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Rare breeding birds  
in the UK in 2020



# Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2020

Mark Eaton and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



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Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

**Abstract** This report documents the status of the 101 species and subspecies of rare or scarce native birds that bred, or showed signs of breeding, in the UK in 2020. This is the highest number of species and subspecies reported on in a single year by the RBBP, which is perhaps surprising for a year in which recording was significantly impacted by lockdown restrictions enforced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact on ornithological fieldwork and birdwatching, and thus data collection, means that the Panel's statistics for many rare breeding species have not been updated. However, sufficient data were received to post new record totals for 12 species, including Common Crane *Grus grus* and White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*. It was also apparent that Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, recently Red-listed in the UK, was not reported breeding for the first time since 1975.

This is the 47th report published by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) and includes reports on the 101 rare or scarce native taxa that bred, or showed signs of breeding, in the UK in 2020. In addition, Appendix 2 summarises the records received for 12 rare non-native breeding species. As well as reporting on the data received for 2020, the Panel has investigated how the availability of data was affected by the restrictions on movement due to Covid-19 lockdown across the UK in spring 2020. One of the most important uses of RBBP

data is in the *Birds of Conservation Concern* (BoCC) assessments and we reflect on the results of the recently published BoCC5 (Stanbury *et al.* 2021).

The area covered by the RBBP includes the four countries of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), plus the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Using 'UK' as a shorthand reference, this is the same unit used by other national monitoring programmes, such as the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) (Harris *et al.* 2022), and by Birds of Conservation Concern

(Stanbury *et al.* 2021). The RBBP species list is available to view at [www.rbbp.org.uk/species-overview](http://www.rbbp.org.uk/species-overview). Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* has been readmitted to the list and is included here for the first time since 2005. Although featured in this report, Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* has now been removed from the species list and will not be included from the 2021 report onwards.

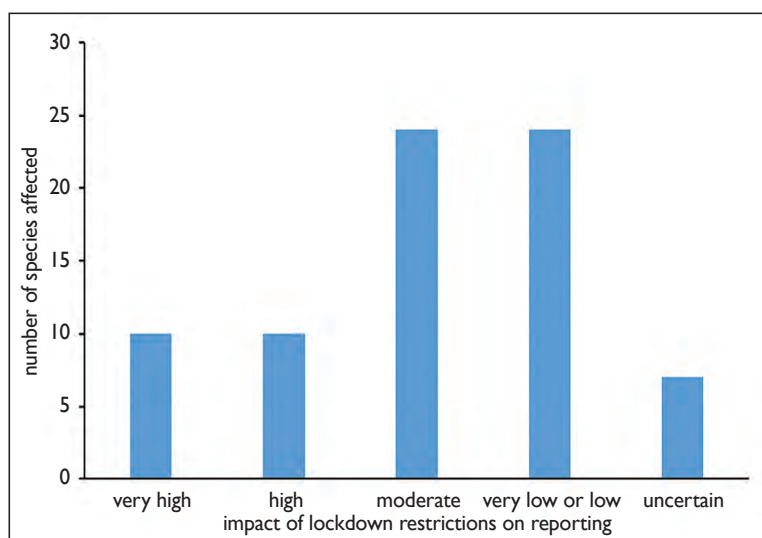
### The impacts of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on rare breeding bird data in 2020

Lockdown restrictions owing to Covid-19 were imposed across the UK from March 2020 and continued until at least the end of May. The application of restrictions, and the rate at which they were lifted, varied between the four countries and Crown Dependencies covered by our reporting. In particular, restrictions on travel were still in place into early July in Scotland and Wales, meaning that effective monitoring of many RBBP species was not possible, although dispensations were made for some ornithological fieldwork (e.g. that carried out by members of Scottish Raptor Study Groups).

It is clear that lockdown restrictions had a significant impact on the recording of rare breeding birds in 2020. Birdwatchers were not able to visit sites as normal; conservation, research and monitoring projects were reduced or cancelled; and the management (and monitoring) of many reserves was

reduced or even ceased. Beyond this, there may have been effects on the bird populations themselves, through changes (both positive and negative) in the level of disturbance by humans, the cancellation of conservation projects, and the lack of management and protection at key sites, and potentially enhanced illegal killing of some raptors (see Balmer *et al.* 2020 for an overview). Gillings *et al.* (2021) documented the impact of lockdown restrictions on data collected for BBS and investigated how the biases in coverage affected the resultant species' trends, and whether such biases could be corrected for. We are unable to undertake a similar analysis since, for the most part, data received by the RBBP comes from unstructured, ad-hoc recording without a formal statistical design. We have instead taken two approaches to gain some understanding of the impacts: we have looked at the data received and how it varied from recent years; and we asked county bird recorders, our key data providers, to complete a short online questionnaire on the impact of lockdown restrictions on the data available to them.

In total, 47 county recorders (or those responsible for the submission of rare breeding bird data, in counties where this responsibility is conducted by an assistant) completed our questionnaire, for which we are very grateful. Most (70%) reported that there was a negative impact on the volume of data on rare breeding birds submitted to



**Fig. 1.** RBBP's assessment of the level of impact caused by Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on reporting rates for species regularly reported on by the RBBP. Definitions of the five categories used are given in the Terminology section.

them, and 77% reported a negative impact on their overall ability to report upon rare breeding birds in 2020. There are indications that this differed between countries, with a larger proportion of recorders in England reporting no (13%) or even a slight positive impact (9.7%), whereas all corresponding recorders in Wales reported a negative impact. We also asked recorders to identify species for which they felt data availability was most affected: 44 species were named, 41 being impacted negatively, seven positively

(and four being identified as both, in different counties). Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* was the species for which data availability was listed most frequently as being negatively impacted (ten times), with other raptors – notably Hobby *Falco subbuteo* and Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* – also identified. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor* and Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* were mentioned repeatedly in responses, alongside species groups including breeding ducks and most upland and montane breeders. Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* was the species most frequently named as having received increased monitoring attention from observers forced to change their birdwatching habits. The absence of data from RSPB reserves (many RSPB reserves staff were furloughed in spring 2020, and formal monitoring ceased) and the difficulties of accessing remote upland areas were highlighted as general issues in multiple responses, and these patterns are clear when we look at the data itself.

The total number of records received by the RBBP was, perhaps surprisingly, slightly higher than in previous years (nearly 7,000 unique records). Rather than being due to a genuine increase in recording activity, this was mostly due to some recorders providing site-level records for species previously reported at county level, for which we are extremely grateful. When the Panel looked at the actual total number of pairs of rare breeding birds, however, it was 14.3% lower in 2020 than the mean for 2015–19 (22,831 pairs compared with 26,656 pairs, excluding those species which have been moved on or off the RBBP species list in this period). At a species level, a comparison of totals for 2020 with the mean for the 2015–19 period for those species on which we report annually shows a range from -94% for Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, to +259% for Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*; the median change was -13.5%. The Cattle Egret is, of course, an example of a species with a genuine increase in numbers rather than the increase being an artefact of recording effort. We used these comparisons, along with the responses received from recorders and other data providers, to place each species into one of five categories

describing the impact of lockdown restrictions: **very high**; **high**; **moderate**; **very low or low**; and **uncertain**. Details of this process are given in the Terminology section below. Of the ten species classified as having experienced a very high impact on recording, nine are mostly or entirely restricted to Scotland within the UK, with Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* being the only exception. Recording of most species was believed to have been impacted (44 of 75; 59%) (fig. 1). Although it had been suggested that some species had received improved monitoring at county level because of lockdown restrictions, we do not believe this to be the case for any species at a national scale.

With lockdown restrictions affecting the reporting of many species, we must be circumspect about drawing conclusions on how the UK's rare breeding birds fared in 2020. Data flows for most of the species on which we report regularly were believed to have been adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions, to the extent that we have not used 2020 data to revise population estimates and trends for them. The data received is still of considerable value for conservation purposes, but we will have to wait until the 2021 report for updates on the recent fortunes of species. While data are reported as normal at county, regional, country and UK levels, we recommend that in the case of those species for which we indicate there was an impact, readers should be cautious in their interpretation of these results.

## Review of the year 2020

The 2020 breeding season was preceded by a mild and wet winter, being both the fifth mildest and the fifth wettest since records began in 1864. February 2020 was the fifth-wettest month ever recorded. This was followed by a remarkably dry and sunny spring, with all four of the UK's countries having their sunniest spring on record (back to 1919). The summer was warm, and the UK's third-hottest day ever was recorded – 37.8°C at Heathrow, Greater London. The summer was also less sunny and wetter than average, although much of the rainfall was later in the season, beyond the end of the breeding period for most species. By and large, the weather provided generally good conditions for rare breeding birds.



The total of 101 taxa believed to have bred, or shown signs of breeding behaviour, in the UK in 2020 is the highest ever included in the RBBP's report. Changes in the RBBP's species list have had an influence on this total, of course: 100 species were reported in 2014 and 2015 and, since then, four species have been added to the list (Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*, Woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Crested Tit) – though this is almost offset by the removal of three species (Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* and Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*). Regardless, it is a notable total, and perhaps surprising given the circumstances.

Of the 101 taxa reported, 68 were confirmed as breeding in the UK in 2020. Another nine – including Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* and 'St Kilda Wren' *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis* – were likely to have bred, but such evidence was not reported. Of the remaining 24 species, many belonged to the scatter of oddities that all RBBP reports contain, the eye-catching records of individuals showing breeding behaviour sometimes far from their species' natural range. Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* has bred or attempted to breed in the UK on a number of occasions previously, but the male 'North American Black Tern' *C. n. surinamensis* in Northumberland was the first of that race to feature in a RBBP report. Little Crake *Zapornia parva*, Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* and Asian Desert Warbler *Curruca nana* all feature in this RBBP report for just the second time, although none of these bred. Although it is tempting to write off all such species as irrelevancies, it is worth noting that 17 of the 24 have been confirmed as breeding in the UK previously.

Another species to have graced our pages just once before is Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*. The species has bred on the Channel Islands previously, in 2009, prior to the inclusion of this Crown Dependency in the RBBP report. In 2020, the species bred again, on Alderney.

While the unusual circumstances of 2020 mean that we must be circumspect about identifying the species that had a poor year, it is easier to be confident of the species that had a good year when the number of pairs

reported were higher than normal – including those that reached new species' records, as was the case for 12 species. Many of these 12 have been highlighted in recent RBBP reports as having increasing populations, and the record totals given here are the continuation of ongoing population growth, not sudden increases. The only exception to this is Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, for which the leap to 109 pairs reported is the consequence of a large amount of additional effort put into a national survey carried out by volunteers, and confirms an increase that was already suspected to be under way (Clements *et al.* 2022).

Other record-breaking species in 2020's report include those that have been the recipients of intensive conservation interventions, such as the Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Common Crane *Grus grus* and Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, and recent colonists from continental Europe, including European Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* and Great White *Ardea alba* and Cattle Egrets. White-tailed Eagle numbers also reached a new high, and the species was moved from the Red to the Amber list in *BoCC5*, recognising the success of the reintroduction of this species to Scotland that began nearly 50 years ago. Two much more recent reintroduction projects also gave cause for optimism in 2020: the number of breeding female Great Bustards *Otis tarda* rose considerably compared to 2019's total, and White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* fledged young in Sussex for the first time.

A maximum total of 32 pairs of breeding Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* was the highest since 1997, although only two pairs are known to have successfully bred. Perhaps more meaningful was the best return for Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* since 1992, the continuation of a recent upturn in fortunes for this skulking warbler.

There is always a chance that previously locally extinct species might return to breed in the UK, as the Savi's Warbler did in 1960, and a pair of prospecting Wrynecks *Jynx torquilla* in Wales must have raised hopes, although ultimately it appears they moved on. It is, however, pleasing to report that two species that have teetered on the edge of extinction in recent years both bred in the

UK in 2020: Red-backed Shrike *Lanius colurio* and Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*.

Two species that regularly breed in the UK are absent from this report. The lack of records for Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* can probably be attributed to lockdown restrictions, which meant that the remote, montane area traditionally used by this species was not visited, although even in more typical years they are not always found, and the numbers of pairs reported (which has never exceeded four in any year) have now dwindled to the point that it was Red-listed in *BoCC5*. The other omission, Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*, is perhaps more surprising as the species has bred (albeit sometimes in mixed pairs) in the UK every year since 1999. Another gap in this report is sadly more expected: in recent years, Golden Orioles *Oriolus oriolus* have featured in our reports only as occasional and brief-staying singing males, but not even they were recorded in 2020. Golden Oriole was moved to the list of former breeders in *BoCC5*. Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* was Red-listed in the latest *BoCC*, so it was grimly fitting that there were no confirmed breeding attempts of this graceful raptor in 2020, for the first time since 1975.

### Data sources and submission

The most important sources of information behind this report are the detailed submissions compiled by the UK's county and regional bird recorders. These recorders, all of whom are volunteers, are uniquely placed to understand the relevance and context of the records they receive from birders. The volume of original data received by recorders has grown substantially in recent years, increasing their workload but underlining the key role that they play. Of course, county recorders, and in turn RBBP, are highly dependent on observers submitting records in the first place. It is vital that birders across the UK continue to make their sightings available, not least for the value these records have for conservation, as outlined in this report.

In recent years, we have received direct submissions of data from all of the UK's recording areas. Unfortunately, we fell just short in 2020, with no data received from Co. Durham. Other important data sources include returns

from Schedule 1 licence holders, the BTO/JNCC Nest Record Scheme, raptor study groups, annual species' monitoring, periodic national surveys, and counts from RSPB reserves. As in 2019, we used data from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS) for records of sedentary species (e.g. Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker), for which presence in the breeding season can be regarded as possible breeding. Counts submitted to the BTO/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) during the breeding season (April to August) were checked for records of non-native waterbirds as, even without information on breeding activity, these provide a useful measure of how widely distributed some of these under-recorded non-native species are.

Best efforts are made to capture the information on rare breeding birds that these multiple sources provide, but the identification of such additional records is only possible when county recorders submit site-level information for all species on which they report, rather than county totals. If only species' totals are available, it is not possible for us to determine whether records from other sources are additional or have been counted already. We therefore continue to encourage recorders to provide site-level data for *all* species covered by the RBBP.

The report was enabled by the collation of 9,070 individual records, of which 6,980 were unique; this latter number has risen thanks to more recorders providing site-level information for species, rather than county totals. Additional data for any years are still welcome, since these make valuable additions to our archive. Birders should consider not only their local records but also sightings made when birdwatching elsewhere in the UK, especially from more remote and less well-covered areas, particularly northern and western Scotland. Additions, amendments and corrections to published reports from 2005 onwards are available on the RBBP website ([www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk)), alongside copies of our annual reports and an 'explore reports' facility, which allows bespoke report extracts for chosen species and years to be generated. These files are updated regularly, and anyone using the RBBP reports for reference or study

should always check the online amendments. If you hold records that you think are missing from this report, please submit them to the relevant county recorder (and if you are a county recorder, please submit such old records to the RBBP Secretary).

The RBBP is soon to reach its 50th anniversary and, by 2025, we will hold an archive spanning 50 years of change in the UK's rare breeding birds. We plan a range of analyses and publications based on our data, so wish it to be as complete as possible before we do so. We are particularly keen to receive old records of breeding and potential breeding of extremely rare breeders not shared with us previously, and additional information (such as site details) for records for which this was withheld in the original submission. If you have valuable data sitting on a hard drive or in old notebooks, please consider sharing; contact the Secretary at [secretary@rbbp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@rbbp.org.uk) (see also *Brit. Birds* 115: 392).

Receiving accurate grid references with species data is especially important to ensure good-quality records of rare breeding birds. Site information is not published and these data remain confidential and securely stored. The lack of accurate site data remains a particular problem for raptors, for which we receive many records summarised by area, or without grid references. Either way, we are unable to eliminate the possibility that some of these may duplicate records submitted via other routes. Consequently, we cannot use the majority of those records in the compilation of the figures reported here, diminishing the value and quality of our archive and restricting the use of these data for conservation purposes. Our annual totals for species such as

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Northern Goshawk and Peregrine are likely to be underestimates, because some imprecise data cannot be included in our summaries.

Recommendations and guidelines on data submission are available online, together with our recording standards and species-specific guidelines ([www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk)). Anyone with experience in monitoring a rare species is encouraged to share their expertise through the further development of these guidelines.

### Conservation and other uses of RBBP data

Stroud (2019) reviewed the work of the RBBP, and how this serves to support a range of conservation purposes. RBBP policy is to make data available for relevant conservation uses, with appropriate controls over the spatial resolution at which data are provided. Site-specific information is used by JNCC and the national statutory nature conservation bodies, and national datasets by the RSPB for survey and conservation planning. Over the 12-month period up to August 2022, we received 11 requests for data or summary information. In addition, population totals published in the *BB* reports are widely used by conservation organisations. Our data were extremely important in the *Birds of Conservation Concern 5* assessment (Stanbury *et al.* 2021; see box), along with a new IUCN Red List assessment for birds in Great Britain conducted alongside *BoCC5*. Trends for selected species were also supplied for use in the UK, England and Scotland Wild Bird Indicators, the UK Priority Species Indicator and the Scottish Marine and Terrestrial Species Indicators.

#### Birds of Conservation Concern 5

*Birds of Conservation Concern 5* (*BoCC5*) was published in December 2021 (Stanbury *et al.* 2021) and represented the fifth review of the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. These reviews are compiled by a coalition of the UK's leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations and provide a crucial aid to identify and refresh species conservation priorities, enabling the targeting of finite resources most effectively.

Each species was assessed against a range of standardised criteria and allocated to the Red, Amber or Green list depending on their level of conservation concern. The Red list contains species that have undergone severe declines (>50%) in population or range in the UK or are threatened with global extinction. The Amber list contains species that have undergone moderate declines (>25%) or are of conservation concern owing to their scarcity, localisation and/or international importance.

The previous reviews have documented a deterioration in the status of UK bird populations, with an ever-increasing number of species on the Red list, and the results from the latest review were no different. The Red list now contains 70 species, nearly double the number from the first *BoCC* published in 1996. The number of regularly occurring rare breeding birds on the Red list is now 25.

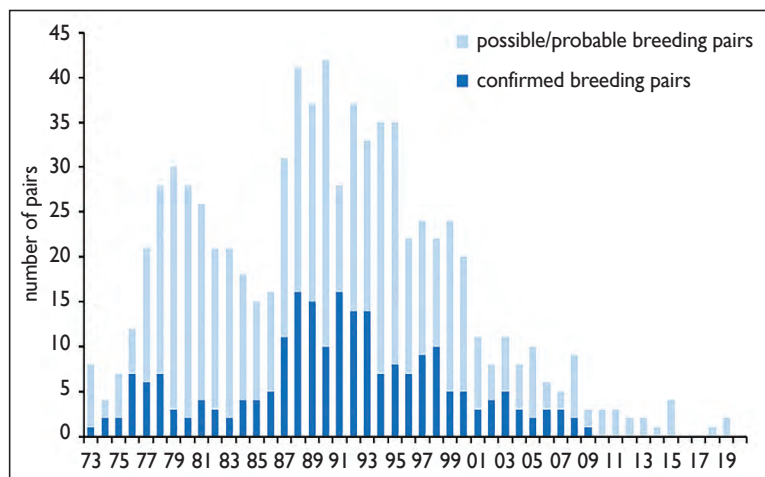
We are extremely fortunate in the UK to have many dedicated volunteers contributing data towards our biodiversity monitoring schemes, and data submitted to the RBBP is a very important part of this. The *BoCC* reviews would not be possible without these vital data. In the latest review, data collated by the RBBP was used to assess trends of 50 breeding species, a fifth of all birds, and some of the changes to the Red, Amber and Green list were as a direct consequence of these data.

Sadly, the Golden Oriole moved onto the list of 'former breeders' in *BoCC5*, to join the likes of Wryneck and Serin *Serinus serinus*. A small population of Golden Orioles established themselves in England through the 1970s, and by the late 1980s numbers had grown to between 30 and 40 pairs (fig. 2), concentrated in commercial poplar *Populus* plantations in the East Anglian fens. They subsequently declined steadily, and the last confirmed breeding was at Lakenheath RSPB in 2009.

Singing males still occur in some years (though not in 2020), so a return may still be possible. Two rare breeding birds, Purple Sandpiper and Montagu's Harrier, were moved to the Red list as a consequence of severe declines in their breeding populations. Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* also moved to the Red list, but this was due to a decline in the wintering population; Red-breasted Merganser moved from Green to Amber for the same reason. Both breeding Redwing *Turdus iliacus* and Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* populations showed an improvement in status and were moved off the Red list to Amber.

The *BoCC* reviews have documented a deterioration in the status of UK bird populations; however, they have also showcased conservation success stories, such as the recovery of Eurasian Bittern, Osprey and Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* populations. As a direct result of conservation action, White-tailed Eagle moved off the Red list for the first time in *BoCC5*.

The UK has seen continued colonisation by new bird species, largely as a result of climate change, and breeding Great White Egret, Cattle Egret and Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* were assessed for the first time.



**Fig. 2.** Numbers of breeding pairs of Golden Orioles in the UK, 1973–2020: confirmed breeding pairs and possible/probable breeding pairs.

## Population estimates

In recent years, county recorders have been asked to supply their best estimate of the populations (as well as the total number of known pairs) for a selection of 16 species. These species are those that occur across large parts of the UK and which we believe are under-recorded in at least some counties, usually where local populations are relatively high. Most recorders submitted such estimates in 2020, either by indicating that the number of pairs for which they submitted records repre-

sented the number present in the county or by giving a higher number (or range) that they felt better represented the true number. As for the 2019 report, we have presented these estimates at county level, rather than just summed by region and country.

