

SYSTEMATIC LIST BIRD REPORT FOR 2005

Edited by Derek Barker

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.

Order of species

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
3/s	Third summer
3/w	Third winter
4/s	Fourth summer

PLACES/LOCALITIES

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

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)

The monthly maxima at sites where counts were regular are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	45	24	26	–	–	–	–	–	–	36	63	41
Dinton Pastures CP	58	29	18	–	9	11	8	7	–	58	48	68
Eversley GPs	28	29	7	10	22	17	37	32	9	7	8	18
K&A Canal Newbury	80	54	73	75	85	84	67	57	47	82	80	70
Lower Farm GP	4	7	30	12	24	32	25	25	15	2	–	2
Summerleaze GP	48	36	51	34	8	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	14*	13*	17*	–	–	38	53	52	67	68	81	73
Windsor Esplanade	278	262	–	–	–	–	228	–	–	154	209	185
Wraysbury GPs	26	20	20	–	5	–	–	–	29	27	25	20

*Count not complete

The largest herd was once again on the R. Thames at Windsor Esplanade, the peak count (278) occurring Jan 5th (DF). Elsewhere there were 180 at Richfield Avenue, Reading Aug 27th (ARa). **Breeding:** at least 26 pairs from 20 sites were known to have bred, the largest brood being 10 cygnets on the R. Thames at Old Windsor May 23rd (KPD). On the downside only one brood was hatched at Dorney W where a further 6 nest sites were abandoned (BDC), possibly due to disturbance, and a brood of 5 cygnets at Whiteknights Lake all became sick and died – at least one due to lead poisoning (PG).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

The only record of wild birds involved a party of 5 (incl. 2 definite adults) which flew high west over Windsor Great Pk on Nov 14th (CDRH). Additionally, the feral individual was still present at Padworth Lane GP Jan 14th at least (JPM).

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common and widespread introduced resident

Records were received from 48 locations evenly distributed throughout the county. The monthly maxima at the main sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cockmarsh	133	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	127	112	65	–
Eversley GPs	21	13	11	6	5	7	7	46	74	73	12	20
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	–	1	–	–	28	90	140	144	90	–
Summerleaze GP	30	55	49	2	2	–	150	227	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	150	–	92	10	19	7	–	45	84	110	200	100
Twyford GPs	8	–	4	6	1	–	–	50	43	80	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	23	22	50	–	28	–	–	–	37	39	26	5

The high count of 227 at Summerleaze GP occurred on Aug 4th (CDRH). Away from the main sites, counts exceeding 50 involved 60 at Arborfield Feb 9th (DJB), 90 on the R. Thames from Wargrave to Henley Jul 19th (PNe), 112 at Pingewood GPs Aug 6th (MFW), 90 Cookham Rise Aug 21st (BDC) and 60 Borough Marsh, Charvil Oct 6th (MSFW). **Breeding:** was noted at only 8 sites involving at least 14 pairs that had variable success. However the high numbers reported in autumn may indicate that many breeding pairs either go undetected or are not being reported.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

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

The feral population centred at Eversley GPs continues to decline, the monthly maxima according to records received being:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	6	6	6	1	5	–	–	5	5	5	4

Elsewhere 1 appeared near Hungerford Jan 9th and was joined by a second bird Jan 11th (RGS). A blue morph adult was located at Summerleaze GP Jul 28th (CDRH) and in West Berks, single birds were seen flying north at Greenham Common Aug 29th (IW; JL) and by the K&A Canal at Kintbury Oct 1st (RGS).

See article '**Feral Barnacle and Snow Geese in the upper Loddon and Blackwater valleys**' in this report for further discussion.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common and widespread introduced resident

The monthly maxima at the main sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Dinton Pastures CP	152	42	70	–	–	100	–	23	49	134	85	54	
Eversley GPs	180	109	276	–	–	98	105	60	65	110	210	376	
Heath Lake		8	19	8	14	4	3	12	3	20	22	12	7
Lower Farm GP		90	110	65	22	70	77	87	125	44	23	300	150
Muddy Lane (Thatcham) GP		87	194	154	76	48	80	105	209	240	183	340	273
R. Thames Pangbourne–Reading		43	10	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	185	156	205
Summerleaze GP		95	36	81	28	18	55	180	8	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs		10	46	107	–	–	–	–	–	16	147	–	37
Windsor Esplanade		241	189	–	–	–	–	70	–	–	296	78	152
Wraysbury GPs		85	104	75	–	–	–	–	–	91	68	153	231

Elsewhere there were high counts of 543 on the R. Thames between Wargrave and Hurley Jul 19th (PNe), 350 at Remenham Aug 8th (ANS), 400 on stubble at Long Lane Cookham Aug 28th (BDC) and 325 at Borough Marsh Oct 6th (MSFW). **Breeding:** was reported from numerous locations usually involving 1-2 pairs but there were 6 broods at Eversley GPs May

5-6th (GH). Large crèches of goslings were noted at Lower Fm GP with 36 May 27th (NC), 42 on the R. Thames at Hurley Jun 2nd (BDC) and 37 nearby at Aston Jun 21st (BDC).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Rare vagrant and localised feral visitor/resident

Correction 2004: Although it is believed that numbers had been shot during the 2003/4 winter, this did not occur at Stratfield Saye, Hants.

2005: The monthly maximum at the main site, Eversley GPs, according to records submitted, is as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
90	101	4	6	11	12	4	30	54	61	100	62

At Eversley GPs one pair attempted to breed (compared to 8 in 2004) rearing 1 gosling (MGLR). Elsewhere 1-2 birds were reported from 7 locations with larger counts involving 50 flying SW over Crowthorne Aug 14th (BMA) and 10 at Bucklebury Oct 17th (P Jones).

See article 'Feral Barnacle and Snow Geese in the upper Loddon and Blackwater valleys' in this report for further discussion.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

All 3 records – involving 6 birds – come from the same area in the east of the county. **First winter:** a f/w bird appeared at QMR Jan 10th remaining until dusk (CDRH). **Second winter:** 4 flew high ESE over QMR Oct 14th (CDRH) and a f/w was present at Horton fields from Dec 22nd -28th (CDRH).

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Very rare vagrant

A first winter bird was located feeding on a grassy bank beside Theale Main GP Mar 16th (MJT et al) remaining to Mar 17th. This is the first documented record of this sub-species in Berkshire and proved a popular attraction to county observers.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Common introduced resident in M and E Berks, local in the west

Records were received from 64 locations, 6 in W Berks, 22 in M Berks and 36 in E Berks. The monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cookham area	2	–	2	–	–	–	2	40	16	–	2	25
Dinton Pastures CP	11	24	2	4	2	4	–	4	5	5	2	1
Eversley GPs	20	14	21	10	14	19	38	41	50	66	36	43
Theale GPs	11	9	11	6	4	5	5	3	4	2	4	5
Windsor Great Park	14	12	–	11	14	6	–	–	–	–	–	2

The count of 66 at Eversley GPs occurred on Oct 28th (BMA) and is a site record. Elsewhere double figure counts involved 15 Newell Green Jan 28th (MPa); 30 Hurst Feb 21st – Mar 2nd (MFW) and 19 Summerlease GP Aug 29th (CDRH). An albino bird was seen at Charvil on Dec 3rd (CDRH). West Berks records generally involved 1-3 birds but at Lower Fm GP 4 were reported in April and May (MO) and 5 Dec 31st (IW; JL). **Breeding:** was reported from 8 locations with up to 15 pairs hatching young from Feb to Oct. However mortality was high especially during Feb-Mar and it is thought that no more than 25-30 goslings were reared.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Reported from 26 localities evenly spread throughout the county, monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	3	3	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Dorney Wetlands	1	1	3	6	5	2	2	–	–	–	1	1
Lower Farm GP	7	9	16	4	4	5	–	–	–	–	–	3
Padworth Lane GP	2	4	3	8	12	–	–	–	–	–	1	3
Pingewood GPs	4	2	4	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Res	1	–	3	2	4	2	–	–	1	–	–	–
Theale GPs	2	2	1	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GPs	4	3	4	3	6	1	–	–	–	–	–	2
Other Sites	3	8	15	34	23	6	–	1	–	–	–	–

Jan-Jun: the high counts of 16 at Lower Fm GP occurred on Mar 25th (SAG) and the 12 at Padworth Lane GP May 18th (CDRH). Elsewhere notable counts included 8 Moatlands GP Apr 12th (RCr) and 15 flying NW over Englefield May 31st (RCr). **Breeding:** it was a poor year; the only record of confirmed breeding in the county was the presence of 2 ducklings in the high count at Padworth Lane GP (CDRH), although display was noted at Lower Fm GP Mar 21st (RF). **Jul-Dec:** most birds had left the county by the end of June, the exceptions being 2 at Dorney W Jul 3rd (SP); 1 Eversley GPs Aug 4th (BMA) and a f/w at QMR Sep 29th (CDRH). The first returning bird in the second winter period was a drake at Dorney W Nov 22nd (CRE).

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Localised but increasing introduced resident

Records were received from 50 locations 4 in W Berks, 15 in M Berks and 31 in E Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	18	2	6	4	8	Br	Br	–	1	2	5	8
Whiteknights Park Lake	30	32	6	7	14	4	1	–	–	–	–	–
Windsor Great Park	–	–	15	–	–	50	100	194	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	5	4	8	–	1	–	–	–	2	6	17	12

The count of 194 in Windsor Great Pk occurred on Aug 29th (CDRH) and is the largest count since 240+ were seen there on 31st Oct 1990. Elsewhere 38 flew over Drift Rd Oct 27th (CDRH), 9 were present at Ufton Wood Pond Nov 26th and 15 came in to roost near Maidenhead Weir Nov 15th (DF). **Breeding:** broods were seen at 9 locations: at Whiteknights Pk Lake 3 broods of 9, 4 and 3 were located between May 15th – 29th but due to predation, probably from Pike, only 1 survived (PG); 1f 1y on the Jubilee River May 25th (BDC); 2f with 2y and 1y were on the Thames at Cliveden Jun 15th and a brood of 7 there Jul 6th (WAS); there were 4 broods in Windsor Great Pk during June (CDRH; WAS); 1f 3y at Boveney Lock Jun 18th (WAS); a count of 33 at Sunninghill Pk Jun 18th included 3 broods of 3, 4 and 5 (DJB); 1f 2y Cookham Lock Jul 20th (BDC); a f with a well grown juv at Aldermaston GP Jul 25th (JPM); and at Eversley GPs, 8 nest boxes were occupied and a total of 122 eggs (frequent egg dumping) laid – of which 46 hatched, with young seen in June (MGLR). Of the 8 nest boxes used by Mandarins 5 failed mainly due to disturbance from Grey Squirrels. **West Berks:** Apart from the Aldermaston breeding record, birds were only seen at Streatley, 2 on Feb 20th (NJB); Hamstead Marshall, 1m Mar 26th (RF) and Streatley STW, 1pr Apr 10th (GDS).

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	262	80	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	166	310	103
Dinton Pastures CP	17	8	30	–	–	–	2	1	45	82	67	195
Eversley GPs	398	247	18	12	1	–	1	15	88	284	398	432
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands	1	7	–	6	–	–	–	–	3	3	1	11
Lower Farm GP	66	10	52	–	–	–	–	1	9	28	30	50
Moatlands GPs	140	–	–	3	–	–	–	1	–	184	100	–
Theale GPs	79	109	37	7	–	–	–	–	51	126	–	104
Twyford GPs	–	–	104	2	–	–	–	–	9	108	100	52
Wraysbury GPs	6	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	103	98	150	202
Other Sites	102	6	100	3	–	–	–	2	33	4	18	15

First winter: based on records received, the period was below average for numbers wintering, Eversley GPs consistently holding more birds than anywhere else in the county. In March birds began to leave the county, so 104 at Twyford GPs Mar 17th (ADB) were notable. Birds could only be found at 7 locations in April and the latest departures occurred in early May, a male at Eversley GPs on the 5th (GH; MRA) and a female at Wraysbury GPs on the 7th (CL). **Second winter:** first returns occurred in mid July with an eclipse male at Eversley GPs on the 11th (BMA) and 2 eclipse males at Dinton Pastures from 15th – 18th (PBT et al). The main influx began in September and birds were widespread by the end of the month. Higher numbers were reported during Oct-Dec than during Jan-Mar, the high count of 432 at Eversley GPs occurring on Dec 21st (MGLR).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

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

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	29	26	12	2	2	–	–	5	12	10	40	17
Burghfield GPs	255	81	36	–	–	–	–	–	26	50	233	156
Dinton Pastures CP	138	134	40	5	6	4	2	18	24	30	65	260
Eversley GPs	133	215	26	16	11	12	11	20	44	76	174	84
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands	23	17	15	17	6	10	–	20	10	20	24	–
Lower Farm GP	147	78	57	7	14	11	14	7	20	39	47	64
Padworth GP	–	–	–	44	–	25	1	26	12	–	–	–
Theale GPs	46	43	17	–	–	–	3	27	91	167	40	139
Wraysbury GPs	228	74	21	–	–	–	–	–	5	19	15	57

Away from the main sites, the only count to exceed 50 was 67 at Moatlands GP Jan 2nd (DJB). **Breeding:** birds could be found at 9 localities during Jun-Jul and breeding was confirmed at Eversley GPs where 2 broods of 11 and 4 were noted (BMA; GH); a female with 5y Lower Fm GP Jun 27th (RF); 1f with 2y at both Theale Main GP and Field Fm GP Jul 18th (RCr); and 1f with 3y Dorney W Aug 6th (DJB).

COMMON TEAL *Anas crecca*

A common winter visitor rare in summer (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	46	43	14	11	2	–	–	–	–	3	4	22
Dinton Pastures CP	54	22	23	12	5	–	3	25	31	30	24	44
Eversley GPs	40	22	12	6	–	–	–	15	25	76	91	138
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands*	66	70	70	64	2	6	–	13	25	10	63	122
Lower Farm GP	188	52	8	9	3	–	–	11	32	110	90	180
Theale GPs	6	23	13	12	–	–	–	–	2	4	–	21
Wraysbury GPs	112	58	106	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	109
Other Sites	90	74	40	12	1	1	1	22	35	74	120	126

*includes the adjacent Slough SF

First winter: the high count of 188 at Lower Fm GP occurred on Jan 6th (DJB). Away from the main sites; 70 were present at Avington Feb 12th (RGS). Numbers fell during April with records only received from 8 locations; however 64 were still on the Jubilee River Apr 8th (BDC). **Summer:** a few lingering birds could still be found at favoured locations during May. Amongst these, an injured male remained to summer at Pingewood GPs (RCr; KEM et al) and 5 flew over Lavell's Lake May 12th (SPA). Six drakes appeared at Dorney W Jun 12th -13th (SP) with 3 still present Jun 16th (CDRH). One at Lavell's Lake Jul 3rd (MFW) began a series of records there peaking at 3 on Jul 23rd (MFW).

Autumn/Second winter: apart from Lavell's Lake, the first returning birds appeared on Aug 4th with singles at Lower Fm GP (RA) and Summerlease GP (CDRH). By October birds were widespread, notable counts away from the main sites being 60+ at Kings Mere Oct 18th (DJS), 52 Windsor Great Pk Nov 7th (CDRH), c50 flying N over Greenham Common Nov 26th (NC; IW; JL) and 120 Avington Dec 3rd (RGS).

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
Bray GPs	13	21	16	8	16	29	36	10	15	14	45	–
Burghfield GPs	35	38	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	78	50	41
Dinton Pastures CP	83	141	135	–	–	75	–	–	–	136	130	116
Eversley GPs	117	107	120	15	30	–	33	30	43	76	86	72
Heath Lake	42	46	73	25	21	44	86	74	69	63	69	98
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands	174	160	76	160	51	10	50	287	105	–	174	198
Lower Farm GP	22	16	6	9	11	23	25	65	60	82	25	53
Muddy Lane (Thatcham) GPs	181	158	94	104	96	151	210	81	51	353	250	205
Queen Mother Reservoir	27	5	18	–	–	–	–	–	54	91	40	34
Theale GPs	52	99	49	–	–	–	–	–	26	150	–	104
Windsor Esplanade	301	257	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	402	271	341
Wraysbury GPs	122	121	120	–	24	–	–	–	113	107	112	121

The high count of 402 at Windsor Esplanade occurred on Oct 19th (DF) and is the highest Berks site count since 660 were counted in Windsor Great Park on Nov 14th 1982. Elsewhere, 120 were present at Avington during January and 150 there Dec 3rd (RGS). A check of the R. Thames between Wargrave and Hurley (c8 miles in length) on Jul 19th located 420 birds (PNe). **Breeding:** still under-recorded, however 32 broods were reported from 18 sites throughout the county.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

First winter: small numbers were reported from 7 locations throughout the county. At Eversley GPs a pair remained from 2004, being present until Jan 3rd (MO) with further records of 1 Jan 19th (GH) and a female Feb 5th (JMC). A series of reports from Dorney W involved a female Jan 2nd (RN), a drake flying west Jan 5th (DJB) and a female Jan 9th (SP et al). A new influx occurred towards the end of January with a drake at Pingewood GPs Jan 21st (PH) increasing to 2 drakes Feb 26th (KEM), 3 Mar 6th (KEM) and finally 2 drakes Mar 12th (DJB). Nearby a drake appeared at Burghfield GPs Jan 30th (RRi) then up to 2 drakes (possibly Pingewood birds) were seen to Mar 13th (WeBS) however a pair was present Feb 5th (MHo). Further west a female was located at Lower Fm GP Jan 29th (JA) then a drake remained from Feb 26th to Apr 1st (MO). One, possibly 2 drakes were at Wraysbury GPs Jan 30th (MO), 1 remaining to Feb 3rd (RDrd) and a group of 4 including

3 drakes were on Great Meadow Pond Jan 30th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** a female at Lavell's Lake Aug 11th (MFW) remained to Oct 27th (PBT), occasionally visiting the adjacent Lea Fm GP. Other records from this area involved a pair departing high to the SW Oct 24th (PBT), 3 (2m 1f) flying N Nov 29th (PBT), 3-4 circled with c30 Wigeon before departing S Dec 4th (FJC), 1f flying N Dec 17th (MFW) and 2f on Lea Fm GP Dec 25th (BJH). Elsewhere a drake visited Eversley GPs Oct 24th (BMA) and 2 (imm male and a fem) remained from Dec 16th to the years end (BMA et al).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

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

Records were received from 11 locations involving 16 birds. **Spring:** passage was poor, a drake at Lavell's Lake May 12th (MFW et al) was the only record. **Autumn:** 2005 will be remembered for the strong passage which peaked in October. The first record involved a pair at Eversley GPs on the early date of Jul 7th (BMA) and was followed by an eclipse drake at Midgham GPs from Aug 6th (KEM) to Aug 11th (CDRH). A juv then visited both Lavell's and Sandford Lakes at Dinton Pastures Aug 29th (BTB) to Sep 1st (MFW). Records increased in Sep/Oct with 1 Lower Fm GP Sep 5th (CDRH), 1juv Padworth Lane GP Sep 10th to 29th (KEM et al), 1 Moatlands GP Sep 11th (TGB) and 1 juv at Hosehill Lake from Sep 25th (BU) to Oct 14th when it was joined by a second bird (BU; RCr) both remaining to Oct 16th (RCr). A long staying juv was present at Lavell's Lake from Oct 2nd (MFW) to Oct 23rd (FJC), visiting the adjacent Lea Fm GP on Oct 15th (PMC). A f/w drake was noted at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury GPs Oct 5th (CDRH) and a drake and f/w fem visited QMR Oct 8th-9th (CDRH; PMC). Another long-stayer was found at Dorney W Oct 9th (SP et al) remaining to Nov 11th, the latest date since the 1987-88 wintering bird. Finally a juv was reported from Eversley GPs Oct 16th (CDJ).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	15	22	28	2	–	–	–	4	4	10	9	12
Dinton Pastures CP	130	70	23	4	–	–	2	12	16	8	14	35
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	20	6	32	22	3	2	2	29	40	55	38	2
Eversley GPs	48	50	31	7	–	–	–	7	9	20	22	36
Lower Farm GP	111	129	117	5	–	–	11	9	49	77	60	62
Moatlands GPs	225	227	100	12	–	–	4	5	40	56	63	–
Muddy Lane (Thatcham) GP	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	6	20	17	44
Theale GPs	92	4	11	–	–	–	–	32	30	21	–	128
Whiteknights Pk Lake	–	15	4	–	–	–	–	–	5	10	50	41
Wraysbury GPs	300	120	172	–	–	–	–	–	9	20	8	70
Other Sites	4	14	152	20	3	10	–	18	40	46	49	66

First winter: analysis of the table shows that an above average number of birds were present within the county during Jan-Mar. The high counts of 300 at Wraysbury GPs occurred on Jan 30th (CDRH; PNe) and the 227 at Moatlands GP on Feb 6th (JA). Away from the main sites, 54 were counted at Twyford GPs Mar 17 (ADB). **Spring/Summer:** the main departure occurred from late March into April and by May the only birds reported involved 3 drakes at Woolhampton GPs May 4th (RF) and a peak of 3 (2m, 1f) at Dorney W May 20th (SP; DJB). June records involved a pair at QMR on the 19th-20th (CDRH) and at Great Meadow Pond a pair bred and a brood of 7 were observed during the month (RRG). Two at Lower Fm GP Jul 6th (NC) may also have been summering birds. **Autumn/Second winter:** early returning birds occurred from Jul 20th with 1 Lower Fm GP (GMa) and 2 Dinton Pastures CP Jul 23rd (BTB). Second winter totals were lower than the first winter, the only site to hold a three figure count being Bottom Lane GPs, Theale where 128 were present on Dec 18th (MRWS) with 116 still present Dec 29th (KEM). Away from the main sites, the highest counts were 40 at Slough SF Sept 11th, 34 at Summerleaze GP Sep 15th (CDRH) and 46 on Whiteknights Lake, Reading Nov 15th (Alan Absolom).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

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

The recent increase in what is believed to be feral birds continued in 2005 with records from 11 locations. **First winter:** the majority of reports came from the Theale/Burghfield GPs area. The problem of birds moving between waters makes it difficult to accurately assess the numbers of birds involved, but it could have been as low as 5. At Burghfield GPs a pair was regularly reported from Jan 1st to Feb 26th (MO). Two pairs were noted from Feb 27th (JA) to Mar 6th (KEM) then 1-3 on many dates to May 2nd (KEM). A pair was intermittently seen on Theale Main GP from Jan 3rd (BU) to Feb 8th (KEM) also visiting Hosehill Lake Jan 10th (TM) and a leucistic female there on Jan 30th (MFW). Moatlands GP's only record involved a female Jan 21st (DJB) and a female had returned to Theale Main GP Mar 4th (RJB). In the east of the county a drake of captive origin was present at Wraysbury GPs throughout the winter into May and was probably the bird seen with a pinioned f/w at Horton GPs through Feb, the f/w remaining through Mar (CDRH). However, 3 (2 drakes) were present at Wraysbury GPs from Jan 24th to Feb 12th (CDRH) and nearby a female visited Great Meadow Pond on Jan 12th (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** the only W Berks record involved a female Brimpton GP May 16th (GEW). In M Berks, 3 (2m 1f) were noted at Burghfield GPs Jun 11th (KEM), a pair visited Pingewood GPs Jun 13th (RCr) and a moulting pair was back at Burghfield GPs Jul 3rd (JA). **Autumn/Second winter:** an eclipse drake at Wraysbury GPs Jul 16th was probably the same bird to visit Great Meadow Pond Jul 22nd (CDRH), the same date saw another eclipse drake at Twyford GPs (BTB; MFW). A drake appeared at Burghfield GPs Aug 14th (JA; RPo) and remained to the year's end (MO). Back at Great Meadow Pond 2 (1 drake) were noted on Nov 11th (CDRH), then a pair visited several waters at Theale GPs from Nov 10th (RF; RSJ) to Nov 30th (RCW), then 3 (2m 1f) appeared at Bottom Lane GPs Dec 4th (SAG) and 2f Theale Main GP Dec 22nd to 24th (RCr; KEM). All remaining records came from E Berks, a flightless (pinioned) drake was found on a stream at Wraysbury Nov 25th (CDRH), a f/w male was at Wraysbury GPs Dec 8th then 6 (1m 5f) appeared there on Dec 17th – but did not linger – and possibly the same f/w was relocated again on Dec 29th – 31st (CDRH). Finally a drake visited Eversley GPs Dec 24th (AWo)

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	196	172	64	2	–	–	–	12	62	177	194	227
Burghfield GPs	91	79	51	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	52	79
Dinton Pastures CP	87	38	47	6	–	–	1	–	3	32	31	46
Eversley GPs	65	51	26	2	–	–	3	3	4	61	68	43
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands	20	4	5	–	1	–	1	–	2	35	–	131
Lower Farm GP	17	14	5	1	3	7	4	2	8	10	20	9
Moatlands GPs	80	106	–	–	–	1	5	4	39	88	112	62
Muddy Lane (Thatcham) GP	77	56	5	1	–	–	–	1	2	28	35	62
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	1	1	1	24	14	58	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	32	25	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	66	–
Theale GPs	80	77	19	–	2	–	1	–	4	63	–	79
Woolhampton GPs	–	36	2	1	1	2	–	13	10	51	19	30
Wraysbury GPs	408	403	264	–	–	–	–	–	27	88	146	510

First winter: numbers were slightly down on 2004 with only 3 sites holding more than 100 birds. The high counts at Wraysbury GPs were made on Jan 16th and Feb 13th (WEBS). Away from the main sites, 20 at Old Slade GP Feb 10th (RDr) proved to be the highest count. **Spring/Summer:** from April to the end of June birds were reported from 14 locations. Nearly all records referred to 1-2 birds, usually drakes, but there was no confirmation of breeding. Towards the end of June, passage was already evident with 7 Lower Fm GP Jun 26th (JL) and 17 at Great Meadow Pond Jun 30th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** for July and August, numbers were generally low, the highest count being 24 at Pingewood GPs Jul 22nd (KEM). A steady increase in numbers began in September and reached a peak in December when 227 were noted at Bray GPs on the 3rd (WAS) and 510 were present at Wraysbury GPs on the 5th (PNe).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, numbers increasing in winter

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	146	120	53	34	24	6	36	67	152	161	160	206
Burghfield GPs	249	238	246	–	–	–	–	–	–	162	360	303
Dinton Pastures CP	190	138	241	85	7	7	12	18	14	65	59	144
Eversley GPs	225	152	162	70	45	45	64	17	30	110	101	138
Heath Lake	24	15	21	3	2	–	1	1	3	3	22	21
Jubilee River/ Dorney Wetlands	338	243	46	243	30	6	114	20	–	200	259	236

Lower Farm GP	34	28	28	26	15	26	25	15	15	20	17	10
Muddy Lane (Thattham) GP	50	23	24	39	13	4	4	7	7	23	73	66
Queen Mother Reservoir	11	10	2	–	–	–	–	–	100	141	55	9
Summerleaze GPs	35	60	53	30	6	12	–	–	6	45	71	10
Theale GPs	212	127	150	–	–	–	–	–	68	94	–	174
Wraysbury GPs	800	240	378	–	14	–	–	–	241	119	105	820

Elsewhere 316 were present on Moatlands GP Feb 4th (DJB) and 222 there Dec 18th (ABT). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 10 locations with at least 25 broods reported. The most productive site was Lower Fm GP where at least 5 broods were reported.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

A better year for records with birds reported from 7 locations although it is thought that some birds may have visited more than 1 site. **First winter/Spring:** the year began with a report of 1 female at Sandhurst GPs Mar 15th (BMA; RJG). Another female was located on Theale Main GP Mar 18th (DJB) and may have been the same individual that was seen subsequently at Woolhampton GPs Mar 19 (KEM; MFW) remaining to Mar 22nd (BJW), Moatlands GP on Apr 1st (DJB; RCr) and finally at Brimpton GP Apr 25th (GEW). **Second winter:** a f/w female visited Burghfield Mill GP Nov 12th (KEM) and a f/w drake was located at Wraysbury GPs Nov 17th before flying off west (CDRH); this bird was then relocated on Dec 18th and remained to the year's end (CDRH).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

With just 2 records involving 3 birds, 2005 was the worst year since 1982 (when there was just 1 record involving 1 bird). A female was located on Muddy Lane GP Thattham May 31st (GJS; GST; IW) and 2 drakes visited QMR Aug 5th (CDRH).

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Locally common winter visitor

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	2
Burghfield GPs	16	9	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	7
Dinton Pastures GP	21	29	35	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	24
Eversley GPs	5	6	6	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	5
Moatlands GPs	22	24	18	3	–	–	–	–	–	5	6	8
Theale GPs	19	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5
Wraysbury GPs	63	30	18	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	31	37
Other Sites	3	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	9	6

First winter: reported from only 9 localities and as usual Wraysbury GPs held the highest number, 63 being seen on Jan 29th (CDRH). As the table shows, birds could still be found at 2 sites in April, the last (an imm male) lingered at Moatlands GP until Apr 25th (RCr). **Second winter:** the first returning birds arrived in mid October with 1 Bray GPs Oct 16th (BDC) and 1 juv QMR Oct 18th increasing to 4 Oct 19th (CDRH) and there were 5 at Moatlands GP Oct 23rd (RCr). Birds were noted at 12 locations during the second winter period with a high of 37 (15 drakes) Wraysbury GPs Dec 12th (CDRH). The only W Berks records involved an imm seen at Woolhampton GPs Nov 29th (KEM) and 1 at the same site Dec 23rd -24th (BJW; RRK)

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites

The monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2
Twyford GPs	8	6	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Wraysbury GPs	8	8	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	17
Other Sites	5	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3

First winter: numbers were slightly down on recent winters, the counts of 8 (3 drakes) at Twyford GPs occurred on Jan 1st (BTB) and 9 at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 2nd (3 drakes) and 4th (2 drakes) (CDRH). Away from the main sites a redhead was reported intermittently at Theale GPs from Jan 1st (DJH; DNTR) to Mar 7th (PH) and a drake was present at Theale Main GP on Feb 18th -19th (RA; KEM). Four (1 drake) at Dinton Pastures Jan 6th (KCr) were probably birds from the nearby Twyford GPs. Birds were soon to depart from the county with 4 (1 drake) Wraysbury GPs Mar 9th (DR) the last record. **Second winter:** the first returning birds were single redheads at Wraysbury GPs Nov 25th (CDRH) and Bray GPs Nov 27th (WAS). For most of the county numbers remained low and away from the main sites there were 2 redheads at Dinton Pastures (PBT) and 1 redhead at Burghfield GPs (KEM), both Dec 21st. However at Wraysbury GPs there was a count of 17 on Dec 29th (CDRH), which is the highest December count since 1998.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

With only 2 records, both of single birds, 2005 was the worst year since 1995 when there was only 1 report. **Spring:** a redhead visited Theale Main GP on the late date of Apr 19th (KEM; BTB). **Second winter:** a redhead flew SW over QMR on Nov 15th (CDRH).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites, has summered

The monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	31	38	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	37
Queen Mother Reservoir	2	5	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Theale GPs	3	3	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	9	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	8
Other Sites	6	1	6	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	6	5

First winter: numbers at the Eversley GPs roost peaked at 38 on Feb 28th (NR). Elsewhere a drake with an injured wing at Theale Main GP remained all winter to Apr 19th (MO). Away from the main sites, numbers at Bray GPs peaked at 6 (3 drakes) Jan 22nd (DJB), a drake was found on the R. Loddon at Swallowfield Feb 15th (CRW) and a pair was located at Burghfield GPs Mar 6th (DJe). **Summer:** a drake, possibly the injured bird that wintered at Theale GPs was on the R. Kennet in Reading May 18th (RHS). **Second winter:** a redhead was reported from Lower Fm GP Oct 9th (SAG) and a drake flew west over Thatcham Marsh Oct 30th (NRG). This early influx continued into November with a drake at Woolhampton GPs Nov 5th (KEM), however the main arrival began from Nov 19th when 6 had returned to Eversley GPs (JMC) and another redhead was reported from Lower Fm GP (SAG). Four (1 drake) visited Padworth Lane GP Nov 29th (KEM) and apart from the main sites, 1-2 were reported from a further 4 locations during December.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	2	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Eversley GPs	2	–	1	1	–	1	2	–	–	–	–	1
Lower Farm GP	7	10	12	10	2	2	2	4	3	2	2	3
Moatlands GPs	1	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	3	4
Wraysbury GPs	12	10	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	16	40
Other sites (14)	–	–	3	5	10	2	–	–	7	6	4	4

Records were received from 19 locations, 3 in W Berks, 6 in M Berks and 10 in E Berks. Away from the main sites most records involved 1-2 birds; however 3 were noted at Great Meadow Pond Apr 25th and May 26th (CDRH); Woolhampton GPs May 13th (PMC); Summerleaze GPs Sep 12th (CDRH); Theale Main GP Oct 2nd (BU; RJB) and Hosehill Lake Nov 14th (MR). **Breeding:** was not confirmed this year but may have occurred in the Newbury/Thatcham area as display was noted at Lower Fm GP on several dates. The large count of 40 at Wraysbury GPs occurred on Dec 18th and 21st (CDRH) and is the highest count since January 1997 when 53 were present at Old Slade NR.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Records were received from 60 locations throughout the county, most in the more rural areas in the west and east, only 8 localities being found in M Berks. The vast majority of sites reported only small numbers on 1-3 dates. Sites where regular counts were made appear in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Compton/Aldworth Downs	4	6	–	–	–	8	1	2	–	5	18	–
Cookham Rise area	2	10	2	–	2	–	–	30	99	30	14	12
Englefield	–	–	2	2	1	1	1	3	4	–	–	–
Hurst area	8	8	2	2	2	1	1	6	5	10	10	9
Lower Farm GP	–	–	2	2	2	3	2	4	5	–	–	–
Streatley area	–	–	3	10	8	–	1	–	–	50	–	9

The high counts of 99 at Cookham Sep 18th (BDC) and 50 Streatley Oct 2nd probably refer to birds released for shooting. Elsewhere double figure counts were made at 5 sites with 14 Bury Down Jan 19th (JPM); 10 Woolhampton GPs Sep 27th (JPM); 11 Pinkneys Green Nov 22nd (PNe); 10 White Place Fm, Cookham Nov 28th (BDC) and 23 (released birds) Remenham Dec 20th (DJB). **Breeding:** was only reported from Lower Fm GP with an adult with 3 juvs Jul 17th (SAG).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)

Records were received from 34 locations, 16 in W Berks and 9 in M Berks and E Berks. The maximum monthly counts at the most regular sites are shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bury/Cow Downs	35	2	6	–	–	–	–	20	7	18	9	6
Compton/Aldworth Downs	15	12	8	–	5	2	–	8	6	–	12	30
Englefield	–	–	–	4	2	6	1	14	3	–	9	9
Other Sites (31)	2	2	10	9	13	11	22	51	20	31	67	32

Analysis of the table shows an increase in the autumn which may in part be due to a good breeding season but may also refer to some birds being released. The high counts of 35 at Bury/Cow Down occurred on Jan 5th (TGB) whilst the 30 (3 coveys) on the Compton Downs was on Dec 23rd (DJB). Elsewhere counts of over 20 adults were reported from Little Heath, Tilehurst with 20 (released birds?) Aug 7th (JLe) and 27 Sheepdrove Nov 20th (ABT). In E Berks the highest count involved 9 birds seen at Cold Harbour and White Waltham in Oct and Dec (DJB). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 5 locations: a pair with 8y Stanford Dingley Jul 11th (JLe); a brood of 8 Jealott's Hill Jul 26th plus an ad with 3 juvs Aug 4th (PJC); 3 juvs were part of a covey of 8 at Farnborough Aug 13th (GDS) and a pair with 4 juvs nearby at Farnborough Down Aug 21st (GDS). Finally a pair with 11 full grown juvs was at Englefield Aug 21st and 2 juvs there Sep 4th (RCr).

