

SYSTEMATIC LIST BIRD REPORT FOR 2004

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See Acknowledgements for a list of those drafting the accounts.

Observers

Please see the list of contributors at the end of this report to whom we extend our thanks.

Abbreviations and place names

The normal abbreviations are shown below in the table. 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.

AGE/SEX

Ad	adult
F/s	First summer
F/w	First winter (plumage)
Imm	Immature
Juv	Juvenile
M	Male
Pr	pair
F or fem	Female
Rh	Redhead
R/t	Ringtail
S/p	Summer plumage
S/s	Second summer
S/w	Second winter
W/p	Winter plumage
W	Winter
W/p	Winter plumage
3/s	Third summer
3/w	Third winter

PLACES/ LOCALITIES

Com	Common
CP	Country Park
Fm	Farm
GC	Golf course
GP	Gravel Pit(s)
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
Res	Reservoir
R.	River
SF	Sewage Farm
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
E. Berks	East Berkshire
M. Berks	Mid Berkshire
W. Berks	West Berkshire
Dorney W	Dorney Wetlands
QMR	Queen Mother Reservoir

Order of species

This is in BOU order, game birds now follow ducks, divers to herons follow game birds which are then followed by raptors and rails.

Status of species

In addition to the current assessment of the status of the species in Berkshire, species accounts now also highlight the national population status where it is RED (birds of high conservation concern) or AMBER (birds of medium conservation concern). Birds granted special protection on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are also identified.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Locally common resident

AMBER LISTED

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	24	15	11	–	–	–	–	–	60	82	69	71
Dinton Pastures CP	24	12	11	2	9	8	2	7	7	55	51	66
Eversley GPs	32	18	8	8	12	10	10	–	–	18	29	26
Newbury, K&A Canal	–	52	–	50	70	–	–	50	–	45	110	107
Windsor Esplanade	324	243	–	276	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	248

Counts of up to 60 were received from a further 45 sites. The count of 324 at Windsor Esplanade occurred on Jan 24th (DF) and is the largest flock ever to be recorded in Berks.

Breeding: was reported from 23 sites, involving 25 prs, the largest brood reported being 7 at Lavell's Lake (MFW).

Note: Swan Life-line have advised that any non-flying Swan, which recovers in all other aspects, is normally released into the R Thames Mute Swan flocks at either Windsor, or occasionally at Caversham Bridge.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Uncommon (declining) passage migrant and winter visitor.

AMBER LISTED

This is only the sixth year since 1962 that this species has not been reported in the county, the others being 1972, 1977, 1988, 1994 and 2001. In fact since the turn of the century there have been only 3 records involving 10 birds. Bewick's Swan has recently undergone a fairly rapid national decline with numbers wintering in the past five winters being considerably lower than in any year since the mid-1970s (The state of the UK's birds 2004).

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor

A flock of 17 were located in fields south of the A4 at Cold Harbour on Dec 13th (GBr), and were subsequently seen the following day (MO). All were of the Tundra race (ssp *rossiscus*), and one had a yellow neck collar-imprinted with 7U6, which was fitted in the Netherlands in 2002, when the bird was a first winter. Unfortunately, they had gone by the next morning, but the flock was relocated in Staffordshire later the same day (15th). These were no doubt part of an influx during December, which saw many Tundra Beans arrive in the Midlands, Southern England and East Anglia. Coincidentally this is the second consecutive year that a flock of 17 Bean Geese have been seen in Berkshire (the other flock was over QMR on Feb 24th 2003), and that record was also part of a national influx.

After some initial disagreement, the above flock was aged as 15 adults and two juvs by CDRH – who has commented as follows: 'The juveniles of the various grey geese (*Anser*) species each have individual plumage characteristics, but some generalisations can be made. During the autumn all adult geese undergo a complete moult (including the flight-feathers, which makes them temporarily flightless), resulting in the wholly fresh w/p. By contrast, juveniles at this time of the year are in varying stages of moult from juvenile to f/w plumage - with the retained juvenile wing-coverts and mantle feathers perceptibly smaller, more rounded and less immaculately pale-fringed than those of adults. On the two juvenile Bean Geese in the Coldharbour flock the innermost greater coverts could be seen

to be duller with more frayed tips (than those of the adults) and there was an obvious moult contrast at the base of the neck between the older juvenile head and neck feathering and the fresh new feathering on the breast.'

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

On Dec 1st a flock of 27 (24 adults and 3 juvs-all of the Eurasian ssp *albifrons*) flew NE over Maidenhead and were seen independently from Blackamoor Lane (DJB) and Summerleaze GP at approx 1220 hrs (CDRH). Presumably the same flock, but reported as c.25 were noted flying NE over Moatlands GP at 1145hrs on Dec 1st (PMC); the time difference between these 2 sightings indicates that the birds were flying at just less than 40mph.

Recorder: despite no obvious meteorological cause, the 1st was evidently a busy day for Whitefront movements in the South-east - with reports of 66 briefly at Abberton Res, Essex, flocks of 8 & 9 flying over and 2 in Pagham Harbour, West Sussex and 9 (and 1 Bean Goose) flying over Rainham, Essex (per BLSE).

Additionally, the usual feral bird was seen on 13 separate occasions, from Jan 1st until at least Nov 6th, in the Kennet valley between Woolhampton and Pingewood (MO). This bird has been resident in the area for at least 4 years.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common introduced and increasing resident

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cock Marsh	85	–	32	–	–	122	–	–	153	–	111	86
Eversley GPs	–	2	7	4	6	2	20	2	16	26	4	37
Pingewood GPs	31	–	8	2	22	–	22	45	–	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	–	32	6	4	–	1	2	75	–	14	5	5
Theale GPs	102	87	72	–	19	–	–	–	134	77	142	138
Twyford GPs	9	35	1	2	4	–	–	73	–	–	–	43
Wraysbury GPs /Horton GPs	9	12	12	9	–	–	–	–	63	74	101	36

The count of 37 at Eversley GPs on Dec 20th (BMA) was a site record. The year's county high count of 153 at Cock Marsh occurred on Sep 20th (WAS). Counts of up to 30 were received from a further 24 sites, with higher counts reported from Charvil with 90 on Jan 25th (MFW), 77 there on Feb 18th (CDRH) and 120 nearby at Borough Marsh on Oct 21st (DJB). Elsewhere there were 85 by Switchback Road, Cookham on Aug 10th (BDC), 122 Englefield Aug 14th (RCr), 95 Padworth Lane GP Aug 28th (MFW), 76 Woolhampton GP Aug 28th (IW,JL) and 61 Windsor Great Pk Dec 20th (CDRH). **Breeding:** despite the fact that individual site numbers seem to be increasing, breeding records are still obviously under-recorded, with 11 prs noted at 8 locations with a total of 54 y recorded.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Occasional escapee and regular visitor to one site where it has bred

Monthly maxima at the main site was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	9	9	9	8	7	–	2	6	7	7	6	6

The feral population continues to decrease year by year. Brimpton GP also had a single bird (white morph) on Aug 23rd (GEW).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common and widespread introduced resident

Introduced in the late 17th century by King Charles II for his wildfowl collection in St James Park, and continues to increase.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	7	5	12	14	39	26	6	37	415	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	130	84	16	12	5	–	11	97	99	50	47	61
Dorney Wetlands	40	–	50	–	–	–	–	105	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	–	69	–	22	41	135	224	240	334	–	113	158
Lower Farm GP	261	126	45	15	72	64	67	56	87	60	153	330
Summerleaze GP	66	108	103	10	32	38	10	170	–	500	76	97
Thatcham GPs	147	143	128	42	63	124	134	188	136	142	116	58
Theale GPs	42	97	84	–	45	–	–	–	52	100	50	9
Twyford GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	40	–	134	–	–	–
Windsor Esplanade	198	72	–	88	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	155

Counts of up to 80 were received from a further 26 sites, those with higher counts were: 200 flying over Swallowfield Jan 18th (CRW); 120 Maidenhead Towpath fields Jan 28th (DF); 117 Sonning, Sonning Meadows Apr 15th (ABT); 450 Cookham, Switchback Road Aug 10th (BDC); 360 Pingewood GP Aug 14th (RCr); 200 Crookham Com Aug 17th (JPM) with 420 there on Sep 29th flying over north-east (JPM); 300 Remenham Aug 22nd with 100 there Oct 2nd (ANS); 100 Lower Fm Trout Lake on Oct 3rd (SAG); 277 Thatcham Oct 16th (BJW); 130 Charvil Dec 11th (MFW) and 200 at Donnington Valley GC on Dec 29th (JL). **Breeding:** was reported from many sites, high counts consisted of 5 broods totalling 31y at Eversley GPs on May 11th (DJB), 5 broods totalling 24y at Lower Fm Trout Lake on May 14th (SAG) and a creche of 39 at Donnington Valley GC on May 23rd (SAG).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Rare vagrant and localised feral visitor/resident

Monthly maxima at the main site was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	100	96	76	8	16	10	2	9	86	91	92	100

Figures in the table show that this species has undergone a dramatic decrease since last year and this may be due to shooting at Stratfield Saye Hants, the other main site for this feral population. **Breeding:** eight prs attempted to breed at Eversley GPs but none

were successful. Away from Eversley individual feral birds were noted at 5 locations, with higher counts of 6 at Dorney W on Mar 30th (JOB) and 4 at Pingewood GPs on Oct 16th (KEM).

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant

A poor year with just 3 records compared to an average of just over 6 for the previous 10 years. **First Winter:** a single was located at Theale Main GP on Mar 19th (RAD). **Second Winter:** one circled QMR before departing north on Dec 22nd (CDRH); earlier that day a small goose sp. seen very distantly from QMR, flying south with 5 Egyptian Geese, was probably the same bird. Finally 2 were reported at Eversley GPs on Dec 26th (MGLR).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Now an increasingly common resident in east and Mid Berks, local in the west

Egyptian Geese are now present at most of the larger GPs as well as many stretches of R Thames in mid and east Berks. The monthly maximum is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cookham Area*	12	3	-	-	-	8	1	79	113	27	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP	3	3	11	10	10	2	11	8	-	4	4	4
Eversley GPs	8	15	11	6	2	5	22	29	34	28	26	26
Pingewood GPs	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	5	20	-	2	-
Theale GPs	10	1	10	7	1	1	5	-	3	4	6	7
Windsor Great Pk	-	2	-	6	10	17	-	-	-	-	2	4
Other Sites	16	40	14	27	16	2	19	12	15	47	4	38

*This area covers sites from Summerleaze GP north to Cock Marsh.

The large counts in the Cookham area occurred at Cookham Rise on Aug 24th (DJB) and Sep 29th (CDRH) and are record counts for Berks. The 34 at Eversley GPs on Sep 9th (JMC) is a site record. Away from the main sites, counts exceeding 9 were made at Hurst (12 on Feb 2nd: DJB), Hall Fm Arborfield (13 on Feb 2nd: MBu and 26 on Dec 22nd: DJB), South Hill Pk Bracknell (10 on Jul 23rd: DKP), Moatlands GP (12 on Aug 16th: JOB), Langley (10 over on Oct 3rd: CDRH) and Carters Hill Shinfield (22 on Oct 16th: DJB). In West Berks birds were only noted at Lower Fm GP with a max of 3 on May 29th (IW; JL), Muddy Lane GP with 1 on Apr 17th (IW; JL) and Greenham Com with 1 on May 14th (CDRH). **Breeding:** was reported from 11 locations. A pr bred at Eversley GPs, a brood of 4 noted on Jan 29th and a 2nd brood of 8 on Jul 10 (MGLR) but only 1 bird fledged. At least 2 prs bred at Dinton Pastures CP with a brood of 6 noted on Mar 1st (PBT) and 2 broods of 3 and 4 on Mar 14th (MFW), there was 1pr with 2 goslings at Mill Pond Bracknell on Mar 12th (DJB; MFW), 1pr with 8 goslings on Theale Main GP on Mar 15th (RJB) and further broods there of 4 on Nov 6th (MFW) and 5 on Dec 6th (KEM). A pr with 2y was found at Whiteknights Pk on Mar 23rd (MBu), a pr with 4y on K&A Canal at Theale on Apr 1st (RF) and at least 3 prs bred in Windsor Pk, a brood of 2 on Apr 27 increasing to 3 broods of 6, 3 and 2 well grown y on Jun 20th (CDRH). Two goslings were seen at Swallowfield on May 11th (CRW), a pr with y at Twyford GPs on May 22nd (SPA), a pr with 6y at Cock Marsh on Jun 28th (WAS), 1pr with 5y at Datchet on Jul 3rd (WAS) and 1pr with 2y at Hosehill Lake on Oct 30th (JLe).

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor

AMBER LISTED

Mid Berks now seems to be the stronghold for this species in Berkshire with 12 locations out of a County total of 29.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands	2	6	8	5	6	3	1	–	–	–	–	1
Lower Farm GP	6	2	4	6	4	5	4	1	–	–	3	2
Padworth Lane GP	4	3	4	4	18	18	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	6	2	4	2	4	2	1	1	1	–	3	1
QMR	1	–	3	5	8	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
Woolhampton GPs	4	6	6	8	7	6	–	–	–	–	–	2

Counts of up to 5 were received from a further 19 sites with higher counts of 7 Aldermaston GP Apr 19th (JPM); 6 Wraysbury GPs Apr 24th which flew in from the east and were additional to the locally bred birds (CDRH); 6 Lower Farm Trout Lake Apr 25th (MJT); 6 in flight over Brimpton on Apr 26th (GEW). **Breeding:** the counts in the maxima table for Padworth Lane GP for May and June included a single brood of 10 juvs on May 20th (CDRH) whilst the June record included a total of 15 juvs on Jun 12th (MFW). Overall, apart from Padworth Lane GP, breeding records seem to be very hit and miss and a pr with 2 ducklings at Lower Farm GP from Jun 13th (RF) into July are all that has been recorded. However a pr at Hosehill Lake on Mar 17th (BU) was thought by the observer to be nest prospecting.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Localised but increasing introduced resident

The distribution trend is still very much East Berks based, in particular Virginia Water and the River Thames areas, but now spreading both up the Thames and through other river valleys and gravel pits and lakes into Mid Berks, and gradually into West Berks.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Whiteknights Lake	25	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Wraysbury GPs	7	–	6	9	–	–	–	–	4	6	8	2
R Thames Maidenhead	2	1	12	5	–	–	4	–	–	–	–	12
Eversley GPs	3	–	7	12	12	3	1	–	3	1	–	6

Counts of up to 9 were received from a further 44 sites with a higher count (not including counts with young) of 20 at Virginia Water on Oct 24th (J S Hunt). The only records from W Berks concerned 1m at Freemens Marsh on Apr 13th (LM), 3 Aldermaston GP on Aug 25th and 1 there on Sep 9th (JPM). **Breeding:** was reported from 12 locations, broods of 3 and an incredible 16* were located on Rapley Fish Pond on May 24, 10 at Swallowfield Pk on May 25th, 6 at Swinley Pk on May 28th (all DJB), 7 at Burghfield GPs on Jun 3rd (DBM), 5 and 1 in Sunninghill Pk on Jun 4th (DJB), 2 on Jun 10th (DJB) and 3 on Jul 12th (WAS) in Windsor Pk, 2 Romney Lock on Jun 16, 2 Boveney Lock on Jun 18th (both WAS), 3 The Cut nr Binfield on Jun 19 (BDC), 3 Boulters Lock on Jul 1st (LJF) and 4 juvs at Cookham Lock on Jul 5th (DJB). At Eversley GPs 8 prs bred successfully (1 brood seen on Jul 10th) with some using nest boxes (MGLR).

*The brood of 16 is exceptional, BWP states that normal broods range from 9-12 rarely 14 so could this brood be a product of more than 1 female laying in the same nest?

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Locally common winter visitor and rare summer visitor has bred,

AMBER LISTED

'What a grand noise they make as they come tearing down, one, two, three hundred feet, in a few seconds, to rock and sideslip as they near the surface of the water, and churn it into a lather with their outstretched feet' - Eric Ennion (*The Field* 1939).

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	202	43	35	-	-	-	-	-	10	130	159	120
Dinton Pastures CP	120	4	26	3	-	-	-	-	7	72	86	124
Eversley GPs	389	395	356	28	-	-	-	-	45	175	406	563
Lower Farm GP	89	154	16	2	-	-	1	-	4	46	110	28
Moatlands GPs /Burghfield Mill GPs	50	100	15	-	-	-	1	1	100	57	-	-
Pingewood GPs	297	160	131	7	-	-	-	-	34	-	25	-
Summerleaze GP	6	34	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	61
Theale GPs	67	108	59	11	1	-	1	1	13	88	176	94
Wraysbury GPs /Horton GPs	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	2	164	50	18	-

The high count of 563 at Eversley GPs occurred on Dec 27th (MGLR). Away from the main sites, the only count to exceed 100 was 160 at Stanlake Pk on Feb 29th (MFW).

First Winter: records were received from 18 locations with the gravel pit complexes of Mid Berks holding the highest numbers. By April most birds had departed north, the last report being 2 at Eversley GPs on Apr 14th (BMA). **Summer:** late migrants or summering birds were noted at 2 sites in May. A confiding drake took up residence at Hosehill Lake from 8th (MFW) to 31st (BU) and a female appeared at Wraysbury GPs on 21st (CDRH). After no records in June, an eclipse drake was present at Dorney W Jul 8th (CDRH), Jul 12th (CRe) and Jul 26th (BDC). A drake (possibly the May bird) was then seen back at Hosehill Lake Jul 13th (BU) and Jul 25th (RJB) and was probably the same bird that was seen there Aug 2nd (RCr) now with an injured wing. In West Berks a female was present at Lower Farm GP Jul 14th (SAG), all these July birds may have been early returning, rather than summering birds. **Autumn/Second Winter:** after July, the first definite returning birds were noted at Dorney W, where 2 were present Aug 17th (SP) and a single bird at Burghfield Mill GP Aug 20th (RAd) but as normal the second winter period really began during September with 12 sites occupied by the months end. A total of 22 sites held birds during the second winter but apart from the main sites in the table, no counts exceeded 30 birds.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Common winter visitor now breeding in several locations

AMBER LISTED

Whilst the site record high count for Berkshire (626 Wraysbury 1998) was not exceeded, Gadwall had some consistent high numbers through the county. However it is worthwhile recording that Eversley GPs did have a new site record of 279 on 17th Jan (IHB). In total, 35 locations recorded Gadwall.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	50	17	8	4	2	1	–	–	4	8	17	28
Burghfield GPs	231	85	84	–	–	–	–	–	17	–	105	173
Dinton Pastures CP	221	66	115	10	5	4	–	6	16	4	28	88
Eversley GPs	279	209	47	15	6	2	11	8	66	68	128	258
Horton GPs	–	–	6	18	–	–	–	–	254	7	–	–
Lower Farm GP	44	45	64	5	8	13	12	16	42	57	91	104
Lower Farm Trout Lake	30	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	33	10
Moatlands GPs	10	–	–	4	–	–	11	64	72	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	31	71	47	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	10	10	–	2	–	1	–	–	–	6	7	22
Thatcham GPs	55	27	7	20	3	–	3	–	–	71	47	35
Theale GPs	30	7	10	1	2	–	–	–	25	29	79	86
Wraysbury GPs	72	15	14	1	2	–	–	–	332	30	30	86

Counts over 20 were received from a further 5 sites; 35 QMR April 3 (ABT); 21 Jubilee River Oct 10th with 24 there Nov 11th (BDC); 33 Thatcham Marsh Nov 27th (JL), c 40 Aldermaston GP Dec 16th (RF); 22 Summerleaze GP Dec 21st (BDC). **Breeding:** a total of 8+ broods is an increase over last year. At Dorney W 2 ducks with 14 juvs were noted Jun 26th (MFW) and probably the same broods now numbering 4 and 7 were there Jun 30th with another two broods nearby at Slough SF (CDRH). A brood of 2 were at Woolhampton GPs Jun 30th (GEW); a duck with 1y at Moatlands GP Jul 16 had increased to 2 broods of 4 and 2 Aug 8th (RCr) and breeding was reported nearby at Bottom Lane Theale (TABR) although there are no further details. Finally a brood of 8 was noted at Eversley GPs (MGLR) but only 2 juvs were present by Aug 23rd (BMA).

COMMON TEAL *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor and rare summer visitor has bred,

AMBER LISTED

A 'spring of Teal', what a wonderful collective name, described, no doubt, for their near vertical take-off.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	36	18	31	12	–	–	–	–	2	12	7	19
Dinton Pastures CP	53	56	16	11	2	2	–	11	48	29	49	46
Dorney Wetlands/ Jubilee River/Slough SF	195	98	40	20	4	2	–	15	8	74	50	85
Eversley GPs	59	33	15	10	–	–	–	4	16	29	34	56
Lower Farm GP	122	76	11	8	1	–	–	4	12	30	54	141
Moatlands GPs	10	70	4	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	70
Padworth Lane GP	–	14	37	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10
Pingewood GPs	275	25	25	8	1	2	1	9	31	18	–	–
Thatcham GPs	66	14	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	10	15
Theale GPs	22	3	14	15	–	–	1	1	4	3	6	5
Wraysbury GPs	42	14	17	–	–	–	–	–	8	24	18	36

Counts of less than 20 were received from a further 17 sites, but those with higher counts were; 22 Brimpton GP Jan 2nd (IW,JL), 20 Sandford Fm settling beds, Twyford GPs Feb 28 (FJC), 20 Manor Farm (Brimpton) Mar 6th (GEW) and in the second winter

an exceptional 180 at Great Meadow Pond Sep 15th (CDRH) which is a record count for September. Away from the river valleys 2 flushed from a dew-pond on Walbury Hill (Berkshires highest elevation) on Feb 15th (IW) is noteworthy. **Spring/summer:** most wintering birds had left by mid April, the latest being 2 at Lower Fm GP Apr 25th (IW). In May birds were reported from 5 locations; 4 were present on the exceptional passage day of May 1st at Dorney W (DJB; MFW). A drake, occasionally seen with a female was present in the Lavell's Lake/Lea Fm GP area from May 8th (MFW) to Jun 5th (FJC), a drake with an injured wing remained at Pingewood GPs from May 8th (MFW) to May 18th (DJB) and a drake frequented Lower Fm GP from May 9th (JC) to May 12th (KEM). Two drakes visited Pingewood GPs Jun 5th (KEM) and a drake Jun 8th (JOB) was followed by a female on Jun 22nd (BDC) at Dorney W. In July there were 2 records from Pingewood GPs, 1 drake on 4th and 1 25th (RJB), 1 was also noted at Hosehill Lake Jul 20th (BU) and were probably the first returning birds.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Very rare vagrant

After brief views of a probable drake at Slough SF Feb 23rd, identification was confirmed when the bird was relocated on the adjacent Dorney W Feb 24th (JOB *et al*). It could not be found Feb 25th, but reappeared with c75 Teal at Slough SF Feb 26th (CDRH). There were no further sightings until Mar 4th when it was relocated with 30+ Teal at Bray GPs (DJB); a subsequent visit 2 hours later, could not relocate the bird and it was never seen again. This is the 3rd record for Berkshire.

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
Dinton Pastures CP	120	123	114	7	12	22	28	40	31	94	120	121
Heath Lake	97	83	80	20	22	48	73	77	66	80	87	49
Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands	30	201	135	–	241	46	–	–	–	167	234	124
Lower Farm GP	21	8	5	3	12	14	23	75	113	56	32	64
Thatcham GPs	140	255	129	126	120	168	185	120	196	198	158	252

The high number of resident birds at Muddy Lane GP accounts for the high totals shown in the table for Thatcham GPs. Counts of up to 80 were received from a further 49 sites, whilst those in excess of 80 were; 134 Pingewood GP Aug 12th (RCr); 100 Denford Pk Sep 6th (RGS); 100 plus Swallowfield Nov 14th (CRW). **Breeding:** another under recorded breeding species with records from just 11 sites with the highest reported concentration of breeding birds being Dorney W with 14 broods noted Jun 10th (BDC).

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Once described as the world's most common duck, unfortunately that may no longer be the case. After last years unprecedented numbers for Berkshire, 2004 fell into a 'more normal' year with most records involving 1-4 birds and none exceeding 10. **First Winter:** began with 6 (3 drakes) at QMR Jan 2nd (CDRH). This heralded a small influx into the county with a drake at Pingewood GPs Jan 3rd (JOB), a drake on Theale Main GP (BU),

a pr flying N over Summerlease GP (CDRH), 4 (3 drakes) heading high NE over QMR (CDRH) and a pr at Dorney W (JOB) all Jan 4th, with the latter birds still present Jan 6th (BAJC). Back at Pingewood GPs, a group of 3 (2 drakes and 1f) were located Jan 7th; the female flying off towards Burghfield GPs (MGM) and a drake was present at Eversley GPs Jan 10th (BMA; IHB). Further January records involved a drake at Twyford GPs Jan 17th (BTB) still present Jan 24th (MFW), 1 drake Moatlands GP Jan 17th (RANG; RCr) and another drake at Pingewood GPs Jan 25th (KEM). The drake of a pr at Dorney W/Slough SF Feb 5th (JOB), 12th (CDRH) and 23rd (JOB) may possibly be the same individual located on the RThames at Bray Jan 23rd and Bray GPs Mar 18th (RAN; JAN). Meanwhile a group of 10 (4 drakes) visited Lower Farm GP Feb 6th (RAH; RH). Finally a drake at Hosehill Lake Mar 10th (BU) was probably the same drake at Moatlands GP having relocated on Mar 11th and remaining to Mar 26th (RJB *et al*). **Autumn/Second Winter:** the earliest returning birds were 3 juvs noted at Eversley GPs Sept 9th (PBT). A female visited Burghfield GPs Oct 7th (CDRH), another fem departed north from Dinton Pastures CP Oct 10th (FJC; PMC) and there was another report of 1 on the R Loddon nr Lavell's Lake LNR Oct 15th (RR). In November 1 was noted at Lower Farm GP on 7th (RF) and a f/w drake flew W over QMR Nov 8th (CDRH). A drake visited Aldermaston GP Dec 16th (RF) and a group of 7 (1m, 3f, 3imm) arrived at Eversley GPs on Dec 17th (NG *et al*). These birds seemed to reduce in number as the days went on, 6 on Dec 18th (BMA), 5 Dec 27th (JMC), and down to three by the year end (JMC/NG) however 2 adult drakes were noted Dec 17th (IHB) and Dec 31st (JMC). A drake at Pingewood GPs Dec 29th (KEM) and Dec 30th (AMc) was followed by the final record of the year of a pr circling Dinton Pastures CP before departing N on Dec 31st (RR).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor, has bred

SCHEDULE 1 and
AMBER LISTED

A fairly average year with a total of 10 records involving up to 14 birds. **Spring:** Dorney W started the year off with a pr located Mar 30th (JOB *et al*). On Apr 7th Pingewood GPs had a female (RJB). The next two records, in May, were one-day drakes at Lower Farm GP 16th (BJH; JC) and Dorney W 25th (SP). **Autumn:** was definitely more active with most reports coming from Burnthouse Lane GP, Pingewood GPs. At this site a juv was located Aug 4th (CDRH) and 3 were noted Aug 5th (RCr) with 2 departing at 2045hrs. The next records (of what may have been new birds) from Burnthouse Lane occurred Aug 12th with 2 juvs (RCr *et al*). These were seen daily to Aug 19th when 3 were seen together (JOB). Subsequently 1-3 were regularly seen until Sept 5th (MO), the general consensus was an eclipse male, and two juv birds. Elsewhere 2 were located at Dorney W August 17th (SP), whilst the year finished with an eclipse drake at Dinton Pastures CP (Sandford Lake) Sep 8th (ADB/BTB/MFW).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Locally common winter visitor, scarce summer visitor which has bred

AMBER LISTED

Recorded in every month of the year. Few were recorded in West Berks, the main bulk split between Mid and East Berks, based on recorded locations.

Four counts exceeded 100 birds, and whilst shown in the monthly maxima below, it is perhaps worth noting these; 110 on Feb 1st (RRK) and 117 Mar 13th (IW/JL), both at Lower Farm GP, 160 at Moatlands GP (RJB) Dec 4th and 120 at Dinton Pastures CP Dec 28th (30 on BSL (TWa) and 90 on LCA: FJC). The count of 55 at Eversley Feb 7th(JMC) was apparently a new site record count.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	10	29	24	–	–	1	–	–	24	7	9	15
Burghfield GPs	40	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	26	9	6
Dinton Pastures CP	49	52	50	20	–	2	–	10	31	7	6	120
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	22	28	40	6	2	2	1	18	20	57	10	21
Eversley GPs	48	55	42	15	2	–	–	2	2	15	23	34
Lower Farm GP	73	110	117	26	3	–	–	10	20	9	26	74
Moatlands GP	8	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	55	–	87	160
Thatcham GPs (Muddy Lane GP)	46	14	44	–	–	–	–	–	14	11	16	22
Theale GPs	76	50	30	–	–	–	–	4	24	43	59	26
Wraysbury GPs	19	4	–	–	–	–	–	13	8	56	18	49
Other sites	13	0	31	1	3	4	0	0	2	4	0	62

The only other counts to exceed 15 were 16 Pingewood GPs Mar 29th (ABT) and 53 Whiteknights Lake Dec 31st 24m 29f (AM). Summer records came from 9 locations most being reports of 1-2 birds seen on single dates. However 3 were present at Lower Farm GP on May 28th (SAG) and at Great Meadow Pond (a site where this species has bred in the past), 2 males were seen May 26th and a pr a few days later on Jun 1st (CDRH). An interesting record from Dorney W Jul 7th (CDRH) involved a juv which by virtue of date would indicate possible local breeding?

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce winter visitor but presumed feral birds occur annually in small numbers

First Winter: the year began with a drake at Wraysbury GPs on Jan 3rd (CDRH). A series of records were then received from Mid Berks, possibly involving a minimum of only 4 birds. A female at Moatlands GP on Feb 2nd was followed by a drake there on Feb 10th (RAd). A pr appeared at Burghfield GPs from Feb 8th (JA) and was regular to Mar 7th when 2 prs were noted (JA). A pr continued to Mar 20th then a drake was reported irregularly through April to May 3rd (MO) before moving to Pingewood GPs on May 23rd-24th (PBT; KEM) and finally back at Burghfield GPs on May 29th (JA). Wintering birds at Burghfield/Theale GPs have become fairly regular in recent years and are thought to possibly originate from the feral population centered on the Cotswold Water Park (Wilts/Glous). However no records were received from W Berks. **Second Winter:** an eclipse male and a leucistic female arrived at Hosehill Lake on Aug 15th (RGB; RCr; MFW) who states that these are probably the same birds that were seen at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 16th 2003 and were seen to Sep 26th (R Sharp). Meanwhile 2 f/w males were found at Bray GPs on Sep 11th (CDRH; WAS) remaining to Sep 13th (CDRH; DJB). October records included a drake at Hosehill Lake from Oct 1st (RCr) to Oct 21st (RR)

and a female nearby at Theale Main GP from Oct 15th intermittently to Nov 8th (KEM). A pr found at Burghfield GPs on Oct 10th (JA) increased to 3 (2 drakes 1f) on Oct 17th (KEM; KS) and then 1-3 were reported regularly from Burghfield GPs or occasionally Theale Main GP to at least Dec 28th (MO). In the east of the county November records involved a party of 3 (a drake and 2 f/w drakes) at Wraysbury GPs on Nov 4th (CDRH). These wary birds had departed by the following day, and it is possible that they may have been genuine wild birds, but the issue is clouded by the presence of 2 nearby at Horton GP from Nov 6th, which were pinioned and unable to fly (CDRH); allegedly released to reduce pondweed! Further reports from Wraysbury included a group of 7 reported on Nov 28th (Surrey Birds website per CL) and finally 1 f/w male on Dec 21st (CDRH).

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor which occasionally breeds

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	216	194	94	1	1	1	6	7	24	255	353	183
Burghfield GPs	87	111	47	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	22	115
Dinton Pastures CP	33	11	123	1	–	–	–	–	1	5	60	48
Dorney Wetlands	71	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	3	16	20
Eversley GPs	68	71	27	1	–	–	–	5	6	40	40	94
Horton GPs /Wraysbury GPs	368	147	257	1	1	–	17	38	71	153	193	300
Lower Farm GPs	56	7	3	2	2	2	2	–	4	22	45	27
Moatlands GPs	187	197	140	–	–	–	3	13	–	67	–	–
Summerleaze GP	58	107	36	–	–	1	–	–	–	3	29	11
Thatcham GPs	120	67	74	–	–	–	–	–	–	23	47	71
Theale GPs	117	100	20	–	–	–	–	–	14	40	72	117
Other Sites	86	25	23	2	3	3	6	0	14	100	104	85

Interesting to note that more observers recorded Pochard than any other wildfowl species. Counts in the 'other sites' row of over 50 were 55 at Twyford GPs on Oct 31st (DJB) and 90 from Midgham Bridge on Nov 9th(RF). **Summer:** small numbers were reported during the quieter months of April through to August with summering or wandering birds being reported from 12 locations. Most records involved individual drakes but at Lower Farm GP a drake and female were regularly reported from Apr 3rd (IW/JL) to Jul 31st (SAG/JLS), a female remained at Bray GPs from early April to late August (MO) and 2 drakes were noted at Hampstead Pk on May 2 (MFW) and Pingewood GPs on Jun 10th (MGM). With most records of single drakes coming from Mid Berks during this period, it is not inconceivable that the majority of sightings may refer to a widely travelled individual. By July return passage was already evident, 3 birds (including 2 drakes) were present on Burghfield Mill GP on Jul 21st (RJB) and 5 were located at Pingewood GPs on Jul 25th (MFW). However it was in the east of the county where the highest counts made with 5 present at Wraysbury GPs on Jul 11 increasing to 17 by Jul 25th (CDRH).

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

2002 Correction: the observer of the drake at Pingewood GPs on May 13 was MGM.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common throughout the year

Some very high counts overall, Eversley GPs had a new site record count of 261 on 5th Dec (JMC).

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	251	319	242	52	10	6	36	41	97	124	183	143
Burghfield GPs /Moatlands GPs	442	412	268	40	–	–	11	102	51	–	190	302
Dinton Pastures CP	132	76	150	37	14	7	9	13	5	53	154	185
Dorney Wetlands/Jubilee River	57	–	104	100	107	1	2	50	–	258	409	282
Eversley GPs	128	151	156	35	70	30	43	20	35	72	86	261
Lower Farm GP	26	14	25	14	18	21	44	22	14	25	26	34
QMR	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	233	57	27	17
Summerleaze GP	68	46	59	21	13	16	5	6	–	40	44	39
Thatcham GPs	124	43	39	24	24	5	5	10	9	24	52	54
Theale GPs	176	200	154	30	–	–	–	–	63	112	169	167
Woolhampton GPs	129	88	101	89	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	61
Wraysbury GPs /Horton GPs	233	227	164	20	–	–	84	–	319	487	584	558

Counts of up to 50 were received from a further 28 sites. The only count to exceed 50 was 65 Padworth Lane GP Nov 15th (JPM). **Breeding:** recorded from only 10 sites involving at least 16 broods with a total duckling count of c70. However no records were received from several waters where this species has bred regularly in the past and so it is likely that the Berkshire breeding population is substantially higher. A leucistic female was located at Wraysbury GPs on Apr 14th and 16th (CDRH).