## The Panel

The nine members of the RBBP serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners. The membership of the Panel



remained unchanged from 2019: Helen Baker, Dawn Balmer (Chair), Mark Eaton (Secretary), Ian Francis, Mark Holling, Andrew King, David Norman, Andy Stanbury and David Stroud. The Panel is funded by the JNCC (on behalf of the country nature conservation bodies) and the RSPB, with an additional financial contribution from the BTO. Panel membership aims to achieve broadly representative geographic coverage and to include members who have active involvement in monitoring schemes and specialist research groups, or who participate in various external groups, to facilitate liaison between the Panel and researchers, nest recorders, ringers, surveyors and conservationists.

## Terminology

### Recording areas

The recording areas used in this report are the same as in previous reports (see Holling *et al.* 2007 and [www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk)); these match the bird recording areas used by recorders across the UK, with Gower and East Glamorgan presented separately *contra* Ballance & Smith (2008). We attempt to collate all breeding records by recording area (usually 'county') wherever possible and urge contributors to submit records in the same manner, via recorders.

To reduce the possibility of duplication with surrounding areas, records from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral, are reported as follows. Under the Greater London heading we list records from the Inner London area and the old county of Middlesex only. Records away from this area and within the counties surrounding London – Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey – are listed under those county headings.

### Species banners

Shown for every species in the report, the species banners present key information on status, numbers and trends. A **regular** breeder is defined as a species that has bred (i.e. confirmed breeding has been recorded) at least once in the UK *and* which has bred (or was strongly suspected to have bred) for any five consecutive years within the last 25 (unless the last breeding was more than ten years

ago). This definition is the same as used in the *BoCC* reviews (e.g. Stanbury *et al.* 2021). Other species may be classed as an **occasional** breeder (a species which has bred at least once in the UK but is not a regular breeder); a **potential** breeder (one which has not bred previously in the UK but, in some years, shows signs that it may do so, e.g. presence of singing males holding territory or pairs in suitable breeding habitat); a **colonising** breeder (a new colonist which first bred in the UK in the most recent five-year period (2016–20, or subsequently, if known at the time of writing), or one which may have occasionally bred in the past but for which breeding now appears to be becoming more regular); a **re-introduced** breeder (as for colonising breeder, but for which the source is a deliberate conservation reintroduction); or a **former** breeder (one which bred regularly in the past but for which there has been no confirmed breeding record in the last ten years).

For all **regular** breeding species, the species banners give additional information, as follows:

1. The population status (Red, Amber or Green) as determined by *BoCC5* (Stanbury *et al.* 2021); see below.
2. An indication of population status in one of four categories:
  - **Very rare** (mean of <30 breeding pairs (bp) per annum);
  - **Rare** (30–300 bp per annum);
  - **Scarce** (301–1,000 bp per annum);
  - **Less scarce** (>1,000 bp per annum).
3. Published estimate or RBBP 5-year mean. If a recent estimate from a published national survey is available, this is used and referenced. Otherwise the estimate is based on RBBP data, using the mean maximum population size from the last five years (in this report, 2016–20). If it was believed that reporting in 2020 was adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions (see below), then the mean was derived from the five years 2015–19 (i.e. as in the report for 2019), and given in italics. If annual RBBP coverage is poor, the best available national population estimate is used. The unit varies, but is most frequently 'breeding pairs' (bp). We acknowledge that, for some species, estimates based purely on RBBP data may be

contrary to other estimates, especially where RBBP coverage is moderate or low (see below).

4. A population trend, where one can be calculated; this is presented as a 25-year trend where possible. For species that were added to the RBBP list in 1996, either a 15- or 20-year trend is given depending on the suitability of 2020 data. Trends are calculated by comparing the five-year mean for 2016–20 with the five-year mean ending 25, 20 or 15 years earlier. As with the population estimates, if it was believed that reporting in 2020 was adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions (see below), then the trend was derived from data ending in 2019 (i.e. as in the report for 2019), and is given in italics. Trends are categorised into five bands, based on thresholds of rate of change used to classify species trends in the Wild Bird Indicators (e.g. Defra 2021), and shown in the table below. Most trends are derived from RBBP data, although in some cases trends from periodic surveys are used if they are more robust.

5. The degree of coverage, defined as follows:

- **Near-complete** (RBBP reports present more or less complete annual totals);
- **High** (a good estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, though an unknown (but thought to be small) proportion has not been recorded/reported);
- **Moderate** (a less accurate estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, which is nonetheless thought to be a significant proportion of the total population);
- **Low** (the volume of the data received is such a small proportion of the total population that RBBP totals are of little value for conservation or status reviews; however, maintaining an archive of known sites is useful, and this information can be used in the design of future targeted surveys).

Coverage categories (reassessed in this report) are based on comparisons between the 5-year mean and the most reliable population estimate, where possible, considering known factors in the monitoring and detectability of the species.

The *BoCC5* status can be Red, Amber or Green. The majority of Red- and Amber-listed species on the RBBP list are categorised as such because of some criteria related to their breeding status, whether it be population size (rarity or recent/historical decline), breeding range (localisation or decline) or international importance of the UK breeding population. Some species, which do not have regular breeding or wintering populations in the UK, are not classified.

### The impact of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions upon reporting

As discussed above, the recording of many species was adversely impacted by Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. We have assessed this for each of the species that the RBBP reports upon regularly by comparing totals reported in 2020 against the average for the previous five years (2015–19) and by considering how much numbers of a given species typically vary between years. The feedback received from data-providers on the lockdown impacts on recording activity was also taken into account. Each species for which the RBBP reports regularly has then been placed into one of five categories:

- **Very high lockdown impact on recording**  
The total reported in 2020 at least 50% lower than the mean for the preceding five years.
- **High lockdown impact on recording**  
The total reported in 2020 was between 30 and 50% lower than the mean for the preceding five years.

**Table 1.** Thresholds for defining 25-, 20- and 15-year trend categories.

	thresholds based on 25-year trends	thresholds based on 20-year trends	thresholds based on 15-year trends
strong increase	> +100%	> +74%	> +52%
weak increase	+33% to +100%	+26% to +74%	+19% to +52%
stable	-25% to +33%	-21% to +26%	-16% to +19%
weak decrease	-50% to -25%	-44% to -21%	-34% to -16%
strong decrease	> -50%	> -44%	> -34%



- **Moderate lockdown impact on recording**  
The total reported in 2020 was between 10 and 30% lower than the mean for the preceding five years.
- **Very low or low lockdown impact on recording**  
The total reported in 2020 was no more than 10% lower than the mean for the preceding five years.
- **Uncertain lockdown impact on recording**

A number of species were included in a category different from that which would otherwise be suggested simply by comparing 2020 totals with those from previous years. For example, numbers of Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* in 2020 were above the recent average, but we believe this to be a consequence of a continued increase in the population and know that monitoring at, for example, the Avalon Marshes, Somerset, was hampered by lockdown restrictions. We therefore categorised recording of this species as having been moderately impacted.

For many species, RBBP data are usually considered sufficiently robust to produce population estimates and trends (typically those defined as having Near-complete or High degrees of coverage, see above for definitions). As described above, we have not used 2020 data to update our statistics if we believed lockdown restrictions had a moderate or greater impact on monitoring. In these cases, the estimate and/or trend given in the banner is the same as in the report for 2019, and is given in italics, and we have included a statement below the banner to highlight this. Our recommendation is that others do not use the 2020 data for these species for the production of estimates and trends.

### Species accounts

The headline figure for 2020 (number of sites, breeding pairs, singing males, territories, etc.) is indicated in bold for easy reference. Any regular breeding species classed as Very rare (see above), plus occasional, potential, colonising and former breeders, receive more detailed text describing the records by county. For all other species (with only a few exceptions, generally where available data are limited), the data are tabu-

lated, with each line representing a county or RBBP region. Within the tables, note the use of the following abbreviations:

S	=	sites
T	=	territories
CP	=	confirmed breeding pairs
TP	=	max. total breeding pairs (typically possible, probable and confirmed breeding)
SM	=	singing males
M	=	males
I	=	individuals or singles
YF	=	minimum number of young fledged

### Definitions of breeding evidence

The definitions of ‘Confirmed breeding’, ‘Probable breeding’ and ‘Possible breeding’ follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997), but precise definitions are species specific, as defined on [www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk). Thus, for some species – for example, Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* and Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* – records of summering birds are excluded if we can be sure that breeding was not attempted. Where tables show the number of occupied territories, these are the sum of confirmed and probable breeding pairs, as territorial birds are classed as being probably breeding, unless a nest has (at least) progressed to the stage where eggs have been laid, in which case the pair is classified as a confirmed breeding pair. It is important to note that confirmed breeding is *not* the same as successful breeding; nests that fail with eggs or with young still fall into the confirmed category. A successful breeding pair is one that fledges at least one young bird from a nesting attempt. Readers should note that in all cases the identity of the birds has been confirmed; it is only breeding *status* that is possible/probable/confirmed. The report does not routinely include breeding records of hybrid individuals but they will be noted in an Appendix if young are hatched. Mixed pairs where one of the parents is a species or race on the RBBP list are, however, included.

### Definition of numbers used

Within each species account, numbers given in the format ‘1–4 pairs’ indicate (in this case) one confirmed breeding pair and a

maximum total of four breeding pairs (thus also including possible and probable breeding pairs).

For 16 of the more abundant species reported upon, county bird recorders are asked to provide estimates of populations based upon available evidence. As they were in 2019, these are presented at county level. We have dropped these from the reporting of Willow Tit as more robust county estimates from the national survey will be published shortly. Estimates, where provided, are given in parentheses after the county name. They are summed at regional and

country level, using the actual number of pairs reported for those counties that did not provide estimates, and a + indicating that the regional or national estimate may have been higher. Some regional and country totals include estimates from counties which did not provide actual records in 2020, and so are not given in the table – hence the regional and county totals may be higher than the sum of the county estimates presented. Where county estimates are provided as a range, the upper limit was used in calculating regional and national totals.

**Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus***

Rare 1,114 individuals\* 22y trend: weak decrease -49%

**Red**  
Low

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring**

52 males at 18 active leks. A total of 20 lek sites were monitored across three recording areas. This represents a huge reduction compared to normal coverage, so no conclusions can be drawn from the numbers reported. The results from a transect survey over the winter of 2021/22, the sixth such survey, indicate a considerable decrease in this species since the last survey in 2015/16; we will report further details on this survey in due course.

\* Wilkinson *et al.* (2018).

<b>Capercaillie</b>			North-east Scotland	4	8
	leks	M	Scotland, N & W	9	39
Scotland, Mid	9	13	Highland	9	39
Moray & Nairn	5	5	<b>TOTALS</b>	18	52

**Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

Scarce 400 males 25y trend: stable +4%

**Amber**  
High

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

2–565 singing males. The Common Quail is well known for its substantial year-on-year fluctuations in population size in the UK. It is unusual, therefore, for us to be reporting a similar total to that in 2019 (584 singing males). Last year, we reported on the northward shift of the Quail population in the UK since it was added to our species list in 1986, and it is notable that northern England has now held the largest regional total for the most recent four years.

<b>Common Quail</b>		Hampshire	4	Oxfordshire	11
	SM	Somerset	2	Surrey	1
England	430	Wiltshire	55	Sussex	19
England, SW	106	England, SE	50	England, E	69
Avon	2	Berkshire	8	Cambridgeshire	13
Cornwall	2	Buckinghamshire	2	Lincolnshire	29
Devon	6	Essex	1	Norfolk	25
Dorset	32	Hertfordshire	3	Suffolk	2
Gloucestershire	3	Kent	5	England, C	57



<b>Common Quail cont.</b>		Yorkshire	52	Scotland, Mid	70
Derbyshire	6	Wales	10	Angus & Dundee	23
Herefordshire	7	Anglesey	3	Fife	11
Leics & Rutland	6	Carmarthenshire	1	Moray & Nairn	5
Nottinghamshire	13	Ceredigion	1	North-east Scotland	26
Shropshire	1	Denbigh & Flint	2	Upper Forth	5
Staffordshire	16	East Glamorgan	1	Scotland, N & W	22
Warwickshire	5	Gower	1	Argyll	2
Worcestershire	3	Radnorshire	1	Highland	4
England, N	148	Scotland	124	Orkney	4
Cheshire & Wirral	20	Scotland, S	32	Shetland	12
Cumbria	14	Borders	13	Northern Ireland	1
Lancs & N Mersey	14	Clyde	2	Co. Down	1
Northumberland	48	Lothian	17	TOTAL	565

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Rare 31 bp

25y trend: strong increase +488%

Amber

High

#### Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)

27 sites: 26–31 pairs. While some breeding pairs may have been missed in northern and western Scotland due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, it was clearly another good year for this species in the UK, with the increase in breeding numbers reflecting a wider increase in numbers and an expanding range across Europe (Ledger *et al.* 2022). The first confirmed breeding of a wild pair of Whooper Swans in England was as recent as 2011 (Holling *et al.* 2013), and pairs have bred at the same site in seven of the nine years since, matching a similar pattern of southward expansion in countries including France, the Czech Republic and Hungary (Keller *et al.* 2020).

#### England, E

**Norfolk** One site: one pair bred, fledging five young.

#### Scotland, N & W

**Highland** Three sites: one pair bred, fledging two young; two probable breeding pairs. **Orkney**

One site: one pair bred, fledging three young. **Outer Hebrides** Five sites: two pairs bred, of which one fledged four young; three probable breeding pairs. **Shetland** 16 sites: 16 pairs bred. Ten were successful, with 27 young known to have fledged.

#### Northern Ireland

**Co. Derry** One site: five pairs fledged a total of ten young.

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Occasional breeder

**One site: two probable breeding pairs.** Two pairs were present at a site in **Highland** between 11th June and 19th July. Occasionally, injured birds, unable to migrate, remain on their wintering grounds in the UK throughout the summer, but there were no signs of any injuries to any of 2020's birds. Records of pairs or individuals summering have featured in these reports occasionally but the only reported confirmed breeding came from 2010, when pairs fledged young in Cumbria and Highland (Holling *et al.* 2012).

**Garganey *Spatula querquedula***

Rare 120 bp

25y trend: stable -6%

**Amber**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

64 sites: 14–92 pairs. The reduction or complete absence of monitoring at some wetlands no doubt contributed to this being the lowest total of Garganeys reported since 2013.

<b>Garganey</b>				Cambridgeshire	6	1	12	Carmarthenshire	1	0	1
	S	CP	TP	Lincolnshire	5	1	5	East Glamorgan	1	0	1
England	53	12	77	Norfolk	5	1	5	Scotland	5	1	6
England, SW	6	0	8	Suffolk	3	0	4	Scotland, Mid	2	0	3
Devon	1	0	1	England, C	1	1	1	Angus & Dundee	2	0	3
Gloucestershire	2	0	2	Warwickshire	1	1	1	Scotland, N & W	3	1	3
Somerset	2	0	4	England, N	15	4	25	Argyll	1	0	1
Wiltshire	1	0	1	Cleveland	1	0	2	Highland	1	1	1
England, SE	12	4	17	Cumbria	1	0	1	Orkney	1	0	1
Essex	2	2	3	Greater Manchester	1	0	1	Northern Ireland	3	1	6
Hertfordshire	1	0	1	Lancs & N Mersey	2	0	2	Co. Antrim	1	0	2
Kent	5	2	8	Northumberland	1	0	1	Co. Armagh	1	0	3
Oxfordshire	1	0	1	Yorkshire	9	4	18	Co. Derry	1	1	1
Sussex	3	0	4	Wales	3	0	3	TOTALS	64	14	92
England, E	19	3	26	Anglesey	1	0	1				

**Shoveler *Spatula clypeata***

Less scarce 1,241 bp (no trend available)

**Amber**

Moderate

**High lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

209 sites: 218–627 pairs. Reporting of this species was clearly impacted negatively by the lack of monitoring at wetland reserves, in particular some RSPB reserves that typically hold relatively high numbers.

<b>Shoveler</b>				Cambridgeshire (e 60)	15	6	60
	S	CP	TP	Lincolnshire (e 47)	9	5	19
England (e 926+)	157	191	501	Norfolk (e 60–90)	13	22	48
England, SW (e 41)	9	12	19	Northamptonshire (e 6)	6	0	6
Devon (e 1)	1	1	1	Suffolk (e 70)	10	2	18
Dorset (e 1)	1	0	1	England, C (e 41)	14	13	25
Gloucestershire (e 9)	1	9	9	Derbyshire (e 10)	1	0	3
Hampshire (e 5)	2	2	2	Leics & Rutland (e 5)	3	5	5
Isle of Wight (e 3)	1	0	3	Nottinghamshire (e 14)	2	4	5
Somerset (e 21)	2	0	2	Staffordshire (e 4)	2	3	4
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	0	1	Warwickshire (e 4)	2	0	4
England, SE (e 338+)	33	38	97	West Midlands (e 2)	2	0	2
Bedfordshire (e 4)	3	0	4	Worcestershire (e 2)	2	1	2
Essex (e 179)	4	0	5	England, N (e 233+)	48	93	209
Greater London	2	1	3	Cheshire & Wirral (e 15)	9	7	15
Kent (e 50–100)	15	23	33	Cleveland	2	2	5
Oxfordshire (e 7)	3	0	7	Cumbria (e 6)	6	0	6
Sussex (e 45)	6	14	45	Greater Manchester (e 12)	4	1	6
England, E (e 273)	53	35	151	Lancs & N Mersey (e 50)	5	30	32



<b>Shoveler cont.</b>				<b>Scotland, Mid (e 28)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>
Northumberland (e 4)	3	4	4	Angus & Dundee (e 7)	4	0	7
Yorkshire (e 120–141)	19	49	141	North-east Scotland (e 10)	8	0	10
<b>Wales (e 49+)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	Perth & Kinross (e 10)	1	0	1
Anglesey (e 35)	1	0	2	Upper Forth (e 1)	1	0	1
Carmarthenshire (e 1)	1	0	1	<b>Scotland, N &amp; W (e 140)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>68</b>
Denbigh & Flint (e 3)	1	0	3	Argyll (e 30)	3	0	14
East Glamorgan	1	0	1	Highland (e 3)	2	1	3
Gower	1	1	1	Orkney (e 46)	7	19	31
Gwent (e 4)	1	1	1	Outer Hebrides (e 50–60)	6	1	19
Pembrokeshire (e 4)	2	1	4	Shetland (e 1)	1	1	1
<b>Scotland (e 182+)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Northern Ireland (e 11+)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Scotland, S (e 14+)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	Co. Antrim	1	0	11
Borders (e 1)	1	0	1	<b>Channel Islands (e 1)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Clyde	1	0	2	Jersey (e 1)	1	1	1
Dumfries & G'way (e 10)	5	0	9	<b>Isle of Man (e 2)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Lothian	1	0	1	<b>TOTALS (e 1,171+)</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>627</b>

### Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Rare 216 bp\* (no trend available)

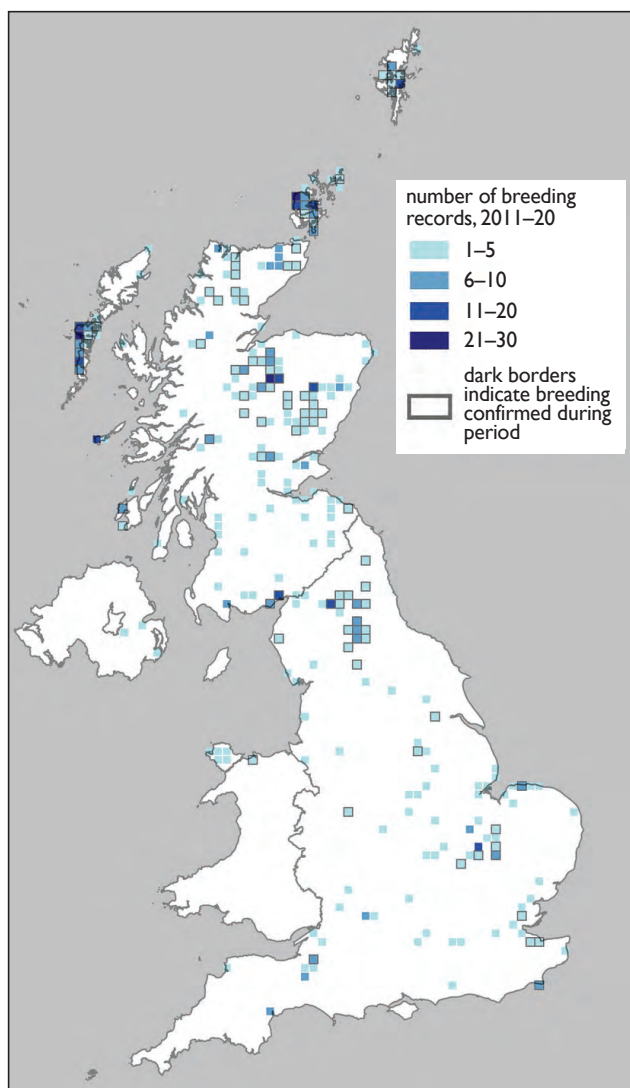
Amber

Low

#### Very high lockdown impact on monitoring

55 sites: 29–88 pairs. The patchy distribution of this species across often-remote areas of Scotland north of the Central Belt (fig. 3) undoubtedly means that RBBP reports underestimate true numbers. This was even more the case in 2020. The population estimate of 216 pairs given by Woodward *et al.* (2020) is derived from RBBP data; the 50-year-old estimate of 300–500 pairs given by the first breeding bird atlas (Sharrock 1976) may well remain a more appropriate total.

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).



**Fig. 3.** Breeding distribution of Eurasian Wigeons *Mareca penelope* in the UK based on records for which accurate locations have been given, 2011–20. Although records are scattered broadly, only 37% of squares have confirmed breeding and distinct clusters can be seen in the East Anglian fens, northern England, northern and eastern Scotland, the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebrides.

