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# Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 1994

# Norfolk Bird Report – 1994

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# Norfolk Mammal Report – 1994

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Front cover painting: White-fronted Geese by J.C. Harrison (reproduced by courtesy T. Andrewartha).  
Back cover photographs: Fallow Deer and Red Deer stag with hinds (R. Tidman).

# NORFOLK BIRD REPORT – 1994

## Editorial

The Council of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society, in conjunction with Norfolk Ornithologists Association, presents the annual report on the birds of Norfolk.

Following publication of the 1993 issue and after discussions with Norfolk Bird Club, it has been agreed that the Club will assume responsibility for compiling the annual county systematic list commencing with the events of 1994.

Readers will have noticed that the amount of space in the 1993 *Norfolk Bird Report* devoted to the species list has almost trebled during the last three issues in an attempt to meet criticism that Norfolk was publishing insufficient information on the more abundant and widespread species. This increase in the size of recent classified lists has placed a substantial burden on the recording team. At the same time Norfolk Bird Club has been duplicating some of this effort in its two-monthly Bulletins. The new arrangements, entirely amicable ones, will enable the Club to devote more space in its Bulletins to articles and allow topical publication of ornithological highlights.

An explanation of the changes and an introduction to those now involved appears below:

**Senior Editor:** Michael J. Seago

Responsible, on behalf of the Society as publishers, for editing the Report as a whole, commissioning articles and illustrations, organising the layout, style and size of the publication and liaising with the printers.

**Editor of Systematic List and County Recorder:** Michael E.S. Rooney

Responsible for assembling a team of recorders and compilers, producing the final edited systematic List and liaising with the Senior Editor.

**Systematic List Authors and Compilers:** Peter Allard, Peter Clement, Keith Dye, Vernon Eve, Mick Fiszer, Phil Heath, John Kemp, Neil Lawton, Michael Rooney, Richard Walker and John Williamson. Continuity should be an important feature of this team with individual members acquiring specialist knowledge of their own species groups.

**Review of the Year:** Giles Dunmore and Phil Heath.

**Contributors List:** Mike Young-Powell.

**Recording:** All systematic list records including those relating to county rarities and national rarities should be submitted *at the end of each month* to the County Recorder Michael E.S. Rooney, The Old Bakery, High Street, Docking PE31 8NH). Recording forms are available from the Recorder. Observations will not normally be acknowledged, but names of all contributors will be published. All observations should be listed in the order appearing in this issue of the *Norfolk Bird Report*.

All articles for consideration, the Ringing Report and artwork, photographs and transparencies should continue to be forwarded to Michael J. Seago (33 Acacia Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PP).

**County Records Committee:** Vernon Eve, Mick Fiszer, Steve Harris, Dave Holman and Andy Stoddart. Secretary: Giles Dunmore (49 The Avenues, Norwich NR 2 3QR). Records of the under-mentioned will only be published if accompanied by a description accepted by the Committee:



Cory's Shearwater  
Great Shearwater  
Storm Petrel  
Purple Heron  
White Stork  
Black Brant  
Green-winged Teal  
Ring-necked Duck  
Ferruginous Duck  
Surf Scoter  
Goshawk (except Brecks)  
Spotted Crake  
Corncrake  
Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
Sabine's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Bec-eater  
Short-toed Lark

Tawny Pipit  
*Flava* Wagtail Continental races  
except Blue-headed and Grey-headed  
Bluethroat (White-spotted only)  
Savi's Warbler  
Aquatic Warbler  
Marsh Warbler  
Melodious Warbler  
Dartford Warbler  
Pallas's Warbler  
Chiffchaff (*tristis* race)  
Woodchat Shrike  
Raven  
Serin  
Common Rosefinch  
Ortolan Bunting  
Little Bunting

**National Rarities:** If the *record* has already been submitted to the County Recorder, the *description* should be forwarded to the Secretary of the County Records Committee (who will provide recording forms) as soon as possible and not left until the year-end.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to the following artists and photographers: N. Arlott, J. Bhalerao, Mrs Sara Bhalerao, A. Bloomfield, N. Bowman, N. Borrow, R. Chittenden, N. Clayton, C. Donnet, Dr K. Elsby, B.W. Jarvis, P. Jones, C.R. Knights, D. Nye, the late R.A. Richardson and R.C. Wilson.

A record total of over 140 prints and transparencies was received. It was no easy task making the selection which appears in this Report. For the first occasion we are delighted to welcome a lady photographer. It is anticipated that by the date of publication all the rarities featured in colour will have been officially accepted.

Acknowledgement is also due to Birdline East Anglia, BTO, Cley Bird Club, English Nature, Gt Yarmouth Bird Club, Nar Valley Ornithological Society, National Trust, Norfolk Bird Club, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Rare Bird Photographic Library, RSPB, Stanford Training Area Bird Club, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, P.R. Allard (county archivist), Mrs M. Dorling, Mrs S.F. Seago and all other contributors.

Regular readers will know that since the 1982 issue, the *Norfolk Bird Report* has been published by the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society in conjunction with Norfolk Ornithologists Association. Throughout this period the Society has enjoyed the ready co-operation of Peter Clarke who, since the publication of the last Report, has retired as Warden of Holme Bird Observatory and Secretary of NOA. We take this opportunity to wish both Peter and his wife, Margaret, a long and happy retirement. Looking to the future the Society looks forward to working with the new team at Holme and welcomes its decision to continue the association whereby members of NOA receive copies of the annual Bird & Mammal Report.

### Sponsorship

We are grateful to the following Trusts for generous support: Christopher Cadbury Charitable Trust, C. James Cadbury Trust, Timothy Colman Charitable Trust and Sarnia Charitable Trust.



# Review of the year

The year started (and ended) with a Black-winged Stilt at Titchwell. Other long-stayers in January included 2 Little Egrets at Stiffkey, an unseasonal Hoopoe at Taverham, 3 Dippers, and an often elusive Raven at Horsey. A Great White Egret also remained at Feltwell Moor, with another flying past Cley on 21st. In contrast to huge numbers of Pinkfooted Geese in the north-west of the county there were only low numbers of Shorelarks, Twite and Lapland Buntings.

**February** was, as January, generally a quiet month ornithologically speaking, with signs of the coming spring limited to coastal movements of Meadow Pipits and Pied Wagtails at the month's end.

**March** was generally mild allowing early spring migrants to appear in good numbers, including plenty of Sand Martins.

Compared to 1993 **April** did not live up to expectations. Following a well watched Grey Plover at the beginning of the month, spring 'ended' on 4th with a cold spell which lasted nearly three weeks. Some compensation occurred in this period with a fly-by Sabine's Gull off Hunstanton and an Arctic Redpoll at Brancaster. The weather changed on 20th and a female Bluethroat (was it a White-spotted?) and two Dotterel appeared at Sheringham, followed by a Sardinian Warbler at Burnham Overy the next day. Common migrants flooded in from the 23rd and towards the month's end a flurry of rarities appeared, with Hartford Warblers at Weybourne and Winterton, an Alpine Swift at Beeston, Black Kite at Beeston/Glaven Valley and undoubtedly, and unexpectedly, the bird of the month, a summer plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher at Pentney GP on 28th.

The early part of **May** was generally uneventful, but a lengthy spell of east/north-easterly winds over much of Northern Europe from 10-21st produced an interesting collection of rarities. Following a brief sighting of a Bee-eater on 10th, a singing Great Reed Warbler commenced a long stay at Cley the next day, with a Blue-winged Teal also appearing at the same locality. Cley was the place to be on 13th when a Lesser Yellowlegs arrived, mainly haunting a pool close to the main coast road for the next five days. The 15th saw two Whiskered Terns at Rockland Broad (which were later seen at Willen Lake in Buckinghamshire), and a Sardinian Warbler at Holme. Widespread low cloud with rain and



*Whiskered Terns (N. Arlott)*

drizzle crossed the county overnight on the 19/20th and easterly winds, and rain, continued until the early hours of the 22nd. Blakeney Point produced an Icterine Warbler on 20th being joined by a Subalpine Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher next day, when Bluethroat numbers increased from three to four. A Serin was at Bacton on 21st, followed the next day by a Great Reed Warbler at Rockland Broad, together with a Rustic Bunting and Siberian Stonechat at Salhouse. Also somewhat remarkably the two Whiskered Terns appeared briefly at Cley before departing to the east. The 24th saw another Subalpine Warbler, this time on Salhouse Heath. The east coast was not to be "outclassed" with both Marsh and Dartford Warblers on 27–28th. A Scarlet Rosefinch was at Cley next day, with another Serin at Weybourne on 30th. The last day of the month ended with a Night Heron and Marsh Warbler at Sheringham, singing Subalpine Warblers at Holkham and Rollesby, and Woodchat Shrike at Stiffkey.

**June** was less eventful than May but not without its surprises. The month produced a Red-footed Falcon for two days in the Brecks, a White-winged Black Tern at Hockwold Flood (Lakenheath Flash), two further Marsh Warblers (Holme and Cley), a Rose-coloured Starling at Winterton and then Sea Palling and a Serin at Holkham.

One of the highlights of the year was undoubtedly the Collared Pratincole which appeared at Titchwell on the first day of **July**. It alternated between here and Cley until the 21st and attracted hundreds of visitors. It was the first record of this species this century and was surprisingly the only major rarity of the month. As usual there was also a flurry of interesting waders at Cley mid-month, with Temminck's Stints, a Pectoral Sandpiper, and a Red-necked Phalarope.

**August** was generally a disappointing month with no major seabird movements. Several small falls of drift migrants occurred, however, commencing on 12th with small numbers of Wrynecks, Barred and Icterine Warblers. On the 31st a developing area of low pressure moved north-east through the English Channel, giving gale-force easterly winds with rain spreading northwards across the county. This set the scene for the most exciting **September** ever in Norfolk.

The month started with excellent sea-watching as the wind backed to northerly on the 1st, including Storm Petrel and 126 Long-tailed Skuas past Sheringham. Passerines during the first week included large numbers of drift migrants, including many Icterine and Barred Warblers and an impressive 50–60 Wrynecks. Rarer species included Greenish and Arctic Warblers at Wells, a Booted Warbler and Siberian Stonechat in the same field in Cromer and an elusive Bonelli's Warbler at Sheringham. On the 14th an unusually intense low pressure area over the southern North Sea gave persistent easterlies emanating from the Baltic, which swung down into Norfolk as gale-force northerlies, heralding an amazing few days with birds arriving from both east and west. Seawatchers on the 15th at Sheringham witnessed the passage of a Cory's Shearwater, 52 Leach's Petrels, 34 Long-tailed Skuas and 4 Sabine's Gulls, with a further 47 Long-tailed Skuas past Sheringham on the 16th and 48 Sooty Shearwaters past Horsey Gap on the 17th. Waders arrived in the form of a Great Snipe from the continent at Sheringham, and a Spotted Sandpiper at Welney and Wilson's Phalarope at Cantley BF. Rare passerines were also arriving, with a Lesser Grey Shrike at Sheringham, an Aquatic Warbler at Burnham Overy, and for many, a contender for the highlight of the autumn, a much admired superb Siberian Thrush also at Burnham Overy. Further easterlies, often accompanied by rain, on 20–26th, produced a steady arrival of migrant passerines accompanied by rarities more usually associated with the Northern Isles such as Lanceolated Warbler at Mundesley on the 21st, a Little Bunting at Burnham Overy and around the county 20 Richard's Pipits, 14 Yellow-browed Warblers and 9 Red-breasted Flycatchers.



**October** continued where September left off, with two successive spells of anticyclonic weather giving three weeks of easterlies, veering to south-east before Atlantic fronts finally brought south-westerlies on the 21st. Migrants continued to arrive and with them came several further Yellow-browed Warblers, a Red-throated Pipit at Sheringham, an Aquatic Warbler at Cley, and an obliging Spotted Crane at Titchwell from the 12th. The first of eight Pallas's Warblers in the county arrived on the 16th. Rivalling the Siberian Thrush as star bird of the autumn was a Red-flanked Bluetail which added a splash of colour in Yarmouth cemetery from the 18th for three days. Other rarities towards the end of the month were Dusky Warblers at Holkham, Waxham and Wells East Hills, and a Short-toed Lark at Sidestrand. Exceptional numbers of Richard's Pipits appeared during the month, with a remarkable 80 odd birds passing through. Also from 17th, the county witnessed the biggest invasion of Rough-legged Buzzards for twenty years, with at least 40 birds noted by the month's end. Finally a young Red-breasted Goose arrived at Wells/Wareham on the 23rd, staying till early November.

The excitement of the previous two months carried on into **November**. A large anticyclone moving south-east over northern Europe on the 3rd gave strong east to north-easterlies over the Baltic, and a three day spell of south to south-easterlies over eastern England. These produced a flood of thousands of autumn thrushes, bringing with them further Dusky Warblers at Mundesley and Yarmouth cemetery, a Red-throated Pipit at Lancaster, Siberian Stonechat at Burnham Overy, several more Pallas's Warblers, and a fine Desert Wheatear at Weybourne/Cley. Also several long staying Red-rumped Swallows were found, with a single at Cley, three together in the Thornham area, and one for eight days at Winterton. Rough-legged Buzzards continued to arrive, and two different Goshawks at Holkham could well have been migrants too. On the 8th what was possibly a White-rumped Swift frustrated its observers as it flew inland at Thornham. An elusive White-winged Blackbird also evaded most would-be observers at Weybourne for several days, with presumably the same individual later moving to Cantley BF. Things quietened down as the month progressed, but a Ring-billed Gull at the Nunnery Lakes, Thetford on the 15th was an excellent find, and around the coast Mediterranean Gull numbers started to build.

Unseasonably mild weather throughout **December** gave a generally quiet month, with reasonable numbers of Shorelarks and wintering Rough-legged Buzzards attracting most attention.

So why did so many eastern and Siberian species arrive in Norfolk this autumn? The occurrence of such migrants depends, almost entirely, on particular sequences of meteorological events coming together, occurring at the departure point and at subsequent points during migration. An anomalously high pressure system over much of central and western Russia during the autumn could be construed as the main reason for the westward displacement of large numbers of eastern migrants during the season as a whole; their occurrence in Norfolk being only a function of the local weather at a particular time.

1994 will also be remembered as a year of unfulfilled promises. A build-up of breeding Scarlet Rosefinches in parts of western Europe did not take place in Britain. Similarly a major influx of Rose-coloured Starlings into eastern Europe resulted in several hundred pairs nesting in Hungary. These birds later dispersed over much of Europe, but only one was found in Norfolk.

*Giles Dunmore, Phil Heath, Steve Wakeham*



# Birds on Set-Aside in Norfolk

Robert Yaxley  
*Research Department, RSPB*

It is becoming widely known that many of our familiar farmland birds have declined alarmingly over the last twenty years or so. Grey partridge, tree sparrow and corn bunting have become relative rarities in the wider countryside, while others have declined sharply in abundance (see table 1). This is thought to be related to agricultural intensification and an associated decline in abundance of seeds and invertebrates which form the diet of farmland birds. Shifts from mixed farming to cereal monoculture and the loss of autumn and winter stubbles linked to the change from mainly spring-sown to mainly autumn-sown cereals have, in particular, been detrimental.

**Table 1. Population changes of some farmland birds between 1968 and 1991**

Species	Percentage change	Species	Percentage change
Tree sparrow	-85	Skylark	-54
Corn bunting	-76	Greenfinch	-6
Grey partridge	-73	Yellowhammer	-5
Reed bunting	-59	Goldfinch	+6
Linnet	-56		

*Source: British Trust for Ornithology*

Under the European Community regulations, introduced in 1992, all arable farmers claiming Arable Area Payments (price support) had to leave at least fifteen per cent of their tilled land 'set aside' (in 1994-95 reduced to twelve per cent). Set-aside may offer farmland birds a potential lifeline, for three main reasons. First, it can offer a supply of seed food in the winter; secondly, it puts back summer ley grassland into the arable rotation, providing a home for invertebrates, which in turn provide summer food for many birds; and thirdly, it puts back bare fallow for birds to nest on. This research, by the RSPB, is part of a programme to establish to what extent set-aside is being used by birds.

## Introduction

During 1993-94, winter birds surveys were carried out on thirteen farmland plots in Norfolk, six in Suffolk and one Cambridgeshire. Twenty farmland plots in south Devon were also surveyed. These plots were chosen using a stratified random sampling method. The project was undertaken by the RSPB research department under the supervision of Dr Andy Evans. The Norfolk fieldwork was completed by Robert Yaxley and by Tony Morris, who also covered the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire farms. The project was designed to discover the extent to which set-aside land was being used by birds, and which particular set-asides were preferred. The types of set-aside surveyed fell into two main types, rotational (one year) set-aside, and non-rotational (minimum five year) set-aside. Within each type, land could either be sown with a green cover or left to naturally regenerate, giving room for considerable variety between different set-asides. The information collected could also tell us about the preferences of species for different crops or stubbles.

There was a second winter of field work in 1994–95, the results of which are being analysed. Summer field work is also being undertaken, designed to find out how set-aside is used by birds for breeding and foraging. This work, not summarised here, involves intensive nest watches of yellowhammers and farmland bird surveys. The following information summarises the first winter's fieldwork.

### Survey Methods

The fieldwork was carried out between November 1993 and March 1994. It consisted of four bird counts on each plot. Each count included a total area search of farmland plots of 5–100 hectares containing at least one set-aside field. Birds of all species were logged both in the fields and their boundaries. Crop types, weed densities and boundary types were also recorded for analysis. Birds were recorded both as individuals and as flocks where possible, and double counting was avoided. All counts were undertaken in dry weather conditions with winds less than Beaufort force 4.

Data was collected in a form which allows us to compare the East Anglian plots with the twenty plots in south Devon. The two locations are contrasting, East Anglia giving us information on large intensive arable farms; Devon by contrast being an area of smaller scale, less intensive, agriculture.

### Results

It should be stressed that all results are, as yet, at the preliminary stage and teasing out the influences of all the various factors involved is complex.

The following information has been compiled for the thirteen Norfolk plots. The data has been lumped for all visits to all thirteen plots. The figures refer to numbers of individual birds found.

Table 2. The fifteen commonest birds on a selection of Norfolk farms, winter 1993/94

Species	Number of individuals	Number of plots
Woodpigeon	4550	13
Skylark	3213	13
Yellowhammer	950	12
Chaffinch	921	12
Linnet	857	7
Rook	728	4
Red-legged partridge	649	13
Fieldfare	603	11
Pheasant	544	12
10 Black-headed gull	484	8
11 Meadow pipit	388	12
12 Starling	356	8
13 Blackbird	350	13
14 Grey partridge	348	10
15 Jackdaw	295	4

Some gregarious species, such as rook, jackdaw and starling were only seen on relatively few visits, whereas less intensely flocking birds such as blackbirds were seen on almost every visit, a reflection of this is the number of plots on which each species was recorded.

So which type of field is preferred by birds? Field types were placed into one of six categories, as shown in table 3. Set-aside fields varied considerably in terms of the type of habitat they provided; see table 4.

If the birds showed a preference for a particular field type, the proportions of birds exceed the available amounts of the field type. Table 3 shows that 37 per cent of the birds found were on set-aside which was just 24 per cent of the field area surveyed. Birds also showed a preference for grass. Strong positive selections are shown by asterisks in the following tables.

**Table 3. Field type preferences for all species, winter 1993–94**

Field type	Percentage of total available area	Percentage of total number of birds recorded	Preferred field types
Ploughed	27	21	
Set-aside	24	36	*
Other arable	20	15	
Winter-sown cereals	16	13	
Stubbles	13	14	
Grass	0.1	0.3	*

Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number except for grass for which the area was too small.

**Table 4. Bird numbers on different types of set-aside, winter 1993–94**

Set-aside type	Percentage of total available area	Percentage of total number of birds recorded	Preferred field types
Five year grass	5.0	10.1	*
Turned stubble	4.1	1.5	
Barley stubble	3.8	10.5	*
Wheat stubble	3.8	5.6	*
Sugar beet	2.5	2.5	
Nil	1.9	1.8	
5 year natural regeneration	1.3	1.4	
Potatoes	0.7	1.9	*
Green cover turnips	0.6	0.6	
Industrial rape	0.2	0.6	*

Some of the above requires explanation. The five-year grass totals were boosted when birds were attracted by feed put out for cattle on the set-aside. ‘Nil’ refers to ploughed land and left after a green cover has been grazed off. Oilseed rape may be grown on set-aside if it is a non-food crop.

Table 4 shows that set-asides generally preferred by birds were five-year grass, cereal stubbles (especially barley) and potatoes. How this pattern varies from species to species is set out in table 5, which shows the positively selected field types for a range of birds.



Table 5. Selection of field type by a range of birds, winter 1993–94

species	Set-aside	Cereals	Stubbles	Ploughed	Other arable	Grass
parrowhawk	*		*			
kestrel	*		*			
red-legged partridge	*				*	
<b>grey partridge</b>	*		*			
pheasant				*	*	
lapwing				*	*	
snipe			*	*		
black-headed gull		*		*		
common gull			*		*	
rock dove	*				*	
woodpigeon	*					
<b>skylark</b>	*		*			
meadow pipit					*	
field wagtail	*				*	
fieldfare		*		*	*	
song thrush	*					
reedwing	*					
mistle thrush		*			*	
jackdaw			*	*		
rook			*	*		
starling		*		*		
house sparrow	*					
<b>tree sparrow</b>				*	*	
chaffinch	*					
goldfinch	*					
greenfinch	*					
<b>linnet</b>	*					
yellowhammer	*		*			
<b>reed bunting</b>	*		*	*		

Species in bold type are proposed for the 'red list' for the revised 'red data birds' on account of declines of over a half in the last 25 years.

– preferred field types

Table 5 shows preferences for set-aside by most seed-eating passerines and many other species, including birds of prey. Tree sparrows are an apparent anomaly; they are shown preferring ploughed land and other arable but were recorded in adjacent hedges and not in the fields.

As well as the commoner species recorded, there were a number of surprises. The numbers of snipe (71) and jack snipe (4) logged in arable fields was interesting, three lapland buntings in November (including one seven miles inland), a common buzzard, several merlins, and (in winter 1994/95) stonechat, green sandpiper, twite and hen harrier entertained us.

Flock sizes were, on the whole, disappointing, but maxima were 160 yellowhammers, 150 skylarks, 200 chaffinches, 40 tree sparrows, 80 greenfinches, 150 goldfinches and 160 fieldfares.

Winter 1993/94 was unusual in that the first part of the season was extremely wet, and ground conditions often extremely muddy. This delayed farming activity, especially lifting of sugar beet, which in turn affected farmers' choice of set-aside land. It also meant that many stubbles were left for longer than normal, and winter cereal sowing was delayed. Winter 1994/95 was a more usual winter, where autumn cereals were sown by November, and most other fields ploughed ready for spring sowing. The first impressions from surveys in winter 1994/95 are a similar pattern of field types preferred by birds, but fewer birds corresponding with a reduction in the areas of set-aside and stubbles.

## Discussion

Preliminary results suggest that when foraging on arable land in winter, many birds prefer set-aside land as a good feeding area. In particular, rotational set-aside with barley stubbles are favoured, as are longer term set-asides with sown grass and grazing cattle, and preferred crops are oilseed rape stubbles and harvested potatoes. Results from Devon suggest that the value of long-term set-aside decreases as it gets older and more grass-dominated. Other set-asides, such as sugar beet tops, wheat stubbles, industrial crops and stubble turnips are of less value. Of the non-set-aside crops, stubbles were positively selected by many birds; ploughed fields and especially winter cereal fields were avoided.

Seed-eating birds including yellowhammer, skylark, linnet and grey partridge all showed a strong preference for set-aside and stubbles, supporting the idea that one of the reasons for these species' decline is the reduction in winter feeding areas. This is all part of a growing body of evidence to suggest that set-aside land is highly beneficial to seed-eating birds.

## Acknowledgements

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# Breeding Lapwing & Redshank at Welney Washes

J.B. Kemp  
*Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust*

Lapwing and Redshank are two key breeding species on lowland wet grassland, the former showing a 38% decline in Britain between 1982-1989. Redshank numbers though, showing no overall change have had quite marked variations between sites. The Ouse Washes remain an important breeding area for both species particularly Redshank for which it is one of the major inland sites. During the spring/summer of 1994 a number of BTO nest record cards were kept for both species followed by a later brood count of the entire Welney reserve in an attempt to establish breeding success. Both species are noisy and demonstrative particularly when chicks are present, enabling a fairly accurate assessment of the number of broods.

## Lapwing

A count of 72 territorial pairs in mid-May was the highest figure for over ten years. Early incubating birds were on eggs by March 29th, but rising water levels and bank to bank flooding by mid-April destroyed all nests (at least 20 known clutches). Spring floods in recent years have frequently caused the failure of many nests, but these conditions and prolonged winter flooding may have provided a habitat particularly suitable for this species as water levels subside. Regular flooding has resulted in substantial areas of bare ground and retarded spring growth, a habitat much favoured by Lapwing and their offspring, enabling easy movement of foraging chicks. Lapwing chicks have a poor thermo-regulation just after hatching and are prone to heavy losses in cold, damp conditions, aggravated by long, wet, vegetation.

BTO nest record cards were maintained for 34 clutches (all produced after the April flood) only two of these failed entirely. A total of 135 eggs were laid of which 117 (86.6%) hatched; the 18 (13.3%) failed eggs being due to infertility (5 eggs) i.e. one addled egg in five clutches; predation (4 eggs) – one nest Fox predated; one nest flooded (4 eggs); one dead chick in egg (1 egg) and single eggs disappearing during the course of incubation from four nests (4 eggs).

## Clutch Sizes

No. of Eggs	3	4	5
No. of Clutches	2 (5.8%)	31 (91.1%)	1 (2.9%)

Commonest clutch size was four eggs, the normal situation for this species. The rather unusual five-egg clutch lost one egg during incubation.

## Hatching Date

Week Ending	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	June 4	June 11	June 18
No. Clutches	6	NIL	6	13	4	2	1



The Lapwing is normally regarded as an early breeder, but the Washes population has a history of late nesting attempts due to the frequency of spring flooding. A high proportion of the recorded nests were likely to be second clutches or at least delayed nesting attempts. Birds breeding on the nearby arable land are able to nest early, a week-old chick seen April 30th undoubtedly originating from off the Washes.

### *Nest-Site Details*

Lapwings generally nest in the centre of fields. The pattern at Welney is notably different. Twenty-four (70.5%) nests were near field margins with just ten (29.4%) towards the centre. This is probably explained by the shallow dish-like shape of individual Washes with drier areas around the perimeter. The centres particularly early in spring hold water or wet mud unsuitable for nesting. All Washes are surrounded by ditches about three metres wide. Nests were typically exposed, situated particularly amongst very short emerging *deschampsia* (5cm tall) or herb layer. Occasional nests became less obvious as the incubation period progressed due to plant growth with long plant stems sometimes partly overhanging a nest.

In seventeen cases Redshank nested within 35 metres of a Lapwing nest, on one occasion only four metres away. Presumably this small, less aggressive, species gains some protection from the Lapwing's vigorous mobbing of predators, particularly Carrion Crows. A small 'colony' of six Lapwing pairs bred around the perimeter of the Bemis Wader scrape in front of the Buxton Hide; two of these nests were just fifteen metres apart, all hatching successfully. In two instances elsewhere the introduction of cattle into a Wash containing a Lapwing's nest needed the use of 'nest protectors': heavy wire frames placed over the clutch to prevent trampling. Both clutches hatched successfully.

A brood survey on the entire reserve June 12th located thirty-nine pairs of Lapwing with chicks (54% of total pairs with young) a slightly disappointing figure considering the high hatching rates found amongst the sample of BTO recorded nests. Clues to this probably lay with four large chicks (almost ready to fly) found dead and headless in Washes close to the Main Hide, undoubtedly Fox victims. A predator control programme carried out for the past five years appears to have been extremely successful against Carrion Crows enabling a high hatching success with no recorded incidence of wader egg predation by crows during the 1994 season. However, increasing efforts may need to be expended into Fox control measures.

### **Redshank**

A mid-May breeding survey located 55 territorial pairs of Redshank, an improvement on recent years. This species breeds later than the Lapwing and was probably less affected by mid-April flooding of the Reserve. The flood did, however, result in both species breeding at the same time as soon as water levels dropped.

BTO nest record cards were kept for 33 clutches, only two of these recorded as definitely failing, one predated (probably by a small mammal) and the other pair deserted. Both failures were late nests, possibly involving young inexperienced birds. Two other nests could not be relocated due to vegetation growth, but alarm-calling birds suggested a successful attempt. Nevertheless both of these latter nests were recorded as 'outcome unknown' and are not included in the 'successful hatching rate' figures.

A total of 130 eggs were laid of which 114 (87.6%) hatched successfully, 8 eggs (6.1%) failed and the outcome was unknown for another 8 eggs (6.1%) though failure was not suspected. Unlike Lapwing, no infertile eggs were discovered nor was there any mysterious disappearance of individual eggs from a clutch.

## Clutch Size

No. of Eggs	2	3	4
No. of Clutches	1 (3%)	Nil	32 (96.9%)

Like Lapwing the typical clutch is of four eggs with just one variation recorded.

## Hatching Date

Week Ending	May 21	May 28	June 4	June 11
No. Clutches	1	16	10	2

## Nest Site Details

Redshank, like Lapwing, tended to nest closer to the margins of fields than their centres, presumably for the same reason. A breakdown of sites showed 22 (66.6%) on field margins and 11 (33.3%) towards the centres of fields. Redshank are more secretive than Lapwing, with the nest often well hidden and some incubating birds prepared to sit tight at the approach of a human intruder; others leave the nest quite readily. No colonial breeding was recorded although two Redshank nests were just 30 metres apart. Nests were frequently in *Deschampsia* clumps or a mix of plants including fine grasses, *polygonum* sp., dock and marsh ragwort. Nests became more hidden during incubation as plant growth developed being recorded as 'well hidden' (27) and 'partly hidden' (6). The maximum vegetation height at all nests is shown below.

Vegetation Height	5–10cm	11–15cm	16–20cm
No. of nests	12	15	6

A brood survey of the entire Reserve on June 12th located 43 pairs with chicks (78% of total pairs with young) a markedly better performance than Lapwing. Redshank young may be less prone to Fox predation because they tend to keep in cover and are often in wetter areas more difficult for Foxes to exploit. Redshank certainly enjoyed an excellent breeding season in 1994. Casual observations from hides by late June showed numerous chicks in all stages of development feeding on the lagoons and scrapes, though post-breeding or failed adults and independent young soon depart from the reserve (presumably for the coast) leaving few birds by late July.

## Discussion

Flooding, an almost annual problem for breeding washland waders, has resulted in later than average nesting but sometimes with high success. Flooding later in the season during May or June is potentially more serious than an April inundation as birds will be well advanced into their breeding cycle and less likely to make a repeat attempt. During 1992 spring floods occurred in both May and June resulting in barely ten out of 56 pairs of Lapwings producing any young. However, given reasonable conditions washland birds can be highly productive.

There was a noticeable absence of breeding pairs of both Lapwing and Redshank alongside the main grid pylons crossing the NE end of the reserve where several hawthorn bushes grow across the Washes. An area of land (240 acres) at the SW of the reserve was also almost devoid of breeding waders. There are two possible explanations: one being the prominence of trees with a mature block of woodland dividing the washland, numerous scattered hawthorn clumps and a line of willows bordering the Delph. Most waders prefer

an open landscape and tree removal can greatly improve breeding habit. The experimental removal of isolated trees on the reserve in recent years has seen both Redshank and Lapwing move into the cleared areas sometimes nesting amongst the remaining tree stumps. Tree removal also helps to keep nesting Carrion Crows away from the main wader areas.

A second reason for the lack of breeding waders in the 240 acre block may be regular grazing with sheep for over ten years. This form of livestock is notoriously more liable to result in nest trampling than cattle. Future years hopefully will see a more sympathetic management for the site and resulting improved wader production. In the meantime the continued monitoring of breeding success may help future management decisions for Welney reserve.

## Siberian Chiffchaffs in Norfolk

Andy Stoddart

Chiffchaffs of the Siberian race *tristis* have long been known to visit Britain, predominantly in late Autumn and largely on the East Coast. In fact, so much are they an expected Autumn visitor that the term *tristis* has now become a convenient label for any pale, dull-looking or atypically-calling Chiffchaff encountered at this time of the year.

Recently literature, notably Svensson (1992), has helped to define more closely the criteria to be used in racially assigning Chiffchaffs. This in turn has opened a debate on the true status of *tristis* Chiffchaffs in Western Europe. A recent meeting of European Rarities Committee delegates on Heligoland took the view that the race might well be far rarer than popularly supposed and recommended that only trapped and photographed individuals should be considered for acceptance. This view has received little sympathy within Britain, where *tristis* is likely to be commoner than in other European countries, but it nevertheless highlights the need for considerably more caution in record assessment than has been the case in the past.

It is in this context that the Norfolk Records Committee decided to add *tristis* Chiffchaff to its list of considered races from 1994 onwards. Submissions for that year have demonstrated a high degree of uncertainty over the characters of this race, and this paper sets out to define the key criteria in an attempt to place the recording of this form in Norfolk on a more secure footing.

Chiffchaff morphology is complex throughout its vast range, but in Britain we need realistically only concern ourselves with three forms: *collybita*, *abietinus* and *tristis*, each of which intergrades with its neighbour and is subject to extensive clinal and individual variation. Nevertheless, Svensson has helped to define some plumage boundaries of *tristis* and this note follows his recommendations in full.

*Collybita* is the familiar form which breeds in Britain and much of Central, Western and Southern Europe. Typically it is strongly olive or olive-brown above, usually with obvious yellow in the supercilium and underparts but, as with all Chiffchaff forms, there is considerable variation and some are duller than the norm.



*Abietinus* breeds throughout Scandinavia and Western Russia, south to the Caucasus and northern Iran. Many individuals are very close to, or even identical to, many *collybita*, but, especially in the more Eastern populations adjacent to *tristis*, they have a tendency to be somewhat paler and greyer above with a reduced olive component and paler and whiter underneath with reduced yellow and more buff in the supercilium and underparts. Variation is such that some can look strikingly pale and 'cold' but on very close examination even these will still retain subtle green tones throughout the upperparts (most importantly on the mantle, nape and crown) or have faint yellow streaking below. Extremely good views (preferably in the hand) may be required to determine the presence of these tones, and the temptation automatically to log these birds as *tristis* should therefore be strongly resisted.

*Tristis* breeds across the whole width of Siberia between the Pechora and Kolyma rivers. It differs markedly from *collybita* but often only subtly from paler, usually Eastern, *abietinus* and intergrades with this form where their ranges meet. To be described as classic *tristis* the upperparts should be a pale brown or brownish-grey with olive-green tones confined to the wing-coverts, wing and tail feather fringes, upper tail-coverts, rump and sometimes subtly on the lower back and scapulars. The key feature is that in all individuals there should be a complete lack of green in the mantle, nape or crown. The green present in the wing and tail may therefore appear contrastingly bright specifically because of this dullness in the rest of the upperparts, but in worn plumage these bright tones may disappear entirely. The face and underparts of true *tristis* are white, variably suffused with buff. Some are very white below whereas others have extensive buff 'clouding' to the breast, breast-sides and flanks, but not to the under-tail-coverts which are always white. The key point however is that in true *tristis* the supercilium, eye lids, ear-coverts and underparts lack all yellow, however faint. If present, yellow occurs only on the axillaries and underwing-coverts (and hence is invisible) and on the marginal wing-coverts (usually visible as a tiny oval along the forward edge of the folded wing).

Additional supporting characteristics of *tristis* can be a stronger, whiter supercilium, especially behind the eye, and very contrastingly black bill and legs but these are important only in support of the specific plumage detail described above. Pale fringes to the greater coverts are merely a common feature of pale Chiffchaffs and do not necessarily indicate *tristis*.

Much has been written about the significance of calls. However the great variety of Chiffchaff calls, the lack of a sharp correlation between call-types and races and the vagaries of call transcription all hinder progress in this area. The classic 'peep' or 'lost chicken' note given by birds of Eastern populations is not restricted to *tristis* and is closely matched by some calls of *collybita*. Only the song is peculiar to *tristis*. Unlike the familiar 'me-ticking' of European birds, it has a very different, more rambling, musical and flowing song, but this is unlikely to be heard from Autumn individuals.

It is important to re-emphasise that exceptionally close views are required confidently to establish the absence of green or yellow in the appropriate parts of a Chiffchaff's plumage. These tones can be very faint, and brief views or views of birds at moderate ranges or high in trees will never be sufficient for proper diagnosis as *tristis*. The ideal is, of course, examination in the hand but there are circumstances when individuals may allow particularly close eye-level approach and prolonged scrutiny through a telescope. Tired migrants feeding on the ground, for example, may sometimes allow such views.

As a result, the Norfolk Records Committee will be looking for claims of *tristis* to provide reassurance that the specifics detailed above have all been fully noted and that the views obtained really were sufficient for such characters to have been assessed at all. Mapping and photographing in the hand will remain the ideal.

# Setting the Record Straight: the Yarmouth Citril Finch

Peter Allard

As mentioned in the 1993 *Norfolk Bird Report* the supposed Citril Finch taken alive on Yarmouth North Denes 29th January 1904 and the only British record has been removed from the British List by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee. The bird is in fact a Cape, or Yellow-crowned, Canary *S. canicollis*.

This Canary has masqueraded as Britain's sole Citril Finch record for 90 years, despite its position being questioned in *British Birds* by the late Paul Barbier in 1968. Its history makes interesting reading. It was trapped, together with other finches, by John Quinton – Yarmouth's last bird-trapper. He recognised it as being unusual and took the bird to local taxidermist E.C. Saunders. Saunders, in his unpublished diaries, claims to have identified it as a Citril Finch, but surprisingly little detail is available.

The bird was kept alive for several days before being killed and skinned (presumably by Saunders) and sent to Norwich. J.H. Gurney examined the specimen and was 'responsible for its identification' as reported in the *Zoologist* for 1905. He noted it was 'an adult female in good feather'. The bird was then admitted to the British List by Howard Saunders, and presumably sold to T.E. Gunn the famed Norwich taxidermist who prepared it as a mounted specimen. Shortly after it passed into the collection of Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe in Derbyshire. But why one taxidermist passed such an apparently valuable specimen to another, remains a mystery.

Harpur Crewe spared no expense in acquiring rare specimens. But his carelessness in assessing the authenticity of rarities offered him resulted in great temptations to dealers. Many of the birds formerly in his collection are of very doubtful value. More intriguing, a third taxidermist, Walter Lowne, whose shop was a stone's throw from Saunder's premises in Yarmouth, kept Canaries, mules and foreign birds in large numbers...

The specimen remained with Harpur Crewe until his death when it was auctioned in 1925 or 1926 and presented to the Booth Museum in Brighton, where it still remains. When researching the whereabouts of specimens prior to publication of my *Birds of Great Yarmouth* (1990), I visited the Brighton Museum after reading Booth's *Catalogue of Cases of Birds in the Dyke Road Museum Brighton*. The historic specimen remained in its original case. But not as I had expected: the bird was larger, the blackish wing-bars extending to the tertials were incorrect for Citril Finch and the bill appeared too heavy and Greenfinch-like. The Museum confirmed this was indeed the correct case. There is no evidence of the bird having been examined critically since 1905 until my visit.

Having considerable doubts as to identification, photographs were circulated to local ornithologists, but for a variety of reasons they were unable to assist. Lee Evans, with his wealth of knowledge and contacts, was then approached and a photograph was forwarded to him. His reaction was positive: it was not a Citril Finch as I had suspected.





survey by the Hawk & Owl Trust in north Norfolk revealed that over half the total of known breeding Barn Owls were nesting in tree cavities. Few farm barns offered suitable nesting ledges or cavities. Providing nesting boxes within buildings has been most successful in coastal marshes, in peckland and in areas of the county cleared of trees when used as war-time airfields. Many Barn Owl boxes have been occupied for over 25 years (*C.R. Knights*).





Unusual visitors to Norwich Waterworks. Top: Glaucous Gull, January; this bird regularly appeared at Attlebridge. Bottom: Shag, March (both by *N. Clayton*).



He suggested a Canary or even a Greenfinch hybrid. Contact was then made with Dr Ian Knox on behalf of the BOURC. He visited Brighton and tentatively identified the skin as that of a Cape, or Yellow-crowned, Canary and he was able to verify this when the specimen was taken to the Natural History Museum at Tring. It was further identified as a Canary based on plumage characters.

Following reidentification the 1904 record of Citril Finch is clearly no longer acceptable and the species has been deleted from the British List. Cape Canary is not considered to be a likely candidate for natural vagrancy to Britain. They were in demand as cage birds towards the end of the last century. Maybe Walter Lowne even kept them in his aviaries...

## Pallid Swift – A First for Norfolk

*Peter R. Colston*

I was stationed on the sea wall at Burnham Norton from 0930 hours on 25th July 1993 watching the rather inactive Oriental Pratincole squatting on the mud. At 1120 hours a party of Arctic Skuas arrived ahead of a black thundercloud. Many Swifts also moved ahead of the storm track and their numbers began building up over the fresh-marsh. It was fairly windy with a blustery south-west wind and the last few Swifts heading inland were making slow progress. Suddenly, among the tail-enders was an amazing pale individual which stood out like a beacon against the backdrop of the storm behind Scolt Head. It was very pale milky-brown with an extensive white throat, pale forehead, distinctive jizz and flight. I estimated its distance at a third of a mile at a hundred feet. I watched the bird intently as it came towards me in company with 3 or 4 Common Swifts. It took a full minute to come close and gave me sufficient time to assess a mental checklist of Pallid features. When I ascertained that the bird could only be a Pallid Swift, I shouted to nearby birders "Look at this Swift!". Only three were near enough to hear. The bird slowly flapped and glided past showing all the features typical of a Pallid Swift. The overall paleness (especially the head), large white throat patch, more paddle-shaped wings with a slightly rounded tips were obvious as was the contrast between the slightly darker primaries and the paler inner wing.

The other observers, all unfamiliar with Pallid Swifts, remarked how obviously different the bird was in colour, shape and flight from Common Swift. Without priming them on the differences one pointed out 'blunter wing tips, pale inner wing with contrastingly darker primaries – the opposite of Common Swift'. The bird passed over the sea wall before turning large numbers of wheeling swifts. I followed it for a further ten minutes; it was always identifiable even against the light by its slightly more robust shape, different wing configuration, less forked tail and rather predictable flight pattern.

Pallid Swifts breed along rocky coasts, in mountain regions and in towns in southern Europe and north-west Africa. This sighting is the first recorded in Norfolk. During November 1984, a total of four, forming part of a late autumn influx of southern birds, appeared in Britain. The first British record was from Kent in 1978.

# Red-flanked Bluetail – A First for Norfolk

*Peter Allard*

The 18th October was a day of south-easterly winds and bright sunshine. After visiting Breydon Water early morning I headed for Yarmouth cemeteries hopeful that a Yellow-browed Warbler I had found there the previous day might still be present.

A quick search in the south side (often the more rewarding area) revealed surprisingly little apart from Goldcrests. I entered the north side at 0950 hours – at the time the only bird-watcher in the area. Walking along the main path towards the Holm Oaks which held yesterday's Yellow-browed Warbler two birds appeared briefly on the path. One was certainly a Robin displaying a bright reddish-orange breast. But the other was a complete surprise and although of Robin-shape and size and brownish above it revealed orange coloured flanks and clearly lacked a reddish breast. A whitish throat patch was just visible before it dived into cover. I had seen colour photographs of the immature/female Red-flanked Bluetail at Winspit, Dorset, and this bird appeared almost identical. But was I dreaming? Fortunately, a brief third view confirmed distinctive orange flanks and a pale eye-ring. It really did look like a Red-flanked Bluetail but I had yet to confirm the crucial blue coloured tail. On each occasion I had glimpsed the bird the tail appeared darkish in the dense shade of the Euonymus bushes. Still cautious I left another birder, who had just arrived, on guard and hastened to phone the news of a probable Red-flanked Bluetail.

Fortunately, Dave Holman was not too far away and members of Great Yarmouth Bird Club were also contacted. Andy Wallis and John Burrell were first to arrive and almost immediately the stranger was showing well in a Sycamore. The blue tail soon became obvious to the admiring observers who were increasing by the minute.

This was the Norfolk's first Red-flanked Bluetail, a female/immature and the fourteenth record for the British Isles. Yet it was only the second twitchable example following last year's well-watched Dorset bird which lingered ten days. By mid-day 60 or so observers had seen this gem and in the afternoon it was watched by an audience of several hundreds. BBC TV provided a camera crew and film of this colourful vagrant featured on Look East local news. The bird was quite obliging and, with patience, showed well to all who came to pay homage. During its three-day stay this much desired rarity favoured the north side of the cemeteries frequenting Sycamores, Euonymus bushes and, to a lesser extent, Holme Oaks. Fortunate observers watched it fly-catching from tombstones and also feeding on the main paths. It was heard to call on a number of occasions: a Pied Flycatcher-like 'huit' and also a quiet 'tick'.

During its stay the Bluetail attracted perhaps over a thousand admirers; some arrived from the Scilly Isles! Cemetery staff were helpful even leaving the gate open for late-comers, and Birdline East Anglia provided constant assistance. Surprisingly, another Red-flanked Bluetail – a male, was trapped at Landguard Point, Suffolk, six days after departure of the Yarmouth visitor. The Bluetail's main breeding range extends in a belt from westernmost Russia to Japan. The birds winter in the Himalayas and southern China.



# The Wetland Bird Survey 1994 – The Complete Wash

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Grebe	31	29	7	7	2	14	19	29	2	5	5
Crested Grebe	18	13	19	12	18	34	136	94	18	1	2
Porant	155	147	142	84	92	191	304	394	123	88	104
	6	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heron	19	13	7	10	9	67	51	49	29	27	9
Black's Swan	111	109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Woolly Swan	70	76	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	50	-
Goose	22638	20191	17435	9425	14084	6	8	8	2333	7148	11695
Willet	14242	9818	3562	2931	1462	6346	2001	1761	1233	4307	5130
Willet	1172	334	109	56	-	-	18	68	157	3134	893
Willet	88	112	72	14	3	-	35	19	-	2	-
	449	295	132	75	-	2	434	227	223	140	109
Willet	3518	1485	516	157	230	560	1067	1477	1042	623	675
Willet	42	109	5	-	-	-	7	51	14	16	4
Willet	8	19	29	10	2	-	28	-	-	-	-
Willet	121	65	33	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2
Willet	58	41	63	36	19	16	92	65	-	-	-
Willet	3	27	26	22	10	-	6	-	-	-	-
	200	82	80	15	30	159	182	145	20	11	60
Willet	-	-	-	-	-	68	40	1	1	-	-
Willet	63	107	55	15	-	2	-	-	-	12	6
Willet	35	74	98	29	2	1	1	-	19	16	6
	169	261	107	53	42	-	303	163	-	5	-
Willet	21353	15563	10154	4631	2879	10570	25560	13778	9919	8987	6412
Willet	-	26	121	2	-	324	40	94	-	-	-
Willet	15	41	330	119	989	398	2237	996	628	61	98
Willet	4589	916	986	2610	10	826	1558	3547	3801	3965	6360
Willet	3074	4984	6840	2621	12509	2582	10475	11950	4791	2324	3411
Willet	12539	6738	116	6	18	513	1645	942	4391	10628	10924
	47370	34652	28999	10676	18676	20210	72154	39696	32624	44042	19300
Willet	125	250	1583	92	225	2027	1576	223	4	11	14
Willet	-	-	-	-	4	1	1	7	-	-	-
Willet	-	-	-	-	-	23	2	18	-	-	-
	23682	23166	23580	20549	38406	33783	21725	19289	18191	9480	7083
	-	1	-	-	-	-	31	10	-	-	-
Willet	538	650	79	34	-	827	812	1374	931	149	705
Willet	11132	8330	2045	505	1168	5511	6583	7940	3475	2820	1926
Willet	-	-	-	18	90	351	133	50	7	-	-
Willet	1809	3079	1365	1949	209	7264	5244	7520	3125	607	1402
Willet	-	-	-	-	4	3	99	89	-	-	-
Willet	2041	1815	1738	1739	441	4555	4697	6500	1575	643	982
Willet	-	-	-	-	24	120	178	267	28	-	-
Willet	-	-	-	-	51	49	42	12	-	2	-
Willet	411	367	297	264	246	925	1261	482	446	290	58
Willet	711	545	4138	1582	1456	5002	12355	3498	3178	1598	3923
Willet	2281	693	230	170	5	347	1188	252	704	105	155
Willet	-	3	3	62	220	230	212	17	20	1	4
Willet	840	1091	1140	1323	630	1266	6538	1000	2836	564	845
Willet	123	132	203	86	83	715	1275	905	2203	402	82
Willet	-	-	-	-	3	-	4	48	-	1	-

# Siskin Ringing in Norfolk

*Moss Taylor & Stephen Moores*

Between January and April 1994, an exceptional influx of Siskins was recorded in many Norfolk gardens. As a result over 3000 were ringed during these four months alone, compared with the usual annual ringing total in the county of no more than 250.

During the autumn of 1993 an unprecedented passage of Siskins was noted all around the Norfolk coast. At Sheringham, for example, where the maximum autumn passage normally involves up to 40–50 Siskins daily, 800 were counted, arriving from the north, in a two-hour period on September 16th and an amazing 2600 were recorded flying west on October 16th. Smaller but still impressive numbers of birds on passage were seen until well into the new year.

Not all Norfolk ringers, however, were fortunate enough to have Siskins feeding in their gardens, although large numbers were being ringed at sites as far apart as Weybourne and Sheringham in the north of the county and Garboldisham and Ickburgh in the south. Perhaps surprisingly, only one Norwich ringer managed to catch many Siskins.

During the early part of winter, Siskins feed on Alder cones and it is only after the crop has been depleted, generally in January, that they begin to visit gardens to feed on peanuts. In the early 1970s, ringers in Surrey first reported Siskins visiting gardens, but normally only if the peanuts were contained in red plastic bags. An analysis of the sites where Siskins were ringed in Norfolk in early 1994, demonstrated that although red peanut containers were probably preferable, they were not essential. However, certain gardens were clearly being favoured by the Siskins. Two features appeared to be helpful, firstly the presence of mature trees which provided the Siskins with perches for loafing, preening and singing, which in turn proved an attraction to overflying birds. Secondly, the three garden sites, in which 80% of the Siskins were ringed, all had a small pond about 4 square metres in area adjacent to the net site. The presence of this small area of water seemed to be the main attraction.

In most previous studies of ringed Siskins, a preponderance of males has been demonstrated and this was the case with those ringed in Norfolk in 1994. However, the proportion of males to females was only 52%. First-winter birds made up about 75% of both sexes.

Ringers at most garden sites began to catch the first few Siskins in mid-January and the numbers ringed increased steadily week by week, as shown on Figure 2. This gives the cumulative ringing totals at all the garden sites throughout Norfolk and a clear peak is demonstrated in week 13 which was the first week of April, after which numbers fell. A dramatic departure of Siskins from all the gardens occurred in week 15 and not a single one was ringed after April 22nd. A suggested reason for this is given below.

Figure 2 also shows the proportion of males to females each week, with the males indicated in each left hand column. In all the weeks except one, there is a clear excess of males until week 14, after which females are more numerous. This suggests some males were leaving Norfolk ahead of the females, to return earlier to their breeding areas in order to establish territories. A similar analysis of the weekly age distribution shows that proportionately more first-winter birds were ringed after the end of March, suggesting that adults were also tending to leave for the breeding areas sooner.

