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# Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 1997

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# Norfolk Bird Report – 1997

*Editor:* Michael J. Seago

Editorial .....	401
Review of the Year .....	404
Wetland Bird Surveys .....	410
Systematic List .....	413
Contributors .....	540
Ringing Report .....	543
Canvasback, an addition to the County list .....	553
Calandra Lark, an addition to the County list .....	554
White Wagtails nesting in Norfolk .....	555
Fea's/Zino's Petrel in Norfolk .....	557
The Yarmouth Little Tern colony .....	558
The Birds of Felbrigg Park .....	559
The Birds of the Wash, 1971-1996 .....	565



# Norfolk Mammal Report – 1997

*Editor:* Martin R Perrow

Editorial .....	589
Classified List .....	590
Contributors .....	600
Chinese Water Deer Survey .....	601
Otter Survey .....	604
Water Vole Survey .....	606

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*Cover photograph:* Pink-footed Geese (Chris Knights)

# NORFOLK BIRD REPORT – 1997

## Editorial

The Council of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society presents the annual report on the birds of Norfolk. A close liaison has continued with Norfolk Bird Club and with Birdline East Anglia and an introduction to those involved in the current report appears below. Many readers will be aware that the Norfolk Bird Report was again successful in the prestigious 'British Birds' Bird Report of the Year competition sharing third position with Sussex.

Don Dorling has decided to relinquish the Chairmanship of the Society's Publication Committee. This Editorial provides an opportunity to acknowledge his very considerable contribution towards past publications of the Report. It is a great pity so little is written about the history of ornithology and the observers involved in it at county level. It may come as a surprise to realise that, following a chance remark by the present Editor, Don was an assistant county recorder for a period of over thirty years.

Since the Society became sole publishers of the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report fifteen years ago Mary and Don Dorling have handled the sales and distribution. Never failing, within hours of arrival from the printers each issue has been packaged and delivered to the post office. The Society relies on a number of sales outlets and the Dorlings have without fail always responded rapidly to requests for additional copies. Their involvement and encouragement through the years has been greatly appreciated.

Fortunately Mary and Don remain very active within the ornithological scene and both are actively involved in production of the new definitive Birds of Norfolk.

Finally a warm welcome to Iris and David Paull who have assumed responsibility for the sale and distribution of the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report.

### **Editor:** Michael J Seago

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

**Editors of the Systematic List and County Recorders:** Giles Dunmore and Neil Lawton. Responsible for assembling teams of compilers and authors and producing the final edited List.

**Recording Card Compilers:** Giles Dunmore, Mick Fiszer, Justin Lansdell, Neil Lawton, Mick Saunt and John Williamson.

**Systematic List Authors:** Dave Appleton, Julian Bhalerao, Andrew Bloomfield, Dave and Jacquie Bridges, Andy Brown, Peter Clement, Giles Dunmore, Keith Dye, Mark Eldridge, Vernon Eve, Paul Fisher, Mick Fiszer, Phil Heath, Gary Hibberd, John Kemp, Chris and Justin Lansdell, Neil Lawton, Mick Saunt, John Williamson and Mike Young-Powell.

**Review of the Year:** Phil Heath and Steve Wakeham

**Recording:** All Systematic List records, including those relating to national and county rarities, should be sent on a monthly basis to Giles Dunmore at 49 The Avenues, Norwich



NR2 3QR. In the case of national rarities details (*in duplicate please*) should be sent as soon as possible and not left until the year-end. Observations will not normally be acknowledged but names of all contributors will be published. All records should be listed in the order of species appearing in this Report. 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. 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.*

**Editorial Material:** Articles for consideration, the Ringing Report, artwork, photographs and transparencies should continue to be submitted to the Editor, Michael J Seago at 33 Acacia Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PP.

**County Records Committee:** Vernon Eve, Steve Gantlett, Phil Heath, John Kemp and Andy Stoddart with Giles Dunmore as Secretary. Thanks go to Vernon Eve who has completed his term on the Committee. John Williamson has been elected as a new member dealing with 1998 records and thereafter.

A total of 124 records were considered in the year: 26 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 make two additions to that published in the 1996 Report. The list is as follows:

Black-necked Grebe (at sea)	Bee-eater
Cory's Shearwater	Short-toed Lark
Great Shearwater	Tawny Pipit
Mediterranean Shearwater	<i>Flava</i> Wagtail (Continental races except
Storm Petrel	Blue-headed and Grey-headed)
Purple Heron	Bluethroat (White-spotted only)
White Stork	Savi's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Aquatic Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Marsh Warbler
Ferruginous 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
Ring-necked Parakeet	

Information regarding submission of descriptions was published in the 1995 Report. 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.



# Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following artists and photographers: N Arlott, P Beeson, J Bhalerao, N Bowman, N Borrow, R Chittenden, C Donner, V Hanlon, B W Jarvis, P Jones, C R Knights, I Leach, D Nurney, D Nyc, R Powley, M Rains, the late R A Richardson, G Smith and A Tate.

Acknowledgements are also due to the team of compilers of the recording cards (especially Neil Lawton); the authors of the Systematic List; Dave Appleton for analysing/summarising the Breeding Birds Survey information; Pat Bonham for his diligent proof reading of the draft Systematic List and advice on the use of English, and Judy Dunmore for liaising with the printers, preparing discs and explaining the mystery world of computers.

Thanks are also due to Birdline East Anglia, BTO (for making available the Breeding Birds Survey information), Cley Bird Club, Eastern Counties Newspapers (for providing the county map), English Nature (particularly for making available details of the inter-tidal counts undertaken along the North Coast in Nov/Dec), Gt Yarmouth Bird Club, Nar Valley Ornithological Society, National Trust, Norfolk Bird Club, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Rare Bird Photographic Library, RSPB, Stanford Training Area Bird Club, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Peter Allard (county archivist), Mrs S F Scago and all other contributors.

# Sponsorship

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

## 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 six bulletins during the year, holds indoor meetings and organises bird survey work.

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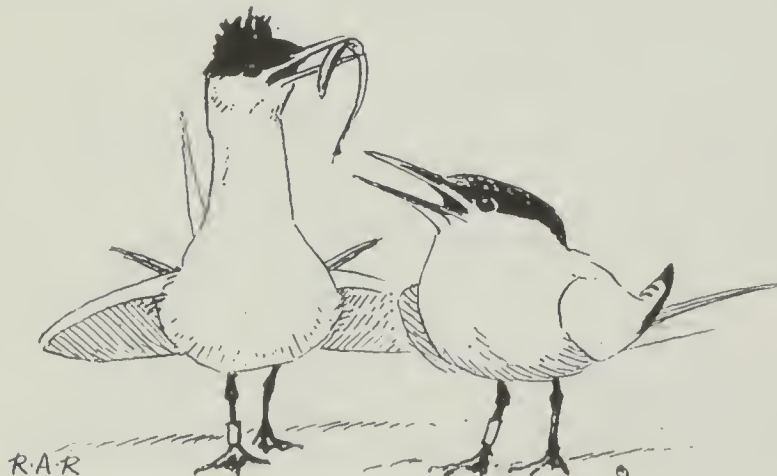
# Review of the Year 1997

*Steve Wakeham and Phil Heath*

**January** commenced with a high pressure dominant to the north-west of Britain, feeding bitterly cold easterlies across Norfolk until the 10th, and daytime temperatures struggled to rise above freezing. This biting weather had some compensation in that it forced an influx of wildfowl from the Continent, with large numbers of sea duck arriving off the north-west coasts, and sawbills to those few areas of inland water that remained unfrozen. An Arctic Redpoll at Wells Woods mid-month could also have arrived at this time. An obliging Black-throated Diver in Norwich during the first three weeks of the month was a popular attraction. From the 11th-17th high pressure over south-east Europe brought much milder south to south-westerly winds. A spell of stronger westerly winds over the Atlantic on the 17th/18th pushed the month's first significant front from the west, bringing dull and drizzly weather, and may have contributed to the arrival of a Canvasback at Wissington BF on the 18th, and then there and at Welney intermittently thereafter. Other wildfowl of note were a Ferruginous Duck also at Wissington BF for a few days late in the month, and an American Wigeon at Welney on the 24th. After a spell of unsettled weather until the 24th, high pressure built up over Britain, persisting till the end of the month. Long-stayers included single Snow Geese at Welney and in north-west Norfolk, a Black Brant around Cley, and the now familiar Black-winged Stilt which remained throughout the year at Titchwell. At the start of the month this site also held 2 Spoonbills, 2 Little Egrets and up to 44 Shorelarks, with up to 250 Snow Buntings just along the coast at Holme.

The high pressure quickly gave way at the start of **February**, and the month became very unsettled, with mild, strong to gale force west to south-westerly winds for much of the time. Many of the birds from January remained throughout February, including the Canvasback which put in frustratingly erratic appearances at Welney. Although a pale shadow of last winter's masses, small flocks of Waxwings entertained people at Hoveton and in Norwich. A temporary ridge, and a slight lull in the winds over the south-east of England on the 27th, produced an early Garganey at Burnham Norton.

The mild, unsettled, weather continued into **March**, with strong south-westerlies on the 1st veering westerly early on the 2nd as a cold front swept east across Norfolk; the first Wheatears and Sandwich Terns being found in its wake. It wasn't until the 5th, when pressure began to rise steadily that the weather began to settle down, with the first Stone



*Sandwich Terns (R.A. Richardson)*

Curlew arriving at this time. The county enjoyed another bumper early spring passage of Red Kites, particularly along the east coast, with birds noted throughout the month. High pressure over the country on the 8th moved away to the east bringing south-easterly winds and the first Sand Martin on the 9th and Swallow on the 10th. The Canvasback put in a final appearance at Welney from the 7th-10th, while the Snow Goose there remained until the end of the month. The high pressure then sank further south over Europe during the 12th-17th, and warm west to south-westerly breezes became established. The first very early House Martin was seen on the 15th. Following a cooler showery spell over the 18th-21st, with winds from the north or north-west, the 22nd-27th saw a milder spell of westerlies, during which time the first Yellow Wagtail was noted. A Green-winged Teal was at Berney on the 20th, while up to 30 Waxwings were by the Thetford bypass throughout the month. A cold front sweeping south on the 27th brought strong north-westerlies, which gradually moderated as high pressure moved in from the west to end the month. A Great Grey Shrike, very much a rarity these days, put in a brief appearance at Salthouse/Kelling on the 31st.

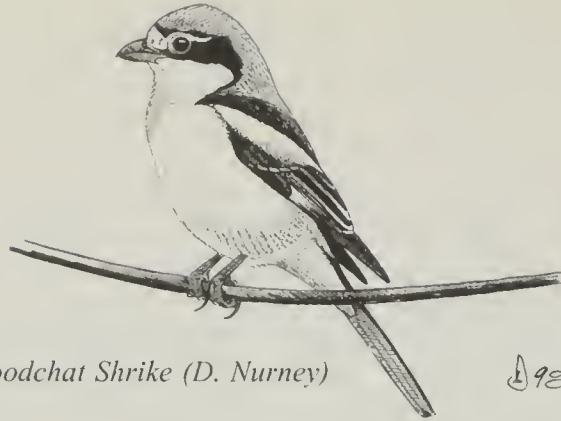


*Surf Scoters (N. Borrow)*

**April** was largely dominated by high pressure, with much of the month dry and settled. An immature Surf Scoter at Titchwell from the 2nd-15th was a popular attraction, and was joined briefly by another on the 9th. A Green-winged Teal was at Stiffkey Fen for two weeks mid-month. A build up of high pressure to the east brought east to south-easterlies over the 6th-9th, while from the 10th-22nd the winds came mainly from the north or north-east, but were however light enough to allow a further slow arrival of spring migrants. The first Cuckoo was noted on the 10th, a Woodcock Shrike was at Winterton from the 20th, a Little Bunting in a garden at East Wretham was a surprise find, and the first Turtle Dove was found on the 21st. The only notable unsettled weather and rain during the month was over the 24th-28th, when a series of fronts pushed in from the west. These were preceded by south-easterly winds which brought a Hoopoe to Holme on the 27th and a Red-throated Pipit to Waxham on the 28th. A high pressure re-established itself over the final days of the month. An Ortolan Bunting, an increasingly rare visitor to the county, was at Eeles on the 30th.

The high pressure, which saw April out, slipped south-east into Europe at the start of **May**, bringing very warm south-easterlies from 1st-3rd and another arrival of continental migrants, including 2 Tawny Pipits, a Red-throated Pipit and the year's second Hoopoe. There was also an impressive influx of nearly 300 Black Terns as fronts arrived from the west on the 3rd, heralding a sharp change in the weather over the bank holiday weekend, with cold northerlies becoming established during the 5th. These pushed unseasonal Sooty Shearwaters and a Leach's Petrel past Sheringham on the 6th. Conditions then remained unsettled for much of the time through to the 21st. During this period up to 9 Dotterel were at Paston, the first of 4 Red-footed Boats during the month was found on the 11th at East Ruston, and the first of a remarkable 5 Night Herons were seen at Holkham.





*Woodchat Shrike (D. Nurney)*

198

On the 14th a brief area of high pressure lay over the region, and as this slipped north-eastwards a spell of south to south-easterlies from 15th-19th brought a good selection of continental species, including the Collared Pratincole returning for its fourth successive year, the only Kentish Plover of the year, a Woodchat Shrike, two Red-backed Shrikes, Short-toed Lark, Red-throated Pipit, Subalpine Warbler and Serin, and culminating most notably with Norfolk's first Calandra Lark on the 19th. After a cold front moved south on the 21st/22nd, more settled conditions followed as high pressure built to the north of Britain. North-east to south-east winds predominated for the rest of the month, with Icterine Warblers featuring from four sites around the county, along with several Red-backed Shrikes, a Siberian Stonechat, Bluethroat, a singing Common Rosefinch, and a Short-toed Lark.

Quite strong north-easterlies at the start of **June** gave way to light south-easterlies from the 4th. A Broad-billed Sandpiper was at Scolt Head on the 3rd/4th, and the Collared Pratincole toured the north coast during the first week of the month. Marsh Warblers, now seemingly annual visitors, were singing at Weybourne and Pensthorpe, with two others later in the month in Broadland. From the 5th the weather turned more unsettled, though remaining warm. Although there were no obvious arrivals, oddities continued to turn up. A further Icterine Warbler was on Blakeney Point on the 6th, and a White-winged Black Tern was at Holkham the next day. The spring's final Red-footed Falcon was at Winterton on the 8th, and a fine Long-billed Dowitcher spent the day at Titchwell on the 10th. A Little Bittern finally showed well at times at Holme from the 13th. An unseasonably deep low swept across England on the 19th/20th, bringing a Whiskered Tern passed Cley and a Storm Petrel to Wells Quay. A significant influx of Crossbills into the county, that had started as a trickle at the beginning of the month, commenced in earnest around the 24th. A second vigorous depression moving in from the west on the 25th-27th brought wet and unusually cold weather with a strong north-north-westerly wind. During this period large numbers of Manx Shearwaters were observed along the coast, along with a few Cory's Shearwaters, and single Sooty Shearwater, Leach's Petrel and Storm Petrel. However the star of this seabird movement was a Fea's/Zino's Petrel that was first seen passing Blakeney Point, then tracked all the way along the coast as far as Mundesley. A pure pair of White Wagtails bred for the first time in the county in Cley village during the month.

Cool and showery conditions were maintained through into the first week of **July**, with low pressure persisting nearby. The Crossbill invasion continued right through the month, with flocks of up to 100 throughout the county. A few early returning migrants appeared in the first few days of the month, including 1-2 Red-backed Shrikes, 1-2 Golden Orioles and a Wood Warbler, while a Purple Heron was at Cley on the evening of the 5th. From the 5th-12th high pressure asserted itself over the country, and temperatures recovered. As is usual in July return-passage waders provided most interest. The Collared Pratincole reappeared

from the 5th, wandering along the north coast for the next two weeks, and a White-rumped Sandpiper was at Cley from the 9th. The weather was unsettled with predominately westerly winds through to the 17th, on which date there was a second White-rumped Sandpiper at Cley. Strong winds veering round to the north-east on the 18th brought good numbers of Manx Shearwaters and a Cory's Shearwater within sight of land. Light north-easterlies then continued till the 23rd, before Atlantic frontal systems brought the return of a more westerly flow for much of the rest of the month. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper graced Cley from the 27th, and the Greater Flamingo (with its Chilean friend) visited various localities from the 28th for the third summer running. Two Night Herons were still present at the end of the month in the Holkham area. Green Sandpiper numbers had reached 35 at Cantley BF by the 30th, on which day a Caspian Tern made a brief visit to Breydon Water. The pair of White Wagtails raised a second brood in Cley.

**August** started with fronts bringing rain from the west on the 1st, and also a Pectoral Sandpiper to Titchwell, and the first Pomarine Skua of the autumn off Overstand. An area of low pressure deepening off south-west Britain brought a strengthening east-north-easterly on the 4th, and a few more Pomarine Skuas were seen along the coast. The following three weeks remained hot and generally settled with light winds. The 7th saw the first autumn records of Pied Flycatcher, while the first Redstarts were found on the 20th. Ospreys started to return through the county from the 14th. Red-backed Shrikes were at Overstand on the 9th and at Winterton and Blakeney Point on the 16th and 19th respectively. A Spotted Crake began a lengthy stay at Titchwell from the 18th. A Two-barred Crossbill in Thetford Forest on the 21st had no doubt accompanied the numerous Crossbills still arriving in East Anglia from the Continent. Wrynecks were at Blakeney Point and Sheringham from the 22nd as thundery rain on that day finally brought the hot spell to a close. No doubt it was south-easterly winds associated with the first vigorous autumn depression that brought a Pallid Swift to Mundesley on the 28th. Waders continued to move through in numbers throughout the month, particularly Green Sandpipers, with a peak of 60 at Cantley BF on 29th. The month ended with unsettled weather as further areas of low pressure moved in from the west. An early Grey Phalarope was at Welney from the 30th.

The Spotted Crake remained at Titchwell for the first three weeks of **September**, while new birds included a Night Heron at Honing on the 2nd, and an early Common Rosefinch at Holme on the 4th. As the month progressed high pressure gradually built up to the west introducing north-westerlies, which freshened on the 8th/9th as low pressure moved across Scandinavia. Sea watching on the 9th along the north coast produced a Great and several Sooty Shearwaters, along with several Long-tailed Skuas and Sabine's Gulls. Two Ortolan Buntings were seen at Blakeney Point on the 11th. The north-westerlies backed to warmer south-westerlies during the following week, before high pressure built to the north on the 18th, introducing a strengthening easterly by the following day, with a Red-breasted Flycatcher found at Holme. A Pectoral Sandpiper was at Hickling from the 18th, with a different bird there from the 26th. As the high pressure settled over the North Sea on the 19th/20th, the first autumn Redwings began arriving in Norfolk, closely followed by Fieldfares on the 21st. A second wave of Crossbills also began to arrive around this time. The first real fall of migrants occurred from the 25th, accompanied by 3 Red-breasted Flycatchers and the first of over a dozen Yellow-browed Warblers that were to arrive before the month was out. The easterly winds finally came to an end on the 28th, and the month ended with an anticyclonic south-westerly flow. A Short-toed Lark was at Overstrand and a Baird's Sandpiper was at Cantley BF from the 30th.

As might be expected, **October** proved to be an exciting month. Strengthening north-westerlies produced a flood of seabirds on the 2nd, with 6 Leach's Petrels, a Cory's



Shearwater, 80 Manx and 115 Sooty Shearwaters, 2 Grey Phalaropes, 6 Long-tailed Skuas and 5000+ Razorbills passing Sheringham alone. As the north-westerlies eased on the 3rd the first returning Whooper Swans arrived at Welney. The weather then turned very unsettled, with a series of fronts sweeping east across England over the following week. A White-winged Black Tern past Eeels on the 6th was the only notable bird during this time. A fast moving area of low pressure moved south-east across England on the 11th, and in its wake followed two days of quite strong northerly winds, with several Leach's and Storm Petrels, Manx and Mediterranean Shearwaters noted by seawatchers. As the winds eased and backed westerly on the 14th the first of 20 Pallas's Warblers for the month was found at Holkham. Winds temporarily came in from the south-east on the 15th ahead of Atlantic fronts that were to follow; this saw the arrival of several Yellow-browed Warblers, and, under dull drizzly skies and a light southerly breeze on the 16th, a massive finch movement was evident around the coast. As well as 24,000 Chaffinches passing Sheringham and 50,000 over Hunstanton, there were hundreds of Bramblings, Greenfinches, Goldfinches, Siskins and Linnets. A Great Grey Shrike was at Horsey the same day, with further records in the month from Overy Dunes and Warham Greens. A White Stork toured the county for the rest of the month from the 18th. On the 19th a Ring-necked Duck was at Pentney GP's, and a White-winged Black Tern was seen at points between Weybourne and Cley. The wind slowly backed towards the east as high pressure established itself to the north of Britain. With a strengthening easterly and fronts stalling over southern England on the 20th, good fall conditions on that and subsequent days brought 2 Dusky Warblers, a Radde's Warbler, several more Pallas's and Yellow-browed Warblers, 3 Waxwings, a couple of Rough-legged Buzzards, and a Rose-coloured Starling at Blakeney. A shift to northerlies on the 23rd-25th saw some 300 juvenile Pomarine Skuas past the coast. The winds fell light during the 25th/26th as high pressure transferred into central Europe, maintaining a ridge to East Anglia until the end of the month. A White-tailed Eagle drifted over Overy Dunes on the 28th, while less rare but equally noteworthy was a flock of 54 Mistle Thrushes in off the sea at Overstrand on the 29th, on which date the second Short-toed Lark of the month was at Salthouse.

Much of **November** was marked by low pressure and winds from a southerly source, making it a very mild month - the second mildest in the last fifty years. Around 200 Bean Geese made a very early arrival to the Yare valley on the 1st. The mild weather encouraged a number of migrants to linger at the start of the month, including Little Ringed Plover, 2 Swifts, several Swallows and a Reed Warbler. Off Titchwell a concentration of up to 10 Black-throated Divers on the 6th was an unusual sight, with up to 46 Shorelarks along the beach there by the 23rd. A male Rose-coloured Starling at Beeston from the 15th was a popular attraction throughout the rest of the year, although it was frustratingly mobile. A Red-rumped Swallow sped south over Breydon on the 17th, and a Serin settled down to over-winter at Martham from the 18th. Numbers of Mediterranean Gulls around the county gradually rose during the month, with over 10 at Yarmouth seafront, where they could readily be attracted to bread. Low pressure crossed England on the 29th and introduced the only day during the month with winds from the north on the 30th. This prompted a superb passage of Little Gulls, including 695 past Sheringham.

After a cold start to **December**, a mild, unsettled spell set in from the 5th to the 13th, with mainly west or south-westerly winds. After spending some time in Essex, last winter's Canvasback returned to Welney from the 3rd, where it mingled with the hundreds of Poehard. An erratic Green-winged Teal was also at Welney, while a Black Brant took up residence with the wintering Brent Geese in the Holme/Thornham/Titchwell area from the 5th. Two Red Kites just north of Hoveton, although found on the 5th, could have been in the area a



while, and remained into 1998. Passerine interest at the start of the month included a Desert Wheatear at Snettisham from the 7th. A Swallow at Sheringham on the 10th/11th was unseasonal, as were four Sandwich Terns off Sheringham on the 11th. A large Pied Wagtail roost in central Norwich, which regularly held over 500 birds, peaked at c650 early in the month, and was a welcome distraction for many doing the chore of Xmas shopping. From the 14th a strengthening east to south-easterly developed and it became progressively colder until the 17th. Atlantic frontal systems then started to make progress from the west and the temperatures recovered. Four Penduline Tits were at Duck Broad (Heigham Sound) on the 20th, but then vanished into the extensive reedbeds there. A Ferruginous Duck was at Cley and then various north coast localities from the 21st, while an elusive Blue-winged Teal made a short stay at Stiffkey Fen on the 22nd/23rd. The 24th was marked by strong-to-gale force winds, with mild, unsettled conditions following and continuing through to the end of the year. A Great White Egret flew west over Cley on the 28th, and then settled at Stiffkey/Morston until the month's end. More traditional wintering species during the month included up to 5 Bitterns at Martham Broad, 10 Mediterranean Gulls at Yarmouth, and around 20 Shorelarks at Titchwell. Another Penduline Tit seen briefly at Titchwell on the 31st was to prove more obliging in early 1998.



*Pochard and Tufted Ducks (N. Arlott)*

# Wetland Bird Survey 1997

Breydon and Berney: *Peter Allard*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Little Grebe	3	3	11	18	16	6	16	23	28	12	8	2
Gt Crested Grebe	8	1	4	13	21	32	41	26	34	26	16	4
Cormorant	63	71	81	54	40	53	60	129	103	81	62	67
Mute Swan	155	56	123	107	52	60	85	80	60	55	46	64
Bewick's Swan	340	476	25	3	-	-	-	-	-	30	14	20
P-footed Goose	1100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	175
W-fronted Goose	55	69	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Greylag Goose	81	39	15	6	38	43	91	74	97	91	130	172
Canada Goose	64	56	12	23	14	106	52	20	1	1	76	110
Barnacle Goose	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	37	-
Brent Goose	88	44	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	19	15	26
Shelduck	499	341	406	241	309	244	193	64	84	185	134	720
Wigeon	6500	5500	1138	98	21	5	2	0	71	272	1540	10200
Gadwall	17	88	129	44	10	5	1	-	-	10	5	18
Teal	125	202	231	237	26	16	10	6	20	30	130	400
Mallard	183	227	71	38	30	22	53	51	108	107	99	119
Pintail	227	141	21	10	4	2	-	2	13	64	90	172
Garganey	-	-	2	2	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
Shoveler	80	172	160	37	13	33	30	5	7	9	12	117
Pochard	5	11	7	8	8	20	5	5	10	3	7	26
Tufted Duck	52	23	23	10	10	10	18	6	5	2	-	16
Scaup	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Goldeneye	16	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	3
Oystercatcher	95	101	248	222	121	97	290	270	64	53	61	54
Avocet	23	66	77	31	15	27	121	192	126	43	37	23
Lt Ringed Plover	-	-	-	2	4	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	92	68	22	77	263	91	43	253	248	131	107	110
Golden Plover	400	800	950	469	4	3	288	1150	1200	1000	5300	7200
Grey Plover	140	144	15	9	56	27	4	17	18	41	49	83
Lapwing	3000	6500	800	140	120	200	450	110	400	3100	15400	18400
Knot	1653	35	18	12	11	12	8	29	17	6	19	359
Sanderling	31	5	34	27	2	-	5	1	1	19	21	24
Little Stint	-	-	-	-	6	5	4	1	1	1	-	-
Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	-	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	2	2	4	8	17	6	-	-
Dunlin	4000	2200	1350	1710	1100	26	470	560	1711	1450	2450	3850
Ruff	20	18	24	26	62	2	12	4	14	13	8	22
Snipe	2	3	15	15	3	3	12	12	4	24	12	27
Black-t Godwit	43	110	95	87	164	253	456	881	615	448	417	419
Bar-t Godwit	78	64	22	7	32	2	5	12	18	5	16	72
Whimbrel	-	-	-	29	11	1	6	20	3	1	-	-
Curlew	773	825	858	537	66	209	838	800	878	651	619	584
Spotted Redshank	2	2	5	5	3	3	1	3	2	2	6	4
Redshank	752	671	959	579	56	140	453	613	600	896	837	730
Greenshank	-	-	-	11	12	4	9	8	8	3	1	-
Green Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	12	2	4	1	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Conn Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	9	1	6	6	5	2	-	-
Turnstone	10	4	8	14	19	1	5	12	16	10	3	4
Little Gull	-	1	-	-	2	1	1	2	1	-	4	-
Black Tern	-	-	-	20	10	2	-	15	-	-	-	-
Snow Bunting	85	14	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	9	13	40

# Wetland Bird Survey 1997

The Complete Wash: *Paul Fisher*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Little Grebe	31	20	7	3	1	1	1	8	29	17	20	11
Great Crested Grebe	4	2	14	11	9	10	15	74	45	15	38	5
Cormorant	87	121	98	40	60	59	86	188	291	87	174	242
Grey Heron	7	11	6	8	15	27	24	37	45	21	21	19
Mute Swan	45	22	22	10	10	2	2	2	4	7	3	4
Brent Goose	19590	20452	12534	9976	880	6	5	8	36	4262	12545	20981
Shelduck	7051	10352	4336	1579	1441	1004	1645	2403	2715	5644	5533	12067
Wigeon	371	1877	69	8	1	3	-	5	1105	1107	1828	1435
Gadwall	12	53	33	8	9	-	6	19	7	10	10	34
Teal	217	174	33	4	-	1	6	86	695	659	570	622
Mallard	1291	1343	619	220	230	276	316	424	1718	736	1497	1922
Pintail	425	27	16	-	-	7	4	-	99	10	9	29
Shoveler	2	-	4	2	-	-	2	-	9	4	19	28
Pochard	28	86	41	-	-	-	-	-	2	29	75	84
Tufted Duck	42	48	107	37	21	22	17	2	67	67	74	66
Scaup	11	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	6
Eider	1569	209	209	90	87	17	18	175	186	-	18	30
Common Scoter	-	-	4	-	-	33	-	2	50	1	9	-
Goldeneye	61	103	85	4	1	-	-	1	1	13	47	57
R B Merganser	67	26	68	11	-	-	2	-	1	60	67	30
Moorhen	2	18	10	12	3	4	6	-	12	-	7	-
Coot	146	156	128	24	15	23	39	43	68	68	67	98
Oystercatcher	9711	9248	8411	2839	2428	1619	2751	13258	14405	6989	6477	16745
Avocet	-	-	83	23	6	22	108	113	48	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	17	28	147	210	165	20	170	1570	901	50	89	20
Golden Plover	184	4224	819	186	17	31	626	5756	5657	1714	22809	10858
Grey Plover	2857	3151	5642	14381	10175	333	2504	11184	10461	3883	8849	2419
Lapwing	90	9132	278	20	39	494	8991	1458	1717	3312	35146	29819
Knot	16844	37512	34324	21400	1058	54	11630	43524	58005	39995	80636	65924
Sanderling	423	216	193	101	1590	38	797	647	525	318	69	199
Purple Sandpiper	5	5	6	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	5
Dunlin	20371	38741	35579	25722	17662	277	12931	24093	27107	24443	25845	31300
Ruff	4	-	-	2	-	-	1	6	11	3	1	3
Snipe	5	4	3	5	2	-	-	4	24	22	7	-
Black-t Godwit	2226	1316	2738	725	-	26	345	5290	7119	62	3103	1991
Bar-t Godwit	9635	16246	6717	650	424	624	3684	8808	14627	1830	3418	7312
Whimbrel	-	2	1	39	10	97	144	81	154	3	6	-
Curlew	814	1663	2067	1061	719	609	4367	8070	8377	3967	2761	1913
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	3	1	-	65	128	11	6	107	29
Redshank	1715	1573	2675	1718	548	528	1873	3786	5958	3262	1700	1086
Greenshank	-	1	-	13	3	-	191	295	206	20	2	-
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	3	-	23	106	3	57	54	7
Turnstone	766	449	361	517	55	17	546	648	540	410	290	130
B-headed Gull	3192	3375	4309	1677	2335	2756	2846	4928	2804	2019	4344	997
Common Gull	656	830	418	55	39	22	221	887	85	162	373	194
L B B Gull	807	14	19	102	239	94	26	123	26	6	-	2
Herring Gull	4642	2789	709	240	1383	2058	665	937	635	645	10931	2125
G B B Gull	88	344	40	45	72	118	428	276	636	117	376	82
Kittiwake-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	15	-	240	-	-
Sandwich Tern	-	-	-	115	22	30	586	81	189	8	-	-
Common Tern	-	-	-	61	118	215	147	162	65	-	-	-
Little Tern	-	-	-	3	17	30	24	13	-	-	-	-
Black Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-



# Wetland Bird Survey 1997

North Norfolk Coast: *Michael Rooney*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Red-throated Diver	45	20	11	5	-	8	16	28	43
Black-throated Diver	4	5	-	-	-	-	2	7	5
Great Northern Diver	5	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Little Grebe	51	31	36	32	63	87	55	43	62
Great Crested Grebe	26	21	27	9	2	21	26	51	33
Red-necked Grebe	1	1	1	-	-	1	14	6	10
Slavonian Grebe	2	17	3	1	-	-	1	1	4
Cormorant	79	94	98	98	120	224	118	149	84
Grey Heron	13	16	11	13	39	36	28	19	16
Mute Swan	94	88	51	63	62	106	90	85	82
Pink-footed Goose	27840	16848	405	773	3	16	655	32151	49592
White-fronted Goose	152	302	491	1	1	-	-	4	103
Greylag Goose	998	658	565	634	1849	1508	1598	2177	1233
Canada Goose	122	162	164	84	161	115	266	294	143
Brent Goose	7630	8793	6037	1769	5	44	6028	10298	10691
Egyptian Goose	1	18	24	54	198	81	51	21	20
Shelduck	1355	1088	786	665	156	123	486	883	1382
Wigeon	14247	11752	7012	243	106	1826	7941	12423	10252
Gadwall	59	50	114	136	126	160	227	232	205
Teal	1985	1175	812	294	799	1503	2255	3992	2507
Mallard	1189	816	573	374	923	666	942	1467	907
Pintail	1177	243	24	15	1	103	205	825	1583
Shoveler	109	84	119	61	83	68	93	121	96
Pochard	62	57	80	13	14	13	26	7	30
Tufted Duck	72	65	116	139	29	27	67	28	45
Scaup	482	35	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Eider	106	61	42	39	9	20	24	51	194
Long-tailed Duck	141	49	12	-	-	-	-	12	19
Common Scoter	1654	2070	762	1046	3	365	453	915	1860
Velvet Scoter	1	-	5	13	-	-	18	-	-
Goldeneye	218	205	77	23	-	-	18	69	124
Red-breasted Merganser	166	93	66	75	-	9	52	102	79
Coot	1165	914	768	339	262	269	357	473	488
Moorhen	145	104	170	96	84	113	117	334	256
Oystercatcher	3372	33636	2508	1762	2658	3815	4033	3283	2826
Avocet	2	2	51	354	161	21	47	-	-
Ringed Plover	91	313	273	231	1460	1203	233	274	208
Golden Plover	675	2049	318	181	1651	1756	2467	4417	4727
Grey Plover	1660	1867	1106	532	1147	1408	1041	2273	1110
Lapwing	491	2489	1189	550	318	698	2308	5306	6365
Knot	17236	812	39	15	103	28603	46126	9006	3670
Sanderling	447	580	517	549	730	670	583	594	294
Dunlin	4653	4452	1855	980	987	2821	4423	4431	4470
Ruff	-	118	59	39	107	84	36	6	6
Snipe	28	21	15	31	109	19	49	89	114
Black-tailed Godwit	2	13	21	49	249	32	193	31	24
Bar-tailed Godwit	3360	2631	1205	358	463	1436	4577	3108	1424
Whimbrel	-	-	-	-	99	35	-	-	-
Curlew	923	1529	1444	588	1742	1692	1702	1416	1324
Spotted Redshank	8	4	2	4	4	3	4	2	5
Redshank	1356	1114	885	662	1474	1252	1232	1729	1634

# 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. The English names that are most familiar have been retained. Unless otherwise stated, all observations are of single birds and refer to 1997. The following abbreviations are used in the species accounts:

<b>BO</b>	=	Bird Observatory
<b>BBRC</b>	=	British Birds Rarities Committee
<b>BBS</b>	=	Breeding Birds Survey (details from BTO)
<b>BF</b>	=	Sugarbeet Factory
<b>BOU</b>	=	British Ornithologists' Union
<b>BTO</b>	=	British Trust for Ornithology
<b>CBC</b>	=	Common Birds Census
<b>CP</b>	=	Country/Coastal Park
<b>ESA</b>	=	Environmentally Sensitive Area
<b>FM</b>	=	Fresh Marsh
<b>GC</b>	=	Golf Course
<b>GM</b>	=	Grazing Marsh
<b>GP</b>	=	Gravel Pit
<b>NBC</b>	=	Norfolk Bird Club
<b>NBR</b>	=	Norfolk Bird Report
<b>NNR</b>	=	National Nature Reserve
<b>NR</b>	=	Nature Reserve
<b>RSPB</b>	=	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
<b>STW</b>	=	Sewage Treatment Works
<b>TA</b>	=	Training Area
<b>WeBS</b>	=	monthly Wetland Bird Survey counts
<b>WM</b>	=	Water Meadows
<b>WWT</b>	=	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 generally derives 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. For the first time the WeBS thresholds for International/National importance have been inserted for all relevant species. The recording area of Sheringham BO lies to the north of the main coast road; it extends to the east to include part of the golf course and to the west as far as the access track to the former coastguard cottages at Weybourne. 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. All the counts at Hunstanton Cliffs in the autumn commenced at dawn. 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 of the year. Monthly max (including birds in flight and on sea - see 1993 Report for discussion of movements) along the coast clearly indicate the importance of the north-east and east coasts for this species and the relatively small numbers in the Wash and the Burnham Overy/Blakeney Hbr area:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington-Hunstanton	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Holme-Scolt Head	459	30	52	3	5	36	11	10	27
Burnham Overy-Blakeney Hbr	-	-	-	2	-	1	3	3	2
Blakeney Point-Happisburgh	150	155	260	-	5	35	106	220	280
Eccles-Hopton	411	319	37	7	1	9	14	69	119

*National importance (winter): 50*

Several large movements involving in excess of 100 birds noted early in year: *Jan* Holme 373 west 86 east 12th. Cromer 150 east 5th and 125 west 20th, Trimingham 359 east 15 west 19th, Mundesley 127 west 6th and 129 east 19th; *Feb* Sea Palling 319 north 5th; *March* Sheringham 260 east 6th and 260 west 7th. Last few spring birds noted in May at Scolt Head 13th and Weybourne and Yarmouth 27th. Thereafter singles Overstrand June 19th, Brancaster July 11th and Sea Palling 22nd, Holme Aug 20th, Titchwell and 2 Cley 30th.

Numbers built slowly through Sept and Oct with first double-figure count 36 Titchwell Sept 12th. Few large movements noted with first not until Oct 14th when 80 west Sheringham and 106 west Mundesley. The only other movements involving in excess of 100 birds were on Nov 30th when 100 Cley, 220 Sheringham, 136 east, 8 west East Runton (0815-1330 hrs) and 63 east Overstrand, and in Dec at Sheringham where 170 east, 50 west 1st, 270 east, 10 west 12th, 115 east, 60 west 26th and at Overstrand where 120 east 3rd.

Birds inland at Breydon Jan 25th and Dec 28th, Lound Feb 12th, Horsey Mere Feb 22nd, Berney and Bawsey GP (oiled) both March 3rd, Martham Broad March 31st and Heigham Sound Dec 14th. Singles on Snettisham pits April 15th-20th and Dec 19th-21st.

Other oiled birds at Kelling WM Jan 14th-18th and April 8th, 6 Winterton (oiled and dead) Feb 2nd and Yarmouth Feb 10th.

**Black-throated Diver***Gavia arctica****Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; exceptional in summer***

Recorded until April 9th (2 Cley) and from Sept 14th (west Sheringham). Regular reports of ones and twos in first winter period Hunstanton-Scolt Head, with total there of at least 3 Jan, 7 Feb (including 6 Scolt Head 5th) and 2 March, with last reported Scolt Head 22nd. Elsewhere in Jan: 6 east Trimingham 19th; also 2 Cley and one West Runton 5th with singles Mundesley 7th, Eccles 18th, Sea Palling 17th/18th and 24th, Horsey 29th (with 2 there Feb 2nd) and Yarmouth 11th.

Sept birds Scolt Head 20th and Overstrand 23rd. Main concentration in second winter period between Hunstanton and Scolt Head, with at least 5 Oct when 3 Scolt Head 23rd, building to at least 10 Nov, when 10 Titchwell 6th and 9 Scolt Head 9th, and up to 5 Dec, when 5 Scolt Head 14th. At least 4 Cley-Overstrand throughout, with 4 reported Sheringham Oct 12th, Weybourne 19th and Cromer Dec 23rd. Elsewhere in Oct: 2 Winterton 2nd and singles Waxham 6th and 25th, Caister 26th, Scratby 12th, and Yarmouth 13th. One Holkham Bay Dec 29th.



Inland: Wroxham Broad Jan 26th-Feb 13th and, from Dec 31st 1996 in Norwich on R Wensum until Jan 19th. An oiled bird in a saltmarsh creek at Burnham Norton on Feb 15th.

Great Northern Diver

*Gavia immer*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers; exceptional in summer

Reported until March 31st (West Runton) and from Oct 2nd (east Holme). Seen on 9 dates Holme-Titchwell area in first winter period, where at least 3 present. Last reported there March 27th. Elsewhere in Jan at Burnham Overy 3rd, Cley 5th, Weybourne 10th, Salthouse 16th , Sheringham 26th and in Feb at Scolt Head 5th.

In second winter period 1-2 birds reported on 12 dates from Oct 1st to year end between Holme and Scolt Head and on 15 dates between Cley and Overstrand with one Sheringham Nov 9th-Dec 13th. Elsewhere on coast the only records in Oct were Snettisham 26th, Mundesley 20th, Winterton 17th and 25th, in Nov Sea Palling 20th and Caister 22nd, and in Dec Paston 11th and Horsey 14th. One inland at Lynford GP Dec 25th to year end.

Little Grebe

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Found throughout the county with monthly peak counts of non-breeding birds at selected sites as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	18	-	6	9	15	20	28	37	32
Holme	7	6	4	3	12	13	14	15	16
Thornham-Titchwell-Brancaster	-	12	8	7	3	5	4	9	11
Burnham Norton-Holkham	-	1	4	14	3	8	12	6	8
Wells	11	8	-	-	-	-	7	5	10
Blakeney Hbr	14	5	4	-	-	-	5	3	17
Cley-Salthouse	9	4	4	1	4	4	4	6	10
Holkham Park	-	7	6	4	46	52	3	5	2
Breydon/Berney	3	3	11	18	23	28	12	8	2
Whitlingham Lane GP	5	12	-	6	-	14	10	-	-
Tottenham GP	-	4	2	-	-	3	-	12	15

16 at Holme in Dec was a reserve record, perhaps a response to water levels raised as part of works to rehabilitate the reedbeds in an effort to attract breeding Bitterns. Additional counts of 10 or more birds: 18 Heigham Sound Jan 1st and 10 Feb 1st, 20 Bure Park, Yarmouth Jan 7th, 13 Cantley BF Aug 9th and 20+ Sept 5th, 28 Hickling Broad Nov 14th and 10 Dec 14th, and 12 Lynn Point Dec 7th.

Breeding confirmed (numbers of pairs in brackets) at Snettisham (6), Holme (5), Brancaster (7), Burnham Norton (3), Holkham Park (4), Kelling WM, Sheringham, Gimingham, Cantley BF (3), Strumpshaw (3), Whitlingham Lane GP, Baconsthorpe, Middleton, Kettlestone Common, Mannington Minnow, Hoe GP, Cockley Cley, Lynford Arboretum, and Tottenham GP. 29 prs were at Holkham NNR, 15 prs were reported in the Breydon-Berney area and a further 19 prs were reported from 12 additional sites giving a county total of possible and confirmed breeders of 106 prs.

A low-tide count of inter-tidal habitat (plus the area to the north of the Cley-Salthouse drain) in Nov located a total of 70 birds Holme-Weybourne, including 3 Holme, 11 Thornham, 4 Titchwell, 2 Brancaster, 10 Burnham Overy Hbr, 7 Wells, 13 Warham, 2 Stiffkey, 3 Blakeney Hbr, 9 Cley and 6 Salthouse.

**Great Crested Grebe**

*Podiceps cristatus*

*Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Found throughout the county with monthly peak counts of non-breeding birds at selected sites as follows:

	<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	-	-	-	-	11	10	24	12	5
Holme	8	7	28	4	9	12	29	19	7
Cley-Salthouse	5	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	11
Thornham-Titchwell-Brancaster	13	12	21	12	15	9	20	40	17
Breydon/Berney	8	1	4	13	26	34	26	16	4
Rockland Broad	-	7	11	19	16	7	9	3	7
Ranworth	-	8	9	-	-	12	11	11	-

All other counts of 10 or more birds: *Jan* 26 Walcott 19th, 11 Gorleston 30th; *March* 10 Pentney 10th and 14 28th, 10 Welney 15th, 12 Strumpshaw 17th, max 13 Wroxham; *April* 13 Welney 21st; *May* 12 Broome GP 23rd; *July* 10 Burgh Castle 11th, max 41 Breydon; *Aug* 44 Breydon 4th; *Oct* 32 Barton Broad 8th, 19 Hickling Broad 19th; *Nov* 36 Hickling Broad 13th and 32 16th; *Dec* 34 Hickling 14th, 24 Filby Broad 14th. The only coastal movements reported were at Holme where 22 east Oct 20th, 13 west Oct 27th and 7 west Nov 30th and at Sheringham where 7 east 4 west Dec 12th.

Breeding confirmed (numbers of pairs in brackets) at Snettisham, Holkham Park, Barton Turf, Strumpshaw Fen (7), Hickling Broad (20), Rockland Broad (4), R Bure at Stokesby, Bure Valley Lakes (2), East Ruston, Wroxham-Horning ('several'), Hoe, R Wensum in Norwich, Middleton GP (2), Pentney GP (2), Tottenhill GP, Costessey GP (3), UEA Broad, Welney, Lenwade Common and Thetford Nunnery Lakes. A further 32 prs were reported from an additional 13 sites, suggesting a county total of possible and confirmed breeders of at least 82 prs, but this is no doubt an under-estimate of the real situation.

**Red-necked Grebe**

*Podiceps grisegena*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Recorded in all months of year. Very scarce at start of year with just 1-2 Blakeney-Sheringham throughout Jan, 4 Feb, 3 March, and one to April 9th Hunstanton-Scolt Head where max 4 Scolt Head Feb 5th. One Heacham Feb 23rd. Only inland record R Wensum, Norwich Jan 15th.

Thereafter recorded Pentney GP May 20th-25th, Snettisham June 28th-July 4th, a summer-plumaged adult past Cley, Weybourne and Sheringham July 18th, then small influx beginning at end of Aug with singles Scratby 24th-27th, Sheringham and Waxham-Sea Palling 30th and adjacent to Breydon Water 31st-Sept 2nd.

More numerous in latter part of year. Monthly estimates at Hunstanton-Scolt Head: 1-2 Sept, 14 Oct, 12 Nov and 14 Dec, and max monthly counts 9 Titchwell Oct 31st, 11 Scolt Head Nov 6th and 9 Dec 14th, and at Blakeney-Sheringham: 3 Sept, 8-13 Oct, 2 Nov and 6-7 Dec, with highest count 8 Cley Oct 12th. Elsewhere in Sept: Winterton 3rd-5th, Mundesley 15th and Snettisham 20th, in Oct Wells Quay 2nd and Mundesley 13th, in Nov 1-2 Holkham Bay 16th-Dec 22nd and at Overstrand Dec 1st. Larger movements included: in Oct 5 west Scolt Head 2nd, 5 west Blakeney Point 13th, 8 east Holme 20th; in Nov 6 west, 2 east Holme 30th; and in Dec 5 west 2 east Sheringham 12th and 4 west there 13th. Inland: Rockland Broad Oct 22nd, Tottenhill GP Dec 14th-30th and Hickling Broad Dec 28th-31st.

## Slavonian Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

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

Recorded until April 19th (Cley) and from Aug 26th (Heacham). Majority of birds in nearshore waters Hunstanton-Scolt Head with at least 5 Jan, 17 Feb, 8-10 March and 4 to April 10th when last recorded in this area and when pair displaying Titchwell. High counts included 10 Titchwell and 5 Scolt Head Feb 9th, 8 Titchwell March 13th and 7 Holme March 16th. Other coastal records in first winter period Blakeney Hbr Jan 12th, Cley Jan 1st and 24th, Overstrand Jan 19th, and inland on R Bure near Bure Park, Yarmouth Jan 1st-9th, and Hickling Broad Feb 7th-27th.

Three Sept birds at Titchwell 13th and 27th and Scolt Head 27th and then 10-12 regularly present Oct to year end Hunstanton-Scolt Head, including high counts of 9 Holme Oct 27th, 9 Brancaster Nov 22nd and 9 Titchwell Dec 7th; 5-8 between Cley and Overstrand in Oct, including 5 Sheringham Oct 12th/13th with 2-3 regularly present to year end. Other records all coastal: Mundesley Oct 14th, 2 Snettisham Oct 19th/20th, 3-4 Holkham Bay Nov 22nd-29th, Waxham Nov 9th and 2 Holkham Bay Dec 14th.

## Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

### *Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

Possibly just 4 birds this year: Hunstanton Jan 31st (EMPS), Holme-Titchwell March 13th-16th (NML RQS) with 2 swimming east at both localities on 17th (GED), and one Brancaster Dec 1st (RK).



*Black-necked Grebes (N. Borrow)*

## Fulmar

*Fulmarus glacialis*

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

In first winter period the only substantial movement Jan 4th when 280 east Sheringham. No further movements until spring when 280 east Scolt Head May 6th. On June 26th 420 east 80 west Scolt Head (full day count), 180 east Blakeney Point, 1000 east Sheringham (full day count) and 216 east Overstrand. Next day 470 east 30 west Scolt Head (full day count) and on 28th 160 east Sheringham (1130-1345 hrs).

During breeding season 186 occupied ledges Hunstanton Cliffs, but only 43 young present Aug 13th. A substantial increase on 1996's 120 prs/ledges but still down on the 200 in 1995. The number of young present/fledged declined for the third successive year. Elsewhere up to 5 prs Scrabby Cliffs April 17th but only one pair remained May 7th and no proof of breeding. Disappointingly no breeding data received from Weybourne/Sheringham or other north-east localities.

Highest counts of autumn Sept 9th when 1300 west Holme (full day count) and 278 passed Titchwell. The only other notable count of autumn was 80 east Scolt Head Sept 20th.



An excellent year for blue-phase birds when in strong north-easterly winds in Jan exceptional numbers passed Sheringham where 4 east 1st, 59 east 4th and 16 east 5th. Others here June 26th and 27th, west Sept 19th, Oct 13th and Nov 30th. Others Cley Jan 4th and 5th, north Winterton April 17th, Blakeney Point June 26th, 2 Cley June 26th, west Holme Sept 9th and west Scolt Head Oct 13th.

### **Fea's or Zino's Petrel**

*Pterodroma feae/madeira*

#### ***Rare vagrant from eastern Atlantic***

A Fea's or Zino's Petrel, the first accepted record for the county, flew east along the coast on June 26th. It was first seen passing Blakeney Point at 1340 hrs (S McE) and subsequently Cley (SMJG *et al*), Sheringham (IGJ) and Mundesley at 1537 hrs (MDF). Owing to the difficulty of distinguishing these species in the field, particularly in the case of a lone bird, this individual was accepted only as Fea's/Zino's Petrel by BBRC. It was, however, almost certainly a Fea's Petrel *P feae* whose world population of c1200 prs breeds on Bugio in the Desertas off Madeira and on the Cape Verde Islands. Fea's has occurred as a vagrant off the eastern USA and western Europe, whereas Zino's Petrel *P madeira* is extremely rare (c20 prs in 1996) and has never been conclusively identified away from its breeding site on Madeira. See article page 557.

### **Cory's Shearwater**

*Calonectris diomedea*

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

Another good year including an unusually high number in June when west Overstrand 25th (BJM NP); Sheringham 1425 hrs (IGJ) and east Overstrand 1450 hrs on 26th (AE BJM); and on 27th when Cley 1415 hrs (RGM), 2 Sheringham 0920 hrs and 1445 hrs (DJH IGJ *et al*) and east Overstrand 1100 hrs (AE BJM). Others during the year west Cley July 18th (SMJG), east Holme Aug 30th (AFB JBi) and in Oct at Sheringham 2nd (SCV) and Cley 12th (RGM). As in 1996 details of several records remain unsubmitted.

*1996 Additions:* Cley June 21st and Sept 9th (MAG) and Sea Palling Sept 13th (AJK), taking the 1996 total to an impressive 10 birds.

### **Great Shearwater**

*Puffinus gravis*

#### ***Rare vagrant from North Atlantic***

One flew west and then east past Cley at 1030 hrs on Sept 9th (SJMGRGM JT), but was only seen by a few of those present at the time. The 14th county record and the first since 1979.

### **Sooty Shearwater**

*Puffinus griseus*

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

Recorded in an exceptional 7 months of the year between May and Nov. In spring 3 Sheringham May 6th (DPA) and east Scolt Head June 27th (NML). More typical autumn birds from July 11th when 2 west Holme and north Horsey 19th. No further records until 2 Titchwell Aug 30th. In Sept best day 9th when 20 west Holme (full day count), 2 Titchwell, one Brancaster, 3 west Blakeney Point, 30 Cley, 10 Sheringham, 3 west Overstrand, 7 Sea Palling and 11 Winterton. In Oct recorded on 11 dates with highest numbers on 2nd when 21 west Holme (full day count), 11 west Titchwell, 43 west one east Scolt Head (full day count), 80 Cley, 22 Weybourne, 115 Sheringham (full day count), 2 west Mundesley and 28 north Sea Palling. Smaller but equally widespread numbers on 12th and 13th. On 12th 23 Hunstanton, 6 east one west Holme, 6 Titchwell, 2 Brancaster, 17 west Scolt Head (full day count), 25 Cley, 18 Sheringham, 4 west Overstrand, 4 west Mundesley, 4 north Sea

Palling and 2 Yarmouth. On 13th 6 Hunstanton, 3 east one west Holme, 19 west Scolt Head (full day count), 2 Cley, 14 Sheringham, north Sea Palling and 2 west Mundesley. Stragglers continued to be reported during Nov when east Sheringham 18th, Sea Palling 26th and west Sheringham and Overstrand 30th.

Perhaps the good numbers for the second year running may come as a bit of a surprise if recent reports of a 90% decline over some of its range are true. We await with interest to see if this decline is apparent in the North Sea in the next few years.

## Manx Shearwater

*Puffinus puffinus*

### *Passage migrant with majority during autumn movements*

In spring west Overstrand April 11th and in May 5 east Scolt Head and one Sheringham 6th, east Sheringham 14th, 21 east Sheringham 17th and 4 Hunstanton 21st. Impressive numbers during June when recorded on 11 dates, most on 26th and 27th. On 26th 60 east Holme, 364 east 47 west Scolt Head (full day count), 80 west Blakeney Point, 200 Cley, 253 east Sheringham (full day count), 243 east Overstrand and 134 Mundesley. On 27th 138 east Scolt Head (full day count), 30 Cley, 15 east Weybourne and 160 east Sheringham (full day count).

Next major movement July 18th when 3 Hunstanton, 14 west 2 east Holme, 5 west Titchwell, 59 west 6 east Scolt Head, 100 Cley, 20 east Weybourne, 120 east 35 west Sheringham, 8 east 2 west Overstrand and 9 north Sea Palling. Only small numbers during Aug, but virtually daily during Sept when best counts 9th and 13th. On 9th 184 west Holme (full day count), 19 Titchwell, 9 Brancaster, 20 west Blakeney Point, 100 Cley and 48 west Sheringham. On 13th 4 Ongar Hill, 10 Holme, 20 west Titchwell, 25 west 16 east Scolt Head, 6 Blakeney Point, 14 Cley, 66 east Sheringham and 23 east Overstrand.

In Oct highest counts 2nd, 12th and 13th. On 2nd 74 west 3 east Holme (full day count), 80 west Titchwell, 72 west Scolt Head (full day count), 35 Cley, 3 Weybourne and 80 Sheringham. On 12th 12 Hunstanton, 4 Holme, 6 west Titchwell, 6 Brancaster, 40 west 2 east Scolt Head, 15 Cley, 60 east 14 west Sheringham, 2 Eeels and one Mundesley. Reduced numbers on 13th when 3 Hunstanton, 25 west 21 east Holme, 51 west Scolt Head, 35 Sheringham, 2 north Sea Palling and singles Winterton and Yarmouth. Smaller numbers continued to be reported until 25th. No records during Nov but a late bird east Sheringham Dec 26th.



*Manx Shearwaters (N. Arlott)*

## **Mediterranean Shearwater**

*Puffinus yelkouan*

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

A good year with singles Yarmouth Aug 3rd (SSm), Braneaster (RK) and Sea Palling (AJK) Aug 17th, Cley Sept 13th (PE PJM), east Cley (IGJ) and 2 Sheringham Sept 23rd (KBS SCV) and Holkham Sept 28th (DHR). Most records during Oct when on 2nd west Scolt Head (NML), Blakeney Point (BAEM), Cley (RGM), Weybourne (MPT), Sheringham (KBS SCV) and west Mundesley (MDF). On 12th Sheringham (KBS) and Sea Palling (NBB AJK) and on 13th further singles west and east Sheringham (KBS *et al*), west Mundesley (MDF) and north Sea Palling (NBB AJK).

*1996 Additions:* Cley Sept 9th (MAG) and Sea Palling Sept 13th (AJK).

## **Storm Petrel**

*Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

Like so many seabirds in 1997 a good year with singles Wells quay June 21st (AIB *et al*) and east Sheringham June 27th (DJH IGJ JRW *et al*). More typical autumn records in Oct when Braneaster 12th (RQS), Blakeney Point (BAEM) and feeding offshore Sheringham 0705-0730 hrs (GED PJH KBS *et al*) both 13th, and west Holme (JBi) and Waxham (BHa) both 14th.

A petrel sp at Sheringham Jan 4th (IPr) was probably this species.

## **Leach's Petrel**

*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

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

A number of unusual records in spring and early summer when singles east Sheringham April 12th and May 6th and west Scolt Head June 27th. More normal autumn passage commenced on Sept 9th when also best day of autumn with 41 west Holme, 3 west Titchwell, 2 Braneaster, 4 west Blakeney Point, 25 Cley, 4 Sheringham, 5 west Sea Palling and one Winterton. The Holme count was a site record with most birds passing during late afternoon and evening. Recorded on only 2 other dates during the month when one Titchwell and 3 west Scolt Head 13th and singles Titchwell, east Scolt Head, Cley and Yarmouth 19th.

Recorded on 4 dates during Oct when on 2nd 4 west Holme, 2 west Titchwell, 10 west Scolt Head, 3 Cley, one Weybourne and 6 Sheringham. On 11th west Scolt Head and on 12th 2 west Holme, west Titchwell, Braneaster, 8 west Scolt Head, 7 west Cley, Weybourne, 8 west Sheringham, west Cromer, west East Runton, 2 west Overstrand and singles Waxham and Yarmouth. Last birds of year on 13th when 3 west Holme, 9 west Scolt Head, singles Blakeney Point, west Cley, Salhouse and 2 Sheringham. One of the Scolt Head birds on 13th was caught and eaten by a Great Skua.

## **Gannet**

*Morus bassanus*

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

Recorded in varying numbers in all months of the year. Numbers small until May when 160 Sheringham 3rd, 220 east Scolt Head and 440 east Sheringham 6th, and 120 east Scolt Head 18th. Good numbers during June when on 26th 380 east 140 west Scolt Head, 180 east Overstrand and 641 east Mundesley; also 330 east 100 west Scolt Head 27th, and 250 east 30 west Sheringham 28th.

In autumn daily July to Oct. In July best counts 18th when 61 west 31 east Holme, 65 east 20 west Scolt Head and 200 east 60 west Sheringham. Numbers then remained low until Sept. Best counts 13th when 70 Holme, 237 Titchwell, 261 west 167 east Scolt Head, 100 Cley, 650 east Sheringham, 200 Sea Palling and 180 Waxham, and 20th when 127 east Ongar Hill, 132 north Snettisham, 300 west Holme, 250 east 40 west Scolt Head, 100 Blakeney Point, 600 Sheringham and 900 Horsey.



During Oct surprisingly low numbers during strong northerly winds on 2nd but larger numbers on 12th and 13th. On 12th 300 Hunstanton, 304 east 173 west Holme, 155 west 110 east Scolt Head, 250 Cley, 259 East Runton, 600 Sea Palling, 500 Scratby and 209 north Yarmouth. Numbers higher on 13th when 1000 Hunstanton, 550 east 378 west Holme, 2329 east 420 west Scolt Head, 1000 east Sheringham, 1500 Overstrand and 1200 north Sea Palling. Further movements occurred on 14th, 20th, 22nd and 26th; most on 22nd when 450 east Overstrand, 700 Sea Palling and 372 south Yarmouth.

Inland birds at Sedgeford May 6th, heading inland along R Ouse, King's Lynn May 24th and rescued from the middle of the road Bacton June 28th. Also during June an adult was found at Kelling WM 4th-6th, spending most of its time on an island occupied by breeding Avocets, causing one pair to desert. This was possibly the first time anywhere in the world that breeding Avocets have mobbed a Gannet sitting only a few feet away from their nests! Sadly it was found dead on 6th.

**Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Increasing winter visitor and passage migrant; has bred*

Monthly counts from roost sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welney	104	148	197	82	32	24	20	-	98	104	121	-
Snettisham	-	-	-	32	29	30	97	73	-	121	102	87
Holkham	25	42	44	54	-	-	-	-	150	-	-	16
Ranworth	47	194	110	87	12	-	-	-	203	206	405	305

*National importance (winter): 130*

Additional roost counts from Titchwell where 15 July, 40 Aug and at Whitlingham Lane GP where up to 9 roosting on pylons during the autumn. No counts received from any of the other known roost sites.

The number of inland breeding Cormorants has increased in Britain by 28% per year 1991-1995 and 17% 1995-1996. Research has shown that most of these are of the rapidly expanding race *P c sinensis*. It therefore seems likely that many of Norfolk's birds are of this race. This is supported by increasing numbers being identified in the county, especially in 1997, when counts were made at Cley of 15 July 24th and 50 Sept 11th and recent sightings of colour-ringed birds from the Abberton Reservoir colony. For more details see NBC Bulletin no 28.

This increase in numbers has led to increasing conflict between birds and anglers. Nowhere has this been better illustrated than at Holkham Park where deliberate disturbance and removal of roosting trees caused desertion of the roost. This was done despite the fact that there was little evidence to suggest they were having any significant impact on fish stocks in the lake, most of the birds choosing the coast to feed. It remains unclear where these birds now roost but counts of 40+ apparently going to roost at Bayfield during Nov and Dec may give a clue. For a fuller account see NBC Bulletin no 27.

**Shag**

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

*Autumn and winter visitor with occasional birds wrecked inland*

A poor year with singles in first half of year Burnham Overy Hbr Jan 6th, King's Lynn Jan 7th, Wells Boating Lake Jan 19th, Mundesley Feb 6th/7th, inland at Fakenham Feb 5th-19th, Hunstanton March 8th, and Titchwell April 19th and May 8th/9th.

No further records until autumn when first Overstrand July 21st/22nd. A gap of over a month before any other records when in Sept singles Blakeney Point 9th-12th, Scolt Head 20th and Sheringham 29th and 6 off Burnham Overy Dunes 27th. Most records during Oct but numbers still low with 2 west Cley 25th and singles at 8 other sites, most 12th/13th when at Scolt Head, Sheringham, Overstrand, Mundesley and Sea Palling. In Nov 2 west Cley 8th and in Dec singles Titchwell 6th and Hunstanton 22nd.

### **Bittern**

*Botaurus stellaris*

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

An apparent increase from end of previous year when numbers considered lower than usual. During Jan-March noted at 23 sites, mainly singly, with larger numbers in the Hickling/Horsey/Marham reedbed complex (5), How Hill (2), Strumpshaw (2) and the Filby/Ormesby/Rollesby complex (2). Probably in excess of 20 birds involved. One at Hempstead Marshes Jan/Feb regularly seen feeding in fields of winter cereal next to woodland edge.

It is sad to report a further decline in national breeding numbers with only 11 booming males in the country, 3 of which were in Norfolk. Two nests were located in Broadland and a further 2 on the north coast, where interestingly, a silent male was known to have bred. Unfortunately no data is available on success rates in the county.

One unusual midsummer record, at Mannington June 7th.

Numbers again fairly low during Nov-Dec, when noted at 9 locations with max 3 Hickling/Heigham Sound, 3 Strumpshaw and 5 Marham Broad.

It has long been considered that influxes into Norfolk in the winter months are related to hard weather and mainly involve birds of Continental origin. However, an intensive colour-ringing and radio-tagging programme in operation at Minsmere RSPB, Suffolk, has revealed that virtually all the birds present in the autumn leave the area; indeed 3 of these were traced to Norfolk when an adult and juv were located at Marham Broad and another was at Burgh Castle Oct 24th. It is probable that a proportion of wintering birds in Norfolk are a direct result of post-breeding dispersal from Suffolk.

### **Little Bittern**

*Ixobrychus minutus*

#### ***Vagrant from the Continent***

A splendidly vociferous, if somewhat monotonous, adult male revealed itself all too infrequently at Holme June 13th-16th (JBi GFH JRW *et al*) and was almost certainly present from 11th.

### **Night Heron**

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

#### ***Vagrant from the Continent; free-flying colony at Great Witchingham causes confusion***

An intriguing series of events at Holkham where 2 sub-adults were located May 7th (VE JL MTu *et al*), frequenting the dyke system and adjacent scrub on the edge of the freshmarsh, to be joined by another sub-adult May 15th. During the next 3 weeks there was great confusion with birds being recorded as adult, sub-adult and 2nd-summer and even 1st-summer, and several varying totals quoted. Due to this confusion, in early June the assistant wardens (VE MTu) walked the most frequented dyke and flushed 5 birds, including 2 adults. Subsequently 5 birds were seen on several occasions. The dates of arrivals and departures were obviously confusing but at a minimum 2 sub-adults (3rd-summers) were present May 7th-Aug 28th, one sub-adult (also 3rd-summer) May 15th to end of June and 2 adults at least June 1st-29th. In Aug the 2 sub-adults visited Holkham Park Lake where they remained for 4/5 days (per AIB). Interestingly, this multiple arrival coincided with a similar event in north-east England.

Also juvs Little Dunham Jan 26th/27th (KBi) and Honing Common Sept 2nd (CL).  
A tame adult Garveston May 19th to at least 22nd (RG).



*Night Herons (N. Arlott)*

### **Little Egret**

*Egretta garzetta*

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

In Jan, singles Burnham Norton 5th, Snettisham 15th and Breydon 25th may have been different from the 1-2 in the Titchwell area; however, 2 Wells/Warham 19th and one there 26th may be the same as movement between these sites has occurred in previous winters.

In Feb, one Wells/Warham Greens all month, another Cley 11th and 15th-20th, with further records there March 5th/6th, 9th and 22nd-27th.

At Titchwell, a single April 9th was the first since late Jan. Other April records from Burnham Norton 10th, Cley/Salthouse 11th-17th and Hickling 19th probably relate to the same individual.

Singles in May at Titchwell 5th, west over Scolt Head 6th, east Burnham Overy Hbr 18th and Holme 31st. Also singles briefly at Sparham Pools/Lyng-Easthaugh GP and Blakeney Point 19th presumably relate to one or both of 1-2 Cley/Salthouse 19th-24th.

June records from Burnham Overy Staithe/Burnham Norton 1st, Cley/Salthouse 2nd-4th, 7th/8th and 15th, Sea Palling (north) 6th, Winterton 8th, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 11th and Breydon 22nd.

The situation from July to year end is clearer and follows a now familiar pattern: singles Cley/Salthouse July 4th-8th, Stiffkey Oct 26th, Cley and Blakeney Hbr Oct 27th are the only records away from Titchwell area, where one from July 4th-25th, 2 July 26th-Aug 8th, 2-3 Aug 9th-Nov 9th, 5 Nov 10th then 3 to Nov 15th, 2 Nov 16th-18th, then only singles to year end except 2 Dec 13th.

### **Great White Egret**

*Ardea alba*

*Vagrant from the Continent*

One Cley Dec 28th was relocated at Stiffkey Greens later the same day and was to remain on the Warham/Stiffkey saltings well into 1998 (GED *et al*).

### **Grey Heron**

*Ardea cinerea*

*Resident and passage migrant/winter visitor*

The only sizeable count in first winter period was 18 Narford Lake Jan 3rd. North Coast WeBS counts in this period were 13 Jan, 16 Feb and 11 March.



At Sheringham, where one passed east in Jan, coastal movement was small in spring with 3 east/5 west March 8th and 3 east March 14th. At Weybourne, one south-east March 11th with 2 on 20th.

Following last year's request for more breeding data, a total of 30 heronries were counted (more than usual), revealing 263-267 nests, a significant drop from the 283 nests in 1995. While still not wholly reflecting the 21% national decrease, it does appear that the decline has definitely reached Norfolk.

Location	No of nests	Location	No of nests
Buckenham Carr	4	Holkham Park	3
Burgh Common	2	Horning Church Marsh	1
Burgh Castle	10	How Hill	1
Burgh St Peter	3	Hundred Acre Wood	3
Calthorpe Broad	1	Hunstanton	3
Cockshoot Broad	2	Islington	43
Colney Wood	11	Narford	3
Didlington Carr	3	North Elmham	6
Feltwell	3	Ranworth Broad	2
Great Witchingham	49	Reedham Carr	2
Heckingham	5	Sennowe Park	1
Heigham Sound	8-12	Snettisham	5
Hérons Carr (Barton)	9	Sturston	15
Hilgay	33	Upton Broad	1
Holkham GM	14	Wimbotsham	17

Further coastal movement from May onwards, notably at Scolt Head where singles east on 2 dates in June, 5 on 3 dates in July (max 3 west 10th), one west Aug 15th, 2 in from the sea Sept 15th, 18th and 27th and an unusually large flock of 13 west Sept 21st. At Sheringham, 1-2 on 3 dates in May, one west Aug 24th and 7 east Aug 30th, 1-3 on 7 dates in Sept and singles west Dec 20th and in from sea Dec 30th. Elsewhere, in from sea Eeoles July 18th and Oct 16th, 2 Overstrand July 18th, one south Yarmouth Oct 10th, where 2 north Oct 14th, 2 south Hunstanton Oct 6th with 4 south there Oct 19th.

North Coast WeBS counts in autumn and second winter period: 39 Aug, 36 Sept, 28 Oct and 19 Nov. During this period, largest counts from Welney, 31 Aug 15th, and Snettisham, 11 Sept 17th.

### Purple Heron

*Ardea purpurea*

*Almost annual spring and autumn vagrant from the Continent*

One at Cley on evening of July 5th (TCD RGM *et al*).

### White Stork

*Ciconia ciconia*

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

One flying east over Stiffkey (CJ *et al*), Blakeney (AMS PMW), Cley, Salthouse and Kelling (where landed briefly) (JRW SBe *et al*) and Sheringham (MPL ETM) on the afternoon of Oct 18th. The next day it was between Sheringham and Cromer and then between Roughton and Northrepps Oct 20th-24th. On Oct 28th it was near Tunstead and it passed over Neatishead the following day. On Oct 31st it was following the plough at Irstead and seen over Thrigby. On Nov 1st it was seen on rooftops at Martham.

The County Records Committee has considered all records of this species for 1996/7 and has resolved to publish all accepted records in the future, irrespective of their origin. This decision has been made as there are several free-flying escaped birds in the country which can, and do, turn up anywhere including Norfolk. In addition birds ringed in the Netherlands, one of which appeared in the county in 1996, are almost invariably introduced birds. It is thus virtually impossible to ascertain whether any sightings are of genuinely wild birds or not. If it is known with certainty that a bird is an escape it will be published as such.

*1996 Additions:* It appears that at least one and probably both of the 2 White Storks at Holkham NNR April 16th/17th (MESR *et al*) were from the Continent. Both birds were full-winged, one unringed, the other ringed above the right knee. Having roosted at Holkham overnight on 16th, they departed in different directions at 1000 hrs on 17th. Singles Snettisham April 5th and Field Dalling mid-April may relate to one or other of these individuals, and 2 Warham Camp 'prior to April 19th' (*per* AIB) are probably the same. One of these birds drifted west over Wells, Holkham and Titchwell April 18th and the ringed bird was later relocated in Cambridgeshire to April 20th; it then flew over Northamptonshire into Warwickshire where it roosted overnight, allowing the ring number to be read and revealing it to be of Dutch origin (LGRE). The second individual was seen again in the Holkham/Longlands area to April 19th.

The following birds were also seen in 1996 and all are likely to have been escapes: Runham Jan 25th, Nov 21st and 28th; Thrigby Feb 29th and Aug 1st; Filby Broad, Ormesby Little Broad, Cley, Holme and Hunstanton April 1st; Winterton May 12th; Yarmouth, Upton and South Walsham Broads May 21st; Fleggburgh May 22nd; Rollesby Sept 2nd; Filby Oct 17th and Nov 7th.

## Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

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

The 2 imms remaining from 1996 were usually found on saltmarsh between Braneaster and Titchwell throughout Jan, but wandered occasionally to Holme, Scolt Head and Burnham Norton. A third individual, an adult, was also present in the same general area, first noted Scolt Head Jan 2nd-5th, then usually Burnham Norton throughout Jan-Feb. During March to mid-April all 3 remained, occasionally noted together, but usually the 2 imms were apart from the adult. An additional single at Berney Marshes March 16th.

From mid-April the situation clouded by arrival of overshooting spring migrants. At Titchwell, 3 passed offshore April 13th, further April singles at Cley 17th, Berney Marshes 23rd-May 7th, Holme 20th, 22nd and 24th/25th with at least 2 in Titchwell area throughout the month.

During May, 1-4 at Berney Marshes with 2 commuting between there and Breydon until June 12th. Also in May, 3 west Scolt Head and Burnham Overy Dunes 2nd, 1-3 on several dates Holme including 2 displaying, with an additional imm 6th, 1-3 Titchwell, 2 Horsey 13th and 17th, plus singles Cley 4th-6th, 8th/9th, 2 there 11th/12th and 15th-17th, with singles 19th and 29th, Snettisham 5th, Sheringham 10th, west at West Runton, Sheringham, Weybourne and Burnham Norton 26th and Scolt Head 31st.

As usual, fewer from June onwards but still in reasonable numbers. The 2 Berney Marshes/Breydon birds departed high over Yarmouth June 13th, 2 at Cley June 7th and 15th-17th, 1-2 throughout June Titchwell, 2 Holkham 18th, and singles Martham Broad 3rd and Holme 6th, 21st and 29th.

In July, 2 over Potter Heigham 6th were possibly the same as 2 at Cley the same date; elsewhere 1-3 remained between Holme and Holkham, usually a max of 2 together.

During Aug, 5 Titchwell most of month, visiting Holme 11th/12th, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 13th/14th and Cley 20th, remaining in Titchwell area until Sept 13th.

## Mute Swan

*Cygnus olor*

*Resident; the Ouse Washes attract the most important winter concentrations*

Welney produced the following max monthly counts:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
178	81	36	119	164	31	44	65	134

Monthly counts at other sites included 155 Breydon area and 58 St Benet's Level Jan, 43 Billockby March and 75 Lyng GP (winter). Summer build-up at Rockland Broad where 63 May, 76 June-July, 82 Aug, 93 Sept and 38 Oct. In contrast increase in numbers Hickling in second winter period with 44 Oct, 59 Nov and 71 Dec.

Details received of 67 breeding prs at 22 sites but no records from several important localities; largest number of nests at Welney (20+) and Berney (12).

A 'Polish' type juv (all white), out of a brood of 7, at Titchwell July/Aug.

## Bewick's Swan

*Cygnus columbianus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in internationally important numbers*

*International importance (winter): 170*

Largest gatherings, as usual, in Fens with counts during Feb at Welney the highest since Dec 1994.

<i>Jan 6th</i>	<i>Feb 9th</i>	<i>Mar 9th</i>	<i>Oct 30th</i>	<i>Nov 16th</i>	<i>Dec 29th</i>
2767	3477	941	624	903	3106
(5004)	(4610)	(969)	-	(1457)	(4257)

(Total Ouse Washes figure in brackets)

Severe weather and icing caused problems early in year as little open water available for night-time roosting during Jan when the flocks sometimes disturbed by Foxes wandering out across the ice. Substantial numbers of birds temporarily left the site to find alternative roosts on small areas of open water which remained on Ely Ouse River next to village of Ten Mile Bank. Continuing periods of cold weather into early spring saw large numbers lingering well into March with 941 present on 9th, though there were some large scale departures over the next few days. Flocks were seen moving off during evenings of 11th and 12th, leaving just 150 birds on 13th, 52 on 24th and the last 12 on 30th. Three injured birds over-summered.

The first 2 autumn adults arrived Oct 13th but the following build-up was extremely slow with still only 446 birds by Nov 3rd. Due to abundant food supplies, large numbers of swans were lingering in the Netherlands and it was mid-December before numbers on the Washes reached expected levels.

A total of 137 colour-ringed birds was recorded in 1996/97 winter, these having been ringed in Russia 73, The Netherlands 17, Martin Mere 23, Slimbridge 18 and Welney 6. Autumn/winter flocks held a disappointing 5.2% young, the last productive breeding season being as long ago as 1990 when there were 20% young in the flocks.

An unprecedented 52 birds killed by striking overhead powerlines during 1996/97 winter, by far the majority on two unmarked lengths of National Grid line spanning the Washes. At



the time large numbers of swans were crossing the lines twice daily to and from their arable feeding areas north-east of the reserve.

Once again the species was widespread in Broadland with several sites holding impressive numbers, especially in first winter period. Much interchange of birds between sites. The main areas were How Hill-Johnson Street-Ludham with 300 Jan 30th and 538 Feb 18th, Catfield 272 Jan 7th and 76 Dec 10th, Wood Street 145 Jan 5th and 100 in Dec, and St Benet's Levels 490 Feb 17th. Another feeding site to the north in East Ruston-Lessingham-Happisburgh area held up to 283 birds in Jan and 225 in late Dec. On the Halvergate Marshes up to 250 birds frequented the Acle-Billockby area in Feb while Breydon/Berney peaked at 340 in Jan and 476 Feb 9th. Elsewhere 98 Potter Heigham Jan 24th and 30 West Somerton-Horsey Jan 30th.

