on September 5th, one at Grimley on 10th and two at Upton Warren from 18th-20th.

**Staffs** Spring passage birds were noted at Middleton Pit on May 4th and Drayton Bassett on 19th. Autumn passage began with single at Tittesworth on August 22nd and Chasewater on 25th. September and October maxima at the main sites were:

	September			October	
	1st-10th	11th-20th	21st-30th	1st-10th	11th-20th
Blithfield	15	8	7	1	0
Chasewater	0	3	1	0	0

Numbers at Belvide were disappointing, with only singles on September 6th and 17th. One was at Branston GP on September 20th.

### 1997 Addendum and Corrigendum

**Staffs** An additional spring record involved two at Belvide on April 26th, while in autumn two were also at Chasewater on October 18th.

### Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

*Rare passage migrant. Very rare in winter (5/10).*

**Staffs** A juvenile was at Blithfield on September 26th ICW, MY.

### Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

*Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

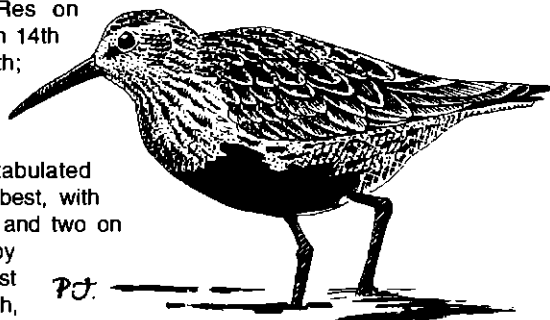
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	-	1	3	7	9	-	6	7	3	2	2	3
Dosthill area	1	1	2	2	23	-	3	9	5	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	-	6	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	3	6	3
Grimley	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	2	1	1	1	1
Kinsham	-	2	-	15	9	-	2	3	1	2	1	1
Upton Warren	-	-	1	7	11	2	6	5	3	2	6	1
Barton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Belvide	-	4	4	7	11	2	20	28	5	7	17	7
Blithfield	1	-	1	5	3	-	4	23	35	18	-	-
Branston	-	3	2	-	4	2	-	-	9	-	15	-
Chasewater	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	19	18	3	2
Doxey	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	-	6	-	17	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	3	-
Westport	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	2	2	1	-	-
Sandwell Valley	-	-	-	1	2	1	2	1	1	-	1	-

**Warks** Spring passage peaked at Dosthill on May 10th and Draycote on 12th. Elsewhere, Coton had one on September 27th; Ladywalk had singles on June 4th and August 16th, then up to five during December; and Brandon had ones and twos on odd dates from March 24th-May 18th (peak: seven on April 21st) and again from July 28th-September 17th (peak: three on August 1st) and a late bird on November 8th. Further south, there was one at Black Hill Pool on May 12th; one at Salford Priors GP on August 2nd and two on 16th;

one at Napton Res on August 5th, two on 14th and one on 27th; and five at Earlswood Lakes on September 13th.

*Worcs*

Away from the tabulated sites Ryall fared best, with three on May 9th and two on 23rd, followed by three on August 1st and 8th, one on 9th, one on 27th and two on November 25th.



*Dunlin (Phil Jones)*

Three were at Throck-

morton on August 2nd and singles were at Bishampton Vale Pool on August 7th, Bittell on September 7th and 29th and Holt from December 1st-13th.

*Staffs*

Elsewhere, two were along the R. Dove in the Tutbury area on March 11th, while Croxall had one during October and Lymedale Park one on 27th, two on November 5th and three on 27th.

*W Mid*

Singles were at Stubbers Green on February 6th and May 12th; Dunstall Park Lake on May 12th, 21st, 22nd and 26th; and Sheepwash UP on September 28th, November 5th and December 1st.

#### **1997 Addendum**

*Warks*

A flock of 20 at Brandon on September 30th was a good site record.

#### **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
Brandon	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	3	14	-	-	-
Draycote	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-
Grimley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-
Kinsham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	9	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	-
Belvide	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	4	1	1	1
Blithfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	37	4	-	-
Branston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-
Doxey	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Westport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-

Generally a poor year.

*Warks*

A white summer-plumaged male was at Brandon on May 25th. Untabulated records were two males in spring at Dosthill on March 21st-22nd and two at Ladywalk on 26th, followed by singles daily from 28th-April 3rd. Autumn passage brought another white adult male to Napton Res on August 14th, while Dosthill had three on 29th and up to four during September, with the last bird on 27th.

- Worcs** After one in winter at Upton-on-Severn on January 19th, seven at Bredons Hardwick on March 22nd turned out to be a good showing in an otherwise poor spring. In autumn, singles were at Bredons Hardwick on September 1st and Ryall on 26th. An almost completely white adult male impressed visitors to Upton Warren between August 14th-17th.
- Staffs** Good numbers were noted at Blithfield during the main autumn passage. Elsewhere, singles were at Tittesworth and Coldmeese in September, and Barton in October, while Rickerscote had three on September 15th.
- W Mid** Four flew through Marsh Lane GPs on May 26th, whilst five were in Sandwell Valley, briefly, on September 2nd.

### 1997 Addenda

- Warks** Additional records from Brandon included four on April 5th, one on 19th, two on September 20th and one on October 5th.

### Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

*Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor.*

*Average: September 26th (57)–April 20th (53)*

Two at Upton Warren on April 26th were the last in spring and one at Brandon on September 14th the first in autumn.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	1	1
Dosthill	1	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–
Lighthorne Quarry	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	3
Castlemorton Com	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Grimley	5	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	5
Upton Warren	1	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	1	1	3	2
Wilden	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–
Chasewater	2	–	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Doxey	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Drayton Bassett	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Hill Ridware	4	6	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Pool Dam Marsh	1	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Goscote V (site A)	6	18	17	4	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	8
Marsh Lane GP	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sandwell Valley	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1

- Warks** Away from tabulated localities, singles were at The Somers on January 8th and Ladywalk on March 4th, with two in Packington Park from March 30th–April 1st. At the end of the year, singles appeared at Lea Marston on December 28th and Alvecote on 31st.
- Worcs** A better year began with one at Ipsley Alders from January 14th–February 27th, two at Ripple on January 29th, then further singles at Ashmoor Common on February 1st and Northwick Marsh on February 11th, two at Stourvale Marsh on February 11th and one at Abberton on March 8th. In autumn, singles were at Kinsham on October 11th and December 12th; two at Bredons Hardwick on October 19th; two at Holt on November 4th and 24th, with one there on December 13th; one at Bishampton Vale Pool on December 5th; and one at Bittell on December 30th. A most unexpected record was of one flushed from a meadow along Dowles Brook on December 31st.
- Staffs** A decline in passage and wintering birds was noticeable at the main sites.



Apart from the tabulated sites, singles were at Tittesworth in January, Blithfield in February and Croxall in March: then in autumn at Croxall in November and Astonefields, Barton, Belvide and Branston in December.

**W Mid** Single birds were reported from Pelsall on January 7th, near Park Lime Pits on February 3rd, Sheepwash UP on April 2nd and November 8th and Netherton Hill on November 12th. Apart from the excellent numbers at 'site A', this species appears to have declined drastically.

### 1997 Addenda and Corrigendum

**Warks** The Brandon records were incomplete as one or two were noted there on about 20 dates up to March 28th and from September 29th.

**Staffs** The figures for Chasewater in March and April should have been 0 and 1 respectively.

**W Mid** Up to two were on Netherton Hill during January.

### 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	23	21	27	20	-	-	1	8	45	41	41	45
Dosthill/Kingsbury	70	75	6	4	1	-	-	-	4	31	43	11
Casilemorton Com	11	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	31
Kinsham	5	15	32	10	-	-	3	1	5	10	22	19
Ryall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7	19	10	38
Upton Warren	50	40	50	20	1	-	-	10	30	23	20	19
Belvide	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	4	-	8	22
Blithfield	-	38	-	-	1	-	-	23	30	2	-	-
Chasewater	6	4	12	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1
Croxall	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Doxey	32	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drayton Bassett	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Pool Dam Marsh	100	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	-
Tittesworth	9	13	14	-	-	-	-	3	26	15	15	30
Dunstable Park	25	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	3	6	13	21
Goscole Valley	1	9	11	-	-	-	-	-	4	9	11	4
Marsh Lane GP	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-
Sandwell Valley	7	15	6	3	-	2	-	2	9	6	2	7
Sheepwash UP	8	17	23	12	-	-	-	1	1	2	19	19

**Warks** No evidence of any attempted breeding, with the last in spring being singles at Lighthorne Quarry on May 2nd and Dosthill on 16th before the first return on July 25th. Better numbers than recently were recorded in the two main areas during the autumn and winter months, but very few were seen elsewhere, with records from just 16 further sites. Apart from 20 at Charlecote GP on February 17th, maxima at all other sites came in autumn, with peaks of six at Ladywalk in August, seven at BAD Kineton in October and 12 at Lighthorne Quarry in November. Up to five were noted at five further sites.

**Worcs** No evidence of breeding reported. Maxima outside the breeding season were 21 at Grimley on January 1st, 77 at Ripple on 29th, 18 at Ashmoor Common on February 1st, 37 at Northwick Marsh and 27 at Stourvale Marsh both on 11th, 21 at Holt on November 24th and 23 at Wilden on 26th. Smaller numbers were noted at 12 other sites.

**Staffs** For breeding data see the article on *Survey of Breeding Waders*: of note were the late breeding attempts at Aqualate, especially as the area had not seriously flooded earlier. The best counts during the first winter period were 60 at Ford Green on January 25th and 30 at Aqualate on February 16th. Smaller numbers were also reported from five other sites. Autumn concentrations included six at Kidsgrove on September 1st, 25 at Rawbones Meadows on October 1st, six at Gun Hill on 11th and six at Doley Common on December 2nd. Up to five were also seen at a further six sites.

**W Mid** Two displaying birds were noted at Clayhanger in mid-June and three were in Sutton Park during the breeding season. In the first winter period, nine were on Birmingham Airport on January 10th, 12 were at Perry Hall playing fields on February 2nd, 29 at Spring Vale on March 21st and 25 at Clayhanger on 23rd. Very small numbers were regular at The Leys, with a peak of eight in November, and around 14 flew over Park Lime Pits on 23rd. Smaller numbers were also reported from four additional sites.

**1997 Addenda and Corrigendum**

**Warks** At Brandon, birds were present in every month except June, with a winter peak of 26 on February 13th. Exceptional numbers (for recent times) were here in autumn and early winter, with monthly maxima of 30 on September 29th, 61 on October 16th, 97 on November 27th and 45 in December.

**Staffs** The tabulated figure for Chasewater in March should have been 4, not 44.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

*Fairly common resident and winter visitor.*

**Warks** A poor year. No more than two were noted roding at Bentley Woods, while one roding at Chesterton Wood on May 2nd and another at Little Shrewley on July 1st were the only other breeding season reports. During the winter and autumn months one or two were seen fairly regularly in the Brandon and Hams Hall/Ladywalk areas, with odd birds at BAD Kineton, Coleshill (in observer's garden on November 18th), Draycote, Fenny Compton, Middleton and Oversley Wood.

**Worcs** Roding birds were reported only from Blakeshall (one on the early date of February 21st), Coldridge Wood (two) and Wyre Forest (six). The maximum count outside the breeding season was four at Wilden on November 4th. Small numbers were also recorded at Abberton, Bednall Brook, Bittell, Broadway GP, Castlemorton Common, Defford, Drakes Broughton, Farmbank Plantation, Hewell Grange, Horsham, Ipsley Alders, Kyre, Oakley, Ox Leasowes Coppice, R. Rea, Sugarloaf Hill, Tiddesley Wood, Trench Wood and Upton Warren.

**Staffs** At the main roding areas on Cannock Chase, reports came from three separate areas, with two at Haywood Warren on July 5th; one near the Katyn Memorial on May 30th and June 19th, then two on July 1st and singles again on 3rd and August 24th; and two at Seven Springs on May 4th and June 20th. Singles were noted during autumn and winter at Belvide, Blithfield, Chasewater (three sites), Crumpwood, Doxey, Hawkshutts Wood, Sherbrook Valley and Tittesworth.

**W Mid** A roding individual was noted at Boulton's Wood during the breeding season.

Outside the breeding season, singles were reported from Fens Pools, Harborne NR, Netherton Hill, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park. Seven of the 12 records were in November.

### 1997 Addendum

*W Mid* One was flushed on Netherton Hill on January 3rd.

### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

*Uncommon passage migrant. Very rare in winter.*

*Average passage: March 17th (9)-October 25th (9)*

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Kinsham	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	1	17	23	13	1	1	-	-	6
Belvide	-	-	3	-	10	-	16	9	1	1	-	3
Blithfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	1	-	-	-
Bransdon	-	-	4	-	-	9	-	2	1	-	-	-

*Warks* Two at Black Hill Pool on April 2nd were the first of the spring. The only subsequent records were of one at Ladywalk from June 28th-30th, 11 at Dosthill on July 5th (which flew off south-west), two at Draycote on 13th and one, probably the same bird, visiting Kingsbury on August 11th, Ladywalk on 12th-13th and Kingsbury again on 15th. One at Brandon on September 11th was the last record.

*Worcs* Additionally in spring, two were at Bredons Hardwick on April 11th. An increasing feature of recent years has been mid-summer arrivals and Upton Warren benefited once again, with the peak of 23 on June 29th *per AFJ* being a new county record. One at Ryall on July 4th was followed by a long-stayer at Wilden from September 19th-October 25th and the unexpected winter record from Upton Warren.

*Staffs* A very impressive series of records at Belvide. Untabulated records came from Doxey, where one on May 2nd and two on June 14th, and Tittesworth, where two on June 7th.

*W Mid* Three were at Marsh Lane GPs on March 28th and singles were in Sandwell Valley on July 2nd and August 23rd.

### 1996 Addendum

*Staffs* Ten at Chasewater on July 5th, which constituted a locality record.

### 1997 Addenda

*Warks* An unusually large party of 22 was at Brandon on June 18th, followed by three on 28th, singles on August 16th-21st and 26th, and then two from September 6th-20th (not just on 8th and 15th as published).

### Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

*Uncommon passage migrant. rare in winter.*

*Average passage: March 28th (9)-October 11th (9)*

*Warks* The only reports came from Dosthill, where five flew in during drizzle on the evening of May 10th accompanied by three Whimbrel, and a party of six flew across the lake to the east on November 23rd.

*Worcs* One stayed a short time at Kinsham on October 25th.

**Staffs** For such an uncommon passage migrant to the county, a large party of 21 flying south-east at Tittesworth on August 9th was an excellent record. The only other report was of a late bird at Chasewater on November 23rd.

**1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** One was at Barton GP on July 7th.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

*Frequent passage migrant.*

*Average passage: April 12th (9)-September 21st (9)*

**Warks** In spring, there were two over Dosthill on April 25th, followed by one north-east at Fenny Compton on May 9th, three over Dosthill on 10th, and singles on the ground at Dosthill on 12th, Brandon on 16th and Dosthill again on 17th. A late bird flew over Brandon on May 28th. The only autumn records were of singles at Brandon on July 17th and 29th, Draycote on July 26th, Dosthill on August 23rd and Ladywalk on September 11th.

**Worcs** The bulk of records were in spring. Passage commenced with one at Upton Warren on April 22nd, four there on 25th, and three roosting with Eurasian Curlews on most nights from 26th-May 3rd. Four were at Bredons Hardwick from May 1st-2nd and one at Kinsham from 4th-7th. Numbers at Upton Warren dwindled to singles on May 4th-5th, 19th, and 26th. Singles were also at Ryall on May 16th and Grimley on 27th, with two at Kinsham on 28th. The only autumn birds were singles at Grimley on August 1st, over Bittell on August 9th and over Abberton near midnight on 19th.

**Staffs** Good spring and autumn passages. Spring passage began with one flying over Westport on April 23rd followed by another the next day, while at Brocton Coppice one flew over on 28th. During the main spring passage a flock of 11 was at Tittesworth on May 3rd followed by a single on 9th. Singles were also at Branston on May 9th, Belvide on 25th, Drayton Bassett on 27th and along the R. Dove in the Tutbury area. Two headed west over Chasewater on June 6th and one was at Blithfield on 21st. Return passage then brought singles to Belvide on July 21st, August 26th and September 1st; Blithfield on August 5th, 7th and September 3rd, 5th-9th and 11th; Chasewater on August 23rd and 26th; and Branston GP on 20th.

**W Mid** One was at Fens Pools on May 17th and one flew over Brownhills West on August 26th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Warks** Singles were at Brandon on May 3rd and August 30th.

**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
Upton Warren	3	96	53	9	2	21	100	107	98	73	47	30
Belvide	-	9	11	3	1	8	1	8	5	-	1	-
Blithfield	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	14	3	-	-	-
Branston	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	34	150	110	2	4	20	40	13	8	-	-

**Warks** Breeding was proved only at BAD Kineton (one pair), with other single pairs on traditional territories near Beausale and at Burton Dassett, Great Alne, Maxstoke, Morton Bagot, Oxhill, Priors Hardwick and Tysoe. The roost at Ladywalk peaked at 23 in February-March and 19 in August-September, while birds were recorded at Draycote on January 13th and on 13 dates from March 12th-October 2nd, with a maximum of four on September 1st. Other records were mainly of one-three passage birds at scattered sites in the Tame Valley, and in the east and south-east of the county, with a party of 11 flying south-east over Fenny Compton on October 3rd the only significant count.

**Worcs** Breeding confirmed near Trench Wood, but pairs were also seen on farmland during the breeding season at Bishampton Vale, Bredons Hardwick, Broad Green, Broad Heath, Church Lench, Cotheridge, Crowle, Defford, Earls Croome, Eckington, Hanley Castle, Kenswick, Little Comberton, Longdon Marsh, Lower Moor, Peopleton/Upton Snodsbury (three pairs), Pilton, Powick Ham, Stoke Bliss, Strensham, Timberhonger and Tinkers Cross. Away from Upton Warren the only flocks were 19 at Bredons Hardwick on March 12th, seven at Grimley on March 12th, five at Kinsham on August 8th and seven at Westwood on September 1st.

**Staffs** Six pairs at Swallow Moss was the only breeding report from the Moors. For details of breeding away from the Moors, see the article on *Breeding Waders*. Additionally, pairs were also at Coton Clanford, Seighford (three in edges of silage field and one on damp set-aside) and the Sudbury area (three along R. Dove), while Crakemars had two pairs on June 4th. Of the few winter flocks, 32 at Whittington STW was the largest, while the usual pre-breeding assembly occurred in the Longsdon/Tittesworth area, with 125 roosting adjacent to Longsdon Mill Pool on March 1st. Small numbers or singles were reported from 14 further sites during March-September, with maxima of eight at Revidge and five at Beech, and one at Barton in November. No significant autumn flocks were reported.

**W Mid** Noted at Bartley on March 7th, with two on April 4th; three flew north-west over Valley Park on March 20th; one flew through Sheepwash UP on March 23rd and November 28th; and one, possibly two, were in the Lutley Wedge area on July 27th.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** Single birds flew over Netherton Res on April 8th and June 17th.

#### **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

*Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

*Average passage: April 15th (8)-October 3rd (9)*

*A better year than last, but still below average.*

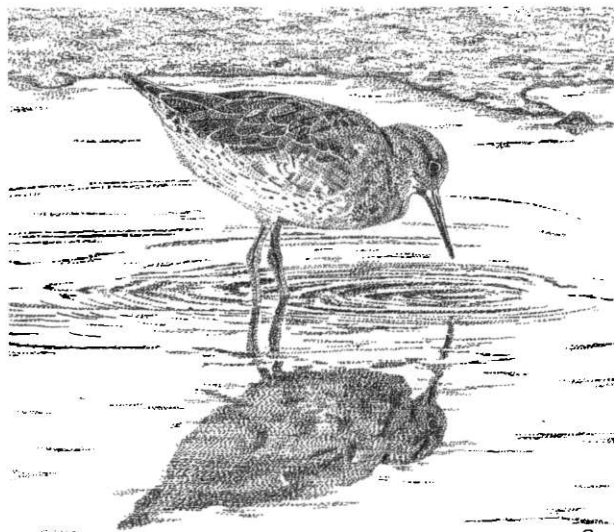
**Warks** Another very poor year, with just singles at Brandon from April 15th-21st and at Draycote on September 5th-6th.

**Worcs** A very unusual winter record concerned one at Bredons Hardwick from February 5th-March 9th *SJH et al.* Spring passage was confined to Kinsham, where there was one on April 23rd and two flew over on May 4th. Unusually, autumn began with an adult at Upton Warren on August 30th, followed by single juveniles at Lower Moor on August 31st and Upton Warren on September 9th.

**Staffs** A total of five individuals were seen during autumn passage, which commenced with one at Tittesworth on August 11th. This was followed by a juvenile at Blithfield on September 5th, 6th, 8th and 9th, then a winter-plumaged adult and a juvenile from September 22nd-24th, with one remaining until 27th, and a single at Branston on September 13th.

**Common Redshank (Redshank) *Tringa totanus***

*Frequent passage migrant. Uncommon summer resident and winter visitor.*



*Common Redshank (Terry Parker)*

**Monthly maxima at selected sites:**

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	—	1	9	8	10	8	2	—	3	—	—	1
Dosthill/Kingsbury	—	1	11	10	11	5	2	1	—	—	—	—
Draycote	—	—	3	—	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	1
Bredons Hardwick	1	3	9	11	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kinsham	—	6	10	9	7	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
Strensham	—	—	5	1	6	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Upton Warren	—	1	8	6	8	9	2	—	1	1	—	—
Airewas	—	—	3	6	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barton	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Belvide	—	1	17	14	12	12	12	1	1	1	4	7
Blithfield	—	—	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	—	—	—
Branston	—	10	10	3	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Doxey	—	2	8	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Drayton Bassett	—	—	—	20	8	4	2	—	—	—	—	—
Elford	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Tittesworth	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	1	2	—	—	—

**Warks** A nest of four eggs found at Brandon was later deserted or predated, while an adult and juvenile at Kingsbury in July provided the only other direct

breeding evidence. Mating was, however, observed at Ladywalk, where up to seven were present from March-June and five on August 23rd. Up to three were also present at Alvecote, Coton and Shustoke in spring, with one at Alvecote again on November 1st. A bird at Charlecote GP on March 13th was the only record in the south of the county.

**Worcs** Breeding was proved at Ryall and attempted at Bredons Hardwick, Eckington, Kinsham, Strensham and Upton Warren. Singles were at Little Comberton on April 7th, Upton-on-Severn on April 12th and Grimley on May 27th, July 26th and November 7th, while four were at Kempsey Lower Ham on November 10th.

**Staffs** Four pairs bred at Doxey (*cf.* three in 1997), while two at Belvide raised two chicks each. For full details of breeding see the article on *Breeding Waders*. Two were at Hixon from April 13th-May 10th, with display noted but breeding unproven. Elsewhere, two were at Baswich on April 4th and May 23rd, one at Brancote on May 4th and two at Milford on 28th. Singles were at Westport in July and October, Chasewater in August, Lymedale Park on November 27th, December 1st, 2nd and 4th; Holditch on December 2nd; and Dosthill on 31st.

**W Mid** Up to four were present in the Marsh Lane GPs area from at least March 21st-April 24th and four were also noted at nearby Meriden Quarries on March 21st. Singles were at Fens Pools on March 14th, 29th and September 4th; Netherton Res on March 21st; Stone Hill Estate (Coventry) on March 24th; Dunstall Park on 28th and again on July 15th; and Sheepwash UP on April 6th. Three were in Sandwell Valley on April 19th, followed by singles on May 14th, 25th and November 1st.

### 1997 Addenda

**Warks** Present at Brandon from February 22nd-July 5th, with maxima of ten on March 23rd and 11 on April 16th, but with no evidence that any young were raised. Singles were also here in August and October.

### Common Greenshank (Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia*

*Frequent passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

Numbers generally remain low at most sites.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brandon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	3	-	-	-
Dosthill/Kingsbury	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	11	3	-	-	-
Draycote	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	2	-	-
Grimley	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-
Kinsham	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	7	1	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5	2	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	1	-	-
Chasewater	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	11	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-

**Warks** The only additional spring record was one at Ladywalk from May 1st-4th. Autumn passage was very concentrated this year, with only four July singles going through, all at Draycote. Few others were seen until a notable

arrival during August 8th-10th, with fair numbers present at Brandon, Kingsbury WP (favouring the partly drained Cliff Pool) and Dosthill until the end of the month. The only records from elsewhere in the Tame Valley were of singles at Ladywalk on August 5th and September 10th, and the last of the year at Shustoke on October 11th. Elsewhere in the county, there were records of five flying over Stoneton on August 9th, singles at both The Somers and Wixford Pool on 15th, one at Wormleighton Res on 28th, two over Leamington Spa on September 1st and one at a pool in Avon Dassett on 5th.

**Worcs** Away from the tabulated sites passage was confined to the autumn. Two were at Throckmorton Tip from August 8th-9th, one at Lower Moor on August 16th and two at Ryall on August 29th, followed by one there on September 19th, two on 26th and one on October 3rd. Two flew over Stoke Works on September 1st, one was over Bredon Hill on September 3rd and singles were at Strensham from September 3rd-5th and over Sinton Green on September 5th.

**Staffs** Additional untabulated records were singles at Doxey in May; and Branston, Doxey, Elford and Westport in September; then two at Barton in November and two late birds at Drayton Bassett on December 6th.

**W Mid** One to two were present almost continually in the Marsh Lane GPs area from August 11th-November 10th, frequently visiting nearby quarries and Bradnock's Marsh. The best counts here were four on August 28th and five on September 11th. One in Sandwell Valley on August 11th was followed by six which dropped in on 20th: one then remained until 25th, followed by a further singleton on September 5th. Three were at Sheepwash UP, briefly, on August 12th and one at Fens Pools on 25th.

### 1997 Addenda

**Warks** The largest counts at Brandon were four on July 4th and five on August 19th.

### 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	3	1	2	2	7	18	20	15	3	2	-
Dosthill/Kingsbury	2	3	1	-	-	1	2	9	4	2	1	2
Grimley	-	-	-	1	-	-	9	12	6	2	-	1
Kinsham	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	1	-	-
Ryall	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	4	2	1	2
Strensham	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	6	2	1	-	2
Upton Warren	3	2	3	3	1	3	15	17	6	1	1	5
Belvide	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	2	2	-	1	-
Blithfield	2	2	-	-	-	-	5	4	2	-	1	1
Drayton Bassett	2	2	3	-	-	-	4	-	3	-	1	1
Marsh Lane GP	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	8	1	4	1	1

**Warks** The peak count at Brandon came on August 12th. Maxima from elsewhere included seven at Baginton Lagoons on July 18th, four at Draycote on August 6th, four at Napton Res on 14th, five at The Somers on 15th, five during the same month at Ladywalk and four on flooded fields by the river at Baginton



on December 29th. Up to three were also noted along the R. Blythe at Packington, and at Bubbenhall Tip, Charlecote GP, Farnborough, Lighthorne Pools, Lighthorne Quarry, Packington Park, Salford Priors GP, Wixford Pool and Wormleighton Res.

**Worcs** Singles were at Longdon Marsh on January 11th, Defford on August 3rd, Throckmorton from August 13th-16th, Westwood on August 16th, Bredons Hardwick from September 2nd-5th, Pirton on September 11th, Ipsley Alders on September 26th, Wilden on October 4th and 17th and Throckmorton on December 6th.

**Staffs** All other records were of singles, unless otherwise stated. Early on, birds were reported in January at Barton, Bishton (two on 9th), Brancote and Teddesley Park (where also two on February 22nd); in March at R. Dove (Tutbury area) and Haughton; and in April at Doxey (two) and Meece Brook. A record from Branston in June was then followed by birds in July at Coldmeece, Doxey, Elford (three) and Tittesworth; in August at R. Dove – Tutbury (two on 16th), Doxey and Tittesworth (three); in September at Branston (two), Elford and Little Stoke; in October at Barton; in November at Coldmeece (two on 2nd); and in December at Barton and Teddesley Park.

**W Mid** Singles were at Stubbers Green on March 19th and April 5th; Cornets End GP on March 21st; Sandwell Valley on March 29th and May 1st, followed by up to two from July 22nd-31st with one remaining until August 2nd and then again on 14th; singles at Sheepwash UP on April 15th, August 10th, 13th and 27th; and one in Dunstall Park on July 9th, 16th and 22nd.

### **1997 Corrigenda**

**Warks** The Brandon table was incomplete. Birds were present in every month, except December, with additions including maxima of five in March and 13 in September.

### **Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

*Uncommon passage migrant. Has over-wintered.*

*Average passage: May 4th (9)-September 24th (9)*

**Warks** A bird in song and display flight at Dosthill on May 27th NPB was the only one in spring. A lean autumn produced singles at Draycote on July 25th, Salford Priors GP on August 16th and Kingsbury WP on 21st.

**Worcs** All the records were in September. One at Kinsham on 1st, then two at Bredons Hardwick on 2nd, one at Strensham on 5th, two at Upton Warren from 8th-12th and one at Kinsham from 17th-18th.

**Staffs** A total of four individuals, but only one in spring. All sightings were of singles, at Belvide on May 24th-25th, Tittesworth on August 12th, Belvide from 23rd-24th and Blithfield on September 6th.

**W Mid** One was at Marsh Lane GPs on September 5th.

### **1997 Addenda**

**Warks** Brandon also had two on July 22nd and one on September 17th.

**Staffs** The two birds at Blithfield on August 6th and 13th were also seen on 14th.

**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
Brandon	-	-	-	1	1	3	2	4	3	1	-	-
Coton/Lea Marston	-	-	3	3	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
Dosthill/Kingsbury	-	-	-	2	-	2	5	4	-	-	-	-
Draycote	-	-	-	11	14	2	10	10	4	-	-	-
Bishampton Vale P	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
Biltell	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3	-	-	-
Bredons Hardwick	1	1	1	2	1	1	6	4	3	2	-	-
Grimley	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	5	1	1	-	-
Kinsham	-	-	-	7	4	-	2	2	1	-	-	-
Lower Moor	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	-
Pirton	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-
Ryall	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-
Strensham	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Upton Warren	-	-	-	4	4	1	6	5	2	-	-	-
Westwood	-	-	-	4	1	-	1	2	2	-	-	-
Belvide	-	-	-	2	-	14	17	10	5	3	-	-
Blithfield	-	-	-	5	7	1	24	19	7	1	-	-
Chasewater	0	0	0	3	2	1	3	3	21	1	0	0
Doxey	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elford	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Tittesworth	-	-	1	4	9	8	8	4	5	-	-	-
Westport	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dunsall Park	-	-	-	3	1	-	3	1	-	-	-	-
Fens Pools	-	-	-	2	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Marsh Lane GP	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Netherton Reservoir	-	-	-	1	4	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Sandwell Valley	-	-	-	4	5	1	5	1	-	-	-	-
Sheepwash UP	-	-	-	3	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	-

**Warks** Another poor year, not helped by high water levels. Extreme dates were March 28th, when three were at Coton, and October 2nd, when one was at Brandon. Four at Napton Res on August 14th was the best count from elsewhere, with up to three at Abbots Salford Pool, Black Hill Pool, Charlecote GP, Compton Verney, Coombe, Earlswood Lakes, Farnborough Park, Ladywalk, Packington Park, Salford Priors GP and Shustoke.

**Worcs** Away from the tabulated sites, two were at Trimpley on April 20th, one at Laughern Pools on April 28th, 13 at Trimpley on July 13th, singles at Eckington and along the canal at Tibberton both on July 19th, and three at Wilden on September 4th.

**Staffs** At Tittesworth, the last remaining breeding site in the Region, there were six or seven pairs and the population appears stable (*cf.* seven territories in 1993). First noted at Tittesworth sometime in March and last seen at Belvide on October 17th. Of note was a remarkable flock for Chasewater of 21 on September 13th. Away from the main sites, singles were seen at Alrewas in April, Brookleys on May 2nd; Basford, Brancote and Great Haywood all on May 4th; and along the R. Dove at Calwich on July 23rd.

**W Mid** In spring, migrants were at Stubbers Green on April 6th, 12th, 28th and May 6th; Bartley on April 16th, 17th (two) and 23rd; Netherton Hill on April 23rd; Footshole on May 8th (two); and Edgbaston Res on 16th. In the autumn, two were at Bartley on July 31st, six on August 2nd and two on September 11th.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres**Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.**Average passage: April 22nd (9)-September 22nd (9)*

**Warks** Unusually, all records this year were from the Tame Valley in spring. Singles at Dosthill on May 9th and 12th were followed by two heading north over Coton on 16th, with presumably the same two seen at Dosthill on the same day. Further singles were then at the latter site on May 17th and 24th, with four on 27th.

**Worcs** Three paused briefly at Upton Warren on August 16th.

**Staffs** The first of the spring was at Drayton Bassett/ Middleton Pit on May 9th, followed by three there on May 16th and four on 27th. Meanwhile, one was at Belvide on May 11th and two at Alrewas on 23rd. A good autumn passage started with one at Belvide on August 5th, which was followed by two on 22nd, three on 26th and two on September 10th. Blithfield had four on August 12th, two on 25th increasing to four on 26th, three on 27th-28th, two on 30th-31st and one on September 2nd. Three then flew straight through during a period of heavy rain on September 12th. Chasewater, which is a favoured site, produced two juveniles on September 3rd and one on October 1st.

**W Mid** One was at Bartley on September 11th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** At Blithfield, there were also four on August 14th and three on 24th.

**Great Skua** *Catharacta skua**Rare vagrant in autumn and very rare in spring (4/10)*

**Warks** One was at Draycote on September 28th-29th *CDB, JFCJ, SR et al.* The first acceptable county record since 1989.

**W Mid** One was at Fens Pools on January 3rd *BMM, AP* and two circled Bartley for five minutes on September 15th before leaving to the north-west *SPR*.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus**Uncommon, but increasing, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Another good year at Draycote. Records from the gull roost included an adult on January 10th *REH, DJS*, two adults and a first-winter on 11th *PDH, JFCJ, MY*, an adult and first-winter on 17th *JFCJ*, single adults (all different) on February 10th, 17th and 19th *JFCJ*, and on 28th *REH, DJS*, all three adults together on March 2nd and one on 3rd *JFCJ*, two adults, a second-winter and a first-winter on 27th *JFCJ*, and finally two first-winters on 31st *JJB, JFCJ*. The first returning bird was a juvenile on September 1st *JFCJ*, followed by a first-winter on October 24th *REH, DJS*, two adults and a first-winter on November 10th *JJB, JFCJ*, single first-winters on 20th *JFCJ* and 21st *REH, DJS*, and an adult on December 29th *PDH*. Elsewhere, an adult feeding on pasture with a large flock of Black-headed Gulls at Fenny Compton on January 19th *JJB* was known to be one of several using the roost at nearby Boddington Res (Northants). A summer-plumaged adult at Dosthill on March 9th *per SR* was the only report from the Tame Valley.

**Worcs** Single adults were on floodwater at Upton-on-Severn from January 11th-13th *GHP et al* and on January 18th *GHP*, with another at Bredons Hardwick on

January 17th *SJH*. Spring passage began with three adults at Bredons Hardwick on March 15th *WFP et al*, followed by a second-summer on 28th *GG*, *TMH* and two adults on April 2nd *SJH*, *WFP*. A first-summer was at Longdon Marsh on April 11th *GHP* and a first-winter at nearby Upton-on-Severn the same day *GHP*. None then, until a colour-ringed juvenile appeared at Grimley on July 26th *MJI*, *GJM*, having been ringed a month earlier at Pas de Calais (France). Another juvenile then appeared at Upton Warren and Westwood on August 7th (the same bird) *GG*, *RAP*, *SMW* and a fine adult in full summer plumage was found at Kinsham on August 9th *RAP*. Single juveniles moulting into first-winter were at Upton Warren from August 20th-22nd *TMH*, *DAJ et al* and from September 15th-21st *TMH et al*. The only late autumn bird was an adult at Upton-on-Severn from November 7th-8th *GHP et al*.

**Staffs** Chasewater had a first-winter on January 2nd *MY*, single adults in winter plumage on 10th-11th *MY*, *GE* and one moulting into summer plumage on February 8th *KMC*, *GE*. Single winter plumaged adults were at nearby Cannock Tip on January 24th *KMC* and 25th *MJI*, *PDH*. At Blithfield, an adult moulting into summer plumage on February 15th *GS*, *WJL* was followed by single winter plumaged adults on August 15th *MY*, 23rd *PDH*, *ESC* and October 11th *WJL*; then a single first-winter on September 23rd *ESC* and two on November 1st *WJL*. Finally, Tittesworth had a second summer on March 1st *MB*, *PAW* and a second-winter the next day *RJH*.

**W Mid** A first-winter bird was at Bartley on December 31st *ARD*.

#### **1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** Second winter birds were also at Chasewater on January 14th and 31st *GE*, whilst an adult was at Belvide on August 9th *KMC*.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Additional adults were seen at Belvide on August 31st *KMC* and Chasewater on September 1st and December 27th *GE*.

### **Little Gull *Larus minutus***

*Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.*

**Warks** Spring passage started well with six adults at Dosthill on March 29th, but then fizzled out quickly, with just single first-summers at Draycote on April 5th and 12th and Kingsbury on 18th-19th, plus two at Dosthill on 29th and May 4th. After an immature at Draycote from August 16th-18th being the sole record during the traditional return passage period, an unusual number of late records occurred. Single first-winters were seen at Draycote almost daily from October 11th-30th, but possibly only involving one or two individuals. Further first-winters were at Shustoke on October 11th-12th and 18th, and at Dosthill on 17th, with a bird at Brandon from November 21st-23rd, and again on December 9th.

**Worcs** An adult at Westwood on April 4th, a first-winter at Bittell on April 24th and a juvenile at Upton Warren on August 23rd completed a really poor showing.

**Staffs** January records involved a second-winter at Tittesworth on 3rd and an adult at Belvide on 17th. A good spring passage then began with a second-summer at Chasewater from March 26th-27th followed by three second-summer birds

on April 4th and one on 5th. A first-summer was also at Blithfield on 5th, with an adult at Westport on 6th and four adults at Tittesworth on 15th. A second-summer then remained at Chasewater from April 15th-20th, while an adult was at Belvide and three adults and a second-summer were at Blithfield on 19th. A second-summer was then at Chasewater from 29th-30th, two adults were at Drayton Bassett on 29th and one at Belvide on 30th. Autumn passage started with a first-summer at Belvide from July 28th-August 9th, while single juveniles were at Blithfield on 31st and Belvide on September 1st. An un-aged bird at Chasewater on September 25th was then followed by single juveniles/first-winters at Belvide on 27th, Westport on October 15th and Belvide again on 24th. Blithfield then had an adult on November 1st followed by a first-winter on 15th and finally a first-winter visited Copmere on December 27th.

**W Mid** One at Bartley on March 29th and a first-summer in Sandwell Valley on April 22nd were the only records.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One was at Brandon on September 6th.

### **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	287	121	200	-	-	-	19	19	43	96	950	1400
Throckmorton	100	100	450	-	-	-	20	50	-	30	-	400
Upton Warren	50	131	22	1	6	9	800	700	750	1000	150	50
Westwood	3600	3500	3000	-	-	-	-	1000	600	1800	3700	4400
Chasewater	10000	10000	3000	145	6	5	1200	3500	3500	5000	10000	12000
Tittesworth	3000	150	400	2	7	2	81	90	40	80	2000	2000

**Warks** The Dosthill gully was estimated to have contained a record 150 pairs *SR* this year and 27 young were ringed at Kingsbury WP gully. The only estimate of the huge Draycote roost was 15000 on January 10th, though 10000 on pasture at Napton Res on March 8th were presumably bound for there. Dosthill Tip had maxima of 3000 on February 10th, 5000 on November 12th and 4000 on December 1st. Counts from elsewhere were smaller and included 700 at Fenny Compton during January, 695 at Brandon on 17th, 500 at Radway on March 2nd and 7th, a southerly movement of 650 over Fenny Compton on July 26th and 530 at Wormleighton on August 14th.