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

A slightly better than average year with records from 3 downland areas and 4 lowland sites, possibly involving up to 14 calling males and a migrant. First reported from Spencers Wood where 1 was calling in nearby fields on the early date of May 3rd (NR). One calling Bury Down May 11th (CDRH) was followed by a single calling bird on the Lambourn Downs May 29th (CL) increasing to 5 calling from 3 separate sites there on Jun 10th (CDRH). Away from the downs single calling males were present at Dorney W May 31st (CRe) and Westley Mill May 31st – Jun 7th (MSFW). Two were calling from Cow Down, West Ilsley Jun 5th (ABT) and singles called from Lowbury Hill Jun 23rd (DJB) and Aldworth Jul 9th (LS). The last record involved an individual brought in by a cat at Dedworth on Aug 10th which unfortunately died overnight (N Edwards; BDC).

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

All high counts were thought to stem from released birds. The numbers of birds released each year into Berkshire's countryside must be truly immense, for example the local shoot at Englefield released 9000 birds in September (per RCr).

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Rare winter visitor

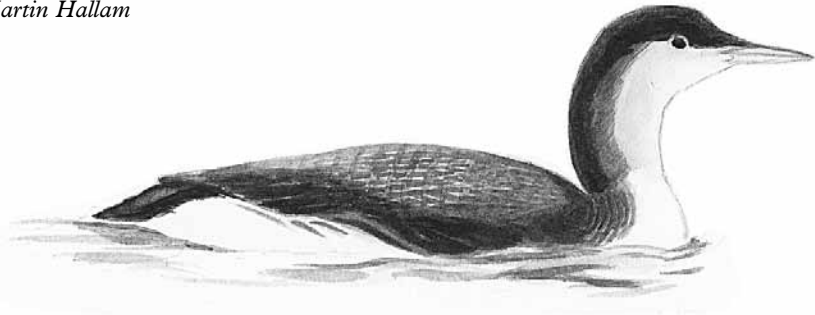
[The only record involved one that had been briefly present at Marlow GPs Bucks on Nov 27th and appeared to have possibly crossed into Berks when departing the site (APa).]

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare winter visitor

The first record since 1996 involved a bird located on the Village pit Wraisbury GPs Jan 22nd (PNe et al), remaining to Jan 23rd when it was aged as a juv (CDRH). What is presumed to be the same bird was seen subsequently at Island Barn Res, Surrey.

Black-throated Diver
by Martin Hallam



LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A common and widespread resident

In what can only be described as a record year for this species, birds were reported from 60 locations throughout the county with monthly max counts exceeding 20 birds on 13 occasions. The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	1	3	2	1	1	–	1	1	3	2	5	2
Eversley GPs	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	27	21	5	4	4
Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands	24	27	5	27	8	7	4	25	42	35	54	38
Lower Farm GP	2	6	7	8	8	9	16	20	15	14	6	5
Padworth Lane GP	18	12	6	–	–	–	7	7	13	14	8	–
Thatcham GPs and Marsh	1	4	3	2	1	1	10	10	1	7	3	7
Woolhampton/Midgham GPs	–	2	1	1	–	–	5	3	9	10	12	1

As the table shows, the Jubilee River has become a wintering stronghold for the species with birds concentrated around Dorney W to just downstream of Manor Fm Weir. The peak count at this site (54 on Nov 16: BDC) is the highest ever total recorded in Berks, the previous high being 51 at Dinton Pastures in Sep 1976. Other notable counts include an influx of 27 at Eversley GPs on Aug 30th (MGLR). Away from the main sites 45 locations reported 1-4 birds while 5 held 5-8. **Breeding:** The number of breeding records was disappointing; nests were discovered at 5 sites but breeding was only confirmed at 2, Lower Fm GP where 3prs bred (DJB; SAG) and Dorney W where a recently hatched chick was seen Aug 8th (BDC).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident and winter visitor

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	37	34	21	12	6	8	33	9	17	20	40	36
Burghfield GPs	43	35	43	–	–	–	–	–	–	51	40	36
Dinton Pastures CP	5	10	9	6	4	8	5	8	7	8	1	3
Eversley GPs	15	18	22	10	9	8	6	6	6	7	16	17
Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands	8	11	4	11	5	12	7	23	16	–	–	10
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	7	2	77	66	–	–	–	33	10	23	2
Summerleaze GPs	11	4	12	8	14	7	–	15	8	5	9	–
Thatcham GPs	19	16	15	7	3	7	3	12	8	17	27	35
Theale GPs	25	25	21	–	6	–	33	–	33	33	–	23
Woolhampton GPs	17	17	–	8	–	21	–	–	20	17	10	26

Elsewhere Horton GPs held a sizable non-breeding community with 85 May 15th (FJC). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 18 sites involving 28 pairs usually with broods of 2-3 young

however a brood of 5 was present on Maiden Erleigh Lake Jun 10th (RR). Birds nesting on the R. Thames fared better than in recent years with 6 pairs breeding at 5 locations.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant

Eight records involving 10 birds make 2005 a slightly better than average year. The 15 year status is shown in the table:

Year	1991	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01	02	03	04	05
No of Records	0	0	1	6	9	4	7	10	9	8	3	10	3	5	8
No of Birds	0	0	1	7	6	4	8	9	11	8	6	9	3	9	10

Spring: after no records in the first winter period, 1 in s/p Moatlands GP Apr 25th (ABT et al) was followed by a courting pair at Lower Fm GP from May 14th to 17th (MO). **Autumn:** a juvenile at QMR Aug 30th (CDRH) heralded a small influx into the county with 2 Moatlands GP Aug 31st (KEM) 1 remaining to Sep 6th (MO); 1 Lower Fm GP Sep 11th to 13th (SAG et al); 1 w/p QMR Sep 17th -18th (CDRH; MMc) and 1 w/p at the latter site Oct 12th (CDRH). **Second winter:** the only record involved a w/p adult at QMR from Nov 21st (CDRH) to Dec 3rd (MO)

LEACH'S STORM PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Rare vagrant

Increased coverage of QMR in recent years has improved the status of many seabird species in Berkshire, Leach's Storm Petrel being no exception. For the second year running a single bird visited the site, arriving from the NE at 1037hrs on Nov 9th and remaining till dusk (CDRH et al). This is the 19th county record and the 7th to occur in November.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Rare vagrant

The 22nd county record, an adult, was located at the unlikely site of Russel's Pond, Windsor Great Pk on Jul 26th (per EEG) and was still present on the morning of Jul 27th (CDRH); although the bird appeared exhausted and was only seen to make several short flights, it was not seen after 1135hrs.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Aldermaston GP		17	20	38	–	32	–	–	–	–	17	–	
Bray GPs		29	20	13	1	2	–	–	–	8	14	–	
Burghfield GPs		45	39	17	–	–	–	–	–	15	30	20	
Dinton Pastures CP		19	9	10	4	5	4	5	11	12	25	4	27

Eversley GPs	98	69	41	7	1	2	3	5	12	17	34	71
Heath Lake	10	9	8	1	3	3	3	2	11	12	16	9
Jubilee River/Dorney Wetlands	–	6	6	18	5	–	1	2	–	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	44	35	17	9	12	7	14	12	13	31	26	35
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	14	–	–	–	–	100	–	252	645	250	28
Summerleaze GPs	7	–	2	–	1	–	–	2	18	–	4	–
Thatcham GPs	23	34	16	1	1	1	10	3	1	11	22	6
Theale GPs	11	13	3	–	–	–	–	–	14	6	–	38

A better year for numbers than in 2004, the highest counts came from QMR with a peak of 645 on Oct 8th (PMC). Away from the main sites, high counts included 38 flying over Widbrook Common Sep 8th (BDC) and 36 Moatlands GP Sep 15th (KEM). **Breeding:** a check of the only colony in the county revealed 16 occupied nests on May 16th (JPM) which is down on the number of nests in 2003 (23). No other information was received, so it is not known how many young were fledged.

EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

The first record since 2001 came in the form of a juvenile at QMR from Aug 2nd to Nov 5th (CDRH et al).

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

Records were received from 4 localities involving 9 birds. **First winter:** the 2004 wintering adult remained at Lavell's Lake throughout the winter being last seen on Mar 14th (KIT). A short-staying bird appeared at Hosehill Lake Jan 26th remaining to Jan 28th (BU). **Second winter:** record numbers were reported from the reedbeds of Dinton Pastures CP. An adult was located at Lavell's Lake Nov 12th (J Beever per AR) and remained into Dec (MO), 2 dark-crowned adults were then seen on Dec 3rd (FJC) and a different bird with a paler crown showed on Dec 8th (FJC) but was not seen again; however the 2 dark-crowned birds remained until the year end (MO). Meanwhile, another was reported from the White Swan Lake reedbed on Dec 12th and 2 were present there from Dec 17th (MDL) remaining to at least Dec 31st (MO). The total of 5 birds (4 wintering) is unprecedented for this location. Elsewhere 1 was reported from Woolhampton GPs Nov 20th (Z Blackwood) and 1 showed at the Searle's Fm reedbed at Burghfield GPs Dec 3rd (TGB).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon but increasing visitor (Amber listed)

Records were received from 32 locations, 12 in W Berks and 10 in both M and E Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of sites	7	5	7	1	1	2	10	4	1	1	3	8
Min no of birds	11	11	13	2	1	2	11	4	1	1	3	16

As the table shows, numbers peaked in both winter periods and in mid summer, the highest counts involved 4 Eversley GPs Jan 9th (BMA) and Dec 1st (MGLR) and 4 along the R. Lambourn at Great Shefford Dec 24th (MSt). The most regular sites were Eversley GPs and Lower Fm GP with birds recorded in 7 months at the former site and 6 months at the latter site. Juveniles were noted at Summerleaze GP Aug 4th and 14th (CDRH) and Windsor Great Pk Aug 30th (CDRH). Birds are now beginning to appear more regularly at heronries (prospecting adults?) with 2 at Donnington Feb 27th (SAG) and Mar 5th (JL) and 3 at Burghfield GPs Dec 27th-28th (RJB; PMC).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor in small numbers

Recorded throughout our river valleys, sites where regular counts were made are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	5	5	5	1	–	2	3	2	3	2	4	–
Burghfield GPs	14	13	24	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	9	9
Eversley GPs	15	5	3	3	5	3	6	6	2	2	3	4
Heath Lake	3	6	4	4	6	4	1	2	1	1	2	2
Lower Farm GP	6	1	1	2	3	4	6	6	6	5	4	5

Breeding: was reported from 4 of the 9 known heronries situated in Berks. At Donnington 5 nests were noted on Mar 5th (JL) with 3 active on Apr 22nd (SAG). There were 3 occupied nests at Heath Lake on Mar 18th (DJS) and 2 pairs reared young (IT), 2 nests held young at Aldermaston GP May 16th (DJS) and there were 4 broods at the Wraysbury heronry May 31st (BDC). Unusual prey selection was noted at Lavell's Lake where an individual caught and for an hour attempted to swallow a Water Rail on Dec 12th (AR); the final outcome is not known.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

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

This is now a common bird in Berkshire. The affiliation this species has with man, often seen patrolling above roof-tops, and its attraction to landfill sites and farming practices has made this one of the most recorded species (1000+ records) within the county. The highest densities are generally found in the north and extreme SW of the county but birds are now beginning to appear even on the far eastern boundary of Berkshire, an area where there have been few reports in previous years. Most reports were of 1-7 birds, larger counts involved 10 Cookham Rise Feb 1st (L Kwantes); 10 attracted to hay cutting at Maidenhead Thicket Jul 17th (G R. Farrell); 9 Cookham Rise Sep 4th (BDC); 8 Streatley Warren Oct 16th (MR); 13 in the East Garston area Nov 20th (ABT) and 9 Knowl Hill Nov 21st (D Fry). The largest gatherings occurred at the Woolley Down roost where monthly peaks were 17 Jan 20th (SWi), 20 Sep 26th (GDS), 60 Oct 11th (SWi), 49 Nov 13th (GDS) and a modern day record of 80 Dec 9th (GDS). **Breeding:** was confirmed at only 2 locations: an adult was seen carrying food to a nest site in the Cookham area Jun 19th and Aug 10th with an adult and a juv there Sep 2nd (BDC); and a pair bred in the Woolley area rearing 2 young (GDS). Elsewhere a pair built a nest in the Farnborough area but it was later abandoned (GDS) and another pair was reported to be breeding in the Streatley area (per SAG) and the presence

of 2 juvs there on Oct 2nd (SAG) gives some credence to the earlier report. Juveniles were reported from various other localities so it is likely that other pairs may have been successful.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)

Although not quite emulating 2004, the total of 7 records still makes 2005 an above average year. **Spring:** the year began with an adult male flying north over Lavell's Lake Apr 10th (FJC; MFW). A female flew W/SW over QMR Apr 26th (CDRH) and a female-type flew high to the NE over the same site on May 22nd (CDRH). **Autumn:** in the west single juveniles were hunting along the Ridgeway near Compton Aug 18th (CDRH) and quartering fields at Sheepdrove Sep 8th (ABT). In M Berks an adult female flew SW over Lavell's Lake Sep 24th (FJC) and the last report occurred in the east with an imm/f seen at Wraybury GPs on Sep 28th (CL).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule 1)

Three records all of ringtails make 2005 an average year (based on the previous 10 years). **Second winter:** one watched for 5 minutes at Sheepdrove Sep 8th (ABT) is the earliest autumn record since a male visited Thatcham Marsh on the same date in 1981. Having seen a Marsh Harrier just 20 minutes earlier this was certainly a red-letter day for the observer. Another lingered at Bury Down being noted on Oct 29th (GBr) and Oct 30 (ANS). Finally 1 was reported from the county boundary at Weathercock Hill, Lambourn Dec 11th (T Edwards).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

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

Birds were reported from the usual summering area on the Berks/Oxon boundary with many Berks records from Apr 30th, a male (ABT), to Aug 16th, when a male was observed attacking a resting Hobby (DJB). At another location a melanistic first-summer male was present from Jul 16th to Aug 11th (M Shurmer per CDRH); this is only the third time that this rare colour morph has been recorded in Berks (the others being a male at an undisclosed site and date in 2004 and a male of the "dark variety" killed at Hall Place, Burchett's Green in 1870).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common and widespread resident

Recorded throughout the county, records suggest that the species is most common in the wooded south-east and scarcest in the more open downlands of the north-west. Most records, not including family parties, involved 1-2 birds, with higher counts being 3 over Cranbourne Chase Mar 26th (DJB); 4 together Wishmoor Apr 16th (MFW); 5+ in the Dinton Pastures area Apr 17th (FJC); 3 Englefield Jul 8th (RCr) and 3 Thatcham Marsh Jul 30th, Aug 6th and Oct 30th (NRG). **Breeding:** was confirmed at Burghfield GPs where a pair and 3 young was located Jul 10th (JA); 2 recently fledged juvs were present at Gorrick Wood from Jul 23rd to Sep 14th (PJC); a pair reared 2 young at Whiteknights Pk in Reading (PG); there were 3 including 2 juvs Theale Main GP Aug 21st (JA) and 3 juvs were noted

at Swinley Brickpits Aug 28th (PJC). Breeding was suspected at Freeman's Marsh (RF), an adult was carrying prey at Winter Hill Jul 27th (BDC) and display was seen at a further 5 locations. Ringing activities on Greenham Common led to 4 imm males being ringed between Oct 1st and Dec 31st (NC). There were numerous reports of Sparrowhawk kills (mostly from gardens) with House Sparrow, Blackbird, Starling and Collared Dove being the most reported however a female was seen with a Black-headed Gull at Eversley GPs Jul 27th (BMA).

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common and widespread resident and passage migrant

Like the Red Kite, Common Buzzards are another of the most recorded species in the county with over 1050 records submitted. Most reports were of 1-5 birds, higher counts of 6-9 came from 26 locations including 8 over Thatcham town centre Mar 23rd (RRK). Records of 10 or more involved 18 in the Woolley- Farnborough- Brightwalton area Jan 8th (GDS); 11 Walbury Hill Jan 21st (DJB); 13 Streatley Jan 22nd (ABT); a record count of 27 over Combe Hill included 4 displaying pairs Feb 18th (DJB) and 21 were noted in the same area Mar 26th (ABT). On the latter date 11 were noted over Theale Main GP (NR) and 12 drifted over Newbury Mar 28th (R R. Capewell). The highest count for E Berks was 11 over Widbrook Common Sep 14th (CDRH) and was followed by the highest M Berks count of 14 over Lavell's Lake Sep 18th (FJC); both these records may have involved some migrating individuals. The last high count was 10 over Hungerford Oct 9th (JBut). **Breeding:** most records came from the more densely populated west of the county where a nest was located at Peasemore May 8th (GDS); 2 young were heard at West Woodhay Down Jul 22nd to 28th (RGS; LS); 2 juvs Beedon Jul 31st (RF); a pair with 2 juvs Hell Corner Fm Aug 2nd (LS); 2 calling juvs Speen Moor Aug 3rd (GDS); a pair with 2 juvs Lower Fm GP Aug 7th (IW); a pair with 2 juvs Arlington Grange Aug 8th (IW); 1 juv Brimpton Aug 8th (GEW); 1 juv Lardon Chase Aug 28th (JLe); 1 juv Welford Aug 29th (GDS); 4 juv Eastbury Oct 2nd (GDS) and in the Woolley – Farnborough area GDS located 6 breeding pairs that reared 11 young. In M and E Berks breeding was confirmed at Ashley Hill where 2 pairs reared 3 young (BDC; DJB); an adult was carrying food to a presumed nest site in the Hawthorn Hill area Jul 4th (BDC); 1 juv fledged from a nest at Widbrook Common Jul 22nd (C Carver; J Field) and single juvs were noted at Swallowfield Jul 25th (MDL) and Eversley GPs Sep 3rd (BMA). Display was noted at a further 8 locations involving 12 pairs. The total of up to 23 breeding pairs plus the displaying pairs are the highest totals ever recorded in the county.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

Rare winter visitor

One (probably an adult female) was reported from Frogmill, Hurley on Nov 5th (SJF; FMF). This is the first acceptable record of this rare visitor since an elusive juvenile wintered in the Combe area during the winter of 1994/95 (not 1993/1994 as mentioned in the Birds of Berkshire 1996). NOTE: extreme caution should be used when confronted with a possible Rough-legged Buzzard in Berkshire. With Common Buzzard now a common resident throughout the county, the wide range of colour variants can trick the unwary into believing that they have a Rough-legged Buzzard; pale-morph Common Buzzards can often show Rough-leg features such as a pale head, breast, rump and occasionally some of the tail.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)

There were 19 records probably involving 13 birds, nearly emulating the record year of 2002. **Spring:** 1 flew NW over Theale Main GP Mar 26th (RAD) and April reports came from Upper Basildon where 1 flew NW Apr 9th (C Wearn) and Chaddleworth where 1 visited a small lake at the West Berks GC from Apr 11th to 13th (J I F Perry). May began with 1 flying north over Lavell's Lake on the 1st (PJC; WAN), then 1 flew west over Dorney W on the 10th (CRe) and finally 1 was located at Eversley GPs on the 17th (RMW). **Autumn:** there were several clusters of records which probably refer to wandering individuals. One seen flying west at Newbury Aug 27th (TC) may have been the same bird seen at Lower Farm GP Aug 30th (NC) and Sep 1 (RA). Another was reported from the Wasing estate Sep 3rd (C Elwood) with further sightings at nearby Woolhampton GPs Sep 4th (KEM) and Brimpton GP Sep 7th (GEW) when it flew south. One flew SSW over Caversham Sep 4th (TBa per RCr) then 1 visited several east Berks locations, being first noted at Bray GPs Sep 10th (WAS) then Cockmarsh Sep 12th (WAS) and over the R. Thames at Bray Sep 16th (RAns; JAns). One at Sonning Eye GP, Oxon departed south into Berks Sep 11th (HRN); another flew east over Eversley GPs Sep 12th (RMW) and finally 1 was reported flying SW over Silwood Pk Sep 13th (A Phillimore).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread resident (Amber listed)

Records were received from throughout the county with counts of adults usually being 1-4 birds. A high count of 7 was made on the Compton Downs Nov 12th (DJB). **Breeding:** 17 pairs were known to have bred successfully within the county with most broods numbering 1-3 juvs. Larger broods were reported from Woolhampton GP where 4 juvs were noted Jun 30th (KEM), a family party of 6 (no ad male present) were south of Knowl Hill Jul 5th (PBT) and 4 juvs at Ashley Hill Aug 29th (DJB). The only site to report more than 1 breeding pair was Woolley Down where 2 pairs bred rearing 2 and 3 young (GDS)

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

Records were received from 10 locations involving up to 14 birds. **First winter:** the year began with a fem/imm hunting over Cow Down, West Ilsley Jan 5th (TGB) and a female on the Lambourn Downs Jan 13th (CDRH). An adult male (presumably the Dec 2004 bird) visited Cold Harbour Jan 16th (DJB) but despite searching was not seen again. One at West Ilsley Jan 23rd (RANG) may have been the Jan 5th individual, however a female and a f/w male were present there on Feb 2nd (CDRH). A fem/imm was present on the Compton Downs Jan 29th (DJB). The last report involved a male flying south through Lower Farm GP flushing all in its path Mar 20th (RRK). **Second winter:** a juv female flew east over QMR Oct 18th (CDRH) and what was presumed to be the same bird reappeared there Nov 2nd (CDRH; KEM). Meanwhile a female took up residence at Cold Harbour from Oct 29th to at least Dec 14th (DJB et al). An elusive male joined the female at Cold Harbour Nov 18th (DJB) remaining into 2006 and 2 flew south over Greenham Common Nov 26th (NC; JL). A fem/imm shot through Bottom Lane Floods Dec 14th (RJB) and a female was seen in pursuit of a Fieldfare at East Garston Down Dec 18th (GDS). A bird seen distantly at White Waltham Airfield Dec 19th (DJB) was presumed to be a Cold Harbour bird and finally a female was seen hunting over Compton Downs Dec 23rd (DJB).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

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

Records were received from over 100 locations throughout the county and the volume of records show that this species seems to be doing well in 21st century Berkshire. **Spring:** first reported from Dinton Pastures CP with 1 Apr 16th (FJC; MFW), there were no further sightings until 1 Eversley GPs Apr 22nd (MGLR) but after this date birds began to be reported more widely with a peak in mid May. Records at this time were usually of 1-4 birds but at favoured sites larger counts were made such as 10 Horton GPs May 15th (FJC) and 12 there Jun 11th (CDRH), 7 Woolhampton GPs Jun 10th (CDRH) and 6 Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood GPs Jun 13th (RCr). **Breeding:** pairs bred at 5 locations: in NE Berks pairs bred at 2 sites with both pairs rearing 2 young (DJB; BDC) and in SE Berks 3 pairs reared 7 young (PJC; DJS). The lack of breeding records from mid and west Berks is surprising when given the number of juveniles reported at gravel pits, however the lack of coverage of suitable breeding habitat in this part of the county during the summer months would account for possible breeding pairs going undiscovered. **Autumn:** passage at this time of year is generally more leisurely so gatherings are usually smaller than those in the spring. The highest counts this year were 5 over Dorney W and the adjacent Slough SF Sep 5th (BDC) and 6 in the Widbrook Common area Sep 8th (BDC). By early October most birds have departed, late records being 1 over Lavell's Lake Oct 19th (PMC) and an exceptional record of 1 over Burghfield Mill GP Nov 4th (RJB). Both of these records exceed the previous latest departure date for the county.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

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

The high mobility of this species makes it difficult to assess the number of birds that visited Berkshire in 2005, however birds were reported from 35 locations throughout the county and the monthly site totals are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of Sites	13	10	5	4	4	0	3	3	6	9	9	12

Most records referred to single individuals, but records of 2 came from Weathercock Hill, ad male and fem Jan 1st (ACJ); ad male and fem at Bury Down Jan 2nd (RRi); ad male and fem in the Horton/Wraysbury area from Jan 9th to the end of Feb (CDRH); Greenham Common Aug 16th (NC); imm male and fem QMR Nov 9th (CDRH); and 2 adults Lower Fm GP Dec 2nd (MO). Long staying individuals were reported from Theale GPs with 1 from Jan to Mar 31st (MO) and an ad male there from Oct 2nd to the year end (MO); an imm male took up residence at QMR from Sep 9 to the year end (CDRH; ABT); and an ad male was at Cold Harbour from Oct 7th (PJC) to at least Nov 1st (DJB). The most regular sites were Lower Fm GP where reports came in Jan – Feb and Oct – Dec and involved at least 4 birds; Theale Main GP with reports for Jan – Mar, July and Sep – Dec involving up to 3 birds and QMR where birds were reported from Jan – May and Aug – Dec involving 5 birds including a leucistic first summer female which had pale sandy upperparts and all the black markings replaced by brown May 29th (CDRH).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

Records were received from 32 locations evenly spread across the county. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of Sites	10	14	14	4	2	1	2	3	7	9	15	19
Minimum number of birds	12	17	22	5	3	1	5	5	8	15	37	37

First winter: birds were reported from 21 locations with most reports involving 1-2 birds. Higher counts occurred in March with 3 noted on several dates at Thatcham Marsh and 4 at Thames Valley Pk Mar 3rd (SH) and 4 Dorney W Mar 13th (SP). **Spring/Summer:** only reported from 5 sites during this period. One was present at Kintbury Cressbeds on Apr 10th-11th (RGS), another was calling from reeds at White Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures Apr 20th (MSte; MSFW) and 1 showed at Eversley GPs Apr 21st (KCr). At more regular summer locations up to 3 birds were noted throughout the summer at Thatcham GPs (NRG) and 1 was calling at Brimpton GPs May 3rd (at night: MFW), May 11th (RCr) and 2 birds Jul 20th (JPM). Unfortunately there were no confirmed cases of breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** birds began to reappear at wintering sites from early Aug with 1 at Dorney W Aug 8th (C C Humphrey; DJB) and numbers slowly increased, peaking in Nov-Dec when high counts included 4 Lavell's Lake Nov 21st (MFW), 5 Bray GPs Nov 30th (PNe), 4 Brimpton GPs Dec 16th (GEW) and at least 6 present at Hosehill Lake throughout Dec (BU).

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Formerly a not uncommon summer visitor now a rare vagrant (Schedule 1 and Red Listed)

One heard calling from fields near Grazeley Jun 11th (R D Waterer) is the first record since 24 July 1983 when one was seen in flight at Theale GPs.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common and widespread resident found almost anywhere there is open water

Monthly maxima at locations where counts were regular were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	11	7	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	11	15
Eversley GPs	32	19	24	-	20	-	-	-	18	17	14	32
Heath Lake	4	5	4	2	3	2	3	4	6	3	8	10
Jubilee River	54	74	-	74	-	-	-	38	107	-	-	56
Lavell's Lake	2	4	3	2	2	9	6	7	6	6	5	4
Lower Farm GP	12	20	14	9	9	10	12	20	16	18	15	12
Muddy Lane GP	10	7	4	3	2	4	2	2	2	14	21	20
Wraysbury GPs	43	58	55	-	-	-	-	-	21	22	22	11

The large count of 107 on the Jubilee River consisted of 93 adults and 14 young and occurred on Sep 2nd (BDC). Elsewhere high counts included 20 Shepherd Meadows,

Sandhurst Jan 8th (DJS); 15 Burchett's Green College Feb 24th (PNe); 15 Quelm Pk Hurley Mar 6th (BDC); 26 Whiteknights Pk Lake Mar 17th (EGC); 24 Theale Main GP Sep 9th (WeBS) and 23 Hosehill Lake Sep 25th (BU). **Breeding:** as is usual for such a familiar species, breeding was generally overlooked and only 8 sites produced confirmation of breeding.

COOT *Fulica atra*

A common resident and winter visitor

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	70	44	40	26	11	14	26	18	25	33	21	–
Burghfield GPs	399	297	207	–	–	–	–	–	–	300	418	437
Dinton Pastures CP	104	46	15	–	–	–	–	20	51	117	80	142
Eversley GPs	250	106	99	–	–	42	143	–	173	–	196	203
Jubilee River	171	179	90	179	46	–	44	242	406	–	–	222
Lower Farm GP	105	84	75	40	41	71	118	150	55	19	34	21
Muddy Lane GP	42	25	14	14	14	23	26	29	30	48	45	56
Summerleaze GPs	178	110	73	54	59	48	–	67	124	53	73	–
Theale Main GP	219	195	157	–	–	–	–	–	600	435	780	391
Wraysbury GPs	265	198	184	–	17	–	–	–	128	176	177	243

The high count of 780 at Theale Main GP occurred on Nov 17th (RCr). Away from the main sites, 272 were present at Pingewood GPs Sep 3 (MFW) and a count of 285 at Hosehill Lake was made on Sep 25th (BU) the observer having just counted 600 on the adjacent Theale Main GP. A further count of 335 at Hosehill was made on Nov 25th (DJB). **Breeding:** was confirmed or suspected at most of our wetland sites – including rivers such as the Kennet, Loddon and Thames. Breeding densities differed from site to site; high concentrations reported included at least 8 nests at Lower Fm GP (SAG), 5 nests at Dorney W on Jul 28th (BDC) and at least 5 pairs breeding at Lavell's Lake (MFW). A nest containing 15 eggs was found at Whiteknights Pk Lake, 8 subsequently hatching (PG). A partial albino (white on flanks) showed at Twyford GPs Jul 22nd (MFW).

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

A remarkable year with 34 records all of single birds. Analysis of the records shows that around 27 birds were responsible for all reports. **Spring:** birds were reported from 13 locations: at Eversley GPs sightings were made Mar 13th (BMA; MJM), Mar 22nd (NG), Mar 24th (BMA), Apr 10th (RJG) May 15th (GH; GR) and May 22nd (BMA); Moatlands GP Mar 19th–20th (MO); Crookham/Greenham Common Mar 26th (RAH) and Apr 1st (PGo); Hosehill Lake Mar 28th (NR); Lower Fm GP Apr 1st (GK), May 3rd (GMac), May 15th (MO) and Jun 15th (GMac; GSte) the latest spring report; Bray GPs Apr 9th (BDC); Dorney W Apr 10th (SP), Apr 17th (MO), Apr 21st (CRe), Apr 29th and May 1st (SP); Lavell's Lake/Lea Fm area Apr 10th (MO) and Jun 11th (TOA); Pingewood GPs Apr 30th (FJC; KEM) and May 1st (RAd); Warfield May 9th (WAN); Horton GPs May 14th (CDRH; CL) and Twyford GPs Jun 5th (MFW). **Autumn:** passage was much lighter with

birds being reported from 5 locations: over Birch Hill, Bracknell Jul 16th (MRAn); Eversley GPs Jul 20th (BMA), Jul 22nd (GH) and Jul 24th (BMA; GH); Horton GPs Jul 28th (CDRH); QMR Aug 15th (CDRH) and Aug 29th (CDRH; CL) – the latest date – and over Woodley Aug 16th (FJC).

STONE CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

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

All records were from the Downs, where birds were present on at least 5 sites during May to August and 2 possibly 3 pairs bred rearing 3-4 young (MO). Unfortunately the results of the annual RSPB survey were not available so these totals are probably an under estimate of the true county status of the species. In the autumn a flock of 21 was located Sep 21st (CDRH).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule 1)

Records were received from 20 locations, 5 in W Berks, 7 in M Berks and 8 in E Berks. The monthly maxima at the main sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lea Fm GP	–	–	2	–	3	4*	4*	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	–	–	4	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	3	6	8*	5*	8*	4*	–	–	–	–
Greenham/Crookham Commons	–	–	6	7	3	5*	7*	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	–	–	2	4	6	5*	10*	1	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	3	4	6	1	2	–	–	–	–	–
Other sites	–	–	9	9	7	10	3	3				

* = totals that include young birds

Spring: first arrivals involved singles at Pingewood GPs (KEM) and Dorney W (MO) on the later-than-usual date of Mar 16th. High counts in March were 6 Bottom Lane Theale on 21st (KEM) and Greenham Common on 23rd (SWi) increasing to 7 there Apr 10th (NC).

Breeding: birds were reported from 14 locations in May/June with breeding confirmed at 4 of these. In the Moor Green Lakes report, 3-4 pairs were reported at Eversley GPs with 3 pairs breeding; however individual records suggest that only 2 pairs bred on the Berkshire side of the site – each rearing 2 young (BMA). Elsewhere at least 3 pairs were present on Greenham Common and 1 pair had 2-3 young Jun 18th (IW; JL) and 3 juvs on Jul 12th (JPM) were possibly a different brood. A pair bred at Lea Fm GP, Hurst, rearing 2 young (MFW) these birds visiting the adjacent Lavell's Lake Jul 2nd (BTB). Finally at least 2 pairs bred at Lower Fm GP, 2 pairs were incubating eggs May 29th (IW; JL) and 4 ads were seen with 6 juvs Jul 8th (NC). **Autumn:** passage was very light this year, with 4 present at QMR Jun 30th (CDRH) and 3 there Jul 15th (CDRH). Otherwise most reports involved 1-2 birds the latest being 2 at Summerleaze GP Aug 21st (BDC), 1 Twyford GPs Aug 23rd-24th (MFW) and 1 remained at Lower Fm GP until Aug 30th (DJB).

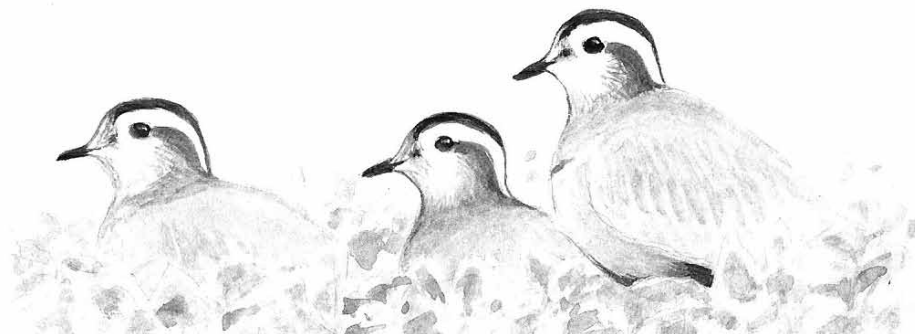
RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

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

Like 2004 records were received from 10 locations, 3 in both W Berks and M Berks and 4 in E Berks. The monthly site maximum counts are shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Crookham/Greenham Commons	-	-	20	2	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	-	1	3	2	2	-	2	-	3	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
Horton GPs	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	1	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	3	4	7	5	3	-	-	-	-	-
Pingewood GPs	-	-	1	3	4	1	1	1	3	-	-	-
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	1	1	1	2	1	4	4	1	-	-
Other sites	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Spring: Ringed Plovers usually start to arrive in Berkshire a little earlier than Little Ringed Plovers, the first this year being 1 at Dorney W Feb 10th (WAS), followed by 1 QMR Mar 7th (CDRH). Numbers remained low for a further 2 weeks before an influx on Mar 21st which included a record March count of c20 at Crookham Common (C Ellis), the highest count reported in the county since 1998 when 40-50 were present at Dorney W May 27th. By May birds had been located at 8 sites, with high counts being 3 Moatlands GP (a former breeding site) May 19th (BU), 4 Pingewood GPs May 20th (ABT) and 7 at Lower Fm GP May 30th (IW). **Breeding:** in recent years many of this species regular breeding sites have become unsuitable due to habitat change or disturbance, leading to fewer successful breeding attempts. In 2005 breeding was only attempted at 4 locations although summering may have occurred at a further 2; at Dorney W a pair attempted to breed but failed (DJB); on Greenham Common a nest was located with 2 eggs Jun 7th increasing to 4 by Jun 17th but the nest was empty on Jun 27th (NC). At Horton GPs 1 pair fledged 2 young (CDRH) and at Lower Fm GP a pair fledged at least 1 young (SAG et al). **Autumn:** a light passage was noted from Jul 25th (2 ads Slough SF: CDRH) to Oct 5th (1 over QMR: CDRH). Notable counts included 4 QMR Aug 11th and Sep 25th (CDRH), 3 Pingewood GPs Sep 11th (KEM) and 3 Slough SF Sep 16th (CDRH).