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

2002 Correction: delete the report for Eversley GPs on Feb 22, the bird was seen at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury

2004 A poor year, with the only new birds appearing in the second winter. **First Winter:** the f/w female which arrived in November 2003 was seen intermittently at Bray GPs from Feb 26th to Apr 14th (CDRH *et al*) and was also seen nearby at Dorney W (WAS).

Second Winter: the first September arrival since 1995, a female/imm was present at Woolhampton GPs on Sep 10th (GEW). This, or another bird, aged as a f/w female was then present at Woolhampton GPs on Nov 14th (CDRH/MFW/GR), Nov 17th (CDRH), Nov 20th (KEM) and lastly on Nov 22nd (JPM). Finally a f/w male appeared on Heron Lakes, Wraysbury GPs on Nov 18th (CDRH).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant/winter visitor

2002 Correction: the finder of the female at Eversley GPs on Apr 2 was GR.

2004 Spring: light passage occurred during late March with a drake on the 18th at Dinton Pastures CP (FJC/MFW), then 2 drakes were present all day at QMR on the 29th (CDRH) and a female unusually remained for 2 days at Theale Main GP from 29th (ABT *et al*) to 30th (RAD/RCr). **Autumn passage:** all records came in November and began

on the 8th when an astonishing flock of 90 (all immatures/females) arrived at QMR from the SE at 12.02hrs (CDRH). They briefly landed four times but were disturbed each time by jets taking off from Heathrow and finally flew overhead and off to the North at 12.30 hrs. However, 2 imm/females were also on view there the following day (Nov 9th) until midday (CDRH). Finally, on Nov 14th, an imm/fem was feeding actively at Woolhampton GP (CDRH).

Recorder: the flock of 90 at QMR on Nov 8th is by far the largest flock recorded in Berks, the previous high count being 30 drakes at Theale Main GP on Apr 24th 1993 and is also the largest flock recorded in the LNHS area. The absence of any drakes may at first seem odd, but single age/sex flocks are frequent in many duck species (*e.g.* the flock of 26 Eider in November 1973 were also all fem/imms).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Locally common winter visitor

Being so difficult to count, the totals below are probably slightly under the actual figures. In comparison to 2003; the totals are reasonably consistent especially now that the pattern of figures is more accurate.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	18	24	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	9
Dinton Pastures CP	21	33	43	10	–	–	–	–	–	1	5	16
Eversley GPs	10	8	12	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	4
Moatlands GPs	20	27	18	1	–	–	–	–	–	2	12	14
Theale GPs	10	10	5	3	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	2
Twyford GPs	8	8	12	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs /Horton GPs	40	56	90	12	–	–	–	–	–	16	34	67
Other sites	11	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	4

The latest date for the first winter period was on the 14th April, a female at Burghfield Mill GP (JA), and an apparent pr at Eversley GPs (BMA). The first to return, for the second winter period, was on the 14th September, a female at Hosehill Lake NR, Theale GPs (BU). The count of 90 on the 9th March (CDRH) covering all the pits in the Wraysbury GPs complex, is now the highest Berkshire count for a single GP complex. Goldeneye remain scarce in the west of the county with birds only recorded from 5 locations all of single birds except for 2 at Lower Farm GP on Jan 24th (IW; JL).

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	2	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Moatlands GP	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Twyford GPs	7	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Wraysbury GPs	9	17	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	6
Other sites	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2

The high count of 17 (7 drakes) at Wraysbury GPs occurred on Feb 12th and there were 16 there on 15th (both CDRH). Records away from the main sites involved 1 redhead at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 2nd and a drake there on Feb 28th (MFW), 1 at Wigmore Lane GP on Jan 25th and Feb 22nd (WEBs) which was probably the redhead seen at nearby Bottom Lane GP on Jan 30th (MRWS). In West Berks a redhead was found on Lower Farm GP on Feb 17th (ICB). In the second winter a drake and a probable redhead were seen at Hosehill Lake on Dec 25th (BU). For the first winter period, the last bird to depart was a redhead at Bray GPs on Mar 17th (JOB). The earliest return this year was on Nov 14th, a drake at Wraysbury GPs (MHu).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

First Winter: a drake circled Bray GPs before departing to the east on Mar 4th (CDRH; DJB) and a redhead was located fishing at Theale Main GP on Mar 27th (KEM *et al*) remaining to Mar 31st (MO). **Second Winter:** in the second period there were only two records, one of an unsexed bird at Lower Farm GP on Nov 27th (IW/JL), the other of a redhead with Goosanders at Heron Lake, Wraysbury GPs on Dec 9th (CDRH).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites

Missing information 2002: The 2002 report fails to give departure and arrival dates. Latest departure – 2 at Eversley GPs Mar 24 (L Jackson), first arrival – 1 drake Eversley GPs on Nov 7 (IT).

2004 Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	31	25	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	48
Wraysbury GPs	9	12	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	14
Other sites	7	5	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	15	4

The high count of 48 at Eversley GPs occurred at the roost on Dec 27th (JMC) and included 27 drakes. A further 12 sites recorded Goosander. The best counts away from the two sites above was 4 including 2 drakes at Bottom Lane GPs, Theale GPs on Nov 25th (RF) and two days later on Nov 27th another 4 (but only including 1 drake) at Searles Farm Lane, Burghfield GPs. Other records of interest came from the R Thames with a drake at Romney Lock Windsor on 1st Feb, a redhead there on Dec 30th (WAS) and 2 at Streatley on Nov 14th (NJB). Overall, the last remaining birds in the first period were a pr on Mar 29th at Eversley GPs (GH) although a late migrant drake was noted at Woolhampton GP on May 1st (ACJ), whilst the first returning bird for the second period was a drake also at Eversley GPs on Nov 13th (GR).

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Farm GP	8	13	21	23	8	3	7	6	16	18	12	11
Moatlands GPs	7	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	6	3
Thatcham GPs	5	8	5	–	–	–	–	–	5	11	16	6
Woolhampton GPs	5	–	–	2	4	–	1	–	–	–	1	1
Wraysbury GPs	14	26	27	4	–	–	–	4	2	3	4	5
Other sites (11)	2	5	4	–	1	–	4	–	1	3	3	4

Numbers at Lower Farm GP continue to increase; the counts of 21 on Mar 13th (IW; JL) and Mar 21st (ABT) and the total of 23 on Apr 4th (MJT) all exceed the previous high count for this site. However the high of 27 at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 13th (CDRH) is down on previous years and with the national cull of this species in progress this may be a sign of things to come. Away from the main sites the highest count involved just 4 birds at Burghfield GPs on Dec 14th (CDRH). **Breeding:** no broods were reported and the only evidence that breeding may have occurred locally is a report of a juv in a flock of 14 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 26 (DJB).

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Records were received from 60 locations (70 in 2003), 28 in W Berks, 13 in M Berks and 19 in E Berks. The monthly maxima at the most regular sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldworth/Compton Downs	31	8	–	–	–	–	–	51	–	62	23	–
Cookham	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	30	24	25	–
Englefield	–	4	–	–	–	4	–	5	6	–	–	–
Cold Harbour	–	–	–	2	–	1	–	–	–	14	8	–

The high count of 62 on Aldworth Downs occurred Oct 30 and involved coveys of 26, 22, 10 and 4 (DJB). The high numbers at Cookham came from Long Lane/Lower Mount Fm area and probably represent released birds. Elsewhere most reports involved 1-14 birds, higher counts being c15 at Brimpton GP Jan 2 (IW; JL), 15 on “Berkshire Downs” Feb 18 (JOB), 28 at Kintbury Apr 25 (JPM) and c20 in the Streatley Warren/Thurle Down area May 13 (DJB). **Breeding:** breeding was confirmed at 2 locations. An adult with 3 chicks was crossing the road at Rushtons Fm nr Wokingham Jun 23 (DJB) and of the count of 51 on Compton Downs Aug 28, 15 were juvs (DJB). Unusual records involved an individual feeding on a lawn at Caversham Heights Mar 2 (PML) and 4 exploring a greenhouse at Inkpen Jul 31 (LS).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

A localised and declining resident

RED LISTED

As in 2003 records were received from 39 locations, 26 in W Berks, 4 in M Berks and 9 in E Berks. The monthly maxima at the most regular sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldworth/Compton Downs	23	1	2	–	3	–	2	6	30	6	8	–
Bury/Cow Down area	28	5	–	8	3	–	–	–	2	14	1	10
Cold Harbour/Knowl Hill area*	10	2	–	2	1	–	–	–	2	15	12	13
Englefield	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	2	8	9	–	8
All other sites (35 sites)	26	12	7	22	23	9	2	26	3	46	45	45

*Includes records from the adjacent White Waltham Airfield

A better year for the number of birds reported. Apart from the high counts of 28 in Bury Down area Jan 20 (JPH) and 30 on Compton Downs Sep 2 (ABT), three other localities exceeded counts of 20 birds. These were 20+ at Woolley Down Oct 17 (GDS), 24 at Sheepdrove Nov 27 (ABT) and 25 at Catmore Dec 28 (JOB). A further 5 locations recorded counts of 13 or more. This upturn in numbers reported was generally confined to the west of the county. In Mid Berks records were only regular from Englefield; however the highest Mid Berks count came from Pingewood GPs with 11 Jan 26 (KS). In the east the largest counts were 15 at Cold Harbour Oct 10 (DJB) and 13 Widbrook Com Dec 21 (BDC). **Breeding:** a pr with 5 y was located at Curridge Aug 13 (IW), a pr with 8 juvs was present on White Waltham Airfield Oct 31 (DJB) and 3 juvs were part of a covey of 12 at Cold Harbour Nov 5 (PJC).

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

An uncommon summer visitor, most frequently encountered on the downs

SCHEDULE 1 and
RED LISTED

An above average year with records being received from 8 locations, 5 on the downs and 3 elsewhere, the table below shows the estimated status of singing Common Quails in Berks since 1990:

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No of Sites	3	2	3	2	5	3	4	5	5	2	3	4/5	5	2	7
Males	12	2	12	8	16	8	621/24	7/8	3	4	5/7	9/10	7	10	

The year began early with 1 located in water meadows at Denford Pk Apr 1 (RDW). Calling birds were then noted at Aldworth/Compton Downs, 1 May 12 (AJC) and 2 there Aug 28 (ABT), 1 at Wellbottom Down May 15 (MFW), 2 there Jul 4 (MJT) and 1 Jul 18 (GDS), 1 Brightwalton May 25 (SWi), 1* Windsor Pk Jun 3 (CDRH), 1 at Englefield Jun 6 (RJB) and Jun 7 (RCr), 1 at Seven Barrows Jun 12 (JA), 3 on Lambourn Downs Jun 25 (RRK) and 1 at West Ilsley Jul 6 (CDRH).

[* Common Quail are known to be kept in captivity nearby but no escapes were confirmed.]

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Under-recorded in 2004, the highest count being just 36 at Long Lane Cookham Nov 25 (BDC). **Breeding:** this was reported from 3 locations, 1f with 8y at Woolhampton GPs Jun 10 (GEW), 1f with 2y at Lavell's Lake LNR Jul 11 (TOA) and 1f with 6juvs on new workings at Eversley GPs Aug 29 (BMA).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common resident and apparent passage migrant

Records were received from 52 locations, 18 in W Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 23 in E Berks. The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	8	6	4	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Burghfield GPs	5	5	1	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	4	6
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lavell's Lake LNR	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Jubilee River inc Dorney W	11	16	11	3	10	4	2	9	16	14	25	14
Eversley GPs	1	3	2	2	4	-	5	5	23	11	6	4
Lower Farm GP	0	3	6	8	8	12	12	16	8	2	2	2
Muddy Lane GP Thatcham	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	3
Padworth Lane GP	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	14	22
Thatcham Marsh	3	1	2	5	-	-	4	7	-	-	1	1
Theale Area GPs	1	-	2	2	-	6	-	9	2	-	10	1
Woolhampton GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	2	4	-
Wraybury GPs	4	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	2	12	18

The counts that exceeded 20 occurred Sep 12 at Eversley GPs (MGLR), Nov 11 on Jubilee River (BDC) and Dec 9 at Padworth Lane GP (JPM). Elsewhere the highest count involved 5 ads and 5 juvs at Aldermaston GP Sep 9 (JPM). **Breeding:** this was confirmed at 8 sites with 1pr nest building at Oval Pond May 6 (GEW), 1 brood of 4y on Leiper Pond Windsor Pk May 31 (DJB), 1ad with 1y seen Jun 3 at Rapley Lake where 3prs were resident (DJB), 1 ad with 1y at Dorney W Jun 21 and 3 broods present Sep 30 (BDC), a family party at Field Fm GP Jun 25 (BDC), 1pr with 2y at Lower Fm GP Jul 7 (JCh) and prs with 3y and 1y there Jul 24 (SAG), 3ads and 4y were present on a small pond in Thatcham Marsh Aug 13 (RAH) and 2 broods of 3y were found at Woolhampton GPs Aug 28. Juvs were also noted at Aldermaston GP and 7 were at Padworth Lane GP Sep 9 (JPM) but the lack of preceding records puts doubt as to whether Little Grebes bred at these sites.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Records were received from 31 locations, 6 in W Berks, 10 in M Berks and 15 in E Berks. The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	28	26	9	8	6	7	10	8	9	14	45	43
Brimpton GP	4	4	–	–	–	–	4	–	6	–	–	–
Burghfield GPs	31	34	24	–	–	–	–	–	51	43	45	34
Dinton Pastures CP	5	5	18	3	16	2	2	2	6	9	6	5
Eversley GPs	7	11	9	8	8	8	6	9	–	10	19	26
Horton GP	3	9	11	10	–	–	–	–	30	22	26	30
Jubilee River inc Dorney W	20	–	32	4	10	10	–	–	5	15	15	13
Lower Farm GP	2	2	2	4	5	4	3	3	3	1	1	0
QMR	1	4	6	34	–	–	–	–	85	44	7	7
Summerleaze GP and Lake	6	15	8	16	14	11	6	13	–	11	6	10
Thames Reading to Pangbourne	1	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	3	7	8	6
Thatcham Lakes, inc Muddy Lane GP	13	8	7	6	10	10	12	10	8	19	23	25
Theale area GPs	35	26	25	–	–	–	–	–	43	76	68	37
Woolhampton GPs	25	22	18	11	4	–	–	23	–	–	15	12
Wraysbury GPs	43	44	37	–	–	–	–	–	35	42	54	58

The high count of 85 at QMR occurred Sep 1 (WEBS) with 69 still present Sep 18 (ABT), away from the main sites no counts exceeded 15 birds. **Breeding:** unfortunately the coverage this species enjoys during both winters was not continued into the summer months, thus confirmed breeding was somewhat patchy. However breeding was proved at 13 locations involving some 15 prs including 4 prs on R Thames. The highest density occurred at Dorney W where 5 nests were occupied Jun 10 (BDC), however only 1 pr was reported later to have young so could disturbance from the general public and uncontrolled dogs have been a cause for this failure?

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Scarce and declining winter visitor and passage migrant

The only record this year involved an individual in summer plumage at Wraysbury GPs from Mar 9 to April 15th (CDRH *et al*). Before 1979 this species was treated as a comparatively rare visitor. Since then there have been several hard weather influxes with birds being recorded annually from 1984 to 1991. However due to recent warmer winters numbers have declined, the last good year being 1996 when 7 birds were located. In the last 7 years only 4 birds have appeared and the status of Red-necked Grebe may be returning to its pre 1979 level.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

The run of poor years continued in 2004. After no records in the first winter, 2 were found in the second winter. A first-winter bird visited Wraysbury GPs Oct 19 (CDRH) but did not linger. The first for Eversley GPs (a first-winter) was found on the Moor Green Lakes reserve Dec 14 and remained until Dec 17 (BMA *et al*). Like Red-necked Grebe, this species has shown a recent decline in the numbers being reported in Berkshire with only 8 birds since 1997; the number of birds reported over the last 10 years is shown in the table.

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of Birds	4	4	8	1	2	0	1	2	0	2

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant

There were five records involving 9 birds. **Spring:** two in w/p were located on Theale Main GP Mar 29 (ABT; MJH *et al*). These were followed by 2 in s/p at Lower Farm GP Apr 17 (IW; JL; JPM) and 3 very popular s/p birds at Moatlands GP May 2 (JA *et al*). **Autumn:** one in s/p visited QMR Aug 13 (CDRH) and a w/p adult was present at Wraysbury GPs on Nov 4 (CDRH).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Rare vagrant

The eighteenth record for Berkshire was located at QMR at 11.15hrs Oct 16 (CDRH *et al*). At first, the bird remained at the western end of the reservoir, so giving fairly distant views for all but some enterprising individuals who arranged a boat trip to photograph it. Eventually the petrel took flight and completed a lap of the reservoir before flying off strongly to the west at 14.33hrs.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Rare vagrant

The 21st record for the county – and the first to be seen by multiple observers – was a second summer, located on Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP in the evening of Jul 2 (L Martyn *et al*). The bird was still present the following morning but was not capable of anything other than short flights and, as the morning progressed, its condition deteriorated and it was taken into care at midday and unfortunately died overnight. The bird had been ringed as a nestling at Great Saltee Island Co Wexford in July 2002 and a post mortem concluded that the probable cause of death was starvation.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Present throughout the year, most common in winter

AMBER LISTED

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	27	27	7	1	1	2	2	3	6	6	25	31
Burghfield GPs	26	27	3	–	–	–	–	–	22	–	2	24
Dinton Pastures CP inc												
Lavell's Lake LNR	19	24	17	5	7	5	9	13	6	23	20	14
Eversley GPs	56	68	26	19	8	1	2	8	18	16	21	54
Heath Lake	34	60	16	2	1	2	1	3	8	12	15	9
Horton GPs	8	–	2	10	–	–	–	–	8	13	16	15
Lower Farm GP	47	19	19	7	10	5	13	21	18	24	53	32
QMR	20	16	16	–	–	–	–	–	49	29	–	9
R Thames at Frogmill Hurley	5	9	7	3	0	1	2	0	1	8	7	10
Thatcham Lakes inc Muddy Lane GP	20	24	7	1	–	–	–	–	–	23	27	41
Theale area GPs	14	3	7	–	–	–	–	–	15	77	12	15
Wraysbury GPs	50	50	18	5	–	–	–	–	65	94	78	104

Most of the counts in the table are WEBS counts, due to these counts not continuing through spring and summer this species is therefore under-reported during this period. Most counts involved less than 25 individuals. Higher counts were received from Dorney

W where there were 62 on Jan 2 (DJB), 57 Feb 28 (BAJC) and 30 Mar 4 (FE), 25 were present at Aldermaston GPs Feb 18 with 28 there Dec 24 (JPM) and 30 were located at Twyford GPs Oct 31 (DJB). One with a red band on its left leg numbering 253 was located at Moatlands GP Dec 4 (KEM). It is thought that breeding again took place at the West Berks breeding colony this year but no records were forthcoming.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

2002 Delete the 3 records shown in the systematic list for 2002 as none were considered acceptable.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce but increasing winter visitor

SCHEDULE ONE and RED LISTED

A poor year with only 4–5 birds reported. **First Winter:** the 2003 wintering adult remained at Lavell's Lake LNR to Mar 24 (FJC) although it was elusive at times. One was located at Hosehill Lake Jan 5 and was seen intermittently to Feb 5 (BU *et al*). **Second Winter:** an adult was located at Lavell's Lake LNR Nov 6-7 (AR *et al*), what was possibly the same bird was seen again Dec 28-29 (AR *et al*).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon but increasing visitor principally in winter

Records were received from 24 locations, 7 in W Berks, 11 in M Berks and 6 in E Berks. The monthly maxima for all sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Eversley GPs	3	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Lower Farm GP	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pingewood GPs	1	0	1	0	2	0	5	6	0	0	0	0
All other sites	3	5	3	5	1	1	1	2	2	0	4	3

The totals in the table may include wandering individuals that may have occurred at more than one site.

The high counts occurred Jan 8 at Eversley GPs (BMA; GH), Feb 22 at Burghfield GPs (KS), Jul 20-22 (KS; RCr) and Aug 1 (RJB) at Pingewood GPs (a site where birds were regularly reported from Jul 16 to Aug 31) and Dec 17 at Burghfield GPs (KEM). Away from the main sites most records involved single birds, the exception being 2 juvs at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Pk Sep 2 and 10 (CDRH) and 2 at Bagnor Cressbeds Nov 28 (IW; JL). Although birds were seen at the Burghfield GPs heronry Feb 21 (KEM), Mar 20 (PBT; MFW) and Apr 13 (CRW) there was no evidence of attempted breeding. However juvs (probably from coastal breeding colonies) were reported from Dorney W (1 Jun 30: CDRH), Pingewood GPs (2 on Jul 22: TGB) and at Great Meadow Pond.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Egretta alba*

Very rare vagrant

One having been flushed by machinery flew low from Field Fm GP over the K&A Canal and headed towards Calcot before being lost to view Apr 27 (TBa). Record accepted by the BBRC and is the second record for Berkshire. The recent upward trend in the number of British records may mean that we may not have to wait too long for a more obliging individual to reach Berkshire.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor in small numbers

A familiar bird of our river valleys, Grey Herons were reported from all of our major water bodies throughout the county. The monthly maxima at the regular sites where counts were made are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	2	1	1	–	1	2	2	1	–	2	–	2
Burghfield GPs	13	27	8	>50	–	–	–	–	6	–	6	9
Dorney W	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	1	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	10	11	4	3	4	2	6	5	6	2	3	4
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	1	2	3	3	5	4	3	–	–	–
Heath Lake	1	7	6	3	2	2	–	1	1	1	2	2
Horton GP	–	–	1	2	–	–	–	–	4	6	6	3
Lavell's Lake LNR	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	2
Lower Farm GP	3	–	1	2	2	2	9	10	3	5	3	2
QMR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	4	2	2	1
Wraysbury GPs	22	20	9	–	–	–	–	–	18	27	35	29

The high counts at Wraysbury GPs were all WEBS counts, 27 at Burghfield GPs occurred Feb 8 (JA). Away from the main sites the only double figure counts involved 10 birds in fields by the R Thames north of Maidenhead Feb 3 (DF) and 10 at Pingewood GPs Jul 16 (RCr). No counts were received from Home Fm, Hungerford this year, a site that has regularly held high numbers in recent years. **Breeding:** breeding records were only received from 3 locations; 2 nests both with single juvs were noted at Heath Lake Apr 8 (BMA), at least 42 y were visible in 14 nests at Burghfield GPs Apr 11 (JA) and at Donnington there were 5 occupied nests Apr 25 (SAG).

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare vagrant with some records involving escaped birds

A first-summer bird flew low south-east over the M4 at Bray at 16.48hrs Mar 31 (BTB) and was reported later flying west along Jubilee River (per DJM). Extensive searching the following day finally had its reward when the bird was relocated flying over Dorney W at 12.20hrs (MGM; LJF *et al*) and was followed to Eton Wick and watched circling Windsor Racecourse until it flew away southeast of Windsor Castle (CDRH). It was then relocated flying east over Wraysbury and then over Runnymede before drifting off low south of Egham, Surrey (CDRH). The age and plumage condition identified the bird as that which wintered near Ashford Kent to which it returned a few days later (see account on p. 10–12). This is the 4th record of an apparent wild bird for Berkshire.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Formerly a rare vagrant, now frequently recorded following its successful reintroduction

SCHEDULE ONE and
AMBER LISTED

Birds were reported from throughout the county except for the far east around Wraysbury. The monthly maxima in the areas where the birds were most frequently encountered are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldworth/Streatley/Compton area	6	2	1	5	7	1	2	5	–	3	6	–
Brightwalton/Woolley area	60*	30*	9	2	2	–	4	7	20*	69*	55*	73*
Bury Down/West Ilsley area	3	2	2	–	3	3	1	2	1	–	4	1
Combe/Walbury Hill area	–	1	4	2	–	–	1	1	–	6	5	4
Cookham	–	2	6	1	–	1	2	3	2	3	1	1
Dinton Pastures CP/Hurst area	3	2	4	3	2	4	6	2	1	1	2	1
Lambourn Downs	4	–	2	3	3	–	1	–	–	1	12	12
Remenham to Hurley	1	7	2	1	–	1	–	2	5	6	2	2
Tilehurst	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	–	–	1	1	1
Twyford to Charvil	1	2	2	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	1	1
Warren Row to Cold Harbour	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	–	–	3	4	1

* Roost counts

The Woolley winter roost continued to prosper with the first winter high of 60 occurring Jan 11 and the second winter high of 73 occurring Dec 5 (GDS) however on the evening of Dec 19 when at least 71 birds had congregated gun shot then disturbed the roost causing the birds to leave and no further large counts were logged to the years end (GDS). The high counts of 12 on Lambourn Downs occurred Nov 16 at Warren Down (CDRH) and Dec 10 (DJB) there was also 11 at Sheepdrove Nov 27 (ABT). Elsewhere higher counts involved 6 at Whatcombe nr Chaddleworth Feb 21 (GDS) and 5 flew west over Arborfield Jun 4 (PBT). **Breeding:** as Berkshire is on the southern edge of the core breeding range in Bucks and Oxon it is possible that many of our birds are non-breeding adults or immature birds that are not tied to a territory thus prone to wander widely within Berks. This is borne out by the very few records (less than 0.5% of all submitted records) that indicate breeding activity. In the Cookham area 1 pr was observed in display flight Feb 3 (BDC), one was seen carrying nest material nr Farnborough Apr 15th (ABT) and a pr with 1 calling juv was nearby Aug 14 with up to 5 juvs there Aug 17th (GDS).

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce passage migrant that has increased in recent years

2002 Additional information - The bird seen by MGM over Eversley GPs Apr 22 was a female.

2004 With a total of 11-12 birds reported, 2004 is the best year for this species in Berkshire since at least 1948 and reflects the increase in the British breeding population to 249-284 prs in 2004 (British Birds, Rare Breeding Birds Panel). Records were received from 11 locations throughout the county and involved 4 possibly 5 males, 5 females, 1 female/juv 1 juv and 1 not aged or sexed. **Spring:** the first records involved adult males on Apr 2 with 1 flying north over Dinton Pastures CP(ACJ) and 1 (seen later and probably the Dinton bird) flying north-east from Windsor Pk over QMR (CDRH). The following day 1 was reported flying south over Wraysbury GPs (CL) and further April records involved a female flying north over Remenham on 12th (ABT) and a female circling Wraysbury GPs for 10min on 24th before

flying east (CDRH). May continued the excellent spring showing with an immature male over Theale Main GP on 1st (ABT) another imm male seen over Slough SF and Dorney W on 10th (SP), a female flying north-west over Horton GPs on 13th (CDRH) and 1 male quartering fields nr West Ilsley on 25th (CDRH). **Autumn:** an early female flew north over Lowbury Hill Jul 7 (ACJ), a juv flew south there Aug 28 (DJB) and finally a fem/juv flew west over Woolhampton GPs Sep 11 (MFW) and was relocated still heading west over Lower Farm GP (JC). The table overleaf shows the number of Marsh Harriers seen annually in Berkshire since 1990.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No of birds	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	11*

* Counts the 2 males reported Apr 2 as the same bird.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

The poorest year since 1991 with only one record of a male seen over Aldworth Downs Dec 28 (NJB). The table below shows the estimated number of Hen Harriers seen annually in Berkshire since 1990.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No of birds	7	1	2	6	11	6	7	2	2	3	3	4	2	7	1

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor

SCHEDULE ONE AND AMBER LISTED

For the ninth consecutive year a pr summered on the Berks/Oxon boundary being regularly reported from Apr 22 (ACJ) to Aug 15 (JA; RCr). Elsewhere an adult male was hunting on Aldworth Downs May 30 (WAN; MRWS) and a ringtail was hunting pea fields at Yewtree Hill, East Ilsley Jun 2 (CDRH).

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare visitor

As in previous years a number of records were submitted without descriptions and so are not dealt with here. However there were 2 acceptable records; an immature flying east over Burghfield Mill GP Apr 4 (RJB) and a moulting adult male was located at Combe Hill Jul 13 and observed flying toward Combe Wood (CDRH).

Additionally, a bird thought to be an escape was seen on several occasions at Bere Court, Tidmarsh during Sep/Oct (J Nettleley; per JLe).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common and widespread resident

Records involving 1-3 birds were received from throughout the county except for the Lambourn area where no records were forthcoming. The only non-breeding count to exceed 3 involved 4 birds at Hosehill Lake Aug 4 (JLe). **Breeding:** for such a widespread species, confirmed breeding records were surprisingly few however display was noted at 8 locations and adults carrying food (presumably to a nest) at a further 2. Breeding was confirmed at Windsor Forest where 2 nests were located Jun 27 (DJB), a female carrying

food and a recently fledged juv seen at Dorney W Aug 1 (BDC), 2 nests were reported from Mcllroy Pk Tilehurst Aug 8 (JLe), 1pr with 2juvs at Blundells Copse Tilehurst Aug 11 (JLe), 2-3 calling juvs at Westley Mill nr Hawthorn Hill Aug 12 (DJB) and 2 calling juvs at Wishmoor Aug 17 (DJB). A male re-trapped at Bagnor Cressbeds Nov 28 (JL) had been ringed nearly 8 years earlier and a very large female seen over Windsor Great Pk Nov 5 (CRW) superficially resembled a Northern Goshawk. Prey items included Song Thrush, Starling, Lapwing, Collared Dove, Moorhen and House Sparrow. A female chased a female Black Redstart from a Farnborough Down garden Oct 17 (GDS) the outcome is not known! Regularly mobbed by corvids, other species are occasionally observed mobbing Sparrowhawks, in 2004 these included 2 Goldfinches over Hamstead Pk (SAG), 1 Mistle Thrush over Hungerford (JBur), a group of Starlings over Maidenhead (BAJC), a Swallow over Woolley Down (GDS) and a group of 4 Ring-necked Parakeets over Windsor (DF).

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common and widespread resident and passage migrant

So familiar have Common Buzzards become in Berkshires landscape that now many observers only report their higher counts and breeding records thus the table showing the monthly maxima in the main areas is incomplete.

Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brimpton/Woolhampton	1	6	3	3	–	2	–	3	3	–	2	12
Bury Down/West Ilsley	3	5	4	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1	1
Combe/Inkpen Hill	7	5	5	10	5	–	–	6	7	4	6	15
Compton to Streatley	1	–	5	9	3	1	1	5	4	2	1	–
Dinton Pastures Cpto Twyford GPs	6	2	3	3	5	3	–	1	2	2	2	–
Englefield to Tidmarsh	–	2	7	6	–	2	–	4	5	5	1	–
Eversley GPs	1	1	6	1	–	2	–	–	1	2	–	1
Greenham Com/ Lower Fm	–	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Knowl Hill/Warren Row	1	4	2	4	3	1	–	–	–	1	4	2
Lambourn Downs	4	–	1	5	4	–	2	–	2	1	3	3
Pingewood/Theale GPs	–	2	2	5	4	1	1	4	5	2	1	–

High counts in the table of 12 nr Brimpton GP (GEW) occurred Dec 16 and in the Combe area 10 were present Apr 15 and 15 were over Combe Hill Dec 29 (DJB) with 12 nearby over Walbury Hill Dec 30 (ABT). Elsewhere 9 were soaring over Thatcham Apr 24 (RRK) and 11 (9 drifting SW on thermals) were noted over Jealott's Hill Sep 2 (BDC). **Breeding:** a thorough check of the Farnborough, Woolley and Brightwalton area revealed a minimum of 8 breeding prs, rearing at least 15 y (GDS). Calling juvs were also located at Elcot with 1ad with 2-3 juvs Jul 6 (LS), Binfield with 1 Aug 3 (BDC) and at Arlington Grange Curridge with 2+ Aug 13 (IW). Display was noted at 11 locations involving at least 16 prs.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant

At least 11 birds were reported including 2 together. **Spring:** passage began with 1 being mobbed by Black-headed Gulls over Moatlands GP before heading west Apr 2 (DJB) and was followed by 1 flying NW over Thatcham Marsh Apr 4 (JL; JPM; IW). Wishmoor Bottom provided the next sighting when 1 flew low over the heath before moving off north Apr 11 (DJB). One circled R. Kennet nr Greenham Com before drifting east May 2 (ABT) and was followed by 1 hunting along the R Kennet at Chamberhouse Marsh before heading west May 5 (CDRH) and 1 flew west over Eversley GPs May 8 (RMW).