**Worcs** The larger flocks away from the tabulated sites were 300 at Lower Moor on January 9th, 7000 at Upton-on-Severn on January 18th, 500 at Bredons Hardwick on February 15th, 600 at Bredons Hardwick on October 25th, 600 at Longdon Marsh on November 1st, 2000 south over Upton-on-Severn on November 8th, 350 at Lower Moor on December 30th and 280 at Tibberton on December 30th.

**Staffs** Bred near Aqualate, where 25-30 pairs were seen on May 25th and six nests and two chicks on June 14th. The larger untabulated counts in the first winter period were 1000 on floods at Rickerscote on January 7th, 300 at Aqualate on 15th, 500 at Denstone Hall on 25th, 420 at Aqualate on February 15th

and 6000 roosting at Belvide on March 1st: peaks in the second winter period were c500 roosting at Aqualate on September 10th, 500 at Rickerscote on 12th, 2000 roosting on the roof of a furniture store at Festival Park on November 5th and 11th, c300 roosting at Belvide on 13th, 4000 roosting at Aqualate on December 2nd, 500 regularly on floodwater at Rickerscote during the second half of December and 4000 roosting at Belvide on 31st. A leucistic adult near Croxall on January 9th was probably the same bird that remained at Blithfield from April 9th-19th, while an albino was at Belvide on March 6th.

**W Mid** Maxima in the first winter period were up to 800 at Netherton Res on January 28th and 4000 at Bartley on February 8th. Second winter peak counts comprised 200 at Marsh Lane GPs on September 17th, 5000 at Bartley on December 24th, 750 in Dunstall Park during November and December and 350 at Netherton Res on December 15th. An albinistic individual and one with all white primaries were at Bartley on February 8th, with the latter bird again present on March 15th. A partial albinistic bird was again noted at Bartley on November 15th.

#### **Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*

*Very rare vagrant (4/10).*

**Warks** A bird in second-summer/sub-adult plumage was resting on the water at Draycote on March 30th AC. Only the third acceptable county record, the last being in 1991.

#### **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
Bredons Hardwick	-	10	250	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chasewater	10	10	8	5	2	0	4	0	1	2	2	25
Tittesworth	100	33	40	0	0	0	50	1	0	1	15	180

**Warks** The only count at the Draycote roost was 3200 on January 10th. In the south of the county, 350 flying south-west over Wormleighton Res on January 11th and 200 on February 5th were followed by March flocks of 150 at Compton Wynyates on 14th, 150 at Fenny Compton on 16th, 200 at Radway on 20th, 150 at Arlescote on 23rd and 320 at Chesterton on 28th. A flock of 470 flying west over Napton Hill on April 2nd were presumably passage birds. Extreme dates were May 12th at Draycote and July 15th at Fenny Compton.

**Worcs** An exceptional count of 1150 at Eckington on February 20th PFW was followed by more typical maxima of 115 at Kinsham on March 5th, 50 at Strensham on March 15th, 160 at Bredon Hill on March 19th, 150 over Aston Mill on April 11th, 370 at Upton-on-Severn on April 11th, 50 over Lower Moor on April 13th and 600 at Longdon Marsh on April 16th. Small numbers were noted at several other localities.

**Staffs** Recorded at just eight other sites, the larger counts being 17 at Belvide on October 6th and nine at Westport in February, April and December.

**W Mid** In the first winter period, a small group at Marsh Lane GPs peaked at 12 on March 15th and a creditable 130 were at nearby Meriden Quarries on 21st. Small numbers were also at Fens Pools, Perry Hall playing fields, Netherton Res, Sandwell Valley and Sheepwash UP. No commoner in the autumn/second winter period, with maxima of nine at Marsh Lane GPs on November 9th, four at Bartley on 30th and three at Netherton Res in December. Singles were noted at Fens Pools, Netherton Hill (July) and Sandwell Valley.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

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

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Throckmorton	900	1200	500	450	—	—	500	650	—	1000	—	800
Westwood	1000	500	600	—	5	—	—	260	200	1300	1800	2200
Chesewater	1000	3000	1100	600	400	435	1700	2800	2800	3400	2700	1000
Tittesworth	189	16	100	15	48	30	30	65	35	21	150	200

**Warks** No count from the huge Draycote roost. Away from here, maxima included 400 moving south at Fenny Compton on February 10th, 600 flying towards the Draycote roost over Heathcote on October 8th, 520 at Shustoke on 31st and 1000 at Dosthill on November 18th.

**Worcs** No information on the numbers breeding in the major towns in the county. Many reports of substantial flocks on farmland, the larger ones in the early part of the year being 300 at Lower Moor on January 9th and 2500 at Longdon Marsh on January 11th. Equally as common in the autumn, with peaks of 1500 at Longdon Marsh on November 1st, 2000 flying south-west over Upton-on-Severn on November 8th and 1230 at Tibberton on December 26th.

**Staffs** Away from the tabulated sites, there were roosts of 520 at Belvide on March 1st, 200 at Blithfield on April 4th, 500 at Aqualate on September 10th, 1400 at Blithfield on 27th, 730 at Belvide on November 13th, 1500 at Aqualate on December 2nd and 760 at Belvide on 12th followed by 2000 on 31st. The largest reported flock was 200 at Church Eaton on September 21st. An albino roosted at Belvide on December 6th.

**W Mid** Increasingly common throughout and breeding around Birmingham City Centre, but no counts were received. First winter period gatherings included 1450 roosting at Bartley on February 8th, 260 near Pensnett on January 4th and 200 flying over Netherton Res on January 28th. Fens Pools then had 55 on March 13th and 40 flew north over Sandwell Valley on April 12th. In July, 76 were loafing on factory roofs on Netherton Hill, while up to 50 were at Dunstall Park in August. During the second winter period, 70 were on Hill Crest school fields, Netherton, on October 12th, around 300 were attracted to ploughed fields at Park Lime Pits on October 28th and peak counts in December were 300 at Sheepwash UP and 1200 in the Bartley roost.

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

**W Mid** The occasional bird, believed to be of this race, was reported at Marsh Lane GPs in September and October.

**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	25	5	40	—	—	5	4	—	6	—	330
Westwood	75	6	6	—	—	—	—	6	3	6	16	280
Chasewater	2800	1250	200	60	5	1	0	1	6	150	1500	2500

**Warks** The summering pair were back at Earlswood Lakes for the third year in succession, while up to five were seen in the Dosthill/Kingsbury area during the breeding season. Two immatures flew over Fenny Compton on June 7th. Winter flocks included 120 roosting at Dosthill on January 2nd and 165 flying south-west over Wormleighton Res on 11th from the huge Draycote roost, for which there were unfortunately no accurate counts.

**Worcs** Much less common than the preceding species, with maxima of just 12 at Bredons Hardwick on March 22nd and 40 at Lower Moor on December 30th. Small numbers were noted at nine further sites.

**Staffs** Few records were received, but noted at nine sites, including Chasewater where an adult with white primaries in the roost on January 24th *KMC* was either this species or a Glaucous x Herring hybrid.

**W.Mid** At least one pair was present around Birmingham City Centre during the breeding season. During the first winter period the best counts were 240 near Pensnett on January 4th, 35 on Dunstall Park on the same date; 250 in the Bartley roost on 11th; and 80 on Perry Hall playing fields on 17th. The highest second winter period count was 24 at Sheepwash UP on December 23rd. Also reported from Sandwell Valley, Stubbers Green and Sutton Park.

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

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

All birds were believed to be *L. a. michahellis*, but observers are urged to look carefully at any potential *Yellow-legged Gull* and take full notes as *L. a. cachinnans* may well be overlooked. Essential reference papers can be found in *British Birds*: 90: 25-62 and 369-383.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	16	1	—	—	—	—	2	2	8	3	3	4
Bredons Hardwick	2	1	1	—	—	3	2	1	—	—	1	—
Throckmorton	3	1	1	—	—	—	3	3	—	1	3	3
Westwood	6	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	2	5	9	7

**Warks** Good numbers were located in the Draycote roost, with a peak of at least 16 on January 4th. Away from here, single adults were at Bubbenhall Tip on December 12th *REH*, *DJS* and Ladywalk on 14th *per SLC*.

**Worcs** Single adults were at both Bittell *RJW* and Wildmoor Tip on January 2nd *TMH*, with two (a second-winter and a third-winter) at the latter on 20th *SMW*. An adult was at Upton-on-Severn from January 10th-11th *GHP*, *WFP*, a third-summer at Hartlebury Tip on February 24th *SMW* and a second-summer at Kinsham from May 27th-June 1st *SMW et al.* An adult was seen at Grimley



on July 26th *REH*, a fourth-summer was in fields at Naunton Beauchamp on August 22nd and a third-winter visited Grimley on September 30th *TMH*. November then brought records of a fourth-winter at Longdon Marsh on 1st *SMW*, an adult at Upton-on-Severn on 8th *GHP*, *SMW* and a further adult at Upton Warren on 26th *RAH*. Further adults then followed at Wildmoor Tip on December 2nd *TMH*, and at Kinsham on December 6th and 27th *GHP*, *SMW*. Finally a fourth-winter was identified at Holt on December 13th *BS*.

*Staffs* All records refer to single adults unless otherwise stated. Reported in the first winter period at Belvide on January 10th, 11th (two) and 25th *KMC*; Blithfield on January 2nd (two), 18th, 25th, February 8th (three), 15th (two plus a second-winter) and 22nd, with a second-summer on April 5th and 19th *WJL*; and Chasewater on January 24th and February 8th *KMC*. Chasewater also had a second-summer bird on July 10th *GE*. Second winter period records then came from Belvide on November 14th, 19th and December 27th *KMC*; Blithfield on September 6th, 27th (accompanied by a second-winter) and November 8th *WJL*; Drayton Bassett on 11th *BLK*; Westport on 15th, with a fourth-winter there on December 12th *WJL*; and Cannock Tip on November 14th and December 19th *KMC*. An adult at Chasewater on November 7th appeared to show characteristics of *L. a. cachinnans*, but due to its head shape and mantle tone was considered to be *michahellis* *GE*.

*W Mid* A good series of records from Bartley saw an adult on January 1st *ARD*; a moulting adult on July 19th *ARD*; an adult and a third-summer on 26th *ARD*; an adult on August 2nd *ARD*; two adults on November 1st *MDJ*; two adults on November 15th *REH*; and one adult on November 30th *MDJ*. ('Small numbers' were also reported here between January-March and June-December, but without descriptions/further details). Elsewhere, singles were at Fens Pools on January 17th *PWG* and December 29th *PWG* and a first-summer bird at Marsh Lane GPs on September 8th *NPB*.

#### **1996 Addendum**

*Staffs* Two were at Belvide on December 15th *KMC*.

#### **1997 Addenda**

*Staffs* An adult winter bird was at Belvide on August 31st *KMC*.

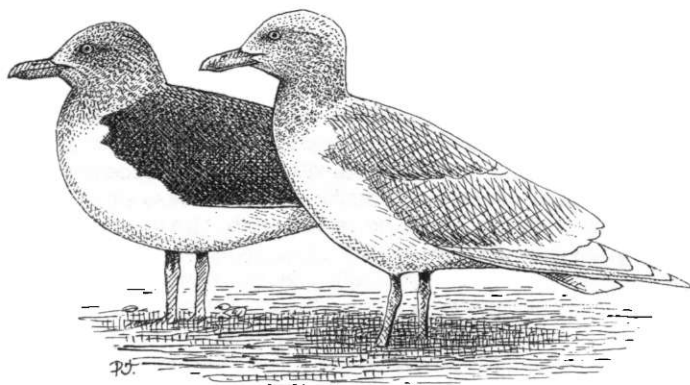
*W Mid* An adult was at Netherton Res on January 12th *CJT*.

### **Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus***

*Scarce winter visitor.*

*Warks* A single adult roosted at Draycote on at least fifteen evenings during January 6th-March 1st *JFCJ et al*, together with a second adult on January 23rd *JFCJ* and a second or third-winter on 24th *MY*. An adult was again in the roost on seven evenings from December 11th-31st *PDH*, *JFCJ et al*. Elsewhere, single adults, presumably from Draycote, were at Bubbenhall Tip on January 31st *SMH et al* and December 12th *REH*, *DJS*.

*Staffs* At Chasewater, the usual complexity of winter records (all singles) began with a first-winter on January 11th and first and second winters on 24th *AC* (with the latter also at Kingswood). February then brought first-winters on 7th-8th *AC*, *GE*; 13th *PDH*; 17th *GE*; and 21st and 28th (the latter a different individual to 8th) *AC*, *GE*, *ICW*; plus an adult on 8th *AC*, *KMC* and 14th-15th



*Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (Phil Jones)*

*GE.* Finally a new first-winter was present on March 4th and 13th-14th *AC*, *GE.* Elsewhere, single first-winters were seen at Blithfield on January 9th, 28th *ESC* and February 22nd *ESC*, *WJL* and an adult on January 25th *WJL*, *MY*; while Cannock Tip had single first-winters on January 24th *KMC* and February 6th *SAR* and a second-winter on January 24th and February 8th *KMC*. At the end of the year, a second-winter was at Blithfield on December 13th and 16th *ESC*, *WJL*.

*W Mid* A first-winter/first-summer bird roosted at Bartley from February 22nd until at least March 6th *ARD*, *AN*, *SPR*.

**1996 Addenda**

*Staffs* A second-year bird was at Cannock Tip on April 6th and a first-winter on December 29th *KMC*. Also noted at Chasewater from January 31st-February 3rd (third-winter); 11th (first-winter); 28th-March 15th (first-winter on eight dates); 5th-6th and 15th (second-winter); and 31st, April 1st and 4th (second years) *GE*.

**1997 Addendum**

*Staffs* A second-winter bird was at Cannock Tip on February 2nd *KMC*.

**Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus***

*Scarce winter visitor.*

*Warks* The Draycote roost contained a second-winter bird on January 10th *REH*, *DJS*, an adult from 27th-30th *AC*, *JFCJ et al* and a bird in second-summer plumage on March 15th *JFCJ*. The adult was also seen at Bubbenhall Tip on January 31st *SMH*, while good views were had of a second-winter bird flying west low over Oversley Wood on February 14th with other large gulls *JJB*.

*Worcs* A very pale first-summer bird was at Bredons Hardwick from February 1st-15th *REH*, *RWP*, *RAP*, *SMW et al*. The first record for the locality.

*Staffs* A second winter at Chasewater on January 10th-11th *AC*, *MY* and 24th *KMC*

was followed by a first winter on eight dates from 25th-February 19th AC, GE *et al*, with a second first-winter also present on 7th GE and 13th-14th PDH, AC. A new first-winter on March 8th AC was then followed by a first-summer on March 21st, April 4th and 7th GE. A first-winter seen on December 13th and 19th GE then stayed into 1999 and was also seen at Cannock Tip on 19th KMC. Single first-winters were also seen at Cannock Tip on January 10th, 24th-25th and February 8th KMC *et al* and at Blithfield on January 11th, 24th and February 25th ESC, WJL, with a second-winter there on March 4th ESC.

#### 1996 Addendum

**Staffs** A first-winter bird at Chasewater on January 12th GE was presumably that seen the following day at Cannock Tip.

#### 1997 Addenda

**Staffs** Cannock Tip also had a third-winter on January 25th and two first-winters on February 9th, while a second-year bird was at Blithfield on April 6th KMC.

**W Mid** An adult was seen on wasteland near Pensnett on January 20th CJT.

### 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	17	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Westwood	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	25
Chasewater	500	95	5	12	0	0	0	0	2	25	70	460

**Warks** Few reports were received. Roost counts included 42 at Dosthill on January 2nd and 72 at Draycote on 10th, with up to 30 in the Dosthill/Kingsbury area from October-December. There were two summer reports, of four at Dosthill on June 14th and one at Brandon on July 9th. Very few were seen in the south or west of the county.

**Worcs** Very scarce as usual. Singles were seen at Wildmoor Tip on January 2nd, Longdon Marsh on 17th, Bredons Hardwick on February 15th and over Eve-sham on 28th. Two were then at Bredons Hardwick from April 5th-10th, followed by singles there on April 25th and December 5th. Finally, six were at Lower Moor on December 27th.

**Staffs** Records were received from a further seven sites, with the only double-figure counts being 10 at Denstone on January 11th and 15 roosting at Belvide on December 30th.

**W Mid** A peak of 21 near Pensnett on January 4th was a very respectable county total. Elsewhere, maxima of six at Dunstall Park and five at Bartley, both in January, and four at Sheepwash UP in December, with smaller numbers at Fens Pools and Netherton Res.

### Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

*Uncommon passage migrant and storm-driven winter visitor.*

A small influx of storm-driven birds occurred in early January, following several days of strong south-westerly winds that culminated in a severe gale on the 4th. Typically, most were in Worcs, having been blown up the Bristol Channel. A weak, but unusual, passage also occurred in late spring.

- Warks** In January, single adults were at Middleton on 1st, Draycote on 3rd-4th, Coton on 10th (recently dead) and Draycote again on 18th. Single adults at Shustoke on March 26th and at Dosthill on April 18th and 24th were the only spring records, followed by a first-summer at Draycote on May 13th and 16th and an unseasonal adult there on June 28th-29th. Autumn produced single adults at Draycote on October 21st and 24th, single first-winters both there and at Shustoke on 31st, and another at Draycote on November 22nd. In December, there was one at the latter locality on 16th and two on 27th.
- Worcs** A good year began with a storm-driven influx in early January. An adult at Bredons Hardwick and five adults at Westwood on 4th were followed by an adult at Upton Warren on 5th, a first-winter at Lower Moor on 6th and an exhausted adult, which was picked up at Droitwich on 7th. Further adults were then at Bittell on 11th and 12th, Strensham and Westwood on 18th, Bredons Hardwick on 22nd and Wildmoor Tip on 25th. Spring passage was less pronounced than usual, producing just an adult at Westwood on March 15th and a first-summer at Upton Warren on April 23rd, though there were further singles on the unusually late dates of May 21st, when an adult was at Bittell, and June 2nd, when a first-winter visited Westwood. Also surprising were single juveniles at Upton Warren on August 23rd and Grimley and Westwood (same bird) on September 2nd. Later in the autumn, two adults were at Westwood on October 31st, with a first-winter there on November 3rd, and an adult was at Bittell on December 27th.
- Staffs** An excellent spring passage. Winter and spring records were all of single adults (unless otherwise stated) at Handsacre on January 4th, Blithfield on 9th; Belvide from February 20th-21st and on 24th and March 15th-16th; Chasewater (oiled) on March 4th; Westport on March 5th, 13th, 16th (four), 19th and April 1st, 16th and 19th; and Middleton Pit on April 18th. The only summer/autumn records were a first-winter at Blithfield on August 23rd, when four adults were at Belvide, and an adult and a first-winter at Belvide on October 31st.
- W Mid** In the aftermath of the gales, one was in Sandwell Valley on January 4th and a badly oiled bird was at Bartley on 8th. Autumn brought one to Sheepwash UP, briefly, on September 13th and an immature to Bartley, also momentarily, on 24th.
- 1997 Addendum**
- W Mid** An adult was on Netherton Res on February 24th.

### **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

#### *Uncommon passage migrant*

*Average passage: April 4th (9)-October 1st (9)*

- Warks** There were four at Dosthill on March 28th, three at Draycote on April 22nd and one there on 23rd. Two were at Draycote from October 4th-6th.
- Worcs** The only records were of two significant parties at Bredons Hardwick, with seven on September 17th and 17 (mostly immatures) on 27th.
- Staffs** The only spring record was one at Chasewater on April 5th. A good autumn passage started with single adults at Belvide on July 13th and 21st. An adult and a juvenile were then at Chasewater on September 4th, followed by two

on 7th. At least 12 were then around Alrewas and Barton GPs on September 27th, before leaving north-eastwards. Finally a juvenile/first-winter was at Belvide on October 6th.

**W Mid** Singletons were in Sandwell Valley briefly on September 25th and 26th. A winter plumaged adult and a juvenile bird were equally brief visitors to Sheepwash UP on September 26th, with two adults the next day which again only stayed a short while. Possibly the same bird(s) visited both localities.

#### 1997 Addendum

**Staffs** Three immatures visited Gailey on August 16th.

#### Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

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

*Average: April 12th (14)–October 5th (14)*

A typical arrival, with the first two at Kingsbury WP on April 13th, but an early departure with the last at Sandwell Valley on September 22nd.

Monthly maxima at selected sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Draycote	—	—	—	6	22	8	11	7	3	—	—	—
Bittell	—	—	—	2	2	—	2	2	—	—	—	—
Bredons Hardwick	—	—	—	—	5	2	—	4	2	—	—	—
Upton Warren	—	—	—	1	7	4	7	7	3	—	—	—
Westwood	—	—	—	—	7	2	1	1	7	—	—	—
Blithfield	—	—	—	1	5	4	20	20	3	—	—	—
Chasewater	—	—	—	9	22	6	10	9	2	—	—	—
Fens Pools	—	—	—	1	1	3	2	1	1	—	—	—
Sandwell Valley	—	—	—	2	3	2	10	2	1	—	—	—
Slubbers Green	—	—	—	—	2	—	5	1	—	—	—	—

**Warks** Only two pairs were thought to have hatched young this year at Dosthill, but 85 young were ringed at Kingsbury WP, where 103 were on Cliff Pool on August 10th. Three pairs also bred on the rafts at Draycote, producing four young, although one of these subsequently drowned when it was thrown from the raft by an adult from an adjoining nest! Elsewhere, two pairs nested on the rafts at Brandon, one unsuccessfully and the other rearing three young, while another pair attempted breeding on a raft at Coombe for the first time. Small numbers were seen during the summer months at many waters in the north of the county, at some of which display was noted. Peak counts included 12 at Shustoke on June 28th and over 30 at The Somers during August. Further south, up to five were noted on many dates at Earlswood Lakes, Napton Res and Wormleighton Res, with odd birds in July at Compton Verney, Fenny Compton (Oxford Canal) and Lighthorne Pools, and two at Bishop's Bowl Lakes on September 1st.

**Worcs** Two pairs bred successfully on the tern rafts at Upton Warren. Away from the tabulated sites, there were singles in spring at Lower Moor on May 9th, Kinsham on May 11th, Larford on May 13th and Strensham on May 17th and June 6th. More widespread in early autumn, with singles on the R. Severn in the centre of Worcester on July 1st and at Lower Moor on July 6th, while Grimley had up to three from July 21st–August 1st, five on 8th and four on 9th. Six used the canal at Tardebigge on July 24th, six were at Hewell Grange on

August 6th, two at Lower Moor on August 16th, one at Wilden on September 1st and a final juvenile at Kinsham on September 19th.

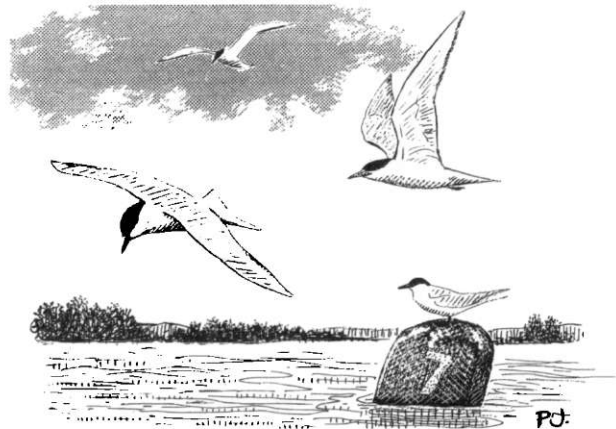
**Staffs** Bred at three sites. A pair hatched three young on the tern raft at Belvide, four pairs hatched four young at Aston Bridge and a pair hatched two young at Elford. Small numbers were recorded at another six sites, with maxima of six at Alrewas GP on May 10th and 14 at Elford North Pit on August 8th.

**W Mid** A pair at Sheepwash UP raised two young to the wing-flapping stage, but these sadly disappeared due, perhaps, to vandals or Grey Heron predation. At least two adults frequented Marsh Lane GPs during the breeding season, but were not thought to have bred even though a flying juvenile was present on July 14th: the latter was considered to have possibly come from a nearby pit or from Kingsbury WP. Elsewhere, fairly regularly reported from Edgbaston Res, where the peak count was 13 in early August, and Stubbers Green. Up to three were noted in Sutton Park, while birds were seen fishing along the canal at Park Lime Pits from late May into mid-July and were noted fairly regularly at Netherton Res from mid-June until late July, with a peak count of three. In July there were also up to six at Bartley, two at Goscote Valley and one over central Aldridge.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

*Frequent passage migrant in variable numbers.*

*Average passage: April 9th (9)-October 8th (9).*



*Arctic Terns (Phil Jones)*

There was a huge movement across the East Midlands in early May which spread just sufficiently far westwards to bring modest totals to Warks in particular. A very weak autumn passage.

**Warks** A very concentrated passage began with two at Draycote on April 22nd-23rd. A moderate influx in early May began with up to 44 at Dosthill on 1st and 50

on 2nd, when 36 were also at Brandon. Next day the emphasis shifted to Draycote, where up to 53 appeared, but there were still 16 at Dosthill and five at the nearby Marston Pits. Four at Dosthill and one at Draycote on May 4th, singles at Brandon on 6th-7th and 9th and two at Draycote on 30th then concluded the spring passage. By contrast, there was only one in autumn; a juvenile at Draycote on September 15th.

**Worcs** An early bird at Westwood from April 4th-7th was joined by another on 5th. A small influx in early May saw six at Bittell plus singles at Bredons Hardwick and Upton Warren on 1st, then 12 at Bittell, four north over Upton Warren and seven at Westwood on 3rd. No more were seen then until autumn, when single juveniles appeared at Upton Warren on August 23rd and September 15th, and at Kinsham on 19th.

**Staffs** A much better year than 1997. Spring passage began with eight at Chasewater on April 15th followed by 45 at Blithfield on 19th; two at Alrewas on 20th with one next day; and one at Chasewater on 22nd-23rd. A second influx in early May started with seven at Chasewater on 1st, six on 2nd, 18 on 3rd and one on 4th. Three were then at Belvide on 7th and two at Blithfield on 11th. Following an early bird at Westport on June 27th, passage began with four at Blithfield on July 21st, followed by three on 31st and 10 on August 16th. Singles were also at Belvide on August 13th and Tittesworth on 21st, while Chasewater had one on 22nd, two on 29th and 24 'Comms' on September 5th which were probably Arctics MY. Finally, Blithfield had six on September 5th and one on 13th, while Belvide had one from 12th-19th.

**W Mid** Singles were at Marsh Lane GPs on May 3rd and Stubbers Green on July 29th.

#### **1997 Addenda and Corrigenda**

**Staffs** Additional records show a better spring passage, with Chasewater having 48 on April 25th and one on May 8th and Belvide five on April 26th and two on May 5th. An adult was also present at Chasewater on August 31st-September 1st and two juveniles on 3rd, while the three at Belvide on August 30th were present next day and an immature stayed from at least September 20th-27th.

#### **Little Tern *Sterna albibrons***

*Scarce or uncommon passage migrant.*

*Average passage: May 4th (9)-August 29th (8)*

**Warks** One flew through Ladywalk on May 9th and another was at Draycote on August 8th.

**Worcs** One was at Upton Warren for just 30 minutes on June 2nd.

**Staffs** A good year, with singles at Belvide on May 10th, Blithfield on 12th and 25th, Chasewater on July 20th, Blithfield on August 11th, Belvide on 12th and Tittesworth on 22nd.

#### **Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

*Frequent passage migrant in variable numbers.*

*Average passage: April 22nd (9)-October 18th (9)*

Generally a poor year, apart from a moderate passage from May 10th-13th and a small influx in early September.

**Warks** The first of a moderate passage were 16 at Draycote on May 3rd and three on 8th, followed by five there on 10th, when up to 53 occurred at Dosthill. Eight were still at Dosthill on 11th, dropping to six on 12th, when there was also one at Kingsbury and three at Draycote, with one at Earlswood Lakes on 13th. Spring passage concluded with three at both Dosthill on 19th and Draycote on 20th, then 15 at the latter site on 30th. On return passage, up to three birds were at Draycote on at least 21 dates during the period August 10th-September 20th, with maxima of four on September 2nd and from 12th-15th and five on 13th. Birds were also at Dosthill on ten days during the first half of September, with a peak of six on 7th, while the day before an odd marsh tern, closely resembling a White-winged Black Tern, was seen here in company with three Blacks. There were also two at Earlswood on September 7th and one on 12th, with another at Shustoke on 8th.

**Worcs** One at Kinsham on April 23rd was the precursor to a small arrival in mid-May which saw six at Bredons Hardwick on 11th and five there the next day, three at Grimley on 12th, one at Larford on 13th and two at Westwood on the same day. A good autumn passage commenced with a juvenile at Trimpley on August 19th; then two (an adult and a juvenile) at Upton Warren on September 1st, with a juvenile there from 9th-13th; and three at Westwood on September 1st, followed by one on 7th, two on 8th and one from 20th-21st. One at Bredons Hardwick on September 3rd was followed by up to three from 8th-10th, four on 11th and two on 12th. Three which flew over Bishampton Vale Pool on September 5th had been seen at Kinsham an hour earlier and a further single was at the latter site on 8th. Additionally, one was at Ryall on September 5th and two at Bittell on September 7th.

**Staffs** Spring passage began with singles at Chasewater on April 24th and 29th before an influx brought 22 to Drayton Bassett and two to Blithfield on May 10th; and four to Chasewater on 11th, when Belvide had three, dwindling to two next day and one on 13th. Two were then at Chasewater on May 21st, followed by singles at Blithfield on 22nd and Belvide on 25th. Autumn passage started with three moulting adults at Blithfield on July 26th, then one on 29th, two on 30th and one on August 1st. One was at Doxey from August 9th-11th. A small influx occurred in early September, with Blithfield having six on 5th and Belvide three on 1st, five on 6th, 15 on 7th and one on 8th. One then remained at Blithfield from September 12th-20th, two were at Chasewater on 20th and singles were at Belvide on 21st and Tittesworth on October 4th.

**W Mid** Single birds were at Sheepwash UP on May 11th and 14th.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** The five reported at Chasewater on May 3rd were joined during the morning by a further 33. One was also present on 16th, two on 29th and singles on August 19th and 31st.

#### **Little Auk *Alle alle***

**Worcs** One was picked up at Wickhamford on November 7th *per SMW*. It was taken alive to the Vale Rescue Centre, but died shortly afterwards.



**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia**Very common resident in urban areas.*

Clearly very few people bother to record this species.

**Warks** No significant records.**Worcs** No information received.**Staffs** The only record received was of a flock of 130 at Needwood on January 22nd.**W Mid** Up to 64 in central Wolverhampton was the only count received.**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas**Common resident.***Warks** An abundant breeding bird now in much of the county, with familiarity tending to lead to gross under-recording. A pair at Ladywalk nested in an owl box, while six breeding pairs were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasture fields at Chapel Green. The BAD Kineton May count of 33 was the same as in 1997, indicating a stable population. The largest flock recorded was 150 at Charlecote GP on July 14th, with other maxima of 55 at Priors Marston in February, 50 at both Southam in April and Draycote in August, 65 at Fenny Compton in October and 75 at Wormleighton in November.**Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Crowle, Dunhampstead, Grafton Wood, Offerton/Tolladine, Tibberton, Upton Warren and Web Heath. The larger flocks reported were 40 at Westwood in January; 150 at Strensham in March; 79 at Sale Green and 70 at Aston Mill both in April; and 55 at Upton Warren and 53 at Holt both in November.**Staffs** Pairs were seen in the breeding season at Coombes Valley, Churnet Woods NR, Dove Leys, Dydon Wood, Prestwood, Thorncliffe, Tittesworth and the Weaver Hills. The larger post-breeding and winter flocks were at Belvide (26), Calwich Park (22), Dunstall Bottom (90), Little Wyrley (150), Marston (30), Moat Hall (50) and Morridge (20).**W Mid** Probable breeding pairs were at Claregate golf course (three), Dunstall Park (three), Park Lime Pits, in the Harborne NR area, Mons Hill CBC (four: cf. five-year average of 4.6), Sandwell Valley and Valley Park (four). Also recorded in the breeding season at Goscote Valley (two), Fens Pool, Hales-owen Abbey, Lower Illey, Marsh Lane GPs and Sutton Park. Notable counts were 25 on stubble at Park Lime Pits and 19 near Pedmore both in January; 50 in Sandwell Valley and 21 at Hampton-in-Arden both in March; 40 in a rape field near Hampton in July; and 23 in Dunstall Park in October.**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus**Abundant resident and winter visitor.***Warks** A total of 272 logged on the BAD Kineton May count was almost identical to the previous two years, indicating a stable population. About 15 nesting pairs were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasture fields at Chapel Green. Outside the breeding season, the largest recorded late winter flocks were roosts of 1100 in Itchington Holt and 850 in Chesterton Wood in January and 900 at Fenny Compton in February. Few autumn flocks exceeded 500, apart from over 800 going to roost at Shuckburgh Hills in December.**Worcs** Several flocks were reported, the larger all being in the first half of the year

as follows: 350 at Westwood in January; 500 at Grafton Lane, 355 at Defford, 250 at Tibberton and 230 at Tardebigge all in February; and 500 at Abberton and 270 at Ab Leach in March.

- Staffs** At Coombes Valley 68 pairs bred (*cf.* average of 60.5 for previous four years) and in the Churnet Woods NR 32 pairs. The maximum monthly counts at Lawneswood were 150 in January and 300 in December. Reports of other flocks came from Aquamoor (500), Ashwood (300), Boscobel (600), Butterton (170), Byrkley Park (600), Chasewater (200), Marston (300) and Little Onn (100). The roost at Coombes Valley held 380 in January and 500 in November.
- W Mid** 14 territories were on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (*cf.* five-yearly average of 20) – a decline of 30%. Peak winter counts at the Saltwells Wood roost culminated in excess of 2000 birds in both winter periods. Notable counts were 120 at Birmingham Business Park (Marston Green) in January, 200 in Valley Park in April, 120 on stubble at Cuckoo's Nook and 160 at Nutall's Farm (Aldridge) both in October.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

*Very common resident.*

- Warks** The largest flocks occurred in October, with maxima of 45 at Fenny Compton, 63 at Heath End and 30 at Knightcote.
- Worcs** The breeding season population at Lodge Pool, Tibberton (where 10 pairs bred) and Web Heath has shown no significant trends over the last few years. Several substantial flocks were seen, the larger being 60 at Upton-on-Severn in January, 48 at Banks Green in February, 52 at Pebworth in August, 73 at Bredons Hardwick in October and 48 at Saxons Lode in November.
- Staffs** The few records received comprised flocks of 24 at Rickerscote between November and December, 28 at Wiinecote in November and 21 at Chase-water in December.
- W Mid** Perceived to be common, but little data submitted. Three territories at Mons Hill CBC indicated a fairly stable population (*cf.* five-yearly average 2.8), whilst up to 10 pairs bred on and around Harborne NR. Aldridge churchyard held up to 25 during both winter periods.

**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 (63)–September 24th (63)*

A typical arrival, with the first report from Ufton Fields on April 28th, but an early departure with the last at Belvide on September 7th.

- Warks** Conflicting reports, with a slight increase in the north, where at least four were singing in the Kingsbury area (*cf.* one or two in 1997), but a drastic decline in the south, where the BAD Kineton count located only one bird (*cf.* eight in 1997) and birds were absent from other traditional sites. Only three singing males returned to the Fenny Compton/Wormleighton area and just one regular territory was subsequently held (*cf.* six pairs bred in 1996-7). A further 13 sites, all in the south and east, held possible breeding birds. A few more were seen on passage in May and late summer.
- Worcs** Reported from 41 localities, mainly in the south of the county and particularly in

the Avon valley, but remains scarce. Maxima were four over Broadway GP and eight at Lower Moor on July 5th, six at Strensham on August 16th and 12 at Ryall on August 31st. The most northerly to be reported were a pair at Blackstone Rock in May and small numbers at Dodford and Timberhonger in July.

*Staffs* Around Cannock Chase, singles were at Mansty Farm near Penkridge on May 30th, at Bednall Belt from late June onwards and singing well in small pines at Ranges Corner on July 31st. At Drayton Bassett Pits up to three were seen and heard during May, while Belvide had singles on May 23rd and June 14th, followed by two on September 7th. Probable passage birds were noted at Needwood and Prestwood Manor.

*W Mid* Two were at Clayhanger in late April and again on May 13th, 18th and June 15th, with singles in Sandwell Valley on May 15th-16th.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** (Ring-necked Parakeet) *Psittacula krameri*  
*Scarce feral visitor which has bred.*

*Warks* Singles were present in a Nuneaton garden from November 9th-11th and in Atherstone around the same time. Two flew over Brandon on December 7th, while one visited Ladywalk on 15th and 27th.

*Staffs* Three were seen at Stanton Dale on September 5th.

*W Mid* A bumper year began with singles in Sandwell Valley on February 15th, March 15th and June 7th and one flying through a Solihull garden on March 12th. Later in the year, an adult and immature were in Darlaston on August 5th, three flew over Clayhanger on 31st and two flew over Deers Leap Wood on November 2nd.

**Common Cuckoo** (Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus*  
*Common summer resident, which has declined in recent years.*  
*Average: April 10th (62)–September 4th (61)*

None reported until April 14th, at Westwood, with the main arrival beginning a week after that. Several reports through to mid-August and last seen in Sandwell Valley on September 5th.

*Warks* Reports, mostly of not more than two males, came from 39 sites, but with five at Fenny Compton, four at Priors Hardwick and three each at Itchington Holt, Shuckburgh Park and Wormleighton Res. Numbers on the BAD Kineton spring count were up again slightly to 19 after two poor years (*cf.* three-year average 16.7). Very few late summer juveniles get reported nowadays, the only ones this year being at Brandon from July 28th-August 13th, Ladywalk from August 3rd-9th and Wormleighton Res on 10th.

*Worcs* Noted at 47 localities around the county, with breeding proved at Tibberton. Most records referred to no more than three birds, but seven were seen on a two hour walk around Tibberton on May 8th, and five, including an hepatic female, were along Droitwich Canal on May 9th *MJJ*.

*Staffs* Noted at 26 localities throughout the county, mostly single birds, though four were at Seven Springs on May 10th and three in the Sherbrook Valley on May 4th. At Belvide there were three juveniles in July, one being fed by a Hedge Accentor, and a final juvenile on August 8th. Hedge Accentor and Meadow Pipit were also said to be the normal host parents at Chasewater. A late adult male was at Blithfield on August 14th.

**W Mid** Recorded at 13 localities, mostly single calling birds. However, up to five, thought to be two males and three females, were on the west side of Bradnock's Marsh in May, with copulation noted; and two were seen together in flight in the Dorridge area on May 17th.

**1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** A late bird flew over Cradley Heath on August 2nd.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

*Frequent, but much declined, resident.*

**Warks** Breeding, or suspected breeding, birds were located at 11 localities in the east and south of the county, although there is still considerable under-recording of this nocturnal species. One was also found dead at another site south-east of Coventry in June. Fewer winter sightings were reported this year, presumably due to the milder weather, and the only ones well away from known breeding sites included birds at Brailes, Brandon, Fenny Compton, Kingsbury, Loxley, Shotteswell, Southam, Whatcote and Wormleighton.

**Worcs** Noted in the breeding season at three sites in the Teme Valley, one in the Avon Valley and one in the north of the county. Singles outside the breeding season were at Bockleton, Bransford Bridge, Cookley, Croome, Eymore Wood, Grimley, Harpley, Honeybourne, Kyre, Larford, Little Comberton, Ombersley, Spetchley, Upton Warren, near Warndon and Whittington. Sadly, both of the last two records involved birds found dead at the side of the M5.

**Staffs** Records were received for just two breeding pairs, one at Prestwood and the other (which reared two young) between Alton and Cheadle. Outside the breeding season, noted at Barton GP, Byrkley Park, Croxall, Denstone, Dunstall Cross, Handsacre Flash, Hixon, Norton Bridge, Rocester, Spath and Seighford. Birds were also recorded in two gardens, at Denstone and Doxey respectively.

