



Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2006

P.A. Fraser and the Rarities Committee

This is the forty-ninth annual report of the British Birds Rarities Committee. It is also the first report in the post-Mike Rogers era, the last that will be compiled primarily by Pete Fraser, and the last one with an introduction from me. Nigel Hudson began his term of office as Secretary on 1st September 2007 and Adam Rowlands takes over as Chair on 1st April 2008. BBRC is greatly indebted to Pete, who stepped in at short notice as Mike Rogers' health deteriorated and kept the Committee's work rolling until a permanent Secretary could be appointed. He has helped our IT development and leaves the Committee in a much healthier state than when he stepped into the breach.

The new Secretary and Chair will continue to implement the technological changes necessary to make submitting records easier and the process of record assessment more efficient (but no less stringent). New systems in place from early 2007 include electronic circulations and submission of records on-line via the BirdGuides website (www.birdguides.com). This has speeded up record circulation considerably and already many records for 2007 have been assessed. In the next year we hope to develop links with other websites to facilitate the submission of photographed rarities and we are piloting a 'fast-tracked' system for assessing such photographed records. To this end we must also thank the editors of *Birding World* and *Birdwatch*, who have shared relevant photographs and articles on records of rare birds with us.

The 2006 report is the first without many of the more regular rarities, which are no longer BBRC species (see *Brit. Birds* 100: 18–19), but we have yet to pick up many records of those rare races which we hope to consider in future

(see *Brit. Birds* 99: 619–645). Birders are encouraged to look on the BBRC website (www.bbrc.org.uk) at the information required for acceptance of rare races in Britain, and we would urge observers to submit both formal and informal records. In addition, BOURC is reviewing all species in Category D of the British List with the ultimate goal of placing them within a permanent category rather than a rather unsatisfactory 'holding area'. So that all relevant information is available, we urge birders to submit records of *all* Category D species but in particular those of Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*, Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*, Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* and Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*. For each of the aforementioned species, there seems to have been a perceptible shift in vagrancy potential because of changes in either population trends or captive status (Vinicombe in prep.). We are also keen to receive details of well-documented records of all races of Lesser Canada Goose *Branta hutchinsii* and all forms of Greater Canada Goose other than *B. canadensis canadensis*. Hopefully, the inclusion of rare races and Category D records in this report in future will more than compensate for the missing commoner rarities.

Assessment of several older records has taken up a significant amount of time during 2007. Following the separation of the British and Irish Lists, BOURC and BBRC have reviewed records of all 'firsts' for Britain. Consequently, we now believe that the 1965 Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* in Kent is no longer safe as a first record (see p. 720). BBRC will review all subsequent records of Royal Tern and work with BOURC to establish an acceptable first record. This work is set alongside ongoing

analysis of the recent crop of 'orange-billed terns', including both morphological and DNA features of this complex. But don't hold your breath for definitive answers. BBRC had also completed work on three records of large skuas showing characters associated with the southern *Stercorarius* species, in Dorset (West Bexington, 27th January to 4th February 1996), Scilly (St Agnes, 7th October 2001, taken into care and released on St Mary's on 22nd January 2002), and Glamorgan (Aberavon, 1st February 2002, taken into care and released at Southgate on 16th February). We were preparing to report these as 'southern skuas' in an effort not only to get them back into the public domain but also to encourage submissions of other such records. However, recent work has suggested that at least some may be specifically identifiable, so it seemed premature to publish in this non-specific way. Hopefully, we will have a definitive answer within the foreseeable future.

In 2007, BBRC completed its assessment of the odd curlew at Minsmere, Suffolk, in October 2004 against the criteria established during the analysis of the Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* at Druridge Bay, Northumberland (*Brit Birds* 95: 279–299); this clearly established that the Suffolk bird was Eurasian Curlew *N. arquata*. This suggests that the criteria are both accurate and robust but, because of the significance of the Druridge Bay record, we will examine it again – although currently there is some debate as to what format that review will take. The bird claimed as a 'Wilson's Snipe' *Gallinago gallinago delicata* on Scilly in 1998 has almost finished its BBRC circulation and our decision on this bird is imminent. We have also begun the long-awaited review of North Atlantic Little Shearwaters *Puffinus baroli* and we are currently examining all British records of Redhead *Aythya americana* after the suggestion that some have features suggestive of Redhead-like *Aythya* hybrids.

What sort of year was 2006? In terms of both number and quality of rarities it fell somewhat short of the bounties of 2005. It did, however, produce two outstanding firsts for Britain, in the shape of a Long-billed Murrelet *Brachyramphus perdix* in Devon and an Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* in Shetland, details of which appear in this report. In addition, a further two prospective firsts involved a Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* in Gloucester and a 'Black-eared Kite' *Milvus migrans lineatus* in Lincolnshire and Norfolk, although both these records are still in circulation. Also included here are the first British record of Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*, from Shropshire, the second Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* and second mainland record of a Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia caliope*, plus the third British record of the distinctive 'Caspian Stonechat' *Saxicola torquatus variegatus* and the fourth of 'Two-barred Greenish Warbler' *Phylloscopus trochiloides plumbeitarsus*.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank all the observers and photographers who sent in details of rarities to BBRC. Once again we owe a huge debt of gratitude to county and regional recorders and their records committees for the invaluable work they undertake. *Surfbirds*, *Birding World*, *Birdwatch*, *Birding Scotland* and *Yorkshire Birding* have helped with the compilation and documentation of some records. We are also indebted to BirdGuides and particularly to Russell Slack for assisting with the development work of rare-bird recording. We would like to thank Paul Buckley, Dick Forsman, Kimball Garrett, Steve Howell, Andrew Lassey, Paul Lehman, Ian Lewington, Killian Mullaney, Ron Pittaway, Keith Vinicombe and Steve Votier for their input on difficult records this year; Keith Naylor for reviewing pre-1950 statistics and Paul Leader for commenting upon the distribution sections. Last, but by no means least, for sponsorship of the Committee's work we continue to be enormously grateful to Carl Zeiss Ltd, which has supported us for the past 26 years.

Colin Bradshaw

Systematic list of accepted records

The principles and procedures followed in considering records were explained in the 1958 report (*Brit. Birds* 53: 155–158). The systematic list is set out in the same way as the 2005 report (100: 16–61, 72–104). The following points show the basis on which the list has been compiled:

1. The details included for each record are (1) county; (2) locality; (3) number of birds if more than one, and age and sex if known (in the case of spring and summer records, however, the age is normally given only

where the bird concerned was not in adult plumage); (4) if photographed or sound-recorded (and this evidence assessed by the Committee); (5) if trapped or found dead and where specimen is stored, if known;

- (6) dates(s); and (7) observer(s), in alphabetical order.
- In general, this report is confined to records which are regarded as certain, and 'probables' are not included. In cases of the very similar Eastern *Phylloscopus orientalis* and Western Bonelli's Warblers *Ph. bonelli*, however, we publish indeterminate records, and this also applies to those of frigatebirds *Fregata*, Zino's/Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira/feae* and Booted *Hippolais caligata* and Sykes's Warblers *H. rama* (see also *Brit. Birds* 94: 395).
 - The sequence of species, English names and scientific nomenclature follow the 'British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic; see www.britishbirds.co.uk/bblast.htm
 - The three numbers in parentheses after each species name refer specifically to the total number of individuals recorded in Britain (i) to the end of 1949, (ii) for the period since 1950, but excluding (iii) those listed here for the current year. The decision as to how many individuals were involved is often difficult, but a consensus view is represented by 'possibly the same' (counted as different in the totals), 'probably the same' (counted as the same in the totals), or 'the same' when evidence is certain or overwhelming. An identical approach is applied to records of a particular species recurring at the same, or a nearby, locality after a lapse of time. In considering claims of more than one individual at the same or adjacent localities, the Committee requires firm evidence before more than one is accepted. Note that this report is the first to take into account decisions reached during the review of 1950–57 rarities reported in 2006 (*Brit. Birds* 99: 460–464).
 - The breeding and wintering ranges for each species are given in parentheses at the end of each species account.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (9, 61, 3)

Dorset The Fleet, adult, 4th–15th November, photo (D. & P. Saunders *et al.*); same, Poole Harbour, 18th November to 25th January 2007, photo (T. Hill *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Saltfleet, two, adults, 13th October to 1st January 2007, photo (per www.birdguides.com) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 358; 100: plate 49, plate 333), see also Yorkshire, East.

Yorkshire, East Spurn, two, adults, 27th October (P. Leonard, A. Porter, R. Scott *et al.*); see also Lincolnshire.

(Breeds Taimyr Peninsula, Siberia. Migrates SW to winter in coastal regions of W Black Sea in Romania and N Bulgaria. Small numbers regularly winter in Netherlands, Greece, Turkey. Some may still use former wintering areas along Caspian Sea.)



Graham Catley

333. Adult Red-breasted Geese *Branta ruficollis*, with 'Dark-bellied Brent Geese' *B. bernicla bernicla*, Howden's Pullover, Lincolnshire, November 2006.

Black Duck *Anas rubripes* (0, 30, 1)

Scilly Tresco, ♀, 12th February to 21st April, photo (J. Askins, J. K. Higginson *et al.*); presumed same as Scilly 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 20).

Shetland Fair Isle, ♂, 1st–5th November, photo (P. A. A. Baxter, M. D. Warren *et al.*).

(Breeds E North America from Labrador S to North Carolina and W to Manitoba. Most are resident or dispersive but N breeders migrate to winter in coastal SE USA.)

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (10, 221, 2)

Cumbria Longtown, ♂, with metal ring, 16th–19th May (D. J. Robson *et al.*, per C. G. Batty). See also Northumberland and Yorkshire, North.

Essex Hanningfield Reservoir, age uncertain, 20th August, photo (D. L. Acfield, P. Livermore *et al.*).

Northumberland St Mary's Wetland Nature Reserve, ♂, with metal ring, 17th–23rd April, photo (M. S. Hodgson, B. Robson *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 159; plate 334); see also Cumbria, Yorkshire, North.

Yorkshire, North Filey Dams, ♂, with metal ring, 11th–14th April (J. Horton, C. C. Thomas *et al.*); see also Cumbria, Northumberland.



John Malloy

334. Male Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*, St Mary's Wetland Nature Reserve, Northumberland, April 2006; this bird, sporting a metal ring, was also seen in Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

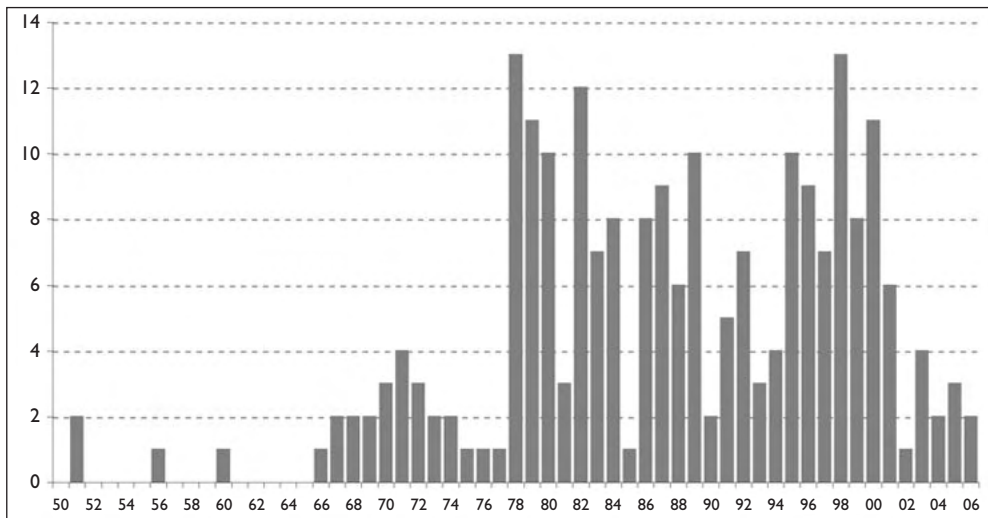


Fig. 1. Accepted records of Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* in Britain, 1950–2006.

With only two individuals recorded, 2006 was, in the context of the last 30 years, a poor year for this species. However, this showing is consistent with that in recent years, as totals for each of the last five years have been lower than any year in the preceding seven, while the average for the current decade looks set to be closer to that of the 1960s and 1970s rather than the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s (fig. 1). The reasons for this trend are unclear as the estimated North American population reached 5.9 million birds in 2006; 28% greater than the 2005 estimate and 30% above the long-term average (<http://www.ducks.org/news/1179/DuckoftheMonthBluewi.html>).

With the finger of suspicion so often pointed in the direction of rare wildfowl, the presence of a metal ring on the male tracked from North Yorkshire through Northumberland to Cumbria might be seen as a negative credential. However, given that there are at least 13 instances of Blue-winged Teals ringed in North America and later recovered in Europe – including singles in the Outer Hebrides and in Suffolk – there seems little reason to doubt the validity of this northwest-bound spring migrant (Dennis 1994).

(Breeds from S Alaska, across much of temperate Canada to SC USA. Migratory, wintering in S USA, Mexico, Caribbean and N South America.)

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (c. 160, 309, –)

2005 Cambridgeshire Fen Drayton Gravel-pit, ♂, intermittently from 16th July to 28th August (*Brit. Birds* 100: 20–21); note revised dates.

(Main breeding range in temperate steppe-forest from Poland and Hungary E through Ukraine to Caspian Sea, but distribution often patchy. Other populations occur in S Spain, Kazakhstan, W Mongolia and Tibetan Plateau. Migratory, most winter in E Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Seas, NE Africa and Indian subcontinent.)

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* (0, 87, 14)

Argyll Loch A'Phuill, Tiree, adult ♀, 12th–16th November, photo (J. Bowler).

Cambridgeshire Ouse Washes, first-winter ♂, 29th January to 4th March, photo (D. L. Buckingham, P. & S. Coombes *et al.*).

Cleveland Reclamation Pond, ♀, 7th–15th January, photo (S. J. Hinley, R. C. Taylor *et al.*); presumed same as Caerlaverock, Dumfries & Galloway, below.

Clyde Barr Loch, ♂, 22nd January (B. Orr *et al.*); presumed same as Clyde 2005, below.

Devon Roadford Reservoir, first-winter ♂, 3rd–9th January, photo (A. Cunningham *et al.*).

Dumfries & Galloway Caerlaverock, ♀, 17th January to 10th March, photo (per www.birdguides.com) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 70), presumed same, 27th November to 13th March 2007, photo (C. G. Batty *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 51); see also Cleveland. Milton Loch, ♂, 11th–31st March, photo (K. Gillon); presumed returning bird of previous years (*Brit. Birds* 98: 635–637).

Greater Manchester Heaton Park, ♂, 4th July to 3rd September, photo (R. & S. Adderley, I. M. McKerchar *et al.*), presumed same as Greater Manchester 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 22–23); see also Greater Manchester 2004, below.

Lancashire & North Merseyside Pine Lake, Carnforth, adult ♂, 14th September to 26th October, photo (P. J. Marsh *et al.*); presumed same, Leighton Moss, 15th–20th October, photo (per S. J. White).

Leicestershire Swithland Reservoir, first-summer ♂, 9th April to 3rd May, photo (S. M. Lister, A. J. Mackay *et al.*). Rutland Water, ♂, 11th April, photo (M. G. Berriman, S. M. Lister *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Loch Sandary, North Uist, first-winter ♂, 17th November to 9th January 2007, photo (J. Kemp, B. Rabbitts *et al.*).

Staffordshire Tittesworth Reservoir, adult ♂, 1st July, photo (P. Barrett, W. J. Low, N. Smith *et al.*).

Bliethfield Reservoir, ♀, 3rd November (R. C. Broadbent, G. J. Mant, M. P. Radford).

Suffolk Suffolk Water Park, Bramford, ♂, 10th–17th May, photo (W. J. Brame, N. B. Cant, C. Fulcher *et al.*).

Worcestershire Grimley, first-winter ♂, 11th–14th February, photo (B. Stretch *et al.*); same, Westwood Great Pool, Droitwich, 15th–19th February and 4th–7th March, photo (W. Dutton *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Hornsea Mere, ♂, 10th July, photo (B. Richards).

Yorkshire, North Farnham Gravel-pit, 30th April (L. Lancaster, J. R. Mather).

2004 Essex Abberton Reservoir, first-winter ♂, 11th December to 15th January 2005, photo; previously published in 2004 report (*Brit. Birds* 98: 635–637) but omitted from 2005 report in error.

2004 Greater Manchester Pennington Flash, ♂, 8th–17th July, photo (A. Makin, I. M. McKerchar *et al.*), now considered to be returning bird of 2003 (*Brit. Birds* 97: 564–566).

2005 Argyll Loch Leathen, first-winter ♀, 18th December, photo (J. M. Dickson).

2005 Ayrshire Kilbirnie Loch, ♂, 27th November to 22nd January 2006, photo (B. Orr *et al.*), presumed same as Clyde 2005, below.

2005 Clyde Barr Loch, ♂, 10th December (B. Orr *et al.*); presumed same as Ayrshire 2005, above.

2005 Cornwall Drift Reservoir, first-winter ♂, 8th November to at least 21st February 2006, photo (D. Parker *et al.*); note correct observers (*Brit. Birds* 100: 22–23).

2005 Greater Manchester Heaton Park, ♂, 21st–28th August (P. Berry, I. M. McKerchar); now considered to be same as Pennington Flash, 2003 and 2004 (*Brit. Birds* 98: 635–637).

2005 Warwickshire Kingsbury Water Park, ♂, 21st May, photo (R. Duckhouse, S. Seal *et al.*).

(Breeds from C Alaska through Canada to Hudson Bay, and S to Washington and South Dakota. Isolated populations E of Great Lakes. Winters along both coastlines of USA, in E from New Jersey to Mexico, W Indies, and C America to N Colombia.)

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* (57, 127, 3)

Ayrshire Irvine and Barrasie, adult ♂, 2nd April to 22nd July, photo (per www.birdguides.com), presumed same as Ayrshire 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 160; 100: 23).

Moray & Nairn Nairn Bar, adult ♂, 12th February (D. C. Jardine); same, Kingsteps, 18th–21st February, photo (M. J. H. Cook, C. A. Gervaise, A. Jensen *et al.*); same, Portknockie, 13th April (G. Wylie *et al.*); presumed same as Moray & Nairn 2005, below.

North-east Scotland Blackdog, adult ♂, intermittently 4th May to 26th July, photo (N. A. Littlewood *et al.*), presumed same as Peterhead, 2005, below; same, Ythan Estuary, intermittently from 6th May to 7th June (per H. E. Maggs); same, Blackdog, 10th September (N. A. Littlewood); same, St Combs, 22nd October, photo (H. Addelee); same, Peterhead, 28th October to 11th December (M. Innes *et al.*).

Shetland Mousa Sound, adult ♂, 3rd January to 21st February (P. M. Ellis *et al.*), present from December 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23); same, 21st December to 2007. Reawick, Mainland, adult ♂, 1st February (P. V. Harvey), presumed one of two individuals in Clift Sound, September 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23); presumed same, Tresta, Mainland, 22nd April and 25th May (D. P. Hall, D. Jackson, S. J. Minton); presumed same, Burra, 6th October (R. A. Haywood). Clift Sound, ♀, 28th February to at least 4th March (J. & R. A. Haywood); ♂, 14th and 18th July, 11th September (J. & R. A. Haywood), presumed same as one of two there in September 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23). Dales Voe, Delting, Mainland, adult ♂, 2nd April to 15th June (B. H. Thomason *et al.*), presumed returning bird of May 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23); ♀, 15th–18th April (P. V. Harvey, S. J. Minton, R. Riddington *et al.*). Hamars Ness, Fetlar, ♂, 10th March, photo (B. H. Thomason), presumed returning bird last recorded Belmont, Bluemull Sound, April 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23). Fair Isle, adult ♂, 30th March (D. N. Shaw).

2005 Moray & Nairn Nairn, ♂, 24th–27th August (M. J. H. Cook *et al.*); same, 2nd–11th October (A. Jensen, R. Proctor).

2005 North-east Scotland Blackdog, second-summer ♂, 29th May to 12th June (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23); note revised dates. Peterhead, ♂, intermittently 11th December to 29th April 2006 (per H. E. Maggs), presumed same as 2004, above (*Brit. Birds* 98: 637).

In some ways this is one of the most straightforward species to assess on the BBRC list. Adult males are highly distinctive and, in their favoured areas, they can be adequately described in a few lines. In other plumages, King Eiders are a little more subtle and could be overlooked but, although only 20% of records relate to females, they may be genuinely rarer, as females of at least some species of wildfowl are less prone to dispersal (Clarke *et al.* 1997). Away from Scotland this is a very rare bird: since 1950 only 16 have been seen in England and just one in Wales.

In other ways this species gives the Committee real headaches. Almost 70% of records come from eastern Scotland, between Shetland and the Firth of Forth, and long-staying individuals are frequent in these areas. For example, one or more returning males were seen at Loch Fleet, Highland, for 18 consecutive years to 1993, and on the Ythan estuary, North-east Scotland, for 19 years to 2001. Keeping tabs on birds like these as they move up and down the coast between wintering and moulting areas and identifying new arrivals in the same areas is difficult, especially as regular birds may go missing for several months. The presence of long-stayers also makes it difficult to analyse arrival patterns but occa-

sional small influxes of new blood are apparent, notably in the mid 1970s and the late 1980s. This year's batch is a fairly typical selection: all but three of the sightings are presumed to relate to wandering males, which initially arrived between 2003 and 2005, and two of the three new arrivals are females (with another photographed female still under consideration) – so perhaps females may hang about longer without being detected after all.

It has to be admitted that the totals for this species are a matter of opinion. A review in 1994 dramatically reduced the British total (Suddaby *et al.* 1994) but a recent revision for *The Birds of Shetland*, applying criteria used to assess other rare birds so that individuals were considered to be returning only if there was strong evidence, produced an amended figure (Harvey & Pennington 2002). This would add another 36 to the total quoted above, and these revised totals will be adopted by BBRC in the near future. BBRC will always take local opinion on returning individuals into account and it would be of value if observers and County Recordors could collate records or give views on whether birds reported are new or are believed to be returnees and, if so, which records are linked.

(Breeds from Kanin Peninsula E across Arctic Siberia, including Novaya Zemlya and W Svalbard, Arctic Alaska, N Canada and N Greenland. European population winters along ice-free coasts of White Sea, N Norway and Iceland. Pacific population winters in Bering Sea.)

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana* (0, 7, 0)

Caernarfonshire Llanfairfechan, adult ♂, from 2005 to 28th April (*Brit. Birds* 100: 23); again, 24th September to 31st December (per R. I. Thorpe).

(Breeds on Siberian tundra from Yana River E to Alaska, and N Canada to Newfoundland. In N Atlantic, winters along coasts of E USA, N to South Carolina, and inland on Great Lakes. Elsewhere, winters in ice-free seas along both coasts of N Pacific Ocean, S to N Japan and California.)

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* (2, 10, 1)

Shetland Loch of Snarravoe, Unst, adult ♂, 12th November to 20th January 2007, photo (M. G. Pennington *et al.*) (plate 335).

This diminutive duck continues its recent good run with yet another adult male, this time on one of Britain's most northerly lochs. This species has now occurred in four of the past five years and this individual, the third for Scotland, was unringed, extremely wary and surely beyond any significant doubt a wild bird. All records have been males apart from the female in Suffolk in 2002, but this is not unusual among Nearctic ducks. Males account for approximately 80% of records of Black Duck *Anas*



Hugh Harrop

335. Adult male Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*, Loch of Snarravoe, Unst, Shetland, November 2006.

rubripes and Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* and about 70% of Blue-winged Teals *A. discors*. Undoubtedly this will be partly due to females being overlooked, but it is hard to believe that it is the sole reason. Males throughout the animal kingdom tend to be the dispersive, colonising sex, although immatures tend to be the dispersive, colonising age so the preponderance of adult Buffleheads is harder to explain. There are still questions to be answered, unfortunately.

(Forested regions of North America from C Alaska throughout W and C Canada to Hudson Bay, and S to Montana and NE California. Winters throughout North America from Aleutian Islands and coastal Alaska, S along both seaboard of USA to N Mexico, with small numbers inland.)

Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* (0, 2, 1)

Forth Callander, adult ♂, intermittently from 19th November to 24th March 2007, photo (N. Bielby *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plates 52, 336); same, Loch Venachar, intermittently from 20th December to 27th April 2007, photo; possibly same as North-east Scotland 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 24).

(Resident W Palearctic population breeds Iceland, and two North American populations. Larger Nearctic population breeds S Alaska and W Canada, S to N California, and winters on adjacent coastal lowlands; smaller E Canadian population breeds Labrador and winters along coast S to New York.)



Fraser Simpson

336. Adult male Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica*, Callander, Forth, December 2006.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* (7, 288, 17)

Highland Peterburn, Melvaig, adult, 21st December (K. D. Shaw).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, Aberdeen, adult, 1st November (H. Addelee, I. J. Kelman).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, adult, 20th and 24th–25th April (P. A. Brown *et al.*); immature, 20th–21st April (P. A. Brown, M. Gray *et al.*). Rack Wick, Westray, 29th November, photo (E. R. Meek), corpse, probably dead for about ten days.