Elsewhere in county a small group frequenting Snettisham area peaked at 39 Jan 3rd while up to 350 near Stoke Ferry in Feb were an offshoot of Ouse Washes flock.

The spring exodus was less obvious than in some years though there were easterly movements of 50 Framingham Earl and 45 Holme Feb 27th and 45 Boughton Fen March 11th. Late sightings were 5 out to sea at Horsey March 31st and April records of singles from Breydon 2nd and Wells 15th.

Autumn movements off the coast were observed from Oct 21st when 2 flew south at Hunstanton. Numbers were mostly small apart from 80 west Holme Nov 17th.

Whooper Swan

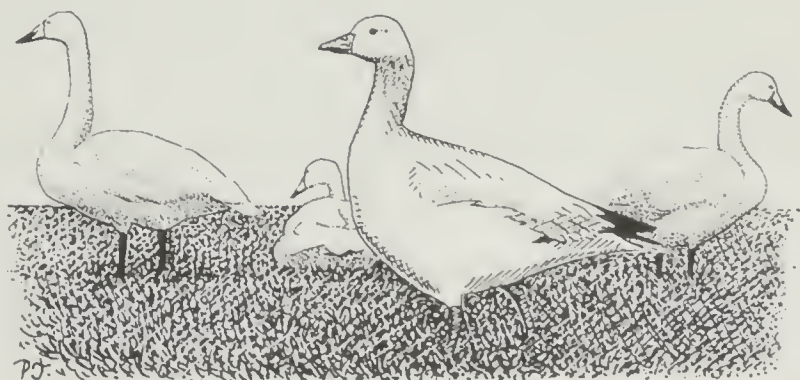
Cygnus cygnus

Winter visitor, mainly from Iceland, in internationally important numbers

Jan 17th	Feb 9th	Mar 9th	Apr 2nd	Oct 27th	Nov 30th	Dec 19th
867	903	891	181	441	717	1020
(949)	(1001)	(959)				

(Total Ouse Washes figure in brackets)  
International importance (winter): 160

At the main Fenland wintering site at Welney numbers fell slightly during severe weather conditions in Jan when the Ouse Washes were largely frozen over. There was only a partial recovery in Feb suggesting some birds had left the area completely. Good numbers lingered throughout March though evening departures to north-west were observed from 6th onwards, with some big overnight movements on March 30th/31st and March 31st/April 1st. Substantial numbers remained into first week of April, gradually dropping to 53 on 12th with last 5 on 21st. Three injured birds were present in early summer, reducing to a single by Sept.



Snow Goose and Whooper Swans (P. Jones)

Autumn arrivals commenced with 10 adults on Oct 3rd increasing to 16 next day and 48 on 5th. The following build-up was greatly disrupted by fireworks being set off close to the main roosts on two evenings in early Nov. The worst occasion was on the evening of Nov 1st when a total of around 1000 mixed Whooper and Bewick's Swans were panicked off their roost by a prolonged firework display, resulting in them flying around the area calling for several hours. A number of birds collided with overhead powerlines causing localised blackouts. Only 400 Whoopers/Bewick's remained the following day; it seems possible some birds deserted the area completely, later increases being due to normal arrival of more wintering swans. The pace of arrivals was much slower than last year though over 1000 birds were present by mid-Dec.

A total of 145 colour-ringed birds was recorded during the 1996/97 winter. These had been ringed in Iceland 118, Finland 6, Caerlaverock 12, Martin Mere 7 and Welney 2. Autumn flocks held 15% young compared to 20% last year. Five birds were killed by flying into overhead powerlines during 1996/97 winter.

Flocks present in numerous Broadland areas where there was a conservative estimate of at least 250 birds present in first winter period, though as usual much interchange of birds between sites. Recorded up to April 18/19th (West Somerton) and from Oct 11th (Waxham). The most important localities were at Catfield-Wood Street, where counts peaked at 112 Jan 21st, 40 Nov 23rd and 133 Dec 3rd; Ludham-St Benet's Levels, where max 78 Jan 12th and 82 Feb 8th; Potter Heigham-Hickling-Horsey-West Somerton where 80 Jan 15th, 61 Feb 9th and 25 March 3rd; and East Ruston-Happisburgh with peak of 51 on Jan 22nd. Also counts of 26 Waxham Nov 15th and 19 Billoekby Jan 22nd.

Only very small numbers recorded infrequently elsewhere in county. These include a late record of 2 flying west Titchwell April 20th, 4 early adults flying west Sheringham and 6 west Holme both Oct 4th and 13 Snettisham Oct 31st.

**Bean Goose**

*Anser fabalis*

*A. fabalis* (**Taiga Bean Goose**): winter visitor to the Yare Valley

*A. rossicus* (**Tundra Bean Goose**): small numbers increasingly recorded in winter

**Taiga Bean Goose - *A. fabalis***

Peak monthly counts of Yare Valley flock:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
300-350	160	200	250

Presumed departing birds were seen at Berney where 32 Feb 7th increased to 41 Feb 8th and a peak of 48 Feb 15th. Also 47 Breydon Feb 14th. Mild weather prompted an early departure with no reports after 5 Rockland Feb 20th. An early arrival with 200 Cantley Nov 1st.

As always scarce away from traditional sites: 4 Catfield Jan 11th and one intermittently Holkham March 12th-April 1st at least. In addition a feral/escaped bird at Welney Sept 6th to end of year.

**Tundra Bean Goose - *A. rossicus***

Records continue to increase. Max counts in first winter period: 4 Flitham, 2 Heaeham, 2 Burnham Norton, one Burnham Thorpe, 10 Holkham, one Wighton, 3 Baconsthorpe, 10 Waxham/Horsey, 5 Billoekby, 62 Catfield, 60 Heigham Holmes, 11 Filby Bridge, singles Berney and Buekenham, 6 Rockland, 15 Ten Mile Bank and 26 Welney. As small flocks

move around clearly some duplication likely between sites. Most birds departed by mid-March but at Holkham 2 remained until April 29th and a bird of unknown origin Berney May 15th.

An injured bird summered at Holkham and was presumably responsible for records from Burnham Norton May 25th, Stiffkey May 27th and Holkham Lake July 12th.

As usual few reports in second winter period: 9 over Eccles Nov 15th, singles Titchwell Nov 16th and Thornham/Holme Dec 22nd, 2 Stiffkey Dec 27th, and a series of records from Welney where one Nov 14th-24th increasing to a max of 9 by Dec 20th.

In addition the following bean geese were not racially identified: Horsey Mere Jan 18th, 5 west Sheringham Jan 28th and one west Feb 27th, 5 west Weybourne March 25th and 11 east Titchwell Feb 26th.

**Pink-footed Goose**  
*Winter visitor from Iceland and East Greenland*

*Anser brachyrhynchus*

International importance (winter): 2250; National importance (winter): 1900.  
Despite many records of flocks reaching several thousand in north-west Norfolk, co-ordinated dawn counts of birds leaving traditional roost sites provided the only reliable way of counting the population.

First winter period:	<i>Jan 6th</i>	<i>Jan 14th</i>	<i>Jan 21st</i>	<i>Feb 11th</i>	<i>Feb 17th</i>
Snettisham	32540	12880	15280	3915	6510
Scolt Head	11300	17800	11300	1600	-
Warham	8810	12890	9940	16500	14550
Total	<b>52650</b>	49670	36520	<b>22015</b>	21606

Second winter period:	<i>Oct 6th</i>	<i>Oct 13th</i>	<i>Oct 20th</i>	<i>Nov 10th</i>	<i>Nov 24th</i>	<i>Dec 1st</i>	<i>Dec 8th</i>	<i>Dec 22nd</i>	<i>Dec 29th</i>
Snettisham	30	1790	8800	7820	36150	40350	16900	23560	26663
Scolt Head	-	230	150	6500	7300	5420	15890	10250	-
Warham	2000	3200	500	-	22850	30400	33700	26400	-
Total	2030	5200	<b>9450</b>	14320	<b>66300</b>	<b>76170</b>	66490	60210	26663

Monthly max are shown in bold. The Dec 1st count is an all-time record.

Most had departed by mid-March but still 1500 Holkham April 17th and in early May the last sizeable flocks were 220 Holkham 1st, 160 Scolt Head 2nd and 50 west there 6th. Several feral/injured birds reported throughout the year.

Following 2 Snettisham Sept 4th and one Welney 11th of unknown origin the first autumn arrivals took place Sept 13th when 25 Scolt Head, 2 Titchwell and 17 Holme. Numbers built up during second half of month to a max of 350 Holkham Sept 29th.

The recently established East Norfolk population centred on Horsey Heigham Holmes continues to increase with the following monthly max:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
2400	5000	2000	1100	7000	5400

The Feb count included a neck-collared bird ringed in Spitsbergen.



Although centred on Horsey/Heigham Holmes flocks often dispersed widely across Broadland with high counts from more distant sites including 1100 Breydon Jan 18th, 1000 Honing Lock Nov 22nd, 4000-5000 Ormesby south Dec 6th and north 8th, 2000 Scratby Dec 7th-14th and 4000 Filby Dec 12th.

Away from traditional sites many large movements recorded in north-east Norfolk, presumably flocks moving between Broadland and north-west Norfolk; peak counts included 3900 Sheringham Nov 21st (a site record).

**White-fronted Goose**

*Anser albifrons*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant from Siberian tundra*

Monthly max at regular wintering sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holkham	475	416	570	11	160
Hickling/Heigham Holmes	640	900	200	30	200
Buckenham/Cantley/Rockland	178	150	50	70	245
Welney	54	85	80	2	32

*National importance (winter): 60*

Numbers in first winter period reduced from previous year at main wintering sites, presumably due to mild weather both here and in the Low Countries, the source of previous influxes.

In first winter period many other sites, principally in North Norfolk and Broadland, produced isolated counts of 1-20 birds with larger counts restricted to the following: 23 Castle Acre Jan 13th, 24 Snettisham Feb 11th-24th, Cley/Blakeney up to 45 Jan 16th-Feb 19th, Berney regular Jan 26th-Feb 22nd with max 69 Feb 1st-8th and 23 Breydon Jan 21st. In addition 100 arrived from sea at Titchwell Jan 25th. Very few remained beyond mid-March. A melanistic bird was seen in a flock of 27 Potter Heigham Jan 18th.

A scattering of feral/escaped birds reported throughout the year.

The first returning bird, a single off the sea at Sheringham Oct 16th, was early for what is traditionally a late arriving species. The second winter period produced few sightings away from traditional wintering areas, the best 22 south over Titchwell Nov 20th and 14 over East Ruston Dec 31st.

**Lesser White-fronted Goose**

*Anser erythropus*

*Vagrant from Northern Scandinavia but most records involve escaped/feral birds*

Occurrences of this species in recent years are clouded by uncertainty due to an ongoing reintroduction scheme in Scandinavia where the native population is in steep decline. In addition the known presence of several escaped/feral individuals causes further confusion.

An adult with White-fronted and Pink-footed Geese at Holkham Jan 12th-22nd (AIB *et al*) was seen by many observers and perhaps stands the best chance of involving a vagrant bird.

The remaining records almost certainly relate to birds of escaped/feral origin but are included for completeness: Burnham Norton Jan 6th and March 20th, Filby Broad Jan 8th-16th and 24th, St Benet's Abbey Jan 23rd, King's Lynn all July and Cley Sept 5th. The only bird late in the year at Pentney GP in Dec.

Grèylag Goose

Anser anser

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

Highest counts at most consistently counted key sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	420	183	-	126	169	350	319	217	213
Titchwell	-	-	2	13	75	330	360	255	200
Burnham Norton	132	140	112	110	465	261	335	316	215
Holkham Lake	730	350	108	110	864	165	5	600	750
Holkham	-	126	126	276	260	433	582	712	39
Cley	-	-	49	60	200	320	270	55	129
Heigham Holmes	150	460	350	-	-	-	250	900	350
Sennowe Park GP	315	-	-	52	-	38	300	710	400
Raynham Lake	255	235	125	139	-	-	270	-	355
Welney	56	32	16	27	77	413	445	243	231

All other counts of 200 or more: *Jan* 202 Brancaster Hbr, 350 Filby Broad, 500 Potter Heigham, 320 Cranwieh GP; *Feb* 250 Wretton Fen; *July* 201 Snettisham, 301 Burnham Norton, 280 Sennowe Park; *Aug* 300 Stiffkey Fen, 340 Roekland, 440 Buekenham, 247 Pentney GP, 228 Tottenhill GP; *Sept* 205 Brancaster, 260 Stiffkey Fen, 290 Ranworth Broad; *Oct* 200 Holme; *Nov* 735 Potter Heigham, 220 Attleborough/Swangey GP; *Dec* 200 Stiffkey, 300 Potter Heigham, 230 Ludham, 500 Wolterton Hall, 346 Attleborough/Swangey GP, 380 Thetford Nunnery Lakes.

Breeding numbers doubtless under-reeorded but included 40 prs Holkham Lake, 32 broods Holkham NNR, 20 prs Raynham Lake, 27 young at Pentncy GP and 1-6 prs at Brancaster, Strumpshaw Fen, Heigham Holmes, Baconsthorpe, Fliteham, Pentney GP, Wissington BF and Thetford Nunnery Lakes. Elsewhere it was considered by at least one observer to be a common breeder in the Wensum Valley.

A bird seen with Pink-footed Geesc at Holkham Jan 14th was thought likely to be a vagrant (CD).

Snow Goose

Anser caerulescens

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

Two white morph adults which arrived in the county during Dec 1996 remained at beginning of year. The eircumstanees surrounding their occurrence, behaviour and associated species strongly indicates wild origin and the first genuine vagrants from the North American continent in Norfolk since 1985.

At Welney one remained amongst Whooper Swans throughout first three months of year, finally departing overnight March 30th/31st with a large exodus of Whoopers. Although it spent much time in Cambridgeshire it often visited the Norfolk washes and adjacent fields, roosting each evening at Welney WWT.

In north-west Norfolk a less predietable individual roamed arable fields with Pink-footed Geese from beginning of year until Feb 25th when it was last reported at Doeking and Fliteham. Its appearanees at individual localities were erratic as it ranged over a large area centred on Doeking, being seen as far south as Fliteham and east to Burnham Market. Roosting with Pink-footed Geese at Seolt Head on many dates, the bird only occasionally used the other traditional Pinkfeet roost in the area at Snettisham.

As usual there were many reports of escaped/feral individuals including a gaggle of 7 white-morph birds which wandered the north-west corner of the county during the year (and were still present in Jan 1998).

**Canada Goose**  
*Introduced resident*

*Branta canadensis*

Highest counts at most consistently counted key sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Whitlingham Lane GP	112	75	-	-	-	285	190	-	-
Thetford Nunnery Lakes	360	44	80	56	200	360	171	299	172

All other three-figure counts: *Jan* 100 Martham, 160 Pentney GP, 297 Cranwich GP, 180 Wissington BF; *Feb* 200 Wretton Fen; *March* 210 Wretton Fen; *June* 112 Snettisham, 300 Titchwell, 101 Breydon/Berney; *July* 101 Snettisham, 288 Titchwell, 132 Whitlingham Lane GP, 145 Sennowe Park, 166 Thetford Nunnery Lakes; *Aug* 159 Snettisham, 130 Holme, 148 Pentney GP; *Sept* 110 Holme, 176 Tottenhill GP; *Nov* 109 Burnham Norton, 200 Postwick; *Dec* 110 Breydon/Berney, 600 Wolterton Hall, 120 Barnham Broom, 268 Swangey GP.

Breeding under-reeorded: 1-5 breeding prs/broods at Ken Hill Marsh, Holme, Burnham Norton, Breydon/Berney, Strumpshaw Fen, Filby Broad, Bure Valley Lakes, Pentney GP, Hethersett Park, Thetford Nunnery Lakes (where 24 prs on terrirory), Broome GP and Wissington BF.

One of the smaller races, and a presumed escape, with others of nominate race Santon Downham March 9th.

An interesting series of eoastal movements in late spring/early summer: 7 east Sheringham May 1st and at Scolt Head 36 east May 31st, 69 east June 5th and 18 east June 8th.

**Barnacle Goose**  
*Passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers with feral birds often in large groups causing confusion*

*Branta leucopsis*

Records nowadays almost impossible to interpret with sightings in every month.

In first winter period birds where eircumstanees suggest wild origin (mostly among flocks of wild geese) reeorred at several sites. Max counts included: Docking/Ringstead area 5, Holme 5, Titchwell 5, Holkham 3 (roosting at Warham), Eeeles 3, Hiekling/Heigham Holmes 67 and Caister 13; also singles Flitcham, Scolt Head and Burnham Overy.

Following an early bird west at Blakency Point Sept 27th, more widespread arrivals in Oct including the following eoastal movements: 9 west Holme 11th with 14 west there 15th, west Scolt Head 13th, 4 west Sheringham 11th, south Sea Palling 8th, and 8 south Yarmouth 20th.

Also in Oct a small flock of 16 Cley Oct 13th-16th contained 2 ringed in Spitsbergen; otherwise scarce until end of year with max count in Nov/Dec of 12 at Hickling/Heigham Holmes. Elsewhere singles at Ongar Hill, Lynn Point, Flitcham and Welney.

Birds considered to be feral/escapes throughout year at many localities with 1-9 at 21 sites and larger counts 60 Fritton, 57 Hardley Flood, 54 Buckenham, 40 UEA Broad, 40 Hethersett Park, 40 Blieking Park, 37 Breydon, 23 Lynford Lakes and 14 Gunton Park. Although some may refer to wild birds, flocks, particularly in south-east of county, must be elouded with suspicion due to the continued presenec of a sizeable feral population in





This Canvasback attracted a great many observers during its prolonged visits to Wissington beet-  
factory and Welney Wash (*Upper: S. Young; Lower: I. Leach*)







Attractive winter visitors: Fieldfare (*C. R. Knights*) and  
Waxwing, Hoveton, January–March (*I. Leach*)





Upper: Brent Geese at Holkham provide a winter spectacle (*R. Powley*).

Lower: Ever mobile Smew on the Great Ouse, January (*A. Tate*).







Winter visitors in unusual surroundings: This Bittern at Hempstead January–February fed in winter cereals next to the woodland edge (*N. Bowman*). The Black-throated Diver attracted much attention during a three week visit to the Wensum in the centre of Norwich (*B. W. Jarvis*).



neighbouring Suffolk in the Kessingland/Southwold area which peaked at 125 at Benacre Broad on Nov 29th. Breeding pairs at Ditchingham GP and Hetherset Park.

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*  
*B b bernicla* (**Dark-bellied Brent Goose**): abundant passage migrant and winter visitor  
*B b hrota* (**Pale-bellied Brent Goose**): rare but increasingly recorded winter visitor  
*B b nigricans* (**Black Brant**): almost annual winter vagrant from North America/east Asia

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

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
North Coast WeBS	7630	8793	6037	1769	44	6028	14088	10671
<i>International importance (winter): 3000; National importance (winter): 1000</i>								

As usual large numbers remained well into May with peaks of 450 Ongar Hill, 180 Snettisham, 50 Titchwell, 680 Scolt Head, 85 Burnham Norton and 150 Blakeney Hbr. 700 still present at Lynn Point 24th. An above-average number of midsummer records in June/July with 1-3 birds reported at Titchwell, Scolt Head, Burnham Norton, Cley, Salthouse, Sheringham, Mundesley, Yarmouth and Berney, with a max of 8 Blakeney Hbr June 7th.

First birds of autumn arrived mid-Sept with 2 Holme 13th and one Scolt Head 15th, preceding a small but more widespread arrival from 19th. Movement continued throughout Oct peaking in mid-month when impressive westerly passage included 1645 Scolt Head, 1550 Sheringham and 1203 East Runton 12th, 1290 Scolt Head 13th, 2000 Sheringham and 1870 Mundesley 14th and a further 1500 Sheringham 20th.

Inland records are scarce and therefore the following are notable: 2 Flitcham Jan 26th, Rockland Broad Feb 9th, Wroxham Broad March 6th, Welney March 11th and Dec31st, Wissington BF March 12th, 4 Welney Nov 30th, and Wolterton Hall Dec 14th.

At Brancaster the long-staying leucistic bird remained until mid-March returning on Oct 15th for its 16th winter. In addition a white-headed bird was at Ongar Hill April 12th. An example of longevity and site fidelity was provided by a bird at Cley Jan 18th which had been ringed at Salthouse on Feb 26th 1974!

Breeding success difficult to decipher due to few counts of young birds received giving conflicting results. A flock of 265 Titchwell Nov 3rd included 25% juvs, whereas 550 Burnham Norton next day produced just 7% young.

**Pale-bellied Brent Goose - *B b hrota***

The increase noted in previous reports continues unabated with the first winter period producing many records: 3 Ongar Hill March 2nd with one March 12th, 6 Lynn Point/



*Brent Geese (N. Borrow)*

Ousemouth Feb 5th with 1-2 on several dates until March 9th and a late bird April 27th, 2 Burnham Norton Feb 26th, 1-4 Holkham/Burnham Overy on several dates Jan 14th-March 8th, Warham March 5th, 3 Blakeney Jan 12th and one Jan 15th, up to 3 Cley/Salthouse on many dates Jan 2nd-March 5th with 9 Jan 22nd and 4 Feb 14th, 2 Kelling WM Jan 22nd and 2 Sheringham Jan 6th.

Fewer records at end of year following the first of 3 west Cley Oct 4th; 2 west Weybourne Oct 12th, 2 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr Oct 12th with one still present Oct 13th, and one Dec 29th, Thornham one in Dec, Lynn Point Nov 26th and 30th, and 2 Terrington Marsh Dec 7th and 27th.

**Black Brant - *B b nigricans***

An elusive bird remained from 1996 being seen in Jan at Cley 1st, Weybourne 2nd and Cley again 17th/18th and 22nd (IGJ FJW *et al*). Another was at Lynn Point Feb 5th (ADC), and at end of year a well-watched adult at Titchwell and later in the Thornham/Holme area from Dec 5th until end of year (PBr IBu GED *et al*).

**Egyptian Goose**

*Alopochen aegyptiacus*

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

Highest counts as follows: *Jan* 76 St Benet's Level, 24 Postwick, 32 Sennowe Park; *Feb* 66 St Benet's Level; *March* 22 Holkham Lake; *April* 54 Holkham Lake; *May* 21 Sennowe Park; *June* 41 Sennowe Park; *July* 95 Holkham Lake, 69 Sennowe Park, 36 Pentney GP, 53 Middleton GP; *Aug* 163 Holkham Lake, 21 Cley, 31 Blickling Park, 28 Sennowe Park, 83 Pentney GP, 40 Tallents Meadow Lake; *Sept* 195 Holkham Lake, 26 Salthouse, 25 Filby Broad, 48 Buckenham, 38 Mannington, 35 Sennowe Park, 39 Pentney GP, 92 Cranwich GP; *Oct* 20 Cley, 80 Blickling Park, 20 Sennowe Park, 44 West Acre, 24 Raynham Lake, 51 Lynford GP; *Nov* 30 West Acre; *Dec* 38 Gunton Park, 38 South Acre.

Confirmed breeding of 1-2 prs came from at least 26 localities with larger concentrations at Holkham Lake where 14 prs and Sennowe Park where 4 prs raised a total of 41 young. Late breeding was confirmed at Cantley BF where a pair were seen accompanying 3 small chicks Oct 2nd.

Rare evidence of movement was provided by a single west at Sheringham March 8th.

**Shelduck**

*Tadorna tadorna*

***Widespread breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Monthly peak 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>
Welney	39	60	136	129	134	-	-	-	8	12	6	29
Terrington	726	1920	1346	482	545	-	460	416	628	1988	2034	3575
Lynn Point	480	3613	1145	226	38	-	71	1750	-	1275	609	80
Snettisham	200	300	188	229	560	762	1494	115	1102	1805	1008	1417
Scolt Head/												
Brancaster Hbr	487	264	225	85	73	93	30	22	5	105	268	182
Wells	120	175	-	24	-	-	-	1	6	32	186	210
Warham	54	23	8	22	-	-	-	5	13	141	125	302
Blakeney Hbr/Cley	202	333	185	211	100	-	-	67	52	265	482	831
Breydon/Berney	499	341	406	241	309	244	193	64	84	185	134	720

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





*Shelduck (N. Borrow)*

Notable counts elsewhere of 59 Rockland Broad Feb 9th, 113 Hardley Flood Feb 16th; 152 Wissington BF April 29th, 73 Buckenham and 156 Titchwell April; 93 Gunton Park May 13th, 89 Buckenham May; 105 Cantley BF July 19th; 270 Stiffkey Dec 24th.

Breeding records from Baconsthorpe (brood), Blakeney Hbr (broods), Brancaster GM (2-3 prs), Breydon (5 broods), Cantley BF (30+ juvs), Flitcham (2 broods), Hedenham (brood), Holkham NNR (17 broods), Holkham Park Lake (5 broods), Holme (2 broods), Kettlestone Common (pr), Lyng Easthaugh GP (2 prs), Lynn Point (2 broods), North Burlingham (brood), Raynham Lake (5 broods), Runham (brood), Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr (31 prs but only 7 broods), Selbrigg (brood), Sennowe Park (3 prs), Sparham GP (2 prs), Sparham Pools (2 prs), Strumpshaw Fen (2 prs fledged 3 young), Tallents Meadow (2 prs), Wash Outer Trial Bank (pr), Wissington BF (40-50 juvs). General decline noted at several sites, that at Holme attributed to disturbance and Fox predation.

Regular eastward movement of adults to moulting sites off NW Germany noted from June 12th, when 32 Scolt Head, with further notable counts of 152 Scolt Head June 24th and 312 there July 12th, 90 Sheringham July 18th, 40 Cley July 19th, and 99 Holme July 22nd.

Returning birds noted from Sept till year end, with peak westerly counts of 140 Holme Sept 13th, 82 Holme Sept 17th, 162 Scolt Head Sept 18th, 60 Overstrand Sept 19th, 40 Titchwell and 75 Sheringham Sept 28th, 53 (south-west) Hunstanton and 72 Scolt Head Oct 13th, 50 Sheringham Oct 14th, 60 Sheringham Oct 29th, 240 Sheringham and 72 Overstrand Dec 17th, and 69 Holme Dec 20th.

*1996 Correction:* Jan count at Wells should read 121 (not 1222).

## **Mandarin**

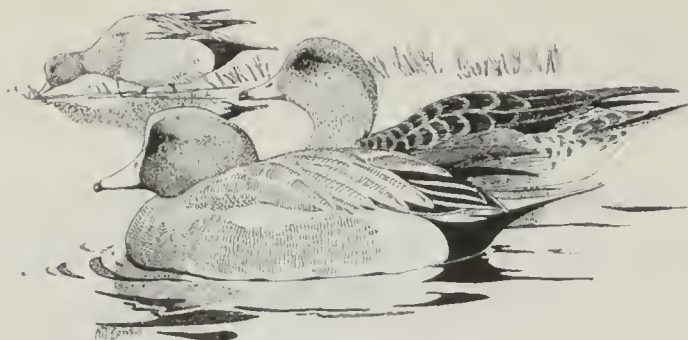
*Aix galericulata*

### ***Introduced wanderer and escape; breeding collection at Sandringham***

Records of 1-4 from Babingley River, Broome GP, Brundall, East Winch, Fakenham (R Wensum), Heacham, Holt Hall, King's Lynn, Salhouse Broad, Sennowe Park, Southacre GP, Stowbridge, Whitlingham Lane GP, and Yarmouth where unusual record of pair at river mouth March 29th (DJ). Higher numbers recorded from Felbrigg Hall (max 9 March, 7 April, 3 May), and Ken Hill Marsh (max 6 Feb, 2 April, 5 May, 5 June, 9 July).

Breeding records from Ken Hill Marsh where a brood in June, and Framingham Pigot where female with 4 young July 9th.

No information received on the substantial Sandringham population.



*Wigeon (N. Borrow)*

## 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:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welney	9275	8744	8760	866	761	1481	4075	11118
Snettisham	1000	430	12	0	102	1273	54	523
Holme	1750	2200	1280	36	100	550	629	850
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	132	29	2	-	96	2520	3000	30
Holkham NNR	8640	8100	3260	27	637	636	8500	2600
Blakeney/Cley	1466	1940	872	136	743	1421	5000	2174
Breydon/Berney	6500	55000	1138	98	71	272	1540	10200
Ranworth Broad	484	6200	299	-	-	-	124	600
Cantley/Buckenham	9000	4241	2240	100	200	-	3160	-

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

Notable counts elsewhere include *Jan-Feb* 800 Horsey Mere; *Feb* 1502 Terrington Marshes; *Oct* 1200 Titchwell; *Nov* 800 Titchwell; *Dec* 1000+ Horsey Mere.

As usual small numbers summered, with counts in June/July of 2 Breydon, Buckenham, 7 Burnham Norton, Cantley BF, 5 Cley, Hickling Broad, 12 Holkham NNR, Pentney GP, 6 Salthouse, 2 Snettisham, 10 Titchwell and 12 Welney. No real indication of breeding.

First clear returning migrants single Scolt Head and 4 Sea Palling Aug 14th. Westerly coastal migration noted from then until early Nov, with peak counts of 683 Scolt Head and 587 (0700-1400 hrs) Overstrand Sept 19th, 420 Sheringham Sept 20th, 755 Scolt Head Sept 21st, 650 Sheringham Sept 27th, 1150 Scolt Head and 1300 Sheringham Sept 28th, 350 Scolt Head Oct 12th, 303 Scolt Head and 396 Sheringham Oct 13th, 341 (2 hrs) Holme, 300 Cley, 450 Sheringham, 376 East Runton and 720 Mundesley all Oct 14th, 2520 Scolt Head Oct 19th and 3000 Scolt Head Nov 6th. Late winter movements of 140 west Sheringham Dec 17th, 230 east Overstrand and 2000 east over Yarmouth Dec 22nd.

Interesting observation of c45 birds feeding on weed brought to the surface by Coot at Crome's Broad Nov 6th.

## American Wigeon

*Anas americana*

*Vagrant from North America*

A male Welney Jan 24th (JBK *et al*). The fifteenth county record. Found by diligent checking through the large flocks of Wigeon. One wonders how many go undetected at sites along the north coast and Yare valley, where viewing conditions are not so ideal.

## Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Peak monthly counts at principal localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welney	19	141	128	38	-	51	21	16	52
Snettisham	32	53	29	4	0	0	3	8	34
Titchwell	-	50	28	32	90	42	25	15	10
Holkham NNR	-	11	21	49	31	134	92	64	96
Holkham Park Lake	32	6	9	16	-	65	36	123	135
Hickling/Heigham Sound	-	200	-	-	-	-	160	224	81
Breydon/Berney	18	88	129	44	-	-	10	5	18
Sennowc Park	112	30	-	12	-	20	40	66	116
Raynham Lake	15	40	-	-	97	246	45	35	50
Lynford GP	179	62	90	-	-	-	-		110

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

Notable counts from elsewhere include 72 Earsham GP Jan 3rd; 114 Colney GP Feb 27th and 62 there March 1st, 34 Strumpshaw Fen March 9th; 46 Cockley Cley April 6th; 35 Raynham Lake June 12th, 35 Welney June 16th, 80 Titchwell June 20th and 44 there July; 50 Cantley BF Aug 23rd, 39 Cley Aug; 79 Ranworth/Cockshoot Broad Oct 19th, 125 Stanford Water Oct 28th, 51 Cley Oct; 78+ Martham Broad Dec 21st, 35 Pentney GP Dec 24th, 260 South Acre GP Dec 30th, 120 Strumpshaw Fen Dec, and 100 Wensum Valley GPs combined count Dec. Max only 25 (Oct) at Whitlingham Lane GP where extension of gravel workings has reduced the site's favourability for this species, and only low numbers for most of year at Colney GP due to disturbance from angling and shooting.

Breeding records received from following localities: Baconsthorpe (brood), Blakeney Hbr (2 prs), Brancaster GM (3 prs), Cantley BF (2 prs bred), Flitcham (brood of 9 at Abbey Farm, but all died by end of June due to poor weather), Heigham Holmes (2 prs), Hickling Broad (brood of 7), Holkham NNR (16 broods from 30-38 potential breeding prs), Holkham Park (9 broods), Holme (3 broods), Raynham Lake (7 broods), Spring Walk Thetford (brood), Stanford TA (4 prs), Strumpshaw Fen (9 prs bred), Tattersett (brood), Welney (6 broods) and Whitlingham STW (3 broods of 9, 5 and 5).



*Shovelers and Gadwall (N. Borrow)*



A couple of late spring movements noted, with 4 west Sheringham May 20th and 9 east Scolt Head June 8th. Autumn passage counts from Scolt Head of singles west Sept 6th and 7th, and 2 west Sept 18th and Oct 13th, 6 west Sheringham Oct 13th, 10 (no direction given) in 2 hrs off Yarmouth Oct 16th, and 8 west Sheringham Oct 19th. Late winter movement of 15 west Wells Dec 29th.

## 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
Welney	727	829	1296	952	300	803	422	1269	4102*
Snettisham	2	96	4	-	1	185	611	501	458
Titchwell	600	296	163	47	222	240	300	700	884
Holkham NNR	210	275	186	111	132	147	319	442	333
Blakeney/Cley	970	386	104	75	401	1107	1376	2205	341
Horseý Mere	600	60	-	-	-	190	-	-	-
Hickling	-	266	128	-	240	220	310	162	436
Breydon/Berney	265	202	236	237	6	20	30	130	400
Ranworth/Cockshoot	-	183	100	60	-	-	-	59	313

(\* reserve record)

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

Numbers generally low in first winter period, and highest counts elsewhere of only Jan 160 Raynham Lake, 201 Buckenham Marshes, 120 Wissington BF, 139 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, 127 Holme; Feb 176 Buckenham Marshes; Feb/March 140 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr; March 148 Buckenham Marshes; April 122 Buckenham Marshes.

Usual scattering of summering birds May to mid-June, principally males, with records from following localities (with max numbers): Berney Marshes (3 - one female), Ken Hill GM (7), Kettlestone Common (2), Ranworth Broad (11), South Acre GP (one), Titchwell (6), Welney (4) and Wissington BF (2 prs). One pair bred at Strumpshaw Fen; at Holkham NNR 3 prs with one brood reared.

Autumn passage noted from early July; monthly max of 14 west and 45 in off sea Scolt Head 13th. Following 140 east Scolt Head Aug 21st, subsequent peak westerly counts of 117 Scolt Head, 124 Sheringham and 168 (0700-1200 hrs) Overstrand Sept 7th, 124 Titchwell, 450 Sheringham and 226 Overstrand (0700-1400 hrs) Sept 19th, 340 Sheringham Sept 20th, 300 there Sept 27th, and also 300 next day; 220 Sheringham Oct 12th; 140 Weybourne, 270 Sheringham, 250 East Runton and 430 Mundesley all Oct 14th.

Away from tabulated sites notable counts in second winter period of Sept 200 Cantley BF 15th and 125 Sennowe 21st; Oct 320 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr; Nov 250 Cantley BF, 420 Reedham Water, 312 Scolt Head, 126 Sennowe, 308 Stiffkey, 141 Stiffkey Fen, 300+ Tallents Meadow Lake, 441 Thornham and 156 Warham; Dec 700 Cantley BF, 140 Cockley Cley, 180+ Pensthorpe, 130 Pentney GP, 210 Scolt Head and 150+ Tallents Meadow Lake.

**Green-winged Teal** *A c carolinensis*: Single males of this Nearctic race of the Teal at Berney Marshes March 20th (JOa), Stiffkey Fen April 9th-18th (JL *et al*) and again May 9th/10th (BHa *et al*), and Welney Dec 7th-9th (JBK *et al*), reappearing Dec 26th (GNB *et al*).

**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>
Welney	1151	778	439	258	-	623	782	883	951
Terrington	-	206	43	63	20	105	103	195	176
King's Lynn Docks	225	-	-	-	-	111	-	151	105
Snettisham	228	150	66	34	237	513	898	581	1321
Titchwell	73	25	41	20	194	100	16	66	46
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	320	169	30	10	21	90	302	408	224
Holkham NNR	-	50	55	103	91	180	119	362	148
Holkham Park Lake	106	90	105	31	36	115	64	294	192
Blakeney/Cley	400	168	159	110	387	181	263	254	343
Breydon/Berney	183	227	71	38	51	108	107	99	199
Hickling Broad	-	-	-	-	-	-	162	334	214
Ranworth/Cockshoot	214	286	76	-	-	153	89	279	335
Buckenham/Cantley	558	90	57	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thetford Nunnery Lakes	-	123	100	46	-	101	114	180	163
Sennowc Park	370	144	-	24	110	108	130	195	266

National importance (winter): 5000

Notable counts elsewhere of *Jan* 260 Earsham GP, 800+ Horsey Merc, 267 Lynford GP, 409 Stanford TA; *May* 157 Welney; *June* 164 Snettisham, 200 Welney; *July* 147 Holkham Park Lake, 207 Lynn Point, 133 Sennowc Park; *Oct* 142 Tottenhill GP; *Nov* 106 Norwich (inc feral birds), 133 Stiffkey; *Dec* 111 Stanford Water and 100 Cantley BF.

At Holkham NNR 69 broods seen from 140 potential breeding prs.

Only two records received of passage movements: 18 west Scolt Head Oct 13th, and 90 west Sheringham Oct 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>
Welney	502	424	197	173	436	125	863
Titchwell	-	-	18	14	16	60	124
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	184	140	-	8	71	56	-
Blakeney/Cley	985	118	10	83	300	754	1519
Breydon/Berney	227	141	21	13	64	90	172
Tottenhill GP	735	451	-	40	397	500	4

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

It is unclear how much movement there is between Welney and Tottenhill GP (and Wretton Fen), and there could be considerable overlap in numbers.

Chiefly single-figure records at a few other wetland sites, with double-figure counts of *Feb* 13 Wells; *Feb/March* 45 Wretton Fen; *March* 16 Terrington; *Sept* 10 Snettisham and 12 Terrington; *Oct* 10 Cantley BF; *Nov* 18 Burnham Norton.

Rapid departure late March/early April, with virtually all gone by mid-April. Only spring coastal movement noted was on very late date of May 10th when 3 east Sheringham.

A pair lingered at Berney Marshes until May 17th, the male remaining until June 21st when at Breydon. Other summer records from Kelling WM June 29th and Titchwell July 7th.

Return passage from July 23rd with max westerly counts of 47 Holme and 14 Scolt Head Aug 30th, 21 Blakeney Point Sept 12th, 24 Sheringham Sept 13th, 16 Scolt Head Sept 18th, 44 (+3 east) Scolt Head Sept 19th, 111 there Sept 21st and 35 Sept 28th, 130 Scolt Head and 25 Sheringham Oct 1st, 16 Holme and 20 Sheringham Oct 12th, 56 Scolt Head Oct 13th, 14 Weybourne and 45 Sheringham Oct 14th. Also 5 south inland at Baconsthorpe Sept 21st. Winter movements of 33 west Titchwell Dec 11th, and 17 west Sheringham Dec 12th.

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

*Anas querquedula*

First arrivals Burnham Norton on early date of Feb 27th (AC), then 2 Berney Marshes March 16th. A good number of further spring records of 1-3 at Berney, Breydon, Buckenham Marshes, Burnham Norton, Cley, East Ruston (King’s Fen), Heigham Holmes, Hickling Broad, Holkham FM, Holme, Ken Hill GM, Pentney GP, Reedham Water, Rockland Broad, Salthouse, Stiffkey Fen, Titchwell and Welney.

Summer records from 9 localities, but breeding only confirmed at Ken Hill GM where brood of 5 in June.

Autumn records of 1-4 from Berney Marshes, Cantley BF, Cley, Cranwich GP, Hickling Broad, Kelling WM, Pentney GP, Snettisham, Titchwell, Welney (max 6 Aug 12th, 5 Sept 28th), and Wolferton. Latest Welney Oct 6th, Snettisham Oct 14th, with a particularly tardy individual lingering Welney Nov 17th-Dec 7th (JBK *et al*).

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

*Anas discors*

An elusive male Stiffkey Fen Dec 22nd/23rd (VJH *et al*). The 14th county record.

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

*Anas clypeata*

Peak monthly counts at selected localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welney	-	113	181	154	71	133	167	102	155
Snettisham	-	-	-	-	-	8	15	19	28
Titchwell	-	9	30	14	75	47	54	55	35
Holkham NNR	11	35	32	11	12	12	23	19	23
Blakeney/Cley	28	26	38	19	36	11	33	42	31
Breydon/Berney	80	172	160	37	5	7	9	12	117
Buckenham/Cantley	-	43	32	41	-	-	-	-	-

National importance (winter): 100

Large numbers concentrated by freezing weather at start of year on remaining open areas of water on the Trinity Broad, with max 245 Filby Broad Jan 7th, 250 there Jan 13th and 219 Jan 25th; also 100+ Ormesby Little Broad Jan 18th. Notable counts elsewhere during year of: *March* 38 Holme; *April* 39 Ken Hill GM; *May* 36 Welney; *July* 70 Welney; *Aug* 100+ Cantley BF; *Oct* 42 Hickling Broad, 58 Ranworth Broad, 42 Stanford Water; *Nov* 100 Duck Broad, Heigham Sound (15th), 250 Hickling Broad (15th), 95+ Horsey Mere (15th), 130 Reedham Water; *Dec* 30 Pensthorpe, 107 Ranworth/Cockshoot Broad.



Limited number of breeding records from: Brancaster GM (1-3 prs), Burnham Norton (brood of 8), Cantley BF (5 prs), Holkham NNR (16 broods - 35-45 potential breeding prs), Holme (2 broods), Strumpshaw (8 prs) and Welney (5 broods).

Winter movement off Scolt Head where 5 west Feb 5th, and small spring movement with 2 west Scolt Head April 23rd, 2 east Sheringham May 29th, and 11 east Scolt Head June 9th. Midsummer movement of 8 west Blakeney Point July 23rd. Coastal autumn passage occasionally noted from Aug 17th (Scolt Head), with max counts of 10 west Holme Sept 9th, 6 west Sheringham Sept 19th, 5 west Scolt Head Oct 12th, 8 west Sheringham Oct 29th, 3 east Sheringham Oct 31st and 3 south Eccles Nov 25th.

### Red-crested Pochard

*Netta rufina*

#### *An escape, but with possibility of genuine vagrants from the Continent*

Fewer records than in recent years. A female Hickling Broad Jan 28th-Feb 9th, 2 males Lyng GP Jan 30th, 2 females Ormesby Little Broad March 2nd, pair Blakeney FM March 28th, male Whitlingham (Norwich) late March-April 3rd with presumably the same Brundall April 4th-6th, male Barton Broad April 16th, female Ditchingham GP April 29th, female Hickling Broad July 14th, unsexed Welney Aug 10th, unsexed Cantley BF Aug 23rd and female Sept 14th, male Hickling Broad Oct 19th, Nov 6th-13th and Dec 22nd-24th, female Sparham GP Nov 1st, and female Welney Dec 7th-31st.

Additional records of pair on R Wensum, Fakenham April 21st-23rd, and singles Sennowe Park Sept and Oct considered to originate from nearby free-flying population at Pensthorpe.

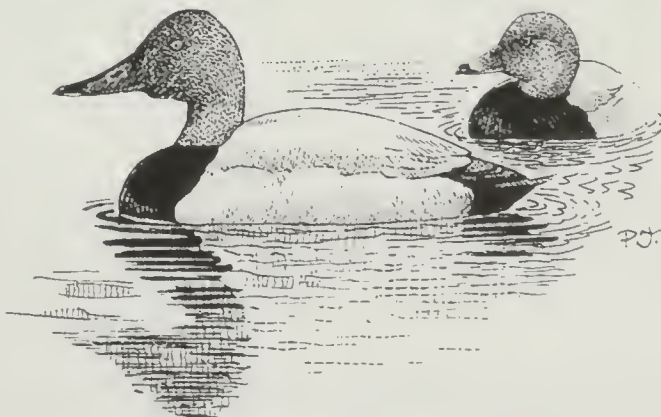
### Canvasback

*Aythya valisineria*

#### *Vagrant from North America*

An imm male initially found at Wissington BF Jan 18th (CDo) led observers a merry dance, appearing at Welney Jan 21st (JBK *et al*), Wissington BF Jan 22nd, Welney Jan 23rd, Wissington BF Jan 24th/25th, Welney Jan 26th/27th, back at Wissington Jan 28th, then erratically at Welney Feb 1st, 6th, 22nd, and March 7th-10th. Throughout it associated with Pochard, its closest congeners on this side of the Atlantic. This, the first for the county, (subject to ratification by the BOU) was possibly also the first British record, though a prior record from Kent in the mid-1990s is still being considered. See article page 553.

Presumably the same returning bird was found in Nov at Abberton and Ardleigh Reservoirs in Essex, before moving to Welney for the second winter period, being noted there Dec 3rd, 8th/9th, 11th-15th, 19th-22nd, 24th, 26th/27th, and 29th-31st into 1998 (JBK *et al*).



*Canvasback and Pochard (P. Jones)*

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

Max monthly counts at main wintering site at Welney:

<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
1276	1404	662	34	4	113	462	1455

*National importance (winter): 440*

Sex ratio in Feb of 7.9 males to 1 female (sample size 683).

Notable counts elsewhere: *Jan* 69 Barton Broad, 165 Hickling/Duck Broads, 75 Pentney GP, 135 Sennowe Park, 88 Snettisham, 138 Tottenhill GP, 768 Wissington BF, 114 Wroxham Broad; *Feb* 95 Barton Broad, 79 Cranwich GP, 140 Heigham Sound, 87 Lynford GP, 69 Ranworth Broad, 72 Rollesby Broad, 166 Snettisham, 83 Strumpshaw Fen, 105 Tottenhill GP, 300 Wretton Fen; *March* 183 Cranwich GP, 250 Wretton Fen; *Oct* 89 Ranworth Broad, 65 Snettisham; *Nov* 85 Heigham Sound, 200 Hickling Broad, 110 Lynford GP, 80 Pentney GP, 70 Ranworth Broad, 105 Snettisham, 65 Sparham GP; *Dec* 75 Blickling Lake, 136 Hickling Broad, 160 Pensthorpe, 185 Pentney GP, 84 Snettisham, 166 Tottenhill GP. Counts at Wissington BF, and probably Wretton Fen, involve birds moving to and fro between these sites and Welney.

Notable first winter period movement of 73 west Holme Jan 12th. Usual rapid departure of wintering birds late Feb/March. Only spring passage noted 2 east Sheringham May 1st and single west Scolt Head May 2nd.

Small numbers summered as usual at various localities, with breeding records from the following: Berney Marshes (4 broods incl one of 5), Cantley BF (1+ broods), Filby Broad (brood), Hickling Broad (brood), Holkham NNR (19 broods - 20 prs), Holme (brood - first breeding record for reserve), Ludham (3 broods), Raynham Lake (3 broods), R Ant at Irstead Shoals (brood of 4), R Bure at St Benedicts (brood of 4), Sennowe Park (brood), Strumpshaw Fen (6 prs bred incl brood of 2), Titchwell (2 broods), and Upton Broad (brood of 3). County total no doubt much higher as coverage very incomplete, particularly in Broads. Interesting summer movement of 8 west Scolt Head July 18th.

Light autumn passage with all records given: 4 west Scolt Head Sept 13th, one west Scolt Head Oct 12th, 4 west Weybourne and Sheringham Oct 14th, 10 west East Runton Oct 17th, 6 east Sheringham Oct 19th, 2 east Sheringham Oct 25th, 17 west Titchwell Nov 5th and 4 south Eccles Nov 18th. Winter movement of 16 east Sheringham Dec 16th.

**Ring-necked Duck***Aythya collaris**Vagrant from North America*

A juv male at Pentney GP Oct 19th (PMW).

**Ferruginous Duck***Aythya nyroca**Rare visitor from the Continent, or escape from captivity*

Recorded in both winter periods, with a female with the Pochard flock at Wissington BF Jan 22nd and 24th-26th (CD *et al*), and an imm at Cley/Wiveton Dec 21st-23rd and Stiffkey Fen 29th (AIB IGJ *et al*).

**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>
Welney	65	82	115	-	6	14	14	125
Snettisham	48	80	98	39	67	96	125	76
Holkham Park Lake	-	26	80	77	-	32	3	25
Hickling NNR	370	210	-	-	-	330	418	180
Ranworth/Cockshoot	-	62	-	-	-	-	78	47
Strumpshaw Fen	185	93	60	-	-	-	-	-
Sennowe Park	127	112	59	116	88	140	111	88
Tottenham GP	86	110	30	84	63	66	35	137
Pentney GP	150	75	45	43	99	214	72	138
Thetford Nunnery Lakes	50	97	38	28	14	35	56	28

*National importance (winter): 600*

Notable counts elsewhere of *Jan* 72 Buckenham Marshes, 108 Earsham GP, 175 King's Lynn Docks, 151 Norwich Waterworks, 247 Ouse Relief Channel (Saddlebow-Stowbridge). 140 Rockland Broad, 90 Salhouse Broad, 85 Whitlingham Lane GP, 350 Wissington BF, 75 Wolterton Hall Lake, 220 Wroxham Broad; *Feb* 86 Colney GP, 256 Rollesby Broad; *March* 107 Colney GP, 79 Cranwich GP, 73 Whitlingham Lane GP, 75 Wretton Fen; *July* 67 Sennowe Park; *Aug* 115 Sennowe Park; *Nov* 120 Lynford GP, 89 Rollesby Broad; *Dec* 201 Ormesby Little Broad, 120 Stowbridge.

Breeding records from the following sites: Baconsthorpe (brood), Berney Marshes (3 broods), Brancaster GM (2 prs), Breydon (brood), Cantley BF (brood), Filby Broad (4-6 breeding prs), Flitcham (pr bred), Fustyweed GP (1+ broods), Heigham Holmes (brood), Holkham NNR (14 broods from 25-30 prs), Holkham Park Lake (2 broods), Holme (5 prs - 2 broods), How Hill NR (2 broods), Lenwade Common (brood), Ludham Marshes (2 broods), Lynn Point (brood), Raynham Lake (3 broods), Sharp Street Fen (brood), Sparham GP (6 broods), Stanford TA (4 prs), and Strumpshaw Fen (11 prs).

Interesting late spring movements of 2 east Scolt Head May 6th, 4 west there May 9th, and 6 west Sheringham May 21st, and summer movements of 12 west Holme and 21 west Sheringham July 18th. Several autumn passage records, all westerly, with 11 Scolt Head Sept 1st, singles there Sept 4th and 28th and 4 Oct 6th, 6 Holme and Scolt Head Oct 13th, 9 Holme Oct 17th, and 1-6 past Sheringham on 6 unspecified dates in Oct.

## Scaup

*Aythya marila*

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

Peak monthly counts from principal sites. As birds move around the coast some duplication of numbers is inevitable:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham Pits	21	-	-	1	3	8
Heacham	-	-	-	-	-	7
Hunstanton	120	12	-	-	-	1
Holme	465	350	-	-	-	-
Titchwell	12	30	8	-	1	-

*National importance (winter): 110*

An impressive influx early Jan with coastal passage of 26 east Sheringham and 37 south Sea Palling 1st, 9 east Sheringham 3rd, 9 west there 4th and single south Sea Palling 17th.



Numbers built up rapidly off north-west Norfolk during first two weeks of month, from 3 Hunstanton Jan 1st to 120 by 17th and 80 Holme 8th to an impressive 465 by 12th. Hardly any were recorded elsewhere around the coast, with the only other records, probably of resting passage birds, 8 Cley 1st, 7 Brancaster 4th and 3 Sea Palling 9th. Numbers declined equally rapidly early Feb, and virtually all had departed by mid-month. The only coastal birds in March were at Titchwell (one 12th and 8 15th), Wells and Kelling WM.

During this influx there were numerous inland occurrences, with records (and max numbers in Jan unless given otherwise) from: Breydon (2), Buckenham, Buxton Lamas, Cantley BF (2), Denver Sluice, Dilham Canal (2), Eau Brink (3), Fritton, Haddiscoe, Heigham Sound (4), Hickling Broad (8 Jan, 2 Feb), Horsey Mere (2), King's Lynn Docks (13), Lynn Point (one Jan, one Feb), Martham Broad (2), Ormesby Broad (one Feb), R Ant at Irstead (4), Rockland Broad (2), St Mary Magdalen (2), Salthouse (2), Stowbridge, Stowbridge Lakes (8), Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Tottenhill GP (8 Jan, one Feb/March), Trowse, Wells boating lake (3), Wells Quay (one Jan, one Feb), Welney (2 Jan, 2 Feb), Wisington BF and Wroxham Broad. Additional inland records in April Holkham Park Lake 4th-18th with 2 on 19th and Middleton GP 29th. Only coastal records at this time Snettisham April 1st and west Mundesley April 5th.

In summer singles east Sheringham June 14th, east Blakeney Point June 25th, east Sheringham and north Mundesley June 27th, Burgh Castle July 15th, Reedham Water July 18th, Cantley BF July 21st and Lynn Point Aug 6th.

First autumn records west Holme, 2 Cley and single Sheringham Sept 9th, 2 Ongar Hill Sept 13th/14th and 2 Cley Sept 14th. Very light passage, with max 5 east Sheringham Sept 25th, 5 off Cley and 4 west Sheringham Oct 12th and 5 west Scolt Head Oct 13th. On east coast, north Sea Palling Oct 12th and off Yarmouth Oct 20th. Very scarce in second winter period and other than those tabulated records of only 1-4 from Cley, Sheringham, Overstrand and Walcott.

Inland records in second winter period from Pentney GP Oct 2nd, 3 Cantley BF Oct 4th-6th with one till 10th, Cley Oct 11th/12th, Welney Oct 14th, Hickling Broad Nov 14th and Sparham GP Dec 29th.

## Eider

*Somateria mollissima*

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

Impressive numbers remained off Snettisham at start of year. Only small numbers seem to have summered. As ever, some duplication of counts is likely as birds drift around the coast with the tides.

Max monthly counts at principal sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	-	-	75	1	-	-	-	-	112	40	-	-
Snettisham	1400	700	97	120	25	-	10	22	7	-	8	-
Hunstanton	-	800	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	150
North Coast WeBS	106	61	42	39	-	-	-	-	-	24	51	194
Holme	40	15	116	-	-	-	2	-	14	23	39	109
Titchwell	53	65	35	15	6	8	-	1	2	7	80	50
Scolt Head/												
Brancaster Hbr	37	30	36	42	19	13	9	9	19	13	65	41
Blakeney Hbr/Cley	7	14	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	12

*National importance (winter): 750*

Off east coast 30 Sea Palling Jan, and a group of up to 12 Gorleston Jan-March.

Light easterly spring passage noted Scolt Head where 4 March 3rd, 70 March 10th, 10 March 22nd, and 11 east Sheringham April 28th. Summer movements of 6 east Weybourne June 2nd, 3 west Weybourne and 11 north Mundesley June 27th and 28 west Overstrand June 30th. On east coast occasional counts of 2-4 off Sea Palling and Walcott. Although few summer records, 50 were noted on sandbanks off Ousemouth on Aug 31st.

Only small numbers seen on autumn passage and wintering numbers low. Max counts 6 east Overstrand Sept 21st, 6 east Weybourne Oct 14th, 18 north Caister and 17 Yarmouth Oct 21st, 5 north 3 south Yarmouth Oct 27th, 15 west Overstrand Nov 19th, 10 Horsey Nov 22nd, 12 east Overstrand Nov 30th, 66 west Overstrand Dec 3rd, 10 west Overstrand Dec 15th and 110 west Sheringham Dec 16th. Apart from those tabulated, other notable counts of up to 73 Sea Palling Nov and 63 there Dec, 33 Wash Eastern Bund Nov 21st, 17 Caister Dec 3rd and 19 Holkham Bay Dec 4th.

A single inland record: a female King's Lynn Fisher Fleet Dec 23rd.

### Long-tailed Duck

*Clangula hyemalis*

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

Scarce at start of year, with the only concentrations again off Holme where monthly max of 141 Jan, 49 Feb, 44 March and 40 April. Only other double-figure count 11 Titchwell Jan 13th. Otherwise only occasional records of 1-3 from Hunstanton, Titchwell, Brancaster and Scolt Head Jan-April. Latest Titchwell April 17th, with isolated singles Holme May 9th and Yarmouth May 24th.

Very scarce indeed in second winter period. In Oct 4 Holme 12th, single west Scolt Head 13th, 2 Cley 14th, 6 Brancaster 17th and one Yarmouth 28th. In Nov up to 22 Holme, otherwise 1-3 on a few dates off Titchwell and Brancaster, with single west East Runton Nov 30th. In Dec max 57 Holme, with 1-4 off Hunstanton and Titchwell, and single west Sheringham 15th.

No inland records.

### Common Scoter

*Melanitta nigra*

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

Max monthly counts at principal coastal sites. Some duplication of counts is inevitable:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hunstanton	300	300	-	-	-	200	-	1	3	1	1	170
Holme	500	800	345	40	1	140	69	70	200	183	51	80
Titchwell	2300	1300	650	1265	30	250	350	50	200	800	1270	1450
Brancaster	500	500	1000	-	-	240	100	15	-	800	800	600
Scolt Head	-	-	-	1000	4	1	350	20	300	15	8	50
Cley	140	-	-	1	3	20	50	46	-	100	5	-

*National importance (winter): 350*

Notable counts from north-east/east coast include Jan 32 Gorleston; April 12 Sea Palling; July 60 Sea Palling, 14 Horsey, 52 Yarmouth; Aug 48 Sea Palling, 26 Caister/Yarmouth; Sept 129 Horsey, 15 Winterton; Oct 125 Sea Palling, 20 Yarmouth; Nov 80 Sea Palling, 28 Waxham.

Coastal movements along north coast included: 250 east Sheringham May 14th; 60 east Overstrand June 11th; 265 west Scolt Head, 20 west Weybourne and 183 west Overstrand

June 26th; 120 west Scolt Head, 40 east 30 west Weybourne and 80 east Sheringham June 27th. Subsequent westerly counts (unless otherwise stated) of 43 Sheringham and 49 Overstrand June 30th; 65 Scolt Head July 10th; 63 Scolt Head July 13th; 176 Scolt Head, 47 Weybourne, 240 Sheringham and 91 Overstrand July 18th; 65 Overstrand Aug 2nd; at Scolt Head 106 Aug 5th, 103 Aug 13th and 80 Sept 3rd; 67 Scolt Head, 100 Cley, 350 Sheringham and 86 north 27 south Happisburgh Sept 19th; 190 Scolt Head Sept 21st, 76 Scolt Head and 290 Sheringham Sept 27th; 210 Scolt Head and 88 Sheringham Sept 28th; 105 Holme, 310 Scolt Head, 79 Sheringham and 113 East Runton Oct 12th; 50 Blakeney Point and 114 Sheringham Oct 13th; 137 Holme, 74 Blakeney Point, 140 Weybourne, 240 Sheringham and 147 East Runton Oct 14th; 183 Holme and 145 plus 25 east Sheringham Oct 20th.

Only inland records were a pair Rockland Broad April 13th and a male Whitlingham Lane GP June 14th-21st.

### Surf Scoter

*Melanitta perspicillata*

#### *Vagrant from North America*

An imm male with the scoter flock off Titchwell April 2nd-15th (RQS *et al*) was joined by an adult male on afternoon of April 9th (TRD *et al*). The first records since 1991.

### Velvet Scoter

*Melanitta fusca*

#### *Winter visitor, but numbers and localities fluctuate*

Max counts at selected sites. Main concentration Titchwell/Brancaster, with reasonable numbers there in both winter periods. Some duplication of counts is likely:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Hunstanton	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
Holme	1	-	2	-	1	8	1
Titchwell	13	18	20	27	16	27	26
Brancaster	1	-	9	-	3	24	30

Only other records at start of year 8 east plus single offshore Sheringham and 8 south Sea Palling Jan 1st, Sheringham Feb 27th-March 17th and 3 west there April 7th. Latest record off Titchwell April 15th, with single Cley May 6th. Only summer record west Sheringham June 29th.

First autumn birds 2 west Mundesley Sept 15th, then singles Holme, Scolt Head, Cley and Sheringham Oct 11th. Interesting series of passage birds mid-Oct, when on 12th 5 west Scolt Head, 3 Cley, 4 west one east Sheringham, 3 west East Runton, one east Overstrand, one west Mundesley, one Eccles/Sea Palling, 2 Horscy and one Scratby; on 13th (all to west) 6 Holme, 7 Scolt Head, 7 Cley, 6 Weybourne, 8 Sheringham, 6 Overstrand and 2 Sea Palling; on 15th also 15 Sea Palling. Occasional records from then till early Dec of 1-4 passing Blakeney Point, Salthouse, Weybourne, Sheringham, East Runton, Overstrand, Mundesley, Eccles, Sea Palling, Waxham, Horsey and Winterton. Larger counts of 8 west 6 east Holme Oct 20th, 8 Sea Palling Nov 20th and 6 west Sheringham Dec 17th.

Inland records of female Snettisham Pits Oct 18th and male Hickling Broad Dec 21st.

### Goldeneye

*Bucephala clangula*

#### *Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Max monthly counts at principal sites:



	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	62	72	77	3	22	44	58
Hunstanton	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holme	71	12	16	-	5	-	2
Titchwell	29	39	7	2	7	5	8
Scolt Head/Brancaaster Hbr	30	30	35	10	17	30	60
Holkham Park	15	44	30	15	2	4	13
Blakeney Hbr	75	47	11	-	2	53	89
Hickling Broad	30	35	24	5	1	8	18

Good numbers present around the coast in first winter period. Numerous single-figure records throughout the county. Higher counts of *Jan* 16 Breydon, 23 Bure Park (R Bure), 10 Eau Brink, 15 Horsey Mere, 13 Pentney GP, 25 St Mary Magdalen, 60 Saddlebow-Magdalen, 13 Wiggshall St Mary; *Feb* 11 Heigham Sound, 12 Horsey Mere, 25 Saddlebow-Stowbridge, 12 Thornham Hbr; *April* 14 Tottenhill GP.

Most birds had departed by third week in April. Single lingering imm male Whitlingham Lane GP May 1st-28th.

First autumn record Titchwell Aug 23rd. Main return passage from Oct 12th but generally in low numbers. Max westerly counts 27 Scolt Head Oct 13th; 14 Holme, 18 Cley, 40 Sheringham and 14 (north) Yarmouth Oct 14th; 14 (north) Yarmouth Oct 23rd; 13 Holme and 21 Cley Oct 24th; 31 Holme Oct 25th; 31 Cley Oct 26th.

Widespread records for second winter period though numbers generally small and principally 1-3. Higher counts in Nov of 16 Burnham Overy Hbr, and in Dec of 14 Burnham Overy Hbr, 10 Filby Broad, 10 Heigham Sound, 12 Martham Broad, 11 Ormesby Little Broad and 19 Wells.



*Goldeneye (N. Borrow)*

## Smew

*Winter visitor, only appearing in numbers during severe winters*

Another impressive influx which started in late Dec 1996 produced numerous records throughout the county from Jan 1st. Passage records of 5 west Weybourne and 4 west Sheringham Jan 1st, and singles west Weybourne Jan 2nd and south plus north Sea Palling Jan 3rd. Numbers involved difficult to assess as birds very mobile, and sites often visited by several different birds or flocks. Records (with max counts in brackets and estimated minimum numbers in square brackets) from Berney (2 Feb), Brancaaster Hbr (1 Jan), Breydon/Burgh Castle (7 [9] Jan, 4 Feb), Buekenham/Strumpshaw (R Yare) (4 [6] Jan), Bure Park (R Bure) (3 [4] Jan), Cantley (R Yare) (2 Jan), Cley (3 [11] Jan, 2 Feb), Eau Brink (14 Jan), Great Ryburgh (1 Jan), Gunton Park Lake (1 Feb), Hickling Broad (16 [18] Jan, 11 Feb).

## *Mergellus albellus*

Holme 1 [2] Feb), Horsey Mere (2 [4] Jan, 4 Feb), King's Lynn Docks (7 Jan), Lound (7 Jan, 10 Feb), Lyng GP (1 Jan), Lyng Easthaugh GP (1 Feb), Magdalen Relief Channel (10 [20+] Jan, 3 Feb), Martham Broad (4 [6] Jan, 1 Feb), Middleton GP (1 Jan), New Costessey (1 Jan), Ormesby Little Broad (6 [7] Jan, 9 Feb), Pentney GP (3 Jan, 13 Feb), Rockland Broad (3 Jan), Rollesby Broad (3 [4] Jan, 3 Feb), St Olaves (1 Feb), Saddlebow (16 Jan, 7 Feb), Sennowe Park (2 Jan), Snettisham (2 [3] Jan), Stowbridge Pits (11 [18] Jan), Stowbridge-King's Lynn (10 Jan), Surlingham (R Yare) (1 Jan), Taverham (1 Jan), Thorpe (R Yare) (2 Jan), Titchwell (1 [2] Jan, 1 [2] Feb), Tottenhill GP (12 [14] Jan, 4 Feb), UEA Broad (2 [3] Jan), Watlington (8 Jan), Wells boating lake (4 [5] Jan), Welney (3 Jan, 3 [6] Feb), West Acre GP (6 Feb) and Whitlingham Lane GP/R Yare (4 [5] Jan). Most had departed by late Feb. Latest records 2 Rollesby Broad March 8th/9th, 2 West Acre GP March 11th, Tottenhill GP March 13th and Lound March 20th-25th.

A few autumn passage records with 2 (1 male) south Yarmouth Oct 21st, west Cromer Oct 24th and 2 Salthouse Nov 4th. A small influx at end of year from Nov 27th when 2 south Sea Palling. Records in Dec, with max counts, from Berney, Blickling Hall Lake, Breydon 3, Cley 4, Heigham Sound, Hickling Broad 8, Horsey Merc 3, Langor Bridge GP (nr Pensthorpe) 2, Lyng GP, Martham Broad, Ormesby Little Broad, Pentney GP 2, Tottenhill GP 5 and Welney 2.

**Red-breasted Merganser**

*Mergus serrator*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional in summer*

Max monthly counts at principal coastal localities:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Snettisham	2	1	3	15	60	20	30
Heacham/Hunstanton	20	-	39	-	39	132	43
Holme	82	20	23	5	39	22	11
Titchwell	14	33	36	16	20	20	20
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	31	20	26	40	53	49	17
Blakeney Hbr	36	19	9	12	48	61	59

*National importance (winter): 100*

Numerous in Wash and off north-west coast in first winter period, with occasional records from north coast. Only east coast records Winterton April 5th and 2 north Sea Palling April 10th. Large numbers recorded on the Fenland drains in early Jan, with max counts of 10 Denver Sluice-Magdalen Jan 4th, 55 Stowbridge-King's Lynn Jan 5th, 14 Eau Brink-Magdalen Jan 7th, 16 Magdalen (Great Ouse) Jan 9th, and also 75 King's Lynn Docks Jan 4th with 31 still mid-month, these flying north to roost at Ousemouth at dusk. Inland records elsewhere during first winter period of 5 Breydon Jan 2nd, with 4 on 3rd and single 4th, 2 26th and one Feb 1st, Buckenham/Strumpshaw (R Yare) Jan 8th-11th, and 2 Welney Feb 1st.

Occasional records of 1-4 at various coastal localities May-Aug.

Light westerly coastal passage from mid-Sept with highest counts 9 Titchwell Sept 13th; 6 Blakeney Point Sept 15th; 8 Sheringham Oct 11th; 19 Holme, 10 Scolt Head, 6 Cley, 7 Weybourne, 20 Sheringham, 14 East Runton and 10 (north) Sea Palling Oct 12th; 16 Holme, 13 Scolt Head, 10 Cley, 8 Sheringham and 6 Overstrand Oct 13th; 22 Cley, 7 Weybourne, 25 Sheringham, 13 East Runton and 8 (north) Sea Palling Oct 14th; 15 Scolt Head and 9 Yarmouth Oct 16th. An impressive 37 east Holme Oct 25th and 7 (north) Sea Palling Nov 4th. Again numerous off north-west coasts/Wash in second winter period,

with occasional records from south Wash and north coast. Other than a few autumn passage birds only east coast records 2 Caister Nov 21st and Horsey Dec 20th, and none reported from Fens.

## **Goosander**

*Mergus merganser*

### ***Winter visitor and passage migrant, most abundant in severe winters***

As with the other sawbills cold weather at start of year produced a marked influx from the Continent. Visible passage noted as follows: 3 south Hunstanton Jan 1st; 5 west Holme and 9 west Brancaster Hbr Jan 2nd; 17 south Snettisham, 10 north Sea Palling and 2 north Yarmouth Jan 3rd; west Holme Jan 4th; 7 south Waxham and 2 Horsey Gap Jan 12th; 2 west Brancaster Hbr Jan 14th; 8 south Eccles Jan 18th; north Eccles Jan 31st and 3 west Brancaster Hbr Feb 3rd. Later records of single east Sheringham March 7th, 3 west Mundesley March 12th, 9 west Holme and singles west Weybourne and Sheringham March 13th, west Mundesley March 18th and south Sea Palling March 24th. may refer to return passage.

During Jan-March noted at the following localities (with max monthly counts): Aylsham (R Bure) (1 March), Barton Broad (1 Jan), Brancaster (1 Jan), Breydon/Burgh Castle (9 Jan, 1 March), Broome GP (1 Jan, 5 Feb), Brundall (R Yare) (20 Jan, 3 Feb, 2 March), Buckenham/Strumpshaw (R Yare) (28 Jan, 1 Feb, 3 March), Buckenham Tofts (1 Jan), Cantley (R Yare) (32 Jan), Cley (2 Jan), Colney GP (4 March), Cranwich GP (33 Jan, 29 Feb, 4 March), Denver Sluice (20 Jan, 3 Feb), Downham Market (2 Jan), Fakenham (R Wensum) (1 Jan), Filby Broad (1 Jan, 1 Feb), Glandford (3 Jan), Hethersett Lake (6 Feb), Hickling Broad (1 Feb), Horsey Mere (3 Jan), Irstead (R Ant) (4 Jan), Langley Dyke (R Yare) (7 Jan), Lound (6 Jan-Feb), Lynford GP (22 Feb, 6 March), Magdalen Relief Channel (48 Jan, 38 Feb), Martham Broad (1 Jan), Methwold Hythe (2 Feb), Middleton GP (1 Jan, 4 Feb, 1 March), Norwich Water Works (3 Jan), Ormesby Little Broad (1 Feb, 1 March), Postwick (R Yare) (3 Jan), Ranworth Broad (6 Feb), Ringland (1 Jan), Rockland Broad (13 Jan, 3 Feb, 1 March), Saddlebow (5 Jan), Snettisham (1 Jan, 1 Feb, 1 March), Stanford Water (3 Feb), Stowbridge (37 Jan, 10 Feb), Stowbridge-King's Lynn (38 Jan), Strumpshaw Fen (5 Jan), Thetford Nunnery Lakes (8 Jan, 4 Feb, 1 March), Thompson Water (2 Feb), Thorpe (R Yare) (1 Jan), Titchwell (1 Jan), Tottenhill GP (4 Jan, 1 March), UEA Broad (17 Jan, 21 Feb, 6 March), Welney (2 Jan, 6 Feb, 1 March), Whitlingham Lane GP (3 Jan, 1 Feb, 1 March), Wiggenhall (15 Jan), Wretton Cut (3 Jan-Feb) and Wroxham Broad (2 Jan). Most had departed by April, with last records Thetford Nunnery Lakes April 4th, 2 Brundall April 6th/7th, Titchwell April 9th/10th, Cranwich GP April 12th, Cley May 4th and male Stiffkey Fen May 24th.

Very early autumn record of imm male Stiffkey Sept 9th till year end, and two singles (one male) south Winterton Sept 21st (SH). Next single west Sheringham Oct 2nd, followed by a scatter of coastal and inland records of 1-3 through to year end. Max counts 9 Yarmouth Oct 16th, 6 west Sheringham Dec 12th, 4 Berney Marshes Dec 13th, 3 UEA Broad Dec 13th rising to 16 by Dec 30th, 8 Thetford Nunnery Lakes Dec 17th, 4 Cley Dec 21st, 4 Sparham Pools Dec 24th, 7 Lynford GP and 5 Wiggenhall Relief Channel Dec 30th and 19 Magdalen Relief Channel Dec 31st.

## **Ruddy Duck**

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

### ***Increasing introduced wanderer, first recorded 1977; now breeding***

Numerous records throughout year of 1-6 from Baconsthorpe, Cantley BF, Cockley Cley, Colney GP, Costessey Pits, Duck Broad (Heigham Sound), Felbrigg Park Lake, Filby Broad, Gunton Park Lake, Hickling Broad, Holkham FM, Holkham Park Lake, Horsey Mere.



Martham Broad, Norwich Mile Cross (R Wensum), Norwich Water Works, Ormesby Broad, Ormesby Little Broad, Ouse Washes, Pentney GP, Raynham Park Lake, Reedham Water (How Hill), Rockland Broad, Rollesby Broad, Sennowe Park Lake, Snettisham, Stradsett Park Lake, Swanton Morley GP, Taverham Pits, Tottenhill GP, Welney and Wroxham (R Bure). Max counts 8 Livermere April 2nd, up to 8 ads Holkham FM in May, and 9 Pentney GP Dec 31st.

Four breeding records: 2 prs bred Holkham FM, 6 young seen May 28th; one pr Cantley BF fledged one young from first brood with 2 juvs from second brood Sept 23rd-Oct 4th; 2 prs Cockley Cley Lake May 18th, and female with 4 juvs there Aug 27th. Pairs also present in May/June at Ormesby Broad and Ormesby Little Broad but no evidence of breeding.

**Honey Buzzard**

*Pernis apivorus*

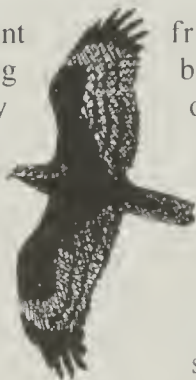
*Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant*

Spring migrants noted in May over Yarmouth 19th, Titchwell 20th, Kelling 28th and Bagthorpe/Syderstone 29th.

At the usual breeding locality, 2 birds were present conclusive evidence available either way regarding though 3 birds reported there Aug 3rd. Additionally Walsham July 6th and another was in suitable habitat during the breeding season.

Autumn migrants east Burgh Castle Aug 2nd and north-east Warham Greens Aug 18th, 2 Winterton single south Scratby Sept 13th.

1996 *Correction:* Further details have been that 2 young were fledged at the usual breeding



from May 15th. No breeding attempts, one was near North in north-east of county

Scolt Head Aug 9th, Sept 5th/6th and

received confirming site in 1996.



*Honey Buzzard (P. Beeson)*

**Black Kite**

*Milvus migrans*

*Vagrant from the Continent, usually in spring*

The first accepted record since 1994 - one at Burnham Norton May 31st (AA JWo).

**Red Kite**

*Milvus milvus*

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

The increase in spring records is thought to reflect the improving fortunes of this species in northern and central Europe as well as a result of reintroduced birds. All records listed below; those marked with an asterisk indicate wing-tagged birds where known.

*Feb:* Heigham Sound 8th, Bagthorpe/Syderstone 18th and Belton/Yarmouth 28th.

*March:* Horsey and Sheringham 5th, Breydon 6th, Hickling/Heigham Sound 8th, Ken Hill Wood 9th, Beeston Common 11th, Horsey\* and King's Lynn 13th, Caister 14th, 3

Yarmouth, singles Caister, Mundesley, Roughton and Sheringham 15th, Winterton 16th and 21st, Sheringham 17th with 2 there 18th, Hickling 23rd, Breydon\* and Horsey\* 25th, 2 Bradwell, Yarmouth, Caister, Winterton and Horsey 26th, Brundall, Horsey\* and Winterton\* 27th, Breydon 28th, Horsey and Waxham 31st. (Note: reading of tags revealed at least 5 and possibly 7 birds involved in movement through Horsey during month.)

*April:* Beeston Common 1st, Titchwell 6th, 2 Hickling 13th and Horsey 18th.

*May:* Stiffkey, Blakeney and Cley 4th, 2 Yarmouth, singles Horsey, Eeoles/Hempstead\* and Thornham 5th, Horsey 13th\*, Snettisham 15th\*, Mundesley and 2 Shotesham, Brooke and Trowse 26th, with single Swanton Novers\* 28th.

*June:* Snettisham 1st, Ormesby St Margaret 11th, near King's Lynn 12th, Walsey Hills, 2 Weybourne and 2 Sheringham 19th. Also in June one rescued from a Larsen trap near Dersingham.

From July far fewer records: singles Haddiscoe Island July 21st, Salthouse Heath Sept 5th, Berney Marshes Sept 17th, Horsey Oct 5th, Caldecott Hall Oct 22nd, Sheringham and Felbrigg Oct 27th, Great Massingham Nov 9th, East Ruston\* Nov 14th, East Rudham, West Raynham, Weasenham and Fring\* Nov 23rd and again at latter site Nov 30th.

At least 2 kites from the Midlands reintroduction project, which began in 1995, have already been recorded in Norfolk. The first involved a 1996 released bird that was rescued near Dersingham in June. It was apparently in a state of shock, although less so than the crow found in the same compartment, and was taken to the RSPCA centre at East Winch where it recovered and was released the next day. It had returned to the Midlands by the autumn and was still present in January 1998. The second record, the bird in the West Raynham/Great Massingham area in Nov, involved one of the 8 young fledged in the Midlands in 1997. This was one of 4 chicks reared by another untagged pair of kites, birds that were certainly not released in the Midlands and are most likely to be wild migrants - see NBR Bulletin no 28.