Dotterel by Martin Hallam

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare passage migrant

A trip of 3 (1f, 2m) found in a bean field at Burnthouse Fm, Pingewood on Apr 30th from 1105hrs to 1820hrs (MO) is the first record of more than 1 bird since 1886 and the first record away from the Downs since 1885.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common but local winter visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 50 locations throughout the county. The monthly maximum counts where birds were regularly reported are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cold Harbour/White Waltham area	100	150	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	71	360
Dorney Wetlands area	1800	1000	500	400	-	-	-	-	40	200	750	500
Greenham Common	4	-	100	50	-	-	-	-	37	150	35	-
Lower Farm GP	408	150	28	-	-	-	-	-	11	1000	4000	1500
West Ilsley area	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	1000	-

First winter: birds were reported from 30 locations, mostly in West Berks where a higher than usual number of large flocks were reported. Flocks of c1000 were reported from Bury Down throughout Jan (MO), Newbury Jan 29th-30th (JL;IW), over Enborne Feb 5th (AG), Bothamstead Mar 9th (CDRH) and larger flocks of c1500 flew over Sheepdrove Feb 5th (ABT) and c2000 circled fields near Winterbourne Mar 20th (MJT). In Mid Berks the largest count was 300 beside the M4 at Broadcommon, Hurst Mar 20th (DJB) while in the east, Dorney W regularly held 1000+ peaking at 1800 Jan 8th (MFW); 498 flying west over Bray GPs Feb 12th (DJB) were probably Dorney birds. Most birds had left the county by April, however c400 were still present at Dorney W Apr 8th (BDC). The latest departure was Apr 15th when 25 were seen in flight west of J10 of the M4 (PBT).

Second winter: 1 at QMR on Sep 17th-18th (MMc) was the forerunner of a surprisingly large number of September records involving a minimum of 132 birds from 8 localities, high counts being 37 Greenham Common Sep 24th (MO) and 40+ Dorney W Sep 29th (CDRH). Numbers continued to build during October with highs of 1000+ Lower Fm GP Oct 27th and 29th (RA; IW), 198 Eton Wick Oct 5th (CDRH) and 200+ nearby at Dorney W Oct 22nd (SP). Apart from 1500 over Lower Fm GP Dec 2nd (RAH) no other flock exceeded 500 birds in December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

A poor year with only 2 records, both from QMR. **Spring:** one in non-breeding plumage flew west over the reservoir May 9th (CDRH). **Autumn:** a group of 4 calling birds flew NE over the reservoir Oct 5th (CDRH).

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

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

The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	400	600	8	2	1	–	100	80	–	61	20	550
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	944	100	190	150	4	–	2	30	–	–	–	–
Englefield	–	60	51	29	30	–	–	124	223	64	–	–
Eversley GPs	700	400	250	18	18	100	260	238	300	184	181	540
Lavell's Lake/ Hurst Tip area	700	400	–	–	–	2	–	16	56	200	150	700
Lower Farm GP	400	247	43	15	18	103	80	47	102	224	70	300

First winter: the high count of 944 at Dorney W occurred on Jan 1st (DJB). Elsewhere 500+ were noted at Bury Down Jan 1st (RCr); 600 were present at Amners Fm, Pingewood Jan 3rd (RCr); c500 were noted at both Combe (TPo) and Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood (RJB) Jan 22nd; 565 were amongst pigs at Bucklebury Feb 5th (ABT) and c500 were at Aldworth Feb 19th (NJB). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding was reported from 16 locations, 7 of which were confirmed. Young were first seen at Eversley GPs May 13th and 3+ were there Jun 24th (GH). At Pingewood GPs a pair had 3 young May 27th (MJT) and at Lower Fm GP 6 nests were located May 28th (IW) and a max of 12 chicks was seen Jun 18th (IW; JL). There were 2 young at Englefield May 31st (RCr); a pair with 2 young was found at the Vodafone HQ in Newbury Jun 16th (M G Prince); several pairs bred at Farnborough (GDS) and young were present at Old Lane Kintbury Jul 19th (TPo). At least 15 territories were noted at Brimpton May 9th (GEW) but breeding was not confirmed. **Second winter:** flock sizes were generally smaller than in the first winter period, the largest count being c700 on Hurst Tip/Lea Fm GP Dec 22nd (MFW).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce passage migrant

Ten records, 4 in spring and 6 in autumn involving 16 birds make 2005 a fairly average year for this species. **Spring:** the only record away from QMR involved the first of the year, an ad in s/p at Lower Fm GP Apr 30th (MO). This was followed at QMR by 2 in s/p May 16th, 1 s/p May 23rd and 3 briefly before departing to the west May 29th (CDRH). **Autumn:** all records were from QMR. An early bird arrived with Little Ringed Plovers Jul 5th (CDRH) and was followed by 3ads (2 in s/p) Jul 19th, 2 s/p Jul 20th, 1 moulting ad Jul 28th-29th, 1 Aug 8th and finally a juv Aug 28th (CDRH).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn

For the first time since 1987, no county records were submitted of this diminutive wader.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant predominantly in spring

There were 2 spring records, both in E Berks (and possibly involving the same bird). One at Horton GP on May 14th – May 15th (CDRH et al) was followed by an elusive individual at Dorney W from May 18th-20th (CRe et al).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Scarce passage migrant

Four records this year, 2 in spring and 2 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 in partial s/p Dorney W May 12th (DAC et al) and 1 reported from Lower Fm GP May 21st (RA; GK; GMac). **Autumn:** a juv was briefly present at Pingewood GPs Sep 17th (BTB; RCr) and another was present the same day at Lower Fm GP (IW), being reported again Sep 20th (AJP; GK). The appearance of the 2 autumn individuals in a year when there were no reports of Little Stints is very unusual when one looks at the affinity this species has with strong Little Stint passage in the autumn.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Common passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor

Recorded from 13 locations this year, the monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	–	1	3	5	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	10	5	–	6	1	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	1	4	7	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	2	5	2	1	1
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
Number of Sites	1	–	1	1	6	1	3	4	1	–	–	–
Number of Birds	10	–	4	3	8	1	4	6	1	–	–	–

First winter: a flock of 10 circling low over Fobney Lock Jan 23rd (WAN) was the only true first winter record; 1 DorneyW on Feb 28th-Mar 1st (CRe) probably involved an early migrant. **Spring:** 4 reported from Eversley GPs Mar 9th (MGLR) were followed by 1 Pingewood GPs Mar 17th-18th (MO) and 3 Dorney W Mar 20th (BDC). Records increased from late March into April with a peak of 10 in s/p Lower Fm GP Apr 30th (MO). Birds were reported from 10 sites in May, high counts involved 7 Pingewood GPs May 20th (ABT) and 5 Lower Fm GP May 22nd (NC). Summer plumaged individuals visiting QMR Jun 5th and Greenham Common Jun 9th (CDRH) were the latest records. **Autumn/Second winter:** passage resumed on Jul 3rd when an adult of the southern form (*C. a. schinzi*) was identified at Horton GPs (CDRH) and was followed by a party of 6 Lower Fm GP Jul 8th (NC). Passage continued through Aug-Sept, but numbers were small, the largest groups being 3 Moatlands GP Aug 25th (KEM) and 5 f/w QMR Sep 16th (CDRH). Later passage was confined to QMR with 2 Oct 26th (CDRH) and singles Oct 18th (CDRH), Nov 9th (RDr) and finally Dec 29th (CDRH).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Compared with recent years, 2005 with 5 records involving 11-15 birds was below average. **Spring:** there were 2 records from Dorney W, a female May 9th-10th (SP) and a male May 12th (DAC; SP). **Autumn:** a juvenile commuted between Dorney W and Slough SF from Aug 25th (SP) to Sep 5th (CR) and 8 flew west over Moatlands GP Aug 28th (JA; RPo). Finally 4 (3m 1f) flew west from Staines Moor, Surrey over Wraysbury GPs on Sep 11th (CDRH).

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon and localised winter visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 15 locations with 9 in E Berks and 3 in M and W Berks. However numbers were usually small, most reports being of single birds. **First winter:** reported from 12 sites beginning with 1 at Greenham Common Jan 1st (IW) then 1 Slough SF (RN) and 2 Decoy Heath (DJB) Jan 2nd. Further January records came from Wraysbury GPs with 1 on the 12th (WAS); 1 Freeman's Marsh on the 20th (RF) and at Pingewood GPs, 1 on the 23rd (BTB) and 2 on the 30th (MFW). At Horton GPs, which has been a favoured site for many years, there were 16 on Jan 11th and 12 on Feb 6th (CDRH). Birds remained at Pingewood GPs through February with singles seen on the 3rd (ANS), 9th (PH) and 20th (KS) then 2 were noted there Mar 6th (KEM). Elsewhere 1 was flushed at Swinley Brickpits (JEW) and 4 were located near Brimpton GP (GEW) Feb 5th and 1 at Eversley GPs on Feb 12th (IHB). March records, some involving passage birds, came from Horton GPs where there were still 5 on Mar 2nd (CDRH); Decoy Heath, 1 Mar 5th (MFW); Eversley GPs, 1 Mar 6th (GH) and a long staying bird from Mar 20th (BMA) to Apr 5th (KEM) then again Apr 11th (CDJ); 1 Lavell's Lake Mar 10th (FJC; MFW) to Mar 16th (PNe; PBT); 1 Dorney W Mar 18th (CR) and 1 Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Pk Mar 28th (CDRH). **Second winter:** there were single birds at Wraysbury Oct 15th (CDRH) and Bray GPs Dec 24th (CDRH) and at Horton GPs there were 6 Nov 25th and 5 Dec 15th (CDRH).

COMMON SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

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

Records were received from 46 locations, 13 in W Berks, 20 in M Berks and 13 in E Berks. The monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	1	5	5	1	–	–	1	–	3	3	1	1
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	39	22	60	45	2	–	–	6	7	7	22	10
Eversley GPs	10	7	12	2	1	1	–	2	4	4	7	2
Lower Farm GP	2	6	5	6	5	1	1	3	11	36	2	8
Pingewood GPs	14	12	17	–	–	–	–	–	4	3	5	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
Number of Sites	12	14	13	7	–	–	1	–	7	10	14	10
Minimum number of birds	69	33	50	28	–	–	1	–	21	25	28	27

First winter: a total of 6 sites held double figure totals with the Dorney W/Slough SF area holding the lion's share. The sludge lagoons of the sewage farm were in a good condition for this species and produced the high counts of 39 Jan 1st (SP) and 60 Mar 13th (DJB; BDC; SP) whilst the February count of 22 occurred on the Wetlands Feb 3rd (CR). Away from the main sites there were 3 counts of 12 birds, at Wraysbury GPs (WAS) and Hosehill Lake (RCr) Jan 12th and Bray GPs Jan 24th (PNe). **Spring/Summer:** numbers had reduced by April with the exception of c45 Slough SF Apr 3rd (SP) and 20+ Englemere Pond Apr 4th (DJS). May records involved 2 Dorney W May 1st (SP), 5 Lower Fm GP May 26th (RF) and a long staying bird at Eversley GPs which remained to Jun 4th (GH). The last spring/summer date involved 1 Lower Fm GP Jun 11 (IW; JL), there was no evidence of breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** returning birds began to appear in July with singles at Lavell's Lake Jul 22nd (PBT), Lower Fm GP Jul 23rd (SAG) and QMR Jul 24th (CDRH). Throughout the county site totals were lower than the first winter, the exception being 36 at Lower Fm GP Oct 21st (LS). Elsewhere only Dorney W held reasonable numbers the high being 22 Nov 18th (SP). An individual seen flying over Inkpen Hill Dec 29th (MJT) may have been using a nearby dewpond.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

Records were received from 42 locations, 19 of which produced records during the period of Apr-Jul. **First winter:** birds were reported from 10 sites during the period. Most records were of single birds however 2 were flushed at Kintbury Cressbeds Feb 4th (RGS) and 2 were noted in Windsor Great Pk Mar 6th (MMc). Early roding was reported from Swinley Forest, Feb 27th (MSFW) and Mar 13th (BTB) and at Gorrick Wood Mar 3rd (NG). **Spring/Summer:** roding was reported from 14 locations from late March into July. **West Berks:** Roding was noted at 8 locations, the site high counts being 1 Kintbury Apr 10th (JLS); 1 Box Wood, Hermitage throughout May (JBU); 2 on several dates Greenham/Crookham Common in May and June (MO); 1 Winterbourne Holt May 27th (JL); 4 Snelsmore Common Jun 8th (BJW); 3+ Bucklebury Common Jun 17th (GJS; GSt); 1 Wickham Heath Jun 19th (SAG) and 2 Stockcross Jun 26th (SAG). A pair was also seen at Denford Mill Apr 1st (RGS) and single birds were reported from a further 4 sites but not reported as roding. **Mid Berks:** Roding was only reported from Padworth with 1 Jun 6th (ANS) and Mortimer with 3 Jun 27th (RCr). **East Berks:** Most reports came from Swinley and Windsor Forests. At Swinley there were numerous reports from at least 5 different areas within the forest. Peak counts involved 5 in the Hut Hill area May 7th (MSFW), 2 Devils Highway Jun 10th (DJB), 3 Caesars Camp Jun 15th (MSFW) and 2 Wishmoor Bottom Jul 12th (WAS). In Windsor Forest the main site was Cranbourne Chase where 6 were roding Apr 21st (BAJC) and at least 8 there Jun 27th (DJB). Elsewhere 1 was heard at Chawridge Bank Mar 25th (KCr) and 2 were roding at Swinley Brickpits Jun 19th (DJB). **Second winter:** There were records from 18 locations throughout the county. Like the first winter most reports involved single birds but 2 were seen at dusk in Swinley Forest Dec 4th (DJS), 2 were flushed at Wasing Pk Dec 5th (DJS) and 4 were encountered at Brimpton Mill Dec 18th (GEW).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant (Schedule 1)

Like 2004 there were 8 records, 2 in spring and 6 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 in s/p was present at Lower Fm GP from Apr 26th to 30th (MO). This was followed by an adult in non-breeding plumage at Hosehill Lake Jun 4th-5th (BU et al). **Autumn:** a flock of 15 reported from

Eversley GPs Jul 13th (GH; BH) is the largest flock ever reported from this site, which had a very good autumn for this species with further records of 1 Jul 27th (RMW), 1 s/p Jul 31st-Aug 1st (MO) and 3 over Aug 3rd (BMA). Elsewhere 3 s/p adults of the Icelandic race (*L. l. islandica*) were located at Slough SF Jul 25th (CDRH) and 5 circled Woolhampton GPs Aug 5th (GEW) before moving off west.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant

The recent increase in annual county records continued in 2005 with a total of 18 records involving 29-30 birds, all but 1 occurring in the spring. **Spring:** an influx occurred at the end of April and continued into May. The table illustrates the daily status during this period.

Date	Apr 22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	May 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No of sites	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	6	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
No of birds	1	1	-	1	2	-	1	-	13	1	7	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

Eversley GPs hosted the first bird on Apr 22nd (BMA) and had further records of 2 Apr 26th (IHB), 1 Apr 28th (BMA) and 1 May 1st (BMA; NG). Further individuals appeared at Lower Fm GP Apr 23rd (IW; JL) and QMR Apr 25th (CDRH). The main influx occurred on Apr 30th when singles were noted at Dorney W (DJB; SP), QMR (CDRH) and possibly the same individual at Midgham and Woolhampton GPs (MFW). Four were located at Lower Fm GP (NC; ABT) and 5 were present at Pingewood GPs - 4 in the same field as the trip of 3 Dotterel and 1 on the adjacent Burnthouse Lane pits (MO). Six flew WNW over QMR on May 2nd (CDRH) and 1 visited Pingewood GPs (KEM) the same day. Other singles were noted flying W over Theale Main GP May 3rd (RHS), 1 was heard at night over Aldworth May 7th (MFW) and 1 flew N over QMR May 11th (CDRH). **Autumn:** in contrast to the spring, only one was reported, flying S over the Compton Downs on Aug 31st (RRi).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

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

Recorded from 16 locations this year with 2 areas recording summering, the rest passage. **First winter:** 3 flew NW over Woolley Down Jan 20th (SWi) and 1 briefly visited Lower Fm GP Jan 30th (K Eggleton). Spring passage: was observed in March and April. One Eversley GPs Mar 12th (IHB) was followed by 1 over Crowthorne Mar 25th (BMA) then singles flying over Windsor (KPD), Theale Main GP (RRK) and probably the same bird over Moadlands GP (RJB) all Apr 4th. Other singles were reported from Lower Fm GP Apr 10th (TGB) and Eversley GPs Apr 20th (KCr) and 21st (TGB), 1 heard at Greenham Common Apr 24th (IW) and 1 NW over Bagnor Cressbeds May 8th (IW; JL). **Summering:** early birds had returned to the Lambourn Downs by late March with 4 present Mar 25th (DJB) and 2 were located on the Compton Downs Mar 28th (MSFW). At Lambourn, in the area around Wellbottom Down, numbers had increased to 4 regular pairs by late May (MO) and a peak count of 11 May 30th (3 pairs nesting) and Jun 19th (IW; JL). At Compton birds kept mainly to the Oxon side of the boundary however birds were heard Jun 8th (MFW) and 2 were seen Jun 9th (DJB). At both summering sites there was no evidence to confirm that breeding had been successful and, with the last documented report of successful breeding being in 1996 and 1997, could the regular mowing of the gallops where this species occurs

be having a detrimental effect on breeding attempts? **Autumn:** passage began early with 1 at Eversley GPs Jun 25th (RMW). A month passed before the next record of 1 Greenham Common Jul 26th (CDRH) and in August 1 flew W over Bray GPs Aug 6th (KPD), 1 flew W over Brimpton GP (GEW) and 4 flew NE over QMR (CDRH) at dusk Aug 15th. Later 1 flew SW over Dinton Pastures CP Sep 11th (PMC) and another flew over Hosehill Lake Sep 25th (MO). Singles visited QMR Oct 13th & 14th (the same bird?) (CDRH) and finally 1 flew over Hosehill Lake Oct 15th (BU).

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce passage migrant

An adult in almost full s/p was located on the Burnthouse Lane section of Pingewood GPs early on Apr 30th (FJC et al) and is the only record for 2005. The table below shows the species status over the last 10 years and confirms that this is one of our rarer passage migrants.

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
No of records	6	3	2	1	0	4	1	3	2	1
No of birds	7	3	2	1	0	6	1	3	2	1

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

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

Records were received from 23 locations, 5 in W Berks, 8 in M Berks and 10 in E Berks. The monthly maximum counts for the main sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lee Fm GP	–	1	3	3	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	1	1	6	10	6	2	–	–	–	–	1	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	5	7	4	2	2	1	–	–	1	–
Greenham/Crookham Commons	–	–	2	9	4	8	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	7	5	4	6	2	2	–	1	–	–
Midgham/ Woolhampton GPs	–	–	6	4	6	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	4	2	–	1	2	–	1	–	1	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	3	–	1	1	2	1	–	–	–
Theale GPs	–	–	3	3	5	1	1	–	1	–	–	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
No of sites	–	–	4	5	4	7	2	–	–	–	1	2
Minimum no of birds	–	–	8	8	5	10	5	–	–	–	1	2

First winter: apart from 1 Dorney W Jan 1st (DJB), it is thought that all other records during this period refer to early spring passage birds. These are singles at both Dorney W Feb 20th (SP) and Lavell's Lake Feb 26th-27th (AR et al). Spring passage: birds were

reported from 12 locations in March, the highest count being 7 Lower Fm GP Mar 26th (IW; JL). Numbers continued to build in April with reports from 14 sites with highs of 10 Dorney W Apr 10th (JLe) and 9 Greenham Common Apr 30th (ABT). As is the case nowadays numbers began to fall in May as most birds moved on leaving behind our ever decreasing breeding population. **Summer/Breeding:** although 15 sites held birds in June (8 ads were still present at Greenham Com on the 9th: CDRH) breeding records were few. Breeding was attempted at Eversley GPs but the eggs were taken by crows May 10th (BMA) and at Braywoodside a territorial pair had their nest site destroyed by mowing (CDRH). Mating was observed at Lower Fm GP Apr 13th (RHai) but chicks were never seen. Successful breeding was only confirmed in the Horton area where 1 pair bred (CDRH) and Twyford GPs where 1pr had 2 chicks on Jul 4th (CDRH). The decline in the Theale area is such that it is now thought that this species no longer breeds in the area (TABR). **Autumn/Second winter:** passage was first encountered on Jun 21st when 1 flew NW with Lapwings over the Lambourn Downs (CDRH). Apart from summering birds, others were seen at 6 locations in July including juvs moving through with adults. By Aug/Sep passage was only reported from 5 sites involving 8 birds and the only Oct report came from Lower Fm GP with 1 Oct 4th (SAG). Second winter records were up on recent years with singles noted at 4 sites in Nov and 2 in Dec.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor (Schedule 1)

Records were received from 9 locations throughout the county. **Spring:** only reported from 5 sites with passage being first noted at Eversley GPs where singles were reported Apr 24th (BMA), Apr 30th (BMA), May 9th (PH), May 21st-26th (MO), Jun 11th (BMA) and 4 May 14th (IHB). Elsewhere 2 were present Dorney W May 1st (SP; CRe) and 1 was there May 13th (CRe). One visited Bray GPs May 6th (PNe) and 1 was present at Lower Fm GP Jun 15th (GMac) and Jun 18th (JCh). What was possibly the same bird was seen nearby at Crookham Pools, Greenham Com Jun 17th (NC). **Autumn:** passage was heavier than in the spring and began with 3 flying S over Dorney W Jun 30th (CRe). July records consisted of 1 Eversley GPs Jul 2nd (ASl), 1 Lower Fm GP Jul 9th (SAG) and Jul 12th-15th (MO), 1 Crookham Pools, Greenham Com Jul 16th (JPM) and 1 Bray GPs Jul 30th (WAS). Passage peaked in August when an influx occurred mid month with 2 Lower Fm GP Aug 13th-20th (MO), 3 there Aug 21st (MFW) and a report of 4 there Aug 29th (Logbook). Elsewhere 1 flew over Thatcham Aug 16th (RRK); 1 Greenham Common Aug 17th and 21st (NC); 2 Woolhampton GPs Aug 20th (RRK); 1 Eversley GPs Aug 24th (MDL); 1 Padworth Lane GP Aug 28th (JPM); 2 Pingewood GPs Aug 31st 1 remaining to Sep 19th (KEM). The Padworth bird was seen again Sep 3rd (MFW) and Sep 8th-9th (BTB; KEM) and 1 was located at Woolhampton GPs Sep 6th (JPM). The last record involved a late bird at Lower Fm GP Nov 2nd-3rd (SAG; RAH).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 29 locations, 15 in W Berks and 7 in M and E Berks. The monthly maximum counts for the main sites are shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	–	1	1	–	2	2	1	–	–	1	1
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	2	1	2	2	–	4	3	12	7	5	1	2
Eversley GPs	1	1	1	1	–	4	3	4	1	1	2	1
Greenham/Crookham Commons	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	1	2	2	1	1
Lower Farm GP	1	2	1	4	1	3	3	5	3	2	3	2
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	1	1	–	–	2	4	6	4	4	3
Midgham/ Woolhampton GPs	–	1	3	1	–	2	2	3	3	1	1	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
Number of sites	4	3	5	2	0	2	4	6	5	3	1	5
Minimum no of birds	4	4	6	2	0	2	4	6	5	4	1	6

First winter: although fairly widely reported, numbers were low with no site holding more than 2 birds until Mar 25th when 3 were present at Midgham GPs (JPM). **Spring:** low numbers continued to be reported with 4 Lower Fm GP Apr 19th (RA) the only count to exceed 2. The only May record was 1 at Lower Fm GP May 15th to 21st (MO). **Autumn:** return passage began in early June with singles at Lower Fm GP Jun 4th (JCh; RAH) and Greenham Common Jun 9th (CDRH). Numbers increased slowly during the rest of June and into July but it was not until August that higher counts than 4 were reported. At Slough SF, regular checking of the sludge lagoons resulted with 6 located on Aug 13th (CDRH) and a party of 12 on Aug 19th (DJB). Elsewhere 5 were present Lower Fm GP Aug 21st (MFW) and 23rd (SAG). In September numbers at Slough SF had declined to 7 on the 5th (CDRH) whilst numbers at Padworth Lane GP increased to 6 on the 9th (KEM). **Second winter:** after October, birds could only be located at 13 sites and again winter numbers were below average. Four were still present at Padworth Lane GP during November, dropping to 3 by Dec 18th (KEM) and no other sites recorded more than 2 in December.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce passage migrant

A slightly better year than in the previous 3 years with 4 records involving 7 birds. **Spring:** a party of 4 in s/p at Burnthouse Lane GP, Pingewood GPs May 11th (KEM et al) is the highest spring count since 7 at Field Fm GP on May 30th 1991. **Autumn:** 1 was located at Eversley GPs Jul 17th -18th (MO) and again on the 22nd-23rd (GH; NG). A juvenile remained at Crookham Pools, Greenham Com from Aug 30th (DJB) to Sep 5th (CDRH) and another juvenile was present at Padworth Lane GP from Sep 9th (KEM) to Sep 13th (PH).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

Monthly maximum counts at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	1	1	–	5	1	1	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands/Slough SF	–	–	–	2	4	–	4	3	2	–	1	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	–	2	4	–	2	1	1	1	1	–
Lower Farm GP	–	1	–	4	3	1	7	4	2	1	–	–
Moatlands GP	–	–	–	8	1	–	–	1	1	1	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	1	5	1	1	1
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	1	1	–	3	3	7	1	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	2	3	1	14	11	10	1	1	1
Theale GPs	–	1	–	1	2	–	2	2	2	–	–	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
Number of sites	–	–	1	8	5	1	3	5	4	1	1	–
Minimum no of birds	–	–	1	16	5	1	3	7	6	1	1	–

First winter: the wintering bird at Padworth Lane GP (birds have wintered at this site every year since 1999) was seen intermittently from Jan to Mar 10th (MO). February reports from Bottom Lane Theale Feb 7th (TM) and Lower Fm GP Feb 11th (logbook) may have been this individual out on a day trip. **Spring:** 1 at Home Fm Avington Mar 14th (RGS) was early and no more were reported until April when singles were noted at Lower Fm GP Apr 2nd (SAG; JLS), Eversley GPs (BMA; GR) and Pingewood GPs (BTB) Apr 3rd. After these dates the species became widespread with high counts of 8 at Freeman's Marsh Apr 20th (RGS) and Moatlands GP Apr 27th (LRB). **Autumn:** return passage began in June with singles at Lower Fm GP (IW) and Whiteknights Pk Lake (PG) Jun 21st, followed by 1 QMR Jun 28th (CDRH) and another Lower Fm GP Jun 29th (SAG). Numbers were high during Jul-Sep with peak counts at QMR of 14 Jul 26th, 11 Aug 2nd and 10 Sep 16th (CDRH). Elsewhere 7 were present at Lower Fm GP Jul 26th (GVW). Singles were seen at 7 locations during October, the latest (not including the returning Padworth bird) being 1 QMR Oct 25th (HRN). **Second winter:** there was a surprisingly high number of November records (5) including the wintering Padworth bird that had returned by Oct 21st (PMC) and remained to the years end. Other single individuals were reported from Eversley GPs Nov 5th (MDL), Dorney W Nov 7th (DJB), QMR (a f/w) Nov 16th (CDRH) and on the R. Lambourn at Easton Nov 26th (MSt). Apart from Padworth Lane, the only December record came from QMR with 1 on the 4th (CDRH).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce passage migrant

A poor year with only 3 records involving 4 birds. **Spring:** 2 (1 in full s/p 1 partial s/p) spent Apr 28th–30th at Dorney W (SP et al). **Autumn:** a faded s/p adult visited QMR Jul 19th (CDRH) and a juvenile accompanying 5 Dunlins was present there Sep 16th (CDRH).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare vagrant

The influx of over 200 storm-blown individuals onto the British coast in early November resulted in a number of birds penetrating inland. In Berkshire, 2 birds were found at the two ends of the county. At QMR a first winter bird was found on Nov 2nd remaining to Nov 5th (CDRH et al) and at Lower Fm GP an adult was located on Nov 3rd (MO) and remained all day but departed overnight. Both birds proved to be very popular with visiting observers and were the 25th and 26th records for the county and the first multiple occurrence since the Great Storm of Oct 1987.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 10 locations, 1 in W Berks, 4 in M Berks and 4 in E Berks. The total number of birds involved is difficult to determine due to the tendency of birds to visit more than 1 site but could be as high as 27-30. Note that for the first time there were records for every month; the table shows monthly status of this species throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
QMR no of birds	5	2	1	0	0	1	4	2	1	2	1	2
No of birds at other sites	(1)	1	4	2	1	0	(1)	0	0	0	0	1

Numbers in brackets indicate number of individuals that were also seen at QMR

Jan-Mar: the first of 5 birds to be seen at QMR in Jan, an ad w/p, was located on Jan 10th and was followed by a f/w Jan 14th (CDRH). Another ad w/p visited Old Slade GP Jan 14th before appearing at QMR Jan 25th, 28th and 29th and then at Colnbrook Jan 31st (CDRH). Two more birds, a small billed ad w/p and a f/w with a well-marked head pattern were also seen at QMR Jan 28th, the ad reappearing Feb 2nd and 10th and a different f/w there Feb 4th (CDRH). An ad w/p was located in the Moatlands GP roost Feb 20th and Mar 3rd (ABT). A s/w was found at Dinton Pastures CP Mar 3rd (MFV) and 2 (s/p ad and f/w) at Bucklebury Mar 9th (CDRH) was a surprising find. What may well have been these birds were then relocated in the Theale area, the ad at Hosehill Lake Mar 10th (RCr) and Moatlands GP Mar 13th (PBT; ABT) and the f/w there Mar 11th (RAd). The last record for this period was a striking s/s at QMR Mar 28th (CDRH). **Apr-Jun:** a f/w visited Eversley GPs on Apr 5th (GBr) and 7th (KIT); a report of 1 (not aged) on Apr 30th (RMW) and a f/s May 21st (JMC et al) may also have been this bird. In June a f/s was located at QMR on the 15th (CDRH). **Jul-Sep:** At QMR 4 different birds were identified in July, a s/s Jul 9th; an ad s/p Jul 11th, probably the same bird Jul 24th; a juv Jul 15th-17th, 24th and possibly the same on Jul 31st and another juv Jul 22nd; one of these birds also being seen at Colnbrook Jul 22nd (CDRH). In August another juv, moulting into f/w was seen at QMR Aug 4th-5th and 17th when another very fresh juv was also present (CDRH) finally a f/w was located there Sep 12th-13th (CDRH). **Oct-Dec:** the Sep f/w bird reappeared at QMR Oct 5th and was followed by a s/w Oct 25th-26th (CDRH). Possibly another f/w appeared at QMR Nov 2nd and the year ended with w/p ads seen at Borough Marsh, Charvil Dec 3rd, at QMR Dec 4th and a different w/p ad there Dec 6th (CDRH).

LAUGHING GULL *Larus atricilla*

Véry rare vagrant

The late autumn influx of over 60 birds into Great Britain brought Berkshire's first record of this Nearctic species. Located by visiting Bristol-based observer R. Laughton on Dec 2nd at Smallmead Fm GP, the bird, an ad w/p was quickly re-found the following day and was enjoyed by many at this site until Dec 7th when it became more elusive. Constant checking of the Moatlands GP gull roost throughout December proved worthwhile with sightings on 5 dates from Dec 4th to Dec 29th (MO). Record accepted by BBRC (Brit.Birds 100:46) and see the finder's account in this report. The bird also visited Rose Kiln Lane, Reading on Dec 4th (MFW) but it was not until 2006 that the bird was finally located at a regular daytime site.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 12 locations, 2 in W Berks, 4 in M Berks and 6 in E Berks. **Spring passage:** at least 89 birds were reported, the first being a f/w at Theale Main GP Mar 23rd (KEM) and followed by 5 (4 f/s and 1 near s/p) at Hosehill Lake Mar 28th (KEM). There were no further reports until mid April when an ad at Theale Main GP Apr 18th (KEM) was the first of a major influx into the county. There were 4 records on Apr 19th with an ad at Eversley GPs (BMA; RJG); 1 (not aged) at Lower Fm GP (The); an ad and s/s at Horton Fields (CDRH) and 5 ads on Theale Main GP (KEM). Further single adults or possibly lingering birds were noted on Theale Main Apr 21st (KEM) and 22nd (BTB). The largest recorded flock to ever be seen in Berks totalling 33 birds (all but 4 being adults) flew ESE over QMR Apr 22nd (CDRH). More birds moved through on Apr 23rd with 5 (4ad 1 f/w) Eversley GPs (CRG; AWo), 3 (1ad 2 f/s) Theale Main GP (ABT) and 4 (not aged) Burghfield GPs (BU). Four (3ads 1 s/s) were found at Brimpton GP Apr 24th (CMR) and passage involving 8ads and 4 f/s flew NE over QMR in 30 min on Apr 25th (CDRH). Passage slowed after Apr 25th but birds were still reported from Eversley GPs, a f/s Apr 28th (TGB); an ad Moatlands GP May 4th (NR); an ad and imm at Dinton Pastures CP May 5th (RR) and a f/s through QMR the same day (CDRH). Another string of records, all of first-summer birds, occurred from May 21st with 1 Dorney W (BDC; BAJC), 1 Horton GPs May 24th with 2 there May 25th (CDRH), 1 Eversley GPs (BMA), 1 QMR May 25th (CDRH), 3 Horton GPs May 27th then single sightings there to Jun 1st (CDRH) and also seen at Horton fields May 28th (CDRH). **Summer:** Records of first-summer birds continued at Horton GPs from Jun 11th to Jun 21st with 2 there Jun 13th (CDRH) and what is presumed to be these birds were also seen at Wraysbury GPs Jun 14th and 15th (CDRH). **Autumn:** At least 18 birds were reported, the first, possibly a summering bird flew into Horton GPs from the NE Jul 10th and this or another was present there Jul 20th (CDRH). Two juveniles visited QMR Aug 17th (CDRH) and an ad and juv arrived at Moatlands GP Aug 28th (RCr et al) the juv remaining until Sep 12th (RJB). A juv moulting into f/w was located at QMR Aug 30th (CDRH) and another juv (possibly the Moatlands bird) visited Pingewood GPs Sep 9th (KEM). All Remaining records came from QMR with a f/w Sep 11th, 1 juv/f/w Sep 22nd, 1 ad w/p Oct 14th, 7 (5ads 2 f/w) Oct 19th and finally the only winter record of an ad w/p there Dec 4th (CDRH).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

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

This, our most common gull species, is a familiar sight throughout the county; however it is generally overlooked and it is unusual to receive more than just a handful of records from such highly populated sites such as QMR and the area to the south of Reading. **First winter:** The highest W Berks count was 650+ apparently roosting at Lower Fm GP Jan 6th (DJB). Moving east 8500+ were roosting at Moatlands GP Jan 21st (DJB), c1000 were on Lavell's Lake Mar 6th (DCo) and 2500 were located in Home Pk, Windsor Feb 19th (WAS). A leucistic adult with pure white plumage except for some black on the primaries was located at Bisham Feb 7th (CDRH), having previously been photographed at Little Marlow GPs, Bucks. This or another similar bird was then seen at Moatlands GP Mar 13th (PBT; ABT). **Breeding:** breeding was confirmed at 3 locations. In the west at least 7 pairs attempted to breed at Lower Fm GP, 6 nests on the tern raft being successful with 16 juvs counted Jul 29 (SAG). At Hosehill Lake at least 44prs nested and 50 young were counted May 29th (MFW). The colony at Eversley GPs continues to prosper with up to 77 nests by May 13th (BMA) and by the end of the breeding season, 122 pairs had reared 125 young (MGLR). Dispersing juvs began to appear in late June the earliest being singles at both QMR and Horton GPs Jun 22nd (CDRH). **Second winter:** The only counts to exceed 500 birds were from Dinton Pastures CP where numbers built from c1500 Dec 7th to c2000 Dec 10th (FJC). There were no counts from the major gull roosts at QMR and Theale where Black-headed Gulls roost in their thousands. A leucistic bird similar to the previous winters individual was located at Moatlands GP Dec 28th (ABT) and Smallmead Fm GP Dec 29th (MFW).