Outer Hebrides Skigersta, Lewis, adult, 23rd March to 29th April, photo (A. Carroll, A. W. Lauder, K. D. Shaw *et al.*). Tolsta Head, Lewis, age uncertain, 24th March (A. Carroll, A. W. Lauder, K. D. Shaw). Skigersta, Lewis, three, adults, 26th March to 29th April (S. E. Duffield, A. Robinson, M. S. Scott *et al.*). Butt of Lewis, adult, 28th May, photo (M. S. Scott).

Scilly St Mary's, 12th February (R. L. Flood).

Shetland Mousa Sound, age uncertain, 28th January to 1st February (P. V. Harvey *et al.*); presumed same December 2005, below. Bluemull Sound, adult, 19th April, photo (V. Smith, B. H. Thomason). Burrafirth, Unst, age uncertain, 21st–30th April, photo (M. A. Maher *et al.*). Kettla Ness, West Burra, adult, 30th April (R. A. Haywood). Foula, 8th, 14th & 29th May (D. & G. Atherton). Kirkabister, Mainland, adult, from 2005 to at least 7th April; again, 24th–25th October (G. H. & W. F. Peplow *et al.*); presumed returning bird (*Brit. Birds* 100: 24).

Suffolk Minsmere, 12th January (R. Drew).

2005 Moray & Nairn Cummington, adult, 3rd May (M. O'Reilly, D. M. Pullan *et al.*).

2005 Orkney Holm Sound, second-summer, 18th July to 10th August, photo (K. E. Hague *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: 24); note correct observers.

2005 Shetland Colgrave Sound, adult, 6th–7th January (B. H. Thomason). Brough, Fetlar, juvenile, 18th January (B. H. Thomason). Mousa Sound, 11th December (P. M. Ellis, K. D. Shaw).

Prior to 1980, there had been just 68 British records of White-billed Diver but there were 68 in the 1980s, 84 in the 1990s and now 92 since 2000. Why there should be such an increase is unclear, as this is a globally rare species with a world population estimated at just 18,000 individuals in the early 1990s (North 1994). Although there is a small but regular wintering population in northern Norway, the core breeding areas are in distant regions of eastern Siberia and northern Canada.

Half the British records come from the three Scottish archipelagos of Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides and there is a clear spring peak in sightings, with over 40% of records in April and

May. An even more pronounced spring passage is evident in southwest Norway, where up to 22 individuals have been seen passing one site in a day (Folvik & Mjøs 1995; Bell 2006; J. Bell pers. comm.). It has been suggested that these birds are wintering in the North Sea (*BWP*) and the fact that there are records from almost every coastal recording area along the east and south coasts of Britain from Shetland to Scilly suggests that small numbers may winter there. To account for the Norwegian passage, however, there must be a population of perhaps 100–200 birds somewhere to the south. It seems unlikely that such numbers are wintering in the North Sea, especially as sightings in The Netherlands have decreased recently, with 21 of the 35 records up to 2004 occurring before 1980 (van der Vliet *et al.* 2005), a completely different pattern from that found in Britain.

An alternative suggestion is that spring birds originate to the west of Britain, passing northern Scotland before they reach the Norwegian coast and begin heading north (Bell 2006). The recent discovery of a significant spring passage in the Outer Hebrides lends support to this theory but still leaves the mystery of where these birds spend the winter. Midwinter records are rare in Scotland, even in Shetland and the Outer Hebrides, although becoming slightly more frequent in line with the overall increase. There is also little evidence of regular occurrence to the south or west of Scotland: there have been just six records around Irish Sea coasts at any season (three in England and Wales, and three in Ireland), and a grand total of just eight in Ireland to the end of 2004, although four of these were in January or February. There are just three records from the Faeroe Islands (J. Hansen pers. comm.) and, amazingly, there are no confirmed records from Iceland (Y. Kolbeinsson pers. comm.).

Submissions should ideally establish that observers are aware of the very real pitfall of pale-billed Great Northern Divers *G. immer*; preferably, the bird should be viewed from different angles and in different light conditions to ascertain bill colour clearly. This may not always be possible, in flybys for example, but there are also structural differences that should be noted. Birds in summer plumage are usually easier to identify, as White-billed Diver has larger white chequers on the back and more white in the neck patches, while Great Northern Diver should have a black bill in summer. BBRC has, however, received photographs of birds which appear to be summer-plumaged Great Northern Divers with pale bills.

(In W Palearctic, rare and sporadic breeder along Arctic coasts of European Russia, E from Yamal Peninsula and Novaya Zemlya. Also breeds in coastal regions of Siberia, N Alaska and Canada E to Mackenzie River and Baffin Island. Winters at sea, in E Atlantic, S to S Norway, but distribution poorly known.)

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* (1, 22, 0)

Outer Hebrides Sula Sgeir, adult, 23rd May to 1st July, photo (per B. Rabbits), presumed returning bird of 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 25).

(Breeds on islands in S South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Outside the breeding season, disperses N throughout southern oceans as far as Tropic of Capricorn.)

Zino's/Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma madeirafeae* (0, 33, 0)

2004 At sea Sea area Sole. 16 km NE of St Mary's, Scilly, 28th August, photo; note corrected location (*Brit. Birds* 98: 640).

(Zino's Petrel confined to central mountains of Madeira where entire world population is c. 65–80 pairs; wintering range unknown. Fea's Petrel breeds in Madeira archipelago (Bugio) and Cape Verde Islands. Outside breeding season, disperses throughout N Atlantic.)

North Atlantic Little Shearwater *Puffinus baroli* (3, 57, 1)

Cornwall Pendeen Watch, 20th August (M. T. Elliott, C. Moore, S. Rogers *et al.*).

In October 2005, the BOURC's Taxonomic Sub-committee announced changes in its treatment of the three forms of small black-and-white shearwaters inhabiting the tropical and subtropical North Atlantic, previously classified as Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus l. lherminieri* and two races of Little Shearwater, *P. assimilis baroli* breeding in the Canary Islands, Azores and Madeiran islands and *P. a. boydi* breeding in the Cape Verde Islands. It reported that these three form a monophyletic group, not closely related to the other taxa of the wider complex, including the Little Shearwaters of the southern oceans, which are now considered a completely separate species. Its recommendation was that the North Atlantic forms be treated as two species: Macaronesian Shearwater *P. baroli* (polytypic, with

subspecies *baroli* and *boydi*; note that the common name used in *British Birds* is the rather more explanatory ‘North Atlantic Little Shearwater’) and Audubon’s Shearwater *P. lherminieri*. North Atlantic Little Shearwater (or Macaronesian Shearwater) *P. b. baroli* therefore replaces Little Shearwater *P. assimilis* on Category A of the British List. In practical terms for British birders this is simply a change of name. However, BOURC also noted that the taxonomic status of *P. b. boydi* remains under consideration pending study of recently collected sound recordings of that taxon.

Fortunately, this taxonomic uncertainty does not affect the identification of vagrants in a British context. Of the accepted records a number have been handled, but only one of these lived to tell the tale. This was the remarkable record of a male that visited Skomer, Pembrokeshire, in June and July of 1981 and 1982, where it was trapped, photographed and sound-recorded, but was documented originally in the Dutch journal *Ardea* (James & Alexander 1984). Details became available to a wider British audience when James (1986) published a summary of the events on Skomer in *BB*. Others found dead or moribund were in March 1975 (Lancashire & North Merseyside), May 1958 and 1960 (inland Cheshire and Norfolk, respectively), June 1977 (inland Cheshire again) and December 1990 (Lothian). Where these have been assigned to a particular form, all have been *P. b. baroli*. Claims of the species based on field observations, however, tend to occur between August and October. The species has suffered from high rejection rates in the past, since the elimination of Manx Shearwater *P. puffinus* is a major initial hurdle that not all claims have overcome. We are aware that, over several decades, BBRC has found it difficult to take a completely consistent approach, both from record to record and, perhaps more importantly, from decade to decade.

A review of all British records of small black-and-white shearwaters has been planned for some time to try to improve our understanding of the status of this species in British waters. We know that it can and does occur and this will be the starting point for the review. A proportion of very well-described recent records have been accepted and published, but most recent claims have been pended for the review. Over the next year we will develop and agree criteria and begin the arduous task of reviewing all of the accepted records since 1950 and, in the interests of fairness, the considerably larger number of rejected claims. In the meantime, we continue to welcome submissions of this species, while hoping that one will soon be photographed from a pelagic trip in British waters.

(N Atlantic range restricted to warmer waters of Madeira, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands and possibly Azores. Outside the breeding season found at sea near breeding sites within N Atlantic.)

Wilson’s Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (2, 426, –)

2005 Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 3rd August (T. ap Rheinallt, A. Robinson, M. S. Scott).

(Breeds on rocky coastlines and offshore islands of Antarctic. Migrates N to winter throughout southern oceans, N to C North Atlantic along E seaboard of North America N to Newfoundland, Canada, and E to Bay of Biscay in W Europe.)

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (0, 2, 0)

2005 Shropshire near Whitchurch, adult ♂, 7th November, photo (M. Eaton, Mr Handley, M. Jordan *et al.*), taken into care at Chester Zoo and later died.

Magnificent Frigatebird now joins a remarkable list of vagrant seabirds that have been found and eventually identified in an incongruous setting, far from the sea. Hurricane Wilma, which blitzed its way northeast across the North Atlantic in November 2005, was responsible for the arrival of this bird and reported frigatebirds from the Azores, France and Spain and the unprecedented influx of some 53 Laughing Gulls *Larus atricilla* to Britain. A similar weather system preceded the discovery of an adult female Magnificent Frigatebird at Scarlett Point, near Castletown, Isle of Man, on 22nd December 1998 (this bird was picked up exhausted, and taken into care; it subsequently died in captivity in October 1999). The day before the Shropshire bird was found (6th November 2005), unidentified frigatebirds were reported from Porthgwarra, Cornwall, heading towards Land’s End, and over Flat Holm in the Bristol Channel. In the case of the latter bird, the timing and the bird’s flight path into the mouth of the Severn, together with a described red throat and asymmetry in the length of the outermost tail feathers, suggest that it may have been the Shropshire bird, though this is simply not verifiable from the brief description.

This bird was discovered on 7th November, flapping around in the corner of a field near

Whitchurch, Shropshire, by Mr Handley, a local farmer. It was taken to Chester Zoo the following day where it was carefully checked over by Dr Mike Jordan, who took biometrics while the bird was still alive. It was established to be a Magnificent Frigatebird by Mark Eaton, Richard Bradbury and Chris Bowden on the strength of these measurements and the purple gloss to the feathers. Unfortunately, it died on 9th November and the specimen was deposited at the Natural History Museum (NHM), Tring.

This record is not unprecedented in British waters – as noted above, a female was found on the Isle of Man in 1998 (*Brit. Birds* 96: 550). As Isle of Man records are no longer added to the British List (but are still included in BBRC totals), the Shropshire bird becomes the first British record. In addition, a first-stage juvenile Ascension Frigatebird *F. aquila* was on Tiree, Inner Hebrides, on 10th July 1953. This was originally thought to be a Magnificent Frigatebird but was later reidentified as an Ascension (*Brit. Birds* 96: 58–73).

Frigatebird identification is not easy, with adult male Magnificent and Ascension Frigatebirds being virtually identical in the field and Great Frigatebird *F. minor* being very similar, apart from a conspicuous pale bar across the greater coverts. Bearing the saga of the Tiree bird in mind, BBRC, together with Katrina Cook and Mark Adams at the NHM, took much care over checking and rechecking the characters of the Shropshire bird. Specifically, the specimen proved to be an adult male in suspended wing moult, retaining fully developed old tertials and two innermost greater coverts. The tail has a partially grown outer feather on the left side. Another inner tail feather is broken and the tail feathers are a mixture of old and new. There was some body moult taking place as well, though this is believed to continue throughout the year (*BWP*). On this individual, the head and nape are glossed green, and the wings are predominantly green though with some purple scattered throughout. The breast feathers are green-based with a purple tip but, most importantly, the back and mantle are predominately purple, consisting of green-based feathers with a purple distal half, and so appear as purple over green. Most adult male frigatebirds show some purple and some green gloss in their plumage but other species are obviously green-glossed on the upperparts, whereas this bird and all specimens of Magnificent Frigatebird examined are more obviously purple.

Biometrics (allowing for shrinkage compared with the live bird) are at the lower end of the range for male Magnificent Frigatebird: bill to skull 114 mm; bill to feathering 105 mm; wing 610 mm. Birds inhabiting the Cape Verde islands are said to average larger than those in the Caribbean (*BWP*), and so the combination of weather conditions and biometrics clearly suggests a Caribbean origin.

(In W Palearctic, breeds on two islets off Boavista, Cape Verde Islands, where population is small and declining. Elsewhere, breeds S Florida, USA, throughout Greater and Lesser Antilles from Bahamas to coastal Venezuela and Brazil, and in Pacific from S Baja California, Mexico, S to Ecuador and Galapagos. Largely sedentary, but occasionally wanders N in USA to Canada.)

Frigatebird sp. *Fregata* (0, 5, 0)

2005 Glamorgan Flat Holm, ♂, 6th November (J. Tatton-Brown), flying southeast into Avon sector of Bristol Channel. Presumed same as Magnificent Frigatebird, Shropshire 2005 (above), and thus not included in statistics as a new bird.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (259, 218, 1)

Sussex Hove, ♂, 28th March to 5th May (J. & M. Barnes, P. & D. Cooper, D. Uprichard *et al.*).

(Widespread, patchy and declining in Europe N to 53°N. To E, breeds to 60°N in Russia, and E to Kazakhstan and NW China. Western Palearctic population migratory, wintering mainly in E Africa from Sudan and Ethiopia south. Other populations largely resident or dispersive in N Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa and Australia.)

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (69, 61, 1)

Somerset Shapwick Heath, adult, 17th June to 18th July (B. D. Gibbs, N. Smith *et al.*).

(W Palearctic breeding population small and fragmented, centred on Mediterranean basin, from S Spain to Black Sea and E to Kazakhstan, with large population in Danube Delta. Migratory, wintering in N tropical Africa. African population largely resident.)

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (3, 139, 23)

Devon Otter Estuary, 23rd October to at least 1st January 2007 (I. Waite *et al.*); see also Dorset, Kent.

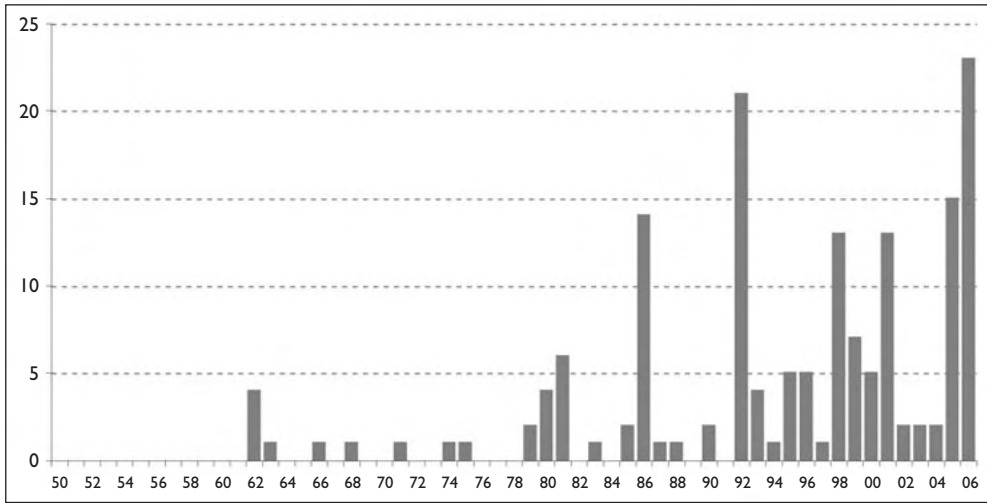


Fig. 2. Accepted records of Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* in Britain, 1950–2006.

Dorset Stanpit Marsh, two, 9th–17th September, photo (per J. Lidster), one to 9th October; same, Lodmoor, two, 15th–16th October, photo (I. M. Stanley *et al.*); see also Devon, Kent.

Hampshire Warblington, 9th January to 3rd March, photo (J. Crook *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 71). Barton Stacey, adult, 19th April, photo (K. Haggard, A. Polley, B. Rickwood). Needs Ore, Beaulieu Estuary, adult, intermittently from 25th April to 4th May (B. Cozens, A. J. Hold, V. Lowings *et al.*).

Kent Samphire Hoe, 24th April (D. E. Smith). Grove Ferry, 23rd July, photo (M. P. Wilson); same, 29th July to 7th August, photo (per C. G. Bradshaw). Elmley, two, adults, 7th September, photo (M. May *et al.*), seen later in Dorset and Devon. Dungeness, adult, 18th–20th October, photo (P. G. Akers *et al.*). Norfolk Holkham, 7th May (A. I. Bloomfield, D. Foster *et al.*). Burnham Norton, age uncertain, 8th–10th August, photo (T. Allwood, R. Martin *et al.*). Blakeney Fresh Marshes, 9th–23rd October, photo (per www.birdguides.com).

Northamptonshire Summer Leys LNR, juvenile, 11th–13th August, photo (per www.birdguides.com).

Somerset Minehead, adult, 5th April, photo (C. Gladman, C. M. Sawyer, J. White).

Sussex Piddinghoe, eight, 21st January to 1st April, photo (per C. W. Melgar). Pett Level, 18th April, photo (N. Bayly).

Wiltshire Britford, two, from 24th December 2005 to 31st March (M. K. Penn *et al.*). Great Cheverell, 18th March to 1st April, photo (R. Turner *et al.*).

2001 Kent Dungeness, 30th August (P. G. Akers *et al.*).

2005 Cambridgeshire Brampton, 28th July to 14th September (*Brit. Birds* 100: 28); note revised dates. Although wandering individuals often make it difficult to determine exactly how many birds are involved, the total of at least 23 made 2006 a record year for this increasingly regular species (fig. 2). The previous highest total was 21 in 1992 and, as in that year, the 2006 crop included a remarkable flock of eight, those in Sussex recalling the eight in Hertfordshire in 1992. Unlike the 1992 influx, when all the records were in May, there was a more even spread throughout the year in 2006, broadly reflecting the established occurrence pattern of the British records as a whole. Winter records and spring influxes are typical, but in recent years there has been an increasing number of late summer and early autumn birds, which presumably include dispersing juveniles from colonies on the Continent.

As one might expect, the records show a strong southerly bias, there being just three in Scotland by the end of 2006. This is a highly successful species that continues to expand its range within Europe and, with a general upward trend in the number of records continuing, Cattle Egret seems destined to follow Great White Egret *Ardea alba* and perhaps even Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* in becoming a more regular feature of the British avifauna.

(In Europe, common and widespread in S Spain and Portugal with small, expanding populations in France and Italy. N populations disperse outside breeding season. Widespread resident throughout much of Africa, S USA, N and C South America. Distinctive race, *coromandus*, sometimes treated as a distinct species, breeds S and SE Asia N to S China and Japan, Australia.)

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* (8, 302, –)

2004 Yorkshire, North Fairburn Ings, 19th May (V. Parslow, C. Winn).

2005 Dorset Little Sea, Studland Heath, 14th April (G. Armstrong, H. G. Wood-Homer). Sturminster Marshall Gravel-pit, first-summer, 24th–25th July (G. P. Green *et al.*). Hengistbury Head, 18th–19th October (M. S. Andrews, D. N. Smith); note revised dates and observers (*Brit. Birds* 100: 28–30).

2005 Kent Seaton, 15th January and 13th February at least (N. V. McCanch).

(Small, but increasing breeding population in Netherlands and France. Elsewhere in Europe, highly fragmented breeding range from E Austria to Ukraine, but generally rare. W Palearctic population migratory, most wintering in N Africa and E Mediterranean, although recent trend to remain near breeding sites in C and NW Europe. Other populations breed across much of Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas.)

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (23, 134, 7)

Borders Houndwood, first-summer, 7th–23rd July, photo (D. Graham *et al.*); presumed same as Seaton Sluice, Northumberland, below.

Cornwall Church Cove, The Lizard, age uncertain, 27th August (R. J. Joliffe); see also Isle of Wight.

Durham South Shields and Whitburn Coastal Park, 16th May (T. I. Mills, B. Unwin); same, Frosterley, 17th May (J. Olley); see also Highland, Moray & Nairn, Northumberland, Orkney, North Yorkshire.

Highland Wester Clunes, The Aird, adult, 9th May (C. Leslie); see also Durham, Moray & Nairn, Northumberland, Orkney, North Yorkshire.

Kent Margate, Thanet, 6th June (B. A. Ryan), presumed same as Suffolk, below.

Lancashire & North Merseyside Marshside Marsh, adult, 8th June (G. R. Clarkson, D. Hawker-Bond); presumed same, Liverpool, 15th June (J. Smith).

Moray & Nairn Tomfarclas, 13th May (D. A. Gibson); see also Durham, Highland, Northumberland, Orkney, North Yorkshire.

Northumberland Plenmeller Common, 17th May (J. Roberts); see also Durham, Highland, Moray & Nairn, Orkney, North Yorkshire. Powburn, 28th May, presumed same, Branton, 31st May (I. & K. Davison, H. Tindle). Seaton Sluice, 23rd July (A. S. Jack); presumed same as Borders.

Orkney North Ronaldsay, adult, 10th May (P. J. Donnelly *et al.*); see also Durham, Highland, Moray & Nairn, Northumberland, North Yorkshire.

Suffolk Gazeley, adult, 6th June (K. J. Warrington); presumed same as Kent.

Wight, Isle of Luccombe Down, 22nd August, photo (K. B. Gillam); see also Cornwall.

Yorkshire, North Filey, 23rd May (C. C. Thomas).

2005 Scilly St Mary's, 27th August (B. J. Thomas, K. Webb).

(Breeds C Iberia and E France through C Europe to Russia and, in small numbers, into N Greece and Turkey. To E, breeds widely in small numbers throughout forested temperate regions of Russia and Siberia to Russian Far East, S to N China. Most migratory, wintering in Africa, S and SE Asia, but Iberian population remains in C Spain and another resident population occurs in southern Africa.)

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (341, 91, 1)

Derbyshire Newhall, juvenile, 17th–18th September, photo (T. Davison, R. M. R. James, K. Peach *et al.*); see also Dorset, Lancashire & North Merseyside, Staffordshire.

Dorset Radipole Lake, juvenile, 7th–8th September, photo (per www.birdguides.com); see also Derbyshire, Lancashire & North Merseyside, Staffordshire.

Lancashire & North Merseyside Martin Mere, juvenile, intermittently from 20th September to 2nd November (G. Gallimore *et al.*); same, Brockholes Quarry, 1st–2nd October (W. Berry *et al.*); same, Fluke Hall, Pilling, intermittently from 11th October to 15th December, photo (S. G. Piner *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 359); same, Cockersands, 12th–13th October (per C. G. Batty); same, St Annes, 14th October (per www.birdguides.com); same, Marshside, intermittently, 14th–27th October (per www.birdguides.com); see also Derbyshire, Dorset, Staffordshire.

Staffordshire Burton-on-Trent, juvenile, 18th September, photo (A. Archer, D. Pratt, per N. Pomi-ankowski); see also Derbyshire, Dorset, Lancashire & North Merseyside.

(Regularly breeds France and Spain, elsewhere European breeding range centred N and W of Black Sea in Ukraine and Romania, with small, declining population in Balkans. To E, breeds from Volga River to Kazakhstan. Palearctic population migratory, most wintering in E Africa, but W European population wintering Morocco and

Mediterranean basin. Resident or dispersive populations occur in Africa, S Asia, Australia, E USA and the Caribbean.)

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (5, 356, –)

2005 Cheshire Moore, 20th–21st May; note revised dates (*Brit. Birds* 100: 30–31).

2005 Cumbria Talkin Tarn, 29th May (H. Hussey, T. Reid).

(Breeds throughout continental Europe, most in Spain, France and Germany, with smaller populations in all, except maritime NW Europe and Scandinavia and European Russia. Distinctive race, *lineatus*, breeds W Kazakhstan E to Japan. Nominate race winters Africa and NW Indian subcontinent. Other races migratory, dispersive or resident, in sub-Saharan Africa, Indian subcontinent, C, E and SE Asia and Australia.)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

North American race *C. c. hudsonius*, 'Northern Harrier' (0, 1, 0)

1982 Scilly St Mary's and other islands, juvenile, 22nd October to 7th June 1983 (P. Basterfield, R. J. H. Raines, B. J. Widdén *et al.*) (plate 337). Now accepted by BOURC and added to the British List.

The acceptance of this record has taken a long time! A review of claims of this form initiated by John Martin unearthed additional good-quality colour slides of this bird taken by Barrie Widdén. Examination of skins at the NHM, Tring and numerous colour photographs of both Hen and 'Northern Harriers' built on the work of the late Peter Grant and others and resulted in some new identification criteria. Variability in juvenile Hen Harrier of the nominate race had to be taken into account but the Committee felt confident that this striking bird showed the full suite of *hudsonius* characters. This North American race is treated as a full species in some recent literature (e.g. Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001), and may well become a future 'tick' for those lucky enough to have seen it. This record has now been accepted by the BOURC and a full account will appear in *BB* in due course.



B. J. Widdén

337. 'Northern Harrier' *Circus cyaneus hudsonius*, St Mary's, Scilly, October 1982.

(Breeds Alaska E to Canadian Maritime Provinces and S throughout Canada and USA from California E to Pennsylvania and Maryland, and S to Baja California, Mexico. Northern populations migratory, wintering from USA S throughout C America to N Colombia and NW Venezuela.)