Eurasian Wigeon			Scotland, S				
	S	CP	TP				
England	14	5	28	Borders	1	1	1
England, SW	1	0	1	Clyde	1	0	2
Wiltshire	1	0	1	Dumfries & G'way	2	2	5
England, SE	2	0	2	Lothian	1	0	1
Kent	2	0	2	Scotland, Mid	8	1	9
England, E	5	0	10	Angus & Dundee	3	1	3
Cambridgeshire	5	0	10	Moray & Nairn	1	0	2
England, C	1	0	1	North-east Scotland	4	0	4
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	0	1	Scotland, N & W	26	20	40
England, N	5	5	14	Argyll	3	0	3
Cumbria	1	1	1	Highland	11	10	22
Lancs & N Mersey	1	0	4	Orkney	4	1	5
Northumberland	2	4	4	Outer Hebrides	4	3	4
Yorkshire	1	0	5	Shetland	4	6	6
Wales	1	0	1	Northern Ireland	1	0	1
Anglesey	1	0	1	Co. Down	1	0	1
Scotland	39	24	58	TOTALS	55	29	88

**Black Duck *Anas rubripes***  
Occasional breeder

One site: one male. The long-staying male remained at Strontian, Highland, with Mallards *A. platyrhynchos* until at least 9th December (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 575). There were no reports of breeding behaviour in 2020.

**Pintail *Anas acuta***

Very rare 28 bp

25y trend: weak decrease -45%

Amber  
High

Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)



Roger Wyatt

473. Juvenile Pintail *Anas acuta*, Oxfordshire, June 2020.

19 sites: 5–31 pairs. The distribution of records changed somewhat between 2019 and 2020, with recording effort likely to have been impacted by lockdown restrictions. Nonetheless, the total number of sites and pairs are similar to those for 2019. The successful breeding in Oxfordshire was the first breeding record for that county.

#### England, SE

Essex One site: two probable breeding pairs. Kent One site: one probable breeding pair.

Oxfordshire One site: one pair bred, fledging three young.

#### England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one possible breeding pair. Suffolk One site: one probable breeding pair.

#### England, N

Cumbria Two sites: two probable breeding pairs. Yorkshire One site: one pair bred, fledging at least six young, and one probable breeding pair.

#### Scotland, N & W

Argyll Three sites: (1) & (2) one pair bred; (3) six probable breeding pairs. Dumfries & Galloway One site: one possible breeding pair. Orkney Six sites: (1) one pair bred (three young fledged) and one possible breeding pair; (2) two probable breeding pairs; (3) one probable and one possible breeding pair; (4) & (5) one probable breeding pair; (6) three possible breeding pairs. Outer Hebrides One site: one possible breeding pair.

### Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce 734 bp

25y trend: weak increase +57%

Red

High

#### Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)

162 sites: 293–556 pairs. Common Pochard was moved to the *BoCC* Red list in 2015 (Eaton *et al.* 2015) and maintained that status in 2021 (Stanbury *et al.* 2021) owing to a severe decline in the UK's wintering population (-69% over 25 years; Frost *et al.* 2021 and a Global IUCN Red List assessment of Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2022). Drivers for this decline were discussed in the RBBP report for 2018 (Eaton *et al.* 2020), though it remains unclear as to why the breeding population in the UK has gone against this trend, increasing by 57% over the last 25 years. While the total number of breeding birds reported for 2020 is the lowest since 2006, this can be attributed to the reduction of monitoring coverage at some of the wetlands that are important for this species.

Common Pochard							
	S	CP	TP				
				Greater London (e 26)	6	8	26
				Hertfordshire (e 30)	7	19	30
England (e 821)	159	290	551	Kent (e 100–150)	19	20	45
England, SW (e 64)	13	20	31	Oxfordshire (e 2)	2	0	2
Devon (e 1)	1	0	1	Surrey (e 15)	7	12	12
Dorset (e 1)	1	0	1	Sussex (e 26)	5	11	26
Gloucestershire (e 6)	4	0	6	England, E (e 158)	40	46	146
Hampshire (e 10)	3	4	4	Cambridgeshire (e 56)	15	11	56
Isle of Wight (e 3)	1	0	3	Lincolnshire (e 36)	7	21	36
Isles of Scilly (e 2)	1	1	1	Norfolk (e 40–55)	8	11	43
Somerset (e 40)	1	14	14	Northamptonshire (e 4)	4	1	4
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	1	1	Suffolk (e 7)	6	2	7
England, SE (e 400)	70	141	255	England, C (e 22)	9	9	20
Bedfordshire (e 3)	3	1	3	Nottinghamshire (e 9)	3	1	9
Berkshire (e 10)	6	6	10	Staffordshire (e 4)	2	4	4
Essex (e 136)	15	64	101	Warwickshire (e 3)	1	0	1



<b>Common Pochard cont.</b>				Northumberland (e 1)	1	1	1
West Midlands (e 1)	1	0	1	Yorkshire (e 95)	15	44	63
Worcestershire (e 5)	2	4	5	Wales (e 22)	2	2	4
England, N (e 143)	27	74	99	Anglesey (e 15–20)	1	0	2
Cheshire & Wirral (e 16)	3	14	16	Carmarthenshire (e 2)	1	2	2
Cleveland (e 9)	4	3	5	Northern Ireland (e 11+)	1	1	1
Cumbria (e 1)	1	0	1	Co. Antrim	1	1	1
Lancs & N Mersey (e 21)	3	12	13	<b>TOTALS (e 820+)</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>556</b>

**Greater Scaup *Aythya marila***  
Occasional breeder

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. Only 11 confirmed pairs of breeding Greater Scaup have been reported by the RBBP since 1973, and in three of these instances mixed breeding with Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* was not discounted. Nevertheless, records of birds in potential breeding locations are received in most years; many, like this year's, have been from locations in northern Britain.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Two sites: (1) a female present from 18th June was joined by a male on 20th. The pair remained until 23rd June; (2) a male summered, from 7th May to 11th July.

**Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis***  
Potential breeder

One site: one male. A male was present between 27th May and 17th June at a site in the Outer Hebrides, in the company of Tufted Ducks, although no evidence of breeding was recorded (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 575). This Nearctic vagrant features in our report for the fourth time, and the second year in succession although, unlike previous lingering drakes, this year's individual was not observed displaying or mating.

**Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***

Rare 52 bp\*

25y trend: stable -22%

Red

Low

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

Two sites: 1–3 pairs. It is hardly surprising that, given the requirement for April and May visits in remote areas of Scotland, little monitoring of Common Scoters was undertaken in 2020.

\* Eaton *et al.* 2008.

<b>Common Scoter</b>				Scotland, N & W	1	0	2
	S	CP	TP	Shetland	1	0	2
Scotland, Mid	1	1	1	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
Perth & Kinross	1	1	1				

**Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***

Rare 200 bp\*

(no trend available)

**Red**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

27–58 breeding females. Numbers reported during 2020 were low, as little monitoring of the important Strathspey population was possible due to lockdown restrictions. Regardless, such monitoring has been much reduced, and numbers reported in recent years are down from the high point of 200 pairs in 2006 (Holling *et al.* 2009). The small population in Northumberland continues to increase, aided by the provision of nestboxes, as were the birds that colonised Scotland: the first breeding record in the UK was in a nestbox at Rothiemurchus, Highland, in 1970 (Dennis & Dow 1984).

The Common Goldeneye was moved to the Red list in *BoCC5* (Stanbury *et al.* 2021) on the basis of a 58% decline in the wintering population in the UK over the last 25 years (Frost *et al.* 2021). It appears that the European population is stable, but there has been a rapid change in wintering distribution, with birds responding to warmer early winter temperatures by wintering in greatly increased numbers in Finland and Sweden. Conversely, there has been a decrease in the south and west of its wintering range – not just the UK but also France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Lehikoinen *et al.* 2013).

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

<b>Common Goldeneye</b>			Hertfordshire	0	1	North-east Scotland	1	4
	CP	TP	England, N	13	14	Scotland, N & W	13	37
England	13	17	Northumberland	13	14	Highland	13	37
England, SE	0	3	Scotland	14	41	TOTALS	27	58
Greater London	0	2	Scotland, Mid	1	4			

**Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator***

Less scarce 1,565 bp\* (no trend available)

**Amber**

Low

**High lockdown impact on monitoring**

61 sites: 48–97 pairs. The RBBP has collated data on this species since 2016 and there is still a long way to go in improving coverage, although the numbers reported were understandably low in 2020. Red-breasted Merganser moved from Green to Amber in the *BoCC5* review (Stanbury *et al.* 2021) on account of a moderate decline in the wintering population. At present we do not know whether the breeding population has followed a similar trajectory, but it is notable that there was a 28% contraction in the breeding range in Britain and Ireland between the 1968–72 breeding bird atlas (Sharrock 1976) and 2007–11 atlas (Balmer *et al.* 2013).

\* Humphreys *et al.* (2016).

<b>Red-breasted Merganser</b>			Angus & Dundee (e 6)	0	6
	CP	TP	Scotland, N & W (e 486+)	28	64
England, N (e 22)	18	18	Argyll (e 100–300)	0	3
Cumbria (e 14)	14	14	Highland (e 50–70)	20	31
Lancs & N Mersey (e 6)	2	2	Orkney (e 8)	3	6
Northumberland (e 2)	2	2	Outer Hebrides (e 80–100)	5	16
Wales (e 35)	0	6	Shetland	0	8
Caernarfonshire (e 5)	0	3	Northern Ireland (e 3+)	2	3
Meirionnydd (e 9–15)	0	3	Co. Antrim	2	2
Scotland (e 530+)	28	70	Co. Fermanagh	0	1
Scotland, Mid (e 34)	0	6	TOTALS (e 590+)	48	97

**Great Bustard *Otis tarda*****Very rare** 10 breeding females (no trend available)

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

**One extensive site: 22 nesting females.** There was a minimum of 22 nesting attempts in 2020, from which at least six birds fledged. Care is taken to minimise disturbance to breeding female bustards, which means that some breeding attempts may be missed, although it is also possible that there is a small amount of double counting of relaying individuals. In addition to the birds fledged in the wild, 17 eggs were taken from nests vulnerable to farming operations in England and the young hatching from these were reared in captivity. Of these, six birds were released back into the wild and five were retained for captive breeding purposes. There has been a considerable increase in the number of breeding Great Bustards arising from the reintroduction project, led by the Great Bustard Group ([www.greatbustard.org](http://www.greatbustard.org)); in 2017 there were only three breeding females. There was no release of imported birds in 2020.

## England, SW

**Wiltshire** One extensive site: approximately 22 females laid eggs; a minimum of six young fledged, and a further six were released after being reared in captivity from clutches taken.

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*****Less scarce** 2,100 bp\* 25y trend (BBS): **strong decrease -96%****Red**

Moderate

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

**396 sites: 42–619 pairs.** This was only the second year in which the RBBP has collected data on Turtle Doves, and the number reported was similar to that in 2019 (652 pairs); the relatively late arrival of migrant Turtle Doves, and the fact that their distribution is limited to England, meant that lockdown restrictions had little effect on their monitoring in 2020. The national survey conducted in 2021 will be documented fully in next year's report but it suggests that the actual population level is over three times as high as reported here (and twice as high as suggested by recorders' estimates).

\* Stanbury *et al.* (in prep.).

Turtle Dove	S	CP	TP				
				Sussex (e 75)	28	0	53
				England, E (e 328)	222	21	296
England, SW (e 18)	8	2	16	Cambridgeshire (e 55)	44	4	55
Devon (e 1)	1	0	1	Lincolnshire (e 39)	30	0	39
Hampshire (e 13)	5	2	13	Norfolk (e 80–125)	58	10	93
Isle of Wight (e 1)	1	0	1	Northamptonshire (e 3)	3	0	3
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	0	1	Suffolk (e 106)	87	7	106
England, SE (e 519+)	150	16	258	England, C (e 12+)	12	2	12
Bedfordshire (e 12)	5	1	12	Derbyshire (e 2)	2	0	2
Berkshire (e 1)	1	0	1	Leics & Rutland	2	0	2
Buckinghamshire (e 1)	1	0	1	Warwickshire (e 5)	5	1	5
Essex (e 20)	11	5	18	Worcestershire (e 3)	3	1	3
Hertfordshire	1	0	1	England, N (e 110)	4	1	37
Kent (e 200–400)	98	10	165	Yorkshire (e 110)	4	1	37
Oxfordshire (e 4)	3	0	4	TOTALS (e 987+)	396	42	619
Surrey (e 5)	2	0	3				



**Corn Crane *Crex crex***

Scarce 992 bp\*

25y trend: **strong increase +108%****Red**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

801 singing males. The monitoring programme coordinated by the RSPB was affected by lockdown restrictions in 2020, so the decline in numbers reported must be regarded with caution. Indications from 2021 are, however, that the population continues to fall from the peak reached in 2014, and there are fears over the long-term future of the species in north and west Scotland. A National Heritage Lottery-funded project, 'Corncrakes Calling', has been launched to address the downturn in Scotland through land management, advocacy, and public engagement and education.

The increase in calling males in Norfolk is due to another conservation initiative, the release of captive-reared birds in the Wensum Valley by the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust between 2016 and 2020 (with releases subsequently moved to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve at Welney).

\* Wotton *et al.* (2015)

**England, E**

Cambridgeshire Nine, at five sites. Norfolk 19, at 18 sites.

**England, N**

Northumberland Three, at three sites.

**Scotland, Mid**

North-east Scotland Two, at two sites.

**Scotland, N & W**

Argyll Total 416: Coll 43, Colonsay & Oronsay 17, Iona 16, Islay 44, Jura 1, Luing 1, Tiree 294.

Highland Total 15: mainland 7, Skye 8. Orkney Total 20. Outer Hebrides Total 315: Benbecula 16, Berneray 1, Harris 5, Lewis 75, Monarch Isles 2, North Uist 98, South Uist 118.

**Northern Ireland**

Co. Antrim One site, one. Co. Derry One site, one.

**Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana***

Very rare 20 bp

25y trend: **weak decrease -37%****Amber**

Moderate

**High lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

12 sites: 1–13 singing males/pairs. It is hard to be confident of the extent to which Covid-19 lockdowns impacted recording of this species – although numbers in 2020 were low, the species is prone to considerable between-year fluctuations. However, as this is a species of often-remote locations for which Scotland, where lockdown restrictions were in place for longer, sometimes holds a substantial proportion of the population, there is a chance that birds were missed. As the figures given in the account for Baillon's Crane *Zapornia pusilla* suggest, breeding is rarely proven in the UK, but it seems likely that the juvenile birds in Cheshire & Wirral had been raised at the site in question.

**England, SW**

Gloucestershire Two sites: (1) one singing male from 19th to 26th June; (2) one singing male on 22nd June. Isle of Wight One site: one singing male from 12th May to 15th June. Somerset One site: one singing male from 31st May to 4th June.

**England, SE**

Oxfordshire One site: one singing male from 1st to 7th April. Sussex Two sites: (1) one singing male from 12th to 20th May; (2) one singing male on 6th April.

**England, E**

Cambridgeshire One site: one singing male. Lincolnshire One site: one singing male from 30th April to 1st May.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: adult seen with two juveniles in August.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one singing male from 4th to 25th June.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: at least two singing males heard between 18th and 30th June.

### Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla*

Potential breeder

**One site: one possible pair.** There was one singing female at a site in Somerset between 31st May and 4th June (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 578). This is the fourth year in the last decade that this species has featured in our report, and it is now on birders' radars when visiting suitable fenland habitat in late spring and early summer. It is not unreasonable, however, to suspect that proof of breeding may be equally elusive for Baillon's Crake as it is for Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*; in the last ten years, the RBBP has reported 239 records of singing Spotted Crakes, but only three confirmed breeding attempts, so even if Baillon's Crakes continue to arrive in the UK, it may be some time before we are able to confirm breeding.

### Little Crake *Zapornia parva*

Potential breeder

**One site: one possible pair.** There was a singing female at a site in Cambridgeshire between 15th and 26th May (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 578). This is the second time we have reported on this species; the first record, in 2018, was also of a singing female in Cambridgeshire, albeit at a different site.

### Common Crane *Grus grus*

Rare 44 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +1,281%**

**Amber**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

**30 sites: 40–57 pairs.** The RBBP currently uses the criteria developed by the UK Crane Working Group to assess and classify records. These seek to reduce the risk of double counting by excluding itinerant pairs not settled at a breeding site, and thus some records of apparent breeding activity are excluded from our totals. In addition to the breeding attempts summarised in the table below, non-breeding pairs were reported from two sites in each of **Cambridgeshire**, **North-east Scotland** and **Norfolk**, and single sites in **Somerset** and **Wiltshire**. A single female summered at a site previously used for breeding in **East Glamorgan**.

Once again, the UK Common Crane population has reached a new high, with the numbers of confirmed and total pairs exceeding the records set in 2019.

Common Crane	S	CP	TP	YF	Cambridgeshire	5	7	8	5
					Lincolnshire	1	1	1	1
England	25	38	52	20	Norfolk	7	10	14	9
England, SW	7	12	21	3	Suffolk	2	3	3	1
Dorset	1	0	1	0	England, N	2	3	3	1
Gloucestershire	1	5	5	0	Yorkshire	2	3	3	1
Somerset	5	7	15	3	Scotland, Mid	5	2	5	3
England, SE	1	2	2	0	North-east Scotland	5	2	5	3
Oxfordshire	1	2	2	0	TOTALS	30	40	57	23
England, E	15	21	26	16					

**Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps***  
Occasional breeder

One site: one mixed pair. A male, which has been resident at Loch Feorlin in Argyll since 2014, was present again in 2020, paired with a Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 578). Hybrid breeding has only been reported once, in 2017.

**Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***

Very rare 29 bp      25y trend: strong decrease -61%

**Red**  
Low



**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

Seven sites: 2–7 pairs. Typically, all successful breeding records for this species came from Scotland, though lockdown restrictions meant that the usual coordinated monitoring coverage was not possible, and only a few ad hoc records were received. In England, an injured bird summered on the Exe Estuary in Devon for its 14th and final year.

Scotland, N & W

**Highland** Five sites: five pairs, of which two were confirmed as breeding, fledging six young. **Moray & Nairn** One site: a single bird in suitable habitat on one date. **Orkney** One site: three birds on 8th June, following early spring sightings.

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

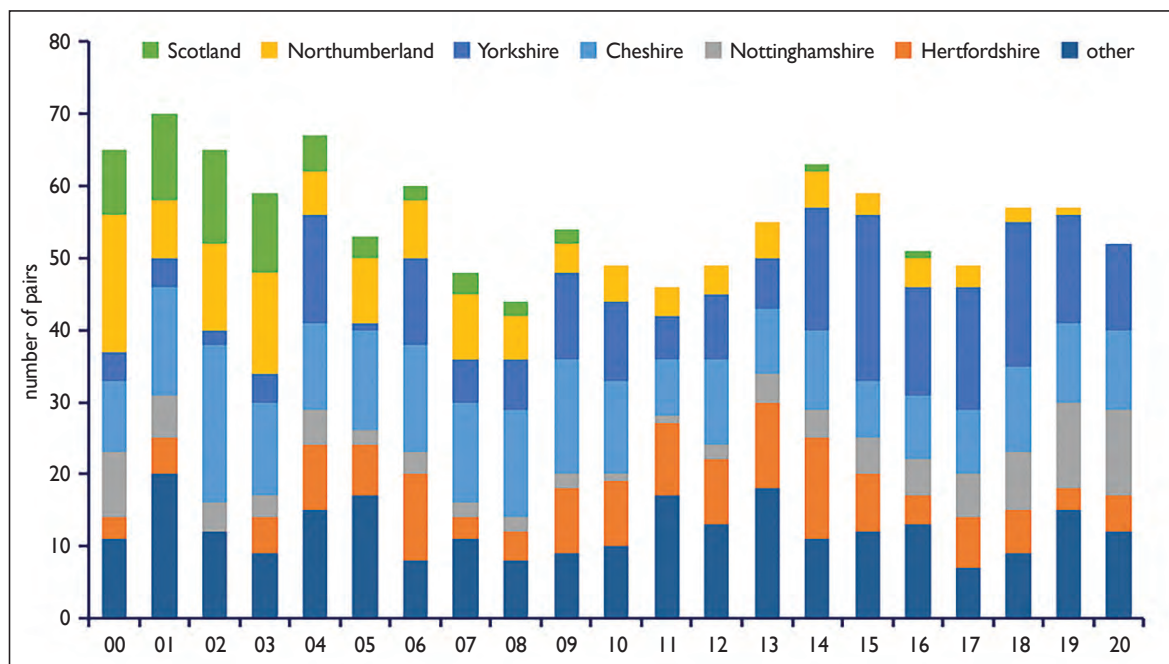
Rare 53 bp      25y trend: stable -7%

**Amber**  
Near-complete



**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

13 sites: 29–52 pairs. In contrast to Slavonian Grebe, the more southerly distribution of Black-necked Grebe meant that monitoring was largely unaffected by lockdown restrictions in 2020, although a small number of pairs may have been missed at peripheral sites. It was a typical year,



**Fig. 4.** Numbers of breeding pairs of Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* in key counties (Scottish recording areas lumped), 2000–20.



with Nottinghamshire, Cheshire & Wirral and Yorkshire continuing to hold the bulk of the population. Numbers of Black-necked Grebes breeding in the UK have been relatively stable, with a population between 40 and 60 pairs for the last three decades, but the key sites for them have shifted over time and the relative importance of the main counties has changed over the last two decades (fig. 4); note the disappearance from Scotland, then Northumberland, and conversely the growing importance of Yorkshire and, more recently, Nottinghamshire.

Black-necked Grebe					Nottinghamshire	1	0	12	0
	S	CP	TP	YF	Staffordshire	1	5	5	5
England, SE	3	1	7	0	England, N	5	21	23	30
Essex	1	0	2	0	Cheshire & Wirral	2	11	11	21
Hertfordshire	2	1	5	0	Yorkshire	3	10	12	9
England, E	2	2	4	3	Northern Ireland	1	0	1	0
Lincolnshire	1	2	2	3	Co. Armagh	1	0	1	0
Suffolk	1	0	2	0	TOTALS	13	29	52	38
England, C	2	5	17	5					

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus***

Scarce 328 bp

25y trend: strong increase +106%

Amber

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

198–232 pairs. Considerable effort is still expended on monitoring Stone-curlew populations but coverage is now less complete than previously and gaps were exacerbated in 2020 by the impact of lockdown restrictions on RSPB fieldwork. Therefore, no conclusions should be drawn from the lowest total of pairs reported since 1998.

