

S.296

# Norfolk Bird Report 1999



Volume 33 part 2

# Norfolk Bird Report – 1999

*Editor:* Giles Dunmore

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This year for the first time in many decades the Mammal Report has not been included in the current issue. The reason is that Dr Martin Perrow is editing a comprehensive book on the mammals of Norfolk as part of the Wildlife 2000 Project which aims to record the county's fauna and flora at the turn of the century. The work involved has meant that the annual report on the mammals of Norfolk has had to be omitted for this year. We plan to return to the normal format next year so please send in your records of mammals to Dr Perrow at the School of Biological Sciences, UEA, Norwich NR4 7TJ. Dr Perrow also welcomes articles/papers on our county mammals for future inclusion. Details of the book and publication date will be announced in due course.

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*Front cover photograph:* Desert Wheatcar (R Chittenden)

*Back cover photograph:* Bittern (D Nyc)

# NORFOLK BIRD REPORT – 1999

## Editorial

On behalf of the Society I am pleased to present the annual report on the Birds of Norfolk.

### Acknowledgements

When I took over the role of Editor in May last year, I resolved to enlist some additional help in the preparation of the present and future reports in view of my continuing role also as Joint Recorder. I have therefore set-up an Editorial Team comprising:

- myself,
- Neil Lawton – Joint Recorder,
- John Williamson – liaison with Norfolk Bird Club and the printers,
- Julian Bhalerao – co-ordinating photographs and sketches,
- Justin Lansdell – co-ordinating articles and dealing with Review of the Year.

I am grateful to them for their help, ideas and encouragement. Neil, John and Julian were also particularly involved in the preparation of the 1998 Report and it is pleasing to note that it was awarded second place in the 'British Birds' Report of the Year competition, as well as in 1997, having been joint winner in 1994 and 1995.

However, the production of a report for a county like Norfolk, with the number of observers and records submitted, has to be very much a team effort and my thanks must go to:

- the other compilers of the monthly and annual Record Cards – Dave Bridges, Vince Hanlon, Justin Lansdell, Neil Lawton, Mick Saunt and John Williamson;
- the other authors of the Systematic List – Peter Allard, Dave Appleton, Andy Benson, Dave and Jacqui Bridges, Andy Brown, Mike Crewe, Keith Dye, Vernon Eve, Mick Fiszer, Vince Hanlon, Phil Heath, Gary Hibbard, Ian Johnson, John Kemp, Chris Lansdell, Justin Lansdell, Neil Lawton, Mick Saunt, Moss Taylor, Andy Wilson, Peter Wilson and John Williamson;
- members of the County Records Committee;
- authors of the articles in the Report;
- the artists and photographers who have made their work freely available;
- Steve Wakeman for the meteorological information;
- Mike Rogers, Secretary of the British Birds Rarities Committee;
- Richard Bashford of the BTO for supplying details of the Breeding Birds Survey and Dave Appleton for analysing and summarising this information;
- Pat Bonham for his invaluable help in proof-reading the draft Systematic List and correcting the grammar;
- all the many individual contributors and clubs/societies, and in particular Birdline East Anglia, who have contributed records, without which there would be no Report;
- finally my wife Judy for her continued help in typing, layout and in many other ways.



**The County Records Committee** (Steve Gantlett, Phil Heath, John Kemp, Andy Stoddart and John Williamson) considered a total of 92 records in the year; 7 of these were rejected, mostly as a result of insufficient detail and not owing to an incorrect identification. The Committee also reviewed the list of species needing submission of a written description or photographic evidence (and subject to acceptance) prior to publication and decided to include Dark-breasted Barn Owl to the list. The list is now as follows:

Black-necked Grebe (at sea)	Ring-necked Parakeet
Cory’s Shearwater	Dark-breasted Barn Owl
Great Shearwater	Bee-eater
Balearic Shearwater	Short-toed Lark
Storm Petrel	Tawny Pipit
Purple Heron	Flava Wagtail (continental races except
White Stork	Blue-headed and Grey-headed)
Greenland White-fronted Goose	Bluethroat (White-spotted only)
‘Small’ Canada Goose	Aquatic Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Marsh Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Melodious Warbler
Surf Scoter	Dartford Warbler
Spotted Crake	Pallas’s Warbler
Corncrake	Chiffchaff ( <i>tristis</i> race)
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Woodchat Shrike
Grey Phalarope (in flight at sea)	Raven
Sabine’s Gull	Serin
Ring-billed Gull	Common Rosefinch
Yellow-legged Gull ( <i>cachinnans</i> race)	Ortolan Bunting
Lesser Black-backed Gull ( <i>fuscus</i> race)	Little Bunting

With regard to the submission of details, obviously the Committee would expect a far more detailed description of a species such as Ring-billed Gull (which is not only rare in the county but difficult to identify) than a species such as a White Stork. Written descriptions should consist of a brief note of the circumstances of the observation (weather, distance from bird, any other observers, etc), followed by a description of the actual bird(s) and details of any other species nearby for comparison. Written notes should state clearly how a bird was identified. Observers are also requested to included a note of their previous experience of the species and, if relevant, a brief outline of how any confusable species were eliminated. Copies of field sketches (however poor artistically) are often invaluable together with written field notes. It should be noted that on occasions observers may be asked for further details of species not contained in the above list – if records relate to unusual dates, localities, etc.

**Editorial Material:** Articles for consideration, artwork, photographs and transparencies should continue to be submitted to me at 49 Nelson Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8DA.

**Submission of Records**

All records for the Systematic List should continue to be submitted to me at 49 Nelson Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8DA. Preferably these should be submitted on a monthly basis or, if this is not possible, on a 3-monthly or 6-monthly basis. Obviously records can



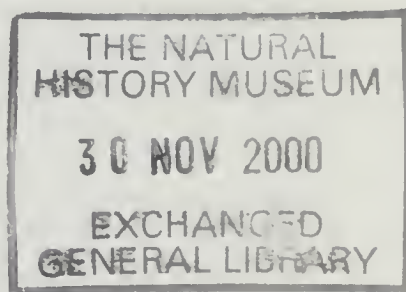
be accepted annually after the end of the year but all observers are requested to submit their notes within a shorter time scale if possible to reduce the pressure of recording in January/February the following year. Receipt of late records causes a major problem in drafting the Systematic List *and observations received after February of the following year cannot be guaranteed for inclusion in the Report.* All records should be listed in the order of species appearing in this Report. Notes will not normally be acknowledged but names of all contributors will be published. To obtain as complete coverage as possible records 'phoned-in' to Birdline East Anglia have been frequently used in the compilation of the List. However, records of national and local rarities have only been included where considered and accepted by the appropriate Committee.

During the year I spent a considerable amount of time 'chasing' descriptions of both county and national rarities. I would request that finders of such birds should submit details to me as soon as possible and certainly not left to the end of the year. In the case of national rarities these should be submitted in duplicate. Obviously if other observers have particularly good views of a rarity for example, but were not the finder, then additional descriptions would be gratefully received.

As far as I am aware there are only two outstanding records awaiting a decision from the British Birds Rarities Committee at the time of writing (August 2000). One of these relates to the Blyth's Pipit at Happisburgh in September. As this would be only the second county record hopefully it will be possible to include an article on this bird in next year's report.

Finally a brief mention of computerisation of records. Time has been spent researching the whole subject and it is hoped that it will be possible to run a trial with selected species relating to records in 2000. Full computerisation will obviously be a huge exercise in terms of time and money but further details will be announced in due course.

Giles Dunmore



# Review of the Year 1999

*Justin Lansdell and Steve Wakeham*

The year began just as 1998 had departed with stormy and unsettled weather. **January** was exceptionally mild and often wet with winds for much of the month from the west or south-west, frequently reaching strong to gale-force.

As usual a fine array of rarities and local scarcities remained from 1998. Six Little Egrets and a Spoonbill added to the Mediterranean feel at Titchwell provided by the long-staying Black-winged Stilt. Elsewhere scrutiny of hoards of Pink-footed Geese revealed a number of Barnacle Geese, 2-3 presumed vagrant Canada Geese and more records of Greenland White-fronted Geese as we begin to unravel the status of this distinctive bird in Norfolk's rolling arable fields.

Mild weather ensured that hard-weather wildfowl remained in short supply but a count of 177 Goldeneye in Blakeney Harbour was impressive and a smattering of Smew favoured Hickling Broad and Tottenhill GP.

Other fare to be enjoyed included the returning Black-necked Grebe at Holkham Park Lake, up to 6 Black Brants, a Green-winged Teal at Whitlingham Lane GP, 5 wandering Rough-legged Buzzards with 2 in the Massingham Heath area also favoured by 2 Red Kites, 9 Cranes in the Broads and a Black-bellied Dipper near North Walsham. The only rarity of the month was an American Wigeon which surfaced among its more familiar congeners at Cley on the 2nd only to disappear just as quickly. The continuing presence of a huge Pied Wagtail roost in floodlit central Norwich and a super showing of Shore Lark gave passerine interest.

Diligent observers at Breydon/Berney were rewarded with site record counts of Golden Plover and Curlew, but to balance that many reported a dearth of Siskins, Redpolls and Crossbills at traditional sites, and only one reliable wintering Great Grey Shrike was available to year listers.

The anticyclone that saw January out remained nearby for the first three days of **February** bringing a mini-influx of Waxwings. However, on the 4th a cold front swept south-east and the resultant west to north-westerlies next day rewarded seawatchers with a Leach's Petrel and 50 Gannets at Sheringham, all following an unseasonable Sooty Shearwater there on the 2nd. These winds possibly hinted at the origin of a Raven at Grimston Heath also on the 5th, but this was overshadowed by a very popular presumed vagrant Canada Goose at Holkham next day amongst a cacophony of geese.

Over the following few days winds veered further towards the north resulting in 2 Pomarine Skuas at Cley and the first of two sizeable counts of Little Gulls at Sheringham, both on the 7th. Coastal snow showers on that day were followed by more widespread snowfall across the county. Pressure then began to rise but it was not until the 14th that mild air returned from the west. At this time the hordes of Wigeon at Berney parted long enough



Smew (P Jones)

to reveal another drake American Wigeon, while more impressive was a Red-breasted Goose at Lynn Point on 14th-18th, with the winter's best Water Pipit count of 27 at Buckenham.

The weather for the remainder of the month was rather changeable with winds mainly from the west or north-west bringing a huge *laridae* influx to beaches in the Titchwell/Braneaster area. Here up to 6 Glaucous Gulls and an Iceland Gull were discovered amongst gull flocks, including an impressive 9850 Herring Gulls feeding on a wreck of American razorshells. The month's end saw the central Norwich Pied Wagtail roost continuing to break records, with a new peak of 1584 birds.

Changeable conditions continued into **March** and during a period when wildfowl often build up before departure, 1337 Whooper Swans at Welney on the 7th was an all-time peak there. More scarce wildfowl was provided by further Greenland White-fronted Geese, the drake American Wigeon again on two dates at Berney and a Green-winged Teal also at Welney.

Following hot on the heels of a brief cold north-easterly wind on the 8th/9th a deep, but slow moving, area of low pressure to the south-west of Biscay brought warm southerly winds to much of western Europe and the first migrants of spring. A Wheatear at Beeston Bump on the 12th arrived a day before the first Sand Martins and Swallows. By the 14th a warm ridge of high pressure had become established over south-eastern Britain and observers were galvanised into action following the discovery of Norfolk's second Pied-billed Grebe at Stowbridge Pits on the 17th. Another Black-bellied Dipper was found at Lyng on the 22nd-24th but little else was 'on the move' in changeable weather. On the 28th warm dry southerlies inspired the year's first Ospreys to return north through the county and brought the month's star bird, a mobile but well-watched Great-spotted Cuckoo on the east coast. After a brief absence the Pied-billed Grebe was re-found on territory at Thompson Water, a site at which it was to remain until May.

**April** started warm and dry and although a cold front brought thundery rain on the 2nd, it remained generally warm into the Easter weekend. Buckenham still held 14 Water Pipits but numbers declined quickly as winter slipped away quietly, and 2 early Nightingales on the 3rd brought a taste of spring to come. The prevailing weather turned more changeable from the 5th; typical early spring diurnal migrants at this time were a White Stork over Northrepps on the 9th and 18 migrant Sparrowhawks at Winterton next day, while familiar summer migrant passerines filtered slowly into the county without drama. North to north-westerly winds set in on the 11th; it then remained cold and showery until 19th but failed to deter the arrival of a Laughing Gull which flew west at Beeston Bump on the 18th, settling into the Blakeney Point tern colony and Cley village green area for the next two months.

An unseasonably deep area of low pressure on the 19th pushed strengthening but mild south-westerlies back across the county. Quick to respond, the first of 3 singing Savi's Warblers arrived at Hickling and a Kentish Plover made landing briefly at Cley, whilst numbers of summer migrants built up almost unnoticed due to the fine weather. A further large depression moved into Biscay on the 24th-26th forcing winds into the easterly sector. From that direction came a clear surge of Ring Ouzels, a Richard's Pipit at Salthouse, a Purple Heron at Winterton and the spring's earliest Temminck's Stint at Berney.

High pressure remained nearby during the first three days of **May** with light east to north-easterly winds. Bank holiday birdwatchers soon discovered birds from that compass point with 2 Black-necked Grebes at Rockland Broad, the first of 4 Wrynecks at West Somerton, a Short-toed Lark parading clifftops at Sheringham to an assembled throng of visiting birders, and another peak in Ring Ouzel passage. The first numbers of Swifts wheeled over Norfolk skies and a small influx of Grey-headed Wagtails began on the 3rd.



Easterly winds strengthened as fronts pushed northwards on the 5th over central Europe, bringing a Red-throated Pipit to Waxham and 5 Dotterel to Knapton.

More fronts moved across southern Britain on the 6th resulting in a warm southerly airflow for the next three days. Quality birds were quick to respond; a Whiskered Tern arrived at Rockland Broad, a Purple Heron was logged passing six north and east coast localities, and a Black Stork began an eight-day tour of the county by soaring along the Holt-Cromer ridge. A Red-footed Falcon and a Red-throated Pipit on the 9th completed a period of passage which brought the majority of a poor spring movement of Temminck's Stints and Black Terns, but also 2 Ortolan Buntings, both to Blakeney Point.

During the 10th-12th the winds veered to the south-west and the regular Collared Pratincole arrived on cue for its sixth consecutive summer wandering Norfolk's coastline. By mid-month pressure building to the north had produced an easterly airflow, bringing with it a selection of typical Mediterranean and east European birds; 2 Purple Herons lingered while 2 Bee-eaters continued to frustrate by making only brief appearances. Single White Stork, Red-footed Falcon, Kentish Plover and Red-throated Pipit completed the picture, save for the now almost annual Caspian Tern at Breydon Water found by a Bird Race Team on the 16th and a highly unusual spring Sooty Shearwater off Mundesley on the 18th.

A ridge of high pressure building to the south-west brought a return to westerly winds from the 20th, stemming the flow of over-shooting migrants, and grounding a flock of 9 Spoonbills at Cley, the largest gathering in the county for many years. Frontal systems then persisted, before an area of low pressure moving into Biscay on the 27th brought another day of easterlies. Beeston Bump quickly produced another Red-throated Pipit and a Marsh Warbler before a ridge of high pressure to the north pushed cold air southwards over the North Sea.

The resultant north-easterly winds strengthened on the 29th and daytime temperatures on the 30th were at least 12°C cooler than 24 hours previously. Whilst not classic conditions hardy seawatchers were rewarded with the year's peak Manx Shearwater passage and good numbers of Fulmars, Gannets and large auks. Fittingly, the same spell brought not only the month's fourth Wryneck to Waxham, but also the fourth Red-throated Pipit, this time to Blakeney Point, underlining this as a month of quality not quantity.

A ridge of high pressure on the 1st of **June** heralded a sunny start to the month and a Common Rosefinch was located at Blakeney Point. The ridge quickly decayed as fronts moved up from the south and easterly winds on the 2nd saw a brief Pectoral Sandpiper at Cley, with a late spring Grey-headed Wagtail there next day. Further fronts then pushed in as areas of low pressure moved in from the Atlantic. The 6th was a curious day with a late migrant Golden Oriole at Whitlingham Marshes and an unseasonable Waxwing at Thornham. The rest of the month was largely uneventful with high and low pressures alternating and only a Red-necked Phalarope between Cley and Salthouse on the 11th providing excitement. Attention turned to summering birds with the long-staying Laughing Gull taking centre stage, and the breeding Honey Buzzards at the traditional site, an average showing of Quail and Roseate Terns at three localities, also giving variety to warm summer days.

Pressure was high over central Europe at the beginning of **July** as a frontal system moved into Britain. A brief south to south-westerly flow on the 2nd brought the last of the year's crop of Red-footed Falcons, with sightings at Hickling and Pentney, and was presumably responsible for an adult White-winged Black Tern which graced floods at Berney all too briefly on the 5th. High pressure then generally prevailed and with a lull in bird movement, the breeding season activity marched on. Little Terns, while experiencing mixed fortunes elsewhere, produced 200 young on Scolt Head, and 4 pairs of Mediterranean Gulls

attempted nesting at 2 sites. While dozing Spoonbills once more summered, the roving Collared Pratincole re-appeared for the last time but was soon replaced by a Black-winged Pratincole at Cley on the 17th. This midsummer star proved popular and yet erratic, remaining for six weeks to delight and frustrate would-be observers in equal amounts.

The second half of the month also saw a Red-backed Shrike at Titchwell and an unseasonable Glaucous Gull at Snettisham, stirring thoughts of the autumn ahead. As the wind moved into the north-east on the 26th a Cory's Shearwater passed Cley, but this was soon replaced by a more gentle south-easterly breeze which saw temperatures at their highest for the month, reaching 30°C in places on the 31st.

The hot and humid south-easterlies continued into **August**, before thunderstorms brought a slight respite on the 3rd and delivered the first early autumn Black Terns, and southward bound Ospreys. Much cooler, cloudy easterlies set in on the 7th and 8th, bringing 2 Icterine Warblers to Yarmouth Cemetery and the first of a good autumn of Red-necked Phalaropes. Commoner waders for once overshadowing their rarer cousins took centre stage, however, with large numbers of Curlew Sandpipers and Little Stints at a number of sites including Cantley BF which also housed 90 Green Sandpipers and 24 Wood Sandpipers on the 7th.

A northerly breeze on the 10th saw the first worthwhile seawatching (in what was to become a poor year for onshore winds) and a number of early Sooty Shearwaters provided the cream in a steady passage of Arctic Skuas; interestingly a Temminck's Stint also appeared at Titchwell. Further unsettled weather set in from the 13th and 2 Red-necked Phalaropes and a new Temminck's Stint, this time at Cley, ensued.

A strong northerly airflow developed on the 19th bringing a return to seawatching conditions; 200 Arctic Skuas passed Cley with 7 Long-tailed Skuas at Sheringham next day. High pressure to the north-west then built a ridge towards central Europe by the 23rd and welcome easterlies aided the arrival of common drift migrants, an event that was to prove scarce as the autumn progressed.

A Wryneck at Winterton and a Pectoral Sandpiper at Cantley BF on the 23rd, and a Greenish Warbler on Scolt Head next day, proved the pre-cursor to a widespread arrival of Whinchats and Pied Flycatchers on the 25th. With them the expected quality was provided by another Greenish Warbler (again at Scolt Head) and 3 Icterine Warblers.

After a day of brisk westerly winds on the 26th, high pressure across southern England gave a return to light winds and more migrants of easterly origin. However, a Red-backed Shrike at Titchwell and an Ortolan at Blakeney Point were beaten for sheer spectacle by the best autumn passage of juvenile Curlew Sandpipers since 1985; those which accumulated at Cley by the month's end were enjoyed by many, the same of which could not be said of a Corncrake which briefly shared the boardwalk to Daukes Hide with one observer on the 30th.

High pressure at the beginning of **September** produced a dry and very warm spell through to the 11th. Falls of migrants were few during this settled spell but a number of quality birds continued to appear. Following a Dotterel at Winterton on the 1st, an Arctic Warbler on the 5th gave many observers at Holme only tantalising glimpses. The calm weather concluded with 2 Icterine Warblers at Waxham on the 9th and the first arriving Pink-footed Geese next day, but by then a cold front was moving in from the west, bringing a Barred Warbler to Holme on the 12th. Another front became slow moving over the county on the 14th and with it came south-westerly winds, a Spotted Crake at Titchwell, a Buff-breasted Sandpiper for those prepared to make the pilgrimage to Berney Marshes, and yet another Red-necked Phalarope at Cley.

By the 18th an exceptionally deep area of low pressure was approaching western Ireland,



bringing strong to gale-force south to south-easterly winds and the most promising blow from Scandinavia of the month. Drift migrants soon responded with influxes of Pied Flycatchers, Redstarts and Whinchats to coastal localities and with them single Dotterel, Short-toed Lark, Barred Warbler, Common Rosefinch and Ortolan Bunting added quality. It was to be short-lived, however, and by the 22nd the 'helpful' winds were gone once more and the rest of the month was unsettled with winds mainly from the south-west. American waders arrived almost en masse with an American Golden Plover at Tibenham seen by just two observers, but a Baird's Sandpiper and 3 more 'Pecs' were eventually witnessed by more and Norfolk had at least taken part in an impressive invasion of transatlantic waders to Britain.

With the unsettled weather continuing an array of birds from all points of the compass brightened the shortening autumn days. A Sabine's Gull off Cley and a Grey Phalarope at Titchwell were pushed inshore, another Red-necked Phalarope was found at Berney and that almost mythical Norfolk bird, the Corncrake, made another brief appearance. A varied and often exciting month concluded with a huge and unprecedented movement of hirundines, Ospreys and Swifts still lingering in Norfolk airspace and the first of the good showing of Richard's Pipits and Yellow-browed Warblers.

The unsettled spell continued into **October**; on the 3rd the only transatlantic vagrant of the month, a Blue-winged Teal, was at Titchwell and a Rough-legged Buzzard, the first of a mini-influx, was at Felbrigg.

Strong to gale-force north to north-westerly winds on the 4th brought the best seawatching of the month with the bulk provided by thousands of passing Gannets and hundreds of Arctic and Great Skuas. The quality came in the form of small numbers of Pomarine Skuas and Sooty Shearwaters, single Sabine's Gull and Leach's Petrel, and the best Long-tailed Skua passage of a poor autumn by recent standards. On land it was much quieter but 2 Red-breasted Flycatchers were especially notable and predictably the wind direction brought more Yellow-browed Warblers.

A spell of mild westerlies followed and high pressure built up across England from the 11th, persisting to the 14th, and only a drake Ferruginous Duck at Hickling threatened to break the lull in proceedings. Thereafter the high pressure moved into Scandinavia and the south-easterly winds that ensued answered the prayers of birders across Eastern England. First to respond were winter thrushes along the coastal strip but a popular and attractive Pied Wheatear at Choseley from the 14th, with a Dusky Warbler at Holkham and the first Great Grey Shrike of the autumn next day, among many common migrants upped the tempo.

With promising winds weekend birdwatchers were tempted out and the weight of observer coverage soon added 2 Radde's Warblers, a Siberian Stonechat, the autumn's only Bluethroat and the front runners in an impressive showing of Pallas's Warblers. The star of an outstanding spell for rarity hunters, a Red-flanked Bluetail at Brancaster Staithe on the 17th, was unfortunately witnessed by few.

Numbers of Little Gulls arrived off the north coast on the 16th-19th and by the latter



Pied Wheatear (J R Williamson)



date other seabirds were on the move with 600 Gannets, a Leach's Petrel, odd Little Auks and 2 Black Terns offshore.

High pressure finally gave way to more fronts pushing up from the south but not before an elusive Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler had been found at Mundesley on the 20th. A developing depression off north-west Spain on the 23rd intensified as it moved into south-east England on the 24th. The last of the Ospreys escaped in time but rain and gales brought the outstanding event of the autumn with an influx of Pallid Swifts causing mayhem amongst resident and visiting birdwatchers alike.

The month ended with strong and mild south-westerly winds but not before the first Waxwings of a strong autumn arrival, a late migrant Quail at Paston and a continental 'dark-breasted' Barn Owl at Kelling Heath.

The first days of **November** remained mild and changeable; an American Wigeon at Berney on the 4th was presumably a returning bird but the 5th looked like being a quiet day until a further Pallid Swift was located in Sheringham, giving local birdwatchers another opportunity to enjoy this species' subtle features.

A vigorous area of low pressure moving south-east into the North Sea on the 6th brought record numbers of Pomarine Skuas pouring along the north coast. These were the crowning glory of a day which also saw Leach's Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters, Bonxies and masses of Kittiwakes, with many Little Gulls remaining offshore at Scolt Head, the remnants of at least 1035 feeding there the previous day.

A Gull-billed Tern moved west with Black-headed Gulls at Weybourne on the 7th and with more north-easterlies picking up almost a week of onshore winds again profited seawatchers. A dozen Little Auks and 4 Leach's Petrels whirled past both Cley and Sheringham but a huge westerly movement of 1100 Eider on the 10th and 11th stole the show. On land the situation was almost as dramatic with a major Waxwing invasion underway; peaks of 125 at Holme and 80 at Snettisham were the front runners of an arrival which was to last, albeit in lesser numbers, for the remainder of the month.

A 'continental' Long-tailed Tit surfaced in a flock at Wiveton on the 11th and was to remain until the end of the year, while an easterly influence in the weather was responsible



Eiders (*G Wright*)



Storm Petrel (*J R Williamson*)

for a Hoopoe at Eccles on the 11th, 2 Pallas's Warblers at Holkham Meals from the 14th and a Dusky Warbler there next day. Strengthening north-westerly winds veering north-easterly saw a further movement of Pomarine Skuas and single Storm and Leach's Petrels at Sheringham on the 17th with more Poms blasting passed other north coast watchpoints. Continuing north-easterlies finally drove Little Auks south into the North Sea two days later with numbers on the north and east coasts including at Caister. Here observers logged the prize of the year's most impressive spell of seawatching, a drake Surf Scoter north offshore.

The disturbed period of weather continued into **December** and the first two weeks saw strong, mainly south-westerly winds. Bird populations changed little but the White-tailed Eagle was re-found over Gooderstone on the 1st before settling into the Cockerley Cley area for the remainder of the year. A Ring-necked Parakeet at Caister was last seen on the 4th, the day after which a Penduline Tit was seen briefly at Berney. In mid-month the first of three more presumed vagrant Canada Geese were located amidst huge hoards of Pink-footed Geese, and Little Egrets wintering in the Titchwell area reached double-figures for the only time during 1999.

A dominating cold spell took charge until the 21st before milder air once more brought south-westerlies from the Atlantic. Little stirred birdwise although the Cranes reached a peak of 13 on Boxing Day and the year faded out in mild conditions with Siskins and Redpolls in short supply.

# Wetland Bird Survey 1999

The Complete Wash: *Dave Powell*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Red-throated Diver	224	178	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	7
Little Grebe	17	7	1	2	2	-	-	6	26	34	22	56
Great Crested Grebe	17	11	18	56	13	7	8	20	33	63	20	23
Cormorant	106	171	101	80	66	22	175	146	467	403	280	324
Grey Heron	16	9	15	40	29	20	39	45	94	67	22	23
Mute Swan	21	32	29	40	28	3	4	10	-	4	19	33
Brent Goose	16630	12060	9149	8723	7552	16	16	3	26	3478	26411	22994
Shelduck	9117	6855	2221	2338	1215	198	365	881	1927	3772	7096	7338
Wigeon	1375	1157	239	6	-	-	-	2	1989	842	1221	872
Gadwall	73	135	25	14	6	-	-	-	15	-	4	5
Teal	832	558	183	40	-	5	5	106	1418	436	175	353
Mallard	1956	1023	383	319	259	106	122	604	1179	2187	1358	1313
Pintail	290	67	16	14	-	-	-	-	200	21	16	6
Shoveler	8	20	25	17	2	-	-	3	18	8	2	19
Pochard	144	44	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	18	38
Tufted Duck	127	67	43	72	52	4	18	12	13	26	51	34
Scaup	15	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	13
Eider	8	88	346	39	85	62	7	7	110	21	5	16
Common Scoter	7	468	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	1	166	-
Goldeneye	60	79	79	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	28	44
R B Merganser	47	49	61	104	1	2	-	-	-	21	20	62
Moorhen	27	13	8	4	10	5	18	86	6	8	5	12
Coot	103	85	47	32	30	36	25	27	29	18	71	108
Oystercatcher	8684	12068	6742	8868	4715	2690	3836	16500	17501	12104	14801	12862
Avocet	-	23	2	82	80	-	528	99	26	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	236	355	146	258	878	67	107	657	1518	609	3	110
Golden Plover	16638	8918	1090	1152	250	1	660	6212	5806	14160	41941	14420
Grey Plover	3168	3284	5489	9914	11860	440	1387	6942	15214	8360	3912	2562
Lapwing	27585	6178	314	62	73	67	743	517	1017	9268	77529	45992
Knot	22520	38788	41116	28639	8590	2020	9243	59918	60377	42925	48493	49450
Sanderling	106	260	363	607	4867	4	396	3306	1711	1212	36	441
Dunlin	16196	17254	15003	32470	20099	419	26737	18874	28555	32243	23040	16554
Ruff	-	1	-	14	-	-	4	2	2	6	-	-
Snipe	-	11	15	16	-	-	1	1	52	15	10	9
Black-tailed Godwit	843	835	22	3236	12	-	2497	1825	4433	3176	1245	1844
Bar-tailed Godwit	4743	10319	4795	1702	1463	1009	877	3806	13937	8825	9246	7139
Whimbrel	-	-	-	10	77	16	53	107	141	8	-	-
Curlew	1495	4306	1501	5768	1071	204	4180	8770	9480	7402	2248	1342
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	4	-	2	3	23	32	5	-	-
Redshank	1577	2939	3059	3651	970	325	2805	4628	6056	4661	1303	2012
Greenshank	-	-	-	1	15	1	236	423	445	44	3	1
Common Sandpiper	-	3	-	2	8	-	15	126	23	-	-	3
Turnstone	992	215	408	604	365	48	216	665	551	269	133	302
Black-headed Gull	1494	2461	3300	2703	1261	748	4878	5426	8209	14093	856	31327
Common Gull	446	1693	192	175	520	48	210	254	343	419	826	4187
L B B Gull	1	10	35	55	2206	26	1993	374	964	976	71	42
Herring Gull	2252	4430	1828	2392	3240	2788	1486	846	4007	3882	540	4165
G B B Gull	70	47	39	256	266	24	366	495	1473	2901	265	719
Sandwich Tern	-	-	-	-	9	131	420	50	162	6	-	-
Common Tern	-	-	-	-	16	10	98	370	208	6	-	-
Little Tern	-	-	-	-	48	40	44	148	36	-	-	-



# Wetland Bird Survey 1999

North Norfolk Coast: *Michael Rooney*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Red-throated Diver	38	5	9	2	-	-	-	-	3	3	14	4
Little Grebe	76	38	48	80	69	32	41	54	40	48	65	60
Great Crested Grebe	40	13	4	4	1	4	-	2	8	9	31	22
Cormorant	67	68	24	48	63	62	148	197	224	278	122	80
Little Egret	3	3	-	-	1	-	3	4	6	5	8	8
Grey Heron	15	18	15	28	33	27	17	51	75	46	21	19
Mute Swan	84	67	98	58	85	82	80	84	42	79	52	68
Pink-footed Goose	590	1060	3	83	-	-	1	-	-	331	12641	569
White-fronted Goose	19	383	2	1	-	-	-	11	-	-	82	52
Greylag Goose	926	572	967	486	201	854	454	1837	982	1432	1476	492
Canada Goose	118	35	95	83	45	153	432	195	312	155	94	65
Brent Goose	7932	5198	2311	1009	1303	12	4	2	51	3005	8748	9030
Egyptian Goose	11	12	15	27	8	180	93	197	166	47	2	12
Shelduck	761	577	571	408	454	421	133	177	142	152	730	815
Wigeon	13205	10161	7468	430	30	6	8	28	2761	7935	14623	16090
Gadwall	258	168	132	177	137	222	112	146	252	294	165	178
Teal	2400	923	774	271	28	86	38	851	2000	2974	2930	3133
Mallard	1229	759	521	490	426	298	295	811	1200	1650	1351	1175
Pintail	824	588	12	15	2	-	1	2	58	568	1235	729
Shoveler	96	85	121	138	96	50	28	115	153	141	153	93
Pochard	96	78	68	52	14	10	3	13	6	16	61	64
Tufted Duck	87	58	134	126	90	92	44	45	30	39	72	69
Eider	171	212	37	21	23	36	48	25	12	4	55	10
Long-tailed Duck	13	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	41
Common Scoter	1552	143	1003	15	6	13	-	2	6	5	2182	-
Goldeneye	153	201	66	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	104	156
R B Merganser	66	70	28	24	12	-	2	-	4	26	130	72
Ruddy Duck	-	-	-	2	2	12	2	3	9	5	3	2
Water Rail	10	-	1	2	2	1	1	-	3	5	10	5
Coot	998	792	694	387	362	375	428	489	429	490	749	700
Moorhen	230	271	183	144	231	91	89	178	215	161	323	243
Oystercatcher	3166	2612	1897	1429	1406	1318	1024	3589	3907	3431	2995	3478
Avocet	5	43	301	322	341	262	151	113	28	12	9	25
Ringed Plover	215	274	190	175	1082	258	225	1289	1798	1233	223	215
Golden Plover	4165	1865	618	23	-	1	2	253	516	1173	2781	2193
Grey Plover	1056	514	828	1056	965	26	16	644	2837	1180	1225	1132
Lapwing	4682	3261	584	747	788	415	402	349	506	1193	8395	2614
Knot	6136	1230	513	1620	31	13	3	22446	31131	40349	1470	1722
Sanderling	548	720	381	423	798	66	124	998	1786	957	401	891
Dunlin	3787	2680	1295	392	993	31	801	1692	2464	2583	2300	3729
Ruff	51	20	39	64	8	4	56	74	144	74	26	62
Snipe	137	100	132	43	12	3	8	72	252	69	114	100
Black-tailed Godwit	75	76	17	181	53	99	100	133	274	117	88	98
Bar-tailed Godwit	1173	562	297	13	20	31	4	341	5772	3698	659	1252
Whimbrel	-	-	-	-	56	1	31	139	13	-	2	-
Curlew	1386	920	1441	384	152	320	1014	1939	1716	1467	1290	1251
Spotted Redshank	4	1	2	1	-	3	4	7	8	4	3	-
Redshank	1303	1019	948	593	574	422	598	1659	1327	1359	1148	1302
Greenshank	2	1	1	4	13	-	69	163	193	49	3	1
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	21	-	9	90	10	2	-	-
Turnstone	462	526	243	300	383	41	179	660	516	536	311	389

# Wetland Bird Survey 1999

Breydon and Berney: *Peter Allard*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Little Grebe	3	4	10	10	10	12	12	12	19	10	9	2
Great Crested Grebe	5	4	3	7	14	13	16	17	23	13	11	4
Cormorant	68	71	116	51	39	56	96	114	121	70	71	80
Spoonbill	-	1	-	-	1	2	5	3	-	-	-	-
Mute Swan	171	148	167	143	102	70	85	65	49	47	98	171
Bewick's Swan	72	210	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	28
Pink-footed Goose	2300	5500	3100	-	1	-	-	-	-	372	600	1800
White-fronted Goose	85	34	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	46	-
Greylag Goose	77	86	52	17	14	67	82	99	183	219	151	80
Canada Goose	72	6	20	8	6	18	23	114	112	119	98	24
Brent Goose	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	12	1	5
Egyptian Goose	2	-	4	1	5	15	12	2	4	2	-	-
Shelduck	204	207	239	128	219	452	227	26	52	269	214	174
Wigeon	8600	11200	3900	348	23	3	5	87	634	2200	5100	12150
Gadwall	102	217	258	81	44	38	12	27	9	11	14	25
Teal	800	370	1284	870	30	70	100	518	650	1085	2060	3150
Mallard	508	243	130	33	110	125	120	300	132	148	215	315
Pintail	217	255	104	24	2	-	-	6	17	59	118	189
Garganey	-	-	1	5	7	4	3	8	6	2	-	-
Shoveler	264	236	319	257	36	53	34	105	167	229	208	116
Pochar	40	22	18	18	16	20	9	8	5	2	26	-
Tufted Duck	32	32	29	21	12	20	12	7	3	7	11	11
Seaup	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	4	-
Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Oystercatcher	78	152	182	149	91	74	146	177	39	33	29	39
Avocet	54	70	94	95	52	142	314	381	273	63	74	66
Lt Ringed Plover	-	-	1	2	2	1	7	3	1	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	113	118	44	29	248	72	63	234	202	111	76	57
Golden Plover	10300	6550	340	22	3	1	351	1314	1650	1400	7000	7100
Grey Plover	55	43	20	8	26	2	1	10	39	57	61	51
Lapwing	24600	7100	450	216	220	200	400	1000	1000	3100	20500	14000
Knot	196	96	17	26	8	12	14	23	29	33	38	197
Sanderling	10	6	32	31	21	-	1	2	2	2	12	2
Little Stint	-	-	2	1	11	-	-	7	15	7	1	1
Temminek's Stint	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	3	-	2	43	71	13	-	-
Dunlin	4400	4420	1870	1920	1390	12	644	639	983	1430	2790	2950
Ruff	4	1	11	40	44	6	36	45	54	11	24	53
Snipe	31	10	64	75	7	10	23	44	120	67	121	210
Black-tailed Godwit	493	176	125	44	47	91	544	569	603	303	752	883
Bar-tailed Godwit	43	43	25	3	16	-	2	64	22	21	6	30
Whimbrel	-	-	-	80	102	-	12	42	1	-	-	-
Curlew	1240	1083	663	427	24	65	624	651	921	813	746	689
Spotted Redshank	5	2	4	6	3	3	1	6	6	5	3	1
Redshank	860	732	1061	740	120	161	478	883	1014	743	720	697
Greenshank	-	-	-	5	16	7	11	9	22	6	1	-
Green Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	4	10	11	7	1	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	3	4	1	5	6	-	-	-
Comn Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	16	-	14	13	2	1	-	-
Turnstone	6	9	13	18	13	1	7	27	23	9	12	12
Little Gull	-	-	-	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-

# Systematic List

## Introduction

The order used follows the sixth edition of the *Checklist of Birds of Britain and Ireland* published by the BOU in 1992, as amended 1998 and 2000. The English names that are most familiar have been retained. Unless otherwise stated, all observations are of single birds and refer to 1999. The following abbreviations are used in the species accounts:

**BO** = Bird Observatory

**BBRC** = British Birds Rarities Committee

**BBS** = Breeding Birds Survey (details from BTO)

**BF** = Sugarbeet Factory

**BOU** = British Ornithologists' Union

**BTO** = British Trust for Ornithology

**CBC** = Common Birds Census

**CP** = Country/Coastal Park

**ESA** = Environmentally Sensitive Area

**FM** = Fresh Marsh

**GC** = Golf Course

**GM** = Grazing Marsh

**GP** = Gravel Pit

**NBC** = Norfolk Bird Club

**NBR** = Norfolk Bird Report

**NNR** = National Nature Reserve

**NR** = Nature Reserve

**RSPB** = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

**STW** = Sewage Treatment Works

**TA** = Training Area

**WeBS** = monthly Wetland Bird Survey counts

**WM** = Water Meadows

**WWT** = Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

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 or none present. For wildfowl and waders, the data used derives generally from the monthly WeBS counts although if higher totals are available these are used instead; readers are also referred to the tables giving composite counts for the Wash, North Coast and Breydon/Berney which should be read in conjunction with the individual species accounts in the Systematic List. WeBS thresholds for International/National importance have been inserted for all relevant species. Whilst many records to the west of Sheringham town are in the Sheringham Bird Observatory recording area, for the sake of simplicity most records are referred to as 'Sheringham' only. The area referred to as 'Lakenheath Washes' is that part of the new RSPB reserve situated within Norfolk. Where details of breeding birds are given at Holkham NNR these refer, unless otherwise stated, to the grazing marshes at Burnham Norton, Burnham Overy and Holkham. Observers' initials are given for all national and county rarities and for a few other exceptional records. Normally the initials of the finder(s) are given (where known), and if applicable initials of observers who have also submitted detailed descriptions.



Red-throated Diver

*Gavia stellata*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor; rare in summer

Recorded in all months except June. Monthly max (including birds in flight and on sea - see NBR 1993 for discussion of movements) for coastal waters again illustrate relative importance of north-east and east coasts for this species and the very small numbers in Wash and Burnham Overy-Blakeney Hbr area:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington-Hunstanton	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Holme-Scolt Head	74	10	8	1	-	-	8	20	4	6
Burnham Overy-Blakeney Hbr	3	3	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	2
Blakeney Point-Happisburgh	276	420	160	3	1	1	2	31	100	130
Eccles-Hopton	30	92	1	-	-	-	4	12	80	4

National importance (winter): 50

Few large movements noted in first winter period. Those involving 100 birds or more were at Overstrand in Jan when 124 west and 30 on sea 10th, 111 east 17 west 11th, 199 west 27 east and 60 on sea 21st, and 237 on sea 22nd, and in March when 100 west and 60 on sea 4th; at Mundesley in Feb 147 west on 1st. Numbers fell rapidly from winter peak on Feb 25th, when 420 between Cromer and Trimmingham, and no double-figure counts were made after March 15th. In April, singles Holme 1st/2nd, Titchwell 23rd, Scolt Head east 8th and 26th, Cley east 1st, Salthouse 4th, Beeston Bump west 25th, and Overstrand east and 2 on sea 8th. Thereafter singles east and west Sheringham May 1st, west Scolt Head May 19th, Walcott July 3rd, west Weybourne Aug 12th, and Cley and Sheringham 19th.

Very gradual increase in numbers to first double-figure count of autumn 20 Cley Sept 19th. Numbers remained unusually low to year end with 100 Sheringham Nov 17th and 130 Happisburgh Dec 31st being the only three-figure counts of second winter period and no movements involved over 100 birds.

Inland: Martham Ferry Nov 28th-Dec 16th, Martham Broad Dec 23rd, and Horsey Mere and Filby Broad Dec 27th.

Black-throated Diver

*Gavia arctica*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; exceptional in summer

Regularly reported during Jan and to Feb 1st (Gorleston) with singles on 14 dates at Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Cley, Salthouse, Sheringham, Beeston Regis, West Runton (where 2 Jan 23rd), Waxham and Gorleston. Quite possibly no more than 4-5 birds were involved in all of these sightings. Thereafter, singles Weybourne March 15th and inland Pentney GP May 21st (JLi SCW).

First of autumn Salthouse Aug 30th. Small numbers in Sept with singles Titchwell 7th and intermittently Sept 26th-Oct 28th, and 2 Cley 12th, and in Oct when singles Scolt Head 12th, 14th, 25th and 27th, Holkham Bay 14th, Blakeney Point 17th with 2 on 26th, Sheringham 5th and 31st, West Runton 16th and birds east and west on 21st, Horsey 30th, 2 Seratby 15th and Yarmouth 15th/16th. A small influx apparent in Nov with site max of 3 Titchwell 21st, 3 Scolt Head 4th and 23rd with 2 on 29th, 2 Burnham Overy 7th and 13th, 2 Holkham Bay 28th/29th, 5 Cley 11th, 3 Sheringham 11th and 2 West Runton 14th. Singles were also at Holme, Weybourne, Overstrand, Winterton and Yarmouth during Nov and inland Hickling Broad 26th. Other than one west Sheringham 12th, all Dec records were from north-west with 2 Hunstanton 28th with one 29th, Holme 5th, 12th and 28th, Titchwell

2nd intermittently to 20th, and Scolt Head 12th. 5 off Holme 31st was an exceptional year-end count for this site.

**Great Northern Diver**  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers; exceptional in summer*

*Gavia immer*

Small numbers in first winter period with 1-2 Holme Jan 11th-23rd, 1-2 Blakeney Hbr Jan 9th-Feb 19th, 1-2 Blakeney Point/Cley/Salthouse Jan 16th-March 15th, with 3 off Salthouse Jan 24th, and singles Scolt Head Jan 23rd and March 23rd, Sheringham west Jan 1st and east Feb 7th, west West Runton Jan 29th and east Overstrand Feb 22nd. Just 2 spring records: Titchwell April 24th and Eccles May 5th.

First in autumn Titchwell Sept 26th where singles intermittently from Oct 1st-Dec 28th with 3 Nov 25th. Singles also intermittently: Scolt Head Oct 15th-Dec 12th, though 4 Nov 29th; Holkham Bay Nov 4th-Dec 4th with exceptionally 9 Nov 29th and 2 Nov 30th; Blakeney Point/Cley/Salthouse Oct 16th and Nov 7th-14th, with 2 Nov 18th and Dec 10th, 3 Dec 4th and one again to Dec 27th; Weybourne/Sheringham Oct 18th and Nov 6th-23rd, with 2 west Nov 14th, 19th and Dec 4th, 3 west Nov 11th and 3 Nov 20th. Elsewhere, singles Holme Oct 14th and Dec 31st, with 3 Nov 11th, east West Runton Oct 14th and 17th, west Cromer Nov 11th and Dec 13th, Mundesley Nov 6th and 20th with 4 on 18th, Happisburgh Oct 17th and Dec 4th, Waxham Nov 2nd, south Eccles Oct 18th and Yarmouth Nov 20th. At end of year 1-2 were in Blakeney Hbr Dec 27th-31st.

Inland: Blackfleet Broad Dec 27th.

**Pied-billed Grebe**  
*Vagrant from the Americas*

*Podilymbus podiceps*

A bird at Stowbridge GP March 17th-29th (CD *et al*) and later at Thompson Water March 31st to May 11th (PN *et al*) was the second record for Norfolk. See article page 290.

**Little Grebe**  
*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Found throughout the county with monthly max at regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	27	15	25
Holme	13	9	8	9	6	4	4	2	7	16	5	6
Thornham-Brancaster	12	7	4	8	10	8	10	-	-	12	9	12
Holkham Park	-	-	8	33	-	15	13	18	-	-	-	-
Cley-Salthouse	7	-	6	-	-	-	5	7	9	-	16	19
Breydon/Berney	3	4	10	10	10	12	12	12	19	10	9	2
East Wretham Heath	-	-	9	11	12	14	10	34	17	4	9	6

Additional counts of 10 or more: 28 Bittering GP Sept 29th, 14 Cantley BF Aug 7th, 16 Aug 28th and 18 Sept 19th, 30 Heigham Sound Jan 9th, 14 Nov 3rd and 27 Nov 8th, 31 Hockwold Cut-off Channel Dec 28th, 22 Holkham NNR in April and 55 in May, 10 Raynham Lake Sept 25th, 12 Rockland Broad in Dec, 10 Stanford Water Oct 11th, 12 Tottenhill GP Nov 12th, 16 Wells Hbr in Jan and 15 in Nov, 11 Welney April 11th, 10 Whitlingham Lane GP March 14th and Sept 27th.

Reports received of 136 breeding pairs (numbers of pairs in brackets): Baconsthorpe, Breydon/Berney (17), Bintree Mill (2), Brancaster (6), Calthorpe Broad, Cantley BF, Cley (2), Cockley Cley, Dickleburgh (2), East Ruston, East Wretham (7), Fakenham, Fowlmcre,



Little Grebe (*A. Benson*)

Hedenham, Hoe GP, Holkham NNR (36), Holme (7), King's Lynn BF, Lakenheath Washes, Little Cressingham, Lopham Fen (5), Ludham (3), Lynford Lake (3), Pensthorpe (3), Pentney GP, Raynham Lake (2), Reedham Water How Hill (2), Salthouse (2), Sennowc Park, Sheringham, Strumpshaw (2), Titchwell (5), UEA Broad, Wensum Valley (2), Westmere, Weybourne, Whitlingham Lane GP (3) and Wolterton Hall Lake (7).

## Great Crested Grebe

*Podiceps cristatus*

*Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Found throughout the county in both coastal and inland waters with monthly max at regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holme	30	9	9	1	4	11	-	-	2	4	21	4
Thornham-Scolt	36	2	1	3	1	-	-	1	5	25	14	1
Breydon/Berney	5	4	3	7	14	13	16	17	23	13	11	4
Rockland Broad	4	17	14	10	14	18	25	41	36	26	11	11
Pentney GP	9	-	7	7	5	10	17	8	8	12	32	26

Counts of up to 20 birds were also frequently reported from elsewhere. All counts of 20 or more: 20 Hunstanton Nov 14th; 40 Burnham Overy Nov 7th; 20 Walcott Sept 21st; 23 Winterton March 26th; 23 Barton Broad March 11th, 38 Oct 7th and 45 Oct 10th; 20 Ranworth Broad July 18th, 24 Sept 12th, 20 Oct 11th and 25 Oct 30th; 30 Hickling Broad Jan 30th; 36 Trinity Broads Feb 21st; 28 R Ouse Relief Channel Magdalen-Saddlebow Feb 13th, 54 Nov 12th and 52 Nov 19th; 29 Welney April 6th.

Few notable coastal movements with only double-figure counts 12 south Hunstanton Aug 15th, 18 west Scolt Head Nov 6th and 7 west 6 east Sheringham Nov 7th.

As expected only 84 breeding pairs reported (with numbers of pairs in brackets), following the full county spring survey in 1998: Bradmoor Lake, Breydon, Bure Valley Lakes, Cranwich GP (2), Diss Merc (2), Felbrigg Park, Filby Broad (3+), Fustyweed GP (Elsing), Hickling Broad (12), Lakenheath Washes (2), Lenwade GP, Ludham (5), Lynford GP (2), Lyng GP-Sparham Pools-Lyng-Easthaugh GP (7), Middleton GP (3), Nar Valley Fisheries, Narford Lake, Pensthorpe (3), Pentney GP (2), Raynham Lake, Rockland Broad (5), Scoulton Mere, Sennowe Park (2), Snetterton GP (3), Snettisham (2), South Acre GP, Thompson Water (2), Tottenhill GP (2), UEA Broad (4), Welney (3), Whitlingham Lane GP (3) and Wissington BF (4).



## Red-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Rather scarce in first winter period, with 1-2 regularly reported only along north coast until Feb 21st as follows: Hunstanton Jan 23rd; Holme Jan 1st-Feb 14th with 2 on Jan 21st and 2 Feb 1st; Titchwell-Brancaster Jan 1st-Feb 21st with 2 Jan 1st, 23rd and 29th; 2 Holkham Bay Jan 1st-10th; 2 Blakeney Hbr Jan 18th, and singles Feb 12th and 17th; Cley Jan 23rd; Sheringham east Feb 5th and west 16th; Overstrand Feb 8th. Away from north coast, one Snettisham Jan 6th-9th.

Next reported Cley Sept 3rd/4th, becoming more numerous along north coast than in first winter period, at least until early Dec: 1-2 Hunstanton Oct 9th-30th, Holme Oct 15th, 20th/21st and Nov 6th, Titchwell Sept 12th-25th then 2-6 Sept 26th-Nov 29th with one Dec 8th, 1-4 Scolt Head Oct 5th-Nov 29th, 1-4 Holkham Bay Nov 14th-Dec 12th, east Blakeney Point Oct 16th, 1-4 Cley Oct 5th-Dec 5th, 2 west Weybourne Oct 5th and one east Oct 21st, 1-4 Sheringham Oct 4th-Nov 19th, east West Runton Oct 21st, west Cromer Nov 13th, Mundesley Nov 13th, Eeoles Oct 10th and 13th, and Horsey Nov 13th.

Inland: Martham Broad Feb 13th-March 14th, Snetterton GP Feb 17th-19th, and Ouse Relief Channel at Magdalen Bridge Nov 12th-Dec 5th.

## Slavonian Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

### *Winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly during autumn*

Slightly less numerous than last year but, as in most years, the majority in nearshore waters Hunstanton-Scolt Head. Regularly reported Holme, where 1-2 Jan 17th-Feb 4th and again April 1st-19th with 5 on Jan 24th, and off Titchwell where 1-2 Jan 2nd-Feb 23rd with 3 on Jan 21st and 24th. Singles Hunstanton Jan 1st, Scolt Head March 16th and 2 Thornham Hbr Feb 2nd were probably part of same group of 5-8 birds in this area during first winter period. Elsewhere, singles Holkham Bay Jan 12th (2 on Jan 1st), Blakeney Hbr Jan 11th-23rd, Feb 19th and 3 on Jan 27th, Cley Jan 2nd and 23rd, Salhouse Jan 9th-11th and east Sheringham Feb 5th.

First in autumn Cley and Blakeney Point Sept 19th. Usual build-up in north-west with 1-2 (possibly 3) regularly reported Holme Oct 17th- Dec 12th, 1-2 Titchwell Oct 1st- Dec 18th, with 3 on Oct 1st and Nov 24th, and 4 Oct 29th and 6 Nov 27th, and 1-2 Scolt Head Oct 5th-Dec 8th. Singles at Hunstanton Oct 23rd and Nov 13th/14th probably part of group of 6-8 birds in Hunstanton-Scolt Head area during second winter period. Elsewhere, 2 Lynn Point Nov 6th, Burnham Overy Nov 7th, 3 Holkham Bay Oct 14th, Blakeney Hbr Dec 29th, 3 west Sheringham Nov 7th with 2 there 17th, Cley Oct 5th and Dec 5th, and Walcott Nov 13th.

Inland: Hickling Broad Jan 6th-Feb 16th, with 2 Feb 18th and 3 Feb 12th-15th and March 4th-7th, and 2 Horsey Mere Feb 13th and 21st.

## Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

### *Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

For the second successive year, a long-staying bird was on Holkham Park Lake Jan 7th-March 14th, by which time it had gained partial summer plumage. Elsewhere in first winter period, singles Tottenhill GP Jan 17th, Sennowe Park Feb 14th, Welney March 24th where 3 April 1st, Wissington BF March 29th, Reedham Water How Hill April 25th-29th and 2 Roekland Broad May 1st. In autumn, singles Kelling WM July 31st-Aug 8th, Snettisham Aug 23rd-Oct 3rd and Pentney GP Sept 7th and Oct 8th; one winter record Brancaster Hbr Dec 14th.



Black-necked Grebe (*R Gillmor*)

## Fulmar

*Fulmarus glacialis*

**Breeder, some remaining all year; regular coasting and storm movements**

A poor year for offshore movements, no counts of note until May 30th when 150 east Holme, 116 east Overstrand, 141 south-east Walcott and 100 Waxham. Only other movements of note Aug when at Sheringham 100 8th and 105 east 25 west 10th. 105 east in 4 hrs Cley 19th, and on 20th 29 west 21 east Scolt Head, 50 Cley and 42 Sheringham.

Breeding in county better recorded. At Hunstanton up to 100 pairs during breeding season, with 65 occupied ledges July 27th and 42 young present Aug 11th. Elsewhere 3 pairs on ledges Weybourne and 7 pairs to west of Sheringham May 1st, one near-fledged youngster Beeston Regis Aug 5th and 9, including 2 sitting birds, Scratby July 10th. Also 18 birds on cliffs at Cromer Feb 24th but no other details.

Only blue-phase birds Sheringham Feb 7th, May 12th and Aug 8th, Cley Feb 7th, Overstrand Aug 10th and Walcott May 30th.

Two inland records with singles east over Norwich July 2nd and another flying around a church Dereham Sept 14th.

## Cory's Shearwater

*Calonectris diomedea*

**Annual vagrant from Mediterranean/North Atlantic; most during autumn**

Another poor year with only record, east Cley 1010 hrs July 26th (RFP).

*1998 Addition:* one east West Runton Sept 13th (MDC).

## Sooty Shearwater

*Puffinus griseus*

*Autumn passage migrant, most during northerly gales; rare at other times*

In first winter period one east Sheringham Feb 2nd (IGJ KBS AJLS) was only the fourth midwinter record and the first for that month. This species has now been recorded in all months of year. In spring one east Mundesley May 18th (MDF).

Due to a lack of onshore gales at peak passage times it was one of the poorest autumns for several years. First in Aug when singles east Cromer and Mundesley 10th, 2 Cley 19th and 20th, Eccles 20th, north Horsey 21st and Winterton 28th. Recorded on just 5 dates in Sept with singles Blakeney Point and Horsey 4th, east Sheringham 15th, south Waxham 18th, east Cley, west Sheringham and 2 south Horsey 19th, west Sheringham and 2 east Overstrand 20th. Only Oct records south Snettisham 3rd, 2 west Scolt Head, 2 west Cley, 8 Sheringham and west Overstrand 4th, 2 Sea Palling 19th and east Sheringham 20th. In Nov most 6th when 5 north Hunstanton, 5 east Holme, 3 Cley, 2 Sheringham and south Horsey. Others during month east Cromer 11th, 2 west Sheringham 17th, where one east 19th, and last of year Mundesley 20th.



Sooty Shearwaters (A Benson)

## Manx Shearwater

*Puffinus puffinus*

*Passage migrant with majority during autumn movements*

First of year an unseasonal bird north Waxham Jan 2nd. No others until spring when in May one east Titchwell 5th, 2 east Scolt Head also 5th and 17th, 2 east Hunstanton, 2 east Scolt Head, 11 east Sheringham and 2 Mundesley 18th, 13 Cley 24th and 21 east Cromer 29th. Largest movement of year May 30th when birds moving east along north coast and south on east coast with 10 Hunstanton, 89 Holme, 87 Cley (0800-1400 hrs), 10 Salthouse, 53 West Runton (0600-0950 hrs), 107 Overstrand (0930-1320 hrs), 100 Walcott (1115-1400 hrs), 112 Mundesley (0930-1400 hrs), 51 Waxham and 45 in 2 hrs Horsey.

Most in June at Cromer where 30 east 6th and 19 east 8th. Recorded on 12 dates in July; best days 21st when 22 Hunstanton, one Titchwell, 24 west 3 east Scolt Head, 12 east Sheringham, and 22nd when 16 Hunstanton, 6 west Cley and 15 Sheringham. Largest counts during rest of month 20 Hunstanton 1st, 17 south Horsey 3rd with 14 there 26th, and 24 east Overstrand 28th.



Autumn passage poor with peak count in Aug on 10th when 6 east Cley, 12 east Sheringham, 7 west 3 east Overstrand, 13 east Cromer and 2 Mundesley. In Sept 4 east Sheringham 15th was easily the max monthly count. Best day of autumn Oct 4th when 4 north Hunstanton, 6 west Scolt Head, 8 west one east Cley, 20 Weybourne, 20 Sheringham and one west Mundesley. Only other Oct records west Scolt Head 3rd and 2 Eccles 5th. Last of year Nov 6th when 4 Cley and singles Lynn Point, Hunstanton and Sheringham.

### **Balearic Shearwater**

*Puffinus yelkouan*

#### *Annual in small numbers during autumn*

An average year with singles west Scolt Head Oct 4th (NML), east Cley Aug 10th (RFP) and Sept 30th (JRW), east Sheringham Aug 8th (IGJ), west 10th (AJLS *et al*), east 12th (IGJ), and east Oct 4th (AJLS TW *et al*), 2 west Overstrand Aug 10th and west Aug 14th (BJM), and Mundesley Aug 10th (MDF).

### **Storm Petrel**

*Hydrobates pelagicus*

#### *Almost annual late autumn visitor, often in stormy weather*

Three records with singles east Scolt Head Oct 15th (NML MESR), Lynn Point Nov 6th (ADC) and east Sheringham Nov 17th (KBS). A typical spread of records in both dates and localities.

### **Leach's Petrel**

*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

#### *Gale-blown visitor mostly during autumn*

In first winter period one feeding offshore Sheringham (DJH IGJ KBS) and same or another Overstrand Feb 5th (BJM).

Autumn passage very poor with only records Cley Sept 19th and west there Oct 5th, Sca Palling Oct 19th, and in Nov Hunstanton, Cley and west Sheringham 6th, Sheringham 9th, 3 Cley and one Waxham 10th, Cley 11th, east Sheringham 17th, and Sheringham and Waxham 20th.

### **Gannet**

*Morus bassanus*

#### *Passage migrant, most during autumn gales*

Recorded in all months of year, first significant movement Feb 5th when 50 east Sheringham and 60 east Overstrand. Few other movements of note until May when 50 Hunstanton, 54 east Overstrand and 15 Mundesley 18th; 19 Hunstanton, 80 east Holme, 152 east Overstrand, 109 south 4 north Waleott and 100 Waxham 30th; 37 west Titchwell and 92 west Overstrand 31st. Numbers low in June, but in July 145 east Scolt Head 12th and 100 Hunstanton 28th.

In Aug best counts 20th when 55 west 18 east Scolt Head, 50 Cley, 120 east 56 west Sheringham and 192 Cromer. Few counts of note Sept apart from 19th and 20th. On 19th 50 Snettisham, 500 Hunstanton, 218 east Holme in one hour, 250 east Scolt Head in 1.5 hrs, 150 east Cley (1215-1315 hrs), 250 east 40 west Sheringham, 150 east West Runton and 100 Winterton. On 20th 75 east 18 west Scolt Head, 145 east Cley, 348 east Salthouse, 114 east West Runton and 300 east Overstrand.

Best day of autumn Oct 4th when 80 Snettisham, 1000 Hunstanton, 620 east Holme (1230-1545 hrs) 125 Titchwell, 1550 east 230 west Scolt Head, 329 east 152 west Cley, 950 east 125 west Sheringham, 240 east Overstrand (0800-1000 hrs) and 1263 east Mundesley. Next best day Oct 19th when moving east 400 Weybourne, 500 Sheringham, 600 Overstrand and 600 Eccles. During rest of year largest counts Nov 6th when 52 Hunstanton, 50 Cley, 195 Sheringham and 30 Horsey all also moving east.



Gannets (J R Williamson)

Only inland bird, one picked up exhausted Northrepps Sept 30th and released next day on coast and flew strongly out to sea. Also one on Arnolds Marsh, Cley May 1st and one flew up river Lynn Point Oct 27th.

### Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Increasing winter visitor and passage migrant; sporadic breeder*

Monthly counts from roost sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	-	-	-	-	58	65	62	109	134	68	-	-
Titchwell	18	-	8	-	-	25	73	104	89	133	-	-
Ranworth Broad	263	308	163	29	-	-	-	19	67	295	289	240
Welney	233	173	281	126	45	27	22	39	87	138	192	162

National importance (winter): 130

Other roosts very poorly counted and only additional counts: Whitlingham Lane GP 27 Jan and 20 March, and Holkham Park Lake 4 Feb 23rd. Away from roost sites some good numbers of loafing birds and daytime/high tide roosts: Scolt Head 94 Aug, 105 Sept, 135 Oct; Breydon 116 Feb, 114 Aug, 121 Sept; Buckenham 157 March. Closer observations of birds at Cley July 19th identified 34 *sinensis* and 2 *carbo* race birds and once again confirmed that most birds using the coast are of *sinensis* race.

Some visible migration with 18 high west Sidestrand Aug 3rd and 103 west Mundesley Oct 16th during a day of good immigration.

No breeding data from Nar Valley nesting site, but breeding proven on north coast for first time where at Holkham GM 6 breeding pairs, all probably fledging young.

### Shag

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

*Autumn and winter visitor with occasional birds wrecked inland*

Recorded in all months except June. During first winter period 3 east Sheringham Feb 7th, 2 Yarmouth March 31st and singles Holme, Overstrand, Mundesley and Walcott. In spring one long-dead on cliff top West Runton April 14th, east Mundesley April 24th and last east Overstrand May 31st.

No others until singles Wells Quay July 8th, Overstrand Aug 10th and Sept 20th, and Horsey Sept 4th. As usual most records during Oct and Nov but numbers low. In Oct 4 Scolt Head 4th, 2 Cley 6th, 2 Overstrand 1st and 15th, and singles at 6 other sites. In Nov 3 west Sheringham 7th, 2 Mundesley and Sheringham 20th, with singles during month at Lynn Point, Hunstanton, Wells and West Runton on 5 other dates. Only record in Dec at Sheringham 17th.

**Bittern**

*Botaurus stellaris*

*Rare resident breeder; also winter visitor in variable numbers*

Moderate numbers recorded from a total of 15 coastal and Broadland sites in first winter period, max 3-4 Trinity Broads, 3 Martham Broad, 2 Hickling Broad and 2 Strumpshaw. Noted away from usual areas in Jan at Pentney GP and Scnnowe Park. A 3 to 4-day-old corpse found at Winterton Feb 4th was autopsied and proved to be an adult male with food in the stomach and good fat deposits; damage to the bill and face suggested the cause of death to be the result of a collision.

Booming first noted Feb 24th and subsequently recorded at 6 sites. In Broads breeding suspected at 4 sites and one nest containing 2 chicks located. On north coast one locality held 2 nests, one of which contained 4 chicks, all of which were ringed, but tragically 3 failed to survive. A booming male was present at another north coast locality but breeding was not thought to have taken place. At an additional Broadland site a lingering wintering bird remained to end of May.

Autumn dispersal noted from Aug 29th when single Strumpshaw with another in Wensum valley mid-Sept.

Recorded at 11 coastal and Broadland sites in second winter period but numbers apparently low, max 2 Trinity Broads and 2 Martham Broad.

**Little Egret**

*Egretta garzetta*

*Increasing annual visitor, now recorded most months; a few over-winter*

The now familiar Titchwell population was present in all months. There was a decrease in numbers in early summer with max at each end of year. Not all roosted at Titchwell every evening, indeed on moonlit nights they often stayed to feed on the marshes throughout the night. During Jan-March 1-3 fed almost daily in Brancaster Hbr with up to 6 Oct-Dec. Monthly max at Titchwell tabulated below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	6	4	2	3	1	4	7	7	7	7	10

Elsewhere during first winter period singles Warham Greens Jan 1st and 22nd, Wells Jan 10th, Holkham, Cley and Salthouse March 28th - these presumably all originated from Titchwell; 2 west Cley March 20th may have been additional birds.

Spring arrival noted from May 3rd when single Strumpshaw and Buckenham, then wandering to Gunton Park 4th, near Aele 7th. Buckenham again 7th and Breydon/Berney 9th-13th. Also a second bird south at Burgh Castle May 10th and these 2 presumably accounted for 1-2 Berney intermittently May 20th-29th. Also in May west Scolt Head 6th, Cley 23rd, 3 west over sea Sheringham 28th and presumably same 3 Stiffkey later in day, singles Holkham and Snettisham 29th, and a bizarre record of what was almost certainly a Little Egret being pursued by a Goshawk at Hilborough 31st. In June 2 west over Swanton Novers raptor watchpoint 10th, and singles Cley 11th, and Scolt Head and west over Winterton 16th.



First returning birds of autumn were 1-2 intermittently Cley July 10th-18th then during Aug singles Blakeney Point 4th-7th, Berney 5th and Cley 27th with 2 Thetford Nunnery Lakes 22nd. Also 1-4 Breydon/Berney Aug 18th-Oct 1st, and a long-stayer Snettisham Aug 18th-Oct 3rd. In Sept one at Terrington 12th.

During second winter period Stiffkey Nov 28th, with 2 there Dec 1st, and Warham Greens Dec 29th probably from Titchwell. Additional birds Lynn Point Dec 12th and Lynford GP Dec 24th-29th may have been the same.

*1998 Correction:* 3 Welney Dec 10th an erroneous record.

## **Grey Heron**

*Ardea cinerea*

### ***Resident and passage migrant/winter visitor***

No large gatherings at start of year, but unusually 2 west Sheringham Jan 1st with another west Jan 16th. A better than average spring passage followed when totals noted as follows: Holme 2 west April 1st; Scolt Head 10 west 2 east April 16th-May 6th; Sheringham 8 west 3 east March 6th-May 14th; West Runton 3 east 3 west March 8th-May 29th; and Overstrand 2 east 2 west March 9th-May 29th.