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (2, 21, 1)

Norfolk Winterton, juvenile, 23rd September to 7th October, photo (N. Machin, J. Starbuck-Machin, A. Wilson *et al.*).

2005 Scilly St Martin's, juvenile, 16th September (W. H. Wagstaff *et al.*) and probably earlier St Mary's (R. L. Flood); note earlier sighting (*Brit. Birds* 100: 31).

(Fragmented range on steppe grasslands from Ukraine E through Russia to 100°E and S to Kazakhstan and NW China. Occasionally breeds to W of main breeding range in Europe. Entire population migratory, wintering throughout much of E and C Africa and the Indian subcontinent.)

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus* (215, 147, 1)

Orkney Burwick, South Ronaldsay, adult, 23rd May (P. Higson).

2005 Shetland Fetlar, first-winter ♀, intermittently from 15th January to 2nd February (B. H. Thomason *et al.*); same, Norwick, Unst, 15th February (C. & M. Cocker, M. A. Maher).

(Within Europe, most numerous in Iceland and Norway, with smaller populations breeding in N Sweden, Finland

and Arctic Russia. To E, breeds across Arctic Siberia, Alaska, N Canada and Greenland. European birds mostly resident but high Arctic breeders from N Canada and Greenland migratory, occasionally wintering S to NW Europe.)

Sora *Porzana carolina* (4, 10, 1)

Lincolnshire Gibraltar Point, first-winter, 5th–19th March, trapped, photo (T. Bagworth, A. Dobson, P. M. Troake *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plates 99 & 100; plate 338).

The majority of records are of first-winters found in reedbeds at migrant traps from late September to November, while the few overwintering birds are presumably ones that arrived the previous autumn undetected. There are, however, some peculiarities to this species' occurrence patterns in Britain. Firstly, there seems to be an unusually high incidence of adults – of the 16 that have been aged, no fewer than seven were adults. Secondly, there is a curious spread to the records, both geographically and temporally. Three records in particular are well away from expected localities, those in Berkshire in October 1864, Nottinghamshire in December 2004 and the Lincolnshire bird listed above. Furthermore, there are records from all seasons, although none in late spring – perhaps surprisingly as Sora arrives in Canada as a migrant mainly in late April and early May. Perhaps most difficult of all to fathom is the adult on Bardsey (Caernarfonshire) on 5th August 1981 (and a similar Irish record, involving another adult, in Co. Wexford on 2nd–4th August 1998). Perhaps these were returning adults that had summered on this side of the Atlantic? Overall, the pattern is closer to that of some North American shorebirds than we might expect and widening the search focus away from southwestern reedbeds in October may be rewarding.

If you should be fortunate enough to find one, could you identify it on brief views? While adults are relatively easy to identify, immatures are more challenging. At-a-glance separation from the similar Spotted Crake is perhaps best achieved by noting the absence of both spotting on the face and transverse white bars on the tertials – both of which are usually obvious on immature Spotted Crakes (Bradshaw 1992). Confusion can also occur with the other small crakes and Finland's first Sora was, apparently, misidentified as Little Crake *P. parva* for a few days. However, all plumages of both Little and Baillon's Crakes *P. pusilla* have heavily barred undertail-coverts, quite unlike the flashing clear yellowish panel of Sora.

(Breeds North America from C Canada south to C California and Maryland, USA. Migrates to winter from southern USA to C America and northern South America.)



Marc Read

338. First-winter Sora *Porzana carolina*, Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire, March 2006.

American Coot *Fulica americana* (0, 6, 0)

2005 Outer Hebrides Coot Loch, Benbecula, 25th February to 6th April, photo (S. E. Duffield *et al.*).

(Breeds across temperate southern Canada and the USA, from Vancouver Island E to New Brunswick, and S throughout much of the USA, Mexico, the West Indies and C America, with isolated populations in N and C Andes. Northern populations migratory, wintering in southern USA, occasionally N to south Ontario, Canada.)

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (129, 236, 7)

Carmarthenshire Morfa Uchaf, 24th September (B. Poulter, per B. Stewart); same, Kidwelly, Gwendraeth Estuary, 25th–26th September, photo (D. Davidson, B. & S. J. Stewart).

Cornwall Windmill Farm, The Lizard, 16th–17th April, photo (M. R. Anderson *et al.*).

Devon Blaxton Meadow, Plymouth, 1st–3rd April, photo (M. Darlaston, L. H. Hurrell *et al.*); same, Thurlestone, 6th–14th April, photo (A. J. Livett, K. Millman *et al.*).

Kent Elmley, 3rd–4th May, photo (C. G. Bradshaw, M. May, B. O'Dowd).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Martin Mere, two, first-summer ♂ and ♀, 5th May to 28th June, photo (R. Allen *et al.*), formed breeding pair which laid four eggs, but these failed to hatch; additional first-summer ♂, 5th–20th May, photo (R. Allen *et al.*); see also Lincolnshire, Worcestershire.

Lincolnshire Barton-on-Humber, three, first-summer, 4th May, photo (G. P. Catley, M. Hopper, E. Shucksmith *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 188; plate 339); see also Lancashire & North Merseyside, Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Upton Warren, 21st–22nd May, photo (C. Lee *et al.*); see also Lancashire & North Merseyside, Lincolnshire.

2005 Essex Old Hall Marshes, two, 31st May (J. Kerr).

2005 Kent Dungeness, 4th May, photo (D. Beck *et al.*, per B. E. Wright).

2005 Norfolk Welney, 1st–5th May (J. B. Kemp, M. R. & O. R. Marks *et al.*); note revised dates and observers (*Brit. Birds* 100: 35).

The undoubted highlight of what was a good year for this species was the fifth breeding attempt in Britain. A party of three was located initially in Lincolnshire on 4th May before a westward overnight flight of 150 km or so to reach Martin Mere, in Lancashire. At this inland site, two of the birds paired up and soon settled among the newly colonised Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta*, and laid four eggs. Sadly, like the breeding attempts in Cambridgeshire in 1983 and Cheshire in 1993, they were not successful and there was speculation that the failure of the eggs to hatch was related either to a prolonged period of torrential rain in late May or to the young male failing to fertilise the eggs (Allen 2007). The third individual was last seen at Martin Mere on 20th May and was relocated in Worcestershire the following day, some 150 km to the SSE.

A recent study in Doñana, Spain, has indicated that climatic conditions influence the behaviour of individual Black-winged Stilts, with birds dispersing farther in dry springs; since the projected mean rainfall in the Mediterranean region is predicted to fall, it seems possible that breeding attempts in



Graham Catley

339. First-summer Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, Barton-on-Humber, Lincolnshire, May 2006. Three first-summer birds arrived in Lincolnshire on 4th May and soon moved on to Lancashire, where two of them paired up and attempted to breed at Martin Mere.

Britain may become more frequent in the future (Figuerola 2007; <http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/tpbiodiv.pdf>). Autumn records of Black-winged Stilt in Britain are always in the minority so the one in Carmarthenshire in September was particularly noteworthy, being a county first and presumably the same individual that had been present c. 150 km to the WNW in Co. Wexford for the preceding three days.

(Breeds along Atlantic coast of France and locally throughout Mediterranean basin to Black Sea. To E, breeds from S Siberia and C Asia to NW China and S to Hong Kong. Most European birds winter in sub-Saharan Africa and, increasingly, in SW Iberia. Asian breeders winter across S and SE Asia and S China. Other distinctive races occur in Australasia, the Americas and Hawaii.)

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (23, 63, 1)

Kent Old Cheyne Court, Walland Marsh, adult, 7th–8th June, photo (B. Chambers *et al.*).

(Breeds locally in Mediterranean basin from N Africa and S Iberia to Black Sea, most in S Spain, Portugal and Greece. To E, breeds across SW Asia to Pakistan and Kazakhstan but distribution highly fragmented. Winters sub-Saharan Africa. Other races resident in Africa.)

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* (2, 31, 0)

1957 Somerset Steart, Bridgwater Bay, adult, 15th June.

This bird was published erroneously as a pratincole sp. in the BBRC 1950–57 review (*Brit. Birds* 99: 460–464), with the year given as 1955. It is still acceptable as Black-winged Pratincole, with the correct date as given above. However, a bird at the Midrips, near Camber, East Sussex, on 21st August 1955, is now acceptable only as pratincole sp.

(European breeders confined to N Black Sea in Romania and Ukraine where extremely rare and declining. To E, more numerous across steppes of S Russia to E Kazakhstan. Winters NE Namibia and Botswana, S to northern Cape and E to W Natal, South Africa, and W Swaziland. Some apparently regularly winter Ethiopia.)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* (4, 42, 3)

Argyll Oronsay, 18th October (M. Sur).

Norfolk Blakeney Fresh Marshes, 7th–9th April, photo (per www.birdguides.com) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 135; plate 340).

Outer Hebrides Clachan Sands, North Uist, 16th October, photo (D. J. MacDonald).

(Breeds S Alaska, S Canada and throughout USA to Mexico. Northern breeders migratory, wintering S USA and Mexico to Columbia. Other races resident in Caribbean and South America.)



340. Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*, Blakeney Fresh Marshes, Norfolk, April 2006.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* (0, 277, –)

2005 Cumbria Anthorn, first-summer, 14th August to 4th October (T. Reid, C. Shaw *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: 36–38); note correct observers.

2005 Orkney North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 20th September (P. J. Donnelly, A. E. Duncan *et al.*).

2005 Outer Hebrides Stillgarry, South Uist, juvenile, 14th–15th September, photo (T. Charman, S. E. Duffield, H. Venables); same, Bornish, South Uist, 17th–18th September (S. E. Duffield, A. Stevenson *et al.*).

(Breeds on coastal tundra from extreme NE Siberia, E across N Alaska and Canada to Baffin Island. Migrates over W Atlantic to wintering grounds in S South America.)

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (3, 58, 2)

Argyll Bailevullin, Tiree, first-summer, 29th August to 2nd September, photo (J. Bowler, K. Gillon).

Norfolk Hickling Broad, 6th June, photo (A. J. Kane, J. R. Williamson *et al.*).

2005 Cumbria Port Carlisle/Anthorn, 2nd–8th July, now considered not same as Northumberland 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 38).

With just the two individuals listed above, 2006 was, on recent form, a below-average year for this species; in the 17 years back to 1990, there have been no fewer than 51 records. Norfolk, now with eight records, remains the top British county for this species and the date of the 2006 bird suggests that it represented a pre-breeding, as opposed to the usual post-breeding, arrival. The autumn record in Argyll was the second for that county – and indeed the second for Tiree – and was discovered in a purple patch on that island that included American Golden Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*, Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* and Booted Warbler, all present there during August!

(Breeds across Siberian tundra from Yamal Peninsula E to Chukotskiy Peninsula, including New Siberian islands, and W Alaska. Although small numbers winter regularly in Kenya and Persian Gulf, main wintering range extends from Indian subcontinent to S China and Japan, S through SE Asia to Australia, New Zealand and islands in C Pacific.)

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* (0, 77, 5)

Cleveland Back Saltholme Pool, adult, 5th–11th July, photo (per www.birdguides.com) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 226).

Gloucestershire Slimbridge, juvenile, 22nd–24th September, photo (R. Baatsen, J. Lees *et al.*).

Gwent Goldcliff, juvenile, 6th–9th September, photo (P. Bristow, M. C. Powell *et al.*).

Hampshire Pennington Marshes, juvenile, 4th–19th September, photo (S. Farmer, M. P. Moody, T. Parminter *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, juvenile, 3rd–6th September (D. Page).

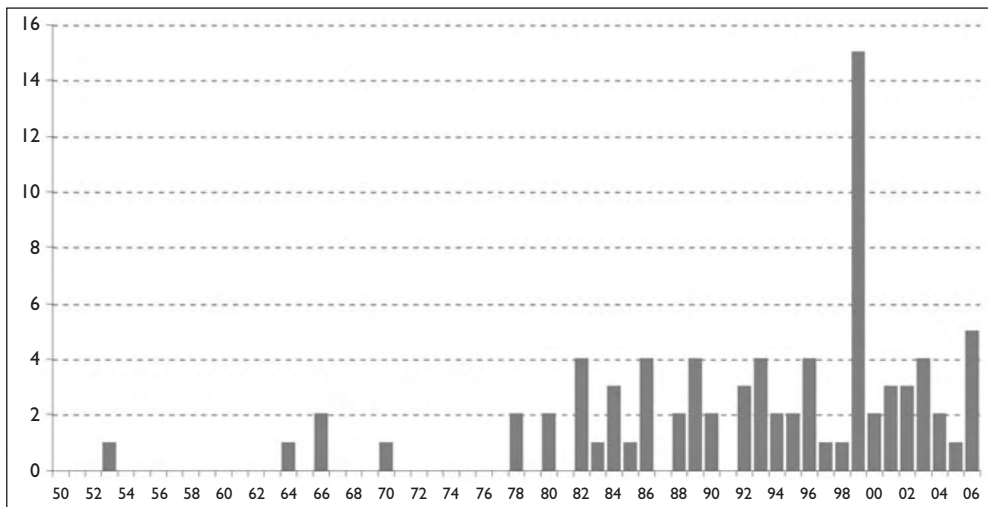


Fig. 3. Annual totals of Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla* in Britain, 1950–2006.

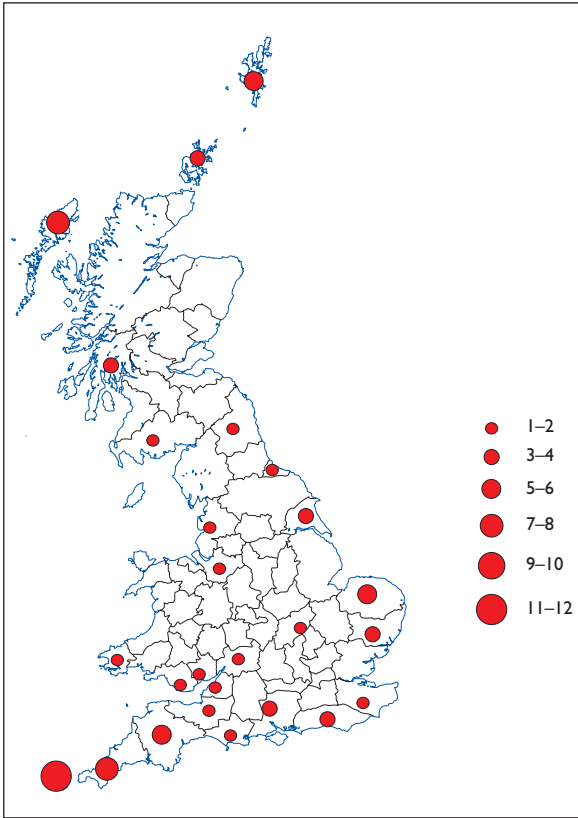


Fig. 4. Annual totals of Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla* in Britain, 1950–2006.

This series of records represents a fairly typical showing for this species. Almost half the British records have been in September and juveniles predominate. The adult on the east coast is also not atypical. There have been four records in a year on six previous occasions since 1982 (see fig. 3), but this year's total of five has been exceeded in only one year (the exceptional influx of 15 in 1999, when the majority were found in the Outer Hebrides), so 2006 represents the second-best year on record. The two individuals on opposite shores of the Severn estuary represent the first county records for both Gloucestershire and Gwent, while the Hampshire bird is the first juvenile for that county, following two previous autumn adults. The Cleveland bird is the third record of an adult for that area. Scilly holds sway as the top recording area in Britain, with approximately 14% of the national total.

(Breeds on tundra of W Alaska, E across Arctic Canada to S Baffin Island and coastal Labrador. Has bred in extreme NE Siberia. Migrates across Great Plains and E seaboard of USA to winter in C America and shorelines of tropical South America to Brazil and Peru.)

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* (4, 27, 1)

Cornwall Hayle Estuary, juvenile, 17th September to 25th October, photo (R. J. Chandler, P. Coleman *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 318; plate 341).

2002 Warwickshire Fisher's Mill Gravel-pit, 25th May (L. Johnson, P. Johnson *et al.*), presumed same as Staffordshire 2002

(*Brit. Birds* 96: 568).

2005 Devon South Milton Ley/Thurlestone Marsh, adult, 28th August, photo; observers should have included A. J. Livett and S. M. R. Young (*Brit. Birds* 100: 39).

(Breeds in C and S Alaska, E across N Canada, to Labrador and Newfoundland. Winters in S USA, C America, the Caribbean and South America, S to Brazil and N Chile.)



Alan Tate

341. Juvenile Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*, Hayle Estuary, Cornwall, October 2006.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* (16, 412, –)

2004 Outer Hebrides Northton Bay, Harris, juvenile, 20th September (A. Robinson).

2005 Argyll Loch Gruinart, Islay, 17th October (C. Fotheringham, J. How).

2005 Orkney North Ronaldsay, adult, 12th–21st September (J. Bird, A. E. Duncan, M. Gray *et al.*); juvenile, 18th–20th September (J. Bird, A. E. Duncan, M. Gray *et al.*); adult, 19th–23rd September (J. Bird, A. E. Duncan, M. Gray *et al.*); up to seven, 12th–25th October (J. Bird, P. J. Donnelly *et al.*).

2005 Outer Hebrides West Gerinish, South Uist, juvenile, 8th–10th October (S. E. Duffield, A. Stevenson *et al.*); three, juveniles/first-winters, 16th October (S. E. Duffield, A. Hogg, A. Stevenson). Loch Ordais/Port Mhor Bragar, Lewis, first-winter, 11th–12th October (M. S. Scott), and four in total on 12th October (A. C. Lees, R. D. Wemyss *et al.*), one still on 13th, photo (A. Drake, per A. Stevenson). Loch Paible, North Uist, juvenile, 21st October (B. Rabbits). North Bay, Ardivachar, juvenile/first-winter, 29th–30th October (S. E. Duffield, A. Stevenson).

These additional 21 birds for 2005 bring the total for that year to a staggering 39, making 2005 the best year on record for this species. Previous good years include 1984 (24), 2000 (23) and 1999 (21).

(Breeds in N Alaska and Arctic Canada, from Mackenzie River E to S Baffin Island. Overflies W Atlantic to winter in S South America.)

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* (1, 195, 4)

Cornwall Hayle Estuary, juvenile, 8th–13th September, photo (S. Rogers *et al.*). St John's Lake, juvenile, 20th September, photo (S. C. Votier *et al.*).

Derbyshire Aston-on-Trent Gravel-pit, adult, 7th June (R. M. R. James, R. W. Key).

Shetland Baltasound, Unst, juvenile, 17th August, photo (M. A. Maher, B. H. Thomason).

2005 Gloucestershire Slimbridge, juvenile, 6th–9th October, photo (M. J. McGill *et al.*).

2005 Outer Hebrides Borve, Lewis, juvenile, 3rd–5th September, photo (*Brit. Birds* 100: 40); note revised dates.

(Breeds extreme NE Siberia on Chukotskiy Peninsula and Wrangel Island, E across N Alaska and Arctic Canada, to N Baffin Island and NW Greenland. Migrates through North American interior to winter in South American Andes, from S Ecuador to Tierra del Fuego.)

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* (0, 22, 2)

Caernarfonshire Conwy RSPB reserve, first-summer, 11th–13th July, photo (M. Duckham *et al.*).

Dorset Brownsea Island, Poole Harbour, adult, 12th–21st August, photo (G. Armstrong *et al.*).

These records include the first for Wales and the second rare wader from Brownsea Island in three years, following a Western Sandpiper *C. mauri* there in 2004 (*Brit. Birds* 98: 652–653). Stilt Sandpiper is perhaps the most enigmatic of the North American waders and the geographical distribution, phenology and age structure of the British records are not what might be expected.

No fewer than three of the first 13 records of this species were in spring, although there has been only one since. Furthermore, these spring birds have tended to appear on the east coast, in Suffolk in May 1985, Norfolk in May 2005 and on the east coast of Sutherland in April 1970; the other record is the famous long-stayer which arrived in Cheshire in April 1985 and remained until October. Nearly all the others have occurred between July and September; of these 19, 16 were adults and one was aged as a first-summer. There have only ever been two juveniles in Britain, in Lancashire in September and October 1967, and in Shetland in November 2002 (the latter over a month later than any other arrival in the country). The geographical distribution is also unexpected: apart from the bird in Wales this year, one in Shetland in September 1976 and another in Lancashire in September and October 1967, records of this wader come from the southeast of Britain, between Yorkshire and Dorset.

This easterly bias for adult North American waders is not unprecedented, since both White-rumped *C. fuscicollis* and Pectoral Sandpipers *C. melanotos* show a similar pattern of an unusually large proportion of adults in early autumn on the east coast (Dymond *et al.* 1989). While it is quite likely that some Pectoral Sandpipers come from the east, the standard explanation is that these birds are not all primary immigrants newly arrived from North America, but include some that have arrived in previous autumns and are now migrating back and forth on this side of the Atlantic; it is also assumed that this applies to most spring records of North American waders. This seems reasonable for species that have

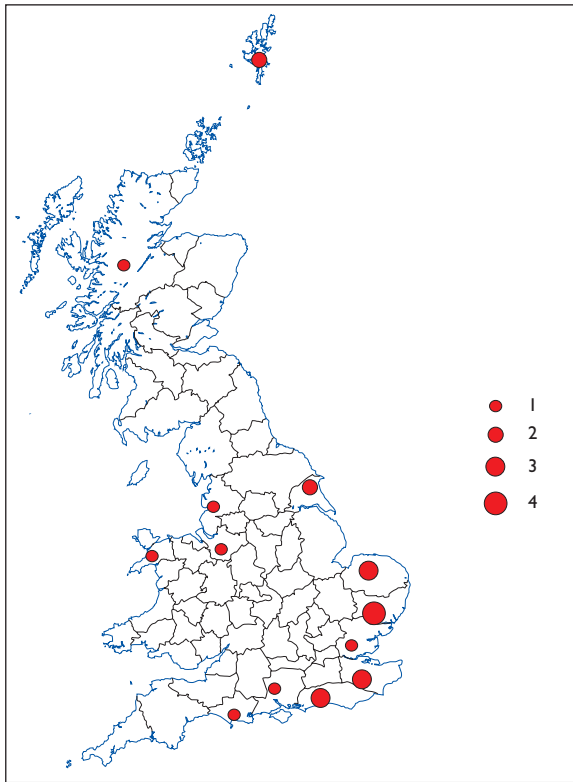


Fig. 5. Distribution of Stilt Sandpipers *Calidris himantopus* in Britain, 1950–2006.

an established pattern of autumn juveniles arriving in Europe, but it is not a particularly satisfactory explanation for Stilt Sandpiper.

It is worth comparing the situation with that in Ireland, where there had been 12 records up to the end of 2003. These are later than British birds, with just one in July, five in August, four in September and two in October; there is a distinct bias towards the southwest, with only one record elsewhere; while the nine individuals that have been aged included five adults and four juveniles. It is illuminating to find such a different pattern of occurrence so close to home, but while there is more evidence of autumn immigration in Ireland, it is hardly enough to account for the relative frequency of records at other times of year, especially as records in the rest of the Western Palearctic, surprisingly widely dispersed both in time and space, show a strong bias towards spring and summer.

The rarity of Stilt Sandpiper in Europe in autumn presumably reflects the fact that the main migration route is through the interior of North America and therefore comparatively

few are recorded on the east coast. Its status in the rest of the year is harder to account for, but it is highly unlikely that all European records relate to newly arrived migrants. As is the case with Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*, another species that is largely a migrant through central North America and turns up surprisingly often, but rather erratically, in Europe, it seems likely that some Stilt Sandpipers are crossing the Atlantic to the south of the UK and then migrating within the Old World.

(Breeds on tundra from NE Alaska to Hudson Bay. Migrates through interior and E USA to winter in C South America, from E Bolivia and S Brazil to NE Argentina. Occasionally winters N to Mexico, Caribbean and S USA.)

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* (15, 199, 6)

Cambridgeshire Over Fen, adult, 19th May, photo (R. D. Thomas *et al.*).

Cumbria Port Carlisle, 24th August, photo (D. J. Robson *et al.*).

Devon Exminster Marshes, 1st May, photo (L. Lock, J. Waldon).

Hampshire Pennington Marshes, 2nd May, photo (R. B. Wynn).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Cockersands, 15th–17th May, photo (M. Jones, P. McGough *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, 13th–15th May, photo (L. J. Degnan, A. Gibson, T. McEvoy *et al.*).

2004 Devon Dawlish Warren, 16th–18th July, photo (L. Lock); presumed same as Bowling Green Marsh, Devon, 13th–14th July 2004 (*Brit. Birds* 98: 654–655).

(Nominate European race breeds in boreal forest bogs of N Norway, Sweden and Finland, and into Arctic Russia, where distribution uncertain. European birds migrate through E Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Seas to winter in Persian Gulf, W India and Sri Lanka, with small numbers in coastal E Africa. E race *sibirica* breeds from Taimyr Peninsula to Kolyma River delta, and winters from Bay of Bengal through coastal SE Asia to Australia.)

Great Snipe *Gallinago media* (506, 149, 1)

Shetland Baltasound, Unst, 11th September, photo (M. G. Pennington, D. Preston).

2003 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, first-winter, 10th October (S. D. Stansfield).

(Scarce and local breeder in Norway and Sweden, which hold most of declining European population. Smaller and fragmented population breeds from Poland to Estonia. Also breeds E through European Russia, W and N Siberia to Yenisey River but population trends here unknown. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa.)