Autumn: after 1 over Basildon Aug 22 (A Gardiner) all records were for September. One heading SSE over Lavell's Lake LNR and Winnersh Sep 1 (ADB; FJC) was followed by 1 at Pingewood GPs Sep 7 (DHu) and a series of records from Eversley GPs then ended the year with 1 Sep 11 (BMA), 2 briefly hunting there before heading south Sep 16 (per BMA) and then singles there Sep 17 (BMA) and Sep 18 (JOB).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread resident,

AMBER LISTED

Birds were widely reported from throughout the county, usually of 1-3 birds with higher counts being 7 at Combe Hill Sep 3 (DJB) and 4 Woolley Down Oct 13 (GDS). **Breeding:** breeding was confirmed from only 7 locations with single prs rearing 2 y at Arlington Grange Curridge (IW), Brimpton GP (GEW), Eversley GPs (MGLR) and Woolley Down (GDS). Adults with single juvs were noted at Dorney W (BDC) and Greenham Com (GDS) and 1 pr bred at Denford Pk (RGS; RDW).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant which has increased in recent years

Although still a good year, numbers were slightly down on 2004 with up to 18 birds reported from 15 widespread locations. **First Winter:** the 2003 wintering male remained at Cold Harbour until Mar 7 (DJB *et al*) and a female was located there Feb 19 (PBT). A fem was located at Calcot GC Jan 15 and 1 (possibly the Calcot bird) flew over Moatlands GP Jan 16 (RAD). There were 3 reports Jan 24 with single birds seen at Chaddleworth and Woolley Fm (JOB) and a fem at Faringdon Down (ABT). One was heading north over Theale GC Feb 6 (JStr) and single females were noted at Bury Down Feb 9 (CDRH) and nr Aldworth Feb 18 (NG). A male visited Winnersh Feb 21 (FJC) and finally a male flew south nr Bill Hill Mar 14 (JOB). **Second Winter:** two males arrived at the regular wintering site of Cold Harbour on the fairly early date of Oct 10 (CDRH) and were regularly seen to Nov 2 (DJB). After this date all records refer to just 1 male to Dec 14 (RJB) whilst a fem/imm took up residence from Nov 4 (CDRH) to Dec 16 (LRB; PBT). Elsewhere a male was seen at Dorney W Oct 12 (BDC), a fem/imm was at Warren Down Nov 16 (CDRH) and what was possibly the same bird was seen nearby at Sheepdrove Nov 27 (ABT).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 78 locations across the county, 24 in W Berks, 20 in M Berks and 34 in E Berks, the monthly totals are shown in the table.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number of sites	10	27	31	20	31	34	12
Minimum number of birds	12	65	62	30	51	63	17

Spring: the first records involved singles over Furze Platt Maidenhead Apr 9 (BDC) and over Thatcham Apr 11 (BJE) but remained scarce until end of April with the only multiple sighting 3 birds at Wraysbury GPs Apr 23 (CDRH). Passage increased during May with most records involving 1-4 birds, higher counts involved 10 Wraysbury GPs May 13 increasing to 12 May 23 (CDRH) and 5 over Black Swan Lake Dinton Pastures CP May 23 and 30 (SDi). Numbers remained high into June with 6 at Wraysbury GPs Jun

3 (CDRH) and up to 13 present at Pingewood GPs Jun 11 (RCr). **Summer/breeding:** by late June the large groups had dispersed or moved on and birds were more difficult to locate. However the totals for July in the table would point to a fairly healthy summering population. Breeding was confirmed at 3 locations in East Berks with 2 prs rearing 2 y (PJC; BDC; DJB) and 1 pr rearing at least 1 y (DJB). A juv located in Windsor Great Pk Jul 1 and the juv being fed by an adult at Wraysbury GPs Aug 30 could both have fledged locally (both CDRH). Elsewhere a family party of 1pr with 2juvs was located at Brimpton GP Sep 16 (GEW) but there is no evidence that they had bred in Berks. **Autumn:** passage began in August and peaked in September the largest counts being 7 at Widbrook Com Aug 28 and 8 in that area Sept 16 (BDC). A record numbers of Hobbies were still present in early October possibly due to warm weather conditions at the time. Single birds were noted at Bray GPs , Dinton Pastures CP, Eversley GPs , Finchampstead, Finchampstead Ridges, Frogmill Hurley, Moor Copse and Wraysbury GPs . Higher counts involved 2 nr R Thames south of Cookham Oct 1 (DJB), 2 Summerlease GP Oct 4 (DJB), 2 Woolhampton GPs Oct 7 (CDRH) and 3 at Brimpton GP Oct 8 (GEW) the latest record.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon visitor throughout the year

Records were received from 29 widespread areas, down slightly on the 2003 totals; the monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP area	1	–	1	1	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	2	1	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	1	1	1
QMR	1	1	–	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	–
Theale–Pingewood area	2	1	2	1	2	–	–	–	1	2	2	1
Other Sites	8	5	5	4	1	1	1	2	2	4	3	4

These figures do not account for the possibility of individual birds visiting various different locations

As usual, most records involved singles. However records involving 2 were received from Crookham Com Jan 1 (JPM), Field Fm GP Jan 12 (RCr), Lower Fm GP (GJS) and Dorney W (JOB) Jan 13, on pylons south of Hosehill Lake Jan 23 (PH), Brimpton (1 stooping on a Lapwing) Feb 25 (GEW), Theale Main GP Mar 17 (BU), Oct 18 (TM) and Nov 25 (KEM), Bottom Lane Theale May 24 (KEM) and QMR (a female chasing a juv) Sep 16 (CDRH). Analysis of records at the main sites show that at least 4 birds were at Lower Fm GP and QMR and as many as 6 were in the Theale/Pingewood area. Apart from the already mentioned Lapwing, other species either consumed or pursued included several Feral and Woodpigeons, Golden Plover, Ring-necked Parakeet, Jackdaw and a thrush species. Thames Water workers found 2 freshly killed Little Owls amongst other remains on the central tower at QMR on May 25 (per CDRH) and 1 briefly pursued a day-flying bat in Windsor Great Pk Mar 17 (CDRH).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Uncommon winter visitor and rare summer resident

Records were received from 26 locations, 8 in W Berks, 10 in M Berks and 8 in E Berks which is down on the previous year. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	10	9	10	6	3	2	1	1	3	4	10	13
Minimum number of birds	20	14	12	7	3	2	4	5	5	7	18	18

First Winter: birds were reported from 19 sites during this period. High counts involved 4 birds at Moatlands GP Jan 3 (RJB) and at Thames Valley Pk Feb 28 (ABT) and 3 were noted at Lavell's Lake LNR and Thattham Marsh in Jan. **Spring/summer:** most birds had departed wintering sites by mid April although some lingered into May at Denford Pk, reported May 4 (RGS; RDW) and Dorney W May 16 (BDC). Later, birds were only reported regularly at Thattham Marsh during the summer although 1 was at Southcote Jun 9 (JLe). Breeding was confirmed at Thattham Marsh when an adult with 2 chicks was located Jul 12 (JCh; RAH) and 2 adults with 2 chicks Jul 18 (NRG). Elsewhere a chick was reported from Thames Valley Pk Jun 10 (SDi). **Autumn/Second Winter:** apart from 5 heard at Thattham Marsh Aug 28 (IW) and 3 there Sep 19 (NRG) all records involved single birds until 3 were noted at Denford Pk Oct 24 (RGS; RDW). After Oct 24, high counts involved 4 at Lavells Lake LNR Nov 13 (MFW), 5 at Brimpton GP Nov 28 (GEW) and 3 at Wraysbury GPs Dec 27 (CDRH).

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Rare passage migrant

The only record involved a juv at Great Meadow Pond Sep 9–10 (CDRH)

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

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

The monthly minimum counts at the main sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	10	6	7	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	8	nc	13	11
Eversley GPs	26	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	4	nc	16	nc	nc	15
Jubilee River	16	66	31	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	44	26
Lavell's Lake LNR	3	3	4	3	3	1	5	8	5	5	3	3
Lower Farm GP	8	17	9	9	10	6	11	11	15	11	12	24
Summerleaze GP	nc	4	7	3	1	4	10	10	nc	9	3	2
Thames Reading – Pangbourne	4	29	13	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	6	14	7	9
Thattham GPs	27	14	11	5	4	8	4	3	4	23	20	22
Theale GPs	19	23	12	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	7	9	7	12
Wraysbury GPs	24	26	24	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	22	29	28	38

The high count of 66 at Jubilee River occurred Feb 25 (BDC). Away from the main sites there were 17 at Shepherd Meadows Sandhurst Dec 15 (CRW) and 15 were feeding in horse paddocks in Windsor Great Pk Dec 31 (DJB). Breeding was reported from 11 locations and probably occurred at many more. Although the species has suffered in some areas from predators such as American Mink and disturbance due to the increased use of the countryside for recreation, the Moorhen remains one of our most familiar waterside species.

COOT *Fulica atra*

A common resident and winter visitor

The monthly maxima at the main sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	87	27	35	25	10	11	17	33	nc	71	110	86
Burghfield GPs	513	253	185	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	259	nc	498	379
Datchet Com GP	45	16	18	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	15	27	15	25
Dinton Pastures CP	173	84	59	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	31	81	150
Eversley GPs	214	198	158	nc	47	nc	90	60	125	319	313	330
Horton GPs	24	28	50	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	60	34	34	21
Jubilee River/Dorney W	50	nc	nc	nc	nc	30	150	nc	nc	112	150	185
Lower Farm GP	55	75	81	53	34	46	52	62	109	85	92	100
Summerleaze GP	142	132	81	43	26	25	82	103	nc	205	268	158
Thatcham GP	77	84	95	10	18	23	21	29	42	129	179	115
Theale GPs *	416	218	146	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	449	383	428	440
Wraysbury GPs	125	121	102	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	220	195	153	190

* The Theale totals are not complete as the high numbers present on Theale Main GP were only counted in September.

The high count of 330 at Eversley GPs is a site record and occurred Dec 27 (JMC), elsewhere 127 were on Woolhampton GPs Jan 2 (IW; JL). Breeding was widely reported, the highest density involved 15 occupied nests at Dorney W Jun 10 (BDC). A white headed individual was present at Dinton Pastures CP Feb 2–5 (RR) and 2 Coots were observed killing a Black-headed Gull at Moor Green Lakes Reserve at Eversley GPs June 13 (PJC). The Coots stood on the gulls back in the water continually pecking it whilst being mobbed by all the other gulls on site.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Twenty-two records, 15 in spring and 7 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 Eversley GPs Mar 13th (GR,IHB), Apr 12th (BMA,RJG,RR), Apr 25th–26th (BMA *et al*) and probably the same bird Apr 28th (BMA,IHB); 1 at Pingewood GPs Apr 7th (RJB) and Apr 11th (BTB,KEM); 1 Moatlands GP Apr 11th probably the same bird seen at Pingewood GPs (BU,JA,KS); 1 reported over Lavell's Lake LNR May 2nd (K I Tubb) was relocated later that day at nearby Lea Farm GP (DJB *et al*); 1 Greenham Com May 3rd (GEW); 1 Dorney W May 7th (JOB), 2 May 18th (JOB) and 1 Jun 3rd (RDr); 1 QMR May 11th (CDRH) and 2 May 20th (CDRH); 1 Twyford GP May 23rd (BTB). **Autumn:** 1 Hosehill Lake Jul 19th (RAH); 1 Lower Farm GP Jul 24th (JCh) and Aug 13th (RRK); 1 Theale Main GP Oct 22nd (RAD); 2 (1 juv and 1 un-aged) QMR Oct 11th (CDRH) and moulting ad Nov 9th (CDRH).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare passage migrant

Corrections: delete the 2002 record for Woolhampton GPs on Mar 9 as the record was for 2003. In the 2003 report reference was made to a record of 14 at Theale GP on Mar 27 1983. This record was only reported orally and as no supporting notes were received the record is no longer acceptable.

2004 A good year for the species with a total of 4 records, 3 in spring and 1 in winter. In spring one was seen in the evening of Apr 2nd at Pingewood GPs (MGM,BTB), followed by 1 Dorney W Apr 16th (CRe,JOB) and 1 flying over Burghfield GPs Apr 25th (JJW per RCr). The winter record was of a juvenile at Moatlands GP Dec 14th (ABT,KEM *et al*).

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicanus*

Scarce and localised summer visitor

SCHEDULE 1 and
RED LISTED

First recorded on the Downs Apr 1st (ABT). Unusually for this species there was a record of a bird on passage at Pingewood GPs Apr 22nd (SRi), On the Downs counts of 1 to 4 were recorded throughout the spring and summer. Evidence of breeding included a pr with 1 well grown juv Jun 12th (JA) and a pr with 1 juv Jul 1st (MRWS). No large counts were recorded during the autumn. The last record was from the Downs on Sep 2nd (ABT). The RSPB survey recorded 7 breeding prs, 10 y were ringed of which 8 fledged, making 2004 the best year since at least 1974.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

SCHEDULE 1

Recorded at 20 locations, 7 in E. Berks, 8 in M. Berks and 5 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Crookham/Greenham Commons	-	-	5	5	6	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP /Lea Fm GP	-	-	1	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	-	-	12	12	8	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	3	7	7	5	4	3	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	1	6	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pingewood GPs	-	-	8	4	2	5	6	-	-	-	-	-
Other Sites	-	-	11	27	14	3	3	-	-	-	-	-

First recorded on the early date of Mar 7th when there were singles at Dorney W (DAC,SP) and Twyford GPs (BTB *et al*). These records were also the first records for the UK! No further records arose until Mar 14th with one at Moatlands GP (BU), after which records became more widespread with highs of 12 at Dorney W Mar 19th (BDC) and Apr 4th (JOB).

Breeding: Breeding was confirmed at just four sites: 1pr with 3 juvs at Pingewood GPs Jun 19th (MFW), 1 on a nest at Dorney W May 6th (JOB) and an ad and 2 juvs there Jun 26th (MFW) and a pr with 2 juvs were at Lower Fm GP on Jun 26th (SAG). At Eversley GPs 3-4 prs were on site with 2 prs breeding, successfully rearing 5 y (MGLR). Elsewhere evidence of probable breeding included a pr mating at Woolhampton GPs on Mar 25th (JPM), display flight at Greenham Com Apr 24th (JLS) and an adult giving the broken wing distraction display at a site near Brimpton GP on Jun 27th (GEW). Most birds had left by late July but three lingered into August at Eversley GPs with the last record being Aug 18th (MGLR).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor

AMBER LISTED

Recorded at 10 locations, 5 in E. Berks, 2 in M. Berks and 3 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Crookham/ Greenham Common	–	–	4	4	6	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	–	5	1	2	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	–	1	3	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	3	6	4	6	4	2	1	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	1	4	1	–	2	11	4	–	–	–
Other sites	–	–	1	–	2	–	–	4	4	–	–	–

First reported Feb 19th when 4 were commuting between Dorney W and Slough SF (CRe) increasing to 5 on Feb 23rd – 28th (MO). The high counts of 8 at Dorney W occurred May 9th (SP) and May 20th (JOB) and may indicate 2 influxes, the high of 11 at Pingewood GPs involved birds flying west on Aug 14th (RJB). Away from the main sites, records were received from a further 5 locations. The only counts to exceed 2 were 3 flying SE over QMR Aug 16th (CDRH) and 4 there Sep 30th (JOB) the last record of the year. **Breeding:** was only confirmed at Lower Fm GP where a pr with 2 juvs was noted Jul 31st (SAG). Elsewhere, display was noted at Greenham Com Mar 15th (RRK) 16th (RAH) and Apr 10th (ABT) and at Dorney W Apr 14th (JOB). It is likely that breeding failed at the latter sites due to dog disturbance at Greenham and poor habitat management at Dorney.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare passage migrant

One was discovered at Bury Down on the afternoon of May 17th (M P Shurmer; F Lucas *et al*). Surprisingly it was still present on 18th before flying off north at 19:30 (JOB). Only the third modern day record, following singles at Bury Down Oct 15th 1975 and (heard only) at Aldworth May 12th 1990.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common but local winter visitor and passage migrant

Recorded at 42 locations, 12 in E. Berks, 7 in M. Berks and 23 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Compton Downs	1000	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	250	230	65
Crookham /Greenham Commons	450	17	65	24	–	–	–	–	50	1000	1	4
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	675	400	598	–	–	–	–	–	34	200	850	600
Lower Farm GP	1500	26	3	8	–	–	–	–	–	1000	800	2000
West Ilsley to Bury Down	1500	58	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	60	–	1000

First Winter: high numbers were present at several sites in W Berks. A flock of 600+ on the Compton Downs Jan 1st (RCr) had increased to 1000+ by Jan 11 (ABT), 1500 visited Lower Fm GP Jan 1st and 1500 were also present nr West Ilsley Jan 19th (RAD). Many smaller flocks were encountered throughout the region, 450 at Crookham Com Jan 8th (APh) and 150 at Combe Mar 14th (TPo) being the most noteworthy. In M Berks

numbers were generally small, the highest count being 80-100 flying NW over Twyford Mar 22nd (SPA). In E Berks 400+ visited White Waltham airfield Jan 1st (DJB) and a large flock commuted between Slough SF and Dorney W, numbers peaking at 675 Jan 2nd (DJB) and 598 Mar 13th (JOB). Most birds had left the county by April, however 420 were still present at Farnborough Apr 8th (CDRH). The last record involved 8 birds at Lower Fm GP Apr 18th (JC) **Second Winter:** after 3 at Bury Down Aug 31st (CDRH) there were no further records until 2 flew over Woodlands Pk Sep 21st (CDRH). An influx occurred during October with flocks of 200 – 250 noted at 5 sites in W Berks and 200 at Dorney W Oct 26th (CRe) in E Berks. A larger flock of 1000+ was present at Lower Fm GP from 14th (RH; RAH) and probably accounts for the report of 1000+ at Greenham Com on 27th (Aph). There were 8 reports of flocks of 100-230 birds during Nov-Dec, higher counts were 2000+ over Halfway Nov 8th (RF), peaks of 850 at Dorney W Nov 11th (BDC) and c600 Dec 31st (SP; JOB), c2000 flying south over Lower Fm GP Dec 4th (JL) and 600 at Freeman's Marsh Dec 14th (RF).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

Four records comprising 8 individuals, all in Spring: 1 in partial w/p at Dorney W Apr 30th (RN), 1 w/p flying over Dorney W with Bar-tailed Godwits and Whimbrel May 1st (DJB), 5 (1 w/p and 4 s/p) flying NE over QMR with 16 Bar-tailed Godwits Apr 30th (CDRH), 1 s/p Greenham Com May 1st till 12:45 when flew off W (ACJ).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Common breeder, and abundant migrant and winter visitor

AMBER LISTED

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	1500	300	200	10	6	9	100	6	1	100	640	119
Eversley GPs	675	1000	470	30	14	40	220	188	320	200	400	379
Lavells Lake /Hurst Tip	1000	500	50	–	2	4	1	1	2	150	300	800
Lower Farm GP	400	75	112	31	19	55	170	150	100	200	200	251
Pingewood GPs	200	–	142	1	23	87	170	141	238	200	–	250
Theale /Englefield area	–	300	–	–	–	10	–	108	160	–	54	292

Widely reported all year, the largest flocks away from the main sites involved c1500 at both Compton Downs Feb 19th (JOB) and Bucklebury Nov 29th (WB). **Breeding:** confirmed at 8 sites. 3prs Lower Fm GP (SAG) but only 1 chick fledged; 3prs Dorney W (JOB) fledged 3 juvs; 1pr with 3 chicks Field Farm GP (RCr); 7 prs attempted to breed at Eversley GPs rearing 6 y (MGLR); 3prs Brimpton GP (GEW) with broods of 4, 2 and 2; 3prs Thurle Down (DJB) with broods of 4, 3 and 3; 1pr Ryehurst Fm, Binfield (BDC) with 2 juvs; 1pr Loddon Reserve Twyford GPs (MBu) with 3 juvs. Elsewhere breeding was attempted at Greenham Com (JLS) but the outcome is not known and display was noted at Walbury Hill, Whistley Green and Winterbourne (5prs).

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Two records, both in autumn at Pingewood GPs : 1 Aug 29th (MJH) and 1 ad and 1 juv Sep 12th (JA *et al*).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce passage migrant

Ten records, 4 spring and 6 autumn. **Spring:** 1 w/p QMR Apr 29th (CDRH), 1 s/p May 24th (CDRH) and 1 s/p May 27th (CDRH); 1 Moatlands GP May 10th (KS). **Autumn:** all records came from QMR as follows, 1 s/p ad Jul 20th (CDRH), 5, 3 ads and 2 flying over Aug 16th (CDRH), 1 ad mostly w/p Aug 17th (CDRH), 4 partial w/p Aug 19th (JOB), 1 juv Aug 20th (JOB) and 1 juv Aug 24th (JOB).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn

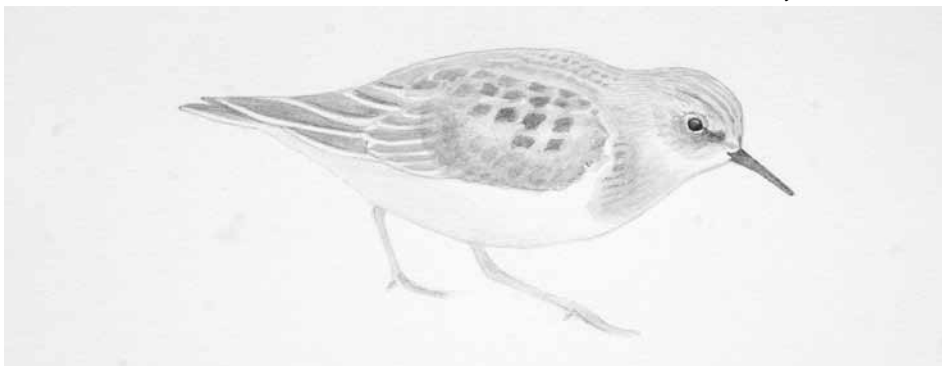
Four autumn records: 2 juvs Pingewood GPs Sep 11th (BTB *et al*), 3 Sep 12th and 13th then 1 Sep 14th to 22nd (MO); 1 juv Slough SF Sep 12th (CDRH,JOB) and 1 Lower Fm GP Sep 16th (RAH).

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant, predominantly in spring

A large influx of this charismatic wader into Britain (190+ reported) during May led to 3 in s/p being located at Greenham Com May 12th (ACJ) with at least 1 there May 13th (DJB) and 2 May 14th (BTB). This is only the second Berks record of 3 birds seen together, the other being at Ham SF on May 16th 1951.

Temminck's Stint by Martin Hallam



PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant

An adult at Pingewood GPs from Aug 26th to Sep 3rd (KS *et al*) constitutes the 14th county record; it was believed to be the same bird that was at Staines Res, Surrey from Aug 22nd–26th (P Naylor: RIn).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce passage migrant

The only record involved a juvenile at Pingewood GPs on Sep 11th to 15th (BTB *et al*).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Recorded at 14 locations, 5 in E. Berks, 6 in M. Berks and 3 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	–	–	1	6	12	–	–	–	1	2	7	1
Eversley GPs	–	–	–	1	8	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Greenham /Crookham Commons	–	–	–	1	11	–	5	2	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	1	–	2	1	2	2	–	–	1	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	1	–	1	2	5	3	1	–	–
Queen Mother Res	–	–	1	3	3	–	2	1	1	1	1	–
Other sites	–	–	–	1	15	1	1	2	–	–	–	1

Spring: first reported from Dorney W where 1 was located Mar 7th (SP; DAC). Numbers were low through April until 6 arrived at Dorney W Apr 28th (JOB; SP), the beginning of a substantial influx that lasted into early May. This influx was most notable at Dorney W where counts from May 1st to May 14th was 9, 7, 4, 5, 5, 2, 2, 0, 6, 12 (SP), 9, 8, 6 and 2. Elsewhere highs of 8 at Eversley GPs (RMW) and Theale Main GP (D Smith) and 11 on Greenham Com (GEW) all on May 3rd. The last reports concerned 1 at Moatlands GP Jun 1st (MGM) and Pingewood GPs June 3rd (KEM) **Autumn:** return passage was first reported at Lower Fm GP with 1 ad on the early date of Jun 26th (JC) and was fairly light during the peak time of Aug-Sep. However 7 were present at Dorney W Nov 23rd (CRE). There were two December records: 1 Dorney W 9th (CRE) and 1w Lavell's Lake Dec 14th (FJC).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Nine records, 4 spring and 5 autumn. **Spring:** 2 circling Dorney W Mar 30th (CDRH, JOB) with 1 commuting between there and Slough SF Mar 31st to Apr 2nd (MO); 1 Pingewood GPs Apr 21st (ABT, KS), May 1st (KS). **Autumn:** 1 juv Pingewood GPs Aug 12th (KS) and Aug 13th (CDRH, TGB), 1 Aug 27th (RAd), and 1 juv Sep 1st (TGB) to Sep 9th (MO); 1 juv Eversley GPs Aug 15th (BMA) and 1 at Dorney W Oct 11th (WAS).

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon localised winter visitor and passage migrant

Recorded at 10 locations, 4 in E. Berks, 3 in M. Berks and 3 in W. Berks. **First Winter:** recorded at 6 sites: 1 Eversley GPs Jan 2nd (MGLR); 1 Dorney W Jan 25th (DJB); 3 Horton GPs Feb 5th with 6 there Feb 12th and 5 Feb 27th (CDRH); 1 Thatcham Marsh Feb 14th (DJB); 1 Pingewood GPs Feb 17th (ABT) and 1 Woolhampton GP Feb 27th (GEW). A light spring passage involved singles at Lavell's Lake Apr 11th (MO); Burghfield GPs Apr 12th (JA) and Eversley GPs Apr 13th and Apr 14th (RJG; NG *et al*). **Second Winter:** recorded at 4 sites: 1 Pingewood GPs Oct 16th (KEM) and Oct 17th (KS); 1 Lavell's Lake LNR Oct 18th (RAnG); 1 Wraysbury GPs Nov 17th (WAS) and 1 Brimpton GP Dec 25th (GEW).

SNIPE*Gallinago gallinago**Common winter visitor, scarce in summer*

AMBER LISTED

Recorded at 33 locations, 10 in E. Berks, 9 in M. Berks and 14 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	7	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	13	2
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	28	10	9	9	2	–	2	20	3	3	27	55
Eversley GPs	3	21	4	2	1	–	–	13	3	2	4	4
Lower Farm GP	1	4	8	10	2	1	2	6	14	9	5	1
Pingewood GPs	2	3	26	21	1	–	1	8	8	7	11	7
Theale area GPs	1	1	34	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	21
Other sites	47	79	65	17	0	0	1	0	19	11	24	81

Counts of up to 10 were received from a further 25 sites. The only counts exceeding 10 involved 47 at Horton GPs on Feb 12th, with 46 there on Mar 29th (CDRH) and 47 at Englemere Pond Dec 6th (CDRH). Unusually birds were present during May, (although there was no evidence of breeding) as follows: 1–2 Lower Fm GP 1st, to 15th (MO), 2 Dorney W 1st, then 1 till 22nd (MO); 1 Pingewood GPs 8th (MFW) and 1 Eversley GPs 26th (MGLR). The first June record since 1997 involved a probable returning bird at Lower Fm GP on Jun 26th (BJH,JL), followed by 1 over Thatcham Marsh Jul 11th (IW) then 2 Lower Fm GP Jul 28th (JCh) and 2 Dorney W Jul 29th (CRc). Records became more widespread during August, although the only double figure counts were 20 Slough SF Aug 22nd (SP) and 13 Eversley GPs Aug 22nd (RJG). The high count of 55 at Slough SF was made Dec 31st (JOB).

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola**Localised resident in small numbers; recorded more widely in winter*

AMBER LISTED

Recorded at 30 locations, 8 (counting the various sites in Swinley Forest as 1) in E. Berks, 5 in M. Berks and 17 in W. Berks. **Jan-Mar:** recorded at 7 sites. Most counts were of single birds with higher counts of 2 Decoy Heath Jan 1st, 3 there Jan 24th (DJB) and 3 roding at Cranbourne Chase Mar 29th (BAJC). **Apr-Sep:** recorded at 17 sites. Singles were recorded at Bagnor (SAG), Bradfield (JLe), Denford Pk (RDW,RGS) and Freemans Marsh (RF). Higher counts included 8 contacts Bucklebury May 11th (JA), 4+ roding Cranbourne Chase May 12th (BAJC) 8+ roding Dukes Lane Windsor Forest May 15th (DJB), 5+ roding Wokefield Com May 18th (CWil), 4 roding Kintbury May 23rd (DJB; FJC), 3 Stockcross on May 23rd and Jul 4th (SAG), 2 roding Greenham Com on May 25th and Jul 6th (JL), 3+ roding Snelsmore Fm Jun 16th (IW,JL) and 2 roding Snelsmore Com on Jun 30th (MJT). A survey by DJB located 15 roding males in Swinley Forest and 14 in South Ascot between May and July. Breeding was confirmed at Denford Pk where a nest of 4 eggs was located on Mar 30th the young having hatched and left the nest between Apr 6th–10th (RDW; RGS). There were no records in August and just one in September, at Snelsmore Com 4th (PJO). **Oct-Dec:** recorded at 11 sites. Most counts were of single birds with higher counts of 2 Woolhampton GP Nov 13th (GEW) and 2 Brimpton Mill Dec 16th (GEW).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant

2002 Correction: the observer of the Eversley GPs record on Mar 30th was G W Bryant

2004 Eight records, 4 in spring, 3 in autumn and one in winter. **Spring:** 2 Lower Fm GP Apr 2nd (PH); 12 s/p Pingewood GPs May 1st (RR *et al*); 1 Bottom Lane Theale May 4th (RA_d); 5 (3m 2f) s/p Dorney W May 15th to May 17th then 1 May 18th to May 19th (JOB *et al*). **Autumn:** 2 Dorney W Jul 12th (CR_e); 1 Pingewood GPs Aug 14th (RC_r,RJB) with 2 there Aug 15th to Aug 22nd (MO) and Aug 25th (TGB). Winter: 1 Eversley GPs Dec 16th (LM *et al*).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

A record year for this species with 8 records involving 35 birds, all in **Spring:** 1 w/p Theale GP Apr 15th (MGM; DJB); 4 s/p QMR Apr 28th (CDRH) with a flock of 16 and 5 Grey Plover flying NE over there Apr 30th (CDRH); 1 Pingewood GPs Apr 29th (KS,PH); 3 w/p Dorney W Apr 30th (JOB,RN) with 8 s/p there in a mixed flock with 9 Whimbrel and 1 Grey Plover early morning May 1st (DJB) and another flying through early evening (CL), 1 Eversley GPs Apr 30th and May 1st (BMA,IHB). Although larger flocks have been recorded in Berks, these were in the autumn (100+ Aug 28th 1978 and 43 Sep 10 1992), thus making the flock of 16 on Apr 30 the largest recorded in spring.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant

With a total of 19 records (18 in spring and 1 in autumn), involving at least 49 birds, 2004 is only bettered by last years total of 21 records. **Spring:** 1 Dorney W Apr 8th (JOB) with 2 flying W there Apr 22nd (SP;JOB), 1 Apr 29th (SP), 9 May 1st in a mixed flock with 8 Bar-tailed Godwits and 1 Grey Plover (DJB); 4 Eversley GPs Apr 16th (BMA) with 1 flying over there Apr 25th (GR); 2 flying SW over QMR Apr 16th (CDRH), 3 May 2nd (1 circled reservoir, calling and flew off westwards at 1920hrs, another calling at 2020hrs, then another circled reservoir at 2035hrs) (CDRH), 2 flying N May 8th (CDRH); 4 flying WSW over Wraybury GPs Apr 19th (CDRH); 2 Lower Fm GP Apr 20th (SAG) with 2 there May 12th (GJS,JC); 1 Pingewood GPs Apr 20th (MGM) with 1 there Apr 24th (KIT,KS, RC_r); 1 Moatlands GP Apr 28th (RA_d) with 3 there May 18th (RC_r); 1 Dinton Pastures CP May 14th (BMA *et al*); 1+ Swinley Brickpits May 15th (DJB,ENW,JPH) heard calling at night. **Autumn:** 4 flying SSW over QMR Jul 20th (CDRH).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Uncommon passage migrant and now summer visitor in small numbers

AMBER LISTED

Apart from the summering population there were 16 records, 4 in the first winter period, 9 in spring and 3 in autumn. **First Winter:** 1 NE over QMR Jan 1st (CDRH); 3 E over Twyford Feb 12th (SPA); 1 W over Brightwalton Feb 26th (SWi); 1 over Brimpton GP Feb 28th (GEW). **Spring:** 1 S over Decoy Heath Mar 4th (PBT); 1 Bottom Lane Theale Mar 12th (BU); 1 NE over Burchett's Green Mar 27th (PMC) probably the same bird at Cockmarsh also on Mar 27th (MLy); 1 Lower Fm GP Mar 27th (IW,JL); 1 Theale Main GP Mar 28th (RJB); 6 over QMR Mar 29th (DKP); 1 over Crookham Com Mar

29th (JPM,MES) and 1 Woolhampton GP May 6th (RCr). **Summer:** first recorded at the species stronghold on the Lambourn Downs on May 2nd (MFW) where there were regular counts of up to 8 throughout May, but just 2 records in June, 9 on the 12th (JA) and 5 on the 21st (BMA). There was no evidence of breeding. Also reported from the Compton Downs where birds have bred in previous years with 2 May 22nd (JOB), 3 May 24th (ABT) and 1 Jul 14th (BDC). **Autumn:** 1 SW over QMR Jul 3rd (CDRH) with 1 over there Aug 9th (CDRH) and 1 SW over Moatlands GP Jun 24th (RAd). There were no records during the second winter period.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce passage migrant

The strong movement of passage waders on May 1st produced 2 records, both summer plumaged individuals. One flew E from Eversley GPs (GR) and the other departed to the west from Woolhampton GP (ACJ).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Locally common passage migrant but declining summer visitor in small numbers AMBER LISTED

Recorded at 21 locations, 6 in E. Berks, 7 in M. Berks and 8 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	-	-	3	3	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands /Slough SF	-	1	3	4	11	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	2	7	5	7	2	-	-	1	-	-
Greenham /Crookham Common	-	-	1	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	3	5	4	4	1	3	3	1	-	-
Moatlands GP	-	-	2	4	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pingewood GPs	-	-	4	8	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-
Theale GPs	-	1	3	6	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woolhampton GP	-	-	1	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other sites	-	-	19	12	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	2

Counts of up to 2 were received from a further 11 sites with higher counts of 8 Midgham GP Mar 30th (JPM,MES) with 6 there Apr 9th (JPM). First recorded on Feb 1st at Wigmore Lane GP (WEBS) and followed by 1 Dorney W Feb 23rd - 24th (JOB), with records becoming widespread during March. **Breeding:** was confirmed at Eversley GPs where up to 3 prs were present with 1 pr hatching a brood of 4 on Jun 10th but only 1 survived (MGLR) elsewhere 1 pr attempted to breed at Dorney W (BDC) but young were never seen. **Autumn:** most birds had left by the end of August but 3 were at Lower Fm GP Sep 1st (JC); 1 juv Windsor Great Pk Sep 10th and 21st (CDRH); 1 Eversley GPs Oct 5th (MGLR); 1 QMR Oct 8th (CDRH, ABT) and Oct 9th (CDRH) and 1 Lower Fm GP Oct 30th (BDC). Unusually there was a Dec record of 2 QMR 9th (CDRH). The high count of 11 Dorney W was on May 19th (JOB).

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant

2002 Additional record: six at Eversley GPs on Aug 7th (MGLR) possibly the same group that visited Summerleaze GP the same day.