From Dec 5th 2 Red Kites took up residence near Hoveton, remaining into 1998. One was an untagged 1st-winter bird; the other older bird carried specific wing tags which identified it as one of the Suffolk-bred young fledged in the summer of 1996. This had left its natal area in the autumn of that year only to be relocated at a Midlands roost, remaining there until Feb 1997. This in itself is surprising enough; however, it is even more remarkable that another of the Suffolk-bred birds was subsequently seen in the heart of the Welsh 'kitelands' at Tregaron.

## **White-tailed Eagle**

*Haliaeetus albicilla*

### ***Rare vagrant***

An imm flew west over Burnham Overy Dunes Oct 28th (1B KR CSy). The first county occurrence since the much-appreciated Broadland imm in the late autumn of 1990.

## **Marsh Harrier**

*Circus aeruginosus*

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

Up to 5 roosted at main Broadland roost throughout Jan-Feb and the number of sightings in mid-Yare valley and Waveney suggest 1-2 were roosting there also. During this period, recorded away from known roosting areas at Burnham Norton Jan 16th and Feb 16th and North Wootton Feb 8th.

Spring migrants again began arriving early: up to 5 Fritton/Chedgrave March 5th doubtless included some wintering birds, but coastal migrants began appearing in small numbers from March 7th (Titchwell) and pairs were noted on territory and in display before end of month. By mid-April most breeding sites were occupied. March-April records away





*Marsh Harrier (N. Arlott)*

from usual areas at Toft Monks March 25th, Swanton Morley GP April 9th, Kettlestone Common April 24th and Thompson Water April 30th. Interestingly, Sheringham BO recorded no migrants during this period in contrast to 10 in 1996, while Scolt Head noted 12 migrants in April alone. Passage continued during May including 6 through Sheringham. Records from less familiar sites during May at Pentney 20th and Baconsthorpe 23rd and in June at Thompson Water on 8th..

A minimum of 56 nests were reported, fledging a total of at least 88 young but probably more as nests indicated as merely 'successful' have been attributed only one fledged young. In addition a male summered for the first time at a suitable breeding location in the Wensum valley. Numbers of nests in Wash slightly down on previous year, but general indications are that success matched, if not surpassed, that in 1996.

Autumn dispersal noted from July 7th when one west Cley and Blakeney Point, then several records away from known breeding areas as birds dispersed. Reports of a number of small post-breeding roosts of up to 8 birds were received during July/Aug. Most had departed by end of Sept; after this recorded away from known winter roosts at Welney to Oct 21st, Titchwell to Oct 5th and Cley Nov 9th and 22nd.

Three Broadland roosts in use during second winter period, holding max 6, 3 and 2 birds respectively.

## Hen Harrier

*Circus cyaneus*

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

A large increase was noted in roosting numbers in early part of year (c24 in Dec 1996), partly due to the occupation of a sporadically used former roost site and the discovery of 2 new roosting sites. It is feasible that these new sites were adopted simply because more birds were present than usual. No counts received from roosts E or I, but coverage was generally much improved during this period. A wing-tagged bird seen regularly at Winterton Nov 1996-March 1997 was marked as a chick in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in June 1996.

	<i>Roost</i>										<i>Max total</i>
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	
Jan	7	9	4	4	7	5	2	3	-	3	44
Feb	7	9	4	5	6	4	1	-	-	-	36
Mar	-	4	2	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	19



Larger numbers also reflected in records away from the more usual areas during Jan-March at Cromer, East Ruston, Great Bircham, Houghton St Giles (following the plough with Black-headed Gulls for 2 weeks in Feb), Hunstanton (south over sea Feb 14th), Kipton Heath, Thornage and Wisington.

Fewer recorded during April as birds dispersed with a few lingering into May when noted at Scolt Head 1st, Winterton 5th, Holme 8th, Brooke 10th, Breydon/Burgh Castle/Berney Marshes 13th and 16th, in from sea at Cromer 19th, Stiffkey 19th, Salhouse Heath and Cley 24th and Weybourne 31st.

A single midsummer record from Holme July 1st (GFH).

Autumn arrival from Sept 10th (Ongar Hill), followed by a further 4 in Sept but main arrival not until mid-Oct. Return to more usual numbers in second winter period when noted at less regular haunts as follows: Coltishall Nov 4th, Egmore Nov 21st. Honing Nov 27th and Great Massingham Dec 8th. Roost sites less well covered at this time when all 3 'new' roosts apparently not in use but a further site occupied in Dec. No data received from roosts E or I.

	Roost										
	A	B	C	D	F	G	J	K	L	M	Max total
Oct	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Nov	7	11	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Dec	5	10	3	2	-	4	-	-	2	-	26

Montagu's Harrier

Circus pygargus

Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant

Early spring arrival from April 6th at Ludham, remaining to 8th (SL), followed by a further 4 April singles at Roydon 21st, Lynn Point 24th, Cley 26th and Wiveton Downs 29th. The breeding area was occupied from April 27th.

An impressive number of migrants in May when noted Repps 3rd, Berney Marshes, Halvergate, Holt, Langham and Holkham 10th, Welney WWT 11th, near North Walsham 12th, Surlingham Broad and 2 west Scolt Head 14th, Titchwell (2 birds) 23rd and 24th, Flitcham 29th, Holkham 30th and Scolt Head 31st. June records from Flitcham 2nd, Holkham 16th and Burnham Norton 18th.

A total of 7 breeding females, bettered recently only in 1994, produced just 6 young, the lowest number since 1988. It is surely the poor success rates of this species which holds it back from further expansion. Breeding data since 1987 are tabulated below.

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Young	9	6	13	13	7	10	13	11	12	10	6
Nests	3	3	5	5	2	4	4	9	4	3	7

Post-breeding dispersal noted from July 23rd, at Cley, with further singles Scolt Head July 26th/27th, Holme Aug 28th and lingering birds Ongar Hill Sept 4th and Dersingham Sept 14th.

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

Rare breeder; also scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

This remains one of the most difficult species to evaluate; most records relate to the first 4 months of the year, when birds are in display and at their most obvious. Breckland apparently

remains the centre of breeding activity but this may be simply a reflection of observer coverage. There are numerous large stands of undisturbed woodland throughout the county which could provide suitable seclusion for a pair of Goshawks. It is puzzling in these times of enlightenment and protection towards raptors in general, that this species shows no obvious signs of increasing its numbers.

In first winter period noted at Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Sparham Jan 25th, UEA Feb 11th, Pentney Heath Feb 15th and the Nar valley area March 15th.

During April, 5 prs were noted in display at 4 sites (3 in Breckland), with an additional adult at one of the sites. Sightings from 4 further Breckland localities April-May but no evidence of display or breeding behaviour. Also noted during April at UEA 13th and Castle Rising 22nd. No further data received between May and Sept and it is therefore meaningless to attempt to speculate on breeding success.

During Nov/Dec a female noted in off sea Brancaster Oct 18th, another Dersingham Bog Oct 31st, a male in off sea Overstrand Nov 12th and a single in Burntfen Broad/Cangate area Dec 15th.

### **Sparrowhawk**

*Accipiter nisus*

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

Considered by some experienced observers to have recovered to pre-DDT levels within the county and must now be approaching saturation point. Recorded regularly throughout the year in all habitats.

Little submitted evidence of spring movement when just 4 noted at Sheringham: April 8th, May 2nd, 3rd and 18th, and 4 Scolt Head: May 1st, 5th, 10th and 23rd.

Details received of 26 breeding (or displaying) prs at 16 localities with no indication of success rates.

Autumn migrants in from the sea at Yarmouth Oct 14th and south at Hunstanton Oct 15th with 3 there Oct 17th.

Interesting observations include a melanistic bird, Breydon Sept 14th, 5 gathered at a Starling roost Strumpshaw Nov 9th, and one (presumably a female) carrying a Moorhen at Walsey Hills Sept.

### **Common Buzzard**

*Buteo buteo*

#### ***Passage migrant and winter visitor; very small breeding population of unknown origin***

Recorded in Jan/Feb at Bexwell Jan 16th, Acle Jan 19th, Eccles Jan 25th, Pentney GP Jan 31st, Ormesby St Michael Feb 11th and 2 Holkham throughout Feb, plus a number of other birds occupying last year's breeding territories.

During March-May noted at 26 localities away from prospective breeding areas with an estimated 35+ birds involved. Spring passage peaked late March to early April when 3 Winterton March 30th, 2 March 31st, 5 April 1st, one April 4th, 4 Titchwell April 6th plus several other coastal sightings on that date. Also a smaller peak mid to late April when 4 west Holme 17th and 2 east Titchwell 20th, when one penetrated Fens to Welney on 22nd.

Breeding confirmed at 4 locations with a minimum of 7 young fledged. Birds were noted in display at a further 4 sites, one of which held 6 birds in Sept, some of which may have been juvs. Two further sites held summering birds, one of which (on the county border with Suffolk) may hold breeding birds just outside the county limits.

It is pleasing to record the largest number of both confirmed breeding pairs and fledged young since breeding recommenced in the county in 1992.

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

Midsummer records not likely to relate to breeding or summering birds at Ludham June 9th, 11th and 14th and Cley July 5th.

Autumn dispersal and passage on a relatively small scale involving singles at 12 sites Aug-Oct, 4 Flitcham Aug 30th with 3 there next day, and 2 Salthouse Heath Sept 6th, plus several small groups of adults and juvs near known breeding sites.

Perhaps more evident than usual in second winter period when recorded in Nov at Holkham Park 1st, Felbrigg 6th, Breydon 21st and Hickling 23rd, and in Dec at Felbrigg 3rd, Catfield 7th, Heigham Holmes and Snettisham 13th, Wymondham/Ketteringham 16th, Northrepps 17th, Titchwell 18th, Overstrand 22nd and West Beckham 27th.

### **Rough-legged Buzzard**

*Buteo lagopus*

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

During first winter period noted at Snettisham Jan 20th, West Aere Jan 25th, Ringstead Jan 27th, Horsey Feb 23rd and Grimston Heath Feb 27th; probably no more than 2 elusive birds involved in all sightings. Records from Wolferton March 30th and Haddiseoe April 10th coincided with the peak Common Buzzard passage and were presumably migrants; likewise one Holkham May 10th.

First autumn bird at Holme and Snettisham Oct 22nd, probably another Sheringham, Blakeney and Morston Oct 25th when also one Snettisham. Subsequently one, or possibly 2, wandered widely to the year end, most regularly seen in the area bounded by Snettisham, Docking and Brancaster, but also recorded at Warham Greens Nov 5th, 13th and Dec 3rd. One at Hickling Nov 26th was presumably another individual.

### **Osprey**

*Pandion haliaetus*

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

By recent standards the spring max of 24 constitutes a poor passage. First noted at Cley April 10th with further April records at Thompson Water 15th, Breydon 26th and Eeoles and Binham 30th.

A further 17 in May: Kelling Heath 5th, Sea Palling and Gunton Park 9th, Fritton 10th, Ongar Hill and Winterton 11th, Rollesby 12th, Blakeney Point, Salthouse and Horsey Mere 13th, Martham Broad and Thompson Water 14th, again at latter site 16th-19th, Hickling 17th, Holme 20th, Sparham 22nd, Salthouse 23rd and Sutton High Fen 29th.

Notably fewer in June when noted Pentney GP 2nd, Catfield Fen 7th and 17th and Strumpshaw Fen 24th.

A single midsummer record at Narford Lake July 25th.

By contrast to spring, a fairly normal autumn passage involving at least 17 and possibly 20 birds. First returning bird noted Winterton and Heigham Holmes Aug 14th, then singles Holkham Park Aug 18th, a long-staying bird at Strumpshaw, one of the most favoured county localities, Aug 22nd-Oct 10th, Blakeney Point Aug 28th and 30th, Cley Aug 28th and Welney Aug 31st. A good number of early Sept records from Scolt Head 1st and 6th, Eeoles 2nd, Holme 2nd and 6th, Cley 3rd and 5th, Breydon 4th, Titchwell 5th and 8th, and



a lingering bird at Alderfen Broad from Sept 11th, with 2 there Sept 17th and one to Oct 6th. Regular records of singles at Brundall, Surlingham, Crome's Broad, Reedham Water and Burntfen Broad at this time are thought to involve either of the long-staying birds at Strumpshaw or Alderfen. Further Sept records from Hoveton Little Broad 12th, Downham Market 18th, Horsey 20th, Blakeney Point 21st and Warham 27th.

A late bird at Denver Nov 23rd (MHR).

## **Kestrel**

*Falco tinnunculus*

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

Spring migrants noted at Sheringham, where 2 east April 7th, 3 west May 1st and one east May 2nd, and Scolt Head, where 5 west May 13th.

Disappointingly low level of data received for breeding numbers. One observer noted that good numbers of young were present in the north and north-west of the county and considered it 'one of the best years in recent times'. In contrast in Stanford TA 'after last year's bonanza breeding season, they had a poor year, with some obvious post-fledging mortality to add to small broods'. However, details of only 16 prs at 10 sites received.

A max autumn count of 9 Lynn Point Aug 6th with several sites recording 3-4, and 5 Welney WWT Oct 20th.

Evidence of autumn movement noted at Scolt Head, where one in off sea Aug 9th, and at Sheringham, where one also in off sea Oct 10th. Also an interesting record of 2 hunting Starlings on an oil platform 60 miles east of Yarmouth Oct 20th.

## **Red-footed Falcon**

*Falco vespertinus*

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

Following a blank year in 1996, the first in the county since 1983, a welcome return to more favourable levels this year with at least 5 seen.

A spectacular and equally confiding adult male graced East Ruston Common May 11th-17th (JHa, AJK *et al*), with presumably the same at Hickling May 17th/18th (RSt *et al*). Another male Burnham Norton May 14th (RAS *et al*), when an advanced 1st-summer male was at Herringfleet (PRA); subsequently an imm male Stiffkey/Cockthorpe May 29th (AIB JRMe) with another female Winterton June 8th (INS).

## **Merlin**

*Falco columbarius*

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

Roosting details received from just 2 sites in first winter period, with a combined max total of 10 Jan, 9 Feb and 2 March.

Regularly noted in vicinity of known roost sites, mainly singly but 1-2 Breydon Jan-April 16th, 2 Burnham Norton Jan 8th and 20th, 2 Flitcham Jan 14th, 3 Scolt Head Feb 2nd with up to 2 regularly there throughout Feb, 2 Ousemouth area March 9th. Also regular in north-west corner of county in area bordered by Wells, Burnham Market, Docking and Snettisham. Inland records in this period from Bansley, Barmer, Burgh Common, Cantley, Haddiscoe, How Hill, Robin's Lodge (Stanford TA), Searning, Snookers Hole (Stanford TA), Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Thurton and Welney (where 2 March 16th).

More regular along coast east of Wells during March/April as birds began departing their winter quarters. Sheringham BO noted birds on 4 dates in March including out to sea 6th, plus east April 26th, and 2 east April 27th. Another east Overstrand April 28th. Inland records in this period from Castle Rising, Holme Hale (2) and Welney.

Predictably fewer in May when noted Scolt Head 1st with singles in off sea there 14th and 31st, 2 west Sheringham 2nd plus one east 4th when singles Waxham and Winterton,

Weybourne 17th and 19th, Salthouse 17th and 20th, Holme 19th and inland at Searning 28th.

As last year, first returning bird on the early date of July 28th (Bunwell), followed by just 4 in Aug at Salthouse 2nd, Ongar Hill 4th, Welney 4th/5th and Seolt Head/Braneaster Hbr 21st. Numbers small until last week of Sept with only 5 records before 24th but coastal records regular during last week of month including 2 in from sea Winterton 28th.

Second winter period numbers lower than first. Noted Oct-Dec at usual coastal sites, mainly singly but 2 Terrington Oct 4th, 2 Sheringham 14th-16th where singles on 9 dates (including one hunting passerines over sea 12th), 1-2 Breydon Oct-Nov but only one Dec, 2 Seolt Head Nov 16th/17th where singles regular Oct-Nov. Noted inland during this period at Aele, Bressingham, Cantley, Griston and Welney (3 dates in Dec).

Roosting details again received from only 2 sites where combined max total 2 Oct, 5 Nov and 3 Dec, but data incomplete from both sites.

**Hobby**

*Falco subbuteo*

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

One at Lynford Arboretum on the early date of April 11th (PW), but no further records until 22nd (Castle Rising) followed by 6 further April records involving at least 4 birds.

Passage increased steadily through May, peaking around mid-month when widespread throughout county, mostly singly but 2 Thetford Nunnery Lakes and Berney Marshes 10th, Colney GP and Cranwich GP 13th and Hickling 18th. Coastal passage virtually ceased by mid-June; records then almost exclusively inland during remainder of month, again mainly singles (away from breeding sites) but 2 Fordham 1st, Lessingham 3rd, Seolt Head 8th, Sutton High Fen 9th and Welney WWT 29th.

With such a mobile species breeding is hard to prove unless a nest site is located. Fledged young invariably not seen until Aug and soon wander far from nest sites, albeit usually in the company of adults. However, breeding confirmed at 5 sites with a minimum of 6 young fledged. A further 2 sites held pairs which probably attempted to breed, though no young seen at either, and at least 2 birds summered at a further 3 locations.

Breeding data since nesting recommenced in Norfolk are tabulated below.

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Confirmed prs	3	2	2	1	3	4	7	6	7	8	4	5
Possible prs	-	-	-	2	2	4	-	4	1	1	5	5
Fledged young	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	10	6	8	10	6

More regular at coastal sites again during July when 2 Cley 7th, Seolt Head 9th and Snettisham 26th, and up to 3 adults Weybourne/Kelling during the month, with singles again widespread throughout the county.

Fewer noted in Aug as birds began departing, most records at coastal sites or in proximity of breeding areas. At this time 2 Terrington/Clenehwarton 19th, 2 Northrepps 23rd, 3 Holme 30th and 3 Welney and 2 Winterton 31st.

Still small numbers after mid-Sept but a sudden departure at end of month and only a single Oct record. During this period 2 Titchwell Sept 3rd, 2 Winterton and 2 Norwich Sept 7th, 2 Holme Sept 20th, 3 Hoe WM Sept 21st, 2 Horsey Sept 27th and lingering singles Burnham Norton Sept 18th, Snettisham Sept 29th and finally one in off sea Sheringham Oct 1st.

Interesting observations included one taking a Little Tern at Scolt Head June 18th, another feeding on insects on Norwich airport runway July 21st/22nd and an adult and a juv creating havoc amongst huge flocks of waders roosting at high tide at Holme Sept 20th where, without ever giving serious chase, they apparently delighted in repeatedly flushing c70,000 Knot into swirling grey clouds.

## **Peregrine Falcon**

*Falco peregrinus*

### ***Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor***

At least 8 wintering birds during first winter period when 1-2 Breydon/Berney Marshes to April 16th, 2 Welney to April 2nd with one to April 29th and a third on 2 occasions, 2 Haddiscoe/Fritton to March 16th with one to March 30th, female Holkham to April 6th with a male during Feb at least, and up to 3 different birds wandering the coastal strip from King's Lynn to Scolt Head up to April 14th. There is still confusion as to whether the Breydon/Berney birds are the same as those in the Fritton area; ageing and sexing of birds recorded would assist in clarifying the situation.

Most Jan-April records can be attributed to one or other of the above wintering individuals, but others Sennowe Park Jan 18th, Winterton Feb 14th, Wretton Fen 22nd, Bagthorpe Feb 25th, Flitcham March 9th and Sea Palling March 22nd.

May records from Breydon/Berney Marshes 6th-8th, Ongar Hill 11th, Holkham 13th and Holme 18th.

First returning autumn birds early Aug at Scolt Head 2nd, Lynn Point 5th, Cley 9th (chasing skuas and Gannets offshore), Holme 10th and Welney 12th. Further coastal migrants Scolt Head Aug 28th and Sept 4th, Holme Sept 13th, Brancaster Sept 14th, Lynn Point Sept 17th, Mundesley Sept 20th and Cley/Blakeney Hbr Sept 24th/25th; and in Oct at Cley 1st, 12th, 27th and 31st, Scolt Head 3rd, Overstrand 11th and 13th (2 birds) and Sheringham 12th.

Wintering birds, at similar levels to first winter period (7-10), at Breydon (1-2) from Sept 27th, 2 Holkham/Wells from early Oct, 1-2 Scolt Head-Holme from Oct 17th, 1-2 South Wash-Snettisham from Oct 10th, 2 Fritton from early Dec at least, plus an adult on 7 dates in Nov at Welney where a sub-adult on 6 dates in Dec. Further records from this period probably not associated with the above wintering birds at Alby Oct 12th, Feltwell Nov 9th, Sheringham Nov 18th, Fring Nov 30th, Sea Palling Dec 5th, Northrepps Dec 7th and South Creake Dec 25th.

## **Red-legged Partridge**

*Alectoris rufa*

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

During first half of year the only sizeable covey reported was 39 at Baconsthorpe in Jan.

A better showing in second part of year with coveys exceeding 20 recorded at Baconsthorpe (32) and Swanton Abbot (155) Sept, Horsey (80) Oct and Sea Palling (32) Nov. Some of these may relate to released birds.

The information below (and the corresponding data for Grey Partridge) has once again been made available by The Norfolk Partridge Group and The Game Conservancy Trust. The sites in the tables were chosen in 1994 and based on geographical location, divided into three broad areas covering the localities where information is collected. Sites were chosen randomly to enable year-by-year comparisons to be made. In 1997 42 counts were made in the county, covering 33 sites, which totalled 27,500 hectares.



### *Spring density 1997*

	Hectares counted	Prs located	Density prs/sq km	Percent change 1996-97
<i>North Norfolk</i>				
Site A	918	312	34.0	+51.7
Site B	195	44	22.6	+4.9
Site C	587	21	3.6	+15.4
<i>Central Norfolk</i>				
Site D	1823	123	6.7	+22.7
Site E	394	19	4.8	-59.5
<i>North-west Norfolk</i>				
Site F	790	93	11.7	+52.9
Site G	608	120	19.7	-3.7
Site H	1175	226	19.2	+13.8

Where direct comparison is possible between 1996 and 1997, it is encouraging to note that 20 sites showed an increase in density whereas just 7 showed a decrease. The average increase of all sites surveyed was 4.5% representing a rise for the 6th successive year.

In contrast the BBS results have shown a slight fall both years since 1995 in the number of squares found and in the mean number per occupied square, but probably not large enough to draw any firm conclusions.

### **Grey Partridge**

*Perdix perdix*

#### *Resident*

Very few double-figure coveys recorded: Docking (40) and Houghton (10) Jan, Bagmore (13) July, Thetford (42) Sept, Ringstead (27) Nov and Potter Heigham (10) Dec.

### *Spring density 1997*

	Hectares counted	Prs located	Density prs/sq km	Percent change 1996-97
<i>North Norfolk</i>				
Site A	918	378	41.2	-13.1
Site B	195	20	10.3	-31.2
Site C	587	6	1.0	+2.2
<i>Central Norfolk</i>				
Site D	1823	54	3.0	+23.4
Site E	394	6	1.5	-72.7
<i>North-west Norfolk</i>				
Site F	790	17	2.2	+26.6
Site G	608	77	12.7	-25.1
Site H	1175	78	6.6	-0.9

For the first time in 6 years the overall density of Grey Partridges showed a slight decline of 4.1% at sites where comparison is possible with 1996. Encouragingly though, 10 of the sites surveyed can now boast densities in excess of 12 prs per sq km, double the number 5 years ago. Sites with active habitat management schemes, notably in the north-west of the county, have shown good increases.

The BBS results show a significant rise in number of squares occupied: 50% more than in 1995. However, the average number of birds seen in each occupied square fell by about 30%.

Additional breeding season territories received: Bacton 4, Brancaster, Cley, Downham Market (where one pair with 14 young Aug 21st), East Ruston 4, Flitcham 7, Holme 3, Horsey 2, Mundesley 2, Paston 2, Roudham, Scolt Head 4, Sea Palling 2, Shropham, Titchwell 4, Wells, Winterton and Wootton Carr.

## **Quail**

*Coturnix coturnix*

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

First recorded in spring at Sheringham April 25th. A spate of records of calling males during May and June from a minimum of 21 sites were mostly of singles but included Bircham 4, Choseley 2, Cowles Drove 3, Docking 4, East Ruston 4, Feltwell 3, Langham 4, Ringstead 2, Sculthorpe 3, Sheringham 2, Southcrepps 2, Tattersett 4, Welney 2 and Wiveton Down 2.

Fewer reported in July and Aug as calling ceased with max of 12 at 9 sites, mainly along the north coast between Thornham and Salthouse. In Sept calling birds until 4th/5th at Choseley and Sedgeford with a migrant Scolt Head 17th-20th.

An average year closed with an unseasonal bird flushed at Old Hunstanton on Dec 31st (MRC).

## **Common Pheasant**

*Phasianus colchicus*

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

Very little information received. 36 territories at Abbey Farm, Flitcham was fractionally down on 1996. At Baconsthorpe 1050 birds released in Aug/Sept. On Scolt Head males held 6 territories but only 3 broods seen. Found in 64 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS, with the number of birds found per square falling by nearly a quarter since 1995.

## **Golden Pheasant**

*Chrysolophus pictus*

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

Records received from more localities than in most recent years although max counts at main sites suggest a continued dwindling of numbers. Max counts as follows: Wayland Wood 11, Wolferton 6, East Wretham Heath and Pentney 4, Ashill 3, Roudham Junction 2, and singles at Bridgham Heath, Kilverstone, Seven Hills, Rushford and West Tofts Mere. Also recorded at Merton and West Harling but no counts available.

Observers should be aware of at least one hybrid male in the Wolferton area that closely resembles a pure-bred Golden Pheasant.

## **Water Rail**

*Rallus aquaticus*

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

Fewer than usual reported in first winter period with records from 30 widely scattered localities, mostly singles but including Beeston Regis 3, Blakeney FM 2, Burnham Norton 2, Cley 2, Costessey 2, Holme 3, Scolt Head 2, Surlingham 2, Titchwell 3, UEA Broad 4, Welney 2 and Wells 2. A bizarre record of an individual on a hedge on Cromer sea front in Jan and another from Yarmouth Cemetery in April.

Possibly under-recorded in breeding season; noted at 13 localities with breeding proved at Old Hunstanton, Strumpshaw and Titchwell.

Numbers in second winter period much the same as earlier in year with counts of more than one at Blakeney FM 2, Brancaster 2, Burnham Norton 3, Catfield 2, Heigham Sound 2, Hickling 3, Holme 5, Rockland 2, Stiffkey 2, Titchwell 5, Warham 3, Welney 2 and Weybourne 2.

Spotted Crake

*Porzana porzana*

Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter; formerly bred

Two records. A bird calling at Welney in the small hours on April 22nd (JBK). A long-staying bird at Titchwell Aug 18th-Sept 22nd (MHo *et al*) was appreciated by many.

Moorhen

*Gallinula chloropus*

Abundant resident; immigrants in autumn

Peak monthly counts at the most regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holme	17	37	57	11	6	21	37
Titchwell	-	-	11	8	5	20	10
Holkham Park Lake	65	36	35	39	27	104	99
Blakeney FM	-	19	-	17	21	29	-
Salthouse	33	31	42	18	39	66	56
Kelling Quags	-	-	-	24	10	12	-
Ranworth Broad	51	15	9	-	-	-	10
Wroxham (R Bure)	25	25	20	-	-	-	-

Breeding data not comprehensive but records from Baconsthorpe 8 prs, Bayland Wood 2, Burnham Norton 2, Holkham Park Lake 4, Holme 3, Kelling WM, Ken Hill Marsh 5, King's Lynn Walks 3, Mundesley 5, Paston 2, Sennowe Park 3, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 14 and Tottenhill 3. A further decline was suggested by the BBS results: found in 27% fewer squares than in 1996 and nearly 40% fewer squares than in 1995 (using data only from 46 squares covered in all three years).

An interesting report received of a pair of Moorhens raising one young Moorhen and one young Coot at Abbey Farm, Flitcham.

Coot

*Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor

North coast WeBS counts: 1165 Jan, 914 Feb, 768 March, 339 April, 269 Sept and 357 Oct.

Monthly max from the most regularly recorded sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holme	122	37	69	77	32	38	31
Burnham Norton	96	138	109	26	31	48	49
Holkham NNR	112	100	91	35	34	81	14
Holkham Park Lake	724	520	385	50	223	285	403
Berney Marshes	67	340	183	-	-	-	-
Hickling	-	450	-	515	-	1092	1270
Rockland Broad	-	-	-	220	200	200	30
Buckenham Marshes	60	259	126	-	-	-	-
Strumpshaw	271	186	100	-	-	-	-
Whitlingham Lane GP	-	85	77	-	-	103	-
Sennowe Park	357	263	85	164	263	296	240
Pentney	297	238	-	163	266	302	262
Welney	489	671	401	55	105	261	300

National importance (winter): 1100



Some sites very well covered throughout year with the max often recorded during WeBS counts. Once again Holkham Park Lake accounted for a significant proportion of north coast counts.

Largest counts from less regularly counted sites: Tottenhill 250 Jan, Wroxham Bridge 352 Jan, Colney GP 147 March, Titchwell 150 Aug and Lyng GP 350 Oct-Dec.

Observers are urged to submit all counts to provide a fuller picture.

Breeding details received from Heigham Holmes 9 prs, Hethersett 4, Holkham NNR 147, Holme 12, Ken Hill Marsh 20, Mundesley 3, Pentney 3, Sennowc Park 9, Tottenhill 3 and Welney 100.

Just one migrant record, one in Brancaster Hbr Jan 15th.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus*  
*Resident colony in Broadland since 1979; some records may relate to Continental migrants*  
The ever-present Broadland group numbered an impressive 12 in first winter period although the full complement was recorded together on only a few occasions.

A pair noted dancing and trumpeting beside the road in April was followed by the nesting of 3 prs. Of these, one pair successfully reared 2 young with the juvs being reported by observers from Sept onwards.

Later in year max counts of 10 in Nov and Dec. On Dec 6th 10 birds closely observed included 2 prs, each with 2 young, and 2 single adults. It is most likely that one of these family groups (ie 4 birds) were genuine migrants.

Few records from outside the usual Broads area: Seratby 3 March 25th and Welney 3 April 20th-22nd (where noted eating Lapwing eggs) but none seem to have wandered to the north coast during the year.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*  
*Common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder*  
Table includes all sites holding 500 or more birds:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	121	250	869	263	328	-	-	171	540	2	75	6252
Snettisham	1000	2016	-	500	201	232	580	1100	5018	5800	2240	1485
Holme	768	1024	507	334	50	90	74	415	615	680	322	579
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	666	697	520	332	154	145	-	601	530	586	658	486
Wells	121	138	-	-	-	-	-	231	521	778	984	434
Warham	460	526	322	233	-	-	1000	932	1236	624	348	
Stiffkey	-	240	263	164	-	-	-	235	793	161	262	318
Blakeney Hbr	690	537	409	357	-	-	109	417	493	320	541	

National importance (winter): 3600

Numbers at Snettisham continue to decline, albeit more slightly than in recent years. Other sites with counts over 200 included Heacham/Hunstanton 280 (Dec), Thornham 230 (Jan), Titchwell 220 (April) and Breydon 270 (Aug).

For the first time this year English Nature organised a series of low tide counts during second half of winter to look at distribution and numbers using the low water habitats. Two counts were made as follows: Nov - Holme 154, Titchwell 139, Scolt Head 627, Burnham Overy 46, Wells 994, Warham 150, Stiffkey 302, Blakeney Hbr 472 - Total 2940. Dec -

Holme 72, Titchwell 106, Scolt Head 486, Burnham Overy 47, Wells 369, Warham 449, Stiffkey 211, Blakeney Hbr 450 - *Total 2256.*

Breeding: a total of 584 prs reported as follows: coastal sites (beaches and grazing marshes) Wash Outer Trial Bank 22, Ken Hill marshes 7, Holme NNR 29 (no young noted), Brancaster GM 2, Brancaster beach 17, Scolt Head 94 (good success), Brancaster Hbr 47, Holkham NNR 70 (beach), 42 (grazing marshes), Holkham Park 3 and Blakeney Point 200. In Broads 14 prs at 5 sites: Buckenham 4, Cantley 5, Heigham Holmes 3, South Walsham, Strumpshaw 2 and Wroxham Broad, but under-recorded. A further 27 prs at other inland sites: Baconsthorpe (failed), Briston, Cranwich GP, Lyng/Sparham GPs 3, Flitcham (Abbey Farm) 2, Middleton GP (2 young), Pentney GP 2 (with young), Sculthorpe 10, Sennowe Park, Stanford TA 2, Syderstone 2, Tallents Meadow, Tattersett 3, Whitlingham Lane GP and Welney 5.

A high inland count of 66 at Welney on March 16th was noteworthy, while in July a good westerly movement noted at Sheringham with 370 on 18th.

## Black-winged Stilt

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

The male at Titchwell survived another year, its 5th. Most of the year saw it at Titchwell with occasional visits to Holme, Thornham Saltmarshes and Brancaster GM. At Titchwell it paired with an Oystercatcher in March!

*Black-winged Stilt (V. Hamlin)*

*Himantopus himantopus*



## Avocet

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

*Breeding summer visitor, and possibly increasing winter visitor in small numbers*

Monthly max at main 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>
Titchwell	3	1	60	75	60	60+	113	201	102	14	2	3
Cley	3	33	104	125	-	141	200	23	2	1	3	-
Breydon	23	66	100	31	17	27	150	192*	135	43	37	26

*\* indicates record count for the site*

Numbers wintering at Breydon continue to increase during first and second winter periods. During late Feb began to arrive in good numbers at this site and in Wash with 51 on 26th at Ousemouth; at month end 33 were at Cley. Typically March saw main arrivals at key breeding sites with counts of 60 Titchwell 17th and 104 Cley 23rd.

A total of 181 prs bred at 13 sites as follows: north coast 160 (102 fledged young reported from 3 sites); east coast 18 (4 fledged young reported from one site); inland 3 (6+ fledged young from one site). The flooding at Cley in 1996 may still have affected success

with very few chicks fledging. More information on fledging success or causes of failure would be useful for future reports.

Typically largest late summer concentrations at tabulated sites in Aug with a notable drop in numbers by Sept, the exception being Ongar Hill in Wash where 250 on 20th with 100 still present Oct 12th. At Cley 13 flew west at sea Oct 18th.

### **Stone Curlew**

*Burhinus oedichenus*

#### ***Breeding summer visitor, mainly to Breckland***

The first migrant returned to the Gooderstone area March 5th, followed by 3 Weeting Heath on 22nd. Norfolk Breckland saw another good season despite the wet weather in June, with 57 prs fledging 64 young. Though the numbers were slightly down in the county the fledging of over one chick per pair bodes well for the future. Overall in Breckland the total of 122 prs fledging 114 young continued the upward trend with an extra 9 prs being located. Only 22% of nesting birds were found on heathland, the rest on arable and often only successful thanks to sympathetic farmers and the efforts of RSPB staff.

There was only one spring record just outside Breckland, a single at Hingham May 10th. In July there was some dispersal of non-breeders or failed breeders with one at East Ruston 6th and possibly the same bird at Stalham Fen 15th, with the only coastal record at Holme (Gore Point) 20th.

Large concentrations were noted in Breckland in Sept with flocks of 30+ and 40 at two different sites on 25th. A very late bird at Thetford Nunnery Nov 19th (BTO).

### **Collared Pratincole**

*Glareola pratincola*

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

Recorded for the 4th year running. This long-staying individual was first noted at Berney Marshes on May 15th-17th (PRA *et al*) and after a 9-day gap presumably the same bird appeared on 26th along the north coast at Burnham Norton (RQS), Titchwell, Holkham Marsh and finally Cley, where present again next day before being seen at Stiffkey Fen, then Burnham Norton from May 29th to June 1st and Titchwell 1st-7th; also Blakeney Point on 7th. In July the bird appeared erratically along the whole north coast as follows: Cley 5th, Titchwell 5th/6th and 14th/15th, Cley 15th-18th, Titchwell 19th, Snettisham 19th, Thornham Point 21st and finally Titchwell 24th.

Later in autumn a different bird, an often very confiding first-year, inland in the Felbrigge-Metton area Oct 12th-28th (FAS NRS *et al*).

### **Little Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius dubius*

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

First migrant noted at Buckenham Fen March 22nd, and then 1-2 at 4 other sites to month end. The first half of April saw the main arrival, with records from 17 sites (only 6 from the coast) with counts of 5 or more as follows: 5 Hickling Broad 4th, 9 Buckenham Fen 12th, and on 14th 6 at Kelling WM and 8 at Whitlingham Lane GP.

In spring some coastal visible migration with singles west Sheringham May 1st and 2nd and Scolt Head also on 2nd. Another west Sheringham June 14th.

Breeding: compared with last year's 21-23 prs a slight increase with 25 prs at 16 sites as follows: north coast - 3 prs at 2 sites but with no evidence of success; Broads - 2 prs, 3 young noted at one site; inland - 15 prs from 9 sites, 2 prs successful at one site; Fens - 5 prs at 3 sites, one pr failed due to rat predation.

During autumn there seemed to be a quick exodus out of the county. Highest counts were confined mostly to July, with all counts of 5 or more as follows: 7 Titchwell 27th, 15





Bearded Tit at Cantley, a former breeding site (*B. W. Jarvis*).

Lower: Snow Bunting, Salthouse, March (*D. Nye*).





Black-tailed Godwits and Avocets, Cley Marsh (*G. Smith*).

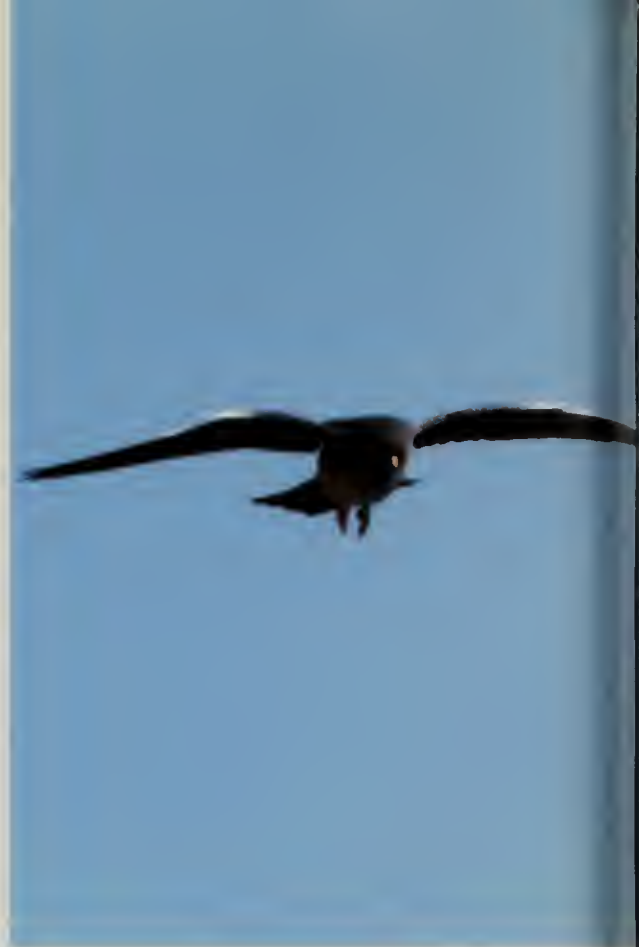




This spectacular male Red-footed Falcon visited East Ruston Common in May  
(Upper: D. Nye; Lower: R. Chittenden).







Upper: Further studies of the East Ruston Red-footed Falcon (*Left: D. Nye; Right: I. Leach*).

Lower: Little Owl (*I. Leach*).



Cley 12th and 17th, 9 Salthouse 21st, 7 Buckenham 23rd, 5 Cantley BF 30th, 8+ Sennowe Park 7th and 5 Welney all month. In Aug only noteworthy records were one west Mundesley 8th, while counts of 5 or more included 10 Titchwell on 13th and max of 8 at Hickling.

In Sept singles Lynn Point 1st, Welney 3rd/4th and Cley 5th, 2 Titchwell 6th, one remaining until 23rd. No Oct records; a very late straggler Cley Nov 2nd (MAG *et al*).

## Ringed Plover

*Charadrius hiaticula*

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

Table includes all sites holding 200 or more:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	0	0	44	0	46	56	57	87	300	319	1	0
Holme	4	21	36	33	20	22	50	200	169	103	26	16
Scolt Head/ Brancaſter Hbr	13	37	80	40	247	34	-	650	699	73	65	64
Blakeney Hbr	58	72	69	81	-	-	-	240	275	63	92	-
Breydon	92	68	22	77	350	91	50	253	248	154	119	110

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

In first half of winter typically low numbers along the coast, the only three-figure count coming from Warham with 101 in Feb. Passage birds of *tundrae* race noted in late spring but in smaller numbers than last year. Breydon picked up majority as usual with birds present from May 15th-28th, peaking at 350 on 15th. Other sites recording 50+ of this race in May included Lynn Point with 61 on 29th and Scolt Head 217 on 19th. Another population that passes through Norfolk at this time is the nominate race on route to north-east Canada; a flock of 130 on Scolt Head on 22nd was considered to be this race with only a few *tundrae* birds among them. Clearly any large flock of Ringed Plovers in May should not automatically be assumed to be *tundrae* birds.

A total of 189/190 prs (251 prs 1996) were reported from 10 coastal and 3 inland sites, the following totals also including last year's figures where applicable: Snettisham 28 (36), Holme 10 (30), Brancaſter Beach 12, Scolt Head 39 (30), Holkham NNR 30/31 (37-39), Blakeney Point 50 (75), Paſton, Eccles 4, Horſey and Yarmouth 6 (9). Inland: Berney, Hilborough 3, Stanford TA and Welney 4 (2 prs fledged young). The picture looks bleak for the 'Stonerunner' at moſt ſites, with further declines noted at all ſites bar one, but this may be due to more accurate recording. Foxes and Stoats appear to be the greateſt threat, eſpecially at the incubation ſtage, and the two recent cold winters may have cauſed a higher than normal mortality in adults and young birds.

Apart from tabulated ſites, hiſheſt autumn concentrations at Ongar Hill in Waſh when in Aug 420 on 19th and 250 on 30th.

Low tide counts along the north coaſt found the following preſent in Dec: 13 Holme, 64 Scolt Head/Brancaſter Hbr, 87 Wells, 47 Stiffkey and 27 Blakeney Hbr. Theſe totals were higher than expected, probably due to the mild weather.

## Kentish Plover

*Charadrius alexandrinus*

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

A very poor year with only one record, a male at Berney Maſhes May 15th (PRA).

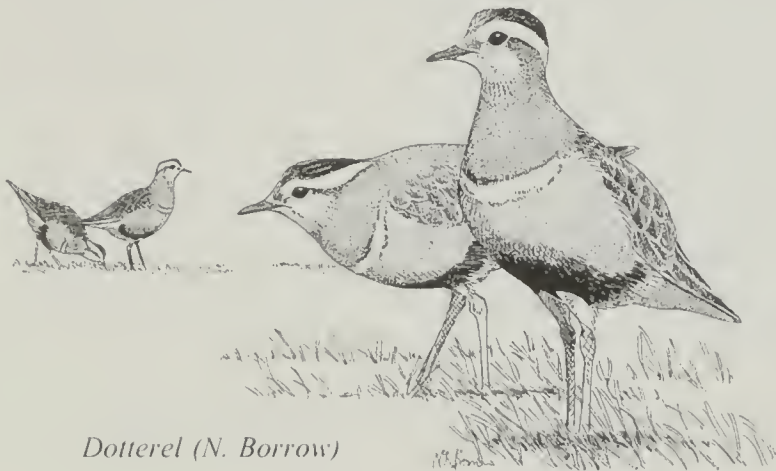
**Dotterel**

*Charadrius morinellus*

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

A good year. During spring records from May 2nd to June 3rd on total of 23 dates at 9 sites: north Sheringham 2nd, north Horsey 3rd, south Titchwell also 3rd, 2 Paston 4th, Cley 4th/5th, followed by a remarkable series of counts from a field to the west of Baeton gas terminal where 3 from 5th-7th, 8 from 8th-10th, 9 on 11th, 6 on 12th/13th and 7 on 14th. Numbers then reduced to singles at North Wootton 17th, Blakeney Point 20th and 23rd, and Thornham Point 21st-26th. A late bird was on Holme GC June 3rd.

Fewer during autumn with only 6 records: in Aug 2 east Weybourne 25th and one Blakeney Point next day; in Sept 3 juvs Seolt Head 2nd, 2 north Sea Palling 10th and one west Holme 20th. Latest record Mundesley Nov 1st-4th.



*Dotterel (N. Borrow)*

**Golden Plover**

*Pluvialis apricaria*

*Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor*

Table showing most regularly counted 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>
Terrington	-	308	-	-	900	320	556	3111	1504
Ousemouth	-	35	-	-	3000	900	120	3030	3000
Snettisham	-	-	-	-	725	550	40	500	500
Holme-Titchwell	300	420	700	105	200	400	520	1600	2000
Seolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	5	20	-	-	1000	2300	1800	350	100
Breydon/Berney	400	1000	950	469	1150	1200	1200	5300	7200
Welney	6	657	1436	154	13	-	43	734	749

*National importance (winter): 2500*

Higher numbers were reported this year, especially inland. Apart from the tabulated sites counts in excess of 2000+ at a further 5 sites in last 2 months of year. In Nov 3000 Wash East Bund, 2550 Burnham Norton, 7230 Boyland Airfield, 4300 Winfarthing, 2500 Bressingham; also 6000 Fakenham all Dec. A further 5 sites had 1000+ as follows: 1000 Attleborough March, 1597 Blakeney Hbr Oct, and in Nov 1000 Bradenham, 1200 Banham and 1000 Horsey.

*1996 Correction:* Jan count for Holme/Titchwell should be 900, not 9000.



Grey Plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Table showing all sites with counts over 200 birds:

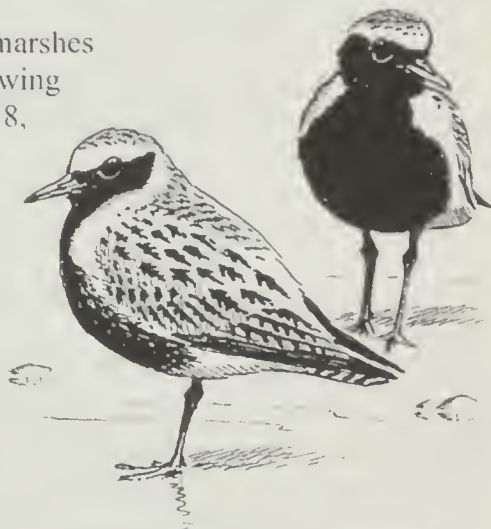
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	53	355	1043	263	328	-	2117	2187	746	588	518
Ousemouth	17	95	66	1859	3	415	352	n/c	450	5800	50
Snettisham	356	220	669	500	3520	160	1011	1502	923	516	680
Holme	930	927	648	143	140	30	158	385	432	1360	311
Titchwell	170	80	33	115	207	70	60	200	220	5	10
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	167	163	270	127	210	31	496	345	235	333	295
Warham	36	230	37	-	-	-	380	111	122	261	243
Blakeney Hbr	87	91	89	63	-	-	23	82	111	410	266

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

Ousemouth and Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr are new additions to the above table, while Breydon becomes the only omission. At Beeston Regis 91 on 21st Jan was the highest for 6 years.

Two low tide counts of the lower shore and saltmarshes along the North Norfolk coast produced the following counts: Nov Holme 94, Thornham 104, Titchwell 38, Scolt Head/Brancaster 333, Wells 152, Warham 261, Stiffkey 154 and Blakeney Hbr 410; Dec Holme 65, Thornham 105, Titchwell 32, Scolt Head/Brancaster 295, Wells 123, Warham 243, Stiffkey 126 and Blakeney Hbr 266. It can be clearly seen that the counts are very similar, suggesting many of these birds are loyal to these sites during midwinter.

At Welney singles on total of 21 days Jan-March, May and Oct-Dec, with 3 Oct 1st and 2 Dec 20th-24th. Elsewhere inland (all singles): Holkham Lake Jan 7th (first record here), Ringstead Jan 27th, Hickling March, Buckenham May 3rd and 26th, Wissington BF May 21st-23rd, Pentney GP May 31st, Cantley BF Nov 4th, Felbrigg/Metton Nov 16th and Bressingham Common Nov.



Grey Plovers (R.A. Richardson)

Lapwing

*Vanellus vanellus*

Passage migrant and increasing winter visitor; declining breeder

International and National importance (winter): 20,000

All winter flocks of 1000+ reported included for completeness. Records from 15 sites as follows: Wash East Bund 10,000-12,000 Nov; Lynn Point 3000 Feb, 4500 Nov, 5000 Dec; Snettisham 1200 Oct, 1730 Nov; Holme/Titchwell 1000 Feb, 1036 Nov, 1100 Dec; Wells 2450 Dec (low tide count); Stiffkey 1041 Oct, 1662 Nov; Blakeney Hbr 2000 Dec (low tide count); Berney 2052 Jan; Breydon Water 3000 Jan, 6500 Feb, 15,400 Nov, 18,400 Dec; St Benet's Level 1600 Feb; Boyland 4300 Nov; Fakenham 2500 Dec; Pulham St Mary 1050 Nov; Welney 2790 Feb, 4450 Nov, 5000 Dec.

Only 642 breeding prs reported compared with last year's 723. As usual largest concentrations on coastal freshwater marshes with 289 as follows (last year's counts in

brackets): Ken Hill 30 (26), Holme 32 (40), Brancaster 6 and Holkham NNR 221 (240) where 270 young were fledged. The Broads area reported double last year's total with 148. The two main areas were Berney Marshes with 55 and Yare Valley 85 (72) with Strumpshaw 4, Buckenham 54 and Cantley 27. Elsewhere a total of 57 (78) reported from 15 (20) sites as follows: Baconsthorpe 3, Bircham/Houghton 2, Briston, Coxford 4, Corpusty 2, East Ruston 2, East Tuddenham 2, Felbrigg 2, Flitcham 9, Frettenham 3, Sennowe Park 6, South Creake 6, Sparham 6, Syderstone 4, Tattersett 7 and Wereham 4. 142 (147) prs also in Fens at Welney which suffered from Fox predation, though relays had better success with numerous young fledging.

Best movements during autumn with much higher counts than in 1996. On Oct 16th 6209 (all day) Hunstanton Cliffs, 6700 west (8 hrs) Scolt Head and 3800 west (all day) Sheringham. On Oct 17th 2550 (4.5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs and 1127 west Holme. In Nov 1750 Scolt Head 13th and 2026 west Holme 17th. A partial albino was noted at Salthouse on Nov 15th.

**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	750	5582	5140	7200	-	3725	5598	645	395	4075
Snettisham	2600	7880	12230	2000	4330	30000	8050	8950	39050	20062
Holme	518	62	23	14	7	19000	66000	46300	5021	631

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

There is little sign of any recovery in the winter population in Wash, although there was another strong autumn passage.

Other coastal counts: Ouse-North Wootton 7000 July, 2500 Aug, 3000 Nov, 4500 Dec; Titchwell 200 Jan, 300 Oct; Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 8910 Jan; Wells Hbr 1280 Jan, 225 Feb, 374 Sept, 3280 Nov; Warham 5000 Jan, 400 Nov; Stiffkey 632 Jan; Blakeney Hbr 360 Jan, 430 Feb, 310 Dec. East coast, highest counts at Breckdon: 1653 Jan, 359 Dec. High counts elsewhere especially in Jan when a large cold weather influx onto saltmarshes.

Low tide counts of whole North Norfolk coast revealed 3955 Nov and 1729 Dec.

The usual scatter of summering birds in June: best counts Snettisham 20, Thornham 79, Titchwell 20 and Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 120.

Inland: Welney singles March 8th, April 16th and Oct 20th; Hickling Broad 2 March (no date) and Aug 15th; Strumpshaw one May 1st.

**Sanderling**

*Calidris alba*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly max at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	30	-	75	6	1532	580	800	412	66	61	65
Heacham	200	7	15	-	-	-	-	-	179	49	-
Hunstanton	244	174	59	44	-	-	10	3	109	507	127
Holme	162	252	323	274	468	184	396	970	344	210	33
Titchwell	30	60	30	58	114	110	40	70	140	42	150
Holkham Bay	54	35	8	48	-	-	10	51	133	-	53

*International importance: 1000 (winter), 300 (passage); National importance: 230*

The May count at Snettisham is a spring record. Tail end of spring passage in June included notable counts of 100 Titchwell and 65 Scolt Head. Highest counts away from main sites: Thornham 55 Jan, 58 March; Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 54 Feb, 65 April, 130 July, 242 Aug, 76 Sept; Wells Hbr 59 Jan, 133 Feb, 173 April, 107 Aug, 81 Nov, 157 Dec; Stiffkey 80 Sept, 167 Nov; Winterton 76 Jan (many partially oiled); Breydon 31 Jan, 34 March, 24 Dec.

Low tide counts of whole North Norfolk coast: 276 Nov and 339 Dec.

Inland: Welney 2 May 16th; Hickling singles May 3rd and Aug 8th.

### **Little Stint**

*Calidris minuta*

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

One at Cley Jan 3rd was perhaps the bird seen there and at Salthouse Dec 1996.

Spring: one Pentney GP March 22nd the first, followed by only two further singles in April, Salthouse 8th and Welney 23rd-27th. Passage continued from May 1st to June 12th, mostly involving 1-3 birds, except Breydon 6 May 2nd and 5 May 3rd; Buckenham 5 May 3rd and 7 May 4th; Cley 4 June 3rd; Hickling 5 June 7th.

Autumn: following an adult at Cley on June 27th the weighty passage of 1996 was not repeated this year. In July from 12th, when one Cley, with main passage from 20th; max 4 Cley 22nd and 4 Breydon 31st. Aug and Sept continued in a similar vein: max 4 Titchwell Aug 30th/31st, Sept 4th and 8th with 5 on Sept 3rd; max 7 Cley Aug 13th and 4 Sept 4th. In Oct 4 Cley 1st, 2 21st and 3 west Weybourne 1st; otherwise, singles at 4 sites on 8 dates. Only one Nov record, Cley 2nd - last of year.

### **Temminck's Stint**

*Calidris temminckii*

#### ***Passage migrant, more frequent in spring***

Spring: multiple arrival May 3rd, when one Cley, 2 Salthouse, 4 Berney (remaining to 7th) and one Buckenham. Then 3 Salthouse 4th-10th, with 1-2 11th-15th; 2 Cley 15th doubled to 4 16th, when also seen Salthouse. 2 Morston/Stiffkey 15th may have joined these, as 6 present Cley and Salthouse 17th. Further records at Cley - one 18th, 3 19th, 2 27th - and Salthouse, 2 on 23rd, may all refer to the same birds. Remaining spring records: singles Kelling WM 4th, Burnham Norton 10th and 19th, Holme 19th/20th, Berney 26th and Stiffkey Fen 29th. In June, 3 Berney 1st with single 8th-10th.

Autumn: 5-6 individuals July 15th to Sept 7th - Titchwell July 15th/16th, Cley July 18th and Aug 26th/27th, Breydon July 18th, Salthouse Aug 28th and Stiffkey Fen Sept 6th/7th.

### **White-rumped Sandpiper**

*Calidris fuscicollis*

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

Two individuals, both at Cley. One July 9th-14th (DHR *et al*) was rapidly followed by another July 17th-19th (IGJ *et al*). There have now been 44 county records.

### **Baird's Sandpiper**

*Calidris bairdii*

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

A juv was present at Cantley BF from Sept 30th to Oct 10th (BWJ *et al*). The 11th Norfolk record.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper**

*Calidris melanotos*

#### ***Almost annual autumn vagrant from North America/Siberia; rare in spring***

Four records, all of single birds - Titchwell Aug 1st, Cley and Salthouse Aug 2nd-9th, and at Hickling Broad, juvs Sept 18th-20th and 26th/27th.



## Curlew Sandpiper

*Calidris ferruginea*

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

Spring: two April records, Pentney GP 9th and 2 Breydon 28th/29th. Seen at 7 sites in May, all singles except 2 Holme 15th, 2 Welney 16th and 2 Breydon 26th. Then 11 records, all singles, in June at Titchwell, Cley, Breydon, Hickling and Welney.

Autumn: small numbers from July 2nd (Breydon), with max 4 Cley 30th and 4 Breydon 21st/22nd. Aug continued similarly, with first juvs noted from 20th (Breydon); max 4 Breydon 3rd and 21st, 5 on 6th, 6 on 8th; 4 Titchwell 9th and 30th; 4 Cley 23rd/24th, and 9 on 31st; 4 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 30th. Numbers picked up in Sept, with peak passage 1st-14th. Noted at only 9 sites, however: max 11 Breydon 1st, 14 2nd/3rd, 17 5th; 16 Cley 2nd/3rd, 26 4th, 22 6th, 20 7th/8th, 10 14th; 12 Titchwell 2nd/3rd, 21 5th, 30 6th; 10 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr Sept 4th. In Oct, 1-2 birds at 6 sites, except 6 Breydon 8th. One Nov record - Snettisham 11th.

## Purple Sandpiper

*Calidris maritima*

### *Passage migrant and declining winter visitor in small numbers*

Present to May 6th (Cley) and from Aug 11th (Blakeney Point). Max counts at Heacham/Hunstanton rather lower than usual: 5 Jan, 5 Feb, 6 March, one April, one Oct, 5 Nov and 6 Dec. Noted at a further 18 sites, most regularly at Sea Palling, where 2 Jan, one April, 5 Oct, 6 Nov and 7 Dec. Elsewhere, 1-3 irregularly at Titchwell, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr (5 Aug), Sheringham (5 Oct) and Eccles (5 Oct and 4 Dec). Also 6 Gorleston Nov. Small coastal passage, best one east 4 west Sheringham Oct 12th, 6 west Scolt Head same date, and 4 south Winterton Nov 25th.

## Dunlin

*Calidris alpina*

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

Peak counts at main regular resorts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	3500	7362	8620	2650	1167	-	3999	3191	5,656	9447	14179
Ousemouth	56	220	128	4620	120	1200	2000	1100	270	89	2500
Snettisham	2275	8450	5280	2000	6004	5900	9600	4565	11,450	11,020	6812
Holme	892	543	653	120	45	30	131	2250	2,695	172	429
Titchwell	180	255	200	184	200	-	80	102	68	259	187
Scolt Head/ Brancaster Hbr	1503	830	335	450	650	260	530	480	532	629	688
Warham	335	948	15	47	-	-	40	123	220	570	1487
Stiffkey	-	273	233	284	-	-	8	251	38	935	810
Blakeney Hbr	630	520	212	121	-	-	143	360	630	560	1036
Cley	62	3	163	-	20	300	250	200	101	44	3
Breydon	4000	2200	1350	1710	1100	470	560	1711	1450	2450	3850

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

Other notable coastal counts: Heacham 1100 Feb; Wells 545 Jan, 456 Nov, 1294 Dec. Low tide counts of whole of North Norfolk coast revealed 4431 Nov and 6175 Dec.

A scattering of June records, max 65 Snettisham and 200 Titchwell. First juv noted July 15th (Breydon).

Largest coastal movements were in Oct: 1210 west Scolt Head 12th; 2700 west Sheringham and 2360 west Mundesley both 14th.



*Dunlins (N. Borrow)*

Highest inland counts: Buckenham 46 March; Welney 209 March, 197 April, 154 May, 258 Dec; Cantley BF 43 Nov.

A partial albino was present at Breydon April 28th to June 1st.

### Broad-billed Sandpiper

*Limicola falcinellus*

*Vagrant from North Eurasia*

One at Scolt Head June 3rd/4th (NML MESR).

1996 Addition: A juv at Titchwell (PWA RQS *et al*) Aug 31st. The county tally now stands at 47.

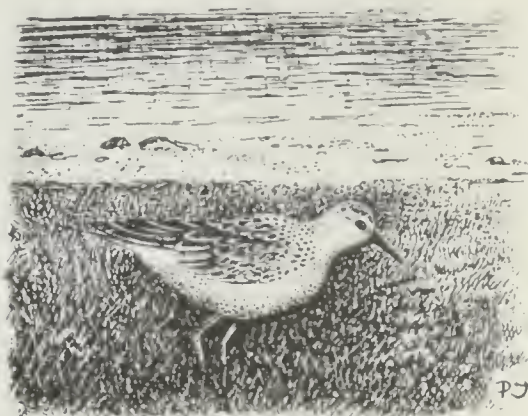
### Buff-breasted Sandpiper

*Tryngites subruficollis*

*Vagrant from North America*

An adult was well watched at Cley, July 27th-Aug 4th (AMS *et al*). By contrast, another appeared briefly on the beach at Snettisham, Aug 20th (DPo). These bring the Norfolk total to 28.

*Buff-breasted Sandpiper (P. Jones)*



### Ruff

*Philomachus pugnax*

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

Monthly peak counts at regular resorts:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Titchwell	100	70	76	2	11	34	100	80	92	71	50
Holkham NNR	8	34	35	22	65	-	4	-	-	-	-
Cley	5	22	40	4	42	43	45	47	4	2	-
Breydon/Berney	20	18	24	26	62	2	12	14	13	8	22
Welney	3	8	45	29	106	33	32	51	51	28	37

*National importance (winter): 50*

Reported from a further 9 sites during the winter periods. Best counts were Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 45 Jan, 36 Feb (roosting); Docking 25 Nov; Blakeney Hbr 26 Dec and Berney Marshes 10 Dec.

Major influx early May as illustrated in above table. Also noted in spring at 14 other sites with max Hickling 37 April and Buckenham 15 March, 42 April. In June, 1-7 at 6 sites.

In autumn recorded at 11 sites other than those in table - fewer sites and fewer birds than in 1996. Highest counts were 17 Wissington BF Aug and in Sept 57 Brancaster saltmarsh, 21 Stiffkey Fen and 14 Cantley BF.

## Jack Snipe

*Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

First winter period/spring: reported from 23 localities, all involving 1-2 birds except 4 Welney April 23rd. Latest Titchwell May 3rd.

Autumn/winter: seen at 18 localities, from Sept 27th, when one Kelling WM. Again, 1-2 birds involved, except 4 Ludham Oct 8th.

## Common Snipe

*Gallinago gallinago*

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

Table shows a selection of well-counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holme	3	5	6	20	4	2	24	5	7	19	17
Holkham NNR	11	6	4	10	20	-	15	3	21	26	44
Breydon/Berney	2	3	15	15	3	12	12	4	24	12	27
Buckenham/Cantley	3	1	-	-	-	4	57	20	-	25	-
Welney	7	-	55	41	102	-	-	23	-	17	11

A poor first winter period with other sites with double-figure counts as follows: 15 St Benet's Level (Feb), 12 Thetford Nunnery Lakes (Feb), 30+ Bradfield (March), 14 Berney (March), and 11 Flitcham (April).

Breeding: total of 87 drummers reported from 13 sites, but the overall trend is still downward. All drumming sites (last year's totals where applicable) as follows: Holme NNR (one), Holkham NNR 10 (11), Cantley/Buckenham/Strumpshaw 17 (12), Berney 3, Burgh Common/Filby Broad 1 (declining), Castle Acre, Claxton Marsh, Watton, West Acre and Welney 51 (52). Only the traditional sites appear to be holding their own with a welcome increase in the Yare Valley, and some stability at Welney; however, with the susceptibility of flooding on the Ouse Washes and the continued decline along the north coast the future continues to look bleak for this species.

During autumn only 2 sites held over 20 birds (not including those tabulated) compared with 6 sites last year; these were Cley where 60 (Aug) and 100 (Sept) and Hickling Broad where (66 Aug).

Visible migration in west of county produced highest autumn counts. On Scolt Head westerly movements as follows: in Aug 26 12th, 17 13th and 83 26th; in Sept 10 4th, 25 11th, 14 17th and 21 18th; in Oct 12 17th. At Hunstanton Cliffs total of 277 south Sept 29th-Nov 15th, highest counts including 13 Sept 30th, 165 Oct 16th (all day count) and 33 Nov 5th.

Surprisingly, low tide counts along north coast found that significant numbers of birds clearly use saltmarshes to feed on, as follows: Nov Holme NNR 19, Thornham 26, Scolt Head 43, Burnham Overy Hbr 58, Wells 5, Warham 10, Stiffkey 48, Blakeney Hbr 87; Dec Holme NNR 7, Thornham 60, Scolt Head 46, Burnham Overy Hbr 39, Warham 21, Stiffkey 27 and Blakeney Hbr 181. Other notable Dec counts (20+) included 50 Stiffkey Fen and 30-40 Breydon.



Long-billed Dowitcher

*Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Vagrant from North America and north-east Siberia

A summer-plumaged bird at Titchwell on June 10th (RK, RQS *et al*) was the 8th county record.

Woodcock

*Scolopax rusticola*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; abundant breeder particularly in the Brecks

In first winter period reports from about 45 sites. A major influx in Jan in many parts of the county but mainly in small numbers; exceptionally 1000-1500 Holkham Park (140 shot in 3 days in one 1.5 mile stretch) and 100 flushed from one wood at South Creak in a shoot. Also 30 shot out of 100 at Baconsthorpe.

Widespread during breeding season with roding noted at 31 sites; no more than 10 counted at any site.

In autumn/winter seen at 30 sites, with widespread coastal arrival Oct 15th-26th. Small numbers noted, except 30 Westacre Estate Dec.

Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa limosa*

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	20	517	536	792	-	-	1324	900	760	57	1	230
Ousemouth	-	170	-	8	-	-	278	120	72	7	600	-
Titchwell	18	15	12	86	112	200	110	220	63	50	4	-
Holkham NNR	1	24	28	205	100	140	80	7	11	7	6	-
Cley	4	13	24	92	19	8	15	150	105	140	165	9
Breydon	43	110	95	93	164	253	456	881	615	448	417	419
Welney	15	127	1236	429	51	69	75	22	6	29	2	10

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

The Aug count at Breydon is a record for that site.

Winter periods: noted at only 5 further sites, max 92 Blakeney Hbr Nov.

Spring: small numbers away from main sites, except 64 Hickling April and 127 Berney Marshes May. Good numbers throughout June but no evidence of breeding this year.

In autumn 44 Scolt Head July 7th, 76 there Aug 4th and 100 Aug 11th; otherwise no counts exceeded 40 away from sites in table.



Black-tailed Godwits (N. Borrow)

**Bar-tailed Godwit***Limosa lapponica**Passage migrant and winter visitor; a few non-breeders in summer*

Monthly max at main sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Terrington	-	1470	155	4	-	-	558	37	73	300	2481
Snettisham	6208	9210	3000	-	2000	750	1707	4510	1220	10	71
Holme	950	1390	591	60	4	37	133	1070	1810	322	551
Titchwell	400	324	111	30	22	155	430	2500	2500	1810	800
Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr	370	200	234	35	41	50	165	210	135	188	202
Wells Hbr	-	460	-	21	-	-	-	7	6	163	432
Blakeney Hbr	73	90	97	71	-	-	14	64	230	147	343
Breydon	78	64	50	69	32	20	10	18	5	17	72

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

Cold weather influxes evident in Jan and Feb. Good numbers present also in autumn at Holme and Titchwell as many birds left the Wash to roost. Low Nov and Dec counts at Snettisham are unprecedented, as birds apparently moved elsewhere in Wash and to North Norfolk coast. Notable counts away from the main sites were 410 Thornham Jan, 185 Brancaster Jan, 253 Stiffkey Jan and 130 Warham Aug. Best June counts were 130 Snettisham and 60 Titchwell. Low tide counts of whole North Norfolk coast produced 1031 Nov and 1853 Dec.

Largest coastal movements were at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr where 84 west July 6th, 181 west Sept 1st and 135 west Oct 12th.

Inland: 1-3 birds were seen at 5 localities.

**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus**Passage migrant in spring and autumn; rare in winter*

National importance (passage): 50

Spring: two records in March, Weybourne 16th and 2 Cley 31st/April 1st. Passage April 8th-June 9th, heaviest April 24th-May 16th. Highest counts: 17 Lynn Point April 24th, 55 Blakeney April 25th, 29 Berney Marshes April 27th, 40 Breydon/Berney April 28th with 150 there May 6th, 14 Snettisham April 30th and 23 there May 7th, 17 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr May 2nd, 16 east 2 west Sheringham May 2nd, 41 Burnham Norton and 22 Berney/Halvergate Marshes both May 3rd, 15 Stowbridge May 4th and 20 Holkham May 10th. At Cley, 48 west May 28th.

Autumn: from June 22nd (Holme), with main passage July 18th-Aug 16th. Max 20 west Sheringham July 18th; 25 west 29 present Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr July 20th with 126 west Aug 1st, 66 present Aug 4th, 83 west Aug 5th, 52 west Aug 13th and 41 west Aug 15th; 30 Titchwell July 19th and 40 Aug 3rd; 30 west Holme Aug 7th. Further heightened passage from Aug 24th: 31 Blakeney Aug 24th, 12 west Holme Aug 25th, 40 west Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr Aug 26th and 44 west Sept 16th, 11 south Weybourne Sept 7th and 41 Eccles Sept 7th. A scattering of records to Oct 10th, with the last of year Brancaster Nov 10th.

**Curlew***Numenius arquata**Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce breeder*

Monthly max at main sites:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Terrington	44	165	436	477	106	760	2425	3121	1255	323	126
Ousemouth	9	44	48	11	-	170	67	30	430	10	7
Snettisham	50	215	10	163	45	815	1356	1000	1500	600	1000
Heacham	44	180	185	8	-	-	-	-	222	-	-
Holme	99	93	180	50	1	22	50	45	126	130	212
Titchwell	-	63	50	18	-	84	61	133	40	79	90
Scolt Head/Brancaaster Hbr	600	837	870	275	145	750	1460	750	596	483	540
Overy Hbr	-	23	24	18	-	-	51	40	92	73	26
Holkham NNR	47	40	66	34	-	-	16	52	51	57	68
Wells Hbr	65	71	-	64	-	-	340	437	480	139	252
Warham	-	30	48	9	-	-	6	106	72	146	102
Stillkey	40	21	48	35	-	-	-	16	34	74	48
Blakeney Hbr	137	216	139	41	-	-	450	160	178	332	257
Breydon	773	825	858	537	66	838	800	878	760	619	584

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

Low numbers at most coastal sites in Jan due to cold weather exodus. Away from main sites, good numbers at Heacham south beach 420 Dec, Thornham Hbr 165 Aug, 230 Sept, 150 Nov; Berney Marshes 250 Feb. Reports of flocks feeding inland rather few and far between; noted at 12 sites, max 50 Narford April, 40 Flitcham Oct and 60 Dec. 104 Anmer Nov, 41 Bircham March, 30 Strumpshaw Jan.

In Stanford TA first present Feb 28th; total of 34 prs at 22 sites. Elsewhere pairs or territories noted at 4 sites. June counts: 320 Scolt Head/Brancaaster Hbr, 110 Blakeney Hbr and 209 Breydon (a record June count).

Movements: 104 north Blakeney Point May 31st, 105 west Salthouse June 19th, 79 west Overstrand June 24th, 84 east Titchwell July 11th and 70 west Sheringham Oct 14th.

Low tide counts of whole North Norfolk coast produced 1366 Nov and 1238 Dec.

## Spotted Redshank

*Tringa erythropus*

### *Passage migrant; small numbers over-winter*

In first winter period a number of wintering birds with one Holme, 6 Titchwell, singles Burnham Norton and Cley. 2 Breydon/Berney, and occasional records Admiralty Point, Brancaaster and Hickling. Spring passage underway by mid-March when 4 Berney 16th but numbers small throughout spring. Best counts 5 Berney April 8th, 7 Blakeney FM April 18th, 3 Welney April 21st, 3 Hickling April 23rd-26th, 3 Kelling April 28th, 8 Hickling May 8th and 7 Burnham Norton May 10th. Final birds of spring Berney 19th and Cley 27th.

One Burnham Norton June 8th was start of autumn passage followed by 23 Snettisham 24th, 6 Cley 29th and 1-3 at 5 further localities. In July, apart from 30 Snettisham 20th and up to 10 daily Cley, elsewhere numbers poor with 1-3 at 7 other sites. A similar situation in first half of Aug but slight improvement in second half when 40 Snettisham 24th, up to 10 daily Cley, 6 Titchwell 27th, 3 Cantley BF 15th and 1-2 at 7 other sites. In Sept numbers still poor with 7 Cley 4th/5th, 7 Snettisham 17th and 21st, and 6 Titchwell 24th easily the largest counts. In Oct 5 Terrington 4th, 4 Titchwell 5th, 6 Cley 13th and 1-2 Hickling and Breydon. In Nov a surprising number of records with up to 8 Titchwell, 6 Breydon/Berney, 3 Cley, 3 Welney and singles Terrington, Brancaaster Hbr and Warham. In Dec numbers declined slightly but still far more than normal in residence with 7 Titchwell, 4 Breydon/Berney, 2 Brancaaster Hbr and singles Ongar Hill, Snettisham, Wells, Warham, Cley and Kelling.



**Redshank***Tringa totanus**Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; declining breeder in some areas*

Monthly max by 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>
Snettisham	-	50	-	33	55	55	948	605	1470	1500	91	239
Holme	189	143	135	76	40	40	40	57	91	73	153	179
Thornham	49	-	6	19	-	-	-	80	40	15	55	10
Titchwell	120	40	45	21	-	-	40	46	43	1	71	40
Scolt Head/ Brancaster Hbr	475	472	301	86	130	130	455	833	611	553	580	580
Burnham Overy Hbr	64	78	33	61	-	-	-	81	110	71	105	147
Wells Hbr	162	55	-	34	-	-	-	203	96	84	401	302
Warham	40	40	94	40	-	-	-	67	77	109	158	130
Stiffkey	45	35	24	37	-	-	-	33	65	75	55	84
Blakeney Hbr	192	192	160	119	-	-	-	78	93	450	126	98
Breydon/Berney	752	671	959	579	56	140	453	613	600	896	837	730

*National importance (winter): 1100*

Additional counts: Ousemouth 194 March, Lynn Point 150 Nov and Welney 163 March.

This is a difficult species to count at high tide due to a preference for roosting on saltmarshes and as a result it is under-counted. This was illustrated by low tide counts of all inter-tidal habitat Holme-Weybourne during Nov and Dec when totals of 3556 and 3279 respectively. Main localities Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, Wells Hbr, Warham and Blakeney Hbr which accounted for c70% of these totals.

Breeding data again incomplete. On coastal grazing marshes the following pairs: 10 Ken Hill, 10 Holme, 2-3 Brancaster, 77 Holkham NNR and one Kelling WM. On saltmarshes under-recorded with only counts of 23 Snettisham, 14 Holme, 45 Brancaster Hbr, 17 Scolt Head, 2 Blakeney Point and 6-8 Breydon. Inland 75 Welney, 21 Berney, 8 Heigham Holmes, 4 Runham, 2 Wissington BF and singles South Walsham and Tallents Meadow Lake. Success generally seems to have been good at most sites despite high Fox predation at Welney and high tides over saltmarshes in May and June.

The usual easterly passage observed in Aug when 60 Sheringham 7th, 30 Mundesley 10th and 60 Scolt Head 31st.

**Greenshank***Tringa nebularia**Passage migrant in spring and autumn; scarce in winter*

In first 3 months of year singles Holme Jan 16th, Feb 2nd, March 9th; Thornham Jan 28th; Titchwell Feb 5th and 15th; Holkham March 9th and Hickling March 28th. A single bird probably accounts for most of these records. First spring birds in April when singles Cley 2nd, Scolt Head 7th, Salthouse and Breydon 8th where 11 was best count of month. In May an obvious influx 1st-5th when 3 Holme, 5 Titchwell, 3 Cley, 6 Weybourne, 5 west 2 east Sheringham, 12 Berney, 3 Hickling, 8 Buckenham, 6 Welney and 1-2 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, Burnham Norton, Holkham, Hardley Flood, Cranwich GP, Scnnowe Park, Middleton GP and Pentney GP. Best counts during rest of month 12 Wissington BF 9th and 12 Berney 29th. In June recorded daily and impossible to determine finish of spring and start of autumn passage. Best counts 9 Hickling 1st, 5 Welney 3rd, 4 Cley 4th, 17th and 23rd, 4 Berney 3rd, and 12 Titchwell 7th.

An excellent autumn passage with peak numbers mid-July to mid-Sept. Highest counts:

	<i>Jul</i>			<i>Aug</i>			<i>Sep</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>
Terrington	-	51	9	25	20	12	56	-	-
Snettisham	-	16	16	20	20	30	5	34	-
Titchwell	1	1	9	20	15	40	44	45	29
Scolt Head/ Brancaster Hbr	5	13	5	32	36	49	14	54	66
Cley	2	5	7	21	15	34	14	12	7
Cantley BF	2	2	1	10	20	30	7	5	-

Largest counts elsewhere: Lynn Point 50 Aug 20th and 30 Sept 4th, Holme 13 Aug 17th, Thornham 18 Aug 22nd, Burnham Norton 16 Aug 24th, Burnham Overy Hbr 26 Aug 24th, Blakeney Hbr max 10 Aug and Hickling 12 Aug 15th. Some good counts of birds moving at Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr where 10 south July 15th, 33 west Aug 28th and 19 west Sept 17th. In comparison numbers inland small with 3 Wissington July 22nd-31st, 5 Welney Aug 12th and 3 Tallents Meadow Lake Aug 20th the best.

Smaller numbers in Oet with max 13 Terrington 4th, 15 Titchwell 1st and 16th, and 25 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 2nd. Numbers very small in Nov with 3 all month Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr and 1-2 on odd dates at Terrington, Snettisham, Titchwell and Cley. In Dec singles Holme all month and Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr.