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* (6, 172, 6)

Anglesey Afon Alaw Estuary, first-winter, intermittently from 28th November into 2007, photo (K. G. Croft *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 116).

Cornwall Drift Reservoir/Hayle Estuary, first-winter, from 2005 to 23rd April (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 72; 100: 42).

Cornwall/Devon Upper Tamar Lake, juvenile/first-winter, 8th October to 14th November, photo (D. Churchill, M. S. Shakespeare *et al.*).

Kent Oare, juvenile/first-winter, 2nd October to 12th April 2007, photo (A. W. Swandale *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Gibraltar Point, adult, 22nd July to 1st October, photo (P. M. Troake *et al.*); possibly same as 5th July to 29th September 2004 (*Brit. Birds* 98: 656–657).

Outer Hebrides Aird an Runair, North Uist, adult, 9th May, photo (J. Boyle, S. E. Duffield).

Worcestershire Upper Bittell Reservoir, juvenile, 25th September to 3rd October, photo (K. Wheatley *et al.*).

2005 Cumbria Port Carlisle, juvenile, 22nd–23rd September, photo (T. Reid *et al.*).

2005 Yorkshire, East Spurn, 2nd October (R. J. Swales).

(Breeds primarily in Arctic Siberia, where range is expanding W to Lena River delta. North American range restricted to coastal tundra of W and N Alaska, and E to Mackenzie River. Migrates through USA to winter from coastal S USA to N Central America.)

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* (9, 33, 1)

Shetland Norwick, Unst, juvenile, 6th October, photo (P. V. Harvey, M. A. Maher, S. Mitchell *et al.*); same, Baltasound, Unst, 7th October, photo.

2005 Outer Hebrides Liniclate, Benbecula, 3rd–6th October (S. E. Duffield *et al.*).

(Breeds in temperate and subarctic North America, from SE Alaska through NW and C Canada to mid-west and NE USA. Migrates through interior USA E of Rocky Mountains, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean to winter in South America from S Brazil to Argentina.)

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (6, 120, 2)

Hampshire Farlington Marshes, 28th July (D. Fry); see also Sussex.

Kent Reculver, adult, 11th June, photo (D. J. Smith *et al.*); same, Dungeness, 14th–15th June, photo (P. G. Akers, S. J. Broyd, D. Walker *et al.*).

Sussex Sidlesham Ferry, 29th July to 5th August, photo (D. Brown, C. W. Melgar *et al.*); see also Hampshire.

(Occasionally breeds in Finland and Baltic countries to Ukraine and W Russia. To E, breeds commonly across forest-steppe region of Siberia to Mongolia and NE China. Winters commonly throughout sub-Saharan Africa, especially E Africa, and Indian subcontinent E to S China and SE Asia; also Australia.)

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (16, 253, 3)

Avon/Somerset Axe Estuary, juvenile, 7th–11th October, photo (P. Bowyer *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Freiston Shore, 7th–9th June, photo (A. G. Parker, P. Sullivan *et al.*); same, Gibraltar Point, intermittently from 9th June to 23rd September, photo (P. M. Troake, K. M. Wilson *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, juvenile, 15th–16th September (per www.birdguides.com); same, Meikle Loch, Slains, 17th September to 3rd October (P. S. Crockett *et al.*).

2005 Yorkshire, East Tophill Low, 25th–29th August (E. J. Hediger, P. W. Izzard, R. Lyon *et al.*).

Lesser Yellowlegs is traditionally one of our most regular transatlantic visitors, but this year's total of just three is the lowest since two in 1994. Notwithstanding the expected autumn bias, this species has long been characterised by a broad spread of arrival dates and locations and the trio in 2006 continue that trend. Extended stays during the winter have been recorded on several occasions in the past, but the Lincolnshire individual's extended summer stay is noteworthy.

(Breeds throughout much of subarctic Alaska and Canada, E to James Bay. Migrates through USA, where some overwinter, but majority winter from Caribbean and C America to Chile and Argentina.)

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (1, 131, 5)

Cornwall Newlyn, 25th–28th May, photo (M. K. Ahmad *et al.*). Hayle Estuary, juvenile/first-winter, 5th October to 3rd May 2007, photo (M. A. Beevers, I. Kendall, J. P. Martin *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 117).

Cornwall/Devon Upper Tamar Lake, juvenile, 8th October to 22nd November, photo (D. Churchill, J. R. Diamond, I. W. Lakin *et al.*).

Dorset/Somerset Sutton Bingham Reservoir, 18th September (T. Farr, B. J. Matthews).

Suffolk Minsmere, adult, 1st–2nd June, photo (J. A. Rowlands *et al.*).

A good showing that reflects perfectly the long-term predominance of autumn over spring occurrences (62% and 38% respectively). The wintering bird on the Hayle is not unusual, as just over 10% of British records have involved overwintering individuals. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that spring records are linked with cases of overwintering: since 1960 there has been an average of 1.1 birds during the 14 springs following one or more overwintering birds, little different from the overall average of 1.2 birds each spring. Published images nicely illustrate the progression and timing of the Hayle bird's moult. It remained in completely first-winter plumage right up to mid April but during the second half of April a distinct orange flush to the bill materialised and summer plumage was developed rapidly, with spotted underparts and transverse blackish barring on the tertials and upperparts. Interestingly, it remained easy to age as a first-summer by the retention of its distinctive lesser and median coverts. Its dramatic change in appearance was clearly linked to the development of migratory urge and it departed in the first week of May.

(Breeds over much of North America from W Alaska to Newfoundland and S to California, Texas and North Carolina. Some winter in coastal USA to S of breeding range but most winter in C America, Caribbean and N South America, S to N Argentina and Chile.)

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* (0, 214, 2)

Buckinghamshire Hillesden Pools, ♂, 27th–30th May (M. Slaymaker, W. R. Tunnicliff *et al.*).

Cornwall Walmsley Sanctuary, first-winter, 15th–16th September, photo (per www.birdguides.com); same, Stithians Reservoir, 17th–25th September, photo (per I. M. Wilson) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 323).

2005 Northumberland Amble Braid, Amble, juvenile/first-winter, 2nd September (*Brit. Birds* 100: 45); note revised location.

(Breeds interior W Canada S to California, and throughout mid-west USA; also S Ontario, where population is increasing. Most migrate through interior USA and winter in South America, from Peru S to Argentina and Chile.)

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* (1, 150, 20)

Argyll Campbeltown, adult, 10th January to 9th April, photo (J. Dickson *et al.*). Kennacraig to Islay ferry, second-summer or adult, 15th June (P. Roberts).

At sea Sea area Forties. Oil installation Buchan Alpha, second-summer or adult, 11th July, photo (W. Burke, D. Penney).

Avon Chew Valley Lake, adult, 17th April (R. Mielcarek, C. J. Stone, K. E. Vinicombe *et al.*).

Ayrshire Ardrossan, adult, 24th January to 15th March, photo (R. H. Hogg, J. McManus *et al.*).

Berkshire Reading/Pingewood, adult, from 2005 to 29th March, photo (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 101).

Caernarfonshire Porthmadog Cob, adult, from November 2005 to at least 4th April (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 43; 100: 46–48).

Cambridgeshire Grafham Water, adult, 19th November (J. Leadley *et al.*).

Carmarthenshire Sandy Water Park, Llanelli, first-winter, 3rd January, photo (per B. Stewart); same as 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 46–48).

Cornwall Restrounguet Creek, second-year, 21st–23rd April, photo (M. May, W. R. Wilkins, per P. A. Fraser). Newlyn, first-winter, 30th April, photo (M. K. Ahmad). Marazion, second-summer or adult, 7th May (P. A. Fraser).

Devon Brixham, Torbay, adult, from 2005 to May, photo (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 73). Dawlish Warren, first-summer, 5th August, photo (L. Collins, K. Rylands *et al.*); see also Sussex.

Gloucestershire Witcombe Reservoir, adult, 29th January (T. Fenton).

Hertfordshire Hilfield Park Reservoir, second-winter, 19th–20th September (J. Fearnside, S. Murray

et al.). Amwell, adult or second-winter, 26th–27th November (B. Reed, J. Thompson *et al.*).

Highland Brora, second-summer or adult, 13th August to at least 12th October, photo (A. & D. Macaskill, S. Morrison, A. Vittery).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Marton Mere, adult, 9th–16th April, photo (M. Jones, M. & P. McGough *et al.*). Aldcliffe Marsh, age uncertain, 19th August (J. Carter).

Merionethshire Traeth Bach, adult, intermittently 1st January to 4th April (per S. Cullen); same as Caernarfonshire, above.

Norfolk Cromer, adult, 7th–8th May, photo (per *Birding World*); same, Cley, 7th–8th May (per G. E. Dunmore); same, Blakeney Fresh Marsh, 9th May (J. R. Williamson).

Outer Hebrides Stornoway, Lewis, adult, 3rd June, photo (M. S. Scott *et al.*).

Shetland Burrafirth, Unst, adult, 19th June, photo (G. Bullivant); presumed same, Virkie, 25th June, photo (P. V. Harvey *et al.*).

Sussex Beachy Head, adult, 19th April (R. H. Charlwood, J. F. Cooper). Arlington Reservoir, first-summer, 11th–23rd July, photo (P. J. Wilson *et al.*); same, Barcombe Reservoir, 29th–30th July (S. H. Linington *et al.*); see also Devon.

2005 Cornwall Sennen, first-winter, 9th–13th November (M. T. Elliott *et al.*), previously published as three first-winters at this site, now believed that only one bird involved (*Brit. Birds* 100: 46–48).

2005 Durham Wellhouse Farm, Whitburn, adult, 14th December (J. P. Cook).

2005 Yorkshire, North Scalby Lodge Pond, Scarborough, first-summer/second-winter, 22nd July (N. W. Addey).

2005 Yorkshire, West Various locations, second-winter, 6th October to 13th November (*Brit. Birds* 100: 46–47); list of sites included Pugney's Country Park in error.

(Locally common from Nova Scotia, S along E seaboard of USA to Florida and Gulf coast, the Caribbean, and C America to N Venezuela. S populations largely resident but N breeders winter within S breeding range.)

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* (0, 49, 4)

Cambridgeshire Grunty Fen, adult, 29th July (S. Stirrup).

Devon Bideford, first-winter, 16th March to at least 9th May, photo (D. Churchill, R. Doble, M. S. Shakespeare *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 909: plate 162).

North-east Scotland Ythan Estuary, adult, 21st–26th August (P. D. Bloor, P. S. Crockett *et al.*).

Staffordshire Blithfield Reservoir, adult, 9th–10th August, photo (R. C. Broadbent, S. Nuttall, M. P. Radford *et al.*).

2005 Northumberland Woodhorn Flashes, Newbiggin, second-summer, 2nd–3rd April (*Brit. Birds* 100: 48); note revised location and dates.

(Breeds locally throughout interior provinces of temperate W Canada, E to Great Lakes and S to mid-west USA. Winters along Pacific coast of South America, from Guatemala to Chile.)

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia* (8, 129, 10)

Angus & Dundee Lunan Bay, adult, 3rd–5th January, photo (S. R. Green); same, 2nd February, photo (R. McCurley, T. Reid); same, Ferryden, 12th–15th March (per www.birdguides.com); presumed same, 19th November to 4th March 2007.

Cleveland Saltburn, adult, 13th–14th November, photo (I. Kendall, E. C. Parker *et al.*); see also Northumberland.

Devon Ernesettle Creek, Plymouth, second-winter, 20th November, photo (S. C. Votier).

Dorset Weymouth Bay, adult, 21st April (M. Forster *et al.*).

Fife Dalgety Bay, adult, 17th October, photo (A. Inglis).

Glamorgan Cardiff Bay, adult, 14th April, photo (G. N. Smith, W. M. Strong *et al.*).

Gloucestershire Slimbridge, adult, 10th September, photo (R. Baatsen, J. Lees *et al.*).

Northumberland East Chevington, adult, 4th September (T. Blake, J. & T. R. Dean *et al.*); same, Newbiggin, 7th September to 29th October, photo (A. D. McLevy *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 287; plate 342); see also Cleveland.

Oxfordshire Farmoor Reservoir, first-winter, 17th–20th April, photo (N. J. Hallam, B. Sheldon *et al.*).

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, 7th December to 23rd February 2007, photo (J. K. Higginson *et al.*).

Somerset ASDA Nature Reserve, Frome, first-winter, 18th–25th March, photo (B. A. Taylor *et al.*).

John Malloy



342. Adult Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia*, Newbiggin, Northumberland, September 2006.

2004 Cornwall Gannel Estuary, Newquay, first-winter, 8th–14th January (S. G. Rowe *et al.*).

2005 Caithness Castlehill and Thurso, adult, 12th September 2004 to 26th April (*Brit. Birds* 100: 49); note revised dates.

2005 Outer Hebrides Goat Island, Stornoway, adult, 10th January, photo (S. P. Coyle, M. S. Scott *et al.*). Peninerine, South Uist, adult, 26th April to at least 5th May, photo (S. E. Duffield *et al.*); presumed same, West Gerinish, 30th April (A. Stevenson). Baile Gharbhaidh, South Uist, second-summer or adult, 18th May to 6th June, photo (S. E. Duffield *et al.*).

(Breeds widely across N North America from W and C Alaska through Canada to James Bay. Winters locally on ice-free rivers and lakes in N USA, and S along both coasts of USA to Mexico and Caribbean.)

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

North American race *L. a. smithsonianus* 'American Herring Gull' (0, 13, 0)

2002 Scilly Tresco, first-winter, 24th February to 9th March (R. L. Flood) (*Brit. Birds* 96: 575, 'Bird 3').

(Breeds from S Alaska E across C and N Canada to S Baffin Island, Labrador, Newfoundland and NE coastal region of USA. Many resident, others winter S to S USA and Mexico.)

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* (1, 85, 3)

Argyll Aird, Tiree, adult, 9th August (J. Bowler). Ormsary, first-winter, 14th December to 15th January 2007, photo (J. Dickson *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 55).

Norfolk Cley and **Blakeney**, adult, from 2005 to 1st January (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 44; 100: 50).

Suffolk Lowestoft, 6th–14th January, photo (A. Revett, R. Wilton, J. Wright *et al.*).

(Locally common on tundra of NE Siberia, from Lena River E to at least Kolyma River. In Canada, rare and local in W Hudson Bay region, perhaps elsewhere. Siberian birds migrate E past Point Barrow, Alaska, in September to unknown wintering areas assumed to lie near edge of pack ice, perhaps in Bering Sea or N Pacific, S to N Japan.)

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea* (84, 50, 1)

Ayrshire Ayr, juvenile, 13th–15th December, photo (A. I. Macintosh *et al.*); same, **Troon**, 24th December (per F. Simpson), also seen in 2007 (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 56).

(In Europe, breeds only in Svalbard. Elsewhere, restricted to islands in the high Arctic between Franz Josef Land and Arctic Canada, with small numbers in N and SE Greenland. Wintering range poorly known, apparently within or close to edge of pack ice.)



Andrew Wright

343. Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex, August 2006.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* (1, 20, 1)

Essex Dovercourt, Harwich, 25th August, photo (A. Wright) (plate 343).

(Tropical seas. West Indies and Atlantic population breeds Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, Pagalu, Gulf of Guinea and widely throughout Caribbean south to offshore N Venezuela. Other populations breed from Red Sea and Arabian Gulf locally through Indian Ocean to SE China, Philippines, and N Australia. Northern populations migratory, wintering at sea to south of breeding areas.)

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (51, 263, 7)

Cleveland Hartlepool Headland, two, adults, 9th May (C. Dodsworth); see also Northumberland.

Cornwall Walmsley Sanctuary, second-summer, 1st–4th July, photo (per www.birdguides.com).

Devon River Caen, Braunton Burrows, adult, 14th–15th May at least, photo (L. & S. Bruce, D. Churchill *et al.*).

Kent Dungeness, adult, 25th May, photo (K. G. Holland, M. J. Lawson).

Northumberland St Mary's Island, two, 9th May (A. Cowell, A. S. Jack, M. Lowther); same, Snab Point, 9th May (A. D. McLevy); see also Cleveland.

Nottinghamshire Lound, adult, 19th May (I. Cowgill *et al.*).

Warwickshire Kingsbury Water Park, 19th May, photo (P. A. J. Newman *et al.*).

2003 Yorkshire, South Old Moor, Wath, adult, 29th May (D. M. Waddington).

(Small population in N Germany and Denmark. Widespread though local in Spain, but colonies are isolated and small elsewhere in S Europe. To E, breeds discontinuously from Turkey and SW Russia through Kazakhstan, Mongolia and NW China, with an isolated population in NE China. European population winters in coastal W Africa, S to Gulf of Guinea. Asian populations winter from Persian Gulf to Indian subcontinent and SE Asia. Other races occur in Australia and the Americas.)

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* (25, 251, 2)

Cleveland Hartlepool Headland, adult, 2nd July (J. Regan, R. C. Taylor); see also Durham.

Durham Whitburn Coastal Park, adult, 2nd July (P. Hindess, M. Newsome); see also Cleveland.

Norfolk Breydon Water, 15th July, photo (M. S. Smith *et al.*); presumed same, Rush Hills, Hickling, 19th–20th July (P. J. Heath *et al.*).

2005 Norfolk Rush Hills, Hickling, 21st June (P. J. Heath, A. J. Kane, P. J. Milford *et al.*); same as Norfolk 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 52).

At first sight, the paucity of spring records of Caspian Tern in Britain is surprising as it is a fairly common breeding bird in the Baltic. But, given the northeasterly overland spring migration route taken by the Baltic breeding population from its wintering grounds, perhaps we should not really be

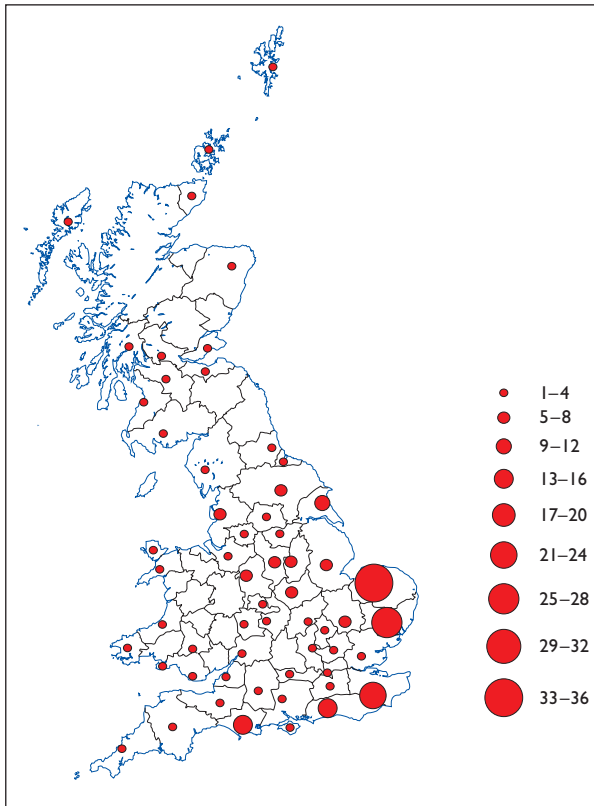


Fig. 6. Distribution of Caspian Terns *Hydroprogne caspia* in Britain, 1950–2006.

too surprised. Even in autumn, only a minority of this population uses the North Sea and Atlantic route to return to the African wintering grounds, but this presumably explains some west-coast late-summer and autumn records such as those at Leighton Moss (Lancashire & North Merseyside) in July 2005, and on Bardsey (Caernarfonshire) in October 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 52). The birds listed here reinforce the fact that the summer period, June–August, is the peak time for British sightings, which probably encompass dispersing adults returning to the wintering areas and wandering non-breeding birds, both adults and immatures. Since over-land migration routes are used routinely, it is not surprising that British records are often from inland sites (fig. 6).

The numbers occurring here are probably influenced by fluctuating population levels in the Baltic. For example, there was a rapid increase in Estonia from the early 1950s, when it was an extremely rare breeding species, to 360 pairs by

1971. More recently, the Baltic population has declined, from 44 colonies holding 2,200 breeding pairs in 1971 to 25 colonies and 1,500 pairs in 1992. Since they nest in remote areas, including small offshore skerries or sandy islands in maritime archipelagos, many of which are protected reserves, it seems that human disturbance is not to blame.

Hagemeyer & Blair (1997) noted a strong correlation between drought years in the Sahel and numbers breeding in the Baltic and it has been suggested that climatic fluctuations may result in reduced fish stocks in the wintering areas in dry years. This affects both local people and fish-eating birds, and leads indirectly to greater persecution by local fishermen.

(Isolated and declining European population breeds on Baltic coasts of Estonia, Sweden and Finland to head of Gulf of Bothnia. To E, fragmented populations from Black Sea coast of Ukraine across steppe-lake region of C Asia to NW Mongolia and E China. European birds winter in W Africa to Gulf of Guinea, while Asian populations winter on coasts to S of breeding range. Other populations in Australia, S Africa and North America.)

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* (23, 125, 4)

Avon Chew Valley Lake, second-summer, 28th April (A. H. Davis, R. Mielcarek *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Gibraltar Point, adult, 20th–21st June, photo (D. Hitchin, P. M. Troake, K. M. Wilson *et al.*).

Norfolk Brancaster and Titchwell, first-winter, 12th–20th October, photo (R. Q. Skeen *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 361; plate 344); same, Cley, Blakeney and Salthouse, 19th October, photo (per G. E. Dunmore).

North-east Scotland Loch of Skene, adult, 5th June (I. Broadbent, D. Dunstan, I. Moig).

2005 Warwickshire Alvecote Pools, adult, 27th June (J. A. & R. L. Smith).

(Breeds in small, scattered colonies through S and E Europe from Iberia to C France and Poland. From N Black Sea east to W Kazakhstan, numerous and widespread, with Volga–Ural River complex holding bulk of European population. Winters tropical W and C Africa and Nile Delta to E Africa. Other populations occur Indian subcontinent, E Asia, S Africa and Australia.)



Robin Chittenden www.harlequinpictures.co.uk

344. First-winter Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*, Titchwell, Norfolk, October 2006.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* (76, 795, –)

2003 Kent Grove Ferry, juvenile/first-winter, 18th October (M. P. Wilson).

2005 Essex Abberton Reservoir, juvenile, intermittently during 21st–28th August (D. Rhymes *et al.*).

(W limit of European range from Poland to Hungary, where local, with sporadic breeding to W. Breeds commonly from Belarus, W Russia and Ukraine E to S Siberia, N Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russian Far East and NE China, but absent from large areas. Winters throughout sub-Saharan Africa, Indian subcontinent, SE Asia and N Australia.)

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* (0, 4, 0)

1965 Kent Sandwich Bay, 28th–29th July (*Brit. Birds* 61: 361); now considered inadequately documented to represent the first record for Britain.

Following the separation of the British and Irish Lists, BOURC asked BBRC to review this record as it was felt that it did not meet the standards required for a first for Britain. After review, BBRC agreed with this view. We were particularly concerned about three elements of the description: the pattern of dark on the trailing edge of the primaries was incorrect for Royal Tern; the upperparts were described as darker than those of Sandwich Tern *S. sandvicensis* whereas they are usually paler or, at best, the same colour on Royal Tern; and this individual showed a complete black cap whereas virtually all Royal Terns show significant head moult by late June (P. Buckley, K. Garrett, P. Lehman *in litt.*).

Other features, such as apparent size, bill thickness and rump colour were open to interpretation but seemed a little anomalous for Royal Tern. In addition, a minor problem that came to light during the circulation was that the original sketches differed somewhat from those published in *Birds New to Britain and Ireland* (Sharrock & Grant 1982). In a side-by-side comparison, the size and thickness of the bill had been accentuated in the published sketches compared with the originals.

Although the original observers and assessors had been rigorous in excluding Lesser Crested *S. bengalensis* and Elegant Terns *S. elegans*, they had no knowledge of the intriguing ‘orange-billed terns’ that have occurred more recently in western Europe and on which the jury is still out. Indeed, this Kent bird has many similarities to the Co. Down (1982) and Co. Wexford (1999) ‘Elegant’ Terns (Killian Mullarney *in litt.*). Under these circumstances, the place of this record as an undisputed first record of Royal Tern in Britain seemed untenable.

(Nominate form breeds both coasts of USA, from S California and Maryland, S to Baja California and along Gulf of Mexico S to Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, and Caribbean islands. Winters S throughout Caribbean and coastal C and South America to Argentina and Ecuador. In W Palearctic, W African race *albididorsalis* breeds at Banc d’Arguin, Mauritania, and at four locations in Senegambia. Disperses N to Morocco and S to Angola and N Namibia.)

Brünnich's Guillemot *Uria lomvia* (1, 36, 1)

Shetland West Sandwick, Yell, 4th May, photo (R. M. Mellor); found dead, now in National Museums of Scotland.

(Apparently declining, but huge colonies remain in Greenland, Iceland, Svalbard and Novaya Zemlya, with tiny population in NE Norway. Outside Europe, breeds on islands off N Siberia into Bering Sea, S to Kuril, Kommander, Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. Also W Alaska and N Canada from Baffin Island to Hudson Bay, Labrador coast and W Greenland. Winters among open leads in pack ice or at sea from Barents Sea S to N Norway, S Greenland, and along Labrador coast S to NE USA. Other populations winter in N Pacific, S to N Japan.)

Long-billed Murrelet *Brachyramphus perdix* (0, 0, 1)

Devon Dawlish, juvenile, 7th–14th November, photo (D. J. Hopkins, K. Rylands, D. Stone *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plates 57 & 58, 345).