There was considerable movement of Siskins between ringers within the county. Excluding retraps of under 5 kms, a total of 29 controls were made by Norfolk ringers of



**Figure 1.** The sites of Siskins controlled (retrapped by another ringer) in Norfolk January – April 1994. Birds ringed before the winter of 1993/94 shown by a filled square and birds ringed during the winter of 1993/94 by a filled circle. H1 indicates one control from The Netherlands and B2 two from Belgium.

Siskins which had been ringed in Norfolk during winter of 1993/94. Yet not a single bird was found outside the county in the same period. No clear pattern emerged regarding direction or timing of movements, apart from controls between Banningham and Weybourne/Sheringham. The Siskins ringed at Banningham are all caught in an Alder carr and four were controlled later in the same winter in gardens in Weybourne or Sheringham, with no movements in the reverse direction. This is to be expected for the reason explained



earlier. Some birds, however, remained faithful to the same garden for varying periods. At Sheringham, out of a total of almost 600 caught, 56 were retrapped up to two weeks later, four after six weeks and two were still visiting the same garden seven weeks after ringing.

In addition to the controls mentioned above, a total of 32 Siskins ringed outside Norfolk were caught during the first four months of 1994. The origins of these birds is shown on Figure 1. Of particular interest are those which had been ringed during the same winter, i.e. 1993/94 and which are shown as filled circles on the map. Siskins were clearly moving into Norfolk from areas as far afield as London and the Home Counties to the south, from Gloucestershire and Avon in the west, from Staffordshire and Derbyshire in the Midlands, from Cleveland and Tyne & Wear in the north-east and even from Tayside in Scotland.

Ringling in previous years has suggested that Siskins breeding in Highland are amongst those that winter in Norfolk, but the dates in ringing and subsequently being controlled in Norfolk of the four recoveries shown on the map with a circle above a triangle suggest a different explanation. The most northerly one was ringed in Perth February 1994 and controlled at Ickburgh in April 1994 and the other three from the north-east were all ringed in February/March 1994 and controlled in Norfolk in March/April 1994. If all these had been birds ringed in their breeding areas, surely as winter progressed to spring, the movements should have been in the reverse direction. The extraordinary passage of Siskins in autumn 1993 presumably involved birds arriving from the Continent. A movement which has been confirmed in previous years from ringing recoveries and which is further supported by three foreign-ringed controls in Norfolk in early 1994, one from The Netherlands and two from Belgium. It would appear therefore that Siskins which had migrated to Britain in the previous autumn from their more northerly, European breeding areas, were gathering in Norfolk in March and April prior to making the return journey by way of the shortest sea crossing between Britain and the Low Countries. The sudden departure of Siskins from Norfolk gardens, described earlier, coincided with an area of high pressure to the south and east of the British Isles resulting in ideal conditions for a North Sea crossing.

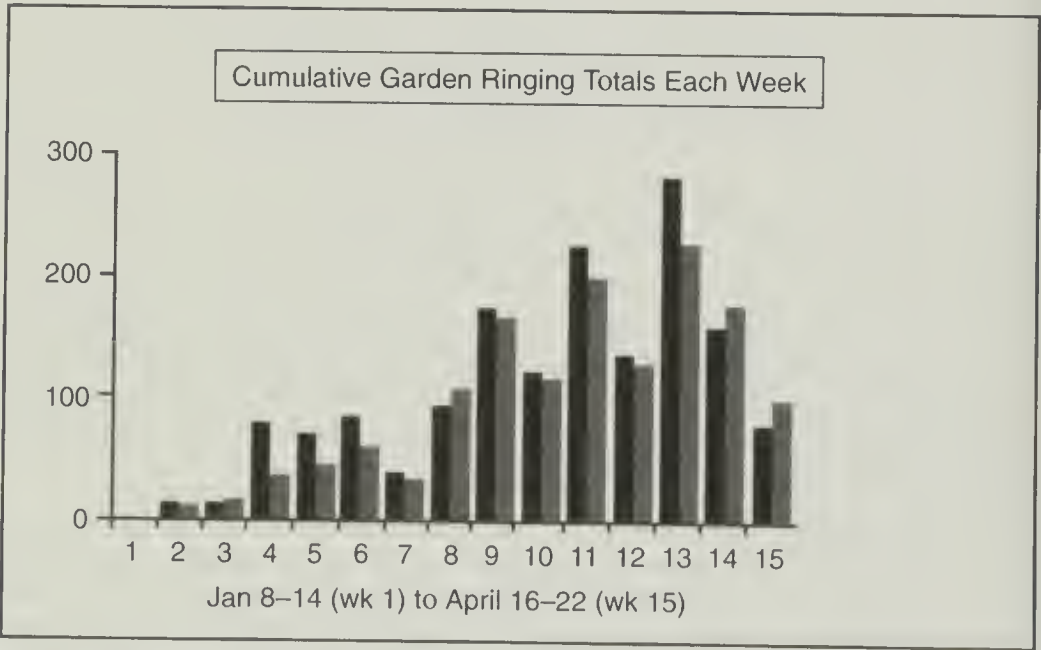


Figure 2. Weekly ringing totals of Siskins in Norfolk gardens January 8th – April 22nd 1994.

Further confirmation of the mixed origins of those Siskins wintering in Norfolk in early 1994, comes from two subsequent ringing recoveries. The first ringed in Sheringham in early April and found dead by the roadside in Norway fifteen days later and the second ringed at Ickburgh in mid-March and found breeding in the Kielder Forest, Northumberland in June. Out of the three thousand ringed in Norfolk between January and April 1994, only one more has so far been recovered. Ringed at Banningham in mid-January it was controlled in Belgium in mid-February, illustrating that the emigration of these Continental birds was taking place over at least a two-month period. More recoveries will undoubtedly be reported over the ensuing months which will enable us to understand more fully the origins and destinations of the remarkable influx of Siskins into Norfolk during the 1993/1994 winter.

## Acknowledgements

This article would not have been possible without the dedication of the Norfolk ringers who not only trapped and ringed the Siskins, but who also took the time and trouble to complete and submit a detailed data request form. To them all, we are most grateful. We would also like to acknowledge the help in obtaining an up-to-date list of ringing recoveries from the BTO Ringing Scheme which is supported by BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee [on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales, the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage], the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland).

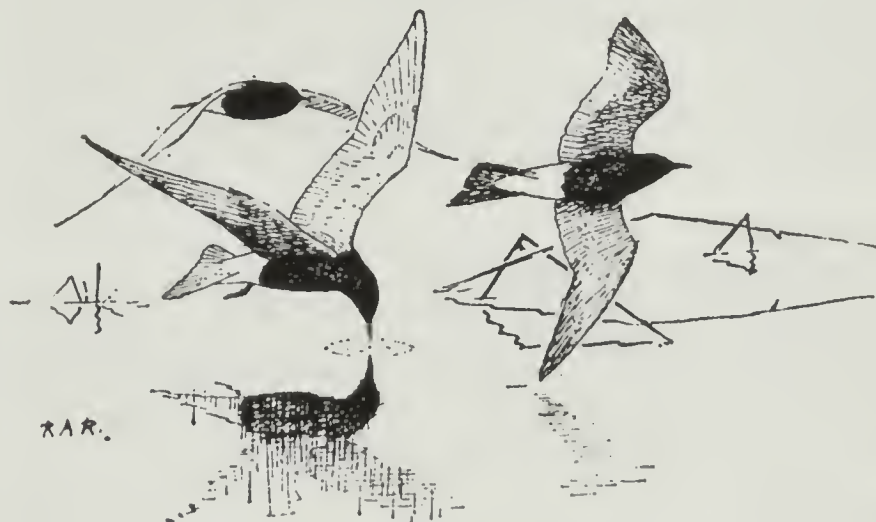
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# Systematic List



*Black Terns (R.A. Richardson)*

The order used follows the sixth edition of the Checklist of Birds of Britain & Ireland published by the BOU in 1992. The English names that are most familiar have been retained. Unless otherwise stated, all observations are of single birds and refer to 1994. The following abbreviations are used in the species accounts:-

<b>imm</b>	= immature	<b>GC</b>	= Golf Course
<b>juv</b>	= juvenile	<b>GP</b>	= Gravel Pit
<b>pr(s)</b>	= pair(s)	<b>NBR</b>	= Norfolk Bird Report
<b>BBRC</b>	= British Birds Rarities Committee	<b>NNR</b>	= National Nature Reserve
<b>BF</b>	= Sugarbeet Factory	<b>NR</b>	= Nature Reserve
<b>BTO</b>	= British Trust for Ornithology	<b>Pt</b>	= Point
<b>CBC</b>	= Common Bird Census	<b>SW</b>	= Sewage Works
<b>CP</b>	= Country Park		

Where tables are used in the species accounts these refer to monthly maximum counts for main sites unless otherwise stated. A dash indicates that no count details have been received. For wildfowl and waders, the data used generally derives from the monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts although if higher totals are available these are used instead.

Observers' initials are given for all national and county rarities and for a few other exceptional records. To save space, no more than three sets of initials are given for any record.

## Red-throated diver

*Gavia stellata*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare in summer.*

At the beginning of the year numbers offshore unexceptional, but some good movements in Jan with 200 east Sheringham and 150 south (in 2hrs.) Waxham on 2nd; 343 west Mundesley on 15th and 455 east Mundesley on 16th. Numbers present offshore increased in Feb especially at Overstrand where a maximum of 200; again some good movements including

240 east Sheringham on 19th and 300 east Mundesley on 20th. March saw a general drop in numbers but a count of 182 at Walcott on 5th. Even fewer in April and a scattering of reports of 1-4 birds from a variety of coastal sites during May.

Midsummer singles at Brancaster June 18th; Cley 6th and July 9th; Sheringham June 1st, July 12th and 17th.

A handful of Aug records and a slow build-up during Sept - Nov, but numbers generally modest. At the end of the year a concentration of 60 at Cley Dec 6th and a movement of 220 east, 75 west, at Sheringham on 22nd.

### Black-throated diver

*Gavia arctica*

#### *Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor*

An average showing with mainly singles reported from various points around the coast until May 16th (Sheringham) and again from the early date of Aug 30th (Sheringham). Peak numbers Sept-Oct. Only summer record concerned one lingering in Blakeney Point/Cley area June 7th-10th. Monthly totals for the county were:- Jan 6; Feb 5; Mar 6; April 0; May 3-4; Jun 1; July 0; Aug 1; Sept 8-10; Oct 11-12; Nov 11 and Dec 1.

### Great Northern Diver

*Gavia immuer*

#### *Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers. Exceptional in summer.*

A very poor showing in first winter period, only records being of singles off Weybourne Jan 14th; Mundesley Jan 7th and Cley Feb 25th. Subsequently, just a couple of unseasonal records concerning a bird in non-breeding plumage at Paston/Bacton May 28th and one in breeding plumage east off Sheringham June 10th.

After an early appearance of one off Sheringham Sept 2nd, the second winter period produced a few more birds. Records of 1-3 individuals on numerous dates around the coast from the Wash to Winterton. Monthly totals for the county were:- Sept 3-4, Oct 13-17; Nov 13 and Dec 5-7.

### Little Grebe

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

#### *Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding records (number of prs. in brackets):- Brancaster Freshes (3); Bintree Mill (1); Breydon/Berney Marshes (30); Cantley BF (9); Cantley Marshes (1) Flitcham (1); Fowl Mere (2); Holkham NNR (39); Holkham Park Lake (11); Holme (1); Kettlestone Common (1); Langmere (1); Swangey GP (1); Titchwell (1). A total of 102 pairs reported.

Winter maxima at main sites:-

	JAN	FEB	MAR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	6	-	-	4	10	5	-	-
Snettisham	100	40	12	33	46	80	116	102
Holme	-	5	5	6	-	5	8	7
Holkham NNR	-	5	14	9	-	11	6	12
Holkham Pk. Lake	-	-	-	33	34	-	-	-
Wells Harbour	8	5	6	-	-	-	6	8
Blakeney Harbour	12	14	9	-	-	-	7	12

Irregular counts from a variety of other sites including 14 Wensum Valley in Feb; 16 West Mere in Aug; 15 Heigham Sound, 16 Langmere and 13 Wensum Valley in Nov; 14 Heigham Sound in Dec. More regular counting would result in a more complete picture.

## Great Crested Grebe

*Podiceps cristatus*

*Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

breeding records (no. of prs. in brackets) were:- Bittering GP (1); Blickling Lake (2); Bure Valley Lakes (2); Colney GP (1); Filby Broad (5); Gunton Park (1); Hickling (24); Holkham Park Lake (2); Lyng-Easthaugh (2); Martham Broad (4); Thetford Nunnery Lakes (1); Pentney GP (2); Sennowe Park (2); Snettisham (1); Sparham Pools (2); Surlingham (1); Thompson Water (1); Welney (5); Wroxham (6). A total of 65 pairs reported.

Evidence of very early nesting again at Horning where a pair with young Dec 1st and a nest with eggs Dec 4th.

Winter monthly maxima at main coastal sites:-

	JAN	FEB	MAR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Snettisham	—	5	—	16	21	33	15	5
Hunstanton	10	—	—	—	—	48	8	—
Holme	10	15	—	10	13	69	10	4
Titchwell	—	—	—	—	9	20	16	15
Holkham Bay	—	—	—	—	—	11	15	20
Grancaster Harbour	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	4
Sundesley	—	5	5	—	—	3	—	—

Winter monthly maxima at main inland sites:-

	JAN	FEB	MAR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Cley	5	12	23	—	1	2	8	5
Nunnery Lakes	5	7	10	—	—	—	—	—
Ottenhill GP	12	—	11	—	9	11	—	13
Holkham Pk. Lake	—	—	4	6	6	4	—	—
Blickling Lake	6	9	12	—	—	—	—	12
Wroxham	—	17	14	—	30	10	6	26
Manworth Broad	—	7	8	—	—	19	13	12
Rockshoot Broad	—	7	8	—	19	14	13	12
Horning Ferry	19	16	—	—	—	—	—	10
Blickling	13	—	14	—	—	11	—	8
Rockland Broad	—	—	—	30	28	15	8	8

The only notable coastal movement came on the last day of the year when 35 west. coast, at Sheringham.

## Red-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor, especially following severe conditions.*

Very scarce in first part of the year, only records at Holme Jan 7th; Titchwell on 4th; Hunstanton Feb 19th, 27th, 28th and Overstrand Feb 25th. Spring records from Hunstanton March 2nd and Titchwell on 5th. The first bird of the autumn appeared off Cley Aug 12th with a further 4 coastal reports during the month. Sept saw another 18 birds, but peak numbers came in Oct, especially in the last week. A monthly total of 30–40 individuals included 4 Titchwell Oct 6th and 5 Holkham Bay on 30th. Nov produced a further 15 birds. The species was most regular in Holkham Bay where maximum was 5 on 27th. Few records during Dec although 4 remained in Holkham Bay early in the month. Only inland record Magdalen Bridge Gt. Ouse Dec 19th–24th.



## Slavonian Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant mainly during autumn.*

Coastal records until April 24th and from Sept 2nd. During Oct reported almost daily with following maxima: 8 Holme on 25th, 6 Titchwell on 25th and 29th and 5 Holkham Bay on 30th. Peak numbers during Nov at Titchwell (7 on 8th) and Holkham Bay (5 on 5th). Then usual decline, but 3 lingered in Holkham Bay all Dec.

Inland: Hickling where one Jan 27th–29th and 2 March 26th. A bird picked-up freshly dead Holkham beach during July remained in non-breeding plumage and wing moult.

## Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

An early record at Ormesby Feb 27th/28th followed by birds in breeding plumage at Mundesley April 1st and Hardley Flood July 23rd/24th.

Autumn and early winter reports from Snettisham Oct 19th/20th where 2 Nov 24th; Lynn Point Sept 16th; Scolt Head 2 Oct 9th; Titchwell 3 Oct 26th (BJR) and single Oct 30th/31st and Cley Nov 9th.

Inland: 2 Holkham Park Lake Sept 9th.

## Fulmar

*Fulmaris glacialis*

*Breeder with some remaining throughout year. Often coasting and storm movements.*

Hunstanton colony continues to thrive: 123 nests and 106 young fledged. However, depressing news from Weybourne/Sheringham where the colony has reached a new low and only 3 chicks fledged. Predation by Foxes and Rats, together with erosion of cliff-face are responsible. No breeding detail from elsewhere received.

Most impressive movements during torrential rain and strong NE winds Sept 1st when 150 Snettisham (2 hours), 220 Holme (all day), 415 Blakeney Point (0900–1200), 2000 Sheringham (all day) and 405 Mundesley (0700–1100). Also a good movement during similar weather conditions Sept 15th when 1000 Sheringham (all day) and 826 Mundesley (all day).

A blue phase bird remained in the Sheringham area until May and again from Sept 1st with 2 on 15th. Another took up residence from Nov 27th onwards.

Inland: Swanton Novers June 5th, Stracey Arms (Acle New Road) June 10th and Taverham Aug 8th.

## Cory's Shearwater

*Calonectris diomedea*

*Vagrant from the Mediterranean/North Atlantic. Almost annual in autumn.*

Singles Thornham Point Sept 17th (MKe); Sheringham 15th (SBe, KBS *et al*) and Sheringham Oct 3rd (DPA RGM KBS).

1993 additional record: Sheringham Oct 13th (IGJ MPL *et al*).

1993 correction: Sheringham Oct 14th, single initial to read PJH.

## Sooty Shearwater

*Puffinus griseus*

*Autumn passage migrant, occasionally in large numbers during northerly gales. Rare in spring.*

Estimated total of 175 during ten dates between Aug 7th (Mundesley) and Oct 3rd (Cley and Sheringham); the overwhelming majority during Sept. Largest easterly movements during storm conditions Sept 1st (7 Holme, 16 Blakeney Point, 12 Cley and 16 Sheringham) and Sept 15th (8 Cley and 15 Sheringham). Also 45 returning north off Horsey Gap Sept 17th.

The most distant regular passage visitor to local waters; nearest breeding colonies are on the Falkland Is.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*  
*Passage migrant with majority during autumn storms.*  
Usual scarce in spring, but one west Sheringham April 14th.  
More typical summer/autumn occurrences May 3rd to Oct 16th. Most notable storm  
Sept 1st when 20 Snettisham, 23 Holme, 15 Titchwell, 10 Brancaster, 81 Blakeney  
Pt (0900–1200), 40+ Cley, 260 Sheringham (all day), 128 Mundesley (all day) and a  
single Winterton. Numbers again Sept 15th during similar weather conditions when 60  
Cley, 105 Sheringham (all day) and 10 Mundesley.

**Mediterranean Shearwater** *Puffinus yelkouan*  
*Annual in very small numbers, mainly during early autumn.*  
Heavy rain and strong winds Sept 1st resulted in singles Hunstanton and Holme, 2  
Brancaster, 2 Cley, 2 Sheringham and 2 Mundesley.  
Additional records: Sheringham 2 Sept 2nd, 2 Sept 15th and 2 Oct 3rd; Mundesley Sept  
14th; Horsey Gap 3 Sept 17th and 2 Oct 3rd and Winterton Sept 17th.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*  
*Most annual late autumn visitor, often in stormy weather.*  
Two heading east off Sheringham April 14th (AMB) were unusual but not unprecedented.  
Also an early bird Sheringham Sept 1st (DJH KBS *et al*).  
A casualty brought in by helicopter from an offshore platform Oct 10th was released on  
Plymouth beach next day (*per* PRA).

**Leach's Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*  
*Tide-blown visitor mainly in autumn.*  
One 3 west off Holme and 6 east off Sheringham Sept 1st, followed by singles Hunstanton  
Sept 2nd and Cley Sept 2nd and 14th were forerunners of a major movement Sept 15th  
when 8 east, 1 west, Holme; 1 Blakeney Pt; 9 east Cley; 52 east Sheringham and 1 off  
Winterton.  
Smaller numbers Sept 16th when 1 Hunstanton, 5 west Holme and 7 east, 3 west,  
Sheringham with another off Horsey Sept 17th.  
Only Oct records Holme and Brancaster on 3rd.

**Manx Gannet** *Sula bassana*  
*Passage migrant, most abundant during autumn storms.*  
Recorded every month with peak counts as follows: 28 east Mundesley Jan 16th; 300 east  
Sheringham Feb 14th; 12 Holme Mar 19th; 135 west Mundesley Apr 17th; 280 east  
Sheringham May 12th; 39 east Sheringham June 14th; 110 east Sheringham July 2nd; 320  
Sheringham Aug 10th; 800 east Sheringham Sept 15th; 310 east Sheringham Oct 3rd; 35  
west Holme Nov 2nd and 100 east Sheringham Dec 31st.

**Common Noddy** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
*Increasing passage migrant and winter visitor.*  
Peak monthly counts from main roost sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Wolfram Park	63	57	43	25	77	50	200	200	268	240	160	111
Winterton	259	232	206	137	39	32	56	108	107	191	270	250
Snettisham	–	39	48	28	34	–	120	154	129	75	61	11
Winterton	194	187	269	128	24	22	–	80	122	163	172	193

Birds showing characteristics of the continental race *sinensis* appear to be increasing with counts of 9 Ranworth Broad Feb 19th, 8 Welney March 12th, 6 Pentney GP Feb 15th and 1-4 at 14 other sites. An apparent peak Jan-March.

### Shag

*Phalacrocorax aristoteli*

*Mainly autumn and winter visitor; occasionally wrecked inland.*

Numbers much lower than last year, one particular bird staying in Wells Harbour all year.

A fairly widespread inland 'wreck' during mid-Feb, producing a maximum of 19 at Magdalen; 2 Trowse; 1 Norwich Waterworks; 1 Colney GP and 3 Wareham.

### Bittern

*Botaurus stellaris*

*Rare resident breeder. Also winter visitor in very small numbers.*

A remarkably high wintering population in the Hickling/Horsey/Marham/Heigham Sounds complex, estimated at 16 birds. Also noted during Jan-Feb at Snettisham CP, Cley Strumpshaw Fen, Ormesby Broad, Upton and Thompson Water.

Breeding situation remains critical. On the north coast, a pair fledged 2 young, 2 pairs attempted breeding with outcome unknown, and another male was considered to be unmated. In the Broads, 2 pairs bred, one fledging 2 young; the other nest was predated. A further male heard booming on one occasion only was also considered to be un-paired.

Away from breeding sites, the only mid-summer records were from Holme July 3rd and 9th.

In second winter period records from Holme, Titchwell, Holkham, West Somerton/Horsey, Heigham Holmes, Hickling and Rollesby. One inland at Burnham Thorpe Dec 23rd maybe displaced by freezing conditions.

### Night Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

*Vagrant from the Continent. Free-flying colony at Gt Witchingham causes confusion.*

A single record, the first since 1990. An adult flew in from the north-east at Sheringham May 31st continuing westwards over Weybourne (MY-P).

### Little Egret

*Egretta garzetta*

*Official rarity until very recently. Now annual visitor, the majority in autumn.*

Following the national trend of increased records of birds wandering from the northwards expanding European population, county sightings continue to increase.

Two present Stiffkey saltmarsh from turn of the year to Mar 27th. One flew east at Burnham Norton Mar 24th. Two wandered between Blakeney Point and Kelling Quags April 25th-26th and a single Holme Apr 28th-29th.

Singles in May at Berney Marshes on 1st, Burnham Norton 5th and Breydon 23rd. Three Cley June 18th wandered between Blakeney and Salthouse to 26th. Also 2 Berney Marshes June 23rd and a single Lynn Point July 24th.

In autumn 2 Stiffkey August 15th, singles Cley Aug 18th and west over Sheringham and Cley Aug 29th.

A complex situation in north-west of the county centred on Titchwell where one roosted each evening from May 17th, joined by a second May 23rd. Then 2 again Aug 19th, 3 Aug 23rd-25th, 4 Aug 26th-31st, 5 Sept 1st, 6 Sep 2nd, 4 Sep 6th, 3 Oct 23rd and 2 still present Dec 30th. These birds fed mainly in Brancaster and Thornham Harbours and the adjacent saltings and creeks. During this period the following records may well relate to the Titchwell group: Holme 2 May 23rd, singles June 4th and 7th, Aug 21st-22nd, 2 Aug 27th, 3 Nov 24th and singles Dec 4th and 16th; Scolt Head Oct 15th; Burnham Deepdale Dec 23rd and Warham/Stiffkey Dec 24th-31st.





*Little Egrets (N. Borrow)*

## Great White Egret

*Egretta alba*

*Transient migrant from the Continent.*

One at Feltwell Anchor from Dec 22nd 1993 (JBK, DK), departed Feb 13th at the onset of freezing conditions. Subsequently recorded in Cambs, Northants and Bucks. This individual frequented dykes on private arable farmland throughout its stay.

This constitutes the eighth county occurrence, the first being as recent as 1979, at Hickling/Horsey.

What must have been a different bird headed west at Cley Jan 21st during early morning (CD).

## Grey Heron

*Ardea ardea*

*Resident and passage migrant/winter visitor.*

No large winter concentrations, but migrants noted in from the sea at Holme where 5 May, 3 Jun 26th and 5 Jun 27th. Also one west at Sheringham May 7th.

### Breeding records received from:

Barton Broad	7 nests	Holme	1 (no eggs laid)
Burgh Castle	12	Islington	91
Burgh St. Peter	2	Narford	7
Cockshoot Broad	1	North Elmham	10
Didlington	8	Old Hunstanton	3
Feltwell (Black Dyke)	4	Quidenham	17
Fleggburgh Common	2	Ranworth	1
Gt. Witchingham	44	Snettisham	7
Hilgay	38	Sounds Wood, Hickling	12
Holkham	7	Sturston Carr	9

The total of 283 nests is slightly down on 1993, but no reports received from some small parishes, indicating a stable breeding population.

Autumn coastal migrants moving west at: Holme 4 Jul 7th, 5 Aug 21st and 5 Sep 1st; Lancaster Harbour 5 Sep 3rd and Sheringham 5 Jul 11th and 9 Sep 19th.

High numbers in second-winter period at Lenwade where 27 in Dec.

## White Stork

*Ciconia ciconia*

*Vagrant from the Continent appearing most years.*

A single example of this still sought after county rarity at St Benet's Level, Jul 17th–18th (SEL).

## Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorocha*

*Scarce non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Rare in winter.*

March singles at Berney Marshes 17th and 29th–30th. Two east over Holkham May 10th arrived at Cley the same day (one colour-ringed), remaining to 14th. One east over Holme May 18th and briefly at Titchwell later that day. One roamed the Blakeney/Cley/Salthouse area May 20th–25th with a second at Salthouse on 29th. Two Cley June 4th, 3 Breydon/Berney Marshes June 5th remained to 10th when 2 adults departed leaving an immature until 12th. Another Horsey Mere June 17th. Three Hickling June 19th, 4 (one colour-ringed) on 21st with a single there on 23rd. Additional single over Yarmouth June 28th.

As usual, fewer autumn records. A juvenile Breydon Aug 18th, Cley Aug 19th–29th and Blakeney Harbour Aug 30th–Sep 7th presumably relate to one wanderer. Also singles at Stiffkey Sep 18th, Breydon Oct 6th and Nov 4th; possibly the same Welney Nov 5th–6th.

## Mute Swan

*Cygnus olor*

*Resident. The Ouse Washes attracts the most important winter concentration.*

Welney monthly counts: Jan 221; Feb 118; March 235; April 136; Oct 61; Nov 121 and Dec 182; 24 pairs bred there. Elsewhere few breeding records received, but included Holkham NNR 9 pairs; Wroxham Broad 2 pairs; Hickling Broad 7 pairs; Martham Broad 2 pairs and Berney 6 pairs. A 'Polish type' juvenile (all white) present at Burnham Norton. Highest counts elsewhere include Hockwold Flood 80 in May; St Benet's Level 62 in Jan; 66 in Feb and 84 in March; Yare Valley at Claxton and Langley 74 in Dec and Breydon area 103 in Jan and 69 in Nov.

## Bewick's Swan

*Cygnus columbianus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in internationally important numbers.*

As usual, largest concentrations at Welney where monthly totals as follows: Jan 3210; Feb 2626; March 2500 (until 2nd then rapid departure 3rd to 5th leaving 536 by 9th; 136 on 13th and just 2 juveniles on 31st); Oct 173; Nov 2462 and Dec 3668. Extreme Welney dates April 24th and Oct 17th. 3 injured adults summered there. One adult again summered at Cley (until at least Sept 11th and then moved to Holkham).

Elsewhere at least 3 main Broadland sites used in both winter periods, but situation very complex with much interchange. Co-ordinated counts would be very useful. At Ludham/St. Benet's/Catfield: Jan 268; Feb 245; Nov 42 and Dec 131. Horsey/Waxham: Jan 200; Feb 160; Nov 21 and Dec 17. Breydon/Berney/Halvergate: Jan 331; Feb 350; March 300 (until 3rd, with 75 remaining on 4th); Nov 24 and Dec 33. Elsewhere in Broadland, Haddiscoe/Wheatacre 75 in Feb; Strumpshaw 57 on Nov 25th.

Early departures, Sheringham Feb 6th when 28 east, but main departure in first week of March with 50 east over Yarmouth on 1st and 145 on 2nd. First in autumn Oct 9th when 3 west at Cley followed by arrivals at coastal sites on many dates including 32 over Docking (Nov 2nd) and 54 Holme (Nov 19th).

## Whooper Swan

*Cygnus cygnus*

*Increasing winter visitor from Iceland in internationally important numbers.*

Monthly totals at Welney include Jan 775; Feb 924 (on 6th, a new county record); March still 900 on 9th and an unprecedented 215 still present on 31st; April 232 on 3rd decreasing



Top left: the longest ever staying Black-winged Stilt at Titchwell (*Sarah Bhalerao*); right: Collared Pintail at Titchwell and Cley July (*R. Chittenden*); the fifth county record. Bottom: Lesser Yellowlegs, Cley, May (*J. Bhalerao*); the seventh county record.







Top: the Holkham Bay Grey Phalarope which stayed four days in early April was almost certainly the long stayer in Lowestoft harbour, Suffolk (*R. Chittenden*). Bottom: this summer-plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher (the sixth county record) appeared briefly at Pentney 28th April (*R. Chittenden*).



82 on 9th; 30 on 16th and 12 until 21st leaving 2 injured birds. 3 injured birds present in May and one in June–Sept. First birds back Oct 4th and 446 by 31st; Nov 492; Dec 853 (on 1st, but an earlier count on 4th saw a record total Ouse Wash count of 1142 with 842 in Norfolk and 300 in Cambs).

Elsewhere, the regular Horsey/Waxham herd peaked at 45 in Jan; 60 in Feb and 8 in March (until 20th); 50 again Nov 26th and 48 in Dec. Also up to 42 at Catfield/St. Benet's Jan and 25 on Dec 24th. Also in Broadland 4 Hardley Flood Jan 16th; 4 Breydon Nov 1st and one Dec 4th.

Coastal records include 5 east Sheringham Feb 11th; 21 east Kelling March 1st; and 9 Wymham Norton on Oct 28th. Obvious arrival Nov 19th when 10 in off sea Bacton; 18 west Overstrand; 22 Titchwell; 21 west Holme and 22 over Castle Acre.

Unusual record of 6 Buckenham Tofts on May 1st.

### Lesser Goose

*Anser fabalis*

*A.f.fabalis*, winter visitor to the Yare Valley. *A.f.rossicus*, small numbers irregular.

In the Yare Valley *A.f.fabalis* gaggle remained in good numbers with 416 Jan 1st; but decreased to 376 on 8th. Early departures followed: 139 remained on 14th; 70 on 15th and 18 until 27th. In Jutland, Denmark the Yare Valley birds' arrival was noted on 10th–15th. None present in February. First arrivals back 4 on Nov 15th with 67 next day. This soon increased to 236 on 26th and 259 Dec 1st. A peak of 292 achieved on 24th. Up to 100 *rossicus* birds Dec 12th–18th.

Elsewhere there were many coastal sightings which perhaps all relate to the expanding Russian race (*rossicus*). At Welney 21 increasing to 25 Jan 22nd which remained to Feb 1st. King's Lynn 13 Jan 10th; Lynn Point 28 east Feb 13th; Weymouth 11 east Jan 22nd; Holkham 3 in Jan until Feb 17th; Horsey-Waxham-Marham 80 Jan 11th decreasing to 20 on 23rd, 6 on Feb 4th and 3 on 27th; up to 7 from Nov 18th with 16 Dec 24th and 20 on 25th. Ludham 12 Nov 30th; Breydon/Halvergate 24 Jan 15th, 8 Feb 2nd and 11 on 10th–27th.

Records of 5 in off the sea at Winterton Nov 1st and 18 Halvergate Nov 20th may relate to *rossicus* birds.

### Bank-footed Goose

*Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor from Iceland and East Greenland in increasing numbers.

Well co-ordinated roost counts in NW Norfolk at Snettisham, Scolt Head and Warham in 1981 produced totals of 60,505 on 3rd; 68,560 on 10th, 57,655 on 17th, 24,084 on 24th and 14,025 on 31st. The early month counts once again broke all previous records. The highest roost count was 14,590 on 16th with an additional 1400 which roosted at Holme. Slower spring departure than normal, 765 still at Snettisham April 16th. Last 4 at Holkham May 1st. First autumn arrivals Sept 18th and co-ordinated roost counts resulted in 43,390 on Dec 5th and 49,040 on 27th.

In east Norfolk, the Heigham Holmes-Horsey population continues to increase with 420 in Jan and 850 in Feb with 400 in Dec. Elsewhere in Broadland 750 south over Irstead on 1st and 4th and a maximum of 74 in Breydon area late Nov. A feral pair bred successfully at St. Benet's Level. At least 2 leucistic birds in the NW Norfolk population.

### White-fronted Goose

*Anser albifrons*

Winter visitor and passage migrant from the Siberian tundra.

Records from traditional localities: Welney 113 in Jan; 35 in Feb; Holkham 294 Jan, 384 Feb; Buckenham/Cantley 311 Jan, nil Feb; Heigham Holmes 140 Jan, 260 Feb. Some interchange noted between the last 2 localities. Elsewhere 45 in Berney area and 38 Cley/Blakeney.

Rapid spring departure as usual; 326 at Holkham March 6th, all gone by mid-month. An injured bird remained at Berney until June 6th when it flew out to sea.

First autumn arrivals 6 at Berney Oct 26th followed by 4 Holkham on 28th; 5 Cley on 29th. Dec totals at regular sites: 50 Welney; 136 Holkham; 245 Buckenham/Cantley and 6 Heigham Holmes.

### **Lesser White-fronted Goose**

*Anser erythropus*

*Vagrant from Northern Scandinavia. Birds of captive origin now predominate.*

The captive bred blue-collared bird which arrived at Buckenham/Cantley on Nov 7th 1992 stayed with Bean Geese until Jan 15th. It was then reported at Vejlerne, Denmark Feb 10th–April 10th, at Kvismaren, Sweden on April 17th and in Finland on April 22nd. The origin of this individual is Finnish Lapland and not Sweden as originally published in 1993 NBR. It was released July 12th 1993. It was then seen at Skane, Sweden on Oct 31st. A sub-adult of unknown origin was also at Buckenham/Cantley Dec 12th–18th associating with both Greylags and Bean Geese. Other sightings (all of unknown origin) were an adult with Pinkfeet at Burnham Norton April 4th into May, an adult at Holkham Nov 28th into Dec, adult at Welney Dec 9th–22nd and a first year bird at Cley Dec 27th.

The true status of this species has become impossible to unravel.

### **Greylag Goose**

*Anser anser*

*Long established feral population complicates the identity of genuine wild birds.*

Highest counts at main localities: Welney 252 in Oct; Pentney GP 193 in Jan; Sennow Park 325 in Dec; Flitcham 175 in Nov; Snettisham 372 in Sept, 570 in Oct; Titchwell 108 in Aug; Holkham NNR 725 in Sept and 738 in Oct; Holkham Park 600 in Dec; Lyng-Eastaugh 290 in Jan; Sparham 350 in Sept; Gunton 121 in Jan; Cley 290 in Nov; Ranworth 400 in Dec; Wroxham 394 in Oct; St. Benet's Level 170 in July; Hickling/Heigham Holmes 540 in Sept and 595 in Oct; Surlingham Church Marsh 270 in Nov and Filby Broad 355 in Dec.

Few breeding records received, but included Holkham NNR 23 pairs; Flitcham 4 pairs; Brancaster 4 pairs and Heigham Holmes 5 pairs.

### **Canada Goose**

*Branta canadensis*

*An abundant introduced resident.*

Monthly total at main sites: Jan 148 Gunton Park; 117 Blickling; 86 Swanton Morley GP; Feb 85 Lyng; 140 Heigham Holmes. March 44 Snettisham. June 302 Titchwell; 125 How Hill. July 80 Snettisham; 122 Thetford Nunnery; 150 Swangay GP. Sept 250 Sparham, 107 Holkham NNR, 82 Breydon. Oct 257 Thetford Nunnery, 124 Snettisham. Nov 168 Holkham NNR, 268 Whitlingham. Dec 233 Tottenhill GP. Few breeding records received, but included 4 broods Thetford Nunnery; 5 broods West Mere; 5 broods Lynford Arboretum; 11 pairs Holkham NNR and 2 pairs Filby Broad.

### **Barnacle Goose**

*Branta leucopsis*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Feral groups cause confusion.*

During January, good numbers remained from Nov 1993 influx, max counts 80 Heigham Holmes; 12 Holkham; 23 Salthouse/Cley (although 27 Cley on 27th) and 17 Berney on 28th. Few present after Feb 13th, but 10 over Scolt Head on 17th; 18 at Holkham NNR in March to 21st and one to April 6th.

In autumn, singles with Brents at Sheringham and Holme Oct 2nd, one also at Holme on 23rd; 14 at Breydon Nov 3rd followed by 8 at Holme on 23rd and at least 3 associated with Pink-feet in N.W. Norfolk. Up to 29 favoured Heigham Holmes in Dec, 26 at Hickling on 20th were presumably the same birds. Small movement on 25th; 5 south at Horsey were



er over Yarmouth and 6 Breydon with an additional 21 north. On 26th, 15 Cley and 16 rney.

Information now received regarding the 1993 Holkham NNR sightings of several colour ged birds Feb 16th, the colour combinations and letters successfully being read on 4 ividuals. It is now known that the 2 pairs were marked in a new breeding area on the and of Gotland, Sweden, established from the Russian population in the early 1980s and ntaining an exceptional 2,000 pairs by 1993.

The origins of the following are unknown: 9 Brundall April; 7 Surlingham May 9th; 9 nterton May 22nd; 5 Sheringham May 31st; 12 Wells/Holkham in July/early Aug; the 11 Cley Aug 13th–31st were presumably the same birds; 29 Hardley Floods Sept 23rd; 27 ntley on 30th; same birds Limpenhoe Oct 2nd–9th and 22 Surlingham Nov 27th. Also smaller numbers elsewhere including 3 Cranwich GP in Dec. In addition up to 27 und/Fritton Lake all year. Most of the above are considered to be of captive origin, but ent evidence suggests that this may not always be the case. One at Lound April 10th–11th 93 remarkably had been ringed in Spitzbergen in 1986 whilst another at Fritton Lake on ne 24th 1993 had been ringed in Sweden in 1989. This latter record shows that even some en in mid-summer could be genuine wild birds.

Further reading: *The origins of Barnacle Geese wintering in Norfolk* (NBC Bulletin 11).

### rent Goose

*Brenta bernicla*

### ark-bellied Brent

*B.b.bernicla*

#### *Common passage migrant and winter visitor.*

orth coast maximum counts between Holme and Salhouse: 14,211 Jan; 10,278 Feb; 5,331 arch. Total Wash counts (only part of which is in Norfolk). 22,388 Jan; 19,896 Feb. The ash holds the most important wintering population of the dark-bellied race in Britain. ewhere: Breydon 180 Feb 17th increasing to 247 on 19th (a site record); 125 remained arch 7th. Other March counts 2,000 Lynn Point; 135 Snettisham. Good numbers remained April: 500 Lynn Point, 310 Snettisham and 3,090 Holme-Salhouse. 8 also Breydon on th with 3 on 16th. Max of 650 at Snettisham in May, but much smaller numbers ewhere apart from 150 Holme present to mid-month. Summering birds (June–Aug) clude Lynn Point 1–2; Snettisham 1; Holme 3; Brancaster Harbour 8; Blakeney Harbour . First autumn arrivals 2 west Sheringham Sept 18th followed by 20 Brancaster Harbour 20th and a general arrival on 21st when 48 west Holme, 40 Wells Harbour and 80 west eringham. Increasing numbers throughout Oct with coastal movements on many dates pecially 16th when 650 west Holme and 1100 west Sheringham. In addition up to 49 at eydon Oct. Max Nov count Holme–Salhouse 10,515. Coastal movements continued with 0 west Sheringham Nov 3rd and 780 west on 22nd. Initial counts showed a poor breeding ason with just under 6% young. The December (4th) Holme–Salhouse total produced 3,364 although indications show that the Brancaster Harbour population was seriously dercounted and the total was probably nearer 15,000.

### ble-bellied Brent

*B.b.hrota*

#### *Annual winter visitor/passage migrant in very small numbers.*

xamples of the pale-bellied race at Lynn Point Jan 16th; Holkham Feb 1st; Cley Feb 17th d Dec 26th; Salhouse Feb 2nd; Sheringham 13 west Sept 17th. 2 west Oct 4th, one west ov 14th and Yarmouth Nov 3rd.

### ack Brant

*B.b.nigricans*

#### *Migrant from North America.*

ngle at Cley Feb 9th (IGJ).



Red-breasted Goose (P. Jones)

### Red-breasted Goose

*Branta ruficollis*

*A vagrant from Siberia.*

A first-winter bird with Brent Geese at Wells/Warham Oct 23rd to Nov 6th when it flew east (AIB, JRMc, RW *et al*). It was subsequently seen flying south at Winterton at 1205 hr the same day (PDK). Four previous county records.

### Egyptian Goose

*Alopochen aegyptiaca*

*Longest established feral population.*

Highest totals: *Jan* Blickling 16, Wroxham 18; *Feb* Cockshoot/Ranworth 30, Coston 26; *March* Holkham NNR 28; *July* Sennowe Park 27; *Aug* Holkham Park 85, Thetford Nunnery 23, Sennowe Park 58; *Sept* Pentney GP 48, Holme 29; *Oct* West Acre 38, Holkham NNR 28, Catfield 98; *Nov* Thetford Nunnery 24, Wroxham 18; *Dec* Horning Upper Street 46.

Breeding birds at Thetford Nunnery 3 pairs; Stanford Battle Area 10 pairs; Docking 1 pair; Bawsey GP 1 pair; Holkham Park 7 pairs; Pentney GP 2 pairs; Lyng Eastaugh GP 1 pair; Blakeney Freshes 1 pair; Felbrigg 1 pair; Colney GP 3 pairs; Wroxham 6 pairs and Filby 1 pair.

In addition 21 young at Blickling and 7 young at Gunton Park. Evidence of early breeding: pair with 2 small young Horning Ferry Jan 6th and up to 8 pairs nest building at Holkham Park in Dec.

### Ruddy Shelduck

*Tadorna ferruginea*

*Status uncertain. Most are escapees, but a few are probably genuine vagrants.*

A few spring and autumn records: Terrington St. Clement April 12th and Ongar Hill April 16th; Stanford Water April 26th; pair Sparham Pools May 12th; 2 Swanton Novers May 27th; 2 Cley June 27th–28th. Two Sennowe Park Sept 27th and Nov 29th; a female immature Welney Sept 9th; Wroxham Broad Dec 26th.

With so many wandering birds at large, it is impossible to accurately assess the origins of birds seen in the county. There was a minor influx into NW Europe from late June, but German feral birds and escapees create a confusing picture.

### Shelduck

*Tadorna tadorna*

*Widespread breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

onthly peak counts at selected sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
an Point	2645	2026	310	306	184	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
atisham	900	1195	403	269	269	365	479	104	786	1520	800	1094
akeney Hbr/ y	263	218	247	147	—	—	—	78	80	322	285	468
eydon	210	549	—	491	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	119

Other notable max counts include 208 Brancaster Harbour and 198 Wells Harbour Jan; 100 Ongar Hill and 120 Welney March; 159 Welney April and 53 Gunton Park Feb with there March.

Breeding information received from 25 localities, including 17 broods at Holkham NNR and 100 juvs. Cantley BF in August. Adults departing east to traditional moulting sites off north-west Germany noted at Holme on fine evenings throughout July with max 221 on and; also c1000 flightless adults off Bulldog Sands in July is the first evidence for some of the continued presence of a Wash moulting flock.

Birds returning from moulting areas noted from Sept 1st. with peak counts on 18th when west Holme, 230 west Sheringham and 116 west Mundesley.

**mandarin**

*Aix galericulata*

**roduced wanderer and escapee. Large breeding collection at Sandringham.**

Little detail received on the Sandringham population. Nearby a pair bred at Fliteham and 2 pairs at Babingley May 8th where there had been 6 birds Feb 5th.

A wintering bird remained at Welney Jan 15th–Feb 4th and again from Sept 24th until at least Dec 5th. Elsewhere 1–3 at Filby, Brundall, New Costessey, Tottenhill GP; Sennowe Park, Gunton Park and Felbrigg.

1993 Addition: Two pairs bred in a free flying collection at Aylmerton, the offspring wing off before they could be pinioned.

**idgeon**

*Anas penelope*

**undant passage migrant and winter visitor in internationally important numbers. Not bred.**

Peak monthly counts at main localities:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	11635	6280	7748	1517	1100	3240	6595	9524
Holme	1500	1600	1100	12	350	1100	1100	1280
Brancaster/Scolt	175	—	—	—	700	1500	500	161
Holkham NNR	7910	6230	5427	131	757	3901	6304	7460
Akeney/Cley	2524	700	619	75	338	625	2010	7080
Eydon/Berney	5100	4200	—	—	—	—	—	940
Snorth Broad	940	790	—	—	—	58	464	348
Wickenham	2750	—	—	47	200	3474	4300	4500

The majority of birds had left by the end of March, with a visible NE departure noted from Welney on the evening of March 29th. As usual most main wetland sites held a few summering individuals with a county total of 40–50 birds. Also a surprising 16 at Sennowe



Park June 30th. Two pairs bred at Holkham NNR, both hatched young; 3 fledged from one pair, but outcome unknown for second pair. Apparently the first confirmed breeding in the county since 1965.

Coastal movements regularly noted Sept–Nov with max counts 830 west Holme Sept 15th; 900 west Sheringham on 20th; 320 west Holme Oct 17th; 350 west and 35 east Sheringham 21st, and 400 west there Nov 4th.

## Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

*Resident, passage migrant, summer visitor and winter visitor.*

Highest counts: 88 Snettisham, 80 Colney GP, 63 Hickling *Jan*; 177 Welney, 113 Snettisham, 82 Titchwell, 96 Holkham NNR *Feb*; 343 Welney (new reserve record), 76 Snettisham, 107 Titchwell, 76 Berney/Breydon *March*; 96 Welney *April*; 82 Surlingham Broad *June*; 102 Holkham NNR, 62 Cley *Aug*; 71 Holme (reserve record), 125 Holkham NNR, 95 How Hill NR, 108 Tottenhill GP, 116 Tallent's Meadow Lake, 150 Gunton Park *Sept*; 111 Welney, 67 Gunton Park *Nov*; 90 Hickling, 95 Stanford Water, 85 Sennowe Park *Dec*.

Breeding recorded at Welney (17 broods); Tallent's Meadow Lake (1 brood); Holme (4 broods); Holkham NNR (15 broods); Holkham Park Lake (9 broods); Blakeney Point (1 pair); Wroxham (2 broods); Cantley BF (1 brood); Hickling (6 pairs); Nunnery Lakes (2 broods); Stanford Water (6 pairs bred); Wretham Gate (1 pair bred); Gunton Park (3 broods); Flitcham (1 brood); Ouse Washes RSPB Norfolk Section (19 pairs present). No counts received from Narford Hall Lake which formerly held nationally important numbers.

The feeding association noted between Coot and Gadwall mentioned in last year's report very evident at Martham Broad.

## Teal

*Anas crecca*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; breeds in very small numbers.*

Peak monthly counts at main sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	956	1100	1200	289	360	710	426	1756	1831
Snettisham	300	140	62	–	58	101	216	160	471
Titchwell	224	127	90	89	56	100	205	500	440
Holkham NNR	595	769	376	251	243	2	445	611	626
Blakeney/Cley	1250	469	104	168	262	318	655	1340	1616
Berney	750	300	–	–	–	–	–	280	–
Cockshoot/ Ranworth	504	229	49	–	–	81	189	223	200

The above table includes all records over 200 except Gunton Park 247 Oct.

At Welney high flooding in first-winter period reduced numbers to well below expected totals.

Breeding records, each of single broods, in July at Welney, Holkham NNR, Wroxham Broad and Wretham Gate.

Westerly coastal movements of autumn migrants from mid Aug. with exceptional counts Sept 1st of 1169 Holme; 850 Sheringham; 360 Mundesley, and then 720 Sheringham Sept 20th.

## Green-winged Teal

*A.c.carolinensis*

A drake of this Nearctic race at Cley Jan 23rd (JAM) and presumed the same bird March 26th–30th (RGM *et al*). The 22nd county record.

allard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

*spread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*  
Peak counts at main sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	1339	1244	696	1100	1059	960	1814	1359
Snettisham	518	450	77	403	747	545	252	227
Holkham NNR	112	176	158	309	366	82	146	80
Welney/Cley	506	286	262	336	427	181	236	288
Kelling	302	243	—	205	—	35	—	81
Shoot/Ranworth	217	146	65	304	269	138	235	411
Breydon	512	322	—	—	—	—	—	153
Wensley Lakes Thetford	134	138	58	103	124	104	242	249

Elsewhere max counts of 457 Lynn Point and 167 Blickling *Jan*; 123 Snettisham and 165  
Sedham Water *June*; 190 Snettisham *July*; 270 Stanford Water and 300 Sennowe Park *Dec*.  
Largest breeding counts: 149 males and 46 females Welney in May; 62 broods Holkham  
NNR; 28 pairs Snettisham and 150 pairs Ouse Washes RSPB Norfolk section.

entail

*Anas acuta*

*assage migrant and winter visitor, but has bred.*  
Peak monthly counts at main localities:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	200	362	288	473	642	314	356
Welney Hbr/Cley	746	774	81	28	288	3604	915
Breydon	213	218	129	24	101	106	139
Wensley GP	—	—	—	77	357	371	110

Pairs at Filby Broad May 28th–June 7th and Burnham Norton June 7th where a drake  
seen 23rd, but no proof of breeding.  
Some good westerly coastal movements of autumn migrants, with peak counts 350  
Surlingham Sept 20th and 189 Holme Sept 21st.

arganey

*Anas querquedula*

*very scarce breeding summer visitor; scarce passage migrant. Exceptional in winter.*  
First spring arrivals Buckenham March 6th, Cley March 25th with a pair there from 29th.  
Pair Welney March 29th–31st, Burnham Norton March 31st. Thereafter spring records of  
4 Welney, Snettisham, Holme, Titchwell, Burnham Norton, Holkham NNR, Cley, Kelling  
Water Meadow, Surlingham, Breydon, Berney, Strumpshaw, Surlingham, Hockwold Flood  
and Ouse Washes RSPB.

Summering at five localities, with confirmed breeding from two involving three pairs; a  
fourth pair may have attempted breeding.

Few autumn records. Max counts in Aug of 3 Titchwell; 11 Cley; 2 Welney, Holkham  
NNR, Colney GP. In Sept 1–3 at Welney on several dates up to 23rd; 1–5 at Cley up to 9th;  
single Berney Sept 5th and two Sept 7th. Last Welney Oct 4th.