RING BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Rare vagrant

An adult in the pre-roost gathering at Marlow GPs, Bucks in March was seen to leave the site heading SE on Mar 25th – presumably entering Berkshire over Cockmarsh (PBT; J E Rose). This bird was a different individual to the bird seen at this site and roosting at QMR in 2004 (being much smaller, the 2004 bird was at the larger end of the size range); unfortunately it was never seen at the QMR roost.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

This is another gull species which is grossly over-looked within the county. The tendency of this species to congregate on areas of open pasture to feed, means that numbers at many of the more popular wetland areas are lower than would be expected, so giving the impression that the Common Gull is less numerous than it actually is. **First winter:** In W Berks where this species is less common, counts on downland sites included 27 at Lowbury Hill Jan 3rd (DJB) and 30 there Mar 13th (RF) whilst at Sheepdrove 136 were also present Mar 13th (ABT). In M Berks the roost at Moatlands GP held at least 200 Jan 21st and c500 Mar 12th (DJB). High E Berks totals came from Summerleaze GP with 44 Jan 21st (BDC) and at Eversley GPs with 68 Feb 4th (BMA) and c100 Mar 17th (RBor). **Spring:** most birds had departed by April however 37 were counted along the Jubilee River Apr 8th (BDC). Late birds were located at Dorney W Apr 19th (DT) and Eversley GPs Apr 22nd (GH). **Autumn/Second winter:** 2 first-summer birds were located at Horton GPs on the exceptionally early

date of Jun 7th (CDRH) and another first-summer appeared at QMR Jun 21st increasing to 8 birds (1ad 7 f/s) Jun 28th (CDRH). Thereafter small numbers could be seen at both QMR and Horton GPs throughout July and birds were seen at a further 5 sites including 1 at Moatlands GP Jul 25th (KEM) and 2 Lower Fm GP Jul 27th (GSt). Numbers remained low in August with 8 ads Cold Harbour Aug 6th (DJB) and the first juv at QMR on Aug 9th (CDRH) being highlights. With no records coming from roost sites, numbers reported were extremely low. The first count to exceed 10 birds was 12 Farnborough Down Dec 1st (GDS) and 38 on Compton Downs Dec 23rd (DJB) was the highest second winter count received.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

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

First winter: the largest counts came from roost sites. At Lower Fm GP, 900+ were present Jan 6th (DJB) and 550 there Feb 14th (SAG). A total of 7000+ roosted on Moatlands GP Jan 21st (DJB). Elsewhere some large counts came from the Downs with c300 Compton Jan 16th (ABT) and 500 (95% adults) Sheepdrove Feb 2nd (ABT). **Spring/Summer:** most reports involved small numbers of up to 20 scattered throughout the county until June when 132 were noted at Englefield and 86 nearby at Pingewood GPs Jun 13th (RCr). On the Lambourn Downs up to 325, mostly immature birds flew W into Wiltshire at dusk Jul 11th (PBT) and 90 were present at Lower Fm GP Jul 17th (SAG). For the first time Lesser-black Backed Gulls have bred in the county, an adult with 1 chick was observed on a factory roof at Slough Industrial Estate Jun 28th (PMC) and breeding may have occurred at another site nearby (PMC). **Autumn/Second winter:** at Englefield 150 were present Aug 8th (RCr) and c1200 were seen on Bury Down Aug 31st (CDRH). In September 390 were located at Cow Down Sep 4th (ABT), 200 Lower Fm GP (AJP) and 250 visited West Woodhay (RGS) Sep 30th. High October totals included 450 on the Compton Downs Oct 2nd (SAG), c450 Lower Fm GP Oct 9th (SAG), 200+ Farnborough Down Oct 15th (GDS) and 300 Bucklebury Oct 16th (PJo). Large counts in Nov/Dec involved c900 Burghfield GPs Nov 15th (RCr), 500 Lower Fm GP Nov 20th (SAG), 1250 there Dec 23rd (DJB) and 1500 at Moatlands GP Dec 11th (ABT). The almost total lack of notable counts from M and E Berks is presumably due to the difficulty covering the large gull roosts at Theale and QMR. However the records supplied do confirm this species as the most numerous gull in West Berks and the commonest large gull in the county as a whole.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 24 locations, 5 in W Berks, 10 in M Berks and 9 in E Berks. The monthly status of the species within the county is shown in the table, QMR totals are separate.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Minimum no. of birds at QMR	5	3	3	3	1	15	90	87	30	5	3	6
Number of other sites	11	7	4	0	3	2	4	5	4	4	7	6
Min. no. of birds – other sites	17	10	7	0	4	3	28	9	5	7	17	10

As the table shows, by far the most important site for this species is QMR and the peak day totals in Jul and Aug are the highest ever for Berks. **Jan-Mar:** birds were reported from 14 locations usually involving 1-3 birds. Higher totals were noted at QMR with 5 (4 ads 1 3/w) Jan 21st (CDRH) and 4 (3 ads 1 s/w) Pingewood GPs Jan 30th (JA). **Apr-Jun:** April is usually the poorest month for records so 2 3/s and 1 4/s in the QMR roost Apr 4th and a 3/yr Apr 25th (CDRH) were notable. A f/s was also at QMR May 2nd (CDRH), the same observer also locating an adult and f/s at Pingewood GPs and a f/s at Wraysbury GPs May 11th and another f/s at Horton May 14th. June heralded the beginning of the now annual autumn influx into the county with 15 (10ads, 2 3/s, 3 s/s) QMR on the 27th (CDRH). **Jul-Sep:** Away from QMR, good numbers were located in M Berks in July with 9 ads/subads on fields at Grazeley Jul 4th (KEM) and 17 ads at Green Pk Jul 26th (CDRH). Numbers peaked at QMR on Jul 19th with 86 (82 ads, 2 juvs, 2 f/s) and remained high into August when 84 (82 ads, 1 juv, 1 f/s) were present Aug 4th (CDRH). Numbers declined thereafter, the only double figure count being 30 QMR Sep 9th (CDRH). **Oct-Dec:** after the autumn influx numbers quickly fell and apart from QMR only the landfill at Colnbrook (5 Nov 4th: CDRH), Burghfield GPs (4 Nov 15th: RCr) and Smallmead Fm GP (4 Dec 29th: MFW) held more than 3 birds.

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce autumn/winter visitor

After the record year of 2004, a quieter year, at least 12 birds were reported from 6 locations all in M Berks apart from the main site QMR. **First winter:** a f/w was located at QMR Jan 28th with what is presumed to be the same bird again there Feb 15th (CDRH). Another f/w was located at Burghfield GPs Feb 28th and then at Smallmead Fm GP Mar 3rd (CDRH). Finally a large f/w visited QMR Mar 28th (CDRH). **Spring:** the first May record for Berks involved a f/s at Moatlands GP May 14th (PBT). There were no further records until late July. **Autumn/Second winter:** a 3/s at QMR Jul 27th (CDRH) was the forerunner of a small August influx with 3 birds visiting QMR: an ad in the roost Aug 4th, a full juvenile (the first county record in this plumage) in the roost Aug 16th, and then again (from 1015 –1220hrs) on 17th and another adult Aug 31st (CDRH). QMR's last bird of the year was a f/w on Nov 2nd (CDRH). Reports then came from the Gravel pit complexes to the south of Reading with an adult at Moatlands GP Dec 4th (ABT), a f/w at Pingewood GPs Dec 18th (KEM) and what is presumed to be the same adult at Pingewood GPs (MFW), Smallmead Fm GP (KEM) Dec 20th and Burghfield GPs Dec 21st (KEM).

Recorders comment: the individual at QMR on Aug 16-17th was the first and to date only *full juvenile* to be observed in the county. Note that the first juvenile for Oxfordshire was recorded at Farmoor Res on 6-7th Sept 2008.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

The Herring gull is another gull species that due to its familiarity is under recorded. Very few large counts were submitted and once again there were no representative counts from the QMR roost (because a large proportion do not arrive until after dark.). **First winter:** the largest count received was 100+ at Moatlands GP Mar 13th (PBT) and the largest W Berks count was 4 at Lower Fm GP Jan 3rd (IW). A leucistic f/w was present in the QMR gull roost on several dates in Feb (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** 58 were present at Moatlands

GP Apr 18th (RCr), there were 43 at QMR May 1st (ABT) and 40 sub-adults were noted at Englefield Jun 18th (RCr). Although suspected for several years breeding was at last confirmed inside the Slough Industrial Estate where broods of 2, 2 and 1 were located on a factory roof-top Jun 28th (PMC) and 2 ads with a juv in Woodley Jun 26th (FJC) may also indicate local breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** 1-2 subads of the Scandinavian race *L. a argentatus* were identified at QMR on the early date of Jul 1st (CDRH). Numbers slowly increased through the autumn but it was not until November that any substantial counts were submitted. Burghfield GPs, adjacent to Reading's Smallmead tip attracted 260 Nov 15th (RCr) and there were 120 at Dinton Pastures Dec 8th (PBT). This species is a scarce bird in W Berks, the highest count during this period being only 5 Lower Fm GP Dec 2nd (IW; JL). Three adults of the "thayeri" type were located at QMR Dec 30th (CDRH).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Rare winter visitor

This was the best year ever for this attractive species, with at least 4 different individuals being identified at QMR, the only site to host birds. **First winter:** the year began with a pale f/w roosting at QMR from Jan 21st- 25th and again on Feb 2nd (CDRH). This bird was subsequently located feeding at Hedgerley Tip, Bucks Jan 31st (CDRH). An adult then appeared in the QMR roost Jan 29th and what is presumed to be the same bird was seen again Feb 15th and Mar 7th, while the latter date also produced the second f/w of the year (CDRH). A s/s then regularly roosted at QMR from Mar 26th to Apr 25th (CDRH). **Second winter:** an adult was located in the roost Dec 27th (CDRH).

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare but annual winter visitor

Only 2 records this year, possibly involving the same wandering individual. A f/w was located at Smallmead tip Feb 14th (KEM). This or another f/w then visited QMR Feb 26th (CDRH et al) and roosted there Mar 7th (CDRH).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

The usual scattering of records with birds reported from 15 locations. The table shows the monthly total of birds reported throughout the county.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	5	3	4	4	1	2	1	3	3	1	2	3
Minimum number of birds	183	4	8	15	2	2	1	5	5	1	84	262

First winter: the largest counts came from Pingewood where 80+ were in fields off Hartley Court Rd Jan 7th (RCr) and Hurst Tip with 94 Jan 8th (MFW). No other report exceeded 5 birds. In W Berks, where this species is quite scarce, only Lower Fm GP held birds with 1-2 present on many dates throughout the period. **Spring/Summer:** an immature at Home Fm, Avington Apr 9th (RGS) and Apr 30 (JLS) was followed by 8 Theale Main GP Apr 13th (RCr) and 2 Lower Fm GP (RHai) on the same day. Another visited Lower Fm GP Apr 19th (The) and 2 (f/s and 3/s) visited Moatlands GP May 14th (PBT). In June a

3/s was located on the Downs at Aldworth Jun 8th (MFW) and 9th (BMA) and a f/s was located at QMR Jun 28th with another there Jul 28th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** August records involved a 3/yr Dorney W Aug 7th (WAS) with 2 ads there Aug 13th (DJB). At Summerleaze GP 1 was present Aug 28th (BDC) and the first juvenile of the autumn arrived at QMR Aug 31st (CDRH). Numbers were low during Sep-Oct but 82 (79 ads 3 f/w) were counted at QMR Nov 27th (CDRH). Large numbers were maintained at QMR in December with a peak of 255 (mostly ads + 3 subads + 9 f/w) Dec 27th (CDRH) which is the highest recorded count for Berkshire.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

An excellent year, with 11 records received from 4 locations involving c102 birds – which makes 2005 the best year since 1993 when at least 648 birds were recorded (the majority during one day in January.). **First winter/Spring:** evidence pointing to a small overland movement on Jan 20th was apparent at QMR when a party of 6 adults were feeding along the north shore at 1427hrs before leaving to the NE, then 2ads were seen in the pre-roost gathering between 1445 and 1545hrs (CDRH). An adult then spent 3 days at QMR from Feb 11th (CDRH) to Feb 13th (ABT) but was found dead there one week later (CDRH) and 2 adults flew high to the south over Wraysbury Feb 20th (CDRH). March records involved a first yr at Lower Fm GP Mar 8th (CDRH; R.Haynes); another first yr was located in the Moatlands GP roost Mar 12th (ABT; KEM; MFW) and was briefly joined by an adult (DJB) before both birds left the site at 1800hrs; and an adult flew NE over Colnbrook with Lesser Black-backs on Mar 31st (CDRH). On Apr 4th a tightly packed flock of c85 birds (ads and 1 first yr) arrived at QMR at 1045hrs, leaving to the east at 1107hrs, then 15 birds returned to the site before leaving to the NE at 1209hrs, and finally an adult arrived at 1330hrs, leaving to the NE 15 minutes later (CDRH). There were no further records until early May when an adult briefly visited Moatlands GP May 4th (RJB) and an adult was at QMR May 13th (CDRH).

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybrida*

Rare vagrant, first county record

This second summer bird, the first county record of the species, was found by BMA and JMC on the morning of 21st May at Colebrook Lake, Eversley GPs, reappearing on May 24th (GH) and May 27th (RMW:IHB). A full account of the circumstances leading up to the finding and its subsequent movements is in the article in this report.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant

A quiet year for this species with a light passage in both spring and autumn. **Spring:** Theale Main GP hosted the first of the year with 1 in s/p Apr 19th (MO) and 2 there Apr 20th (BU). Three passed through Moatlands GP Apr 25th (MO), with another there May 13th (MO). One was located at Woolhampton GPs Apr 30th (MFW) and 2 were present May 14th (MO). The spring passage came to an end with 1 Eversley GPs May 20th (BMA) and a late bird at Dinton Pastures CP Jun 12th (MFW). **Autumn:** passage was only reported from 2 locations. At Moatlands GP an adult was present Aug 25th (RCr; JA) and a juv Aug 26th-28th (RCr et al). QMR was the main site with 2 (1 s/p) flying south Aug 13th, followed

by 6 (1juv) Sep 1st (CDRH; CL), 1juv Sep 7th-9th (CDRH) and 1 juv Sep 12th (CDRH; CL).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant

A poor year with only 5 records involving just 6 birds. **Spring:** 1 visited both Theale Main and Moatlands GPs May 3rd (NR et al) and 1 moved through QMR May 16th (CDRH). **Autumn:** an unusually early record involved 1 amongst Black-headed Gulls at Lower Fm GP Jun 25th (JCh). This was followed by 1 QMR, located resting on a buoy Aug 17th remaining there for over an hour (ABT). Finally, 2, an adult and a begging juv flew south over QMR Sep 13th (CDRH).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common passage migrant and regular summer visitor in small numbers

Records were received from 52 locations with records spanning dates from Mar 24th to Oct 10th. The table shows the maximum monthly counts at the main sites and status elsewhere.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	-	-	-	10	2	2	13	-	-	-	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP	-	-	-	10	53	12	37	14	-	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	1	22	57	35	50	12	-	-	-	-
Lower Fm GP	-	-	-	12	14	14	22	5	1	1	-	-
Midgham/Woolhampton GPs	-	-	-	4	40	6	-	2	2	-	-	-
Moatlands GPs	-	-	-	55	240	-	-	24	-	-	-	-
Muddy Lane GP	-	-	-	12	10	17	19	3	-	-	-	-
Thatcham	-	-	-	12	10	17	19	3	-	-	-	-
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	-	2	6	-	43	8	10	3	-	-
Theale GPs	-	-	-	39	20	6	-	5	-	-	-	-
Twyford GPs	-	-	-	1	-	21	25	5	-	-	-	-
<i>Other locations</i>												
Number of sites	-	-	-	11	16	17	14	3	2	-	-	-
Minimum number of birds	-	-	-	41	65	62	33	10	5	-	-	-

Spring: the earliest ever record for Berkshire involved an individual at Eversley GPs on Mar 24th (BMA). This was followed by another there Apr 1st (BMA) before the main passage commenced from Apr 4th when birds were reported from 3 sites. Numbers peaked from late April into early May, the large count of c240 at Moatlands GPs occurred on May 4th (TGB) and mirrors events at this GP in 2004. Away from the main sites the highest count was c20 Pingewood GPs Apr 30th (DJB). **Breeding:** the recent colonisation of Berkshire by Black-headed Gulls has had a negative impact on the numbers of Common Terns breeding within the county, the gulls invade breeding sites previously occupied solely by terns. In 2005 the once important sites at Theale and Moatlands GPs had been all but deserted, a few pairs attempting but failing to breed at Hosehill Lake. Elsewhere Common Terns have

been forced out of the fenced off section of the gravel island at Eversley GPs. However a minimum of 24 pairs still managed to rear at least 24 young on the un-protected western end of the island (MGLR). Smaller numbers bred at Lower Fm GP where 6 pairs bred rearing a minimum of 9 young (SAG) and 7 pairs were present at Muddy Lane GP and 7 young were ringed Jul 2nd (NRG). At Twyford GPs at least 18 adults were present with 3 chicks Jun 25th, chick numbers rising to 7 Jul 2nd (MFW) and at Summerleaze GP, 1 pair was thought to have been successful (per BDC). **Autumn:** evidence of passage was first noted on Jul 21st with 39 birds at Dinton Pastures CP (FJC) and 43 adults at QMR, remaining to Jul 22nd (CDRH). By August numbers were already in decline although 24 were present on Moatlands GP Aug 6th (KEM). Only 5 locations held birds in September and the last birds were 3 QMR Oct 7th (CDRH) and 1 Lower Fm GP Oct 10th (RA).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant in varying numbers

Spring: passage began on Apr 23rd when 10 were present on Theale Main GP (ABT) and 2 visited QMR (CDRH) with another there Apr 25th (CDRH) and 2 Moatlands GP on the same day (MO) and another there Apr 30th (MFW). A flock of c60 arrived at Moatlands GP, briefly visiting Theale Main GP, May 4th (KEM et al) and 2 passed through Eversley GPs also May 4th (RMW). A flock of 36 briefly visited Dinton Pastures (MFW) and 6 were noted at Moatlands GP (KEM) May 5th. The last spring records involved singles at Moatlands GP May 6th and Dinton Pastures CP May 8th (MFW). **Autumn:** just 2 records, both of single juvs at Eversley GPs Aug 24th (RMW; MDL) and QMR Oct 7th (CDRH). The total of up to 124 birds this year, makes 2005 the best year since 1991.

'COMMIC' TERN *Sterna sp*

One was on the R. Thames at Reading Oct 11th (TGB)

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant urban resident

Counts of 200 at Widbrook Common Sep 3rd (BDC) and c100 at Long Lane, Cookham Dec 26th (BDC) were the only records of note.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor

First winter: there were numerous reports of up to 50 birds. Higher counts involved 100 Cookham Rise Feb 7th (CDRH), 200 Westley Mill Feb 13th (KCr) and 450 Fifield Feb 18th and 200 there Mar 27th (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** as would be expected at this time of year, flocks sizes had declined somewhat. However 203 at Waltham St Lawrence May 13th (CDRH) is unusual. Other notable gatherings included 50 Westley Mill Apr 17th (KCr) and 60 Seven Barrows Jun 19th (IW; JL). Breeding was confirmed at Arlington Grange (IW), Cookham (BDC), Eton (BDC) and Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen (LS). Survey work in SE Berks revealed 10+ pairs in the Caesars Camp area of Swinley Forest and 17 territories within Swinley Pk (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** flocks began to appear in September with c100 Westley Mill Sep 23rd (KCr) and 69 Englefield Sep 27th (RCr). However flock sizes failed to emulate the large counts that occurred during this period in 2004, indeed the species, compared to previous years was fairly scarce and only 4 flocks numbered 40

or more. These were c40 at Eversley GPs Nov 6th (RJG); 40 Wokingham STW Nov 15th (DJB); 150 Sheepdrove, Lambourn Nov 20th (ABT) and 40+ at Eton Dec 12th (DJB).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

First winter: the only counts to exceed 300 came from Cookham Rise with 400 Jan 24th and c900 Mar 13th (PNe). A mainly white individual was present at Freeman’s Marsh Mar 31st and Apr 11th (RF). **Second winter:** passage was noted from late October and peaked Nov 5th when at least 6110 birds were logged moving south on a broad front throughout the county. In W Berks 500+ flew over Greenham Common (NRG) while in E Berks there were 360 over Eversley GPs (PBT); 500+ over Woodlands Pk (DJB); 350 over Widbrook Common (BDC); c600 over Dorney W (CRe) and c3800 over QMR, including an albino (CDRH; ABT). The rest of the year was fairly quiet, although 500+ were present at White Place Fm Cookham Nov 28th (BDC).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread resident

Although a familiar species throughout much of the county, there were very few records of note submitted. The largest counts all came in the second half of the year when this species congregates in post breeding flocks that can be encountered almost anywhere in the county. High counts came from Dorney W with 68 Aug 18th (KPD), 62 there Sep 11 (SP) and 50 were reported from both Thatcham Marsh Nov 13th (GJS) and Long Lane Cookham Dec 10th (BDC). Although still a common breeding resident it seems that the large flocks that used to be reported regularly are no longer encountered.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Widely, but now only thinly distributed and declining summer visitor (Red Listed)

The decline continues. Birds were reported from 34 locations (40 in 2004) with 11 in W Berks, 9 in M Berks and 14 in E Berks. The table shows the monthly status of this species throughout the county.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	–	–	–	2	18	11	12	4	4	–	–	–
Minimum number of birds	–	–	–	2	24	17	22	13	10	–	–	–

Spring/Summer: the first arrivals were later than average, the first being 1 at Brimpton GP Apr 28th (GEW) and 1 nearby at Woolhampton GPs Apr 29th (JPM). Birds could be encountered at these sites throughout the summer and breeding was confirmed at Brimpton with 1pr and 2juvs located on Jul 14th and up to 5 juvs there Aug 14th (GEW). Elsewhere the picture is not so rosy. Single birds (some singing) were reported once from Combe Wood (IW; JL); Dorney W (DJB); Bottle Lane, Binfield (DJB); Station Rd, Theale (RD); Ufton Nervet (PH); Wash Common (DSm); Westley Mill (KCr) plus 2 at Great Hollands, Bracknell (CWo) and Theale Main GP (ABT) in May and Bucklebury Common (CMR); Foliejon Pk (MFSW); Hurst (PMC); Midgham Bridge (RF); West End (PMC); Padworth Common (RCW) plus 2 at Stockcross (SAG) in June. Seven locations held birds for longer

periods; the regular site at Ruscombe was occupied by at least 1 pair from May 1st (MFW) to Aug 8th (PBT); Thatcham Marsh recorded singles on May 1st (IW; JL) and May 25th (NRG) and 3 were reported Jul 30th (NRG). An old site near Waltham St Lawrence held birds on May 4th (PMC) to May 13th (CDRH) and 2 were there Jul 3rd (PMC). Bottom Lane, Theale was occupied May 8th (RJB) and 2 were present Jul 3rd (JA); nearby another sang at Hosehill Lake May 8th (RJB) and 2 were present from Jul 3rd to 23rd (JLe). A pair was located at the traditional site in Ryehurst Lane, Binfield May 10th (DJB) and 1 sang nearby on Jul 13th (BDC). Finally 1 sang on Hodcott Down, West Ilsley May 15th and 3 were present there Jun 7th (CDRH). **Autumn:** birds were still being located in suitable breeding habitat in July. New sites were Aldermaston GP (JPM), Greenham Common (NC), Swinley Forest (RD) and 2 at Jealott's Hill (PMC) and Twyford (RDr). Later records came from Cold Harbour with 3 adults Aug 6th (DJB) and 1 juv there Aug 12th (CDRH), 1 Englefield on Aug 21st and 3 there Sep 4th (RCr), 1 Widbrook Common Sep 3rd (BDC) and nearby at Summerleaze GP (WAS) on the same day. The last record of the year concerned 1 at Brimpton GP Sep 9th (GEW).

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Common but localised resident in the east of the county, uncommon elsewhere

With records coming from 21 E Berks and 8 M Berks locations, this species in continuing its slow expansion westward especially along the Thames Valley. The monthly maximum counts at the main sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	49	-	-	12	26	-	-	112	-	-	-	15
Remenham	7	12	6	-	6	10	3	-	-	6	-	-
Wraysbury	90	-	-	30	30	40	14	-	120	-	-	100

The high counts of 112 at Dorney W and 120 at Wraysbury occurred on Aug 27th (DJB) and Sep 21st (CL). Elsewhere E Berks counts exceeding 25 birds were reported from Windsor Esplanade with 55 Jan 5th (DF) and 60 over Pinkneys Green Nov 7th (BDC). In M Berks most reports involved 1-10 birds however 16 were reported from Charvil Nov 16th (KF) and 11 flew west over Lavell's Lake Dec 11th (TGB). **Breeding:** there is scant information concerning the breeding status of this species in Berks, this year the only report of possible breeding came from Braywick Pk where adults were seen at a nest hole May 1st and 7th (MFW).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Common summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 72 locations, 37 in W Berks, 17 in M Berks and 18 in E Berks. The table shows the monthly status of the species within the county.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of known occupied sites	-	-	-	47	44	6	3	0	1	-	-	-
Minimum number of birds	-	-	-	55	56	8	3	0	1	-	-	-

The first arrival involved 1 at Wishmoor Bottom Apr 8th (MHu) and was followed by singles at Brimpton (GEW) and Kintbury CBs (RGS) Apr 10th. Although widespread by the end of April, the only count to exceed 2 birds involved 3 Dinton Pastures CP Apr 24th (MFW). Numbers were maintained during May as calling birds betrayed their presence. High counts involved 3 Wraybury GPs May 7th and 21st (CL), 5+ Swinley Forest May 21st (DJB) and 3 Swinley Pk May 25th (DJB). As birds stopped calling, numbers reported declined and sightings were limited to just 6 locations in June. Notable records during this month included 3+ Swinley Forest Jun 10th (DJB) and 1 of the brown type variants in Swinley Forest at Wishmoor Jun 18th (GR; MHu). There were 3 records in July, all of un-aged individuals at Manor Fm, Brimpton Jul 10th (TPo); Woolhampton GPs Jul 27th (JPM) and Pingewood GPs Jul 31st (RJB). The last report of the year concerned a juvenile located in Woolley Pk Sep 4th (GDS).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

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

Another record year with birds recorded from 60 locations, 33 in W Berks, 17 in M Berks and 10 in E Berks. As is usual, records are predominantly of single hunting birds with many sites only recording Barn Owls on one date. However it must be stressed that this species is under recorded; an example showing this comes from an area in M Berks where only 1 casual record was made throughout the year, yet 2 pairs were known to have bred there. Away from known breeding sites 2 birds were reported from Seven Barrows Jun 19th (IW; JL); Farnborough Jul 26th (GDS); Long Lane, Cookham Aug 21st (BDC) and Englefield Nov 1 (per RCr). **Breeding:** was attempted at 18 known locations, 14 pairs rearing young. In W Berks, the Pang and Kennet Valley Barn Owl ringing scheme recorded 11 occupied sites and although eggs were abandoned at 4 sites, 7 pairs did rear 30 young, 28 being ringed (JPM). In M Berks, S Croft of Wokingham District Council ringed 16 chicks from 3 broods located within the district including a brood of 7. Elsewhere a well known M Berks pair reared 2 young (MFW et al). In E Berks where this species is widely overlooked, breeding was confirmed at 3 sites. One pair reared 4y (DJB), another 3y (BDC) and fledged young were noted at the 3rd location (M Osman). Of all the breeding records mentioned above all but 2 were in owl boxes. Breeding may have occurred at 4 other localities: 1 was seen carrying prey Apr 27th (ABT); 1 seen entering a barn Jun 10th (DJB); 1 in an owl box Jul 18th (ABT) and a pair residing in a barn throughout the year (RGS). A further 12 sites recorded birds in the breeding season and a newly erected owl box in the east of the county was quickly occupied by at least 1 bird during Oct – Dec. An adult flew into a room via the chimney at Manor Fm Brimpton Sep 20th (GEW) both the owl and the house occupants recovered well from the shock!

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Widespread and locally common resident

Birds were reported from 75 locations, 20 in W Berks, 18 in M Berks and 37 in E Berks. Most records involved 1-2 birds however 3 were reported from Eversley GPs in Jan, Feb, Nov and 4 there Oct 31st (BMA). Three were also noted at Dorney W Aug 8th-10th (CR; SP) and from the Cookham Rise/Long Lane area Sep 2nd and 8th (BDC). **Breeding:** 31 sites recorded birds during Apr-Jun and breeding was confirmed at Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen where a pair was feeding young May 29th and 2+ juvs were present Jun-Jul (LS); Remenham, 1ad and 1juv Jun 10th (ANS); Bradfield; young heard Jun 10th (CMR) and 2

pairs confirmed as breeding (1pr with 3y) Jul 15th (JLe); Chapel Green, Wokingham; 1ad with 1 juv Jun 17th (PBT); Ryehurst Lane, Binfield; 1pr with 4 juvs plus another probable breeding pr nearby Jun 21st (DJB); Streatley; a presumed family party Jul 10th (SAG) and at Wokingham STW where a pair reared 2+ young (DJB). Checking of owl boxes in the Cookham area in November led to the discovery of a clutch of eggs hidden underneath a squirrel's drey at Odney Nov 28th (BDC).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat including urban areas

A good year for records with birds (mostly calling) reported from 98 locations throughout the county. Records were usually of 1-3 birds, higher counts being 4 calling at Foliejon Pk Mar 24th (KCr) and Sep 24th (MSFW), 5 (3m, 2f) calling along Long Lane Cookham Sep 2nd (BDC) and 5 in the Hell Corner Fm area from Oct into Dec (LS). **Breeding:** birds were reported from 65 localities during the breeding season (Mar-Jul) and breeding was confirmed at 17 of these. At West Woodhay House, 2 small young were located May 6th (RGS) and 1 chick was found in South Forest, Windsor May 29th (DJB). An all night check of suitable habitat on the night of Jun 9th-10th by DJB revealed 1 juv on the Compton Downs (2 there Jun 21st: BMA), 1-2 juvs at Wellbottom Down, 1 juv West Ilsey, 2 juvs Woodspeen, 2 juvs Manor Fm Woolley, 1-2 juvs East Shefford and 3 ads and 2 juvs at Upper Star Post, Swinley Forest. A juvenile was sat on a road side post in Dog Lane, Ashampstead and 2 juvs called from Greathouse Wood, Bradfield Jun 23rd (DJB); a pair with 2 juvs was located at Remenham Jul 18th (ANS); 2 juvs called at Maidenhead Court Jul 26th (DF) and a juv was calling in Caversham Aug 10th (RDDr). Breeding was also confirmed in the Farnborough area with juvs calling at Boardhouse Plantation and Nine Acre Wood (GDS) and a pair at Whiteknights Pk Reading reared 2y (PG).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Rare resident; scarce winter visitor

A good year with increased breeding and wintering records, at least partly due to improved detection. The first confirmed breeding inside Berks since 2002 involved 3 pairs in West Berks. At site A: 2 just-fledged juvs were observed being fed by adults on June 9th, another family including 3-4 juvs was then found just a third of a mile away and both broods of fledged juvs were seen at these adjacent sites on June 13th (CDRH). At site B: birds were first detected on Jun 10th when young could be heard distantly, and a thorough check of the area on Jun 13th revealed a pair feeding at least 2 calling young in tall scrub (DJB); and c.2 calling young were still present there June 23rd (CDRH). Away from these sites the regular Oxon breeding pair was often seen hunting on the Berks side of the boundary from May into July (MO) and at least 2y were heard calling from the Oxon nest site during June (MO). In M Berks one was photographed at night from the road at Swallowfield in early Aug (M Naylor). Finally, at the W.Berks roost-site discovered in 2004 there were 6 birds in January and at least 13 in Dec (CDRH).

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 9 locations and involved around 22 birds – given that those encountered at the main site (Bury/Cow Down) in both winters are probably returning birds. **First winter/Spring passage:** at the main wintering site of Bury/Cow Downs, up to 4 were

regularly reported from Jan 1st to Jan 14th when 9 were present (MWRS). Numbers varied from 6-4 birds throughout the rest of the winter before 9 were counted again dispersing from their daytime roost Mar 9th (CDRH). Birds were last reported from this area on Mar 19th when 5 were present (BJH). Elsewhere there was 1 on Compton Downs Jan 10th (ABT); 1 Hurst Jan 20th (JA); 1 Theale Main GP Mar 26th (NR; KEM) and 1 possibly the Theale bird at Amners Fm, Pingewood Mar 27th (RAD). Late passage involved singles at Eversley GPs Apr 20th (RMW; BMA) and Apr 25th (BMA) and 1 flying west at Burghfield Mill GP also Apr 25th (JA et al). **Autumn/Second winter:** there was a marked autumn passage with 3 over Lowbury Hill, Compton Downs Sep 21st (CDRH), 1 over the Ridgeway Oct 17th (CDRH) and 1 flying over QMR Oct 19th (CDRH). Five had returned to Bury/Cow Down by Oct 22 (KMa), 4 remaining to the year end. One was located on Compton Downs Nov 12th (DJB) and 1 flew east over Lavell's Lake Nov 15th (PBT).