Stone-curlew		Berkshire	3	5	Suffolk	52	52	
	CP	TP	Oxfordshire	5	5	England, C	0	1
England, SW	63	81	Sussex	1	4	Leics & Rutland	0	1
Hampshire	15	22	England, E	126	136	TOTALS	198	232
Wiltshire	48	59	Cambridgeshire	4	7			
England, SE	9	14	Norfolk	70	77			

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Very rare 3 bp

(no trend available but increasing)

Amber

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Three sites: one breeding pair, another pair present for seven days at two adjacent sites. In addition, pairs were recorded for single days in Kent and Surrey. There have been 23 confirmed breeding attempts since 2006 (fig. 5), but only seven of these have been successful, fledging a total of 25 young. Prior to this century, breeding had occurred on just four occasions, and successfully only in 1945 and 1987.

England, SW

Somerset One site: a pair fledged three young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: one pair visited two nearby sites between 13th and 19th April, was seen copulating at one but did not stay.

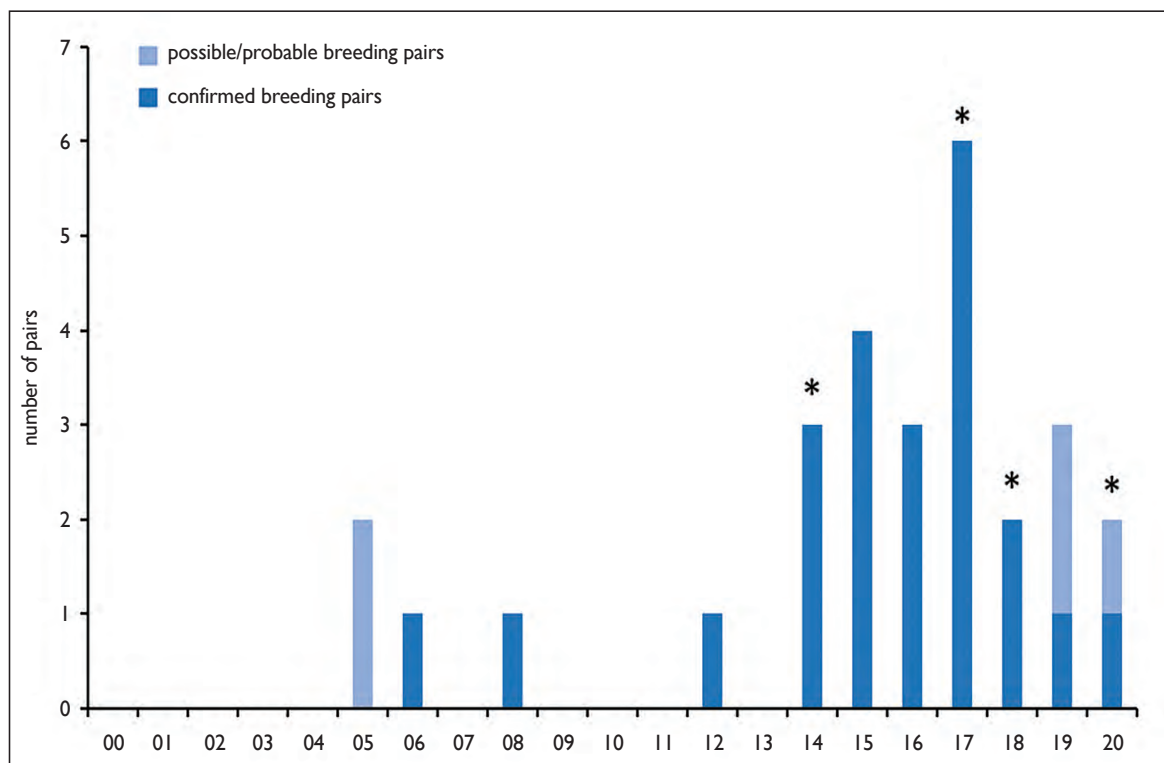


Fig. 5. Number of pairs of Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* breeding in the UK, 2000–20. Asterisks denote the years in which young birds were fledged.

**Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

Less scarce 2,138 bp 25y trend: strong increase +326%

Amber  
High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

135 sites: 1,970 pairs. The table gives totals of confirmed breeding pairs only, so may underestimate the size of the breeding population slightly. While the number of sites from which Avocets were reported increased in 2020 (though not to a record total, which remains the 139 reported in 2017), the number of pairs reported fell, which is probably attributable to the lack of counts from some RSPB reserves where Avocets were known to be present. The numbers of young fledging from some of the larger colonies was noticeably low, which may well be a consequence of these nature reserves not being adequately staffed and managed during lockdown restrictions.

After breeding was suspected in the Outer Hebrides in 2019, it was proven in 2020, with a pair being seen with a one-week-old chick, although it did not survive. In addition, Avocets bred in North-east Scotland for the first time.

Avocet			Sussex	6	68	Cheshire & Wirral	5	66
	S	CP	England, E	58	896	Cleveland	1	19
England	133	1,968	Cambridgeshire	11	29	Cumbria	1	6
England, SW	11	202	Lincolnshire	9	173	Lancs & N Mersey	9	139
Avon	1	4	Norfolk	26	463	Northumberland	3	5
Dorset	1	2	Suffolk	12	231	Yorkshire	12	141
Gloucestershire	2	63	England, C	6	46	Scotland	2	2
Hampshire	6	99	Leics & Rutland	1	3	Scotland, Mid	1	1
Somerset	1	34	Nottinghamshire	2	12	North-east Scotland	1	1
England, SE	27	448	Staffordshire	1	7	Scotland, N & W	1	1
Essex	10	255	Worcestershire	1	24	Outer Hebrides	1	1
Kent	11	125	England, N	31	376	TOTALS	135	1,970

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Scarce 620 bp

20y trend: **stable +7%**

**Green**

Moderate

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

426–671 pairs. To maintain comparability with the last national survey (Conway *et al.* 2019), the table below shows only confirmed and probable breeding pairs; although information on a further 49 possible breeding pairs was also submitted to the Panel, these may have been passage birds or those using sites only temporarily.

While it is difficult to imagine there were no local impacts on recording effort, numbers of Little Ringed Plovers reported were slightly up on the recent average and it is conceivable that the focus on birdwatching near observers' homes may have resulted in an increase in recording of this species, which can be found in well-populated areas.

<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>		Cambridgeshire (e 25)	20	Yorkshire (e 70–85)	62
	TP	Lincolnshire (e 30)	29	<b>Wales (e 88)</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>England (e 704)</b>	<b>572</b>	Norfolk (e 30–40)	35	Breconshire (e 10)	6
<b>England, SW (e 73)</b>	<b>63</b>	Northamptonshire (e 10)	10	Carmarthenshire (e 30)	30
Avon (e 6)	6	Suffolk (e 7)	7	Denbigh & Flint (e 9)	9
Devon (e 10)	9	<b>England, C (e 135)</b>	<b>121</b>	East Glamorgan (e 6–10)	5
Dorset (e 4)	4	Derbyshire (e 28)	26	Gwent (e 6)	1
Gloucestershire (e 6)	6	Herefordshire (e 11)	4	Meirionnydd (e 6)	2
Hampshire (e 35)	29	Leics & Rutland (e 21)	17	Montgomeryshire (e 10)	2
Somerset (e 3)	3	Nottinghamshire (e 8)	8	Radnorshire (e 4–5)	4
Wiltshire (e 9)	6	Shropshire (e 7)	7	<b>Scotland (e 55+)</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>England, SE (e 138)</b>	<b>99</b>	Staffordshire (e 31–32)	31	<b>Scotland, S (e 29+)</b>	<b>24</b>
Bedfordshire (e 16)	11	Warwickshire (e 11)	11	Borders (e 8)	8
Berkshire (e 8)	8	West Midlands (e 6)	6	Clyde	10
Buckinghamshire (e 9)	9	Worcestershire (e 11)	11	Dumfries & G'way (e 3)	2
Essex (e 36)	23	<b>England, N (e 246)</b>	<b>188</b>	Lothian (e 8)	4
Greater London (e 2)	2	Cheshire & Wirral (e 22)	22	<b>Scotland, Mid (e 26)</b>	<b>16</b>
Hertfordshire (e 14)	13	Cleveland (e 9)	9	Angus & Dundee (e 6)	5
Kent (e 20–30)	15	Cumbria (e 15)	15	Fife (e 7)	1
Surrey (e 10)	5	Greater Manchester (e 29)	27	North-east Scotland (e 8)	8
Sussex (e 13)	13	Lancs & N Mersey (e 36)	36	Upper Forth (e 2)	2
<b>England, E (e 112)</b>	<b>101</b>	Northumberland (e 30)	17	<b>TOTAL (e 847+)</b>	<b>671</b>

**Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus***

Scarce 423 males\*

24y trend (survey): **strong decrease -57%**

**Red**

Low

**High lockdown impact on monitoring**

6–26 'pairs'. The remote nature of this montane species' breeding sites means that, away from national survey years, only a small fraction of the population is recorded. This was of course exacerbated by lockdown restrictions in Scotland in 2020, with county recorders specifically identifying upland species such as Dotterel as being subject to lower levels of reporting.

\*Hayhow *et al.* (2015).

<b>Dotterel</b>				<b>Scotland</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	North-east Scotland	4	1	6
	S	CP	TP	<b>Scotland, Mid</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Scotland, N &amp; W</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>England, N</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	Angus & Dundee	1	0	1	Highland	10	1	13
Cumbria	3	2	3	Moray & Nairn	3	2	3	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>



**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

Scarce 290+ bp\* (no trend available)

**Red**

Low

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring**

7–8 pairs. The RBBP receives few records of breeding Whimbrel, and 2020 certainly proved no exception to this. A sample survey conducted across Shetland in 2021, with targeted coverage in other areas of Scotland with a history of occupancy, will provide a much-needed update on changes in this species' status since the last survey in 2009.

The individual holding territory in lowland pasture in Warwickshire, recorded defending it from a pair of Eurasian Curlews *N. arquata* (Marlow & de Clermont 2021), is the first record of attempted breeding in England known to the RBBP. The only breeding recorded away from Scotland is of a pair that fledged three young on Ynys Gwylan Fawr, a small island off the coast of the Llyn Peninsula in Caernarfonshire in 2000, and which had probably also bred there the previous year (Pritchard *et al.* 2021).

\* Jackson (2009)

## England, C

Warwickshire A male held a territory from 14th April until at least 21st May.

## Scotland, N &amp; W

Shetland Records of confirmed breeding were received from seven territories.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***Rare 52 bp 25y trend: **stable** +22%**Red**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

13 sites: 46–55 pairs. Unfortunately, lockdown restrictions meant that Project Godwit, an EU LIFE-funded project intended to increase the breeding populations of 'Continental Black-tailed Godwits' *L. l. limosa* on the Nene and Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, had to halt activities in 2020. This meant a pause in the raising of godwit chicks in captivity for subsequent release to boost productivity (known as 'head-starting'; see also Taylor 2022). The need for this is clearly demonstrated by the low productivity from the godwits breeding without this intervention – just nine young fledged from 43 pairs across the two sites. The project was able to resume in 2021 and received a one-year funding extension into 2022 to enable another year of head-starting. Elsewhere, a pair of 'Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits' *L. l. islandica* was observed with a half-grown chick on Orkney and may well have succeeded in raising it to fledging.

Black-tailed Godwit					Lancs & N Mersey	1	2	2	0
	S	CP	TP	YF	<i>L. l. islandica</i>				
<i>L. l. limosa</i>					Scotland, N & W	8	2	10	3
England	5	44	45	9	Orkney	4	1	5	0
England, E	4	42	43	9	Outer Hebrides	2	0	3	0
Cambridgeshire	3	39	40	6	Shetland	2	1	2	3
Norfolk	1	3	3	3	TOTALS	13	46	55	12
England, N	1	2	2	0					

**Ruff *Calidris pugnax***Very rare 13 females 25y trend: **strong decrease** -52%**Red**

Moderate

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

Six sites: 0–2 breeding females. Nesting female Ruffs are extremely elusive and breeding is rarely confirmed. Many more records come from the far more obvious lekking males, and we use the

number of females in attendance at leks as our core metric. Most records come from either RSPB reserves in England or wetland sites in north and west Scotland (some also under RSPB management); access to, and consequently monitoring effort at, such sites was reduced considerably in 2020.

The Ruff remained Red-listed in *BoCC5* (Stanbury *et al.* 2021) owing to the severe population decline over 25 years. This decline reflects a massive contraction across the southern part of its European range, as shown by Keller *et al.* (2020) and discussed in last year's RBBP report (Eaton *et al.* 2021).

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one male lekking to one female.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: (1) five lekking males with one female; (2) five lekking males. Orkney Two sites: two males lekking at each. Outer Hebrides One site: one lekking male.

**Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos***  
Potential breeder

**One site: one displaying male.** A male was displaying at a site in Orkney between 12th and 15th July. Such records of an individual well outside of the breeding range in North America and eastern Siberia might be regarded as being of little interest, but probable breeding has occurred in the UK once before, at Strathbeg, North-east Scotland, in 2004. In that year, a pair was observed displaying in the spring, and subsequently a 'very fresh' juvenile was recorded, accompanied by an adult (Holling *et al.* 2007). In the same year, there were records from three sites in the Outer Hebrides (a displaying pair, another pair, and a male possibly paired with a Dunlin *Calidris alpina*) and one in Caithness (a displaying male). There have been no records of birds showing breeding behaviour since, but records were received from three sites in Norway and one in European Russia during fieldwork for the *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller *et al.* 2020) and it may be that breeding is regular in the far north of Europe. Kempnaers & Valcu (2017) showed how male Pectoral Sandpipers move vast distances between sites in the breeding season, with some individuals visiting up to 24 sites spread throughout virtually the whole breeding range and travelling up to 13,045 km within a four-week period. During this time males may sleep for as little as 10% of the time in order to maximise their mating opportunities (Lesku *et al.* 2012).

**Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus***

Rare 95 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +254%**

**Red**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

**40 sites: 38–123 breeding pairs/males.** In addition to the Scottish breeding attempts tabulated below, a female summered at a site in Northumberland for the seventh successive year. Lockdown restrictions may have had a slight impact on coverage in Argyll and the Outer Hebrides but monitoring otherwise seems to have been complete. We have provided commentary on the remarkable increase in this species in our last two reports (e.g. see fig. 4 in Eaton *et al.* 2020); after a slight dip in numbers in 2019 the population rose once again to a new record total. Since 2010, the population has increased by an impressive average rate of 14.7% per annum.

<b>Red-necked Phalarope</b>				Caithness	1	0	1	Outer Hebrides	8	20	23
	S	CP	TP	Fair Isle	1	1	2	Shetland	26	5	81
Scotland, N & W	40	38	123	Highland	2	0	3	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>123</b>
Argyll	1	11	11	Orkney	1	1	2				

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

Very rare 3 bp

20y trend: strong increase +100%

Amber

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Two sites: 0–3 pairs. While still an extremely rare breeding bird in the UK, this is another wader found at high latitudes that has increased in recent years, along with Red-necked Phalarope and Wood Sandpiper.

## Scotland, N &amp; W

Highland Two sites: (1) one probable breeding pair, seen copulating, and a possible breeding pair; (2) one singing male.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

Very rare 36 bp

25y trend: strong increase +528%

Amber

Low

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

Seven sites: 0–11 pairs. It is no surprise, given the Scottish distribution and remote nature of many of the sites occupied by this wader, that reporting was heavily impacted by lockdown restrictions in 2020.

Wood Sandpiper				Argyll	1	0	1
	S	CP	TP	Highland	6	0	10
Scotland, N & W	7	0	11	TOTALS	7	0	11

**Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Less scarce 1,080 bp\* (no trend available)

Amber

Low

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring**

3–31 pairs. Lockdown restrictions meant that an even smaller proportion than usual of the population of this wader of north and west Scotland was reported in 2020.

\* Hancock *et al.* (1997).



Steph Thorpe

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*



Greenshank		Argyll	4	Shetland	2
	TP	Highland	23	TOTALS	31
Scotland, N & W	31	Outer Hebrides	2		

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeus melanocephalus***

**Amber**

Less scarce 1,823 bp 25y trend: strong increase +6,228%

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

44 sites: 2,118–2,187 pairs. It seems that the monitoring of the overall population of Mediterranean Gulls was affected little by lockdown restrictions, since all of the main colonies were surveyed and the total number of pairs is the second highest reported since breeding was first recorded in the UK in 1968. The number of sites was, however, the lowest since 2015, suggesting that breeding activity at a few peripheral locations might have been missed.

In recent years, Langstone Harbour, Hampshire, has been the most important colony for this species in the UK – and 2020 was no exception, with numbers recovering after a relatively poor year in 2019. Productivity was low, however, with only 271 young fledged by the 1,579 pairs (0.17 young per pair), the lowest output since the complete failure of the colony in 2011.



Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeus melanocephalus*

Steph Thorpe

<b>Mediterranean Gull</b>				Suffolk	2	55	55
	S	CP	TP	England, C	4	1	6
England	41	2,116	2,180	Nottinghamshire	1	0	1
England, SW	5	1,593	1,603	Staffordshire	2	0	4
Dorset	1	1	1	Worcestershire	1	1	1
Hampshire	3	1,592	1,592	England, N	9	70	84
Isle of Wight	1	0	10	Cheshire & Wirral	1	0	8
England, SE	12	310	340	Greater Manchester	1	0	1
Essex	3	5	30	Lancs & N Mersey	3	64	65
Kent	3	147	148	Northumberland	1	2	6
Oxfordshire	1	0	1	Yorkshire	3	4	4
Surrey	1	1	1	Wales	2	1	6
Sussex	4	157	160	Carmarthenshire	1	1	1
England, E	11	142	147	Denbigh & Flint	1	0	5
Cambridgeshire	3	0	4	Northern Ireland	1	1	1
Lincolnshire	3	4	5	Co. Antrim	1	1	1
Norfolk	3	83	83	TOTALS	44	2,118	2,187

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

Less scarce 1,375 bp 15y trend: stable -14%

**Amber**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

51 sites: 1,173 pairs. The number of Little Terns fledged in 2020 is the lowest since we began reporting this metric in 2006. Lockdown restrictions (and normal variation in coverage of the more remote colonies in Scotland) may have resulted in a reduction of monitoring. More worryingly, it is possible that the increased numbers of people on the UK's beaches as lockdown restrictions eased (but foreign holiday travel

remained impossible), combined with a reduction in numbers of conservation staff and volunteers at breeding sites (Balmer *et al.* 2020), may have resulted in damaging disturbance at some colonies.



Little Tern  
*Sternula albifrons*

Dave Nurney

<b>Little Tern</b>				Northumberland	2	63	21
	S	CP	YF	Yorkshire	1	27	42
England	27	914	468	Wales	2	110	60
England, SW	3	89	36	Denbigh & Flint	2	110	60
Dorset	1	50	30	Scotland	22	110	18+
Hampshire	2	39	6	Scotland, Mid	2	28	0
England, SE	6	37	19	Moray & Nairn	1	3	0
Essex	2	14	3	North-east Scotland	1	25	0
Kent	1	0	0	Scotland, N & W	20	82	18+
Sussex	3	23	16	Argyll	6	47	10
England, E	9	616	343	Caithness	1	12	0
Lincolnshire	1	11	5	Highland	4	17	7
Norfolk	6	510	281	Orkney	2	5	1+
Suffolk	2	95	57	Outer Hebrides	7	1	0
England, N	9	172	70	Isle of Man	1	39	2
Cleveland	3	63	7	TOTALS	51	1,173	548+
Cumbria	3	19	0				

**Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***

Rare 119 bp 25y trend: weak increase +43%

**Red**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Three sites: 133 pairs. Only sites with confirmed breeding pairs are listed. In addition, a mixed pair with a Common Tern *S. hirundo* was recorded at a site in Anglesey; the pair fledged a single chick.

The all-important colony on Coquet Island, Northumberland, continued to increase and has returned to levels last seen there 50 years ago. As we go to press, however, it is clear that this colony experienced significant impact from highly pathogenic avian influenza in 2022; the level of loss will be recorded in the report for that year. The total of 1,888 pairs at the two main colonies in the Republic of Ireland in 2020 – Rockabill (1,615 pairs) and Lady's Island Lake (273) – is the highest since monitoring began (Macleod-Nolan 2021).

<b>Roseate Tern</b>				Northumberland	1	130	122	Channel Islands	1	2	0
	S	CP	YF	Northern Ireland	1	1	1	Jersey	1	2	0
England, N	1	130	122	Co. Antrim	1	1	1	<b>TOTALS</b>	3	133	123

**‘American Black Tern’ *Chlidonias niger surinamensis***  
**Potential breeder**

**One site: one individual.** A male was present at Long Nanny, Northumberland, between 8th and 25th June (see also *Brit. Birds* 115: 576), with records of a Black Tern (unassigned to race) from three other Northumberland sites between 13th June and 31st July thought likely to be of the same individual. The race of this individual was not determined until the examination of photographs after it returned in 2021. It spent much of its stay displaying and presenting fish to Arctic Terns *S. paradisaea*. This is the first time that this race of Black Tern has featured in a RBBP report and is only the ninth record of this race in Britain.

**Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*** **Red**  
**Scarce 785 bp\*** 19y trend (SMP): **strong decrease -70%** **Low**

**Very high lockdown impact on monitoring**

78 apparently occupied territories (AOT). Breeding success is not monitored for many of the reported territories, so the numbers of fledged young we report cannot be taken as a measure of productivity, and it is not always clear where breeding success has been assessed to enable us to separate out those counts. In recent years, survey work for the *Seabirds Count* census of all Britain and Ireland’s breeding seabirds has resulted in increased reporting of Arctic Skuas. The intention had been for this fieldwork to be completed in 2020, but this was postponed to 2021 due to lockdown restrictions. The results of the census will be published in 2023 and will give a robust update on the status of this Red-listed and rapidly declining species.