The discovery of Britain's first Long-billed Murrelet was undoubtedly one of the ornithological highlights of the year. The discussion that surrounded photographs of a suspected Little Auk *Alle alle* posted onto the Dawlish Warren NNR website (<http://www.dawlishwarren.co.uk/birdnovember06.html>) soon had birders wondering whether Britain's first Long-billed Murrelet had been one that got away. Hundreds of birders will be relieved that the determination of Kevin Rylands to relocate the bird paid dividends, and his efforts prompted one of the largest twitches ever in Britain, on an otherwise quiet November weekend.

Few birders would have predicted Long-billed Murrelet as a potential addition to the British List but its occurrence in the Western Palearctic is not unprecedented. A juvenile was found dead in a fishing net on Lake Zurich, Switzerland, in December 1997, when the taxon was still treated as a race of Marbled Murrelet *B. marmoratus* (Maumary & Knaus 2000). Just weeks after the Dawlish bird, another was discovered and photographed at Porumbacu, Romania, in mid December 2006. These sightings across continental Europe support the hypothesis that these three Western Palearctic vagrants arrived via continental Russia. This would be the most direct route, but a passage across the Arctic Ocean, along the north Russian coast, cannot be eliminated. Both of these routes are considerably shorter than one across North America and the North Atlantic to reach the Devon coast (and on into mainland Europe; Maumary & Knaus 2000; Hopkins *et al* 2006).

Of all the North Pacific alcids, Long-billed Murrelet is by far the most prone to vagrancy. To date, more than 50 have occurred at inland localities throughout the USA and Canada (Thompson *et al.*



Simon Stirrup

345. Juvenile Long-billed Murrelet *Brachyramphus perdix*, Dawlish, Devon, November 2006.

2003), many east of the Rockies. Many inland and east North American records have fallen between late October and early December, so the Dawlish Warren bird falls within this established dispersal period. Conversely, the closely related Marbled Murrelet does not disperse as far as Long-billed in winter and is not prone to vagrancy, there being no records from inland North America away from its forest breeding grounds.

Sealy *et al.* (1991) and Mlodinow (1997) established that the majority of autumn to midwinter records in North America have been associated with storms off the east coast of Asia, between Japan and the Kamchatka Peninsula. Large-scale atmospheric phenomena may affect vagrancy of this species, perhaps through an effect on food supply, but it is yet to be fully established which weather patterns are most significant and could contribute to the arrival of vagrants to the Western Palearctic.

Long-billed Murrelet breeds within forests on the Pacific coast of Russia and winters in the seas around Japan. It has also been recorded as nesting in northeast Hokkaido and northern Honshu in Japan, but recent studies have indicated that it may be extinct in this part of the range (Nelson *et al.* 2002). Although ground-nesting was suspected in Russia in the 1890s, nesting in trees was confirmed as recently as 1961 (Carter & Sealy 2005).

Although Long-billed Murrelet was originally described (as *Cephus perdix*) by Pallas in 1811, it was treated as a race of Marbled Murrelet for much of the twentieth century. Friesen *et al.* (1996) showed that the mitochondrial DNA of the two forms was highly divergent and estimated that gene flow between the two was essentially zero. They recommended that Long-billed and Marbled Murrelets should be considered separate species, supported by phylogenetic, evolutionary and biological criteria. Long-billed was split from Marbled Murrelet by the AOU in 1997 (AOU 1997) and this treatment is now widely accepted.

Mlodinow (1997) discussed the identification and occurrence of this species in North America. The Dawlish bird's identity is easily confirmed by the lack of the near-complete white neck-collar of Marbled, the presence of pale ovals on each side of the nape, the less extensive dark area under the eye giving a straighter border along the cheek between light and dark (apart from the blip of pale above the lores that both species show to a variable extent), and the lack of the extensive dark breast 'pegs'. Adult Long-billed Murrelet has entirely white underparts and smoother, more uniform upperparts, so the pale fringes on the upperparts and brown barring on the underparts indicate clearly that the Dawlish bird was still in juvenile plumage.

This record brings to mind the Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* that summered on Lundy, Devon, from 1990 to 1992. Perhaps we can look forward to another Ancient Murrelet, populations of which breed on both sides of the North Pacific and which has also been recorded from numerous inland and east-coast locations throughout North America. Moreover, there are other small Pacific auks that have ventured to Europe, albeit none with the established vagrancy patterns shown by Long-billed and Ancient Murrelets. Is it too much to hope for a repeat visit by Parakeet Auklet *Aethia psittacula* to the Western Palearctic, almost 150 years after the one that was found at Lake Vättern in Sweden? Failing that, a return visit by Crested Auklet *Aethia cristatella* or Tufted Puffin *Lunda cirrhata* would be very much appreciated.

(Breeds within forests on the Pacific coast of Russia and Sea of Okhotsk. Winters at sea S to N Japan.)

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* (3, 38, 0)

1990 Devon Lundy, 23rd February (*Brit. Birds* 84: 477); note corrected date.

(Common summer migrant to Spain, rare and local breeder in Portugal, S France and E to Greece. W Asian population uncommon, breeding discontinuously from C Turkey, Cyprus, Israel and Jordan to N Iraq and SW Iran. Palearctic breeders winter in sub-Saharan Africa but range uncertain owing to African populations.)

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* (45, 34, 3)

Oxfordshire Thrupp, ♂, 12th–30th June at least, photo (N. J. Hallam, I. Lewington, R. Wyatt *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 228).

Shetland Swining, Mainland, 10th May, photo (D. P. Hall, S. J. Minton *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 163; plate 346). Fair Isle, 17th May, trapped, photo (P. A. Harris *et al.*).

The presence of a calling male in Oxfordshire resulted in one of the biggest twitches of the spring, somewhat to the bemusement of the human inhabitants of the quiet riverside village it decided to

make its temporary home. The bird had probably been present since 21st April but its identity was not confirmed until June. Most villagers initially thought that the sound came from a faulty alarm on a canal boat, until the sound persisted and one of the locals contacted the RSPB, who then put them in touch with Ian Lewington, the County Recorder (Lewington 2006). It recalls the record of a male at Dummer, Hampshire, from May to July 1980, the monotonous call of which led to some residents complaining to British Telecom (or rather the GPO as it was then) about the noise! There have been suggestions that the Dummer bird was an escape (Clark & Eyre 1993) and while another territorial bird in 2006 would appear to strengthen the credentials of the Hampshire record, a recent reinvestigation would suggest that the rumours have some credence, although it is still included in BBRC totals.

The other two sightings in 2006 came from Shetland and continue a good run for the islands, which have now had five in the last six years. Is it just coincidence that the two Fair Isle records have followed sightings elsewhere in Shetland earlier in the spring? These three take the total for the twenty-first century to nine, already making the first decade of this century the best on record and tending to refute the assertion that this species used to be commoner in the past. Nevertheless, this is one of the few rarities for which the pre-1950 total is still greater than the number recorded since.

There have been 37 records since 1950 and over half of these (20) have been either trapped or found dead or injured. This is no great surprise, as finding a Scops Owl in the field is not easy. Even in its Mediterranean strongholds, many observers will have seen the species only at well-known stake-outs, while observers at Thrupp in 2006 will readily confirm that actually seeing the bird was much

harder than hearing it! Since 1950, there have been arrivals in March (2), April (9), May (9), June (11), July (1), August (1), September (1), October (2) and November (1). The five autumn records, the most recent in 1996, show an easterly bias, with two in Orkney and singles in Norfolk, Kent, and Scilly, so perhaps these may originate from southeastern Europe or southwest Asia. The remaining 32 records show a pattern of occurrence typical for a spring overshoot from the western Mediterranean, with most at or near first landfall on the south coast between Scilly and Kent (13), or from final landfall in the Northern Isles (11), with a widespread scatter in between. There has, however, been a recent bias towards Scotland, which now accounts for ten of the last 12, including records from Clyde, Argyll and the Forties oilfield.

The post-1950 statistics have been revised as an old record from Nottinghamshire published in the 1999 report (*Brit. Birds* 93: 540) had already been published (*Brit. Birds* 67: 329), while two sightings in Wiltshire



Hugh Harrop

346. Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops*, Swining, Mainland Shetland, May 2006.

in 1982, which were assumed to involve the same bird (*Brit. Birds* 76: 503), had mistakenly been treated as two records.

(Common summer migrant to N Africa and S Europe, from Iberia N to C France and E to Greece. Also breeds across Ukraine, S Russia and S Siberia to W Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Iran. Most winter in N equatorial Africa, but some remain in S Europe.)

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus* (177, 166, 2)

Highland Tarbet, Sutherland, adult, 19th June, photo (D. R. Peutherer).

Outer Hebrides Baleshare, North Uist, intermittently 11th–23rd January (B. Rabbitts, J. Voldeba); same, Balranald, North Uist, 21st April, photo (S. E. Duffield, B. Rabbitts *et al.*); same, Corran Aird a'Mhorain, North Uist, 7th July to November, photo (B. Rabbitts *et al.*). Bru, Lewis, immature ♂, intermittently from 9th November to 11th December (J. & M. S. Scott *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: plate 59).

2005 Outer Hebrides Ness, Lewis, ♂, 21st December, photo (M. Fraser), presumed same as other sites on Lewis, last seen 13th November 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 56–57).

This represents a fairly typical scatter of sightings from the Outer Hebrides. The number of individuals involved has been much debated locally, surprisingly perhaps for a species with such individually variable markings and given the growing catalogue of Snowy Owl photographs from the area. The popular local view is that, despite almost no date overlap, there were almost certainly two rather similar-looking males on the Outer Hebrides in 2006; the two were seen two hours and some 110 km apart on 9th November (and were then seen together on Lewis in February 2007). The Tarbet bird, only 60 km across the Minch from Lewis, is thought likely to have been one of these.

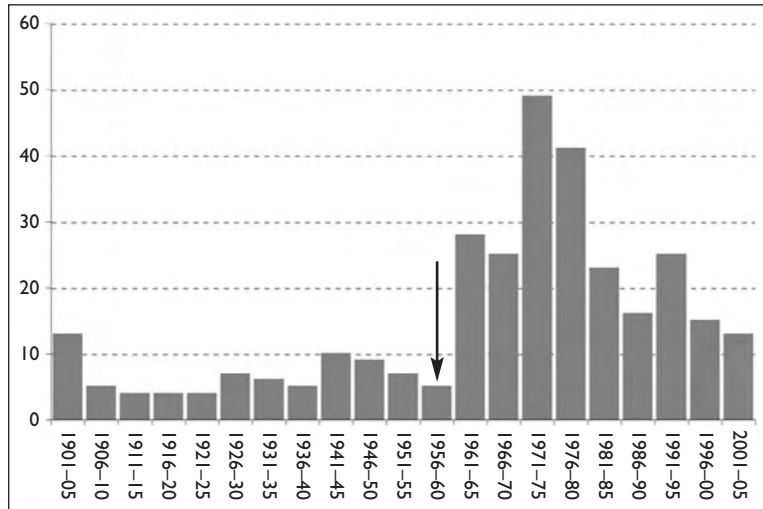


Fig. 7. Records of Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus* in Britain by five-year periods, 1901–2005. The arrow denotes the formation of BBRC (see text).

The long-term data suggest a vaguely cyclical occurrence pattern in Britain, with influxes every 30–40 years or so (fig. 7). The picture may be complicated somewhat by recording effort and at first sight it appears surprising that the species apparently became that much commoner around the time that BBRC was formed, at the turn of the 1960s. However, even then there were enough keen observers in areas like Shetland (such as Sammy Bruce, Dennis Coutts, Theo Kay and Bobby Tulloch) to confirm that the influx in the 1960s was unprecedented in their lifetimes.

(Occasionally breeds in N Scandinavia and Iceland, depending on availability of small mammals. Outside Europe, erratic circumpolar breeder across tundra and N islands of Arctic Russia, Siberia, Alaska, Canada and N Greenland. Most disperse S in winter, but some resident or nomadic if food available.)

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* (78, 483, –)

2003 Greater London Brent Reservoir, 5th May (I. Ellis).

2005 Suffolk Walberswick, 14th June, also seen at Dunwich the same day (*Brit. Birds* 100: 57–58).

(Breeds discontinuously in NW Africa and throughout S Europe, N to C France and Switzerland, to Ukraine. To E, breeds locally through Turkey and Caucasus to Iran, Afghanistan and N Pakistan. Winter range unknown, but assumed to be in Afrotropics or W India, where separation of local populations from northern migrants not possible.)

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (0, 62, 2)

Dorset Weston, Portland, 23rd September (P. A. Coe, G. Walbridge).

Kent New Romney, juvenile, 26th October, photo (D. Walker *et al.*); found moribund.

2005 Scilly Bryher, 20th June (J. K. Higginson, per N. Hudson).

2005 Yorkshire, East Spurn, 30th October (J. Hewitt, B. R. Spence *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 100: 58–60); note revised observers.

(Locally common throughout Mediterranean basin from Iberia to Greece, but rare or absent from many regions. Outside Europe, breeds locally from Mauritania and Canary Islands across NW Africa and Middle East to Arabian Peninsula and S Iran. Most winter in N African tropics, but some remain in S Europe.)

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* (191, 106, 3)

Cleveland South Gare, juvenile, 18th August, photo (I. Boustead *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plates 288, 347).

Northumberland Holy Island, first-winter, 8th October, photo (A. D. Mould *et al.*); presumed same, Beal, 8th–19th October, photo (per www.birdguides.com) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 362).

Scilly St Mary's, adult, 15th October, photo (A. Dunkley, M. Jones).



John Malloy

347. Juvenile European Roller *Coracias garrulus*, South Gare, Cleveland, August 2006.

Roller populations have been declining across Europe for the last 50 years (*BWP*) and the species is now classified as 'Vulnerable' in Europe (BirdLife International 2004). This situation has recently been linked to agricultural intensification leading to poor chick survival (Aviles & Parejo 2004). In spite of the declines in Europe, the number of Rollers reaching Britain held up well until about the mid 1980s, with 39 between 1968 and 1977 and 20 between 1978 and 1987. Since then, however, there has been a distinct slump, with 14 during 1988–97 and only 7 during 1998–2006 (fig. 8). Furthermore, the species was annual between 1973 and 1985 but since

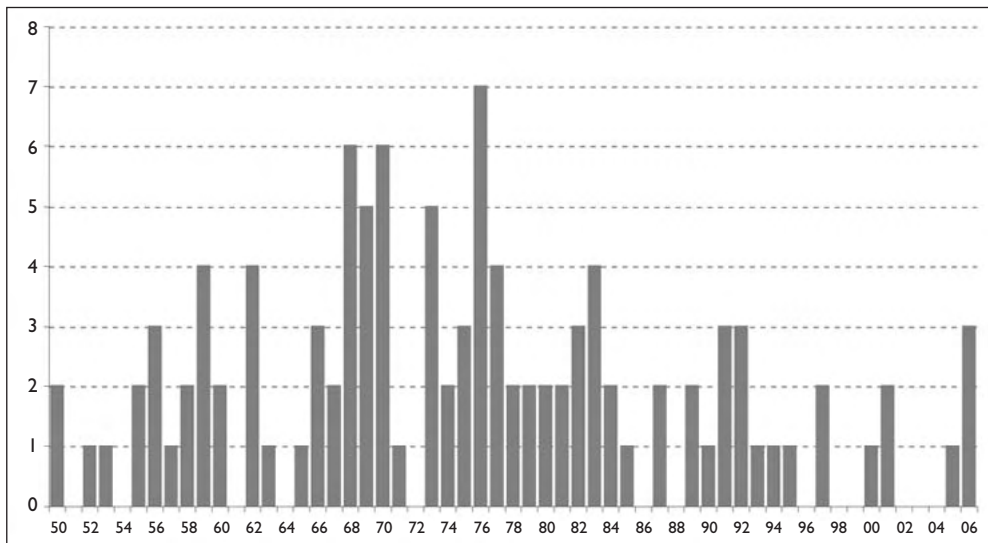


Fig. 8. Accepted records of European Roller *Coracias garrulus* in Britain, 1950–2006.

then there have been eight blank years, so the three in 2006 is a pretty decent showing by recent standards. The long-term prospects of the species give cause for concern, however.

The St Mary's bird was very late indeed and there have been only three later arrivals since 1958.

(Declining, yet remains widespread and numerous in NW Africa and Spain. In E Europe, occurs locally N to Estonia and E to Ukraine but nowhere common. More common from Turkey and S Russia to S Urals, SW Siberia, S Kazakhstan and W China. Winters locally in equatorial W Africa but most in E Africa from Kenya to Zimbabwe. Another race breeds Iran, Afghanistan and N Pakistan, and winters in E Africa.)

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* (0, 12, 1)

Fife Isle of May, 12th–17th May, photo (M. A. Newell *et al.*).

The nominate race *calandra* (which breeds from the west of the range to northwest Iran) is essentially resident, though large flocks gather in autumn and winter, and some movements do occur. Notwithstanding the large population in Spain, Calandra Lark is thus a great rarity across much of northwest Europe and the first British record was as recently as April 1961, at Portland Bill in Dorset. The Portland record set the tone for what was to follow: the subsequent 12 records show a well-scattered distribution, almost like a ring around Britain, and all have turned up on islands or coastal promontories. All but two have been in spring, the exceptions being those on St Kilda, Outer Hebrides (on 21st September 1994) and at Spurn, East Yorkshire (on 3rd October 2004).

Given that recent range contractions and population declines have been noted in many European countries, probably associated with agricultural intensification and consequent loss of fallow, and perhaps a rising number of afforestation schemes, the recent surge in British records is somewhat surprising. With no fewer than 10 of the 13 records coming since 1994, perhaps numbers and awareness of observers is a key factor, although the species is relatively straightforward to identify. With its predilection for islands and being well known as a short-stayer, it has remained an awkward species to see in Britain, however. Those quick off the mark may have seen the Leanness bird on the Isle of Man in May 1997, or perhaps one or other of the two Scilly records in April 1985 and April 1996. This year's bird remained on the Isle of May for three days, giving another chance. But what of its close relative Bimaculated Lark *M. bimaculata*, not seen in Britain since 8th June 1976, on Fair Isle, and with only three sightings to its credit? Now there's a treat in store for someone!

(Abundant on steppe grasslands of Iberia and Morocco but uncommon and local throughout much of Mediterranean basin. To E, breeds Ukraine, Turkey and SW Russia to Kazakhstan, NW China and Afghanistan. European and S Asian populations resident or nomadic, while N Asian populations disperse S of breeding range, wintering S to Persian Gulf coast of Iran.)

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* (2, 510, –)

2002 Yorkshire, North Reighton, 31st March (P. Nash); same as Filey Brigg (*Brit. Birds* 96: 583–584).

2003 Staffordshire Brookleys Lake, 1st May (G. Pepper).

2005 Hampshire Titchfield Haven, 21st May (D. & R. Powell).

(Widespread and locally common NW Africa, Iberian Peninsula, Balkans and Greece but uncommon C Mediterranean to S France. To E, breeds discontinuously W and S Turkey and Middle East. Wintering area of European population unknown but assumed to lie in northern equatorial Africa. Other races, including the nominate, breed E Asia from S Siberia to S China and Japan, Indian subcontinent and locally in equatorial Africa.)

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* (1, 14, 3)

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, 18th–27th October (probably from 17th), photo (D. H. Hatton, J. Lidster *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 364).

Shetland Sumburgh, Mainland, first-winter, 12th October, photo (J. J. Gilroy, A. C. Lees *et al.*) (plate 348). Fair Isle, 21st–24th October, photo (P. A. A. Baxter, R. J. Nason *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 363).

2005 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, first-winter, 16th–17th October, photo (S. D. Stansfield *et al.*).

Following the first British record, at Brighton, East Sussex, on 23rd October 1882, it was another 106 years before this species appeared again, on Fair Isle in October 1988. Since then, however, Blyth's Pipit has proved to be a somewhat more regular (though still rare) vagrant, with 17 in the last 18 years, including seven since 2002. Mid to late October is clearly the time to find this species; ten have arrived between 12th and 23rd October (fig. 9). Two birds were recorded in 1993, 1994, 1998 and 2005, but the

Hugh Harrop



348. First-winter Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*, Sumburgh, Shetland, October 2007.

three in 2006 make this a record year.

The 2006 records include the third and fourth for Shetland, although the Sumburgh bird was the first for the islands away from Fair Isle (note that the two Shetland birds were separable in terms of plumage). The St Mary's individual was also the third for this island, and for Scilly as a whole. One on Bardsey in 2005 has been belatedly accepted and constitutes the first record for Wales.

(Breeds S Transbaikalia, N Mongolia and extreme NE China. Winters locally throughout Indian subcontinent S to Sri Lanka.)

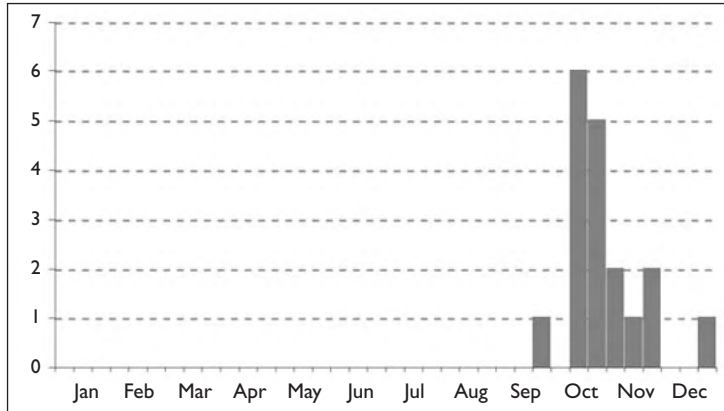


Fig. 9. Accepted records of Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* in Britain, by month.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (1, 285, 15)

North-east Scotland Blackdog, 21st October, trapped, photo (E. Weston).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, 14th–15th October, photo (P. A. Brown *et al.*); another, 15th–17th October (P. A. Brown *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, 18th September (D. N. Shaw *et al.*); second bird, 22nd September (W. Miles *et al.*); third bird, 10th October, photo (M. D. Warren *et al.*); fourth bird, 15th–23rd October, photo (M. Lawson *et al.*). Out Skerries, 27th–28th September, photo (M. J. McKee, C. Turner, T. Warrick) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 324). Foula, three different individuals, two on 6th and another on 10th October, two photographed (J. M. & T. P. Drew, K. D. Shaw, M. A. Wilkinson). Kergord, Mainland, 9th October,

photo (A. C. Lees, R. Moores *et al.*). Vidlin, Mainland, 18th October (M. S. Chapman *et al.*). Sumburgh Head, Mainland, 20th October (P. V. Harvey).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, 14th October, photo (M. Cunningham, J. & P. Sharp *et al.*).

2003 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, 20th October (S. D. Stansfield).

2003 Shetland Skaw, Whalsay, 2nd October (J. Dunn *et al.*).

2004 Scilly St Mary's, 25th October (R. A. Filby, N. Lawrence, R. A. Parks); note revised observers (*Brit. Birds* 100: 74).

2005 Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, 16th October (P. A. Lassey, I. Marshall).

This species is now one of the most frequently occurring rarities considered by the Committee, but escaped being dropped from the BBRC list in the last review by virtue of a lull in records during the mid to late 1990s. It has become more frequent again since 2000, and the ten-year total of 105 has now exceeded the limit that saw other species with over 200 records removed from the list (*BB* 100: 18–19). Nonetheless, recent totals are still well short of the unprecedented arrivals of the early 1990s, which peaked at 43 in 1990 and 35 in 1993. The predominance of Shetland records in 2006 continues that archipelago's dominance for this species, accounting for almost half the British 'OBP's. Scilly is the next best place to find this species, with Yorkshire (and Flamborough Head in particular) the best bet on the mainland. The Bardsey record represents the fourth for Wales, and the first to occur away from the Pembrokeshire islands. The one on Fair Isle on 18th September represents the earliest autumn record for Britain but the majority of records in 2006, which arrived between 6th and 21st October, are more typical.

(European range restricted to N Urals. Widespread across C and E Siberia to N China, Kamchatka, Kuril Islands and Japan. Winters widely across S China, Taiwan and throughout N and C parts of SE Asia. Population in Himalayas and mountains of west-central China winters throughout Indian subcontinent.)

Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi* (4, 67, 4)

Shetland Fair Isle, 15th–23rd September, photo (M. D. Warren *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 325). Fetlar, 18th–21st September, photo (B. H. Thomason *et al.*). Foula, 9th–13th October, photo (J. M. & T. P. Drew, K. D. Shaw, M. A. Wilkinson). Virkie, Mainland, 14th–15th October, photo (J. Bird, J. J. Gilroy, R. D. Moores *et al.*).

(Breeds within narrow region of scrub-tundra and taiga of subarctic Eurasia from Pechora region of NE Russia across Siberia to Chukotskiy Peninsula and Kamchatka. Migrates through E China and Taiwan to wintering areas in Philippines, N Borneo and N Sulawesi. Isolated race, *menzbieri*, breeds NE China and Amur River region of SE Russia.)

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens* (1, 4, 0)

Lincolnshire Wyberton, from 2005, also seen 24th–29th January, photo (*Brit. Birds* 100: 76–77).

(Breeds W Greenland, N and NW Canada, and Alaska. Winters W and S USA, Mexico and C America. Asian race *japonicus* vagrant to W Palearctic, breeds NE Siberia W to Baikal region; winters N Pakistan and NW India to S and E China, S Korea and S Japan.)