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

Churring was reported from 10 locations throughout the county with a minimum of 37 males involved. Although a much lower total than in the national census year of 2004, it is still a substantial total given that 5 sites that held birds in 2004 were not covered and the important area of Swinley Forest was only partially covered. **West Berks:** reports came from 4 sites with at least 5 territories in the Greenham/Crookham Common area during May-Jun (NC), last reported on Aug 10th (NC). At least one was churring in the Wickham Heath area in May-Jun (PJO; SAG), 3 were churring on Snelsmore Common Jun 8th (PJO) and 2 were churring on Bucklebury Common Jun 10th (CMR) where a nest with 2 eggs was discovered Jun 26th, the chicks hatching by Jul 9th (NC). **Mid Berks:** 1 was reported at Sonning Farm, at dusk in mid-May (per A.Driver), 2 were churring at Padworth Common Jun 6th (ANS) but a report of 3 at this site Jun 8th (RCW) was not accompanied by any details. Nearby at Mortimer 4 were churring Jun 27th (RCr). **East Berks:** the earliest record this year came from Hut Hill, Swinley Forest with 1 churring May 7th (MSFW). At least 2m and 1f were present there Jun 15th (MSFW) and a report of 3 Jun 17th (MFW) may have been the same birds. Elsewhere in Swinley Forest, 3 churred in Caesars Camp May 28th (JEW) and Jun 27th (RD), reports of 6 Jun 21st (MO) and Jul 15th (BAJC) lacked details. Six were churring along the Devils Highway Jun 10th (DJB) and 2 churred in Wishmoor Bottom Jul 12th (WAS). Finally a report of 5 in Swinley forest Jul 20 (BDC) lacked details. Other sites reporting churring was Gorricks Wood with 1 May 8th (BTB) increasing to 3prs in May (BMA) and Jun (ABT), all 3 still churring Aug 17th (BMA) the latest 2005 record. Five (4m 1f) were seen at Swinley Brick Pits Jun 19th (DJB; FJC) and 2m and 1f were in Windsor Forest Jun 26th (DJB). An apparent migrant was observed at Odney, Cookham May 25th (LJF; BAJC; DJW).

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common though declining passage migrant and summer visitor

The first of the year passed through Dinton Pastures Apr 16th (T A Guyatt per FJC) and the first large flock was logged Apr 25th when 100+ assembled at Moatlands GP (RCr). From this date on through May flocks of 100+ were regularly reported from GPs throughout the county. High counts involved c200 at Lower Fm GP (GJS; GSt) and c1000 at Moatlands GP (KEM; NR) May 4th. The latter site proved to be popular with 500 May 14th (RJB) and 400 on May 19th (RCr). Other counts included 200 Woolhampton GPs (GEW) and c300 Theale Main GP (RCr) May 17th and c200 over Eversley GPs May 24th (MGLR).

Large numbers continued to visit our gravel pits in June (stemming from local breeding populations?) and 220 were noted at Moatlands GP Jun 3rd (RCr), 200 Pingewood GPs Jun 13th (RCr) and c200 Lower Fm GP Jun 26th (IW; JL). Return passage began in July and continued into August. Surprisingly there were few large flocks reported, the peak count being 250+ at Pingewood GPs Aug 1st (MJT) and numbers quickly dwindled thereafter. A few lingered into September and the last was reported over Eversley GPs Sep 12th (GH). Although there were no confirmed reports of breeding, it was thought by MCh that swifts bred at Bearwood College and the high number of reports involving bands of screaming birds flying over our towns would suggest that Berkshire still holds a relatively large breeding population.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

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

A county-wide survey of this species was organised by our BTO representative C M Robinson the results of which can be seen in the article accompanying this report. However, although the survey indicates a breeding population of between 78 and 84 breeding pairs within the county, the method used to establish such a total was based on birds present at sites throughout the breeding season and not on actual confirmed breeding records. Although there were many records of probable breeding, breeding was confirmed (nest sites or young seen) at 9 locations involving 10 pairs.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Scarce passage migrant

There were 2 records this year, probably involving the same individual. One was located in a Reading garden at 0800hrs on Mar 29th (R and W Matthews) and what was almost certainly this bird was then relocated the same day, less than a mile away in the gardens of the Courage Brewery (GJSu et al). After permission was granted to enter the site, this bird was enjoyed by many before departing overnight on Mar 31st.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident (Amber Listed)

This species was widely reported from much of the county although it appears less common on the Berkshire Downs. Records were usually of 1-5 birds, higher counts involved 6 in Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Apr 9th (DJB), 6 Wildmoor Heath Jul 10th (KLi), 7 Greenham Common Oct 29th (ABT) and 6+ there Nov 19th (IW). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding came from 13 locations, usually referring to family parties or independent juveniles. Unlike Great Spotted Woodpecker it seems that nest sites are somewhat more difficult to find and the only record connected to such came from Swallowfield Park where a pair was feeding young at the nest hole Jul 1st (CRW). Ringing operations in Silwood Pk by the RRG resulted in 5 being ringed during the year.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and seemingly increasing resident

Our most frequently recorded woodpecker, this species can be found almost anywhere that suitable habitat exists from mature gardens to hillside copses. Records were received from

throughout the county, the highest densities being in the south-east while lower densities occur in the north-west. Most reports involve 1-8 birds although 9 were noted in Windsor Great Park Jan 27th (PNe). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 31 locations, most sites reporting 1-2 nesting pairs, however in the SE of the county, 9 occupied nests were found in Swinley Park and 5 nearby in Windsor Forest during May-Jun (DJB). A juvenile was observed feeding on ants (like Green Woodpecker) on a lawn at Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen Jun 15th (LS).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

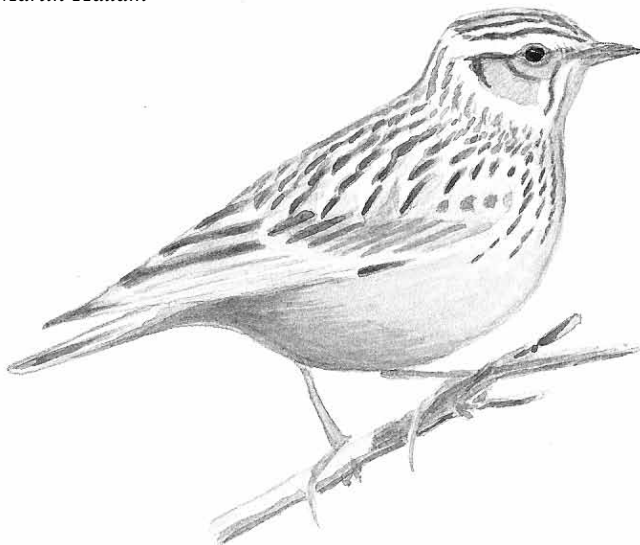
Uncommon and declining resident (Red Listed)

A slightly better year for records with birds reported from 31 locations, 11 in W Berks, 12 in M Berks and 8 in E Berks. The year began with 1 drumming at Bottom Lane, Theale Jan 1st (RCr; JA). **Jan-Mar:** records involved singles at Burghfield (WP), Kintbury Cressbeds (RGS), West Woodhay (RGS), Swallowfield (JA), Great Meadow Pond (RRG), Twyford (MFW), Theale (M Thomas), Emmer Green (HRN) and 2 at Theale Main GP (RAd). March 28th was a productive day with 3 displaying at Bagnor Cressbeds (JL), 1 at Shalford (IW), a male at Twyford (BTB) and a female at Rapley Lake (DJB). **Apr-Jun:** 2 birds were still at Bagnor Cressbeds Apr 3rd (JL; IW) and singles were noted at Bere Court (J Nuttley), Rushall Fm, Bradfield (JLe), West Woodhay (RGS), Arborfield (DJB), Bowdown Woods (MRD), Lower Fm GP (GJS), Allanbay Pk (BDC), 2 Benham Valence (APy), 2 Greenham Common (APy) and Great Meadow Pond (RRG). At Eversley GPs a male regularly visited bulrushes from Apr 13th (TCa) to May 14th (MO) and in Windsor Great Pk there was a male Apr 12th and 3 inc 1pr mating Apr 27th (CDRH) and an adult was seen at a presumed nest site May 14th (BDC). A nest-site was discovered at Sonning in June (A.Driver), a female was feeding a juv in BTB's Woodley garden Jun 25th and a male with a juv in DNTR's Woodley garden Jun 29th and Jul 9th may have been part of the same family. **Jul-Sep:** single birds were reported from Aston (ANS), Greenham Common (NC), Lower Fm GP (RAH; JCh), Theale Main GP (JA), Summerleaze GP (WAS) and Windsor Great Pk (WAS). Two were seen in Bowdown Woods (MRD). **Oct-Dec:** there were reports of single birds in Nov in Bracknell, 1f (RD), Kintbury (JBra), Sonning (CGi) and Widbrook Common (BDC). The last record of the year was 2 at Hambridge Rd, Newbury Dec 21st (SWi).

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

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

Records were received from 12 areas, all but 2 reporting singing males. **West Berks:** the main site continues to be Greenham Common where after 3 Jan 3rd (JL), at least 5 territories were identified during the breeding season with 3 pairs confirmed as breeding (NC et al). Post breeding counts peaked at 9 Aug 29th (JL) and 9 together Sep 5th (JPM). One was reported Oct 22nd (IW; JL) and 2 Nov 19th (IW). Elsewhere song was heard at Snelsmore Common on Feb 12th, 2 singing (BJW), 2 singing Apr 16th (IW; JL) and 1 Jun 1st (JL). At Bucklebury Common, 2 territories were located Jun 11th, 1 bird was seen carrying food (NC). **Mid Berks:** in the Sulhamstead/Ufton Nernet area, birds were reported from 2 locations. Three were present Jan 28th and Feb 15th when 1 was singing (PH), 4 (2 singing) May 18th and 6 Jun 28th however there was no evidence to confirm breeding (PH). Flocking occurred at 1 site in the autumn with 14 Sep 9th increasing to 19-21 Sep 15th (PH) and 1 was still present Dec 12th (PH). Elsewhere 1 sang at Farley Hill Feb 8th (BDC) and 1 flew over Padworth Lane GP Feb 27th (RCr). **East Berks:** in Swinley Forest 1 was reported from Caesars Camp Jan 12th (JEW) however the first report of song was



not until Feb 6th (DJB). From Feb to Jul this species was again surveyed within the SPA by DJB and a total of 28 territories were located with at least 2 pairs breeding. On Wildmoor Heath, 1 sang Feb 19th (DJB) and 3 singing males were present Apr 25th (KCr) and May 20th (DJS). Breeding was confirmed when family parties were located Jul 16th (DJS) and Aug 5th (DJB). Four territories were found in the South Ascot area during Apr-Jul with at least 1 pair breeding (DJB) and 2 territories were located in Swinley Pk (DJB). Finally an adult was seen at QMR Aug 31st and Sep 3rd (CDRH). The total of c50 pairs/singing males located shows that the population has maintained the high levels of the previous 10 years. The forthcoming 2006 National BTO Survey promises much for this enchanting species, however future increases may depend on the continued creation of new habitat to replace areas that may become less suitable as heathland and forestry plantations develop.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

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

Although this species has been in long term decline nationally, the Skylark is still a relatively common and familiar species in much of rural Berkshire. From March to July birds were reported from 74 locations with at least 41 of these involving singing birds. Notable concentrations included up to 12 singing in the Widbrook Common area during the summer (WAS), "many" singing on Englefield Estate from Mar to Jul (RCr), 20+ singing Greenham Common Mar 26th (JPM) and 10+ singing at Cockpole Green Jul 9th (DJB). Few counts were submitted from the highly populated downlands in the NW of the county. **Breeding:** as is usual for this species actual breeding records are few, however a nest containing 3 eggs was discovered on Greenham Common May 2nd (NC), an adult was carrying food at Inkpen Hill Jul 31st (SAG) and several pairs bred at both Farnborough and Woolley Downs (GDS). There were many flocks of up to 75 reported in both winter periods. **First winter:** 300 Chieveley Jan 13th (CDRH) and 140 Compton Downs Jan 24th (DJB). **Second winter:** 130 Englefield Oct 14th (RCr) with c100 still present Dec 29th (ABT), 75+ Cold Harbour during Oct-Dec (DJB) and 75-80 were on fields near to Wokingham STW throughout Nov

(DJB). Over 200 were on the Compton Downs Nov 12th (DJB), 100+ Bury Down Nov 18th (GJSu), c200 Sheepdrove Nov 20th (ABT), 80 Pangbourne Nov 21st (JLe), 75 White Place Fm, Cookham Dec 16th (BDC) and 150 nearby on Widbrook Common Dec 28th (CDRH). At Englefield counts were made regularly throughout the year, mainly by RCr, the monthly maximum counts are shown in the table:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
30	50	80	70	80	50	70	–	30	130	70	100

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 28 locations, 11 in W Berks, 8 in M Berks and 9 in E Berks. **Spring:** the first of the year involved 5 at Theale Main GP Mar 16th (RCr). Small numbers were reported from a further 11 localities during March however Theale Main GP remained the centre of activity with 114 there Mar 31st (RCr). Passage increased in April, large counts being 250 at Theale Main GP Apr 4th (JA) and 150 there Apr 15th (RCr), c300 through Thatcham GPs Apr 8th (RAH) and c100 over Moatlands GP Apr 16th (RCr) and May 14th (RJB); otherwise no counts exceeded 50 in May. **Summer/Breeding:** from mid May to the end of June, records were only received from 9 locations and the only confirmed breeding came from Padworth Lane GP where 10+ nest holes were active on Jun 15th (KEM) and 4 juvs were on wires at Brimpton GP Jun 22nd (GEW). For the second consecutive year no birds bred at Hosehill Lake and although c20 were present at an old breeding site at Knowl Hill May 15th (DJW), breeding was not confirmed. Numbers began to build in June in preparation for the autumn departure with 50 at Lower Fm GP Jun 16th (NC) and c70 Bray GPs Jun 25th (BDC). **Autumn:** passage was noted at many sites throughout July to September, high counts being 100 Lower Fm GP Jul 6th (GSte), 50 Dorney Wetlands Jul 29th-30th (WAS), c250 Bray GPs Jul 30th (WAS), 65 Padworth Lane GP Aug 15th (JPM) and 50 Eversley GPs Aug 25th (BMA). Numbers reported in Sept were lower and a count of 50 at Lower Fm GP on Sep 23rd (GRW) is unusual. The last sighting was at QMR where 2 were seen with Swallows Oct 5th (CDRH).

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

2005 was a relatively poor year for records. Although widespread and no doubt under recorded during the summer months, flock sizes in both migration periods were much lower than in recent years and recalled the poor year of 2001. **Spring:** the first records involved 1 flying NE over Wraybury GPs Mar 26th (CDRH), followed by 2 Bray GPs (CDRH) and 1 Pingewood GPs (RAd) Mar 27th. As already mentioned, passage was light, no obvious influxes were noted and the highest counts involved c100 birds at Theale Main GP Apr 8th (MJT), Moatlands GP Apr 25th (RCr) and May 14th (RJB). **Summer:** breeding was reported from Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen where a pair reared 2 broods (LS). Elsewhere 20 juvs on wires at Brimpton GPs Jul 11th (JPM) are presumed to be of local origin. **Autumn:** numbers began to build in August with c100 Cockmarsh Aug 25th (WAS) and 60+ Brimpton GP Aug 27th (JPM). Over 200 were roosting in maize fields at Sonning Sep 1st (ABT), c100 were reported at Farnborough Down (GDS) and Lower Fm GP (NC) Sep 7th and in small groups over Lavell's Lake Sep 14th (FJC). Birds were scarce by October and 30 over Bracknell STW Oct 7th (MK) was by far the largest count. The last records came

in early November with 1 over Lavells Lake Nov 2nd (PBT) and 1 over Caversham Heights Nov 7th (TGB). The lack of breeding data for many of our more common/familiar species (especially migrants) is a long running issue. The recording team urge all contributors to submit all breeding records of such species for future reports.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

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

In contrast to the Barn Swallow, House Martins appeared to have had a fairly good year with more records of high counts and breeding than usual. **Spring:** first reported Apr 4th with 1 at Muddy Lane GP (RF) the next appeared at Theale Main GP Apr 6th (KEM) and by Apr 8th c50 were present at the latter site (MJT). Counts during April remained fairly low, 60 at Muddy Lane GP Apr 27th (GJS; GSte) the highest reported. There were some large flocks reported during May, probably a mix between passing migrants and local breeders with counts of 200+ coming from 3 sites. At least 200 visited Lower Fm GP May 4th (GSte; GJS), c200 Moatlands GP May 14th (RJB) increasing to c500 May 17th (RCr) and c400 Woolhampton GP May 16th (GEW). **Breeding:** was reported from 8 locations (still under recorded), the number of nests at each site was 10 Bray (WAS), 18 Old Windsor Lock (WAS), 10 Water Oakley (WAS), several at Woolley Pk (GDS), 3+ Stanford Dingley (BAJC), 74 Jealott's Hill (PJC), 15+ Woodlands Pk (DJB) and a colony near to Greenham Common (JL). Birds were believed to have bred at Winterbourne (MJT) and 15+ were collecting mud at Freeman's Marsh May 29th (SAG). **Autumn:** flocking began in August and groups of 100 or more were reported from 14 sites on 25 dates to the end of September. The highest counts involved c300 Dinton Pastures CP Aug 24th (FJC), c400 Cockmarsh Aug 25th (WAS), 300 Freeman's Marsh Sep 15th (JBut), 270 Hosehill Lake Sep 27th (RCr) and several thousand at QMR Sep 29th with c1000 still present Sep 30th (CDRH). An albino was present with a group of 90 at Lower Fm GP Sep 23rd (RJH; The). Numbers quickly diminished in October, the largest number reported being 40+ at Lower Fm GP Oct 1st (MO). The last records occurred on Oct 7th when there were records from 3 locations and finally 1 was seen at Moatlands GP Oct 30th (JA).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

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

A slightly better year than 2004 with birds present at 9 locations during the summer and passage was noted at a further 3 sites where this species is not known to breed. **Spring:** the first of the year was located at Wildmoor Heath on Apr 1st (NG). Birds quickly occupied suitable areas and the only report concerning a probable migrant involved 1 at Easton Apr 30th (ABT). **Summer/Breeding:** in West Berks birds were located at 4 sites. One Greenham Common Apr 10th increased to 2 singing there by Apr 23rd (NC). Eight were singing at Snelsmore Common Apr 16th (IW; JL) and 2 were feeding young whilst another pair was observed mating Jun 29th (RAH). There were 3 territories on Bucklebury Common and nests containing 5 and 2 young were found Jun 11th (NC) and 2 singing males were discovered at Combe Wood May 2nd (IW; JL). The only Mid Berks record came from Padworth Common where 2 were noted on May 4th (GEW). In East Berks, survey work by DJB located 46 territories within the Swinley Forest SPA, 5 territories were found at South Ascot and 2 in Swinley Pk (DJB). Additionally 2 males were singing on the golf course adjacent to Swinley Pk May 21st (MSFW) and 3 territories were located on Wildmoor Heath (DJS; DJB). Breeding was confirmed at Caesars Camp (MRAn) and Wildmoor Heath (DJS). A total of 74 pairs or singing males were located throughout the county.

Autumn: it is always difficult to discern true migrants from lingering summer residents. What may have been an undetected summering bird was located at Simons Wood Aug 30th (DJS). There were no later records until October when 1 was found at Caesars Camp Oct 9th (WAN) and another was at Cranbourne Chase Oct 15th (CDRH). These records represent the first October records since 1994 and the latter date is the latest record since at least 1974.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

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

Records were received from 80 locations throughout the county with most records occurring during the non-breeding period. **Jan-Mar:** birds were reported from 44 sites, most records involving 1-40 birds including 22 reports of flocks of 20+ birds. Larger counts were c.60 Bottom Lane Theale Jan 15th (DJB) and 50 Burghfield GPs Jan 30th (RRi). One was singing at Wellbottom Down Mar 25th (DJB). **Apr-Jun:** reports came from 20 locations mostly in April when late passage was still evident at a number of sites. High totals at this time included 29 Dorney W Apr 8th (BDC), 20 Warfield Apr 12th (BDC) and 13 Englefield Apr 16th (RCr). Song was heard at Dorney W, 1 from Apr 2nd into June (BDC et al), 1 sang on Walbury Hill Apr 2nd (TPo) with 2 there Jun 3rd (JD), 1 Eversley GPs May 7th (MGLR), 1-2 on Wellbottom Down Jun 13th (DJB) into July and 1 with a pair nearby on Lowbury Hill Jun 23rd (DJB). Presumed summering birds were also noted at Lambourn (JD), Seven Barrows (IW; JL), Sheepdrove (ABT), Bury Down (SPA), Inkpen Hill (JBra), Greenham Common (MO) and Cow Down where 8 were present on May 2nd (MFW). Song may have occurred at all of these sites but the records lacked details. **Jul-Sep:** the only confirmed breeding records occurred during this period when 1 was observed carrying food at Walbury Hill Jul 31st (SAG) and several juvs just capable of flight were disturbed there Aug 30th (DJB). Records in Jul-Aug involved mostly summering birds; high counts included 12 Combe Hill Jul 23rd (IW; JL) and 20+ Greenham Common Aug 30th (DJB). However passage was detected at 2 sites on Aug 17th with 1 Finchampstead Ridges (BMA) and 2 QMR, becoming regular thereafter (CDRH). Passage became widespread in September with records from 17 locations; high counts being 50 moving SW over Cookham Sep 17th (BDC), c50 Cockmarsh Sep 27th (WAS) and c150 near Summerleaze GP Sep 30th (WAS). **Oct-Dec:** autumn passage continued in October with birds reported from 24 sites. Most of this period's highest counts were made at this time, peaks being c300 QMR Oct 3rd (CDRH), 150 Broad Common Hurst Oct 5th (MFW) and c70 Cold Harbour Oct 7th (PJC) all other reports were of 1-50 birds. November and the first half of December were quiet, the largest count being c50 QMR Nov 5th (DJB). A small influx was detected later in Dec and counts of 50+ were reported from Eton Wick Dec 21st (WAS) and Englefield Dec 29th (ABT).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

There were 9 records probably involving 6 to 10 birds, all but 1 report came from QMR. **Spring:** 1 of the Scandinavian race *A. p. littoralis* at QMR on Mar 1st (CDRH) is the 5th record of a bird showing characteristics of this race in Berks. A subsequent record of 1 at QMR Mar 15th (CDRH) was not racially identified. **Autumn:** the first of the autumn was found at QMR on Sep 29th (CDRH) and sparked a run of records at this site with 1 Oct 3rd (CDRH), 1 flying over Oct 5th (CDRH), 2 flushed then flew high to the west Oct 8th (PMC) and 1 Oct 10th (CL). One spent 10 minutes on the Lavell's Lake bund Oct 24th (PBT) and finally 1 QMR Nov 7th (CDRH).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

First winter/Spring: 1 was located at Bottom Lane, Theale Jan 9th (ABT; TGB) and remained until at least Jan 19th (RCr). Further sightings of 1 at this site Mar 7th (PH), Mar 20th (MRWS) and Mar 22nd (SRi) may have been 1 or possibly 2 different birds. One in partial s/p was located at Pingewood GPs Mar 27th (RAAd) and 1 still in w/p was present at Dorney W Apr 8th (DJB et al). **Autumn/Second winter:** the only records came from QMR and probably refer to the same bird being seen Nov 22nd, 23rd and 27th (CDRH).

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

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

Records were received from 33 locations, 13 in W Berks, 8 in M Berks and 12 in E Berks. **Spring:** passage was light with birds only reported from 16 locations during April-May, beginning with 1 over Lower Fm GP Apr 3rd (NC) and 2 Lavell's Lake Apr 4th (RR). Unlike 2004 there were no double figure counts; the highest was 8 at Englefield May 31st (RCr). **Summer/Breeding:** June records came from only 4 locations however 3 of these did confirm breeding. At Brimpton GP a pair was observed carrying food Jun 10th (GEW), of 4 seen at Englefield Jun 18, 1 fem was carrying food and 2 females were feeding young there Jun 23rd and 5 juvs were noted Jul 8th (RCr). A pair also bred at Aldermaston with young being fed Jun 22nd (GEW). A female was located in a pea field at Oakley Fm, Hurst Jun 1st (MFW) but there were no subsequent sightings. On Jul 3rd 1 sang at Paley Street (PMC) while 2 adults were feeding young at Haws Hill Fm, Drift Rd Jul 8th (BDC). It is unclear as to whether a juvenile at Lower Fm GP Jul 9th (SAG) and a pair with 2 juvs on Bury Down Aug 30th (DJS) were migrants or part of the local breeding population. **Autumn:** early migrants or wandering individuals were noted at Wokingham STW Jul 5th (DJB), Cold Harbour Jul 8th (DJB) and over Winterbourne Jul 9th (MJT). It was August before passage really got underway and birds were reported from a total of 16 sites in Aug-Sep with 4 sites, Freeman's Marsh (max 35 Sep 1st and 30 Sep 15th: JBut), QMR (max 14 Sep 3rd: CDRH), Greenham Common (max 12-15 Sep 8th: JPM) and Cock Marsh (max 24 Sep 27th: WAS) regularly holding birds during the period. Elsewhere c25 were present on Cow Down Aug 29th (MSm) and Sep 4th (ABT). Birds lingered at Cock Marsh to Oct 1st when 4 were present (WAS) and also at QMR where the last record involved 1 Oct 4th (CDRH).

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*

Scarce passage migrant

A male in fields near to Brimpton Apr 20th (GEW) was the only record this year.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber listed)

Recorded from 112 locations, mainly throughout our river valleys especially the Kennet, Thames and Loddon. As is usual most records were of 1-5 birds, higher counts that did not include family parties were 7 Wokingham STW Jan 14th (DJB), 7 Dinton Pastures CP Jul 21st (MFW) and 9 Padworth Lane GP Aug 28th (JPM). **Breeding:** breeding season records came from 63 locations and breeding was confirmed at 19 of these, 17 involving 1 pair but 2, Raymill Island (WAS) and Wokingham STW (where a pair nested in a box of wire on the top shelf of the depot stores rearing 5y: DJB) had 2 confirmed pairs. Away from

the usual habitat where this species is encountered, 2 were noted on the Downs at West Ilsley Sep 4th (ABT) and garden records came from Bracknell (KCr), Sandhurst (DJS) and Crowthorne (IT).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Our most common and widespread wagtail, records came from throughout the county in habitats varying from farmland, towns, wetlands to parks and gardens. This species is generally overlooked by the majority of observers but a number of counts exceeding 50 birds were reported in both winter periods. **First winter:** high counts involved c200 roosting Windsor Station Jan 5th (DF), 200+ Wokingham STW during February (DJB), 50 Bracknell Feb 4th (NA), c50 Westley Mill Feb 13th (KCr) and 80+ Green Pk, Reading Mar 5th (KEM). **Breeding:** was reported from Arlington Grange (IW), Dorney W (BDC), Remenham (ANS), Hell Corner Fm (1pr double brooded: LS), Dinton Pastures CP (16 juvs on Jul 19th: MFW) and Wokingham STW (5+ prs bred: DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** counts exceeding 50 came from Dinton Pastures CP with 60 Aug 3rd (FJC), 50+ Emmer Green Oct 3rd (ABT), 56 Englefield Oct 14th (RCr), 74 QMR Nov 9th (ABT), 85 Wokingham STW Nov 24th increasing to 200+ Dec 14th (DJB), 50+ roosting Maidenhead Clock Tower Dec 5th (DJB) and 60+ Windsor Station Dec 16th (DF).

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Uncommon passage migrant

An average spring and above average autumn. **Spring:** the first report involved 2 Pingewood GPs Mar 27th (NR) and these were followed by a male QMR Apr 4th (CDRH), 1m Pingewood GPs Apr 8th (KEM; MJT), 1m Twyford GPs Apr 15th (BTB), 1f QMR Apr 19th (CDRH), 1m near Combe Wood May 2nd (IW; JL) and 1m Swallowfield Pk May 5th (DJB). **Autumn:** after a f/w at Pingewood GPs Aug 27th (KEM), records came solely from QMR where up to 13 (3ad and 10 f/w) birds were reported from Sep 8th to Nov 15th (all CDRH). The table shows the pattern of occurrence of these records.

	Sep 18	Sep 19	Sep 20	Sep 21	Sep 22	Oct 5	Oct 11	Oct 16-20	Nov 5	Nov 9	Nov 15
first winters				2		3	1	1	1	1	1
Ad male w/p	1	1	2	1	1					1	

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irregular and scarce winter visitor

The huge irruption into Britain in autumn 2004 had only just reached Berkshire by the end of that year. However all was to change from the first week of January. Unprecedented numbers were present in the county throughout the first winter period, smashing all previous county records. The table shows the weekly status throughout this time but due to the high mobility of some flocks, totals should be treated as estimates as some duplication or the overlooking of separate flocks may have occurred.

7 day periods	Jan 1-7	Jan 8-14	Jan 15-21	Jan 22-28	Jan 29- Feb 4	Feb 5- 11	Feb 12-18	Feb 19-25	Feb 26- Mar 4
No of occupied areas	3	5	2	7	9	9	10	10	8
Estimated no of birds	128	315	400	363	640	701	706	610	407
7 day periods	Mar 5-11	Mar 12-18	Mar 19-25	Mar 26 - Apr 1	Apr 2-8	Apr 9-15	Apr 16-22	Apr 23- 29	Apr 30 May 6
No of occupied areas	7	5	5	5	3	4	3	3	0
Estimated no of birds	301	254	343	179	70	42	61	32	0

Due to the sheer volume of records and the need to document all records of interest it was thought that the account should be divided into specific areas and placed in order starting from the first date birds appear in each area.

Bracknell: birds could be found in the Forest Park/Worlds End area of SE Bracknell throughout January. Numbers increased during the first half of the month with 117 (previous county record high count 100+) Jan 5th (PJC), 235 Jan 11th (BAJC) and peaking at 300+ Jan 18th (TS). High numbers were maintained in this area until the end of Jan, impressive counts being 270+ Jan 19th (TS), 188 Jan 21st (DF) and 150 Jan 23rd (TS). Meanwhile numbers began to build in the north and west of Bracknell with peaks of c100 Easthampstead Jan 18th (R Dinnage), 60 Bullbrook Jan 25th (R Mearnton), c100 in the Priestwood/Western industrial area also on Jan 25th (DJB), Jan 26th (MFW) and Jan 28th (RD). During February, although widely reported, flocks were smaller (depleted food supplies?) and so the report of c200 possibly including some new birds in the Western Industrial Estate Feb 25th (RD) was a surprise. Birds were occasionally encountered over the following month but no counts exceeded 70 birds and the last Bracknell report was of 50 on Mar 31st (MFW). **Upper Bucklebury:** the only report involved 7 birds Jan 4th (RF). **Wokingham:** after 4 were reported Jan 4th (BTB), 7 were found in Emmbrook Jan 8th (P Johns) but there were no further reports until Jan 29th when 29 were back in Emmbrook (PBT) and c60 visited the town centre (M Turton). The following day c120 were stripping Rowans in Emmbrook (PBT), however this was the peak and no other count exceeded 50 birds although 50 in the East Heath area Feb 23rd (per MSFW) may have been new. The last Wokingham report was on Apr 9th when 2 were seen in Woosehill (PBT). **Binfield:** the first report involved 2 Jan 11th (MAS). Birds were then located in the Foxley Fields – Temple Pk area from Feb 1st when 31 were by the Blue Mountain Golf Club (MAS). Sixty were present in Benetfield Rd Feb 3rd (MAS) then after a period of scarcity c50 were noted on Mar 3rd (FJC) increasing to 60 Mar 8th and 14th (MAS). Birds lingered into April, the last being 1 Apr 29th (MAS) the latest recorded county date. **Maidenhead area:** 21 were observed to fly into Berks by Maidenhead Bridge Jan 13th (BDC). Birds were then located in the Furze Platt – Pinkneys Green area with 32 Jan 22nd (BDC et al) increasing to 42 Jan 23rd (PNe). Meanwhile 3 visited Cox Green Jan 25th (DJW) while numbers continued to increase in the north of the town with 71 Pinkneys Green Feb 5th (LJF) and 94 in the Cranbrook estate Feb 13th (TK). Thirty birds probed south to the A4 Feb 6th (B Morgan) and birds began to congregate in the Summerleaze/Sheephouse Rd area with 12 Feb 13th increasing to 130 Feb 16th (CDRH) and then of 180+ and 300+ Feb 17th (DF; BDC), however only 75 could be found Feb 18th (CDRH). Small groups continued to tour the town into April, the last being 16 Apr 25th (MJF). **Newbury:** the only reports were of 50 Braunfels Walk Jan 14th (JBri) and 2 Apr 26th (SAG). **Wishmoor Bottom:** an isolated

report of 22 Jan 23rd (CDJ). **Thatcham:** after 1 Jan 26th (per RAH), a flock of up to 42 toured the east of the town Jan 27th (MO). Numbers increased to 75 in Pipers Way Jan 29th (RAH), 120 in Agricola Way Feb 1st (GSte; GJS) and peaked at 148 Feb 5 (ABT). The flock still numbered 120+ Feb 13th (RAH) and 115 were still present Feb 20th (GJS; GSte) before the last 30 were reported Feb 21st (NC). Surprisingly 55 reappeared Apr 17th (RAH) however only 35 could be found Apr 18th (GJS; GSte) and were not seen again. **Twyford:** 1 Springfield Pk Jan 26th (LFos) was followed by 12 in Waitrose Car Pk Feb 12th (TK) before 70 visited Springfield Pk Feb 20th (MO). A group of 30 were observed in Ruscombe Feb 25th (PBT) and finally a party of 8 rested near Hurst Apr 14th (W Tobitt). **Silwood Pk:** 11 were reported Jan 29th (CL). Slough: 50+ were noted in oaks near to Slough Industrial Estate (SIE) Jan 30th (BJH) then 150 were located in Hamilton Rd SIE Feb 4th (J M Benson). Further reports of c60 birds in this area occurred on Feb 9th (when 5 were found dead: P Bowyer) and Feb 12th (TS) then c70 flew over Dover Rd SIE Feb 24th (JKn). The last Slough report came from Slough Railway Station when 25 were watched for 5 min Apr 8th (J Hook). **Sandhurst area:** 106 were located in the Meadows superstore car park Jan 31st (DJB). A roosting flock of c60 on the county boundary at Blackwater Mar 1st-2nd (DJB) probably accounted for the 28 in College Town Mar 14th (NG) and 40 in the Meadows Mar 15th (RJG). Finally c50 were in Shepherds Meadows Mar 20th (RJG). **Reading:** several were reported in Katesgrove Lane, central Reading Feb 1st (per ABT) then 2 were seen in Tilehurst Feb 19th (P D Tilbury) before a flock of 172 was located along Langley Hill Rd, near Calcot (RA) and 35 were in Caversham (C Webster) Feb 27th. Feb 28th had 100+ at Southcote (KS) while 125+ were still near Calcot (RA). Birds were last reported at the latter site on Mar 2nd when 30 were present (RA). **Hungerford:** 5 were reported Feb 5th (DF). Dedworth: c200 beside the A308 Feb 6th (CDRH) had all but disappeared by Feb 8th when only 17 flew over (CDRH). **Finchampstead/Crowthorne area:** up to 14 were located in Finchampstead Feb 6th (GR; BMA) then 20+ were near to the Nine Mile Ride Feb 8th (BMc; RMc). Numbers from this area slowly reduced so that only 11 were present on Feb 14th (RJG). However 55 were present along Dukes Ride Feb 23rd (DClo) and 76 were at the Sand Martins Golf Club Mar 8th (J A Eyre). Further reports of up to 22 birds came from Heath Lake (IT) and Crowthorne (BMA) and c35 were in Wellington College Mar 17th to 19th (R Auger) before the last flock of 30 were seen at Gorrick Wood Apr 11th (BMA). **Windsor Great Pk:** 52 were attracted to mistletoe along Tower Ride, Cranbourne Chase Feb 8th (CDRH); these had increased to c80 Feb 18th and 100+ were nearby at Sandpit Gate Mar 10th declining to 52 Mar 14th (CDRH). Further south, c180 were on the county boundary near to Virginia Water Mar 20th (PNe; ADC). **Spencers Wood:** 1 Feb 23rd (NR). **Eversley GPs:** 1 flew over Feb 25th (JMC). **Theale:** 44 in Theale High St Mar 3rd (RCr). **Aldermaston:** 25 were located inside the AWE Mar 8th (SRI). **Barkham:** 1 of 10 in a Barkham garden Mar 9th had a white-blue-white colour ring on its leg (S Heffer). **North Ascot:** 50-100 were present Mar 11th (V Tickle). **Winkfield:** up to 30 were present Mar 31st (MMc). **Bray GPs:** 15 were seen to enter nearby gardens Apr 8th (CRE). **Wraysbury:** 2 flew SE along the Colne Brook Apr 19th (CDRH). **Speen:** 4 were present Apr 21st (ACJ).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident

A survey by BDC to ascertain the status of this species in selected woodlands in E Berks resulted in the following number of territories at the following sites. Ashley Hill, 38, Lot Wood Warren Row, 10, Maidenhead Thicket, 19 and Pudding Hill Warren Row, 5. Elsewhere a family party and 5 singing males were noted at Mount Scipett Copse Jun 10th (BDC) and

other notable counts came from Wraysbury GPs with 29 Mar 27th and 43 May 23rd (PNe), 19 Bray GPs Jun 12th (PNe), 17 Dinton Pastures CP Jun 13th (RBor) and 15 Stanford Dingley Jun 17th (BAJC). Ringing totals were quite low with 29 ringed at Great Meadow Pond between March and Sept (RRG) and 35 ringed plus 16 re-traps at Wraysbury GPs which is a 65% drop compared to the 2004 Wraysbury total (RRG).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Common resident

The only notable records were 22 at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 27th (PNe) and 29 ringed there from May to August (RRG).