**Blue-winged Teal***Anas discor***Vagrant from North America.**

A female at Cley May 12th (PW *et al*) was actively pursued by 3 male Shoveler with amorous intent.

**Shoveler***Anas clypeat***Passage migrant, summer and winter visitor.**

Peak counts at main sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	229	404	621	119	70	118	97	302	536
Holkham NNR	40	59	64	—	—	40	102	129	41
Cley/Salthouse	70	83	56+	—	20	26+	55+	77	61
Berney/Breydon	—	120	—	—	—	—	—	139	155
Strumpshaw	71	60	43	—	—	—	52	20	45

Highest numbers elsewhere: 129 Filby Broad *Feb*; 60 Cantley BF and 40 Tottenhill GP in *Aug*; 95 How Hill NR, 80 Cantley BF and 64 Tottenhill GP in *Sept*.

Breeding records at Welney (7 broods); Holme (5 pairs bred); Titchwell (2–3 pairs bred); Holkham NNR (12 broods); Breydon (1 brood); Berney (5 broods); Hickling (2 pairs possibly bred); Ludham Marshes NNR (1 brood); Wroxham (2 broods); West Mere (1 brood); Ouse Washes RSPB Norfolk Section (20 pairs present).

This species is seldom involved in coastal movements, so records of 10 west Mundesley March 20th and moderate passage in Sept with max 22 west Mundesley Sept 1st are notable.

**Red-crested Pochard***Netta rufina***An escapee, but with the possibility of genuine vagrants from the Continent.**

Ones and twos at Welney, Snettisham, Cley, Hickling, Martham, Ranworth, Whitlingham GP, Lyng-Easthaugh, Swangey GP, Tottenhill GP. Also 1–10 at Sennowe Park Aug–Dec. Most originate from escaped populations or collections. A free-flying pair at Blakeney and a free-flying population of c.50 at Pensthorpe doubtless account for the various Cley and Sennowe Park records respectively.

**Pochard***Aythya ferina***Summer visitor breeding in small numbers; passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Max monthly counts at the main wintering site at Welney:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	1960	1377	1100	26	151	777	870

Other notable counts include: 121 Snettisham, 240 Barton, 122 Hickling in *Jan*; 187 Hickling, 80 Cockshoot/Ranworth in *Feb*; 127 Hickling *March*; 83 Barton Broad *April*; good coastal movement of 130 west Sheringham Oct 21st; 118 Snettisham, 120 Swanton Morley in *Nov*; 180 Fowl Mere, 140 Ranworth, 92 Holkham Park Lake (highest ever site count) in *Dec*.

A breeding survey organised by *Norfolk Bird Club* produced a total of 65–68 broods. County total no doubt higher as no details available for several key sites in the Broads.



Long-necked Duck
 

Aythya collaris

Migrant from North America.

The regular drake appeared erratically at Wroxham Broad Jan 1st, Feb 4th, 6th, 15th and 23rd (NB *et al*). Presumably the same bird on the Bure east of Horning April 18th and 21st (PJH *et al*). It returned to the upper Bure for its fifth winter, putting in an appearance at Wroxham Broad Dec 25th (NB *et al*).

Perhaps a different drake at Hockwold Flood Mar 24–25th (PKB PVH GRD *et al*).

Tufted Duck
 

Aythya fuligula

Summer breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak counts at selected sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Welney	124	184	216	68	–	–	24	152	107
Titchwell	85	89	–	58	82	61	92	110	67
Wroxham Park Lake	59	43	63	61	38	–	57	58	53
Wetling	77	116	127	–	–	–	121	–	107
Wetshoot/Ranworth	32	75	88	–	–	33	59	94	240
Wroxham Broad	51	237	–	–	–	–	12	62	104
Wanton Morley GP	106	123	–	–	–	–	–	111	75
Tottenham GP	–	64	75	–	70	72	–	–	110

Counts elsewhere included: 150 Barton Broad, 76 Broome Heath, 180 Ditchingham GP Jan; 216 Colney GP Feb; 100 Narford Hall Lake March; 150 Pentney GP, 82 Sennowe Park GP; 89 Strumpshaw Nov; 87 Stowbridge Pits, 93 Earsham GP, 161 Strumpshaw and 95 Wangey GP in Dec.

Confirmed breeding reported from 19 sites with a total of 65 broods. One or more pairs recorded at a further 12 potential breeding sites.

Trump
 

Aythya marila

Winter visitor in varying numbers. Scarce inland. Occasional in summer.

Most regular at Snettisham, with max monthly totals:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Snettisham	10	30	26	0	0	0	2	13	20	7	0	0

Elsewhere in first-winter period 1–3 on a few dates at Welney, Lynn Point, Hunstanton, Holme, Titchwell, Blakeney Freshes, Cley, Sheringham, Breydon/Berney. Otherwise 6 Hunstanton Jan 8th; 17 east Sheringham Jan 17th; 9 Horsey Feb 12th; 7 Mundesley Feb 19th; 4 Cley March 1st. Inland Colney GP Feb 6–13th; Flitcham Feb 19–28th, and 3 Wroxham Broad April 9th.

Single males Brancaster May 6th and Hunstanton May 8th.

Again ones, twos and threes at coastal sites from July with highest counts of 4 Cley Aug 1st; 10 east, 2 west, Sheringham Oct 3rd and 6 west there Oct 4th; 6 off Titchwell Oct 29th; 6 Cley Nov 19th; 6 west Sheringham Nov 5th; 19 west Holme Nov 6th; 11 Brancaster Dec 1st and 10 there Dec 8th; 8 off Cley Dec 19th.

Inland, Fowl Mere Sept 8th; 2 males Cantley BF Sept 20th; Tottenham GP Nov 6th, and Wroxham Broad on 3 dates in Dec.

## Eider

*Somateria mollissima*

*Non-breeders throughout the year, highest totals in winter and early spring.*

Numbers from the Wash to Holkham generally very low. As birds drift round the coast with the tides some duplication of counts is likely.

Maximum counts at principal sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Hunstanton	130	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	3	30	34
Holme	110	14	12	85	20	2	10	39	45	32	4	36
Titchwell	—	9	—	77	150	—	—	—	127	40	27	25
Brancaster Hbr/ Scolt Head	59	90	90	135	—	145	144	37	55	19	—	55
Holkham Bay	3	—	—	—	91	—	—	—	—	—	8	29

Off the east coast numbers remained relatively high at beginning of the year following the influx of late 1993.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Waxham/Horsey	6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	—	—
Winterton	120	80	55	—	12	—	—	—	—	2	3	—
Hemsby/Scratby	—	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Yarmouth	—	13	—	56	35	—	29	10	20	13	4	2

Coastal movements generally poor, with max 25 west Sheringham April 21st, 33 west Holme Oct 2nd, 18 east Sheringham Oct 5th and 20 west there Nov 5th. No inland records.

## Long-tailed Duck

*Clangula hyemalis*

*Winter visitor chiefly to NW Norfolk coastal waters. Occasional inland.*

Recorded to May 1st off Titchwell and from Oct 16th when 3 west past Sheringham and Cley.

Peak counts of 19 Snettisham, 80 Hunstanton, 70 Holme, 46 Titchwell *Jan*; 22 Hunstanton, 107 Holme, 9 Titchwell *Feb*; 123 Holme, 15 Titchwell *March*; 9 Brancaster/Titchwell *April* and 45 Holme April 4th falling to 2 April 30th as birds departed. Off the east coast 2–3 at Winterton/Scratby Jan–Feb and one April 2nd. Maximum count in Nov 43 Hunstanton, 25 Holme, 8 Titchwell, with 28 Hunstanton, 39 Holme, 10 Titchwell in Dec. Again few east coast records: single Winterton Oct 22nd and 2 there Nov 11th.

A male Snettisham Pits Nov 14th.

North Norfolk is the most southerly site regularly supporting notable numbers.

## Common Scoter

*Melanitta nigra*

*Winter visitor in varying numbers, passage migrant, non breeders over summer.*

Numbers difficult to determine. Fishermen report that flocks regularly drift out to sea a mile or two from shore, hence large numbers may well be present but out of sight of land. This is admirably illustrated by a record of 1500 two and a half miles off Scolt Head May 9th.

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JULY AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

lme	600	40	—	400	250	80	700	—	150	350	350	2450
chwell	7	3	300	500	—	600	1000	100	—	850	300	50
y/Sheringham	—	150	—	—	—	—	60	30	—	150	1500	1500
nterton/Hemsby	60	240	200	190	400	40	—	—	46	30	300	—

Some good coastal movements including 300 west Sheringham Jan 22nd; 100 west, 80 east, there Feb 25th; 780 west, 35 east, Holme April 10th; 500 east Blakeney Point May 1st; 250 west Cley and 400 west Sheringham June 25th; 230 west Sheringham July 2nd; 100 west Sheringham and 311 west Mundesley Sept 1st; then at Sheringham 160 west Sept 1st, 200 west, 20 east, Oct 18th, 900 west on Nov 5th and 5000 west Nov 22nd. Inland 4 Pentney GP April 8th; 8 there May 8th.

Willet Scoter

*Melanitta fusca*

Winter visitor, but numbers and localities fluctuate.

Only regular group at beginning of year off Horsey/Winterton where max 9 Jan 31st, 12 Feb 1st, 16 March 23rd and 10 April 16th. Otherwise low numbers with a few records of 1–7 at coastal sites up to June 18th. A small movement April 10th: 6 west Holme and 3 west, 2 east, Sheringham.

Three Titchwell July 3rd and 2 Yarmouth July 13th.

Autumn records of small numbers from Aug 10th. Small flocks developed off Titchwell with max 18 Oct, 40 Nov and 36 Dec; Cley 29 Nov, 15 Dec; Winterton 18 Nov 17th. Slight passage in Oct with max 13 west Cley 16th; 6 west Mundesley 18th; 8 west Holme 19th and 4 east Sheringham the same day; 8 east Titchwell 29th.

Goldeneye

*Bucephala clangula*

Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Maximum monthly counts at principal coastal sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	OCT	NOV	DEC
Snettisham	80	77	69	38	17	49	49
Lancaster Harbour	29	35	—	—	—	32	25
Bolkham Park Lake	24	37	25	18	—	—	8
Blakeney Harbour	123	83	52	—	12	88	84

Elsewhere widespread, but few counts exceeded 10. Only notable concentrations being 13 Hickling Feb 13th and 17 there April 10th. Only marked coastal movements were 8 west Mundesley Jan 2nd and 8 west there Oct 16th; 18 west Sheringham Oct 21st and 6 west Holme next day; 22 west Cley Nov 5th.

A lingering female Breydon/Burgh Castle May 27th and an early individual Snettisham Sept 21st.

Wentwren

*Mergus albellus*

Winter visitor, only appearing in numbers during severe winters.

A good scattering of records during first-winter period. At Snettisham 2 Jan 1st–23rd then none until Feb 26th; at Stow Bardolph Pits 4 Jan 1st–17th, with 2 to 19th then probably the same 4 at Tottenhill GP Jan 22nd–March 13th, with 2 remaining to 27th. At Hickling 1–4



from Jan 8th to Feb 27th with a max 6 Feb 11th (including a drake Feb 6th–13th). Elsewhere: Lound Jan 1st; Cley Jan 2nd and 16th; Titchwell Jan 8th and 15th; Welney Jan 9th; Martham Broad Jan 23rd; Lyng Feb 2nd; How Hill NR (drake) Feb 17th; Ormesby Feb 27th–28th and March 5th. A female at Cley throughout Feb (with 2 Feb 27th and March 1st) remained until June 7th. During the latter part of its stay it seemed to have paired with a female Shelduck, often trying to drive off the bird's mate. Only three records in a mild second-winter period; a redhead over the Bure near Cockshoot Dyke Nov 23rd; a redhead on the sea off Weybourne Dec 2nd and a drake Cley Dec 16th.

### Red-breasted Merganser

*Mergus serrator*

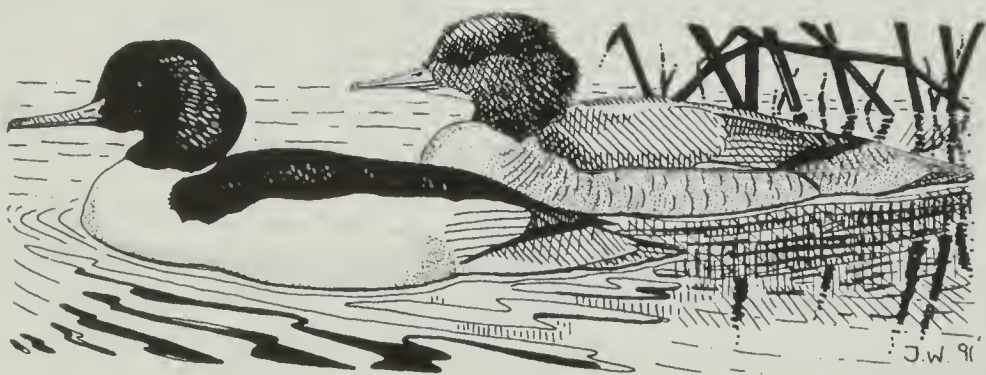
*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Occasional in summer.*

Counts early in the year again rather low, best numbers being: Snettisham 19 Jan, 28 Feb, 74 March and 55 April; Hunstanton 39 Feb; Blakeney Harbour 32 Feb, 68 March; Titchwell 21 April, where an obvious coastal movement March 5th when 35 west in 1½ hours.

Other than single R. Yare, Thorpe Feb 21st only recorded inland in Fens with 1–3 in late Feb at Denver Sluice, Magdalen, Wiggshall St. Mary, and max 6 Ousemouth Feb 13th.

Occasionally one to six at various coastal localities May–Sept.

More normal numbers in second-winter period. Max counts; Snettisham 53 Oct, 14 Nov, 59 Dec; Heacham 64 Nov; Hunstanton 23 Dec; Blakeney Harbour 38 Oct, 14 Nov, 53 Dec. Coastal passage noted on a few days in October, with max 8 west Mundesley 4th; 14 west Holme 13th and 16 west Sheringham 24th.



*Goosanders (J. Wright)*

### Goosander

*Mergus merganser*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant most abundant in severe winters.*

In first-winter period recorded widely though mainly 1–2 birds on single dates. Higher counts of 4 Colney GP/UEA Broad Jan 28th to at least March 15th; 4 Welney Jan 29th; 4 Thompson Water Jan 3rd; 11 Stanford Water Jan; 3 Heigham Sound Feb 12th; 4 Cranwich GP Feb 20th; 3 Stowbridge Feb 23rd.

A late bird Surlingham Church Marsh May 1st.

In autumn an early male Snettisham Sept 17th, then Sparham GP Oct 23rd. During Nov small numbers passing coastal sites and a few inland. Higher counts: 4 west Holme Nov 1st; 5 Cley Nov 14th; 5 in off sea Caister Nov 16th, and 6 Thompson Water Nov. Usual ones and twos at various sites in Dec involving 20–25 birds. Highest count 5 Strumpshaw Dec 28th–31st.

## **Reddy Duck**

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

**Increasing introduced wanderer, first recorded 1977. Has bred.**

Increase in records with numerous observations throughout the year of 1–4 at Horsey Mere, Duck Broad (Heigham Sound), Ormesby Broad, Rollesby Broad, R. Bure near Horning, Ranworth Broad, Cockshoot Broad, Reedham Water, Cantley BF, Hardley Flood, Lumpshaw Fen, Wroxham Broad, Colney GP, Sparham Pools, Sennowe Park, Langmere, West Mere, Thompson Water, Buckenham Tofts, Fowl Mere, Ring Mere, Pentney GP and Winterton Park.

Higher counts at Welney of 25 Jan 31st, 22 in Feb, declining to 5 by March 2nd, none in April and only singles in second-winter period. At nearby Tottenhill GP max of 5 Feb. 8 March, 4 April, 1 May, 7 Sept, 15 Oct, 24 Nov and 19 Dec. Present throughout Jan–Feb at Sparham Broad with max 5 Jan 23rd and 31st.

A male displayed to two females Little Broad, Filby, June 18th–26th but no evidence of breeding.

A notable observation of one on the sea off Gorleston Nov 19th (PRA).

1983 correction: Record of 5 off Holme Dec 11th now withdrawn by observers.

## **Honey Buzzard**

*Pernis apivorus*

**Core migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant.**

Spring migrants over Scolt Head, May 12th, Sheringham Park May 14th, Thetford May 14th Breydon May 29th and North Wootton May 30th. One at Winterton June 18th – the only bird that month.

The well-publicised breeding birds returned to Swanton Novers/Fulmodeston by mid-May, although actual arrival date unclear. No young fledged. Last year's female failed to return, but the male attracted a new mate and display was noted on several occasions. A new territory was adopted and breeding failure may have been due to the female being a first-time breeder. Additionally, a single bird at a former breeding site in early June: no further details forthcoming.

Following the large-scale autumn passage the previous year, sightings returned to normal with singles at Oulton Aug 27th, Salthouse Sep 3rd, Welney Oct 9th and a late bird at Winterton Oct 23rd.

## **Black Kite**

*Milvus migrans*

**Core migrant from the Continent, usually in spring.**

Over wandering singles west over Beeston (DBr JCW) and in Glaven Valley (JGa) April 29th and east over Cromer (RJM) and at Paston (JRA RCo) May 2nd. Another Attleborough May 15th (CK).

## **Red-tailed Kite**

*Milvus milvus*

**Increasing vagrant. Birds from the Continent and British re-introduction projects occur.**

The current increase in records continues with Feb, July and Sept the only blank months. All records are listed. Those marked with an asterisk involve wing-tagged birds.

In Jan, Cley/Holt area on 14th. Late winter/early spring movement from Mar 3rd (South Walsham), possibly the same Burnham Market next day and 2 west Winterton on 5th. Singles at Cley Mar 19th, Kelling Heath and Snettisham Mar 27th, Winterton Mar 28th. April records from How Hill 1st, Hickling 3rd and Ludham/Horning 5th, appear to involve just one bird. Later in month Cley on 12th and Marham Airfield on 28th. Single bird in May Winterton and Rockland Broad on 15th. One Jun record: Welney on 19th\*.

In autumn a good series of records commenced Aug 1st (Stow Bedon). Around this time –2 present in Melton Constable Park for 'some weeks' and noted in numerous localities.



Singles over Soigne Wood (West Acre) Aug 17th and 28th and North Wootton Aug 14th may indicate a single wanderer. Last week in Oct provided a series of records but number involved difficult to assess: Horsey 22nd; Mundesley, Northrepps, Salthouse\*, Cley\* and Langham 27th; Stiffkey\*, Winterton\* (ringed and tagged Wales, 1990), Martham and Hindolveston 28th and East Barsham, 30th. In Nov, Great Snoring 11th, Buckenham 16th (presumed same Strumpshaw Hill 17th and Burlington 23rd). Dec records again involve duplication: Binham 3rd, Norwich Airport and New Costessey 5th, Walsingham 11th Framingham Earl 17th, Briston 18th, Mundesley and Hempstead 19th.

The number of wing-tagged birds is surprisingly few. Are they too difficult to see at long distance or great height, or is the surge in records mainly of wandering continental migrants? Observers are requested to check carefully for evidence of tags, noting colours and letters

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
*Scarce but increasing migrant breeder. Also passage migrant; small numbers winter.*

A single record away from Broadland in Jan–Feb; at Marham. Main Broadland roost held a max of 9 Jan and 6 Feb. Not all roost at this site each evening and the actual number is higher.

Breeding birds arrived at several sites simultaneously between March 11th–14th and most sites occupied by end of first week in April. Passage birds noted mainly from Apr 19th notably 8 through Sheringham in Apr and 11 in May. At Cley, 8 passed west May 30th alone. Spring passage was heavy at many coastal sites.

Inland, a good sprinkling of birds in spring: Thompson Water Mar 27th and May 1st Hockham Apr 22nd; Welney Apr 24th, 25th, 28th and up to 3 on several dates in May Cawston Apr 28th; Hanworth Common May 14th and Frog Hill (Brecks) May 20th. In June recorded at Massingham Heath 12th; Great Bircham 29th and again up to 3 at Welney on several dates.

Breeding numbers remained stable at 43–47 nests (46 in 1993), but numbers of fledged young fell considerably to a minimum of 71 (105 in 1993). Fledging success at Broadland sites was disappointing with 22–26 nests producing only 29 young. Numbers of nests in the Wash area was down on the previous year.

Fledged young totals in recent years are listed below:

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
49	33	36	43	60	82	88	90	75	114	105	71

A roost of failed/non-breeders on arable farmland held up to 6 birds in June and a max of 10 in July.

During Aug, records away from breeding areas at Welney (almost daily with 6–7 in total). Sheringham 16th, Pentney GP 25th and Whitlingham GP 28th. Sept sightings widespread until third week when rapid exodus with few remaining by end of month. At Welney noted on thirteen dates (4 birds) during month and singles Narborough 13th and North Elmham 19th.

In Oct. juveniles at Welney 1st–11th at Whitlingham GP on 8th. Latest records away from Broadland: Sheringham Nov 7th and Titchwell 7th–8th.

Numbers roosting at main Broadland roost in second-winter period: 7 Oct, 5 Nov and 10 Dec. A total of 18–20 believed to be present during Dec – many more than usual – with birds regularly in Thurne, Bure and Ant valleys and occasionally in the Yare valley.



# n Harrier

*Circus cyaneus*

ssage migrant and winter visitor. Former breeder, now exceptional in summer.

st-winter period records received from six roost sites (Roost C unrecorded at this time).  
 xima for each site is given.

	Roost A	Roost B	Roost D	Roost E	Roost F	Roost G	Max Total
	6	8	2	0	4	6	26
y	6	7	1	1	6	6	27
r	3	4	0	0	3	4	14

As usual few reports away from roost areas in early part of year, but noted Jan–Mar at  
 tcham, Narborough, Massingham Heath, Sculthorpe, Castle Acre and Wickhampton.

In April up to 15 birds at coastal and Broadland sites (all ringtails). Then ringtails at  
 olme May 2nd, 5th and 9th; Cley May 6th; a male Scolt Head May 12th and ringtails  
 nterton May 15th; Stoke Ferry May 29th and Titchwell May 31st. An unusual number of  
 e sightings with ringtails at Holme 1st, North Wootton 1st and 4th; Cley 5th and Welney,  
 ery late bird on 30th.

First returning bird, a wing-tagged ringtail at Holme Sep 27th followed by a scattering of  
 rly Oct records: Horsey 2nd, Titchwell 5th, Thornham 6th, 2 Overy Dunes 10th and Acle  
 d Blakeney Point 18th. Arrival widespread from Oct 20th.

In second-winter period inland at Welney Oct 25th–Nov 1st intermittently; Docking Nov  
 r; Egmere Nov 6th; Letheringsett Nov 13th; Little Walsingham Dec 5th and Waterden  
 ec 11th. One at Mundesley Dec 23rd was well away from usual areas. Roosting details  
 om seven sites appear overleaf:



Hen Harriers (J. Smith)

	Roost A	Roost B	Roost C	Roost D	Roost E	Roost F	Roost G	Max Total
Oct	6	7	5	0	0	3	2	23
Nov	4	8	2	0	2	4	4	24
Dec	6	9	2	0	2	5	6	30

### Montagu's Harrier

*Circus pygargus*

*Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant.*

First arrivals at breeding sites Apr 24th when 3 males and 2 females present. A ringtail moved west Salhouse Apr 28th, a male Holme on 29th and a male Weeting Heath and a ringtail Welney on 30th. Good movement early in May: Sandy Hill (Brecks) 2nd; Hickling 4th and 8th; Egmere and Swaffham 6th; Kelling water-meadows, Titchwell, Docking and Berney Marshes 7th; Weybourne 12th; Ringstead 16th and Strumpshaw 18th. Later in month a further peak: Mundesley 27th; Paston/Bacton 28th; Winterton, Lessingham and Holkham 31st and Weeting Heath 'late May'. One west Holme June 1st; female south Winterton on 4th; Marham and Sculthorpe 7th; male Cley 16th; female Kelling water-meadows 24th and at Titchwell 25th. A sub-adult at Holkham throughout June and a ringtail along the Little Ouse June 21st–26th.

A sub-adult in July at Burnham Overy 3rd, Cley/Wiveton/Blakeney 5th–6th and 10th thought to have moved back to Holkham where seen up to 20th.

An excellent breeding season in terms of nests, 9 being the best for 70 years. Eight in arable crops and one on saltmarsh: a contrast to 9 nests in 1924 all in Broadland reedbeds. A total of 5 males mated with 9 females producing 11 young in total. Three nests were predated. The number of fledged young was disappointing.

Numbers of fledged young and nests since 1986 tabulated below:

FLEDGED	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Young	3	9	6	13	13	7	10	13	11
Nests	3	3	3	5	5	2	4	4	9

During Aug male in from sea at Sheringham 11th and ringtail west there 14th; ringtail Winfarthing 13th; second-year male Great Ryburgh 19th; Burnham Overy 20th and juvenile Welney 24th – last record for the year.

### Goshawk

*Accipiter gentilis*

*Rare breeder. Also scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Only one record prior to the breeding season: Croxton Heath, Feb 6th (PJD). March onwards birds displaying at 4 sites: one pair reared 2 young and another was thought to have attempted breeding. Situation is unclear at the other sites. Additionally a single soaring over suitable breeding habitat on one occasion in May (JW).

During latter part of year female Dersingham Bog Sep 12th (MESR), male Holkham/Wells Sep 18th–19th (AIB, JRMc), Titchwell Oct 7th (PHi), male Wells Oct 18th (AIB, BWJ, JRMc), East Wretham Oct 27th (JK), male Holkham Nov 2nd (MESR) with a juvenile there Nov 3rd (MESR), female Swangey GP Nov 17th (ACF) and female Roydon Common Dec 20th (MESR).

### Sparrowhawk

*Accipiter nisus*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Records from over 60 localities.





Top: many observers enjoyed watching Siskins attracted to garden nut containers between early January and mid-April (*N. Bowman*). Bottom: at times elusive, this Hoopoe lingered at Taverham between Christmas 1993 and 21st April (*R.C. Wilson*).







Oystercatchers at Snettisham, the majority from Norway (*C.R. Knights*). This Pectoral Sandpiper visited Cantley where an unusual group of 4 appeared in September 1984 (*B.W. Jarvis*).



Evidence of spring migration at coastal sites when 7 soaring together Winterton Apr 14th. Also 6 west Holme Apr 22nd and 8 Sheringham May 1st.  
 As last year breeding recorded from 12 sites only. This figure is clearly only a small proportion of the real total. At Gooderstone a pair raised 6 young including a striking, acistic, pale buff-coloured bird.  
 Regular autumn records of up to 5 at a variety of coastal sites and 3-4 at Welney.  
 Prey items included Yellow Wagtail and Greenfinch.

**Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*  
*Message migrant and winter visitor. Very small breeding population of unknown origin.*  
 Over-wintering birds in suitable breeding habitat at 4 sites at beginning of year. Spring movement widespread away from these areas and doubtless some duplication: Yarmouth to 7th; Strumpshaw, Brundall, Winterton and Lessingham Feb 27th and Cley and Sheringham March 4th. Numerous reports from Winterton March 6th-29th with a minimum of 22 birds involved. Lingwood March 27th; Halvergate April 2nd; Burnham Norton 16th; Strumpshaw 17th; Winterton 23rd with 2 on 24th; Salthouse 24th; Waxham 25th another on 29th when also noted Weybourne and Norwich Airport. Hemsby/Winterton/Wexham on 1st; Alby, Swanton Hill, Lessingham and Cley on 2nd; Breydon 5th and 28th; Choseley 8th; Griston 10th and Weeting Heath 31st.  
 A probable total of 6 pairs resident in the county with a single over-summering at another locality. Two pairs bred successfully, each fledging one young. A third pair was considered likely to have bred. A further 2 pairs were seen in display and a sixth site held at least 2 birds but no display noted. Recent breeding results are shown below.

	1992	1993	1994
Confirmed breeding pairs	1	3	2
Possible breeding pairs	1	2	4
Fledged young	2	6	2

It seems likely some at least of the breeding birds are the result of deliberate releases from captivity. An article covering release schemes is planned for inclusion in the 1995 report. However, there was clear evidence suggesting an autumn arrival associated with the large-scale Rough-legged Buzzard influx.  
 Autumn sightings are as follows: Cley Sept 9th, 11th and 23rd and intermittently during Oct when roosting in The Hangs with 2 there Oct 26th-29th; Sheringham Sept 11th and Nov 6th-7th; Northrepps Sept 13th; Warham Sept 20th; Burnham Norton Sept 23rd; Stradsett Sept 30th; Titchwell and Ringstead Oct 10th; Winterton Oct 23rd with 2 ranging between here and Horsey Oct 28th-Nov 19th; Old Hunstanton Park 2 Oct 28th-Nov 1st; Choseley Oct 29th; Snettisham Nov 1st-3rd; Wells/Morston Nov 1st-4th; North Walsham Nov 6th; Sandford Nov 13th.  
 In final weeks of the year birds again taking up residence in winter territories near breeding sites. In addition singles at Winterton Dec 13th, Cley on 19th and Swangey GP on 22nd.

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*  
*Message migrant and winter visitor. Periodic large-scale influxes.*  
 None recorded in first-winter period.  
 Following last year's comment of no sizeable influx since the winter of 1985/6 an invasion (mirrored down the East Coast of Britain) commenced Oct 20th. Prior to this date just one sighting: Welney Oct 17th. It is impossible to eliminate duplication thus all reports are listed:





*Rough-legged Buzzards (C. Donner)*

### October:

- 20 – 2 How Hill and one Blakeney
- 21 – Horsey/Waxham
- 22 – Horsey/Waxham, King's Lynn BF and Winterton
- 23 – East Rudham, in from sea Cley and Sheringham; 2 Winterton
- 24 – in from sea Holme, Cley/Holt, Cley/Salthouse, Happisburgh, How Hill, 2 Halvergate, 2 Breydon and Yarmouth
- 25 – in from sea Holme, Cley, Breydon and Weybourne
- 26 – in from sea Titchwell, Warham, Cley/Salthouse
- 27 – Anmer, Titchwell, Warham and Cley/Salthouse
- 28 – 2 Titchwell, Egmore, 2 Cley/Salthouse, Mundesley, Horsey, Hickling and Rollesby
- 29 – 2 Holme, Titchwell, in from sea Overy Dunes, Egmore, 2 Stiffkey, Cley/Salthouse and Kelling Heath
- 30 – Egmore, 3 Warham, 2 Stiffkey/Morston, 2 Cley/Salthouse and 2 Horsey
- 31 – King's Lynn, 2 Holme, 3 Warham, Wighton/Walsingham, Stiffkey/Morston, Sheringham and 2 Horsey

### November:

- 1 – North Creake, in from sea Yarmouth, Holme/Titchwell to month-end, Stiffkey, Egmore, Welney, Sheringham and 3 West Acre
- 2 – 4 Wells, Holkham, 2 Winterton/Horsey, Cockthorpe, Salthouse Heath, Scolt Head/Brancaster Harbour, Thorpe St. Andrew,

- Sheringham, Overy Dunes and Holkham Park
- 3 – Holkham; 3 Winterton/Horsey; Holkham Park/Overy Dunes; in off the sea Wells
- 4 – 1–2 Winterton; Brancaster Harbour/Overy Dunes
- 5 – 1–2 Winterton; 3 Wells East Hills
- 6 – 5 Wells (with 2–3 to month-end and at least 7 in Wells/Warham/Wighton area); Overy Dunes
- 7 – Brancaster
- 8 – Overstrand; 2 West Acre; Browston (to 15th)
- 10 – Choseley
- 12 – Docking
- 13 – Holkham; Horsey; 2 Choseley/Summerfield; Brancaster; Fritton; 2 Overy Dunes
- 15 – Winterton/Horsey
- 16 – Gayton; Winterton/Horsey; Brancaster Harbour
- 17 – Horsey; 2 Brancaster
- 18 – Winterton/Horsey; Welney
- 19 – Horsey; Bacton; Choseley; Burnham Market; Gt. Bircham
- 20 – Winterton; 2 West Acre; 2 West Barsham
- 21 – Winterton
- 23 – Winterton; Fritcham (to 30th); Holkham Park
- 24 – Belton Common
- 27 – Field Dalling
- 28 – Horsey; Wheatfen (to Dec 2nd)
- 29 – Horsey 29th



## December:

- Wells/Warham/Wighton (2-3 all month);
- Brancaster/Docking (all month);
- Holkham/Overy Dunes (all month)
- Egmore/Waterden (to 9th)
- West Barsham/South Creak/Walsingham (to month end)
- West Acre
- Barrow Common;Fritcham (to month end)

- 6 - West Acre
- 11 - Horsey/Winterton (to month end)
- 12 - 2 Fritcham
- 17 - West Acre
- 18 - Titchwell
- 19 - 2 Burnham Overy; Stanhoe
- 20 - Burnham Thorpe
- 31 - Cley/Salthouse; 2 landford/Letheringsett

## Prey

*Pandion haliaetus*

### Regular passage migrant in small numbers.

An early spring migrant at Martham Broad Mar 20th and 23rd. A total of 8 in Apr: Blofield 4th, Knapton/Mundesley/Paston 8th; Thetford 22nd; Wroxham 23rd; Nunnery 24th; Thetford and Cley 28th, with 2 more moving west at latter site on 29th. A minimum of 15 in May in two main peaks (13th-16th and 20th-25th) at Horsey 2nd, Weybourne 3rd, Hilborough 13th, Cley 14th, Snettisham and 2 Cley/Blakeney Point 16th with one lingering at 17th when also at Welney and west through Holme/Titchwell. Singles Hilborough 20th, Wootton marsh 22nd, another there 23rd when also at Fordham. Cley/Salthouse/Kelling 24th, perhaps same Blakeney Point and Weybourne 25th and one Holkham 30th. Predictably fewer in June when a minimum of 4: Sheringham 1st, Strumpshaw 5th. Buxton/Coltishall 6th and Swanton Novers 11th and north over How Hill 25th.

July records: Cley 11th and Irstead 20th, doubtless relate to immature or non-breeding wanderers.

In autumn, fewer records than usual (maximum 11): 2 immatures made a prolonged stay at Stanford Water/Buckenham Tofts Oct 27th-Nov 6th; another 2 at West Acre, Nov 3rd-20th. Also at Strumpshaw Aug 5th, over the sea at Horsey, and Blakeney Harbour Aug 14th. Burlingham Church marsh Aug 23rd, in from the sea Hunstanton then east to Titchwell Sep 11th; Wereham Sep 12th, and Berney Marshes Sep 14th. Finally a late bird at Ickburgh Nov 25th (SFM).

## Kestrel

*Falco tinnunculus*

### Common resident and passage migrant.

Little information received. Many observers do not record this species at all! More data requested, particularly concerning breeding pairs.

Ten nest-boxes occupied in Stanford Battle Area during the breeding season.

Concentrations of 19 in a single field Winterton Jul 30th; c.40 in the North Wootton area Aug 22nd; 7 Horsey Sep 30th and 9 Welney Dec 5th.

The problem of predation with Kestrels taking Little Tern chicks at both the Yarmouth and Holkham colonies continues.

## Red-footed Falcon

*Falco vespertinus*

### Migrant, most often in spring.

Rettenham Heath, June 14th-15th (DJH *et al*). Not since 1983 has this enchanting falcon failed to put in an appearance.

## Merlin

*Falco columbaris*

### Passage migrant and winter visitor. Exceptional in summer.

A total of 5 roosts known in first-winter period, numbers shown below are maximum counts

	Roost A	Roost B	Roost D	Roost G	Roost H	Maxima
Jan	6	3	1	2	2	14
Feb	4	3	1	2	2	12
March	—	4	—	—	3	7
April	—	—	—	—	3	3

Regular reports at coastal localities Jan/Feb and inland birds at Stanford Battle Area Jan 13th, Flitcham on 14th, 2 Welney on 17th where singles 23rd and 31st, Feb 6th and 13th and Calthorpe Feb 9th.

More widespread March/April including an increase in inland records: Mundford March 3rd; Welney March 6th, 22nd and 27th and also 4 dates in April; Flitcham March 10th; East Winch on 12th; Cranwich 17th, Stanford Battle Area 19th; Corpusty 20th; Egmore 27th; Bridgham 30th; Hockwold April 1st and near Fakenham on 17th. Fewer in May but 14 coastal records to 28th (Cley).

First returning bird at Wells July 21st followed by Warham saltings Aug 17th; Snettisham 28th and juvenile Sheringham 29th. During Sept Overy Dunes on 1st and 19th; Kelling Quags 2nd; Holme 5th and Blakeney Point 6th. A more general arrival from Sept 24th, but numbers lower than usual at coastal and Broadland sites until year-end.

Autumn/winter *inland* records: Welney Sept 10th and Dec 19th; Cantley BL Oct 25th; Buckenham Nov 17th; Aylmerton 18th; Flitcham Dec 10th; Fakenham 16th and Syderstone 19th.

Roosting details in second-winter period appear below:

	Roost A	Roost B	Roost D	Roost G	Roost H	Maxima
Sep	—	—	—	—	1	1
Oct	—	3	—	—	2	5
Nov	—	3	—	—	1	4
Dec	3	3	0	—	2	8

## Hobby

*Falco subbuteo*

### *Scarce migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Spring arrival from April 22nd when noted at Cley with another in from the sea at Sheringham. Subsequently at Happisburgh and Waxham April 23rd; Salthouse and Hickling 24th; Cley/Salthouse 25th–27th; Sennowe Park and Overy Dunes 27th; Beeston, Holme, Titchwell and Overy Dunes 29th and Holkham 30th. During May 40 reports of singles at 32 sites; also 2 Winterton May 5th and 2 Holkham on 10th.

A June minimum of 38 birds at 29 sites with up to 3 daily at Holkham from mid-month and 4 east at Blakeney Point June 20th.

Breeding season reports of 8 pairs at 7 sites. Seven pairs bred and at least 4 successfully fledging a minimum of 6 young. A pair displaying during May at another locality and 2 additional sites held 4 and 5 birds respectively.

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994

Confirmed pairs	3	2	2	1	3	4	7	6	7
Possible pairs	–	–	–	2	2	4	–	4	1
Dead young	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	10	6

feeding pairs since nesting recommenced in Norfolk.

During July 49 records of singles from 22 sites. In Aug regularly noted at Cley, Holkham Park and Cantley BF; also 2 Yarmouth Aug 24th and 2 Norwich next day. Additional Aug records of 41 singles from 23 sites. Declining numbers in Sept when 2 Berney on 8th and singles at 23 localities. Late birds in Oct at Burnham Norton on 16th, Buckenham Tofts 1st and Yarmouth cemetery 21st–22nd.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*  
*Message migrant and winter visitor.*

Gain an increase in observations including over-wintering birds at both ends of the year. Only absent late/July.

A male and female resident in Holkham area to end of Feb with one to end of March. One at Wymondham Jan 30th to late March crashed into a garage window while in pursuit of a Collared Dove; amazingly it flew off apparently unscathed. Another Wells/Stiffkey/Morston/Blakeney all Feb.

Further records in first-winter period at Titchwell Jan 1st, 8th and 22nd; Stiffkey Jan 8th; Breydon 1st, 8th, Feb 7th and 21st–26th; Admiralty Point Jan 8th; Snettisham Jan 9th and 19th, Feb 2nd–5th and 14th; Horsey Jan 9th; Blakeney Point Jan 10th; Roydon Common Jan 11th and 16th and Feb 27th; Wymondham/Horsey Feb 19th; Flitcham Feb 21st and Holme Feb 26th.

Most March records probably relate to passage birds which continued to be recorded well into May. During this time noted at Holme March 1st; Welney on 6th; 10th, 20th/21st and April 9th–19th (at least 10 birds); Burnham Norton and Massingham Heath March 25th; Terrington Marsh on 26th; Salthouse 27th; Cley 31st, Barnham Broom April 1st; Breydon 6th–10th; Holkham 10th and a different place next day; Salthouse 22nd; Yarmouth 30th and Wootton Marsh May 9th.

One in from the sea at Cley May 8th may account for sightings at Blakeney harbour next day and Wymondham/Blakeney Point between 15th and 17th. One at latter site May 29th was considered different.

Returning birds Titchwell Aug 14th, juvenile Lynn Point 16th; Wootton salt-marsh 17th and Holme 18th. Increase during Sept: Warham Greens and Waxham 7th. Snettisham 9th/10th and 28th; King's Lynn BF 12th; Overy Dunes 15th; Lynn Point 16th; Wells East Hills 20th and 22nd and Berney Marshes 29th. Good numbers Oct onwards with wintering birds taking up residence: Snettisham Oct 1–9th, several Nov dates and 1–2 on 3 Dec dates; Winterton Oct 6th; 2 Wash Trial Bank Oct 9th; other Burnham Norton same day; Holkham Oct 10th to year-end; Breydon Oct 10th, 17th/18th, daily Nov with 2 on 27th and regularly throughout Dec; Titchwell Oct 13th, 28th–30th, Nov 2nd and 14th/26th, Dec 11th and 27th; Scolt Head Oct 16th and Dec 2nd; Holme Oct 16th/17th and 27th, Nov 14th and 25th/26th; Wells East Hills Oct 21st onwards; South Wootton Oct 26th; Horsey Nov 4th; Lynn Point 23rd; Surlingham/Strumpshaw Dec 6th, 12th and 15th and Welney Dec 11th.

Prey items included Collared Dove and Dunlin.

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

Comprehensive sets of data received from the Game Conservancy Trust for both this species and Grey Partridge. We are indebted to Karen Blake and the Norfolk Partridge Group.

Sites selected in the tables have been chosen on geographical location, divided into three broad areas in an attempt to cover the localities where information collected. Sites are chosen randomly and will be of value for year-by-year comparison. Autumn densities may be down on true figures due to difficulty of counting from farm tracks and gateways without damaging mature crops:



## Spring density 1994

	Hectares counted	Pairs located	Density pairs/km <sup>2</sup>	Percent change '93-'94
<i>North Norfolk</i>				
Site A	918	257	28.0	+21.2
Site B	171	31	18.1	-23.6
Site C	587	21	3.6	-29.4
<i>Central Norfolk</i>				
Site D	1822	80	4.4	+18.9
Site E	394	42	10.7	+56.1
<i>North-west Norfolk</i>				
Site F	790	58	7.3	-44.0
Site G	608	56	9.2	+33.3
Site H	1215	118	9.7	+4.3

Fifteen sites registered a decline in numbers; 12 showed increases. Density is considered to be stable/encouraging following too many years of poor breeding success and decline in numbers.

1994 was considered the best breeding season for at least five years with an average chick survival of 32%. A minimum chick survival rate of 30% is required to maintain a stable population.

Counts were made in June/July when insect density is critical for chick survival. Overall population is at a greater density than Grey Partridge, with 48 birds per km<sup>2</sup> in areas surveyed.

Additional breeding information: Welney 8 pairs; Wash Trial Bank 4 pairs and Blakeney Point 3 pairs.

## Autumn density 1994

	Hectares counted	Broods	Mean brood size	% chick survival	Density (100 ha)	Total birds
Site A	918	120	4.9	27.4	102.8	944
Site B	109	13	4.5	27.0	85.3	93
Site C	474	3	3.3	21.7	9.7	46
Site D	1822	39	5.7	35.5	22.4	408
Site E	346	24	7.0	47.1	70.8	245
Site F	790	23	4.8	24.4	28.0	221
Site G	608	16	3.9	22.4	28.1	171
Site H	1012	76	5.1	28.2	61.1	618



*Grey Partridges (N. Arlott)*

The selection in the tables follows that for Red-legged Partridge:

Spring density 1994

	Hectares counted	Pairs located	Density pairs/km <sup>2</sup>	Percent change '93-'94
<i>North Norfolk</i>				
Site A	918	500	3.9	+42.5
Site B	171	42	24.6	-32.1
Site C	587	7	1.2	+19.2
<i>Central Norfolk</i>				
Site D	1822	34	1.9	+9.7
Site E	394	23	5.8	+76.9
<i>North-west Norfolk</i>				
Site F	790	13	1.6	-18.8
Site G	608	49	8.1	+39.1
Site H	1215	44	3.6	-2.1

Fourteen sites surveyed showed decreases, 13 sites increases. Managed set-aside land is of particular importance providing food in spring and cover in winter. First broods did well; second broods mixed fortunes. Average chick survival rate was 39%. The 30% threshold has been exceeded for the first time this decade. Predation levels were minimal – a direct result of keepering activities. Survival of both hens and eggs exceeded 90% (figures may fall to 50% and 35% respectively on less rigorously kept estates. All in all an excellent season.

Breeding information also received from Holme where 2 broods; Ringstead-Holme, 9 males calling; Titchwell pair; Choseley/Thornham, 12 males calling; Friars Thorn Farm, 2 pairs; Sculthorpe Airfield, 7 pairs; Happisburgh Lighthouse-Cart Gap, 5 pairs and Wroxham, pair.

Autumn density 1994

	Hectares counted	Broods	Mean brood size	% chick survival	Density (100 ha)	Total birds
Site A	918	203	6.4	35.6	197.4	1812
Site B	109	10	5.1	23.1	76.1	83
Site C	474	3	4.7	23.2	4.9	23
Site D	1822	15	6.1	36.5	7.0	128
Site E	346	13	6.5	36.1	34.4	119
Site F	790	3	2.0	**	1.6	13
Site G	608	24	6.9	35.3	39.1	238
Site H	1012	21	8.0	48.3	21.8	221

\*Data not available

Overall density in autumn on surveyed estates reached 36 birds per sq km, highest level for five years.

Autumn counts from casual observers in areas surveyed by the Group indicate that only a small proportion of the true number of partridges can be recorded without access to large estates. Norfolk currently holds the highest density of this species in Britain.

**Quail**

*Coturnix coturnix*

*Summer visitor in erratic numbers. Sporadic breeder.*

Spring influx from May 22nd. All records noted: Blakeney Point May 22nd–23rd; 3 Titchwell May 24th; singles Sheringham May 25th–27th; Lessingham May 25th and Cley May 25th and 31st.

During Jun–Aug, 55+ calling birds located over 30 sites scattered across the county including Brecks and Fens in small numbers. Notable counts: Kelling (8), Hockwold (4) and Docking (3). No confirmation of breeding received.

In Sept still calling at Thurgarton on 9th and another flushed by mowing operations at Welney 24th.

An unusual record (the sixth in the county) of an autumn migrant at Sheringham Oct 8th.

**Common Pheasant**

*Phasianus colchicus*

*Common introduced resident.*

Only information received was of a number of white birds (seemingly frequent) and a first ever nest found on the Wash Trial Bank.

**Golden Pheasant**

*Chrysolophus pictus*

*Scarce and local introduced resident.*

Recorded from following locations: Wolferton (7), Kelling triangle (1), Rockland All Saints (1), Wayland Wood (22), East Wretham (4), Croxton Heath (1), East Harling (1), West Harling Heath (7) and Roudham junction (Peddars way) (3). Breckland is the place to seek this dazzling pheasant.

**Water Rail**

*Rallus aquaticus*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

During winter periods small numbers at Snettisham CP, Holme marsh, Holme village, Brancaster (3 Nov), Scolt Head, Overy Staithe, Burnham Overy Dunes, Holkham, Blakeney Harbour, Blakeney Freshes (3 Jan), Horsey Gap, Horsey Mere, Hickling, How Hill, Catfield Fen, Fleggburgh Common, Rollesby Broad, Wroxham, Horning Hall, Ranworth Broad, Rockland Broad, Hardley Flood, Reedham Marsh, Brayden Marshes and Wheatfen. Inland away from Broad and Fens at Swanton Morley GP, Tallent's Meadow Lake, Sculthorpe Fen, Felbrigg, Winfarthing, Beeston Regis Common and Lopham Fen.

Detail from more regularly recorded sites tabulated below:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	OCT	NOV	DEC
Snettisham pits	2	2	—	1	4	2
Holme	4	14	3	5	16	6
Titchwell	3	4	1	1	12	5
Burnham Norton	1	3	—	1	6	8
Cley (including village)	2	1	2	1	6	—
Irstead	1	—	—	2	2	—
Horning (Marsh farm)	6	—	—	—	3	9
Surlingham (Broad & Marsh)	—	—	—	1	3	2
Strumpshaw Fen	—	—	—	—	9	4
Thompson Water	3	3	—	4	4	4
Nunnery Lakes (Thetford)	—	1	1	1	1	1
Welney	1	—	1	3	1	1



1 Breeding pairs at Titchwell (1), Catfield Fen (1), Martham Broad (2), Ranworth (1) and  
ow Hill (predated nest). Up to 2 birds calling in breeding season at Burnham Norton,  
ckling and Welney and singles at Thompson Water and Scarning Fen.

A coastal migrant Waxham Sands Oct 21st.

## otted Crake

*Porzana porzana*

Large passage migrant. Rare in winter. Formerly bred.

ey, a spring record May 5th has been accepted as 'a small crake, probably Spotted Crake'  
(AJ). Single calling male at one locality during breeding season.

Two autumn occurrences: Welney a juvenile Sept 5th–9th (JBK *et al*) and an extremely  
liging bird at Titchwell Oct 12th–20th (DIC *et al*).

## oorhen

*Gallinula chloropus*

undant resident. Immigrants in autumn.

ounts from regularly recorded sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
lme	–	–	–	–	13	9	16	11
chwell	–	–	–	–	13	13	8	8
lkham NNR	–	84	50	–	–	66	66	77
lkham Park Lake	–	41	35	20	–	36	–	–
akeney Freshes	21	–	11	22	18	15	–	8
ey	13	12	10	28	21	16	–	25
thouse	57	30	26	18	16	–	–	36

Sizeable counts from additional sites: Cantley BF 80 Dec; Felbrigg 28 Nov; Sennowe  
ark 25 Oct; Lyng 30 Feb; Hethersett Hall 58 Nov and Welney 42 Nov and 72 Dec.

Almost no breeding data.

## oot

*Fulica atra*

ommon resident and winter visitor.

ounts from regularly recorded sites (monthly maxima).

	JAN	FEB	MAR	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
ettisham	192	258	132	85	145	231	154	240	204	149
lme	112	106	80	–	53	101	97	98	85	80
lkham NNR	105	150	176	–	310	125	61	54	66	65
lkham Park Lake	383	121	151	–	–	261	165	120	–	329
ckling	139	94	84	–	–	–	–	218	–	410
ckland Broad	–	–	–	–	–	127	135	102	59	29
nton Park Lake	98	68	51	–	–	–	115	–	–	–
lney GP	200	220	–	210	180	–	–	–	–	–
nnowe Park	–	88	–	–	134	164	334	235	415	325
oxham Bridge	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	85	100	160

Counts in excess of 100 at less well recorded localities: Tottenhill GP 108 Oct; Pentney  
GP 225 Oct; Swanton Morley GP 110 Nov; River Thurne (Candle Dyke-Potter Heigham)  
44 Dec and Cantley BF 140 Dec.

Breeding records from Snettisham 12 pairs; Holme 20 broods; Holkham NNR 155 pairs; Heigham Holmes 15 pairs; Thompson Water 7 pairs; Langmere 3 pairs; Fowlmere 2 pairs; Lynford Arboretum 3 broods and Welney minimum 30 pairs.

## Crane

*Grus grus*

*Resident colony in Broadland since 1979. Some records may relate to Continental vagrants.*

The resident Broadland group numbered 9 early in the year and doubtless provided most if not all the following records: 2 Burnham Market March 30th and 2 Paston and Winterton next day; another Blakeney Freshes later landing on Holkham fresh-marshes April 21st and departed the following day heading out to sea. Another 2 Sheringham then south-east towards Winterton July 7th.

Three pairs nested in Broadland, but no young reached the flying stage. Six present in Broadland from Sept onwards.

