

THE SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 2009

The 2009 systematic list was prepared by a team of species account writers (see below) and edited by Chris Heard and Renton Righelato.

We try to restrict records to those within the long and tortuous border of Berkshire. However, this is not always possible and it should be noted, for example, that monthly peak counts of wildfowl at Eversley GPs may include some birds in Hampshire and some records on the Thames and Blackwater rivers may have been over the midline and outside Berkshire. Moreover, references to Atlas survey data include counts in the whole of border tetrads, resulting in the survey area being almost 25% larger than the area of Berkshire itself.

Species account writers of the 2009 systematic list

Mute Swan to Egyptian Goose	Ken Moore
Ruddy Shelduck to Mallard	Ray Reedman
Pintail to Ruddy Duck	Renton Righelato
Red-legged Partridge to Grey Heron	Andy Horscroft
Red Kite to Peregrine*	Steve Ricks
Water Rail to Coot	Renton Righelato
Oystercatcher to Grey Phalarope	Marek Walford
Arctic Skua to Arctic Tern	Paul Bright-Thomas
Feral Pigeon to Cuckoo	Jim Reid
Barn Owl to Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Bill Nicoll
Woodlark to Dunnock	Peter Gipson
Robin to Greenland Wheatear	Renton Righelato
Ring Ouzel to Firecrest*	Richard Burness
Spotted Flycatcher to Treecreeper	Roger Stansfield
Great Grey Shrike to House Sparrow	Bill Nicoll
Chaffinch to Corn Bunting	Richard Burness
Escapes and hybrids	Chris Heard

*Honey Buzzard, Montagu's Harrier, Goshawk, Yellow-browed Warbler were written by Renton Righelato

Abbreviations and place names

Abbreviations used in the systematic lists are shown below. For place names difficulties arise where there are several names for the same sites including where, for example, a gravel pit complex is named but not the individual pit. A map and guide to the main sites is included towards the end of the report to assist with identification and further detail can be found at www.berksbirds.co.uk/pits.asp.

AGE/SEX

ad	Adult
f/s	First summer
f/w	First winter (plumage)
imm	Immature
juv	Juvenile
s/p	Summer plumage
s/s	Second summer
s/w	Second winter
w/p	Winter plumage
w	Winter
3/s	Third summer
3/w	Third winter
4/s	Fourth summer

PLACES/LOCALITIES

Com	Common
CP	Country Park
Fm	Farm
GC	Golf course
GP	Gravel Pit(s)
K&A	Kennet and Avon
Res	Reservoir
R.	River
SF	Sewage Farm
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
Dorney W	Dorney Wetlands
QMR	Queen Mother Reservoir

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Locally common resident (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at regular count sites follows (some of the counts included young birds):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield	40	14	16	–	–	24	–	66	53	99	97	92
Eversley/Moor Green Lakes	36	17	6	–	–	6	21	19	23	31	35	47
Wraysbury/Horton GPs	–	29	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	140	90	56
Dorney Wetlands/ Jubilee R.	–	–	13	2	12	11	8	12	12	10	–	–
Lower Farm GP	8	18	10	6	7	3	4	24	28	5	14	11
Newbury	81	87	76	51	44	38	37	57	43	42	60	64
Remenham	48	26	51	50	–	3	–	–	–	45	–	–
Windsor	213	168	299	319	237	–	281	227	263	245	187	233
Thatcham Marsh GP	6	6	5	2	6	2	4	16	4	7	5	2
Theale	9	13	16	–	5	42	48	44	–	–	28	28
Windsor Great Park	19	29	26	28	33	34	33	35	30	28	20	8
Wraysbury	13	5	4	4	–	7	–	7	–	140	90	56

The highest count of the year, 319, was, as usual, Windsor Esplanade on Apr 2 (DF). Other significant counts outside of the above table were 62 at Moatlands GP in September, 48 in July at Theale Main Pit and 57 at Bray GP on Sep 27. Breeding was evident at many sites, but fledging success seems rarely to have been recorded.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon passage migrant

Three records this year – all in December. The first was at Borough Marsh on the 12th a single bird resting (ABT *et al.*) for only the one day. On the 20th at Colebrook Lake, Moor Green Lakes (BMA, IHB) three adults were resting on the ice, but again just for the day – the first records here since 1996. Finally a party of 8 (5 adults and 3 immatures) were present for 15 minutes at Queen Mother Reservoir before flying off, low, to the West on 24th (CDRH).

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce winter visitor, but small introduced resident population

Four Whooper Swans were seen flying SW over Woolhampton GPs on Oct 3 and on Oct 7 two arrived at Lower Farm GP in heavy rain and stayed until the following morning (GJS, HMG, TL, IW). The final sighting of the year was on the morning of Nov 8, again at Lower Farm GP, of a single adult (NC) and on this occasion, with the news being broadcast quickly, many observers were able to see the bird.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Scarce winter visitor

A single first-winter bird found beside the R. Thames in the Cleeve Lock area, Sreatley on Jan 4 (NJB), was subsequently seen by many observers until last being reported on Jan 25; however a Pinkfoot photographed in the same area in the spring seems likely to have been the same bird.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common and widespread introduced resident

Shown below are the monthly maxima figures at the main concentrations for this species:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	–	46	7	–	17	–	4	88	57	–	–	60
Theale GPs	108	64	153	16	8	–	–	–	–	2	28	120
Eversley GPs	25	28	14	8	7	6	4	2	156	41	42	32
N. Maidenhead/ Cookham *	14	68	15	–	–	–	–	313	221	3	–	44
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	10	–	28	–	60	122	–	189	–	–
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	27	150	132	–	–
Windsor Great Park	–	5	116	96	139	154	114	346	13	259	1	–

* includes records from Summerleaze GP, Cookham area and Cockmarsh.

It is worth highlighting from the above that Eversley GPs with the 156 on Sep 15 was a new site record count. Other specific counts over 150, not shown in the above, were 150 at Loddon Drive, Charvil on Feb 9 (DJB), 190 at Borough Marsh on Feb 10 (CDRH), 150 at Sunninghill Park on Nov 22 (DJB) and 290 at Sonning Meadows during December (ABT).

Breeding: as usual breeding was under-reported via the usual county routes, with only 15 nests at 10 sites reported, though the Atlas surveys carried out during the 2007–11 period confirmed breeding in 55 tetrads.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Occasional escapee and feral resident at one site where numbers are in decline, has bred

Only one individual was seen intermittently at Eversley GPs from May until November. However on two occasions (March and May) two birds were observed. Elsewhere, a single 'blue morph' was with Greylag Geese at Remenham on Jan 12 (CDRH) and subsequently at Charvil Meadows from Jan 30 until at least Feb 15 (CDRH). Two white morphs were also seen at Summerleaze GP from Aug 8–27 (CDRH). They also visited other local sites within this period and were then seen at Summerleaze GP on Sep 10 (CDRH) and White Place Farm, Cookham on Dec 17 (BDC). A single white morph adult was at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Oct 11 (CDRH).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common and widespread introduced resident

The monthly maxima at regular 'count' sites are detailed below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	35	69	74	–	22	–	–	–	37	34	31	12
N. Maidenhead/ Cookham*	9	27	11	–	–	–	–	545	206	45	–	8
Dorney Wetlands/ Jubilee R.	–	100	16	–	7	–	74	186	275	107	–	470
Eversley GPs	50	158	94	–	–	30	50	716	633	206	96	147
Lower Farm GP	150	150	75	7	28	30	67	50	56	100	250	210
Thatcham Marsh GPs	79	65	67	36	15	89	82	36	181	146	33	50
Twyfords GPs	23	31	21	27	2	4	–	–	–	172	10	49
Windsor Great Park	49	56	103	124	123	102	118	123	300	410	217	–
Windsor Esplanade	189	81	92	82	47	–	343	251	338	183	123	81
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	–	1	18	27	35	18	117	80	–	–

* includes records from Summerleaze GP, Cookham and Cockmarsh.

Other than those mentioned above, further high counts over 150 were: 283 between Maidenhead and Windsor on Aug 27 (DF), 212 at Engelfield on Sep 2 (RCr), Borough Marsh with 150 on Dec 13 (RCW), Heath Lake had 320 on Oct 13 (IT), Sonning Meadows with 179 on Dec 26 (ABT) and finally 535 at POCOcks Lane, Eton on Nov 30 (DJB).

Breeding: the highest number of young noted was 86 in Windsor Great Park. Atlas surveys for the 2007–11 period confirmed breeding in 147 tetrads.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Rare vagrant and localised feral visitor/resident

The flock at Eversley has reduced in size year by year. Breeding success in 2009 is unknown. Occasionally single Barnacle Geese have appeared briefly at other localities in the County. A single Snow Goose (see above) is often with the flock at Eversley and there were also two hybrids which seem to have joined up with the flock.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	20	21	20	14	3	–	2	5	19	18	17	18

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

The numbers recorded were higher than 2008; all records referred to the dark-bellied race *B. b. bernicla*. The first was a single bird with Egyptian Geese at South Field, Eton Wick on Jan 2 (CDRH, DAC *et al.*), followed by another (with scattered white flecking on the head) at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 23 (CDRH). The third of the year was again at Queen Mother Reservoir, on Mar 1 (ABT, CDRH *et al.*), which remained in the area until the last sighting on Mar 13 (CDRH). The fourth and final Brent Goose of the year was in the second 'winter' period, an adult at Queen Mother Reservoir, for several hours on Oct 15 (CDRH).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Common introduced resident in Mid and East Berkshire, local in the west

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	3	–	1	5	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	2
N. Maidenhead/ Cookham*	1	–	–	2	2	30	11	9	98	2	32	35
Eversley GPs	68	47	30	25	6	10	51	87	119	177	109	50
Theale GPs	3	6	10	12	12	12	16	33	19	13	3	11
Windsor Great Park	–	6	18	30	17	16	23	4	11	32	13	17

*includes records from Summerleaze GP, Cookham and Cockmarsh.

Other counts over 35 were recorded as follows; 44 flew into Queen Mother Reservoir on 10 August (CDRH), 68 were at Remenham Hill on Oct 19 (CDRH), 41 at South Field, Eton Wick on 4 Jan (DJB), 41 at Jubilee River on Feb 20 (BDC) and 40 at Sonning Meadows Dec 19 (ABT). This species breeds through much of the year and Atlas surveys confirmed breeding in 87 tetrads in Mid and East Berkshire during the 2007–11 period.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 31 locations throughout the county (with the exception of west of Newbury). The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh/Charvil	4	4	9	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney/Slough SF	3	6	5	15	8	12*	8*	–	–	1*	1	2
Lower Farm GPs	3	1	2	3	3	3	1	–	1*	–	–	–
Padworth GP	11	7	9	5	26*	13*	8*	–	–	–	–	2
Pingewood GPs	1	4	4	4	4	–	1*	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res.	2	–	10	11	14	4*	5*	5*	2*	1*	–	–
Great Meadow Pond	–	3	7	10	4	11*	0	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GPs	1	1	3	3	4	3	–	–	2	–	–	–
Other sites	7	3	13	16	22	14*	2*	2*	–	–	3	–
Monthly max. totals	32	29	60	74	91	60	25	7	6	2	4	4

*includes young birds

Jan–May: Winter and spring figures, with the exception of the Padworth count in May, show only adults, with good numbers present in favoured areas by May, including a high count of 18 adults at Padworth Lane GP on May 11 (KEM). Other high counts were recorded at Windsor Great Park on Apr 5 (DJB) and Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 20 (CDRH). **Jun–Jul:** Successful breeding was noted at Padworth GP, Dorney Wetlands, Windsor Great Park, Queen Mother Reservoir and Brimpton, but survival rates varied. Of some 40 young reported from all sites in June, only about 14 were recorded further in July. **Aug–Oct:** The last adults, a pair with a late youngster, lingered at Queen Mother Reservoir until Aug 6 (CDRH), after which the few records referred to immature birds. **Nov–Dec:** The first record of returning adults was of 3 females on Nov 11 at Theale (KEM), after which there were relatively few records before the year's end.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Localised but increasing introduced resident

There were again reports from nearly 60 sites, heavily biased to the east of the county. The table shows the monthly totals of individuals recorded. The lack of December records can be attributed to the extreme weather of that month.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	3	8	2	14	19	13	7	3	3	3	3	–
Minimum no. of birds	7	16	46	80	86	61	25	20	27	25	11	–

There were no large winter counts, the largest number being 7 birds on the partly-frozen Savernake Lake, Bracknell on Feb 5 (ITS). The largest count of solely adult birds was of 16 males and “several” females on Apr 20 at Moor Green Lakea (DEa). Breeding was confirmed at a dozen sites, but nowhere west of Brimpton, which also produced the earliest brood when a female was seen with 10 ducklings on Mar 4 (GEW).

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Locally common winter visitor and rare summer visitor, has bred (Amber Listed)

Monthly totals for the main sites, excluding flyover flocks, are summarised below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley	285	192	200	5	1	1	1	6	55	13	118	289
Summerleaze	200	70	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	–	6
Twyford	122	106	41	–	–	–	–	–	18	28	66	98
Dinton Pastures/Lea Farm	230	170	–	–	–	–	–	1	33	60	–	200
Burghfield	129	97	7	–	–	–	–	–	2	131	145	264
Theale GPs	1	62	35	1	1	–	1	2	177	200	145	56
Jubilee River	61	42	15	5	–	–	–	–	5	20	10	29
Lower Farm	130	59	23	–	–	–	–	–	10	40	25	102
Wraysbury	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	180	472	111	52
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Birds	351	134	284	13	–	–	1	1	100	28	14	81
Sites	8	8	8	4	–	–	1	1	3	3	3	4

First winter: Monthly maxima were in line with recent years at most sites, though increased flock mobility in freezing weather in January may have led to multiple counting of some flocks. Wraysbury returned an unusually high count of 472 on Oct 31 (JMC), though numbers there fell as birds moved elsewhere during the winter. In addition to the birds reported in the table, mostly at and around gravel pit sites, there were records of a number of flocks on farmland, including 70 at East Park Farm, Charvil on Jan 4 (MHT), 110 at Binfield on Jan 21 (PNe), 120 at Fleethill Farm, Finchampstead on Mar 22 and 61 along the Thames between Reading and Pangbourne on Jan 17 (WeBS). A flock of c200 Wigeon flew over Eversley GPs on Mar 21 (DJB). The ‘last dates for the first winter period were late April. It would seem that the last were a pair at Jubilee River/Dorney on Apr 26 (MFW), and a pair (or perhaps the same pair) at Slough Sewage Farm on Apr 27 (CDRH).

Summer: There were records of a drake at Eversley GPs in May, June and July (MO), a drake on the Theale GPs in May and July (MO) and an eclipse drake at Wraysbury GPs in July and August (CDRH). **Second winter:** Arrivals appear to have started on Jul 6 with a drake going into eclipse on Wigmore Lane GP (KEM), followed by another or the same eclipse drake at Hosehill LNR 8 days later, on Jul 14 (KEM). Then another at Wraysbury GP on Jul 29 and again on Aug 1 (CDRH), leading into the normal return months of August and September, and the second winter period. On Aug 23 there were 2 birds at Hosehill Lake (MFW) and numbers building up in mid-September.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana*

Rare vagrant, some records probably refer to escapees

Reports of the drake at Newbury continued regularly throughout January. Most records came from Lower Farm GP, with occasional reports from the nearby Trout Lake. It was last recorded on Jan 28 (GJS).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

A common winter visitor, uncommon summer resident which breeds (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benham Park	-	24	20	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bray GPs	23	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burghfield GPs	149	143	15	-	-	12	-	13	-	125	171	257
Dinton Pastures	150	78	2	12	8	25	-	13	36	70	-	-
Donnington	-	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eversley GPS	79	73	18	8	7	4	2	6	7	13	31	25
Horton/Wraysbury GPs	142	204	29	7	6	-	-	-	-	258	273	307
Jubilee R/Slough SF	35	14	19	15	-	7	13	14	38	34	-	33
Home Farm, Kintbury	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	50	46	8	5	18	50	12	60	102	78	75	42
Summerleaze GP	92	30	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Thatcham	6	6	4	5	6	2	-	6	2	-	-	-
Theale/Moatlands GPs	86	186	8	6	-	-	-	-	72	95	200	248
Twyford/Charvil GPs	166	31	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	17	159	59
Great Meadow Pond	186	156	144	60	17	27	13	86	100	46	51	0
Woolhampton GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	8	18	3	11
Other sites	-	21	-	8	5	4	-	3	-	14	1	14
Monthly max. totals	1344	1102	297	127	70	131	40	246	367	770	976	1091

First winter: Records were very scarce to the west of the Newbury area, the largest number being 10 at Kintbury Jan 23 (GDS). Some totals were substantial, with 7 sites producing three-figure counts during January. The highest single site count was of 186 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Jan 18 (DJB), but Feb 10 brought counts of 180 at Horton (KPD) and a

further 24 at Wraysbury (JMC). **Breeding:** The presence of moderate numbers throughout the county during the breeding season was accompanied by evidence of breeding from several sites. The earliest record was of a female with 6 young at Padworth Lane GP May 31 (MFW), of which 2 were surviving on Jun 26 (MJT). Reports of further young then came from 6 sites, all single broods during June and July. **Second winter:** The Horton/Wraysbury complex produced very high counts for the last three months. The Wraysbury pits alone accounted for 258 birds on Oct 31 (JMC), while a combined total of over 307 was recorded on Dec 22 – Wraysbury 239 (JMC) and Horton 68 (KPD). On Dec 20, counts of 92 (BDC) at Theale and one of 156 at Moatlands (WeBS), brought the area total to 248. A single site count of 257 was noted on Dec 13 at Burghfield GPs (RBor).

TEAL *Anas crecca*

A common winter visitor rare in summer (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	29	19	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	26
Dinton Pastures CP	113	100	25	6	–	–	–	–	10	10	15	124
Eversley GPs	66	59	20	8	–	1	1	14	14	25	24	48
Hurley	76	33	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kintbury	60	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Jubilee R	198	45	30	8	1	–	5	9	23	66	80	100
Lower Farm	60	70	8	2	2	5	2	7	3	20	104	224
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	20	6	3	–	–	–	30	15	–	14
Burghfield GPs	1	25	25	3	–	–	–	10	15	30	–	–
Theale GPS	1	60	23	4	–	–	–	5	6	–	–	1
Great Meadow Pond	200	171	14	–	–	–	–	26	120	120	145	69
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	10	–	–	–	–	15	20	9	1	110
Wraysbury GPs	84	3	–	5	1	–	–	2	–	7	9	144

Numbers at the main sites were high compared to the two preceding years. **First winter:** There were exceptionally high counts of 200 at Great Meadow Pond, on Jan 4 (DJB), and of 198 at Jubilee River Jan 11 (WAS). The only record to the west of Newbury was of 60 birds at Home Farm, Kintbury, Jan 17, with 3 pairs lingering into April (RGS). Greenham Common held 20 birds Feb 19 (JL). Flooded fields at Frogmill, Hurley hosted 76 birds on Jan 27, with 7 still there on Mar 21 (SJF; FMF). 29 birds were recorded on the Thames between Reading and Pangbourne on Feb 15 (WeBS). **Summer:** Though a small number lingered through the summer, there was no evidence of attempted breeding. 5 birds were noted at Summerleaze GP on Jun 4 (CDRH); 5 more were at Lower Farm Jun 26 (NC; IW; JL) and counts of 5 were made at Dorney Wetlands on Jul 7 and 18 (FTr). **Second winter:** The first double-figure count of returning birds was on Aug 21 (FJC) at Lea Farm but numbers grew steadily until December, when several three-figure counts were topped by the 224 recorded at Lower Farm on Dec 5 (JA).

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common and widespread resident and winter visitor

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	36	22	64	–	–	–	–	–	44	63	92	89
Dinton Pastures CP	119	80	80	–	–	20	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	58	48	13	5	64	37	41	106	52	63	54	86
Jubilee River	240	186	144	27	71	15	72	98	80	89		27
Lower Farm GP	30	25	10	16	9	75	15	50	110	120	100	102
R. Thames Cliveden Reach	123	60	123	–	–	42	–	–	53	34	36	–
Thatcham GPs	150	103	3	62	1	182	57	153	5	147	–	1
Theale GPs	15	47	64	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	47	58
Twyford GPs	28	22	14	16	6	11	–	–	–	55	61	16
Great Meadow Pond	10	43	17	32	36	49	20	72	89	191	103	23
Wraysbury GPs	–	5	12	29	15	7	1	27	13	104	–	6

Mallard were reported in small to moderate numbers from the extreme west of the county. The high count of 240 on Jan 5 was at Dorney Wetlands (BDC). Great Meadow Pond, which was consistently favoured by the species throughout the year, produced a count of 191 on Oct 11 (DJB). Frequent large counts at Thatcham Discovery Centre, including an exceptional summer-time figure of 182, Jun 30 (GJS), may relate to supplemental feeding. **Breeding:** the earliest reported brood was of 8 well-grown ducklings in Maidenhead on Mar 18 (BAJC). Other families were confirmed from many scattered sites throughout the county during the following four months.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

There were records from 12 sites involving probably 47 birds in 2009. The monthly status is shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	8	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	2	4
Number of Birds	14	13	2	–	–	–	–	–	6	8	4	7

First winter: A male and female were found at Wigmore Lane GP on Jan 1 (MWh), followed by single birds at Padworth Lane GP on Jan 2 (RCr). A drake was present at Lower Farm on several dates between Jan 3 (MFW) and Feb 7 (SAG), joined by a female present from Jan 24– Feb 7 (SAG). A flock of 8 came in to Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 3 (MMc) and 4 birds (2m 2f) were found at Pingewood GP on Jan 25. On Jan 27 a pair was found amongst other wildfowl on the Loddon floods at Arborfield (RRi). A pair were at Thatcham GPs on Jan 31 (IWJL); 3 (2m, 1f) at Loddon BBOWT reserve on Feb 3 (JPBr), a pair at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 11 (WAS), 5 at Borough Marsh on Feb 13 (ABT), and a single male at Burghfield Mill GP on Feb 14 (JA; MFW). A female was at Loddon BBOWT Reserve on Mar 7 and the last record was there on Mar 15 (WeBS).

Second winter: An eclipse male was at Lower Farm on Sep 12 (NC, JL, IW), a female or immature bird at Dinton Pastures on Sep 14 (FJC), one at Hurst Green on Sep 22 (ADB), 2 eclipse drakes and a female at Great Meadow Pond, Sep 20–Oct 11 (DJB), with a drake still present on Oct 25 (DJB). Three birds (1f, 2 f/w) were at Lower Farm on Oct 31 (SAG), a female at Horton GPs on Nov 28 (CDRH), 3 including an adult drake at Main Pit, Theale on Dec 1 (KEM), 2 drakes at Eversley GPs on Dec 11 (JMC) and one still there the next day (JDC, RHS), a drake at Burghfield GPs on Dec 19 (JA), a female at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury on Oct 2–10 (CDRH) and a drake at Wraysbury GP on Dec 21 (CDRH).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor, has bred (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

An unremarkable year with records at 8 sites involving 14 birds. **Spring passage:** A pair arrived at Dorney Wetlands on Mar 13 (BDC) and two pairs were present from Mar 19 (RCW) to at least Apr 3 (KPD), one pair staying to Apr 13. Records of single birds and a pair at Slough Sewage Farm during this period (KPD) may have involved the same birds. Other spring records were a single bird at Dinton Pastures on Apr 4 (FJC); a pair at Burghfield Mill GP on Apr 12, a female at Great Meadow Pond on the same day (DJB), a pair at Colnbrook on the Apr 13 (RRi), 2 drakes at Horton GPs on May 2 (CDRH) and a male at Dorney Wetlands on May 20 (WMo). **Autumn passage:** An immature female at Lower Farm stayed from Aug 31 (KEM) to at least Sep 5 (ABT). Another bird was seen at Lower Farm on Oct 26 (RA) and Nov 1 (RHS). The last record of the year was a single immature bird at Dinton Pastures on Nov 2–3 (ADB, AR).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Locally common winter visitor, scarce in the summer; occasionally breeds (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima for the main sites are listed below. Interchange between neighbouring sites may occur, overstating total numbers.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	8	13	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Burghfield GPs	12	4	1	1	–	–	–	7	–	41	106	53
Dinton Pastures/Lea Farm	32	13	12	6	–	–	–	12	10	40	20	40
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	37	20	42	5	2	2	4	20	54	28	1	5
Eversley GPs	80	153	72	19	–	2	–	3	4	9	28	118
Great Meadow Pond	15	4	18	9	2	–	–	36	114	122	77	3
Lower Farm GPs	87	115	113	28	6	2	–	10	39	28	60	40
Moatlands GPs	175	330	109	4	–	–	–	7	14	45	49	–
Theale GPs	200	40	140	1	–	–	–	–	5	76	15	175
Thatcham Discovery Centre	103	4	15	19	2	1	–	4	22	4	–	2
Whiteknights Park	21	27	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	18	29
Wraysbury	25	67	2	–	–	–	–	8	–	26	22	87
Orlitt's Lakes	135	104	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Birds	66	30	48	6	2	–	1	5	21	5	4	67
Sites	7	4	4	3	1	–	1	1	2	2	1	3

First winter: Counts were somewhat higher than in recent years, with six sites recording more than 100 birds, the highest being 330 at Moatlands on Feb 14 (MFW). Numbers fell rapidly in April and the last departing birds seen were 6 at Lower Farm on May 2 (IW, JL). **Spring/Summer:** From mid-May to mid-July, single birds or pairs were recorded at seven sites: one at Great Hollands, Bracknell on May 7; a drake at Dorney Wetlands on Jun 6 (CDRH) and on Jul 4 (KPD); at Padworth Lane GP a pair was seen on May 14 (KEM, MFW) and again on May 22 (MFW); at Thatcham Discovery Centre a pair on May 17 and one bird on Jun 13 (IW, JL); a pair at Great Meadow Pond on May 24 (DJB); a pair at Lower Farm on Jun 6 (IW, JL) and a pair in partial eclipse at Eversley GPs on Jun 11 (BMA). **Second winter:** The first returning birds were a party of 8 seen at Slough SF on Jul 31 (CDRH). Numbers at Great Meadow Pond grew rapidly to 114 on Sep 20 peaking at 122 on Oct 25 (DJB) then fell in November as birds moved on to wintering sites elsewhere.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce winter visitor but presumed feral birds occur in small numbers throughout the year

Records, mostly of single birds or pairs, from 13 sites, some of which may have involved the same birds. **First winter:** Single drakes on Jan 4 at Charvil GP (MHT), Searles Farm Lane GP (MFW) and Wraysbury GP (CDRH). A drake was at Eversley GPs Mar 6–7 (RMW, DN, BMA). A drake was reported on many occasions through the year at Lower Farm from Jan 17–Oct 31 (MO) and probably the same bird at Thatcham Discovery Centre through the year from Feb 15–Dec 28 (MO). **Spring:** Pairs were observed at Bottom Lane GP on Apr 7 (DJB) and at Hosehill Lake on Apr 17 (KEM); a female was at Wigmore Lane GP on Apr 18 (KEM) and a male on May 8 at Bottom Lane (MFW). There was no evidence of breeding recorded. **Autumn:** Two drakes were at Wraysbury GP from Sep 11–17, when they were joined by a leucistic male that stayed to Oct 25 (CDRH) and was seen again at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 30 (CDRH). A drake was present at Orlitt's Lake on Oct 10 (CDRH) and a pair at Burghfield GP on Oct 21 (JA). **Winter:** As well as the continuing records from Lower Farm and Thatcham Discovery Centre, a pair was at Woolhampton GPs on Nov 8 (GEW) and a party of five tame birds, three drakes and two females, at Horton GP on Dec 22 (JMC).

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor

Monthly maxima at the main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	187	150	34	1	–	–	–	1	43	70	73	80
Burghfield GPs	107	70	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	97	49	95
Dinton Pastures CP	16	29	–	–	–	–	–	9	3	12	–	52
Dorney Wetlands	96	56	10	–	1	1	3	1	7	36	–	38
Eversley GPs	45	44	25	6	1	3	1	4	3	26	30	26
Great Meadow Pond	12	34	31	3	3	1	45	115	123	54	57	5
Lower Farm GP	16	10	6	3	3	5	10	18	23	30	20	16
Moatlands GP	–	225	68	1	–	–	3	11	22	107	151	168
Thatcham Discovery Centre	50	54	39	2	1	–	–	1	12	21	40	22
Theale GPs	7	17	2	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	11	17

Woolhampton GPs	–	–	–	6	3	8	12	4	12	36	2	32
Wraysbury GPs	180	170	93	–	–	–	10	17	–	150	87	191
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Birds	50	127	24	–	3	5	8	8	23	21	26	40
Sites	10	10	3	–	2	1	1	2	2	5	5	5

Winter: The peak counts of around 200 birds at the main sites are typical of recent years. Although some movement between sites does occur, the total of the monthly Pochard counts suggests a wintering population of 700–1,000 in Berkshire. **Summer:** A small number of birds were present in the summer at Lower Farm, Dorney Wetlands, Great Meadow Pond, Woolhampton GPs and Queen Mother Reservoir. Pochard bred for the second successive year at Lower Farm GP, where 5 young were fledged in June (MO). By Jul 12, 31 Pochard had gathered at Great Meadow Pond, including several fully fledged juveniles, which were known to have been bred elsewhere (DJB).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare winter visitor

On Dec 2 a drake was present at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures (FJC), which was aged as a f/w bird (CDRH). Additionally, the long-staying escaped drake was present at Dorney Wetlands on several dates between Jan 24 and Mar 24 (MO) and again between Oct 11 and Nov 21 (BDC, KPD, Pga); it also regularly visited Staines Reservoir, Surrey during the year.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, numbers increasing in winter

Monthly maxima at the main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	328	326	113	28	–	–	–	19	52	109	134	317
Burghfield GPs	320	481	237	88	–	–	–	–	16	140	203	303
Burghfield Mill GP	–	235	–	–	–	–	66	269	526	389	392	–
Dinton Pastures CP	181	151	84	–	–	24	–	23	–	60	–	200
Dorney Wetlands	150	277	100	–	–	–	32	3	36	34	–	75
Eversley GPs	227	296	137	88	40	60	104	89	70	43	24	183
Horton GPs	421	544	160	–	–	–	–	–	–	41	294	331
Lower Farm GP	20	47	38	28	20	17	19	40	10	25	30	12
Moatlands GP	–	195	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	92	101	–
Queen Mother Res.	1430	–	–	4	–	46	–	251	117	–	–	–
Thatcham Discovery Centre	52	46	34	41	17	13	21	28	34	42	36	41
Theale GPs	190	163	106	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	339	391
Great Meadow Pond	1	45	59	70	30	9	5	4	14	11	15	10
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	–	21	20	27	2	15	50	30	20	21
Wraysbury GPs	561	529	466	8	2	20	–	140	–	920	1005	553

Winter: Tufted Duck can be quite mobile between neighbouring water bodies, so the totals of peak monthly counts tend to overestimate total numbers, particularly in the eastern end of the county. For example, the abnormally high count of 1430 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 10 (MMc) probably included birds driven from nearby gravel pits by freezing weather. **Summer:** Reports of confirmed breeding came from fifteen tetrads in the Atlas surveys in 2009.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

First winter: The party of Scaup that had built up in December 2008 remained between Queen Mother Reservoir, Horton GPs and Wraysbury GPs until March 2009, with, at its maximum, two drakes and five females on Jan 10–11 (CDRH; MMc), five birds remaining to Mar 7 (CDRH). A drake was at Moatlands on Feb 15 (JA, PBT) and a female reported at Lower Farm on Mar 22 (NC). **Second winter:** A female was reported at Lea Farm and Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Aug 4 (ADB, FJC, TAG). A drake was reported from several gravel pits in the Theale area between Oct 29 and Dec 30 (MO) and a moulting drake was at Wraysbury GP from Nov 1–21 (CDRH).

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Rare winter visitor

A f/w bird was found at Moatlands GP on Nov 12 (RHS) and remained until Dec 20.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

A female was present at Woolhampton GPs from Mar 5 (KEM, RRe, AB) to Mar 20. On Apr 17 a pair were at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) and a male and three females were found at Main Pit, Theale (KEM). On the return passage a drake was present at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 3 (CDRH) and a female/immature bird on Oct 15 (CDRH).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Locally common winter visitor

Monthly maxima for the main sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	18	21	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	14
Dinton Pastures CP	18	23	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	6	11
Eversley GPs	4	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2
Horton GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	9
Moatlands GP	5	13	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	9
Queen Mother Res.	11	–	4	–	–	1	–	–	–	2	1	5
Theale GPs	7	5	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	5	3
Wraysbury GPs	62	48	67	–	–	–	–	–	1	15	33	34
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Birds	5	2	4	–	1	2	1	–	–	2	1	3
Sites	2	2	3		1	2	1			2	1	3

First winter: The largest concentration of Goldeneye was, as usual, at Wraysbury with a peak count of 67 on Mar 8 (CDRH). The peak count at Burghfield was 21 on Feb 1 (WeBS) and at Dinton Pastures 23 on Feb 15 (WeBS). Most birds departed during March, with only 3 reported in April, on the 13th at Theale (KEM). **Summer:** Unusually, there were two summer records: a female seen at Horton GPs on May 20 and probably the same bird at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 6 (CDRH); a drake at Woolhampton GPs from Jun 20–Jul 1 (JRe, KEM). **Second Winter:** The earliest autumn report was of a female at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 26 (CDRH), though most arrivals were mid-late October, with birds at all the main sites by early November, again Wraysbury attracting the largest numbers, with 34 on Dec 22 (JMC).

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites

An average year with reports from six sites. **First winter:** The main site, Wraysbury GPs, held 8 birds, 6 drakes and two redheads, on Jan 4 (CDRH), when much of the area was frozen and 10 birds, 8 drakes and 2 redheads, on Feb 8 (CDRH, BJH). The last record from this site was of a pair on Mar 7 (CDRH). Elsewhere there were records of a drake at Bray GP from Jan 2–15, joined by a redhead from Jan 6–9 (DJB, BAJC, WAS, KIT); 2 drakes at Eversley on Jan 1 and 2 (IHB); 2 drakes at Old Slade Lakes on Jan 7–11 (CDRH); a drake and 2 redheads at Twyford GPs from Feb 24 (RCr) to 2 March (MO); and two birds at Windsor Great Park on Mar 2 (RHay). **Second winter:** The first arrival was a drake on Dec 13 at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH), where numbers built to 6, (2 adult drakes, 2 eclipse drakes and 2 redheads) by Dec 21 (CDRH).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

The only report was of a drake at Woolhampton GPs on Dec 1 (KEM).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites, has summered

The great majority of the wintering population of Goosander in Berkshire is found at Eversley GPs, with the maximum January count this year being 60. Small numbers were recorded at 16 other sites from Lower Farm in the west to Wraysbury in the east.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	60	53	24	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	11	48
Lower Farm GP	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Padworth Lane GP	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res.	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
Theale GPs	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	3	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	4
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Birds	3	4	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	10
Sites	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	6

First winter: The peak count at Eversley was 60 on Jan 3 (JMC). Elsewhere single birds

or parties of two were reported on various dates from January to March at Padworth Lane GP (MO), Dinton Pastures (FJC), Theale GPs (MO), Old Slade Lake (CDRH), Heath Lake (PJC), Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH), Little Sandhurst (PNe), Searles Farm GPs (MFW), the River Blackwater near Farley Hill (RHai) and flying over Sandhurst STW (MFW). A party of three, 2 males and a redhead, were at Wraysbury GPs Jan 24–29 (DGC, MJT, JMC); a party of four, two males and two redheads, at Moatlands GP on Feb 7 (JA) and a party of four, one male and three redheads, at Heath Lake Mar 12 (ABT). The latest bird was a redhead at Eversley on Apr 11 (BMA). **Second winter:** the first arrivals were single drakes on Nov 6 at Eversley GPs (DPN) and Wraysbury GPs (CDRH). Numbers at Eversley built to a maximum of 48 on Dec 24 (JMC). Elsewhere, single birds or parties of two were noted at Lower Farm (SAG), Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH), Woolhampton (GEW), Broadwater Farm (WHa), Green Park (TC), Wraysbury (JMC), Twyford GPs (MFW) and the River Thames at Windsor (RMH). Two males and a redhead were present at Wraysbury on Nov 24 (JMC) and two pairs there on Dec 29 (CDRH). On the Thames at Old Windsor five birds were present on Dec 30 (KPD).

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor

Reports of Ruddy Duck came from eleven sites across Berkshire, though numbers were much reduced from 2008, due presumptively, to the eradication campaign being carried out by Defra. The totals for all sites are shown in the table compared to 2008 totals.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	10	5	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	3
2008	22	10	10	5	5	–	2	3	4	4	19	15

During the first winter period there were up to 5 (3 drakes) present at Old Slade Lake during cold weather Jan 7–10 (CDRH). The highest count of the year came during February when there were 7 (3 drakes) at Lower Farm GP on 1 (SA). There were also 2 (1 drake) at Moatlands GP on Feb 8 increasing to 3 (2 drakes) on Feb 28 (JA *et al.*) and a female at QMR on Feb 14 (CDRH). In the autumn there was a drake at QMR on Sep 15 (ABT) and a drake at Dinton Pastures between Sep 6 (ADB) and Sep 21 (FJC), followed by a fem/imm at Hosehill Lake on Oct 6 (KEM). Subsequently there was a fem/imm at Burghfield GP from Nov 12 (CDRH) to Dec 5 (JA) and a fem/imm at Wraysbury GP on Dec 12 (CDRH).