2004 Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Crookham/ Greenham Commons	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	2	–	1	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	2	–	1	–	–	8	3	–	–	–
Other Sites	1	–	–	3	7	–	3	2	2	–	–	–

Records were received from 13 locations throughout the county. **First Winter:** unusually there was a January record, the first since 1983, with 1 at Slough SF and Dorney W on Jan 2nd (DJB,SP). **Spring:** passage began early with 1 at Crookham/Greenham Com on Mar 2nd (Aph) and 2 over Pingewood GPs Mar 28th (RJB). Records became more widespread during April and May being most regular at Dorney W where birds were reported on 6 dates involving up to 8 birds during May with a peak of 3 on May 10th (SP). Elsewhere all reports involved 1-2 birds. Late singles were noted at QMR May 27th (CDRH) and Lower Fm GP on Jun 4th (JC). **Autumn:** passage began on Jul 8th with 1 at Lavell's Lake (MO) and 3 there on Jul 11th (TOA). There were many records of 1-3 birds during Aug and Sep, predominately at Pingewood GPs where birds were regularly present from Aug 18th to Sep 13th; the high count of 8 was on Aug 23rd (RCr). The last records involved 1 juv at Great Meadow Pond on Sep 15th (CDRH) and 1 Crookham/Greenham Commons on Oct 27th (Aph).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor

Recorded at 29 locations, 10 in E. Berks, 7 in M. Berks and 12 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	6	4	5	4	–	4	11	12	9	10	8	2
Eversley GPs	3	2	2	3	–	2	1	6	3	3	1	1
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	2	3	–	–
Lavell's Lake (DPCP)	–	–	–	1	1	3	3	1	1	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	1	1	2	1	1	3	4	4	3	4	1	1
Midgham GP	–	1	1	4	–	–	–	4	1	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	2	3	1	–	–	4	–	–	–	1	2
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	1	–	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Woolhampton GP	1	–	–	3	–	–	11	3	1	–	2	–
Other Sites	5	2	5	3	–	2	1	7	1	5	2	3

Away from the main sites, counts of up to 2 were received from a further 17 sites with higher counts of 4 QMR Jan 8th (CDRH); 3 Brimpton Aug 15th (GEW) and 3 Jubilee River Oct 10th (BDC). The high count of 12 at Slough SF was made Aug 22nd (SP) and the consistent high counts at this regular site and neighbouring Dorney W were due to areas of suitable habitat being continually available all year. The count of 11 at Woolhampton GPs on Jul 19 (CDRH) was exceptional for this location. The only May records were 1 Lower Fm GP 1st (DJB) and 1 Lavell's Lake 21st (ADB). Unusually a number of records were received from our rivers, especially the Kennet and Lambourn.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce passage migrant

Two records, both in autumn involved a juv at Eversley GPs Aug 5th to Aug 18th (BMA *et al*) and 1 Pingewood GPs on Aug 24th (KS).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

Recorded at 23 locations, 9 in E. Berks, 7 in M. Berks and 7 in W. Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	1	1	1	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP/Lea Fm GP	-	-	-	4	1	1	2	3	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	-	-	1	5	5	1	2	7	2	-	1	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	-	3	2	-	1	10	1	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP/ Trout Lake	-	-	1	1	3	-	3	3	1	-	1	-
Moatlands GP	-	-	-	3	2	-	3	2	-	2	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Pingewood GPs	-	-	-	2	5	-	3	7	2	-	-	-
Queen Mother Res	-	-	-	4	10	-	12	16	1	-	-	-
Theale GPs	-	-	-	2	1	-	3	1	1	-	-	1
Other sites	-	-	-	3	5	-	5	6	6	-	-	-

Counts of up to 2 were received from a further 13 sites with a higher count of 4 at Greenham Com on Sep 9th (ABT). For the fifth consecutive winter a bird wintered at Padworth Lane GP being seen intermittently from Jan 17th (RCr) to Apr 4th (KEM). The first spring record away from Padworth Lane GP was 1 Lower Fm GP Mar 17th (GJS,G Kimber), followed by 1 Dorney W Mar 30th (BDC). Records increased during Apr and May with a high count of 10 at QMR May 27th (CDRH). There were 2 records during Jun: 1 Lavell's Lake 12th (K Girling) was probably a late spring migrant, whereas 1 Dorney W 28th (DJB) was probably the first returning bird. Records increased during Jul/Aug with the high of 16 at QMR occurring on Aug 8 (CDRH). Numbers tailed off towards the end of Sep, after which there was 1 at Bray GPs on Oct 3rd (WAS) 2 Field Fm GP Oct 15th (KEM), 1 Lower Fm GP Nov 1st (RF) and 1 Dorney W Nov 7th (RJB). What was probably the regular wintering bird returned to Padworth Lane GP Nov 29th (JPM), although there were no further records. The only other winter record was 1 Theale Main GP Dec 26th (M Hoit).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce passage migrant

Eight records, 4 in spring and 4 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 s/p Dorney W May 1st (JOB,SP *et al*); 1 s/p Lower Fm GP May 1st (BJH *et al*); 1 Moatlands GP May 10th (BU) and May 12th (BU,KS). **Autumn:** 1 ad s/p QMR Aug 3rd (CDRH), moulting ad Aug 15th (CDRH), ad s/p Aug 17th (CDRH), 3 moulting ads Aug 19th (JOB).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Rare vagrant, principally in autumn

2003 Correction: the arrival date for the individual at QMR was Oct 19th.

2004 A flock of 5 (2 adult, 1 light and 1 dark phase and 3 juvs) passed through from west to south-east at QMR Sep 23rd (J Wilczur; S Conner; S J Spooner; ABT; P Whitman), while the observers were watching a juv Great Skua (see below) – in fact the Bonxie rose to intercept the incoming birds. This is the first time 2 skua species have been recorded together in Berkshire! Sadly, the Arctic Skuas did not linger, and just the handful of observers mentioned enjoyed this seabird bonanza. This flock constituted the 14th record for Berkshire and the first time that more than 2 birds have been seen together in Berks.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Rare vagrant

An unidentified large skua was located on QMR late Sep 22nd (DKP) but was not specifically identified as a juvenile Great Skua until 23rd (CDRH *et al*). It continued to show well over the following days, often around and over the car park, seen by many observers. It was eventually seen to be ailing and was found dead Sep 27th (CDRH), a sad end to the 10th record for Berkshire; the corpse is now in the possession of LGRE (see account on p. 12–13 and photograph on p. 134).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

2002 Additional record: a first winter was present at Eversley GPs Feb 9th (IHB)

2004 The estimated total of around 25 birds was on a par with recent years. **First winter/Spring:** the first record of the year was a w/p ad at Dinton Pastures CP Jan 10th (ACJ) and 11th (BTB; FJC), followed soon after by a f/w (with only one leg) at Lavell's Lake LNR Jan 17th (MFW). The next records were a w/p ad at Moatlands GP, in the gull roost Jan 17–18th and Feb 1st (PBT *et al*), a f/w at Smallmead GP on 19th (MGM), and presumably the same ad nearby on Smallmead GP/Tip Feb 9th (CDRH, MGM), 11th (MGM) and 16th (PMC). QMR hosted a sequence of records with 1 w/p ad from Feb 9th to 18th together with a f/w Feb 16th, a moulting ad from Feb 24th to Mar 12th (all CDRH) and a w/p ad Mar 2 (ABT). Moatlands GP also hosted multiple birds, with a f/w Feb 22nd (PBT), and 2 s/p ads together in the gull roost at Moatlands GP Mar 3rd (CDRH;RHS;GEW) 1 being seen earlier at Burghfield GPs that day (RHS). One returned to the Moatlands GP roost Mar 4th (RHS) and nearby at Pingewood GPs 5th (MGM). The spring period concluded with an ad at Lower Farm GP Mar 3rd (JC) – possibly one of those seen later in the roost at Moatlands GP – and a s/p ad flying over Calcot towards Moatlands GP on Mar 11th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second Winter:** there was a series of records from QMR between Jul 13th and Nov 3rd, possibly involving up to 12 birds. After a s/p ad on Jul 13th a juv was located on Jul 20th, a s/w on Jul 22nd, a w/p ad and a colour ringed Juv on Aug 8th the adult remaining to Aug 5th and an un-ringed juv on Aug 7th and 9th. Two sightings of w/p ads on Aug 12 may have been different birds but 1 was probably the bird on Aug 17 (all CDRH). A w/p ad, different to the birds seen in Aug was noted from Sep 8th (CDRH) to Oct 1 (ADB) with a f/w there on Sep 9th, 16 and 17th (CDRH). Another w/p ad appeared on Oct 11th and 14th, a f/w on Oct 19 and a w/p ad and f/w on Nov 3rd (CDRH). Elsewhere a w/p ad was briefly at Bray GPs on Aug 2nd (CDRH), a f/w flew over Dorney W into Bucks on Sep 22nd (DMF) and a f/w at Bray GPs Oct 11th (CDRH). After a busy year for this species, there was just one record in the second winter period, a w/p ad at Bray GPs Dec 6th (CDRH; WAS).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

A good spring passage of an estimated 72 birds and a further 9 birds in autumn. **First winter/Spring:** as in 2003, the year opened with a mid-winter record close to the Thames, of an ad in w/p at Remenham Jan 3rd (DJB), with the bird feeding over fields. Early spring records at Theale Main/Moatlands GP, were 2 f/s from Mar 21st (ABT) to 28th (MO), with one remaining (or another) to Mar 31 (MJT). A f/w also commuted between Theale Main and Moatlands GPs from Apr 3rd (ABT; JA; KEM) to 8th (BU). The passage of adults began with 2 ads at Eversley GPs on Apr 3rd (IHB; GR; D McGill) and an ad through north-east at QMR on Apr 15th (CDRH). The same date produced the first flock of the year, with 13 ad and 1 f/s at Theale Main GP (JA *et al*) with just one adult remaining later in the day. There then followed a sequence of records from Theale Main GP with 2 ads on 16th (MRWS), single ads on 17th (JA) and 20th (RR), followed by a total of 27 through between 07:45 and 10:00 on 25th (BU). On this final date there were two adults briefly at QMR (CDRH) before departing eastwards. May began a spread of records on 1st with 4 birds on Theale Main GP (BU), 2 (ad and f/s) on Moatlands GP (RR), a single ad visited Eversley GPs (MO) with a f/s appearing at dusk (JMC; GR) remaining to the 3rd (BMA) and 3 (s/p ad, s/s and f/s) at Woolhampton GPs (ACJ). Three s/p ads were noted at Moatlands GP on May 2nd (JA) and another f/s was noted at Eversley GPs on May 6th (BMA). At Dinton Pastures CP, the first bird of the year was a f/s on May 10th (ADB), departing just before dusk on the 11th (FJC), but closely followed by an ad and 2 f/s on 13th (RR), with the two imms remaining until 14th. The final Moatlands spring record was a f/s on May 13th (KEM). **Autumn:** Moatlands GP produced the first juvs of the autumn, with 2 from Aug 15th (MFW) to Aug 19th (MO) with one remaining to 21st (DJB). QMR produced a modest autumn passage with 2 juv on Sep 15th, 1 still present on 16th and another juv on Sep 24th (all CDRH). Passage continued into October, with a w/p ad at QMR on 16th (CDRH), a w/p ad at Dinton Pastures CP on 17th (MFW) and a f/w at Moatlands GP on 24th (JA). The final record of the year was a w/p ad over Horton GP on Nov 1st (CDRH).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant, which now breeds.

AMBER LISTED

Black-headed Gull is the most widespread gull in Berkshire, likely to be encountered at any time and almost any location with a little water in sight. **First winter/Spring:** the maximum count in the first winter period was of 9400 birds at Moatlands GP on Jan 21st (RCr), higher than comparable counts in recent years. An estimated 1000 were in fields at Hurst on Feb 4th (PBT), and 400 were counted at Cockmarsh on Feb 9th (BDC). The highest counts from Eversley GPs were 200 on Jan 23rd (GH) and 210 on May 1st (JMC). From W Berks, there were counts of 375 Thatcham Feb 3rd (GJS), 365 at Lower Farm GP Feb 17th (IW). An all-white leucistic bird was seen on Apr 8th at Theale GP (JPH). Several birds with orange dye were seen, as far west as Lower Farm GP on Feb 15th (SAG), presumably from the marking programme at Hedgerley landfill in Bucks. **Breeding:** breeding numbers continued to rise across the county. Lower Farm GP had breeding confirmed with 6 nesting attempts and at least 6 chicks on Jun 12th (IW). At Eversley GPs, although only the second year of breeding, approximately 80 pairs reared in excess of 130 y (MGLR). At Theale GPs, 54 pairs bred on Hosehill Lake and 6-8 pairs bred on Theale Main GP (TABR). Several juvs were at Pingewood GPs on the early date of Jul 9th (MJT), perhaps from breeding nearby.

Autumn/Second Winter: a large autumn gathering was of 2000 at the Home Pk Windsor on Sep 8th (WAS) and c1000 were present on Lea Fm GP on Nov 27 (FJC). The highest count in this winter period was 4000 on Dec 28th at Moatlands GP (RCr), with the highest W Berks count being 400 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 28th (JL) and the highest E Berks count being 619 at Jubilee River Nov 11th (BDC).

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Rare vagrant

A s/w Ring-billed Gull was seen in the roost at QMR, with Lesser Black-backed Gulls, on Apr 11th (CDRH). Purely by chance, CDRH then rediscovered the same bird, having now moulted into s/s plumage, at Little Marlow GP, Bucks on July 16th where it was seen regularly in the pre-roost gull gatherings up until Aug 6th. It was also seen again in the roost at QMR on Jul 21st, 24th and 26th (CDRH) and was possibly roosting here regularly but only arriving after dark. This is the 9th record for the county.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

2002 Additional record: At least 550 were present at Eversley GPs on Feb 16 (IHB) the highest count reported that year.

2004 There were records in every month except June. **First winter/Spring:** the highest count was as numbers rose in early spring, with 316 in the roost at Moatlands GP on Mar 4th (PBT). This species seems prone to retain juv plumage through its first winter and such a bird was seen at Moatlands GP on Jan 18th (PBT). A bird with a dyed nape and red ring on left leg was seen at Cookham Rise on Feb 16th (BDC). Evidence of visible passage was provided by 32 f/s birds that arrived from the south at QMR mid-afternoon on Apr 23rd and then departed to the north-east (CDRH). 1-3 f/s then present at QMR throughout May (CDRH), while the last spring bird elsewhere was a f/s at Eversley GPs on May 27th (PBT). **Autumn/Second Winter:** the first returning birds were an ad and f/s at QMR on Jul 17th (CDRH), 2 at Bray GPs on Jul 18th (WAS) and 6 ads and a very early juv at QMR on Jul 20th (CDRH). The highest counts in the second winter period were 205 at Cookham on Nov 25th (BDC), 200 in Windsor Great Pk on Dec 5th (P Holden) and 224 at Eversley GPs on Dec 31st (DJB).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

The commonest of the larger gulls in winter roosts and now present throughout the year, with a pronounced peak in early autumn passage. Counts come mostly from mid-Berks, with no details from the E Berks roosts (where they are often outnumbered by Herring Gulls). **First winter/Spring:** the highest count from the first winter period was of 3176 at Moatlands GP on Jan 18th increasing to 6800 on Jan 21st (RCr). A sizeable flock of 1000+ was on the Compton Downs on Jan 11th and c600 at Sheepdrove Farm on Jan 24th (both ABT). 700 were at Lower Farm GP on Feb 17th (JL). After c100 at Hurst Tip on Mar 31st (FJC) numbers tailed off, with the only count over 10 between then and early June being of 30 at East Garston on Apr 8th (ABT). **Autumn/Second Winter:** the first large count after the lull of spring and early summer was 356 imms at Pingewood GPs on Jun 10th (RCr) increasing to 381 on Jun 15th and peaking at 592 birds on Jul 21st (RCr). The peak

autumn roost count was of at least 6000 at Theale Main GP on Sep 15th (RCr), somewhat lower than in recent years, but perhaps the peak in the passage is of very short duration. Other autumn maxima were 200 following the plough at Combe on Sep 5th (TPo), 850 at Eversley GPs on the same date (MGLR) and 500 at Home Pk on Sep 8th (WAS). High winter counts consisted of c1500 at a pre-roost gathering at Lower Farm GP on Nov 26th (J Fabian) increasing to c2000 there on Dec 12th (DJB), 1000+ on East Garston Down also on Dec 12th (DJB) and 4700 in the roost at Moatlands GP on Dec 28th (RCr).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant and winter visitor

There were records from all months except April, with highest numbers in the summer months – presumably due to post-breeding dispersal from continental, and possibly south-coast, populations – but this is basically another gull species now present year-round in Berkshire. **First winter/Spring:** the maximum counts from winter roosts were of 18 ads QMR Jan 4th (CDRH), and 7 (6ads + 3/w) at Moatlands GP Jan 17th (PBT). Other records were of small numbers from landfills and gravel pits across the county, with a single bird or birds regularly at Lower Farm GP. The last record is hard to judge, since singles persisted to late March, with single 1s birds at Moatlands and Hurst Landfill on 23rd (both CDRH), and then a record on May 2nd of an ad and 2s at QMR (CDRH), before regular records recommenced in late May. **Autumn/Second Winter:** “Autumn” began early for Yellow-legged Gulls, since 3 at QMR on May 27th (CDRH) were the first of small numbers of ads and imms there throughout the mid-summer period. Pingewood GPs also produced records during this period, involving ones or twos of ad, f/s, s/s and t/s birds (MO). Lavell’s Lake LNR briefly hosted an ad on Jul 16th (ADB). Numbers built from early July, with 24 (mostly ads) at QMR on Jul 13th (CDRH) and peaking at 48 – mostly ads, but with several f/s, s/s and juvs – there on Aug 11th (CDRH), not reaching the high levels of 2003. The highest count elsewhere was 22 – mostly s/s and t/s – Pingewood GPs Jul 22nd (TGB). The first juv to reach Berkshire was at QMR on Jul 7th (CDRH) and the highest count of juvs was 5 at QMR on Oct 14th (CDRH). The highest post-summer count was 20 at QMR on Oct 15th, with 8 at Burghfield GPs on Dec 14th and 6 at the Hermitage Landfill on Dec 29th (all CDRH). The monthly status is shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Occupied Sites	7	9	6	0	1	2	5	5	7	7	11	13
Min No of Birds	37	25	10	0	5	3	85	56	27	34	30	37

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Rare (under-recorded?) Autumn/winter visitor

The trend in records of this intriguing gull has been firmly up since the recognition of its occurrence in Britain in the mid-1990’s, but 2004 was an exceptional year, with an autumn influx contributing two-thirds of the total of at least 23 individuals in Berkshire. **First Winter:** the year began with the 2003 f/w still present at QMR on Jan 1st (CDRH), still present on 4th, on which date an adult – a presumed fem – was present nearby at Sunnymeads GP (CDRH). Dinton Pastures CP produced its first record on Jan 15th (FJC *et al*), with a striking f/w bird on Black Swan Lake until 17th (MO). The same date also featured an ad at Burghfield GPs (PBT), which was possibly the same bird seen at Pingewood GPs (RCr) and Smallmead GP (PBT) on 23rd. The presence of multiple birds in the Reading area was demonstrated on Feb 10th when a f/w was seen nearby at

Smallmead GP (CDRH) while an ad was present at Green Park (JPH), with the same or another ad at Smallmead GP on 11th (MGM). An ad, probably male, was at Smallmead GP on Mar 2nd and Pingewood on 3rd (both CDRH) and back at Smallmead GP on 5th (MGM). **Second Winter:** the autumn period produced a pronounced influx, beginning with a juv moulting to f/w plumage at QMR on Oct 8th (CDRH), followed by two more f/w on Oct 15th, which were identified as male and fem – possibly siblings, and further f/w birds on Nov 3rd and 4th and possibly another on 20th (all CDRH). A fourth-winter bird regrowing the outer primaries was at Lea Farm GP on Nov 16th (PBT) and was then videoed by Ian Lewington at Smallmead GP on Nov 26th. Pingewood GPs produced an ad and a f/w together on Nov 21st (PBT *et al*) to 23rd (MGM). QMR's autumn got even better with multiple birds on 23rd (f/w, plus ad and another heavily marked f/w in roost), a f/w on Nov 24th, the ad and the heavily marked f/w in the roost on 25th, an unprecedented 5 on 27th (a s/w, two ad and two f/w), the ad and f/w again in the roost on Dec 5th and finally the same ad on Dec 10th (all CDRH). The Hurst landfill and the newly-created adjacent gravel pit at Lea Fm also produced a sequence of records, with a f/w on 24th (PBT), an ad and the same f/w on 27th (FJC), and a small ad on Dec 6th (PBT).

Recorders comment: the arrival of at least 12 individuals in Oct/Nov constitutes the largest-ever influx into the county; it was reflected elsewhere in the Thames valley (*e.g.* at Staines Res, Surrey and in S. Oxon) but not, apparently, elsewhere in SE England.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

2002 Additional record: At least 200 (95% immatures) at Felix Fm Binfield on May 30th (DJB)

2004 This species is now present in Berkshire in all months, with winter flocks feeding or loafing at a few regular sites, and the now established “off-season” summer records of small groups of imms at mid-Berkshire gravel pit sites. Late spring and summer records of adults, singly or in pairs, now also seem to be the norm, but breeding has yet to be confirmed in Berkshire. **First winter/Spring:** although present at sites throughout the county, there were few counts of large groups reported, the highest being 70+ at Pingewood GPs on Jan 24th (JA, RPo) and 150 imms at Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 19th (RR) with 200 nearby at Hurst Tip on Mar 31 (FJC) and a distant flock of c 250 circling Smallmead Tip that appeared to be mostly Herring on Apr 16 (MGM). Interestingly, numbers in the roost at Moatlands GP are significantly lower than daytime numbers in the same area, these birds presumably roosting elsewhere. Only small numbers were reported from West Berkshire, all from the Newbury area, with a maximum count of 8 at Lower Farm GP on Jan 24th (SAG) and there were no reports from the Downs this year. Records from seemingly unusual sites were of a t/w on Windsor Esplanade on Jan 10th (DF) and 3 in Swinley Forest at Rapley Lake Feb 1st (WEBS). An ad in central Reading on May 15th (MFW) may, as in previous years, be an indication of breeding. **Autumn/Second Winter:** there were a few Herring Gulls along with the summering Lesser Black-backed flock in the Pingewood/Burghfield area, with the highest counts being 20 on Jun 30th and 26 on Jul 27th (both TGB). The first juv was recorded on Aug 3rd at Pingewood GPs (PBT). Numbers picked up again in August and a large late summer gathering of 270 was at Pingewood GPs on 9th (RCr). Numbers reach their highest levels in late autumn with 50 at Eversley GPs on Nov 29th (KCr), 70 at Summerleaze GP on Dec 6th (BDC) and a flock of 400 at Lea Farm GP on Nov 27th (FJC), but the highest count was nearby at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 9th with at least 1000 on the wing (FJC). In addition to the

high proportion of winter birds of the Scandinavian *argentatus* race, an adult with almost all-white primaries, still re-growing, was seen at Lea Farm GP on Nov 5th (PBT).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Rare winter visitor

A typical year, with only two records, one of which was a presumed returning bird in the east of the county, and the other an atypically late spring record. **First winter/Spring:** an ad. in the roost at QMR on Feb 12th and 24th (CDRH), was the same bird as Dec 2003. A late f/s was at Smallmead GP on Apr 28th (PMC *et al*) in the morning was then seen to fly in from the west to join the roost at QMR at 19:45hrs (CDRH) and is the latest recorded departure date for Berkshire [the same bird was subsequently photographed at Staines Res, Surrey on Apr 30th]. **Second Winter:** an adult was present at QMR for 10 minutes on Dec 5th (CDRH) before heading off north to be seen at Hedgerley (Bucks); possibly the same ad. as in the first winter period, but this is earliest ever return date at this site.

Recorders comment: the above account includes the second-earliest arrival date and the latest ever departure date for Berks, which might suggest a widening occurrence window, but it must be remembered that the first county record was also an April sighting (at Slough SF in 1940).

KUMLIEN'S GULL *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*

An ad was seen at Lower Farm GP on Mar 2nd (JC) and then the next day standing on ice with Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Pingewood GP (CDRH); the bare parts and primary markings suggest that this could be the same bird as that seen in Mar 2001, now fully adult.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare annual winter visitor

The only record involved an ad found in fields adjacent to the Newbury landfill site on Dec 29th (CDRH) and is the 45th record for the county.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

As indicated by its scientific name, this stately gull was formerly restricted to coastal locations, but like most of its congeners it is now found inland throughout the year. In the summer months adults return to coastal breeding areas, leaving a few immatures behind to enjoy the ample feeding opportunities. There were records from most gravel pits in the county, and in all months except May, although the records from Apr – Jul probably all relate to a single f/s bird summering around the Burghfield and Pingewood GPs (MO). The maximum counts from the first winter period were 100+ at Pingewood GPs on Jan 24 (JA; RPo) and 151 at Hurst Landfill Feb 4th (PBT) – mostly adults – with others still in flight over the tip. The first returning birds were 3 at Eversley GPs on Aug 2nd (GH), closely followed by an early juv at QMR on Aug 5th (CDRH). From the second winter period the maximum counts were 64 adults at QMR on Nov 18 increasing to 142 - 135 being adults - on Dec 27th (CDRH). This species continues to be scarce in the west of the county with only Lower Farm GP, Greenham Com and Thatcham contributing records, the 3 at Lower Farm on Feb 17 (JL) being the highest count.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce spring migrant and winter visitor

Spring: a moderate spring passage with a f/w at Moatlands GP on Mar 21st (ABT), with two f/w present on Mar 22nd (RCr, KS). An ad circled for 10 minutes at midday before flying northwards at QMR on Mar 29th (CDRH), and further ads were each present briefly mid-morning at this site on Apr 16th and 29th respectively (CDRH). **Autumn:** the short nature of the spring visits to QMR was repeated in the autumn with 3 (2 ads and a s/w) there on Nov 23rd (CDRH), again only lingering briefly mid-morning.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant

2003 Correction: the finders of the individual at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 15 were ADB and CDRH.

2004 Our smallest tern put in two appearances in 2004; a single spring record at Dorney W on May 1st (DJB), moving through early morning with Common Terns, and an ad was briefly detained by rain at QMR on Aug 9th (CDRH).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant

Spring: the spring passage began with two at Theale Main GP on Apr 18th (KS *et al*), and another on 21st (BU *et al*). May began with 3 at Theale Main GP before moving to Moatlands GP on 1st (BU), followed by 2 at Theale Main GP on 10th (KEM; MJT), 2 at Moatlands GP (CDRH; MGM) on 17th, single ads on 26th at Hosehill Lake (CRW) and Moatlands GP (MGM), and concluding with 2 at Moatlands GP on May 29th (JA). **Autumn:** passage at QMR commenced with a moulting ad on Aug 5th, swiftly followed by 3 ads and a juv seen to arrive from the east in the afternoon of Aug 9th, and a single juv on 12th (all CDRH), and concluding with an impressive 42 birds on Sep 2nd (CDRH) dwindling to 10 later in the day. Passage elsewhere was sparse, but was compensated for by the lengthy stay of a juv at Lower Farm GP from Aug 12th (JC) to 24th (RAH), and a juv at Moatlands GP on 19th (RCr) and 20th (MO).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant

2002 The W Berks record of 3 on Aug 29th refers to Lower Farm GP and the observer credited should be J Chivers (JCh).

2003 Delete the records at QMR for Mar 24th and 31st.

2004 A fairly poor showing in the spring led to a more typical autumn, with most records being of small groups. **Spring:** at QMR there were 2 flying east plus another perched on a buoy on Apr 2nd, the earliest recorded date for this species in Berks and 4 birds were present on Apr 5th (both CDRH). **Autumn:** QMR: ad in from east Jul 5th, 3 ads briefly mid-morning Jul 25th before departing southwards (both CDRH). The sole August record was of 2 at Lower Farm GP on the morning of 29th (RAH, RW, JW), but September did slightly better with 1 at Dinton Pastures CP on 7th (RR) and 3 ads (one with a BTO ring) mid-morning on 9th at QMR (CDRH), joined later by a 4th bird, and remaining until departing southwards in the evening (ABT). Records continued until October, with an

ad and f/w landing with gulls on Horton Fields on 11th (CDRH) and the final record of the year was of one for 15 minutes on Oct 13th at Horseshoe Lake (R G Davis), only the second record for Eversley GPs .

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common passage migrant and regular summer visitor in small numbers

2002 Correction: 16 pairs reared 16 y at Eversley GPs (MGLR) not 14 pairs as in the 2002 report

2004 This is a characteristic summer species at any waterway or wetland site across the county. The first records were arrivals at 2 sites on Apr 1st, with 1 at Theale Main GP (BU) and 1 at Denford Pk (RDW, RGS). The peak count was of 250 minimum at Moatlands GP on May 5th (RCr), obviously boosted by passage birds, and smaller maxima of 50 at Theale Main GP on Apr 22nd (RCr), 43 at Eversley GPs on Apr 24th (JMC) and 40 at Dinton Pastures CP on May 9th (MFW). In the autumn 36 were present at QMR on Aug 29th (CDRH) and a group of 17 f/w present there on Sep 20th (CDRH) were seen to depart to the south-west mid-morning. The last records involved more October birds than usual with 1 at Lower Fm GP on the 17th (GGI) 2 f/w at Theale Main GP on the 15th with 1 still present on 16th (KEM), what is presumed the Theale bird at Moatlands GP on 16th -17th (JA; PBT), a f/w at QMR on the 14th (CDRH) and finally a juv at Theale Main GP on 25th (KEM) and 27th (JOB).

Across the county, some 84 pairs raised at least 34 y:

Site	Pairs	Chicks
Eversley GPs , Colebrook Lake N	24	23
Theale GPs , Main Pit	40	?
Theale GPs , Hosehill LNR	4	?
Woolhampton GP	6	3
Dinton Pastures CP, Lavell's Lake LNR	2	5
Lower Farm GP	4	3
Thatcham, Muddy Lane GP	1	3
Dorney Wetlands	1	-

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant in small numbers

2003 Correction: the finder of the birds at Moatlands GP on Apr 6 was FJC

2004 A good spring passage of some 40 birds, but only two autumn juvs, one of which was a long-stayer. **Spring:** the first bird of the year was a single at Theale Main GP on Apr 15th (MGM), and birds were then seen there daily until 21st (MO) with a maximum of 4 on 18th (RCr) – an estimated passage of at least 10 birds. The next wave of records was at Moatlands GP with 3 on Apr 27th (JA) and ones or twos daily to May 1st (JA), with a peak of 4 on Apr 30th (RAd). Passage continued in early May, with a single bird seen to arrive from the south at Theale Main GP on May 4th (Rad), and several more at Moatlands GP later in the day. The peak passage date was May 8th, with a flock of 10 lingering at Dinton Pastures CP until late evening (FJC *et al*), 4 at Moatlands GP (MFW) and 4 at QMR for 20 minutes mid-afternoon (CDRH). Spring passage concluded with two late records, of 2 at Moatlands GP on May 21st (KEM) and a single bird at Wraysbury GPs on May 24th (CDRH).

Autumn: passage was limited to just two juvs, one at Dinton Pastures CP from Sep 18th (MFW) to 23rd (KIT) and another at Moatlands GP on Oct 6th (CDRH) and 7th (RCr).

‘COMMIC’ TERN

A late bird at Lower Farm GP on Oct 13th (RF) was not identified to species between Arctic and Common Tern. Another seen briefly at Theale Main GP on Oct 26 (MJT) may refer to the Common Tern present at this time.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant urban resident

As usual, the small number of records (18) covering most months of the year (and nearly all from the Maidenhead area) do not reflect the distribution or abundance of this very common species. Large flocks of birds feeding on stubble were reported in Sep and Oct, the largest being 450 at Eton Wick Sep 13th (DJB), 486 in the Widbrook Com/Summerleaze GP area Sep 16th (BDC) increasing to 550 Oct 15th (DJB) and 350+ at Cold Harbour Oct 19th (DJB). No reports of breeding were received.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor.

AMBER LISTED

Records came from the whole county throughout the year. 23 flocks of over 20 were reported including 14 of over 50 birds, with a strong bias towards the eastern end of the county (probably due to under reporting in the west). **First winter/Spring:** flocks were generally small during the first winter with 80 at Finchampstead on Feb 4th (BMA), 121 at White Place Fm, Cookham on Feb 10th increasing to 163 on Mar 15th (BDC) and 70 at Jealott's Hill on Mar 2nd (PJC). In spring, 97 were counted at Finchampstead on Apr 5th (BMA) and a large flock for the time of year of 222 were attracted to a pea field at Cold Harbour on May 25th (DJB). **Breeding:** song and display were noted at several locations during summer, however confirmed breeding records were limited to 2prs nesting at Hell Corner Fm Inkpen Apr 7 (LS), 1pr at Caesars Camp Apr 17 (WAN), juvs noted at Dorney W Jun 16th and Jul 16th (BDC), 3prs using nest boxes at Moor Copse Jun 21st (JLe) and 6 prs using Barn Owl boxes in the Kintbury/Hamstead Marshall area (JPM). A check of Swinley Pk located 9 territories during April (DJB). **Autumn/Second Winter:** large numbers were attracted to stubble fields throughout the county. After 450 were located at Hawthorn Hill on Sep 24th (DJB) and a record Mid Berks count of c700 in several flocks flying south over Hosehill Lake on Oct 5th (BU), numbers began to build in the Cold Harbour area with 2 flocks of c500 and 84 there Oct 14th increasing to c1200 there on Oct 19th (DJB). Up to 300 were present at Binfield on Oct 24th (JOB) and 100 were reported at Westley Mill on Nov 18 (KCr). A record W Berks flock of c.900 was noted at Warren Down on Nov 16th (CDRH); nearby, 100+ were at Sheepdrove on Nov 27th (ABT).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Recorded across the county throughout the year (Berkshire's commonest breeding bird according to the Berks BTO report). There were no reports of large numbers from Jan 1st to Feb 14th but large flocks (100+ birds) were reported on 10 occasions between Feb

15th and Mar 15th and on 11 occasions between Oct 30th and Dec 31st. **First Winter:** obviously under recorded in Jan with no counts exceeding 100 birds. In February, c1500 were present at Farnborough Down on Feb 15th with c1000 still there on Mar 2nd (GDS), there were 600+ at Combe Hill on Feb 15th (IW), c700 in Windsor Great Pk on Feb 18th (LJF) and 500 on the Compton Downs on Feb 19th (JOB). **Second Winter:** peak counts were 200+ at Eversley GPs Oct 30th (MGLR), 1000+ flew east over Wishmoor Bottom Nov 1st (CRW), a similar number passed in a SE direction over Lavell's Lake Nov 11th (MFW) and c300 flew over Combe Hill in a 90 minute period Dec 27th (JL).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Widespread and common resident

Records were evenly spread across the county and throughout the year. The population appears to be stable. Counts of up to 8 were received from 16 sites but flocks of 20+ were reported from only 4 sites (on 11 occasions). Highest counts were 30 at West Ilsley Feb 19th (JOB) with 90+ there Feb 22nd (SAG), 38 at Newell Green Oct 1st (MFW), 20 in a garden in Bracknell Nov 4th (KCr). While breeding appears to have been widespread (birds present throughout the breeding season and rising numbers in late summer) only 1 record supports this - a family party at Warfield on Jul 9th (BDC). Regular reports from a small area in Twyford, where birds were seen on most days of the year, show that numbers were high in Jan/Feb (*e.g.* 23 Jan 4th and 90 Feb 22nd) lower in spring (max of 9 during Mar-Jun) then increasing rapidly to 20 on Jul 22nd with a further steady increase to 40 on Nov 25th and then 33 Dec 7th (all SPA). This probably indicates that (in that area) early broods achieved independence in late June with second broods leaving the nest in Sep/Oct.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Widely, but now only thinly distributed and declining summer visitor.