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

SE European and W Asian race *M. f. feldegg*, 'Black-headed Wagtail' (0, 12, 1)

Somerset Minehead Golf Course, ♂, 23rd–24th April, photo (C. Gladman *et al.*).

(Breeds Balkans and Greece E through Turkey to E Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, and S to Iran. Western populations winter Nigeria to Uganda and S to Congo, eastern populations winter NW India.)

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (0, 178, 7)

Essex Holland Haven, ♀, 7th–9th May, photo (S. Cox *et al.*).

Norfolk Stiffkey Fen, juvenile, 4th September (S. J. Aspinall).

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, 6th–7th September (W. H. Wagstaff *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, first-winter, 3rd–12th September, photo (M. D. Warren *et al.*). Out Skerries, first-winter, 15th–16th September, photo (P. M. Ellis, R. Riddington *et al.*); another, 24th September (R. A. Haywood, S. G. Piner, R. Pocklington *et al.*). Scatness, Mainland, first-winter, 23rd September, photo (P. V. Harvey, R. Riddington *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 326).

(Nominate race breeds in N Russia, from E Kola and Kanin Peninsula across N Siberia to Taimyr Peninsula and S to C Siberia. To south, range expanded W during 20th century; small numbers now breed regularly in Belarus, Baltic countries and occasionally S Finland; otherwise from Ukraine and S Russia, E across Kazakhstan and Mongolia to N China. Black-backed race *calcarata* breeds S Central Asia to Tibetan Plateau. Winters throughout Indian subcontinent, S China and SE Asia to peninsular Thailand.)

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (1, 160, 5)

Orkney Herston, South Ronaldsay, first-winter, 13th October, trapped, photo (J. A. & R. McCutcheon *et al.*).

Shetland Frakkafield, Mainland, first-winter, 29th–30th September, photo (D. Coutts, P. V. Harvey, A. Nicol *et al.*). Fair Isle, first-winter, 25th–28th October, trapped, photo (L. C. & D. N. Shaw *et al.*).

Suffolk Hollesley Bay, first-winter, 10th September, trapped, photo (P. Catchpole, R. A. Duncan, O. Slessor).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, 18th August (A. Roadhouse *et al.*); same, 21st August.

2005 Shetland Foula, 4th–5th September (A. R. Mainwood, B. H. Thomason). Brae, 8th September (B. H. Thomason).

(Widespread throughout E Europe with dramatic population increase in 20th century. Range still expanding NW into W Norway, and locally abundant in S Scandinavia and Baltic countries. C European range from Denmark SE to Romania and Ukraine, and through temperate European Russia to S Siberia. Winters E Africa, from S Kenya to Zimbabwe.)

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* (0, 5, 1)

Durham Fulwell, Sunderland, first-winter ♀, 26th–28th October, photo (I. Fisher, M. & A. Williams *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 366; plate 349).

Despite there now having been six records, Siberian Rubythroat remains one of the most highly prized of all vagrants on the British List. Four of the previous five had been in Shetland, so the appearance of one in a garden in Sunderland was something of a surprise, even though the date was entirely typical; all have appeared between 9th and 26th October. News of the Sunderland bird was withheld at the request of the house owners and, contrary to some remarks made on the internet, it was an entirely understandable decision; housing estates are not designed to cope with the hordes that would have descended on this cul-de-sac in Fulwell. The fact that the bird could be seen only from the kitchen windows of two adjoining houses would have placed an even greater strain on local goodwill. And what hordes there would have been as this was only the second mainland record, and the first (at Osmington Mills, Dorset, in 1997) was present for just one afternoon. There have now been four records since 2001; it is surely only a matter of time before one is located at an east-coast hotspot.

(Occurs throughout Siberia from Ob River E to Anadyr and Kamchatka, with small numbers to European foothills



of Urals in W. S limit reaches N Mongolia, Ussuriland, NE Hokkaido and NE China, with isolated population on E slopes of Tibetan Plateau. Winters from Nepal E through Himalayan foothills to NE India, Myanmar and N Indochina to C Thailand, S China and Taiwan.)

Ian Fisher

349. First-winter female Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*, Fulwell, Sunderland, Co. Durham, October 2007.



Stuart Elsom

350. First-winter Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*, Thorpeness, Suffolk, October 2006.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* (2, 34, 4)

Shetland Westing, Unst, first-winter, 13th–16th October, photo (D. M. Foster *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 367). Skaw, Whalsay, ♀/first-winter, 21st–24th October, trapped, photo (J. Dunn, B. Marshall *et al.*). Brae, ♀/first-winter, 23rd October (G. H. & W. F. Peplow *et al.*).

Suffolk Thorpeness, first-winter, 16th–24th October, photo (J. A. Rowlands *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 368; plate 350).

(Tiny population persists NE Finland but main range extends through cool and temperate forests of N Eurasia from E Russia and Siberia to Kamchatka, N Japan and NE China. Winters S China, Taiwan and S Japan through SE Asia to N peninsular Thailand. Distinctive race, *rufilatus*, of Himalayas and W China, sometimes treated as distinct species, descends to lower elevations during winter.)

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Eastern race *S. t. maurus*, 'Siberian Stonechat' (1, 318, 4)

Cornwall Porthcurno, age uncertain, 21st–24th October, photo (C. D. R. Heard, I. M. Wilson *et al.*).

Silly St Mary's, ♀/first-winter, 19th October, photo (J. Chapple, S. Morgan *et al.*).

Shetland Hamister, Whalsay, ♀/first-winter, 18th–23rd September (J. L. Irvine, B. Marshall *et al.*). Out Skerries, first-winter, 13th–14th October, photo (P. R. Gordon).

Caspian Sea race *S. t. variegatus*, 'Caspian Stonechat' (0, 2, 1)

Shetland Virkie, Mainland, ♂, 7th May, photo (P. V. Harvey, R. Riddington *et al.*) (plates 351 & 352).

BBRC has recently reviewed all spring records of 'Siberian Stonechat', in the process drawing up clear criteria by which they may be assessed (see *Brit. Birds* 97: 596–597, which lists all the records which remain accepted). During 2006 there were one or two claims of spring Siberian Stonechats that proved not to be acceptable, even though they were supported by photographs. Although these birds showed large amounts of white below and in the wings, precise details of the extent of white on the lower back, rump and uppertail-coverts were lacking. Consequently, the Committee could not rule out an aberrant plumage or unusually well-marked Common Stonechats of the continental race *S. t. rubicola*, and these pitfalls should be borne in mind by any observers of a putative spring male 'Siberian'.

No such problems arose for the finders of the 'Caspian Stonechat' in Shetland; quite simply this was a stunning bird and the envy of many farther south. It was unfortunate that the bird stayed for just one day and could not be enjoyed by a wider audience. The assessment of this record was made easy by the



Steve Minton



Steve Minton

351 & 352. Male 'Caspian Stonechat' *Saxicola torquatus variegatus*, Virkie, Shetland, May 2006.

exemplary description, supported by photographs. The appearance of a strikingly black-and-white stonechat may be matched by some extreme *rubicola*, but the pure white lower back, rump, uppertail-coverts and the obvious extension of white along the outer rectrices rules out all other races of Common Stonechat. The Virkie bird was aged tentatively as a first-summer on the basis of brownish (presumably retained juvenile) primaries and pale brownish flecks on the head.

The striking tail pattern of *variegatus* is shared by the rather similar White-tailed Stonechat *S. leucurus*, a largely sedentary species of the northern Indian subcontinent. As well as being an unlikely vagrant, White-tailed Stonechat has a broader black nape connecting the crown with the back, a deeper chestnut central breast patch, a shorter primary projection, and more extensive white on the inner webs of the outer rectrices – though this last feature is variable. Like *variegatus*, it occurs in riparian grasslands and reedbeds. In this context, the frequently used English name of 'Caucasian Stonechat' given to *variegatus* seems inappropriate as it is a bird of lowlands and wetlands fringing the western and northern shores of the Caspian Sea rather than the higher slopes of the Caucasus Mountains, where *S. t. rubicola* breeds.

(The race *maurus* breeds widely across N Asia from N Urals S to N Caspian Sea, Mongolia and N China, E to Kolyma basin, Okhotsk coast and N Japan. Winters from N Indian subcontinent to S China and SE Asia. The race *variegatus* breeds W and N Caspian Sea from Azerbaijan and Georgia, N to lower reaches of Volga River, and northeast to delta of Ural River, Kazakhstan. Migrates southwest through E Iraq and throughout Arabian Peninsula, west to Israel. Most winter NE Africa, from N and E Sudan, N Ethiopia and Eritrea, occasionally N to Israel; small numbers remain southeast Transcaucasus.)

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* (1, 23, 2)

Anglesey Mynachdy, Carmel Head, 22nd–23rd September, photo (J. Dyda, D. Powell, R. I. Thorpe *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 327; plate 353).

Yorkshire, North Filey, 14th October, photo (R. E. Harbird, D. J. Scanlan, C. C. Thomas *et al.*).

2002 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, 16th October (D. Barndean, S. D. Stansfield).

2005 Orkney North Ronaldsay, 23rd–29th October, photo (A. E. Duncan *et al.*).

Despite some continuing difficulties in separating this species from Northern Wheatear *Oe. oenanthe*, a clear pattern of occurrence is now evident. With the exception of a lone spring record, at Winterton, Norfolk, on 28th May 1977, and a late autumn bird at Allonby, Cumbria, on 11th November 1887, all records involve arrivals between 14th September and the end of October. The most favoured counties are Shetland (four records), followed by Scilly, Suffolk, Norfolk and Yorkshire (each with three).

The Filey bird shared its chosen field with a Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* and a Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* and came at the start of a purple patch for the site that also produced a Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* and a 'Two-barred Greenish Warbler' *Ph. trochiloides plumbeitarsus*. With such a supporting cast, and given that a number of other previous Isabelline Wheatears have arrived at the same time as other vagrants from Asia, it seems likely that this and many

other British records involve birds originating from Central Asia, rather than from the closer southeastern European or Middle Eastern populations.

(Small European population restricted to E Greece, Bulgaria, Ukraine and SW Russia. In Asia, breeds widely across arid grasslands from Turkey through Kazakhstan, Mongolia and N China, S to Iran and N Pakistan. Winters from N Sahel zone to E Africa, and throughout Middle East from Arabian Peninsula to S Iran, Pakistan and NW India.)

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* (9, 85, 4)

North-east Scotland Meikle Loch, Slains, ♀/first-winter, 21st October (P. S. Crockett *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, first-winter ♀, 27th October (D. Page). St Mary's, first-winter ♂, 1st–6th November, photo (R. L. Flood *et al.*).

Sussex Cooden, Bexhill-on-Sea, ♀, 1st–4th November, photo (P. Brown *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 369).

2005 Northumberland Holy Island, ♀, 31st October to 14th November (*Brit. Birds* 100: 80); note revised dates.

(Breeds widely but discontinuously across arid and desert regions of N Africa from Morocco to Middle East, N to S Caucasus, and across C Asia from C Iran and N Pakistan to Mongolia and N China. Some N African birds resident, but many winter in Sahara and Sahel region of N Africa from Mauritania E to Ethiopia and Somalia. Asian breeders winter from Arabian Peninsula to NW India.)

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* (2, 58, 1)

Glamorgan Townhill, Swansea, ♂ *T. r. atrogularis*, from December 2005 to 15th March, photo (*Brit. Birds* 99: plates 75 & 76; 100: plates 81, 354).

Northumberland Riding Mill, first-winter ♀ *T. r. atrogularis*, 4th December 2005 to 16th January, photo (K. Charman *et al.*).

Shetland Foula, first-winter ♀ *T. r. atrogularis*, 7th–9th October, photo (J. M. & T. P. Drew, K. D. Shaw, M. A. Wilkinson).

Somerset Curload, from December 2005 to 3rd January (*Brit. Birds* 100: 81).

Not so long ago this was a great rarity – the fourth British record was as recently as 1974 – but records are now virtually annual, with 47 of the 61 records in the last 20 years. It has been found in every month from September to May, and sightings have been widely scattered: everywhere from the Northern Isles and east coast in autumn to suburban parks and inland gardens in winter. Consequently, this is a rarity that dedicated patch-workers everywhere must think they have a chance with, bringing a little tingle of optimism during cold-weather thrush movements.

Nonetheless, October in the Northern Isles is still *the* time and place to find a 'Black-throated Thrush', probably among an influx of Redwings *T. iliacus* (fig. 10). There have been 27 autumn records in the Northern Isles, all between late September and mid November apart from two December arrivals. Throughout the rest of Britain, however, there have been only eight in October, all at migration hotspots (five in Scilly, two on the Norfolk coast and one in Cornwall), but 21 have been found between mid November and mid March, nearly all well inland. Three in November were seen on single dates but many of the winter birds have lingered for several weeks; it is likely that most arrived in



Gary Bellingham

353. Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*, Carmel Head, Mynachdy, Anglesey, September 2006.



Stuart Elsom

354. Male 'Black-throated Thrush' *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*, Townhill, Swansea, Glamorgan, February 2006.

Britain the previous autumn and were located only when they moved into new areas in search of food. There have also been four records in April and May (all since 1993, in Shetland, Orkney, Norfolk and Kent), all in circumstances suggesting that they were birds leaving the country.

The single British 'Red-throated Thrush' *T. r. ruficollis*, at the Naze, Essex, from 29th September to 7th October 1994, turned up earlier than all bar two Black-throated Thrushes. Late September is within the typical arrival period of Red-throated Thrushes in coastal northeast China but most other Western Palearctic records of Red-throated Thrush have occurred between October and May. Given that *ruficollis* breeds to the east of *atrogularis*, there must surely be different factors at work affecting the vagrancy of the two forms. Another 'Red-throated' would be much appreciated, especially as the two races have quite different songs (Arkhipov *et al.* 2003) and may be regarded as separate species in the future, although birds showing characters of both forms occur where their ranges overlap, from the upper Lena River to the Russian Altai and Sayan mountain ranges (Clement & Hathway 2000).

(Western, black-throated form *T. r. atrogularis* breeds C and N Urals, E across SW Siberia and E Kazakhstan to NW China. Winters Iraq to N India, E through Himalayan foothills to Bhutan. Nominant red-throated race breeds to E of *T. r. atrogularis* in C Siberia and N Mongolia, wintering E Himalayas and S fringe of Tibetan Plateau from Nepal to SW China, N to NE China.)

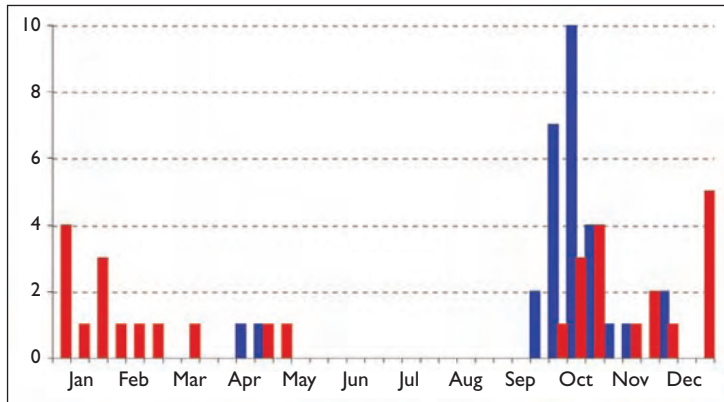


Fig. 10. Arrival times of 'Black-throated Thrushes' *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis* in Britain, separating records in the Northern Isles (blue) from those elsewhere in Britain (red).



Tom Tarns

355. First-winter male American Robin *Turdus migratorius*, Tresco, Scilly, October 2006.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (0, 20, 3)

Greater London Peckham, January to 28th March, photo (I. Skelton, per A. S. M. Self *et al.*).

Highland Glenmore Forest Park, 4th May, photo (G. Lewis); presumed same, Boat of Garten, 6th May, photo (M. Butters).

Scilly Tresco, first-winter ♂, 10th–28th October, photo (P. Brown *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 371; plate 355).

(Breeds throughout North America from tree line of Alaska and N Canada, S to S Mexico. Winters from S Canada to S USA and C America, S to Guatemala.)

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* (0, 4, 1)

Kent Bockhill, St Margaret's, 25th August, photo (P. Chantler, R. Heading *et al.*).

(Resident throughout Mediterranean basin, and N along Atlantic seaboard of W France, but recent N expansion curtailed by severe winters. Elsewhere, other races breed throughout Indian subcontinent, S China and S Japan to SE Asia and N Australia, and in sub-Saharan Africa.)

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* (1, 32, 1)

Shetland Skaw, Whalsay, first-winter, 2nd October, trapped, photo (B. Marshall, A. & G. Seth, P. Stronach *et al.*).

1998 Shetland Hillwell, 1st October (M. S. Chapman).

(Five races breed across Siberia from the Ob River in W Siberia, N to 64°N, and E to Yakutia and Sea of Okhotsk, and to the south from SW Siberia and NE Kazakhstan through Mongolia to Ussuriland and N and NE China. Winters from NE India to S China, and S throughout SE Asia.)

Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* (7, 100, 3)

Shetland Fair Isle, 15th September, photo (C. G. Bradshaw, R. M. Tallack, M. D. Warren *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 328); another, 15th September, trapped, photo (H. E. Maggs *et al.*). Foula, 5th–9th October (J. M. & T. P. Drew, K. D. Shaw, M. A. Wilkinson).

(Singing males regular in E Finland. To E, breeds discontinuously from C Urals E across much of Siberia to Kamchatka, Kuril Islands, Hokkaido and NE China. Winters in Indian subcontinent, from Nepal E through NE India into SE Asia and Philippines.)

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* (0, 30, 2)

Shetland Fair Isle, 15th June (E. A. & N. J. Riddiford), sound-recorded. Foula, 3rd–4th October, photo (J. M. & T. P. Drew, K. D. Shaw, M. A. Wilkinson *et al.*).

Since the 1950s the breeding range of River Warbler in Europe has expanded to the west and north. During this period, the tiny Finnish population doubled in the late 1980s, while in Estonia it was a scarce breeding bird until the 1950s, yet by 1989 the population had grown to an estimated 10,000 pairs (*BWP*). This trend is clearly apparent in the British situation. The first record was of a bird trapped on Fair Isle in September 1961, while the majority of the 31 subsequent records came during the 1980s and 1990s, including a peak of seven in 1995 alone. Almost equal numbers have occurred in the spring and summer period (18), the majority of which were singing males, and in autumn (14), most of these in the narrow window between 14th and 24th September.

On migration, they are extremely inconspicuous and difficult to locate, even in areas where they are known to be common; for example, at Ngulia, in the Tsavo West National Park in Kenya, where River Warbler is the fourth most numerous species trapped in autumn, field observations are unusual. This is reflected in Britain, where 11 of the 14 autumn birds have been trapped or found dead. How many must escape undetected? Once predicted as a potential breeding colonist, in recent years River Warbler has become extremely rare; including the two this year there have been only three accepted since 1998, and there hasn't been a singing male in that time.

In spring and early summer, singing River Warblers are a familiar part of the dawn chorus in lowland parts of central and eastern Europe. The pulsing, stridulating song of the male is unmistakable (except, perhaps, with the exception of a singing bush-cricket (*Tettigoniidae*)) and it carries far on still evenings and dawns, so few lingering birds should be overlooked. Autumn birds are more tricky, as getting decent views of this hulking *Locustella* is always a problem. This year's Foula bird was noted to be medium- to large-sized, both bigger- and wider-bodied than a Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia*, with a noticeably long and bulky tail. It was described as a very plain warbler, but a patient approach revealed the concolorous dark brown upperparts, which lacked any warm tones, an obvious gorget of streaks extending from the throat to the upper breast, and the brownish flanks extending to darker undertail-coverts with whitish tips, giving these a spotted or patterned effect. This bird was reported to be 'the best runner ever, like a mouse inches from you, running through walls and long vegetation'. What chance of finding your own in well-vegetated England!

(Patchy and local distribution across C and E Europe, but is spreading into NW Europe; range from Germany to C Finland, and E through C Russia to W Siberia. S limit extends to Croatia and Ukraine. Migrates through Middle East and NE Africa to winter in E Africa.)

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* (–, 633, 3)

Norfolk Burnham Norton, ♂, 3rd–4th June (J. Bird, J. J. Gilroy, R. Martin *et al.*).

Shetland Skaw, Unst, 28th May to 3rd June, photo (M. A. Maher, S. J. & A. I. McElwee *et al.*) (*Brit.*



Stef McElwee

356. Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*, Skaw, Unst, Shetland, May 2006.

Birds 99: plate 191; plate 356).
Somerset Ham Wall NNR, adult ♂, 9th–14th April (B. D. Gibbs, N. A. Smith *et al.*), presumed returning bird of 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 83).
Meare Heath, 25th–28th July (D. J. Chown, J. A. Hazell), presumed returning bird of 2005 (*Brit. Birds* 100: 83).

Wiltshire Waterhay Bridge, Cotswold Water Park, 28th May, photo (T. Frayling, J. Wells).

2005 Kent Stodmarsh, 15th–29th April, photo (A. & M. J. Hindle *et al.*).

2005 Somerset Meare Heath, 24th June to 26th July (*Brit. Birds* 100: 83); note revised dates.

(Breeds discontinuously in W Europe, from Iberia to Netherlands; range contracting to SE, although still expanding NE into Baltic countries. To E, occurs through temperate Russia S through Ukraine to Black Sea coasts. European birds winter in W Africa from Senegal to N Nigeria. C Asian race, *fusca*, breeds from Caspian Sea E across Kazakhstan to NW China and W Mongolia, wintering in NE Africa.)

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* (1, 59, 3)

Scilly St Mary's, adult, 9th September, trapped, photo (J. Askins, R. L. Flood *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 291).

Shetland Skaw, Whalsay, 12th June, trapped, photo (J. L. Irvine, B. Marshall *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Kilnsea, first-winter, 13th August, trapped, photo (T. McEvoy, R. Swales *et al.*).

The occurrence patterns of British Paddyfield Warblers superficially resemble those of other species with similar breeding ranges in southeastern Europe and Central Asia. The vast majority involve first-years in September and October along the east coast, with later arrivals in the southwest. There are also eight late-spring records, of which the majority are from the Northern Isles. This year's crop, however, includes two less predictable records: a first-winter at Spurn on the amazingly early date of 13th August and an adult on St Mary's in early September.

The immature in East Yorkshire is difficult to explain. It arrived a month earlier than most other British records, which show a peak between late September and mid October, and recalls a similar record from Guernsey, Channel Islands, on 19th August 1993. There is no similar pattern among other species from the same region; for example, all early autumn records of Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* have been of adult birds. Could the Spurn bird have originated farther east than most British Paddyfields? Although birds around the Black Sea begin to migrate in mid August, migration occurs much earlier in Siberia (*BWP*), with adults starting to move in late July and young birds somewhat later.

The worn tertials and tail of the St Mary's bird clearly showed that it was an adult; Dement'ev & Gladkov (1954) suggested that while some adults moult in late August, others migrate in worn plumage. A worn adult in autumn may show curiously dull wings that, at first glance, might suggest Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum*, although the more striking head pattern, with a well-marked supercilium extending well behind the eye, should help the identification process.

(In Europe, restricted to Black Sea coasts from N Bulgaria and Danube delta E to Ukraine. To E, breeds widely across steppes of S Russia and SW Siberia, Kazakhstan, northwest China and western Mongolia, S to Uzbekistan and N Pakistan. Winters throughout Indian subcontinent N of Sri Lanka.)

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (9, 64, 3)

Lincolnshire Gibraltar Point, first-winter, 16th September, trapped, photo (R. Emmens, G. Gregory, K. M. Wilson *et al.*).

Lothian Skateraw, 17th September, photo (K. Gillon *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 330).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, first-winter, 23rd–30th September, trapped (P. A. Brown, E. R. Meek *et al.*).

2001 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, first-winter, 13th October, trapped (S. D. Stansfield *et al.*).

(Breeds widely throughout S Finland, Estonia, Latvia and European Russia to 64°N. To E, range extends across C Siberia to Lake Baikal and upper Lena River, S through W Mongolia and NW China, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to N Pakistan. Winters throughout Indian subcontinent S to Sri Lanka and E into NW Myanmar.)

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (9, 209, 5)

Angus & Dundee Loch of Kinnordy, ♂ in song, 11th June to 13th July, photo (A. J. Leitch *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Far Ings, Barton-on-Humber, 24th June, photo (G. P. Catley, N. Drinkall, S. Routledge *et al.*).

Suffolk Gunton, Lowestoft, 16th May (R. Fairhead, J. Wright *et al.*). Dunwich, first-winter, 14th October, trapped, photo (A. Howe, D. Pearson *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, 26th May (R. Butcher *et al.*).

2005 Warwickshire Brandon Marsh, 6th–10th May (K. I. Lydster, F. G. Stokes *et al.*).

(Breeds discontinuously throughout much of continental Europe from Iberia to Greece, N to S Sweden and Finland, and E across S Russia, Turkey and Caucasus to W Siberia. C Asian race, *zarudnyi*, breeds from Volga to NW China and W Mongolia. Winters throughout C and S Africa.)

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* (1, 100, 4)

Argyll BALEPHETRISH Bay, Tiree, 31st August to 2nd September, photo (J. Bowler, K. Gillon).

Essex THE NAZE, 9th September, photo (S. Bunn).