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

A locally common resident in suitable habitat with numbers inflated in autumn at certain sites for shooting

Records were received from 59 locations throughout the county. The majority of sightings were of fewer than 10 birds, however several sightings of 25+ birds (no doubt boosted by released birds) were reported: 60 Great Shefford Jan 30 (JLe), 26 Windsor Great Park Feb 1 (DJB), 26 Remenham Mar 4 (DJB), 50 Eastbury Aug 29 (JLe), 40 Welford Sep 28 (RCla), 150 Farnborough Oct 9 (GDS), 40 Remenham Oct 20 (PBT), 26 Englefield Oct 31 (RCr), 30 (released birds) Windsor Great Park Dec 6 (DJB). Two records of birds released for shooting were: 160+ Compton Downs Sep 11 (DJB), 136+ Aldworth/Lowbury Hill Sep 25 (DJB). Breeding was only confirmed at two sites: Arlington Apr 24 (IW), and Englefield Sep 5, where a pair was seen with 3 fledged young (RCr).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)

Records for this species were received from 31 locations, most from Mid and West Berkshire, but small numbers were reported in the East of the county. High counts were: 10 Cow Down Jan 1 (NR) with 12 there on Sep 29 (CDRH), 10 Stanford Dingley Sep 14 (JLe), 36 Englefield Oct 8 (RCr), 9 East Ilsley Oct 29 (DSe), 12 Woodlands Park Nov 17 (DJB), 14 Eastbury Nov 27 (MBry), 12 Purley-on Thames Dec 3 (JLe), 20 Tilehurst (2 coveys of at least 10 birds) Dec 3 (JLe), and finally 11 Pinkneys Green Dec 8 (PNe). The management program at Englefield appears to be reaping rewards, judging by the peak of 36 birds recorded in Oct – perhaps this could be a model for other landowners. No breeding was confirmed from any sites, however calling males were reported from several areas.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

An uncommon summer visitor most frequently encountered on the downs (Schedule 1 and Red Listed)

A slightly better year for this species, with records coming from 10 locations: 1 Canon Court, Maidenhead May 22 (MJF), 1 present at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead from May 21 until June 10 (DJB), 1 Lands End, Farnborough Jun 14 (GDS), 2 Farnborough June 27 (GDS), 3 Roden Down, Compton Jul 1 (ABT), swelling to 7 birds Jul 8 (MJT). Singles were reported in the Lambourn area during the July/Aug period (MO), and, lastly, a migrant was flushed at Colnbrook on Sep 5 & 6 (CDRH). Hopefully it will not be too long before we have another “Quail Year” in Berkshire, the last being back in the 1990’s.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

A widespread and locally abundant resident in rural areas with numbers inflated by large numbers released for shooting

Birds were recorded from 66 locations throughout the county from varying habitats. The greater totals were from areas where shooting was likely, and most of these birds would have been released for that purpose. No breeding in the wild was reported, the species probably being under recorded.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare winter visitor

A photograph received by MFW on Jan 1 2010 of a “Diver species”, was immediately identified as a winter plumaged Black-Throated Diver. The bird had been observed at the River Loddon Mill Pool, Twyford, from Apr 24–29 by Mick Walker. Uncertain of its identity, the observer forwarded a photo to the Berkshire Birds website for help. This is only the second April record of the species in the county following a bird seen at Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 19 2008 (CDRH).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Rare winter visitor/passage migrant

An average year with 4 birds recorded, following an equal number in 2006 and 2008. The **first winter** period produced a juvenile at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 1 (CDRH), a bird which was first found on Nov 10 2008. Another juvenile, with a darker throat and neck than the original bird, was observed on Feb 13 (CDRH); this individual also had over-grown

mandibles, giving it a “Crossbill like” impression and enabling it to be identified as the same bird that had wintered at KG6 Reservoir, Surrey, (and was last noted there Feb 12). This bird was seen subsequently until Mar 20 (MO). The **second winter** period produced a bird at Queen Mother Reservoir Nov 17 (FJ Mareovic). Presumably the same bird, a juvenile, was present at the same site on Nov 20 (CDRH; DJB). This individual was also recorded on Nov 30 (CDRH). Almost certainly this bird was also observed at Horton GPs on Nov 20 (CDRH). Another juvenile was present at Brimpton GPs from Dec 9 (GEW) until Dec 12.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A common and widespread resident

Records were received from 42 locations throughout the county. The monthly maxima from the most regularly reported sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	5	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	2
Burghfield GPs	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	5	6	7
Eversley GPs	–	3	–	2	–	3	1	8	5	7	–	2
Freeman’s Marsh	9	–	4	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	–
Hungerford	5	3	5	3	–	–	–	1	3	2	–	–
Jubilee River	1	3	1	–	2	4	3	5	11	11	–	5
Lavell’s Lake	–	1	–	–	–	–	4	3	12	14	–	8
Lower Farm	4	6	8	13	10	12	10	15	10	4	5	4
Moatlands GP Theale	16	33	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	10	18
Padworth Lane GP	24	24	21	10	6	20	16	–	–	9	–	11
Thatcham Marsh	–	1	6	2	5	6	4	7	4	3	3	1

The high count of 33 at Moatlands GP Theale, was on Feb 14 (JA). Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites, including most of the above locations.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Records were received from 44 locations, mainly from the larger water bodies, including rivers. The larger counts were recorded as follows: 15 Bearwood Lake Jan 1 (DJB), 23 Bray GPs Jan 3 (KPD), 35 Burghfield GPs Mar 1 (WEBS), 13 Dinton Pastures CP Feb 15 (WeBS), 25 Eversley GPs Oct 21 (JMC), 25 Jubilee River Mar 24 (BDC), 45 Moatlands GP Theale Sep 6 (JA), 160 Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 8 (MMc), then 130 at the same site Feb 7 (DJB), 40 Theale Main Pit Dec 20 (WEBS), 56 Woolhampton GPs Aug 17 (KEM), and finally 27 Wraybury GPs Oct 31 (JMC). Breeding was confirmed at 24 locations, including 7 pairs breeding at Great Meadow Pond with at least 8 birds fledging (DJB) and 9 juveniles from 3 pairs being recorded at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 10 (DF).

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Just 1 record of this beautiful grebe in 2009: a f/w was located at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 8 (CDRH), and continued to be seen regularly by many observers until the last sighting,

at dusk, on Nov 25 (CDRH). This species continues to be very irregular in its appearances in Berkshire, with the previous record being in 2004, hopefully it will not be another 5 years before we get the next!

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Just 3 birds were recorded. One in the first winter period, albeit left over from the previous December, a bird present at Moatlands GP Theale on Jan 1 (PH), was first seen at Burghfield Mill Pit Dec 14–15 2008, then Moatlands GP to the year’s end. The second winter period produced a bird at Wraysbury BA Pit, for 2 days on Nov 8–9 (CDRH), following an anonymous report of 2 there on Nov 7, then a one day bird at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 9 (CDRH).

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant

A fairly average year for this scarce little Grebe, with 5 records involving 9 birds. In the first winter period there was just one record, a bird at Moatlands GP Theale from Feb 23 until Mar 13 (KEM; KS) and presumably the same bird on Theale Main GP on Mar 14 (DNTR); the bird was reported most days during this period (MO). Spring produced a s/p bird at Searle’s Farm Lane, Burghfield GP Apr 18–19 (JA), then 4 s/p birds at Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 26 (CDRH; MFW), 2 s/p birds appeared at Woolhampton GPs Apr 25 (MFW) then stayed until Apr 28, these birds were regularly observed displaying to each other suggesting they were a breeding pair on passage. In the second winter period there was one record, a f/w at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 22 (CDRH).

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Rare vagrant

A single record of a juvenile found at Wraysbury BA Pit late in the day on Oct 5 (PMC), the bird was observed until dark (CDRH). The following day Oct 6 this bird was reported, mainly in flight, from several locations including Heron Lakes, Wraysbury (FJC; LGRE) and Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). This represents the 26th record of this species for the county.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common winter visitor, uncommon but increasing in summer; the continental race P c sinensis now breeds (Amber Listed)

The monthly maxima at the most reported sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	16	6	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	7
Burghfield GPs	102	32	17	–	–	–	–	–	14	23	37	29
Dinton Pastures CP	25	15	7	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	26	21	15	16	3	–	11	–	6	20	26	32
Jubilee River	6	–	6	–	–	–	2	3	23	22	16	5
Lower Farm GP	18	46	29	19	16	30	13	17	18	20	25	57

Queen Mother Res.	–	–	20	5	–	–	–	10	6	145	–	–
Thatcham Marsh	–	15	12	7	4	–	–	16	19	18	10	1
Theale GPs	8	12	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	19
Twyford GPs	3	1	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	36	4	–
Windsor Great Park	–	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	38	11	2
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	4	1	2	6	4	14	44	16	16	17
Wraysbury GPs	134	4	1	6	–	–	–	47	–	47	69	12

The highest counts: 145 at Queen Mother Reservoir Oct 18 (MFW), 134 Wraysbury GPs Jan 29 (JMC), 102 roosting at Searles Farm Lane GP Jan 5 (RHS). No confirmed breeding was reported, however juvenile birds were reported from several sites in the company of adults.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Two records of this scarce visitor to our county in 2009: A f/w was found on Jan 25 sitting amongst Cormorants on the raft at Lower Farm GP, before flying off south (NC; JL; IW) A second f/w was located on the island at Moatlands GP, Theale with 2 Cormorants on Sep 2 (KEM), where it remained for the afternoon (MO).

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce but increasing winter visitor (Schedule 1 and Red Listed)

Up to 10 Bitterns were recorded in 2009, many more than 2008 when just 2 were seen. Dinton Pastures CP was again the main venue to see this secretive visitor. A maximum of 3 individuals were recorded between Jan 11 and Mar 16 at this site. The first on Jan 11 (FJC), 2 birds on Jan 13 (RANG; RHS; KEM), then 3 birds on Jan 16 (FJC; TAG). The second winter period at Dinton Pastures CP produced: 1 on Dec 17 (FJC), then 2 on Dec 20 (FJC), these birds were then reported until the year's end (MO). Away from Dinton, birds were recorded from: Eversley GPs Jan 8 (JMC), Searles Farm Lane GP Jan 9 (P Simpson per RCr) and finally Great Meadow Pond Mar 29 (DJB).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon but increasing visitor (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 48 locations throughout the county. The table below shows the maximum monthly counts from the most recorded sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	8	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	9
Dinton Pastures CP	2	1	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	2
Freeman's Marsh	5	1	–	–	–	4	–	–	2	1	–	2
Jubilee River	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	6	1	–	1	–
Lower Farm GP	1	1	1	3	–	–	1	1	1	3	1	1
Pingewood GPs	–	2	2	1	–	5	6	4	4	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	1	2	2	1

The high counts at Burghfield GPs were on Jan 5 (RHS), 8 birds were seen to fly in to roost

in the heronry at Searles Farm Lane GP, with 7 birds recorded the following day (KEM), 9 birds were recorded in the roost on Dec 1 (RHS). The 5 birds at Freeman’s Marsh were recorded on Jan 3 (RGS), 6 birds were present on East Marsh, Jubilee River on Aug 8 (KPD), then 6 were seen at Pingewood GPs on Dec 7 (MFW). Confirmed breeding took place at the same site in East Berkshire as in 2007, with an adult feeding 3 barely fledged chicks close to the nest Jun 6 (CDRH). Another juvenile was recorded with adult birds at Pingewood GPs Jul 1 and Jul 7 (KEM) suggesting that breeding may have taken place nearby.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Rare vagrant

Probably the highlight of the year for many of Berkshire keenest birders, this fine adult s/p bird was located mid-afternoon at Padworth Lane GP Jul 30 (KEM; RHS). The bird showed for most of the remainder of the day until flying off east to roost (MO). The following day it was enjoyed by many observers until again flying east presumably to roost late in the day. Unfortunately the bird could not be relocated the following morning. This occurrence closely follows the record of an adult at Lower Farm GP in the Autumn of 2007.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Scarce vagrant

Although increasing in their occurrences here, and in neighbouring counties, 2009 once again only produced 2 or 3 brief sightings none of which were seen for long or by many observers. One was recorded flying WNW between Woodspeen and Priddles’s Farm, Stockcross on Feb 8 (SAG); this individual was heading in the direction of the Kintbury/Hungerford area, but was not relocated subsequently. Another bird was observed initially in flight at Dinton Pastures CP, then, relocated briefly on the ground before flying off north on Nov 5 (FJC). Photographs of what may have been the same bird were shown to CDRH, having been taken by the River Loddon, at Charvil on Dec 3–4 by a local resident (Ms H. Keay).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor in small numbers

The highest monthly counts from the sites most frequently recorded are:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jubilee River	1	–	2	–	–	2	3	2	3	3	–	4
Lower Farm GPs	3	1	1	3	2	4	6	6	6	6	4	2
Theale GPs	8	17	13	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	6	4
Great Meadow Pond	1	2	3	1	3	4	5	8	3	5	7	4

The high counts of 17 at Searles Farm Lane roost was on Feb 1 (WEBS), and 23 at Twyford GPs on Feb 22 (MHT), were noteworthy. Breeding was recorded from Searles Farm Lane GP, with 13 nests occupied Mar 7 (JA), at Donnington, 2 broods of 2 chicks and 1 brood of 1 was recorded on Apr 18 (SAG), in the heronry adjacent to Queen Mother Reservoir there were at least 6 nests occupied on Apr 10 (DJB), and at Twyford GPs there were 7 occupied nests on Apr 26 (MHT). Generally, with this species being a regular sight in our county, it does seem to be a little under recorded.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Common re-introduced resident (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

Red Kite is the most common and easily the most observed and recorded of the raptor species, having been entered on the database on all but seven days of 2009, amounting to 1180 records. They have been recorded from all areas of the county with the maximum count at a single site being 93 at the Woolley Down roost on Jan 31 with 31 close by at Sparrow Copse on Jan 25 (GDS). Later in the year the same site yielded a maximum of 56 on Oct 11 (GDS). Other significant counts include 82 at Cookham on Jan 22 (the largest ever single count for the village (BDC pers. com.) with 71 at the same site on Mar 7, 46 on May 9 and several counts of in excess of 60 birds throughout the Autumn (BDC). Away from these two traditional sites, other high counts included 40 in the Aston area on Jun 17 (DJB). **Breeding:** Confirmed or probable breeding was recorded in 67 tetrads during surveys in 2009 for the Berkshire atlas. Other reports included a pair at Hampstead Norreys (JLe), a pair nest building at Remenham (DJB), a pair in Thrift Woods, Maidenhead (DJB), a pair at a nest in West Woodhay (RGS) and a pair raised 2 young at Yattendon (JLe). There were many reports of juveniles, though of course these birds could have originated elsewhere. There were several reports of birds following working farm machinery and feeding on unidentified invertebrates, with 15 together on the ridgeway at Compton on July 31 (DJB). Other reported food items (apart from road kill) include a frog, a rat and a slice of ham!

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)

There were 11 records probably involving 11 birds, which is consistent with recent years, though a slight increase on last year; the majority of reports coming from late summer onwards. The three spring records were on Apr 2 over Greenham Common (NC), one on the evening of Apr 24 at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) and one at Chieveley on May 8 (GK). Later in the year, a female flew over the new workings at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 9 (JBS). A juvenile was found at Seven Barrows, Lambourn on Aug 17 (RHS) and a juvenile bird found the following day at Cow Down (RHS). A juvenile was at Roden Down on Aug 22–23 (MFW, ABT). A female was seen over Lea Farm GP on Aug 22 (FJC). A juvenile was seen flying into the new workings at Moor Green lakes on Sep 8, but not relocated (CRG). A juvenile circled over Woolhampton GP before flying off East on Dec 4 (KEM), and finally on Dec 13, DJB located an adult male flying over Great Meadow Pond and made a call to CDRH who was able to see the bird flying over Wraybury from Queen Mother Reservoir. These last 2 records are the first December records for over 100 years, the last mid-winter record being 1 shot at Kintbury on Jan 13 1875.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule 1)

There were 7 records, probably involving 6 birds, all bar one being seen in the first part of the year and only one after April; all were 'ringtails'. There were 3 January records. The first, a female type, flew through Wishmoor Bottom on the 11th (GR), with a juvenile was then seen nearby at Eversley GPs on 20th, 22nd, 24th and 31st; this is likely to have been the same bird that had been in the area in December (DL0). A ringtail was found on the 23rd in the more expected surroundings of Cow Down (MFW) and was seen in the area by MO on and off until Feb 18 (RR). On Mar 10 a f/w ringtail was flushed from its 'kill' (a Dunnock) at Horton GP and was seen again in the same spot on Mar 12 (CDRH). Another ringtail

was seen flying over Wishmoor Bottom being mobbed by a sparrowhawk on Mar 16 (RJH). On Mar 17 a ringtail was seen at Combe (RRe). The only autumn record was of a ringtail in the Red Kite roost at Woolley Down on Oct 3 (GDS).

MONTAGU’S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

Reports of two adult males, a f/s male and a ringtail came from a site in West Berkshire in May and June. Elsewhere a juvenile was seen on Aug 16 at Bury Down (ABT).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common and widespread resident

Sparrowhawks were well reported from all areas of the county though as in previous years, the number of sightings is slightly skewed towards the East. This is undoubtedly due to abundance of observers rather than abundance of birds as the majority of sightings come from well watched areas. The number of reports over the course of the year was 447, with a considerable number of birds hunting in suburban gardens. Most of the common garden species have been reported as prey items with perhaps surprisingly, the most commonly reported being Collared Dove. Again, as with most other raptor species, evidence of breeding is not often reported. However, Atlas surveys in 2007–11 recorded confirmed or probable breeding in 126 tetrads across the county and it is reasonable to assume that most of the large bodies of woodland support a pair. Other observations reported are of a female carrying food into a wood with young birds heard calling on Aug 6 at Binfield (JCLA) and young birds again heard calling with two fledglings being seen in a wood near Farnborough on Aug 5 (GDS).

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common and widespread resident and passage migrant

The eastward spread of this species over the past 20 years has been considerable, before which, in Berkshire, the species was restricted to the downs and there only in small numbers. Buzzard now rivals Red Kite as the commonest raptor reported in the county, helped by the obvious size and visibility of soaring birds with 917 individual reports on the database for the year. The table below shows maximum counts from the most frequently reported areas.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Combe to Inkpen area	15	15	19	3	3	3	6	6	10	4	–	6
Curridge/West Ilsley	3	6	10	4	4	2	1	3	10	4	–	–
Dinton Pastures	–	4	7	7	1	3	–	12	10	5	–	2
Everlsey	1	2	3	3	–	1	3	–	2	–	1	1
Hermitage	1	1	6	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	1
Lower Farm/Thatcham area	3	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	5	3	12	3
Snelsmore Common	1	1	8	3	2	4	1	5	1	–	–	–
Twyford/Waltham area	–	3	4	16	2	1	4	3	2	4	1	1
Windsor Forest/Windsor Great Park	5	6	2	7	8	10	11	12	4	3	6	5
Woolhampton/Padworth area	5	5	7	7	8	1	1	1	1	4	5	4

Away from the well reported areas, other significant counts comprised 12 at Greenham Common on Mar 2 (KEM), 10 at Remenham on Mar 12 (DF), 10 over Moatlands GP on Apr 13 (JA), 13 at Compton on May 20 (DJB), 13 at Englefield on Aug 25 (RCr), 14 at Compton on Sep 11 (DJB), 9 over Woose Hill on Sep 25 (PBT). Evidence of breeding consisted of a fledgling calling in woods at Eastbury (GDS); an adult carrying nest material at Hungerford (RF); confirmed successful breeding at Farnborough (GDS); a fledgling heard at Snelsmore Common (GDS); juveniles calling at Swallowfield, Swinley Park, Thrift Woods (Maidenhead), Warfield House, 2 at Knowl Hill, 2-3 at Waltham Place, 3 at Cold Harbour and 9 juveniles from 5 broods in Windsor Great Park (all DJB); 3 young birds calling at Hell Corner (Inkpen) (LS), 2 juveniles with an adult at Cookham (JLP), 2 juveniles together at Pinkneys Green (CCH) and begging calls heard from a nest site at Warren Row (BDC). Common Buzzards are well known for their variation in plumage with several pale birds reported throughout the year; of particular interest, 2 at Cold Harbour on Jan 1 (DJB), one present in the Burnthouse Lane area seen regularly throughout the first 3 months of the year (KEM), one on Jun 21 at Windsor Great Park (DJB), one at Cow Down on Aug 18 with a completely white head and underparts (ABT), a pale juv from Sep 16-18 at Wraysbury with a slim white head, pale rump and upperwing coverts, pale underparts and underwings (except for a streaked belly and dark carpal marks) recalling a pale morph Honey Buzzard (CDRH). A very pale bird complete with a white rump at Compton Downs on Sep 25 (DJB) and another very pale individual with a pale head and under parts at Foliejon Park on Nov 8 (DJB).

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

Rare winter visitor

A welcome return to the systematic list for this elusive raptor and the first acceptable record since 2005. There were six reports of presumably the same individual which commuted from across the boundary in North Hampshire to the Combe area. It was first found on Feb 14 seen on several dates (MO), the last being Mar 13.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)

There were reports involving up to 12 birds spread roughly equally between Spring and Autumn. The first record for the year was of a bird flying NE over Tilehurst on Mar 22 (JLe) and a week later on Mar 31 a bird flying WNW over Windsor Great Park was viewed from Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). On Apr 11 a bird flew into Padworth Lane GP from the East, perched in a tree and stayed for 40 minutes before flying off West (SRi). Presumably the same bird was being mobbed shortly after by Lesser Black Backed Gulls over Decoy Heath, Aldermaston (JGos) and could have been the same individual on Apr 12 and Apr 13 at Kintbury (JD). Another bird flew NE over Coldhabour/Littlewick Green on Apr 19 (FJC). On May 2 2 were reported flying over Reading town centre, one flying North, the other West (Ricky Josey per CMc), presumably the latter was the same bird seen flying towards Theale GP a few minutes later (CMc). There was a report of one over the River Kennet at Kintbury on Jul 1 (RHar). Return migration was first seen on Aug 17 over Maidenhead (CCH), with one low over Theale Main GP on Aug 21 (RCr) and another over the same area on Aug 31 (JLe). One was seen by the gamekeeper over Englefield on Sep 3 (RCr) and another flying over Tilehurst on Sep 5 (T Blackman). Finally one drifted over the M4 from Moatlands GP on Sep 7 (PBy).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)

Present throughout the year from all areas of the county. No significant counts were recorded, with the maximum number recorded being three counts of 4: at Remenham on Jun 17 (DJB), Wellbottom Down, Lambourn on Aug 11 (KEM), and Maidenhead on Sep 24 (BDC). Breeding evidence submitted for specific sites was as follows: 2 juveniles calling in a tree at Curridge (IW), a parent feeding 2 youngsters at Bradfield (WB), 3 juveniles together at Eversley GP (BMA), an adult with 2 fledglings at Knowl Hill (BDC), 2 together at a nestbox in Lambourn (ABT), an juvenile calling to an adult at Swallowfield Church (JCLa).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant which has increased in recent years (Schedule 1)

A scattering of records throughout the year. A female first seen at Cow Down on Jan 3 (MFW) was possibly the same bird seen again on Jan 27 (CRG). A male bird at Cold Harbour on Jan 5 had been in the area from at least mid-December (CDRH). A male was present throughout January and February in the Bury Down/Cow Down area of West Ilsley. It was first seen on Jan 6 (RRi; MJD) then on and off (MO) until Feb 14 (ABT) and then on Feb 19 at the same site 2 birds were reported simultaneously attacking a passerine (DAMD). A male in the Cold Harbour area first reported on Jan 18 (MSFW) was seen subsequently on Feb 7 (BJH) and possibly the same bird was at White Waltham on Feb 25 (CDRH). A female was seen at Remenham on Jan 17 (PNe) and a male at Spencers Wood on Feb 8 (NR). A female flew over the M4 J10 on Feb 13 (IDP), another on Feb 15 at Mortimer (PD) and a third female was at Jubilee River on Mar 1 (BJH). A male flew low through Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 13 (CDRH) with a female on the same date at Burghfield (BJD). A juvenile found at Cow Down on Aug 18 (ABT and RHS) was seen again on Aug 20 (MFW). A female or immature bird was seen at Remenham on Oct 17 (CDRH) with a similarly plumaged bird the next day at Lavell's Lake (FJC). On Oct 27 a bird was chased across Hungerford Marsh by two crows (RH_a), whilst the next day an immature male was seen at Aldworth (CDRH). A bird was seen by the RThames at Bray on Nov 14 (CCHum) and finally a male flew into the county from Oxon at West Ilsley on Dec 28 (ABT).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

A locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule 1)

There were 394 reports from right across the county. As in previous years, there were more reports from the East of the county, but interestingly all the double figure counts came from West of Reading. The first records were on Apr 18 at Moatlands GP (JA) and Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). The highest maximum counts were: Moatlands GP, with 22 on May 2 (JA), 10 at Woolhampton GP on Apr 29 (RAH), 8 at Bottom Lane, Sulhampstead on Jun 2 (TABR), 8 at Horton GP on May 22 (CDRH) and 8 at Woolhampton GP on May 11 (GEW, KEM, DJB). Breeding was recorded at sites in East Berkshire where a pair were seen at a nest (ABT), 2 juveniles were fledged from a nest at another site (PJC), one juvenile fledged at a third site (PJC) and 2 were fledged from a fourth (PJC). The last record of the year was at Eversley GPs on Oct 13 (RR).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon, but increasing visitor throughout the year (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

There were a good number of reports spread throughout the year and from all areas of the county with several birds remaining faithful to certain traditional areas. A male bird found at Theale on Jan 2 (KEM) was subsequently joined by another male on Jan 7. There were reports, possibly involving 4 birds overall, of combinations of a single male, 2 males, 1 female and 2 females, though never more than 2 birds together. These birds stayed in the area for the rest of the year and were usually seen on the pylon on the Theale Main GP Island. Several other birds also became long-stayers and were regularly seen and recorded. A pair took up residence on the 3M building in Bracknell town centre. The male was first seen on Jan 3 (RJB) and the female on Jan 5 (DLo). They were then seen throughout the year (MO) until the last report on Dec 22 (DLo). A pair first seen at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 8 (CDRH) remained throughout the year (MO); they were seen to kill and eat Ring-necked Parakeets on several occasions and caught a Redshank on Nov 29, while a Woodpigeon on Nov 15, a Shoveler (from a flock of 4) on Nov 23 and a Green Sandpiper on Dec 20 all escaped by dropping onto the water, the latter actually diving beneath the surface! (CDRH). An immature male at Newbury BT building had been present for most of the winter and remained until Feb 26 (SAG); a bird seen throughout January and February at Lower Farm could have been the same bird. A juvenile bird was at Eversley GP from Feb 15 (BMA) and remained until Mar 24. What could have been the same bird was seen again for several days in mid-May (BMA, MFW, PBT). Once again a bird was present in Reading town centre, roosting on the office blocks around Reading Railway Station throughout January and February (MO). Birds were also regularly reported from Burnthouse Lane area and there were numerous single bird sightings from across the county.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Rare passage migrant

There were no records in 2009 but, during the preparation of the species accounts for the new avifauna (Birds of Berkshire, 2013) a number of past records were re-examined. Initiated by DJB, this review eventually led to the BRC removing eight previously accepted records as follows:

- 1977 Thatcham – Dec 18
- 1982 Freeman’s Marsh – Jan 12, 16 and 21
- 1982 Freeman’s Marsh – Dec 29
- 1983 Freeman’s Marsh – Mar 20
- 1984 Freeman’s Marsh – Feb 11
- 1987 Wraysbury – Jan 17
- 1994 Kintbury -Dec 15
- 1995 Kintbury – Jan 13

Most were brief sightings in winter, some of which were only seen in flight (and some were only heard!). This brings Berkshire’s winter occurrences of this species more in line with adjacent counties, such as Surrey and Wiltshire, although several winter records from the former Manor Farm SF in Reading remain fully accepted.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Uncommon winter visitor (often overlooked) and a rare summer resident

The monthly totals for all sites are shown in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	21	18	14	7	3	2	3	2	3	12	9	19
Min. number of birds	33	32	26	12	4	2	3	3	6	27	14	28

Reports came from across the county, mostly of one or two birds, often heard but not seen. Records of more than 3 birds are noted here. **First winter:** At Great Meadow Pond 4 birds were reported on Jan 4, Mar 1 and Apr 12 (DJB); at Kintbury Cress Beds, 5 birds in Jan-Feb (RGS); at Dorney Wetlands, 6 on Feb 20 (BDC) and 6 on Mar 15 (WAS). **Spring/Summer:** Although there was no direct evidence of breeding, birds were reported through May 1 and 17 and on Jul 3 at Searles Farm Lane (RCMu); at Thatcham Marsh on May 1, Jun 28 and Aug 2–30 (IW, JL); and at Hungerford Marsh on Jul 7. **Autumn/Second winter:** The largest concentration of Water Rails was 8 at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 23 (BDC). At Great Meadow Pond, 4 were heard calling on several dates in October and November (DJB) and 4 were counted at Hosehill Lake on Dec 27 (RHS).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common and widespread resident found almost anywhere where there is open water

The Moorhen is a widespread, but little reported species. Monthly totals for the main sites for which there are reports are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freeman's Marsh	5	–	–	–	8	–	11	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm	20	6	8	10	7	10	10	15	18	15	16	8
Thatcham Discovery Centre	26	15	11	4	5	3	10	13	24	25	20	17
Dorney Wetlands	37	–	6	–	2	–	3	4	5	5	–	12
Eversley	40	12	8	–	6	–	8	15	19	13	24	17
Great Meadow Pond	8	–	9	5	–	13	26	45	30	20	–	–

Other sites reporting more ten birds, all outside the breeding season, were Hurley Lock (16), Donnington (11), Green Park, Reading (17) and Burghfield GPs (18). Breeding is widespread, though not often reported: the 2007–11 Atlas surveys confirmed breeding in 228 of the county's 394 tetrads.

COOT *Fulica atra*

A common resident and winter visitor

Monthly maxima for the main sites are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	203	129	63	–	–	–	–	–	123	265	378	385
Dinton Pasture/Lea Farm	151	72	38	–	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–

Eversley GPs	294	182	52	–	–	–	101	121	197	220	294	326
Great Meadow Pond	35	68	74	59	69	137	250	272	190	40	30	10
Lower Farm GP	150	141	76	50	52	115	60	130	170	100	75	110
Summerleaze GP	306	193	31	–	–	3	–	–	162	105	–	248
Thatcham Discovery Centre	27	14	17	11	11	17	44	47	48	48	58	68
Theale GPs	732	342	121	–	4	–	–	–	–	450	563	600
Wraysbury	175	290	201	–	–	9	–	22	–	454	811	736
Woolhampton	–	–	–	–	44	128	141	222	207	353	199	193

The high count of 811 at Wraysbury on Nov 24 (JMC) included the nearby Horton GPs. Other sites reporting more than 100 birds were Bray GP, with 146 on Dec 27 (DJB); Horton GPs with 163 on Feb 10 (JMC); Twyford GPs with 159 on Oct 9 (WeBS). As with Moorhen, breeding is widespread, but under-reported: the 2007–11 Atlas surveys confirmed breeding in 173 of the county's 394 tetrads.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

There were 35 records, involving 43 birds received from 10 sites: 5 in East Berkshire, 2 in Mid Berkshire and 3 in West Berkshire. **First winter:** singles were at Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 29 and Feb 28 (CDRH), Burghfield Mill GP Feb 15 (PBT) and Wigmore Lane GP Feb 28 (FJC). **Spring:** In March 1 was recorded flying over Queen Mother Reservoir GP Mar 19 (MMc), followed by 1 at Theale GP Mar 28–31 (MFW *et al.*), 1 at Woolhampton GP Mar 29 (JRe) and 1 at Midgham Mar 31 (KEM). In April 2 were at Theale GP Apr 2–6 (TABR) with 1 lingering all month. Elsewhere singles were at Lavell's Lake Apr 10 (ATr), Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 11 (MMc; DJB), Woolhampton GP Apr 11 and 16 (KEM), Padworth Lane GP Apr 19 (MFW) and Dorney Wetlands Apr 25 (DJB). In May 1 was at Hosehill Lake May 2 (BU), Dorney Wetlands May 9 (RN), Queen Mother Reservoir May 12 (CDRH), Lea Farm Lake May 14 (ABT) and 2 at Queen Mother Reservoir May 17 (MMc). In June, 1 was present for 10 minutes at Queen Mother Reservoir Jun 5 (CDRH), followed by 1 at Twyford GP Jun 14 (JCLa), Hosehill Lake Jun 18 (JLe) and 29 (BU, RCr), Horton GP Jun 30 (CDRH) and Queen Mother Reservoir Jun 30 (CDRH). **Autumn:** In July 1 was at Summerleaze GP Jul 9–13 (CDRH), 2 at Eversley GP Jul 11 (BMA), Jul 20 and Jul 31 (MGLR), 1 at Woolhampton GP Jul 20 (KEM), 1 at Theale GP Jul 24–25 (KEM, RCr), 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 24 (MMc), Padworth Lane GP Jul 31 (KEM). In August singles were at Queen Mother Reservoir on 1st, 11th and 27th (all CDRH) and 1 was at Summerleaze GP Aug 26 (CDRH). The only record in September and the last of the year was a family party of 2 adults and 3 juveniles at Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 5 (CDRH, MMc).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare passage migrant

There were 3 records, 2 in spring and 1 in autumn. **Spring:** singles Queen Mother Reservoir Mar 19 (MMc *et al.*) and Theale Main Pit Mar 31 (KEM, RHS). **Summer:** one Summerleaze GP Jun 23 (CDRH *et al.*).

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicanus*

*Scarce and localised summer visitor, very rare away from breeding grounds
(Schedule 1 and Red Listed)*

All records came from the traditional site on the Downs. The first bird was recorded Apr 5 (MFW), the same date, site and observer as the first record in 2008! Counts of 1–4 were received throughout the summer. The only record of confirmed breeding was an adult with 3 chicks Jul 8 (MJT). The only notable count during the autumn was 11 Aug 14 (DJR) and the last record was of 4 on Sep 25 (CDRH).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule 1)

Recorded at 19 locations. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beenham GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	4	–	–	–	–
Bray GPs	–	–	2	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	3	6	6	16	6	1	1	–	–	–
Greenham Common	–	–	5	8	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Horton GPs	–	–	1	5	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	3	3	8	2	3	3	–	–	–
Midgham GP	–	–	4	8	6	9	8	3	1	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	3	4	1	–	8	2	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res.	–	–	–	1	1	–	1	2	3	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–
Theale GP	–	–	2	2	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	3	4	2	3	3	–	1	–	–	–

Spring: First recorded on Mar 13 at Eversley GP (BMA) and Horton GP (CDRH). By the end of the month birds had been recorded at 12 locations. **Summer:** Reported from 12 locations during May/June, with breeding attempted at 4 of these. At Horton GP 2 pairs were present and a nest with 4 eggs was discovered Apr 26 (CDRH); but the nest may have been predated as no juveniles were seen subsequently. At Bray GP, a pair with 2 juveniles were seen May 13 (CDRH). At Eversley GP, 5 pairs hatched broods of 1, 1, 2 and 4 although probably only 3 fledged (BMA, MGLR). At Midgham Quarry 2 broods of 3 and 2 were seen Jun 14 (MFW). At Lower Farm GP 3 fledged juveniles were seen Jun 21 (JL, IW). **Autumn:** The first definite migrant was 1 at Lea Farm Lake Jul 7 (FJC). During July counts were swelled by locally fledged juveniles and included 8 at Midgham Quarry Jul 4 (KEM) and 8 Pingewood GP Jul 12 (MFW). As locally bred birds dispersed counts were lower during August, with the only count exceeding 3 being 4 at Beenham GP Aug 1 (MFW). Birds were recorded on 12 dates during September with the last being a fairly late juvenile at Midgham Quarry Sep 25 (MFW).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon passage migrant and now a declining summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Recorded from 14 sites across the county. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	1	–	–	4	1	1	–	2	–	–	–	–
Greenham Common	–	–	4	4	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Horton GPs	–	2	2	2	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	1	2	3	3	3	–	–	–	–
Midgham GP	–	–	1	1	3	3	2	–	1	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res.	–	–	–	3	3	1	1	3	2	–	–	–

Spring: 1 at Eversley GP Jan 18 (BMA) was unusually early before a more typical arrival date of Feb 27 when 2 were at Horton GP (CDRH). Most counts were of 1–3 birds but 4 were at Greenham Common Mar 9 (NC) and 4 were at Eversley GP Apr 11 (CRG). Six birds of the darker Arctic form (*tundrae* types) were observed at Horton GP on May 13 (CDRH) and were directly compared with the resident pair. **Summer:** Birds were recorded at 7 sites during May with breeding attempted at 3 of these. At Horton GP a pair were already nesting Apr 17 (CDRH) but subsequently failed. A replacement clutch of 2 eggs was found May 30 (CDRH). At Greenham Common 1 was sitting Apr 26 (MFW) and 2 juveniles were seen there May 22 (MFW). At Lower Farm GP a pair with 1 juvenile was seen Jun 3 (GSte). **Autumn:** The first definite migrant was 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 5–6 (CDRH). Most records were of 1–2 birds but 3 were at Queen Mother Reservoir Aug 17 (CDRH) and Aug 23 (MMc), The last record of the year was 2 at Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 12 (CDRH).