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).



Roger Riddington

**474.** Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*, Shetland, May 2020.

<b>Arctic Skua</b>				Caithness	1	6	-	Outer Hebrides	1	1	-
	S	AOT	YF	Fair Isle	1	27	26	Shetland	3	3	-
Scotland N & W	15	78	67	Highland	1	21	19	<b>TOTALS</b>	15	78	67
Argyll	2	5	-	Orkney	6	15	22				



**Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*****Occasional breeder**

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. Although this elegant species might be regarded as an unlikely breeding bird in the UK, the southernmost point of its European range is in southern Norway, at the same latitude as, and only 300 miles to the east of, Shetland. A pair attempted to breed at Barry Buddon, Angus & Dundee, in 1980 but their eggs were predated (McLeod 2005). In addition, there have been a handful of records of birds lingering in the breeding season, on Orkney, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland, and occasional reports from montane sites in mainland Scotland (Forrester *et al.* 2007). Keller *et al.* (2020) showed how, in common with many Arctic-breeding species, there has been a considerable contraction in distribution in the south of the Long-tailed Skua's European range since the 1980s, so it may be that such occurrences become less frequent in the UK.

**Scotland, N & W**

**Outer Hebrides** One site: one individual aggressively defending a moorland site on one date.

**Shetland** One site: a bird on territory between 29th May and 20th August was joined by a second individual on 16th–17th July only.

**Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*****Less scarce** 1,255 bp\* 12y trend (survey): **weak increase** +38%**Green**

Low

**High lockdown impact on monitoring**

73–145 pairs. The breeding population of Red-throated Divers in Scotland is scattered across a wide and often remote area, with pairs often utilising tiny lochans to nest by, of which there are many thousands to choose from! Therefore, it is no great surprise that only a small proportion of the population (last surveyed nationally in 2006) is reported annually, and that this was further reduced in 2020. We suspect that, in more typical years, many observations of both Red-throated and the rarer Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* in potential breeding habitat are not submitted to the appropriate county bird recorder, and so are lost for monitoring purposes. We would encourage all birders, both residents and those visiting Scotland on holiday, to submit all records of potentially breeding divers.

\* Dillon *et al.* (2009).

Red-throated Diver			Scotland, N & W		Outer Hebrides			
	CP	TP	Argyll	72	142	Shetland	13	15
Scotland, Mid	1	3	Caithness	1	4	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>145</b>
Moray & Nairn	0	2	Highland	13	24			
North-east Scotland	1	1	Orkney	33	57			

**Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*****Rare** 217 bp\*12y trend (survey): **stable** +16%**Amber**

Low

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

12–39 pairs. As with Red-throated Diver, reporting of this species is typically low, and was lower still in 2020. The third network review of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the UK (Stroud *et al.* 2016) reported that the current provision of SPAs is insufficient, and that a national survey was required – it is now 16 years since the last national survey of this species.

\* Eaton *et al.* (2007).



<b>Black-throated Diver</b>			Moray & Nairn	1	1	Highland	7	22
	CP	TP	North-east Scotland	0	1	Outer Hebrides	4	6
Scotland, S	0	1	Perth & Kinross	0	3	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>
Clyde	0	1	Scotland, N & W	11	33			
Scotland, Mid	1	5	Argyll	0	5			

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***  
**Reintroduced breeder**

**One site: two confirmed breeding pairs, one probable breeding pair.** Last year, we reported on the first (unsuccessful) breeding attempt arising from the White Stork Project, which is aiming to establish a population of 50 breeding pairs in southern England by 2030. A breeding population is being established using rehabilitated (wild-hatched) birds from Poland and France, as well as releasing juveniles raised in captivity. In 2020, the next project milestone was reached, with two pairs breeding successfully. One of these pairs was the same as 2019’s unsuccessful pair, consisting of a wild, vagrant male and a released Polish female. The birds in the other pairing were both released Polish birds. In addition, a cohort of 19 captive-bred juveniles was released (24 were released in 2019). Gow & Edgcumbe (2015) documented evidence for the historical presence of the White Stork as a breeding bird in Britain – there is only one documented record of a specific incidence of breeding, a pair on St Giles’ Cathedral, Edinburgh, in 1416 (Clarke 1919), although more general evidence exists for occurrence of the species earlier than this.

England, SE

**Sussex** One site: two pairs of reintroduced birds bred, both laying three eggs and fledging broods of three and one. A third pair built a nest and was observed copulating, but no eggs were laid.

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

Rare 32 bp

(no trend available but increasing)

Amber

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

**Four sites: 36–40 pairs.** After a rapid increase following the onset of breeding at the main Norfolk colony in 2010, population growth has slowed somewhat over the last 2–3 years and 2020 was the first year since 2017 that breeding did not occur at a new site in the UK. Still, activity in North-east Scotland gives hope for future breeding there and, with continued high productivity in Norfolk, it is difficult to imagine that the population will not continue to prosper.

England, E

**Norfolk** One site (Holkham NNR): 28 pairs bred, fledging 56 young.  
**Suffolk** One site: three breeding pairs; fledged broods of three and one, with the third failing with a clutch of four eggs.



Andrew Bloomfield

**475.** Adult and juvenile Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*, Holkham NNR, Norfolk, May 2020.

## England, N

Yorkshire One site: five confirmed and three probable breeding pairs; five young fledged.

## Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: a pair was seen displaying and mating in July.

**Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

Rare 201 booming males 25y trend: **strong increase +1,128%**

**Amber**

Near-complete

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

123 sites: 49–247 pairs. It was another record year, regardless of monitoring at some sites being impeded by lockdown restrictions. There were notable increases in eastern and northern England. That numbers dipped in southwest England can be attributed to incomplete monitoring on the super-site that is the Avalon Marshes.

Eurasian Bittern	sites	booming males (min)	booming males (max)	nests (min)	nests (max)	TP
England	120	228	236	46	46	239
England, SW	13	51	52	3	3	52
Avon	1	1	1	0	0	1
Dorset	1	1	1	0	0	1
Gloucestershire	2	2	2	1	1	2
Hampshire	1	1	1	0	0	1
Isle of Wight	1	2	2	0	0	2
Somerset	5	39	40	1	1	40
Wiltshire	2	5	5	1	1	5
England, SE	11	14	16	6	6	16
Bedfordshire	2	1	2	0	0	2
Essex	1	1	1	0	0	1
Kent	6	9	10	4	4	10
Oxfordshire	1	2	2	2	2	2
Sussex	1	1	1	0	0	1
England, E	72	130	134	22	22	135
Cambridgeshire	17	34	34	3	3	34
Lincolnshire	7	11	12	7	7	12
Norfolk	34	40	43	7	7	43
Suffolk	14	45	45	5	5	46
England, C	2	2	2	0	0	2
Derbyshire	1	1	1	0	0	1
Nottinghamshire	1	1	1	0	0	1
England, N	22	31	32	15	15	34
Greater Manchester	2	2	2	0	0	2
Lancs & N Mersey	4	5	5	2	2	5
Northumberland	1	1	1	0	0	1
Yorkshire	15	23	24	13	13	26
Wales	3	7	7	3	3	8
Anglesey	2	5	5	1	1	5
Gwent	1	2	2	2	2	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>247</b>

These figures are based on the RSPB monitoring methodology with the minimum figure based on the number of nests found. The minimum number of booming males is based on residency at a site for at least a week, while the maximum figure includes males booming for a shorter period only and cases where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved. The maximum total number of pairs (TP) combines information on both booming males and nests found; sometimes the number of nests at a site exceeds the number of boomers heard.

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*****Very rare** 3 males (no trend available)**Amber**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

One site: two males. A typical year, with sightings from the key area on the Avalon Marshes, but no breeding evidence of this elusive species beyond 'barking' males (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 594).

England, SW

Somerset One site: two males singing, at least one present from 16th May to 30th June.

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*****Colonising breeder****Amber**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

11 sites: 27–35 pairs. A substantial increase in numbers from the 19 pairs in 2019. Breeding was confirmed at five new sites.

England, SW

Hampshire One site: eight pairs bred and three probable pairs, 18 young in nests. Somerset No evidence of breeding, but juvenile birds seen in July may have fledged in the county.

England, SE

Essex Two sites: (1) three pairs bred, fledged two young; (2) two pairs bred. Kent One site: one probable breeding pair. Sussex Three sites: (1) five pairs bred, fledged five young; (2) two pairs bred, no young fledged; (3) one pair bred, three young in nest, another pair may have been present.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one possible breeding pair. Norfolk One site: five pairs bred, fledged six young. Northamptonshire One site: one pair bred.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one probable breeding pair.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*****Occasional breeder**

One site: one possible pair. A single bird was present at a site in Somerset between 17th May and 1st June. The nesting by a pair that fledged two young at Dungeness, Kent, in 2010 remains the only confirmed breeding attempt in the UK.

**Great White Egret *Ardea alba*****Very rare** 18 bp (no trend available but increasing)**Amber**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Ten sites: 22–27 pairs. Records of possible breeding are noted where two or more birds are present at a potential breeding site throughout the breeding season.

It was another record year, with confirmed breeding at four sites, including a new location in Wiltshire. Numbers of breeding Great White Egrets have continued to increase steadily since the first breeding attempts in the UK in 2010 (fig. 6).

England, SW

Isle of Wight One site: one probable breeding pair. Somerset Two adjacent sites: 15 pairs bred, fledged 34 young. Wiltshire One site: one breeding pair fledged three young.

England, SE

Buckinghamshire One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one possible breeding pair. Lincolnshire One site: one possible breeding pair.

Norfolk One site: three pairs bred, two pairs fledging three young each.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: three pairs bred, fledging broods of four, four and three.

Wales

East Glamorgan One site: one possible breeding pair.

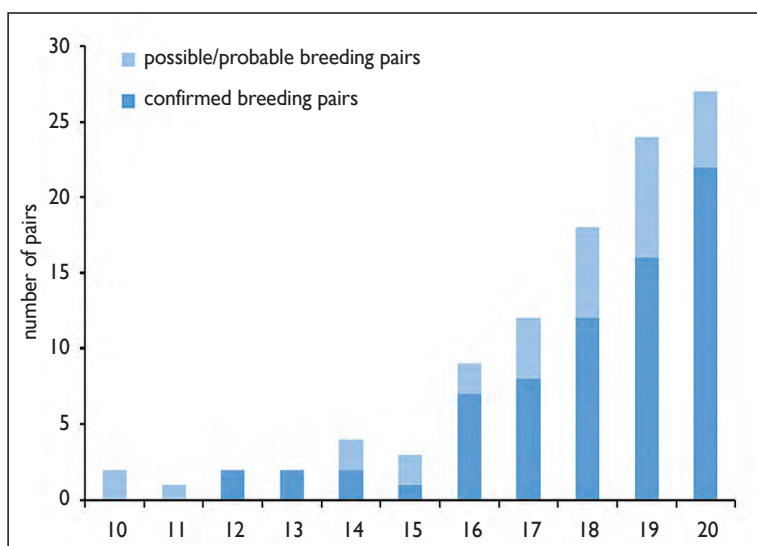


Fig. 6. Numbers of pairs of breeding Great White Egrets *Ardea alba* in the UK, 2010–20.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Scarce 1,260 bp

15y trend: strong increase +1,001%

**Green**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

138 sites: 1,100–1,130 pairs. For a bright-white, conspicuous bird, the Little Egret is surprisingly tricky to monitor during the breeding season. It seems that breeding sites can go undetected – but perhaps an even greater problem is the difficulty of counting nests and recording productivity, even at established sites, and to distinguish nests from those of Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea*. Nests are often obscured or completely hidden in dense thickets, and the inaccessibility of wetland sites, or the difficulties of visiting without causing undue disturbance, can cause further problems. These factors may have exacerbated the difficulties caused by lockdown restrictions, with numbers reported in 2020 dropping compared to recent levels.

Little Egret		Kent		5	136	Greater Manchester	2	2
	S	TP	Oxfordshire	3	6	Lancs & N Mersey	2	36
England	122	1,017	Surrey	1	7	Northumberland	1	1
England, SW	31	201	Sussex	8	50	Yorkshire	5	41
Avon	1	2	England, E	29	251	Wales	10	64
Cornwall	7	53	Cambridgeshire	3	33	Anglesey	2	13
Devon	3	30	Lincolnshire	11	101	Breconshire	3	3
Dorset	5	19	Norfolk	8	65	Caernarfonshire	1	10
Gloucestershire	4	34	Northamptonshire	2	7	Carmarthenshire	1	12
Hampshire	5	34	Suffolk	5	45	Denbigh & Flint	1	23
Isle of Wight	1	3	England, C	11	32	Montgomeryshire	1	1
Somerset	2	3	Derbyshire	3	7	Pembrokeshire	1	2
Wiltshire	3	23	Leics & Rutland	3	7	Scotland, S	1	1
England, SE	34	331	Nottinghamshire	2	9	Dumfries & Galloway	1	1
Bedfordshire	3	12	Warwickshire	2	8	Northern Ireland	1	23
Berkshire	1	6	Worcestershire	1	1	Co. Down	1	23
Buckinghamshire	3	9	England, N	17	202	Channel Islands	4	25
Essex	4	73	Cheshire & Wirral	2	93	Jersey	4	25
Greater London	1	5	Cleveland	1	17	TOTALS	138	1,130
Hertfordshire	5	27	Cumbria	4	12			



One notable record in 2020 was the long-awaited first breeding in Scotland. Little Egrets have been breeding in Cumbria since 2012, including in the north of that county since 2017, and are a familiar sight along the Scottish side of the Solway Firth during the non-breeding season. There have been suggestions of breeding on the north side of the Firth in the past, with sightings of stick-carrying birds and even a fledged brood, for which a Cumbrian origin couldn't be discounted. Hence, it is no surprise that the first confirmed breeding attempt for Scotland was on the Solway Firth in Dumfries & Galloway, where a pair fledged at least one and maybe as many as three young (Mearns & Mearns 2020).

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

Rare 242 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +239%**

**Amber**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

200–235 pairs. As has been the case for many years, information was not received from all the monitoring effort that took place in Scotland. At the other end of the UK, only the female returned from the pair that built a nest in Dorset in 2019. She laid unfertilised eggs and we will have to wait a little longer to report the first successes of the project aiming to establish a new Osprey population in and around Poole Harbour.

<b>Osprey</b>				Breconshire	0	1	0	Angus & Dundee	10	12	15
	CP	TP	YF	Caernarfonshire	1	1	0	Fife	1	1	0
England	23	27	46*	Denbigh & Flint	1	1	0	Moray & Nairn	17	17	25
England, SW	0	1	0	Meirionnydd	2	3	6	North-east Scotland	17	20	26
Dorset	0	1	0	Montgomeryshire	2	2	5	Perth & Kinross	10	10	13
England, E	2	2	4*	<b>Scotland</b>	171	200	272	Upper Forth	19	25	31
Northamptonshire	2	2	4*	<b>Scotland, S</b>	32	40	62	<b>Scotland, N &amp; W</b>	65	75	100
England, C	7	7	15*	Ayrshire	2	2	4	Argyll	17	17	23
Leics & Rutland	7	7	15*	Borders	8	9	17	Caithness	3	5	0
England, N	14	17	27*	Clyde	7	10	12	Highland	45	53	77
Cumbria	8	9	17*	Clyde Islands	2	2	4	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>329</b>
Lancs & N Mersey	0	1	0	Dumfries & G'way	12	16	25				
Northumberland	6	7	10	Lothian	1	1	0				
Wales	6	8	11	<b>Scotland, Mid</b>	74	85	110				

\* Fledging data not available: based on young in nest.

**Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

Rare 109 bp\*

20y trend: **strong increase +85%**

**Amber**

Moderate

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

42–108 pairs. A national survey was run by a group of Honey-buzzard enthusiasts over 2020 and 2021 (Clements *et al.* 2022). Fortunately, the late breeding season of this species, with a peak of activity in July and August, meant that the survey was relatively unaffected by lockdown restrictions in 2020. The survey results revealed that, as suspected, the population has grown substantially since the last survey 20 years previously (Batten 2001) and is far larger than the numbers reported to the RBBP annually suggest. It is clear that the secretive nature of breeding Honey-buzzards means that pairs can easily go undetected without dedicated searching, and despite the efforts during the two survey years there probably remain pairs yet to be found. Clements *et al.* (2022) believe that the true population in Britain could be as high as 150 pairs.

<b>Honey-buzzard</b>					Yorkshire	0	2	3	4
	I	CP	TP	YF	Wales	0	2	5	0
England	2	24	53	26	Caernarfonshire	0	0	1	0
England, SW	0	11	20	14	Carmarthenshire	0	1	1	0
Dorset	0	3	3	6	Gower	0	1	1	0
Gloucestershire	0	0	1	0	Meirionnydd	0	0	2	0
Hampshire	0	7	9	7	Scotland	0	15	48	16
Somerset	0	0	2	0	Scotland, S	0	2	6	1
Wiltshire	0	1	5	1	Borders	0	0	1	0
England, SE	2	10	23	8	Dumfries & G'way	0	2	5	1
Kent	0	2	5	0	Scotland, Mid	0	11	22	12
Surrey	0	1	3	2	Perth & Kinross	0	10	21	10
Sussex	2	7	15	6	Upper Forth	0	1	1	2
England, E	0	0	4	0	Scotland, N & W	0	2	20	3
Norfolk	0	0	4	0	Highland	0	1	11	1
England, C	0	1	2	0	Moray & Nairn	0	1	5	2
Nottinghamshire	0	1	2	0	North-east Scotland	0	0	4	0
England, N	0	2	4	4	TOTALS	2	42	108	39
Northumberland	0	0	1	0					

**Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos***

Scarce 508 bp\*

33y trend (survey): **stable** +16%**Green**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

130–229 pairs. As usual, our data for Golden Eagles come from the efforts of members of the Scottish Raptor Study Groups, as submitted to the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme. Given the lengthy lockdown restrictions in place in Scotland in the spring of 2020, they are to be congratulated on still being able to report about 75% of the pairs monitored in a more typical year.

\* Hayhow *et al.* (2017).

<b>Golden Eagle</b>					Argyll	1	39	52	22
	I <sup>1</sup>	CP	TP	YF	Caithness	0	1	1	1
Scotland, S	0	5	7	1	Highland	11	50	106	49
Scotland, Mid	4	25	40	26	Outer Hebrides	0	10	23	7
Angus & Dundee	0	1	1	2	Northern Ireland	1	0	0	0
Moray & Nairn	0	4	4	0	Co. Fermanagh	1	0	0	0
North-east Scotland	0	7	12	7	TOTALS	17	130	229	106
Perth & Kinross	4	8	14	11					
Upper Forth	0	5	9	6					
Scotland, N & W	12	100	182	79					

<sup>1</sup> Total includes home ranges occupied by single birds or showing signs of occupation, but no pair seen.

**Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***

Scarce 673 bp

25y trend: **strong increase** +204%**Green**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

581–864 pairs. The first Covid-19 lockdown was imposed at the height of the Goshawk fieldwork season and, while many raptor workers managed to ‘catch up’ after lockdown restrictions had eased, recording of this species was undoubtedly impeded in some areas. Regardless, the total number of pairs is the highest we have ever reported. This is almost certainly due to a continuation of rapid

population growth; over the last two decades the number of breeding Goshawk pairs reported in the UK has increased by approximately 5% per annum (see fig. 7 in Eaton *et al.* 2020). The total estimated by county recorders, allowing for gaps in monitoring coverage, is now approaching 1,300 pairs.

Records received in 2020 give some idea of the ferocious nature of the species. Goshawks were recorded preying on the broods of Honey-buzzards, Hobbies *Falco subbuteo*, and other Goshawks, as well as on fledged Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* and adult Short-eared Owls *Asio flammeus*. In one Northumbrian Goshawk territory, a first-year female paired with an older male, having first killed his previous mate!

Northern Goshawk			Northumberland (e 50)	38	50
	CP	TP	Yorkshire (e 40–50)	15	21
England (e 707)	352	554	Wales (e 314+)	50	87
England, SW (e 316)	168	248	Breconshire (e 55)	6	23
Avon (e 1)	0	1	Carmarthenshire (e 3)	1	1
Cornwall (e 14)	7	14	Ceredigion (e 20)	5	5
Devon (e 53)	30	53	Denbigh & Flint (e 7)	2	7
Dorset (e 30)	1	5	East Glamorgan (e 15–20)	7	7
Gloucestershire (e 45)	39	45	Gower	4	9
Hampshire (e 100)	47	59	Gwent (e 75)	4	4
Somerset (e 15)	4	15	Meirionnydd (e 20–30)	7	10
Wiltshire (e 58)	40	56	Montgomeryshire (e 50)	5	6
England, SE (e 74)	20	48	Pembrokeshire (e 10)	1	2
Berkshire (e 2)	2	2	Radnorshire (e 30)	8	13
Kent (e 2)	2	2	Scotland (e 279+)	179	223
Surrey (e 10)	4	6	Scotland, S (e 84+)	59	74
Sussex (e 50)	12	38	Ayrshire	5	8
England, E (e 64)	32	55	Borders (e 39)	34	39
Lincolnshire (e 3)	1	1	Clyde	0	1
Norfolk (e 45–50)	20	43	Dumfries & G'way (e 35)	19	25
Suffolk (e 11)	11	11	Lothian (e 1)	1	1
England, C (e 132)	73	118	Scotland, Mid (e 155+)	105	132
Derbyshire (e 30)	24	24	Angus & Dundee	2	4
Herefordshire (e 36)	12	36	Fife (e 15–20)	0	13
Nottinghamshire (e 10)	6	6	Moray & Nairn (e 20)	2	4
Shropshire (e 35)	21	32	North-east Scotland (e 88)	86	88
Staffordshire (e 13)	4	13	Perth & Kinross	9	16
Worcestershire (e 8)	6	7	Upper Forth	6	7
England, N (e 121)	59	85	Scotland, N & W (e 40)	15	17
Cheshire & Wirral (e 3)	1	1	Highland (e 30–40)	15	17
Cumbria (e 11)	4	11	TOTALS (e 1,300+)	581	864
Co. Durham (e 5)	1	2			

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Scarce 391 bp

25y trend: strong increase +270%

Amber

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

277–367 breeding females/pairs. Some ‘pairs’ actually refer to two or more females paired with a single polygynous male. Overall, numbers were slightly down, presumably owing to lockdown restrictions. Estimates submitted by county bird recorders suggest that the true population is about 100 pairs higher than reported here.