Following last year's full survey, breeding numbers reported were understandably fewer; details received of a total 226 nests. If numbers at heronries not recorded remained stable, the total number of nests would compare favourably with the 315 nests recorded in 1998. Breeding data received as follows:

#### **North Norfolk (10 nests):**

Burnham Overy 1, Holkham 8, Cley 1.

#### **East Norfolk and Broads (min 30 nests):**

Buckenham (bred), Burgh Castle 23 (producing 40-50 young), Burgh Common 2, Calthorpe Broad 2, How Hill 1, Surlingham 2, Wheatfen (bred).

#### **Mid-Norfolk (84 nests):**

Colney Hall 11, Great Witchingham 52, North Elmham 6, Quidenham 1, Sennowe Park 2, Sturston 12.

#### **West Norfolk (109 nests):**

Feltwell 2, Hilgay 24, Islington 52, Narford 10, Snettisham 6, Wimbotsham 15.

#### **South Norfolk (2 nests):**

Diss Carr 2.

An exceptionally strong summer/autumn movement was recorded along the coast from Hunstanton to Bacton between early June and late Oct: Hunstanton one south Sept 13th; an impressive 75 west (max 11 Sept 11th and 10 Oct 15th) Scolt Head June 1st-Oct 22nd; 2 west Wells Oct 16th; in from sea Blakeney Point Sept 11th; 24 west 2 east Sheringham Aug 20th-Oct 16th; 3 west 3 east Beeston Bump June 17th-Oct 22nd; 6 west Sidestrand Aug 28th-Sept 15th; 3 west one east Paston Aug 16th-Oct 6th; 2 in from sea Bacton Oct 16th; This movement is reflected in the North Norfolk WeBS counts of 51 Aug, 75 Sept and 46 Oct, all of which are approximately double the corresponding figures for 1998. These birds apparently did not stay to winter in North Norfolk as counts for Nov and Dec returned to normal levels.

In second winter period 2 followed a plough at Brograve Farm, Hickling Nov 13th and a melanistic bird Stowbridge Dec 29th. Again no large counts, max 6 Holkham Nov and Attlebridge Dec.

## Purple Heron

*Ardea purpurea*

### *Almost annual spring and autumn vagrant from the Continent*

Four typical overshooting spring birds. One flew south over Winterton April 25th (INS), and another flying east at Cley was subsequently seen at Salthouse, Weybourne, Sheringham, Overstrand/Sidestrand and finally Hempstead May 8th (NBB AE BJM MY-P *et al*). An elusive bird frequented the massive reedbed expanses at Hickling Broad May 15th-25th (DJHe PJH *et al*) and a fourth individual, probably a 1st-summer, Holkham GM May 16th/17th (AD JRW *et al*).



Black Stork (*R Gillmor*)

## Black Stork

*Ciconia nigra*

### *Rare vagrant*

One soaring over Cley/Blakeney (AO'C EF), Kelling Heath and Felbrigg/Northrepps (AE BJM) May 8th was the first since 1991. It was subsequently seen at Mundesley/Bacton and Rockland St Mary 9th, Winterton 10th, Gunton Park 11th and finally west along the Cromer ridge at West Runton (Ineleborough Hill) 15th.

## White Stork

*Ciconia ciconia*

### *Vagrant from the Continent, appearing most years; status clouded by free-flying collection birds*

One west over Northrepps April 9th (AE) and another east over Old Catton May 19th (RFJ). Singles at Martham May 13th and Filby Broad May 24th believed to be individual from Thrigby Wildlife Park. One Banham/Kenninghall Aug 31st had escaped from nearby zoo.

## Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

### *Scarce non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant; rare in winter*

The bird remaining in Titchwell area from 1998 present to Feb 19th with presumably another Berney Feb 5th and Holkham Feb 12th/13th and 17th-19th.

First spring birds in April at Cley 22nd-24th, Blakeney GM 24th, Welney 27th and 30th, and over North Wootton on latter date. Arrivals continued into May when 2 Waxham/Horsey 1st/2nd, intermittently at Welney 2nd-7th and again 15th, Ouse Washes 4th/5th (same as Welney), Stiffkey Fen 8th, Blakeney Point 10th, 2 Snettisham 16th with singles there 23rd and 29th, Hickling Broad 18th/19th with 3 there 31st, and Scolt Head 27th. In

June Holme 3rd and east there 29th, east Brancaster Hbr 4th, east Beeston Bump 13th and west there 15th, and King’s Lynn BF 26th.

This strong spring passage produced regular sightings at 4 main coastal localities with good numbers over-summering at Cley. The first juv of year was noted at Berney on early date of June 30th. Max counts for May-Aug at Breydon/Berney, Cley, Holkham and Titchwell tabulated below:

	May		Jun		Jul		Aug	
	1st-15th	16th-31st	1st-15th	16th-30th	1st-15th	16th-31st	1st-15th	16th-31st
Breydon/Berney	1	1	2	2	4	5	3	-
Cley	1	1	8	9	3	2	2	2
Holkham	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Titchwell	-	3	6	1	1	4	2	1

The flock of 9 (both adults and imms) at Cley produced records of mutual preening and stick gathering/carrying on a number of occasions. It is clear that the dispersal of this flock accounted for the larger numbers noted subsequently at other sites.

During Sept 2 Cley 1st-6th and 8th, and 2 east Blakeney Hbr 7th were presumably the same. A further 2 Titchwell Sept 7th-10th and Oct singles Berney 12th and Cley 16th.

**Mute Swan**  
*Resident; the Ouse Washes attract the most important winter concentrations*  
Monthly max at main sites:

*Cygnus olor*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welney	169	130	113	156	197	-	-	-	-	48	117	117
Hickling Broad	85	-	-	-	94	-	150	177	-	-	-	-
Breydon/Berney	171	148	167	143	102	70	85	65	49	47	98	171
Lakenheath Washes	71	46	60	99	147	49	52	42	62	-	115	135

Other notable counts: Claxton/Rockland Marshes 74 March, 103 April; Buckenham Marshes 90 April; Narford Lake 71 May; Titchwell 61 June/July; Whitlingham Lane GP 135 July; Wiggenhall St Peter 65 Dec.

Two interesting offshore movements of 4 west West Runton June 4th and 3 west Beeston Regis (at least half a mile from the coast) Oct 3rd. Birds also on the sea Mundesley (3) Feb 2nd and Overstrand (2) Nov 16th.

Breeding: total of 85 pairs submitted from 39 sites including 19 Welney and 10 Holkham NNR. A ‘Polish’ type juv again at Titchwell as in 1997.

**Bewick’s Swan**  
*Passage migrant and winter visitor in internationally important numbers*

*Cygnus columbianus*

Large numbers again wintered in Fens at Welney and surrounding areas. During early March and to a lesser extent autumn, low water levels allowed substantial numbers of birds to feed on the washlands for a period. For much of the winter, however, flocks flighted out to feed on the farmland each day. Quite high numbers lingered into early March though quickly falling to 115 by 17th with the last record of 25 on 23rd. Up to 4 injured birds remained over the summer.

First autumn arrival 9 Oct 16th with a rapid build-up to 118 on 18th, 452 19th, 788 20th and 1442 on 21st. Numbers roosting just on the Welney reserve throughout the autumn and



early winter were highest since 1992. Breeding success during summer of 1999 was again rather poor with just 8% cygnets in flocks at the end of year.

A total of 81 colour-ringed birds observed during the 1998/99 winter, these having been ringed in Russia 22, The Netherlands 15, Martin Mere 20, Slimbridge 21 and Welney 3.

There were just two casualties with powerlines recorded during 1998/99 winter.

Counts in the Norfolk Fens:

<i>Jan 17th</i>	<i>Feb 12th</i>	<i>Mar 7th</i>	<i>Oct 24th</i>	<i>Nov 28th</i>	<i>Dec 12th</i>
4791	4169	2057	2219	3257	3800
(5129)	-	(2122)	-	(3937)	(4938)

*International importance (winter): 170*

*\* (Total Norfolk/Cambridgeshire figure in brackets)*

The east of county in Broads again produced some sizeable flocks in traditional areas though as usual there was much movement of flocks around the region. The main sites were: Sutton/Hickling Broad 107 Jan 9th and 100 on Dec 30th; Brumstead 70 Jan 5th; Catfield/Wood Street 95 Jan 17th, 70 Nov 29th and 114 Dec 17th; Reedham 63 Feb 7th and 73 roosting Dec 20th; St Benet's/Ludham 194 Jan 30th-Feb 20th, 68 Nov 6th and 63 Dec 2nd; Acle Straight 150 Jan 24th-31st and 80 Feb 23rd; Breydon/Berney 210 Feb 3rd may have involved Fenland birds stopping off on return passage as the number greatly exceeded all previous counts in the winter - there was also a late record here of 18 March 25th; Chedgrave/Langley 58 Jan 22nd. Elsewhere in county a small group of 10-11 Snettisham in Jan/Feb and 66 Burnham Norton Dec 11th.

There were numerous records of easterly moving flocks around the county during the 'spring' exodus, some as early as first week in Feb. The larger of these included 54 Mundesley Feb 3rd, 27 Winterton Feb 22nd, 40 Norwich Feb 27th, 100 Shipdham Feb 20th followed by 60 March 13th and 100 next day, 40 Wramplingham March 13th, 90 Ashill March 14th and 39 Wayland Wood March 17th.

Despite the rapid autumn build-up in Fens the majority arrived undetected, passage elsewhere in the county being poorly documented with few westerly movements reported. Earliest 5 Holme Oct 17th followed by 2 Cley, single How Hill and 20 west over West Somerton on 21st, and 3 Titchwell 25th. Small numbers of immigrants continued to be seen at a number of localities during Nov/Dec.

A small individual at Welney March 4th-11th showed only a restricted amount of yellow on its bill. It was thought likely to have been a Bewick's Swan x Whistling Swan hybrid or simply an aberrant Bewick's Swan though its true identity must remain a matter for debate.

## **Whooper Swan**

*Cygnus cygnus*

*Winter visitor, mainly from Iceland, in internationally important numbers.*

The inexorable growth of the Fenland wintering population continued with a record count of 1337 at Welney March 7th. Spring departures first noted from March 10th, these often occurring prior to dusk with flocks moving off to the north or north-west. Counts fell to 988 on 17th, 617 27th and 315 on 31st though as usual the vast majority of birds left unseen, presumably at night. Up to 154 remained April 1st, 93 13th, 33 16th with the final 14 on 21st. Four injured birds remained throughout the summer, one of these able to fly.

The first 3 adults of autumn arrived Oct 1st, increasing steadily to 10 on 2nd, 21 3rd, 41 5th which included the first family of 4 cygnets, 84 6th, 118 8th and 297 on 24th. Continuing arrivals throughout Nov saw record counts achieved for that month. As usual the main

lagoon at the WWT site at Welney was the focal point for this species, though when water levels were low enough large numbers spread out to feed along the Washes. Flocks also fed on farmland for much of the winter, especially on sugarbeet tops. A census in early Dec revealed 17.3% cygnets in the flock, a similar figure to last year.

A total of 115 colour-ringed birds was seen during the 1998/99 winter, these having been ringed in Iceland 91, Finland 2, Caerlaverock 8, Martin Mere 13 and Welney one.

Overhead powerlines accounted for just one bird during the 1998/99 winter.  
Counts at Welney WWT:

<i>Jan 10th</i>	<i>Feb 21st</i>	<i>Mar 7th</i>	<i>Apr 1st</i>	<i>Oct 28th</i>	<i>Nov 28th</i>	<i>Dec 12th</i>
1050	1135	1337	194	421	1266	1146
-	(1437)	(1623)	-	-	(1660)	-

*International importance (winter): 160*  
*\*(Total Norfolk/Cambridgeshire figure in brackets)*

Away from Fens extreme dates were singles Holme/Titchwell April 3rd and Breydon/Berney April 5th, with the first autumn flock of 26 Reedham Water How Hill Oct 17th.

The more traditional sites in cast of county again held substantial numbers for prolonged periods as follows: Sutton/Stalham/Hickling 73 Jan 9th and 63 Dec 17th; Waxham/Horsey/West Somerton 20 Feb 21st, 26 Nov 23rd and 24 Dec 2nd; Catfield/Wood Street 108 Jan 16th and 37 Dec 18th; Breydon/Berney 9 in Jan and 14 in March while Bure Park (Yarmouth) held up to 14 Jan/Feb.

Very small numbers were also seen at several sites throughout the county, especially during migration time, though few lingered. Exceptions were 2 at Langmere (East Wretham) Nov 12th-Dec 31st.

Bean Goose

*Anser fabalis*

**Taiga Bean Goose** *A (f) fabalis*  
*Winter visitor to the Yare Valley*

Peak count of the regular flock 198 Jan 6th, with 180 remaining on 17th; then considerable decrease from 23rd, with 25 still on 24th and 6 from Feb 7th which were last seen March 6th.

In second winter period 134 arrived back Nov 13th, increasing to 142 on 28th; peak Dec count 149 on 28th. Cantley was again much favoured and few were seen on south side of R Yare, where max 80 Rockland/Claxton Nov 14th.

Rare elsewhere as expected: 2 Cley Jan 2nd and presumably same Stiffkey Fen Jan 29th, Feb 16th and 26th. Also party of 6 Burnham Overy Marsh Feb 2nd, possibly the same group that appeared in Yare Valley from Feb 7th. A feral bird at Welney on several dates Sept 23rd-Dec 15th.

**Tundra Bean Goose** *A (f) rossicus*  
*Small numbers increasingly recorded in winter*

All records are again listed: Anmer Jan 1st, Snettisham/Hcacham Jan 17th, 3 Brancaster/Docking Jan 30th, Holkham injured bird in Feb and March, in addition one Feb 2nd, 5 Feb 26th and 28th, 15 27th, 16 March 4th and one to 10th, 2 Blakeney GM April 4th, Sheringham Jan 9th-23rd, 2 Gunton Park (possibly feral) Jan 29th, 2 Welney Jan 10th-16th, 5 17th and 7 on 26th to March 13th.

In second winter period, again few records. First arrivals 5 Holkham Nov 9th and 11 next day. In Dec recorded at Flitcham/Fring 20th and 24th, Brancaster/Docking 27th, 14 Repps-with-Bastwick 20th/21st, 6 Berney 5th and 12th, and 2 Welney 13th-29th.

3 Bean Geese at Snettisham Nov 28th were not racially identified.

**Pink-footed Goose**

*Anser brachyrhynchus*

*Winter visitor in internationally important numbers from Iceland and East Greenland*

Three important wintering populations are located in the county.

In north-west Norfolk coordinated dawn counts of geese leaving the 3 traditional roost sites give a reasonable estimate of the numbers involved.

First winter period:

	Jan 11th	Jan 19th	Jan 26th	Feb 8th	Feb 15th
Snettisham	27590	35250	8560	22300	9740
Scolt Head	1900	1300	590	-	-
Holkham/Wells	24350	18200	19550	10000	8000
Total	53840	54750	28700	32300	17740

Second winter period:

	Nov 8th	Nov 15th	Dec 2nd	Dec 7th	Dec 13th	Dec 18th
Snettisham	11740	16930	3885	7240	12970	15150
Scolt Head	13400	15250	28930	35180	15400	17800
Holkham/Wells	15740	16100	16200	22350	31190	30700
Total	40880	48280	49015	64770	59560	63650

It is noticeable from the above counts that a considerable proportion of the birds move from one roost site to another on different nights. Considerable concentrations also occurred in the daytime with several large flocks reported: Jan 8000 Terrington Marsh 6th, 15,000 Houghton 7th/8th, 12,000 Egmere/North Barsham 10th, up to 25,000 Anmer/Harpley 20th, and up to 20,000 Flitcham on several dates; Feb/March 5000 Holkham; Nov 5000 Docking/Ringstead 22nd, 6000 Holkham 29th/30th; Dec 12,000 Docking/Burnham Market 1st, 6000 Egmere 1st, 10,000 Holkham 14th, 9000 Flitcham 23rd, 15,000 Flitcham/Fring 24th.

At Holkham at least 2500 all March and still 1200 April 27th. Stragglers in May until 28th with 1-4 at 6 sites. First autumn flock 25 Holkham Sept 10th but then none reported until further arrivals on Wash/north coast Sept 28th-30th.

In East Norfolk, the Horsey/Heigham Holmes wintering population continues to steadily increase. All roost regularly on floods adjacent to Horsey Mere; monthly max:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
6500	5000	-	1500	5500	5000

Feeding gaggles range widely to Sea Palling, Waxham, Hickling, Ludham, Winterton, Martham and Hemsby. On Feb 20th 62 headed east out to sea at Horsey (22 of which later returned) suggesting that part of those wintering in East Norfolk may be from the Svalbard population which winter in the Netherlands. Possible further evidence of this was 2 east out to sea at Waxham April 1st and 5 in off sea Horsey Oct 6th.

The Breydon/Berney/Halvergate Marshes continued as a regular wintering location for significant numbers, having been re-established in 1996/7. Although gaggles ranged widely



and with obviously much interchange with the Horsey/Heigham Holmes population, a definite increase was noted. The Haddiscoe Island Levels were utilised for the first time in Feb. Favoured areas continued to be marshes alongside the A47 Acle Straight and along the east side of the Halvergate branch road. Most roosted on the Berney RSPB reserve. Monthly max:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
2300	5500	3100	372	600	1800

Unlike 1998, large numbers remained until late March with 1700 still present on 27th; the last 12 departed on 31st. 38 passage birds were noted April 5th with 60 on 9th. An earlier return with 300 back Oct 12th and 372 at month end.

The undoubted interchange of flocks between the major concentrations continued with numerous records of flocks in flight in north and north-east Norfolk in the winter months, including 1050 east Paston Oct 11th, and as far inland as Norwich, where max 1000 north-west Dec 18th.

## White-fronted Goose

*Anser albifrons*

### European White-fronted Goose *A (a) albifrons*

#### *Winter visitor and passage migrant from Siberian tundra*

Peak counts at traditional wintering localities:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holkham	467	600	600	50	250
Hickling/Heigham Holmes	500	500	-	73	120
Buckenham/Cantley	300	17	-	200	30
Breydon/Berney	85	34	6	46	-
Welney	1	1	1	-	-

Early departures as usual in first winter period with majority gone by early March and latest 19 Holkham March 19th. Very low numbers at Welney compared to recent years.

Away from above localities 2 Cley Jan 2nd, Anmer 3rd, 3 Little Ryburgh and 3 Holme 9th, 3 Flitcham 12th and 2 Feb 1st, 90 south-east Reedham Jan 21st, 12 Blakeney GM 23rd, 3 Gunton Park 29th, 4 east Sheringham Feb 2nd, 38 Langham Airfield 6th, 32 Claxton 13th, 2 Snettisham 17th and 9 on 21st, and 2 Ken Hill 27th. 4 Rockland St Mary Feb 14th considered birds from Buckenham/Cantley.

1-4 feral/escaped birds seen during spring, summer and into autumn at various sites but no breeding recorded.

In second winter period one of suspect origin Cranwich GP Oct 10th with first genuine arrivals on 17th when 5 Ludham, followed by 10 in off sea Holme and 7 Holkham GM 18th, with 12 there 20th, 4 east Titchwell 19th and 26 Berney 30th. Main arrival mid-Nov at main resorts but increasing at only two of these into Dec. Only records away from main sites during this period, 13 east Hilborough Nov 16th, Sedgeford 28th, 35 Burnham Norton Dec 5th, 16 Holme 18th and 8 Halvergate Marshes Dec 31st.

### Greenland White-fronted Goose *A (a) flavirostris*

#### *Rare visitor from Western Greenland*

More awareness of this distinctive race has led to an increase in records. The imm first seen at Holkham in Dec 1998 could well have been the same bird at Anmer Jan 3rd (CD), Houghton

Jan 8th (JBK JRMc), Anmer/Harpley Jan 20th (AIB) and Holkham Feb 24th-March 4th (AIB JRMc *et al*). Continued scrutiny of the Pink-footed Gecse flocks in north-west of county in second winter period resulted in another imm West Barsham Dec 11th (AIB) and an adult at Holkham Dec 26th (CD), with same or another Brancaster/Docking 27th (DJH JRMc).

In east of county the Lower Bure Levels near Yarmouth attracted 2 adults March 18th, with 3 on 20th and 4 21st-29th; 6 adults there March 15th were also probably of this race (PRA *et al*).

This race has been added to the list of species requiring written descriptions in relation to all records received after Jan 1st 2000.

**Greylag Goose**  
*Long-established and increasing feral population complicates identity of genuine wild arrivals*

*Anser anser*

Highest counts at most regularly counted important sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	360	137	241	15	105	225	165	440	468	317	-	285
Holme	7	65	8	12	4	40	34	30	7	61	85	80
Holkham NNR	215	-	213	217	60	-	-	609	792	621	418	-
Holkham Park	150	95	450	80	-	420	-	763	-	450	475	250
Stiffkey Fen	350	222	114	90	-	-	170	583	1000	-	420	-
Cley	101	-	-	49	68	-	64	425	-	343	-	-
Breydon/Berney	77	86	52	17	14	67	82	99	183	219	151	80
Welney	19	10	12	41	-	-	-	52	364	297	390	304

Many other counts of 200 or more: *Jan* 400 Thetford Nunnery Lakes, 340 Raynham Lake, 340 Heigham Holmes, 204 Pentney GP, 200 Elsing, 200 Wretton Fen; *Feb* 400 Wretton Fen, 260 Heigham Holmes, 237 Buckenham; *March* 295 Claxton; *May* 319 Buckenham; *June* 345 Sennowe Park, 201 Ranworth Broad; *July* 200 Pentney GP; *Aug* 328 Cranwich GP, 320 Pensthorpe, 309 Titchwell, 282 Strumpshaw; *Sept* 672 Titchwell, 400 Rockland Broad, 250 Thetford Nunnery Lakes; *Oct* 400 Titchwell, 270 Swangey GP, 212 Pentney GP; *Nov* 500 Sennowe Park, 375 Cranwich GP, 350 Pentney GP, 320 Elsing, 245 Felbrigg Park; *Dec* 306 Pentney GP, 305 Cranwich GP, 300 Swangey GP, 290 Tottenhill GP, 248 Felbrigg Park, 23 Reedham Water How Hill.

More breeding records received than in 1998, with records of 1-6 pairs/broods from Attleborough, Baconsthorpe, Breydon, Buckenham Tofts, Cley, Flitcham Abbey Farm, Hempton, Hoe, Holme, Pensthorpe, Quidenham, Raynham Lake, Sandringham, Salthouse, Sennowe Park, Swangey GP, Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Westmere, Welney (first breeding record) and Wisington BF. Larger concentrations Holkham GM 27 broods, Pentney GP (14), Stiffkey Fen (14) and Cranwich GP (7). In addition 76 young at Buckenham May 28th.

**Snow Goose**  
*Feral/escaped birds in small numbers; probability of occasional genuine vagrants*

*Anser caerulescens*

1997 Correction: The bird at Welney Jan-March, roosting on the reserve each evening, spend the day entirely in Norfolk and not 'much time in Cambridgeshire'.

## Canada Goose

*Branta canadensis*

### Introduced resident

Highest counts at most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Breydon/Berney	76	6	20	8	6	18	23	114	112	119	98	24
Cranwich GP	53	6	4	10	3	-	60	59	111	-	150	52
Lakenheath Washes	6	50	38	-	20	31	12	-	-	-	25	32
Lynford GP	24	33	38	48	28	49	53	87	-	4	-	173
Snetterton GP	102	56	70	-	-	90	-	161	44	-	-	37

From limited counts received, population has certainly been maintained and possibly increased, with high Dec counts from 4 sites. Peak monthly counts from elsewhere: *Jan* 130 Snettisham, 102 Bowthorpe Marsh, 100 Wretton Fen; *Feb* 450 Wretton Fen, 131 Whitlingham Lane GP; *June* 177 Thetford Nunnery Lakes, 147 Titchwell; *July* 288 Titchwell, 136 Snettisham; *Aug* 250 Nar Valley Fisheries, 204 Lopham Fen, 200 Titchwell, 171 Whitlingham Lane GP; *Sept* 156 Titchwell; *Oct* 150 Bridgham, 100 Felbrigg Park; *Nov* 235 Pentney GP, 220 Sparham, 127 Cantley; *Dec* 325 Pentney GP, 300 Tottenhill GP, 250 Bowthorpe Marsh, 200 Swangey GP.

Breeding season records received of 1-3 pairs/broods at Brancaster GM, Breydon, Buckenham Tofts, Filby Broad, Flitcham Abbey Farm, Holme, Lynford Lake, Pensthorpe, Pentney GP, Salthouse and Welney (first breeding attempt at this site). Larger concentrations of 14+ broods Thetford Nunnery Lakes, 8 broods Burnham Norton and 5 pairs/broods at both Cley and Wissington BF.

## 'Small' Canada Goose

### Potential vagrants from North America

A sudden upsurge of records in association with Pink-footed Geese with descriptions submitted and accepted for all birds seen in 1999. In Jan 2, possibly 3, in the Houghton/Anmer/Harpley area 7th-20th (JBK JRM*et al*), showing features of *parvipes*. Subsequently a much visited individual at Holkham Feb 6th-23rd (JRM*et al*) closest to race *hutchinsi*.

In Dec one at West Barsham 7th (AIB) and Flitcham 23rd (ADC) considered to be *parvipes/intermedius* type. One at Brancaster/Docking 26th/27th (CD JRM*et al*) considered to be *parvipes/interior*. Another (or same?) on Lower Bure Marshes between Acle and Yarmouth 18th (JLa) also considered to be *parvipes/interior* type.

All records of these races are subject to consideration (and hence require descriptions) by the County Records Committee as from Jan 1st 2000.

## Barnacle Goose

*Branta leucopsis*

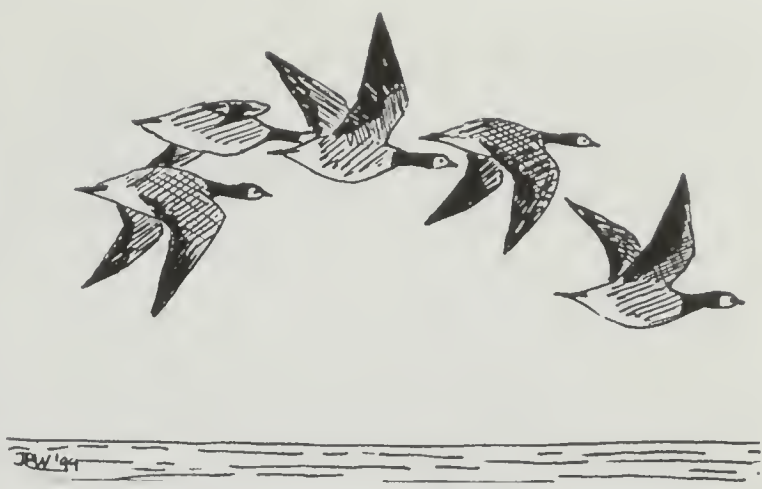
### Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers with feral/escaped birds often in large groups causing confusion

As in past years, sightings in every month make an analysis of records extremely difficult. Wandering birds from local known feral population in the county and from neighbouring Suffolk, and perhaps elsewhere, confuse the issue. Many, however, suggest birds of wild origin.

In first winter period, up to 9 associating with Pink-feet in north-west Norfolk in Jan/Feb, being recorded most regularly at Anmer, Egmere, Flitcham, Harpley, Houghton and Snettisham. Other birds with Pink-feet were up to 13 in Holkham area Jan/Feb whilst 5 at Burnham Norton Feb 1st-8th and 11 on 28th associated with Brent Geese; 10 also at Ken



Hill Feb 21st and 7  
Titchwell March 18th-20th.  
The only Heigham Holmes  
records were 3 Jan 2nd and  
15 Feb 12th. Other first  
winter period records  
received suggest feral  
origin and included up to 90  
at Buckenham/Cantley in  
Jan, 85 Feb and 64 March.  
April records included 6  
Holme 21st/22nd, Holkham  
4th and 15th, and 6 east  
Blakeney Point 21st; 3 west  
Sheringham May 11th



Barnacle Geese (J R Williamson)

continued the regular sightings here during this month. At Berney 9 May 26th were presumably from the Fritton Lake feral population.

Breeding records of feral birds: Flitcham Abbey Farm brood May, Pensthorpe 9 broods with 22 well-grown young in July/Aug and 2 broods Hethersett. Counts at latter site included 56 March 30th and 65 Aug 24th. In addition up to 24 Fritton Lake in summer and 5 at Thetford Nunnery Lakes.

In second winter period, first Sept 30th when one in off sea Scolt Head with Pink-feet. On Oct 4th, a day of an unpreented passage of Barnacle Geese off north-east British coast with westerly movements of 14 Scolt Head (with 22 next day), 5 Cley (with 3 next day) and 4 Sheringham (one next day). Other Oct records included Hempstead 8th with Pink-feet, 6 east Scolt Head and 3 Holkham 16th, and one Happisburgh 19th.

In Nov/Dec 1-5 with Pink-feet in north-west at various localities including Brancaster, Docking, Flitcham and Fring; also 1-2 in Holkham area. At Cley/Salthouse one with Brents Nov 8th-23rd and Dec 26th-29th. Others probably of wild origin included 6 Hickling Dec 27th, and singles Eccles Nov 12th and Waxham 28th; at Heigham Holmes 5 Dec 12th and 10 31st. Known feral population winter gatherings included 20 at Buckenham/Cantley Nov 11th and an exeptional 166 Lound Waterworks Dec 25th.

**Brent Goose**

*Branta bernicla*

**Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *B (b) bernicla*  
*Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly peak counts at selected important sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington Marsh	2000	1440	2250	1000	1322	710	2487	3050
Ousemouth/Lynn Point	2300	800	700	450	400	35	2060	1340
Holme	980	680	525	330	43	1000	650	700
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	2000	1950	830	575	495	860	2370	3215
Wells	302	-	485	-	-	-	809	2721
Warham Greens	-	484	390	250	300	-	139	241
Stiffkey	-	-	-	300	378	-	239	464
Blakeney GM/Hbr	2849	3206	-	-	900	1731	2049	2450

For further counts in Wash and north coast see WeBS tables

As expected with this species, there is clearly much overlap between adjacent localities, as mobile flocks wander between coastal intertidal areas.

Many remained again to early May, and later in month concentrations still widespread with max 412 Blakeney Hbr on 19th. Easterly exodus noted at Scolt Head on several dates in May including 48 east 22nd.

More midsummer records than usual with 1-7 during June-Aug at Lynn Point, Snettisham, Burnham Overy, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, Stiffkey, Blakeney GM, Cley, Sheringham, Horsey and Breydon/Berney.

First returning birds of autumn, 3 Scolt Head Sept 11th with 42 west there 15th and 157 west Sheringham same date. Small movements regularly noted Sept 17th-20th. Numbers gradually increased, boosted by a series of further westerly coastal movements especially on Oct 16th when 6000 Blakeney Point, 550 Cley in 7 hrs, 4020 West Runton in 2 hrs 15 mins, and 3000 at Mundesley in 2 hrs; also on same date 943 north at Horsey with an additional 251 south in 3 hrs 15 mins. At Brancaster Hbr the usual leucistic bird returned in early Nov.

Inland records as expected scarce, but singles West Barsham Jan 15th, Cantley BF Jan 16th, an oiled bird Strumpshaw April 30th, Swangey GP May 3rd, Welney Nov 23rd-27th, and unusually 19 heading north at Wereham Dec 19th.

In East Norfolk, remains very scarce as a winter visitor, max of only 12 in Breydon area.

From limited breeding data received, success seemed to be average, with 15% young birds estimated at Holme and 15-20% at Brancaster Hbr. Nationally the overall proportion of juv birds present was 23.5%, with mean brood size 2.44 young. This represents the most successful breeding season since 1991, and the first time that productivity has exceeded the estimated annual mortality rate since 1993 (WWT).

### **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** *B (b) hrota*

#### ***Scarce winter visitor***

As in recent years an increase in records; almost all individuals are believed to relate to the Svalbard population, but interesting observations of singles with Pink-feet at Holkham in Oct, in Docking area in Nov and at Flitcham in Dec are suggestive of Greenland origin. In first winter period 4 Terrington Jan 17th, 2 Ongar Hill Feb 20th, up to 3 Lynn Point Jan 20th-Feb 24th, and singles March 14th, April 5th-7th and May 3rd, Titchwell April 22nd, Burnham Norton/Overy 2 all Feb and one March 10th, 2 Brancaster Hbr Feb 24th, Holkham/Wells 1-3 Jan 23rd-Feb 25th, and Sheringham Jan 1st-17th.

In second winter period Scolt Head Oct 21st/22nd and Holkham 30th. In last 2 months of year 4 Lynn Point Dec 20th, and singles Docking area Nov, Holkham/Wells Nov 25th and Dec 5th, Burnham Deepdale 13th and Flitcham Dec 20th-23rd.

### **Black Brant** *B (b) nigricans*

#### ***Almost annual vagrant from North America/East Asia***

An excellent year, the best on record, but extremely difficult to determine the exact number present as considerable movement between sites: *Jan* Terrington 24th and Lynn Point same day, Holme/Thornham/Titchwell all month (with 2 on 26th), Holkham 23rd and 30th, Wells Hbr 1st (to Feb 2nd), 3 Blakeney GM 27th, Cley 12th-30th, and 2 Sheringham area 1st-22nd. Perhaps as many as 6 different individuals and most, if not all, were birds present from the Nov 1998 influx; *Feb* Titchwell until 12th, 2 Holkham/Wells 6th-12th (with 3 9th) and one to 26th, Cley/Salthouse one all month with 2 6th-19th; *March* Holme one to at least 15th, Titchwell 8th and 20th, Wells 7th, Blakeney Point 13th, Cley 2 on 3rd and one to 20th.



Black Brant with Brent Geese (*P Wilson*)

In second winter period: *Oct* Wells 10th onwards remaining to year end; *Nov* Holme/Thornham/Titchwell 13th and 21st-27th, Holkham/Wells 15th and 30th with 2 on 20th-23rd, Cley 5th-7th, 12th-14th, 19th and 28th, Salthouse/Kelling 22nd/23rd; *Dec* the Holme/Thornham/Titchwell bird remained to year end, Burnham Deepdale 13th, Holkham 2 on 5th with one next day, Stiffkey 16th, Saxlingham (inland) 18th, Cley all month with 2 on 26th-31st, Weybourne/Sheringham 13th and 18th.

It is interesting to note the first county record was as recently as 1982.

### Red-breasted Goose

*Branta ruficollis*

#### *Vagrant from Siberia*

An adult at Lynn Point with Brent Geese Feb 14th-18th (ADC *et al*); the eighth county record and the first since two occurrences in 1995.

### Egyptian Goose

*Alopochen aegyptiacus*

#### *Long-established resident feral population*

Fewer coordinated counts received from main sites than in 1998. Highest counts were 101 Sennowe Park in June and 163 Holkham NNR in Aug. All other counts of 30 or more: *Jan* 68 St Benedict's Level, 30 Gunton Park; *Feb* 32 Claxton Marsh; *March* 30 Hoveton Hall; *April* 42 Blickling Lake, 36+ Sennowe Park; *May* 31 Holkham Park; *June* 96 Middleton GP, 32 Lynford GP; *July* 90 Holkham Park, 80 Sennowe Park, 42 Lyng-Easthaugh GP, 38 Middleton GP; *Aug* 72 Pentney GP, 63 Nar Valley Fisheries, 62 Sennowe Park; *Sept* 89 Holkham NNR, 80 Buekenham, 71 Pentney GP, 70 Sparham GP, 69 Holkham Park; *Oct* 54 Pentney GP, 50 Buekenham, 45 Fleggburgh; *Nov* 66 Horning Upper Street; *Dec* 72 Horning Upper Street, 36 Stanford TA.

A small increase in breeding season records involving 1-2 pairs/broods at 28 widely scattered localities with 5 Felbrigg Park, 4 Sennowe Park and Cranwich GP, and 3 Holkham GM and Whitlingham Lane GP. No details from Holkham Park Lake where 15 pairs in 1998. First broods recorded in late March and a pair with one juv at Cockley Cley in Dec. A leucistic bird at Berney in May and early June.

Several offshore records received including 5 south Caister Jan 3rd.



**Shelduck***Tadorna tadorna****Widespread breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Monthly peak counts at selected sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	2891	2735	914	843	578	-	-	293	1071	1782	3030	2586
Ousemouth	234	-	-	402	28	-	209	114	148	69	338	256
Snettisham	683	641	365	238	214	-	28	370	507	873	1294	1378
Holme	25	77	24	32	24	9	3	4	3	7	15	71
Titchwell	41	74	-	42	40	42	39	40	-	40	-	53
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	286	171	112	80	96	101	54	42	10	199	213	336
Blakeney Hbr/Cley	295	166	114	45	85	92	-	99	96	260	-	238
Breydon/Berney	204	207	239	128	219	452	227	26	52	269	214	174
Wissington BF	42	-	-	78	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buckenham	42	42	31	51	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rockland Broad	34	20	12	22	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Welney	12	64	48	57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29

*International importance (winter): 3000; National importance (winter): 750*

Only other notable counts elsewhere: 71 Thornham and 97 Holkham NNR March, 114 Holkham NNR and 79 Stiffkey Oct.

Small winter westerly movement noted Jan with 20 Scolt Head 6th, 32 Holme 9th, 48 there and 13 Sheringham 10th, 11 Overstrand 11th and 19 Sheringham 28th.

Seemingly another good breeding year, with records from Alby (brood), Baconsthorpe (brood), Brancaster GM (2 pairs), Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr (30 pairs hatched 16 broods), Breydon (11 broods totalling 79 ducklings), Bridgham (brood), Cantley BF (4 broods with 21 young June), Cley (16 pairs), East Wretham Heath (brood), Flitcham Abbey Farm (3+ broods), Holkham NNR (14 pairs), Holme (15 pairs), King's Lynn BF (3 pairs hatched 1 brood), Lakenheath Washes (pair), Neatishead (brood), Pensthorpe (4 broods), Pentney GP (brood of 7), Salthouse (14 pairs), Stanford Water (brood), Tallents Meadow Lake (brood), Welney (4 broods), Whitlingham Lane GP (2 broods) and Wissington BF (30+ ducklings June).

Usual easterly movement of adults to traditional moulting sites off NW Germany from May 27th (when 13 east Scolt Head) until early Aug, with max counts off Scolt Head of 103 June 16th, 118 July 12th, and 268 July 13th.

Few observations of returning birds moving west, with best counts of 48 Holme Oct 10th, 145 Cley and 140 West Runton (0700-0915 hrs) Oct 16th, 28 north Yarmouth (30 mins) Nov 9th, 75 Sheringham (0700-1300 hrs) and 34 north Yarmouth (30 mins) Nov 10th, 15 Holme Nov 12th, with a late movement 80 Beeston Bump Dec 15th.

**Mandarin***Aix galericulata****Introduced wanderer and escape; breeding collection at least formerly at Sandringham***

Most regularly recorded at the following 4 localities, with monthly max:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Felbrigg Park Lake	-	1	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Flitcham Abbey Fm	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gunton Park Lake	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pensthorpe	5	6	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	2	3	3

Elsewhere a scattering of records throughout the year of 1-4 from Aylmerton, Caistor St Edmund, Calthorpe Broad, East Ruston, Hillington Lake, Holme, Ken Hill GM, Martham Broad North, Sandringham Gardens (single drake May), Sedgeford Hall Heacham, Snettisham, Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Titchwell (drake briefly on beach May), Welney and Weybourne. Also in Nov 5 free-flying birds in a collection near Wayford Bridge, Smallburgh.

No indication of breeding.

## Wigeon

*Anas penelope*

*Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor in internationally important numbers; a few over-summer and have bred*

Peak monthly counts at main localities:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	280	733	89	-	160	287	239	600
Holme	930	1330	680	30	600	300	950	1350
Scolt/Braceaster Hbr	801	235	350	2	555	2200	2242	312
Holkham NNR	7100	4205	6315	377	980	3584	7450	11615
Blakeney Hbr/GM	2709	3140	388	-	85	2069	2777	2103
Cley/Salthouse	223	618	375	-	731	202	875	660
Breydon/Berney	8600	11200	3900	348	634	2200	5100	12150
Ranworth Broad	1202	1000	-	-	-	-	485	1400
Cantley/Buckenham	-	3000	5000	375	131	1200	-	3400
Lakenheath Washes	358	371	404	55	-	-	57	25
Welney	8141	6534	4317	623	727	2945	5493	8130

*International importance (winter): 12,500; National importance (winter): 2800*

Considerable increase in wintering numbers at Breydon/Berney due in part to increase in size of the RSPB reserve, and to good flood conditions on the grazing marsh.

Notable counts elsewhere included: *Jan* 300 Pentney GP; *Feb* 515 Cantley BF, 642 Ken Hill GM, 269 Pentney GP, 650 Stiffkey; *March* 221 Cantley BF, 176 Pentney GP, 472 Ken Hill GM; *Sept* 550 Stiffkey Fen, 517 Titchwell, 500 Warham; *Oct* 285 Titchwell; *Nov* 350 Cantley BF, 300+ Sennowe Park; *Dec* 200+ Fritton Decoy, 200 Horsey Mere, 317 Pentney GP.

Winter movement of 91 west Scolt Head Jan 23rd. Usual rapid departure in late March/early April, with a few lingering into May.

Usual scattering of summering birds at wetlands around the county, but no evidence of breeding. Counts in June/July: 3 Buckenham, 3 Burnham Norton, 3 Cantley BF, 5 Cley, 5 Berney, Great Ryburgh, 6-10 Holkham NNR, Holme, Lakenheath Washes, R Bure at St Benedict's, 2 Stiffkey Fen, 10 Titchwell and 11 Welney. Also unusual record of 2 on sea off Horsey July 3rd.

First certain return migrants (same?) 4 west Scolt Head, Sheringham and Cromer Aug 20th, with 4 north Horsey the following day. Regular westerly movements from then until mid-Nov, with peak counts 245 Scolt Head Sept 11th; 700 Holme and 1160 Scolt Head Sept 12th; 335 Scolt Head Sept 14th; 230 Scolt Head and 120 north Winterton Sept 15th; 267 Scolt Head Sept 20th; 169 Cley, 180 Sheringham and 77 West Runton all Oct 5th; 2000 Holme, 2075 Scolt Head and 320 Sheringham Oct 6th; 675 Scolt Head and 168 Sheringham Oct 15th; 1330 Scolt Head, 1000+ Cley, 2370 West Runton (0700-0915 hrs) and 500+ Mundesley (2 hrs) Oct 16th; 92 West Runton Oct 17th; 110 Scolt Head, 200 Sheringham, 36 West Runton, 147 Overstrand all Nov 10th.

Winter movement of 650 west Beeston Bump and 200 west Mundesley (2 hrs) Dec 15th, with 180 on sea off Horsey Dec 27th.

American Wigeon

*Anas americana*

Vagrant from North America

At start of year a drake Cley Jan 2nd (IB AG AMeL), then an elusive drake Berney Feb 18th, March 11th and 13th (PRA *et al*). Presumably the same returning drake again Berney Nov 4th (PRA).

Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Peak monthly counts at principal localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	74	131	54	9	7	-	4	-
Titchwell	126	64	40	-	51	41	-	-
Holkham NNR	52	21	55	67	78	73	59	-
Cley	39	14	21	19	120	128	53	121
Hickling/Heigham Sound	75	-	-	6	45	145	160	-
Martham Broad	36	83	-	2	-	-	-	-
Breydon/Berney	102	217	258	81	9	11	14	25
Lynford GP	113	2	-	4	5	60	128	197
Whitlingham Lane GP	61	87	-	16	31	38	187	180
Cranwich GP	12	-	16	8	40	1	-	36
Stanford Water	-	350	81	66	-	80	70	54
Lakenheath Washes	30	90	79	121	-	140	22	1
Welney	12	65	45	72	21	13	71	53

International importance (winter): 300; National importance (winter): 80

The March figure at Breydon/Berney was a record count for this site.

Notable counts from elsewhere: Jan 48 Cringleford Marshes, 107+ Crome’s Broad, 49 Flitham and 51 Raynham Lake; April 98 Strumpshaw; May 44 Berney, 42 Holkham NNR, 45 Lakenheath Washes, 53 Little Ouse Thetford, 60 Titchwell, and 53 Welney; June 132 Cley and 87 Titchwell; July 45 Raynham Lake; Aug 49 Cley, 55 Holkham NNR, 92 Raynham Lake, 64 Reedham Water How Hill, 75 Stanford Water and 100+ Titchwell; Oct 54 Holme; Nov 85 Colney GP, 218 Crome’s Broad and 70 Thompson Water; Dec 125 Colney GP, 120 Horsey Mere and 70 Ranworth Broad.

Exceptional winter movements 6 south Waxham Jan 2nd and 86 west Scolt Head Jan 23rd. In spring at Sheringham 2 east May 1st, 2 west Sheringham May 6th and 6 east Sheringham May 15th.

Limited breeding season records received from the following localities: Braneaster GM (15 pairs produced 4+ broods), Cley (12 pairs), Cranwich GP (pair), Filby Broad (2 pairs), Flitham Abbey Farm (brood), Holkham NNR (44 pairs produced 21 broods), Holme (5+ pairs), Lakenheath Washes (2 pairs), Little Ouse Thetford (2 pairs), Pensthorpe (pair), Reedham Water How Hill (brood), Salhouse (16 pairs produced 2+ broods), Sandringham Gardens (pair), Scolt Head (3 pairs hatched 2 broods), Strumpshaw (5 broods), Thompson Water (brood), Tottenhill GP (brood), Welney (6 broods) and Wolterton Hall (brood).



Summer movement of 3 west Scolt Head July 20th. Only autumn movement reported 2 west West Runton Oct 16th.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Passage migrant and abundant winter visitor; breeds in small numbers

Peak monthly counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	233	401	117	-	-	440	543	91	250
Holme	115	84	123	60	27	66	45	70	102
Titchwell	350	110	-	-	430	530	200	273	153
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	158	58	18	0	7	125	221	79	140
Holkham NNR	486	86	160	145	174	671	957	848	762
Blakeney Hbr/GM/Cley	982	368	216	57	527	1180	1309	1161	1562
Salthouse	290	175	75	-	-	76	284	-	282
Breydon/Berney	800	370	1284	870	518	650	1085	2060	3150
Ranworth/Cockshoot Broad	270	252	-	32	-	84	135	-	2400
Cantley BF	700	479	22	-	80	275	300	-	815
Buckenham Marshes	-	-	400	100	40	-	-	-	250
Welney	517	905	1493	419	158	1382	848	1509	3030

International importance (winter): 4000; National importance (winter): 1400

Highest counts elsewhere during the year: Jan 100 Cranwich GP, 114 Flitcham, 200 Tallents Meadow Lake, 540 Wretton Fen; Feb 120 Barningham Hall Lake Matlaske, 162 Brancaster GM, 107 Hiekling Broad, 300 Horsey Mere, 112 Lakenheath Washes, 160 Tallents Meadow Lake, 1000 Wretton Fen; March 300 Horsey Mere; Aug 100 Tallents Meadow Lake; Sept 106 Lopham Fen; Oct 340 Pensthorpe, 270 Reedham Water How Hill, 300 Tallents Meadow Lake; Nov 2000 Horsey Mere, 350 Stiffkey Fen; Dec 404 Cranwich GP, 3000 Horsey Mere, 101 Stiffkey Fen, 127 Whitlingham Lane GP.

Breeding confirmed only at Berney (4 pairs nested), Holkham GM (3 pairs hatched 2 broods) and Welney (brood). Possible breeding at Lopham Fen (1-2 pairs with weak-flying young early Aug) and Lakenheath Washes (agitated female mid-Aug). Elsewhere in May singles or pairs present at Flitcham Abbey Farm, Holme, Ken Hill GM, Sennowe Park and Titchwell.

Post breeding gatherings at several sites from mid-June with westerly passage at coastal sites from July 12th. Subsequent peak westerly counts: Aug 83 Scolt Head, 320 Sheringham and 161 Cromer 20th, 199 Sheringham (2 hrs) and 104 Mundesley 21st, 134 Scolt Head 23rd and 131 there 25th; Sept 251 Scolt Head 11th and 275 there 12th, 80 north Winterton 15th, 45 west 80 east Sheringham 19th, 135 Scolt Head 20th; Oct 495 Scolt Head 6th and 135 there 15th, and an exeptionally large movement of 1000+ Cley 16th.

Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis

Vagrant from North America

Drakes recorded as follows: Whitlingham Lane GP, Jan 11th-17th, Feb 11th-13th and 17th (DJH JLa et al), Welney March 14th with presumably the same April 4th-8th (DMJ JBK), Surlingham Church Marsh April 1st/2nd (JE GC), Burnham Norton April 15th (TRD), Cley Sept 28th (VE), Cantley BF Dec 17th/18th (PJH DJH) with probably the same Berney Dec 19th (PRA KRD). In addition undoubted returning bird Cley/Salthouse/Kelling WM various dates Feb 24th-April 21st.

**Mallard**

*Anas platyrhynchos*

*Widespread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Peak counts at selected sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	641	258	60	30	415	625	515	416	417
Holme	57	19	20	54	81	137	260	202	132
Titchwell	99	75	-	46	200	293	140	-	64
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	287	95	49	53	92	195	471	265	289
Holkham NNR	125	46	131	162	65	165	158	187	97
Blakeney GM/Cley	411	329	110	42	274	271	227	219	230
Breydon/Berney	508	243	130	33	300	132	148	215	315
Ranworth/Cockshoot Broad	293	113	-	42	81	393	267	372	248
Cantley BF	267	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	221
Pensthorpe	209	109	-	-	226	-	-	-	-
Welney	918	509	368	274	-	433	669	1162	1572

*International importance (winter): 5000*

Notable counts elsewhere: *Jan* 100 Bittering GP; *April* 160 Fustyweed GP (Elsing); *May* 110 Berney, 141 Holkham NNR, 379 Welney; *June* 125 Berney, 101 Reedham Water How Hill; *July* 120 Berney; *Aug* 245 Hundred Acre Marsh Hickling, 200 Raynham Lake, 175 Strumpshaw; *Sept* 200+ Lopham Fen, 120 Saddlebow, 110 Thompson Water, 103 Whitlingham Lane GP; *Oct* 235 Holkham Park Lake, 120 Lynford GP, 200 Stanford Water; *Nov* 322 Barton Broad; *Dec* 173 Barton Broad, 120 King's Lynn Fisher Fleet, 164 Reedham Water How Hill, 170 Tottenhill GP.

A good scattering of breeding records received, including 106 broods raised by 140-150 pairs at Holkham NNR. Late brood King's Lynn Nov 2nd.

Only passage movements noted, all to the west: 23 Scolt Head Jan 23rd and 11 there Oct 15th, 23 West Runton Oct 16th, 35 Cromer Nov 11th, 31 Sheringham and 20 West Runton Nov 14th.

**Pintail**

*Anas acuta*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor, has bred*

Peak monthly counts at main localities:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Terrington	169	11	-	57	15	8	-
Titchwell	55	42	10	17	23	50	-
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	93	113	0	90	133	255	240
Burnham Norton	65	-	-	-	17	17	65
Blakeney Hbr/Cley	775	449	2	138	433	1018	450
Breydon/Berney	217	255	104	17	59	118	189
Tottenhill GP	70	-	-	194	410	-	60
Welney	1306	1377	568	57	-	348	1240

*International importance (winter): 600; National importance (winter): 280*

Occasional records from many other wetland sites during year with max: 28 Lakenheath Washes and 28 Wretton Fen Jan and 30 Stiffkey Fen Sept.

At Breydon birds increasingly using Berney. Usual rapid departure late March/early April, with almost all gone by mid-April. Visible spring departure noted at Winterton where 3 east high out to sea March 13th and single high east March 16th. A few lingering birds noted in May at Berney, Titchwell and Welney. Only summer records single Burnham Norton July and intriguingly 3 imms King's Lynn BF July 20th, with presumed same Pentney GP July 23rd.

First presumed returning bird Cley July 27th. Best counts from around the coast of birds moving westwards at Scolt Head 15 Aug 24th, 36 Aug 25th, 32 Sept 1st, 65 Sept 10th, 174 Sept 12th, 76 Sept 14th and 62 Sept 15th; 43 Cley (0955-1055 hrs) Sept 30th, 17 Sheringham Oct 3rd, 35 Scolt Head, 44 Sheringham and 17 West Runton Oct 4th, 18 Cley and 17 Sheringham Oct 5th, 33 Scolt Head Oct 6th, 12 Blakeney Point Oct 9th and 72 Scolt Head Oct 15th. Late winter movement of 40 off Sheringham Dec 15th.

## Garganey

*Anas querquedula*

### *Very scarce breeding summer visitor; scarce passage migrant*

First spring arrivals in March drake Felbrigg Park Lake 14th-28th, Berney 26th, drake Welney 30th with pair there 31st. Further spring records, mainly of 1-4, from Berney (where up to 7 May), Cley, Hardley Flood, Hickling Broad, Holkham NNR, Holme, Ken Hill GM, King's Lynn BF, Lakenheath Washes, Ouse Washes (RSPB), Pentney GP, Reedham Water How Hill, Rockland Broad, Salthouse, Snettisham GP, Stiffkey Fen, Strumpshaw, Titchwell and Welney.

Summer records from 15 localities but breeding only confirmed at Buekenham Marshes where brood June 30th and at Holme where brood of 6 fledged. Elsewhere pair bred unsuccessfully Cley, 1-2 juvs Berney from July 4th possibly indicating breeding locally, and agitated female Welney July 3rd.

Notable record of one west Sheringham Aug 30th. Other autumn records (with monthly max) from Berney (8 Aug, 6 Sept), Cantley BF (Aug, Sept), Cley (4 Aug, 6 Sept), Cranwich GP (Aug, Sept), Hockwold Sluice (Aug), Holme (Sept), Kelling WM (4 Aug), Nar Valley Fisheries (Aug), Pentney GP (Aug), Raynham Lake (Aug), South Fen East Ruston (2 Aug), Titchwell (Aug, Sept) and Welney (6 Aug, 2 Sept). Latest 2 Berney Oct 1st-3rd and Cley Oct 21st and 31st.



Garganey (V Hanlon)



**Blue-winged Teal***Anas discors***Vagrant from North America**

Typical autumn record of female/imm Titchwell Oct 3rd (PMW *et al*).

**Shoveler***Anas clypeata***Passage migrant, summer and winter visitor**

Peak monthly counts at selected localities:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holme	11	19	37	24	8	10	8	28	9
Titchwell	-	12	-	11	24	29	33	18	-
Holkham NNR	30	46	55	70	35	39	25	44	37
Cley	34	-	-	-	39	19	74	44	27
Breydon/Berney	264	236	319	257	105	167	229	208	116
Cantley BF	57	73	-	-	190	128	91	-	89
Pensthorpe	47	26	-	-	-	-	46	-	-
Lakenheath Washes	9	42	59	26	4	-	-	6	6
Welney	12	147	234	159	-	207	128	55	92

*National importance (winter): 100*

*The count at Breydon/Berney in March was a record for the reserve.*

*Numbers low at Welney at start and end of year due to extensive deep flooding.*

Highest counts noted at other sites during year: *Jan* 70 Hickling Broad; *Feb* 21 Scoulton Mere, 29 Stiffkey Fen, 35 Stiffkey Washes, 26 Surlingham Church Marsh, 35 Whitlingham Lane GP; *March* 32 Buckenham, 29 Ken Hill GM; *April* 19 Cockshoot Broad, 28 Ken Hill GM; *May* 36 Berney, 51 Holkham NNR, 41 Welney; *June* 53 Berney, 35 Titchwell; *July* 34 Berney, 72 Welney; *Sept* 46 Holkham Park Lake, 23 Pentney GP; *Oct* 39 Buckenham, 40 Reedham Water How Hill; *Nov* 170 Ranworth Broad; *Dec* 80 Martham Broad South, 24 Snettisham, 37 Whitlingham Lane GP.

Winter movement of 8 west Scolt Head Jan 23rd. Spring coastal passage of 2 west Beeston Bump March 22nd and 2 east Mundesley April 20th.

Limited information on breeding, with records from the following localities: Berney (33 pairs with 12+ broods), Brancaster GM (6 pairs), Cley (10 pairs), Holkham NNR (18 broods from 42 pairs), Holme (12 pairs - creche of 20 fledged young July 19th), Rockland Broad (brood), Stiffkey Fen (pair), Strumpshaw (3 broods) and Welney (12+ broods).

Very light westerly autumn passage with only records: at Scolt Head 3 Sept 1st, 2 Sept 14th, one Oct 6th, 2 Oct 10th, 5 Oct 12th and 4 Oct 26th; also 4 Sheringham Oct 14th.

**Red-crested Pochard***Netta rufina***An escape, but with possibility of gennine vagrants from the Continent**

A male at Welney Jan 12th/13th and 30th/31st, all Feb, March 5th and March 18th-April 4th. Another male, undoubtedly of feral origin, Wroxham Bridge March 13th and April 3rd-30th. A female at Hickling Broad Jan 30th, most of April (with 2 females there 3rd), June 13th-26th, and Nov 11th; this bird could well have accounted for records at Lilly Broad (Rollesby) Sept 11th, Ormesby Broad Sept 28th and Horning Nov 26th.

Elsewhere a pair (probably same) Lyng GP Feb 28th, Sennowe Park March 24th, Great Ryburgh April 10th/11th and Dunton April 24th. At nearby Pensthorpe 6 broods raised. Also pair Titchwell June 15th-30th and 2 Cley Aug 6th.



Red-crested Pochard (*A Benson*)

## Pochard

*Aythya ferina*

*Summer breeder in small numbers, common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Peak counts at selected sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	116	54	23	-	-	-	22	38
Holme	24	21	22	14	1	18	31	30
Hickling Broad	380	90	-	-	50	-	465	545
Martham Broad	450	185	-	-	-	-	95	115
Ranworth Broad	103	2	17	16	5	37	188	14
Breydon/Berney	40	22	18	8	5	2	26	-
Pensthorpe	-	97	60	-	-	-	-	19
Pentney GP	95	-	-	-	-	-	231	200
Welney	3001	3738	1221	15	33	397	1186	1620

*National importance (winter): 440*

Notable counts elsewhere: *Jan* 159 Cantley BF, 42 Felbrigg Park, 300 Tottenhill GP; *Feb* 50 Strumpshaw; *March* 46 Raynham Lake, 55 Rockland Broad, 80 Sennowe Park; *Nov* 107 Thompson Water; *Dec* 90 East Wretham, 240 Horsey Mere, 35 Rockland Broad, 43 Whitlingham Lane GP.

Small numbers summered at various localities, with breeding records from (broods in brackets): Berney (1), Cantley BF (2+), Cockshoot/Ranworth Broads (4), Holkham NNR (21), Holme (5), Honing (1), How Hill (1), Kettlestone Common (1), Pensthorpe (5), Sennowe Park (1), Stanford Water (1), Strumpshaw (1), Thompson Water (2), Titchwell (1). Pairs also present (no proof of breeding) at Barton Turf, Burnham Norton, Filby Broad, Hickling Broad, Holkham Park, Sparham Pools and Swanton Morley GP.

Post breeding flocks of 39 Tottenhill GP July 30th, 44 Cantley BF Aug 28th and 57 Pensthorpe Aug 31st.

Autumn/winter coastal movements: 2 east Sheringham Sept 19th, one on sea Beeston Regis Oct 15th, 3 south Eccles Oct 19th, 3 west Oct 25th and one west Scolt Head Oct 26th.

## Ferruginous Duck

*Aythya nyroca*

*Rare visitor from the Continent, or escape from captivity*

Only one, a drake at Hickling Broad on Oct 13th (PCa). All records of this species are now considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

*1998 Correction:* Observer of male Hickling Broad May 5th was SH not SSm.

## Tufted Duck

*Aythya fuligula*

*Summer breeder, common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Peak counts at selected sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	90	62	30	18	-	26	38	33
Holme	16	19	33	28	11	13	20	16
Holkham Park Lake	40	18	55	40	-	-	42	45
Hickling Broad	246	-	45	-	210	360	400	-
Martham Broad	-	41	25	32	-	100	-	-
Ranworth/Cockshoot	147	44	39	39	40	7	2	21
Trinity Broads	108	524	118	-	-	-	-	-
Breydon/Berney	32	32	29	21	3	7	11	11
Whitlingham Lane GP	43	-	-	-	50	-	103	61
Tottenhill GP	80	-	-	32	-	-	-	38
Cranwich GP	13	35	120	48	46	47	87	74
Pentney GP	64	-	-	36	61	-	-	193
Lynford GP	99	-	-	-	-	-	102	135
Pensthorpe	264	359	247	184	218	308	380	297
Welney	281	191	176	191	15	6	53	76

*National importance (winter): 600*

Notable counts elsewhere: *Feb* 74 Ouse Relief Channel, 127 Sennowe Park, 54 Strumpshaw; *March* 39 Swangey GP, 73 Wroxham Broad, 54 Lakenheath Washes; *April* 48 Lakenheath Washes, 94 Sennowe Park, 66 Swangey GP, 32 Titchwell; *Sept* 71 Cantley BF; *Oct* 91 Saddlebow; *Nov* 137 Thompson Water; *Dec* 72 Colney GP, 63 Middleton GP, 170 Wroxham Broad.

Breeding records (broods in brackets): Baconsthorpe (3), Bintree (1), Brancaster GM (2), Breydon/Berney (1), Cantley BF (6), Cley (4), Cranwich GP (2), Fakenham (1), Flitcham Abbey Farm (4), Fustyweed GP (Elsing) (1), Hanworth Common (1), Hickling Broad (1), Holkham NNR (14 from 25-30 pairs), Holme (3+ from 14 pairs), Horning Hall (1), How Hill (5), Lopham Fen (1), Lynford GP (3), Middleton GP (1), Ormesby Broad (1), Pensthorpe (16), Pentney GP (2), Raynham (1), Rockland Broad (1), Salthouse (1), Sennowe Park (7), Stanford Water (1), Stowbridge GP (1), Thompson Water (1), Welney (7), Westmere (1), Wisington BF (2), Wolterton (3). Pairs also present at Filby Broad (4), Honing Marsh Farm, Snettisham, Titchwell and Tottenhill GP.

Coastal movements: 3 west West Runton Jan 23rd; one east Beeston Regis April 1st; at Scolt Head singles west May 24th, Aug 22nd, Sept 15th and Sept 22nd, with 3 west Oct 5th; at Sheringham one west Aug 20th, 2 west Oct 5th and 4 west next day; at Cley one west Oct 5th and 3 west Oct 16th; one south-west Hunstanton Nov 6th.

## Scaup

*Aythya marila*

*Winter visitor in varying numbers; scarce inland; occasional in summer*

Widespread in first winter period with singles at Waxham and Burnham Overy Jan 2nd, Hickling Broad Jan 7th and 9th, Overstrand Jan 11th, Pentney GP Feb 2nd, Mundesley Feb 6th, Felbrigg Park Feb 10th and Swangey GP April 18th. Also more regularly recorded at: Welney 2 Jan 6th increasing to 7 Feb 18th, 9 March 28th and 5 April 3rd, then 3 April 23rd; Ouse Relief Channel and Tottenhill GP 1-2 from Jan 22nd to Feb 13th; Snettisham 8 Jan 5th increasing to peaks of 17 Jan 15th, 23 Feb 19th and 24 March 3rd; Heacham 3 Jan 9th and





Scaup (*J R Williamson*)

Holme 4 east Feb 23rd; Titchwell/Brancaster one Feb 13th increasing to 10 Feb 24th and 27th, then 8 March 13th, and finally 2 March 28th; Holkham Bay 2 March 27th; Holkham Park 2 Feb 5th then 1-2 until one April 5th; Blakeney Hbr 4 Jan 10th and 6 Jan 16th with 4 Stiffkey Fen also 16th; Breydon/Berney 1-3 in Jan/Feb.

Few summer records: at Welney one lingered, paired with a Tufted Duck in May/June, and still present, injured July 9th; one Cley May 9th-21st, then pair May 23rd-25th; east Walecott July 9th; Breydon July 26th; Stiffkey Fen July 30th-Aug 5th; 5 Ongar Hill Aug 1st; Blakeney GM Aug 16th; 2 Scolt Head Aug 29th.

Few records in second winter period. In Sept Yarmouth 9th, Breydon/Berney 25th until Oct 3rd; also in Oct 2 west Sheringham 4th, Eeles 10th-14th and Welney 24th. In Nov present Saddlebow 2nd, 3 Winterton 3rd-7th, 5 west Scolt Head 5th and 2 west 15th, 2 west Sheringham 6th and 13th, then 4 west 18th, 12 Cley 11th, 3 Mundesley 19th, 3 east Cromer 19th; also 4-5 Holkham Bay 7th then 10 on 23rd, 4 Snettisham 11th then up to 10, and 4 Breydon/Berney 23rd-27th. In Dec one Snettisham 5th with 15 on 7th; also singles Cley 5th and Stiffkey Fen 19th.

## Eider

*Somateria mollissima*

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

This year there were no high winter counts, but high numbers during Nov passage.

Max monthly counts at principal sites, with probable overlap of counts between Hunstanton and Holme:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hunstanton	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	19	125	170
Holme	10	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	25	5	3	2
Titchwell	82	85	3	-	-	2	33	2	1	10	37	10
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	107	109	38	29	28	38	48	25	3	8	7	3
Holkham Bay	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	6	26	20
Blakeney Hbr	12	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	9	15

*National importance (winter): 750*

In first winter period there were also single-figure records from Yarmouth and Horsey, with 14 Waxham/Sea Palling Jan 10th. Jan movements: 7 west Overstrand 4th; 22 east Sheringham 9th; 20 east Beeston Bump 10th and 10 west 11th; 98 east 4 west Overstrand also 11th, and 14 east 21st.

Apart from 14 Snettisham April 18th and at sites in table, only other records April-Sept were single figures of birds on north and east coasts.

In second winter period movements in Oct included 24 Blakeney Point 6th and 11 west 9th, 14 West Runton 10th, 12 Heacham 13th, 56 north Horsey 16th and 21 west Weybourne

also 16th. An exceptional westerly passage took place on Nov 10th and 11th. On 10th a total of 546 passed Sheringham (all day count) with smaller numbers recorded moving north on east coast and west at other north coast localities. At Sheringham on 11th 512 moved west, plus 38 east, between 0700-1230 hrs. Subsequent counts were on a smaller scale: 79 north Waxham Nov 12th, 24 west 15 east West Runton and 25 Winterton Nov 14th, 74 west Sheringham Nov 19th, 33 north Caister Nov 20th, 109 west Titchwell Nov 21st, 27 west Beeston Bump Dec 15th and 20 west there next day.

**Long-tailed Duck**

*Clangula hyemalis*

*Winter visitor chiefly to north-west Norfolk coastal waters; occasional inland*

In first winter period mostly recorded from Hunstanton to Brancaster, with peak counts of 47 Jan 3rd and 23 Jan 21st at Holme. Elsewhere occasional records of 1-2 Holkham Bay Jan/Feb with 10 Feb 11th, one West Runton Feb 27th, 3 Salthouse March 6th and one Yarmouth March 20th. In April 2 Titchwell 1st-7th, and singles Holme 4th and Scolt Head 18th/19th.

In second winter period, several records of 1-4 from Yarmouth northwards, particularly at Winterton, where first north Oct 13th and then regular counts of up to 5 there in Nov and 11 Dec 4th onwards.