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare passage migrant

Two flew south over Sheep Down, West Ilsley Aug 20 (MFW).

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common but local winter visitor and passage migrant

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh, Wargrave	280	265	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	390	400
Bury Down West Ilsley	15	–	200	–	–	–	–	–	–	40	–	15
Dinton Pastures CP	28	42	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	89
Dorney Wetlands	300	280	10	–	–	–	–	–	1	150	450	970
Drift Road, Hawthorn Hill	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	300
Greenham Common	–	–	130	200	–	–	–	–	2	120	–	–
Lower Farm GP	25	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	400	80
Queen Mother Res.	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	140
Remenham Hill	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	734	–	40
Woodlands Park/ Coldharbour area	330	10	20	175	1	–	–	–	1	73	200	1000

First winter: Recorded from 28 locations. Counts were very low. The only counts to exceed 300 were 330+ at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill Jan 1 (DJB) and c.300 Dorney Wetlands Jan

26 (DJB). A flock lingered at Greenham Common into April, dropping from 200 on Apr 11 (MJD) to 42 on Apr 20 (NC). **Second winter:** Recorded from 51 locations and in greater numbers than during the first winter period. There was a very early migrant at Midgham Quarry Jul 4 (KEM) but there were no further records until 1 at Greenham Common Sep 13 (NC) after which records became more widespread. Most counts were less than 500 but 734 were at Remenham Hill Oct 22 (CDRH), 1500+ at Welford Nov 16 (FGM), c.970 Dorney Wetlands Dec 4 (DJB) and c.1000 at White Waltham Airfield Dec 18 (DJB).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

Just one spring record: a s/p female was on the new workings at Eversley GP May 30 (BMA *et al.*) to June 1 (MGLR).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Locally common breeding resident, common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh, Wargrave	450	400	8	–	–	–	120	–	–	–	159	238
Dinton Pastures CP	900	30	–	–	3	11	40	150	–	35	–	1000
Dorney Wetlands	280	404	–	–	1	6	13	284	78	200	200	34

First winter: Away from the main sites there were few large counts; the only counts to exceed 400 were 450 at Borough Marsh Jan 18 (ABT), 450 Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 18 (CDRH), 400+ Slough SF Jan 26 (DJB) and 404 Dorney Wetlands Feb 15 (BDC). **Summer:** Evidence of breeding was noted at 18 sites and confirmed at 10 of these. **Winter:** With the exception of 1000 at Lavell’s Lake Dec 6 (FJC) counts were generally low. The only counts over 400 were 500+ at Washmore Hill Oct 24 (ABT) and 450 at Cold Harbour on Oct 31 (DJB).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce passage migrant

Ten records, 5 in spring and 5 in autumn. **Spring:** A s/p adult was at Eversley GP on May 13 (BMA) and 1 Horton GP May 13–14 (CDRH). At Queen Mother Reservoir there was 1 on May 13–14 (MMc, CDRH), 1 on May 23 (CDRH) and 2 s/p individuals on May 26 (CDRH). **Autumn:** a worn adult at Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 11 (CDRH), an adult at Midgham Quarry Jul 25 (KEM *et al.*), 1 at Eversley GP Jul 26 (CRG *et al.*), then 2 s/p adults there Aug 1 (BMA), and finally an adult at Queen Mother Reservoir Aug 23 (MMc).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn

Three records, all in **autumn:** adult Eversley GP Aug 2 (BMA, NS), s/p adult Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 21 (MMc *et al.*) and two juveniles at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 10 (CDRH, PBT *et al.*).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce passage migrant

Only one record, an adult in near s/p at Midgham Quarry Jun 6 (KEM *et al.*).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Common passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	–	–	2	1	2	–	2	5	2	–	1	–
Queen Mother Res.	3	1	–	1	4	–	1	7	1	1	1	1
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	3	–	2	–	–	–	–	–

First winter: Two were at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 3 and Jan 6–8 (CDRH, MMc) with 3 there on Jan 7 (CDRH). Singles were at Hosehill Lake Jan 9 (CGI), Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 31 (CDRH), Borough Marsh Feb 15–19 (CDRH), Queen Mother Reservoir Feb 19 (CDRH, MMc) and 2 were at Borough Marsh Feb 25 (CDR, Ne). **Spring:** Although there were 3 records in March migration didn't really get going until mid-April when 1 was at Eversley GP Apr 17 (EN). It was still slow going with just 4 records in April. Passage peaked during May with birds being recorded at 7 sites. Most records were of 1–2 birds but 3 were at Woolhampton GP May 8 (PH) and 4 flew NE at Queen Mother Reservoir May 13 (CDRH). The last spring record was 1 at Horton GP Jun 4 (CDRH). **Autumn:** Passage recommenced on Jul 16 with 2 at Eversley GP (BMA). 1–2 birds were recorded at 5 sites during July. Passage peaked during August with birds recorded at 6 sites. Most counts were of 1–4 birds but 7 were at Queen Mother Reservoir Aug 11 (CDRH) and 5 were at Eversley GP Aug 18 (BMA, MJT). Records tailed off over September with 4 sites hosting 1–2 birds before the last at Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 17 (CDRH, KPD). There was one record in October, at Queen Mother Reservoir Oct 10 (MFW). **Second winter:** 1 was at Eversley GP on Nov 11 (MGLR), 1 was at Queen Mother Reservoir Nov 11 (CDRH, RRI) and another there Dec 25 and possibly the same bird on Dec 30 (CDRH).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Five records, 1 in the first winter period, 1 in spring, 2 in autumn and 1 in the second winter period. **First winter:** a female was at Eversley GP Jan 5–15 (DPN, EN), most often seen feeding with Lapwings. **Spring:** 1 was at Lea Farm Lake May 11 (AR). **Autumn:** 2 circled Queen Mother Reservoir before continuing South East Aug 9 (CDRH), 1 was at Dorney Wetlands Aug 20 (WAS). **Second winter:** 3 flew low WSW over Queen Mother Reservoir during hard weather Dec 20 (CDRH).

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon and localised winter visitor and passage migrant

First winter: Recorded from 6 sites, as follows: 1 Pingewood GP Jan 1 (KEM), 1 Eversley GP Jan 2 (IHB), 1 Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 8 (CDRH), 1 Horton GP Jan 16 (CDRH), 2 Horton GP Jan 20 (CDRH), 1 Eversley GP Jan 26 (JMC), 2 Lambourn Downs Jan 26 (JPM), 1 Freeman's Marsh Feb 3 (JWar). The bird at Queen Mother Reservoir was only the

2nd ever record for the site, the last one being in January 1975. **Spring:** 1 was at Pingewood GP Mar 22 (MFW); 2 were at Greenham Common Mar 23 with 3 there Mar 28 and Apr 1 (NC) and 1 still there Apr 9 (NC, RHS); 1 Horton GP Mar 28 and Apr 20 (CDRH). **Second winter:** Recorded from 3 sites. All records as follows: 1 Horton GP Oct 11–14 (CDRH), 2 Greenham Common Oct 25 (NC) and 2 Colnbrook Dec 25 (CDRH).

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Common but declining winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	5	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	53
Dorney Wetlands	20	50	60	3	–	–	–	2	6	24	1	1
Jubilee River	6	52	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	15	9	19	12	–	–	–	–	5	6	–	–
Pingewood GP	1	22	30	10	–	–	–	–	3	3	–	–
Woolhampton GP	4	16	5	4	–	–	–	2	3	14	1	25

First winter/Spring: Double figure counts were received from 7 sites. Dorney Wetlands was the only site to consistently record good numbers with a peak of 60 Mar 5 (JAd). Although still widespread during April there was just 2 records in May: 1 at Eversley GP May 1–11 (BMA, MFW) and 1 at Lower Farm GP May 9 (NC). There was still 1 at Lower Farm GP during June which was seen on 3 dates between Jun 1–14 (IW; JL; NC). **Autumn/Second winter:** 3 at Lower Farm GP Jun 26 (IW, JL, NC) were probably early returning birds rather than late migrants. However, there were no further records until Jul 23 when 2 were at Eversley GP (BMA). From August onwards records became much more widespread. Double figure counts were received from 4 sites. The only notable counts came from Dinton Pastures where the peak count was 53 Dec 18 (FJC), a new site record.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Localised resident in small numbers, more widely reported in winter (Amber Listed)

Recorded from 27 locations, 6 in East Berkshire, 5 in Mid Berkshire and 16 in West Berkshire. **First winter:** Recorded at 23 locations, all single birds. **Summer:** Recorded at 17 locations but only 13 of these recorded roding birds. There were no records of confirmed breeding. Maximum counts of roding birds were as follows: 1 Hut Hill, Swinley Forest (MFW), 1 Windsor Forest Golf Club (BAJC), 1 Stockcross (SAG), 2 Greenham Common (SAG), 2 Lower Star Post, Swinley Forest (DJB), 3 Snelsmore Common (MJT; PJO), 3 Bucklebury Common (IS), 4 High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest (DJB), 7 South Ascot (DJB). **Second winter:** Recorded at 11 locations. Apart from 1 record in August, all records were during November and December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant (Schedule 1)

There were 10 records involving 18 birds reported from 7 locations. **Spring:** Singles were at Padworth Lane GP Mar 18 (MO) and Lavell's Lake Mar 19 (MWh) to Mar 23 (FJC). **Autumn:** The first returning bird was seen at Hosehill Lake Jul 8 (TABR) followed by 1 at

Lower Farm GP Jul 25 (IW; JL, NC). The majority of the records were seen during August, starting with 1 at Eversley GPs Aug 2 (BMA, NR, RCW) and followed by 3 juveniles at Woolhampton GP Aug 17 (GEW *et al.*), 6 flying over Lower Farm GP Aug 22 (BJW; JCh; RA) and 2 there Aug 30 (DKel). Finally, 1 was at Woolhampton GP on Aug 30 (JRe *et al.*).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

A poor year with just three records, all in the **spring**: w/p Lea Farm Lake May 14 (Tim James *et al.*), s/p male NE over Queen Mother Reservoir May 13 (CDRH), female (or non-breeding plumage) NE over Queen Mother Reservoir with Whimbrel May 17 (CDRH).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant

There were 24 records involving 113 birds reported from 7 locations, making 2009 the best ever year for the species. **Spring**: There were 15 records involving 37 birds. Passage began in mid-April with 1 flying NW over Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 8 (MMc) followed by 1 flying Northeast there Apr 13 (MMc), 1 over Pingewood GP Apr 18 (NR), 6 Northwest over Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 18 (CDRH), 1 over Burghfield GP Apr 19 (JA), 1 Southwest over Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 25 (RRi). Apart from 1 at Lower Farm GP May 1 (RF, MBP), 3 at Eversley on May 1 (JOB) and 2 at Woolhampton GP May 7 (KEM; RHS), all May records came from Queen Mother Reservoir as follows: 1 flying North May 4 (CDRH), 1 May 6 (MMc), 2 May 7 (MMc *et al.*), 1 May 8 (KPD), 1 May 11 (RRi), May 10 (BDC, MHG, MJF), and finally 7 flying Northeast May 17 (CDRH). **Autumn**: Passage resumed Jul 11 with 1 Southeast over Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH), followed by 2 over Theale Main Pit Jul 19 (CMc; JA). There was then a run of records from Queen Mother Reservoir, starting with an impressive 55 Aug 1 (DJB) which flew low over the northern edge of the reservoir before heading west-southwest over Windsor Great Park. Another 5 flew south later the same day (CDRH). 1 was present Aug 4 (MMc), 1 flew west and 2 flew southeast Aug 5 (CDRH), 6 flew west and later another in the same direction Aug 7 (CDRH). Elsewhere, 1 flew over Theale Main Pit Aug 25 (RCr) and finally 1 flew southeast over Moatlands GP Sep 26 (DNTR; MFW).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Uncommon passage migrant and a summer visitor in small numbers (Amber Listed)

Recorded from 17 locations, 6 in East Berkshire, 1 in Mid Berkshire and 10 in West Berkshire. **First winter**: 1 was at Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 6–7 (CDRH), 2 flew Southwest over Twyford Jan 8 (SPA), 1 was heard over Datchet Jan 24 (SLF) and 2 flew southwest over Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 24 (CDRH). 1 put in a protracted stay at Borough Marsh from Jan 28 (CDRH) to Feb 25 (PNe). It was joined by a second bird on Feb 26 (CDRH) and both birds remained until Mar 6 (CDRH) with one still present on Mar 12 (DJB). **Spring**: The first migrant flew over Dorney Wetlands Mar 4 (WAS) and 15 mins later over Horton GP (CDRH). 1 was at Lower Farm GP Mar 28 (IW; JL, NC). 1 flew southeast over Greenham Common Apr 18 (NC) and another flew south over Whatcombe the same day (GDS). 1 was at Aldermaston May 7 (RF) and 1 flew over Wishmoor Bottom May 30 (RJB). **Summer**: Birds summered on the Downs at Lambourn and Compton. In the Lambourn area the first returning birds recorded were 4 at Upper Lambourn on Apr 12 (ABT) and 6 at Wellbottom Down Apr 14 (MFW). The highest count was 8 at Wellbottom Down on Jun 2

(CDRH) and the last record was 1 there on Jun 21 (SAG). After the first successful breeding since 1997 in 2008 there was no confirmation of breeding in 2009. In the Compton area 1–2 were seen between Apr 18 (ABT) and Jun 18 (DJB) but again, breeding was not confirmed. In addition, 1 was at Woolley Down on Jun 14 and Jun 17 (GDS) and 1 at Eversley GPs on Jun 27 (IHB). **Autumn:** Passage began in June and apart from 1 over Theale Main Pit Sep 12 (RJB) was confined to Queen Mother Reservoir where 1 flew east on Jun 29, 1 South on Jul 11, and 15 northwest on Sep 9 (CDRH). 1 was at Eversley GPs on Oct 17 (NS). **Second winter:** 1 was at Borough Marsh Dec 26–31 (ABT).

CURLEW/WHIMBREL

One circling high over Queen Mother Reservoir before flying off Southwest on Jul 12 (CDRH) may have been a short-billed young Curlew.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Locally common passage migrant, declining summer visitor; scarce in winter (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh, Wargrave	–	–	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Crookham Common	–	–	2	1	4	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	5	5	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	–	–	4	3	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	8	8	2	4	1	4	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	3	3	3	2	–	–	3	1	–	–
Midgham GP	–	–	5	5	4	5	2	–	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	7	6	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GP	–	–	3	2	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Twyford GP	–	–	3	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	1	2	3	1	–	–	–	–	–

First winter: One was at Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 3 (MMc) and another was at Bray GP Jan 23 (CDRH). The Bray bird is possibly a returning bird that wintered at the site in 2007/2008. **Spring:** Passage peaked during March/April. High counts included 8 at Eversley GP Mar 21 (DJB) and Apr 16 (BMA), 7 at Padworth Lane GP Mar 30 (KEM), 5 at Lea Farm Lake on several dates and 5 at Midgham Quarry Apr 4 (KEM). **Breeding:** Breeding was confirmed at Midgham Quarry where there were 2 juveniles on Jun 14 (MFW) and 26 (CDRH) and at Horton GP where a summering pair were accompanied by a fully fledged juvenile on Jun 28 (CDRH). **Autumn:** Most summering birds had left by the end of June, although the juveniles at Midgham Quarry lingered into July. Otherwise there was a light passage of birds moving through during August and September with a late bird at Lower Farm GP on Oct 9 (GVW; KEM; JCh). **Second winter:** 1 was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 29 but was taken by 2 Peregrines hunting cooperatively (CDRH).

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor (Schedule 1)

Records were received from 13 locations. **Spring:** Passage was very light with just 4 records, starting with 1 at Dorney Wetlands May 12 and 15 (WAS) and quickly followed by another at Lavell's Lake/Lea Farm GP May 13–15 (MO). There was then a gap of 2 weeks before 4 flew east over Greenham Common on May 30 (NC) and 1 was at Midgham Quarry on May 30 (KEM) and May 31 (MFW). **Autumn:** Assuming it was a returning bird, passage resumed very early with 1 at Lower Farm GP on Jun 13 (JCh) followed by 1 at Horton GP on Jun 29 (CDRH). There were 4 records in July and passage peaked in August when there were 12 records, the highest count being 9 circling over Greenham Common on Aug 13 (CDRH). At Dorney Wetlands 1–3 birds were present between Aug 20 (WAS) and Sep 6 (FTr) indicating either a strong passage or the presence of long-staying birds. A very late bird was at Lower Farm GP Nov 8 (ABT; KEM; NC).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 39 sites: 10 in East Berks, 12 in Mid Berks and 17 in West Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beenham GP	–	–	–	–	–	2	5	4	1	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	2	1	4	–	–
Eversley GP	4	1	4	4	–	3	9	11	7	4	2	1
Horton GPs	2	4	5	2	–	1	–	1	3	1	1	1
Lower Farm GP	1	4	–	1	–	2	3	3	3	3	2	–
Midgham GP	–	–	2	1	–	3	7	11	3	1	1	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	2	3	3	–	–	1	4	6	2	–	–
Pingewood GP	3	2	3	2	–	3	6	5	4	2	–	1
Queen Mother Res.	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	4
Slough Sewage Farm	–	2	1	6	–	1	5	8	3	4	5	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	1	–	–	1	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1

First winter: Records were widespread during Jan-Feb. Most counts were of 1–3 birds but 4 were at Queen Mother Reservoir on 4 dates between Jan 6–15 (CDRH; MMc), Eversley GP Jan 17–18 (BMA), Lower Farm GP Feb 15 (IW; RA) and Horton GP Feb 27 (CDRH). The numbers at Queen Mother Reservoir are unusual and were probably the result of frozen water everywhere else. **Spring:** Passage increased during March but numbers remained fairly low, the peak counts being 5 at Horton GP Mar 9–20 (CDRH) and 6 at Slough sewage farm Apr 13 (KPD). Passage extended through to the very end of April when 1 was at Lower Farm GP on Apr 30 (LS). There was 1 May record, a single at Woolhampton GP on May 2 (KEM). **Autumn:** Passage resumed on Jun 8 with 1 at Lavell's Lake (RCM) and a further 8 sites recorded birds during June. Numbers increased during July and peaked in August when there were 11 at Eversley GP on Aug 23 (BMA) and 11 at Midgham GP Aug 13 (CDRH). Numbers remained fairly high during September but began to drop off during October, although remaining widespread. **Second winter:** Birds were reported from 12 sites during

November and December. Most records were of 1–2 birds but 5 were at Slough sewage farm on Nov 13 (CDRH) and 4 at Queen Mother Reservoir Dec 23 (CDRH).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce passage migrant

Three records, all in **autumn**: adult Eversley GP Jul 28 (BMA) to 29 (MO), juvenile Crookham Common Aug 9 (ABT) to 13 (MO), 2 Lower Farm GP Aug 30 (DKel).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common passage migrant, scarce in summer and winter; has bred

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	–	1	–	3	5	1	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	–	1	2	1	3	3	2	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP, Newbury	–	–	1	1	4	2	1	4	3	–	2	–
Midgham GP	–	–	–	1	1	–	3	2	–	–	–	–
Moatlands GP	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	1	3	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	–	–	3	2	1	2	1	1	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res.	–	–	–	3	3	3	10	16	2	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	1	3	–	8	2	–	–	–	–

First winter: A wintering bird was seen at Padworth Lane GP Jan 1 (NR) to Jan 3 (KEM) but was not seen subsequently. **Spring:** Apart from two early records at Lower Farm GP on Mar 18 (NF; JFoo) and Mar 30 (JBre) passage began in April with 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 16 (CDRH). Counts of 1–3 were received from a further 9 sites by the end of the month. Records were more widespread during May, coming from 18 sites. Most counts were of 1–3 birds but 4 were at Lower Farm GP on May 15 (RHS). **Autumn:** the first record of the autumn was of 2 birds at Lower Farm GP Jun 2 (NC; KEM). There were further June records from Padworth Lane GP, Eversley GPs and Queen Mother Reservoir where there were 3 birds on Jun 30 (CDRH). The main passage period was between July and September, when birds were recorded at 24 sites. The highest counts came from Queen Mother Reservoir with 16 on Aug 11 (CDRH) and Aug 21 (MMc), Woolhampton GP with 8 on Jul 25 (KEM), Summerleaze GP with 6 on Aug 5 (BDC) and Lea Farm Lake with 5 on Aug 6 (FJC). The last record was 1 at Padworth Lane GP on Sep 30 (PH). **Second winter:** The only record was of 2 at Lower Farm GP on Nov 13 (NC).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce passage migrant

Four records, 2 in spring and 2 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 in transitional plumage at Horton GP on May 7 (CDRH), s/p adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 23 (CDRH). **Autumn:** 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 21 (MMc *et al.*) and a juvenile there Sep 10 (CDRH; MMc).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare vagrant

A juvenile moulting into winter plumage was at Moatlands GP on Nov 15 (RCr).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Rare vagrant, principally in autumn

Autumn: One record on Aug 29, a bird seen flying high east-southeast over the northeast corner of Queen Mother Reservoir (MMc) was nevertheless photographed, and the long tail-projections indicate it was an adult bird. This is the 21st record for Berkshire.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant and winter visitor

A good crop of records in all months except April and October, dominated by East Berkshire.

First winter/Spring: An adult roosted at Queen Mother Reservoir on several dates Jan 1–24 (CDRH, MMc), with a second adult on multiple dates and 5 birds (f/w, 2/w, 3 adults) present during Feb 19–24 (CDRH), then further records of 1 or 2 birds up to Mar 13 (FJC). A f/w was seen nearby at Colnbrook on Feb 4 (CDRH). A w/p adult was at Coldharbour on Jan 21 (DJB). A f/w was seen at Borough Marsh Feb 18 (CDRH). The only record for West Berkshire was a f/w at Lower Farm on Jan 1 that had remained from 2008 (NC), and may have been the same bird in the Moatlands GP roost on multiple dates from Jan 2–Feb 8 (MFW). An adult joined the f/w on Feb 7 (KEM), an adult with a partial hood was there on Feb 25 (PBT) and Mar 14, but two adults were present Mar 6 (RHS); two at Hosehill Lake on Mar 21 (EN, IDP) may have been the Moatlands pair. **Summer:** A first summer at Horton GP on May 5 was followed by a different first summer on May 23 at Queen Mother Reservoir (both CDRH). A strong run of summer adults began when 4 adult s/p birds that appeared to be two pairs lingered at Queen Mother Reservoir for a few hours on Jun 15, before departing high ENE, and what may have been 3 of the same birds were seen there on Jun 22 and Jun 28 (all CDRH), with 2 adults at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 1 (MMc) and Horton fields on Jul 15 (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** A second summer bird was at Old Windsor on Jul 28 (CDRH). The first juvenile of the year was in fields at Bray on Jul 29 (CDRH), with 2 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 5 (CDRH) and 3 on Aug 6, while further juveniles were at Summerleaze GP (BDC) and at Horton Fields on the same day (CDRH). A f/w was also at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 6 (MFW) and a s/w on Sep 18 (CDRH). At Queen Mother Reservoir, up to 3 birds (2 w/p adults and a f/w) were seen intermittently between Nov 9 and December 28 (CDRH), with 1 of the adults seen in Upton Court Park, Slough on Nov 23 (CDRH). A f/w was at Moatlands GP on Dec 4 (CDRH).

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

Ten records of 20 birds. **First winter:** A f/w at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 20 (CDRH) overflowed and continued w. **Spring:** At least 4 at Theale Main Pit on Apr 5 (MFW), with 5 present on Apr 6, aged as 2 s/p adults, 2 w/p adults and a s/w (KEM, RHS). Three (2 adult s/p, 1 f/s) at Queen Mother Reservoir flew NE mid-morning Apr 19 (CDRH). A first summer bird at Hosehill Lake May 9 (RCr) was later at Theale Main GP (AMH; MFW). On May 30 at Horton GP a first summer bird flew in with Black-headed Gulls (CDRH). **Autumn:** a s/w was present at Queen Mother Reservoir for the afternoon of Aug 9 (CDRH),

then on Sep 14 a w/p adult and f/w flew W with terns, with 3 f/w birds W later same day (CDRH). On 15 Nov a w/p adult was present early morning at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). **Second winter:** a s/w bird in roost late afternoon at Queen Mother Reservoir Dec 15 was presumably the same bird seen earlier at Staines Reservoirs (CDRH).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant which now breeds in increasing numbers (Amber Listed)

Numerous reports were received and three-figure counts were recorded in all months and across the county during peak periods, with wintering and passage flocks replaced by summering and breeding gatherings at several sites. However, there were no big roost-based counts reported. **First winter:** The maximum counts were of 2000 at Brooklands Farm Jan 23 and 3000 Hurst Feb 9 (DJB), 2000 at Lea Farm GP Jan 29 (FJC). The largest count in West Berkshire was at Lower Farm GP of 400 on Feb 6 (NC; JL; IW). **Spring/Summer:** Large flocks remained into Mar, with 500 at Waltham Place on Mar 6 (BDC), 800 at Jubilee R on Mar 9 (RCM) and 500 at Bucklebury on Mar 11 (RF). Later in spring there was a build-up of 300 feeding at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 24 (CDRH), with an even larger gathering of 1000 late afternoon on Jun 28 at Queen Mother Reservoir, many hawking flying insects (CDRH). Breeding reports were of 42 on nests at Eversley GP on May 25 (JMC), 4 pairs at Lavell's Lake Jun 14 (MFW), and at least two nests on gravel islands at Lower Farm May 2 (SAG). There was no count of nests at Hosehill Lake, but up to 19 juvenile and 1 adult were colour-ringed and juveniles from that site were seen at Midgham and Burnthouse Lane Jul 11 (KEM). White 2X74 ringed at Hosehill Lake was later seen at Epney in Gloucestershire on Sep 25 98km WNW of the ringing site. Colour-ringed adult black 2A98 on white at Hosehill Lake Apr 13 and 15 (KEM). **Autumn/Second winter:** The biggest autumn gathering was 700+ on Smiths Lawn Windsor Great Park on Oct 11 (DJB), with an early winter maximum of 1000 at Dinton Pastures on Dec 4 (FJC). One with a complete brown hood at Whiteknights on Dec 4 would be exceptionally early for assuming breeding plumage (PG), and a f/w came to a garden ground feeder in Crowthorne on Dec 24 (BMA).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Records in all months, predominantly in Mid and East Berkshire, with large winter gatherings but few roost counts. **First winter:** The peak counts were of 300 at Fifield Jan 23 (DJB) and 310 at Warren Row Jan 26 (SJF, FMF). There were also flocks of 100 at Windsor Great Park on Jan 18 and 200 on Feb 22 (both DJB), and the only roost count was of 100 at Moatlands on Feb 25 (PBT). **Spring/Summer:** There were 400 at Cockpole Green on Mar 2, rising to 1000 on Mar 14 (both CDRH), after which records soon dwindled. **Autumn/Second winter:** The first autumn flock was 50 on Sep 20 on Smiths Lawn Windsor Great Park, rising to 250 on Nov 8 and at least 500 by Nov 22 (DJB)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, increasing in summer and now breeding (Amber Listed)

Regular throughout the year, with large passage gatherings and winter flocks. **First winter:** The year opened with a count of 150 at Theale GP on Jan 1 (MWh), with Padworth Lane GP holding 212 on Jan 2 (RCr). Lower Farm GP had even larger counts on several dates, with a max of 800 on Jan 17 (SAG). A flock of 70 were still in post-roost gathering at Eversley GP on Jan 2 (JMC). Away from various waters, the largest flock reported away from various waters was 200 at Cow Down on Jan 16 (GDS). **Spring/Summer:** Low numbers were reported from multiple sites through Mar-May, but a surprisingly large mid-summer count of 580 was made at pig fields near Bucklebury on Jun 13 (RCr). **Autumn/Second winter:** A flock of 86 were following the plough at Compton Down on Jul 31 (DJB) and 500 were at Cow Down on Aug 16 with 1000 at Lambourn on Aug 18 and 1200 back at Cow Down on Sep 15 (all ABT). A roost count of 1030 was at Theale Main Pit on Aug 28, growing to 5300 on Sep 18 and a year max of 11700 on Sep 28 (both RCr). Pre-roost gatherings of up to 375 at Lower Farm (Oct 10, SAG) but many birds left to E, perhaps to join the large roost at Theale. Roosting at Eversley GP reached 800 birds leaving on Sep 19 (BMA), with other roost counts of 250 on Oct 31 and 605 on Nov 15 (JMC). Numbers at Moatlands GP reached 980 on Nov 21 (JA). Counts in fields were again high in winter with 3200 at Bucklebury on Nov 30 (RF) and 1000 at Frilsham on Dec 11 (JLe). An unusual garden record was of one landing to take bread, along with Black-headed Gulls, at Tilehurst on Dec 22 (RCr).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant and winter visitor

The increasing regularity of this species is indicated by the fact that there were records from all months, as in 2008. **First winter:** The species status as a regular winter visitor is underlined by the fact that there were records from four sites on Jan 1, with single adults at Eversley GPs (BMA), Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH), Padworth Lane (KEM), and Moatlands GP (NR), this last together with a 3/w bird (KEM). There was an adult at Lower Farm GP on Jan 17 (LGRE) and Jan 20 (RBor), but most records were from the Reading area – with birds regularly in the roost at Moatlands GP including 2 adults and a s/w on Jan 21, a f/w on Feb 7 and 2 3/w on Feb 8 (all MFW), an adult on Feb 23 (KEM) and a s/w on Feb 25 (PBT). An adult seen on Feb 14 at Borough Marsh (PBr) may have been the same as also present on Mar 5 (ABT) and Mar 14 (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** There were few spring records, with a single at Lower Farm on Mar 21 (IW, JL) and a second summer in the roost at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 20 (CDRH). Apart from a single s/s bird at Lea Farm on May 15 (FJC), most spring and early summer records were at Queen Mother Reservoir, with a first summer present on May 2 perhaps the same that was reported consistently through to Jun 27, when 7 adults were also present, including a distinctive bird with a missing left foot that was first seen on Jun 14 (all CDRH). From Jul 2, up to 3 adults were also reported at Eversley GP (BMA; JMC), while in East Berkshire, numbers peaked at 12 at Old Windsor on Jul 15 (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** The first juvenile of the autumn was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 29, with 5 adults (CDRH), where numbers built quickly to 32 adults + 2 juveniles on Aug 4, and 45 adults + 2 second summer birds on the nearby landfill at Colnbrook on Aug 6 (CDRH). Apart from the occasional adult at Eversley GPs, the only other sites to report birds were a juvenile at Summerlease GP on Aug 8 (CDRH), and perhaps less expected, 5 adults at Cow Down on Aug 16 (ABT), and 2 at

Jubilee River on Sep 7 (WAS). Numbers at Queen Mother Reservoir and nearby Horton Fields remained in double figures through Sep, with, for example, 38 adults on Sep 8, and into Oct, with 10 adults, 3 f/w and 2 s/w at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 5. The first returning bird at Moatlands GP was a f/w on Oct 15 (MFW) and 1 or 2 adults at Lower Farm GP on several dates from Oct 17 (JA. SAG). Small numbers were reported at the usual sites throughout the autumn, with the maximum in this period of 5 adults in the roost at Moatlands GP on Nov 15 (PBT) and again on Dec 4 (CDRH). 25 were reported at the Eversley GPs roost on Sep 20, 31 on Oct 1 and 20 on Oct 21 (JMC). 1 was at Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Sep 20.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor and increasing summer resident which now breeds (Amber Listed)

Records in all months, with three-figure counts in the summer months. **First winter:** There were many records of small numbers, but few larger counts; the highest of the period was 160 at Kiln Green Feb 26 (BDC), with a flock of 50 at Borough Marsh Feb 16 (ABT) and again on Feb 23 (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** There was a flock of 140 at Dinton Pastures on Mar 21 and the same site or nearby at Hurst and Twyford (NA) had the most significant counts for the period, peaking at 280 at Dinton Pastures Jun 10 (PBT). Breeding was suspected in Reading where pair regularly calling over rooftops Jul 8 (PG). First juvenile recorded Aug 17 at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** Early autumn delivered the highest count of the year with 800 at Coldharbour on Aug 29, 500 on Oct 10 and the same area held counts of at least 300 in each month through to Nov (DJB). There were few roost counts, but 80 roosting at new workings at Eversley GPs on Oct 1 (JMC) shows that new sites are sometimes adopted. A colour-ringed adult (black A2MD on white-R) at Jubilee R on Aug 14 (KPD) had been ringed as a chick rescued by RSPCA, released in E Sussex 23 July 2004. A leucistic f/w was seen at Queen Mother Reservoir from Sep 24 (CDRH) was a reminder that abnormal common species can resemble the scarcer white-winged gulls.

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce autumn/winter visitor

A good year with 30 records of at least 11 birds. As in recent years, Queen Mother Reservoir and its environs produced the vast majority of records, but there were several records from mid-Berkshire. The spread throughout the year was rather narrower than in recent years, with none after February, and none earlier than the first week of September. **First winter:** An adult female remaining from 2007 was seen on Jan 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir and then throughout the month, and also at Colnbrook, with the last record on Feb 5 (CDRH). A larger adult was found at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 4 and seen with the above female on several dates until Jan 10 (CDRH). The first mid-Berkshire record of the year was an adult in the roost at Moatlands GP on Jan 21 (MFW) with the same or another present at the same site on Feb 23 (KEM). A s/w was photographed at Borough Marsh on Feb 15 (CDRH), a f/w was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 23, and the same or another f/w was the last of the winter at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 28 (CDRH). **Autumn:** A juvenile was seen at Queen Mother Reservoir and then Horton on Sep 6, and then on several dates until at least Oct 8 (CDRH). A moulting 3/s was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 7, with a second f/w joining the first from Sep 15 to at least Oct 10 and possibly later (CDRH). A s/w was found on Sep 26, making at least four individuals (of three ages) visiting the reservoirs in one month (CDRH). The only mid-Berkshire record of the autumn was an adult in the

roost at Moatlands GP on Nov 7 (KEM). A f/w at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 30 was probably one of the September/October birds (CDRH). **Second winter:** A new f/w was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 13 and was seen on several occasions there and at Colnbrook until the end of the year, when it was joined by a second f/w (CDRH). The adult female from the start of the year was seen again at Colnbrook on Dec 27/28 but not seen again at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH).

SCANDINAVIAN HERRING GULL

First winter: Two adult *argentatus* at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 10 were of an extreme *thayeri*-type with very little black in wing-tip. **Second winter:** The same birds may have returned at the end of the year, with an adult of this type at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 20 (CDRH), followed by 2 adults at Colnbrook Dec 28 that showed the same characteristic, along with a f/w that also appeared to be of an extreme northern form (CDRH). First returning *argentatus* was a summer adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on 17 Aug (CDRH).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Rare winter visitor

First winter: A f/w bird was present in the roost at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 16–17 (CDRH). **Spring:** A f/w bird was present in the roost at QMR on Apr 16 (CDRH).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Records through all months of the year, and 13 sites across the county, though there were few high counts even in the winter periods.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	6	2	2	3	2	2	1	4	3	4	4	5
Number of birds	119	2	4	7	3	4	1	6	15	39	40	217

First winter: The only sizeable count of this winter period was 107 (including 4 f/w) at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 6 (CDRH), no other count being above 4. Singles and small counts came from typical wetland sites across the county, with 4 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 13 (RANG), 3 adult in the Moatlands GP gull roost on Jan 18 (MFW) and a lingering adult at Padworth Lane GP on Jan 20 and 24 (KEM). Most aged birds were adults, apart from a f/w at Jubilee River on Feb 22 (BJH) and another f/w at Lower Farm on Mar 11 (CDRH). **Spring:** Two adults at Theale GPs from Mar 13 (RCr) were seen repeatedly there and at Hosehill Lake until at least Mar 31 (RCr); an adult reported as looking sickly was at Theale Main GP on Apr 17 (MFW), and the same or another pair of adults was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 20 (CDRH) and what was believed to be the March pair was still at Theale Main GP on Apr 27 (RCr). The only other records were of f/w + 2 s/w in the roost at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 19 (CDRH) and a third sumer at Moatlands GP on Apr 20 (KEM). **Summer:** Records from this period are usually immature birds and indeed there was a sub-adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 1 (CDRH), but the spring pair seems to have remained until May 8 at Theale Main GP (BU), with 1 adult at the same site on May 20 (RHS). A pair of adults was also seen at Queen Mother Reservoir Jun 3 and Horton GPs on Jun 4 (CDRH), making for either an attempted summering pair or a very late departure for breeding grounds elsewhere. More expected summering immature birds were seen at Queen Mother Reservoir,

with 2 first summer birds on Jun 6, a single first summer on Jun 14 and the sole July record of a first summer on Jul 2 (all CDRH). **Autumn:** 3 adults at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 9 (CDRH) were presumably returning birds, building to 7 adults at Colnbrook on Sep 17 (CDRH). Double figures were reached with 15 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 4 and the first juvenile was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 7 with 5 juveniles amongst 20 there on Oct 16 (all CDRH). Small numbers were seen further west with 3 at Crookham Common on Oct 5 (RRK), and single adults at Theale Main GP from Oct 26 and Englefield on Oct 29 (RCr), and Lower Farm from Nov 9 (NC). **Second winter:** Numbers had built up by the early winter, with 35 adults at Colnbrook on Nov 29 (CDRH), with singles further west in the Mootlands GP roost on the same date (MFW), at Lower Farm GP on Dec 2 (GSte) and 4 at Borough Marsh on Dec 6 (ABT). There was a count of 13 at Theale Main GP Dec 20 (RJB), but a return to high counts came at the end of the year with 62 adults at Colnbrook and 137 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 28 (CDRH).