## Green Sandpiper

*Tringa ochropus*

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

Only small numbers Jan/Feb when 3 Methwold Common Feb 23rd and 1-2 Cley, Lynford GP, Middleton GP, Roekland Broad, Searning Fen, Whitlingham Lane GP and Wissington BF. Small numbers continued to be reported in first half of March until a small but obvious increase at month end as first spring birds moved through. Spring passage light with 4 Felbrigg April 23rd the largest count and 1-3 at 23 additional sites with final birds of spring Burnham Norton and Berney May 17th. One east at Sheringham May 29th could have been a late spring migrant but could also have been an early returning bird.

First definite returning birds in June when at Strumpshaw 8th and Kelling 9th and by month end 1-4 at 14 further sites. As usual during autumn the premier locality was Cantley BF where 32 July 19th, 35 July 30th, 45 Aug 5th, 50 Aug 14th, 60 Aug 29th, 37 Sept 5th, 20 Sept 16th, 8 Oct 2nd and smaller numbers till mid-Dec. Elsewhere in July max counts 11 Strumpshaw 1st, 10 Cley 14th, 18 Wissington BF 18th and 6 Holme 20th. During Aug recorded at many sites with max counts 6 Titchwell 1st, 6 Baconsthorpe 7th, 8 Holme 10th, 8 Wissington 18th/19th, 5 Buckenham 23rd, 12 Holkham 24th, 5 Tattersett 25th, 7 Salthouse 26th and 15 Cley 29th. Numbers steadily declined during Sept when 9 Cley 6th and 5 Strumpshaw 26th. In Oct 1-3 at 11 localities and in Nov/Dec 1-2 at Snettisham, Sea Palling, Breydon, Hunworth, Merton, Wissington BF, Middleton GP and Pentney GP.

## Wood Sandpiper

*Tringa glareola*

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn*

First of year Kelling WM April 27th. Birds daily during May with an obvious influx 3rd-5th when 3 Welney, 3 Wissington BF (till 11th), 2 Berney, 2 Buckenham and singles Lynn Point, Titchwell, Burnham Norton, Holkham, Cley, Salthouse, Kelling and Weybourne. Others during month 3 Buckenham 9th and 14th, 6 Salthouse 17th, 4 Cley 18th, 2 Berney 28th and singles at 4 other coastal localities.

Spring passage continued during first half of June with singles Cley 7th/8th, 15th and 17th, Hickling 7th/8th and 17th, and Pentney GP 12th. First returning birds June 28th-30th when a large influx with 13 Holkham, 3 Cley, 15 Salhouse, 2 Welney and singles Kelling and Surlingham.

Passage light during July with 4 Cley 14th and 26th/27th, 3 Welney 18th and 1-2 Holme, Titchwell, Kelling WM, Hickling, Cantley BF and Wissington BF. Numbers peaked during Aug when highest counts 8 Hickling (no date), 7 Titchwell 12th, 7 Salhouse 26th, 7 Cley 28th, 3 Cantley BF 10th, 3 Welney 11th and 1-2 at 4 other coastal localities. Other inland birds at this time Syderstone 19th and Tattersett 25th. Apart from 10 south Cley Sept 6th numbers fewer during month with 4 Cley 6th, 3 Cantley BF 8th and final birds of year 2 Stiffkey 22nd, Cantley BF 23rd and Titchwell 26th.

## Common Sandpiper

*Actitis hypoleucos*

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

First Stiffkey March 8th may well have been too early for a true spring migrant and was probably a bird which wintered elsewhere in the country. First definite migrants in April when singles Pentney GP and Whitlingham Lane GP 14th and an influx from 23rd when 1-3 at 14 sites. Main passage in May but numbers generally disappointing with max counts 7 Pentney GP 3rd, 5 Snettisham 3rd, 4 Martham Broad 17th, 5 Titchwell 22nd, 4 Salhouse 22nd, 4 Whitlingham Lane GP 24th, 9 Breydon 27th, 6 Kelling 30th, 8 east Sheringham 31st and 1-3 at 15 other widely scattered localities. Small numbers of spring migrants continued to be reported to middle of June with best count 6 Titchwell 2nd. Later in month 2 Whitlingham Lane GP 16th and 21st difficult to assign to either passage period.

First definite returning birds end of June when Berney 28th and 2 Titchwell 29th. Best counts of autumn in July when peaks 19th-27th and in Aug 12th-15th and 19th-25th. Highest counts: Lynn Point 21 Aug 19th; Snettisham 40 Aug 19th; Holme 11 Aug 13th; Titchwell 16 July 26th and 15 Aug 1st and 19th; Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 24 Aug 12th; Cley 8 July 26th and 13 Aug 12th; Sheringham 16 west Aug 25th; Happisburgh 10 Aug 28th; Breydon/Berney 21 Aug 4th; Hickling 28 Aug 8th; Cantley BF 10 July 30th and 15 Aug 14th and 22nd; Gunton Park Lake 22 Aug 19th; Wissington BF 11 July 18th; Pentney GP 14 Aug 14th; and Welney 6 July 18th.

Smaller numbers recorded throughout Sept with max 12 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 4th, 17 Cantley BF 5th and 17 Lynn Point 17th. Final birds in Oct when last Snettisham 17th.

## Turnstone

*Arenaria interpres*

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

Monthly max at main and best counted localities:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
King's Lynn Docks	61	49	35	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	39
Snettisham	-	15	-	26	-	4	288	510	32	247	46	40
Holme	40	26	42	11	20	8	18	60	45	30	48	38
Scolt Head/ Brancaster Hbr	92	95	75	120	227	21	82	286	275	223	333	184
Wells Hbr	20	17	-	3	-	-	-	10	14	6	25	39
Stiffkey	17	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	33	17	32	31
Blakeney Hbr	42	38	23	31	-	-	-	30	30	74	155	152

National importance (winter): 640



Other counts not included in the above: 100 Lynn Point Aug. 25 Heacham Dec, 34 Thornham Jan, 40 Titchwell Mareh, and at Sheringham 85 Mareh and 50 April.

More records than normal inland: 2 Hiekling May 2nd, one July 21st, 2 July 27th, 1-3 Aug 15th-19th and 2 Sept 4th; 4 Berney May 3rd; 3 Strumpshaw May 3rd; Welney June 2nd and Dec 15th; Pentney GP Aug 11th-15th; and 7 Cantley BF Aug 14th.

An interesting ringing recovery of one Yarmouth Feb 1st 1995 which had been ringed at Ellesmere Island, Canada, Aug 14th 1994.

### **Red-necked Phalarope**

*Phalaropus lobatus*

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

A poor year, only record a female Burnham Norton June 28th (GPD *et al*). A typical date and locality.

### **Grey Phalarope**

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

An exceptional autumn began with early individuals Welney Aug 30th-Sept 2nd and west Holme Sept 20th (JRW).

As usual most during Oct with first of month 2nd when west Weybourne (MPT) and one west one east Sheringham (KBS SCV). Largest numbers occurred during strong northerly winds 12th/13th. On 12th 2 west Holme (AFB JBi), 2 Braneaster Hbr, one Cley reserve (till 13th with 2 14th-21st), west Weybourne (MPT), north Scratby (SSm), on sea Yarmouth (till 13th), and one Welney where 2 13th-15th. Further new arrivals on 13th when 2 on sea Seolt Head, 2 west Weybourne (MPT) and singles on sea Mundesley and Winterton. Apart from those already mentioned only new bird on 14th one on sea Caister. Last of year Stiffkey Fen Oct 28th/29th. As many records referred to birds moving between sites it is impossible to determine how many individuals were involved.

Two which passed Sheringham Sept 13th (PJH) were accepted as phalarope *sp* by the County Records Committee.

### **Pomarine Skua**

*Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

In opening month of year singles Cley 1st, east Sheringham 4th, Titchwell 9th and Weybourne 16th. No further records until autumn when first east Overstrand Aug 1st with others during the month on 9 dates. Most 4th when 2 Titchwell, 2 east Cley, one Weybourne, and 30th when one Holme, 4 west Seolt Head, one Cley, and one west 2 east Overstrand. In Sept recorded on just 6 dates; most 9th when 11 west Holme, 3 Titchwell, 2 Cley, 3 Sheringham and 2 Sea Palling.

Some good counts during Oct when on 2nd 6 Holme, 3 west Titchwell, 15 west Seolt Head, one west Blakeney Point, 3 west Cley and 7 Sheringham. Birds daily from 10th with most 12th/13th and 23rd-25th. On 12th 20 south-west Hunstanton, 3 west Titchwell, 8 west Seolt Head, 5 Cley, 4 east 3 west Sheringham, 2 west Mundesley and singles Sea Palling and Yarmouth. On 13th 2 west Holme, 21 west Seolt Head, one west Blakeney Point, 3 Cley, singles east and west Sheringham, and 2 Sea Palling. From 23rd exceptional numbers of juvs recorded along the coast when 24 west Holme, 17 in off sea and then south inland Titchwell, 139 east Cley, 100 east Sheringham and 2 Waxham. Numbers higher on 24th when 49 west Holme, 173 east Cley, 145 east Sheringham, 40 east Overstrand, 14 Mundesley, 18 Sea Palling and singles Waxham and Winterton. Fewer next day but still 19 west Holme and 31 east Sheringham.

Small numbers continued to be reported almost daily to end of Nov with most on 30th when 11 Titchwell, 3 Cley, 4 Sheringham, 3 east East Runton, 3 east Overstrand and one south Sea Palling. In Dec east Sheringham 1st and on 12th west Holme, 6 east Sheringham and one Sea Palling.

## Arctic Skua

*Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Spring passage fairly typical when in April at Breydon 10th, 2 Titchwell 11th and east Scolt Head 15th and in May 3 west Scolt Head 6th and west Cley 27th. An unusual number of June records with 2 west Overstrand 5th, 3 Titchwell 10th, west Overstrand 25th, west Scolt Head and 2 east Overstrand 26th, and on 27th west Holme, 3 west Scolt Head and singles Sheringham, Sea Palling and Mundesley.

During July Scolt Head 2nd and from 12th birds daily along coast through to end of Oct. By month end up to 30 feeding offshore between Holme and Scolt Head, increasing to 40 early Aug. First notable movement of autumn Aug 30th when 65 west 21 east Holme, 61 west 25 east Scolt Head, 15 east Blakeney Point, 125 Cley, 20 east Sheringham and 72 east Overstrand. In Sept 208 west Holme, 42 Titchwell, 50 Brancaster, 100 Cley and 50 Sheringham 9th; 19 Ongar Hill, 13 west Holme, 23 Titchwell, 16 east 4 west Scolt Head, 13 Cley, 49 Sheringham and 33 east Overstrand 13th. On 19th 35 Cley and 60 west Overstrand. In Oct best counts 2nd when 66 west Holme, 46 Titchwell, 78 west 5 east Scolt Head, 45 Cley, 60 Sheringham and 10 Eccles; and 12th when 30 west 5 east Holme, 37 Titchwell, 43 west Scolt Head, 30 Cley, 8 east 7 west Sheringham, and 10 Eccles. In Nov more than normal reported especially on 30th when 4 west Holme, 3 Cley, 6 Sheringham and east Overstrand. Small numbers continued to be reported during Dec when 2 between Snettisham and Titchwell 6th-8th and last of year east Sheringham 12th.



*Arctic Skua (P. Beeson)*

## Long-tailed Skua

*Stercorarius longicaudus*

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

A fairly typical autumn by recent standards with first 2 Sheringham Aug 25th and an adult north Horsey 31st. In Sept juv Blakeney Point 6th, and on 9th 4 west Holme, adult and juv Brancaster, juv Blakeney Point, adult and 8 juvs Cley, and juv Sheringham. Others during the month were juv Cley 10th; Sheringham 12th; west Holme, 4 Cley, 6 juvs east Sheringham and 3 east Overstrand 13th; Cley 14th; juvs Cley and west Overstrand 19th; adult west Sheringham 23rd; west Sheringham 25th and juv west Weybourne 27th.

In Oct west Overstrand 1st when juv found dead inland at Field Dalling; 2 Holme, adult Titchwell, adult and 4 juvs west Scolt Head, adult Cley and 6 Sheringham 2nd; 3 east Sheringham 10th; 4 juvs west Holme, adult and 4 juvs west Scolt Head, 4 Cley, 2 Weybourne, 4 Sheringham, 2 Eccles and west Mundesley 12th. On 13th west Holme, 2 adults and 7 juvs west Scolt Head and singles Cley, Sheringham and Eccles. Final birds of year juvs Cley and Eccles 24th.

## Great Skua

*Catharacta skua*

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

In first winter period singles east Sheringham Jan 4th, Yarmouth Feb 16th and east Titchwell Feb 23rd. Spring passage light with birds east Titchwell April 11th, 4 west Scolt Head May 6th and 2 east Sheringham May 21st. Like so many seabirds an unusual number of records during June when west Cley 24th, west Holme, 2 west Scolt Head, 5 Cley, west Weybourne, 2 east Sheringham, east Overstrand and Yarmouth all 26th, and east Scolt Head 27th.

During July recorded on 3 dates, most on 18th when west Holme, 3 west Scolt Head, east Cley and east Sheringham. Birds offshore daily during Aug, most on 30th when 27 west 2 east Holme, 11 west Scolt Head, and 6 east 3 west Sheringham. Best counts in Sept on 9th when 192 west Holme, 26 Titchwell, 40 Brancaster, 60 Cley and 22 Sheringham, and on 13th when 13 north-west Ongar Hill, 37 west Holme, 6 Titchwell, 23 west 15 east Scolt Head, and 23 east 5 west Sheringham.

Some excellent counts in Oct when on 2nd 56 west Holme, 23 west Titchwell, 87 west 4 east Scolt Head, 28 west Blakeney Point, 50 Cley, 14 Weybourne, and 40 west 35 east Sheringham. Impressive numbers also on 12th when 6 Lynn Point, 64 south-west Hunstanton, 235 west Holme, 60 west Titchwell, 25 Brancaster, 237 west Scolt Head, 100 Cley, 27 Weybourne, 50 west 40 east Sheringham, and 20 Eccles. On 13th 36 south-west Hunstanton, 89 west 15 east Holme, 281 west Scolt Head, 64 west Blakeney Point, 63 Cley, 16 Weybourne and 43 Sheringham. Inland birds during this period east Felbrigg/Metton 12th and 3 Welney 13th (first reserve record). Smaller numbers continued to be reported rest of month. During Nov recorded on 7 dates, most on 30th when 21 west Holme, 15 Cley, 25 Sheringham and 17 east East Runton. In Dec one Sea Palling 1st, 13 east 2 west Sheringham 12th, and one Overstrand 15th.

## Mediterranean Gull

*Larus melanocephalus*

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

Breeding only at Blakeney Point where one pair probably fledged at least one young and another pair failed.

The trend of increasing occurrence continues but yet again true numbers are difficult to assess. Records are summarised by month and age:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st year	7	6	12	18	31	14	4	5	5	3	6	3
2nd year	11	6	8	14	7	3	2	2	8	9	8	8
Adult	16	18	38	21	8	9	10	7	7	16	17	14

Most popular sites included Heacham/Hunstanton, Cley/Blakeney, Salhouse, Overstrand and Yarmouth/Breydon. Some larger counts included Heacham 5 adults, 2 1st-winters Nov 27th; Scolt Head 7 1st-summer, 2nd-summer May 13th, and 8 1st-summer May 20th; Blakeney Point up to 4 adults, 2 2nd-summer, 3 1st-summer in May; Yarmouth 2 adults, 3 2nd-winters, 4 1st-winters Jan 4th; 5 adults, 3 2nd-winters, 3 1st-winters Feb 19th; 2 adults, 2 2nd-winters, 6 1st-winters, one juv Sept 11th; and 5 adults, 3 2nd-winters, 2 1st-winters Dec 26th; and Breydon 4 1st-summer May 10th.

Inland: Barnham Cross Common adult Jan 1st; Bradwell adult Nov 28th; Buckenham 1st-winter Jan 24th; Cantley BF 1st-winter Sept 5th; Felbrigg Park 2 adults March 18th and 2nd-year March 25th; Filby Broad adult and 2nd-winter Nov 9th; regular Holkham Park with 4 adults, 2nd-summer, 2 1st-summer April 12th; Pensthorpe 2 adults March 29th; Pentney GP 1st-winter Jan 30th and Dec 23rd; Raynham Lake adult Jan 31st; Thetford



Nunnery Lakes 2nd-winter Jan 13th and 31st; Tottenhill GP 2nd-winter Jan 22nd and 25th/26th; and Welney adult Jan 25th.

Only juv reported Yarmouth Sept 11th. A 1st-winter at Yarmouth from Oct 29th had been ringed in the Netherlands May 29th.

### Little Gull

*Larus minutus*

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

Numbers small in first 3 months of year apart from an influx Holme-Scolt Head Feb 7th-9th when 60 Holme, 100 Titchwell and 18 Scolt Head, with up to 60 in this area till Feb 25th.

Spring passage light involving mostly adults with 2 Wroxham Broad March 17th, up to 3 there April 12th-23rd, Sheringham April 12th, 3 Rockland Broad April 14th, Kelling WM April 27th, 3 Hickling Broad May 3rd and 2 Breydon May 5th.

From May 8th there was the usual influx of 1st-summer birds which were recorded daily till at least end of July. Highest counts 13 Titchwell, 8 Cley, 5 Holkham Park, 4 Holkham, 4 Sheringham, 3 Salthouse and 1-2 Berney, Breydon, Burnham Norton, Hickling Broad, Holme, Scolt Head, Sea Palling, Thornham and Weybourne.

Autumn passage commenced mid July when small numbers of adults noted. Numbers small till mid Oct with best counts 13 west Scolt Head Sept 1st; 9 west Scolt Head, 6 west Blakeney Point and 46 Sheringham Sept 28th; 20 Cley Oct 10th. Main autumn passage from Oct 20th when 20 Eccles, 32 Sea Palling and 30 Winterton; 39 east Holkham Bay 22nd; 250 Hunstanton, 244 west 9 east Holme, 10 east Scolt Head, 36 Cley and 50 east Sheringham 24th; 120 west Holme 25th; 40 Titchwell 26th. Birds daily Nov when 52 Sea Palling 2nd, 52 Brancaster and 113 south Horsey 21st, and impressive numbers on 30th during strong northerly winds when 14 west Holme, 250 Cley, 695 east Sheringham, 88 east East Runton and 25 east Overstrand. Numbers small during Dec when singles at 4 sites. As in several other counties in Britain there has been a genuine increase in numbers recorded, especially in late autumn. How long before Norfolk sees its first four-figure count?



*Little Gulls (P. Jones)*

### Sabine's Gull

*Larus sabini*

Almost annual but scarce autumn vagrant from High Arctic; extremely rare in spring. An exceptional series of records. Aug-Oct: Aug 19th Cley possibly 1st-summer (LP); Aug 30th Holme (JBi), and presumed same Scolt Head adult west (NML MESR); Sept 9th Holme juv west (NML), Cley juv east, adult west, and juv on Arnold's Marsh and then west (BAEM RGM *et al*), Sheringham adult and juv east (JRW), Overstrand 2 juvs west (AE BJM); Sept 10th Brancaster juv west (RQS); Sept 13th Cley juv east then west (RGM), Overstrand

adult east (AE BJM); *Sept 20th* Brancaster juv east (RK), Scolt Head head juv east (JoB NML), Cley 2 juvs east (JD&JEG SCV *et al*), Sheringham 2 juvs (one east) (TW); *Sept 21st* Waxham juv south (TBA); *Sept 25th* Sheringham juv east (IGJ); *Sept 27th* Sheringham juv west (KBS SCV) and Horsey juv south (DJ); *Sept 28th* Cley juv lingering (SJMG *et al*); *Oct 2nd* juv west Titchwell (MHo) and Scolt Head 2 juvs west (NML); *Oct 3rd* Holme juv west (JBi); *Oct 10th* Hunstanton 2 juvs north-east out of Wash (MR&ORM); *Oct 12th* Eccles 3 (1-2 juvs, one unaged) (NBB JHa AJK); *Oct 20th* Holme juv west (NML).

*1996 Addition:* Cley juv *Sept 13th* (MAG).

## **Black-headed Gull**

*Larus ridibundus*

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

Breeding pairs recorded as follows (success unknown unless otherwise stated): Wash Outer Trial Bank 21, Snettisham 1357, Holme 15, Brancaster Hbr 40-51 (poor success), Scolt Head 276 (<10 young fledged), Burnham Overy Saltmarsh 100+, Holkham NNR 70, Blakeney Point 2500 (large number of young), Heigham Holmes 2, Strumpshaw 250, Middleton GP one (2 young) and Wisington GP 20 (flooded out).

Monthly roost counts: *Jan* Lynn Point 9000, Heacham 3000 and Thornham 450; *Feb* Lynn Point 5450, Thornham 750, Scolt Head 12,500, Wroxham 5000 and Roekland 3000; *March* Lynn Point 1860; *April* Lynn Point 525; *June* Lynn Point 330; *July* Lynn Point 2880; *Aug* Lynn Point 2875 and Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 6000; *Sept* Lynn Point 6350, Thornham 409 and Titchwell 400; *Oct* Welney 2400, Lynn Point 9200 and Thornham 265; *Nov* Lynn Point 4150, Heacham South Beach 10,000, Ranworth Broad 6000 and Filby Broad 1200; *Dec* Lynn Point 6630, Ranworth Broad 3000 and Barton Broad 2000.

Westerly coastal movements included: Sheringham 200 *April 1st*, 450 *Oct 1st* and 4000 *Oct 16th*; Scolt Head 270 *June 26th*, 220 *July 2nd*, 146 *July 8th*, 400 *July 18th*, 1850 *July 19th*, 170 *Sept 18th*, 650 *Oct 13th* and 118 *Oct 16th*; Holme 279 *July 19th*, 346 *Oct 16th* and 540 *Oct 17th*.

Flocks feeding on flying ants included 3500 at Scolt Head *Aug 24th* and 700 Holme *Aug 12th*.

Other notable counts: St Benet's Level 1600 *Feb 12th*; Felbrigg Park 750 *March 18th*; Titchwell 420 *March*, 275 *April*, 510 *June* and 365 *Oct*; Sheringham 600 *March* and 400 *Oct*; Scolt Head 550 *April*; Snettisham 1300 *May*, 1710 *June* and 2000 *Oct*; Holme 1000 *Oct*; East Harling Heath 3000 *Dec 18th*; Blackborough End Tip 1200 *Dec 31st*.

## **Common Gull**

*Larus canus*

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

Breeding recorded at Blakeney Point where 6 prs bred with 'good success' (one pr fledged 3 young) and Scolt Head where 2 prs failed.

Notable roost counts: *Jan* 3000 Lynn Point, 4500 Heacham and 1500 Thornham; *Feb* 1350 Lynn Point, 2380 Thornham and 7500 Scolt Head; *March* and *April* 100 Lynn Point; *July* 307 Lynn Point; *Aug* 335 Lynn Point and 1000 Scolt Head; *Sept* 1950 Lynn Point and 1500 Scolt Head; *Oct* 3300 Lynn Point, 607 Thornham and 58 Welney; *Nov* 2325 Lynn Point, 1500 Heacham and 200 Filby Broad; *Dec* 2770 Lynn Point.

Visible migration at Sheringham included 250 east *Jan 1st*, 180 west *March 31st*, 175 east *April 12th*, 40 east *May 6th*, 400 west *Sept 27th*, 600 west *Oct 14th* and 950 west *Oct 16th*. At Scolt Head westerly movements of 120 *June 26th*, 110 *July 18th* and 640 next day, 160 *Oct 12th* with 220 next day. Elsewhere Holme 138 west *Aug 20th* and 116 west *Oct 12th*; 5000 Cley *Oct 14th*.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

*Larus fuscus*

*Passage migrant and migratory breeder; increasing in winter*

Breeding recorded at 2 sites: Wash Outer Trial Bank approx 900 prs in a mixed colony with Herring Gulls, and Blakeney Point 8 prs.

Some large gatherings: Lynn Point 118 March 29th, 348 April 24th, 223 May 24th, 187 July 24th and 510 Aug 27th; Scolt Head 85 June 24th; Welney 232 July 4th and 114 on 16th; Keswick 900 July 7th and 500 July 10th; Caister St Edmund 150 July 13th and 300 Aug 2nd; Whitlingham Lane 120 July 15th; Hickling 300 Sept 4th and 27th; Fundenhall 120 Aug 16th; East Tuddenham 200 Aug 18th; East Ruston/Lessingham 280 Sept 7th; Boyland Common 650 Sept 18th; Winfarthing 200 Sept 28th; East Harling 600 Oct 4th.

Movements included Scolt Head 75 west April 23rd and 45 west July 19th; Sheringham 60 east 12 west April 27th, 50 east 15 west May 25th.

As usual small numbers in winter apart from 350 Garboldisham Nov 6th and an exceptional max of 580 East Harling Heath in Dec with 100 still there on 29th on harvested sugar beet.

While several records of the Baltic race *L f fuscus* have been submitted, the County Records Committee does not consider that any such records should be published either at present or in the future without an accepted detailed description. This form is now rare in its breeding grounds and potential confusion with *L f intermedius* cannot be over-emphasised.

**Herring Gull**

*Larus argentatus*

*Increasing breeder, late summer migrant and winter visitor*

Breeding occurred at 4 sites: Wash Outer Trial Bank approx 900 prs in a mixed colony with Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Brancaster Hbr 4-5 prs, Scolt Head one pr and Blakeney Point 120 prs.

Concentrations included Terrington Marsh 400 Aug 17th; King's Lynn Docks 200 June 11th, 151 June 25th and 635 Dec 6th; Lynn Point 226 March 29th, 429 April 24th, 145 May 24th, 112 July 24th, 400 Aug 27th and 291 Nov 9th; Heacham 2000 Jan 8th and 1200 Nov 28th; Snettisham 1400 June 22nd, 525 July 6th and 160 Aug 24th; Holme 2000 Jan 1st, 2820 Feb 9th and 500 July 8th/9th; Thornham 2500 Jan 2nd and Feb 2nd; Titchwell 250 April, 102 June 22nd and 350 Dec 2nd; Scolt Head 450 May 10th and June 24th, 420 July 6th, 180 Aug 1st, 400 Aug 8th, 1300 Aug 29th, 1200 Sept 1st/2nd and 150 Oct 19th; Blackborough End Tip 550 Dec 31st.

Notable movements: Welney 180 north-east Jan 5th (unusually high number for this site); Sheringham 300 west Feb 23rd, 200 east March 9th, 150 west on 17th, 150 east April 27th, 100 east 35 west May 25th and 400 west Oct 14th; Scolt Head 440 west April 23rd, with 180 west next day, 80 west June 20th and 450 west Oct 13th; Overstrand 172 west Dec 1st and 70 east on 24th.

A juv showing the characteristics of the American form *smithsonianus* at Cley Dec 31st (RGM) - the first accepted county record.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *micahellis* (Mediterranean Yellow-legged Gull) Recorded each month with the usual midsummer peak. Exact number of individuals difficult to assess but monthly totals as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	7	5	11	3	20	23	14	9	4	5	4



Most favoured sites Cley/Salthouse, Breydon and Hickling. Generally 1-2 but 3 2nd-summers Cley and max 5 Hickling in Aug. An adult at Kelling WM on April 22nd was reported displaying to an *argentatus* Herring Gull.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *cachinnans* (Pontie Gull) Following comments in last year's Report the first two accepted records of this south-west Asian race received: Cley 2nd-winter Nov 18th and adult Dec 17th (RGM).

### **Iceland Gull**

*Larus glaucoides*

*Annual but very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

Snettisham unaged Jan 4th; King's Lynn 2nd-winter Feb 5th-9th and 1st-winter Feb 25th; Welney 2nd-winter March 8th; Ongar Hill 2nd-winter March 9th; Salthouse/Cley 1st-summer April 5th; Titchwell 1st-summer April 8th; Whitlingham Lane GP 3rd-summer May 26th and 28th-30th. Only one record in second winter period, Titchwell 2nd-winter Dec 2nd.

In addition an adult Iceland/Glaucous Gull flew south Winterton May 1st.

### **Glaucous Gull**

*Larus hyperboreus*

*Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers; rare in summer*

King's Lynn 1st-winter Jan 5th and Feb 5th and 2nd-winter Dec 12th; Aldeby Tip 1st-winter various dates Jan 5th-20th; Lynn Point 1st-winter Jan 10th and adult Dec 7th; Breydon 1st-winter Jan 18th and 23rd, March 22nd-26th (unaged) and 1st-winter Dec 3rd; Mundesley 1st-winter north Jan 11th, 1st-winter Feb 17th and 1st-summer west (0800 hrs) April 5th; Snettisham unaged Jan 20th; Salthouse 1st-winter west Feb 28th; Cley 'immature' March 27th and 1st-summer west May 5th; Holkham FM 1st-summer May 9th; Sparham GP 2nd-year May 16th; Blakeney Point 1st-winter Oct 12th; Seolt Head 1st-winter west Oct 13th; Eeales 1st-winter Nov 30th.

Glaucous x Herring Gull 1st-winter Cley Dec 26th (RGM).

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

*Larus marinus*

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

Coastal movements included Sheringham 25 east March 9th and 160 west Oct 14th; Seolt Head 140 west June 26th, 85 west July 19th and 145 west Oct 13th; Overstrand 70 west Aug 2nd and 30 west Dec 1st.

Notable gatherings: Seolt Head 75 July 6th, 180 July 20th, 125 Aug 1st, 200 Aug 8th and Sept 1st, 280 Sept 2nd, 270 Sept 17th, 350 Sept 23rd, 145 Oct 13th and 378 Oct 19th; Ongar Hill 95 July 20th and 94 Dec 27th; Thornham Hbr 93 July, 100 Sept and 144 Oct; Terrington Marsh 150 Aug 17th; Blakeney Hbr 70 Oct 31st; Buxton Tip 120 Oct 28th; Heacham 45 Nov 28th; Blackborough End Tip 52 Dec 31st.

### **Kittiwake**

*Rissa tridactyla*

*Mainly passage migrant; occasional non-breeding concentrations in summer*

Notable coastal movements included Sheringham 1100 east Jan 1st; Seolt Head 480 east, Weybourne 375 east and Sheringham 1400 all May 5th; Seolt Head 550 east June 26th; Sheringham 'a few hundred' June 27th and 350 mainly east Sept 13th; Seolt Head 250 west Oct 3rd; Sheringham 800 east 200 west Oct 12th with 300+ (100/hr west in 3 hrs) next day; Hunstanton 350, Holme 350 west 66 east, and Seolt Head 550 west all Oct 13th; Cley 5270, Sheringham 6800 east, Mundesley 9600 east and Overstrand 638 east all Oct 24th; Holme 500 Oct 25th; Sheringham 1000 Nov 11th; Holme 968 west 6 east, Cley 500 and East Runton 435 mainly east (0815-1330 hrs) Nov 30th.

Inland: Wereham (died) March 3rd, East Harling Feb 23rd/24th, Whitlingham Lane GP March 14th and 31st, West Lynn April 6th, Welney Aug 8th/9th and Nov 30th, Buckenham Aug 17th, and Hickling 2 1st-winters Nov 30th.

Seven were found dead Kelling WM March 7th/8th.

### **Caspian Tern**

*Sterna caspia*

#### ***Vagrant from the Baltic***

One at Breydon July 20th (SSm *et al*) - a typical date and locality.

### **Lesser Crested Tern**

*Sterna bengalensis*

#### ***Vagrant from north-east Africa***

1993 Amendment: The bird at Scolt Head and Thornham in July 1993 has been accepted (by BBRC) as different from the 1983 and 1988 individual, which is considered to be the same bird that has been returning to the Farne Islands, Northumberland annually since 1983. This now becomes the second county record and the fifth British record. The bird past Sheringham in August 1993 is still being considered the same as the 1983/88 individual.

### **Sandwich Tern**

*Sterna sandvicensis*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant***

First noted Cley and West Runton March 2nd with no further records until Holme March 18th followed by Cley on 26th.

A complete breeding failure at Scolt Head where c250 prs fledged no young due to a combination of high tides, bad weather and predation. Better success at Blakeney Point where 3000+ prs fledged c2000 young, but c1000 died late June/July due to heavy continuous rain and the failure of adults' ability to catch food. The first juvs recorded away from breeding colonies were singles at Cley and Breydon July 3rd.

A 1st-summer Breydon June 15th/16th.

Inland: 2 Pentney GP May 4th, Pulham St Mary June 28th, Welney June 28th-30th (the first ever June record there), 2 Middleton GP June 29th with one later found dead.

At Scolt Head gatherings of 1800 July 21st and 1500 Aug 4th. Gatherings/movements away from colonies: 214 Holme July 20th, 200 noted there on several dates in first half of Aug, 250 Aug 24th with 100 Sept 3rd; 181 Thornham Aug 2nd with 350 4th; 270 Titchwell Aug 30th; 300 Cley April 30th and 180 May 2nd; 315 Sheringham May 3rd with 150 west 21st and 150 Aug 30th; 158 west Overstrand June 21st with 270 cast in 5 hrs Sept 7th; 380 west Mundesley Oct 2nd and 134 Breydon July 31st.

1-3 recorded at 5 north coast localities in Nov. In Dec one at Sheringham intermittently until 12th with 4 together there on 16th.

### **Roseate Tern**

*Sterna dougallii*

#### ***Uncommon summer visitor; has bred***

Continuing the recent trend of increased occurrences and following last year's first nesting attempts since 1948, breeding was attempted at 2 coastal localities. At one site a pair laid one egg but the nest was predated. At another site a second different pair laid one egg but within a day or two of hatching the nest was lost due to exceptionally high tides in mid-June.

Other sightings: Scolt Head May 18th; east Brancaster May 16th; Cley June 23rd/24th, 26th and 28th; Cley/Blakeney Point 1-2 throughout July and Aug; Cley Sept 2nd/3rd and 7th; 2 Weybourne June 25th and one July 5th; east Sheringham June 26th; west Cromer July 18th; east Overstrand Aug 8th; south Sea Palling July 18th; 2 Sea Palling/Waxham

Aug 18th and 21st with one on 30th; Yarmouth Aug 1st; Breydon June 8th and 21st and July 19th.

**Common Tern**

*Sterna hirundo*

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

Recorded between April 4th (Wroxham Broad) and Oct 31st (Brancaster).

Coastal movements/concentrations in spring included 140 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr April 24th, 200 27th-30th and 200 in May, 610 east Sheringham May 3rd and 144 Snettisham May 11th.

A min of 617 breeding prs, 194 down on last year. No figures available from some sites, especially the Broad.

	<i>No of prs</i>	<i>Young fledged</i>
Wash Outer Trial Bank	8	unknown
Snettisham	70	14
Scolt Head	168	0
Blakeney Point	170	0
Breydon	188	152
Lyng-Easthaugh	1	unknown
Sparham Pools	2	unknown
Middleton GP	1	unknown
Pentney GP	7	14
Ditchingham GP	1	1
Wissington BF	1	2

The Scolt Head and Blakeney Point colonies both failed due to first clutches being abandoned because of adverse weather. Later attempts were all predated.

At Breydon exceptionally cold weather at the end of June with heavy rain for several days resulted in many chicks dying. By the end of the season a record 91 dead chicks recorded there. Despite this Breydon Water LNR remains the most successful breeding colony in the county and probably Great Britain. Since 1977 a total of 2025 young have fledged there. The concentration of birds at this colony is remarkable considering that 186 of the 188 prs nested out on the estuary on 4 fixed raised wooden structures, each structure measuring only 12 ft sq and containing 49 nesting compartments 1.5 ft sq that each nesting pair treat as a territory, ie a total of 196 nesting sites. Were the platforms not sectioned off it is likely that only a small percentage of these numbers would nest there. This year, for example, the A platform fledged 47 young, the B 42, the C 40 and the D 23, representing 0.82 young per pair, lower than the average 1.2 per pair there. The colony started with a 10 ft x 6 ft raft in 1977 and in the intervening years increased to the 4 present structures. (See NBR 1986 for the history of the Breydon Water tern platforms.)

An early juv at Breydon June 29th was not from the Breydon colony.

An adult at Breydon June 25th/26th showed an all-black bill and dark legs but its general shape and colouring was as other Common Terns nearby. It was presumed not to be of the central Siberia to Alaska and China race *longipennis*.

1st-summer birds at Cley June 22nd/23rd; Overstrand June 25th; Breydon June 25th, July 5th, 7th (3), 8th, 14th, 15th (2), 20th, 23rd and 26th with a 2nd-summer bird also there on the 5th.

In autumn 200+ Lynn Point Aug 20th and Sept 2nd; 200 Thornham Aug 2nd; 250 Titchwell Aug 30th with 112 west Sept 9th; 500 Scolt Head Aug 2nd with 600 Sept 2nd;



300 east Sheringham Aug 30th with 160 Sept 9th; 200 Overstrand Oct 10th; 113 west Mundesley Sept 3rd with 170 west Oct 2nd; and 500 Breydon Aug 16th.

**Arctic Tern**

*Sterna paradisaea*

*Double passage migrant; a few pairs breed*

Recorded from April 12th (3 cast at Sheringham) with a light passage of 1-12 birds at 11 sites to mid-May. The only double-figure counts were 12 Scolt Head April 18th and 12 Wroxham Broad April 22nd.

Breeding occurred at Scolt Head where one pr failed and Blakeney Point where 15-20 prs but only 1-2 young may have fledged.

Away from breeding sites juvs at Cley and Breydon (2) July 18th. Light autumn passage at 10 sites with the only double-figure count 10 Salthouse Aug 4th. Last one south Waxham Nov 22nd appears to be the latest ever recorded (KD).



*Arctic Terns (P. Beeson)*

**Little Tern**

*Sterna albifrons*

*Local migratory breeder*

Recorded between April 16th (Brancaster) and Oct 2nd (Mundesley). Inland records from Welney May 2nd; Middleton GP May 3rd; 3 Hickling (Rush Hill) June 2nd and 17th with 4 there Aug 6th.

Only 406 breeding prs recorded, a 34% decrease on last year, but the 148 fledged young were just 7 fewer than the previous year. The Scolt Head and Blakeney Point colonies were complete failures while the Yarmouth colony did well after its complete failure last year. This was due in no small part to a 24 hr wardening scheme throughout the breeding season which was certainly influential in decreasing predation.

	<i>No of prs</i>	<i>Young fledged</i>
Holme	14	0
Brancaster	12	0
Scolt Head	37	0
Stiffkey Binks	50	10
Blakeney Point	100	0
Caister South Beach	2	0
Yarmouth	191	138

The first juv away from breeding sites was at Breydon July 12th.

The only autumn concentrations were at Scolt Head where 125 July 10th, 100 21st, 275 22nd, 205 Aug 1st, 200 2nd, 100 3rd and 248 4th.

## Whiskered Tern

*Chlidonias hybridus*

### Vagrant from southern Europe

One flying east at Cley June 20th at 1610 hrs (MC). The twenty-first county record.

## Black Tern

*Chlidonias niger*

### Regular double passage migrant in variable numbers; has bred

First recorded April 23rd when 28 Breydon then one Middleton GP on 30th. Following 3 Welney May 2nd main movement of spring on 3rd with max of 297 at 16 sites. Largest counts on that date were 45 Barton Broad, 35 east Sheringham, 34 Middleton GP, 32 Strumpshaw, 30 Colney GP, 22 Rockland Broad and 21 Hardley Flood. Passage continued throughout month with a further 129 at 19 sites, mainly 1-4 birds but 6 Holme 15th, 5 Holkham 16th and 10 Breydon 17th. In June 31 at 8 sites, mainly 1-2 birds but 5 Titchwell 1st, with 4 there on 2nd and 6th. In July only 2 records, singles offshore Horsey 19th and west Cley 26th.

Main autumn passage commenced Aug 3rd with one Cley followed by max of 117 at 17 sites by end of month, mainly 1-4 birds but 9 Blakeney Point 14th, 6 Lynn Point 19th, 15 Breydon 27th, 23 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 28th and 7 there on 30th, 9 Ongar Hill and 5 Cley both 30th. Smaller passage continued until mid-Sept with 44 at 14 sites, mainly 1-4 birds but 6 Sheringham 7th and 8 Cley 9th. Subsequently 9 Ongar Hill Sept 28th and in Oct 2 west Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 2nd, singles Holme 4th and 6th, Hunstanton 6th and 8th, Wells 11th and 4 south Yarmouth 16th.

## White-winged Black Tern

*Chlidonias leucopterus*

### Vagrant from south-east Europe

The first records since 1994: Holkham June 7th (RIH JL *et al*), Eccles Oct 6th (AJK), and one at Salthouse (GED DJS *et al*), Weybourne (GED DHS TW MY-P) and subsequently Cley (RB *et al*) Oct 19th.

## Guillemot

*Uria aalge*

### Passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional wrecks

In first two months of year most records of corpses with 9 all oiled Winterton Jan 11th, 18 Blakeney Point Jan 21st and 9 Scolt Head Feb, 7 of which were oiled.

Some impressive counts of birds specifically identified during year, when in May 150 east Scolt Head and 80 east Sheringham 6th, and in June 100 Sheringham 23rd, 40 east 15 west Scolt Head 26th, and on 27th 70 east Scolt Head and 100 Sheringham. Highest counts of year during Oct when 543 Titchwell 2nd, 700 east Sheringham 13th, and 2350 west in 4 hrs Mundesley 14th.

Inland one Welney Dec 3rd.

## Razorbill

*Alca torda*

### Passage migrant and winter visitor

Small numbers identified in most months of year with some notable counts Sept and Oct. In Sept 1000 Cley 19th and 410 east Weybourne 30th, and in Oct large numbers on 2nd when 5000 at both Cley and Sheringham and 3000 at the last site 13th and 21st.

## Guillemot/Razorbill

Larger numbers seen than in recent years: on Jan 4th 1200 east 20 west Sheringham with next best counts in May when 200 east Scolt Head and 900 east 30 west Sheringham 6th,

and 250 east Sheringham 21st. Most considered Guillemots, as in June when 120 east 40 west Scolt Head 26th, and 420 east Sheringham 27th.

Best count in Sept 1000 Sheringham 13th. In Oct 1123 west 393 east Holme, 11,750 east 1250 west Scolt Head, and 5100 east 100 west Sheringham 2nd considered by all observers to have been mostly Razorbills. Also during month 1000 Cley 10th; 2500 east 100 west Sheringham 12th; 400 Hunstanton, 960 east 120 west Scolt Head, and 3500 east 200 west Sheringham 13th; and 830 Cley, 1300 east Sheringham 24th.

### **Black Guillemot**

*Cepphus grylle*

#### ***Rare passage migrant and winter visitor***

A typical spread of records during the year with singles Overstrand Jan 29th, adult west Titchwell July 27th, 1st-winter Sheringham Oct 13th and east Mundesley Dec 17th.

### **Little Auk**

*Alle alle*

#### ***Passage migrant, most during northerly gales; occasional wrecks***

Small numbers in first winter period with singles Scolt Head Jan 5th, Hunstanton Jan 16th, found in dunes Holme and released on to The Broadwater there Jan 28th, and dead Blakeney Point Feb 8th.

As usual most records during Oct with first east Sheringham 12th and next day 5 west Scolt Head, 2 west Cley and one Sheringham. On 14th a number east of Blakeney Point where 3 west, with 7 Cley, 2 Weybourne, 7 Sheringham, 3 Mundesley, 2 Sea Palling and singles Caister and Yarmouth. Recorded daily during rest of month, most 24th/25th. On 24th 9 west Holme, west Titchwell, west Scolt Head, 23 Cley, west Sheringham, 25 Mundesley (in 4 hrs), 3 Sea Palling and 15 Waxham. On 25th 17 west one east Holme, 24 west Blakeney Point, 20 Cley, 48 Sheringham, 9 Sea Palling, 4 Waxham and 2 Yarmouth. Also at this time single wrecked/inland birds Titchwell 24th, Snettisham Pits 25th-27th when found dead, Wiveton Downs 25th and south-west of Breydon Water 30th.

Small numbers on 4 dates in Nov, most 30th when west Holme, 2 west Cley, Sheringham, 2 north Eccles and north Caister. No Dec records.

### **Puffin**

*Fratercula arctica*

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

One Cley April 19th was the first of year. No further records until June when east Overstrand 11th, one Sheringham and 2 west Overstrand 23rd, 4 east Blakeney Point, 8 east Sheringham and singles Overstrand and Mundesley 26th, 4 east Scolt Head and 8 east Sheringham 27th and one Cley 30th. In July 2 east Sheringham 5th and one Overstrand 18th. Next in Sept when 9 east Sheringham 13th, 9 east Scolt Head, 3 Cley and 2 west Overstrand 19th, east Holkham Gap 20th, Cley 26th and Brancaster Hbr 30th. Recorded on 10 dates in Oct, mostly in small numbers, but west Holme, 21 west 4 east Scolt Head and 7 Sheringham 2nd, 3 east Scolt Head, 10 east Sheringham and 3 Mundesley 12th, east Scolt Head and 6 east Sheringham 13th, 3 east Sheringham 24th and 2 Sheringham, one east Overstrand and 2 north Waxham 25th. In Nov only record east Overstrand 30th; in Dec at Sheringham singles east 12th and west 13th, with 2 east 14th, and one east Overstrand 17th.

### **Stock Dove**

*Columba oenas*

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

Some good counts in first winter period again including 60 Baconsthorpe Jan, 200 Gooderstone Jan/Feb, 120 Frettenham, 85 Holme (site record), 60 Horsey and 120 Ringstead Feb and 40 Holkham Park and 75 Snettisham CP March.



Notable coastal passage began second half of Feb: at Sheringham 50 west Feb 28th, 85 west March 3rd, 45 west April 1st and a late movement of 26 east May 14th.

Breeding information received included 30-40 prs Holkham Park, 6 prs Paston, 5 territories Thetford Nunnery CBC and 7 territories Thornage Hall CBC. In 8 CBC plots surveyed in both years there were 17 territories in 1997 compared with 10 in 1996. The BBS found Stock Doves in 30 out of 68 squares with an average of 3.1 birds per occupied square.

Autumn coastal passage included 43 south in 2.5 hrs Hunstanton Nov 11th and a party of 15 in and west Sheringham Dec 9th. Best second winter period counts were 90 Flitcham Sept, 200 Brograve Level and 60 Lynn Point Oct, 44 West Somerton Nov and 90 Flitcham and 53 Welney Dec.

## **Woodpigeon**

*Columba palumbus*

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

Highest counts at start of year included in Jan/Feb 1000 at Heigham Holmes, Ringstead and Sutton Mill and in March 580 Cantley and 500 Holme.

Spring coastal passage March to mid May at Sheringham where highest counts were 450 west April 1st, 450 west May 1st and 300 west May 3rd.

Those 8 CBC territories surveyed in both years held 92 territories in 1997 compared with 103 in 1996. Specific results included 20 Brettenham Heath, 36 in 2 plots East Wretham Heath, 10 Flitcham (Abbey Farm) and 37 Thetford Nunnery. The BBS found Woodpigeons in all 68 squares surveyed with virtually no change in average number of birds per square.

Autumn coastal passage at Hunstanton totalled 6922 south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including 2105 in 2.5 hrs Nov 10th. At Sheringham 4500 west Oct 29th, 2500 west 30th and 2300 west 31st. End of year counts included 1500 Thetford Nunnery and 600 Weybourne Nov, 1000 Ringstead Nov/Dec, and 1000 Baconsthorpe and 2500 Ryston Hall (nr Denver) Dec.

A partial albino bird at Heacham Feb 13th.

## **Collared Dove**

*Streptopelia decaocto*

### ***First bred in Britain at Cromer in 1955, now widespread and common resident***

Only count received for first winter period was 20 Burnham Deepdale Jan. Spring coastal passage included 20 west Sheringham May 13th. Migrants noted on Blakeney Point April 23rd/24th, May 13th and 15th and Scolt Head May 19th.

Apart from 11 territories Thetford Nunnery little breeding data received. Found in 33 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS; no significant change from the previous two years.

Autumn coastal passage noted at Hunstanton where total of 191 mostly south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including 39 in 4 hrs Oct 18th, 37 in 2.5 hrs 19th and 18 in 2 hrs 28th. Autumn/winter counts included in Sept 41 Briggate and 72 West Lynn and in Dec 40 Northrepps and 145 Wereham.

A leucistic bird all year at Wereham.

## **Turtle Dove**

*Streptopelia turtur*

### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant; evidence of a recent decline***

First recorded at Baconsthorpe April 21st with 2 Cantley next day. Main arrival from mid May but, apart from 25 Southery May 20th, rather small numbers involved. Reflecting this, spring coastal passage poor with best movements in May when 10 south Winterton 14th, 15 west Burnham Overy 20th and 12 west and 2 east Sheringham 25th.

Despite the poor spring passage one observer noted that the species seemed particularly numerous this year in much of the east of the county. However, a decline noted in the Holme area and 8 CBC plots surveyed in both 1997 and 1996 held only 5 territories this year compared with 8 in 1996. Evidence of breeding reported from 39 sites, more than last year but probably a result of increased recording. Of these only Egmore, with 5, held more than 3 prs.

Hardly any autumn coastal migration noted but autumn gatherings included 35 Methwold Hythe Aug 3rd and 25 Eeles Sept 25th, with most birds departing from the county by end of Sept. Last records were Eeles Oct 8th, Harpley Dams 17th and Fliteham Nov 7th.

### **Ring-necked Parakeet**

*Psittacula krameri*

#### ***Introduced vagrant***

Again very scarce, with just 2 records: singles at Burnham Norton July 21st (AIB) and Norwich Nov 3rd (NACH, SDC). This remains a difficult species to see in Norfolk and with other similar species on the loose its identification still requires care.

### **Cuckoo**

*Cuculus canorus*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant***

First arrivals Tottenhill GP April 10th, Holme 13th, Holme Hale 16th and Fliteham 19th. Several records from 26th but no significant arrival obvious from records received.

Reports possibly relating to breeding birds included 3 males Holme and at Welney 4 males in May and 7 on wires in July. Otherwise few breeding records received with Dunnock and Reed Warbler noted as foster species. The BBS did not reveal a significant change since last year in number of squares occupied, with Cuckoos recorded in 39 out of 68 squares. However, there has been a drop of over 25% in number of birds per occupied square since 1995.

A very poor autumn with only a thin scattering of records in Aug and just one in Sept. a juv in off the sea at Winterton 3rd.

### **Barn Owl**

*Tyto alba*

#### ***Resident, continental race guttata has appeared as a vagrant***

The species is still widespread throughout the county, with reports received from 200 sites, slightly more than in 1996. Recorded throughout the year although, as in previous years, most records from winter months. Breeding records were received from only 22 sites compared with 50 in 1996. It appears that at some sites pairs did not attempt to breed, although present. One site recorded only one breeding pair this year as opposed to 5 prs last year; the poor weather may have been a contributory factor.

Two records of dark-breasted birds at Lynn Point May 25th (CDo) and Berney Dec 21st (PRA).

### **Little Owl**

*Athene noctua*

#### ***Introduced resident***

Recorded from 99 sites, a slight increase on last year's total of 97. The species is still widespread in the Broadland area with reports from 17 sites. From the previous strongholds of Fenland and Breckland reports from only 13 sites in total; however, birds were reported at 12 locations in North Norfolk. During the breeding season (April-July) records from 66 sites but breeding was proved for only 14 prs. At Fliteham breeding occurred for the first time in 11 years with at least 2 young being successfully fledged.

## **Tawny Owl**

*Strix aluco*

### ***Widespread resident***

Fewer reports received than last year with records from 70 sites. During the breeding season (April-July) records received from 42 sites; breeding was suspected for 44 prs but proven for only 3: Holme, Cley and Norwich. The true status of this species within the county may be indicated by the total of 15 prs in Holkham Park, a density probably matched by other similar sites.

## **Long-eared Owl**

*Asio otus*

### ***Scarce and local resident, passage migrant and winter visitor***

During first winter period (Jan-April) reports of singles from 12 sites; one in Fenland held 2 birds. In May birds were reported at two coastal sites: Horsey Gap 10th and Wells where one came in off the sea 18th. During breeding season reports came from 8 sites with breeding confirmed at only two. At Hilgay a dead adult was found on the A10 June 14th.

From Sept until end of year birds were reported from 8 sites with one holding 4 birds. Coastal sites included reports from Holme, Cley, Sheringham (one in off the sea on the late date of Dec 3rd), Trimmingham and Sea Palling. No reports were received of any communal roosts during this period.

## **Short-eared Owl**

*Asio flammeus*

### ***Rare breeder, regular passage migrant and winter visitor***

During first winter period records received from 30 sites, main areas being Wash, north coast (Holme-Overstrand) and East Norfolk (Eccles-Yarmouth and area surrounding Breydon Water). Monthly totals for this period: Wash 8 Jan, 3 Feb and 2 March-May; North Norfolk 7 Jan, 4 Feb, 6 March, 5 April and 7 May; East Norfolk 5 March, 3 April and 4 May. Away from these areas birds at Scolt Jan 8th, Hilborough Feb 4th, Vinegar Middle April 21st and West Beckham June 3rd. Notable gatherings of 8 Snettisham and 5 Warham Greens, both in Jan. A breeding attempt in Wash; otherwise the only summer records came from Snettisham with one June 28th and July 20th.

Autumn records began with one Yarmouth Cemetery and another at Welney, both on Aug 27th. Sept sightings Welney and Sheringham 11th, Blakeney Point 28th/29th and Scolt Head 29th. In Oct birds arriving off sea were seen at East Runton 11th, Cley 12th and 31st, Yarmouth 15th, Sheringham 16th (2) and 20th, Winterton 20th, and Waxham 20th and 25th. Elsewhere, records from Snettisham, Holme, Titchwell, Scolt Head, Burnham Norton, Wells, Blakeney Point, Cromer, Eccles and Caister. Final two months of year produced gatherings of 5 in Chedgrave area and up to 3 on Ouse Washes, with other records from Snettisham, Holme, Thornham, Scolt Head, Burnham Overy Staithe, Wells, Beeston Regis, Sea Palling, Horsey and Caister.

## **Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus europaeus*

### ***Local migratory breeder and rare passage migrant***

Birds were reported earlier this year, the first May 3rd at Grimes Graves, with a migrant Scolt Head May 17th (NML). At Roydon Common a further increase to 23 churring males, this continued increase almost entirely due to habitat management at this site by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Elsewhere only 8 churring males were reported from 6 sites in Breckland, the major stronghold! This is clearly a vast underestimate of the true figure. Elsewhere, a total of 29 churring males were reported from 11 sites, less than half the number of birds reported last year. Hopefully this is a result of under-recording rather than a decline in numbers. In autumn a migrant Brancaster Staithe Sept 22nd (JoB).



## Swift

*Apus apus*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First recorded April 26th with singles Snettisham CP, Holme, Stiffkey Fen, Salthouse and Yarmouth Cemetery. Further April records on 28th at Colney Pits, Strumpshaw Fen and UEA. In May passage increased with 350 Colney 8th and 350 west in 1.5 hrs Cromer GC 12th, with other movements noted on the latter date at Paston and Norwich. Numbers of note for rest of May were 200 Holkham Lake 20th, 320 Welney and 700 Rockland Broad 24th, with 700 west Sheringham 26th and 'thousands' Cley 27th. In June further notable coastal movements: several dates at Scolt Head, including 200 west 8th, Overstrand where 200 west in an hour 18th, and Lynn Point where 200 south 25th.

The BBS found birds in 41 out of 68 squares surveyed with an average of 9.9 birds per occupied square.

Large movements noted in July at Holme with 1000 16th, 2000 17th, and 1000 18th. The only large gathering in early Aug was 500+ Sparham 6th. Main departure of breeding birds in Brancaster area 10th/11th. At end of month reports of groups in excess of 100 at Cley, where 150 28th and 300 30th. In early Sept exceptionally 2000 Overstrand/Cromer GC 3rd; westerly movement on 6th when 135 Holme, 220 Scolt Head and 290 Blakeney Point. A further 110 moved west Scolt Head on 7th. Much smaller numbers were seen after this date with late birds Beeston Bump Oct 18th, Baconsthorpe Oct 21st, Cley Nov 6th, and Caister Nov 8th.

A partial albino with white rump and upper tail coverts Hickling June 14th (AB).

## Pallid Swift

*Apus pallidus*

### *Vagrant from southern Europe and north-west Africa*

A bird at Mundesley Aug 28th (MDF) was the second record for the county. Unfortunately like the first record in July 1994 its stay was all too brief.

## Kingfisher

*Alcedo atthis*

### *Resident, numbers fluctuating in response to severity of winters*

Recorded in every month of year with reports from 79 sites. During first winter period most records were of singles with fewer records being received after early Jan, probably as a result of the severe weather at start of year. Confirmed breeding records received for only 8 nests with a further 7 prs present at sites during breeding season. At Old Costessey in July a juv was found in a kitchen; it was picked up, quite unconcerned, and taken outside where it was soon found by an adult. At Garboldisham ringing results were again low with only 2 birds ringed, compared to 15 in 1994.

Records in second half of year were slightly better with several sites reporting 2 or more birds. However, during this period, Holme and Breydon Water recorded their only birds of the year, Aug 26th and Nov 29th respectively.

## Bee-eater

*Merops apiaster*

### *Vagrant from southern Europe*

One Sea Palling May 30th (NBB); most likely same bird Holkham May 30th (CH&DKL) and 31st (CH&DKL PMW JRW *et al*). Another Colney GP June 20th (JRW). Hopefully, in the not too distant future, one of these gems will make a prolonged stay in the county.

## Hoopoe

*Upupa epops*

### *Annual vagrant in very small numbers*

Two typical spring arrivals: Holme April 27th and Titchwell May 2nd.

*Bee-eater (N. Arlott)*



### **Wryneck**

*Jynx torquilla*

**Former breeder; now scarce annual passage migrant, mostly in autumn**

Rather a poor year with 5 spring sightings and only 9 autumn records. First birds arrived simultaneously April 30th at Cley and Fakenham, while in May singles at Weybourne 3rd, Holme 4th/5th and Sea Palling 10th. Following one at Burgh St Peter in early Aug, further singles at Blakeney Point Aug 22nd-24th, Sheringham Aug 22nd-25th and 28th, Weybourne Aug 25th-31st, Sheringham Sept 19th/20th, Holme Sept 22nd, and Breydon and East Runton Sept 28th.

### **Green Woodpecker**

*Picus viridis*

**Resident**

With more information submitted, yet another increase in number of sites where this species was recorded. Seen at 82 localities with 51 sites producing breeding season records. North Norfolk and East Norfolk/Broadland held most with sightings from 25 localities in each area, Norwich and central Norfolk had 7 sites, West Norfolk and Fens 9 sites, 2 sites near the county's south-eastern border, and most surprisingly only 4 Breckland sites, the latter surely a case of under-recording. Holkham Park produced the largest concentration with 6 prs, whilst Frettenham held 4 prs. Other localities where fledged juvs seen included Buxton Heath, East Ruston, Fritton, Hautbois, Hickling, Holme Hale and Salthouse Heath. Found in 24 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS, no change from 1995 results.

Some coastal movement noted in autumn with singles seen flying over Hunstanton Cliffs Oct 18th and Nov 11th while another seen on Salthouse beach Nov 15th.

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

*Dendrocopos major*

**Common resident; birds of the northern race occasional in the autumn**

Ever increasing recording of the species produced 79 widely scattered localities across Norfolk, of which 58 sites provided breeding season records. Undoubtedly still many more which are unrecorded or not submitted. Most sites held either single pairs or drummers although 2 prs at Baconsthorpe, Elsing, Hickling, Sheringham Park, Stanhoe (first breeding since 1948), UEA and Wells town, 3 prs at East Ruston and Thetford Nunnery, 4 prs at Merton and between Brandon and Santon Downham, 6 prs at Raynham Park/South Raynham and the highest concentration of 18 prs at Holkham Park. Found in 26 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS, no significant change since 1995.

In July post-breeding dispersal of juvs noted at coastal sites with singles on a fence post Weybourne 8th, at Sheringham GC 9th and west high over Weybourne/Salthouse 23rd. Number of autumn coastal migrants higher than normal with 21 seen at 8 localities between

Sept 18th and Oct 29th. Arrivals from the sea noted at Blakeney Point, Overly Dunes and Paston while the highest overhead counts included 4 at Overstrand Sept 18th and Hunstanton Oct 16th and 3 Holme Oct 22nd. One of the year's most intriguing records was of one hunting insects high over Caister Cemetery in the company of Swifts for up to 10 minutes on July 30th.

### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

*Dendrocopos minor*

#### ***Declining local resident***

Recorded at 49 localities this year (in contrast to 40 in 1995 and 1996) with 24 sites hosting birds during the breeding season (17 last year). This increase undoubtedly occurred as a result of more observers submitting records due to its declining status, evidence of which came from Hethersett (where now unrecorded for 4 years) and Holkham Park where a population of 9 prs in 1995 and 1996 dropped to 4 in 1997. Distribution seems centred on mature mixed and deciduous woodland and parkland stretching north from Norwich and central Norfolk to the north coast, and Breckland with more isolated sightings from Broadland and West Norfolk. Breeding season records from the following sites: Bagmore (Stanford TA), Bradenham, Brettenham (family party), Buckenham Tofts, Cringleford, Dersingham, East Ruston, East Harling (family party), Felbrigg, Great Carr (Stanford TA), Holkham Park (4 prs and one family party), Holt, Lynford (3 prs), Lyng, Newton Flotman, Norwich (pr in a garden in June), Santon Downham (2 nests found), Sparham, Strumpshaw (2 drummers), Thetford Nunnery, Thetford Warren, Thompson Water, Whitlingham Lane (Trowse) and Wroxham Broad.

Again found in only one of the 68 squares covered by the BBS. Sad to report one squashed on coast road at Holme Sept 15th.

### **Calandra Lark**

*Melanocorypha calandra*

#### ***Vagrant from southern Europe east to Afghanistan***

An all too brief individual on Scolt Head May 19th (JoB NML MESR) was the first county record, hot on the heels of the sixth British record which occurred on the Isle of Man on May 17th/18th. Hopefully the next will be more accessible! See article on page 554.

### **Short-toed Lark**

*Calandrella brachydactyla*

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

In spring, individuals at Breydon May 17th (PRA) and Blakeney Point May 31st (AMS *et al*).

Two well-watched and obliging birds in autumn at Overstrand Sept 30th-Oct 12th (AE BJM *et al*) and Salhouse Oct 29th-Nov 1st (IGJ *et al*).

*1996 Addition:* A third record for that year at Salhouse Oct 15th (MAG).

### **Woodlark**

*Lullula arborea*

#### ***Uncommon migratory breeder, recently increasing; also scarce passage migrant***

Another excellent year for this species began with the discovery of a wintering flock of 21 on a snow-covered harvested sugar beet field adjacent to Weeting Heath Jan 1st-5th. Another group of 9 was on arable at West Stow Jan 7th (14 here in late Nov 1996) and a single also on arable Feltwell in early Jan.

Spring migration began early with 2 Sheringham Cemetery Jan 21st and 24th. Migrants flew past Sheringham Feb 20th, Holme 22nd and Kettlestone Common 25th. Then recorded at Lound March 1st with 2 there next day, and further records from Salhouse 1st, Horsey





Top left: Siberian Stonechat, Holme, May 1996 (*D. Nye*): right: Woodchat Shrike, Winterton, April (*R. Chittenden*).  
 Centre: Cetti's Warbler, Strumpshaw (*J. Bhalerao*).  
 Bottom left: Ortolan Bunting, Eccles on Sea, April (*N. Bowman*): right: Little Egret, Cley, July (*D. Nye*).



Upper: Continental immigrant Crossbills began arriving from May 31st.

Lower: The Goldfinch is ever active, flitting from plant to plant like a butterfly (*C. R. Knights*).







Top: Red-throated Pipit, Sheringham, May (*I. Leach*).

Bottom: Short-toed Lark, Overstrand, September/October (*J. Bhalerao*).







Top left: Baird's Sandpiper, Cantley, October (*B. W. Jarvis*); right: Long-billed Dowitcher, Titchwell, June (*A. Tate*).

Bottom left: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Cley, July/August (*D. Nye*); right: Night Heron, Holkham, May (*D. Nye*).



5th and Winterton 22nd, Cromer April 10th, Holkham May 1st and May 5th. Unusually for north coast migrant passerines which are most often seen flying west, a number of these were noted flying south.

Breeding birds again began returning to their territories from the end of Jan. Once again the Breckland breeding population saw a significant increase of 38% to 430 singing males, of which 232 were the Norfolk side of the border. Woodlarks are now spread throughout the length and breadth of Thetford Forest, having exploited the vast amount of new habitat created by first rotational fellings. The distribution of Woodlarks relative to planting year is still heavily weighted towards the younger restocks but reasonable numbers are now persisting in 5 year old crops and older. Prompted by mild spring conditions, an unusually early start to the breeding season saw some clutches complete by March 15th and several pairs were feeding young before end of month. Overall breeding success was again excellent with another clutch of 6 eggs (only the third on record) and more clutches of 5 than usual, emphatically reflecting the healthy viability of the breeding population. Another unusual nesting attempt in a wheat field failed but this pair eventually reared young on an adjacent field of sugar beet.

Elsewhere the 1997 RSPB/BTO/English Nature national survey found 11 territories in North Norfolk alone. Clearly the species is faring well in suitable habitat throughout much of the county. Putting all this in a wider context, a total of between 1426 (min) and 1552 (max) territories were found across the whole country, compared with just 241 during the last national survey in 1986.

The breeding season came to its usual abrupt halt in mid July but long before this many post-breeding flocks were already gathering. Numbers built up steadily with 34 Wangford Glebe July 17th, 50 Croxton Heath Sept 1st and 27 Weeting Heath Oct 5th being the most noteworthy. After one Sheringham Sept 29th, autumn migrants were recorded south at Winterton Oct 18th, west at Sheringham Oct 19th and Nov 4th, and south at Hunstanton Nov 6th and 11th.

Flocks of 5 Northrepps Nov 12th and 23rd and 5 Feltwell Dec 13th (on set-aside) were the only records received in second winter period.

(Ron Hoblyn/Forest Enterprise kindly provided the Breckland information.)

## Skylark

*Alauda arvensis*

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

First winter period counts included 350 Ringstead, 200 Sheringham, 300 Snettisham and 180 West Runton Jan and 191 Hickling Feb.

Breeding records included (number of pairs in brackets): Blakeney Point (40), Brancaster Hbr (25), Buckenham (11), Cantley (27), Flitcham (Abbey Farm) (24), Scolt Head (69) and Welney (32). At Flitcham, breeding counts have remained more or less steady since 1993, varying from 23 to 28 territories. In Wensum Valley/Sparham area no decline detected, with one pair per 10 acres on 550 acres arable and set-aside. Found in 64 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS with an average of 11.0 birds per square. The results for those squares covered each year show a decline of 10% since 1995.

Autumn coastal migration began at Scolt Head Sept 17th. Peak numbers in Oct included 1200 west Sheringham 14th, and at Hunstanton 2160 south (all day) 16th, 498 south (4.5 hrs) 17th and 340 south (4 hrs) 18th.

The importance of saltmarsh as a habitat for wintering Skylarks was well demonstrated when an inter-tidal survey between Holme and Weybourne found totals of 5500 in Nov and 5409 in Dec (NML) including the following:



	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>		<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Holme	175	232	Wells	639	738
Thornham	744	527	Warham	313	707
Brancaster	-	164	Stiffkey	671	505
Seolt Head	1034	923	Blakeney Hbr	1151	894
Burnham Overy	273	355	Salthouse	88	184
Holkham Bay	-	125			

Elsewhere counts of 180 Choseley, 200 Northrepps, 300 Ringstead, 250 Sidestrand, 600 Weybourne and 250 Wramplingham all Nov and 200 Lynn Point Dec.

## Shore Lark

*Eremophila alpestris*

### *Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; exceptional in summer*

At start of year flocks remained at Titchwell (up to 44), Seolt Head/Brancaster Hbr (up to 23 and considered different from Titchwell flock) and Holkham/Wells (8 Jan and 14 Feb). Elsewhere Holme Jan 5th, Terrington 11th, 2 Cley 18th, 3 Heacham Feb 28th and 2 Burnham Overy March 9th. Bulk of wintering population remained until late April with up to 25 Titchwell until month end and 18 Seolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 30th. Still 9 Seolt Head/Brancaster Hbr May 8th with last 2 there 14th.

Spring migrants included 4 Beeston April 2nd (one remaining to 17th), 2 Sheringham 7th, 5 Breydon/Berncy 16th, 2 Cley 17th, and singles Snettisham 24th and Sheringham 25th/26th.

In autumn, just one Sept record, Cromer 26th/27th, followed by 2 Cley Oct 1st. Thereafter only a light trickle of birds until last week of Oct when arrivals included 9 Salthouse, 5 Titchwell and 9 Waxham, as well as 7 east at Burnham Overy Dunes 26th. Although numbers at Salthouse rose to 16 Nov 5th, there were otherwise few further arrivals in Nov until 14th when 14 Holkham, 10 Stiffkey and 20 Titchwell, with 14 Blakeney Point and 5 west Sheringham next day. The last presumed migrants were 10 east and 5 west Sheringham Nov 21st.

Following 46 at Brancaster/Titchwell Nov 23rd, numbers seemed to fall with 31 Titchwell Dec 11th and up to 22 until end of year. Elsewhere there were 23 Seolt Head Dec 13th and up to 12 Holkham Bay occasionally during Nov/Dec. The Salthouse birds had moved on by Nov 21st, but 10 Dec 10th were perhaps the same as 10 Blakeney Point Dec 15th with 18 next day. With some of the regular sites irregularly covered during the winter months it is always hard to estimate numbers but a population of about 80 seems close to the mark for both the start and end of the year.

One inland record, Boyland Airfield Oct 14th/15th (SG JHM).



*Shore Larks (R.A. Richardson)*



## **Sand Martin**

*Riparia riparia*

### **Local migratory breeder and common passage migrant**

Early records in March at Welney 9th, Snettisham CP 11th and Wash Coastal Path 13th. Only 6 further records (7 birds) before March 31st when 2 at each of 4 sites. Then small numbers at coastal sites with larger gatherings inland including 60 Rockland Broad April 2nd, 50 Wroxham Broad 5th and 47 Pentney GP 6th, building to 500 Pentney GP 25th and 300 Rockland Broad 26th. Coastal passage at this time rather poor, best day 27th when 50 west Sheringham and 140 west Scolt Head. In May max 250 west Scolt Head 13th.

Only breeding data submitted: Cranwich (45 holes), Crimplesham (50-60 prs), Gorleston GC (5 prs), Middleton GP (200-220 active holes), Pentney (75 active holes), Sandy Bottom Pit (Stanford TA) (40+ nests), Sparham (100 active holes) and Widdowshall Pit (Stanford TA) (35 nests). It is extremely disappointing that hardly any observers are recording breeding data, let alone on a comparable, annual basis. It is impossible to make any assessment of the county's breeding population without greater observer effort. However, this is a difficult bird to census accurately as even counting active holes can be misleading with pair bonds often altered between first and second broods.

Minimal coastal movement recorded in June with greater numbers in July when 430 west Scolt Head 21st and 250 west there 22nd, and in Aug when 200 east Holme 11th, 390 east there 28th and 100 east Mundesley 29th. In Sept 150 west Scolt Head 4th, 66 west Holme 5th and 60 west Scolt Head 6th. Autumn gatherings included 100 Blakeney Point July 23rd, 100 Sheringham Aug 24th, 140 Welney Aug 26th, 300 Cantley BF Aug 29th, 150 Blakeney Point Sept 9th and 100+ Lynn Point Sept 20th. Final singles south at Hunstanton Oct 6th, Holme Oct 23rd and Snettisham Nov 10th.

All in all it was a very unremarkable year for this species.

## **Swallow**

*Hirundo rustica*

### **Common migratory breeder and passage migrant**

An early record at Titchwell March 10th but no more until 26th when singles Cley and west Bacton. Then one Holme 30th and total 5 on 31st. Only small numbers reported in April: 6 Wroxham Broad 5th, 45 Fustyweed GP, 40 Worthing GP and 35 west Sheringham 9th, 30 Rollesby Broad 14th, 90 Sennowe Park 19th, 100 Titchwell 26th, Scolt Head 320 west 23rd and 27th, with 625 west 30th, and 350 west Sheringham 27th. In May, 200 Wroxham Broad 6th, and coastal movements included 100 west Sheringham 3rd and 740 west there 13th, whilst a good series of westerly counts at Scolt Head included 650 4th, 500 5th, 450 10th, 6500 13th (*cf* much smaller numbers west at Sheringham) and 650 26th. Latest spring migrants included 150 west Scolt Head June 8th.

The BBS found 51 out of 68 squares to be occupied and a comparison between results since 1995 reveals no change.

Autumn gatherings included 300 Holme July 17th, 500 Holme 23rd, 400 Titchwell Aug 18th, 1000 Brancaster Hbr 22nd and 300 Holme 26th. Coastal passage included 500 west Scolt Head Sept 7th and 300 west per hr Paston Sept 12th and 13th. Still 450 Welney Sept 19th and 400 Holme next day. In Oct 40 Cantley BF 5th, 10 Holme 11th-14th and small numbers elsewhere to month end. Six records in first half Nov with an unusual number of late birds at Sheringham Nov 16th (2), Brancaster Hbr 20th, Lynn Point 23rd, Potter Heigham Marshes 24th and finally Sheringham Dec 9th-11th.

## **Red-rumped Swallow**

*Hirundo daurica*

### **Vagrant from southern Europe**

Two were seen this year, although neither lingered: west at Holme May 4th (CAH MGMcC STu) and south at Breydon Water Nov 17th (PRA).

## House Martin

*Delichon urbica*

### *Common migratory breeder and passage migrant*

Two very early records: Yarmouth March 15th and Broome GP March 18th. In early April seen at Ongar Hill and Wroxham Broad 5th, Repps with Bastwick 7th and Acle 9th (2). Westerly spring coastal passage light, getting underway with 20 Scolt Head April 23rd and 40 there and 18 Sheringham 27th, picking up in mid and late May when 500 Scolt Head 13th and 850 there and 250 Sheringham 26th. Passage continued into early June with 50 west Scolt Head 8th. Gatherings included 60 Titchwell and 100 Rockland Broad April 26th, 300 Colney May 8th and 100 Titchwell 27th.

All breeding data received: 14 nests on single house Bacton, 4 Corpusty, 3 Edgefield, 34 Gooderstone (Crow Hall Farm) (43 in 1995, 33 in 1996), 8/9 Old Catton, 9 Saxthorpe (13 in 1995, 6 in 1996) and 22 West Runton (Links Hotel). The BBS showed no significant change in number of squares occupied since last year but the number of birds seen per occupied square fell a further 15% on 1996, now less than half the figure for 1995.

A large post-breeding gathering of 2000 at Holme July 23rd. Autumn coastal passage began in earnest in Sept with 2500 west Paston 4th, 6000 west Overstrand 6th, 2100 west per hr Paston 12th and 3100 west per hr Paston 13th, though only smaller numbers were recorded further west with 450 west Scolt Head 7th and 500 east and 400 west Sheringham 16th. Gatherings at this time included 120 Titchwell and 120 Waxham 6th, 100 Holkham Park Lake 15th, 150 Oulton 17th, 150 Snettisham 21st and 110 Fakenham 27th. Numbers much reduced by Oct although 120 south at Hunstanton 6th and 40 Overstrand 17th. Numerous Nov records, including 4 Cromer 15th and 6 Beeston Regis next day. Last recorded at Holkham Park Nov 23rd/24th.

*1996 Correction:* Geldeston entry should read: "60 Geldeston (Manor House Farm) (12/13 in 1994, 30 in 1995), 33 Gooderstone (Crow Hall Farm) (43 in 1995)".

## Richard's Pipit

*Anthus novaeseelandiae*

### *Virtually annual autumn migrant from western Siberia; rare in spring and winter*

A single spring record - Sheringham April 25th/26th (DPA APB MY-P), also seen at Weybourne on latter date (GH MPT).

An autumn total of around 17 birds was slightly below average; with many records referring to birds moving overhead along the coast some duplication is probable. During Sept one west Sheringham 26th, 2 Weybourne 27th and another east at Brancaster the same day.

Most records were typically during Oct: Stiffkey/Warham Greens 14th-16th and 2 Sheringham 16th with one staying to 27th. Other Oct records: Holme and Beeston Regis 17th, Trimmingham 18th, Morston 21st, Holme 22nd, south Winterton 25th, and at Lynn Point and Burnham Overy Dunes 26th. A single Mundesley on 31st lingered to Nov 6th and the last record of the year one east at Weybourne Nov 19th.

## Tawny Pipit

*Anthus campestris*

### *Scarce migrant from southern Europe*

Two records in spring: Burnham Overy Dunes May 1st/2nd (AIB JAB *et al*) and Eeles May 3rd (NBB AJK).

## Tree Pipit

*Anthus trivialis*

### *Migratory breeder and passage migrant*

First returning birds: March 26th at Merton and April 7th at Sheringham and Holme. Main passage/arrival did not start until April 23rd and continued to end of May. Birds on passage

during April included 6 west at Sheringham 23rd, and 12 north Horsey and 11 west Scolt Head on 30th. Passage peaked May 1st with 21 Scolt Head, 32 Sheringham and 6 Cromer all moving west.

Breeding data again sparse but included the following number of territories: 11 East Wretham, 6 Kelling Heath, 3 Dersingham/Sandringham, 3 Salthouse Heath, 3 Thompson Common, 2 East Harling, 2 Rishbeth Wood, 2 Roydon Common and a single at Sheringham.

Autumn passage commenced Aug 7th when recorded at Lynn Point. Passage very light with only about 20 birds reported. Highest counts were 3 at Holme Aug 27th and Holkham Meads Sept 27th and Oct 3rd. Other records from Blakeney Point, Sheringham and Yarmouth with latest Weybourne Oct 6th..

### **Meadow Pipit**

*Anthus pratensis*

*Locally common migratory breeder and passage migrant with small numbers in winter*

Very few winter records received with only counts in double figures of 25 and 40 in Stanford TA Jan/Feb. No evidence of any cold weather movements.