Occasional records of 1-4 coastal migrants on north and north-east coasts end-Oct and during Nov, with 6 west Cromer Dec 13th. In Holkham Bay counts of 6 Nov 7th, 7 Nov 28th and 11 Nov 29th. Main concentration as usual in north-west with first Holme Oct 15th peaking at 45-50 there Dec 12th. Elsewhere Breydon Nov 5th-Dec 5th with 2 Dec 16th-18th; 2 circled Thetford Nunnery Lakes Nov 24th and one Stiffkey Fen Dec 14th-26th.

**Common Scoter**

*Melanitta nigra*

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

Max monthly counts at principal Wash/north coast sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heacham/Hunstanton	-	-	2000	2000	10	100	-	-	19	60	431	-
Holme	126	11	50	50	-	-	-	-	20	5	2620	4500
Titchwell/Brancaster	-	200	500	50	17	-	-	8	25	63	80	-
Holkham Bay	2500	1450	1600	3000	-	20	-	-	-	600	800	6
Cley/Salthouse	80	30	50	-	-	10	13	85	25	40	600	-

*National importance (winter): 350*

Elsewhere numbers relatively low, most notable being: 82 Walcott May; 34 Horsey July; 168 Eccles, 117 Waxham Oct; 145 Happisburgh Nov; 60 Hemsby Dec.

Coastal movements occurred early in year and continued throughout with largest numbers: Holme 126 east Jan 10th, 83 west March 14th, 50 west 3 east April 2nd, 450 east May 7th, 59 east June 15th, 288 west Nov 14th, 90 west Dec 14th; Titchwell 300 west Dec 8th; Scolt Head 130 west 12 east Oct 4th, 193 west Oct 5th, 265 west Nov 6th, 230 west Nov 10th; Blakeney Point 270 east 35 west Feb 2nd; Sheringham 122 west Aug 12th, 125 west Oct 6th, 700 west Nov 10th, 494 west Nov 11th, 540 west Nov 14th; Overstrand 129 west 15 east Jan 11th, 315 west Nov 10th, 150 west 20 east Oct 15th.

Only 3 inland records, 2 on same date of March 13th, when 3 pairs displaying Filby Broad and 2 Welney. Also one Saddlebow Relief Channel Nov 11th/12th.

Surf Scoter*Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare vagrant from North America

A male north off Caister Nov 19th (PAM SAW). The county total now stands at 7 records totalling 12 birds.

Velvet Scoter*Melanitta fusca*

Winter visitor, but numbers and localities fluctuate; occasional in summer

Max counts from principal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Titchwell	24	1	-	1	7	2	1
Holkham Bay	17	10	3	-	-	12	30
Salthouse/Kelling	12	3	5	3	-	3	-

In first winter period only other sightings: 11 Horsey Jan 2nd, 3 Heacham Jan 9th, and singles Holme April 24th/25th and Hunstanton May 18th.

None were then recorded until first returning birds of autumn when one Titchwell Oct 10th, rising to 7 on 18th. More widespread in second winter period with records of 1-4 from Scolt Head, Cley, Sheringham, East Runton, Cromer, Happisburgh, Eeoles, Waxham, Horsey, Winterton, Hemsby and Caister. Larger counts at this time included 24 west Burnham Overy Nov 7th, 9 west Sheringham Nov 10th with 5 west there next day, 6 Hemsby Dec 5th and 5 west Mundesley Dec 16th.

Inland one Saddlebow Relief Channel Nov 15th.

Goldeneye*Bucephala clangula*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Max monthly counts at selected localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	31	-	64	3	35	35
Titchwell	31	42	46	4	31	25
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	31	26	22	11	52	54
Blakeney Hbr	177	115	-	-	-	22
Hickling Broad	25	48	78	-	24	-

The excellent count at Blakeney Hbr in Jan mirrors exactly that at this location in Feb 1995, these being the highest totals for the decade.

Other sites with 10 or more during first winter period included: Heigham Sound, Holkham Park Lake, Martham Broad, Ouse Relief Channel, Pensthorpe, Pentney GP, Sennowe Park, Tottenhill GP and Welney (a count of 14 Feb 19th being the highest reserve count). Very few movements noted during this period: 3 west Sheringham Feb 23rd and one west Overstrand/West Runton/Sheringham Feb 24th. A notable departure by early April with birds lingering into May at Lynn Point 3rd, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr until 6th and Snettisham until at least 24th.

An injured female remained at Welney up to July 9th.

First returning birds noted at Cley (2 west) Sept 30th then surprisingly few reported in Oct with records of 1-4 only from Hunstanton, Waxham, Horsey and How Hill. Westerly



coastal movements in Nov included: 6th 21 Scolt Head, 10th 55 Sheringham, 11th 20 Scolt Head and 75 (and 3 east) Sheringham, 14th 33 West Runton and 54 Mundesley.

In Dec away from principal sites single-figure counts from numerous inland waters except 15 Pensthorpe 11th and 15 Saddlebow Relief Channel 18th.

Smew

Mergellus albellus

Winter visitor in small numbers, increasing during severe weather

With no apparent cold weather movements or coastal migration reported during either winter period this species remained well-recorded, although a little less widespread than in recent years, with the majority of reports coming from the eastern Broads.

Monthly county totals of male/redhead ratio:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov	Dec
Males	4	2	1	1	1
Redheads	19	9	13	1	7

Max calculated totals of individuals at all sites during first winter period: Hickling Broad Jan 7 (2 males), Feb 5 (one male), March 9 (2 males); Tottenhill GP Jan 8 (one male), Feb one. Single redheads also noted at Filby Broad, Gunton Park Lake, Martham Broad, Ormesby Broad, Ouse Relief Channel, Stiffkey Fen and Welney. At Pensthorpe a pair of unknown origin were seen to fly south March 23rd. Latest record a redhead Hickling Broad April 3rd/4th.

First returning birds were at Ouse Relief Channel male Nov 21st and Hickling Broad female 27th. In Dec redheads at Cley, Hickling Broad (2), Stiffkey Fen, Titchwell and Tottenhill GP with males at Lynford GP, Ouse Relief Channel and (same?) Tottenhill GP.

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional in summer

Max monthly counts at principal coastal localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Titchwell	7	24	12	9	19	3	-
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	21	18	17	24	42	48	23
Holkham Bay	16	4	4	-	-	8	34
Blakeney Hbr	40	44	-	-	6	-	27

National importance (winter): 100

Reported from several other well-watched Wash/north coast sites in single figures except for 15 Holme Jan 3rd and 21 Snettisham March 7th. Only reported sighting on east coast in first part of year Eeclles April 24th. During May up to 9 still Titchwell and 13 Scolt Head. Single west Mundesley/Sheringham June 21st with latest Scolt Head next day; one Hunstanton July 3rd.

First migrant of second winter period Sheringham Sept 20th with birds becoming more apparent in Oct, though still only in single figures until 16th when 100 offshore at Snettisham. Other notable counts to year end away from principal sites included 25 Heacham Oct 21st, 22 Hunstanton Nov 4th and 62 Snettisham Nov 20th.



Marsh Harrier – now regularly seen during the winter (*R Tidman*).

Wigeon – a characteristic scene at Buckenham (*T Howes*).







Greenland White-fronted Goose – an immature with Pink-footed Geese at Holkham (*A I Bloomfield*).

Scandinavian Rock Pipit – a winter visitor to coastal saltings (*G Cresswell*).







'Small' Canada Goose – another popular attraction at Holkham in February (*I Leach*).

Back-bellied Dipper – present on the Dilham Canal from January to March (*N Bowman*).





Pied-billed Grebe – a major spring attraction at Stowbridge GP and then at Thompson Water (*I Leach*).





Goosander

*Mergus merganser*  
Winter visitor and passage migrant, most abundant in severe winters  
Max counts from favoured sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov	Dec
UEA Broad	16	12	12	-	4
Thetford Nunnery Lakes	16	7	7	-	7
Ouse Relief Channel	5	11	12	-	8

During first winter period inland records also from (max counts): Barnhamcross Common (7), Breydon/Berney (1), Buekenham Mill (2), Cantley BF (3), Cranwich GP (7), Hickling Broad (1), Methwold (8), Sparham Pools (1), Stanford Water (4), Stourton Water, Cawston (4) and Welney (3).

Coastal movements and occurrences were noted at: Titchwell west Jan 2nd and offshore Feb 19th; Scolt Head west Jan 10th, 7 west Jan 23rd and single west April 18th; Cley west April 26th and Beeston Bump 2 east April 3rd.

In May a pair west Scolt Head 3rd and a redhead Titchwell 13th. An interesting June record of a pair sitting on the sea off Scolt Head on 1st.

Three Oct records (all singles): Snettisham 5th, Hillington 12th and south Horsey 23rd.

Coastal movements noted in final 2 months of year. In Nov singles west Cley 8th, Overstrand 10th and Scolt Head 15th. In Dec further birds west Sheringham 4th and 15th, Holme 5th, Waxham (2) 5th, Holkham Bay 6th and Cley (4) 17th.

Further inland records in second winter period (max counts): Coekley Cley (5), Felbrigg Park (1), Lyng GP (1), Pensthorpe (1), Pentney GP (2), Ranworth Broad (1), Stourton Water (1), Tottenhill GP (1) and Welney (1).

Ruddy Duck

*Oxyura jamaicensis*  
An increasing but scarce introduced resident, first recorded in 1977  
Continues to increase slowly, in both numbers and sites recorded; breeding once again proven.

Max counts were made in Feb with 16 Pensthorpe, 15 Tottenhill GP and 8 Sennowe Park. Elsewhere, 1-6 were reported from Baeonsthorpe, Berney, Bittering, Cantley BF, Cley, Cockley Cley, Cockshoot Broad, Gunton Park Lake, Hardley Flood, Hickling Broad, Holme, Holkham Park Lake and NNR, How Hill, Lopham Fen, Langmere, Lyng GP, Ormesby Broad, Raynham, Rollesby Broad, Sparham Pools, Stowbridge Pits, Selbrigg, Swanton Morley, South Aere, Titchwell, Thompson Water, Welney and Whitlingham Lane GP.

Pairs present throughout the breeding season at Holkham NNR (2 pairs), Langmere (1 pair) and Lopham Fen (2 pairs). Breeding was confirmed at Cantley BF (2 broods).



Ruddy Ducks (J R Williamson)



Pensthorpe (1 brood) and Wolterton (1 brood). Additionally, an insight into this species' prolific expansion was observed at Holme, where first recorded in 1998; this year 3 present in April, rose to 4 in May, and in June at least 5 broods of young were noted. These then dispersed by Aug leaving 2-3 until year end.

## **Honey Buzzard**

*Pernis apivorus*

### ***Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant***

First spring migrants 2 Hickling Broad May 3rd followed by further May records Winterton 5th, 2 south in 20 mins Cley 11th, Flitcham 16th and Sidestrand 23rd. One was also picked up dead in Yarmov> Cemetery May 24th and taken to a local taxidermist. Singles in June North Wootton 19th and south Langham 30th.

Usual breeding territory occupied from May 22nd by returning pair, the female of which subsequently disappeared. However, the male attracted a new mate and breeding was confirmed when regular food carrying was observed July/Aug. This was substantiated by what was almost certainly a juv flushed from the ground in dense woodland Aug 30th, by which time the adults had apparently already departed. Also 2 additional birds present in area during breeding season, making a total of 5 individuals recorded at this site during the summer. The presence of Common Buzzards in the area still gives cause for concern, conflict between the 2 species being noted on a number of occasions. (per English Nature).

Additional midsummer record Strumpshaw July 11th.

Autumn passage unremarkable, following last year's good numbers, with singles in Sept south Cley 10th, Horsey 14th, Hickling Broad 17th, west Titchwell 18th and last south-east Cantley Oct 2nd.

## **Red Kite**

*Milvus milvus*

### ***Increasing visitor; birds from the Continent and British reintroduction projects occur***

The 2 wintering birds remaining from 1998 present to March 23rd, in an area bounded roughly by Flitcham and Massingham and Grimston Heaths. They were seldom seen together and became more elusive towards the end of their stay. Additional first winter period records in Feb from Salle 7th, Cranwich 14th, Wroxham 25th, West Somerton/Horsey 27th and Bergh Apton 28th.

Reasonable spring passage underway from mid-March when singles Waxham and Overstrand 15th, Fakenham 23rd, a flock of 5 north Halvergate 28th, and a well tracked coasting bird passing north then west through Horsey, Eccles, Cart Gap, Northrepps, Overstrand and Aylmerton 29th. April birds noted at Gimingham 6th, Warham 16th and 21st, and Holme 16th, followed in May by singles Brundall 10th, between Fakenham and Dercham 22nd, and Cley 23rd.

From April 5th 2 birds present in suitable breeding habitat at a site where display was observed on at least one occasion. Unfortunately both birds had left the area by May 6th.

First returning bird Tallents Meadow Lake July 10th and again there 27th. Further singles in July at Threxton 18th, Winterton 21st, Welney 24th and Sea Palling 31st, then Ludham Aug 8th, near Flitcham Sept 2nd and Choseley Sept 17th.

An untagged juv was present in the Glandford/Letheringsett area Nov 23rd-Dec 1st.

## **White-tailed Eagle**

*Haliaeetus albicilla*

### ***Rare vagrant, mainly in winter***

An imm at Cley Nov 21st (TCD PJH MAW *et al*) flew west along the coast, landing briefly at Wells before continuing west, landing on the beach at both Scolt Head and Holme, before heading south inland and apparently roosting in a wood south of Thornham. It was



White-tailed Eagle (G Wright)

subsequently seen in the Fring, Docking and Sedgeford areas to Nov 27th before moving to Gooderstone Dee 1st and then to Cockley Cley Warren Dec 4th to year end.

This is widely believed to be the imm seen in Yorkshire mid-Oct to Nov 19th and constitutes the first county record since 1997; it was the first long-staying individual since the Broadland bird in Nov/Dec 1990 (see *Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin* No 39 pp 4-8).

### Marsh Harrier

*Circus aeruginosus*

***Increasing migrant breeder; also passage migrant; small numbers winter***

Over-wintering is becoming increasingly common and is reflected in a total of 4 Broadland roosts in use in first winter period with another Jan only. Max numbers roosting were 16 Jan, 21 Feb and 15 March. Additional records away from roosts at this time from Titchwell Feb 1st and 24th, and Cley Feb 24th and 27th.

First spring passage birds Cley March 14th and Holkham March 16th, and arrival well underway by end of March when 4 Eastern Bund (Wash) 27th and 4 Rockland Broad 30th with first reaching Welney April 2nd. During April/May westerly passage noted at many sites, most impressively 20 Scolt Head April 14th-May 16th (max 6 May 11th) and 11 Sheringham April 4th-May 21st. Also at this time birds noted in from, or moving over, the sea at Becston Bump April 21st, Snettisham April 24th, Winterton May 10th and Hunstanton May 26th. During May and early June noted at 15 widespread localities away from known breeding areas including up to 5 at Flitcham during June. These records may be associated with immature birds searching for prospective breeding sites away from regular areas which must now be reaching capacity in some cases.

First nest building noted March 31st and the first fledged juv June 10th. In Wash present at 23 sites but only 9 successful nests with total of 30 fledged young. On the north coast 27-30 young fledged from 14 nests with display noted at a further site where breeding did not take place. A total of 22 nests were reported in Broads, fledging at least 29 young but the success of several pairs was undetermined. In the Wensum valley one pair fledged 4 young (including a leucistic individual) and another pair were prospecting during spring.

At Welney a pair deserted the nest June 14th when a hot air balloon passed low and noisily overhead.

Number of fledged young in recent years:

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Fledged young	82	88	90	75	114	105	71	112	87	88	117	90+

Interestingly a breeding female was watched taking eggs from an Avocet nest at a north coast location.

Autumn dispersal noted from July 25th when singles east Mundesley and west Sheringham following day. Much activity during Aug when singles out to sca Overstrand 11th and west 1.5 milcs offshore from Scolt Head 21st, with notably 8 high west there in 15 mins 29th. Birds recorded well away from usual areas during this period at Sculthorpe Aug 14th, Thetford Aug 17th and Sept 22nd, Alby Aug 21st, Westacre Aug 28th and Sept 5th, Swanton Novers Aug 29th, Hilborough Sept 3rd, Great Cressingham Sept 5th, a melanistic bird Anmer/Massingham Heath Sept 7th, Felbrigg Sept 9th and Downham Market Sept 19th. Also during Aug/Sept up to 6 regularly hunted Starlings Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr.

Many had left by Oct but an exhausted juv on Overstrand cliff-face Oct 12th, which flew inland after 2 hrs, indicated passage was still on-going, as did singles west Scolt Head Nov 13th and 15th.

Four Broadland roosts regularly occupied during second winter period producing monthly max 22 Oct, 18 Nov and 27 Dec. The Dec total is particularly noteworthy as it included what is believed to be the largest winter roost in the county for this species, with 18 females/imms in the air together at the main Broadland roost. This total did not include a male which was also using the roost around this time. Additionally in Dec, 6 birds left a previously unrecorded roost at dawn on one occasion. Noted away from known roosts during this period at Burnham Norton Dec 24th and Cley Dec 25th. Also a blue-tagged female, ringed in Scotland in 1993, was noted at Berney on several dates Dec.

Hen Harrier

*Circus cyaneus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; former breeder, now exceptional in summer*

Plentiful in first winter period when regular at coastal localities from Holme east to Kelling and Eccles/Cart Gap south to Winterton, in Broads and also in north-west of county in Massingham/Grimston Heath area. Apparently scarce along west coast from Holme south to Snettisham.

Eight roosts in regular use at this time:

	Roosts								Occasional roosts	Max total
	A	B	C	D	F	G	M	O		
Jan	9	8	-	2	6	2	3	1	1	32
Feb	8	10	1	2	2	2	2	1	4	32
Mar	4	2	1	-	4	2	2	2	-	17

Elsewhere during first winter period Narborough Jan 16th, Cockthorpe/Langham Jan 23rd and Feb 8th, Stoke Ferry and Bacton Feb 6th, Caister Feb 16th and Holt Feb 20th. One Northrepps April 20th was probably a passage bird.

Singles remained into May at Horsey/Winterton to 7th and Titchwell to 9th, with passage birds Scolt Head 11th, Salthouse 12th, Cley 13th, North Wootton 15th, Holme 22nd and Sheringham 23rd, plus a very late bird Holme June 10th (GFH).



First returning autumn bird Blakeney GM Sept 29th followed in Oct by singles Horsey 9th, Flitcham 12th, Sheringham 13th and 19th, Hempstead/Eccles and Wickhampton/Reedham 16th, and Holme and Warham 17th.

Numbers apparently stable and fairly low late Oct through Nov with slight increase to more normal levels in Dec. During second winter period noted away from more regular haunts at Paston Nov 11th, Hilborough Nov 14th and Rcpps-with-Bastwick Dec 15th. Again 8 roosts occupied regularly during this period:

	Roosts								Occasional roosts	Max total
	A	B	C	D	F	G	M	O		
Oct	1	3	-	1	4	5	1	1	-	16
Nov	1	7	1	-	1	4	-	2	-	16
Dec	-	7	1	1	2	6	2	2	2	23

The low numbers recorded at roost A, one of the largest and longest-used roosts in the county, gave cause for concern. In previous years there has been disturbance by ‘birdwatchers’ at this site and it is sincerely hoped that this situation is not on-going. Smaller satellite roosts were adopted nearby when this problem previously occurred and increased numbers at adjacent roosts this year indicated a similar pattern.

Montagu’s Harrier

Circus pygargus

*Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant*

First of spring Cley April 22nd with another there 30th when also Weeting Heath. The usual light spring passage continued into May when Breydon 6th, Yarmouth 13th, Salthouse 19th and 23rd, Flitcham 20th, Scolt Head 22nd, Titchwell 22nd with another 23rd, and Swanton Novers 31st. In June singles Flitcham 1st and another 3rd, high north-west over Thornham 6th, Berney 11th, possibly the same Haddiscoe 13th, and west Burnham Norton 22nd.

In breeding area one pair bred unsuccessfully - the first time for many years that no young have been fledged.

Breeding details in recent years:

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Nests	3	5	5	2	4	4	9	4	3	7	1	1
Fledged young	6	13	13	7	10	13	11	12	10	6	4	0

Autumn passage, often unspectacular, produced just 2 records, south Langham Aug 22nd and Holme Scpt 12th.

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

*Rare breeder; also scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

During first winter period recorded only from Brecks, still the apparent stronghold of this species.

During March a male was noted on several dates at a number of north coast localities (covering a fairly small area). Other spring records, some presumably migrants, in March at Holme 22nd and Langham 31st; in April west Horstead 2nd, Sparham 4th, Cley 24th and Northrepps 25th; also south Weybourne May 27th.

Display was noted at 4 sites (2 in Brecks) end Feb to June and at least one bird occupied suitable territory at a further 3 sites (2 in Brecks). Breeding was proven at one locality where 2 juvs soaring overhead Sept 5th.

The origins of a 1st-year bird Strumpshaw June 6th and an adult Salthouse Heath July 11th remain speculative.

Away from known occupied areas autumn birds Burnham Deepdale Sept 28th, Holkham Meals Oct 22nd and Nov 30th, and near Briston Dec 13th and 29th.

## **Sparrowhawk**

*Accipiter nisus*

### ***Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Widespread during both winter periods, recorded in all habitats on a regular basis.

Spring passage noted at coastal sites March 30th-May 25th. Some well-watched areas are now producing a good series of records at this time, particularly Winterton where coasting migrants often move south. First 2 in from sea Overstrand March 30th when single west Holme with 7 south Winterton following day. In April, 6 south Winterton 2nd, 10 north 8 south there 10th, 11 south 21st and 5 south 25th. At Scolt Head 6 west April 15th-25th, at Northrepps 3 west one east April 19th-30th and Sheringham 4 east April 25th. May also produced good numbers with a major movement 8th when 7 east Northrepps, 7 east Mundesley, 24 south Winterton (with 2 south following day) and single in from sea Scolt Head.

Breeding numbers apparently remained stable with 37/38 pairs noted at 27 localities, almost identical to those reported in 1998 but surely still a small proportion of the county population. Again, virtually no data regarding success rates received. Some observers feel that numbers of this dashing hawk have now levelled out following the recent upturn in fortunes. This is currently confirmed in breeding data submitted if it represents a true reflection of the population level in relation to observer coverage.

Autumn passage as usual less impressive when westerly movement noted Sidestrand Aug 8th and 22nd, and 2 there Oct 8th; 3 Scolt Head Aug 29th, 2 there 30th and single Oct 16th; also 7 east Northrepps Oct 13th and single west there Oct 28th.

## **Common Buzzard**

*Buteo buteo*

### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor; small but increasing breeding population***

With an increasing number of breeding (or suspected) pairs in the county it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify wintering birds which are unlikely to be associated with these. Up to 4 present at a number of sites in first winter period plus singles Sparham/Elsing Jan 2nd-March 19th, Bacton Jan 9th, Hales Jan 17th, Haddiscoe Jan 24th, 1-2 Ebridge/North Walsham area to Feb 13th and single Ridlington Feb 28th. One Beeston Regis Feb 21st showed some characteristics of one of the eastern races.

Spring passage underway from mid-March when singles at many sites but notably 2 south Winterton 13th, 5 Gorleston 14th, 2 west Holkham 15th, 4 west Northrepps 16th with 3 west next day, and 5 east Bodham 21st. Further small movement end-March when 4 west Inceborough Hill 31st. During April good movement 9th when 9 south Winterton (including 7 in from sea), 5 west Trimingham, and 2 east one west Northrepps with 2 east there following day. Also in April 3 south-west Holme 17th and 3 east Sheringham 30th. Early May produced 2 Wiveton 3rd, 3 Sheringham 3rd with 3 there 8th, when best movement of spring also involved 5 north-west and single north Winterton and 18 west in 90 mins (largest flock 5) Northrepps. Passage virtually over by mid-May when 3 Salthouse Heath 15th followed by just 3 migrants in June.

Breeding was again confirmed at 5 sites, min 9 young fledging safely, a record number since breeding recommenced in 1992. Breeding was also suspected at a further 5 sites, display being seen at some of these and at others at least 2 birds over-summered. At least one bird summered at a further 2 sites where breeding was a possibility. Most interestingly, 1-2 regularly recorded over the northern limits of Norwich and adjacent urban areas.

Details since breeding recommenced as follows:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Confirmed breeding prs	1	3	2	1	2	4	5	5
Probable breeding prs	-	1	1	-	5	4	5	5
Possible breeding prs	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Max breeding prs	2	5	5	2	8	9	12	12
Min fledged young	2	6	2	1	2	7	7	9

Widespread reports from areas adjacent to breeding (or suspected breeding) areas July/Aug as birds dispersed, with family parties recorded at several sites. Away from these areas 3 Baconsthorpe Aug 24th, 2 Felbrigg Park and 3 Bircham Tofts Aug 28th may have been dispersing birds.

Autumn passage unimpressive and first certain migrant west Scolt Head Aug 29th followed by small coastal passage when 2 south-west Holme Sept 24th, single west Titchwell Sept 25th, Lynn Point Oct 3rd, Waxham Nov 4th and south Eccles Nov 26th.

Over-wintering birds present in several breeding areas in second winter period when again difficult to separate from other wandering birds, particularly as wintering ranges are similar to, but invariably larger than, those occupied during the breeding season. Birds probably not associated with these areas Wayford Bridge Nov 19th, Letheringsett/Glandford Nov 27th-30th, West Barsham Nov 28th and Bircham area all Nov.

## **Rough-legged Buzzard**

*Buteo lagopus*

### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor; periodic large-scale influxes***

At least 5 remained from previous year: Winterton Jan 1st-May 6th, occasionally wandering to Hickling Broad and Horsey; Harpley and Massingham and Grimston Heaths Jan 1st-Feb 2nd, 2 there Feb 3rd-March 14th with one to 28th; Chedgrave/Langley Marshes Jan 16th-Feb 16th, with 2 there Jan 17th, and Stiffkey Jan 1st/2nd only.

In Jan also recorded East Ruston 1st, Fleet Dyke 7th, Halvergate 7th and 24th, Caistor St Edmund 10th, Roydon Common 10th (and Feb 13th) and Flitcham 16th. In Feb at Brooke, Langham and Dunton/Sculthorpe 6th, Reedham 13th, Southrepps/Northrepps and Belton 15th, north-east Barrow Common 23rd, Warham/Stiffkey 26th and east Holt 28th. Considerably fewer in March when at least one Wells during month and single Breydon/Berney 22nd/23rd.

Probable passage migrants in April north How Hill 7th, north Rockland St Mary/Bramerton 10th, east Potter Heigham 24th and Baconsthorpe 25th; in May Lound and east Sheringham 3rd, another east at latter site 8th when also east Overstrand, and south Morston/Stiffkey 10th.

Few records in autumn and second winter period indicated only a small arrival. In Oct north Felbrigg Park 3rd, then west Westacre 10th and three records of possibly the same bird east Holkham and Sheringham 25th and west Overstrand 26th. During Nov, juv Holme intermittently 15th-Dec 18th and singles Westacre 20th, Flitcham/Anmer 24th and Salthouse Heath 25th. Dec records from Thurlton/Reedham Ferry 11th, Haddiscoe/St Olaves 18th and Guist 30th.



## Osprey

*Pandion haliaetus*

### ***Regular passage migrant in increasing numbers; over-summering has occurred***

Whilst the exceptional numbers of last autumn were not fully repeated the general increase in both spring and autumn passage migrants throughout the last decade continues, as indicated by 35-40 records from each period.

Arrival in spring from March 27th when noted west Titchwell and Holme, with another Tallents Meadow Lake 28th. Passage stuttered somewhat throughout April when noted Flitcham 7th, Holme 10th and 16th, West Runton and Cley 13th, Northrepps 17th, Salhouse and Breydon 21st, Oxnead Mill 22nd, Langham 28th and Rockland 30th. Over 20 recorded during May when passage steady, increasing from mid-month. At this time 2 Briston 15th (one carrying a fish) and at least 4 on 22nd when recorded Caister. Hickling Broad, East Ruston, Crome's Broad, Holt/Edgefield and North Wootton. Also, unusually for spring, one lingered in the Wensum valley, roosting in a wood at Billingford for a week at end of month. A further 6 in June with the last Guist 24th.

One midsummer record, again at mid-Yare valley location, July 14th/15th.

Autumn passage commenced Aylmerton Aug 2nd with one lingering Dilham Canal Aug 3rd-8th. Further singles Breydon Aug 4th and Scolt Head 11th before movement fully underway in last 10 days of month when Tasburgh 21st-24th and Cranwich GP 25th-27th, plus 2 Strumpshaw 30th and singles at 4 further sites. Steady passage throughout Sept with birds recorded virtually every day; a monthly total of c25 included lingerers How Hill 1st-8th, Thompson and Stanford Waters 7th-21st, Alderfen Broad 16th/17th, 2 Hickling Broad 18th-Oct 2nd and How Hill again 26th/27th. Fewer in Oct than previous year when singles Ten Mile Bank 3rd, Overstrand and Northrepps 13th, and south-west Cley and Blakeney GM and west Stiffkey and Holkham 23rd the only records.

*1998 Addition:* 3 juvs Strumpshaw in addition to adult and imm in mid-Yare valley area Sept 21st.

## Kestrel

*Falco tinnunculus*

### ***Resident and passage migrant***

Small numbers of spring migrants at coastal sites (westward bound unless indicated): *March* Overstrand 3rd, east Sheringham 21st with 2 there 27th, 2 east Beeston Bump 25th, Holme 27th, with 3 there 31st; *April* 4 Holme 1st, south Sheringham 2nd, Scolt Head 4th and out to sea Beeston Bump 18th; *May* Overstrand 11th, out to sea there 18th, Scolt Head 1st, 2nd and 17th. Passage also noted inland at Northrepps where west March 17th, 2 east May 8th and west May 23rd.

Also in spring several observers noted a local concentration Horsey/Winterton where 10-12 April 10th and 20+ May 9th.

Poor breeding season again recorded from Stanford TA (but better than 1998). The BBS found birds in the same number of squares as last year. At Sparham a juv was released unharmed after becoming entangled in bale net-wrap.

Autumn passage negligible with 4 west Scolt Head July 17th-Aug 29th the only records. Small autumn concentrations of 6 Lynn Point Aug 14th and 9 Snettisham Aug 15th.

## Red-footed Falcon

*Falco vespertinus*

### ***Vagrant, most often in spring; large influx in 1992***

A 1st-summer male, in from sea, Winterton May 9th (JRW), drifted off north-west after just 10 mins but was followed by a female there May 19th (INS). An adult male Hickling Broad (INS) and another 1st-summer male Pentney GP (PMW *et al*), both July 2nd, completed a typically brief but welcome quartet following a blank year in 1998.

## Merlin

*Falco columbarius*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor; exceptional in summer*

Roosting details from 2 sites in first winter period, monthly max 3 Jan, 6 Feb, 2 March. During this period 1-2 regularly recorded from coastal sites between Holme and Sheringham. Also regular in Breydon/Berney area, where 1-2 present throughout period, and in vicinity of Broadland roost. Scarce eastwards from Sheringham to Cart Gap and, unusually, around Wash where only records were Snettisham Jan 1st, 10th and 16th and March 3rd, Dersingham Bog Jan 3rd, and Ongar Hill Feb 18th and 28th. Contrastingly an apparent increase in inland records when noted at 12 localities, including single on edge of Norwich at Bowthorpe/Colney several Jan dates. Just one record from Welney in this period, March 16th, but 2 there April 24th, presumably passage birds.

Coastal passage noted from late April when north Cart Gap 24th and south Sea Palling 30th. Further movement during May when west Overstrand/Sidestrand 2nd and east there 4th, Paston 5th, in from sea Eccles 6th, Sheringham 9th and 15th, and Scolt Head 11th, 15th/16th, 21st and finally 23rd.

First returning bird of autumn Scolt Head July 15th, then none until Ten Mile Bank Aug 19th and Aug 26th when noted Freethorpe, Breydon and Winterton. Considered scarce during autumn, particularly Sept, at both well-watched sites of Sheringham and Scolt Head, but arrival from mid-Sept elsewhere, when Holme 11th/12th, Cley, Warham and 2 Ongar Hill 12th, Horsey 13th and Cromer 18th.

Oct singles south Horsey 7th, east Sheringham 7th, and west there 8th and 9th indicated continued arrival. Also 1-2 on 8 dates Scolt Head, 2 Stiffkey 22nd and 2 Breydon from 23rd. Nov singles regular in usual north coast areas and on east coast adjacent to Broadlands. Also 2 Blakeney Point 11th, 2 Snettisham 28th and (same?) 2 west together King's Lynn 29th, when also 2 Salthouse. Up to 3 regular at Titchwell throughout Dec. Again a good number of inland records Oct-Dec when recorded singly at 16 sites. Again few records from Welney where Oct 16th/17th, Dec 14th and Dec 20th only. Roosting recorded at 2 sites in second winter period when monthly max 3 Oct, 6 Nov and 4 Dec.

## Hobby

*Falco subbuteo*

### *Scarce but increasing migratory breeder and passage migrant*

Recorded at over 100 widespread localities during year covering virtually the whole of the county. Coastal sightings predominated during spring passage late April to early June but inland waters and open heaths particularly favoured during summer months.

Spring migration commenced April 23rd, when singles Holme (to 25th), Strumpshaw and Catfield Fen, and was immediately in full flow with 14 further sites recording birds before month end including 2 Salthouse 28th, 2 Catfield Fen and 3 Strumpshaw 29th, and 2 Ringland late April.

A total of 55 sites recorded this elegant falcon during May, usually singly but 2 Holme 12th, 2 North Wootton 15th, 3 Pentney GP 19th, 2 Titchwell 22nd and up to 5 at sites where breeding later occurred or was suspected.

Fewer in June at coastal sites but migrants Sheringham 1st and 18th and a late bird Mundesley 27th. Noted at over 35 sites during month but away from known or suspected breeding areas 2 Lakenheath 1st was only multiple record.

Breeding confirmed at 8 sites where encouragingly a min 14 young reached fledging stage, the highest total since breeding recommenced in the county. Additionally 2-5 present during summer at a further 6 localities where breeding may have taken place. At a further 2 sites 2 juvs in Sept in areas where 1-2 adults seen intermittently during summer and breeding

may have occurred nearby. Hence the number of fledged young may have been considerably higher. Breeding details from recent years:

	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
Confirmed prs	2	2	1	3	4	7	6	7	8	4	5	7	8
Possible prs	-	-	2	2	4	-	4	1	1	5	5	5	8
Max prs	2	2	3	5	8	7	10	8	9	9	10	12	16
Min fledged young	5	-	-	-	-	-	10	6	8	10	6	8	14

Several family groups during Aug with multiple records away from these areas 2 Caistor St Edmund 6th, 2 Martham 14th, 2 Cantley BF 15th-24th, 2 Holkham 25th and 3 Berney 28th. During Sept 2 Breydon 7th, 2 Holt 8th, 3 Thetford Nunnery 10th, 2 Winfarthing 11th but autumn departure well underway mid-month and subsequent records involved singles, except 3 Holkham 29th, and virtually all departed by month end. One Titchwell throughout Sept remained to Oct 3rd when another Holkham, then singles Scolt Head 6th, out to sea Sheringham 8th and the last there 16th.

**Peregrine**

*Falco peregrinus*

*Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor*

At least 10 birds present in first winter period when 2 Wolferton/Snettisham into April, 1-2 Titchwell/Holme to March 21st, 1-3 Wells/Stiffkey to Feb 8th and 1-2, occasionally 3, Breydon/Berney/Halvergate area to May 3rd, often wandering to Chedgrave/Fritton and occasionally to mid-Yarc valley (until March 22nd). At this time also noted Welney 3 dates Feb, intermittently March 10th-31st and April 8th/9th. Other records: *Jan* Croxton 1st, Edgefield 8th, Cley/Blakeney Point 9th-16th, Harpley Common 21st; *Feb* Brisley Common 4th, Cley 6th, Brettenham 11th, Heigham Holmes 21st, Langham 22nd; *March* Blakeney Point 8th, West Harling 12th and Horsey/Winterton 17th.

Presumed April passage migrants Holme 5th, Scolt Head 7th-9th, Morston 10th, Croxton 23rd and Stiffkey 25th. May records from Scolt Head 3rd and 21st, Wolferton 15th, Berney and west Salthouse/Cley/Blakeney 22nd and North Wootton 25th.

Midsummer records Whitlingham Marsh (Thorpe St Andrew) June 15th and Titchwell July 12th. No repeat of last year's over-summering in Wells/Holkham area.

First in autumn Aug 5th (Langham), possibly the same juv Cley/Blakeney occasionally wandering to Sheringham Aug 13th-Sept 24th. Widespread coastal reports by end-Aug when west West Runton 16th, Stiffkey 22nd-24th, Scolt Head and Terrington 29th, plus others already occupying wintering territories; Sept singles Scolt Head 4th and 27th, and Hunstanton 9th.

Inland records from Welney Aug 20th, Buckenham Sept 5th and Garboldisham Sept 12th.

Second winter period territories occupied as follows: Wolferton/Snettisham juv from Aug 15th, joined by 2 adults, all 3 to year end; Titchwell/Holme from Aug 17th, 2 from Nov 7th to year end; Scolt Head 1-2 Oct/Nov; Wells/Stiffkey from Sept 12th with up 5 (3 adults, 2 juvs) from early Oct to Nov, at least 2 of which present to year end; 1-2 Breydon/Berney Sept 17th-Nov 26th, 2-3 Nov 27th to year end, again accounting for up to 2 roosting on pylons Haddiscoc Dec and single occasionally mid-Yarc valley Dec. Also at least 3 birds visited Welney where noted 15 dates Oct-Dec. An estimated 15 birds resident Oct/Nov but by year end numbers similar to first winter period.



Birds difficult to attribute to occupied wintering territories: *Oct* Sidestrand 8th, Cromer 11th, Happisburgh 23rd; *Nov* Pensthorpe 6th, Sheringham 14th, Horning 23rd, Binham/Field Dalling 28th; *Dec* Pentney GP 4th, How Hill 5th, 18th and 27th, Coekley Cley Warren 8th and 13th, and Great Bireham 26th. A number of records between Morston and Cley during this period are thought to relate to wandering birds from Wells/Stiffkey as they ceased at the time that numbers dropped at this site.

Coastal marshes and wetlands have long been favoured hunting grounds of Peregrines in Norfolk but it is becoming increasingly obvious that wintering flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plover, on open areas such as disused airfields, are attracting the attention of this spectacular falcon, particularly inland from the north coast.

### **Red-legged Partridge**

*Alectoris rufa*

#### ***Common introduced resident***

Very under-recorded in first winter period with 55 at Merton in Jan the only sizeable covey reported.

Breeding records virtually non-existent, apart from 12 pairs Burnham Overy GM, whilst 200 in a field at Shadwell Aug 24th thought to be recently released birds. The BBS located birds in a few more squares than last year but still well down on previous years since the survey began in 1995.

Rather more records in second winter period with groups exceeding 20 at Blakeney Point (31), Cranwich (25), East Tuddenham (40), Ickburgh (55) and Stanford TA (100) *Oet*, Bridgham (41) *Nov*, and Horning Waterworks (43) and Wretham (49) *Dec*. Some of the East Tuddenham covey later became trapped in a greenhouse but managed to escape by breaking the glass.



Red-legged Partridge (*V Hanlon*)

### **Grey Partridge**

*Perdix perdix*

#### ***Resident***

All coveys reaching double figures listed: Nar Valley Fisheries (12) and Roydon Common (19) *Jan*; Hilborough (11) *April*; Thetford Nunnery Lakes (11) *Aug*; Shadwell (15) *Sept*; Saxthorpe (12) and West Runton (21) *Oet*; Halvergate (36) *Nov*; Briston (12), East Wretham (15), Hickling Green (12), Ludham (11) and Woodton Carr (20) *Dec*.

Very much under-recorded in breeding season but 220 pairs on a 3500 acre site in west of county notable. Additional pairs recorded at Baconsthorpe/Lower Bodham (4), Beeston Common (1), Brograve (1), Burnham Overy GM (4), Caister (2), Corpusty (1), East Ruston (1), Martham (1), Overstrand (2), Scolt Head (6), Snettisham (1), Sparham Hall Farm (6-7 on 800 acres), Waxham (3), Wells (2) and Welney (2). The BBS continued to indicate a decline with only a quarter of squares now containing this species.

## **Quail**

*Coturnix coturnix*

### ***Summer visitor in erratic numbers; sporadic breeder***

First of spring May 3rd at Northrepps followed by another at Kelling 9th before becoming more widely recorded from 19th.

Most records related to single calling males in May, June and July with larger numbers at Choseley (6), Corpusty (4), Cowles Drove Hockwold (2) East Ruston (2), Feltwell (4), Melton Constable (2), Plumstead (2), Sidestrand (2), Swanton Novers (2), Walcott (2) and Welney (3). Also recorded at Banningham, Berney, Cart Gap, Eastgate, Flitcham, Halvergate, Langham, Massingham Heath, Methwold, Repps-with-Bastwick, Salthouse Heath, Sheringham, Sidestrand, Stanford TA, Swaffham, Wighton and Witton.

Family parties noted at Langham Airfield and Repps-with-Bastwick whilst breeding was suspected at Welney.

An 'average' year finished with autumn migrants Holme Sept 22nd and Paston Oct 26th.

## **Common Pheasant**

*Phasianus colchicus*

### ***Common introduced resident***

Not a popularly reported species so very little information available.

Only two sizeable counts, a 'flock' of 47 on set-aside Ludham Nov and 61+ in one field Cockley Cley Dec. Total albino birds at Martham Ferry Jan and Martham Broad Sept probably relate to the same individual.

## **Golden Pheasant**

*Chrysolophus pictus*

### ***Scarce and local introduced resident***

Max count from all localities: Barnhamcross Common (1), Cockley Cley (1), Croxton (9), East Harling (7), East Wretham (8), Great Hoekham (3), Kilverstone (1), Lynford Arboretum (1), Merton (4), Shakers Furze, Thompson (2), Thetford Nunnery Lakes (1), Thompson Water (3), Wayland Wood (20) and Wolferton (13). The majority of records came from Brecks as usual but from a selection of widely scattered sites.

There appear to be encouraging increases in the numbers at most of the traditionally favoured localities for the second successive year, which seems indicative of a genuine upsurge in the fortunes of this species. This needs to be monitored carefully in the coming years.

A record from Sparham in April was thought to be an escape from captivity.

## **Water Rail**

*Rallus aquaticus*

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

Scattered reports from all areas of the county in both winter periods. Peak counts from the most regularly monitored sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Burnham Norton	3	-	1	-	-	4	2
Flitcham	1	2	2	-	-	-	-
Hickling Broad	1	-	1	6	15	-	-
Holme	2	7	3	4	3	7	5
Horning	-	-	8	-	1	8	-
Rockland Broad	2	1	-	-	-	3	-
Strumpshaw	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
Titchwell	3	1	-	5	3	2	3
UEA Broad	4	4	2	-	-	2	2

Winter records of 1-4 also at Baconsthorpe, Barton Broad, Beeston Regis, Blakeney GM, Brancaster, Briston, Buekenham, Burgh Common, Calthorpe, Castle Acre, Catfield, Cley, East Ruston, Eccles, Felbrigg Park, Glandford, Horsey, Holkham, How Hill, Hunstanton, Langford, Lopham Fen, Lyng-Easthaugh GP, Martham, Norwich, Ormesby Little Broad, Pensthorpe, Pentney GP, Raynham Lake, Reedham, Snetterton GP, Stanford Water, Stiffkey Fen, Stoke Ferry, Tallents Meadow Lake, Thompson Water, Walcott, Warham Greens, Wayford Bridge, Welney, West Somerton, Weybourne, Winterton and Wootton Carr.

Breeding confirmed only at Barton Turf, Burnham Overy GM, Cley, Hickling Broad, Lopham Fen (7+ pairs), Strumpshaw (3 broods) and Welney (3+ pairs), but also suspected at Titchwell and present at several other sites in summer months.

One lucky bird was plucked from the sea at Walcott Nov 16th and later released at Eccles.

### Spotted Crake

*Porzana porzana*

*Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter*

Just one typical autumn record: Titchwell Sept 16th/17th, presumably the same returning bird as in 1997 and 1998.

### Cornerake

*Crex crex*

*Rare passage migrant*

One seen perched on the boardwalk at Cley by one lucky observer Aug 30th (MIE) and another flushed by a dog at Stiffkey Sept 28th (JO). The first records since 1992.

### Moorhen

*Gallinula chloropus*

*Abundant resident; immigrants in autumn*

Peak monthly counts at the most regularly monitored sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holme	20	16	28	11	14	24	25	24
Holkham Park Lake	38	72	70	26	52	30	52	56
Blakeney GM	83	54	27	23	-	-	-	60
Cley	37	50	24	29	34	32	87	37
Salthouse	51	27	30	17	51	-	64	38
Diss Mere	16	14	10	-	-	11	5	7

Other sizeable counts from Billingford (23), Quidenham (25), Thurning Hall (35) and Welney 78 Jan, Kelling WM (26) Sept and Colney GP (36) Nov.



Breeding records from all parts of county with concentrations at Bintree Mill (3 pairs), Boyland Wood (4), Brancaster GM (13), Cley (30), Holkham NNR (111), Pensthorpe (3), Pentney GP (3), Salthouse (32) and UEA (5). The BBS found a 30% increase in the number of occupied squares over last year.

The count of 60 in Dec at Blakeney was of birds all feeding inside the pen of the well-known wildfowl collection by the quay.

Coot

*Fulica atra*

*Common resident and winter visitor*

Monthly max at all regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	76	39	-	11	22	21	31	50
Holme	155	137	96	55	40	106	62	60
Holkham NNR	130	63	118	139	109	128	105	164
Holkham Park Lake	1650	400	350	52	131	128	425	350
Hickling Broad	2400	800	-	-	500	-	5000	5300
Rockland Broad	17	22	13	16	52	44	48	175
Lyng GP	250	150	-	-	-	150	280	300
East Wretham	-	-	-	14	44	38	66	63
Lakenheath Washes	8	124	162	100	148	-	-	-
Cranwick GP	101	56	25	20	-	35	40	60
Welney	506	705	500	413	76	115	272	574

National importance (winter): 1100

The numbers on Hickling Broad at year end surpass even the impressive counts of 1998. The 1650 on Holkham Park Lake in Jan could have left little room for anything else. Another large concentration of 825 Colney GP in Dec.

Breeding details received from Baconsthorpe (3 pairs), Bintree Mill (1), Brancaster GM (33), Brettenham (1), Bure Valley Lakes (1), Cley (35), Diss Mere (3), East Wretham (3), Filby Broad (3+), Fritcham Abbey Farm (3), Hoc (1), Holkham NNR (134), Lakenheath Washes (7), Lynford Lake (2), Pensthorpe (15), Pentney GP (3), Quidenham (1), Roudham Marsh (2), Salthouse (28), Sennowe Park (6), Snetterton GP (1), Thompson Water (1), UEA Broad (3), Welney (70) and West Tofts (2).

A leucistic bird was noted at Wroxham Broad in Feb.

Common Crane

*Grus grus*

*Resident colony in Broadlands since 1979; some records may relate to continental migrants*

The much visited Broadland ‘colony’ reached its 20th year with healthy numbers continuing to be reported.

In first winter period regular counts of up to 9 in Horsey area with 11 reported on one occasion in mid-March. These sightings often included the single young bird which fledged in 1998.

Three pairs attempted breeding but it would appear no young were fledged.

The second winter period saw much the same numbers as earlier in the year but a count of 13 Dec 26th was the largest congregation recorded.

Away from regular areas in east of county, including occasional records as far as Eccles and Strumpshaw, wandering birds or migrants (normally only seen in flight) as follows: 2

Cley March 4th then Welney intermittently March 5th-April 19th; one along coast Sheringham to Morston and then inland Langham March 29th; 2 south-east Titchwell April 4th; 2 east Overstrand April 6th; 2 east Holme April 14th; 2 west Cley along coast to Holme and then presumed same Welney May 2nd; one west Cley and east Sheringham Park May 15th; one north-east Kelling Heath May 31st; 4 Pensthorpe June 21st; 5 west Salthouse to Blakeney Oct 6th; 5 south-east Northrepps Nov 3rd.

Oystercatcher

*Haematopus ostralegus*

Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder

Table includes all sites holding 500 or more:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	1083	333	465	1604	696	-	242	525	105	3	735	1187
Snettisham	1090	2274	1624	1304	773	500	762	4000	3500	4500	1602	930
Titchwell	192	384	61	225	291	329	200	360	143	313	540	363
Holme	567	643	696	349	103	95	301	595	710	475	1010	501
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	828	760	542	431	373	401	407	927	859	895	604	645
Wells Hbr	268	-	322	-	88	-	-	146	543	683	354	372
Warham Greens	528	63	239	110	47	24	-	817	960	713	657	757
Stiffkey	-	-	-	-	330	328	289	636	465	335	423	273
Blakeney Hbr	567	426	-	-	-	-	-	423	253	473	380	426

National importance (winter): 3600

The only other noteworthy counts included 4266 Ousemouth Nov and 2587 Dec; also 257 Thornham Nov.

The downward trend continued at Snettisham, Holme, and more noticeably Breydon where there was a decline in every month. Counts along the north coast overall appeared similar to last year, while those at Scolt Head increased.

A total of 332 breeding pairs reported as follows: coastal sites (beaches and grazing marshes) Snettisham CP 1, Ken Hill 7, Holme 28, Brancaster Beach 14, Brancaster GM 3, Scolt Head 112 (c40 young fledged), Holkham Beach 66 (Burnham Overy-Stiffkey), Holkham GM 40, Blakeney Point 34 (200+ last year), Cley 20, Salthouse 13, Kelling WM 1, Yarmouth 4 (2 nesting on flat roofs, one on North Beach and another on pile of unloaded gravel chippings at fish wharf).

Inland a total of 50 pairs noted at 32 sites: Baconsthorpe (2), Barton Bendish, Beechamwell, Briston, Burgh Common, Coekley Cley, Cranwich GP (2), East Harling, Elsing, Fliteham, Gooderstone (3-4), Gooderstone Common, Guist Common, Hilborough (5), Hopton Farm, Lakenheath Washes, Little Barningham, Lyng GP, Pentney GP, Pensthorpe (6), Saxthorpe, Sennowe Park, Shereford/Tatterford, Sparham Pools, Sparham GP, Stanford TA (Log Hill), Stowbridge, Tallents Meadow Lake, Thetford Nunnery Lakes (2), Weeting Heath, Welney (6), Whitlingham Lane GP, Wissington, Wretton.

Little migration recorded, only counts 20 west Sheringham July 27th and 46 south up-river King's Lynn Aug 9th.

The largest inland groups included 13 at Welney March 22nd and April 19th.

An albino at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr in both winter periods.

**Black-winged Stilt**

*Himantopus himantopus*

*Vagrant, mostly in late spring/summer, has bred*

The male at Titchwell present for its 7th year. Most of the year saw it at Titchwell and Brancaster GM with single visits to Thornham and notably further east to Scolt Head April 23rd, 24th and 27th, and then to Burnham Overy Marsh on 29th.

**Avocet**

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

*Breeding summer visitor, increasing in winter*

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	-	23	-	8	6	-	373	79	-	-	-	-
Titchwell	2	86	61	69	97	75	95	68	41	16	23	0
Holkham			107	63	90	83						
Cley	11	76	115	92	90	123	130	35	18	5	9	25
Breydon	54	70	94	95	52	142	*314	*381	273	63	74	66
Welney			36	37	*46	42	30	24				

*\*Indicates record counts for site*

The first winter period saw few notable gatherings. Apart from sites in table other notable counts in early spring included 45 Ousemouth March 14th, 41 Burnham Norton March 26th, 38 Stiffkey Fen April 10th, 33 Blakeney Hbr April 17th, and 34 Rush Hills, Hickling April 11th. Unusually one swimming, then north, Ormesby Little Broad March 21st.

The number of breeding pairs was slightly down (or under-recorded) on last year with 186 pairs at 11 sites. Success recorded at 4 sites with 124 fledging; of these the return to better success was welcome at one coastal site where 37 pairs fledged 40 young, and at another 52 pairs fledged 37. Pride of place went to a recently colonised inland site where 23 pairs fledged 39 young. Cause for concern was the poor success at a normally reliable north coast site, where 64 pairs fledged only 15 young.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Prs	131	126	157	174	209	214	203	181	252-267	186
Sites	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	11	13	16	11

Unusual records at this time included 2 Pentney GP May 25th, a single Wretton Fen April 8th, and a single on the beach road at West Runton after a sudden downpour May 10th.

July saw the usual build-up in Wash (Terrington) with records numbers at Breydon in both July and Aug. Only other notable count elsewhere in autumn was 36 Ongar Hill Sept 26th; away from inland breeding sites, one Cantley BF Aug 7th.

**Stone Curlew**

*Burhinus oedicnemus*

*Breeding summer visitor, mainly to Brecks*

First records from Stanford TA where 3 March 19th and Weeting 20th. A single at South Pickenham was the only 'stray' record in spring. In Norfolk/Suffolk Brecks a total of 159 pairs (140 in 1998) was another significant increase. Of these, 80 pairs fledged only 49 young in Norfolk, being significantly lower than in recent years and attributed to wet weather



killing young, and producing luxuriant growth so inhibiting re-laying (per RSPB). A further 4 pairs were located outside Brecks.

Autumn concentrations at the usual Breckland sites; at one site largest count 54 with still 30 present there Nov 15th. Elsewhere a single Waxham Sept 26th.

### **Collared Pratincole**

*Glareola pratincola*

#### ***Vagrant from southern Europe***

What was clearly the same bird returning for its sixth year, returning 7 days earlier than last year on May 11th at Holme and Titchwell, remaining to 15th; then moving along the coast to Cley next day and onto Berney, staying until early on 17th. It returned to Holme and Titchwell on 21st and remained in this area until June 10th, when seen heading west at Scolt Head. Showing the same pattern as last year it disappeared, reappearing a month later at Snettisham July 11th/12th, and at Titchwell on latter date.

### **Black-winged Pratincole**

*Glareola nordmanni*

#### ***Very rare vagrant from south-east Europe***

The third Norfolk record, and the first since 1974. Found at Cley on July 17th (RJH *et al*) and also seen there next day, it soon headed west to Titchwell from 19th-27th. It moved to Terrington on 31st (NAC *et al*), and back to Snettisham Aug 1st-3rd, on this last date returning to Titchwell to 7th, then disappearing until being found again at Cley on 27th and 30th. A welcome find for many, and a long-stayer, though typically mobile and elusive at times. See article page 292.



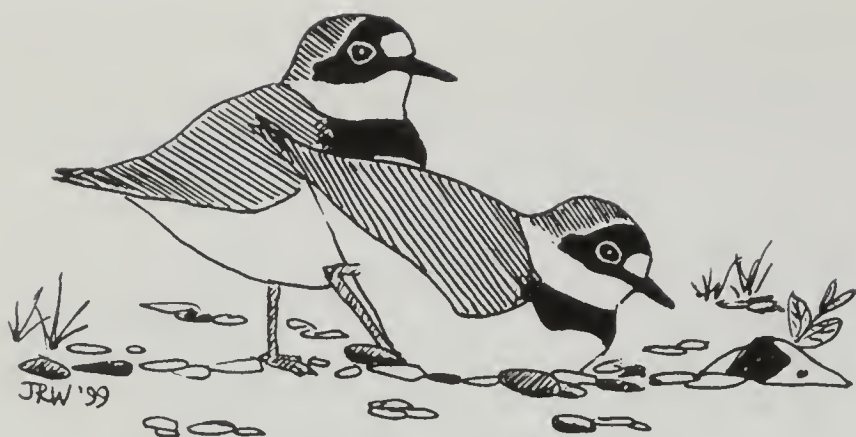
Black-winged Pratincole (*R Gillmor*)

### **Little Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius dubius*

#### ***Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant***

The first arrivals noted at Trowse and Buckenham, both with 2 on March 14th. The majority arrived from 20th with 1-3 recorded at 8 sites to month end. Largest counts in April/May as



Little Ringed Plovers (*J R Williamson*)

follows: 4 Buekenham April 11th, 12 Cranwich GP May 6th, 4 Pensthorpe May 23rd, 5 Sennowe Park May 16th, 8 Welney April 24th with 16 on May 21st and 26th, and 4 Whitlingham Lane GP April 11th. Visible migration at this time included singles west Sheringham on May 1st and 14th.

Breeding pairs very similar to last year with 33 recorded at 18 sites: north coast – one pair at one site; Broads – 2 pairs at 2 sites; inland – 17 pairs at 11 sites; Fens – 13 pairs at 4 sites. Details of success not known for many sites, but at least 20 young fledged at 3 sites, including 15+ from 8 pairs at a fenland locality.

Late summer concentrations of 5+ included: 6 Titchwell July 19th and Aug 6th; 6 Cley July 2nd, with 10 July 10th and 8 Aug 3rd; 7 Berney in July; 6 Pentney GP July 2nd and 29th; 9 Wissington BF July 19th; 20 Welney July 1st and 26 on 14th, with 7 Aug 4th and 5 10th. In Sept numbers reduced with 1-4 at 6 sites up to 28th when a single at Titchwell. Visible migration included singles west at Sheringham Aug 10th and west Walecott Aug 18th.

## Ringed Plover

*Charadrius hiaticula*

*Breeding summer visitor, passage migrant, and winter visitor in small numbers*

Most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	-	-	-	77	75	-	67	286	250	94	-	-
Holme	42	12	32	40	89	33	85	201	413	251	33	30
Titchwell	-	48	40	40	45	-	70	70	100	34	-	-
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	80	83	91	51	589	99	86	1411	1050	570	80	74
Stiffkey	-	-	-	-	151	33	63	158	68	132	27	31
Blakeney Hbr	46	76	-	-	-	-	-	170	173	150	52	57
Breydon/Berney	113	118	44	29	248	72	63	234	202	111	76	57

*National importance: 290 (winter), 300 (passage)*

Impressive counts Scolt Head in May where 305 13th, 515 14th and 589 16th. A trickle of inland migrants of 1-5 at several sites also May.

Breeding pairs included Holme 17, Brancaster Beach 11, Scolt Head 53 (35-40 young fledged), Holkham NNR 37, Cley 12, Salthouse 11, Horsey 1, Sea Palling 4, Caister 1 and Yarmouth 7. Only 5 pairs reported inland at Cranwich, Hilborough, King's Lynn BF and Welney (2).

In autumn larger numbers than usual roosting on Scolt Head (see table); the max count of 1411 on Aug 29th was a new county record, considerably higher than the 1000 at Snettisham in July 1997. Visible migration included 25 high inland Brancaster Staithe Oct 3rd.

An albino Scolt Head late Aug/early Sept.

**Kentish Plover**

*Charadrius alexandrinus*

*Scarce but annual passage migrant, mostly in spring; rare inland*

Three records: a male at Cley briefly April 21st (RFP), a female at Berney May 15th-17th (PRA SSm *et al*), and in autumn a single at Holme Sept 3rd (DIMW).

**Dotterel**

*Charadrius morinellus*

*Scarce but annual passage migrant; has over-wintered*

A poor year; in spring only recorded in May with 11 west Knapton 5th, 2 Little Dunton 6th, and singles Blakeney Point 20th and 22nd, and Wells 26th.

In autumn, singles in Sept at Winterton 1st and Sheringham 18th

1998 Addition: A single at West Walton Sept 23rd/24th.

**American Golden Plover**

*Pluvialis dominica*

*Very rare vagrant*

One with a flock of Golden Plover at Tibenham on Sept 26th (SG JHM), was only the second county record, the first being at Breydon in June 1976. See article page 294.

**Golden Plover**

*Pluvialis apricaria*

*Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor*

Most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	400	450	550	-	-	462	405	1200	1000
Holme	370	350	500	15	10	350	350	330	465
Titchwell	3150	1835	200	-	375	1500	600	660	800
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	800	350	130	-	1500	450	350	330	465
Blakeney Hbr	3000	1500	400	-	200	-	800	-	1500
Breydon	10300	6550	340	22	1314	1650	3000	7000	7100
Boyland Common	1136	1563	140	-	-	320	1500	4500	3761

National importance (winter): 2500

Counts from the north coast should be used with caution as much interchange takes place between these sites and those just inland.

The Jan count at Breydon was a site and county record.

Other than the tabulated sites above, there were a further 8 sites (11 in 1998) holding 2000+: Cley 2100 Mareh, Banningham 3000 Jan, Coekthorpe 2000 Dec, Corpusty 2000 Dec, Great Wicthingham 4500 Jan and 4000 Feb, Ludham 2000 Jan and 2400 Nov; 7 other sites (8 in 1998) held counts of 1000+: Ousemouth 1200 Aug and 1000 Oct, Thornham 1500 Aug, Holkham 1130 Dec, Wells 1250 Nov, Horsey 1000 Dec, Postwiek 1350 Dec, Tibenham 1000 Sept and 1626 Dec.

Westerly movement reeorded at Scolt Head where 15 June 23rd, 15 July 22nd and 14 23rd, 27 Sept 1st and 45 27th. Other counts included 50 east Sheringham Aug 28th and 48 west Oct 9th.



Grey Plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Regularly counted sites holding 200+ birds:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	50	-	2175	2040	1806	132	1248	2724	645	745	283
Ousemouth	-	-	-	116	9	-	246	495	185	394	105
Snettisham	-	750	950	468	8	10	1700	782	319	90	126
Holme	116	172	1284	714	378	21	15	1428	687	424	233
Titchwell	29	-	-	2	84	-	220	239	55	243	5
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	224	255	312	449	500	2	390	379	330	226	191
Warham Greens	220	1	20	-	1	-	62	12	135	132	220
Stiffkey	-	-	-	-	75	-	90	575	401	368	288

International importance (winter): 1500; National importance (winter): 430

The only other count of 200+ was at Thornham where 237 Nov.

Fewer inland records than usual: 5 Welney March 28th and singles May 23rd, Oct 5th, 10th and 27th, Buckenham May 4th, Thetford Nunnery Lakes north-west June 15th and Heigham Sound Sept 30th.

Only notable visible migration at Scolt Head where 26 west Sept 1st.



Grey Plover (J R Williamson)

Lapwing

*Vanellus vanellus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; declining breeder

Most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	5140	1575	-	-	3	-	60	1400	8094	7280
Ousemouth	2275	-	-	-	7	300	14	980	1743	706
Holme	250	300	38	67	19	120	145	160	770	470
Titchwell	1225	1445	-	-	-	300	400	445	1040	852
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	500	1150	200	-	74	60	120	400	3000	180
Holkham NNR	1498	-	237	525	61	82	292	835	850	735
Blakeney GM/Cley	1850	2000	76	61	-	320	118	-	1055	-
Breydon/Berney	24600	7100	450	216	400	1000	1000	3100	20500	14000
Boyland Common	1210	1305	-	-	-	500	-	1500	3038	1711
Welney	1160	728	1142	184	100	462	750	700	7930	6420

International and National importance (winter): 20,000

The mild winters and noticeable influx in Nov made it a good year. Counts of 1000+ occurred at 26 sites, compared with 16 in 1998. Other than those tabulated above, sites as follows: Wells 3000 Nov, Warham Greens 1390 Nov, Stiffkey Fen 1000 Nov, Heigham Holmes 1500 Dec, West Somerton/Horscy 1500 Nov and 1000 Dec, Little Plumstead 1100 Nov, Halvergate 10,000 Jan, Easton 1000 Feb and Nov, Edgefield 1500 Nov, Great

Witchingham 1500 Jan, Langham 1500 Feb, Swainsthorpe 1000 Nov, Tibenham 1880 Nov, Tivetshall St Mary 1300 Nov, King's Lynn BF 1000 Jan, Wiggenhall St Peter 1000 Feb, Wissington BF 1000+ Aug. Some overlap in counts likely from north coast and Broads especially.

Coverage improved again with total of at least 960 breeding pairs. The north coast produced highest concentrations (419), with further numbers in Broads (247), Brecks (132) and Fens (134). Numbers and sites (with last year's figures where applicable): north coast - Holme 33 (32), Titchwell 1, Brancaster GM 17 (7), Holkham NNR 283 (242) with 230+ young fledged, Blakeney GM 40, Cley 39, Salthouse 6; Broads - Berney 108 (85), Buckenham/Cantley/Strumpshaw 126 (99), Hickling Broad 2, Horning 2, Horning Marsh Farm 3, Ludham 6; Brecks - Bridgham 2, Cranwich 1, Cranwich GP 3, East Harling Fen 2, East Wretham 2, Gooderstone area 55, Hilborough 43, Ickburgh 1, Illington 10, Swaffham 3, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 3, Thetford Nunnery Stud 3, Threxton 1, Weeting Heath 2, West Harling 1; Fens - Hockwold Sluice 7, Lakenheath Washes 6, Welney 109, Wissington BF 12; inland - Baconsthorpe 3, Banham 1, Castle Rising 2, Flitcham 8+ (20-30 young fledged), Fersfield Airfield 1, Foxley 1, Kenninghall 4, Melton Constable 1, Pensthorpe 3, Saxthorpe 2, Shereford 1, Winfarthing 1. Significant increases continue at Holkham, Yare Valley and Berney.

In early spring, migration noted March 13th when 95 west Holme, 70 east 11 west Sheringham, 64 south Horsey and 40 east at Winterton.

June/July migration of young birds and failed adults clearly recorded at Scolt Head June 14th-July 19th, with a total of 496 west; max 105 June 23rd and 185 July 3rd.

Autumn migration noted Oct 13th -Nov 28th; best counts (all west) at Holme where 475 Oct 16th and 779 22nd, 664 Nov 8th, 412 15th, 1430 23rd, 455 25th and 240 28th; at Scolt Head 195 Oct 13th, 320 15th, 330 22nd, 735 30th and 430 Nov 8th. Largest movement further east took place Nov 8th when 266 West Runton, 650 Sidestrand and 800 Paston.

**Knot**

*Calidris canutus*

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

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	9450	-	11900	4425	90	6400	375	2445	9480	6000
Snettisham	-	15882	17000	13980	5000	18500	-	15500	30000	12500
Holme	670	550	495	10000	-	22360	29000	35500	1050	32
Titchwell	-	615	-	-	1000	3500	4500	5000	1000	-

*International importance (winter): 3500; National importance (winter): 2900*

Good numbers remained in Wash during first winter period and autumn passage better than 1998, but still well below the high counts in early 1990s.

Other coastal counts: Ousemouth 3000 Oct, Heacham 40,000 Oct, Thornham 3000 Oct, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 1017 Sept, Wells Hbr 3040 Jan, Warham Greens 2100 Jan and Breydon 196 Jan, 197 Dec.

In summer only June reports 500 Snettisham, 35 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr and 12 Breydon. First juvs Scolt Head Aug 5th and Breydon 19th.

Largest westerly coastal movements 80 Scolt Head June 24th and 65 there July 22nd, 50 Sheringham Aug 3rd, 50 Cley Aug 20th, 125 Scolt Head Sept 1st and 170 there Nov

23rd. Few inland with singles Pentney GP April 7th and Cantley BF Aug 26th; at Welney 2 May 20th and singles July 30th-Aug 1st, Nov 15th, 19th and 22nd.