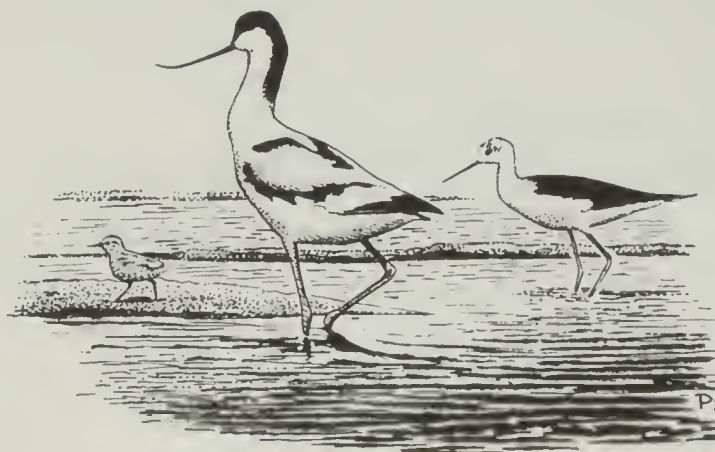
## Oystercatcher

*Haemaphysalis ostralegus*

*Common passage migrant, winter visitor and breeder.*

Monthly maxima at Snettisham 7000 Jan, 4400 Feb, 3385 March, 640 April, 630 May, 650 June, 3610 July, 6900 Aug, 6224 Sept, 7230 Oct, 4000 Nov and 6290 Dec; the wintering population still at a low level. Substantial gatherings at a number of other locations where peak counts were 2118 Holme (Jan), 688 Brancaster/Scolt (Nov), 527 Wells harbour (Oct), 959 Warham (Dec), 787 Stiffkey (Nov), 840 Blakeney harbour (Dec) and 353 Breydon (April).

Breeding data incomplete, but numbers of coastal pairs received includes 33 Wash Triad Bund, 18 Holme, 45 Scolt Head, 94 Holkham NNR and 29 Wells with a further 78 pairs on the grazing marshes between Snettisham and Kelling. Another 57 pairs at inland sites throughout the county.



*Avocet/Black-winged Stilt (P. Jones)*

## Black-winged Stilt

*Himantopus himantopus*

*Vagrant, mostly late spring/summer; has bred.*

The longest ever staying individual which first arrived in the county Aug 18th 1993 lingered at Titchwell through 1994 (BR *et al*) making brief excursions to Holme on four dates and Brancaster/Scolt Head while regularly feeding in Thornham harbour particularly during Sept/Oct. Is it coincidence that it is so close to Holme – site of the 1987 breeding success?

ocet

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

**eeding summer visitor. Small numbers wintering.**

arly in the year recorded at Breydon Jan 1st–3rd with 14 on 23rd; also 2 Snettisham Jan th. Numbers increased during Feb as breeding birds arrived; peak counts at Titchwell ere 30 on 27th and Cley where 46 on 28th. Ousemouth saw a dramatic rise from 26 Feb th to 121 Mareh 13th. By mid-April well established at all main breeding sites.

A minimum county total of 209 breeding pairs, the highest yet with a further range pansion. At Cley 60 to 80 pairs reared 60 to 100 young with first chicks hatching by May th. Foxes again caused problems at some sites.

Post-breeding flocking at Ousemouth produced counts of 318 July, 272 Aug, 83 Sept d 40 Oct/Nov; also 63 at Titchwell in July. An interesting build-up at Breydon where 50 ct, 24 Nov and still 18 Dec. Away from the coastal strip small numbers (1–6) at Welney (March, May), Wissington BF (May), Hockwold Flood (May) and Hickling (March and ay with a site record of 26 June 26th).

one Curlew

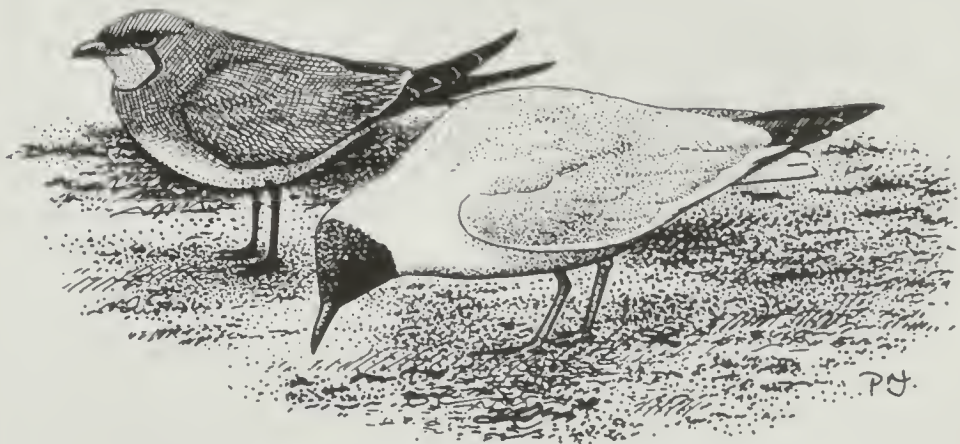
*Burhinus oedicanus*

**eeding summer visitor, mainly to Breckland.**

an early bird at Gooderstone Feb 28th followed by another at Watton March 13th, Stanford ttle Arca March 20th and 7 Wecting Heath March 24th. The only non-Brecks record ncerns one heard over North Elmham June 4th.

Forty pairs bred in the Norfolk Breck fledging at least 30 young; a further 2 pairs bred sewhere fledging at least one young.

Post-breeding gatherings in Breckland included 17 Oct 26th with 9 lingering to Nov 5th d 'a few' still present Nov 7th.



*Collared Pratincole/Black-headed Gull (P.Jones)*

ollared Pratincole

*Glareola pratincola*

**igrant from southeru Europe.**

n adult at Titchwell July 1st to 3rd appeared at Cley July 4th–8th and 10th–12th. It turned to Titchwell July 14th but was back at Cley July 15th–20th when it departed astwards (BJR CSa *et al*). First appearance in the county since 1868. By far the most opular bird of the month completing the trio for many observers.

ittle Ringed Plover

*Charadrius dubius*

**igratory breeder and passage migrant.**

ecorded between March 8th (Holme) and Oet 13th (King's Lynn BF). Just 29 territorial



pairs reported, substantially lower than last year and doubtless partly due to under recording.

Post-breeding gatherings during July produced peak counts of 20 Cley on 13th and 10 Cantley BF on 10th followed by 15 Cley Aug 2nd. Almost all birds had departed by mid-Sept.

### Ringed Plover

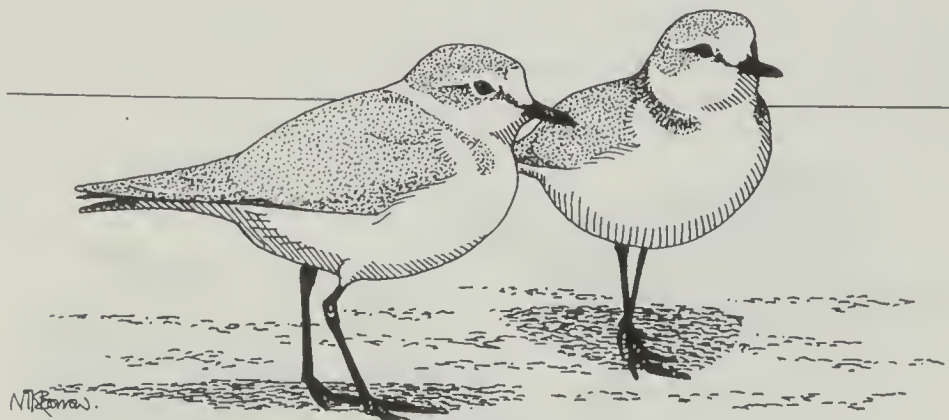
*Charadrius hiaticula*

**Breeding summer visitor as well as passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Breeding data very incomplete, but includes concentrations at Holme (48 pairs) and Holkham NNR (52 pairs) with 10–16 pairs at inland sites.

A strong passage of the Arctic race *tundrae* during May when up to 20 Welney, 20 Lynn Point, 40 Brancaster harbour, 20 Burnham Norton, 75 Blakeney harbour and 20 Breydon on 21st. Return movements produced peak counts of 655 Snettisham (Aug) and 204 (Sept), 191 Holme (Aug) with 370 (Sept), 170 Titchwell (Aug) with 175 (Sept), 300 Brancaster/Scolt (Aug) with 170 (Sept), 207 Wells (Aug), 341 Blakeney harbour (Sept) and 338 Breydon (Aug).

Wintering number much smaller and concentrated at just a few sites: 45 Brancaster/Scolt (Jan), 55 Wells harbour (Jan), 57 Blakeney harbour (Jan) with 146 (Dec) and 102 Breydon (Jan) with 112 (Dec).



*Kentish Plovers (N. Borrow)*

### Kentish Plover

*Charadrius alexandrinus*

**Scarce but annual passage migrant. Rare inland.**

A fairly typical spring showing when recorded at Cley May 13th/14th (TPI RGM *et al*), Salthouse male April 24th (CL *et al*), Breydon 2 females April 24th (PRA KRD SSm *et al*), female May 3rd (PRA KRD AWW *et al*) with another female May 22nd (PCN) and finally Berney Marshes male May 24th (TEB).

### Dotterel

*Charadrius morinellus*

**Scarce but annual passage migrant Has over-wintered.**

Two early birds appeared at Sheringham April 20th/21st followed by 8 Gooderstone Warren April 30th. A further single at Wootton Marsh May 16th completed a disappointing spring movement.

A lean autumn passage saw an adult Blakeney Point Aug 24th, 2 flew west Sheringham Sept 8th, one flew east Salthouse Sept 22nd while a single was with Golden Plovers near Docking Sept 28th. Late birds at Salthouse Oct 12th and Titchwell Oct 27th.

## Golden Plover

*Pluvialis apricaria*

### Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Widespread in both winter periods when largest gatherings (1000 or more) at Vinegar Middle 1000 Jan, Snettisham 1090 Aug, 1040 Sept, 1920 Oct, 2134 Nov and 2500 Dec; Thornham 1400 Jan, 1050 Feb and 2650 Nov; Titchwell 1600 Jan, 2100 Feb, 2000 Sept and 1000 Dec; Docking 1300 Sept; Wells 2000 Jan; Blakeney Freshes 1500 Jan; Cley 1800 Dec; Weststrand/Trimingham 1500 Jan; Breydon 6400 Jan, 4900 Feb, 1250 Aug, 1300 Sept, 4000 Oct, 6100 Nov and 5100 Dec; Marham Airfield 1435 Feb; Castle Acre 1000 Sept; Hunstanton Morley Airfield 4000 Jan; Corpusty 2000 Feb and Boyland 2000 Dec.

Most wintering birds had departed by late April, but 150 flew west at Holme April 23rd. A few stragglers in May followed by singles at Sheringham June 2nd and Holme June 18th. A very few reported in July though a rapid Aug build-up when a small westerly coastal movement also observed: maximum 25 Holme on 22nd. Later a marked immigration during Nov when 650 west Holme 19th and 350 in off sea 22nd in small groups, 260 west 23rd and 100 west 26th while at Sheringham 600 in off sea then west 22nd.

## Grey Plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

### Passage migrant and winter visitor.

The most regular gatherings were at Ousemouth: 185 Feb and 315 March; Lynn Point 788 May and 510 Sept; Snettisham 300 Jan, 250 Feb, 1050 March, 350 April, 2650 May, 1800 June, 83 July, 500 Aug, 1290 Sept, 1000 Oct, 500 Nov and 650 Dec; Holme 1155 Jan, 1600 Feb, 135 March, 100 April, 150 May, 30 June, 80 July, 440 Aug, 500 Sept, 1720 Oct, 1400 Nov and 1675 Dec.

Frequent in smaller numbers in the numerous harbours and saltings elsewhere along the North Coast where peak site counts as follows: Titchwell 300 Aug and 200 Sept; Brancaster Harbour/Scolt 200 April and 311 Nov; Holkham Bay 142 Jan and 141 Nov; Wells harbour 183 Jan and 93 Aug; Warham 275 Jan and 184 Nov; Stiffkey 119 Feb and 275 Oct; Blakeney harbour 500 Aug and 143 Nov. Along the East Coast a peak of 113 Breydon Oct. Small numbers, generally 1–3, at 6 inland sites on spring passage with 14 Welney May and 1. Also 1–4 at both Welney and Cantley BF on a few dates Sept–Dec.

Westerly coastal movements obvious in Aug particularly on 12th when 85 Holme, 130 Sheringham and 28 Mundesley/Paston.

## Upwing

*Vanellus vanellus*

### Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor. Declining breeder.

In the opening months of the year major concentrations noted at Vinegar Middle 2000 Jan; Snettisham 1000 Jan; Heacham/Hunstanton 1000 Jan; Titchwell 1700 Jan and 2240 Feb; Wells 1200 Jan; Breydon 32,000 Jan 9th down to 7100 Jan 30th; Wiggenhall St. Mary 2000 Jan; St John's Fen End 2500 Jan; Marham 3000 Jan; Castle Acre 3000 March; Welney 1000 Jan, 1500 Feb and 1000 March and Fakenham 2300 Jan.

Visible migration noted Feb 27th with a westerly movement of 110 Holme and 110 Sheringham together with 270 east Mundesley and 1000 south-east at Winterton.

Westerly post-breeding movements recorded from June 6th, but particularly on June 28th when 300 Cley and 150 Holme; also 600 past Holme next day. Later visible movements exceptional in the July–Oct period although livening up in Nov when 2000 west Sheringham and 2540 south Hunstanton on 3rd; 1500 west Sheringham, 1000 west Warham and 1750 west Holme all on 13th and 1800 west Holme on 15th. Following these movements a generally mild late autumn/early winter period saw widespread flocking in the county. Groups over 1000 as follows: Ousemouth 5000 Nov; Snettisham 2000 Dec; Thornham 1000 Nov; Titchwell 3000 Nov; Brancaster/Overy harbours 12,000 Dec; Holkham NNR 193 Dec; Sheringham 2480 Nov; Mundesley 1000 Dec; Breydon 32,000 Nov and 30,000



Dec; Berney Marshes 5000 Nov; Cantley 5000 Nov; Buckenham 1000 Dec; Earsham 108 Dec and Welney 11,790 Nov and 6230 Dec.

Coastal grazing marshes between Snettisham and Kelling held 391 territorial pairs, main concentration being 226 Holkham NNR; but also 17 Snettisham, 25 Holme, 68 Blakeney Freshes and 19 Cley. A further 140 pairs reported from inland sites including 72 pairs Welney and 20 pairs Breydon/Berney though information incomplete.

### **Knot**

*Calidris canutus*

#### ***Passage migrant, winter visitor and non-breeding summer visitor.***

The Wash and NW coast remains the county stronghold with counts from Snettisham 16,550 Jan, 18,000 Feb, 5700 March, 6030 April, 4000 May, 3900 June, 14,100 July, 47,000 Aug, 3600 Sept – an unusually low figure, 6500 Oct, 33,600 Nov and 40,000 Dec. At Holme high tide counts of 650 Jan, 950 Feb, 4500 July, 9500 Aug, 30,000 Sept, 75,000 Oct and 1500 Nov. Undoubtedly much interchange of birds between sites depending on disturbance, wind direction and strength and tide height.

Counts from a number of other North Coast sites as follows: Thornham harbour 1000 Oct; Titchwell 1000 July, 2000 Aug, 5000 Sept, 2000 Oct; Brancaster harbour 1800 Feb and 408 Sept; Wells harbour 1100 Jan; Warham 1216 Jan, 5150 Nov and 2170 Dec; Blakeney harbour 300 Feb, 360 Nov and 600 Dec. On the East Coast 693 Breydon Feb.

A marked westerly cold weather movement Feb 14th when 650 Sheringham and 900 Mundesley with inland records of 14 Welney the same day followed by singles Wroxham Feb 16th and Cranwich GP Feb 20th. Otherwise recorded inland on spring passage at Welney April 9th/11th and May 16th; Pentney GP May 21st and Hickling May 5th followed by autumn migrants at Welney Oct 9th; also 14 over Swaffham Sept 3rd.

### **Sanderling**

*Calidris alba*

#### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor.***

As with the previous species the Wash and NW coast holds the largest numbers. The two major sites being Snettisham (where monthly peaks of 30 Feb, 134 March, 85 April, 44 May, 1280 July, 1100 August, 155 Sept, 181 Oct, 190 Nov and 165 Dec) and Holme (where 191 Jan, 116 Feb, 207 March, 420 April, 450 May, 30 June, 175 July, 204 Aug, 436 Sept, 466 Oct, 165 Nov and an exceptional 523 Dec).

Numerous other localities produced regular but much smaller numbers. Maximum counts: 152 Heacham/Hunstanton Nov; 80 Thornham harbour Dec; 99 Titchwell May; 80 Brancaster/Scolt Sept; 23 Overy harbour Aug; 100 Holkham Bay Feb; 180 Wells harbour Oct; 86 Stiffkey Nov; 42 Blakeney harbour Nov; 36 West Runton Feb; 24 Winterton Jan and 24 Breydon Jan.

Spring passage, as usual, produced a few inland records: 3 Welney May 23rd, singles Pentney GP May 7th/8th, 13th, 16th, 22nd/23rd and Hockwold Flood May 20th.

### **Little Stint**

*Calidris minuta*

#### ***Double passage migrant in fluctuating numbers.***

Present at Welney March 11th to April 2nd with 2 birds on at least 3 dates. Another early migrant at Breydon April 12th–29th. A more typical later passage peaked between May 11th and 15th when up to 3 Lynn Point, 4 Titchwell, 4 Holkham NNR, 16 Cley, 4 Breydon, 7 Berney Marshes, 11 Pentney GP on 11th, Welney 12th and 2 Hockwold Flood 7th.

Scattered records into June when recorded at 5 sites with 3 at Cley on 26th.

Autumn passage proper commenced with singles at Cley July 20th and Titchwell next day with 1–5 at a further 3 localities. A low key passage continued into August with records from just 6 sites; 4 at Cley the highest count. A gradual improvement in Sept attaining a



work in the last week. Reported from 12 sites with maximum counts of 5 Snettisham, 10 Titchwell, 20 Cley, 4 Salthouse, 6 Breydon and 7 Cantley BF. Also a westerly movement of birds at Holme Sept 17th. Still up to 10 Titchwell Oct 1st, otherwise just 1–2 birds at regular haunts during Oct with late ones at King's Lynn BF Oct 21st and Lynn Point Nov 1st.

### **Temminck's Stint**

*Calidris temminckii*

*Passage migrant, more frequent in spring.*

Good spring movement commencing May 1st (Welney), peaking between May 11th and 15th and involving up to 23 individuals. Maximum site counts: 4 Holkham NNR May 16th, 4 Cley May 15th/16th, 2 Berney May 15th/16th, 4 birds passed through Welney May 1st to 15th, 3 through Burnham Norton May 11th–19th with singles also at Holme, Titchwell and Hickling followed by a late bird Hockwold Flood June 14th.

Autumn passage saw singles at Snettisham Aug 9th, Titchwell Aug 8th and 12th–17th and regularly from Sept 4th to Oct 2nd, Cley July 12th and 16th, then Aug 28th and finally Berney Sept 5th–7th.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper**

*Calidris melanotos*

*Most annual autumn vagrant from North America/Siberia. Rare in spring.*

Return to form after the poor showing in 1993. Autumn migrants at Cley July 14th (RAB *et al*), juvenile Aug 25th–31st (PKB *et al*) and Sept 2nd–4th (DJH *et al*); Berney Marshes Sept 4th–7th (CJD *et al*) and Sept 28th (CJD *et al*); Cantley BF juvenile Oct 2nd–10th (VWJ) and Nov 11th (BWJ); Welney juvenile Sept 11th–14th (JBK *et al*) and King's Lynn Sept 11th–13th (JL).

### **Marlews Sandpiper**

*Calidris ferruginea*

*Autumn passage migrant in fluctuating numbers; scarce in spring.*

Early migrants at Welney April 23rd–26th and Breydon April 23rd where 2 next day. A very light spring movement followed when examples noted up to May 23rd. Maximum site counts: 2 Titchwell, 3 Holkham NNR, 3 Cley, 3 Breydon and a single Berney.

Autumn passage commenced July 19th (Cley) followed by regular records (maximum counts in brackets) at Snettisham (9), Titchwell (1), Cley (5) and Breydon (18); also singles at Wells 23rd and Hickling 24th. A light Aug passage followed although regular at Snettisham (maximum 4), Titchwell (3), Cley (8) and Breydon (20) with an isolated count of 6 at Wakeney harbour on 4th. Became more widespread during Sept with numbers peaking between 9th and 13th but few remained by the month-end. Site maxima: Snettisham (3), Holme (2), Thornham (1), Titchwell (12), Brancaster harbour (2), Holkham NNR (6), Wakeney harbour (6), Cley (25), Breydon (20) and King's Lynn BF (1).

Six remained at Titchwell Oct 2nd with the last single Oct 16th; Breydon 3 Oct 10th and last bird Oct 13th; 3 west Holme Oct 2nd and a single Admiralty Point (South Wash) Oct 1st.

### **Purple Sandpiper**

*Calidris maritima*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers.*

Recorded up to May 2nd (Titchwell) and from Aug 10th (Snettisham), but again in rather disappointing numbers. The Heacham/Hunstanton area produced monthly peaks of 16 Jan.

Feb, 8 March, 11 April, 11 Nov and 11 Dec. Only other tolerably regular sites: Titchwell (1–3), Brancaster harbour (1–3) and Walcott (1–4). Irregular sightings of 1–2 at a further 9 haunts.

## Dunlin

*Calidris alpina*

**Passage migrant and winter visitor. Non-breeders in summer.**

Largest counts from The Wash at Snettisham: 3300 Feb, 2475 March, 4050 April, 746 May, 215 June, 13,050 July, 11,800 Aug, 2970 Sept, 15,270 Oct, 9810 Nov and 5000 Dec. The Ousemouth/Lynn Point area held 1251 Feb, 204 March, 3000 April and 4245 May.

Numerous at a number of localities along the North coast as shown by a selection of peak counts: Holme 715 Jan, 554 Oct and 305 Dec; Thornham harbour 290 Jan and 40 Nov; Titchwell 296 Jan, 500 May and 278 Nov; Brancaster harbour 250 Jan, 600 May, 29 Sept and 533 Nov; Burnham Norton 300 Jan; Holkham Bay 1035 Jan and 396 Nov; Wells harbour 718 Jan, 284 April and 326 Dec; Warham 931 Jan, 300 April and 1000 Nov; Stiffkey 301 Jan, 132 Sept and 977 Nov and Blakeney harbour 635 Jan, 810 Feb, 680 Sept and 760 Dec.

Breydon is the main East Coast haunt: 2300 Jan, 1650 April, 3000 May, 200 July and 2850 Nov.

Also numerous at some non-tidal areas notably Welney where 400 March; Holkham NNR grazing marshes 157 Feb and 295 Mar; and Cley 713 Feb, 499 March, 292 April, 30 May, 80 July, 250 Sept and 400 Dec. Small numbers on passage at several inland localities including King's Lynn BF (5), Pentney GP (4), Thetford Nunnery Lakes (20), Cantley BF (62), Buckenham (42), Cranwich GP (1), Wisington BF (1), West Mere (1), Martham Broad (3), Lyng Easthaugh GP (1), Whitlingham GP (5), Langmere (1), Cantley Marsh (25) and Berney Marsh (30).

Coastal movements noted at Sheringham included 100 east Feb 15th and westerly passages of 70 Aug 11th, 280 Sept 18th and 180 Oct 4th.

## Calidris sp

A mystery wader first seen at Cley in Nov 1993 (see 1993 Report page 177) was again present Feb 13th.

## Ruff

*Philomachus pugnax*

**Double passage migrant. Small numbers over-winter. Has bred.**

Peak numbers of wintering birds at Welney where 20 Jan, 23 Feb and 20 Dec; Titchwell 28 Jan, 46 Feb and 52 Dec; Glaven water meadows 80 Feb; Cley/Salthouse 10 Feb and 14 Dec and Cantley 13 Dec, together with groups of 1-6 at 6 other sites.

Hints of spring passage by late March, but main movements took place between May 2nd-9th with few remaining after the 20th. Main sites were Holme where 24 April and 61 May; Titchwell 50 March, 60 April and 38 May; Burnham Norton 30 March and 22 April; Holkham NNR 79 May; Cley 13 March, 25 April and 200 May; Horsey 214 May (but only 4 males); Breydon 49 May; Berney Marshes 141 May; Buckenham 72 May; Hardley Flood 11 May; Hockwold Flood 15 May; Welney 28 March, 51 April and 47 May; Wisington BF 15 May; Pentney GP 17 April and 27 May and West Acre 19 May.

During June 1-4 at 7 sites with a small increase at the month-end when up to 15 at Titchwell.

Widespread autumn passage. Most important areas: Titchwell 78 July, 90 Aug, 150 Sept, 74 Oct and 108 Nov; Holkham NNR 12 July; Cley 40 July, 56 Aug, 12 Sept and 9 Oct; Hickling 10 July; Breydon 16 Aug; Cantley BF 11 Aug and Welney 62 July, 71 Aug, 31 Sept, 100 Oct and 64 Nov.

Groups of birds regularly fed inland on arable in the Docking/Choseley area amongst Golden Plovers (110 Sept, 45 Oct, 70 Nov and 24 Dec) and probably originated from Titchwell. Small numbers (under 10) also recorded from an additional 17 areas during autumn passage.





Top: Red-breasted Flycatchers, left: Blakeney Point May (*R.C. Wilson*); right: Salthouse September (*D. Nye*). Bottom: Spotted Crake, Titchwell, October (*D. Nye*).







Top left: Dartford Warbler, Winterton, April (*J. Bhalerao*); right: Sardinian Warbler, Holme, May (*R. Wilson*). Bottom left: Great Reed Warbler, Cley, May/June; right: Icterine Warbler, Salthouse, Au (both *D. Nye*).



### Jack Snipe

*Lymnocyptes minimus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Declining.*

Recorded up to May 3rd (Burnham Norton) and from Sept 17th (Burnham Norton with 2 in from the sea Sheringham). Observed at 36 sites, generally ones and twos but 6 Holme Oct 1st and 4 Cantley BF Nov 20th.

### Pint Snipe

*Gallinago gallinago*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Declining as a breeder.*

County total of 147 'drummers' reported. The two main concentrations were of 92 drumming birds on Norfolk section of the Ouse Washes in the Welney area and 17 'drummers' at Holkham NNR. Good breeding success from the former area where 2 adults seen to be taken by Sparrowhawks.

Outside the breeding season numbers did not match those of 1993. Counts of 50 or more as follows: Holme 65 March; Titchwell 130 Jan and 86 Feb; Rollesby 50 Oct 28th in harvested sugarbeet; Cantley BF 100 Oct; Whitlingham GP 140 Oct, 120 Nov and 112 Dec; West Acre 50 Aug and 60 Oct and Welney 90 July, 100 Aug, 120 Nov and 132 Dec.

Coastal movements included 75 south at Hunstanton Nov 3rd and westerly flights at Holme of 72 Aug 21st, 316 Oct 2nd, 35 Nov 6th and 59 Nov 19th.

### Great Snipe

*Gallinago media*

*Migrant from north-east Europe.*

A juvenile in fields at Sheringham Sept 17th (DPA KBS MPT *et al*) was discovered opposite a Lesser Grey Shrike's favoured hedgerow the previous day thus highlighting the magic of Norfolk in autumn. This (the twelfth record since 1958 and the first since 1991) was a source of great satisfaction to its finders as the bird gave good views to many observers.

### Long-billed Dowitcher

*Limnodromus scolopaceus*

*Migrant from North America and north-east Siberia.*

A summer-plumaged adult at Pentney GP April 28th (JDG *et al*), the seventh county record and the first since 1990.

A bird at Snettisham 7th to 30th September 1968, accepted as Dowitcher sp. has been reconsidered by *British Birds Rarities Committee* and found to be fully acceptable as Long-billed Dowitcher (DJH *et al*).

### Woodcock

*Scolopax rusticola*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Abundant breeder particularly in Brecks.*

Roosting birds reported from 30 localities throughout the county with concentrations of 10 at Roydon Common, 4 Sandringham CP, 4 Merton Park, 3-4 Horsford and 5 Upton Fen.

Widespread reports of small numbers (1-3) in first winter period, but up to 5 Dersingham, Holme (where 7 Jan 25th suggesting migration), 3 Syderstone Common and 4 Barrow Common Brancaster.

Two early winter arrivals at East Hills Wells Sept 21st preceded a light immigration from Oct 15th with just 50 reported in the month followed by around 40 in Nov. A large shooting estate in NW Norfolk considered it the worst winter for many years.

### Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa limosa*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor, declining breeder.*

Overwintering birds at Breydon reached 475 Jan 15th, but had dropped to 156 Jan 22nd and 44 Feb 7th. Other sites saw increases with totals at Welney rising from 31 Jan 23rd to 330 Jan 30th. At Ousemouth an impressive 700 Feb 13th.



The March/April period was highly productive as birds of the Icelandic race *islandica* passed through the county. Peak counts at Welney included 645 March 9th and 1200 April 16th. On the latter date the birds concentrated on higher ground on the Norfolk section of the Ouse Washes following high flood levels. Relatively few on the Wash although 300 at Vinegar Middle April 3rd. Elsewhere 321 Titchwell April 6th and 780 Cley April 16th with smaller flocks at several other localities. Diminishing numbers during May/June when maximum counts of 47 Welney, 14 Holme, 30 Titchwell, 11 Holkham NNR, 40 Cley and 12 Berney/Breydon.

Rising numbers again during July particularly on the Wash when Terrington Marsh held 1100 July 27th and 300 Aug 10th, but no later counts received for that site. Notable gatherings also at Snettisham: 80 July and 32 Aug; Titchwell 62 July and 29 Aug; Blakeney harbour 100 Aug; Cley 112 July, 80 Aug and 32 Sept; Breydon 248 July, 352 Aug, 394 Sept, 437 Oct/Nov and 146 Dec and Welney 32 July, 20 Aug/Sept and 32 Dec.

Sadly no confirmed breeding in the county although a displaying and copulating pair at one locality.

### **Bar-tailed Godwit**

*Limosa lapponica*

#### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor. Non-breeders in summer.***

As usual the NW of the county produced the highest numbers. At Snettisham 7500 Jan/Feb, 1620 March, 450 April, 550 May, 530 June, 880 July, 2050 Aug, 1700 Sept, 800 Oct, 1800 Nov and 2250 Dec. At Holme 2940 Jan, 4850 Feb, 135 July, 368 Aug, 1600 Sept, 1350 Oct, 740 Nov and 3415 Dec. At Titchwell 150 Jan, 260 Aug, 1000 Sept, 1570 Oct, 1500 Nov and 319 Dec.

Several other coastal sites held smaller numbers during the autumn/winter including Brancaster/Scolt where 132 Jan, 275 Sept, 113 Nov and 172 Dec; Wells harbour 64 Jan and 40 Nov; Stiffkey 66 Jan, 48 Feb, 300 Oct and 103 Nov; Blakeney harbour 73 Jan, 91 Feb, 209 Oct, 247 Nov and 163 Dec. Along the East coast a peak of 54 Breydon May.

Remains scarce inland with wandering migrants at Wroxham Feb 16th; Welney 1–3 on 17 dates May 1st–26th; Wissington BF May 6th and 8th–11th; Pentney GP 8 May 7th; West Acre 4 May 21st; Hickling 2 May 7th/8th and Hockwold Flood May 7th.

A 'hard weather' movement of 41 Mundesley Feb 14th (see Knot). Westerly coastal movements modest in the autumn with peak day counts of 30 Aug 12th and 43 Sept 16th both at Sheringham.

### **Whimbrel**

*Numenius phaeopus*

#### ***Double passage migrant.***

A rare winter occurrence at Titchwell Jan 19th with it or another Burnham Overy harbour Jan 25th. Early spring migrants at Paston March 13th and Sheringham March 29th, but generally movements not commencing until April 13th (Breydon/Berney).

Widespread on spring passage during April/May. Largest numbers at Holme where 13 April 24th and 18 May 8th; Titchwell 9 April 28th; Holkham 28 April 28th and 21 May 1st; Cley 25 April 23rd; Sea Palling 21 May 8th; Waxham 43 April 27th and Berney/Breydon 140 May 1st.

Scarce in June with ones and twos at 4 sites. Autumn passage began gathering pace in early July. Counts included Lynn Point 41 July; Holme 330 west during July including a maximum of 75 on 17th and 320 west during Aug with a peak of 85 on 7th; Titchwell 30 west July 19th/20th; Brancaster harbour 37 Aug 2nd; Burnham Overy harbour 20 Aug 1st; Stiffkey 21 July 21st; Cley 100 west July 19th and 45 July 28th; Breydon 42 Aug 4th and St. Benet's 114 July 29th.

Numbers much reduced by Sept when largest count was 23 west Holme 13th. Only Oct records from Holme where 2 east on 2nd and a single on 9th; Snettisham Oct 5th with the



st bird west at Sheringham Oct 15th.

A number of inland sightings with spring occurrences at 10 localities. Generally 1-3, but Watton May 11th and 14 Strumpshaw April 21st. Also 1-3 at 6 sites between July 7th and Sept 1st.

## Wentlew

*Numenius arquata*

**Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeder.**

Largest coastal gatherings at Snettisham: 433 Jan, 610 Feb, 254 March, 970 July, 220 Aug, 10 Sept, 1100 Oct, 500 Nov and 950 Dec; Brancaster harbour/Scolt: 410 Feb, 338 March, 1 June and 600 Sept; Blakeney harbour 250 Aug, 157 Sept, 164 Oct, 140 Nov and 150 Dec; Breydon 450 Jan, 756 Feb, 350 March, 623 April, 659 July, 721 Oct and Berney Marshes 10 March. Smaller flocks found in all North coast harbours and saltings.

Substantial numbers feeding inland in the NW of the county including 48 at Anmer Dec 19th. No major coastal passage reported during June/July.

Breckland breeding stronghold remains in Stanford Battle Area where 20+ pairs, together with a further 7 to 10 pairs in the River Thet valley.

## Spotted Redshank

*Tringa erythropus*

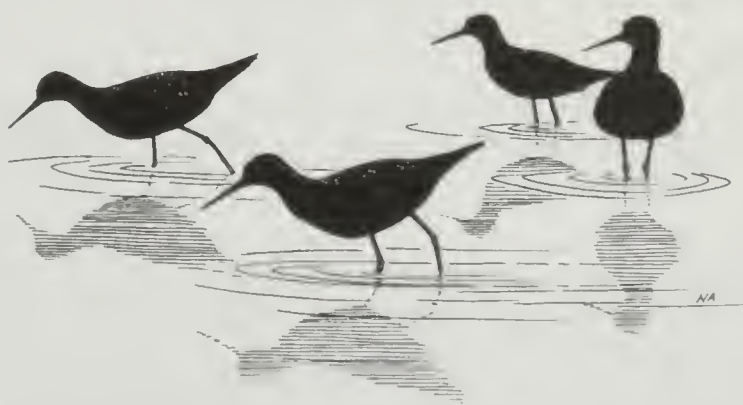
**Passage migrant. Small numbers over-winter.**

Overwintering birds at Snettisham (Nov/Dec), Holme (Dec), Titchwell (1-4 Jan/Feb and Nov/Dec), Wells harbour/salt marsh (Jan 16th and Nov 5th), Breydon (Jan/Feb and Nov/Dec) and Hickling (Feb).

A rather light spring movement: Lynn Point May 15th; Holme April 22nd; Titchwell 1-2 March 6th-18th were perhaps overwintering birds followed by 1-2 on several dates April and 1-2 May 1st-10th; Holkham NNR April 20th, May 6th and 11th; Cley March 15th and 22nd/23rd, 1-2 on several dates April and maximum 6 May 14th; Hickling April 30th were maximum 4 May 7th and 3 on 8th; Breydon/Berney March 30th, 1-2 April and 1-3 May 1st-7th; Welney April 19th, April 29th/30th and May 1st-3rd. None reported between May 16th and June 10th.

Disappointing autumn passage at most localities although a return to high numbers on the Wash at Snettisham where birds arrived June 18th followed by monthly peaks of 91 Aug, 69 Sept and 22 Oct. Highest counts elsewhere: Titchwell 5 June, 4 July, 3 Aug, 2 Sept and 9 Oct; Holkham NNR 2 June, 4 July, 2 Aug and 3 Sept; Cley 4 June, 12 July, 10 Aug, 1 Sept and 3 Oct; Breydon passage commenced June 11th with peaks of 2 Aug/Sept and 6 Oct. Ones and twos reported at 13 additional sites.

Westerly movement noted at Holme (1-2 on 6 dates in Sept) and Sheringham (Aug 11th and 2 Aug 16th).



*Spotted Redshanks (N. Arlott)*

## Redshank

*Tringa totanus*

**Passage migrant and winter visitor. Declining breeder.**

Largest coastal gatherings: Lynn Point/Ousemouth 210 Jan, 172 Feb; Snettisham 230 Jan, 120 Feb, 340 March, 650 July, 1520 Aug, 810 Sept, 990 Oct, 164 Nov and 189 Dec; Holme 149 Jan, 110 Feb, 123 Aug, 65 Sept, 107 Nov and 135 Dec; Brancaster harbour/Scolt 5 Jan, 300 March, 400 July and 73 Nov; Overy harbour 136 Feb, 93 March, 75 Sept, 92 Oct, 74 Nov and 123 Dec; Wells harbour 81 Jan, 157 Feb, 91 March, 231 Aug, 65 Oct and 5 Nov; Warham 55 Jan, 74 Aug, 56 Sept, 55 Oct and 191 Nov; Stiffkey 94 Jan, 103 Feb, 5 March, 81 Sept, 40 Oct and 128 Nov; Blakeney harbour 54 Jan, 78 Feb, 71 March, 12 Aug, 93 Sept, 146 Oct, 87 Nov and 286 Dec; Glaven water-meadows 73 Jan and 60 Feb; Breydon 530 Jan, 510 Feb, 779 March, 820 Oct and 570 Dec.

Easterly movements observed at Sheringham in Aug with 70 on 13th and 210 on 30th.

Breeding data incomplete, but 243 pairs reported including 112 pairs on the coastal grazing marshes between Snettisham and Kelling; 20 pairs Snettisham (non grazing marsh); 11 pairs Wells saltings; 22 pairs Breydon area; 55 pairs Welney WWT with an additional 14 pairs RSPB Norfolk washes. For the second year running each main site reported an excellent season with high numbers of young fledged.

## Greenshank

*Tringa nebularia*

**Double passage migrant. Scarce in winter.**

During first winter period a single at Cley Feb 14th. Towards the year-end small numbers (1–2) regularly at Titchwell Nov/Dec with peaks of 8 Nov 5th and 5 Dec 19th. Nearby at Holme a maximum of 4 Nov 11th with sightings on 4 dates in Dec – possibly an exchange of birds with Titchwell. Elsewhere at Snettisham Nov 2nd, Brancaster harbour Nov 26th with 3 Dec 20th–31st, Warham saltings Nov 5th and Breydon Nov 16th. These are the first mid-winter records since 1991.

Spring passage commenced April 10th (Blakeney harbour) followed by peak counts of Titchwell May, 5 Holkham NNR April and 7 May, 5 Cley May, 5 Breydon May, 16 Berney Marshes May 5th/6th, 7 Hickling May, 5 Buckenham May, 7 Swanton May and 10 Welney April 30th followed by 26 May 2nd.

A few scattered June sightings mostly from 20th onwards totalled 14 individuals. Widespread on autumn passage. Largest counts: Lynn Point 18 Aug 30th; Snettisham 9 July 20 Aug, 44 Sept and 8 Oct; Titchwell 20 July 24th, 38 Aug 10th, 50 Sept 5th and 15 Oct 4th; Brancaster harbour/Scolt 25 Sept 9th; Burnham Norton 14 July 13th and 17 Aug 2nd; Warham 10 Sept 7th; Cley 12 July 7th, 10 Aug 24th and 30 Sept 9th; Kelling Quags 10 Aug 11th; Breydon 12 July 7th, 13 Aug 8th and Hickling 18 Aug 7th. Finally a westerly movement at Holme of 31 Aug 14th.

## Lesser Yellowlegs

*Tringa flavipes*

**Vagrant from North America.**

One at Cley May 13th to 17th (TCD RGM *et al*) often frequented roadside pools. The first record for Cley was in May 1992 so perhaps this was the same individual. Seventh county record.

## Green Sandpiper

*Tringa ochropus*

**Double passage migrant most abundant in early autumn. Some over-winter.**

Wintering recorded at 22 localities, predominantly inland. Generally singles, but up to 4 Cranwich GP (Feb/Dec) and 3 Whitlingham GP (Feb). Records of 1–5 at 7 sites during March may have included both wintering birds and early spring migrants.

Light spring passage with 1–2 birds at 15 sites during April/May as well as 4 Wissington BF April 22nd, 3 St. John's Fen End April 9th and 5 Cranwich GP April 9th.

Return movement commenced June 13th (Welney and Holkham) and birds became sparsely but thinly distributed throughout the county during July and until mid-Aug. But few in mid-Sept. Most productive sites included Holme where 19 July 7th and 9 Aug 2nd; Titchwell 9 July 31st and 8 Aug 2nd; Holkham NNR 21 July 4th; Cley 12 July 31st and 20 July 16th/24th; Breydon 9 Aug 26th; Cantley BF 28 July 21st, 47 Aug 5th and 12 Sept 1st; Hardley Flood 8 July 23rd; Colney GP 8 Aug 7th; Whitlingham GP 12 Aug 6th; Snettisham BF 20 July and 17 Aug; King's Lynn BF 15 July, 16 Aug and 14 Sept.

### **Wood Sandpiper**

*Tringa glareola*

*Passage migrant in fluctuating numbers.*

Early spring migrant at Cley April 16th preceded a more general arrival from April 30th to 2 May at Welney, one Cley and one Buckenham. Reasonable passage developed during May when recorded at 13 sites. Largest numbers: 15 Holkham NNR 15th, 7 Kelling Water 15th, 4 Cley 3rd, 3 Welney 2nd and 1–2 at other localities.

Noted on numerous dates in June when ones and twos at 5 sites mostly later in the month and presumably on return passage. Autumn birds at 18 sites July–Sept with the last at Welney Sept 28th/29th. Generally 1–3 but 4 Holme Aug 17th, 5 Holkham NNR Aug 5th, 4 Cley July 28th and 4 Aug 25th–27th; also 5 Kelling Quags Aug 1st–8th with 4 Aug 21st.

### **Common Sandpiper**

*Actitis hypoleucos*

*Variable passage migrant, rare in winter. Has bred.*

First spring arrivals at King's Lynn BF April 11th and Snettisham April 15th with a more general arrival from 22nd/23rd although numbers initially small. Increases during May with peak counts of 21 Holkham NNR 15th, 20 Holme 15th, 17 Breydon 15th, 10 Cley, 8 Snettisham, 7 Whitlingham GP and 1–6 at 20 additional localities.

A scattering of June records particularly from the 24th onwards as return movement commenced. Widely distributed in small numbers July to Sept. Highest counts: King's Lynn 16 Aug 16th; Lynn Point 23 Aug 5th; Holme 26 July 30th and 20 Aug 5th; Titchwell 10 July 14th and 14 Aug 21st; Brancaster harbour 16 July 4th; Holkham NNR 24 Aug 22nd; Breydon 13 Aug 7th; Cantley BF 20 Aug 7th and 18 Sept 20th; Hickling 11 July 19th and 18 Aug 7th; Wroxham Broad 10 July 18th and Hardley Flood 10 July 20th.

A number of Oct records when 1–3 at 9 sites followed by late birds at Breydon Nov 4th and 13th, Snettisham Nov 19th and Holme Dec 4th–6th.

Additional 1993: One at Wiggenhall St. Mary the Virgin Jan 3rd.

### **Mottled Sandpiper**

*Actitis macularia*

*Migrant from North America.*

A juvenile at Welney Sept 18th lingered into 1995 (JBK *et al*). The seventh county record. Wintering birds have become the norm in recent years.

### **Turnstone**

*Arenaria interpres*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Counts at Snettisham highly variable with poor winter/spring totals, but an improving situation in the autumn: 50 Jan, 40 Feb, 43 March, 56 April, 41 May, 35 June, 584 July, 500 Aug, 65 Sept, 900 Oct, 34 Nov and 85 Dec.

Peak numbers elsewhere: 98 Heacham/Hunstanton (Nov), 84 Holme (Oct), 36 Ornham harbour (April), 60 Titchwell (July), 176 Brancaster harbour/Scolt (Aug), 130akeney harbour (Sept), 48 Cley (May) and 29 Breydon (April).

A handful of passage birds appeared at inland localities: Welney May 10th, Pentney GP May 3rd, Hickling 2 May 2nd and 5 July 25th and Buckenham May 3rd.



### **Wilson's Phalarope**

*Phalaropus tricolor*

#### ***Vagrant from North America.***

One at Cantley BF Sept 16th–20th (PJH BWJ) was the fourteenth county record – all since 1967.

### **Red-necked Phalarope**

*Phalaropus lobatus*

#### ***Scarce passage migrant.***

A typical showing of birds on autumn passage when an adult Cley July 16th (RGM *et al*) followed by a juvenile Sept 17th (RGM SJMG *et al*); Breydon Aug 5th (SSm) and juveniles at Welney Sept 22nd–30th (JBK *et al*).

### **Grey Phalarope**

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

#### ***Scarce autumn passage migrant. Rare in winter/spring.***

A rare spring occurrence at Holkham Bay April 1st–4th (DA RN *et al*) was considered the long stayer in Lowestoft harbour (Suffolk) from Jan 1st until end of March. It was followed by another unseasonal bird there Dec 4th (AIB).

Noted on autumn passage at Overy Dunes Sept 18th (MESR), Cley Sept 21st (MAG) and Sept 27th (TCD), Blakeney Freshes Oct 5th found dead next day (GL) and finally Sheringham 2 east and one west Sept 16th (DPA KBS *et al*).

### **Pomarine Skua**

*Stercorarius pomarinus*

#### ***Passage migrant during autumn; unusual at other times.***

During first-winter period singles Holme Jan 28th, Blakeney Pt. Jan 2nd, Overstrand Jan 4th, Hunstanton Feb 15th and Winterton Feb 1st. Only spring birds noted were at Sheringham May 5th and Horsey Gap May 14th. An immature off Cley June 18th was rather unusual and extremely early.

Autumn passage, first noted Horsey Gap Aug 14th, continued during Sept although counts remained in single figures apart from 27 at Hunstanton Sept 16th.

Most impressive counts during Oct came from Holme with 12 west 1 east and Sheringham with 21 east (including first juveniles) both on 3rd. Numbers dwindled during Nov with a final series of sightings from Sheringham during Dec (2 west on 22nd, 1 west on 30th and 2 west on 31st).

### **Arctic Skua**

*Stercorarius parasiticus*

#### ***Mainly autumn passage migrant, scarce at other times.***

This year, winter records concerned one east Holme Jan 16th, 2 off Blakeney Pt. Jan 2nd and one east Kelling Hard Jan 4th.

A light spring passage Apr 13th to June 27th consisted of 15 birds on 13 dates.

Return passage commenced July 2nd with numbers slowly increasing through Aug to reach a peak on Sept 1st when 28 east, 28 west Holme (all day), 45 Brancaster; 171 east Blakeney Pt. (0900–1200hrs), 200 Cley, 420 east Sheringham (all day – this constitutes a record single-day count for the county), 287 east Mundesley (all day) and 66 Winterton.

Another major movement Sept 15th with 120 east Cley/Blakeney Pt, 355 east Sheringham (all day), 106 east Mundesley and on 16th when 110 west, 35 east Holme and 220 east, 10 west Sheringham.

The largest Oct count was 220 west at Holme on 3rd; numbers then declined with the final 2 off Titchwell Nov 21st.

An inland record from Flitcham where 3 NW Sept 1st.

### **Long Tailed Skua**

*Stercorarius longicaudus*

#### ***Scarce autumn passage migrant.***

1 adult Blakeney Pt. Aug 10th and another Sheringham Aug 11th were followed by gulls at Sheringham/Weybourne Aug 14th and Winterton Aug 31st. Unprecedented numbers off the coast Sept 1st when 3 at Brancaster, up to 30 at Cley, 126 east Sheringham 1 day – mostly juvenile), 16 Mundesley (all day – all juveniles) and 4 Horsey. Another 10 identified Sept 2nd–4th. No more recorded until Sept 15th when 34 east Sheringham, 20 east Cromer and 24 east Mundesley.

Only Sheringham recorded double figures on 16th with 47 east and 2 west.

Smaller numbers followed until the month-end. Last records on Oct 3rd.

Regular sea-watchers commented that this year's high numbers are at least partially counted for by significant advances in skua identification and increasing observer confidence. This species is likely to have been overlooked in the past.

## Great Skua

*Stercorarius skua*

*Passage migrant mainly in autumn – otherwise scarce.*

During first-winter period 9 west Holme and 4 south Hunstanton Jan 28th with singles off Sheringham and Mundesley Jan 16th and another off Horsey Feb 13th.

No further sightings until May 21st when one off Yarmouth followed by singles at Titchwell May 31st, Blakeney Pt. May 26th, Cley and Yarmouth May 28th.

Autumn passage commenced July 28th with a handful of records during Aug.

Main passage during Sept gales with largest counts of 100 Cley, 105 east Sheringham Sept 1st; 246 east Sheringham, 100 east Mundesley Sept 15th and 185 west Holme, 310 east Sheringham on 16th.

Apart from 325 west, 6 east, at Holme Oct 3rd numbers remained small during the remainder of the month.

A good winter count of 21 east Sheringham Dec 31st.

## Mediterranean Gull

*Larus melanocephalus*

*Regular all-year visitor in increasing numbers and often remaining for weeks.*

The first successful breeding in the county. A pair at Blakeney Point fledged one young, following two successive years of failed attempts there and at Titchwell. At another site, mating and nest-building occurred, but no eggs laid.

Increasing numbers of sightings make it impossible to specify exact numbers. Coastal records are summarised in the following table giving approximate numbers reported under the three age-groups each month, as a comparison with 1993:

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JULY AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

1st-year	–	–	2	3	7	7	2	2	2	6	19	8
2nd-year	–	–	–	5	–	–	1	1	4	4	1	1
adult	4	9	6	6	3	6	18	8	10	9	8	6

Most favoured sites as usual were Hunstanton, Holme, Titchwell, Cley/Blakeney, Sheringham, Overstrand, Mundesley and Yarmouth/Breydon, with Snettisham and Holkham coming into the picture more regularly.

Mainly ones and twos, but at Breydon 4 1st-summer May, 3 June and 3 1st-winter Nov; Brancaster Harbour 3 un-aged May 29th; Cley/Blakeney Point 4 1st-summer June; Overstrand 2 adults all Oct (1st-winter from 15th and a 2nd-winter 18th), 3 all Nov with 4 on the 18th and 5 on the 21st and in Dec 4 all month; Yarmouth an adult and 2 1st-winter Oct, adult, 2nd-winter and 5 1st-winter Nov and an adult, 2 2nd-winter and 4 1st-winter Dec; Holkham Park 4 Nov 20th and 3 all Dec.

Inland: Lyng-Easthaugh 2nd-winter Jan 27th, 1st-winter Feb 13th; Colney GP 2nd-winter April 12th; Holt adult June 18th; Burnham Market Oct 29th and Wroxham Broad 1

in Nov and 1–2 in Dec.

Just across the North Sea almost 190 breeding pairs were counted in mixed colonies with Black-headed Gulls in the SW Netherlands (*Birding World*).