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident

Rather more records were submitted than usual. High counts included 38 at Maidenhead Thicket Jan 21st (BDC), 28 Wraysbury GPs Jan 30th (PNe), 29 Bray GPs Feb 4th (PNe), 45 Wraysbury GPs Mar 27th (PNe), 22 territories in Ashley Hill and a further 10 in Lot Wood, Warren Row Apr 11th (BDC) and 42 territories were located in Maidenhead Thicket May 27th (BDC). The most outstanding breeding record involved a pair rearing 3 broods of 4, 3 and 3y at Cookham Rise (M Poulter). Bird counts along the Jubilee River showed that up to 69 birds were in residence during September (BDC).

COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

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

Records were received from 20 locations (Theale/Burghfield GP area counting as 1), 14 in W Berks, 3 in M Berks and 3 in E Berks. Song was noted from all sites and up to 93 singing males were identified. **Spring:** the first reports involved 1 Moatlands GP Apr 8th (RCr) followed by 1 singing Burghfield GPs (KEM) and 2 singing Dinton Pastures CP (FJC) Apr 12th. By the end of April birds could be found at 12 locations, high counts being 4 singing Greenham/Crookham Common Apr 24th (NC) and 5 Dinton Pastures CP Apr 27th (SH; FJC). Numbers peaked in May when most reports involved 1-4 singing males from 16 localities, higher totals were 7 territories at Greenham/Crookham Common May 2nd (NC) and a survey organised by RCr on behalf of the TABCG resulted in a total of 57 singing males throughout the Theale/Burghfield GP area (an area under threat from housing development). In E Berks (where this species is increasingly scarce) 1 was on territory at Wraysbury GPs (RDr; WAS) and presumed migrants were singing by the Coppid Beach Roundabout, near Wokingham May 20th (SDi) and Strand Water Jun 6th (WAS). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 2 sites; an adult was observed carrying food at Dinton Pastures CP May 30th (SPA) and a thorough search of the Searles Lane/Cottage Lane area of Burghfield GPs by JA produced 5 family parties Jul 3rd and 10th with 13 juvs noted on the former date and 12 on the latter. Autumn departure: Nightingales are only rarely encountered on autumn migration. Usually the latest county records refer to birds still on breeding grounds and this was indeed the case in 2005 with 1 at Burghfield GPs Jul 16th (JA) the latest date.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

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

Unusually there were no spring passage records this year. The first report came from Reading town- centre where 2 (a singing male and a female) were located Apr 17th (PG; JLe). Other sightings from this area involved males May 1st (BTB; PG), May 6th (RCr), May 7th (MFW) and a female May 9th (TGB). Records suggest that the Reading population may now be only 1 pair and breeding was not confirmed. For the second consecutive year there were no records from Aldermaston AWE. **Autumn:** passage began with 1 at Greenham/Crookham Common Aug 4th (NC). A juvenile was reported at West Woodhay Down Sep 3rd (ABT) and another visited Greenham/Crookham Common Oct 23rd (NC). Birds were still present in Reading where 2-3 including a singing male were noted on Oct 26th (TGB) and shortly afterwards a small influx produced 2 at Coley Fm, Reading from Nov 2-9 (DJS), a f/imm and probable male were on the rim of QMR also Nov 5th (ABT) and nearby the same 2 f/imm were at Datchet Pumping Station Nov 5th, 1 remaining to Nov 7th (CDRH).

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 14 locations throughout the county. Apart from Swinley Forest all records probably involved passage birds. **Spring:** a singing male at Wishmoor Cross, Swinley Forest Mar 28th (DJB) is the earliest record since a male at Brimpton GP on Mar 25th 1995 and is probably the earliest ever returnee to a breeding site in Berks. Passage was noted at 7 sites; a male was located at Wraysbury GPs Apr 16th (MSFW; MSte), 1 was singing at Wildmoor Heath Apr 25th (KCr), 1 fem, Dinton Pastures CP Apr 30th (PG), another singing male was located at Combe Wood May 2nd (IW; JL) and further reports involved a female Lower Fm GP May 11 (DJe), 1 Greenham Common on May 19th (APy) and 2 Walbury Hill on the unusual date of Jun 3rd (JD). **Summer:** the annual survey of this species within the Swinley Forest SPA from April to July resulted in 46 territories being located (DJB). Breeding was confirmed at Lower Star Post where adults were feeding young in a nest within a birch stump May 23rd (DJB) and 1+ juvs were seen there Jun 21st (MDL) and a male was carrying food to a nest site on the Devils Highway Jun 10th (DJB). **Autumn:** passage was noted at 8 sites. A juv was found at Jealott's Hill Aug 9th (PJC) and another was located at Brimpton GP Aug 11th (GEW) while a f/imm visited Wildmoor Heath (RJG) the same day. A fem/f/w appeared at Cock Marsh Aug 25th (WAS) and moulting adult males were reported from Lough Down, Streatley and Several Down, Compton Aug 30th (ABT). A female visited TBa's Caversham garden Sep 9th, another male was present at Lough Down Sep 10th (ABT) and finally a f/w was present at Wraysbury GPs Sep 14th (CL).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon (and declining?) passage migrant which formerly bred

Spring: passage was reported from 6 locations, probably involving no more than 18 birds. The first records involved singles at Pingewood GPs (RHS) and Greenham Common (GJS; GSte) Apr 20th. The main arrival occurred from Apr 28th (a male at Dorney W: CRe) and continued to May 1st and involved 12 birds from 5 sites. Peak counts at this time were 4 (2m 2f) at Greenham/Crookham Common (NC) and 3 at Dorney W/Slough SF (CRe) Apr 30th. Later arrivals were 2 at Dorney W May 8th (CRe), 1 West Ilsley May 11th (CDRH) and 1 Dorney W May 14th (DJB; SP). **Autumn:** passage began with 1 at Lower Fm GP Jul 31st (IW; JL) and was followed by 1 at Maddle Fm, Lambourn Aug 12th (ABT). At

least a further 55 birds moved through the county, being noted at 16 sites with highs of 5 at Brimpton Sep 8th (GEW), 4 Slough SF Sep 20th (CRe) and 5 at both Cow Down, West Ilsley (CRe) and the Compton Downs (PMC) Sep 24th. Three birds from an autumn total of 10+ birds were ringed at Greenham/Crookham Common (NRG) and this site also held the latest record with 1 present Oct 22nd (IW; KEM) and 23rd (NC).

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

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

Records were received from 74 locations throughout the county. Most reports occurred in the periods Jan-Mar and Sep-Dec, however the largest counts were made during the breeding season. The table shows the monthly status of the Stonechat in Berks in 2005.

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greenham/Crookham Commons	4	7	9	8	15	10	5	11	8	18	4	–
Wildmoor BBOWT Reserve	1	3	3	8	8	12	5	8	8	4	2	2
Swinley Forest SPA *	–	–	7	38	42	41	38	5	7	7	–	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
Number of Birds	46	34	36	2	3	7	–	10	23	40	43	28
Number of occupied sites	23	18	23	1	2	3	–	3	13	18	17	15
Overall total number of birds	51	44	55	56	70	70	48	37	46	69	49	30

*Survey work within the Swinley Forest SPA concentrated on locating territories and relatively few visits were made when young would be expected, thus the lower than usual totals for June and July. The survey had finished by August so totals from Aug-Oct are incomplete.

Jan/Feb: wintering birds were reported from 38 locations, most reports being of 1-3 birds. Higher counts were 6 (3prs) at Twyford GPs Jan 1st (BTB), 4 Greenham/Crookham Commons Jan 3rd (JL) increasing to 7 Feb 17th (JPM) and 5 Bury/Cow Downs Jan 19th (ANS) and Feb 6th (MGP). **March:** as birds began to leave the wintering grounds, numbers in the breeding areas began to increase. For instance there were 9 at Greenham/Crookham Common Mar 20th (ABT) and 7 Wishmoor Bottom Mar 28th (DJB). Passage was also noted at several sites (eg there were 5+ Dorney W Mar 17th: SP). **Spring/Summer:** at the usual breeding sites 19 territories were located within the Swinley Forest SPA (DJB), 7 territories were located on Greenham/Crookham Commons (NC), several pairs were located on Wildmoor Heath (MO) and there was 1 pair at Swinley Brick Pits (DJB). Breeding was confirmed at Greenham where at least 5 pairs bred (NC; SAG; DJB); Swinley Forest 6+ pairs confirmed (DJB; PJC; WAN); Wildmoor Heath 3prs (DJS; BMA) and for the first time in many years a pair bred on the Lambourn Downs: adults noted with 1+ juvs Jun 10th (CDRH). Later in the summer a pair with 3 juvs was present on Compton Downs Aug 30th (ABT) but the lack of any earlier sightings may indicate that these birds had bred elsewhere. Dispersing juveniles were noted at Brimpton GP Aug 9th (GEW), Broadmoor Fm 3 on Aug 18th (BMA) and Pingewood GPs Sep 22nd (KEM). **Autumn/Second winter:** birds began to repopulate wintering sites in September, numbers peaking in October. Most counts involved 1-4 individuals but higher counts were 5 at Walbury Hill Oct 20th (DJS), a surprising 18 on Greenham Common Oct 22nd (IW) and 6 Bury/Cow Downs West Ilsley Nov 1st (MR) and Nov 5th (RAH).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant, very rare summer visitor

Records were received from 45 locations throughout the county, spanning Mar-May and Jul-Nov. The tables show the distribution of records throughout these periods.

Spring

Week ending	20/3	27/3	3/4	10/4	17/4	24/4	1/5	8/5	15/5	22/5
Number of sites	11	5	2	8	9	8	12	7	3	2
Minimum number of birds	23	15	2	32	24	25	63	22	5	2

Autumn

Week ending	10/7	17/7	24/7	31/7	7/8	14/8	21/8	28/8	4/9
Number of sites	1	1	1	1	3	4	5	7	10
Minimum number of birds	1	1	1	1	4	8	5	15	25
Week ending	11/9	18/9	25/9	2/10	9/10	16/10	23/10	30/10	6/11
Number of sites	4	7	8	4	4	5	2	1	1
Minimum number of birds	14	31	23	9	5	7	3	1	2

Spring: first reported on Mar 15th when 2 males were located at both QMR (CDRH) and Dorney W (SP). As numbers increased through Mar/Apr it became apparent that 4 locations were consistently attracting higher numbers than elsewhere in the county, the maximum counts at these sites were 7 Dorney Wetlands Apr 8th (DJB; LJF) and Apr 30th (CRe), 8 QMR Apr 19th (CDRH), 13 Englefield (KEM) and 15 Greenham/Crookham Commons (NC) both on Apr 30th. With passage peaking in the last week of April numbers soon began to decline but 11 could still be located at Greenham/Crookham Commons May 7th (IW; JL). The last spring record was of 1 at Dorney W May 22nd (CRe). **Autumn:** began early with single juvs noted at Dorney W Jul 10th (WAS), Jul 17-18th (JRe; WAS) and an adult there on Jul 29th (WAS). Autumn passage was more protracted than that of the spring and peaked in late Aug to mid Sep with high counts of 11 f/w birds at Greenham Common Aug 30th (DJB) and 12 at Dorney W Sep 16th (BDC). Birds continued to pass through the county during October, the most consistent sites being Dorney W and QMR and it was at the latter site where the last birds were reported with 2 Nov 4th (CDRH) and 1 remaining on Nov 5th (CDRH; ABT; DJB)

GREENLAND WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*

A small number of birds showing characteristics of this race were identified in both the spring and autumn. **Spring:** a report of several among Wheatears came from Greenham Common Apr 24th (NC), another was reported from Englefield Apr 26th (RCr) and finally a bird at Horton GPs May 22nd appeared to be a male in retarded first summer plumage (CDRH). **Autumn:** single fem/f/w birds were noted at QMR Sep 19-20th and Oct 11-16th (CDRH).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant

A good year with 9 records involving 13 birds. **Spring:** began with 2 records both involving 2 birds, at Combe Hill (1m 1f: ABT) and Inkpen Hill (2f: JLS; AG) Apr 15th. A popular male was located at Broadmoor Fm Apr 28th (BMA et al). This was followed by an unprecedented record involving a male (photographed) visiting a Finchampstead garden Jun 2nd to 4th (per BMc; RMc). **Autumn:** a small influx occurred during mid October. On Oct 17th a f/w was located on Lowbury Hill (CDRH) and a f/w was ringed and a female observed at Greenham Common (NC). A male visited QMR Oct 19th (CDRH) and finally there was 1 (probably a f/w) on Cow Down (CRe) and a male and f/w were at Greenham Common (RAH) Oct 22nd.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

An abundant resident and winter visitor

This species can be encountered everywhere within the county and is so familiar that few observers send in records. However there were some reasonable counts submitted this year, most being of gatherings of up to 20 birds. The exceptions were counts of 21 Jan 30th, 27 Mar 27th and 28 May 23rd at Wraysbury GPs (PNe) and 24 at Dorney W Nov 16th (BDC). Thirteen were heard singing in Maidenhead Thicket May 17th (BDC).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor (Schedule 1)

First winter: the factors that caused the huge Waxwing influx (poor berry crops on the continent), may have also affected the numbers of Fieldfares that wintered in Berks during this period. Flocks exceeding 100 birds were located at no less than 34 sites compared to just 17 in Jan/Mar 2004. Most flocks numbered from 100 to 250 birds, but counts exceeding these totals were c350 Shottesbrooke Fm Jan 1-2nd (DJB), 350 Bury Down Jan 1st (RCr) increasing to c500 Jan 2nd (GR), 400+ Compton Downs Jan 29th (DJB), 450 Sheepdrove Feb 5th (ABT), 300+ Chapel Green Feb 10th (BMA) and 250+ Hall Fm, Arborfield Feb 23-24th (DJB). Although Jan-Feb had the lion's share of large flocks, 7 sites still held flocks of 100+ well into March, the largest being c200 at Eastbury Grange Mar 13th (ABT). As one would expect, most birds had departed by April, 47 at Dorney W Apr 8th (BDC) being the only count of note. An unusually late bird was present at Charvil May 17th (HRN) and was followed by 2 seen at Greenham Common May 19th (APy). These are the latest records since 1988 when Fieldfares bred in Berks. **Second winter:** in stark contrast to the first winter, the species was unusually scarce during the autumn. The first arrivals occurred in mid October with 29 flying SE over Windsor Great Pk Oct 15th (CDRH), 1 over Caversham Oct 16th (TBa; TGB) and 2 at Eversley GPs Oct 19th (GR). Before December, the only sizable flock was of 100+ on Cow Down Nov 1st (MR) and elsewhere very few flocks numbered more than 50. In December numbers began to pick up a little and 100 were located at Wraysbury GPs Dec 5th (PNe), 100 Theale Dec 11th (KEM), 175-200 Cold Harbour Dec 14-15th (DJB; RDr), 150 Farnborough Dec 18th (GDS) and 100 West Woodhay Dec 27th (LS).

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Reported from throughout the county, this species continues to recover from the declines of recent years. Records were received from 111 locations; however this is surely an underestimate of its county-wide status as many observers do not submit records of this familiar species. **First winter:** as is usual for this species, records were mainly of 1-6 birds, larger counts were 9 Maidenhead Court Jan 30th (DF) and 8 Bray GPs Feb 4th (PNe). Song is heard fairly regularly at this time and some interesting counts were made. Five sang in Cookham Jan 5th (BDC) and 8 sang at Eversley GPs Jan 16th (BMA). **Spring/Summer:** a check of woodlands in E Berks located 5 singing at Ashley Hill Apr 4th (BDC) and DJB located 71 territories during his heath and woodland survey in SE Berks. The TABCG breeding bird survey of the Theale and Burghfield GPs area located 54 territories. Breeding was confirmed at 14 locations and was thought to have occurred at a great deal more; a pair at Hell Corner Fm, Inkpen raised 2 broods (LS). **Autumn/Second winter:** there were few counts of more than 4 birds; 6 were noted at Greenham Common Oct 22nd (IW) and 7 Padworth Lane GP Dec 18th (TGB). Ringing totals by RRG involved 36 birds and 8 retraps. Two juvs were ringed at Kintbury Cressbeds on the early date of Apr 4th (RGS)

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. (Schedule 1)

First winter: like the Fieldfare, Redwings were more common than usual during this period. Flocks of 100 or more were reported from 29 locations with most counts ranging from 100 to 200 birds. Higher counts involved c250 Shottesbrooke Fm Jan 1-2nd (DJB), 260 Windsor Great Pk Jan 27th (PNe), c300 Hurst Feb 8th (DJB), 1000+ (the largest count since 1991) Chapel Green, Wokingham Feb 10th (BMA) and 250 (some singing) at Holt Lodge, Kintbury Mar 16th (LS). For the second successive winter a partial albino was located in the Shinfield/Arborfield area Feb 23rd having a white mantle, scapulars and outer tail feathers (DJB). Apart from these larger flocks, groups numbering up to 99 birds were frequently encountered. Most birds had left by April but 58 were still present beside the Jubilee River Apr 8th (BDC). The last records occurred Apr 17th with 1 Twyford GPs (BTB) and several in a mixed flock of thrushes at Upper Lambourn (FGM). **Second winter:** returning birds were first noted on Oct 3rd when 2 flew over Caversham (TBa per RCr). These were followed by singles over Spencers Wood (NR) and White Place Fm, Cookham (DJB) Oct 5th and several records on Oct 6th. Passage increased during October, especially in the mid and east of the county and birds were reported from a total of 43 locations. The highest counts during this period were 150 Silwood Pk (CL) and 250 Spencers Wood (NR) Oct 15th; 150-200 over Caversham (TBa; TGB), 790 in small groups heading N-NE over Wishmoor in 3hrs (DJB) and 150+ flying E over Greenham Common (NRG) Oct 16th; 200+ SE over Emmbrook Oct 17th (DJB), 200+ over Greenham Common Oct 23rd (NRG), c200 Datchet Common (CDRH) and 100+ S over Woodlands Pk (DJB) Oct 29th, 100+ S over Eversley GPs (RJG) and 200 Woolley Down (SWi) Oct 30th. Once this passage had passed, numbers recorded on the ground were much lower and during Nov-Dec the only flock to exceed 100 birds was 120 at Wokingham STW Nov 14th (DJB).

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 103 locations, 38 in W Berks, 24 in M Berks and 41 in E Berks. **First winter:** there were no counts reported that exceeded 4 birds but pairs were frequently encountered at many sites throughout the county. **Summer/Breeding:** comparatively few records were received even of singing birds. However song was reported from 13 sites and breeding was confirmed at 6 of these. Unusually for this time of year, groups of 7 were found at New Mill May 18th (CRW), 10 were located at Hurst Jun 13th (PMC) and 16 at Donnington Castle Jun 29th (RAH). **Autumn/Second winter:** post-breeding flocks were located at 10 sites, the largest being 20 at Widbrook Common Aug 22 (DJB), 20 Charvil Sep 13th (HRN) and 16 Swallowfield Sep 19th (CRW). Evidence of migration came from Lavells Lake where 24 flew over in groups of 17, 6 and 1 Oct 26th (MFW). Apart from the Berkshire Bird Index (BBI), there has been no real effort to survey our commoner breeding birds since the Tetrad Survey of 1987-89. Because of this it has been difficult to ascertain the level of decline this species has endured during the intervening years. The BBI shows a decline of 15% from 2004 and a 19% decline since 2000. One way of gauging any significant drop in population may be by monitoring the size of post-breeding flocks within the county. A check of recent Berkshire Bird Reports shows that, where once fairly frequent, there has not been a flock numbering over 50 birds since 2001 and the last flock to exceed 100 birds was in 1992. Hopefully the forthcoming BTO Bird Atlas 2007-11 will shed more light on the fortunes of this and other breeding birds.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Localised resident in small numbers (Schedule 1)

Records were received from 22 locations, 16 in W Berks, 5 in M Berks and 1 in E Berks. The vast majority of records came from the Kennet valley where at least 41 singing males were reported. Elsewhere a further 6 singing males (3+ at Dinton Pastures CP and 3 at Bray GPs) contributed to a county record total of 47 males. **Jan/Feb:** reported from just 6 locations, usually single singing birds betraying their presence. A pair was present at Kintbury Cressbeds throughout the period (RGS) and 3 were singing at Thatcham Marsh Jan 21st (DJB). **Mar-Jul:** song was reported from 15 sites, a further 6 sites reported 1-3 birds. High counts involved 16 singing at Thatcham Marsh Apr 2nd (IW; JL), 5 singing Moatlands GP throughout April (RCr), 3 singing Woolhampton GPs Apr 15th (JPM), with a report of 5 there on May 6th (MFW); nearby there were 4 territories along the K&A Canal at Brimpton Mill during the period (GEW). Away from the Kennet, at least 3 were singing at Dinton Pastures CP in Apr/May (MO) and in E Berks, after 1 at Bray GPs Apr 4 (WAS) numbers increased to 3 singing there Jun 3rd (WAS). **Breeding:** was confirmed at Brimpton Mill where a pair was observed feeding young May 29th (GEW) and a juv was ringed at Thatcham Marsh Jul 3rd (NRG). **Aug-Dec:** 12 sites reported birds, including 5-6 heard at Thatcham Marsh Oct 2nd and 30th (NRG) and other notable records included 11 birds ringed at Denford Trout Fm during Sep (RDW), 2 singing Freeman's Marsh Sep 29th (RGS), the last Bray record was 1 Oct 8th (CRe), at least 2 remained at Lavell's Lake through Nov-Dec (FJC) and 1 at Green Pk, Reading Nov 16th (TC) and Dec 29th (PG).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

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

Although spring passage was lighter than in 2004, there were signs that some birds remained to at least summer in the county. The first report involved 1 reeling at Jealott's Hill Apr 6th (PEd), the earliest arrival date since 1978. This was followed by 1 reeling at Lavell's Lake Apr 12th (BTB; MFW) to May 4th (MO) with 2 reported reeling there Apr 13th (WAS) and 30th (MDL); further records from this site involved 1 reeling May 11th (MFW) and what may have been a different bird reeling intermittently from Jun 6th to Jun 25th (FJC et al). Elsewhere 1 was reported from Hosehill Lake Apr 16th (RANG), 1 reeling Dorney W Apr 21st (SP; DAC) was probably the same bird that was reeling nearby at Slough SF Apr 23rd (DJB) and May 11th (SP). An influx occurred at the end of April with 1 reeling at Wraysbury GPs Apr 27th (RDr) to May 1st (DB) – probably the bird ringed there by RRG Apr 30th, 1 Freeman's Marsh Apr 29th-30th (RF; JBut) and May 12th (RF) and 15th (JBut), 1 reeling Eversley GPs (IHB et al) and 1 Swallowfield (BMA) Apr 30th. Later records involved 1 at Wraysbury GPs Jun 18th (CL) and another reeling at Freeman's Marsh Jul 3rd and 5th (JBut) and finally 1 there Jul 30th (KTa) and Aug 1st (JBut).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 39 locations from April to October. **Spring:** the first occurred at Southcote Lock on Apr 1st (AVL), followed by single singing birds at Moatlands GP (RCr; RJB) and Hosehill Lake (BU) Apr 3rd. Records came from 32 locations during Apr/May with high counts of 10 at Dinton Pastures CP Apr 30th (MJM), 11 singing at Moatlands GPs May 2nd (CMR), 13 ringed at Thatcham Marsh May 14th (IW; JL) and 9 at Freeman's Marsh May 22nd (JBut). **Summer:** a survey of the Theale/Burghfield GPs area by the TABCG resulted in 120 territories being located. Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites usually involving single pairs feeding young, however careful monitoring of 6 territories along Maidenhead Ditch and Strand Water in July resulted in 3 family parties being located (WAS). **Autumn:** passage was evident in August when birds began to appear out of habitat eg 1 in maize at Englefield Aug 28th (RCr) and 15 ringed at Great Meadow Pond (not a regular breeding site) during Aug (RRG). Although birds were noted at a number of sites during September, passage remained light and there were no observations of more than 3 birds. Ringing returns by the RRG at one site were down a massive 72% compared to 2004 totals and may point to a poor breeding season for this species as well as possibly a poor survival rate in its winter quarters. The last of the year was noted at Thatcham Marsh Oct 2nd (NRG).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

Records were received from 35 wetland locations throughout the county. **Spring:** 1 at Eversley GPs Apr 2nd (IHB) is the earliest ever Spring record for Berkshire and continues a recent trend for this species to arrive earlier (the earliest recorded date prior to 1995 was Apr 12th 1993, since then there have been earlier records in 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2002). The next reports came on Apr 10th with singles at both Thatcham Marsh (JL) and Lavell's Lake (FJC; MFW). Passage increased during April, when 15 were noted at Thames Valley Pk Apr 29th (SH), but it was May when numbers peaked. In May song was reported from 20 sites,

high counts being 7 singing at Moatlands GP May 2nd (CMR), 10 Dorney W from May 17th into June (BDC), 9 Wraybury GPs May 23rd (PNe) and 8 along Strand Water from May into June (WAS). Ringing operations resulted in 16 caught at Thatcham Marsh May 14th (IW; JL). **Summer:** the TABCG survey of the Theale/Burghfield GP area resulted in 86 territories being located. Elsewhere, new summering sites were found at Hurley (3 singing Jun 2nd: BDC) and Old Slade NR (4 singing Jun 8th: RDr). Breeding was confirmed at 6 locations; family parties being found at Bray GPs (WAS), Brimpton GPs (GEW), Dorney W (BDC), Lavell's Lake (FJC), Lower Fm GP (SAG) and Strand Water (WAS). **Autumn:** passage throughout the period was fairly light (or under recorded) with most records involving single birds especially in September. High counts involved 13 at Dorney W Aug 15th (BDC) and 4 at West End, Bracknell Aug 16th (BDC). In October singles were located at Thatcham Marsh Oct 2nd (NRG), Hosehill Lake Oct 4th (RAH), Dorney W Oct 5th (WAS) and back at Thatcham Marsh Oct 23rd (NRG). Ringing totals by the RRG showed totals in their Constant Effort Site (CES) amounted to an alarming 79% drop in numbers of birds ringed compared to 2004.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor

This one of our most common warblers continues to do well within the county with summer populations remaining fairly stable while recent mild winters have benefited wintering birds. The table shows the status throughout the winter periods.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov	Dec
West Berks sites	0	4	1	1	7
Minimum number of males	0	4	0	1	4
Minimum number of females	0	2	0	0	3
Minimum number not sexed	0	0	1	0	1
Mid Berks sites	3	2	13	2	10
Minimum number of males	2	2	11	1	7
Minimum number of females	2	1	6	2	6
Minimum number not sexed	0	0	1	0	0
East Berks sites	8	13	9	4	13
Minimum number of males	6	12	8	4	14
Minimum number of females	4	1	5	2	5
Minimum number not sexed	0	1	0	0	0
Total number of birds	14	23	32	10	40

First winter: records were received from 40 locations with most coming from gardens and involved 1-2 birds visiting feeders. Most reports came from the east of the county during Jan–Feb (there were no W Berks records in Jan), and whilst numbers increased in Mid Berks in March they remained stable in the east. Counts of 3 birds together were reported from Thatcham Feb 15th (2m, 1f: RAH) and 2m and 1f at Theale from Mar 6th to 29th (JPM). Spring migrants began to arrive from about mid March, so distinguishing lingering winter birds from new arrivals is difficult, but a male remaining in SPA's Twyford garden to Mar 30th and a male in WB's Tilehurst garden to Apr 1st are probably the latest wintering birds. **Spring/Summer:** a pair at Dinton Pastures CP Mar 13th may have been spring migrants and were followed by singing males at Upper Basildon Mar 19th (CMR) and Virginia Water

Mar 20th (ADC). The species was widespread by early April and records were received from a total of 98 locations during the period. Surveys were undertaken at 5 localities; in the Theale/Burghfield GP area 201 territories were located. In Windsor Forest 80 territories were located and nearby 30 were located in Swinley Pk, 26 in Swinley Forest and 8 in South Ascot (all DJB). Other high counts included 12 singing Thatcham Marsh Apr 3rd (NC); 9 singing Ashley Hill Apr 11th (BDC); 13 Dinton Pastures CP Apr 30th (MJM); 12 singing Maidenhead Thicket May 17th (BDC); 27 Wraysbury GPs May 27th (PNe) and 14 Bray GPs Jun 12th (PNe). Breeding was confirmed at 12 sites and probably occurred at many more. **Autumn:** passage occurred from Aug to Oct/Nov with the peak in September. Away from ringing sites numbers reported were fairly low. However, 10 were on the pylon island in Theale Main GP Aug 21st (RCr; RJB) and 8 were in hillside scrub at Cock Marsh Sep 1st (WAS). At Denford Trout Fm 40 were ringed in September (RGS) and small numbers were ringed at several W Berks locations (NRG). In East Berks, RRG reported significant numbers of this species passing through their main sites. Passage continued into November, the last probable migrants being 1f at Wraysbury GPs Nov 18th (CDRH) and a male at Lavell's Lake Nov 22nd (FJC). **Second winter:** the first returning garden birds were 2f/imm at Caversham (MI), 1m Maidenhead Court (DF) and 1 Pinkneys Green (D Bow) all on Nov 17th. During this period birds were reported from 36 sites and, although still more widespread in E Berks, more were found in the west. Again, records usually involved 1-2 birds and the only count to exceed this was 3 (1m 2f) at Pinkneys Green Nov 25th (DBow).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Spring/Summer: first reported at Denford Trout Fm on the early date of Apr 3rd and heard singing there on Apr 4th (RDW). Apart from an extraordinary record of 1 at Caversham on Mar 23rd 1975, this is the earliest record of this species for Berks. The next record was not until Apr 21st when 1 was singing at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH; CRP). During spring birds were noted at 47 locations, usually 1-2 birds. Larger counts usually came from survey sites; the Theale/Burghfield area survey located 111 territories. Eversley GPs held 13 territories (MGLR) and 24 territories were found in Swinley Forest and 6 in South Ascot (DJB). Nine were singing at Wraysbury GPs May 10th (CRP), 5 sang at Lavell's Lake on Apr 30th (TOA) and 4 territories were located at Ashley Hill Jun 18th (BDC). **Breeding:** was reported from 7 sites with family parties seen at Allanbay Pk (BDC), Burghfield GPs (2 broods: JA), Eton (BDC), near Foliejon Pk (BDC) and Strand Water (WAS). Adults were feeding young at Eversley GPs (BMA) and juveniles were ringed at Woolhampton GPs (JPM). **Autumn:** this species passes through the county generally un-noticed at this time of year. Ringing returns from RRG point to the main passage being in August, 5 times more birds being ringed than September. The latest departures involved 1 ringed at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 14th and 1 ringed at Greenham Common on Sep 20th (NC).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

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

A better year for records compared with 2004, birds were reported from 61 locations, but there was only 1 record that referred to breeding and local declines were noted in several areas. **Spring/Summer:** birds were first reported in late April with 1 singing Enborne Apr 24th (JPM). Further April records involved singles at 7 locations, at least 3 were singing. The main arrival took place in May with at least 40 birds (25 noted as singing) from 32 sites.

There were 3 singing Wraysbury GPs May 10th (CRP) and in hedgerows surrounding Bird Hills GC, Hawthorn Hill May 19th (WAN). All other reports were of 1-2 birds. Records were received from 17 locations in June, an expected decline as some May birds were presumed migrants and song declines once eggs are laid. Five territories were located in the Theale/Burghfield GP bird survey (TABCG), a decline of 45% on the 1998 total, and there were 2 territories at Wokingham STW (DJB). Elsewhere all sites held just 1 territory and the only report of breeding came from Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood GPs where a pair was feeding young Jun 5th (SDi). **Autumn:** although singing birds were being located in July, eg 2 singing Aldworth Jul 9th (LS), passage was already underway. At Dorney W 2-3 were located on Jul 3rd (SP) and Jul 18th (WAS), singles were noted at Greenham Common Jul 6th (LRB) and in a Woodlands Park garden Jul 30th (DJB). Passage increased in Aug-Sep with birds reported from 17 locations, peak counts being 3 at Thatcham Marsh Aug 6th (NRG), Cock Marsh Aug 25th (WAS) and Wraysbury GPs Sep 14th (RRG). Ringing operations in E Berks resulted in 28 birds ringed from May to Sept, the last and the year's latest date was 1 Sep 21st (RRG).

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Spring: first reported on Apr 5th with singles at Coley Meadows, Reading (AVL) and Woolhampton (RF). Birds were reported from 73 locations during Apr to Jun with song noted from at least 51 of these. High counts involved 10 singing Dinton Pastures CP May 1st (WAN); 7 singing Compton Downs May 11th (ABT); 7 singing Cabbage Hill, Binfield May 16th (BDC); 14 singing Dorney W May 17th (BDC); 31 Wraysbury GPs May 23rd (PNe) and 17 singing there on Jun 15th (CRP); 10 Remenham May 24th (ANS); 10+ Seven Barrows May 30 (IW; JL); 15 Stanford Dingley Jun 17th (BAJC); and 10 singing Englefield Jun 23rd (RCr). Local surveys located 27 territories in the Swinley Forest SPA/South Ascot area (DJB), 11 territories at Eversley GPs (MGLR) and 87 territories in the Theale/Burghfield GP area (TABCG). **Breeding:** was reported from 13 sites usually involving single pairs; however, of 6 pairs located in the Strand Water area, 2 pairs bred in bean fields with young seen in July (WAS). **Autumn:** passage was first noted in early August when birds began to appear out of habitat eg 1 ad in DJB's Woodlands Pk garden Aug 7th. Most counts involved 1-5 birds but 15+ were on the pylon island at Theale Main GP Aug 8th (RCr) and 8 were present at Cock Marsh Sep 1st (WAS). Ringing operations by RRG resulted in a peak in Jul-Aug. At one site the number trapped from May to Aug was a 67% drop from the previous year. Late records were singles at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 14th (CL), 1 ringed Greenham Common on Sep 26th (NC) and a f/w there on Sep 29th (KEM) the latest departure date since Oct 6 1997.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

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

Records were received from 10 locations, 3 of which were in the Swinley Forest SPA and all but 1 in E Berks. **West Berks:** Greenham/Crookham Common remains the only W Berks location for this species. In the first winter small numbers were regularly reported. Numbers increased in March with 6 (2pr 1m 1f) reported on Mar 20th (ABT). By late spring 7 territories had been identified (NC) and a pair was feeding young Jun 11th (JKn) and later a female was attending 2 juveniles Aug 30th (DJB). There were frequent reports in Sep/Oct with 8 Oct 22nd (IW) and 7 Oct 29th (ABT). The last site record was 3 Nov 12th (IW).