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Spring: Three records, all at Queen Mother Reservoir: adult in roost Mar 22 (CDRH), s/w in from E before departing NE Mar 27 (CDRH) and an adult making a short visit on May 24, briefly settling on a buoy before circling up into the blue (CDRH).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant

Fifteen records of 92 birds. **Spring:** The first record was of 1 at Eversley GPs Apr 17, followed by 3 at Lavell's Lake Apr 26 (Rick Dawson, per FJC). There was a spate of records on May 13, starting with a single at Eversley GPs (JBS), followed by 2 at Lea Farm GP (EN), rising to 9 there in the afternoon (BTB *et al.*), 6 at Padworth Lane (RRi) and 3 at Theale Main GP (KEM, BU). There was another pulse of records in late spring, with a single at Eversley GPs on May 31 (GR), and on Jun 1 a single headed from Queen Mother Reservoir to Horton GPs in the early morning (MMc), followed by parties at Queen Mother Reservoir of 9 and 3 and a single late afternoon (CDRH). Another single was at Horton GPs on Jun 4 (CDRH), and a further bird flew East down Jubilee River on the evening of Jun 6 (KPD). **Summer:** A mid-summer record at Eversley GPs on Jun 26 (DPN), and an adult and first summer at Lower Farm GP on Jul 17 (SAG). **Autumn:** A substantial flock of 54 (53 adults and 1 juvenile) was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 6 (CDRH), with 26 lingering until evening (DJB), and 7 present early morning on Aug 7 may have been part of the same group (CDRH). The final records of the year were a juvenile at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 15 (CDRH) and another juvenile at Theale Main GP on Sep 16 (RCr, KEM).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant

Spring: Two records, beginning with 4 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 18 (JCh; NCl; JL; IW); 1 Queen Mother Reservoir on May 1 mid-morning (CDRH) and what was presumed to be the same bird perched with Common Terns at Horton GPs later the same day (CDRH). **Summer:** single at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 29 (CDRH, photographed) for 15 minutes to 1pm before departing E. **Autumn:** a single adult at Queen Mother Reservoir flew in from the SW but did not linger on Aug 29 (CDRH). There were no subsequent records.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common passage migrant and regular summer visitor in small numbers

Breeding or attempted breeding at 11 sites, although some traditional sites were not used.

Spring/Summer: The first record of the year was at Thatcham on Apr 5 (GT), with further arrivals at Eversley GP (GR) and 4 at Theale Main Pit (MO) on Apr 10. Over the remainder of the month there were records at 17 sites, including 2 on the canal in Newbury on Apr 24 (RBU), and a max count of 29 at Moatlands GP on Apr 26 (JA). There was 1 first summer at Hosehill Lake on May 9 (BU). The earliest sign of breeding was 6 possibly nesting at Twyford GPs on May 22 (DLoy), and 10 nests occupied at Eversley GPs on May 25 (JMC). At least 2 broods fledged 5 juveniles by Jun 24 on the raft at Summerleaze GP, with an additional 2 chicks produced by a late brood on Aug 5 (CDRH) and 16 adult and 10 juveniles at Thatcham GP on Jun 14 (IW; JL), while at least 4 juveniles were at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 28 (SAG). Only one nest and 2 young juveniles were reported from Hosehill Lake on Jul 6 (ABT, KEM), although they were ominously gone soon afterwards. A late but productive breeding attempt began at Lea Farm GP when 7–10 pairs suddenly appeared on Jun 19 (FJC), rising to 21 pairs by Jul 6, when only a single pair had been present nearby at Lavell's Lake previously in the season; at least 17 recently fledged juveniles were still present on Aug 25 (PBT). At Lower Farm, while 10 birds were regularly present, only two chicks were reported on Jul 18 (IW, JL), and at Padworth Lane GP 2 chicks were separately reported on Jul 9 (KEM) and recently fledged on Aug 1 (MFW), while a single nest at Woolhampton was abandoned after Jul 9 (KEM). **Autumn:** Post-breeding juveniles were seen at several locations where breeding did not take place, including Queen Mother Reservoir from Jul 27 (PBT). A total of 160 (flocks of 58, 52 & 36 plus further small parties of adults and juveniles) birds passed through Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 7, with smaller numbers on other dates (CDRH). An unusual location was a single reported from Cow Down on Jul 15 (ABT). The last records were of a locally-fledged juvenile at Lea Farm GP on Sep 16, one at Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 19 (both FJC), and 2 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 25 (NC).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant in varying numbers

Nine records of 14 birds. **Spring:** The first of the year was a single at Moatlands GP on Apr 17 (KEM); then 3 were seen at QMR on Apr 18 and 1 on Apr 19 (all CDRH), all passing through N or NE. The last spring record was one flying S over Moatlands GP Apr 25 (MFW). **Autumn:** An adult was seen circling Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 31 (CDRH). An adult at Dinton Pastures Sep 1 (ADB) was still present the following day (MO). Later records were all at Queen Mother Reservoir, with 3 juveniles on Sep 14, a single juvenile on Sep 16, and the last record of the year was of 2 juveniles on Oct 2 (all CDRH).

'COMMIC' TERN

Autumn: A flock of 38 terns at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 22 were probably mostly Common Terns (DJB) and at least some members of two mid-sized tern flocks at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 25 were thought to be Arctic Terns (MMc).

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*

Abundant urban resident

Only four counts of 100 or more: 120 at Bayliss Park on Nov 18, 100 at Summerleaze GP on Sep 6, 120 at White Place Farm, Cookham Dec 17 and 120 at Widbrook Common, Maidenhead on Sep 12 (all BDC).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor

There is a pronounced East/West Stock Dove divide in the county, as last year, the largest single count was approx 400 at Horton GP on Jan 10 (CDRH); this had dropped to 60 by Apr 20 (CDRH). Other noteworthy counts include a peak of 185 in one area of Windsor Great Park on Oct 11 (DJB) and at least 250 birds at Remenham Hill on Sep 2 (CDRH), with 200 recorded there 20 Oct (PBT). Central and Western parts of the County have had much smaller flocks reported, the exception being 45 birds on Mar 12 at Sulhamstead Abbots (TM) and 16 on Aug 8 at Burnthouse Lane (KEM). The majority of the rest of the reports were in single figures. Several reports of breeding activity including a pair in a nest hole at Inkpen on Apr 30 that were still there on Aug 16 but failed to produce any young (LS) and an owl box being used at Marsh Benham June 21 (IW JL).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

There were 18 counts of between 100 and 499 birds, while only 10 counts of over 500 birds. The largest count, in excess of 2000, at Great Meadow Pond was on Mar 1 (DJB). Flocks in excess of 1500 were recorded at Cold Harbour, on Feb 9 (DJB) and Englefield on Feb 8 (RCr), 1231 were recorded in 3 fields at Long Lane, Cookham on Dec 20 (BDC). Between 20 and 30 were recorded in every month through the year at Lower farm (NC; RGS, JL; IW *et al.*). An Albino bird was seen with a flock of c200 at Combe Wood on Mar 11 and 13 (CDRH; DJB). First recording of winter migration was on Oct 17 with a flock of 80+ over Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). 850 were counted in 20 mins over Woose Hill Nov 2 (PBT). 30 birds flying south over Lower farm on Dec 5 (IW JL) was the last record of migration.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread resident

Although the dove is widespread throughout the county, there were only 17 counts of over 10 birds, the largest four being 52 at Long Lane Cookham on Dec 20 (BDC), 43 at Dorney waters on Dec 23 (BDC), 36 seen at Waltham St Lawrence on Sep 19 (PNe) and numbers of up to 18 visited regularly through out the year to a garden in Twyford (SPA). Four opportunistic birds were seen feeding on spilt pig food at Hell Corner, Inkpen, Mar 16 (LS). Several records of nest building were submitted including a very keen bird seen carrying nesting material into a Twyford garden on 28 Dec (WB).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Widely, but now only thinly distributed and declining summer visitor

Reported from 15 locations in the year. The first bird being reported on Apr 26 at Brompton GP (RCr), a pair were then seen at the same location on May 22 (MFW) with the final

report being of 2 birds flying west there on Jul 18 (GEW). Nearby at Woolhampton GP 1 was singing from Willows on Apr 28 (KGW), then again on Apr 29 in the 'cormorant tree' (KGW and NC). By May 2 a second bird had arrived, both being seen together on overhead wires (GEW). The 2 birds were regularly seen and heard purring in the vicinity throughout June and July (KEM; PH; MFW; GT, RRK; CDRH; AA), the last record being one bird seen on Aug 1 (MFW). Also nearby, at Midgham GP a single was reported on 5 occasions between May 9 and Aug 14 (KEM). One was reported calling at Burghfield Gravel Pits on three occasions between May 24 and June 20 (JA). In the East of the county, a bird was reported at Hogoak Lane, West of Foliejon Park, several times, initially on May 19 (MSFW) and then reported purring on three occasions from May 3 till 16 (MSFW and PSB). Four birds were reported to the north of Foliejon Park feeding with a small flock of Stock Doves at Walkers Farm on Jun 28 (SA). 2 birds were reported in the same area on Jul 10 "behaving as if a pair" (MSFW) with the last report from that area of a single bird purring from wires on Jul 18 (SA). One was also seen on wires by the railway line at Ruscombe May 10 (ABT), again May 22 (PBT) and in a dead oak tree on May 25 (DJB). Single sightings include one at Great Shefford May 25 (RF), one at Hungerford May 31 (LS), one in Mortimer Jul 18 (PD); one at Padworth Lane GP May 6 (MFW), one with Woodpigeons in a setaside field at Peasmore (MJT); one at Snelsmore Common perched in an oak on May 29 (IW), one in the private grounds of Warfield house May 25 (MSFW) and one singing on Thatcham Marsh May 17 (IW; JL). There were no reports of nest building and no reports of fledgling birds.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Common but localised resident in east of county, uncommon elsewhere

The largest single flock was of 150+ birds seen flying out from Windsor Great Park at Old Windsor on Aug 17 (DJB). There were 23 other records of flocks greater than 20 being seen, all of them in the Eastern side of the county, these include; 78 flying over Maidenhead centre Oct 11 (BDC); 67 at Wraysbury GP Dec 10 (FCC); 49 at Datchet Jan 24 apparently flying to roost (SLF); 39 at Malt Hill, Warfield Nov 8 (MSFW) and 30 over Hurley Dec 8 (SJF). Although this bird is regularly seen in the east,, it was almost totally absent from the west of the county apart from 2 sightings: a possible bird was seen flying around Wash Common in Newbury on Jan 6 (TPo), and a lone bird seen and heard almost every day from early Sep to Nov 22 in Newbury (TV).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Common summer visitor (Amber Listed)

The first bird was reported calling for approximately an hour from pines trees in South Ascot on Apr 8 (DJB) and by the end of the month birds had been reported from over 30 different sites. By the end of the summer, records were submitted of birds in almost 90 different locations across the county, including, on July 5, a juvenile being fed by Reed Warblers at Great Meadow Pond (DJB). The majority of records were of single birds, the exceptions being 3 birds at Basildon Park Jun 7 (CWW), 2 at Bowdown Woods May 8 (MRD), 2 at Hamstead Lock 22 May (IW); 2 at Dinton Pastures on 24 May (JCLa), 2 reported on May 13, 14 and 16 at Lower Farm (NC, JL), up to 4 birds between Wishmoor and Caesars Camp on May 25 (DJB), 3 at Thatcham Marsh on Apr 25 and 26 (DJW; IW; JL), 3 at Kintbury on May 4 (RHar), 2 at Cookham May 26 (JLP), 2 calling a few hundred meters apart Winkfield Row (MSFW). 2 birds were seen on several occasions at Woolhampton (IS, Rang; TBu). The last record for the year was of one at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Aug 11 (LB).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon but widespread resident which has shown signs of increase in recent years (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

The 207 records came from 61 sites, 32 in West Berkshire, 15 in Mid Berkshire and 14 in the east of the county. Generally, the species was recorded wherever there is suitable habitat. The great majority of the reports were of single birds and many of the sites featured only once in the records, so many of these reports might be of wandering birds. Reports of 2 birds came from 9 locations. The table below shows the number of birds reported month by month. Comparing this table with those for the last few years, it appears that numbers dropped significantly in 2009.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	11	13	13	8	10	8	6	7	5	10	7	7
Number of birds	13	16	15	9	12	10	8	11	6	11	8	7

Breeding: A pair were seen regularly from Jan until end Aug in and around a nest box at Eversley GP (MO) but there was no confirmed breeding success. At Dinton Pastures, a pair used a nest box from May until Aug (MO) and 3 birds, assumed to be the pair plus one fledged juvenile, were present there on Aug 31 (MWh). Near Kintbury an adult was feeding 2 or more young in a box on Jun 12 (GDS). A pair near Hungerford, Newton were feeding young on Jul 1 (JLe). The Pang Valley Barn Owl Group recorded 30 barn owl chicks which were believed to have survived to the fledging stage. Fifty two boxes were surveyed in the Pang Valley, Barton Court at Kintbury, Elcot Farm near Kintbury and Little Hidden Farm near Hungerford.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Widespread and locally common resident

There were 236 records from 60 sites, 15 in the west, 15 from Mid Berkshire and 30 from East Berkshire, suggesting that there has been little change in distribution over the last several years. The sum of the maxima of all 60 sites is 89 giving us a minimum number present at those sites, but probably many sites went unrecorded. The table below gives some indication of the seasonal variation in numbers reported. It is not clear from the records whether the general decline of this species in England is reflected in Berkshire.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	10	11	16	11	15	10	7	9	8	12	7	9
Min. number of birds	12	13	27	17	16	16	10	13	12	16	7	10

Most reports were of single birds but there were 36 reports of 2 together and 3 were seen together at Padworth Lane on Mar 31 (KEM, RHS), at Eversley GPs on Jul 4 (BMa), at Bisham on Sep 24 (PNe) and at Chapel Row, near Bucklebury, on Oct 31 (HEB).

Breeding: throughout the year there were 22 sites where more than 1 bird was present, and during the breeding season there were 13 sites where more than 1 was present, but we do not know if most of these bred. Confirmed breeding was reported as follows: at Eversley GPs, where there were 4-5 territories, an adult was feeding 3 downy young on a branch on Jun 25 (SW); near Cookham on May 25 an adult and juvenile were seen (JLP); in Woolley Park a fledgling was seen sitting on a post on Jul 18 (GDS); 2 adults and a juvenile were

reported at Padworth Lane GP on Aug 7 (PD); at a regularly occupied site near Inkpen a juvenile was seen on several dates in July (LS); a downy juvenile was seen on Bradfield golf course on Jul 2 (WB).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat including urban areas

Of 198 records, 41 were in East Berkshire, 19 in Mid Berkshire and 45 in West Berkshire. They were reported in every month, but less often in late winter and in September, and most often in June, when fledglings and juveniles are numerous. Most reports were of calling birds, usually singly, sometimes pairs, and there were several reports of 3 or 4 birds but most observers gave no details of the circumstance. 2 males and 1 female were reported near Wishmoor on Jun 28 (BDC) and 2 males and 1 female were at Eversley on Nov 8 (SPe).

Breeding: Calling adults were present in many places on many dates (so we can assume that many bred), but apart from the birds at Wishmoor on Jun 28 (above) there were no reports of pairs in the breeding season. There were 12 reports of juveniles between May 23, when fledglings were calling at Brightwalton (GDS), and Aug 13, when a juvenile was heard in a garden at Caversham Heights (MRWS). The other locations where there were juveniles were Compton Downs (MFW, PBT), Upper Lambourn (ABT), Inkpen Common (LS), Snelsmore Common (GDS), Binfield (MSFW), two sites in Windsor Forest (DJB), Sandhurst Military College (PJC) and Wishmoor (PJC).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Rare resident; scarce winter visitor

There were no breeding reports, though a bird was heard singing during the night of May 9 by a Bird Race team (KEM; KS; NR). The usual West Berkshire roost site held 10–11 birds during January (CDRH).

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Most of the 37 records came from the West Ilsley area **First winter:** as many as 10 birds had been recorded in the West Ilsley area in December 2008 and most or all of these were still present in January 2009 with reports of 7 on 1 (NR), 8 on 3 (GF), 7 on 10 (KEM), and eight reports of 4 birds or more up to 21 (MO). They were reported throughout Feb and Mar, with maxima of 7 on Feb 10 (KEM), 6 on Feb 11 (KGW) and 5 on Mar 13 (NC). At Woolley Down, where birds had been present in December 2008, 3 were seen on Jan 25 (GDS). The latest reports were of 1 at Hodcott Down on Apr 18 (ABT) and 1 in the Lowbury Hill area on Apr 21 (ABT). **Second winter:** in the West Ilsley area, 2 were seen in Dec 26 (MJT) and 1 on 28 (MFW).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Regular summer visitor in small numbers to suitable habitat (Red Listed)

There were 59 records from 12 locations. In the west/central parts of the county reports came from the following (with number of records per site shown in brackets): Wickham Heath (1), Snelsmore Common (12), Crookham/Greenham Commons (5), Bucklebury Common (7) and the Mortimer/Padworth area (9). In East Berkshire, there were 12 separate

sites, namely Windsor Forest, Gorrick Wood, Wildmoor Heath, and 9 sites in Swinley forest, providing a total of 25 records. A survey of the Swinley Forest SPA located 48 churring males (PJC; CRG; DJS; DJB) a further 8 churring males were located in South Ascot on June 2 (DJB). The number and situations of records are similar to those for the last several years, suggesting that the Berkshire population is stable. The earliest report was from Wildmoor Heath on May 8 (DJS), and churring birds had been located on all the areas mentioned above by May 30. There were 21 May records, 25 in June, 9 in July and 3 in August. The latest record was at Wishmoor Bottom on Aug 28 (DJB). PJC organised a survey of the Sandhurst military ranges on Jun 28 which located 12 territories and perhaps as many as 17 churring birds. Across the county at least 67 different birds seem to have been present but possibly it was as many as 91. **Breeding:** Based on song for a period of a week or more, there appear to have been at least 43 territories in Berkshire, with possibly 72 singing or displaying males altogether. Only 9 females were reported so it is uncertain how many breeding pairs there were. There was no better evidence of breeding in Berkshire but in Bramshill Forest, Hampshire breeding was confirmed very close to the county boundary.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common though declining passage migrant and summer visitor

This was a bad year in terms both of flock size and breeding evidence and is consistent with national BTO Breeding Bird Survey results indicating a steady decline. There were 320 records fairly evenly spread across the county. **Spring:** The earliest report was of 1 passing west over Moatlands GP on Apr 4 (KEM) and on the following day there were 3 at Burghfield GP (RHS) and 1 at Woolhampton GP (MJD), then there was a week without records until 2 at Burghfield GP on 17 (WFW) after which birds were recorded on most days. Flocks of 100+ were seen on 17 occasions between Apr 29, when there were 130 at Moatlands GP (RCr), and Jun 21, when there were 150+ at Lower Farm GP (IW; JL). The biggest flocks were 350 at Theale GPs on May 7 (RCr) and 300+ at Lower Farm GPs on Jun 6 (NC; IW; JL). **Breeding:** birds were present throughout mid-summer, e.g. 200 moving south over Dorney Wetlands on Jul 7 (DJB), 100+ at Lower Farm GP on Jul 11 (NC; IW) and c75 over Lower Early on Jul 17 (DJMi) but apart from the presence of the species there was almost no evidence of breeding other than a pair mating over Newbury on May 9 (SAG). There were two reports of low level screaming parties, which might have been recently fledged local juveniles, at Whiteknights Park on Jul 20 (RCr) and at Kintbury on Jul 21 (LS). **Autumn:** the main return passage peaked between Aug 1, when there was a flock of 60+ over Lower Farm GP (MO), and Aug 5, when 52 were feeding over the Jubilee River (BDC) but these flocks were the biggest autumn gatherings reported. After that small numbers occurred almost daily until Sep 6, the biggest flock in that period being 17 at Moatlands GP on Aug 30 (JA). Latest reports were of 3 at Woodley on Sep 11 (GEW), 1 south over Horton GPs on 20 (CDRH).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Common but thinly distributed resident (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

There were 486 records of kingfisher. They are present throughout the county wherever there is suitable waterside habitat, so the fact that, over the course of the year, they were recorded at 25 sites in West Berkshire, 38 in Mid Berkshire and 47 in East Berkshire largely reflects the distribution of suitable streams, rivers and gravel pits. The population appears to be stable (in line with BTO data for the whole UK) and Atlas data indicate that all of the county's

rivers are occupied. **Breeding:** During the breeding season (mid-March to mid-August), 62 sites were occupied (*i.e.* at least 1 record). There were reports of 2 birds together, perhaps pairs, from Padworth Lane GP, Woolhampton GP, Virginia Water, Lavell's Lake, Emm Brook (Wokingham), Hurley, Eversley GPs, Cookham and Pingewood GP. At Hurley on Mar 22 a male was seen displaying to a female (JClA). Single birds were carrying food at Woolhampton GP on May 6 and at Padworth Lane GP on Jul 9 (both KEM). A pair plus a juvenile were at Cookham on May 26 (JLP). The only major area without breeding season records was the Wraybury complex (although there were 8 records outside the breeding period).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident (Amber Listed)

The species is most abundant in the east of the county, although the 540 records came from 140 National Grid squares throughout Berkshire. They were mostly of 1 or 2 birds but there were 25 records of 4 birds or more. The large number of records and high counts suggests that this species is doing well in the county, which supports the BBS figure of a 45% increase since 1995 in the south east of England. The sites producing the highest counts were Jubilee River (16 on Jan 5 and Mar 24, BDC), Swinley Forest (8 between Caesars Camp and Devils Highway on Mar 21, DJB), Maidenhead area (7 at Thrift Wood on Apr 13 and 7 at Crazies Hill on Nov 11, BDC) and Greenham Common (6 on Aug 27, RPy). Counts of 5 were reported at the following sites: Little Sandhurst on Feb 24 (PNe); South Ascot on Apr 8 (DJB); Warren Row on May 9 (BDC). The highest counts in the west were 4 at Theale GP on Jun 19 (RCr), 4 at Snelsmore Common on Jul 24 (IW JL) and 3 at Welford Military Base on Dec 24 (RCla). **Breeding:** There was no clear confirmation of breeding. However there were reports of adults with juveniles at Theale Main Pit on Jun 19 (RCr), at Lavell's Lake on Jul 7 (FJC), near Inkpen on Jul 13 (LS) and at The Myrke, Eton on Jul 19 (BDC). In the west, 3 unaccompanied juveniles were seen on Jul 5 at Snelsmore Common (IW JL) and were 8 reports of independent juveniles from East Berkshire.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and seemingly increasing resident

Of the 615 records submitted, most were of 1 or 2 birds, but there were 85 reports of 3 or 4 together (usually family groups) and higher numbers from area counts, *e.g.* 14 around Swinley Brick Pits on Dec 28 (DJB) and 10 around Little Sandhurst on Feb 24 (PNe). The records indicate that the species is abundant in suitable habitat across the county. **Breeding:** There were reports from across the county of nests with young (seen at 13 sites between May 20 and Jun 5) and juveniles (35 records between May 29 and end of August). Atlas surveys in 2007–11 confirmed breeding in 274 of Berkshire's 394 tetrads.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon and declining resident (Red Listed)

There were a total of 30 records (including one 'probable') from 18 sites, 8 in West Berkshire, 5 in Mid Berkshire and 5 in East Berkshire. For comparison, there were 25 sites in 2008; but the drop from 12 sites in East Berkshire in 2008 to 5 this year is worrying. The majority of the reports were of 1 or 2 birds from areas away from large woods and usually close to water. **Breeding:** drumming was heard at Kintbury on Feb 14 (RGS), at Cheapside, Ascot on Mar 20 (PM) and Apr 19 (SA), at Greenham Common on Apr 1 (NC) and at Aston on

Apr 21 (ANS). There were no sites at which birds of both sexes were recorded, together or separately, so we do not know where pairs might have been, and there were no other reports of breeding behaviour. This year's records suggest that the decline in the species continues in Berkshire. Nationally, it is longer common enough to assess in the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

Locally common summer visitor in areas of suitable habitat, uncommon in winter (Schedule 1 and Red Listed)

The heaths and commons across Berkshire support a nationally significant population of this species, which was present between Jan 20 and Nov 6. Disappointingly, breeding was proved only in East Berkshire, where it is locally common. **West Berkshire:** At the main site of Greenham/Crookham Common 1 singing on Jan 20 (JLe), then 1–2 singing Feb–Mar (MO) though 8 found Mar 21 (IW; JL), 3 singing Apr 11 (IW; JL) and 6+ Apr 27 (JL), then only 1–2 reported until 6 counted Jun 27, including 1 in song (SAG), though no breeding was confirmed (3 pairs were confirmed in 2005). There was just 1 further report of 1 Oct 25 (NC), suggesting under-reporting. At Snelsmore Common 1–2 recorded between Apr 2 (IW) and Oct 14 (IW; JL) and 2 singing males held 2 territories (MO), with 3 birds noted on May 29 (IW) and Jul 5 (IW; JL), though again no confirmation of breeding. Only 1 report from Bucklebury Common, a former breeding site, where there was 1 May 24 (RF). Away from the commons: 1 Paices Wood Mar 21 (JLe) and 1 in song Combe Hill Jun 23 (RGS). **Mid Berkshire:** In the Ufton Nervet area there were 3 Feb 14 (PH) followed by 1–3, including 1 in song, to Jul 5 (MO), then 4 Sep 10 and 2 Sep 19 (PH). There were 2 in song at Decoy Heath Apr 5 (PD); 2 at Aldermaston AWE May 18 (SRi) and 1 at Padworth Common May 6 (PH). **East Berkshire:** The county's Woodlark stronghold remains in the Swinley Forest/Sandhurst area, a district which has benefited from both diligent searching on the part of several observers and many casual observations. The first record came from Wishmoor Bottom, to which 8 had returned, on Feb 25 (BAJC). A survey of Swinley Forest from Mar 22–Jun 28 revealed 28 territories with breeding confirmed at 2 of these (PJC; DJB; CRG) whilst nearby Wildmoor Heath supported 1 territory (Mar 28–Jun 4, DJS). Only 3 reports came from Swinley Forest after June: 1 Aug 14 (DLoy), 6 at Caesar's Camp Oct 22 (AEL) and 2 Wishmoor Bottom Nov 6 (DJB). Elsewhere in East Berkshire 1 pair was feeding young at the nest in Swinley Park on Apr 24 (DJB) and in the South Ascot area there were 4 territories during the spring/summer with the first sightings involving 1 pair plus singing male at on Feb 21 (DJB; PM).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Common but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Outside the breeding season 18 counts were made of flocks of more than 100, some associated with hard weather, with numbers similar to recent years. Between Mar–Jul records came from 44 locations in West Berkshire, 22 in Mid Berkshire and 39 in East Berkshire, though there remained the customary difficulty in confirming breeding. **First winter:** Hard weather resulted in some significant flocks across the county which had disappeared by Mar: 100 Englefield Jan 2 (RCr), 300 Bury Down Jan 6 (RRi), 120 Upper Lambourn Jan 17 (ABT), c100 Cold Harbour Feb 6 (DJB), 300+ Cold Harbour Feb 9 (DJB), c100 White Waltham Airfield Feb 9 (DJB), 142 Bottle Lane, Binfield Feb 16 (PBT) and 120 Englefield Feb 21 (RCr). Two further sites produced notable counts: 60 at Wash Common Jan 4 (SAG) and 70 at Pangbourne Sewage Works Jan 15 (GJSu). **Spring/Summer:** Breeding was confirmed in 13 tetrads in the Atlas surveys during 2009 and in 93 over the full survey period, similar to

the 90 tetrads in the Atlas survey 20 years earlier. Some detailed records received were: a pair visiting a nest site at Castle Royal Golf Course, Kiln Green on Jun 16 (BDC); 2 carrying food and a juvenile seen along The Ridgeway, Compton, where there were also 17 in song on Jun 18 (DJB); 1 carrying food at Hyde Farm, Pinkneys Green on Jun 25 (BDC); and 2 recently fledged juveniles found on the landing strip at Englefield on Jun 27 (RJB). Also an isolated juvenile at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 17 (BMA) may have been raised locally. On farmland in the Waltham St Lawrence area only 2 were encountered during a 2 hour walk on Apr 29 (DLoy). Localities where 9+ songsters appeared to be present included Colnbrook (JMP), Englefield (RCr), Remenham (DJB), The Ridgeway, Compton (DJB), the Widbrook Common area (WAS) and Woodlands Park, Maidenhead (DJB). Although not reported, many parts of the downs surely held concentrations of singing birds. **Autumn/Second winter:** Flocks began forming during September and peaked with 350 at Englefield on Oct 26 (RCr). Nine further counts of 100+ birds were distributed across 7 sites: 150+ Compton Downs Sep 25 (DJB), 100 Englefield Oct 1 and Oct 8 (RCr), 100+ Woodlands Park, Maidenhead Oct 2 (DJB), 110 Englefield Dec 4 (RCr), 100+ Eastbury Fields, Lambourn Dec 5 (ABT), 180+ Englefield Dec 19 (RCr), 144 Cookham Dec 20 (BDC) and c300 Colnbrook Dec 22 (CDRH). As is usual, flocks were widespread: those at additional sites included 50+ Cold Harbour Oct 31 (DJB), 50 near Foliejon Park Nov 8 (MSFW), 75 at Upper Lambourn Nov 15 (ABT), 60 at Hurley Lock Dec 17 (PNe), 50 at Hodcott House, West Ilsley Dec 28 (ABT) and 60 at Purley Dec 28 (JLe). Autumn song was heard at Widbrook Common on Sep 21 (BDC), Dorney Wetlands on Oct 23 (BDC) and Cold Harbour on Oct 31 (DJB).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring and especially autumn passage brought good numbers, and it appears that over 150 pairs bred in known nest holes. Records were received for 34 locations, 11 in West Berkshire, 9 in Mid Berkshire and 14 in East Berkshire, with improved information on breeding. **Spring:** The earliest arrivals appeared across 3 sites on Mar 12, with 5+ Thatcham Station (RAH), 2 at Woolhampton GP (KEM) and 1 (with a short tail) Horton GP (CDRH), followed by 1–6 at 14 sites until an increase on Mar 20 with 14 Padworth Lane GP (KEM) then 18 Woolhampton GP Mar 21 (KEM) and 12 Padworth Lane GP Mar 21 (PD). Numbers were boosted at the end of the month with 60 Woolhampton GP Mar 28 (AA) and Mar 29 (SNP), 30 Lea Farm/Lavell's Lake Mar 30 (FJC), 25 Lea Farm Mar 31 (PBT) and 120+ Woolhampton GP Mar 31 (RRK). Thereafter flocks on passage were evident widely until May 8, mostly of under 100, the larger ones including 200 at Woolhampton GP on Apr 25 (IW;JL), and 100–150+ at Lower Fm GP on 6 dates between Apr 18 and May 8 (MO), and 100 at Thatcham on Apr 25 (BJW). (A flock of 500 hirundines at Theale Main GP on Apr 17 was alternately recorded as Swallows or nearly all Sand Martins, while KEM noted 30+ Sand Martins and 100+ Swallows.) **Summer/Breeding:** Breeding activity was observed from Mar to Aug at 13–14 sites, where it appears that over 150 pairs bred. Sites are treated here from west to east. Near Newbury Station at least 3 holes were being prospected on Apr 19 (SAG). At Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre (IW;JL) 5+ were entering holes on Jun 14 (IW;JL) and 4 on Jun 28 (SAG). At Copy Hold Quarry, Hermitage there were c70 occupied holes on Jun 23 and 45 birds were present Aug 5 (IW;JL). At Midgham GP 2 were entering holes on May 17 (MFW). At Hosehill Lake the wall was first used on Mar 21 (BU) and 6 were entering it on Mar 23 (RCr). It was last used on Aug 17 and an inspection on Aug 29 found 29 nests (BU). At Lea Farm up to 10 nest holes in the wall were visited on Mar 31 (FJC; PBT) but no further reports. At Lavell's Lake there were 30 at the wall on Apr 15 (FJC) and 20+ entering holes May 7 (RCW) but again no further reports. At Knowl Hill 5 pairs were carrying food to nests on July 31 (BDC). On the

Berkshire side of Cookham Bridge 5 were entering holes in the brick retaining wall on May 3 (DF) and 8 were feeding juveniles on July 1 (BDC). At the Odney Club, Cookham 4 were using pipe holes for nests on May 28 (BDC). At an unspecified site in Cookham, 4 holes were in use on Jun 15 (WAS). Under the Boulters Inn Hotel, Raymill Island, Maidenhead 3 were entering holes on May 2 (DF). At Blackpott's Viaduct, Jubilee River 6 were using pipe holes for nests on May 22 (BDC) and 8 nests were located on Jun 16 (WAS). Finally, at Pockocks Lane, Jubilee River 6 were taking food into bridge pipe entrances on July 19 (BDC). Numbers began building up at Lower Farm GP from 75+ on May 26 (NC) to 100+ by Jun 6 (MO) and peaked at 200+ Jun 16–17 (GSte; GJS). At Theale Main GP 80 had gathered on Jun 25 (RCr). **Autumn:** Local birds or migrants were recorded in good numbers, particularly in West Berkshire. Higher counts in July–August started with 100 Woolhampton GP Jul 4 (AA), then a run from Lower Farm GP where 200+ Jul 11 (MO), 100+ Jul 18–19 (MO), 150+ Jul 26 (NC), 100–150 Jul 29 (GSTE) and 100+ Aug 1 (MO), and finally 130 Moatlands GP Aug 26 (RCr). Unusually high numbers occurred in September with 7 counts exceeding 50: 150 Moatlands GP on 3rd (RCr), 50+ Moatlands GP on 6th (JA), 200 Woolhampton GP on 13th (MFW), 50+ Burghfield GP on 13th (JA), 50+ Woolhampton GP on 15th (KEM), c50 Hosehill Lake on 17th (KEM) and 60 Hosehill Lake on 18th (RCr). The latest sighting was 3 with 2 House Martins at Arthur Jacob LNR on Oct 4 (CDRH). At Woolhampton GP 20 were taking insects on the tops of tall poplars on Sep 11 (GEW).

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring: A series of singles across the county began on Mar 19 at Freeman's Marsh (RF) and Borough Marsh (CDRH), increasing to 4 at Lower Farm Trout Lake on Mar 28 (SAG) and 14 perched together at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 29 Mar (FJC). Numbers stayed low (1–20) for a fortnight until 50+ Lower Farm GP Apr 14 (NC) followed by 60+ Burghfield GP Apr 18 (JA). (A flock of 500 hirundines at Theale Main GP on Apr 17 was alternately recorded as Swallows or nearly all Sand Martins, while KEM noted 30+ Sand Martins and 100+ Swallows.) Only modest numbers (1–50+) represented the remainder of a rather undefined passage through much of May aside from 100 Theale Main GP May 7 (RCr). **Summer/Breeding:** Following the appeal for breeding records in the 2005 Report, when only 2 instances were confirmed, and the efforts of the tetrad survey, breeding was confirmed in 42 tetrads in 2009; some details reported follow. At Spencers Wood 3 pairs were rebuilding old nests in stables on Apr 23 (GBro). A pair were visiting the usual nest site in a porch in Hell Corner Farm, Inkpen on Apr 28, where 1 earlier in song on Apr 13 (LS) and later 4 juveniles being fed on Jul 10 (LS). At least 4 pairs were nesting in stables at Moor Farm, Holyport on May 28 (DJB). A party of 42 at Great Meadow Pond on Jun 7 (DJB) was a high number for early summer. Successful breeding occurred at Woodgreen Farm near Basildon Park where 3 fledglings were perched on wires on Jun 13 (GDS). 4 were present at Lambden's Farm, Beenham on Jun 16 (LS). Several pairs were found breeding in buildings by the church at Remenham on Jun 17 (DJB). Survey work at Ashampstead on Jun 21 yielded a juvenile (PBT) and at Long Lane, Cookham, a party of 17 included at least 2 juveniles on Jun 25 (BDC). At Warren Farm, Sreatley parents were watched feeding chicks in a garage at the side of a house on Jun 28 (SPA). Juveniles presumed to be of local origin were present among 28 at Ferry Bridge, Cookham on Jul 1 (BDC). A pair were feeding 5 recently fledged juveniles at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead on July 7 (DJB). A group of 22 at Juddmonte Fm, Warren Row on Jul 31 included juveniles (BDC). **Autumn:** There were many reports of smaller numbers (1–30) between July–October and no counts above 200 were submitted. Counts exceeding 100 were spread across 7 sites: 100+ feeding with House Martins over fields at Frogmill, Hurley Jul 29 (DJB), 100 Englefield Aug 25 and

130 Sep 1 (RCr), 120 Woolhampton GP Sep 6 (MJD), 200 through Lavell's Lake Sep 8 (FJC) and 150 through nearby Hurst the same day (ADB), 100 through Combe Bottom Sep 13 (IW; JL), 150+ Burghfield GP Sep 13 (JA) and 100 Woolhampton the same day (MFW). In October groups of 1–25 birds passed through until the last sighting of 2 at Lavell's Lake on Oct 20 (FJC), an unusually early date.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Locally common (but declining) summer visitor and common passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A good clutch of breeding records helped to lift an undistinguished year for numbers on passage. **Spring:** Passage started with 1 Padworth Lane GP Mar 20 (KEM; RCr) and 2 Greenham Common Mar 21 (GF) then a trickle of 1–3 until 10 Twyford GP Apr 7 (ADB). Numbers remained modest (1–50) in April and May except for c75 White Waltham SF Apr 27 (DJB), 125+ Lower Farm GP May 26 (NC) and c150 Hurst Green GP May 27 (DJB).