RED LISTED

Records came from 40 sites, 13 in W Berks, 10 in M Berks and 17 in E Berks. The unusually high site count from E Berks (5 sites in 2003) is due in part to the checking of many of the quiet country lanes that run through the countryside south of Maidenhead and between Windsor and Bracknell by BDC, uncovering birds at 7 localities, 5 of which have not been known to hold birds in recent years. The earliest arrivals were singles at Hosehill Lake Apr 15th (TM) and Woolhampton GPs Apr 24th (JPM) and last to depart were single birds at Burnthouse Lane Aug 30th (RJB), a juv at Brimpton GPs Aug 31st (GEW) and on Compton Downs Sep 2nd (ABT). All but 8 of the 86 records referred to 1 or 2 birds. 3 birds were seen near Thatcham Jun 10th (JC) and 3 were calling near Theale Main GP Jul 10th (RCr). **Breeding:** singing was reported from 12 sites between mid April and early July. There were prs at Ruscombe May 15th (DJB), Tickleback Row Jun 11th (BDC), West End Jun 19th (BDC) and Ryehurst Lane, Binfield Jul 1st (BDC). At Brimpton GPs (1 of only 2 places where the species was reported throughout the breeding season, the other being Bottle Lane, Binfield) numbers increased from 1 on May 3rd to 3 Jul 17th and reached 9 by Aug 28th, with 2 juvs plus 4 adults there Jul 18th (GEW). Elsewhere 2 juvs located near Boxford Jul 26th (MSt) were probably of local origin. There was no firm evidence of breeding at any other site and it must be feared that the breeding population within the county has continued to decline.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Common but localised resident in east of county. Uncommon elsewhere

With the exception of c400 passing over Wraysbury Dec 6th (RBor) numbers seem to be down on 2003. Plotting the number of birds reported by map reference clearly shows that there is a concentration along the R. Thames from Wraysbury to Cookham. Other reports came from as far south as a garden in Crowthorne Jul 18th (BMA) and as far west as Burghfield Mill GP with 1 Jan 3rd (RJB) and 3 there Feb 23rd (RAd) (but see note below) suggesting that the species is maintaining its spread from its core area. Smaller concentrations around Aston and in Windsor Great Pk were observed. As in recent years a sparse but consistent scatter of records across the countryside north of the Ascot-Bracknell-Wokingham urban axis indicates wider colonization. Note: a parakeet sp that flew over Arlington Business Pk, Theale on Mar 30th (PBT) was probably rose-ringed so this might be the most westerly record for 2004.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	4	2	15	-	2	-	-	4	33	17	-	2
Dorney Wetlands	12	12	21	5	15	-	1	19	-	80	45	-
Windsor Great Park	-	2	4	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	50	20
Wraysbury GPs	6	-	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	6	400

Counts of up to 10 were received from a further 48 sites. Highest counts included 58 in a single flock that flew over Slough SF on Oct 15th (CDRH); 31 at Frogmill (Hurley) Oct 26th (SJF,FMF); 25 at Southcote Oct 30th (CMc); 15 over Lavell's Lake LNR Nov 6th (only the 3rd DPCP record - MFW) and 67 moving NE (to a new roosting site?) in small groups at dusk over QMR Dec 28th (ABT). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding was sparse as usual. A pr was seen near Maidenhead (throughout February - DF), another pr was prospecting a nest hole near Lower Culham Fm west of Hurley Feb 20th where they stayed until mid June (SJF/FMF) and a juv was at Old Slade GP Jul 9th (RD). At Frogmill, Hurley a pr took over a nest site from Jan 4th, and raised 4 y that fledged by Jul 17th after which the family group remained together in the area until mid October (SJF/FMF).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Common summer visitor,

AMBER LISTED

The pattern of records this year (from 52 sites) was very similar to previous recent years, suggesting that the Berkshire population is reasonably stable. First reports were on Apr 10th from Lower Fm GP (RAH) and Thatcham Marsh (IW; JL) that probably involved the same bird. Further early records came from Bagnor on Apr 11th (IW;JL;JPM) and Farnborough Down on Apr 13th (GDS) birds becoming widespread by early May. The monthly status is shown in the table:-

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No of sites	22	35	11	4	3	1
Min no of birds	25	48	13	4	3	1

Most records involved 1-2 birds with higher counts of 3 occurring at Thatcham Marsh May 12th (JC) and May 22nd (IW; JL). Five were noted in Swinley Forest May 20th (DJB) with 3 there on both Jun 2nd and 7th (DJB) and 3 were heard along the K&A Canal near Hampstead Lock May 25th (DJB). **Breeding:** song was heard at most sites where birds were reported. Males with females were noted at Broadmoor Bottom Apr 25th (PJC), Thatcham

Marsh May 12th (JC) and Woolhampton GP May 25th (JPM). Juvs were recorded at Brompton GP Jul 17th (GEW), Wildmoor Heath Jul 22nd (CRW) and at Curridge Aug 23rd (IW). A late bird was reported from Eversley GPs Sep 25th (CRG) and is the latest departure date since 1987 when 1 was noted at Wraybury GPs on the same date.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon and localised resident but nest box schemes are likely to increase numbers of records

SCHEDULE 1 and
AMBER LISTED

Records were received from a modern day record of 57 locations, 37 in W Berks, 11 in M Berks and 9 in E Berks. The great majority referred to single, hunting birds but there were records of roosting birds and of pellets. However, the increased number of nest boxes provided for this species in recent years has increased the number of breeding records to levels not seen since before 1974. The estimated site distribution is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
W Berks	5	4	1	14	15	12	15	13	3	7	8	5
M Berks	4	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	3
E Berks	2	2	6	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Breeding: as previously mentioned, nest box schemes operating throughout the county have helped Barn Owls immensely in recent years. The results from 3 such schemes in West Berks, courtesy of CMR; JPM and JPB, has resulted in figures showing that 15 prs laid eggs of which 9 were successful in fledging young, plus 1 pr where the outcome is not known. Clutch sizes varied from 1 sterile egg to 12 which were incubated throughout Aug but failed to hatch. Another pr vacated the nest box to Jackdaws before breeding had commenced. A total of 17 y were ringed by JPM including 1 which was later recovered dead beside the A338 at Hungerford on Sep 21st. Elsewhere breeding was reported from a further W Berks site on May 25th (CDRH) and from an E Berks site Aug 10th (CDRH) in both instances adults were seen delivering prey to the nest site. Nest box data covering M and E Berks was unfortunately not available, but two prs bred within the area of Wokingham Borough Council and 2 y were fledged (S Croft). A bird hunting near to the Woolley Red Kite winter roost Jan 3rd (GDS) was pursued by 8 Red Kites after catching prey before reaching cover to feed in peace.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Widespread and locally common resident

Reports came from 73 sites, 20 in the west, 14 in Mid Berks and 39 in the east of the county. Almost all records were of 1 or 2 birds. Higher numbers were recorded at 7 sites; *i.e.* 3 (1 pr + 1 calling) calling at Eversley GPs Feb 7th (JMC) where 3 territories were occupied throughout the year, 3 at Cockmarsh Mar 28th (BDC), 3 calling at Widbrook Com Aug 26th (DJB) Aug 28th and Sep 1st (BDC), 3 calling at Cookham Rise Oct 19th (DJB), up to 4 on several dates from Jul 14th to Sep 25th near Donnington Castle (RAH), 5 (including a dead one) at Strand Water Mar 4th (BDC) and 5 calling before dawn along Dukes Lane in Windsor Great Pk May 15th (DJB). The table below shows the seasonal fluctuation in reports.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	9	11	18	15	18	17	7	6	12	11	8	5
No of birds	11	17	26	12	25	18	12	14	21	18	9	6

Breeding: 2 or more birds were recorded at 18 sites during months Feb to Aug (though only 4 observers stated that prs were present). Breeding was confirmed at Inkpen where a regularly reported pr was seen taking food to young, which could be heard hissing, from Jun 10th to Jul 28th (LS). Juvs were seen with adults at Donnington Castle Aug 15th (BJH) and Aug 24th (RAH), 1 ad + 1 juv were seen at Sonning Sep 1st (ABT) and an adult was observed carrying food at Woolley Down Sep 4th (GDS).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat, including urban areas

Reports came from 76 sites fairly evenly distributed across the county, indicating a stable and substantial population in the county. Approximately 90% of reports relate to calling birds and 2 were found dead near roads. Almost all records referred to 1 or 2 birds but larger numbers were recorded at Bucklebury (max of 7 on May 15th – JA), The Coombes, Barkham (7 calling on Oct 28th – KCr), Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest (at least 4 calling on May 12th – BAJC) and Swinley Brickpits (up to 4 calling on May 11th – DJB). The monthly summary of records is shown in the table though not including the Woolley and Eversley GPs records as dates are not available.

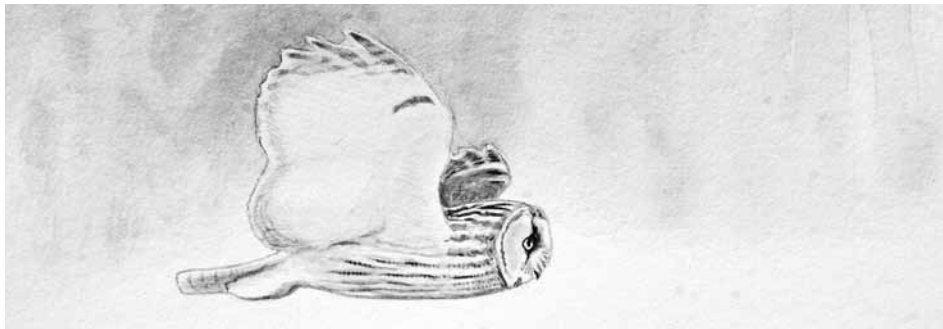
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of sites	4	5	10	11	12	14	5	9	6	13	13	10
No of birds	7	6	10	13	29	22	7	11	6	23	16	13

Breeding: was believed to be widespread with calling birds (many of these in prs) in suitable habitat at 41 sites during Feb – Jun. Breeding was confirmed at Inkpen Com (young heard in nest box May 17th and adult and juv there Jun 22nd – TSt), Sheepdrove (young heard May 22nd – ABT), Woolley Down/Brightwalton Com (3 prs raised a minimum of 4 y – GDS), Snelsmore Com (2 fledglings calling Jul 22nd – GDS) and Eversley GPs where 2 prs bred (MGLR). Unusually an adult was ringed at Thatcham Marsh May 1st (NRG).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Resident in very small numbers and scarce winter visitor

A single bird used a roost site in the Brimpton area on at least 4 occasions from Apr 15th to May 22nd (GEW). Just over the county boundary the usual pr reared at least 2 y (CDRH; ABT). In the second winter period a roost-site in W. Berks held up to 5 birds during Nov, and 8 on Dec 29th (CDRH).



Long-eared Owl by Martin Hallam

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

2004 is the best year since the apparent record year of 1988, with records coming from 8 localities involving 17 to 24 birds. This takes into account that numbers at the usual site in both winters may refer to the same returning wintering birds and that birds reported from elsewhere are thought to be separate from the usual wintering population. **First Winter:** the group of 3 birds that was present on the gallops north of West Ilsley at Cow/Bury Downs Dec 31st 2003 was joined by a 4th (and possibly a 5th) by Jan 11th (JOB). Birds were regularly reported with highs of 7 Jan 20th (ABT), 6 Feb 7th (MRWS) and Feb 19th (JL). The last record from this site involved just 1 individual Feb 21st (KEM). **Second Winter:** passage began Sep 30th with 1 being mobbed by gulls over QMR (CDRH), others noted were 1 at Greenham Com (RF) and 2 circling Lowbury Hill (CDRH) both Oct 7th. The first returning bird at Cow/Bury Downs appeared Oct 30th (PMC) and by Nov 10th there were 3 there (CDRH), 4 by 13th (JOB), 5 Dec 4th (MHu) and a peak of 7 in the roost Dec 28th (JOB). Other scattered records were 1 near Brimpton GP Nov 9th -11th (GEW), 1 nr Streatley Nov 27th (NJB), 3 together on Lambourn Downs Nov 29th (CDRH), plus one at nearby Wellbottom Down Dec 12th (ABT).

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Regular summer visitor in small numbers to suitable habitat

RED LISTED

First reported May 15th at 2 locations within Swinley Forest (KEM; MFW) and last reported in Windsor Forest Aug 10 (CDRH). This year the BTO organised a national census, the Berkshire results (courtesy of CMR) are shown in the table and are compared to the 1992 BTO census.

Site	2004	1992	Observer
Bucklebury Common	1	3	A Taylor
Greenham Common	5	2	JL
Snelsmore Common	3	3	JW
Wickham Heath	2	1	SAG
Padworth Com (part Hants)*	5	9	CMR
Wokefield Common	7	-	CWil
Wasing Wood	-	3	-
Edgebarrow Hill	1	-	DJB
Gorrick Plantation	4	-	BMA
South Ascot	7	-	DJB
Swinley Forest	33	26	DJB
Swinley Park	1	-	DJB
Whitmoor Bog	1	-	DJB
Wildmoor Heath	1	1	DJB
Windsor Forest	2	-	DJB
Totals	73	48	

*The count in 1992 was for the Padworth/Mortimer area, there were no records from Mortimer in 2004! The 1992 Swinley Forest total covered all the east Berks heaths.

The total of 73 churring males is the highest Berks total recorded in modern times and shows a 35% increase on the 1992 total. This is mirrored in the national total where 4500

churring males were found compared to 3,400 in 1992, an increase of 32% (State of the UK's birds 2004). **Breeding:** successful breeding was confirmed at two locations, a female was observed attending a nest which contained 1 egg and a newly hatched chick at Greenham Com on Jul 2nd (NC) and a pr with 2 recently fledged juvs at Windsor Forest Aug 10th (CDRH). Elsewhere a pr was observed mating at Caesars Camp on Jul 1st (MG) and a male was seen to approach a nest site from which the fem had left at Edgebarrow Hill Jul 11th (DJB). As well as churring, the distinctive flight display involving wing-claps was noted at several localities.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common passage migrant and (declining?) summer visitor. (National figures show a 22% decline in the past 10 years)

2002 Correction: the April section of the graph showing Swift numbers is incorrect, apart from an early bird no others were seen until Apr 24th.

2003 The tables compiled for Swift and the 3 hirundine species represents the number of records and birds in those records and not the actual summer status of these 4 species.

2004 Spring: a single at Burghfield GPs Apr 15th (JA) was quickly followed by 1 over Reading (SHa), 1 over Maidenhead (BDC) and 3 at Summerleaze GP (CDRH) Apr 16th. The main arrival occurred from the end of April into early May, the largest counts being in M. Berks with 300+ at Moatlands GP Apr 27th (JA) increasing to c500 there Apr 28th (JPH), May 2nd (JA) and May 9th (RJB), 200 at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 28th (RR) and May 8th (FJC) and c150 at Burghfield GPs on May 3rd (JA). **Summer:** large flocks could still be found in June with c200 at Lower Fm GP Jun 12th (JLS), 120 Moatlands GP and 100 at Pingewood GPs (RCr) Jun 17th. Birds were now widespread in the county with groups of birds screaming around town rooftops a familiar site; however, due to this familiarity few observers's submitted details and no confirmed breeding records were received. **Autumn:** flocks began to reappear in early July as birds fed over rich food sources prior to their migration. At least 400 were located over Southcote (JA) and 160 over Strand Water (BDC) on Jul 4th, 140 congregated over Pingewood GPs Jul 11 (RCr) and 100 were feeding over fields at Cold Harbour Jul 19th (PBT). In August numbers were much lower; the largest group reported being 66 over Pingewood GPs Aug 28th (JA). Birds were reported from five places in September, the last being 1 at Lower Fm GP Sep 12th (RAH).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Common but thinly distributed resident

SCHEDULE 1 and AMBER LISTED

Birds were reported from 105 locations with most records coming from the major river systems within the county. The table below shows the number of sites either on or adjacent to (riverside gravel pits) our main rivers.

River	No of sites
River Kennet	28
River Pang	6
River Lambourn	6
River Loddon	6
River Blackwater	3
The Cut	10
Maidenhead Ditch	3
River Thames	28
Other Sites	15
Total	105

This year there was no clear difference between summer and winter distribution. The records show a strong correlation with observer coverage *i.e.* many records from popular sites and populated areas but few from apparently similar habitat in isolated areas (*e.g.* most of the R. Thames except near Reading and Maidenhead, the Blackwater between Swallowfield and Eversley GPs, much of the Loddon and all of the upper Lambourn). Despite the number of records it seems that many kingfishers may still go unreported so an estimate of county population has not been attempted. The table below summarises the records by month.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of sites	18	20	21	20	26	20	19	20	33	31	24	22
No of birds	20	32	36	34	37	33	27	28	40	45	35	37

Breeding: 2 birds or more were seen at 21 sites during Apr-Jul of which 10 were identified as pairs by the observer. At Denford Pk a pr was present continuously from Mar – Jul, but without indication of breeding success. Juvs were reported from Thatcham Marsh (1 seen by BJH on Jul 26th and 1 (the same?) caught there by NRG the next day), 1 at Brimpton was being fed by an adult Jul 2nd (GEW) and 2 were seen with a pr leaving a nest hole on The Cut near Bracknell Jun 19th (BDC). One took food to a nest at Bottom Lane Floods Jul 22nd (BDC). At Cookham, Boveney Lock and Old Windsor Lock prs were present from Apr – Jun and all bred successfully (WAS).

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Now only a scarce passage migrant

Only one record, of 1 at QMR Sep 9th that stayed in the area around the car park for less than 1½ hours (CDRH).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident

AMBER LISTED

Commonly reported throughout the county in all months but slightly more than half of sites were in East Berks (due to better coverage?). 80% of records were of single birds and only 5% referred to more than 2. Highest numbers were reported from Burghfield GPs where there were 6 Mar 17th and again on 24th and 4 on 31st (RCr), Wraybury GPs (4 on Jan 19th – FCC), with reports of 3 from Strand Water (Mar 4th – BDC), Marsh Benham area (Apr 24th – TPo), Greenham Com (Jul 4th – SAG), Warfield (Jul 20th – BDC), Eversley GPs (Jul 25th – RBor), Woolley Down (Jul 31st – GDS) and Cookham

(Oct 31st – BDC). **Breeding:** seems to have been successful throughout the county. Reports of calling and of 2 birds (not necessarily pairs) were numerous. Juvs and family parties were seen in July and August from 13 well distributed locations.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and increasing resident

Reported from 70 areas all over the county in all months, about half of the sites being in East Berks, with most reports coming between February and June. About 80% of reports were of singles, 15% were of 2 birds, and the remainder recorded up to 8 birds. Many reports were from gardens where this species feeds readily from peanut dispensers. **Breeding:** drumming was recorded from January to April and in Dec. Juvs were reported from 12 locations and in suitable habitat breeding density was high *e.g.* DJB located 8 occupied nests in Swinley Pk, 5 in Swinley Forest and 4 on South Forest, Windsor.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon and declining resident

RED LISTED

34 reports came from 23 sites throughout the county, 90% during the first 6 months of the year, and almost all were isolated reports of single birds with no reports of more than 2 adult birds. This is a 50% drop in sites and records compared with 2003. **Breeding:** the only report of drumming was on Feb 5th at Dinton Pastures CP (RR) from where there were 3 other reports of birds of both sexes. Reports of 2 birds together (not described as pairs) came from Brightwalton on Mar 1st (SWi) and Strand Water Mar 4th (BDC). There was a nest in a Crowthorne garden Jun 20th (J Morris) and a pr raised a brood successfully at Padworth which were fledged by Jun 15th (GEW). In East Berks the RRG ringed individuals at both Great Meadow Pond and Silwood Pk.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

*Locally common summer visitor in areas of suitable habitat,
uncommon in winter*

SCHEDULE 1 and
RED LISTED

Away from the 3 areas where birds spend the summer there were 3 reports – 1 at Decoy Heath Feb 11th (GEW), 1 at Lower Fm Trout Lake (which was singing, before departing to the north) May 16th (NC) and 1 (possibly several) Cold Harbour Nov 21st (CDJ). **Breeding:** birds were recorded through the breeding season (Feb – Jul) on Snelsmore Com, Greenham/Crookham Commons and at 8 heathland locations in south-east Berks. **Snelsmore Common:** a pr was present Mar 28th (ACJ), 2 birds May 18th (SWi) then 1 singing into June, but there was no evidence of breeding success, last reported Sep 24 (BJW). **Greenham Common area:** there were 40 records between Jan 24 (IW/JL) and Oct 7 (RF; CDRH) indicating that there were 4-5 territories *e.g.* 5 singing Feb 15 (ABT), 3 singing + 1f Mar 3 (NC) and 4 singing Apr 1 (ACJ), there were at least 2 prs Mar 27 (JPM) and 2 more prs Crookham Com Mar 26 (JPM). Family parties or groups were reported Jul 13 (6 incl adults + juvs – CDRH), Aug 4 (1ad + 2juvs – CDRH) and Sep 28 (2 groups of 3 and 7 – GEW). **South-east Berks:** there were 26 records including a comprehensive survey of Swinley Forest (DJB) in which 21 territories were identified with 2 prs successfully breeding near Broadmoor Bottom (DJB) and another pr with 2juvs at Wishmoor Bottom on Jun 12th (MHu). Elsewhere singing males were noted at Gorrick Wood Mar 18th (BMA) and Jun 11th (PJC), Swinley Pk Apr 14th to May 17th (DJB) and 2 at Wildmoor Heath Mar 26th (BMA). Overall, the Berkshire population seems to be stable.

SKY LARK *Alauda arvensis*

Common but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

RED LISTED

Records were received from most farmland areas in the county especially on the downland areas in the west. Moving further east, distribution becomes patchier as land usage becomes less favourable for the species. **First Winter:** although widely reported, flock sizes were generally small, with the largest flocks reported being 87 at Field Fm GP on Jan 12th (RCr) and 60 at Englefield on Feb 12th increasing to 100+ by Mar 28th (RCr). **Breeding:** possibly took place at 36 sites but the records are patchy (due to under recording). Song was recorded at 23 sites with 19 singing on Greenham Com with at least a further 12 birds present Mar 27th (JPM) the highest count. At least 30 were noted at Remenham Apr 27th (ANS) and 50 were present at Englefield May 30th (RCr). Breeding was confirmed at Dorney W Jun 16th when 4 juvs were located (BDC), near Eton Jun 21st, 1 juv (BDC) and near Brimpton GP where 3 recently fledged young were discovered Jul 25th (GEW). **Second Winter:** flocks began to build from late Sep onwards with 100+ at Strand Water Sep 30th to Oct 15th (DJB), 120 at Englefield Oct 3rd with 100+ still present in Dec (RCr) and several flocks exceeding 50 birds through Oct-Dec. The largest flock of c.250 was found feeding on stubble at Chieveley Dec 13th (CDRH).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

AMBER LISTED

Reports came from 27 locations throughout the county with all but 2 in our river valleys. **Spring passage:** the earliest bird was at Dorney W Mar 8 (P Jackson) then a full week later, Mar 15th, 6 appeared at Lower Fm GP (JC) and on the following day there were 2 at Lavell's Lake LNR (FLC) and 1 at Dorney W (MO). Numbers built up quickly after that *e.g.* 125 at Lower Fm GP Mar 19 (JL; JW), c200 at Woolhampton GP Mar 24 (GEW), 400+ at Moatlands GP Apr 29 (MGM) and 300 there the following day (MJT). Away from river valleys 3 were seen at Greenham Com May 12th (GJS) and 1 flew over Wellbottom Down May 24th (ABT). **Breeding:** 8 prs were nesting in pipes at Black Potts viaduct, Eton May 25 (BDC) and there were 25 nest holes at Padworth Lane GP Jun 12 (MFW). For the first time in many years none bred on the Hampshire side of Eversley GPs due to habitat loss. Before the return passage began, significant numbers fed at sites 10 or more kilometres from reported nest colonies, *e.g.* at Thames Valley Park c50 on Jun 8th and 24th (SH) and at Lower Fm GP 150+ on Jul 10 (JA/RPo) suggesting that there might be other unreported colonies (or that Sand Martins travel long distances to feed?). **Autumn passage:** built up from about Aug 18 and peaked on about Aug 30 when 80+ were at Pingewood GPs (JA), c200 at Lavell's Lake LNR (FJC), c.50 at Lower Fm GP (JLS) and c.150 at Moatlands GP (JA). Then there was steady but declining passage until Sep 21 when there were 20 at Lavell's Lake LNR (FJC). After that there were only 3 records – 2 at Thatcham Station Oct 7 (RRK), 2 at Lavell's Lake LNR Oct 10 (FJC) and 4 at Moatlands GP Oct 15 (KEM).

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

AMBER LISTED

Records came from over 80 sites evenly spread around the county. **Spring passage:** the earliest birds were singletons reported from Burghfield GPs (RM) and Woolhampton GPs (MFW) on Mar 20th but for nearly a fortnight there were no other reports until, on Apr 2nd, 2 were seen at Dinton Pastures CP (FJC), 1 at Dorney W (CDRH) and 1 at Eversley GPs (GR). Numbers built up during April with c.200 at Pingewood GPs on

the 21st (JA) but it was from the end of the month into May that several days of heavy passage occurred. On Apr 28th 200 had arrived at Dinton Pastures CP (RR) whilst at Theale/Moatlands GPs, up to c2000 were present on Apr 29th (RCr *et al*) with c1000 still on Moatlands GP on Apr 30th (MGM; MJT). On May 1st 500+ flew north over Dorney W in the early morning (DJB), 460 were noted at Eversley GPs (MGLR) and 750-1000 congregated at Lower Fm GP at dusk (DJB). Numbers dwindled thereafter although 500 were still present on Theale Main GP on May 3rd (RCr) and 400 at Dinton Pastures CP on May 8th (FJC). **Breeding:** regular records from Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen record the arrival of 3 birds on Apr 25th, nest building on May 12th (using the remains of a nest from 2003), hostility to marauding magpies, chicks in the nest on Jul 29th, first flight on Aug 10th and departure on Aug 17th (LS & GSt). Elsewhere there were 10 nests under a railway bridge near Newbury on May 16th (JLS) and 5 nests at Moor Fm, Holyport on Jun 30th (BDC). Records of juvs were 25 at Brimpton on Jul 17th (GEW), 18 with 3 adults at Lower Fm GP on Aug 22nd (JPM) and 2 that fledged in a stable at Kintbury on Sep 9th (LS). **Autumn passage:** migrant flocks started to appear from about Aug 19th when 30 were over Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (FJC), then there were no major movements until on Sep 1st a party of 1000+ went to roost in a maize field near Sonning (ABT), then apart from c100 flying south over Brimpton GP on Sep 7th (GEW) and a flock of 150 that landed in a field near Hungerford on Sep 12th (JL) there were relatively minor movements until Sep 30th when 300 flew south over Hosehill Lake (RCr) and 200 were over Englefield with 130 there on Oct 4th (RCr). Almost daily reports of decreasing small numbers continued until Oct 22nd when 1 was seen at Wokingham SF (DJB) with no further records until the last 2 left via Binfield on Oct 27 (FJC). **Summary:** the spring passage this year was large by recent standards and very short with 80% of birds passing through during w/e 5th May. Autumn passage was similar to 2003 but in 2 clear surges in early and late September. Breeding once again was under-recorded however a planned breeding survey of this species in 2007 should clarify the Berkshire breeding status.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Locally common (but declining) summer visitor and common passage migrant AMBER LISTED

Spring: first reported on Apr 3rd with 5 at Muddy Lane GP (GJS) and 1 at Lavell's Lake (MFW). Numbers slowly increased until mid-month when c100 were noted at Eversley GPs on Apr 17th (BMA). Like Swallow, there was an influx at the end of the month when counts of 100+ were made at 8 locations, peak counts being 200 at Lower Fm GP on Apr 30th (RF), 200 Moatlands GP also on Apr 30th (MJT) increasing to c300 on May 9th (RJB) and c450 at Eversley GPs on May 1st (MGLR). **Summer:** generally under-reported as flocks either moved-on or fragmented as birds re-occupied breeding sites. Signs of local breeding came from Lower Fm GP where 20 were collecting mud on May 18th (JLS) and there were 74 occupied nests at Jealott's Hill (PJC) but at Cookham there were no nests in the village this year (BDC). A survey of this species in 2007 should give a fuller picture of the breeding status of species. **Autumn:** post-breeding flocks began to be noted in August and flocks of 100 or over were reported from 17 locations with passage reaching a peak in September. Highest counts involved c400 at Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 17th (MFW), 500 there on Sep 12th (FJC) and 600+ Sep 21st (FJC), 400+ Burghfield GPs Sep 21st (BU), 450 Eversley GPs Sep 25th (MGLR) with 300+ there Oct 2nd (GR), c500 moving south over Hosehill Lake Sep 30th (RCr) and 320 at Englefield Oct 4th (RCr). Numbers declined after Oct 4th although fairly strong late passage did occur Oct 13th -14th with a peak of c100 at Eversley GPs on the 14th (BMA). Five over Winter Hill Oct 17th (BDC) was the last record.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Locally common but declining summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant AMBER LISTED

Birds were reported from 17 sites (7 of these on the East Berks heaths) of which 8 produced only single records. The earliest was 1 at Woolley Down on Apr 7th (GDS) and the latest 1 at Caesar's Camp on Sep 15th (CRW), both typical dates. There was 1 singing at Curridge on Apr 22nd (IW), 1 at Dorney W on May 1st (CL) and 1 at Lambourn on May 6th (JD) which were probably on passage. **Summer:** single records from areas that have been occupied in recent years came from Bucklebury Com (NC), Padworth Com (MFW) and Gorrick Wood (NG), all on Apr 24th. At Woolley Down song was heard on Apr 25th (GDS) and 1 was singing at Hermitage on May 21st (JBU). Records of 1 at Combe Wood on Jun 13 (IW/JL) may indicate summering. At Snelmore Com up to 7 birds (5 singing) were present from Apr 18th (IW; JL; JPM) to late June, and on May 25th a pr was feeding young there (DJB). Greenham Com, which is well watched, produced only 3 isolated records with nothing else to support possible breeding. The annual survey of Swinley Forest located only 39 territories, which is down from 55 in 2003 (DJB), but breeding was confirmed there at Broadmoor Bottom (DJB) and Wishmoor Bottom (MSFW; DJB). Wildmoor Heath had 1 singing during April-May (DJB; BMA), Swinley Pk had 1 singing regularly in May & June (DJB).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common migrant and winter visitor, locally common summer visitor

AMBER LISTED

Reported from throughout the county with a bias towards the west with numbers peaking in September. Flocks of 20+ were reported on 61 occasions including 19 flocks of 50 or more. **First Winter:** small numbers were reported widely, the only counts of over 20 involved 35 at Cookham Rise Jan 12th (DJB), 56 at Woolley Down Jan 17th (GDS) and c50 at Woolhampton Feb 28th (ABT). **Spring passage:** passage began in early March and peaked at the end of that month with 275 heading north at Cold Harbour Mar 25th and c100 there Mar 29th (DJB). Passage continued into April when 60 appeared at Woolhampton GP Apr 8th (GEW) and 21 flew over Combe Gibbet Apr 12th (SAG). **Summer:** during the period Apr – Aug birds were present on 21 sites, mainly on the Downs, with singing reported on various dates, mostly in May, from Walbury Hill (DJB), Dorney W (JOB), Lambourn Downs (DJB), Seven Barrows (RCr) Greenham Com (ABT) and Wellbottom Downs (DJB; MJT). Breeding was confirmed at Greenham Com (1 carrying food May 14th – JLS), West Ilsley (2 carrying food May 17th – SPA), Dorney W (pr feeding young Jun 16th – BDC) and Woolley Down (fledglings Aug 6th- GDS). **Autumn:** away from the breeding grounds passage birds began to appear in late August with 1 at Donnington on 22nd (BJH) followed by 2 over Lavell's Lake (MFW) and 1 at Widbrook Com (DJB) Sep 2nd. The main passage was Sep but only small movements in Oct *e.g.* 200+ were around the banks of QMR Sep 26th (CDRH), 150+ at Cookham Rise Sep 29th-30th (DJB) and at Englefield there were several reports including 75+ Sep 17th (RCr). **Second Winter:** largest numbers were in December with 45 at Dorney W 6th (DJB), 56 at Englefield 27th and c50 near West Ilsley 30th (JL).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Altogether, birds were seen on 11 dates probably totalling 7 birds, so a fairly typical year. **Spring:** at QMR 1 flew south after a brief stop Mar 12th and an individual of the Scandinavian race (*A. p. littoralis*) showed well there Mar 29th (CDRH). **Autumn:** 1 was feeding along the shore line with several Meadow Pipits at Lower Fm GP Oct 10th (IW).

All the other records came from QMR with 1 (with 30 Meadow Pipits) Sep 30th (PMC) then single birds Oct 9th, 12th, 16th and 19th and 2 Oct 15th and 20th and a late bird was present Nov 11 (all CDRH).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

There were 2 spring and 2 autumn records involving 5-6 birds in total which is about average for the last 10 years. **Spring:** 2 were at Lower Fm GP Mar 21st (IW/JL) then 1 briefly at Pingewood GPs Apr 15th (MGM). **Autumn:** 2 were located adjacent to the BA pit, Wraysbury GPs Oct 19th, both birds flying off to the south-west (CDRH), but what was probably one of these birds was flushed from sow thistles at the same location Oct 20th (CDRH).

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

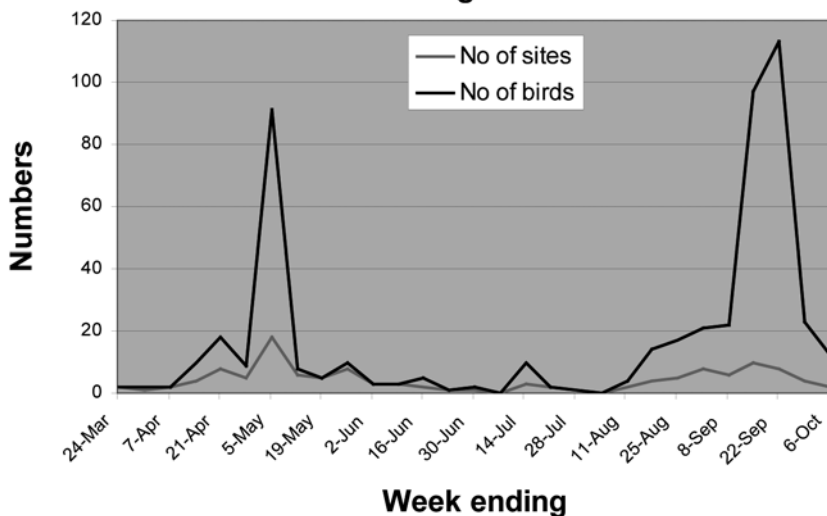
Common but decreasing passage migrant and localised summer visitor
in small numbers

AMBER LISTED

2000 Correction: delete the record of 1 at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 15th (account writers error).

2004 Spring passage: the first spring report was of a male at Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood GPs Mar 19th (RCr) which is the earliest record since at least 1974 (A record for QMR on Mar 15th 1994 appears in the Arrival and Departure table for that year but not in the species account). After that there were ones and twos until mid April when passage increased, e.g. on Apr 10th there were 7 in a paddock at Twyford GPs (BTB/AR) and Apr 18th saw 8 at Pingewood GPs (ABT). The main movement was Apr 30th and May 1st, with up to 120 moving through over those 2 days including 11 at Woolhampton GPs (GEW), 14 at Lower Fm GP (IW/SAG) and up to 70 at Dorney W with 35-40 moving through in the early morning of May 1st (SP; JOB; DJB) and c30 later in the day (MFV).