**Sanderling**

*Calidris alba*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	-	136	25	315	1755	-	86	2300	120	828	15	432
Heacham/Hunstanton	149	575	300	230	401	120	-	-	270	495	136	208
Holme	89	257	380	510	519	8	103	267	812	785	318	139
Titchwell	306	382	60	50	156	35	73	215	200	35	50	-
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	25	31	27	28	201	35	93	395	237	225	28	53
Holkham Bay	170	470	58	60	-	30	-	126	99	55	-	550
Wells	161	-	30	-	-	-	-	115	114	65	91	46

*International importance: 1000 (winter); National importance: 230*

*The Ang count at Snettisham was a site record.*

Highest counts away from main sites: Thornham 110 Jan and 71 Nov, Burnham Overy 354 Sept, Warham Greens 66 June and 71 Nov, Stiffkey 87 Nov and Waxham 100 Feb.

Only report of visible migration 20 west Sheringham July 22nd.

Inland: Welney April 27th, Middleton GP May 10th and Pentney GP July 30th.

**Little Stint**

*Calidris minuta*

*Double passage migrant in fluctuating numbers*

In first winter period singles Titchwell Jan 3rd/4th and Berney Feb 20th.

A protracted spring passage March 20th-June 3rd. In March singles Walcott and Breydon/Berney 20th, 2 Welney 29th and 3 31st, and one Titchwell 30th. Main site in April Welney where up to 4 10th-30th; elsewhere one Salthouse 7th/8th and at Breydon/Berney 2 10th and one 21st. In May most Breydon/Berney where 2 1st, 6 8th, 8 11th, 11 12th, 6 16th and 19th, 9 20th and 5 28th; elsewhere 3 Welney 1st and 1-2 Snettisham, Titchwell, Blakeney Point and Cley. In June 1-2 in Blakeney Point/Cley area until 13th.

Autumn passage slow to get underway and only July record one Cley 2nd/3rd and 6th. In first 3 weeks of Aug max 5 Titchwell and 15 Scolt Head 5th, 3 Cley 12th and 2 Welney 7th/8th. Numbers higher and more widespread from last week in Aug until end of Sept, but passage not on scale of previous 2 years.

Main sites:

	Ang 21-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Welney	3	3	10	4
Titchwell	7	15	6	2
Cley	25	20	16	17
Breydon/Berney	4	3	15	11

Numbers elsewhere small with 1-4 Snettisham, Scolt Head, Stiffkey Fen, Cantley BF, Pentney GP and Wissington BF.

Few during rest of autumn, best counts in Oct 7 Berney 1st, 3 Cley 5th and 3 Horsey 16th. Stragglers in Nov and Dec when singles Salthouse Nov 2nd-4th, and Berney Nov 4th-Dec 5th.



**Temminck's Stint***Calidris temminckii***Passage migrant, more frequent in spring**

A poor year with first in spring Berney April 28th. In May most also at Berney where 4 3rd, one 10th/11th, 2 15th and further singles 17th, 20th and 27th; elsewhere just 3 Stiffkey Fen 9th and one Cley 23rd. Two autumn records when in Aug singles Titchwell 10th and Cley 16th.

**Baird's Sandpiper***Calidris bairdii***Vagrant from North America**

In autumn a juv Berney Sept 27th/28th (PRA *et al*) with same Cantley BF Oct 1st-9th. This is the fifth occurrence in the last decade.

**Pectoral Sandpiper***Calidris melanotos***Almost annual autumn vagrant from North America/Siberia; rare in spring**

An exceptional year with a record 17 birds reported. One in spring Cley June 2nd.

In autumn: Cley July 2nd, July 17th-19th and Aug 22nd; King's Lynn BF July 22nd; Cantley BF Aug 23rd-26th and Sept 20th; Breydon/Berney Aug 30th, Sept 5th, 12th/13th, 3 14th, 2 16th and singles 28th, and Oct 1st-3rd; Titchwell Sept 8th, 13th-16th, 2 17th-20th, one 21st, 2 24th/25th, 3 26th-30th and 2 Oct 1st; 3 Thornham Point Sept 25th considered same as Titchwell birds.

Annual totals:

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
7	2	12	2	9	7	8	4	7	17

1998 Correction: Records for Berney in Sept should read Oct.

**Curlew Sandpiper***Calidris ferruginea***Autumn passage migrant in fluctuating numbers; scarce in spring**

A light spring passage April 30th-June 10th, with best counts 4 Cley April 30th, 3 Berney May 16th and 1-2 Snettisham, Titchwell, Scolt Head Stiffkey Fen, Horsey and Hickling Broad. Last in spring 2 Cley June 10th.

Autumn passage from early July when 2 Cley 2nd/3rd and 6th/7th; also during month 1-2 Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head and Breydon. In first week of Aug counts of 12 Snettisham 14th, 5 Scolt Head 6th and 4 Breydon 2nd-4th. From 19th one of the best autumn passages of juvs since 1985 commenced; apart from inland records at Cantley BF and Welney, passage was almost exclusively confined to the coast. Main sites:

	Aug 20-31	Sep 1-10	Sep 11-20	Sep 21-30
Snettisham	30	30	-	10
Titchwell	23	64	100	16
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	123	141	116	8
Cley	148	179	44	5
Breydon/Berney	43	71	13	6
Cantley BF	70	73	2	-
Welney	28	23	2	-

Also during this period 15 Holme, 10 Terrington and 7 Blakeney Hbr. Some westerly visible migration noted at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr where 42 Aug 25th and 52 Sept 1st.

and at Sheringham where 6 Aug 20th and 3 Aug 30th. Numbers much reduced in Oct with max 13 Breydon 1st, 3 Titchwell 1st/2nd and 1-2 at 5 other localities. Last of year Nov when singles Cley 1st-3rd and Welney 11th-13th, 22nd/23rd and 27th.

The final autumn total was well over 600 birds, but with few counts from Wash the true total was probably nearer 1000 individuals.

**Purple Sandpiper**

*Calidris maritima*

*Passage migrant and declining winter visitor in small numbers*

Numbers wintering in county remained very low. Peak monthly counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heacham/Hunstanton	7	7	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	4
Titchwell	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	3	3	3
Sheringham	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Eccles	2	8	8	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	-

All other records: Holme one Nov, Thornham 2 Feb, Brancaster 2 Feb, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 3 Oct, Stiffkey one Oct, Blakeney Point 5 Sept, Cley 2 Oct, Salthouse 3 Oct and 3 Nov, West Runton one Jan and Nov, Waxham one Jan, Horsey one Oct, Caister one Nov, and Yarmouth one Feb/March and Oct. An interesting record of a presumed migrant west far offshore Sheringham Feb 9th (KBS). Last in spring Eccles April 27th, 2 Waxham May 9th and Titchwell May 18th.

In autumn Titchwell July 19th and Aug 24th-26th, and 1-2 in Cley/Salthouse area Aug 15th-28th. Westerly migrants: Scolt Head 4 Oct 4th, 4 Oct 5th and one Oct 6th; Cley 2 Oct 5th; Sheringham 2 Nov 6th and one Nov 10th, and Mundesley one Oct 4th.

**Dunlin**

*Calidris alpina*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; non-breeders in summer*

Peak counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	4200	-	2800	7335	6568	-	8218	3355	7675	5224	5560	3283
Snettisham	-	4510	4615	5770	3820	15	10665	7550	1750	11332	8500	2710
Holme	142	237	3500	178	23	-	5	145	1060	400	252	644
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	689	740	262	177	760	55	325	780	705	631	831	785
Wells	1172	-	356	-	20	-	-	61	-	41	600	145
Warham Greens	1200	820	200	25	25	25	-	60	1	200	301	906
Stiffkey	-	-	-	215	215	4	410	498	235	327	219	659
Blakeney Hbr	258	359	-	-	-	-	600	184	253	670	376	381
Breydon/Berney	4400	4420	1870	1920	1390	12	644	639	983	1430	2790	2950

*International importance (winter): 14,000; National importance (winter): 5300*

Other notable coastal counts: Ousemouth 500 April, 1070 Sept, 1300 Oct, 2090 Nov; Holkham Bay 209 Feb; Cley 200 Feb, 200 July and 151 Oct. First juv Berney July 2nd, the earliest ever at this site.

Largest westerly coastal movements in Oct: Scolt Head 820 5th, 1970 6th and 252 12th; Blakeney Point 1000+ 6th; Cley 294 6th; Sheringham 100 5th, 150 6th with 166 Nov 7th.

Max inland counts: Cantley BF 33 Oct, Lakenheath Washes 45 March and at Welney 45 Feb, 152 March, 40 Nov and 90 Dec.

At Breydon a leucistic bird April 24th-May 3rd.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**

*Tryngites subruficollis*

*Vagrant from North America*

In autumn a juv Berney Sept 16th-18th (PRA *et al*); the eighth record in the 1990s compared with 10 in 1980s.

**Ruff**

*Philomachus pugnax*

*Double passage migrant; small numbers over-winter; has bred*

Monthly peak counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holme	-	-	12	4	1	1	9	14	1	-	23	-
Titchwell	94	83	63	32	13	5	70	104	215	192	124	136
Brancaster Hbr	23	29	11	-	-	-	-	56	15	40	15	31
Stiffkey	21	-	-	-	-	-	4	30	45	27	8	-
Blakeney GM	18	11	8	21	-	2	-	7	-	4	6	-
Cley	4	6	45	30	37	11	59	70	40	-	-	-
Breydon/Berney	4	1	11	42	44	6	36	45	54	11	24	53
Cantley BF	6	14	8	11	1	-	4	44	14	24	-	-
Buckenham	1	9	20	35	2	-	3	-	1	-	-	-
Welney	-	4	48	121	20	3	51	104	142	120	4	43

National importance (winter): 50

Additional counts in winter months: 53 Brancaster GM March 13th, and 19 Docking also March 13th and 18 Nov 21st. During winter months the main wintering population is centred around Titchwell where birds return to roost each evening, feeding during the day on arable as far inland as Docking, grazing marshes at Holme, Brancaster and Burnham Norton, and on saltmarsh at Brancaster Hbr. A similar situation probably exists in the Stiffkey/Blakeney/Cley area and Buckenham/Cantley.

In spring peak counts away from tabulated sites: 13 Burnham Norton March 23rd, 12 Pentney GP April 19th and 59 Lakenheath Washes April 27th. Last in spring Holme June 6th and autumn passage from mid-June. Highest counts in autumn apart from above, 18 Wissington BF Aug 12th and 26th, and 14 in off sea Bceston Bump Aug 25th.

**Jack Snipe**

*Lymnocyrtes minimus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; declining*

In first winter period peak counts from a sensitive inland site where 8 March 3rd, 6 Feb 9th and 4 Feb 10th. Elsewhere 2 How Hill March 23rd and singles at 16 other widely scattered localities. In spring an obvious migrant Blakeney Point March 30th, with last Titchwell April 2nd and Lopham Fen April 30th.

First in autumn Happisburgh and Horsey Sept 28th, and Buxton Sept 30th. Some good counts during Oct when 14 at Berney 18th and 7 23rd, 6 Hempstead 15th with 4 next day, and 4 East Ruston 21st; also one east Overstrand 16th. During rest of year 1-2 at 19 mainly coastal or Broadland sites.



## Common Snipe

*Gallinago gallinago*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor; declining breeder*

During first winter period a noticeable improvement on last year with 13 sites recording 30+ birds (10 in 1998). The counts on saltmarshes were not repeated this year so numbers may appear low when compared to 1998: Titchwell 31 Jan and 55 March, Thornham GM 43 March, Brancaster GM 33 March, Burnham Norton 37 March, Wells 62 Jan, Stiffkey Fen 82 Feb and 44 March, Stiffkey Meadows 159 Feb, Blakeney GM 42 Jan, Blakeney Saltmarsh 55 Jan, Breydon 64 March and 75 April, Welney 32 Jan and 43 March, Cringleford Marsh 47 Jan, Wymondham 30-40 on winter wheat Jan/Feb.

A slight increase in the number of breeding sites to 22 (17 in 1998) and the number of drummers to 93 (83 in 1998): north coast - Holme 1, Thornham GM 1, Brancaster GM 1, Holkham NNR 9; Broads - Berney 6, Strumpshaw 2, Buckenham/Cantley 7, Hickling Broad 1; inland - Castle Acre Common 2, East Wretham 1, Foulden Common 2-4, Hilborough 1, Lakenheath Washes 2, Tattersett 2, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 1, Tottington 1, Weeting Heath 1, West Acre 4, Whitlingham Lane GP 1, Whitlingham Marsh (Thorpe St Andrew) 1; Fens - Welney 47. Slight increases at Holkham and Berney, and a notable return to form at Welney, where good breeding success gives hope for this species. However, the notable decline in the Yare Valley (down from 24 to 9) is more typical of its overall status.

Visible migration very notable at well-watched sites, especially Scolt Head where westward movements on many days Aug 13th-Nov 8th totalling 649, with max 122 Sept 1st, 78 13th, 67 14th and 95 Oct 1st. At nearby Holme 56 Oct 1st, 77 7th and 48 16th, and at Sheringham 30 in off sea from dawn to 1300 hrs Nov 6th.

During autumn/second winter period 17 sites (15 in 1998) held 30+ birds: Holme 57 Dec; Titchwell 69 Sept, 73 Nov and 69 Dec; Warham Greens 83 Sept; Stiffkey Fen 50 Nov; Cley 40 Sept; Acle-Yarmouth 50+ Dec; Berney 44 Aug and 60 Sept; Breydon 44 Aug, 120 Sept, 67 Oct, 150 Nov and 350 Dec; East Ruston 35 Aug; Haddiscoe Bridge 600 Oct; Heigham Holmes 100+ Dec; Hickling Broad 35 Nov; Horsey 80 Dec; Strumpshaw/Buckenham/Cantley 45 Aug, 95 Sept, 100 Oct and 160 Dec; East Harling 39 Sept; Hockwold Sluice 80 Sept; Welney 107 July, 94 Aug, 60 Sept and 96 Nov. Much higher numbers than 1998 with the counts at Haddiscoe Bridge and Breydon in Dec being particularly noteworthy.

An albino bird was at Titchwell in Aug and Oct.

## Woodcock

*Scolopax rusticola*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor; breeder particularly in Brecks*

During winter months recorded at 44 localities (45 in 1998). Apart from 80 shot in a single day Holkham Park in last week Jan, numbers elsewhere low with max 7 Cringleford Feb 25th, 7 Stubb Mill (Hickling) Nov 29th, 7 Merton Dec 14th, 6 Briston Feb 2nd, 5 Hopton Point Dec 26th, 4 Barrow Common Jan 23rd and up to 5 UEA.

Return passage in spring light with only migrants Winterton March 16th, Yarmouth Cemetery March 27th and Overstrand April 5th.

Roding reported at a record 40 sites and no doubt went unrecorded at many more, all sites listed: Beeston Regis Heath 3, Boughton Fen 4, Brandon Stanch, Brettenham Heath, Buckenham Tofts Mill 2, Buxton Heath 4-5, Calthorpe Broad 2, Cawston Heath 3, Cloversfield (Thetford) 2, Cockley Cley 3, Common Fen (Wayford Bridge) 2, Croxton 3, Diddlington, Drakes Marsh Barton Turf 3, East Winch Common 2, Foulden Common 4, Great Hockham 8, Guist, Harling Woods 2, Holt Lowes 4, Honing Lock 2, Horsford 6, Langford, Narborough, Pentney Heath 2, Repps Staithe, Roman Camp (Sheringham), East Runton 5+, Roydon Common 4, Salthouse Heath 3, Sculthorpe Fen 2, Swaffham GC 5,



Woodcock (*J R Williamson*)

Strumpshaw, Syderstone, Tattersford, Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Thompson Water, Tottington, Weeting 2 and Wolferton 7.

In autumn coastal migrants from Oct 5th when one Waxham. Small arrival over next few days at Burnham Overy Dunes, Wells East Hills (2), Blakeney Point (2), Paston, Winterton and Yarmouth Cemetery 16th; Holme, Wells East Hills, Blakeney Point (2), and Paston 17th; in off sea Holme, and Holkham and Eeels 18th. There were further small arrivals in Nov when Holme and Scolt Head 10th, Holme, Blakeney Point (2) and Yarmouth Cemetery 11th, Scolt Head, Weybourne and Yarmouth (2) 12th, Holkham Meals (2) 16th, Waxham 18th, and Holkham Meals and Titchwell 19th.

## Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa limosa*

*Increasing passage migrant and winter visitor; declining breeder*

Peak monthly counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	-	-	-	700	-	-	1995	1696	58	5	45	14
Snettisham	3	8	25	60	27	50	50	180	-	1	1	-
Titchwell	12	-	-	19	33	14	170	578	182	120	107	3
Scolt/Brancaaster Hbr	-	-	-	105	100	45	21	1	40	193	-	-
Holkham NNR	1	-	35	21	80	29	35	400	31	16	-	-
Blakeney Hbr/GM	45	41	176	94	-	-	8	175	110	8	32	-
Cley	74	140	300	500	125	178	100	300	87	41	50	50
Breydon/Berney	493	176	125	44	47	91	544	569	603	303	752	883
Welney	6	233	280	1448	70	29	106	12	1	1	70	79

*International importance (winter): 700; National importance (winter): 70*

Elsewhere highest counts: 1540 Ongar Hill July 18th and 187 Sept 26th, 450 Ousemouth April 5th and max 1323 Sept, 42 Holme July 9th, 70 Stiffkey Fen May 17th, 16 Hickling Broad May 22nd, 30 South Walsham Marshes Dec 30th, 10 Cantley BF Oct 20th, 25 Strumpshaw April 6th and 63 King's Lynn BF July 22nd.

No breeding recorded, only suggestion in east of county where up to 5 during last week May, when one in constant display flight and one apparently sitting 29th, but all 5 disappeared 31st.

1998 Correction: 3330 Welney April (table page 203) should read 330.

**Bar-tailed Godwit**

*Limosa lapponica*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; a few non-breeders in summer*

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	1100	-	40	13	128	-	35	735	112	131	1905	49
Snettisham	2200	5800	3100	1100	821	480	430	2100	70	300	5000	4100
Holme	176	212	143	11	3	21	-	10	1412	3500	459	192
Titchwell	143	123	-	-	-	-	100	2820	5035	5000	909	-
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	305	310	141	37	42	8	40	331	235	230	276	260
Blakeney Hbr	510	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	47	56	-
Breydon	43	43	25	3	16	-	2	64	22	21	6	30

International importance (winter): 1000; National importance (winter): 530

Other coastal counts: Ongar Hill 600 Jan, Ousemouth 200 May, Thornham 350 Sept, Wells 105 Feb, Warham Greens 108 Dec, Stiffkey 73 Sept, 177 Nov and 418 Dec, and Cley 55 May. As usual most left Wash on very high tides in autumn to roost at Holme and Titchwell.

Coastal movements included Scolt Head 195 east May 5th (same day as large movement along south coast), 375 west Aug 29th and 85 west Sept 1st, and 60 west Sheringham Aug 30th.

Inland records: 30 south-west Garboldisham Jan 16th, singles Welney March 4th-8th and May 2nd with 22 April 26th, Buckenham May 1st and 7th, 4 East Ruston May 6th, Baconsthorpe May 7th, 2 Berney May 9th, and Cantley BF May 15th.

**Whimbrel**

*Numenius phaeopus*

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn; rare in winter*

Peak counts of grounded/feeding flocks at main sites:

	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep
Holme	2	15	5	6	2
Titchwell	4	10	10	12	3
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	11	37	26	87	7
Holkham NNR	4	11	-	20	-
Cley	12	33	1	26	1
Horsey	72	19	2	4	2
Breydon/Berney	80	102	12	42	2

National importance (passage): 50

First in spring during April when Holme 2nd/3rd, Cley 8th, 2 Holme 10th and Sheringham 14th, with main passage April 24th-May 19th. Max counts of feeding/grounded flocks other than those in table: in April 30 Brograve Level and 30 Waxham both 25th; in May 75 Potter Heigham 3rd, 30 Haddiscoe 5th, 12 Waxham and 20 East Ruston both 6th. Smaller numbers overhead with best counts 7 north-east Hilgay



April 25th and 12 west Scolt Head May 9th. Last in spring Cley June 17th and Scolt Head next day.

Return passage from June 25th, main passage July 29th-Aug 28th. Largest grounded flocks: 11 Ongar Hill July 18th, 20 Winterton July 21st, 50 Blakeney Point Aug 4th, 42 Winterton Aug 8th and 16 Burnham Norton Aug 17th. Largest westerly overhead movements: Scolt Head 133 July 30th, 43 Aug 28th and 31 Sept 1st, Stiffkey 25 Aug 5th and 40 Aug 21st, Titchwell 16 Aug 9th, Holme 120 Aug 28th and 11 Sept 4th, and Brancaster 53 Aug 28th. Small numbers during Sept and early Oct until last Sheringham 18th and Weybourne 19th.

1998 Addition: A striking albino Breydon/Halvergate April 28th-May 4th.

Curlew

*Numenius arquata*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce breeder

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	404	480	287	585	130	-	1407	1929	2052	1437	330	329
Snettisham	-	1534	-	221	-	-	20	1150	30	1018	386	125
Ken Hill GM	620	478	354	358	218	-	-	42	101	31	83	211
Heacham/Hunstanton	71	98	146	32	-	-	-	-	101	210	113	201
Holme	105	155	157	95	10	2	20	5	67	61	119	108
Titchwell	7	1	26	40	22	40	45	-	67	200	112	3
Scolt/Brancaster Hbr	660	507	591	375	90	310	1250	1673	1146	661	674	637
Holkham NNR	127	29	44	88	3	-	12	113	92	113	104	169
Wells Hbr	53	-	494	-	35	-	-	-	85	80	21	61
Warham Greens	76	33	20	30	30	30	-	33	40	148	56	60
Stiffkey	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	14	48	96	75	68
Blakeney Hbr	219	209	-	69	-	41	250	90	107	152	102	73
Breydon	1240	1083	663	427	24	65	624	651	921	813	746	689

International importance (winter): 3500; National importance (winter): 1200

The Jan count at Breydon was a site record.

Additional coastal counts: Thornham 74 Jan, Burnham Overy Hbr 69 April and Ousemouth 100 May.

Main departure during spring in April when at Scolt Head 28 north-east 8th and 32 17th. Few during May at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr apart from early returning birds at month end when 90 back 29th. All westerly movements of note in autumn Scolt Head where 77 July 3rd, 50 July 8th, 29 Sept 1st and 59 Oct 6th.

Feeding flocks inland poorly recorded, only counts 32 Flitcham Feb with 35 March, 60 Grimston Nov and 60 North Wootton Dec.

Breeding: 7 pairs Stanford TA and an additional 7 pairs at other inland localities, mostly in Brecks.

Spotted Redshank

*Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant; small numbers over-winter

In first winter period regularly reported only from Titchwell and Breydon/Berney. At Titchwell up to 4 Jan/Feb and 3 in March, with peak of 5 Feb 1st. At Breydon/Berney 5 Jan, 2 Feb and 4 March. Elsewhere just one record, at Welney Feb 8th.

First spring migrants arrived in late March at Cley 21st, Burnham Norton 30th and Welney 31st. Lighter than usual spring passage during April/May, peak counts: 4 Berney April 5th and 28th, 3 Welney 24th and 3 Breydon May 11th. Elsewhere 1-2 at Ousemouth, Snettisham, Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Burnham Norton, Holkham, Blakeney GM, Cley, Buckenham and Lakenheath Washes, with latest at Berney and Welney May 22nd.

Return passage commenced with 2 Cley June 15th after which reports almost daily until mid-Oct. Peak counts at most consistent sites:

	<i>Jun</i>		<i>Jul</i>		<i>Aug</i>		<i>Sep</i>		<i>Oct</i>	
	<i>16-30</i>		<i>1-15</i>	<i>16-31</i>	<i>1-15</i>	<i>16-31</i>	<i>1-15</i>	<i>16-30</i>	<i>1-15</i>	<i>16-31</i>
Snettisham	-	-	-	2	14	1	10	22	20	-
Titchwell	2	2	2	3	5	8	13	22	27	2
Cley	9	6	6	8	3	8	13	7	1	2
Cantley BF	-	-	-	-	4	10	4	1	4	-

Gatherings of 14 Ousemouth Scpt 12th and peaks at Breydon/Berney of 6 Aug and Scpt, and 5 Oct were notable. Otherwise just 1-2 at 9 coastal and 4 inland sites until end of Oct with late migrants in early Nov at Ousemouth, Holme (2) and Welney.

Towards year end wintering birds again at Titchwell with 4 regularly Nov, 5 Dec and peak 8 Nov 26th. Also at Breydon/Berney 3 Nov and single Dec, but no records from elsewhere.

Redshank

*Tringa totanus*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; declining breeder in some areas*  
Monthly max at main and most regularly counted sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Terrington	153	511	443	542	236	-	1072	652	872	864	294	327
Ousemouth	144	-	-	332	9	-	113	572	904	751	348	52
Snettisham	-	196	285	250	36	-	350	1655	1900	540	20	911
Holme	102	211	123	84	20	13	9	16	89	246	101	165
Scolt Brancaster Hbr	496	405	365	198	131	146	459	977	734	484	498	487
Blakeney Hbr	145	96	-	-	-	-	-	139	73	134	158	221
Breydon/Berney	860	732	1061	740	120	161	478	883	1014	1000	720	697

*National importance (winter): 1100*

Poorer coverage produced a total of only 506-508 breeding pairs: Wash - Snettisham 77; north coast - Holme 15, Titchwell 15, Brancaster GM 14, Scolt Head 29, Holkham NNR 115, Cley 28, Salthouse 14; east coast/Broads - Breydon 6-8, Berney 60, Cantley/Buckenham 49; Fens - Welney 83 (fledged 80 young), King's Lynn BF 1. No other inland records.

At Snettisham a near albino March 14th, and a leucistic variant on Oct 14th at Wolferton.

Greenshank

*Tringa nebularia*

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn; scarce in winter*  
Early in year only recorded from north-west at Hunstanton, Holme, Thornham, Titchwell, Scolt Head and Burnham Overy Hbr. Most sightings of 1-2 but up to 4 at Titchwell during Jan and 5 Jan 18th.

Two Welney March 11th and another Sheringham March 15th may have been first spring migrants but passage slow until mid-April after which many records of 1-5 with larger counts of 11 Welney April 28th and 8 on 29th. Spring movement accelerated in May with peak counts 16 Breydon/Berney, 8 Cley, 6 Buckenham, 5 Titchwell and 3 Welney, and many records of 1-2 individuals. Mobile and vocal movements of 7 north Rockland Broad 7th and 13 north-west UEA Broad 18th were notable. One in display flight Cley May 25th (AMS) was unusual.

June reports of 1-2 at Ousemouth, Snettisham, Heacham, Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Cley, Hickling Broad and Berney may have been late spring birds or early returning individuals. By last week, however, autumn return passage clearly underway with peaks of 5 Scolt Head 24th, 4 Ousemouth 27th and 7 Berney 30th.

Autumn passage heavier with peaks at most regular and well-watched localities:

	Jul			Aug			Sep			Oct		
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31
Snettisham	-	5	4	-	32	14	10	20	15	9	3	-
Titchwell	4	10	11	30	12	19	20	37	29	30	6	13
Scolt /Brancaster Hbr	3	25	9	8	53	40	37	49	23	14	15	4
Cley	4	8	3	10	6	17	9	12	23	-	-	1
Breydon/Berney	10	7	14	6	9	15	11	22	2	6	3	-
Cantley BF	-	-	1	6	8	14	7	1	1	2	-	-

Elsewhere largest counts: Terrington/Ongar Hill max 99 July, 121 Aug and 85 Sept, Stiffkey Fen 24 Aug 18th, Burnham Norton 51 and Wells Hbr 27 Aug. and Holkham 39 Sept, with 32 other sites recording smaller numbers during July-Oct.

Lingering birds in Nov at Snettisham (2), Holme (3), Titchwell (2), Scolt Head (2), Breydon and Whitlingham Lane GP with few records late in month presumably relating to wintering individuals. Dec records from Holme (2), Stiffkey 20th, and Morston 20th and 29th.

Green Sandpiper

*Tringa ochropus*

*Double passage migrant, most in autumn; small numbers over-winter*

Unobtrusive in winter months, small numbers continue to over-winter with singles in Jan/ Feb at Cantley BF, Chedgrave, Felbrigg Park, Flitcham, Honingham, Langley Marshes, Methwold, Pensthorpe, Sculthorpe and Strumpshaw, with 2 Whitlingham Lane GP.

First spring migrants difficult to ascertain but bird at Watlington March 7th followed by typically light passage until early May: max counts 3 Cley March 10th and 4 Wissington BF April 1st and Hockwold Sluice 19th. Otherwise 1-2 at 20 inland and 3 coastal localities in March/April. Late spring birds in early May at Salthouse 3rd, Holme 3rd and 6th, Sheringham 6th, and East Ruston 6th, 9th and finally last individual of spring 14th.

Autumn passage commenced Wissington BF June 13th and Cley and King's Lynn BF 15th with birds widespread by month end. As usual many more birds than in spring evidenced by peak counts from Cantley BF, the premier autumn site:

	Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
	16-30	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-30	1-15	16-31
Cantley BF	3	15	28	90	46	30	13	13	1



The peak count of 90 Aug 7th coincided with a large influx of Wood Sandpipers at same site and is the highest count ever in Norfolk. Elsewhere widespread reports of smaller numbers in late June/July when double-figure counts: 15 King's Lynn BF June 27th and 13 July 2nd, 10 Wissington BF July 4th, 21 Snettisham and 10 Berney both 17th, and 20 Titchwell 29th. Passage still heavy during Aug/early Sept when, alongside many reports of 1-10, the following larger gatherings: 14 East Ruston Aug 4th, 12 Cley 6th, 10 Wissington BF 21st, 11 Breydon/Berney 22nd and 12 Breydon Sept 2nd.

Numbers dropped steadily during second half of Sept but protracted nature of autumn withdrawal ensured 1-2 remained at 7 sites until at least mid-Oct after which late migrants confused with birds remaining for winter. During mid-Oct to Dec recorded at the following localities (singles unless otherwise stated): Berney, Briston, Brundall, Cantley BF (2), East Winch Common, Felbrigg Park, Happisburgh, Hempstead Marshes, Hockwold, Holkham, Holme (2), Hunworth, Middleton GP (2), North Piekenham STW, North Wootton, Stody, Strumpshaw, Swaffham STW, Titchwell and Whitlingham Lane GP.

**Wood Sandpiper**

*Tringa glareola*

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn*

First of year Hiekling Broad April 30th followed by light spring passage May 1st-29th with peak 3 Berney May 11th/12th and 19th; otherwise 1-2 Buekenham, Cley, East Ruston, Holme, Horsey Mere, Lakenheath Washes, Salthouse, Sheringham and Stiffkey Fen.

Return passage commenced Cley June 15th with 2 there by 29th and 4 Berney 30th. During impressive autumn peaks 17 Cantley BF Aug 6th and 24 7th, 12 Titchwell Sept 4th and 9 Cley Aug 4th.

Peak counts from most consistently counted key sites show clear influxes in early Aug and early Sept:

	<i>Jun</i>		<i>Jul</i>		<i>Aug</i>			<i>Sep</i>			<i>Oct</i>
	<i>21-30</i>	<i>1-10</i>	<i>11-20</i>	<i>21-31</i>	<i>1-10</i>	<i>11-20</i>	<i>21-31</i>	<i>1-10</i>	<i>11-20</i>	<i>21-30</i>	<i>1-10</i>
Titchwell	-	-	1	1	5	2	-	12	2	3	3
Cley	2	2	1	1	9	5	4	-	-	-	-
Breydon/Berney	4	-	-	1	-	1	5	6	2	-	-
Cantley BF	-	-	-	1	24	2	3	1	-	-	-

Elsewhere 6 East Ruston Aug 3rd and 5 18th/19th. The following 13 localities held 1-2 during protracted autumn passage July-Sept: King's Lynn BF, Holme, Seolt Head, Stiffkey Fen, Salthouse, Weybourne, Buekenham, Strumpshaw, Heywood (Diss), Lakenheath Washes, Nar Valley Fisheries, Welney and Wissington BF. Final records of year in early Oct: 3 Titchwell 1st-3rd and singles there and Welney 4th/5th.

**Common Sandpiper**

*Actitis hypoleucos*

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn; rare in winter; has bred*

First migrants of spring at Holme and Whitlingham Lane GP April 12th; by end of month records from 13 sites, all singles except 2 Ousemouth 25th. Spring passage accelerated in May with larger counts of 5 Eccles 3rd, 8 Seolt Head 6th, 8 Breydon/Berney 10th, 7 Seolt Head and 6 Hiekling Broad 16th, 9 Berney 18th, 14 East Ruston 18th/19th, 13 Berney and 7 Eccles 19th, and 9 Cley 20th. Many sightings of 1-4 birds from both coastal and inland sites.



(Corn Bunting – although declining nationally, this species maintains a foothold in West Norfolk (*R Tidman*).

B Brambling – less common this spring than in recent years (*R Tidman*).







Rough-legged Buzzard – one of the well-watched birds at Massingham Heath (*I Leach*); Great-spotted Cuckoo – a major east coast “twitch” one day in late March (*N Bowman*).

Spoonbills – this group at Cley in June raised hopes of possible future breeding (*D Nye*).







Laughing Gull – one of the highlights of the spring, visiting Cley almost daily during May and June  
(above J V Bhalerao, below D Nye).





Short-toed Lark – an almost annual spring vagrant, seen here at Sheringham in May (*I Leach*).

Ring Ousel – a female attracted to a garden pond at Eccles in May (*N Bowman*).





Spring passage continued until June 7th with summering bird Titchwell June 1st-24th. Difficult to differentiate midsummer records from start of autumn passage but 2 Scolt Head June 12th, and birds at Cley 15th and Snettisham 16th, with 5 further singles by month end.

During spectacular autumn passage peak counts at key sites:

	Jul			Aug			Sep			Oct
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10
Snettisham	-	2	1	8	17	5	1	-	2	1
Titchwell	2	7	5	20	7	5	2	4	2	-
Scolt/Branecaster Hbr	-	1	-	12	54	5	-	-	-	-
Cley	1	1	5	50	3	2	2	2	-	-
Breydon/Berney	-	14	-	14	1	12	6	-	-	-
Cantley BF	1	-	10	60	26	12	7	4	-	-
Welney	-	1	4	6	5	1	1	2	2	1
East Ruston	2	-	26	52	-	-	-	-	-	-

In July other counts of 12 Ousemouth 18th and 11 Wissington BF 25th. Clear arrival in early Aug when large counts daily: *2nd* 52 East Ruston; *3rd* 37 East Ruston, 24 Scolt Head/Branecaster Hbr; *4th* 50 Cley, 38 East Ruston, 20 Titchwell; *5th* 35 Cley; *6th* 22 East Ruston; *7th* 60 Cantley BF. Later in month significant counts of 23 Ousemouth 11th and 15th, 33 Scolt Head/Branecaster Hbr 12th increasing to 54 on 13th, 22 Cantley BF 18th increasing to 26 on 19th, and a further 19 counts of 10-20 during Aug/Sept.

A few stragglers lingered into Oct, the latest at Ousemouth 15th and Swangey GP 17th.

## Turnstone

*Arenaria interpres*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; some summering non-breeders*

Monthly peaks at most regularly counted key sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	-	-	112	46	54	7	91	454	13	107	-	20
Heacham/Hunstanton	30	65	50	100	76	-	-	14	66	101	133	86
Holme	30	12	63	75	17	1	-	36	54	128	29	56
Titchwell	-	264	60	-	72	6	57	30	-	96	70	-
Scolt/Branecaster Hbr	210	181	128	200	275	80	205	396	320	270	156	169
Stiffkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	51	56	28	71
Blakeney Hbr	84	44	-	-	-	-	-	117	59	75	35	38
Breydon	6	9	13	18	13	1	7	27	23	9	12	12

National importance (winter): 640

All other counts of 20 or more: *Jan* 63 West Runton, 52 Thornham; *Feb* 100 Thornham, 80 King's Lynn, 26 Eeels; *March* 48 Beeston Bump, 38 West Runton; *April* 112 Terrington, 44 Cromer, 43 Eeels; *May* 53 Wells Hbr, 20 Ousemouth and Salthouse; *Aug* 20 Wells Hbr; *Oct* 31 Weybourne; *Dec* 23 Cromer.

Inland, one spring record of 3 Strumpshaw April 27th. Also a succession of early autumn records: Welney Aug 5th, Westmere Aug 6th and 2 Cantley BF Aug 22nd-24th, increasing to 4 25th/26th, 3 27th with 2 remaining until 28th.

An example of Turnstones' adaptability was provided at Waxham, where 75 fed on arable fields with Sanderlings Feb 25th and 27th.



## Red-necked Phalarope

*Phalaropus lobatus*

### *Scarce passage migrant*

An excellent year with at least 8 records including several long-staying juvs. In spring Cley/Salthouse June 11th, followed by an early autumn adult Welney Aug 7th. Subsequently juvs Cley Aug 17th/18th, 20th-26th and Sept 17th-30th, Cantley BF Aug 17th-20th, Scolt Head Aug 21st and Berney Sept 27th-29th. The year ended with the latest ever county record at King's Fen East Ruston Nov 7th-14th.

## Grey Phalarope

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

### *Scarce autumn passage migrant; rare at other times*

First of autumn at Titchwell Sept 26th-30th followed by 2 records Oct 4th, on sea Mundesley and briefly on tidal pool Scolt Head. No further records until singles Cley/Salthouse Oct 31st/Nov 1st, on sea Sheringham Nov 9th/10th and finally Cley again (on sea) Nov 10th.

In addition an unidentified phalarope Snettisham Sept 10th.

## Pomarine Skua

*Stercorarius pomarinus*

### *Passage migrant during autumn; small numbers at other times*

In first half of year only records Salthouse Jan 17th and 2 Cley Feb 7th.

First in autumn during Aug when north Hunstanton 7th and 8th, east Sheringham 8th, 2 east Cley 9th, and one Cley, 2 east Sheringham, 3 West Runton and 2 east Cromer all 10th. Recorded on 5 additional dates during the month with 1-2 Hunstanton, Holme, Cley, Sheringham, West Runton and Horsey. Present offshore on just 5 dates in Sept with most 19th when 4 east Cley and 6 east Salthouse. Only others during month at Scolt Head where 2 west 3rd, and singles west 11th and east 30th, and one Cley 26th. In Oct numbers small apart from 4th and 5th. On 4th 10 Hunstanton, 21 west Holme, 15 west Scolt Head, 15 Sheringham and 7 Eccles. On 5th 4 west Scolt Head, 2 Blakeney Point, 8 Sheringham, east Overstrand and 2 west Mundesley. Apart from 3 Happisburgh 19th all other records of 1-2 on 11 other dates.

Highest counts of autumn during Nov when min 675 birds recorded offshore; best days 6th and 17th-19th. On 6th record numbers moved mostly east and the biggest site count was



Pomarine Skua (P Jones)

nearly double the previous record day total with 7 Lynn Point, 28 north Hunstanton, 18 Holme, 14 Brancaster, 16 Scolt Head, 300 Cley, 18 Weybourne, 238 Sheringham and 12 south Horsey. On 17th 62 west Holme, 30 east Cley, 172 east Sheringham, 53 Cromer and 40 Mundesley. On 18th 50 east 25 west Sheringham with 15 Mundesley 19th. Also during month one inland Welney 14th.

Stragglers continued to be reported during Dec when 4 east Sheringham and 2 south Winterton 19th, and singles Holme 5th, Sheringham 13th and 15th, Mundesley 15th and Horsey 27th.

## **Arctic Skua**

*Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

No records until light spring passage when singles west Overstrand and Horsey May 30th and in June singles Cley and Mundesley 5th and Cromer 8th, and 2 Mundesley 10th. One Winterton June 30th was probably first of autumn, but no others until July when singles Titchwell 11th, Scolt Head 15th, Cley 16th and 2 Snettisham 17th. Birds daily along coast from 20th, but numbers low and best counts 5 Winterton 21st, 5 Scolt Head and 8 Cley 28th, and 6 Hunstanton 29th. Also during month 2 inland records with one south over Brancaster July 16th and east Langham 23rd.

First notable movements of autumn during Aug when on 10th 17 west 16 east Scolt Head, 60 east Cley, 85 east 4 west Sheringham, 30 West Runton, 99 east Cromer, 65 east 2 west Overstrand and 82 east Mundesley. This was followed by further good movements 19th and 20th; on 19th 14 Hunstanton, 200 east Cley and 59 Sheringham; on 20th 40 Cley, 40 east 12 west Sheringham and 20 Cromer. A lack of onshore gales during Sept resulted in no large movements with highest counts 12 Cley 12th, 16 east 11 west Scolt Head 15th and 12 Horsey 19th. The first few days of Oct saw some larger numbers especially on 4th and 5th. On 4th 113 west Holme, 43 east Titchwell, 119 west 30 east Scolt Head, 69 west Cley, 150 Sheringham, 25 east Cromer, 35 Eeoles and 31 east Mundesley. There were fewer next day but still 27 west Scolt Head, 20 west Cley, 14 west 4 east Sheringham, 4 west 4 east West Runton and 7 Mundesley.

Good numbers were again noted offshore in Nov when on 6th 8 Hunstanton, 11 west Holme, 11 west 9 east Scolt Head, 30 Cley, 30 east Sheringham and 6 east Mundesley. Other counts during rest of month included 15 west Sheringham 10th and on 14th 32 west Holme, 12 Titchwell, 2 Sheringham and singles Hunstanton and Cromer. One Holkham Bay Dec 12th was the month's only record and last of year.

## **Long-tailed Skua**

*Stercorarius longicaudus*

### ***Autumn passage migrant increasingly identified in recent years***

An average year with most records of juvs or imms. First in Aug when west Mundesley 10th, 2 adults east Cley 15th, east Cley 19th, east Cley, 7 east Sheringham and east Cromer 20th, west Holme and Cley 21st, and Cley 22nd. In Sept recorded on 9 dates when Holme, Warham Greens and adult Cley 12th, east Sheringham 15th, Blakeney Point 18th, 2 east Cley, east Salthouse, 4 west Sheringham and 2 south Eeoles (one adult) 19th, 2 Cley and east West Runton 20th, roosting in a field Waxham 22nd, Eeoles 23rd/24th, adult Titchwell and Waxham 26th. In Oct only recorded on 4th and 5th. On 4th 12 west Scolt Head (one adult), 2 west Cley, 3 west Weybourne, 7 east 3 west Sheringham and 2 Eeoles. On 5th west Scolt Head, Blakeney Point, 3 Cley and singles Sheringham and Eeoles. A late flurry of birds Nov 6th when singles Hunstanton and Holme, 5 west Cley, 4 east Weybourne and 2 east Sheringham.

## Great Skua

*Catharacta skua*

*Passage migrant mostly in autumn; small numbers at other times*

All records in first winter period in Jan when singles Titchwell 3rd, Brancaster 11th, and Blakeney Point and Cley 17th. Spring passage light with singles Cley and Salthouse April 27th, west Overstrand May 30th, west Sheringham and east West Runton June 6th.

First of autumn during July when singles east Sheringham 11th, west Cley 12th, east Scolt Head 21st, and found dead Breydon 31st. Small numbers during Aug with most 19th when 5 east Cley and 7 east Sheringham, and 20th when singles east and west Scolt Head, 2 Cley and 4 west 3 east Sheringham. A lack of onshore gales during Sept resulted in low numbers, best counts 22 west Holme 6th, 7 east 2 west Scolt Head and 8 Sheringham 15th, 8 Cley 19th, 5 Cley and 9 Sheringham 20th, and 9 west Cley 30th. Apart from 4th and 5th numbers during rest of Oct small. On 4th record numbers moved west off Scolt Head where 336 including one group of 40; elsewhere 70 Hunstanton (0945-1145 hrs), 60+ west Holme, 101 west 2 east Cley, 10 west Weybourne, 70 Sheringham and 12 Eccles. Numbers smaller on 5th but still 62 west Scolt Head, 50 Cley, 10 west Weybourne, 8 west Cromer and 10 west Mundesley. Other counts during rest of month included 10 Titchwell 1st, 6 Hunstanton and 5 Horsey 2nd, 15 west Scolt Head 3rd and 4 Eccles 19th.

Recorded throughout Nov with most 6th when 52 south-west Hunstanton, 64 west Holme, 51 west Scolt Head, 40 east Cley, 16 east Weybourne and 26 Sheringham. Also during month 10 west Cley 7th, 8 south-west Hunstanton and 22 west Holme 14th, and 10 Cley and 42 Sheringham 17th. In Dec only record 2 east Sheringham 15th.

## Mediterranean Gull

*Larus melanocephalus*

*Regular all-year visitor in increasing numbers, often remaining for weeks; recent breeder*

Another good year for this attractive gull with records from 35 coastal/near coastal and 13 inland localities. At Blakeney Point 21 individuals were recorded during the breeding season including 3 adult pairs; one pair nested and hatched chicks but success unknown. At another site one pair hatched 3 young which survived for about one week before vanishing. More promising was an adult with a juv Holme July 17th and an adult accompanied by a food-begging juv Winterton July 31st. Surely these birds were raised within the county? Further juvs noted in Aug at Breydon 13th, west at Weybourne 23rd and Pentney GP 24th.

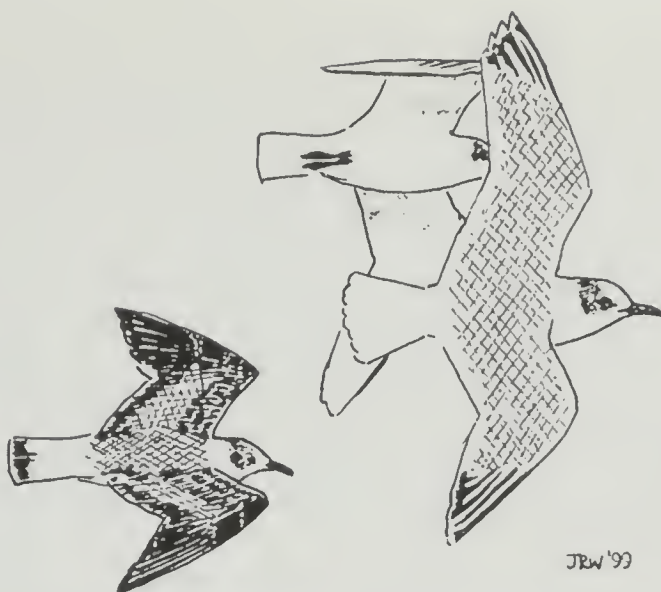
The following table shows min number of birds present each month though true numbers remain difficult to determine. The usual spring influx of 1st-summer birds was particularly evident at Breydon and Scolt Head, the latter site recording at least 13 individuals during May.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Juv	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	
1st-year	10	9	12	14	21	6	3	4	5	5	4	3
2nd-year	4	7	5	5	3	1	1	4	3	6	3	4
Adult	13	19	15	11	14	11	14	13	11	17	19	13
Unaged	5	4	-	8	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	5
Total	32	39	32	38	38	18	20	24	25	28	26	25

Favoured sites were Heacham/Hunstanton, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Blakeney/Cley, Cromer/Overstrand and Yarmouth/Breydon. Fewer records were received from Sheringham BO possibly due to the demise of the Sheringham/Cromer sewage outfalls.

Notable counts were 21 Yarmouth Jan 21st and Feb 23rd, with 17 there Oct 27th, 9 Scolt Head May 14th, 8 Breydon May 1st, 6 Titchwell April 26th, 6 Heacham South Beach March 15th and 5 Overstrand late Feb.





Mediterranean Gulls (*J R williamson*)

Inland: 1st-winter Harpley Common Jan 23rd, adult Filby Broad Feb 2nd, Docking Feb 15th, adult Roughton March 12th, 1st-winter Welney March 21st/22nd, 1st-winter Lakenheath Washes and adult Halvergate Marshes March 28th, adult Hickling Broad April 9th, adult Langham April 14th, 1st-summer Berney May 17th and 23rd, 2 adults Northrepps May 18th, 2 adults Hickling Broad May 19th, adult Northrepps Aug 8th, 2nd-summer West Winch Aug 12th, juv Pentney GP Aug 24th, 2nd-winter Welney Oct 1st/2nd and an adult Wroxham Broad Dec 13th.

### Laughing Gull

*Larus atricilla*

#### *Vagrant from North America*

A handsome summer adult initially sighted flying west at Beeston Bump April 18th (GBB GED) was one of the highlights of the spring and was surely last year's bird returning. It subsequently spent the majority of the next 2 months in the gull colony on Blakeney Point, visiting Cley on a daily basis until June 23rd (MY-P *et al*), most often coming to breed at the village green. The last sighting came from Lynn Point June 27th (ADC).

### Little Gull

*Larus minutus*

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

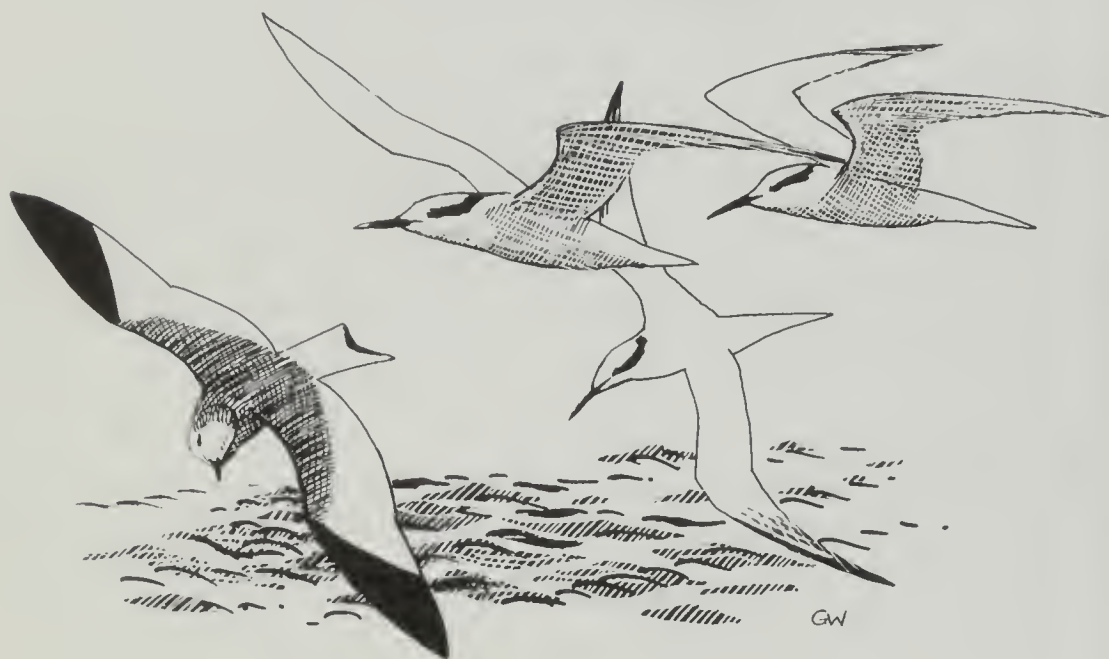
Regular off Titchwell/Brancaster in Jan, max 30 (adults) 19th. Otherwise just 1-4 at 6 coastal sites and more unusually at this time of year a 1st-winter inland at Welney Jan 3rd. An increase in Feb, up to 15 off Brancaster and at Sheringham 330 (318 west 12 east) 7 dates, max 100 west Feb 7th and 10th. Also 50 Cley Feb 7th and 17 west Overstrand 3 dates.

A 1st-winter Pentney GP March 25th/26th was probably the first real 'spring' bird. Pentney saw 3 April 6th and Welney recorded up to 3 on 11 dates during April with 1-2 at a further 10 localities. The usual build-up of 1st-summer took place at Titchwell May/June, with peaks of 17 May 24th and 14 June 1st. Elsewhere, small numbers of mostly 1st-summer, 1-4 at 12 localities during May and June.

An early movement of adults July 12th when 9 east Scolt Head and 2 Cley. First juv Walcott Aug 17th. Unexceptional numbers July-Sept, highest counts 18 west Sheringham Aug 10th, 12 west there Aug 28th and 16 west there Sept 30th.

Large numbers appeared off many coastal localities Oct 4th-Nov 21st. Birds fed daily offshore from Scolt Head Oct 9th-Nov 13th, with some 3376 'bird days' recorded during the period. A massive 1035 feeding offshore Nov 5th becomes the first four-figure count in Norfolk, though the observer thought the true total was probably much higher as there were many white specks several miles offshore! Other peaks at Scolt Head 385 Oct 12th, 455 Nov 3rd and 820 Nov 6th. Sheringham amassed 859 'bird days' Oct 4th-Nov 20th, the majority moving east with peak numbers of 147 Oct 17th, 100+ Oct 19th and 172 (and 7 west) Nov 6th. Other counts of note: Oct 120 Hunstanton 12th with 61 there 13th; on 16th 50 east Titchwell, 156 (139 south) Horsey (0850-1210 hrs) and 161 south Yarmouth; 107 south Eccles 18th; on 19th 120 Hunstanton, 100 Beeston Bump, 450 east Overstrand (0850-1050 hrs), 100 east Mundesley and 71 south Eccles; Nov on 6th 177 (97 east) Holme, 100+ Cley, 86 east Mundesley, 246 south Horsey in 2 hrs; 100 east Salthouse 12th, 50 Cley 18th and 123 west there 21st.

Few birds in Dec: 4 Cley 5th, 6 Sheringham and 4 Mundesley 15th.



Sabine's Gull with Sandwich Terns (G Wright)

### Sabine's Gull

*Larus sabini*

*Almost annual but scarce autumn vagrant from High Arctic; extremely rare in spring*

Just 2 sightings, making it the poorest year since 1992 although unsubstantiated reports were received of at least 4 other individuals; both were adults at Cley on Sept 28th (SJMGE *et al*) and Oct 4th (RFP CEW). The former bird gave prolonged views offshore and was seen to attempt to parasitise Sandwich Terns, Gannets and even an Arctic Skua!

### Black-headed Gull

*Larus ridibundus*

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

Breeding pairs recorded as follows (success unknown unless stated): Titchwell 400, Scolt Head 487 (400 young fledged), Holkham NNR 185, Blakeney Point 3000+, Cley 28, Salthouse 33, Kelling WM 15 (min 10 young), Berney 6, Strumpshaw 150, Pentney/Blackborough GP 100+ (poor success), Middleton GP 20 (good success), Wisington BF 20 and Welney one (unsuccessful). Information was lacking from many sites.

Monthly roost counts at selected sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Lynn Point	8800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6950	-	14000	15000
Thornham	2750	2100	1100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600
Scolt Head	5750	3500	1175	1250	608	1245	792	8300	6500	8500	-	-

Other significant roost counts 5000 Heacham South Beach Jan 9th with 12,500 there March 15th, 6500 Welney Feb 19th, 4000 Roekland Broad Feb 23rd and 2000 March 23rd, 10,000 Wroxham Broad Nov 11th and 2000 Filby Broad Dec 18th.

Early spring movements off Walcott where 1000+ east March 12th and at Sheringham where 900 east March 13th and 200 east March 27th. Return passage began June 3rd when 425 west Scolt Head, this site recording 24,985 west between this date and Oct 26th; numbers peaked during Oct and included a massive 18,100 west Oct 6th, probably the largest movement recorded in the county. This date also saw 15,000+ west Cley and 2200 west Sheringham. Further movements included 1250 west Holme Oct 16th and 2000 west Mundesley Nov 7th.

An influx of gulls at Titchwell/Braceaster during late Feb brought 3000+ 20th and 8000 Holme-Scolt Head 25th. Other large counts were 5000-10,000 'small gulls' offshore Yarmouth Jan 2nd, 1000 Saddlebow Jan 24th, 1500 Blackborough End Tip March 13th, 1200 following plough East Harling Heath Aug 23rd and 1200 Saddlebow Dec 24th.

The long-staying leucistie bird was present at Yarmouth seafront early in the year and returned from Oct 27th at least; also a partial albino at Roekland St Mary Jan 26th and a leucistie bird there Dec 19th. A juv with an extremely elongated upper mandible was present at Whitlingham Lane GP July 31st.

Common Gull

*Larus canus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor with non-breeders remaining all summer; spasmodic breeder*

Breeding recorded at Blakeney Point 6 pairs and Scolt Head where 3 pairs fledged 5 young. Monthly roost counts at selected sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Lynn Point	3200	-	-	-	-	-	44	-	1500	-	2000	-
Thornham	4200	300	1300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2800
Scolt Head	4500	4200	-	1150	750	150	150	1250	3500	4200	-	-

Roost counts elsewhere: 5000 Heacham South Beach Jan 9th and 10,000 there March 15th, 750 Welney Feb 24th and 320 there March 22nd, 1000 Wroxham Broad Nov 19th and 350 Filby Broad Dec 24th.

Spring exodus noted at Sheringham where 350 east April 2nd and 100 east next day. First obvious return movement was 105 west Scolt Head July 3rd; another 55 west there July 13th preceded a large arrival from Aug 13th. As with Black-headed Gull Oct 6th saw a marked westerly passage along the north coast evidenced by 2210 Scolt Head, 1000+ Cley and 300 Sheringham. After this, only visible migration noted at Scolt Head where 210 west Oct 10th and 410 west Nov 10th.

Elsewhere significant counts of daytime flocks were 600 Holkham Jan 4th, 300 Titchwell



April 5th, 115 Lakenheath Washes April 11th, 114 1st-summer's Holkham and 97 Titchwell  
May 16th, 3800 Titchwell Dec 16th and 1000 King's Lynn Docks Dec 19th.

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

*Larus fuscus*

#### ***Passage migrant and migratory breeder; increasing in winter***

A massive increase in breeding pairs at Blakeney Point where 120 pairs compared with 7 pairs in 1998. Yarmouth likewise saw an increase with 10 pairs, all nesting on flat roofs, and 2 pairs nested on flat roofs at Gorleston. At Welney one pair was nest building and copulating for a spell in early May and one pair was prospecting at Pentney GP during April but both these moved on. Breeding data incomplete.

Large gatherings noted throughout the year with typically the main concentration in Jan/Feb being in south of county. Numbers low in north-west and probably elsewhere at this time. Some increase in north-west during March further augmented in April when seemingly more birds along the coast. Numbers generally peaked in Aug/Sept, then a gradual decline to much reduced winter figures with no large counts in Quidenham/East Harling area at close of year.

Significant counts included: *Jan* 5 Heacham South Beach 9th, 744 Quidenham 15th, 11 Welney 23rd, 16 (roost flight) Lynn Point 24th, 68 Fersfield Airfield 31st; *Feb* 330 Quidenham 2nd, 14 Welney 21st, 140 East Harling 26th; *March* 40 Blackborough End Tip 20th, 25 Welney 21st; *April* 39 Titchwell 5th, 65 Fustyweed GP (Elsing) 9th, 600 Quidenham and 100 Blackborough End Tip 15th, 79 Eeles Heath 18th; *May* 460 West Harling 2nd, 60 Wickhampton Marshes 9th, 75 Scolt Head 13th, 80 Snettisham 16th; *June* 125 Thetford Nunnery Lakes 11th; *July* 55 Cley 3rd, 93 Scolt Head 16th, 568 (roost flight) Lynn Point 21st, 150 north at dusk Wissington BF 25th; *Aug* 360 East Harling 8th, 280 north-west Wereham 20th, 500 Banham 23rd, 1000 Saddlebow 24th and 26th, 1590 (roost flight) Lynn Point and 220 Brettenham 27th; *Sept* 900 Saddlebow 10th, 740 West Somerton/Horsey and 200 Happisburgh Common 11th, 450 near Caister Castle 17th, 199 Whitlingham Lane GP 27th; *Oct* 400 Saddlebow 1st, 400 East Harling 19th, 200 Snetterton 21st, 72 Breydon 31st; *Nov* 310 Saddlebow 2nd, 150+ (roost flight) Lynn Point 10th, 220 Lopham Fen 16th, 100 Snetterton 26th; *Dec* 40 Saddlebow 11th and max 20 Titchwell.

Generally little passage reported but birds moving west along coast in spring evidenced by 10 Overstrand March 1st with 6 March 2nd, 2 Sheringham March 6th and 30 May 22nd. and 149 Scolt Head on 4 dates April 22nd-May 19th. Later in year 32 west Scolt Head July 3rd, 35 east Sheringham Aug 29th, 120 in from north-east Sheringham Sept 19th and 4 west Scolt Head Oct 2nd.

Records of birds showing characteristics of *L f intermedius* relatively few though all between Aug and Nov suggestive of autumn passage through the county. First Saddlebow Aug 14th where 2 Aug 27th. During Sept 4 Titchwell Sept 18th and a peak of 5+ Saddlebow Sept 30th. Saddlebow attracted 15+ Oct 6th and elsewhere in month several Breydon 31st, 5 King's Lynn 12th, 2 Pentney GP 1st, 2 Titchwell 10th and one Blackborough End Tip 2nd. Recorded at Saddlebow for much of Nov with max 5 on 15th.

### **Herring Gull**

*Larus argentatus*

#### **Herring Gull *L (a) argenteus/argentatus***

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

Breeding information received from 4 sites: Titchwell pair fledged young, Scolt Head 5 pairs, Blakeney Point 180 pairs (increase on last year) and Yarmouth an increase to 31 pairs all on roof tops.

Good numbers throughout the year, probably more birds present during winter/spring. A huge influx along the Holme to Scolt Head coastline in late Feb, with 9850 on 25th, along with other Laridae. These were feeding on American razorshells that were wrecked during a combination of strong northerly winds and cold weather. The following table shows monthly peaks at selected sites. The Lynn Point numbers refer to a roost flight and the Holme figures refer to a high tide roost.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lynn Point	434	-	-	-	-	-	137	400	-	-	550	-
Snettisham	-	-	400	420	1250	-	310	-	-	-	-	-
Holme	2100	850	1300	275	-	280	-	240	700	900	1720	-
Thornham	-	410	676	712	250	165	-	-	-	-	358	-
Scolt/Braceaster Hbr	1270	3100	60	1100	570	130	130	505	775	350	1800	-

Other large or significant numbers included 80 north-east Welney Jan 10th, max 700 Titchwell March, 500 roosting Heacham South Beach March 15th, max 2900 Titchwell April, 200 Blackborough End Tip April 15th, 415 Titchwell May 16th and 314 there June 13th, 500 Blackborough End Tip Nov 20th with 820 there Dec 11th, 225 Titchwell Dec 16th and 125 Attlebridge Dec 30th.

Coastal movements included: at Overstrand 800 west (all day total) Feb 4th, 139 west (one hr) Feb 8th and 350 west (1.5 hrs) March 1st; 150 west Sheringham March 20th and 150 east there April 2nd; 120 west Scolt Head April 14th, and a spectacular 7000 west Holme (0800-1000 hrs) Dec 5th which appears to be the largest movement recorded in the county.

The nominate race *argentatus* seems to suffer from under-recording. Birds presumably widespread along the coast during winter months though no real indication of numbers. Several were at Breydon Oct 31st and at Scolt Head 30+ adult/older immes Nov 21st possibly suggesting an influx about this time when the county also saw a sprinkling of Glaucous Gulls. Inland records from Blackborough End Tip where 2 Jan 24th and 12+ Dec 11th.

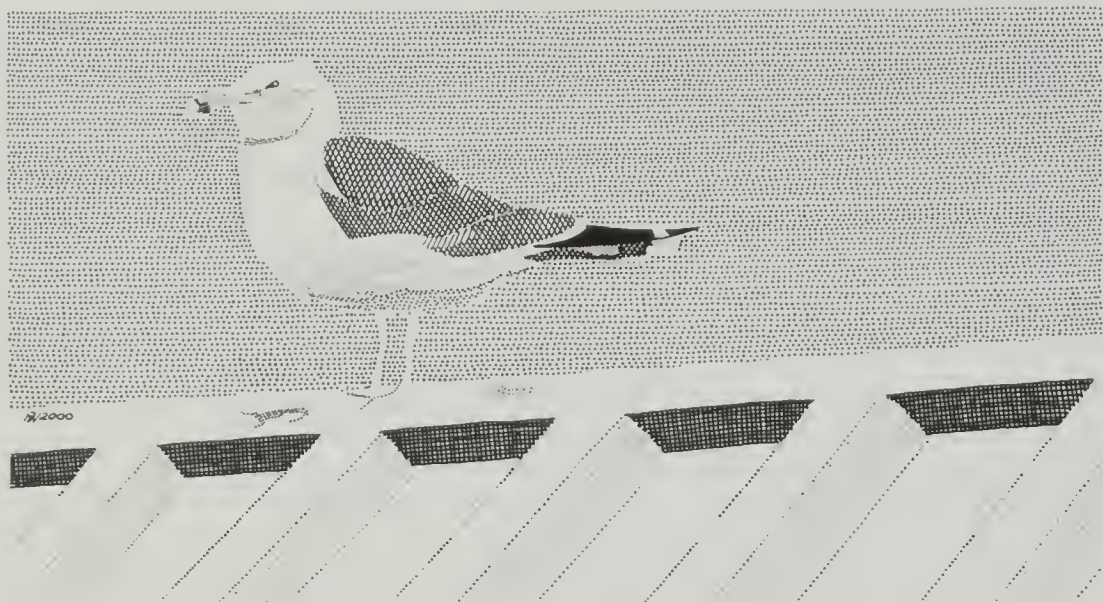
**Yellow-legged Gull *L (a) michahellis***  
**Increasing visitor from southern Europe**

The best year to date for this 'soon to be' species probably due in part to greater awareness of its field characteristics. There does, however, appear to have been at least some genuine increase over the last 2 or 3 years.

Monthly totals as follows, though true numbers are difficult to assess:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Juv	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-
1st-year	3	-	1	1	1	-	2	3	8	9	-	2
2nd-year	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	6	3	6	1	1
3rd-year	-	-	-	-	1	1	4	9	5	5	3	-
4th-year/Adult	4	2	1	-	-	1	8	31	17	18	11	6
Unaged	1	3	1	-	-	1	5	-	4	-	1	-
Total	8	6	4	1	3	4	20	54	37	38	16	9

Birds were noted throughout the county with records from 45 localities. The King's Lynn area was favoured as birds joined the large flocks of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in late



Yellow-legged Gull (*P Wilson*)

summer/autumn. Traditionally July and Aug are the peak months for *michahellis* but it is clear from the table that many birds lingered well into autumn this year. The first juv was at King's Lynn Fisher Fleet July 21st.

Larger counts included 19 Saddlebow Oct 3rd, 18 Lynn Point Aug 27th, 14 Saddlebow Aug 26th and 28th with 11 there Sept 10th/11th, 7 Blackborough End Tip Oct 2nd, 6 Saddlebow Nov 2nd, 5 Whitlingham Lanc GP July 24th, 4 Breydon Aug 6th, 4 West Winch Aug 12th and 4 Titchwell Sept 18th.

### **Caspian Gull *L (a/michahellis) cachinnans***

#### ***Rare visitor from eastern Europe***

Five records this year, all of singles: adult Welney March 13th-23rd (JBK *et al*), adult Blackborough End Tip March 20th (DEB PMW), adult Saddlebow Aug 24th (PMW) and 3rd-winter there Sept 30th/Oct 1st (PMW), and 1st-winter Saxlingham Dec 27th (AMS).

### **Iceland Gull**

*Larus glaucoides*

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

A rather lacklustre year for this species, which remains an exciting find for Norfolk birders. Three typical records in late winter: 1st-winter Titchwell Feb 18th and Feb 20th/21st, 1st/2nd-winter east Overstrand Feb 22nd and 1st-winter west Beeston Bump March 1st. Later in year a 1st-winter Salthouse Nov 13th followed by a 1st-winter Scolt Head Nov 20th. It is possible the first three sightings relate to the same individual and more likely the Nov records refer to one bird.