Summer/Breeding: The tetrad survey produced more breeding records than usual with breeding confirmed in 42 tetrads; some details received follow. A pair was sitting in the regular nest at Charvil on Apr 20 (DBI). A nest at Englefield Estate Office was being built from mud on May 5 (GDS). At Eton Wick 8 late arrivals were building nests on a new site on May 21 (KJo). At least 4 pairs were nesting on buildings at Eton College May 27 (DJB). A pair were building a nest at the Odney Club, Cookham on May 28 (BDC); only 6 pairs were known to be breeding in Cookham in 2009 (BDC). Nests were in use at Stanford Dingley on May 31 (BAJC). At Hambledon Lock House at least 7 pairs were nesting on Jun 17 (DJB). A nest was being used at Warren Farm, Streatley on Jun 28 (SPA). Some juveniles at Mortimer on Jul 18 had been raised near Mortimer Station (PD). At Frogmill, Hurley, in addition to 100+ feeding over fields, birds were visiting 15 occupied nests on buildings, with further nests suspected nearby, Jul 29 (DJB). 20 were active around buildings at Church Farm, Lower Basildon, Aug 1 (DLoy). Food was being taken to a nest at Windsor Castle on Aug 14, where many nests had fallen from (or been knocked off) the castle ramparts (BDC). 3 nests were in use near Lough Down, Streatley on Aug 23 and the last 4 fledglings left on Sep 15 (GP). Besides the Hurley record, the highest summer counts were 100+ Burghfield GPs Jun 6 (JA) and “many hundreds” at Lower Farm GP Jun 16 (GSte). **Autumn:** This perhaps fell a bit below par. Numbers through August only rose to 100 on Aug 25 at Englefield, which were mostly juveniles (RCr), followed by 100 at the Downgate Pub, Hungerford Aug 30 (RGS) and 150+ Moatlands GP Aug 30 (JA), and finally a surge to 500+ Lower Farm GP Aug 31 (NC). Counts of 200+ in September consisted of 200 near the Sonning Aquatic Research Centre Sep 8 (RCW), 200 Woolhampton GP Sep 13 (MFW), 250+ Moatlands GP and 500+ at adjacent Theale Main GP on Sep 15 (KEM), 200 high up with a Sparrowhawk at Cookham Moor Sep 21 (BDC), and 200 Woolhampton GP Sep 21 (KEM). Passage tailed off to 1–20 between Sep 26 and Oct 11 before the final sighting a month later of 1 at Twyford on Nov 11 (SPA).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Locally common but declining summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Ominously, the information received for 2009 only indicated about 33 singing males/territories, compared with 74 in 2005, an apparent decline of over 50%, and breeding was confirmed in only 2 tetrads. **Spring/Summer:** The first birds arrived on Apr 6 with 4 at Wishmoor Bottom (PJC) and the last evidence on breeding grounds concerned at least 1 on Jul 26 at Snelsmore Common (IW; JL). Three records can be attributed to spring migrants: 1 on Greenham Common on Apr 11 (RRK), another there departed to N on May 2 (NC) and 1 was at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 14 (CDRH). Breeding was confirmed in only 2

tetrads (SU86M and SU86S in Swinley Forest), though singing males were probably holding a total of 30–33 territories in the whole county. In West Berkshire 4 sites were occupied. Snelmore Common held 7 territories on May 29, with 8 singing on Jun 16 (IW). At nearby Arlington Grange 1 was singing on Jun 26 (IW). The status of 1 at Donnington Castle on May 19 (JCh) is not clear. At Bucklebury Common 3 were singing on Apr 22 (NC) and 1 singing on May 24 (RF). In Mid Berkshire the only site occupied was Padworth Common, which held 2 territories on May 2 (TGB). In East Berkshire 4 sites (counting Swinley Forest as 1) were occupied. One was noted at Gorrick Wood Plantation on Jun 27 (ABT). A survey of Sandhurst Royal Military Academy land revealed 9 territories over the period April–June (PJC). In Swinley Forest, a maximum of 8 were found singing on May 22 (DJB), which did not include 1 at Broadmoor Bottom on May 31 (PJC). In South Ascot, a bird calling on Jun 2 was probably holding territory (DJB). **Autumn:** Migrants or birds dispersing from breeding areas were identified at 5 sites: 1 Bagnor Cress Beds Jul 9 (JL), 1 Wraysbury GP Aug 17 (CDRH), 1 Colnbrook Sep 5 (CDRH), 1 overhead at Thatcham Sep 6 (IW;JL), 1 in brassica crop at Horton GP Sep 12, where 2 Sep 17–19, and 1 still there Sep 21–24 (all CDRH).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common migrant and winter visitor and locally common summer resident (Amber Listed)

Records involved 88 locations, 35 in West Berkshire, 19 in Mid Berkshire and 34 in East Berkshire. January–March: As usual, counts were relatively low, only 6 being over 40: 45 Queen Mother Reservoir Jan 24 (CDRH), 50 Horton GP Feb 2 probably displaced from Queen Mother Reservoir by snow (CDRH), 54 Great Meadow Pond Feb 8 increasing to 80 Feb 15 (DJB), 41+ North Heath Feb 24 (IW) and 100 Kintbury Marsh 6 (JD), a high number for this period. **Summer/Breeding:** As with the Tree Pipit it is surprising, as well as disappointing, that no breeding was confirmed. Tenuous indications were provided by 1 performing a display flight at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 13 (BMA), 2 singing at Seven Barrows on Jun 2 (RJB), 1 singing on Compton Down on Jun 18 (DJB), 2 singing at Wellbottom Down on Jun 20 (DJB), 2 at Weathercock Hill on Jul 31 giving alarm calls suggesting young were nearby (DJB), and the occurrence of a fully-fledged juvenile at Greenham Common on Aug 13 (CDRH). Small numbers passed through in the first part of April, with 10 Borough Marsh on Apr 1 (ABT) and 8 The Long Walk, Windsor the same day (RHay), then 16 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 11 (DJB). Apart from 15+ at Lower Farm GP on Jun 26 (MO), only very small numbers were reported from May to August. **Sep–Dec:** A large influx occurred in September, evidenced by 40 Hyde Farm Sep 15 (PNe), 200+ all over the Cold Harbour area Sep 18 (DJB), 120+ Compton Downs Sep 25 (DJB), 66 Sonning Meadow Sep 26 (ABT), 86 heading S in 50 minutes at Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead on Sep 26 (BDC), 50 Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 26 (CDRH), 100+ Remenham Hill Sep 27 (ABT), 40+ Cow Down Sep 30 (ABT) and 43 Sonning Meadows Oct 4 (ABT). Many small groups also flew over in Sep. Mediocre numbers (1–40) featured throughout Oct–Dec, without any of the 100+ counts made in many Octobers, except that snow in December resulted in a concentration of 75 on the southern bank of Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 18–19 (CDRH) and forced 50+ to the filter beds at Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works on Dec 23 (DJB).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Records were confined to autumn passage in September and October, principally at Queen Mother Reservoir. A trickle began with 1 at Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 20, then 1 there Oct 3, 2 together Oct 8, 1 Oct 14, 4 together Oct 15, 1 Oct 17, 2 Oct 18 with 1 flying off East and 1 flying off Northwest, 3 together Oct 19 and 1 with Meadow Pipits Oct 29–31 (all CDRH); 1 Oct 18 also (MFW). Elsewhere 1 Horton GP Oct 17 (CDRH) and 1 New Workings, Eversley GPs Oct 17–18 (GR; IB). Parties of 4+ only occur occasionally in Berkshire; in some years there are additional reports between November and April.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Two at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 29, one in s/p (KEM *et al.*) and another in partial s/p (RHS) at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 29 comprised the only definite record in a poor year for this species, although a probable was seen on the New Workings, Moor Green Lakes on Oct 17 (FSt).

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Common but decreasing passage migrant and localised summer visitor (Amber Listed)

By recent standards, good numbers on spring passage preceded high, though not exceptional, numbers in the autumn. Records involved 57 locations, 26 in West Berkshire, 12 in Mid Berkshire and 19 in East Berkshire. **Spring:** A widespread passage had a good start with 5 males at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 28 (JA), equalling the highest ever number in March. Many reports followed in April and May of small numbers (1–6) assumed to be passing through Berkshire involving 24 sites, namely Wellbottom Down, Lambourn, Farnborough Down, Brightwalton Common, West Ilsley, Lower Farm GP, Greenham Common, Crookham Common, Midgham GP, Woolhampton GP, Woolhampton, Padworth Lane GP, Englefield, Pingewood GP, Lea Farm (Dinton Pastures), Remenham Hill, Borough Marsh, Waltham St Lawrence, Pitlands Farm and Knowl Hill Farm, Eversley GPs, Maidenhead, Dorney Wetlands, Colnbrook and Queen Mother Reservoir. **Summer/Breeding:** In view of this species' scarcity in summer, all records of potential significance are covered by sites from west to east. At Wellbottom Down, Lambourn 2 Jun 20 (DJB), 1 female June 25 (RRi), 1 female carrying food Jul 17 (PBT) and 7 Aug 17 (MJT). At Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn 6 Aug 18 (ABT). At Cow Down 1 going to nest in wheat Jul 4 (ABT). At the Ridgeway, Compton Downs 1 May 4 and 1 pair carrying food to nest Jun 16 (ABT), probably the same as 1 carrying food to nest Jun 18 (DJB). At Starveall, Aldworth 2 claimed Jul 11 (observer unknown). At Aldermaston 1 female Jun 14 (RCr). At Englefield an agitated pair probably had young nearby Jun 26 (RCr). At Pingewood GP a possible pair May 29 (KEM). At Drift Road, Maidenhead a singing male was holding territory May 20 (CDRH). **Autumn:** A strong passage began unremarkably with 1–4 between Aug 11–28 at 8 sites but was enlivened by a large influx at the end of August which included 40 at Cockmarsh on 29th (WAS), 12 flew to S over Sheep Down (West Ilsley) on 30th (KEM), 15 at Queen Mother Reservoir on 30th (MMc), 68 together by the Sonning Aquatic Research Centre on 31st (ABT), and 16 Hungerford on Sep 1 (JBut). Substantial numbers continued through the first half of September, including 20 on Sheep Down Sep 5 (CRe), 27 over Compton Downs Sep 11 (DJB), 20 Hungerford Sep 12 (JBut), 20 over Sonning Farm Sep 12 (MFW; NR) and 20 Streatley Warren Sep 14 (ABT), but numbers fell away through the second half of September (1–7 at 13 sites). October had 3 records: singles

over Dinton Pastures on Oct 2 and Oct 8 (FJC), where there had been only 3 previous October records, and the final sighting of a f/w bird at Queen Mother Reservoir between Oct 29–31 (CDRH). Although this was rather late, stragglers have occurred well into November. The table below shows total numbers week by week, based on the conservative number at each site in that week, and includes a few birds that may have been summering.

Week ending	7/8	14/8	21/8	28/8	4/9	11/9	18/9	25/9	2/10	9/10	16/10	23/10	30/10
No of sites	0	4	7	5	12	16	11	6	6	1	0	0	1
No of birds	0	5	19	9	174	127	98	13	10	1	0	0	1

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL

Now less frequent in Berkshire than last century, the only record concerned a male with a Yellow Wagtail at Englefield on May 24 (RCr). A *flava* × *flavissima* hybrid (Channel Wagtail) was identified in a field near Woolhampton GP on Apr 18 (KEM) and 19 (MFW).

GREY-HEADED WAGTAIL

A male was encountered at 10:30 on May 30 at Queen Mother Reservoir (MMc) and was seen by many observers up to 17:30 that day. This is the first county record of this Fennoscandinavian race of the Yellow Wagtail. A photo of the bird can be seen on page 12.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

As with many other widespread species, the Grey Wagtail is overlooked by some observers and inconsistently reported by others. Whilst annual assessment of abundance and distribution is not possible the recently published Atlas based on surveys carried out 2007–11 provides this information. Of the 412 records received, almost half came from just 6 observers (201 records from BAJC, DJB; IW; JL; KEM and MFW) while the remainder came from 89! On the other hand no records were received from several very active observers. Records involved 126 localities, 46 in West Berkshire, 29 in Mid Berkshire and 51 in East Berkshire, and a variety of habitats including rooftops, gardens, a churchyard, a hospital, a golf course, open woodland and a stubble field, as well as many wetter sites. Counts of this species in Berkshire usually range from 1–5, with higher counts often relating to family parties: the peak number at Wokingham STW of 15+ on Aug 3 included at least 8 juveniles (DJB) and 6 at Thatcham Marsh on Aug 30 (IW:JL) may have included juveniles. The only other count over 5 was 6 at Roundmoor Ditch on Jan 8 (DJB). Probable or confirmed breeding took place at 6 sites in West Berkshire, 1 in Mid Berkshire and 7 in East Berkshire, with DJB locating a nest with 2+ young on top of a light fitting in the pump house at Wokingham STW on Jun 8.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

This common species was reported widely across Berkshire though is overlooked by some observers. In most years only a handful of reports of breeding are received, though Atlas surveys confirmed breeding in 55 tetrads in 2009 and 222 (56%) tetrads during the 2007–11 survey period. Although this species can assemble in large roosts during the winter, past numbers having reached an estimated 2,000 birds at Reading Sewage Farm in the winter of 1972/3 and 3,529 at Slough Sewage Farm in November 1981, nothing approaching these numbers was reported in 2009 and some larger roosts were probably overlooked. There were only 6 counts

of 100+: 3 came from Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works where 150 on Jan 6 had increased to c250 on Jan 29 and later in the year 100+ on Dec 22 (all DJB), 2 from Borough Marsh where c100 on Mar 12 (DJB) and 140 on Nov 15 (ABT), and 1 from Sandhurst Sewage Treatment Works where c100 on Jan 19 (KEM). Some relatively high summer counts included c75 at Moor Green Lakes on Jul 27 (BMA), 70+ gathering to roost in a single tree outside the Southwest entrance to the Kennet Centre, Newbury on Aug 9 (SAG), and 75 flying over the Madejski Stadium, south Reading in small groups on Aug 25 (DJMi). DJB observed a female in Windsor Forest on May 7 resembling a White Wagtail with a very pale mantle and sharply defined edge between the black on the head and pale grey back, but ruled out by a black rump!

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla (alba) alba*

Uncommon passage migrant

A very good spring passage (16+ birds) contrasted with poorer autumn passage than in recent years (6 birds). **Spring:** the earliest arrivals appeared at Borough Marsh, where 5 Mar 21 (ABT), 2 Mar 22 (ABT), and 1 Mar 29 (FJC), followed by 1 male Midgham GP Mar 29 (MFW), 1m Padworth Lane GP Mar 30 (KEM), 1m Apr 10 New Workings, Moor Green Lakes (GR), 1 Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 13 (MMc), 1 Colebrook Lake, Moor Green Lakes Apr 14 (GR), 1 Lea Farm, Dinton Pastures Apr 17 (FJC), 1 male Midgham GP Apr 18 (KEM), 1 Woolhampton GP Apr 21 (RAH), 1 f Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 30 (CDRH) and 1 f Horton GP May 5 (CDRH). **Autumn:** 6 singles, all f/w, were reported at Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 6, Queen Mother Reservoir Sep 25, Colnbrook Oct 14–21, Cockpole Green Oct 21, Queen Mother Reservoir Oct 21 (all CDRH).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irregular and scarce winter visitor

Following the unprecedented hundreds in 2005, the low numbers from 2006–2008 continued, with 1 briefly in a Whitley Wood garden, Reading on Jan 2 (S Day) and 8–11 moving around the Foxley Lane, Binfield area Mar 10–11 (PSB *et al.*).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident

Little of distinction was received for this species, which is very common in many places. Counts exceeding 15 were received for 6 locations: 15 Binfield area Jan 21 (PNe), 39 singing males Burghfield GP Mar 30 (RCr), 22 singing males South Ascot Apr 8 (DJB), 23 Waltham St Lawrence Apr 13 (PNe), 15 Oakley Green, Windsor Apr 22 (PNe), 15 White Waltham May 20 (PNe), 17 Boxford Aug 9 (RCla), 18 Waltham St Lawrence Dec 1 (PNe) and 16 Boxford Dec 9 (RCla). One entered the hide at Lower Farm GP on Sep 26 (LKY)!

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Common resident

This familiar species attracts little interest on the part of many observers, 17 at Pinkneys Green on May 25 (PNe) being the only count received above 15. DJB comments that it is very common in Windsor Forest. A bird was observed making circuits well above treetop height on Feb 16 and two were doing the same on Oct 29, at Woose Hill (PBT).

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident

Following the 2008 year in which high counts had been reported for several sites, perhaps a spin-off of survey work for the Atlas, a count of 71 singing birds was reported on Mar 30 for Burghfield GPs (RCr). Other counts of 30 or more were 61 at Little Sandhurst on Feb 24 (PNe), 34 at Stockcross on May 10 (SAG), 32 at Great Hollands, Bracknell on Feb 8 (PNe), 30 in the Binfield area on 21 Jan 21 (PNe), 31 on Jan 27 at Henley (PNe) and an autumn record of 42 at Coldharbour on Sep 19 (PNe). Whilst these records are predominantly from East Berkshire, Atlas surveys indicate similar abundances of Robins in Mid and West Berkshire (*The Birds of Berkshire*, 2013).

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 16 locations, 7 in West Berkshire, 9 in Mid Berkshire. **Spring:** during the period April–May, birds were reported singing at 16 sites probably involving at least 47 males. The first of the year was singing at Searles Farm GPs on Apr 9 (RCr). From this date birds quickly reoccupied favoured sites with singing males noted at Brimpton GP, Crookham and Greenham Commons, Dinton Pastures CP, on the Kennet and Avon Canal between Hamstead and Dreweat's Locks and near Woolhampton, Thatcham Marsh, Theale Main and Moatlands GPs. Larger concentrations involved 10 singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 26 (JA), 6 at Moatlands on Apr 26 (JA), 5 at Dinton Pastures on Apr 26 (FJC), 3 at Hosehill on May 9 (JLe), and 3 at Greenham Common on May 10 (IW; JL). **Breeding:** reports of confirmed breeding came from Brimpton, where a family party including 2 recently fledged young was seen on Jun 4 (GEW), Dinton Pastures, where a bird was observed carrying food on Jun 11 (SDi) and 2 juveniles were seen at Burghfield on Jul 11 (JA), the last record of the year.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*

Rare vagrant

This year's cover bird, painted by Robert Gillmor, and the first spring record for Berkshire was discovered at Woolhampton GP on Apr 9 by Ken Moore. A male with a hint of a white spot was typically elusive in scrub alongside the old gravel workings and was seen by only a few lucky observers. There have only been two previous Berkshire records, both in autumn – one Sep 17–24 1972 at Reading Sewage Farm and the second at Whitley on Oct 2 1978.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

Again there were few records of this species. **Spring passage:** no records. **Spring/Summer:** Although there were no records of singing males in central Reading, a female was reported carrying food and displaying agitated behaviour in mid-June (NFO; MFW) and recently fledged young were reported on June 22 (RCr). **Autumn:** a female/immature was feeding on the clinker beds at White Waltham SF on Jul 7 (DJB). At Queen Mother Reservoir a female/immature was present from Oct 14–17 (CDRH) and another on Nov 9 (CDRH).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring/Summer: The first arrival was reported on Apr 12 at Wishmoor Bottom (MDa) and the next day birds were singing in several regular sites: 2 at Wishmoor Bottom (NR), 4 at the Royal Military Academy (PJC). By May 5 10 territories were recorded in Swinley Forest (DJB) and 2 territories recorded on May 7 in South forest, Windsor Forest (MSFW; DJB). Outside the breeding areas, the only Spring record was at Woolhampton GP on Apr 21 (KEM). **Autumn:** 1 was seen at the Wilderness, Kintbury on Jul 19 (JLS) and 1 the same day at Halfway (Andrew Camp), possibly dispersing birds; then from mid-August to mid-October birds were reported from 14 other locations across the county: 1 at Lower Farm Aug 15 (NC); a male at Seven Barrows, Lambourn on Aug 18 (RHS, KEM); a male at Wigmoreash Pond, Inkpen Aug 22–23 (SAG); a male in Swinley Forest Aug 28 (DJB); a juvenile at Cow Down Sep 5–6 (CRe; ABT); a female/immature at Greenham Common on Sep 6 (AEDH); a female/immature at Arthur Jacob LNR Sep 10–11 (CDRH); a female/immature at Cock Marsh on Sep 12 (WAS); 1 at Walbury Hill on Sep 12 (CRe); 1 at Starveall on Sep 14 (ABT); a female/immature at Wraysbury on Sep 15 (WAS); a f/w male at Colnbrook on Sep 18 (CDRH); a female/immature at Lavell's Lake from Sep 20–25 (FJC *et al.*); a female/immature at Arthur Jacob LNR on Sep 24 (CDRH). The latest record was a f/w at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 13 (DJB).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon (and declining?) passage migrant which formerly bred

As in 2008, there were rather few Spring reports: 16 records involving 18 birds and 12 sites. The Autumn passage was smaller than 2008, with 33 records, probably involving 39 birds and 20 sites. **Spring passage:** the first record of the year was of a male on Apr 18 at Pingewood GPs (GR), followed by other single birds at Weathercock Hill, Apr 19 (MSm), Wildmoor Heath, Apr 23 (BMA), Greenham Common, Apr 26 (NC), Englefield May 3 (RCr), Bury Down May 4 (MFW), Wishmoor Bottom May 5 (DJB), Crookham Common May 6 (KEM). On May 8, 2 at Bury Down (KEM), 2 at Caesar's Camp (PBT, MFW), singles at Bury Down (KEM), Chamberhouse Marsh (KEM), Englefield (PBT; MFW), Jubilee River (PBT; MFW); 1 at West Ilsley, May 10 (GDS), Great Shefford May 21 (JLe), Englefield May 24 (RCr). **Autumn passage** (all single birds unless otherwise indicated): Inkpen Hill Aug 18 (RGS), Woolhampton GPs Aug 18 (ABT), Woodlands Park Aug 21 (DJB), Compton Downs Aug 22 (MFW), Great Meadow Pond Aug 23 (DJB), Colnbrook Aug 27 (CDRH), Windsor Great Park Aug 27 (CDRH), Combe Gibbet Aug 29 (SAG), Englefield Aug 29 (RCr), Cow Down Aug 30 (KEM), Colnbrook Aug 31 (CDRH), 2 at Dorney Wetlands Aug 31 (KPD), Queen Mother Reservoir Aug 31 (CDRH), 2 at Remenham Hill Aug 31 (ABT), Wishmoor Bottom Sep 1 (RTS), Colnbrook Sep 3 (CDRH); on Sep 6 4 together at Cow Down (ABT), Eversley GP (BMA), 2 at Greenham Common (AEDH), Sonning (FJC), Woolhampton GP (MJD); on Sep 8 Dorney Wetlands (KPD), Woolhampton GP (KEM); Dorney Wetlands Sep 10 (DKPu, DF); on Sep 12 Englefield (RCr), Horton GPs (CDRH), Woolhampton GP (KEM); Starveall Sep 14 (ABT), Horton GPs Sep 17–20 (CDRH); 2 at Coldharbour Sep 18 (DJB), 2 at Brimpton Sep 23 (GEW), Woolhampton GP Sep 24 (KEM), Englefield Sep 30 (RCr) and a late bird at Moor Green Lakes on October 21 (LRB).

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, locally common breeding summer visitor

The numbers of Stonechat reported were approximately two thirds lower in all seasons than in 2008 and records were received from only 49 locations (2008, 73). Stonechats are particularly susceptible to cold winters and may have been affected by unusually cold weather in December 2008–February 2009. Tetrad surveys done in 2008 and 2009 for the County Atlas showed a 60% reduction in breeding season abundance between the two years (Righelato, 2014, in 2010 Annual Report). Birds are concentrated in spring and summer in the heathland breeding areas in the south of the county, whereas the wintering population is much more widespread across farmland and the Downs. The table shows the monthly maxima reported for breeding and non-breeding sites throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BREEDING AREAS												
Greenham Common	–	–	8	5	8	–	–	–	10	–	–	–
Swinley Forest SPA	6	3	6	3	12	2	–	14	–	10	8	–
Wildmoor Heath LNR	–	–	2	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Windsor Great Park	–	2	–	–	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
No. of sites	12	13	7	1	1	1	3	–	8	19	9	10
Min. number of birds	22	22	11	1	1	1	7	–	10	29	12	14
Totals	28	27	25	13	21	6	7	14	20	39	20	14

First winter: In January and February birds were reported from 25 locations (cf 56 in 2008), higher counts being 9 in Swinley Forest on Jan 1 (DJB) and at least 5 at Bury Down on Jan 2 (MJT). **Spring/Summer:** in March–May pairs were reported at Bury Down (PJC), at Wishmoor Bottom, 3 (DJB), Caesar’s Camp, 1 (DJB; BDC; MJF; MHG), Lower Farm, 1 (IW), Wildmoor Heath, 2 (BDC), Greenham Common, 4 (IW; JL), Crookham Common, 2 (MFW), Windsor Great Park, 1 (CDRH) and 6 pairs in the Broadmoor Bottom Danger Area of Swinley Forest (PJC). Breeding was confirmed at Windsor Great Park (KPD; CDRH), Caesar’s Camp and Wishmoor Bottom (DJB; BDC; MJF; MHG). **Autumn/Second winter:** Post breeding 5 birds were seen in *Miscanthus* at Brimpton on Jul 28 (GEW). 14 birds were counted in the Wishmoor Bottom area on Aug 28 (DJB) and 10 at Greenham Common on Sep 5 (IW; JL), 3 at Woolhampton on Oct 10 (MFW), 3 at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 13 (BAJC) and 3 at great Meadow Pond on Oct 18 (DJB). Elsewhere counts were of single birds or pairs at a total of 26 sites. The monthly counts were, on average approximately one third of those reported in the same periods in 2008.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant, very rare summer visitor

A typical year: records were received from 54 locations with 23 in West Berkshire, 11 in Mid Berkshire and 20 in East Berkshire. All records were of passage birds, none staying through the summer. **Spring passage:** began with 2 males on Mar 13 at Dorney Wetlands (BDC), followed by 2 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 14 (CDRH) and 1 at Woolhampton on Mar 15 (KEM). At peak passage in mid-April 8 birds were found on Compton Downs (ABT), 13

on Crookham Common (NC) on Apr 18th, 7 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 25 (CDRH) and 7 on Greenham Common on Apr 26 (NC). A second influx in early May included 9 at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 7 (CDRH) and at least 9 on Greenham Common on May 9 (MJT). The last spring record was of 2 birds at Greenham on May 10 (IW/JL). The table below show the distribution of records throughout the spring migration period.

Week ending	15 Mar	22 Mar	29 Mar	5 Apr	12 Apr	19 Apr	26 Apr	03 May	10 May
No. of sites	2	3	5	4	8	9	11	7	14
Min. number of birds	5	4	8	5	12	32	29	13	41

Autumn passage: the first returning bird was recorded at Colnbrook on Aug 2 (CDRH). This was followed by reports from 44 sites, mostly of one or two birds; records of five or more were: 7 at Compton Downs Aug 23 (ABT), 5 at Combe Gibbet on Aug 29 (SAG), 8 at Remenham Hill on Aug 31 (ABT), 7 at Hyde Farm on Sep 5 (PNe); 6 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 5 (CDRH), 6 at Canon Court Farm on Sep 6 (CCH), 6 at Long Lane, Cookham on Sep 6 (BR), 13 at Coldharbour on Sep 18 (DJB). The last record was at Cockpole Green on Oct 15 (CDRH).

Week ending	2 Aug	9 Aug	16 Aug	23 Aug	30 Aug	6 Sep	13 Sep	20 Sep	27 Sep	4 Oct	11 Oct	18 Oct	27 Oct
No. of sites	1	7	4	6	8	19	8	14	5	6	3	1	1
Minimum no. of birds	1	12	4	19	18	57	9	38	9	11	4	1	1

GREENLAND WHEATEAR

Among 9 Wheatears at Queen mother Reservoir on May 7 were three females showing the characteristics of Greenland Wheatear (CDRH).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant

A poor year with just three spring records; one at Pingewood GP Apr 18 (JR; KEM), a male at Inkpen Hill Apr 25 (MFW) and 26 (RHS), and a male at Greenham Common also Apr 26 (MFW).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

An abundant resident and winter visitor

Double-figure counts were received from 38 sites, with counts of 20 or more as follows: 20 at Eversley GPs Jan 3 (TBI), 20 at Hurley Lock Jan 13 (PNe), 20 at Boxford Common Oct 29 (IW; JL) with 26 there Dec 31 (RCI), 21 at White Waltham May 20 (PNe) and 20 there Dec 27 (PNe), 22 at Twyford Dec 25 (SPA), 23 at Charvil Feb 13 (PNe), 25 at Warren Row Nov 28 (PNe), 27 at Chaddleworth Dec 1 (JL), 30 at Great Meadow Pond Oct 4 and 18 (DJB), 34 at Lower Farm GP Nov 22 (NC) and 34 at Pinkneys Green Nov 27 with 37 there May 25 (PNe). A leucistic bird was noted at Aston Jan 28 (CDRH) and an albino was in Newbury Jan 29 (SAG).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor (Schedule 1)

First winter: Normally counts of 100+ would be considered individually for inclusion in this report, but with 34 records received from across the county (27 in February alone), space limitations only allow for the very highest counts to be commented on, indeed, at times it must have seemed that the whole county must have been covered in Fieldfares! There were seven counts of 200 or more; 250 at Cow Down Jan 6 (RRI), 200 at Englefield Jan 24 (RCr), 200 at Binfield Jan 30 (PJC), 250 at Widbrook Common Feb 6 (DJB), 200 at Colnbrook Feb 7 (CDRH), 205 at Great Meadow Pond Feb 15 (DJB) and 200 at Leckhamstead Feb 24 (IW). Six 300+ counts consisted of 360 at Coldharbour Jan 24 (DJB), 300 at Peasemore Feb 1 (MJT), 300 at Jubilee River Feb 4 (BAJC), 300 at Billingbear Feb 5 (DJB), 300 at Summerleaze GP Feb 10 (BDC) and 300 at Temple Feb 20 (BDC), but the very highest counts of all occurred during the tiny window of Feb 8–10 when 1400 were at Pingewood GP on 8 (KEM), 440 were at Coldharbour on 9 (DJB), 1000 were at Bisham on 10 and 600 were at Windsor Great Park also on 10 (CDRH). Most birds seemed to have departed from the county by the end of February as the only high count received after that time was 120 at Bagnor Mar 31 (IW; JL). Four records were received in April: singles at Greenham Common on 11 (RRK) and Easthamstead Park on 12 (AEL), 42 at North Heath on 13 (IW) and two at Waltham St. Lawrence also on 13 (PNe). **Second winter:** After one at Lower Farm GP on the early date of Sep 12 (IW; JL; NC), 30 at Lambourn Sep 30 (FGM), two at Bagnor Oct 2 (JL), one at Colnbrook Oct 13 (CDRH), 12 at Widbrook Common Oct 14 (CDRH) and 50 at Wraysbury also on 14 (CDRH), this species appeared in large numbers again with 100+ counts coming from 15 locations and 200+ counts coming from a further seven sites. Larger submissions concerned 500 at Coldharbour Nov 14 (DJB) and 350 there Nov 16 (BDC), 300 at Eastbury Down also Nov 16 (FGM), 300 at Sonning Meadows Nov 21 (ABT), 475 at Waltham St. Lawrence Dec 1 (BDC) and 300 at Queen Mother Reservoir Dec 27 (CDRH).

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)

With numbers having declined in recent years it may be that a recovery is under way with a noticeable general increase in numbers and several observers reporting the species appearing in their gardens for the first time in many years. [Editor's note: Atlas survey data show no significant change in abundance between the 1987–9 and 2007–11 surveys and a statistically insignificant decrease in abundance between 2008 and 2009.] Most records consist of 1–5 birds, with 6–9 birds reported from 12 sites: Eversley GPs, Winkfield, Little Sandhurst, Sonning, Combe Wood, Swinley Forest, Datchet, Old Slade Sewage Treatment Works, Cranbourne Chase, Pinkneys Green and Bisham. Double-figure counts in spring came from Dinton Pastures where 10 were present Feb 24 (RBor) and Burghfield GPs with 14 Mar 30 (RCr), but the highest counts came in October, eg 20 at Littlewick Green on 5 (PNe), 13 at Great Meadow Pond on 18 (DJB), 15 at Snelsmore Common on 28 and 20 at Boxford Common on 29 (IW; JL). In December 14 were at Waltham St. Lawrence on 1 (PNe). Atlas surveys confirmed breeding 48 tetrads in 2009 and in 241 (62%) over the 2007–11 survey period.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant (Schedule 1)

First winter: The following counts of 100 or more were received: 150 at Inkpen Jan 11 (LS), 100 at Hurst Jan 12 (DJB), 100 at Bradfield Jan 13 (JLe), 130 at Kings Meadow, Reading

Jan 20 (JCI), 162 at Stanford Dingley Feb 1 (RCr), 180 Englefield Feb 8 (RCr), 175 White Waltham Feb 9 (DJB), 100 Strand Lane, Cookham Feb 10 (BDC), 100 at Swallowfield Park Feb 13 (DJB), 104 at Great Meadow Pond Feb 15 (DJB) and 150 at Charvil Feb 23 (DJB), but these were eclipsed by 700 at Pingewood Feb 8 (KEM) and 300 at Moatlands Taxi Pit Feb 15 (JA). Widely reported in smaller numbers during March and early April with last birds being singles at Quarry Wood, Cookham Apr 17 (BJC), Woolhampton GP Apr 18 (RRK) and Thatcham Marsh Apr 26 (IW; JL), and finally four over Burghfield Mill GP on the late date of May 9 (AL; MJT; PB). **Second winter:** Early autumn arrivals were three at Eversley GPs Sep 26 (BMA) and one over Woosehill the same day (PBT), then six over Midgham Sep 27 (PD), eight at Bagnor Oct 2 (JL) and two at Lavell's Lake also Oct 2 (PBT). Forty at Burchetts Green Oct 9 heralded the start of a noticeable passage period in mid-October with 100 over Padworth (GJS) and Snelsmore Common (IW; JL) on 14, 100 over Spencers Wood on 15 (NR), 120 over Queen Mother Reservoir on 17 (CDRH) and 150 over Thatcham Marsh on 18 (IW, JL). More substantial passage occurred towards the end of October with 300 over Snelsmore Common on 28 (IW, JL), 285 over Woosehill also on 28 (PBT) and 250 over Boxford Common on 29 (IW, JL) and 100 there the following day (JL). In Nov/Dec 150 were at Hurst Green GP Nov 6 (DJB), 250 were at Knowl Hill Nov 16 (BDC), 177 were at Waltham St. Lawrence Dec 1 (PNe) and 300 were counted along the A4 between Theale and Woolhampton Dec 19 (JA).

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)

Reported from 117 locations with most records being of 1–5 birds. In the first winter period seven were at Hurley Lock Jan 13 (PNe), 10 were at Virginia Water Jan 29 (PNe) and also at Upper Lambourn Feb 14 (ABT), whilst six were at Hungerford Newtown Feb 16 (JLe). Breeding was confirmed in 45 tetrads in Atlas surveys in 2009 and in 187 tetrads over the 2007–11 survey period. Post-breeding gatherings became apparent from July onwards with 16 at Stanford Dingley Jul 9 (RCr), 12 at Padworth on 10 (GJS), 10 at White Waltham Aug 10 (DJB), Woodspeen Sep 11 (JL) and Woolhampton GP Sep 13 (MFW), and 20 at Great Meadow Pond Oct 4 (DJB). Smaller counts were received in the latter part of the year with eight at Padworth Oct 19 (GJS) and Windsor Great Park Dec 5 (DJB), seven at Dinton Pastures Oct 28 (PBT), and six at five sites; Wishmoor Bottom Nov 2 (DLo), Wargrave Marsh Nov 7 (DJB), Waltham St. Lawrence Dec 1 (PNe), Cranbourne Chase Dec 12 (DJB) and Great Meadow Pond Dec 20 (DJB).