Spring passage began March 6th with 100 west at Holme. Largest counts of month were 168 west Holme 13th, 450 west Sheringham 23rd and 1000 Sheringham 31st of which 700 west. Westerly coastal movement continued throughout April, max counts Sheringham 7000 1st, 950 23rd and 350 28th. At Holme max 234 28th and at Scolt Head 175 west 18th and 340 present 20th-25th. Inland movement noted Fakenham where 15 west on 14th and Stanford TA where flocks of 80, 60 and 42 present 21st-23rd. Max counts for May were on 1st with 220 west Scolt Head and 230 west Sheringham.

Breeding information included the following territories/pairs: 108 Welney, 65 Scolt Head, 60 Blakeney Point and 30 between Mundesley and Bacton.

Passage migrants were noted in Sept with coastal max as follows: 63 Holme 27th, 30 Brancaster 7th, 60 Scolt Head 28th, 100 Blakeney Point 20th, 180 Sheringham 27th, 100 Happisburgh 28th, 150 Waxham 27th, 180 Winterton 22nd and 100 Yarmouth 29th. Passage continued into Oct: 100 Snettisham 18th, 50 Holme 19th, 300 Sheringham 16th, 70 West Runton 11th, 95 Winterton 19th and 50 Yarmouth 8th. At Hunstanton Cliffs autumn total of 1028 south and 51 north Sept to Nov; best counts in Oct 149 (5 hrs) 6th and 167 (all day) 16th.

In second winter period Nov low tide inter-tidal survey produced 73 birds including 2 Holme, 12 Scolt Head, one Wells, 2 Stiffkey, 9 Blakeney Hbr, one Cley and 46 Salthouse. Other notable counts during the month: 46 Welney 17th, 37 Roydon Common 22nd and 65 Snettisham 11th. Dec low tide count total was 72 including 8 Scolt Head, 31 Blakeney Hbr and 18 Salthouse.

### **Red-throated Pipit**

*Anthus cervinus*

*Vagrant from northern Europe*

Three spring records: Waxham April 28th (GE *et al*), Blakeney Point May 3rd/4th (MIE AMS) and a well-watched bird Sheringham May 18th/19th (KBS *et al*).

### **Rock Pipit**

*Anthus petrosus*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant, most probably of the Scandinavian race littoralis*

In first two months of year some large counts when at Lynn Point 18 Feb, Titchwell 12 Jan and 19 Feb, Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 70 Jan and 87 Feb, and at Wells 22 Jan and 56 Feb. A rapid departure during first half of March with max counts 10 Cley 2nd, 50 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr 3rd, 12 Burnham Norton 5th and 10 Lynn Point 9th. The counts from Burnham Norton and Cley are of particular interest considering that most had attained summer



plumage and as expected were Scandinavian birds which probably in the past would have been reported as Water Pipits.

Only records in April, singles Breydon 9th and Titchwell 25th.

Two midsummer/early autumn records of singles Yarmouth July 5th and Breydon Aug 8th.

First true autumn migrants during Sept when 2 Scolt Head 18th, one Lynn Point 20th and at 5 other sites by month end. Some good movements during Oct when at Hunstanton a total of 302 south 16 north with best counts 75 16th and 40 17th; westerly movement noted at Weybourne where 28 12th and 14th, Sheringham where 40 12th, 60 14th and 150 16th, and Overstrand where 70 14th. Also during Oct numbers on saltmarshes began to build up with best counts 12 Lynn Point, 25 Holme, 10 Titchwell, 125 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr and 160 Blakeney Hbr.

During Nov and Dec low tide counts of all inter-tidal habitat between Holme and Weybourne were carried out by a small group of observers under the auspices of English Nature. This confirmed suspicions that the number of wintering birds has been grossly under-counted in the past. In Nov a total of 3200 were found all on saltmarshes including 30 Holme, 268 Thornham, 49 Brancaster, 875 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, 327 Burnham Overy Hbr, 367 Wells, 336 Warham, 428 Stiffkey and 693 Blakeney Hbr. Numbers lower in Dec probably due to some passage birds from Nov moving on but still 2010 found including 21 Holme, 229 Thornham, 67 Brancaster, 462 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, 198 Burnham Overy Hbr, 206 Wells, 218 Warham, 193 Stiffkey and 409 Blakeney Hbr. All were considered to have been Scandinavian birds, as in the Netherlands, where large numbers of this race winter, feeding exclusively on small molluscs on saltmarshes. It seems likely that Norfolk birds have similar habits.

Also during year a number of inland records with 3 Burgh Castle Jan 4th, two 3 miles west of Yarmouth Feb 2nd-March 6th, Welney March 24th, Nov 3rd and 6th/7th, and Cantley BF Oct 4th.

## **Water Pipit**

*Anthus spinoletta*

### **Local winter visitor**

More counts received in response to last year's appeal. Jan records included 2 Wissington (including a ringed bird), up to 4 Titchwell, 2 Burnham Norton, 6 Cley, 12 How Hill, 2 Hickling, 2 Catfield Fen, 3 Rockland, 20 Buckenham and an unusually high count of 27 Wood Street (nr Catfield) feeding on harvested onion and sugar beet fields near to a flooded grazing meadow (PJH). Recorded at 7 sites in Feb, max counts 4 Cley 15th, 4 Titchwell 25th and 3 Burnham Norton 27th. Reported from 9 sites in March, highest count being 3 at Titchwell and Burnham Norton. A few singles recorded in April with final birds of spring Titchwell 20th and Strumpshaw 23rd.

The first autumn birds were in Sept at Titchwell 29th and 3 Hickling 30th with far lower numbers in second winter period. Oct records of ones and twos came from Snettisham, Cley, Hickling, Catfield Fen and Cantley BF. Numbers peaked in Nov with 5 at Cantley BF 13th; also recorded at 4 other sites. In Dec singles on 9th at Welney and Breydon Water.

## **Yellow Wagtail**

*Motacilla flava*

### **Declining migratory breeder and passage migrant**

In spring an early record from Horsey Gap where one north March 25th. Next records April 8th at Cley and Welney. Main spring passage not until last week of month with max counts 87 Snettisham, 105 west Scolt Head and 12 Sheringham 23rd; 30 west Scolt Head 24th; 50 west Sheringham, 60 Waxham and 52 Berney Marsh 28th; 30 Snettisham and 160 west

Scolt Head 30th. In May westerly movement at Scolt Head 1st-4th (max 135 1st) and 13th (75); similarly at Sheringham 55 1st and 60 2nd.

Breeding data received included 57 prs Welney (47 on grazing marshes and 10 on arable), 10 West Walton, 5 Holkham NNR and several pairs at Aldeby, Wheatacre, Waxham, Trimmingham Beacon, Haddiscoe Island and Halvergate. Mixed pairings (with *M.f.flava*) noted at West Walton and Sea Palling. First young of year on early date June 6th at Welney. Up to 37, mostly juvs, at Terrington Marsh July 20th.

Apart from 3 singles Scolt Head July 6th-20th no further autumn movements noted until Aug when max 27 Terrington Marsh 17th and 188 Welney 25th. Sept records widespread with max counts at Welney 40 on 6th, 28 22nd and 20 23rd. Elsewhere 10 Ongar Hill 13th, 6 Cantley BF 5th and 3 Happisburgh 20th. Oct records included Cantley BF 2nd-4th, Welney 5th, Sheringham and Hunstanton 16th, and finally Holme 27th.

**Blue-headed Wagtail** *M.f.flava* Around 60 reported in spring with the first Middleton GP April 20th. An influx on 28th-30th included 6 Overstrand, 5 Waxham, 3 Beeston Regis and records from 5 other sites. During May max 3 Beeston Regis with 1-2 at 13 other sites.

**Grey-headed Wagtail** *M.f.thunbergi* A good spring passage with males mainly identified. Majority of birds in May. At Salthouse 5th-8th, 3 on 20th (including 2 females), 22nd/23rd, 27th and 30th; at Kelling STW singles 5th and 11th with 2 on 16th/17th. Elsewhere singles Kelling WM 10th, Brancaster, Blakeney Point and Sheringham 15th, and Scolt Head and West Runton 18th.

**Spanish Wagtail** *M.f.iberiae* A bird showing characteristics of this race at Salthouse May 23rd (MJSa JRW).

## Grey Wagtail

*Motacilla cinerea*

*Local breeder, fairly common passage migrant, less common in winter*

During first winter period a total of around 40 birds reported from 23 sites with max of 3 Whitlingham Lane GP March 21st. A light coastal spring passage began Feb 28th and continued to June 6th involving around 44 individuals - best count 2 Sheringham March 1st. Late spring migrants included male Salthouse June 4th and one east Overstrand June 6th.

During breeding season single pairs present or bred at following localities: Briggate Mill, Buxton Mill, Corpusty Mill, Costessey Pits, Cranwick GP, Didlington, Hardingham Bridge, Keswick Mill, Langford Bridge (Stanford TA), Lyng Bridges, Narborough Mill, Norwich, Santon Downham, Thetford (2 prs) and Whitlingham Lane.

An unusual midsummer record concerns 2 west at Scolt Head July 7th.

Autumn passage was late with only 11 reported from Aug 9th to end of month. Around 45 recorded in Sept including 4 west Sheringham 29th. Passage slightly heavier in Oct with 55 seen including 3 Sheringham 3rd-5th and 3 Weybourne SF 26th. A total of 19 south and one north at Hunstanton Cliffs Sept-Nov with max counts in Oct - 6 on 16th and 4 on 17th.

In second winter period around 21 birds recorded from 14 sites.

## Pied Wagtail

*Motacilla alba*

*Common breeding resident and passage migrant*

Few large gatherings/roosts during Jan-March but 300+ Thetford Ind Est, 40 Brancaster Staithe and 29 Hickling.

First spring movement noted Sheringham where 50 west Feb 28th. Passage peaked in March - max counts 55 west Holme 11th, 60 Titchwell 31st, 20 Cley 12th, and at Sheringham 60 west 14th and 50 west 23rd. Highest count in April 30+ Holkham 19th.

Little breeding data supplied although 2 young at Overstrand had pure white and longer than usual tails. Found in 39 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS.

Post-breeding dispersal noted at Scolt Head where small numbers west throughout July and Aug with max 7 July 8th. Aug gatherings included 20+ Cantley BF 23rd and 37 Waxham 30th. At Hunstanton Cliffs between Sept 29th and Nov 15th 89 south and one north - best count 21 south Oct 18th in 4 hrs. Max count Sheringham 5 east and 25 west Oct 5th.

Largest gatherings Oct-Dec: 100 UEA, 100 Burnham Market, 50 Coxford, 41 Brancaster, 22 Titchwell and 20 Welney, and a roost in 3 trees in the centre of Norwich at Brigg St Nov/Dec, which peaked at 650 on Dec 8th.

**White Wagtail** *M a alba* Spring passage involved at least 112 individuals with the first at Cley March 1st. Max counts in April: 4 Scolt Head 23rd, 6 Wissington BF 24th and 5 Weybourne 30th. A steady passage in first half of May included 4 Sheringham 4th and 4+ Salthouse 10th. Latest spring migrant Salthouse 24th.

At Cley one pr fledged 3 young on north side of village. At least 2 young were also fledged from a second brood. 7 birds were present until late Aug on Cley Reserve with the latest there (ad and imm) Sept 17th. This is the first breeding record for Norfolk. See article page 555.

## **Waxwing**

*Bombycilla garrulus*

### ***Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor***

In first winter period groups in excess of 5 as follows: Hoveton 10 Jan 23rd, increasing to 12 Feb 22nd-27th with 11 still March 16th; Norwich 8 visiting various sites in west of city Feb 3rd-6th; Thetford bypass 30 March 8th-31st, with 18 still April 28th; Bowthorpe 6 April 10th increasing to 9 April 14th. Elsewhere reports of 1-5 at Attleborough (one killed by cat), Bodham, Brundall, Caister, Cley, Holme, Holt, Knapton, Langham, Norwich, Stalham and Thetford Nunnery. One found exhausted west Norwich May 1st was taken into care and released at Costessey May 14th.

In autumn 3 south over Cley Oct 21st and 3 over Yarmouth Cemetery Nov 1st. Dec records of 1-3 at Bodham, Brancaster Staithe, Burnham Overy, Cley, Coxford Wood, Hickling, Sheringham, Weybourne and Yarmouth, with 5 at Wells Dec 5th and Castle Rising Dec 7th.

## **Wren**

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

### ***Very common resident and passage migrant in small numbers***

Results from CBC and other breeding surveys produced the following pairs/territories: Baconsthorpe 7, Belmore Plantation 11, Boyland Wood 6, Brettenham Heath 3, East Wretham Heath 22, Flitcham (Abbey Farm) 5, Thetford Nunnery 31, Thornage Hall 6, Scolt Head 19 and Welney 37. Abbey Farm showed another decrease of 25% from 1996, but Welney showed an increase of 62%. East Tuddenham reported a 'good breeding season'. Ringing results showed mixed fortunes with Kettlestone recording the highest numbers since 1993 and Garboldisham reporting a 27% drop in numbers ringed. The further decline predicted in last year's report was borne out by the BBS results as there was another slight but possibly significant decline of 5-6% in both the number of squares occupied and the average number of birds per occupied square.

On Scolt Head on Sept 27th/28th an increase in numbers was indicative of migration.

## **Dunnock**

*Prunella modularis*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn***

Results from CBC and other breeding surveys produced the following pairs/territories: Baconsthorpe 4, Belmore Plantation 3, Brancaster Hbr 31, Brettenham Heath 3, Boyland Wood 10, East Wretham Heath 12, Flitcham (Abbey Farm) 8, Scolt Head 27, Thetford



Nunnery 12, Thornage Hall 5, and Welney 10. Abbey Farm showed another decrease of 20% but Welney showed an increase of 100%. East Tuddenham reported 'very good breeding success'. Found in 53 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS. Last year's slight increase was reversed with the number of birds per occupied square fallen by nearly 25% since 1995.

In autumn migrants were noted at Sheringham where 30-40 Sept 27th/28th and 35 Oct 29th, Scolt Head 50+ Sept 27th and Holme 150-200 Sept 22nd and 26 Oct 15th. At Hunstanton total of 21 counted flying south between Sept 29th-Nov 15th with peak counts of 5 in 5 hrs Oct 6th and 4 in 4 hrs Oct 8th.

A partial albino showing 'off-white/grey head and body with normal wings and tail' at Muckleburgh Hill March 21st.

## **Robin**

*Erithacus rubecula*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant, especially in autumn***

Spring passage very light: single continental birds trapped at Weybourne May 1st, 7th and 20th. CBC data produced the following pairs: 3 Flitcham (Abbey Farm) (5 prs in 1995 and 1996) and 20 Belmore Plantation, Thorpe (same as last 3 years). Elsewhere 64 territories at 6 CBC plots (22 Thetford Nunnery, 11 Boyland Farm, 19 East Wretham Heath (2 plots), 8 Brettenham Heath and 4 Thornage Hall). Also 8 territories at Baconsthorpe. The BBS found birds in 55 out of 68 squares, no significant change since 1995. The number of birds per occupied square had fallen by over a quarter since 1996, but like the last two species fluctuations between consecutive years should probably not cause too much alarm.

Autumn passage early Aug to early Nov mainly at north coast sites, no large scale arrivals but influx 26th/27th Sept with 17 Holme, 11 Scolt Head, 12 Eccles, 15 Waxham and 10 Winterton, followed by peaks of 30 Holme Oct 18th and 23 Nov 6th, 25 Sheringham Oct 29th and 21 Snettisham CP Nov 1st.

## **Nightingale**

*Luscinia megarhynchos*

### ***Local migratory breeder and very scarce passage migrant***

First recorded Salthouse Heath (2) and Thetford Heath April 13th, a typical first date, followed by singles at Wiveton 21st, Narborough 23rd, Fairstead 25th and Alderford Common 26th. At end of month, singles Hunstanton GC, Wells caravan park, Caister, Colney GP and Blackborough End, and at Narborough 4 in song on 30th. In May a fair scattering of migrants, mostly singles, at 9 localities in north of county but also single birds at Honing Lock and Strumpshaw early in month.

In breeding season singing males at Salthouse Heath 8, Narborough 4, Boughton Fen 3, Pentney GP 3, Wissington BF 3, Alderford Common 2-3, Blackborough End GP 2, Thetford Nunnery 2, and singles Barnham Cross Common, Boyland Wood, Caistor St Edmund, East Ruston, Fordham, Frettenham, Holme village, How Hill, Hunstanton GC, Methwold, Muckleburgh Hill, Newton, Repps Staithe, Southacre and Swanton Novers. Also total of 22 singing males at 18 sites in Stanford TA.

The only autumn records were singles at Eccles July 14th (presumably a juv of local origin), Holme July 20th and Blakeney Point Aug 8th.

## **Bluethroat**

*Luscinia svecica*

### ***Scarce passage migrant, now more frequently recorded in spring***

A poor year compared to recent years. Single females at Salthouse May 23rd and July 22nd/23rd.

*1996 Correction:* The female present at Cley from July 5th-12th was also present early on morning of 13th.

## **Black Redstart**

*Phoenicurus ochruros*

### ***Rare migratory breeder, regular passage migrant and occasional in winter***

At start of year a single at Rackheath Ind Est Jan 5th to Feb 24th (possibly later). A single at Holme Feb 8th may have been an early migrant about a month ahead of first spring arrivals. Widely reported in March from at least 24 localities including several north coast sites and Winterton, Yarmouth Cemetery, Norwich and King's Lynn; mostly singles but max 6+ Winterton 23rd and 5 Weybourne-Sheringham 31st. Less widespread in April and May, majority along the north coast and mostly 1-2 birds with max 4 Overstrand April 8th-10th and 3 Scolt Head May 19th. Passage continued to early June with singles Eccles and Sea Palling (singing male) 4th, Scolt Head 5th, and Blakeney Point on the late date of 15th-17th.

In the breeding season pairs bred at Gorleston and Yarmouth, where 2 additional singing males; in Norwich singing male in Carrow Road area all summer, same or another singing at Norfolk and Norwich Hospital June 23rd.

Autumn passage began Aug 13th with single Blakeney Point but apart from juv at Haddiscoe Sept 1st most passage was in Oct with total of 17 records, all of singles, at 11 localities. In Nov singles at Eccles 16th and Baconsthorpe 23rd-26th.

## **Redstart**

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

### ***Local migratory breeder (most in Breckland), common passage migrant***

First arrivals in spring were 2 on April 10th - a typical date - at Cley and Hall Road, Norwich. Several males on territory in Breckland on 11th but main arrival of migrants was later in month with singles at 14 sites from 21st with max 4 Holme 26th. Good passage throughout May, mostly of singles, but peaks of 4 Holme 5th/6th, also 2 at Scolt Head 1st, Blakeney Point 18th and 23rd, and Stiffkey 21st. Last migrants of spring were singles at Blakeney Point June 1st and Wells 2nd.

Two males were singing on territory Sheringham Park May 10th and one pr had 2 young June 12th; elsewhere a singing male at Swanton Novers May 17th, one pr bred at East Wretham Heath and there was a total of 75 singing males in Stanford TA (same number as 1996).

A single on Aug 5th at East Ruston South Fen was probably of local origin. Main autumn arrival from 20th onwards with singles at 8 sites to end of month. In Sept very few seen until 18th but passage continuous from 20th onwards with peaks of 10 Holme 20th, 13 Scolt Head 27th, 16 Blakeney Point 25th, 10 Cromer 27th, 15+ Waxham 27th/28th and 15 Yarmouth Cemetery 25th. Also up to 5 at 8 other sites, all except 3 at coastal localities. Passage continued until Oct 4th then no further records until small influx Oct 16th-25th at 6 sites with max 3 Holme 20th; latest at Yarmouth Cemetery.

## **Whinchat**

*Saxicola rubetra*

### ***Rare migratory breeder and common passage migrant***

First arrivals were singles at Snettisham and Winterton April 23rd followed by small arrival 25th/26th with birds at 10 coastal sites, max 7 at Holme. Plentiful and widespread in May both along the coast and inland; no large-scale arrivals and mostly 1-2 but noticeable influxes on 3rd-5th, max 8 Sheringham and Waxham-Winterton, and 12th/13th, max 7 Weybourne. Last of spring at Holme 25th.

No summering birds for second year running and no confirmed breeding since one pr at Horsey Gap in 1992.

Autumn passage from July 28th (Holme) and continuous from Aug 8th with reports from 18 sites, max 13 at Scolt Head 16th and 22nd. Passage continued throughout Sept

with max 12 Winterton 3rd, 11 Sea Palling 22nd, 11 Cromer GC 25th and 7 Scolt Head 27th. In Oct mostly singles at 11 sites but max 5 Holme 1st and last Cley 28th.

### Stonechat

*Saxicola torquata*

*Very small coastal breeding population; regular passage migrant, local in winter*

Very few records at start of year with singles (except for 4 at Holme March 1st) at 11 well-dispersed inland and coastal sites. In March generally light passage with singles or 1-2 at 18 (mainly coastal) sites together with some evidence of pairs moving into nesting areas; light passage, mostly of singles, continued through April and May.

In breeding season pairs on territory at Heacham north beach (present May-Aug but no young seen), Kelling Heath (2 prs - 2 juvs May 25th and 3 juvs Aug 21st); Horsey Gap (one pr - 4 juvs June 14th); Waxham-Winterton (3 prs - 2 juvs Aug 22nd); Winterton south (one pr - 2 juvs Aug 16th). Also a singing male at Wissington BF March 21st-April 25th. Very few midsummer records away from breeding areas - a juv at Weybourne July 14th was thought to have come from nearby Kelling Heath.

Autumn passage lasted from Sept 6th (Stiffkey Fen) into Nov, by which time birds had moved into the usual wintering sites. In Sept singles at 6 sites and, away from breeding sites (where family parties still in occupation), there were 7 Waxham 27th and 3 Eecles 28th. Oct records were mostly singles from 15 mainly coastal sites except for max of 3 at Brancaster and Waxham, and inland singles at Welney and Catfield Fen. In Nov and Dec birds on winter territories at Holme (2), Brancaster (2), Cley (2-3), Kelling, Weybourne, Horsey (2), Heigham Holmes (2), Martham Staithe, East Ruston (2), Colney GP, Roydon Common and Welney.

**Siberian Stonechat** *S t maura/stejnegeri* A 1st-summer male Blakeney Point May 21st-23rd (SCJ AMS)

*1996 Additions:* A male Holme May 18th (1Bu DNy *et al*) and a female/imm Ongar Hill Sept 18th (PMW).

### Wheatear

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Increasingly rare migratory breeder and common passage migrant*

First spring birds on very early dates at East Ruston March 2nd/3rd, Bacton and Happisburgh (2) the following day and 2 Horsey 4th, with singles at 4 other sites on 8th. Main passage from 12th onwards, mostly singles or small groups, with max 9 Holkham 18th, 9 Winterton 21st, and 12 Sheringham 31st. Passage in April more widespread at both inland and coastal sites, numbers fairly constant but an arrival on coast 6th/7th produced 24 Weybourne, 40 Sheringham and 22 Winterton-Waxham. A larger-scale arrival evident on 25th-28th with peaks of 110 Sheringham 25th (decreasing to 35 by 28th); on 26th 40-50 Snettisham CP (decreasing to 21 the following day), 29 Holme (decreasing to 5 the following day), 28 Warham Greens, 20 Blakeney Point, 20 Weybourne, 10 Cromer, 20 Mundesley-Bacton and 15 Baconsthorpe; on 27th 75 Scolt Head, 34 Winterton, 28 Breydon Water and 28 Berney Marshes; on 28th 70 Cromer GC. In early May passage was moderate, and many reports probably referred to earlier arrivals; max of 23 Sheringham and 28 West Runton both 1st, 15 Weybourne 3rd and 15th, 10 Holme 12th and 14 Scolt Head 13th. In June singles Weybourne 6th and Sheringham 28th. Inland records (in addition to those above) from at least 20 sites with max 12 Hickling April 4th.

In Stanford TA recorded at 15 sites in breeding season but only two broods observed. This is undoubtedly a declining breeding species in this area and local observers foresee its demise in the very near future. First autumn birds during July and typically juvs with 2 Holme 8th and singles Sheringham and Cley 5th, Scolt Head and Weybourne 10th, and



Blakeney Point 11th with 7 there 30th. In the past this annual occurrence of juvs along the north coast has been used as evidence of breeding. However most, if not all, of these birds are probably recently fledged juvs from elsewhere in the British Isles or even the Continent. In spring adults can regularly disappear down rabbit holes and, along with the occasional occurrence of whole family groups, may lead wrongly to reports of breeding. Unless adults are seen at well-watched sites throughout the breeding season claims of past and future breeding must be treated with caution. Breeding along the coast was probably more common in the past but, like the decline in the Brecks, would now seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

Passage during Aug generally light and widespread, only evidence of an arrival was 16 Hunstanton Cliffs 20th, 10 Salthouse 21st, 10 Holme 22nd, and 35 Blakeney Point and 9 Sea Palling 23rd. In Sept passage uneventful, mostly singles from 18 sites, max 12 Scolt Head 27th and at Sheringham 10 6th and 20th, 11 22nd and 12 28th. Oct records were also mostly singles at 15 sites except for 5 Yarmouth 1st; 5 singles in Nov with last of year at Salthouse on 11th.

### **Pied Wheatear**

*Oenanthe pleschanka*

#### ***Vagrant from central Asia***

A 1st-winter female at Sheringham Oct 20th (KBS MAW TW *et al*). The seventh record for the county and the first since one at Holme Oct 1990.

### **Desert Wheatear**

*Oenanthe deserti*

#### ***Vagrant from North Africa or central Asia***

A female at Snettisham Dec 7th-12th (1Be RCH DLa STa *et al*). The eighth record for the county, 6 of which have appeared since 1993.

### **Ring Ouzel**

*Turdus torquatus*

#### ***Passage migrant in fluctuating numbers; exceptional in winter***

First recorded April 1st when single Winterton Dunes. Very light passage continued through the month with just 1-3 at 18 coastal and 16 inland sites with movement peaking on 26th when a total of 16 recorded from 10 coastal sites. Max counts 3 Blakeney 15th-18th, 9 Winterton 20th, 4 Snettisham CP and 3 Horsey 26th. In May, 11 records from 8 coastal and one inland site in the first week. The final occurrence at Weybourne on 17th brought the spring total to c90 birds which was well down on the 160 and 200 reported in the springs of 1996 and 1995 respectively.

Autumn passage commenced Sept 1st when single Titchwell but no further records until 20th when another on Scolt Head followed by singles from a further 9 coastal sites until month end. Small scale movement continued through Oct with max counts 3 Yarmouth Cemetery 14th and 3 Horsey 19th. A single in Nov at Wells 11th.

### **Blackbird**

*Turdus merula*

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

In Jan, 50 feeding on windfall apples at Burnham Deepdale.

CBC breeding records from 8 sites indicated a decline in number of territories from 58 in 1996 to 46 in 1997. Details as follows (with last year's figures where known in brackets): 12 Belmore Plantation (11), 3 Boyland Wood, 2 East Wretham Heath, 5 Flitcham (Abbey Farm) (10) and 24 Thetford Nunnery. The BBS found 64 out of 68 squares to be occupied, with an average of 8.6 birds per square. It is worth noting that the most recent BTO survey showed a reduction of 58% in UK numbers between 1981 and 1997.

Return movement from Sept 27th when 2 on Scolt Head. No further reports until Oct 13th when 30+ in Yarmouth Cemetery. Increase on 15th when 150 Holme, 60 Cley, 100+ Winterton and 150+ Yarmouth Cemetery. Movement peaked on 16th when max counts 200+ Holme, 420 Scolt Head, 250 Sheringham, 200+ Eeles, 50+ Waxham and 200+ Yarmouth Cemetery. A further small influx towards end of month when 70 at Sheringham 29th.

## **Fieldfare**

*Turdus pilaris*

### ***Common passage migrant and winter visitor with occasional summer records***

In first winter period only movements noted were 1000 south Snettisham Jan 14th and 200 west Sheringham March 17th. During this period, three-figure totals from 7 mainly inland sites with highest counts in Jan when 500+ Bramerton/Rockland 6th and 500 Wretton 19th-26th.

Spring passage unimpressive with only notable counts in April 250+ Little Cressingham 12th and 300 West Acre 23rd. Only other three-figure counts from Stanford TA where several flocks including Mousehall and Stanford Rectory 23rd and from East Ruston on 23rd and 28th. In May, 1-4 noted from 8 mainly coastal sites with the last at Eeles on 10th.

In autumn, first noted Sept 21st when 2 Holme and 6 Welney. Few subsequent records until Oct 12th when 120 Snettisham and 120 Flitcham. Small coastal influx in west of county from 21st when 3000 Snettisham. Further movement noted at Snettisham when 2100 south 25th and 1050 south 26th and at Hunstanton with 904 south in 2 hrs 30th. Inland, Oct numbers peaked on 26th when 2500 Choseley and 400 Baconsthorpe. Nov produced three-figure counts from 13 sites, max 400-500 South Creake-Egmere all month, 600 Pulham St Mary 8th and 800 Stubb Mill 14th. Regular observations at Hunstanton between Sept 29th and Nov 15th produced total of 4029 south and 27 north. In Dec, inland sites in east of county provided the largest flocks with 1500 How Hill 7th, 3400 Potter Heigham marshes 10th and 1000 over Ranworth Broad to roost on 31st.

## **Song Thrush**

*Turdus philomelos*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant; recently decreasing***

In first winter period small cold weather influx on Jan 6th when 20 Sheringham. Spring passage almost non-existent with just 1-2 Scolt Head until April 27th and 5 Yarmouth Cemetery April 25th.

During breeding season records from 41 sites with highest totals from Thorpe St Andrew where 19 singing males and from Holkham Park where 30 prs bred. Found in 40 out of 68 squares surveyed by the BBS with an average of 3 birds per square, a significant fall since last year and roughly 20% down on 1995.

In autumn, an early bird Blakeney Point Aug 8th may have been a migrant but no further records until Sept 19th when 2-4 birds noted at Scolt Head, Blakeney Point and Yarmouth Cemetery. Small numbers recorded until month end with max 20 Scolt Head 27th and 15 Sheringham 28th. In Oct, small influx from mid-month included 50 Holme 15th with 40 Sheringham the following day. In Nov, only double-figure count was 16 at Holme 6th. Unseasonably mild weather at end of Nov and beginning of Dec resulted in records of singing birds from Spixworth, Sheringham and Norwich.

## **Redwing**

*Turdus iliacus*

### ***Common passage migrant and winter visitor, exceptional in summer***

In Jan only notable counts 100 Muckleburgh Hill 22nd, 165 Holkham Park 28th and 150 Blakeney 29th. Fewer Feb reports, the highest count 285 Whitlingham Lane on 25th. Spring

passage disappointing with 500 west Sheringham on March 17th being the only movement reported. Very few April records, being noted at just 5 sites, the last singles at Gunton Park and Yarmouth Cemetery on 25th. Of interest, at Sheringham BO there were no April records, a sharp contrast to the 12,000 noted there in 1997.

In autumn, first noted Sept 19th when 2-3 in Yarmouth Cemetery. Small numbers reported until month end at a further 12 mainly coastal sites. In Oct, heavy overnight passage over Honing and Sheringham 11th and Norwich 12th with three-figure counts from further 6 sites on latter date. Increase in numbers from 15th when 750 Cley and 1000+ west in 4 hrs at Eccles the following day. Further movement on 21st when 1000 west Holme and 2000 Snettisham, peaking the following day when 5000 east and south at Holme/Hunstanton. Small-scale passage continued until month end with 125 west Sheringham and 105 south Hunstanton on 29th and 132 south at latter site on 30th. Few Nov records with max count 75 Holme Hale 3rd. In Dec 1000 in hedgerows at Stiffkey 7th with only other notable count from Holkham Park when 100 birds 24th.

### **Mistle Thrush**

*Turdus viscivorus*

#### ***Common resident and partial migrant***

Breeding records from just 16 sites compared with last year's 20. Mainly 1-2 prs but 3 Hedenham, Holme Village, Spixworth and Welney, 4 Thetford Nunnery and 5 Paston. County trends difficult to assess with a continued increase reported in Mundesley area but a decline noted in Holme Village from 7-8 prs in 1996 to 4 prs in 1997. Found in 40 out of 68 squares surveyed by the BBS (as many as Song Thrush) with an average of 2.7 birds per square.

Post-breeding flocks recorded from 10 mainly inland sites, highest counts being 31 East Ruston June 22nd, 45 Buckenham Tofts Aug 8th and Sept 12th, 20+ Hautbois Aug 26th and 27 Saham Hills Aug 28th. Coastal movement noted from Sept 20th when 15 east and 10 west Sheringham followed by 10 Eccles 24th and 14 south Winterton 28th. Movement continued into Oct when 21 west Holme 3rd with 30 Cley and 15 south Hunstanton 15th, and a very large flock of 54 off the sea Overstrand 29th. Regular observation at Hunstanton Cliffs between Sept 29th and Nov 15th produced a total of 74 birds all moving south.

### **Cetti's Warbler**

*Cettia cetti*

#### ***Broadland breeding population established since 1974***

Away from Broads the year started with the bird at Welney first seen in Dec 1996 making a brief appearance on Jan 1st; it was not seen again due to the onset of cold weather.

The breeding season proved disappointing with breeding numbers or data considerably down on previous 2 years. The following totals are of singing males on territory: *River Yare*: Rockland Broad 5, Strumpshaw Fen 8-10, Surlingham Broad one and Wheatfen 3. *River Bure*: Ranworth Broad 2, Wroxham Broad one. *River Ant*: Barton Broad one, Catfield Fen 3 and How Hill one. Elsewhere males were noted at Hickling and an unmated male at Whitlingham Lane May 18th-July 25th. The county total of 27-29 singing males compares unfavourably with the 56 in 1996. This is probably mainly because 1996 was the national survey year and the 1997 totals are reflected in observer coverage, not a genuine decline. Many Broadland observers commented that in general numbers seemed similar to 1996. The submission of any unpublished data for 1997 would be appreciated so the continual monitoring of this relatively recent new breeding species can be undertaken.

One trapped at Weybourne Oct 28th (MP).



**Grasshopper Warbler**

*Locustella naevia*

*Summer visitor and scarce passage migrant*

First recorded in spring April 13th at Holkham and Titchwell, with 4 Strumpshaw 18th and widespread arrival at many breeding sites from 20th onwards. Max April counts came from Strumpshaw 8 and Snettisham 7.

Singing males during breeding season were noted at the following sites: Baconsthorpe, Barton Turf Fen 3, Beeston Common, Berney Marshes 2, Boyland Wood, Brancaster, Breydon, Burgh Common, Catfield Fen 4, Cley, East Ruston 2, Edgefield, Flitcham, Halvergate, Heacham 2, Hickling 23 (including Heigham Sound), Hoe, Holkham 5, Holme 4, Horning Hall Marshes 4, Horning Marsh Farm 2, Horsey, How Hill 3, Kettlestone Common, Lynn Point, Martham Broad 3, Rockland Broad 2, Santon Downham (Little Ouse) 2-3, Scolt Head 2, Sharp Street Fen, Snettisham 4, Southrepps Common, Strumpshaw Fen 8, Sturston Carr, Surlingham Church Marsh 2, Sutton Fen, Thetford Nunnery Lakes, Thorpe Marshes 3, Titchwell 4, Tottington, Wells 5, Welney, Wickhampton Marshes and Wisington. Again an excellent amount of breeding data received with over 100 singing males. We are now getting a good picture of the status of this species as a breeding bird in the county.

At Scolt Head last fledged young seen Aug 9th; subsequently total of 7 migrants Aug 17th-25th. Only other autumn migrants Weybourne Aug 20th (trapped) and Mundesley Sept 20th.

**Sedge Warbler**

*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Summer breeder and passage migrant*

First spring migrants noted in April at Tottenhill 4th, Strumpshaw 6th, Cley 7th and Costessey Pits and Titchwell 8th. Widespread arrivals continued during month with most breeding sites reporting good numbers by month end. May migrants Scolt Head 13th, 14th, 16th and 19th and Blakeney Point 16th.

During breeding season counts of singing males received from the following sites: Brancaster FM 33, Holkham Meals 25, Holme 24, Ludham 11, Thetford Nunnery Lakes 10, Titchwell 17, Welney 77 and UEA 12. Welney WWT has been consistently counted since 1991 and the table shows the number of singing males. This illustrates a general recovery after poor years in 1993 and 1994.

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
No of males	73	51	34	47	56	86	77

As usual with this species a very light autumn passage with the only Sept records as follows: Welney 2 on 7th, Winterton 2 on 8th, Sheringham 14th, Weybourne 18th, Blakeney Point 20th and last at Salthouse 25th.

**Marsh Warbler**

*Acrocephalus palustris*

*Rare in late spring and autumn*

Four typical late spring records all in June at Weybourne 3rd (MP *et al*), Pensthorpe 5th/6th (NA MPT *et al*), Hempstead 15th-29th (NBB JHa AJK *et al*) and Ludham 17th-23rd (SL D&MJS JRW). These 4 birds take the county total to 29, recorded annually since 1990. It is also remarkable that the second county record was only as recently as 1983.

## Reed Warbler

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

### *Summer breeder and passage migrant*

A very early bird on April 13th at Rockland Broad followed by others at Strumpshaw 19th and UEA 21st. Subsequently a scattering of arrivals in next few days with a county-wide influx from 30th onwards.

Totals of singing males were received from the following sites: Brancaster FM 43, Brancaster Staithe (tidal reedbed) 22, Holme 50, Ludham 13 and Welney 99. One of the nests at Holme was predated by the male Little Bittern in June.

Autumn passage small with only a handful of Sept records mainly from the coast. However, more Oct sightings than usual, with records in first 2 weeks of month from Cantley BF 2, Cley 2, Titchwell, Welney (up to 5), Weybourne 2, and later at Eecles 16th and Holme 18th. Finally a very late 1st-winter bird trapped at Sheringham BO Nov 4th.

## Icterine Warbler

*Hippolais icterina*

### *Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring*

A good showing with 5 typically late spring records. In May at Burnham Overy Dunes on 20th, Yarmouth 26th, Winterton 28th and Horsey 31st, and in June Blakeney Point 6th. This is the highest spring total since 1992.

The least productive autumn since 1990 with only 6 records, all in Aug: Salthouse 20th/21st, Blakeney Point and Sheringham 25th, Yarmouth 26th, and Scolt Head and Blakeney Point again on 31st. The first Sept since 1976 with no records.

## Dartford Warbler

*Sylvia undata*

### *Vagrant from southern England and the Continent*

A singing male was present at an inland site from March 21st to July 3rd. With the continued increase in the British breeding population, the possibility of this species attempting to breed in the county is not out of the question, hence the locality and observers' names have been withheld since any disturbance may hamper any future breeding attempts.

The county total for this century advances to 10.

## Subalpine Warbler

*Sylvia cantillans*

### *Vagrant from the Mediterranean*

In May a female at Blakeney Point 17th (JVB GED MIE *et al*). This species has now been recorded in the county in 7 out of the last 10 years, 1991, 1992 and 1996 being blank years, and the county total moves to 20.

## Barred Warbler

*Sylvia nisoria*

### *Scarce autumn migrant recorded only once in spring*

In Aug the first appeared at Weybourne on 20th followed by another at Holme 24th. Sept proved more productive: Holme 20th-28th with 2 birds 21st and 25th (3 birds involved), Warham Greens 20th/21st and Eecles 27th-30th.

In Oct Holme 15th-17th with 2 birds on latter date, Eecles 19th-27th, Sidestrand 24th and finally a very well-watched bird at Burnham Overy Dunes 25th-27th. The bird at Eecles was tailless and must have been a strange sight.

A lean year compared with the record-breaking years of 1994 (38), 1995 (35) and 1996 (34).

## **Lesser Whitethroat**

*Sylvia curruca*

### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

A slow spring arrival with only 3 April records: UEA 22nd, Holme 28th and Kettlestone Common 29th. In May a more widespread arrival in first half of month, though only ones and twos noted with the exception of 8-12 Sheringham 13th-16th and 10 at Scolt Head on 14th. Later in month up to 7 Holkham and 3 Warham Greens.

Breeding data was very thin - apart from total of 8 singing males at Holme the only sites with 2 prs were Boyland Wood, Burgh Common, Flitcham (Abbey Farm), Frettenham and Walton. Observers from most sites commented on the poor breeding season compared with 1996. Found in only 6 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS with just one bird recorded in each. In the squares surveyed in all three years the total number recorded fell by a massive 78% between 1995 and 1997.

Autumn migration began in mid-Aug with very small numbers along the coast, with max Holme where 11 on 13th, 12 25th and 15 26th. Sept was extremely quiet with no site recording more than 2 birds. Oct produced more records of late birds than in recent years and unusually more records than Sept in general, with 2-4 Holme 18th-31st, Scolt Head 18th, Wells 22nd, Holkham and Snettisham 28th and Winterton 29th. A late bird at Holme on Nov 7th (JA).

## **Whitethroat**

*Sylvia communis*

### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First records April 10th when singing males at Baconsthorpe and Thetford Nunnery Lakes, with further singles at Terrington 12th and East Ruston 14th. From 18th onwards recorded at many coastal and inland sites; highest April count 16 at Sheringham 28th. During May no large influxes noted, though most observers commented on good numbers of singing males in general.

Totals of singing males during breeding season at the following sites: Baconsthorpe 11, Boyland Wood 18, Flitcham (Abbey Farm) 11, Holme 10, Salthouse Heath 21, Stiffkey 15, Waxham 12 and Welney WWT 24. At Kettlestone Common best ringing year since 1989 but still barely half of late 1980s average; many pairs lost first clutches/broods but laid again. The BBS located birds in 47 out of 68 squares, not significantly different from the two previous years. The average number of birds per square was 3.8, approximately 25% down from 1995.

The autumn proved uneventful with best numbers noted during Aug - on 23rd 10 Holme and 25 Sheringham. In Sept records from only 8 sites with peak of 6 Waxham 27th; elsewhere only singles noted. During Oct singles Eccles 2nd, Welney 3rd, Sheringham 7th and Holme 19th/20th.

## **Garden Warbler**

*Sylvia borin*

### ***Summer breeder and passage migrant***

First noted at UEA April 22nd, followed by East Wretham 23rd, Thompson Water 24th, Lynford 25th and at 6 other sites 26th. In May passage migrants were very scarce with only ones and twos noted at coastal sites; one Scolt Head June 5th was a late migrant.

By late May most breeding sites had received their quota of singing males. Breeding season totals as follows: Boyland Wood 4, Blickling Hall 7, East Wretham 11, Salthouse Heath 6, Swangey GP 5 and Thetford Nunnery 4. Found in 20 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS, with the comparable data revealing virtually no change.

As with Whitethroat only a very light autumn passage, commencing on Aug 13th when single coastal migrants Thornham Point, Blakeney Point and Sea Palling. Records from 5



other sites in last week Aug with peak autumn count 10 Sheringham 25th. No notable falls in Sept with mostly singles recorded; max counts of 4 Sheringham 19th/20th and 6 Scolt Head 27th. In Oct Holme 10th, Yarmouth and Holme (2) 22nd/23rd, and finally Weybourne 26th (ringed).

**Blackcap**

*Sylvia atricapilla*

*Summer breeder and passage migrant; winters in small numbers*

In first winter period only 8 birds at 7 sites, suggesting that the hard weather in early Jan may have caused birds to move south or even some fatalities; the corresponding figures for Dec 1996 showed 17 birds at 12 sites.

The first sign of spring migration mid-March, with at least 12 sites recording birds by month end. April's peak count of 20 singing males Holkham Meals 20th was not reflected in May with few coastal migrants, though breeding birds were in good numbers and widespread. Summer totals of singing males included Boyland Wood 8, Holkham 6, Ling Common 14, Thetford Nunnery 11 and Welney 6. Recorded in 43 out of 68 squares in the BBS, no significant change, although a slight fall in number of birds per square.

In autumn no major falls occurred, with peak counts of 20 Overstrand Aug 25th and 14 Sheringham Sept 19th. As usual widespread records in Oct with peaks of 5 at Holme and Holkham Meals and 8 at Sheringham; most migrants had departed by mid-Nov.

Small numbers also present in second winter period with records from Chedgrave, East Ruston, Eaton (2), Norwich (Thorpe Hamlet) (2), Salthouse, Sheringham, Stibbard and Thorpe St Andrew.

**Pallas's Warbler**

*Phylloscopus proregulus*

*Rare autumn migrant from Siberia*

Another exceptional year for this species with birds arriving in 2 waves. The first noted in Oct on 14th at Holkham remaining until 17th (AIB JRMc *et al*), followed on 15th by another at Eccles which also remained until 17th (NBB PJH AJK). The 17th saw the arrival of 4 additional birds with 2 at Overstrand (TE BJM *et al*) and singles at 2 separate sites at Winterton, one of which was ringed (KJB PCa *et al*). On 19th one appeared in an observer's garden in Wells town centre (JRMc).

The second wave began on 21st when birds noted as follows: Cley 21st/22nd (MAG BAEM JRW *et al*); Wells 21st-23rd with 3 on 22nd (AIB JRMc *et al*); 3 Yarmouth 22nd/23rd (SSm *et al*), 2 still 24th/25th, one remaining until 26th; Holme 2 22nd/23rd (NML VET *et al*), Mundesley 23rd (MDF), Trimingham 25th (MMac), East Hills, Wells 27th (JRMc) and Sea Palling 28th (NBB AJK). Further singles also occurred in Nov at Sea Palling on 1st (NBB AJK) and at Eccles on 15th (NBB AJK). The year's total of 22 individuals is the second best for the county - only bettered in 1996 when 29 were recorded.

*1996 Addition:* Wells Oct 22nd (JSB).

The yearly totals since 1991 are as follows:

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
6	2	7	12	4	29	22

**Yellow-browed Warbler**

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

*Scarce autumn migrant from Siberia*

A good series of autumn records with first Sept 25th at Sheringham, remaining until 26th. On 26th another Holkham then 3 there 27th, with 2 28th-30th. The 27th saw more arrivals

at Holme (2), Waxham Sands and Winterton (2), and on 28th at Titchwell, East Runton, Paston, Eccles and Yarmouth (until Oct 1st). Another was seen at Hopton on 29th.

In Oct only 2 recorded in first half of month, both at Holkham on 3rd. One 'performed' very well but became weak and was picked up later in the afternoon - examination in the hand revealed a large tick on the right side of its head and although this was removed the bird unfortunately later died.

Fresh arrivals began to appear from Oct 15th as follows: Stiffkey 15th, Cromer 15th-17th, Waxham 15th, Hempstead 16th, Yarmouth 16th-18th, Sheringham 18th/19th, Overstrand 18th, Winterton 18th, Wells (2) 21st (one until 22nd), Yarmouth 21st, Holme and Blakeney 22nd, Yarmouth 25th, Holkham 26th and Waxham 30th. Latest of year Wells Nov 1st. The autumn total of 33 is a high number for recent years but low compared to the 52 in 1994.

### **Hume's Leaf Warbler**

*Phylloscopus humei*

#### *Vagrant from central Asia*

One at Holme on Oct 22nd (JBi GFH NML *et al*) showed well most of the day to the assembled 'crowd' but was unfortunately not present the following day. Several past records in the county of this recently 'split' species remain under consideration by BBRC.

### **Radde's Warbler**

*Phylloscopus schwarzi*

#### *Vagrant from central Asia*

One at Wells on Oct 22nd (JBK EJH *et al*) showed well and was an odd sight with very little tail present. The first after 2 blank years, moving the county total to 23.

### **Dusky Warbler**

*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

#### *Vagrant from northern and central Asia*

Singles at Wells Oct 20th/21st (AIB JRMc *et al*) and Waxham Oct 23rd-25th (KKH PJH *et al*). These 2 records take the county total to 32; after years of near-level pegging this species is now becoming more regular than Radde's Warbler.

### **Wood Warbler**

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

#### *Passage migrant and rare breeder*

The first record of year a male in song at Brandon May 1st, followed by a multiple arrival the following day at Holme, Titchwell, Kelling Triangle and Salthouse Heath. Subsequently records from Fakenham 7th, Yarmouth 10th, Titchwell again 14th/15th and also Kelling Triangle 24th.

No breeding data received; it seems as though any past breeding sites are now totally deserted. Hopefully a reversal of the current situation may occur in the future.

A very unseasonal record at Sea Palling July 5th (AJK).

A light autumn passage with only 7 records: Yarmouth Aug 10th and 13th, Holme Aug 16th, Hanworth Common Aug 17th, Wells Sept 27th, Holkham Sept 28th and Warham Sept 29th.

### **Chiffchaff**

*Phylloscopus collybita*

#### *Common summer breeder, passage migrant and scarce winter visitor*

Few records during first winter period, the only Jan records at Fakenham 6th and 30th, Wells town mid-month and Beeston Regis Common 16th, followed in Feb at Yarmouth 5th, Sheringham (2) 27th/28th and Stanford Water 28th.

Spring migration began abruptly in second week of March with 1-5 birds at over 35 sites. Seen in larger numbers and at more sites in second half of March with peak counts of 15 Yarmouth 18th and 12 Strumpshaw 22nd.

By April a widespread and county-wide arrival had taken place with most breeding sites occupied; highest spring counts of 30 Holkham 2nd and 21 Wells 27th. Highest numbers of territories held (during breeding season) as follows: Belmore Plantation 10, Boyland Wood 6 and Thetford Nunnery 8. At Kettlestone Common exceptional breeding success noted (in contrast to Willow Warbler) with 50% more ringed than in previous best year of 1995 and the best year overall since ringing began there in 1982. The BBS found birds in 35 out of 68 squares, representing no significant change.

Autumn migration began with dispersal of juvs along coast during Aug but only small numbers involved. Falls were few during Sept with passage peaking from 23rd onwards; highest count of 10 Holkham 27th was matched by no more than twos and threes at other sites. A heavier passage in Oct especially in third and fourth weeks, coinciding with the arrival of Pallas's Warblers, with max counts 10 Wells 3rd and 24th. Birds showing characteristics of *abietinus* race at Sheringham 18th-23rd (trapped) and another 23rd/24th.

In Nov recorded at 12 sites with max of 5 Wells 4th and 3 Yarmouth 6th. At Sheringham on 26th another bird showing characteristics of *abietinus* race present. Total of 18 wintering birds in Dec at 13 sites with max 4 Winterton 5th.

## **Willow Warbler**

*Phylloscopus trochilus*

### ***Common summer breeder and passage migrant***

First arrivals were singles Potter Heigham and Weybourne March 31st, followed in April by others at Wells 1st, Thetford Nunnery 2nd, and Brettenham, Thompson Water and Wells 4th. A much wider influx from 6th onwards when birds noted at many sites. Peak numbers recorded in second half of month with max 21 Scolt Head 27th. Coastal peaks in May also at Scolt Head where 20 1st and 18 16th, when also 18 Blakeney Point. Spring passage then smaller until month end.

Territories occupied during breeding season included 9 Brettenham Heath, 36 East Wretham Heath, 9 Roudham, 12 Roydon Common, 13 Syderstone Common, 19 Thetford Nunnery and 14 Welney. The BBS found that again there was no significant change in the number of squares occupied (37 out of 68) but there was a further fall in the average number of birds per occupied square, down from 5.2 in 1995 to 3.2 in 1997.

Autumn migration commenced second week of Aug but remained light until 22nd when 16 Holme, 40 Scolt Head and 15 Blakeney Point, followed next day by 75 Scolt Head, 48 Blakeney Point and 22 Sheringham. A further fall on 30th produced 40 birds on both Scolt Head and Blakeney Point. In Sept small numbers at many coastal sites but only notable fall on 18th when 27 Scolt Head. In Oct few records in first 2 weeks with last birds Yarmouth 15th, Wells (2) 21st and Holkham 31st.

## **Goldcrest**

*Regulus regulus*

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

Spring movement virtually non-existent with single Weybourne April 17th and 1-3 Scolt Head on just four dates until month end.

Breeding season records from 12 inland sites. Mainly 1-2 prs but 3 Boyland Wood, 4 Brettenham Heath, 6 Thetford Nunnery and 7 East Wretham Heath. The BBS found birds in 20 out of 68 squares surveyed.

Autumn passage from Aug 16th when one Scolt Head. Small numbers recorded through Aug until early Oct from 11 coastal sites with max 32 Holme Oct 1st. Then few records



until Oct 15th when 20 Cley, 30+ Eccles and 35+ Holkham Pines with a peak on 17th when 100+ Winterton. Only other double-figure counts received were 20 Yarmouth Cemetery Oct 18th with 25+ there on 23rd, 10 Waxham Oct 26th and 14 Kettlestone Common Nov 5th.

### **Firecrest**

*Regulus ignicapillus*

#### ***Spring and autumn passage migrant, scarce in winter; occasional breeder***

In Jan singles at Lynford Arboretum, remaining from 1996, and at West Tofts (trapped) 30th with 1-2 at Strumpshaw until Feb 2nd. Only other Feb records from Acle and Sparham with 2-3 singing males noted at Lynford Stag 23rd. Increase in records in March from 9 mainly east coast sites with min of 18 birds, the highest count being 3-4 Yarmouth Cemetery 12th. Fewer April records with just 12 birds from 9 sites with 3 singing males at Holkham 6th. Migrants Scolt Head May 6th and 14th-31st.

Breeding season records from Lynford Arboretum, Lynford Stag, Sandringham and Yarmouth Cemetery but breeding only confirmed at Lynford Arboretum where an adult seen feeding young; the possibility of hybridisation with Goldcrest could not be eliminated. In June singles Diddlington 12th, Beeston Regis 20th and Brundall 24th.

In autumn, first recorded Blakeney Point on Sept 6th with a further 10 birds at 8 coastal sites until month end. In Oct, at least 28 at 12 coastal sites with noticeable influx from 21st but all records of just 1-2. In Nov, 13 at 7 sites; in Dec 1-2 Pretty Corner, Sheringham from 7th until the month end and one Wells 20th.

### **Spotted Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa striata*

#### ***Declining summer breeder and passage migrant***

First noted May 1st at Cromer with migrants recorded until June 6th; mostly 1-2 but 6 Scolt Head May 17th and 6 Yarmouth Cemetery May 26th.

Breeding records received from 47 sites, a substantial increase on last year's 28 sites. All records of 1-2 prs except 3 prs Wells town and 10 prs Holkham Park. However, despite this apparent increase, a number of observers noted an absence of breeding pairs from former regular haunts. For example, in Holme village no birds bred for the first time while at East Tuddenham there were no nesting birds for the first time in 23 years.

In Aug, parties of 6 at Stibbard 18th and Hautbois 26th but coastal movement almost non-existent with only 3 singles noted, the first being at Sea Palling 21st. Sept produced records from only 9 coastal sites with the highest count being 6 Yarmouth Cemetery 26th. Additionally, inland 4 Flitcham 5th, 10 Sandy Hill (Stanford TA) 6th and single Welney 20th. A single Oct record at Stiffkey on 15th.

### **Red-breasted Flycatcher**

*Ficedula parva*

#### ***Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring***

In Sept, first recorded 19th on Blakeney Point with further singles at Holme 25th-28th, East Runton 27th and Waxham on 28th. A late Oct bird East Hills. Wells 27th.

### **Pied Flycatcher**

*Ficedula hypoleuca*

#### ***Passage migrant, scarce in spring, abundant at times in autumn; has bred***

In April, first recorded Metton on 24th with another Gramborough Hill on 27th. A further 10 singles noted in spring at 6 coastal sites with the last Blakeney Point June 1st.

Return passage from Aug 7th when single at Holme. Small-scale movement continued through the month with 1-4 most days at many coastal sites and highest count 5 Yarmouth Cemetery 13th. Inland, recorded at Binham, Hempstead Marshes, Sennowe Park and Swanton

Novers. Steady if unspectacular passage continued through Sept with numbers peaking in last week when 10 Paston 25th, 40+ Yarmouth Cemetery 26th and 10 Trimingham 27th; inland singles Lynford 22nd and North Walsham 28th. In Oct, 1-3 recorded from 7 coastal sites, the last being at Caister GC 19th.

**Bearded Tit**

*Panurus biarmicus*

***Declining resident and partial migrant; periodic influxes from Low Countries***

In early part of year recorded in small numbers at Burgh Castle (max 12), Burnham Norton, Buckenham Marsh, Brancaster (tidal reedbed), Cley, Horsey Mere, Haddiscoe, Holkham, Hickling, Martham Broad, Rockland Broad, Strumpshaw, Titchwell and Weybourne.

Breeding numbers again low with records from Titchwell, Brancaster (pr), Holkham NNR (4 prs), Cley (5 prs), Hickling (17 prs), Haddiscoe and Strumpshaw (15 prs). At Hickling the species appears to be very much in decline as the following counts of breeding pairs show:

	1980	1982	1983	1985	1986	1992	1994	1996	1997
No of prs	108	92	77	60	36	30	33	35	17

The only counts of any size during autumn were 50 Cley, 40 Titchwell and 14 Hickling. Evidence of immigration from the Continent at Salthouse when 4 in from the sea Nov 1st. Only significant count at year end was 40 Titchwell during Dec.

**Long-tailed Tit**

*Aegithalos caudatus*

***Common resident breeder; Scandinavian white-headed race very rare in autumn***

No large gatherings reported in first winter period; however, flocks of 32 Salthouse Broad May 13th, 24 Beeston Regis May 16th, 27 Pentney GP May 19th and 28 Baconsthorpe June 6th were perhaps a reflection of another cold spring.

The BBS found no further reduction in number of squares occupied and the average number of birds was well up on last year.

Flocks in latter part of year included 40+ Sennowe Park and 50 Hautbois in Aug and 40 Overstrand in Sept; also total of 65 Sennowe Park again Nov.

Evidence of migration at Hunstanton Cliffs where flocks of 15 south Oct 18th and 8 south next day.

At Kettlestone Common ringing numbers back to average after the 'disastrous' 1996, whereas at Garboldisham only 20 ringed compared to 49 in 1996.

**Marsh Tit**

*Parus palustris*

***Common breeding resident***

Reported from only 38 localities, significantly fewer than last year - no doubt under-recorded. Largest number of breeding pairs were 30+ Bacton Wood, with other breeding season records from the following sites: Belmore Plantation, East Ruston, Holme Hale, Kettlestone Common, Lynford Arboretum, Ormesby Broad, Rockland Broad, Santon Downham, Sennowe Park, South Wootton Common, Stalham, Thetford Nunnery and Wayland Wood. Found in 8 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS.

**Willow Tit**

*Parus montanus*

***Breeding resident in decline***

Recorded from the following localities during breeding season: Brundall, Brettenham Heath, Bridgeham, Catfield Fen, East Tuddenham, East Wretham Heath, Fakenham, Feltwell, Frost's

Common, Hoe, Horning Hall Marshes, Horning Marsh Farm, Hickling, Kettlestone Common, Ludham, Lynford Stag, Quidenham, Roddard Wood, Rockland Broad, Saham Toney Mere, Santon Downham, South Wootton Common, Sutton, Sutton High Fen, Swaffham Forest, Thompson Water and 4 other sites in Stanford TA, Thetford Nunnery, Titchwell, Welney WWT, West Briggs, West Harling, and Whitlingham Lane. None were located in 68 squares covered by the BBS. 46 of these squares were surveyed in 1996 and of these 5 held Willow Tits that year. Reported from an additional 25 sites during rest of year.

Many observers have commented on how difficult this species is to find. Would all observers please make a special effort to look for it and continue to submit *all* records.

### **Coal Tit**

*Parus ater*

#### ***Breeding resident and passage migrant***

CBC data produced the following pairs: Belmore Plantation 3, Brettenham Heath 7, East Wretham 12 plot 1 and 6 plot 2, and Thetford Nunnery 8. Found in 21 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS. No change in number of squares but the average number of birds per square was twice that for last year.

At East Tuddenham a pair nested in a cardboard box, lining the nest with yellow fluff from a tennis ball and raising 2 broods.

Evidence of dispersal from Holme where 10 present Oct 19th. Unlike 1996 no reports of birds showing characteristics of the continental race.

### **Blue Tit**

*Parus caeruleus*

#### ***Common breeding resident and passage migrant***

CBC data produced the same number of pairs at Belmore Plantation (11) and Abbey Farm, Flitcham (6) as in 1996. Elsewhere the data produced the following number of territories: Boyland Wood 4, Brettenham Heath 6, East Wretham 15 plot 1 and 9 plot 2, Thetford Nunnery 19 and Thornage Hall 6. At Kettlestone Common a good breeding season recorded, with highest total since 1989. The BBS found 65 out of 68 squares occupied, a slight increase, but after last year's increase the number of birds per square (6.2) was back to the 1995 level.

Only movements recorded were from Sheringham where 5 west March 12th, 6 west Oct 26th and 5 west Oct 28th, and Hunstanton Cliffs where 4 south Oct 18th and 6 south Oct 30th.

### **Great Tit**

*Parus major*

#### ***Common breeding resident and passage migrant***

CBC data produced the following territories: Belmore Plantation 7, Boyland Wood 2, Brettenham Heath 4, East Wretham Heath 10 plot 1 and 8 plot 2, Flitcham (Abbey Farm) one, Thetford Nunnery 14 and Thornage Hall 5. The BBS located birds in 53 out of 68 squares with an average of 4.5 birds per occupied square.

The only migrants were reported from Sheringham where 3 west March 1st and 6 west March 5th.

### **Nuthatch**

*Sitta europaea*

#### ***Breeding resident, possibly in decline***

Reported from 38 sites but this included 15 sites in Stanford TA, hence no doubt under-recorded. At Holkham Park the population increased from 30 to 36 prs prompting the observer to describe it as a 'bumper' year. Elsewhere the species re-established itself at Ditchingham after an absence of 6 years. Although the data are limited, the BBS has shown no indication of any change of status since 1995.



A female ringed at Garboldisham March 8th had a more orange-buff breast and belly with orange-chestnut flanks, suggesting it was not of the usual European race but of the *caesia* race.

Compared with 1996, few coastal records except at Holme where singles April 12th, July 13th and Aug 15th.

### **Treecreeper**

*Certhia familiaris*

#### ***Widespread woodland resident***

At Holkham Park a min of 30 prs with 'probably many more' present. At Kettlestone Common almost twice as many trapped as average, the best year since ringing began in 1982. Coastal records particularly noticeable at Holme where 1-2 on many dates July 27th-Oct 7th and where considered to be an 'excellent' year for this species.

### **Penduline Tit**

*Remiz pendulinus*

#### ***Vagrant and potential breeder***

A male and 3 others at Duck Broad, Heigham Sound Dec 20th (AJK).

One seen briefly in flight and calling at Titchwell Dec 31st (MHo IR) was seen well in the reeds next day and then irregularly until April 1988.

Four previous county records, the last in 1993.

### **Golden Oriole**

*Oriolus oriolus*

#### ***Scarce migratory breeder and passage migrant in small numbers***

Another good year for spring migrants with the following reported in May: male Winterton 11th, west Salthouse 17th, imm male and female Glandford also 17th, male Martham 24th and imm male in song Holme 30th.

During June imm males in song at Holkham 6th and Mundesley 14th, and one west Brancaster/Titchwell 28th. In July female west Cley 4th, same or another Titchwell 5th.

Breeding: 4 prs bred, 6+ young fledged (3 ringed from same nest). 2 additional prs probably bred with birds present at 8 other sites (information from Golden Oriole Group).

### **Red-backed Shrike**

*Lanius collurio*

#### ***Passage migrant in small numbers; last bred 1989***

A good spring passage, 18 in total, as follows: in May males Cromer 17th, Heacham/Hunstanton 18th, Wiveton Downs 21st/22nd, Burnham Overy Dunes 21st-24th, Stubb Mill 23rd, Northrepps 23rd-26th, Waxham 24th-27th, Salthouse Heath and Snettisham CP 25th, Kirby Bedon/Bramerton 26th, Somerton 28th and Winterton South Dunes 30th, with females Hunstanton GC 27th-29th, Holkham 31st/June 1st and Saxthorpe June 1st; also in June females Saxthorpe 1st and Winterton 10th with a male Snettisham 6th.

Midsummer males at Burgh Castle July 4th and 14th and Strumpshaw Fen July 21st/22nd possibly relate to the same individual.

By contrast with spring, autumn passage was less pronounced, with just 8 recorded: Overstrand Aug 9th, Winterton Aug 16th-20th and Sept 6th-9th, Blakeney Point Aug 19th-21st, West Dereham Sept 17th, Mundesley .



*Red-backed Shrike (V. Hamlin)*

Sept 20th-25th, Scolt Head Sept 21st and a late imm between Brancaster and Titchwell Oct 25th-28th.

## **Great Grey Shrike**

*Lanius excubitor*

### ***Scarce passage migrant and declining winter visitor***

Following a notable lack of over-wintering birds in recent years, the last 2 years have also seen a marked drop in the number of passage migrants, most apparent in spring. The future begins to look bleak for what is generally a much admired species and there is nothing to give hope that this decline has bottomed out in the following series of records.

A single spring migrant, Salthouse/Kelling March 31st, followed by 5 (or possibly just 3) in the autumn/winter period: Horsey Oct 16th, Burnham Overy Dunes Oct 27th, possibly the same Warham Greens Oct 28th and Nov 9th, and Grimes Graves Nov 23rd/24th.

## **Woodchat Shrike**

*Lanius senator*

### ***Vagrant from southern Europe, mostly in spring***

Three delightful spring overshoots and an autumn juv continue the recent good run for this species in the county.

In spring a well-watched bird at Winterton April 20th-24th (D&MJS JL *et al*), and others near North Wootton May 16th (SPD DNu *et al*) and Overstrand May 19th (BJM).

Overstrand also hosted the first juv in the county since 1986, when one frequented cliff-face scrub Oct 6th/7th (AE BJM *et al*) just a few metres away from a Short-toed Lark.

## **Jay**

*Garrulus glandarius*

### ***Common resident; periodic influxes from Continent following failure of acorn crop***

The autumn of 1996 produced a classic irruption of this species and when this has occurred in the past there has tended to be a smaller series of movements noted at coastal sites the following spring. This pattern could be clearly seen in 1997 where birds, presumably mainly of continental origin, made a return to home territories. The first signs of this passage were observed at Welney, where this species is normally absent, with singles April 16th and 27th and 3 28th/29th. Following these records there was a widespread passage noted at coastal sites from Burnham Norton to Winterton throughout May but with no records in June. At Cromer GC 8 flew in from the sea and 41 flew west on 1st, and at Waxham 26 flew out to sea on 3rd. All other records were of birds 'coasting' (flying along the coastline) or lingering at sites where they are usually absent. The best counts were 25 west 4 east Sheringham 1st, 35 west 5 east Sheringham 3rd, 19 Sea Palling 5th and 18 north Eccles 18th.

Found in 21 out of 68 squares in the BBS, a further increase, although last year's dramatic rise in the number of birds per occupied square was partly reversed. In June a pair with two albino young were a remarkable sight visiting a Taverham garden (JW-T). Only one record received in autumn, a flock of 15+ at Hickling Nov 12th.

## **Magpie**

*Pica pica*

### ***Common winter resident forming winter roosts***

A series of winter roost counts as follows: 43 Ringstead Common Jan 23rd and 67 there Feb 12th, 98+ Roydon Common Feb 8th and 50 along edge of R Nar between West Winch and Saddlebow Feb 6th. In March max 15 Titchwell, 11 Frettenham 5th, 34 Horsford 7th and 20 Kelling 8th. There was a post-breeding roost of 11 at Hainford July 11th. In Dec 119 at the Roydon Common roost on 7th.

The BBS found 39 out of 68 squares to be occupied - no significant change from the 1995 and 1996 results.

Though fewer than in 1996 there were once more unusual sightings of birds apparently migrating: Seolt Head one high west April 13th, and southerly movements at Hunstanton in Oct of 10 6th, 10 18th and 11 19th. This is normally a highly sedentary species which appears to be expanding in numbers in Norfolk.

*1996 Correction:* The table headed Ringland Common should have read Ringstead Common.

## **Jackdaw**

*Corvus monedula*

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

In first half of year, largest roosts/gatherings: 600 Sculthorpe-Barsham (Jan), 300 Baeonsthorpe (Jan), 160+ Lyng (Feb), 400 Houghton (March) and 200+ Thetford Nunnery (April). At Holkham Park 300 Feb, 500 March and 300 again April. Migrants were noted on three occasions in May: 8 west Seolt Head 1st, 3 west Seolt Head 10th and 35 west Sheringham 13th.

Found in 46 out of 68 squares covered by the BBS with a 59% rise in number of birds per occupied square since 1995.

At Hunstanton Cliffs, autumn passage recorded between Sept 29th and Nov 15th totalling 251 birds south and 6 north, with the best southerly counts in Oct as follows: 66 18th (when 60 south Snettisham), 29 19th, 32 28th, 30 29th and 30 30th. 54 also moved west at Overstrand Oct 31st. There were roosts/gatherings of 350 Holkham Park and 125 near East Winch in Nov, and 850 near Roydon Common and 700 Pentney GP in Dec.

Migrating corvids are always exciting, even more so when they pose interesting racial questions, as this species does, and make observers much more aware of the variation within resident populations. Once again birds showing characteristics of the continental/eastern forms were reported in 1997, Jan to April and then Oct and Dec as follows: in Jan Cley 31st; in Feb Yarmouth 7th-22nd, Lyng 9th, 2 West Somerton 21st; in April Cley/Salthouse 8th, Blakeney 13th and Salthouse 13th and 30th; in Oct Cley 9th, Blakeney 15th; and in Dec Pentney GP 31st. Additionally, the flock of 300 in Holkham Park in April contained several showing features of eastern birds.

## **Rook**

*Corvus frugilegus*

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

Largest roosts/gatherings: 340 south-west Catfield Fen (probably heading for Buckenham roost) Jan, 1500 Keswick July and 200 West Somerton Oct 3rd. Additionally 'thousands' were reported from Didlington and Seamere in second winter period. Mixed flocks of Rooks/Jackdaws as follows: c10,000 Buckenham Marsh Oct 25th, c3000 Shipdham Airfield in winter, and a vast mixed winter roost reported at Gimingham. A new rookery comprising 13 nests was established in 30-year-old poplars at Bedingham while 10 nests in clms at Old Catton were not included in the 1995 and 1996 reports.

Spring migration noted in March: one in off sca Sheringham 1st, 15 west Holme 17th and 15 west Sheringham 31st, and then 35 west Sheringham May 1st.

The BBS found birds in 38 out of 68 squares, a slight increase both in number of squares and in number of birds per square.

At Hunstanton Cliffs in autumn there was a total of 203 south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th; the best counts, all in Oct, were 34 14th, 20 17th, 22 18th, 29 19th and 19 29th. At Holme there were 21 east Oct 21st and 10 west 4 cast Oct 30th. Some birds from breeding populations in Russia, Scandinavia and the Baltic states spend the winter in Britain, though numbers on visible migration are often obscured by the presence of mobile resident feeding flocks.



## **Carrion Crow**

*Corvus corone*

### ***Increasing resident forming winter roosts; also a passage migrant***

Roost counts: 200 Roydon Common (Jan/Feb), 80 Doeking Jan 29th, and in Dec 175 Roydon Common, 71 east Baconsthorpe 3rd, 60 East Harling Heath 18th and 310 Doeking 30th.

Spring migration recorded only in April and May though good numbers usually move through earlier. At Seolt Head a westerly movement in April: 7 10th, 10 13th, 13 20th, 27 21st, 11 22nd and 23 20th; in the same month 60 west Cromer GC 28th and 17 west Holme 30th. In May a notable movement on 1st was picked up at Seolt Head (108 west), Weybourne (15 east) and Sheringham (30 west 10 east). Other May records: 33 west Seolt Head 10th, 37 west Sheringham also 10th, 24 west 14 east Sheringham 11th, 8 east Weybourne 15th and 2 west Weybourne 20th.

The BBS found 55 out of 68 squares to be occupied, with last year's increase in number of birds per square partly reversed.

The only definite movement in autumn was 12 east Holme Sept 28th. A group of 22 were present at Horsey Nov 9th.

**Hooded Crow** *C c cornix*: One wintered at Horsey remaining until at least March 30th. Further records in Jan: Hempstead Marshes 15th and Flitcham 29th; in Feb Roydon Common 8th and Gooderstone 27th; in March Sea Palling 7th, west Sheringham 8th, Holme 9th-11th, north Horsey 15th, Salthouse/Weybourne also 15th, Winterton 21st, Berney Arms 22nd, north Horsey 25th, west Sheringham 26th and Kelling 30th; in April Winterton 22nd; in May Berney Marshes 1st, Paston 5th and west Sheringham 10th; Holme Aug 30th; 2 reported on an oil rig 60 miles east of Yarmouth Oct 20th; in Nov Brancaster Beach 14th, Horsey Mere 15th, Titchwell/Brancaster 16th; and finally Brancaster Dec 5th. A pair in the Burgh Castle area all year described as being 80% Hoodie and with 2-3 hybrid birds described as being 30-40% Hoodie.

## **Raven**

*Corvus corax*

### ***Formerly bred; now a vagrant/escape***

One flying north Winterton (KJB *et al*) and then subsequently seen at Horsey March 22nd (JHa). Another flew in from the sea at Horsey, heading directly inland, April 18th (JRW). Though once extremely common in Norfolk, particularly in Norwich, Ravens are a largely sedentary species with very few ringing recoveries over 100 km, so even with the recent increase in sightings this is likely to remain a real rarity in county terms. Horsey appears to be the place to look for one, however, for the 1993/94 individual also frequented this area for some of its protracted stay.

## **Starling**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Passage noted from March with 1500 south Winterton 16th, 450 west 250 east Sheringham 17th, and 1200 west 3400 east Sheringham 22nd.

Found in 49 out of 68 squares surveyed by the BBS. Comparing squares covered in all three years, there was a further drop in the number of squares occupied, but the average number of birds rose this year.

In June and July a series of counts from Seolt Head included 1000 west June 24th and 1800 west July 19th. Also 4000 Snettisham July 8th. At Rockland Broad 3000 roosted Sept.

In Oct numbers generally increased as passage was noted once more: there were 5000 roosting Whitlingham Lane 9th, 35,000 Titchwell 22nd, 10,000 at Rockland/Wheatfen roost 25th and 12,000+ roosting Martham North Broad 26th. The largest movements from sites

other than Hunstanton in Oct were 45,000 west Sheringham 16th (when 86,901 Hunstanton - both figures being all day counts), 23,036 west Holme 17th, 20,000 south Snettisham 18th, 7000 west Sheringham 18th and 3200 west Sheringham 26th. The Hunstanton counts are remarkable: 408,995 were recorded flying south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including 36,212 Oct 14th, 10,798 15th, 86,901 16th, 23,520 17th, 13,952 18th, 34,884 19th, 10,171 21st, 25,648 22nd, 17,481 27th, 39,293 28th, 17,243 29th and 11,796 Nov 5th.

A leucistic bird was present at Holme Oct 17th.

### **Rose-coloured Starling**

*Sturnus roseus*

#### ***Vagrant from eastern Europe***

A juv was present in gardens at Blakeney Oct 20th-27th (A&BR TCD DNy *et al*). An adult was present at Beeston Regis Nov 15th through to 1998 (DNy *et al*); it was highly mobile at times but nevertheless proved very popular with locals and visitors alike. The first records since 1994; the county total now stands at 30.

### **House Sparrow**

*Passer domesticus*

#### ***Common but declining resident***

The decline continues in many areas with observers noting few in places where until recently this species was common. This pattern noted at sites such as Blakeney, Ditchingham, Holme, Old Catton and Wroxham. The picture is not uniform, however, for healthy breeding populations are being reported still, as at Weelspring Farmhouse, Southrepps.

The BBS found birds in 40% of squares - no significant change from 1995 and 1996, but there was a fall of 15% in the average number of birds per square compared to the two previous years.

Largest flocks noted: 40 Baconsthorpe Jan and Aug, 55 feeding on spilt corn at Roudham Aug 2nd, 150 daily at Pasta Foods factory, Yarmouth Sept-Dec, and 25 Garboldisham Dec 31st. Once again passage noted Hunstanton Cliffs, though small with 30 south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including 11 Oct 18th.

### **Tree Sparrow**

*Passer montanus*

#### ***Scarce resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor***

Recorded widely in first winter period generally in small numbers with a bias towards west of the county. Largest flock reported was 40 at Cressingham Feb 14th; the only other flocks in double figures were at Courtyard Farm, Ringstead during Jan/Feb (max 27 Jan 27th), 25 Hindringham all through Jan (10 remaining into Feb), and also in Jan 17 Saxthorpe 6th, 20 Stody 31st and 10 Titchwell all month. In Feb there were up to 24 Flitcham, and in March 10 Briston/Thurning 17th, 10 West Beckham 21st and 10+ Terrington 29th. Very light passage late April to early June: west Sheringham April 30th, 3 west Scolt Head May 2nd with 13 west there 25th, 15 west Holme May 10th, Gramborough Hill, Salthouse May 16th and 4 west Sheringham June 1st.

Pairs during breeding season noted at Baconsthorpe (5 prs), Stanford TA (5 occupied boxes), Briston (pr), Flitcham (Abbey Farm) (6 prs - 3 in 1996), Fulmodeston (7-8 prs), Hindringham (pr), Pulham Market (2 prs), Saxthorpe (pr), Southrepps (pr), Ten Mile Bank (pr at Mantons Farm) and Wood Dalling (pr). Of these, breeding was confirmed at Pulham Market, Saxthorpe, Southrepps and Ten Mile Bank, where 3 broods reared in same nest box. Although the amount of data is perhaps too small to draw any firm conclusions the BBS results are interesting. Of 46 squares covered in all three years, 11 held Tree Sparrows

in 1995, 6 in 1996 and only 4 in 1997. Moreover the total number of birds located in these squares fell from 34 in 1995 to 7 in 1997.