### **Glaucous Gull**

*Larus hyperboreus*

#### ***Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers; rare in summer***

After a slow start in Jan it proved to be a reasonably good year with about 20 individuals recorded. The Titchwell-Scolt Head coast attracted at least 4 different birds Feb 11th-Feb 26th. A 1st-summer Snettisham July 17th was unusual while a 2nd-winter Saddlebow Sept 22nd was possibly the same bird. The latter was probably the 2nd-winter occasionally in the King's Lynn area from Nov. An adult Yarmouth Nov 13th was last seen Dec 5th and was the first of a small arrival in Nov.



All records listed: *Jan* 2nd-winter Holme 16th, 1st-winter Lynn Point 24th; *Feb* 1st-winter Cley 7th, adult Docking Tip 9th, 3rd-winter Titchwell/Scolt Head 11th-26th, 2nd-winter Breydon 13th, 1st-winter Titchwell/Scolt Head 13th-25th (2 1st-winter 25th), 1st-winter Docking Tip 13th-15th, 2nd-winter Titchwell/Scolt Head 23rd-26th; *March* 1st-winter Titchwell 11th, adult west Sheringham 20th; *April* adult west Burnham Overy Dunes 6th; *July* 1st-summer Snettisham 17th; *Sept* 2nd-winter Saddlebow 22nd; *Oct* adult west Blakeney Point 18th, 1st-winter Lynn Point 24th; *Nov* 2nd-winter Lynn Point 6th and 11th, adult Yarmouth area 13th-Dec 5th, 1st-winter north Mundesley 19th, 2 1st-winter Cley 19th, 1st-winter west Holme 20th, sub-adult Blackborough End Tip 20th, 3rd-winter Lynn Point 21st, adult Scolt Head 21st; *Dec* 2nd-winter Lynn Point 3rd and 12th, 2nd-winter Middleton 7th, 2nd-winter Ongar Hill 12th and 3rd-winter Lynn Point 12th.

## Great Black-backed Gull

*Larus marinus*

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

Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr (henceforth referred to as Scolt Head) was the favoured coastal site though only one count was received from Breydon this year. Attlebridge typically provided the largest inland gathering.

Notable counts: *Jan* 375 Scolt Head, 32 Welney 9th, 105 Thornham 10th, 37 (roost flight) Lynn Point 24th; *Feb* 135 Thornham 23rd, 50 Scolt Head; *March* 30 Scolt Head; *April* 37 Scolt Head, 20 Blackborough End Tip 15th; *May* 49 Scolt Head; *June* 80 Scolt Head; *July* 65 Scolt Head; *Aug* 104 (mostly imms) Cley 7th, 75 Scolt Head 11th increasing to 310 27th, 65 Thornham 24th, 104 (roost flight) Lynn Point 27th; *Sept* 385 Scolt Head 12th, 111 Titchwell; *Oct* 100 Blackborough End Tip 2nd, 420 Scolt Head 9th, 30 Thornham 10th, 173 Breydon 31st, 60 Titchwell; *Nov* 120 Blackborough End Tip 20th, 350 Scolt Head 21st; *Dec* 130 Blackborough End Tip 11th, 60 Fustysweed GP (Elsing) 13th, 86 Thornham 28th, 505 Attlebridge 30th, 200 Sparham and 30 Berney.

Coastal movements included: 50 west Sheringham March 20th, 38 east one west West Runton Sept 20th, 63 east Sheringham Sept 25th and 60 east there Oct 19th.

## Kittiwake

*Rissa tridactyla*

*Mainly passage migrant; occasional non-breeding concentrations in summer*

Some good gatherings in Jan/Feb then low numbers present until year end, with few in summer (which is now the norm). Notable counts: *Jan* 200+ Yarmouth 2nd, 200 Titchwell 3rd, 30 Scolt Head 23rd; *Feb* 600 Overstrand 5th, 120 Brancaster and 700 Overstrand 22nd; *July* 80 Scolt Head ternery 30th; *Dec* 100+ Holkham Bay 10th.

Movements included: *Jan* 500 east (one hr) Mundesley and 700 south (30 mins) Waxham both 3rd, 100 north Winterton 14th; *Feb* 600 east Mundesley (0730-1030 hrs) 2nd, 884 Sheringham on 7 dates with max 300 9th, 40 west Hunstanton and hundreds south Caister 7th; *March* 53 Cley 4th; *May* 49 east Scolt Head 5th, 35 east Sheringham (45 mins) 15th, and on 30th 82 east 2 west there (3 hrs) with 45 east West Runton, 25 east Overstrand and 31 Waleott; *June* 13 west 2 east Sheringham (0730-0900 hrs) 11th; *Oct* 35 west Scolt Head 11th and 175 west there next day; *Nov* on 6th 800+ Hunstanton/Holme, 300+ Cley, 1014 east 32 west Sheringham and 400 Horsey, 125 east West Runton 9th, 157 west Scolt Head and 143 Sheringham 10th, on 14th 386 east 59 west Sheringham, 641 east West Runton and 800 Cromer, 114 east Sheringham 15th, 962 east 212 west Sheringham 17th, 120 west Scolt Head and 300 Sheringham 18th, 200 Cley and 303 west 114 east Sheringham 19th, and 700 west Holme (0800-1000 hrs) Dec 5th.

At Scolt Head 10 found dead on the beach Nov 23rd included one oiled bird.

Inland Welney had an excellent late winter/spring as birds moved through to breeding grounds. All records listed: 8 Feb 7th, one Feb 19th, 21 Feb 22nd, singles March 2nd, 13th and 17th with 2 March 21st. All the March records related to adults moving north-east. The only other inland sighting was an adult south-west Kilverstone March 9th. Later in year 9 dropped into Welney Nov 18th.

### **Gull-billed Tern**

*Sterna nilotica*

#### ***Vagrant from southern Europe***

An adult in winter plumage flying west with a flock of Black-headed Gulls Weybourne Nov 7th (CJM-G MT AT CT); the first county record since 2 in 1993.

### **Caspian Tern**

*Sterna caspia*

#### ***Vagrant from the Baltic***

An adult Breydon May 16th-19th (KJB *et al*). Interestingly, this bird was found at 1915 hrs by a Yarmouth Bird Club bird race team at Breydon looking for Mediterranean Gulls. Unusually for Caspian Terns visiting this site it was not seen outside the Breydon area. Recorded in the county for the fourth successive year, and in 9 of the last 13 years, but in only two of the preceding 13-year period 1974-1986.

### **Sandwich Tern**

*Sterna sandvicensis*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant***

First arrival Cley March 20th followed by Blakeney Point on 23rd, 2 Cley 25th, Salthouse and Sheringham 28th, and 2 Scolt Head 29th; 95 had gathered on Blakeney Point by 31st.

Following two successive complete failures Scolt Head had an excellent breeding season. Late arrivals there meant all breeding birds did not arrive until June 14th, but an estimated 1000 breeding pairs fledged 650 young. Similar success for the 3rd consecutive year at Blakeney Point where 3200 pairs fledged a conservative estimate of 1750-2000 young; here some pairs had eggs by the last week in May with first fledged young July 1st. The first juv recorded away from breeding colonies, a single Breydon July 3rd.

Gatherings at Scolt Head of 500 May 3rd and 19th, 600 June 10th, 2000 14th/15th, 2400 29th, 4000 July 22nd, 3100 30th, 1200 Aug 26th and 1500 27th. At Blakeney Point the evening roost increased to over 5000 by April 17th.

Few reported notable movements/gatherings away from colonies: 250 west Overstrand evening April 24th, 300 Hunstanton July 7th, 145 east West Runton Aug 20th and 120 Sheringham Oct 4th. At Breydon 50+ Sept 3rd was the lowest peak count there for 22 years.

Recorded at 4 inland sites: Hickling Broad April 4th and 2 May 3rd, one flying north-west Langham June 15th, 2 Pentney GP July 19th and 2 flying north-west Beeston Common Aug 1st.

1-2 recorded at 7 north coast localities in Nov plus 5 Horsey on 6th. Two winter records, singles Cley Dec 3rd and west Titchwell on 6th.

### **Roseate Tern**

*Sterna dougallii*

#### ***Uncommon summer visitor; has bred***

Another good year with birds recorded May-Sept; for the 4th successive year breeding was attempted. At one site a pair hatched one chick, the first young in Norfolk since the 1940s; unfortunately it disappeared after 14 days, probably taken by stoats. At another site a pair were seen nest scraping and at a third display was observed but no breeding was recorded at either site.

Elsewhere: 2 Titchwell July 25th and one Sept 6th; a total of 5 birds recorded Scolt

Head May 16th-Aug 3rd; 1-2 Blakeney Point May 11th-July 20th, and 5 present early Aug (2 Blakeney Hbr Aug 8th were presumably the same birds), plus a single Sept 4th; Cley July 1st, 30th/31st, Aug 2nd and 15th; Salhouse July 31st; Sheringham Aug 8th, 10th and Sept 15th; 2 Mundesley July 8th; 2 Yarmouth North Beach Little Tern colony May 28th-June 16th (one had been colour-ringed at Rockabil, Eire), one July 3rd, 2 4th, 2 14th, one 15th, 3 16th-20th and 1-2 to Aug 8th; Breydon May 25th, 2 June 1st and 6th, with 1-2 daily July 11th-25th and one 30th/31st. It is presumed that at least some of the birds at Yarmouth North Beach and Breydon were the same.

## Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

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

Recorded between March 27th (Wroxham Broad) and Nov 6th (Scolt Head).

Notable spring concentrations at Scolt Head only where 125 May 5th, 160 10th, 300 14th and 320 20th.

Min of 722 breeding pairs, 16 up on last year, but a massive increase in fledged young and the most successful breeding season since at least 1977. Still no figures from some sites.

	<i>No of prs</i>	<i>Young fledged</i>
Snettisham	102	80
Scolt Head	185	300-350
Titchwell	1	0
Burnham Overy-Stiffkey Binks	88	120
Blakeney Point	100	200-300
Breydon	185	235
Ranworth Broad	29	unknown
Barton Broad	13	unknown
Lyng-Easthaugh GP	1	1
Sparham Pools	3	1
Middleton GP	8-10	10
Pentney GP	2	2
Welney	4	11

A marked decline in breeding pairs at Blakeney Point believed to be a local fluctuation but an excellent fledging rate this year. At Breydon the second highest ever number fledged there bringing the total to 2375 since 1977. At Middleton GP first broods were taken by a fox. For the past 12 years a few have been flying from the coast over Ludham carrying sand eels for young at Ranworth Broad, a min round trip of 23 miles.

At Breydon, 1-3 1st-summer birds on various dates June 27th-Aug 8th.

In Aug 102 Walcott 5th, 150+ Lynn Point 12th and 200+ 15th, 117 Mundesley 21st and 107 22nd, 505 Scolt Head 26th, 810 27th, 550 28th, 391 29th and 155 30th, also 450 Thornham Hbr Sept 24th.

*1998 Additional breeding record:* one pair at Crome's Broad, How Hill had a single chick predated by a Sparrowhawk

## Arctic Tern

*Sterna paradisaea*

*Double passage migrant; a few pairs breed*

Very light spring passage compared to 1998 with 1-5 at 7 sites in April, including earliest Pentney GP 7th, plus 16 north over Blakeney on 23rd and 55+ west in 15 mins at Beeston Regis on 27th. Only 1-3 at 10 sites in May with 7 Lynn Point on 1st.



Breeding: one pair located Burnham Overy-Stiffkey Binks but success unknown; 2 pairs at Scolt Head during breeding season, success again not known; at Blakeney Point 16 pairs, including 5 pairs at Stiffkey Meals, had early broods affected by Kestrels but second broods a little more successful.

1st-summer birds at Breydon July 24th and Aug 2nd. An albino at Blakeney Point Aug 4th.

Light autumn passage with 1-8 at 9 localities with the exception of 11 east Scolt Head Sept 20th and 25 in the ternery there on 28th, and 60 west Cley Oct 4th; latest 2 Cley Nov 6th.

**Little Tern**

*Sterna albifrons*

*Local migratory breeder*

Easliest record Caister April 18th and latest Scolt Head Oct 3rd.

Breeding: a total of 601 pairs, an increase of 91 on last year, and an increase of 70 fledged young, due mainly to good success at Scolt Head and Blakeney Point (where artificial shelters were used for the first time but not considered to be the main reason for success). At Yarmouth North Beach, despite the highest number of pairs since 1996, poor success due to heavy predation by Kestrels which accounted for at least 251 chicks.

	<i>No of prs</i>	<i>Young fledged</i>
Holme	5	0
Titchwell	1	unknown
Scolt Head*	98	c200
Burnham Overy-Stiffkey Binks	124	36
Stiffkey Meals-Blakeney Point	131	135
Winterton	10-20	some
Yarmouth	242	82

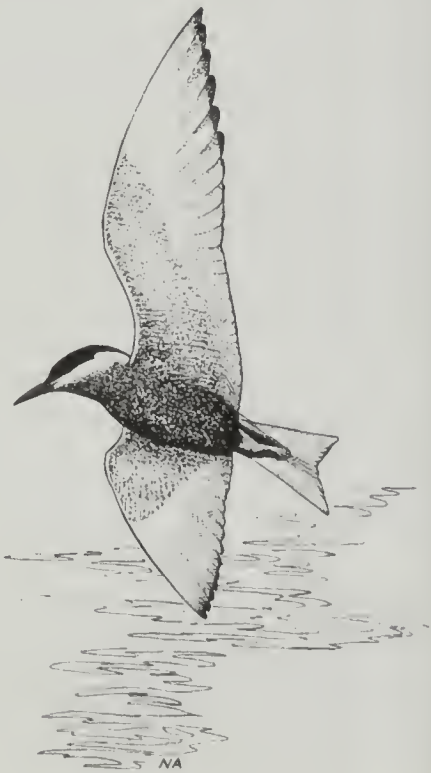
*\*Most successful colony in Britain in 1999*

Largest autumn counts 187 Scolt Head July 29th, 125 30th, 110 Aug 5th and 73 13th; 40 Winterton July 31st and 59 Lynn Point Aug 8th.

Inland records: 2 Rockland Broad and presumed same Strumpshaw May 1st, Gunton Park 4th, 2 Hickling Broad May 6th and 8th, and 21 flying strongly high west Berney July 7th.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*  
*Vagrant from southern Europe*

An adult Rockland Broad May 7th-10th (DL *et al*). Three of the last 5 county records have been at Rockland Broad.



Whiskered Tern (N Arlott)

## **Black Tern**

*Chlidonias niger*

### ***Regular double passage migrant in variable numbers; has bred***

First recorded April 24th with singles Titchwell, Blakeney GM (remaining until 28th) and Salthouse, the only occurrences in the month. Subsequently records from May 1st to end of month involving only 18 birds at 7 localities, all singles other than 3 Roekland Broad 5th and 28th with 2 on 7th, 2 Strumpshaw 3rd and 2 Breydon 8th. The lightest spring passage since 1975.

In June 2 Yarmouth 5th, 2 Lyng GP 6th, Titchwell and Brancaster 7th, and Lakenheath Washes 27th. Only 3 birds in July, Scolt Head 16th and 2 Berney 20th.

A more impressive autumn passage commenced Aug 5th with 12 Blakeney Point and 5 Cley, followed by a max of 112 birds at 16 localities from 9th until mid-Sept, mainly 1-4 but 8 west Scolt Head 25th, 8 present there 26th and 6 on 27th with 5 west there Sept 15th, 11 east Blakeney Point Aug 25th and 9 west Titchwell 26th. From mid-Sept only 9 birds at 4 localities with max 4 Lynn Point 26th. In Oct 2 Lynn Point 2nd and one 4th, 3 Sheringham 4th and 5 on 5th, Ongar Hill 10th, Holme 13th and last 2 Hunstanton 19th, the latest date for 10 years.

## **White-winged Black Tern**

*Chlidonias leucopterus*

### ***Vagrant from south-east Europe***

An adult over the floods at Berney for a short period during evening of July 5th (JRo). The second successive year for what has become a very scarce species in Norfolk. A moulting adult in Kent next day was considered the same bird.

## **Guillemot**

*Uria aalge*

### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional wrecks***

Few large counts in first winter period with max in Feb 50 Brancaster 4th, 50+ Salthouse 14th and 21 Sheringham 16th. Counts better in spring when off Scolt Head 80 east May 6th and 335 east there May 17th, 506 east West Runton May 30th and 38 east Sheringham June 21st.

Best counts in autumn 200 east Weybourne Oct 19th, 150 Cley Nov 19th and 50 Scolt Head Oct 25th.

Small number of corpses again washed ashore with 11 Cromer Feb 19th, some of which oiled, and 6 Scolt Head Nov 23rd of which 2 oiled.

## **Razorbill**

*Alca torda*

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

As usual few positively identified. Numbers small until spring when in May 35 east Scolt Head 5th, and on 30th 40 east West Runton and 18 east Overstrand. Few others reported until autumn when 50 Scolt Head Oct 12th and 2000 Weybourne Oct 19th. All other counts very small.

## **Guillemot/Razorbill**

Highest counts in first winter period all during Feb when 50 Sheringham 5th, and on 22nd 300 Overstrand and 50 Yarmouth. In spring best counts May 30th when 118 Sheringham and 212 Overstrand.

No other noteworthy counts until main autumn passage in Oct and Nov. In Oct max 400 east 55 west Sheringham 3rd; 360 east 55 west Scolt Head and 300 Sheringham 4th; 450 east per hr in morning Beeston Bump, 390 Eccles and 320 east per hr Mundesley 18th; 2250 east 120 west Sheringham (80% Razorbills), 400 per hr east Beeston Bump, 250 Eeles

and 200 per hr east Mundesley 19th; 900 east Sheringham (70% Razorbills) and 579 east West Runton (0720-0840 hrs) 20th. In Nov best movements 118 west 7 east Holme, 262 east 33 west Sheringham and 486 east 40 west West Runton (60% Guillemots) 14th; 3200 east 15 west Sheringham 17th and 564 east 133 west also there next day.



Black Guillemot (*J R Williamson*)

### Black Guillemot

*Cepphus grylle*

#### *Rare passage migrant and winter visitor*

An excellent year by recent standards. All records of singles in autumn when west Cley Sept 30th and Nov 6th, east Scolt Head Oet 5th, Sheringham Nov 6th, 7th and 13th, west Cromer Nov 7th and 13th, and Happisburgh Dee 4th. These records probably involve about 5 individuals.

### Little Auk

*Alle alle*

#### *Passage migrant, most during northerly gales; occasional wrecks*

Only records outside autumn, one freshly dead Horsey Feb 13th and one on sea Overstrand Feb 23rd.

An early start to autumn passage in Oet when one Cley 5th. Only others during month one Weybourne 19th, and 2 east West Runton and another over Yarmouth Cemetery 20th. Recorded on 17 dates in Nov with best days 10th and 19th. On 10th 2 west Scolt Head, 12 Cley, 12 west Sheringham. 2 West Runton, 5 west Overstrand and 2 Winterton. Best day of year 19th when 28 Cley, 80 west one east Sheringham, 6 Overstrand, 23 Mundesley, 12



Little Auks (*P Jones*)



north Caister and one north Yarmouth. Other notable counts during rest of month: 4 west East Runton 8th; 5 Cley 11th; 5 north-west Hunstanton, 5 Cley, 5 Sheringham and 4 Mundesley 18th; 7 Sheringham 20th. Also during month several dead or wrecked birds along coast and inland with one dead Ludham 15th, one in a garden East Ruston 19th, 2 Welney (village) 19th and 3 dead Scolt Head 23rd. Small numbers during Dec with most 5th when 4 west Holme, 2 Holkham Bay, 14 Cley, 2 Salthouse, 2 west Weybourne, 2 Waxham, 9 Winterton, 4 north Horsey and one Hemsby. Also during Dec single west Titchwell 6th, dead Horsey 13th and one north there 27th.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

During first winter period only records west Overstrand Jan 9th, Cromer Jan 21st, Mundesley and 3 east West Runton both Feb 23rd. No others until spring when 3 north Hunstanton May 18th, 2 east Salthouse May 30th, west Overstrand June 5th, and at Cromer east June 4th and 2 east 8th. In summer months 2 east Scolt Head July 12th and one east Sheringham July 27th.

None in Aug and few in Sept when east Cley and Sheringham 19th, 4 east Scolt Head, east Sheringham and Overstrand 20th, and Scolt Head 30th. Recorded on 9 dates in Oct most 4th when 6 east Scolt Head, 4 east Cley, one east Cromer and west Mundesley. Also during month 2 east West Runton and 4 west Mundesley 5th, 8 east Weybourne 18th and 4 east Mundesley 20th. In Nov birds noted offshore on 10 dates but numbers very small with max 3 west Sheringham 7th. Only records in Dec 2 west Sheringham 4th, and singles Cley and Salthouse 5th.

**Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

*Introduced/escaped resident in most urban areas*

Widespread and common in many of the county's urban areas where widely considered a pest. Three-figure counts received during year of 162 Wells Jan and 150 Thetford March. At some coastal areas observations indicate that birds are reverting to traditional cliff-nesting sites with records from Hunstanton, where birds have been present for at least 10 years, and Beeston Regis/West Runton where up to 12 birds were present with displaying and singing noted. Two recently fledged young seen at latter site March 16th.

Sightings from West Runton indicate that birds are becoming caught up in Woodpigeon movements with totals west in March of 10 14th, 16 15th, 14 16th and 4 27th.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Largest counts in first winter period: Jan 60 Fliteham, 50 Beeston Regis and 45 Choseley; Feb 200 Ringstead Common, 200 Great Massingham and 60 Horsey; March 105 Winterton, 75 Fliteham, 70 Little Walsingham Airfield, 70 Beeston Regis and 60 Ringland; April 198 Docking.

Coastal movement noted at Beeston Bump where 53 west during March with 12 14th, 9 24th and 16 28th, with 6 west April 6th. Other movements noted at West Runton 35 west March (max 11 on 16th) with 7 west April 10th; Sheringham 18 west April 5th; Overstrand 2 west March 22nd and 8 west March 24th; Paston 10 east April 1st and Horsey/Winterton 6 north March 27th and 9 south April 2nd.

Breeding details received were very similar to last year with Welney 4 pairs, Barrow Common 3, Braneaster GM 2, UEA 2 and Boyland Wood 2. Breeding also recorded at Old

Catton. The BBS appears to be suggesting a reasonably stable population. On average, one Stock Dove was found for every 21 Woodpigeons.

In autumn coastal movement noted at 2 sites with 10 west Sheringham Oct 5th and 30 west Lynn Point Nov 7th.

During second winter period largest counts included 129 Choseley Oct, 130 Holme, 100 Choseley and 75 Holkham Nov, and 130 Holme, 110 Cantley and 80 Stanhoe Dec.

## **Woodpigeon**

*Columba palumbus*

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

In first winter period highest counts: *Jan* 1200 Metton, 800 Massingham Heath, 700 Baconsthorpe, 560 Saxlingham, 500 Fersfield Airfield, 400 Magdalen and 400 Merton; *Feb* 750 Salthouse; *March* 1000 Thetford Nunnery Stud, 800 Sheringham, 600 Watlington, 420 Holme; *April* 300 Holme.

Westerly coastal movements noted in March: 147 West Runton 12th, 821 Holme, 75 in 1hr 45 mins Sheringham and 162 West Runton 14th, 335 Holme 15th, 104 Beeston Bump 16th, 302 Holme, 85 north Horsey/Winterton 27th, 320 Beeston Bump (0630-0800 hrs) 28th, 948 Holme 29th with 230 there 31st. Further movements in April 500 east Paston 1st, 216 west Beeston Bump (0620-0720 hrs) and 53 north with one in off sea Winterton 10th, and in May 84 north Horsey/Winterton 8th, 52 west Beeston Bump (0430-0530 hrs) 21st with 60 west there (0545-0645 hrs) 29th.

Breeding records received from Scolt Head 3-4 pairs, Kettlestone Common 5+ pairs and Boyland Wood 7 pairs. Also noted as a common breeder at Welney. The BBS found 20% more birds than last year, the first time since 1995 that there has been a significant change.

In autumn only coastal movements noted were at Sheringham where 140 west Oct 7th.

Largest gatherings in second winter period were 600 Holme Sept, 3000 Thornham, 700 Holme, 400 Titchwell and 400 Baconsthorpe Oct, 600 Holme and 400 Winfarthing Nov, and 450 Cockley Cley and 450 Rockland St Mary Dec.

Two aberrant birds were reported, a leucistic bird at Boughton May 5th and an albino at West Acre Dec 26th.

## **Collared Dove**

*Streptopelia decaocto*

### ***First bred in Britain at Cromer in 1955, now widespread and common resident***

Largest first winter period gatherings of 60 Ormesby and 53 Morston Jan, and 88 Wercham and 75 Stoke Ferry Feb. Coastal movements in spring noted at Beeston Bump where in March 3 west one east 14th, 5 west 26th and 5 east 2 west 28th, in April 3 west 1st and in May 4 west 22nd. Elsewhere: 2 west West Runton March 15th and 8 west there May 29th, 5 west Sheringham May 11th and 4 west there May 22nd, and 3 east one west Overstrand June 2nd.

Only breeding records received were from Welney where 4 pairs bred and Old Catton where 2 chicks seen leaving a nest on Oct 17th. The BBS revealed a significant increase in distribution this year with nearly 30% more squares covered containing birds than last year.

Autumn movements: 6 east Sidestrand Sept 26th, 7 west Holme Oct 7th and 21 west Brancaster (0730-0930 hrs) Oct 14th.

Largest numbers in second winter period were 48 Thornham Sept, 100 Saddlebow, 100 Sheringham, 89 Happisburgh and 60 Old Hunstanton Oct, 80 Downham Market and 55 Stody Nov, and 50 Binham, 49 Snetterton and 47 Tibenham Dec. Up to 110 were also recorded at Ludham during the year.

A single record of a leucistic bird at Fustyweed (Elsing), one of a breeding pair.

## **Turtle Dove**

*Streptopelia turtur*

### **Migratory breeder and passage migrant; evidence of recent decline**

In spring earliest date April 13th at East Ruston. Thereafter in April at Titchwell 21st, Salthouse Heath and Eeles 22nd, Titchwell and Wymondham (2) 23rd, Hunstanton GC, Blakeney, Beeston Bump, Kettlestone Common and Stibbard 24th, Potter Heigham and Hickling Broad 25th, and Holme, Harling Woods and Frettenham 26th. Records more widespread in May with double-figure counts of 21 Halvergate 11th, 29 Eeles 22nd, 14 Holme 28th and 10 North Wootton 29th.

Coastal movements in May: one west Scolt Head 7th, 10 east Overstrand and 6 north Horsey/Winterton 8th, 2 west Scolt Head 9th with one west there 11th, 11 west 10 east Holme 15th, 2 south Horsey/Winterton 20th, 10 west Sheringham 22nd, 2 west Overstrand 23rd, 2 west Beeston Bump and one west Overstrand 24th, 2 west Sheringham 27th and 2 west Beeston Bump/West Runton 29th.

Breeding pairs/territories noted: Snettisham 1, Holme 1, Titchwell 1+, Holkham 1, Salthouse 3+, Berney 2+, Hanworth Common 1, Briston 3+, Wayland Wood 1 and Welney 10; singing males recorded at a further 35 localities. Species noted as being common in east of county and locally common in north-east but elsewhere at East Harling and Lyng-Easthaugh GP further declines were highlighted and in Stanford TA area numbers remained low. The BBS suggested that there was no change in population size again this year.

Notable summer gatherings of 31 East Ruston June 29th and 47 Eeles at a feeding station July 6th.

No reports of coastal movements in autumn. Sept records of 12 Winfarthing 5th, 2 Frettenham 10th, 8 Fersfield Airfield 18th and 5 East Ruston Common 27th, with singles Walcott 12th, Welney 18th and Holme 25th. Two late records Holme Oct 8th and a presumed wintering bird ringed at Ormesby Dec 4th.

## **Ring-necked Parakeet**

*Psittacula krameri*

### **Introduced vagrant**

A long-staying bird at Caister, first reported in the summer and last seen Dec 4th (IM *et al*).

A parakeet sp at Hindolveston July 11th (JC) could not definitely be ascribed to this species.

## **Great Spotted Cuckoo**

*Clamator glandarius*

### **Vagrant from southern Europe**

One initially at Waxham then Eeles and finally Cart Gap on March 28th (AS RWRS NWa *et al*); the sixth county record and the first since 1992.



Great Spotted Cuckoo (P Jones)



## Cuckoo

*Cuculus canorus*

### *Migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First recorded at Pentney GP April 9th with further records from Rockland Broad 10th, Gayton 11th, Lopham Fen (3) 13th, Brancaster GM 14th, Titchwell and Winterton 15th, Ormesby, Lynford GP and Great Cressingham 17th, and Swannington, Merton, Little Cressingham and Watton 18th. Records became widespread after 22nd. May migrants included 2 Yarmouth Cemetery 6th, 2 in off sea Paston 9th and one west Overstrand 25th.

During breeding season multiple records from Bagmore 3, Foulden Common 2, Holme 4, Lopham Fen 3, Tottington 2, UEA 2 and Welney 3. At Becston Regis Common, a site where the species used to be regular, no birds were found. A slight decrease in numbers was implied by the BBS results this year but perhaps not large enough to draw any firm conclusions.

In Aug juvs at Cley 7th, East Ruston 12th/13th, Snettisham 15th, Horning Water Works, Cantley and Norwich Airport 18th, Baconsthorpe 22nd and Holkham Park 28th. Last records of year in Sept at Holme 15th and Breydon 19th.

## Barn Owl

*Tyto alba*

### *Resident, continental race has appeared as a vagrant*

Records from 218 localities during the year, a marked increase on 1998. Although this may be due just to better observer coverage, it is very encouraging to see that the species remains widespread in the county. Sightings were again noted in every month with the traditional winter bias. Breeding recorded at 27 sites with 48 pairs involved, an increase of 14 pairs despite there being fewer sites. Again this is probably an underestimate in view of the number of sightings and the sedentary nature of the species.

An individual of the dark-breasted race *guttata* at Kelling Heath Oct 29th/30th (GPD *et al*). This bird, unfortunately found dead next day, had been ringed as a juv in the Netherlands in the summer.

## Little Owl

*Athene noctua*

### *Introduced resident*

Reports received this year from 97 sites, a decrease for the first time in 4 years. As in previous years many sites held 2 birds, most presumably pairs. Records very similar to last year but fewer reports from Broads where birds found at just 13 localities. Distribution in the north of the county remains patchy with reports from only 7 sites in the coastal belt between Holme and Cromer.

Breeding reported from 23 sites with 28 pairs involved, including one Broadland locality which held 3 pairs. Although an increase over last year, the true figure is probably much higher. Fledged young were seen at 4 sites, including 3 broods each of 3.

## Tawny Owl

*Strix aluco*

### *Widespread resident*

Reported from 51 sites, undoubtedly not a true reflection on the actual status of this species. In Holkham Park 2 birds occupied the regular roost during early part of year. In breeding season (April-July) reported at 43 sites including 46 hooting males. Sites with more than one calling bird were Stanford TA and UEA 4 each, Brancaster, Bridgham, Croxton Heath, Hockwold and Horsford 3 each, and Buxton Heath, Cawston Heath and Weston Park 2 each. Breeding confirmed at only 2 sites, one of which was Welney, the first breeding

record for the reserve. At Sheringham BO hooting was heard Sept 10th and Oct 16th/17th, an unusual occurrence at this site.

### **Long-eared Owl**

*Asio otus*

#### ***Scarce and local resident, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Very few sightings in first winter period with no roosts reported. Only records received were singles at Ashill and Gun Hill Feb, Beeston Bump (probable migrant 27th) and Cockley Cley March, and Brettenham and Weeting April. In May records relating to presumed migrants came from Happisburgh 7th and Titchwell 21st.

Breeding records from 12 sites with at least 2 young noted at 4 of these and a calling juv at another. An unseasonal summer record of one on the beach at Titchwell July 20th.

In autumn, Sept records from Horsey 15th and Irmingland Hall where one found dead 28th. Birds arriving in off sea in Oct at West Runton 16th, Titchwell 17th, Weybourne 22nd and Waxham 30th, in Nov at Sheringham 11th and Mundesley 15th, and in Dec a late bird at Waxham 5th. Other autumn coastal records came from Holme, Titchwell (Gypsy Lane), Scolt Head (2), Warham Greens/Stiffkey (2), Blakeney Point, Sheringham, Overstrand, Winterton and Yarmouth Cemetery Oet, and Thornham (2). Blakeney Point and Cley Nov. One record only in second winter period, East Tuddenham Dec 15th.

### **Short-eared Owl**

*Asio flammeus*

#### ***Rare breeder, regular passage migrant and winter visitor***

In first winter period reported regularly around Acle/Halvergate/Berney, Chedgrave Marshes and lower Yare Valley, reflecting the large influx from previous autumn; up to 3 noted at Halvergate and Reedham with 2 seen at Langley and Chedgrave Marshes. Regular reports also in Cley/Salthouse area with 2 Jan, one Feb, 3 March and 2 April. Birds in off sea at Waxham Jan 2nd and Eeoles April 21st. At Stiffkey/Morston 7 were reported March 7th. Other records during period as follows: Ongar Hill (Jan, April), Lynn Point (Jan, May), Eastern Bund in Wash (March), Snettisham (Jan-March, May), Holme (Jan, March/April), Titchwell (April), Scolt Head (Jan, March/April), Warham Greens (Feb/March), Stiffkey/Morston (Jan-May), Blakeney GM (Jan, March-May), Blakeney Point (May), Gramborough Hill (dead 3rd March), Weybourne (March), Sheringham (March), Beeston Bump (May), Cromer GC (April), Eeoles (March-May), Waxham (April/May), Horsey (April), Winterton (March), Caister Airfield (March), Upton Fen (Feb), Rockland Broad (Feb), Great Massingham (Jan Feb), Fliteham (Jan/Feb 3), Roydon Common (Feb), Grimston Heath (March), Kimberley (Jan), Lopham Fen (April), Wisington BF (April), Winfarthing (Jan), Saddlebow (March), Welney (April) and Lakesend (April). Latest in spring, Snettisham May 26th.

First autumn record Cley Sept 12th and then noted regularly late Sept to Nov. Birds in off sea at Blakeney Point, Cley, Cromer (2) and Horsey Oet 16th, Holme and Holkham Meals Oet 17th, Sheringham Oet 18th and Winterton Nov 7th. Elsewhere recorded at Terrington, Wolferton, Snettisham, Thornham Point (2), Titchwell, Scolt Head, Warham Greens, Stiffkey/Morston, Salthouse/Kelling WM, Weybourne, Overstrand, Walcott, Cart Gap, Eeoles, Lessingham, Waxham, Yarmouth Cemetery, Massingham Heath, Hillington and Welney.

At Sheringham 2 unidentified 'eared' owls in off sea Nov 10th.

### **Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus europaeus*

#### ***Local migratory breeder and rare passage migrant***

In May first records occurred on 9th and 15th in west of county and 11th in north of county. During breeding season a total of 64 churring males recorded at 19 sites. Of these only 13



Nightjars (*J R Williamson*)

were in Brecks, this figure showing a large reduction on last year because there was no complete census carried out there this year. Elsewhere during summer 2 birds ringed at Weybourne June 10th and 13th and one at Snettisham 20th.

In autumn late Aug records came from Salthouse Heath 21st and Beechamwell where a road casualty found 28th. Last records of year in Sept at Winterton 11th and a bird flying east at Sheringham BO 28th, the first record for this site.

## Swift

*Apus apus*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant*

In April first record was an early bird at Yarmouth 15th followed by others at Beeston Regis 23rd, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 27th, Rockland Broad 28th, and Hunstanton (2). Cley and Caistor St Edmund 30th. Numbers built up during first week of May with notable counts from Buckenham/Strumpshaw 100 and Lakenheath Washes 150 4th, and Thompson Water 200-300 and Colney GP 2500-3000 8th. Westerly coastal movements during May: 880 Scolt Head and 600 Overstrand (0930-1100 hrs) 8th; 1350 Holme 9th, 690 there 10th and 1020 13th; heavy passage Hunstanton, 3725 Scolt Head, 1155 Beeston Bump (0600-0700 hrs), 6200 Cromer (0445-0745 hrs), 3000 Overstrand (0845-1115 hrs) and 1200 per hr Paston all 25th; 350 Holme 28th and 240 in 2 hrs Sheringham 29th.

Again no change in the number of BBS squares occupied by Swifts and following the decrease reported last year the total number of birds located was back up to around the levels of the previous year.

During summer large gatherings in June reported Overstrand where 1000 over the sea ahead of a storm 7th, Attleborough 2000 28th and Mundesley/Bacton 7000 feeding over cliff-top fields 30th. In addition 6000 east Paston (0600-1000 hrs) June 15th with 6500 also east there in same period next day. Three-figure westerly movements on 8 dates Scolt Head June 19th-July 18th with peaks 885 July 2nd and 630 July 17th. In Aug still 50 East Ruston 21st.



Exceptional numbers late Sept/early Oct mainly in association with the huge hirundine migration (see article page 282). Westerly movements recorded at many coastal localities with peak counts in Sept: 22nd 6 Titchwell; 24th 24 Scolt Head; 25th 7 Scolt Head, 5 Overstrand, 12 Waxham and 4 Horsey; 27th 22 Scolt Head; 10 Overstrand and 6 Winterton; 29th 6 Scolt Head and 4 Cromer. In Oct still several reports during first 3 days with records from Happisburgh and Berney 1st, Scolt Head (3), Cley, Salhouse, Sheringham, Beeston Bump, Cromer and Eeles 2nd, and Sheringham, Beeston Bump (1-2), Winterton (2), Filby Broad and Sculthorpe 3rd. Last records of year at Watton 5th and Norwich 7th.

An aberrant bird with a white rump moved east at Mundesley June 27th.

## **Pallid Swift**

*Apus pallidus*

### ***Vagrant from southern Europe and north-west Africa***

One of the highlights of the year was the largest recorded influx of this species into Britain in late Oct following strong southerly winds. Norfolk featured prominently with at least 6 records: Sidestrand/Trimingham 24th (AE BJM), Mundesley 25th (GED JND *et al*), Winterton 26th (JE RT *et al*), Holkham 27th (PT *et al*), West Runton 31st (MDC) and Sheringham Nov 5th (MPL MP *et al*). The last bird collided with a parked car and was taken into care, finally being released on Nov 15th. See article page 295.

## **Kingfisher**

*Alcedo atthis*

### ***Resident, numbers fluctuating in response to severity of winters***

A significant increase in records for second year running with reports from 156 sites. In first winter period widespread records from 63 localities, both inland and coastal. Two or more were noted at Costessey Pits and Honing Jan, Cranwick GP, Whittington and Lynford GP Feb, and Alderford, Martham Broad and How Hill March. Breeding recorded at 20 sites with pairs noted at a further 6; very little detail regarding breeding success received.

During autumn/winter noted at 84 localities. Records of 3 or more birds from Titchwell 6 Sept, 3 Nov and 4 Dec, Cley 3 Sept and Barton Broad 3 Dec. Elsewhere reports of 2 birds from 6 sites in Sept, 2 in Oct, 4 in Nov and one in Dec. Holme reported best numbers for several years, birds being noted almost daily during Sept/Oct, with above-average counts also at Titchwell where max 6 Sept 26th and Oct 10th. On Scolt Head singles also seen Sept 4th (perched on brambles) and Oct 16th and 22nd.

## **Bee-eater**

*Merops apiaster*

### ***Vagrant from southern Europe***

Two records of this southern beauty: Holme May 15th (AD) and Cromer May 17th (SJMGE *et al*)

## **Hoopoe**

*Upupa epops*

### ***Annual vagrant in very small numbers***

A very poor year, the only record being one briefly at Eeles Nov 12th (NBB).

## **Wryneck**

*Jynx torquilla*

### ***Former breeder; now scarce annual passage migrant, mostly in autumn***

In May 4 recorded: West Somerton 1st, Snettisham CP 3rd, Weybourne 6th and Warham Greens 30th.

A lean autumn with just 6 records including 4 at Winterton - Aug 23rd, Sept 6th and 25th-27th, with 2 26th; elsewhere Holkham Meals Sept 1st and Yarmouth Cemetery Oct 1st.

## Green Woodpecker

*Picus viridis*

### Resident

Recorded from 121 sites with breeding reported at 25; Costessey GP, Sennowe Park, UEA and Weston Park each contained 2 breeding pairs while East Wretham Heath and Horsford both held 3 pairs. An increase in records, but probably reflecting observer contribution levels rather than any population trend. A difficult species to assess, common enough for most observers not to record but probably too scarce for most small-scale local censuses to provide significant results. Again the BBS results did not reveal any significant change.

A record of one Scolt Head Aug 9th was presumably evidence of post breeding dispersal.

## Great Spotted Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos major*

### Common resident; birds of the northern race occasional in autumn

The BBS results were encouraging after last year; this species was seen in more squares than any year since the survey began in 1995 (56% up on last year).

Between Sept 10th and Oct 27th 27 records considered likely to relate to migrants. Although some of these may have been wandering local birds, there were several reports of birds coming in off the sea, including 2 Holme Sept 22nd and in Oct one West Runton and 3 together Holme 16th, and singles again Holme 17th and Beeston Bump 25th. In addition 6 seen in Oct during dawn visible migration watches at Snettisham, and 6 Titchwell Oct 8th.



Great Spotted Woodpecker (*V Hanlon*)

## Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos minor*

### Declining local resident

Reported breeding or drumming, or young seen, at Cringleford (probably breeding), Felbrigg Park (5 in March), Harling Woods (2 pairs), Holkham Park, Kelling, Merton, Roudham (2 drumming), Stanford TA (6 localities), Strumpshaw Hall and Wayland Wood. In addition recorded between March and May at a further 23 localities: Acle, Bayfield Hall, Brandon Carrs, Bridgham, Buckenham, Burgh Castle, Cranwich, Ditchingham, Garboldisham, Great Cressingham, Hilborough, Kilverstone, Lopham Fen, Melford Bridge (Thetford), Rockland Broad, Santon Downham, Sennowe Park, Sparham Pools, Stanford TA (Mortimers Way), Stowbridge Pits, Thetford Nunnery, Two Mile Bottom and Witton Bridge.

Also reported at the following 26 sites: Barnhamcross Common, Barrow Common, Bintree Mill, Blickling, Bradmoor Lakes, Bressingham, Brettenham, Cockley Cley, Ebb and Flow Marshes (near Ranworth Broad), Edgefield, Elsing, Fakenham, Frenze Hall (Scole), Fritton, Great Hockham, Horning, Langham, Lynford Arboretum, Lynford GP, Kilverstone, Roydon, Sheringham Park, Snettisham (village), Stanford TA (Reed Fen), Swan Lodge (Cley-Holt), Tottenhill GP, Watlington, Welney and Wheatfen

## Short-toed Lark

*Calandrella brachydactyla*

*Vagrant from southern Europe east to Afghanistan*

Three records, one in spring and 2 in autumn: Sheringham May 1st-3rd (APB *et al*), Yarmouth South Denes Sept 20th (EPJ PCN) and Stiffkey Oct 17th (SCJ).

## Woodlark

*Lullula arborea*

*Uncommon migratory breeder, recently increasing; also scarce passage migrant*

Spring migration first noted at Holme where singles Jan 21st and Feb 13th. Thereafter 13 migrants recorded at a variety of mainly coastal sites between March 12th and May 3rd, and finally a late bird at Holme May 27th. In addition a flock of 6 were on stubble at Gateley Feb 14th.

Unfortunately the usual comprehensive Breckland data not available this year but the casual records received suggest a continued thriving population. Away from Brecks, possible or confirmed breeding records from 13 localities including at least one new site holding 2 pairs on territory. Breeding success confirmed at 3 of these sites, with 2 holding up to 10 birds during autumn. With some records from very under-watched localities, this species is probably faring even better than the records suggest. Whilst Brecks clearly remains this species' stronghold, the geographical spread of sites was noticeable. Woodlarks are increasingly likely to be encountered in suitable habitat anywhere in the county.

Just 4 autumn coastal migrants: Yarmouth Sept 20th (with a Short-toed Lark), Holme Oct 6th and Nov 7th, and Sheringham Oct 13th. In addition, just inland, 3 records between Northrepps and Bodham Oct 31st-Nov 13th.

## Skylark

*Alauda arvensis*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

No particularly remarkable counts noted in early part of year, the best being 300-500 at Boyland Common and 200 Garboldisham in Jan, and 200 Waxham in Feb. The north coast WeBS counts located totals of 458 Jan, 264 Feb and 137 March. The only cold weather movement recorded was 150 west Paston Feb 11th.

As usual, little evidence of spring migration with small numbers west Holme March 14th/15th and 30 west Sheringham 21st.

Counts of breeding pairs or singing males: 12 Bodham, 10 Brancaster GM (9 in 1998), 11-18 Buckenham/Cantley (38 in 1997), 52 Cley, 3 Harling Woods, 39+ Holme (80+ in 1998), 4 Hunstanton GC, 30 Ludham NNR (40 in 1998), 77 Salthouse, 88 Scolt Head (20-30 in 1996, 69 in 1997 and 82 in 1998), 19 Titchwell (18 in 1998) and 61 Welney (best year ever, 20 in 1998). The BBS results indicate a slight decrease in numbers compared to last year. Though this was small and probably not significant in itself it certainly does nothing to suggest that the species' outlook is improving.

First autumn migrants noted at Scolt Head Sept 21st. Best totals of birds moving west here were on Oct 12th-16th when daily counts were 130, 375, 295, 250 and 200 respectively, and again Oct 26th-30th when counts included 235 28th and 250 29th. Elsewhere passage noted on east coast on Oct 23rd including 250 east Paston. Finally 195 west Scolt Head Nov 5th and 53 west Holme Nov 8th.

In second winter period the north coast WeBS counts revealed 588 Oct, 448 Nov and 434 Dec. No large counts of flocks received again, the best being 200 each at Blakeney Point Oct, Holme Nov and Honingham Thorpe Dec.



## Shore Lark

*Eremophila alpestris*

### *Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; exceptional in summer*

After last autumn's exceptional invasion there were still high numbers present in the county at start of year. It seems likely that between 260 and 320 were present in Jan but with some movement between neighbouring sites it is impossible to determine an exact figure. Flocks included 34 Holme, up to 60 Titchwell, up to 55 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, up to 60 Holkham Bay, 33 Wells, 50-60 Blakeney Point, 25 Salthouse and 18 Eccles/Waxham. Numbers dwindled slightly during Feb and March with 200 a generous estimate of the county total by middle of March.

Although some birds clearly disappeared beforehand there was no evidence of passage until very end of March. During April many wintering birds remained *in situ* at least for a while but most seemed to move between sites prior to departure. At beginning of May there were still about 110 present including 5 Holme, 35 Blakeney Point, 19 Cley, 17 Waxham, 23 Horsey and 11 Yarmouth. These had all departed by 9th except for 12 remaining on Blakeney Point to 11th. The only records after this were one Salthouse 17th and 9 Blakeney Point 19th.

Autumn passage rather light, a far cry from the events of last year. The first was at Holme Oct 3rd with further singles Holkham Bay next day and west Cley/Blakeney Point 5th; then 6 more singles until 22nd when 2 Mundesley and 12 Holkham Bay. Further arrivals occurred 27th and 30th with totals of 31 and 47 respectively. Only a tiny trickle of new arrivals took place during first half of Nov, but by 21st the Holkham flock had built up to 39, increasing to 49 the following week.

During Dec over 90 were present with up to 7 Titchwell, 4 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, 6 Burnham Overy Dunes (6th only), up to 50 Holkham Bay and 32 Blakeney Point; much thinner on the ground than last winter, but a respectable total nonetheless and the next best total since 1973/74.

## Sand Martin

*Riparia riparia*

### *Local migratory breeder and common passage migrant*

An early arrival with first Sheringham and Wormegay March 13th, but no others during month until Heacham, Sheringham and Sparham 20th, Stowbridge 21st and 4 Holkham 25th. Recorded at 11 further sites by month end but numbers small with best counts 11 Sheringham 28th and 6 west Holme 29th. A light spring passage with largest gatherings in April of 110 Rockland Broad 9th, 105 Pentney GP 13th, 85 Worthing GP 16th and 100 Strumpshaw 27th. In May max 150+ Weybourne 3rd, 120 Lynford GP 5th, 80 Colney GP 7th, 80 Swanton Morley GP 8th and 100+ East Ruston 22nd. Westerly movements at Scolt Head in April when 125 8th (also 100 west Overstrand) and 111 22nd, and in May 85 1st, 72 9th, 55 10th, 130 13th and last of spring 32 14th.

Another good effort in recording breeding data, especially in the Mundesley/Bacton and Walcott/Happisburgh areas where 9 colonies identified (8 in cliffs) producing a total of 778 holes, but total of only 662 birds present. Three colonies contained no birds in June despite good numbers being present in April/May, whilst at others they suffered from heavy rain in June which caused cliff falls. Elsewhere: California (50 pairs), Cranwich GP (58 active holes), Downham Market Relief Channel (30+ holes), Glaven Pits (3-4 pairs), Hilborough (74 holes, 20+ pairs), Middleton GP (40+ pairs), Pensthorpe (20+ active holes), Pentney GP (25-30 active holes), Sheringham (90+ pairs), Stanford TA (Gallows Hill 5 pairs, Sandy Hill 180 holes, 50 pairs and Widdows Hills 13 holes, 2+ pairs), and West Runton 120 occupied holes.

Autumn passage from June 19th with 14 west Scolt Head 23rd. Largest gatherings: 500 Weybourne July/Aug, 200 Pentney GP July 1st, 140 Sheringham July 7th, 200 Cley July 20th, 500 Cantley BF Aug 7th, 90 Pentney GP Aug 18th and 250 Welney Aug 24th. Largest westerly July movements: 220 Scolt Head 2nd, 475 Holme 9th, 550 Scolt Head 13th, with 145 there and 350 per hr Mundesley (0900-1100 hrs) 17th, and 195 Scolt Head 18th. Good numbers still present in Sept when 150 Pentney GP 19th and 40 Titchwell 22nd. Few in Oct with 1-7 at 6 sites until 6th and only record after this date Sheringham 24th.

In summer an albino Happisburgh July 13th. During the breeding season at West Runton birds seen catching feathers from moulting gulls on the breakwaters, hawking actively after the feathers as they drifted out over the sea.

## Swallow

*Hirundo rustica*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First 2 Winterton and one Holme March 13th, but no others until final 4 days of month when Stowbridge 27th, Holme, Salthouse, Sheringham, 2 Beeston Bump, Waxham and Stow Pits 28th, Holme and Titchwell 30th, and 2 Holme 31st. Birds became increasingly widespread during first week of April and several inland observers recorded their earliest ever arrival dates. First double-figure counts of month 35 west Scolt Head 8th, 10 Lynford 10th and 16 Whitlingham Lane GP 13th. Best counts during rest of month of birds moving west at Scolt Head where 58 21st, 545 22nd, 135 24th and 115 25th. Elsewhere 30 Holkham Park 15th, 50 Holme 21st and 30 south per hr Winterton 23rd. During May counts as usual dominated by Scolt Head where moving west 1725 8th, 625 9th, 575 10th, 840 11th, 2050 13th, 1650 14th, 395 15th, 410 16th, 715 25th and 950 26th. Best counts elsewhere in May 300 east Cromer 3rd and 400 west 8th, 614 west in 2 hrs Cley 14th and 300 west Blakeney Point 15th. Smaller numbers continued to move west at Scolt Head until June 23rd.

Breeding data included 95-100 pairs at Stanford TA. Also described as a common breeder in hides at Welney, whilst at Runton none nested in the Church porch there for first time in many years. Last year's reduction was reversed according to the BBS results with an 11% increase in number of squares recorded and a 55% increase in average number of birds per occupied square.

A very pronounced autumn passage commenced with 12 west Scolt Head July 5th and a roost of 125 Lopham Fen July 6th. Also at Scolt Head during July 55 west 17th and 155 19th. Some impressive counts during Aug when west at Scolt Head 1350 28th, 2600 29th and 2150 30th. Elsewhere roost counts of 600 Lopham Fen 3rd, 1000+ Haddiscoe Island 30th/31st and 200 Cley 31st. Autumn passage peaked during Sept when unprecedented numbers moved through the county; for a detailed account see article page 282. Numbers in Oct were relatively low considering the huge numbers recorded during Sept. with max 40 Scolt Head 1st, 100 Cantley BF 2nd and 40 Happisburgh 3rd. Few after mid-month and in Nov 4 Holme 1st, 3 Holkham 4th, Hunstanton and Sheringham 5th, 3 Scolt Head 6th, Eeels 8th and 12th, Hickling Broad 13th and a very late bird east Hunworth Dec 1st.

During the year albinos were recorded at Langley Aug 11th, Seething Aug 14th/15th and Fundenhall Sept 3rd.

## House Martin

*Delichon urbica*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First in April at Holme 1st, Eeels and Salthouse 2nd, and Holme, Weybourne and Thompson Water 3rd. Recorded at many sites by second week in month, but numbers low with largest counts just 6 Cley 14th, 10 Holme 21st and 7 Scolt Head 25th. Passage much improved in

May when some notable counts of birds moving west at Scolt Head where 220 8th, 160 9th, 155 10th, 500 11th, 1360 13th, 135 21st, 245 25th and 285 26th. Highest counts elsewhere 250 west Overstrand 8th, 90 west Sheringham and 100 East Ruston 22nd, and 200 Narford Lake 30th. Small numbers moved west at Scolt Head almost daily until last west July 2nd.

Apart from a few exceptions many sites reported declines in breeding numbers: Bure Valley Lakes 1, Chedgrave/Hardley/Langley 39 (only 21 in 1998), Corpusty 6, East Wretham Heath 3, Crow Hall Farm Gooderstone 30 (34 in 1997, 43 in 1995), Horning Hall 15, noticeable decline in Ludham area, Norwich (Harford Bridge) 35, Old Catton (Wrenningham Road) 2 (decline from 1998), Saxthorpe 2, Stanford TA 34 (decline) and Welborne 1 (5-6 in 1998). Also 50% declines on previous year at Castle Rising and North Wootton, whilst a further 3 observers reported breeding numbers down. Recorded in fewer than a third of squares surveyed in the BBS, the lowest since the study began in 1995. Clearly the county breeding population appears to be in trouble and more breeding data is urgently needed especially if comparative to past years.

Largest gatherings in first part of autumn: 60 Flitcham July 30th and in Aug 150 Wolferton 1st, 100 Sheringham 5th, 100 East Ruston 8th, 120 Waxham/Horsey 17th, 600 Thetford 24th, 130 Becchamwell 28th and 100+ West Acre 30th. Best movement in Aug 385 west Scolt Head 29th. Passage peaked during Sept and early Oct when huge numbers were recorded; for details see article page 282.

Numbers quickly disappeared during Oct with only a few during the second half of month, and in Nov fewer than normal with only singles Holkham 4th and Sheringham 5th.

Complete albinos Saxlingham Nethergate Aug 3rd and west Scolt Head Oct 2nd.

### **Richard's Pipit**

*Anthus novaeseelandiae*

*Virtually annual autumn migrant from western Siberia; rare in spring and winter*

This species remains very rare in spring, so singles at Salhouse April 25th-28th and Sheringham GC May 6th are of interest.

After one Holme Sept 30th, Oct produced a wealth of reports: Paston 5th; Sheringham 9th (remaining to 17th with another 16th); Scolt Head 13th; East Runton 15th; Brancaster Staithe, Scolt Head, Weybourne and West Runton (2) 16th; Burnham Overby Staithe, Wells Saltmarsh, Morston (2), Blakeney Point (2) and West Runton 17th; Sheringham 22nd; Sheringham and West Runton 25th, with 2 at Sheringham 26th; Holme 27th, and Burnham Norton (2) 31st. One at Waxham Oct 30th remained to Nov 4th. Other Nov reports included Holme 3rd-7th, Salhouse 3rd/4th, Scolt Head 5th and finally Paston 12th.

### **Tree Pipit**

*Anthus trivialis*

*Migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First arrivals in April included singles Beeston Common and Wissington BF 4th, Scolt Head (3) 9th and Horsey 10th. Spring passage was light, continuing at coastal sites through May, with highest day count of 11 Scolt Head April 25th.

Birds in breeding habitat first reported from Thetford April 11th. Singing birds were widely recorded from suitable habitat throughout Brecks, the Greensand ridge, Holt/Cromer ridge and heaths north of Norwich. Highest counts included 7 Kelling Heath and 4 at both Roydon Common and Croxton Heath. At regularly monitored sites, numbers were poor, with none noted at Salhouse Heath and numbers low in Stanford TA.

Autumn movements widely reported at the coast, but mostly involving 1-2 birds, beginning with one Scolt Head Aug 26th. Higher counts of 3 West Runton and 4 Blakeney Point Sept 20th. Latest Winterton Sept 26th.



## Meadow Pipit

*Anthus pratensis*

*Locally common migratory breeder and passage migrant with small numbers in winter*

A rather quiet first winter period, but a cold weather movement of 140 west Paston Feb 11th. Spring movements noted from mid-March and throughout April with highest counts west at well-monitored sites as follows: Holme 480 March 14th, 575 March 27th, 1246 March 29th and 492 March 30th; Scolt Head 570 April 8th and 2649 April 9th; Sheringham 660 March 27th and 400 April 5th with 300 east April 2nd. Other, westerly movements included 600 Beeston Bump April 6th (0700-0800) and 1200 Overstrand April 9th (0800-1400).

Counts of pairs during breeding season included 17 Holme, 84 Scolt Head, 48 Cley, 73 Salthouse and 5 Lakenheath Washes. A total of 99 pairs at Welney represented a good recovery after the previous year when breeding sites were flooded out.

Late Sept saw the start of return migration, with counts of 320+ present Holme 19th, 500 south Winterton 22nd and 550 south in an hour Mundesley 23rd. Counts from Beeston Bump in Oct included 100 west in one hour 7th and 110 west similarly 12th, whilst movements at Scolt Head peaked at 405 west 13th.

The second winter period produced few counts, but included 52 Shropham Dec 15th and 52 Lakenheath Washes Dec 28th.

## Red-throated Pipit

*Anthus cervinus*

*Vagrant from northern Enrope*

A typical set of spring sightings but, unusually, no autumn birds; in May singles at Waxham 5th (RC&SCMcI), Horsey 9th (PJH), west Beeston Bump 26th (GED) and Blakeney Point 29th-31st (JRMe *et al*).

## Rock Pipit

*Anthus petrosus*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant, most probably of the Scandinavian race littoralis*

WeBS counts in first winter period produced totals of 305 Jan, including 69 Scolt Head Brancaster Hbr and 202 Wells Hbr; 98 Feb, including 90 Warham Greens. and 49 March, including 40 again Warham Greens. Norfolk's coastal saltings offer prime habitat for these wintering Scandinavian birds (British birds preferring rockier habitats). Of note was the presence of one Cantley BF Jan 10th, while 29 Breydon Feb 20th was a good count for this site.

Spring passage passed almost unnoticed, but included 6 west West Runton March 14th, with the last bird passing there April 5th. One was still at Cley May 15th.

First birds of autumn at Holme Sept 15th and Scolt Head Sept 26th. Numbers then increased during Oct with westerly counts of 60 Sheringham 6th; at Scolt Head peaks of 85 6th, 125 12th and 195 13th; 60 Holkham in one hour in afternoon also 13th; also 60 Blakeney Point 26th. An impressive count of 395 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, Oct 28th. WeBS counts of wintering birds gave lower counts with 228 Nov, including 95 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, and 203 in Dec, including 97 Warham Greens.

In second winter period inland records at Baconsthorpe Oct 16th and at Cantley BF 8 Dec 18th and 2 Dec 26th.

*1998 Correction: 26 West Runton Sept 27th should read 'one'.*

## Water Pipit

*Anthus spinoletta*

*Local winter visitor*

Once again highest counts came from Buckenham, where max of 16 Jan 15th, 27 Feb 14th, 20 March 24th and 14 April 2nd. Elsewhere occasional records from Cley and Martham

Broad, where peaks of 5 Jan 17th and March 18th respectively, and other sporadic records of 1-2 from Blakeney GM, Brancaster, Catfield Fen, Holme, How Hill, Lakenheath Washes, Reedham, Stiffkey Fen, Titchwell, Welney, Wissington BF and Yarmouth (Bure Park). Latest Buckenham and Cley April 5th.

First in autumn Berney and 3 Thornham Oct 10th. Elsewhere in Oct 3 Martham Broad 14th, one Hickling Broad 15th and 2 Titchwell 16th. In Nov/Dec a scattering of 1-3 birds at 13 sites, mainly those listed above, but also Burnham Norton, Cantley BF and Damgate Marshes, Acle, with 4 Titchwell Dec 27th.

## **Yellow Wagtail**

*Motacilla flava*

### **Yellow Wagtail** *M (f) flavissima*

#### ***Declining migratory breeder and passage migrant***

First of year involved singles Holme March 25th and at both Waxham and Salthouse March 28th. These were followed by a steady run of birds throughout April, with the first double-figure count of 10 Heacham 5th. Higher counts during April included a noticeable arrival on 25th when 30 Snettisham CP, 32 west Scolt Head, 30 Blakeney Point, 30 Salthouse and 33 Cromer. Numbers in May generally lower with highest counts of 22 at Blakeney GM 3rd and at Scolt Head westerly movements of 28 1st, 25 8th, 78 9th and 22 10th, where latest spring movement 26th.

Breeding was only reported from Hickling Broad, Holkham NNR, Ludham, Wretham Camp, Middleton, Wissington, Feltwell Anchor (15 pairs), Lakenheath Washes and Welney, although at the latter site a total of 43 pairs is encouraging and shows a good recovery after flooding the previous year. Conversely, the mid-Yare RSPB reserves reported no territories for the first time ever. Incidental sightings from several other Broadland sites suggested at least a scattering of pairs.

Autumn passage commenced July 5th (Scolt Head) with counts of up to 127 Welney during Aug and 90 still there at month end. Elsewhere in month 40 Cantley BF Aug 28th, 20 Terrington 29th and 50 Haddiscoe 31st. Sept movements produced a trickle of birds throughout the county, with only reported concentrations being 62 Ludham 18th and 20 Salthouse 30th. Oct reports involved singles Welney (to 2nd) and Saddlebow 1st, Holme 5th, Ongar Hill 10th and Berney 30th.

### **Blue-headed Wagtail** *M (f) flava*

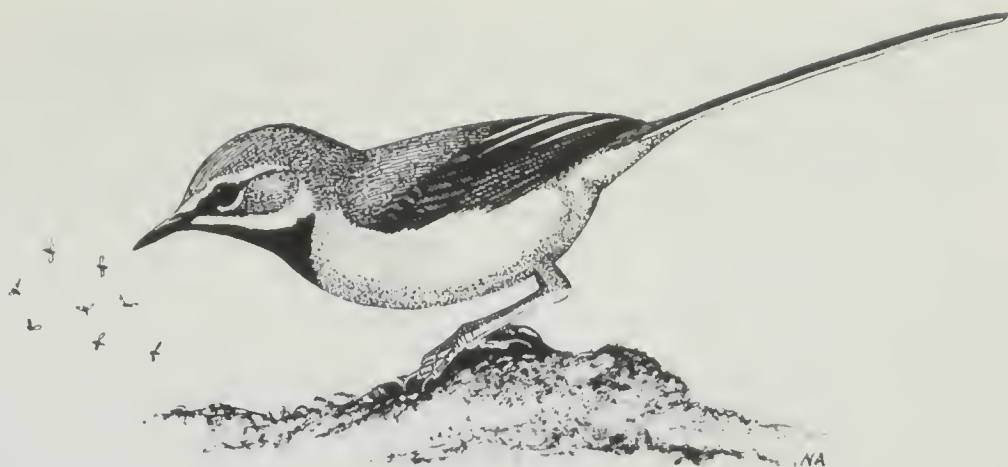
#### ***Regular migrant from continental Europe, mainly in spring***

An early bird Welney April 3rd, otherwise a good run of sightings associated with the main Yellow Wagtail movement April 23rd-30th. Highest counts involved 7 Beeston Bump and 6 Waxham 23rd, 6 at Holme 24th, and 7 Salthouse, 5 Cromer and 4 West Runton 25th. During May a total of 20 birds, highest count being 3 Yarmouth South Denes 6th. Problems of identification result in fewer autumn records: singles at Cley Sept 9th and Salthouse Sept 25th and 28th-30th perhaps all relate to a single individual.

### **Grey-headed Wagtail** *M (f) thunbergi*

#### ***Scarce spring migrant from North Fennoscandia***

Apart from one Cley June 3rd, all records were in May as follows: Sheringham and Blakeney GM 3rd, Blakeney Point 6th, Overstrand 8th, Salthouse (3) 20th, Sheringham 21st and 23rd, Stiffkey Fen 24th and Cley (3) 27th.



Grey Wagtail (*N Arlott*)

## Grey Wagtail

*Motacilla cinerea*

*Local breeder, fairly common passage migrant, less common in winter*

Widely reported during first winter period with any apparent bias along coast, Fens and Norwich area probably owing more to observer distribution. Spring passage poor but protracted, with small numbers reported from coastal sites from mid-March through to mid-May. Sightings from well-watched localities included: Holme 4 singles between March 14th and May 2nd; Sheringham 3 singles between April 29th and May 23rd; Beeston Regis/Runtun 4 between March 14th and May 21st.

Breeding records began in March and came from a total of 14 sites, mostly at or near water mills in the traditional Norwich and West Norfolk areas. Dispersing birds began to appear at the coast from July, when singles Gimmingham 2nd and Overstrand 14th. Scattered singles at a handful of sites in Aug, then a marked increase as autumn movements began in Sept. Passage peaked in Oct with reports from around the coast from King's Lynn to Yarmouth and from all well-watched gravel pit complexes; most sightings involved 1-2 birds with higher counts of 6 west Scolt Head 13th and 3 west Holme 17th. Numbers fell away sharply in Nov, while Dec reports involved a handful of wintering singles at 15 widely scattered sites.

## White/Pied Wagtail

*Motacilla alba*

**Pied Wagtail** *M (a) yarrellii*

*Common breeding resident and passage migrant*

Reports at start of year dominated by roost observations. Norwich's Brigg Street roost produced peak monthly counts of 1008 Jan 28th, 1584 Feb 24th and 1110 March 4th. Other roost counts included 400+ Lopham Fen Jan, 225 Glandford Jan 27th, 200 Downham Market STW Jan 17th, 160 Thetford (Stevenson Way Ind Est) April 5th, 130 Brancaster Staithe Feb 1st and March 1st, and 110 Yarmouth South Beach (pre-roost) Jan 26th.

Westerly spring movements at well-watched coastal sites gave peaks in March of: Holme 56 14th, 43 15th and 35 29th; Sheringham 35 20th and 65 27th; Beeston Regis/Runtun 33 14th, 29 15th, 34 next day and 21 April 5th. The only breeding report came from Welney where 4 pairs present. The decline reported last year does indeed appear to have been just a fluctuation as the BBS results showed a similar-sized increase this year. Coastal movements



began again in July and included 35 west Scolt Head 19th. Aug produced counts of up to 150 at Cantley BF while Sept counts included 44 Cley 10th, 56 Long Stratton 16th and 39 Waxham 18th.