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Localised resident in small numbers (Schedule 1)

Reported from 33 sites this year, 19 in West Berkshire, 10 in mid-Berkshire and four in East Berkshire. Most reports were of singing birds in the first half of the year with highest counts being seven Thatcham Marsh Oct 18 where 13 individuals were ringed during the year (IW; JL), seven territories at Woolhampton GP (GEW), five singing at Burghfield GPs Mar 30 (RCr), and three at Moatlands GP in May (ABT, MFW), Hungerford Marsh May 6 (RF), Great Meadow Pond Oct 18 and 25 (DJB), Lower Denford Mar 21 (LS) and Brimpton Mill Sep 22 (GEW). Confirmed breeding came from Marsh Benham where two juveniles were present Jun 21 (IW; JL), Kintbury Cress Beds (two juveniles ringed Jul 10, RGS) and Thatcham Marsh, where four juveniles were ringed Jul 12 (IW; JL).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

*Scarce summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant which has declined in recent years
(Red Listed)*

Most records were of spring migrants, commencing with singles at Chamberhouse Marsh Apr 12 (NC) and 23 (MFW), and May 9 (MFW), Dorney Wetlands Apr 18 (KPD) and May 12 (DV), Burghfield GPs Apr 19 (JA), Slough SF also on 19 (KPD), Greenham Common Apr 22 (NC), Wraysbury Scrub Apr 22 (CDRH) and 25 (DGC), Charvil Apr 26 (MHT), Hungerford Apr 30 and May 1 (PBy), Wargrave Marsh May 6–19 (DJB), with two at Wraysbury Scrub May 16 (BDC, MJF, MHG). There were two June records; a further sighting at Wraysbury Scrub on 15 (RHar) and one at Jealott's Hill on 23 (RHS; LRB; EN; RD) and 24 (ABT; KEM). There were 3 autumn records consisting of one ringed at Brimpton GP Aug 3 (JPM), 1 ringed at Windsor Great Park on Sep 13 (RRG) and a late bird at Sonning Meadows Sep 26 (ABT).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Three at Thatcham Marsh Apr 5 (IW; JL) were the earliest at that site since 1973 and were soon followed by birds at Burghfield GPs (RHS), Burghfield Mill (RCr), Hosehill Lake (RCr; BU) and Woolhampton GP (KEM) all on 6, Binfield on 7 (MSFW) and Eversley GP on 8 (BMA). Numbers then increased rapidly during the rest of the month with 12 at Thatcham Marsh on 12 and 20 on 26 (IW; JL), 14 singing at Dorney Wetlands on 25 (DJB) and 21 there on 29 (DJM), and 16 at Hungerford Marsh May 6 (RF). Of 19 at Dorney Wetlands Jun 22 three were juveniles (BDC) and other youngsters were reported from Thatcham Marsh from Jun 13 (IW; JL) and Marsh Benham Jun 20 (DJB). Reported from 35 sites throughout the summer with many still around into September. Tardy birds were at Woolhampton GP Sep 24 (KEM), Horton GPs on 26 (CDRH), Burghfield GPs (JA), Thatcham GP (JW), Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and 5 at Thatcham Marsh (IW; JL) all on 27, with the final sighting being one at Thatcham Marsh Oct 4 (IW; JL).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

Arrived rather early this year with two Woolhampton GP on Apr 9 (KEM), increasing to three on 10 (PBT) with two Burghfield Mill GP (RHS) and singles Jubilee River (KPD) and Hosehill Lake (BU) also on 10. These were followed by two at Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and one at Thatcham Marsh (IW; JL) on 12. Widely reported from mid-May, with some excellent counts coming from several sites: at Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands 19 were singing Apr 25 (DJB) with 25 there on 29 (BDC) and May 13 (DJB), 20 on May 25, 58 on Jun 22 and 66 on Jul 19 (all BDC). At Thatcham Marsh 10 were present on Apr 26 and May 9, 19 on May 17, 17 on Jun 20 and 25 were caught and ringed there Jul 19, 20 on Aug 2 and 18 on Aug 30 (all IW; JL). Elsewhere, at Great Meadow Pond 14 were singing on Apr 26, with 17 on May 3, 13 on May 24, with 21 present on Aug 2 (all DJB), and 14 were at Green Park on Jul 2 (BDC). All of these sites produced positive breeding records and others came from Maidenhead Ditch, Cookham Rise (WAS), Marsh Benham where 10+ juveniles were caught (IW; JL), Eversley GPs (BMA), Chalvey Ditch, Slough (DJB), Lower Farm GP (APat) and Strandwater (BDC). Passage birds were being reported throughout September and into October with one at Woolhampton GP on 1st (JPM), two at Lavell's Lake on 2nd (PBT), singles at Horton GPs on 2nd (CDRH) and Colnbrook on 4th (CDRH), four at

Great Meadow Pond on 4th (DJB), and singles at Hosehill Lake on 5th (KEM) and Great Meadow Pond on 11th and 18th (DJB), the last date.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer migrant and passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor

First winter: Reported from 45 individual sites, mostly from gardens, with a total of 61 birds noted, consisting of 36 males, 15 females and 10 unspecified. This total is likely to be well under the true numbers wintering in Berkshire as many must surely go unreported. The highest single count was four together in DJB's Woodlands Park garden from Jan 24–Feb 2 (DJB) but ringing activity in TGB's Caversham garden revealed that although at least four birds used the garden on different dates, at least seven were present during the winter.

Spring/Summer: Although there were a number of reports of singing birds in the first two weeks of March, some away from garden sites, it wasn't until the third week that there was an upsurge in records of birds at more traditional summering sites. Singing birds at Lower Padworth (PH) and Pincents Lane, Tilehurst (WB) on 18, followed by individuals at Lea Farm GP on 20 (RR) and Burghfield GPs on 21 may have been the first incoming summer migrants as opposed to over-wintering birds, particularly as three singing males and a female were at Burghfield GPs on 22 (RCr), with singles at Moatlands (JA) and Padworth Lane GP (BJH, KEM) the same day, and two at Linear Park, Calcot (CMc). By the end of March there were 21 singing males at Burghfield GPs (RCr). Other high counts during the summer months included 19 at Burghfield GPs Apr 13 (JA), 12 singing at Windsor Forest May 7 (DJB), 23 at Swinley Park May 20 (DJB), 16 singing at Jubilee River May 22 (BDC), 12 at Wraysbury GPs June 12 (DGC) and 15 Marsh Benham June 20 (DJB) which included some young. Other breeding records came from Burghfield GPs, Freeman's Marsh, Kiln Green, Cranbourne Chase, Remenham, Compton, Wokingham STW, Green Park, Braywick Park, Great Meadow Pond and Swinley Park. In 2009, Atlas surveys recorded confirmed or probable breeding in 87 tetrads and in 350 (89%) over the 2007–11 period. Autumn passage was noteworthy at a couple of sites, particularly Thatcham Marsh where 18 were caught and ringed Aug 22, 25 on Aug 30, 17 on Sep 6, 15 on Sep 13 and 10 on Sep 19 (IW, JL). Twenty-eight were ringed at Brimpton GP Aug 30 (JPM) and 25 were under the pylon at Main Pit, Theale Sep 10 (RCr). In October this species was reported from eight sites. **Second winter:** A total of 38 birds (22 males, 11 females and five unspecified) were reported from 23 sites during November and December.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First arrivals were one at Newbury on Apr 12 (JBR), one Crookham Common on 14 with three there on 19 (NC), and singles at Burghfield GPs (JA) and Decoy Heath (CHy) on 19. Numbers gradually increased through April and into May, and subsequently this species was reported from 64 sites with most records consisting of 1–5 birds. High counts received were seven at Hosehill Lake May 9 (JLe), nine singing at Cranbourne Chase also May 9 (DJB), and eight Dorney Wetlands Jun 22 which included three juveniles (BDC), with six there from two family parties on Jul 25 (DJB). In 2009, Atlas surveys recorded confirmed or probable breeding in 27 tetrads and in 136 tetrads (35%) in the 2007–11 survey period. Most birds had departed by the end of August but there were four September records; singles at Cockmarsh (BDC) and Greenham Common (IW;JL) on 5th, Horton GPs on 10th (CDRH) and Burghfield GPs on 13th (JA).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant which has declined in recent years

One singing at Wraysbury GPs Apr 17 (CDRH) was soon followed by singles at Greenham Common (NC), Hodcutt Down, W. Illsley (ABT) and Shinfield (FJC) on 18, Freeman's Marsh (RF) and Burghfield GPs (JA; KEM; RJB) on 19, with two at Greenham Common on 20 (AEDH). Subsequently this species was reported from 48 locations, with most records being of one or two birds. Higher counts received were three at Greenham Common Apr 22 (JL), three at Dorney Wetlands Apr 29 (BDC), four at Sonning Sep 12 (MFW) and four at Moatlands GP Aug 8 which consisted of an adult with three, possibly four recently-fledged young (RCr). The only other breeding record was of a pair with two young at Burghfield GPs July 11 (JA). Apart from the previously mentioned September record there were six others; two at Cockmarsh on 5th (WAS), singles at Summerleaze GP on 9th (BDC), Horton GPs on 11th (CDRH), Coldharbour on 18th (DJB) and Sonning Meadows on 20th (ABT), and finally two at Widbrook Common on 21st (BDC).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

The first record was of one at Hungerford Marsh on the early date of Apr 1 (RHar), then one at Crookham Common on 7 (BAJC) followed by singles at Eversley GP (BMA) and Pingewood GP (RHS, KEM) on 10, with four there the following day (JA). One was at Compton Downs also on 11 (SAG). This species was located at a further 29 sites in April including 12 at Slough SF on 25 (DJB), 17 at Stanford Dingley on 26 (BAJC) and 11 at Dorney Wetlands on 29 (BDC). Good numbers continued to be found throughout the summer with 24 located between Brightwalton and East Illsley May 28 (GDS), 18 at Wraysbury GPs June 12 (DGC), 12–15 pairs in the Coldharbour area in June (DJB), 36 along the Ridgeway at Compton June 18 (DJB) and 50 (adults and young) at Eversley GPs June 19 (BMA). Breeding was confirmed at Coldharbour, Dorney Wetlands, Orlitts Lake, Spencers Wood, Kiln Green, Compton, Eversley GPs, Kintbury, Wokingham STW, Brimpton, Warren Row and Pingewood GP, but is assumed to have taken place at many other sites. The species was reported from 12 locations in September with the latest sightings being singles at Englefield on 16th (RCr), Coldharbour on 18th (CDRH), and Combe Hill (MFW) and Sonning Meadows (ABT) on 20th.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Resident in small numbers in suitable habitat, rare away from breeding sites (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

Reported from five sites in East Berkshire and one site in West Berkshire. Most records came from Wishmoor Bottom where nine (including five males) were present Jan 1 (DJB) but subsequently very few were seen, indicating that the species suffered severe losses during the winter months. Just one or two were seen on six dates Jan-May with DJB not finding any Feb 26. A pair was present Oct 9 (DJB) with one Nov 2 (DLo) and four Nov 6 (DJB) which consisted of a pair, a male and a female/immature. Swinley Forest records comprised of two Jan 1 (DJB) and singles Aug 14 (DLo) and 17 (JBS), and Nov 7 (DLo). At Wildmoor Heath two pairs were present Jan 1 and breeding was confirmed by one pair (CRG; RDr) and singles were seen Mar 7 (DJB), Apr 23 (BMA) and Aug 26 (RJG). The only other records in East Berkshire were a male at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy

Apr 13 (PJC) and a wintering bird at Colnbrook Oct 18 with two there Dec 18 (CDRH). At Greenham Common, the only West Berkshire site where this species was recorded this year, most reports were of one or two birds Feb-Nov (MO) with three (pair and a male) on May 25 (ABT) who also observed a juvenile on Aug 9.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Very rare vagrant

One was seen well, and heard calling, alongside the Heron Lakes complex at Wraysbury GP on Nov 7 (J. Tillbrook per BLSE).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Formerly an uncommon summer visitor now an increasingly rare passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A slight improvement on last year with five spring records; one at Whiteknights Park, Reading Apr 20 (AAb *et al.*) was followed by singles at Swinley Park Apr 24 (DJB), Snelmore Common Apr 29 and 30 (IW) which remained until May 20 (MO), Greenham Common May 2 (NC), and another at Swinley Park May 20 (DJB) which was considered to be a different bird to the one in April.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

A common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor

Jan-Feb: Reported from nine sites with at least 26, possibly 28 birds involved. Ones and twos were noted at Thatcham GP, Bray GP, Jubilee River, Thatcham Marsh, central Reading and Bracknell STW, with four at Freeman's Marsh Jan 2 (JWar), four at Eton Wick Jan 4 (KPD) and five there Jan 8 (DJB), but a series of records from Sandhurst Sewage Treatment Works included no less than eight on Jan 3 (KEM), three on Jan 7 (JMC), seven on Jan 15 (MGM), five on Jan 19 (KEM) and eight, possibly as many as ten, Feb 12 (MGM). **Spring/Summer:** Birds appearing in the first week of March at locations not noted during January–February are presumed to be new incoming migrants; one at Dinton Pastures on 4th (MHT), two at Burghfield GPs on 6th (RJB) and one at Main Pit, Theale GPs on 7th (MFW) and two there on 8 (RCr) preceded a glut of records between 12th–14th from Whistley Green (1), Jubilee River (1), Marsh Benham (1), Decoy Heath (2), Eversley GPs (3), Padworth Lane GP (2), Burghfield Mill GP (2), Bottom Lane, Theale (1) and Wigmore Lane GP, Theale (2). During the summer double-figure counts came from 20 sites with the highest being 30 at Padworth Lane GP Aug 8 (MGM), 25 singing at Burghfield GPs Mar 30 (RCr), 20+ at Lavell's Lake Apr 1 (MJF), 18 at Great Meadow Pond Sep 20 (DJB), 17 caught and ringed at Thatcham Marsh Sep 6 with the same number there on Sep 19 (IW, JL), and 15 at White Waltham sewage treatment works on Aug 7 and Aug 13 (DJB). Confirmed or probable breeding was recorded from 69 tetrads in 2009 Atlas surveys and from 308 tetrads (78%) over the 2007–11 survey period. **Oct-Dec:** Up to four birds were reported from 28 sites in October and one or two were at 12 sites in November with three at Main Pit, Theale on Nov 15 (RJB). There was no discernible cut-off point to distinguish between the last autumn migrants and wintering individuals. In December ones and twos were at 20 locations, with four at Woolhampton GP on 2nd (KEM), three at Sunnymeads GP (S) on 6th (CDRH) and four at Sunnymeads GP (N) on 16th (CDRH) which included a *tristis* type, five at Broadwater Farm GP on 10th (WHa), and three at Dinton Pastures on 18th (FJC).

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

The individual reported at Sandhurst sewage treatment works in December 2008 remained at the site into 2009, last being seen on Feb 13 (MO), and another at was seen well at Wraysbury GP (N) on Dec 16–20 (CDRH).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common and widespread (though declining) summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

The first arrival noted was at Hungerford Marsh on Mar 26 (RHar), closely followed by two at Lower Earley on Mar 29 (DJM) and on at Woolhampton GP on Mar 31 (KEM). In April, after one Crookham Common on 3 (RAH) there then followed an influx of new arrivals on 4 with birds at Lavell's Lake (two, FJC), Eversley GPs (BMA), Moatlands GP (two, RANG, MFW), Burghfield Mill GP (four, KEM), Padworth Lane GP (KEM) and Main Pit, Theale (KEM). Numbers increased significantly over the next two weeks, but how many were just passing through is difficult to say as numbers of summering birds continue to decline within Berkshire and the south of England. However, some healthy counts were received with six at Burghfield GPs Apr 6 (RHS), six at Braywick Park Apr 8 (BAJC), 20 at South Thatcham Apr 10 (IS) who commented that they seem to be 'everywhere' this spring, 10 at Padworth Common Apr 12 (TGB), 16 at Swinley Forest Apr 20 (DJB), 12 at Snelsmore Common May 12 (IW), six at Wildmoor Heath Apr 23 (DLoy), six at Wishmoor Bottom May 5 (DJB), nine there on May 30 (RJB) and six Compton Jun 18 (DJB). Confirmed breeding records came from 11 tetrads in the Atlas surveys of 2009 and from 60 tetrads over the 2007–11 survey period. Autumn migration was evident in August when 10 were at White Waltham SF on 7 (DJB) and six were ringed at Brimpton on 16 (JPM), and continued into September with last dates being two Inkpen on 17th (RHar), two Horton GPs on 19th and one on 20th (CDRH), and finally one Hawthorn Hill, Binfield 24th (MSFW).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Double-figure counts came from seven sites but numbers were considered to be well down on previous years leading to speculation that last winter's cold spell affected this species quite severely. In January 20 were at Sandhurst sewage treatment works on 3 (RHS) with 15 on 15 (MGM), 13 were at Little Sandhurst Feb 24 (PNe), 10 were at Wraysbury GPs Mar 11 (TBI) and DJB's summer counts consisted of 14 singing at Swinley Park Apr 24 and only 10 there May 20, and 10 singing at Cranbourne Chase May 9 with 15 (including five juveniles) Jun 16. Elsewhere, 10 were at Snelsmore Common Oct 14 (IW; JL) and 10 were at Swinley Brick Pits Dec 28 (DJB).

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce visitor to most of Berkshire in all seasons, however a locally common summer visitor in selected woodlands in the east (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)

First winter: One was present at Sandhurst sewage treatment works Jan 3 (RHS, AMH).

Spring/Summer: Only a partial survey of this species in E. Berkshire was done in 2009, revealing 32 territories (DJB). Other records consist of five singing in E Berkshire Apr 5 (MJF) and one there May 9 (MFW), three singing at Frilsham May 2 (RCr) and singles there on May 7 (RCr) and May 9 (KEM), one ringed at Wokefield Common in April (TGB), four E Berkshire Jun 11 (RRi) and one ringed Aldermaston GP Aug 6 (JPM).

Second winter: The only record was two Silwood Park Nov 7 (WHa).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Widespread but thinly distributed summer visitor and passage migrant which has declined in recent years (Red Listed)

79 reports from 53 sites across the county were received. The table below represents the number of birds seen at these sites, with the number of young from breeding sites for each month in brackets.

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number of sites	0	21	13	8	15	10	0
Number of birds reported	0	38	26 (2)	28 (13)	29 (8 ¹)	17 (3 ¹)	0

¹ includes one f/w bird

Spring: the first reports of the year were single birds on May 9 at Crambourne Chase (DJB) and The Wilderness, Kintbury (RHAr). Singing birds were subsequently reported throughout May and June including up to 8 in the Crookham/Greenham Common area (NC).

Breeding: nest building or feeding of nestlings was observed at Warren Farm, Streatley on Jun 14 (GDS) and 2 young were seen at Farnborough village on Jun 21 (GDS). Further observations of young throughout July and August were at Grove Lane, Winkfield Row (in garden of Victoria Cottage) (MFW; SA; RCW), Warren Farm, Streatley (SPA), Lardon Chase, Streatley (MJM), Marsh Meadow and Cookham Pudding Hill, Warren Row (BDC), Lough Down, Streatley – 3 juveniles (ABT) and Moor Copse, Tidmarsh (JCLa). A nest was located high in ivy against the trunk of a lime tree in a front garden at Brimpton on Jul 20 but no young were reported (GEW). **Autumn:** A juvenile on dead tree branches, above the wild parsnip bank, at Woolhampton GP on Aug 19 (KEM) was probably a migrating bird. Further juvenile and f/w reports for August and September came from Donnington Castle, Newbury (JCh), Arthur Jacob LNR, Horton and Temple (CDRH), Pingewood GPs, Pingewood (KEM) and the last record of the year was of a f/w bird on on Sep 19 at Arthur Jacob LNR, Horton (CDRH).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common and widespread resident

A common species throughout the year, Long-tailed Tits are heavily under-recorded. A pair nest building (collecting lichen) at South Forest, Windsor Forest on Mar 14 (DJB) and 1 with nesting material at Eversley GP on Mar 15 (SPA), were the earliest reports of the breeding season. A fledgling with adults near Moonlight Barn in the Farnborough area on May 3 (GDS) was the start of many juvenile reports throughout the period May to July. The highest counts received were both of 50 birds – first from Shaw, Newbury, on Feb 13 (JCh) and secondly from Dinton Pastures CP, in groups of 5–15 birds every 50–100 yards from park and ride to fisherman's car park, on Oct 8 (FJC). A further high count of 47 at Great Meadow Pond on Jun 7 which included a flock of 45, mainly juveniles, probably 4–5 broods (DJB), was noteworthy.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident

There were many reports of this very common breeding and popular resident species. Birds entering a box for the first time after weeks of inspection in a Cookham garden on Feb 22 (BDC), was the first indication of the breeding season. A report of a pair nesting on an

outdoor PA speaker at the Bounty Pub, Cockmarsh on May 7 (MPoy) was interesting. The first juvenile of the year was seen at Great Meadow Pond on May 24 (DJB). Many reports of young followed from May through to July, with the highest count of 50 at Greenham Common on Nov 12 (NC).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident

There were a similar number of reports of this widespread species as for Blue Tit. **Breeding:** the first indication of nesting reported were 2 birds checking out a nest box in Hell Corner, Inkpen on Apr 8 (LS). A melanistic male was feeding on sunflower hearts in a Hurst garden on July 6 (DCB) [*Note: The core area for melanistic Great Tits is about 25 miles away from Hurst, in the adjacent county of Surrey, in the triangle Leatherhead, Epsom and Esher*]. 15 adults and very large number of young, “1 of the young having tumourous growths that seemed to be decreasing in size recently” were at Chapel Row on Jul 19 (HEB). Highest count was of 35 at Pinkneys Green on December 8 (PNe).

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common resident

This species is still common, normally breeding restricted in areas with conifers. There appears to be an increasing reports coming from gardens and garden feeders – 14 reports for the whole of the county involving over 24 individuals. The highest counts however come from the Swinley Forest/Cranbourne Chase/South Ascot area. A record of 50+ birds that “were plentiful throughout Swinley Brickpits area” on Dec 28 (DJB), with a further 50+ in Swinley Park on Jul 25, including juveniles and several singing males (DJB). As with many of the commoner species, Coal Tit sightings are heavily under-reported.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montana*

Uncommon and declining resident now almost completely confined to West Berkshire (Red Listed)

This species is now virtually confined to the far southwest of the county. The Combe Wood/Combe/West Woodhay area having the only reliable reported sightings and then only of a handful of birds. The only reports, away from the southwest, were 1 calling and showing well at Burnt Hill on June 13 (RCr) and 1 in a classic tit flock at Bottom Lane GP, Theale on November 26 (KEM). The highest count was of a group of 5 feeding on the banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal at Kintbury on June 5 (NJD).

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Locally common resident in West Berkshire, uncommon resident in Mid and East Berkshire where numbers have declined in recent years (Red Listed)

Records were received from 63 sites which is comparable with that from 2008. Again there is an obvious bias towards the west of the county with fewer records coming from the east, suggesting a similar pattern to the earlier decline of the Willow Tit. The monthly minimum

numbers of birds reported from these sites are shown below. The figure in brackets indicates the number of young seen in that month.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	15	16	19	7	10	13	11	12	10	6	9	16
Min. number of birds	25	25	44	11	19	32 (8)	15	18	13	13	13	30

Jan–Mar: high counts were received from Combe Wood of 8 on Feb 24 (KEM) and 12 on Mar 13 (DJB). All other reports were of 1–4 birds sometimes in pairs and often singing. **Apr–Jun:** birds reported from 26 sites during this period with 4 sites having juveniles or fledged young. Again a high count of 12 was in Combe Wood on June 20 (DJB). Also reported were 6 at Lower Green, Inkpen on May 16 (RHar). Apr 4 was a special day for one Woodlands Park resident as it was the first ever sighting in his garden (DJB). **Jul–Aug:** 1–3 birds reported in this period from various sites but no more young specifically mentioned. **Sep–Dec:** there were several garden sightings reported in this period. A count of 6 again in Combe Wood on Oct 25 (NR), 8 on Sole Common, Welford on Dec 8 (JL) and 4 at Stanmore on Dec 28 (IW). All other sighting were of 1–2 individuals.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and widespread resident

Reported from over 130 sites right across the county with many from private gardens, where they are often seen feeding at all times of the year on peanuts and even fat balls. **Breeding:** the first evidence of breeding was reported from Donnington Castle, Newbury on Feb 18 as one of 4 birds seen that day was prospecting a nest site (JCh). Further at Aston on Apr 6 two birds were both entering separate tree holes and on Apr 24 food-passing between a pair was observed (ANS). At Snelsmore Common CP on May 12, 4+ birds were seen and two nest boxes occupied but no young were subsequently reported (IW). Positive breeding success was first reported from Swinley Park on May 20 when 6 were seen, a pair feeding young at a nest plus 4 others (2 singing) (DJB). Further nesting sites were found at Swinley Park (Northern sector) on May 25 where 2 pairs were feeding young at two newly located nests plus 1 adult carrying food at another new site (DJB); South Forest on May 30 (DJB); a Bracknell garden on Jun 7 (JGo); Cranbourne Chase where a count of 27 (highest count of 2009) in family parties of 6 and 4 and all other sightings were of 1–2 birds on Jun 16 (DJB). Nores Hill, Reading on June 26 (MHT); at Englefield on Jun 28 where there were 11 birds including a pair plus 4 young in Ufton Wood and nearby area (RCr); Woolley Down on Jul 4 (GDS) and finally at Chapel Row on Jul 19 two birds believed to be a pair, with young, seemed to be taking turns frequently collecting food and were “back and forth for a period of about 3 hours each morning in recent days” (HEB).

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident

Records came in from over 100 sites and although having a similar range as Nuthatch, they are sometimes more often heard than seen! A pair seen in Whiteknights Park and Lake, Reading on Apr 3 prompted the finder to comment “several recent observations after being less regular at this site over the past year or two” (PG). **Breeding:** Nest building was noted

at Burghfield GPs on Mar 29 (JA) and Burnt Hill on Apr 5 (RCr). First sign of young was at Swinley Park (Northern sector) on May 25 when an adult was feeding 4 juveniles and a pair was nest building (DJB). At South Forest, Windsor Forest on May 30 there was an adult with 2 juveniles, Sunninghill Park on Jun 5 there were 4 in a family party and Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest on June 16, the highest count of the year of 13 including several juveniles (all DJB). There was a pair with 2+ fledglings in woods at the eastern end of Farnborough Down on Jun 21s (GDS), while at Great Meadow Pond an adult was feeding young on Jun 21 and on July 5 there were 6 including a family party of 4+ at the same site (DJB). Finally present at Knowl Hill on Jul 31 was an adult plus 2 juveniles and Lillbrooke Manor, Maidenhead on Aug 11 there were 2 adults feeding 2 juveniles (both BDC).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor

The long staying bird first reported in October 2008 at Wishmoor Bottom was recorded by 17 observers on many dates until late March. All reports were from the heath close to the Surrey border south of Wishmoor Cross and north of Kings Ride, Camberley; the last sighting was on Mar 31 (CL). Although scarce, this species has occurred in Berkshire, usually on this site, in most of the past 20 years.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident and uncommon passage migrant

More than 400 records came from 129 locations all over the county, 42 in the west, 25 in mid-Berkshire and 62 in the east. About 70% of reports were of single birds with only 7 reports of more than 5. **Breeding:** breeding of this secretive species is not often reported, though the Atlas surveys of 2009 recorded confirmed or probable breeding for 54 tetrads. An adult was feeding 2 young at Woodley on Jun 27 (JCLa) and near Bucklebury on Jul 19 a pair was at a nest high in a tree (HEB). **Autumn:** A simple statistical analysis of the records showed that there were an average of 57 ± 25 birds reported per month, but double that number in September and October, when birds collecting and storing nuts may be more visible or birds may be arriving from elsewhere.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant resident

Reported from all corners of the county in all seasons by 51 observers, there were 31 double figure counts including 9 counts of 20+ birds. The highest count was 67 along the Jubilee River on Mar 24 (BDC), but with no indication of over what length of time or riverbank so it is hard to compare with other high counts *e.g.* 41 at Slough Sewage Farm on Oct 11 (KPD) and 31 at Little Sandhurst on Feb 24. The biggest single group was 28 mobbing an unseen predator near the Jubilee River on Apr 29 (BDC). **Breeding:** Confirmed or probable breeding was recorded in Atlas surveys in 2009 for 87 tetrads and in 334 during the 2007–11 survey period.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant resident

High counts were down on recent years: there were 315 at Cookham on Jan 17 (BDC), 400+ At Great Meadow Pond on Feb 15 (DJB), c350 at Farnborough Down on Feb 22 (GDS),

c500 at Binfield on Mar 12 (BDC), c300 at Englefield on Jul 10 (JLe), 500+ in Windsor Great Park on Nov 28 (RHay) and 300+ there on Dec 27 (DJB). Although the vast majority (231) of the 333 records received were from West Berkshire, most of the birds were recorded in East Berkshire and 21 of the 25 counts of 100+ birds were in East Berkshire, while very few reports came from Mid Berkshire. We can reasonably conclude that the species is commoner in the east than the west perhaps because there are so many suitable nesting trees in Windsor Forest, where the birds are particularly abundant.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident especially in rural Berkshire

The species, which is common throughout Berkshire, has increased in numbers in recent years and is probably still increasing. The Berkshire Bird Index showed a statistically significant increase (+244%) between 2000 and 2008. Records came from 77 different areas but the highest counts were in West Berkshire, where more birds were reported generally. The distribution of Rooks differs from the distribution of jackdaws and carrion crows in that rooks are commonest in the west and the other corvids in the east, probably reflecting the different terrain and land use. **First winter:** three flocks of 100+ were reported, all in January: there were 100+ at Bury Down on 20th (RBor), 162 near Binfield on 21st (PNe) and 130 at Henley-on-Thames on 27th (PNe). **Breeding:** 14 rookeries were reported of which only 2 were reported on in 2008, so we can conclude little from such sparse data. The largest numbers of nests were 186 near Lambourn on Apr 14 (ABT) and 85 near Chieveley on Apr 13 (IW). **Post-breeding:** the earliest large post-breeding flocks were reported on Jun 7, when there were 264 at Cookham, and on Jun 12 (BDC), when there were 2000+ at a pig farm near Bucklebury (RCr). **Autumn/Second winter:** 120 were seen in the Lambourn Downs on Nov 27 (MBry), 110 at Welford on Dec 11 (RCla) and the biggest flock of the year was at Eastbury Down, Lambourn on Dec 27 when 3000+ gathered in a field before flying off (FGM).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant resident

This species is common throughout Berkshire, but nearly 3 times as many birds were recorded in the eastern half of the county than in the western half (despite there being fewer records from the east). Flocks of up to 100 were reported throughout the year but more frequently in the colder 6 months. The largest flocks (all in the east, as has generally been the case for the past few years) were 300+ at Colnbrook on Apr 28 (CDRH), c200 at a trout fishery near Shurlock Row on Mar 12 (BDC) and 120 near Binfield on Jan 21 (PNe). In 2009, Atlas surveys recorded confirmed or probable breeding in 87 tetrads and in 377 tetrads over the 2007–11 survey period. Juvenile birds were reported to be numerous in early June at Strand Lane, Cookham (BDC) and a juvenile, not fully fledged, was reported at Colebrook Lake on Jun 5 (BMA). There were 3 reports of leucistic birds, all from West Berkshire. The Berkshire Bird Index for 2008 shows a statistically significant (52%) increase since 2000.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce but increasing visitor (now breeds in Wiltshire)

Summary: The gradual spread of Ravens into Berkshire appears to be continuing, with 137 records this year from 67 sites, including the first confirmation of breeding. Most of the reports were from the west of the county (102 records), with 24 in the east but only 9 from mid-Berkshire. There were 70 records of single birds, 57 records of 2 together and 10 records

of flocks of 3–5 birds. The records indicate that there are probably three sites where the birds are resident, namely: around Combe, around Farnborough, both in West Berkshire, and in Windsor Forest in East Berkshire. Outside the breeding season, birds are regularly seen south of the Kennet from Inkpen to Brimpton. **First winter:** In West Berkshire, up to 3 birds were reported in the Combe area on Jan 2 (RHar) and Jan 18 (IW; JL) with up to 3 there on several dates in late February (MO). In the Farnborough Downs, 2 birds were reported on many dates from mid-January until late February (GDS). Two birds were reported at Cow Down in early January (MO), 2 near East Ilsley on 4 (RCr) and 2 at Lower Farm GP on 14 (MGM) and 24 (MFW). In February, two birds were reported from Crookham Common on 7th (SAG) and Hermitage on 15th (JBU). The Brimpton area (including Woolhampton GPs) produced 5 records of overflying birds from Jan 24 to late March, with 2 displaying on Mar 24 (GEW). Mid Berkshire produced 2 reports, both from Padworth Lane GP, of 1 on Jan 7 (KEM) and 2 on Feb 18 (MFW). There were 8 records in East Berkshire. On Jan 2 at Moor Green Lakes 1 flew over, calling (MPr). In the Cookham area: during January, 2 birds flew over Cookham on 2nd (BDC), 2 were feeding there on 4th (BB), then on 19th two were seen nearby in courtship flight (PMar) and on Feb 22 one flew south over Summerleaze GP (BDC). In Swinley Forest: 2 birds flew from the trees and circled overhead on Jan 30 (DJB) then on Feb 21 two birds, perhaps the same pair, flew south over Swinley Brickpits towards the same area (DJB) and on the same day a group of 4 birds visited the northern part of Windsor Forest and flew off northeast (DJB). **Breeding:** A pair occupied a site in the downs near Farnborough from January through to November with 9 records in April, 5 in May and further records in June, July and August. On Apr 19 a bird was seen carrying food to the nest site (GDS) and 4 birds, presumed to be the pair plus 2 offspring, were flying in the area on May 28 (GDS). In the Combe area, a bird was seen taking nest material to a presumed nest site on Feb 15 (ABT) and from that date until the end of June there were 23 more records from this area including 5 birds on Mar 14 and 3 on Jun 2. There were 5 records of 1 or 2 birds in 2 parts of Windsor forest during the period Mar 10–Jul 8th, but no stronger evidence of breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** there were 10 records from the Combe area, mostly from Inkpen, the highest count being 5 birds at Combe on Dec 27 (ABT). 1 or 2 birds were present around the Farnborough breeding site on 8 dates from Aug 7 until Nov 20 (GDS). Two birds seen at Hamstead Marshall on Aug 23 (RHar) and Sep 1 (JD) could be Farnborough birds. There were 3 reports from near Wellbottom Down of 1–2 birds from Jul 31–Sep 25 (DJB; KEM) and 3 reports from Lowbury Hill in the same period (DJB, MFW) these being the only significant records from north of the Kennet. Brimpton produced 6 records, mostly of 2 birds, from Sep 11–Dec 20 (GEW). The only further records from Windsor Forest were 2 soaring on Aug 11 (CDRH) and 2 flying south on Nov 1 (DJB).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident and winter visitor, formerly an abundant resident (Red Listed)

Although still common over most of the county, this species' marked decline in numbers over recent decades continues (BBS). There were 3 records of gatherings of over 1000 and 34 reports of 100+. The biggest flock was at Newbury retail park on Jan 11 when between 3000 and 4000 came to roost in conifers following a pre-roost display (AEDH). Other high counts were a single flock of c1000 passing over Hurley on Nov 9 (SJF) and c1000 leaving a reedbed roost at Brimpton on Dec 12 (ABT). Largest flocks reported in summer were: at Wokingham sewage treatment works, where a flock of c 250, of which 70% were juvenile, on several dates from May 27–Jun 8 when 2 leucistic juveniles were present, 1 strongly resembling a juvenile Rose-coloured Starling apart from its dark bill (DJB); around Dorney wetland, where a flock of up to 900 was reported on several dates in July and early August

(DJB); at Greenham Common, where 175 were seen on Aug 27 (RPy). The Berkshire Bird Index showed a statistically significant decrease (-37%) between 2000 and 2008.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident (Red Listed)

As this species declines so the number of records goes up, presumably because people take more interest; 249 records were provided by 47 observers. According to BBS, the decline in the southeast is 40% since 1995. In SPA's Twyford garden, where records have been kept for many years, the numbers were similar to last year, a maximum of 4 birds, which compares poorly with the maxima of 40 in 2000 and 20 in 2005, and supports the picture of a more general decline. There was some good news: much larger flocks were seen this year than in 2008, and this seems to be a genuine phenomenon, as the records are from consistent observers at regularly watched sites. There were 25 reports of 20+ birds from 20 sites, the largest flocks being c180 at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead on Jul 27 (DJB), 120 on Sep 7 and 100+ at Heywood Farm Barns, 80+ (mainly juveniles) at Woodlands Park on July 13, 54 at Mortimer on Aug 31 (RCr) and 120 at a farm near White Waltham on Sep 7 (DJB). The species is assumed to have bred widely, though little formal evidence of breeding was submitted, but pairs were widespread and juveniles were reported by many observers from late May to August.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Formerly a not uncommon resident, now a rare and declining visitor (Red Listed)

Just four records involving 3 birds; 1 at Sonning Farm, Sonning, on Sep 8 and again on 11 (EN), 1 at Lowbury Hill, Compton Downs, also on Sep 11 (DJB).