Very small numbers reported through summer and early autumn apart from 25 at Baconsthorpe Aug 8th-25th. Only definite autumn migrants were west Sheringham Aug 30th, 2 west Salthouse Oct 17th and singles south Hunstanton Oct 17th and 30th. Towards year end few records received from west of county; the largest flocks (and the only ones in double figures) were all in Dec: 14 Saxthorpe 2nd, 11 Cawston 4th, 60 Illington 20th, 10 Ringstead 22nd and 10 West Acre 28th.

### **Chaffinch**

*Fringilla coelebs*

*Common resident; also passage migrant and winter visitor in varying numbers*

Largest flock reported in first half of year was at Warham Greens in Jan and Feb, reaching a peak of 250 Feb 23rd. Also in Jan: max of 75 Vinegar Middle. 50+ Sennowe Park 18th, 75 Houghton 25th and 200 Wretton Fen 26th; in Feb 200 Raynham 2nd, 40 Ringstead 6th, 50 Brancaster 7th, 220 Sutton Mill 26th and c100 Grimston Heath 27th; 150 were at Santon Downham and 50 Great Bircham March 9th; 50 Sennowe Park April 19th. The only spring migrants noted were at Sheringham where max of just 35 west March 3rd.

CBC breeding data received: Boyland Wood (8), Belmore Plantation, Thorpe (7), Brettenham Heath (16), East Wretham Heath plot 1 (36), plot 2 (19), Flitcham (Abbey Farm) (36 territories), Thetford Nunnery (31), Thornage Hall CBC (10); also at Welney 34 singing males in May. The BBS results indicate a stable population with hardly any change since 1995.

First signs of autumn passage in Sept when first 2 noted Blakeney Point 19th and one there 20th, then 12 east Holme 27th. In Oct some extremely impressive counts particularly at Hunstanton Cliffs where total of 89,830 south 358 north between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including 1013 south 8th, 50,599 south 16th (when 24,000 in/west Sheringham - both all day counts), 24,790 south 17th, 5850 south 18th and 2141 south 19th. Several of these movements were recorded at other sites in lesser numbers, the huge movement on 16th being additionally noted at Holme (10,000+ west), Titchwell (2800 west), Brancaster (2000 west per hr), Warham Greens (1000+ west per hr) and Eeoles (100+ west in 4 hrs). The majority of birds were arriving at the coast between Sheringham and Eeoles with Sheringham on the western edge of the arrival front where birds were also seen coming in from the sea. Other noteworthy counts in Oct: 4000 south Snettisham 17th, 6529 west Holme 17th, 1500 south Snettisham 18th, and 1900 west Sheringham 18th.

Largest flocks in second winter period (all Dec): 70 Baconsthorpe 2nd, 150 Warham Greens 3rd, 100 Burnham Overy village 5th, 100 Holkham Park 22nd, 50 Ringstead 22nd, 60 Burnham Overy sea wall 28th and 50 Burnham Market 30th.

### **Brambling**

*Fringilla montifringilla*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in highly variable numbers*

Very few sizeable flocks in first half of year, the largest being 80 Buckenham Tofts Jan 14th-17th, 40 Methwold Hythe Feb 9th, 50 Bailey Bridge (Stanford TA) Feb 11th, 150 Santon Downham March 22nd, 50 Roydon Common April 5th, 85 Lynford April 20th and 40 West Tofts April 23rd. No definite spring movements reported; latest Yarmouth Cemetery April 29th.

Recorded in autumn from Sept 19th (Honing), numbers building to month end including 30 Trimingham 27th, 45 Holkham Pines/Burnham Overy Dunes 28th, and 30 Titchwell 29th. Also on 29th, 30 west Overstrand. Main autumn passage best at Hunstanton Cliffs where 4572 south 113 north Sept 29th to Nov 15th. Best counts in Oct all to south (with



comparable figures for Sheringham where available) included: 2028 16th (1000 west Sheringham - both all day counts), 141 17th, 736 18th (180 west Sheringham), 148 25th, 360 28th, 363 29th and 234 30th. The only other counts of note were 200+ west Eccles 16th and 700 south Snettisham 17th. Clearly the 16th was the day to be watching visible migration.

By Oct 20th there were flocks of 60 and 10 well inland at Santon Downham. The largest concentrations reported in Nov were 50 Holt Hall 6th, 120 Thetford 7th and 60+ Bircham Newton 16th; larger numbers were noted in Dec when 200 South Creake and 100 Holkham Park with 120 Pretty Corner Woods, Sheringham 13th. In Broads and the north-east of the county, however, Bramblings were notably scarce at this time.

## **Serin**

*Serinus serinus*

### ***Vagrant from Continental Europe***

A male trapped, ringed and photographed at Pensthorpe Water Park May 15th (RoB WMM) and a first year male at Martham Nov 18th to year end (PRA *et al*).

1996 Addition: Cley May 14th (MAG).

## **Greenfinch**

*Carduelis chloris*

### ***Common resident and passage migrant***

The only flocks reported in first half of year: in Jan 60 Scolt Head 8th (35 there March 17th), 50+ Sennowe Park 12th and c50 St Germans 20th, and 85 Bodham April 6th. Light spring passage noted at Sheringham, max 30 west March 31st.

The BBS found Greenfinches in about 65% of squares for the third year, but the number of birds per occupied square has risen by about 35% since 1995. Post breeding flocks reported from July when there were 50 at Holme and then 60 Stibbard Aug 11th, 80 Snettisham Sept 21st and 50 Kerdiston Sept 25th.

Autumn passage recorded at Hunstanton Cliffs, Sheringham and Holme. The counts from Hunstanton cover Sept 29th to Nov 15th when totals of 2309 south 89 north, best in Oct (Sheringham and Holme counts in brackets) as follows: (120 west Sheringham 5th), 273 south 6th, 137 south 8th, 120 south 11th, 127 south 14th, 122 south 17th, 369 south 31 north 18th (90 west Sheringham), 227 south 19th (75 east Holme 21st) and 116 south Nov 13th.

In second winter period largest flocks in Oct with 120 Hunstanton 3rd, 150 Snettisham 5th and 90 Scolt Head 30th; in Nov 70 Snettisham 11th and 55 Scolt Head 13th; in Dec 100 Baconsthorpe 2nd, 55 Reepham 26th and 50 Burnham Market 30th.

An interesting note from Garboldisham where a recently fledged bird was ringed on the very late date of Nov 16th.

## **Goldfinch**

*Carduelis carduelis*

### ***A common resident, passage migrant and summer visitor***

Rather few flocks reported during first half of year, the largest being 210 Shouldham Thorpe Jan 11th, 100 Wretton Fen Jan 26th, 128 Welney Jan 27th, 70 Holkham Park March 7th, 50 East Wretham March 9th, 52 Welney March 22nd-24th, and 52 Ouse Washes and 90 Thetford Nunnery Lakes 24th.

Short spring passage from April 21st when 46 west Scolt Head. Other April movements 120 west Scolt Head and 150 Sheringham 23rd, 120 west Scolt Head 27th, 91 west Holme and 400 Sheringham 28th, and 75 west Scolt Head 30th. In early May 210 west Sheringham and 65 west Scolt Head 1st, and 75 west 10 east Sheringham and 95 west Scolt Head 2nd. Breeding records included 12 prs at Welney. Of 46 squares covered by the BBS in each year since 1995, the number holding Goldfinches has fallen from 36 to 29.

Very light autumn passage recorded only at Hunstanton Cliffs where 273 south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th including the following Oct counts (all south): 69 6th, 34 17th and 50 18th.

A post-breeding flock of 30+ Burgh Castle July 6th with large flocks becoming more widespread in Aug and Sept through to year end, including 150 Paston Aug 30th, 136 Beeston Regis Sept 11th, 100 Blakeney Sept 20th, 220 Snettisham Sept 29th, 200+ Hilborough Oct 1st, 100+ West Acre Oct 5th, 100 Brancaster Oct 12th and 100 Cley Nov 29th.

## Siskin

*Carduelis spinus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in fluctuating numbers; small numbers breed*

Widespread in reasonable numbers in first winter period, with numerous flocks of 10-30 recorded. Highest counts: *Jan* 200 Barton Broad, 100 East Ruston, 75 Fakenham, 50 Honing, 300 Thetford Nunnery, 90 Wroxham; *Feb* 60 Buckenham Tofts, 160 East Ruston, 50 Honing Lock, 100 Lynford Arboretum, 50 Wroxham.

Records tailed off rapidly from late Feb, with very few inland records from March onwards, the exception being the Brecks where high numbers were noted during this period, with March counts of 60 East Tuddenham, 60 East Wretham, 70 Santon Downham, 65 Swaffham Forest and 60 Thompson Water; and 100+ Lynford Arboretum April 11th. Also out of a total of 772 birds ringed at Garboldisham on edge of Brecks between Jan 18th and March 30th, 675 were caught during March. Of total trapped, 451 (58.5%) were male and 569 (73.5%) were juvs. Very few return passage birds noted at coastal localities, the only notable counts being 35 Titchwell (March), 20 west Holme March 6th, 21 east Holme March 9th, c25 Pretty Corner March 17th/18th, 27 Eccles March 30th, 90 west Sheringham March 31st, 40 Wells April 2nd, and 13 Overstrand April 23rd. Last coastal migrants 4 Sea Palling May 4th.

Occasional records of 1-6 May to Aug from Buckenham Tofts, East Ruston, Frost's Common, Honing, How Hill, Ken Hill Woods (12 in Aug), Lynford Stag, Mundford, Surlingham, Thompson Water and Titchwell. Records indicative of breeding: pairs at Thompson Water May 3rd, Merton, Thetford Warren and Santon Downham all May 14th; a family group visiting a Holt garden in May; juv Ormesby June 7th; a pair feeding on nuts throughout June in a Wells garden; a female/juv feeding on nuts throughout June in a North Wootton garden; family group Brancaster Staithe June/July; several pairs bred around Weybourne with the young being taken to feed on peanuts in gardens in June/July; family party Lynford Arboretum July 6th; 2 juvs in East Harling gardens July 6th and 27th; pair bred Holkham Park with family party seen Aug/Sept.

First autumn migrants 20 east Paston Aug 30th and 6 Eccles Aug 31st. A steady trickle of coastal migrants throughout Sept, with a significant arrival from late Sept and throughout Oct. Notable coastal counts included 88 Eccles Sept 23rd; 100 west (3 hrs) and 50+ present Holkham, 66 Sheringham and 101 Eccles all Sept 28th; 133 Eccles Sept 29th; 175 north Winterton Oct 2nd; 104 Eccles Oct 3rd; 100 south (5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs Oct 6th; 88 Eccles Oct 11th; 219 south (all day) Hunstanton Cliffs and 90 Titchwell Oct 16th; 300 south Snettisham and 160 south (4.5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs Oct 17th; 121 south (2.5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs, 113 Holme, 140 west Sheringham and 100 Eccles all Oct 18th; 81 north (1.5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs Oct 21st; 130 Eccles Oct 22nd; 85 Eccles Oct 24th; 177 Eccles, 400 north Waxham, 223 north Horsey and 100 Winterton all Oct 25th; 85 west Holme, 250 west Sheringham, 393 Eccles and 70 north Horsey all Oct 26th; and 80 Eccles Oct 29th. Small numbers continued to arrive in early Nov, with a late movement of 60 west Sheringham

Dec 12th. At Hunstanton Cliffs a total of 952 south and 102 north between Sept 29th and Nov 15th.

Widespread inland in autumn, with numerous mobile small groups. Best counts: 65 Felbrigg Sept 28th, 50+ Sutton High Fen Sept 30th, 200 Lynford Arboretum Oct 5th, 95 south Alderfen Broad Oct 6th, 60 Barton Turf Staithe Oct 8th, 120 Lynford Arboretum and 60 Baconsthorpe Oct 11th, and 75 Santon Downham Oct 20th. Still numerous in the second winter period, with large flocks forming in favoured feeding areas. Highest counts were: Nov 70 East Ruston, 150 Felbrigg, 50 Filby Broad, 110 Hardley Flood, 50 Raynham Park, 380 Swangey GP, 100 Thetford Nunnery, 200+ Thompson Water and 100 West Acre; Dec 220 Baconsthorpe, 70 Felbrigg, 100 Filby Broad, 190 Harling, 200+ Hoe, 80 Honing Lock, 100+ Langford, 400 Narborough, 210 Pensthorpe, 70+ R Wensum at Fakenham, 200 Sparham, 120 Swanton Abbott, 200 Thetford Nunnery, 100 West Acre and 80 Whitlingham Lane GP.

## Linnet

*Carduelis cannabina*

### *Common resident and passage migrant*

Following on from 1996, seemingly scarce in first winter period, with few flocks reported. Largest flocks were: Jan 53 Barnhamcross Common, 80 Courtyard Farm Ringstead, 70 Scolt Head/Brancaster Hbr, 40 Sennowe Park, 150 Sheringham, 200 Syderstone, 40+ West Acre, 40 Weybourne; Jan/Feb 50 Southrepps, 50+ Rollesby; Feb 100 Sheringham; March 150 Sheringham, 120 Swaffham, 45 Titchwell; April 50 Snetterton.

Return spring passage from late March to early May correspondingly poor. Max counts, including a welcome and informative series from Scolt Head: 300 west Paston March 30th, 220 west Scolt Head April 10th, 275 west Scolt Head and 145 west West Runton April 13th, 100 west Weybourne April 16th, 310 west Scolt Head April 21st and 350 west there April 23rd, 200 present West Runton April 24th, and further westerly movements at Scolt Head of 140 April 27th, 220 April 29th and 100 May 2nd.

Little data received for the summer months. At Scolt Head 25+ breeding prs were located, with 7-8 prs Blakeney Point. At Flitcham (Abbey Farm) 6 territories (5 in 1993, 11 in 1994, 9 in 1995, 7 in 1996). The BBS found Linnets in about three-quarters of squares in each year since 1995, but the number of birds per occupied square has fallen by 30%. Several notable summer flocks located, including: July 45 Breydon, 80 North Wootton Farms, 70 Holme; July-Aug 150-200 Blakeney Point; Aug 60 Holme, 230 Scolt Head, 300 Snettisham; Sept c50 Norwich Airport.

Several good-sized flocks at various coastal localities from Sept onwards presumably related to passage birds, though virtually no records of actual visible migration received. Flocks noted included: Sept 100 Kelling Quags 9th, 90 Snettisham 21st, 120 Horsey 24th, 65 Scolt Head 28th, 50+ Yarmouth 30th, and max monthly counts of 60 Holme, 67 Titchwell and 120 Sheringham; Oct 40 Titchwell 3rd, 60 Snettisham 5th, 116 south (5 hrs) Hunstanton Cliffs 6th, 40+ Yarmouth 8th, 50 Holme 17th/18th, 250 Snettisham 22nd, and up to 280 Sheringham; 100 Salthouse Nov 15th with 260 there Nov 22nd. Autumn total of 347 south Hunstanton Cliffs between Sept 29th-Nov 15th.

Scarce again in second winter period, with largest flocks noted: Nov 60 Flitcham, 331 Scolt Head; Dec 150 Castle Rising, 100 Cley, 50 Holme, 190 Salthouse, 329 Scolt Head, 70 Sennowe, 50 Sheringham, 50 South Creake, 100 Stiffkey, 50 Tatterford, 80 Titchwell, 80 West Runton, 50 Wighton.

A low tide survey of all inter-tidal habitat between Holme and Weybourne produced 1191 in Nov and 1146 Dec, with best sites as follows:





Upper: Dotterel, Thornham Point, during six days in May (*D. Nye*).

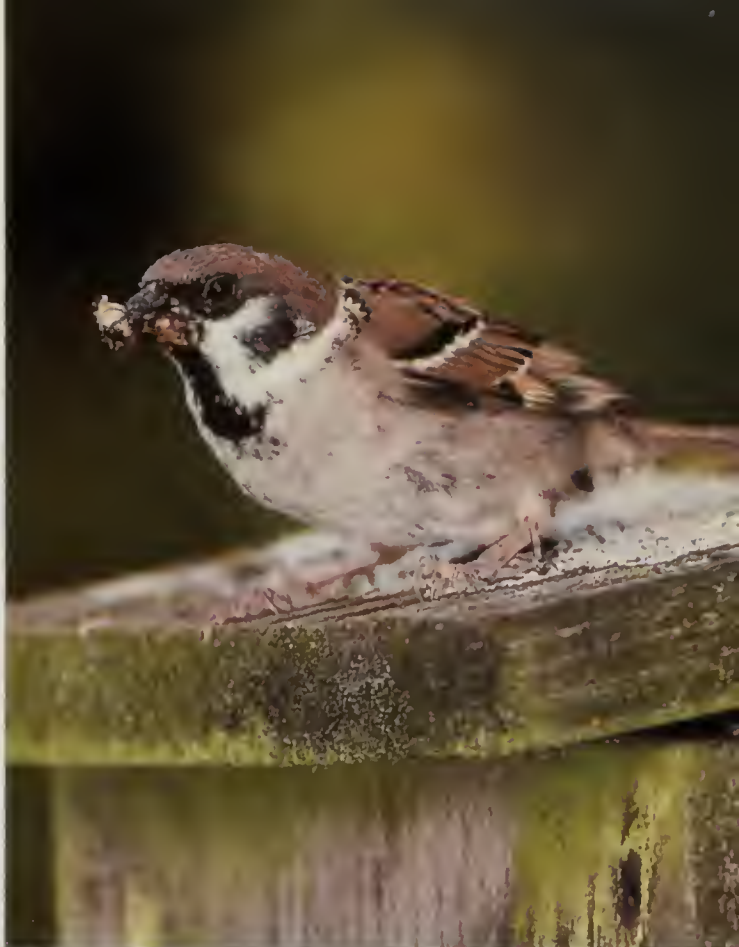
Lower: Common Snipe continue to decline as breeders (*C. R. Knights*).





Long-eared Owl breeding season reports came from eight localities in the county (*C. R. Knights*).





Upper left: Confirmed breeding of Kingfishers was received from only eight sites (*R. Powley*); right: Three pairs of Tree Sparrows occupied nest-boxes at Ten-mile Bank in 1997; all had disappeared by the following spring (*M. Rains*).

Lower: Nestling Little terns at Yarmouth North beach where camouflaged shelters have resulted in greatly increased breeding success (*M. Thomas*).







This White Stork toured north Norfolk between October 18th and 24th before appearing in Broadland (*Upper: J. Bhalerao; lower: D. Nye*).



	<i>Holme</i>	<i>Thornham</i>	<i>Scolt Head</i>	<i>B Overy</i>	<i>Warham</i>	<i>Stiffkey</i>	<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>Cley</i>	<i>Salthouse</i>
Nov	148	99	301	85	33	61	140	60	240
Dec	22	118	329	25	45	140	104	98	190

## Twite

*Carduelis flavirostris*

### Local winter visitor

Recorded regularly to April 9th (11 west Scolt Head) - with 2 late birds Sheringham May 2nd (DPA) - and from Oct 2nd (15 Scolt Head). Max counts at main resorts:

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
Wash	59	125	80	-	200	100
Holme	150	104	80	17	145	48
Thornham-Titchwell	15	47	-	35	25	30
Brancaster Hbr-Scolt Head	165	80	45	85	159	210
Burnham Norton/Overy Hbr	20	-	10	-	97	15
Holkham Bay	130	100	-	12	125	174
Wells-Stiffkey	40	30	-	4	60	100
Blakeney Hbr	10	12	-	36	105	23
North Coast WeBS	225	177	100	65	490*	370

\* Low tide count of all suitable habitat - 90 Holme, 15 Thornham, 159 Scolt Head, 97 Burnham Overy, 4 Holkham Bay, 20 Wells and 105 Blakeney Hbr - giving total similar to that of Jan 1996 co-ordinated count.

Elsewhere up to 15 Cley-Salthouse Oct 31st-Nov 13th, 15 Fritton Marshes March 5th and 11th and 6 Breydon Oct 13th, though this was second winter in succession when no Twite over-wintered there. Small numbers noted on spring passage in *March*: 3 west Titchwell 3rd and one Weybourne 24th; and in *April*: 3 west Burnham Norton 1st, 3 east Titchwell 6th and one on 24th. More noticeable autumn passage in *Oct*: 2 north Horsey 11th, one north there 25th, one west Sheringham/Beeston Regis 3rd, 3 on 18th, 28th-30th, 4 on 21st and 20 on 25th, Yarmouth 17th; and in *Nov*: 6 north Mundesley 6th (with 4 there 4th-6th) and one west Overstrand 10th.

This is a species which has declined greatly in recent years and observers are urged to report all sightings and to report periods of absence from traditional sites.

## Redpoll

*Carduelis flammea*

*Lesser Redpoll (C f cabaret): passage migrant, winter visitor and declining resident*

*Mealy Redpoll (C f flammea): scarce winter visitor*

**Lesser Redpoll *C f cabaret*:** Following on from a poor autumn passage in 1996, remained generally very scarce in first winter period, with few reported. Most records of only 1-2, and only double-figure counts: *Jan* 10 Dilham, 28 Fakenham, 13 Thetford Nunnery, 20 Whitlingham Lane GP; *Feb* 30+ Strumpshaw Fen; *March* 17 Beeston Regis. Also two notable counts at end of winter of 110 Swaffham Forest March 16th-20th and 100+ Kelling Heath April 3rd.

Return passage almost undetectable; a few coastal records of 1-3 birds late April to mid-May, with highest counts 4 west Scolt Head May 1st and 6 there next day.

Remains scarce as a breeder, though doubtless under-recorded, with pairs or singing males noted at the following locations during summer: Calthorpe Broad (pr), Catfield Fen (2 males), East Harling (pr), Eccles (male in song on one date only in July), Fakenham (pr), Hellesdon, Kelling Heath (3-4 males), Norwich (Christchurch Rd), Old Catton, Strumpshaw

Fen (3 prs), Sutton High Fen (3 prs), Swaffham GC (pr nested), Syderstone (pr), Watton (2 males), Wells town (pr), West Harling, Winterton Dunes (2 males). Other summer records of 1-4 from Barton Turf, Catfield Common, East Ruston, Fakenham (10+ July 12th), Frost's Common, Holme, Honing Lock, Rockland, Swanton Novers and Titchwell.

Autumn passage from early Sept (Holme 5th) till mid-Nov. Again very light, with little visible migration, and most observations of only 1-5 birds. Higher counts reaching double figures were: 13 Eccles Sept 20th with 11 there 22nd, 20 Holme Sept 28th/29th, 20+ Eccles Sept 28th and 12 there next day; 11 Eccles Oct 3rd, 20 Wells Oct 22nd, 20 Snettisham Oct 27th, 8 east 4 west Sheringham Oct 29th, and 15 west Titchwell Nov 19th. Inland counts during autumn of 28 Sutton High Fen Sept 22nd, 11 East Ruston Sept 24th/25th, 12 Kettlestone Common Sept 26th, 30 Langford Sept 27th, 10+ Sutton High Fen Sept 29th, and 12 Kettlestone Common Oct 30th. At Hunstanton Cliffs an autumn total of only 9 south.

Correspondingly scarce again in second winter period, with very few records received. Max counts: Nov 20 Eccles, 20 Kettlestone Common; Nov-Dec 20 Flitcham; Dec 35 Kettlestone Common, 40 Gimingham Pound, 50 R Wensum at Fakenham, 60+ Pensthorpe.

**Mealy Redpoll** *C. flammea*: Only noted in first winter period at Wells where up to 30 Jan 4th-13th and at Thorpe St Andrew where 4 Jan 15th. Early spring records, probably of return passage birds, of 45 Wells March 11th with 20 there March 18th, 20 Pretty Corner March 17th/18th, 17 west Holkham March 18th, 5 Beeston Regis March 23rd, 2 Wells April 2nd, and 12 Ormesby Little Broad April 12th.

Only a few identified during autumn: Sheringham Oct 25th and 27th, Wells Oct 26th, 20 Ormesby Little Broad Nov 3rd with 2 there Nov 23rd, and Stiffkey Nov 11th and 14th. During second winter period records from Pensthorpe Dec 5th and 4-6 Gimingham Pound Dec 14th-20th.

## **Arctic Redpoll**

*Carduelis hornemanni*

### ***Winter vagrant from Scandinavia***

A single record of one Wells Jan 11th (JRW *et al*) and again on 13th (IGJ).

**1995 Additions:** The following additional records for late autumn/winter 1995 have been accepted by the BBRC: 1st-winter Horsey Mere Nov 5th (JO); Winterton Nov 20th (AWB KJB DPa); Overstrand Dec 11th (BJM); up to 4 Cromer Dec 20th to 1996 (PML AMS SCV *et al*); 2, including a male, North Wootton Dec 20th-Jan 4th 1996 (GNB D&MR *et al*); a male Syderstone Dec 25th, when taken by a Kestrel, with another 4 there Dec 26th (AIB).

## **Two-barred Crossbill**

*Loxia leucoptera*

### ***Vagrant from the Siberian taiga***

A male trapped Thetford forest Aug 21st (SFM *et al*). The sixth county record and the first since 1991.

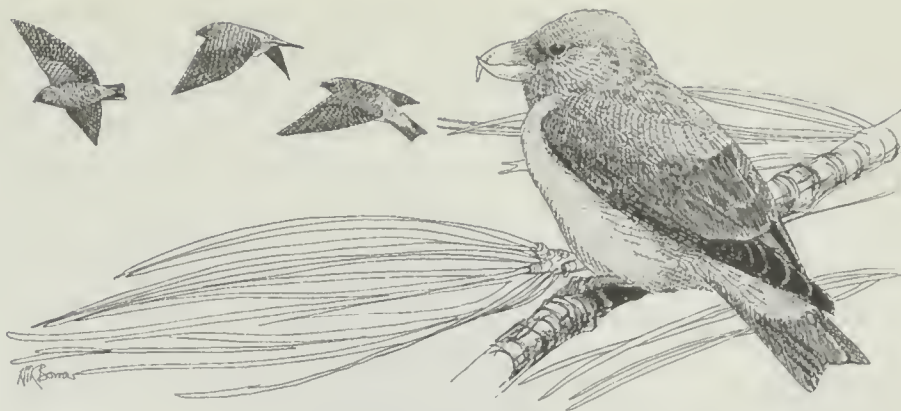
## **Crossbill**

*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***

Numbers remained very low in first half of year. Only regularly recorded at Lynford Arboretum (regularly 1-4 but 14-20 Jan/Feb), Santon Downham (1-4 Jan-May), and Thetford Warren (1-2 Feb/March, 8 April). Otherwise in Brecks the only records were 2 Weeting Heath April 11th, Lynford Stag May 1st, 3 Lynford May 13th, and 12 Mundford June 22nd. Elsewhere in county UEA Jan 6th and Feb 12th, and 2+ Wells March 17th, 2 Pretty Corner





*Crossbills (N. Borrow)*

March 18th with 12 March 19th, single Wells and 10 Kelling Heath April 4th. Single spring movement of 12 west Beeston Regis April 18th.

The only records indicative of breeding were a singing male West Tofts March 6th, and a singing male Santon Downham May 11th with 19+ including juvs there May 25th.

The second half of year saw a significant irruption from the Continent, with county-wide records. The first immigrants to arrive were singles at Holme May 31st/June 1st and Fleggburgh June 2nd, then 18+24 Holme village June 14th and one Sheringham Park June 17th. There was then a gap until June 23rd with 2 east Overstrand, followed by an influx on June 24th with records from Cley, 50 Cockley Cley, 30 west Docking, Ludham, 60 Strumpshaw, 20 Thetford Nunnery and 70 south-west Thorpe. Thereafter there were numerous records throughout the county. Many of these were of flocks flying over, predominately westwards, or of short-staying groups pausing to feed in stands of pine or Larch. Most records involved between 1-20 birds. Numbers continued to arrive around the coast throughout the rest of June and until early Aug. During this period there were still numerous records of birds moving within the county, and several large flocks built up in woods with suitable feeding, such as 50 Bacton Wood, 40 Frosts Common, 40 Holt Lowes, 40+ Horsford, 50 St Olaves, 70+ Sheringham Park and 100 Swanton Novers. Necessity forced some to choose alternative food sources, including a juv feeding on wheat at Snettisham June 28th and one on thistle heads Breydon Aug 31st. Records rapidly tailed off in Aug, and there were only occasional records throughout much of Sept, presumably as birds moved through the county further westwards. A second slightly smaller influx started from Sept 20th till mid-Nov, with another series of widespread coastal and inland records: a total of 59 were ringed at West Tofts Sept/Oct. From latter half of Nov until year end records remained plentiful, principally of flocks feeding in various conifer stands throughout the county.

During second half of year records were received from the following localities: Alderfen Broad, Baconsthorpe, Bacton, Bacton Wood, Beeston Regis, Belton, Blakeney, Blickling Great Wood, Boyland Wood, Breydon, Brettenham Heath, Bridgeham, Briston, Brundall, Burnham Overy Dunes, Burntfen Broad, Catfield Fen, Cley, Cockley Cley, Coltishall, Cranwich, Cromer GC, Crostwight, Dersingham Bog, Docking, Drayton Drewray, East Harling, East Hills Wells, Easton, East Ruston, East Tuddenham, East Walton Common, Eeclles, Edgefield, Egmore, Felbrigg Hall, Fleggburgh, Foxley Wood, Frog Hill, Frosts Common, Furze Heath, Grimes Graves, Grimston Heath, Hevingham Park, Hickling, High Kelling, Holkham Meals, Holkham Park, Holme, Holt, Holt Hall, Holt Lowes, Honing, Horsey Gap, Horsford, Houghton, Hunstanton, Kelling Heath, Ken Hill Woods, Kettlestone Common, Kilverstone, Langford, Lound, Ludham, Ludham Marshes, Lynford, Lynford

Arboretum, Lynford Stag, Marsham Heath, Martham, Merton, Mundford, Northrepps, Norwich, Overstrand, Pretty Corner, Quarles, Raynham Park, Reephams, Repps, Risbeth Wood, Roman Camp, Roydon Common, St Olaves, Salthouse Heath, Sandringham, Santon Downham, Scolt Head, Sea Palling, Selbrigg Woods, Sennowe Park, Sheringham, Sheringham Park, Snettisham, Stalham, Stonepit Heath, Strumpshaw Fen, Surlingham, Sutton High Fen, Swanton Abbott, Swanton Novers, Syderstone, Thetford Nunnery, Thetford Warren, Thorpe St Andrew, Titchwell, Trowse, Waxham, Weeting Heath, Wells, Welney, West Tofts, Weybourne, Weybourne Heath, Wheatfen, Whitlingham STW, Winfarthing, Winterton, Wolferton and Yarmouth.

**Common Rosefinch**  
*Rare passage migrant; potential colonist*

*Carpodacus erythrinus*

Four typical records; two in late spring and two in early autumn. A singing imm male at Meals House Holkham May 30th-June 2nd (DWS *et al*), Winterton South Dunes June 8th (PC), Holme Sept 4th (JA MR), and a 1st-winter trapped at Sheringham BO Sept 9th (AGI SCV).

**Bullfinch**  
*Resident and occasional immigrant*

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Little information and only a few breeding records received. Although observers at Ludham and Wroxham commented on its continued scarcity, others elsewhere in Broads, and at Kettlestone Common and Holme recorded a noticeable increase, particularly during the winter months, possibly accountable to winter immigration. Highest counts noted were 8 Coltishall and Wells in Jan, an impressive 25 Kettlestone Common Sept 26th, up to 8 Titchwell and up to 11 Sheringham Dec.

Of 68 squares surveyed in the BBS, Bullfinches were found in 14. In 1996 birds were found in 12 out of 57 squares covered, not 21 as printed in last year's report.

Autumn passage noted at Hunstanton Cliffs where 3 south Oct 30th, and at Sheringham where up to 11 present in Oct, and also 5 west Oct 31st, and 7 west (and 4 present) Nov 29th.

**Hawfinch**  
*Evasive and very local resident; scarce migrant*

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Regular records from Barnhamcross Common (and the adjacent Thetford Nunnery), Holkham Park and Lynford Arboretum. Monthly max are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barnhamcross												
Common	13	35+	20	2	2	-	-	-	-	14	9	14
Lynford Arboretum	3	2	8	5	1	3	1	-	6	-	3	-
Holkham Park	-	1	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Remains scarce or overlooked elsewhere, with all records listed: St Helens Well Jan 11th, Cley Jan 18th, 2 Santon Downham (formerly a regular locality) March 12th, up to 3 in a Watton garden March, Sennowe Park April 6th, Kilverstone and Thetford town centre both April 22nd, Sandringham May 8th and 29th, Hickling Nov 11th, and Thompson Water Dec 28th.

At a former regular roost in the Wensum valley single noted only on Jan 5th and 14th despite regular visits.

A pair bred successfully at Hilborough; otherwise the only breeding information received was of a male in song Lynford Arboretum June 15th, with an adult and juv there July 11th.

Two spring migrants, female Yarmouth May 9th and another there May 13th. One Burgh Castle June 3rd is also likely to have been a migrant. Coastal migrants in autumn at Titchwell Oct 24th, and Yarmouth Oct 28th and Nov 4th.



*Hawfinch (P. Beeson)*

### **Lapland Bunting**

*Calcarius lapponicus*

*Regular but usually scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

A poor showing in first winter period with records of 1-4 at Snettisham, Holmc, Titchwell, Brancaster, Burnham Norton (4 on Jan 29th), Holkham Bay, Cley (3-4 in Jan), Salthouse (3 in March), Overstrand, Breydon and Berney. Last of spring in April when singles Titchwell and Scolt Head 23rd.

Small numbers began to return in Sept. Following the first at Scolt Head 18th other singles noted Holmc, Holkham, Wells, Stiffkey, Blakeney Point, Cley and Eccles. Oct passage slow with total of 33 individuals; other localities included Hunstanton, Salthouse, Sheringham (where 4 west 4th and 30th), Cromer and Trimmingham. One inland at Cantley BF on 4th was particularly noteworthy. In Nov minimum total of 50 birds at the following localities: Terrington Marsh, Holme, Thornham, Titchwell, Brancaster, Scolt Head, Burnham Deepdale, Burnham Norton, Burnham Overy Hbr (18 on 27th), Blakeney Point, Cley/Salthouse (7 on 9th), Weybourne/Sheringham (16 on 22nd), West Runton, Overstrand, and Eccles. By Dec largest counts included 14 Burnham Overy Hbr 28th, 6 Sheringham 9th, and 4 Horsey 20th, with singles at Titchwell, Brancaster, Wells and Salthouse.

### **Snow Bunting**

*Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Winter visitor in declining numbers; exceptional in summer*

A poor first winter period with groups of 30 or over noted only at the following sites: Snettisham (50), Heacham (40), Hunstanton (40), Holmc (250 Jan, 123 Feb), Cley/Salthouse (70), Sheringham (38), Beeston Regis (31), Paston (55), Gorleston (30) and Breydon (85). As usual some flocks put in only brief appearances and much movement between sites noted. Smaller numbers seen at Caister, Haddiscoe, Holkham Bay, Sea Palling, Scolt Head, West Runton, Weybourne and Yarmouth. One seen inland at Docking Jan 2nd. Very few spring sightings following main departure by mid March. April records included birds at



Snettisham, Titchwell, Weybourne, Sheringham, West Runton and Waxham; latest one was at Sheringham May 3rd-6th.

Autumn passage began Sept 10th, when 2 Blakeney Point and singles Cley and Horsey, followed by others in Sept/Oct at 16 coastal sites. Numbers low except 15 Eccles Oct 16th, 20 Holme Oct 23rd, and 31 Sea Palling/Eccles Oct 30th. In Nov/Dec numbers increased to produce a larger wintering population than at start of year. Results from a survey of all the inter-tidal habitat between Holme and Weybourne produced totals of c600 in Nov and 249 in Dec. Again much movement between sites but large flocks included 118 Holkham Bay Dec 14th, 220 Blakeney Point Nov 15th, 276 Salthouse/Cley Nov 25th and 120 Weybourne Nov 22nd. Elsewhere notable counts included 47 Snettisham Dec 3rd, 70 Holme Dec 3rd, 40 Thornham Dec 12th, 80 Brancaster Nov, 62 Sheringham Dec 9th, 70 Overstrand Dec 5th, 60 Mundesley-Happisburgh Dec, 80 Eccles/Sea Palling Dec and 42 Breydon Dec. Smaller numbers also seen at Hunstanton, Titchwell, Scolt Head, West Runton, Winterton, Caister and Yarmouth. More records of birds inland this year included Baconsthorpe Dec 21st, 2 south-east over Boyland Airfield Nov 21st, Cranwich GP Dec 7th, 2 Hickling Dec 14th, and Welney Nov 9th/10th.

Several observers witnessed the large flocks concentrating around ringers' baiting areas at Salthouse and Holkham becoming regular prey for Merlins and Sparrowhawks, thus raising the question whether artificial baiting is ethically correct.

## **Yellowhammer**

*Emberiza citrinella*

### ***Once common resident, currently in decline***

More records submitted in first winter period including several three-figure flocks. Highest numbers were 60 Docking Feb 9th, 300 Hindringham Jan/Feb, 130 Lessingham Feb 11th, 40 Ousemouth Jan 11th, 160 Quarles Feb 6th, 120 Sheringham Park Jan 11th, 60 Wells Feb 6th, 75 West Bilney Feb and 100 Wymondham Jan 1st. At Ringstead 210 Jan 6th decreased to 150 on 27th during a cold snap but rose again to 260 Feb 21st. Smaller groups (up to 40) reported from Baconsthorpe, Fakenham, Flitcham, Hethersett, Littleport, Scarning, UEA, Wreham and Wiggenhall St Peter.

Too under-recorded in breeding season to comment on true distribution or numbers. Counts of singing males included 6 Baconsthorpe, 5 Brettenham Heath, 5 Crostwick/Horstead, 12 East Wretham, 12 Flitcham (Abbey Farm), 5 Hedenham, 2 Knapton, 2 Mundesley, 6 Paston, 6 Roudham (in 20 acres of scrub/grassland), 8 Spixworth, 12 Syderstone Common, 11 Thornage Hall and 4 Winterton. The BBS results have shown only minor fluctuations since 1995. This year 58 out of 68 squares surveyed held Yellowhammers.

Small coastal passage noted Hunstanton in autumn with total of 30 south between Sept 29th and Nov 15th. In second winter period few records received with best counts 83 East Harling Dec 30th, 30 Lynn Point Nov 23rd, 65 Ringstead Nov 21st increasing to 80 Dec 22nd, and 30 Sheringham in Sept/Oct.

## **Ortolan Bunting**

*Emberiza hortulana*

### ***Rare passage migrant***

A rather typical year. One in spring at Eccles April 30th (NBB AJK) while in autumn 2 Blakeney Point Sept 11th (SMcE BAEM) and one 12th (DJH).

## **Little Bunting**

*Emberiza pusilla*

### ***Vagrant from northern Scandinavia eastwards, mostly in autumn***

One spring record: unusually in a garden at East Wretham April 20th/21st (SPD RWa *et al*).

## Reed Bunting

*Emberiza schoeniclus*

### *Resident and passage migrant*

Only very small numbers reported in first winter period. Largest groups included 23 Scolt Head/Braneaster Hbr Jan, 15 Feb and 30 March. Inland at Ringstead 13 Jan and 14 Feb. Following an appeal in the local press, reports of birds visiting gardens included one Eaton Rise, Norwich, 2 Great Hoekham, 8-10 Brundall, and 10 Martham feeding on millet sprays hung in a willow tree.

High concentrations of pairs/singing males found in breeding season included 106 Braneaster Hbr and 57 Scolt Head (all in suaeda), 10 Blakeney Point and 43 Welney WWT. Also 15 in Stanford TA (excluding Thompson Water). Elsewhere very little information submitted except singles Corton Fen, Elsing and East Tuddenham, 2 Fakenham, Roudham and Thompson Water, and 3 Kettlestone Common. Evidence of a decline at several localities inland (such as the upper reaches of the Wensum and around Syderstone) once more noted. More information would be useful. The BBS results were similar to those of 1995 again, but probably too little data to attach much significance to any year-to-year changes.

Autumn passage described as poor at Hunstanton where total of 87 south and 4 north between Sept 29th and Nov 15th, including a peak of 31 south Oct 18th. Elsewhere 24 west Scolt Head Sept 27th and 12 west Sheringham Sept 28th. Other concentrations of 10-15 birds in this period were noted at Holme, Kettlestone Common, Snettisham, Titchwell and Thornham.

The second winter period produced more records thanks to a survey of all inter-tidal habitat between Holme and Weybourne. In Nov total of 468 seen there included 26 Holme, 49 Thornham, 115 Scolt Head, 38 Burnham Overy, 42 Wells, 50 Warham, 45 Stiffkey and 108 Blakeney Point. Similar figures were found in Dec. Belts of saltmarsh suaeda proved to be a very important habitat for this species. Elsewhere 17 Snettisham Nov, while away from the coast 15 Ringstead Nov/Dec, 10 Hardley Dec 27th feeding on a manure heap with other finches and buntings, and 15 Wighton Dec in a Quinoa game cover strip.

## Corn Bunting

*Miliaria calandra*

### *Local and declining resident*

A better showing than normal in first winter period with most, as usual, in Fens and West Norfolk. Noted at Braneaster, Brumstead, Choseley-Ringstead (20 Jan 8th-11th), East Harling, Feltwell (90 Feb 7th), Fincham (10 Jan 18th), Happisburgh (20 Jan 14th), Hemsby, Hilgay Fen (20 Jan 30th), Hindringham, King's Lynn, Lynn Point (28 Feb 14th), Ringstead (75 Jan, 58 Feb), Snettisham, Southery (20 May 20th), Titchwell (30 Feb 28th), Terrington (15 March 9th), Vinegar Middle (55 Jan 12th), Welney (an impressive 309 on stubble Jan 13th) and Winterton. One noted flying west Scolt Head May 2nd.

In breeding season distribution seemed to be divided between Fens/West Norfolk and East/North-east coastal Norfolk. Singing males/pairs seen at the following sites: Botany Bay, Burnham Norton, Choseley (4), East Ruston-Happisburgh (7), Feltwell-Brandon Creek (20), Fincham, Gimmingham, Hemsby, Hoekwold-Lakenheath (4), Lessingham, Mundesley, Rollesby, Sea Palling, Sheringham, Shouldham, Snettisham, Southrepps, Stow Bardolph, Ten Mile Bottom, Welney (3), Wreham, West Somerton and West Walton.

Smaller numbers seen in second winter period. Max counts included 20 roosting in Braneaster reedbed Dec 28th, 22 Lynn Point Dec, 18 Ringstead Dec 22nd, 23 Terrington Nov 21st and 15 Welney Dec. Others noted at Eccles, Gimmingham, Mundesley, Rollesby, Sheringham, Snettisham, Stiffkey, Weybourne and Winterton.

# Introductions, Escapes, Ferals and Hybrids

## APPENDIX I - Categories A and B

Escapes or feral birds of species on the British List

### Category A Species

#### Hooded Merganser

*Lophodytes cucullatus*

Breeds North America, winters in Mexico and West Indies

Fakenham (R Wensum) Dec 5th-29th; Holme Jan 25th-28th; Thornham Channel Jan 2nd; Titchwell Feb 21st/22nd, April 10th.

### Category B Species

#### Ruddy Shelduck

*Tadorna ferruginea*

Breeds Asia and North Africa

A now regular series of winter and spring records, with 1-2 moving between Colney GP, Elsing GP, Lyng, Lyng Easthaugh and Sparham Jan-May, one oddly with Pink-footed Geese Choseley area Jan 7th-9th and later at Warham/Wighton until Feb 12th, Cranwich GP Jan 3rd and 11th, and Lynford GP Jan 26th, Heigham Holmes Feb 21st-March 8th, Holkham FM May 8th and presumably the same Kelling WM May 10th/11th and then Cley May 19th/20th, 2 west Swanton Novers May 23rd.

A pair bred Bayfield Hall, where seen with 11 young in late May. None of the young were reported to have survived.

Records in second half of year of juv Cley July 20th-25th, Holkham Park Lake July 27th, 2 Salthouse/Kelling WM Sept 1st-19th, one north past Sea Palling then west past Sheringham and Cley Oct 12th, Lynford GP Oct 18th, presumed returning bird from last winter with Pink-footed Geese at Flitcham Nov 21st-23rd, Sparham Pools Dec 30th.

Records of 1-2 at Sennowe Park Jan and Aug considered certain escapes.

Numbers recorded in north-west Europe over recent years in late summer/autumn appear to exceed the feral/escapee population in Europe, and many observations may relate to wild birds.

## 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

#### Greater Flamingo

*Phoenicopterus ruber*

Breeds southern Palearctic, southern Asia, Africa and Madagascar

Breydon July 28th, Aug 8th; Hickling July 29th; Titchwell July 30th-31st, Aug 1st-7th.



## APPENDIX III - Category E

Escapes or feral birds of species not on the British List

### **Sacred Ibis**

*Threskiornis aethiopicus*

*Africa south of Sahara to Iran; Madagascar*

Breydon June 23rd.

### **Black Swan**

*Cygnus atratus*

*Anstralia and Tasmania*

Barton Broad April-June; Coston 3 April 26th; Gunton Park April 26th; Horsey March 13th; Pentney GP Dec 31st; Rollesby Broad Feb 17th, April 1st-30th, Sept 1st-8th, Nov 9th-13th; St Peter's Channel Dec 30th; Salhouse Broad Jan 27th-29th; West Somerton Feb 22nd, March 8th-13th; Wroxham Broad April 20th, 3 May 19th/20th; Welney 3 Feb 1st-28th, April 30th, 2 Oct 28th-31st, 3 Dec 28th/29th.

### **Swan Goose**

*Anser cygnoides*

*Eastern Enrasia*

Pentney GP Jan 31st; Walcott Aug 18th.

### **Bar-headed Goose**

*Anser indicus*

*Alpine lakes in central Asia; winters in India and Burma*

Breydon 2 May 19th; Bramerton Woods June 22nd-July 20th; Raynham Lakes Jan 10th-24th; Sennowe Park 3 July 7th; Wretton Fen Jan 14th-19th.

### **Australian Shelduck**

*Tadorna tadornoides*

*Patchily distributed southern Australia*

Sheringham May 20th/21st.

### **Muscovy Duck**

*Cairina moschata*

*Lowlands of southern Mexico to Argentina and Brazil*

East Ruston a brood of 13 April 20th; Broome GP 6 Dec 4th.

### **Wood Duck**

*Aix sponsa*

*Canada to northern Mexico; Cuba and Bahamas*

Bramerton Woods June 26th; Titchwell male on beach Nov 5th; Whitlingham Lane GP Aug 29th, Oct 9th.

### **Maned Duck**

*Chenonetta jubata*

*Australia and Tasmania*

East Hills, Wells with Brent Geese Dec 31st.

### **Chiloe Wigeon**

*Anas sibilatrix*

*Southern South America*

Walcott Oct 16th.

### **White-cheeked Pintail**

*Anas bahamensis*

*Locally in South America; West Indies and Galapagos Islands*

Welney Aug 1st-20th.

### **Chilean Flamingo**

*Phoenicopterus chilensis*

*Andes of South America; pampas of southern Brazil; Paragnay to southern Argentina*

Breydon July 28th, Aug 8th; Burnham Norton May 21st; Cley March 25th, April 25th, May 7th, 11th and 22nd; Hickling July 29th; Titchwell April 14th and 17th, May 3rd and 14th.

### **Harris's Hawk**

*Parabuteo unicinctus*

*Arid south-west USA to northern Argentina, Chile and Brazil*

Thetford Nunnery Lakes July 21st.

- Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*  
*Savannah and deserts of western Palearctic region and Africa*  
 Wissington adult with jesses March 13th-22nd.
- Silver Pheasant** *Lophura nycthemera*  
*Mountains of southern China to Burma; Thailand and Indochina*  
 East Somerton male regularly Bernley Hall.
- Reeves's Pheasant** *Syrmaticus reevesii*  
*Low altitude deciduous forest of north-central China*  
 Aylmerton May 5th.
- Eastern Rosella** *Platycercus eximius*  
*South-east Australia and Tasmania*  
 Paston Aug 11th.
- Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus*  
*Drier parts of Australia*  
 Eccles Sept 6th; Ongar Hill Sept 18th; Overstrand Aug 23rd; Winterton Sept 9th.
- Grey-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula finschii*  
*Mountains of northern India to south-west China, Burma and south-east Asia*  
 Sheringham Feb 8th. Other unidentified parakeets seen at King's Lynn March 6th and Norwich (York St) July 6th.
- Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*  
*Widespread and abundant, interior of Australia*  
 Thetford Nunnery Lakes May 17th; Yarmouth Hbr March 23rd.
- Purple Glossy Starling** *Lamprolornis purpureus*  
*Savannah of Senegal to southern Sudan, Uganda and north-west Kenya*  
 Eccles/Sea Palling May 5th/6th.
- Laughing-thrush sp** *Garrulax sp*  
 Hockering Nov/Dec 1996; March 24th thought to be Red-winged.
- Sudan Golden Sparrow** *Passer luteus*  
*Thorn scrub of sub-Saharan Africa*  
 Caister April 15th.
- Black-headed Munia** *Lonchura malacca*  
*Grasslands of southern Asia and Malay Archipelago*  
 Scolt Head Aug 17th-19th.
- Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*  
*Savannah and swamps of Afrotropical region*  
 Mundesley one of the race *nigriceps* Nov 12th.
- Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Uragus sibiricus*  
*Montane riparian thickets of central Asia*  
 Scolt Head May 31st.
- Pallas's Rosefinch** *Carpodacus roseus*  
*Breeds Siberia to northern Mongolia; winters in Japan and Korea*  
 Holme imm April 27th.

## **APPENDIX IV - Hybrids**

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

Tottenham Jan 16th; Rockland/Buckenham March-May.

### **Greylag Goose x Pink-footed Goose**

Thetford Dec 9th-19th.

### **Greylag Goose x Canada Goose**

Gunton Park March 7th; 2 Tottenham Sept 21st; mixed broods Wroxham and Stiffkey Fen.

### **Barnacle Goose x Greylag Goose**

4 Stiffkey washes Dec 26th.

### **Barnacle Goose x Emperor Goose**

Burnham Thorpe and Summerfield Feb 6th.

### **Barnacle Goose x White-fronted Goose**

Mixed brood Raynham Lake.

### **Barnacle Goose x Snow Goose**

Recorded from Holkham, Warham and Wighton.

### **Australian Shelduck x Shelduck**

Kelling WM May 22nd.

### **Mallard x Gadwall**

Cley March 14th and Nov 14th.

### **Mallard x Pintail**

Tottenham Jan 7th-12th.

### **Wigeon x Chiloe Wigeon**

Cley Nov 2nd.

### **Ferruginous Duck x Tufted Duck**

Welney Feb all month.

### **Tufted Duck x Pochard**

Tottenham GP Jan 23rd and Feb 23rd; Felbrigg March 7th; Welney 2 during Feb, one remaining April-June; Hickling Broad Jan 1st-March 5th and Dec 22nd-24th.

### **Carrion Crow x Hooded Crow**

Welney Dec 11th.

### **Tree Sparrow x House Sparrow**

Burnham March 14th/15th.



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C L Grimshaw	R Jones	R Martin
M C Hall	R F Jones	M Matheson
R Hadman	A Jowett	D Mayes
A Hale	M Jowett	J R McCallum
J Hampshire (JHa)	P Joy	R McCann
P Hampson	SC Joyner	M G McCarthy
V J Hanlon	D Jupp	A M McLeod
B Harding (BHa)	A J Kane	R McCurley
C Haines	D F Kelly	S J McElwee
R I Harold	G I Kelly	R C & S C McIntyre
J Harris	J B Kemp	C Mead
John Harris	Dr I F & Mrs J Keymer	H R Mead
J C Harris	R Kimber	J Melhuish
R L Harris	C A E Kirtland	J & B Mighell
K K Harrison	P Kitchener	P M & V M Miles
B Hassler	D R Knight	P J Milford
P J Heath	C Knights	J Miller
I G & L K Henderson	F Lambert	R G Millington
Dr R Heselden	P Lambert	P A Monsey
D J Hewitt	P Lambley	R Monteath
G F Hibberd	C H & D K Lamsdell	P Montgomery
D Hird	R Land	D Moore
G A & M A Hirons	W N Landells	N Moore
R Hoblyn	D Lander (DLA)	S F Moores

D Mower	R Rolfe	R Sturgess
B J Murphy	M E S Rooney	B J Sullivan
A J Musgrove	K Rosewarne	C Symes (CSy)
E T Myers	B Ross	T J Tams
NARVOS	F & M Rowe	G & Dr P Taylor
R G Newell	S Rowland	M P Taylor
C & F Neale	RSPB	S Taylor (STa)
P Newport	A & B Rumsey	S Thompson
T Nightingale	D H Russell	J Threadgold
D Nobbs	D H Sadler	R Tillbrook
D Nurney (DNu)	B Sage	D K Toomer
D Nye (DNy)	K G Saul	M Tunmore (MTu)
J Oates (JOa)	S Saunders	M Turner
J Osborne	D & M J Saunt	S Turner (STu)
S Osler	J & S Savidge	V C Turner
P Overson	C Sayer	J Uphill
N Owens	D J Scott	R Vicears
G R Oxborough	J Scott	A E Vine
A Oxenford	R E Scott	S C Votier
N Paker	E M Seabrook	C Wade
S Pallister	M J Seago	G L Walford
I Paradine	D W Sharples	P M Walker
D Parsons (DPa)	K B Shepherd	J Wallis
D Paull	R Shepherd	R M Ward
D Peach	Sheringham Bird	E E Warminger
W J Peach	Observatory	R Waters (RWa)
T Peet	M Shrubb	R J Waters
C Penny	G M Siriwardena	A Watson
Dr M C Petch	G F Simmons	F J Watson
L Peters	M & S Simmons	J W Watson
R F Porter	D Simpson	M A Webster
C M Potter	R Q Skeen	J Wells
D Powell (DPo)	C Skinner	C V Wernham
I Prentice (IPr)	C J Small	R White
M Preston	M Smart	J Whitelegg
S Quaterman	B Smith	J R Williamson
G Rainc	G Smith	J Willis
M H Rains	I N Smith	A M Wilson
H R Ramsay	L Smith	P M Wilson
P J Ransome	M Smith	J Wilson-Town
E J Rced	S Smith (SSm)	J Wood (JWo)
M Reed	S T Smith	P J Woolnough
M M Rehfisch	S South	S Wooton
D C Richardson	E M P Stanford	S A Wright
D I & Mrs R M Richmond	Stanta Bird Club	T Wright
S Rider	R Stimpson (RSt)	M Young-Powell
D & M Roberts	N R Stocks	
I Robinson	A M Stoddart	
B J Robson	R A Stroud	



# Ringling Report

*Allan Hale*

During 1997 a total of 38,791 birds of 146 species were ringed in the county. Unusually, major rarities were conspicuous by their absence. Impressive totals ringed during the year included 156 Woodlark, 5,483 Greenfinch, 2,637 Siskin, 129 Crossbill and 258 Snow Bunting. Annual ringing totals dropped to an all time low for House Martin, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher and Willow Tit, reflecting concerns about the population level of these species. For the first time ever, the number of Chiffchaff ringed exceeded that of Willow Warbler, possibly as a result of the particularly good breeding season enjoyed by the former.

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 1997

Ringing 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 ringing
- 4 Hatched before calendar year of ringing, 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 ringing
- 8 Hatched more than two calendar years before year of ringing

M = Male                      F = Female

### Condition at Recovery

- X Found dead
- XF Found freshly dead or dying
- XL Found long dead
- + 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 healed
- R Caught and released by ringer
- RR Ring or colour marks read in the field

### Whooper Swan

During the winters of 1995/96 and again during 1996/97, groups of colour-ringed Whooper Swans were regularly seen in Broadland (mainly in the Catfield area). These related to several family parties ringed in Southern Finland during the summer of 1995. The birds were regularly seen together during their various migrations, with further sightings of the same family parties still together in Sweden, Germany, the Baltic States and The Netherlands.

It is interesting that birds ringed in Northern Finland winter in Southern Scandinavia, whilst those from the south favour Germany, The Netherlands and sometimes England.

#### **Mute Swan**

5	07.01.96	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
R	13.07.97	Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland	378 km NW

Perhaps surprisingly, a movement of this magnitude is not particularly unusual for a British Mute Swan.

#### **Wigeon**

4M	27.12.91	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	26.09.97	Malmö, Malmöhus, Sweden	845 km ENE
5F	07.01.86	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	09.05.97	Sherkaly, Khanty-Mansi, Russia	3,954 km ENE

The first shown was presumably shot whilst migrating south-westward towards its wintering area. The second was the longest movement of the year.

#### **Pochard**

5M	14.01.96	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	02.01.97	Ondres, Landes, France	1,042 km S

This bird doubtless summered far to the north-west of either the ringing or finding locations and chose to winter in different areas of Western Europe.

#### **Tufted Duck**

3M	19.09.93	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
+	11.05.97	Sheryaga, Komi Assr, Russia	3,431 km ENE

A typical Tufted Duck movement. Also typical was the fact that it was shot.

#### **Sparrowhawk (and Greenfinch)**

5F	29.12.96	Sparrowhawk ringed at Garboldisham, Diss	
5M	07.03.97	Greenfinch ringed at Garboldisham, Diss	
X	31.05.97	Garboldisham, Diss	

Only a local recovery, but fascinating in that this ringed Sparrowhawk was killed by hitting the window of the Rectory in Garboldisham whilst carrying the ringed Greenfinch.

#### **Oystercatcher**

8	10.02.90	Heacham, Hunstanton	
X	15.08.94	Jovik, Lenvik, Troms, Norway	2,065 km NNE
1	14.06.94	Mannofield Reservoir, Aberdeen, Grampian	
R	17.06.95	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	502 km SSE
8	31.01.93	Heacham, Hunstanton	

XL	16.05.97	RAF Sculthorpe, Fakenham	21 km ESE
8	10.02.90	Heacham, Hunstanton	
X	01.06.97	Rougham Park, Rougham, Swaffham	22 km SE
4	12.08.67	Snettisham, Hunstanton	
XF	19.06.97	Findhorn Bay, Grampian	588 km NNW

The first shown is from north of 69 deg.N, where only a small percentage of the many Norwegian recoveries occur. The second was spending its first summer on The Wash after being ringed as a nestling at a roof-nesting colony in Aberdeen.

The third and fourth are examples of Oystercatchers venturing inland; possibly further evidence of increasing numbers looking to breed on arable/open land. Finally a road casualty in its breeding area, 30 years after being ringed, already as an adult.

#### **Little Ringed Plover**

1	26.05.93	Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth	
+	15.07.94	Libourne, Gironde, France	865 km S

Like so many of our recoveries from France, this bird was found freshly shot.

#### **Ringed Plover**

1	14.06.96	Snettisham, Hunstanton	
RR	11.08.96	Grafham Water, Cambridgeshire	81 km SW
RR	06.09.96	Ile de Bannel, Finistere, France	626 km SW

A demonstration of the rapid onward south-westerly movement of a Snettisham nestling.

#### **Grey Plover**

5	20.02.88	Wolferton, King's Lynn	
+	02.01.97	Aumenille Lestrc, Manche, France	382 km SSW
4	14.12.88	Wolferton, King's Lynn	
XF	05.01.97	Porthysgi Bay, St Davids, Dyfed	405 km WSW

The first probably moved on to escape the cold weather, only to be shot in France. The second was only the second Wash-ringed Grey Plover to be found in Wales and was also likely to have been a cold-weather movement.

#### **Knot**

6	11.01.97	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
S	29.04.97	Elbe Estuary, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	581 km ENE

Found on board an oil rig situated in the Elbe estuary.

#### **Dunlin**

6	31.07.96	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
R	04.05.97	Vasa Sacos, Santarem, Ribatejo, Portugal	1,705 km SSW



The most distant recovery of a Norfolk-ringed Dunlin during the year. This bird will have been on northward spring passage.

### **Black-tailed Godwit**

6	01.08.96	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
XF	19.01.97	Nummer Een, Zeeland, Netherlands	277 km SE

The colour-marking of Black-tailed Godwit on The Wash is one of three studies being undertaken nationally. The increased catching totals of this species in the last few years continues to be rewarded with reports of colour marked birds, this one falling victim to the cold weather in January. This is only the second Wash-ringed Black-tailed Godwit to the Netherlands, although there has also been a sighting of another colour marked bird.

### **Bar-tailed Godwit**

A bird ringed at Thornham and found dead at Snettisham over 26 years later set a new national longevity record for Bar-tailed Godwit.

### **Curlew**

4	12.08.91	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
XF	10.05.97	Kotajoenitic, Kiuruvesi, Kuopio, Finland	1,946 km NE
4	12.08.91	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
X	28.05.97	Palmark, Norrfjarden, Norrbotten, Sweden	1,842 km NE

Two Curlew caught together at Terrington back in 1991 and both recovered in May 1997 on their respective breeding grounds. Finland is the main breeding stronghold of Wash Curlew, the former being the 18th recovered there. Sweden comes in second with the latter being the fifth there.

### **Redshank**

4	31.07.96	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
R	12.10.96	Ogwen Estuary, Gwynedd	293 km W
4	18.08.85	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	
XF	25.05.97	Roxton, Bedfordshire	82 km SSW
3	11.09.88	Dorum Sud, Luneburg, Germany	
X	02.03.96	Weybourne, Sheringham	498 km W

The first was a movement to Wales within the same year as ringing. It is known that following moult some Wash Redshank carry out an onward migration within Britain to south-western European coasts; this bird is likely to have opted to winter in North Wales.

The second, an inland recovery, was likely to have been breeding in the adjacent Great Ouse or Ivel river valleys.

The third was probably long dead, with the leg and ring only found on the flood tideline.

### **Turnstone**

4	10.03.96	Hcacham, Hunstanton	
RR	07.03.97	Felixstowe, Suffolk	121 km SSE

Surprisingly this is the first Wash Turnstone to be found in Suffolk. The ring number was read in the field by a diligent observer.

**Black-headed Gull**

6	14.01.87	Norwich	
RR	01.07-01.08.87	Utterslev, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	15.04.88	Utterslev, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	31.08.91	Frihavnen, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	08.07.92	Frihavnen, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	12.03.93	Oregardsparken, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	24.07-10.08.93	Frihavnen, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	02.07-20.07.94	Frihavnen, Copenhagen, Denmark	
RR	09.08.96	Frihavnen, Copenhagen, Denmark	813 km WNW

A remarkable example of site fidelity on both spring and autumn passage. Amazingly all the Danish records were from the same observer (thanks to Mr Kjeld Pedersen!) who read the ring number in the field on each occasion.

A bird ringed at Sheringham on 23.12.81 had its ring number read on Sheringham promenade by the ringer himself over 15 years later on 07.01.97.

**Common Gull**

2F	30.05.87	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 88	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 89	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 90	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 91	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 92	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 93	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 94	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 95	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 96	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	Summer 97	Kakrarahu, Matsalu Nature Reserve, Estonia	
RR	19.08.97	Terrington St Clement, King's Lynn	1,770 km SW

Another remarkable record of site fidelity, this bird has been monitored nesting every year in the Matsalu Nature Reserve since ringing in 1987. It was spotted at Terrington through the August fog, and provides a good example of how early post-breeding continental gulls arrive back in Britain during the autumn.

Additionally a Norfolk winter bird was found in the Netherlands two years later, and two summer Danish-ringed birds (one a nestling) were re-trapped in Norfolk during the winter period.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

1	10.07.95	Maasvlakte, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	
RR	28.09.97	Winfarthing, Diss	224 km WNW
1	08.07.96	South Walney, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria	
+	08.12.97	Hilborough, Swaffham	306 km SE

The first, like all recent Lesser Black-backed Gull recoveries, was during September when the species is probably at its most common in Norfolk. However the second perhaps gives an indication of the origin of the increasing numbers of this species in Norfolk during winter.

### **Common Tern**

I	18.07.96	Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth	
X	08.12.96	Ad Dakhla, Morocco	3,546 km SSW

Young Common Terns usually accomplish their journey south with speed and reach their winter quarters long before December. This bird was seemingly therefore, wintering further north than the majority of its kind.

### **Barn Owl**

I	04.07.96	near Ashill, Watton	
XF	13.12.96	Thirsk, North Yorkshire	231 km NW

Such a distant Barn Owl recovery is rarely reported from the British ringing scheme.

### **Nightjar**

3	19.08.96	near Thetford	
X	18.09.96	Orgedeuil, Charente, France	750 km S

Nightjar recoveries are few and far between. To get an international movement from a Norfolk bird is particularly satisfying.

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

3JF	03.08.91	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent	
R	22.02.97	Ickburgh, Mundford	148 km NNW

An unusually distant movement for a Great Spotted Woodpecker presumed to have been British-bred.

### **Swallow**

I	04.08.92	Burgh Castle, Great Yarmouth	
X	10.02.95	Tabou, Ivory Coast	5,416 km S

Nearly all Norfolk Swallows winter in South Africa. However, by February the return passage is well under way, and a bird in the Ivory Coast at that time comes as no surprise.

### **Nightingale**

3J	26.07.97	Didlington, Mundford	
R	22.08.97	Landguard Point, Felixstowe, Suffolk	80 km SE

### **Wheatear**

6	31.03.97	Holme Bird Observatory, Hunstanton	
X	16.07.97	Glen Dye, Banchory, Grampian	486 km NNW

This bird was taken by a raptor, possibly a Merlin, on its breeding grounds



**Blackbird**

4F	11.11.95	Weybourne, Sheringham	
X	07.12.96	Leer, Weser-Ems, Germany	423 km E
4F	10.11.94	Weybourne, Sheringham	
X	25.03.97	Sorring, Silkeborg, Jylland, Denmark	664 km ENE
5M	03.06.96	Fyren, Falsterbo, Sweden	
X	18.11.96	East Runton, Cromer	800 km WSW
3M	19.10.96	Turoy, Fjell, Hordaland, Norway	
R	30.10.96	Weybourne, Sheringham	866 km SSW
5F	30.01.97	Ormesby, Great Yarmouth	
X	02.04.97	Vuosaari, Helsinki, Finland	1,663 km ENE

The first, already an adult bird, chose to winter in Norfolk. It is perhaps surprising that it chose to spend the next winter in Germany. The others follow the normal pattern for this species.

Additionally there were two movements by Norfolk-ringed birds in autumn to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly respectively.

**Song Thrush**

3J	10.06.96	Weybourne, Sheringham	
X	25.11.96	Newent, Gloucestershire	264 km WSW

This Thrush was only a very few weeks old when ringed in Norfolk. It obviously chose to winter further south-west.

**Reed Warbler**

4F	16.07.97	Weybourne, Sheringham	
R	28.07.97	Icklesham, Sussex	228 km S

A indication of the timing of this birds migration southward (it still had a significant brood patch when ringed). There were also movements to Icklesham, Sussex, from both Weybourne and Snettisham Coastal Park.

**Whitethroat**

3	24.08.96	Turoy, Fjell, Hordaland, Norway	
R	20.09.96	Holme Bird Observatory, Hunstanton	873 km SSW

Foreign-ringed Whitethroat are rare in Britain. Of the 16 to date this is only the second from Norway, the first being found in Scotland during 1989.

**Blackcap**

5	07.05.96	Holme Bird Observatory, Hunstanton	
+F	10.03.97	Al Ladhiqiyah, Al Lathquie, Syria	
2M	22.08.96	Tancremont, Liege, Belgium	

RR 23.09.96

Scratby, Great Yarmouth

366 km NW

The eastern route taken by the Holme bird in its second spring possibly indicates its origins more correctly than its overshoot in its first.

More Belgian-ringed Blackcap are found in Britain than from any other country. Interestingly, of British-ringed Blackcap, Spain tops the list, followed by Morocco, France, Algeria, Portugal and then Belgium.

### **Chiffchaff**

3J 20.08.96

Kettlestone, Fakenham

R 09.10.96

Trimley St Mary, Felixsowe, Suffolk

101 km SSE

This bird was in distinctive juvenile plumage when ringed and thought to have been raised locally, so even in mid October coastal Chiffchaffs are not necessarily of foreign origin.

Also 25 Sept 97 Norfolk to Icklesham 3 Oct 97

### **Willow Warbler**

3 27.07.96

Strathrory, Ardross, Highland Region

R 25.08.97

Weybourne, Sheringham

632 km SE

Presumably re-trapped in Norfolk on its southward migration after being ringed at, or close to, its birthplace.

### **Bearded Tit**

Two birds, both ringed on 29.07.94 at Walberswick, Southwold, Suffolk, were re-trapped by a Norfolk ringer on two different dates during August 1996 at a site in East Norfolk.

### **Coal Tit**

3M 06.10.96

Kettlestone, Fakenham

R 29.12.96

Garboldisham, Diss

50 km S

3F 11.10.96

Ipswich, Suffolk

R 16.11.96

Burgh Castle, Great Yarmouth

66 km NNE

Coal Tits are not known for the distance that they travel. To get a brace of movements in excess of 50 kilometres in one year is most unusual.

### **Starling**

5 16.03.96

Burnham Market

+ 17.11.96

Loon Plage, Nord, France

239 km SSE

3F 08.07.96

Ventes Ragas, Silute, Lithuania

R 12.11.96

Burgh castle, Great Yarmouth

1,314 km WSW

The first, shot in its second year, paid the penalty for choosing to winter in France rather than in Norfolk.

The second represents one of many Lithuanian-ringed Starling that winter in Norfolk. Some breed in Lithuania whilst others are on passage from their breeding grounds which are often much further to the east.

**Chaffinch**

3F	09.12.96	Shimpling, Diss	
X	13.04.97	Toringe, Vinberg, Halland, Sweden	887 km NE

Chaffinch movements to Sweden are regular as part of the Norfolk winter population returns to breed in Scandinavia.

**Greenfinch**

4M	10.10.96	Ormesby, Great Yarmouth	
R	04.04.97	Kvassas, Sokndal, Rogaland, Norway	694 km NNE

The trend towards more Norwegian birds wintering in Norfolk continues. Additionally there was a movement from Diss to The Netherlands.

**Siskin**

5F	05.05.96	Maryburgh, Highland Region	
R	23.02.97	Thetford	61 km SSE
5F	27.03.97	Garboldisham, Diss	
XF	10.04.97	Egersund, Rogaland, Norway	746 km NNE
6M	18.02.95	Ickburgh, Mundford	
X	27.03.97	Hulshorst, Gelderland, The Netherlands	345 km E
5M	04.04.94	Ickburgh, Mundford	
X	15.12.96	Villeneuve de Marsan, Landes, France	958 km S
5M	29.03.95	Ickburgh, Mundford	
R	07.02.97	Ballehraggan, Kildary, Highland Region	54 km NNW

Note the speed of movement of the Norwegian bird which demonstrates the timing of return passage. It has been shown that Norfolk Siskins generally originate from Scotland and also Europe from Benelux through to Scandinavia. Somewhat unusual therefore, that the French bird should be quite so far south.

**Snow Bunting**

3M	08.12.96	Zeebrugge, West Vlaanderen, Belgium	
R	31.01.97	Holkham, Wells	244 km NW
3F	05.12.96	Castricum Duinen, Noord Holland, The Netherlands	
R	17.02.97	Salthouse, Holt	241 km W

This is the eighth year of the colour ringing scheme operated by the North West Norfolk Ringing Group. These are the first and second foreign-ringed birds to be caught by the group and complement the two Norfolk birds to The Netherlands that previously represented the only interchanges between these wintering populations.



# Norfolk Ringing Totals - 1997

Fulmar	7	Common Gull	37	Reed Warbler	900
Comorant	2	L B B Gull	1	Lesser Whitethroat	99
Grey Heron	26	Common Tern	182	Whitethroat	581
Mute Swan	20	Little Tern	181	Garden Warbler	240
Greylag Goose	5	Stock Dove	26	Blackcap	1104
Barnacle Goose	4	Woodpigeon	60	Pallas's Warbler	1
Canada Goose	23	Collared Dove	80	Yellow-browed Warbler	1
Egyptian Goose	3	Turtle Dove	10	Wood Warbler	2
Pink-footed Goose	3	Cuckoo	3	Chiffchaff	826
Shelduck	24	Barn Owl	48	Willow Warbler	794
Mandarin Duck	2	Little Owl	4	Goldcrest	957
Wigeon	4	Tawny Owl	4	Firecrest	11
Gadwall	52	Nightjar	1	Spotted Flycatcher	41
Teal	31	Swift	7	Pied Flycatcher	40
Mallard	3	Kingfisher	15	Bearded Tit	46
Pintail	1	Wryneck	2	Long-tailed Tit	824
Shoveler	1	Green Woodpecker	25	Marsh Tit	131
Pochard	15	Great Sp Woodpecker	79	Willow Tit	30
Tufted Duck	212	Lesser Sp Woodpecker	1	Coal Tit	454
Marsh Harrier	3	Skylark	81	Blue Tit	3907
Sparrowhawk	36	Woodlark	156	Great Tit	2218
Kestrel	23	Sand Martin	294	Nuthatch	27
Grey Partridge	28	Swallow	651	Treecreeper	138
Water Rail	4	House Martin	17	Jay	34
Moorhen	37	Tree Pipit	3	Carriion Crow	1
Coot	38	Meadow Pipit	36	Magpie	31
Oystercatcher	171	Rock Pipit	2	Jackdaw	4
Avocet	6	Yellow Wagtail	125	Rook	22
Little Ringed Plover	7	Grey Wagtail	4	Starling	562
Ringed Plover	159	Pied Wagtail	284	House Sparrow	439
Golden Plover	11	Waxwing	1	Tree Sparrow	26
Grey Plover	63	Wren	707	Chaffinch	2402
Lapwing	132	Dunnock	928	Brambling	162
Knot	252	Robin	1005	Serin	1
Sanderling	34	Nightingale	26	Greenfinch	5483
Curlew Sandpiper	1	Black Redstart	7	Goldfinch	357
Dunlin	730	Redstart	41	Siskin	2637
Ruff	1	Whinchat	18	Linnet	185
Snipe	7	Stonechat	1	Twite	1
Woodcock	6	Wheatear	212	Redpoll	59
Black-tailed Godwit	16	Ring Ouzel	1	Crossbill	129
Bar-tailed Godwit	43	Blackbird	2716	Two-barred Crossbill	1
Curlew	85	Fieldfare	82	Common Rosefinch	2
Redshank	66	Song Thrush	300	Bullfinch	258
Greenshank	2	Redwing	374	Snow Bunting	258
Green Sandpiper	2	Mistle Thrush	39	Yellowhammer	269
Common Sandpiper	5	Cetti's Warbler	2	Reed Bunting	267
Turnstone	3	Grasshopper Warbler	6	Corn Bunting	5
Black-headed Gull	116	Sedge Warbler	414	<b>Total Ringed</b>	<b>38,791</b>

# Canvasback – A first for Norfolk

*John B Kemp*



*Canvasback among Pochard, Tufted Duck and a Ferruginous Duck, Wissington (C. Donner)*

Severe weather in January 1997, with almost total icing on the Ouse Washes, resulted in large numbers of Pochard moving from Welney to unfrozen areas of water at Wissington Beet Factory settling pools. It was there on January 18th that Carl Donner found a drake Canvasback though he was unable to relocate it on subsequent visits. As weather conditions improved and open water developed at Welney numbers of Pochard started to return with the Canvasback making its first appearance on January 21st. Its visits were, however, very erratic as it initially commuted between Welney and Wissington, though at times it could be found at neither site. Welney appearances were on January 21st, 23rd and 26/27th, February 1st and 6th and March 7th-10th.

Though sometimes difficult to find amongst hundreds of sleeping Pochard, once active the Canvasback could readily be located. Main features included a long black tapering bill, darker chestnut colouring on the head, especially around the face and paler body plumage than Pochard - not always obvious in bright sunny conditions. It was larger and longer necked than Pochard and the different bill structure enabled light to be seen through the nostril slit. It was aged as first-winter mainly by the mottled appearance to the black of the lower breast, brownish tail feathers and by the body colour not being as pale as generally depicted in field guides. Initial concerns about possible hybrid influence were soon dismissed.

At first the Canvasback was very shy, flying off when grain was fed each day to the wild Pochard flock. However, by the end of its stay it became partly adjusted to the feeding regime and simply swam off to the further reaches of the lagoon, at no time attempting to join the hundreds of Pochard at the feed. Much of its time was spent sleeping on the bank amongst Pochard and like most of them it was flying off to feed elsewhere each night. On a number of occasions it would display to a female Pochard, throwing back its head and pointing its bill skyward then puffing out its neck in a style similar to other Pochard types - this could pose some interesting identification problems in the future. It was strongly attached to the Pochard flock and departed in the spring as Pochard numbers fell. But this was not to be the end of the story!

The following winter a male Canvasback was found amongst Pochard at Abberton Reservoir in Essex from November 23rd-30th. What was clearly the same bird returned to Welney on December 3rd. Once again it was initially erratic in its appearances being seen

on December 8/9th, 11th-15th, 19th-22nd, 24th, 26/27th and then non stop from December 29th to February 22nd 1998 with a surprising reappearance on March 9th, when it was present all day. It was not found at any other Norfolk locality during the 1997/98 winter.

On its return in December 1997 it initially remained shy, flying off at feeding times though gradually it accepted the routine so that by late January it was coming up close to the Main Hide once the human presence had departed, making it a target for photographers. It was one of the most photographed rarities of the year with stunning portraits appearing in birdwatching magazines. It was now noticeably more adult looking with a jet black bill, paler body plumage and a generally sharper overall appearance. A steady stream of admirers in both winter periods resulted in record attendances at the Welney reserve.