End of season roost counts were again dominated by Brigg Street, Norwich where peaks of 606 Nov 25th and 484 Dec 2nd. Elsewhere, 150+ Martham Pits Sept 25th, 165 Brancaster Staithe Nov 12th (tidal reedbed roost) and 250 Bacton Gas Terminal Nov/Dec. Particularly interesting roost gatherings included up to 100 with Swallows in standing maize at Shipdham early Oct and 25 roosting on boats Scolt Head Nov 20th.

### **White Wagtail** *M (a) alba*

#### ***Regular passage migrant from continental Europe; has bred***

First report of one Holkham March 10th, with a slow build-up from 14th, including highest counts of 15 Paston, 10 Cart Gap and 10 Eccles 28th, and 6 Horsey 27th. Passage peaked in April with reports from many coastal sites, particularly in the north-east, although no sites produced double-figure counts, the highest being 5 Paston 1st and 6 Waxham 2nd, Blakeney Point 6th and Salhouse 16th.

May produced no more than a couple of dozen birds, although Scolt Head mustered 5 1st and 9th, and 4 were noted at both Holme and Salhouse on 3rd.

Autumn proved to be very poor with just one Martham Sept 25th and 2 Scolt Head Oct 6th.

### **Waxwing**

*Bombycilla garrulus*

#### ***Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor***

In first winter period reported from following sites (singles except where indicated): Aylmerton (2) Feb 28th/March 1st, Brancaster/Brancaster Staithe Feb 18th/19th, Claxton March 17th, Cley Feb 6th and Feb 22nd, Crostwight Heath Jan 24th, Gorleston Feb 28th, Hickling Broad March 4th, Holme Jan 3 1st/Feb 1st, Kelling Jan 14th, Norwich March 27th, Rockland St Mary Feb 14th/15th, Sheringham March 4th and (3) March 6th, Swanton Morley March 4th, Titchwell (7) Feb 2nd, (4) Feb 10th and Feb 16th, Upper Sheringham Feb 25th, Warham (2) Feb 22nd, West Runton March 2nd/3rd and Yarmouth Feb 27th. A very late bird at Thornham 6th June (JSB).

In second winter period singles in late Oct at Cringleford 25th and west Sheringham 28th and 29th were the forerunners of a notable influx in Nov. During first week singles or small numbers were reported at several sites but on 10th records became widespread with some sizeable gatherings. A smaller influx occurred around 16th with most records from east of county. Numbers remained high well into Dec. Largest flock reported 125 Holme Nov 10th reducing to 20 by 26th. Other large flocks in Nov of 80 Snettisham 10th, 35 Horsey 14th, 54 Smallburgh/Wayford Bridge 15th (with 45 still 17th), 70 west Overstrand 16th, 30 Happisburgh 17th and 37 Horsey 20th. In Dec further flocks at Sca Palling/Stalham (28 5th, 31 7th, 27 12th and 19 13th), Calthorpe Broad (26 7th), Brundall (18 5th/6th with 12 still 17th) and Rockland St Mary (24 11th with 14 still 19th). Min totals of birds involved were 611 Nov and 152 Dec. Birds also recorded at Alby, Beeston Regis, Blakeney, Briston, Cantley, Castle Acre, Cley, Cromer, Docking, East Runton, East Ruston, Eccles, Edgefield, Gimmingham, Great Ryburgh, Hempstead, Hickling (village), Hickling Broad, Holt, Horning, Horsey, Hunstanton, Kelling, Knapton, Langham, Lessingham, Ludham, Mundford, Northrepps, Norwich, Potter Heigham, Reepham, Sheringham, Sidestrand, South Wootton, Spixworth, Stibbard, Sutton, Swaffham, Thornham, Thorpe St Andrew, Titchwell, Waxham, Wells, Weybourne and Yarmouth.

## Dipper

*Cinclus cinclus*

### *Almost annual winter visitor in very small numbers*

One of the nominate race, known as Black-bellied Dipper, found roosting at Ebridge Mill Jan 1st and last reported there March 13th, was found to be feeding during the day on a private stretch of the North Walsham-Dilham Canal at Briggate.

A second Black-bellied Dipper was present at Lyng March 22nd-24th.

## Wren

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

### *Very common resident and passage migrant in small numbers*

Data from CBC and various other breeding bird surveys gave the following singing males/pairs/territories: Barrow Common 35, Beeston Regis Heath-West Runton Heath 23, Bodham 14, Boyland Wood 14, Brancaster GM 22, Holme 20+, Kettlestone Common 10+, Roydon Common 54, Scolt Head 34, UEA 6 and Welney 36. 1999 was another good year for this species as demonstrated by the BBS results. Recorded in all but one of the squares surveyed with a 21% increase over last year in the average number of birds per square.

Ringling results from 2 sites: at Kettlestone Common 50 ringed, the highest total since 1985, including 8 retraps which suggested high winter survival and a healthy breeding population with high success rate; at Shimpling 57 birds ringed, a record for the site.

In autumn reports indicative of migration at Scolt Head where 30 Oct 6th and 45 Oct 15th.

## Dunnock

*Prunella modularis*

### *Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn*

Results of CBC and other breeding bird surveys (singing males/pairs/territories) as follows: Barrow Common 21, Bodham 4, Boyland Wood 10, Brancaster GM 6, Holme 36+, Salthouse 3, Scolt Head 61, Titchwell 14, UEA 4 and Welney 10. Another slight increase in the percentage of squares in which this species was recorded during the BBS.

An interesting record from East Runton where on Sept 6th one was seen feeding a small green caterpillar to a juv Chiffchaff; an adult and second juv Chiffchaff were also present. At Shimpling 47 birds ringed, a record for the site.

Autumn migrants at Holme where 50 Sept 22nd, 20 Sept 26th and 60 Oct 16th. and Scolt Head where in Oct 14 west 5th, 80 6th, 4 west 10th, 11 west 12th, 13 west 13th, 35 14th and 65 15th.

## Robin

*Erithacus rubecula*

### *Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn*

Only very small-scale spring migration with occasional records of 1-2 at coastal sites in April and early May with small peak April 3rd when 10 Waxham and 6 Horsey.

Breeding records (pairs/territories) included 11 Barrow Common, 11 Boyland Wood (8 1998), 6 Brancaster GM, 6 Holme, 4 Kettlestone, 10 UEA (12 1998) and 6 Welney (4 1998). The best year for this species since the BBS began with birds recorded in about 85% of squares.

Autumn migration from Aug 21st (Scolt Head) with an early continental bird trapped Weybourne next day. Then only occasional records until second half Sept when 7-8 Beeston Bump 16th, 10 Holme 22nd and 16+ Winterton 26th. Max numbers in Oct 25 Scolt Head 15th, with 70 Holme and 50+ Winterton 16th. A subsequent count of 60 Titchwell Oct 23rd with 40 still there Nov 8th.

A leucistic bird again present East Runton from Oct 6th.

## Nightingale

*Luscinia megarhynchos*

### **Local migratory breeder and very scarce passage migrant**

A remarkably early arrival with passage migrants noted at both Waxham and Martham Broad on April 3rd, a full week earlier than the previous earliest records in the county. Spring migrants were also noted in April at Stalham 16th-18th, Cley and Ridlington 24th, Yarmouth Cemetery 26th and Snettisham CP 30th. During May, migrants (or wandering unpaired birds) were noted Burntfen Broad (undated record), Honing Lock 5th/6th, Welney 11th/12th, Holme 21st and Fritcham 29th.

The first BTO Nightingale Survey since 1980 revealed a higher population than expected with 316 singing males located – a similar total to 1980. However, there has been a notable change in distribution with decreases in most areas compensated for by large increases in the eastern Fens and western Brecks. Full details can be found on page 286.

Song output waned during late May and rather few were reported singing during June; the last, 2 at Wissington BF on 19th, were in fact the latest records of the year.



Bluethroat (*S Cale*)

## Bluethroat

*Luscinia svecica*

### **Scarce passage migrant, now more frequently recorded in spring**

Only one record, Mundesley Oct 16th (MDF).

## Red-flanked Bluetail

*Tarsiger cyanurus*

### **Rare vagrant from northern Russia/Siberia**

A 1st-winter male trapped Brancaster Staithe Oct 17th (KJH *et al*); the second county record. See article page 297.

## Black Redstart

*Phoenicurus ochruros*

### **Rare migratory breeder, regular passage migrant and occasional in winter**

In first winter period Heacham/Hunstanton Jan 1st-Feb 24th with 2 Jan 30th, Beeston Regis/West Runton Jan 1st, Feb 27th and March 3rd, Yarmouth Jan 1st and Feb 2nd (singing), Winterton Jan 24th, Sheringham Feb 8th and 12th, and Blakeney Quay Feb 24th.

Spring coastal migrants March 8th (Sea Palling) to May 5th (Happisburgh) with concentrations of 5 Winterton March 26th/27th, 4 Sheringham Cemetery March 28th, 3 Cromer GC March 29th and 4 Waxham April 2nd. Inland singles at Stalham March 28th; in April at Old Catton 4th, UEA 10th, Surlingham 14th and Swaffham 25th; in May Choseley 3rd and Stanford TA (Smokers Hole) 6th. A late migrant Scolt Head May 25th.

In breeding season 3 singing males at Yarmouth, adults seen carrying food at one site. At Cromer singing males at 6 different sites April 4th-July 8th with a min of 4 different birds. A singing male also for most of summer at Hardy Road, Norwich. At Wissington BF



one pair successfully bred with 2 juvs present July 14th. During summer months singles also Beeston Bump June 26th, in July at Happisburgh 14th, Baconsthorpe and Eccles (juv) 15th and Titchwell 19th, and Swaffham Aug 1st.

In autumn 2 Heacham/Hunstanton Aug 16th-23rd then migrants Sept 10th (Langham) to Nov 12th (West Runton) but fewer birds than in spring. Notable fall Oct 16th when 4 Blakeney Point and inland singles Choseley, Baconsthorpe (still present 22nd) and Aylmerton; also 3 Overstrand 22nd. Other inland records Aylmerton Sept 22nd and North Walsham Oct 19th.

Towards end of year singles Cley Nov 28th, Aylsham Dec 11th and Sheringham Dec 13th.

## Redstart

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

### Local migratory breeder (most in Brecks), common passage migrant

Simultaneous arrival April 3rd when males Horsey and inland at Stanford TA (2) and Honingham. A subsequent trickle of ones and twos at coastal sites until end of May.

In breeding season in Brecks total of 73 singing males Stanford TA (where at one site a pair hatched and fledged 8 young), 4 singing males East Wretham Heath and one Santon Downham. Elsewhere 2 singing males Sandringham May and a pair reared 2 young Sheringham Park. An unusual record of a female UEA June 25th.

Autumn migration Aug 25th (Holkham Meals) to Oct 17th with only double-figure counts on Sept 19th when 36 Holme, 33 Scolt Head, 30 Sheringham and 11 Mundesley/Paston. Inland records from Stoke Holy Cross Sept 11th and Old Catton Sept 19th.

A female of *samamisicus* race Blakeney Point Oct 16th/17th (RFP).

## Whinchat

*Saxicola rubetra*

### Common passage migrant; has bred in past

Earliest records April 25th when singles Cley, Salthouse and Sheringham; 4 further coastal migrants by month end and one inland Banham 30th.

Small-scale passage throughout May until 27th (Weybourne) with max Scolt Head, where 3 5th and 6 11th, and Blakeney Point, where 3 1st and 3rd, 4 11th and 3 19th. Elsewhere counts of 3 at Sidestrand 3rd, and Kelling WM and Beeston Bump 9th. During this period inland records from Castle Acre, Choseley, East Tuddenham, Hickling Broad and Nar Valley Fisheries.

Autumn passage Aug 9th (Beeston Bump) to Oct 23rd (Holme) with 2 notable falls: on Aug 25th 15 Scolt Head and 18 Blakeney Point; on Sept 19th 15 Holme, 25 Scolt Head, 16 Blakeney Point and 20 Sheringham. Other double-figure counts: 10 Salthouse Sept 30th, 13 Waxham Sept 15th, and 18 Winterton Sept 4th with 12 there 24th and 20 25th. Inland records in autumn from Barnhamcross Common, Buckenham, Caistor Fort, Choseley, Fincham Drove, Hilborough, Hickling Broad, Lopham Fen, Pentney GP, Thetford Nunnery Lakes and Tibbenham.

A very late bird Little Barningham Dec 1st (GWF).

## Stonechat

*Saxicola torquata*

### European Stonechat *S (t) hibernans*

#### Very small breeding population; regular passage migrant, local in winter

During Jan/Feb occasional sightings at a variety of sites with max counts of 4 Weybourne, and 3 Cley and Horsey; inland records from Buckenham, Gateley, Haddiscoe, Hickling Broad, Rockland Broad, Roydon Common, Strumpshaw and Whitlingham Lane GP.

Birds more widespread March with peak counts of spring migrants 6 Cley 3rd, 3 Holme 4th, 4 Titchwell 6th and 3 Beeston Bump 12th; birds inland at Barrow Common, Flitcham, Massingham Heath and Thetford Nunnery Lakes. In April only records away from breeding areas Calthorpe Broad 7th, Santon Downham 8th and Sheringham 10th.

Total of at least 13 breeding pairs; at traditional east coast site 7 pairs between Waxham and Winterton South Dunes. Elsewhere successfully bred at Kelling Heath (2 pairs), Salthouse Heath (one pair) and Stanford TA (one pair - birds present all year). Also pair present Dersingham Bog and another Roydon Common June.

Apart from one Eccles Sept 24th-27th (possibly from nearby breeding area) only other Sept records away from traditional sites at Banham Moor and Lopham Fen, both on 26th. First Oct coastal migrant Cley 6th, followed by more widespread records: unusual numbers mid-month when 6 Scolt Head 15th and 9 16th, and 5 Holme 16th, with 8 17th. Inland records from Clippesby Mill, Ludham and Welney.

Still reasonable numbers present Nov/Dec at several coastal sites with max 5 Hunstanton GC/Holme Nov 7th and 11th, 4 Titchwell Nov 12th, 4 Cley Nov 26th and 4 Holme all Dec. Recorded inland at Grimes Graves, Horsey Mere, Rockland Broad, Strumpshaw and Wissington BF.

### **Siberian Stonechat** *S (t) maura/stejnegeri*

#### ***Almost annual vagrant***

A female or 1st-winter Warham Greens Oct 17th (AIB JRMc).



Stonechat (*J R Williamson*)

### **Wheatear**

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

#### ***Increasingly rare migratory breeder and common passage migrant***

Earliest (female) Beeston Bump March 12th with further singles Choseley, Cley and West Runton following day. As usual prolonged spring passage with peak counts April 23rd/24th, when 22 Heacham, 29 Holme, 24 Scolt Head, 26 Blakeney Point, 20 Blakeney GM, 26 Sheringham and 20 Beeston Bump, and May 9th, when 31 Blakeney Point and 40 Sheringham. Passage continued into early June with singles Flitcham 1st, Heacham 3rd, West Runton 4th, Snettisham CP 6th and Holme 7th; also 2 Blakeney Point 10th.

Only breeding records from Stanford TA where total of 15 pairs.

July records from Welney 11th, Snettisham CP 17th and Titchwell 18th, 27th and 29th. Main autumn passage from Aug 13th (Choseley) with only double-figure count of month 12 Blakeney Point 26th. In Sept max counts: 25 Scolt Head and 17 Mundesley/Paston 19th, 37 Blakeney Point, 15 Eccles and 25 Yarmouth South Denes 20th, 18 Hunstanton and 25 Caister 21st, and 19 Sheringham and 12 Cart Gap 25th. In Oct only notable counts 9 Happisburgh 3rd, 5 Horsey 9th and unusually 16 Cromer 16th; subsequently only occasional records of ones and twos during rest of month apart from 4 Salthouse 30th, where 2 remained until Nov 5th and one until 8th.

### **Pied Wheatear**

*Oenanthe pleschanka*

#### ***Vagrant from Central Asia***

A well-watched male Choseley Oct 14th-17th (JVB *et al*); the eighth county record.

## Desert Wheatear

*Oenanthe deserti*

### *Vagrant from North Africa or Central Asia*

Another well-viewed bird on a typical date, a male at Holkham Bay Nov 27th-Dec 11th (RR RNFS *et al*), involving a long walk for many observers; the ninth county record.

## Ring Ouzel

*Turdus torquatus*

### *Passage migrant in fluctuating numbers; exceptional in winter*

First Holme March 25th with further records Waxham, Horsey and Winterton (2) before month end. In April recorded daily from many sites with three distinct peaks: between 2nd-4th when max 5 Cley and 4 Horsey/Waxham 3rd; between 11th-14th with max 6 Blakeney 12th, 5 Holme and 4 Beeston Regis 14th; and 24th/25th with max 15 Holme, 12 Beeston Bump and 11 west Cromer 24th, and 10 Sheringham 25th. A further influx in early May with peak counts of 15 East Ruston and 10 Salthouse 1st, 6 Heacham and 11 Holme 2nd, and 6 Holme, 6 Thornham and 5 Blakeney 3rd. Few records after mid-month with just singles Mundesley 16th and Eccles/Sea Palling 30th. Inland records from Berney, Bodham, Burgh Castle, Choseley, Cockthorpe, East Ruston, Felbrigg Park, Flitcham, Grimston Heath, Gunton Park, Hilborough, Langham, Merton, Northrepps, Potter Heigham, UEA and Welney.

First of autumn Winterton Sept 19th (with up to 4 present 27th) with further singles during month Blakeney Point, Langham, Sidestrand, Thornham, Titchwell and Yarmouth Cemetery. In Oct, singles Sheringham 2nd and Sidestrand 6th but no further records until 15th when 1-2 Holme, Kelling WM, Scolt Head and Yarmouth Cemetery. Apart from 3 Scolt Head 16th, 1-2 birds noted at a further 17 coastal sites during second half of month. In Nov, a single well inland Ludham on 3rd and 22nd.



Ring Ouzel (*A Benson*)

## Blackbird

*Turdus merula*

### *Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Very little evidence of spring movement received with just singles Scolt Head on 3 occasions in March and 5 Waxham April 2nd/3rd.

Breeding season pairs/territories included: Bodham 18, Boyland Wood 7 (5 in 1998), Titchwell 18 and Welney 18 (17 in 1998). In common with Wren, Dunnock and Robin, the BBS showed that 1999 was a good year for this species. There was a further rise of 10% in the average number of birds found per occupied square.



A small arrival Sept 20th when 50 Sidestrand and 40 Yarmouth Cemetery followed by 20 West Runton 25th. In Oct 70 West Runton 6th but main movement from 15th when 160 Scolt Head, 100+ Waxham and 200+ Yarmouth Cemetery. Peak count 16th when 1500+ Bacton/Mundesley with three-figure counts at a further 8 coastal sites from Holme in west to Yarmouth Cemetery in east. A further wave of birds in west of county Oct 22nd when 200 Titchwell, 45 Scolt Head and 180 Brancaster with another small influx on 30th. Fewer records until Nov 12th, when 150 Holme and 140 Titchwell, followed by a noticeable increase throughout the county with flocks of 20-100 birds appearing at a number of coastal and inland sites from mid-month. Last migrants 3 Scolt Head Nov 29th.

## **Fieldfare**

*Turdus pilaris*

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

Peak counts in Jan/Feb from Broads where 1400 Ludham Jan 4th and 600+ Ranworth Jan 14th, with three-figure counts also noted Alderford, Ashill, Buckenham (including a leucistic bird), Caistor Fort, Great Cressingham, Halvergate, Hoe, Ickburgh, Kerdiston, Northwold Fen and Saham Hills. Major movement noted March 18th when 1000 north-west over Thetford in just 30 mins, with evidence of further build-up prior to departure 600 East Wretham Heath March 26th. In east of county, numbers peaked April 1st when 300 Halvergate with three-figure counts from 2 other sites although numbers dwindled rapidly by month end. Still some small flocks present in early May with 55 Heacham and 70 Holme 1st, 40 Snettisham and 20 Sculthorpe Mill 2nd, and 20 East Ruston 6th, with last of spring 2 Sea Palling 8th.

An early returning bird Blakeney Point Aug 7th but no further records until Sept 5th when single Scolt Head, with 1-2 at a further 7 sites to month end. Main immigration from Oct 15th when 260 Lynn Point, 360 Scolt Head, 800 Sidestrand and 250 Welney, while in East Norfolk described as 'widespread'. Movement continued over next few days with peak coastal counts 500+ Sidestrand Oct 16th, 210 Holme 17th and 250 Scolt Head 21st. As these birds moved inland numbers built up at several sites, with max of 2500 Ludham and 560 Hilborough Oct 20th. After a brief lull, a further surge of migrants in west of county on 29th with many birds moving at Hunstanton and 2455 west Scolt Head, with 355 west there the following day. Small-scale movement continued into Nov although a noticeable peak occurred on 10th when 1230 west at Lynn Point in just 1.5 hrs. As usual, inland totals continued to increase during the month with peak counts 880 Welney 8th, 300 Pensthorpe 14th and 1200 Ranworth 27th. An interesting inland movement Dec 12th when 2000 west over Ludham but only other movement of note 140 Holme Dec 31st.

## **Song Thrush**

*Turdus philomelos*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant; recently decreasing***

Little evidence of spring movement with peak counts 10 Sheringham March 6th, 8 south Waxham April 3rd and 3 Scolt Head April 24th, with a single at the latter site May 6th. Since the BBS began in 1995 this species' breeding population appears to have fluctuated considerably with no clear overall pattern emerging as yet. One observer commented that many more were breeding in East Norfolk while at Boyland Wood 2 pairs bred after a complete absence in 1998; in contrast at East Harling a continued decline was noted.

First autumn migrants 4 high west Baconsthorpe Sept 12th and single Blakeney Point 15th, followed by a small movement from 19th when 15 Scolt Head and 5 Blakeney Point, with 10 Sidestrand and 10 Yarmouth Cemetery the following day. Peak movement occurred Oct 15th when 185 Scolt Head, 15 Blakeney Point, 300 Sidestrand and 30 Yarmouth Cemetery, with 65 Holme the following day.

## Redwing

*Turdus iliacus*

### *Common passage migrant and winter visitor*

In Jan, apart from 85 Felbrigg Park 1st, main concentrations in Brecks where 80 Lynford Arboretum 9th, 80 Great Cressingham 16th, 80 Drymere 27th and 85 Santon Downham 30th, with a similar pattern in Feb when peak count 80 Hockwold 6th. Increase in numbers in early March when 150 Holkham Park 2nd with first evidence of northward movement on 11th when 120 Hanworth Common. Main exodus from 17th with 600 Brundall, 200 west Titchwell and hundreds over Sparham, and 250 west Stowbridge Pits the following day. Peak movement 21st with 1000 over East Harling and 280 Lynford Arboretum, but a rapid decline in numbers to month end although 80 still East Wretham Heath 26th. Single-figure counts at just 10 sites in April with final birds of spring Eecles May 18th and East Runton May 20th.

First of autumn 20 south-west Brundall Sept 28th with up to 40 at a further 8 sites before month end. In Oct, 130 over Thetford Nunnery Lakes 1st followed by a small influx on 5th when 'hundreds' over Brundall, 140 west Frettenham, 100 west Stoke Holy Cross and heavy passage over Watton with many flocks of over 100 birds. Main movement from mid-month when 630 Scolt Head and 1500 Sidestrand 15th, 2000 Holkham Meals, 600 west West Runton, 2000 Sidestrand, 2000 Bacton/Mundesley and 1350 west Baconsthorpe (in 2 hrs) all 16th, with peak count of 6000 Holme the following day. Most moved quickly on but three-figure counts noted at 6 sites up to month end. In Nov/Dec little evidence of further movement apart from Nov 10th when many passing Hunstanton and 100+ west Lynn Point. Small numbers noted to year end with max count only 32 Holkham Meals Dec 14th.

## Mistle Thrush

*Turdus viscivorus*

### *Common resident and partial migrant*

Little evidence of spring movement with just single Blakeney Point March 12th and 3 west April 5th, and 2 west April 9th Sheringham. Post breeding flocks noted at several inland sites, peak counts being 40+ Sennowe Park July 25th, 72 Buckenham Tofts Aug 16th, 40+ Raynham Lake Aug 31st and an impressive 82+ Saham Toney Sept 7th.

What may have been early migrants Sidestrand Sept 24th and 29th with further small-scale movement in Oct; peak counts 20 west Brancaster Staithe 4th, 7 Sidestrand 6th with 20 there on 9th, 6 west Sheringham 14th with 10 east 6 west at same site 22nd. Only other migrants reported were 2 in off sea Winterton Nov 24th.

## Cetti's Warbler

*Cettia cetti*

### *Broads breeding population established since 1974*

This species is clearly enjoying the recent run of mild winters, with 1999 seeing a record breeding season. The following are totals of singing males in suitable habitat: *R Yare* Buckenham/Cantley 5, Rockland Broad 10-12, Strumpshaw 15, Surlingham Broad 5, Surlingham Church Marsh 4, Thorpe St Andrew, Wheatfen 3, Whitlingham Lane GP; *R Bure* Ranworth Broad 5, Hall Fen (Hoveton); *R Ant* Barton Broad 3, Barton Turf Fen, Catfield Fen 3, East Ruston, Honing Marsh Farm 2, Horning Hall Marsh, Horning Upper Street 2, How Hill 3, Sutton Broad; *Elsewhere* Berney/Burgh Castle, Burgh Common 2, Chedgrave Common, Filby Broad, Hickling Broad (including Heigham Sound) 10, Martham Broad 3, Ormesby/Rollesby Broad, Smallburgh Staithe, Wayford Bridge and West Somerton. Away from Broads singing male at Rackheath Church April 26th.

This year's total of 90-92 males is by far the highest number of males recorded in the county, and with many presumably going undetected along the huge river network they

inhabit, the real total would certainly be higher. The spread of records is much greater this year but despite the increase, this secretive songster shows little sign of extending its range in any numbers at the present time.

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Singing males	18	28	22	24-27	51	56	27-29	59-61	90-92

The only bird recorded well out of range was at Welney Dec 15th.

**Grasshopper Warbler**  
*Summer visitor and scarce passage migrant*

*Locustella naevia*

The first occurred at Waxham April 6th, the earliest ever county record, followed by more typical arrival date of 9th at Rockland Broad and 11th at Hickling Broad. Then several records from mid-April onwards when 16th Titchwell, 17th Horsey, 19th Hickling Broad (4) and 20th How Hill. After this date recorded more widely with max counts for April and early May from Barton Turf Fen 3, Hickling Broad 10, Holme 4 and Strumpshaw 5.

During the breeding season singing males at Barton Turf Fen 2, Beeston Common, Boughton Fen 4, Brancaster GM 2, Brandon, Breydon, Burgh Common 3, Burnham Overy, Catfield Fen, East Ruston, Fouldon Common, Gillingham Marsh, Hempton 2, Hickling Broad/Heigham Sound 9, Holkham Meals 2, Holme 9, Horning Hall Marsh, Horsey 2, How Hill, Kettlestone Common, Lopham Fen 5, Lynn Point, Marham Fen, Newton Mill, Rockland Broad 5, Scolt Head 2, Snettisham, Strumpshaw 10, Surlingham Church Marsh, Thornham, Titchwell 2, UEA, Upton Fen, Wecting Heath, West Somerton, Whitlingham Marsh (Thorpe St Andrew) 3, Wissington BF 2 and Woodbastwick. Recorded at a similar number of sites and a similar number of birds as 1998.

Autumn records were very scarce with migrants Scolt Head Aug 13th and 21st/22nd; the only Sept record of one Blakeney Point 3rd where, however, 3 late records in Oct on 5th, 17th and 22nd. The last was the second latest ever county date, one being at Weybourne Nov 4th 1967.

**Savi's Warbler**  
*Rare migrant and summer visitor*

*Locustella luscinioides*

A good series of records from Hickling Broad involving 3 different individuals. The first bird was heard singing and seen on April 19th (PJH DJH *et al*) and present until July 21st, followed by a second April 29th-May 22nd (PJH *et al*) and finally a third May 3rd-June 17th (PJH AJK *et al*). These records are a welcome return to form after several disappointing years.

**Sedge Warbler**  
*Summer breeder and passage migrant*

*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Several early records again this year starting with 2 at Titchwell March 30th followed by 2 Hickling Broad next day. In early April something of a rush in the first 4 days with record numbers so early in the month coming from Beeston Bump, Berney, Buckenham, Holkham, Holme 3, Martham Ferry, Strumpshaw, Swanton Morley GP, Thornham and Welney. After this early arrival a more widespread influx with good numbers present by third week at many sites. Best April counts of 20 Holme 23rd, 30 Snettisham CP 24th and 23 Pensthorpe 25th. Obvious migrants Scolt Head April 25th, 30th (2) and in May on 5th, 9th, 15th and 26th, Blakeney Point May 6th, and Beeston Bump April 30th and in May on 1st, 2nd (different bird), 21st and 26th.



The species appeared to have had an excellent breeding season with good numbers noted at many suitable sites. Counts of singing males on territory: Brancaster GM 36, Colney GP and adjoining marshes 21, Cley 86, Hempton 16, Holme 39, King's Lynn BF 10-15, Pensthorpe 26, UEA 11 and Welney 63. Although the BBS data is limited for this species, a second successive reduction in the percentage of squares where this species was recorded may perhaps be a cause for concern. This year's decline was less dramatic than last year's but the previous 3 years' results had suggested a steady population.

As is often the case autumn passage uneventful with few migrants noted; Sept records only from Scolt Head 3rd, Holme 9th, Welney 22nd (6) and Blakeney Point 25th, and finally a very late bird at Berney Oct 14th, equalling the latest county date (Strumpshaw 1998).

### **Marsh Warbler**

*Acrocephalus palustris*

#### ***Rare in late spring and autumn***

A very exciting year for this species with several appearing and the county's first breeding record. Following an obvious migrant Beeston Bump May 28th (GED *et al*), others appeared in June at King's Lynn on 16th (PMW *et al*), UEA Broad 19th-29th (CJB NAC), Ludham 23rd (SL), and in July at East Ruston 7th-22nd (PJH AJK *et al*).

The most interesting development, however, was the news of a breeding pair and 3 more singing males at a site in East Norfolk. The first male noted June 13th was seen to be paired with a female on 21st, both then watched carrying nesting material on 22nd; by July 19th the pair were seen carrying food to the nest site. Nearby a second male from 21st-23rd at least, and a third 21st-29th at least, with a fourth singing male noted 22nd only. With the increase in records in recent years this was perhaps predictable but will they return in future years?

### **Reed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

#### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First recorded April 11th at Hickling Broad, (the earliest county record), but then no other records until Thetford Nunnery Lakes 22nd, Holme and Snettisham 23rd, and Rockland Broad and Titchwell 24th, after which recorded at many sites, but with no marked passage noted at coastal sites.

Singing males on territory in breeding season included: Brancaster GM 37, Cley 136, Filby Broad 37, Hempton 11, Holme 14, King's Lynn BF 15, Pensthorpe 23, Salthouse 13, Stoke Ferry Sluice 19, UEA Broad 16, Weeting Heath 14, Welney 73 and Wissington BF 14. Although many sites noted very little change in numbers this year, at Welney a marked increase, as with Sedge Warbler, following the problems with flooding in 1998. The receipt of more breeding data is a very welcome trend.

Autumn passage was light with only single numbers at coastal sites in Aug while Sept records were scarce with only 5 Waxham 5th, Winterton 11th, 2 Scolt Head 19th, Cantley BF also 19th, and Bacton and Holme 22nd. In Oct late birds at Cantley BF 2nd, Welney 15th, Blakeney Point and Baeton 16th.

### **Icterine Warbler**

*Hippolais icterina*

#### ***Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring***

The first spring since 1995 with no records followed by a very lean autumn. In Aug 2 Yarmouth Cemetery 8th, with one remaining until 11th, followed by another 25th when also 2 Blakeney Point. In Sept only one record, 2 Waxham on 9th. The third year running this species has appeared in below average numbers.

### **Dartford Warbler**

*Sylvia undata*

#### ***Vagrant from southern England and the Continent***

As last year a single record of a bird present at Winterton from Oct 10th-Nov 3rd (SH *et al*), although only seen on 3 dates during this period. This is the fourth consecutive year this former great rarity has appeared; with more mild winters will this species be added to the county's breeding list?

### **Barred Warbler**

*Sylvia nisoria*

#### ***Scarce autumn migrant recorded only once in spring***

An early record at Weybourne Aug 11th. Singles Holme Sept 12th and Eccles Sept 21st were the only other reports, confirming a continuing decline for the fifth consecutive year.

### **Lesser Whitethroat**

*Sylvia curruca*

#### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First reported Holme April 23rd with peak count of 4 at same site April 30th. During May coastal migrants on north and east coasts, with max 5 Yarmouth Cemetery 6th.

During the breeding season, singing male and breeding pair counts of up to 5 Eccles, 4 Holme, 4 East Ruston, 3 Salthouse Heath and 3 Runton parish with records of 1-2 pairs from 42 other sites. Another substantial increase (22%) in the number of squares where this species was recorded during the BBS. However, there is still a fair way to go before this species recovers to its 1995/96 levels.

Autumn passage very light with for example only one record Scolt Head; peak counts of 3 Holme Aug 25th with 4 there Sept 22nd and 3 Eccles Sept 25th. Only 6 coastal sightings in Oct, with the last report Holkham Meals 22nd. A bird at Eccles Nov 12th/13th exhibited a number of features of the race *minula* (NB).

### **Whitethroat**

*Sylvia communis*

#### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First reported at Thetford Nunnery Lakes and East Ruston April 8th, equalling the previous earliest county record in 1956, followed by singles Holme 9th/10th. Max monthly peak 15 Salthouse Heath 27th. Evidence of continuing migration into May with falls of up to 50 Wissington/Wereham 3rd, 20 Waxham 6th, 20 Horsey/Winterton 8th and 10 Bodham also 8th.

Notable breeding season reports included 23 pairs Barrow Common, 11 Boyland Wood (15 pairs 1998) and 9 Holme, with singing males counts of 21 Welney (25 1998), 16 Colney GP, 9 Horsey and 7 Pensthorpe. Breeding was noted at Scolt Head, the first for many years. The BBS seems to indicate that this species' population size is remaining steady.

Autumn passage peaks included 4 Blakeney Point Aug 26th, 5 Waxham Sept 5th, 5 Scolt Head Sept 19th and 9 Blakeney Point Sept 20th. Last reported Holkham Meals Oct 25th.

### **Garden Warbler**

*Sylvia borin*

#### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First reports from Titchwell and Holme April 23rd, with 1-2 Langham, Lyng-Easthaugh, Stiffkey and Cley April 24th. May movement very light with 1-2 at a handful of coastal sites.

Despite this, breeding reports showed an increase on last year, most notable being 7 pairs Hempton, 6 Foulden Common, 6 Kettlestone, 4 Merton, 3 Wayland Wood, 2 Boyland

Wood (3 1998) and 1-2 at 8 other sites. After an apparent reduction in numbers last year, this year's BBS results also indicated a recovery.

Autumn passage underway from Aug 14th when 4 Holkham Meals and 'several' reported Warham/ Stiffkey Aug 25th. Peak counts in Sept included 9 Scolt Head 19th, 3 Sidestrand 20th, 5 Eccles 25th with 1-2 at other regular coastal sites. In Oct singles at Yarmouth 7th, Holkham Meals 18th, Holme 19th/20th, Blakeney Point 20th and Scolt Head 22nd; a late bird at Holkham Meals Nov 16th.

**Blackcap**  
*Summer breeder and passage migrant; winters in small numbers*

*Sylvia atricapilla*

During the first winter period up to 17 reported from 13 sites, compared with 30 at 18 sites in 1998. With the exception of 3 Thompson Water March 31st, 4 Titchwell April 2nd and 3 Kettlestone April 3rd, migration remained light during the month with late peaks 9 Holme 23rd and 8 Sheringham 24th.

Breeding reports included counts of singing males/pairs: 29 Harling Wood, 22 Merton, 14 Roydon Common, 12 Wayland Wood, 10 Barrow Common, 9 Boyland Wood (11 1998), 8 Watton, 8 UEA, 6 Lynford and 5 Welney. No change in population was indicated by the BBS results.

Most notable autumn movements included 10 Overstrand Aug 30th, 8 Holkham Meals Sept 3rd, 15 Holme Sept 19th, 15 Sidestrand Sept 20th, 12 Holkham Meals Oct 22nd/23rd, 11 Scolt Head Oct 22nd and 6 Yarmouth Cemetery Nov 12th.

During second winter period 1-2 reported from Brundall, Corpusty, Garboldisham, Holt, Norwich, Stibbard, Taverham, Wiveton and Yarmouth.

**Greenish Warbler**  
*Vagrant from north-east Europe*

*Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Following last year's 2 spring reports, more typical autumn records of 2 separate birds on Scolt Head Aug 24th and 25th (NML MESR).

**Arctic Warbler**  
*Vagrant from northern Europe*

*Phylloscopus borealis*

Recorded for the second year in succession with a well-watched, albeit elusive, bird at Holme Sept 5th (PLa *et al*).

**Pallas's Warbler**  
*Rare autumn migrant from Siberia*

*Phylloscopus proregulus*

After the poor showing of 1998 a return to double figures with singles in Oct at Bacton 16th (MDF *et al*), Happisburgh 16th/17th (MDF *et al*), Blakeney Point 16th/17th (BAEM *et al*), Holme 18th (NML *et al*) with another 21st/22nd (PLa *et al*), Holkham 20th-23rd with 2 22nd (JBK *et al*), Mundesley 22nd-24th (PMW *et al*) and Waxham 26th (RG PSe *et al*). In Nov 2 Holkham Meals 14th-16th with one until 22nd (JBK JRMc *et al*).

The yearly totals since 1991 are as follows:

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
6	2	7	12	4	29	22	8	11

The decade results since 1957, shown below, show a significant increase, but this may





Pallas's Warbler (*A Benson*)

be due to an increase in the number of observers and observer awareness, as with few exceptions most of the less common *phylloscops* generally follow a similar trend.

1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
1	2	10	51	103

### Yellow-browed Warbler

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

#### *Scarce autumn migrant from Siberia*

First report Waxham Sept 29th. During Oct recorded on many dates Holkham Meals 1st-25th, with peak counts of 3 2nd/3rd and 16th/17th, and at Yarmouth Cemetery 2nd-16th, with peak of 2-3 6th and 8th. Elsewhere singles at exclusively coastal sites: Happisburgh 3rd and 16th/17th, Weybourne (ringed) 6th, Sheringham 6th-8th, Mundesley 6th, 11th and 21st, Waxham 12th/13th, Titchwell 15th, Gorleston 15th-17th, Morston 16th, Cley 16th and Winterton 16th/17th.

### Hume's Leaf Warbler

*Phylloscopus humei*

#### *Vagrant from central Asia*

A well-watched bird, which unlike the 1997 one, obligingly remained at Mundesley Oct 20th-23rd (MDF AJK TL *et al*) allowing observers to study the finer points of this recently split species. This brings the county total to 6.

### Radde's Warbler

*Phylloscopus schwarzi*

#### *Vagrant from central Asia*

Two reports, following a blank year, at Holkham Meals Oct 16th (BHi) and Stiffkey Oct 16th/17th (DSe *et al*).

### Dusky Warbler

*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

#### *Vagrant from northern and central Asia*

Singles at Holkham Meals Oct 15th-17th (AIB *et al*) with a second there a month later on Nov 15th/16th (AIB JRMc *et al*).

### Wood Warbler

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

#### *Passage migrant and rare breeder*

First record Cley April 28th, with possibly the same bird nearby May 1st. Other May reports include singles Kelling 4th, Sheringham 4th and 15th, Sandringham 26th, and Sheringham

and Swanton Novers 31st. A singing bird Sheringham June 14th, but there have been no confirmed breeding reports of this species since 1995.

In autumn 2 Yarmouth Cemetery Aug 9th-11th, with one remaining to Aug 14th, and single Holme Sept 15th/16th.

### **Chiffchaff**

*Phylloscopus collybita*

#### ***Common summer breeder, passage migrant and scarce winter visitor***

During first winter period 1-2 reported from 20 sites, markedly fewer than 1998 when 1-2 at 38 sites. Reports of returning migrants by second week of March, with peak counts of 12 Holme 25th and 9 Hickling Broad 31st. In April, coastal reports included 12 Holkham Meals 14th, 9 Blakeney Point 23rd and 6 Scolt Head 26th.

Singing male counts during breeding season included 4 Catton Park, 4 Wayland Wood and 3 South Wootton, with breeding pair counts of 10 Harling Woods, 10 UEA, 9 Barrow Common, 6 Kettlestone, 5 Boyland Wood, 5 Brancaster, 4 Holme and 3 Watton. Kettlestone recorded first juv ringed June 26th, suggesting that first broods failed. Following an increase last year, the BBS detected a 15% decrease in the number of squares occupied and a 25% decrease in the number of birds per occupied square.

Autumn reports included 6 Overstrand Aug 30th, with best counts in *Sept*: 10 Holkham Meals 3rd, 14 Snetterton GP 13th, 8 Thetford Nunnery Lakes 16th, 12 Winterton and 9 Waxham both 26th; in *Oct*: 11 Holkham Meals 9th and 20 Titchwell 25th. Second winter period counts of 1-2 from 13 sites Nov and 1-2 at 6 sites Dec.

Singles of the race *abietinus* Corpusty Aug 7th, Sheringham Sept 18th and Sidestrand Nov 7th. Reports of the race *tristis* at Paston May 8th (MDF), Holkham Meals Nov 20th (PJH), and Titchwell Nov 12th and 24th (DPo).

### **Willow Warbler**

*Phylloscopus trochilus*

#### ***Common summer breeder and passage migrant***

First reported Cley March 27th/28th, with 5 Hickling Broad by 31st. Peak counts during April included 9 Holme and 5 Weybourne 3rd, 6 Hickling Broad 7th and 8 Scolt Head 24th/25th. One showing characteristics of the race *acredula* Sheringham on the very early date of April 6th. An influx in early May with 18 Scolt Head and 12 Blakeney Point 1st, with 30 at latter site 3rd; passage continued to early June with latest Scolt Head 2nd.

In contrast to previous years, a recovery evident with singing male counts during breeding season of 37 Roydon, 18 Pensthorpe, 14 Welney and 6 South Wootton, with 29 pairs reported Barrow Common, 15 Watton, 12 UEA, 6 Kettlestone and 4 Boyland Wood. The BBS results were also more encouraging with a 20% increase over last year in the number of squares where this species was recorded. As with the previous species, first broods appeared to have failed, but 20 ringed at Kettlestone in late June suggested that this species, normally single brooded, re-nested on this occasion.

Return migration underway in Aug from 9th with peak movement 25th when 30 Holme, 21 Scolt Head and 30 (including one *acredula*) Blakeney Point 25th. Low numbers in Sept with max 8 Scolt Head 19th. Last reports from Waxham and Holme Oct 23rd.

### **Goldcrest**

*Regulus regulus*

#### ***Resident breeder and passage migrant***

In spring, small numbers from mid-March at coastal sites but no major influxes as in 1998.

A good year for this species was apparent from the BBS results. Although the percentage of squares with birds recorded has varied greatly since the survey began, the average number of birds per occupied square has been higher during the last 3 years than in the first two.

First autumn coastal migrant Holme Sept 6th with peak counts during month 8 Scolt Head 22nd, 12 Holme 24th and 20+ Yarmouth Cemetery 28th. In Oct, 100+ Holkham Meals 2nd with counts of 10-50 on various dates from mid-month at Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Blakeney Point, Bacton, Waxham, Winterton and Yarmouth Cemetery. A noticeable influx Nov 20th when 80+ Holkham Meals while in Dec 25 East Wrentham Heath 16th.

## Firecrest

*Regulus ignicapillus*

*Spring and autumn passage migrant; scarce in winter; occasional breeder*

In first winter period singles Holkham Park Jan 17th and Winterton Feb 8th. Spring passage from March 14th at Holkham with records from a further 14 sites during the month. Mainly singles but 3 Yarmouth Cemetery 17th with 2 22nd-29th and 2 Walsey Hills, Cley 20th and 23rd. In April recorded from 14 sites including inland birds at Scarning and Welney, while singing birds noted at Sheringham Park and Waxham. Fewer records May/June but singing birds Eccles, Harling Woods, Holkham Meals (2), Lynford Lake (2) and Welney, although no records of successful breeding reported.

Return movement from Aug 24th at Eccles with further singles in Sept at Holme, Cromer and Yarmouth Cemetery. In early Oct singles Winterton, Langham and Holme, but main passage from 15th when recorded daily until month end from a further 19 mainly coastal sites. Mostly 1-2 birds but 5 Winterton 17th (including 3 ringed), 4+ Holkham Meals 20th, 5 Yarmouth Cemetery 22nd-26th, 3 Scolt Head also 22nd and 3 Happisburgh 25th. Peak counts in Nov 3 Yarmouth Cemetery 14th (with 2 birds to year end) and 4 Holkham Meals 20th, with single Hunstanton 13th. Further singles in Dec at Holkham Meals, Holkham Park, Pretty Corner (Sheringham) and an inland record from Stanford TA 31st.



Firescrest (*P Wilson*)

## Spotted Flycatcher

*Muscicapa striata*

*Declining migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First of year Yarmouth Cemetery May 6th followed by singles Blakeney and Wceting Heath the following day. 1-2 recorded almost daily at widely scattered sites until month end but 3 UEA 15th, 4 Didlington Lake 21st and 5 Holme 27th. Evidence of continued movement early June when 4 Blakeney Point 4th.

In contrast to recent declines in breeding records for this species, a very encouraging increase with pairs noted at 60 sites, the highest recorded county total for some years. Mainly single pairs but 2 Edgefield, How Hill, Langham, Sheringham Park, Titchwell, UEA, Wercham and Weston Park, with 3 at Stibbard and 4 Holme Hale. At Keswick, a pair bred at an old site for the first time in 6 years, but on a more cautionary note Strumpshaw appears to have been abandoned. Additional breeding season records of singles from a further 8 sites gives genuine cause for optimism.





Spotted Flycatcher (*G Wright*)

Evidence of autumn movement from Aug 1st when juv Hellesdon with further records from 21 sites during month, including several family parties, with peak counts 7 East Ruston South Fen 12th and 9 Thetford Nunnery Garden 23rd. Sept passage disappointing with records from just 12 mainly coastal sites, max 3 Holme 19th. Last birds of year Yarmouth Cemetery Oct 2nd and Cley Oct 19th.

### Red-breasted Flycatcher

*Ficedula parva*

*Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring*

A poor year with just 3 records, all in Oct: Holme 5th, Horsey 6th and Yarmouth Cemetery 22nd.

### Pied Flycatcher

*Ficedula hypoleuca*

*Passage migrant, scarce in spring, abundant at times in autumn; has bred*

In April, an early bird Pretty Corner, Sheringham 12th with further singles during month at Kettlestone Common, Pentney Heath, Salthouse Heath and Yarmouth Cemetery. Another disappointing May with records from just 7 sites although a singing male Diddlington 21st; all singles except 3 Yarmouth Cemetery 6th.

First bird of autumn Lopham Fen Aug 14th with small peak 25th when 2 Holme, 4 Scolt Head, 4 Warham/Stiffkey and 9 Blakeney Point, while a bird was found dead in a Norwich garden the following day. In Sept, 1-3 noted on many dates from 21 mainly coastal sites with peak counts of only 6 Yarmouth Cemetery 6th, 4 Blakeney Point 15th, and Scolt Head and Holme 19th. Of note, on the latter date, one Sheringham BO was their only record of the year. No Oct records until 15th when one Scolt Head followed by further singles the following day Sidestrand (and 19th), Paston (and 17th) and Mundesley, with the last of year 22nd when 2 Yarmouth Cemetery.

### Bearded Tit

*Panurus biarmicus*

*Declining resident and partial migrant; periodic influxes from Low Countries*

Recorded in early part of year in small numbers at Brancaster, Cley, Hickling Broad, Horning, How Hill, Martham Broad, Reedham, Rockland Broad, Strumpshaw (where max count 30) and Titchwell.



Bearded Tit (*S Gillings*)

Breeding data received as follows: North coast - Titchwell (24 pairs), Brancaster GM (one), Holkham NNR (3) and Cley (31); Broads - Burgh Castle (3), Cantley BF (3), Hickling Broad (5), Horning (1), How Hill (5) and Strumpshaw (8-11). Largest post breeding counts from Hickling Broad (60), Reedham (20), Strumpshaw (40) and Titchwell where 84 juvs counted July 15th.

In Sept 16 west Thornham 22nd; Oct movements included 7 in from north Snettisham CP 16th, Holme 5 east 17th and 5 east 22nd, Scolt Head 13 west 23rd, Sheringham 3 west 14th and Sidestrand 10 west 13th.

The max counts during second winter period came from Cley (35), Hickling Broad (30) and How Hill (20).

### Long-tailed Tit

*Aegithalos caudatus*

**Common resident breeder; Scandinavian white-headed race very rare in autumn**

The only notable flocks in first part of year were 26 Beeston Rcgis, 18 East Runton, 12 Elsing, 40 Felbrigg Park, 10 Flitcham, 17 Great Hockham, 15 Holkham Park, 10 Kelling WM, 35+ Stalham Fen and 28 Thetford Nunnery Lakes. At Kettlestone Common 6 retrapped from previous year suggested a good winter survival.

Found in nearly half the squares surveyed during the BBS, the best result since the survey began in 1995.



Continental Long-tailed Tit (*J R Williamson*)





Woodcock – this charismatic species remains under-recorded (*T Howes*).

Nightingale – this renowned songster was the subject of a major survey this year (*R Tidman*).







Black-winged Practincole – a major find in July and the first since 1974 (*D Nye*); Pectoral Sandpiper – one of three present at Titchwell in September (*J V Bhalerao*).

Purple Sandpiper – a confiding juvenile in the Cley/Salthouse area during August (*J V Bhalerao*).





Curlew Sandpiper – one of many seen in a bumper autumn passage (*D Nye*).

Common Sandpiper – high numbers also seen in early August (*J V Bhalerao*).







Red-necked Phalarope – usually recorded in early autumn but this individual was found inland in November (*N Bowman*).

Spotted Redshank – a regular passage migrant seen here at Cley in September (*J V Bhalerao*).





Flocks later in year included 26 Baconsthorpe Oct 16th, 27 and 19 Beeston Regis Aug 10th, 65 Burgh Common Oct 27th-29th, 52 East Wretham Heath (2 flocks) Dec 16th, 38 Holme Oct 21st, 60 Horning Hall Dec 28th, 40 Horning Marsh Farm Oct 12th, 60 How Hill Aug 15th, 55 Sheringham Oct 28th, 40 Sidestrand Oct 9th, 27 Strumpshaw Dec 19th, 30 Thetford town centre Sept 28th, 60 Titchwell Oct 27th, 23 Welney Oct 23rd, 20 West Runton Nov 13th, 28 Winfarthing July 23rd and 30 Yarmouth Cemetery Oct 12th.

Coastal migration: 16 Scolt Head Oct 18th, 9 east Blakeney Point Oct 22nd and 18 east Mundesley Nov 13th.

A semi white-headed bird showing characteristics of an intergrade between *europaeus*/*caudatus* appeared at Wiveton Nov 11th remaining in area until year end.

## Marsh Tit

*Parus palustris*

### Breeding resident

Reported from 44 localities, marginally down on last year. Breeding records included pairs at Hockham Fen (4), Lynford Arboretum (2), Pentney Heath (2-3), Snetterton GP (3). Strumpshaw (3) and Thompson Common (5). Described as 'extremely common in Brecks' whereas at Sparham 'harder to find than in previous years'.

In contrast to the above the BBS results indicated that there was a substantial increase of 75-80% in both the number of occupied squares and the average number of birds per occupied square. With relatively scarce species the BBS results need to be treated with caution but this must surely reflect a genuine increase.

## Willow Tit

*Parus montanus*

### Breeding resident in decline

Reported from 69 localities compared with 68 last year, most surprisingly, however, 40 were new sites. These were Blo' Norton Fen, Brancaster GM, Briston, Brundall, Cockley Cley, Cranwich GP, East Ruston Common, East Wretham Heath, Fakenham (R Wensum), Flitcham, Foxley Wood, Great Bircham, Gressenhall, Heigham Corner, Hilborough Estate, Hockham, (Cranberry Rough and Fen), Holkham, Holme, Horning Hall Marshes and Waterworks, How Hill (Reedham Marshes), Langham, Lenwade, Massingham Heath, Narborough, Ormsby Little Broad, Pentney Heath, Sennowe Park, Sheringham Park, Sparham Pools, Stody, Sutton High Fen, Swaffham Forest, Thompson Water, Thorpe Marriott, Tottenhill GP, Weasenham St Peter, Wending (Honeypot Wood) and Whitlingham Lane GP.

The BBS detected a total of only 2 birds in 56 squares. This compares with 22 for Marsh Tit.

1998 Correction: Ling Common (Coltishall) should read Ling Common (North Wootton).

## Coal Tit

*Parus ater*

### Breeding resident and passage migrant

The BBS found Coal Tits in slightly more squares this year than before.

Only one concentration reported, a loose flock of 45 Beeston Regis Sept 13th.

Birds showing characteristics of continental race *P a ater* Holme Sept 22nd, Yarmouth Cemetery Oct 12th, 5 Holkham Oct 19th, Langham Oct 20th and Nov 9th, West Runton Oct 23rd and Mundesley Oct 23rd-25th.

## Blue Tit

*Parus caeruleus*

### Common breeding resident and passage migrant

In spring 2 noted flying high west with 2 Great Tits along cliffs West Runton March 14th.

Breeding reports included 6 pairs at Barrow Common, Boyland Wood and UEA, and 9 pairs at Welney. At Weston Dinosaur Park a pair nested in a mushroom bench cover, despite much disturbance by visitors. The BBS results showed no change in the population.

In autumn largest flocks noted were 40 How Hill Aug 15th and 20 Holme Oct 19th.

### **Great Tit**

*Parus major*

#### ***Common breeding resident and passage migrant***

Westerly spring passage noted at Holme where 2 March 14th, 30th and 31st, and 4 April 2nd, and at West Runton where 2 March 14th with 2 Blue Tits.

Breeding records from Barrow Common (4 pairs), Brancaster GM (4), UEA (9) and Welney (8). At Weston Dinosaur Park 2 pairs nested in model dinosaur mouths.

In autumn a flock of 40 How Hill Aug 15th and 10 Holme Oct 19th. A presumed migrant Scolt Head Oct 23rd.

### **Nuthatch**

*Sitta europaea*

#### ***Breeding resident, possibly in decline***

Breeding records included 3 pairs at Lynford Arboretum, UEA and Wayland Wood. This species is too scarce for the BBS to provide a clear indication on population fluctuations but it would appear that the species has not fared as well during the last 2 years as during the first 3 years of the survey. Wandering birds at Holme May 3rd and Becston Bump June 15th.

### **Treecreeper**

*Certhia familiaris*

#### ***Widespread woodland resident***

Very little information received. At least 10 singing males in Merton parish and 'undoubtedly many more in private woodlands in parish'.

Wandering birds or migrants Holme Sept 30th and Yarmouth Cemetery Sept 20th and Nov 11th-14th.

### **Penduline Tit**

*Remiz pendulinus*

#### ***Vagrant and potential breeder***

Compared to 1998 only one record, imm/1st-winter male Berney Dec 5th (PRA).

### **Golden Oriole**

*Oriolus oriolus*

#### ***Scarce migratory breeder and passage migrant in small numbers***

Four typical spring migrants: a female/imm male Scolt Head May 1st/2nd, a male Holkham Meals May 14th, a 1st-winter male in off sea West Runton May 29th and one Whitlingham Marsh (Thorpe St Andrew) June 6th.

Breeding: a very poor season in the county, the worst since survey work started in 1986. One pair bred with at least 3 young fledged; 2 pairs also probably bred. At one site a pair present all season and at another a male also present all season and seen chasing a predator on one occasion. Bird(s) seen very infrequently also at 4 other sites (information from Golden Oriole Group).

### **Red-backed Shrike**

*Lanius collurio*

#### ***Passage migrant in small numbers; last bred 1989***

Records reached a new low with just 4 occurrences, a major contrast with the numbers seen in 1998. In spring a female Cley May 21st and a male Scolt Head June 16th were only records. A single midsummer bird Titchwell July 16th was followed by the only autumn

record at the same site Aug 27th/28th. With a continuing decline in north-European populations this attractive species looks set to become a scarce migrant.

### Great Grey Shrike

*Lanius excubitor*

#### *Scarce passage migrant and declining winter visitor*

In Jan a well-watched bird at Santon Downham from 1st intermittently to Feb 10th, with further singles Oxborough Wood Jan 14th, Reephham Feb 1st/2nd and Fritcham Feb 11th. In line with recent declines in spring migrants, just a single at Holme April 10th.

In autumn a small influx from mid-Oct involving probably 8 birds: south between East and West Runton 15th, Thornham Marsh/Point 16th, Stiffkey 17th (also over Wells Boating Lake and Holkham GM), Halvergate 18th, Winterton 20th, Burnham Overy Dunes 22nd, Kelling 26th and Stanford TA from 31st (to year end). In Nov also one East Wretham Heath 25th.

1998 Addition: Blakeney April 10th.



Great Grey Shrike (V Hanlon)

### Jay

*Garrulus glandarius*

#### *Common resident; periodic influxes from the Continent following failure of acorn crop*

An unusual spring concentration of 11 Thetford Nunnery Lakes March 22nd. In addition to one flying north-east out to sea Paston April 15th, other possible migrants were singles Holme April 19th, west Sidestrand May 16th and 4 Eccles 13th.

The BBS indicated that last year's reduction in numbers had been reversed.

In autumn, 2 in off sea Sidestrand Sept 20th; other possible migrants in Oct included 3 Holme 7th and 5 on 16th, 2 west Morston 16th, 2 east Sheringham 3rd, 7 west Cromer 13th and 5 Horsey 14th. In addition up to 13 Titchwell in Oct and a notable concentration of 12 Norwich Cemetery 16th.

At Old Catton, where one was reported in 1998 attempting to take peanuts from a bag at a garden bird table, it had clearly mastered the art and was regularly feeding from a hanging bird feeder in Nov.

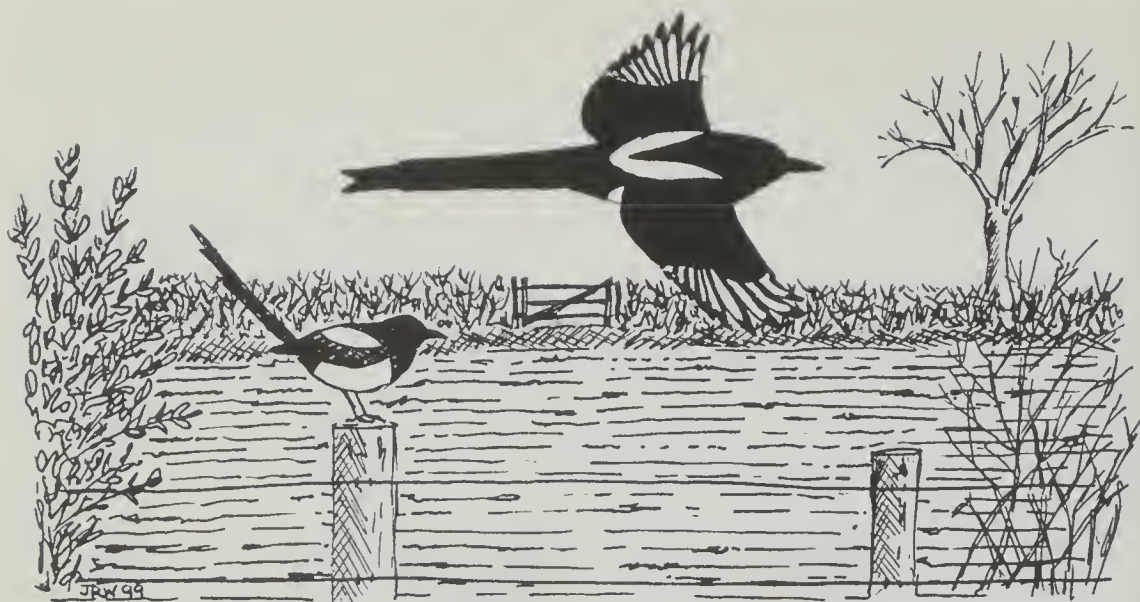
### Magpie

*Pica pica*

#### *Common resident forming winter roosts*

As expected, max roost counts Roydon Common with 186 Jan 10th and 170 Feb 13th; in second winter period, 14 East Wretham Sept 21st, 22 at pre-roost gathering Horsey Nov 22nd and 37+ Stubb Mill, Hickling Dec 26th. Other notable winter counts 31 Whitlingham Lane GP Jan 24th and 27 UEA Feb 25th.





Magpies (J R Williamson)

Presumed spring migrants along north coast March 14th-April 23rd, all west except as stated: Holme 18 March 14th, 5 30th and 7 April 1st; Scolt Head 3 March 31st and one April 15th; Sheringham 7 March 24th; Beeston Bump 4 east March 25th and 3 west April 23rd.

A first-ever breeding attempt at Scolt Head, where pair present April 4th-May 15th, but disappeared without any encouragement! Marked increase in number of breeding pairs East Tuddenham. Like the last species, the BBS found that last year's reduction had been reversed.

In autumn, a pre-roost gathering of 22 Holme Oct 5th and 2 possible migrants high west Overstrand 6th.

## Jackdaw

*Corvus monedula*

### *Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Largest winter gatherings reported were 3-4000 at a mixed roost with Rooks Ringland Feb 19th, a mixed flock with Rooks of 1000+ Brinton Feb 2nd, 400 Wretham Jan 17th, 200 Thetford Jan 20th, 200 Weeting Nov 17th and 290 Pentney GP Dec 4th; also 800+ flying over Horning to Buckenham roost Nov 14th.

Coastal spring passage March 12th-May 11th. Max counts at main sites: 28 east Holme April 1st, 9 west Scolt Head April 23rd and 8 west May 11th, 15 west Beeston Bump March 26th, 11 west West Runton March 14th, 8 east Overstrand April 6th and 32 north Winterton (0730-1000 hrs) May 8th, when 40 also present.

The decrease last year was reversed this year according to the BBS results.

An impressive post breeding gathering of 650 Aylmerton Aug 4th.

Autumn passage Sept 28th-Nov 7th, with highest counts of 90 west Sidestrand Oct 15th with 90 west also there Nov 7th, and 250 in off sea Mundesley Oct 16th. A total of 180 at Sheringham Oct 5th may have included some migrants.

Individuals showing characteristics of the continental/eastern forms at Cley Jan 15th, Blackborough End Tip March 20th, East Harling March 21st, Salthouse Nov 2nd and Pentney GP Dec 4th.

## Rook

*Corvus frugilegus*

### *Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Very large parties of Rooks, outside the breeding season, are becoming increasingly common in the county, especially in the vicinity of open pig farms. At least 2000 Edgefield/Saxthorpe and East Harling, with 1000 at Corpusty/Thurning and a mixed flock with Jackdaws of 1000+ at Brinton. A mixed roost with Jackdaws of 3-4000 Ringland Feb 19th and a peak of 5000 Buckenham roost Oct 24th.

In recent years most rookeries have been increasing in size and in Stanford TA 340 nests counted. New rookeries are also appearing, for instance 40 nests at Long Stratton for first time. Last year's fall in the number of squares recorded during the BBS was not reversed unlike the preceding corvids but there was a 13% increase in the average number of birds seen per occupied square.

Spring passage March 11th-May 8th with peak in North Norfolk late March to mid-April (a few weeks earlier than Carrion Crow). Max counts at main sites: 23 west Holme March 14th, 19 west Burnham Overy Dunes March 25th, 12 east Beeston Bump April 3rd and 12 west 23rd, 11 east Overstrand April 6th and 48 east Paston March 31st. In East Norfolk, 9 south and 42 north Winterton (0730-1130 hrs) April 10th, but peak numbers in May when 22 north Waxham 5th and 114 north Winterton (0730-1000 hrs) 8th, when 80 also present.

Apart from 98 high west Northrepps July 23rd, only autumn migrants were 6 in from sea Holme Sept 22nd, 6 west Scolt Head Oct 6th and 8 north Horsey Oct 16th.

## Carrion Crow

*Corvus corone*

### *Increasing resident forming winter roosts; also a passage migrant*

As usual largest roost counts during the two winter periods at Roydon Common with max 120+ Feb 13th and 285 Dec 31st. Other large assemblies in second winter period were 63 in one tree at dusk at Roekland Nov 24th, 140 Lopham Fen Dec 2nd and 94 Saddlebow Dec 17th.

Spring passage March 13th-May 13th, peaking late April and early May. Max counts at main sites: 71 west Scolt Head April 23rd and 37 west May 11th, 14 west Weybourne May 9th, 13 west Beeston Bump March 28th and a total of 40 Carrion Crows/Rooks west April 23rd, 14 west West Runton March 16th, 30 east Sidestrand May 2nd and 42 east Paston May 9th. In East Norfolk, 72 north Winterton (0730-1130 hrs) April 10th and 62 north (0730-1000 hrs) May 8th, when 35 also present in Winterton/Horsey area.

A much lighter autumn passage Sept 18th-Oct 14th, the only double-figure counts were 21 east Cromer Sept 18th and 10 south Horsey Oct 3rd.

**Hooded Crow** *C c cornix*: The Horsey/West Somerton/Waxham area remained the best place to see Hooded Crow during the winter, with up to 3 Jan-March and one to April 5th; also up to 2 from Nov 23rd to end of year, with a hybrid Nov 27th/28th.

In spring, west Sidestrand May 2nd, east Sheringham 3rd and 4 further records of singles in Winterton/Horsey/Waxham area 9th-14th.



Hooded Crow (J R Williamson)

First of autumn Horsey Sept 25th, Waxham next day and west Sidestrand 28th. More widespread in second winter period with singles Holkham, Wells, Winterton, Halvergate Marshes and Whitlingham Lane GP Oct 17th-26th, Clippesby Nov 14th, Brancaster/Titchwell/Docking area from Nov 14th to end of year with 2 Dec 27th/28th, in off sea Morston Nov 29th and west Cley next day, and in Dec Cockley Cley 5th-31st, Roydon Common 11th, Saddlebow 13th-17th and Castle Acre 28th.

## **Raven**

*Corvus corax*

### ***Formerly bred; now a vagrant/escape***

One at Grimston Heath Feb 5th (BAEM RFP), the seventh record since 1993. Some of the records may well be related to the successful reintroduction scheme in The Netherlands or escapes.

## **Starling**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

### ***Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Only 3 sizeable roosts reported in early part of year: 8000 Wretton Fen Jan, 2000 Woodlands Estate, Thetford Feb 15th and 2500 Swaffham March 5th. Also 2000 feeding on open pig farm at Rockland St Mary Jan 16th.

Spring passage from March 11th with all notable counts during next 6 days: 2500 east Sheringham 13th and 2000 east 15th, 950 east West Runton 16th, 600 east per hour Paston 11th and 1000 east per hour 16th, and 3000 in Winterton/Somerton Dunes 13th, when 50 south-east out to sea and 220 south. During same period 400 roosted in a Blakeney garden on 17th, a unique event.

Apart from 46 west Overstrand May 13th, first midsummer westerly movement noted June 12th at Scolt Head, where four-figure counts of 1150 June 23rd, 1400 on 29th and 1150 July 21st, during which period large numbers fed on the saltmarsh peaking at 7100 July 18th. Elsewhere 800 west Beeston Bump (0545-0645 hrs) June 15th and 650 west (0650-0715 hrs) on 17th, while 7000 roosted at Titchwell June 23rd -29th and 3500 Snettisham July 17th. An interesting record of 6000 roosting on St Nicholas Parish Church, Yarmouth Sept 18th.