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Common and widespread throughout the county. High counts included 100+ at Remenham on Jan 1 (DJB), 300+ feeding on a Maize strip at Remenham on Mar 3 (DJB), 100 at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill, on Oct 17 (DJB), 100 in a Maize field near Aldermaston on Nov 21 (KEM) and 100 at Warfield on Dec 14 (LRB). Evidence of light spring and autumn passage was reported from Lavell's Lake and Woose Hill, Wokingham.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers (Schedule 1)

120 records were received from over 50 sites. Reports refer mainly to single figure records from gardens and parks with no large flocks reported. The majority of records received were for the first winter. **First winter:** highest counts were 15 in a garden in Mile Ride, Ascot, on Mar 28 (SA), 5 in a garden in Shaw, Newbury, on the same date (IW) and a small flock at Searle's Farm Lane GP through March and April which peaked at 18 on Apr 16 (RAnG). The last report was of one on garden feeders at Shaw, Newbury, on Apr 21s (IW). **Second winter:** the first report refers to 1 flying west over Foxley Fields, Binfield, on Oct 13 (PBT). Thereafter reports refer mainly to single figure garden counts.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common and widespread resident and winter visitor

Common and widespread throughout the county and a familiar sight on garden feeders. High counts include 30 at Lower Farm GP on Jul 4 (NC/IW), 70 at Newbury Racecourse on Nov 7 (SAG), 40+ at a feeder on Greenham Common on Nov 12 (NC) and 100 on game cover at Waltham St. Lawrence on Dec 2 (BDC). Nest building was noted at Bayliss Park, Slough, on Apr 26 (BDC), a pair with 3 juveniles was on garden feeders at Hell Corner, Inkpen, on May 24 (LS) and 5 fledglings were present in a garden at Brightwalton Common on May 28 (GDS). Of interest, a partial albino bird was seen at Datchet on Jan 1 (CDRH).

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread resident

Common and widespread throughout the county but under-reported. One of the few UK species recovering from the 1980s decline. **First winter:** high counts included 77 at Freeman's Marsh on Jan 3 (JWar), 50 at Colnbrook on Jan 4 (CDRH), 40 on Bury Down on Jan 20 (RBor), 50 at Strande Lane, Cookham, on Feb 13 (BAJC) and 100 at Frogmill, Hurley, on Mar 10 (SJF, FMF). **Summer/Autumn:** 80 on the Ridgeway at Compton on Jul 31 (DJB), 110 at Colnbrook on Aug 15 (CDRH), 50+ at Greenham Common on Sep 5 (IW, JL) and 100 (mainly juveniles) in the Streatley Warren area on Sep 11 (DJB). **Second winter:** 150 at Woolhampton GP on Oct 3 (ABT), 70 on Hodcott Down on Oct 12 (IFe), 50 on a feeder at Greenham Common on Nov 12 (NC), 50 at Sonning Meadows on Nov 21 (ABT) and 50+ at Lower Farm GP on Nov 29 (NC). **Breeding:** No reports of nesting activity received but summer juveniles were noted at Bracknell, Cookham Moor, Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands, Knowl Hill, Lower Farm GP, Maidenhead, Thatcham, Twyford and Windsor.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer

A rather ubiquitous species and a common sight in winter, spring and autumn in small numbers in all but the most heavily built up areas and in larger flocks in the rural parts of the county. Fewer reports were received from the downland in the northwest where the habitat is less suitable. Most of the larger flocks tended to favour the Alders which line the county's waterways. **First winter:** reports of flocks numbering over 50 birds were received from 15 locations. The peak counts: 60 at East Park Farm, Charvil, on Jan 1 (MHT), 60 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 14 (MJF), 60 at Freeman's Marsh on Jan 16 (RGS), 50 at Virginia Water on Jan 30 (PNe), a flock at Horton GPs peaked at 70 on Feb 6 (CDRH), 50 at Bray GPs on Feb 7 (BAJC), 100+ at Bottom Lane GPs on Feb 8 (JA), 100+ at Moatlands/Burghfield Mill GP also on Feb 8 (JA), 100 at Speen on Feb 12 (JL), 50+ at Bottom Lane GPs on Feb 14 (JA), 100+ at Moatlands/Burghfield Mill GP on Feb 21 (JA), 100+ at Burghfield GPs also on the same day (JA), 100 at Thatcham Marsh on Feb 22 (IW; JL), 80+ at Wildmoor Heath BBOWT reserve on Mar 7 (DJB), 100+ at Burghfield GPs on Mar 7 (JA), 175+ at Marsh Benham on Mar 13 (DJB), 50 at Charnham Street, Hungerford, on Mar 14 (RGS) and 170 in the vicinity of Caesars Camp on Mar 21 (DJB). **Spring:** single figure numbers lingered into May at Forest Park Bracknell, Crowthorne, Snelsmore Common, Stockcross, Sulhamstead, Swinley Park, Tilehurst and Twyford. **Summer:** 2 juveniles in a Crowthorne garden on May 21 with single juveniles being reported there again on Jun 8 and Jul 23 (BMA), 1 in a garden at Forest Park, Bracknell, on Jun 6 (JCr), 2 juveniles were seen in SPA's Twyford garden on Jun 19 where adult birds had been present since March but no

more were seen after that date until December! **Second winter:** the first autumn bird was reported from Forest Park, Bracknell, on Aug 28 (JCr). However, in contrast to the first winter, no significantly large flocks were seen. Maximum counts: 40 at Burghfield GPs on Oct 11 (JA), 30 in Alders in the Cable and Wireless car park, Bracknell, on Oct 21 (MJT), 40+ Burghfield GPs on Nov 28 (JA), 40+ at Greenham, Newbury, on Nov 30 (JL) and 30 at Aston on Dec 27 (BDC).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Locally common resident which is in long term decline, more common on passage and in winter (Red Listed)

211 records received from 78 sites with a bias towards the northwest of the county, a distribution supported by the interim atlas analysis although this is another under-recorded species. Sizeable winter flocks were established at Borough Marsh, Bury Down, Compton, Cow Down, Englefield and Cold Harbour. **First winter:** Highest numbers reported; 140 at Englefield on Jan 2 (RCr), 200 at Cow Down on Jan 17 (DJB), 100 at Bottle Lane, Cold Harbour, on Jan 18 (MSFW), 200 at Bury Down on Jan 20 (RBor), 100 at Cow Down on Jan 21 (KEM), 150 at Cold Harbour on Jan 24 (DJB), 140 in a stubble field in the Whatcombe area on Jan 25 (GDS), 300 at Cow Down on Feb 4 (JPBr), 200 at Bury Down on Mar 4 (PJC), 100 at Borough Marsh on Mar 14 (CDRH) rising to 180+ on Apr 7 (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** May and June records were received from 22 locations. A breeding pair with young was recorded at Widbrook Common, Maidenhead, on May 1 (WAS), a pair with 2 juveniles was at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead on Jun 4 (DJB), a pair feeding 3 juveniles was at Cold Harbour on Jun 5 (DJB) and a family group including 2 juveniles was at Long Lane, Cookham, on Jun 25 (BDC). **Autumn:** After mainly single figure reports through the summer and early autumn the first significant flocks were 103 at Compton on Jul 31 (DJB), 30 at Brightwalton Common on Aug 18 (GDS) and 50 at Greenham Common on Aug 27 (RPy). **Second winter:** Highest counts: 215 at Compton on Sep 11 (DJB), 120 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 14 (CDRH), 100 at Streatley Warren on Sep 14 (ABT), 70+ at Arlington Grange, Curridge, on Sep 24 (IW), 310 at Compton on Sep 25 (DJB), 100 at Remenham Hill on Sep 27 (ABT), 150 at Sonning Meadows on Oct 4 (ABT), 150+ at Cold Harbour on Oct 15 (DJB), 220 at Englefield on Oct 26 (RCr), 100+ at Borough Marsh on Nov 1 (ABT) and 200+ at Malt Hill, Warfield, on Dec 28 (DJB).

MEALY REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Rare winter visitor

Of the 21 records received of this species – which can present identification difficulties – all but one fall in February and March. Most refer to a popular mixed flock of Mealy and Lesser Redpolls which were easily viewable in the Alders lining the river alongside Padworth Lane Gravel Pits. **First winter:** At Horton GPs a female/immature on Feb 2, a male on Feb 16 and 2 females/immatures on Mar 9 (all CDRH). At Padworth Lane GP 2 were seen on Feb 28 (KEM) then seen on several dates until Mar 15 (MO). A male with an alloy ring was seen on Mar 1 and 7 (JA, KEM). In addition 1 was seen on feeders in an Ascot garden on Mar 28 (SA) and 1 was at Wishmoor Bottom on Mar 31 (CL).

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly a sporadic breeder (Amber Listed)

A poor year for this species with few large winter flocks and no records at all for June, July and August; although the interim atlas results indicate a summer presence in the south of the county. There were no records from the downlands in the north and northwest, an indication of the lack of suitable habitat. The majority of the 228 reports received refer to single figure groups on feeders and in gardens and parks etc. **First winter:** Highest counts: 40 at Virginia Water on Jan 30 (Pane), 60 in trees in the Farnborough area on Feb 15 (GDS), the February/March peak at Padworth Lane GP was 30+ on Mar 7 (DJB), 40 at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy on Mar 22 (PJC), 50 at Wishmoor Bottom on Mar 31 (CL), the flock that visited PH's Sulhamstead garden between February and April peaked at 26 on Apr 5, 450+ in the Wishmoor Bottom area on Apr 20 were seen to be generally moving south (DJB) and 30 were at Snelsmore Common on Apr 24 (IW). May: Just three May records: 51 in small groups at Wishmoor Bottom on May 5 (DJB), 10+ at Swinley Forest on May 9 (MFW) and 2 at Snelsmore Common on May 12 (IW). **Autumn/Second winter:** The first of the autumn was 1 flying over Snelsmore Common on Sep 29 (IW). Highest counts: 36 at Wishmoor Bottom (DJB), 48 at Eversley GP on Nov 30 (BMA) and 100 at Horseshoe Lake, Eversley GP, on Dec 18 (JMC).

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular (irruptive) visitor in variable numbers (depending on the cone crop) occasionally breeds (Schedule 1)

Of the 92 records received the majority, as might be expected, refer to birds seen in the dozen sites that are the Berkshire strongholds for this species in the south, southeast and east of the county. This distribution is reflected in the Atlas analysis. Away from the usual centres there were reports of small numbers at Finchampstead, Upper Bucklebury and Virginia Water. There were more records of significant flocks during the first winter than the second but this may just reflect the time of year that observers choose to look for them. **First winter:** the first report of the year was of 15 at Swinley Brickpits on Jan 3 (EN). Thereafter the highest counts were: 30 at Padworth Common on Mar 17 (PH), 30 at Swinley Forest on Mar 18 (DL0). Peak numbers recorded of a flock that was at Wishmoor Bottom during March and April was 30 on Mar 22 (RD), 60 on Mar 24 (RJG; DL0), 70 on Mar 27 (DJB), 80 on Mar 28 (ABT), 33 on Mar 31 (CL) and 40 on Apr 13 (NR). **Spring/Summer:** 41 at Wishmoor Bottom on May 5 (DJB), 20+ at Swinley Forest on May 9 (MFW), 25 at Swinley Park on May 20 (DJB), 2 at Ufton Nervet on Jun 30 (PH), 20+ at Swinley Park on Jul 25 (DJB) and 9 at Swinley Park on Jul 28 (CDRH). **Second winter:** Highest counts: 21 at Roundoak Piece on Sep 15 (PH), 23 at the same location on Sep 19 (PH), 20 at Swinley Brickpits on Oct 1 (DJW), 35 at Wishmoor Bottom on Oct 9 (DJB), 32 at Swinley Forest on Oct 23 (DL0y), 30 at Wishmoor Bottom on Oct 29 (JEW), 23 at Swinley Brickpits on Dec 28 (DJB) and 20 at Roundoak Piece on Dec 31 (ANS),

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Locally common though declining resident and occasional passage migrant (Red Listed)

Widely but thinly distributed throughout the county, and reported from over one hundred locations, this species tends to be less prevalent in the east and southeast of the county. Most reports involved single birds or one or two pairs and, unsurprisingly, the few larger congregations occurred in the winter months. Groups of 5 or more were reported as follows.

First winter: 5 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures, on Jan 13 (PBT), 5 at West Woodhay Down on Jan 18 (IW, JL), 7 at Theale Main GP on Feb 7 (KEM), 5 at Burghfield GPs on Feb 15 (JA), 5 at Thatcham Marsh on Mar 15 (IW, JL) and 5 at Combe on Apr 8 (RHar). **Summer:** 5 at Hungerford Marsh on Jun 9 (RHar), 5+ at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 20 (IW, JL), 7 at Hungerford Marsh on Jun 23 (RHar) and 5 at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures, on Jun 26 (FJC). **Second winter:** 5 at Littlewick Green on Sep 18 (PNe), 5 at Lower Green, Inkpen, on Sep 27 (RHar), 6 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures, on Oct 5 (FJC), 5 at Boxford Common on Oct 13 and Oct 29 (IW, JL), 7 at Waltham St. Lawrence on Nov 8 (BDC), 6 at Theale Main GP on Dec 13 (MPr), 7 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures, on Dec 20 (JDC), 6 at East Park Farm, Charvil, on Dec 27 (MHT) and 8 at Stanmore on Dec 28 (IW). **Breeding:** A group of up to 7 birds at Caversham Heights between Jun 24 and Aug 3 included 3–5 juveniles (MRWS), a female was seen carrying a faecal sac at Brimpton on Jul 15 (GEW), a juvenile accompanying an adult male was at Woolhampton GP on Aug 3 and a juvenile was seen at Combe Hill on Sep 20 (MFW).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Now a scarce visitor which may no longer be resident (Amber Listed)

13 reports of this sought after species from 3 locations. Most records involve a group of up to 4 birds in the Combe/Combe Hill area between Feb 25 and Mar 18. There were no summer, autumn or second winter records. 2 at Combe Hill on Feb 25 (PBT), 4 at Combe Wood on Mar 8 (MFW), 3 at Combe Wood on Mar 9 (RHS), up to 3 at Combe and Combe Wood on Mar 11 (CDRH, ADB), 1–2 at Combe Wood on Mar 13 (RRi; DJB), nearby 1 at Walbury Hill on Mar 17 (LRB).

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Declining but still fairly common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Reported from 82 locations but not evenly distributed, the species favouring the north, west and northwest of the county. **First winter:** Significant flocks: 80 at Cow Down on Jan 6 (RRi), 30 at Upper Lambourn on Jan 17 (ABT), 20 at Walbury Hill on Jan 18 (IW, JL), 45 at Brightwalton Common on Jan 30 (GDS), 70 at Gore Hill, West Ilsley, on Jan 31s (ABT), 40 at Farnborough Down on Feb 15 (GDS), 20 at Hungerford Newtown on Feb 16 (JLe), 25 south of the radio mast at Combe Hill on Feb 25 (PBT) and 20 at Combe Hill on Mar 13 (DJB). **Summer/Breeding:** summer records were received for 37 locations with singing males present at 18 of them. An adult pair with 2 young was at Widbrook Common, Maidenhead, on Jun 8 (WAS) and an adult with 2 juveniles was at Long Lane, Cookham, (BDC). **Second winter:** The first reported flock of the **Autumn/Second winter** was of 41 on the Ridgeway at Compton on Jul 31 (DJB). Other significant flocks: 20+ at Compton Downs on Sep 11 (DJB), 62 at Cow Down on Sep 30 (ABT), 67 at Crow Down, Lambourn, on Oct 24 (ABT), 40 near East Ilsley on Dec 4 (GDS) and 35 at Long Lane, Cookham, on Dec 20 (BDC).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Locally common but declining resident passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Reports were received from 68 locations. As to be expected, most of the summer records were from the county's wetland areas and riversides but a wide winter dispersal was evident with reports from the heathlands in the southeast to the downs in the northwest. **First winter:** Reported from 37 locations including 8 gardens. Maximum counts: 25+ at Remenham on

Jan 1 (DJB), 30+ at Wishmoor Bottom on Jan 1 (DJB), 15 at Remenham on Feb 4 (DF), 15 at Wishmoor Bottom on Feb 10 (RJG), 55 at Wishmoor Bottom on Feb 26 (RBor), 14 in the Lower Star Post area, Swinley Forest, on Feb 26 (DJB), 16 at the Agricultural College, Burchett's Green, on Feb 27th, 18 at Jubilee River on Mar 4 (WAS) and 12 at The Wilderness, Kintbury, on Apr 13 (RHar). **Summer:** Reported from 21 locations where habitat is suitable for potential breeding with singing males at 10 of them. Summer records away from the wetlands include: 1 at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn, on Jun 13 (MFW), a singing male at Castle Royle GC, Kiln Green, on Jun 16 (BDC), 2 (a pair) on the Ridgeway at Compton on Jun 18 (DJB) and 1 at Bury Down on Jul 4 (ABT). **Breeding:** In 2009 Atlas surveys, confirmed or probable breeding was recorded in 42 tetrads and in 1008 tetrads over the 2007–11 survey period. **Second winter:** fewer records (26) than in the first winter with only 3 garden reports. Maximum counts; 30+ at Woolhampton GP on Oct 17 ((IW), 12+ at Thatcham Marsh on Oct 18 (IW, JL), 22 at Wishmoor Bottom on Nov 6 (DJB), 12+ at Thatcham Marsh on Dec 13 (IW, JL) and 15 at Long Lane, Cookham, on Dec 20 (BDC).

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Locally common resident on the downs of northwest Berkshire, seriously declining elsewhere in the county (Red Listed)

A species still in decline and, apart from a small enclave in the farmland to the south and west of Maidenhead, totally absent from central Berkshire. They retain a permanent presence only in the downland of the northwest and extreme southwest. Only 76 records were received from less than 30 locations. Hopefully this paucity of reports (from only 29 observers) is a consequence of under-recording. **First winter:** highest counts; 24 at Cow Down on Jan 6 (RRi), 35 there on Jan 16 (DF), 60 at Upper Lambourn on Jan 17 (ABT), 25 at Bury Down on Jan 20 (RBor), 45 at Cow Down on Jan 21 (KEM), 25 at Combe Hill on Jan 24 (GDS), 132 at North Standen House, Hungerford, on Feb 1 (JWar), 30 at Compton Downs on Feb 11 (MFW), 17 at Cow Down on Mar 21 (CRe) and 20 there on Mar 28 (MFW). **Spring/Summer:** Reported from 16 locations with singing males noted at 13 of them. **Breeding:** A report of nesting activity came from the Ridgeway at Compton on Jun 18 where a pair was seen attending a nest and another pair showed signs of having a nest nearby (DJB). In 2009 Atlas surveys recorded probable or confirmed breeding in 13 tetrads and in 45 tetrads over the 2007–11 survey period. **Second winter:** highest counts; 16 at Lowbury Hill, Compton, on Sep 25 (DJB), 25 there on Oct 28 (CDRH), 14 at East Ilsley on Oct 29 (DSe), 30+ at Roden Downs, Compton, on Dec 19 (MJT), 15 at Bury Down on Dec 26 (MJT) and 60 at Compton Downs also on Dec 26 (MJT). Away from the downs there were reports from just 6 locations; at Bottle Lane, Binfield on 3 dates between Feb 18 and Jun 16 with singing birds noted in April and June (PBT, MSFW), at Knowl Hill on 6 dates between Mar 4 and Oct 10 with a singing bird noted in May (DJB, PNe), 1 singing bird Frogmore Farm, Littlewick Green, on May 23 (DJB), 2 at Cockpole Green on Oct 21 (CDRH), 1 at Waltham St. Lawrence on Dec 2 (BDC) and 1 at Remenham Hill on Dec 6 (ABT).

ESCAPES AND HYBRIDS

ESCAPES

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

In east Berkshire the regular pair at Great Meadow Pond were still present from Jan to Mar (DJB; CDRH), hatching 3 cygnets in April (DJB), but reduced to 1 cygnet by early May (CDRH). This one survived and there were still 3 birds present on Oct 11 (CDRH) but the younger bird is presumed to have dispersed soon after as there were only 2 present subsequently (DJB). Two at Old Windsor on Nov 6 (KPD) may have involved the same pair. On the R. Thames by the Kennet mouth there were 3 on Jan 9, 2 on Jan 29 and 6 on Mar 24 (all JCLa). At King's Meadow, Reading there were 3 on Feb 24, 4 on Mar 12 (JCLa) and 6 (pair + 4 juvs) on Apr 30 (PG), but 10 (6 ads + 4 juvs) were counted on May 9 (LI). Nearby 8 (4 ads + 4 cygnets) were on the R. Thames at Caversham on Apr 28 (JCLa), with a new nest discovered by the weir on Sep 29 (RDR; PG); however the adult was still sitting on Nov 4 and there were still just 7 on Nov 27 (ABT). Other mid Berks records may have been wanderers from this group: 1 at Searle's Farm Lane on Jan 2 (MFW), 2 at Loddon NR on Jan 8 (CDRH) and, at Dinton Pastures CP, 2 at Sandford Lake on June 21 (AR), with 1 there on Dec 16 (Dse) and 2 (appropriately) at Black Swan Lake on Dec 24 (CDRH). Two were on floodwaters at Shinfield on Dec Dec 10 (RRi). In the West there were 2 at Lower Farm on Dec 18 (IW, JL) and 1 at Thatcham from Dec 26 (GJS) to 30 (MWat).

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Singles at Lower Denford on Jan 10 (JD), Winkfield on Jan 30 (CDRH) and Loddon NR on Feb 3 (JPBr), with the latter bird subsequently at Charvil from Feb 10–23 (CDRH) and Sonning Meadows on Feb 26 (CDRH). There was 1 at West Woodhay Lake on Mar 5 (RGS). In Windsor Great Park 1 was recorded between Mar 29 and Oct 11 (MFSW; DJB; CDRH). Further singles were at Bray GP on Sep 2 (CDRH), Hosehill Lake on Oct 16 (Khe; TABr) and at Lower Farm on Oct 17–Nov 1 (RA; IW; NC).

Emperor Goose *Anser canagicus*

One was in Windsor Great Park on Sep 23 (CDRH).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare resident, probably of introduced origin

Records of Ruddy Shelduck in the UK are generally considered to be escaped or feral birds. An unusual number of sightings were noted from six wide-ranging sites in the county. A single bird was noted on the Thames at Henley Jan 27 (Pne), with further sightings of a one-footed bird at Dorney Wetlands on Jan 27 (BDC) and Feb 1 (KPD). Sightings of two birds (female and juvenile?) came from Lower Farm on Jan 22 (THe; GT), Mar 13 (NC), Apr 9 (MFW), Apr 10 (IW) and Jun 14 (MFW; GT). On Sep 20 two birds flew off from Midgham Quarry when approached (KEM) and, on the same day, a single bird was at the Summerleaze Pit (CDRH, BDC, WeBS). Two apparently feral birds were at Woolhampton pits on Oct 29 (KEM; GW) and Nov 11 (KEM; GW).

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

A pair at Eversley GP on Jul 26–27 (BMA)

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Englefield: pair flushed from a dew-pond at Ufton Wood Jan 24 (RCr). Whitenights Park: single drakes reported from Jan 7–Nov 8, with 2 drakes on Jan 21, Oct 4 & Nov 1 (PG). Nearby there were 2 drakes in Prospect Park on Mar 22 (JA) and single drakes at Maiden Erleigh Lake between April 12 (JA) and Nov 6 (PG). The relative absence of females does not bode well for the future of the local population!

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

One (possibly a juvenile) was seen at Sonning Meadows Feb 15 then nearby at Charvil, attacking Lapwings and gulls, on Feb 19 (CDRH).

Cockatiel

Horton GP: 1 flew over on May 4 (CDRH).

Budgerigar

One was at the The Wilderness on April 13 (RHar).

Chestnut-Backed Thrush *Zootheraea dohertyi*

A recent escapee (ringed) was photographed at Wraysbury GP on Oct 29 (R. Martin).

HYBRIDS

Greylag × Canada Goose

One was with Greylag Geese at Datchet on Jan 5 and nearby at QMR, with 86 Greylag Geese, on Jan 12 (CDRH).

Greylag × ?

One was with Greylag Geese at Datchet on Jan 5 (CDRH): Presumed same bird (of uncertain parentage) was again at its usual haunt in Windsor Great Park on Apr 12 & Oct 4 (DJB). Note that this bird shows a passing resemblance to a White-fronted Goose.

Barnacle × Snow Goose (?)

Two again regularly at Eversley GPs throughout the year (MO).

***Aythya* hybrids**

As in previous years, these are listed by the species they most resemble rather than by their presumed parentage, since this is often speculative.

Scaup type

Moatlands GP 1 (drake?) Jan 3 (RHS; AMH); presumably this drake still present here on Jan 31 (MFW). Woolhampton GP drake (present since Nov 2008) again Jan 21–May 27 (KEM *et al.*) and then returning Dec 19–28 (KEM *et al.*).

Lesser Scaup type

Thatcham GP 1 drake on Jan 8 (IW; JL). Moatlands GP drake (“resembling a Tuftie”) Feb 14 (MFW) to Mar 7 (KEM) and still present on adjacent car park pit Mar 25 (KEM); probably same at Burghfield GP on Mar 28 (MFW). Presumed returning drake (‘Lesser Scaup-type’ - but rather subtle: dark grey mantle + peak at rear of crown, instead of full crest”) on Nov 12 (CDRH) and Nov 25 (KEM); 2 of this type at Burghfield Mill GP on Nov 29 (MFW; photo on berkbirds website) and 1 still there Dec 4 (CDRH). Bray GP adult drake, on Nov 23 (CDRH) ‘Lesser Scaup-type’ - “dark grey mantle, pale grey flanks + peak at rear of crown; pale blue-grey bill base”) and Dec 1–18 (CDRH). Wraybury GP drake present (on Sunnymeads Pit) Dec 16–23 (CDRH)

Tufted Duck type

At QMR a drake (long crest; black head & back) on Jan 7–11 presumed to be the regular Wraybury bird - displaced by frozen GPs (CDRH).

Baer’s Pochard type

A drake at QMR on Jan 9–11 (short crest; coppery chestnut on crown & breast) was believed to be the same as Horton GP in Dec 2008 (CDRH). Another drake on Village Pit at Wraybury GP on Oct 16–30 (CDRH); a variation on the Tufted × Ferruginous hybrid: head blackish, with predominantly green gloss and very short spur-like crest, chestnut breast, brownish flanks, limited white on utcs, pale eyes, bill-pattern like Tufted.

Ferruginous Duck type

At Bray GP an adult drake (lacking white utcs or wing-bar but with smoky-grey flanks, even darker upperparts & maroon tone to breast; closer to Pochard in appearance) on Feb 25 (CDRH). At Wraybury GP a first-winter female on Village Pit Oct 31 (CDRH, JMC) showed “dark eyes, smallish size & good bill/head-shape for Ferruginous but dingy colour overall, sullied wing-bar & dull underwing coverts”; it was still present Nov 1st on the Heron Lakes complex (CDRH). Possibly the same female was then at Woolhampton GP on Dec 5–19 (KEM *et al.*)

Gull species

At QMR a first-winter gull was found by CDRH at 11.00hrs on Feb 2 and was assumed to be a hybrid (of unknown parentage). Subsequent observers misidentified it later that day as a Kumlien’s Gull and, although the ‘Kumlien’s Gull possibility’ was fully eliminated in the ensuing discussions, its true identity remains conjectural. It was subsequently seen in the gull-roost on Feb 4 and 8 (CDRH) and then again on Mar 26 by which time it was still showing a warm brown tone to the body plumage, but had lost much of the dark/light contrast within the head pattern (CDRH). There were no further sightings for almost a month (due to observer absence) but what is presumed to have been the same bird was seen again in the roost on Apr 20–22 (CDRH) although the whole plumage now looked much less ‘warm’ brown’ and more reminiscent of a Glaucous-winged Gull!

Carrion Crow × Hooded Crow *Corvus corone* × *cornix*

One was photographed at Aldworth on Jun 26 (DJ Britton).

Extreme Dates of Winter and Summer Migrants

WINTER

Species	DEPARTURE			ARRIVAL		
	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Pintail	Loddon BBOT Reserve	Mar 15	WeBS	Lower Farm GP	Dec 9	NC; JL; IW
Scaup	Lower Farm GP	Mar 22	NC	Lea Farm, Black Swan Lake Dinton Pastures	Aug 4	FJC
Goldeneye	Theale Main GP	Apr 13	KEM; MFW	Wraysbury GP	Sep 26	CDRH
Smew	Wraysbury GP	Mar 7	CDRH	Wraysbury GP	Dec 13	CDRH
Goosander	Eversley GP	Apr 11	BMA	Eversley GP	Nov 6	DPN
Bittern	Windsor Great Park	Mar 29	DJB	Dinton Pastures	Dec 17	FJC
Merlin	Queen Mother Reservoir	Mar 13	CDRH	Cow Down	Aug 18	ABT; RHS
Golden Plover	Greenham Common	Apr 20	NC	Midgham Quarry	Jul 4	KEM
Jack Snipe	Horton GP	Apr 20	CDRH	Horton GP	Oct 11	CDRH
Short eared Owl	Compton Downs	Apr 21	ABT	Queen Mother Reservoir	Dec 26	MJT
Rock Pipit	–	–	–	West Ilsley	Sep 20	CDRH
Fieldfare	North Heath, Waltham St Lawrence	Apr 13	IW; PNe	Lower Farm	Sep 12	IW; JL; NC
Redwing	Burghfield Mill GP	May 9	AL; MJT; PB	Eversley GP	Sep 26	BMA
Brambling	Shaw, Newbury	Apr 21	IW	Foxley Fields, Binfield	Oct 13	PBT
Lesser Redpoll	Wishmoor Bottom	May 22	DJB	Snelsmore Common	Sep 29	IW

SUMMER

ARRIVAL				DEPARTURE		
Species	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Garganey	Dorney Wetlands	Mar 13	BDC	Dinton Pastures	Nov 3	ADB; AR
Quail	Maidenhead	Mar 21	DJB	Colnbrook	Sep 6	CDRH
Osprey	Tilehurst	Mar 22	JLe	Moatlands GP	Sep 7	PBy
Hobby	Moatlands GP, Queen Mother Reservoir	Apr 18	JA CDRH	Eversley GPs	Oct 13	RR
Stone Curlew	Downs	Apr 5	MFW	Downs	Sep 25	CDRH
Little Ringed Plover	Eversley GP	Mar 13	BMA	Midgham Quarry	Sep 25	MFW
Ringed Plover	Eversley GP	Jan 18	BMA	Queen Mother Reservoir	Sep 12	CDRH
Common Tern	Thatcham	Apr 5	GT	Lower Farm GP	Sep 25	NC
Turtle Dove	Brimpton	Apr 26	RCr	Midgham GP	Aug 14	KEM
Cuckoo	South Ascot	Apr 8	DJB	West Ilsley	Aug 11	LB
Nightjar	Wildmoor Heath	May 8	DJS	Wishmoor Bottom	Sep 28	DJB
Swift	Burghfield Mill GP	Apr 9	KEM	Horton GPs	Sep 20	CDRH
Sand Martin	Thatcham Station; Horton GPs; Woolhampton GP	Mar 12	RAH; CDRH; KEM	Arthur Jacob LNR	Oct 4	CDRH
Swallow	Freeman's Marsh	Mar 19	RF	Lavells Lake	Oct 20	FJC
House Martin	Padworth Lane GP	Mar 20	KEM	Twyford	Nov 11	SPA
Tree Pipit	Wishmoor Bottom	Apr 6	PJC	Horton GP	Sep 24	CDRH
Yellow Wagtail	Padworth Lane GP	Mar 28	JA	Queen Mother Reservoir	Oct 31	CDRH
Nightingale	Searles Farm GP	Apr 9	RCr	Burghfield	Jul 11	JA
Redstart	Wishmoor Bottom	Apr 12	MDa	Dorney Wetlands	Oct 13	DJB
Whinchat	Pingewood GPs	Apr 18	GR	Eversley GPs	Oct 21	LRB
Wheatear	Dorney Wetlands	Mar 13	BDC	Cockpole Green	Oct 15	CDRH
Grasshopper Warbler	Chamberhouse Marsh	Apr 12	NC	Sonning Meadows	Sep 26	ABT
Sedge Warbler	Thatcham Marsh	Apr 5	IW; JL	Thatcham Marsh	Oct 4	IW, JL
Reed Warbler	Woolhampton GP	Apr 9	KEM	Great Meadow Pond	Oct 18	DJB
Garden Warbler	Newbury	Apr 12	JBR	Burghfield GP	Sep 13	JA
Lesser Whitethroat	Wraysbury GP	Apr 17	CDRH	Widbrook Common	Sep 21	BDC
Whitethroat	Hungerford Marsh	Apr 1	RHar	Combe Hill; Sonning Meadows	Sep 20	MFW; ABT
Willow Warbler	Hungerford Marsh	Mar 26	RHar	Hawthorn Hill Binfield	Sep 24	MSFW
Spotted Flycatcher	Crambourne Chase; Wilderness, Kintbury	May 9	DJB; RHar	Arthur Jacob LNR	Sep 19	CDRH

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Abbott, SD	SA	Bryant, M	MBry	Dodgington, C	CD
Absolom, A	AA	Bryant, T	TB	Dormer, MR	MRD
Absolom, J	JAb	Bubb, R	RBu	Dowling, D	DD
Adam, SP	SPA	Buchanan, J	JBu	Drewitt, E	EDr
Adam, N	NA	Bucknell, NJ	NJB	Driver, PW	PD
Adam, P	PA	Bunce, T	TBu	Dryden, R	RDr
Adam, J	JAda	Burden, P	PBu	Duncan, KP	KPD
Adams, R	RAda	Burness, RJ	RJB	East, D	DEa
Addison, R	RAd	Butler, T	TBut	East, TA	TAE
Adey, J	JAd	Butler, D	DBu	Edie, T	TEd
Adnams, R	RA	Butler, J	JBut	Edwards, J	JE
Allen, J	JAl	Bysh, P	PBy	Edwards, A	AE
Anderson, G	GAn	Capewell, RR	RRC	Esrich, C	CEs
Andrews, JE	JA	Carr, DG	DGC	Evans, LGR	LGRE
Angus, R	RAng	Chapman, J	JCha	Evans, HW	HWE
Archer, BM	BMA	Cheeseman, M	MCh	Evans, L	LE
Ayres, J	Jay	Chivers, JL	JCh	Farnell, G	GF
Badziak, OEM	OEMB	Claridge, R	RCla	Farnsworth, SJ	SJF
Ball, TG	TGB	Clark, JM	JMC	Farnsworth, FM	FMF
Ball, JP	JPB	Clark, BAJ	BAJC	Farnsworth, SJ	SJF
Balmer, T	TBal	Clark, FC	FCC	Farrell, GR	GRF
Banks, PS	PSB	Cleal, D	DCle	Fell, M	MFe
Barker, DJ	DJB	Cleere, N	NC	Fewtrell-Smith, I	IFe
Barlow, L	LB	Clewley, G	GCl	Finch, MJ	MJF
Barnes, DJ	DJBa	Clews, BD	BDC	Finch, LJ	LJF
Bassett, AD	ADB	Cohen, PA	PCo	Firth, T	TFi
Bassett, DC	DCB	Coleman, C	CCol	Fisher, SL	SLF
Baugh, W	WBa	Cooper, E	EC	Fookes, NJ	NF/JFo
Bayfield, L	LBa	Cottingham, FJ	FJC	Forster, L	LFo
Bedwell, HE	HEB	Cox, JD	JDC	Forster, V	VFo
Bee, SD	SDB	Cox, R	RCox	Forster, N	NFo
Beever, D	DBe	Crawford, R	RCr	Foskett, D	DFo
Beever, J	JBee	Creed, K	KCr	Fossey, A	AFo
Beglow, B	BB	Crompton, T	TC	Foster, G	GFo
Theale Area Bird Conservation Group Report	TABR	Cropper, PM	PMC	Fox, SE	SEF
Bishop, J	JBi	Crouch, J	JCr	Frankum, R	RF
Blackett, S	SBl	Crowley, PJ	PJC	Fry, D	DFr
Blackmore, D	DBl	Crozier, HVJ	HVJC	Fuller, D	DF
Blundell, LR	LRB	Culley, T	TCu	Gasson, P	PGa
Blythe, T	TBl	Dale, C	CDA	Gent, CR	CRG
Bond, R	RBo	Dalton, NJ	NJD	Gipson, P	PG
Booth, A	ABo	Daniels, N	NDA	Glombek, G	GGlo
Borwick, R	RBor	Daniels, K	KDa	Glombey, G	GGlom
Boult, P	PBo	Darby, BJ	BJD	Godden, RJ	RJG
Bowler, D	DBow	Davies, M	MDav	Gompertz, R	RGo
Bowman, J	JBow	Dawson, R	RD	Goodchild, J	JGo
Bowtell, D	DBo	Day, M	MDa	Goodey, J	JG
Breeze, S	SBre	Day, S	SDay	Goodship, M	MGo
Brex, J	JBre	Dear, MJ	MJD	Goodship, HM	HMG
Briggs, CA	CAB	Dellman, K	KDel	Goodwin, J	
Bright-Thomas, P	PBT	Dellow, J	JD	Goriup, P	PGo
Britnell, M	MBri	Dent, A	ADent	Gosling, J	JGo
Brouard, JP	JPBr	Dibb, C	CDi	Gostling, MH	MG
Brown, DC	DCBr	Dighe, MD	MDDi	Gough, J	JGo
Brown, IH	IHB	Dimond, S	SDi	Grag, D	DGra
Brown, W	WB	Dingwall, T	TDi	Graham, SA	SAG
Brown, G	GBro	Dixon, N	NDi	Grantham, M	MGra
		Dodds, DAM	DAMD	Green, F	FG