East Berks: birds were noted at 3 locations in Swinley Forest, Wishmoor, Broadmoor and Caesars Camp. At Wishmoor and Broadmoor birds were reported throughout the year, non-breeding season records peaked with 3 at Wishmoor Bottom Jan 15th (DJB) and 17 (including several first winter birds) were seen on Oct 16th (DJB) when both sites were visited. At Caesars Camp a pair was reported from Feb to Sep (MO). The breeding season survey by DJB located 14 territories: 1 Caesars Camp, 5 Broadmoor Bottom and 8 in the Wishmoor area and breeding was confirmed at Wishmoor, 1pr feeding young on May 21st (DJB) and the pair at Caesars Camp had 2 juvs on Jul 2nd (ASi) and 4 juvs (second brood?) Sep 4th (WAN). At Wildmoor Heath numbers have begun to recover from last year's fire. Seven (4m 3f) were located Feb 19th (DJB) and 4-5 pairs were present in Mar/Apr (DJS) and 6-7 pairs were present in July with some breeding (DJS). With lower coverage from August onwards, fewer birds were reported, with 5 on Nov 7th (BMA) being the largest count. Elsewhere a pair took up residence on Wellington College Heath from March into May; two males were singing there on Apr 21st and possibly 2 pairs were present on May 18th (DJS) but there was no evidence that breeding occurred. Four other sites held birds: a male sang at Swinley Brick Pits Feb 4th and a pair was present there on Mar 5th but not subsequently (DJB); two immatures (dispersing birds?) were on heathland at Simons Wood Aug 30th (DJS); a f/w was found at Slough SF Oct 16th (SP); and 1 was calling from heather by Virginia Water Nov 27th (CRW) and Dec 21st (HWE) – unfortunately the area was mowed before protection measures could be installed. The county total of 28-30 pairs/singing males is only beaten by the modern day record year of 2003.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

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

Another poor year with just a single record of 1 singing in Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest at 0800hrs on May 15th (DJB). The bird was present in an area of young larch and birch and had moved on by midday.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

A common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor

Jan/Feb: records were received from 21 locations throughout the county. Most reports involved 1-2 birds but 3 were noted at Bottom Lane Jan 9th (RJB) and Feb 14th (TGB), Dorney W Jan 13th (CRe) and along the R. Blackwater at Sandhurst Feb 12th (DJS). Singles at Lowbury Hill Feb 19th (RF) and Streatley Feb 20th (NJB) were at unusual sites for wintering birds and may possibly have been migrants. **Spring/Summer:** the tendency of this species to sing whilst at wintering sites and on migration make distinguishing winter birds from migrants very difficult and so it has not been attempted here. March records came from 63 sites with numbers increasing toward the end of the month as more summer migrants arrived. High counts involved 8 singing in Cranbourne Chase Mar 26th (DJB), 19 Wraybury GPs Mar 27th (PNe) and 10 Thatcham Marsh Mar 28th (TPo) increasing to 23 singing there Apr 4th (NC). Numbers continued to build during Apr/May and local surveys resulted in 77 territories in Swinley Forest, 14 in Swinley Pk, 17 South Ascot and 41 Windsor Forest (all DJB). The Theale/Burghfield GP survey located 104 territories (TABCG) and there were 8 territories at Eversley GPs (MGLR). Elsewhere high counts included 10 singing at Denford Trout Fm Apr 1st (RGS), 20 Dinton Pastures CP Apr 10th (FJC), 8 singing Ashley Hill Apr 11th (BDC) and 9 singing at Avington Apr 22nd (DR). Although these totals look impressive, figures based on previous year's surveys have shown that Chiffchaffs have suffered a decline in the SE Berks woodlands and Theale area and

this was mirrored in RRG ringing totals where numbers were down one third on 2004. **Breeding:** this was suspected at many sites but was only confirmed at 6. Most breeding reports were of single pairs apart from 5 family parties located at Burghfield GPs on Jul 3rd (JA). **Autumn/Second winter:** passage commenced in August and peaked in September. Birds could be found in all types of habitat during this period from shopping centre gardens to hilltops on the downs. Most records involved small numbers, larger counts came from Summerleaze GP with 10 Aug 15th (WAS); 15+ Thatcham Marsh Aug 21st (NRG) and 34 caught there on Sep 4th (NRG); 12 Moatlands GP Aug 25th (JA); 9 at ringed Brimpton GPs Aug 30th (JPM); and 46 were ringed at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 3rd (RRG). At Bray GPs 15+ were present on Sep 11th (PNe) increasing to 24 Sep 18th (BDC), 10+ were at Horton GPs Sep 28th (CDRH) and finally 8 were ringed at Greenham Common Oct 30th (NC). Numbers decreased in Nov/Dec, but birds were still found at 25 sites usually numbering 1-3 birds; however 4 were noted at Moatlands GP on Nov 9th (RCr), Wraysbury GPs on Nov 30, Dec 10th, 17th, and 18th – including 1 showing characteristics of *P. c. tristis* but was not heard to call – (CDRH) and 1 at Greenham Common Dec 4th (NC)

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

In recent years the status of the Willow Warbler within Berkshire has changed from an abundant summer visitor to a species most common during migration. The summering population, although still widespread, has shown signs of decline which is mirrored throughout much of southern England (though not further north). Breeding bird surveys throughout SE England have shown a 53% decline in the period 1994-2005 (SUKB05) and the Berkshire Birds Index (BBI) has shown a 57% decline from 2000 to 2005. Today many of the singing birds noted in April no longer remain to breed and the song of the Willow Warbler from May onwards is becoming a less common sound in much of Berkshire. **Mar/Apr:** the first migrant appeared at Theale Main GP on Mar 24th (NR) and by the end of the month birds had been reported from a further 18 sites. The main arrival occurred in April when reports came from 61 sites, usually of 1-5 birds. Higher counts (of singing birds) involved 6 Muddy Lane GP Apr 5th (RAH), 18 Burghfield GPs Apr 8th (RCr), 6 Dinton Pastures CP Apr 10th (FJC), 15 Wraysbury GPs Apr 21st (CRP), 12 Avington Apr 22nd (DR) and 20 Swinley Forest Apr 29th (DJB); also 8 were at Snelsmore Common Apr 27th (BJW). **May/June:** reported from just 23 locations, a quite startlingly low total compared to earlier in the spring. It is this time of year that local surveys produce the more important figures for this species. In SE Berks, DJB's survey resulted in 12 territories located in Windsor Forest, 14 in South Ascot, 83 in Swinley Forest, 4 in Swinley Pk and 8 on Wildmoor Heath. Apart from the first 2 localities, where the 2004 survey was not complete, all sites showed declines. The Theale/Burghfield GPs survey located 78 singing males in Apr/May (TABCG) – it is possible that some of the earlier reports may have been migrants. At Eversley GPs only 3 territories were present in summer, a drop from 5 in 2004 (MGLR). Other sites that reported reasonable numbers during the period were Snelsmore Common with 7 May 12th (BJW), 15 Wraysbury GPs Jun 15th (CRP) and 5 Gorricks Wood Jun 19th (MDL). It seems that the highest remaining densities occur where scrub is widespread especially around gravel pits and on our more acid heathland soils. **Breeding:** records were few. The only confirmed cases involved an ad feeding 2 juvs at Thatcham Marsh May 30th (ABT), 1 juv Eversley GPs Jun 9th (BMA) and an adult seen carrying food at Dinton Pastures CP Jun 16th (SDi). **Jul/Sep:** probably under recorded during this period with records coming from just 25 locations. High counts were 3 singing at Greenham Common Aug 4th (RAH); 6 Maddle Fm, Lambourn Aug 12th (ABT); and 6 Cock Marsh Sep 1 (WAS). A juv was

ringed at Brimpton GP Aug 30th (JPM). The latest birds were 2 at Wraysbury GPs Sep 14th (RRG) and 1 Bray GPs Sep 18th (BDC).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

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

Goldcrests were widely reported throughout the county with most records coming from our more wooded areas. Non breeding season counts exceeded 10 at Eversley GPs with c50 Jan 1st (MJM), 11 Bowsey Hill Jan 22nd (BDC), 55 Wraysbury GPs Jan 30th (PNe), 15 Wildmoor Heath Jan 31st (KCr), 16 Caesars Camp Mar 18th (DJB) and 15+ Thatcham Marsh on Oct 16th and 30th (NRG). Breeding season records included an attempt by DJB to survey the species in 4 woodlands in SE Berks. From April to June a total of 525 singing males were mapped, site totals being 200 in Swinley Forest, 83 Swinley Pk, 23 South Ascot and 219 in Windsor Forest. High count days included 73 singing in South Forest Windsor May 29th and 42 singing in the NW corner of Swinley Forest Jun 10th (DJB). Breeding was noted at all the above sites and a further 4 locations, including 2 family parties at Ashley Hill Jul 18th (BDC: who had earlier located 9 territories there Apr 11th). Finally 13 were singing at Sunninghill Pk Jun 18th (DJB).

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

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

First winter: wintering birds remaining from 2004 were still present on RRG E Berks sites where a male, first caught and ringed in December 2004, was re-trapped Jan 15th and 1 caught and ringed in November 2004 was re-trapped twice in the new year (RRG). Elsewhere singles were reported from Finchampstead Ridges Feb 12th (RJG) and Bracknell Feb 13th -15th (PWh; CWh). **Spring/Summer:** birds were first located back on breeding grounds Mar 25th when 3 singing males were noted (DJB). The now annual survey of this species in SE Berks by DJB located 67 territories and 2 pairs were confirmed as breeding, young being fed at different sites on May 10th and May 29th (DJB). Evidence of breeding from a third pair (already mapped in the survey) involved birds gathering nest material on Apr 16th (MFW). Interactions between males of Goldcrest and Firecrest was noted at 2 sites: on both occasions the Firecrest was observed in threat display, raising the crest feathers and quivering its out-stretched wings while continually calling (DJB). Other reports from the survey area included 2 singing Mar 30th (DJW) and 1 singing from Jul 2nd-6th (MRan). **Second winter:** the only reports came in October with singles reported from Kintbury Oct 14th (NRB) and at Finchampstead Ridges Oct 15th (BMA).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

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

Records were received from 70 locations: 36 in W Berks, 15 in M Berks and 19 in E Berks. Birds were noted at 20 sites in May, 21 in June, 16 in July, 29 in August and 9 in September. **Spring:** passage began in early May when 1 was located at Combe Wood May 2nd (IW; JL) and 2 at Inkpen May 5th (RHar). High counts involved 5 singing Swinley Forest May 23rd (DJB), 4 Streatley May 25th and 29th (SPA), 2 pairs by the K&A Canal Newbury May 26th (RRK), 4 singing South Forest Windsor May 29th (DJB) and 4 at Hoe Benham May 30th (ABT). Surveys in May/June resulted in 9 territories located in Windsor Forest, 13 in

Swinley Forest and 5 in Swinley Park (all DJB). Most other June records involved single birds or pairs; however 2 pairs were located in Combe Village Jun 5th (TPo). **Breeding:** a nesting pair was located in Windsor Forest Jun 11th (DJB) and another pair was nesting in out buildings by Bowdown Woods Jun 26th (MRD). Adults were feeding young at Kintbury Mill Jul 6th (DR) and an adult was feeding 2 juvs at Sulhamstead Jul 8th (RAH). Later records which may involve migrating family parties were: adults feeding 1 juv at Cookham Dean Aug 4th (ASi), 2 ads with 2juvs at Aston Aug 17th (ANS) and a family party of 5 at Donnington Aug 20th (SAG). **Autumn:** a fairly strong passage was noted throughout August into Sept with many counts of up to 4 birds received. Higher counts involved 8 (inc juvs) at Remenham Aug 8th (ANS), 8 Cock Marsh Aug 25th (WAS), 5 Caesars Camp Aug 28th (WAN), 6 Lough Down Aug 30th (ABT) and 5 at West Woodhay Down Sep 3rd (ABT). One was observed eating elderberries at Bray GPs Sep 6th (CRE). The last reports came Sep 17th with 1 at Brimpton GP (GEW) and 2 Lough Down (ABT)

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Scarce but annual passage migrant and rare summer visitor

After the good year of 2004, 2005 was the opposite with only 2 records. In the spring a female was reported from Wraysbury GPs Apr 30th (DHo). In the autumn a f/w was located on Lough Down, Streatley Sep 10th (ABT).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common and widespread resident

Large counts involved c100 in scattered groups at Eversley GPs Jan 1st (MJM); 30 Windsor Great Pk Jan 27th (PNe); 25 Woolhampton GPs Jun 16th (GEW); 35 Bottom Lane, Theale Jun 26th (JLe), 40+ Strand Water Aug 1st (WAS); 23 Summerleaze GP Aug 21 (BDC); c60 Bottom Lane, Theale Nov 27th (RJB); 45+ Bray GPs Nov 20th (PNe); 23 Eton Wick Dec 7 (DJB) and 26 at Wraysbury GPs Dec 21 (FFC). A further 33 counts of between 10 and 20 birds were received and this species is now becoming a regular visitor to garden feeders, being noted at 12 such sites. Breeding was reported from 10 localities and probably occurred at a great deal more.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident

An ongoing Blue Tit ringing study by the RRG resulted in 285 adults and 759 pulli being ringed in 2005. Elsewhere work by BDC resulted in 67 noted in Maidenhead Thicket Jan 22nd and where he located 13 family parties on May 17th. Visits to Ashley Hill and Lot Wood, Warren Row Apr 11th resulted in the finding of 20 territories in the former and 11 in the latter sites (BDC). Otherwise the only notable count was 32 at Wraysbury GPs Jan 30th (PNe).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident

Records published here almost match those of Blue Tit in date and site so some direct comparison of the abundance of both species can be made. Ringing operations at one site resulted in 211 birds ringed in 2005 (RRG). Thirty-nine were counted in Maidenhead

thicket Jan 22nd and 5 family parties were located May 17th (BDC). At Wraysbury GPs there were counts of 26 Jan 30th and 34 Mar 27th (PNe) and visits to Ashley Hill and Lot Wood Apr 11th resulted in 15 and 8 territories located (BDC)

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common resident

Like all of our commoner tits, the Coal Tit is generally under recorded. The only counts to exceed 10 were 13 territories located at Ashley Hill Apr 11th (BDC) and c75-100 birds (including 10+ family parties) in South Forest, Windsor Jun 11th (DJB). Apart from the above record, breeding was confirmed at 7 sites including 2 family parties at Ashley Hill Jul 18th (BDC) and a pair feeding young in a nest situated in a rootball of a fallen spruce in South Ascot May 25th (DJB). Compared to Great and Blue Tits, this species is a relatively scarce visitor to garden feeders; however records did come from 10 sites usually of 1-4 birds with the exception of 5 visiting a Crowthorne garden Nov 16th (IT).

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Uncommon and declining resident, now almost completely confined to W Berks (Red Listed)

Records were received from 11 locations, 9 in W Berks and 2 in M Berks. **West Berks:** as usual the bulk of records came from the Combe area in the SW corner of the county and involved 4 Combe Wood Jan 29th (DJB) and Feb 12th (MFW), 1 Mar 10th (KEM), 5 inc 1 singing May 2nd (IW; JL) and singles there on May 7th (KEM) and Jun 5th (SAG). One was calling on Walbury Hill Feb 12th (TPo) and 2 were seen there Dec 20th (CDRH). Singles were reported from Combe Hill Mar 19 (ABT) and Sep 4th (TPo), West Woodhay Down Sep 3rd (ABT) and on Inkpen Hill on Dec 29th (MJT). Away from the Combe area, further records came from Kintbury Cressbeds where 1 came to feeders throughout January, 2 there on Dec 3rd and a first winter bird ringed there Dec 4th (RGS), the latter record being the only evidence that birds may have bred in Berks in 2005. Individuals were also noted at Bagnor Cressbeds Apr 3rd (JL) and May 8th (IW; JL), 2 were reported from Inkpen May 21st (RHar) and 1 Ashampstead Nov 21st (WB). **Mid Berks:** the only regular site continues to be Bottom Lane where singles were reported Jan 1st, 30th and Feb 27th (JA) and heard calling there on Aug 28th (RCr). An isolated record came from Ufton Wood with 1 Nov 13th (RCr).

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

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

Records were received from an encouraging 82 locations, 56 in W Berks, 17 in M Berks and 9 in E Berks. This site total is the highest in over 10 years and is probably due to a more thorough coverage of woodlands in W and M Berks than to a genuine increase in numbers. The table shows the monthly status of the species based on submitted records.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of Sites	21	17	25	24	15	16	9	12	12	8	9	21
Min No of Birds	43	28	40	48	32	26	17	23	15	8	13	34

First winter: reports came from 42 locations up to the end of March. As is expected for this species, most records involved 1-2 birds, however there were 6 reports of 3-4 birds and higher totals involved 6 at Greenham Common on Jan 3rd (JL) and 8 at Bottom Lane, Theale on Jan 30th (JA). **Spring/Summer:** monthly totals remained high during the spring, doubtless helped by observers visiting woodlands at a time of high bird activity, before declining during the quieter summer months. High counts involved 3 pairs on territories on Woolley Down throughout the period (GDS), 6 Combe Wood on May 2nd (IW; JL) and 5+ at Bucklebury Common on Aug 21st (JLe). Evidence of breeding was gathered from 4 sites: a pair was observed collecting nest material in Ashley Hill Forest on Apr 11th (BDC); 1 was carrying food on Snelsmore Common on May 20th (PMC); at least 1 pair bred at Woolley Down, young seen on Jun 23rd (GDS); and a family party of 5 was located in Walbury Clump on Aug 18th (LS). **Autumn/Second winter:** reports were evenly scattered throughout the period until December when numbers increased markedly. Counts during this time consisted of 1-3 birds, the only report that exceeded 3 was of 4 at Bottom Lane on Nov 27th (RJB).

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and widespread resident

Recorded from throughout the county, with most records (as expected) coming from our more wooded areas especially in the SE. Being a common bird the species tended to be overlooked by many observers, however there were some high counts submitted such as 13 Windsor Great Pk Jan 27th (PNe), 10 Virginia Water Mar 20 (PNe), 10 including 7 singing Cranbourne Chase Mar 26th (DJB) and 6 in Basildon Pk Nov 12th (ABT). **Spring/Summer:** some interesting counts were made during this period, survey work in SE Berks by DJB located 7 territories in Swinley Forest SPA, 24 in Windsor Forest and 7 were singing in Swinley Pk Apr 10th (DJB). Elsewhere 7 territories were located in Ashley Hill Forest Apr 11th (BDC) and 9 birds were seen there Jun 22nd (BDC). Breeding was confirmed at 22 locations, most involving single pairs; however there were 2 pairs feeding young at nests plus a family party at High Standinghill Woods May 18th (DJB), 2 family parties Ashley Hill Jul 18th (BDC), 4 pairs were confirmed as breeding in Swinley Pk (DJB) and at least 3 pairs bred in Swinley Forest (DJB; MHu). Finally 19 were ringed at Silwood Pk by the RRG during the year.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common Resident

Records were received from 92 locations usually of 1-5 birds. High counts included 6 Hut Hill Mar 18th (DJB), 8+ Cranbourne Chase Mar 26th (DJB), 6 (3 singing) Swinley Pk Apr 10th and 7+ there Jun 5th (DJB), 7 South Forest Windsor Apr 21 and 10 there May 29 (DJB), 7 Combe Wood May 2nd (IW; JL) and 7 Wildmoor Heath Jul 10th (BMA). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 14 locations usually involving single pairs; however 3 family parties were located in Swinley Forest May 9th-10th (DJB) and 2 family parties were found at Bracknell STW Jul 13th (BDC).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor

The only record this year involved an adult seen on wires at Wickham on Mar 11th (AJP)

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident and uncommon passage migrant

First winter: 7 were noted in Windsor Pk Jan 27th (PNe) and 7 shared the same branch near Hurley Chalk Pit Mar 6th (BDC). **Spring/Summer:** courtship was noted at Binfield where the male was feeding the female Apr 17th (MJB) and the rarely heard song was heard at Lower Fm GP Jul 9th (NC). Breeding records were few: a pair with 3 juvs was seen at High Standinghill Woods May 18th (DJB) and a pair was attending a nest at Pudding Hill near Warren Row Jun 22 (BDC). **Autumn:** on Sep 11th 2 birds were observed burying acorns at Lavells Lake, followed by an enterprising Grey Squirrel who promptly dug them up. (AR). The usual upsurge of records in autumn led to several high counts. In Tilehurst up to 7 birds remained faithful to a holm oak through Sep to Oct 2nd (JLe), 12 were counted at Caesars Camp Sep 18th (WAN) and 10 visited Brimpton GP Sep 26th (GEW)

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant resident

As would be expected for such a common and familiar species, few observers submitted records. The vast majority of records came from Birdtrack (which generally just stated the species presence at a site). Some large counts were made, these being 12 Long Lane, Cookham Jan 25th (BDC); 17 Lavell's Lake Jan 30th (MFW); 21 Slough SF Mar 9th (PNe); 45 Jubilee River Apr 8th and 78 counted along there Nov 16th (BDC).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant resident

High counts involved 700 going to roost over Lavell's Lake Jan 1st (MFW), 550 Howe Lane near Binfield Jan 12th and 1900 there Mar 15th (BDC), 350 Bowdown Woods Feb 14th (SAG) and c1000 using the Lavell's Lake/Hurst Tip roost site of Lodge Wood on Nov 26th (MFW). Amongst the large population resident in Windsor Great Pk, a breeding adult showing some features typical of the eastern races (i.e. prominent white half collar and silvery crown as well as nape) was observed on May 12th and 25th (CDRH). Although vastly under-recorded, there were breeding records from Allanbay Park (BDC), Hell Corner Fm (LS), Skinners Green (TPo), Swinley Pk (DJB) and Windsor Great Pk (BDC).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident especially in rural Berkshire

One of the most familiar species of our farmlands, Rooks although ignored by many observers, were reported from most areas of the county apart from some parts in the SE of the county where the predominantly wooded landscape is not to its liking. Although counts were not forthcoming from some of the best areas for this species i.e. Compton Downs, some large flocks were reported. At least 600 were noted at Padworth Jan 2nd (TABR), 1500 at Moor Copse Jan 6th (WB), 400 Howe Lane near Binfield Jan 12th (BDC), 200 Juddmonte Fm Warren Row Feb 5th (BDC), 300 Wellbottom Down Mar 13th (ABT), 200 Tickleback Row May 25th (BDC) and 120 Dinton Pastures CP Jun 13 (RBor). **Breeding:** apart from a partial survey in the NDOC area in 1991, there has been no recent concerted attempt to survey this easily countable species since the tetrad survey of 1987-89, although a voluntary listing of Rookeries was organised by BDC and the BOC in 2005, some counts at selected rookeries were made and resulted in the following figures:

Site	No of nests	Observer	Site	No of nests	Observer
B4494 west of Farnborough	55	GDS	Burnthouse Lane Pingewood	8	CRW
Boxford Common	22	JL KL	Swallowfield Pk	18	CRW
Farley Hill	46	CRW	Three Mile Cross	4	CRW
Grazeley	9	CRW	West Ilsey	78	GDS

Small rookeries were also noted at Streatley (RAnG) and Sonning (DJB).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant resident

The only high counts reported involved c600 at Howe Lane near Binfield Mar 15th (BDC) and c300 over Green Pk Reading Jun 8th (TC). What is believed to be the same leucistic individual, first noted at Hurst Tip on Mar 23rd 2004 was seen again nearby at Whistley Green Feb 6th (RR) and Lavell's Lake Feb 12th (MFW). One was seen to be feeding on newts at Dorney W Sep 2nd (BDC).

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce but increasing visitor (now breeds in Wiltshire)

The increase in records continued in 2005 with 32 records from 22 locations but there is probably some duplication as some sites are adjacent to each other. This year, for the first time since this current upsurge in records, there were multiple records from M Berks. **First winter:** the first record of the year involved 1 calling over Hamstead Pk Jan 23rd (GDS). This was followed by another calling bird over Farnborough Down (GDS) and 2 over Lavell's Lake (FJC), both on Jan 30th. There followed a cluster of records from the Combe area with 1-2 birds seen regularly from Feb 12th (2 Combe Wood: MFW) to Mar 31st (1 Walbury Hill: TPo), with display noted on several occasions. Elsewhere 2 flew N over Decoy Heath Mar 5th (MFW), 1 Brightwalton Mar 6th (GDS), 3 displaying over Freeman's Marsh Mar 9th (RF) and 1 flying S over Hell Corner Fm Inkpen Mar 17th (LS). **Spring/Summer:** 1 flew over Manor Fm Combe Apr 27th (LS) and 1 reported from Beenham May 5th (MFW) were the only spring reports. There were no further sightings until August when 2 flew SW over the Compton Downs Aug 14th (ABT), followed by 1 at Box Wood Hermitage Aug 18th (JBU) and 5 (2 pairs and a single) in the Combe area Aug 23rd (LS). **Autumn/Second winter:** 4 were reported from Hungerford Sep 29th (JBut); 3 flew SE over Cow Down Oct 2nd (CRE); 1 called over Kintbury Cressbeds Oct 6th (RGS); 1 Woolley Down Nov 6th (GDS); and 2 over Brimpton Nov 18th-19th (GEW). Two then flew over Lower Green Dec 5th (DR) and 1 flew N over Brimpton Dec 7th (GEW). The Combe area held the last of the year's birds with 1 over Walbury Hill Dec 12th (CDRH) followed by 2 over Inkpen Hill Dec 14th (ACJ) and Dec 18th (GE).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Although reported widely, relatively few large counts were submitted. **First winter:** the regular roost at Brimpton GPs held c2000 birds Jan 6th (GEW). Up to 2000 were seen at Hungerford Jan 14th (RGS) and had increased to c4000 by Jan 26th (RGS); given the time of day that these sightings were made, it is likely they were roosting nearby. Other records of interest included 500 feeding in stubble at Crowthorne Jan 20th (BMA) and

c500 at Howe Lane near Binfield Mar 15th (BDC). An individual with a deformed upper mandible, twice as long as the normal length lower mandible, visited garden feeders at Cox Green Maidenhead Jan 21st (DJB). **Summer/Breeding:** large counts of juveniles came from Earley with 48 juvs May 17 (MSFW) and 25 at Twyford Jul 4th (SPA). There were numerous reports of smaller numbers generally from gardens. Late summer congregations included 800 Compton Downs Jul 18th (ABT) and c1000 Dorney W Aug 15th (BDC). **Autumn/Second winter:** large counts involved 1000+ Englefield Oct 16th (RCr), 1600 Cold Harbour Oct 17th (DJB), 550 Cookham Oct 24th (BDC), 1000 roosting Brimpton GPs Nov 1st (GEW), 1000 Hurst Nov 16th (PBT), 500 Sheepdrove Lambourn Nov 20th (ABT), 2-300 regularly roosting at Lavell's Lake in Nov (MFW) and c6000 in pig fields near Bucklebury Nov 30th (WB).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident (Red Listed)

House Sparrows were widely reported especially from our more built up areas. The number of counts involving 10+ birds continues to decline and this year only 6 sites recorded more than 25 birds. At Woodlands Pk 25+ regularly visited DJB's garden throughout Jan including a white headed male that had been present since 2002; 80+ were counted at Beenham Jan 22nd (RCr); 30+ at Wraysbury on Jan 30th (LJF; MJF) and Mar 27th (PNe); and 40 were at Juddmonte Fm, Warren Row Feb 5th (BDC). Counts in the Cookham Rise area peaked at 85 Apr 15th (BDC) and counts of 45 including juvs Aug 8th and 51 Sep 28th were made from BDC's own Cookham garden. Breeding presumably took place at many sites throughout the county; however records involving juvs were only submitted from 6 locations. SPA has again provided us with monthly counts from her Twyford garden, the maximum counts are shown in the table along with comparable counts from 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2000	15	21	12	12	10	25	40	35	35	16	8	10
2005	15	20	15	10	8	12	9	10	7	4	5	6

The results clearly show a large decline in summer/early autumn which may be caused by high chick mortality due to less invertebrate food being available.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

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

The only record this year involved 2 located within a finch flock at Streatley Warren on Nov 19th (ABT).

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

High first winter counts involved 205 Windsor Great Pk Jan 27th (PNe); c200 Swinley Pk Feb 4th (DJB); 100+ Manor Fm, Brimpton Feb 7th (ABT); c300 Windsor Great Pk Feb 21st (WAS); 300+ Caesars Camp area Mar 18th and 200+ Wishmoor Cross Mar 20th (DJB). In the second winter counts exceeding 99 were noted at Long Lane, Cookham where c100 were seen on Nov 19th and Dec 10th (BDC). A mixed flock of finches and buntings numbering c800 birds at Shinfield included c500 Chaffinches on Dec 20th (DJB).

Additionally there were c100 at Aston Dec 20th (DJB), 100+ Englefield Dec 29th (RCr) and c200 Widbrook Common Dec 31st (CDRH)

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

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

Birds were reported from 60 locations, 24 in the first winter and 40 in the second winter. The table shows the species status over 2 week periods through both winters.

1st Winter	1/1–14/1	15/1–28/1	29/1–11/2	12/2–25/2	26/2–11/3	12/3–25/3	26/3–8/4	9/4–22/4
No of sites	7	2	4	5	2	5	8	4
Min no birds	18	2	27	68	3	489	68	37
2nd Winter	9/10– 22/10	23/10– 5/11	6/11– 19/11	20/11– 3/12	4/12– 17/12	18/12– 31/12		
No of sites	4	8	11	11	10	18		
Min no birds	10	48	437	24	135	294		

First winter: Bramblings were relatively scarce during much of this period with no count exceeding 15 birds until a flock of 50 was located near to the Devils Highway in Swinley Forest Feb 13th (MSFW). No further large counts were forthcoming until late March when passage in SE Berks produced totals of 60+ Wishmoor Cross Mar 20th (DJB) and c410 in Swinley Pk Mar 25th (DJB). Passage continued into April, the last being 2 Wishmoor Bottom Apr 16th (MFW). **Spring/Summer:** a summer plumaged male was located at Wishmoor Bottom May 31st (KEM) and equals the latest modern day record (1 Swinley 1979); the only June record occurred in 1885 in Windsor Great Pk (Noble 1906). **Second winter:** a better period for records. The first, a female, was located in Windsor Great Pk Oct 10th (CDRH) and a flock of c400 were located there feeding on chenopodiums Nov 7th (CDRH). Elsewhere there were no counts of over 30 until December when there were 60+ Remenham Dec 11th (CDRH), 38 Inkpen Hill Dec 14th (ACJ), c40 Combe Hill Dec 18th (MMc) and c150 Shinfield Dec 20th (DJB). Ringing operations on Greenham Common resulted in 3 birds (1m 2f) being caught and ringed during the period (NC).

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common and widespread resident and winter visitor

A disappointing year for records with very few reports of sizable flocks. **First winter:** the largest counts submitted were 37 at garden feeders Farnborough Down Jan 15th (GDS) and 30 Windsor Great Pk Feb 13th (ABT). **Summer:** breeding was only confirmed at 6 locations (juvs seen) and although some late summer flocking was reported, the only large flocks involved c50 birds at Strand Water Aug 3rd (WAS) and Sheepdrove Sep 8th (ABT). **Second winter:** numbers continued to be low with 40 Wraysbury GPs Dec 5th (PNe) and c50 Wargrave STW Dec 20th (DJB) the highest counts.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread resident

Unlike most of our finches, the Goldfinch has undergone a steady increase over the last 35 years. **First winter:** there were some notable counts during the period: c100 were reported from Eversley GPs Jan 1st (MJM); 80 Bottom Lane, Theale Jan 12th (RJB); 55 Freeman's

Marsh Jan 22nd (RGS); 40 Burghfield GPs Feb 26th (KEM); and 40 Westbrook Mar 12th (MSt). **Summer:** generally under recorded at this time and evidence of breeding was only noted from 8 locations. Flocks began to assemble in late July, when 20 were noted at Freeman's Marsh Jul 21st (KTa). **Autumn/Second winter:** high numbers were present in Aug-Sep, possibly due to a good breeding season. Large flocks included 50 Eversley GPs Aug 7th (BMA); 120+ (95% juvs) at Greenham Common Aug 30th (DJB), with 60 still present there Sep 3rd (JPM); 42 inc juvs Dorney W Sep 5th (BDC); 50 Sheepdrove Sep 8th (ABT); c100 Charvil Sep 13th (HRN); 56 Jubilee River at Eton Sep 26th (BDC); and c100 Woolley Down Sep 26th (SWi). Later in the year 140 were located in Windsor Great Pk Oct 15th (CDRH), 50+ Remenham Oct 22nd (DJB), 40 in a Crowthorne garden Nov 3rd (BMA), 60 Widbrook Common Nov 5th (BDC) and 50 Long Lane, Cookham Dec 10th (BDC); flock sizes then decreased toward the year's end.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer

Records were received from 80 locations throughout the county including 6 areas within Swinley Forest. Most records came from the river valleys and more wooded areas; there were no records from the downland areas in the NW of the county. The table shows the monthly status throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of sites	9	9	10	4	7	2	2	2	13	20	35	26
Min no of birds	88	55	82	12	27	5	4	22	144	272	722	998

First winter: compared to normal winters, this period was unusually quiet for this species. Most reports involved small groups/flocks, the largest being 25 seen at Eversley GPs Jan 11th (RBor) and Feb 3rd (BMA). Even in March when passage birds often swell numbers, birds were hard to find and 40 at Padworth Common on Mar 12th proved to be the highest count. **Spring/Summer:** birds were reported from 10 sites, all but one in SE Berks and six within Swinley Forest. In Swinley Forest birds were reported in small numbers (1-9) by MO throughout Apr-Jun. Song was heard in 4 areas but the only breeding record involved a male attending 4 recently fledged juvs near to Caesars Camp May 23rd (DJB). Elsewhere singing males were noted in Swinley Pk on May 16th and Jun 5th (DJB) and a pair was observed aggressively mobbing a Jay in South Ascot May 25th (DJB) and may have been protecting a nest. The only report outside of SE Berks involved 1 in Newbury May 6th (JBri). Late summer reports involved 3 Upper Star Post, Swinley Forest Jul 12th (PBT); 1 Caesars Camp, Swinley Forest Jul 16th (PMC); 1f visiting a Crowthorne garden Aug 13th-15th and a juv male there Aug 24th-30th (BMA). The first autumn gathering involved 20 juvs at Caesars Camp on Aug 28th (WAN) possibly a product of local breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** migrants began to appear from Sep 17th when 2 were seen at Lough Down, Streatley (ABT) and 10 at Long Lane, Cookham (BDC). September was a busier month than usual, the largest flocks being 20 Caesars Camp Sep 18th (WAN), probably the Aug birds, and 20 Dinton Pastures CP Sep 26th increasing to 25 Sep 30th (MFW). Numbers continued to grow in Oct and by the year's end some large flocks had been discovered, including 150+ Eversley GPs Nov 24th (MGLR); 95+ Bottom Lane, Theale Nov 27th (RJB); 110 Kintbury Dec 16th (DR); 70 Lavell's Lake Dec 11th (FJC; MFW); c150 Bottom Lane Dec 14th (RJB); 83 Thatcham Dec 23rd (BJW); 200+ Bradfield Dec 24th (ABT) and 75 Purley Dec 25th (MJS). A further 17 sites held flocks ranging from 20 to 60 birds.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

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

Records were received from 74 locations during the year. Records suggest that birds are more widespread in April and October when passage may be at its peak. **First winter:** only reported from 16 locations during Jan/Feb and counts were generally low (1-50). Larger flocks were encountered at Arlington Grange 70+ Jan 5th (IW), 53 Dinton Pastures CP Jan 13th (BTB), 60 Cow Down Jan 14th (SAG), 70 Compton Downs Jan 29th (DJB) and up to 72 Eversley GPs during Feb (BMA). Flocks tended to be smaller in March, the only count to exceed 30 being 60 Warren Row Mar 6th (BDC). **Spring/Summer:** small numbers were reported from 37 localities, the bulk of which were in April when the period's largest counts all occurred mid month, suggesting passage. High counts at this time involved 30 Popeswood (KCr) and 40 Woolhampton GPs (GEW) Apr 15th, 70 Lambourn Apr 18th (JD) and 30 Ashampstead Apr 20th (JLe). Apart from the latter counts, the season's largest count was 28 West Meadows, near Kintbury May 29th (IW). Breeding was only confirmed at Swallowfield, where 1 pair bred (BMA), otherwise the only evidence of possible breeding was the presence of singing males at scattered sites through the county. **Autumn/Second winter:** birds were reported from 34 sites during the period with flocking first noted in Aug with 20 Cold Harbour Aug 6th (DJB), 53 Englefield Aug 8th (RCr), 46 Emmer Green Aug 17th (ABT) and 100 Farnborough Down Aug 21st (GDS). From September flocks of 20 to 99 were reported from 20 locations, larger counts were c250 Cookham Sep 18th (BDC), c100 Spencers Wood Oct 6th (NR), c400 Englefield Oct 14th (RCr) and 150 there Nov 5th (RCr). Numbers at Eversley GPs built up to 100 by Nov 2nd (BMA) and similar counts were made on the Compton Downs Nov 12th (DJB), Bury Down Nov 18th (GJSu) and Nov 21st (RJB), Streatley Warren Nov 19th (ABT), Cookham Dec 10th (BDC) and finally 110 at Eton Dec 12th (DJB).