Yellow wagtail 2004



Breeding: birds were present on 15 sites at some time over the period mid May to end of July. There were singing males at Cold Harbour during May (PBT; DJB), Farnborough on May 9th (DR), Wellbottom Down on May 25th (DJB) and Englefield on Jun 2nd (RCr), and there were prs at Lower Fm Wasing on May 11th (GEW), QMR on May 21st (CDRH), Aldermaston on Jun 16th (GEW) and Farnborough on Jun 29th (CDRH). The only reported confirmation of breeding was a female feeding 4 juvs at Cold Harbour on Jul 11 (DJB; PBT). **Autumn passage:** a prolonged and substantial passage took place between about Aug 15th (when 9 turned up at Englefield – RCr) and early October with daily movements and many parties of up to 10 and 14 larger parties being reported. The largest numbers were 67 at Port Down Hungerford on Sep 21st (JBut) and notable flocks were 20 at Greenham Com/Crookham Com Aug 28th (GEW), 13 Englefield, the same day (RCr), 33 at Cock Marsh Sep 13th (WAS), 22 at Widbrook Com Sep 16th (BDC), 13 QMR Sep 20th (ABT) and 12 at Freeman’s Marsh Sep 24th (JBut). A record of 11 at Greenham Com Oct 2 (Aph) is the highest October count recorded for Berks and concluded the passage quite abruptly, without the normal tapering off.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL

One of the race *M. f. flava* was present at Lower Fm GP on May 1st (BH; RHo).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor

The population appears to be stable, possibly increasing. Records were received from 99 sites across the county with a slight bias towards the east of the county (probably due to higher observer activity). As this species is not known to form flocks there were few reports of more than 4 or 5 *e.g.* the largest number reported together were 8 at Dinton Pastures CP on 4th and 12th Aug (MFW) which included a family group. The table below illustrates the species abundance through the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	15	14	18	30	33	27	15	7	23	11	11	15
Minimum No of Birds	23	16	31	53	65	60	39	19	42	17	27	25

Breeding: during the period Mar 1st to Jul 31st there were reports from 70 locations mostly along the courses of the bigger rivers especially near locks and weirs, but with a few reports from smaller watercourses. Two or more birds were reported from 42 locations and evidence of breeding was reported from 20 locations involving 23 prs. Most locations held single prs; however 2 prs bred at Eversley GPs (MGLR), Wokingham STW (DJB) and near to the A322 on the Jubilee River (BDC).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

There are some signs of a decline in numbers (*i.e.* fewer records during May – Aug), but under-recording makes it difficult to be sure, although the BTO Berkshire Bird Index does record a significant fall in numbers in 2004. Records were received from 38 sites across the whole county, which hugely under-represents the true distribution of a bird that can be found (usually in small numbers) in almost any open (mostly lowland) habitat in the county. A high proportion of records were from towns and other man-made habitat. During the first winter, the biggest flocks were c200 at Wokingham SF Jan 15th (DJB)

and c100 near Reading Station Feb 4th (VFo). The most obvious feature to come out of the records is the build up of these winter flocks. Small groups, probably family parties, of up to about 10 form in July/August on or near breeding sites *e.g.* 2 family parties (of unreported size) at Dorney W Jun 16th (BDC), 11 birds at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP Jul 11th (GR) and 13 on the tern raft at Lower Fm GP Aug 7th (SAG). These parties merge (or may be joined by migrant birds) in autumn *e.g.* 46 at QMR Oct 10th (ABT), c30 at Pingewood GPs Oct 25th (MSFW) and c40 at Englefield Nov 23rd (RCr). In December large pre-roosting flocks are seen around human settlements (there were no reports of really big flocks from rural locations), *e.g.* at Wokingham SF c150 Dec 8th (DJB), 100+ reported at Windsor Station Dec 16th and 29th (DF) and a pre-roost gathering at the Tesco supermarket in Newbury of c150 Dec 23rd (NC). Unfortunately the records do not provide enough regular data to follow the build-up, merging and dispersal of these flocks. The table below records the size of the largest flock reported in each month of the year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maximum flock	200	100	50	21	3	9	11	15	26	46	40	150

Breeding: Was poorly recorded, even though birds were reported throughout the breeding season at well-watched sites.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Uncommon passage migrant

Spring: there were 10 spring birds in 6 locations (4 males, the others of unspecified sex). At Burghfield Mill GP there was 1 Mar 7th (RJB) with another on the adjacent Moatlands GP Mar 26th (PBT) and 28th (JA) and a third bird Apr 3rd (JA). At Lower Fm GP Mar 27th there were 2 (IW; JL). A male was at Greenham Com Apr 8th (CDRH) and 10th (ABT), 2 males together at Woolhampton GPs Apr 12th (CDRH), a male at Burnthouse Lane floods Apr 17th (KEM) and at Eversley GPs there were singles Apr 19th (NG) and Apr 30th (BMA). **Autumn:** there were 4 birds, all first winters, in 2 locations: 2 at QMR Sep 26th (1 until 29th) and 2 at North Town Moor, Maidenhead Oct 10th (1 until 11th) (all CDRH).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irregular and scarce winter visitor

After no Berkshire records in the first winter, a major national influx occurred in October with over 6500 in Scotland and c800 in England south to East Anglia. This influx steadily moved west (several thousand were seen in Ireland) and south into southern England with the forerunners of this now huge irruption reaching Berkshire in early December. The first sighting involved a single bird at Forest Park, Bracknell on the 4th (TS; JOB), joined on the 5th by 7 others - 5 of which were identified as f/w birds (CDRH) - and remained in the area to the 7th (PJC). Further sightings in the Forest Park area occurred on the 19th (7 birds) and 26th when 17 were present (TS). Meanwhile, a party of 11 was located in Pendery's Lane, Hawthorn Hill on Dec 19th (MSFW).

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Rare vagrant formerly a more regular visitor which has bred

One present on the River Lambourn at Easton on Jan 30th (RWyatt per Ian Lewington) is the first record since 1 was seen flying along the RThames at Bourne End on Sep 30th

1989. The last West Berks report also came from the R Lambourn at Great Shefford from Jun 30th to Jul 6th 1987.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Recorded from less than 40 locations, the true abundance of this widespread species is more reflected in some of the territorial counts received, with no less than 50 singing at Burghfield GPs Mar 17th (RCr) with 61 there Mar 24th (RCr) and 18 Theale GP Mar 20th (RCr). **Breeding:** only one observer recorded successful breeding, at 5 locations, whilst ringing operations at 6 sites totalled 165 ringed or re-trapped.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Widespread and common resident

Another under-recorded species with counts of up to 3 received from just 29 sites. RCr's counts resulted in 38 Burghfield GPs Mar 17th whilst SPA's daily counts in a Twyford garden resulted in sightings of up to 3 birds on 234 of the 365 days of the year. Known also to form small groups in winter, 4 in Cookham Nov 19th (BDC) was the only such report received. Ringing operations at 4 locations in East Berks resulted in 170 birds being ringed/re-trapped (RRG).

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident

Just 27 recorders submitted 178 reports of this widespread and popular bird, the highest number at any one site being 31 Burghfield GPs Mar 17th singing (RCr) whilst 28 were counted along the Berkshire stretch of the Jubilee River Oct 10th (BDC). Other double-figure counts came from Lower Farm/Bowdown Woods with 10 Sep 26th (TPo) and the same number at both Thatcham GPs Oct 12th (TPo) and Greenham Com Nov 24th (TPo). One of the few breeding records was of nesting in straw in a pig building which was supposed to be bird proof! (LS). Ringing operations at the 4 East Berks localities used by RRG resulted in 253 birds being ringed/re-trapped.

COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor

AMBER LISTED

Reports were received between Apr 3rd and Jul 10th from 48 observers, who submitted 108 records from 14 sites in West Berks and 7 in Mid Berks, there being no records from Wraybury which is becoming a less-regular site for the species. **Spring:** the first record was of one in sub-song at Burghfield GPs Apr 3rd (JA, RPo), equalling 2002's earliest Berks arrival date. There was a 9 day gap before the next report at Dinton Pastures CP with 2 singing Apr 12th (MO) building to 4 May 2nd (PJC). Highest counts were 8 singing at Burghfield GPs May 3rd (JA) and 8 singing at Hosehill Lake May 13th (RCr). There were at least 53 singing males found from April to June, a significant drop on the 107 of 2003. However, that year's systematic surveys were not repeated so a direct comparison is difficult. **Breeding:** the only potential breeding record was of 2 on Jul 10th giving alarm calls in the 'garden' area of Theale Main GP, possibly with young nearby (RCr). With only 8 records in June, this single July sighting record also became the last for 2004.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor

SCHEDULE ONE and AMBER LISTED

Spring/Passage: a first summer male was located at Dorney W Mar 21st (WAS *et al*) and remained until Mar 30th (MO); this site is adjacent to Slough SF where sporadic records of the species have been noted over the last decade. A female was at Greenham Com Apr 24th (RRK). **Breeding:** no records came from the regular Aldermaston site where up to 3 breeding pairs have been in the past, and just single males were reported singing in Reading town centre Apr 8th and Apr 22nd (TBa), where 5 were heard in 1997. **Autumn Passage:** the only record was of a female feeding in the observer's garden near Brightwalton Com Oct 20th until dusk when pursued by a Sparrowhawk, and not seen subsequently (GDS). Overall, a poor year, but increased observation at the regular sites might have corrected that.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant

AMBER LISTED

A significant increase in records over recent years resulted in 54 reports from 24 observers, with sightings at 13 locations, 6 in E. Berks, 5 in M. Berks and 2 in W. Berks. **Spring passage:** the first record of the year involved a singing male in breeding habitat at Mill Pond in Swinley Forest Apr 9th (DJB). Away from Swinley Forest, migrants were noted at Pingewood GPs, a male Apr 14th (MJT) followed by further single males at Arthur Jacob NR, Horton on 16th (CDRH) and at Hosehill Lake on 22nd (RAH). Females were at Theale Main GP Apr 22nd (DS; RAD) and probably the same bird Apr 30 (RAD; DS) and May 1st (ABT) and 2 were ringed at Silwood Park Apr 23rd (RRG). **Summer:** by far the most significant information came from the annual survey of Swinley Forest by DJB, aided by casual records from MO. The resulting findings indicated no fewer than 55 prs or singing males were in these woodlands from April to mid July (DJB), up from 46 last year and 44 in 2002. Elsewhere a singing male was located at South Forest, Windsor May 31st (DJB) the first such record in this area since 1989. Breeding was confirmed by DJB at 7 sites within Swinley Forest involving prs feeding young at a nest in a birch at Wishmoor Cross Jun 11th, a pr feeding y at Poppy Hills Jun 13th, a pr feeding y and 2 prs with 2 and 3 juvs in the Wishmoor area, 1 pr feeding y at Lower Star Post and another pr feeding 4 juvs on the Devils Highway all on Jun 25th. **Autumn Passage:** Dorney W held a f/w bird Aug 30th (DJB) to Sep 3rd (CRe) and two males were found at Larden Chase, Sreatley Aug 31st (CDRH). The Combe Hill/Walbury Hill area had no less than 7 (3 males and 4 f/w) Sep 3rd (DJB), which is the highest autumn count recorded in Berks, whilst a single bird was at Greenham Com on 4th (JPM). A fem turned up in a Caversham garden Sep 9th (TBa) and entertained MO until Oct 2nd, during which time CDRH found 1, calling, in Windsor Great Pk 25th Sep. The last of the year was in yet another garden, in Reading on 4th Oct (RHS) when a fem remained during the afternoon despite the attentions of the neighbour's cat! It was last seen by him and AMH at 17.45pm.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant which formally bred.

Recorded in 28 locations this year (10 in E. Berks, 6 in M. Berks and 12 in W. Berks). **Spring passage:** first of the year was a male at Greenham Com Apr 17th (RRK), a fairly typical date, quickly followed by a fem at Field Farm GP on 18th (BU). Thereafter up to 20 appeared at 12 sites to May 20th. Of these, 9 were males and 5 were fems (gender of

the remainder not recorded). No record involved more than 2 birds. **Autumn Passage:** the first returning bird was Aug 12th at Brimpton (GEW) followed by a flurry of August records involving up to 18 birds from 9 sites. Some may have stayed into September contributing to the total of around 37 individuals seen that month with highs of 6 Greenham Com on 4th (DJB) and 4 Englefield on 9th (RJB). Four were noted in October, 2 at Englefield on 3rd (RCr), a f/w at Brimpton on 4th (GEW) and a f/w at Pingewood GPs on the 16th (KEM).

Spring

Week beginning	12/4	19/4	26/4	3/5	10/5	17/5
Number of birds	2	3	4	9	2	1
Number of sites	2	3	3	7	2	1

Autumn

Week beginning	9/8	16/8	23/8	30/8	6/9	13/9	20/9	27/9	4/10	11/10
Number of birds	1	7	10	15	12	7	4	2	1	1
Number of sites	1	5	6	7	5	4	2	1	1	1

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; breeds locally in small numbers dictated by habitat availability

Records were received from 46 locations, 16 in E. Berks (counting all sites in Swinley Forest as 1), 15 in M. Berks and 15 in W. Berks and were recorded in every month. Important areas for breeding are the East Berks Heaths (incorporating Swinley Forest and Brickpits, and Wildmoor Heath) and Greenham/Crookham Com. The following table helps to indicate the distribution throughout the year.

Month		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E Berks Heaths	Birds	6	5	23	33	31	50	6*	17	8	1	1	3
Greenham/Crookham	Birds	3	1	9	9	2	3	2	7	13	8	3	0
County-wide	Birds	18	15	55	43	35	53	13	24	32	53	36	37
	Sites	12	8	13	5	5	3	4	2	11	18	20	20

* The survey of the East Berks Heaths ended in early July, so an accurate count of the months of Jul to Sep cannot be given.

First Winter: around 29 birds were spread over 15 locations across the county, including 5 in Swinley Forest Jan 18th (DJB). **Spring:** passage was most evident in March with highs of 5 at Dorney W on 13th (JOB) and 6 (3m and 3f) Brimpton GP Mar 16th (GEW). As birds began to decline in the wintering areas, numbers began to build in the breeding areas and by April reports came predominately from sites within the two main breeding areas. **Breeding:** in East Berks the annual survey by DJB located 20 territories, 5 at Wildmoor Heath, 1 Swinley Brickpits and 14 in Swinley Forest. At Wildmoor Heath a fire devastated much of the reserve and only 1 pair bred. In Swinley Forest 12 prs were confirmed as breeding, rearing at least 26 juvs, and 2 prs reared a second brood. Further evidence of late breeding involved a male with a juv at Caesar's Camp Sep 15th (CRW). At Greenham Com the only confirmed breeding record involved a male feeding 4 juvs Sep 3rd - part of a count of 13 birds that day (DJB). **Autumn passage:** an early report of dispersal involved 5 at Compton Downs Jul 25th (JW Burnett). Birds were seen at far more locations in Sep and Oct and, apart from lingering birds at breeding sites (*e.g.* 8 at Greenham Com Oct 7th), notable counts included 7 at Englefield Oct 3rd (RCr) and 4 at Brimpton GP Oct 4th (GEW), Wraysbury GPs Oct 5th (CDRH) and Dorney W

Oct 31st (SP). **Second Winter:** numbers declined a little as passage birds moved on and wintering birds set up their winter territories. Numbers during this period were still above average for the time of year. High counts included the 4 birds remaining at Dorney W through to the years end (MO) and 5 noted in the Bury/Cow Down area Dec 30th (JL).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant and rare summer visitor

Records received from 43 locations, with 18 in E. Berks, 9 in M. Berks and 16 in W. Berks. **Spring:** the first sighting comprised 2 males at Dorney W Mar 14th (JOB), a fairly typical date for recent years. A strong pulse of movement over the next 2 weeks peaked with counts of 6 at Burnthouse Lane Mar 21st (RCW) and 6 at Dorney W Mar 25th (CRc), followed by an easing off before the main movement from around Apr 12th when the largest gatherings included 15 at QMR (CDRH) and 11 at Greenham Com (RF) 16th Apr and 14 at Lower Farm GP 17th Apr (IW JL). Two of the QMR birds showed intermediate '*schioleri*' features suggesting Icelandic/Faeroe origin (CDRH). During April, 19 sites held Wheatears, with an apparent total of 96+ birds, though it is impossible to account for any movement between sites, or for birds to move on and be replaced by others later in the month. Passage continued throughout May, 11 at Greenham Com May 2nd (ATB) the highest count, and a fem was still present at Dorney W May 30th (SP). The end of the spring passage was denoted by a fem at Dorney W Jun 16th (BDC) the latest record since 1999. **Autumn:** return passage commenced quite early with a juvenile at Brimpton GP Jul 14th (GEW) followed by a female on Wellbottom Down on the 31st (RCr) and a f/imm at Combe Gibbet Aug 1st (SAG). As usual, returning birds were seen at most of the well-watched sites, though rarely in the numbers experienced during the spring passage, August seeing c.44 birds spread over 14 sites. Greenham/Crookham Com did best with 12 Aug 28th (7 at Greenham and 5 at Crookham: JPM) and 8 there Sep 3rd (DJB). Elsewhere 7 were seen at QMR Aug 27 (ABT) and 6 at both Compton Downs Sep 2nd (ABT) and Lambourn Downs Sep 5th (DKP). Passage continued into Oct with reports from 6 sites. The last of the year was late on Oct 30th on Compton Downs (DJB).

Spring

Week beginning	9/3	15/3	22/3	29/3	5/4	12/4	19/4	26/4	3/5	10/5	17/5	24/5	31/5	7/6	14/6
Number of birds	2	20	30	13	12	71	27	25	16	7	1	1	0	0	1
Number of sites	1	7	8	6	3	14	11	8	8	6	1	1	0	0	1

Autumn

Week beginning	12/7	26/7	2/8	9/8	16/8	23/8	30/8	6/9	13/9	20/9	27/9	4/10	11/10	18/10	25/10
Number of birds	1	2	1	9	17	27	32	8	7	9	3	5	1	1	1
Number of sites	1	2	1	5	9	6	9	3	5	4	2	4	1	1	1

GREENLAND WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa*

As in most years, records were received of birds exhibiting the characteristics of Greenland Wheatears, the first being a male at QMR Apr 27th, the same or another May 13th, whilst on May 20th a fem (probably *leucorrhoa*) was found, followed May 24th by another male. In autumn at the same site, 1 adult male & 1fem/imm were present Sep 13th and finally, an adult male Sep 15th (all records CDRH).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant

With a record year in 2003, things were back to normal for this striking thrush, with just two spring records. 1 fem was at Brightwalton Apr 4th (SWi) and another was at Inkpen Hill Apr 17th (ABT).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident and common winter visitor

As with many common species, the limited records received covered widespread locations. The highest numbers in the first winter included 21 in a Twyford garden Feb 23rd, amazingly the same as the beginning of 2003, (SPA), 20 at Wraysbury Jan 19th (FCC) and 10 in DF's Maidenhead garden Feb 28th. A bird seen in Upper Bucklebury on Jun 1st sported a white blaze across the chest almost like a Ring Ouzel (RF). Of the handful of breeding records, 4 was the highest brood. In the second winter, many groups of 10 were reported, but 11 were together in Long Lane, Cookham Dec 13th, one of the males even in sub-song (BDC), and some 20 birds were in TPo's Newbury garden Nov 24th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor, very rare in summer

No fewer than 73 observers submitted 273 reports, equally divided between the two winters, covering 108 locations, and with the usual W Berks bias. **First Winter:** the end of 2003 witnessed just 3 three figure flocks of this attractive thrush, but by the third week of January there were six such flocks, and several of 50 or more, so additional birds may have moved in during early January. The largest was of 300 at Jealott's Hill, which remained throughout the month (PJC). Elsewhere, Sheep Down held 250 Jan 20th (LJF *et al*), Compton Down had 200 Jan 11th (ABT) and the same number were at Bury Down Jan 24th (JLS). During February, even bigger flocks were noted, the largest being 1000 at Englefield 18th (RCr) and 600 near Arborfield Feb 2nd (DJB). The largest gathering in March was of 500 at Brightwalton 30th (SWi) whilst for April it was 140 at Woolley Down on 1st (GDS). The last records for this period were all on May 1st with at least 3 over Dorney W (SP; DJB) and 9 at Inkpen Hill (ACJ). Interestingly, of 122 records covering this period, most groups were of Fieldfares only with only 3 accounts of one or two Redwings present (but one with Ostriches nearby on a Crowthorne farm Jan 16th ! (BMA)).

Dates and distribution of all three-figure flocks were as follows:-

Month	West Berks	Mid Berks	East Berks
Jan	200 Compton Downs 11th (ABT) 250 Sheep Down 20th (LJF) 150 Kintbury 23rd (LS) 200 Bury Down 24th (JLS) 180 Combe 24th (TPo) 200 Brimpton 29th (GEW)	100 Amners Farm 8th (RCr) 150 Hurst 28th (DJB)	300 Jealott's Hill 1st (PJC) 120 Cookham Dean 12th (DJB)
Feb	100 Combe 7th (ABT)	600 Arborfield 2nd (DJB) 1000 Englefield 18th (RCr)	100 Cookham Rise 1st (ABT)
Mar	150 Walbury Hill 20th (TPo) 500 Brightwalton 30th (SWi)	100 Pingewood 29th (ABT)	

There were no summering records, the last of such being of a breeding pair in 1988 in Sulham Wood.

Second Winter: the first arrivals were an over-flying group of 196 during the afternoon of Oct 8th in Windsor Great Park (CDRH), a fairly typical date. It seems to take time for larger flocks to gather as, during October, there were just 5 three-figure flocks (the largest 250), whilst there were 9 in November (largest being 500) and 19 in December, of which 1000 was by far the biggest. Only one of the 236 second winter records mentioned the presence of Redwings. The year closed with 800 at Walbury Hill, 600 at West Ilsley and 200 at Knowl Hill.

Month	West Berks	Mid Berks	East Berks
Oct	100 Greenham Common 22nd (DJS) 150 Lands End 27th (GDS) 250 Compton Downs 30th (DJB) 200 Brightwalton 31st (TPo) 200 Roden Down, Compton Downs 31st (PJC)		196 Windsor Great Park 8th (CDRH)
Nov	250 Farnborough 6th (GDS) 300 Bury Down 6th (MFW) 500 Compton Downs 26th (DJB) 300 Fawley 30th (JD)	184 Englefield 23rd (RCr)	100 Windsor Gt Pk 5th (CRW) 200 Widbrook Cmn 16th (DJB) 200 Eversley GPs 29th (MGLR) 100 Wraybury 30th (WAS)
Dec	100 Farnborough 5th (GDS) 750-1000 East Garston 10th (DJB) 200 Sheepdrove 12th (ABT) 100 Combe Hill 27th (JL) 300 Cow Down 28th (JOB) 800 Walbury Hill 29th (DJB) 600 Cow Down 30th (JL) 100 Thatcham 31st (JL)	280 Englefield 5th (RCr) 200 Pingewood 6th (WB) 200 Wokefield Pk 27th (RCr) 100 Theale GPs 28th (RJB) 200 Sonning 29th (ABT)	100 Eversley GPs 2nd (BMA) 145 Strand Water 6th (BDC) 100 Bray GPs 28th (WAS) 100 Wraybury 29th (WAS) 130 Cockmarsh 30th (WAS) 120 Dorney Wetlands 31st (JOB) 200 Knowl Hill 31st (BDC)

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor

The number of records sent in (210) was up on previous years, but the number of locations involved (68) was somewhat down on 2003, and the species remains under-recorded. (During the 1987-1989 Avifauna surveys, only 9 Berkshire tetrads had no Song Thrushes recorded in them.) The vast majority of sightings came from East and Mid Berks, indicating a combination of less coverage on the Downs and the tendency for Song Thrushes to use suburban gardens more than farmland and scrub in recent years. The only indication of winter gathering was a group of 10 together at Eversley GPs Feb 20 (DJB). Song was noted regularly from Jan 1st to June (one of which contained strong mimicking of Common Sandpiper at Binfield Jun 7th - BDC), song was not reported again until Nov 23rd and then to the end of the year. **Breeding:** good numbers of reports came in of adults carrying food to nests and the first juveniles seen were on May 17th and the largest brood noted was 4 juvs. During surveys of the Swinley Forest and adjacent heaths, DJB discovered 64 territories. The last family party was reported Jun 22nd but food was seen being carried by adults as late as Aug 3rd in Twyford (SPA).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor

Conveniently, compared to Fieldfare, a similar number of reports (226) came from an almost identical number of observers (74) covering a comparable number of sites (96), but unlike the westerly bias of Fieldfare sightings, Redwings were much more evenly distributed at sites across the county (35 W Berks, 24 M Berks and 37 E Berks). **First Winter:** the highest count at the end of 2003 had been 60 but larger groups immediately became apparent at the outset of 2004 with three-figure flocks at Carters Hill, Shinfield and Tilehurst on Jan 1st. In the former of these two flocks, DJB noted an individual with white head and wings. Seven locations held flocks that exceeded 100 birds, the largest being c200 at Walbury Hill Feb 3rd (LS) and 200+ at Wargrave Mar 12th (DJB). By April most birds had departed north, however 6 sites still held small numbers during the month with 40 (several heard singing) at Padworth Lane GP Apr 3rd (JA) the largest flock. The latest birds remained into late April with 4 at Burghfield Mill GP Apr 27th (TBa). **Summer:** an exceptional record of an adult (with the 2nd to 5th primaries missing) trapped and ringed at Wraysbury GPs Jun 26th (RRG) is the first ever June record for Berkshire. **Autumn:** the first returns involved 3 birds over Freeman's Marsh Sep 25th (JBut), then Oct 1st with 3 at Greenham Com (JC) and 7 flying west over Cookham Rise (DJB). There was notable westerly movement over the next 10 days or so with groups of up to 65 moving through, larger counts being 326 (260 between 1400–1430hrs) at Windsor Great Pk on 8th (CDRH) and 250+ over Thatcham Marsh on 9th (RRK). A further influx took place at the end of October, 200 nr Chaddleworth on 31st (TPo) being the largest count. **Second Winter:** once settled in the county, the largest flocks were generally of 100 or less, although 150 gathered at Winkfield Dec 3rd (WAS), 200 fed on hawthorn hedges at Denford Park Dec 27th (RDW; RGS) with flocks of 120 at Cockmarsh (WAS) and 300 at Cow Down Dec 30th (JL). Only three reports indicated presence of Fieldfares amongst the Redwings. Previous experience with winter thrushes indicate that, in mild winters, mixed flocks would be regularly found on farmland, while colder winters seemed to drive Redwings into woodland, where Fieldfares were less inclined to venture.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident although there are signs of a recent decline.

AMBER LISTED

The Amber-listed 'Storm Cock' was reported from just 59 widespread locations, by 37 observers, so clearly somewhat under-recorded. **First Winter:** only ones and twos, in gardens and paddocks, were reported in Jan, but 12 were together on Smiths Lawn Feb 9th (DJW) and 10 on Wildmoor Heath Feb 23rd (BMA). **Breeding:** a couple of fighting individuals at Hells Corner Fm Mar 15th (LS) signified commencement of territorial hostilities and indeed a nest was later found on Apr 9th followed by a family party on May 15th. Adults were seen gathering food at Hoshill Lake Apr 11th by SAG who also saw a juv at Bowdown Wood May 22nd. **Late Summer:** post-breeding gatherings included 42 together at Greenham Com Jul 14th (CDRH), 10 at Tickleback Row Jul 15th (BDC), 12 at Hells Corner Fm Jul 18th (LS) and 10 at Summerleaze GP Aug 10th (BDC). **Second Winter:** Snelmore Com held a group of 17 Sep 25th (RAH), increasing to 20 by Oct 2nd (BJW). Then 35 (together, on Poet's Lawn) at Windsor Great Pk Oct 5th (CDRH) transpired to be the largest gathering for this season, which concluded with four accounts of singing birds at Hells Corner Fm Nov 8th (LS), Gardners Green Nov 28th (BMA), Brompton Dec 15th (GEW) and Cookham on Boxing Day (BDC).

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Localised resident in small numbers

SCHEDULE 1

Up to 34 singing birds were reported from 15 sites, with Thatcham Marsh once again providing the highest number with 9 Apr 10th (IW,JL). No reports from East Berks this year but a singing male was present at Dinton Pastures CP March – October (MO). All other records came from the Kennet Valley. **Breeding:** an adult was observed feeding 4 y at Southcote Lock July 4th (JA) and 2 juvs were ringed at Thatcham Marsh July 4th and 3 more juvs were ringed July 18th (NRG).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant which has declined in recent years

RED LISTED

Spring: first arrival was one by the R Loddon nr Lavell's Lake LNR on Apr 17th (MFW,TOA) which remained until 23rd (MO) followed by one at Jealott's Hill Apr 20th (PJC). Other spring records came from Theale Main GP - one Apr 23rd (RA), Eversley GPs - one Apr 25th & 26th (RJG,NG,GR), Freemens Marsh - one Apr 28th (RF), Kintbury Cress Beds - 2 Apr 28th (LS), Chamberhouse Marsh - one May 1st (ACJ) & 27th (CDRH), Burghfield GPs - one May 3rd (JA), Bracknell STW - one May 10th-20th (DJB), Hosehill Lake - one May 12th-22nd (KEM, KS, RCr *et al*) with possibly a different bird there May 28th (BU), and one along the K&A canal at Theale May 12th (RF). Although some birds remained for a week or more none remained for the summer, the only June record being one reeling on farmland at Englefield on 6th (RHS, RCr). **Autumn:** four records, a juv ringed at Thatcham Marsh Aug 22nd (IW,NRG) was followed by 1 at Brimpton on Aug 29th (GEW) and 2 birds were ringed at Wraysbury GPs, 1 on Sep 9th and 1 on Sep 22nd (RRG).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

An early returning bird was at Hosehill Lake Mar 23rd (RJB) with 2 there on 31st (BU), 3 Apr 3rd (KS) and 4 on 7th (RJB). Elsewhere singles were at Bray GPs Apr 1st (WAS), Thatcham Marsh on 4th (IW,JL), Moatlands GP on 6th (WB) and 2 at Pingewood GPs on 7th (RJB). Common and widespread throughout the summer with double-figure counts coming from Dinton Pastures CP (10 Apr 20th, RRI), Wraysbury GPs (20 Apr 23rd, JOB), Dorney W (10+ Apr 25th, JOB), the K & A canal between Hamstead Lock and Dreweats Lock (11 singing May 31st, IW), Hosehill Lake (14 singing Apr 26th, RCr) and Thatcham Marsh where 32 were present May 1st (IW,JL). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 7 locations, a pr with y found in oil-seed rape at Brightwalton Com on Jun 20th (GDS) being the most unusual. Late birds were at Wraysbury GPs (RRG) and Englefield (RCr) on Sep 18th, Thatcham Marsh Sep 19th (ringed, NRG), Dorney W Sep 26th (SP) and finally 1 was at Hosehill Lake Oct 4th & 7th (BU).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

Singles at Hosehill Lake Apr 16th (BU), Arthur Jacob NR (CDRH) and Horton GP the same day (WAS) were the first arrivals, followed by 3 at Brimpton GP Apr 17th (GEW) and singles at Denford Park on 18th (RDW,RGS) and Burghfield Mill on 19th (RCr). Thatcham Marsh once again proved to be the stronghold for this species in the county with 17 there May 1st (IW; JL). Other sites holding good numbers were Brimpton GP (12 May 8th, GEW), Lavell's Lake LNR (10 May 29th, 12 Aug 26th, TOA), Hosehill Lake (10 May 10th, MJT), Dorney W (10 Aug 4th, JOB) and Moatlands GP (10 Aug 8th which consisted of 4 or 5 prs feeding y, JA). Breeding was also reported from Brimpton GP (GEW), Dorney W (JOB; CRE), Great Meadow Pond (RRG), Thatcham Marsh (IW) and Lower Fm GP (MO). Late September records involved one ringed at Woolhampton GP on 28th (JPM) and, finally, 1 was present at Dorney W on 30th (BDC).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer migrant, and uncommon but regular winter visitor

First Winter: reported from 22 sites in January and 16 sites in February, mostly from gardens. In January records consisted of 21 males, 13 females and 2 unspecified, whilst in February the totals were 16 males, 9 females and 3 unspecified.

Summer: distinguishing new arrivals from lingering winter visitors is always a problem and this year was no exception, especially as some wintering birds are prone to burst into song during decent weather. Contenders for first returning summer migrants are birds singing at Marsh Meadow Mar 22nd (BDC), 2 males at Wokingham SF Mar 23rd (DJB) and one at Burghfield GPs Mar 24th where there were 6 singing by Mar 31st (RCr). Widely reported from April onwards with highest counts being 25 singing males at Burghfield GPs Apr 9th (RCr) and 26 there May 10th (RCr), 30 at Wraybury GPs Apr 23rd (JOB), 15 at Boxford Com Apr 27th (JL) and 25 at Lavell's Lake LNR Aug 26th (TOA). Survey work in East Berks by DJB revealed 99 territories, 40 in Windsor Forest, 31 in Swinley Park and 28 in Swinley Forest and c15 territories were located at Eversley GPs (MGLR).

Second Winter: a female at Bray GPs Nov 2nd (CDRH) may have been a late autumn bird as there was no more records until 14th when one was at Theale Main Pit (KEM). Sporadic records were received for mid-November with a flurry in the last 4 days consisting of 12 birds at 9 sites. In December reports came from 25 sites and consisted of 20 males, 12 females and 16 unspecified, including a remarkable 12 at Turners Drive, Thatcham Dec 23rd (GJS).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First arrivals were at Moatlands GP Apr 18th (JA) and Theale Main Pit the same day (KS), closely followed by singles at Aldermaston GP (JPM) and Dinton Pastures CP (PMC) on 19th, and also 2 at Eversley GPs (NG). Reported from 41 locations throughout the summer with highest counts coming from Burghfield GPs where 16 singing males were heard May 10th (RCr), and DJB's survey in Swinley Forest revealed 27 territories and there were at least 15 territories at Eversley GPs (MGLR). Specific breeding records came from Dinton Pastures CP where a pr was collecting food May 27th (SDi), Thames Valley Park where an adult and juvs were seen June 14th (SDi), and Tickleback Row where 2 adults and 4 juvs were located July 15th (BDC). Several September records consisted of

birds being seen at Wraysbury GPs on 6 dates to Sep 15th (RRG) and singles at Wraysbury GPs on 8th (WAS), Compton Downs also on 8th (ABT), Brimpton on 19th (GEW) and finally at Theale Main Pit on 23rd (RJB).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant which has shown signs of a decline in recent years

First arrivals were at Brimpton GP (GEW) and Pingewood GPs (KEM) on Apr 17th, then 1 at Jealott's Hill Apr 19th (PJC), birds were present at a further 8 locations in April. **May/June:** reported from 42 sites, with song heard from at least 33 of these. Most records involved 1 or 2 birds, but 3 were reported from Wokingham SF (2 singing: DJB), Twyford GPs (3 singing: BTB) and Theale Main GP (3 singing: RAD). **Breeding:** the only records received were of a family party at Malt Hill Warfield on Jun 20th (BDC) and an adult with 4 juvs at Brimpton on Jun 30th (GEW). Most birds had departed by end of August but there were 3 September records away from Wraysbury GPs, these being singles at Jealott's Hill on 2nd (PJC), Moatlands GP on 5th (JA) and Burghfield GPs on 19th (JA). At Wraysbury GPs 35 (more than twice as many as in 2003) birds were ringed and 1 re-trapped from May to Sep (RRG). Most birds were caught in Aug (14) and Sep (13) the latest dates being 2 on Sep 25th and 1 on Sep 27th (RRG).

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Singing birds at Wraysbury Scrub (BAJC) and Main Pit, Theale (RAD) Apr 13th preceded a flurry of records in the following few days with birds reported from Englefield, Eversley GPs, Brimpton, Jubilee River, Pingewood GPs, Lavell's Lake LNR, Burghfield Mill and Dorney W. By Apr 23rd 20 were at Wraysbury GPs (JOB) and in the summer double-figure counts consisted of 15 at Eversley GPs May 2nd (BMA), 15 at Lambourn May 6th (JD), 14 at Dorney W May 16th (BDC), 14 singing between Westley Mill and Newell Green May 24th (BDC) and 12 at Stanford Dingley June 9th (BAJC). Survey work by DJB at Swinley Forest revealed 25 singing males/territories. Autumn counts included 11 at Southcote July 4th (JA), 12 at Englefield Aug 21st (RCr) and 16 at Compton Downs Aug 28th (DJB). Records continued into September, the last being singles at Burnthouse Lane on 23rd (RJB) and Bury Down on 26th (DJB).