Scilly Bryher, adult, 13th–14th October, photo (T. Parminter, A. Tomczynski *et al.*).

Shetland Funzie, Fetlar, 18th–22nd September, photo (B. H. Thomason *et al.*).

1998 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, first-winter, 25th–26th September, trapped (D. Anning, S. D. Stansfield).

2004 Cleveland Hartlepool, 10th August (R. C. Taylor).

2005 Yorkshire, North Castle Hill, Scarborough, 10th September (N. W. Addey, J. Middleton, S. Wignill *et al.*).

(Range expanding W, and breeding in S Finland. To E, breeds C Russia and W Siberia to Yenisey valley, C and N Kazakhstan to W Mongolia and W Xinjiang province, China. Winters N and peninsular India, S to Karnataka.)

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* (0, 0, 1)

Shetland Boddam, first-winter, 16th August, photo (P. M. Ellis, H. R. Harrop, R. A. Mavor *et al.*). (*Brit Birds* 99: plate 292; plate 357).

Finding a first for Britain should be one of the highlights of a birding lifetime, so one must sympathise with the observers involved here – as most people will now know, this bird was identified from photographs after it had departed. It was discovered skulking in an overgrown garden, giving fleeting views and disappearing for up to an hour at a time. On-site discussion covered most of the *Hippolais* genus, with Olive-tree and Upcher's Warblers *H. languida* both considered, but Olive-tree Warbler was excluded at the time, largely on the basis of two factors: size and tail movements. The bird was clearly not 'Great Reed Warbler size' as stated in the *Collins Bird Guide* and it consistently dipped its tail, a behavioural trait thought to be diagnostic of Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *H. pallida*.

The bird had gone next morning and that might have been that, but for the fact that Hugh Harrop had managed to grab half a dozen reasonable photographs of this elusive bird. When these were sent to Hadoram Shirihai he was confident that they showed an Olive-tree Warbler, an identification also supported by Killian Mullarney and Lars Svensson. The enormity of the sighting is emphasised by the fact that this is the first record of long-distance vagrancy by this species to our knowledge.

In hindsight, from the comfort of the armchair and with the benefit of expert opinion, the photographs make identification relatively straightforward, but it is very easy to be wise after the event. The photos show a chunky, long-winged warbler with distinct orange-yellow tones to the lower mandible of a heavy bill, greyish plumage, a prominent wing panel, and dark wings and tail contrasting with a

pale body. Other factors, though, cannot be judged from the photographs. Although size seems to have been overstated in the literature, this *was*, in retrospect, a large bird, although Harvey *et al.* (2006) pointed out that published weights of Olive-tree Warbler are similar to those for Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. Although the Boddam bird constantly dipped its tail, on one occasion it was seen to wave its tail in an oval, ending with the tail spread – a movement



Hugh Harrop

357. First-winter Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*, Boddam, Shetland, August 2006.

that is apparently diagnostic of Olive-tree Warbler. Nevertheless, it is clear that tail movements of *Hippolais* warblers need to be used with caution to support an identification. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler also tends to be rather vocal and tail movements and calls are usually associated with each other, while the deep 'tchuk' call of Olive-tree, heard from the Boddam bird but not sound-recorded, differs from the harsher call of Eastern Olivaceous.

Not many British birders could seriously claim to have had Olive-tree Warbler on their 'radar', although it was included in Ian Wallace's list of predicted future vagrants over a quarter of a century ago (Wallace 1980). It was one of the few long-distance migrants breeding in Europe not on the British List and it joins a surprisingly long list of species with distributions centred on the eastern Mediterranean which have turned up in Britain, including Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli*, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis*, Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* and Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*. Perhaps other long-distance migrants from the eastern Mediterranean, such as Cinereous Bunting *E. cineracea*, or even Upcher's Warbler, should be taken seriously as prospective vagrants, although Olive-tree Warbler breeds as far west as Croatia, much closer to Britain than any of the other species mentioned.

Britain's first Rüppell's Warbler was also found at Boddam, almost exactly 29 years earlier; indeed at one stage the Olive-tree Warbler was in the very same garden. While this might appear to strengthen the case for August as a time to look for Balkan vagrants, the Rüppell's Warbler was an adult in moult, believed to have arrived the previous spring. Nevertheless, three of Britain's 11 Eastern Olivaceous Warblers have also turned up in August, including one of the two Shetland records, and Shetland's only Eastern Bonelli's Warbler was also in August.

Two other firsts for Britain in 2006 were also identified from photographs (Long-billed Murrelet *Brachyramphus perdix* and the *lineatus* race of Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, although both of these had the decency to stay around afterwards), while what was potentially the first Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii* for Finland was photographed in June 2007 and identified retrospectively. These records serve to emphasise the immense value of modern digital recording equipment. It has led to some suggestions that big claims will now be accepted only with supporting video or photographs, but this is not the case. The Committee will always consider all records on merit, although the very fact that some of the birds mentioned could have been misidentified emphasises just how important it is that significant records are accompanied by thorough documentation.

(European breeding range restricted to E Mediterranean, extending from coastal Croatia S through Balkan Peninsula to Greece, and along Black Sea coast in Bulgaria and S Romania. To east, breeds W and S Turkey, NW Syria and N Israel. Migrates S to winter in East Africa from S Tanzania to N South Africa.)

Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*

Western race *S. h. hortensis*, 'Western Orphean Warbler' (0, 1, 0)

1955 Dorset Portland Bill, 20th September, trapped.

Although this record of Orphean Warbler appeared in *BB* as long ago as 1956 (*Brit. Birds* 49: 180), this bird has now been accepted by BBRC and BOURC as the first British record of the nominate form *S. h. hortensis*. As is so often the case when trying to review old records to establish the race involved, the description was not particularly detailed, despite the bird being trapped. There was enough to suggest that it was an adult female, the eye being described as 'dirty greyish white', the crown pale grey and the upperparts greyish-brown. Establishing the racial identity proved to be rather more complicated, with separation of nominate *hortensis* from the most likely of the eastern races (*crassirostris*) being based on bill structure and plumage tones. The bill of *hortensis* is shorter and has a more strongly curved culmen and straighter lower mandible, while that of *crassirostris* tends to appear long and spiky. The description of the Portland bird's bill as being long, strong and 'shrike-like' was not helpful, although 'shrike-like' might indicate that it was decurved and thus closer to *hortensis*. As it would have undergone a (more or less) complete post-breeding moult, the plumage of an adult in late September should be fresh. From the description of the underparts – having a pinkish tone, with brownish-buff flanks and a pinkish-buff wash to the undertail-coverts – *hortensis* might be more likely; the underparts of *crassirostris* tend to be paler and lack any trace of a pink or buff wash, while the undertail-coverts have darker centres, which should have been visible in the hand. Luckily, the original description contained a single tail feather that fell out during the processing of the bird (and was stuck to a piece of paper

with sellotape). This feather was sent to Prof. Staffan Bensch at Lund University, Sweden, who kindly analysed its DNA. He compared the results with those of nominate *hortensis* and *crassirostris* and concluded that it was a strong match with the nominate race.

This leaves another four accepted Orphean Warbler records as yet unassigned to race: Porthgwarra, Cornwall, October 1967; the well-watched bird on St Mary's, Scilly, in October 1981; Aberdeen, North-east Scotland, in October 1982; and Saltash, Cornwall, in May 1991. All have been reviewed by BBRC and we hope to publish the results shortly. According to Shirihai *et al.* (2001), *hortensis* is 'genetically well differentiated from *S. [h.] crassirostris*; the two [races] are as divergent as either is from [Arabian Warbler] *S. leucomelaena*'. The voice of the two forms is diagnostic and in adult plumage the two races show consistent plumage differences as described above. This supports the case for treating *hortensis* and *crassirostris* as separate species; indeed, the 15th draft of the AERC 'Checklist of bird taxa occurring in the Western Palearctic region' treats them as such: Western Orphean *S. hortensis* and Eastern Orphean Warbler *S. crassirostris*.

(Nominate 'Western' form breeds N Africa from Morocco to NW Libya, N through Iberian Peninsula to S France, S Switzerland and Italy. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa from S Mauritania and N Senegal to Chad. 'Eastern' form *crassirostris* breeds Slovenia and Croatia south through Balkans to Greece, and E through Turkey to at least Armenia, also NE Libya and Israel. Winters Sudan to Eritrea. Third form, *jerdoni*, breeds from southern Caspian Sea region in Iran to Pakistan and Afghanistan and N to Tien Shan Mountains in SE Kazakhstan. Winters Arabian Peninsula to peninsular India E to Bihar.)

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* (4, 539, –)

2002 Shetland Aith, Fetlar, first-summer ♂, 23rd–28th May (M. O'Brien, M. Smith, B. H. Thomason *et al.*). Norwick, Unst, ♀, 22nd June (M. A. Maher).

2005 Cornwall Nanquidno, adult ♂, 10th October (I. M. Mc Kerchar *et al.*).

(Four races widely but locally distributed throughout Mediterranean basin from NW Africa and Iberia N to S France, and E to Greece and W Turkey. Winters S of Sahara from Mauritania and Senegal to S Egypt and Sudan.)

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* European and W Siberian race *Ph. t. viridanus* (4, 448, –)

1958 Devon Lundy, 2nd–3rd November, trapped (*Brit. Birds* 53: 412); note revised dates.

1978 Devon Lundy, ♂ in song, 14th–15th July (*Brit. Birds* 72: 537); note revised dates.

2004 Shetland Ham, Bressay, 6th September (S. E. Duffield *et al.*).

2005 Durham Seaham, 10th September (S. G. Addinall, T. Armstrong). Whitburn, 11th September (P. Hogg, M. Newsome).

2005 Norfolk Holkham, 11th–12th September (G. Allport, A. Long *et al.*). Stiffkey, 12th September (C. A. Holt, D. Ritchie).

2005 Yorkshire, North Scarborough Castle Hill, Scarborough, 9th–12th September (N. W. Addey *et al.*). Ravenscar, 11th September (N. W. Addey).

(The European and W Siberian race *viridanus* has expanded W during 20th century to E Poland, Baltic countries and S Finland, with sporadic breeding in Germany, Sweden and Norway. To E, breeds through Russia and W Siberia to Yenisey River, S through NW Mongolia to N Afghanistan and NW Himalayas. Winters throughout Indian subcontinent. Other races occur throughout Himalayas to SW China, wintering from Indian subcontinent to Indochina and N Thailand.)

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Siberian race *Ph. t. plumbeitarsus*, 'Two-barred Greenish Warbler' (0, 3, 1)

Yorkshire, North Filey, 16th–18th October, photo (D. Gilroy, C. C. Thomas *et al.*) (plate 358).

October Greenish Warblers *P. trochiloides viridanus* are rare in Britain, rarer in fact than Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*, and both are potential confusion species with Two-barred Greenish Warbler *plumbeitarsus*. Song is unlikely to be useful when identifying an autumn vagrant, and although the call of *plumbeitarsus* is slightly different from that of *viridanus*, whether it is sufficiently distinct to benefit British birders is open to question. Ultimately, it is to plumage details that differentiation must fall. A first glimpse might suggest a Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus* because of the prominent supercilium and bold double wing-bars, but the lack of pale tertial edges will soon rule this out.



Tom Tams

358. 'Two-barred Greenish Warbler' *Phylloscopus trochiloides plumbeitarsus*, Filey, North Yorkshire, October 2006.

Size, structure and actions are likely to appear as for typical *viridanus*, including the bill being held upwards and having a pale orange lower mandible lacking a dark tip, but some plumage traits are more akin to Arctic Warbler. Good pointers towards *plumbeitarsus* include slightly darker green upperparts with a greyish wash (but note that the Filey bird, like the one on Bryher on 27th–28th September 2003, could look quite bright ('grass') green in certain views). The underparts are whiter and include little or no yellow, being a sort of pale grey-white rather than the lemon-white of *viridanus*, but lack the smudgy greyish wash often seen on Arctic. Of particular importance is the appearance of the off-white bar on the greater coverts. This is bold, long and straight (typically formed by the squared-off tips to seven coverts) and of even width along its entire length, not narrowing on the inner coverts as does the wispy wing-bar of *viridanus*, which is usually restricted to the outermost four or five greater coverts. Indeed, it is reminiscent of the greater-covert bar on Yellow-browed Warbler, but it lacks the adjacent dark border along the bases of the secondaries of that species. Moreover, the bar on the median coverts is more prominent on *plumbeitarsus*, forming a short but distinct upper wing-bar. The supercilium is long in all these closely related taxa and, as on *viridanus*, it is often wider above and behind the eye in *plumbeitarsus*. It is white with a lemon hue, and often less obvious in front of the eye, appearing not to reach the forehead and typically starting between the eye and the bill base. The dark loreal stripe tends to be longer, more like Arctic's and the ear-coverts can be more mottled, also closely resembling Arctic's. The legs can be grey-toned, but not exclusively so, and typically they are not as dark as those of *viridanus*; the Filey bird had dark, reddish-brown legs, which were paler to the rear, and flesh-toned feet.

Three of the four British records have been found in the third week of October, with only the Bryher 2003 bird bucking that trend. However, the four records elsewhere in western Europe show a wider spread of arrival dates, including birds on 17th September and 2nd October in The Netherlands, 5th July in Sweden, and 1st October in Finland. Vagrants to Europe seem to be occurring more frequently, a pattern akin to that of some other far-flung eastern gems such as Siberian Rubythroat and Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans* and further records can be expected.

(Breeds SE Siberia from Baikal and N Mongolia to Ussuriland, S to NE China. Winters S China to Indochina and C Thailand.)

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (11, 262, 7)

Scilly St Agnes, 17th–19th September (D. Page *et al.*). St Mary's, 23rd September (M. Anderson, I. W. Lakin *et al.*).

Shetland Funzie, Fetlar, 31st August, photo (M. A. Maher, M. Smith *et al.*). Foula, 2nd September (R. J. Else). Geosetter, Mainland, adult, 21st–27th September, photo (D. Cooper, B. Kay *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 331); first-winter, 30th September, photo (R. C. & I. D. Broadbent, P. S. Crockett, I. Gordon *et al.*). Boddam, Mainland, 9th–12th October, photo (R. Martin *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 372).

(Breeds locally in N Scandinavia, becoming widespread across N Russia E to extreme NE Siberia, S to Baikal region, Ussuriland and NE China. Other races breed in Alaska, and Kamchatka through Kuril Islands to N Japan. Migrant through E China to winter widely in SE Asia to Java, Philippines and Sulawesi.)

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* (0, 86, 4)

Norfolk Holkham Park, intermittently 2nd–18th January (N. Green, J. R. McCallum *et al.*). Horsey Mere, 24th January to 6th February (P. J. Heath, A. J. Kane *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Donmouth, Aberdeen, 13th–30th December, photo (M. Lewis *et al.*), sound-recorded.



Stef McElwee

359. Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, January 2006.

Northumberland Whitley Bay, intermittently from 14th January to 25th March, photo (C. Bradshaw, A. S. Jack *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plates 77 & 78; plate 359).

2005 Lothian Skateraw, 25th–27th October, photo (D. Allen, C. N. Davison *et al.*).

(Breeds in Altai Mountains to W Mongolia, S through Tien Shan and Pamirs to NE Afghanistan, NW Himalayas and mountains in NW China. Winters in S Afghanistan to N India, E to W Bengal. Another race breeds in C China from Hebei to S Yunnan, W to lower slopes of Tibetan Plateau.)

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* (1, 273, –)

1999 Durham Marsden Quarry, South Shields, 23rd October (C. Bell *et al.*).

2005 Durham Hawthorn Quarry, 16th October (S. G. Addinall *et al.*).

2005 Scilly Bryher, 7th–8th October (E. Allchin, D. Watson, per N. Hudson).

(Breeds in S Siberia from Novosibirsk region E to Ussuriland and NE China. Migrates through E China to winter in N Myanmar, Indochina and C Thailand.)

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (1, 309, –)

2005 Cornwall Rame Head, 10th October (S. C. Votier).

(Breeds in Siberia from Ob River N to 60°N, E to Sea of Okhotsk, S to Russian Altai, N Mongolia and Ussuriland through NE China. Winters Nepal to S China and SE Asia to Singapore. Another race breeds on Tibetan Plateau.)

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (1, 75, 5)

Borders St Abb's Head, first-winter, 24th–26th September (D. Graham, K. Rideout *et al.*).

Northumberland Hauxley, 29th August, photo (B. Galloway, M. Holmes *et al.*).



S. Message

Fig. 11. Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*, St Mary's, Scilly, September–October 2006.

Radnorshire Gwastodyn Hill, ♂ in song, 17th–18th May (R. Knight *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, intermittently during 22nd–25th September (D. Page *et al.*); presumed same, St Mary's, intermittently from 26th September to 21st October (S. Message, J. M. Turton *et al.*) (fig. 11). St Martin's, 18th–20th October (S. Huggins, P. Lymbery, R. Peach *et al.*).

This species' recent consistent run was continued in 2006 – there have now been annual totals of five birds in four of the last five years – and there was a typical spread of autumn records during the peak period from late August to early October. The most noteworthy record, however, was the singing bird in rarity-starved Radnorshire. Wood Warblers *Ph. sibilatrix* with aberrant songs have proved problematic on two previous occasions in south Wales but there were no such problems with this individual, which was seen well and responded enthusiastically to recordings of the species.

The difficulties of identifying silent individuals are by no means fully resolved, however. Even in the hand, separation of Western and Eastern Bonelli's Warblers *Ph. orientalis* is not guaranteed, as demonstrated by the bird on Bardsey (below), which, although trapped, was still not identified conclusively.

(Breeding range centred on SW Europe from Iberia to N France, S Germany, Italy, Austria, and locally in mountains of N Africa. Winters along S edge of Sahara, from Senegal and S Mauritania to N Cameroon.)

Eastern/Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis/bonelli* (1, 152, 7)

Caernarfonshire Bardsey, 24th–25th September, trapped, photo (S. C. Renouf, S. D. Stansfield *et al.*).

Leicestershire Hambleton Wood, Rutland Water, 2nd May (J. Wright).

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* (0, 11, 2)

Devon Challacombe Common, Dartmoor, ♂, 1st May to 6th June, photo (D. J. Hopkins, S. N. G. Howell, M. R. Langman, J. P. Martin *et al.*).

Lothian Pitcox, adult, 5th May, photo (D. J. Bates, M. W. Fraser *et al.*); presumed same, Pressmennan Lake, 6th–13th May, photo (per www.birdguides.com).

(Breeds locally in French Pyrenees and S throughout W Iberia. N African range restricted to NW Morocco and N Algeria to NW Tunisia. Wintering range poorly known.)

Hugh Harrop



360. Adult male Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*, Brow Marsh, Shetland, May 2006.

Collared Flycatcher
Ficedula albicollis
(1, 26, 1)

Shetland Brow Marsh, adult ♂, 9th–10th May, photo (R. H. Johnston, R. Riddington *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 164; plate 360).

(Scattered pockets breed E France and S Germany but more numerous through C and E Europe to temperate regions of European Russia W of Urals. Isolated populations breed on Swedish islands Gotland and Öland, and S Italy. Winters in E and C Africa, from Tanzania to Zimbabwe.)

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* (0, 25, 0)

2005 Essex Bradwell-on-Sea, 6th–10th April (C. Barton, J. C. Sutherby, R. Warwick *et al.*).

(Widespread resident throughout continental W Europe, from S Spain N to Denmark and E to Poland, W Ukraine and Greece. Elsewhere, resident in mountains of N Africa, W Turkey and W Caucasus.)

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (0, 200, 3)

Cleveland Portrack Marsh, Stockton-on-Tees, two ♂♂, 23rd March to 6th April, photo (D. Page, E. C. Parker, J. L. Sharp *et al.*); same, Dorman's Pool, two ♂♂, 9th April (C. Dodsworth, I. J. Foster, per R. C. Taylor); see also Durham.

Durham Drinkfield Marsh, Darlington, two ♂♂, 4th April (M. S. Rayment *et al.*); see also Cleveland. Greater London/Essex Rainham Marshes, up to six, three ♀♀/immatures and three ♂♂, from 2005 intermittently to 30th March 2006, photo (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 46; 100: 92). Two returning birds from 22nd December into 2007 (S. Cowie *et al.*).

Kent Stodmarsh, 11th–12th January (R. Brooks, P. Heathcote, D. Johnson).

2005 Kent Dungeness, ♀/immature, 14th November (S. J. Broyd).

(Widely but locally distributed throughout C and E Europe, from Denmark, Germany and Italy NE to C Sweden and Estonia. Absent from much of NW Europe but locally numerous in Spain. To E, breeds from S Russia to Volga River. Largely resident or dispersive in Europe. Other races, frequently treated as three separate species, occur in C Asia and from S Siberia to NE China, and winter NW Indian subcontinent, S China and S Japan.)

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (0, 68, 8)

Caernarfonshire Great Orme, first-winter, 22nd October, photo (M. Hughes *et al.*).

Durham Whitburn, *L. i. phoenicuroides*, 14th May, photo (R. Ahmed, P. Hindess, M. Newsome *et al.*).

Kent Dungeness, first-winter, 15th October, photo (R. E. Turley, D. Walker *et al.*).

Northumberland Belsay, first-winter, 4th October, photo (R. Forster, A. D. McLevy, J. Stott *et al.*). Cresswell, first-winter, 27th–29th October, photo (I. Fisher, D. Williams *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 374).

Orkney Carpaquoy, Eday, first-winter, 20th September to 10th October, photo (M. G. Cockram, E. J. & S. J. Williams).

Outer Hebrides Bru, Lewis, first-winter, 22nd–29th September, photo (M. S. Scott *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 332); presumed same, Breibhig, Barra, 30th September to 1st October, photo (K. Gillon *et al.*).

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, 20th October, photo (B. J. Thomas, K. Webb *et al.*).

A glaring omission from the lengthy summary in the 2005 report (*Brit. Birds* 100: 92–94) was that the adult female at Portland Bill, Dorset, on 15th–23rd September 1985, has been assigned to the race *isabellinus*. This is particularly significant as this individual may well prove to be the first acceptable record of this form in Britain. BOURC is currently reviewing material from BBRC files to establish the first British records of *phoenicuroides* and *isabellinus*.

A small number of the first-winters listed above have been tentatively identified to form. For example, the bird on the Outer Hebrides was felt most likely to be *phoenicuroides* but, until our research is more complete, BBRC will be cautious about publishing such decisions.

(Four races breed C Asia, from Caspian Sea and W Iran through Kazakhstan to Tajikistan, Afghanistan and N Pakistan to S Mongolia and NW China, with isolated subspecies, *tsaidamensis*, breeding Zaidam depression to N Tibetan Plateau. Winters in NE and E Africa, S Arabian Peninsula, S Iran and NW Indian subcontinent.)

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (21, 150, 3)

Suffolk Thelnetham Fen, ♂, 29th June, photo (D. Mieville, B. Pleasance). Shingle Street, 8th–11th July, photo (N. Mason *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 230; plate 361).

Yorkshire, North Ryton, Malton, 23rd–26th June, photo (D. G. Fairweather, M. G. Hodges, L. M. Richardson *et al.*).

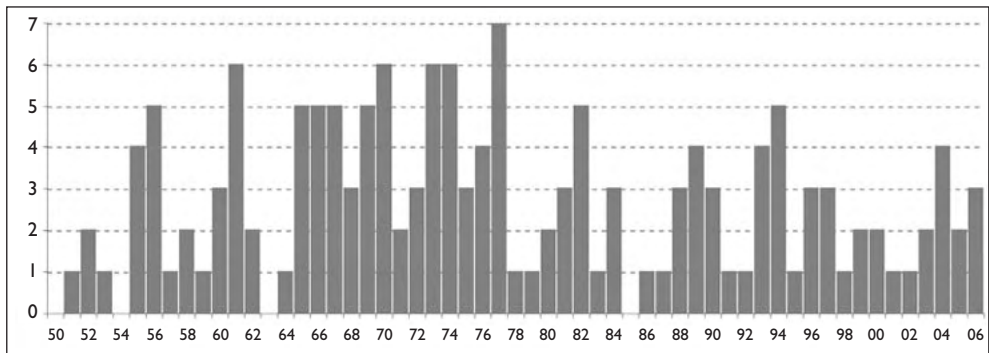


Fig. 12. Accepted records of Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* in Britain, 1950–2006.



361. Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*, Shingle Street, Suffolk, July 2006.

Bill Baston

Despite the continuing population decline in Europe, the three records in 2006 represent a slightly better than average year compared with the totals for the previous ten years. The four-day stay by the Shingle Street bird over a quiet July weekend ensured that it was particularly well twitched and photographed. The sexing of this individual has been the subject of some debate; it appeared to be an adult, with no retained juvenile remiges, but the forehead looked generally grey with some black feathering, suggesting an adult female. The second Suffolk record came to light when photographs taken by a farmer were shown to a birder, and this proved to be a smart adult male.

(European range centred E of Balkans to E Poland, with small numbers W through N Mediterranean to S France and NE Spain. To E, breeds locally from Black Sea coasts, across S Russia and Kazakhstan to NW China and SW Siberia. Migrates through E Africa to winter in S Africa, from Namibia to S Mozambique and N South Africa.)

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* (0, 1, 1)

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, 1st November, photo (S. C. Joyner, A. M. Stoddart *et al.*) (plate 362).

Few people would have predicted the arrival of a second Masked Shrike so soon after the first British record, at Kilrenny, Fife, from 29th October to 14th November 2004. It was an excellent late-season find on Scilly and its identification was perhaps made easier by the lessons learnt from the Kilrenny bird. One area of debate has centred upon its age, with some advocating it to be a juvenile while others thought it was in first-winter plumage.