The species is long overdue in Britain which has seen increasing numbers of Lesser Scaups *Aythya affinis* and a returning Redhead *Aythya americana* in recent years. Canvasbacks breed in North America from central Alaska to north-eastern California and east to Minnesota; wintering areas are from the Great Lakes and British Columbia south to the Gulf Coast and Mexico. After many years of decline, Canvasback populations are once again rising, resulting hopefully in more British records of this striking diving duck.

## Calandra Lark – new to Norfolk

*Jonathan Brown, Neil Lawton and Michael Rooney*

On the morning of 19th May 1997 we were carrying out breeding bird census work on Scolt Head NNR. Although working in the same general area, we were each covering different parts of the saltmarsh and sand dune habitats.

At about 11.30 am Jon noticed a scuffle between two birds; a closer look revealed that one was clearly a Skylark but the other was distinctly larger and bulkier with broader wings. The Skylark was clearly the aggressor and soon chased the other bird off although it seemed to land about 100 metres away. During the next 20 minutes Jon had three further views of the mystery bird, twice in flight and once close enough to pinpoint it on the ground, a situation not helped by the undulating terrain and patches of marram grass that prevented visual location from any distance. However, flight views were good and at close range enabling a number of pertinent identification features to be determined and a mobile 'phone call describing a large lark with black underwings and a white trailing edge 'like an adult Little Gull' was enough to send Neil and Michael hurrying to join Jon.

They arrived simultaneously to find that the bird had flown into the saltmarsh. A search of the area produced nothing and with the first wisps of sea fog rolling in from the northeast, two rather worried men were heading back towards the dunes when the bird appeared from the ground a little way ahead hotly pursued by a Skylark. It flew past us, calling, at about head height affording excellent flight views clearly showing the black underwings and a white trailing edge to the secondaries visible from above and below. The flight was gently undulating, the wings appearing broad and rounded. General flight impressions were of a bulkier and heavier bird than Skylark with a noticeable heavy-headed look. The flight call was a rolling '*tchrupp*', quite loud with a rather liquid feel to it. By now we had no doubts as to the bird's identity but were obviously keen to obtain views of it on the ground, although Jon had already noted the black patches on the sides of the neck and the white crescents above them giving a slight half-collared effect.



Unfortunately on this occasion the bird had flown farther than ever but it seemed to land about half a kilometre to the east. As we were about to set off in pursuit, the sea fog thickened and we had to sit it out until the next clear patch gave us a chance of relocating the bird. Despite taking every care to ensure that we saw the bird before it saw us our next views were of it rising in flight in front of us. It circled us once, calling, before heading off even further east. This time the fog prevented us from pinpointing the landing area. More in hope than expectation we set off in pursuit once more. The fog continued to thicken and we had walked another kilometre before once again seeing and hearing the bird in flight. On this occasion it headed out into the saltmarsh and was lost to sight in the fog.

*Extracted from an account which first appeared in Bulletin No 24 of Norfolk Bird Club (complete with a detailed description).*

## **White Wagtails breeding at Cley – a Norfolk first**

*Richard Millington*

White Wagtails are regular spring and autumn migrants in Norfolk, with most Cley sightings being in April, when up to 15 have been reported in a day. Although Pied Wagtails breed commonly, there has been no proven breeding of a pure pair of White Wagtails in Norfolk - until this year.

From 18th May 1997, a male White Wagtail was seen acting suspiciously on telegraph wires along the A149 and his bent tail-tip indicated that he may be breeding nearby. His mate was not seen until 6th June, when she too proved to be a White Wagtail, and just two days later this pair was watched tending their three newly-fledged youngsters in the meadow beside the coast road. The family kept together around Keeper's and Cricket Marshes until mid-June, when the young were finally abandoned and the adults set about raising a second brood.

Thanks to some amateur sleuthing by RM and Trevor Davies, the secluded nest site was discovered on 3rd July and found to be in a gap below the gutter of the rear roof of a holiday cottage on the north side of the village. Both parents were already feeding young and carrying off faecal sacs, and their demanding new charges kept them busy during the next ten days. Interestingly, the pair largely usurped separate sites for food collection, with the male foraging in the meadows east of the beach road while the female took advantage of the myriad of flies attracted by the Charollais bull stationed near the Salt Pans. This latter ready source of insects was a prime territory which the female defended vigorously; no Pied Wagtail was allowed to encroach, while even her mate rarely dared to venture near. The airspace above was also sacred, and she determinedly harassed the Pied Wagtails which were regularly overflying this spot, even though they were simply heading to the Mill with food for their own nestlings!

At least two young left the nest on 13th July, and continued to be tended by both parents over the next few days, while at least two of the original brood continued to visit nearby gardens. With up to seven White Wagtails (and at least 40 Pied Wagtails) on Cley Reserve from late June until late August, birders were able to practise their wagtail identification

skills. Apart from being rather more clean-looking and silvery-hued (and with whiter wing markings) than the Pies, the young Whites were best picked out by their structure (being more delicately proportioned with apparently longer legs and a more prominent tail) and actions (with the decidedly more impetuous feeding action being accompanied by an almost incessant tail-wagging which, curiously, drew comparisons with Grey as much as Pied Wagtail).

Pied Wagtails are virtually endemic to Britain & Ireland, and are largely resident (although some do move south to France and even western Iberia in winter). In contrast, White Wagtail is wholly migratory throughout its range; it breeds across Europe and winters in West Africa. White Wagtails have recently colonised the Channel Islands, but they are primarily passage migrants in Britain, with (mostly Icelandic) birds moving through annually. There may be very limited hybridisation between White and Pied Wagtails, and occasionally mixed pairs are reported, but the difficulty of correctly identifying females and first-summer birds means that an element of doubt has been cast over many such claims. Pure pairs of White Wagtails breed quite regularly in Shetland, and several have bred in Scotland, but English pairs are very few and far between, with the Cley record being the first fully documented breeding of a pure pair of White Wagtails in Norfolk.

*This article was first published in Cley Bird Club Newsletter No 45*

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# Fea's/Zino's Petrel in Norfolk

*Stefan McElwee*

The 26th of June 1997 greeted us with weather much like the rest of the month; cold, wet with strong north-east winds. I hadn't considered seawatching until the pager announced a Sabine's Gull and Cory's Shearwater past Cley. Midsummer birding blues banished as we headed for the Blakeney Point seawatching hide.

Myself and fellow warden Saul Brown were enthusiastic as to the prospects of good birds, so much so that Janet Reed, the wife of Property Manager Joe, decided to come along, armed with the reserve's scope, for her first ever seawatch.

We arrived in the hide at 1.30 pm to be greeted by huge seas and light drizzle. It was obvious we were in for good seawatching as Manx Shearwaters flooded past along with a good number of Fulmars.

At 1.40 pm whilst scanning the shoreline, I noticed a bird far closer than any seen previously and assumed a Manx Shearwater. I told Janet and Saul to get ready for great views when I saw its head. Avid seawatchers will think it crazy to claim identification of any seabird on head alone. But the instant I saw the bird head on, coming towards us I knew it had to be a Soft-plumaged Petrel. Indeed it was! I repeated 'Soft-plumaged Petrel' three times to my companions before shooting from the hide. I covered the distance to the lifeboat house in five minutes realising someone down the coast just had to see it. I quickly 'phoned the news to Birdline and Birdline East Anglia.

Richard Millington 'phoned Steve Gantlett who was already watching the bird at Cley as the news came through. Richard, along with Ron and Sue Johns, managed to get to Salthouse in time. It was also seen independently at other watchpoints along the coast. An incredible series of events. Incidentally, the petrel was only the second seabird of any species Janet had ever seen!

It was similar to Manx Shearwater in overall size but not as powerful in build, the wings and body appearing thinner. It would almost be likened to a large swift with wings set well forward adding to a 'no necked' appearance. The rear end tapered off to give a pointed tail. The bird came in from the west at a height but then dropped to wave level. The impression was of a wobbly flight with a gentle twisting from side to side; no hard breaks like a Manx Shearwater. The bird often had both wings pointing towards the sea at the same time, producing a gibbon-like effect.

*Extracted from accounts, each with a detailed description, first appearing in Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin No 25 and Cley Bird Club Bulletin No 45.*



# The Yarmouth Little Tern Colony during 1997

*Mark Thomas and Jenny Atkins*

With a current populations of around 200 nesting pairs the Little Tern colony at North Denes, Yarmouth represents some 10% of the UK total nesting population and as such is very important. In recognition of this importance the locality has been afforded Special Protection Area (SPA) status alongside the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation for the entire North Denes dune system.

Since RSPB wardening began in 1986 the colony has experienced mixed fortunes with high levels of productivity in some years and noted failures in others, a total of 1286 young have fledged from 2023 nests during the period 1986-1996. The failure of the colony during the 1996 season, due to a combination of high tides and predation by Kestrel and Fox, resulted in a review of the protection methods prior to the 1997 season.

One aspect obviously in need of updating was the design and provision of shelters to assist chick protection and development. Chicks using the wooden shelters at the colony prior to 1997 suffered from predation by Kestrels which had no problem landing on the beach and simply extracted the chicks from the shelters due to the design.

After seeing the provision of plastic pipe shelters for Common Tern chicks at Denaby Lngs, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve it was decided to field-test this method using 200 plastic shelters with modified design specifications to suit Little Terns (6 inch diameters with 1-2 ft lengths). The shelters (used a density of two per nesting pair) were camouflaged with the aid of glue and sand and then location in the colony in mid-May, generally in a random arrangement but more importantly with the lower circumference of the pipes buried into the sand at a level which prevented ground predation by Kestrels.

Observations indicated that the terns didn't appear disturbed by the shelters and the first incident of shelter use occurred on June 15th - three days after the first hatching. By mid-June a large number of the nests had hatched and widespread occupancy of the shelters took place throughout the colony by chicks aged between two and seven days old. During any disturbance which caused the adults to leave the colony; chicks that were being brooded at the time would instantly run very quickly and directly towards the nearest shelter and protection.

Further detailed observations proved multiple occupancy of the shelters by up to two families at one time and also shelter fidelity by specific individuals. Adult birds returning from fishing trips would be greeted by two or more chicks scrambling out of the shelters to meet the parent half way down the beach before once again quickly returning to the safety of the shelters - a comical sight!

As in previous years supplementary feeding of the local Kestrel population took place and this combined with the great success of the shelters reduced predation significantly on 1996 levels. More importantly, on only one occasion was a Kestrel actually observed taking a chick from the entrance of a shelter. During several periods of wet weather and strong sand-blow we encountered minimal problems due to the provision of shelters, although on one occasion it was necessary to alter the orientation of the shelters.

Based on the results obtained at Yarmouth during 1997 where 135 chicks managed to fledge from 191 nesting pairs (0.7 per pair) we believe this conservation practice has the potential to be of great value in assisting other tried and accepted measures in safeguarding Little Tern populations.

# The Birds of Felbrigg Park

*Moss Taylor*

Felbrigg Estate was the home of Robert Wyndham Ketton-Cremer, one of Norfolk's greatest men of letters, having been purchased by his great-grandfather in 1863. The estate, including the 17th century house and its contents, were bequeathed to the National Trust, on the death of Mr Ketton-Cremer in 1969. Opened to the public for the first time on 1st July 1971, the estate extending to over two thousand acres, includes a rich mosaic of habitats, from open parkland and mature woodland, to mixed farmland, water meadows and a lake.

Although the author has been visiting the estate regularly since 1972, it is only during the last few years that the variety of birdlife found at Felbrigg has been recognised by a wider audience. In 1997, the East Anglian Regional Office of the National Trust requested an updated list of Red Data Book species and other notable birds present on their properties. As a result, the author carried out a breeding bird survey of the Felbrigg Estate during the summer of 1997. This, together with historical records from the annual *NBR* since 1953 and a review of the author's own records since 1972, form the basis of this paper.

## The Habitats

Mention of Felbrigg would make most people immediately think of the extensive woodland to the north of Felbrigg Hall, which includes the Lion's Mouth and the Great Wood. Here, majestic beech trees provide feeding and nesting sites for many of the common woodland birds and until recently, held a few pairs of Redstarts and Wood Warblers. The fine stands of oak, chestnuts and ash trees are a poignant reminder of the 18th century tradition of tree planting, a tradition so beloved and followed by the previous owner of Felbrigg, Mr Ketton-Cremer. The continuing woodland management by the National Trust, has resulted in a patchwork of plantations of various ages, of both deciduous and coniferous trees, thus producing a diversity of woodland-type habitats, so important for attracting a wide variety of species.

Many of the large estates in Norfolk are characterised by the parkland surrounding the main house and Felbrigg is no exception. Originally created as an area in which herds of deer could roam, the parkland of Felbrigg now provides grazing for cattle and sheep. The typical parkland breeding birds include Little Owl, Jackdaws and Mistle Thrushes, while large flocks of Fieldfares, Redwings and Starlings are usually present in late winter and early spring, prior to their return to breeding grounds in northern and eastern Europe.

The lake, not visible from the Hall, has really only been visited regularly by birdwatchers since the lakeside walk was officially opened in 1977. Extending to several acres, it plays host to a variety of wildfowl during the winter months, including occasional Goosander and in most years, Mandarin. A reed-bed at one end holds a small colony of Reed Warblers, while the lakeside alders and birches attract Siskins during the winter months. During the spring and autumn, Common Sandpipers are regular visitors to the muddy margins of the lake. To the south lies an area of damp meadows, in which Lapwing breed, although Snipe have not done so for a number of years.

The surrounding farmland and hedgerows, although mostly not open to the public are the home of partridges and Skylarks, which are still reasonably common, despite the national decline in the species. Finally, the situation of the whole estate, along the Cromer to Holt Ridge and only a couple of miles from the coast, means that many migrants pass through in spring and autumn, perhaps the most notable being the spring passage of raptors.



## The Birds

Hard weather often forces the more unusual species to seek shelter on inland waters and this was the case with the only record of a diver in January 1993, when a Red-throated Diver graced the lake at Felbrigg. Little Grebes are irregular winter visitors with a maximum of four in 1983, while Great Crested Grebes are irregular breeding summer visitors. Both Cormorant and Grey Heron are winter visitors and there is one record of a Bittern by the lake during a spell of severe weather in February 1968. Although a pair of Mute Swans bred in at least 1980 and 1983, in both years producing some eygnets of the white 'Polish' morph, there have been no recent records of successful breeding. Both Bewick's and Whooper Swans have been seen on single occasions on or near the lake.

Up to three pairs of Egyptian Geese breed annually in holes in the parkland trees and while one or two pairs of Greylag Geese nest annually, breeding Canada Geese are less regular. Flocks of Greylags visit the park in winter with a peak count of 193 in October 1994, while the highest count of Canada Geese was 252 in September 1980. Although the skeins of Pink-footed Geese flying over the estate in recent winters clearly involve wild birds, most of the other records of Pink-footed, White-fronted, Lesser White-fronted, Snow and Barnacle Geese around the lake almost certainly refer to feral birds.

In the last few years, small numbers of Shelduck have been present near the lake from late winter to mid-summer, but to date there has been no evidence of breeding in the immediate area. The origin of a Ruddy Shelduck that circled the lake before flying off west in April 1996 can only be guessed at! Not all exotic wildfowl, however, are necessarily escapes, even if earlier generations were of feral origin. Such is the case with the Mandarin which have been turning up at Felbrigg since 1985. Up to 11 were present on the lake from January 1986 and a pair bred on a nearby farm pond, but none of the young survived. Since then, Felbrigg has become one of the most reliable sites to see Mandarins in winter in Norfolk, with a maximum count of 20 in October 1995. Unfortunately there have been no further definite breeding attempts but displaying birds have been observed in spring.

A few pairs of Mallard breed around the lake each year, numbers often increasing to over a hundred in winter, when they are joined by small numbers of Teal, Tufted Duck and Poehard. Wigeon are less frequent visitors, although up to 22 grazed the lakeside pastures during the winter of 1996/97. A few Gadwall and Shoveler have been recorded in winter and spring. From October to December 1995, up to nine Red-crested Poehard, including at least four drakes, attracted a good deal of interest from visiting birdwatchers, although their origin remained a mystery.

During recent winters, occasional Goosander have been reported, with a maximum of eight in February 1994. The only other 'sawbill' to have been seen on the lake was a 'red-headed' Smew in December 1996. Single Goldeneye are noted most winters, while of the sea-duck, a Long-tailed Duck was a surprise find in November 1991 and a female Scaup was present intermittently in December 1990 and January 1991. Ruddy Ducks have become commoner in Norfolk in the last few years and the first for Felbrigg was a pair in March 1997, followed by a female which stayed for a month at the end of the year.

One of the likely consequences of opening the Felbrigg Estate to the public in the early 1970s was the disappearance of Honey Buzzard as a breeding species. Prior to then it had certainly bred in the Great Wood and if the number of mounted specimens in the Felbrigg collection is anything to go by, it had bred, or at least attempted to breed, on the estate many years earlier. Sadly, there have been no records in recent years. A few pairs of Sparrowhawks and Kestrels are resident breeders in the woods and parkland. Occasional Buzzards are seen in winter, with one or two generally recorded passing through on spring migration. Other raptors to take advantage of the thermals created by the Cromer to Holt Ridge have been



Red Kite and Marsh Harrier, while Ospreys have been attracted to the lake on a number of occasions. Merlin has been recorded once and Hobby has been seen in several years in early summer, on one occasion chasing bats around the lake at dusk.

The three common species of game bird all breed, although there has been a noticeable decrease in Grey Partridge in recent years. Moorhen and Coot both breed around the lake, with the winter influx of Coot often producing counts of over 50. The highest number to date being 84 in November 1995. Occasional Water Rail are seen or heard between November and April, in or near the reed-bed at the northern end of the lake.

The damp water-meadows to the south of the lake provide an ideal nesting habitat for a few pairs of Lapwing and in recent years, a pair of Oystercatchers has also bred there successfully. Snipe have not bred since the early 1980s, although they remain winter visitors and Jack Snipe was added to the list of Felbrigg birds in February 1996. Woodcock are visitors to the woods, particularly during periods of hard weather in winter and 'roding' birds have been reported in summer, suggesting that they probably breed. A feature of late winter is the build-up in the numbers of Lapwing and Golden Plover on the parkland near Felbrigg Church, both of which have peaked at 400 in March. Common Sandpipers are annual spring visitors to the muddy fringes of the lake, all records being during the period 4th-20th May, with a maximum count of seven. Green Sandpipers are less often seen, but a party of four were present in April 1997. Both species have also been recorded by the lake in autumn and a Wood Sandpiper in August 1995 was a pleasant surprise. Other waders noted at Felbrigg have been Whimbrel, Curlew, Redshank and Greenshank. The rarest bird to have been seen at Felbrigg was the Collared Pratincole which spent two weeks in mid-October 1997 on farmland to the south of the estate, although it was seen to have flown over National Trust land! Appropriately, it was the one hundred and fiftieth species to have been recorded at Felbrigg.

Both Black-headed and Common Gulls are regular visitors to the lake and surrounding fields, but a mixed party of gulls including 750 Black-headed and 250 Common Gulls on 18th March 1997 on the grassland near the Church was exceptional. Even more surprising was the fact that while counting the flock, two adult Mediterranean Gulls were also picked out. A second-summer Mediterranean Gull was found in the same area a week later. Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls are recorded each winter, while Lesser Black-backed Gulls visit the lake between spring and autumn. Strangely enough, the only tern to have been reported at Felbrigg was an adult White-winged Black Tern over the lake on 19th August 1986, which had been seen at Cley earlier in the day. At dusk it climbed in tight spirals for five minutes before heading off north-east, a few minutes ahead of a squall approaching from the south-west.

Wood Pigeons and Stock Doves are common breeding birds, the latter being particularly evident nesting in holes in the trees scattered around the parkland. Turtle Doves continue to breed in the hedgerows and copses but their familiar purring song has become less evident in recent years, as has the well-known call of the male Cuckoo. At least one pair of Little Owls breed in the parkland, while both Barn and Tawny Owls are resident, the latter often found roosting in winter in the larch plantations.

Swifts are common aerial feeders during summer and may well breed in houses on the estate. A not uncommon visitor to the lake in the 1980s, the Kingfisher has not been reported for about three years. The Great Spotted Woodpecker is undoubtedly the commonest member of the family and while the few Green Woodpeckers betray their presence with their far-carrying 'yaffle', the more elusive Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, of which there are one or two pairs, are occasionally seen, mainly on the parkland trees. A single Wryneck has been reported, in August 1959.

Skylarks remain common breeding birds on the farmland, although numbers have probably fallen in recent years. Sand Martins are frequent summer visitors to the lake, where they hawk for insects, as do Swallows and House Martins, both of which breed around buildings on the estate. A completely albino Swallow was seen in August 1980. Until 1978, Tree Pipits bred in the more open, young plantations, but as the trees matured, the habitat became unsuitable and the species is now only known as an occasional passage migrant. Small numbers of Meadow Pipits over-winter on the grassland and arable fields, as well as being recorded on passage. The familiar Pied Wagtail breeds in farm buildings and parties of up to 25 have been recorded in autumn and winter. White Wagtails are occasional passage migrants, usually by the lake in spring, while Yellow Wagtails are seen more frequently, again often near the lake. A Grey Wagtail can be found most winters near the sluice at the south-eastern corner of the lake. One winter visitor, however, that is erratic in its appearance is the Waxwing which has been seen occasionally during irruption years.

As to be expected, Wren, Dunnock, Robin and Blackbird are all common breeding residents and the number of pairs of breeding Mistle Thrushes probably now outnumber Song Thrushes. Singing male Common Redstarts were recorded annually in the Lion's Mouth and Great Wood from at least 1963 until 1981. Normally only a few pairs were present but an unprecedented total of 11 singing males were located in May 1978, the year in which Pied Flycatchers bred in the Great Wood. The birds were almost certainly of Scandinavian origin and many were probably only on passage. In recent years, the only record concerned a male in song behind the Hall in May 1993. Black Redstarts are occasionally reported on passage in early spring, usually in March and often in the vicinity of the Hall. Wheatears and Whinchats have also been noted on spring passage. One or two Ring Ouzels are recorded annually in spring, usually on the grazing meadow to the north of the lake and often in the company of Fieldfares and Redwings. The majority have been seen in the second half of April with a maximum day count of five. Flocks of Fieldfares and smaller numbers of Redwings are not uncommon on the fields from December onwards, counts varying from year to year. Even at this time of year it is not uncommon to hear many birds in the flocks singing from the treetops, the chorus becoming louder and more sustained as spring approaches. Highest mid-winter counts of Fieldfares are usually about 300 but at least 500 were feeding on the grassland near Felbrigg Church in March and early April 1996. Although most have left by mid-April, 200 were still present on 14th April 1993 and 120 on 28th April 1995. Redwing numbers peak in mid-winter with a maximum count of 200 in January 1984.

Reed Warblers breed annually in the lakeside reed-bed and have been joined in some years by one or two pairs of Sedge Warblers. A male Grasshopper Warbler 'reeling' from the reed-bed on 1st June 1996 is the only record. Garden Warblers, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers are all breeding summer visitors to the woods, the latter favouring the more open areas of woodland and the young plantations. A few pairs of Whitethroats breed in the more open scrubby areas, but strangely enough I have never recorded Lesser Whitethroat at Felbrigg.

Goldcrests breed commonly in the coniferous woodland and occasional Firecrests have been seen both in spring and during the winter. Spotted Flycatchers have become extremely scarce at Felbrigg and during the breeding bird census in 1997 only a single pair was located, near the village of Metton. Pied Flycatchers are rare spring visitors, but in 1978 a pair bred successfully in a Scot's pine on the southern edge of the Great Wood, the first breeding record for Norfolk and almost certainly for East Anglia. The late timing of breeding (the eggs were laid after 9th June), the large number of Scandinavian drift migrants in Norfolk



that spring in association with predominantly easterly winds and the choice of a Scot's pine, indicate that the pair was almost certainly of Scandinavian stock.

The five common species of tits, Treecreepers and Nuthatches are all resident breeders at Felbrigg, but the Willow Tit, which formerly bred in the damper areas of deciduous woodland, particularly adjoining the lake, has not been recorded since February 1993. Although Jays are resident in the woods, Magpies have never been common around the estate, presumably as a result of keeping, and only one pair was located during the summer of 1997. Many Jackdaws nest in the parkland trees, the birds clearly in pairs, even when flying in large flocks, from late autumn onwards. A few pairs of Carrion Crows breed on the estate but there is no record of a rookery ever having been present, despite the abundance of suitable trees. Hooded Crows are rare winter visitors and are likely to remain so given their increasing scarcity throughout the county. One early June morning in 1979, some lucky observers found three Golden Orioles, including one adult male, at the Lion's Mouth.

A noticeable decline in the numbers of breeding Starlings has resulted in the majority of breeding pairs being restricted to the buildings on the estate, with few pairs using the natural holes in woodland trees. Although House Sparrows frequent many buildings at Felbrigg, they do not appear to use the Hall itself at the present time for nesting. Perhaps the most noticeable absentee in recent times is the Tree Sparrow. Formerly a resident breeder in the parkland and around the farm buildings, it has not been recorded at Felbrigg for a number of years.

One of the five commonest breeding passerines on the estate, Chaffinches are found throughout the deciduous woodland and along the hedgerows, numbers being swelled in the winter by the arrival of Continental birds, when they are often found feeding in the beech woods. In those years in which there is a heavy crop of beech mast, flocks of up to 150 have been counted, often in the company of Bramblings, which have numbered up to 100 on occasions. Siskins are also winter visitors, arriving in late autumn and spending the early winter feeding on the alders and silver birches around the lake, where up to 65 have been counted. Generally by late January, the alder crop has been depleted and the Siskins move on to town gardens where they take advantage of the bags of peanuts, hung out for tits and Greenfinches. In recent years, Redpolls are less often found feeding in the birch plantations, although a party of 50 in April 1996, included some Mealy Redpolls. Small numbers of Greenfinches, Goldfinches and Bullfinches breed at Felbrigg, while a small 'colony' of Linnets are confined to the gorse near the lake. The elusive Hawfinch has never been easy to locate at Felbrigg, although the odd bird is seen most years and a party of 14 were recorded in December 1990. Following late summer irruptions, up to 50 Crossbills were recorded at Felbrigg in 1990 and 1997, and in both years 20-30 over-wintered through to February/March the following year. The national decline in the Yellowhammer has been mirrored at Felbrigg, where it is now an extremely rare breeding bird, with only a single pair located in the summer of 1997. Winter flocks are also less frequent, although 50 were still present as recently as January 1995. Finally, a single pair of Reed Buntings usually breed near the lakeside reed-bed, but they are rarely seen winter.

### **Breeding Bird Survey 1997**

During April and May 1997, the Felbrigg Estate, bounded by the villages of Aylmerton in the north-west, Felbrigg in the east and Metton in the south was visited on twelve dates. All woodland, parkland, farmland and gardens were surveyed. The recording area was divided into eight compartments and by using a system of transects, an attempt was made to record the number of breeding pairs of each species (except Wood Pigeon), based on singing males



for the majority of passerines and sight records for other species. In order to increase the likelihood of recording most of the breeding birds, visits were made during the early mornings on fine, sunny days. A total of fifty-nine species bred at Felbrigg in 1997. They are classified below as abundant, very common, common, scarce or very scarce, depending on the estimated number of pairs present. By comparing the orders of magnitude with future survey results, it should be possible to detect any major changes in the abundance of each species.

**Group 1 - Abundant (51-100 breeding pairs)**

Woodpigeon*	Wren	Robin	Jackdaw
* (based purely on a 'guesstimate')		Blue Tit	Chaffinch

**Group 2 - Very Common (26-50 breeding pairs)**

Blackbird	Chiffchaff	Great Tit
-----------	------------	-----------

**Group 3 - Common (11-25 breeding pairs)**

Pheasant	Blackcap	Long-tailed Tit	House Sparrow
Stock Dove	Willow Warbler	Coal Tit	
Skylark	Goldcrest	Starling	

**Group 4 - Scarce (6-10 breeding pairs)**

Red-legged Partridge		Swallow	Garden Warbler
Jay			
Moorhen	Duncock	Marsh Tit	Goldfinch
Tawny Owl	Mistle Thrush	Nuthatch	
Great Sp Woodpecker		Treecreeper	

**Group 5 - Very Scarce (1-5 breeding pairs)**

Greylag Goose	Lapwing	House Martin	Carrion Crow
Egyptian Goose	Turtle Dove	Pied Wagtail	Greenfinch
Sparrowhawk	Cuckoo	Song Thrush	Linnet
Kestrel	Barn Owl	Reed Warbler	Bullfinch
Grey Partridge	Little Owl	Whitethroat	Yellowhammer
Coot	Green Woodpecker	Spotted Flycatcher	Reed Bunting
Oystercatcher	Lesser Sp Woodpecker	Magpie	

**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, (01842) 750050

# The Birds of the Wash, 1971-1996

*Paul Fisher RSPB Senior Warden*

*The Wash, a vast estuary, lies under the widest of skies. Here the winds constantly blow. It is a magical place and a vital larder for thousands of wintering birds from North America, Greenland, Iceland, northern Europe and Siberia. It is a 'scape washed by light always changing and where feeding is limited by tides pulled by the power of the moon - where all life dances to the turn of the tide'. But there is a threat to this wilderness. The 1973 proposal to construct fresh-water reservoirs behind high embankments has been revived as an alternative to constructing a vast reservoir at Feltwell.*

The Birds of Estuaries Enquiry counts, combined with the National Wildfowl Count, began in The Wash in 1969. These were eventually amalgamated in 1993 into the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). All waterfowl and some other species have therefore been counted here for 27 years. Since 1988 counts have been undertaken in every month, prior to that it was normal to count in the winter only. The Wash is divided into 22 count sectors. Since 1995 a new approach has also been adopted resulting in counts being made in 215 sub-sectors. However, the current account is based on the original division.

Count data are held in a Paradox database, developed by RSPB. More than 100,000 bird records are held in the database. This allows a detailed analysis of counts. Further treatment of the data is possible using MapInfo, a GIS mapping database. In order to iron out problems of uneven data quality, the counts used in this article are only those which satisfy criteria relating to the completeness of monthly coverage (18 of 22 sectors counted) and count quality (counters' assessment of accuracy and weather conditions).

The Wash Wader Ringing Group have made a huge contribution to our understanding of wader populations, movements and ecology in over thirty years of activity. The brief status accounts are derived from their work and refer to the birds that use the Wash.

The Wash, which is in the counties of Lincolnshire and Norfolk, is the most important estuary in the British Isles for wintering and migrating waterfowl. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area and candidate marine Special Area for Conservation.

Huge changes have occurred in the Wash in recent centuries. It is about 40% smaller now than it was during Roman times, due to a succession of land claims which converted intertidal habitats into highly productive farmland. The rich wetlands of the wider Wash basin, extending into the Fens, have also been lost. A moratorium was established on further land claim in 1987. It remains to be seen how the managed realignment of sea defences and the creation of freshwater habitats inside those defences can contribute to redressing the balance.

## Layout of the species accounts

**Status:** a brief description. Population origins and movements are given, where known. Thresholds for international (**Int**) and national (**Nat**) importance qualification are also listed.

**The counts:** the data are from *high tide* counts only, except that Pink-footed Geese are counted at the roost at Snettisham. The maps therefore purely represent bird distributions at that state of tide, principally when they are roosting.

**The graphs:** these show the five-year means of winter peak counts, from 1971/2-1975/6 to 1991/2-1995/6, unless otherwise stated. Winter is defined as November to February, inclusive. Referring to the x-axis, the years are as follows:

1 1971/2-1975/6

3 1981/2-1985/6

5 1991/2-1995/6

2 1976/7-1980/1

4 1986/7-1990/1

**The Maps:** unless otherwise stated, the maps are all derived from winter mean peak counts for 1991/2-1995/6.

The WeBS count sectors are:

1 Gibraltar Point

7 Butterwick

13 Welland

19 Ouse

2 Wainfleet

8 Freiston

14 Holbeach

20 Snettisham

3 Friskney

9 Witham

15 Dawsmere

21 Heacham

4 Wrangle

10 Frampton, North

16 Gedney

22 Hunstanton

5 Leverton

11 Frampton, South

17 Terrington, Lincs

23 Holme

6 Benington

12 Kirton

18 Terrington, Norfolk

25 Titchwell



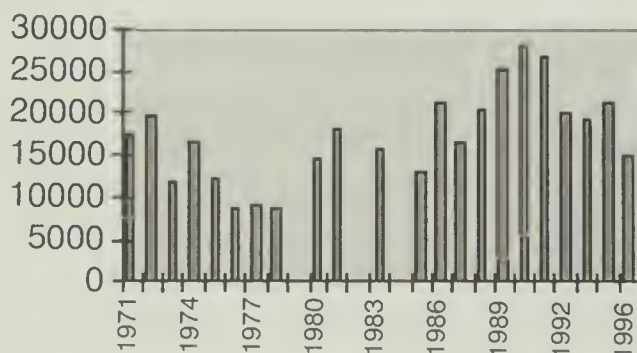
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Holme and Titchwell are included because significant numbers of waders leave the Wash to roost at these sites, particularly during the autumn. However, in terms of national WeBS counts and reports these birds are attributed to the North Norfolk Coast.

## Overall populations and distribution

The January counts of all waterfowl species (wildfowl and waders) combined regularly exceed the qualifying level for international importance of 20,000 birds. The graph is highly influenced by population changes of three species - Pink-footed Goose, Oystercatcher and Knot (for which see the species accounts). Winter and migratory movements add significantly to the number of birds which actually use the Wash.

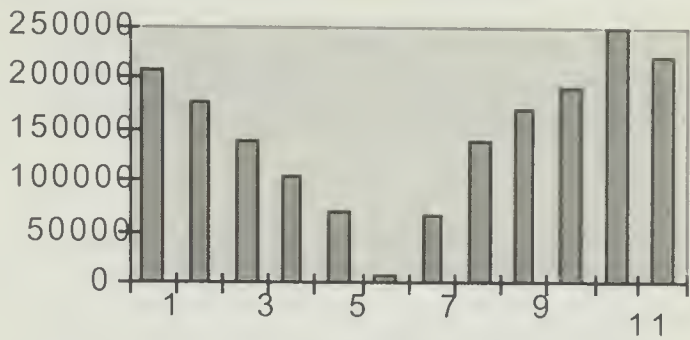
Figure 1: combined total of all waterfowl, January counts



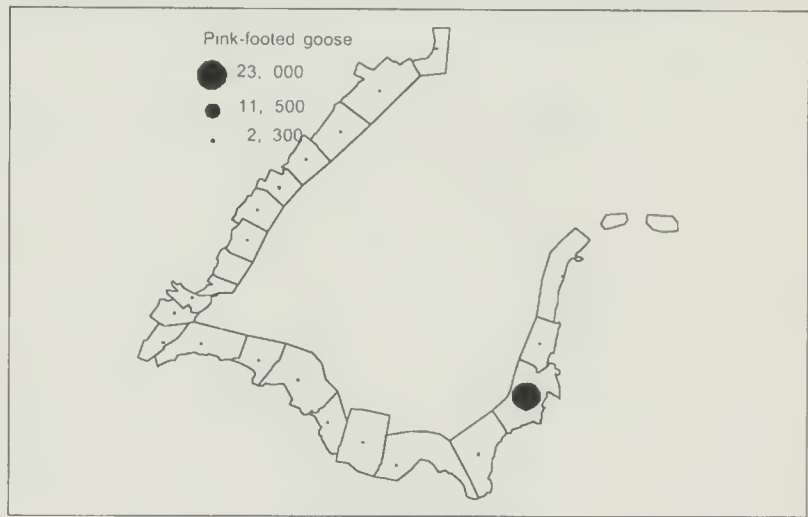


The Wash is important at all times of year. Internationally important populations occur in all months except June.

Figure 2: all waterfowl, mean of monthly counts, 1991-6



Pink-footed Geese, Oystercatcher and Knot all roost at Snettisham in particularly big numbers and largely account for the distribution below.



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### Species accounts

All species which occur in internationally and nationally important numbers are dealt with in this section. A few others, of a more local interest, are also covered. The accounts are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to give a reasonable sketch of each species' status and distribution.

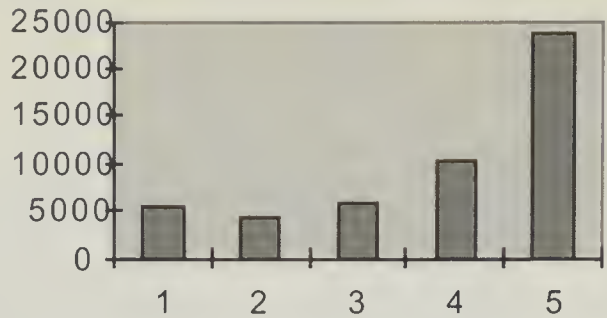
#### Pink-footed Goose

*Winter visitor; breeds in Iceland and Greenland; small numbers from Svalbard breeding population*

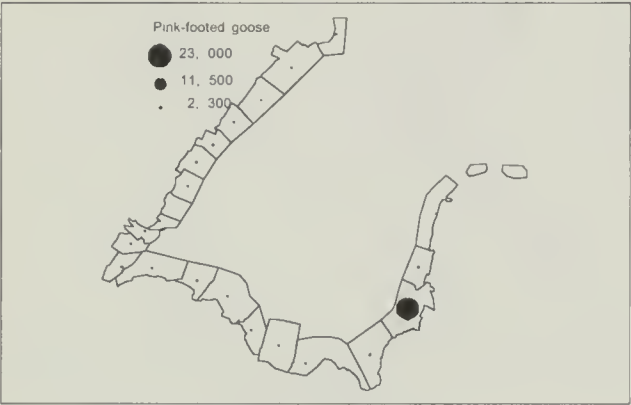
*Int: 2250 Nat: 2250*

A dramatic increase in the past ten years or so, with a peak count of 45,925 in January 1994. The build up of numbers appeared to begin with cold weather movements from Lancashire and Scotland, but since 1995 they have been arriving earlier in the winter and this now seems to be an established wintering pattern. The principle food is the tops of harvested sugar beet, with grassland (including saltmarsh) being used increasingly from January.

Figure 3: Pink-footed Goose, five-year mean of peak winter counts

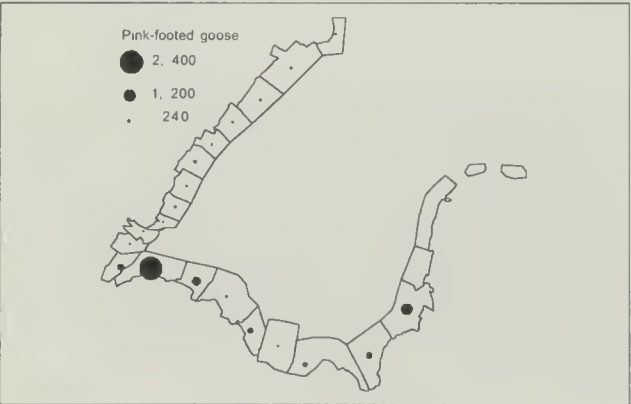


Almost all of the dots below represent geese which have moved out from their roost at Snettisham and subsequently been seen on WeBS counts. Since 1996 there has been an encouraging spread into Lincolnshire, notably on sugar beet set-aside and including the formation of local roosts. Up to 4000 have been noted at Welland and Wainfleet. The Wash birds form part of a wider, principally Norfolk, population. The other main roosts are at Scolt Head Island and Warham Sands, Wells. There is regular interchange between all three sites, each of which provides roosting opportunities which are relatively disturbance-frec.



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Pink-foot distribution was quite different in the past, although numbers were lower. The map below shows the winter mean of peak counts for 1969 to 1975 and illustrates the situation some 25 years ago, albeit during a period of decline from previous years. Lincolnshire was much more of a stronghold than it is now, particularly at Welland and Holbeach.



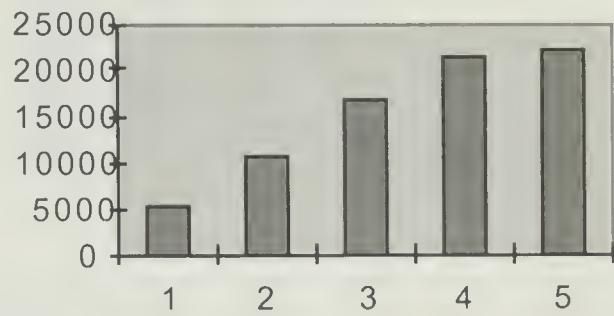
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**Dark-bellied Brent Goose**  
*Winter visitor; breeds in Siberia*

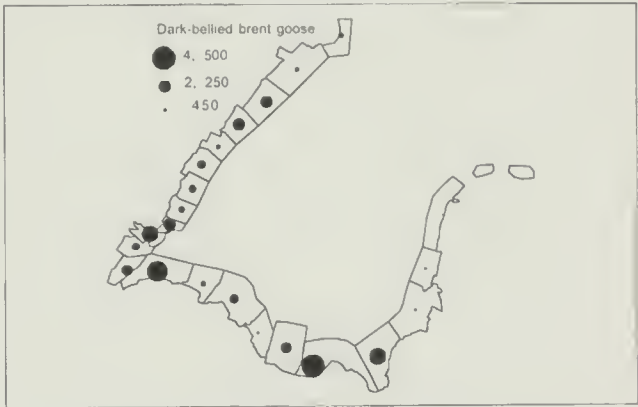
*Int: 3000      Nat: 1000*

The Wash is the most important site in the UK for this species and the population having approximately quadrupled in the last 25 years, now appears to be stable. The original food source of eel grass has disappeared and brents feed mostly on saltmarsh and, unfortunately, winter wheat although rather less frequently than was the case. The Wash has the largest unbroken block of saltmarsh in the British Isles. Recent increases in summer cattle grazing should help to keep this species on the right side of the sea defences.

Figure 4: Dark-bellied Brent Goose. five-year mean of peak winter counts

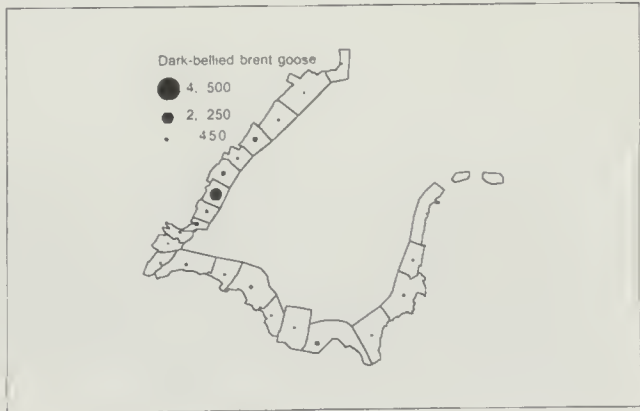


The saltmarshes of Lincolnshire are the strongholds.



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The distribution during the winters of 1971/2 to 1975/6 (mean of peak winter counts) indicates that the western Wash, particularly around Butterwick, was a core area at that time.



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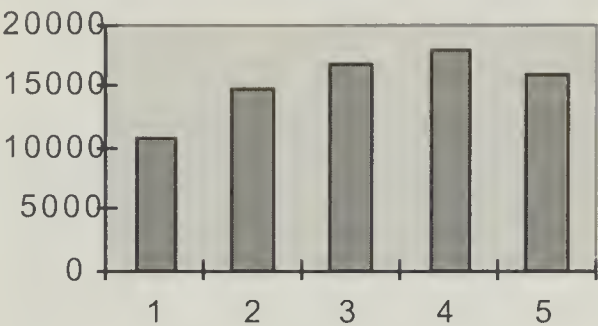
**Shelduck**

*Winter visitor; breeds, post-breeding moult flocks in south and south-east Wash*

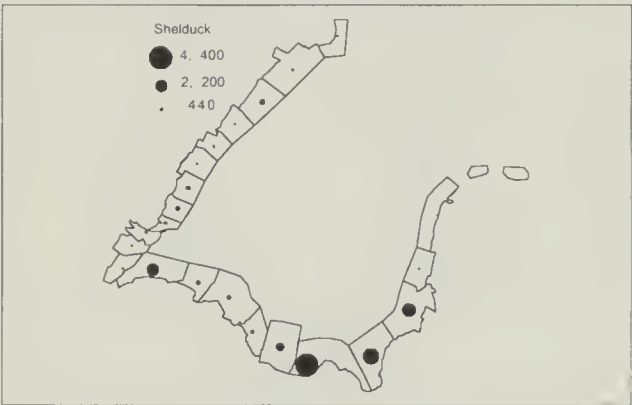
*Int: 3000                      Nat: 750*

The Wash is by far the best site in the UK for Shelduck. Steady increase during the first 20 years, with numbers slightly declining since about 1990.

*Figure 5: Shelduck, five-year mean of peak winter counts*



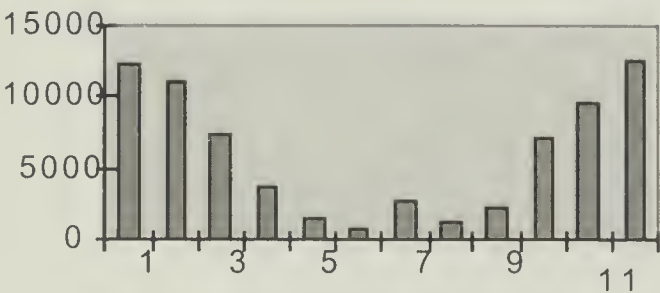
The largest concentrations are in the inner Wash, especially near the mouths of the rivers Welland, Nene, and Great Ouse. The exposed flanks of the Wash tend towards a sandier substrate, which is less favourable to feeding Shelduck.



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The seasonal pattern shows the importance of the Wash as a wintering site. Most birds leave during the late summer to moult on the continent, but others remain in, or move to, the Wash to moult.

*Figure 6: Shelduck, mean of monthly counts, 1991-6*



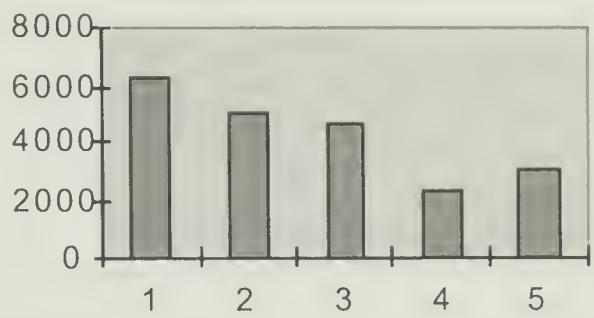
Wigeon

Winter visitor

Int: 12,500      Nat: 2800

Numbers have declined, in contrast to a national increase in recent years. It is likely that a reduction in saltmarsh grazing and improved management elsewhere, notably at the Ouse and Nene Washes, have been important factors. Autumn stubbles are used before birds move on.

Figure 7: Wigeon, five-year mean of peak winter counts



Wainfleet and the Gibraltar Point and Snettisham reserves are the important areas for Wigeon in recent years.



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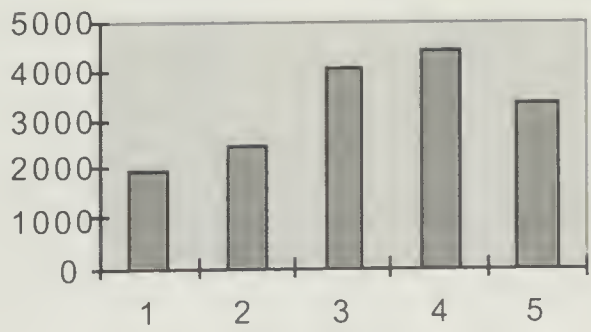
Mallard

Winter visitor; breeds

Int: 20,000      Nat: 5000

Recent decline, mirroring the national trend, following large increases. The effects of changes in the practice of releasing birds into the wild are not fully understood.

Figure 8: Mallard, five-year mean of peak winter counts





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## Pintail

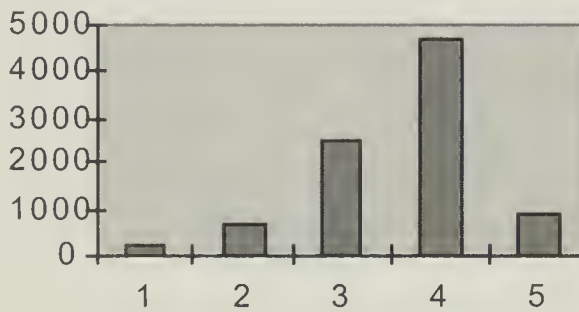
*Winter visitor*

*Int: 600*

*Nat: 280*

There have been dramatic changes in the fortunes of this species. Numbers peaked at about 8000 in the late 1980s, having risen from almost none twenty years earlier. This has been followed by a rapid decline. An increase in numbers at the Ouse and Nene Washes does not account fully for the loss. It seems likely that a decline in cockles and tellins (*Macoma*) is implicated, as Pintail were principally intertidal feeders here.

Figure 9: Pintail, five-year mean of peak winter counts



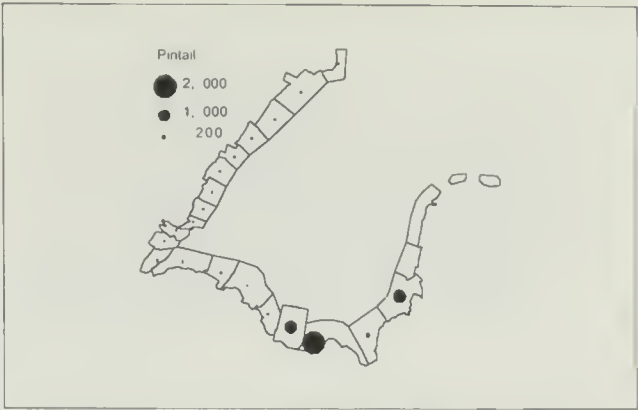
Concentrated almost entirely just to the east of the river Nene.



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The mean of peak winter counts, 1981 to 1989, shows a wider distribution which was nonetheless restricted to that part of the Wash between the Nene and Snettisham. Pintail distribution has contracted westwards.



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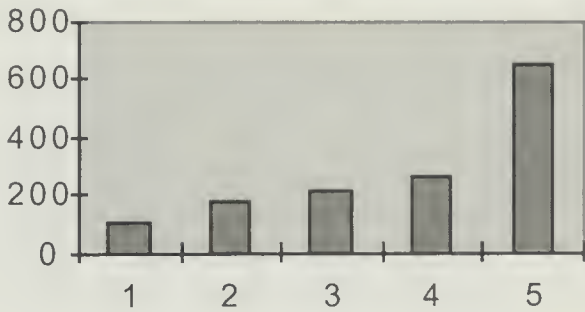
**Eider**

*Winter visitor*

*Int: 20,000      Nat: 750*

A recent increase. Eiders are presumably feeding on sub-littoral shellfish, crabs and starfish. A regular flock of 6-800 is currently present off the Outer Trail Bund (an artificial island in the Terrington, Lines count sector) and remains into the early summer at least - a future breeding bird? This flock may well be missed during WeBS counts.

Figure 10: Eider, five-year mean of peak winter counts



Eiders are not uniformly distributed, presumably reflecting the availability of food.



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**Common scoter**

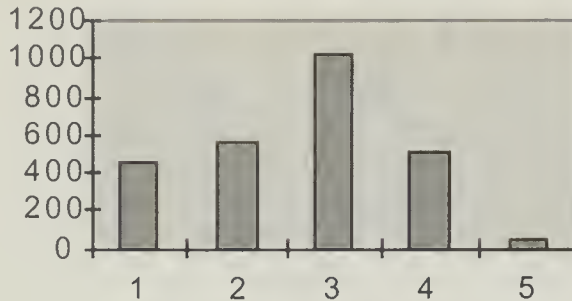
*Winter and autumn visitor*

*Int: 16,000*

*Nat: 350*

Significant decline from a high peak in the late 1970s.

*Figure 11: Common Scoter, five-year mean of peak winter counts*



**Oystercatcher**

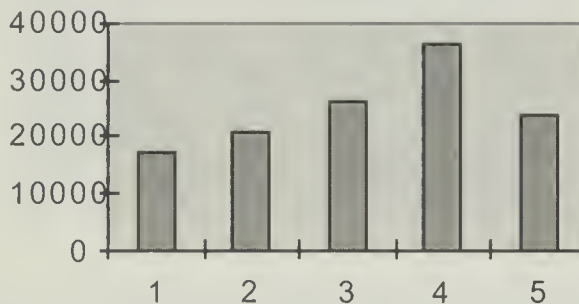
*Winter visitor, breeds. Mostly breeds in Norway; much smaller numbers from Iceland, Faeroes, Holland, Belgium and Shetland*

*Int: 9000*

*Nat: 3600*

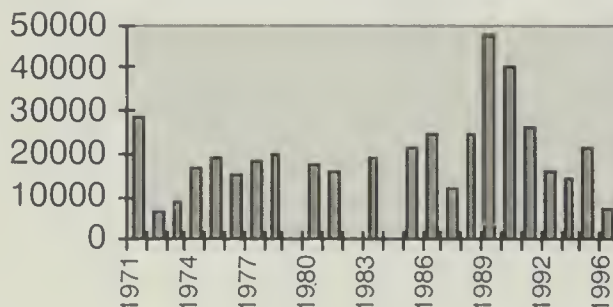
Sustained increase until 1989, followed by a marked decline to less than 8000 in January 1996. Oystercatcher populations seem to be closely linked with the shellfishery in the Wash. Cockles and mussels are in a sustained decline, for reasons which are not clearly understood. However, it seems likely that most of the vanished Oystercatchers are probably dead as there is little evidence from ringing recoveries of movements elsewhere. The decline in the early 1990s was exemplified by high mortality and a switch by many birds away from the estuary to local grassland.

*Figure 12: Oystercatcher, five-year mean of peak winter counts*



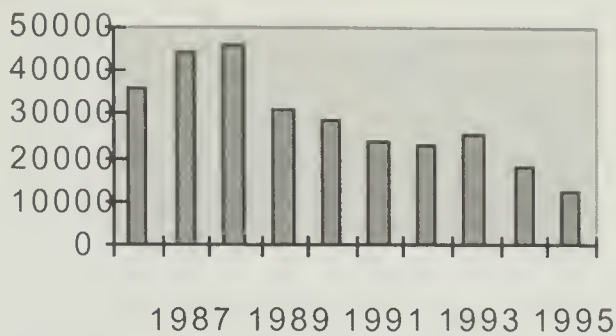
The finer detail of January counts shows a pattern which broadly follows cockle landings in the Wash.

*Figure 13: Oystercatcher, January counts, 1971-96*

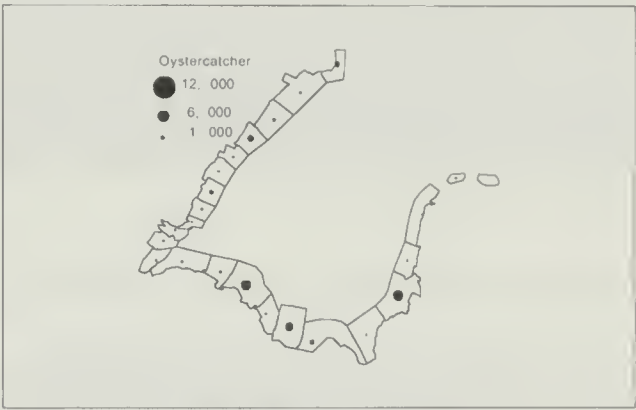


The autumn peak counts (August to October) show a similar decline.

Figure 14: Oystercatcher, autumn peak count, 1987-96

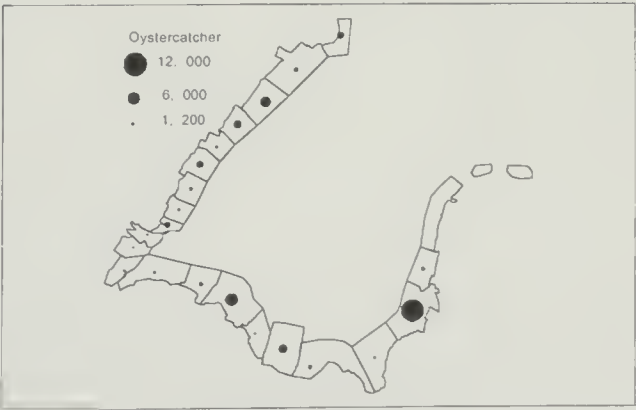


Oystercatchers tend to congregate in favoured large roost sites, which draw birds in from quite large distances. Smaller roosts form between these sites.



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The winter distribution in the period 1986/7 to 1990/1, when the population was at its peak, is broadly similar to the recent period (above). However, there does appear to have been a relative loss on the west side of the Wash, particularly at the formerly important Friskney roost.



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**Avocet**

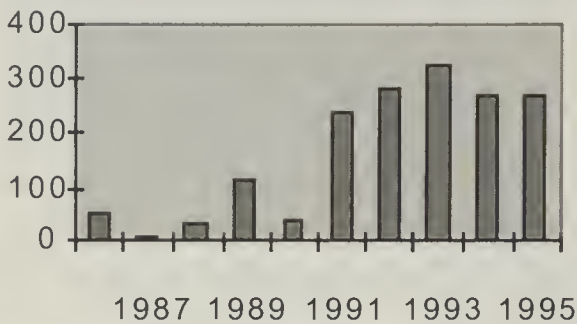
*Passage migrant; breeds in small numbers*

*Int: 700*

*Nat: 50*

Avocets return to the Wash in February. Peak numbers occur in the autumn.. Many of these birds appear to be from the north Norfolk coast breeding population. Numbers present in the spring are also increasing in the Wash.

Figure 15: Avocet, peak autumn counts (July to September), 1987-96



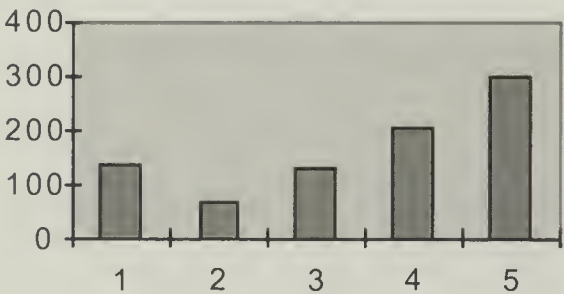
**Ringed Plover**

*Passage migrant, breeds, winters in small numbers. Wintering population from eastern North Sea coast. Breeding birds winter in south-west Britain, France and Spain. Migrants mainly from Iceland/Greenland breeding grounds.*

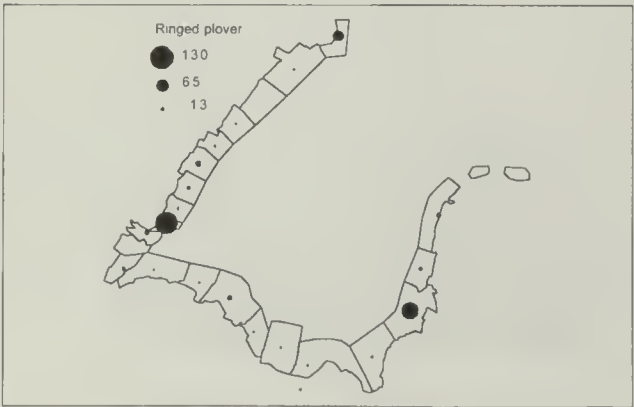
*Int: 500 Nat: 290 (300 passage)*

Steady increase in the small wintering population.

Figure 16: Ringed Plover, five-year mean of peak winter counts



Gibraltar Point, the Witham and Snettisham are the main sites. These records refer mostly to early returning breeders in February - there are no Ringed Plovers at Snettisham, for example, in December and January.





Top: Juvenile Rose-coloured Starling, Blakeney, October (*D. Nye*).

Bottom: Adult Rose-coloured Starling, Beeston Regis, November/December (*I. Leach*). The county total stands at thirty.







This Desert Wheatear remained at Snettisham six days from December 7th (*R. Chittenden*).

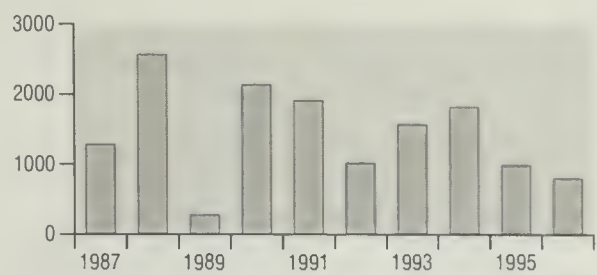
Lower: Two Collared Pratincoles appeared including this first-year bird at Felbrigg in October (*B. W. J.*





The autumn passage is variable, but it is the time of peak numbers in the Wash.

Figure 17: Ringed Plover, peak autumn counts (July to September), 1987-96



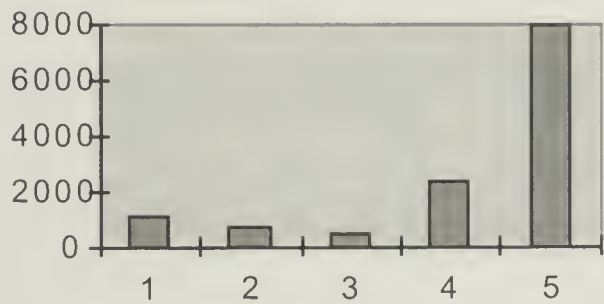
Golden Plover

Winter visitor and passage migrant; origins unclear but likely to be mainly Scandinavia and north-west Russia

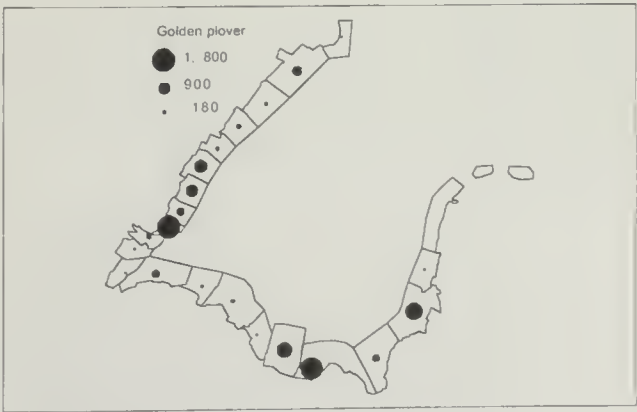
Int: 18,000 Nat: 2500

A huge increase in recent years. This is very similar to the pattern for Lapwing and might suggest a shared origin. Golden Plover have not historically fed in the Wash itself, preferring bordering fields whilst roosting on the estuary, but in recent years large numbers have been feeding on the mudflats during the autumn.

Figure 18: Golden Plover, five-year mean of peak winter counts



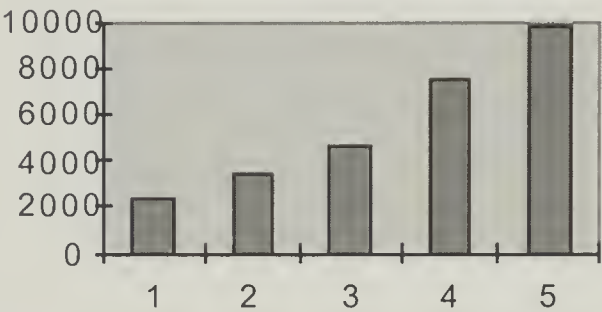
The entire Wash is surrounded by apparently suitable farmland, so the reasons for the less than uniform distribution are not clear, but might reflect intertidal feeding.



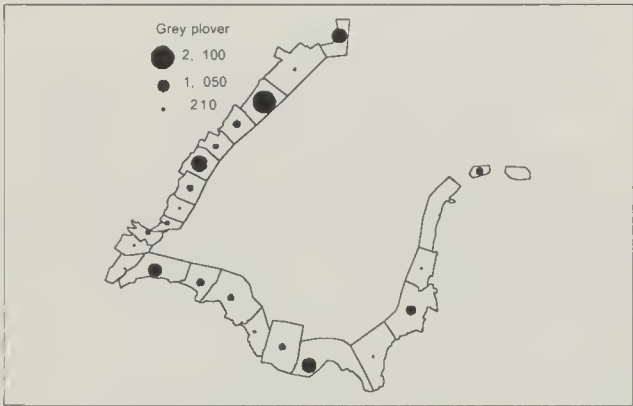
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**Grey Plover**  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant; birds from Siberian population adopt two strategies - one moults and winters on the Wash, while others stage here and move on, many to Africa, to moult and winter*  
**Int: 1500      Nat: 430**  
 A sustained, almost linear, increase over the last 25 years, mirroring the national wintering population. Grey Plovers have not been affected by the recent demise of the shellfish stocks, as their diet consists largely of worms and crustaceans.

Figure 19: Grey Plover, five-year mean of peak winter counts



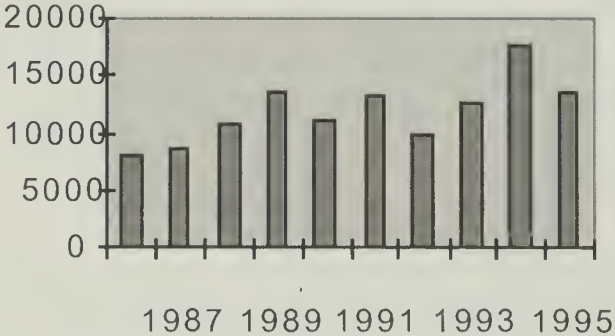
Grey Plover’s preference for sandier substrates for feeding may be reflected in the westerly distribution of their roost sites.



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Spring passage involves numbers which exceed that of the wintering population. May is the peak month in the whole year.

Figure 20: Grey Plover, peak spring counts (March to May), 1987-96



**Lapwing**

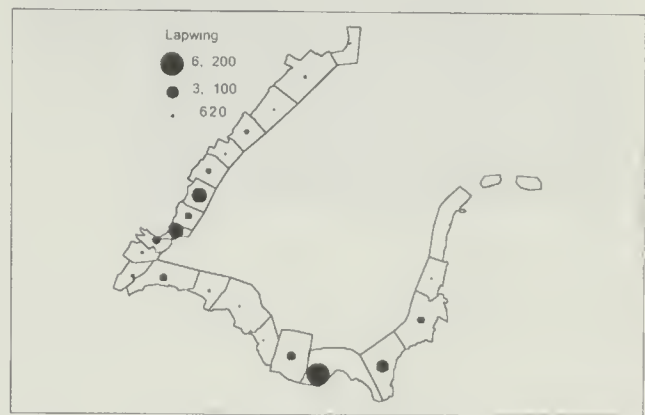
*Winter visitor and passage migrant, breeds in small numbers*

*Int: 20,000      Nat: 20,000*

A very large increase in recent years. See Golden Plover.

*Figure 21: Lapwing, five-year mean of peak winter counts*

The distribution is almost identical to that of Golden Plover, although intertidal feeding has not been noted.



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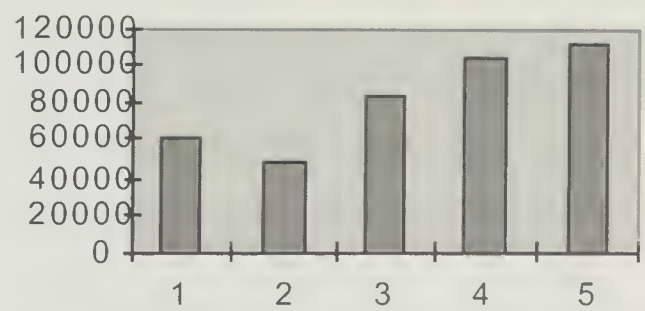
**Knot**

*Winter visitor and passage migrant; majority of birds breed in Greenland and north-east Canada; a small number from Siberian breeding grounds occasionally occur in spring and autumn*

*Int: 3 500      Nat: 2 900*

The Wash is the most important estuary for Knot in the British Isles. Knot are highly mobile and there are well established movements between the Wash and the Wadden Sea, on the eastern seaboard of the North Sea.

*Figure 22: Knot, five-year mean of peak winter counts*

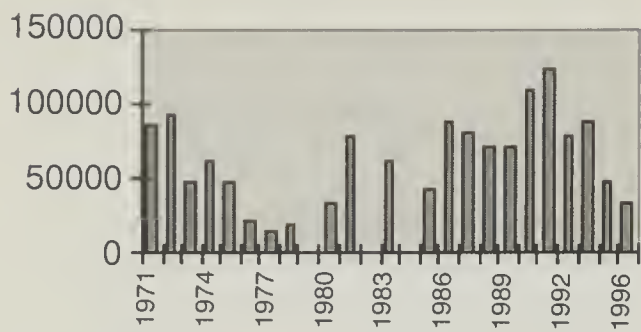


The above graph of five-year peak winter mean counts shows what appears to be a sustained increase in numbers. The more detailed graph of January counts below, however, clearly shows a large decline since 1991. A single roost at Snettisham comprised 120,000 birds in November 1990. This was associated with a peak in wintering numbers, when many birds moved to the Wash from the Wadden Sea at a time of poor cockle stocks there. The decrease since 1991 has coincided with a sustained decline of cockles in the Wash, while at the same

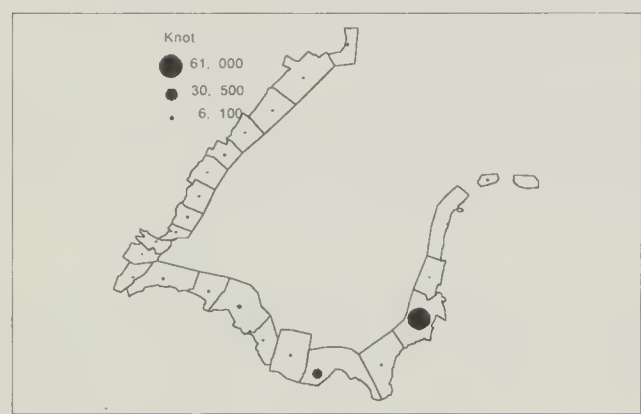


time there has been some recovery in the Wadden Sea. The changes in January numbers are very similar to those shown by Oystercatcher, not least in the high peaks around 1990.

Figure 23: Knot, January counts, 1971-96



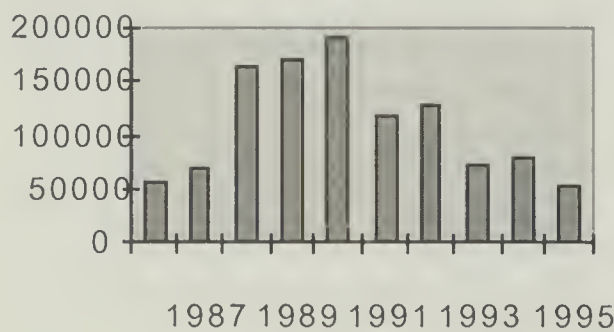
The overwhelming majority of Knot roost at Snettisham.



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Large numbers of Knot arrive in the Wash in July and August. They moult; some remain for the winter, while others move on to winter on other British and west European estuaries. A remarkable feature of September and October is the exodus of Knot from the Wash to the north Norfolk coast to roost at high tide. The decline in the autumn passage since 1991 mirrors that of the wintering population and probably indicates that birds are returning directly to the Wadden Sea to moult and winter.

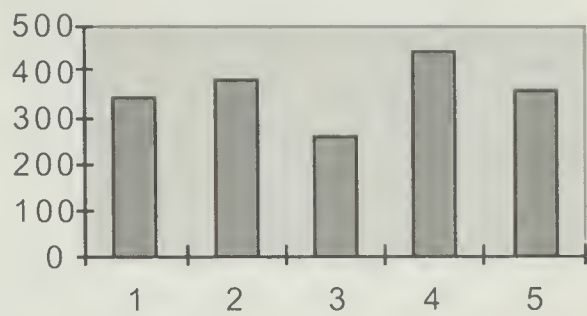
Figure 24: Knot, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



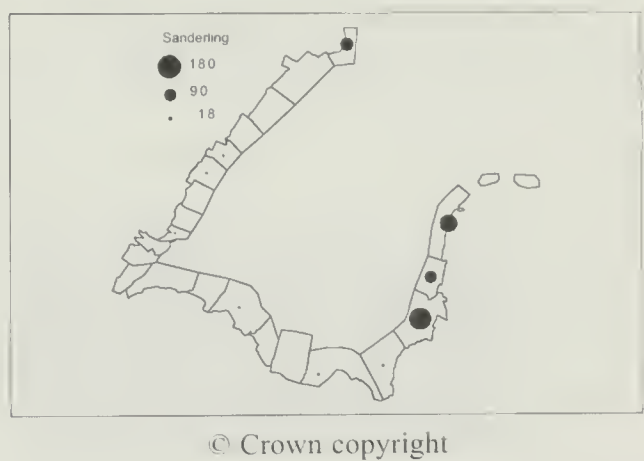
**Sanderling**  
*Passage migrant; winter visitor in small numbers; origins probably in both Siberian and Greenland populations, but actual breeding grounds are unknown. Siberian birds probably winter, whilst those from Greenland move on to Africa*  
*Int: 1000      Nat: 230 (300 passage)*

The wintering population has remained fairly stable.

Figure 25: Sanderling, five-year mean of peak winter counts

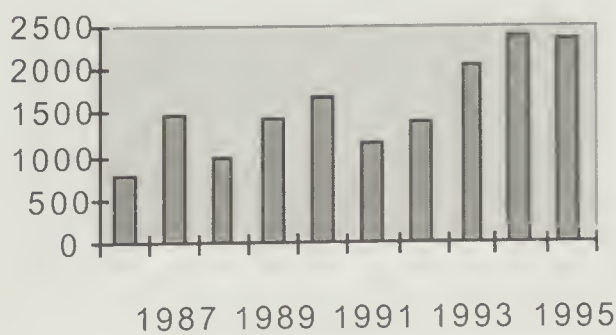


Winter Sanderling are rarely found away from the sandy beaches of the outer Wash.



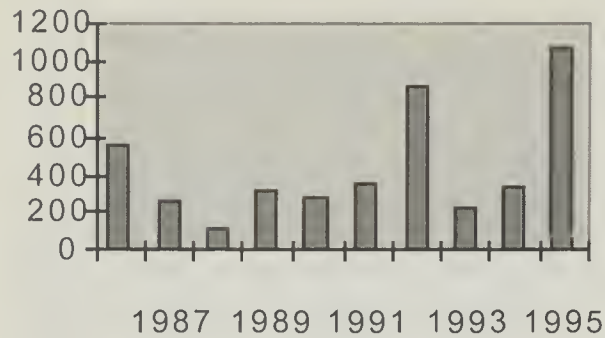
Autumn passage has increased in the last decade. The majority of these birds are presumably from the Greenland population. Changes in beach quality and profile brought about by a major beach nourishment scheme between Snettisham and Hunstanton may be a factor in holding birds for longer, resulting in higher counts.

Figure 26: Sanderling, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



Two recent high peaks of counts during the spring passage.

Figure 27: Sanderling, peak spring counts (March to May), 1987-96



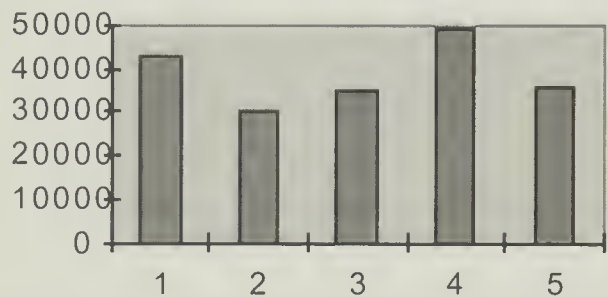
Dunlin

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Three populations – one from Iceland and Britain east to the Baltic (*schinzii*), one from northern Scandinavia and north-west Russia (*alpina*) and one from Greenland (*arctica*); *schinzii* birds, together with small numbers of *arctica* occur in small numbers in spring. Larger numbers pass through on autumn migration to wintering areas in west Africa; *alpina* Dunlin occur on passage, moult on the Wash in the autumn, many remaining for the winter.

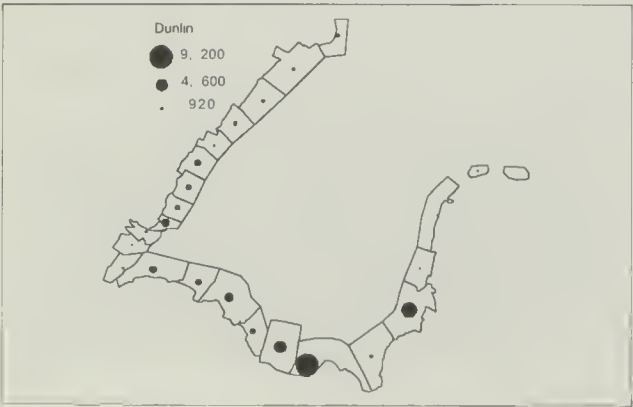
Int: 8200 (*schinzii*), 14,000 (*alpina*) Nat: 5300 (*alpina*)

A recent decline in the wintering population from a high peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Numbers now broadly similar to those of 25 years ago.

Figure 28: Dunlin, five-year mean of peak winter counts



The majority of birds favour the inner reaches of the Wash. There is little or no movement of birds between the western and eastern Wash.





**Black-tailed Godwit**

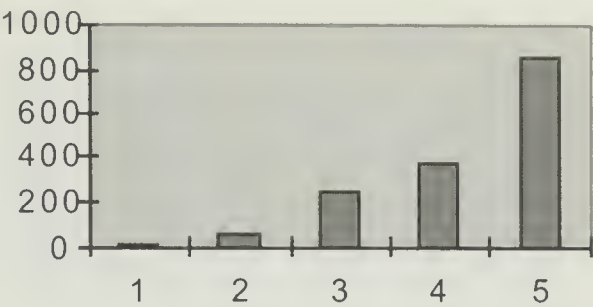
*Winter visitor and passage migrant, origin Iceland*

*Int: 700*

*Nat: 70*

The winter population has increased markedly, especially during the last five years or so. There has been a similar increase nationally and on other East Anglian estuaries.