### Little Gull

*Larus minutus*

*Non-breeding summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Recorded each month as usual. Largest monthly coastal counts: 9 west Holme Jan 28th, the only report that month; 20 Mundesley, 50 Sheringham Feb 15th; 11 Holkham Bay 20th; 30 Titchwell March 5th and 33 Hunstanton 18th; 8 Sheringham Apr 1st; 12 Cley May 30th and 10 there June 8th; 3 Titchwell July; 3 Sheringham Aug 10th and 4 Cley 13th; 15 Sheringham Sept 15th with 17 there 16th and 9 Blakeney Point 20th; 15 Cley and 24 Sheringham Oct 3rd with 65 Holme 26th; 31 Cley and 140 Sheringham Nov 11th; 2 Salthouse Dec 26th, the only record.

Inland: Singles Filby Broad April 2nd–4th and Hickling 6th, Fustyweed GP 13th–15th, Barton Broad 22nd and Welney 17th–19th with 34 flying north-east there 24th and Wroxham Broad 1–3 from April 21st–26th. Singles Berney Marshes May, Cantley BF and Hardley Flood July 23rd and Welney Sept 18th.



*Little Gulls (N. Arlott)*

### Sabine's Gull

*Larus sabini*

*Almost annual but scarce autumn vagrant from High Arctic. Extremely rare in spring.*

Spring Happisburgh winter adult Feb 13th (AC) and Hunstanton April 4th (SN, KW).

There have been only 6–7 previous spring records 1916 (1), 1979 (3–4), 1982 (1) and 1984 (1).

Autumn Wells summer-plumaged adult Aug 25th (GIG RWP *et al*), Blakeney Point juvenile Sept 1st (AMS), Sheringham 4 juveniles Sept 15th (DPA DJH KBS *et al*).

### Black-headed Gull

*Larus ridibundus*

*Breeds colonially, dispersing in winter when many immigrants from Eastern Europe.*

Breeding pairs recorded at the following sites (success unknown unless otherwise stated): Wash Outer Trial Bank 129, Snettisham 626, Holme 2, Titchwell 400, Scolt Head 650 (425 young fledged), Brancaster 70, Holkham Bob Hall's 10, Wells 1736 (poor success, flooding and predation), Stiffkey Binks 209 (good success), Warham 91, Stiffkey/Morston (no count), Blakeney Point c2000 (good success), Morston/Blakeney 100+: nests (flooded by high tides), Blakeney Harbour 38, Cley 127, Cley/Salthouse (no count), Hickling Broad 90–100, Strumpshaw Fen 19, Cantley BF c60 and Wissington BF 40 (55 young fledged).



Highest roost counts: Welney 6100 and Marham 4000 Jan, Wroxham 5000 Feb, Welney 40 Mar and 660 Apr, Thornham 2400 Aug, Hardley Flood 5000 Sept, Welney 2400 Oct, 50 Nov and 5510 Dec, Wroxham 8000, Ranworth Broad 6000 and Marham 4000 Dec. Coastal movements generally unexceptional but at Mundesley 1400 west Jan 1st, 750 Apr 23rd and 1800 west Sept 11th; Sheringham 1100 west July 9th, 800 west on 11th 11700 west Sept 19th.

### **Ring-billed Gull**

*Larus delawarensis*

*Passage migrant from North America.*

First-winter at Nunnery Lakes, Thetford, Nov 15th (MDC). The seventh county record since 1991.

### **Common Gull**

*Larus canus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor with non-breeders remaining all summer.*

Breeding recorded at 5 sites with poor success: Snettisham 1 pair failed, Scolt Head 2 pairs young fledged, Holkham Bob Hall's 1 pair flooded out, Stiffkey Binks 2 pairs success known and Blakeney Point 3 pairs some young fledged.

Roost counts of note: Thornham 6600 Jan, 3000 Feb, 2500 Mar, 450 July, 1200 Sept, 100 Oct and 1250 Dec; Marham 6000 Jan; Welney 6000 Jan; Holkham Park Lake 600 Nov, Nov and Dec.

Most notable movements Sheringham 220 west July 29th and 300 west Sept 19th, otherwise little visible migration noted.

### **Lesser Black-backed Gull**

*Larus fuscus*

*Passage migrant and migratory breeder. Increasing in winter.*

Confirmed breeding at 2 sites only: Wash Outer Trial Bank c460 pairs of mixed Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gulls, success unknown; Wells Saltmarsh c30 pairs with reasonable success.

Small numbers during winter with double figure counts at Breydon only: 13 Feb and Dec.

Largest gatherings: Titchwell 700 May 30th and 700 June 3rd; Hickling 450 June 30th and 145 Oct 27th; Cantley BF 170 Aug 17th; Winfarthing 580 Sept 11th and Breydon 51 Nov 4th.

Coastal movements mainly noted at Sheringham where numbers continue to increase annually. Maximum count there 130 west Sept 18th.

### **Herring Gull**

*Larus argentatus*

*Increasing breeder, late summer migrant and winter visitor.*

Breeding occurred at 3 sites: Wash Outer Trial Bank c460 pairs of mixed Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, success unknown; Wells Saltmarsh c120 pairs, reasonable success and Blakeney Point but no young fledged.

Largest counts: 450 Gore Point Jan; 600 Holme Feb and 650 Mar; 700 Titchwell Apr; 1000 Thornham Sept and 400 Oct; 1700 Gore Point Oct 9th, Hunstanton 2000 Oct 10th (possibly duplication at the latter 2 sites) and 2100 Gore Point Nov.

At Cley 10 birds of the northern race *argentatus* June 27th.

A leucistic bird at Taverham Jan 20th.

### **Yellow-legged Herring Gull**

*L.a.michahellis*

*Mainly a summer passage migrant.*

Recorded monthly except Jan/Feb. A mid-summer peak with most records June-Aug. Most currences of 1-2 birds from a variety of mainly coastal sites. Most regular locations: Titchwell, Cley, Hickling and Breydon. Highest count: 4 Cley June 27th and July 13th.

### **Iceland Gull**

*Larus glaucoide*

*Annual but very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Titchwell 1st or 2nd-winter Jan 3rd, Aldeby 3rd-winter Feb 3rd–4th, Mundesley 3rd-winter Feb 6th, Breydon 3rd-winter Feb 14th, 18th and 20th, Sheringham 1st-winter April 2nd and Nov 11th (also seen at Weybourne) and Weybourne 1st-winter Nov 18th.

### **Glaucous Gull**

*Larus hyperboreus*

*Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers. Rare in summer.*

Attlebridge 2nd-winter on many dates Jan 9th–Feb 5th. Probably the same bird Norwich Waterworks Jan 16th, 22nd–31st and Feb 1st. Rackheath adult and 2nd-winter Jan 29th and 3rd-year Feb 6th, Wroxham Broad adult Jan 31st, 2nd-winter Feb 4th and 6th, Attlebridge adult Feb 5th–6th, Mundesley 2nd-winter April 3rd and 3rd-winter Dec 9th, Yarmouth 2nd-summer May 17th–18th and adult Oct 11th, Lynn Point immature May 24th, Weybourne Sheringham adult Sept 15th, Horsey Mere un-aged Oct 5th, Sheringham Oct 11th, West Runton 1st or 2nd-winter Oct 14th, Cley near adult Dec 10th and Breydon 4th-winter Dec 12th Duplication should be considered.

### **Great Black-backed Gull**

*Larus marinus*

*Passage migrant, winter and non-breeding summer visitor.*

Notable gatherings: Wensum Valley 675 Jan and 180 Feb, Titchwell 200 Mar, Breydon 720 adults July 21st, Brancaster Harbour/Scolt Head 102 Aug 22nd and Thornham 103 Sept and 275 Oct.

Movements: Mundesley 140 east Feb 15th; Sheringham 120 west April 1st, 140 east May 14th and 100 west Oct 15th. Heavy westward movement noted along north coast Dec 12th but no actual counts received.

A near albino Breydon Sept 2nd and 15th.

### **Kittiwake**

*Rissa tridactyla*

*Mainly passage migrant. Occasional non-breeding concentrations in summer.*

Two pairs nestbuilding Hunstanton Cliffs, but no eggs laid.

Notable movements: 740 Holme Jan 28th and 'large movement' Sheringham on the same date; 200 per hour Cley, 500 per hour Mundesley and 550 Sheringham Feb 14th; 1350 Holme Mar 17th; 110 Sheringham May 12th, 130 15th and 150 Aug 13th.

Major coastal movements 230 Holme, 400 Blakeney Point, 400 Cley, 1210 Sheringham and 3000 Mundesley all Sept 1st; 1200 Sheringham Oct 3rd and 330 Nov 11th.

Inland: Breydon Jan 24th, 29th, June 19th, July 16th, 30th and Aug 7th; Thetford Nunnery Lakes Mar 2nd; Welney 18 Mar 3rd and Wroxham Broad Apr 7th–10th.

### **Gull-billed Tern**

*Gelochelidon nilotica*

*Vagrant.*

1993 addition: Burnham Norton Aug 6th (VE JT).

### **Sandwich Tern**

*Sterna sandvicensis*

*Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Recorded March 17th (West Runton) to Nov 22nd (Holme) although a tern at Breydon Dec 2nd was probably this species.

Inland records Sept 15th during rainy conditions with a northerly wind when a single at Welney and 6 east over Norwich. For the second year running an individual in first-summer plumage was present, this time at Cley-Blakeney Pt June 6th–23rd. Away from the colonies there were gatherings of 200 Breydon July 24th and large easterly sea passages of 200 Sheringham and 512 Mundesley Sept 1st.

Both terneries had a highly productive season with 2406 pairs Scolt Head fledging c.2500 young and 1000 pairs Blakeney Pt. fledging c.950 young.

## Roseate Tern

*Sterna dougallii*

*are passage migrant; has bred.*

numerous records between May 23rd (Cley, Blakeney Pt. Morston) and Sept 17th (Horsey). Most frequent at Blakeney Pt. where the presence of 2 non-breeding pairs resulted in regular reports along the north coast particularly at Cley.



*Roseate Terns (N. Arlott)*

Also recorded at Holkham Bay Aug 20th, Stiffkey June 6th, Sheringham 2 July 12th and singles July 17th and Aug 12th, Cromer/West Runton 2 June 19th, Mundesley July 2nd, Waxham Sept 12th, Yarmouth 2 on both June 2nd and 19th and finally Breydon May 30th, June 20th and a single July 15th.

## Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

*Migratory breeder at coastal and inland sites and passage migrant.*

Recorded March 29th (3 Wroxham Broad) to Nov 1st (Blakeney Pt.). Largest spring movements included 300 Lynn Pt. April 25th and easterly movements at Holme of 40 April 23rd and 120 May 3rd.

Notable autumn movements included 65 west Sheringham Aug 4th plus 160 west Aug 11th and 200 east Sept 1st; 119 east Mundesley Aug 24th with 216 east Sept 1st and 68 north Winterton Sept 2nd in 1½ hours. Roost counts in Aug included up to 350 Snettisham and 180 Thornham Pt. A rapid departure in late September with very few during Oct.

A minimum of 813 pairs reported breeding:

	No. Pairs	Young Fledged		No. Pairs	Young Fledged
Wash Outer Trial Bank	73	Unknown	Martham Broad	12	21
Snettisham	70	34	Hoveton Broad	26	59
Fitchwell	6	Unknown	Ranworth Broad	22	25-30
Scolt Head	123	150	Strumpshaw Fen	3	Good success
Holkham NNR	51-53	65-78	Lyng Easthaugh GP	1	2
Blakeney Point	250	350	Sparham Pools	2	Unknown
Cley	5	Unknown	Barton Broad	Sev	Unknown
Breydon	164	220	Ditchingham GP	1	1
Hickling	2	3	Pentney GP	1	1



## Arctic Tern

*Sterna paradisaea*

### *Double passage migrant; a few pairs bred.*

Recorded April 1st (Wroxham Broad) to Nov 20th (Cley). Only a light spring passage at 8 sites, largest numbers being 11 north-east Welney April 18th and 54 north Yarmouth May 28th.

Reported on numerous dates during the autumn but passage numbers mostly insignificant apart from 15 east Sheringham Sept 1st, 28 west Holme and 15 east Mundesley Sept 15th all during strong northerly winds.

Individuals in first-summer plumage at Cley June 24th and July 13th and at Breydon June 24–27th and July 7th and 30th.

Breeding occurred at Scolt Head (one pair), Stiffkey Binks (one pair with 1–2 young fledged) and Blakeney Point (20 pairs with c.20 young fledged).

## Little Tern

*Sterna albifrons*

### *Local migratory breeder.*

Recorded April 22nd (Holme) to Oct 16th (Blakeney Harbour and Sheringham).

Concentrations of birds in August, away from breeding sites, included up to 44 Lynn Point and 35 Snettisham. Inland records from Pentney GP. Sept 15th, Cranwich GP. May 28th and Hickling (2) May 5th.

An excellent breeding season saw 576 breeding pairs fledging at least 602 young.

	No. Pairs	Young Fledged		No. Pairs	Young Fledged
Holme	16	13+	Holkham NNR	70–73	60+
Titchwell	6	1+	Hall Meals	2	0
Brancaster	27	40–45	Blakeney Point	183	250
Scolt Head	42	35	Yarmouth	230	203

## Whiskered Tern

*Chlidonias hybridus*

### *Vagrant from southern Europe.*

Two well watched summer-plumaged birds Rockland Broad May 15th (DL *et al*) left high to the north-east at 2030 hrs. Presumably the same reappeared for 2 hours at Pat's Pool, Cley May 22nd (SJMG *et al*). Seventeen previous county records.

## Black Tern

*Chlidonias niger*

### *Regular double passage migrant in variable numbers.*

Spring movement began April 23rd when 7 Welney, 2 Cley, 7 Colney GP, 2 Wroxham Broad and 2 Rockland Broad followed by 3 Strumpshaw 24th and a single Cley 25th. A further small movement April 29th saw 6 Welney and singles at Holme and Cley.

More widespread in May when generally small numbers at 23 sites. Largest concentrations 8 Pentney GP. 10th, 21 east Holme and 14 east Titchwell 3rd, 8 Cley 3rd and 16 Rockland Broad 3rd. Isolated June occurrences at Cley 1st/2nd and Titchwell 2nd, 10th and 14th.

Autumn movements between July 1st (Yarmouth) and Nov 5th (2 Breydon). A notable westerly movement of 70–80 Holme Aug 4th followed by a concentration of 110 Lynn Point Aug 5th at high tide. A count of 25 Cley Aug 31st was next highest figure followed by 1–15 at a further 19 sites during the month. Most Sept records on just three dates, largest groups being from Holme 31 on 1st, 51 on 15th and 26 on 16th; Cley 20 on 1st; Sheringham 15 on 1st and 11 on 15th; Yarmouth 20 on 1st and 10 on 15th; Lynn Point. 10 on 15th. A number of inland records: Welney 5 on 1st and 2 on 15th; Pentney GP. 3 on 17th and

olney GP on 16th. Records of 1–8 from 5 other sites. A remarkably late passage at Holme when 62 west Oct 2nd followed by 13 next day.

**White Winged Black Tern**  
*passage migrant from S.E. Europe.*

*Chlidonias leucopterus*

an adult on the county border at Hockwold flood (also known as Lakenheath Washes) June 1st (MGK SHM DRW *et al*), the first since 1988. An individual in the Sheringham/Weybourne area Nov 4–11th (DPA DHS KBS *et al*) also at Cley Nov 4th and 7th. A moulting adult at Cantley BF Nov 19th–23rd (PJH BWJ) was almost certainly the same and becomes the latest ever county record.

**Puffin**

*Uria aalge*

*passage migrant and winter visitor. Occasional wrecks.*

during early part of year small numbers. Except Feb 20th when remarkable all-day movement. Totals included 8 east Holme, 500 east Blakeney Pt (1230–1300 hrs), 5300 east Sheringham, 10,000 east (estimated all-day total) Overstrand, 2000 Trimingham (1200–1300 hrs), 4800 east Mundesley (1200–1600 hrs) and 1975 south Waxham (1200–1400 hrs).

Only spring movement of note at Sheringham where 300 east May 14th. First family parties noted 11 miles off Brancaster June 29th – earlier than usual.

Small numbers during remainder of year.

**Booby**

*Alca torda*

*passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Reported only in very small numbers in Feb and between May and Sept.

**Little Auk**

*Alle alle*

*passage migrant and winter visitor. Occasional 'wrecks'.*

Only records: 3 west Holme Jan 28th, singles at Titchwell Feb 8th and 20th and Salthouse Feb 5th.

In autumn a tideline corpse Cley Oct 29th.

**Puffin**

*Fratercula arctica*

*passage migrant and winter visitor.*

during first-winter period 2 west Holme Jan 28th and one east Mundesley Feb 20th.

No further reports until 2 off Scolt Head May 9th.

Summer records from Scolt Head 2 June 8th; Sheringham June 10th and Cley July 1st with 3 there July 12th.

Best autumn counts from Cley (22 east Sept 14th) and Sheringham (24 east Sept 1st and 31 east Sept 14th).

Rather scarce during latter part of year with singles at Hunstanton Nov 12th, Cley Nov 1st, Salthouse Nov 24th, Sheringham Dec 23rd and Mundesley Dec 31st.

**Pouter Dove**

*Columba oenas*

*resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

In the early part of year largest flocks were 60 Stiffkey Jan, 66 Welney and 50 Choseley both Feb, 100 Stiffkey March and 80 Kelling April.

Spring coastal movements were, as usual, very light. The best March count was on 1st when 6 west Holme and 15 west Sheringham, while in April the only notable movement was 38 south in an hour at Snettisham on 21st.

Breeding data remarkably sparse, 9 pairs at Welney the only report received. In early

autumn, a gathering of 50 at King's Lynn Sept 5th was the one record of note, but by Nov some good coastal movements were under way especially on 2nd when 153 south at Hunstanton, 12 east Sheringham, 34 east Mundesley and 70 south Winterton.

Towards end of the year, concentrations of 41 Welney and 40 Bacton both in Nov and 115 Flitcham and 85 Horning Hall in Dec.

Despite being a widespread species, the Stock Dove remains somewhat under-recorded and in particular its status and distribution in the breeding season are poorly known.

### **Woodpigeon**

*Columba palumbus*

***Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.***

No counts received for first-winter period.

Spring coastal movements on a few dates in March/April. Highest counts: 120 west at Sheringham, 235 east Paston March 27th and 250 west Holme April 30th.

No breeding season data submitted.

Interesting late autumn coastal movements with 3743 south at Hunstanton, 1200 east Mundesley and 450 south Winterton all Nov 2nd and 818 south in 2 hrs. at Hunstanton Nov 4th.

Largest flocks reported at end of the year: 1200 Lynn Point Oct, 1200 Holme Oct and 1450 Ringstead Dec. More estimates of winter flocks would be useful.

### **Collared Dove**

*Streptopelia decaocto*

***First bred in Britain at Cromer in 1955. Now widespread and common resident.***

In Britain as a whole, BTO Common Bird Census data shows an overall national increase of 40% during the period 1984–94. Unfortunately the paucity of data submitted prevents us from commenting on how the species' status in Norfolk compares with the national picture. In first half of the year, the only reports came from Holme where the maximum count was 35 in Feb.

Early breeding at Sheringham where pair nest-building Feb 27th. In autumn, coastal movement at Holme where highest count was 16 birds east Sept 29th.

Largest flocks recorded during second-winter period: 110 Holme Oct 11th and 105 West Beckham Nov 30th.

### **Turtle Dove**

*Streptopelia turtur*

***Migratory breeder and passage migrant. Evidence of recent decrease.***

A simultaneous but rather late spring arrival April 24th when 3 Holme, 3 Welney, singles Snettisham and Happisburgh and 'a few' Cley. Widespread reports thereafter, but several observers commented on low numbers.

Spring migration evident at several coastal sites during May, but numbers low with 35 west at Holme on 4th the highest count.

Opinions varied on general breeding status with good numbers in the Wighton/Walsingham/Barsham area, but a significant decrease reported in the Nar Valley area. Actual data received concerned 15 pairs at Welney (17 in 1993), 4–5 pairs at Dersingham Reserve and 2–3 pairs at East Wretham Heath, Sculthorpe Fen, Kettlestone Common and Boyland Wood.

Early autumn concentrations of 60 Attlebridge July 9th, 32 Lynn Point Aug 23rd followed by a rapid departure with very few anywhere after mid-Sept. Last records: Oct singles at Flitcham on 6th, Happisburgh on 8th and Dunham on 11th.

Nationally, the Turtle Dove has undergone such a marked recent decline that it is a candidate Red Data Book species. East Anglia now supports a significant proportion of the British population and we should endeavour to monitor its fortunes more closely.



### Long-necked Parakeet

*Psittacula krameri*

#### Introduced vagrant.

Although the situation is increasingly clouded as the incidence of other escaped parakeets, particularly Alexandrine, make accurate identification ever more difficult; it does seem that this species has become markedly scarcer in recent years.

The only firm records are singles at Dersingham May 31st, Titchwell Dec 1st and Holme Dec 3rd. The latter two records probably relating to the same bird.

### Cuckoo

*Cuculus canorus*

#### Migratory breeder and passage migrant.

Earliest reports at Strumpshaw and Cantley April 11th, followed by Holme Hale on 14th and the first coastal bird on Overy Dunes on 20th. A widespread arrival mid-24th. Breeding season reports indicate a healthy situation with birds reported at many sites across the county. First fledged young at Welney June 26th. Breeding also confirmed at Snettisham, Holme, Holkham NNR, Blakeney Freshes.

Virtually all adults had departed by mid-July, but juveniles recorded regularly throughout Aug including an hepatic individual at Cantley BF on 17th. Fewer than usual in Sept: Holme on 1st, 2 at Wells East Hills 3rd, Welney 4th, Sea Palling 5th, Nutterton 11th. Last of the year a very late bird at Foulton Oct 9th.

### Barn Owl

*Tyto alba*

#### Resident. Continental race *guttata* has appeared as a vagrant.

Norfolk continues to support a strong population of Barn Owls with particularly high concentrations in Broadland and in the north-west of the county. This year records received from just over 100 localities with breeding confirmed at 16 involving 19 pairs.

In Nov 2 birds of the dark-breasted continental race (*guttata*) seen from a gas platform 30 miles north-east of Yarmouth (*per* PRA) and in Dec another dark-breasted bird found dead near Brundall (*per* PRA).

### Little Owl

*Athene noctua*

#### Introduced resident.

Recorded from a total of 63 sites, significantly fewer than the 80 of last year but this probably reflects uneven recording effort from year to year rather than a sudden decline. Meaningful comment on distribution is difficult as it seems likely that many birds go undetected in under-watched inland areas. However, it seems clear Little Owls have retreated from much of the coastal belt in recent years, but still occur at quite high densities in some favoured inland areas, particularly Breckland.

During the breeding season (April–July) reported from 37 localities with confirmed breeding at 16 of these involving a total of 29 pairs. Most reports were of 1–2 pairs but 3 pairs in Stanford Battle Area and 3 pairs at Easton College.

### Tawny Owl

*Strix aluco*

#### Widespread resident.

In spite of the fact that Tawny Owls are quite easy to census, being both highly territorial and very vocal, remarkably few reports are received.

Breeding data from Barrow Common (at least 5 territories), Horsford (3–4 territories), Yarmouth cemetery (2 pairs successfully), Upton Fen (2 pairs) and single pairs at Priory Wood Weybourne, Belmore Plantation Norwich and Topcroft Street.

Reported as present at 9 other localities.

## Long-eared Owl

*Asio otus*

**Scarce and local resident. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.**

In first-winter period just 3 roost sites located, these held a combined total of only 5 birds. Surely more await discovery?

Only other records early in the year were of singles at Holme Jan 25th and 4 dates in Feb, south of Holkham Park Feb 11th, Cley March 1st, Syderstone March 4th and Fleggburgh Common March 27th. Also one dead at Burnham Overy Town Jan 1st.

Coastal passage migrants in April at Sheringham on 23rd, Weybourne on 26th and in May at Scolt Head 20th–23rd and Morston 23rd. Also a bird at Welney April 29th and May 1st.

Successful breeding by single pairs at 8 sites with calling males heard at a further 2 sites and a hunting bird at a third. The majority of breeding sites were in Breckland.

In autumn, a total of 35–40 coastal migrants between Sept 16th and Nov 7th, most during a marked arrival Oct 20th–24th. All records are given: Wells Sept 19th, Morston Sept 26th, Weybourne Camp and Trimmingham Oct 17th, Holme Oct 18th, then an influx on Oct 20th when 2 Blakeney Point and singles Wells East Hills, Cley, Weybourne Camp, Mundesley. Further arrivals next day when 3 landed on a ship in fog at Smith's Knoll remaining on board until it entered Lynn Cut, 4 flew in off the sea at Cley, 1 in off the sea at Sheringham, 3 in Yarmouth cemetery and 1 on Yarmouth beach. On 22nd 2 birds were still in Yarmouth cemetery and 1 at Warham Greens. On 24th 2 Warham saltmarsh; 1 Waxham and 1 Northrepps on 27th. Another flurry of birds Nov 3rd with 3 Scolt Head; 1 Blakeney Point and 2 Cley; one still at Cley next day when another at Wells and a final bird at Burnham Norton 7th.

Towards end of the year, one winter roost reported where numbers increased from 1 on Nov 4th to 3 Dec 31st. Only other records in second-winter period were Fleggburgh Common Nov 20th; Cley Dec 2nd and Flitcham Dec 24th.



*Short-eared Owls (N. Borrow)*

## Short-eared Owl

*Asio flammeus*

**Rare breeder. Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The recent run of poor winters for this species continued this year with a dearth of birds in both winter periods. At beginning of the year Snettisham and Breydon were the only regular sites, each holding 1–2 birds throughout Jan and Feb. Only other records during this period were Holme Jan 1st–15th and several dates in Feb with 2 on 25th; Salthouse





Top left: Migrant Long-eared Owl, Cley, November; right: the very obliging solitary Waxwing, Winterton, Nov/Dec (both *D. Nye*). Bottom: Red-rumped Swallows; left: Cley, Nov (*D. Nye*) on the same length of wire as the adult in April 1987; right: Winterton November (*J. Bhalerao*).







Top: Shelduck family Holkham Park where 5 broods on the lake, together with 17 broods on Holkham National Nature Reserve (A. Bloomfield). Bottom: although expected to remain all-winter, this Red-breasted Goose departed from Wells/Warham salt marshes on 6th November after a fortnight stay (C.R. Knights).





2004 will be remembered in East Anglia as The Year of the Bluetail. After this Red-flanked Bluetail appeared in Yarmouth cemeteries 18th October, unbelievably another turned up in Suffolk. Top: (Chittenden). Bottom left: (B.W. Jarvis); right: (D. Nye).





20th–21st. Small numbers regular in Sept up to 25th with reports from both inland and coastal sites.

Exceptionally warm weather brought a number of late records with Oct birds at Winterton 2nd; Holkham (2) 10th; Happisburgh 22nd; Horsey (2) 23rd. Even later were Nov birds at North Walsham 4th; Winterton (2) 8th; Horsey and Sea Palling 13th; and Horsey Gap 14th.

### Pallid Swift

*Apus pallidus*

*Vagrant from southern Europe and NW Africa.*

1993: One at Burnham Norton July 25th (PRC JC) has been accepted by BBRC and becomes the first Norfolk record of this difficult species to identify. A full account appears on page 367.



*Alpine Swift (N. Borrow)*

### Alpine Swift

*Apus melba*

*Vagrant from southern Europe.*

In a remarkably similar sequence of events to last year, one found at Beeston Bump April 27th (DAR *et al*). More co-operative than most, this bird remained in the area until 29th, making a short trip to Cley and Wiveton on 28th. What was presumed to be the same individual flew in from the beach at Titchwell April 30th, circled the fresh-marsh and then headed off south at 1330 hrs (AC NH GS).

This individual brings the county total to 35.

### Swift sp

*Apus sp*

An unidentified Swift at Wells Nov 9th.

Another Swift, with a white rump, at Thornham 2 days later on Nov 11th (VE *et al*) was considered most likely Pacific (*pacificus*) or White-rumped (*caffer*). Unfortunately, views insufficient to obtain full details. See *Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin 14*.

### Kingfisher

*Alcedo atthis*

*Resident, numbers fluctuate in response to severity of winters.*

Reported from a total of 90 sites with breeding season records from 32 of these of which 15 relate to confirmed breeding involving a total of 20 pairs. This is a much higher total than usual and probably reflects a combination of high population levels following a series of mild winters and a slight increase in observer effort. Nevertheless, it must still represent only a fairly small proportion of the true breeding population.

Breeding confirmed at Garboldisham, Swangey GP, Thetford Nunnery, Hockwold,



ddlington, Fordham, Salthouse, Sparham area (3 pairs), Lenwade, Whitlingham GP, roxham (3 pairs), How Hill, Wheatfen (2 pairs), Postwick Heights and Chedgrave.

An interesting insight into the reproductive capacity of this species came from arboldisham where a total of 1 adult and 13 juvs. ringed at a 2-acre site near a tributary of e Little Ouse between May 29th and Aug 27th and presumed to comprise the progeny of ee broods from just one pair.

Kingfishers occupy a wider range of habitat in the winter and there is an obvious crease in coastal records at this time with regular observations from north coast harbours d from Snettisham pits.

#### ee-eater

*Merops apiaster*

*agrant from southern Europe.*

typically fleeting appearance by one over East Harling May 10th (TD). Amazingly, the me observer saw one at the same location in 1992. Many Norfolk listers still need this zzler – perhaps a move to the Brecks is the answer.

#### oopoe

*Upupa epops*

*annual vagrant in very small numbers.*

one wintering bird at Taverham (present since Nov 1993) remained until Apr 21st, providing n unusual but welcome addition to the winter scene.

A typical spring showing with 3 brief individuals: Ormesby St. Margaret April 22nd; althouse Heath on 30th and Mousehold Heath May 17th. The few autumn records all came Oct and could possibly relate to the same bird. Singles appeared at Overstrand on 5th; romer GC on 11th; West Runton on 15th and Cley/Salthouse on 24th.

#### ryneck

*Jynx torquilla*

*ormer migrant breeder. Now scarce annual passage migrant, mostly in autumn.*

pring passage between April 23rd and May 25th involving 10 individuals at 8 mainly oastal locations. All records given: Holme April 23rd–25th; Wells dell, Blakeney Point and oughthon all on 24th; Salthouse Heath May 14th–15th; Yarmouth cemetery 20th–22nd; ley and Blakeney Point both on 21st; Salthouse Heath on 24th and Sidestrand on 25th.

An excellent autumn migration with 60–70 individuals reported between Aug 13th (Blakeney Point) and Oct 13th (Blakeney Point), the majority in a widespread fall during ept 1st–3rd. Highest counts: 5 Sheringham Sept 3rd; 4–5 Holkham NNR (Overy dunes-Wells ast Hills) on 2nd; 4 Holme on 1st; 4 Blakeney Point on 2nd and 3 Stiffkey on 4th. Records 1–2 birds at Hunstanton GC, Thornham Point, Brancaster GC, Cley, Kelling Quags, althouse, Weybourne, Cromer, Northrepps, Mundesley, Happisburgh, West Somerton, Winterton and Yarmouth.

Inland Ludham Aug 30th and Holt Sept 5th.

#### Green Woodpecker

*Picus viridis*

*esident.*

eriously under-recorded. Reports received from only 33 locations, none of which related to onfirmed breeding. This species is known to be widely distributed with particularly good opulations in Breckland. It should be doing well after a succession of mild winters and ore observations would be welcome.

#### Great Spotted Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos major*

*ommon resident. Birds of northern race major occasional in autumn.*

oo few records received to enable a meaningful account to be written. Reported from a otal of only 23 locations with territorial pairs at 8 of these.

## Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos minor*

### *Local resident.*

Traditionally better recorded than the other two woodpeckers, this species was reported from a total of 35 localities. Present at 15 of these sites in the breeding season, but territorial pairs at only 6: Lynford Arboretum, Stanford Priory, Hilgay, Holkham Park, Wroxham (2 territories) and Horning Water Works. Undoubtedly more widespread than the above records suggest and more extensive coverage of Broadland in particular could be enlightening.

Nationally, Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers enjoyed something of a population boom during the height of the Dutch elm disease epidemic only to show signs of a subsequent decline when the dead and dying elms largely removed from the countryside. Evidence to support a recent decline in Norfolk comes from Hethersett where the species was formerly regular but was not recorded at all in 1994 and from Swanton Novers Great Wood where a regular breeding population of 2–4 pairs has vanished in the last couple of years.

## Short-toed Lark

*Calandrella brachydactyla*

### *Vagrant from southern Europe.*

Sidestrand Oct 21st (BM). Seventeenth county record.

## Woodlark

*Lullula arborea*

### *Uncommon migratory breeder, recently increasing. Also scarce passage migrant.*

The year began with the earliest ever singing male, on a restock site near Feltwell Jan 25th. The Breckland population was surveyed for the 21st consecutive year, the results showing a further population increase to a total of 108 singing males in the Norfolk Brecks, 85 of these were on forest sites and 23 on heathland (a further 112 singing males were in the Suffolk Brecks). Totals of singing males in the Norfolk Brecks in recent years are shown below (Suffolk Brecks totals are given in brackets):

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
26(24)	23(20)	20(23)	29(24)	48(45)	53(39)	69(76)	82(94)

A total of 47 young were colour-ringed in the Norfolk Brecks and an interesting sighting concerned a bird that had been ringed as a nestling at Lynford in 1993 and turned up as part of a breeding pair in Lincolnshire in 1994.

The picture away from the Brecks is also very encouraging with a total of 5–7 singing males from 4 sites and breeding confirmed at one of them.

Only post-breeding flock noted was 20 at Weeting Heath Aug 25th. Mild weather in Nov encouraged birds to linger longer than usual in the Brecks with the latest ever singing male on 18th and the last bird on 22nd.

Only 2 spring coastal migrants: Winterton March 5th and Horsey April 23rd. A much better showing in autumn when 11 birds as follows: Mundesley Oct 5th; Holme on 9th; Horsey on 11th; Hunstanton (2) Nov 2nd with another on 3rd; Cley 3rd; Burnham Norton 6th; Brancaster (2) on 13th and Holme 21st (*Ron Hoblyn/Forest Enterprise kindly provided the Breckland data*).

## Skylark

*Alauda arvensis*

### *Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Counts of wintering flocks early in the year indicated low numbers with 90 Winfarthing the highest Jan total and 200 Choseley the highest in early Feb. A cold-weather influx Feb 21st boosted numbers and concentrations of 1500 Holme; 150 Docking; 500

ston/Edingthorpe/Bacton and 250 Waxham were recorded in last week of the month. An only return movement of 116 east at Mundesley Feb 27th was the only notable one of the ring.

Breeding season counts of singing males were 26 Welney (22 in '93); 51 Snettisham (40 '93); c.20 RAF Marham, while at Choseley detailed research work showed a density of 7 birds/sq. km. on arable farmland.

Autumn coastal movements began Sept 18th and continued until late Nov, but numbers generally modest. Highest counts Nov 3rd when 529 south at Hunstanton and 800 west at Sheringham (both all-day counts).

Very few sizeable flocks reported in second-winter period. Oct gatherings of 400 Thornham and 300 Sheringham doubtless included passage birds. Only Nov data came from Holme where flocks of 150 on set-aside and 50 on saltmarsh. In Dec the only three-figure counts were 100 Overy Harbour; 150 Hethersett and 300 Hickling. Average flock size seems to be 50–70 nowadays.

The latest BTO Common Birds Census results show that breeding Skylarks have declined by a staggering 58% between 1968 and 1994 over Britain as a whole, with the heaviest losses in southern and eastern England. Unfortunately the inevitable under-recording of what is still a common bird and the lack of published data makes it difficult to present a Norfolk perspective on this issue. Much of the breeding data submitted comes from grazing marsh habitats where the species still seems to be doing well, although the high-water levels necessary for breeding wildfowl and waders are probably not ideal for skylarks. The situation in Norfolk's vast tracts of arable remains largely unknown. Hopefully the proposed national survey will provide some answers.

## Shorelark

*Eremophila alpestris*

*Rare winter visitor and passage migrant. Exceptional in summer.*

Blakeney Point was the main locality in the first-winter period with up to 8 birds all Jan and up to 7 throughout Feb, March and during April until last seen on 25th. The only other site with Shorelarks was Snettisham where 4 Jan 21st, all but one of these had departed next day but the lone bird remained until March 3rd.

May produced 2 single migrants: Blakeney Point 1st–2nd and Breydon 5th–6th.

First arrival in autumn was at Waxham Sands Oct 13th, this bird remained until 21st being joined by a second from 16th. Next singles were Snettisham and Wells East Hills on 5th; Holme (in off sea) on 17th. Numbers built up at Wells East Hills to a peak of 12 on 13rd, declining to 2 by 31st. Elsewhere 4 arrived at Titchwell on 24th (coinciding with departure of 5 from Wells E. Hills) and 2 there 28th–30th with one on 31st; 3 at Cley 27th and 31st and singles on scattered dates at Blakeney Point, Salthouse and Sheringham.

Birds very much in evidence in Nov but uneven coverage, elusiveness of birds and movement between sites combine to make interpretation of records difficult. Maxima at individual sites: 4 Holme on 21st; 6 Thornham on 10th; 15 Titchwell on 5th; 30 Holkham Bay on 17th; 24 Wells East Hills 6th–7th; 11 Cley on 1st; 4 Salthouse on 11th; 11 east, 6 west, at Sheringham on 11th and 1 south at Waxham on 2nd. A provisional analysis of total numbers indicates c.12 birds early in the month, augmented by an arrival 5th–6th to give a total of 30–40 until 17th when approx half apparently departed (but may have moved to Blakeney Point and remained undetected until mid-Dec), leaving a fairly mobile population of 12–15 until the month-end.

The Dec picture was more stable with 8–11 birds at Holkham Bay all month; 14 were discovered on Blakeney Point on 14th and a single at Cley 6th.



## Sand Martin

*Riparia riparia*

### *Local migratory breeder and common passage migrant.*

First at Cley March 10th followed by daily reports from an increasing number of sites throughout the month. Spring migration much better than last year with counts of up to 100 birds from several sites and 500 at Pentney GP April 17th. Coastal movements peaked during last week of April, highest counts from Holme where 650 west on 22nd and 500 west on 24th (both all-day counts).

Breeding data: Stanford Battle Area (30 pairs); Welney (10 pairs); Pentney GP (15–20 occupied holes); West Runton Cliffs (8 occupied holes); Whitlingham GP (c.100 pairs: good success with many young fledged).

Coastal post-breeding movements started June 28th (Holme) and continued until early Aug with a peak in mid-July when counts of 750 west at Holme on 10th and 100 west at Sheringham on 11th (both all-day counts). A few good autumn concentrations at inland sites: 200 Welney July 31st; 250 roosting at King's Lynn BF Aug 15th and still 400 at Cantley BF Sept 20th.

Only Oct records from Holkham (2) and Ranworth Broad both on 4th, but a late single at Winterton Nov 5th and an even later one at Cromer Dec 4th (MS DS).

## Swallow

*Hirundo rustica*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Always eagerly awaited, the first spring record was at Hellesdon March 15th, but it proved to be a false alarm since although there were a few other March and early April records adverse weather held up spring migration until April 21st when the floodgates opened with 200 birds west at Holkham and 110 per hour west at Cley. Coastal migration then in evidence most days until mid-May with highest numbers on 8th when 2800 west at Holme (all-day count) and 2500–3000 per hour west at Blakeney Point.

Breeding information only from RAF Marham (25 pairs) and among unusual nest sites was Heigham Holmes floating swing bridge where 2 pairs bred successfully. The reedbed roost at Holme was occupied throughout Aug and Sept, numbers peaked at 7500 Sept 6th. Coastal migration evident late Aug–early Sept, highest counts 1500 west Holme Aug 25th (all-day count); 2000 per hour east (0845–1100 hrs) Mundesley Sept 9th.

Regular Nov sightings at a variety of coastal sites until the last one at Holme on 20th. (A bird at Little Plumstead Dec 6th has been accepted by the County Records Committee as: "Hirundine sp. – probably Swallow".)

## Red-rumped Swallow

*Hirundo daurica*

### *Vagrant from southern Europe.*

The warm south-easterly winds of late autumn brought a small influx of Red-rumped Swallows to Britain. Luckily, Norfolk received more than its fair share of these attractive visitors, giving observers ample opportunity to catch up with a species whose recent appearances in the county have been all too brief.

First to arrive was a single at Winterton Nov 1st (PKB RJM JCW *et al*), this bird stayed until 8th, but a further 3 arrived at Titchwell on the afternoon of 6th (DIC BJR *et al*). Widely believed to be the same birds that had been present in Nottinghamshire a few days previously, they remained until 11th. Often elusive or absent during the day, they returned each evening to roost in a reedbed between Titchwell and Brancaster. Records of 2 over Burnham Norton on 7th (MESR) and 2 briefly at Holme on 8th (NL) almost certainly involved the birds from Titchwell.

A single at Cley from 12th until the morning of 14th (MK *et al*) was then seen over Sheringham on the afternoon of 14th (KBS MPT). One at Winterton on 15th (PJR *et al*) was

ieved to be the same individual.  
There have been 17 previous county records.

### House Martin

*Delichon urbica*

*Common migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Two early birds at Titchwell March 29th were followed by 4 at Surlingham Church Marsh April 1st, but there were only 3 subsequent singles until 19th when a trickle of birds began appear. The first widespread arrival was on 24th. Coastal migration was then evident on many days until early June with a good movement May 31st when 800 west at Holme (all-day count).

Breeding information effectively non-existent. The general impression is one of declining numbers, but hard facts would be useful.

Autumn migration at coastal sites from late Aug until mid-Sept. highest numbers were 1000 west at Holme Aug 25th (all-day count) and 7600 per hour (0845–1100 hrs) at Mundesley Sept 9th. Many records of small numbers, mainly at coastal localities. Throughout Oct and still regular throughout Nov with reports of 1–3 at 6 coastal sites (Winterton being especially favoured) and inland at Buckenham 25th and Loddon 28th. Even in Dec a few ghosts of summer still with us as singles at Hunstanton 2nd; Sheringham 1st and Bacton 9th.

### Richard's Pipit

*Anthus novaeseelandiae*

*Seasonally annual autumn migrant from western Siberia. Rare in winter and spring.*

A single west at Sheringham Sept 6th was not only one of the earliest ever autumn records but heralded an unprecedented influx that broke all previous county records. Following further singles at Sheringham Sept 10th and Burnham Overy on 18th a more widespread arrival occurred 21st–25th. Birds were then recorded virtually daily until Nov 8th (Sheringham) with almost every coastal site reporting at least one.

New arrivals noted most days, but the peak period was Oct 8th–15th and relatively few were seen in Nov. All records were coastal except one at Wymondham Park Oct 10th. Records are summarised weekly:

	SEPT				OCT				NOV	
Week commencing	5th	12th	19th	26th	3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st	7th
No. of birds	2	1	14	12	20	50	11	2	7	2
No. of locations	1	1	7	6	9	13	6	3	6	2

In all, a total of 95–115 individuals recorded this autumn. This is far in excess of the previous highest total which was as far back as 1968 when c.53 birds were recorded. At the end of the year a bird was found on Overy dunes Dec 29th; it remained well into 1995.

### Lawn Pipit

*Anthus campestris*

*Rare passage migrant.*

A very brief individual Thornham Point Sept 2nd (RQS) was the only record.

### Tree Pipit

*Anthus trivialis*

*Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

A singing male Salthouse Heath April 7th was the earliest, but there were no further records until 17th when one at Kelling Triangle. Widespread reports from 19th onwards. Coastal passage migrants noted on many dates from April 20th–May 31st: a total of 130–150 birds recorded during this period. Highest single day counts were from Holme where 25 west

April 29th and 10 west May 9th.

Breeding season counts of singing males from Marsham Heath (3); Croxton Heath (3); Frost's Common (2); Nr. Swaffham (2); Roydon Common (5); Dersingham Reserve (11) and Holt Lowes (3), also reported as present at Salthouse Heath and Sandpit Heath. Former breeding locations at East Winch Common and Syderstone Common were checked, but no birds found. Although there is some evidence of a recent decline this species is commoner than the above records suggest especially in Breckland.

Autumn migration evident Aug 12th–Oct 21st with slight peaks Sept 9th and 21st–24th. Numbers poor with only 34 birds reported in total. Last records 2 Stiffkey Oct 12th and one Wells 21st.

### Meadow Pipit

*Anthus pratensis*

**Common migratory breeder and passage migrant with smaller numbers in winter.**

Largest flocks in first-winter period 40 Snettisham in Jan and 40 Welney, 40 Downham Market in Feb. Spring coastal movements began early on Feb 27th and continued throughout March and April. Peak numbers March 29th when 500 west Holme and 580 west Sheringham; April 3rd when 1250 west Holme and April 19th when 840 west Sheringham (all-day counts). As well as these overhead movements, flocks of migrants were present at many coastal sites during the spring. Highest April counts: 230 Holkham NNR and 200 at Cley, Sea Palling, Waxham.

Breeding data only from Welney (86 prs.); Snettisham (20 prs.) and Sculthorpe Airfield (scv. prs.). Although high breeding densities occur on coastal dune systems and the dryer saltmarshes little is known of inland distribution; it is probably scarcer than realised. Largest autumn flocks 140 Holme in Aug; 100+ Waxham in Sept; 110 Welney, 300 Wells East Hills and 250 Hickling in Oct. Coastal visible migration peaked during first week of Oct, highest count 520 west at Holme on 8th (all-day count).

Largest Nov flocks only 40 Holme and 20 Snettisham. Typically scarce along the north coast in Dec. Largest flocks inland with 24 Welney; 75 Cantley BF.

### Red-throated Pipit

*Anthus cervinus*

**Vagrant from Northern Europe.**

Two autumn records. An elusive and flighty bird at Sheringham Oct 2nd (SCV) and one flew in off the sea at Brancaster Nov 6th, but although it landed on the golf course, it was soon disturbed by golfers and flew off west (VE). A high proportion of Red-throated Pipit reports concern birds seen only in overhead flight and identified by the diagnostic call. Observers are often reluctant to submit these as they believe such records are likely to be rejected by BBRC. As a result we are undoubtedly losing some good data.

### Rock Pipit

*Anthus petrosus*

**Winter visitor and passage migrant. Scandinavian race *littoralis* regular in spring.**

Winters chiefly in tidal creeks in saltmarshes and harbours from the Wash round to Cley and at Breydon. Probably under-counted in these difficult-to-work habitats.

In Jan a total of 192 birds reported from 11 localities including high counts of 60 Snettisham and 57 Thornham saltmarsh. Feb totals much lower with 44 birds at 8 localities.

Spring passage almost non-existent. Birds of the Scandinavian race *littoralis* at Titchwell March 3rd and Holme (2) on 20th.

A very early autumn bird at Blakeney Point Aug 1st; next arrivals Sept 17th at Bacton and Winterton. Then daily from 19th. Coastal migration continued throughout Oct and Nov with the highest counts 45 west Holme Oct 10th; 30 west Holme and 35 west Sheringham on 24th; 30 west Holme Nov 21st (all were all-day counts). In addition to overhead migrants, good numbers of birds present along the west and north coasts this autumn. In Oct a total of 44 at 6 localities then a marked increase in Nov to 193 birds at 9 localities



cluding 50 Wells saltmarsh on 5th. Only about half this total remained into Dec when 89 birds at 10 localities; highest counts 27 Wells saltmarsh and 20 Breydon.

Inland records from Cantley BF Sept 29th; Colney GP Oct 2nd; Cantley BF 9th; Welney 1st and 21st and King's Lynn BF (2) Nov 2nd.

With virtually no ringing evidence to suggest that British Rock Pipits make regular long distance movements, it would seem logical to suggest that the majority of our passage and winter birds are Scandinavian.

### Winter Pipit

*Anthus spinoletta*

#### Local winter visitor.

Jan a total of only 20 birds at 5 sites with the highest count at Burnham Norton where 10 on 22nd. Numbers increased to 37 at 5 sites in Feb, mainly due to an influx at Cley where 20 on 7th. A further marked increase in March to 90 birds at 8 sites with high counts of 33 at Cley on 23rd and 23 How Hill on 15th. Most birds departed during the second week of April, but odd singles recorded throughout the month until the last at Cranwich GP on 24th. An early returning bird at Cley on Sept 26th. In Oct, 15 birds at 4 sites but becoming more widespread during Nov with a total of 36 at 13 sites including up to 7 at Catfield Fen and Cantley BF. Numbers in Dec unexceptional: a total of 29 at 7 sites. Largest gathering 10 at Cantley BF.

The last five years have been a remarkable increase in the numbers of Water Pipits entering in Norfolk. Wisington BF, Burnham Norton, Cley and Cantley BF all now hold good numbers regularly each winter and birds are recorded somewhat erratically at an increasing variety of other sites. The BTO Winter Atlas estimate of a British winter population of 100 or so birds would seem to be in need of revision. It remains to be seen if this upward trend will continue in the long term.

### Yellow Wagtail

*Motacilla flava*

#### Increasing migratory breeder and common passage migrant.

The usual few early records in March, the first at Cley (2) and Blakeney Freshes (2) on 27th followed by Hickling 30th and Waxham 31st. Very few April records until mass arrival on 1st. Spring passage continued until mid-May with an obvious peak April 24th when 170 at Snettisham; 50 west Holme; 100 Burnham Overy; 70 Cley; 58 east Paston and 200 at Waxham. Other good counts: 70 Happisburgh 26th and 120 west at Holme on 29th.

The only breeding records received concerned 27 pairs Welney; 8 pairs Holkham NNR (serious decline from relatively stable population of c.20 prs in recent years); 1-2 pairs King's Lynn BF; 1 pair Aylsham and 1 pair Fleggburgh Common. A negative report from Paston Marshes where this was formerly a regular breeder. The Yellow Wagtail is a candidate Red Data species that would seem to be rapidly declining in Norfolk; it is fortunate that lack of data precludes meaningful comment.

Largest autumn gatherings: 90 Welney Aug 9th; 67 Ludham Sept 13th. Overhead coastal movements heavier than usual, especially in late Aug when 40 west, 30 east, at Holme on 24th (all-day count). Oct singles at Cley 2nd; Snettisham 9th; Holme 11th; Waxham Sands 14th. In Nov one flew east at Holme on 6th and a male at Ludham on 14th.

**Blue-headed Wagtail** *M.f.flava*: A good spring passage from April 1st (Sheringham) to May 14th (Breydon); a total of 40-50 birds reported at a variety of mainly coastal sites. Most records involved 1-3 birds, but 9 Waxham Sands and 8 West Somerton-Waxham both on 23rd. A solitary autumn record of a male still in breeding plumage at Salthouse Sept 17th.

**Grey-headed Wagtail** *M.f.thunbergi*: A total of 12 males: Brancaster April 22nd-24th; Happisburgh April 28th-May 8th joined by a second bird on 2nd and 3 there on 8th; Unstanton May 7th and 10th; Holkham 8th and 13th; Snettisham 15th; Blakeney Point 15th and 21st; Cley 18th. Most curious was a male showing characteristics of this race

involved in a breeding attempt at Claxton Manor.

**Ashy-headed Wagtail** *M.f.cinereocapilla*: Birds showing good characteristics of this race at Cley April 24th (MIE AMS *et al*) and Blakeney Point May 21st (MIE).

**Spanish Wagtail** *M.f.iberiae*: A male showing good characteristics of this race at Happisburgh May 8th (MIE).

**Syke's Wagtail** *M.f.beema*: Males showing good characteristics of this race at Welney April 19th–26th (JBK) and May 2nd–6th (JBK).