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Resident in small numbers in suitable habitat, rare away from breeding sites

SCHEDULE 1 and
AMBER LISTED

As in 2003, records were received from 6 locations, all but one in E Berks. **West Berks:** birds were again resident on Greenham Com with singles noted on Jan 4th (JLS), Feb 9th (GEW) and Feb 19th (JPM). Three singing males were noted on Mar 27th (MO) and could still be found on Apr 26th (JC). The first signs of breeding occurred in May when 1 was seen carrying food on May 22nd (ABT). Two territories were still occupied on June 7 (NC) but it was not until September that successful breeding was confirmed when a male was feeding 1juv on Sep 3rd (DJB). Birds remained on the common into the winter with 2 on Oct 7th (RF), 3 Nov 7th (RF) and Nov 24th (TPo). **East Berks:** most reports came from Swinley Forest and Wildmoor Heath, **First Winter:** in Swinley Forest, 6 were present on Wishmoor Bottom on Jan 4th (DJB) with 5 there and 3 on neighbouring

Broadmoor Bottom on Jan 18th (DJB). Three were noted on 2 dates in the Wishmoor area in Feb before numbers increased in March with 8 in Wishmoor and a further 2 prs in Broadmoor on Mar 28th (DJB). At Wildmoor Heath, the largest counts were 6 on Jan 18th (BMA) and 5 on Mar 5th (DJB). Elsewhere an imm male was ringed at Wellington College Heath on Jan 18th (RRG) with at least 3 present there during March (RRG) and a pr was at Swinley Brickpits on Mar 5th (DJB) but not subsequently. **Summer/breeding:** once again this species was surveyed but numbers were well down on 2003. In Swinley Forest only 12-13 territories could be found, 10 in Wishmoor and 2-3 in Broadmoor. Breeding was confirmed in both areas with 1 pr feeding y at Wishmoor on May 23rd and 3 family parties involving at least 6 juvs on Aug 17th (DJB) whilst in Broadmoor a pr with 3 juvs was seen on Jul 13th (DJB). At Caesars Camp the only spring record involved a calling bird on Apr 9th (DJB) this was probably due to the poor management of the site (a large proportion of the heath being mown to remove scrub in late winter). At Wildmoor Heath, a catastrophic fire on Apr 16th destroyed most of the heathland and only 3 territories could be located after the event. However breeding did occur, a pr with 2 juvs seen on Jul 20th (KC). **Second Winter:** birds had returned to Caesars Camp from August (a wandering juv on the 15th: CRW) and 1-2 could be found there into Oct with a group of 4 there on Oct 30th (WAN). At Wishmoor, up to 4 were noted on several dates to the years end and single birds were reported from Wildmoor Heath during Oct-Dec and on Wellington College Heath on Dec 30th (DJS). Away from the heaths, a f/w appeared at Bray Field Fm on Nov 2nd (CDRH).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce and declining passage migrant and summer visitor

AMBER LISTED

Just a single record – one at Windsor Great Park on May 1st (CL). The second worst year ever for this species after 2002 when there were no records.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor

First Winter: in January reported from 14 sites involving 28 birds with most sightings being of 1-3 birds, exceptions being 7 at Burghfield GPs on 4th (RAD) and 5 at Wraysbury GPs on 19th (FCC) & 24th (WG). In February 26 birds were reported from nine sites, with 7 at Wraysbury GPs on the 4th (WAS) and 4 there including 1 of an eastern race, either *abietinus* or *tristis* (not heard to call), on Feb 15th (CDRH) and 12 at Burghfield GPs (including a flock of 8!) on 10th (RAD) which is the second highest winter count recorded in Berks, after 13 at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 28th 1984. **Summer:** as always, it's difficult to determine new arrivals from over-wintering birds but 1 at Woolhampton GP Feb 28th (MFW) may be a contender for first arrival as no other had been reported there in Jan/Feb. By Mar 7th many birds were singing, e.g. 5 at Moatlands GP (RCr), with others reported from Thatcham Marsh, Burghfield GPs, Burghfield Mill, Bottom Lane, Theale, and Wraysbury GPs (MO). Highest counts received were 21 singing at Burghfield GPs Mar 31st & Apr 9th (RCr), 50+ at Aldermaston GP Aug 25th (JPM), 50 Eversley GPs Sep 4th (GR) and 20 there Oct 2nd (IB), and 20 at Wraysbury GPs Sep 8th (WAS). An example of the Scandinavian race *P. c. abietinus* was closely observed, calling and in song, at Burghfield GPs on Mar 23rd & 25th (CDRH); in view of the scarcity of reports of this race in spring it is worth recording that it was distinctly grey-toned on the upperparts, with slightly greenish-olive fringes to the remiges and rectrices, and whitish on the underparts – with virtually no yellow tinges apart from on the supercilium; the

call was a sad “wiew” and the song, although composed of familiar “chiff-chaff” notes, had a more haphazard and unpredictable structure than British birds. Survey work by DJB in East Berks revealed 58 territories at Windsor Forest, 121 at Swinley Forest and 33 at Swinley Park. **Second Winter:** a succession of records through October and into November obscured the situation regarding late summer birds and new winter arrivals. In November 22 birds were reported from 14 sites and in December 24 birds were reported from 12 sites. Most records were of up to 3 birds but 4 were reported from Bottom Lane, Theale Dec 1st (KEM) and 4 were at Wraysbury GPs Nov 27th (CL) & Dec 15th when one of them was identified as being of the race *P. c. abietinus* (CDRH).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common and widespread summer visitor and passage migrant

AMBER LISTED

An early arrival was at Bray GPs Mar 21st (BDC) with next ones seen at Strand Water Mar 26th (BDC), Lavell's Lake LNR on 28th (caught & ringed, TOA), and Hosehill Lake on 29th (MR) and Theale Main Pit the same day (RCr). This species has undergone a noticeable decline in numbers in our area in recent years and this was emphasised by DJB's survey in East Berks where only 88 territories were located in 2004 compared to 147 the previous year. This decline was further underlined by the fact that apart from 20 at Wraysbury GPs Apr 23rd (JOB) no other double-figure counts were received. Most birds had departed by August but 1 was at Denford Park Sep 1st (RDW,RGS), 2 were at Eversley GPs Sep 15th (GH), 2 ringed Wraysbury GPs on Sep 22nd (RRG) and finally 1 was ringed at Woolhampton GP Sep 28th (JPM).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Widely reported throughout the year with many visiting gardens and several reported on peanut feeders. Most records were of up to 10 birds with higher counts being 10+ Thatcham Marsh Oct 3rd (NRG), 10+ Fifield Nov 27th (JOB), 11 Wraysbury GPs Jan 19th (FCC), 12+ Greenham Com Oct 16th (IW,JL), 16 Curridge Mar 19th (IW) and a massive 100+ estimated in a flock at Caesar's Camp Dec 12th with another similar sized flock nearby, *i.e.* possibly 200 in total (WAN). Specific breeding records came from Thatcham Marsh (RRK), Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen (LS) and Earley (MHo).

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: just one record of a bird at Moatlands GP Jan 12th (RAD). **Spring/summer:** sterling survey work of East Berks Woodlands by DJB revealed a Berkshire record of 73 territories spread through 6 woodland blocks, compared to 70 territories in 2003 and 46 in 2002 and represents nearly 26% of the known British population (British Birds, Volume 100). However a programme to remove all non-native conifers from this area, instigated by Natural England, will cause this population to decline and eventually disappear. Prs were confirmed at 17 territories and breeding was confirmed at 3* of these, 1pr feeding y in a nest in a Douglas Fir on Jun 3rd, 1pr feeding 4+ juvs on Jun 10th and 1 male feeding 2 juvs on Jun 19th and evidence of breeding (courtship/nest building) came from a further five territories. **Autumn/winter:** all records involved singles, at Hermitage on Aug 2nd (JBU), in a garden at Forest Park, Bracknell Sep 18th (TS), by Lavell's

Lake LNR on Nov 7th (AR), an adult male was ringed at Wellington College on Nov 11th (RRG), another in gardens off Coppermill Road, Wrayisbury Nov 13th (CDRH).

*Of only 5 confirmed breeding records for Great Britain in 2004 (British Birds), 3 came from Berkshire!

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Widespread but thinly distributed summer visitor and passage migrant which has declined in recent years. RED LISTED

Reported by 53 observers from 55 locations (13 in E. Berks, 12 in M. Berks and 30 in W. Berks), birds were first encountered on May 2nd at Hosehill Lake (JA; RRK) after which a trickle of individuals were recorded until May 11th when 3 were singing in Swinley Forest and 5 singing there May 20th including 3 at Caesars Camp (DJB). By the end of May birds had been recorded at 26 locations usually singly or in pairs. **Breeding:** survey work in SE Berks resulted in 16 territories located in Swinley Forest and 6 in both Swinley Pk and Windsor Forest (DJB). The first confirmed evidence of breeding was in the form of nest-building observed at Bottom Lane GP May 30th (RCr), and 2 more were seen at a nest in Streatley Jun 5th (SPA). Yet another pair was found nesting on top of a rose arch in MJT's Winterbourne garden during July, but the first juvs of the year were not reported until 3 being fed by 2 adults at Combe Jul 13th (CDRH) and was followed by 2 nr Bucklebury Common Jul 22nd (GDS) and a pr feeding 2 juvs at Bowdown Woods Jul 27th (CDRH). **Autumn:** by early August passage was already underway and, as birds can migrate in (family) groups, differentiating between migrant and locally bred birds can be problematic. Most records involved 1-4 birds, but, due to the strength of the passage this year there were 8 records of 6 or more birds, most including juvs. Six were located at Remenham Aug 2nd (ANS) then 12+ were noted at Streatley Aug 8th (JOB), 5 at Sonning Aug 15th (TOA) were thought to be a family party however numbers had increased to 9 there Aug 16th (SH). Six were located near Bishopsgate in Windsor Pk Aug 17th (CDRH), 11+ at Larden Chase Streatley Aug 31st (CDRH), 14 Combe Hill Sep 3rd (DJB) and 6 at Moor Copse Sep 5th (MR). The high counts on Aug 31st and Sep 3rd corresponded with a passage of Redstarts at these sites. The very last 2004 Flycatcher record was at South Lake, Woodley Sep 26th (DNTR), within 5 days of nine out of the last ten years' departure dates.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Scarce but annual passage migrant and rare summer visitor

After a run of poor years, the total of 6 possibly 7 birds makes 2004 the best year since 1989 when 8 birds were reported. **Spring:** began with a male at Whiteknights Park Apr 14th (P Gipson *et al*); less than annual in spring, this same site has attracted the species with amazing regularity (11 birds in spring since 1989). The next, also a male, was found at Theale Main GP Apr 16th (MRWS) and was seen by MO during its two-day stay. **Autumn:** began with a juv male ringed in East Berks Aug 7th (RRG) followed by a f/w at Prospect Park (another site to attract the species in previous years) Aug 13th (MJH, CDRH) with 2 there Aug 18th (MJH). Meanwhile another f/w turned up at Wishmoor Bottom Aug 17th (DJB), but it was MJH who saw the last, on Aug 30th, at Prospect Park.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce winter visitor and rare summer visitor

Some 200 years ago, this dramatic reedbed specialist was a resident species in Berkshire and has bred as recently as 1986 and 1987. In the last decade, birds have been found in 5 of the years, the most recent being a fine male which arrived at Burghfield Mill GP Dec 30th 2003 and obligingly stayed into 2004 when seen by MO during its extensive stay, and was last seen on Feb 23rd (BDC).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Widespread and common resident

Generally under reported as are most of our tit species. **First Winter:** widely reported, though with a predominance of records from East Berks, no specific large roaming group was reported in the early months, although c50 in 6 parties were located at Eversley GPs Jan 10th (BMA), 20 were at Dinton Pastures CP Jan 18th (LJF, MJF), 25 Wraybury GPs Jan 19th (FCC), 23 at Brimpton GP Jan 21st (GEW) and c20 at Thatcham Marsh Jan 25th (IW). Birds were reported feeding on peanuts and on fat balls. **Breeding:** an exceptionally early record involved a pr feeding young at a nest in a Cox Green garden on Feb 28th (DJW), 2 nests were found at Brimpton GP Mar 30th (GEW) and several prs were nesting in Denford Pk in April (RGD; RDW). Family parties were found at Tickleback Row (BDC), Brimpton (GEW), Newell Green (BDC), Eton (BDC) and the Jubilee River (BDC). **Second Winter:** few large flocks were reported, however 20 were at Dinton Pastures CP Sep 19th (MJM), 55 were counted in groups along the Jubilee River Oct 10th (BDC), 30+ in several flocks were noted at Muddy Lane GP Oct 12 (TPo) and 18 were in a mixed flock, with Blue tits at Thatcham Nov 7th (RRK).

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident

Widely reported, there were nonetheless no significant counts in the first winter, but birds were observed checking out nest boxes as early as Jan 23rd (TPo). An interesting individual with a curlew-shaped bill, some six times normal length, was seen by BDC in ADo's Cookham Dean garden where it had been a regular visitor for three years, always feeding from the side of the beak. Higher counts included 10 in DF's Maidenhead garden in February, 22 along the Jubilee River the same month (BDC) and 26 on Boxford Common in July (JL). **Breeding:** the first juvs were noted on May 27th in a Twyford garden (SPA) with 9 other family parties were reported during June, and a couple more in July. **Autumn:** groups were formed by the end of August when ABT observed no fewer than 166 mixed Blue and Great Tits traversing his garden in just a few minutes. Other September counts included 20 at Dinton Pastures CP whilst in October, 25 were in a flock alongside the Kennet and Avon Canal. November's highest count was 12 along York Stream Maidenhead, and December's comprised 39 birds at Quarry Wood, Cookham.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident

Counts of up to 8 were received from 38 sites with higher counts of 15 Windsor Great Pk Nov 4th (BDC), 21 in 2 groups at Quarry Wood Dec 19th (BDC) and 71 with other tit species at Wishmoor Cross Dec 12th (WAN). Nesting was first reported from Hell Corner Fm May 12th (LS) and the only brood counts submitted were each of 5 (SPA & BS).

One keen individual was recorded 'singing its head off' on Dec 30th (JLS), which bodes well for 2005. A total of 300 birds were ringing or re-trapped at 4 sites in E Berks by the RRG and 18 were recovered at Jealott's Hill and 14 birds ringed (HRG).

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common resident

Only 29 of the 270 observers supporting this annual report sent in records of this species, so doubtless there are many more Coal Tits out there. The larger counts included 20 Englemere Pond Jan 2nd (JOB), 15 at least, Gorrick Wood Plantation Jan 24th (BMA), 8 Maidenhead Thicket Mar 3rd (BDC) and 10 Marsh Benham & Hamstead Park area Nov 25th. But most of a huge flock of some 100 birds at Upper Star Post, Swinley Forest on Dec 12th were considered to be Coal Tits by WAN.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Uncommon and local resident now almost completely confined to West Berks RED LISTED

The 1987-89 Berkshire Tetrad Survey of breeding birds had found the Willow Tit to be present in 124 tetrads with confirmed breeding in 52 of these, east to Windsor Great Pk, how times have changed! In 2004 records were received from just 1 site in M Berks and 11 in W Berks and this is the second consecutive year that breeding has not been confirmed within the county. **First Winter:** single birds were noted at 5 locations in W Berks and 1 in M Berks (Bottom Lane, Theale on Feb 8th: JA). There were 2 at Bowdown Woods on Mar 6th and 4 were SE of Walbury Hill on Mar 8th (ABT). **Spring/summer:** most records came from the Combe area where this species is still present in the woodlands straddling the county boundaries with Hants and Wilts. Four pairs were on territories in Combe Wood in early spring (ACJ) and birds were noted at 4 locations in this area in July with 8+ seen Jul 19th (CDRH), compared to a high of 11 there last year. Elsewhere, 1 heard at Denford Pk Apr 6th with 3 ringed there Aug 31st (RGS; RDW) and 2 at Woolhampton GPs Aug 28th (IW; JL) were the only records. **Second Winter:** a wandering individual on



Willow Tit by Martin Hallam

Compton Downs Sep 9th (ABT) was followed by a rather vague report of 1 on the K&A Canal Oct 13th (J B Rix). Two were seen at Bottom Lane, Theale Nov 27th (KEM), 1 there Dec 31st (KEM; KS) and 1 was on Freeman's Marsh Nov 29th (RF).

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Locally common resident in West Berks, uncommon in Mid and East Berks where it has declined in recent years.

RED LISTED

Well recorded, with 128 reports from 33 observers, no less than 43 locations held Marsh Tits during the year, 4 in E. Berks, 8 in M. Berks and 31 in W. Berks, which is significantly down on the 60 sites of last year. The majority of reports (87) concerned single birds or 2 together (25), whilst 4 were recorded at Bowdown Wood 1st Apr (GEW), Combe Wood 15th Apr (DJB), Boxford Common 27th Apr (JL), Wash Common 12th Jun (AJT) and Speen Moor 30th Dec (JL). The highest count was 6 at Brimpton Mill 6th Aug (GEW).

Breeding: the only record received was of a pr feeding young at a nest hole at Hell Corner Fm May 25th (JLS). **Distribution:** the only sites to record birds in both winter seasons and the breeding period were Bottom Lane, Bowdown Wood, Hell Corner Fm, Hermitage, Marsh Benham, Wash Com and Woolhampton, whereas several sites seemed only to have birds during the breeding season, and many more just winter sightings. Whether this reflects observer site preferences or post-breeding dispersal is difficult to quantify. Whilst the preferred habitat of Marsh Tit is described as Oak and Beech woodland, the Willow Tits seeking damper, mixed woodland, the two species co-habited a number of Berkshire locations this year, including Combe Wood, Freeman's Marsh, Woolhampton GP (and GDS' bird feeder near Farnborough!)

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Widespread common resident

42 observers submitted 134 records encompassing 60 locations, fairly evenly spread with a slight bias to the east of the county. **Groups:** the highest count was 8 at South Forest Windsor Dec 31st (DJB). **Breeding:** a third of all records covered the breeding season but the only ones confirming nesting were of a pair applying mud to an old woodpecker's nest hole at Wildmoor Heath Mar 23rd (BMA), similar behaviour on Greenham Com Mar 29th (JPM) and nest building at Bowdown Wood Apr 4th (RRK). Only three reports concerned juveniles; a pr with 4 y at South Forest, Windsor June 10th (DJB), 3 juvs accompanying an adult at Swallowfield Church Jun 17th (DJB), and a survey of Swinley Pk from April to July located 17-19 prs and 5 family parties were located (DJB). **Other Records:** just 3 records mentioned birds at garden feeders. Elsewhere, 2 were part of a mixed flock of some 50 birds including several tit species, Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Chaffinch and Chiffchaff at Caesar's Camp Sep 15th (CRW).

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident

With only 97 records submitted by 37 observers, this species seems to elude many birdwatchers, although the sites concerned are spread across the county, albeit with an eastern bias (54 locations, 26 in E. Berks, 14 in M. Berks and 14 in W. Berks.) **First Winter:** about a third of all sightings came during this period, with only three records of 2 birds together, so perhaps they tend to be somewhat singular at this season. **Breeding:** an equal number of records covered the summer months, but even then, the majority

were still of single birds and no mention was made of anyone hearing the short but delightful song of this secretive bird. However, 2 accounts related to birds carrying food, but disappointingly, there were only two reports of confirmed breeding, comprising a pr with 4 y at Swallowfield on Jun 17th (DJB) and a family party at Burghfield on 27th (JLe). **Second Winter:** the final third of records came during the last 4 months, but with a higher percentage of twos and threes encountered, doubtless as a result of juvs swelling the numbers. Some were amid mixed flocks such as 2 amongst a flock of some 50 birds already mentioned in the Nuthatch account (CRW) and 2 in a tit flock at Dinton Pastures CP 29th Sep (ADB). JL had 4 together at Speen Moor Dec 30th. The overall picture indicates similar numbers at most sites throughout the year, reflecting the Treecreeper's somewhat sedentary reputation.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor

Since 1990 this striking bird had been encountered in all but 5 winters (95/96, 96/97, 97/98, 2000/01 and 01/02). All records during this period have been sightings of single birds, seven being in the Wishmoor area (possibly including some returning birds), though birds were at 3 different locations in 1995. So further records this year were welcome, the first proving to be a long-stayer on the Downs, which was found by J Cleeter Jan 18th, and was then reported from Cow Down/Bury Down for many weeks, being assessed by CDRH as probably a fem Feb 9th, and again on Apr 8th the last date that it was seen (CDRH). Then, on Oct 10th, one was found at Slough Sewage Farm (JOB *et al*) but the bird was extremely elusive due to the windy weather and could not be located the following day.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident and uncommon passage migrant

Jays tend to make themselves most obvious at three main times of the year; early spring when noisy groups vie for territory, late summer when family parties roam for food, and in autumn when individuals ply back and forth between sources of acorns and their secret stores. However, there were few records of spring groups, 4 in DF's Maidenhead garden Apr 17th and 3 at Dorney W Apr 19th (JOB) being the only contenders. **Breeding:** the only confirmed breeding accounts were of an adult with juv at Bowdown Wood Jun 9th (SAG), 2 adults feeding 2 juvs in VFo's garden in Twyford Jul 9th and another juv spotted at Bagnor Jul 27th whilst a mink paraded nearby (SAG). **Second Winter:** the largest groups were all of 10 individuals, at Wildmoor Heath on 18 Oct (BMA), Windsor Great Pk on Nov 5th (CRW) and Moatlands GP Nov 27th (KEM).

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant resident

Only 26 observers submitted counts, from a total of just 38 locations, but even then, some impressive gatherings were recorded. **First Winter:** up to 50 were seen regularly at South Hill Park during Jan/Feb (WAS) whilst the same number was reported at Slough SF Jan 25th (DJB). **Breeding:** a number of nests were reported but interesting observations included an adult consuming a duck's egg and another of a family feeding on windfall apples whilst harassing a stoat (both LS). **Second Winter:** several groups of 10 to 16 were noted, but the bigger mobs were 57 along one section of the Jubilee River in November and 32 still there in December (BDC).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant resident

Although only a few observers (24) entered information, there were some impressive day-time counts of this abundant corvid, despite the fact that no reports came in from Wraisbury and Bowdown where historic roosts have reached c5000 and c8000 respectively in years gone by. **First Winter:** 300 were at Jealott's Hill in January (PJC) and up to 400 were around Newbury in February (SAG). **Breeding:** there were no details of breeding submitted, but there was a macabre record of one that attempted to do so at Swallowfield Church and died, entangled in wire mesh installed to deter this (CRW). **Second Winter:** around 1000 were at Lavell's Lake/ Hurst Tip in June (SH) and 600 were at Waltham St Lawrence Aug 26th (NA). By 21st Sep, the numbers at Hurst Tip had swelled to some 2000 (FJC) whilst the next biggest flock was of 500 at West Woodhay 30th Nov (TPo).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident

Just 20 observers sent in records, mostly of groups, but few of any significant size. **First Winter:** only 5 flocks of double figures were reported, the largest being 70 at both Cookham Rise in January (BDC) and Chieveley in February (SAG). **Breeding:** nest counts came from just 7 rookeries, the biggest being 22 in one tree in Swallowfield in May (CRW). **Second Winter:** with youngsters increasing flock sizes, the bigger counts for the year not surprisingly came in this period. Nonetheless, there were only 3 three-figure counts, comprising 100 at Twyford GP 20th Oct (KCr), 200 at Thatcham on Dec 30th (BJE) and 500 in the West Woodhay area Nov 30th (TPo). Plenty of scope for observers to establish more about the status of this bird for future annual reports.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant resident

There were three times as many records for this species as for Rook and the majority were of ones and twos at diverse places, so there is something about the Crow which draws our attention. **First Winter:** the biggest gathering in this period was 100 at Cow Down Feb 18th (JOB). **Breeding:** obvious pairing was recorded from Mar 1st (RGS) and nests in use from early April. One, at Hell Corner Fm, seemed to have resulted in the previous occupants, a pair of Rooks, being displaced by the Crows (LS). The highest brood count noted was 4, and several family parties consisted of 3 juvs. The not-unusual feature of white in the wings of some individuals was commented upon by RF from both Thatcham and Lower Fm GP, but an interesting specimen found by CDRH at Hurst Tip on Mar 23rd was a leucistic bird, mid-brown all over. It was still present Apr 28th (MFW). **Second Winter:** no counts above double figures were submitted for this period.

CORVIDS

The only large counts of mixed corvids were 5000 at Greenham Com Jan 16th comprising a pre-roost assembly of Jackdaws and Rooks (GEW) with 8000 there Jan 21st (GEW).

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce but increasing visitor (breeds in Wiltshire)

The sharp rise in records of this magnificent bird in 2003 (25), following several years of between zero and 8 sightings, continued this year with 26 accounts, often of 2 birds

together. All but two of the records came from the western extremities of the county. The 'traditional' site, Walbury and Combe featured in 7 of these but no fewer than 12 reports came from the Farnborough and Woolley Downs area, possibly indicating a second pair. Records came in every month of the year except for May and June. **First Winter:** 2 were recorded in the Woolley/Farnborough Downs area Jan 17th, Mar 6th and 31st, whilst singles were in the same location Feb 14th, Mar 9th & 18th and Apr 1st (all GDS). Meanwhile, 2 were at Hamstead Marshall Feb 22nd (JOB). An intriguing feature of the Mar 6th record was that one of the birds was observed carrying nest material, or possibly food, from Woolley Down towards Farnborough Down, while being mobbed by Kites. **Spring/Summer:** during this period, most records were from the area south of the A4 around Walbury. 1 was over Brickkiln Copse on Apr 8th (ACJo) and the same observer saw one over Combe Wood four days later. RGS and RDW had 1 high over Denford Pk on Apr 30th whilst 2 birds were seen over a 2-hour period between Walbury Hill and Combe Hill 19th Jul (CDRH) and 2 were perched near the Gibbet Aug 1st (SAG). At no time during the breeding season were more than 2 birds seen together. **Second Winter:** 1 was over Walbury Hill Aug 28th (CDRH) and possibly the same bird was seen over neighbouring Combe Hill Sep 3rd (DJB) and another Dec 11th (CRE) whilst most of the remaining records for the year came from GDS who had singles in the Woolley and Farnborough Downs area Oct 1st, Nov 6th, 14th and 21st and Dec 31st. There was 1 however over Snelmore Com Dec 24th (SWi).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident and winter visitor, formerly abundant

RED LISTED

Reported widely across the county, and with groups in double figures from several locations, the larger gatherings in the first winter were of 100 East Garston Mar 14th (ABT), 100 Bray GPs 21st Mar (BDC) and 150 at White Waltham Mar 15th (BDC). **Breeding:** the first date that juvs were reported was May 19th (SPA) and, despite their proclivity to gather in large crèches in summertime, the largest such murmuration noted was just 27 at Earley Jun 13th (MSFW). **Second Winter:** by the end of September, SPA was seeing around 100 in a Twyford garden but it was not until Oct 2nd that the larger flocks formed with 2250 at Brightwalton Com (GDS), followed by 3000 at Thatcham on Oct 10th (JW), by which time many could have been Continental immigrants. 600 were counted at Sheepdrove Fm Lambourn on Oct 16th (BDC) and by the 26th of the same month, the regular Brimpton winter roost had reached an impressive 4000 birds (GEW). By Nov 11th this had extended to 10000 birds which will have been a real spectacle for GEW. The only other large flock in this period was one of 1000 birds at Bucklebury Nov 29th (WB).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident

RED LISTED

Records came from just over 30 sites across the county, fewer than in previous years, which may reflect the continuing slow decline of this species but many of the sightings were of flocks of over 10 birds. Sightings came from each month of the year with the highest counts being 30+ in Thatcham Aug 23rd (BJE), 40 at Lamsdens Fm Theale Sep 19th (ABT), 50+ at Hall Fm Arborfield Oct 16th (DJB) and 95 birds in 8 groups in the Cookham area Oct 17th (BDC). Groups of 30 birds were noted near Lower Fm GP Dec 4th (BDC) and in a Calcot garden Dec 11th (DMc) with 46 in a Cookham garden on Christmas Day (BDC). A Pinkneys Green garden had birds throughout the year peaking at 20 Jul 31st (MJF,

LJF). Evidence of breeding success came from a Cookham garden where 5 pairs with 14 young were seen Jun 26th (BDC). The BOC Garden Bird Survey for the summer period showed House Sparrows present in almost all gardens surveyed, which would appear to be reassuring news, while the BTO BBS only showed them in just over half of the squares across the county (remaining unchanged from previous years). The difference probably reflects the affinity this bird has for human habitation and gardens where feeding takes place.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Formerly a not uncommon resident, now a rare and declining visitor

RED LISTED

As in recent years there were no summer records and only 2 records during the year. Single birds were reported from Cookham Rise Jan 1st (CDRH) where the bird was flushed by a gamekeeper and another was at Dorney W Sep 4th where the bird was seen to fly from the south bank near the weir towards Slough SF (CRe).

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Most of the highest counts came from the first winter period, with the largest flock of 400 at Maidenhead Court Feb 10th (LJF). Other large flocks included 150+ at Hall Fm Arborfield Jan 12th (DJB), 150 in fields at Finchampstead Jan 22nd (NG) with c100 still present Jan 27th (BMA), 200 at White Place Fm Cookham Feb 10th (BDC), 100+ Combe Hill Feb 15th (IW) still present Mar 8th (ABT) and c200 at Douai Abbey nr Woolhampton Mar 19th (GEW). **Second Winter:** counts included c200 passing WNW over Windsor Great Pk Oct 8th (CDRH) and 300+ there (with a few Bramblings) near Blacknest Gate Dec 20th (CDRH) and c200 at Shottesbrooke Pk Nov 28th (BDC). Of interest was an aberrant male bird with an almost all white head which was reported from Cookham Dean Mar 22nd (ADo, BDC). Garden records included regular birds in a Twyford garden where numbers peaked at 37 Mar 10th (SPA). Present and regular in almost all gardens, according to the BOC Garden Bird Survey for the summer period, and similarly in almost all the squares of the BTO BBS, reflecting the continued success of this species in a variety of habitats.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor commoner in some years than in others

First winter/Spring passage: recorded quite widely across the county for the first 4 months of the year, with most reports being of single birds or small flocks (up to 10). Larger counts involved 43 at Combe Jan 2nd (DR), 86+ at Remenham Jan 6th (CDRH), 40-50 at Hall Fm Arborfield Mar 3rd (MRWS), 120+ near Walbury Hill Mar 8th (ABT) and of the 18 gardens where this species was reported the highest counts came from Twyford where numbers peaked at c50 Mar 21st (SPA) and Bracknell with 20 on Apr 11th (WAN). The regular passage through Swinley Forest in spring was disappointing this year, resulting in peak counts of 85+ in the Wishmoor-Surrey Hill area Apr 16th (DJB) and c50 at Caesars Camp Apr 17th (WAN). Elsewhere 20 were noted at Combe Apr 12th (ACJ) and 22 at Wraysbury GPs Apr 14th (CDRH). A male was in full song at Hosehill Lake Apr 3rd (KEM) and of 24 birds ringed at Jealott's Hill one was found to be carrying a Norwegian ring (HRG). The latest report was of 3 birds in Swinley Forest May 3rd (DJB).

Autumn/Second Winter: there were relatively few records from this period of the year with the earliest record a single bird with Redpoll and Chaffinches at Wishmoor Bottom Nov 1st (CRW), where flocks of up to c20 were reported on a few dates in Nov and Dec (PJC, WAN, PMC). Other records included 5 over Hermitage Nov 29th (CDRH), 4 at Caesar's Camp Dec 8th (NG); 6 in Windsor Great Pk Dec 20th (CDRH; WAS) and singles in a Tilehurst garden Dec 26th (MH) and at Eversley GPs Dec 28th (MGLR).

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common, widespread resident and winter visitor

Recorded in all months from locations across the county, but due to its abundance almost certainly under reported. **First Winter:** most notable was a flock of 70+ at Dinton Pastures CP Feb 1st (MJF, LJF), while 20 were at Widbrook Com that day (BDC). **Second Winter:** later in the year c50 were at Compton Downs Aug 6th (CRW); 31 in a Tilehurst garden Sep 10th (JLe); 24 at Lavell's Lake LNR Oct 7th (MFW); c60 in a Brimpton garden Dec 3rd (GEW) and the largest flock of the year contained 81birds at Eversley GPs on Dec 31st (MGLR). The BOC Garden Bird Survey for the summer period had almost all gardens recording visits by Greenfinches, pretty much unchanged from previous years indicating a stable population, which looks to be consistent with other surveys including the BTO Garden Bird Watch and the BTO BBS survey (which showed the bird present during the breeding season in over 75% of the surveyed squares). However the large flocks that were once fairly regularly encountered during the winter months do seem to be a thing of the past.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread resident

Widely reported with records from all months, but mostly from the two winter periods. Interestingly, most of the larger gatherings came from the later part of the year. **First Winter:** largest flock was 75+ at Cookham Rise Jan 12th (DJB) and 60+ at Field Fm GP on the same date (RCr), with flocks of c30 birds at Kintbury Jan 2nd (DR); Dorney W Jan 8th (JOB), nr Curridge Jan 20th (IW), Crookham Com Feb 23rd (JPM) and Bray GPs Mar 3rd (RAn). **Breeding:** family groups and juvs were reported from early June through July, with a late juv reported in Crowthorne Oct 21st (BMA) possibly the result of a third brood. Post breeding flocks were reported from late August with c175 including many juvs at Field Fm GP Aug 21st (DJB), with 115 reported from the same area Aug 30th (RCr, JA), while at Eversley GPs a flock of c100 including many juvs was present Aug 24th (CRW). **Autumn/Second Winter:** later in the year, two flocks totalling 250 birds were at Greenham Com Sep 3rd (DJB), where a flock of 100 was again reported Sep 9th (ABT) and a similar number there in a mixed flock with Linnets Sep 30th (TPo). Winter flocks included 200 at Eversley GPs Dec 5th (NG); with c50 there Dec 8th (BMA), Bray GPs Dec 14th (DJB) and at Speen Moor Dec 30th (JL). Goldfinches are recorded in about 70% of all gardens which take part in the BOC Garden Bird Survey in summer, which has not changed greatly over the years. This is generally consistent with the BTO Garden Bird Watch and BBS surveys which both point to stability of the Goldfinch population in Berkshire.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor

First Winter: sightings of good sized flocks came from various sites around the county with counts exceeding 35 at Dinton Pastures CP, c70 Jan 2nd (RRi), 50+ at Bottom Lane, Theale Jan 10th (RCr) increasing to 100 Jan 15th (RJB), 50 at Eversley GPs Jan 10th (BMA) with 200+ there Jan 23rd (DJB), 75 at Thatcham Marsh Jan 25th (IW; JL) increasing to c100 Feb 14th (DJB); up to 40 regularly visited BMA's Crowthorne garden during Feb, 40 Burghfield GPs Feb 21st (RJB), c50 Englemere Pond Mar 5th (DJB) and 40 in Tilehurst Mar 12th (GJSu). **Spring passage:** was most evident from late March into April especially in SE Berks, where 54 were present at Swinley Brickpits (DJB) and 50 at Caesars Camp (WAN) Mar 27th and 100+ incl 4 singing males were noted at Wishmoor Mar 28th (DJB). A more thorough check of the Swinley Forest area located a total of 300+ birds Apr 16th (DJB). **Summer:** breeding success in the county was indicated by sightings around SE Berks, with a family party with 5 juvs in Swinley Forest May 20th and a pair with 4 juvs at Swinley Pk Jun 19th (DJB). Away from SE Berks, the only other sighting during this period was of a pair feeding on sunflower seeds in a Twyford garden May 15th (SPA). **Second Winter:** migrants were first noted in mid Oct with 1 over Windsor Great Pk on 8th (CDRH) and 1 over Bottom Lane, Theale on 10th (JA). Numbers were slow to build and the only flocks of any size involved 30 at Shepherd Meadows on Oct 31st (DJS), 40 at Wishmoor Bottom Nov 26th (DJS) and 50 at Thatcham Marsh Dec 12th (JL).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Locally and thinly distributed resident more widespread and common on passage and in winter has declined in recent year

RED LISTED

Widely reported from around the county throughout the year. **First Winter:** large flocks were reported from Hamstead Holt Fm, Kintbury with 105 Jan 1st (DR), 100 on Compton Downs Jan 4th (ABT), 140 White Place Fm, Cookham Feb 1st (BDC) and at Strand Water, numbers grew from 125 on Mar 2nd (BDC) to c150 by Mar 24th (BAJC). The largest flock reported was an impressive c600 at Farnborough Apr 8th (CDRH). **Spring/summer:** there were few records to confirm breeding, although it is a fair assumption that they bred successfully across the county in suitable habitat. Examples were a pair gathering nest material at Lower Fm GP May 1st (SAG) and family parties at Summerleaze GP Jul 4th (BDC) and West End, Waltham St Lawrence Jul 9th (BDC). **Autumn/Second Winter:** post breeding gatherings started to be recorded in early August with 30 at Cow Down Aug 4th (SAG); 42 at Lowbury Hill Aug 6th, 100+ at White Waltham Airfield Aug 18th (DJB) and 100+ at Greenham Com Sep 9th (ABT). Four large counts were reported in mid October and may refer to an influx of migrants, these were c170 at Brightwalton Com Oct 10th (GDS), 155 Cookham Rise (DJB) and 120 Bury Down (SAG) Oct 15th and c100 at Eton Oct 22nd (DJB). After this period flock sizes were generally smaller, the exceptions being 122 at Englefield Nov 14th (RCr) and c100 at Eversley GPs Nov 21st (BMA).