**W Mid** Present in the Valley Park area in March, April and June. One was in Sandwell Valley on May 24th and one was hunting in Goscote Valley on December 4th and 5th.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

*Common resident.*

**Warks** Probably the county's most numerous avian predator, with reports this year from a total of 48 sites. Breeding was proved at Fenny Compton, Mousley End, Napton and Packington, where reported to be common.

**Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Bredon Hill (above Elmley Castle), Defford and Westmancote. Noted at 36 other sites around the county, including six territories in six km<sup>2</sup> around Timberhonger *per JR*. Considered to have declined in the Stour Valley, and the north of the county generally, over the last 10 years *BW*.

**Staffs** Widely reported, with records of single birds coming from 35 localities. Pairs were noted at Blithfield, Belvide (three pairs and one juvenile), Checkhill, Gothersley, Longsdon Mill Pond and Seighford, while breeding was confirmed at Elford (two adults and four juveniles) and at Roddige Farm (two adults and three juveniles).

- W Mid* Bred successfully at Marsh Lane GPs, whilst two pairs were at Park Lime Pits, with one possibly and the other probably breeding. Also reported in the breeding season from the Barr Beacon area, Dorridge, Norton Lane (Earlswood), Sandwell Valley (at least two pairs) and near Tidbury Green. Further reported from Cornets End and Hobs Hole Lane in Aldridge in the first winter period and Pedmore in the second winter period. A stunned adult, found sitting in a Norton Lane garden in late July, was taken to Wythall Animal Sanctuary, where it was successfully released a week later.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

*Common resident.*

- Warks* Breeding records came from Brandon (in nestbox), Farnborough Park (two nests found), Ladywalk (in nestbox), Radway and Wormleighton Res. Other reports came from 37 sites.
- Worcs* Breeding confirmed at Abberley Hill, Corn Brook, Defford, Dowles Brook, Knowles Coppice, Monk Wood, Stoke Bliss, The Knapp, Upton Warren and Worcester. This widespread, but difficult to see, species was noted at a further 23 localities throughout the county.
- Staffs* Records were received from only 17 sites compared to 26 last year. These included 10 localities in the Churnet Valley area (SK04/14), Belvide (two young in nest on May 9th: one juvenile on July 16th), Blithfield, Downs Banks, Greenway Bank CP, Leek, Seighford (several breeding pairs) and Weston Coyney. Breeding pairs were stable at Coombes Valley at seven (*cf.* five-year average 7.2).
- W Mid* Up to two pairs bred on Harborne NR and four birds were calling to each other on September 2nd. Breeding season records also came from Leasowes Park (two pairs), Mons Hill CBC plot, Penn Hospital and Sutton Park. Probably bred at Acock's Green also and noted at a further eight sites.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

*Uncommon and rather erratic winter visitor and scarce resident.*

- Warks* One at Brandon on November 9th was the only record.
- Staffs* A pair reared three young at a site on the North Staffs Moors, a pair bred again at Coombes Valley and two young birds were heard near to the Katyn Memorial. The Park Hall CP roost held up to seven birds on January 11th and six in December. Two garden records from Stafford, at Bury Ring on February 15th (one) and Eccleshall Road on March 21st (two), were interesting. The only other record was of a long staying bird at Belvide from November 27th-December 3rd.
- W Mid* Bred at one locality in the county, where at least three recently fledged young were noted. Also reported from another locality on three dates in July.
- 1997 Corrigendum**
- Warks* The Brandon roost actually remained until April 7th, with maxima of seven in January, five in February and four in March.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

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

**Warks** Following on from the unusually blank autumn of 1997, there were no sightings at all in the early months and just one in the spring at BAD Kineton on May 2nd. Single birds at Dosthill on September 20th-21st and flying over Upper Radbourn on October 11th heralded a very small late autumn influx. At least two were present in the Tame Valley, with two at Dosthill on November 2nd, then one on various dates up to 27th and again on December 28th-29th. What may have been the second bird from the first day was seen at Lea Marston on November 8th and again from December 28th-31st. Single birds were also seen at Brandon on various dates from November 25th-December 18th and at Fenny Compton on December 24th.

**Worcs** One at Bredons Hardwick on January 17th was followed by one near Throckmorton on February 4th. There were then two spring records, which may have related to one individual, from Besford on May 1st and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's headquarters at Smite from May 11th-13th. One was at Wythall on September 5th, while two, which spent most of their time across the border in Staffordshire at Whittington STW in October, were seen to fly into the county briefly on October 11th and 18th.

**Staffs** No records of breeding were received, but a pair was seen at Revidge in April and one was at Tittesworth on May 12th. The only records in the first winter period were singles at Tittesworth on January 25th and Swallow Moss on February 13th. Second winter period records came from Gib Torr on September 20th, Broadhurst Mill on October 9th, Oxbatch on 10th, Middle Hills on 14th, Blithfield on 25th, Barton GP on November 1st, Doxey from 13th-29th, Boarsgrove on 30th and Chasewater (two) from 16th to the end of the year.

**W Mid** Now a very scarce species. One in Sandwell Valley on October 8th was the first in the county since one at Clayhanger in 1995.

**1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** Additional records came from Chasewater on May 12th and November 20th-21st.

**European Nightjar** (Nightjar) *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

*Average: May 16th (56)–August 21st (41)*

First for the year was in the Wyre Forest on May 19th, whilst the last was at Byrkley Park on September 23rd – the latest ever barring one historical record.

**Worcs** A male churred in the Wyre Forest from May 19th-22nd, but could not be found subsequently *GHP, WFP, WRHP et al.*

**Staffs** Reports from Cannock Chase included two at Anson's Bank on July 4th; one at Haywood Warren on July 5th; up to three in the Katyn Memorial area, with one still present on August 24th; at least five south of Seven Springs on June 6th, with at least three there on August 2nd; and up to five 'churring' in

Sherbrook Valley on July 7th. Away from the main Chase area, a bird was seen at Hednesford Hills on June 24th and a late passage migrant was at Byrkley Park on September 23rd.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

*Common summer resident and passage migrant.*

*Average: April 22nd (64)–September 25th (64)*

A characteristically prompt arrival, with the first birds on April 22nd at Fens Pools and Sandwell Valley and daily sightings thereafter. Once again, several late records, with the last at Ladywalk on October 4th.

**Warks** Summer concentrations were again well down this year, with the only ones of more than 300 reported being 700 at Draycote on May 10th, 500 at Dosthill on 12th, 400 there on July 12th and 500 moving east over Shawbury on 27th. A very small arrival of late autumn birds was interesting, with one at Shustoke on September 30th, two at Fenny Compton on October 1st and one at Ladywalk on 4th.

**Worcs** Returned to colonies at Alvechurch, Barnards Green, Bewdley, Bromsgrove and Kidderminster between May 8th–10th. The largest totals seen were 500 at Upton Warren on May 11th, 200 at Westwood on June 27th, 80 at Bittell on July 12th, 160 at Little Comberton on July 16th and 250 at Barnards Green on August 2nd.

**Staffs** The most in spring were 100 at Belvide on April 29th, 110 at Chasewater on May 5th and 300 at Westport on 23rd, but no large concentrations were reported during the summer. Later in the year, 125 were at Knypersley Res on July 10th and 88 at Coombes Valley on August 7th. Late birds were noted at Doxey on September 19th and Blithfield on October 2nd.

**W Mid** Little breeding information was received and it would be useful to get some measure of breeding localities. Reported to have bred at Acock's Green, Balsall Common, around Fens Pools, Handsworth, Harborne NR and Marston Green. The larger gatherings comprised 100 at Fens Pools in May and June, 100 in Valley Park in May, 700 in Sandwell Valley at dusk on May 11th, 50 at Stubbers Green in June and 100 at Sheepwash UP in August.

**Common Kingfisher** (Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis*

*Fairly common resident.*

**Warks** Pairs bred at Atherstone-on-Stour, Coombe (one or two) and Ladywalk (two). Other breeding season records came from Brandon, Charlecote, Coton, Draycote, Farnborough, the Kingsbury/Middleton area, Marcliff and Packington. There are signs of a gradual recovery following two cold winters, with reports coming from a total of 35 sites (*cf.* 24 in 1997). Six at Ladywalk on November 8th was the largest count.

**Worcs** Breeding confirmed along Dowles Brook (two or three territories), at Hurcott Pool, The Knapp and Upton Warren. Breeding season reports along the R. Avon at Fladbury, Lower Moor, Strensham and Wyre Piddle; Leigh Brook at Allrick Pound and Brockamin; R. Severn at Bevere Lock, Blackstone Rock, Hanley Castle, Saxons Lode, Shrawley, Trimpey, Uckingham and Upton-on-Severn; R. Teme at Broadwas, Cothridge, Darbys Green, Kingswood

Common, Knightwick and Tenbury Wells; and elsewhere at Broadway GP, Ipsley Mill Pool, Islandpool, New Pool and Witley Court. Recorded at a further 23 localities outside the breeding season.

**Staffs** Reported from 35 widely distributed localities, mainly single birds, though pairs were noted at Branston WP, Coombes Valley, Croxall, Doxey Marshes, Trentham (where two young reared) and Westport Lake (where seen daily from July to end of year).

**W Mid** Bred in Sandwell Valley and probably did so along the Mousesweet Brook in Mushroom Green and in Walsall Arboretum. Also noted in the breeding season on the Bourn Brook in Harborne, at Buckpool Dingle, Meers Coppice, Sutton Park and Sheepwash UP, although not thought to have bred at the latter locality. Outside the breeding season, reported from 12 localities.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

*Scarce passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

A blank year, but the long-term trend remains fairly consistent.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	10	7	7	10	9

**1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** One was captured on video in a garden on the periphery of Sandwell Valley on an unspecified date in April *per TCH*.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

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

The five-yearly figures show a slight decline in numbers.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	12	4	13	12	9

**Warks** One visited a Southam garden on September 18th *RH*.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

*Common resident.*

**Warks** Pairs bred at Bishops Tachbrook, Brandon, Butlers Marston, Coombe, Fenny Compton, Lighthorne, Stockton, Wolverton and Wormleighton Res (two). Three pairs probably bred in the Ladywalk area. Records came from 78 localities, with the largest party being six feeding on the Fenny Compton Hills on September 19th.

**Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Broadway GP, Grimley, Lower Moor, Web Heath and Westwood. Remains widespread and common, with records from 84 other localities around the county. Most reports concerned singles or pairs, but five were reported together on several occasions at Castlemorton Common and nine were seen around North Hill on October 10th.

**Staffs** Reports of single birds were received from 30 widely scattered localities. Three pairs bred at Coombes Valley, as usual, and two in the Churnet Woods NR. Of note were singles at Kidsgrove on October 23rd and at Teddesley Park on December 6th, where it is said to be unusual in the area. Four were in the Fisherwick/Elford area, where it is now very regular.



- W Mid* Breeding season records emanated from Acock's Green, Bartley Green, Clayhanger, Copt Heath (at Langdon Hall), Harborne NR area, Leasowes Park, Mons Hill CBC plot (one territory: stable), Park Lime Pits, Penn Hospital, Saltwells LNR (up to two pairs), Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park, Valley Park and Woodgate Valley. Noted at several localities within Wolverhampton and at six other sites.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

*Common resident.*

- Warks* Breeding reported from Brandon, Coombe, Farnborough Park (two pairs), Packington and Wormleighton Res, with records from a total of 67 sites including three pairs at both Edgehill Wood and Whatcote in spring. Outside the breeding season the largest count was six at Brandon on December 6th, where an aberrant bird with chestnut replacing the normal black parts of the plumage was present from March-May.
- Worcs* Bred at Birchen Coppice, Stoke Bliss and Web Heath. Noted at 85 other localities throughout the county – a very similar situation to Green Woodpecker. The only indication of abundance was six at Trench Wood on February 2nd. A female was watched feeding on a dead sunflower head at Longdon Marsh on February 1st.
- Staffs* Bred at Betley Mere and Loynton Moss and reported from a further 44 localities. A pair feeding a youngster at Westport Lake was an unusual sighting as was a bird being killed by a Eurasian Sparrowhawk in a garden near to Denstone.
- W Mid* Breeding season reports came from Aldridge golf course, Castle Hill Wood, Deers Leap Wood, Harborne NR (two or three pairs), Leasowes Park, Lower Illey, Mons Hill CBC plot (two territories), Penn (two sites), Park Lime Pits, Saltwells LNR area (two or three pairs), Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park, Valley Park, Warley Woods, Wergs and Woodgate Valley. Outside the breeding season, recorded at a further 10 sites.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor*

*Fairly common, but declining, resident.*

- Warks* Again no breeding reports, but widespread records of ones and twos show it to be still thinly distributed throughout. Noted at Alvecote, Brandon, Charlecote, Coombe, Draycote, Earlswood area, Farnborough Park, Great Aine, Leamington Spa, Lighthorne, Packington, Stratford-upon-Avon, Ufton Wood, Watgall, Welcombe Hills, Whatcote and Wormleighton Res. At least three, probably four, were chasing each other from tree to tree, calling loudly, in Clowes Wood on January 26th.
- Worcs* Bred at The Knapp and seen in the breeding season at Bewdley, Deerfold Wood, Devils Spittleful, Diglis, Dowles Brook, Feckenham, Harpley, Hewell Grange, Hill Croome, Kemerton, Knowles Coppice, Langdale Wood, Marsh Common, Monk Wood, Powick, Rhydd Covert, Smith End Green, Stoke Bliss, Upton-on-Severn and Westwood. Noted in autumn and winter at Ashton-under-Hill, Bibbeys Hollow, Birtsmorton, Bishampton Vale golf course, Broadway, Burnt Wood, Castlemorton, Castlemorton Common, Chase End Wood,

Cookley, Grafton Wood, Grimley, Huntingdrop Common, Kyrewood, Lem Brook, Lenchwick, Lower Berrington, Malvern Link, Shelsley Beauchamp, Timberhonger, Trench Wood, Trimpley, Upton Warren and Wilden.

**Staffs** The few records of this elusive species came from Alton Towers Wood, Anslow, Belvide, Blithfield, Brankley Bottom, Byrkley Park, Coombes Valley, Dimmingsdale, Dovedale, Dove Leys, Froghall, Lawneswood, Seven Springs, Teddesley and Whitemoor Haye.

**W Mid** An adult was feeding one or two juveniles in a Cradley Heath garden on May 23rd-24th. Also reported in the breeding season in Handsworth Wood, at Penn Hospital and at Balsall Common, where an adult and juvenile were noted on June 26th. A pair was present throughout the year in the Harborne NR, but breeding was not confirmed. A male was calling and drumming from Claregate golf course in April and it, or another, was calling near Tettenhall college on May 10th. Other reports, mostly singles, came from Sandwell Valley, Mushroom Green Marsh (a female), a Tidbury Green garden, Lutley Wedge (two) and Deers Leap Wood (a male).

**1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** A male was present intermittently in Cradley Heath from July-November.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*

*Resident until early 1960s: now a rare visitor (6/10), but possibly re-establishing a breeding population.*

**Staffs** Following last year's encouraging survey, there was no indication of breeding activity on Cannock Chase, but one on March 27th, two on April 13th *ESC* and singles on May 10th *GS* and June 12th *DWE, SME* at least denote a continuing presence. One flew around Westport Lake calling on February 2nd *WJL*.

**W Mid** One was flushed in Valley Park on March 29th and flew off SW *AD, DJ*.

**Sky Lark** *Alauda arvensis*

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

**Warks** Despite the increase in set-aside, still appears to be doing badly in many areas. At BAD Kineton the annual May count produced just 30 birds, the lowest total since the count began in 1987 (*cf.* max. 84 in 1990). Territories fell back to three at The Somers, but pleasingly there was an increase to ten along the R. Avon from Bidford-Marlcliff (*cf.* five in 1997, nine in 1996). Elsewhere, generally just a few pairs, with at least five on wasteground at Dosthill, six at Ryton Pools CP, eight on restored spoil heaps at the former Kingsbury colliery and nine in 1km<sup>2</sup> of pastureland (an unusually low, but probably now typical figure) at Chapel Green. Most feeding flocks outside the breeding season contained 50 or fewer birds, with the larger being 120 at Fenny Compton on October 4th, 130 at Ilmington Downs on 15th, 200 at Over Whitacre on November 7th-8th and 180 at Priors Hardwick also on 8th. Visible passage per hour to the south-west over Fenny Compton-Wormleighton peaked at 165 on October 7th, 180 on 9th and 80 on November 7th.

**Worcs** Numerous reports of singing males received, with maxima of six to eight at

Lower Moor, six at North Hill, seven around Tibberton and six singing in 4km<sup>2</sup> around Timberhonger. Up to six males continued to sing at Upton-on-Severn on April 12th, even though their territories were under several feet of flood-water. Outside the breeding season, the first winter period maxima were 55 at Longdon Marsh on January 14th and 100 at Ryall on February 1st, while autumn produced 100 at Bredon Hill on October 25th, 200 at Holt on November 16th, 120 at Ryall on November 21st, 150 at Kempsey on December 3rd and 100 at Bredons Hardwick on December 6th.

**Staffs** Birds were noted singing or holding territory at Blackbank, Coldmece (six), Coombes Valley (one), Crossplains (three), Hanchurch (four), Hazelbarrow, Knotbury (four), Lawneswood, Mayfield (four), Morridge, Musden Low (six), Parkhall, Seighford (six), Tittesworth (seven) and Thornccliffe. The few records of flocks outside the breeding season comprised 30 at Apedale in February, 170 on passage at Crossplains in October, 50 at Morridge on October 14th, 91 flying west over Belvide on November 1st, 60 at Little Wyrley on November 30th, 45 at Chasewater on December 12th and 50 at Ashwood on the 15th.

**W Mid** Singing/territory holding birds were reported from Aldridge (Hobs Hole Lane area: four), Barr Beacon, Birmingham Airport, Clayhanger, Dunstall Park (three or four), Marsh Lane GPs (at least three), Meriden (at least two), around Park Lime Pits (three), near Pedmore, Sandwell Valley (up to 12 in song), Sheepwash UP (two), Spring Vale (three pairs), Stubbers Green, Sutton Park and Valley Park. Also noted in the breeding season at Burys Hill (at least three), Halesowen Abbey, Lapal (three), Lower Illey, Lutley (four) and Rowley Hills (three or four). The most in the first winter period was 14 at Park Lime Pits on January 1st, but the second winter period brought some larger concentrations, with 60 in the Wiggins Hill area on December 5th, flocks of 25 and 20 within one-and-a-half miles of each other in the Dorridge/Hockley Heath area on 28th and 45 at Lutley Wedge on 31st. Little passage was recorded, but 'some movement' was detected over Sheepwash UP in October and a very paltry peak of five flew over Netherton Hill on November 5th.

### **Horned Lark** (Shorelark) *Eremophila alpestris*

*Rare autumn and winter vagrant (5/10).*

#### **1997 Corrigendum**

**Staffs** The bird at Chasewater was last seen on March 16th GE.

### **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

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

*Average: March 20th (63)–October 10th (63)*

Spring arrival was early, with one on March 12th at Bredons Hardwick, and the main influx beginning a week later. Departure was early too, with the last seen at Blithfield on October 4th and Brandon on 7th.

**Warks** A very poor year, with not much information received concerning breeding colonies. A 'few pairs only' nested in the river banks near Ladywalk, although 100 were there on June 14th. A few pairs may also have attempted nesting

along the R. Avon, as in late May at least six were noted at Charlecote and two near Bidford. Spring passage numbers were generally late to build up, with maxima of only 50 at Ladywalk on April 5th, 40 at Shustoke on 6th, 60 at Draycote and 20 at Packington Park on 10th, 80 at Dosthill on 13th and 30 at Brandon on 23rd. Autumn passage was almost non-existent.

**Worcs** Bred at Lower Moor (three pairs) and Ryall, where 45 nests in a newly exposed bank were destroyed by gravel extraction but 10 nests in an older part of the site survived undamaged. Spring passage maxima in April were 230 at Westwood on 23rd, 90 at Kinsham on 25th and 30 at Bittell on 26th; and in May 100 at Ryall from 2nd-16th and 300 at Upton Warren on 11th. No significant concentrations were seen in autumn, although 13 south over Tibberton on August 23rd was a good local record.

**Staffs** 42 nesting holes were seen below Denstone Hall Farm on May 11th and ten plus young were being fed there on July 29th. Only two active nest holes were seen along the R. Dove, the least in thirteen years, and birds were only present in small numbers. Spring passage maxima in April were 120 at Chasewater on 2nd, 400 at Blithfield on 5th and 300 at Belvide on 23rd. Small numbers were also at Gerrards Bromley and Tittesworth. No appreciable autumn flocks were noted, but seven through Westport on September 25th was a late date for that site and the last of the year was at Blithfield on October 4th.

**W Mid** Bred within the 'Meriden Quarries complex', but no counts received, and present during the breeding season in the Shire Oak Park area. The peak spring count comprised 150 at Marsh Lane GPs on April 28th, with maxima elsewhere of 13 at Sheepwash UP on March 28th – a very poor showing for this locality – 50 in Sandwell Valley on April 23rd and 20 at Fens Pools on May 3rd. The largest count at Stubbers Green was five on July 6th. Also reported from Dunstall Park on autumn passage.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Warks** Three good-sized passage flocks were noted at Brandon, with 100 on April 6th and 11th, and 250 on September 12th.

#### **Barn Swallow (Swallow) *Hirundo rustica***

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

*Average: March 31st (64)–November 2nd (64)*

Arrived punctually, with two at Fenny Compton on March 30th and daily sightings from April 5th. A strong passage on May 11th. The main departure occurred in mid-September, but birds were quite widely reported in October and the last was seen on November 8th at Chasewater.

**Warks** Only 12 were logged on the BAD Kineton May count, which at just over half the average continues a run of low counts there since 1994. The few records from elsewhere also suggest that breeding densities remain low in many areas, eg. only three pairs located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of suitable pastureland with scattered farms at Chapel Green. Spring passage flocks were unusually small, with the best being only 100 at Coton on May 10th. Late summer and autumn flocks were also well down, with the only large counts coming from the south of the county. At Fenny Compton there were peaks of 120 on August 29th,

180 on September 11th, 600 on 15th and 110 on October 1st. Other maxima included 100 on the Burton Dassett Hills and at Walton on August 9th, 150 at Farnborough on September 2nd, 200 at Radway on 7th and 100 on Ilmington Downs on 12th.

**Worcs** No change in breeding status noted. Spring maxima were 30 at Westwood on April 23rd and 200 at Upton Warren from May 11th-12th. More concentrations in autumn, the larger being 60 over Shoots Hill Wood on August 9th, 500 roosting at Grimley on 18th, 60 at Strensham on 31st, 500 at Upton Warren on September 4th, 50 at Bittell on 6th and 200 at Bredons Hardwick on 18th.

**Staffs** Little information on breeding, but pairs nested again at Denstone Hall (five: four young fledged), Abbots Bromley (one: five young) and Coombes Valley (one). Spring maxima were 50+ at Blithfield on April 7th, 300+ at Belvide on 23rd and 120 at Chasewater on May 11th, while one braved a snow storm at Little Stoke on April 10th. The Ford Green roost was not checked this year, but small numbers roosted intermittently at Betley Mere throughout the summer and visits to ring produced the following counts:

Date	26/7	5/8	6/8	10/8	13/8	18/8	20/8	27/8	1/9	3/9	6/9	15/9	19/9
Count	150	40	50	40	20	80	50	50	200	300	300	20	100
Ringed	43	7	16	0	1	11	0	4	10	62	7	0	-

In the autumn, 140 were at Coombes Valley and 50 at Byrkley Park on August 26th; 1000+ passed through the Needwood area and 200-300 were at Blithfield in damp conditions on September 12th; 1820 moved south in 5 1/2 hrs at Belvide on 17th and 300 roosted in reedbed at Poolfields (Newcastle) that evening with a Hobby in attendance. Ten late birds were at Blackbank on October 11th, a pair lingered at Ousley Cross till 13th and a very late bird went through Chasewater on November 8th. A complete albino at Tittesworth August 8th was of interest.

**W Mid** Bred at Dunstall Park (one pair), Peddimore Hall and probably Sandwell Valley, whilst an adult with two juveniles at Sheepwash UP on June 18th seemed to indicate local breeding. Other breeding season records came from Goscote Valley, Halesowen Abbey, Lower Illey and Lutley. The higher spring counts included 60 at Bartley on April 23rd and 100 at Sheepwash UP on May 11th, but these were by far eclipsed by the presence of 1000 in Sandwell Valley at dusk also on May 11th. The only notable autumn concentration was 55 at Sheepwash UP on September 6th.

### **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

*Very common summer resident and passage migrant.*

*Average: April 6th (64)–November 1st (64)*

A very early bird was at Barnards Green on March 29th, with the main arrival beginning in mid-April. A strong passage occurred in mid-September, but birds were still widespread in the first week of October, with the last at Little Stoke on 24th.

**Warks** There were at least 24 occupied nests at Packington Hall, where young were still being fed in the nest on October 3rd, though all had gone next day. 'Many nests' were also reported from Stoneleigh Park, though, in general, numbers were thought to be down this year, with a particularly late arrival in spring.

A flock of 350 at Draycote on April 23rd was easily the best spring count. Late summer and autumn flocks were also down, but included maxima of 100 at Charlecote GP on July 30th, 100 at Farnborough on September 2nd, 300 at Radway on 7th, 200 at Draycote on 12th, 250 at Fenny Compton on 15th and 100 at Napton Hill from 17th-19th, with 60 in Fenny Compton on October 1st being the last autumn flock of note.

**Worcs** Considered to have declined as a breeding species by 90% at Evesham in the last eight years *PFW* and a poor breeding season was reported at Tibberton. Continues to nest under the bridges over the Teme, with eight nests at Ham Bridge and 12 at Knightsford Bridge. The only reported concentration of birds on spring passage was 60 at Upton Warren on May 10th. Many more records in autumn, with maxima of 120 south over Tibberton on August 15th, 110 at Little Comberton on 29th, 250 at British Camp on 30th, 165 south over Bredon Hill in five minutes on 31st and 350 at North Hill on September 20th.

**Staffs** Little breeding information apart from three pairs nesting at Keele University and small colonies in the Chasewater area and at West Brownhills. In spring, around 100 were at Belvide April 23rd, Westport on May 11th, Brancote STW on 24th and Gerrards Bromley on the same day. Autumn maxima were 200 at Belvide on July 19th, 106 at Coombes Valley early in September, 100+ being harassed by a Hobby at Ousley Cross on 4th, 300 at Stableford on 10th and 500 at Blithfield on 12th. Such numbers were totally dwarfed on the latter date, however, by 2160 moving south-west over the Needwood area, the largest visible movement ever recorded *DIMW*.

**W.Mid** Bred at Balsall Common, Dunstall Park, Marston Green, Pedmore, Pendeford, around Sandwell Valley, Sheldon, Sheepwash UP area, Sutton Coldfield and Warstock. Spring passage brought few large flocks, the most being 40 at Sheepwash UP on May 23rd, although 100 were in Sandwell Valley on June 13th. Autumnal gatherings included 70+ in Lutley Wedge on August 2nd and 60+ over there on September 17th; 100 in Sandwell Valley on 6th; and 100 at Sheepwash UP on 16th.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One at Brandon on March 15th was the earliest ever in the Region by four days.

#### **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 (61)–September 20th (59)*

*Extreme dates were April 2nd at Walton Hill and October 4th at Brandon.*

**Warks** No breeding this year, but a good spring passage, with one at Wormleighton Res on April 12th followed by two over Brandon on 19th and one in song there on 30th. In May there were singles at BAD Kineton on 3rd and Draycote on 14th. On return passage, single birds were at Dosthill on August 22nd and Ufton Fields on 30th, with late birds at Draycote on September 28th and Brandon on October 4th.

- Worcs** Singing birds were noted in the breeding season at Callow Hill (five), Coldridge Wood (four), Happy Valley/North Hill (two), Long Coppice (two), Midsummer Hill (two) and Walton Hill (three). Passage singles were at Bredon Hill on May 12th; and in autumn at Strensham on August 29th, Bredon Hill on September 3rd, over Westwood on 18th, over Broadway Hill on 20th, at Happy Valley on October 1st and North Hill on 3rd.
- Staffs** On Cannock Chase, at least eight pairs were in the main breeding area at Seven Springs. Bred successfully at Tittesworth treatment works. Other breeding season records were two pairs in the Churnet Woods, four pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five-year average 6.6), four at Dimmingsdale, two singing at Highgate Common on June 17th, three at Kinver Edge 12th and one singing at Keele University on June 23rd. During autumn passage, one was at Blithfield on August 23rd, four at Ipstones Edge and one at Chasewater on September 27th, and one at Byrkley Park October 3rd.
- W Mid** An early bird at Bartley on April 11th was followed by another on 18th. Further spring migrants then appeared on Netherton Hill on April 22nd, 23rd and May 4th (two); at Park Lime Pits on April 23rd; Sandwell Valley on 25th; and Sheepwash UP on 29th. Autumn passage began with one over Netherton Hill on August 18th, followed by another on 30th. Further singletons were then over both Netherton Res and Park Lime Pits on August 25th, at Turners Hill on 22nd and 29th, Darby's Hill (two) on September 2nd, Sheepwash UP on 6th and 19th and Harborne NR on 15th.
- 1997 Addendum**
- W Mid** Two birds were on Netherton Hill on August 25th, with one noted on 30th.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

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

- Warks** Breeding pairs were at Brandon (three), Gaydon Tip (six, *cf.* three in 1997) and Lighthorne Quarry (eight), with singing males also during the breeding season at Kites Hardwick, Poolfields and Radway. No information was received from the Tame Valley or the Baginton area, both formerly favoured breeding areas. Spring passage was rather weak, with peak counts of overflying migrants being only 20-30 per hour to the north-west over Fenny Compton on March 31st and Napton Hill on April 2nd. The best reported flocks during this period were 75 at Fenny Compton on April 10th and 40 at Lighthorne Quarry on 11th, with the last migrant at the former on the late date of May 9th. Autumn passage to the south-west in the Fenny Compton-Wormleighton area began on August 29th, with later peaks per hour of 135 on September 18th, 100 on 19th, 140 on October 4th, 80 on 7th and 150 on 9th (with 80 more on the ground on the latter date). Elsewhere, 50 per hour moved south-west over the Welcombe Hills on September 11th and 60 per hour south-west over Napton Hill on 17th, while over 100 were at Ladywalk on October 25th. Winter flocks of 30-50 were noted at BAD Kineton, Burton Dassett, Fenny Compton and Priors Hardwick, with a maximum of 59 at Chapel Green on February 22nd.
- Worcs** Reported in the breeding season only at North Hill, where 34 pairs in May

and June was an impressive total. Possibly bred at Throckmorton, where one was seen on July 5th. Many small parties were noted in winter and on passage, with March peaks of 55 at Defford on 3rd, 80 at North Hill on 18th and 28th, 50 at Corn Brook on 22nd and 70 at British Camp on 31st followed by September peaks of 50 at Ryall on 12th, 60 at North Hill on 15th and 22nd, and 50 at Bredon Hill and 87 south-west over Broadway Hill on 20th.

**Staffs** No breeding data from the Moors, but elsewhere six pairs bred at Seighford and several at Blackbank. Wintering birds occurred at Blackbank (25), Blithfield (30), Lawneswood (30) and Wolseley Bridge (50). Spring passage flocks were noted at Belvide (100), Chasewater (130), Coombes Valley (89), Doxey (40), Little Wyrley (21) and Musden Low (40), while autumn passage concentrations were reported from Belvide (50), Blackbank (100), Chasewater (75), Coombes Valley (250) and Needwood Airfield (100).

**W Mid** Bred in Sutton Park and possibly did so unsuccessfully at Sheepwash UP. Also present in the breeding season at Mons Hill CBC plot and at Spring Vale (three pairs). The larger winter flocks were 22 at Birmingham Business Park (Marston Green) on January 1st, 50 at Marsh Lane GPs on March 13th, 25 moving over Netherton Hill/Res and an impressive 200 on stubble at Pedmore both on 20th, 35 at Sheepwash UP on 23rd and 80 in Sandwell Valley on the same date. In autumn, a regular passage of birds over Lutley Wedge between September 11th-October 8th peaked at 40 on September 25th; 70 passed through Sheepwash UP on 19th; and 25 moved over Netherton Hill on 25th. Flock maxima were 50 at Wishaw on September 27th and 34 in Dunstall Park on December 27th.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Staffs** A flock of 53 was at Chasewater on March 21st.

#### **Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus***

*Uncommon passage migrant and rare winter visitor.*

**Warks** On spring passage there were two at Coton on March 14th, followed by two at Draycote on both 31st and April 4th. A moderate autumn passage at Draycote began with one on September 28th and five on October 1st. These were followed by one on October 6th and 11th, two on 13th, three on 16th, one on 24th, two on November 6th and three on 7th. Two were at Shustoke on October 5th, which was the only other site to hold the species, though a bird, either this species or Water Pipit, was at Brandon the day before.

**Staffs** A poor spring, with the only records being singles at Blithfield on March 21st-22nd and Musden Low on the 31st. Autumn birds were also few, with Blithfield having one from September 26th-October 25th; Belvide two on October 5th, one on 9th, three on 10th, two on 30th and one on November 4th; Chasewater one from October 25th-November 1st; and Westport Lake singles from October 10th-31st and on November 25th.

**W Mid** A good series of records from Sandwell Valley, with singles on March 24th, 26th, September 30th, October 9th and 24th.

#### **1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** Also noted at Chasewater on March 17th and October 8th.



**Scandinavian Rock Pipit** *A.p. littoralis**Rare or scarce passage migrant.*

**Warks** One of the two birds at Coton on March 14th was a summer-plumaged individual of this race *BLK*.

**Staffs** A bird in summer plumage was with Pied Wagtails on the south car park at Chasewater on March 14th *ICW*.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**Average: October 23rd (8)–April 21st (9)*

Numbers have inexplicably halved following the peak years of 1984-93.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	51	67	81	89	41

**Warks** The only records came from the Tame Valley during the early months and clearly involved the same overwintering birds from December 1997, though now less frequently on the Warks side of the county boundary. Three were seen at Middleton on January 1st *ARD*, two at Dosthill on 25th *ARD*, and singles there on 31st *DJS*, and on March 14th *CJL* and 21st *SMH*.

**Worcs** An exceptionally late adult in summer plumage was at Upton Warren for several hours on May 23rd *JTB*, *PRC*, *SMW* *et al.*

**Staffs** Two at Middleton Pits on January 10th were still present on February 22nd *PDH*, while one approaching full summer plumage was there on March 29th *PDH* and 'intriguingly this bird was ringed'. At nearby Drayton Bassett, there was one on February 14th *KMC* and two on December 31st *JAA* which remained into the new year.

**1997 Addendum**

**Staffs** The bird at Doxey on March 31st had also been present on 23rd *KMC*.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava**Fairly common summer resident and common passage migrant.**Average: April 1st (62)–October 11th (62)*

A typical arrival, with the first birds on April 2nd at Draycote, Kinsham and Marsh Lane GPs, but an uncharacteristically early departure with one at Ladywalk on 4th the only October record.

A very poor year, with low numbers almost everywhere.

**Warks** Numbers were well down this year, with a pronounced drop in breeding pairs in most areas. In Fenny Compton only 15 pairs nested (*cf.* 26 in 1997 and 28 in 1996), while for the first time there were none on the BAD Kineton May count. Elsewhere in the south and east, thinly distributed in most traditional areas, with six pairs at both Farnborough and Wormleighton, and five pairs in 1km<sup>2</sup> between Gaydon and Upper Kingston. The north produced only one record of a possible breeding pair, at Curdworth on July 4th. One observer, remarking on their scarcity, stated that on a 'birdrace' on May 16th only three were seen during 15 hours of daylight watching, all of them at Draycote! Passage numbers were also down, with 20 at Dosthill on April 16th the best in the north. As usual, Draycote did better, with peaks of 30 on April 16th and

an excellent 90 on 23rd. Up to 20 were at Draycote again from August 28th-September 12th, with a peak of 30 on 11th. Further south, better numbers were at Naptown Res where the maximum was 55 on August 13th, but at Fenny Compton flocks of 25 on July 25th and 20 on September 11th were much smaller than usual.

**Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Grimley, Lower Moor and Ryall. Seen in the breeding season at Bredons Hardwick, Bretforton, Brockamin, Clifton-on-Severn, Hillhampton, Holt, Kempsey Common, Kinsham, Laughern Pools, Lenchwick, Offenham, Strensham, Uphampton, Upper Howsen and Upton Warren. Numbers on passage were generally low, with maxima of 11 at Grimley on April 20th, 10 at Lower Moor on August 16th, 80 at Bredons Hardwick on 23rd and small numbers at a further seven sites.

**Staffs** Two pairs bred at Denstone Hall, three at Seighford, one on the R. Sow at Shaby Bridges and probably one at Blackbank. A poor spring passage, with peaks of eight at Belvide on April 19th, 30 at Blithfield on 22nd, five at Tatenhill Airfield on May 2nd and even smaller numbers elsewhere. Autumn was no better, with 20 at Blithfield on September 6th, four in a maize field at Bushton Lane on 12th and a general comment of lower numbers this year.

**W.Mid** Present in the Wishaw Lane area during the breeding season. A very poor showing during both passage periods, although this species does tend to be much scarcer in autumn. Sandwell Valley was the primary locality, with passage birds recorded on 14 dates in April and May, peaking at 11 on May 4th. One to three birds were reported from Barr Beacon, Bartley, Clayhanger, Dunstall Park, Fens Pools, Goscote Valley, Harborne NR (a first for the reserve), Marsh Lane GPs, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Probably bred also at Chasewater, where there were 11 on May 6th.

*Blue-headed Wagtail M. f. flava*

*Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.*

**Warks** A male at Draycote on May 14th JJB was the only record.

**Worcs** Single males were at Grimley on April 20th SMW and from May 4th-29th MJJ *et al*, with two on 13th SMW.

#### **1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** One was at Chasewater on April 18th GE.

**Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea**

*Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** A pair bred unsuccessfully at Middleton Hall, with May-June reports also from Brandon, Budbrooke, Combrook, Earlswood Lakes, Packington Park, Salford Priors, Stratford-upon-Avon, Walton Hall and Warwick Park, at some of which pairs were seen. Widely reported outside the breeding season, particularly on passage, with the largest counts being four, at Coton on September 27th, in a Hatton garden on October 10th and at Ladywalk on November 12th. Visible migration was noted at Lighthorne Pools on August 31st, with eight moving south-west in just a few minutes.

**Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Dowles Brook (seven pairs), Ryall, The Gullet

and Wyre Piddle, with breeding season records also from Bittell, Bromsgrove, Carey's Brook, Cofton Hackett, Diglis, Flock Mill, Grimley, Kingswood Common, Knightsford Bridge, Kyre Pool, Leigh Brook (two pairs), New Mill Bridge, Redmarley, River Rea (two pairs), Strensham, The Knapp and Wilden. Seen at 22 localities outside the breeding season.

**Staffs** Breeding season records came from Apedale, Ashwood, Basford Green, Belvide, Bishops Offley, Brookleys Lake, Crumpwood, Norbury (R. Dove), Okeover Mill, Prestwood, Stanton, Tittesworth and Tixall. Other records, mainly of single birds, came from 25 scattered localities.

**W Mid** Breeding season records came from Birmingham City Centre, Edgbaston Res, Harborne (two pairs on Bourn Brook), Ladywood, Mons Hill CBC plot, Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park, Tudor Grange Park and Woodgate Valley area. Widely reported outside of the breeding season, with records from several locations around Birmingham City Centre and from a further 14 sites, with peaks of four at Sheepwash UP in September and three in Valley Park.

### **Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

*Common resident, summer resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Flock size was again rather low, with no large roosts reported. Site maxima included 30 at BAD Kineton and 20 at Wormleighton Res in January-February, 45 at Draycote on March 14th and 31st, 20 at Coton on 21st, 30 at Napton Res on August 5th, 40 at Walton Hall on 9th, 30 at Brandon on 21st, 57 at Fenny Compton on 30th, 50 at Draycote on September 22nd and 40 in Packington Park on October 7th.