## Grey Wagtail

*Motacilla cinerea*

*Local breeder, fairly common passage migrant, less common in winter.*

In first-winter period a small wintering population of 15–20 birds present in the county. Records came from a variety of scattered localities but sewage works and urban waterways particularly favoured. Once again, birds regular at several sites in Norwich.

Coastal spring passage evident from March 3rd to April 24th but as is often the case numbers small involving a total of only 15 individuals.

In the breeding season single territorial pairs present at an encouraging total of 18 sites. Breeding confirmed at 15 of these and was likely to have been attempted at the others. All sites are listed: Bintree Mill, Buckenham Tofts Mill, Burnham Overy Mill, Buxton Mill, Colney GP-Bawburgh End, Corpusty, Glandford, Guist, Horstead Mill, Ickburgh, Letheringsett, Lyng, Marlingford Mill, Narborough, Norwich City Centre, Saxthorpe Mill, Thetford and West Acre Mill.

Autumn coastal movement began July 2nd (Holme), but was fairly desultory until Sept when almost daily records began and continued throughout Oct. A few still on the move in Nov until 26th (Titchwell). A total of c.120 birds involved and the highest single-day count was 7 west at Holme Oct 10th. Some 15–20 inland migrants also recorded, especially during Oct, including more than usual in Broadland.

The year ended much as it began with a scattered wintering population of c.20 birds. The true total is undoubtedly higher and visits to more sewage treatment works would certainly produce more birds.

## Pied Wagtail

*Motacilla alba*

*Common resident and passage migrant.*

Two large communal roosts located in the early part of the year, c.250 birds at Rhone Poulenc (Norwich) Jan–March, still 200 there April 7th but the roost was deserted shortly after this; 180–210 birds roosted at Q.E. Hospital in King's Lynn during Jan. Few daytime gatherings were reported at this time, 75 Downham Mkt. SW Feb 5th and 40 Cranwich GP March 20th were the largest.

Spring coastal movements started early on Feb 27th and continued throughout March, but passage was less strong than last year's. Peak numbers recorded March 27th when 35 west Holme and 44 east Mundesley.

The largest post-breeding gatherings involved two flocks, each of 100 birds, in Holkham Park during July and Aug and a roost of 137 Whitlingham marshes Aug 28th. The second-winter period saw roosts of 100 at Horsey Mere Oct 22nd and 490 Attleborough, 400 Bacton Gas Terminal, 47 Tesco in Thetford all in Nov. The largest daytime flocks were 45 King's Lynn BF Oct 25th and 50 Holkham Park in Dec. A leucistic bird was seen at Ingham on Oct 22nd.

**White Wagtail** *M.a.alba*: Spring passage from March 10th (Brancaster) to May 18th (Snettisham and Holkham). Numbers generally unexceptional; many reports of 1–3 birds at a wide variety of coastal sites and at a few inland locations. More impressive concentrations of 30 Winterton March 24th and 12 Cley April 22nd.

The only autumn records were 15 Blakeney Point Aug 22nd and 1 at Yarmouth Oct 26th.

## Maxwing

*Bombycilla garrulus*

*Captive late autumn and winter visitor.*

The poorest year since the single record of 1983. None recorded in the first-winter period, only 3 in the second. Single birds at Holme Oct 26th, Cley Nov 9th and an obliging, 1-watched bird, at Titchwell Nov 30th–Dec 2nd.

## Oppler

*Cinclus cinclus*

*Most annual winter visitor in very small numbers.*

2 wintering birds from 1993 remained well into the new year. The Heacham bird present until at least Feb 19th and the more elusive individual on the Babingley River until 4th. A third bird on the Glaven at Little Thornage Jan 21st and although often hard to find, it remained in the area until it was last seen at Letheringsett March 5th.

## Green

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Very common resident and a passage migrant in small numbers.*

Breeding information was received from 2 sites: At Welney a total of 20 singing males represented a significant increase from 13 in 1993 and a Common Bird Census at Belmore Plantation (Thorpe St. Andrew) produced a figure of 29 territories in 8 ha. of mixed woodland. Population levels at the latter site have varied from 22–39 territories since 1989.

## Linnet

*Prunella modularis*

*Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn.*

As with other common species, monitoring county population trends is difficult without a broader base of Common Bird Census data. Hopefully the new BTO Breeding Bird Survey will provide information that can be utilised at county level. Breeding data was received from Belmore Plantation where 7 territories in 8 ha. of mixed woodland.

Autumn migration was modest, peak counts came from Holme where 35 Sept 21st and 20 Oct 10th–24th. Also notable were 12 birds moving east at Mundesley Oct 15th.

## Robin

*Erithacus rubecula*

*Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn.*

A very light spring migration with just a handful of coastal records in March and April: highest count 20 at Holme March 12th.

Breeding census results from Welney where there were 5 territories (4 in 1993) and Belmore Plantation where there were 20 territories in 8 ha. of mixed woodland. Autumn passage from late Sept to early Nov, but once again no major falls recorded. This species is becoming less numerous as an autumn migrant.

The only high counts were 100 at Snettisham Coastal Park Oct 20th and 65 Holme Nov 7th.

## Thrush Nightingale

*Luscinia luscinia*

*Migrant from Europe/central Siberia.*

1992 addition: Burnham Overby Dunes Sept 18th (VE MESR). This bird just beats the Salthouse individual to become the first autumn county record and brings the Norfolk total to six.

## Nightingale

*Luscinia megarhynchos*

*Local migratory breeder and very scarce passage migrant.*

The first arrivals April 23rd were not only a good ten days later than normal but were also unusual in that they comprised no less than 4 coastal migrants (Holme, Wells, Weybourne, Orsey) and only 2 singing males at breeding sites (Barnham Cross Common, Salthouse Heath). However, a widespread arrival at breeding sites noted next day. Further coastal



migrants at Holme on 25th, 27th, 30th, May 1st, 5th; Titchwell April 27th–30th and Caister 29th.

Territorial singing males in the breeding season as follows: Alderford Common 4, Barnham Cross Common 8, Belmore Plantation, Boughton Fen 2, Buxton Heath, Fairstead Wood, Hempton 2, Hilgay, Ken Hill Wood, Kettlestone Common 2, Leziate 2, Lopham Fen 2, Methwold Common 3, Narborough Railway Line, Pentney GP, Pretty Corner (Sheringham) 2, Quidenham, Rockland Broad 2, Roydon Common 4, Salthouse Heath 8–10, Santon Downham, Stanford Battle Area 17, Stonepit Heath (Kelling), Sutton Staithe 2, Swanton Novers 3, Swanton Hall, Upgate Common, Wayland Wood, West Acre, Wissington Wymondham. The resultant county total of c.80 territories in 1994 is disappointingly low. The last full survey, in 1980, produced a figure of 345 singing males in Norfolk. Hopefully the enormous discrepancy is largely due to under-recording.

The only autumn migrant was a bird on Blakeney Point Sept 1st–2nd.

### **Bluethroat**

*Luscinia svecica*

*Scarce passage migrant, now more frequent in spring.*

An early bird at Sheringham April 20th was likely to have been of the White-spotted race (*cyanecula*), but as it was a female racial identity could not be established.

For the second year in succession a good scattering of spring migrants of the Red-spotted race (*svecica*) recorded in May, most arriving 20th–21st. In all, a minimum of 13 individuals involved. All records given: Cley on 17th; Holme on 18th; Stiffkey 19th–20th; Scolt Head, Blakeney Point 3 and Cley all on 20th; Brancaster, Scolt Head, Blakeney Point 4 and Cley 3 on 21st; Scolt Head, Blakeney Point 4 and Cley on 22nd; Overy Dunes and Blakeney Point on 24th; Blakeney Point on 26th.

Autumn produced 3 Sept records: Blakeney Point on 2nd, Overy Dunes on 19th and Winterton on 25th.

### **Red-flanked Bluetail**

*Tarsiger cyanurus*

*Vagrant from northern Russia/Siberia.*

A charismatic species that observers regularly working coastal sites in Norfolk dream of finding. This year the dream came true in Yarmouth cemetery where a female, or first winter male, found Oct 18th constituted a long awaited first for Norfolk (PRA *et al*). Luckily the bird remained until 20th, usually providing good views for all-comers. The Norfolk record was preceeded by one in Dorset in 1993 and closely followed by another in Suffolk in Oct 1994. Future events are awaited with interest. See page 368.

### **Black Redstart**

*Phoenicurus ochruros*

*Rare migratory breeder, regular passage migrant and occasional in winter.*

No over-wintering birds noted at the beginning of the year. First record was a migrant at Heacham March 8th, the precursor to a strong spring migration that lasted until June 5th (Holme) with a peak late March/early April and involving c.118 individuals in total. Most records were coastal and involved 1–3 birds, but higher counts included 5 Winterton March 19th; 5 Sheringham on 25th and 6 Winterton April 2nd. Inland sightings at Hickling village March 22nd; Lessingham 26th; Cawston (2) 27th; Frettenham 27th–28th with 2 on 29th; Metton and Little Dunham on 29th; Frettenham April 5th–6th; Whitlingham GP 7th; Choseley 8th; Hempstead 11th–14th.

During the breeding season 2 singing males at King's Lynn Docks, but breeding not proven; 2 singing males in Yarmouth but breeding not proven and a singing male in Norwich but again no proof of breeding.

More late summer/early autumn records than usual with 10 coastal migrants between

y 23rd (Cley) and Sept 2nd (Kelling). Regular autumn migration began Sept 21st (Ornham Point) and continued until Nov 6th (Sheringham) with marked peaks Oct 14th–23rd and Nov 3rd. Approximately 90 individuals recorded, mostly in ones and twos at coastal sites but high counts of 5 Blakeney Point Oct 14th–15th; 4 Yarmouth cemetery 20th and 7 Blakeney Point Nov 3rd. Inland birds at Flitcham in early Sept; Longlands (Holkham Park) 2 Sept 8th with one remaining to 18th and Welney Oct 11th. No Dec records.



*Black Redstart (J. Wright)*

## Redstart

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Local migratory breeder (most in Breckland), common passage migrant.**

First singles of the spring at Horsey and Waxham April 16th. Many coastal records followed from 20th until May 27th (Holme and Holkham) with obvious influxes on April 24th–24th and May 14th–15th. A total of 90–100 birds reported including good counts of 7 Holme April 23rd; 6 Blakeney Point May 15th and 21st; 4 Holme May 14th. Inland singles at Corpusty April 29th and Rockland St. Mary May 28th.

Impressive breeding numbers in Breckland where 49 singing males located in Stanford Battle Area stronghold and single pairs at East Wretham Heath and Brettenham Heath. Only other breeding report concerned 1–2 territories in Sheringham Park.

Autumn migration from Aug 14th (Holme) until Oct 24th (when a bird at Sheringham cemetery showed characters of the race *samanisicus*) with obvious falls of continental birds Sept 15th and 21st when the highest counts were recorded. On Sept 15th – 35 Holme; 60 Holkham NNR (B. Norton-Wells E. Hills); 60 Blakeney Point; 30 Sheringham. On 21st – 11 Hunstanton GC; 27 Holme; 30 Holkham NNR (B. Norton-Wells E. Hills); 30 Blakeney Point; 20 Sheringham. Only a few inland records: East Harling (3) Sept 26th and Norwich 18th.

## Chinchat

*Saxicola rubetra*

**Local migratory breeder and common passage migrant.**

First to arrive 3 at Cley April 22nd followed by a widespread coastal arrival on 23rd. Spring migration continued until May 29th (Sheringham) with pronounced small influxes May 14th–4th and 15th–16th. Overall numbers were about average, a total of c.140 recorded with reports of 1–5 at many coastal sites. Highest count only 6 at Blakeney Point May 15th. Inland records from Welney April 28th and 29th; Thetford Nunnery May 1st; Holkham Park 1st; Sparham 8th.

There were no reports of confirmed breeding this year. A singing male present throughout May at Kelling Water Meadows; singles in Stanford Battle Area May 31st and

June 3rd; a female at Croxton Heath June 6th and a bird at Snettisham on 26th. Although the only July record was of a juv. at Kelling Water Meadows the evidence is not sufficient to draw the desired conclusion.

Snettisham produced the first autumn bird Aug 10th followed by many reports from a wide variety of coastal localities until the last singles at Mundesley Nov 3rd and Horsey on 4th. Moderate falls of migrants occurred Aug 23rd–26th, Sept 1st–3rd, 15th–16th and 21st. Largest concentrations: 26 Sheringham and 35 Mundesley Sept 3rd; 15 Blakeney Point and 20 Sheringham on 15th; 25 Holme and 20 Winterton on 21st. Inland records from Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Barnham Cross Common, Winfarthing, Welney and Colney GP. An autumn total of around 500 birds recorded in the county.

An exceptional record of a bird at Fakenham Dec 16th (GFH NL).

### Stonechat

*Saxicola torquatus*

*Very small east coast breeding population; regular passage migrant, local in winter.*

A small winter population of some 30 present at the start of the year. Reports from scattered localities, but most were coastal or in Broadland, the majority referred to 1–2 birds but up to 6 were at Holme and 3 at Cley in Jan.

An exceptional spring migration began with a sudden influx along the north coast Feb 27th; a total of 75 recorded between Holme and Sheringham on that date including counts of 8 Holme, 12 Wells North Point, 23 Cley and 9 Sheringham. With more complete coverage the total would undoubtedly have exceeded 100. Arrivals continued over the next few weeks until the last pronounced influx March 19th–20th, after which there were only odd records of 1–2 birds until April 6th when migration effectively ceased (only a further 8 scattered coastal singles until June 1st). Further high counts during this period included 12 Stiffkey March 6th; 14 Holme, 8 Titchwell/Brancaster, 9 Burnham Norton, 8 Burnham Overy and 7 Cley/Salthouse all on 7th; 16 Holme and 7 Burnham Overy on 20th. This movement seems to have been centred on the north coast with virtually no records from east or west coast sites and overall a minimum of 150–200 birds were involved, far in excess of any published spring figures for previous years. The few inland records for this period seem largely to relate to overwintering birds. Further discussion of this event may be found in *Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin* 10.

The east coast breeding population numbered 6 pairs; a pair was also present in the Stanford Battle Area during the summer but breeding was not proven and an intriguing record of 2 birds at Marsham Heath June 26th.

A reasonably good autumn passage began Sept 13th (Sheringham) and continued steadily, with no obvious peaks, until early Nov. As usual most records were coastal and involved 1–3 birds, but counts of 4 Overy Dunes Oct 17th; 5 Waxham Sands 23rd; 4 Morston Nov 3rd and 5 Overy Dunes on 7th. Inland birds at Pentney GP Oct 9th; Colney GP (2) 15th; Thetford Nunnery Lakes 18th; Wissington BF Nov 5th. In all, a total of c.80 autumn migrants.

The Dec picture was very similar to that of Jan with a wintering population of around 30 birds at the usual coastal and Broadland sites plus other inland singles at Welney on 5th and Cranwich GP on 18th.

### Siberian Stonechat

*S.t.maura/stejnegeri*

Three autumn records: a well-watched male at Cromer Sept 4th–5th (GPH MPL *et al*); Blakeney Point Oct 24th (MPS) and Burnham Overy grazing marshes Nov 4th–7th (RIH MESR). The Cromer visitor led to the discovery of a Booted Warbler and a Wryneck in the same beet field.

Following a BBRC review of recent spring occurrences, the identification of all 3 May/June individuals published in 1992 NBR have been upheld.



## **Wheatear**

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

*reasingly rare migratory breeder and common passage migrant.*

early arrival with the first bird at Cley March 6th; only a few others followed in the next days but widespread from 17th onwards. Highest March counts: 21 Holme 29th; 25 Blakeney Point 30th; 20 Heacham/Hunstanton and 32 Beeston Regis on 31st. The first inland record was from Stanford Battle Area on 11th. Spring migration continued through April and May with obvious influxes April 2nd–6th and 21st–23rd with maximum counts of 21 Holme and 23 Warham Greens April 2nd; 29 Holkham NNR on 6th; 30 Blakeney Point on 15th. Inland records from 10 sites including 6 at Sculthorpe Airfield April 3rd. June singles Holme on 1st and Snettisham 12th, 26th and 30th. Breeding data rather inadequate: 1 male in Stanford Battle Area, but no indication if these were territorial birds or if breeding was attempted.

Autumn records commenced with a juvenile at Titchwell July 19th, similar coastal records occur most years and probably bear no relation to local breeding. A rather thin migration continued through Aug, but numbers improved during Sept when there were moderate falls on 1st–3rd, 15th and 21st. Highest counts: 40 Blakeney Point Sept 1st; 60 Sheringham on 2nd; 40 Holme, 40 Blakeney Point and 40 Sheringham all on 15th; 45 Sheringham, 44 Beeston/East Runton and 50 Winterton on 21st; 80 Blakeney Point on 22nd and 140 Holkham NNR (B. Norton-Wells E. Hills) on 24th. Inland singles at Welney, King's Lynn BF, Wendling and Cantley BF. Only very small numbers during Oct and latest reports Holme Nov 1st–2nd and Salthouse on 5th.

## **Desert Wheatear**

*Oenanthe deserti*

*migrant from North Africa.*

Norfolk's fifth Desert Wheatear was a superb male at Weybourne Nov 5th (PCF *et al*) and located at Salthouse and Cley on 6th. Following on from two in 1993, this creates an exceptional run of records. Will autumn 1995 bring any more?

## **Siberian Thrush**

*Zoothera sibirica*

*migrant from Siberia.*

Beginning with the Red-flanked Bluetail for bird of the year accolade, the dashing first-winter male at Gun Hill on Burnham Overy Dunes Sept 18th was certainly a breathtaking sight for who managed to get there before dark (TC IM AN *et al*). This is an almost mythical team bird and there have been only 4 previous British records, including one seen briefly by the finder only Christmas Day 1977 at Yarmouth.

## **Ring Ouzel**

*Turdus torquatus*

*passage migrant in fluctuating numbers. Exceptional in winter.*

Most early arrivals at Holme, where 2 on March 27th, one the next day and 2 again 29th–30th, but 2 inland at Mundford on 28th. Spring passage continued with almost daily records until May 28th (Holkham NNR), involving a total of c.190 birds. Main influxes April 21st–23rd and 27th–29th. Highest counts 8 Overy Dunes April 21st; 6 Waxham and 7 Holkham Park on 23rd; 8 Holkham NNR on 27th. As usual, most records were coastal, but inland birds noted at Bale (5 on April 24th), Burston, Corpusty, Docking, Edgefield, Hempton, Hickling, Massingham Heath, Postwick, Potter Heigham and Stanford Battle Area.

Autumn passage from Sept 1st (Blakeney Point) involving a total of some 80 individuals. No obvious influxes, but peak numbers recorded in Oct and there were considerably more Nov records than usual with regular reports up to 18th (Holme). Highest counts: 5 Holkham NNR Oct 1st and 5 Cley Nov 4th. Inland: Choseley, Martham, Sprowston.

Swanton Morley, Welney and Wighton.

An exceptionally late individual at Burnham Norton Dec 2nd.

### **Blackbird**

*Turdus merula*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Very few observations submitted for the first few months of the year, but a female nest-building at Attleborough Feb 26th was certainly getting an early start.

Breeding season census data received from Welney where 14 singing males was a considerable drop from 21 last year and from Belmore Plantation (Thorpe) where 20 territories located in 8 ha. of mixed woodland.

Autumn influxes noted on several dates from Oct 17th onwards. Modest arrivals Oct 18th when 180 Holme, 170 Sheringham and Nov 2nd when 300 Holme, 250 Overy Dunes. A much larger one Nov 3rd when thousands in off the sea all day at Hunstanton and Holme; 400 present at Wells Dell; 1500 at Sheringham and 800 in off the sea at Mundesley. Thousands more arrived the next day when movement was also evident inland with several hundred birds heading west over Norwich in the evening. Smaller arrivals noted over the next few days with 750 Holme on the 7th being the highest count.

### **Black-throated Thrush**

*Turdus ruficollis*

*Vagrant from central Asia.*

1993 correction: Initials for the bird at Sheringham Oct 31st should read (DHS).

### **Fieldfare**

*Turdus pilaris*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Very occasional in summer.*

Flocks during first-winter period widespread, but generally small with only a few three figure counts, the largest 320 Stradsett Park in Jan; 650 Holme in Feb and 4500 (in four flocks) Kenninghall/North Lopham, 600 Gallow's Hill (Thetford), 400 Honingham all in March.

Widespread reports in April up to 23rd then a rapid departure, largest count 400 Holme Hale (up to 19th). Very few lingered into May when singles at Felbrigg and Swanton Hill on 2nd; 2 at Burnham Norton on 4th and 1 at Horsey on 16th.

During June and July singles in Breckland at Stanford Battle Area, Grimes Graves and Weeting Heath, usually in association with post-breeding flocks of Mistle Thrushes.

First Autumn arrivals Sept 1st when 2 Holme, 1 Blakeney Point and 2 Sheringham, a steady trickle of birds followed but not really widespread until after Oct 18th. Main influxes Oct 17th–19th and 23rd–24th, counts at this time included 2500 Ludham 16th; 1500–2000 moving through Flitcham on 18th; 1000 Hickling 21st and 2000 Warham Greens 23rd–24th. A further arrival Nov 2nd–3rd was mainly coastal and produced counts of 2000 south Snettisham, 6012 south Hunstanton and 1200 west Holme on 2nd; 952 south Hunstanton, 3500 Sheringham and 1200 in off the sea at Mundesley on 3rd.

At end of the year largest Dec flocks 800 Ranworth Broad; 250 Felbrigg; 200 Kenninghall and a roost of 240 at Horning Marsh Farm.

A leucistic bird at Waxham Oct 22nd.

### **Song Thrush**

*Turdus philomelos*

*Common resident and passage migrant. Recently decreasing.*

At the beginning of this century, Song Thrushes were more abundant than Blackbirds, but recent data from the BTO clearly shows that this is far from the case today and the extent of the decline in Song Thrush breeding numbers (54% between 1969 and 1994) is a cause for serious concern. Regrettably, the very scant breeding data received makes it impossible to





Top left: Barred Warbler, Salthouse, August (*D. Nye*); right: Booted Warbler, Cromer, September (*C. Wilson*). Bottom left: Rustic Bunting, Salthouse, May; right: Shorelark, Waxham, October (both *Chittenden*).







Top left: Greenish Warbler, Wells, September (*R.C. Wilson*); right: Aquatic Warbler, Cley, October (*R. Chittenden*). Bottom: Mercurial Pallas's Warblers; left: Winterton, October (*J. Bhalerao*); right: Colby, November (*K. Elshy*).



cross population trends at county level. Census totals of 4 singing males at Welney (same as last year) and 3 territories in 8 ha. of mixed woodland at Belmore Plantation.

The species' status as a passage migrant is rather better documented. Very light spring movements noted in March and April with maximum counts of 12 Holme April 16th and 10 Yarmouth cemetery on 24th. Numbers in autumn much greater with main falls of continental migrants Sept 25th, Oct 17th–18th and Nov 2nd–3rd. Highest counts 120 Holme 18th; an exceptional 1200 Sheringham and 160 Mundesley Nov 3rd; 150 Holme Nov 11th.

## **Idwling**

*Turdus iliacus*

**Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Exceptional in summer.**

During the first-winter period, three-figure flocks were reported as follows: 150 Felbrigg in Feb; 150 Blickling, 110 Holkham Park and 100 Potter Heigham all in Feb; 200 Holkham Park, 200 West Acre, 120 Thetford Nunnery Lakes and 100 Sugar Fen in March.

Coastal movements again a prominent feature in March, especially on 11th when 400 Snettisham, 1800 west Holme (all-day count) and 300 west (in 1 hr 30 mins) Titchwell. Only a scattering of April records, but still 25 at Stanford Battle Area on the late date of 15th. Last singles Hickling May 6th and Yarmouth cemetery on 16th.

First autumn birds arrived Sept 15th when records from Holme, Wells, Blakeney Point and Repps. This year's main arrivals took place Oct 10th–11th; 16th–19th and Nov 1st–3rd. Highest counts 1200 in off the sea (in 1 hr. at dawn) at Mundesley and 1200 at Adham Oct 16th; 1850 east (all-day count) Holme on 18th; 1000 south Snettisham and 559 south Hunstanton on Nov 2nd and 4000 (all-day count) Sheringham on 3rd. The Nov movement was also evident inland with many birds heard heading south-west over Norwich on the nights of 2nd and 3rd and 410 south-west over Welney on 3rd.

No sizeable flocks reported at the end of the year, largest was 30 at Holkham Park in Dec.

## **Histle Thrush**

*Turdus viscivorus*

**Common resident and partial migrant.**

As usual, the early months of the year produced few reports and a count of 20 in Holkham Park in Jan was the highest received.

Very widespread as a breeding bird in Norfolk and reports of 1–2 pairs were received from a number of localities, it is however considerably under-recorded and more records of breeding concentrations would be welcome. Breckland is a particularly favoured area and during June–Aug post-breeding flocks of c.30 birds were noted at Cockley Cley, Weeting Heath, Grime's Graves, Stanford Battle Area and Barnham Cross Common. Elsewhere, flocks of 40 Fakenham; 33 Honingham and 40 Rockland Broad during the same period.

Coastal movements noted between mid Sept and early Nov, but numbers involved very small. Counts of 24 west Sheringham Oct 16th and 19 west Holme on 12th and 18th were the highest.

The year ended as it began with few reports. Gatherings of 25 at Felbrigg Nov 29th and 10 Holkham Park in Dec.

## **Cetti's Warbler**

*Cettia cetti*

**Broadland breeding population has been established since 1974.**

Broadland totals of singing males recorded at the following sites: River Yare: Cantley 1, Rockland Broad 4, Strumpshaw Fen 9–10, Surlingham Broad 3, Surlingham Marshes 1–3. Over Bure: Ranworth Broad 2, Wroxham Broad 1. River Ant: Barton Broad 1. Also at Whitlingham Lane GP a singing male on 4 dates April 28th–June 5th and a singing male at Titchwell February 7th–June 13th; both considered unmated.

Out of breeding season, singles at the following additional sites: Brundall, Hardley



Flood, How Hill (2), Hickling and Reedham Water.

The county breeding total of 24–27 territorial males continues the small but gradual increase since 1991. Are we seeing a slow recovery after several disappointing years decline?

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Singing males	22	18	19	22	24–27

### Lanceolated Warbler

*Locustella lanceolata*

*Vagrant from Central Russia and Siberia.*

One at Mundesley Sept 21st (JRA PJH *et al*) represents the second county record. It showed very well in late afternoon to a few lucky observers. However, like last year's Sheringham bird it was not present the following morning. Still a major rarity in mainland Britain.

### Grasshopper Warbler

*Locustella naevia*

*Summer visitor and scarce migrant.*

First of the spring at Sidestrand April 7th, but no further records until April 19th when one at Horning Hall. A more widespread influx commenced on 21st when males at several sites.

During the breeding season singing males at Brancaster 1, Broad Fen (Dilham) 1, Burgh Common 5, Catfield 2, Cley 2, Cockshoot Broad 2, Dersingham Reserve 7, Filby Broad 1, Fleggburgh Common 3, Foxley Wood 1, Hickling-Heigham Sounds 7, Holkham NNR 4–5, Horning 4, Horsey-Waxham Sands 3, How Hill 3, Kettlestone Common 2, Lopham/Redgrave Fen 2, Lynn Point 1, Mallow Marsh 3, Martham Broad 5, Potter Heigham 1, Rockland Broad 1, Sculthorpe Fen 2, Sheringham 1, Stanford Battle Area 6, Surlingham Marsh 2, Thompson Common 1, Titchwell 1, Upton Fen 1, Whitlingham 7, Winfarthing 1, Woodbastwick NNR 2 and Wroxham 1.

The increase in breeding season data is most welcome. In Autumn recorded between 1st and 22nd Sept at 5 coastal sites; also a late bird at Sheringham Oct 18th.

### Aquatic Warbler

*Acrocephalus paludicola*

*Autumn vagrant from Eastern Europe.*

Two records: Burnham Overy dunes Sept 17th (MESR *et al*) and a second, more obliging, individual at Cley Oct 11th (JGWH *et al*). The Cley bird showed well allowing many people to see this sought-after county rarity. There are only two other county records since 1977, so two in 1994 was a real treat! The county total reaches 35.

### Sedge Warbler

*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Summer breeder and passage migrant.*

A very early bird Martham Broad March 21st–22nd, followed by others on more usual dates at Strumpshaw Fen April 5th and Hickling on 12th. Then singles at only 6 other sites until April 22nd when noted in many breeding areas. Counts of singing males in Summer: Kettlestone Common 8, Sculthorpe Fen 10, Snettisham RSPB reserve 5, South Lopham Fen 9 and Welney 47 (up from 34 last year).

Few Autumn migrants, with only four noted during Sept including the latest at Nunnery Lakes, Thetford on 25th.

### Marsh Warbler

*Acrocephalus palustris*

*Formerly a vagrant, but a marked increase in records since 1983.*

Four records and typically all singing males in late Spring. In May Winterton on 27th (KJB RFa PC). June records at Holme (GFH NL) and Sheringham (MY-P *et al*) both on 1st, with



ther in Cley Village on 16th (RGM ETM *et al*).

The current trend continues and the county total has now reached 23 records; remarkably have been since 1983.

#### Reed Warbler

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Summer breeder and passage migrant.*

A fairly ordinary April arrival with the first at Cley and Strumpshaw on 23rd, followed next by 2 at Holme and singles at King's Lynn BF and Welney. Numbers remained low until end of April although a small influx on 26th. Counts of singing males included Kettlestone Common 4, Pentney GP 15–20, Sculthorpe Fen 2, South Lopham Fen 6, Thompson Water 2 and Welney 44 (47 last year).

In Autumn, numbers not exceptional except at Sheringham where the site's heaviest passage ever was recorded, including 16 Sept 2nd. Oct records from several sites, the last at Welney on 23rd. Exceptionally late was a bird trapped and ringed at Weybourne Nov 11th.

#### Great Reed Warbler

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

*Migrant from Continental Europe.*

No records: A long-staying and at times obliging singing male at Cley from May 1st–June 27th (TCD HPM *et al*) and a second bird at Rockland Broad May 22nd (DL). There have been 6 county records in the last ten years, for what was once a great rarity. The county total moves to 12. The Cley visitor's stay of 48 days was the second longest ever by this wanderer.

#### Bearded Warbler

*Hippolais caligata*

*Migrant from north-west Russia and across southern Siberia.*

A bird at Cromer September 4th–5th (KBS TW *et al*) was well watched and much appreciated. Only the second county record; the first was at Titchwell Sept 1982.

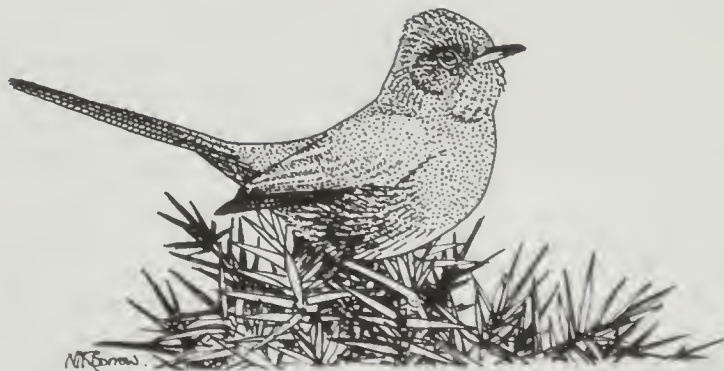
#### Mercurine Warbler

*Hippolais icterina*

*Rare autumn migrant, rare in Spring.*

Two May records, Blakeney Point 20th–21st and another in Wells Dell on 28th.

In autumn a total of 19 records. Singles in Aug at Holme and Winterton on 17th, Sandesley 18th, Salthouse 22nd–23rd, Yarmouth Cemetery 23rd and Sheringham on 31st. In Sept a good showing with one Blakeney Point 1st–3rd and 2 there on 2nd; at Holme 2 on 1st and one remaining to 3rd; at Titchwell one 3rd–5th and 2 there on 3rd. Also on 3rd singles in Holkham Village, Warham Greens and Salthouse. Later in the month singles at Blakeney Point on 15th, Walcott and Keswick on 17th and Waxham on 18th. This bird has appeared annually in spring since 1987; autumn total is highest for a decade.



*Dartford Warbler (N. Borrow)*

### Dartford Warbler

*Sylvia undata*

#### *Vagrant from Britain and Europe.*

In April single males at Weybourne on 26th (MPT JWa) and Winterton 30th (PCa CP *et al*).

In Autumn a bird remained at Winterton Oct 27th to Nov 8th (KJB *et al*).

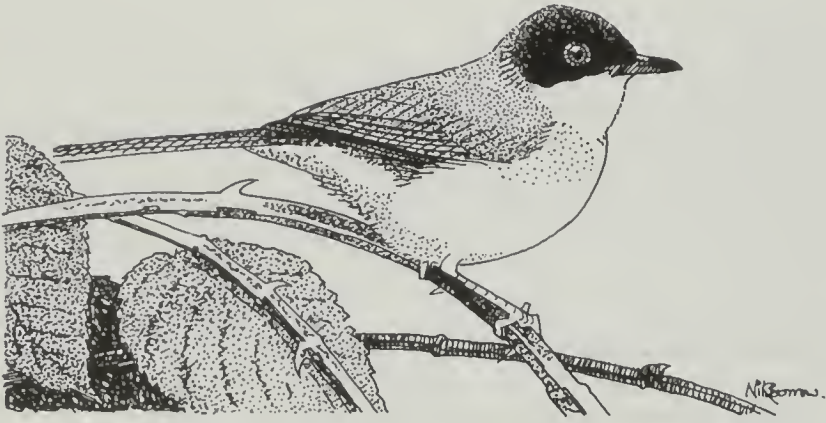
Additional 1990: The records in March/April from Waxham and Cromer were assumed to relate to the same individual, but were in fact different birds. The county total has been adjusted to a present century total of 8 birds.

### Subalpine Warbler

*Sylvia cantillans*

#### *Vagrant from the Mediterranean.*

A record year with 4 males appearing in the last ten days of May. The first on Blakeney Point on 21st (GPB SGK *et al*) and others at Salthouse Heath 24th–26th (DJH *et al*), at Holkham on 31st (MESR RQS) and at Rollesby also on 31st (DPa *et al*). The county total moves to 14.



*Sardinian Warbler (N. Borrow)*

### Sardinian Warbler

*Sylvia melanocephala*

#### *Vagrant from the Mediterranean.*

In April an immaculate male in Burnham Overy dunes on 21st (VE RIH MESR *et al*). Surprisingly it was followed by a first-year male at Holme May 15th–16th (RG *et al*). Both birds showed well and carry the county total to 6. There have been 4 records during the last 4 years.

### Barred Warbler

*Sylvia nisoria*

#### *Scarce autumn migrant, recorded once only in Spring.*

An exceptional autumn, the best for at least 25 years and probably an all-time record with a minimum of 38 birds recorded – nearly half at Holme alone.

In Aug the first single at Holme on 13th followed by 3 others between then and 29th. Singles at Salthouse on 23rd and 26th–29th. Sept saw a major influx from 1st–6th with over 20 birds including following maximum counts: Holme 6 on 3rd, Wells 1 on 2nd, Warham 1 on 4th–6th, Blakeney Point 3 on 1st–2nd, Salthouse 1 on 1st–2nd and 4th–6th, Sheringham 2 on 3rd and 3 on 6th, Waxham 1 on 4th–6th and Winterton 1 on 4th–5th.

Smaller arrivals took place between the 12th–30th with the following at Holme: 1 on 15th, 1 on 17th, 2 on 18th–19th, 1 on 20th, 2 on 22nd and 1 on 26th. Burnham Overy dunes produced 1 on 17th, Sheringham 1 on 18th and 21st and Winterton singles on 12th, 27th and 30th. Oct records of singles came from Holme 9th–10th and 13th, Cley 17th–23rd and Waxham Sands 19th and 23rd–24th.

### Lesser Whitethroat

*Sylvia curruca*

#### Summer breeder and passage migrant.

First of the year was noted at Waxham April 16th, followed by a widespread arrival from March onwards, but no sizeable spring falls. No breeding data received.

In autumn no large numbers, but 3 reports of birds showing distinct characteristics of the northern race *blythi*: 2 at Sheringham September 21st–25th with one remaining until October, another at Holme from Oct 29th–Nov 2nd. Also at Holme a bird of the usual race *curruca* Nov 1st–2nd. In Dec one in Hardley Street from 20th into 1995. This record mirrors that of a bird that spent the winter of 1984–5 frequenting a garden bird-table at Blakeney.

### Whitethroat

*Sylvia communis*

#### Summer breeder and passage migrant.

First arrivals April 21st when singles at Holme, Holkham and Waxham, followed next day by birds at Burnham Overy dunes and Winterton. Maximum count of the spring was 40 at Waxham May 7th. Breeding data included following singing males: Boyland Wood (infarthing) 14, Docking area 95 (within 4 mile radius of village), Sculthorpe Fen 9, Blakeney 14, and 10km square TG33 in north-east Norfolk 75.

In autumn generally small numbers, with highest coastal counts from Holme where 23 on Aug 24th. Sept 1st produced the best daily count when Holme 20, Blakeney Point 14 and Sheringham 30, but only small numbers followed. In October singles at 3 sites including the first at Waxham on 23rd.

### Garden Warbler

*Sylvia borin*

#### Summer breeder and passage migrant.

First appeared on April 23rd at Narborough and Holme, followed by singles at Pott Row on 24th and at Salthouse Heath and Lyng on 25th, with a more widespread arrival from 27th. Breeding data very thin with Sculthorpe Fen producing the highest total of 4 singing males.

In Aug a small coastal fall of 6 at Holme and 13 Sheringham on 13th. Higher numbers in Sept when 50 Holme, 11 Burnham Overy dunes, 20 Blakeney Point and 40 Sheringham all on 2nd. A second arrival on 15th when 30 at Holme, 30 Blakeney Point and 30 Sheringham. Very small numbers in Oct, but three late birds in Nov: Sheringham on 5th, Titchwell on 14th and one trapped and ringed at Weybourne on 16th.

### Blackcap

*Sylvia atricapilla*

#### Summer breeder and passage migrant. Very small number in winter.

First-winter period a total of 37 recorded at 23 sites. Highest counts in Jan (Holme 5 and Norwich 8). Numbers fell in Feb during a spell of colder weather.

First spring migrants from March 25th, but only small numbers until April 23rd when a large and widespread arrival including the highest count of 35 at Holme. In the breeding season a total of 15 singing males in Belmore Plantation, Thorpe St. Andrew and 6 at both Kettlestone Common and Thompson Common.

In autumn only one count over 18 birds when 30 at Overstrand Oct 4th.

In second-winter period total of 30 at 14 sites including highest counts of 5 at Holme and 4 in Norwich during Dec.

### Greenish Warbler

*Phylloscopus trochiloides*

#### Migrant from north-east Europe.

Typical early autumn record from Wells where an obliging example remained Sept 1st–5th (AIB *et al*). The county total advances to 38 (all except 6 of the autumn records fall within the period Aug 20th to Sept 17th).



### Arctic Warbler

*Phylloscopus borealis*

#### *Vagrant from northern Europe.*

A popular bird in Wells Dell Sept 2nd (AIB SJMG *et al*). Observers had a rare opportunity to compare this species and Greenish Warbler just a few hundred yards apart. Recorded for the second year running, but still a great rarity with only 4 records during the last 18 years. The county total reaches 12.

### Pallas's Warbler

*Phylloscopus proregulus*

#### *Vagrant from Siberia.*

A record breaking autumn invasion produced 12 records in two distinct influxes. During Oct recorded on 16th at Stiffkey (RD AMS), Wells Dell 16th–18th (MIE *et al*) with a second bird there on 17th (JRMCC).

A further arrival on 18th when singles at Holme until 19th (GFH NL *et al*), Sheringham to 21st trapped (DHS *et al*), Waxham to 22nd (PKB *et al*) and Winterton to 23rd (BJF *et al*) with a second bird 22nd–23rd (MIE *et al*).

In Nov 4 more singles including 2 inland: Strumpshaw on 3rd (JGB), Weybourne 6th (many observers), Colby 9th trapped (KE) and Weybourne/Sheringham 9th (DAA *et al*).

This influx formed part of a major arrival into Britain. However Norfolk's best year remains 1982 when over 18 recorded. The bird at Colby was a great surprise appearing in a mist-net in the observer's garden. Inland sightings are not unprecedented: one appeared in Norwich in 1971.

### Yellow-browed Warbler

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

#### *Scarce autumn migrant from northern Siberia.*

1994 proved to be an exceptional autumn with at least 52 birds involved. During Sept 14 seen, the first at Holkham on 16th (2 birds) and then recorded there daily until the month-end. Further arrivals Sept 22nd–25th included Holme, Holkham (6), Warham Greens, Stiffkey Greens, Blakeney Point, Waxham (2), Horsey and Winterton; also inland at Stalham Greens on 22nd (PH) and UEA Norwich 29th (NER).

Oct produced 36 birds during the main arrival period extending between 10th and 17th: Holme (6), Titchwell, Holkham (4), Warham Greens (2), Stiffkey (4), Weybourne (5), Sheringham (3), Cromer (4), Trimingham (2), Walcott, Waxham (2) and Yarmouth cemetery (2).

Two late birds in Nov both at East Hills Wells on 4th and 11th.

A remarkable change in status compared with 30 years ago when the county total stood at just a dozen occurrences!

### Dusky Warbler

*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

#### *Vagrant from northern/central Asia.*

Five records equals the previous vintage year of 1990. During Oct at Holkham 17th–21st (MESR *et al*), Waxham 23rd (PJH *et al*) and Wells East hills on 24th (AIB JRMCC). During Nov at Mundesley on 3rd (MF) and Yarmouth cemetery on 6th (PRA).

The county total advances to 27. Norfolk can claim more records than any other county.

### Bonelli's Warbler

*Phylloscopus bonelli*

#### *Vagrant from southern Europe.*

A single trapped at Sheringham Sept 3rd and again on 6th, was not seen between these two dates (MPL KBS MY-P *et al*). First record since one at Wells in 1989. This year's bird was of the race *bonelli* and constitutes the ninth county record.

## Wood Warbler

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

*Early summer breeder and passage migrant.*

First of the year appeared April 22nd at Cley, followed on 28th by a single at Holme and 2 at Beeston Regis. Further birds appeared on 30th at Yarmouth cemetery with 3 at Beeston Common/Sheringham. Between May 1st and 16th a total of 15 at coastal and inland sites: Beeston, Glandford, Yarmouth cemetery (2), Happisburgh, Holkham Meads, Holme, Herring, Salhouse Heath, Sheringham, South Raynham, Swanton Novers, Sutton Staithe and Winterton.

No breeding data received, although some of the above sites doubtless held nesting pairs. In August, migration first noted on 3rd when one in Yarmouth cemetery; this site produced no less than 5 individuals in first half of the month. Other records from Holme, Wells Dell 15th and 22nd, Blakeney Point 20th, Titchwell and Winterton on 25th.

Sept records from Yarmouth cemetery on 3rd, Wells Dell (2) 3rd–5th, Holme 17th–18th and 13 at Holkham/Wells and one at Walcott on 18th.

## Whiffchaff

*Phylloscopus collybita*

*Common summer breeder and passage migrant. A few winter.*

First-winter period a minimum of 16 birds recorded at Breydon, Burgh Common, Cley, Herringham, Yarmouth cemetery (3), Horning, Holkham, North Walsham, Norwich (4), Salhouse and Winterton.

During March a further 10 records, both inland and coastal, until the 27th when a widespread influx commenced. Marked coastal movements continued into first half of April with maximum count of 40 at Holkham.

Only breeding information concerned 16 territories in 8 hectares of mixed woodland at Belmore Plantation, Thorpe St. Andrew.

In Autumn only small numbers involved. Only double figure counts in Sept from Holme (10 on the 15th) and Holkham (20 on the 25th). During Oct and first half of Nov single figure numbers at many coastal and a few inland sites.

Birds showing characteristics of the race *abietinus* in Sept at Holkham on 18th and 24th, 2 at Sheringham on 21st.

Two birds of the race *tristis* recorded: one in Norwich from Sept 28th–October 1st (JGB) with another at Sheringham Nov 4th, where a bird was trapped and photographed (DHS & BBS).

Eighteen recorded during second-winter period, as follows: Burgh Castle, Cantley BF (1), Great Bircham, Hickling, Holkham (3), Holme, Horning, Postwick, Sheringham (3), Thetford and Winterton. See page 364.

## Willow Warbler

*Phylloscopus trochilus*

*Abundant summer breeder and passage migrant.*

First of the year Thetford March 25th followed by additional March records at Pentney GP 29th, Yarmouth and Barnham Cross Common 30th and Winterton 31st. Slow increase during April with more general influx between 20th and 24th. Highest counts included 75 at Holme 23rd and 20 at Blakeney Point 24th.

Little breeding data received, but a CBC at Belmore Plantation, Thorpe St. Andrew, revealed 11 territories in 8 ha. of mixed woodland.

Small influx Aug 12th when 20 at Sheringham followed on 23rd with 25 at Blakeney Point and 25 at Sheringham. Next day 50 in Wells Dell. Maximum Sept counts: 20 at Holme 1st and 5th, 22 at Sheringham 3rd and 20 at Blakeney Point 15th. During Oct at 7 coastal sites with highest at Holkham on 17th. Two birds appeared in Nov: Blakeney Point 3rd and Winterton next day.

## Goldcrest

*Regulus regulus*

**Resident breeder and passage migrant. Often abundant in autumn.**

Usual early and light spring passage peaked March 27th when 25 at Holme, with smaller numbers at other coastal sites.

In autumn numbers increased from late Sept. Largest fall Oct 17th when coastal counts included 150 at Holme, 400–500 Holkham/Wells, 70 Stiffkey, 50 Blakeney Point and 100 Sheringham. Smaller falls occurred during first ten days of Nov including 50 at Sheringham on 4th and 50 at Holme on 6th.

## Firecrest

*Regulus ignicapillus*

**Spring and autumn passage migrant. Rare in winter. Occasional breeder.**

A bumper year including 3 in winter: Wells Dell Jan 8th, West Tofts Jan 17th to Feb 10th and Winterton Feb 19th.

First spring migrant at Overstrand March 3rd followed by 39+ to the month-end. Highest counts 8 Holkham/Wells and 3 Sidestrand – both coinciding with late March peak. During April total of 18 arrived including maximum of 5 Holme on 3rd. May total of a further 15 followed by a late and exceptional influx at Holkham-Wells 28th to 30th when 2 pairs and 4–5 singing males arrived. Final spring total at least 72 birds; most coastal sites managed at least one.

A pair at Wells fledged 5 young with a second solitary male present. A second pair fledged 4 young at another north Norfolk locality. In addition another singing male at Sandringham June 13th.

Autumn passage extended from Sept 3rd to Nov 25th with over 42 birds recorded. Monthly totals included 9 Sept, 20–23 Oct and 13 Nov. Most observations on coast, but 5 well inland. Two arrived at Lynford Arboretum Nov 26th remaining until year-end. Only other Dec record Salthouse Heath on 6th.

## Spotted Flycatcher

*Muscicapa striata*

**Migratory breeder and passage migrant.**

Always one of the latest summer migrants, this year saw the first April records since 1988 with the first at Brundall on 26th followed by others at Horsey on 28th; Holme 29th–30th; Yarmouth cemetery and Winterton 30th. Overall spring passage disappointing with no coastal counts exceeding 4 birds.

Breeding information received involved 3 pairs at Welney; 4 prs. Burnham Norton; 5 prs. Sheringham; 8 prs. RAF Marham and single pairs at Dereham and Narborough.

Autumn migrants appeared at coastal sites from mid-Aug, but only in small numbers except for 20 at Yarmouth on 12th. Highest Sept counts were at Holme where 10 on 15th and 11 on 18th. Inland, Thetford Nunnery Lakes recorded 14 on Aug 18th and 10 on Sept 13th. The last record of the year is from Yarmouth cemetery Oct 12th.

## Red-breasted Flycatcher

*Ficedula parva*

**Rare autumn migrant. Vagrant in spring.**

A spring record of a first-year male at Blakeney Point May 21st.

Autumn produced the best showing since 1989 but all in Sept. All records are given: Holkham/Wells pines on 15th–17th; Waxham 18th; Sheringham (2) on 21st–22nd; Salthouse 22nd; Blakeney Point 22nd; Cley 23rd; Holkham 23rd and Blakeney Point 25th: 9 birds in total.



### Id Flycatcher

*Ficedula hypoleuca*

*Passage migrant, scarce in spring, abundant at times in autumn. Has bred.*

Reasonable spring passage, with c.25 birds recorded, started April 23rd with 2 at Holme and one at Blakeney Point and continued until May 29th (Holkham) with most records being May 11th–15th. Birds reported from 10 coastal sites from Snettisham round to Cromer mouth, all involving 1–2 individuals.

An unusual inland record from Breckland where a singing male from May 30th until June 3rd.

Autumn passage opened with an early bird at Sheringham Aug 2nd, but only a few followed until the first real influx on 23rd when counts included 12 Holme; 10 Wells dell; 10 Blakeney Point. Sept saw 3 good arrivals. The first on 1st–3rd produced counts of 30 Holme; 65 Holkham NNR (Overly Dunes-Wells E. Hills); 15 Blakeney Point; 15 Sheringham and 11 at Mundesley. The second was on 15th–18th when there were 38 at Holme; 20 Holkham NNR and 15 Blakeney Point and the third on 21st–22nd when 17 Holme; 30 Holkham NNR and 10 Warham Greens. This last influx produced inland birds at Bedford Nunnery on 22nd and Norwich on 24th. The few Oct records included one inland at Ludham on 11th and the last bird was on Blakeney Point on 20th. An autumn total of 300–500 individuals reported.

### Red-tailed Tit

*Panurus biarmicus*

*Resident and partial migrant. Periodic influxes from the Low countries.*

Now recorded during first-winter period, small numbers at just seven sites. Highest count 6 at Woodbastwick in Jan.

Pairs recorded breeding at Titchwell 9–10; Holkham NNR 6; Blakeney Freshes 1–3; Althouse 1+; Horsey 5; Hickling Broad complex 33; Martham Brd 8 and Strumpshaw Fen 3. No data received from Cley or How Hill.

Larger numbers and more widespread in the autumn after dispersal from breeding sites. Max counts in Oct when 8 Holme; 42 Titchwell; 10 Burnham Overly; 25 Cley; 8 west of Cleybourne 4th; 10 Horsey Gap; 5 How Hill; 10 Martham Broad and 40 Strumpshaw Fen. During this time also recorded in the Fens at Welney where 3 on 18th and 2 on 20th.

During Nov and Dec still only a handful present at seven sites, maximum 10 Horning Marsh Farm Nov 25th and 10 Surlingham Dec.

Considering the recent succession of mild winters, numbers of breeding and wintering birds remain worryingly low especially at traditional sites. Large numbers moving through coastal sites in the autumn also seems to be a thing of the past. Under a 100 pairs now breed within the county; it is hard to imagine that at Hickling alone in the mid-eighties 142 pairs bred.