Marsh Harrier	CP	TP	YF	Cheshire & Wirral (e 4)	4	4	7
				Cleveland (e 1)	0	1	0
England (e 416)	246	320	280	Lancs & N Mersey (e 5)	2	4	3
England, SW (e 34)	20	26	29	Northumberland (e 3)	3	3	7
Dorset (e 5)	4	5	5	Yorkshire (e 50)	39	50	44
Gloucestershire (e 1)	0	1	0	Wales (7+)	4	5	5
Hampshire (e 3)	1	3	0	Anglesey (e 4)	3	3	2
Isle of Wight (e 3)	3	3	8	East Glamorgan	0	1	0
Somerset (e 20)	11	13	14	Gower	1	1	3
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	1	2	Scotland (e 12+)	6	12	18
England, SE (e 97)	33	56	45	Scotland, S (e 1)	0	1	0
Bedfordshire (e 1)	0	1	0	Dumfries & Galloway (e 1)	0	1	0
Essex (e 17)	8	8	17	Scotland, Mid (e 11+)	6	11	18
Kent (e 50–70)	22	39	23	Angus & Dundee	1	2	0
Oxfordshire (e 1)	1	1	2	North-east Scotland (e 1)	1	1	3
Sussex (e 8)	2	7	3	Perth & Kinross	3	7	11
England, E (e 222)	145	176	145	Upper Forth	1	1	4
Cambridgeshire (e 22)	13	22	13	Channel Islands (e 30)	21	30	10
Lincolnshire (e 40)	24	40	45	Guernsey (e 5)	3	5	0
Norfolk (e 75–90)	75	78	42	Jersey (e 25)	18	25	10
Suffolk (e 70)	33	36	45	TOTALS (e 465+)	277	367	313
England, N (e 63)	48	62	61				

### Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce 575 bp\*

12y trend (survey): **weak decrease -29%**

**Red**

Moderate

#### Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring

210–322 pairs. Numbers reported were down on recent years, no doubt due to the impact of lockdown restrictions. The earlier lifting of restrictions may have allowed most monitoring to resume in England, although birds that displayed early in the spring but did not settle (or were not allowed to settle) may have been missed. In Cumbria, two nests failed on the RSPB reserve at Geltsdale when the polygynous male, which had paired with two females, disappeared in suspicious circumstances. Nevertheless, the English population continued to recover, with both the 24 confirmed and the 29 total pairs being the highest reported since the Hen Harrier was added to the RBBP species list in 1996, and a considerable increase from the nadir of just one pair in 2012 (Holling *et al.* 2014).

\* Wotton *et al.* (2018).

Hen Harrier	CP	TP	YF	Montgomeryshire	1	1	0	Caithness	2	4	0
				Radnorshire	4	8	0	Highland	17	23	26
England	24	29	60	Scotland	134	219	285	Orkney	2	54	26
England, C	0	1	0	Scotland, S	32	39	83	Outer Hebrides	16	26	33
Staffordshire	0	1	0	Borders	7	10	12	Northern Ireland	11	19	-
England, N	24	28	60	Clyde	6	10	16	Co. Antrim	4	4	-
Cumbria	8	10	20	Clyde Islands	10	10	33*	Co. Derry	3	3	-
Lancs & N Mersey	8	8	11	Dumfries & G'way	9	9	22	Co. Fermanagh	2	8	-
Northumberland	6	6	20	Scotland, Mid	26	34	57	Co. Tyrone	2	4	-
Yorkshire	2	4	9	Angus & Dundee	1	1	0	Isle of Man	16	16	38*
Wales	25	41	31	Moray & Nairn	10	11	22	TOTALS	210	322	414
Breconshire	0	1	0	North-east Scotland	7	9	16				
Caernarfonshire	2	8	5	Perth & Kinross	8	13	19				
Denbigh & Flint	3	3	4	Scotland, N & W	76	146	145				
Meirionnydd	15	20	22	Argyll	39	39	60				

\* Fledging data not available: based on young in nest.



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

Very rare 5 bp

25y trend: strong decrease -61%

**Red**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Two sites: 0–6 pairs. The maximum total pairs represented here is based on at least four males of breeding age at a site in the south of England, and a female at a previous breeding site in Yorkshire. This significantly overstates the size of our Montagu's Harrier population, however, with the key statistic instead being that – for the first time since 1975 – there was no confirmed breeding in the UK in 2020. Montagu's Harrier was moved to the BoCC5 Red list and is also assessed as being Critically Endangered in Great Britain (Stanbury *et al.* 2021). The species was driven virtually to extinction at the end of the nineteenth century, but numbers slowly increased again during the first half of the twentieth century to reach a peak of around 40–50 pairs in the early 1950s before declining again. Following an absence of breeding pairs in the mid 1970s, numbers rose once again (fig. 7). The population has had a number of core areas, at which numbers have waxed and waned in recent decades: north Norfolk and around the Wash; Lincolnshire and the Humber; Oxfordshire; Wiltshire; and Dorset/Hampshire. Over the last decade, breeding has ceased in most of these areas and the population has dropped sharply since 2011.

With such low numbers, the fate of the population rests on the survival and breeding success of just a few individuals. Satellite-tagging has revealed the fortunes of individual birds – for example, bad weather in 2018 caused the deaths of four individuals on their migration from wintering grounds in Africa, a severe blow to the species' chances of survival in the UK. At breeding sites, intensive conservation interventions are necessary to protect nests from agricultural operations, reduce nest-predation risk (e.g. with the use of fencing), and prevent illegal persecution. The last, as for many raptors, remains an issue: breeding males, including satellite-tagged individuals, have disappeared in both Norfolk and Wiltshire in recent years.

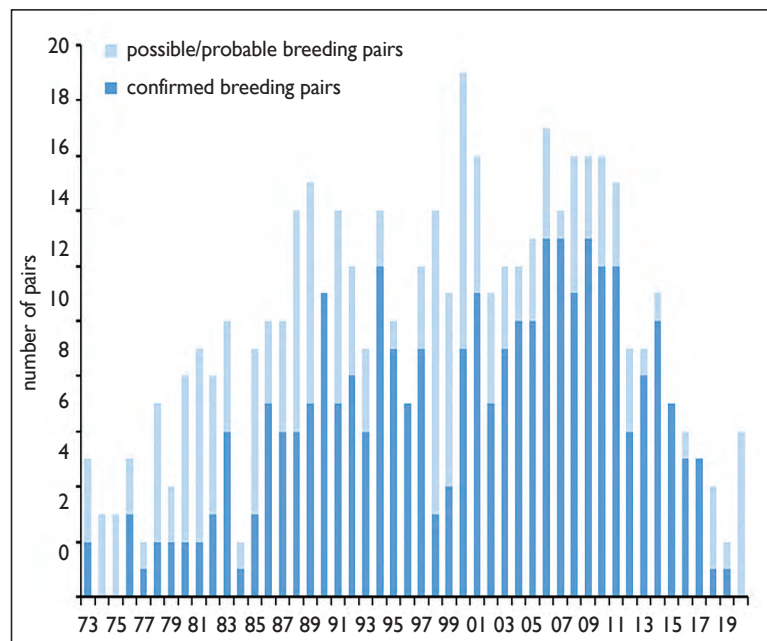
At present, with few individuals returning and no breeding, the future looks bleak for Montagu's Harriers in the UK. However, the species has recovered before, and committed conservation staff, volunteers and landowners are determined to ensure it recovers again.

**England, S**

One site: two first-summer (2CY) females and six males (2CY, 3CY, two 4CY, 5CY and a melanistic individual of unknown age) were present. The 5CY male displayed and built a nest but its mate from 2019 did not return; one of the 4CY males also displayed, but no further evidence of breeding was observed.

**England, N**

Yorkshire One site: a female present sporadically through the summer.



**Fig. 7.** Numbers of pairs of Montagu's Harriers *Circus pygargus* breeding in the UK, 1973–2020.

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

Rare 122 bp

25y trend: **strong increase** +1,224%**Amber**

High

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

103–138 pairs. Each *BoCC* assessment since the first (Gibbons *et al.* 1996) has resulted in a net increase in the number of species that are Red-listed in the UK, and with this have come bleak messages about the status of birds and biodiversity more widely. However, there have been some indications of how targeted conservation action can deliver successes, and previous *BoCC* reviews have seen past and present RBBP species – such as Stone-curlew, Osprey, Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and Woodlark *Lullula arborea* – move off the Red list. Indeed, the last two species are now on the Green list. *BoCC5* reported on another success story, with White-tailed Eagle, once extinct as a breeding species in the UK, moving from Red to Amber as a consequence of a reintroduction programme.

There were three phases of release during the reintroduction programme: 82 birds on Rum, released between 1975 and 1985; 58 birds in northwest Scotland, between 1993 and 1998; and 86 birds in east Scotland between 2007 and 2012. All of the released birds were brought from northern Norway. The first successful breeding came in 1985 (after a gap of nearly 70 years since the last breeding, on Skye in 1916) and was followed by a steady increase, accelerating following the later release phases (see fig. 12 in Eaton *et al.* 2021). By 1996, Scottish-bred birds were themselves breeding and, by 2015, the population had reached 100 pairs. Aided by the release of birds into new regions, the species' range has now spread across much of Scotland north of the Central Belt. In recent years, the rate of increase has been such that the size of the population has exceeded the capacity to monitor it. White-tailed Eagles had qualified for Red-listing previously under the 'Historical Decline' criterion. They are now Amber-listed and classified as 'recovering' from that historical status. If they continue to recover, aided perhaps by the new reintroduction project releasing birds on the Isle of Wight, they may eventually make it to the Green list.

White-tailed Eagle			North-east Scotland	1	3	2	Orkney	2	2	3	
	CP	TP	Perth & Kinross	1	1	1	Outer Hebrides	27	38	27	
Scotland, Mid	4	6	6	Scotland, N & W	99	132	102	TOTALS	103	138	108
Angus & Dundee	1	1	1	Argyll	33	39	34				
Fife	1	1	2	Highland	37	53	38				

**Long-eared Owl *Asio otus***

Less scarce 1,800+ bp\* (no trend available)

**Green**

Low

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

309–377 pairs. Some recorders suggested that interest in recording breeding Long-eared Owls may have increased as a consequence of lockdown restrictions – certainly, the peak time for confirming breeding through locating calling broods is in June and July, after restrictions began to be eased. The totals reported in 2020 have been bettered in only two years since the species was added to the RBBP's list in 2010, but local peaks in vole abundance may well have contributed to a genuine increase in numbers in 2020 rather than, or as well as, the higher figures being an artefact of recording effort.

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Long-eared Owl			Hampshire (e 10)	4	4
	CP	TP	Isle of Wight (e 15)	7	11
England (e 544+)	182	220	Wiltshire (e 10–15)	1	1
England, SW (e 49+)	16	20	England, SE (e 136)	4	17
Cornwall	1	1	Berkshire (e 1)	0	1
Dorset (e 3)	3	3	Buckinghamshire (e 1)	1	1

<b>Long-eared Owl cont.</b>			Radnorshire (e 10–20)	4	4
Essex (e 4)	0	2	Scotland (e 463+)	78	102
Kent (e 20–30)	1	7	Scotland, S (e 35+)	17	23
Sussex (e 100)	2	6	Ayrshire	3	3
England, E (e 25)	18	25	Borders (e 10–12)	3	3
Cambridgeshire (e 10)	4	10	Clyde	5	8
Lincolnshire (e 3)	3	3	Dumfries & Galloway (e 5)	2	5
Norfolk (e 4)	4	4	Lothian (e 7)	4	4
Suffolk (e 8)	7	8	Scotland, Mid (e 253+)	38	49
England, C (e 19)	11	15	Angus & Dundee	9	10
Derbyshire (e 5)	4	4	Fife (e 20–50)	4	5
Leics & Rutland (e 2)	0	1	North-east Scotland (e 150)	14	21
Nottinghamshire (e 8)	6	6	Perth & Kinross	4	5
Shropshire (e 1)	1	1	Upper Forth	7	8
Staffordshire (e 2)	0	2	Scotland, N & W (e 175+)	23	30
Warwickshire (e 1)	0	1	Argyll (e 10–50)	3	3
England, N (e 315)	133	143	Caithness	6	9
Cheshire & Wirral (e 4)	2	2	Highland (e 70–100)	13	17
Cumbria (e 14)	14	14	Shetland	1	1
Co. Durham (e 100)	-	-	Northern Ireland	15	15
Greater Manchester (e 37)	9	11	Co. Antrim	5	5
Lancs & N Mersey (e 30)	17	17	Co. Armagh	5	5
Northumberland (e 60)	41	41	Co. Derry	1	1
Yorkshire (e 40–70)	50	58	Co. Down	2	2
Wales (56+)	11	13	Co. Fermanagh	1	1
Breconshire (e 8)	0	2	Co. Tyrone	1	1
Caernarfonshire (e 5)	1	1	Isle of Man	1	1
Carmarthenshire (e 1)	1	1	Channel Islands (e 32)	22	26
Ceredigion (e 5)	1	1	Guernsey (e 8)	2	2
Gower	1	1	Jersey (e 24)	20	24
Gwent (e 5)	3	3	TOTALS (e 1,111+)	309	377

### Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Scarce 620+ bp\* (no trend available)

Amber

Low

#### Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring

129–248 pairs. Although recording was adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions, there is some evidence that Short-eared Owls may have had a relatively good year in 2020 due to peaks in Short-tailed Vole *Microtus agrestis* numbers.

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).



Short-eared Owl  
*Asio flammeus*

Dave Nurney

Short-eared Owl			Anglesey	0	2
	CP	TP	Pembrokeshire (e 4)	4	4
England (e 189)	89	154	Radnorshire (e 10)	6	9
England, SW (e 2)	0	1	Scotland (e 228+)	30	79
Wiltshire (e 1–2)	0	1	Scotland, S (e 22+)	7	20
England, SE (e 3)	0	1	Borders (e 4)	4	4
Kent (e 2–3)	0	1	Clyde	1	11
England, E (e 5)	0	2	Dumfries & G'way (e 5)	1	3
Norfolk (e 1)	0	1	Lothian (e 2)	1	2
Suffolk (e 1)	0	1	Scotland, Mid (e 54+)	11	25
England, C (e 19)	10	18	Angus & Dundee (e 5)	3	4
Derbyshire (e 10)	2	9	North-east Scotland (e 25)	0	2
Staffordshire (e 9)	8	9	Perth & Kinross	8	15
England, N (e 160)	79	132	Upper Forth	0	4
Cumbria (e 52)	43	52	Scotland, N & W (e 152+)	12	34
Co. Durham (e 19)	16	19	Caithness	1	7
Greater Manchester (e 4)	3	4	Highland (e 10–20)	1	6
Lancs & N Mersey (e 30)	11	21	Orkney (e 20)	10	20
Northumberland (e 15)	1	15	Outer Hebrides (e 60–90)	0	1
Yorkshire (e 35–40)	5	21	TOTALS (e 445+)	129	248
Wales (e 28+)	10	15			

### Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

#### Former breeder

**Two sites: four individual birds.** There have been a number of Snowy Owls lingering in Scotland in recent years and the presence of both sexes at the same site in Shetland is intriguing (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 595–596). Snowy Owls tend to breed from their second summer (3CY) onwards, although some females do breed in their first summer (2CY) (Solheim *et al.* 2018).

#### Scotland, N & W

**Outer Hebrides** One site: a female summered on St Kilda. **Shetland** One site: three birds present during the year – a 3CY female from 25th February to 8th June, a 3CY male from 25th February into 2021, and an unaged male from 9th June to 20th December.

### Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

#### Occasional breeder

**One site: one singing male.** A male made an extended stay in Hampshire, between 15th May and 27th July. Singing was only sporadic, and the bird moved between sites up to three miles apart.

### Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

#### Former breeder

**Three sites: 0–3 pairs.** Wryneck was moved to the list of former breeders by the *BoCC4* assessment (Eaton *et al.* 2015) and is not known to have bred in the UK since 2002, when a nest with young was found in Highland. Indeed, no subsequent record has involved more than a single bird (mostly singing males). Thus, a pair prospecting for a suitable nest site for 20 days is a remarkable record – even more so given this was in Wales, where the last confirmed breeding



record was in 1906 (Pritchard *et al.* 2021). Singing and examining potential nesting holes at multiple sites in a relatively small area, this pair seemed extremely keen to breed – is it possible they settled to do so, undiscovered, at a site nearby? We will never know!

Wales

**Ceredigion** One site: a pair moved between multiple sites in a small area between 14th May and 2nd June, singing and inspecting nest holes, but then disappeared.

Scotland, N & W

**Highland** Two sites: single males singing on 12th June and 16th June.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor***

Less scarce 1,000+ bp\* (no trend available)

Red

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

26–278 territories. Lockdown restrictions came into force in late March, the latter part of the early spring period which is so important for establishing the presence of breeding Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. Some county recorders identified this as a species for which recording was adversely impacted. The numbers reported were about 10% below the 2015–19 mean, which we hope can be attributed to reduction in coverage, although the analysis we presented in last year’s report (Eaton *et al.* 2021) suggests that declines of this already much-depleted species might be continuing.

\* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

<b>Lesser Spotted Woodpecker</b>		Kent (e 150–200)	30	Warwickshire (e 10)	10
	TP	Oxfordshire (e 6)	6	West Midlands (e 1)	1
<b>England (e 727+)</b>	261	Surrey (e 25)	10	Worcestershire (e 12)	12
<b>England, SW (e 311+)</b>	118	Sussex (e 50)	14	<b>England, N (e 30)</b>	10
Cornwall	1	<b>England, E (e 19)</b>	17	Cheshire & Wirral (e 6)	4
Devon (e 13)	13	Cambridgeshire (e 4)	4	Lancs & N Mersey (e 1)	1
Dorset (e 12)	3	Lincolnshire (e 3)	1	Yorkshire (e 10–20)	5
Gloucestershire (e 4)	4	Norfolk (e 6)	6	<b>Wales (e 56+)</b>	17
Hampshire (e 250)	80	Northamptonshire (e 4)	4	Breconshire (e 10)	1
Somerset (e 15)	9	Suffolk (e 2)	2	Carmarthenshire (e 2)	2
Wiltshire (e 15)	8	<b>England, C (e 65+)</b>	43	Ceredigion (e 3)	2
<b>England, SE (e 302)</b>	73	Derbyshire (e 5)	3	Denbigh & Flint (e 1)	1
Bedfordshire (e 2)	2	Herefordshire (e 4)	4	Gower	5
Berkshire (e 1)	1	Leics & Rutland	1	Gwent (e 1–5)	3
Buckinghamshire (e 3)	3	Nottinghamshire (e 5–7)	1	Radnorshire (e 20)	3
Greater London (e 3)	1	Shropshire (e 20)	6	<b>TOTALS (e 783+)</b>	278
Hertfordshire (e 6)	6	Staffordshire (e 5)	5		

**Merlin *Falco columbarius***

Less scarce 1,160 bp\* 25y trend (survey): **weak increase +94%**

Red

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

253–326 pairs. While low numbers in 2020 are undoubtedly related to a dip in coverage, there are concerns over local declines in Merlin numbers, although RBBP coverage provides an insufficient sample from which to estimate population trends. Initial work to develop regional trends in Scotland suggested declines in occupancy (Challis *et al.* 2020); updated Scottish trends will be published shortly (Challis *et al.* in prep.). It is now 14 years since the last national survey and there is a clear need for another.

\* Ewing *et al.* (2011).

<b>Merlin</b>			Caernarfonshire	1	2	Moray & Nairn	12	14
	CP	TP	Ceredigion	1	1	North-east Scotland	16	22
<b>England</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>141</b>	Denbigh & Flint	0	2	Perth & Kinross	9	13
<b>England, C</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	Gower	0	1	Upper Forth	0	1
Derbyshire	8	11	Gwent	0	1	<b>Scotland, N &amp; W</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>71</b>
Staffordshire	0	2	Meirionnydd	2	3	Argyll	0	1
<b>England, N</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>128</b>	Montgomeryshire	1	1	Caithness	2	2
Cheshire & Wirral	0	1	Radnorshire	5	8	Highland	14	23
Cumbria	10	11	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>157</b>	Orkney	5	10
Co. Durham	39	41	<b>Scotland, S</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	Outer Hebrides	8	10
Greater Manchester	0	1	Borders	10	13	Shetland	20	25
Lancs & N Mersey	8	10	Clyde	2	2	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Northumberland	26	28	Dumfries & G'way	4	5	Co. Antrim	4	5
Yorkshire	35	36	Lothian	4	8	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Scotland, Mid</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>58</b>			
Breconshire	1	4	Angus & Dundee	6	8			

**Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

Less scarce 692 bp

25y trend: **weak increase +40%****Green**

Moderate

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

260–699 pairs. The best time for finding breeding Hobbies is in late summer, when young are being fed at the nest or are active close to the nest site after fledging, so many Hobby fieldworkers were able to conduct fieldwork unimpeded by lockdown restrictions.