**Worcs** Several small flocks were reported throughout the year, but the larger counts were 200 at Droitwich STW on January 17th, 55 at Longdon Marsh also on 17th, 60 at Ripple on 29th, 76 at Bredons Hardwick on March 5th, 100 at Upton Warren on September 5th, 60 at Grimley on October 16th, 300 roosting behind Sainsburys in Kidderminster on November 20th, 58 in the Oddingley/Smite area in December and 400 roosting in the centre of Worcester on 28th.

**Staffs** Up to 100 were feeding on Keele University sports field during August. A flock of 14 at Westport Lake on September 9th included a partial albino juvenile that some claimed as a Snow Bunting! Reports of other flocks included 25 at Bishton on January 6th-7th, 50 at Chasewater on March 14th and 80 there on September 22nd, 50 at Belvide and 42 at Prestwood both on October 4th, several hundred on the roofs and bushes of Chesterton Industrial Park on November 1st and a roost of between 80-100 at Stafford Hospital on December 8th.

**W Mid** Breeding season records came from Four Oaks, Cradley Heath/Mushroom Green Marsh area (at least two pairs), Mons Hill CBC plot, Sandwell Valley and Stubbers Green. Winter roosts included up to 100 at Mell Square (Solihull) and up to 80 at Sainsburys in Mere Green. Other concentrations included in excess of 100 at Spring Vale on February 20th, 20 at Marsh Lane GPs on March 7th, 27 at Stubbers Green on August 15th, 48 on Aldridge cricket field on September 29th, 30 in Dunstall Park on several dates in October and 50 in Sandwell Valley on November 21st.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba**Frequent passage migrant, mainly in spring.*

A very disappointing passage.

**Warks** A very poor year, with April reports of two at Ladywalk on 5th, one at Brandon on 14th, singles at Draycote on 14th, 20th and 21st, three at Dosthill on 18th and one there on 25th. A late bird was reported from Brandon on May 18th.

**Worcs** Singles were at Kinsham on April 13th, 22nd and 27th; and at Upton Warren on April 18th, 22nd and 25th. Three at Grimley on April 21st were followed by five on 22nd, then one on 27th. Further singles were at Ryall on April 25th and Laughem Pools on 28th.

**Staffs** A poor year, with only 16 birds recorded compared with 29 last year. They were found at the following localities: Barton GP – four on April 13th; Belvide one on March 30th and four on April 16th; Blithfield – one on April 13th, two on 16th and singles on 19th and 26th; Chasewater – two on April 13th; Doxey Marshes – singles on April 13th and May 5th and 9th; and Westport Lake – singles on April 7th, 11th, 21st and May 6th.

**W.Mid** Recorded only in Sandwell Valley, where singles were noted on March 19th, 22nd, 29th and April 7th, 18th, 26th and 27th.

**1996 Addenda**

**Staffs** An impressive passage at Chasewater between April 8th-29th reached a peak of 21 on 18th GE.

**1997 Addenda**

**Staffs** Additional singles at Belvide on April 13th and Chasewater on April 19th and 26th brought the spring total to 32 birds.

**Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing)** *Bombus garrulus**An erratic and usually rare winter visitor, but occasionally widespread during invasion years (6/10).*

After two good years, a very poor one was perhaps to be expected.

**Staffs** A first-winter bird was feeding on rowan berries at Codsall on January 29th SN.

**W.Mid** One in Pelsall from January 2nd to at least 12th per TCH.

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus**An uncommon and declining resident, becoming increasingly restricted to north Staffs and north-west Worcs.*

**Worcs** Five territories were found at Dowles Brook, with three pairs breeding successfully, and eight pairs were found along the Worcestershire section of the River Rea. Old nests were also discovered at Lower Haresbrook and on the Shakenhurst Brook. Singles were noted on the Sapey Brook near Harpley on March 14th, on the Corn Brook near Boraston on March 22nd and, very unexpectedly, on a stream on Bredon Hill above Overbury from October 9th-11th per RAP.

**Staffs** Reports of nesting birds were received from Okeover Mill, Solomon's Hollow and Three Shires Head. Other sightings came from Bearda, Cotton Mill Bridge, Gradbach, Ousley Cross, Tittesworth, Wettonmill and along the R. Dove at Dove Dale, Dove Leys, Norbury and Toad Hole Bridge.

**W.Mid** None reported this year.



**Long-eared Owls** bred successfully in the Black Country (Phill Ward).



Another Black Country visitor was this **Bohemian Waxwing** (Keith Stone).



A first-winter male **Black Redstart** at Draycote (Keith Stone).



*This **Brambling** was one of many to be ringed in the 1997/98 winter (Rob Skeates).*



***Common Crossbills** were again in evidence on Cannock Chase in the spring (Keith Stone).*

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes**Abundant resident.*

- Warks** A further increase was noted at BAD Kineton following the hard weather crash in 1996, with 70 logged on the May count (*cf.* 48 in 1997, 25 in 1996, 98 in 1995). A total of 20 singing males were located in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods and 12 territories were in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasture fields at Chapel Green. Thought to be scarcer this year at Ladywalk.
- Worcs** The population at regularly monitored sites seems fairly stable, with small increases at Southcrest and Tibberton, no change at Web Heath and a small decline at Shortwood Roughs. No obvious long term trend is apparent at any of the sites.
- Staffs** Five adults and six juveniles were caught at Betley CES (*cf.* six of each in 1997), while regular counts at Lawneswood during the year varied between two and seven. With 93 breeding pairs, numbers at Coombes Valley were very similar to the last two years, but down on the five-yearly average of 112.3. Nearby, 48 pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR.
- W Mid** There were 39 territories on the Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* five-yearly average 44.4) and 26 territories on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot (*cf.* 24 in 1997 and 19 in 1996).

**Hedge Accentor** (Duncock) *Prunella modularis**Abundant resident.*

- Warks** Numbers dropped again at BAD Kineton, where the May count fell to 16, (*cf.* 27 in 1997 following the nadir of nine after the cold winter of 1996). The only territory counts from elsewhere were seven in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods and five in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasturefields and old hedgerows at Chapel Green, both decidedly on the low side.
- Worcs** Regularly censused plots show a stable situation, with very little variation in numbers on most transects from year to year. The populations at Shortwood Roughs and Southcrest show virtually no change over the last five years, but a steady increase to nine pairs at Web Heath, the highest since at least 1995, maybe significant.
- Staffs** An increase in breeding numbers was reported at Coombes Valley, with 17 pairs (*cf.* 12 in 1997 and 11 in 1996).
- W Mid** A decline on the Mons Hill CBC plot, where just 10 territories (*cf.* five-yearly average 13.2), but 12 territories on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot (*cf.* 12 in 1997 and four in 1996).

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant resident.*

The fluctuating numbers at different sites show no discernible long-term trend.

- Warks** Although the BAD Kineton May count fell to 49 this year (*cf.* 63 in 1997), numbers were still 10% above average. Other territory counts included 30 in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods and just five in 1km<sup>2</sup> of pasturefields divided by



old hedgerows at Chapel Green which, like the preceding species, was a decidedly low total for this habitat. An influx, coinciding with large arrivals on the east coast, was noted at Ladywalk in late September, when 25 singing birds were counted.

- Worcs** Seems to have reduced slightly in numbers overall on census plots, with seven pairs at Shortwood Roughs and six pairs at Web Heath representing significant declines on the previous year and a less obvious long-term decline since 1995. However, numbers remained stable at the more urban Southcrest site, whilst 12 pairs breeding around Tibberton suggested a small increase in that area.
- Staffs** Although breeding numbers were slightly down on last year at Coombes Valley, 72 pairs compared favourably with the five-yearly average of 73.4. Twenty-three pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR. At Lawneswood, numbers varied from 10 in April to one in July, while an increase on last year was reported at Tittesworth.
- W.Mid** Declined on the Mons Hill CBC plot, where just 30 territories (*cf.* 35 in 1997 and a five-yearly average of 35.6), but increased on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot, with 18 territories (*cf.* eight in 1997 and 13 in 1996).

**Common Nightingale** (*Nightingale*) *Luscinia megarhynchos*

*Uncommon and declining summer resident to the southern parts of Warks and Worcs.*

*Average: April 20th (64)–July 31st (19)*

A late arrival, with none until April 26th, when two at Langdale Wood. Last reported at Strensham on the late date of August 26th.

- Warks** A disastrous year, with only two singing males located despite a special BOS survey covering most suitable habitat in the south-east, an area where 10 males were reported in 1997. Single males were recorded between May 10th–16th at Bowshot Wood (*cf.* three in 1997) and on the latter date at nearby Roundhill Wood. None were present at BAD Kineton (*cf.* five in 1997), partly due to scrub clearance. One was found recently dead at Long Itchington around August 25th, where last heard in 1993.
- Worcs** In a build-up to the 1999 BTO Nightingale Survey, more attention was paid to this species than normal, with interesting results. In all, 32 singing males, assumed to be on breeding territory, were found at Aston Somerville, Broadway, Caldwell Mill, Croome Court, Deerfold Wood, Defford, Gadbury Bank (two), High Green, Langdale Wood (10), Marsh Common (three), Narrow Wood, North Covert, Old Hills Common, Ripple, Strensham (five) and Upper Lode. Thus, 31% of the county's dwindling population is at one site, Langdale Wood. Many of the localities mentioned held far fewer singing males than they had done in the past. Additional to the breeding population, unpaired birds sang at Castlemorton Common on April 28th and Ipsley Mill Pool from May 18th–31st.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

*Scarce summer resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

- Warks** The bird at Draycote from December 1997 remained until January 10th *many obs.* A female at Draycote from March 24th–26th *JFCJ, GR et al* and a



female/immature at Ilmington Downs on November 8th *ARD* were the only other records.

*Worcs* A male at Castlemorton village from November 26th-29th was the only record this year *DP, RAP, SMW et al.*

*Staffs* A well-watched male remained in Newcastle Town Centre from April 23rd-May 4th. He was joined by a female on 3rd and pair bonding was observed the next day, after which sightings stopped *LRH et al.* A male was singing from the roof of a house at Little Stoke on April 19th *DWE, SME.*

*W Mid* The true status is still, and possibly always will be, very unclear owing to its elusive nature, the difficulty in surveying urban habitats and possible duplication when counting singing males. In Birmingham one pair bred successfully in Bordesley *KMC* and a male was seen and heard at a 1997 breeding site, which sadly was subsequently demolished *PAC.* A further eight singing males, possibly involving some duplication as localities are often close together, were reported sporadically from the Regents Parade/Place area between April 8th-June 8th at least *PAH*; and at Catherine Street on April 30th *DM*; Lower Trinity Street on May 3rd *NPB*; Ladywood Road on 13th *WFP*; Ludgate Hill/Lionel Street area in mid-May *PAC, TCH*; Bordesley Street on 24th *HK*; New Street on 28th *WFP*; and Colmore Row throughout June *REH.* Additionally, males were reported from Alcester Street and Stanhope Street, both on May 4th, and from the College of Food and Domestic Art in the Fleet Street/Summer Row area, where there were two on June 6th. Further, undated records came from Winson Green *PAC*, at the junction of the A45/A34 on Coventry Road roundabout *PAC* and adjacent to the former Saltley Gas Works *PAC.* Migrants were at Spring Vale on April 6th *per HK* and Sheepwash UP on July 15th *AGW.*

#### **1995 Addendum**

*Staffs* A male was at the Sheepwalks on January 1st and 2nd *KMC.*

#### **1997 Corrigendum**

*W Mid* One was in Dunstall Park on April 19th-20th *KMC et al* and not 27th as stated.

#### **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 10th (62)–September 25th (61)*

A fairly typical arrival and departure, with the first of the year at Clayhanger on April 12th and the last at Goscote Valley on September 23rd.

*Warks* The sole spring record was of a male at Fenny Compton on April 27th. About fifteen were recorded on return passage, beginning with two at Watgall on July 26th and two at Newton Regis STW on August 2nd. Singles were then seen at Wormleighton Res on August 25th and 28th, Northend on 27th, Bishop's Bowl on September 1st and Fenny Compton on 11th. Napton Hill produced singles on September 2nd, 6th and 14th, with three, including a singing male, on 19th.

*Worcs* A total of 39 singing males were at Bredon Hill (two), Broadway Hill, Collins Green, Corn Brook, Dowles Brook (20), Great Farley Wood, Happy Valley (two), Kingswood Common (two), Lower Moor, Midsummer Hill (four), Sling

Common, Tinkers Cross, Upper Sandlin and Walton Hill. Seen on spring passage at Bittell, Grimley and Upton Warren; and on autumn passage at Bredon Hill (where 10 on September 3rd was a good count), Broadway Hill, Calcot Hill, Church Lench Pool, Gaudywood Park, Grimley, North Hill and Upton Warren.

**Staffs** The main stronghold was again Coombes Valley, where numbers increased once more to 44 breeding pairs (*cf.* five-yearly average 36.4), while the Churnet Woods held 12 pairs, eight males were singing at Seven Springs on May 10th and six pairs were in the Tittesworth area. Also reported from eight other sites during the breeding season. Spring passage birds were noted at Chasewater on April 16th and Westport on 24th, while a male was seen at Flash on May 29th. Return passage included singles at Blithfield on July 11th, Belvide on August 13th, Prestwood on September 3rd, Byrkley Park on 19th and Doxey on the 20th.

**W Mid** Spring migrants were at Clayhanger on April 12th and 16th, Netherton Res on 22nd, Sandwell Valley also on 22nd and Harborne NR on May 3rd. Slightly more numerous during the autumn period, with records from Woodgate Valley on August 11th, Barston on 15th, Fishley on 26th, Sandwell Valley on 30th (two) and September 3rd (two), Aldridge (along canal) on August 31st, Park Lime Pits on September 11th and Goscote Valley on 23rd.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** One was on Netherton Hill on August 25th.

#### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

*Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly in north Staffs. Widespread on passage.*

*Average: April 22nd (62)—October 6th (58)*

An early bird was at Middleton on April 10th, but the main passage did not begin until April 22nd. An early exodus this year, with the last being four at Wormleighton on September 30th.



*Whinchat (Phil Jones)*

- Warks** With no nesting pair at BAD Kineton since 1996, it seems likely that it is now extinct as a regular breeding bird. In spring, after an early male at Middleton Hall on April 10th, a further 19 birds were noted from April 23rd-May 10th at Bermuda, Brandon (max. five on April 25th), Compton Verney, Dosthill, Draycote, Farnborough, Gaydon Tip (four on May 10th), Lighthorne Quarry and Radway. An early return, mainly of adults, was noted in July, with one at Knightcote on 18th, two at Pleasance Farm from 21st-25th, five at Fenny Compton and singles at both Knightcote and Watgall on 26th, another at Fenny Compton on 27th and two at Stockton on 29th. Subsequent passage of 23 individuals was then recorded from August 15th-September 30th, with ones and twos at Dosthill, Draycote, Fenny Compton, Pleasance Farm, Steetley Meadows CP and Stirch, and parties of nine at Lighthorne Quarry on August 31st and four at Wormleighton Res on September 30th.
- Worcs** Although lost to the county as a breeding species some years ago, a group of nine (including juveniles) near Strensham from July 19th-26th raised the possibility of local breeding. Noted on spring passage at Abberton, Bredon Hill, Broad Green, Clevelode, Cropthorne, Upton Warren (maximum of three on May 8th) and Walton Hill (two on April 23rd). Autumn passage was stronger, with maxima of four at Aston Mill on August 29th, 11 at Bishampton Vale Pool on September 5th, four near Strensham on September 20th and smaller numbers at Bredon Hill, Grimley, Kempsey Lower Ham, Lower Moor, Offmore Farm and Upton Warren.
- Staffs** Rapidly declining as a breeding species, with the only records being a female carrying food at Swallow Moss on June 14th, a male at Knotbury on the 21st and reports from potentially suitable habitat of one at Stanton Dale Tor on April 24th, a pair at Tittesworth on May 2nd, a pair at Rugeley Power Station on the 10th and a male at Three Shires Head on the 24th. The only spring passage birds were a male at Apedale CP and a female at Belvide, both on May 4th. More widespread on autumn passage, with reports of singles at Alrewas GP, Barton GP and Doxey; two at Elford North GP; and multiple sightings in August and September at Blithfield, Chasewater and Tatenhill Airfield, where up to 14 between August 27th-September 22nd were possibly attracted by late standing corn.
- W Mid** Spring passage began with two at Sandwell Valley on April 22nd followed by birds there on nine dates, with a peak of three from May 3rd-11th. Clayhanger had one on April 24th and Sheepwash UP at least three, possibly up to five, on the same day followed by one-three until May 2nd. Singles also appeared at Bartley, Dunstall Park, Goscote Valley and Hobs Hole Lane between April 24th-May 6th. Return passage also started at Sandwell Valley, with two on July 15th followed by up to two on a further seven dates through to September 15th. Also reported at Dunstall Park on seven dates between July 18th-September 27th, with a peak of three on 13th; and between August 11th-September 27th at Bartley, near Chadwick End, Foxcote Pond (max. three from September 21st-25th), Goscote Valley, Park Lime Pits, Sheepwash UP and Woodgate Valley.
- 1997 Addenda**
- Warks** Noted on ten dates on passage at Brandon, with five on May 4th and three on September 5th.

**Common Stonechat** (Stonechat) *Saxicola torquata**Frequent passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce as a breeding bird.*

**Warks** Continues to be at a low ebb, though there were slightly more than in 1997. Early in the year there was a male at Lea Marston on dates from January 9th-February 13th, one at Bermuda on January 17th and a male at Ryton Pools on February 1st and 7th. Spring passage brought a female to Brandon on February 21st-22nd, followed by a pair on March 8th and a male on 10th-11th. A female was also at Dosthill on March 1st, with others at Milcote on 8th and Draycote on 27th. In autumn there was a female at Coton/Lea Marston on October 10th and 18th and a male on 21st, while a female was seen intermittently at Dosthill during November, being joined by a male on 13th. Probably the same male was seen nearby at Kingsbury WP on December 29th.

**Worcs** Bred at Castlemorton Common (three pairs) and Happy Valley. Many reports throughout the year from the Malvern area, with a maximum of seven at North Hill on October 20th. Away from there, one at Ashmoor Common on January 6th and one at Strensham on February 1st were the only winter records. A few more were seen in autumn, with singles at Bredon Hill from October 3rd-30th, one at Grimley on October 4th, two at Ashmoor Common on October 15th of which one remained to December 6th, singles at Abberton and Bishampton Vale golf course on October 18th, one at Wilden on October 25th and two at Throckmorton on November 14th.

**Staffs** On the Moors, a pair was seen defending a territory at the Roaches on June 4th. Two pairs bred in the Katyn Memorial/German Cemetery area of Cannock Chase and members of those families were seen throughout the autumn/winter, with a maximum of six on October 10th. Elsewhere, birds (with sex where known) were reported outside the breeding season at Doxey (two males) from January 29th-February 7th, Wolseley Bridge (female) on March 11th, Blackbank (Apedale) on September 27th, Belvide (female) on the same day, Stanton Dale (male) and Swallow Moss (juvenile) on October 10th, Blithfield (male) on November 7th, Drayton Bassett (female and two males) on the 8th and Barton GP on the 15th.

**W.Mid** The wintering male at Sheepwash UP from 1997 remained until March 3rd, with a female present on 13th. One was in Valley Park on February 19th and three were at Bartley on March 1st-2nd, while a pair visited Sandwell Valley on 2nd followed by one on 11th. A female/immature was by Asda in the Walmley/Peddimore area on September 27th. Singles then followed in Sandwell Valley on October 1st, 2nd and 22nd; on Netherton Hill on 13th; and at Bartley (a male) on 26th; whilst a male returned to the Sheepwash UP wintering area on October 23rd.

**1997 Addenda and Corrigenda**

**Warks** The March record at Brandon was of a male on 7th-8th, while an early female on September 7th was the only other record from there.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe**Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly on the northern moorlands. Fairly common and widespread on passage.**Average: March 19th (61)-October 16th (62)*

- A male at Blithfield on February 25th – the second earliest on record – heralded a strong spring passage that peaked around April 23rd. A few departing birds lingered into October, with the last on 31st at Sandwell Valley.
- Warks** A good spring passage was recorded from Draycote, where after a very early female on March 3rd birds were noted on 17 dates from March 13th-May 16th, with a peak of five on April 24th. Noted at 19 further sites during this period, with peaks in late-March, late-April and around May 8th. Maxima included six at Dosthill on April 18th, nine at Bermuda on May 8th and five at Ryton Pools CP (date unspecified). Again return passage brought good numbers to Draycote, with birds on 20 dates during August 8th-October 19th and peaks of three on September 30th and October 13th. Ones and twos were also noted at eight other sites during this period, which is about average, with three at Hams Hall on September 26th.
- Worcs** A pair bred in the Malvern area as usual. A total of 102 was seen from March 20th-May 25th and 70 from August 5th-October 28th. Maxima were eight at Bishampton Vale golf course and six at Wassell Grove Pools on April 23rd, seven at Aston Mill and nine at Bredon Hill on April 25th; then 12 at Defford on August 19th, four at Alvechurch on September 11th and five at Bishampton Vale golf course on 13th. Smaller numbers were also noted at a further 22 localities.
- Staffs** In the North Staffs Moors area, 26 were at Musden Low on April 13th and six males at Standon Dale on the 24th, while a pair were feeding two young at Knotbury on June 21st with five birds reported in the area earlier. On spring passage, an early male stayed at Blithfield from February 25th-March 4th, while multiple sightings included 19 at Apedale on April 23rd followed by 12 there on May 4th and 16 at Tatenhill Airfield during April. A pair at Westport on the 14th was unusual for the locality. Also reported from ten other sites. During the autumn 27 passed through Tatenhill Airfield, five were present at Apedale from October 5th-7th and others were reported from another seven sites.
- W Mid** Around 90 were recorded at 19 sites during a widespread and protracted spring passage between March 12th-June 1st. Maxima were 12 at Sandwell Valley on March 27th; 10 at Barr Beacon and 15 along the Black Country Route on April 22nd; 15 at Dunstall Park/Valley Park on 23rd; and five at Clayhanger on 24th. A much sparser autumn passage between August 27th-October, with around 24 birds at 12 sites and maxima of two at Goscote Valley on August 19th, Thimble End on September 8th, Dunstall Park on 11th and Sandwell Valley on four dates.

### **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 (42)–October 24th (36)*

An early return, with the first back on its breeding grounds at Drystone Edge on March 24th and others during the next few days. Last seen on the Malverns, at Table Hill on November 1st.

- Warks** A well-watched male at Middleton Hall from April 25th-27th was the only record.

**Worcs** The first of the year was a female in a garden at Pershore on March 28th. The anticipated spring passage on the north Malverns started with a male at Happy Valley/North Hill from April 3rd-5th, with a pair on 4th: two from 11th-13th, three from 17th-18th and singles on 19th and 25th then completed a poor showing. Meanwhile, two at Walton Hill on April 6th heralded a reasonably good spring on Clent, with singles on April 22nd, 23rd and May 2nd, followed by five around St Kenelms Farm from May 3rd-4th, with two remaining to 5th. Elsewhere, singles were at Wick on April 18th, Wyche Cutting on 20th and Upton Warren on 25th. Autumn passage was weaker and confined to the Happy Valley/North Hill area. After one at North Hill on September 17th, further singles appeared on 18th-19th, 22nd and October 2nd and 4th. There were then two on 6th, followed by singles again on 10th, 18th, 29th and 30th, with a juvenile at Table Hill on November 1st.

**Staffs** Probably only four breeding pairs on the North Staffs Moors. A male was present Drystone Edge on March 24th, one was by the road east of Thorncliffe on April 16th, three were at Knotbury on the 19th, two males were at Three Shires Head on May 2nd, one was at Hen Cloud on the 8th, a pair were at Boarsgrove June 7th and a male was behind the 'Winking Man' public house on the 19th. Autumn passage brought a male and a juvenile to Hen Cloud on August 5th and three juveniles to feed on rowan berries at Tittesworth on September 11th.

**W Mid** A typical scattering of short staying spring migrants began with one at Sheepwash UP on March 29th followed by further singles on Netherton Hill on April 4th, Goscote Valley on 22nd, and Lutley Wedge and Winson Green on 24th.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Warks** A bird reported at Brandon on April 30th was the second there of the spring.

**W Mid** One in Saltwells Wood later moved onto Netherton Hill on March 31st, with another on Netherton Hill on April 23rd.

#### **Blackbird *Turdus merula***

*Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Breeding territory counts included ten (as in 1997) at Alvecote, 32 (cf. 27 in 1997) in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods and the rather low total of nine in 1km<sup>2</sup> of pasture fields at Chapel Green. For the third year running the BAD Kineton count was low, with 77 being 14% below average. Some notable autumn influxes were recorded including 80-100 at Brandon on October 11th, "good numbers" at Ladywalk in the same month, 30 feeding on haws at Ufton Fields on November 3rd, a peak of 35 at Wormleighton Res on 6th and over 50 along a short stretch of hedgerow at Fenny Compton on 23rd-24th, but not before or after.

**Worcs** Five pairs at Shortwood Roughs was the same as in 1997, but represented a failure to recover following successive declines since 1994. Conversely, in Redditch, the population is very stable at Southcrest and increased sharply at Web Heath to exceed any total there since 1995. Outside the breeding season the only significant count was 18 at Happy Valley on October 3rd.

**Staffs** Breeding success was down at the Doxey CBC plot, with only nine pairs

(cf. 15 in 1997) and a maximum count of just 22 on December 21st. However, breeding numbers at Coombes Valley increased significantly, with 64 pairs (cf. a low of 37 in 1997 and a five-yearly average of 41.4). Twenty-two pairs also bred in the Churnet Woods NR. The maximum monthly count at Lawneswood was 12 on November 19th, while 20-30 were at Belvide on February 12th.

**W Mid** Territory counts on the CBC plots were 29 at Mons Hill (cf. 28 in 1997, but a four-year average of 36) and 17 at Park Lime Pits (cf. 16 in 1997 and 15 in 1996). Ten visited a Bilston garden on December 26th and an albino was in the grounds of Hawthorn House (Handsworth) during December.

### **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

*Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Bred North Staffs Moors 1974-77, 1980 and 1985.*

*Average: September 30th (63)–May 2nd (62)*

Most had left by early May, but three were still at Stoneton on 24th. In autumn, first noted at Radway on October 7th, but numbers generally remained small until November.

**Warks** Moderately widespread during the late winter and spring in flocks up to 150, with the higher counts again in the south. Maxima in the north were 180 in Packington Park on January 23rd, 200 at Dosthill on February 19th, 180 at Ladywalk on March 4th, 350 at Coombe on 14th and 150 in set-aside at Maxstoke on April 21st. The larger southern flocks included maxima of 300 at Watergall on January 10th, 300 at Fenny Compton on 20th, 500 at Wormleighton on February 4th, 400 at Draycote on March 13th and 300 at Arlescote on 23rd. Arrived late in autumn, with few before November 1st, when 100 flew over Draycote followed by 200 the next day, when 300 were at Dosthill. A huge south-westerly movement was then noted over the following two-three weeks, particularly from 6th-8th, with 520 at Wormleighton on 6th, 1100 at Fenny Compton and 300 at Over Whitacre on 7th, at least 2600 at Priors Hardwick and 400 over Kingsbury on 8th and up to 400 at Ladywalk during the same period. Thereafter, remained fairly abundant, with maxima of 1350 at Knightcote on 20th, 700 at Fenny Compton on 30th, 800 roosting at Wormleighton Res on December 7th and 500 roosting near Chesterton Wood on 30th.

**Worcs** Well reported, with 32 flocks of 50-250 birds in the first winter period and 22 in the second. Maxima in the first period were 500 at Bushley on February 5th, 300 at Broughton Green on February 7th, 250 at Monk Wood on February 8th and 250 at Hornhill Wood on March 29th. In the second period, an influx in early November produced counts of 300 at Broadway on 5th, 500 at Bredon Hill on 7th, 275 at Hinton-on-the-Green on 7th, 500 at Longdon Marsh on 7th and 250 at the Three Counties Showground on 7th. Later in the winter there were peaks of 480 at Tibberton on November 22nd and 420 at Bishampton Vale golf course on December 27th.

**Staffs** During the first winter period flocks of 300 and over included 500 at Glutton Bridge on the edge of the Moors on January 10th, 300 at R. Dove on February 4th, 500 over High Onn on the 24th, 300 at Prestwood on March 8th

and 400 on stubble south of Belvide on April 5th. Lesser numbers were reported from just eight other sites. The second winter period brought some larger flocks, with 630 at Churnet Woods on November 4th, 900 flying west over Belvide on the 7th and 1000 moving west/north-west over Chasewater on the same date, 800 at Meece Brook on the 21st, 600 at Croxall on December 6th and 1100 in the Anslow pig farm area on the 12th.

- W. Mid** Rather scarce in the first winter period, with the most notable flocks being 250 at Bartley on February 8th, around 700 at Chadwick End on the same date, 30 in Sandwell Valley on March 8th and 35 at Wergs on 25th. Records were more numerous and widespread in the second winter period, with the largest numbers comprising 200 over Sheepwash UP on November 2nd; in excess of 250 at Fens Pools also on the 2nd; around 680 moving west-north-west at Park Lime Pits in a short period on November 5th and 150 feeding there on December 18th; 70 in Sandwell Valley on November 5th; 100 on Netherton Hill on 17th; in excess of 200 at Marsh Lane GPs on December 17th; and a similar number near Hockley Heath on 28th. Smaller numbers, less than 50, were reported from ten further sites.

#### **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

*Much declined, though still very common resident. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.*

- Warks** The few territory counts received from northern, central and eastern districts all pointed to low densities, eg two at both Alvecote and in 1km<sup>2</sup> at Chapel Green, three at Ladywalk and five in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods (cf. six in 1997). The highest densities seem to be in parts of the south and south-east, where 10-15 pairs per km<sup>2</sup> are present locally *JJB*. A drop in numbers was registered at BAD Kineton, where 19 on the May count (cf. 28 in 1997) was 11% below average. Some small autumn influxes were again recorded, particularly during the period October 4th-11th, including 30-40 at Brandon on 4th and over 20 at Wormleighton Res on 7th and again on November 6th, in association with large numbers of other thrushes.

- Worcs** Increased on census plots at Shortwood Roughs and Web Heath, with no change at Southcrest. Indeed, there has been no real decrease in the population at any of these localities over the last four years. Elsewhere, singing birds reported at many localities, with maxima of 10 at Castlemorton Common, five at Malvern Wells, seven at Midsummer Hill, five at Tibberton and eight at Upton Warren. In autumn, up to 18 were at Happy Valley, where at least two out of 12 on September 19th were thought to resemble greyer continental birds *SMW*.

- Staffs** With concern about the decline of this species, it is all the more important to send in any sightings. A slight increase was reported from Coombes Valley, where 18 pairs bred (cf. 15 in 1997 and a five-yearly average of 17.2). Eighteen pairs also bred in the Churnet Woods NR, as did five pairs around Belvide. Up to three were reported from Lawneswood, while one at Rickerscote on November 7th was the first since March! A notable increase was reported at Lichfield between mid- and late-September, then again with Redwings on October 7th.



**W Mid** There were two territories at Harborne NR, three on Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* six in 1997 and four in 1996) and four on Park Lime Pits CBC plot (a slight decline). Further breeding season records emanated from Aldridge, Bilston Cemetery, Claregate playing fields, Four Oaks, Marston Green, Sandwell Valley (where six noted on March 23rd), Sheepwash UP (two in song and successfully bred), Sutton Park ('several' in song) and Valley Park (four in song in June). In excess of six at Sheepwash UP on September 20th were believed to be autumn migrants. Several observers added the comment 'rarely seen' or an 'unusual visitor'.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

*Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor.*

*Average: September 26th (64)–April 17th (63)*

Most had left by early April, with the last at Hindlip on 12th. The first returning bird was at Westport on the slightly early date of September 19th, but no more showed until 26th, when five were at Draycote.

**Warks** Very few were present during the early months, with 150 in Packington Park from January 9th–11th the only decent sized flock recorded. Otherwise small parties of up to 30 were the norm, with 50 at Fenny Compton on January 4th, Priors Marston on February 21st and Lighthorne on March 1st, and 70 roosting at Wormleighton Res on 23rd the best counts. In the autumn, a steady passage began on October 7th, though with no flocks of more than 100 appearing until the period November 6th–8th. On November 6th, there were counts of 350 at Wormleighton Res and 150 at Fenny Compton, followed by 500 at both Ladywalk on 7th and Priors Hardwick on 8th. Thereafter, there were 300 at Knightcote on 20th, and up to 200 at Fenny Compton and 150 at Wormleighton Res until the end of the month, but only small numbers were reported in December, with no flock exceeding 80.

**Worcs** Noticeably less common than Fieldfare, with just 10 flocks reported in the first winter period and 15 in the second. Most counts were of fewer than 110 birds, the exceptions being 110 at Huntingdrop Common on January 25th, 140 at Stourvale Marsh on February 11th, 150 at Birlingham on March 7th, 120 at Harpley on March 14th, 134 west over Bushley on October 20th, 500 at Longdon Marsh on November 7th, 600 at Bredon Hill on November 19th, 300 at Castlemorton Common on November 22nd and 130 at Tibberton also on November 22nd.

**Staffs** During the first winter period the larger flocks were 100 at Park Hall CP on January 9th, 65 at Jacks Wood (Chasewater) on February 7th, 200 over High Onn on 24th and 200 at Prestwood on March 8th. In the second winter period, 250 passed over Aqualate on November 8th, 740 were in the Churnet Woods area on the 16th, 200 at Belvide on the 24th, 150 at Bradley on December 20th and 300 at Tittesworth on the 30th.

**W Mid** Probably more widespread than Fieldfare in both winter periods. Peak counts included 100 at The Dell (Pensnett) on January 16th, 100 at Bartley on February 8th, in excess of 80 in Aldridge on 11th, around 100 at Park Lime Pits also in February and 80 around Netherton Hill/Res on March 16th. Later in the year, the larger concentrations included 150 around Netherton Hill on

October 20th, 300 at Sheepwash UP on November 10th and in excess of 200 at Marsh Lane GPs on December 17th. Smaller numbers were reported from 12 other localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

*Common resident.*

**Warks** The population appears to be stable. The largest post-breeding flocks were 15 at Avon Dassett on August 12th, over 40 at Ladywalk/Hams Hall during the same month and 23 at Napton Hill on September 17th.

**Worcs** No change in breeding status was apparent. Breeding was confirmed at Birchen Coppice, Drakes Broughton, Happy Valley, Holt Fleet, Stoke Bliss, The Knapp, Tibberton (three pairs), Upton Warren and West Hagley. Several small parties were reported, but the only ones to reach double figures were 11 at Frith Common on June 9th, 11 at Trimpey on July 9th, 18 at Kingswood Common on August 25th, 10 at Tibberton on September 26th and 11 at Bushley on October 20th.

**Staffs** Three pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR, while five pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* four in 1997 and three in 1996). The largest reported flocks were 10, at Musden Low on July 6th, Wootton on the 19th and Belvide on August 26th; followed by 32 at Chasewater on October 10th and 12 on Calton Moor on November 14th.

**W Mid** Relatively little breeding information was received, but bred at Bilston Cemetery, Harborne NR area (three pairs) and probably at Park Lime Pits. Two territories on Mons Hill CBC plot represented no change over the last three years and it was also described as being stable at Sheepwash UP. Breeding season records also came from Birmingham City Centre, Kings Heath, Leasowes Park and Warley Woods. Post-breeding flocks included 14 on Claregate golf course on June 26th, 10 at Sheldon on July 8th, 20 in Sandwell Valley on July 13th and 24 in Dunstall Park on August 4th.

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

*Scarce resident, breeding only since 1993.*

**Warks** Again present throughout the year at Brandon, with up to three singing males and at least one female seen, but with no proven breeding *BMCG*. A male heard singing at Kingsbury WP on May 15th *JVH* was the only other confirmed record.

**Worcs** At least one pair remained at Upton Warren all year, with two singing males from late March-May 10th *per JTB, AW*. One of these males, which had been colour-ringed, was then discovered at a site near Redditch on May 23rd, where it was found to be paired with an unringed female. The latter was seen nest building, but sadly neither bird was seen after June 1st. There was some evidence of trampling of vegetation around the nest site, possibly indicating human interference *GAF, REH et al.*

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

*Frequent, though much declined, summer resident and passage migrant.*

*Average: April 17th (62)–August 26th (52)*

An early bird was in Sandwell Valley on April 6th, but the main arrival did not

begin until around the 24th. The last of the year was at Netherton Hill on August 20th.

**Warks** Breeding was indicated at Brandon, where up to three were reeling again during the breeding season (see below) and a juvenile was ringed on July 18th. A poor year again elsewhere, with reeling birds heard at BAD Kineton, Chesterton Pools, Dosthill (two), Edge Hill Quarry (two), Fenny Compton, Kingsbury, Ladywalk (two), Lea Marston, Lighthorne Quarry (three), Snitterfield and Sutton-under-Brailes.

**Worcs** Probably bred at Castlemorton Common, where there were up to three singing birds from April 23rd-May 29th. Worryingly, all the other records submitted related to birds singing for no more than three days. These were at Crowle on April 25th, Abberton from 26th-28th, Upton Warren on May 2nd, Aston Somerville on 9th, Arrow Valley Lake on 16th, Wilden on June 6th and Throckmorton on August 2nd.

**Staffs** A pair bred successfully at Coombes Valley, fledging two young, and reeling was heard there from June 2nd-13th. In the spring, reeling birds were located at Belvide (two), Branston GP (two also seen), Chasewater (East Heath), Doxey (Tillington Wash) and Tittesworth (Churnet Bay). In the second reeling period, one or perhaps two were at Byrkley Park on June 21st and at Doxey again on July 2nd.

**W Mid** Up to two were reeling at Clayhanger, with one still singing on July 1st. Two-four reeling birds were also at two or three sites within Sandwell Valley, with reeling again at one of these in early July providing a good indication of breeding. Also present in the breeding season in Longmoor Valley in Sutton Park. Two 'reeling' males were at Valley Park from April 23rd-25th, when one was noted displaying to a third, presumably female, bird; one remained to 28th. One was in Woodgate Valley also on 23rd. What was presumably an autumn migrant was heard weakly sub-singing on Netherton Hill on August 20th.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Warks** Up to three were heard at Brandon during the breeding season, while one there on September 17th was the latest anywhere in the Region for this year.

**Staffs** An excellent year at Chasewater, with nine sites where birds were heard singing on at least three occasions. Last seen on August 3rd.

**W Mid** One on Netherton Hill on April 26th and 27th.

#### **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Common, though declining, summer resident.*

*Average: April 15th (62)–September 28th (56)*

The recent trend for early arrivals continued, with birds at Upton Warren on March 29th and Brandon the next day, the former being the earliest on record. The main influx, though, did not occur until mid-April. A typical departure, with the last at Fens Pools and Sheepwash UP on September 27th.

**Warks** Ten on the May census at BAD Kineton was the highest total there since numbers crashed from 22 to nine in 1992. Elsewhere counts were again generally down, with breeding territories located at Alvecote (seven), Bidford-Marcliff (eight along R. Avon), Brandon (eight), Charlecote,

- Chesterton (three), Draycote (four), Farnborough (three), Fenny Compton (two), Kingsbury WP (eight), Ladywalk (no count, but 43 ringed during the season), Napton Res, Priors Marston, Warmington and Wormleighton Res.
- Worcs** Six pairs were at Croome Court, six males were singing along a 5km stretch of the Droitwich Canal from Hawford-Chawson, 11 pairs were along the R. Avon from Eckington-Strensham Lock and eight pairs were at Strensham Sludge Lagoons. Singing males were also at Feckenham, Fladbury, Great Comberton, Grimley, Hanley Castle, Hewell Grange (where unusual), Lenchwick, Lower Moor, Oakley, Offenham, Ramsden, near Tiddesley Wood and at Upton Warren (where 25 singing on April 24th).
- Staffs** Breeding season territories were held at Alrewas GP, Belvide (23 singing males on May 10th), Blithfield, Doxey (19 pairs on the CBC plot) and Westport, where five males sang May 12th but only two pairs bred – just off the site. At Betley Mere there were no singing males for the first time since 1986 and constant effort ringing produced just two adults and seven juveniles, again down on the previous year.
- W Mid** Breeding, or probable breeding, was reported from Clayhanger, Marsh Lane GPs, Sandwell Valley (up to six in song in May) and Longmoor Valley in Sutton Park. Spring migrants were at Fens Pools, Footshole, Netherton Hill, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park between April 22nd- May 12th and autumn ones at Fens Pools, Sheepwash UP and Valley Park between August 3rd- September 27th.