### Long-tailed Tit

*Aegithalos caudatus*

*Common resident breeder, Scandinavian white-headed caudatus very occasional in autumn.*

Following a request in the local press in the opening months of the year for details of Siskins visiting gardeners' gardens, Long-tailed Tits were also recorded feeding on peanuts, in many instances for the first time. Most observations were of groups of up to eight birds, but larger groups of 15 and 16 also put in appearances. Other food items included Christmas puddings, suet/coconut cakes, and in one instance a chicken carcass which attracted 10 birds at Framingham Earl. Records came from 102 gardens at the following localities. Aldborough, Alington, Antingham, Ashwellthorpe, Aylsham, Beetley, Blofield, Brancaster Staithe, Briston, Brundall, Buxton, Burgh Castle, Caister-on-Sea, Caistor, Coltishall, Cromer, Dereham, Dersingham, Diss, Downham Market, Drayton, East Harling, East Tuddenham, Eaton, Fakenham, Framingham Earl, Fornsett St Peter, Frettenham, Gressenhall, Hainford, Heacham, Hedgesdon, Hempton, Hethersett, High Kelling, Hingham, Holme, Horsford, Horstead, Hoveton, Martham, Mattishall, Mulbarton, Necton, New Costessey, Newton St Faiths, North Walsham, Norwich.

Old Catton, Old Costessey, Ovington, Pensthorpe, Pulham St Mary, Reepham, Roughton, Seething, Sheringham, South Wootton, Sprowston, Stoke Holy Cross, St Olaves, Strumpshaw, Swainsthorpe, Swanton Novers, Taverham, Thetford, Thorpe St Andrew, West Earlham, West Runcton and Wroxham.

Only breeding data received was from CBC site at Belmore Plantation a 8ha mixed woodland where three territories. Nationally, B.T.O. CBC data for 1994 showed significant increases of 27% in woodland and 10% in farmland.

Some evidence of coastal movement in Oct when 30 in off sea Holme 15th, 50 east Titchwell 9th and 30 west Bacton 19th.

### **Marsh Tit**

*Parus palustris*

#### ***Common breeding resident.***

Probably a widespread resident breeding in most woodlands, but typically little data submitted. During the breeding season recorded at the following sites; Felbrigg, Holkham Pines, Holme Hale, Litcham, Sheringham Park, Swaffham Forest, Swanton Novers Great wood and Tottenhill GP. The recent B.T.O. breeding Atlas revealed a 17% national decline; a request for more information would seem timely.

### **Willow Tit**

*Parus montanus*

#### ***Breeding resident, possibly in decline.***

During the year recorded at 56 sites. As this is a largely sedentary species remaining in breeding territories all-year most records probably relate to breeding birds. One or two territories recorded at the following sites during the breeding season: Abbey Heath, Alderford Common, Barnham Cross Common, Beeston Common, Blickling, Boylands Wood, Crome's Broad, East Harling Fen, Fleggburgh Common, Hickling, How Hill, Irstead, Lenwade, Rockland St Mary, Sculthorpe Fen, Sheringham Wood, Santon Downham, Thetford Nunnery, Thompson Common, Upton Fen, Wayland Wood, West Acre and Wroxham Broad.

### **Coal Tit**

*Parus ater*

#### ***Common resident and occasional passage migrant.***

Spring coastal movement in last week of March when 12 at Holme on 27th. Singles at Welney April 24th and July 1st were both unusual for the site. Only breeding data received for the county was from Belmore Plantation an 8ha mixed woodland with three territories.

### **Blue Tit**

*Parus caeruleus*

#### ***Common resident and passage migrant.***

Typically very few records submitted. Small numbers of coastal migrants in spring when 11 west Sheringham March 18th. Breeding data from Belmore Plantation with 15 territories and Welney with three. Movements noted at coastal sites in autumn especially in Oct when at Holme 45 on 11th and Holkham 12 west on 10th and 8 west on 11th.

### **Great Tit**

*Parus major*

#### ***Common resident and occasional passage migrant.***

A much stronger spring passage than normal noted at most coastal sites during March, especially on 18th when 161 west Holme and 32 west Sheringham, and on 27th when 153 west Holme and 25 west Overy Duncs. Breeding data from CBC plot at Belmore Plantation where 11 territories. Some coastal movement in autumn when 25 in Oct at Holme and 8 south at Hunstanton Cliffs Nov 2nd.

### **Thatch**

*Sitta europaea*

#### **ident.**

useful records submitted, but presumably still a locally common woodland bird. However, declines noted in the Hethersett area where one observer stated it was seen much less frequently in 1994 and from Holkham Park where a recent decline has been attributed to the removal of large numbers of old trees.

### **Tree Creeper**

*Certhia familiaris*

#### **Widespread woodland resident.**

records of any value received but there is no reason to suspect any recent change in status.

### **Golden Oriole**

*Oriolus oriolus*

#### **Long-distance migratory breeder in small numbers and passage migrant.**

An exceptionally early spring migrant at Strumpshaw April 11th. Usual scattering of coastal migrants in May, most between 21st and 25th. At Holme 2 singing males in the pines for several hours on 21st before flying inland, a singing male at Thornham on 24th, with a bird at Titchwell 21st, a female Blakeney Point 24th, singles at Kelling triangle on 12th and 14th, and Cromer GC on 22nd. A single June record from Winterton where a male on 8th. Three further singing males were also noted on 3 dates from 3 sites in the Brecks during May and June.

Breeding information for the county is supplied by the Golden Oriole Group: "Six pairs definitely bred, 3 probably bred and a bird or birds present in suitable habitat at 7 other sites. Breeding success very poor due to bad weather at a critical time".

### **Red-backed Shrike**

*Lanius collurio*

#### **Passage migrant in small numbers. Last bred 1989.**

Spring passage: a total of 13 birds involved with a peak during the last week in May. A singing male Titchwell May 14th; Cley May 21st; male Overy dunes May 24th joined by a female on 25th both remaining to 28th with an additional male May 27th–29th; male Weston Regis May 25th; male Waxham May 27th; female inland at Hindringham May 28th. Then a male at Cromer; female between Brancaster and Docking May 29th; another female Winterton May 30th; male Sheringham June 2nd and another male between Wighton and Waxham June 11th.

A good number of autumn drift-migrants: Salthouse Sep 1st; a well-watched bird at Brancaster Sep 1st–21st; Hunstanton GC Sep 3rd and Oct 23rd–29th; 2 Mundesley Sep 1st–4th; Warham Greens and Sea Palling both Sep 5th–6th; Blakeney Point Sep 15th; Holkham Sep 17th–18th; Morston Sep 21st–22nd; Overy dunes Sep 23rd–25th; inland at Cley Sep 26th–27th; Blakeney Freshes Sep 30th and Sheringham Oct 8th–9th.

### **Lesser Grey Shrike**

*Lanius minor*

#### **Passage migrant from south-east Europe.**

First-winter bird hunted the hedgerows and crop-margins at Sheringham Sep 16th–17th (OPA KBS *et al*). The eighteenth county record.

### **Treat Grey Shrike**

*Lanius excubitor*

#### **Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The days when this pallid hunter could be relied upon to brighten a winter day appear to have passed. Very few now over-winter. However, both spring and autumn can still provide opportunities.

In first-winter period Snettisham CP Jan 5th; Briston late Jan–mid Mar and Grime's Graves from at least Feb 19th–Mar 29th.



Spring migrants: Beeston Common Mar 26th; Winterton 27th–28th; RAF Marham 27th–29th; Roughton 27th–30th; Breydon Apr 5th; Scolt Head 9th and Shammer 23rd.

In autumn, Horsey Sept 22nd–23rd followed by an influx during Oct when singles Weybourne/Sheringham 11th–12th (trapped and ringed at former site on 11th); Overy dunes 16th; Holme 16th–17th; Blakeney Point, Warham Greens and Beeston Regis Common all 17th; Snettisham 18th; Winterton 19th with another there Nov 5th.

In second-winter period one briefly at Holme marsh before flying west Dec 6th.

### Woodchat Shrike

*Lanius senator*

*Vagrant from southern Europe, mostly in spring.*

A male on the saltmarsh and hedgerows at Stiffkey May 31st (DH SH).

### Jay

*Garrulus glandarius*

*Common resident. Period influxes from continent following failure in acorn crop.*

Following last autumn's influx, a return movement evident at most coastal sites from last week in April to end of May. In April maximum counts 9 west Cley 27th; 6 west Holme, 19 west Beeston 29th and 13 Horsey Gap 30th. In May 9 east Cromer GC and 6 east Sidestrand 6th; 13 north Waxham 8th; 16 west Holme 22nd; 10 west Mundesley 23rd and 15 Waxham and 22 Horsey on 28th.

Breeding data from Belmore Plantation where three territories in a 8ha mixed woodland.

Continental migrants recorded at most coastal sites during Oct.

Highest counts 14 in off sea Holme 12th; 11 east Brancaster 17th; 15 east Morston 11th, and 14 in off sea Cromer 10th.

### Magpie

*Pica pica*

*Common resident forming winter roosts.*

Roost counts in Jan and Feb: 45+ Roydon Common and 75–100 Lopham Fen. More details needed.

### Jackdaw

*Corvus monedula*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Roost counts received from Welney: 120 Feb, 400 Sept, 300 Oct, 125 Nov and 400 Dec; and Taverham Hall: 180 Feb. Large flocks noted at Attlebridge: 450 Jan. In Nov 400 Holkham Park and 300 Northrepps.

Spring passage at most coastal sites from late Feb. Maximum counts 35 west Holme March 7th and 78 east Mundesley April 23rd. No breeding data received. Autumn coastal passage from late Sept (when at Holme 32 east Sept 23rd and 59 in off the sea 17th) to Nov when 82 south Hunstanton Cliffs 2nd.

### Rook

*Corvus frugilegus*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

In first-winter period roost counts of several thousand Seamere (Hingham) and 3300 Taverham Hall. Only small numbers of coastal migrants in spring, maximum count 21 Holme April 22nd.

A partial census of Rookeries was organised by M.J. Seago, after a number of sites in a three-mile radius around Norwich proved to have been abandoned since a survey in 1971. A more comprehensive survey is planned for 1995. 87 rookeries were found producing a total of 2356 nests. Ten sites held over a hundred nests, the largest were Reedham Marshes 406, Hethersett 269, Lenwade 227, Old Buckenham 205 and Taverham Church 160+. A comprehensive list is published in *Norfolk Bird Club* bulletin number 12.

small numbers of migrants in Autumn when at Holme 37 east Sept 22nd and 34 west 11th; at Hunstanton Cliffs in Nov 33 south on 2nd and 32 south on 3rd. Largest roosts second winter period: 5000 Worham (nr. Bressingham) and several thousand Seamere Ponds, with a pre-roost gathering of 8000 at Strumpshaw Hill Nov 20th.

### **Common Crow**

*Corvus corone*

*Increasing resident forming winter roosts; also passage migrant.*

Opening months of the year roost counts from Roydon 352, Docking 50 in Jan and Wey 55 in Feb. No breeding information received but B.T.O. CBC data has shown a seasonal 50% increase between 1984 and 1994. Coastal spring migration in March/April, numbers small; maximum 31 west Holme April 22nd.

In autumn, movement only noted at Snettisham where 30 south Nov 2nd. Maximum roost counts in Nov and Dec from Welney 80, Docking 135, Grimstone Warren 135 and Somerfield 40. At Titchwell in Nov one seen to kill and eat a Lapwing.

**Hooded Crow** *C.c.cornix* Much scarcer nowadays. In the first-winter period maximum 4 at Horsey/Waxham, with ones and twos at Snettisham, Docking, Brancaster Staithe, Somerham Norton, Stiffkey/Cockthorpe, Felbrigg, Hickling, Burgh Castle and Hopton. At Burgh Castle a hybrid Feb 7th.

Spring passage March 20th to May 2nd, with a max of three west Holme April 23rd and two at Titchwell, Overy Dunes, Sheringham, Cromer, Paston, Horsey, Waxham, Winterton, Hickling and East Harling; most records falling between April 20th and 23rd.

First of autumn at Waxham on Oct 9th with 3 at Kelling on 28th and 1-2 at Snettisham, Holme, Sheringham, Waxham and Aldeby. Only a handful remained at year-end with ones and twos at Stiffkey, Morston, Blakeney/Cley, Waxham, Winterton and Aldeby.

### **Common Raven**

*Corvus corax*

*Former breeder, now a rare migrant/escape.*

The bird present since Nov 1993 remained in the Horsey/Waxham area till at least Feb 27th. During its stay the bird wandered over a large area being seen at Winterton Jan 4th, Stalham and Martham on 29th.

In spring at Sparham May 25th (CS) and Breydon June 4th (PRA), both records probably relate to the same bird and considering the dates are of suspect origin.

Another at Strumpshaw Oct 19th (AWR).

### **Common Starling**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

*Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Good spring movements at coastal sites especially March 27th when 2700 west and 700 east Sheringham and 4200 east Paston. Early nesting at Attleborough where a pair building by 24th. Post-breeding movements commenced mid-June with highest counts 2000 east Holme 28th and 1800 west next day. Large autumn roosts noted during Sept and Oct: 8000 Burdley Flood; 12,500 RAF Marham and 10,000 Holme.

Coastal passage in autumn peaked in first few days of Nov; on 3rd an impressive 80,000 south Hunstanton Cliffs (all day); 1440 west Overy Dunes (0840-1140hrs); 6000 west Sheringham (all day), and 4000 in off sea Paston. On 4th 20,640 south Hunstanton Cliffs in first two hours from dawn, and 3700 west Sheringham (all day). During Nov and Dec 10,000 roosted at Thompson Water.

### **Rose-coloured Starling**

*Sturnus roseus*

*Eastern European vagrant.*

Two records during June: an adult at Winterton village from early morning on 7th showed well until early afternoon before flying north (PCa *et al*). An adult present in a garden at Sea

Palling on 9th may be the same bird (PGM). There have been 26 previous county records the last at Stalham in June 1987.

From early May eastern Europe received an overdue and classic invasion.

### **House Sparrow**

*Passer domesticus*

#### ***Common resident.***

BTO Common Bird Census data has shown an overall national decline of 20% during 1984-94. Impressions of a local decline have been noted by several observers, but we trust the species is not as scarce as the total of just 5 records received for 1994 might suggest.

Counts of 55 Welney in April; 90 Sheringham and 65 Holme in Aug.

### **Tree Sparrow**

*Passer montanus*

#### ***Declining resident. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.***

A good number of flocks located at the start of the year, with maximum counts of 60 Stow Bardolph, 70 Gateley and 50 Frans Green in Jan; 80 Lyng and 44 Ringland Hills in Feb.

Spring migration on the coast in March and April almost negligible.

Breeding reported from only 15 localities with a maximum of c.15 pairs at one site. A few coastal migrants in Sept and Oct. highest counts 9 Sheringham Sept 8th; 7 east Holme 22nd and 8 east Holme Oct 17th.

Far fewer flocks in second-winter period. Counts of 40 The Arms Tottington in Sept; 40 Ringland in Nov; 40 Choseley and 30 Ringland in Dec were the highest.

Tree Sparrows seem to have virtually disappeared from east Norfolk where 4 Somerton June 8th and 1 Ludham Dec 26th the only records.

### **Chaffinch**

*Fringilla coelebs*

#### ***Common resident. Also passage migrant and winter visitor in varying numbers.***

Wintering flock sizes generally low in both winter periods, with maximum counts of only 200 Sennowe Park in Feb and 300 New Holkham Sept 9th.

Spring passage movements noted on a few dates with maximum counts 560 east Paston March 27th and 88 east Paston April 24th.

Autumn passage from Sept 19th with highest counts 130 east Holme Sept 26th (all-day count); 620 east Holme Oct 18th (all-day count); 800 south (in 1 hr.) Snettisham Oct 19th. An excellent series of late autumn observations from Hunstanton where 650 south (in 1½ hrs.) Oct 26th; 1972 south (all-day count) Nov 2nd; 940 south 3rd and 432 south (in 2 hrs.) on 4th.

### **Brambling**

*Fringilla montifringilla*

#### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor in highly variable numbers.***

Widespread flocks of up to 200 in first-winter period. Highest counts included 1500 Binham, 1000 Holt in Jan; 1200 Mundford, 1000 Binham Feb; 280 Honingham, 300 Sharrington in March and 350 Stibbard April.

Light spring passage at coastal sites. Latest were 2 Walsey Hills May 22nd and a female at Terrington St. Clements throughout May until 25th when found dead.

First autumn migrant Holme Sept 18th: main movements Oct 10th-12th, 17th-19th and Nov 2nd-4th with largest numbers 300 Holkham and 95 east Holme Oct 18th; 100+ south Snettisham 19th; 150 south Snettisham 24th and 146 south Hunstanton Nov 3rd. Widespread in small numbers in second-winter period. Only flocks exceeding 100 were 200+ Thetford Nunnery Lakes Nov 11th; 200 Ickburgh Dec and 120 Pentney GP Dec 18th.



*Serinus serinus*

*grant from continental Europe.*

See typical late spring records: Bacton May 21st (MF); Weybourne on 30th (MJP MDR),  
a male at the west end of Holkham pines June 13th (VE MESR).

## Greenfinch

*Carduelis chloris*

*Common resident and passage migrant.*

greatest winter flocks: 600 Magdalen Jan/Feb; 200 Booton, 200 Bingham, 180 Horstead, 150 Sissington all in Jan; 150 Welney Feb/March; 130 Holkham, 200 Lynn Point in Sept and 100 Narford Nov.

Light spring passage at coastal sites in March. Impressive autumn movements with maximum counts of 115 west Holme Oct 8th; 200 south (in 1½ hrs.) Hunstanton on 10th; 100 east Holme and 90 east Sheringham (both all-day counts) on 18th and 213 south (all-day count) Hunstanton Nov 2nd.

## Goldfinch

*Carduelis carduelis*

*Common resident, passage migrant and summer visitor.*

me good flocks in first-winter period. Largest counts: 200 Kenninghall and 180  
 ssington in Jan; 120 Magdalen and 200 Wells Jan/Feb; 150 Northwold in Feb and 100  
 elney March.

Spring passage most marked in late April when 70 west Overy Dunes and 270 west, 20 east (all-day count), Sheringham on 21st; 150 west (all-day count) Holme on 22nd; 160 east on 24th and 200 west (all-day count) Holme on 29th.

Autumn gatherings of 250 Lynn Point and 200 Holme in Aug; 147 Snettisham in Oct. towards end of the year numbers low. No Nov or Dec counts in excess of 100 birds.

## skin

*Carduelis spinus*

passage migrant and winter visitor in fluctuating numbers. Small numbers breed.

Amazingly, last autumn's widespread influx continued into 1994 with coastal migration noted in Feb. Largest movements 65 west Sheringham Jan 3rd; 60 west Holme and 45 west Sheringham on 15th. Numerous inland parties and flocks of up to 60 throughout the county. Larger flocks of 100 Sugar Fen in Jan–March; 95 Roydon in Jan and 80 Crome's Broad in March. Small numbers noted on peanut feeders in gardens from mid-Jan, increasing through Feb and March, then numbers dropping rapidly from mid-April to virtually none after 21st. Daily numbers in gardens were generally only up to c.12 at any one time and rarely over 20. At one Sheringham garden a total of 576 individuals ringed during the period Feb–April. At Garboldisham one observer ringed 717 individuals with another ringing a further 65 birds.

A request for information by M.J. Seago in the local press produced observations of Siskins feeding peanuts in 156 gardens at the following localities:

Attleborough: Alington; Acle; Aylsham; Beechamwell; Beetley; Blofield Heath; Blofield; Bixby; Buxton; Blakeney; Barnham Broom; Bowthorpe; Brundall; Belton; Bradwell; Brooke; Cromer; Cawston; Chedgrave; Caister on Sea; Colkirk; Coltishall; Corpusty; Downham Market; Easingham; Diss; Drayton; Ditchingham; Easton; East Harling; Eaton; East Ruston; Framingham Earl; Gillingham; Great Plumstead; Garboldisham; Great Hockham; Hickling; Hevingham; Harleston; Herring Road; Heacham; Holme; Hingham; Hainford; High Kelling; Hellesdon; Hunstanton; Horsford; Hoveton St. John; Hethersett; Holt; Horstead; King's Lynn; Larling; Little Snoring; Little Plumstead; Loddon; Ludham; Loddon; Norwich; New Costessey; Necton; North Walsham; New Buckenham; New Wootton St. Faith; Old Catton; Old Costessey; Poringland; Reepham; Stoke Holy Cross; Surlingham; Swanton; Trowse; South Wootton; Southrepps; Sheringham; Sloley; Shotesham; Spixworth; Swanton Morley; Thetford; Tibbard; Saxlingham Nethergate; South Walsham; Swaffham; Saxthorpe; Stratton Strawless; Taverham; Thetford; Thorpe St. Andrew; Thorpe Marriott; Toftwood; West Runton; Watton; Wicklewood; Wroxham; West Acre; Wells; Watton; West Earlham; Worstead; Yelverton and Yarmouth.

Departing migrants at coastal localities from late March, with stragglers until late May. Highest counts 65 east Paston March 25th; 35 west Sheringham and 29 west Holkham April 20th; 49 west Holkham on 22nd.

During May–July odd coastal migrants noted on a few dates and counts of 1–7 birds at a variety of mainly Broadland and Breckland sites. Disappointingly, the only records suggesting breeding were a singing male at one site and a single bird at another, both in the Brecks and a ‘recently fledged’ juv at Wells pines July 21st.

Autumn coastal migrants from Sept 11th (Winterton) until Nov 26th (Holme), but numbers generally low with few counts exceeding 30. Best days Oct 23rd when 75 west Holme (all-day count), 30 west Sheringham (all-day) and Nov 2nd when 79 south Hunstanton, 17 west Holme, 20 west, 3 east, Overy Dunes and 15 south Winterton.

Flocks again built up in the second-winter period at many widespread inland sites. Peak counts of 130 Swangey GP in Sept; 120 Reedham Marsh (How Hill) in Oct and 200 Ickburgh, 120 Surlingham Church Marsh, 100 West Acre all in Dec.

See page 370.

## Linnet

*Carduelis cannabina*

### *Common resident and passage migrant.*

Early winter flocks of 150 Beeston Regis Common, 200 Binham and 500 Flitcham in Jan; 120 West Acre in Feb.

Coastal movements from mid-March until late April with counts of 240 east Paston March 27th; 360 west Sheringham (all-day count) on 29th; 500 west Holme (all-day), 250 west Overy Dunes and 750 west Sheringham (all-day) April 21st; 350 south (in 2¼ hrs.) Waxham Sands on 23rd and 830 east Paston on 24th. Also in April flocks of 200 West Acre; 500 Snettisham; 150 Roughton; 160 Waxham Sands.

Summer flocks of 200 Holme May 29th and 200 between Wisbech and Emneth June 23rd. Limited autumn coastal movement only really obvious at Holme where 85 west Oct 22nd, 80 west on 8th and at Hunstanton where 137 south Nov 2nd (all were all-day counts). Second-winter period flocks include 800 Weybourne in Nov; 300 Choseley Nov/Dec and 200 Beeston Regis Common Dec.

## Twite

*Carduelis flavirostris*

### *Local winter visitor.*

A co-ordinated count organised by *Norfolk Bird Club* covering the whole saltmarsh coastline Jan 23rd located just six flocks containing a total of 298 birds, confirming impressions of a decline since the 1980s. Current colour-ringing studies also show that there is frequent movement between sites.

Recorded to April 23rd (Admiralty Point) and from Sept 25th when 25 at Scolt Head. Some migration noted with counts of 2–7 at Eccles, Happisburgh, Horsey and Sheringham and larger movements of 16 west Sheringham Oct 14th; 105 west Holme Nov 6th.

A slight increase in numbers during the second-winter period, with an estimated total of 500 along the Holme-Holkham coast in Nov. On the east coast the maximum count at Breydon was only 9 in Nov.

Inland: 6 Pentney GP Feb 1st; 1 Choseley on 26th and 1 King's Lynn BF on Oct 9th.

## Redpoll

*Carduelis flammea*

### *Passage migrant, winter visitor and declining resident. C.f. flammea scarce in winter.*

Extremely scarce throughout the year. Few winter flocks exceeded 20. Highest counts 90 Pentney GP in Nov and 45 Barton Staithe, 120 Woodbastwick NNR in Dec.

Spring and autumn passages both unremarkable, best counts 38 west Holme Nov 14th and 35 west there on 18th.





Over a third of the national acreage of sugar-beet is grown in Norfolk. After harvesting in the north-west region of the county the discarded tops and any unlifted roots attract great numbers of Pink-footed Geese. Especially at morning and evening flight the battalions provide a splendid spectacle (A. Bloomfield).







Mediterranean Gulls at Overstrand; a regular locality (*J. Bhalerao*).



The very few breeding season records seem to indicate a huge decrease in the county breeding population: 1–3 pairs recorded at only 6 sites, with singing males at a further 8. *All 1995 breeding records are requested.*

**Mealy Redpoll** *C.f.flammea*: Again very scarce, 1–2 on several dates Oct 16th–Nov 1st at Holme, Holkham, Wells Dell and Wells East Hills with higher counts of 7 Wells Dell Oct 18th and 5 there on 20th.

### **Arctic Redpoll**

*Carduelis hornemanni*

*Winter vagrant from Scandinavia.*

A superb male at Brancaster April 17th–18th (BJR DT *et al*) frequented the golf course practice green and adjacent grazing fields.

### **Crossbill**

*Loxia curvirostra*

*Breeding resident in fluctuating numbers. Irruptive immigrant mainly late summer/autumn.* Regularly recorded from a variety of Breckland sites throughout the year, but no flock exceeded c.20 birds. A total of 15 singing males at Lynford in Feb/March, but breeding confirmed only at West Tofts Mere.

Very small immigration noted June 10th–Nov 2nd, chiefly at Holme and Holkham/Wells Dells. Maximum count 17 west at Holkham June 20th. Elsewhere only a few reported inland with largest flocks 16 Horsford Mar 29th; 15 Southrepps June 8th; 35 Wolferton June 5th; 11 Upton Fen July 24th; 12 Upper Sheringham Oct 9th.

### **Scarlet Rosefinch**

*Carpodacus erythrinus*

*Former vagrant, now rare passage migrant. Potential colonist.*

In spring an elusive 1st-summer male sang for brief periods at Cley May 29th–30th (B.Sin *et al*).

Three autumn records: A first-winter at Sheringham Sept 14th (TW), and a 1st-winter at Barnham Greens Sept 4th–6th (DJH *et al*) joined by a second bird Sept 6th (BWJ).

### **Bullfinch**

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Resident and suspected immigrant. Scandinavian race P.p.pyrrhula has occurred.*

Very few records.

During Oct many *pyrrhula* race birds trapped in Shetland, Yorkshire and a few in Norfolk, confirming an influx into the country. Field identification of this race is very difficult, relying on subjective impressions of size and brightness, but following records were considered by observers to relate to northern race birds: 1–3 at Holme, Holkham, Overstrand, Sea Palling, Waxham and Winterton all in Oct; 29 south Hunstanton Nov 2nd (GFH ML); 11 Beeston Regis Heath Nov 27th and 13–15 Lynford Arboretum in Dec (many obs.).

### **Lawfinch**

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

*Elusive and very local resident.*

During winter periods, only regularly recorded (with max. counts) at Barnham Cross Common (4 Jan); Mundford (18 Feb); Lynford Arboretum (12 Mar); Holkham Park (4 Apr). Elsewhere 1–4 at Grime's Graves; Thetford Nunnery; South Wootton; Taverham and The Arms Tottington.

Only confirmed breeding from the Hilborough area where a pair with 2 juvs. Jun 5th. Otherwise, breeding season records from Sandringham; Nr. Swaffham; Lynford Arboretum.

Sole observation relating to coastal migrants concerned 2 birds in Yarmouth cemetery Oct 19th.

This species is prone to erratic occupancy of both breeding and roosting sites. Thus the only record from a regularly watched roost, formerly used frequently for several years at Costessey, was 4 Dec 2nd.

### Lapland Bunting

*Calcarius lapponicus*

*Regular, but usually scarce, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

During the first two months of the year very hard to find. The only regular sites were Bacton where 5 29th Jan with 4 all Feb, and Breydon where up to 4 throughout Jan–Feb. Elsewhere 6 Morston Jan 10th; 4 Cley on 6th; 5 West Runton on 25th and 1–2 at Snettisham, Holme, Titchwell, Brancaster, Warham, Sheringham, Cromer GC, Happisburgh, Waxham, Horsey, Winterton, Hemsby and Halvergate.

In March, 1–2 at Breydon until 30th; 2 Cromer on 6th; a summer-plumaged male at Holme on 7th; 1 Brancaster 10th and 2 at Sheringham 18th–19th. A late bird over Cley Eye field May 2nd.

The first returning bird at Blakeney Point Sept 15th, but only 6 other records this month. A very poor passage continued through Oct, the best sites were Holme and Sheringham with records on several dates and maxima of 5 Holme Oct 15th; 4 Sheringham 16th–22nd. Elsewhere 2 Horsey on 2nd, 3 Cley on 19th and ten other coastal sites reporting just single birds.

During Nov small numbers recorded at a wide variety of coastal sites on scattered dates. There was no clear pattern, but a monthly total of 40–50 individuals. Most regular at Sheringham where up to 6 daily until 13th then 2 to month-end, also fairly frequent at Weybourne and Breydon where up to 3 regularly. Otherwise, erratic reports of 1–3 birds from thirteen coastal sites.

Scarce in Dec: 1 all month at Sheringham; 2 Cley/Salthouse 31st; 1 Burnham Norton 2nd.

### Snow Bunting

*Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Winter visitor in declining numbers. Exceptional in summer.*

Wintering population very mobile along whole coastline with much movement between sites. This is well illustrated at Holme where up to 52 present in Jan but a flock of 36 on Feb 2nd was the only record that month. Also at Sheringham where a flock of 30 birds was only present Feb 18th–19th. Such erratic behaviour makes estimates of population levels rather difficult. Maximum counts at all other localities: Hunstanton 16 Jan, 8 Feb; Titchwell 30 Jan, 32 Feb; Holkham Bay 83 Jan, 22 Feb; Cley/Salthouse 75 Jan, 60 Feb; Paston/Bacton 37 Jan; Happisburgh 37 Jan (? same); Yarmouth 1 Feb and Breydon 17 Jan, 2 Feb.

March saw a rapid departure with virtually none anywhere after mid-month. A summer-plumaged male at Holme on 21st and the last bird at Brancaster Harbour on 25th. First autumn arrivals singles at Holme, Blakeney Point and Winterton Sept 15th. Slow build-up thereafter until main influxes late Oct and mid-Nov. Maximum Nov counts: 2 Wolferton; 9 Snettisham; 8 Holme; 32 Titchwell; 70 Holkham Bay; 12 Blakeney Point; 60 Cley/Salthouse; 35 Weybourne; 70 Sheringham; 14 Happisburgh; 11 Horsey; 4 Winterton; 1 Breydon. As usual much movement between sites and the total population using the coast this month was unlikely to be in excess of 200 birds. A proportion of the Nov birds moved on fairly rapidly, leaving a winter population at the somewhat low level of an estimated 150 birds. Maximum counts 17 Heacham; 37 Titchwell; 25 Holkham Bay; 2 Warham; 100 Cley/Salthouse; 10 Mundesley; 7 Winterton; 10 Breydon.

### Yellowhammer

*Emberiza citrinella*

*Common resident, but currently declining.*

In first-winter period three-figure flocks of 120 Lyng Jan–Feb; 130 Paston Green, 100 Hickling in Jan; 120 Holme and 120 Potter Heigham in Feb. Smaller flocks more widespread.



Breeding data from Choseley where a density of 2.3 prs/sq.km. in rather open arablemland and a total of 10–11 singing males along 3 miles of the Stiffkey-Morston Greens. A dramatic decline in E Norfolk where this was once a familiar species at all seasons but is now known from only a few breeding sites; none now winters on Breydon marshes.

The only three-figure flock in the second-winter period was 130 Ringstead in Nov, the only other flock over 50 was 63 at Horsey Dec 14th. Unless there is a significant level of under-recording, the future for the Yellowhammer in Norfolk looks decidedly bleak.

### **Portolan Bunting**

*Emberiza hortulana*

*rare passage migrant.*

Spring singles in May at Holme on 14th (SS) and Cley on 30th (AJL) represented an average showing, but only 3 in autumn when singles at Blakeney Point Sept 1st (JRMc), Sept 7th (JRMc) and Mundesley Sept 21st (MF).

1993 Additions: Singles at Blakeney Point Sept 9th (RJA) and 16th (PJW).

### **Rustic Bunting**

*Emberiza rustica*

*migrant from Northern Europe.*

Always an enjoyable bird to see, the tenth county record was a well-watched female at Althouse May 22nd–23rd (JVB *et al*).

The bird reported at Holkham Meals 18th May 1993 was in fact seen 18th Sept 1993. Incorrect date submitted by observer.

### **Little Bunting**

*Emberiza pusilla*

*migrant from N Scandinavia eastwards, mostly in autumn.*

A good series of typical autumn records, but unfortunately all were brief affairs. One present very briefly on Overy Dunes Sept 25th before flying into the pines (CR). Other singles at Stiffkey Greens Oct 2nd (DPA *et al*); Winterton also on 2nd (PC) and Overstrand on 11th (RJM). The county total now stands at 23.

### **Reed Bunting**

*Emberiza schoeniclus*

*Common resident and passage migrant.*

Early in the year, flocks of 45 Holme; 60 Blakeney/Morston and 40 Lyng, the few other counts received were all below 15.

Coastal spring movements virtually non-existent.

Breeding information from Welney where 33 prs. (38 in 1993); Brancaster GC-Thornham Point 19prs; Snettisham RSPB reserve 9 prs. Smaller counts of 1–3 pairs at Thompson Water, Langmere, Hockwold Flood, Sculthorpe Fen and Wroxham Broad. More information welcome.

The first notable movement of the autumn came Sept 30th when 15 west Holme and 5 west Sheringham. Passage peaked in early Oct when counts of 45 west Holme (all-day count) on 8th; 18 south Hunstanton, 26 west Holme, 7 west, 1 east, Sheringham all on 10th; 11 east Overy Dunes on 11th and 22 south Hunstanton Nov 2nd.

At the end of the year only concentrations reported were 21 Welney and 12 Snettisham on Dec.

### **Corn Bunting**

*Miliaria calandra*

*Local and declining resident.*

Largest flocks in first-winter period 25 Methwold Fen, 30 Bacton in Jan; 172 Choseley and 102 found in a survey of 10 km.sq. TG33 in Feb; 80 Welney village, 123 Choseley, 32

Brancaster saltmarsh in March. Smaller numbers recorded at 9 other sites. Breeding season data from Welney where 6 singing males in May, but only 1 pr. in June; a triangle bounded by Docking/Ringstead/Brancaster where minimum 12 singing males; in 10 km.sq. TG33 a census revealed 21 singing males; Sheringham 3 singing males; Winterton/Hemsby 2 singing males and single singing males at Wereham, Downham Market, Wiggenshall St. Germans, Hoveton. A breeding population also present Wootton Marsh where a decline noted over last 5 years and another reported in west Norfolk but precise details not available.

Winter flocks did not begin to build up again until Nov when highest counts were 30 Lynn Point (roost); 34 Ringstead; 40 Choseley. An apparent decrease in Dec when maxima only 28 Welney; 21 Lynn Point (roost); 10 Ringstead; 20 Choseley. Smaller numbers recorded at 11 other sites in Nov and Dec.

## Selected Introductions, Hybrids, Escapes and Ferals

### APPENDIX 1. CATEGORY D SPECIES

Species (mostly wildfowl) which are likely to fall within categories A and D are treated as Category A species for the purpose of this report, and all records, including known and probable escapes, are summarised in the main systematic list. The Category D species in the list below are those where there is good evidence or extreme likelihood of being of escaped or feral origin.

#### Greater Flamingo

*Phoenicopterus ruber*

Breeds southern Europe, around the Mediterranean east to Central Asia, Pakistan and NW India, throughout much of Africa, Caribbean, coastal Venezuela and the Galapagos.

1990 Addition: Breydon, an immature on Oct 6th (accepted by BBRC and placed in category D1).

#### Bar-headed Goose

*Anser indicus*

Breeds Central Asia from SE Russian Altai range to western Manchuria south to Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

Singles in the Burnham Norton-Holkham-Cley area in the first half of the year increasing to a maximum of 4 at Burnham Norton in early Oct. Pentney G P up to 4 in June and July. Snettisham 2 on Oct 20th, Sennowe Park 2 in Dec and 2 throughout the autumn in the Sparham-Lyng area; singles at Horning and Welney.

#### Snow Goose

*Anser caerulescens*

Breeds extreme NE Siberia, northern Alaska, Arctic Canada and northern Greenland.

In NW Norfolk all records probably relate to, or originate from, the flock totalling 21 birds in the autumn that commutes between Holkham-Burnham-Norton-Titchwell-Snettisham and Sandringham; the flock of 24 at Blickling Lake on Jan 4th may also have been the same birds. Bred at Titchwell with broods of 2 and 3 in Aug and at Sandringham brood of 5 in May. Singles at Buckenham, Lyng-Easthaugh GP (wearing a metal ring) and blue-phase bird at Wroxham Broad on Jan 14th.

1993 Correction: The maximum size of the flock at Holkham was 24.

#### Wood Duck

*Aix sponsa*

Breeds southern Canada to central California, central Texas, eastern Kansas, Florida and Cuba.

Surlingham, a male on April 30th and probably the same bird there in May and Nov and a male in eclipse at Cantley BF on Sept 17th.

1993 Addition: Sparham Pools, a male Dec 17th.

**Checker** *Falco cherrug*  
Breeds eastern Europe and throughout most of central and southern Asia to Mongolia and central China.

Wiveton, a bird on July 25th could possibly have been a falconer's hybrid. Holme a single Sept 5th wearing jesses and bells.

**Chukar** *Alectoris chukar*  
Breeds from eastern Greece and Turkey east through the Himalayas to northern China.  
Salthouse-Wiveton area, maximum of 18 in November. Bacton a pair. Heydon Park single May 14th.

## APPENDIX II. HYBRIDS

### Grey Heron x Purple Heron

Worham Norton a bird showing mixed characteristics of both species June 15th–20th. Structurally as Grey Heron but neck slightly thinner and longer, plumage as Purple Heron upperparts but head was Grey Heron and neck markings intermediate.

### White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose

Wimpfenhoe Marshes Nov 20th.

### Greylag Goose x Canada Goose

Wolney G P 2 on Nov 15th.

### Canada Goose x Swan Goose

Witchwell 4 Aug 30th.

### Marine Goose x Canada Goose

Winnery Lakes, Thetford July 11th.

### Whooper x Garganey

Wootton Bassett BF a male Aug 8th and 17th.

### Witchamare x Ferruginous Duck

Wolney female Jan 1st to Mar 6th.

### Ring-necked Duck x Tufted Duck

Wroxham first-winter male Feb 20th and 22nd. Brancaster a bird showing characters of both June 8th.

### Tufted Duck x Pochard

Wolney male Mar 13th–25th and another throughout Dec. UEA Broad throughout April and Strumpshaw Dec 19th.

### Tufted Duck x Ruddy Duck

Wolney G P female Feb 4th. Plumage as Tufted Duck but small size, square head and obvious stiff tail.

### Wigeon x Tufted Duck

Widlingham Lane GP a female Dec 15th accompanied by two others (a male and a female) that were probably second generation hybrids with Tufted Ducks.

### Mediterranean Gull x Black-headed Gull

Witcham second-winter Nov 30th.

## APPENDIX III. ESCAPES

This list comprises records of those species recorded in 1994 that are not admissible into Categories A–E of the BOURC Checklist.

### Pink-backed Pelican

*Pelecanus rufescens*

Breeds sporadically throughout central and southern Africa.

1989 Addition: Holkham Feb 25th (accepted by BBRC for inclusion in Appendix 3 only).

### Night Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Breeds from Europe east to Japan, throughout Africa, SE Canada to Argentina, Hawaii and



the Falklands.

Norfolk Wildlife Park, Gt Witchingham, 10 pairs nested; an adult seen to fly out of the Park fairly high towards Lyng June 14th.

**White-faced Whistling Duck**

*Dendrocygna viduata*

Breeds west and central Africa and northern and central South America.

Wells Saltmarsh July 1st and 17th.

**Black Swan**

*Cygnus atratus*

Breeds Australia and Tasmania.

Salhouse Broad, one pair raised 3 young. Wroxham 2 pairs on River Bure. Waxham a pair and 5 cygnets in Dec. Singles at Hickling, Homersfield, King's Lynn BF, Lenwade, Tottenhill GP and Welney.

**Emperor Goose**

*Anser canagicus*

Breeds from coastal NE Siberia, St. Lawrence Is., and coastal NW Alaska.

Hardley Flood and Wroxham Broad, singles in Jan; Antingham 2 Feb 6th.

**Ringed Teal**

*Callonetta leucophrys*

Breeds central South America, mostly northern Argentina and Paraguay.

Cantley BF eclipse male Oct 8th-9th.

**Maned Duck**

*Chenonetta jubata*

Breeds Australia and Tasmania.

Malthouse Broad male in Jan; Wroxham Broad pair in Jan.

**Chiloe Wigeon**

*Anas sibilatrix*

Breeds southern South America in southern Chile, southern Uruguay, Argentina and the Falklands.

Whitlingham GP 3 Sept 12th; singles at Buckenham, Cley and Kelling Water Meadows.

1993 Additions: Holkham male June 13th, Burnham Norton 2 males June 16th-25th.

**Hottentot Teal**

*Anas hottentota*

Breeds in Africa in Nigeria and Chad and E Africa from Ethiopia to South Africa and Madagascar.

Tottenhill Row Feb 9th-Apr 23rd.

**Argentine Blue-bill**

*Oxyura vittata*

Breeds in South America from southern Chile and Argentina.

Welney male during Jan and Dec 4th.

**Silver Pheasant**

*Lophura nycthemera*

Breeds in northern Burma, central Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and southern China to Hainan.

Chedgrave female and a nest with 3 eggs June.

**Reeve's Pheasant**

*Syrnaticus reevesii*

Breeds in northern and central China.

Cley Apr 15th and 17th.

**Peruvian Thicknee**

*Burhinus superciliaris*

Breeds Ecuador to southern Peru.

Single near Hickling May 15th and near Cromer June 11th.

**Parakeet Sp.**

Holme Dec 5th either Ring-necked or Alexandrine; Ludham singles in Jan and Oct to Dec.

**Zebra Finch**

*Poephila guttata*

Breeds Australia and the Lesser Sunda Is.

1993 Addition: Cley Mar 27th.

**Sudan Golden Sparrow**

*Auripasser luteus*

Breeds in Africa from Mauretania and northern Nigeria to southern Sudan and northern Ethiopia.

Bradwell-Caister-Winterton June 10th-22nd.

# Ringling Report

*Allan Hale*

The ringling effort in Norfolk during 1994 totalled 35,600 birds of 139 species – more or less the same as the previous year. Thanks are extended to all Norfolk ringers for committing the data from which this report was compiled. Particular thanks to Steve and Jason Wakeham for supplying Wash Wader Ringling Group recoveries and their interpretation.

The recoveries are arranged by species, with ringling details on the first line and the recovery data on the second. The following codes have been used:

Age when ringed: 1 pullus (=nestling or chick)  
3 hatched during calendar year of ringling  
5 hatched during previous calendar year  
2 fully grown, year of hatching unknown  
4 hatched before calendar year of ringling, but exact year unknown  
6 hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown

Sex: M = male F = female

Recovery detail: X found dead  
+ shot or killed by man  
R caught and released by a ringer  
RR ring number read in the field  
// condition on finding wholly unknown

## NORFOLK RECOVERIES NOTIFIED DURING 1994

### Fulmar

The first was breeding on the cliffs at Hunstanton, and although 13 years old, it was barely middle-aged by Fulmar standards. Neither bird demonstrates the fidelity to its natal colony that might be expected.

	03.08.81	Isle of May, Fife, Scotland	
R	23.06.94	Hunstanton Cliffs	409 km SSE
	05.08.89	Sheringham	
N	03.04.94	Aggertauge, Jylland, Denmark	

### Gannet

An old record has just come to light concerning a nestling Gannet ringed during 1986 in Norway and found dying at Suffield (near North Walsham) some three months later.

### Cormorant

A demonstration of the wanderings of a ringed nestling from the tree-nesting colony at Abberton.

	29.05.93	Abberton Reservoir, Essex	
RR	25.09.93	Snettisham Pits	115 km NW

RR	25.10.93	Holkham Hall	134 km NW
RR	13.01.94	Burnham Overy Staithe	121 km NNW

### Barnacle Goose

During April 1993, six regular Barnacle Geese at Lound were joined by one with a 1986 Spitzbergen ring. At Fritton another Barnacle Goose among 22 free-flying birds there on 24th June 1993 carried a Stockholm Museum ring. Even in spring or summer we cannot automatically assume that all Barnacle Geese are from feral stock.

### Shelduck

An unusual recovery from the Wash Wader Ringing Group's point of view, even if not so from a Shelduck's!

5M	16.05.80	Terrington, King's Lynn	
X	09.12.93	Hippolytushoef, Noord-Holland, The Netherlands	316 km E

### Wigeon

There were two wintering Pensthorpe Wigeon reported from Russia of which this travelled by far the furthest.

3F	22.11.91	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	17.05.93	Elizarovo, Tyumen, Russia	4,159 km WNW

### Tufted Duck

Shown is Norfolk's longest Tufted Duck movement of the year, and the third bird from Pensthorpe to Northern Ireland in four years – all three Irish birds were shot between 13th September and 8th October. Additionally there were movements from Pensthorpe to The Netherlands and from Finland to Pensthorpe.

3M	28.08.92	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	06.06.93	Priuralskiy District, Tyumen, Russia	1,980 km NE

3M	16.09.92	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	08.10.93	Lough Neagh, Tyrone, Northern Ireland	528 km ENE

### Hen Harrier

Two nestlings (both marked with wing-tags in North Wales during 1993) were subsequently reported from Norfolk. The first was present in the Holkham-Burnham area from November 1993 until January 1994, but sadly the other was found dead at North Creak on 13th January 1994.

### Coot

Relatively few Dutch Coot emigrate for the winter, and those that do are much more likely to travel to France or Iberia.

3F	10.10.88	Aalsmeer, Noord-Holland, The Netherlands	
+	15.01.94	Haddiscoe Island, Great Yarmouth	213 km W

### Oystercatcher

The first movement illustrates the winter quarters of a Norfolk-hatched bird. It was shot on Christmas Day.

The second represents only the second British-ringed Oystercatcher to be recovered in Finland. It is estimated that Finland hosts only around 600 pairs of Oystercatchers (cf Norway circa 40,000), and it is thought that very few Baltic-bred birds cross the North Sea;



most wintering on the Waddensee.

The third is from beyond 70 degrees north, and is the most northerly recovery of a Wash-ringed Oystercatcher. The fourth is an example of breeding site fidelity. Additionally, the W.W.R.G.'s oldest recorded Oystercatcher survived just over 26 years.

	10.06.88	Weybourne, Sheringham	
	25.12.92	St Sauveur le Viconte, Manche, France	438 km SSW
	10.01.93	Terrington Bund, King's Lynn	
	02.06.94	Oro Island, Turku-Pori, Finland	1,562 km ENE
	26.02.78	Heacham, King's Lynn	
	27.05.94	Porsanger, Finnmark, Norway	2,317 km NE
	10.02.90	Heacham, King's Lynn	
	31.05.90	Runde, More Og Romsdal, Norway	
R	13.07.92	Runde, More Og Romsdal, Norway	
R	05.07.93	Runde, More Og Romsdal, Norway	1,102 km NNE

### Ringed Plover

A bird aged as an adult at Heacham during 1980 was found breeding locally nearly 14 years later. It sets a new Wash longevity record, beating the previous record which had stood since 1979.

### Knot

The majority of Knot occurring on The Wash breed in Greenland and north-east Canada and are regularly recovered during passage through Iceland, this being the 98th from The Wash to be recovered there.

Curiously, two birds caught together in Norway during May 1985. were trapped again (still together) at Holme over eight years later during October 1993.

	16.10.93	Holme, Hunstanton	
	03.05.94	Ragnheidarstadir, Arnes, Iceland	1,723 km NW

### Dunlin

The first bird shown arrived on The Wash just 15 days after being ringed in Sweden. Unusually for the Swedes the ringing details, however, took five years!

The second shown was caught at both sites by members of the Wash Wader Ringing Group.

	07.08.89	Ottenby, Oland, Sweden	
RR	22.08.89	Terrington, King's Lynn	1,108 km WSW
	11.08.91	Terrington, King's Lynn	
RR	09.05.94	Ria De Alvor, Algarve, Portugal	1,877 km SSW

### Black-tailed Godwit

Black-tailed Godwits have only been reported on The Wash in substantial numbers in recent years. Since 1992 over 300 have been ringed and measured; the biometrics suggesting that most are of Icelandic origin. This recovery conforms to that theory in becoming the first overseas recovery of this species and the sixth British-ringed Black-tailed Godwit to Iceland.

	31.07.92	Terrington, King's Lynn	
--	----------	-------------------------	--

X 25.07.94 Hjaalmsstadir, Arnes, Iceland 1,753 km NW

### Bar-tailed Godwit

The twelfth Bar-tailed Godwit from The Wash to be recovered in Germany.

6M 27.08.88 Terrington Bund, King's Lynn  
X 15.05.93 Dagebull, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany 584 km ENE

### Redshank

Only relatively small numbers of Redshank occur across Ireland, and this is the first from The Wash to be recovered there.

4 Terrington Bund, King's Lynn  
X East Town, Tory Island, Donegal, Eire 616 km WNW

### Black-headed Gull

Nestlings from the Cantley breeding colony were found wintering in Essex, Kent and Durham. The Copenhagen bird was also seen in Denmark during July 1987, April 1988, and August 1991. Note the age of the Dutch bird (the British record is no less than 25 years).

A vigilant observer at Diss Mere read the ring numbers of no less than three foreign-ringed birds – one from Belgium and a brace of nestlings from Finland. The most distant Finnish bird is shown below.

6 05.01.86 Norwich  
RR 12.03.93 Copenhagen, Denmark 813 km ENE  
RR 24.07.93 Copenhagen, Denmark

3 20.07.77 Holt  
X 21.04.94 Bergum, Friesland, The Netherlands 330 km E

1 01.07.93 Tornio, Lappi, Finland  
RR 24.12.93 The Mere, Diss  
RR 19.01.94 The Mere, Diss 1,998 km SW

### Mediterranean Gull

A nestling ringed in the south-west of The Netherlands during the summer of 1994 was seen on Sheringham Golf Course on 7th and 8th October of the same year. Insufficient details are available for the preferred reporting format.

### Sandwich Tern

Already previously re-trapped in Cleveland, this bird went on to become, perhaps surprisingly, the first British-ringed Sandwich Tern to be found in Belgium.

4 11.09.75 Terrington, King's Lynn  
R 22.07.86 Teesmouth, Cleveland  
X 14.06.92 De Panne, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium 245 km SE

### Common Tern

It is many years since a ringed Welsh Tern was reported from Norfolk.

1 24.06.84 Shotton, Clwyd, Wales  
X 11.06.94 Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth 322 km ESE

### **Turtle Dove**

Lucky report since only around four Turtle Doves are ringed annually in Norfolk. Less lucky for the bird since it was shot.

13.08.93	Wells next the Sea	
15.09.94	Villar del Rey, Badajoz, Spain	1,664 km SSW

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

As immigrant seems to have settled down quite happily in Norfolk.

03.08.91	Sandwich Bay estate, Kent	
12.01.92	Ickburgh, Thetford	
25.06.92	Ickburgh, Thetford	
14.01.94	Ickburgh, Thetford	

### **Dunnoek**

Only the fourth Norwegian Dunnoek to be found in Britain.

04.09.93	Giljastolen, Gjesdal, Rogaland, Norway	
18.09.93	Holme Dunes Nature Reserve	744 km SSW

### **Nightingale**

Now Norfolk Nightingales are ringed, let alone heard of again. Two recoveries involving the county in a single year is quite unprecedented.