<b>Hobby</b>			<b>England, C (e 147)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>
	CP	TP	Derbyshire (e 35)	29	31
<b>England (e 1,361)</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>646</b>	Herefordshire (e 22)	0	22
<b>England, SW (e 356)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>151</b>	Leics & Rutland (e 22)	1	1
Avon (e 1)	1	1	Nottinghamshire (e 5–10)	2	2
Cornwall (e 9)	3	6	Shropshire (e 30)	10	17
Devon (e 44)	4	44	Staffordshire (e 10)	0	1
Dorset (e 35)	12	14	Warwickshire (e 10)	2	10
Gloucestershire (e 18)	16	18	West Midlands (e 2)	0	2
Hampshire (e 175)	4	14	Worcestershire (e 6)	4	4
Isle of Wight (e 2)	0	2	<b>England, N (e 132)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>86</b>
Somerset (e 28)	5	8	Cheshire & Wirral (e 29)	6	29
Wiltshire (e 44)	2	44	Greater Manchester (e 15)	3	15
<b>England, SE (e 408)</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>115</b>	Lancs & N Mersey (e 15)	1	1
Bedfordshire (e 85)	2	3	Northumberland (e 1)	0	1
Berkshire (e 15)	0	6	Yorkshire (e 50–70)	25	40
Buckinghamshire (e 9)	0	9	<b>Wales (e 94+)</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>
Essex (e 3)	1	1	Breconshire (e 18)	6	12
Greater London (e 11)	5	11	Caernarfonshire	0	2
Hertfordshire (e 40)	6	8	Carmarthenshire (e 4)	3	3
Kent (e 100)	11	22	Ceredigion (e 2)	1	1
Surrey (e 30)	14	20	Denbigh & Flint (e 4)	1	5
Sussex (e 100)	4	35	East Glamorgan (e 9)	0	4
<b>England, E (e 318)</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>204</b>	Gower	0	2
Cambridgeshire (e 55)	6	53	Gwent (e 25)	3	3
Lincolnshire (e 53)	2	53	Meirionnydd (e 5)	0	4
Norfolk (e 20–30)	14	21	Montgomeryshire (e 3)	1	1
Northamptonshire (e 100)	30	51	Radnorshire (e 20)	6	6
Suffolk (e 80)	11	26	<b>Scotland (e 10+)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Hobby cont.</b>			Fife	0	1
Scotland, S (e 1)	0	1	Moray & Nairn (e 1)	1	1
Dumfries & Galloway (e 1)	0	1	Perth & Kinross	0	4
Scotland, Mid (e 9+)	3	9	<b>TOTALS (e 1,465+)</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>699</b>
Angus & Dundee	2	3			

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

Less scarce 1,701 bp\* 22y trend (survey): **stable +5%**

**Green**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

777–1,092 pairs. As usual, Peregrine Falcon was the most widespread of the species featured in this report, absent from only two recording areas in 2020. It was identified by more county recorders than any other species as having reporting rates that were negatively affected by lockdown restrictions, although this may be in part a function of its distribution. Overall, the total reported is only slightly lower than for previous recent years.

\* Wilson *et al.* (2018).



Gary Thoburn

**476.** Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Avon, March 2020.

<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>			<b>England, SE (e 143)</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>91</b>
	CP	TP	Bedfordshire (e 4)	4	4
England (e 736)	419	591	Berkshire (e 4)	1	4
England, SW (e 216)	120	179	Buckinghamshire (e 2)	2	2
Avon (e 14)	11	14	Essex (e 10)	7	10
Cornwall (e 40)	23	40	Greater London (e 24)	12	18
Devon (e 50)	30	50	Hertfordshire (e 3)	3	3
Dorset (e 32)	8	14	Kent (e 30–40)	8	18
Gloucestershire (e 19)	13	17	Surrey (e 16)	13	16
Hampshire (e 25)	21	23	Sussex (e 40)	7	16
Isle of Wight (e 5)	2	4	<b>England, E (e 52)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>50</b>
Somerset (e 20)	8	8	Cambridgeshire (e 6)	4	6
Wiltshire (e 9)	4	9	Lincolnshire (e 24)	21	24

<b>Peregrine cont.</b>			Radnorshire (e 15)	12	12
Norfolk (e 9)	6	7	<b>Scotland (e 419+)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>303</b>
Northamptonshire (e 5)	3	5	<b>Scotland, S (e 161+)</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>161</b>
Suffolk (e 8)	7	8	Ayrshire	12	21
<b>England, C (e 116)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>112</b>	Borders (e 40)	20	40
Derbyshire (e 33)	29	33	Clyde	16	18
Herefordshire (e 6)	3	6	Clyde Islands	6	9
Leics & Rutland (e 12)	5	11	Dumfries & G'way (e 54)	44	54
Nottinghamshire (e 5)	2	2	Lothian (e 19)	9	19
Shropshire (e 28)	25	28	<b>Scotland, Mid (e 85+)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>86</b>
Staffordshire (e 9)	6	9	Angus & Dundee	8	14
Warwickshire (e 6)	2	6	Fife	9	12
West Midlands (e 4)	4	4	Moray & Nairn (e 4)	2	5
Worcestershire (e 13)	5	13	North-east Scotland (e 28)	22	28
<b>England, N (e 209)</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>159</b>	Perth & Kinross	14	17
Cheshire & Wirral (e 11)	10	11	Upper Forth	7	10
Cleveland (e 6)	2	6	<b>Scotland, N &amp; W (e 173+)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>
Cumbria (e 40)	4	4	Argyll (e 40–50)	15	15
Co. Durham (e 7–10)	4	8	Fair Isle (e 1)	0	1
Greater Manchester (e 21)	14	21	Highland (e 90)	9	22
Lancs & N Mersey (e 35)	29	31	Orkney (e 16)	4	12
Northumberland (e 20)	11	12	Outer Hebrides (e 15)	3	5
Yorkshire (e 66)	46	66	Shetland	0	1
<b>Wales (e 237)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>Northern Ireland (e 89+)</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>89</b>
Anglesey (e 9)	1	2	Co. Antrim	26	28
Breconshire (e 18)	9	15	Co. Armagh	9	9
Caernarfonshire (e 20)	1	1	Co. Derry	10	10
Carmarthenshire (e 7)	2	7	Co. Down	9	13
Denbigh & Flint (e 6)	4	6	Co. Fermanagh	14	16
East Glamorgan (e 30)	16	22	Co. Tyrone	12	13
Gower (e 35)	7	9	<b>Isle of Man (e 25)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Gwent (e 30)	7	8	<b>Channel Islands (e 6)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
Meirionnydd (e 15)	2	5	Guernsey (e 3)	2	3
Montgomeryshire (e 18)	3	3	Jersey (e 3)	4	5
Pembrokeshire (e 24)	0	3	<b>TOTALS (e 1,512+)</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>1,092</b>

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

Very rare 4 bp

25y trend: weak decrease -31%

**Red**  
High**Uncertain lockdown impact on monitoring**

Four sites: 1–4 pairs. It is possible that records of Red-backed Shrikes were missed due to lockdown restrictions, though numbers in 2020 were broadly similar to those of recent years (e.g. see fig. 8 in Eaton *et al.* 2020). In the last decade, confirmed breeding records have been split between Devon (six pairs) and counties in northern Scotland (five pairs), with 2019's unsuccessful breeding attempt in Suffolk being the only exception.

**England, SW**

Cornwall One site: a single male in suitable habitat.

**England, N**

Northumberland One site: a single female in suitable habitat.

**Scotland, S**

Borders One site: a male in suitable habitat; it is possible that another bird was present.

**Scotland, N & W**

Shetland One site: a pair bred, fledging three young.



**Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax***

Scarce 381 bp\*

32y trend (survey): stable -1%

**Green**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

313–338 pairs. The impressive level of annual monitoring of Red-billed Choughs was maintained in 2020, although there were some gaps in coverage attributable to lockdown restrictions in Wales. There is currently little recording of Choughs on the Isle of Man away from dedicated survey years. The population there has been estimated at 133 pairs (Hayhow *et al.* 2018b).

\* Hayhow *et al.* (2018b).

Red-billed Chough			Gower		7	7
	T	TP	Meirionnydd		10	10
England, SW	23	23	Pembrokeshire		70	73
Cornwall	23	23	Scotland, N & W		41	41
Wales	233	258	Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay		5	5
Anglesey	42	44	Argyll: Islay		36	36
Caernarfonshire	82	91	Isle of Man		10	10
Ceredigion	19	30	Channel Islands		6	6
Denbigh & Flint	2	2	Jersey		6	6
East Glamorgan	1	1	TOTALS		313	338

**Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus***

Less scarce 1,000–2,000 bp (no trend available)

**Green**

Low

**Uncertain lockdown impact on monitoring**

8–27 pairs. RBBP collated data on the Crested Tit from 1995 until 2005, when it was believed that the population was over our (then) upper threshold of 1,500 pairs. Following a recent investigation of available population estimates, which suggested that the population may well lie below our current upper threshold of approximately 2,000 breeding pairs, the Crested Tit was readmitted to the RBBP species list in 2020. This, it turned out, was not an auspicious year in which to begin collecting data, given that the ability of birders to access Scottish pine forests was seriously compromised. Nonetheless, even without such barriers, we strongly suspect that recording of Crested Tits will be rather modest, at least initially.

Our first year of renewed recording did, however, coincide with a notable record. The absence of Crested Tits from seemingly suitable pine forests in Deeside, North-east Scotland, is a well-known ornithological conundrum; in recent decades there have been a few reports, but no evidence of breeding (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The discovery of a pair in Deeside in 2020 must have come as a considerable surprise to the observers concerned; they first recorded a singing male and then a bird carrying nesting material and food. It remains to be seen whether this was a one-off or the start of substantial range expansion.

\* Forrester *et al.* (2007).

Crested Tit			Moray & Nairn		0	7	Highland	8	19
	CP	TP	North-east Scotland		0	1	TOTALS	8	27
Scotland, Mid	0	8	Scotland, N & W		8	19			

**Willow Tit *Poecile montanus***

Less scarce 5,550 bp\*

25y trend (BBS): strong decrease -86%

**Red**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring**

110–712 pairs. The year 2020 was intended to be the second year of the first national survey of this species, but coverage was impacted by the imposition of lockdown restrictions during the

field season. Nevertheless, largely reliant on fieldwork conducted in 2019, the survey was completed and provides a baseline for future monitoring of the species. Simon Wotton, RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, summarised the survey and its results: ‘In recent years, Britain’s endemic race of Willow Tit *P. m. kleinschmidti* has been lost from large areas of southern and eastern England and from parts of north and south Wales, and suffered a steep population loss as measured by the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey. Concerns over this decline, and uncertainty over the size of the remaining population led to the species being added to the RBBP species list in 2010, but reporting to the RBBP has been incomplete, particularly from the species’ core areas. Owing to the declining numbers and range, the BBS sample size has fallen below the threshold required for a robust trend for recent years. A national survey was therefore needed if ongoing conservation work is going to be properly underpinned by robust evidence.

‘The first national Willow Tit survey was undertaken between 2019 and 2021, with county-level surveys undertaken across the known range by Willow Tit study groups, county bird clubs and other conservation organisations and volunteers. Although badly affected by lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021, it has been possible to produce estimates at country and county levels across the range in England, Scotland and Wales. The survey results show that the Willow Tit population in Great Britain is estimated at 5,693 breeding pairs (95% confidence limits, 4,847–6,265), of which 76% were in England, 21% in Wales and 3% in Scotland. The three most important recording areas across Britain were Yorkshire, Co. Durham and Derbyshire. A full breakdown by county will be available in the paper currently in preparation.

‘The survey was organised by RSPB, with support from the RBBP, Natural England (through the ‘Action for Birds in England’ partnership), Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Ornithological Society and with additional assistance from the BTO. Many thanks go to the study groups and county bird clubs who helped with the survey, and to all the volunteers who took part in the survey.’

Although the Willow Tit is an extremely rare breeding species in counties on the contracting edge of its range, the survey results show that the population is higher than thought previously, and well above the threshold of 2,000 pairs used to define the RBBP species list. Therefore, 2020 is the last year for which RBBP will report on the species, hoping that the decline abates and we do not have cause to include it once more in the future. We would still urge observers to submit records of Willow Tits in any season to the appropriate county bird recorder to support local monitoring efforts.

\* Wotton *et al.* (in prep.).

<b>Willow Tit</b>		Derbyshire	61	Yorkshire	109
	TP	Herefordshire	5	<b>Wales</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>578</b>	Leics & Rutland	6	Breconshire	7
<b>England, SW</b>	<b>91</b>	Nottinghamshire	1	Carmarthenshire	17
Avon	1	Shropshire	35	Ceredigion	5
Cornwall	21	Staffordshire	55	Denbigh & Flint	2
Devon	52	Warwickshire	8	East Glamorgan	11
Hampshire	15	West Midlands	1	Gower	5
Wiltshire	2	Worcestershire	2	Meirionnydd	8
<b>England, SE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>England, N</b>	<b>295</b>	Montgomeryshire	17
Berkshire	1	Cheshire & Wirral	22	Pembrokeshire	14
<b>England, E</b>	<b>17</b>	Cleveland	4	Radnorshire	38
Lincolnshire	12	Cumbria	6	<b>Scotland, S</b>	<b>10</b>
Norfolk	3	Co. Durham	23	Dumfries & G’way	10
Northamptonshire	2	Greater Manchester	66	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>712</b>
<b>England, C</b>	<b>174</b>	Northumberland	65		

**Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus***

Scarce 673 bp

25y trend: strong increase +82%

**Green**

Moderate

**High lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

91 sites: 453 pairs. As with other species for which large wetland reserves are important, monitoring was adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions in 2020, with the total reported being about 30% lower than the recent average.

<b>Bearded Tit</b>			Greater London	1	1	Cleveland	1	2
	S	TP	Kent	15	44	Lancs & N Mersey	3	3
England	88	448	Sussex	4	16	Northumberland	1	2
England, SW	11	32	England, E	36	173	Yorkshire	10	147
Dorset	5	15	Cambridgeshire	6	13	Scotland, Mid	3	5
Hampshire	4	15	Lincolnshire	6	68	Perth & Kinross	1	1
Somerset	2	2	Norfolk	10	45	Upper Forth	2	4
England, SE	24	83	Suffolk	14	47	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>453</b>
Bedfordshire	1	1	England, N	17	160			
Essex	3	21	Cheshire & Wirral	2	6			

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

Less scarce 3,064 bp\* (no trend available)

**Green**

Moderate

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

719 singing males. Woodlarks are early breeders and are best surveyed between late February and May. It is therefore unsurprising that lockdown restrictions prevented or reduced monitoring in some important parts of the species' range, such as the New Forest and the Brecks.

\* Conway *et al.* (2009).

<b>Woodlark</b>			England, E (e 385)	181
	SM/T		Lincolnshire (e 10)	10
England, SW (e 395)	216		Norfolk (e 100–150)	4
Devon (e 10)	10		Suffolk (e 225)	167
Dorset (e 70)	35		England, C (e 57)	28
Hampshire (e 300)	171		Derbyshire (e 2)	1
England, SE (e 289)	276		Nottinghamshire (e 20)	16
Berkshire (e 46)	45		Staffordshire (e 34)	11
Buckinghamshire (e 4)	4		England, N (e 25)	18
Kent (e 2)	2		Yorkshire (e 20–25)	18
Surrey (e 136)	136		<b>TOTALS (e 1,151)</b>	<b>719</b>
Sussex (e 100)	89			

**Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris***

Occasional breeder

One site: one possible pair. An individual was reported in suitable breeding habitat on Shetland on 15th June only. While this bird was recorded on just a single day, the late date and suitability of the habitat it was in make it worthy of note, and the remote location means that it may have been present for longer. Shore Larks have featured in 11 previous RBBP reports but breeding has been confirmed only twice, in 1977 and 2003, and this is the first time the species has been reported since 2005.

**Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*****Occasional breeder**

Three sites: three singing males. As with other rare migrant warblers, birds are included in RBBP totals if they held territory in suitable breeding habitat for at least five days.

England, SE

Greater London One site: one singing male, 2nd to 30th May.

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one singing male, 3rd to 15th May. Suffolk One site: one singing male, 19th April to 17th July.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*****Potential breeder**

Two sites: one singing male. Individuals are reported by the RBBP only if they maintain territories for at least five days. Although the records from Norfolk and Suffolk were for single days only, they are believed to refer to the same individual, which presumably held territory elsewhere in the intervening period (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 603).

England, E

Norfolk One site: a single male singing on 2nd June. Suffolk One site: a single male singing on 9th May.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*****Potential breeder**

Two sites: two singing males. Individuals are reported by the RBBP only if they maintain territories for at least five days.

England, N

Cumbria One site: a single male singing between 27th June and 7th July.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides One site: a single male singing between 31st May and 5th June.

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*****Very rare** 15 bp25y trend: **strong decrease** -64%**Red**

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

22 sites: 2–32 pairs. Marsh Warblers are late migrants and, by the time birds had arrived in late May and early June 2020, lockdown restrictions were easing and reporting of this species may have been relatively unaffected by the events of 2020. Regardless, 2020 was a remarkable year for Marsh Warblers in the UK, with the highest total of pairs since 1997, presumably related to weather conditions in late May and early June encouraging drifting of Scandinavian-bound migrants across the North Sea. White & Kehoe (2022) reported that the total of migrant Marsh Warblers in 2020 was 'the highest in the past decade by some margin'. It seems unlikely that this upturn will result in any longer-term improvement in the fortunes of this Red-listed species in the UK, since the great majority of records were of singing males only, with just two confirmed breeding pairs.

Breeding in Shetland is not entirely unexpected, given that 26% of RBBP records in the previous five years came from this recording area. The pair that fledged three young in Bedfordshire was,



however, the first known breeding in that county. The latter record also serves as an example of how caution should be exercised over the sharing of news of potential rare breeders. Observers had not considered that a pair could be present, and the location of the singing male was shared widely, with the consequence that, once it was realised that a breeding attempt was under way, a valiant round-the-clock safeguarding effort was required to ensure that the birds were free from disturbance. The RBBP's guidance on reporting rare breeding birds can be found at <https://bit.ly/rbbp-guidance>.

England, SW

Isle of Wight One site: one singing male, 27th May to 16th June. Somerset One site: one singing male, 25th May to 3rd June.

England, SE

Bedfordshire One site: one breeding pair fledged three young. Kent Four sites: (1) one singing male from 21st May to 14th June; (2) one singing male from 25th to 31st May; (3) one singing male from 30th May to 10th June; (4) one singing male from 8th June to 1st July. Sussex One site: nine singing males.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one singing male from 29th May to 12th June. Lincolnshire One site: one singing male from 4th to 11th June. Norfolk Two sites: (1) one singing male from 26th May to 10th June, another from 1st to 10th June; (2) one singing male from 1st to 7th June. Suffolk Four sites: (1) one singing male from 6th to 15th June, possibly a female present; (2) one singing male from 17th to 19th June, possibly a female present; (3) one singing male from 8th to 14th June, possibly a female present, with another male present on at least one day; (4) one singing male from 14th to 30th June.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one probable breeding pair between 25th May and 15th June.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: two singing males, one from 31st May to 17th June, the other from 1st to 12th June. Shetland Four sites: (1) one breeding pair fledged one young; (2) one singing male, 1st to 16th June; (3) one singing male, 4th to 9th June; (4) one singing male, 27th June to 2nd July.

**Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides***

Very rare 9 bp

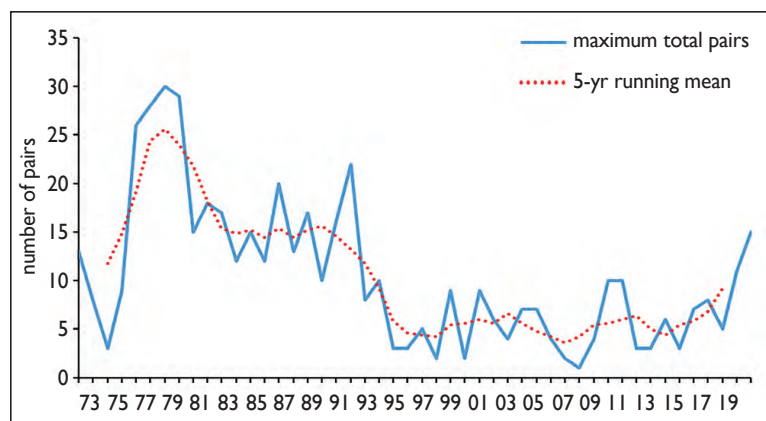
25y trend: stable -22%

Red

Near-complete

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

13 sites: 0–15 pairs. Records of birds present for fewer than five days, and those not accepted by the BBRC, are excluded from our figures (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 605). A total of 15 singing males is the highest number reported to the RBBP since 1992, up from the previous high of 11 in 2019 (fig. 8) – is this species undergoing an improvement in fortunes in the UK? A number of sites have hosted singing males – and, potentially, pairs, since the secretive nature of this species makes detecting the presence of females extremely difficult – in consecutive years, possibly indicating returning individuals. The singing male on the Isle of Wight was the first for the county, as was one present for just a day in Oxfordshire (and so not counted here). Keller *et al.* (2020) showed how the range



**Fig. 8.** Numbers of breeding pairs of Savi's Warblers *Locustella luscinioides* in the UK, 1973–2020.

of Savi's Warblers has shifted north and east in Europe since the 1980s, with considerable loss of range in western Europe, such as in France. This might make a long-term increase in the UK unlikely, although the increased availability of large, well-managed wetland reserves across southern Britain may act to encourage an increase.

#### England, SW

**Somerset** One site: one singing male, 16th May to 10th June.

#### England, SE

**Hampshire** One site: two singing males, 16th April to 20th May and 18th to 25th April. **Isle of Wight** One site: one singing male, 18th April to 2nd May. **Kent** Four sites: (1) one singing male, 27th April to 25th June; (2) one singing male, 17th to 29th May; (3) one singing male, 22nd to 26th May; (4) one singing male, 14th to 21st June.