**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

*Scarce and declining summer resident, now only in south Worcs and seemingly no longer breeding.*

*Average: May 28th (48)–July 8th (3)*

- Worcs** One singing male in the Avon Valley from June 6th-28th *SMW et al* was the same individual seen in 1997. The writing seems to be on the wall.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Fairly common summer resident.*

*Average: April 23rd (58)–September 26th (52)*

Punctual arrival, with the first at Upton Warren on April 23rd, with the main influx following in the first few days of May. Most left during September, with the last at Betley on October 4th.

- Warks** Breeding territories were located at Alvecote (five), Bidford-Marcliff (six along R. Avon), Brandon (where only 17 nests and 29 young reared in the East Marsh colony), Compton Verney, Coombe, Draycote, Fenny Compton STW, Kingsbury WP (two), Ladywalk (no fewer than 119 were ringed during season), Lower Radbourn (seven), Napton Res (six), Newfield Pool (two), Packington Park and nearby Forest of Arden GC, Stockton Quarries, The Somers and Wormleighton Res (five). Although counts were not received from the three largest colonies (Brandon, Coombe and Ladywalk), numbers elsewhere were generally down on last year.
- Worcs** An impressive count of 82 singing males along a 5km, *Phragmites* choked, stretch of the Droitwich Canal from Hawford-Chawson on May 9th *MJL*.

Like last year, this compared favourably with a total of 47 singing along a longer stretch of the navigable Worcester Canal on May 24th *RRH*. River banks can also be a good host, with 11 singing along the Avon from Eckington-Strensham Lock on June 26th. Grimley held over 20 pairs and singing males were also noted at Bishampton Vale Pool, Bittell, Croome Court (five), Fladbury, Great Comberton, Kinsham, Lower Moor (eight), Oakley, Strensham (six), Thorngrove (eight), Upton Warren (12) and Westwood.

**Staffs** There were 12 breeding pairs at Doxey and one or two singing birds were present at Barton GP, Belvide (10 on May 12th), Catholme, Chasewater, Elford GP and Westport. At Betley Mere a constant ringing effort produced 70 adults and 51 juveniles: 85 were trapped there during the season, with a ringed to unringed ratio of 40:45 giving an indication of the survival rate of the previous year's juveniles.

**W Mid** Bred along the R. Blythe at Marsh Lane GPs, at Sandwell Valley (two or three pairs) and Sheepwash UP (at least two pairs), while one sang at Netherton Hill from June 28th-July 25th. Also noted in spring at Fens Pools, Park Lime Pits and Woodgate Valley and at Fens Pools again in September.

#### **1997 Addenda**

**Warks** At Brandon, a total of only 29 young hatched from 25 nests in the East Marsh colony (*cf.* 81 young from 29 nests there in 1993).

**W Mid** Breeding was almost certainly attempted on Netherton Hill, but outcome is unknown.

#### **Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata*

*Very rare vagrant (2/10).*

The fourth regional record this century, but astonishingly the third in four years.

**Worcs** The recent run of records was continued by a male sub-singing at Devils Spittleful from February 14th-21st *GHG, BW*. The third record in the county this century, all since 1995.

#### **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

*Fairly common summer resident.*

*Average: April 20th (62)-September 21st (62)*

First reported from Sandwell Valley on April 18th and last seen at Lutley Wedge on October 1st.

Another very disappointing year for this species.

**Warks** A very poor spring, with far fewer arriving than usual. Numbers were down in most areas, *eg* only three on the May BAD Kineton count (*cf.* 17 in 1997 and 20 in 1996) which was less than 25% of the average. Ladywalk could muster just two records all year, both on return passage. Singing birds were noted at another 26 sites during the spring and summer, with two pairs each breeding at Alvecote, Brandon, Fenny Compton (*cf.* four in 1997 and six in 1996) and Wormleighton Res, and further breeding proved at Butlers Marston, Farnborough, Lighthorne Pools and Watergall. Despite the poor numbers, breeding success must have been good as more than usual were seen on

autumn passage in the south. The peak at Wormleighton Res was 20 on August 28th, while 17 were along the Oxford Canal at nearby Fenny Compton on 30th.

**Worcs** Noted at 51 localities throughout the county. Most records related to no more than one or two singing males, but exceptions were eight around Tibberton on May 2nd, three at Castlemorton Common from May 8th-15th, three at Malvern STW on May 8th and six at Upton Warren on May 10th.

**Staffs** Bred at Belvide, Churnet Woods and Coombes Valley (two pairs), while singing males were present at 11 other sites during the breeding season. Spring passage birds were reported in a Newcastle garden May 20th and at Westport in early May. In the late summer/early autumn an excellent passage was seen in the bushes and hedgerows around Blithfield, ranging from eight on July 26th to 15 on August 9th. Other autumn migrants included four at Belvide on September 5th.

**W.Mid** Breeding/singing males, presumably including birds on passage, were reported from Bradnock's Marsh, Clayhanger, Dunstall Park, Fens Pools, Illey, Lower Illey, Marston Green, Netherton Hill, Netherton Res, Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley (two or three), Sheepwash UP (up to three in song in early May), Sutton Park (two males), Valley Park and Woodgate Valley (one in early May). A family party at Marsh Lane GPs in August was believed to indicate local breeding. Autumn migrants were reported from Fens Pools (peak of six on September 5th), Hampton-in-Arden and Lutley Wedge.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** One at Brandon on April 17th was four days earlier than the published first date.

#### **Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

*Very common summer resident.*

*Average: April 13th (64)–September 27th (64)*

An early arrival, with reports from Hawkesbury on April 5th and both Sandwell Valley and Wilden on 7th. Last seen on October 4th at Childswickham.

**Warks** Numbers remain high in the south, eg 71 on the BAD Kineton May count (cf 77 in 1997) and 47 territories in Fenny Compton parish (cf 53 in 1997 and 46 in 1996). Most other territory counts involved six or less, but with eight at Brandon (cf ten in 1997) and in the replanted section of Oversley Wood (as in 1997). The best count on return passage was at least 15 at Wormleighton Res on August 25th.

**Worcs** Remains common throughout the county, with reports from 52 localities. Several records involved substantial numbers of singing males, the largest counts being 20 at Castlemorton Common on May 22nd, 15 in the Happy Valley/North Hill area in May and June, 20 between Offerton and Tolladine on May 17th and up to 10 in the Tibberton area during May.

**Staffs** Breeding records included a pair feeding young at Colwich, four pairs at Churnet Woods and Coombes Valley, eight pairs at Doxey, two pairs which raised young at Meece Brook and seven pairs at Westport on the old sewage farm site. Singing birds were recorded at 12 other localities, with maxima of 15+ at Belvide on May 13th and seven at Eland Brook.

- W Mid** Reported in the breeding season at 29 localities, with maxima of 11 territories on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot, nine males along the Birmingham Canal (Oxley-Fowlers Park), eight singing along 2½ miles of public footpaths in the Dorridge/Hockley Heath area, five at Goscote Valley, four singing at Sheepwash UP and three or four pairs at Fens Pools. Many records came from the canal corridors of the West Midlands, even in quite urban locations, demonstrating just how valuable such habitats are.

**1997 Addendum**

- Warks** A very early bird at Brandon on March 31st was eleven days earlier than the published first date.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

*Common summer resident.*

*Average: April 21st (61)–September 12th (60)*

One at Tittesworth on March 22nd was the earliest on record by a full nine days. None thereafter until April 18th, at Upton Warren, with others over the next few days. A steady departure through September, with the last record being two at Byrkley Park on 23rd.

- Warks** The BAD Kineton May count of 34 was the highest ever (*cf.* 24 in 1997, just six in 1996 and 32 in 1995). Widely reported elsewhere, with the better counts of singing males including six at Brandon Marsh, three at Charlecote GP, five at Hay Wood, four in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods, eight at Oversley Wood, four along the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton, five at Ufton Fields and four at Wormleighton Res. Most sites seemed to have similar or slightly lower counts than in 1997. Passage maxima at Brandon of 10 on April 27th and 15 on August 9th.

- Worcs** Noted at 48 localities throughout the county. Typically no more than two singing males were at most localities, but maxima of five were at Old Hills Common on May 4th, three at Castlemorton Common on 15th, five in the Wyre Forest on 17th, three at Blackstone Rock on 30th, and 13 in the Happy Valley/North Hill area and four at Upper Sandlin during May and June.

- Staffs** Six breeding pairs were around Belvide Res, 12 pairs were at Churnet Woods, 19 pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five-yearly average 19.4) and two pairs at Doxey, while at Westport two males sang during May but probably only one pair bred. Reports of singing males also came from ten other localities.

- W Mid** Bred at Lutley Wedge and in Sandwell Valley (at least three in song), while three territories on Park Lime Pits CBC plot represented a reasonably stable population. An adult and youngster, seen along the Grand Union Canal at Bordesley in July, presumably indicated local breeding. Also present in the breeding season at Mons Hill CBC plot, Shire Oak Park and Walsall Wood. Males sang at eight other localities, but some were only on passage.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Very common summer resident. Frequent and increasing winter visitor.*

- Warks** Like the preceding species, 44 on the BAD Kineton May count was the highest ever (*cf.* 35 in 1997 and 19 in 1996). Other good territory counts

included 16 at Brandon Marsh (which probably included some passage birds), seven at both Draycote and in Farnborough Park, 10 in Hay Wood, eight in Itchington Holt, 14 in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods, 12 at Kingsbury WP, 11 in Oversley Wood and eight along the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton. There was no conclusive trend this year, with some sites registering increases and others decreases. The first spring migrant arrived at Draycote on March 26th, with others appearing more widely during 29th-31st. On autumn passage, good numbers were noted at a number of sites, with maxima of 15 at Wormleighton Res on August 25th, 20 at Lighthorne Pools on 31st and 20+ on the Welcombe Hills on September 19th. Thereafter just a trickle occurred up to October 7th. Noted in both winter periods at Kenilworth and Stratford, with maxima of two at each in November-December when birds were also at two further sites.

**Worcs** Reported at 84 localities in the breeding season and surely the commonest of the *Sylvia* warblers. Many localities reported good numbers of singing males, the maxima being 22 in the Happy Valley/North Hill area, 11 between Offerton and Tolladine and 10 at Old Hills Common. Some autumn passage was noted at Happy Valley, with a peak of six from September 19th-20th. Seen at 14 localities in the first winter period and 10 in the second. Most records were from gardens, with the largest counts being at least three at Bretforton on January 22nd and another three at Broadway from November 24th-December 26th. A bird sang a peculiar song, believed to be *leiern* variant song, a type described in BWP, at Lickey Hills Wood on May 24th. The song included much mimicry, including the call of Wryneck TCD.

**Staffs** Singing males and breeding pairs were noted at 28 localities. Among the larger numbers were 14 singing birds at Belvide on April 18th, 14 pairs at Churnet Woods, 11 territories at Chasewater, 17 pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five-yearly average 16.2) and seven pairs breeding at Westport. Autumn passage was sparse, with a maxima of three at Byrkley Park on September 26th. At Betley CES 17 juveniles were trapped, a big improvement on last year's five. In the first winter period one was seen in a garden at Weeping Cross on January 10th, while the second winter period records were a female at Belvide from November 27th-December 6th and one feeding on apples in a Newcastle garden during December.

**W Mid** Breeding season records came from Acock's Green, Barr Beacon, Bartley (up to five males), Burys Hill, Caslon Wood, Deers Leap Wood, Fens Pools (eight-ten pairs: an increase), Gosscote Valley, Halesowen Abbey, Hampton-in-Arden, Harborne (at least three localities), Harborne NR, Kings Heath, Lapal, Lutley Wedge (up to nine males in song), Marsh Lane GPs, Marston Green, Mons Hill CBC plot (10 territories: stable), Olton, Park Lime Pits CBC plot (10 territories: double the number of 1996 and 1997), Penn Hospital, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (up to seven males), Shire Oak Park, Temple Balsall, Valley Park (eight in song in April) and Walsall Arboretum. Recorded at eight localities in both winter periods, with a maximum of three (including a ringed individual) at Lutley Wedge in the second period. Almost without reservation winter records came from gardens.



**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus**Very rare vagrant (2/10).*

Only the fourth regional record, but the third in the last six years.

*Yellow-browed Warbler (Phil Jones)*

*W Mid* A superb autumnal find was one in Valley Park on October 25th-26th *KMC*, *AD*, *DJ*, but which was frustratingly elusive at times. This was, not surprisingly, a county first for this ace sprite.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix**Frequent, though declining, summer resident, now mainly confined to the north and west of the Region.**Average: April 21st (62)–August 25th (49)*

One along Dowles Brook on April 18th heralded a small, but steady arrival. Two at Brandon on September 1st were the last of the year.

*Warks* A small concentrated spring passage brought singing males to Brandon Wood on April 26th and Crackley Woods on 29th-30th, with two both there and at Brandon Marsh on May 2nd, one at Ufton Fields on 3rd and one still in Crackley Woods on 8th. Two at Brandon on September 1st was the only autumn passage record.

*Worcs* Bred at Birch Coppice, Dowles Brook (where just three pairs) and Lickey Hills Wood. Singles on passage were at Westwood on April 26th and Broadway GP on April 27th (the first for the reserve).

*Staffs* The strongholds appear to be the Churnet Woods, with seven pairs, and Coombes Valley with eight pairs (*cf.* five-yearly average 8.4). Elsewhere in

the north, two were at Hanchurch Water Tower on May 24th and singles were at Park Banks on May 3rd, Tittesworth on 7th and Dimmingsdale on June 6th. In the south, two were singing on Cannock Chase at Seven Springs on April 27th and one at Satnall Hills on May 17th.

*W. Mid* Singles were at Sandwell Valley on April 22nd, Harborne NR on May 1st and 6th and Sutton Park on 12th.

**1991 Addendum**

*Warks* A bird at Shustoke on May 6th was the first ever there.

**1997 Addenda**

*Warks* Single autumn migrants at Brandon on August 7th, 22nd and 25th.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Very common summer resident and uncommon winter visitor.*

*Warks* A further rise on the BAD Kineton May count, with 31 (*cf* 24 in 1997 and just eight in 1996) being the most since the peak years of 1990-2. Other good territory counts included six at Farnborough Park, 10 at Hay Wood, seven in Itchington Holt, five in Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods, five in Oakley Wood, 16 in Oversley Wood, five along the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton and six at Shuckburgh Hills. In general, numbers were the same or slightly higher than last year at almost all sites. Reported between January-early March at five sites, with up to two at Ladywalk. Summer migrants began to arrive on March 14th, when several appeared in different parts of the county. Autumn brought some good influxes of migrants, with maxima of 25 at Wormleighton Res on August 28th, 25 at Lighthorne Pools on 31st and 30 on the Fenny Compton Hills on September 19th. Small numbers continued to be seen until October 23rd, after which there were none until November 12th (at Brandon). A small influx from 20th then brought five to Draycote, with four remaining to overwinter, and others to a further seven sites, with two again at Ladywalk. Most attempted to overwinter.

*Worcs* Very common, with reports from 102 localities around the county and many occurrences of several singing males together, with maxima of 13 at Eymore Wood, 10 at Kempsey Common, 14 at Old Hills Common and 12 at Tibberton. Also prominent on passage, with peak counts of 20 at Upton Warren on September 6th and 25 at Happy Valley on September 19th. Noted in both winter periods, with reports from nine sites and maxima of three at Lower Moor on February 14th and five at Upton Warren on December 6th.

*Staffs* During the early spring and breeding season, widely recorded from 40 localities. Numbers at Coombes Valley have steadily increased to 11 breeding pairs (*cf.* five-yearly average 8) and 10 pairs bred at Churnet Woods. The larger counts were 11 at Belvide on March 29th, eight singing along the canal between High Onn and Gnosall on March 31st, seven around Trentham Park lake April 11th and eight at Belvide on the 29th. During the autumn passage again widely reported, with the larger numbers being 12 at Westport on September 7th and 14 at Chasewater on 27th. Wintering birds were seen at nine sites, including Westport, where six from 1997 were present in early January, dropping to three from 9th-21st and one on 24th. Three were seen

there in December, including one of the *P. c. tristis* race which was first heard on 7th, but not positively identified until 24th WJL: it remained until 26th at least *sev obs*.

**W Mid** Recorded in the breeding season at Aldridge, Bartley, Caslon Wood, Cuckoo's Nook (two), Deers Leap Wood, Dorridge area, Fens Pools (three or four pairs), Halesowen Abbey, Harborne NR (three pairs), Lapal, Lutley Wedge, Marsh Lane GPs, Marston Green, Mons Hill CBC plot (six territories: a steady increase), Park Lime Pits CBC plot (seven territories: also steadily increasing), Penn Hospital, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP (two pairs), Shire Oak Park, Sutton Park, Valley Park (11 in song in April, but only four in June), Walsall Arboretum, Walsall Wood, Ward End (along the R. Cole), Wergs (two), Whitmore Reans and Woodgate Valley (eight plus in song on March 28th). First winter period records came from Oldbury and Sheepwash UP (up to three) and second winter ones from Fens Pools on November 26th and Sheepwash UP again (up to four in December).

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

*Abundant summer resident, though with some recent decline.*

*Average: March 26th (64)–October 5th (64)*

One at Brandon on March 23rd, another at Sandwell Valley on 29th and daily records thereafter. Last seen at Fenny Compton on October 4th.

**Warks** Little breeding data apart from 26 territories at Kingsbury/Edge Hill Woods (*cf.* 15 in 1997), 10 around Wormleighton Res (*cf.* nine in 1997 and eight in 1996), eight along 1km of the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton and at least six at Alvecote. The BAD Kineton May count produced 77 birds, a slight drop from 85 in 1997. Only three pairs were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of pasturefields at Chapel Green, probably a typical density for farmland these days. The main spring arrival came on April 25th–26th, with falls of 40 at Draycote, 30 at Kingsbury WP and 30 at Wormleighton Res. On return passage there were peaks of at least 30, at Wormleighton Res on August 10th and 25th and at Ladywalk on 29th, and one record of six feeding on insects attracted to aquatic plants dredged from a garden pool at Hatton.

**Worcs** Noted at 47 localities around the county. Most records related to fewer than 10 singing males, but 10 at Castlemorton Common and 59 in the Happy Valley/North Hill area indicated that Malvern is a particular hot spot for the species. There were several reports of birds on passage, with the largest count being 20 at Windmill Hill on August 15th.

**Staffs** Widely reported throughout the county, with the main breeding season records being 20 birds at Belvide on April 25th, 18 pairs at Churnet Woods, 118 pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* 137 in 1997 and a four-yearly average of 129), 12 pairs breeding at Doxey, nine males singing around Trentham Park Lake on April 11th and 16 males singing at Westport, with probably a similar number breeding there, but only four young seen. Two nests which were found at Betley Mere both failed and at the same site 10 adults and six juveniles were trapped. In the autumn at least 12 were at Doxey on August 25th and 20 passed through Blithfield on the 2nd.

**W Mid** The CBC plots at Mons Hill CBC (one territory: *cf.* three in 1997 and 1996) and Park Lime Pits (five territories: *cf.* nine in 1997 and eight in 1996) both showed declines. Elsewhere, singing/breeding birds were reported from a further 23 localities, with the larger concentrations at Fens Pools (15 pairs), Goscote Valley (nine territories), Harborne NR (six pairs), Sheepwash UP (13 singing on April 25th) and Bradnock's Marsh (12 singing on April 19th). In addition, obvious spring passage birds were reported from Colmore Row in the centre of Birmingham, Woodfield Road in Moseley and urban locations within Sheldon and Small Heath.

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** A very early bird at Brandon on March 15th was 14 days earlier than the published first date.

#### **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

*Common resident and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Breeds widely across the county, though not many territory counts were submitted. At least five pairs bred in yews in an area of otherwise mainly deciduous woodland at Farnborough Park. Outside the breeding season flock counts included maxima of 70 in several parties at Oversley Wood on March 22nd, 15 at Brandon on October 4th, 40 at Ufton Fields on November 3rd, 55 in Oakley Wood on December 3rd and 20 in Close Wood on 12th. Many sites from the Tame Valley south to the southern border hills had marked influxes of migrants in October and early November.

**Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Evesham, Lower Moor and Tibberton. Several small parties noted, but the only ones to reach double figures were 10 at Crews Hill Wood on March 22nd, 20 at Bredon Hill on October 4th, 10 at Childswickham on October 4th, 20 at Happy Valley on October 10th, 10 at Castlemorton Common on November 15th, 20 at Chase End Woods on several dates from November 22nd-December 12th and 10 at Tiddesley Wood on December 12th.

**Staffs** Ones and twos were reported from 21 widely scattered localities, the larger counts being 26 at Coombes Valley on October 20th, 12 at Belvide on October 25th and 20 at Blithfield on November 13th. Breeding numbers were slightly down at Coombes Valley, with 14 pairs (*cf.* a peak of 19 in 1996, but a five-yearly average of only 12), while six pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR. Tittesworth reported an increase in breeding season numbers.

**W. Mid** Appears to be stable as far as breeding localities are concerned, with at least one pair breeding on Harborne NR and others present, and probably successful, in Handsworth Wood and Sandwell Valley. Also noted in song at Walsall Arboretum in mid-May. Three territories were on Mons Hill CBC plot and song was frequently heard in the Dorridge area. Further noted in the breeding season at Burys Hill, Kings Heath, Penn Hospital, Sutton Park and Wergs. Outside the breeding season reported from a further 14 sites, with a maximum of 10 at Sheepwash UP on January 1st. Interestingly, one was found dead inside a shop within the Merry Hill Shopping Centre on October 30th.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Bred 1975 and possibly in several other years up to 1989.

The long-term trend continues to fluctuate.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	17	34	24	37	30

**Worcs** In spring, single males were at Longley Green from March 4th-7th *JCS et al*, and Wythall from March 20th-23rd *REH GHP et al*. Then, in autumn, up to two were found at Chase End Wood from November 19th-December 31st at least *SMW et al*, while another was near Kington from November 29th-December 13th *REH et al*.

**W Mid** One was in a Knowle garden on October 12th *JR*.

**1996 Addendum**

**Staffs** An adult male was at Chasewater on November 23rd *NS*.

**1997 Addendum**

**W Mid** The pair in Sutton Park was last seen on the morning of April 12th *DHR*.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common, though declining, summer resident.

Average: May 2nd (62)–September 27th (62)

First noted at Harborne NR on May 3rd and last seen on the Welcombe Hills on October 4th.

**Warks** Noted at 26 sites in the breeding season, with proved breeding pairs at Arley, Chesterton, Coombe, Farnborough Park (three) and village, Fenny Compton (five, cf. eight in 1997 and four in 1996) Lighthorne, Moreton Morrell, Oxhill, Packington Park (no full census, but at least seven pairs were successful, some of which were double-brooded), Radway, The Somers, Wolverton (two) and Wormleighton. Noted at a further 12 sites on passage. A party of 12 in Farnborough Park on May 20th was a notable spring passage record, while in autumn Napton Hill had peaks of 12 on August 27th and 10 on September 6th.

**Worcs** Breeding confirmed at Broadway, Childswickham, Diglis, Stoke Bliss (three pairs), Tibberton and Upton Warren. Breeding season reports also came from the following 34 localities: Abberton, Barbourne, Bromsgrove, Church Lench, Corn Brook, Cropthorne, Darbys Green, Elmley Castle, Evesham, Fladbury, Hampton, Hanley Castle, Hillside, Kempsey, Knightwick, Leigh, Lindridge, Long Coppice, New Wood, Old Storridge, Pipers Hill, Redstone Rock, Shrawley Wood, Sling Pool, South Littleton, St Annes Well, The Knapp, Tiddesley Wood, Upper Holling, Warndon, Web Heath, Westwood, Wilden and Worcester. Several records from additional localities on passage.

**Staffs** Successful breeding was confirmed at Belvide (one young in July), Blithfield (two juveniles in August), Byrkley Park (two adults and a juvenile in August) and Tillington Cemetery (two adults and three juveniles in late July), while

three pairs also bred at Churnet Woods and five pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five-yearly average 5.4). Also noted in the spring and summer at 11 other localities, with a maximum of seven at Belvide August 3rd.

**W Mid** Retains its foothold as a breeding species, but all records are required. Bred at Barston and Berkswell and also noted in the breeding season on Mons Hill. Passage birds were noted during May at Harborne NR, Footshole (two), Fens Pools (max. two), Bradnock's Marsh, Tettenhall Green and Pensnett Coppice; and between August 22nd-September 19th at eight sites, with peaks of three in Sandwell Valley on 3rd.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

*Frequent and increasing summer resident and passage migrant, though breeding regularly only in Worcs and Staffs.*

*Average: April 19th (52)–September 9th (33)*

An early bird was at Happy Valley on April 3rd, but no more followed until 18th when the main passage began. Late birds were at Brandon on September 14th and Byrkley Hall on 23rd.

**Warks** A disappointing year after three good ones, with a male at Ladywalk on April 22nd and another brought in dead by a cat at Bishop's Tachbrook on May 15th the only spring records. One at Brandon on September 14th was the sole return passage record.

**Worcs** Breeding season reports from Dowles Brook, Midsummer Hill and The Knapp, where four males were present on May 19th. In general, however, very little information was received about the numbers breeding at traditional sites. Noted on spring passage at Bittell, Happy Valley (where one on April 3rd was unusually early PGG), a garden at Ravenshill Green, Upton Warren and Walton Hill.

**Staffs** After five years of steady growth, numbers fell back slightly this year at Coombes Valley to 47 pairs (*cf.* a peak of 51 in 1997 and five-yearly average 42.2). Elsewhere, breeding was confirmed or probable at Churnet Woods (12 pairs), Crumpwood (a female feeding young on July 2nd) and on Cannock Chase at Seven Springs, where a pair was feeding young in box 18 on May 28th. Breeding season records also came from Bearda Hill, Brocton Coppice, Dimmingsdale, Cannock Chase (Forest Headquarters), Swynnerton Old Park and Wootton Lodge. Spring passage migrants were noted at Westport on April 23rd, Tittesworth on 26th and R. Dove on May 30th, but one at Byrkley Hall on September 23rd was the sole autumn record.

**W Mid** A singing male was in Lutley Wedge on April 22nd, whilst at Harborne NR a female was noted on May 7th and a pair on 17th – the first records for the latter reserve. The only autumn record was of a bird near The Somers on August 13th.

**1997 Addenda**

**Warks** One at Brandon on September 24th brings the county total for that year to a record twelve birds.

**Staffs** A male was in Himley Wood on May 11th.

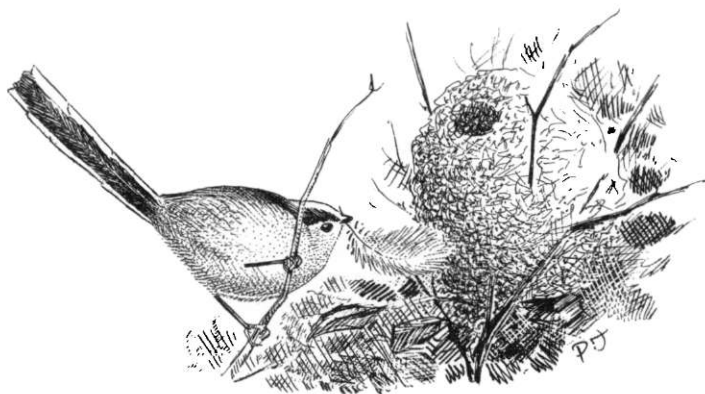
**Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus**Rare or scarce irruptive migrant, mainly in autumn or winter.*

Another blank year in a catastrophic decline over the past five years.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	70	54	61	44	1

**1997 Addendum**

**Staffs** One at Chasewater from November 15th-20th *per GE* was the first to reach the Region since 1993.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus**Common resident.**Long-tailed Tit (Phil Jones)*

**Warks** A total of 36 was recorded on the BAD Kineton May count, which was the joint highest (with 1989) since it started in 1987: the average is 14. Flock counts included maxima of 40 at Ladywalk in late summer, 30 at Brandon on September 27th and 25 at both Farnborough Park on October 14th and Snitterfield on 23rd.

**Worcs** At least eight pairs bred around Tibberton, where considered to have had a better than usual year *RRH*. More parties were reported than usual, the largest being 60 at Trench Wood on February 1st, 30 at Strensham on September 20th, 20 at Twiland Wood on November 15th and 20 at both Abberley Hill and Midsummer Hill on 22nd.

**Staffs** Breeding pairs at Coombes Valley were stable at 14, seven pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR and one pair on Doxey CBC plot (as last year), while a pair at Westport raised four young. The largest flock reported was 107 at Coombes Valley on November 2nd, with smaller ones of 30 at Tittesworth on January 1st, 50 at Westport Lake on May 20th, 45 at Belvide on May 27th, 20 at Blithfield on October 19th and December 14th and 20 at Brookleys on November 12th.

- W Mid** Still widespread, with breeding season records from 20 localities, including six pairs at Fens Pools and two territories at Mons Hill (*cf.* two in 1997 and four in 1996). Outside the breeding season, the larger flocks comprised 20 at Sheepwash UP in June, November and December; four parties totalling 45 birds in Valley Park on November 21st; in excess of 30 in Sandwell Valley on November 22nd; and a very healthy 40 at Harborne NR in December.

**Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris*

*Fairly common resident.*

- Warks** Reported from 29 localities, with breeding pairs (proved or suspected) at Avon Dassett, BAD Kineton, Chesterton Wood, Coombe, Crackley Wood, Edgehill Wood, Farnborough Park (three), Itchington Holt (three), Lighthorne Rough, Long Itchington, Oakley Wood (three), Oversley Wood (nine), Roundhill Wood, Shuckburgh Park, Walton Hall, Wolverton and Wormleighton Res.
- Worcs** Noted throughout the year at Abberley Hill, Arley Wood, Bredon Hill, Broadway GP, Broadway Hill, Bushley Green, Castlemorton Common, Caunsall, Chase End Wood, Cleeve Prior, Cliffe Wood, Dowles Brook, Eymore Wood, Gadbury Bank, Goosehill Wood, Grafton Wood, Grimley, Harpley, Hewell Grange, Kinsham, Leigh Brook, Longdon Marsh, Lower Westmancote, Monkwood, Oakenshaw Wood, Old Hills Common, Pilton, Roundhill Wood, Sedgeberrow, Southcrest, South Wood, Stockingpool Plantation, Suckley Hills, The Knapp, Tibberton, Tiddesley Wood, Trench Wood, Twiland Wood, Westwood and Yeald Wood. Very few reports gave any indication of numbers and the largest party seen was just five, at Twiland Wood on November 15th.
- Staffs** Again, few records were received. Two pairs bred at Coombes Valley and two in the Churnet Woods NR. Pairs were also at Crumpwood and Park Banks and singles at Brocton Field, Byrkley Park, Chillington, Hoar Cross, Jackson's Coppice, Newchurch and Tittesworth.
- W Mid** The only reports were of singles at Marsh Lane GPs on April 5th; in a Solihull garden on October 1st, 6th and December 8th; and at Boulton's Wood from December 12th to the end of the year.

**1997 Addendum**

- W Mid** One at Mushroom Green Marsh on February 28th.

**Willow Tit** *Parus montanus*

*Fairly common resident.*

- Warks** More widespread than Marsh Tit, with records from 40 sites. Breeding pairs (proved or suspected) were reported from Alvecote (two), BAD Kineton, Brandon (two), Butlers Marston, Calcutt, Chesterton Pools, Crackley Wood, Draycote, Farnborough, Fenny Compton (three), Kineton village (two), Kingsbury, Knightcote, Ladywalk, Lighthorne Pools, Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood, Packington (two), The Somers, Ufton Fields (two), Warmington, Whateley and the Wormleighton area (three).
- Worcs** Reported during the year at Abberley Hill, Arley Wood, Astley, Bittell, Coldridge Wood, Eymore Wood, Goosehill Wood, Grafton Wood, Grimley, Ham Wood, Ipsley Mill Pool, Kemerton, Kingswood Common, Kinsham, Kyre Pool, Old Storridge, Pepper Wood, River Rea, Shortwood Roughs, Stoke



Bliss, The Knapp, Trapnell Brook, Trench Wood, Upton Warren and Walsgrove Hill.

- Staffs** Two pairs bred at Westport Lake, where six birds were seen throughout the year. Otherwise reported from Belvide, Brookleys, Croxall (two), Byrkley Park, Dovedale, Dydon Wood, Elford/Fisherwick (two), Norbury Bridge, Ousley Cross, Sprink, Stretton, Tittesworth (max. of six) and Wheaton Aston.
- W Mid** Breeding season records came from Clayhanger, Meers Coppice, Mons Hill CBC plot (two territories: no change in status), Park Lime Pits, Sandwell Valley (successfully) and Woodgate Valley (two pairs both produced young). One was at Sheepwash UP on June 7th, where breeding has occurred previously but was not suspected this year. Two to four birds were present outside the breeding season at Fens Pools, where it has bred previously. A pair was at Sowe Common in January and one was in Valley Park on September 17th and 27th.

#### **Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

*Common resident and eruptive winter visitor.*

- Warks** Breeds abundantly in many mixed and coniferous woods, eg over 100 estimated in several parties in Oversley Wood on March 22nd. That such woods could be nearing saturation point is indicated by the rising numbers spilling into purely deciduous woods. For example, at least six pairs bred in the oak-dominated Itchington Holt (cf. three in 1997) and at least five pairs in a small beech/ash wood in Farnborough Park. Winter flocks included 30 in Oakley Wood on February 27th and 45 there on December 3rd.
- Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Ipsley Alders. Noted at Kinsham and Lower Moor where considered generally scarce in both cases. The largest party was 12 at Eymore Wood on April 13th.
- Staffs** Few records were received for this common species. Breeding pairs at Coombes Valley were stable at 28 (cf. five-yearly average 24.4) and 16 pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR. The maximum count was 30 in an area of Cannock Chase bounded by Hazelslade, Moors Gorse and Castle Ring on March 28th. Also reported from 10 sites in the Churnet Valley (SK04/14) and at a number of garden feeding stations.
- W Mid** Again little meaningful data was received, but it would appear to be reasonably common and widespread though perhaps overlooked. Two territories on Mons Hill CBC plot (cf. one in 1997 and 1996) was the only comparative information. Otherwise noted at 10 sites.

#### **Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

*Abundant resident.*

- Warks** Very little information as usual, but poor breeding success at Brandon with only 49 fledging from the nest-boxes (cf. 85 in 1997). The May count of 48 at BAD Kineton was the joint highest (with 1989) since they began in 1987. Only seven breeding pairs were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of pasture fields near Chapel Green, but it was reported to be common at Ladywalk where 120 were ringed during the year. The larger recorded flocks were 35 at Wormleighton Res on August 28th and 45 in Oakley Wood on December 3rd.

**Worcs** A further major decline was apparent at Southcrest, with just 12 pairs this year (*cf.* 31 in 1996). However this may be atypical, as 10 pairs at Shortwood Roughs and 12 pairs at Web Heath both suggested population stability since 1995. Elsewhere, 20 pairs bred around Tibberton, while 30 and 15 juveniles fledged from four garden nest-boxes at both Dodford and Timberhonger respectively. The larger parties seen were 30 at Goosehill Wood on January 25th, 25 at Childswickham on October 4th and 20 at Castlemorton Common on November 22nd.

**Staffs** Conflicting evidence of breeding success was reported from three regular survey sites. An increase was noted at Doxey CBC plot, where eight pairs (*cf.* four in 1997). However, at Betley CES only 10 adults and 11 juveniles were caught (*cf.* 16 and 19 in 1997) and breeding pairs were down to 108 at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five-yearly average 134.8). 74 pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR.

**W Mid** There were 19 territories on Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* 19 in 1997 and 15 in 1996) and 15 territories on Park Lime Pits CBC plot (no change in status).

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** A high total of 85 young fledged from just ten nestboxes at Brandon, making it the best breeding season there since 1988.

#### **Great Tit *Parus major*** *Abundant resident.*

**Warks** An excellent breeding season at Brandon, with 85 young fledging from nest-boxes (*cf.* 52 in 1997), but the May count of 22 at BAD Kineton was just below average. Numbers at Ladywalk were similar to Blue Tit, with 116 ringed during the year. The largest parties were 20 at Wormleighton Res on August 28th and 25 feeding on yew berries at Napton Hill churchyard on October 16th.

**Worcs** Four pairs at Shortwood Roughs and five pairs at Southcrest both represented declines for the second successive year, but the situation was more ambiguous at Web Heath, where nine pairs was one fewer than last year but still higher than previous years. Enjoyed good breeding success at Dodford (29 fledged from four nest-boxes) and at Timberhonger (40 fledged from six nest-boxes). The largest parties reported were 20, at Goosehill Wood on January 25th and at both Castlemorton Common and Midsummer Hill on November 22nd.

**Staffs** As with Blue Tit, increased at Doxey CBC plot, with five pairs recorded (*cf.* two in 1997). Fared slightly better too at Coombes Valley, with 73 breeding pairs (*cf.* only 65 in 1996, but a five-yearly average of 73.8). Forty-one pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR.

**W Mid** There were 12 territories on the Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* 18 in 1997 and 1996) and 16 territories on the Park Lime Pits CBC plot (*cf.* 12 in 1997).

#### **1997 Addendum**

**Warks** At Brandon, 52 young fledged from eight nest-boxes, the best result since 1990.

**European Nuthatch (Nuthatch) *Sitta europaea****Fairly common and increasing resident.*

- Warks** Reported from 38 sites, with breeding pairs/territory counts recorded at Avon Dassett, Bishops Tachbrook, Chesterton Wood, Coombe (common), Edgehill Wood (three), Farnborough Park (two), Fenny Compton, Kingsbury Wood (three), Oakley Wood, Oversley Wood, Packington (very common), Roundhill Wood, Snitterfield Bushes (four), Walton Hall (four) and Wolverton.
- Worcs** Seen during the year at the following 39 sites: Berrow Hill (Martley), Berrow Hill (Pendock), Bittell, Broadway Hill, Broughton Green, Calcot Hill, Chase End Wood, Crews Hill Wood, Devils Spittleful, Doverdale, Dowles Brook, Elmley Castle, Eymore Wood, Hadzor, Happy Valley, Harpley, Hewell Grange, Midsummer Hill, Monk Wood, Nimmings Wood, Oakenshaw Wood, Pepper Wood, Pipers Hill, Shernal Green, Shortwood Roughts, Sling Pool, Southcrest, Spetchley, Suckley Hills, Tardebigge, The Gullet, The Knapp, Trench Wood, Twiland Wood, Upper Kites Wood, West Hagley, Westwood, Wood Norton and Yeald Wood. One at Kinsham on July 26th was considered unusual at the locality.
- Staffs** Eight pairs bred at Coombes Valley (*cf.* six in 1997) and seven pairs in the Churnet Woods NR. Other reports came from Brookleys, Belvide, Chillington, Crumpwood (pair), Dimmingsdale, Dydon Wood (six), Elford/Fisherwick, Lichfield (two), Little Stoke (two), Lower Avenue, Ousley, Park Banks (pair), Wootton Crags (pair) and Wootton Lodge. Surely under-recorded compared with Warks and Worcs.
- W Mid** Recorded during the year at 25 localities, with breeding season records from Berkswell, Cooper's Wood (near Hley), Cuckoo's Nook, Dorridge, Edgbaston Res, Harborne parish churchyard, Kings Heath, Leasowes Park, Mons Hill, Penn Hospital, Pye Hayes Park, Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park, Tettenhall, Valley Park and Warley Woods. A juvenile in Woodgate Valley apparently constituted the first record in 17 years!

**Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris****Common resident.*

- Warks** Breeding pairs were reported from Brandon, Charlecote, Chesterton Pools, Coombe (common), Farnborough Park (four), Fenny Compton (three), Itchington Holt (four), Ladywalk, Lighthorne village and Pools, Oakley Wood (four), Oversley Wood (at least six), Packington Park (very common), Shuckburgh Park (three), Ufton Fields (three), Walton Hall (two), Wolverton and the Wormleighton area (four).
- Worcs** Noted throughout the year from 51 localities around the county, with no gaps in distribution apparent.
- Staffs** Two pairs bred on Doxey CBC plot (as in 1997), numbers were stable at Coombes Valley with 19 pairs and 15 pairs bred in the Churnet Woods NR. A pair raised two broods at Seven Springs, apparently using an adjacent stump for the second brood. Recorded at a further 18 localities with a maximum of four counted at Dydon Wood on April 5th. Unusually, one visited a garden bird table at Stafford on January 27th.
- W Mid** Rather little information was received, but there were two territories on the

Mons Hill CBC plot and breeding occurred along the Harborne Walkway and at Park Lime Pits (two pairs: the first confirmed breeding). Probably also bred at Sandwell Valley, Sutton Park and Valley Park and noted in the breeding season at Penn Hospital. Otherwise reported from four further sites.

**Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

*Rare passage migrant (6/10).*

Numbers are small, but the long-term trend suggests a steady decline. No records this year.

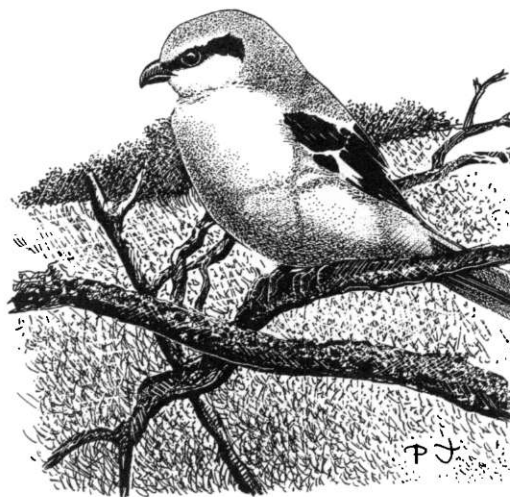
	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	5	5	4	4	2

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

One or two a year now seems to be the norm after the peak of the 1970s.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	77	20	11	10	11



*Great Grey Shrike (Phil Jones)*

The first major autumn influx into Britain for several years resulted in four birds reaching the Region. Only Warwickshire missed out.

*Worcs*

One was on wires at Upton Warren for a short time on April 14th *VPG, KM*. The autumn's influx produced one much twitched individual on Bredon Hill from October 18th-November 13th *SJJ et al.* Originally found at the west end of the hill, it gradually shifted its feeding territory eastwards, being last seen at Kersoe three kilometres from the original site.

**Staffs** One remained on Cannock Chase, in the same area of Sherbrook Valley as the 1997 bird, from October 8th-December 2nd at least *ESC et al.* Another was at Blithfield on October 11th *WJL*.

**W Mid** The autumn influx brought one to Daniels Lane (Aldridge) on October 20th *GKN*.

**Eurasian Jay (Jay)** *Garrulus glandarius*

*Common resident.*

Numbers were generally very small this year, but at Coombes Valley – the only site for which long-term comparable data is available – the breeding population was above average.

**Warks** Seems to be at a low density in many suitable woods and may have declined in recent years. The largest parties were eight at Brandon on April 24th and 11 there on October 7th, and eight at both Compton Verney on 10th and Ilmington Downs on 15th.

**Worcs** Only a few very small groups of this widespread species were reported, the largest being 11 at Bredon Hill on October 10th.

**Staffs** Three pairs bred in Churnet Woods NR and 10 pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* seven in 1997 and a four-yearly mean of 6.3). Elsewhere, no unusual numbers were reported, the maxima being only five at Trentham Park on April 11th, four at Lawneswood on the 16th, seven at Tittesworth on October 4th and five at Belvide on November 13th.

**W Mid** Bred at Harborne NR (four pairs) and Marston Green and presumed to have done so in Sandwell Valley and Sutton Park. There were two territories on the CBC plot on Mons Hill (stable) and birds were also present during the breeding season at Acock's Green, Clayhanger, Park Lime Pits and Valley Park. Winter reports came from a further seven sites.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

*Very common resident.*

**Warks** The larger counts were 28 at Brandon on February 8th and a peak of 52 roosting at Ladywalk in March. Several further flocks of 15-20 birds were reported.

**Worcs** Up to 30 in a Dodford garden during the first winter period and an impressive flock of 106 at Oldington on December 28th were the most significant reports received.

**Staffs** For such a common species few records were received. Five pairs bred at Coombes Valley (as last year) and the larger gatherings were 30 at Chasewater on March 7th, 40+ in the Knotbury area on the 20th and a regular flock of 20 at Huddlesford. Monthly counts at Lawneswood ranged from just five in December to 16 in March. A bird with the white of its coverts and primaries tinged pink frequented the Lyme Valley Park from June-September.

**W Mid** Very little meaningful breeding data was received apart from three pairs breeding on Harborne NR and seven territories on the Mons Hill CBC plot (no change in status). Winter counts, primarily of roosts or pre-roosts, consisted of 80 at Sheepwash UP on February 6th, 20 in Marston Green on 15th, 43 mobbing a fox in Deers Leap Wood on 24th and 28 in Valley Park on December 13th.

**Eurasian Jackdaw (Jackdaw)** *Corvus monedula*  
*Very common resident.*



*Eurasian Jackdaw (Jim Winsper)*

- Warks** The larger counts were of roosts, with 500 at Fenny Compton from October 2nd-4th and 5-600 at Whitacre Heath NR in December. Many flocks up to 250 were reported in southern and central districts, with the most being 300 at Walton Hall on June 28th.
- Worcs** Very well reported, with significant flocks recorded at 18 localities. The larger counts were 300 at Devils Spittleful on January 7th, 225 at Bockleton on 9th, 250 at Tibberton from 10th-18th, 500 at Great Comberton on July 25th, 250 at Marl Brook on August 20th, 300 at Smite on November 12th, 250 at Midsummer Hill on 22nd, 300 at Castlemorton Common on December 6th and 400 at Oakley on 6th. A partial albino was at Bredon Hill on November 7th.
- Staffs** The maximum monthly count at Lawneswood was 60 on January 21st. The only other records comprised 130 at Baldwins Gate and 180 at Stableford on February 21st, over 500 roosting at Whiteswood on July 18th, 100 at Beeston Tor on August 24th, 300 at Denstone on October 26th and 150 roosting at Teddesley Park on December 4th.
- W Mid** Bred in the Edgbaston Pool and Res areas, the Four Oaks area, Handsworth Wood, Harborne, Rushall Hall (thought to be increasing steadily) and Saltwells Wood. Also present at Mons Hill and Wergs in the breeding season. The larger flocks outside the breeding period were 500+ at the Wightwick

roost in January, up to 300 flying to roost in Sandwell Valley on March 21st, 100 at Park Lime Pits on September 18th and 100+ at Barston STW on November 14th. Up to 25 were reported from four other sites, including Harborne NR area where it is said to have increased massively over the last decade.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

*Abundant resident.*

- Warks** Rookery counts included 215 nests at Drayton (*cf.* 160 in 1997), 75 at Wolverton and 32 at Chapel Green, while over 100 nests were still reported to be at Sych Wood. Flocks of 2-400 were reported from Fenny Compton, Knightcote, Lower Radbourn, Moreton Paddox, Napton Fields, Stockton, Stoneton and Wormleighton, with 550 at Farnborough on August 14th the largest.
- Worcs** The larger rookeries were at Bishampton Vale with 69 nests, Naunton Beauchamp with 50, Rhydd Covert with 30 and Upper Kites Wood with 26. Many flocks were reported, with maxima of 950 at Tibberton on January 10th, 200 at Great Comberton on July 25th and 400 at Oakley on December 6th. A leucistic bird was at Pendock on November 8th.
- Staffs** Nest counts at rookeries were Blore Crossroads (32), Calwich Park (40), Canwell (23), Coombes Valley (52 *cf.* 54 in 1997 and 52 in 1996), Harlow Hill (12), Park Gates (15 *cf.* 16 in 1997) and Whiteswood (44). Winter feeding flocks included 700 at Hockley on February 1st, 140 at Tittesworth on the 22nd and both 95 at Baldwins Gate and 80 at Stableford on the 21st.
- W Mid** Rookery counts included seven nests at Bosty Lane (Aldridge), at least nine at Cuckoo's Nook, four in Dunstall Park (consolidating after the first breeding record in 1997), 13 at Pedmore, 50+ in Sandwell Valley and 12 at Wightwick. The largest gathering was 450+ near Barston STW on November 14th.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

*Very common resident.*

- Warks** Seven pairs bred in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasture with well-timbered hedgerows near Chapel Green. Increased again at BAD Kineton, with 125 being the most since the May count began in 1987. Among the larger flocks recorded were 75 feeding on rain-flattened wheat at Knightcote on July 18th, 135 collecting on sheep pasture on the Fenny Compton Hills on October 4th and 75 around a large dunghill at Poolfields on December 20th.
- Worcs** The larger flocks seen were 26 on North Hill and Worcestershire Beacon from March 22nd-April 5th, 51 at Shortwood Roughs on April 5th, 80 at Lenchwick on August 2nd, 58 at Wickhamford on August 16th, 28 at Bushley on October 20th and 40 at Frankley Hill on November 15th.
- Staffs** Four pairs bred in Churnet Woods and six at Coombes Valley (*cf.* five in each of the last three years). Numbers at Lawneswood varied from just two in February to 16 on September 2nd. A flock of at least 50 was at Four Ashes on February 1st and 20 were in the centre of Lichfield, where they are now breeding.

- W Mid** Three pairs bred on the Mons Hill CBC plot and three pairs on the CBC plot at Park Lime Pits, reflecting little change in breeding status at either locality. The larger gatherings comprised 80 on Perry Hall playing fields on January 17th, 45 at Marsh Lane GPs on March 20th, 126 in Valley Park on November 7th and 47 at Park Lime Pits on 11th.

**Common Raven (Raven) *Corvus corax***

*An uncommon visitor and scarce, though increasing, resident in Worcs and Staffs. Very rare elsewhere.*

- Warks** A notable increase in sightings, so perhaps it will soon recolonise. One at Radway on February 2nd *PD*, with subsequent unconfirmed reports of one or two birds between here and Whatcote until late March. A displaying pair were in Oversley Wood from March 22nd-31st *JJB et al.* Later in the year there were two flying over Avon Dassett on August 30th *MJL*, one on the nearby Fenny Compton Hills on October 4th *JJB* and two on Ilmington Downs on 6th *ARD*. In the north-west, at least one was resident in Packington Park from September 16th into 1999 *NPB*, frequently commuting to Little Packington Tip. Probably the same bird was seen over Ladywalk on October 5th *CHP*, with an unconfirmed report from there in December.
- Worcs** Bred at Abberley, Berrow Green, Malvern and probably near Timberhonger and at Wyre Forest. Remains well established in small numbers in the west of the county, with most of the 57 localities from which birds were reported being west of the Severn. However, the extent of the spread eastwards could be gauged from records of one at Tibberton on March 15th, two at Astwood Bank on August 31st, four at Upton Warren on October 1st and one at Ipsley Alders on October 13th. The largest parties were eight at Berrow Hill (Martley) on February 15th and 12 at Worcestershire Beacon on September 14th.
- Staffs** Another good year, though many records remain unsubstantiated through lack of descriptions. In the north, singles were in the Churnet Valley on May 19th *RP, MP*; at Knotbury on 29th *KMC* and June 4th *SAR*; and at Swallow Moss on November 30th *ESC*. Elsewhere, two were at Chillington on January 17th *KMC* and 24th *RF*, with one on April 4th *KMC*; one was over Beech on February 22nd; two were at the Sheepwalks on March 15th and October 19th *DAE*; a pair was seen at Cannock Chase on March 22nd *PDH*; one flew over Little Stoke on July 24th; and several records were received from Belvide, but singles on April 4th, September 5th and October 30th *KMC* were the only validated ones.
- W Mid** Three flew over Wall End on September 2nd *CJT* and one flew over Chadwick End on November 1st *RT*. Still a very rare bird in the county.
- 1996 Addenda**
- Staffs** Seen displaying and carrying food at the Sheepwalks on March 24th *KMC*. Two flew over Himley Park on October 10th *KMC*.
- Corvus spp.*
- Staffs** A mixed flock of over 1000 Eurasian Jackdaws, Rooks and Carrion Crows was feeding at Poplars Tip (Cannock) on February 1st.



**Common Starling** (Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris**Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

- Warks** The decline at BAD Kineton continued, with just 16 on the May count (*cf.* maxima of 218 in 1987 and 202 in 1989). This appears to reflect a county-wide trend in both breeding and wintering populations. About 15 breeding pairs were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pastureland at Chapel Green. Few post-breeding or wintering flocks of any size were reported, the best being 500 on sheep pasture at Fenny Compton on March 9th, 600 on a manured field at Charlecote on 13th, 450 at Snitterfield on October 23rd and 450 again at Fenny Compton on November 23rd.
- Worcs** A few more large flocks than in recent years, with maxima of 2000 at Doverdale on January 11th, 2000 at Longdon Marsh on 17th, 1000 at Bredon Hill on March 13th, 400 at Wyre Piddle on April 3rd, and 1000 at Throckmorton Tip on July 5th building to a peak of 2000 there on December 20th.
- Staffs** The larger flocks reported were 1000 at Chasewater on January 1st, 2000 at Coombes Valley from the 4th-8th, 2800 at Apedale on February 21st, 1500 at Betley Mere on June 6th and 20,000 roosting in reed-beds at Aqualate on December 2nd. A pure white bird was seen in a garden at Kidsgrove on August 22nd. Local birders generally felt that more were around this year.
- W. Mid** Very little meaningful breeding data was supplied apart from one territory on Mons Hill CBC plot (*cf.* one in 1997 and two in 1996). The larger post-breeding flocks were 500+ in Goscote Valley (90% juveniles) on June 24th, 400 in Dunstall Park on September 18th, at least 250 in Lutley Wedge on 28th, 300 on fields in Aldridge on October 10th and a similar number on agricultural land at Berkswell on 17th. Over 400 were at the Dell playing fields (Pensnett) on an unspecified date.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus**Abundant, though declining, resident.*

- Warks** Appears to be commonest now around farms and villages in the south, where mixed farming is still practiced. The larger flocks were 70 in set-aside at Fenny Compton on January 4th, with up to 100 there in standing wheat during early August, and 70 near Wormleighton Res on November 6th.
- Worcs** A small increase in the breeding population was detected around Tibberton. Several flocks were reported, the larger being 60 at Offerton on July 18th, 100 at Lenchwick on August 2nd, 100 at Offenham on 15th, 60 at Honeybourne on September 5th and 50 at Lower Moor on October 1st.
- Staffs** A Garden Bird Survey at Little Stoke recorded a maximum of 16 birds compared with 23 in 1997, reflecting the national decline in this species. Monthly counts in a garden near Denstone varied from 30 in September and October to 46 in December. A garden at Rickerscote regularly held around 35 birds, while a flock of 50 regularly visited a garden in Little Wyrley.
- W. Mid** More comparative/breeding data would help provide a truer picture of the status of this declining species. Five territories on the Mons Hill CBC plot represented a decline from the eight present in 1997 and 1996, but the species was reported to be 'very common' in the Harborne NR area. A flock of 70 was feeding on wheat at Barr Common on August 15th.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus**Fairly common, though declining, resident.*

**Warks** The decline continues in the south-east, with only 11 breeding pairs at Fenny Compton (*cf.* 21 in 1997 and 60 in 1996), and none on the BAD Kineton May count where numbers were good until 1995. Bred in very small numbers within the area bounded by Southam, Napton, Shugburgh, Chesterton and Kineton; and beyond at Charlecote, Great Alne and, in the north, Coleshill, Coombe, Coton and Shustoke. In the south-east, flocks were far fewer and smaller than in 1997, the larger being 20 at Fenny Compton on January 4th, 35 at Priors Marston on February 1st, 30 near Wormleighton Res on October 7th and 50 in stubble at Knightcote on 30th. Elsewhere winter parties up to 10 were still reported from most parts, with better counts being 30, at Spennall on January 27th (feeding on corn with Reed Buntings) and Coleshill on February 10th.

**Worcs** Breeding was confirmed at Stoke Bliss and Timberhonger. The larger counts were 25 at Cookley on January 21st, 15 at Brockhill Farm on February 15th, 17 at Grafton Lane on 20th, 20 at Wyre Piddle from July 28th-August 1st, 20 at Caunsall on October 30th, 20 at The Bourne on December 13th, 70 at Cookley on 24th (the most there for five years) and 28 at Throckmorton on 27th. Smaller numbers were at 18 further sites.

**Staffs** Reports came from only 17 localities (*cf.* 40 in 1997). Flocks of 10 and over were noted at Ousley (22) and Chillington (15) both on January 11th, Belvide (11) on April 18th, Blithfield (70) on July 26th, Needwood Airfield (15) on October 5th, Marston (10) on the 14th, Belvide (17) on November 1st, Filleybrooks (10) on 5th and Whitmoor Haye (30) on December 28th. A large decline at Tittesworth, with no breeding reported.

**W Mid** Bred at Pedmore, where 16 nest boxes were used, and at Sandwell Valley, though it appears to be declining at this former stronghold. Almost certainly bred near Bradnock's Marsh as well, but a pair seen carrying nest material at Park Lime Pits were not noted after April 27th. The larger flocks were 35 on set-aside at Bickenhill on January 11th, 20 in Sandwell Valley in April, a peak of 40 on set-aside at Park Lime Pits on November 5th and 30+ in Lutley Wedge on December 28th. Up to four visited a Chadwick End bird table in January and February.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs**Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Warks** Breeding season counts included 109 at BAD Kineton (just below average), 22 singing males in Edgehill/Kingsbury Woods in May and 20 territories in 1km<sup>2</sup> of mainly pasture fields near Chapel Green. Winter flocks included 150 at Shawbury on January 31st and February 8th, 100 on Ilmington Downs on November 15th, 150 at Umberslade on December 27th and 60-80 at five other sites. An aberrant male with a brown head was present at Ladywalk in spring.

**Worcs** No consistent breeding trend emerged, with numbers down for the second consecutive year at Shortwood Roughs (just seven pairs), but up for the second year running at Web Heath (a new high of 14 pairs). Numbers also increased at Tibberton (to 20 pairs), but remained stable at Southcrest, with

seven pairs again this year. Many flocks were reported during the year, with maxima of 130 at Grafton Lane on January 24th, 230 at Smite on 25th, 300 at Longdon on November 8th, 120 at Little Comberton on 21st, 100 at Hillhampton on 22nd, 100 at Haws Hill Wood on December 9th and 140 at Offerton on 27th.

**Staffs** Numbers fell significantly at Coombes Valley, where 68 pairs bred (*cf.* 88 in 1997 and a five-yearly average of 82.6), while 48 pairs bred in Churnet Woods NR. Monthly counts at Lawneswood peaked at 60 in January and 50 in October. Few other records were received, but first winter period maxima were 100 at Teddesley Park and 112 roosting at Coombes Valley, both on March 3rd; and 100+ with a few Bramblings at Little Wyrley on the 11th. The most during the second winter period were 100 at Teddesley on November 21st and 100+ at Prestwood on December 13th.

**W Mid** Eight territories each on Mons Hill and Park Lime Pits CBC plots represented a slight increase at the former, but double the number since 1996 at the latter. The larger winter flocks were 50 were in Sandwell Valley on March 7th, 50 at Pedmore on October 29th, 100 near Temple Balsall with Yellowhammers on November 7th and around 90 near Packwood House on December 5th.

### **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

*Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, but in variable numbers.*

*Average: October 9th (63)–April 18th (62)*

Last seen in spring at Winson Green on May 3rd. In autumn, one at Brandon on October 4th heralded a small influx over the next few days, but with a poor crop of beech mast numbers were very small.

**Warks** Recorded at ten localities up to April 22nd, with maxima of 27 at Hartshill School for about a week around January 11th, over 30 under beeches in Clowes Wood on 12th, seven in Oversley Wood on 17th and at least six on passage at Earlswood Lakes on April 5th. A poor autumn began with one at Brandon on October 4th, after which one or two were seen at a further 11 sites, with maxima of three over Fenny Compton on October 9th and 21st and five at Avon Dassett from November 14th–16th.

**Worcs** Reported from 19 localities in each winter period, but mostly in very small numbers, particularly in autumn. The larger counts in winter were 13 at Hewell Grange on January 10th, 30 at Blakeshall on 11th, 100 at Pipers Hill Wood on 13th and 50 at Bibbeys Hollow on March 5th. Autumn could only muster maxima of nine at Happy Valley on October 18th, 10 over Haws Hill Wood on December 8th and 25 at Blakeshall on 24th.

**Staffs** Reported from 22 localities in winter and spring, with the larger flocks being 30 at Chillington Hall on January 11th, 200 at Coombes Valley on March 24th and 40 at Chasewater on April 10th. On Cannock Chase in the spring there were 50 at Brocton Coppice on April 4th and at least 40 around the feeding station at the Marquis Drive Visitor Centre on the 20th. During January–April 48 birds were ringed in a Little Aston garden, where numbers were noted as increasing. Scarce in autumn, with just one or two at a few sites and maxima of four at Belvide on November 8th and 12 at Little Aston Golf Club on December 23rd.

**W.Mid** With a fair crop of beech mast, birds were reasonably widespread in small numbers during winter and spring. The larger flocks were at Edgbaston Res, where present from January-April 17th at least, reaching a peak of 30 on January 3rd; and Warley Woods, where 50 on 6th was a notable flock for the county. Small numbers were at a further 12 sites, the most being 10 at both Four Oaks and Harborne NR. A very poor autumn, with records from just five sites and no more than two birds at any. Many records came from suburban gardens.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

*Abundant resident.*

**Warks** Seems to be doing well, though very little breeding information received. In contrast to last year, few reported flocks exceeded 50, with the larger being 115 at Lower Quinton on January 9th, 70 at Fenny Compton on July 26th, 60 at Butlers Marston on August 9th and 60 at Stockton on November 10th. Reported to be the commonest finch at Ladywalk, where 188 were ringed during the year.

**Worcs** The breeding population showed little change at well monitored sites, with five pairs at Southcrest, 12 pairs at Tibberton and 16 pairs at Web Heath all about average for the last few years. Small flocks were reported at 15 localities, with maxima of 100 at Pebworth on August 22nd, 150 at Tibberton on 29th, 120 at Ryall on September 6th and 150 at Bushley Green on October 20th.

**Staffs** For such a common bird, few records were received. Four pairs bred on the Doxey CBC plot (*cf.* two in 1997) and five pairs at Coombes Valley (*cf.* four-yearly average 3.5). The latter site also had roosts of 52 on January 1st and 60 on October 12th. The only flocks reported were 55 at Boscobel on January 24th, 15 at Lawneswood on September 15th, 20 at Prestwood on October 4th and 10 at Stanton Dale on November 8th and Calton on December 7th.

**W.Mid** Three territories on Mons Hill CBC plot was the only meaningful breeding data received. The larger flocks comprised 100 roosting at Aldersley in January, an excellent 170 on rape at Bradnock's Marsh on August 13th, up to 40 at Marsh Lane GPs by the end of August and 18 at Park Lime Pits in November and December.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

*Common resident and partial migrant.*

**Warks** Apart from good-sized flocks of 100 feeding on thistledown at the Middleton pits on August 14th and 120 nearby at Dosthill on September 5th, flock size was generally down this year. The better ones, all of 40-50, occurred in alders by the R. Arrow at Alcester in February (which included an albino); at Draycote in March-April; Knightcote in May; and at Baddesley Clinton, Fenny Compton, Ladywalk and Wormleighton Res in October.

**Worcs** Five pairs bred in 1km<sup>2</sup> at Web Heath. Few big concentrations were reported, the larger being 33 at Kempsey on January 17th, 60 at Strensham on September 5th, 95 at Lower Moor on September 19th, 30 at Childswickham on October 4th and 50 at Westwood on December 29th.

**Staffs** Another good year for this delightful species. Two pairs bred on the Doxey CBC plot (*cf.* three in 1997), while flocks of 30 or more were reported at Little Wyrley (40) on January 1st, Belvide (30) on February 12th and (50) on September 5th, Norton Bridge (30) on September 2nd, Coombes Valley (36) from 12th-27th, Wilnecote (60) on October 2nd and Marston (50) on November 15th. Numbers at Westport Lake were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1997	-	-	-	4	9	3	3	3	1	8	30	12
1998	-	-	-	4	4	2	5	3	15	6	30	50

**W Mid** No breeding data was submitted. The larger concentrations consisted of 28 in Valley Park in January, 15 at Sheepwash UP in August and December, 20 at Marsh Lane GPs in August, 50 in Sandwell Valley on September 13th, 18 at Park Lime Pits on October 9th, 25 at Fens Pools on November 21st and 40 at Harborne NR on 25th. Birds visiting garden feeding stations were reported from Dorridge, Four Oaks and Norton Lane (Earlswood).

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare or scarce breeding species.*

Good numbers from the large 1997 influx remained during the early months, but autumn numbers were poor. As usual, several reports of birds at garden feeders.

**Warks** Winter maxima included 63 at Brandon on January 7th, 80 at Ufton Fields on 14th, 85 at Oversley Wood on 17th, 60 at Ladywalk in the same month and an exceptional 200 in Poors Wood on February 8th, with smaller flocks of 20-30 at an additional five sites. Spring migrants continued to pass into late April, with the last being a pair in Farnborough Park on 29th and six at Fenny Compton on May 6th. The first autumn migrant appeared at Brandon on September 3rd, to be followed by a flock of 20 flying south-west over Worm-leighton Res on 18th. From early October very small numbers were fairly widespread, but with no concentrations larger than 20-25, at Avon Dassett, Brandon and Packington, until 70 appeared at Brandon on December 27th.

**Worcs** Small numbers were present in the breeding season at Ashfield, Kenswick, Kingswood Common, Martley and Stoke Bliss. Seen at 36 localities in the first winter period, with maxima of 40 at Wilden on January 7th; 100 at Worcester Cathedral on 12th; 40 at Bittell and 50 at Upton Warren on 18th; 60 at both Ipsley Alders on 30th and The Knapp on February 1st; and 40 at Alvechurch on February 25th. Several places reported small numbers on passage throughout April. Autumn was rather poor, with records from October 2nd onwards at just 19 places and maxima of only 22 at Grimley on October 10th, 40 at Coldridge Wood on November 9th and 40 at Stanford Court on December 13th.

**Staffs** In the first winter period, the larger flocks in January were 60 at Little Wyrley on 1st, 45 at Alder Stretch on 12th and 200 at Westport, while in February 50 were at Seven Springs on the 21st. Smaller numbers were at four other sites. The customary spring build-up on Cannock Chase saw 19, including

a singing male, at Castle Ring on March 28th and a flock of 100 at Brocton Coppice on April 11th. The second winter period began with a few passage birds on September 29th and by November some respectable flocks had formed, with the larger being 60+ at Crumpwood on 21st, 64 at Churnet Woods on 28th and 50 at Westport. These were followed in December by 50 at Sherbrook Valley on 2nd, 30 at Coldmeee Pools on 19th and 50 at Belvide 26th.

**W Mid** The larger first winter period flocks comprised 30+ at Fens Pools on January 2nd, 65 at Hayhead Wood on 3rd, 12 at Park Lime Pits on 9th, 25 at Marsh Lane GPs on 13th, 16 at Woodgate Valley on 16th, 18 at Wide Waters on February 2nd, 15 in Wergs on 12th, up to 20 at Sheepwash UP in February and 30 in Valley Park on March 15th. Regularly reported from a Solihull garden between January 4th-April 12th, with a peak count of 14. Up to 10 were also reported from 13 other sites. Very scarce in the second winter period, with records from Lutley Wedge, Marsh Lane GPs and Sheepwash UP – all comprising five or fewer birds on occasional dates.

### **Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

*Very common resident and partial migrant.*

**Warks** The BAD Kineton May count logged only 13 birds, down a massive 72% from the average. Why is a mystery, though rather than any real decline it may be redistribution caused by the loss of a local food source. The larger flocks recorded were over 100 near Bannam's Wood on February 15th, 93 at Draycote on April 13th, up to 110 in rape stubble at Packington during September, 150 at Long Itchington on October 4th, 100 at Wormleighton on 10th and 100 at Burton Dassett on 29th.

**Worcs** The highest breeding concentrations were 20 pairs at Castlemorton Common and 12 pairs at North Hill. Breeding was also noted at Diglis, Drakes Broughton, Tibberton (three pairs), Timberhonger (two pairs in a 1km transect) and Web Heath. A few flocks were reported in winter, the larger being 80 at Powick on January 10th, 70 at Lower Moor on 23rd, 90 at Devils Spittleful on February 22nd and 150 at Kinsham on 27th. More flocks were seen after the breeding season, with maxima of 100 at Kyre on September 8th, 140 at Besford on 13th, 520 at Defford on 19th, 650 at Bredon Hill on October 3rd, 300 at Childswickham and 100 at Sheriffs Lench on 4th, 110 at Kinsham on November 6th, 150 at Ryall on 8th, 150 at Iwerley on December 6th and 240 at Lower Moor on 13th.

**Staffs** As last year, two pairs bred on Doxey CBC plot. The larger flocks to be reported were 100 at Halfpenny Green on January 2nd, 30 at Lawneswood on the 12th, over 350 at Little Wyrley on March 18th, 110 at Chasewater on April 19th, 130 at Belvide on August 13th, 50 at Kettlebrook Park on September 6th, 40 at Thornciffe on the 8th, 30 at Wilnecote on the 17th, 180 at Needwood Airfield on the 28th, 40 at Elford on October 3rd and 90 at Byrkley Park on November 29th.

**W Mid** Eight-ten pairs bred on Netherton Hill, breeding was also reported from Sheepwash UP and Sutton Park and birds were present in the breeding season at Bartley (20 on June 26th), Burys Hill, Caslon Wood, Clayhanger, Goscoote Valley, Lower Illey, Sandwell Valley, Shire Oak Park, Spring Vale and

Walsall Wood. Larger early year flocks were 80 at Sheepwash UP on January 17th, 51 in Goscote Valley on February 13th, 70 in Sandwell Valley on March 7th and 150 on stubble at Pedmore on 20th. Later, 70 were at Marsh Lane GPs in August, whilst at Wishaw numbers rose from 60 on September 13th to an impressive 410 by October 10th. Elsewhere around 60 were on the old Walsall airfield on September 15th and on set-aside at Park Lime Pits on October 22nd, and 50 in sugar beet at Pedmore on 29th and in Lutley Wedge in early November. Up to 50 regularly roosted in gorse on Netherton Hill in both winter periods.

**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.*

**Staffs** Few reports and only very small numbers. A pair was at Swallow Moss on March 27th NU and three were at Knotbury on May 24th MJJ, while later in the year three were at Weaver Hill on August 26th and two on September 9th NU.

**Common Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Frequent, though much declined, breeding species, now mainly in Staffs.*

**Warks** Generally scarce during winter, but with a slight increase during March-April as migrants passed through. The best counts were 18 at Ladywalk on January 9th, 10 at Coton on March 21st and 22 at Brandon on April 20th. Unusually, passage continued into early May, with a maximum of 14 at Fenny Compton on 1st and the last there and at Wormleighton Res on 13th. There was an isolated summer record of one at Brandon on June 7th, but no real indications that the species still breeds in the county. The first autumn return was one over Fenny Compton on September 19th. Thereafter, there were only small numbers until a peak of 30 at Ladywalk on October 23rd. Draycote had 30 on November 30th and Brandon had 35 until December 28th when 70-75 arrived.

**Worcs** Has become very scarce as a breeding species in recent years. The only breeding season reports were pairs at Brockamin and Hillside in early May, 15 at Tiddesley Wood on May 3rd, one at Westwood on 10th and five over Kingswood Common on 13th. The early part of the year produced records of small numbers at 19 localities, the only substantial flock being a peak of 60 at Lower Moor from January 24th-25th. The autumn also produced reports from 19 localities, but there were more medium-sized flocks, the larger being 30 at Castlemorton Common on November 1st, 23 at Wilden on November 1st, 30 at Hillhampton on 22nd and 25 at Bibbeys Hollow on December 9th.

**Staffs** A poor showing, with only small numbers at scattered localities. Breeding season records came from Knotbury (two), The Roaches (two) and Swallow Moss (four). Winter flocks included 10 at Betley Mere on January 17th, 15 at Calwich Park on October 8th, 40 at Elford/Fisherwick on December 5th and 38 in Churnet Woods NR on the 18th. Numbers at Westport were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1997	-	-	-	11	6	2	6	12	7	7	3	8
1998	-	-	-	60	2	2	3	1	0	6	12	10

The July record comprised a female feeding two very newly fledged young.

- W Mid** Generally appeared to be rather scarce. No proof of breeding, but a pair in Longmoor Valley (Sutton Park) in early June was in suitable habitat and two males were singing at Bartley on May 12th. In winter and spring the larger flocks comprised 25 in Valley Park on March 29th, 30 at Sheepwash UP on April 6th and 35 at Sandwell Valley on the late date of May 4th. Autumn and second winter peaks consisted of 12 at Marsh Lane GPs on November 1st, 20 at Sheepwash UP in November and 20+ at Bartley during the winter. Less than 10 were reported from a further nine sites.

#### **1997 Addenda**

- Warks** The maxima at Brandon were 20 on April 24th and 35 on October 19th.

#### **Mealy Redpoll *C. f. flammea***

*Rare and erratic winter visitor (5/10).*

- Worcs** Small numbers were present with the Common Redpoll flock at Lower Moor from January 1st-February 14th, with a peak on 12 on January 28th *RAP et al.* Nine were found at Arley Wood on February 17th *EGP, SMW*. At the other end of the year, one was at Holt on December 19th *SMW*.

#### **1997 Addendum**

- Staffs** At least four were at Chasewater on March 15th *GE*.

#### **Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra***

*Frequent, though variable, irruptive visitor. Scarce and erratic breeding species.*

Small numbers from last summer's record influx remained during the early months, but there was no repeat invasion.

- Warks** There were eight at Brandon Hall on January 11th, with three on 21st and 10 on March 1st, 10 in Bentley Woods on January 17th, five in Oversley Wood on February 14th, 15 at Barford on March 8th and 15th, 15 at Temple Pool on 29th, a good-sized flock of 45 at nearby Upton House on May 10th and five at BAD Kineton on 17th, but no evidence of breeding anywhere.

- Worcs** Fairly easily found through to late March, with up to 14 at Kingsford from January 8th-March 22nd; January peaks of 14 at Eymore Wood on 24th and 30 at Callow Hill on 30th; February peaks of 30 at Nimmings Wood on 1st, 13 over Stourvale Marsh on 11th, 28 at Calcot Hill on 16th (probably the Nimmings Wood flock), a new peak of 20 at Eymore Wood on 19th; and, in March, 10 at Deerfold Wood on 1st and 12 at Dowles Brook from 21st-23rd. Up to eight were also seen during January-February at Bittell, Fox Lydiat Wood, Hartlebury Common, Kyre, Pipers Hill Wood and St Annes Well. In spring there were 14 at Arley Wood and 12 at Blakeshall both on April 20th; 13 west over Knightwick on May 1st; 12 at Bredon Hill from May 2nd-6th, with six still on 12th; and up to three in April or May at Callow Hill, Far Forest and Long Coppice, where one on May 20th was the last of the year.

- Staffs** Several flocks were reported during the first winter period, some of which may have been birds from last year that had bred. Up to 150 were to be found on



Cannock Chase, with concentrations at Seven Springs (70), Totem Pole (60), German Cemetery (30), Sherbrook Valley (30) and Beaudesert (15). A flock of at least 55 at Seven Springs on April 18th included some singing and displaying males. Elsewhere, there were 15 at Blithfield on January 9th, nine at Byrkley Park on February 8th, an unknown number calling at Beech on 22nd, a maximum of 60 at Swynnerton Old Park on April 3rd (with birds present from March 9th-July 26th), eight at Trentham Gardens on April 11th and one at Westport Lake on 17th.

#### **1997 Addenda**

- Staffs** Eight were at Chasewater on August 9th.  
**W Mid** One flew over Saltwells Wood on July 28th.

#### **Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Common resident.*

- Warks** Seems to be maintaining its status well in the south-east of the county and around Coventry, but perhaps declining elsewhere. The summer census at BAD Kineton produced 29 (*cf.* 16 in 1997), which was the highest count there since they commenced in 1987. Several parties of 10-15 were reported, particularly in late summer, with the largest a flock of 25 at Lighthorne on August 31st.
- Worcs** Reported from 21 localities in the breeding season, with five pairs at Tibberton. As usual in recent years, most records of parties related to very small numbers, with the larger counts being 15 at Castlemorton Common on January 18th, nine at Upton Warren on August 4th and nine at Tibberton on December 29th.
- Staffs** Five pairs bred at Tittesworth, six at Coombes Valley (as 1997) and three in Churnet Woods NR, while four pairs were reported in the Churnet Valley area (SK04/14). The larger parties were 23 at Coombes Valley on January 6th and 18 on October 26th, 10 at Crumpwood on September 9th and nine feeding on heather capsules at Back Forest on November 14th. Parties of four-six were reported from three other sites.
- W Mid** Noted in the breeding season at Claregate, Dorridge, Four Oaks, Goscote Valley, Halesowen Abbey, Harborne NR (an increase in the last few years), Lapal, Leasowes Park, Meers Coppice, Mons Hill CBC plot (three territories – no change in status), Penn Hospital, Sandwell Valley, Sheepwash UP, Valley Park and Wergs. Outside the breeding season, recorded at seven sites, with up to 10 at Marsh Lane GPs in January and Sandwell Valley in December. Several were noted feeding in suburban gardens.

#### **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

*Uncommon and declining resident.*

Continues to decline significantly from its peak in the early 1980s.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	157	258	222	155	92

- Warks** The only record was of a male calling loudly from the tops of hornbeams at Farnborough Park on April 23rd and 29th, where a pair had been seen in 1997.

- Worcs** Several reports of small numbers near Dowles Brook from January 23rd-March 28th, with a peak of six on the last date. Later in the year Chase End Wood became the best place to see the species. After two on November 28th, small numbers were reported regularly to the end of the year with a peak of seven on November 29th. An unexpected record concerned one over Broadway Hill on December 1st.
- Staffs** One was seen at Marchington on February 2nd and another briefly at Belvide on April 24th. It is now four years since any were reported from Chillington Lower Avenue, so it now appears to be lost as a breeding bird.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, and winter visitor.*

Apart from a trough during 1979-83, numbers have been fairly consistent.