Main westerly autumn passage early Oct-early Nov, peaking in late Oct. Max site counts: 16,000 Holme Oct 16th and 23,250 on 29th, 2500 per hour throughout the day at Titchwell Oct 30th, at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 29,300 Oct 23rd, 32,150 29th, 27,500 30th and 19,925 Nov 5th, 2500 Stiffkey Oct 7th, 5000 Blakeney Point Oct 30th, 3500 Sheringham Oct 22nd, 1200 per hour in late morning Beeston Bump Oct 30th, 1980 West Runton Oct 16th, 2500 in off sea Waxham (1000-1200 hrs) Oct 30th and 940 Horsey (in 3 hrs) Oct 30th. Other notable counts during same period were 8000 roosting at Holme Oct 18th and similar number feeding on grazing marsh next day, 1000s on Stiffkey saltmarsh Oct 22nd, 2500 north Bodham Oct 31st, and at Saddlebow 2000 Oct 28th and 2500 Nov 1st.

The 3 largest roosts reported in second winter period were at How Hill, where 6-8000 at Turf Fen Oct 28th increased to a peak of 22,000 Nov 12th-16th, before falling to a max in Dec of 12,000, and 30,000 Bush's Marsh Dec 18th, while Hall Fen, Irstead held 50,000 Dec 27th.

There were two reports of albinos at Emneth June 5th and Thetford July 1st-16th.

## **Rose-coloured Starling**

*Sturnus roseus*

### ***Vagrant from eastern Europe***

1998 Correction: The adult at Diss was present until April 5th.



## House Sparrow

*Passer domesticus*

### *Common but declining resident*

Very little data received about this declining species, although the BBS found birds in nearly 60% of squares. In early part of year the only notable flocks reported were 100 Egmore Jan 1st, up to 60 Pasta Food Factory, Yarmouth in Jan (where up to 110 in corresponding period last year) and 89 Stoke Ferry Feb 6th. The only migrants recorded were at Holme where 2 west March 29th and 3 west April 6th. The largest post breeding gatherings in July were up to 80 at Flitcham Abbey Farm and at Ashill; in Aug 90 Baconsthorpe, 110 King's Lynn Docks, 60 Stibbard and 50-60 Old Catton; in Sept 50 Blakeney Quay. In many rural areas it appears to be as scarce as Tree Sparrow. **Observers are requested to submit all records of this species in order to obtain a picture of its true status.**

## Tree Sparrow

*Passer montanus*

### *Scarce resident; passage migrant and winter visitor*

In first quarter of year, largest parties recorded from north-west of county with highest site counts in Jan of 70 Flitcham, 20 Fulmodeston and 50 Massingham Heath, and in Feb 25 Great Massingham. Other flocks noted in Brecks where: Jan 10 Great Hockham, 13 Middle Harling; Feb 12 Marham Fen; March 24 East Harling, 10 East Wretham Heath, 18 Hilborough, 30 South Pickenham and 20 Stanford TA. Only other double-figure count 16 Tuddenham in central Norfolk.

Only 2 records suggesting spring migration, 2 east Sheringham April 3rd and 2 west Paston April 17th.

All breeding season records given (single pairs unless stated) and the majority bred successfully: Broom Green, Choseley, East Rudham (3) and Fulmodeston (16), in the north-west; Baconsthorpe (5 juvs) and Corpusty in the north-east; Runhall in central Norfolk; Merton and Stanford TA (11 broods in 8 nest boxes) in Brecks. Also in Fens a party of 12 at Parsonage Drove May 2nd. The 16 pairs at Fulmodeston bred in an area of one and a quarter acres, where only a single pair was present in the late 1980s and 7 pairs in 1998. The increase was attributed to the provision of suitable habitat (including roost sites), intensive feeding throughout the year and erection of nest boxes. Largest post breeding flocks were 55 Baconsthorpe and 40 Hilborough Aug, 36 Choseley and 17 Ouse Washes Sept.

Only evidence of autumn passage, a feature of the past, singles Scolt Head Sept 3rd and Eccles 9th.

During Nov/Dec the only double-figure counts were 30 Choseley and 40 Weasenham St Peter in the north-west; 10 Stody in the north-east; 70 Gooderstone, 45 Hilborough and 75 Illington in Brecks.

## Chaffinch

*Fringilla coelebs*

### *Common resident; also passage migrant and winter visitor in varying numbers*

In opening two months of year flocks in excess of 100 reported as follows: 200 Buckenham, 250 Buckenham Tofts, 300 Gimingham, 400 Great Hockham, 110 Holkham, 150 Illington, 200 Mannington, 200 North Creake, 130 Roydon, 200 Sheringham Park, 200 Snetterton, 120 Stiffkey, 200 Taverham, 115 Welney, 120 West Beckham and 300 Wretham.

Very few records of spring migration: at Beeston Bump up to 5 from March 12th to month end with max 40 west March 24th, 55 west Holme March 14th, and singles Scolt Head April 16th and 26th.

Breeding season reports of males holding territory, with 1997 totals where available in brackets: Holme 9 (14), Bodham 20, Boyland Wood 12, UEA 5 (4), Barrow Common 7 and Welney 39 (26). Once again there was no significant change detected by the BBS.

Visible autumn migration from Sept 16th with peak Oct 13th-23rd. Highest Oct counts 300 east and 100 west Holme 16th when 100 also present, 810 west Brancaster Staithe (0730-0930 hrs) 14th, 150 in off sea and then west Weybourne 15th, 200 west Beeston Bump (0715-1000 hrs) 13th and 250 west (0700-0800 hrs) 14th, 150 east Cromer 15th and 200 east Mundesley 23rd; also 50 Yarmouth Cemetery 15th/16th and 200 Bodham 22nd.

Flocks of 100 or more in Dec: 100 Edgefield Hall, 100 Marsham, 110 Riddlesworth and 200 Wootton Carr.

## **Brambling**

*Fringilla montifringilla*

### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers***

Far less numerous in early part of year than in corresponding period in 1998. Apart from 50 North Creak and 200 Taverham in Jan, and 60 Gimingham in Feb, all counts exceeding 50 were in Brecks with 80 Beechamwell, 150 Foulden, 100 Hillington, 50 Narborough and 250 Swaffham in Jan, and 80 Broom Green, 150 Buckenham Tofts, 450 Marham Fen and 400 Swaffham Forest in Feb. Far fewer noted in March, the highest counts being 40 Castle Rising 3rd, and 54 Northrepps and 150 Taverham both 4th; however, 3 notable gatherings in Brecks in April with 65 Furze Heath, Ickburgh 1st, 35-40 Thetford 11th and 35 Fritcham 18th.

Very few recorded on visible migration in spring: 3 west Holme March 14th, 25 south Winterton March 24th and one east Beeston Bump April 2nd. The latest spring records were Eccles April 26th and Titchwell May 1st, with a male at Cromer June 4th, only the fifth June record since the mid-1980s.

Autumn passage commenced Sept 26th when 2 Holme and one Scolt Head; then none until Oct 6th, when 15 south-west Sidestrand and 23 Stiffkey following day. Main arrival mid-Oct with 40 south Snettisham 16th, 65 west Holme 16th, 55 in off sea Scolt Head 15th, 100 east Holkham Meads 16th and 85 west 19th, 50 in off sea then west Weybourne 15th, 85 west Sheringham 14th, 50 in off sea Sidestrand 15th and 150 next day, 200 west Paston/Bacton 16th and 25 Yarmouth Cemetery 15th/16th.

Max counts in Nov of 50 Wiveton and 110 Waxham. In Dec notable counts were 50 Barrow Common, 50 Hilborough, 50 North Wootton/Castle Rising, 100 Stanford TA, 106 Stanhoe and 80 Stody.

## **Serín**

*Serinus serinus*

### ***Vagrant from continental Europe***

1996 Addition: Male Happisburgh June 2nd (RHe).

## **Greenfinch**

*Carduelis chloris*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant***

Some notable flocks reported during early part of year, including 300 Gimingham, 200 Hickling, 150 Hilborough and 200 North Creak in Jan, and 104 in a pre-roosting flock Beeston Regis, 100 Lynford Arboretum and 100 West Acre in Feb. The largest flocks, however, were in Fens with 150 at Wiggshall St Mary Magdalen Jan, increasing to 300 early Feb and up to 200 in March, while 800 at Wiggshall St Peter Jan 11th is the largest flock to have been reported in the county since 1975 when up to 2000 were at Winterton the

same month. The only counts of spring passage, with birds moving west, from Holme where 63 March 14th, and West Runton where 37 also March 14th, 14 15th and 12 16th.

During the BBS Greenfinches were found in more squares than before although perhaps as a result the average number per occupied square continued to fall.

The largest post breeding flocks (all in late Aug and Sept) were 200 Dereham, 200 Hethersett (on oil seed rape), 50 Langham, 75 Horning Waterworks and 45 RAF Neatishead (both on game cover strips), and 80 Tibenham. All reports (except one) of visible autumn migration along north coast concentrated in period Oct 9th-27th: Holme 51 west 9th, 63 west 14th, 220 east 55 west with 100 present 16th, 60 east 19th with up to 70 present until month end; Scolt Head 34 west 13th, 54 west 14th, 72 feeding on rose hips 22nd and 53 west Nov 5th; 170 west Brancaster Staithe (0730-0930 hrs) 14th; Sheringham 150 west 10th, 100 east 40 west 22nd; Beeston Bump 230 west (0645-0845 hrs) 11th and 190 west (0700-0800 hrs) 12th; West Runton 50 west 17th, 76 west 23rd and 36 west 27th; 129 east Cromer 16th and 320 east Mundesley 23rd. Counts at Waxham of 170 12th and 100 14th almost certainly would have involved migrants. Another unusually large concentration of 500 West Acre Oct 16th. Counts of 100 or more in Nov/Dec: 110 Claxton, 100 Sea Palling, 200 Sparham, 120 Titchwell and 180 Weeting. The only roost reported was at Baeton Gas Terminal where 100 in Nov, increasing to 200 Dec.

## Goldfinch

*Carduelis carduelis*

### *Common resident, passage migrant and summer visitor*

In early part of year, some of the largest flocks ever recorded in the county were present in the Wiggshall area with max monthly counts of 400 Jan 11th, 300 Feb 1st and 3rd, and 200 in March; also in Fens 73 Welney Jan 26th and 150 Watlington March 10th. Elsewhere notable counts in Jan were 70 Taverham and 80 Wilton Bridge, in Feb 120 Ormesby and 80 Snetterton GP, in March 80 Cockley Cley and 120 Gooderstone Warren.

Spring passage April 8th-May 21st with highest day counts of visible migrants at Scolt Head where 85 west April 22nd and 23rd, 105 west 25th, 95 west May 8th and 73 west 9th, 50 west Sheringham May 1st, 150 east Overstrand April 25th and 80 per hour west Paston (0600-1000 hrs) May 9th.

In East Norfolk, many more pairs were noted during the breeding season. Following 3 years of decline, the BBS found birds in more squares than in any of the last 3 years. However, the average number of birds per occupied square was lower than in any year since the survey began in 1995. Notable post breeding flocks: 60 Lynn Point Aug 27th, at Holme 92 Sept 22nd and 60 Oct 8th, and 50 Happisburgh Sept 25th. At Blakeney GM 60 Sept 19th and 150 30th were almost certainly the same birds recorded at Cley where 150 Sept 24th and 200 26th.

The only reports of autumn migration came from Scolt Head where 34 west Oct 13th, 85 west 22nd and 11 west Nov 3rd, with many staying to feed on the tideline, peaking at 107 Oct 11th and 80 Nov 4th. The largest parties in Dec were 60 Happisburgh and 50 East Wretham.

## Siskin

*Carduelis spinus*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor in fluctuating numbers; small numbers breed*

Following on from the low numbers recorded in late 1998 many observers commented on the paucity of this species in first winter period. Records widespread, but at most localities sightings were usually of single figures on only one or two occasions. Highest counts: Jan



120 Bintree Mill, 40 Briston, 42 Catfield Fen, 100+ Garboldisham, 50 Pensthorpe, 35 Santon Downham, 70 Thetford Nunnery Lakes with 120 north there 23rd, 50 UEA, 70 West Acre Ford; *Feb* 25 Beeston Regis, 60 Lynford Arboretum, 65 Taverham GP, 100 Tottington, 40 UEA; *March* 55 Pensthorpe, 30 UEA, 30 Warren Wood (Thetford).

As usual numbers declined rapidly in March with poor coastal passage, best counts 39 west Holme March 14th, 7 Beeston Bump March 16th, 20 Holkham Meals March 25th, 20 Sheringham April 1st, and 9 Snettisham CP and 9 west Scolt Head April 4th. Only records after mid-April singles at Lynford Arboretum, Scolt Head, Sheringham, Stoke Holy Cross and Wells, with 2 Beeston Regis June 24th.

Only breeding report pair with 3 juvs Lynford Arboretum July 25th. Otherwise July/Aug records of 1-2 from Beeston Regis, Langham and Sheringham Park. At Garboldisham only 324 ringed during the year (cf 1100 in 1998); all controls had been ringed relatively nearby with none from the Continent.

First autumn migrant Eccles Aug 24th, then Scolt Head and Blakeney Point Sept 5th. Another very poor autumn arrival, with passage noted till early Nov, peaking mid-Oct. Very few counts exceeded double figures with best: *Oct* 13 Holme 6th and 13 west there 13th; 9 west 3 east Sidestrand 14th; 38 east Holme, 200 Holkham Meals, 10 east Cromer and 20+ Winterton all 16th; 45 east Holme 17th, with 37 east there 19th and 30+ 23rd; 13 north Happisburgh 26th; 11 west Sidestrand and 29 north Waxham 27th; 17 west Sidestrand 28th and 14 West Runton 30th; *Nov* 16 west Scolt Head 2nd. Correspondingly searce inland in autumn with best counts in Oct 30 Pensthorpe 9th, 12 West Acre 22nd, 10 Ormesby Little Broad 28th and 18 Honing Lock 29th, plus 30 UEA during the month.

Once again only meagre numbers noted in second winter period, with best counts: *Nov* 26 Horning Waterworks; *Dec* 56 Buckenham Tofts, 70 Edgefield Hall, 65 Hunworth, 120 Lynford Arboretum, 50 Marsham, 63 Santon Downham, 80 Stanford Water, 40+ Thompson Water, 40 Thorpe Marriot and 45 UEA.

## Linnet

*Carduelis cannabina*

### *Common resident and passage migrant*

Although seemingly scarce in late 1998 many good-sized flocks were located throughout the county at start of year, with best counts: *Jan* 166 Beeston Regis, 100 Bodney, 240 East Beckham, 130 Flitcham, 100+ Magdalen, 300 North Creake, 180 Stiffkey (on stubble) and 120 Thornham (saltmarsh); *Feb* 180 Beeston Regis, 150 Flitcham and 150 Hilborough (on pig fields); *March* 120 Gooderstone Warren, 300 Thetford Nunnery Stud and 150 Watlington.

Spring passage noted from mid-March, peaking in early April. Highest monthly counts: *March* 120 west West Runton 14th, 150 west Overstrand 15th, 240 west Sheringham 27th, 144 west Holme 29th; *April* at Scolt Head westerly movements of 250 5th, 205 7th, 685 8th, 1085 9th, 305 10th, 590 11th, 200 (present) 13th, 410 14th, 125 15th, 145 22nd, 130 24th with 150 present 22nd-24th, and 120 25th. Elsewhere 100 south Winterton (1030-1300 hrs) 2nd, 96 south Waxham and 100+ south Horsey (1000-1200 hrs) 3rd, 360 west Sheringham, 204 west West Runton and 900 west Overstrand (0600-1100 hrs) all on 5th, 152 west Beeston Bump (0615-0745 hrs) 9th, 310 west West Runton and 517 south Horsey Bramble Hill (0730-1130 hrs) 10th, 123 Holme 17th, 1800 east Overstrand 25th and 120 West Runton 28th; also total 890 west Cromer in first 2 weeks of month.

Again little data received for summer months. Breeding details from Barrow Common (18 pairs), Scolt Head (30 pairs), Titchwell (7-12 pairs), and Welney (5 pairs). Within Stanford TA population considered still stable in areas of gorse. The BBS found Linnets in 10% fewer squares than last year.

As usual flocks started to build up in late summer with max counts: *July* 300 Scolt Head; *Aug* 150 Cley, 345 Seolt Head; *Sept* 300 Bressingham Common, 350+ Salthouse, 250 Seolt Head, 200+ Sheringham, 100 Titchwell.

Few autumn records of visible migration, with only notable counts 70 west and 50 present Sheringham Oct 3rd, and 112 west West Runton Oct 27th. However, several sizeable autumn coastal flocks: *Oct* 220 Scolt Head 2nd-11th, 200 Salthouse 9th, 176 West Runton 14th, 200 Waxham 15th, 250 West Runton and 100 Brograve Farm 23rd (on linseed); *Nov* 230 Bceston Regis 2nd.

Largest concentrations noted during second winter period: *Nov* 230 Bceston Regis, 400 Bylaugh (on stubble); *Dec* 110 Bergh Apton, 100 East Harling, 116 Holme, 150 Weybourne.

## Twite

*Carduelis flavirostris*

### *Declining local winter visitor*

Recorded into April when one Holme 1st and 2 east Bceston Bump 3rd and from Sept 26th (5 Titchwell). Max counts at main resorts:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holme	70	30	10	25	3	-
Thornham-Titchwell	120	37	-	5	46	100
Brancaster-Scolt Head	45	53	20	24	120	80
Burnham Norton/Overy Hbr	16	-	-	-	-	-
Holkham Bay	25	30	-	30	120	130
Wells-Stiffkey	-	25	-	-	-	-
Morston Quay	52	23	-	-	-	-
Blakeney Hbr	55	50	2	20	25	20

Numbers continue to fall: north coast WeBS counts Jan, Feb, March, Oct, Nov and Dec revealed 103, 124, 0, 25, 182 and 90 birds respectively, compared with 180, 183, 144, 59, 142 and 255 in same months in 1998. Remarkably, the only records from Wash, which once held thousands of birds, were at Lynn Point where 3 west Oct 27th and 10 Feb 15th. Even along north coast, birds can no longer be found regularly at once favoured haunts at Burnham Overy Hbr, Wells-Stiffkey or Morston. Disappointingly, following last year's over-wintering birds, the only records from Breydon/Berney were in Oct when 2 5th and 9 on 12th. Away from these areas, the only birds were found at Cley/Salthouse where 15 Jan 2nd, one Oct 11th, 2 Nov 12th and 20 Nov 21st.

Westerly spring passage recorded at Holme in March where 5 15th, 8 18th, 7 30th, 6 31st and one April 1st. Autumn passage noted in Oct with 7 east Burnham Overy 16th and at West Runton 3 west 14th, 2 west 16th and one lingering 26th/27th, and in early Nov when 3 Paston 7th and one west Yarmouth 12th.

## Lesser Redpoll

*Carduelis cabaret*

### *Passage migrant, winter visitor and declining resident*

Scarce at start of year, with very few records in double figures. All counts of 5 or more given: *Jan* 5 Buckenham Station, 5 Catfield Fen, 5 Fakenham (R Wensum), 50 Middle Harling, 8 Pensthorpe, 22 Scoulton Mere, 19 UEA, 6 West Acre; *Feb* 20 Flitcham, 10 Pensthorpe, 26 UEA, 5 Whitlingham Lane GP; *March* 5 Buckenham Station, 8 Pensthorpe, 12 Rockland Broad, 12 Thetford (Cloverfield), 30 UEA; *April* 10 Kelling Heath, 7 Pensthorpe.

A handful of coastal records of 1-4 birds on return passage March 17th-June 3rd. During this period Holme recorded a total of just 13 west whilst Seolt Head logged 11 west one east.

Continues to decline alarmingly as a breeding bird, with pairs or singing males noted during summer at Broad Fen Dilham, Catfield Common (2 males), Catfield Fen, Drake's Marsh Barton Turf, Norwich Cattle Market, Pensthorpe (2 family groups Aug 12th), Strumpshaw (2 pairs bred) and Sutton High Fen (family group of 6 Aug 12th). Other summer records, mainly of 1-3, from Baconsthorpe, Barton Turf Staithe, Diss, Hempton, Hickling Broad, Holt, Honing Loek, Horning Waterworks, Kelling Heath, Norwich city centre (6 May), Norwich Colegate (5 Sept), Norwich Hall Road, Norwich St Benedict's Street, Salthouse Heath, Sutton Fen, Swaffham Forest and UEA.

A light autumn passage with a scattering of mostly single-figure records from around the coast Oct 3rd-Nov 15th. Only double-figure counts 20+ present Winterton Oct 3rd-16th, 15 east Sidestrand Oct 6th and exceptionally 103 north in 2 flocks Horsey (0700-0800 hrs) Oct 7th. Single-figure numbers noted from a scattering of inland sites during autumn, particularly Broads, with best flocks: 50+ East Ruston Oct 7th, 22 Horning Waterworks Oct 12th, 68 Pensthorpe Oct 24th, 22 Strumpshaw Nov 3rd, 90 King's Fen East Ruston Nov 9th and 22 Brundall Nov 10th.

Sadly once again scarce in second winter period with a sprinkling of small groups noted in Broads but few from elsewhere. Max counts: Nov 14 Lopham Fen; Dec 20 Buckenham Tofts, 10 Edgefield Hall, 43 Heigham Sound Plantation, 18 Hill Harling, 15 Horning Waterworks, 20 Lynford Arboretum, 40 Marsham, 14 North Wootton, 38 Pensthorpe, 40 UEA.

### **Common (ie Mealy) Redpoll**

*Carduelis flammea*

*Scarce winter visitor*

Singles Berney Oct 23rd and Morston Dee 15th, the sole records for the year.

### **Arctic Redpoll**

*Carduelis hornemanni*

*Winter vagrant from Scandinavia*

The following further records from the 1995/96 influx have been accepted by the BBRC.

*1995 Addition:* female/1st-winter Horsey Mere Nov 5th and 7th with 2 female/1st-winters Nov 6th (PJH JAO *et al*).

*1996 Additions:* female/1st-winter Ormesby Broad Jan 22nd (PJH); male and 7 female/1st-winters Pretty Corner, Sheringham Feb 3rd (PJH *et al*) [at least 3 females additional to those already accepted]; 3 females/1st-winters Costessey (Gunton Lane) March 3rd (SBe PJH); male How Hill March 14th (PJH); male and 5 female/1st-winters Cringleford Marshes March 20th (PJH *et al*) with 3+ female/1st-winters there March 23rd (AMS); female Hand Marsh Sutton Broad April 11th (PJH).

### **Crossbill**

*Loxia curvirostra*

*Breeding resident in fluctuating numbers with Thetford Forest the stronghold; immigrants arrive most years in late summer and autumn; major irruptions at irregular intervals*

Very scarce in first half of year and only recorded in Brecks with records from Barnhamcross Common, Croxton Heath, East Harling, Lynford, Lynford Arboretum/GP, Santon Downham, Thetford Warren and West Tofts. At these sites infrequent records of 1-4 Jan-Aug with only larger flocks 12 Thetford Warren Jan 7th and 11 March 27th, 7 Lynford Arboretum July 20th and 6 Lynford GP Aug 20th. No breeding records received.



A very minor summer immigration with a handful of records of 1-6 birds, chiefly moving west, June 13th-late Aug from Baconsthorpe, Beeston Regis, Buxton Heath, Cley, Dersingham Bog, Drake's Marsh Barton Turf, Fakenham, Hilborough, Holt Lowes, Horning Hall Marshes, Sandringham, Sheringham, Sheringham Park (max 25 Aug 12th), Swanton Novers and Thornham.

At Titchwell 6 Sept 15th may have been associated with this summer movement or further small arrival. Small numbers noted at following localities from early Oct-late Nov: Burnham Deepdale, Burnham Overy Dunes, Buxton Heath, Holkham Meals (including 7 in off sea Oct 17th and max 20 Oct 20th), Holme, Sheringham, Weybourne, Winterton and Yarmouth Cemetery,

In Brecks during last 4 months of year chiefly single-figure numbers noted at Bridgham Heath, Cockley Cley, Croxton Heath, Grimes Graves, Ickburgh, Lynford Arboretum/GP, Santon Downham (where 30 Oct 15th and 17th), Stanford TA. and Thetford Nunnery. Elsewhere in county at year end a single north-west over Rackheath Dec 4th and 24 Horsford Woods Dec 16th were the only records.

### **Common Rosefinch**

*Carpodacus erythrinus*

#### ***Rare passage migrant; potential colonist***

Single spring and autumn records: 1st-summer male Blakeney Point June 2nd (JMcC BAEM) and Holme Sept 22nd (GFH NML). What seemed to be an imminent colonisation a few years ago seems to have fizzled out for the time being.

### **Bullfinch**

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

#### ***Resident and occasional immigrant***

This, one of our most striking yet declining residents, still goes grossly under-recorded. Observations received from only 37 localities. Only notable flocks reported in first winter period 20 near Flitham and 10 UEA both Jan 18th; 5 Sheringham BO Jan 20th considered unusual.

Records of breeding from 11 localities including 3 pairs at Boyland Wood, Strumpshaw and Weston Park. The BBS results suggested that it was a poor year for this species. Found in only 9% of squares monitored, compared with no fewer than 20-23% in each of the previous 4 years. Even the occupied squares held fewer birds with only 1.2 birds per square compared with 1.5 and 2.3 in previous years.

Several observations presumed to relate to autumn passage, with 15 Holkham Meals Oct 16th and Nov 20th, 12 Titchwell Oct 23rd and single east Sidestrand Oct 27th; up to 6 Sheringham BO during Oct and one Paston Nov 12th considered *pyrrhula* race. (male *pyrrhula* race found dead Thames Aro gas platform 25 miles ENE of Yarmouth Nov 13th).

Only modest gatherings noted in second half of year: 12 Merton Sept 16th, 12 Hoe Oct 17th, 14 Snetterton GP Dec 15th and 12 East Wretham Heath Dec 16th.

During the year total 19 ringed Kettlestone Common.

### **Hawfinch**

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

#### ***Evasive and very local resident; scarce migrant***

A continued decline in both numbers and localities recorded, with almost all observations from Brecks. Very few records from the once favoured sites of Barnhamcross Common and Holkham Park (where single Jan 3rd and 4 Jan 17th the only records). Only regularly recorded from the well-searched vicinities of Lynford Arboretum and Santon Downham.



Hawfinch (*N Arlott*)

Monthly max tabulated below:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Barnhamcross Common	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Santon Downham area	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lynford Arboretum	7	7	9	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
West Harling	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Remains very scarce, though possibly still overlooked, elsewhere around the county, with all other records given: 2 at a Wensum Valley roost several times late Feb, Hilborough April 15th, spring migrant Burgh Castle June 13th, Thetford Nunnery Lakes July 7th, one in a Thompson garden early Oct, an autumn migrant south-west over Horsey Mill Oct 15th, and in Nov Illington 10th, Thetford town centre 11th, 4 Limekiln Plantation (Hilborough) 14th, and 2 Holme Hale during month.

The only records hinting at breeding, single singing males West Harling March 14th and Lynford Arboretum March 21st, plus on a slightly more positive note a pair in courtship display Lynford Lake June 14th.

## Lapland Bunting

*Calcarius lapponicus*

### *Regular but usually scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

The first winter period produced peak counts of 12 Reedham Marshes Jan 31st and 13 present at same locality Feb 12th, 6 east Sheringham Jan 1st and 6 Breydon/Berney Jan 31st. Elsewhere more modest numbers with 1-3 Holme, Titchwell, Holkham, Cockthorpe, Stiffkey, Cley, Salthouse, West Runton, Mundesley, Paston and Happisburgh during Jan-March. Inland, also recorded at Reepham Feb 6th and 2-3 Feb 7th.

No April records but late male Blakeney Point May 8th.

First returning birds in autumn 2 Scolt Head Sept 17th but few reports until mid-Oct. Late in year peaks of 6 Scolt Head Oct 28th and 5 Oct 29th-31st and 5 Warham Green Nov 21st. Otherwise 1-4 at Holme, Thornham Point, Titchwell, Burnham Overy, Holkham, Wells, Blakeney GM, Salthouse, Weybourne, Sheringham, Beeston Bump, West Runton, Paston, Happisburgh, East Ruston, Waxham, Horsey and Winterton between mid-Oct and year end.

As usual most birds located in winter stubble, rough grazing marsh and saltmarsh fringe on isolated dates only. Sites frequented for more protracted spells included Salthouse Jan 21st-March 14th and Oct 20th-Nov 12th, Coekthorpe Jan 24th-Feb 9th, Seolt Head Sept 17th-Nov 16th and Holme Oct 13th-Nov 21st.

**Snow Bunting**

*Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Winter visitor in declining numbers*

Monthly max at most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham/Heacham	38	35	5	-	35	60
Holme	50	27	20	50	26	1
Thornham/Titchwell	12	6	-	30	110	195
Scolt Head	9	9	1	22	135	70
Burnham Overy	2	25	-	40	40	70
Holkham Bay	80	25	-	10	140	40
Blakeney Point	120	35	6	39	48	400
Cley/Salthouse	300	200	40	80	150	80
Walcott/Bacton/Paston	21	13	-	6	100	28
Happisburgh/Eccles	66	-	-	18	160	45
Yarmouth	70	105	25	12	44	97
Breydon/Berney	39	14	4	1	17	36

In both winter periods, much interehange between localities with nomadic flocks moving along eoastal strip and eausing duplication. Norfolk wintering population therefore much lower than indicated above.

During first 3 months of year peak count 300 Salthouse Jan 4th. Away from tabulated sites very few reports, one inland Ten Mile Bank Feb 2nd with 1-10 on isolated dates at Sheringham, Beeston Bump, West Runton and Caister. Early departure with last of spring male Thorpe Camp (Stanford TA) March 27th.

First returning bird Cley Sept 11th with gradual arrival in Oct/Nov and clear movement Nov 7th when away from regular sites 20 Weybourne, 19 west Sheringham, 12 Sidestrand, 60 Horsey and 33 north Winterton.

Peak count at year end 400+ Blakeney Point Dec 10th. Away from tabulated sites notable counts of 22 West Runton Nov 9th, 38 Caister 10th and 50 Stiffkey Dec 22nd, with 1-20 occasionally at Kelling, Sheringham, West Runton, Cromer, Sidestrand, Waxham, Horsey and Winterton.

Always scarce inland, only other records in second winter period: Howards Hill-Ebridge Mill (North Walsham) Oct 25th, Welney Nov 7th/8th, 27th and 29th, Aylsham Nov 21st and flock East Ruston at year end peaking 42 Dec 23rd.

**Yellowhammer**

*Emberiza citrinella*

*(Once common resident, currently in decline)*

A number of large flocks reported during first winter period from widely scattered localities. Largest flocks 200 Ringstead, 150 Upper Sheringham, 140 Gateley, 110 Reephams, 100 Cockthorpe, 90 Marham Fen, 81 Great Massingham, 80 Fersfield Airfield, Hickling and South Lopham, 70 Ashill, 60 Sparham and 55 Little Massingham. Flocks of 30 or more at



Choseley, Dickleborough, Docking, East Tuddenham, Eccles, Fakenham, Flitcham, Garboldisham, Hilborough, Kelling WM, Narborough, Stanford TA and West Beckham.

Unusually, many reports of individuals on spring migration during March peaking with 31 east Paston 31st; also noted at West Runton where westerly movement of 16 14th, 9 15th, 4 16th and 4 31st. At Beeston Bump birds moving west on several dates in March with max 7 on 24th, while at Sheringham 1-2 west on 4 dates in March and April.

The few breeding season records received undoubtedly do not represent the full status of this species. Concentrations of singing males included 23 Harling Woods, 15 Barrow Common, 12 Bodham, 8 Goose Common (Little Ellingham) and 5 Buxton Heath, Spixworth and Winterton South Dunes. Encouraging news from Sparham where the breeding population was considered 'stable or slightly increasing' by one observer. The BBS revealed that last year's decline was reversed but there were slightly fewer birds found per occupied square than before.

Westerly autumn passage in Oct noted only at Sheringham where 6 9th and 5 10th, and at West Runton 9 27th.

Very few flocks reported late in year: max counts 100 Hethersett, 95 East Tuddenham, 77 Tibenham and 68 Fersfield Airfield with flocks of 30 or more at Brandeston, Hindolveston, Sheringham and Thetford Nunnery Lakes.

**Ortolan Bunting**  
*Rare passage migrant*

*Emberiza hortulana*

Two in each of the migration periods represents an average showing. In spring on Blakeney Point different males May 7th (SCJ) and May 9th (RFP AMS *et al*). A 1st-winter again Blakeney Point Aug 28th (RFP) was followed by another Old Hunstanton Sept 21st (DK).

Number of records per season/year during past decade:

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Spring	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	2	2
Autumn	0	2	4	8	3	4	2	2	3	2
Total	0	2	5	10	5	4	2	3	5	4

**Reed Bunting**  
*Resident and passage migrant*

*Emberiza schoeniclus*

Monthly north coast WeBS counts:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
81	49	19	54	123	95	48

Notable counts from individual localities outside breeding season: *Jan* 50 Ludham, 35 Wells Hbr; *Feb* 50 Ludham, 26 Warham Greens, 25 Ringstead Common; *March* 60 Burnham Norton; *Sept* 28 Warham Greens; *Oct* 60 Scolt Head, 30 Holme, 29 Warham Greens; *Nov* 58 Scolt Head, 20 Barnhamcross Common; *Dec* 27 Warham Greens, 25 Boughton Fen, 20 Martham. As noted in previous reports saltmarshes form an important habitat and therefore majority of flocks at coastal sites. Inland, flocks favour set-aside, winter stubble and game cover strips.

Following an appeal in the local press in March 1999, birds were noted visiting gardens at Brundall, Catfield, Stalham and Thorpe St Andrew. One of 3 gardens utilised in Brundall held up to 12 individuals.

Light westerly spring movement noted at Holme (18 March 14th), Seolt Head (6 April 18th) and West Runton (March 15th and 3 March 16th).

During breeding season, singing males or pairs recorded as follows: North Norfolk - Home 15+, Titehwell 38, Braneaster GM 10, Scolt Head 84, Holkham NNR 45, Cley 39, Salthouse 5 and Southrepps Common; Broads - Buekenham 3, Burgh Common 3 and Horning Hall Marshes 6; Central - Colney GP 3, East Tuddenham, Fakenham 4, Guist 3, Lyng-Easthaugh GP, Kettlestone Common 3, Pensthorpe 6, Raynham Lake 2, Sennowe Park 2 and UEA 4; Brecks and surround - Cranwich GP, Methwold High Fen, Snetterton GP 3, Stoke Ferry Sluice 3, Thetford Nunnery Garden 3, Thompson Common 2, Thompson Water 5 and Threxton; West Norfolk and Fens - Castle Aere 5 and Welney 31. After a large increase in reports for 1998 a return to patchy coverage, but encouraging news from Welney where 40% increase in singing males after 1998 flooding reduced population to 22 territories.

Autumn passage commenced at Scolt Head with 2 west Aug 30th. All remaining sightings in Oct/early Nov (passage westerly unless stated otherwise): Seolt Head 56 Oct 6th, 21 10th, 65 13th, 25 15th and 12 Nov 5th; Holme 10 Oct 9th and 21 16th; Beeston Bump 5 Nov 2nd; West Runton 4 Oct 14th, 3 16th, 2 17th; Cromer 15 east Oct 16th and Sidestrand 30 during Oct.

## Corn Bunting

*Miliaria calandra*

### *Local and declining resident*

Early in year few records involving flocking birds. Larger counts from Courtyard Farm Ringstead (max 74 Jan 10th), Lynn Point (40 Feb 17th and 19th), Point Farm West Lynn (40 Feb 19th), Choseley (max 35 Jan 10th and March 31st), Coekthorpe/Langham (max 18 Feb 24th), Lakesend (14 April 4th), Stiffkey Fen (14 Jan 24th), Ten Mile Bank/Welney (11 Jan 21st) and Snettisham (10 Feb 21st). Elsewhere single-figure counts from Brancaster, East Ruston, Edgefield, Hilgay Fen, Morston, Nar Valley Fisheries, Seolt Head, Waxham and Wiggshall St Peter. Only 2 sightings in East Norfolk at Paston and Wickhampton/Berney. As usual majority of sightings from restricted areas of north-west Norfolk and Fens and much overlap presumed between counts from closely situated sites.

Barely discernable spring passage, westerly bound migrants at Beeston Bump and West Runton April 9th, Paston April 25th and finally Holme May 7th.

During breeding season singing males or pairs at following sites: Bradwell/Belton, Cranworth, Denver Sluice, Eastmoor (near Gooderstone), East Somerton 2-3, Feltwell Anchor 14, Fineham, Happisburgh, Hemsby, Lakesend 4, Langham 4, Lynn Point, Mundesley, Salthouse, Stowbridge 2, Titehwell/Choseley 5, Welney 8, Wereham 3 and Weybourne/Sheringham 4. A min of 58 territorial males represents an increase on 1998 total, although again very few south and east of a direct line drawn between Cromer and Thetford.

Min number of singing males during recent summers:

1996	1997	1998	1999
44	56	42	58

The only evidence of autumn movement, 3 west Sheringham GC Oct 23rd.

In second half of year, only sizeable gathering at Lynn Point where max 27 roosting Oct 27th. Otherwise very small numbers at the following 16 localities (3 East Norfolk): Brancaster Hbr, Briston, Choseley, Coekthorpe, Eccles, Feltwell Anchor, Happisburgh, Hemsby, Kelling, Langham, Snettisham, Stiffkey, Warham Greens, Welney, West Runton and Wolferton.

# Introductions, Escapes, Ferals and Hybrids

## Appendix I - Categories A, B and C

Escapes or feral birds of species on the British List

### Category A Species

#### Night Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

*Free-flying colony at Great Witchingham*

On a number of occasions 1-2 seen in the Wensum valley, including a headless adult corpse picked up under overhead wires Sparham Nov 15th. The situation here remains unclear but up to 8 birds have been seen flying out of Great Witchingham Wildlife Park at dusk and a local landowner suspects that not all birds are returning to the park by day. The area contains much suitable breeding habitat and overspill from the breeding colony remains a distinct possibility. It is likely that the presence of a large Grey Heron colony within the park is currently containing the spread.



Night Heron (V Hanlon)

#### Lesser White-fronted Goose

*Anser erythropus*

*Northern Eurasia; winters southern Europe, India and China*

Strumpshaw Jan 10th, 3 Wretton Fen Feb 14th-19th, 2 Boughton Fen April 2nd and one Tottenhill GP Dec 19th.

#### Snow Goose

*Anser caerulescens*

*North-east Siberia and North America; winters to Mexico*

4 Titchwell Feb 16th-22nd and again May 26th-June 30th and Sept 9th-18th; Horsey/West Somerton April 17th; 4 Flitcham April 22nd and a pair May 16th.

### Category B/C Species

#### Ruddy Shelduck

*Tadorna ferruginea*

*Breeds Asia and North Africa*

A pair Briston April/May, a pair Colncy/UEA all year, one west with Shelduck Holme Oct 10th, 2 Sennowe Park Nov 21st, a family party of 4 Snettisham Sept 24th, and 6 Titchwell July 29th with one there Sept 9th.



## Category C Species

### Lady Amherst's Pheasant

*Chrysolophus amherstiae*

Mountains of south-east Tibet and south-west China to Northern Burma; small breeding population Beds/Bucks

In Stanford TA 4 March 7th, 2 March 14th, and a pair April 11th and May 23rd.

## Appendix II - Category D

Species that would otherwise appear on the British List except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state

### White Pelican

*Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Locally central Eurasia, Asia and Africa

Walcott east Jan 28th, Berney Oct 3rd and 5th with the same bird seen Horsey/Winterton Oct 3rd.

### Greater Flamingo

*Phoenicopterus ruber*

Southern Palearctic, southern Asia, Africa and Madagascar

One Breydon Jan 1st-May 2nd.

### Saker Falcon

*Falco cherrug*

South central Eurasia; winters eastern Mediterranean, India and Tibet

Scolt Head July 11th, Sculthorpe Aug 16th and Holkham Nov 28th and Dec 19th.

## Appendix III - Category E

Escapes or feral birds of species not on the British List

### White-faced Whistling-duck

*Dendrocygna viduata*

Costa Rica to Brazil; Africa, Madagascar and Comoro Islands

Stibbard June 23rd.

### Black Swan

*Cygnus atratus*

Australia and Tasmania

Breydon (Lower Bure Marshes) Jan 7th-March 13th, 2 Salhouse Broad Jan 21st-Oct 27th,

Walcott Aug 11th-Sept 8th, Welney April 1st-30th, 2 Wretton Fen Feb 14th, Wroxham

Broad March 13th and 25th, and Yarmouth Jan 29th and Feb 6th-19th.

### Swan Goose

*Anser cygnoides*

Eastern Eurasia

Horsey Mill/West Somerton April 17th and Walcott July 18th-Aug 29th.

### Bar-headed Goose

*Anser indicus*

Central Asia; winters in India and Burma

On east Beeston Bump April 14th, Berney May 27th-June 5th, Heigham Corner Feb 20th.

Heigham Holmes Jan 2nd and Dec 31st, Holkham Park Feb 13th, Rockland Broad Sept

13th, and 2 Welney April 14th with one April 30th.

### Emperor Goose

*Anser canagica*

North-east Siberia to western Alaska; winters southern Alaska to northern California

Walcott April 18th-Nov 3rd.

**Muscovy Duck***Cairina moschata**Southern Mexico to Argentina and Brazil*

Horning June 25th, Snetterton Oct 24th and Dec 15th, and Thetford Jan 18th, March 22nd and May 20th.

**Ringed Teal***Callonetta leucophrys**Southern Brazil to Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and north-east Argentina*

2 Cantley BF Oct 2nd-6th, with one Oct 10th.

**Wood Duck***Aix sponsa**Canada to northern Mexico; Cuba and Bahamas*

Cantley BF Aug 4th-7th, female Ormsby Little Broad April 11th, and 2 UEA Broad May 27th with one June 11th.

**Chiloe Wigeon***Anas sibilatrix**Southern South America*

Berney Nov 27th, Cantley BF Dec 14th-18th, Cley Jan 9th and 24th, April 20th-22nd, June 4th and 14th-24th, Kelling WM April 24th, Lakenheath Washes April 16th, Pentney GP Dec 26th, Titchwell Nov 23rd, Tottenhill GP Nov 27th and Welney Nov 27th-29th.

**Silver Teal***Anas versicolor**Bolivia, Paraguay to Tierra del Fuego and Falklands*

UEA Broad May 28th-31st.

**Cinnamon Teal***Anas cyanoptera**Western North America (southern Canada) to Tierra del Fuego and Falklands*

Berney Jan 31st, Feb 19th and March 20th, and Hickling Broad March 4th-19th, April 17th and May 16th.

**Red Shoveler***Anas platalea**Lowlands southern Brazil and southern Peru to Tierra del Fuego*

UEA Broad May 28th-June 1st.

**Red-tailed Hawk***Buteo jamaicensis**North and Central America and West Indies*

Cockley Cley March 21st, May 2nd and 31st, and Dec 7th, and Massingham Heath Feb 6th.

**Helmeted Guineafowl***Numida meleagris**Africa south of Sahara and extreme southern Arabia*

The bird present at King's Lynn from June 1998 finally lost its battle with local traffic when it succumbed on Nov 20th.

**Silver Pheasant***Lophura lencomelanos**Mountains of southern China to Thailand and Indo-China*

Alderfen Feb 27th.

**Reeves's Pheasant***Symaticus reevesii**Low altitude deciduous forests of north-central China*

Barnham Broom Nov 30th-Dec 11th.

**Green Pheasant***Phasianus versicolor**Japan*

Calthorpe Broad April 12th-20th with 2 on 21st and 2 May 4th-6th, 16 Long Moor Point

and 6 Wood Street (both Sutton) during Dec. (This species seems to have been illegally supplied for illegal release into the UK.)

**Indian Peafowl**

*Pavo cristatus*

India and Sri Lanka

7 Sneath Common (Aslaeton) Dec 18th.

**Laughing Dove**

*Streptopelia senegalensis*

Africa and Middle East to India

The bird which arrived at Cranworth Aug 98 still present Jan 99.

**Budgerigar**

*Melopsittacus undulatus*

Drier parts of Anustralia

Barnhameross Common April 30th, Berney June 22nd, Mundesley Aug 7th-9th and Thetford Nunnery July 5th.

**Cockatiel**

*Nymphicus hollandicus*

Interior of Anustralia

Breydon April 15th on mudflats with Dunlin, Sheringham GC March 30th and Winterton Aug 14th.

**Zebra Waxbill**

*Amandava formosa*

Africa south of Sahara and southern Arabia

Lopham Fen Sept 5th.

**Yellow-fronted Canary**

*Serinus mozambicus*

Africa south of Sahara

Eccles Sept 25th.

**Grey-capped (Oriental) Greenfinch**

*Carduelis sinica*

Eastern Asia

Terrington Marsh April 4th/5th (at bird feeder).

**Long-tailed Rosefinch**

*Uragus sibiricus*

Central Asia

Salthouse April 26th and Sheringham GC May 1st.

**Appendix IV - Hybrids**

**Bean Goose x Pink-footed Goose**

Stiffkey Fen May 16th.

**Canada Goose x Greylag Goose**

Bowthorpe Marsh Jan 9th-Feb 28th, 2 Pentney GP July 9th-25th and 4 Wensum valley on many dates.

**Canada Goose x Barnacle Goose**

Bowthorpe Marsh Jan 9th-19th, Buckenham Feb 6th, Pentney GP July 7th-20th and 2 Wretton Fen Feb 3rd.



**Barnacle Goose x White-fronted Goose**

Wighton Jan 1st.

**Barnacle Goose x Lesser White-fronted Goose**

Tottenham GP Dec 19th.

**Barnacle Goose x Pink-footed Goose**

Burnham Market/Docking area during Dec.

**American Wigeon x Chiloe Wigeon**

Breydon/Berney area Jan 6th-19th.

**Teal x Hottentot Teal**

Titchwell March 17th.

**Teal x Tufted Duck**

Wissington Cut May 21st.

**Mallard x Wigeon**

Buckenham March 16th-April 11th and Rockland Broad Dec 22nd.

**Mallard x Teal**

Welney March 4th.

**Mallard x Shoveler**

Whitlingham Lane GP Jan 14th.

**Pochard x Tufted Duck**

2 Welney March 24th then one March 27th-April 4th and one during Dec; Stiffkey Fen Jan 4th-20th.

**Pochard x Ferruginous Duck**

Welney during Dec.

**Ring-necked Duck x Ferruginous Duck**

Welney March 16th-31st.

# Earliest and Latest Dates of Summer Migrants

(excludes occasional winter records)

	Arrivals		Departures	
Manx Shearwater	May 5th	Scolt Head/Titchwell	Nov 6th	4 sites
Garganey	Mar 14th	Felbrigg Park	Oct 31st	Cley
Honey Buzzard	May 3rd	Hickling Broad	Oct 2nd	Cantley
Montagu's Harrier	Apr 22nd	Cley	Sept 12th	Holme
Osprey	Mar 27th	Holme, Titchwell	Oct 23rd	4 north coast sites
Hobby	Apr 23rd	Holme	Oct 16th	Scolt Head
Quail	May 3rd	Northrepps	Oct 26th	Paston
Stone Curlew	Mar 19th	Stanford TA	Nov 15th	Breckes
Little-ringed Plover	Mar 14th	Trowse, Buckenham	Sept 28th	Titchwell
Dotterel	May 5th	Knapton	Sept 18th	Sheringham
Little Stint	Mar 20th	Walcott, Berney	Dec 5th	Berney
Temminck's Stint	Apr 28th	Berney	Aug 16th	Cley
Curlew Sandpiper	Apr 30th	Cley	Nov 27th	Welney
Whimbrel	Apr 2nd	Holme	Oct 19th	Weybourne
Wood Sandpiper	Apr 30th	Hickling Broad	Oct 4th	Welney
Common Sandpiper	Apr 12th	Holme, Whitlingham	Oct 17th	Swangey GP
Sandwich Tern	Mar 20th	Cley	Dec 6th	Titchwell
Roscate Tern	May 11th	Blakeney Point	Sept 15th	Sheringham
Common Tern	Mar 27th	Wroxham Broad	Nov 6th	Scolt Head
Arctic Tern	Apr 7th	Pentney GP	Nov 6th	Cley
Little Tern	Apr 18th	Caister	Oct 3rd	Scolt Head
Black Tern	Apr 24th	3 sites	Oct 19th	Hunstanton
Turtle Dove	Apr 13th	East Ruston	Oct 8th	Holme
Cuckoo	Apr 9th	Pentney GP	Sept 19th	Breydon
Nightjar	May 9th	Pentney Common	Sept 28th	Sheringham
Swift	Apr 15th	Yarmouth	Oct 7th	Norwich
Sand Martin	Mar 13th	2 sites	Oct 24th	Sheringham
Swallow	Mar 13th	Holme, Winterton	Dec 1st	Hunworth
House Martin	Apr 1st	Holme	Nov 5th	Sheringham
Tree Pipit	Apr 4th	Beeston, Wissington	Sept 26th	Winterton
White Wagtail	Mar 10th	Holkham	Oct 6th	Scolt Head
Yellow Wagtail	Mar 25th	Holme	Oct 30th	Berney
Nightingale	Apr 3rd*	Waxham, Martham	June 19th	Wissington BF
Redstart	Apr 3rd	3 sites	Oct 17th	Blakeney Point
Whinchat	Apr 25th	3 sites	Dec 1st	Little Barningham
Wheatear	Mar 12th	Beeston Bump	Nov 8th	Salthouse
Ring Ouzel	Mar 25th	Holme	Nov 22nd	Ludham
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 6th*	Waxham	Oct 22nd	Blakeney Point
Sedge Warbler	Mar 30th	Titchwell	Oct 14th	Berney
Reed Warbler	Apr 11th*	Hickling Broad	Oct 16th	Bacton
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 23rd	Holme	Nov 13th	Eccles
Whitethroat	Apr 8th**	Thetford, East Ruston	Oct 25th	Holkham Meals
Garden Warbler	Apr 23rd	Holme, Titchwell	Nov 16th	Holkham Meals
Wood Warbler	Apr 28th	Cley	Sept 16th	Holme
Willow Warbler	Mar 27th	Cley	Oct 23rd	Holme
Spotted Flycatcher	May 6th	Yarmouth Cemetery	Oct 19th	Cley
Pied Flycatcher	Apr 12th	Sheringham	Oct 22nd	Yarmouth Cemetery
Red-backed Shrike	May 21st	Cley	Aug 28th	Titchwell

\*Earliest county record: \*\*Equals earliest county record

# Latest and Earliest Dates of Winter Migrants

(excludes occasional summer records)

	<i>Departures</i>	<i>Arrivals</i>
Black-throated Diver	May 21st Pentney GP	Aug 30th Salthouse
Great Northern Diver	May 5th Eccles	Sept 26th Titchwell
Red-necked Grebe	Feb 21st Titchwell/Brancaster	Sept 3rd Cley
Slavonian Grebe	Apr 19th Holme	Sept 19th Cley, Blakeney Point
Black-necked Grebe	May 1st Rockland Broad	July 31st Kelling WM
Bewick's Swan	Mar 23rd Welney	Oct 16th Welney
Whooper Swan	Apr 21st Welney	Oct 2nd Welney
Taiga Bean Goose	Mar 6th Yare Valley	Nov 13th Yare Valley
Tundra Bean Goose	Apr 4th Blakeney GM	Nov 9th' Holkham
Pink-footed Goose	May 28th Holkham	Sept 10th Holkham
White-fronted Goose	Mar 19th Holkham	Oct 17th Ludham
Long-tailed Duck	Apr 19th Scolt Head	Oct 13th Winterton
Goldeneye	May 24th Snettisham	Sept 30th Cley
Smew	Apr 4th Hickling Broad	Nov 21st Ouse Relief Channel
Goosander	June 1st Scolt Head	Oct 5th Snettisham
Hen Harrier	June 10th Holme	Sept 29th Blakeney GM
Rough-legged Buzzard	May 10th Morston/Stiffkey	Oct 3rd Felbrigg Park
Merlin	May 23rd Scolt Head	July 15th Scolt Head
Purple Sandpiper	May 18th Titchwell	July 19th Titchwell
Jack Snipe	Apr 30th Lopham Fen	Sept 28th Happisburgh, Horsey
Shore Lark	May 19th Blakeney Point	Oct 3rd Holme
Rock Pipit	May 15th Cley	Sept 15th Holme
Water Pipit	Apr 5th Cley, Buckenham	Oct 10th Thornham, Berney
Fieldfare	May 8th Sea Palling	Aug 7th Blakeney Point
Redwing	May 20th East Runton	Sept 28th Brundall
Great Grey Shrike	Apr 10th Holme	Oct 15th West Runton
Brambling	June 4th Cromer	Sept 26th Holme, Scolt Head
Twite	Apr 3rd Beeston Bump	Sept 26th Titchwell
Lapland Bunting	May 8th Blakeney Point	Sept 17th Scolt Head
Snow Bunting	Mar 27th Stanford TA	Sept 11th Cley



Long-tailed Ducks (J R Williamson)



## Non-accepted Records

The following refer to records where a written description has not been accepted by either the British Birds Rarities Committee or County Records Committee.

### 1998

Pied Wheatear - West Runton Nov 12th/13th; Trumpeter Finch - Waxham July 5th.

### 1999

Cory's Shearwater - Titchwell July 26th; Balearic Shearwater - Titchwell Aug 8th; Steller's Eider - Titchwell Sept 21st; Spotted Crake - Lopham Fen May 7th; Cornerake - Warham Greens Oct 10th; Semi-palmated Sandpiper - Cley Sept 26th; Baird's Sandpiper - Breydon Aug 4th; Red-footed Falcon - Snettisham May 9th; Dark-breasted Barn Owl - Choseley Oct 3rd; Bee-eater - East Tuddenham July 1st; Crag Martin - Pentney GP June 28th; Tawny Pipit - Blakeney Point May 10th; Siberian Stonechat - Cley March 11th/12th; *tristis* Chiffchaff - Pensthorpe Nov 27th and Dec 5th.

## Non-submitted Records

The following records have been reported to either the National or East Anglian Birdlines but to date no details have been received. Descriptions of any of these records would be welcomed (for consideration either by the British Birds Rarities Committee or County Records Committee) so that hopefully they can be published as accepted records in due course.

Cory's Shearwater	Hunstanton	Sept 20th
	Cley	Nov 11th
Great White Egret	Horsey	April 6th
Purple Heron	Strumpshaw	April 5th
	Lakenheath Washes	May 3rd
Black Stork	Dersingham	May 15th
American Wigeon	Welney	March 21st
Green-winged Teal	Cley	Oct 19th
Red-footed Falcon	Salthouse/Cley	May 28th
	Weeting Heath	July 3rd
Sabine's Gull	Cley	Sept 26th and 29th
	Sheringham	Oct 5th
Tawny Pipit	Cley	Aug 18th
Marsh Warbler	Cockshoot Broad	May 5th
Pallas's Warbler	Yarmouth Cemetery	Nov 11th
Serin	Cantley BF	Oct 18th

# List of Contributors to Systematic List

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D E Balmer	P Carr	N Elms	S M Haynes
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D Jones	P M Miles	M M Rehtiseh	M Stewart
E P Jones	J Miller	A Reynolds	A M Stoddart
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R Kaye	P Montgomery	S Rix	M Theobold
G I Kelly	D R Moore	J Rogers	R Thewlis
D Kelsall	B Morrison	R Rolfe	A Thompson
R N Kelsh	D Murdoch	M E S Rooney	I Thompson
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C A E Kirtland	J Nairn	S Rudling	P G Trett
P Kitchener	NARVOS	D H Russell	P Trodd
D R Knight	C & F Neale	Mr & Mrs L Rutterford	C Tyers
C R Knights	S Neale	D H Sadler	R Upson
P Lambley	P Newport	R Safford	H Venebles
K Langdon	M Newton	B Sage	A E Vine
P Langston	B Niehols	R St John	S C Votier
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J & B Lawson	D Nobbs	C Sayer	M Walford
N M Lawton	NOA	J Scott	D I M Wallace
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Dr R M Leaney	A O'Connor	M J Seago	G Warrilow
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M P Lee	G R Oxborough	P Sewell (PSe)	N Watmough (NWa)
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S Mann	S Pigeon	R N F Simpson	J R Williamson
R C Mansfield	T H Pinlon	G M Siriwardena	A M Wilson
J H Marehant	B Picasanee	R Q Skeen	C Wilson
MR & O R Marks	R F Porter	T D Skipper	J Wilson
B A E Marr	D Powell (DPo)	P Slack	P M Wilson
P E Marshall	I Prentice	C J Small	S Wood
A McCall	M Preston	A J L Smith	P J Woolnough
J R McCallum	B & B Pummell	M H Smith	G Wright
RC & S McIntyre	D Radford	I N Smith	S A Wright
A McLennan	M H Rains	S Smith (SSm)	T Wright
E E McLernon	H R Ramsay	P Solly	G Yallop
C J Mead	N D Rawlings	S South	M Young-Powell
H R Mead	J Reed	E M P Stanford	
H P Medhurst	M Reed	Stanta Bird Club	



# Ringling Report

*Allan Hale*

1999 was a lean year for Norfolk ringers. The total of 36,043 birds ringed was the lowest since 1993 and the species count of 131 was the lowest since 1992. With the notable exception of Red-flanked Bluetail and Pallid Swift, rarities were again scarce. Ringers mentioned that spring migrants were few, autumn migrants almost non-existent, the winter finches didn't materialise, and the mass arrival of Blackbirds and other thrushes failed to happen.

However, much of the decline was the result of late-winter Siskins being largely absent. The unpredictable nature of Siskin numbers was amply demonstrated during the early months of the year when only 542 were ringed. The equivalent figure for 1998 was almost 5000. As usual, Greenfinch topped the list of birds ringed with 5,531, but disappointing totals were recorded for many farmland species especially Yellowhammer and Bullfinch.

Once again, thanks to Steve and Alison Wakeham for the Wash Wader Ringing Group recoveries and their interpretation, and to all Norfolk ringers for access to their data.

## SELECTED NORFOLK RECOVERIES NOTIFIED DURING 1999

Ringling details are shown on the first line whilst recovery information is on the second.

### Age when ringed

- 1 Pullus (= nestling)
- 2 Fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 Hatched during calendar year of ringling
- 4 Hatched before calendar year of ringling, but exact year unknown
- 5 Hatched during previous calendar year
- 6 Hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown
- 7 Definitely hatched two calendar years before ringling
- 8 Hatched more than two calendar years before year of ringling

M = Male

F = Female

### Condition at Recovery

- X Found dead
- XF Found freshly dead or dying
- XL Found long dead
- A Alive and probably healthy – fate unknown
- + Shot or intentionally killed by man
- +F Shot or intentionally killed by man - fresh
- +L Shot or intentionally killed by man - not recent
- V Alive and probably healthy; caught and released by a non-ringer
- R Caught and released by ringer
- RR Ring or colour marks read in the field

**Fulmar**

I	01.08.70	Rousay, Orkney, Scotland	
XF	05.12.99	Holme-next-the-Sea, Hunstanton	724 km SSE

Over 29 years old, geriatric even by Fulmar standards!

**Gannet**

I	05.07.97	Scar Rocks, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland	
X	11.08.99	Cley-next-the-Sea	422 km ESE

Found on the beach entangled in a discarded fishing net.

**Greylag Goose**

A nestling ringed in Belgium as a chick during June 1992 (and therefore part of the feral population there) was shot at Winterton, near Great Yarmouth during September 1997.

**Marsh Harrier**

A colour ringed Marsh Harrier, ringed as a nestling in Scotland during 1993, was at Berney (near Great Yarmouth) on several dates during December 1999. Insufficient details are available for publication in the traditional form.

**Kestrel**

I	27.06.98	Burnham Market	
X	29.01.99	Thorne, Doncaster, South Yorkshire	135 km NW

A welcome recovery of a species of which relatively few are ringed in Norfolk.

**Oystercatcher**

8	15.04.95	Heacham, Hunstanton	
+	??.05.99	Pechenga Fiord, Murmansk, Russia	2,458 km NE

Only the seventh Wash-ringed Oystercatcher to be recovered in Russia. A bird ringed at Snettisham was found dead at Blakeney over 28 years later.

**Avocet**

I	25.06.97	Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	
RR	29.07.99	Cley-next-the-Sea	600 km ENE
I	03.06.98	near Snettisham, King's Lynn	
RR	29.08.98	Cliffe Pts, Kent	143 km S
RR	09.04.99	Blacktoft Sand, Humberside	119 km NW
I	05.08.91	Holme-next-the-Sea	
RR	17.09.91	Halvergate, Norfolk	
RR	31.12.91	Tamar, Devon	
RR	21.03.92	Tichwell, Norfolk	
RR	19.04.92	Farlington, Hampshire	
RR	01.05.92	Stanpit, Dorset	

RR	26.06.92	Sidlesham, Sussex
RR	31.07.92	Tichwell, Norfolk
RR	07.08.92	Minsmere, Suffolk
RR	06.08.94	Breydon Water, Norfolk
RR	05.03.95	Tichwell, Norfolk
RR	10.04.96	Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk
RR	11.03.97	Tichwell, Norfolk
RR	07.03.98	Tichwell, Norfolk
RR	07.03.99	Tichwell, Norfolk
RR	14.10.99	Middlebere, Dorset

Interesting that a bird hatched in Northern Germany, should choose to be at Cley in July, two years later. The wanderings of the Snettisham nestling are also fascinating, whilst the Holme nestling has had a remarkable amount of its life history documented.

### Ringed Plover

I	01.06.99	Snettisham, King's Lynn
RR	06.09.99	Ille D'Ouessant, Finistere, France

Another ten Snettisham nestlings (all still alive) were seen along the east coast of England from Scolt Head northwards as far as Northumberland.

Two breeding adults from Snettisham were seen during September 1999 at Sandymount Strand, Dublin. The Republic of Ireland seems to be an increasingly regular destination for Ringed Plovers that spend the summer on The Wash.

### Lapwing

I	24.05.97	Islay, Scotland	
RR	15.06.98	Islay, Scotland	
RR	03.03.99	Cley-next-the-Sea	500 km SE
I	06.05.98	The Island, Haddiscoe	
+	05.01.99	Lestre, Manche, France	395 km SSW

The first is an interesting multiple recovery – ringed as a chick on Islay, breeding there the following year, then wintering at Cley. The second shows the wintering ground of a Norfolk bred bird, regrettably the victim of a French hunter.

### Knot

4	12.05.85	Kantomes, Balsfjord, Troms, Norway	
R	06.12.98	Heacham, Hunstanton	2,078 km SSW
5	09.03.96	Heacham, Hunstanton	
R	14.10.99	Richel, Vlieland, The Netherlands	314 km E

Controls (birds caught again by another ringer) at Kantomes have become a regular feature and continue to illustrate that the shortest migration route for Arctic Canadian breeding birds is via the north of Norway.



The second bird had colour rings added at Richel as part of an ongoing study by the Dutch into the movements of the Canadian and Siberian races of Knot.

### **Dunlin**

5	04.08.96	Terrington, King's Lynn	
XF	27.01.99	Louik, Mauretania	3,931 km SSW
3	17.09.97	Skanors Revlar, Skanor, Malmohus, Sweden	
R	20.09.97	Terrington, King's Lynn	865 km WSW

The first shows the most distant Dunlin movement of the year. It is the fourth to be recovered from Mauretania, known to be a wintering site used by the *schinzii* race.

The second covered the 865 km from Sweden within three days, yet it took nearly two years to obtain the ringing data!

### **Black-tailed Godwit**

3	20.10.91	Guardbridge Saltings, Fife, Scotland	
R	02.08.96	Terrington, King's Lynn	

The first is the only notified movement of the year involving a Black-tailed Godwit from The Wash.

There was also a fascinating multiple recovery of a juvenile female ringed at Holbeach, Lincolnshire on 7th September 1998. It was seen at Rutland Water later during September, and was on the Humber Estuary from November 1998 until March of the following year. It then moved swiftly to Lower Derwent in Yorkshire where it remained until May 1999. After a period when it then went missing, it re-appeared at Cley on 2nd September 1999.

### **Curlew**

4	20.09.82	Terrington, King's Lynn	
XF	10.06.99	Lansi-Vuokko, Juuka, Kuopio, Finland	2,047 km NE

A typical recovery from the Finnish breeding grounds, nearly 17 years after ringing.

### **Mediterranean Gull**

6	02.06.96	Walfisch, Rostock, Germany	
RR	05.02.99	Great Yarmouth	662 km WSW

Surprisingly, this the second time that Mediterranean Gull has featured in this report. The first was a Dutch-ringed bird seen at Sheringham in 1994. Only around 20 foreign-ringed birds have ever been found in Britain.

### **Black-headed Gull**

6	25.03.98	Frognerparken, Oslo, Norway	
RR	01.02.99	The Mere, Diss	
RR	24.12.99	The Mere, Diss	1,029 km SW
1	25.06.97	Ifoverken, Bromolla, Kristianstad, Sweden	
R	23.08.97	Terrington, King's Lynn	983 km WSW

5	08.05.98	Ventas Ragas, Silute, Lithuania	
X	14.02.99	Walsey Hills, Cley-next-the-Sea	1,339 km WSW
1	28.05.90	Cantley, Norwich	
X	10.10.99	Humberston, Humberside	148 km NW

The first shows a Norwegian bird wintering at Diss for two successive winters (another from Oslo was also seen at The Mere). The second illustrates how early newly-fledged Black-headed Gulls from the Baltic arrive for the winter. The third represents the longest movement of the year.

The last is interesting in two respects. Firstly it was one of the nestlings ringed at Cantley and secondly it was killed as a result of being struck by a golf ball!

### Common Gull

1	16.06.77	Kooiduinen, Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands	
R	23.08.97	Terrington, King's Lynn	398 km W

A 20 year old gull still going strong. The British longevity record for this species stands at 21 years 6 months.

### Herring Gull

1	11.07.99	Orford Ness, Suffolk	
RR	24.12.99	Sheringham	150 km N

One of about 300 nestlings ringed at Orford, yet there have been surprisingly few sightings from Norfolk.

### Lesser Black-backed Gull

1	10.07.95	Maasvlakte, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	
RR	28.09.97	Winfarthing, Diss	206 km ESE
8	19.02.93	East Winch, King's Lynn	
RR	26.04.99	Maasvlakte, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	256 km ESE

Two almost identical movements, but in opposite directions.

### Common Tern

1	04.07.95	Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth	
RR	26.06.98	Seaforth, Liverpool	
RR	02.08.99	Seaforth, Liverpool	330 km WNE
1	27.06.98	Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth	
?	12.04.99	Freetown, Sierra Leone	5,090 km SSW

Interesting that a Breydon-bred Common Tern should be at Liverpool during two successive summers. The second was off the West African coast where our Common Terns normally spend the winter.



Long-eared Owl – an immigrant at Stiffkey in October (*R Chittenden*).





Pied Wheatear – the eighth county record, rather unusually found inland in a garden (*J V Bhalerao*).

Desert Wheatear – the ninth county record, typically recorded in late autumn (*A Tate*).