#### England, E

**Norfolk** Four sites: (1) two singing males, 20th April to 7th May and 1st to 7th May; (2) one singing male, 22nd April to 19th May; (3) one singing male, 12th to 19th May; (4) one singing male, 13th to 20th June. **Suffolk** One site: one singing male, 2nd to 10th June.

#### Scotland, N & W

**Shetland** One site: one singing male, 8th to 22nd June.

### Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

#### Occasional breeder

**One site: one pair.** There has been one previous record of confirmed breeding in the region currently covered by these reports, on Guernsey in 2009 (Lawlor *et al.* 2010), though this was before the RBBP included the Channel Islands in its reporting. Although colonisation of the UK has long been predicted – and despite Keller *et al.* (2020) showing that there has been considerable range expansion in France, Belgium and the Netherlands – there have been no records on mainland UK since 2010. If the sea crossing is proving a barrier to the expansion of this sedentary species, it is not surprising that the Channel Islands have proved more attractive: Alderney is only eight miles from the French coast.

#### Channel Islands

**Alderney** One site: four nesting attempts were recorded, three of which fledged young; they were all believed to have been made by the same pair.

### Asian Desert Warbler *Curruca nana*

#### Potential breeder

**One site: one singing male.** A bird in Northumberland from 15th to 19th June (see also *Brit. Birds* 114: 606). This individual constitutes only the 13th record for the UK, and the third to occur in the spring. The first spring bird, in Norfolk in 1993, also sang and was observed carrying nesting material (Ogilvie *et al.* 1996). This species breeds no closer than western Kazakhstan.

### Dartford Warbler *Curruca undata*

Less scarce 3,214 bp\* 25y trend: **stable** +21%

**Amber**

Moderate

#### Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring

1,510 territories. Good coverage was achieved in much of the range, most notably by a full survey of the Thames Basin Heaths.

\* Wotton *et al.* (2009).

<b>Dartford Warbler</b>		Somerset (e 23)	23	Suffolk (e 170)	163
	TP	England, SE (e 870)	860	Wales (e 11+)	8
England (e 2,246)	1,501	Berkshire (e 29)	29	Carmarthenshire (e 1)	1
England, SW (e 1,204)	476	Buckinghamshire (e 4)	4	Gower	4
Cornwall (e 23)	23	Kent (e 1)	1	Pembrokeshire (e 3)	3
Devon (e 50)	30	Surrey (e 775)	765	Channel Islands (e 50+)	1
Dorset (e 500)	50	Sussex (e 61)	61	Jersey (e 50)	1
Hampshire (e 600)	342	England, E (e 172)	165	TOTAL (e 2,307+)	1,510
Isle of Wight (e 8)	8	Norfolk (e 2)	2		

**‘Fair Isle Wren’ *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis***

Rare 39 bp

15y trend: weak increase +41%

Red

Moderate

**High lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

20 territories. This distinctive race occurs only on Fair Isle and is usually subject to an island-wide census every year. This was not possible in 2020 due to lockdown restrictions, so the figure given here was compiled from casual observations. The recorder commented that there was nothing to suggest a major change in the population, although the number of fledged chicks seen was possibly lower than expected.

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle 20 territories; breeding was confirmed in six.

**Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris***

Very rare 2 bp

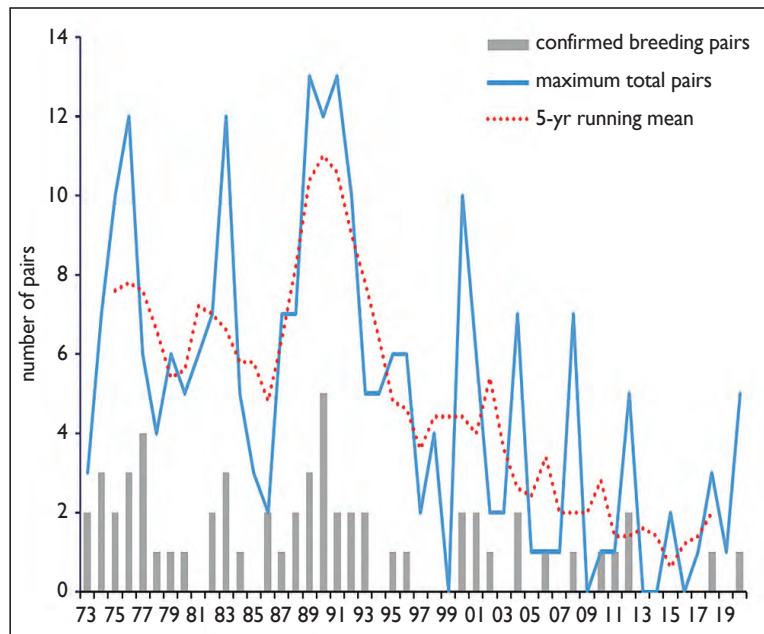
25y trend: strong decrease -74%

Red

Moderate

**Unknown lockdown impact on monitoring**

Five sites: 1–5 pairs. While 2020 was a relatively good year for Fieldfare records, it seems likely that birdwatching effort in suitable areas was nonetheless reduced. Always a very rare breeding bird in the UK, with marked year-on-year fluctuations, the Fieldfare has declined as a breeding species since a peak around 30 years ago (fig. 9). There have been only five confirmed breeding pairs in the last ten years, and there was a gap of five years with no confirmed records. Most recent records have come from the upland margins in southern Scotland and northern England, particularly



**Fig. 9.** Numbers of breeding pairs of Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* in the UK, 1973–2020.

from the margins of conifer plantations with adjacent damp rushy pastures. There are extensive areas of suitable habitat which are infrequently visited by birdwatchers, so it may well be that breeding is more regular than fig. 9 suggests.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway Two sites: one confirmed breeding pair feeding young, and one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one possible breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland One site: one probable breeding pair.



Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Steve McQueen

**Redwing *Turdus iliacus***

Very rare 27 bp

25y trend: **stable** +21%

**Amber**

High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

16 sites: 11–18 pairs. It is difficult to assess how reporting of breeding Redwings was affected by the barriers to observers getting into the field due to lockdown restrictions. The number of pairs reported in 2020 is actually higher than the 12 pairs recorded in 2019 but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that coverage of the often-remote woods that this species occupies would have been negatively affected.

The record from Kent is of interest. The RBBP has received 57 records of possible, probable or confirmed breeding of Redwings in England since 1973 and, perhaps surprisingly, 28 (49%) of these have been in Kent, including three of the six records of confirmed breeding.

Numbers of Redwings breeding in the UK fell from a peak in the 1980s to a low point just after the turn of the century (see fig. 15 in Eaton *et al.* 2020), and the species was Red-listed by BoCC3 as a consequence (Eaton *et al.* 2009). A slight upturn over the last decade meant that the Redwing no longer shows a severe population decline over 25 years, and so it was moved back to the Amber list in the BoCC5 review (Stanbury *et al.* 2021).

England, SE

Kent One site: one probable breeding pair. A female with a brood patch was caught by ringers on 30th July, and two birds were seen nearby in June.

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle One site: one pair (of Icelandic race *coburni*) fledged three young, at least one additional singing male. **Highland** Seven sites: seven confirmed breeding pairs, with an additional singing male at one site. **Orkney** Four sites: four singing males. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one pair fledged at least two young. **Shetland** Two sites: two confirmed breeding pairs.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

Rare 65 bp

25y trend: **stable** -16%

**Amber**

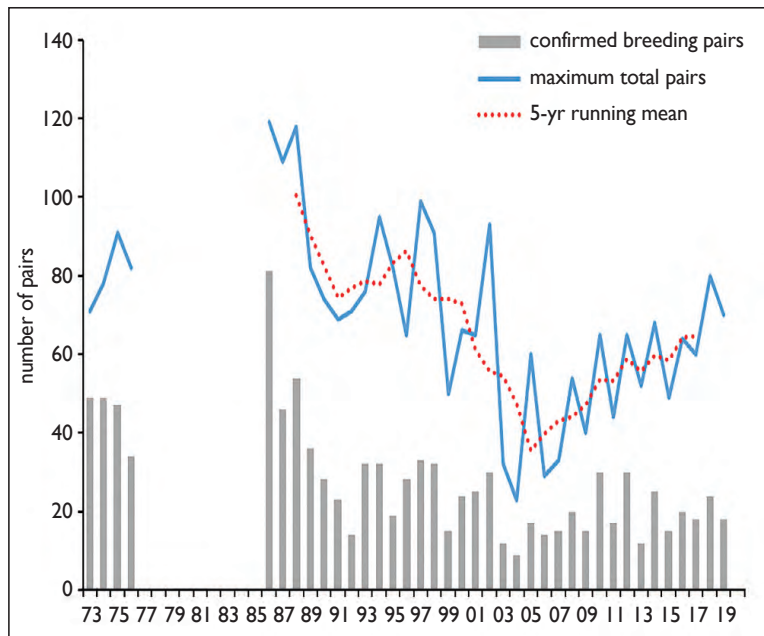
High

**Moderate lockdown impact on monitoring (2020 data not used for estimate or trend calculations)**

41 sites: 30–53 pairs. While some recorders reported that monitoring of Black Redstarts may have benefited from the attention of observers restricted to recreational birding in urban areas during Covid-19 lockdowns, the total recorded here is the lowest since 2015. It seems that increased coverage in some areas may have been offset by the inaccessibility of other sites, such as the most important one in Suffolk.



The Black Redstart was only an occasional breeder in the UK in the first part of the 20th century, with an increase from the 1940s onwards linked to the availability of bomb sites and other derelict lands in southeast England. The population reached a peak in the 1970s and 80s, during which time it was removed from the RBBP's species list for nine years. However, the population declined subsequently (fig. 10), and it was Red-listed by *BoCC4* as a consequence (Eaton *et al.* 2015). The increase in total pairs since the low point in 2004 (although curiously not accompanied by a similar increase in the number of confirmed breeding pairs) meant that the species no longer shows a severe decline in breeding population over 25 years, so was one of six species to move from Red to Amber in the *BoCC5* review (Stanbury *et al.* 2021).



**Fig. 10.** Numbers of Black Redstarts *Phoenicurus ochruros* breeding in the UK, 1973–2019.

The increase in total pairs since the low point in 2004 (although curiously not accompanied by a similar increase in the number of confirmed breeding pairs) meant that the species no longer shows a severe decline in breeding population over 25 years, so was one of six species to move from Red to Amber in the *BoCC5* review (Stanbury *et al.* 2021).

<b>Black Redstart</b>				Essex	2	1	2	England, C	1	0	1
	S	CP	TP	Greater London	6	1	6	Leics & Rutland	1	0	1
England	41	30	53	Kent	8	10	12	England, N	3	1	3
England, SW	1	1	1	Surrey	1	1	1	Greater Manchester	2	1	2
Hampshire	1	1	1	Sussex	2	0	2	Lancs & N Mersey	1	0	1
England, SE	21	15	25	England, E	15	13	23	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>53</b>
Bedfordshire	1	1	1	Norfolk	9	7	15				
Berkshire	1	1	1	Suffolk	6	6	8				

**Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola***  
Occasional breeder

Two sites: two singing males. The only time this species has featured in a RBBP report previously was one of our more surprising records: a male feeding four young wagtails of unknown parentage, in Essex in 1976 (Sharrock *et al.* 1978).

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle One site: one singing male, 4th to 24th June. Orkney One site: one singing male, 7th May to 17th June.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*** **Amber**  
High  
Very rare 23 bp (no trend available)

**Very low or low lockdown impact on monitoring**

Three sites: three pairs, plus approximately 30 pairs on the Channel Islands. It is estimated that there are 15 breeding pairs on both Guernsey and Jersey, with a possible increase there in recent years.

## England, SW

Cornwall One site: one confirmed breeding pair.

## England, SE

Sussex One site: one confirmed breeding pair.

## Scotland, N &amp; W

Shetland One site: one confirmed breeding pair. The female was not seen, meaning that a mixed pairing with a Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii* cannot be discounted.

### Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce 500+ bp\* (no trend available)

Red

Low

#### Very high lockdown impact on monitoring

20–52 pairs. In recent years, most Hawfinch records have been generated by the dedicated work of a few enthusiasts in core areas, such as the New Forest. This work was not possible in 2020, so our total has fallen accordingly. Lockdown restrictions did not stop all recording, however; most notably, the first breeding record for Clyde was registered – a breeding pair that turned up on one observer's bird table (Furness 2021).

\* Clements (2013).



Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Dave Nurney

<b>Hawfinch</b>		<b>England, E (e 10)</b>	3	Ceredigion	1
	TP	Norfolk (e 10)	3	East Glamorgan (e 8)	6
<b>England (e 490)</b>	33	<b>England, C (e 5)</b>	4	Gower	1
<b>England, SW (e 445)</b>	14	Derbyshire (e 2)	1	Meirionnydd (e 100–120)	1
Gloucestershire (e 25)	4	Nottinghamshire (e 2)	2	Radnorshire (e 10)	8
Hampshire (e 400)	9	Warwickshire (e 1)	1	<b>Scotland (e 6)</b>	1
Wiltshire (e 20)	1	<b>England, N (e 5)</b>	4	<b>Scotland, Mid (e 5)</b>	1
<b>England, SE (e 35)</b>	8	Cumbria (e 3)	3	Clyde	1
Kent (e 5)	5	Lancs & N Mersey (e 2)	1	<b>TOTALS (e 957+)</b>	52
Surrey (e 5)	2	<b>Wales (e 461+)</b>	18		
Sussex (e 25)	1	Caernarfonshire (e 5)	1		

### Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Occasional breeder

One site: one singing male. A singing male was recorded in North-east Scotland between 4th June and 5th July. In the 1990s, this species seemed to be on the verge of colonising the UK, following a westward range expansion across Europe. Indeed, our report for 1992 stated 'this species seems to be here to stay' (Ogilvie *et al.* 1995). We spoke too soon: the last confirmed breeding record in the UK was in Cumbria in 2001, and the species has not featured at all since 2015.

### Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Very rare 20 bp (no trend available but increasing)

Amber

Moderate

#### High lockdown impact on monitoring (data not used for estimate or trend calculations)

Eight sites: 6–11 pairs. A very marked drop from the maximum of 35 pairs reported in 2019, no doubt at least in part due to lockdown restrictions.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One large site: four confirmed pairs. Fair Isle One site: one pair fledged at least four young. Outer Hebrides Two sites: two probable breeding pairs. Shetland Four sites: (1) one pair bred, fledged at least one young; (2) & (3) one probable pair; (4) one singing male.

**European Serin *Serinus serinus***

Former breeder

One site: one singing male. A singing male was present at the same site in Kent as in 2019, from 28th May to 21st June. This continental finch was moved to the list of former breeders by BoCC4 (Eaton *et al.* 2015), and other than an occasional singing male, such as this individual, there is little sign of a return being made.

**Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus***

Red

Less scarce 1,079 bp\* 27y trend (survey): large increase +814% Low

**High lockdown impact on monitoring**

86–189 pairs. Outside of national survey years, numbers of Cirl Buntings reported to the RBBP are only a small proportion of the national population. This is not surprising, given that the species is dispersed across farmland and that the great majority of the population is in Devon. There has, however, been good uptake of a new RSPB-led monitoring programme for the species, with volunteers registering to survey tetrads for Cirl Buntings twice every year. This should be sufficient to provide a robust estimate of trends of this Red-listed species in future.

\*Jeffs *et al.* (2018).

Cirl Bunting			Cornwall	6	11	Jersey	4	10
	CP	TP	Devon	76	168	TOTALS	86	189
England, SW	82	179	Channel Islands	4	10			

**Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis***

Amber

Rare 79 bp\* (no trend available)

Low

**High lockdown impact on monitoring**

1–19 pairs. It is possible that there is some duplication between records received from the core of the breeding range in the Cairngorms. Owing to this species' preference for breeding in high mountain corries, numbers reported to the RBBP represent only a fraction of the population, and it is no surprise that this fraction was even lower than usual in 2020.

\* Hayhow *et al.* (2018a).

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Cairngorms: one probable breeding pair and two possible breeding pairs. North-east Scotland Cairngorms: one confirmed breeding pair and seven possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Cairngorms: three possible breeding pairs and two singing males. West Highlands: two probable breeding pairs, one singing male.

## Appendix 1. RBBP taxa for which no data were received in 2020.

The following rare taxa are regular breeders in the UK. Confirmation of presence was received in 2020, but no breeding records were submitted: **Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla* (Channel Islands only), **'St Kilda Wren'** *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis* (St Kilda only), **Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* (Highland only).

In addition, no records were received of the **Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis* that has summered in Perth & Kinross annually since 2009 but, as this bird was reported again in 2021, it is highly likely to have been present in 2020. No records of **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* were received from the regular breeding site in North Scotland, but this is likely to have been due to lack of survey coverage during lockdown.

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## Appendix 2. Rare non-native species considered by RBBP recorded in 2020.

Data on the following rare non-native breeding species have been received for 2020.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Single pairs bred at sites in Berkshire and Devon; records were received from single sites in Hertfordshire and Wiltshire.

**Reeves's Pheasant** *Syrnaticus reevesii* A pair was present at a site in Dorset although there was no evidence of breeding. Two males were reported in North-east Scotland.

**Golden Pheasant** *Chrysolophus pictus* Up to 19 pairs were reported across four sites in Dorset, of which eight bred, although breeding success was not reported. In Suffolk two broods, the first confirmed breeding since 2015, were seen at a site with a stable population of approximately 20 individuals. Golden Pheasants remain at a site on the Isles of Scilly, although the only count received was of just three individuals.

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* Breeding was confirmed in Cornwall (two pairs at one site, with a population of 20–30 birds), Yorkshire (six pairs at one site, most hatching chicks) and Breconshire (single pair). Elsewhere birds were reported from single sites in Caernarfonshire, Dorset, East Glamorgan, Hertfordshire, North-east Scotland and Sussex.

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens* The long-established population on Coll, Argyll, fell in numbers, with only eight birds remaining and no breeding reported in 2020.

**Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus* Reports were received from seven counties, with confirmed breeding at one site in Wiltshire, where a pair fledged one young and another individual raised three in a hybrid pairing with a Mute Swan *C. olor*, and a site in Kent, where a pair was reported with young in both winter 2019/20 and 2020/21. There was a pair in Derbyshire plus singles at seven sites, a pair in Devon, a pair in East Glamorgan plus singles at five sites, a pair in Co. Derry, and a pair which built a nest in Buckinghamshire. Although not records of breeding, Black Swans were reported from 22 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* A possible breeding pair was reported from a site in Yorkshire.

**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* Records were received from six counties with the only confirmed breeding records being a pair in Derbyshire with a brood of three, a pair with a brood of seven in Devon, and fledged young at one site in Norfolk. Elsewhere, reports were received from three sites in East Glamorgan and single sites in Breconshire and Cambridgeshire. Muscovy Ducks were reported from 16 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa* Records were received from two counties. There were four individuals at two sites in East Glamorgan, and a pair reported at a site in Kent.



**Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*** Reported from eight counties. Confirmed breeding records were received from **Berkshire** (two pairs at two sites, with a further four possible breeding pairs), **Greater London** (three pairs at one site), **Hertfordshire** (three pairs at three sites), and there were six confirmed pairs on the **Wiltshire** side of Cotswold Water Park, and a post-breeding count of 137 individuals on the **Gloucestershire** side. In addition, there were five probable pairs at one site in **Lincolnshire** and one probable pair in **Kent** and **Norfolk**. In total, records were received of 33 pairs, of which 18 were confirmed breeders. Red-crested Pochards were reported from 23 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

**Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*** A male was resident in **Cambridgeshire** for the fifth year.

**Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*** The regular pair in the Forest of Bowland, **Lancashire & N Merseyside**, was present; although they were heard calling early in the year, there was no sign of a breeding attempt.

### Acknowledgments

The compilation of this report would not be possible without the support of the many contributors who have supplied the data that it is based upon. Birdwatchers across the country provide many of the original observations and we gratefully acknowledge these. Much of these data are submitted via the BTO/RSPB/BirdWatch Ireland/SOC/WOS BirdTrack system. In most cases, their records reach the RBBP via county and regional bird recorders. Their invaluable but time-consuming work is completed on a voluntary basis, and we salute the willing cooperation and assistance of recorders past and present. Recorders were invited to review an early draft of this report and many have given additional advice and information when called upon. The work of the RBBP simply would not be possible without the support of recorders. The names of the individual recorders and others who provided data for 2020, either directly or as part of their organisational responsibilities, are listed at [www.rbbp.org.uk/acknowledgements](http://www.rbbp.org.uk/acknowledgements).

Input from specialist study groups, conservation bodies and various key individuals also means that the report can be even more comprehensive. Valuable supplementary data were submitted from several national monitoring schemes. Information for many species was supplied via the Schedule 1 licensing system by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NatureScot and the BTO. For additional information on raptors, we are grateful for the support of the Northern England Raptor Forum, the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group and the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme. The BTO also supplied additional data from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB UK Breeding Bird Survey and Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, BTO/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey (for non-native waterbirds), BTO/JNCC Nest Record Scheme and the BTO Heronries Census (for Little Egret). Supplementary seabird data were supplied by the Seabird Monitoring Programme (at the time, led and coordinated by JNCC in partnership with others). We also thank the RSPB for additional information from their network of nature reserves and from species surveys they coordinate including, in 2020, the RSPB/RBBP national Willow Tit survey. More generally, many individuals in these organisations provided friendly advice and information over the year, for which we are most grateful. We thank the JNCC, RSPB and BTO for their financial support for the work of the RBBP; in 2021–22 this has included additional funding from the JNCC to conduct database improvements, and we would like to thank Kirsie Peck (JNCC) and Will George (RSPB) for their particular assistance with this work programme. The Secretary would also like to thank the Panel members for their time and expertise.

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Find out more about the Panel at [www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk)



Records of rare breeding birds in 2021 are now being collated;  
county recorders are reminded that data should be submitted by 30th November 2022  
using the spreadsheet downloadable from [www.rbbp.org.uk](http://www.rbbp.org.uk).

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