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor formerly a sporadic breeder AMBER LISTED

Fairly widely reported from suitable habitats during winter periods with most records from the first winter. With no records between mid May and late October there was no evidence of breeding, although singing birds were reported from Wishmoor Apr 15th (JA)

and Bucklebury Com Apr 24th (NC). **First Winter:** there were flocks of 25 at Dinton Pastures CP Jan 22nd (RR), 36 at Eversley GPs Jan 23rd (DJB); 30+ at Bottom Lane GP Theale Jan 25th (KEM) and c30 at Wigmore Lane GP Theale Feb 22nd (MRWS). **Spring passage:** this was most evident in Swinley Forest where numbers increased from mid April when 150+ could be found in the Wishmoor-Surrey Hill area Apr 16th (DJB) to early May when 250+ were noted between Caesars Camp and the Devils Highway May 3rd (DJB) with the last reported May 11th (DJB). Elsewhere in SE Berks good numbers were present during this period at South Ascot and Swinley Pk. Finally 20 were at Hermitage Apr 16th (JBu). **Second Winter:** the earliest record came from Moatlands GP where a bird flew over Oct 24th (JA), while c20 were at Caesar's Camp Oct 30th (WAN) and two flocks totaling 200 birds were at Wishmoor Bottom Nov 1st (CRW). Elsewhere a flock of 15 were seen at Gorrick Wood Nov 11th (BMA) and c30 birds at Eversley GPs Dec 24th (BMA) and Dec 27th (RJG).

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

*Regular visitor in variable numbers (depending on the cone crop)
that occasionally breeds*

SCHEDULE 1

A relatively poor year for Crossbill sightings, with numbers well down, typical of a bird whose numbers vary very much from year to year. Records came from the first half of the year only. **First winter/Spring:** almost all sightings came from Swinley Forest, the largest counts there being 13 in the Hut Hill/Caesars Camp area Feb 20th and 19 in the Wishmoor area Feb 22nd (DJB). Elsewhere birds were reported from Englemere Pond, 1 male Mar 5th (DJB), 1m and several heard at Gorrick Wood Plantation Mar 18th (BMA), South Ascot, max of 7 Mar 27th (DJB) and Swinley Pk with a max of 10+ May 17th (DJB). **Summer:** no confirmation of breeding although song was heard on several dates in SE Berks, the latest reports from this area involved 12 in the Wishmoor/Surrey Hill area of Swinley Forest May 24th (DJB) and 1 over Wishmoor Jun 6th (DJB). Elsewhere the only record received (and the latest) involved 8 birds at Roundoak Piece nr Padworth Jun 21st (GEW).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Locally common though declining resident and occasional passage migrant

RED LISTED

Widespread throughout the year, with most sightings being single birds or pairs with occasional flocks of up to 8 birds. Largest flocks included 8 at Lavell's Lake LNR Jan 13th (JLS); 8 Wraybury GPs Jan 28th (RDr); 8 Bowdown Woods Mar 19th (ABT) and 8 Westley Mill Nov 3rd (KCr). A count of 10 scattered birds was received for Thatcham Marsh Feb 24th (TPo). **Breeding:** was reported from 4 locations, family parties were noted at Manor Fm Binfield Jun 7th and Jul 9th (BDC), a family party was at West End Jul 30th (BDC), 3 juvs Combe Hill Sep 3rd (DJB) and 1 pr with 1 juv Caesars Camp Sep 15th (CRW). The BTO BBS showed Bullfinches reported in around 30% of squares across the county, similar to previous years. Ringing operations in East Berks by the RRG resulted in 89 ringed/re-trapped at their sites.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Now a scarce winter visitor which may no longer be resident

AMBER LISTED

With no acceptable record this year, the future of this species as a Berkshire bird is bleak.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare winter visitor

For the second consecutive year a bird was located at QMR. This, a f/w female showed well Nov 8th (CDRH) and was followed by a record of 2 birds (1m, 1fem) at Inkpen Hill Nov 13th (HOS) to Nov 14th (MO) then just the male to the 16th (RAH). The longer than usual stay and the confiding nature of these birds as they fed around the gibbet guaranteed their popularity.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Declining but still a fairly common resident and winter visitor

RED LISTED

Seen throughout the year across the county, with W Berks providing about half of the records. **First Winter:** the largest flocks occurred on the Downs with 50+ on Compton Downs Jan 17th (DJB), c50 Bury Down Jan 24th (JLS), c70 at Trindledown Fm, Chaddleworth Feb 14th (DJB) and 42 SE of Walbury Hill Mar 8th (ABT). Elsewhere in the county there were flocks of c20 at Jealott's Hill Feb 25th (PJC) and nr Woolhampton GP Mar 11th (GEW), c30 Cold Harbour, Mar 29th (DJB) and Tidmarsh Apr 14th (JLe). **Breeding:** birds were present at 25 locations from Apr-Jul. but evidence of breeding only came from 2 localities, a fem carrying food nr Brimpton Jul 1st (GEW) and a pair with 2 juvs nr Donnington Jul 24th (RAH). **Second Winter:** flocks began to form in September with 20 at Bury Down on 26th (DJB). Larger flocks were not encountered until end Oct when 65 were on Compton Downs Oct 30th (DJB), numbers increased near Cookham Rise from 20 Nov 25th to 60 on Dec 13th (BDC). The largest flock was at Chieveley where 150+ birds were feeding on stubble Dec 13th (CDRH) and finally 34 were at Cow Down Dec 22nd (TGB).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Locally common but declining resident and passage migrant

RED LISTED

Well recorded at sites evenly spread across the county, mainly of single birds or pairs where suitable wetland habitat is found. Some larger flocks were seen outside of the breeding season, when birds can be seen in a variety of habitats. **First Winter:** a few small flocks were seen with 20 Woolhampton GP Jan 4th (ABT); 14 in reedbeds at Brimpton GP Feb 11th (JPM); 10 at Jubilee River (BDC) and 20+ Jealott's Hill (PJC) both Feb 25th, 10+ at Moatlands GP and 10 Pingewood GPs Mar 19th (ABT) and finally 13 at Lambourn on the late date of Apr 10th (JD). **Breeding:** records came from 29 locations from April to July. Breeding was confirmed at Eversley GPs where a pr with 2 juvs was seen on Aug 30th (BMA) and at Wraysbury GPs (RRG). Elsewhere the only evidence of breeding apart from singing males involved a pair gathering nest material at Lower Fm GP Apr 20th (SAG). Of interest up to 9 singing males were located in crops between Strand Water and Summerleaze GP Jul 4th (BDC). **Second Winter:** on farmland at Englefield birds started to gather in Aug with 14 on 21st before peaking at 59 on Nov 14th decreasing to 26 on Dec 5th (RCr), while at Long Lane, Cookham Rise numbers grew from 20 Nov 19th to 51 by Dec 13th (BDC). There were counts of 17 at feeders at Brimpton GP Nov 23rd (JPM), 15 (9 ringed) at Thatcham Marsh Dec 12th (JL) and 25+ at Hosehill Lake Dec 24th (BU). 36 (twice as many as in 2003) were ringed at one site during the year by the RRG and 5 were ringed at Brimpton GP Mar 23rd (JPM). Garden records involved a pair at Maidenhead Court Feb 10 (DF), 4 to feeders at Earley Mar 3rd (MSFW) and 1 in Thatcham Apr 10th (RRK).

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Locally common resident on the downs of West Berks, seriously declining elsewhere in the county due to modern farming practices.

RED LISTED

Recorded from 16 locations, mostly from W Berks Downs. **First Winter:** good numbers were reported from the Downs with 112 on Compton Downs Jan 17th (DJB), a max count of c200 on the gallops north of West Ilsley Jan 24th (JOB) with 110 still present Feb 9th (CDRH) and in the Sheepdrove area the large flock reported in Dec 2003 had increased to over 250 birds Jan 24th (ABT). Elsewhere 23 were on Farnborough Down Jan 2nd with 10 still present there Mar 31st (GDS) and in E Berks numbers peaked at 7 at Dorney W Jan 29th (JOB). **Spring/breeding:** birds were reported from 8 areas. In West Berks small numbers were reported from Compton Downs, West Ilsley area and around Lambourn with 15 on Apr 10th and 30 May 6th (JD). A singing male held territory at Cockpole Green from Apr 12th to at least May 6th (DJB), the Cold Harbour population peaked at 6 singing males May 26th (DJB) and 1 sang at Dorney W Jul 15-16 (JOB; BDC). The only confirmation of breeding success came from Compton Downs where a juv was seen Aug 28th (DJB). **Second Winter:** The biggest count came from Compton Downs with 107 birds present Oct 30th (DJB). Later in the year 80+ were on stubble at Row Down Nov 14th (GDS); 40 Farnborough Down Dec 5th (GDS), 17 with Yellowhammers at Chieveley Dec 13th (CDRH) 50+ over Woolley Down Dec 18th (GDS) and 50 at Cow Down Dec 30th (AMc). Elsewhere 4 were present at Cockpole Green Oct 31st (DJB), 1 at Englefield Dec 5th (RCr) whilst numbers peaked at 12 at Cold Harbour Oct 31st (MSFW), followed by up to 8 there to the years end with 5 singing (MO), and 4 visited Dorney W Dec 17th (CCH).



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ESCAPES AND HYBRIDS 2004

ESCAPES

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Records were received from 14 locations throughout the county with most records being of single individuals. Higher counts involved 2 at Dinton Pastures CP Jan 3 (LM; MFW), 2 Windsor Esplanade Feb 13 (DF), 2 on the R Thames by the mouth of the R Kennet Feb 19 (RR) and 4 near there Sep 18 (MBu) and 2 were at Eversley GPs Sep 28 (MGLR).

Breeding: The first confirmed breeding record for Berks involved a resident pair at Great Meadow Pond which first nested in May – but were evicted from their nest by a pair of Canada Geese! A second attempt in early August produced 3 cygnets, but none survived (CDRH).

Chinese (Swan) Goose *Anser cygnoides*

The 3 resident birds at Mill Pond Bracknell in 2003 were still present on Mar 12 (MFW)

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

One was reported at Wigmore Lane GP Theale during the September WEBs count.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Birds were reported from 16 localities, usually of 1-2 birds. Higher counts involved 7 in fields by the R Thames near Maidenhead Jan 28 and 4 nearby on Feb 3 (DF). Three adults were located at Bray GPs Sep 21 increasing to 4 ads and 1 f/w Sep 28 (CDRH) which remained until Oct 4 (WAS) and were then relocated at Summerleaze GP on Oct 5 (CDRH).

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

An adult present at Lower Farm GP from Sep 28 (R Allen; JC) to Oct 10 (IW) and nearby at Muddy Lane GP Thatcham on Oct 17 (GJS) bore a ring reading Ai on its left leg.

Emperor Goose *Anser canagicus*

One was reported from Lower Farm GP on Feb 1 (MFW)

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One was present at Muddy Lane GP on Mar 8 (LM) and 2 were noted at Dinton Pastures CP Dec 26 (MFW).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Ten (6m 4f) were present on Maiden Erleigh Lake on Feb 26 (LM) and nearby at Whiteknights Pk Lake, 2 were noted on Mar 5 and 4 on Mar 23 (MBu)

White-cheeked (Bahama) Pintail *Anas bahamensis*

Two were located on Twyford GPs on Jan 1 (BTB)

Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

A male took up residence in a Twyford garden from Dec 23 to the years end (VFo *et al*).

Peafowl Sp.

Singles were noted at Hungerford Common Jun 10 (RF) and Eversley GPs Oct 4-5 (RMW)

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One noted in Twyford on Mar 20 and 27 (SPA)

HYBRIDS

Greylag × Bar-headed Goose

One Windsor Great Park on Dec 20th (CDRH)

Greylag × Canada Goose

One Windsor Great Park on Nov 28 (MSFW) and Dec 20th (CDRH)

Snow Goose × ?

Three blue phase type hybrids were present at Eversley GPs on Jan 7th (LM) and 4 were there on Sep 21st (BMA)

Canada Goose × domestic farmyard-type goose

Broods from this unlikely pairing have now been reared in both 2003 and 2004 along the Thames at Hurley (SJF; FMF)

Egyptian Goose × Ruddy Shelduck

One was present at Dinton Pastures CP on Jul 8-9 (MFW; PAng).

Shelduck hybrid

One female, possibly a Ruddy x Cape Shelduck, flew south over Greenham Common on Apr 8 (CDRH).

Mallard × Gadwall

One male first reported in 2002 had returned to Heron Lakes Wraybury by Nov 6 and remained to the years end (CDRH).

***Aythya* hybrids**

Because some duck hybrids resemble a third species, rather than either of the parents, these have been categorized according to what they resemble; where observers have presumed the parentage this is indicated in parentheses.

Ferruginous-type hybrids

The 2003 female (presumed Pochard × Ferruginous Duck) was still present at Bray GPs until Mar 2 and had returned by Oct 9, remaining until Nov 4 (CDRH). Another female caused some confusion at Burghfield Mill GP and the adjacent Moatlands GP from Nov 14 (MFW) to at least Dec 26 (KEM). A summary by CDRH as to why this bird was a hybrid is reproduced here:

- 1 Size – almost the same size as the Pochards (whereas Ferruginous Duck is the smallest aythya on the British List and females average smaller than drakes).
- 2 Upper-wing – showed a wholly brownish (not white) wing-bar; plus a white trailing edge to the secondaries (a Pochard characteristic, not shown by true Ferruginous, but which was also evident on last years drake Ferruginous hybrid at Theale).
- 3 Undertail – restricted white due to dark “spur” to central undertail coverts and dark tips to longest undertail coverts.
- 4 Bill pattern – showed a broad black tip and prominent pale sub-terminal band.
- 5 Flanks and mantle – both similar (i.e mantle not darker), with greyer tone, visibly contrasting with richer chestnut breast.

A third individual (also a female) appeared at Heron Lakes Wraysbury on Dec 9 (CDRH). This bird was not as distinctive as the Bray or Moatlands birds and was probably a back-cross.

Scaup / Lesser Scaup-type hybrids

A male Lesser Scaup type was present at Heron Lakes Wraysbury from Jan 27 (DJB) to Apr 16 (CDRH). Other Lesser Scaup types included a drake reported from Brimpton GPs on Mar 6 (anon), a drake at Dorney W from Mar 30 (CDRH et al) to Apr 13 (CDRH) (this bird had been previously seen at Little Marlow GPs Bucks where it had originally been identified as a Lesser Scaup) and a female at Burghfield GPs on Mar 16 (CDRH) which was seen again at Moatlands GP on Nov 17 (CDRH) and Nov 20 (MFW).

A female was present on Moatlands GP on Jan 2 (RRK) and Jan 5 (CDRH) who states that this was the bird was first seen in this area in Oct 2002 (presumed Scaup × Pochard).

Tufted Duck-type hybrid

A drake was present at Wraysbury GPs from Nov 30 to Dec 5 (CDRH).

Gull Hybrids

Glaucous × Herring Gull one in s/w plumage was located at Hurst Tip on Jan 28th (PBT), this bird or another then appeared at Moatlands GP on Feb 7 (RAAd).

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

ABT	A B Tomczynski	CRe	C Reeve
ACJ	A C Johnson	CRW	C R Wilson
ACr	A Crocker	CWi	C Williams
ADB	A D Bassett	CWil	C Wilkinson
ADC	A D Crawford	CWo	C Wollerton
ADo	A Doble	DAC	D A Carter
AFd	A Ford	DBM	D B Marsh
AJT	A J Thomas	DDC	D D Callam
AM	A Male	DF	D Fuller
AMc	A McMahan	DFo	D Foskett
AMH	A M Horscroft	DFr	D Fry
ANS	A N Stow	DHu	D Hunt
APh	A Phillips	DJB	D J Barker
AR	A Rymmer	DJBa	D J Barnes
ARE	A R Evans	DJM	D J Morris
ASl	A Slater	DJS	D J Sussex
ASt	A Stevens	DJW	D J White
AWi	A Williams	DKe	D H Kelway
BAJC	B A J Clark	DKP	D K Parker
BB	B Beglow	DKPu	D K Pugh
BDC	B D Clews	DMc	D McEwan
BF	B Fitzpatrick	DMc CMc	D & C McEwan
BH	B Howes	DMcG	D McGill
BHa	B Harland	DMF	D M Ferguson
BHay	B Haynes	DNTR	D N T Rimes
BJE	B J Emms	DR	D Rear
BJH	B J Hollands	DS	D W Smith
BJW	B J Walker	DW	D Wilks
BM	B Miller	EDr	E Drewitt
BMA	B M Archer	EG	E Griffiths
BMc RMc	B & R McCartney	EGC	E G Chambers
BP	B N Pavey	EMH	E M Husband
BS	B Sharkey	EN	E Napper
BTB	B T Bennett	FCC	F C Clark
BU	B Uttley	FE	F Eagan
BVi	B Vickers	FJC	F J Cottingham
CA	C Abbott	FK	F Kelly
CAB	C A Briggs	GBr	G Brookes
CBr	C Bradbury	GDS	G D Scholey
CCH	C C Humphrey	GEW	G E Wilson
CDJ	C D Jones	GGl	G Glomber
CDRH	C D R Heard	GGr	G Grayer
CFL	C F Lamb	GH	G Harland
CGo	C Gott	GJS	G J Stewart
CK	C Knight	GJSu	G J Sumner
CL	C Lamsdell	GK	G Kimber
CMa	C Main	GLa	G Langsbury
CMc	C McEwan	GR	G Randall
CMR	C M Robinson	GS	G Selman

GSt	G Staves	KC	K Chard
GV	G Vine	KCr	K Creed
GVW	G V Wordley	KEM	K E Moore
GWil	G Williams	KF	K Fostekew
HFM	H F Matthews	KGi	K Girling
HMC	H M Clews	KH	K Harris
HMG	H M Goodship	KIT	K I Tubb
HMo	H Morton	KL	K Langton
HRN	H R Netley	KPD	K P Duncan
ICB	I C Bell	KS	K Spring
IHB	I H Brown	KW	K Walker
IJF	I J Fisher	LFo	L Forster
IT	I Twyford	LGa	L Gabrielson
IW	I Weston	LJF	L J Finch
IW JL	I/J Weston/Legg	LM	L Matthews
JA	J Andrews	LRB	L R Blundell
JA RPo	J/R Andrews/Povey	LS	L Staves
JAng	J Angus	MAi	M Airey
JAt	J Atkinson	MAS	M A Sales
JBra	J Bradley	MBa	M Batchelor
JBRi	J B Rix	MBri	M Britnell
JBu	J Buchanan	MBu	M D Budden
JBur	J W Burnett	MDL	M D Lenney
JBut	J Butler	MES	M E Stacey
JC	J Crispin	MF	M Fitzpatrick
JCh	J L Chivers	MFW	M F Walford
JCo	J Coupland	MG	M H Gostling
JD	J Dellow	MGLR	Moor Green Lakes Report
JEM	J E Mitchell	MGM	M G McCarthy
JEW	J E Warren	MGP	M G Prince
JFa	J Fabian	MGPh	M G Philpott
JG	J Goodey	MH	M Hoit
JH	J Haseler	MHo	M Holmes
JHC	J H Collis	MHu	M Hunt
JHey	J Heyes	MJD	M J Dear
JJW	J J Walling	MJF	M J Finch
JL	J Legg	MJF LJF	M J & L J Finch
JLe	J Lerpiniere	MJH	M J Hallam
JLS	J L Swallow	MJM	M J Mitchell
JM	J Meatcher	MJS	M J Smith
JMC	J M Clark	MJT	M J Taylor
JMo	J Morris	MK	M Kettell
JMW	J M Winyard	MLy	M Lynton
JOB	J O'Brien	MMc	M J McKee
JPH	J P Holt	MMcM	M McManus
JPM	J P Martin	MR	M Raper
JSH	J S Hunt	MRWS	M R W Sell
JSt	J Stewart	MSFW	M S F Whitaker
JStr	J Stratton	MSt	M Stuttard
JW	J Wilding	NA	N Adam
JWB	J W Bleloch	NC	N Cleere

NG	N R Godden	RJH	R J Hardie
NJB	N J Bucknell	RM	R Murfitt
NR	N Rampton	RMW	R M Warden
NRG	Newbury Ringing Group	RN	R Ness
NSi	N Silver	RPo	R Povey
PA	P Adam	RPr	R Price
PBa	P Bamford	RR	R Reedman
PBT	P Bright-Thomas	RRi	R Righelato
PCo	P A Cohen	RRK	R R Keel
PGo	P Goriup	RS	R Sharp
PH	P Hickman	RSJ	R S Jacobs
PHol	P Holden	RW	R Watson
PJa	P Jackson	SAG	S A Graham
PJC	P J Crowley	SB	S Ball
PJO	P J Orr	SDi	S Dimond
PJSx	P J PJS (BBB Obs)	SEL	S E Lunt
PJWa	P J Watts	SF	S Fuller
PKn	P Knight	SGa	S Gabrielson
PMC	P M Cropper	SH	S Hughes
PML	P M Lamsdale	SHa	S Harney
PP	P Pickering	SHe	S Heffer
PWr	P Wright	SJF FMF	S J & F M Farnsworth
RAd	R Addison	SJo	S Jones
RAH	R A Haynes	SMe	S Meads
RAlI	R Alliss	SP	S Pavlou
RAlIe	R Allen	SPA	S P Adam
RAn	R Anstis	SRi	S Ricks
RAnd	R Andrews	SSa	S Sadler
RAng	R Angus	SSm	S Smart
RB	R Bayton	SW	S Weeks
RBo	R Bond	SWi	S Wilson
RBor	R Borwick	SWit	S B Witts
RCh	R Christopher	TBa	T Barnes
RCr	R Crawford	TGB	T G Ball
RCW	R C Watts	TK	T Knight
RD	R Dawson	TM	T Marlow
RDi	R Dinnadge	TOA	T O Alexander
RDr	R Dryden	TPo	T Powell
RDW	R D Wilson	TS	T Sweetland
RF	R Frankum	TSt	T Stacey
RG	R Gibbs	TWa	T Walker
RGD	R G Davies	VBe CBe	V & C Benson
RGS	R G Smith	VFo	V Forster
RH	R Hutchins	WAN	W A Nicoll
RHai	R Haines	WAS	W A Stacey
RHo	R Howe	WB	W Brown
RHS	R H Stansfield	WEBS	Wildfowl counts
RIn	R Innes	WG	W Gordon
RJB	R J Burness	WM	W Miles
RJC	R J Cox	ZK	Z Karpowicz
RJG	R J Godden		

Latest and Earliest Dates of Winter Migrants 2004

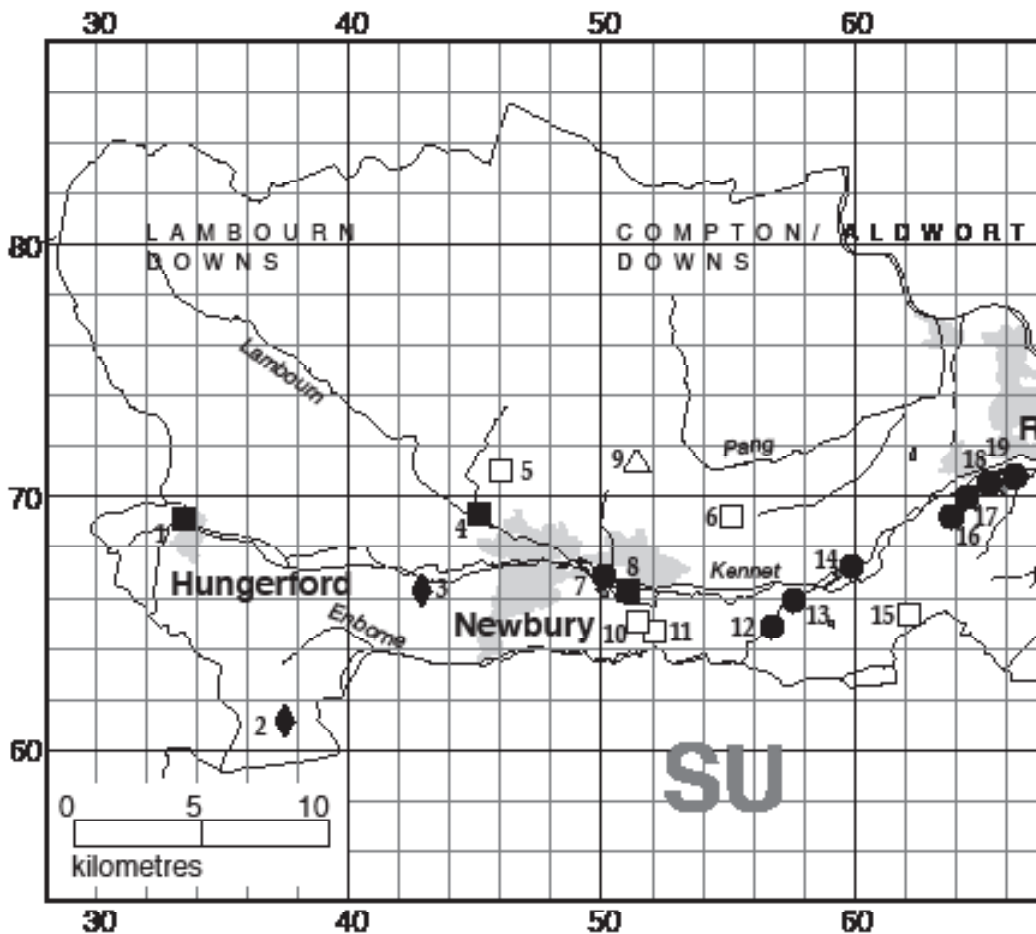
Species	ARRIVALS			DEPARTURES		
	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Golden Plover	Aug 31st	Bury Down	CDRH	Apr 18th	Lower Fm GP	JC
Rock Pipit	Sep 30th	Queen Mother Res	PMC	Mar 29th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Fieldfare	Oct 8th	Windsor Great PK	CDRH	May 1st	Dorney Wetlands Inkpen Hill	DJB; SP ACJ
Redwing	Sep 25th	Freemens Marsh	JBut	Apr 27th	Burghfield GPs	TBa
Brambling	Nov 1st	Wishmoor Cross	CRW	May 3rd	Swinley Forest	DJB
Lesser Redpoll	Oct 24th	Moatlands GP	JA	May 11th	Swinley Forest	DJB

Latest and Earliest Dates of Summer Migrants 2004

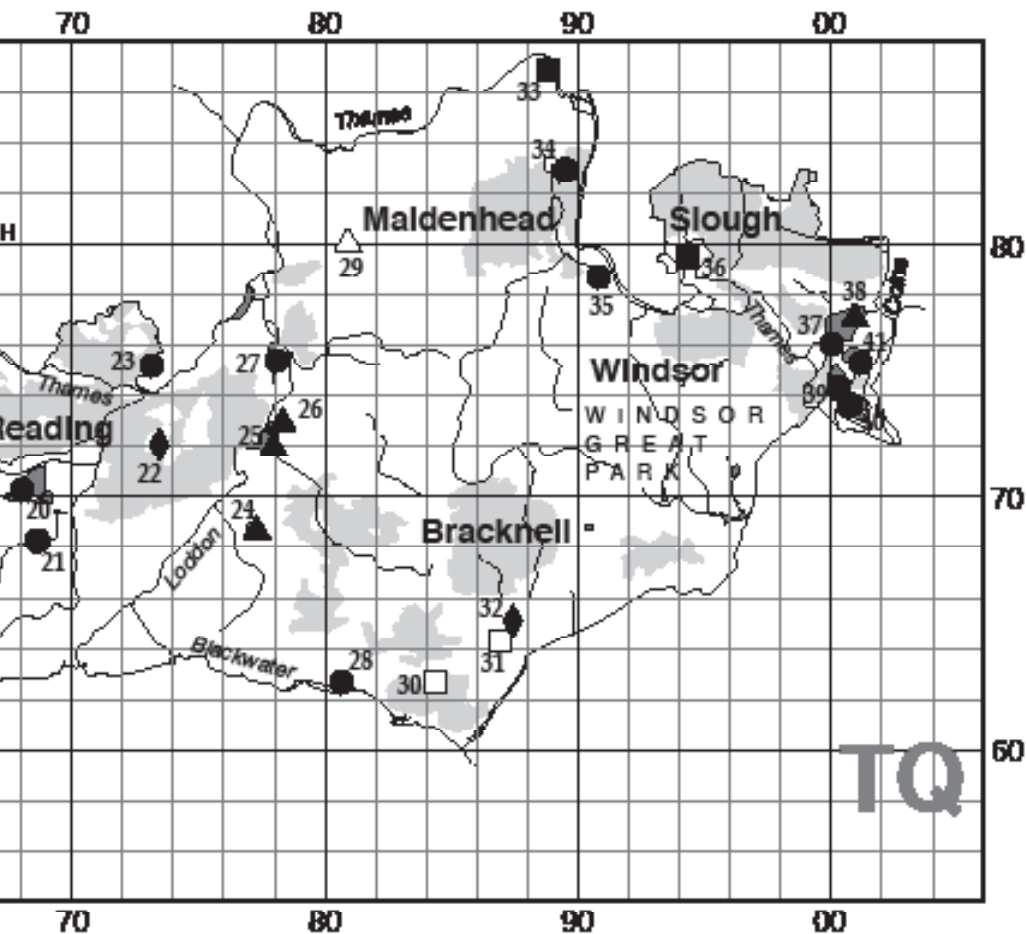
Species	ARRIVALS			DEPARTURES		
	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Hobby	Apr 9th	Maidenhead	BDC	Oct 8th	Brimpton GP	GEW
Little Ringed Plover	Mar 7th	Dorney Wetlands Twyford GPs	DAC; SP BTB	Aug 18th	Eversley GPs	MGLR
Common Tern	Apr 1st	Denford Pk Theale Main GP	RDW; RGS BU	Oct 27th	Theale Main GP	JOB
Turtle Dove	Apr 15th	Hosehill Lake	TM	Sep 2nd	Compton Downs	ABT
Cuckoo	Apr 10th	Thatcham Marsh	RAH; IW; JL	Sep 25th	Eversley GPs	CRG
Nightjar	May 15th	Swinley Forest	KEM; MFW	Aug 10th	Windsor Forest	CDRH
Swift	Apr 15th	Burghfield GPs	JA	Sep 12th	Lower Farm GP	RAH
Sand Martin	Mar 8th	Dorney Wetlands	P Jackson	Oct 15th	Moatlands GP	KEM
Swallow	Mar 20th	Burghfield GPs Woolhampton GPs	RM MFW	Oct 27th	Binfield	FJC
House Martin	Apr 3rd	Muddy Lane GP Lavell's Lake	GJS MFW	Oct 17th	Winter Hill	BDC
Tree Pipit	Apr 7th	Woolley Down	GDS	Sep 15th	Caesars Camp	CRW
Yellow Wagtail	Mar 19th	Pingewood GPs	RCr	Oct 2nd	Greenham Common	APh

Nightingale	Apr 3rd	Burghfield GPs	JA; RPo	Jul 10th	Theale Main GP	RCr
Redstart	Apr 9th	Swinley Forest	DJB	Oct 4th	Reading	RHS
Whinchat	Apr 17th	Greenham Common	RRK	Oct 16th	Pingewood GPs	KEM
Wheatear	Mar 14th	Dorney Wetlands	JOB	Oct 30th	Compton Downs	DJB
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 17th	nr Lavell's Lake	MFW TOA	Sep 22nd	Wraysbury GPs	RRG
Sedge Warbler	Mar 23rd	Hosehill Lake	RJB	Oct 7th	Hosehill Lake	BU
Reed Warbler	Apr 16th	Hosehill Lake Horton GPs	RCr WAS	Sep 30th	Dorney Wetlands	BDC
Garden Warbler	Apr 18	Moatlands GP Theale Main GP	JA KS	Sep 23rd	Theale Main GP	RJB
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 17th	Brimpton GP Pingewood GPs	GEW KEM	Sep 27th	Wraysbury GP	RRG
Whitethroat	Apr 13th	Theale Main GP Wraysbury GPs	RAd BAJC	Sep 26th	Bury Down	DJB
Willow Warbler	Mar 21st	Bray GPs	BDC	Sep 28th	Woolhampton GPs	JPM
Spotted Flycatcher	May 2nd	Hosehill Lake	JA; RRK	Sep 26th	South Lake	DNTR

Please note : at the time of compiling these tables the record of a Reed Warbler at Lower Farm GP on Nov 7th (RF) had neither been accepted or rejected by the BRC.



- | | | | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------------------------------|----|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 | ▲ Lakes and Reservoirs |
| □ Commons and Heaths | △ Downland and Parkland |
| ■ Marshes and Sewage Farms | ◆ Woodland |

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

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Birds of Berkshire report*



Great Skua corpse – QMR, 27 September 2004 by Chris Heard