According to the literature, young Masked Shrikes have a variable post-juvenile moult, some apparently retaining juvenile plumage into early winter while others begin their moult in September (Svensson 1992). A brief check of specimens at the NHM, Tring, has helped to clarify the situation a little. Of ten first-calendar-year specimens examined, collected from August to late October, eight were in full juvenile plumage, including five dated from October. The other two, both from October, had started their post-juvenile moult, and showed a few new black feathers coming through on the mantle, rump, uppertail-coverts, median and greater coverts. The Scilly bird seems to be essentially in juvenile plumage, but a careful examination of the photographs suggests that there may be one or two black feathers on the mantle, uppertail-coverts and crown. It is, therefore, probably best described as a juvenile beginning its moult into first-winter plumage!

(Breeding confined to E Mediterranean, and locally E to W Iran. Passage occurs through the Middle East, to wintering area in narrow band of N sub-Saharan Africa, extending from River Niger in Mali, E to Sudan and Ethiopia, and Red Sea coastline of western Saudi Arabia and Yemen.)



362. First-winter Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*, St Mary's, Scilly, November 2006.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* (0, 104, 3)

Cornwall Nanquidno, 2nd–3rd October (T. Berge, E. Nilsen, M. Thompson *et al.*).

Scilly Bryher, 17th October (A. F. Mears). St Mary's, 17th–19th October, photo (L. Doughty, N. Hudson *et al.*).

2005 Outer Hebrides Liniclate, Benbecula, 30th September (S. E. Duffield, A. Stevenson).

(Breeds throughout S Canada, and USA E of Rocky Mountains. Migrates throughout E USA to winter in N South America. Other races resident in South America.)

**Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*
Greenland race *C. h. hornemanni*, (12, 27, 1)**

Shetland Sumburgh Farm, first-winter ♂, 19th–24th October, photo (R. M. Fray, A. J. Mackay *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 376); presumed same, Fair Isle, 25th October, trapped, photo (P. A. Harris, R. J. Nason *et al.*).

(Nominate race breeds Ellesmere and Baffin Island to northern Greenland, S on E coast to Scorsby Sound. Disperses erratically to S of breeding range in winter, irregularly reaching northwest Europe. Race *C. h. exilipes* breeds on tundra of Arctic Eurasia, Alaska and Canada to Hudson Bay).

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata* (0, 36, 0)

2005 Highland Glasnakille, Skye, first-winter, 4th October (R. D. Day, R. McMillan), note corrected spelling of second observer's name (*Brit. Birds* 100: 99).

(Breeds widely across North America from W Alaska E through Canada to Newfoundland, S to Maine. Migrates through E USA to winter in South America from Panama to Chile and E Argentina.)

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* (0, 8, 1)

Cornwall Penryn, first-winter ♂, 23rd October, photo (R. S. Johns, A. Rollanson, per R. J. Johns), found dead.

This unlucky individual, after managing to cross the Atlantic unscathed, flew into a window at the University of Exeter's Cornwall Campus. Fortunately, at least in terms of getting the bird recorded, it was found by Sinclair Johns, who recognised it as an American warbler and arranged to get it photographed so that his father (none other than Britain's leading lister, Ron Johns) could identify it! This is not the first transatlantic passerine to come to such an ignominious end: a Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* hit a window at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, in October 1990.

This is only the ninth record for Britain and there have been just three other European sightings, in Iceland in September 1997, France in October 1999 and Ireland in October 2003, although there are also records from the Azores. It is a very common species in northeast North America but it is a relatively short-distance migrant which also moves mainly northeast to southwest in autumn and is, therefore, less likely to be caught up in storms and swept across the Atlantic. Autumn sightings in Britain are widely spread temporally, with arrivals between 27th September and 4th November but, with one exception, they have been in the southwest (two in Scilly and singles in Devon, Caernarfonshire and now Cornwall). The other autumn bird was in Shetland, where there have also been two in spring. In spring, this species will head northeast from its wintering grounds so British records at this season can be explained by extreme, long-distance overshooting (Vinicombe & Cottridge 1996). The other British record came from Kent, where there was one from January to April 1989, at the same time as that county played host to Britain's only Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*.

Despite the arrival of Europe's second Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis* in Ireland in early October, it was a poor autumn for vagrant American passerines, and this was the only American warbler recorded in Britain all year. If we consider all records of Parulidae, there have been just 15 individuals of five species in the last ten years, compared with 38 individuals of 13 species in the ten years before that, 1987–96. Looking at the records more closely, sightings in Scotland have remained constant, with ten individuals in each period, although two birds in the latter period were in spring. Records in England (mainly, of course, in the southwest and especially Scilly) have nosedived, from 26 in the decade to 1996 (all in autumn or winter) to just five since; and these included a spring Blackpoll Warbler in Lancashire in 2000 and a winter Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla* in Herefordshire in 2001/02,

so only three were in autumn.

Conventional wisdom is that lows crossing the Atlantic are now passing farther north, thus bypassing southwest England, yet this does not explain why numbers of American warblers in Scotland have only maintained their levels and not increased, although even farther north, there have been some spectacular finds in Iceland in recent years. It may be that recent declines in North American passerines account for the smaller numbers crossing the Atlantic, as discussed in the 2004 report (*Brit. Birds* 98: 688–689). A detailed meteorological analysis of the arrival patterns for all migratory Nearctic passerines in Europe in relation to their population levels may cast more light on the situation.

(Widespread breeder across North America from SE Alaska E to Newfoundland, S to C California and S Texas, and to Oaxaca and Vera Cruz, Mexico. Winters S USA, S through Mexico to Panama.)

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis* (1, 28, 1)

Shetland Sumburgh Farm, 13th May, photo (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 193); presumed same, Quendale, 14th May (P. V. Harvey, R. Riddington *et al.*).

2004 Shetland Foula, 1st July, photo (G. Atherton).

White-throated Sparrow is the commonest of the Nearctic sparrows in Britain and the characteristic pattern of occurrence for this group is now well established: the majority occur in spring and a sizeable chunk of these are in the Northern Isles. The records published in this year's report maintain that pattern, with the Foula bird of 2004 surely just a late find for a spring migrant. It is less clear why this pattern exists exclusively for the sparrows when all other Nearctic passerines, including seed-eaters such as Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* and Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*, have a distinctly autumnal bias. Vinicombe & Cottridge (1996) put forward some interesting theories about spring and autumn migration of Nearctic passerines, suggesting that spring overshoots are responsible for both the northerly and the spring bias for sparrows, while autumn records are more to do with reverse migration.

What is less clear is why so many sparrows yet so few wood-warblers (Parulidae) overshoot in spring and why wood-warblers are much more prone to reverse migration in autumn than Nearctic sparrows.

Some Nearctic autumn migrants – especially Blackpoll Warbler, Bobolink and Grey-cheeked Thrush – have a migration route that takes them way out into the Atlantic in a non-stop flight to Central America. Consequently, not only are they

Table 1. Respective totals of spring and autumn (excluding those recorded during December–February) sightings of all Nearctic sparrows (Emberizidae) and wood-warblers (Parulidae), excluding autumn Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata*, during 1950–2006.

	Spring	Autumn
Nearctic sparrows/juncos	52	11
Wood-warblers	7	75

scarce fall migrants in Texas (<http://www.houstonaudubon.org/index.cfm/MenultemID/562.htm>) but they are also prone to being caught up in fast-moving autumnal storms and so more likely to occur as vagrants in Britain. However, most Nearctic migrants do not fit this pattern. Thus, if we ignore the species with a long-distance migration strategy, why are the proportions of sparrows to wood-warblers so different in spring and autumn (table 1)?

(Breeds North America from SE Yukon E to Newfoundland, S to Great Lakes and N USA to New Jersey. Winters SE USA, from Massachusetts S to Florida, Texas and into N Mexico and California.)

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (22, 43 1, –)

2005 Yorkshire, East Bampton Cliffs, 15th–17th October, photo (M. Anderson *et al.*).

(Breeds in boreal forest mires of N Eurasia from Sweden and Finland, E across N Russia to easternmost Siberia and Kamchatka, and S to Baikal region. Migrates SE to winter in E China, Korean Peninsula and S Japan.)

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* (8, 220, 4)

Norfolk West Runton, 26th August (L. Benson, I. Prentice *et al.*).

Shetland Sandwick, Whalsay, age uncertain, 11th September, photo (H. R. Harrop, J. L. Irvine, B. Marshall *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 335). Fair Isle, first-winter, 15th–16th September (H. E. Maggs *et al.*). Wester Quarff, Mainland, 21st September (R. A. Haywood).

Yellow-breasted Bunting is becoming an increasingly rare breeding bird in Europe. It may no longer breed annually in Finland and is declining in European Russia (BirdLife International 2004). Consequently, it is surprising that the numbers found in Britain have remained fairly stable. Although only 29 were seen before 1970, the totals for subsequent decades have been 55 in the 1970s, 60 in the 1980s and 58 in the 1990s, and these four take the total to 30 since 2000.

The vast majority (80%) have turned up in September, with most of the others in late August or early October. It is also very much an island bird in Britain. It was once a Fair Isle speciality, and that island still has 44% of the total (though down from over 70% in the mid 1980s). A quarter of sightings have now been away from the Northern Isles, but a predilection for islands remains: 13 on the Isle of May, ten on the Farne Islands (Northumberland), six on Scilly, two on St Kilda (Outer Hebrides), two on Lundy (Devon), one on Tiree (Argyll), one (the only Welsh record) on Bardsey (Caernarfonshire) and one on Hilbre (Cheshire), as well as three on Portland (Dorset), which is effectively an island. Excluding Portland, only 26 have been seen on mainland Britain, all coastal except for a singing male in Wester Ross (Highland) in June 1982. Other mainland records have come from Yorkshire (eight, including five at Spurn), Norfolk (six) and Fife (three), with singles in six other east-coast English counties from Northumberland to Kent, one in Somerset and one at Berry Down (Devon) on 7th November 1993, the only record for the month. In addition, only four have ever been seen in Ireland.

Explaining this distribution is not straightforward. It has been suggested that the preponderance of records in the Northern Isles is because they are reversed migrants on a precise track from northeast Europe (Vinicombe & Cottridge 1996). The fact that there is no significant 'trickle-down' effect into the southwest, which is the case with many eastern vagrants, lends support to this idea. The number of spring records is very low, just four in May–June and two in July on Fair Isle, and this suggests that autumn birds are not wintering successfully elsewhere and returning the following year, a rare but apparently increasing phenomenon for eastern vagrants (or 'pseudo-vagrants'; Gilroy & Lees 2003). The fact that Yellow-breasted Buntings are usually found at exposed sites does, however, suggest that they may be overlooked elsewhere. In recent years they have become harder to find in Shetland, where there are now many fewer crops, particularly oats; but they are still turning up there, albeit in a wider range of habitats. What is certain is that finding a Yellow-breasted Bunting on the mainland is still quite an achievement.

Most British birds have been left unaged. It is likely that the majority of autumn records involve first-winters, but this is difficult to establish with confidence as the range of colour intensity and streaking on the underparts may reflect individual variation as well as that between the sexes and between different age groups. Adults of the nominate race, which breeds in the west of the range, moult between late August and early October at migration stopover sites in China, so adults in Britain in early autumn are most likely to be worn. However, *E. a. ornata*, which breeds east of Lake Baikal and resembles nominate *aureola*, moults between late July and mid September on its breeding grounds (*BWP*). This race is perhaps an unlikely candidate for vagrancy to western Europe but a very fresh bird from mid September onwards could possibly be an adult from farther east. An intriguing female at Balcomie (Fife) in September 2000 is the only probable autumn adult on record (*Brit. Birds* 94: 499), as an adult male at Landguard, Suffolk, in August 1999 was considered to be of captive origin (*Brit. Birds* 94: 500).

(European range restricted to small and declining population in C Finland, centred on Gulf of Bothnia. To E, breeds widely across Russia and Siberia to Kamchatka, S to NE China and NE Hokkaido. Winters locally from E Nepal through Himalayan foothills to NE India, and widely throughout SE Asia.)

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* (7, 171, 3)

Caernarfonshire Bardsey, adult ♂, 2nd June, photo (E. Bowler, A. G. Clarke, S. D. Stansfield *et al.*).

Shetland Toab, Mainland, first-winter, 16th–21st September, photo (D. Cooper, B. Kay *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 336). Fetlar, first-winter, 21st–28th September, photo (B. H. Thomason *et al.*).

(Breeds from C Italy to Greece, Turkey, N Iraq and W Iran, N through Caucasus to Ukraine and S Russia. Winters in W and C India.)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* (0, 21, 1)

Norfolk Holme, first-summer ♀, 4th–5th May, photo (J. Andrews *et al.*).

(Breeds C Canada to Nova Scotia and through mid-west and NE USA to Maryland. Migrates through E USA to winter from C Mexico through C America to N South America.)

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Appendix. I. Late records of former BBRC species, removed from the list prior to 2006

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1995 Scilly St Mary's, adult, 6th–10th May, photo (B. Thomas).

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

1981 Kent Pegwell, 13th June (*Brit. Birds* 76: 504); note revised date and location.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

1993 Devon Lundy, 12th–14th May (T. J. Davis).

Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*

1995 Scilly St Mary's, adult, 8th July, photo (B. Thomas).

Appendix 2. Category D species accepted (see *Ibis* 136: 253)

Falcatid Duck *Anas falcata*

Devon Exe Estuary, ♂, 18th November to 13th December, photo (M. Knott, M. R. Langman *et al.*), probably present since mid October (plate 363).

1999 Hertfordshire Wilstone Reservoir, ♂, 13th–20th January (G. White *et al.*).

The male in Devon was found in the company of Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* on the Exe Estuary in mid October 2006, its tricky identification being subsequently fully resolved in November as the adult male characters began to emerge from a dowdy brown plumage. Two key issues were the subject of considerable and understandable debate: (a) the ageing of this particular individual and (b) its origins, the latter inviting questions about the possible elevation of Falcatid Duck to Category A of the British List.

Initially, a combination of plumage features made for a compelling argument that this bird was a first-winter male (*Birding World* 19: 456). It was only when video-footage obtained by Paul Hackett was subsequently scrutinised and the bird was compared with specimens that it became apparent that its plumage was a better fit for an *adult* male. Specifically, the tail feathers can be seen in the video stills to consist of two generations of feathers, but both of these are pale, rather greyish feathers with full tips, lacking the worn, 'inverted-V' pattern with protruding shaft typical of the feathers of first-winters (which are also much browner). The pattern of the shorter tertials on this bird was also a better match for that of eclipse male Falcatid Duck. Juvenile tertials differ in being almost plain brown and lacking any kind of contrasting pattern. Interestingly, examination of a male Falcatid Duck shot in Orkney in November 2000 indicates that it was also an adult male and although most of its plumage was almost full adult breeding, the tertials were so short that they would have been invisible in the field. This suggested that its eclipse tertials had only recently been dropped. There is clearly need for more study on the ageing and moult of Falcatid Duck.

The debate on the origins of these birds tends to generate more heat than light, usually because, as with many other wildfowl that have both escape likelihood and vagrancy potential, it seems just like a best guess without ringing or isotope evidence. There is still a great deal to be learnt about the movements of Eastern Palearctic wildfowl – for example, a Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* that



Paul Hackett

363. Male Falcatid Duck *Anas falcata*, Exe Estuary, Devon, November 2006.

spent one recent winter at Slimbridge spent the following winter in the Sea of Japan (James Lees, WWT pers. comm.). Disinterest in Category D wildfowl is a frustrating reality; the 1999 Hertfordshire Falcated Duck record was clearly part of an emerging pattern, occurring, as it did, with an influx of Wigeon. However it generated little interest at the time and could have been lost from the national record. Records of Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* also exemplify the problem. Old records are sought of this former Category D species but they can be difficult to track down owing to the ambivalence that Category D can generate. In fact, BBRC is very keen to receive detailed reports of *all* current Category D species so that full data can be logged and analysed as part of the process of this 'holding category'.

For pioneer bird finders, the checking of Wigeon and Gadwall *Anas strepera* flocks (the main potential carrier species) for the all-dark bills of Falcated Ducks in brown juvenile plumage should be viewed as a pursuit that is packed with potential.

(Breeds E Siberia from Yenisey River and Baikal region E to Sea of Okhotsk and S to NE China and Hokkaido, Japan. Winters from S Japan to SE China, locally W to Nepal.)



Jon Dunn

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*

Shetland Haroldswick and Burrafirth, Unst, ♂, 15th April to 2nd May, photo (W. Dickson *et al.*) (*Brit. Birds* 99: plate 161; plate 364).

(Breeds from S Alaska, E across S Canada and N USA to Newfoundland, and S to Oregon, Virginia and locally almost to Gulf coast. Winters coastally, from S limit of breeding range to California and Florida.)

364. Male Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*, Haroldswick, Unst, Shetland, April 2006.

Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*

1976 Cumbria Walney Island, adult ♂, 18th May, remains found on tideline (*Brit. Birds* 70: 444); now considered to be of uncertain provenance by BOURC.

(Breeds Northwest Territories E to Newfoundland, Canada, and S to New England states, USA. Winters Gulf and Atlantic coasts of S USA, S to Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, and West Indies.)

Appendix 3. Category E species accepted (see *Ibis* 136: 253)

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*

1998 At sea Sea area Hebrides. Two ♂♂, 10th–12th May, photo (S. Cook), landed on RV *Akademik Ioffe* on 1st May, 135 nautical miles SSW of Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland, Canada. One died in North Sea, the other survived to Kiel, Germany.

These birds were known to have been fed on board ship, which disqualifies them from being listed in Category A.

Appendix 4. List of records not accepted

This list contains all current records not accepted after circulation to the Committee. It does not include a) those withdrawn by the observer(s) after discussion with the Secretary; b) those which, even if circulated, were not attributed by the observer(s) to any definite species; c) those mentioned in 'Recent reports' in *British Birds* if full details were unobtainable; or d) certain escapes.

In the vast majority of cases, the record was not accepted because we were not convinced that the identification was fully established; only in a very few cases were we satisfied that a mistake had been made.

2006 Blue-winged Teal Brodgar, Orkney, 2nd May. **Lesser Scaup** Loch Spynie, Moray & Nairn, 21st November. **Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri* Loch Broom, Highland, 4th October. **White-billed Diver** Hornsea, East Yorkshire, 17th February. **Zino's/Fea's Petrel** Ardnave, Argyll, 12th July. **North Atlantic Little Shearwater** Aird na Gregaig, Outer Hebrides, 17th September. Castlebay to Oban Ferry, Sea area Hebrides, 3rd November. **Cattle Egret** M3 near Cove, Hampshire, 26th March. **Black Stork** Abbey Park, Leicestershire, 3rd June. **Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* Kingsbarns, Fife, 14th May. **Pallid Harrier** Marshside Marsh, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 12th July. **Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonora* Fiddler's Ferry, Cheshire, 23rd July. Tresco, Scilly, 12th September. St Mary's, Scilly, 18th September. **Collared Pratincole** Brockholes Quarry, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 12th April. **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata* Dawlish Warren, Devon, 15th October. **Marsh Sandpiper** Stiffkey Fen, Norfolk, 8th August. **Wilson's Phalarope** Aveton Gifford, Devon, 2nd October. **Laughing Gull** Crosby Marina, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 2nd January. Fremington, Devon, 14th January. Titchwell, Norfolk, 15th January. Little Marlow, Buckinghamshire, 24th March. Dungeness, Kent, 12th May. Isley Marsh, Devon, 15th October. **Bonaparte's Gull** Kenfig Pool, Glamorgan 18th May. **Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei* St Mary's, Scilly, 6th April. **Gull-billed Tern** Goring-by-Sea, Sussex, 11th June. West Worthing, Sussex, 21st June. Gorleston, Norfolk, 3rd August. **Caspian Tern** Attenborough, Nottinghamshire, 26th April. South Gare, Cleveland, 8th May. East Head, Sussex, 11th June. North Denes, Norfolk, 29th July. **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscata* Landguard Point, Suffolk, 14th September. Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, 14th September. **Whiskered Tern** Rockland Broad, Norfolk, 25th May. **Great Spotted Cuckoo** High Minniwick, Dumfries & Galloway, 6th July. **White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus* Swithland Reservoir, Leicestershire, 21st September. **Pallid Swift** Bryher, Scilly, 23rd July. St Mary's, Scilly, 8th August. **Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* Horsey Dunes, Norfolk, 21st October. **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Shell Carrington Reservoir, Greater Manchester, 1st May. **Olive-backed Pipit** St Mary's, Scilly, 15th October. **Citrine Wagtail** Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, 27th April. 'Siberian Stonechat' Roydon Common, Norfolk, 30th April. Fair Isle, Shetland, 8th May. Hamister, Shetland, 2nd November. **Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* Titchwell, Norfolk, 31st August. **Paddyfield Warbler** Start, Orkney, 22nd September. **Great Reed Warbler** Minsmere, Suffolk, 12th September. **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia c. albistriata* Lundy, Devon, 10th October. **Penduline Tit** Dungeness, Kent, 4th November. **Isabelline Shrike** Gunton, Suffolk, 17th October. **Lesser Grey Shrike** Ottery St Mary, Devon, 23rd April. **Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* Whetstone, Leicestershire, 20th February. Earlsdon, Warwickshire, 9th March. **Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera* Cornborough, Devon, 1st August. **Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* Church Norton, Sussex, 23rd January. **Scarlet Tanager** *Piranga olivacea* Red Rocks, Cheshire, 29th August. **Black-headed Bunting** Tintagel, Cornwall, 28th February. Holme, Norfolk, 17th August. Holme, Norfolk, 13th September.

2005 Blue-winged Teal Brodgar, Orkney, 27th May. Seafield, Lothian, 8th October. **Ferruginous Duck** Farnham Gravel-pit, North Yorkshire, 13th October. **Lesser Scaup** Barvas, Outer Hebrides, 13th December. Loch na Muilne, Outer Hebrides, 20th December. **Great White Egret** Bough Beech Reservoir, Kent, 25th March. **Black Kite** Grimsay, Outer Hebrides, 29th June. Prae Wood, Hertfordshire, 7th August. East Leake, Nottinghamshire, 3rd September. **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* Winterton, Norfolk, 1st May. Breydon Water, Norfolk, 27th May. **Collared Pratincole** Llanfaelog, Anglesey, 29th June. **Long-billed Dowitcher** Goldcliff, Gwent, 20th March. Loch Guinart, Argyll, 28th October. **Laughing Gull** Chelford, Cheshire, 15th January. Hammersness, Shetland, 9th November. Ladywalk, Warwickshire, 2nd December. **Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica* Tynemouth, Northumberland, 6th November. **Alpine Swift** Holmebrook Country Park, Derbyshire, 31st July. **Little Swift** South Gare, Cleveland, 13th September. **Olive-backed Pipit** Barra, Outer Hebrides, 29th October. **Citrine Wagtail**

Foula, Shetland, 25th September. 'Siberian Stonechat' London Wetland Centre, Greater London, 24th March. Foula, Shetland, 21st October. **Isabelline Wheatear** St Mary's, Scilly, 25th September. St Mary's, Scilly, 16th October. **Desert Wheatear** Out Skerries, Shetland, 19th October. **White's Thrush** *Zoothera dauma* Filey, North Yorkshire, 6th October. 'Black-throated Thrush' Orpington, Greater London, 12th September. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** St Mary's, Scilly, 1st November. **Arctic Warbler** Stornoway, Outer Hebrides, 2nd November. **Arctic Redpoll** Holy Island, Northumberland, 24th October.

2004 **Wilson's Storm-petrel** North Minch, Sea area Hebrides, 21st July. **Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* Saltholme, Cleveland, 19th September. **Slender-billed Gull** Stevenage, Hertfordshire, 28th January. **Alpine Swift** St Leonards, Lothian, 15th June. **Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* Blakeney Point, Norfolk, 1st May. **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Tresco, Scilly, 11th October.

2003 **Ferruginous Duck** Radipole Lake, Dorset, 7th December. **Bobolink** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* St Mary's, Scilly, 20th October.

2001 **Squacco Heron** Draycote Water, Warwickshire, 23rd June. **Black Kite** Fritcham, Norfolk, 18th August. **Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Forton, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 14th January.

2000 **Short-toed Eagle** Dungeness, Kent, 20th May.

1999 'Wilson's Snipe' *Gallinago gallinago delicata* St Mary's, Scilly, 3rd–8th September.

1996 **Brown Skua** *Stercorarius antarcticus* Dawlish Warren, Devon, 11th January. **Desert Wheatear** Fairbourne, Merionethshire, 13th December.

1994 **Rüppell's Warbler** Dungeness, Kent, 29th May.

1993 'Ehrenberg's Redstart' *Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisticus* The Naze, Essex, 16th September.

1991 'Ehrenberg's Redstart' Southwold, Suffolk, 28th September.

1989 'Ehrenberg's Redstart' Keynsham, Avon, 22nd September.

1988 'Ehrenberg's Redstart' St Mary's, Scilly, 24th October.

1985 'Wilson's Snipe' St Mary's, Scilly, 31st October.

1976 'Ehrenberg's Redstart' Fife Ness, Fife, 23rd September.

1968 **Black-browed Albatross** Calf of Man, Isle of Man, 24th August.

1965 **Royal Tern** Sandwich Bay, Kent, 28th July.



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