Red-flanked Bluetail - trapped at Braneaster Staithe in October (*R Kimber*).

Spotted Flycatcher – an encouraging increase in breeding pairs (*T Howes*); White-tailed Eagle - this bird toured the north coast before settling at Cockley Cley Warren in December (*D Nye*).







Pallid Swift – at Winterton (left) and Weybourne (right), part of a major influx in late autumn (*J V Bhalerao*).

Red-throated Diver - inland at Martham Ferry in December (*N Bowman*).





**Shore Lark**

2M	31.12.98	Holkham Meals, Holkham	
VV	02.05.99	Hawsker Bottoms, North Yorkshire	187 km NNW
2M	31.12.98	Holkham Meals, Holkham	
VV	14.05.99	Fair Isle, Scotland	745 km NNW

There were four recoveries reported, of which the two most distant are shown. The others were coastal sightings from Orford Ness, Suffolk and Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire. Four recoveries from a total of only 52 ringed represents an excellent return on the effort. There may well be more to come since all the larks were colour ringed, and indeed this demonstrates the value of colour ringing.

**Dunnoek**

3	17.09.98	Ljunghusen, Skane, Sweden	
R	01.10.98	near Weybourne	816 km WSW

The first Swedish-ringed Dunnoek to be recovered in Britain.

**Blackbird**

5F	02.02.97	Winfarthing, Diss	
X	17.07.98	Vindafjord, Rogaland, Norway	825 km NE
6M	31.01.98	Garboldisham, Diss	
X	22.07.99	Upplands-Vasby, Stockholm, Sweden	1,082 km NE
3M	10.12.96	Ormesby, Great Yarmouth	
X	17.02.99	Hasselby, Stockholm, Sweden	1,245 km NE
4M	29.12.96	Gaywood, King's Lynn	
XF	15.02.99	Skara, Skaraborg, Sweden	1,026 km NE
3F	03.11.98	near Weybourne	
R	26.05.99	Stora Fjaderagg, Vasterbotten, Sweden	1,666 km NE
3F	07.11.98	Burgh Castle, Great Yarmouth	
X	10.03.99	Nieuw Haamstede, Zeeland, The Netherlands	169 km ESE
3M	07.12.96	Burgh Castle, Great Yarmouth	
R	25.10.97	Groene Glop, Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands	318 km ENE

All the foreign recoveries of the year are shown. As usual all were in Norfolk during the winter period. Note that the third shown was wintering in Sweden after spending the previous winter in Norfolk, and that the sixth shown was on its way back north-eastward by early March.

**Sedge Warbler**

3	21.08.99	The Island, Haddiscoe	
+	05.09.99	Veurne, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium	180 km SSE
3J	12.08.99	Holme Bird Observatory, Hunstanton	
R	22.08.99	Villeton, Lot-et-Garonne, France	

A brace of recoveries that show the normal route for Sedge Warblers to take on the way to their wintering grounds.

**Reed Warbler**

3J	19.08.97	The Island, Haddiscoe	
R	29.06.98	Isle of May, Fife, Scotland	486 km NW
2	19.07.99	Ventes Ragas, Silute, Lithuania	
R	13.08.99	Burnham Market	1,359 km W

The first shown was in distinctive juvenile plumage when ringed, but the data from the subsequent trapping in Scotland, suggests that it was not hatched in Norfolk (or had it perhaps overshot the following spring?)

The second, ringed in Lithuania, was far to the west of its expected route through mainland Europe. It was the first Reed Warbler from the Baltic States ever to be recovered in Britain.

**Garden Warbler**

3	24.08.98	Slevdalsvatnet, Vest-Agder, Norway	
R	07.09.98	near Weybourne	670 km SSW

A rapid movement demonstrating the approximate date of departure from Scandinavia of this drift migrant.

**Blackcap**

3M	24.08.99	Piringen, Limburg, Belgium	
R	17.09.99	Burnham Market	400 km NW

An example of a juvenile migrating in the “wrong” direction

**Chiffchaff**

3	07.10.98	Pitsea Marshes, Basildon, Essex	
R	19.06.99	Kettlestone, Fakenham	145 km NNE
3J	30.09.97	near Weybourne	
X	31.03.98	Antwerpen, Belgium	295 km SE

**Great Tit**

A bird (already an adult) ringed at Garboldisham during September 1990, was still going strong when re-trapped there during November 1999, making it at least 10 years old

**Starling**

6M	25.01.98	Gaywood, King's Lynn	
XF	22.01.99	Roden, Drente, The Netherlands	231 km E

Remarkably this was the only foreign recovery of the year.

**Tree Sparrow**

4	13.03.99	Flitcham Abbey, Flitcham	
XF	23.05.99	Whissonsett, East Dereham	19 km E

Only a few years ago this movement would have been of no interest whatsoever. Now, however, any piece of Tree Sparrow news is welcome.

**Chaffinch**

3M	14.10.96	Ormesby, Great Yarmouth	
X	13.05.99	Tysnes, Hordaland, Norway	852 km NNE

Part of the regular wintering pattern of Chaffinches from Norway

**Brambling**

3F	12.10.97	Hanstholm, Jylland, Denmark	
R	14.03.98	Hevingham, Norwich	679 km SW

Many of our wintering Brambling pass through Denmark on their way southwards from the rest of Scandinavia.

**Greenfinch**

3M	07.12.88	St. Columb Major, Cornwall	
R	31.05.92	Winfarthing, Diss	472 km NE
4F	26.02.94	Winfarthing, Diss	
X	03.01.95	Twisk, Noord-Holland, The Netherlands	270 km E
5M	17.02.99	St. Cross, Winchester, Hampshire	
R	06.07.99	Winfarthing, Diss	315 km NE
3M	13.12.97	Ormesby, Great Yarmouth	
X	07.02.99	Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway	743 km NNE
5M	24.03.97	near Weybourne	
V	10.04.97	Hogasen, Vest-Agder, Norway	725 km NNW

Many Norfolk Greenfinches winter in the south-west of England. The appearance of Norwegian birds in Norfolk during winter is now become a regular event, although the Ormesby bird apparently chose to remain in Norway during a subsequent winter.



**Siskin**

5M	11.01.98	Garboldisham, Diss	
X	21.01.99	Grums, Varmland, Sweden	1,082 km NE
6M	31.01.98	Garboldisham, Diss	
X	13.03.99	Skultuna, Vastmanland, Sweden	1,258 km NE
6M	10.03.98	South Wootton, King's Lynn	
R	03.03.99	Nygrannas, Traslov, Halland, Sweden	896 km ENE
6M	21.02.98	Garboldisham, Diss	
R	27.02.99	Foldby, Arhus, Denmark	728 km NE
6F	21.01.98	Garboldisham, Diss	
X	09.02.99	Carradale, Strathclyde, Scotland	549 km NW

A trio of movements involving Sweden. The first appears to have spent the 1999 winter in Sweden, having spent the previous one in Norfolk. The last shown behaved similarly, this time involving Scotland rather than Sweden. The Danish bird showed considerable displacement between consecutive Februarys.

Another three movements involving Sweden and 15 involving Scotland have not been shown.

**Snow Bunting**

3F	15.12.97	Zeebrugge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium	
R	16.01.99	Salthouse	230 km NW

The only foreign movement of the year. Another bird was noted in Great Yarmouth, having been ringed at Salthouse some three years previously. The only other movement outside the county took 26 days to get from Salthouse to Filey Brigg (North Yorkshire) during early 1999.

**Yellowhammer**

3F	03.10.98	Wells-next-the-Sea	
R	15.02.99	Mildenhall Fen, Suffolk	71 km SSW

Yellowhammers are normally sedentary and this is only the third to have been shown to leave the County.

# Norfolk Ringing Totals – 2000

Mute Swan	23	Woodpigeon	46	Barred Warbler	3
White-fronted Goose	1	Collared Dove	166	Lesser Whitethroat	76
Greylag Goose	1	Turtle Dove	49	Whitethroat	398
Canada Goose	2	Cuckoo	6	Garden Warbler	139
Shelduck	3	Barn Owl	79	Blackcap	1800
Gadwall	14	Little Owl	3	Yellow-browed Warbler	2
Teal	11	Tawny Owl	7	Chiffchaff	477
Mallard	21	Nightjar	3	Willow Warbler	438
Pochar	2	Swift	7	Goldcrest	600
Tufted Duck	59	Pallid Swift	1	Firecrest	10
Marsh Harrier	2	Kingfisher	30	Spotted Flycatcher	31
Sparrowhawk	25	Wryneck	1	Pied Flycatcher	6
Kestrel	20	Green Woodpecker	29	Bearded Tit	50
Water Rail	4	Great Sp Woodpecker	101	Long-tailed Tit	882
Moorhen	5	Lesser Sp Woodpecker	1	Marsh Tit	94
Coot	70	Skylark	68	Willow Tit	23
Oystercatcher	80	Woodlark	95	Coal Tit	451
Avocet	31	Shore Lark	8	Blue Tit	3202
Ringed Plover	209	Sand Martin	329	Great Tit	2245
Grey Plover	30	Swallow	1247	Nuthatch	24
Lapwing	164	House Martin	21	Treecreeper	78
Knot	177	Meadow Pipit	23	Jay	21
Sanderling	150	Yellow Wagtail	10	Magpie	6
Little Stint	2	Grey Wagtail	1	Jackdaw	16
Curlew Sandpiper	29	Pied Wagtail	78	Rook	36
Dunlin	611	Wren	1072	Carrion Crow	2
Ruff	1	Duncock	1088	Starling	739
Jack Snipe	3	Robin	1034	House Sparrow	444
Common Snipe	4	Nightingale	10	Tree Sparrow	31
Woodcock	3	Red-flanked Bluetail	1	Chaffinch	1932
Black-tailed Godwit	5	Black Redstart	3	Brambling	637
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	Redstart	16	Greenfinch	5531
Whimbrel	1	Whinchat	15	Goldfinch	568
Curlew	22	Stonechat	9	Siskin	542
Redshank	188	Wheatear	221	Linnet	127
Greenshank	36	Ring Ouzel	3	Redpoll	31
Green Sandpiper	9	Blackbird	2400	Bullfinch	204
Wood Sandpiper	1	Fieldfare	27	Hawfinch	1
Common Sandpiper	14	Song Thrush	307	Lapland Bunting	1
Turnstone	30	Redwing	195	Snow Bunting	466
Black-headed Gull	98	Mistle Thrush	11	Yellowhammer	89
Common Gull	2	Cetti's Warbler	6	Reed Bunting	373
Common Tern	267	Grasshopper Warbler	5	<b>Total Ringed</b>	<b>36044</b>
Little Tern	285	Sedge Warbler	466		
Stock Dove	8	Reed Warbler	1194		

# An unprecedented movement of Swallows and House Martins

*Neil Lawton*



Swallow (*S Gillings*)

Each year an autumn passage of hirundines is evident through Norfolk, some years proving more productive than others. The peak passage period for each species varies, Sand Martins peak late July and August, Swallows a little later in September and House Martins in September and early October. Previous large autumn Swallow movements included 4500 west at Sheringham on 30th August 1977 and 12,000 west there on 12th September 1995, a count which at the time was considered amazing. There has also been some large House Martin movements with 15,000 west at Overstrand on 13th September 1905, 17,000 west at Mundesley on 9th September 1994 and at the time a record 33,500 east also at Mundesley on 4th October 1995.

Generally birds move west along the north-east and north coast, south along the eastern edge of The Wash and then head south-west inland. Birds along the east coast tend to move south, suggesting an arrival point somewhere in north-east Norfolk.

The Swallow and House Martin passage of autumn 1999 broke all previous records and was of a scale never before witnessed in the county. It was as spectacular as any large falls of Scandinavian migrants of winter thrushes and provided those lucky enough to be present on the coast with some of the most memorable days bird watching they will ever witness.

## **Autumn 1999 Movement**

The main movement occurred during the second half of September and early October, but by late August signs of a strong autumn passage were developing. During August there was some good counts of Swallows especially at Scolt Head where the following peak counts of westerly bound birds were made: 1250 on 28th, 2600 on 29th and 2150 on 30th. Numbers elsewhere included 2000+ roosting in a maize field near Shipdham Airfield and 1000+ roosting at Haddiscoe Island both on 30th/31st. At this time the numbers of House Martins were modest with a gathering of 600 at Thetford on 24th and 385 west at Scolt Head on 29th.



During the first three weeks of September passage of both Swallows and House Martins was higher than normal. At Scolt Head there was a westerly movement of Swallows on an almost daily basis with maximum counts of 6100 west and 3000 feeding on 1st, 1750 west on 2nd and 500 west on 11th. Other counts at this time included 500 roosting at Lopham/Redgrave Fen on 2nd, 300 at Martham Pits on 3rd and 500 at Haddiscoe on 15th. The best House Martin counts during this time were also at Scolt Head where westerly movements of 850 on 2nd and 2500 on 15th were recorded.

Following a small passage of both species on 23rd September the first major movement began next day but was only recorded along the western half of the north coast when 2300 Swallows and 10,500 House Martins moved west at Scolt Head and 1000s of both also west at Holme. On 25th 250 Swallows roosted at Martham Pits and 1300 House Martins moved west at Beeston Bump with 1000 at Overstrand. There was a widespread movement of Swallows on 26th when 2000 roosted at Holkham with a southerly passage on the east coast including 500 at Happisburgh (0900-1000 hrs), 800+ at Waxham (1400-1600 hrs and 1700-1830 hrs) and 200+ at Cart Gap (0830-0900 hrs), demonstrating the importance of time recording.

The 27th saw the largest movements of Swallows and House Martins ever documented in the county. Birds were arriving in off the sea between Mundesley and Winterton, most heading north and then west along the north coast and then south following the Wash coastline. South of Winterton birds generally moved south and were smaller in number. At the main sites the following Swallows and House Martins moved west:

	<i>Scolt Head</i>	<i>Overstrand</i>	<i>Mundesley</i>
Swallow	35,750	3,000	60,000+
House Martin	15,250	84,000+	140,000+



House Martins (*J R Williamson*)

Other counts of Swallows moving along the coast on this date (birds moving west unless otherwise stated) included tens of thousands at Hunstanton Cliffs and Holme all day, 1700 at Sheringham in 1 hr 30 mins, 740 at Beeston Bump (0815-0915 hrs), 1550 at Cromer and 100 south at Winterton. Away from the east coast and Scolt Head there were far fewer counts of House Martins with 465 west in 15 mins at Holme, 1900 at Cromer and a single flock of 2000 south at Caister. At Scolt Head only the passage along the beach and outer dunes was counted, but birds could also be seen moving west 1-2 miles inland. Elsewhere there was an almost continuous west or south-west passage of Swallows along the Tud Valley, and between Fakenham and Hunstanton. Clearly much higher numbers were involved than the counts indicate. There was also a day-long westerly passage in small groups over Norwich. The total number of Swallows moving through the county on this date must have been huge and probably exceeded 100,000 birds. The passage of House Martins was even greater but was largely confined to the coast. At Overstrand and Mundesley passage peaked between 0830 hrs and 1100 hrs but continued in smaller numbers throughout the day and extended for up to at least a quarter of a mile inland; due to the loose nature of the flocks they were very difficult to count and the true total was probably nearer 250,000 birds.

The westerly passage of both species continued over the next few days when the main sites on 28th and 29th recorded:

	<i>Scolt Head</i>		<i>Overstrand</i>		<i>Mundesley</i>	
	<i>28th</i>	<i>29th</i>	<i>28th</i>	<i>29th</i>	<i>28th</i>	<i>29th</i>
Swallow	2,100	750	-	-	36,000	-
House Martin	1,250	7,600	3,000	5,000	44,000	15,000

During this time there were few counts from other sites, but at Holme 100s of Swallows and House Martins moved west on 28th. On 29th a heavy passage of Swallows occurred after a shower at Burnham Overy Staithe, 1000s of House Martins passed Cley with 750 in 2 hours at Beeston Bump (all moving west).

Numbers of Swallows after these movements quickly declined but there were further movements of House Martins on 1st-3rd October. On 1st a huge flock of 10,000+ was feeding over a small area of Yarmouth sea front. In the morning of 2nd 24,500 moved west at Scolt Head, with hundreds west also at both Cley and Sheringham, and gatherings of 250 at Morston, 150 at Lynn Point, 150 at Narborough and 500 clinging to ledges on the cliff front at Cromer (90% juveniles). The last significant movements of the year were on 3rd October when at Beeston Bump 6000 per hour came in off the sea from the east-north-east (0640-0800 hrs) with still 2000 per hour west at 0900 hrs. Also on that day only 120 moved west at Scolt Head with 160 south per hour at Waxham, but inland 1000 were at Sculthorpe with 2 additional 'clouds' of birds overhead, and 700 at Wissington BF. After these last movements most of the Swallows and House Martins disappeared and by the second week of October fewer than normal were left in the county.

This movement was not only confined to Norfolk; elsewhere national counts included 2000 Swallows at Theale GP 25th September, 17,000+ 'hirundines' over Walton-on-the-Naze 26th September, while on 27th 10,000 Swallows were at Hampstead Heath, 6000 'hirundines' passed south over Regents Park, and 3000 Swallows and 1000 House Martins were at Minsmere. On 30th 30,000 Swallows moved south at Dungeness. These give just an indication of the numbers that moved south and south-west through south-east England at this time. The numbers must have involved hundreds of thousands of birds, a truly unique event.

## Origin of the 1999 Movement

Both Swallows and House Martins are common summer visitors to all of northern Europe except Iceland, wintering in Africa south of the Sahara. Why and from where such huge numbers came from is unclear. The weather conditions at the time give little idea of the origins of these birds. Over the period, the whole of northern Europe was dominated by deep low pressure systems situated to the west of Britain and others over Scandinavia and north of Iceland. These systems produced fresh to moderate west to south-west winds over southern England, the near continent and northern Europe with slack winds over northern Britain, giving few clues to the origin of the movement. Scandinavia can probably be ruled out as a source as both species tend to move much earlier from these regions. This is evidenced at Falsterbo in southern Sweden where the peak passage of Swallows tends to occur during the middle of September and House Martins much earlier still in late August. One possible source is northern Britain where in slack winds and falling pressure, birds began to move south and with south-west winds, were deflected out to sea, reorientating themselves through south-east England. Alternatively the passage may have been a continuation of a west or south-west movement along the southern shore of the Baltic with birds originating from eastern Europe which were then blown off course and out into the North Sea, reorientating themselves through south-east England. The weather conditions which produced these movements probably coincided with the main departure of the population of a major European region; undoubtedly a good breeding season had occurred as a high percentage of the birds appeared to be juveniles.

Whatever the reasons for these exceptional movements they are likely to remain one of those ornithological mysteries. What is without doubt is that the hirondine movement of autumn 1999 was one of the most amazing mass migrations ever witnessed in the county.

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The Met Office



# The 1999 Nightingale Survey

*Andy Wilson*

## The history of the Nightingale in Norfolk

During the 19th century, the Nightingale was probably fairly common in suitable habitat throughout Norfolk but even by the 1920s, the species had been virtually lost from former haunts in the Norwich area. Through most of the 20th century, the Brecks and the north Norfolk coast between Weybourne and Cromer have been the most favoured areas of the county for this species with low densities elsewhere (Taylor *et al* 1999). The British Trust for Ornithology organised national Nightingale surveys in 1976 and 1980; in the latter survey 322 singing males were found in Norfolk, the fifth highest county total in England (Davis 1982). At that time, most of the Nightingales in Norfolk were found in the west of the county, largely in the Brecks and the area between Swaffham and King's Lynn. During the Norfolk Bird Atlas years 1980-1985, singing Nightingales were located in no less than 212 tetrads in the county (Map 1), this figure including all those found during the 1980 survey (Kelly 1986). In the two decades since the last BTO survey, there has been evidence of a decrease in numbers in parts of the county, especially in the east where Nightingales are now very local.



**Map 1: Distribution of Nightingale in Norfolk between 1980 and 1985 (from Kelly 1986)**

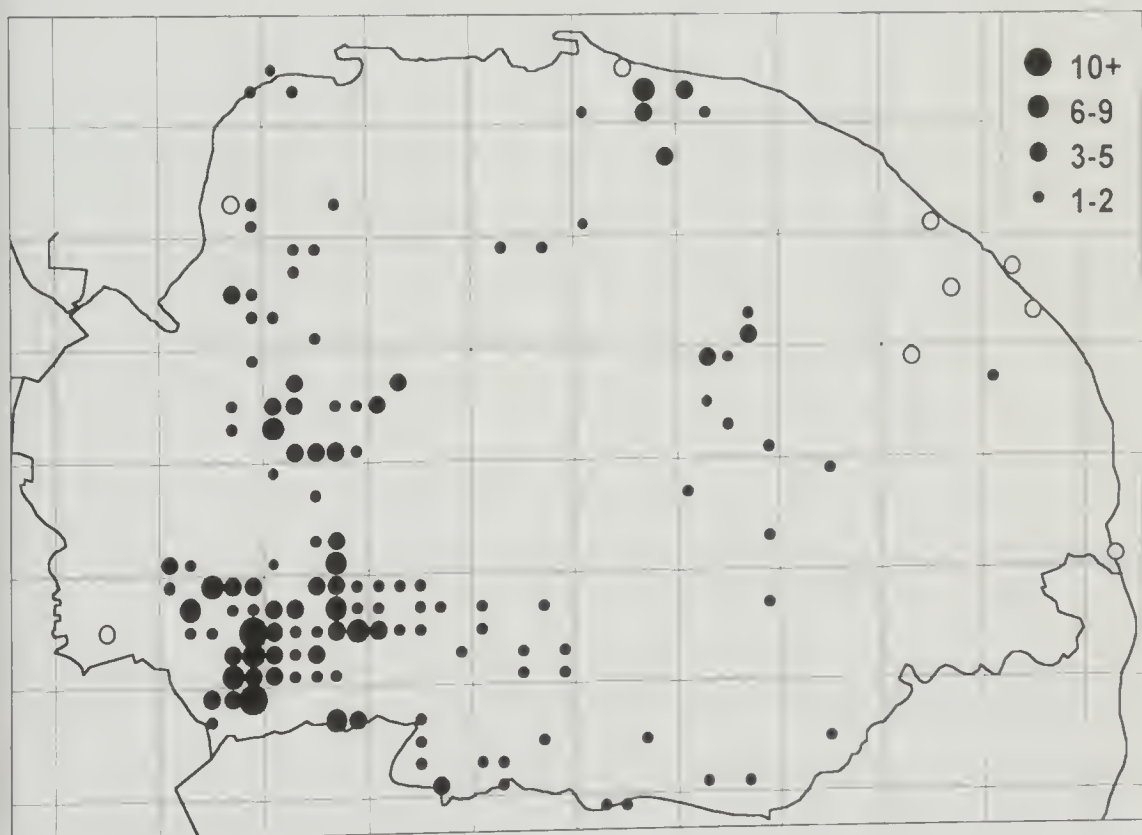


## 1999 Nightingale Survey results

Eastern counties have generally fared better for this species than areas towards the edge of the range, for example, more Nightingales were found in Suffolk, Essex and Kent in 1999 than were found there during 1980. In all, over 4,400 singing Nightingales were found in England in 1999 - Norfolk's share of this population was 7%, a similar figure to that in 1980 (Wilson 2000).

In all, 326 singing male Nightingales were reported in Norfolk in 1999, although at least 10 of these were birds that were almost certainly migrants. The estimate of 316 territory holding birds is only 6 less than were found in 1980, which is something of a surprise given the general impression of the Nightingale as a species in rapid decline. However, the simple comparison of total figures between the two surveys masks some large changes in numbers locally, increases in some areas partly compensating for continued declines elsewhere. Nightingales are certainly seararer in the east of the Norfolk than they were 20 years ago and numbers in the area between Swaffham and King's Lynn are generally lower but in contrast, numbers in the extreme southwest of the county along the eastern edge of the Fens have soared. Nightingales were noted in 84 parishes in the county but the two parishes of Feltwell and Methwold along the Breck/Fen edge supported 23% of the county total. Good numbers were also found in the neighbouring Breckland parishes of Diddlington, Foulton, Hockwold and Weeting.

**Map 2: Distribution of singing male Nightingales in Norfolk in 1999 (open circles = migrants)**



**Main Nightingale sites**

The single best site for Nightingales was a 20km section of the Cut-off Channel between Hockwold and Wereham, where 26 singing males were found in all. This artificial drainage channel was cut during the early 1960s and now has thick scrub growing up along its banks in places – ideal habitat for Nightingale and other scrub loving species such as Turtle Doves and Lesser Whitethroats. Some of these birds can be heard from the public roads that cross the channel but please note that the channel banks are all privately owned, as are many of the sites listed in Table 1. Other important sites in the southwest of the county included Foulden Common (10 males – considerable less than the 25 found in 1980) and Pentney GP (9 males). Further east, small numbers were found in the areas northwest of Norwich, including Alderford Common (3 males) and Buxton Heath (5 males) while in the north, only Salthouse House (11 males) maintains a healthy population.

**Table 1: Main Nightingale sites in Norfolk in 1999**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Habitat/ownership</i>	<i>Singing males</i>
Cut-off Channel	Scrub - Private	26
River Wissey, Mundford area	Scrub/woodland - Strictly private	14
Salthouse Heath	Scrub - public footpaths	11
Methwold Common	Private farmland	11
Feltwell Common	Private farmland	11
Foulden Common	Scrub - public access	10
Stanford Training Area	Scrub/woodland - Strictly no access	10
Pentney GP	Scrub - listen from road	9
Feltwell Anchor	Private farmland	7

**Prospects for the future**

The future of the Nightingale in Britain is uncertain. Certainly, habitat destruction and lack of appropriate habitat management have led to local extinction in many areas but habitats such as wet scrub around gravel pits have presented new opportunities for the species. The range contraction that has been underway in Britain for the last few decades (Gibbons *et al* 1993) may be just as much a consequence of changes in habitat or climate on the Nightingale's wintering grounds in equatorial Africa as it is to do with changes in Britain. Being principally a bird of Mediterranean climates, one might expect predicted climate change in Britain to be of benefit to this species but it remains to be seen exactly how these changes will affect our birdlife.

There can be little doubt that the Nightingale is now vulnerable in parts of Norfolk, as small populations, principally on nature reserves, become more isolated. The general reduction in numbers in the King's Lynn/Swaffham areas and eastern Brecks may be due to habitat changes, possibly exacerbated by the rapidly increasing deer populations in these areas (Taylor *et al* 1999). High deer densities can have serious impacts on scrub or woodland structure as the field and shrub layer vegetation is browsed away – literally eating birds such as the Nightingale out of house and home. In contrast, the high densities of Nightingales now found in the eastern Fens have taken advantage of recently developed scrub along drainage channel banks, demonstrating the opportunistic nature of this species.

The fact that almost half of Norfolk's Nightingales are now found in scrub places emphasises the need to maintain and manage this important habitat for this, and other, scrub loving species. This is especially important at the few remaining Nightingale sites in



the east of the county as it would be difficult to see how this species would be able to maintain a presence in these areas if the populations on these heathlands were lost. The BTO, sponsored by Anglian Water, carried out further research into the Nightingale population of the eastern Fens in the spring and summer of 2000. Hopefully, this will lead to a greater understanding of the species' habitat requirements and may lead to the development of more patches of suitable habitat in the area, helping to maintain Nightingale numbers in the county in coming years.

## Acknowledgements

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## The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

This started in 1994 and gives all birdwatchers a chance to take part in important survey work. If you have a few hours to spare each year and wish to take part in the BBS, please contact your BTO Regional Representative or Richard Bashford at the BTO National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3NR Tel: 01842 750050.

# Pied-billed Grebe in south-west Norfolk – the second county record

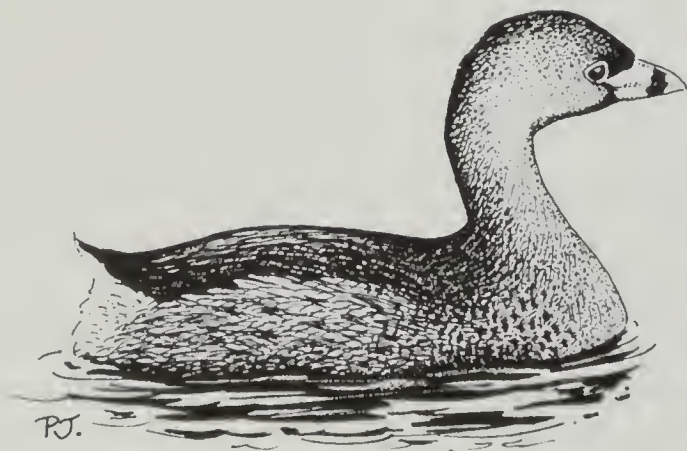
*Carl Donner*

At mid-day on Wednesday 17th March, a quick glance from the road at Stowbridge Pits produced the usual Tufted, Great-crested Grebes, Canadas and Greylags. This spot has been for many years one of my regular calls on route to Tottenhill Gravel Pits. Once a working gravel pit it is now a caravan and camping site viewable from a footpath to the south of the main lake or the adjacent minor road. It is always an interesting place to watch, with Smew and Seaup regular during the winter and good for warblers in early spring.

On this first very warm sunny day of the year a couple of Chiffchaff were in full voice. Otherwise a strange 'Little Grebe' at the far back in company with a pair of Canadas looked decidedly odd, sporting a large and flat head. I casually extracted the 'scope from the car but on returning it had disappeared amongst the reeds. Eventually an image appeared backside on scoffing a small fish and it immediately swam out of the vegetation straight towards me. The shock of seeing a large banded bill, creamy eye ring and black throat stunned me for a few moments, as the best I'd hoped for was a Black-necked or Slavonian! Casually drifting behind the small island the bird looked well settled; realising that a Pied-billed Grebe was a 'tick' for every keen Norfolk lister I hastened home to ring in the news to Birdline.

On returning with John Kemp we located the summer-plumaged bird in the south corner well out in the open water where we obtained excellent views before other birders started to arrive. Even at this very early stage if we approached too close or noisily the bird just sank like a miniature submarine with just its head up acting as a periscope and slunk into the bankside vegetation. This shy and skittish behaviour almost certainly explained the bird's long periods hidden away in reeds later on in its stay. Fortunately most birders obtained good views that afternoon and on subsequent days up until 29th. Thanks are due to the owners and staff of Woodlakes Caravan Park for access and car parking.

Unusually what was undoubtedly the same bird was re-located at Thompson Water (21 miles to the south-east) on 31st March which remained on territory there until 11th May. It often displayed and regularly called towards the end of its stay. It also had various disputes



Pied-billed Grebe (*P Jones*)

with breeding Great-crested Grebes and on one occasion it was attacked by its larger cousin, which drove its bill inside that of the other, forcing it under water for a considerable time.

This bird constitutes the second Norfolk record and follows hot on the heels of others in South Wales, Kent, Cornwall, The Scillies and Surrey during winter 1998/99 (indeed a summer-plumaged bird was at Bessborough Reservoir, Surrey the previous day prompting speculation that the Norfolk record involved the same bird).

The first Norfolk record was near Welney on 9th-12th November 1968 and was only the seventh British record. This individual was only observed on the Washes by a handful of members from the Cambridge Bird Club who viewed it from the Old Bedford river bank.

**The following artists may be able to provide copies of their work or take commissions**

Norman Arlott, Hill House, Station Rd, Tilney St Lawrence, King's Lynn  
PE34 4RB

Andy Benson, Ciconia, The Close, Aylmerton, Norwich NR11 8PX

Steve Cale, Bramble Cottage, Westwood Lane, Gt Ryburgh, Fakenham  
NR21 7AP

Simon Gillings, 39 Sorrel House, Humbleyard, Bowthorpe, Norwich  
NR5 9BT

Robert Gillmor, North Light, Hill Top, Cley, Holt NR25 7SE

Vince Hanlon, Owl Cottage, 6 Hart Lane, Bodham, Holt NR25 6NT

Phil Jones, 24 Church Lane, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 0EG

Ben Murphy, 64 Crossdale Street, Northrepps, Cromer NR27 9LA

John Williamson, 19 Neylond Crescent, Hellesdon, Norwich NR6 5QF

Peter Wilson, 39 Station Road, Thetford IP24 1AW

Gary Wright, 27 Ray Bond Way, Aylsham NR11 6UT



# Black-winged Pratincole at Cley – third for Norfolk

*Robert Holmes*



Black-winged Pratincole (*G Wright*)

I arrived at Daukes Hide, Cley mid-afternoon on 17th July to see the Pectoral Sandpiper that had been found earlier that day. The nearctic visitor was duly 'scoped across a hazy Simmond's scrape' where a selection of returning waders were busy refueling for their southward journey.

At around 1615 hrs a mobile troop of Dunlin, that had been touring the scrape, finally settled close to the hide allowing a detailed inspection of their ranks. Having completed an initial scan of the advancing group my attention was drawn to a dark wader which flew across the scrape and alighted behind the Dunlin. Chris Bishop had also noticed the bird and we were both surprised to see a pratincole sitting on the mud at the edge of the scrape. We alerted other observers in the hide and continued to watch what we assumed to be the annually-summering Collared Pratincole which had been seen at Holme and at Titchwell earlier in the season. Within a minute or so of arriving it promptly flew a short distance to a nearby vegetated spit giving a brief, but tantalising, view of its underwing. Instead of the diagnostic chestnut coverts and pale trailing edge to the secondaries the pratincole revealed an all dark underwing; its identity clearly in need of urgent reviewing!

The pratincole was no more than 50 yards away in good light and did appear to be uniformly dark, lacking the contrast between the upperwing coverts and flight feathers. Few people appeared concerned about the identity; many preferring to accept it was just the returning Collared. James Brown and Chris Bishop were immediately convinced the pratincole was a Black-winged; further plumage details needed to be checked. Dave Nye suggested the distinguishing relative lengths of the primaries and outer tail feathers; they did appear to be of equal length eliminating the short-tailed Oriental and supporting our tentative identification.

A few minutes later Norfolk's and remarkably Cley's third Black-winged Pratincole was now hawking back and forth across the scrape evaporating any lingering doubts: it clearly lacked the chestnut underwing pattern of Collared. A birder tried to contact Richard Millington on his mobile phone but couldn't get through. The pratincole that would complete the trio for most county listers was still zooming around the scrape while Dave and I tried to photograph it. As news of the discovery filtered around the reserve the hide began to fill up, although the number of observers convinced of its true identity remained surprisingly low given the superlative views on offer. After a succession of close fly-bys any remaining doubters were converted as space in Daukes became decidedly scarce! As early evening approached the bird flew east to Salthouse but returned to Cley the next day.

Just as the Collared Pratincole had become accustomed to doing, the bird toured north Norfolk being relocated at Titchwell for 9 days (also visiting nearby Snettisham) before reappearing at Cley in early August. During its absence from Norfolk a pratincole of this species was seen in Denmark. It was last seen at Cley on 30th August.

The Black-winged Pratincole is a trans-equatorial migrant, breeding in south-west Asia and south-east Europe with most birds wintering in the African tropics. As noted above, there are two previously accepted records in Norfolk, birds at Cley 3rd-5th July 1966, and at Salthouse Heath 25th August 1974, Cley 27th and Salthouse 28th.

## THE NORFOLK & NORWICH NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

(Reg Charity No 291604)

**Patron: Her Majesty the Queen**

The county's senior natural history society. It has for its principal objectives the practical study of natural science, the conservation of wildlife, the publication of papers on natural history, especially those relating to the county of Norfolk, arranging lectures and meetings and the promotion of active field work. Specialist groups cover most aspects of the county's flora and fauna.

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Dr A R Leach  
3 Eccles Road  
Holt  
NR25 6HJ

### **Publications:**

Transactions  
Bird & Mammal Report  
Quarterly newsletter "Natterjack"

### **Membership Secretary:**

S M Livermore  
7 Naseby Way  
Dussindale  
Norwich NR7 0TP

# American Golden Plover in south Norfolk – the second county record

*Simon Gillings*

Since winter 1996/97 I have been studying the local distribution and habitat use of Golden Plovers and Lapwings in the Diss area and on 26th September 1999 I was making a preliminary visit to check crop patterns prior to the 1999/2000 fieldwork season. At 1630 hrs I arrived near Tibenham and saw a flock of c700 Golden Plovers in flight. The flock divided into two, half settling to the north and half to the south. After counting the north flock I drove round to the south flock which had settled on a harrowed field. A quick look with binoculars confirmed that there were 3-400 birds present and I set up my telescope to pick through them – previous winters had seen Grey Plover, Dunlin and Ruff and there was always the possibility of something better.

I was immediately struck by a bird with a pronounced white supercilium and dark cap. With my back to the evening sun, the Golden Plovers in the flock shone golden but this bird appeared very cold-toned and dark - surely it must be an American Golden Plover, a long-awaited addition to the study area? Several Golden Plovers around it raised their wings, showing off brilliant white underwings and after what seemed like an age, it stretched its wings high over its back and revealed the smoky grey underwings of a 'Lesser Golden Plover'.

At this point I was convinced that the bird was an American but wanted a second opinion. Thankfully John Marehant lived only a couple of miles away - and he was at home. John returned with me and thankfully the American was still present. We watched it for a further 15 minutes confirming the attenuated rear and general plumage details before the whole flock took flight and we saw the grey underwing again and rakish shape in flight. In failing light and rain showers we eventually gave up searching for the flock.

I returned three times the next day and also on 2nd October and checked all the regular haunts and flocks but the American was not to be found. I can only conclude that the bird left that evening. Visiting birders also failed to find the American, although a greyish juvenile or winter-plumage Golden Plover was seen. At the time I did not realise that this was only the second American Golden Plover to be found in Norfolk, and the first since 1976 when a summer-plumaged individual was present at Breydon 8th-17th June. It was also a nice addition to the local list and further proof that inland birding can be rewarding.



American Golden Plover (*S Gillings*)



# An 'Invasion' of Pallid Swifts in Norfolk

*John Williamson*



Pallid Swift at Winterton (*G Wright*)

An unprecedented influx of Pallid Swifts into eastern England in late October and early November 1999 produced six county records, including the first ever to be ringed in Britain.

Norfolk had previously hosted two of the fourteen accepted British records to the end of 1998. The first, at Burnham Overy on 25th July 1993, was seen by four people; the second, at Mundesley on 28th August 1997, was seen by just one fortunate observer. Both records were associated with large weather movements of Common Swifts.

The first of autumn 1999 was seen on 24th October. Having heard that an unnamed birder had seen one flying north-west over Mundesley, Ben Murphy and Tony Eadson drove along the coast in the vain hope of finding it. Amazingly they relocated the bird and saw it for about two minutes over Trimingham before it disappeared towards Sidestrand.

The next day one was found at Mundesley by Giles Dunmore and Nick Dymond (visiting from Shetland). This bird hawked insects over the town in the afternoon and as news spread that this was not just a fly-through, and the bird was showing well, a major panic broke out amongst county birders as they desperately attempted to get to Mundesley in the fading evening light. The views obtained by several latecomers in almost total darkness must surely have left something to be desired.

Although it is likely that the bird roosted in the town that evening it could not be relocated by those gathered the following morning. However, later the same day another Pallid Swift was found by Richard Thewlis at Winterton where, in bright sunlight, it performed admirably to its audience for most of the day, more than compensating for the poor views some birders

obtained the previous evening. This bird was considered a different individual by many observers based on 'damaged' outer primaries seen in the field. However, photographic evidence suggests this was simply dislodged feathering and thus it may not be safe to draw conclusions based on this alone.

Pallid Swifts were now being reported down the east coast of England from Cleveland to Suffolk, including two together in Yorkshire, and it came as no surprise that further birds were found and identified by Paul Trodd at Holkham on 27th October and by Mike Crewe at West Runton on 31st October.

The final episode of the story was to achieve national press and local television coverage and proved to be a tale of dramatic twists. Paul Lee found a Pallid Swift hawking insects low above the eastern end of Sheringham seafront on 5th November and the bird was showing well for local birders when a gust of wind coincided with a low-level swoop and caused it to collide with a parked car. Upon falling to the ground the bird was immediately retrieved and handed to local ringer Martin Preston. Martin quickly examined the bird which appeared unharmed apart from one broken claw. It was quickly ringed with a view to immediate release. On further inspection, Martin noted that the bird was considerably underweight and thus doubtless in a weakened state, and following two attempted releases, when the bird fluttered to the ground, he decided to take the bird into care. Whilst in care, the bird was fed a diet of lean minced beef, brown crickets, the contents of Martin's moth trap and supplementary vitamins.

It was considered ready for release on the morning of 7th November. Following a quick photo call, the bird was released in front of an amazing 500 birders at Weybourne beach car park. Unfortunately the release was short-lived, the first attempt seeing the bird flutter to the ground again and the second seeing it fly weakly east, low over the heads of the gathered crowd, only to be found grounded, but unharmed, a short distance east of the release point. It was immediately returned to care but many birders present feared the worst. Martin was not deterred however, and with the help of local birders the feeding programme was continued until the bird was felt fit for release again on 15th November. On this occasion perseverance was rewarded as it flew strongly off to the east until lost to view.

Identification of Pallid Swift is at best problematical and good views of both structural and plumage details are necessary to clinch identification beyond doubt (see *Birding World* Vol 12 No 11 pp 448-452, and *Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin* No 38 pp 3-5). It is to the credit of the finders and identifiers of all the above birds that all six have been accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

*Postscript:* The total of £370 collected, and subsequently donated the British Trust for Ornithology, by those present at Weybourne on 7th November for the abortive release of the captive bird, proves that, with thought the generous nature of twitchers can be used to benefit valuable scientific and conservation research.

# Red-flanked Bluetail at Brancaster Staithe – second for Norfolk

*Keith Herber*

Since moving to Norfolk on a permanent basis at the end of February 1999, ringing has been carried out in my garden at Dale End, Brancaster Staithe with the purpose of monitoring the local bird populations and passage through the area. Ringing is usually carried out at least twice a week, with the frequency very dependant on the wind/weather conditions with nets usually open for up to four hours.

On Sunday 17th October at last the wind had dropped and it was possible to open the nets at first light, but few birds were processed, despite moderate to strong easterly winds during the preceding week which it was hoped might have brought a few distant migrants into the county. This feeling was fuelled by the fact that on Friday (15th) we had been privy to see the Pied Wheatear at nearby Choseley Farm, and then on Saturday (16th) a Dusky Warbler at Holkham Meals.

However, Sunday was one of those away days, where we had a firm commitment for a family lunch at Bury St Edmunds. So at about 8.30 am it was time to furl the nets and get washed and changed. Having furled the first two nets and no birds trapped, I came to the last of the three nets to find it contained four birds, a Dunnock, a Greenfinch, a House Sparrow and a Robin-like bird at the far end of the net. As I worked my way along the net extracting the birds, I noted out of the corner of my eye that my supposed Robin had a noticeable pale eye ring and that the orange colouration was limited to the sides flanks and my thoughts turned to the possibility of it being a Red-breasted Flycatcher. Needless to say the pulses started to race a bit. The bird then rolled over in the net and showed a bluetail and then the penny dropped... and panic ensued, it was a Red-flanked Bluetail, for me an unexpected and exciting find in north Norfolk. A calming situation was that I D was not a problem as I have been fortunate to see quite a number in Hong Kong and south-east Asia, and lucky to see the bird at Winspit, Dorset some years back. I will admit it was stunning to have such a bird in one's back garden, and my wife Ann who was in the middle of washing her hair, thought I'd had a mishap when I shouted for her to come and have a look at the bird.

Mindful that I still had to wash and change, I attempted to contact a number of local birders and friends, but being a Sunday morning most were unobtainable or out in the field. However, I did manage to get in touch with Roger Skeen and Ray Kimber who joined me and Ray took some pictures of the bird. I also took some shots but they did not come out brilliantly, no doubt due to my shaking hands! We were later also joined by Alan Pettrigrew at the release point.

As the bird was obviously a Red-flanked Bluetail, based on the blue outer webs of the tail feathers and its orange/buff flanks (the latter and this bird's dark legs eliminating the possibility of a Siberian Blue Robin), the main objectives became to sex and age the bird. Based on the following criteria the bird was processed as a first year male and of the nominate form:

- Inside of upper mandible pale yellow with some brown colouration towards the tip;
- tail feathers narrow and pointed;
- some blue on lesser coverts and at certain angles there was a blue wash on the tertials.



Biometrics recorded included:

Wing 80 mm; Weight 12.0 g; Bill 13.5 mm (bill to skull); Tail 57.6 mm

The bird appeared to be in excellent condition, fat score being estimated as 1 (on a scale of 1-5) and a muscle score of 2 (scale 0-3).

A mutual decision was taken to release the bird locally in view of my impending departure to Bury (as by now I was running late for my cousin's birthday lunch) and so that it could be seen by others. It was therefore taken to Burnham Deepdale churchyard and duly released within the grounds. We had all expected the bird to go straight to cover, but instead it flew strongly and almost vertically upwards maybe 150 ft or so, circled twice, as if to get its bearings and headed off strongly west.

Both Birdline and Rare Bird Alert had been alerted to the release point and were further told that the bird had flown, but despite this many birders turned up to try and relocate it.

We have since learnt that a neighbour saw a strange Robin-like bird in her garden, which spent most of its time skulking under vegetation. Having shown her the bird in the field guides she thinks this was the bird I ringed and that it had been present for at least two days prior to our sighting.

Following on from our bird, three other Bluetails were found that day at Scatness (Shetland), St Abbs Head (Borders) and Rame Head (Cornwall). Another was located in Skegness, Lincs during the following week, but was taken by a Sparrowhawk... an unprecedented influx.

The Red-flanked Bluetail is a very rare vagrant to Norfolk, this being only the second record. The species was added to the county list when another 1st-winter male was in Yarmouth Cemetery 18th-20th October 1994. Its breeding range extends from northern Russia through Siberia to Japan, although some now breed annually in eastern Finland, and spends its winters in south-east Asia.

**Prints of Photographs including those featured in this Report  
may be obtained from:**

Julian Bhalerao, 18 Brook Road, Sheringham NR26 8QE

Andrew Bloomfield, Longlands Farm, Holkham Park, Wells-next-the-Sea,  
NR23 1RH

Neil Bowman, Clare Cottage, Eccles-on-Sea NR12 0SW

Robin Chittenden, 65 Sandringham Road, Norwich NR2 3RZ

Graham Cresswell, 35 Melrose Road, Norwich NR4 7PN

Iain Leach, 26 Ashchurch Drive, Wollaton, Notts NG8 2RA

Dave Nye, 2 Aran Drive, The Meadow, Sheringham NR26 8UR

Alan Tate, 55 Woodlands Way, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7JA

Roger Tidman, 142 Fakenham Road, Briston, Melton Constable NR24 2DL

# Raptor Migration in north-east Norfolk

*Ben Murphy and Mick Saunt*

## Introduction

During the mid-nineties a small group of local birdwatchers discovered that in both spring and autumn a regular movement of raptors takes place along the Holt-Cromer ridge in north-east Norfolk. Initially, Ineleborough Hill, halfway between East and West Runton and just south of the coast road, was chosen as an ideal observation point. Rising to 256 feet, the southern edge of the hill provides a panoramic view of a large section of the ridge and also gives superb views to the east as far as Southrepps and to the west the woodlands of Sheringham Park and Kelling are visible. With migrating raptors being seen from Ineleborough it was reasoned that they must also pass over other points along the ridge and since 1998 various localities in the Northrepps area have also been regularly watched and a tentative pattern of movement is beginning to emerge.

In spring, dependent upon the prevailing weather, the first migrant raptors occur from mid-March with passage continuing into late May. It quickly became apparent that the level of movement is very much weather dependent with ideal conditions usually consisting of a light wind coming from the southern quarter, ideally coupled with warm air to create thermals. The extent of cloud cover does not seem to matter with birds moving in both cloudless and flat grey skies.

As might be expected the majority of movement occurs between mid-morning and early afternoon when rising air currents produce the conditions which trigger the birds to move. However, birds can occur at any time during the day, for example a vagrant Black Kite was seen early in the morning while on one occasion a large movement of Common Buzzards occurred at 3.30 in the afternoon.

Although the main focus of attention has been spring migration, casual observations in the autumn have shown that the ridge still holds an attraction for migrating raptors and more extensive watching would no doubt provide a few surprises.

## Notes on the species recorded to date

The most commonly seen birds are Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard and Marsh Harrier all of which can be expected on days when 'ideal' conditions prevail.

Sparrowhawk passage appears to begin in mid-March and continues right through the spring period with the last stragglers still moving in late May. As indicated in the systematic list, double-figure counts have been noted on several occasions but it is often impossible to tell migrants from the area's healthy resident population.

Although both Marsh Harrier and Common Buzzard can put in first appearances in mid-March, the main period is from early April with both species peaking during mid-April to early May but with small numbers continuing to be seen until the end of the month.

It is likely that the Marsh Harriers in early spring are breeding birds heading for sites further north and west, but the origin of those later in the spring is puzzling. The majority seen in this latter period tend to be adults which is surprising as one would expect most to have set up territory and be busy raising young. It is not inconceivable that some of the birds are wanderers from the Broads making short-distance movements when weather conditions are particularly favourable, while some may be failed breeders from other English populations. An alternative is perhaps Continental migrants wandering to East Anglia as a



Common Buzzards (*J R Williamson*)

result of favourable weather conditions across the North Sea. It is widely believed that the current healthy British population is as a direct result of the dramatic expansion of this species in the Netherlands (Seago *et al*, 1999) and it should be no great surprise that continued immigration is still taking place.

The origin of the Common Buzzards seen is perhaps more intriguing. The status of this species in the county has been well documented (Williamson, 1995) and the number of birds seen reflects the general improvement in the species' fortunes. Although part of the study area has been used by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology to release birds into the wild, with numbers moving along the ridge in spring far outweighing the few resident birds, it must be assumed that the vast majority are genuine migrants - but where do they come from and where are they going?

There are two likely possibilities. Firstly, a recent paper in *British Birds* (Clements, 1999) suggested that such movements may be caused by non-breeders from the populations in western Britain being displaced by resident territory-holding birds and forced to disperse eastwards into areas where current populations are low. In the autumn when the breeding season is over these same birds may filter back into western Britain. Secondly, they may be displaced Continental birds arriving in the county, somewhere to the south and east before reorienting west along the coast. It is possible that some of the birds make landfall as far south as Kent and Essex before continuing to move north and this may account for regular movements through Suffolk in the spring. While local weather conditions often seem unlikely to produce such movements it is more likely that the weather conditions prevailing on the near-Continent are the main influence on their arrival.

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for 'good' and 'bad' springs for Common Buzzard and the answer may lie with the weather conditions prevailing in Northern Europe during the previous winter. During mild winters Common Buzzard populations in Northern



Europe remain high providing enough food is available. This is likely to result in lower numbers being seen in the county the following spring due to a combination of fewer European birds wintering in Britain and also that on the Continent fewer birds need to move any distance on their northward migration., thus providing fewer opportunities for weather-induced movements across the North Sea.

Also of interest, the spring of 1995 which produced record numbers of Common Buzzards (including 32 west at Sheringham BO in a single day) was preceded the previous autumn by a major influx of Rough-legged Buzzards, while good numbers of Common Buzzards in spring 1999 followed hot on the heels of another Rough-legged Buzzard influx in autumn 1998. It is highly probable that the circumstances which resulted in this influx also ensured that good numbers of Common Buzzards were caught up in the same movement both in Britain and on the near Continent.

In spring the vast majority of Common Buzzards are moving west and of equal interest is what happens to these birds when they move off along the ridge. The areas immediately to the west of Northrepps and Inceborough are among the most heavily watched areas in the county and yet there are relatively few records of birds relocated there. Do they continue to move west at great height before continuing their migration through the British Isles? Do any of the birds remain in the county to bolster the existing populations? All these questions remain unanswered. What is certain is that this fine raptor is becoming an increasingly common spring migrant in the county.

Among the other regularly noted species are Red Kite and Osprey, both seen annually with records becoming more frequent, probably due to a combination of increased observer coverage and increases in the British populations, although the timing of Red Kite sightings suggests that most are of Continental origin (Lovegrove, 1990).

As might be expected, raptor migration routes are often attractive to other large soaring birds and a number of interesting sightings have been made. These include White Stork (on 3 occasions), Black Stork, while the Broadland Cranes have put in an appearance with 2 birds on at least 5 occasions in spring and 5 birds south-east over Northrepps in October 1999.

Below is a summary of the birds seen from both Inceborough and Northrepps Sidestrand since 1994. Much of the time spent observing the ridge is at weekends and it is interesting to speculate on the number of birds that must pass through unseen at other times.

### **Honey Buzzard**

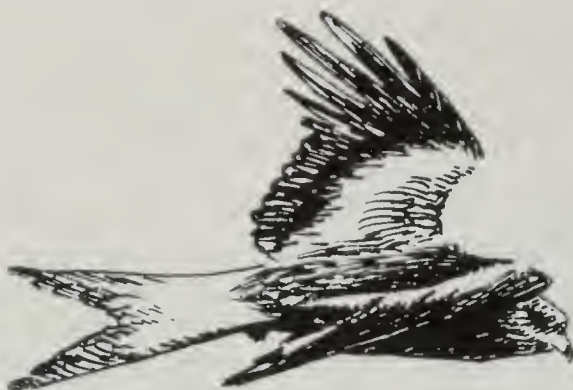
*Spring:* A single bird flew out of woodland south of Inceborough mid-morning May 14th 1995 before heading west after presumably having roosted overnight; another west at Overstrand May 23rd 1999.

### **Black Kite**

*Spring:* One flew east at Cromer GC early morning May 2nd 1994. It is worth noting that the first county record was at West Runton as recently as 1976.

### **Red Kite**

*Spring:* A notable county influx in 1996 was mirrored along the north-east coastal strip with at least 8 birds including 2 on March 24th and 30th. Just a single bird noted in 1997, none in 1998 but 3 in 1999. With the exception of singles on March 10th and April 5th all records fall in the period March 18th-31st which strongly indicates these are displaced Continental birds moving north rather than dispersing individuals from the introduced British populations.



Red Kite (*A Benson*)

### **Marsh Harrier**

*Spring:* Just 2 March records with singles 10th and 31st. Single birds noted from early April but main movement from mid-April to month end, peak counts being 3 west April 14th 1995 and 4 west April 24th the same year. Small-scale westerly movement continues into early May with latest bird noted over Northrepps May 26th 1999.

*Autumn:* Just 7 birds in the period, the earliest August 11th when a bird at Overstrand flew north out to sea. An interesting record occurred September 11th 1999 when an exhausted juvenile was found on the cliffs at Overstrand before being seen later in the day heading east over Northrepps. Latest record November 6th of a bird which flew west at Overstrand 300 yards offshore.

### **Hen Harrier**

*Spring:* Ringtails over Northrepps April 15th 1996, April 20th 1999 and an adult male over the same site May 1st 1999; also a ringtail came in off the sea and then south over Cromer GC May 18th 1999.

*Autumn:* A wing-tagged ringtail arrived off the sea then flew south-east at Cromer Lighthouse (red 'H' on right wing and blue 'I' on left) on September 4th 1994. The origin of this bird remains a mystery.

### **Montagu's Harrier**

*Spring:* An adult male west over Northrepps 23rd May 1999.

### **Goshawk**

*Spring:* In 1995 up to 3 birds were present south of Inceborough in late April, while in March 1996 a pair was seen briefly over Northrepps although in both cases none decided to linger. At Northrepps 2 birds were displaying March 15th 1998 but not subsequently so presumed to be migrants, while at the same site a male moved west April 25th 1999.

*Autumn:* A male flew in off the sea at Overstrand November 12th 1997 before heading off west.

### **Sparrowhawk**

*Spring:* Small-scale movement from mid-March peaking in latter half of April. With a large resident population it is difficult to determine the exact numbers moving through, although double-figure counts noted on 3 occasions in late April. Due to conservative counting

methods the number of actual migrants is likely to be considerably higher. Groups of 2-3 have twice been seen moving through with flocks of Common Buzzards.

*Autumn:* First birds moving from early August. Mainly 1-2 birds but 6 at Northrepps October 18th 1998 and an impressive 10 east over the same location October 13th 1999.

### **Common Buzzard**

*Spring:* After Sparrowhawk, the commonest migrating raptor with 1-3 regular between mid-March and mid-May. Maximum counts include: 5 west April 14th 1995, 9 west March 31st 1996 with 4 south-west the following day, 6 west May 8th 1998, 4 west March 16th 1999, 5 west March 31st 1999 and an impressive 18 west May 8th 1999.

*Autumn:* Just 5 records with 2 east over Northrepps September 13th 1994 and singles over the same site on October 18th and 20th 1998, and October 13th 1999.

Discounting obvious releases and what are assumed to be resident birds, in the period 1995-1999 a total of 95 birds been seen from the two observation areas.

### **Rough-legged Buzzard**

*Spring:* Just 2 records with singles west over Northrepps on February 15th 1999 and east over Inceborough and Northrepps on May 8th 1999.

*Autumn:* An influx in 1998 resulted in singles over Northrepps October 9th and 15th, with a flock of 4 west over Inceborough October 20th.

### **Osprey**

*Spring:* Of 8 birds seen the earliest was on April 18th. One individual drifted off west over Inceborough before turning north over Sheringham and then flew out to sea, while another was seen flying inland carrying a large grey mullet. With one exception, all birds moving west.

*Autumn:* A total of 5 occurrences with single Overstrand September 25th 1996, 2 over Northrepps September 1st 1998 and a single west at Sidestrand October 2nd 1998; a late bird west over Northrepps October 13th 1999.

### **Kestrel**

*Spring:* Only 3 singles moving west in March considered to be migrants.

*Autumn:* Just 2 records, 7 east at Overstrand September 20th and 2 west November 2nd, both 1999.

### **Merlin**

*Spring:* A scarce bird with just 2 singles, Overstrand April 28th 1997 and May 2nd 1999.

*Autumn:* Single Northrepps October 18th 1998.

### **Hobby**

*Spring:* Earliest record April 22nd when 3 west over Cromer GC; 1-2 regularly seen from late April to mid-May, with latest record May 17th.

*Autumn:* Just 4 records, all in 1999 at Northrepps with extreme dates July 5th and September 7th.

### **Peregrine**

*Spring:* Singles west at Inceborough April 24th 1995 and at Overstrand March 30th 1998.

*Autumn:* A single east September 26th 1998 with further birds October 10th and 13th 1997, and October 13th 1999.



## Summary

As previously mentioned, many of these birds are seen only from Northrepps and Inceborough and it is somewhat surprising that, apart from on occasions at Sheringham BO, they are not seen to the west of these sites considering that some of the county's most heavily-watched areas are only a few miles away.

There appears to be two possible reasons for this. Firstly, the birds are often using thermals created by rising warm air over the ridge and can be seen gaining height rapidly, and it is likely that by the time they are over sites further to the west they may simply be too high to detect. Secondly, the western end of the ridge swings inland and birds following its southern flank will not be visible from the coastal strip. With birds continuing to follow the areas of high ground to the west of the ridge it may explain the source of many of the birds seen at the raptor watchpoint at Swanton Novers.

It is hoped that this article will encourage other birders to give raptor watching a try during the coming springs and autumns. Pick a piece of high ground with good views over the surrounding countryside and with a bit of patience (and a little luck) who knows what may be discovered. As an added bonus, by getting to know the favoured routes of such large soaring birds, it may help to connect with that drifting rarity - the Black Stork was seen by waiting patiently for the bird to come to us rather than chasing it!

With global warming becoming a reality there is a real prospect of northwards and westwards expansion of a number of raptor species from Southern Europe such as Booted and Short-toed Eagle and north-east Norfolk may be just the place to see them. Give it a try next spring and in the words of the National Lottery - "It could be you".

## Acknowledgments

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# Norfolk Bird Atlas

*Moss Taylor*

By the end of June 2000, the first year of fieldwork for the Norfolk Bird Atlas had been completed. The organisers have been most encouraged by the response from observers. Provided the level of enthusiasm is maintained, there is every chance that all 1455 tetrads in the county will have been covered within five years.

Anyone interested in birds can become involved at one of two levels. Firstly, by agreeing to cover one or more tetrads for a single winter and/or summer period. During this time the tetrad, which consists of four adjacent 1km squares, will need to be visited twice between December and February inclusive, and twice between April and June inclusive. Once these four visits have been completed, that particular tetrad will not need to be covered again during the course of the Atlas fieldwork.

Secondly, by contributing supplementary records from anywhere in Norfolk. In particular, we are keen to receive all records of owls, Kingfisher, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Tit, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow and Corn Bunting - species which have proved difficult to locate during the first year of recording. Please include dates and exact locations (preferably giving a four-figure map reference) and if during the summer, whether breeding was likely.

The importance of this project has been recognised by many local and national ornithological organisations, and the Working Group of the Norfolk Bird Atlas is most grateful to Birdline East Anglia, British Ornithologists' Union, Cley Bird Club, Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and RSPB for most generous financial assistance.

Any observers who would like to become involved are asked to contact me by post at 4 Heath Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8JH, or by phone on 01263-823637, or by e-mail at [mosstaylor@care4free.net](mailto:mosstaylor@care4free.net). All records received by the Norfolk Bird Atlas will be made available to the County Bird Recorders and all contributors to the Atlas will receive an Annual Newsletter.

# Norfolk Bird Club

The NBC was established in 1992 to provide a forum for all those interested in the county's birds and their conservation and to promote improved communication and exchange of ideas amongst birdwatchers throughout the county. The club publishes four bulletins during the year, holds indoor meetings and organises bird survey work.

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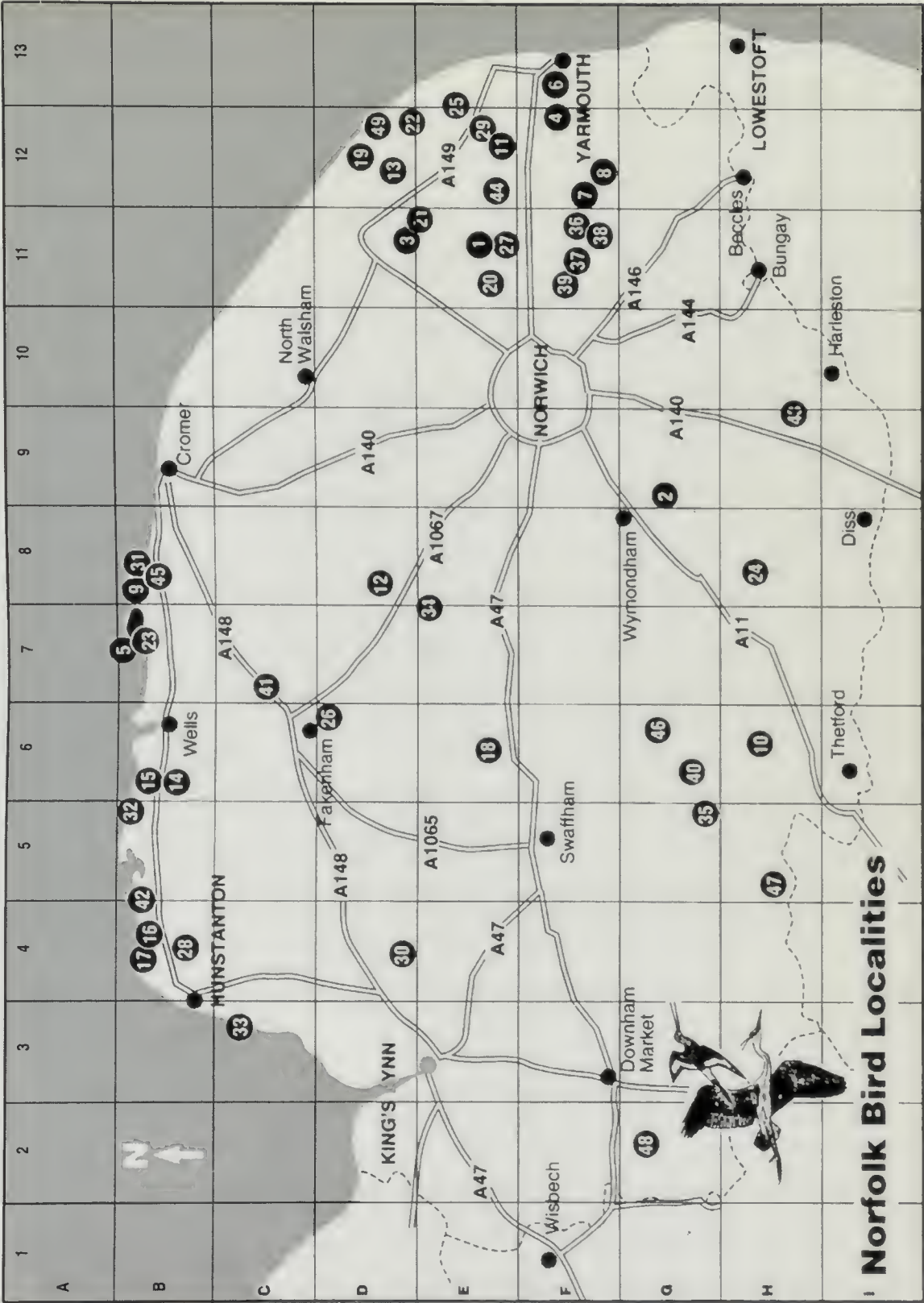




# Key to Location Map

1 Alderfen Broad	NWT	14 Holkham Lake	HE	27 Ranworth/Cockshoot Broads	NWT	40 Thompson Water	NWT
2 Ashwellthorpe Lower Wood	NWT	15 Holkham NNR	EN	28 Ringstead Downs	NWT	41 Thursford Wood	NWT
3 Barton Broad	NWT	16 Holme Bird Observatory	NOA	29 Rollesby Broad		42 Titchwell Marsh	RSPB
4 Berney Marshes	RSPB	17 Holme Dunes	NWT	30 Roydon Common	NWT	43 Tyrrell's Wood	WT
5 Blakeney Point	NT	18 Honeyput Wood	NWT	31 Salthouse Marshes	NWT	44 Upton Fen	NWT
6 Breydon Water	LNR	19 Horsey Mere	NT	32 Scolt Head Island	EN	45 Walsey Hills	NOA
7 Buckenham/Cantley Marshes	RSPB	20 Hoveton Great Broad	EN	33 Snettisham Pits	RSPB	46 Wayland Wood	NWT
8 Cantley Reservoir	BS	21 How Hill	BA	34 Sparham Pools	NWT	47 Weeting Heath	NWT
9 Cley Marsh	NWT	22 Martham Broad	NWT	35 Stanford Training Area		48 Welney Washes	W&WT
10 East Wretham Heath	NWT	23 Morston/Stiffkey Marshes	NT	36 Strumpshaw Fen	RSPB	49 Winterton Dunes	EN
11 Filby Broad		24 New Buckenham Common	NWT	37 Surlingham Broad	NWT		
12 Foxley Wood	NWT	25 Ormesby Broad		38 Surlingham/Rockland Marshes	RSPB		
13 Hickling Broad	NWT	26 Penshorpe Waterfowl Trust	PWT	39 Ted Ellis Trust	TET		
BA = Broad's Authority				NWT = Norfolk Wildlife Trust			
BS = British Sugar				PWT = Penshorpe Waterfowl Trust			
EN = English Nature				RSPB = Royal Society Protection of Birds			
HE = Holkham Estate				TET = Ted Ellis Trust			
LNR = Local Nature Reserve				WT = Woodland Trust			
NOA = Norfolk Ornithologists Association				W&WT = Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust			
NT = National Trust							

Full details of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust sites including how to get there feature in the Trust's Reserves Handbook obtainable from 72 Cathedral Close, Norwich NR1 4DF.







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