M 22.08.93	Portland Bill, Dorset	
30.04.94	Garboldisham, Diss	313 km NE

M 20.07.93	South Lopham Fen, Diss	
15.05.94	Thornham Park, Suffolk	8 km SSE

### **Song Thrush**

This bird was probably still on passage since northernmost breeding Song Thrushes tend to winter further south than Britain (especially first-year birds, of which this was one).

17.07.93	Nummi, Uusimaa, Finland	
18.09.93	Wells next the Sea	1,629 km WSW

### **Blackbird**

Many Scandinavian-bred Blackbirds winter in Norfolk. The Finnish birds (the first sadly shot, the second killed by a dog) illustrate the rapidly increasing population in that country. Interestingly, only part of the population moves south-west towards Britain; others move west or even north-west into Norway.

F 28.10.91	Weybourne, Sheringham	
12.07.93	Heikkila, Luumaki, Kymi, Finland	1,829 km ENE

M 06.12.91	Hevingham, Norwich	
29.03.93	Meilahti, Helsinki, Finland	1,666 km ENE

F 09.04.93	Landsort, Stockholm, Sweden	
17.11.93	Holme Dunes Nature Reserve	1,255 km WSW

F 05.02.94	South Creake, Burnham Market	
10.09.94	Blidingsholm, Kronoberg, Sweden	983 km ENE



### **Sedge Warbler**

Most British Sedge Warblers overfly south-west Europe, but this bird is evidence that for a significant minority the food supply is not substantial enough for the birds to build up sufficient fat to achieve this.

3	26.06.92	Earlham, Norwich	
R	22.08.92	Setubal, Baixo Alentejo, Portugal	1,790 km SSW

### **Reed Warbler**

Although this bird demonstrates the usual strategy of migration in short stages, some individuals do make long unbroken flights.

4	25.05.92	Snettisham Coastal Park, King's Lynn	
R	25.09.93	Irun, Guipuzcoa, Spain	1,072 km S

### **Garden Warbler**

The longest movement of the year is shown.

3	16.07.94	Earlham, Norwich	
R	16.08.94	Icklesham, Sussex	195 km SSW

### **Blackcap**

The ringing site in Belgium probably indicates the birds origin. Additionally there was a movement from Sandwich Bay, Kent to Lopham Fen, Diss.

2M	30.08.93	Jupille, Liege, Belgium	
R	19.10.93	Holme Dunes Nature Reserve	435 km NW

### **Willow Warbler**

Note the speed of movement of the first shown. Even the second had an elapsed time of only two weeks.

4F	27.05.94	Didlington, Thetford	
R	03.06.94	North Ronaldsay, Orkney, Scotland	783 km NNW
3M	12.08.94	Loinnbuie, Highland, Scotland	
R	26.08.94	Holme Bird Observatory	607 km SSE

### **Great Tit**

There was an irruption of Great Tits during spring 1994. Shown in full is the longest movement, but there were others of 54 km, 56 km and 107 km. Such distances are rare in British Great Tits.

5F	22.02.94	Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire	
R	19.03.94	Lopham Fen, Diss	

### **Brambling**

Many of the Bramblings that winter in Britain originate in Scandinavia, so the first movement would be expected. Perhaps the second less so, particularly since Bramblings are markedly less common in Ireland, although they are prone to wintering in widely different areas in succeeding years.

3F	22.10.92	Weybourne, Sheringham	
R	23.04.93	Frei, More Og Romsdal, Norway	1,194 km NNE
3F	05.10.91	Burnham Market	
R	17.03.94	Magherafelt, Londonderry, Northern Ireland	524 km WNW

## Greenfinch

The longest movement of the year is shown in full. The only other birds to move out of the county were five to Suffolk and a single to Northamptonshire.

1	21.11.92	Packington Park, Warwickshire	
	27.03.93	Shimpling, Diss	
	22.05.93	Shimpling, Diss	
	07.04.94	Shimpling, Diss	193 km E

## Siskin

Unprecedented numbers of Siskins were in Norfolk during the spring period of 1994. An analysis appears on page 370.

The movement shown below is particularly interesting in that the ring was found in the nest of a Peregrine

1	15.03.92	Garboldisham, Diss	
	30.05.94	Loch Eck, Strathclyde, Scotland	567 km NW

## Yellow Bunting

The Dutch bird represents the first foreign recovery from the recent Norfolk ringing project. There was another to The Netherlands later in the year. The second shows a migrant which entered further south.


The third is one of a brace of typical movements to Scotland/north-east England, where many seem to fatten up before moving on to breeding areas. Strangely there were also mid-winter movements to Cleveland at a time when birds are usually fairly static.

2	13.01.91	Hunstanton	
	02.01.93	De Balg, Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands	392 km E
2	09.11.93	Salthouse, Holt	
	03.01.94	Foulness Point, Foulness, Essex	148 km S
MM	22.01.94	Salthouse, Holt	
RR	11.03.94	Cairngorm, Highland, Scotland	555 km NNW



*Siskins ground feeding (J.P. Smith)*

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# NORFOLK MAMMAL REPORT – 1994

Editorial



*(Kim Dyle)*

The Editor is pleased to present the 39th annual Norfolk Mammal Report.

The compilation of the Classified List has again been undertaken by Eddie Boosey and we are most grateful for his massive contribution. He has had to come to terms with the difficulties of the task when faced with an extremely uneven distribution of records. Some mammals are all too conspicuous at times; others are rarely seen. There has been a widening of natural history interest in recent years and equipment has improved and become much more readily available. The consequence has been that some disciplines have made great advances. We are left with the paradoxical situation in the systematic listing of our mammals that those that are elusive are not seen while those that are seen frequently are not reported!

The example of the year was the rise in the Brown rat population, more frequently reported in the press than in our contributors notes. As ever, we do emphasise the importance of recording details of all mammals seen, dead or alive, however common they are assumed to be.

Two decades ago the major topic was the expected invasion of the Grey squirrel. Plotting its progress actually brought in a number of new mammal recorders. A small point in favour of what is now generally regarded as a pest. However, the Editor still receives complaints from householders who feed squirrels when the animals metaphorically bite the hand that feeds them by causing damage to property!

The march of the Grey squirrel across Norfolk in full view of the public was predictable and inevitable. While we were reporting that, we were describing the Muntjac as shy, solitary and elusive. Now a visit to Thetford Forest Park is incomplete without finding a representative gazing back from the roadside. The only remaining question may be how long will the novelty remain and how soon will this newcomer go unreported.

John Goldsmith's featured article, *Protect and Survive*, describes the work that has been carried out in Norfolk to save, and where possible to improve, underground hibernation sites of bats. The need for the massive commitment of time, energy and expenditure in the past, present and future is clearly explained. Norfolk has been well to the fore in evolving methods to help this major, and declining, group of mammals. We are pleased to make this full account generally available and pay tribute to those who have given so generously of their time, often in difficult conditions.

Two short but important articles have been contributed by Dr Ian Keymer. *Pox virus Infection of Squirrels* describes the effects of the parapox virus in Red squirrels and briefly summarises the work done to isolate it. Is there evidence that Grey squirrels are now infected by a similar virus? We are invited to join the investigative team by alerting Dr Keymer to any suspicious sighting.

The reduction by natural means of a pest species may appear to be an attractive possibility. It may be so and a way of reaching a proper balance for a species that has little natural control in this country. Yet we should remain cautious on such issues. Another alien that established itself with success many years ago was the Rabbit. So much so, some of our highly specialised habitats were 'managed' by this creature. Many landscape changes brought about by the onslaught of myxomatosis forty years ago are still with us. We can only guess at the consequences of *The Viral Haemorrhagic Disease of Rabbits* if this new plague sweeps through the population. A new and serious factor is that this new disease is found in domestic rabbits. Dr Keymer's article is a clear and concise statement of the present situation and its possible consequences. He does hold out some hopes for the future.

We thank all contributors for their submissions. The Report is entirely dependent on the eyes and ears of mammal observers all over the county, including the visitors who frequently add to our records. We are unable to reply individually to them all but do emphasise our gratitude. Errors and omissions have the nasty habit of being glaringly obvious after publication. We apologise in advance for any in this Report.

Contributions for next year's report should be in by 31st January, 1996, sooner if possible. Please send to:

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**or to**

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Top: Mediterranean Gulls at Overstrand (*J. Bhalerao*). Centre: Mediterranean Gull at Yarmouth where up to ten were present during 1994/5 winter (*N. Bowman*). Bottom: two Whiskered Terns Rockland Road 15th May; arrived next day in Buckinghamshire before appearing at Cley on 22nd (*R. Chittenden*).





A full picture of the distribution of the Water Vole remains desirable (*C.R. Knights*). Six foxes were killed at Welney Wildfowl Reserve during the spring. This annual control is necessary to protect ground-nesting waders and ducks (*C.R. Knights*).



# Protect and Survive

*John G. Goldsmith*

This short article attempts to explain some of the work carried out under the auspices of the Norfolk Bat Group on the conservation of underground bat hibernation sites in the county of Norfolk during the past ten or so years.

## Background

A different species of bat currently inhabit our part of the country and six of these regularly spend at least part of the winter underground. The most abundant species underground here is Daubenton (invariably 60%–70% of finds overall), followed in frequency by Natterers, Brown Long-eared, then occasional Brants and Whiskered and the rare Barbastelle in favoured sites. Only occasionally are Pipistrelle and Serotine found in underground or semi-underground sites. The Horseshoe bats are unlikely to be found outside south-west England or South Wales, although a Greater Horseshoe has turned up in recent winters as close as Leicestershire.

Because of the flatness of our local landscape, the glacially deposited 'loose' overburden of sands, gravels and clay do not lend themselves to natural underground caves. Only the chalk, where it has been excavated and tunnelled by the hand of man, provides suitable underground winter retreats. Otherwise sites are man-made and usually of brick, flint or concrete. Thirty odd years after the formation of the Norfolk Bat Group (Britain's first county bat group), we now know of over a hundred underground sites in the county of which more than 90% contain one or more bats in some winters. These are mapped as Figure 1. Norfolk is the best explored and recorded county in Britain, in this respect.

Alarmingly, our survey has shown that while new sites are being discovered at less than one per year, the known sites are disappearing at the rate of nearly two percent per annum.

Given this situation it was felt that a programme of progressive consolidation and protection should be mounted. It is the Norfolk Bat Group's aim to have the best twenty or twenty-five county sites protected by the turn of the century, plus a county-wide spread of perhaps a dozen to twenty smaller, less important, sites where informal agreements or some protection work has been undertaken. To date, some eighteen sites have been worked on, while sites in the parishes of Appleton, Leziate, Houghton, in West Norfolk, and Whitwell, Tharston and Eaton in the East are in the planning stages for 1995/6.

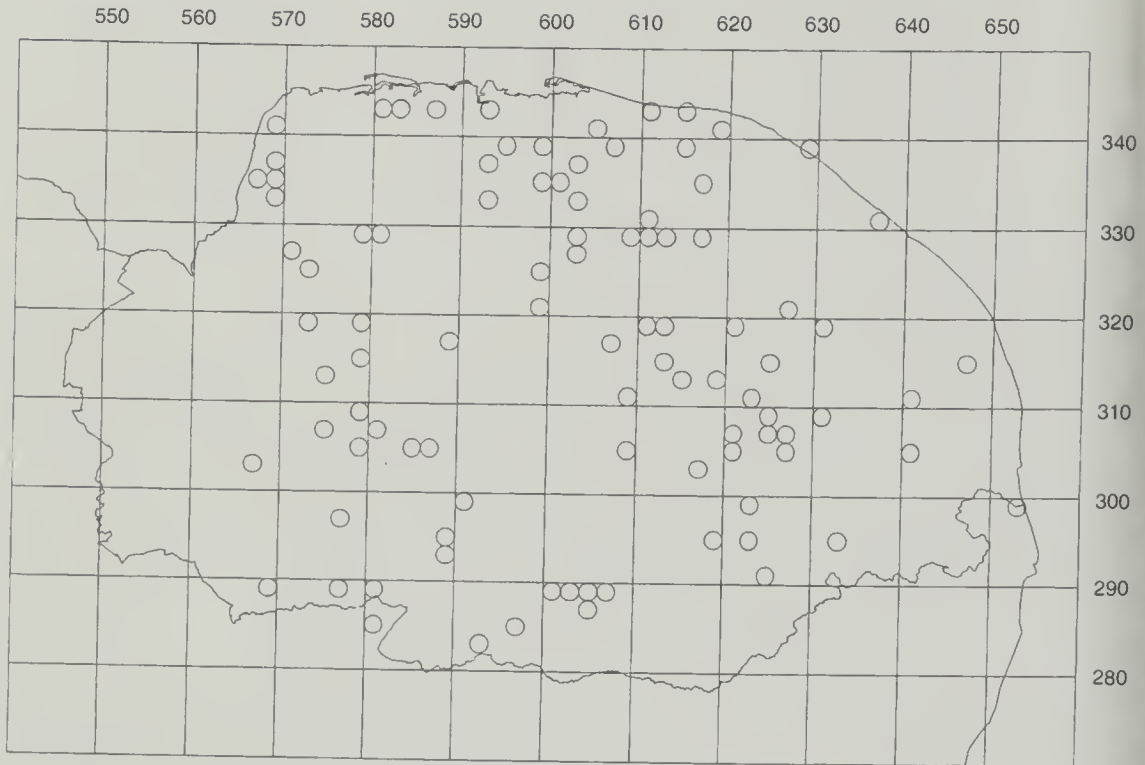
## Basic Bat Hibernation Requirements

To spend, in the case of some Daubenton bats, the period mid to late September through to perhaps mid or late April (i.e. up to seven months) hibernating, required the bat to have put down a considerable amount of special brown fat. To utilise this energy store in a slow and controlled way requires the selection of very exacting environmental conditions:

- Undisturbed conditions during the winter months
- Darkness, or semi-dark
- A low, steady September to April temperature ideally in the area of 6 degrees Celsius plus or minus 4 degrees Celsius, with no sudden changes, plus some pockets of warmer and colder air
- A high constant relative humidity – ideally in excess of 90% R.H., though down to 70% may be acceptable to species such as Brown Long-eared
- Cracks and crevices of between 10 mm to 30 mm wide and more than 100 mm deep, with rough surfaces



○ Tetrad symbol



**Figure 1.** *Norfolk Underground Bat Hibernation Sites*

### **Types of Sites**

Many types of underground (or semi-underground) sites, both natural and man-made, are utilised by bats of up to eight species. These include lime kilns, brick kilns, cellars, ice-house, tunnels and railway tunnels, caves, mines, air-raid shelters and certain other World War II or Ministry of Defence type constructions. Almost any site that fulfils the above requirements may be used.

### **The Real Work**

The decision to carry out work at each site is influenced by such factors as:

- actual number and species of bats currently utilising the site plus further possible bat potential
- location of the site and other nearby sites
- land-owners attitude
- security of the site and exposure to potential vandalism
- cost of improving and securing the site and whether it can be tackled as a DIY job, or will monies have to be obtained

The amount of work required at different sites varies quite considerably. If we take a site such as the ice house at Blickling Hall for instance, it was already empty of rubbish and protected with a substantial metal grille. The addition of some short vertical timber boards and special bat hibernation bricks installed by National Trust staff while undertaking other repair work has roughly quadrupled the number of bats using the site over the past couple of winters. Other ice houses have been completely cleared of rubbish, had a door and boards installed, and subsequently seen an increase in numbers from occasionally one or two hibernating bats to over twenty in most winters.



Currently our best underground hibernating site in the county is four short chalk caves with a lime kiln situated within an old chalk pit in the Stanford Army Field Training Area just north of Thetford. This has contained over 70 bats of 6 species, which puts it amongst the top ten sites in the British Isles. The main problem with these caves was that chalk and soil cascaded down the face and continuously filled them in. Due only to the hard work of a small group of permit holders these were manually dug open annually. An ambitious, costly and somewhat experimental approach was finally agreed between the Army, the STANTA Conservation Group, English Nature and the bat group to dig out (with a massive tracked 40 degree digger) the biggest east facing tunnel and build a protruding concrete block entrance shelter, incorporating a protective grille. This arrangement has worked well, with most bats on this site now using this tunnel.

Most sites fall within these two extremes and indeed many have been tackled in stages. The lime kiln at Alderford illustrates this, with group effort expended in the initial dig and re-building coupled with help from a youth team and some Norfolk Naturalists Trust and Norfolk Bat group funds back in 1985. The grille was professionally constructed and the final digging and consolidation of the brickwork was undertaken in the summer of 1994 with professional paid and voluntary labour.

Making brand new hibernation sites seems to be a rather popular pastime these days and certainly it is a good publicity. In our opinion existing sites are a better and cheaper bet. Not only will they be 'weathered', but some bats may already know the site and costs of improving the existing site by adding hibernation niches, improving the humidity and stabilising the temperatures will probably be less than new-build. Our only Norfolk example of a new concrete tunnel, some two metres wide and specially adapted for bat usage, is at Leziate and was the first such structure to be attempted in the U.K. although as yet only Long-eared bats have been shown to use it.

Special bat grille designs have been developed here to protect the hibernating bat sites from disturbance. The 25mm hard steel bars at 150mm horizontal spacings along with our extra cunning locking mechanisms have attracted considerable interest from other county bat groups, though such arrangements add to the initial costs. It is, however, now widely agreed that a solidly constructed site with a good grille and lock will stand the test of time. Our early efforts carried out 'on the cheap' in the late 1960s have certainly cost more money in repairs than our later, well engineered, examples.

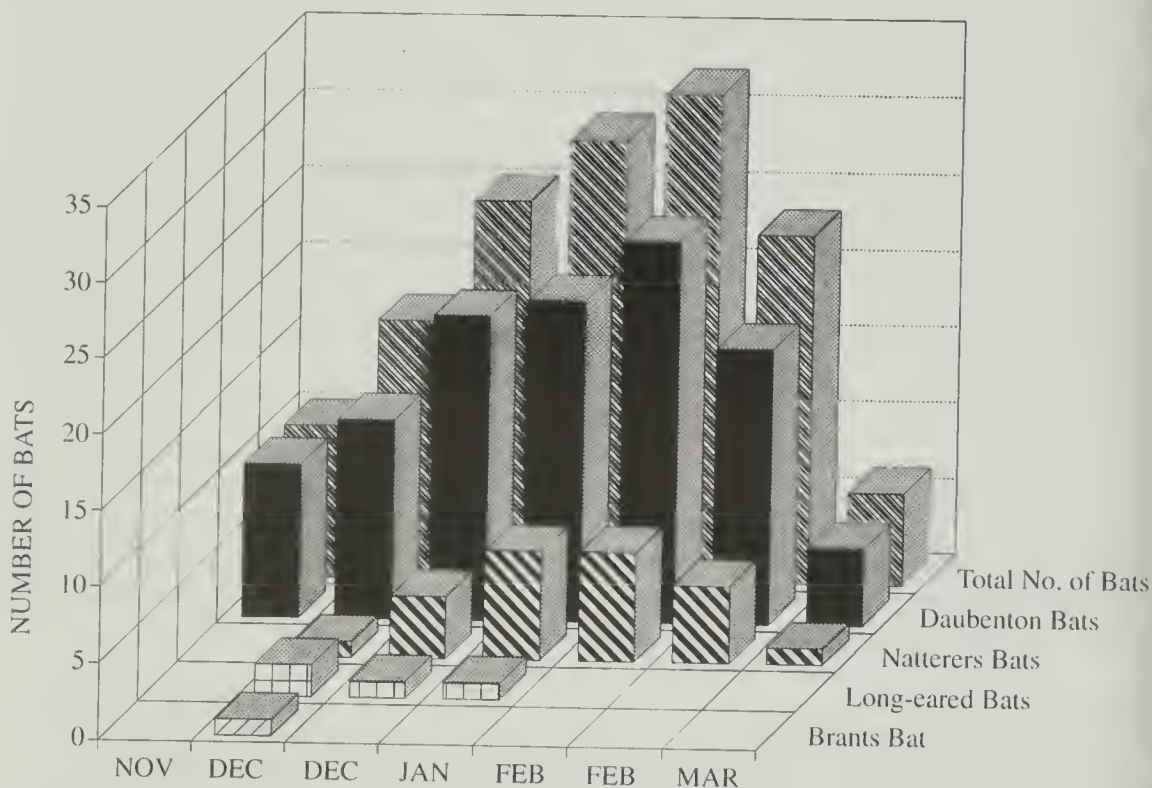
## Finishing

It has been possible to improve almost every existing underground site so far found and worked in East Anglia by adding what we sometimes call the 'furniture and fittings'. We realised at an early stage that a number of brick tunnels and similar structures looked suitable for bats in terms of humidity and temperature, but lacked suitable cracks and crevices in which the bats could conceal themselves. This was addressed initially with a variety of timber structures, but in the autumn of 1985 a series of experiments were conducted to manufacture terra cotta clay and concrete 'bat bricks'. These have proved to be very attractive to hibernating bats, probably for the concealment they offer along with improved humidity and temperature retaining characteristics. Up to seven Daubenton have been found in a single brick, while four different bat species have been observed to use them over the nine winters of usage.

## Finance

Work of a building or structural nature is rarely cheap, and much of the work carried out has, of necessity, been in a serious building conservation vein, rather than the more normal nature conservation, scrub clearance or ditch digging kind. This has been split, according to

circumstance, complexity and availability of funding, between DIY – a few of the bat group members actually rolling up their sleeves and digging out the holes, mixing concrete, laying blocks and the like – and the rest going out to local professional firms and individual builders. Some of this has been achieved with donations from members, friends and supporters, while bodies such as English Nature and The Norfolk Wildlife Trust have given some generous funding over the years. Outstanding amongst the benefactors to our bat conservation cause locally has been the Vincent Wildlife Trust to whom our thanks are most sincerely conveyed. We must also mention the kind help that has been received from most of the district and county council planning departments where they have been approached, plus the many voluntary bodies such as the National Trust who have co-operated. In short, it is most heartening to find that bat conservation work is now almost universally accepted as legitimate and worthwhile, which is in contrast to the attitudes of twenty or more years ago!



**Figure 2.** *Eaton Bats Winter 1992/3*

### Monitoring

As in most facets of life, it pays to have some sort of assessment of what has been done to judge how competent and worthwhile it all was. Important county sites are checked for integrity and the bats counted once per month during the winter by licensed bat workers. A typical site is shown in Figure 2. Minor sites, usually less than 10 bats, might be checked only once or twice per winter, or even every other winter.

Data is recorded on computer, using a reliable interactive data-base called 'Recorder' and the figures are also entered into a spread-sheet such as 'Quattro-Pro' in order to be able to assess trends and compare annual figures.

A further commitment to site monitoring has been made using small 'Tinytalk' temperature loggers which have proved to be 99% reliable in the very damp conditions. The

temperature data is down-loaded onto a laptop computer then automatically graphed. These have enabled individual sites to be properly investigated and bats site usage successfully interpreted.

More practical bat conservation work has been carried out in East Anglia during the past decade than almost any other area, with the exception of work aimed specifically at horseshoe bats in southern Wales and south-west England. May we thank and encourage everyone who has been involved, while inviting yet wider involvement. Long may this work continue!

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## Viral Haemorrhagic Disease of Rabbits: A Threat to Breckland's Birds and Plants

I.F. Keymer

Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (R.V.H.D.) was first discovered in China in domestic rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in 1984 and in the United Kingdom (southern England) in 1992. The following year it was diagnosed in domestic rabbits in Guernsey. It was first confirmed in wild rabbits (*O. cuniculus*) in England (Kent and Devon) in 1994, although it had been suspected earlier than this. At that time, it was already well established in mainland Europe, having first appeared there in southern Italy in 1986. Since appearing in England in 1992, there have been many cases (over 90 in 1994) in domestic rabbits, including outbreaks in Norfolk. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food (M.A.F.F.) declared it a notifiable disease in 1991 [Specified Diseases (Notification order), 1991]. This means that movement restrictions of domestic rabbits are placed on infected premises. Rabbit Societies are also notified of the outbreak. If the disease is suspected in wild rabbits the M.A.F.F. should be notified immediately. If possible, carcasses should be submitted for examination to the local M.A.F.F. Veterinary Investigation Centre, which in East Anglia is situated at Bury St Edmunds.



The causal agent of the disease is a calicivirus, closely related to, but apparently not the same as, the virus causing the European brown hare syndrome (E.B.H.S.) which was first reported in Sweden in the early 1980s. E.B.H.S. was first confirmed in East Anglia in 1989 and was probably present before then. It is suspected that hares (*Lepus europaeus*) may have died from the disease in Cambridgeshire as early as 1976 and from my own experience I suspect that I encountered it in Norfolk in 1980, without realising what it was.

The origin of R.V.H.D. in China is unknown and it is uncertain how it spread from mainland Europe to England. As the virus is very stable and resistant to dessication and maintains its infectivity at low temperatures, it may have arrived here in frozen carcasses of domestic rabbits or even crossed the Channel by airborne droplets, migrating birds or insects, or by means of the south coast ferry traffic.

Rabbits over eight weeks of age are susceptible. The incubation period is very short, between 24 and 72 hours. Unlike myxomatosis the disease is not easily recognisable, because infected rabbits show only depression, loss of appetite, difficulty in breathing, inco-ordination and blood-stained discharge in their droppings. Sick, wild rabbits may fall prey to predators. If not they will die in one or two days, when it is likely that the carcasses will be eaten by scavengers. It will be appreciated therefore that the disease could become well established in a wild population before it is noticed.

R.V.H.D. is good news for arable farmers. In Australia it is already being spread artificially in conjunction with the myxomatosis virus, with the aim of wiping out the rabbits which were introduced by the Europeans during their colonisation of the country. There is no doubt that wild rabbits are considerable pests in Australia, not only to farmers, but also to conservationists. As an introduced species, they have wreaked havoc with grazing land, but also with the indigenous vegetation. In this country, although arable farmers will be delighted that the virus has arrived here, this enthusiasm will not be shared by breeders of domestic rabbits and by most conservationists.

Although rabbits are believed to have been introduced into Britain from mainland Europe as recently as the 1100s, they have been present long enough to have adapted to their environment in a similar way to that of our indigenous mammals. Rabbits are important prey of foxes and stoats, and especially in the west country, also of buzzards. In the Brecks and some southern heaths their close grazing produces suitable nesting conditions for stone curlews and favours many species of heathland plants, especially those of diminutive size. Their burrows provide nesting sites for wheatears and stock doves. Other birds may also benefit from the type of habitat which rabbits help to create and maintain. When myxomatosis virtually wiped out the rabbit population in the 1950s, this had a devastating effect on many plants and indirectly adversely affected some insects. Initially, however, it favoured avian scavengers such as buzzards and corvids and also predators such as foxes and stoats. Later these species, especially buzzards, declined until the few surviving rabbits built up a degree of immunity and began to multiply and increase again. Myxomatosis was a mixed blessing to naturalists at that time. Its effects were not entirely disastrous, because the seeds of some heathland plants were able to survive and return later when close grazing by rabbits provided suitable conditions for them.

Unfortunately there is little that can be done to stop R.V.H.D. spreading in the wild rabbit population. No doubt some people will assist its spread, if indeed this has not already occurred. A vaccine is now available in this country and undoubtedly will be widely used by rabbit breeders. However, it is totally impractical for the immunisation of wild rabbits. The only consolation for conservationists is that it is unlikely that R.V.H.D. will wipe out all the wild rabbits, because infectious diseases seldom eliminate entire populations of animals unless very few numbers in complete isolation are involved. The few which survive (as in the case of myxomatosis) will then eventually build up a population with a degree of

munity to the infection. Indeed as this virus is closely related to E.B.H.S. and there is no evidence that the infection has had an adverse effect on the hare population, hopefully R.V.H.D. may not be such a threat to rabbits after all. Even so, it may spread more quickly than E.B.H.S. because rabbits, unlike hares, are gregarious and this helps the spread of infectious disease.

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Since this article was written (early 1995), further research has shown that a proportion of both healthy, wild and commercial, laboratory rabbits in the United Kingdom are positive to blood tests for R.V.H.D. This finding suggests the presence of long-standing circulation of a closely related, but non-pathogenic strain of calicivirus in the rabbit population. There is no convincing evidence that this strain is the cause of E.B.H.S. derived from hares. Fortunately the strain appears to afford a high degree of protection against R.V.H.D. and therefore is likely to prevent large scale outbreaks of the infection.

## Pox Virus Infection of Squirrels

*I.F. Keymer*

In the *Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report* for 1981, Jonathan Reynolds, John Goldsmith and I wrote an article on squirrels in which we drew attention to the spread of greys in the County and the decline of the reds. Dr J.C. Reynolds wrote further short articles on squirrels in the reports of 1982, 1984 and 1985. These articles make depressing reading showing the steady decline of reds, with a remnant population almost confined to Thetford Forest by 1985. By that time, greys had been recorded in more than half the 5 km grid squares of Norfolk. Now (1995), grey squirrels are probably present in every 5 km square of the county and small numbers of reds are managing to survive only in Thetford Forest on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk. We can probably thank the Forestry Commission for the reds' survival in this area, because it has set up a special sanctuary for them (see the article by Dr John Gurnell in the 1990 Report).

The cause of the decline of reds and the spread of the greys is complex and still not fully understood. Various factors appear to be involved and it is believed that these may include competition for food at certain times of the year, because reds seem less versatile in their food requirements than greys. Some zoologists also believe that there may be interference of red females when they are in oestrus by the larger and more aggressive grey males. Another contributory factor in the decline of reds may be parapox virus infection, especially in small, remnant populations.

Parapox in red squirrels appears to have been present for many years. The late Ted Ellis described symptoms to me which he observed in red squirrels at Keswick near Norwich in 1927, which were almost certainly caused by parapox virus. Ted was not the only person to observe sick red squirrels with possible parapox before the Second World War. Middleton reported similarly affected squirrels in the Thetford area in 1920. The cause was attributed to distemper or mange. It was not until 1962 that a detailed description of the disease was published by Edwards, a veterinary surgeon working in Shropshire. Edwards was unable to discover the cause. I first observed the disease in a sick red squirrel at Stanford near Thetford in 1971 and after that I was sent several similarly affected reds for examination from various parts of Norfolk and Suffolk. It was not until 1980 that it occurred to me that the disease resembled orf or contagious pustular dermatitis of sheep, which is caused by a parapox virus infection. I sent an affected squirrel to a virologist colleague (Mr Tony Scott) at the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge and he confirmed the presence of a



parapox virus in the eyelids, using the electron microscope. The virus appeared to be almost identical to that causing orf in sheep, but was later found to be different.

Greys were introduced into this country from North America last century and there is no evidence to suggest that by 1927 they were present in Norfolk or indeed anywhere in East Anglia. A pox infection causing skin tumours has been recorded in grey squirrels in their native North America. Signs similar to parapox infection of reds in Great Britain appear not to have been observed there, but there are one or two unconfirmed reports in this country. It is unclear, therefore, if pox of grey squirrels is the same disease as parapox of reds. In order to provide an answer to this problem it is of course necessary to obtain a sick or dead, grey squirrel for virological examinations. This is easier said than done, because sick greys appear to be extremely rare. There is reason to believe that parapox infection in reds is associated with stress of some kind, such as shortage of food. The least likely area to find a sick grey is therefore probably an area where they are not plentiful and the most likely, in a confined area where they are extremely common.

The signs of the disease in reds are not dissimilar from myxomatosis in rabbits and are characterised mainly by swollen eyelids. Scabby sores also affect the skin around the eyes, on the chin, around the mouth and on the lips. The affected squirrels become weak and lethargic, appear to be blind in the late stages of the infection and become easy to catch.

If anyone reading this article should find a sick or dead, grey squirrel showing symptoms similar to those described for parapox in reds, or indeed find a grey with skin swellings or other lesions on any part of its body, I should be grateful if they would inform me as soon as possible by telephoning 01263 587365. I can then take steps to get the carcase examined for parapox infection. In the meantime the carcase should be kept cold (for example refrigerated) but **NOT** deep frozen.



(J. Last)

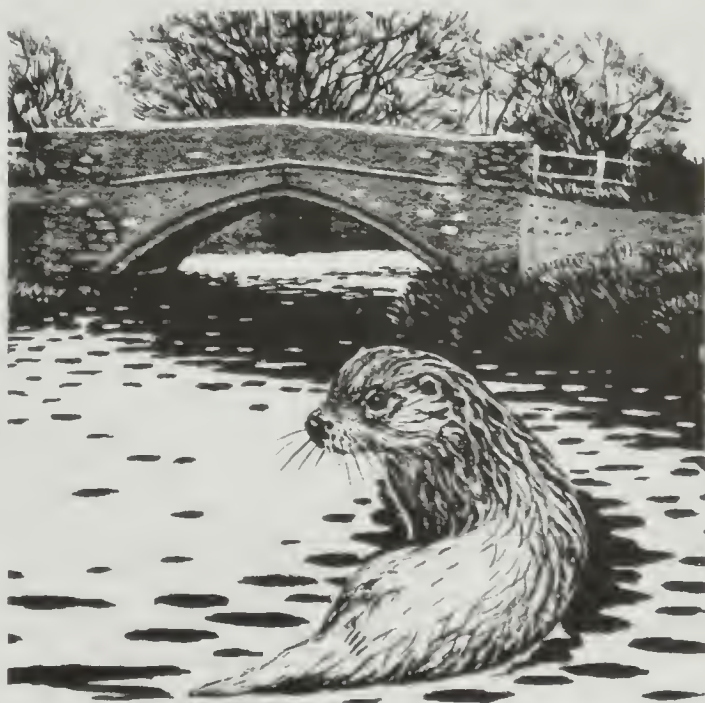


# Contributors to the Mammal Report

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*(J. Last)*

# Classified List



*(J. Last)*



One of the problems writing this List is that it is very difficult making comparisons between one year's records and another's. In 1993 for example many recorders followed 1992's gloomy reports regarding the status of the **Hedgehog** *Erinaceus europaeus* with more depressing reports and 1994 has provided fewer records than 1993. This year however observations of Norfolk mammals have been provided by 23% fewer people than in the previous year. This must have had an effect on the numbers recorded.

One can really only note comments made by regular contributors. Ian Keymer states that he has made the same number of observations of Hedgehogs in each of the last three years and made one fewer in each of the two preceding years. Jean Gaffney, who did not see any Hedgehogs in her garden in 1993 (the first occasion this had happened in 20 years) observed single Hedgehogs there on 11 occasions during 1994. Paul Cobb stated that Hedgehogs were still common, but not as abundant as in the last few years. Keith Zealand reported live Hedgehogs and road casualties only in October and November.

What also needs to have light thrown on it is what Alec Bull called "a deliberate and unprecedented slaughter of Hedgehogs" because "occasionally one may take a few eggs of game birds". This toll is also taking place in Stanford Training Area. The greater annual percentage of Hedgehog records concerns dead ones: 58% in 1994.

Like the Hedgehog, the **Mole** *Talpa europaea* makes its presence very obvious. One correspondent refers to the "war of attrition" which Moles always win. As has been stressed before the number of molehills gives no indication of the size of the local population. Moles have again been recorded from much of the county including a freak, possibly erythristic, specimen found dead at Welney Wildfowl Refuge. They have been reported in bracken in Stanford Training Area thus correcting a mistaken interpretation in last year's Report. Another recorder reported mole fortresses in rough, damp, grassland in the Training Area as well as several on marshes near East Tuddenham. One wonders if Moles will continue to survive. Despite being classed as insectivores, the major item of diet is earthworms. In fact stores of earthworms made by Moles have contained up to 115 earthworms – almost entirely one species: *Lumbricus terrestris*.

Coming to the **Common Shrew** *Sorex araneus* the records are largely of dead specimens. Usual killers are cats and not cars. This was the species most commonly recorded throughout the county. Particularly interesting was the 'very dead' specimen on the move at East Wretham. But it was being transported by burying beetles.

Of the **Pygmy Shrew** *Sorex minutus* although most records are of casualties, one concerns a cat. One suspects however that many of the animals killed by cats and simply recorded as shrews might well be Pygmy Shrews. One recorder reports the bones of Pygmy Shrews contained in owl pellets.

Only two records of **Water Shrews** *Neomys fodiens* were received and both from Welney; one of these was found dead. The paucity of records is doubtless due to behaviour and habitat preferences. Despite the work of Perrow and Jowitt in Broadland (see the 1993 Report) the local status of the Water Shrew is just not known.

Six species of bats figure in the records for 1994. The **Noctule** *Nyctalus noctula* was reported from three locations: two in the west and at Sheringham Park where two summer roosts were discovered. One roost was in an old woodpecker hole and contained six specimens. The other held up to 36 Noctules.

The **Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, not surprisingly, figures in 51 bat observations including the first flight record of the year – at Poringland 28th February. Among the more impressive counts were over 100 adults and young at Hanworth and 600 which occupied a Church on the Fen borders.

**Daubenton's Bat** *Myotis daubentonii* is widespread in Norfolk, particularly over waterways. During the year it was reported at 20 sites. The most notable Breckland winter



roost held 39 Daubenton's during mid-January.

**Natterer's Bat** *Myotis nattereri* was recorded at a dozen sites with a summer peak of 30 at one breeding colony.

The **Brown Long-eared Bat** *Plecotus auritus* was noted at 12 sites. One of the most important contained 48 adults on 31st August and 35 adults a month later.

A total of four **Barbastelles** *Barbastella barbastellus* – the most important East Anglian species – were located at two localities.

When bird-watching at Sheringham 1st September P.E. Beard spotted a small bat coming in off the sea at 10.20am. What might this have been?

We can be sure that the **Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* is far more abundant than reports suggest. It is considered by many to be of insufficient interest. However all information concerning any wild animal in Norfolk is of value and Rabbit detail may well become of importance in the future. Since the mid 1950s, the Rabbit population has been infected by myxomatosis which, being caused by a virus, is like the common cold in humans. It is always present and not possible to develop an immunity. Myxomatoid specimens were reported from many parts of the county. And it seems the Rabbit now faces a new threat: Viral Haemorrhagic disease which has caused mortality in more than 80% of colonies in Spain. It was first reported in Britain, in domestic Rabbits, in 1992. This disease may well threaten the intensively studied wild Rabbit colony at the University of East Anglia. Very large numbers of Rabbits were again killed on Norfolk roads; Diana Beckley's 2 cats killed 57 Rabbits between them during the course of the year. Among the 180 Rabbit observations may be mentioned a total of 58 in a single field near Muckleborough Hill. Melanistic Rabbits appeared at several sites and an all-white one on Snettisham beach. Rabbits in the car-park spinney and adjacent garden at Welney Wildfowl Refuge were very surprising. These were the first to appear here and had successfully negotiated the Hundred Foot River.

Mixed fortunes beset the **Brown Hare** *Lepus capensis*. Mike Hutchings and Stephen Harris of the University of Bristol have completed an analysis of the data obtained during the National Hare Survey. Mid-winter estimate is between 680,000 and 950,000 animals, only half of the highest of earlier estimates. The Hare population is now heavily biased towards arable farmland, a strange situation for animals which evolved in open grassland on the steppes of eastern Europe. This change in behaviour results in Hares doing rather better in eastern England than elsewhere. Cambridge, Suffolk and Norfolk occupy only 5% of the total land area of Britain, but they contain almost one fifth of the country's Hares. Even here Hares have declined substantially as has been noted in the Report over several years. Another point made by the national survey and confirmed by local observers is that even where Hares remain relatively common they are very localised in distribution. In an area centred on Swaffham, for example, Jean Gaffney noted 183 live sightings – almost the same number as in each of the two preceding years. Her largest concentration was 43 Hares over a distance of two miles west of Swaffham in a single day.

Ian and Francis Simper, who noted Hares in 55 tetrads in west Norfolk also echo the national report. The greatest numbers they observed were in four 10-kilometer squares in Breckland. Bob Leancy stated that Hares remain extremely scarce in the Wroxham area compared to the 1970s. In central Norfolk one recorder saw no Hares at all in 1994.

Not surprisingly few **Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris* records were received. One found dead by G. Puttock in a pine plantation just outside the Stanford Training Area was described to Ian Keymer. He thinks it had typical lesions of parapox viral infection, i.e. swollen lips and eyelids. Fortunately other Red Squirrel sightings relate to live specimens in the vicinity of Cranwich and Croxton. Additional groups have been reliably reported in the Swaffham and Little Langford/Bodney areas. The project continues in Thetford Forest where 12 additional Red Squirrels have been introduced this year.

For the **Grey Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis* 74 records were submitted involving of

rise a great many more individuals. Sightings covered the complete county as is only too usual. One was seen stealing an entire bird-feeder, not just the peanuts within in, and explaining the mysterious disappearance of the previous two. Another Grey Squirrel was observed running round one tree, then heading across the ground to another, leaping into the air and turning somersaults, all accompanied by a constant and furious lashing of its tail. Though still plentiful in the Stanford Training Area numbers there have considerably increased. This is hardly surprising considering over a thousand are killed there annually.

Of the **Bank Vole** *Clethrionomys glareolus* there were again few records. Three at Welney Wildfowl Refuge were the first recorded there for several years.

The **Short-tailed Field Vole** *Microtus agrestis* on the other hand has produced many sightings although over 80 were killed by cats.

A **Water Vole** *Arvicola amphibius* at Welney Wildfowl Refuge suffered an unusual fate. This large specimen was taken by a Heron. More fortunate examples were seen throughout the length of the Reserve. Water Voles were reported at Flitcham for the second year running showing a recovery from the effects of a long drought. They have also been reported from 24 additional and widely scattered sites including Catfield, Ranworth, Ackling, Cley and Heacham. Water Voles are in fact common on the coastal marshes in the Heacham area where the water must be quite saline.

The status of the **Long-tailed Field or Wood Mouse** *Apodemus sylvaticus* is perhaps not so healthy. One would expect to receive more records of the Wood Mouse than of the Water vole. In fact there are fewer this year. Wood Mouse victims are usually counted singly while Field Vole victims are counted in tens. One recorder's cats killed many more rabbits this year than the total number of Wood Mice reported as cats' victims by all our recorders.

Also mysterious, according to the first issue of *Endangered British Mammals* is the **Yellow-necked Mouse** *Apodemus flavicollis*. Only recognised as a British species at the end of the last century it is considered rare. In Norfolk encouraging reports have been coming in in recent years indicating the species is well established in at least some parts of the county. So it is disappointing to report that in 1994 no observations have been received.

Reports of the **Harvest Mouse** *Micromys minutus* include two casualties. One had been killed on a road. Additional records concern Harvest Mouse nests including three in the Stanford Training Area.

The surprisingly few contributors who recorded the **House Mouse** *Mus musculus* would prefer that it once again became the dry steppe mouse before it became commensal with man. The majority of records relate to trapping and killing animals rather than observing them.

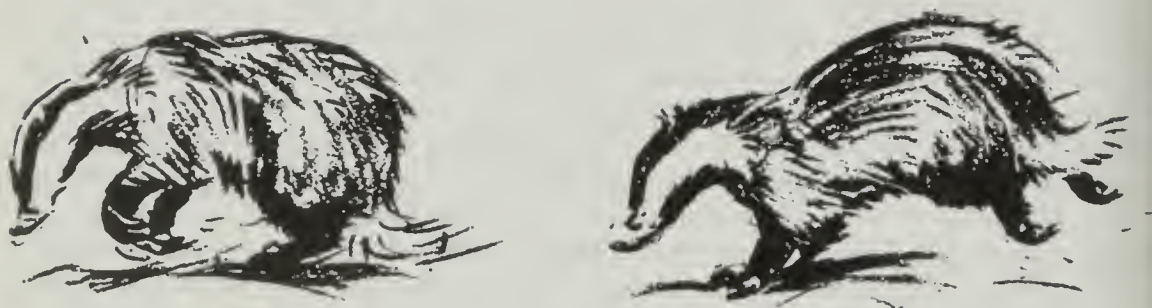
The same is true of the **Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus* for which there was the usual large number of reports. "Four invasions during the year and all poisoned" and "Regularly trapped and poisoned" are typical comments. Even more widespread: "Killed on road", the latter remark making up more than half the Brown Rat total. Perhaps a Brown Rat's distinctive tail makes its corpse readily identifiable to motorists. Only comment concerning damage caused by Rats is by Keith Zealand who remarks that they are partly responsible for the predation of nesting Fulmars on the cliffs near Sheringham.

An additional culprit at Sheringham cliffs is thought to be the **Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*. Foxes were almost certainly responsible for predation of 3 Mute Swan nests at Welney and killing several large Lapwing chicks. Seven Foxes were killed on the Reserve as part of a long term control programme. Large numbers of Foxes were also killed throughout the county. On a Broadland 1000 acre farm, for example, a total of 51 were taken during the 1993/4 winter. Two dead Foxes found by Ian and Francis Simper were thought to have been infected with mange. Rather more pleasant reports involving Foxes included George Taylor's note of one which sat watching him mowing at Upton Fen. Suzanne Williams had a similar experience. After watching 4 cubs playing together on two occasions at Foxley Wood a third visit was



disappointing until it was realised that *she* was being observed by a Fox cub.

The **Badger** *Meles meles* is not so easy to observe, but an up-to-date summary of distribution in the county should appear in the 1995 Report. In the meantime details have been received of the continuing healthy status of five established sets, two of which have been much enlarged. One now encroaches into an arable field.



The comparatively few sightings of **Otters** *Lutra lutra* present a false picture of the present day distribution in the county. As a result of the re-introduction programme – hailed by English Nature as “one of the conservation success stories of the decade” – Otters now breed naturally in every river system in Norfolk. Yet extinction came close; there were fewer than 30 Otters in the county a quarter of a century ago. Great credit is due to Philip and Jeanne Wayre for setting up the Otter Trust at Earsham in 1975. Since 1983 ninety Otters all bred at Earsham have been released into the wild in East Anglia, Dorset and Wiltshire. In fact from next year Earsham Otters will be released in France and Holland where they also face extinction.

News is encouraging for the **Stoat** *Mustela erminea*. There have again been many reports although at Welney it is “still scarce compared with ten years ago”. However at Watton more were seen during 1994 than for many years. Keith Zealand reported a large male having been killed by a cat – an unusual event. Suzanne Williams noted a family of Stoats crossing a road near Seething. Carl Donner reported a specimen in full ermine near West Newton in January. Judy and John Geeson saw 2 Stoats fighting near Brancaster in March; one was in partial ermine. D.A. Peacock recorded a Stoat dancing on the grass at Weybourne provoking alarm calls from birds. The animal then climbed security fencing ending on barbed wire at the summit. Ian Keymer recorded a Stoat in Stanford Training Area climbing a wire-netting fence with ease. Finally Alec Bull describes on an April day a Stoat being persistently pursued by a Rabbit at Bodney Warren. Half a mile away on 28th December a Stoat was laboriously moving a Rabbit there which it had killed taking 5 minutes to cover a hundred yards.

There was a good number of records of the **Weasel** *Mustela nivalis*. Many, including a family of 8, were crossing roads. Several at Welney used the footbridge to cross the Hundred Foot River. Most unusual was the Weasel in a car-park at the Hardwick Industrial Estate, King's Lynn, which was “running about and looking very lost”.

The fewer reports of the **North American Mink** *Mustela vison* received the better. Most records are of traffic casualties or animals trapped and killed. At Welney there was an



crease due to poor trapping results early in the year. By mid-summer Mink were being seen regularly. One which took up residence adjacent to the main hide ate a number of Mallard eggs. A new trapping programme was implemented and 30 Mink were dealt with by the year-end – the highest annual cull to date. George Jessup makes reference to “35 killed at Feltwell” and another was shot at Cley. Most surprising was the Mink walking along the edge of a frozen pond at Stow Bardolph closely followed by 2 Smew!

The **Ferret** *Mustela furo/Putorius putorius* has again been recorded in the wild in Norfolk during 1994. Three specimens were seen in the same area as last year.

At Scroby Sands off Yarmouth there has been a massive increase in the numbers of **Grey Seals** *Halichoerus grypus*. By the end of the year some 200 were in residence. The land is under-water at high tide and although half a dozen pups were born on mainland beaches north of Yarmouth at Horsey and Winterton none survived. Scroby also attracted up to 90 **Common Seals** *Phoca vitulina*. At Blakeney Point a peak of over 400 seals attained during the August moult included 25% Greys. This combined total also included individuals rescued elsewhere in the country and later released at Blakeney. Aerial surveys of the complete Wash revealed a maximum total of 953 Seals (Common and Grey) during August followed by 557 during October.

Unexpected sightings of Common Seals included one in the Great Ouse. At Welney John Kemp reports that single Common Seals were in the Hundred Foot River 10th January, 1st and 11th April and 7th June; a second wanderer in the River Delph within the Washes had presumably entered the water system through Welmore sluice. This individual displayed a yellow tag on a hind flipper, but the number was not discernible. The Reserve is almost 20 miles from the nearest open sea.

The **Chinese Muntjac** *Muntiacus reevesi* is well at home in Norfolk. Ian and Francis Simper in their usual splendid deer report in west Norfolk (and where they found Muntjac in 32 tetrads) state that numbers in north-western areas of Thetford Forest have increased dramatically during the last year or two. Muntjac are now commonly seen to the north of Mundford where they were formerly rather scarce. Increases have also been found in the West Norfolk Forest. Recent northward expansion of Muntjac may be due to many acres of habitat in Thetford Forest being temporarily lost due to tree felling. A regular visitor to Wayland Wood noted 2 Muntjac there for the first time in 1994. Further north in Sheringham Park Muntjac have become a relatively common sight and are beginning to cause damage to garden plants, but not yet to forest plantings. Garden damage is becoming regularly reported throughout the county.

Unlike the Muntjac the **Fallow Deer** *Dama dama* is largely confined to west Norfolk. The Simpers recorded them in 5 west Norfolk tetrads. One group of 10 Fallow appeared on arable not far from Houghton Hall deer park – a constant source for additions to numbers in the wild.

Reports have again been received of the **Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus* from all over the county. Two contributors recorded a herd of 16 in the Hickling area. On one occasion they were seen crossing the Hickling-Sea Palling road. The Simpers report 14 stags in a clearing in Thetford Forest and 13 hinds and calves in the same locality at another time. Largest concentration they are aware of is 93 Red Deer counted by forest rangers and gamekeepers. Although in Thetford Forest this occurrence was just over the Suffolk border. Among the particularly fine individuals in the Forest is a 22 point stag.

The **Roe Deer** *Capreolus capreolus*, reported from a large number of sites is one of the most frequently reported mammals. It is the most successful of our deer. The Simpers recorded Roe in 55 tetrads, just 2 fewer than all the other deer species combined. A wide range of habitats attract Roe: deciduous and coniferous woodland, alder carr, shelter belts and hedgerows, fens, heaths, grassland and arable. A group of 20 Roe were noted feeding in

a field of parsnips in the Thetford Forest area. A late report for 1993 is of a Roebuck on Weybourne beach, apparently licking salt from pebbles in the surf. Many Roebucks in Thetford Forest do not appear healthy, showing very small or deformed antlers, or no antlers at all. The cause of this is not yet known.

Finally the **Chinese Water-deer** *Hydropotes inermis* for which there are again many Broadland records. Four were found dead on a farm during March; one had been dragged 50 yards into a cornfield. Among the more interesting sightings was a female Chinese Water-deer on a roadside verge between Foulden and Hilborough on 9th May – a long way from the Broads. And a male was observed in the same area exactly a month later.

The **Common Porpoise** *Phocoena phocoena* was reported offshore between Titchwell and Winterton. A total of 29 specimens was recorded.



(J. Last)



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(Reg. Charity No. 291604)

*on: Her Majesty the Queen*

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(Reg. Charity No. 267670)

*ident: Chris Knights*

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