*Figure 29: Black-tailed Godwit, five-year mean of peak winter counts*



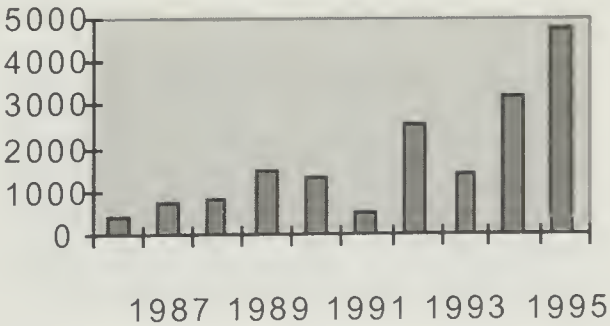
Welland is the stronghold, with other concentrations near the rivers Great Ouse and Witham. Black-tailed Godwits prefer muddy substrates for feeding and this distribution dovetails neatly with that of Bar-tailed Godwit which feeds by preference on the sandier flats.



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There has been a dramatic increase in autumn passage numbers. This demonstrates the current importance of the Wash as a moulting site in late summer. The autumn distribution is similar to that in winter, except for substantial numbers at Terrington.

*Figure 30: Black-tailed Godwit, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96*



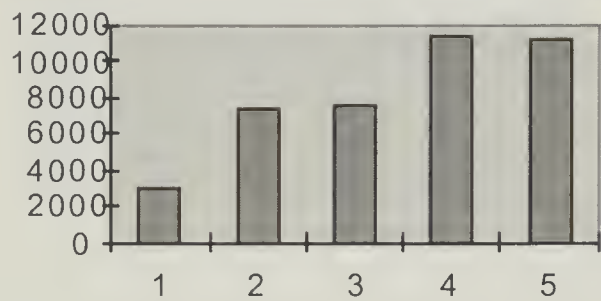
**Bar-tailed Godwit**

*Winter visitor and passage migrant. Origin is Siberia, perhaps two strategies; one moulting on the Wash in autumn and wintering in Africa; another remaining or wintering elsewhere in northern Europe*

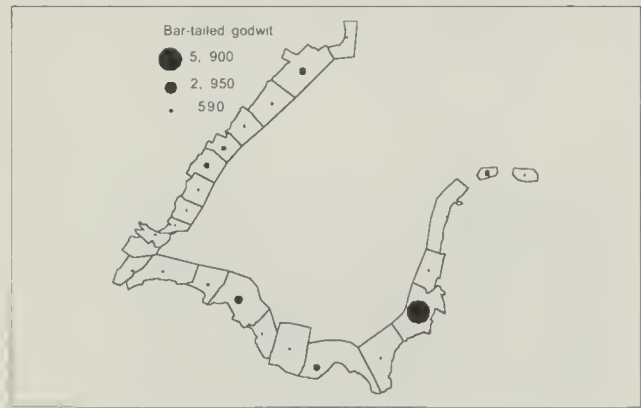
*Int: 1000 Nat: 530*

A large increase in the 25 years, perhaps now stable. Winter numbers are often bolstered by cold weather movements from Europe. A few hundred usually present in the summer.

Figure 31: Bar-tailed Godwit, five-year mean of peak winter counts



Snettisham holds the largest numbers, drawing in most of the birds which feed in the eastern Wash. The more sheltered, muddy reaches of the Wash are largely avoided. Other concentrations are at Wainfleet, Butterwick, Benington, Dawsmere and Terrington.



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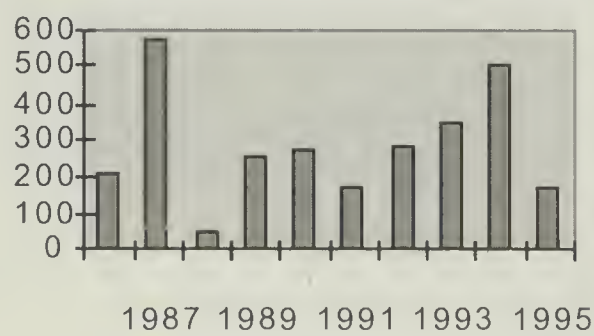
**Whimbrel**

*Passage migrant, especially in the autumn; origin northern Isles and Iceland*

*Nat: 50 (passage)*

Numbers are variable in the autumn, but the larger concentrations are found in Lincolnshire.

Figure 32: Whimbrel, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



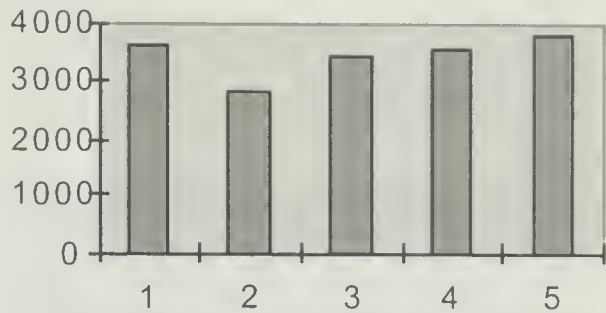
**Curlew**

*Winter visitor and passage migrant; origin is mostly Finland and Sweden, smaller numbers from Russia*

*Int: 3500      Nat: 1200*

Remarkably stable winter population over the 25 years. WeBS counts probably do not accurately assess the true numbers using the Wash as dawn flights inland may frequently be missed. Peak numbers occur during autumn passage, particularly in September.

Figure 33: Curlew, five-year mean of peak winter counts



Concentrations in the south and south-east Wash, with relatively few on its western side.



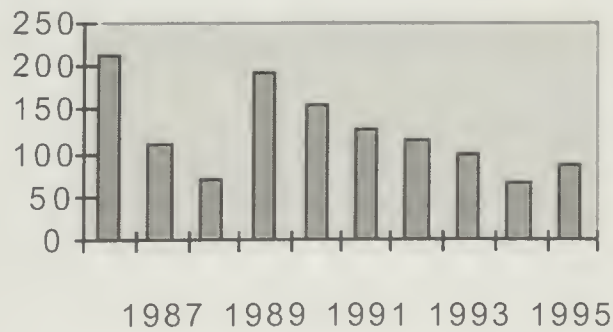
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**Spotted Redshank**

*Passage migrant, particularly in autumn; origin probably Scandinavia, wintering in southern Europe or Africa*

Declining autumn passage, with the largest concentrations at Snettisham. Spring numbers usually less than 30.

Figure 34: Spotted Redshank, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



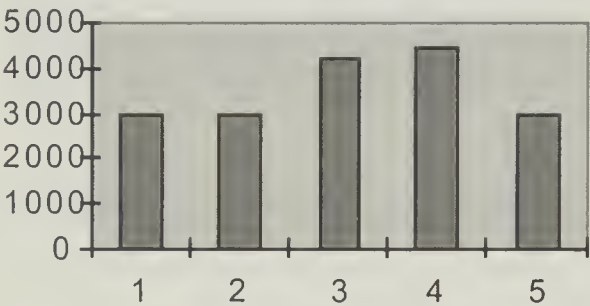


**Redshank**

*Winter visitor, passage migrant; breeds. Two populations - one breeds in Britain, the other in Iceland; both moult and winter on the Wash, some moult and winter in south-west Europe* *Int: 1500      Nat: 1100*

Increasing winter population in the first 20 years, declining since 1991. There was a heavy winter mortality in 1991, when perhaps 80% of the Wash's Redshank died during severe weather. There has been a slow recovery since that time. Numbers breeding in the Wash appeared also to be affected. The saltmarshes of the Wash support a breeding population at some of the highest densities in the British Isles - up 100 pairs per square kilometre. This species should benefit from increased and improved summer grazing by cattle.

Figure 35: Redshank, five-year mean of peak winter counts



A rather even distribution with the exception of Terrington, Norfolk. This site seems to have become increasingly important for roosting Redshank, possibly owing to cattle grazing producing suitable short sward on relatively high saltmarsh. The roost at Snettisham has declined dramatically, with perhaps some birds transferring to Terrington.



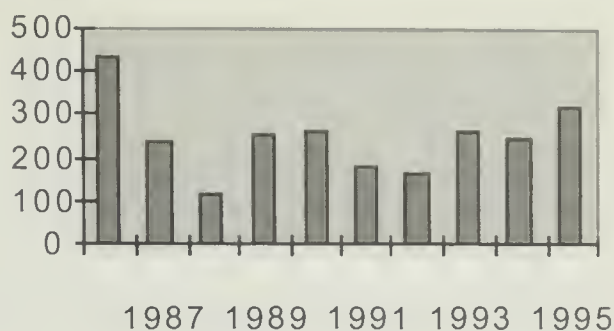
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**Greenshank**

*Passage migrant, particularly in autumn; origins unknown, probably winters southern Europe and Africa*

Autumn passage appears to be fairly stable.

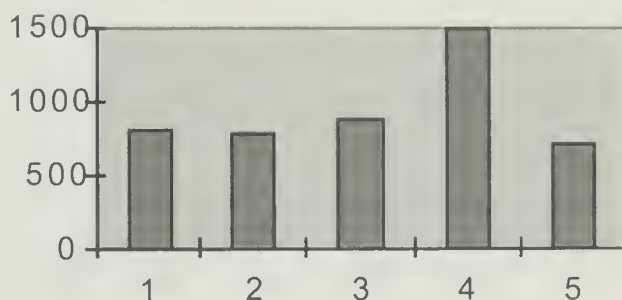
Figure 36: Greenshank, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



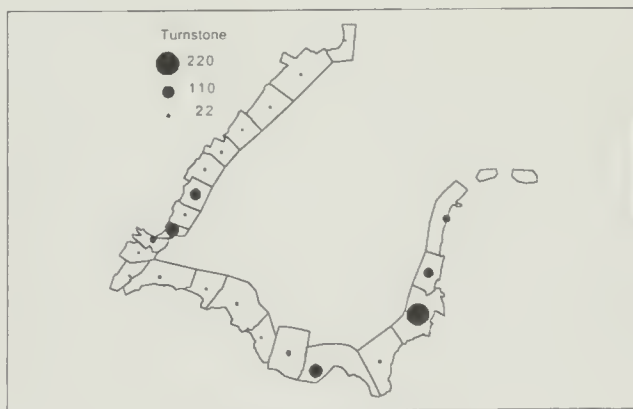
## Turnstone

*Winter visitor and passage migrant; two populations - one breeds mainly in Finland, passes through in the autumn and winters in west Africa; the other breeds in Greenland and north-west Canada, moults and winters on the Wash* Int: 700 Nat: 640  
A high peak in the late 1980s with a subsequent decline.

Figure 37: Turnstone, five-year mean of peak winter counts



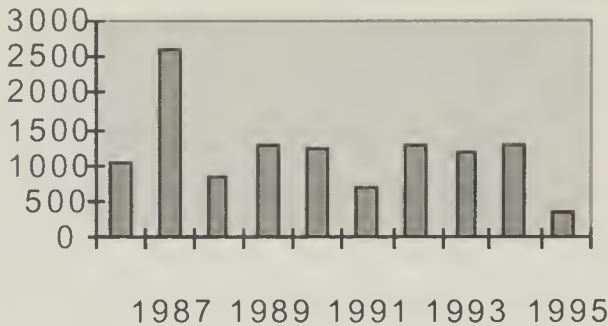
Snettisham to Hunstanton beaches are important for this species, as would be expected. Other concentrations perhaps reflect the importance of dockland sites at Sutton Bridge and Boston.



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Autumn passage variable, but perhaps declining in recent years.

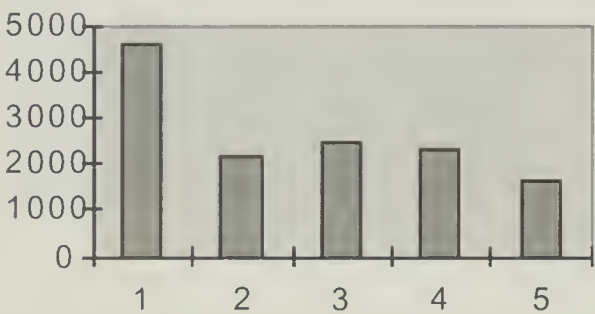
Figure 38: Turnstone, peak autumn counts (July to October), 1987-96



**Twite**  
*Winter visitor*

A passerine for which the British Isles are internationally significant, Twite have declined from large numbers in the early 1970s and continue to do so following an intervening partial recovery. Flocks of several thousand were not unusual 25 years ago, with the saltmarshes of Lincolnshire being particularly important.

Figure 39: Twite, five-year mean of peak winter counts



**Acknowledgements**

It is my great pleasure, with James Cadbury, to organize WeBS counts in the Wash. This account would not have been possible without the veritable army of counters who have, over the years, ventured out in all weathers and who have loved every minute of it! They are far too numerous to mention individually, but they are magnificent and I thank them wholeheartedly. I am grateful to the WeBS partnership (BTO, WWT, JNCC and RSPB) for allowing me the use of their data. Thanks are due also to Keith Blomerley, who devised the Estuary database and to Dave Bingham, John Middleton, Richard Woodgate and Andrew Beeson who slaved for long hours entering and checking the data. English Nature provided the MapInfo package and found someone to train me in how to use it. Ordnance Survey have allowed the use of their maps, under licence, for which I am grateful.

I would finally like to thank Nigel Clark, Peter Cranswick and Ray Waters for their valuable comments on an earlier draft.

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# Norfolk Mammal Report – 1997

## Editorial

Following the editorial last year, I am pleased to report that the number of contributors supplying records for 1996 more than doubled to 25. A terrific number of records were supplied by a number of contributors, including 489 by Elizabeth Smallwood and 444 by Pam and George Taylor. Others supplying over 100 included Ian and Frances Keymer, Anne Brewster, Jean Gaffney and the 'flattened fauna' survey (see the 1995 report). The total number of records was an impressive 1714. Even though a slightly lower total of 1667 was achieved in 1997, this was in spite of the loss (I hope temporary) of the two chief contributors of 1996. However, a remarkable effort was made by Mr G Morris who recorded 345 road casualties (matching my own flattened fauna total of 383). Jean Gaffney supplied 225 records, with others in the '100 club' including Mrs R Hadman and Wildlife Newslines organised by Robin Chittenden. What was also particularly pleasing was the increase in the number of contributors to 68. Quite a few of these were (primarily) bird-watchers, which has markedly improved the number and diversity of cetacean records. As a result of the impressive level of activity, I am pleased to include records for both 1996 and 1997 in the classified list.

I am also grateful to those people who have supplied articles for inclusion into the report this year. These include summaries of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's water vole and otter surveys by Rob Yaxley, and the gathering of information on Chinese Water Deer at the Ted Ellis Nature Reserve at Surlingham by Alan Scowen and David Nobbs. Hopefully, more and more people will want to contribute their experiences and I would be happy to advise on methods of gathering, handling and presenting information.

A further survey period of the National Hare Survey is planned between October 14th 1998 - January 14th 1999. I know there were some contributors to the first phase as 51 km squares were filled in for Norfolk! Obviously, it would be great if more contributions can be made next time. Contact Ruth Temple at D54, Biological Sciences, University of Bristol, Woodlands Road, Bristol, BS8 1UG. It is planned to include a summary of the survey in a future issue of this report. In addition, for those who want further details of the National Yellow-necked mouse survey, contact Steve Wickenden at Gracie Cottage, 27 West Street, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9DT (01263 514824).

Finally, let's hope we can continue to increase the number of records towards the publication of Wildlife 2000. Providing a good coverage of records is achieved, the aim for this publication is to supplement the text with distribution maps of most species. All records now received are being placed into a database allowing easy handling and presentation of information in the future. Many thanks are due to Tika Ram Adhikari (UEA) and Andy Hindes (ECON) for undertaking this task for 1996 and 1997. With an anticipated increase in the number of records, I will be assisted in the future by Steve Wickenden, who will be attempting to raise the profile of mammals in Norfolk to new heights. With respect to future records, it will be easier if these are supplied on the Wildlife 2000 recording forms. Although as space is limited on these, more detailed observations can be supplied on separate sheets. Contact me if you require forms. Also, especially for our major contributors, if records can be sent in at regular intervals (ie a maximum of monthly) throughout the year, this will help spread the workload. Let's make 1998 another record year!

Dr Martin Perrow, ECON, School of Biological Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ Tel: 01603 592189 Fax: 01603 592250 e-mail m.perrow@uea.ac.uk.

# Classified List

The following contains all the mammal species for which records (individuals or groups) were received for 1996 and 1997. Additional details on selected aspects of distribution, status, behaviour and ecology of particular interest are supplied. This is accompanied by the initials of the observer(s) in parentheses.

## INSECTIVORA

### Hedgehog

*Erinaceus europaeus*

1996 - 206 records, 1997 - 317 records. The bulk of records were again of road casualties or visitors to gardens. In one of the latter, food was taken between April 16th and Nov 2nd in 1996 and over a slightly more extended period in 1997 (between April 13th to Nov 25th) (JEG). Emergence was particularly early in 1996 with one very small individual (218 g) taken in (EAS). Other early records include one on 14th Jan (RH) and one dead on the road on 16th Jan (IFK/JK). In 1997 the earliest was a road victim on Feb 8th (JEG). Otherwise not seen alive until Mar 31st (DLC). Hibernation was late in both 1996 and 1997 with the last live sighting on Dec 4th and the last casualty on 28th Dec (MRP) 1996, and 3 in Dec (JEG, IGJ/RJ, MRP) to the 17th in 1997. All had been killed on the road. Disease or starvation appeared to account for two young in one family group recorded (AB).

### Mole

*Talpa europaea*

1996 - 67 records, 1997 - 19 records. First fresh molehills of the year in 1996 were on 7th Jan (PT). Fresh molehills were recorded in snow late in the same year (28th Dec) (PT). Most records of actual moles refer to individuals, rather surprisingly, dead on the road. At least two (BJD, MAB) have been seen crossing the road, one of which showed a surprising turn of speed (BJD). Moles also appear to be relatively regular victims of cats (PT, MAB). There have also been two records of golden moles received. One also a victim of a cat at Westfield in 1982 (DMM). The other was a buff-coloured individual found in 1996 (AIB). Interesting encounters of live moles in 1997 included one emerging from near river bank, which then stuck its head back down its hole and remained bottom up for a couple of minutes. A gentle tickle had no effect (CH). PL also recorded three small (60 mm) moles in a shallow depression (a former shell hole on the STANTA range) about 60 cm apart. These moved around the floor of the shallow pit, sniffing in the open or ferreting in or just below the moss layer for 30 minutes. Even when the observer stamped his feet and clapped his hands they continued their activities.

### Common shrew

*Sorex araneus*

1996 - 15 records, 1997 - 12 records. Apart from the usual records of dead individuals, a few seen alive (GT, JEG, DPL). Seen foraging in broad daylight in short rabbit grazed turf at Bergh Apton and along a footpath alongside the Yare at Rockland (DPL).

### Pygmy shrew

*Sorex minutus*

1996 - 5 records, 1997 - 6 records. Unusually two records in and around habitation. One crossing a lawn in Jun 1996 was caught and identified as a pregnant female (PT). One found dead in a greenhouse (DLC).

### **Water shrew**

*Neomys fodiens*

1996 - 4 records, 1997 - 7 records. A number of live records including one found under a boardwalk at Cley after flooding (22 Feb 1996) in the company of a water vole (GT). One ran zig-zagging across a path and sniffed one of the observer's shoes (EAS), whilst another was watched for 5 mins at Salthouse (BJD). Recorded in diet of barn owl from Briston barn 96 and 97 (MAB). In 1997, recorded away from wetland habitat in a sycamore wood at Cromer (IGJ) and on waste ground at Cockley Cley (JEG). Both individuals were dead.

## **CHIROPTERA**

### **Brandt's bat**

*Myotis brandtii*

1996/97 - one record. No details available (EC)

### **Natterer's bat**

*Myotis nattereri*

1996 - one record, 1997 - 3 records. At Honingham Lee house one was present at the end of 1996. The very severe weather into the New Year led to a record of 7 on Jan 19th (AB). The breeding roost at Waxham contained about 50-100 plus similar number of young in July/Aug (JGG). Also recorded at Lower Gresham in 1997 (AT).

### **Daubenton's bat**

*Myotis daubentonii*

1997 - 2 records. Regularly seen over the Wensum near Sparham pools (CS) and Martham Broad (CW).

### **Noctule**

*Nyctalus noctula*

1996 - one record, 1997 - 4 records. Recorded at Rockland Marsh RSPB (CR), Wayford Bridge (PJH), Sparham pools (CS), with a number (at least 50) reported hawking over west bank at Cley (AS/SH).

### **Leisler's bat**

*Nyctalus leisleri*

1997 - 2 records. Finally recorded in Norfolk! Three in bat boxes in Thetford (EDP) and two passes recorded in July at a bat detecting weekend (EDP). No further details available.

### **Pipistrelle**

*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

1996 - 38 records, 1997 - 21 records. Earliest and latest in 1996: 19th April 1996 and 18th Dec respectively (PT). Earliest in 1997, one at Rockland Marsh RSPB reserve on 13th April (CR). Not seen until June in the garden of one recorder at East Tuddenham (AB). Apart from singles, 3 over a garden in Reepham (RR), at least 10 over the same in Potter Heigham (PT/GT). Non-flying individuals included one clinging to wall in daylight (PD), 6 recorded in boxes at Holt (EDP 96) and 12 recorded in one box at Ranworth (PT/GT). An unfortunate individual was found dead between the double-glazing of window sashes in one home (RH).

### **Barbastelle**

*Barbastella barbastellus*

1996 - one record, 1997 - one record. The only known breeding site in the UK, containing a staggering 40 individuals was discovered in Norfolk in 1996 (JGG). This was made all the more remarkable by the fact that only 100 records have been made in Norfolk and Suffolk since 1859. The number of bats had risen to 50 by June 1997 (EDP).



**Brown long-eared bat***Plecotus auritus*

1996 - one record, 1997 - 2 records. Sixteen individuals were recorded in boxes at Holt in 1996 (EDP). In 1997, the only records were of dead individuals: one in a water tank against a house Bergh Apton in 1997 (DPL) (one was found dead on the road in the same vicinity in 1993), one dead in the road Salthouse Heath (BJD) and 2 dead on the floor of barn of the Bell PH at Wiveton (CBC). Both of the latter were in Oct.

**LAGOMORPHA****Rabbit***Oryctolagus cuniculus*

1996 - 252 records, 1997 - 382 records. Large groups recorded included 52 including two white individuals (EAS), 80+ Kelling east of Muckleburgh (PEB) and c500 around the periphery of Muckleburgh Hill (NO). A total of 336 were shot on one estate (MAB). Unusual encounters in 1997 included one which jumped off a roadside bank into the lap of a cyclist (BJD). Another also ran towards the same observer, which caused a pursuing stoat to break off the chase. One unfortunate recorder found half a baby rabbit in her bedroom (RH), presumably the victim of her cat. At Stalham the population of 25-30 of various sizes and colours (augmented by escapes/released animals) living in a field between the town and bypass, occasionally used as the site of a market, is reported to create problems by sitting under the cars on market day and refusing to come out (PJH). A ginger rabbit was reported at Saxthorpe (MAB).

**Hare***Lepus europaeus*

1996 - 259 records, 1997 - 195 records. The largest numbers recorded included 16 in one field in snow in Jan 1996 (EAS) and 90 in 3 fields at Syderstone in May of the same year (AIB). One experienced observer (JEG) notes an underlying decline in her records: 115 in 1996, 158 in 1995 and 183 in 1994. Large numbers may still be shot in the county (eg 100 in a single day in early Feb 1996 (JH) and up to 200 at Warham in Feb 1997 (AIB)). An interesting record was received in 1997 of a feeding hare which was confronted by a weasel quartering the long grass of a paddock. The hare was aware of the weasel's approach and rose on its hind legs with its ears laid back. Following a couple of feeble boxing motions, the weasel immediately moved off and the hare resumed feeding (DLC). A white hare was reported from Ten Mile Bank (see picture) (MR), whilst a blue-grey morph was seen at South Creak (AIB).

**RODENTIA****Red squirrel***Sciurus vulgaris*

1997 - one record. One seen just outside the exit from Felbrigg Hall on Dec 27th 1997. It was searching in the dirt along the centre of the road/track. The observer (with wife and mother-in-law) stopped the car and watched it for several minutes until it came right up to the front of the car about 2 metres away. It moved off into the hedge when the car was reversed to move out of its way (ID). Tempering the excitement a little, it has now come to light that Felbrigg has been the release site of captive-bred red squirrels (Ed).

**Grey squirrel***Sciurus carolinensis*

1996 - 160 records, 1997 - 108 records. The colonisation ability of the species was nicely shown by one animal swimming in Ranworth Broad, hauling itself out and running away (GT/PT). It is clear that gardens may provide sources of food in times of shortage in summer



Upper: An all-white Hare, Ten-mile Bank (*M. Rains*).

Lower: A county survey of Water Voles was undertaken by Norfolk Wildlife Trust (*C. R. Knights*).







Hare at harvest-time. Norfolk is the current national stronghold (*C. R. Knights*).



(prior to seed production) and winter. This may be utilised by animals on every day of the year (RH). Foods taken include plums in Aug (DIR/RMR) and fallen pears (4 individuals involved) in Oct (DLC). In April 1997, one was seen raiding a chaffinch nest, completely unfazed by the attacks of the parent birds (RH). At a bird table between 6-9 were seen at any one time by one observer between Nov-Dec (DLC). Bird-proof squirrel feeders may also be overcome as shown by one becoming trapped within a feeder, with another small enough to get in and out (RH). Squirrels in gardens are also likely to become very bold as illustrated by a young squirrel running over one recorder's foot. In the same garden, young squirrels were also observed playing peek-a-boo with a retreating cat, and an adult was seen chasing a magpie (RH).

### **Bank vole**

*Clethrionomys glareolus*

1996 - 33 records, 1997 - 8 records. Often recorded as cat-kills. For one cat, bank vole formed the dominant prey over an 8 month period (8 of 21) (RR). Live observations were commonest in gardens including around houses (regular visitor to patio - EAS) and outbuildings (PT). In one garden, up to 5 at a time were seen throughout the summer of 1997 around a woodpile, collecting sunflower seeds from under bird feeder, flowering ryegrass stems, clover leaves and ivy berries (DPL). Three young were also discovered in a flimsy nest of grass under plastic bird bath - all dashed off in different directions. Other interesting records include one regularly seen eating violet seeds (1-18 July 1997) (BJD) and another running in/out of an ivy covered tree stump biting off and eating ivy leaves (MJ).

### **Field vole**

*Microtus agrestis*

1996 - 56 records, 1997 - 5 records. In 1996, the bulk of records refer to victims of cats (eg 17 by one observer - PT). One such female vole contained 10 young in its uterus (IFK/JK). Odd live observations in 1997 included 4 in close proximity at Blickling (EAS). One also seen on road disorientated/shocked and possibly injured by passing verge cutter (DPL). A further vole was not so lucky, an apparent victim of grass-cutting machinery (EAS). Four young voles were found under a tin sheet in Nov 1997, whilst earlier in the year several nests, including one with young, were found at Heacham in potted strongly scented pelargoniums. None of the large range of other potted plants were selected (PRC).

### **Water vole**

*Arvicola terrestris*

1996 - 26 records, 1997 - 10 records. A marked decrease in the number of records submitted, perhaps indicative of a decline (see article-Ed). Live individuals included one at Cley under a section of boardwalk following the floods (Feb 1996) (GT). Five/six were regularly seen at Holkham Fresh marshes in Aug-Sept (AIB). Also recorded from Barton, south of Hickling, Irstead Street, south of Hickling, Ranworth, Barton (GT). In 1997, recorded from Glandford (BJD), Horning Hall (PJH), Lynford gravel pit (SW), Martham Broad (RS), Snettisham (FBJR/BR) and Whitlingham (PJH). A number (perhaps rather surprisingly) fell victim to cats, including at Corpusty, Mannington (MAB) and Weybourne (NO). At the latter, 5 young voles were taken by what is described, as a rather ancient cat, illustrating the vulnerability of this species to predation (see article-Ed.). On a positive note, these voles provided the first evidence of water voles at the site for over 10 years (NO).

### **Wood mouse**

*Apodemus sylvaticus*

1996 - 40 records, 1997 - 31 records. Apart from the usual victims of cats, one was also caught by a dog (PT). A further victim of an unknown predator was found decapitated in a

garden (MRP). Disturbance of underground nests whilst digging the garden was recorded on two occasions (DPL, GT), one of which ran quickly away after being dug up with a forkful of potatoes (GT). Mice were also seen eating sweet chestnuts and bird food on the lawn in the winter 1997 (PJH). In houses, mice were trapped in a porch (DLC) and in an attic (2) (K&GB).

### **Yellow-necked mouse**

*Apodemus flavicollis*

1996 - one record. Recorded at the usual Ditchingham site where a young adult was live trapped in the porch, after the recorder had been alerted by the appearance of acorns (DLC). Unfortunately, the species was not recorded in 1997, despite trapping effort. This revealed the presence of wood mice instead.

### **Harvest mouse**

*Micromys minutus*

1996 - 9 records, 1997 - 11 records. Virtually all records relate to nests. In 1996 recorded from Buxton Heath (GT), Corpusty (MAB), Hoveton Marshes (PJH), Irstead Street, Ranworth (GT), Saxthorpe (MAB) and Sutton High Fen (PJH). One dead one found at Heacham (PRC). In 1997, nests recorded from Corpusty and Saxthorpe particularly in cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) (MAB), Horning Hall marshes (containing young) (PJH), Lower Gresham (AT) and at Rockland (DPL). At the latter site one seen to climb a reed stem as a weasel passed by below it. The observer notes that the vegetation inhabited by mice at this site was subsequently flattened by Environment Agency machinery.

### **House mouse**

*Mus domesticus*

1996 - one record, 1997 - 6 records. Recorded at only 5 sites Bergh Apton (DPL), Bradwell (PJH), Lower Gresham (AT), Saxlingham Nethergate (MRP) and Sheringham (FJLF). At the latter, a total of 20 caught and released from an aviary. At Saxlingham, the editor was embarrassed by being unable to catch an unwelcome lodger in a variety of live traps over a period of several weeks. The animal being finally caught by his wife in her shoe as she attempted to put it on (MRP).

### **Brown rat**

*Rattus norvegicus*

1996 - 44 records, 1997 - 109 records. The vast majority of records were of road casualties. Of the live observations the highlights were one seen swimming in dyke at Welney (JEG) and one, feeling threatened, confronting a dog. The rat repeatedly rushed at its perceived assailant which remained rather bemused. The rat then hid behind the trunk of a hawthorn bush before climbing into it and sitting in the fork of a branch looking back at the observer (EAS). Another individual was disturbed whilst feeding on a road kill at night in Jan (MRP).

### **Coypu**

*Myocastor coypus*

1997 - one record. Memories of a once abundant alien species were recalled by a skull being found in dyke dredgings at How Hill (PJH).

## **CETACEA**

### **Minke Whale**

*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

1997 - 3 records. Minke whale, the smallest and commonest of the baleen or rorqual whales, is the whale species most likely to be seen from shore. Although frequently seen along the coasts of Western Scotland and the Northern Isles (from May-Oct, peaking in Aug) it is rarely encountered south of the Yorkshire coast. The sequence of records almost certainly

relating to the same individual, from Weybourne and Sheringham on 2nd Sept 1997 (MT/JW/FL, WN) is thus rather remarkable. Although none of the observers had previous experience of the species, the description and sketch supplied by MT *et al* at Weybourne is judged to be adequate for identification, although it would have been good to receive further information from the Sheringham crab fishermen, who saw it at close quarters from their boat! The whale was first seen c2 miles offshore at 0920 hrs swimming eastwards towards Sheringham, and telescope and binocular contact was made as the whale broke surface every 3-4 minutes over a 15 minute period. The upperparts were described as smooth drab grey-brown. The back was long with a small, backwardly pointing dorsal fin. A small vertical spout was also visible each time it broke surface.

### Harbour porpoise

*Phocoena phocoena*

1996 - 33 records, 1997 - 82 records. In 1996, no more than 4 together recorded from Cley (BJD), Holme (WN), Kelling, Salthouse (BJD, WN), Sheringham, (WN), Weybourne (RJ) at sea, with one dead on the beach at Cley (BJD). Terrific number of records in 1997 with records from Bacton (WN), Beeston Regis (PEB), Caister (WN), Cley (BJD, IGJ, WN) including one with calf (SB), Eeels (NB), Gore Point (SB), Holme (IGJ), Horsey Gap (PEB), Kelling (BJD), Mundesley (SB, WN), Overstrand (BM, WN), Salthouse (SN, IGJ, WN), Sheringham (SB, PEB, PJH, IGJ, WN) and Winterton (SB). The peak count of 10 was at Holme (IGJ). A loafing group of up to 6 or so at Salthouse on 31 Oct provided a good view for a number of observers, with twos and threes lolling on the surface for several minutes at a time (PJH, RJ, CHL/DKL). Porpoises may be seen in most months of the year as shown by the records of one observer at Overstrand: 4 in Feb, 3 in June (1 with calf), 2 in Aug, 5 in Sept and 4 in Oct (BM).

### Dolphin spp

In 1996, two leaping from the sea at Waleot Gap on Oct 16th (AB) too far out to identify and one long-decayed at Stiffkey Wood strandline on 23 Sept (PJH).

## CARNIVORA

### Fox

*Vulpes vulpes*

1996 - 62 records, 1997 - 62 records. Several observations support the theory of a increasing population. A total of 56 shot on one estate and 40+ shot on adjoining estate between Sept 96 and 16th April 1997 (JoC). In 1997, 6 were seen in one field at Burgh Castle on 22 Nov (JC). Near Dereham, 9 (5 adults and 4 large cubs) were present in one 30 acre field after the wheat harvest. These simply stepped over a long net set for rabbits (JC). Seventeen earths with cubs were recorded at variety of locations, including 3 in Lound Waterworks (JC). Remains around dens illustrate that hares are a common component of diet. Other dietary items at Hickling included moorhen and coot (JC). One was seen carrying a duck mallard across Holkham Fresh marsh being mobbed by avocets and lapwings (AIB). At Burgh Castle, there was evidence of foxes digging out sand martin burrows (JC). Foxes were also observed actively foraging, including one seen on 6 occasions pouncing in grass for small mammals in July/Aug 1997 (PT). In 1996, one was seen digging out 2 young rabbits near Walsey Hills. A number of adult rabbits present simply looked on (BJD).

### Stoat

*Mustela erminea*

1996 - 44 records, 1997 - 53 records. 1996. One with a white tail seen at Strumpshaw (20th Jan 1996 - PJH) and three in full ermine (Cley Jan 15th 1996, Sound Plantation Jan 1997 -



PJH and Trowse March 1997 - DJH). Only 3 records of two or more: two chasing each other at Catfield (GT) and Shotesham (MRP) and a female moving 2 kits through nettles/hedgerow at Barton Turf (PJH). The inevitable conflicts with rabbits were also recorded including one seen chasing, catching and killing a rabbit near Barton Turf (GT), one gnawing on neck of an initially alive rabbit at Salhouse (BJD), and two separate individuals each carrying a rabbit at Blakeney on the same day (BJD). One was also seen killing a hen grey partridge at South Creak in 1997. The stoat had a grip on the back of the bird's neck, which was struggling so vigorously that at one point the stoat was propelled vertically into the air whilst upside-down. Even with the additional problems of 2 cock partridges flying and kicking at it, the stoat finally succeeded with its murderous intent. This was not the case in 1996 as one climbing up a pole attempting to reach a nestbox occupied by blue tits was disturbed by the owner of the garden (EDP).

### **Weasel**

*Mustela nivalis*

1996 - 45 records, 1997 - 39 records. Most weasels are either seen crossing the road or found dead on the road. Most records are also of single individuals exceptions being two half-grown young playing in road at Longford (IFK/JK), one seen repeatedly carrying small objects, possibly young from a garden into a paddock (DLC) and one with calling young in a fallen elm log Geldeston Lock 16 June (PJH), all in 1997. Observed carrying prey on a few occasions including unidentified small mammal (PT), vole (AIB), common shrew (AIB) and twice seen carrying a meadow pipit in and around Cley by the same observer (BJD). Actively foraging animals were also observed, with the unlucky victims being wood mice on all occasions (including 2 on one occasion) (PJH, MJ, EAS).

### **Feral ferret**

*Mustela furo*

1996 - one record, 1997 - 5 records. Records included road casualties at Hedenham (one recorded at the same spot in 1995) (DLC), Blakeney (BJD), Newton Flotman and Thetford (MRP). At Tottington one very much alive individual was seen taking 4 young rabbits from underground and moving them to another burrow over a 10 minute period (PD).

### **American mink**

*Mustela vison*

1996 - 8 records, 1997 - 7 records. A total of 10 were trapped at Pensthorpe (WM), an increase on the previous year. Five were also trapped in Little and Great Cressingham areas in 1996 (IFK/JK), with 4 trapped at Buckenham/Hassingham between Jan-April 1997 (JC). Observations of free living animals included one at Hilgay on the Wissey (RB) and one at Welney (JEG) (both 1997). In 1996, at Tottington in the STANTA an adult ran alongside a stream, approaching within 20 feet of the observer. Upon realising it was being watched it retreated into low lying brambles about 15 feet from the stream (IFK/JK). Scats were also recorded at Bintry Mill and east of Stanford Water (IFK/JK) in 1996 and Lynford Gravel Pit (SW) and Saxthorpe (MAB) in 1997. One road casualty was recorded nr. Downham Market (MRP).

### **Badger**

*Meles meles*

1996 - 11 records, 1997 - 8 records. An increasing number of records, although sadly mostly involving animals killed on the roads. Sites included Hockering (JG/JG), Honingham, Narborough (GM, EAS) and Wiveton (BJD). Live animals were seen at Bessingham (MAB), Buckenham Carrs (MP/JC), Edgefield (CC) and Hassingham (GP). Two further animals were seen at undisclosed locations (EAS). A late record was also submitted of one trying to get under iron keepers gate late on Feb 9th 1995 at Holkham. There is no known sett nearby and this may represent the first record for the site for a century (AIB).

## Otter

*Lutra lutra*

1996 - 18 records, 1997 - 21 records. An increase in the number of records reflecting the general increase in the population (see article-*Ed*). In 1996, sign recorded at Alderfen Broad (MRP), Buckenham Tofts (IFK/JK), Catfield Fen (GT), Ranworth Broad (GT), Upton Fen (GT), Saxthorpe (MAB), Stanford (IFK/JK), Tatterford (AIB), Tottington and Thompson (IFK/JK). A surprising number of animals seen. In chronological sequence in 1996 these included one on the Ant at Irstead Shoals (TR) on 15 Aug, one at Stanford Water on 2nd Nov (CAEK) followed by two at the same site in the same month at mid-day (one chased a moorhen) (IFK/JK), one briefly north of Ranworth Broad (KD) also in Nov and a not quite full grown individual watched for 30 min at Catfield in Dec (JH). Others were seen by an angler at Ditchingham (entering the Waveney from the Norfolk side at 0500 hrs) (DLC) and fishermen on the Wensum (CS).

In 1997, sign was recorded at Buckenham Tofts, Hilborough Ford (IFK/JK), Lynford gravel pit (SW), Sharp Street (a slide - PJH) Stanford Water, Thompson Common and Tottington (IFK/JK), although none could be found on the Bure between Itteringham and Aylsham. A remarkable sequence of events saw a cat, an otter and finally a mink captured in a mink trap at Buckenham Carrs (MG). The otter was caught on 3 April and released unharmed (JoC). The place to see otters then became nearby Strumpshaw, with an animal seen on no less than 5 occasions (PJH, WN). Otters were again seen at Stanford Water (5th April - PD) as well as the Ouse washes (WN), Titchwell (WN) and the Yare at Brundall (PJH). With the increase in the otter population, road casualties will, tragically, become more common. During November 1997, two otters, a bitch on the 5th and a dog on the 30th were killed at the same place near North Elmham Mill (TF999203) between the Rivers Wensum and Whitewater (Wendling Beck) (MN). Both were over 1 m from nose to tail and were sent to the ITE for analysis.

## Raccoon

*Procyon lotor*

1997 - one record. One seen alongside the main A149 at Holkham on 8th March at 2230 hrs. After sniffing along the verges it disappeared into the park (AIB). This intriguing record follows that in the 1980's for which no details are available. There have been around 20 records of raccoon in the UK relating to escapees. However, the escape of a pregnant female led to a pair of wild-born cubs near Sheffield in 1984. Animals may be at large for some time (one was recaptured after 4 years) illustrating their potential for survival. This has been fulfilled by the establishment of feral populations in parts of France, Germany and the Netherlands. Maybe Norfolk is next!

## Feral cat

*Felis catus*

1997 - 4 records. The records refer to 4 road casualties (GM), although it is not known whether these were feral or not.

## PINNIPEDIA

### Common seal

*Phoca vitulina*

1996 - 7 records, 1997 - 8 records. The colony at Blakeney assumed to provide the daily sightings of animals between Cley and Weybourne in 1996 (BJD) and regular offshore sightings at Eccles (NB). One young animal was found dead on the beach (EAS), with a further immature close to Wells Quay in Jan 1997. A further immature at Titchwell showed no fear of people and may have been a release from the seal hospital (JEG). One inland record in the River Waveney around Beeches Quay in December 1996.

### **Harp seal**

*Phoca groenlandica*

The 1995 report stated that one seen on Blakeney Point of 27th March 1988 was presumably the same as that found dead in the Wash later the same year. This is now known to be incorrect as the one on the Point was in fact dead and remained in the same place on the harbour side of the shingle spit until it totally rotted. A few bones were still in evidence in the autumn of 1989 (PJH).

### **Grey seal**

*Halichoerus grypus*

1996 - 8 records, 1997 - 4 records. At the usual breeding site between Horsey-Winterton, 6 pups (+1 dead with no sign of injury), 2 males and 3 females were seen on 10th Jan 1997 (AJDJ). An increase in the number of pups was noted in the following breeding season with 15 live (one with bad bite wounds) and one dead (with no obvious injury) (CS). Six bulls were hauled out amongst the females. One small common seal was also present (CS). In Dec a pup washed up on the beach at Eccles was thought to have signs of the distemper virus (NB).

## **ARTIODACTYLA**

### **Red deer**

*Cervus elaphus*

1996 - 17 records, 1997 - 20 records. In 1996 4 stags (3 with full antlers and one with single spikes) were seen at Potter Heigham in April and south of Hickling in June (PT), illustrating the wide ranging nature of the Red deer in Norfolk. Records were also received from Bayfield, Edgefield (road casualty), Holt Lowes (sign) (MRP), Ickburgh (IFK/JK) and Thursford (AIB). In 1997, groups included a stag with a harem of 7 hinds at Little Barningham (PW), 11 young males in a field at Didlington (K&GB), 13 in a field near Thetford (MRP) 11 at Calthorpe Broad and 5 between Dilham and Honing (PJH). Other records included 2 hinds at Kelling (PEB) and 2 very tame animals at Pond Hills Hempstead (AB).

### **Fallow deer**

*Dama dama*

1996 - 2 records, 1997 - 2 records. Recorded at Castle Rising, Narborough (PRC), Sandringham (3) (EAS) and Wolferton (3) (EAS). Eleven natural coloured individuals seen outside the park (where most animals are white) at Holkham assumed to be free-living (JEG).

### **Roe deer**

*Capreolus capreolus*

1996 - 28 records, 1997 - 43 records. Maximum numbers included 6 together in Newhall Wood at Heydon (MAB) and 5 in pine forest at Great Hockham (IFK/JK). The female of a pair in Horsford woods was seen to browse on birch (PJH). The male in another pair encountered in May 1997 was observed vigorously chasing the female, never more than 2 metres behind, even though the female twisted and turned, never travelling more than 5 metres without changing direction (PD).

### **Muntjac**

*Muntiacus reevesi*

1996 - 28 records, 1997 - 38 records. This species still appears to be expanding its range away from its Thetford stronghold. Wide ranging records from Alderford (DIR), East Harling Fen (MJ), Herons Carr (GT), Felthorpe Woods (IFK/JK), Great Hockham (JG/JG), Holkham Meals (AIB), Holt Lowes (GT), Hopton Point (IFK/JK), Kelling (BJD), Lopham Fen (MJ), Market Weston Fen (MJ), Mossetmere Wood (AS/SH), Salthouse (BJD, IFK/JK), Swanton Novers (AS/SH), Syderstone (AIB) and Waveney Forest (DIR/RMM). An interesting record



of a female shepherding a half-grown young animal across the road at Alderford Common (AB).

### **Chinese water deer**

*Hydropotes inermis*

1996 - 179 records, 1997 - 53 records. A large number of records reflecting the increase of the range and population size of the species, but also its tolerance of human observers. For example, the recognisable deer (one greyish male with a reddish female companion) in the garden of one observer became so tame as to remain in the garden in the presence of playing children (PT). Regular sightings showed the female to be pregnant on 9th May and to have given birth on 21st May. Two young adults were seen on 15 Aug with 5 - an adult with pair of nearly grown twins plus another pair of almost full grown animals which were a target for the females aggression - seen at the end of Aug. Several records of strange behaviour recorded including one behaving like a mad march hare in Feb 1996 (PT), one chasing pheasants and one chasing a fox into some trees. The fox then reappeared and chased the deer (PT). Another at Rockland was reluctant to flee at the approach of an observer and barked over her shoulder while trotting ahead, before galloping around in large circles until the observer left - (DPL). Chinese water deer are clearly susceptible to drowning in dykes (which tend to have steep sides) with a total of 4 recorded. Two had fallen into a dyke from a bridge made from two telegraph poles with few planks nailed on to act as bridge at Sutton Fen (PJH). The increase in the population of Chinese water deer is reflected in the increasing number of animals seen by all recorders (eg 1995 - 7, 1996 - 12, 1997 - 14 - CHW) and an increasing number found dead on the roads (eg 7 each recorded by GM and GP). The A47 in the Acle area produces most records and at least 2 deer have been seen to be picked up by passing motorists (GM). Most road casualties occur in the winter months, presumably as animals attempt to reach fields of winter cereals. This habitat provides up to 50% of all records for one experienced recorder, with up to 8 seen together in one location (field at Horning Waterworks) (PJH). In summer, the diet may include new shoots of reed and also nettles (CHW). There is also further evidence of continued range expansion with animals more frequently recorded outside the Broads such as at Waxham Sands (PJH) and at Eeces (NB).

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Map 1. Otter distribution in Norfolk 1996-97. Stippled areas indicated otter presence.

# Chinese Water Deer study at the Ted Ellis Nature Reserve

*Alan Scowen & David Nobbs*

## Introduction

Out of the estimated total population of 650 Chinese water deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) (Harris *et al* 1995), around 200 are thought to exist in the Broads and east Norfolk river valleys, with smaller groups in the fens and brecks. The Norfolk Bird and Mammal Report of 1993 records 55 deer at 24 sites. However, judging from the number of observations made, the population may be centred on Hickling, Bure Valley marshes and the RSPB/Ted Ellis Reserves in Surlingham.

Although it is not a native species, it is always a very special experience chancing upon a Chinese water deer in a reed-bed. It is only the size of a small dog and generally solitary. It has acute senses of hearing and smell detecting humans up to 200 m away. This usually makes encounters with them brief, as they disappear into the vegetation in a blink of an eye.

At Wheatfen, Chinese water deer have been observed on a casual basis by local naturalists for some years. However, no more systematic work has ever been undertaken. Consequently there a number of fundamental questions remain unanswered. Are Chinese water deer increasing? Do numbers vary between years or even within a year? It is thought deer are more easy to see in winter when the vegetation is more sparse, but does this give a true impression of numbers? If deer are increasing, are they having an impact on the wetland habitats of the reserve?

Although there is some information on deer populations at Woodwalton Fen, Cambridgeshire as a result of the work carried out by Dr A Cooke of English Nature, there is little information on the population dynamics or ecological impact of water deer in the Broads. The Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society were asked to assist with further research into these matters. This article presents the findings of a preliminary study of the Chinese water deer at Wheatfen over the summer of 1997. Information was compiled from three sources a) discussions with local expert sources to obtain their views b) distribution of deer sighting forms and c) carrying out regular evening route walks throughout the summer recording animals and sign.

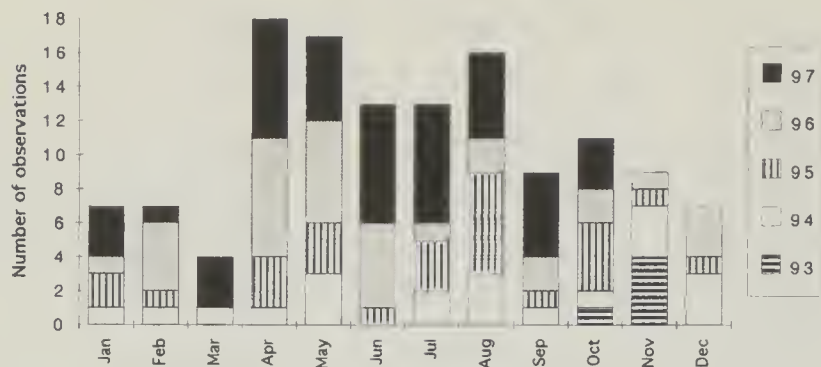
## a) Expert knowledge of populations and impacts

Several potential sources of information on the Chinese water deer at Surlingham were approached. These included English Nature, Broads Authority, British Deer Society, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Rockland Naturalists' Society, Phyllis Ellis, Rex Haney and other NNNs contacts. Very little information was available from these sources. However, good information was derived from RSPB wardens and the previous observations of one of the authors (DN). A total of 130 records, mostly sightings, were available. This information is presented in Fig 1. Although the number of observations of deer has increased annually since 1993 (8 in 1993, 21 in 1994, 24 in 1995, 34 in 1996, 43 in 1997), this may not actually represent an increase in numbers. More effort in different years may reap greater reward for example. In particular, the deer may have become more used to human observers over time, making them easier to see. It is clear from the results, however, that deer may be seen at any time of year, although spring and summer may be particularly good.

With respect to the impact of Chinese water deer, Oliver Rackham visited Wheatfen in 1996 and his view was that there was not a browse line from deer in the reserve woods at the



**Fig. 1. Frequency of observations of Chinese Water Deer at Wheatfen from October 1993 to December 1997**



time of his visit. However, it looked as if one might soon develop, which is suggestive of a relatively high population of deer in the area. Browse lines can be related to different species of deer through the heights at which they, and the accompanying damage to trunks caused by rubbing and chewing, occur. However, Dr Cooke is of the opinion that Chinese water deer do not produce browse lines, preferring less woody vegetation. Therefore, the other species of deer at Surlingham (roe and muntjac) may be responsible for the developing browse line.

In the Bure marshes, Rick Southwood has observed flattened/chewed patches in reedy vegetation, which have been attributed to the foraging and resting activities of groups of Chinese water deer. Flattened areas, probably made by animals, were also discovered at Wheatfen, although these appeared rather large for water deer, especially as Dr. Cooke observes that flattened areas can be quite small, a metre or less in width.

#### **b) Deer sighting sheets**

Survey sheets were prepared and visitors to the reserve, NNS members, Rockland Naturalists' and British Deer Society members were asked to return them with details of their observations. However, only 4 forms have been returned. It is thus not known whether the approach did simply not catch the imagination of local naturalists or that visitors were typically visiting at the wrong time of day to see Chinese water deer. Alternatively, neither may be true and the deer were simply very secretive and not easily seen. Judging from the large number of records provided by the reserve wardens, more deer are present than was immediately apparent.

#### **c) Regular route walks**

A set route on the reserve based on sightings (by DN) was walked by one of the authors (AS) on two evenings a month between May and October 1997. Actual sightings, faeces and signs of damage were all recorded. Dark clothing was worn and as little noise as possible was made. Observations were made through Pentax 8x40 binoculars. During the study period, 3 water deer were seen: one on each of May 16th, June 24th and September 4th. No barking, screaming and/or whistling noises were heard. Faeces (which are relatively distinct, being pointed at one end and round at the other and not sticking together), were seen on at least 6 occasions in relatively small numbers.

## Conclusions

At present although Chinese water deer numbers are thought to be rising, it does not appear they are causing any damage to the habitat on the reserve. At their present population level, they may actually be creating new niches by selective grazing and trampling and thus allowing more/new species to become established. However, if numbers rose unchecked, what would the effect be? Chinese water deer do appear to be fond of milk parsley under certain circumstances. By eating their main food plant, this might harm the swallowtails at Wheatfen. Should Chinese water deer then be culled, or even systematically eradicated like the coypu, another non-native species? Alternatively, will severe winters naturally reduce their numbers? In addition, although Chinese water deer do prefer the wetter areas they do move onto farmland (see classified list - *Ed*). Perhaps this will lead to conflict with farmers? Movement into other habitats may also be controlled through competition with the roe deer and muntjac.

It is clear that more comprehensive studies will be needed to reveal more on the population size and ecological impact of Chinese water deer at Wheatfen. Might it be possible to find 4-6 dedicated volunteers willing and able to help with a longer term study, supplementing the efforts of the reserve wardens? In the short term this could involve carrying on the dusk walks on through the winter when the vegetation is less dense. A more extensive census over one or two weekends during the rutting season (October-November) may also be productive. In the longer term it has been suggested David Farman, an experienced deer society member that it would be beneficial to some evening surveys in March using a light intensifier and high seat hide in a position on the reserve where it is known that the deer are found.

## Acknowledgements

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# Norfolk Otter Survey 1997

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Norfolk Wildlife Trust, 72 Cathedral Close, Norwich NR1 4DF

## Introduction

The history of the otter (*Lutra lutra*) in Norfolk has been well documented (Norfolk Wildlife Trust 1995), with steady decline through the 1960's and 1970's culminating in near or total extinction of the native population in the mid 1980's. Reasons for the original otter decline were probably a combination of poor water quality, increasing use of residual pesticides, hunting pressure, increasing pressure on the otters' habitat and possibly fragmentation of the population and in-breeding. Since then a co-ordinated re-introduction programme of captive-bred otters, largely the responsibility of the Otter Trust, has resulted in successful breeding of introduced captive bred otters and a subsequent steady spread in range and increase in numbers.

Over the winter and early spring of 1996/97, a survey was carried out by Norfolk Wildlife Trust to determine the distribution of Norfolk's otters. This was funded by the Environment Agency, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Essex and Suffolk Water Company. The purpose of the survey was to establish a baseline distribution for otters, both to assess past species recovery efforts and to assist in future species action planning. This article concentrates on the findings relating to otter distribution in Norfolk.

## Methods

All main watercourses (rivers, streams and drainage channels) and their tributaries (where practicable) were searched using the methods used in the latest national survey (Strachan & Jefferies 1996). This involved looking for field sign including droppings (spraints), footprints and food remains, both at all crossing points (bridges, fords etc) over watercourses and on the banks 300 metres upstream and downstream. Where a watercourse had few crossing points, a stretch of bank was surveyed at intervals of <5 kilometres. All signs were counted and additional information such as the freshness of spraint, size of footprint etc were taken and recorded on a standard form. Records of mink (*Mustela vison*) and water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) were also taken.

The survey was undertaken by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, using a combination of staff and volunteer survey groups, all of whom had been trained to identify otter signs. A total of 461 sites throughout the county were visited twice during the survey period between November 1996 and March 1997.

## Results

Of the 461 sites surveyed throughout the county, 155 or 34% showed signs of otter presence. Map 1 (page 600) shows occupied areas of river without giving site-specific information. Rivers with the highest rate of otter presence included the River Wensum, the River Ant and the River Thet.

The overall distribution, when compared to the distribution in 1995 (Norfolk Wildlife Trust 1995) shows extension of range in several areas: the River Ant, the Lower Bure, the River Tas, the River Yare around Norwich, the Lower Wissey, the Cut-off Channel and the River Little Ouse below Thetford. There was a small contraction in range on the River Babingley, where otter signs had previously been found.

A remarkable feature of the results was the use of small tributaries by otters. For example a small stream running into the River Bure showed signs of sustained otter presence despite being only 60 cm wide.



## Discussion

The results of the survey indicates Norfolk holds a small but growing population of otters. It would be unwise to speculate on total population figures since it is currently impossible to reliably relate spraint density to otter numbers.

The current distribution of otters in Norfolk begs intriguing questions on the role of the release of captive-bred otters in re-population. It could be argued that the majority of otters present in Norfolk are the progeny of released animals. As a result of their high mobility, otters are capable of crossing watersheds in a search for favourable conditions. Consequently, even where otters were not released, populations may now be established. This may be the case on the Wensum, which currently shows the highest level of otter presence. It is possible however, that small entirely natural populations have survived in some catchments which have either increased naturally or have been reinforced by released animals.

The increase of otters in Norfolk is probably the direct result of legal protection and improvements in water quality. At the current rate of expansion it is likely that Norfolk's otters will go a long way to achieving the national target for otter as stated in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, through natural spread. The plan states that otter populations should be restored to all river catchments and coastal areas where they have been recorded since 1960, by the year 2010 (HMSO 1995). Given the wide distribution of otter in Norfolk, the usefulness of further introduction of captive-bred animals in the county would appear to be questionable.

Rather, work should continue on improving the basic habitat requirements of otters which are healthy river environment, including good fish populations, trees and bushes for cover, and quiet areas to breed in. Natural colonisation will then follow. It is therefore vital that continuing efforts are made to manage riparian habitats sympathetically and sensitively for otters amongst other wildlife, as there are still large stretches of river and stream in the county which are poorly managed.

Other threats to otters including mink hunting with hounds (which can cause serious disturbance along watercourses) and the use of unguarded fyke nets (although a legal requirement is that they should be fitted with otter guards). Unfortunately, with an expanding otter population, road deaths are likely to increase (*see classified notes - Ed*). A regional Biodiversity Action Plan has been drafted to address these problems, alongside the major issues of habitat loss and change and disturbance, with the Wildlife Trusts and the Environment Agency taking the lead role.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks must first go to Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Essex and Suffolk Water Company who funded the survey. Also thanks to all the volunteer otter surveyors who gave time and knowledge to the survey. The co-operation of all landowners whose permission was sought during the survey is also gratefully acknowledged.

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# Norfolk Water Vole Survey 1997

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## Introduction

In Norfolk, little is known about the precise history and distribution of the water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) (Norfolk Wildlife Trust 1997). Although 106 sites were covered in the national survey of 1989-90 (Strachan & Jefferies 1993), these were concentrated in certain areas and give little indication of the distribution throughout the county. Records from casual observations by naturalists are also inevitably subject to bias.

As part of a national initiative by the Wildlife Trusts and the Environment Agency to map the distribution of this declining species, a systematic county survey of water vole was carried out by Norfolk Wildlife Trust in 1997. The underlying purpose was to establish the status of water voles within the county, in order to give accurate and detailed information necessary for future biodiversity planning (HMSO 1995).

## Methods

Water voles occupy a wide range of aquatic habitats from narrow ditches and dykes to rivers, ponds and lakes. Norfolk has far too much suitable habitat to consider a fully comprehensive survey. Consequently, a methodology was devised, to give as representative a sample as possible. In order to fairly represent the distribution of water voles both spatially and in terms of the available habitats, two types of sample were used:

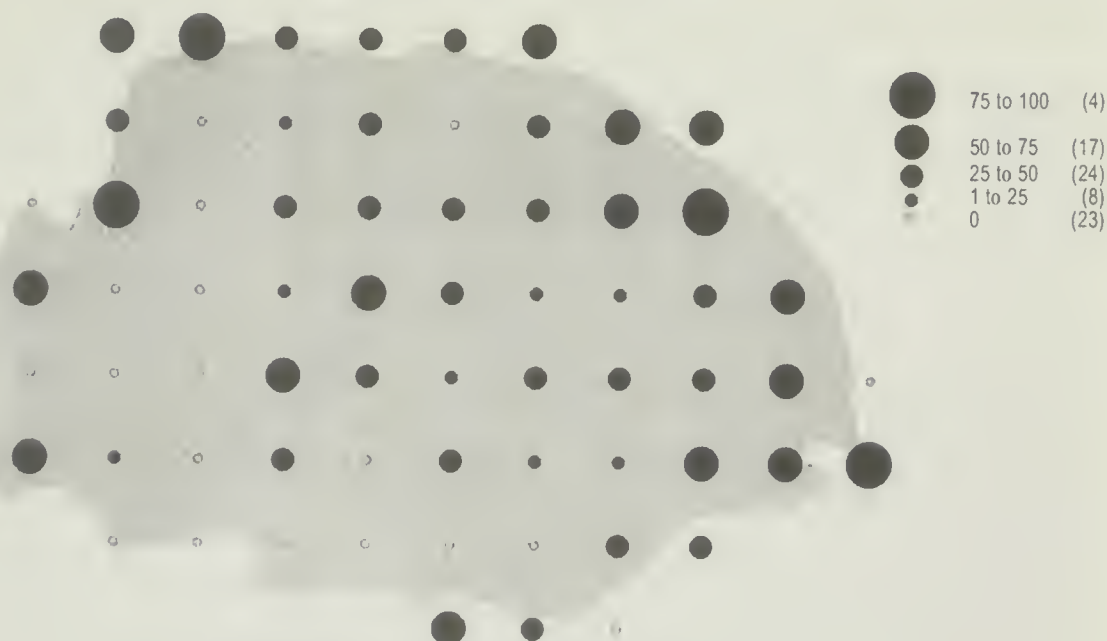
- A main watercourse sample, in which a 500 metre stretch of watercourse was surveyed for every three kilometres of river. This interval was considered small enough to give a good picture of vole distribution. Wherever a river survey site was inaccessible, the nearest accessible stretch of river was surveyed.
- A non-main watercourse sample, in which three one-kilometre grid squares in every ten kilometre grid square were selected. Squares were selected using randomly generated co-ordinates. Only those squares which appeared to have suitable habitat from a 1:50,000 map were selected. Squares appearing to have no suitable habitat were rejected and another selection was made. If, during the survey, one-kilometre squares were found to contain no suitable habitat (for example an infilled or long dry pond), another selection was made.

The actual survey was carried out using methods devised for the national survey of 1989-1990 including a similar recording form. For each water feature, as much as possible (up to a maximum of 500 metres) of the bank was examined for signs of water vole. These included field signs such as latrines, burrows or grazed vegetation. Occasionally a vole was seen, but this represented a very small percentage of the records. As the absence of field signs did not necessarily mean that voles were not present, the results show a minimum distribution.

Habitat features considered relevant to water vole were also noted, such as the composition of bankside vegetation, bank slope, watercourse width, flow speed and bordering land use. The presence of otter (*Lutra lutra*), mink (*Mustela vison*) and brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) was also specifically recorded.

The survey "window" was originally perceived to be from the beginning of April 1997 to the end of October 1997, at a time of year when water voles are most active. In practice, most records came from between the beginning of May to the end of September. During this time, vole signs were easily detectable during good weather, when surveying was carried out.

**Map 1. Percentage of occupied sample sites in each ten kilometre grid square**



## Results

A useful visual guide to the broad distribution of voles in the county is provided by the distribution of positive records according to ten kilometre squares (Map 1). On this scale, water vole appears widely, yet patchily distributed, with the south and west of the county providing few records. Breaking down the records of water vole for all the river catchments in the county, tends to confirm this pattern (Table 1). In west Norfolk, populations are concentrated in the north-western rivers such as the Babingley, the uppermost reaches of the River Wissey and the Watton Brook, and locally in Fenland. In contrast, water vole was widespread within east Norfolk catchments, with strong populations being found in the Broads on the River Ant and in the extensive dyke system, the Rivers Stiffkey and Mun and the Whitewater (Wendling Beck) tributary of the River Wensum.

The degree of occupancy along any main river tended to reflect the distribution in the wider catchment (Table 1). This illustrates the importance of main river habitat for water vole. Of the 7 catchments where site occupancy by water vole was higher in the wider catchment than the main river, the Yare illustrated the greatest difference (34.8% in catchment compared to 21.5% of sites along main river). In the wider catchment, water voles showed a preference for dykes and ditches, with still water bodies being generally less well used.

Mink were found at 26 sites in Norfolk, distributed in the catchments of the Great and Little Ouse, Cut-off Channel, Nar, Wissey, Waveney and Yare. The mink records represent a considerable underestimate as signs are hard to find during the summer months.

## Discussion

Comparing the results of the current survey with the map of collated water vole records from 1974-86 (Haney 1987), there appears to have been recent changes in the distribution of water vole within the county. In the latter, the distribution of water vole in west Norfolk catchments appears to be more contiguous and complete (20 out of 29 10 km squares occupied) than in east Norfolk catchments (25 out of 43 10 km squares occupied). The



**Table 1**  
 Breakdown of water vole records by river (including main channel and tributaries) and the wider catchment.

River	Main river			Catchment		
	Number of sites surveyed	Number with voles	% occupied	Number of sites surveyed	Number with voles	% occupied
Ant	18	11	61.1	9	6	66.6
Bure	51	20	39.2	38	11	28.9
Bure	37	17	45.9	27	9	33.3
Scarrow Beck	5	1	20.0	4	1	25.0
Spixworth Beck	9	2	22.2	7	1	14.3
Burn	6	1	16.7	4	0	0.0
Cut-off Channel	18	0	0.0	15	0	0.0
Fens	17	4	23.5	0	0	0.0
Glaven	12	2	16.7	6	1	16.7
Great Ouse	3	1	33.3	2	1	50.0
Little Ouse	22	1	4.5	22	1	4.5
Mun	3	2	66.6	3	2	66.6
Nar	22	0	0.0	7	0	0.0
NW small rivers	11	4	36.4	6	3	50.0
Babingley	2	1	50.0	1	1	100.0
Heacham	6	2	33.3	3	1	33.3
Ingol	3	1	33.3	2	1	33.3
Stiffkey	11	5	45.5	9	4	45.5
Thet	25	2	8.0	8	0	0.0
Thurne	10	5	50.0	8	2	25.0
Waveney	49	15	30.6	29	7	24.1
Wensum	76	22	28.9	55	19	34.5
Blackwater	13	2	15.4	9	2	22.2
Tud	8	0	0.0	8	0	0.0
Wensum	44	13	29.5	31	12	38.7
Whitewater	11	7	63.6	7	5	71.4
Wissey	41	9	22.0	25	6	24.0
Watton Brook	9	4	45.5	4	2	50.0
Wissey	32	5	15.6	21	4	19.1
Yare	92	32	34.8	65	14	21.5
Blackwater	6	1	16.7	6	1	16.7
Chet	5	3	60.0	5	3	60.0
Tas	19	6	31.6	13	5	38.5
Tiffey	10	1	10.0	5	1	20.0
Yare	42	12	31.6	36	4	11.1

reverse of which is now true. Also, the presence of voles was confirmed in 37 of the 43 available ten kilometre squares (86%) in the current survey in east Norfolk, compared to all of the 34 surveyed in the area in the 1989-90 national survey. Although further detailed analysis (eg direct comparison of sites) would be required to determine the exact extent this superficially represents a 14% contraction in range in under ten years.

The reasons for the apparently rapid decline and current scarcity of water voles in west Norfolk may be in part due to the presence of mink in this area. It has been established that mink are a major cause of local extinction of water vole (Woodroffe *et al* 1990). Even though mink presence was probably underestimated by the survey, some watercourses still showed a relatively high degree of occupancy. For example 27% of sites surveyed on the Cut-off Channel showed signs of mink. Such watercourses showed a correspondingly low level of water vole occupancy. The relative buoyancy of populations in east Norfolk may thus be a direct consequence of the relative lack of mink.

However, conservation of water vole populations is not simply a case of eradicating mink (if this were possible, which it appears not to be), as it is thought that in good quality habitat water voles and mink are able to co-exist (Strachan & Jefferies 1993). In contrast, poor habitat quality substantially weakens populations, and leaves them vulnerable to mink predation. Unfavourable habitat management such as close, regular mowing, heavy bankside grazing or neglect leading to heavy shading may also directly lead to local extinction and fragmentation of populations. The considerable modification of the channel and riparian zones of many rivers, particularly in the west of Norfolk, may thus have exacerbated their decline.

In contrast, in the east and particularly in the Broads, more sympathetic habitat management may favour water vole. This is nowhere so apparent as in Broadland's dyke system. A survey of 2747 dykes carried out for English Nature in 1997, in which records of water vole were also compiled, found 8.7% of all dykes surveyed were occupied by the species. Although the occupancy rate in the dyke areas was low, the 240 sites where they were found is a significant component of the site records compiled during the county survey. Major concentrations of water vole records in dykes were found south of Breydon Water, near Halvergate, around Buckenham and near Ludham with minor concentrations elsewhere.

## Concluding remarks

As elsewhere in Britain, the water vole was once taken for granted as being common and widespread in Norfolk. In 1989-90 the national survey showed that Norfolk still retained good numbers relative to other counties, although as identified by Jowitt (1995), there could be no room for complacency. This is borne out by the current survey which illustrates considerable change. Whilst water voles are still widespread although possibly contracting their range in the east of the county, in the west, the species appears to be scarce and rapidly declining. Without intervention, the species' future in the area is in considerable doubt. In order to try to restore the fortunes of water voles a species action plan is being drafted. The problems facing voles are a combination of habitat management, predator control water-related issues, and successful re-colonisation of sites will depend on these factors being acceptable for voles. To this end, a practical handbook and conservation manual which lays out excellent guidelines for riparian landowners, site managers etc. to encourage water voles is now available (Strachan 1998).

A further critical aspect of water vole conservation is to monitor existing populations and to locate new ones that may previously have been overlooked. Norfolk Wildlife Trust are pleased to welcome new surveyors or any water vole records. Ring 01603 625540 for more details.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this survey, all landowners who kindly gave permission for access, and all those who commented on drafts of this article.

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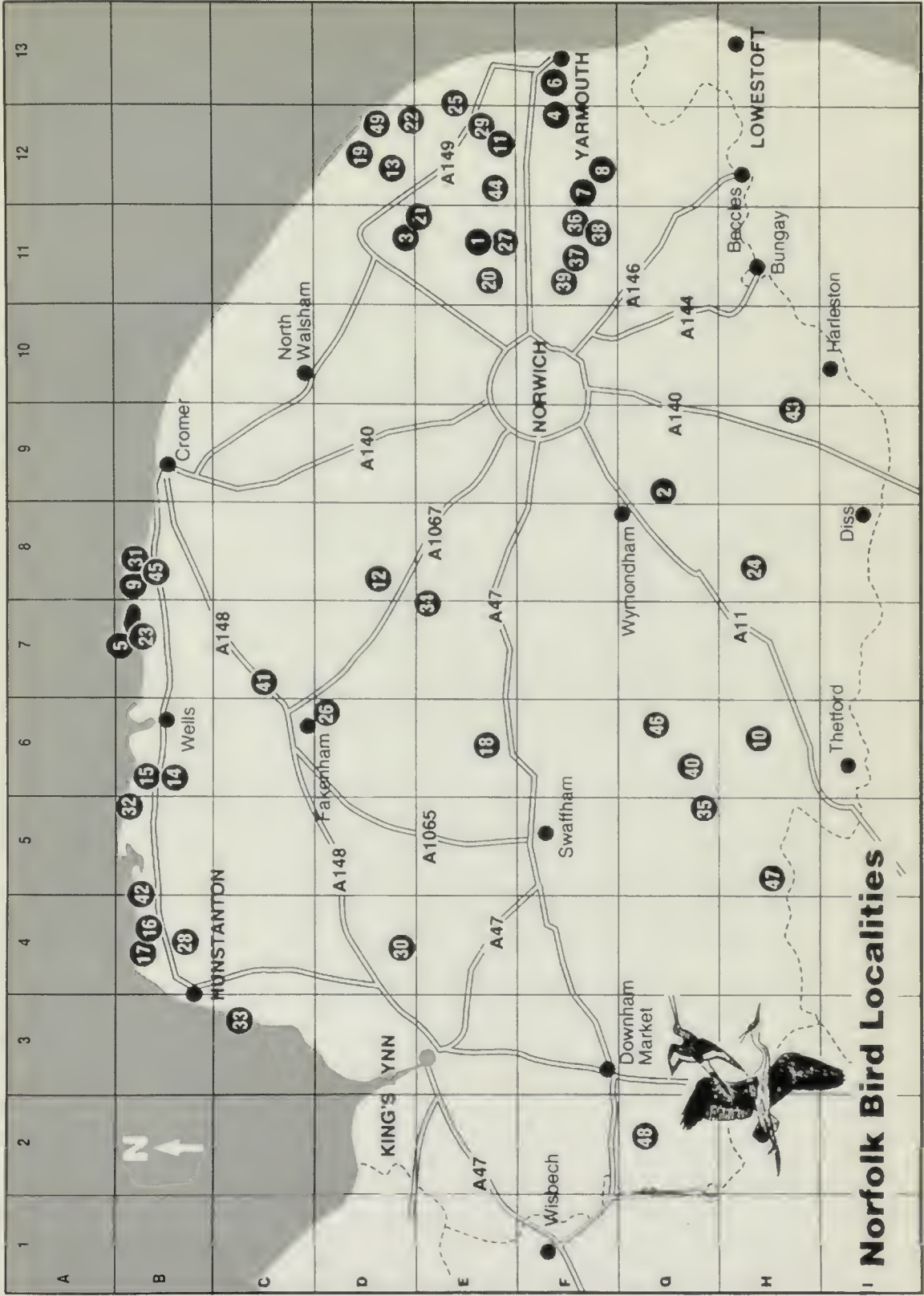
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# Key to Location Map

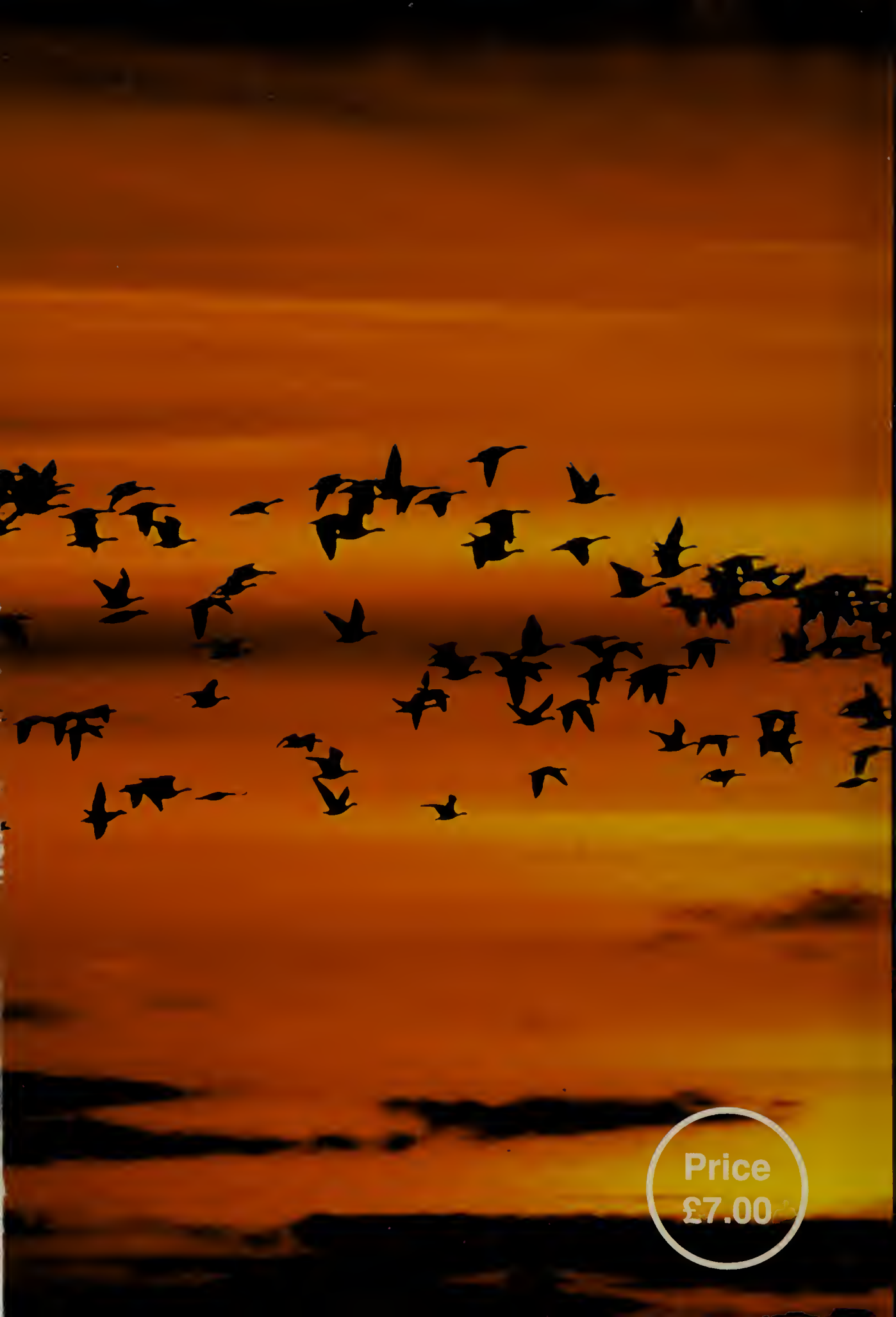
1 Alderfen Broad	NWT	14 Holkham Lake	HE	27 Ranworth/Cockshoot Broads	NWT	40 Thompson Water	NWT
2 Ashwellthorpe Lower Wood	NWT	15 Holkham NNR	EN	28 Ringstead Downs	NWT	41 Thursford Wood	NWT
3 Barton Broad	NWT	16 Holme Bird Observatory	NOA	29 Rollesby Broad		42 Titchwell Marsh	RSPB
4 Berney Marshes	RSPB	17 Holme Dunes	NWT	30 Roydon Common	NWT	43 Tyrrel's Wood	WT
5 Blakeney Point	NT	18 Honeycot Wood	NWT	31 Salhouse 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 Pensthorpe Waterfowl Trust	PWT	39 Ted Ellis Trust	TET		
BA	=	Broads Authority		NWT	=	Norfolk Wildlife Trust	
BS	=	British Sugar		PWT	=	Pensthorpe 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	
NDA	=	Norfolk Ornithologists Association		W&WT	=	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	
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