	1974-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	1994-98
No. of birds	36	10	49	36	40

- Worcs** The first of the autumn was one with the Linnet flock at Ryall on October 10th LAB. The now almost annual occurrences on the North Hill/Worcestershire Beacon area of Malvern were maintained by the arrival of one on North Hill from November 5th-6th SMW *et al*, followed by the discovery of one there and three on Worcestershire Beacon on November 14th BS, two of which remained the following day MWCW. SMW. Meanwhile, Bredon Hill got in on the act for once, with a male remaining near the summit from November 14th-15th RAP *et al*. Finally, one flew north over Ombersley golf course on December 5th GHP.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

*Very common, though declining, resident.*

- Warks** After its disastrous crash in 1996, the May count at BAD Kineton increased slightly to 51, but numbers were still well below normal (*cf.* a peak of 122 in 1990). Appears to be still declining in many northern and central districts, with parties of 20 notable and 52 in set-aside at Polesworth the only larger flock. More numerous in areas of mixed farming in the south and east, where flocks of 40-60 were widely reported outside the breeding season and there were maxima of 70 coming to seed put down in a Southam garden on January 15th, 70 in stubble at Knightcote on October 30th, 100 in maize at Ilmington Downs on November 29th and 90 in stubble near Napton Res on December 8th.
- Worcs** The numbers of singing males fell to seven at Castlemorton Common and eight at Timberhonger (*cf.* eight and 12 respectively in 1997). Small numbers were also reported singing at several other sites, including six at Hollybed Common, six around Tibberton and five at Romsley. Outside the breeding season many small flocks were reported, with maxima of 100 at Stoke Bliss on January 11th, 100 at Malvern Link on 21st, 60 at Churchill on February 3rd, 100 at Bredon Hill on November 6th, 60 at Haws Hill on December 9th and 60 at Drayton on December 21st.
- Staffs** Widely reported, but only in small numbers, with maxima of 29 roosting at Wheaton Aston on January 10th, 50 at Teddesley Park on 24th, 25 at Chase-

water on the 25th, 70+ at Little Wyrley on February 4th and 50 at Little Onn airfield on March 8th. Even fewer in autumn, the most being 18 at Lower Brockhurst on November 15th, 30 at Ousley on the 18th, 13 at Belvide on 20th and 10 at Church Eaton Brook on December 20th.

- W Mid* Singing males/breeding birds were reported from 16 localities, with eight in 2½ miles in the Dorridge/Hockley Heath area, nine in the Illey area and 15+ in Sutton Park the more noteworthy. Stable at Park Lime Pits CBC plot, with six territories. Two very impressive winter concentrations were reported on set-aside and stubble, emphasising the importance of these declining habitats, with 140 at Bickenhill on January 11th and 150 near Temple Balsall on November 7th. Reported from around a dozen other localities, with peaks of 35 in the Dorridge area on February 2nd, 40 in Sandwell Valley on March 7th and 21 in Goscote Valley on 14th.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

*Common, though declining, resident.*

- Warks* A poor year with declines in the BAD Kineton May count, where five was nearly 66% below average (*cf.* 25 in 1994), and in most of the larger territory counts, with six at Alvecote and Fenny Compton; five at Lighthorne Quarry, Dosthill-Kingsbury WP and along the R. Avon from Bidford-Marcliff; four at Chesterton Pools and Packington Park; and three at Coombe, Draycote, Lighthorne Pools, Ufton Fields and Wormleighton Res. Winter and autumn flocks were also fewer and often smaller than last year, the best being 27 at Priors Marston on February 1st, 40 in a Knightcote stubblefield on October 30th and 30 feeding in maize at Ilmington Downs on November 29th. The only reported roost was at Ladywalk, where numbers peaked at 30 in January and 20 in December.
- Worcs* Six pairs bred along the R. Avon from Eckington to Strensham Lock, 25+ pairs at Upton Warren and six pairs at Wilden, whilst three pairs at Lower Moor was indicative of a decline at the site *RAP*. Also present in the breeding season at Castlemorton Common, Church Lench Pool, Croome Court, along the Worcester Canal (at Dunhampstead and Oddingley), Hewell Grange, Ipsley Alders, Oakley Pool, Shortwood Roughs, Strensham and Throckmorton. The largest concentrations outside the breeding season were 20 at Lower Moor on January 23rd and 40 at Holt on December 1st.
- Staffs* Despite a late season due to major flooding, 20 pairs bred on the Doxey CBC plot (*cf.* 18 in 1997). However, at Betley CES only 13 adults and two juveniles were ringed (*cf.* 21 and three in 1997). The largest flocks reported were 30, at Little Wyrley on February 4th and Sherbrook Valley on October 23rd.
- W Mid* Breeding season activity came from Aldersley Junction, Bradnock's Marsh, Clayhanger, Fowler's Park, Goscote Valley (four), Marsh Lane GPs (two pairs), Meers Coppice, Netherton Hill (probably two pairs), Park Lime Pits CBC plot (four territories: stable), Sandwell Valley, Sheldon CP, Sheepwash UP (up to two pairs), Spring Vale and Stubbers Green. An impressive 130 were in set-aside with Yellowhammers at Bickenhill on January 1st, whereas 15 in Sandwell Valley on February 23rd was more normal. Also reported at Fens Pools and Valley Park.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

*Fairly common, though much declined, resident.*

- Warks** Apparently still declining. Up to three singing males were reported during the breeding season at BAD Kineton, Burton Dassett, Charlecote, Chesterton, Curdworth, Fenny Compton, Gaydon, Lawford Heath, Marlicliff, Marton, Poolfields, Seckington, Warmington, Wasperton and Wellesbourne, while a "large number" were singing in the Milcote area. Outside the breeding season, there were very few reports and no flocks, the largest parties being only six, at Charlecote on May 24th and Curdworth on December 28th. Four in a mixed bunting flock at a Knightcote stubblefield on October 30th was the best count away from a breeding site.
- Worcs** Very well reported in the breeding season, with singing males at Bretforton, Caunsall, Churchill/Ismere (four), Clifton-on-Severn, Defford (two), Doverdale (two), Holt (two), Kempsey Lower Ham, Lower Moor/Fladbury (eight), Ryall (two), Strensham, Throckmorton (eight) and Upton-on-Severn. Several reports of flocks outside the breeding season, with maxima of 13 at Kempsey on January 18th, 30 at Wyre Piddle from August 17th-18th, 20 at Bishampton Vale golf course on October 1st, 12 at Bredon Hill on 23rd, 22 at Naunton Beauchamp on November 7th, 15 at Holt from 29th-December 19th, 19 at Mount Segg on 3rd and 47 at Little Comberton on 22nd.
- Staffs** Records of singing birds came from High Offley (four), Himley (two), Little Hay (three), Mucklestone (two), Seighford (one), Shelmore (one), Wall (two) and Whitemoor Haye (three). Outside the breeding season, 26 were at Whitemoor Haye on January 21st, 16 at Chasewater on 26th and four on November 15th, while 98 roosted in *Phragmites* at Belvide on February 12th. Numbers were said to be down in the Shenstone/Little Hay area.
- W.Mid** Singing males were reported from the Hillwood Common Road area of Four Oaks, but only two this year compared with three or four in previous years, and from Pedmore (a healthy 11 birds *cf.* five in 1997) and the Wiggins Hill/Wishaw area. The latter area also held 49 on December 5th.
- 1997 Addendum**
- W.Mid** One was on Netherton Hill on April 3rd.

**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 follow Birds of the World - A Check List J. F. Clements (1991).*

**Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

*Lakes in Australia, Tasmania and (introduced) New Zealand.*

- Worcs** Two at Bittell on August 12th and September 6th, and five at Bredons Hardwick on December 31st.

**Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

*Breeds on high plateaux in central and southern Asia and winters mainly in northern India and Burma.*

**Warks** Singles were with Canada Geese by the Oxford Canal at Napton Fields on April 2nd and at Dosthill on November 8th.

**Staffs** One at Belvide from January 19-25th, one at Doxey from May 14th to the 25th and one with Canada Geese at Drayton Bassett on August 9th.

**W Mid** One paired with a Barnacle Goose was seen at several localities throughout the year. What may have been the same bird was at Marsh Lane GPs with 100 Greylags on December 18th and 20th.

**1997 Addendum**

**Warks** Two were at Brandon on May 19th.

**Ross's Goose** *Anser rossii*

*Breeds on the tundra of central Arctic Canada and winters in western USA and Texas.*

**Worcs** One at Pirton on September 6th.

**Emperor Goose** *Anser canagicus*

*Breeds on the tundra of north-east Siberia west to Alaska and winters south Alaska to north California.*

**Staffs** One at Westport on December 12th with 41 Greylag Geese.

**Cape Shelduck** (South African Shelduck) *Tadorna cana*

*Karoo of southern Africa.*

**Warks** One reported from Dosthill on January 1st.

**Paradise Shelduck** *Tadorna variegata*

*Coastal and inland waters in New Zealand.*

**Warks** The male from last year was again in the north of the county during the spring and summer, with sightings at Alvecote on January 25th, Middleton on April 6th (on a farm reservoir) and 25th (at the Hall), and at Dosthill on May 4th, 23rd and June 13th. It was often seen in company with both Ruddy and Common Shelducks.

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*

*Forested woodlands from Canada to northern Mexico; Cuba and Bahamas.*

**Warks** A male was again at Coombe during much of the year.

**Yellow-billed Teal**

*Anas flavirostris flavirostris/oxyptera Southern South America.*

**Staffs** One remained at Belvide from December 5th-9th.

**Chestnut Teal** *Anas castanea*

*Coastal wetlands of southern and eastern Australia.*

**Worcs** One at Upton Warren from August 14th-24th.

- Bahama Pintail** (White-cheeked Pintail) *Anas bahamensis*  
*Locally in South America, the West Indies and Galapagos Islands.*  
**Worcs** One was at Westwood on October 31st and December 10th.
- Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*  
*Widespread in north and central America and the West Indies.*  
**Warks** One that frequented the Packington area all year was thought to be the one that escaped from its owner in Hampton-in-Arden in about 1996. On one occasion in October it was watched being mobbed by a Raven!
- Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus*  
*Domesticated forms of a species which, in the wild, occurs in the drier parts of Australia.*  
**Staffs** Three were seen at Doxey Marshes on April 24th.
- Grey Parrot** *Psittacus erithacus*  
*Savannah and humid forests of west and central Africa.*  
**1997 Addendum**  
**Staffs** One at Chasewater on November 1st flew off strongly towards Chasetown.
- Senegal Parrot** *Poicephalus senegalus*  
*Open forest and savannah in West Africa.*  
**W Mid** A bird which visited an Aldridge garden in 1997 was also present this year up until April 21st.
- Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*  
*Open habitats throughout the interior of Australia.*  
**W Mid** One at Blowers Green on July 8th and 9th.  
**1997 Addenda**  
**Staffs** One landed in the middle of the lake at Chasewater on April 27th and was rescued by a passing water-skier. Another was seen on July 12th.
- Waxwing sp.**  
**Warks** An intriguing second-hand report was received of a waxwing watched in a garden apple tree at Lighthorne on June 14th for 15 minutes. Details are rather sketchy, but it seems more likely to have been a Japanese Waxwing *Bombycilla japonica* or possibly Cedar Waxwing *B. cedrorum* than a Bohemian, both of which are fairly popular in captivity.
- Canary** (Island Canary) *Serinus canaria*  
*Domesticated forms of a species which, in the wild, occurs on Madeira, the Canary Islands and the Azores.*  
**1997 Addendum**  
**Staffs** One in a garden at Little Stoke from August 18th to 31st was close to the wild form rather than the typical domesticated one. Interestingly, at the bird table, it showed aggressive behaviour towards Greenfinches, but not to any other species.
- Rufous-collared Sparrow** *Zonotrichia capensis*  
*Highlands of south-east Mexico to Tierra del Fuego.*  
**Worcs** One at Walton Hill on April 24th.

## Short Notes

### Bramblings in the winter of 1997/98

What a winter we had in 1997/98 with Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla*, which our cousins across the channel rightly call 'the finch of the north'. Many observers in south-east Staffordshire and Sutton Coldfield reported seeing them in their gardens at this time, describing them as 'funny-coloured Chaffinches'. I have never before been aware of so many in this area. Previously we have only ringed a few at winter finch roosts in Sutton Park and seen odd ones in gardens.

Nationally, BTO ringing totals give some indication of the numbers migrating to the UK each year. The 1998 figure of 4,400 was the third largest ever and far and away the most recorded this decade, being beaten only by the 4,783 ringed in 1981 and the 5,433 in 1976. Locally we became aware of a large influx from reports of flocks up to 20 in October and November 1997. Then, whilst making a late Christmas card delivery a few houses up the road on December 23rd, I heard the characteristic, short 'zzweek' call of Brambling! It turned out to be a small flock of a dozen or so, feeding under beech trees – a typical habitat.

I had to wait about a month before seeing one in my own garden, but it was duly caught and ringed the next day. This immature female proved to be the first of many. Gradually the numbers increased and, despite being away on holiday in February, every morning, on opening the curtains, I was greeted by a group of up to eight Bramblings feeding on the ground or on the seed-feeder. Mostly they were unringed!

Without the privilege of being able to ring them, I would almost certainly have thought that a group of, say, a dozen birds had stayed with me over the winter months. However, exactly 100 individuals were caught and ringed in the garden, which amazingly was 2.25% of all the Bramblings ringed in Britain in 1998! The sex ratio was 69 males to 31 females and the age ratio 30 adults to 70 juveniles. Birds were present from December 23rd 1997 to May 2nd 1998 and it is almost certain that the total number visiting the garden exceeded 200. To put the figures into context, only 20 Chaffinches *Fringilla coelebs* were ringed during the same period.

It is not surprising that birds which migrate over large distances have longer wing lengths than those which travel less far. With British Chaffinches, for example, it is generally recognised that a wing length of over 90mm indicates that an individual is very likely to be from a North European population. Interestingly, the only Brambling I saw in the garden in the 1998/99 winter was trapped on a morning when most Chaffinches had a wing length of 91mm plus.

The average wing length for all the Chaffinches I ringed in 1999 was 85mm, while that for the 1998 Bramblings was 90mm, with two adult males having wing lengths of 96mm. All this clearly indicates that, although very similar, Bramblings have on average a greater wing length than Chaffinches. Moreover, Chaffinches travelling in a Brambling flock could well be individuals from Northern Europe.

As if this visitation was not enough, there was 'icing on the cake' when, on April 18th 1998, I caught a young female (E746344) that was wearing a Norwegian ring. Unfortunately, I am still awaiting the original ringing data on this bird, but only thirty or so Norwegian-ringed Brambling have so far been controlled in Britain. On April 22nd I also controlled a British-ringed adult male, N550179. This had been originally ringed

just 24 days earlier, on March 29th, at Flackwell Heath (Bucks), which indicates that the bird was moving northwards back to Northern Europe.

Finally, imagine my surprise when the BTO sent me a recovery of a Brambling found dead by a Polish man, having hit a glass window in Neumunster, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany on February 24th 1999. I had originally ringed this bird in my garden on April 4th 1998, so it had obviously spent the 1999 winter in a totally different area to its winter home of 1998. Only 30 or so British-ringed Bramblings have been recovered in Germany. It is generally agreed that Bramblings migrate south in varying numbers from year-to-year in search of food or in response to climatic conditions. It is easy to appreciate why a bird would move if the weather was adverse or its food supplies restricted. However, the winter of 1997/98 was not particularly severe. So one would expect that the beech crop in Northern Europe had failed. Interestingly, another theory has been put forward, namely that the winter was too mild! This could have led to the beechmast rotting, thereby once again diminishing the available food and forcing the birds to come south and west.

This was probably the best Brambling winter that I will be lucky enough ever to experience, but I will go on hoping that these beautiful finches are forced south by circumstances to grace our gardens again in future years!

Rob Skeates

### **Black Kite – the first West Midlands County record**

Whilst loading my car at 0745 hrs on March 17th, I looked up and saw a large bird approaching low from the south. Its languid flight, long fingered wings and long tail immediately suggested a bird of prey, but its overall impression did not suggest one of the local Common Buzzards. Grabbing my binoculars, I was astonished to see that, from its forked tail and shape, it was a kite. As it came closer and turned away at a distance of 50-100m, I was even more astonished to see that it was a Black Kite due to the total lack of contrast between head, body, wings and tail.

I rushed indoors to summon my wife and we both watched it circle over the adjacent gardens. It appeared to be coming back, so I rushed to get my telescope and was able to watch it for up to a minute as it turned, circled again and drifted away, low, to the north-east.

*Overall colour:* Generally dark brown all over on the body and underwing, with the only points of contrast being the slightly paler head and two dirty white patches at the base of the outer primaries on each underwing. Also dark brown above, with the only contrast being the marked, pale creamy-brown diagonal bar from the carpal joint curving round the edge of the secondary coverts to the innerwing point. There was no contrast with the tail, but the head was paler when viewed from above.

*Shape and flight:* Large, buzzard-sized raptor, which dwarfed a Carrion Crow which came to mob it. Long wings (longer than Common Buzzard), with strongly fingered wing tips; languid, rather slow, floppy flight on slightly arched wings, drooping from the bend in the wing. Also a long, straight-sided, forked tail held closed as it flew past me and I did not notice it being fanned even when it circled, when it was not obviously used as a rudder, perhaps due to the still conditions. Side on, the wings were angled back from the carpal.

Nicholas Barlow



### **Yellow-browed Warbler – the first West Midlands County record**

Sunday, October 25th was bright, windy and cool. Having visited Dunstall Park with little success and, with eyes streaming from the strong wind and blinding sun, I decided to return home. For some reason, I changed my plans and decided to wander into 'The Paddock', where it would be more sheltered, to check for any late warbler activity. On entering The Paddock, situated between the railway line and canal, all seemed quiet, although it was a lot less windswept.

At around 10.15 am, after walking about 20 yards adjacent to Smestow Brook, I became aware of a strident, double-noted, persistent call; not unlike a Coal Tit, but certainly different enough to make me pay attention. A few moments later I had traced the call to a group of streamside bushes, where I saw a movement as a small bird worked its way towards the front of the bush at roughly eye level. My first impressions were of an active, 'Firecrest-sized' bird, smaller than a Chiffchaff. As it came into full view, I could see it was a strikingly marked little bird, with a very obvious creamy-yellow eye-stripe and double white wing bars.

Straight away, I realised I was watching a Yellow-browed Warbler, my thoughts confirmed by having seen one less than two weeks earlier in a similar habitat in the Scilly Isles. Now came the tricky bit. Should I carry on enjoying my find, or should I leg it back to alert others? I chose the latter, raised Angus Dickie from his sick-bed and 'phoned others while he was dressing. We were back on site with 25 minutes and were shortly joined by four others, but systematic searching, continued until dusk, proved futile. Next morning, pessimistic as ever, Angus and I were back in The Paddock at 9.20 am. We were half-way along when we were hailed from the canal side of the brook by Kevin Clements, who had relocated the bird. It called, though not so stridently as yesterday, and was seen flicking through the bushes in the same line of streamside shrubbery. Where had it gone to all day Sunday?

Angus was keen to get good views of a 'lifer' on his local patch, but unfortunately we lost track of it in the dense foliage. After further fruitless searching I left. Returning around mid-day, I found other local birders had arrived and we were rewarded with good, but brief views. I then had to leave once more, but to the best of my knowledge it was not seen again afterwards.

Dave Jackson

## **Ringling in 1998**

Ringling totals supplied by individual ringers and the secretaries of local ringling groups indicate that just over 10,000 birds of 79 species were ringed within the WMBC area during 1998. Normally the highest percentage of the total birds caught are tits, but in 1998 they came a poor second with 19% of the total. Warblers comprised 12% and thrushes and hirundines provided 4% and 5% respectively. But 1998 was the year of the finches, especially the Siskin. Finches accounted for a staggering 25% of the total and 39% of the finches ringed were Siskins.

Colour ringling is now an extremely important method of tracing bird movements and all colour ringling schemes have to be registered and co-ordinated to ensure there is no duplication that can lead to confusion. In many cases a single colour is used for a particular colony and this enables movements to and from that colony to be monitored more easily, but if a different colour is used each year the ring can also be used to get an indication of longevity. Other colour rings have a unique code engraved upon them enabling positive identification of the individual bird to be made. Some excellent examples of just how valuable these rings can be is provided by the 1998 recoveries.

Great Cormorants used to be associated exclusively with the coast, but both the birds listed in the recoveries were colour ringed as nestlings in colonies well inland. Their presence at Blithfield Reservoir during the winter illustrates juvenile dispersal from the natal site and summer resightings show natal site fidelity, one of the birds having returned on three occasions to its natal site after regularly wintering at Blithfield.

Mute Swans in the West Midlands are studied intensively and the recorded movement of a Worcester bird travelling 146 kilometres to Wiltshire shows they are capable of moving considerable distances. Colour ring sightings of the bird moving between Westport Lake in Stoke-on-Trent and the Cheshire area is just one of many such records showing the north-westerly movement of birds from Staffordshire into the Cheshire area and onto the North Wales coast. In addition to the colour ring, all birds carry a smaller metal ring which is difficult to read in the field and it was the sighting of the colour ring on the Tundra Swan at Sandwell Valley in January 1997 that enabled its history to be documented.

It is important to know how long birds live and for how long they continue to breed during their life. This is essential information when looking at the potential lifetime production of young by the individual. Ringling birds as nestlings is therefore important. We can say with some degree of certainty that the Canada Goose from Swinton Castle was 2.9 years of age when sighted at Blackheath, but we can only speculate in the case of the Gailey bird how many additional years should be added to the 19.6 years between ringling and sighting, because when ringed it was at least one year old. The oldest recorded Black-headed Gull as given in the 1996 Bird Ringling Report published by the BTO in *Ringling and Migration* was 16 years 3 months, so the Black-headed Gull from Madeley Heath recovered in Finland creates a new longevity record at 18+ years of age. Other longevity records established during 1998 include a five year old Robin and a 12 year old Blackbird.

Long distance movements are always exciting and the 1998 Report contains an

excellent number of records. Wintering Eurasian Wigeon have been ringed at Blithfield Reservoir in Staffordshire for a number of years and recoveries in France, Denmark and the Netherlands have been documented and appear in this Report. The staggering movement to Tyumen in Russia, however, shows just how far these ducks travel to their breeding grounds. Similarly, Black-headed Gulls have been ringed at Throckmorton and Madeley Heath in Worcestershire for many years, with winter ringed birds being recovered during the summer in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, all movements being in excess of 1000 kilometres. Birds ringed in the summer in Sweden and France have also been recovered here during the winter months. Recoveries of Lesser Black-backed Gulls show a wide spread of movements, birds coming to Throckmorton from the north (Iceland), the east and north-east (Holland and Norway) and the south-east (Suffolk). Only the Atlantic lying to the west denies us the fourth compass point! The Blackcap movement of 1964 kilometres is one of very few we have for a bird in Morocco and the two March recoveries of winter ringed Chaffinches are clearly partial migrants returning home to breed, but dying after their prodigious journey of over 1000 kilometres. It is interesting to speculate on how many birds actually die of old age. I suspect very few, most of them succumbing in early life to the hazards of living. Causes of death can be bizarre. Black-headed Gull, EK56303, moved six kilometres from Majors Green to Kings Norton where, minding its own business, it was hit by a golf ball which broke its wing so that it had to be destroyed. Cats kill many of our garden birds each year, but the Sheepy Magna cat that caught the Common Kingfisher from Middleton Hall must have been a remarkable animal. The cat that killed the Song Thrush in Worcester was probably not so smart, but it does illustrate the fact that it is not all down to Magpies. A lot of birds die as a result of colliding with vehicles. Owls are a good example and many are killed on our roads each year. One such bird, a Barn Owl, not included in the list of recoveries because we are still awaiting details, was found injured as a road casualty in November 1997 at Broadway in Worcestershire – nothing unusual here, except the bird was wearing a Dutch ring. Flying into windows is another common cause of death and we also await full details of a Norwegian Chaffinch which was killed by flying into a patio window in Perton, Wolverhampton.

Many of the 1998 hirundine and warbler recoveries continue to show the link between the Midlands and the south-east coast and, interestingly, 33 of the adult Sand Martins caught at Cornets End in Meriden during the breeding season were adults ringed there in previous years, again showing how strong site fidelity can be in migrant birds.

The Sedge Warbler from Ireland is the first for the Club, but was it breeding at Hams Hall or was it on its way back to Ireland? Theoretically there was still time for it to do so and, if so, then it's another classic example of natal site fidelity.

Not all movements are migratory or spectacular, some are just unusual and interesting. This is the case with the movements recorded for Blue Tits and Great Tits – they shouldn't be going anywhere, so why did they move so far?

And finally to the large number of 1998 Siskin recoveries. Nearly all show northerly movements back to the Scottish breeding grounds, but three differ. The Siskins to Wales and Ireland are unusual and interesting north-westerly movements, but the bird ringed in Uttoxeter, Staffs, in January and recovered in Felixstowe in April may well be

a bird that wintered here and was caught in the south of England on its way back to breeding grounds in the northern coniferous forests of Scandinavia. That's the wonderful thing about birds, anything can happen, and often does.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the secretaries of the Brandon Ringing Group, the Mercian Ringing Group, the Severn Estuary Gull Group, the Wychavon Ringing Group and all the individual ringers and observers who sent in annual totals and recoveries for this Annual Report, especially Messrs. John Cameron, Richard Castle, Roger Clay, David Clifton, Clive Griffiths, Richard Harbird, John Hodson, Philip Ireland, Andy Lawrence, Bill Low, Dr Clive Minton, Peter Stewart, Dave Stone, Paul Whittingham and Ray Wilson.

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.*

#### Age at Ringing:

Pull	<i>Pullus (nestling)</i>
Juv	<i>Juvenile (young able to fly)</i>
1Y	<i>Bird in its first year</i>
2Y	<i>Bird in its second year</i>
Ad	<i>Adult (at least one year old)</i>
Fg	<i>Full grown (age uncertain)</i>

#### Sex:

M	<i>Male</i>
F	<i>Female</i>

#### Manner of Recovery:

v	<i>Caught and released with ring</i>
+	<i>Shot or killed</i>
x	<i>Found dead or dying</i>
vv	<i>Ring read in the field</i>
?	<i>Manner of recovery unknown</i>

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
<b>Great Cormorant</b>				
L07645	Pull	16.05.93	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	GEd
	vv	27.10.93	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	24.03.94	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	0kms
	vv	17.09.94	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	05.04.95	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	0kms
	vv	01.07.95	Hanningfield Reservoir (Essex)	29kms
	vv	13.04.96	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	0kms
	vv	22.06.96	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	0kms
	vv	08.09.96	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	05.10.96	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	19.02.97	Hanningfield Reservoir (Essex)	29kms
	vv	20.07.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ring Movement
	vv	20.08.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	20.09.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	20.10.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	20.11.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
	vv	24.12.97	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	215kms
5196170	Pull	10.05.98	Besthorpe (Notts)	GED
	vv	01.11.98	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	81kms
<b>Mute Swan</b>				
U4407	Juv	27.12.93	Worcester (Worcs)	WRG
	vv	05.05.97	Amesbury (Wills)	117kms
X0042	Juv	01.12.96	Worcester (Worcs)	WRG
	vv	14.12.97	Leigh (G. Manchester)	146kms
Z94888	Juv	31.12.97	Sandbach (Cheshire)	DCo
	vv	01.01.98	Sandbach (Cheshire)	0kms
	vv	04.02.98	Westport Lake (Staffs)	12kms
	vv	06.02.98	Sandbach (Cheshire)	0kms
	vv	21.03.98	Dudley (W Mid)	69kms
	vv	26.04.98	Westport Lake (Staffs)	12kms
	vv	26.05.98	Nantwich (Cheshire)	11kms
	vv	15.06.98	Rhyl (Denbighshire, formerly Clwyd)	77kms
	vv	10.10.98	Belvide Reservoir (Staffs)	48kms
<b>Tundra Swan</b>				
V6507	2Y	10.08.96	NW of Yangulei River, Russia	
	vv	15.11.96	Hertoghen bosch, Netherlands	
	vv	24.11.96	Vlijmen, Netherlands	
	vv	01.12.96	Hertogen bosch, Netherlands	
	vv	03.12.96	Vlijmen, Netherlands	
	vv	29.12.96	Hertogen bosch, Netherlands	
	vv	21.01.97	Sandwell Valley (W Mid)	
	vv	08.02.97	Oost Souburg, Netherlands	
	vv	10.02.97	Ouwertkerk, Netherlands	
<b>Canada Goose</b>				
L00194	Ad	01.07.78	Gailey (Staffs)	CDTM
	vv	19.01.98	Wolverhampton (W Mid)	11kms
5186597	Pull	05.07.95	Swinton Castle (N Yorks)	MAFF
	VV	15.06.98	Blackheath (W Mid)	194kms
5133075	Ad	08.07.85	Coombe (Warks)	BRG
	x	26.01.97	Coventry (W Mid)	3kms
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>				
FA02960	1YM	11.02.95	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	MRG
	+	02.02.96	Frossay, France	618km
FA86502	AdM	27.01.96	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs)	MRG
	+	19.11.97	Jylland, Denmark	799kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
FA02974	AdM x	11.02.95 30.01.98	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs) Polder Zevenhoven, Netherlands	MRG 460kms
FA86651	FgM +	21.12.96 02.05.98	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs) Tobolsk, Tyumen, Russia	MRG 4448kms
FA86563	1YF +	27.01.96 14.10.98	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs) Turku-Pori, Finland	MRG 1711kms
FA02822	AdM +	13.02.93 24.10.98	Blithfield Reservoir (Staffs) Edwinstowe (Notts)	MRG 71kms

**Common Kestrel**

ER97393	Pull v v	02.06.95 15.11.95 26.12.95	Leigh (G. Manchester) Stoke-on-Trent (Staffs) Crick (Northants)	52kms 105kms
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**Black-headed Gull**

EN91462	Ad vv	29.02.92 12.05.96	Throckmorton (Worcs) Ostenjovannet, Oslo, Norway	SEGG 1173kms
6154953	Pull vv	07.06.96 08.02.97	Malmö, Sweden Westport Lake, Stoke (Staffs)	1028kms
ER48551	Ad x	22.12.90 07.07.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Porkhov, Pskov, Russia	SEGG 2108kms
EJ19826	Ad vv	13.01.80 13.05.98	Madeley Heath (Worcs) Vaskiluoto, Vaasa, Finland	PI
EP84866	Ad x	22.12.90 04.07.98	Throckmorton (Worcs) Landskrona, Malmöhus, Sweden	SEGG 1055kms
FS33848	Pull vv	16.06.98 31.07.98	Pas-de-Calais, France Throckmorton (Worcs)	
ES56006	Ad x	04.01.97 19.11.98	Throckmorton (Worcs) West Stow Country Park (Suffolk)	SEGG 182kms

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

243175	Ad vv	07.05.90 16.12.93	Reykjavik, Iceland Throckmorton (Worcs)	1754kms
FA94143	Ad x	21.12.96 24.05.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Flat Holm (Glam)	SEGG 111kms
GG76326	Ad x	15.12.90 25.12.97	Throckmorton (Worcs) Chesterfield (Derbys)	SEGG 130kms
496674	Pull vv	29.07.95 17.04.98	Farsund, Vest-Agder, Norway Throckmorton (Worcs)	
GG76478	Ad x	12.01.91 07.06.98	Throckmorton (Worcs) Ribble Estuary (Lancs)	SEGG 183kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
FA94133	Ad x	21.12.96 12.06.98	Throckmorton (Worcs) Dropnose Point, Gugh, Isles of Scilly	SEGG 390kms
FA57008	Ad x	05.12.92 08.08.98	Throckmorton (Worcs) Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria)	SEGG 226kms
GF92153	Pull vv	13.07.98 22.08.98	Orfordness (Suffolk) Throckmorton (Worcs)	246kms
GreenSP4	Pull vv	01.07.97 04.09.98	Europoort, Rotterdam, Netherlands Throckmorton (Worcs)	
<b>Common Kingfisher</b>				
SB18471	JuvM x	06.07.97 08.04.98	Middleton Hall (Warks) Sheepy Parva (Leics)	MAG 14kms
<b>Sand Martin</b>				
K804524	Ad x	13.07.96 23.03.98	Comets End (W Mid) Le Hua, Charente-Maritime, France	PI
K547344	Ad v	07.09.96 07.06.98	Icklesham (Sussex) Whittemere (Staffs)	RBRG 269kms
K564683	Juv v	06.09.97 21.06.98	Icklesham (Sussex) Comets End (W Mid)	RBRG 233kms
K564104	Ad v	04.09.97 25.06.98	Icklesham (Sussex) Trysull (Staffs)	RBRG 270kms
N271013	Juv v	08.08.97 05.07.98	Newark (Notts) Comets End (W Mid)	104kms
K674173	Juv v	05.09.97 05.07.98	Wicken Fen (Cambs) Comets End (W Mid)	132kms
K735899	Juv v	20.07.96 17.08.98	Deeping St James (Lincs) Little Aston (Staffs)	109kms
<b>House Martin</b>				
K533656	Ad v	05.10.97 26.05.98	Dungeness (Kent) Uttoxeter (Staffs)	293kms
K543895	Juv v	16.09.96 17.06.98	Icklesham (Sussex) Little Aston (Staffs)	RBRG 257kms
<b>Robin</b>				
H938287	Juv x	26.03.93 20.06.98	Sutton Park (W Mid) Sutton Coldfield (W Mid)	MAG 5kms
<b>Blackbird</b>				
XP80649	JuvM x	20.09.85 05.12.97	Gadbury Bank (Worcs) Crech (Dorset)	WRG 147kms
RC52682	AdF x	05.11.97 03.02.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Wendover (Bucks)	WRG 115kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ring Movement
<b>Song Thrush</b>				
RV38832	JuvM x	01.03.98 22.05.98	Northwick (Worcs) Worcester (Worcs)	WRG 4kms
<b>Sedge Warbler</b>				
5229565	Juv v	13.08.95 25.05.96	Genk, Limburg, Belgium Brandon Marsh (Warks)	500kms
4971083	Juv v	09.08.95 27.04.97	Berendrecht, Belgium Upton Warren (Worcs)	454kms
K373187	Juv v	15.08.95 04.05.98	Upton Warren (Worcs) Hoddesdon (Herts)	WRG 155kms
N268695	Juv v	07.08.97 10.05.98	Belle Lake, Waterford, Eire Hams Hall (Warks)	365kms
E279852	Juv v	14.07.93 16.05.98	Stanford Reservoir (Northants) Hams Hall (Warks)	40kms
N499556	Ad v	25.04.98 20.05.98	Upton Warren (Worcs) Newark (Notts)	WRG 131kms
<b>Reed Warbler</b>				
J657168	Ad v	30.04.95 18.05.98	Bridgwater (Somerset) Grimley (Worcs)	134kms
J005270	Ad v	09.08.93 19.06.98	Icklesham (Sussex) Grimley (Worcs)	ABRG 250kms
N558076	Juv v	26.07.98 11.08.98	Betley Mere (Staffs) Icklesham (Sussex)	JAL 314kms
<b>Common Whitethroat</b>				
K865555	Ad x	03.05.97 13.05.98	Betley Mere (Staffs) Altrincham (Cheshire)	JAL 41kms
<b>Blackcap</b>				
N533340	Ad v	29.08.98 04.11.98	Eldersfield Hill Fort (Worcs) Taounate, Morocco	WRG 1946kms
<b>Chiffchaff</b>				
3F1693	Fg x	30.09.97 02.07.98	Sutton Park (W Mid) Buckley (Cheshire)	MARG 100kms
<b>Goldcrest</b>				
6Y5558	Ad v	16.11.96 07.11.97	Blithfield (Staffs) Wirral (Merseyside)	JC 104kms
<b>Pied Flycatcher</b>				
K427955	Pull v	15.06.96 22.05.98	Newtown (Powys) Dimmingsdale (Staffs)	107kms
N251033	Pull v	07.06.97 22.05.98	Macclesfield (Cheshire) Hollybush (Worcs)	SMRG 131kms



Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ring Movement
<b>Blue Tit</b>				
J542688	Juv v	03.07.94 09.03.97	Brandon Marsh (Warks) Sutton Coldfield (W Mid)	BRG 35kms
N295107	Juv v	04.11.97 07.03.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Bridgnorth (Salop)	WRG 43kms
<b>Great Tit</b>				
N029067	Juv v	25.01.97 09.03.98	Shugborough Hall (Staffs) Grosmont (N Yorks)	B, S and M 200kms
<b>Carrión Crow</b>				
FA76796	Pull	24.05.96	Kemerton (Worcs)	WRG
FA76797	Pull	24.05.96	Kemerton (Worcs)	WRG
FA76798	Pull	24.05.96	Kemerton (Worcs)	WRG
All three freshly dead 15.04.97 at Overbury (Worcs) – Larson Trap – crop control				
<b>House Sparrow</b>				
VP94285	FgM x	24.12.95 20.09.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Malvern (Worcs)	WRG 1km
<b>Chaffinch</b>				
N295171	AdM x	12.12.97 28.02.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Godalming (Surrey)	WRG 155kms
K928937	Ad x	09.02.97 22.03.98	Four Ashes (Staffs) Smaland, Kronenberg, Sweden	B, S and M 1127kms
N465776	Ad x	21.12.97 28.03.98	Shugborough Hall (Staffs) Goteborg-Och-Bohus, Sweden	B, S and M 1032kms
<b>Brambling</b>				
K507962	Fg v	09.03.96 19.04.98	Sandon (Staffs) Ripon (N Yorks)	B, S and M 145kms
<b>Greenfinch</b>				
VV75420	Fg x	04.10.97 12.04.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Milnthorpe (Cumbria)	B, S and M 142kms
<b>Siskin</b>				
N360288	Fg x	30.01.98 02.06.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Dalmally (Strathclyde)	B, S and M 420kms
6195429	JuvF v	22.10.97 22.01.98	West-Vlaanderen, Belgium Malvern Link (Worcs)	363kms
N511724	Ad v	27.01.98 04.04.98	Wolverhampton (W Mid) Morpeth (Northumberland)	B, S and M 285kms

Species Ring No.	Age/Sex	Date	Place	Ringer Movement
K654080	Fg v	07.03.98 27.03.98	Breachwood Green (Herts) Kingsley (Staffs)	152kms
N532091	AdM x	26.03.98 04.04.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Delamere Forest (Cheshire)	WAG 126kms
N532056	JuvM v	26.02.98 05.04.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Wicklow, Eire	WAG 281kms
N548609	Fg v	16.03.98 08.04.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Killearn (Central Scotland)	B, S and M 369kms
N360281	Fg v	27.01.98 12.04.98	Uttoxeter (Staffs) Felixstowe (Suffolk)	JC 240kms
N364232	JuvF x	12.03.95 13.04.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Lewiston (Highland, Scotland)	WAG 594kms
N324543	AdF v	30.01.98 14.04.98	Tamworth (Staffs) Rhos-on-Sea (Conwy, formerly Cwyd)	AEC 156kms
N548834	Fg v	05.04.98 16.04.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Ballochraggan (Highland, Scotland)	B, S and M 542kms
N360122	Fg v	06.01.98 16.04.98	Uttoxeter (Staffs) Ballochraggan (Highland, Scotland)	JC 558kms
N332608	JuvF v	08.02.98 20.04.98	King's Norton (W Mid) Inchmarlo, Banchory (Grampian)	CG 518kms
N511712	Fg v	22.01.98 28.04.98	Wolverhampton (W Mid) Loch Lomond (Strathclyde)	B, S and M 432kms
N548815	Fg x	05.04.98 29.04.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Ardnaggowan (Strathclyde)	B, S and M 404kms
N329326	JuvF v	15.01.98 30.04.98	Malvern Link (Worcs) Ballochraggan (Highland, Scotland)	WAG 636kms
N548822	Fg v	05.04.98 07.05.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Fair Isle (Shetland)	B, S and M 724kms
N548789	Fg x	04.04.98 09.05.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Ormiston Mains (Lothian)	B, S and M 325kms
N548764	Fg x	30.01.98 20.05.98	Kingsley (Staffs) Darvel (Strathclyde)	B, S and M 322kms
N332613	JuvM x	10.02.98 03.04.98	Kings Norton (W Mid) Braemar (Grampian)	CG 520kms
<b>Reed Bunting</b>				
J595494	Juv v	06.07.94 10.01.98	Thrybergh Park (S Yorks) Grimley (Worcs)	SBRG 149kms

## 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 Category A species, which are denoted 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 1998 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	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	1996	1997	1997	1996
* Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	1995	1995	1996	1997
* Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	C	1997	1996	1986
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	C	C	C	C
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	C	1996	C	1996
* Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	C	C	C	1991
* Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	C	C	C	1996
* Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	1994	1989	1993	1996
* Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	—	—	1971	—
* Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	1994	1997	1996	1990
* European Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	1983	1968	1990	1970
* Leach's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>	1997	1997	1989	1987
* Northern Gannet (Gannet)	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	1997	1997	1993	1991
Great Cormorant (Cormorant)	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	C	C	C	C
* Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	C	1993	C	C
* Great Bittern (Bittern)	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	C	1997	C	1995
** Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	1981	1865	1901	<1836
** Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	C	1983	1987	1994