Green, EE	EEG	Kemp, D	DKem	Newbound, PJ	PNe
Greenwood, L	LGr	Kennen-Young, L	LKY	Orr, PJ	PJO
Grundy, J	JGr	Kettell, M	MK	Paine, ID	IDP
Gurr, M	MGu	Kimber, G	GK	Palmer, JM	JMP
Haines, R	RHai	Kita, K	KK	Parkes, A	APar
Haines, W	WHa	Knight, A	AK	Passman, MB	MBP
Hallam, MJ	MJH	Knight, P	PKn	Paterson, A	APat
Hardie, RJ	RJH	Lamsdell, C	CL	Patterson, A	APatt
Hardy, R	RHar	Lander, C	CLa	Pearson, J	JPe
Harris, N	NHa	Langham, J	JLa	Peel, S	SPe
Harrison, A	AHarr	Langridge, JC	JCLa	Plenty, T	TP
Harrold, M	MHa	Langton, L	LL	Pope, W	WP
Haseler, J	JH	Langton, K	KL	Pottinger, D	DPo
Hawtree, J	JHa	Leach, J	JLea	Poulter, B	BPo
Haydon, RM	RMH	Legg, J	JL	Povey, R	RPo
Haynes, RA	RAH	Lenney, MD	MDL	Powell, T	TPo
Haynes, RC	RCHa	Lerpiniere, RJ	RJL	Poynter, M	MPoy
Head, K	KHe	Lerpiniere, J	JLe	Pratt, G	GP
Head, CDR	CDRH	Lincoln, K	KLIn	Prentice, L	LP
Heffer, S	SHe	Little, AE	AEL	Price, M	MPr
Hemmings, M	MHe	Lloyd, D	DLoy	Price, R	RPr
Herring, T	THE	Lloyd-Parry, J	JLPa	Priest, SN	SNP
Hewlett, A	AHe	Lloyd-Parry, John	JLP	Proud, T	TPr
Heyes, J	JHey	Loader, N	NLo	Pugh, DK	DKPu
Hickman, P	PH	Lowther, D	DLo	Pyrah, R	RPy
Hickman, AED	AEDH	Lyford, H	HLy	Rampton, N	NR
Hollands, BJ	BJH	Lyle, R	RLy	Randall, G	GR
Hook, J	JHo	Malpas, L	LMa	Ranger, N	NRan
Hopgood, B	BHo	Mann, LB	LBM	Reedman, R	RR
Horsley, C	CHo	Mannion, P	PM	Reeve, C	CRe
Hotchkis, B	BHot	Marlow, T	TM	Reeve, B	BR
Hudson, D	DHud	Maroevic, FJ	FJM	Reeves, C	CRee
Humphrey, CC	CCHump	Marriner, N	NM	Reid, J	JRe
Humphrey, CC	CCH	Marrs, P	PMar	Reynolds, DJ	DJR
Humphrey, P	PHu	Marshall, SK	SKM	Ricks, S	SRI
Humphrey, CC	CCHum	Martin, R	RMa	Righelato, R	RRi
Humphreys, CC	CCHu	McCarthy, MG	MGM	Rimes, DNT	DNTR
Hunt, M	MHu	McCartney, B	BMc	Rivoire, J	JRI
Huntley, M	MHun	McCartney, R	RMc	Rix, JB	JBRI
Huttner, I	IH	McEwan, C	CMc	Roberts, R	RRob
Hyde, C	CHy	McEwan, DD	DMc	Robson, C	CR
Imber, K	KI	McGinnery, F	FM	Rose, J	JRos
Innes, M	MIIn	McGinnety, FG	FGM	Rymer, A	AR
Irving, L	LI	McKee, MJ	MMc	Sales, MA	MAS
Jackson, PD	PDJ	McMahon, A	AMc	Saunders, I	IS
Jacobs, RS	RSJ	Mills, DJ	DJMi	Scholey, GD	GDS
Jenx, S	SJ	Mitchell, MJ	MJM	Scott, S	SSc
John, GAC	GACJ	Moden, D	DMo	Sell, MRW	MRWS
Johnson, AC	ACJ	Moor Green Lakes		Serpell, C	CSe
Jones, Christine	CJo	Group Report	MGLR	Seward, D	DSe
Jones, K	KJo	Moore, KE	KEM	Sharp, R	RS
Jones, S	SJo	Moore, RC	RCM	Sheridan, JB	JBS
Jones, B	BJ	Morgan, W	WMo	Simpkin, D	DSi
Jones, H	HJ	Murfitt, RC	RCMu	Simpson, PJ	PJS
Josey, R	RJos	Napper, E	EN	Slater, A	ASl
Keay, H	HK	Nash, DP	DPN	Smallridge, D	DSm
Keel, RR	RRK	Ness, R	RN	Smith, RG	RGS
Kelion, D	DKel	Netley, HR	HRN	Smith, MJ	MJS

Smith, K	KSm	Theobald, R	RT	Warren, JE	JEW
Smith, DW	DS	Thorn, L	LTh	Watson, M	MWat
Smith, Martin	Msm	Thornton, G	GT	Watts, RC	RCW
Stacey, WA	WAS	Tilbrook, J	JTi	Weeks, S	SW
Stansfield, RH	RHS	Tomczynski, AB	ABT	Wells, OG	OGW
Stansfield, RT	RTS	Tribe, A	ATr	Weston, I	IW
Stansfield, R	RSt	Try, FTry	FTr	Wetland Bird Survey	
Staves, L	LS	Tubb, KI	KIT	counts	WEBS
Staves, G	GSt	Tucker, S	STuc	Whitaker, MSF	MSFW
Stewart, G	GSt	Turner, BA	BAT	White, KG	KGW
Stewart, GJ	GJS	Turton, MH	MHT	White, DJ	DJW
Stewart, F	FSt	Twyford, I	IT	Whitney, M	MWh
Stone, MR	MRS	Uphill, G	GUp	Wigmore, A	AWig
Stow, AN	ANS	Upton, B	BUp	Wilding, J	JW
Stratton, J	JStr	Uttley, B	BU	Wildish, M	MWil
Stuttard, M	MSt	Vickers, T	TV	Williams, P	PWil
Sumner, GJ	GJSu	Vowles, D	DV	Williams, C	CWi
Sussex, DJ	DJS	Walford, MF	MFW	Wilson, GE	GEW
Sweetland, T	TS	Walker, BJ	BJW	Wordley, GV	GVW
Tan, C	CKT	Walker, T	TWa	Wright, P	PWr
Taylor, MJ	MJT	Wallen, MS	MSW	Wright, N	NW
Taylor, AJ	AJTa	Walton-Waters, C	CWW	Young, G	GY
Taylor, W	WTa	Wardell, J	JWar		
Teall, JE	JET	Ward-Smith, J	JW-S		

Report on Berkshire Bird Ringing in 2009

Tim Ball

A total of over 20,000 birds of 87 species were ringed in the County during 2009. This total comes from the national figures collated by the BTO and includes all birds ringed in the county including those ringed by ringers based outside the county. A few birds (mostly scarcer raptors) ringed at confidential locations are likely to have been omitted from the totals by the BTO.

Table 1 demonstrates that 2009 was a very good year for ringing in Berkshire which resulted in over 4,000 more birds being ringed than in 2008 although the variety at 87 species was only 2 more than were ringed in 2008. The species with between year changes of more than 100 are listed in Table 2. After absences in 2008 it's nice to see that both Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and Willow Tits were ringed in the county although there were no Redstarts in 2009.

Table 2: Changes of more than 100 birds ringed between 2009 and 2008

Species	Difference between 2009 and 2008 Totals	Species	Difference between 2009 and 2008 Totals
Black-headed Gull	+151	Goldcrest	-278
Meadow Pipit	+128	Long-tailed Tit	+138
Dunnock	+200	Blue Tit	+1,232
Robin	+139	Great Tit	+734
Blackcap	+423	Goldfinch	+207
Whitethroat	+180	Reed Bunting	+125
Chiffchaff	+305		

The Black-headed Gull increase was due to the start of a specific project and many of the Meadow Pipits were caught by a targeted effort on Greenham Common. The remainder of the increases are almost certainly associated with a reasonable breeding season and increases in general ringing effort. The Blue Tit and Great Tit increases were almost totally made up of full grown birds and didn't come from more nest boxes being monitored. The decrease in Goldcrests is a reflection of how good the autumn migration was in 2008 followed by a relatively hard winter and a much less pronounced autumn migration in 2009.

The BTO runs two major national ringing projects gathering detailed information on survival and productivity:

- The Constant Effort Sites (CES) scheme is a standardised ringing programme where ringers operate the same nets in the same locations over the same time period at regular intervals through the breeding season. The Scheme provides valuable trend information on abundance of adults and juveniles, productivity and survival rates for about 25 species of passerine.
- The Retrapping Adults for Survival (RAS) project gathers survival data for individual species by recording as many of the breeding adults in study populations as possible each year either by retrapping metal ringed birds or by re-sighting colour ringed birds.

In addition there are a growing number of colour marking projects where birds are marked with colour rings or wing tags and these allow birds to be identified by non-ringers and provide much more information on movements and survival.

Table 1: Birds ringed during 2009

Pulli = chicks, FG = Full grown

Species	Pulli	FG	Total
Mute Swan	44	8	52
Canada Goose	–	1	1
Egyptian Goose	–	3	3
Shelduck	–	1	1
Mallard	–	3	3
Tufted Duck	–	1	1
Sparrowhawk	–	15	15
Kestrel	22	4	26
Moorhen	–	27	27
Stone Curlew	1	–	1
Little Ringed Plover	5	–	5
Lapwing	13	–	13
Woodcock	–	1	1
Black-headed Gull	154	–	154
Common Tern	7	–	7
Stock Dove	9	5	14
Woodpigeon	4	31	35
Collared Dove	2	5	7
Ring-necked Parakeet	–	5	5
Cuckoo	–	3	3
Barn Owl	76	7	83
Little Owl	–	1	1
Tawny Owl	–	2	2
Nightjar	–	4	4
Kingfisher	–	22	22
Green Woodpecker	–	28	28
Great Spotted Woodpecker	–	134	134
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	–	1	1
Woodlark	–	1	1
Sand Martin	–	30	30
Swallow	155	21	176
House Martin	4	2	6
Tree Pipit	–	3	3
Meadow Pipit	–	171	171
Yellow Wagtail	–	3	3
Grey Wagtail	17	19	36
Pied/White Wagtail	9	47	56
Wren	4	416	420
Duncock	12	523	535
Robin	26	604	630
Nightingale	–	5	5
Redstart	–	2	2
Stonechat	–	3	3
Blackbird	27	350	377

Species	Pulli	FG	Total
Fieldfare	–	1	1
Song Thrush	6	114	120
Redwing	–	46	46
Mistle Thrush	–	3	3
Cetti's Warbler	1	75	76
Grasshopper Warbler	–	9	9
Sedge Warbler	9	275	284
Reed Warbler	8	489	497
Blackcap	1	1,238	1,239
Garden Warbler	1	162	163
Lesser Whitethroat	–	49	49
Whitethroat	–	317	317
Dartford Warbler	–	2	2
Chiffchaff	3	1,217	1,220
Willow Warbler	–	178	178
Goldcrest	–	92	92
Firecrest	–	5	5
Spotted Flycatcher	–	1	1
Long-tailed Tit	8	607	615
Blue Tit	2,071	3,300	5,371
Great Tit	1,613	2,112	3,725
Coal Tit	10	272	282
Willow Tit	–	1	1
Marsh Tit	8	52	60
Nuthatch	73	79	152
Treecreeper	–	81	81
Jay	–	22	22
Magpie	–	11	11
Jackdaw	14	21	35
Carrion Crow	1	1	2
Starling	–	35	35
House Sparrow	–	40	40
Chaffinch	–	614	614
Brambling	–	1	1
Greenfinch	–	472	472
Goldfinch	5	627	632
Siskin	–	208	208
Linnet	–	33	33
Lesser Redpoll	–	21	21
Redpoll (Common/Lesser)	–	3	3
Bullfinch	–	125	125
Yellowhammer	–	10	10
Reed Bunting	–	280	280
Grand Total	4,423	15,813	20,236

Berkshire Ringing Recoveries highlights for 2009

Canada Goose

5193267	Adult	03-07-2000	Virginia Water, Berks
	Freshly dead (shot)	05-01-2009	Pulborough, Sussex 53 km S 8y 6m 2d

This illustrates that at least some Canada Geese move short distances.

Brent Goose

SUM DS009796	Adult Female	30-07-2008	Middle Beacon Island, Pyasina River Delta, Taymyr, Russia
	Alive (ring read in field)	21-02-2009	Hurst, Berks 4,880 km WSW 0y 6m 22d

Only a handful of Brent Geese have been ringed or recovered further east than this in Russia so this is a truly remarkable record considering they are so uncommon in Berkshire.

Red Kite

GC12866	Nestling	13-06-2006	Tomlin Wood, near Apethorpe, Northants
	Alive (wing-tag seen)	16-11-2006	Upper Benefield, Northants 8 km SSW 0y 5m 3d
	Long dead	15-01-2008	Brightwalton, Berks 131 km SSW 1y 7m 2d
GC32489	Nestling	22-06-2007	Souther Wood, Northants
	Freshly dead	03-10-2009	Wargrave, Berks 108 km SSW 2y 3m 11d

There seems to be a reasonable interchange of birds round south central England – unfortunately neither of these two survived very long.

Little Ringed Plover

BT02510	First-year Male	16-04-2008	Nanjizal, Land's End, Cornwall
	Alive (ring read in field)	15-04-2009	Burnthouse Lane Gravel Pits, Berks 362 km ENE 0y 11m 30d

Some excellent photos by Jerry O'Brien enabled the ring number to be deciphered and revealed an interesting story. Little Ringed Plovers aren't common in Cornwall and this bird was the only one ringed in the county in between 2006 and 2011. Presumably as it was on its first northward migration in 2008 and in 2009 it seems to have taken a more easterly course north through Berkshire but it didn't stay at Burnthouse Lane and it probably didn't join the local breeding population as it wasn't seen again after 15 April.

Black-headed Gull

EL54698	Nestling	06-06-2004	Cerney Wick, Glos
White 2A98	Alive (colour marks seen)	07-09-2008	Framilode, Glos 36 km WNW 4y 3m 1d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	13-04-2009	Hosehill Lake, Berks 63 km ESE 4y 10m 7d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	06-07-2009	Hosehill Lake, Berks 63 km ESE 5y 1m 0d
EW84074 White 2X74	Nestling	20-06-2009	Hosehill Lake, Berks
	Alive (colour marks seen)	06-07-2009	Hosehill Lake 16 days
	Alive (colour marks seen)	25-09-2009	Epney, Glos 98 km WNW 0y 3m 5d

White 2X74 was the first of many distant records of birds from the Reading and Basingstoke Ringing colour ringing project. White 2A98 was ringed as part of the partner study centered on Cotswold Water Park, since 2009 this bird has bred or attempted to breed at Hosehill every year until least 2012.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GN21028	Nestling	29-06-1999	Bristol, Avon
	Alive (colour marks seen)	05-01-2009	Padworth Lane GP, Berks 101 km E 9y 6m 7d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	26-01-2009	la Seguinere, Maine-et-Loire, France 498 km SSE 9y 6m 28d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	21-02-2009	Amailoux Landfill, Deux-Sevres, France 547 km SSE 9y 7m 23d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	04-12-2009	Sonzay, Indre-et-Loire, France 488 km SSE 10y 5m 5d

This bird had different strategies in different winters – presumably due to the weather, one winter it didn't set off south until January whereas the next it was well south by early December.

Barn Owl

GC68103	Nestling	02-07-2009	near Winnersh, Berks
	Dead	02-11-2009	Huddersfield, West Yorks 252 km NNW 4m 0d
GF6573	Nestling	29-07-2008	Brandon Marsh, Warks
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	08-02-2009	Welford, Berks 102 km S 0y 6m 10d

Some juvenile Barn Owls do move a reasonable distance and these two went in opposite directions!

Sand Martin

X710749	Juvenile	12-06-2009	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe, Essex
	Caught by ringer	23-06-2009	Copyhold Sand Quarry, near Hermitage, Berks 164 km WSW 0y 0m 11d

Juveniles quite often wander around and visit other colonies before setting off on migration.

Blackcap

X904917	First-year Male	22-09-2009	Wraysbury Gravel Pits, Berks
	Caught by ringer	26-09-2009	Pett Level, Sussex 105 km SE 0y 0m 4d
V553119	First-year Male	06-09-2007	Woolhampton Gravel Pit, Berks
	Caught by ringer	26-04-2008	Illa de Buda, Sant Jaume D'enveja, Tarragona, Spain 1,197 km S 0y 7m 20d

X904917 moved pretty quickly to Sussex and a shorter route across the Channel and V553119 may well have been on it's northward migration when it was caught in northern Spain.

Chiffchaff

CHP580	Juvenile	16-07-2009	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	20-09-2009	Brimpton Gravel Pit, Berks 242 km SSE 2m 4d
BPB714	First-year Male	22-09-2007	Wraysbury Gravel Pits, Berks
	Caught by ringer	09-05-2009	Portland Bill, Dorset 169 km SW 1y 7m 17d

Two reasonable distance movements within Britain.

Long-tailed Tit

BJL669	Full-grown	19-02-2008	Winchester College, Winchester, Hants
	Caught by ringer	18-10-2009	Paices Wood, Berks 37 km NNE 1y 7m 29d

Movements of more than 10 km are distinctly uncommon despite the occasional appearance of white-headed European birds in the UK.

Great Tit

X706111	Juvenile	20-06-2009	Thatcham Marsh, Thatcham, Berks
	Caught by ringer	05-12-2009	Hen's Wood, Marlborough, Wilts 26 km W 0y 5m 15d

Movements of more than 10 km are distinctly uncommon and tend to be juveniles dispersing in their first winter like this one.

Goldfinch			
R559659	Full-grown Male	26–09–2008	Ravensmoor, Nantwich, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	01–01–2009	Kintbury Farm, Kintbury, Berks 200 km SSE 0y 3m 6d
A nice long distance example of a winter visitor from the north.			

Lesser Redpoll			
X030641	Adult Female	18–10–2008	Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield, West Yorks
	Caught by ringer	14–02–2009	Burghfield Common, Berks 248 km S 0y 3m 27d
X282062	First-year	17–10–2008	Ramsley Reservoir, Derbys
	Caught by ringer	26–11–2009	Silwood Park, Sunninghill, Berks 217 km SSE 1y 1m 9d
Two nice examples of the significant autumn passage south through England.			

In 2009 there were three CES projects operating in Berkshire – Thatcham (started 1992), Wraybury (started 1993) and Kintbury (started in 2007). There were no RAS projects operating in 2009 although the Reading and Basingstoke Ringing Black-headed Gull colour ringing project which started in 2009 and was registered as a RAS project in 2010. A Willow and Marsh Tit colour ringing project was started in 2009 at a confidential location in the county – the Marsh Tit part of the project only ran until 2010.

These ringing totals and recovery details are taken from Robinson, R.A. & Clark, J.A. (2010) The Online Ringing Report: Bird ringing in Britain & Ireland in 2009 BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 20–July-2012).

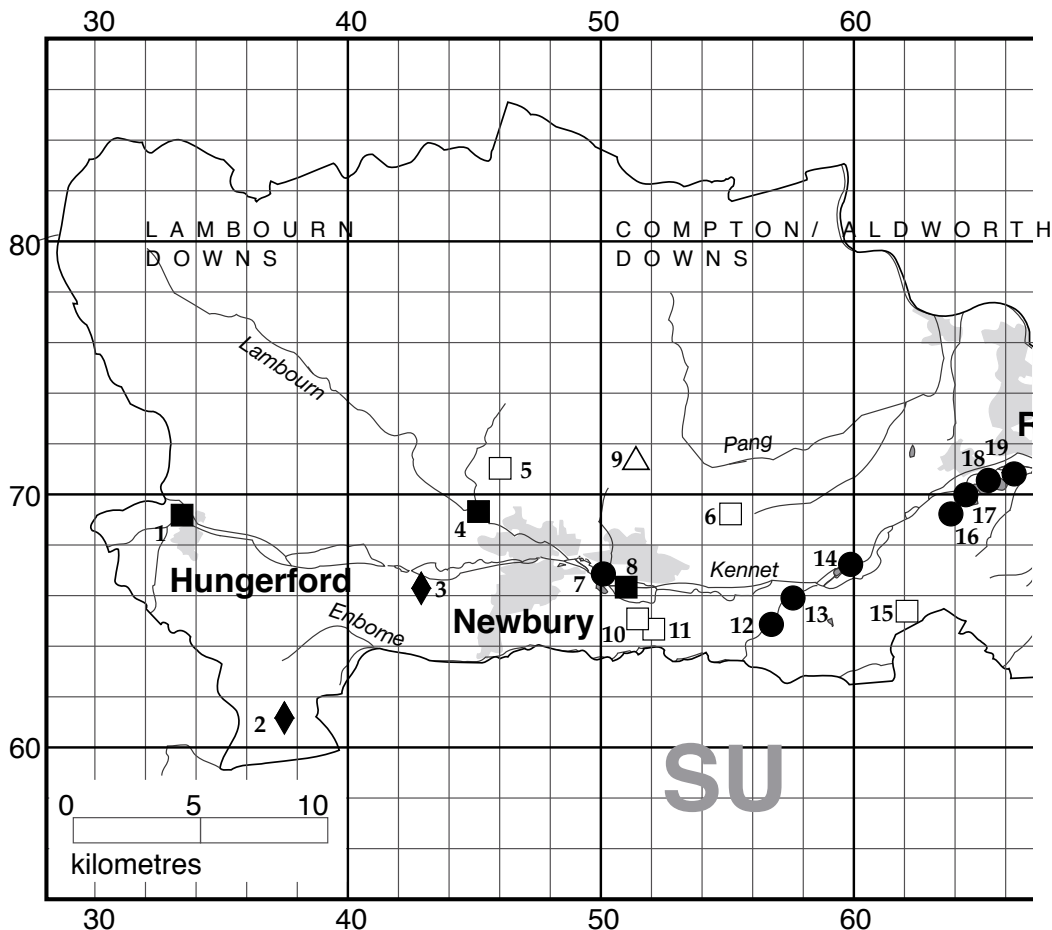
Nest recording in 2009

The BTO's Nest Record Scheme has run since 1939 and collates a vast amount of very important data on breeding success of a wide variety of species. The data is used to identify trends in breeding performance, and identify problems at different stages of the breeding cycle. NRS data are also used to measure the impacts of pressures such as climate change on bird productivity.

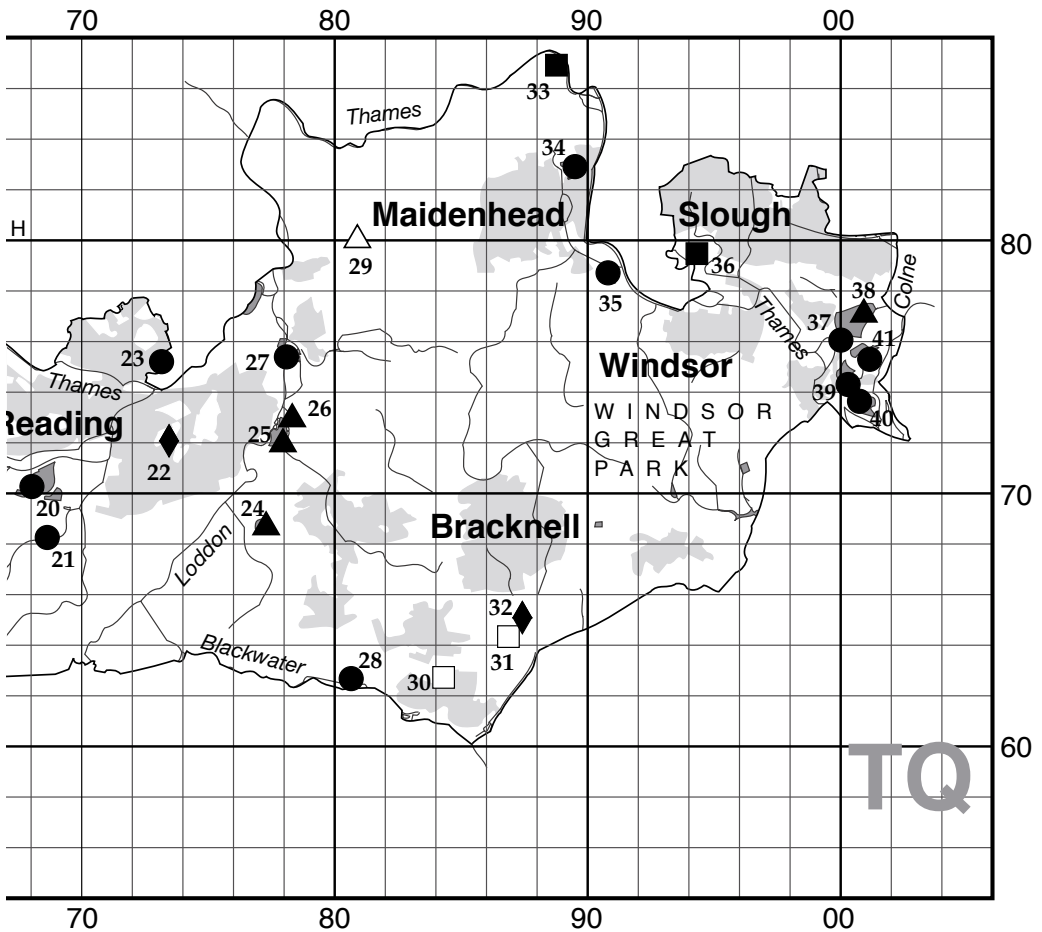
Not all nest recorders are ringers but because many are I have included a record of the Berkshire contribution to this national data set below. Three groups/individuals contributed more than 100 nest records (some from outside Berkshire) during 2009: Newbury Ringing Group (336), Matt Prior (335), Philip and Sarah Bone (169) and Reading and Basingstoke Ringing (103)

Table 3: Nest Records completed during 2009

Species	Nest Records	Species	Nest Records	Species	Nest Records
Great Crested Grebe	5	Collared Dove	2	Spotted Flycatcher	1
Mandarin Duck	4	Barn Owl	13	Blue Tit	123
Kestrel	4	Tawny Owl	1	Great Tit	208
Moorhen	1	Swallow	39	Nuthatch	10
Coot	1	House Martin	1	Jackdaw	3
Little Ringed Plover	1	Grey Wagtail	5	Carion Crow	1
Lapwing	6	Pied Wagtail	3	Goldfinch	1
Stock Dove	15	Robin	4	Total	455
Wood Pigeon	1	Blackbird	2	Species	25



- | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 SU 333 686 | Freeman's Marsh | 23 SU 735 745 | Caversham Lakes/Henley Road GP – Oxon |
| 2 SU 375 616 | Walbury Hill/Combe Wood | 24 SU 773 685 | Bearwood Lake |
| 3 SU 428 662 | Hamstead Park | 25 SU 780 725 | Dinton Pastures CP Country Park |
| 4 SU 452 694 | Bagnor Cress Beds | 26 SU 783 730 | Lavell's Lake |
| 5 SU 460 710 | Snelsmore Common | 27 SU 783 757 | |
| 6 SU 555 690 | Bucklebury Common | and 785 750 | Twyford Gravel Pits |
| 7 SU 502 665 | Thatcham/Muddy Lane/Lower Farm GPs | 28 SU 807 625 | Moor Green Lakes (Eversley Gravel Pits) |
| 8 SU 505 665 | Thatcham Marsh | 29 SU 807 800 | Bowsey Hill |
| 9 SU 515 715 | Fence Wood | 30 SU 842 625 | Wildmoor Heath (aka Edgebarrow Heath) |
| 10 SU 500 646 | Greenham Common | 31 SU 877 630 | Swinley Forest (Wishmoor area) |
| 11 SU 526 643 | Crookham Common | 32 SU 875 655 | Swinley Forest, Crowthorne Woods (Caesar's Camp and The Lookout) |
| 12 SU 568 652 | Brimpton Gravel Pits | 33 SU 885 870 | Cockmarsh |
| 13 SU 570 660 | Woolhampton Gravel Pits | 34 SU 895 825 | Summerleaze Gravel Pits |
| 14 SU 596 668 | Aldermaston Gravel Pits | 35 SU 908 788 | Bray Gravel Pits |
| 15 SU 620 648 | Padworth Common | 36 SU 935 795 | Dorney Wetlands, Slough Sewage Farm and Jubilee River |
| 16 SU 697 648 | Hosehill Lake | 37 TQ 000 760 | Datchet Common Gravel Pits |
| 17 SU 635 703 | Theale Gravel Pits (Wigmore Lane area) | 38 TQ 008 770 | Queen Mother Reservoir |
| 18 SU 655 705 | Theale Gravel Pits (Theale Main) | 39 TQ 005 745 | |
| 19 SU 665 707 | Theale Gravel Pits (Moatlands and Field Farm) | and 010 735 | Wraysbury Gravel Pits, (Sunnymeads) |
| 20 SU 680 705 | Burghfield Gravel Pits (Searles Farm) | 40 TQ 010 735 | Wraysbury Gravel Pits (Village Pit) |
| 21 SU 688 685 | Pingewood Gravel Pits (Burnthouse Lane) | 41 TQ 010 755 | Horton Gravel Pits |
| 22 SU 735 720 | Whiteknights Park | | |



The main areas for birdwatching in Berkshire are the river valleys of the Kennet, Lambourn, Loddon, Blackwater and the Thames, the areas of downland around Walbury Hill, Lambourn, Compton and Aldworth and the forests and heathlands in the south and east of the county.

This map shows the general area of the Lambourn, Compton and Aldworth Downs and Windsor Great Park but includes most other frequently mentioned sites visited regularly by birdwatchers. For further detailed site information try www.berksbirds.co.uk or www.birdsofberkshire.co.uk where maps and site descriptions can often be found. Sites on this map have been given a number, a map reference (approximate centre) and one of the following symbols:

- Gravel Pits
- Commons and Heaths
- Marshes and Sewage Farms
- ▲ Lakes and Reservoirs
- △ Downland and Parkland
- ◆ Woodland

Please note that inclusion of a site does not guarantee free or safe access.

County Directory

COUNTY RECORDER

Chris Heard, 3, Waterside Lodge, Ray Mead Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 8NP.
Telephone 01628 633828.

BERKSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

www.berksoc.org.uk

A Club for birdwatchers throughout Berkshire, with indoor and outdoor meetings, surveys and publications, including Birds of Berkshire annual reports – see page 2 for details. Collects bird records for the county and is responsible for the county database and administers 'The Birds of Berkshire Conservation Fund'. Registered Charity number 1011776

Secretary, Mike Turton, 7 Fawcett Crescent, Reading RG5 3HX

Telephone 0118 969 4197

Email: berksocsecretary@berksoc.org.uk

NEWBURY DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

www.ndoc.org.uk

A Club for birdwatchers in the Newbury area with a recording area of 10 miles radius of the town. Offers indoor and outdoor meetings, surveys and publications.

Membership Secretary, Karen Eggleton, 4 Thornfield, Headley, Thatcham, Berks, RG19 8AQ

Telephone 01635 269566

Email: info1@ndoc.org.uk

BERKSHIRE BIRD BULLETIN

Publisher of monthly newsletters of birds reported in the County with a news summary and detailed listings of sightings. Records are welcome for publication.

County Ornithological Services.

Brian Clews, Telephone 01628 525314 or Email: brian.clews@btconnect.com

BIRDS OF BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION FUND

Charitable Fund managed for the benefit of Berkshire's birds.

Enquiries and applications to: Renton Righelato

Telephone 0787 981 2564

Email: renton.righelato@berksoc.org.uk

www.berksbirds.co.uk

An independent website devoted to offering a free resource to birdwatchers in Berkshire and providing news, photographs and records of birds with additional optional information services.

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY (BTO)

Joint local representatives for BTO matters including organising surveys: Ken and Sarah White, Yonder Cottage, Ashford Hill, Thatcham, Berks, RG19 8AX.

Telephone 01635 268442

Email: btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com

FRIENDS OF LAVELL'S LAKE

Conservation volunteers managing Lavell's Lake local nature reserve near Dinton Pastures Country Park, Wokingham. Bird walks, work parties, occasional meetings and newsletters.

Chairman Fraser Cottington at

Fraser.cottington@ntlworld.com or see www.foll.org.uk

MOOR GREEN LAKES GROUP

Conservation volunteers who manage Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve near Eversley. Work parties, newsletters, an annual report and access to bird hides.

Membership Secretary: David Bishop, 7 Ambarrow Crescent, Little Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 8JA

Email: dave.bishop@mglg.org.uk

THEALE AREA BIRD CONSERVATION GROUP

A local Club devoted to the conservation of birds in the Theale area, west of Reading. Indoor and outdoor meetings, annual bird race and survey work.

www.freewebs.com/tabcg/

Cath McEwan, Secretary,

Email: Catherine@cmcewan.fsnet.co.uk

LOCAL RSPB GROUPS

Groups promote and represent the RSPB in the local community. Activities include indoor and outdoor meetings and fund raising events.

Further details from the RSPB www.rspb.org.uk/ or directly from:

East Berks Local Group
www.eastberksrspb.org.uk/

Reading Local Group
www.reading-rspb.org.uk/

Wokingham and Bracknell Local Group
www.wbrspb.btinternet.co.uk/

The bird-watching code

(from the RSPB's code at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/watchingbirds/code/index.aspx>, with modifications)

The interests of the bird come first.

Birds respond to people in many ways, depending on the species, location and time of year. Disturbance can keep birds from their nests, leaving chicks hungry or enabling predators to take eggs or young. During cold weather or when migrants have just made a long flight, repeatedly flushing birds can mean they use up vital energy that they need for feeding. Intentional or reckless disturbance of some species at or near the nest is illegal in Britain.

Whether your particular interest is photography, ringing, sound-recording or birdwatching, remember that the interests of the bird must always come first.

- Avoid going too close to birds or disturbing their habitats – if a bird flies away or makes repeated alarm calls, you are too close. And if it leaves, you won't get a good view.
- Stay on roads and paths where they exist and avoid disturbing habitat used by birds.
- Think about your fieldcraft. Disturbance is not just about going too close – a flock of wading birds on the foreshore can be disturbed from a mile away if you stand on the seawall.
- Repeatedly playing a recording of birdsong or calls to encourage a bird to respond can divert a territorial bird from other important duties, such as feeding its young. Never use playback to attract a species during its breeding season, even if it isn't a normal breeder in the area as this could prevent potential colonisation.

Know the rules for visiting the countryside, and follow them.

Respect the wishes of local residents and landowners, and don't enter private land without permission unless it is open for public access on foot. Follow the codes on access and the countryside for the place you're walking in.

Irresponsible behaviour may cause a land manager to deny access to others (eg for necessary survey work). It may also disturb the bird or give birdwatching bad coverage in the media.

Legislation provides access for walkers to open country in Britain, and includes measures to protect wildlife. In England and Wales, access is to land mapped as mountain, moor, heath and down, and to registered common land. However, local restrictions may be in force, so follow the Countryside Code and plan your visit. In England, the Countryside Code and maps showing areas for public access are at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.

Know the law

In England, Scotland and Wales, it is a criminal offence to disturb, intentionally or recklessly, at or near the nest, a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Disturbance could include playback of songs and calls. The courts can impose fines of up to

£5,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to six months for each offence. In Scotland, disturbance of Capercaillie and Ruffs at leks is also an offence.

The government can, for particular reasons such as scientific study, issue licences to individuals that permit limited disturbance, including monitoring of nests and ringing.

It is a criminal offence to destroy or damage, intentionally or recklessly, a special interest feature of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or to disturb the wildlife for which the site was notified. In England, Wales, a fine of up to £20,000 may be imposed by the Magistrates' Court, or an unlimited fine by the Crown Court. In Scotland, the maximum fine on summary conviction is £40,000, or an unlimited fine on conviction on indictment.

If you witness anyone who you suspect may be illegally disturbing or destroying wildlife or habitat, phone the police immediately (ideally, with a six-figure map reference) and report it to the RSPB.

If you discover a rare bird, please bear the following in mind:

Consider the potential impact of spreading the news and make an effort to inform the landowner (or, on a nature reserve, the warden) first. Think about whether the site can cope with a large number of visitors and whether sensitive species might be at risk, such as breeding terns, flocks of wading birds or rare plants.

On private land, always talk to the landowner first. With a little planning, access can often be arranged.

Rare breeding birds are at risk from egg-collectors and some birds of prey from persecution. If you discover a rare breeding species under any circumstances report it to the County Recorder (for Berkshire: email records@berksoc.org.uk) as a matter of urgency or the RSPB if it's outside the county. The County Recorder will consider telling the landowner of the bird's presence and legal obligations in most cases, and this will help ensure that the nest is not disturbed accidentally.

- If you have the opportunity to see a rare bird, enjoy it, but don't let your enthusiasm override common sense. In addition to the guidelines above:
- If you go to see a rare bird, park sensibly, follow instructions and consider making a donation if requested.
- Don't get too close for a photograph – you'll earn the wrath of everyone else if you flush the bird out of sight.
- Be patient if the viewing is limited, talk quietly and give others a chance to see the bird too.
- Do not enter private areas without permission.
- Birds should never be flushed in important wildlife habitats or where there are other nesting or roosting birds nearby. Birds should not be flushed more frequently than every two hours nor within two hours of sunrise or sunset, so that the bird has chance to feed and rest. At any time in the breeding season flushing rare visitors can be very disruptive to other species that are breeding in the area and so shouldn't be done.