Species	Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
** Squacco Heron	Ardeola ralloides	—	—	1874
** Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis	1994	1993	1987
* Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	C	C	C
** Great White Egret	Ardea alba	1995	—	—
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	C	C	C
* Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea	1990	1982	1994
** Black Stork	Ciconia nigra	—	1956	1985
* White Stork	Ciconia ciconia	1997	C	C
** Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus	—	—	1840
* Eurasian Spoonbill (Spoonbill)	Platalea leucorodia	1996	1988	C
Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	C	C	C
Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan)	Cygnus columbianus	C	C	C
* Whooper Swan	Cygnus cygnus	C	C	C
* Bean Goose	Anser fabalis	1996	C	1994
* Pink-footed Goose	Anser brachyrhynchus	C	C	C
* White-fronted Goose	Anser albifrons	C	C	C
[Lesser White-fronted Goose]	Anser erythropus	1991	—	1992
Greylag Goose	Anser anser	C	C	C
[Snow Goose]	Anser caerulescens	1997	C	1996
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	C	C	C
* Barnacle Goose	Branta leucopsis	C	C	C
* Brent Goose	Branta bernicla	1996	C	C
[Red-breasted Goose]	Branta ruficollis	1973	1996	1992
Egyptian Goose	Alopochen aegyptiacus	C	1989	C
* Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea	C	1996	C
Common Shelduck (Shelduck)	Tadorna tadorna	C	C	C
Mandarin Duck	Aix galericulata	C	C	C
Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon)	Anas penelope	C	C	C
** American Wigeon	Anas americana	1987	—	C
Gadwall	Anas strepera	C	C	C
Common Teal (Teal)	Anas crecca	C	C	C
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	C	C	C
Northern Pintail (Pintail)	Anas acuta	C	C	C
Garganey	Anas querquedula	C	C	C
** Blue-winged Teal	Anas discors	1989	1989	1996
Northern Shoveler (Shoveler)	Anas clypeata	C	C	C
* Red-crested Pochard	Nettion rufina	C	C	C
Common Pochard (Pochard)	Aythya ferina	C	C	C
* Ring-necked Duck	Aythya collaris	1997	1990	1977
** Ferruginous Duck	Aythya nyroca	C	1993	1992
Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula	C	C	C
Greater Scaup (Scaup)	Aythya marila	C	C	C
* Lesser Scaup	Aythya affinis	—	—	1987
* Common Eider (Eider)	Somateria mollissima	1993	1997	1993
* Long-tailed Duck	Clangula hyemalis	1992	1991	1996
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	C	C	C
* Surf Scoter	Melanitta perspicillata	1986	—	—
* Velvet Scoter	Melanitta fusca	1995	1985	1992
Common Goldeneye (Goldeneye)	Bucephala clangula	C	C	C
Smew	Mergellus albellus	C	C	C
* Red-breasted Merganser	Mergus serrator	C	C	C
Goosander	Mergus merganser	C	C	C
Ruddy Duck	Oxyura jamaicensis	C	C	C
* Honey-buzzard	Pernis apivorus	1993	1987	1997
** Black Kite	Milvus migrans	—	1986	1991
* Red Kite	Milvus milvus	C	C	C
** White-tailed Eagle	Haliaeetus albicilla	1891	1945	1905
* Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus	C	C	C

Species	Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
* Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1997	1997	C 1997
* Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1995	1995	C 1951
* Northern Goshawk (Goshawk)	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	C	C	C C
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	C 1985
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	C	C	C C
* Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	C	1996	1993 C
** Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	1974	—	—
* Corn Crake	<i>Crex crex</i>	1994	1988	1988 1965
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 oedipnemus</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	C —
** 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 1997
** 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	C 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>	1997	C	C 1988
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	C	C	C 1993
* Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	1993	1988	C 1985
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	C	C	C C
** Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	1985	—	—

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
* Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>	1995	—	1980	—
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	C	C	C	C
Jack Snipe	<i>Limnocyptes 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	C
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	C
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	C
** 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	1997	1997
* Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	1997	1995	1991	1985
* Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1997	1996	1997	1997
* Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	—	1987	1994	1991
* Great Skua	<i>Catharacta skua</i>	C	1994	1997	C
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	—	1996	—	1997
Little Gull	<i>Larus minutus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Sabine's Gull	<i>Larus sabini</i>	1989	1997	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>	C	1997	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	1997
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	C	C	C	C
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	C	C	1997	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	C
* 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 albibrons</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>	—	1953	—	1912
* Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	1995	C	1996	1991
* Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	1953	1963	1983	1963

Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
**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 (Ring-necked Parakeet)	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	C	1996	C	C
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	C
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	C	C	C	C
** Tengmalm's Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	—	1901	—	—
European Nightjar (Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	1989	C	C	1979
** White-throated Needle-tailed Swift	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	—	—	1991	—
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	C	C	C	C
* Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	—	1997	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
** European Roller (Roller)	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	—	—	1908	—
* Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1995	1997	1996	1997
* Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	C	1997	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	1997	C	C
Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	C	C	C	C
* Horned Lark (Shorelark)	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	1994	1996	1997	1997
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	1997	C	C
* Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	C	C	C	1995
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	C	C	C	C
* Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	1997	—	—	—
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	C	C	C	C
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	C	C	C	C
* Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing)	<i>Bombicilla garrulus</i>	1996	1997	C	C
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	1996	C	C	1997
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
Common 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

Species	Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
** Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	—	—	1996
** White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	1895	—	—
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	C	C	C
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	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
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	C	C	C
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	C	C	C
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	C	C	C
* Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	C	C	1978
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	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
* Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	1992	C	1996
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	C	C	C
** Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	1979	—	—
* Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	1997	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
Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	C	C	C
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	C	C	C
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	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	—
** Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	—	—	1994
** Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	—	—	—
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	C	C	C
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	C	C	C
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	C	C	C
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	C	C	C
* Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	1997	C	1996
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	C	C	C
* Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1992	—	—
Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	C	C	C
* Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	1994	1994	1997
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	C	C	C
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>	C	C	C
Willow Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>	C	C	C
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	C	C	C
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	C	C	C
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	C	C	C
European Nuthatch (Nuthatch)	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	C	C	C
Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper)	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	C	C	C
* Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1994	1997	1997
* Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	1983	1997	1976
** Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	—	1987	—
* Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1991	C	C
* Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	—	1893	—
Eurasian Jay (Jay)	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	C	C	C
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	C	C	C
** Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	—	—	1991
* Red-billed Chough (Chough)	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	—	1826	—



Species		Warks	Worcs	Staffs	W Mid
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)	<i>Corvus corax</i>	C	C	C	C
(*except Worcs & Staffs)					
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
* Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	1992	1997	C	1991
Common Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	C	C	C	C
** Arctic Redpoll	<i>Carduelis homemanni</i>	—	1996	1996	—
** Two-barred Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	—	1838	1980	—
Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	C	C	C	1997
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	C	C	C	C
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	C	C	C	1997
* Lapland Longspur (Lapland Bunting)	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	1981	—	1997	1996
* Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	1997	C	1997	1997
** Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	—	1996	—	—
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	C	C	C	C
* Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirius</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 calandria</i>	C	C	C	C
** Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	—	—	—	1968
<b>County List Totals</b>		<b>291</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>260</b>

## Gazetteer

The following alphabetical list for each county gives the grid reference (if known) of all localities mentioned in the Report.

### Warwickshire

Abbey Fields (Kenilworth)	SP2872	Church Pool Covert	SP2092	Kenilworth	SP2971
Abbots Salford Pool	SP0749	Claverdon	SP1964	Kinelon	SP3351
Alcester	SP0957	Close Wood	SP2584	Kingsbury	SP2196
Alderminster	SP2348	Clowes Wood	SP0973	Kingsbury Colliery	SP2398
All Oaks Lane (Brinklow)	SP4478	Colehill	SP2089	Kingsbury Rifle Range	SP2296
Alvecole	SK2504	Colehill Gasworks		Kingsbury Water Park	SP2097
Arlescole	SP3948	(site of)	SP1990	Kingsbury Wood	SP2397
Arley	SP2890	Combroke	SP3051	Kites Hardwick	SP4768
Ashorne	SP3057	Compton Verney	SP3152	Knightcote	SP4055
Atherstone	SP3097	Compton Wynyates	SP3341		
Atherstone GC	SP3096	Coombe Abbey	SP4079	Ladywalk	SP2191
Atherstone-on-Stour	SP2051	Coton Pools	SP2194	Lawford Heath	SP4676
Avon Dassett	SP4149	Crackley Wood	SP2874	Lea Marston Pools	SP2093
		Curdworth	SP1892	Leamington Hastings	SP4467
				Leamington Spa	SP3165
BAD Kineton	SP3651	Dosthill Pool	SP2098	Lighthorne	SP3355
Baddesley Clinton	SP2071	Draycote Water	SP4669	Lighthorne Pools	SP3356
Baginton	SP3474	Drayton	SP1756	Lighthorne Quarry	SP3456
Baginton Airport	SP3574	Dunton	SP1893	Lighthorne Rough	SP3154
Baginton Lagoons	SP3573			Little Dassett	SP3852
Bannam's Wood	SP1164	Earlwood Lakes	SP1174	Little Packington Tip	SP2085
Barford	SP2760	Edge Hill Wood		Little Shrewley	SP2267
Barford Wood	SP2862	(Kingsbury)	SP2398	Long Itchington	SP4165
Beausale	SP2370	Edgell Quarry	SP3746	Lower Quinton	SP1847
Bedworth Hill Res	SP3685	Edgell Wood	SP3648	Lower Radbourn	SP4457
Bedworth Slough	SP3587			Loxley	SP2552
Bentley Woods	SP2895	Farnborough	SP4349		
Bermuda	SP3589	Farnborough Park	SP4249	Marcliff	SP2094
Bidford-on-Avon	SP0951	Fenny Compton	SP4152	Marston Pits	SP2195
Bishop's Bowl Lakes	SP3858	Flecknoe	SP5163	Marton	SP4068
Bishop's Itchington	SP3857	Forest of Arden GC	SP2285	Maxstoke	SP2386
Bishop's Tachbrook	SP3161	Forshaw Heath	SP0873	Middleton Hall/Pits	SP1998
Black Hill Pool				Middleton village	SP1798
(Snitterfield)	SP2359	Gaydon	SP3654	Milcote	SP1852
Bodymoor Heath	SP2095	Gaydon Tip	SP3655	Moreton Morrell	SP3155
Bowshot Wood	SP3053	Grandborough	SP4965	Moreton Paddock	SP3054
Brailes	SP3337	Great Aine	SP1159	Morton Bagot	SP1164
Brandon Hall	SP4076			Mousley End	SP2169
Brandon Marsh	SP3875	Hampton Wood	SP2559		
Brandon Wood	SP3976	Hams Hall	SP2091	Napton Fields	SP4461
Bubbenhall Tip	SP3671	Hartshill	SP3293	Napton Hill	SP4561
Budbrooke	SP2565	Hartshill SF	SP3395	Napton Res	SP4759
Burton Dassett	SP3951	Hatton	SP2367	Newfield Pool (Sloneton)	SP4554
Butlers Marston	SP3150	Hay Wood	SP2171	Newton Regis	SK2707
		Heath End	SP2360	No Man's Heath	SK2808
Calcutt	SP4664	Heathcote	SP3063	Northend	SP3952
Chadwick End		Hodnell	SP4257	Nuneaton	SP3691
(Warks side)	SP2072	Hunningham	SP3768		
Chapel Green (Napton)	SP4660			Oakley Wood	SP3059
Charlecote	SP2656	Idlicote	SP2844	Over Whitacre	SP2590
Charlecote GP	SP2657	Ilmington Downs	SP1942	Oversley Wood	SP1056
Chase Wood	SP2572	Ilmington Holt	SP3755	Oxhill	SP3145
Chesterton Pools	SP3558				
Chesterton Wood	SP3457	Jubilee Pools	SP3873		

Packington Park	SP2283	Snitterfield Airfield	SP1959	Upton House	SP3645
Pleasance Farm (Kenilworth)	SP2672	Snitterfield Bushes	SP2060		
Polesworth	SK2602	Somers, The	SP2282	Walsgrave Hill	SP3980
Poofields	SP3253	Soulham	SP4162	Walton	SP2853
Poors Wood	SP2473	Spermall	SP0862	Walton Hall	SP2852
Preston-on-Stour	SP2049	Steetley Meadows CP	SP3875	Warrington	SP4147
Priors Hardwick	SP4756	Stirch	SP5055	Warwick	SP2864
Priors Marston	SP4957	Stockingford	SP3491	Warwick Park	SP2863
		Stockton	SP4365	Wasperton	SP2658
Radway	SP3748	Stockton Quarries	SP4364	Watergall	SP4255
Roundhill Wood	SP2952	Stockton Res	SP4264	Waverley Wood	SP3570
Rugby	SP5175	Stoneleigh Park	SP3171	Welcombe Hills	SP2057
Ryton Gardens	SP4074	Stoneton Moat	SP4654	Wellesbourne	SP2755
Ryton Pools CP	SP3772	Stratford-upon-Avon	SP2055	Whitcote	SP3043
Ryton Wood	SP3872	Sutton-under-Brailles	SP3037	Whaleley	SP2299
		Sych Wood	SP2092	Whitacre Heath	SP2192
Salford Priors GP	SP0752			Whitstone	SP3889
Seckington	SK2607	Temple Pool	SP3744	Wishaw	SP1794
Seeswood Pool	SP3290	Tysoe	SP3444	Wixford Pool	SP0854
Shawbury	SP2588			Wolverton	SP2062
Sherbourne	SP2661	Ufton Fields	SP3861	Wolvey	SP4387
Shotteswell	SP4245	Ufton Wood	SP3862	Wood End (Kingsbury)	SP2398
Shuckburgh Hills/Park	SP4961	Umberslade	SP1371	Wootton Wawen	SP1563
Shusloke Res	SP2291	Upper Kingston	SP3656	Wormleighton	SP4454
Snitterfield	SP2159	Upper Radbourn	SP4458	Wormleighton Res	SP4451

## Worcestershire

Ab Lench	SP0151	Bishampton Vale		Bushley Green	SO8634
Abberley Hill	SO7566	Golf Course	SP0050		
Abberton	SO9953	Bishampton Vale Pool	SP0050	Calcot Hill	SO9478
Alfrick Pound	SO7452	Bitell	SP0174	Caldewell Pool	SO9148
Alvechurch	SP0272	Blackstone Rock	SO7974	Caldewell Mill	SO9148
Arley Wood	SO8062	Blakeshall	SO8381	Callow Hill	SO7473
Arrow Valley Lake	SP0567	Bockleton	SO5961	Carey's Brook	SO7950
Ashfield	SO7652	Boraston	SO6170	Castlemorton	SO7937
Ashmoor Common	SO8446	Bourne (The)	SO9856	Castlemorton Common	SO7839
Ashton-under-Hill	SO9938	Bransford	SO7852	Caunsall	SO8680
Aston Mill	SO9435	Bransford Bridge	SO8053	Chase End Wood	SO9073
Aston Somerville	SP0438	Bredon Hill	SO9139	Chateau Impney	SO9164
Astwood Bank	SP0462	Bredons Hardwick	SO9135	Chawson	SO8862
		Bredons Norton	SO9339	Childswickham	SP0738
Banks Green	SO9967	Bretforton	SP0943	Church Lench	SP0251
Barbourne	SO8457	British Camp	SO7640	Church Lench Pool	SP0250
Barnards Green	SO7845	British Camp Reservoir	SO7639	Churchill	SO8879
Beckford	SO9735	Broad Green	SO7756	Cleeve Prior	SP0849
Bednall Brook	SO5767	Broad Heath	SO8156	Clent	SO9379
Berrow Green	SO7458	Broadwas	SO7656	Clevedale	SO8346
Berrow Hill (Martley)	SO7458	Broadway	SP0937	Cliffey Wood	SO8444
Berrow Hill (Pendock)	SO7933	Broadway GP	SP0837	Clifton-on-Severn	SO8446
Besford	SO9144	Broadway Hill	SP1136	Cobblers Corner	SO7756
Bevere Lock	SO8359	Brockamin	SO7653	Cotton Hackett	SP0075
Bewdley	SO7875	Brockhill Farm	SP0169	Cotton Reservoir	SP0075
Bibbys Hollow	SO9682	Bromsgrove	SO9570	Coldridge Wood	SO8082
Birch Coppice	SO8081	Broughton Green	SO9561	Colliers Knapp	SP1035
Birchen Coppice	SO8073	Brownheath Common	SO8960	Collins Green	SO7457
Birlingham	SO9343	Burnt Wood	SO7673	Cookley	SO8480
Birtsmorton	SO8035	Bushley	SO8734	Com Brook	SO6169

Cotheridge	SO7855	Habberley Valley	SO8078	Kyre	SO6263
Cowdsen	SO9453	Hadzor	SO9162	Kyre Pool	SO6364
Crews Hill Wood	SO7353	Hallow	SO8258	Kyreswood	SO6067
Croome	SO8744	Ham Bridge	SO7361		
Croome Court	SO8844	Ham Wood	SO7359	Langdale Wood	SO7943
Croome Perry Wood	SO9046	Hampton	SP0243	Langdale Wood Pool	SO7943
Crophome	SO9844	Hangman's Hill	SO7639	Larford	SO8169
Crowle	SO9256	Hanley Castle	SO8342	Laughem Brook	SO8158
Crowle Green	SO9256	Hanley Swan	SO8142	Laughem Hill	SO7758
		Happy Valley	SO7645	Laughem Pools	SO7758
		Harpley	SO6861	Leigh	SO7853
Danemoor	SO7941	Hartlebury	SO8470	Leigh Brook	SO7652
Darby's Green	SO7456	Hartlebury Common	SO8270	Lem Brook	SO7275
Dean Brook	SO9260	Hartlebury Tip	SO8371	Lenchwick	SP0347
Deerfold Wood	SO9147	Haws Hill Wood	SO6065	Lickey Hills Wood	SO9975
Defford	SO9143	Hewell Grange	SP0069	Lindridge	SO6769
Devils Spittleful	SO8875	High Green	SO8645	Little Combenton	SO9643
Diglis	SO8453	Highstank Pool	SO8965	Lodge Pool	SP0466
Dodford	SO9373	Hill Croome	SO8840	Long Coppice	SO7550
Doverdale	SO8566	Hill Furze	SP0048	Long Covert	SO8443
Dowles Brook	SO7776	Hillhampton	SO7865	Longdon	SO8336
Drakes Broughton	SO9148	Hillside	SO7561	Longdon Marsh	SO8236
Drayton	SO9076	Hindlip	SO8758	Longley Green	SO7350
Droitwich	SO8963	Hindlip Pool	SO8858	Lower Berrington	SO5767
Droitwich Canal	SO8560	Hinton-on-the-Green	SP0240	Lower Haresbrook	SO5767
Droitwich Sewage Works	SO8661	Hollybed Common	SO7737	Lower Moor	SO9847
Dunhamstead	SO9160	Hollybush	SO7636	Lower Westmancote	SO9337
		Holt	SO8262		
Eardiston	SO6968	Holt Fleet	SO8263	Madeley Heath	SO9577
Earls Croome	SO8742	Honeybourne	SP1143	Madresfield	SO8047
Eckington	SO9241	Hornhill Wood	SO9558	Malvern	SO7745
Eldersfield	SO8031	Horsham	SO7357	Malvern Link	SO7847
Elmbridge	SO8967	Huddington	SO9457	Malvern Sewage Works	SO7944
Elmley Castle	SO9841	Huntingdrop Common	SO9262	Malvern Wells	SO7742
Evesham	SP0343	Hurcott Wood	SO8578	Marl Brook	SO6670
Eymore Wood	SO7779			Marsh Common	SO8942
		Ipsley Alders	SP0767	Martley	SO7560
Far Forest	SO7275	Ipsley Mill Pool	SP0666	Midsummer Hill	SO7637
Farmbank Plantation	SO8765	Islandpool	SO8580	Mill Pond	SO7737
Feckenham	SP0061	Ismere	SO8679	Monk Wood	SO8060
Fladbury	SO9946	Iverley	SO8880	Monkwood Green	SO8060
Flashers Wood	SO8146			Mount Segg	SO8675
Flock Mill Pool	SO8377	Kemerton	SO9437	Mythe Bridge	SO8833
Fox Lydiate Wood	SP0267	Kemerton Pool	SO9437		
Frankley Hill	SO9879	Kempsey	SO8549	Narrow Wood	SO8947
Frith Common	SO6969	Kempsey Common	SO8748	Naunton Beauchamp	SO9652
		Kempsey Lower Ham	SO8449	New Mill Bridge	SO7262
		Kenswick	SO7958	New Pool	SO7843
Gadbury Bank	SO7931	Kersee	SO9939	New Wood	SO7564
Gaudywood Park	SO6771	Kidderminster	SO8376	Nimmings Wood	SO9380
Ghelevell Park		Kingsford	SO8281	Nipple Coppice	SO7456
Goosehill Wood	SO9360	Kingswood Common	SO7460	North Covert	SO9140
Grafton Lane	SO9469	Kington	SO9555	North Hill	SO7646
Grafton Wood	SO9756	Kinnerley	SO8743	Northwick Marsh	SO8357
Great Farley Wood	SO9578	Kinsham	SO9335	Norton Pool	SP0448
Great Combenton	SO9542	Knapp, The	SO7451		
Great Witley	SO7566	Knightstord Bridge	SO7355	Oakenshaw Wood	SP0465
Grimley	SO8360	Knightwick	SO7355	Oakley	SO8960
Gullet, The	SO7638	Knowles Coppice	SO7676	Oddingley	SO9159

Offenham	SP0546	Shermal Green	SO9161	Towns End	SO9856
Offerton	SO8958	Sheriffs Lench	SP0249	Trapnell Brook	SO8471
Offmore Farm	SO8476	Shoots Hill Wood	SO9257	Trench Wood	SO9258
Old Hills Common	SO8246	Shortwood Roughs	SP0270	Trimpley	SO7678
Old Storridge	SO7451	Shrawley	SO8065	Twilard Wood	SO9780
Oldington	SO8274	Shrawley Wood	SO8066	Uckinghall	SO8638
Ombersley	SO8463	Sinton Green	SO8160	Uphampton	SO8364
Ombersley Golf Course	SO8463	Sling Common	SO9477	Upper Holling	SO7558
Overbury	SO9537	Smite	SO8958	Upper Howsen	SO7954
		Smith End Green	SO7752	Upper Kites Wood	SO9757
Pebworth	SP1346	Snuffmill Pool	SO7874	Upper Lode	SO8833
Pendock	SO7832	South Littleton	SP0746	Upper Sandlin	SO7551
Peopleton	SO9350	Southcrest	SP0366	Upton Snodsbury	SO9454
Pepper Wood	SO9374	Spetchley	SO8953	Upton-on-Severn	SO8540
Pershore	SO9045	St Annes Well	SO7745	Upton Warren	SO9367
Pinvin	SO9549	St Kenelm's Farm	SO9480	Wadborough	SO9047
Pipers Hill	SO9565	Stanford Court	SO7065	Walsgrove Hill	SO7456
Pirton	SO8747	Stanley Wood	SO9257	Walton Hill	SO8479
Porters Mill	SO8660	Start's Green	SO8083	Warndon	SO8856
Powick	SO8351	Stocking Pool Plantation	SO6870	Wassell Grove Pools	SO9382
Powick Ham	SO8352	Stoke Bliss	SO6562	Web Heath	SP0166
		Stoke Prior	SO9467	West Hagley	SO9080
Ramsden	SO9246	Stoke Works	SO9466	Westmancote	SO9337
Ravenshill Green	SO7454	Stonehall Common	SO8849	Westwood	SO8763
Ravenshill Pool	SO7453	Stourvale Marsh	SO8277	Whittington	SO8752
Ravenshill Wood	SO7353	Strensham	SO9139	Wick	SO9645
Redditch	SP0467	Strensham Lock	SO9140	Wickhamford	SP0641
Redmarley	SO7566	Suckley Hills	SO7351	Wilden	SO8272
Redstone Rock	SO8169	Sugar Loaf Hill	SO7645	Wildmoor Tip	SO9576
Rhydd Covert	SO8075			Windmill Hill	SP0748
Ripple	SO8736	Table Hill	SO7846	Witley Court	SO7664
River Rea	SO6469	Taldebigge	SO9668	Wood Norton	SP0147
Romsley	SO9679	Teme Valley	SO6676	Worcester	SO8454
Roundhill Wood	SO9281	Tenbury Walls	SO5968	Worcester Canal	SO9058
Ryall	SO8639	Thorn Grove	SO8259	Worcester Cathedral	SO8554
		Three Counties		Worcestershire Beacon	SO7645
Sale Green	SO9358	Showground	SO7842	Wyche Cutting	SO7743
Sapey Brook	SO6961	Throckmorton	SO9748	Wychbold	SO9265
Saxon's Lode	SO8638	Tibberton	SO9057	Wyre Forest	SO7475
Sedgeberrrow	SP0238	Tiddesley Wood	SO9345	Wyre Piddle	SO9647
Severn Stoke	SO8544	Timberhonger	SO9170	Wythall	SP0875
Shakenhurst Brook	SO6773	Tinkers Cross	SO7856	Yeald Wood	SP0152
Shelsley Beauchamp	SO7363	Tolladine	SO8757		

## Staffordshire

Alder Stretch		Back Forest	SJ9865	Beech	SJ8538
Airewas GP	SK1715	Bagots Wood	SK0727	Beeston Tor	SK1054
Aston by Stone	SJ9131	Baldstones NR	SK0164	Belvide	SJ8610
Anslow	SK2125	Baldwins Gate	SJ7940	Betley Mere	SJ7548
Anson's Bank	SJ9816	Barton GP	SK2017	Bishton Hall	
Apedale CP	SJ8047	Basford Green	SJ9951	Blackbank	SJ8147
Apeton	SJ8518	Basford	SJ9951	Blithfield	SK0623
Aquamoor	SJ8214	Bassett's Pole	SO1499	Blore Crossroads	SK1148
Aqualate	SJ7720	Baswich	SJ9422	Boarsgrove	SK0462
Armitage	SK0716	Bateswood CP	SJ7947	Borrowpit Lake	SK2103
Ashwood	SO8688	Bearda Hill	SJ9664	Boscobel	SJ8308
Aston Bridge	SK1631	Beaulesert	SK0313	Bottom Hocker	
Astonefields (Stafford)	SJ9225	Bednall Belt	SJ9517	Boundary Hall/Village	SJ9842

Bradley	SJ0817	Eccleshall	SJ8329	Kettlebrook Park	SJ2003
Branco	SJ9621	Eland Brook		Kidsgrove	SJ8354
Branco Sewage Farm	SJ9522	Elford GP	SK1809	Kings Bromley	SK1216
Brankley Bottom	SK1521	Enville	SO8386	Kingsley	SK0046
Branton GP/WP	SK2120			Kingswood	SJ9908
Brindley Ford	SJ8854	Fauld	SK1828	Kinvar Edge	SO8383
Broadhurst Mill	SK0440	Festival Park	SJ8647	Knotbury	SK0168
Brockhurst	SJ8211	Filleybrooks	SJ8934	Knipersley	SJ8955
Brocton Coppice	SJ9818	Fisherwick	SK1709		
Brocton Field	SJ9817	Flash	SK0267	Lawneswood	SO8786
Brookleys	SK0943	Ford Hall	SK0955	Leek	SJ9856
Burton on Trent	SK2423	Four Ashes	SJ9208	Lichfield	SK1109
Bushton Lane	SK2026	Frogthall	SK0247	Little Aston	SK0900
Butterton	SJ8342			Little Stoke	SJ9132
Byrkley Park	SK1623	Gailey	SJ9310	Little Wyrley	SK0105
		Gerrards Bromley	SJ7734	Longsdon Mill Pond	SJ9555
Calton Moor	SK1050	Gib Torr	SK0265	Longsdon Wood	SJ9655
Calton	SK1050	Glacier Boulder	SJ9818	Lower Avenue	SJ8807
Calwich	SK1242	Glutton Bridge		Lower Brockhurst	SJ8212
Calwich Park	SK1243	Gnosall	SJ8220	Loynton Moss	SJ7824
Cannock Chase	SJ91/SK01	Goldsitch Moss	SK0164	Lutley	
Cannock Tip	SJ9909	Gothersley	SO8687	Lyme Valley Park	SJ8544
Canwell	SK1400	Great Haywood	SJ9922	Lyndedale Park	
Castle Ring	SK0412	Great Wyrley	SO7566		
Catholme	SK2015	Greenway Bank CP	SJ8855	Manifold Valley	SK05/15
Chasewater	SK0307	Gun Hill	SJ9761	Mansty Farm	SJ9512
Cheadle	SK0143			Marchington	SK1128
Checkhill	SO8567	Halfpenny Green	SO8391	Marquis Drive	SK0015
Chillington	SJ8606	Hanchurch	SJ8340	Marston	SJ8213
Church Eaton	SJ8317	Hanchurch Water Tower		Mayfield	SK1545
Chumet Valley	SJ95/SK04	Handsacre Flash	SK0915	Meece Brook	SJ83
Churnel Woods NR	SK0049	Harlow Hill	SK1446	Middle Hills	SK0362
Coldmeee Pools	SJ8532	Hartshill	SJ8640	Middleton Pit	SK1899
Colwich	SK0121	Haughton	SJ8620	Milford	SJ9721
Coombs Valley	SK0052	Hawkshuts Wood		Minster Pool (Lichfield)	SK1109
Copmere	SJ8029	Haywood Warren	SJ9920	Moors Gorse	SK0215
Coton Clanford	SJ8723	Hazel Barrow	SK0163	Morridge	SK0258
Cotton Mill Bridge	SK0742	Hazelstine	SJ9420	Mottey Meadows	SJ8313
Cowhay Head		Hednesford Hills	SK0112	Musden Low	SK1150
Crakemarsh	SK0936	Hen Cloud	SK0061		
Creswell	SJ8925	Highgate Common	SO8489	Needwood	SK1824
Crossplains	SK1624	High Offley	SJ7826	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ8445
Croxall GP	SK1914	High Onn	SJ8216	Newchurch	SK1423
Crumpwood	SK0942	Hill Ridware	SK0717	Norbury Bridge	SK1142
Cuckoo Bank		Himley	SO8891	Norton Bridge	SJ8730
		Hixon	SK0025		
Denstone	SK0940	Hoar Cross	SK1223	Okeover Mill	SK1648
Dimmingsdale	SK0543	Holditch		Oldacre Valley	SJ9718
Doley Common	SJ8121	Hollinsclough	SK0666	Orchard Common	SK0269
Dosthill	SP2099	Hollybush	SK1326	Otherton	SJ9212
Dove Leys	SK1141			Ousley Cross	SK1244
Dovedale	SK1452	Ipstones	SK0249	Oxbatch	SK0461
Downs Banks	SJ9036	Ivtey Bank	SJ8310		
Doxey Marshes	SJ9023			Park Banks	SK0742
Drayton Bassett	SK1900	Jackson's Coppice	SJ7930	Park Hall CP	SJ9244
Drystone Edge	SK0268	JCB North Lake & Pools	SK1039	Pendelford Mill NR	SJ9804
Dunstall Cross	SK1820			Pillaton	SJ9413
Dydon Wood	SK1344	Katyn Memorial	SJ9816	Pool Dam Marsh	SJ8346
		Keele University	SJ8244	Poolfields	

Pottal Pool	SJ9614	Shelmore	SJ7921	Tittesworth	SJ9960
Prestwood	SK0941	Sherbrook Valley	SJ9818	Tixall	SJ9722
Radford Bank	SJ9320	Shugborough Hall	SJ9922	Toad Hole Bridge	SK1443
Ranges Corner		Solomons Hollow	SK0058	Trentham Park Lake	SJ8640
Ranton	SJ8324	Spath	SK0835	Trysull	SO8594
Rawbones Meadows		Sprink	SK0942	Tutbury	SK2129
Ready-leech Green		Stableford	SJ8138		
Revidge	SK0760	Stafford	SJ9223	Uttoxeter	SK0933
Rickerscote	SJ9320	Stafford Common	SJ9125		
Roach End	SJ9964	Stanton	SK1246	Weaver Hills	SK0946
Roaches	SK0063	Stanton Dale	SK1047	Weeping Cross	SJ9421
Rocaster	SK1139	Stoke-on-Trent	SJ8745	West Brownhills	SK0306
Roddige Farm	SK1713	Stonnall	SK0603	West End (Stoke)	
Round Knowl		Strawberry Hill		Weston Coyney	SJ9244
Royal Cottage	SK0263	Stretton	SJ8811	Westport Lake	SJ8550
Rudyard	SJ9459	Sudbury	SK1531	Wettonmill	SK0956
Rugeley Power Station	SK0517	Sutton	SJ7622	Wheaton Aston	SJ8312
Rushton Spencer	SJ9362	Swallow Moss	SK0760	Whitemoor Haye	SK1813
		Swynnerton Old Park	SJ8535	Whiteswood	SK1041
Sandon	SJ9429	Tamworth	SK2003	Wilnecote	SK2201
Satnall Hills	SJ9820	Tatenhill Airfield		Woodmill	SK1320
Seighford	SJ8824	Teddesley	SJ9415	Wootton	SJ0943
Seven Springs	SK0020	Thorncliffe	SK0158	Wootton Lodge	SK0943
Shaky Bridges		Three Shires Head	SK0068		
Sheepwalks	SO8185	Tillington Cemetery	SJ9124	Yoxall Park	SK1521

## West Midlands

Acoc's Green	SP1183	Castle Hill Wood	SO9491	Four Oaks	SP1198
Aldridge	SK0500	Chadwick End	SP2037	Fowlers Park	SJ9100
Aston University	SP0888	Chelmsley Wood	SP1886	Foxcote Pond	SO9483
		Claregate	SJ8801		
Balsall Common	SP2476	Clayhanger	SK0404	Goscote Valley	SK0102
Barr Beacon	SP0697	Colton Hills	SO9095	Grapes Pool	
Barr Common	SP0699	Compton	SO8898		
Barston	SP2078	Coopers Wood		Halesowen	SO9683
Bartley Reservoir	SP0081	Coptham Heath	SP1777	Halesowen Abbey	SO9782
Bartley Green	SP0081	Cornets End	SP2381	Hampton-in-Arden	SP2080
Berkswell	SP2479	Coseley	SO9494	Handsworth	SP0590
Bickenhill	SP1882	Coventry City Centre	SP3378	Harborne	SP0284
Bilston	SO9496	Cradley Heath	SO9585	Harborne NR	SP0285
Bilston Cemetery	SO9597	Cuckoo's Nook	SP0598	Hayhead Wood	SP0498
Birmingham Airport	SP1784			Heath Town	SO9399
Birmingham City Centre	SP0686	Darby's Hill	SO9689	Hillwood Common	SK1200
Blackheath	SO9786	Darlaston	SO9697	Hobs Hole Lane	SK0601
Bordesley Green	SP0886	Deers Leap Wood	SP0286	Hockley	SP0588
Bourne Vale	SP0699	Dorridge	SP1675	Hockley Heath	SP1572
Boulton's Wood	SP2584	Dudley	SO9490	Hydes Road Pool	SO9994
Bowmans Harbour	SO9399	Dunstable Park	SJ9000		
Bradnock's Marsh	SP2179			Illey	SO9881
Brookvale Park	SP0991	Edgbaston	SP0584		
Brownhills West	SJ0305	Edgbaston Pool	SP0584	Jobs Close Park	SP1876
Buckpool	SO8987	Edgbaston Reservoir	SP0486		
Buckpool Dingle	SO8987			King's Heath	SP0781
Bury's Hill	SO8880	Fen End	SP2274	King's Heath Park	SP0781
		Fens Pools	SO9188	King's Norton	SP0478
Cannon Hill Park	SP0683	Fishley	SK0003	Kingswinford	SO8888
Caston Wood	SO9383	Foot's Hole	SO9087		

Lady Moor Pool	SO9495	Olton	SP1382	Stubbers Green	SK0401
Ladywood	SP0586	Oxley	SJ9001	Sutton Coldfield	SP1296
Langley	SO9988			Sutton Park	SP0997
Lapal	SO9882	Park Lime Pits	SP0299	Temple Balsall	SP2076
Leasowes Park	SO9783	Peddimore Hall	SP1593	Tettenhall	SJ8800
Leys, The	SO9087	Pedmore	SO9182	Thimble End	SP1494
Longmoor Pool	SP0995	Pelsall	SK0203	Tidbury Green	SP1075
Lower Illey	SO9881	Pelsall North Common	SK0103	Titford Pool	SO9888
Lutley Wedge	SO9483	Penn Hospital	SO8995	Tudor Grange Park	SP1479
		Pensnett	SO9188	Turners Hill	SO9688
Marsh Lane GPs	SP2180	Perry Barr Park	SP0692		
Marston Green	SP1781	Perry Hall Park	SP0591	Valley Park	SJ8900
Marston Green Rec. Ground	SP1685	Pype Hayes Park	SP1392	Wall Heath	SO8889
Mary Stevens Park	SO8983	Red House Park	SP0394	Walmley	SP1393
Meers Coppice	SO9285	Rowley Hills	SO9788	Walsall Arboretum	SP0198
Mere Green	SP1199			Walsall Wood	SK0403
Meriden	SP2481	Saltley	SP0987	Ward End	SP1188
Meriden Quarries	SP2381	Saltwells LNR/Wood	SO9387	Warley Woods	SP0185
Meriden Shafts	SP2683	Sandwell Valley	SP0291	Warstock	SP0979
Merry Hill	SO9287	Sheepwash UP	SO9791	Wednesbury	SO9895
Minworth	SP1592	Sheldon	SP1483	Wednesfield	SJ9400
Mons Hill	SO9392	Sheldon CP	SP1584	Wergs	SJ8700
Moseley	SP0783	Shire Oak Park	SK0504	Whitmore Reans	SO9099
Mushroom Green Marsh	SO9386	Sixteen Acre Wood	SP2279	Wide Waters	SO9088
		Small Heath	SP0985	Wiggins Hill	SP1693
Nechells	SP0989	Small Heath Park	SP1085	Wightwick	SO8698
Netherton Hill	SO9388	Smethwick	SP0288	Winson Green	SP0488
Netherton Reservoir	SO9387	Smithy Lane Marthole	SO9089	Wishaw Lane	SP1695
Newbridge	SO8999	Solihull	SP1579	Witton Lakes	SP0892
Norton	SO8982	Sowe Common		Wolverhampton	SO9198
		Spring Vale	SO9395	Woodgate Valley	SP0083
Old Walsall Airfield	SP0499	Stoke Floods	SP3778	Wren's Nest NNR	SO9391
Oldbury	SO9689	Stone Hill Estate		Wyken Slough	SP3683



## 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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R A Prudden  
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H S Quiney

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R Randall  
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S P Roberts  
C H Roe  
D H Rogers  
S Roper  
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*(SEGG)\**  
R W Skeates  
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H Smith  
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M Squire  
J Stanley (JSt)  
M A Stephens

D Stone\*  
Mrs J C Stratford  
B Stretch  
N Stych  
G Summers

J C Teasdale  
R J Thomas  
P Thompson  
R Thompson  
S Thompson  
M Till  
C J Timmins  
H Tollemache  
F W Tunbridge  
C E Turner  
M E Turner  
S J Turner

N Unwin

*Valley Park Bird Group*

J Wagstaff  
P A Wain  
D Waite  
M I Wakeman  
D I M Wallace  
A Walton  
R J Wardle  
*Warwickshire Natural History  
Museum*  
*Warwickshire Wildlife Trust*  
M Waterhouse  
B Westwood  
P F Whitehead  
I C Whitehouse  
S M Whitehouse  
C Wild  
A G Williams  
R W Wilson\*  
J R Winsper  
A J Wolf  
M G Woodhams  
G Woodin  
M W C Woodward  
*Wychavon Ringing Group (WRG)\**

Dr D W Yalden  
M Yapp