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

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

Records were received from 66 locations (7 in Swinley Forest) throughout the county. The table shows the monthly status throughout the year

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of occupied sites	8	7	16	16	0	0	0	0	2	16	27	19
Minimum number of birds	40	33	501	206	0	0	0	0	5	113	150	192

First winter/Spring passage: as the table shows, this species was uncommon during Jan/Feb, the only double figure counts came from Eversley GPs with a peak of 20 Jan 1st (BJH) and 16 Snelsmore Common Feb 12th (BJW). Passage occurred during Mar/Apr, especially through the SE of the county where the highest numbers were found in Swinley Forest. The peak count occurred at the latter site on Mar 20th when c275 were present in the Wishmoor area and 40+ were nearby at Broadmoor Bottom (DJB). Double figure counts continued to be reported from the forest into April. Elsewhere 18 were noted at Remenham Mar 8th (ANS); 37 Swinley Pk Mar 25th (DJB); 15 Hermitage Mar 27th (JBU); 30+ Oval Pond, Padworth Apr 1st (DJB); 15+ Gorricks Wood Apr 3rd (BMA) and 40+ Swinley Brickpits Apr 10th (DJB). The latest reports were in Swinley Forest with 8 (1 singing) Caesars Camp

Apr 23rd (ACJ) and 2 Surrey Hill Apr 24th (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** early passage birds occurred at QMR with 3 Sep 18th (CDRH) and 1 Wrysbury GPs Sep 21st, with 2 there Sep 24th (CL). Numbers slowly increased during October, though most reports only involved single figure counts. However there were 13 at Lea Fm GP Oct 15th (PMC), 27 Greenham Common Oct 22nd (IW), 25 Lavell's Lake (TOA) and 14+ Thatcham Marsh (NRG) both Oct 23rd. Birds had become widespread in Nov/Dec albeit usually in small numbers. The only flocks to exceed 10 birds were c50 Windsor Great Pk Nov 7th increasing to 60 Nov 28th (CDRH), 40 R. Kennet Woolhampton Dec 3rd (BDC), 15 Brimpton Dec 7th (GEW), 30 Burghfield GPs Dec 18th (KEM) and 50+ Wigmore Lane GPs Theale Dec 29th (ABT).

MEALY REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Rare winter visitor

Small numbers infiltrating SE England during the second winter period resulted in 2 records for Berks. One associating with Meadow Pipits at QMR, Oct 3rd (CDRH), was by far the earliest-ever arrival in the county but proved to be the forerunner of a significant influx (several others were discovered during the early months of 2006). The other bird was located in a flock of c60 Lesser Redpolls in Windsor Great Pk Nov 28th (CDRH).

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

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

There were no first winter records, reflecting the second winter situation in 2004. A fairly small-scale irruption began in the late spring and continued into the autumn. This movement into Berks was unusual in that a higher number of records occurred away from the usual wooded areas of S and SE Berks than is usually associated with such influxes and point to birds moving through Berks on a fairly broad front. The forerunners to this influx involved a flock of 10 (inc juvs) that visited Wildmoor Heath May 29th (MBa). There followed single birds at Burghfield Common Jun 6th (PH) and Swinley Brickpits Jun 19th (DJB; FJC). The first large group (50+) was located at Caesars Camp Jul 3rd (MRAn), then 6 flew W over Portobello Wood Aldworth Jul 4th (RHai), 6 over Pinkneys Green Jul 16th (PNe), 20 visited Swinley Brickpits Aug 10th (WAS) and 4 were still present at Caesars Camp Aug 29th (WAN). From Sep to Dec birds were regularly seen in Swinley Forest and its adjoining woodlands although counts were usually small. However c25 flew over the neighbouring Crowthorne TRL site Sep 7th (MGM) and counts of 10-11 were made on 3 dates in mid Nov (BMA; RJG; JSh). Elsewhere birds were still being reported from a number of sites: 1 flying N over Emmer Green Nov 13th (HRN), 15 Upper Bucklebury Dec 10th (RF), 10 flying S over Sulham Dec 18th (ABT), a pair Gorricks Wood Dec 20th (BMA) and 1 Bracknell Dec 29th (DEa).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

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

Records were received from 158 locations, 56 in W Berks, 41 in M Berks and 61 in E Berks, totals substantially higher than in any recent year. As usual for this species most records involved 1-5 birds but counts of 6-9 were reported from 13 sites and higher counts involved 10 Greenham Common Jan 3rd (JL), 11 Eversley GPs Jan 27th (GH), 12 Lavell's Lake Oct

15th (TOA) and 12+ Thatcham Marsh Oct 30th (NRG). The October records may involve some passage birds. **Breeding:** evidence pointing to local breeding came from 13 locations, usually of adults with juvs. Pairs bred successfully in gardens at Farnborough (GDS) and Brimpton (GEW). The rarely reported song was heard at Ellis Hill, Arborfield May 31st (DJB).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

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

Although there were only 5 records involving 4-5 birds, 2005 is still the best year since 1994.

First winter: a female was present at a traditional wintering site in Windsor Great Pk Feb 13th (ABT), with another sighting closeby on Feb 28th (CDRH) possibly referring to this bird. **Second winter:** a small scale influx into SE England during the autumn resulted in 3 Berkshire records: single birds (both calling) flew E over Lavell's Lake Oct 19th and SW over the same site Oct 25th (both PBT). Another was reported from St Michaels Churchyard, Tilehurst Nov 27th (JA).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare winter visitor

Reflecting events of Nov 2004 when 2 birds were located by Combe Gibbet on Inkpen Hill, a very mobile adult female was found at the same locality on Dec 3rd (CDRH) and what is believed to be this bird was seen again briefly at the same site Dec 28th (DJS). The third consecutive year for records.



*Snow Bunting
by Martin Hallam*

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

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

Records were received from 84 locations, 36 in W Berks, 23 in M Berks and 25 in E Berks. **First winter:** birds were reported from 35 sites, usually of 1-20 birds. Higher counts involved 40 Pinkneys Green Jan 9th (PNe), 50+ Bury Down Jan 21st (RAD), 30 Compton Downs Jan 24th (DJB), 45 Farnborough Down Jan 30th (GDS), 80 Cookham Rise Feb 7th (CDRH), 60 Bury Down Feb 16th (ADB), 30 Larks Hill Feb 23rd (KCr), 35 Combe Hill Mar 12th (JL) and 40 Moor Copse Mar 13th (JLe). **Spring/Summer:** reported from 53 sites with song heard at at least 19 of these. Most records were of 1-5 birds, although counts were not submitted from this species' downland strongholds during this time. At Stanford Dingley 16 were present May 11th and 12 Jun 17th (BAJC), whilst high counts of singing birds included 6 in the Strand Water area during Apr-Jul (WAS). Breeding was only reported from 4 sites: 1f carrying food at Eversley GPs Jun 6th (BMA); 2 pairs feeding young Strand Water in Jul (WAS): 1pr attending 2 juvs Farnborough Down Aug 6th (GDS); and 1pr with 2 juvs Old Down, Farnborough Aug 30th (DJS). **Autumn/Second winter:** noted from 31 sites, high counts involved 50 Streatley Warren 19th (ABT) and 60 Cookham (BDC) Nov 19th, 80 Cookham Nov 28th (PNe) increasing to 160 there Dec 12th (BDC) (which is the largest count recorded in Berks since 180+ were found on the Downs south of Newbury 4th Dec 1982), c100 Lowbury Hill Dec 23rd (DJB), 30 Inkpen Hill Dec 29th (MJT) and c100 Widbrook Common Dec 31st (CDRH).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

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

A record year for flock sizes, records were received from 63 locations evenly spread throughout the county. **First winter:** birds were noted from 34 locations, usually of 1-10 birds. However, the presence of some larger flocks within the county may indicate an increase, at least in the wintering population. At Hosehill Lake 28 were counted Jan 16th (BU); 30 were noted at Long Lane, Cookham Rise Jan 25th (BDC) which increased to a staggering c160 Feb 7th (CDRH), the largest reported flock since at least 1974. Elsewhere 40+ were beside the Colnbrook Bypass Feb 20th (CDRH) and 15 were in breeding habitat between Summerleaze GP and Strand Water Mar 25th (WAS). One male visited a garden bird table in Twyford Mar 12th (LFo). **Spring/Summer:** the TABCG survey team located a surprising 81 singing males during the Theale/Burghfield GPs Bird Survey. Away from the Theale area, song was reported from 19 locations including 9 singing in the Summerleaze GP/Strand Water area from Apr to Jul with at least 2 pairs breeding, 1 in a bean crop (WAS) and 2 pairs bred in oilseed rape at Farnborough Down May 15th (GDS). Breeding was confirmed at Lavell's Lake (SPA), Dorney W (BDC) and Lower Fm GP (NC). **Autumn/Second winter:** from Sep to Dec birds were reported from 25 sites and, like the first winter, some very large flocks were noted. Counts exceeding 15 birds were 27 Englefield Oct 14th (RCr); 16 Greenham Common Oct 22nd (IW); 15+ Thatcham Marsh Oct 30th and Nov 27th (NRG); 25 Hosehill Lake Nov 12th (BU); c100 Long Lane, Cookham Rise Nov 19th and c60 there Dec 10th (BDC), c150 Remenham Dec 11th (CDRH) and 20+ Shinfield Dec 20th (DJB). Three visited garden feeders in Earley Dec 23rd (MSFW).

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

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

Although still widely reported on the downlands in the NW of the county, this species has all but disappeared from the rest of the county. The only area where Corn Buntings are regularly encountered away from the downs is to the west of Maidenhead where ever decreasing numbers can still be found in the Cold Harbour- Knowl Hill area; the monthly maximum counts for this area can be seen in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cold Harbour/ Knowl Hill	5	-	2	3	2	6	1	5	-	15	1	9

The spring totals represented probably 3 pairs, the high count of 15 occurred Oct 22nd (DJB). Records elsewhere in E Berks included 8 Dorney W Jan 9th (CRe), with 2 there Mar 23rd (CRe) and 1 May 29th (SP). At Cockpole Green, 1-2 were present Oct 22nd (DJB) and 10 were at Remenham Dec 11th (CDRH). **West Berks:** the three main areas where Corn Buntings are to be found are the Compton Downs, the West Ilsley gallops and the downs surrounding Lambourn. Compton Downs: the large flock present late in 2004 had increased in numbers to 189 Jan 3rd and 200+ Jan 29th (DJB). This flock had moved on by mid Feb with only 57 (4 singing) noted on Feb 18th (DJB). Five were singing by Lowbury Hill on Mar 13th (RF) and 6 were singing plus 1 pair feeding 1+ juvs along the Ridgeway Jun 23rd (DJB). Numbers increased again in the second winter with at least 213 present Dec 23rd (DJB). West Ilsley: wintering numbers peaked at 80 on Cow/Bury Down Feb 16th (ADB) and were still at this level Mar 9th (CDRH). In spring song was regularly reported peaking at 6 Jun 5th (ABT). In the second winter, 75 were counted on Bury Down and another 50 at West Ilsley Nov 21st (RJB). Lambourn: apart from a flock of c100 at Sheepdrove Jan 13th (CDRH) and 45 there Feb 5th (ABT), numbers were fairly low in this area during the winter months. However song was reported from the Wellbottom/Seven Barrows area in May and June with a peak of 6 singing Jun 19th (IW; JL). (38 were located just over the county boundary in Oxon near to Maddie Fm Aug 12th (ABT)). Other sites: small numbers were reported from other W Berks locations and involved 2 males on territory at Woolley Down from Apr-Jul (GDS) and 7 there Oct 30th (GDS); 1 singing Hungerford Newtown Apr 24th and May 29th (LS); 1 Lands End May 27th (GSte); and 1 singing Little Hidden Fm, Hungerford Newtown Jun 14th (JLe).

ESCAPES AND HYBRIDS 2004

FERAL/ESCAPES

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Birds were reported from 13 locations with 1-2 present intermittently throughout the year at Dinton Pastures CP (MFW et al); 2 Windsor Esplanade on Jan 5th, 15th and Feb 3rd, then from Oct 19th to Nov 29th and 1 there Dec 13th (DF); 3 on the R Thames by Thames Valley Pk on Feb 14th (MSFW); a pair bred on R. Thames just upstream of Kennetmouth and 3 half-grown cygnets were seen there in April (A. Driver); 1 resident on the Kennet and Avon Canal, Newbury all year (MO); 2 Bray GPs Feb 27th (WAS); a resident pair at Great Meadow Pond bred again, hatching 3 cygnets (however, all 3 had died by Sep 12th) but 4 ads there on Nov 22nd (CDRH); 1 Theale Main GP intermittently from May 23rd (MJT) to Sep 10th (KEM); 1 Eversley GPs Aug 8th (GH); 2 ads QMR Sep 15th (CDRH) were possibly Windsor Great Pk birds; 1 on the R Thames near Wargrave on Oct 23rd (MSFW); 2 Twyford GPs Oct 30th to Dec 1st (MFW); 2 Virginia Water Nov 8th (WAS) and Nov 9th (R Gompertz) and 2 Lower Fm GP Nov 25th-Dec 31st (MO).

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

One adult was reported from Padworth Lane GP on several dates from Sep 27th (RCr) to Nov 29th (KEM).

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Up to 5 were present at sites bordering the R Thames in the Cookham area from Jan 10th to Mar 31st at least (MO); a pair was located on West Woodhay House Lake on Apr 15th and 26th with 1 there on May 23rd (RGS); 1 was on the R Thames at Wargrave on Jul 19th (PNe); 6 including 3 juvs were located at Summerleaze GP on Jul 28th and 1 there on Aug 15th (CDRH) and 1 was found on the Loddon Reserve, Twyford GPs on Sep 14th (CDRH).

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

Reports of 1 bird at Greenham Common on Aug 29th (NC) and Nov 9th (GJS), Thatcham GPs occasionally from Sep 1st to Dec 12th (GJS) and regularly at Lower Fm GP from Nov 3rd (RF) to Dec 27th (SAG) probably refer to the same individual. One was also reported from R Thames at Lower Basildon on Nov 12th (ABT).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

One over Cookham Dean on Apr 24th (BDC) was probably 1 of the 2 seen at Cannon Court Fm, Maidenhead on May 6th and 14th (S Meads).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

A pair was reported at Dinton Pastures CP from Jan 9th to May 10th (MFW et al) and 1 visited Hungerford Common on Aug 20th (TPo).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

A small population persists in central Berkshire. At Whiteknights Park Lake, 9 (8m 1f) were noted on Feb 5th (D J Barnes) and 7 (6m 1f) were present on Feb 8th (PG). After these dates, 1-6 birds were reported on many dates to May 25th (MO) and later 5 (4m 1f) were reported on Nov 25th (PG). Nearby at Maiden Erleigh Lake there were 3 (2m 1f) on Feb 4th and 5 (4m 1f) on Jun 10th (RR). Two males were located on the R Loddon near Woodley on Mar 9th (MBa) and a female was reported from Dinton Pastures CP on Jul 4th (PMC). Away from this area, a drake was located at Eversley GPs on Apr 18th (GH).

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A first winter drake was found on the Jubilee River, near to the Wood Lane Bridge on Dec 12th (DJB; CDRH). The plumage condition (only 1 tail feather) and reaction to simulated feeding (approaching the second observer to within 20m) made it extremely unlikely that it was of wild origin (and it was still present in the area in 2009!).

Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

The December 2004 male continued to visit gardens at Springfield Park, Twyford until Mar 7th (VFo; LFo).

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

A male were reported from Whiteknights Park on Feb 3rd and Feb 16th and a pair was seen on Mar 29th (PG).

Parakeet Sp.

A small darkish parakeet, possibly Nandey Parakeet, flew west over Greenham Common on Mar 8th (CDRH).

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One flew west over QMR on Mar 26th (CDRH) and 1 was present at Widbrook Common on Aug 17th (DJB).

Lesser Green Leafbird *Chloropsis cyanopogon*

One was reported eating apples on a Twyford lawn on Dec 11th (SPA).

HYBRIDS

Greylag × Canada Goose

One Summerleaze GP on Aug 4th (CDRH).

Bar-headed Goose × ?

One was reported from Eversley GPs on Mar 19th to Jun 26th, Sep 4th and Nov 9th (GH).

Canada Goose × Barnacle Goose

One Lower Fm GP on Aug 13th (KEM) and 1 Freeman's Marsh Nov 3rd (RF).

Snow Goose × Barnacle Goose

One or two were reported throughout the year at Eversley GPs (MO).

Egyptian Goose × ?

One Pingewood GPs on Oct 23rd (PBT).

Ruddy Shelduck-type hybrid

One Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 3rd (DJ Barnes).

Mallard × Gadwall

A drake that first appeared at Great Meadow Pond on Jan 30th (CDRH), re-appeared in the second winter, being seen at Heron Lake, Wraysbury GPs on Sep 18th and Nov 14th and back at Great Meadow Pond on Sep 20th, Oct 11th to Oct 27th (CDRH).

Mallard × Pochard

One was identified at Woolhampton GPs on May 18th and Jun 10th (CDRH).

***Aythya* hybrids**

As in the 2004 report these are grouped according to which species they most resemble, rather than by their parentage – which is often speculative (but indicated in brackets where it has been suggested)..

Ferruginous-type hybrids

At Bray GPs, the 2004 wintering female, first seen in 2003 (presumed Pochard X Ferruginous Duck), remained to Mar 12th (DJB) and returned for its third winter on Oct 9th remaining to at least Oct 25th (CDRH et al). A female (first seen on Dec 9th 2004 and not the Bray bird) was located on the Village Pit, Wraysbury GPs on Jan 23rd and Jan 30th (CDRH) and was also nearby at Heron Lake, Wraysbury GPs on Jan 25th (CDRH).

Scaup-type hybrids

A female Scaup-type (presumed Scaup × Pochard) was present at Woolhampton GPs on Apr 20th (CDRH) and Apr 30th (MFW); probably the same female Scaup-type reappeared at Moatlands GP from Oct 23rd (PBT) to at least Nov 26th (MFW), where it was first seen in Oct 2002.

Lesser Scaup-type hybrids

A female (Tufted × Pochard) at Burghfield GPs on Mar 8th had previously been seen on Mar 16th 2004 (CDRH). A drake resembling a Lesser Scaup/Ring-necked Duck located at Aldermaston GP on Apr 5th (JPM) was accompanied by a female Pochard. A drake (Tufted × Pochard) was reported from Lower Fm GP on Apr 10th (TGB). A first winter drake (Tufted × Pochard) was new to the county, being located on Wraysbury GPs on Nov 1st (CDRH).

Tufted Duck-type hybrid

A drake (Pochard × Tufted Duck) was noted at Heron Lake, Wraysbury GPs on Dec 24th (CDRH) and at Horton GPs on Dec 29th (CDRH) and is presumed to be the same bird that visited this area in Nov-Dec 2004.

Gull Hybrids

Herring Gull × Lesser Black-backed Gull

An adult was located at Smallmead Fm GP on Dec 3rd (CDRH).

Other Hybrids

Stock Dove × Collared Dove

A juvenile of this unusual, intergeneric hybrid was observed at close range (from inside the car) at QMR on May 25th, but could not be relocated subsequently (CDRH).

Latest and Earliest Dates of Winter and Summer Migrants

The year 2005 was extraordinary for the amount of record or near record extreme dates. Eleven species produced records that were close to or exceeded the county record date, those marked with an asterisk in the tables are new record county dates.

WINTER DEPARTURES

WINTER ARRIVALS

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Goldeneye	Apr 25th	Moatlands GPs	RCr	Oct 16th	Bray GPs	BDC
Smew	Mar 9th	Wraysbury GPs	DR	Nov 25th	Wraysbury GPs	CDRH
Goosander	May 18th	K&A Canal Reading	RHS	Oct 9th	Lower Farm GP	SAG
Bittern	Mar 14th	Lavell's Lake LNR	KIT	Nov 12th	Lavell's Lake LNR	J Beever
Merlin	Mar 20th	Lower Farm GP	RRK	Oct 18th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Golden Plover	Apr 15th	M4 Winnersh	PBT	Sep 17th	Queen Mother Res	MMc
Rock Pipit	Mar 15th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH	Sep 29th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Water Pipit	Apr 8th	Dorney Wetlands	DJB	Nov 22nd	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Short-eared Owl	Apr 25th	Eversley GPs Burghfield Mill GP	BMA JA	Sep 21st	Lowbury Hill	CDRH
Fieldfare	May 19th	Greenham Common	APy	Oct 15th	Windsor Great Pk	CDRH
Redwing	Apr 17th	Upper Lambourn Twyford GPs	FGM BTB	Oct 3rd	Caversham	TBa
Brambling	May 31st	Wishmoor Bottom	KEM	Oct 10th	Windsor Great Pk	CDRH
Lesser Redpoll	Apr 24th	Swinley Forest	DJB	Sep 18th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH

SUMMER ARRIVALS**SUMMER DEPARTURES**

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Garganey	May 12th	Lavell's Lake LNR	MFW	Nov 11th	Dorney Wetlands	SP
Quail	May 3rd	Spencers Wood	NR	Aug 10th	Dedworth	N Edwards
Osprey	Mar 26th	Theale Main GP	RAd	Sep 13th	Silwood Pk	A Phillimore
Hobby	Apr 16th	Dinton Pastures CP	FJC; MFW	Nov 4th*	Burghfield Mill GP	RJB
Little Ringed Plover	Mar 16th	Pingewood GPs Dorney Wetlands	KEM MO	Aug 30th	Lower Farm GP	DJB
Common Tern	Mar 24th*	Eversley GPs	BMA	Oct 10th	Lower Farm GP	RA
Turtle Dove	Apr 28th	Brimpton GPs	GEW	Sep 9th	Brimpton GPs	GEW
Cuckoo	Apr 8th	Wishmoor Bottom	MHu	Sep 4th	Woolley Pk	GDS
Nightjar	May 7th	Swinley Forest	MSFW	Aug 17	Gorrick Wood	BMA
Swift	Apr 16th	Dinton Pastures CP	T A Guyatt	Sep 12th	Eversley GPs	GH
Sand Martin	Mar 16th	Theale Main GP	RCr	Oct 5th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Barn Swallow	Mar 26th	Wraysbury GPs	CDRH	Nov 7th	Caversham	TGB
House Martin	Apr 4th	Muddy Lane GP	RF	Oct 30th	Moatlands GP	JA
Tree Pipit	Apr 1st	Wildmoor Heath	NG	Oct 15th	Cranbourne Chase	CDRH
Yellow Wagtail	Apr 3rd	Lower Fm GP	NC	Oct 4th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Nightingale	Apr 8th	Moatlands GP	RCr	Jul 16th	Burghfield GPs	JA
Redstart	Mar 28th	Wishmoor Cross	DJB	Sep 14th	Wraysbury GPs	CL
Whinchat	Apr 20th	Pingewood GPs Greenham Common	RHS GJS; GStE	Oct 23rd	Greenham Common	NC
Wheatear	Mar 15th	Dorney Wetlands Queen Mother Res	SP CDRH	Nov 5th	Queen Mother Res	CDRH; ABT; DJB
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 6th	Jealott's Hill	PEd	Aug 1st	Freemen's Marsh	JBut
Sedge Warbler	Apr 1st	Southcote Lock	AVL	Oct 2nd	Thatcham Marsh	NRG
Reed Warbler	Apr 2nd*	Eversley GPs	IHB	Oct 23rd	Thatcham Marsh	NRG
Garden Warbler	Apr 3rd	Denford Trout Fm	RDW	Sep 20th	Greenham Common	NC
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 24th	Enbourne	JPM	Sep 21st	Wraysbury GPs	RRG
Whitethroat	Apr 5th	Coley Meadows Woolhampton	AVL RF	Sep 29th	Greenham Common	KEM
Willow Warbler	Mar 24th	Theale Main GP	NR	Sep 18th	Bray GPs	BDC
Spotted Flycatcher	May 2nd	Combe Wood	IW; JL	Sep 17th	Brimpton GP Lough Down	GEW ABT

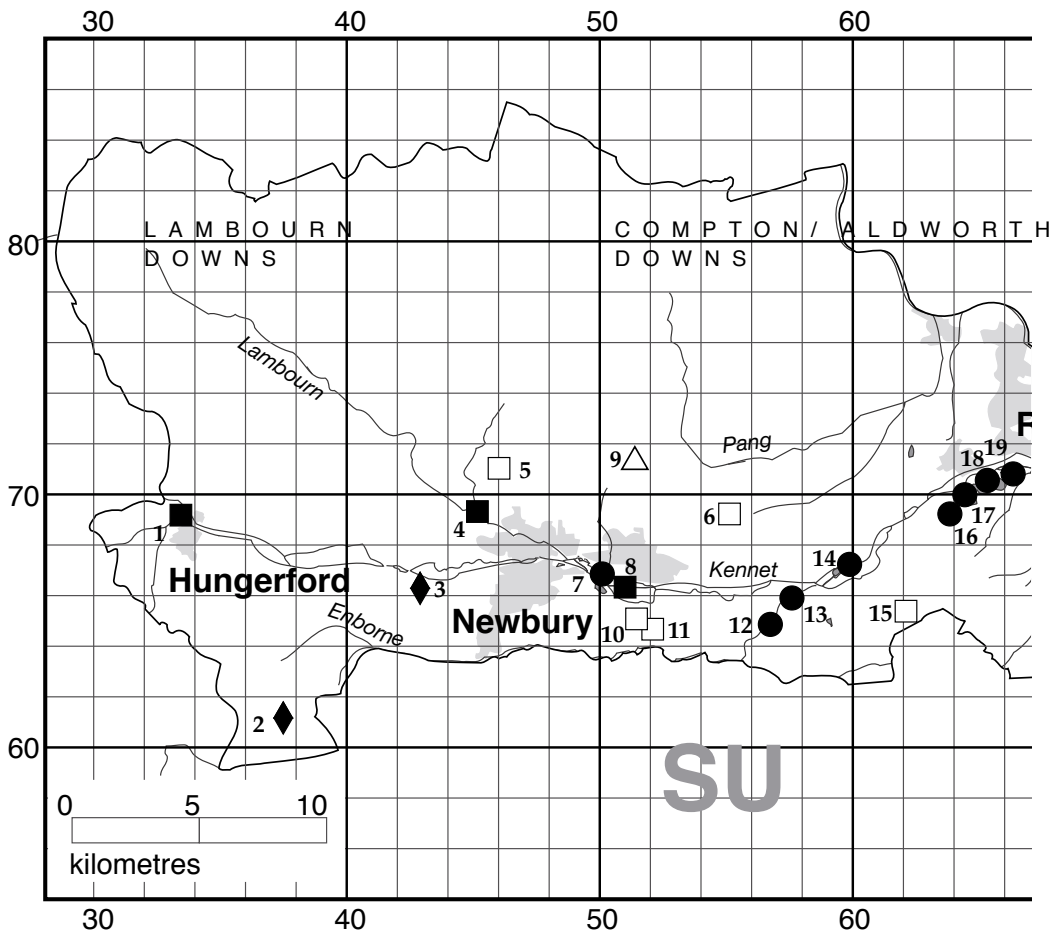
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report	Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report
Abbott	C		Brown	I H	IHB
Abbott	S		Brown	W	WB
Adam	N	NA	Buchanan	J	JBu
Adam	P	PA	Bucknell	N J	NJB
Adam	S P	SPA	Burlow	M	
Addison	R	RAd	Burness	R J	RJB
Adnams	R	RA	Burt	S	
Alexander	T O	TOA	Butler	D S	
Allerton	M		Butler	J	JBu
Alliss	R		Callister	T	TCa
Anderson	M R	MRAn	Capewell	R R	
Andrews	J	JA	Carson	A	
Angell	T		Carter	A M	
Angus	R	RAng	Carter	D A	DAC
Anstis	J	JAns	Carver	C	
Anstis	R	RAns	Chambers	E G	EGC
Archer	B M	BMA	Cheeseman	M	MCh
Auger	R		Chivers	J L	JCh
Austin	S		Clark	B A J	BAJC
Ball	T G	TGB	Clark	J M	JMC
Banks	P S		Clark	F C	FCC
Barker	D J	DJB	Clarke	S	
Barker	M J		Clay	M J	
Barlow	L		Cleere	N	NC
Barnes	D J		Clews	B D	BDC
Basher	P J		Cload	D	DClo
Bassett	A D	ADB	Cohen	P A	
Batchelor	M	MBa	Coker	D	DCo
Beglow	B		Collins	R	
Bell	I C	ICB	Colmer	H M	
Bennett	B T	BTB	Cottingham	F J	FJC
Benson	J M		Coupland	J	
Blackmore	D		Cowell	P	
Blissett	N R	NRB	Crathorne	B	
Blundell	L R	LRB	Crawford	A D	ADC
Bond	R		Crawford	R	RCr
Bowler	D	DBow	Creed	K	KCr
Bowtell	D		Crocker	A	
Bowyer	P		Croft	S	
Bowyer	V A		Crompton	T	TC
Boyd	D A		Cropper	P M	PMC
Bradbury	C		Crowley	P J	PJC
Bradley	J	JBra	Cullis	J	
Breeze	S		Davis	S	
Briggs	C A		Dawson	R	RD
Bright-Thomas	P	PBT	Dazley	R	
Brimmell	S		Dear	M J	
Bring	E		Dellow	J	JD
Britnell	M		DeMuynck	A	
Broadley	D	DB	Denen	A	
Brookes	G	GBr	Denness	A	ADen
Brough	P		Densley	R	
Brown	G		Dent	K	

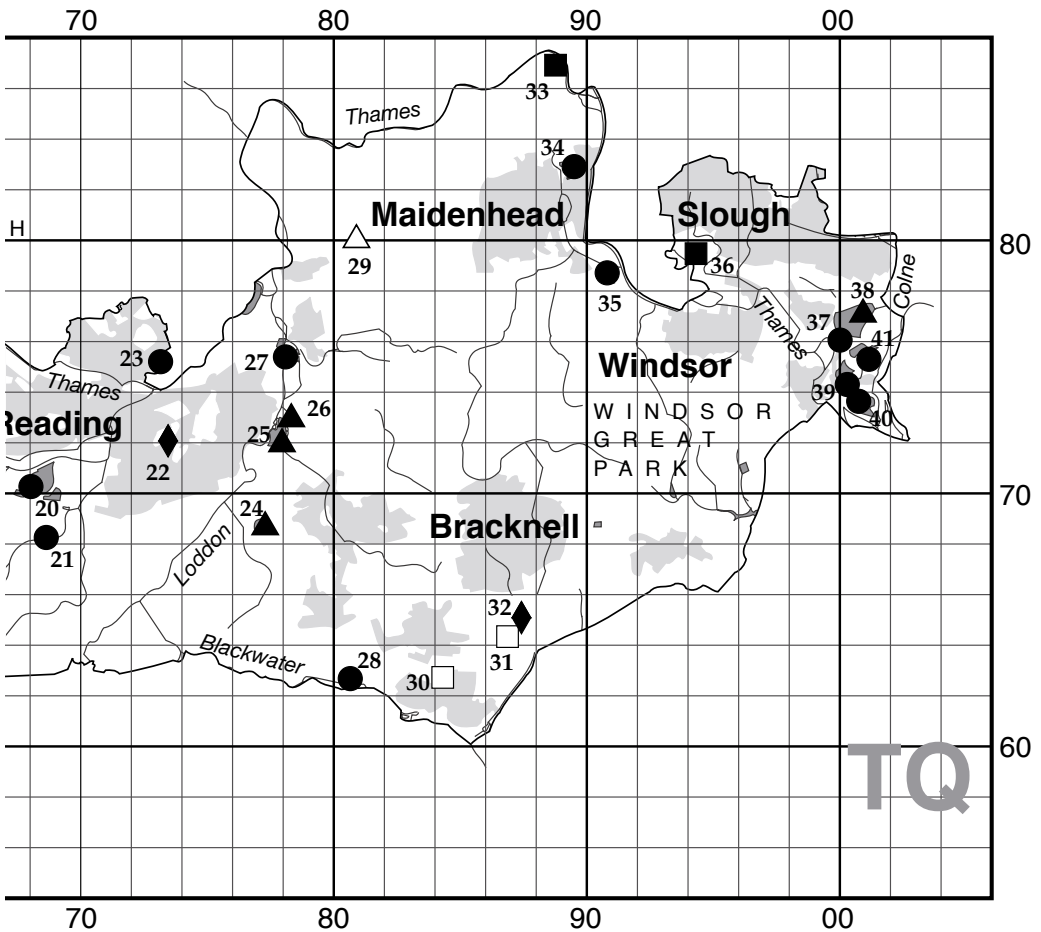
Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report	Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report
Dimond	S	SDi	Graham	S A	SAG
Dinnage	R		Green	E E	EEG
Dormer	M R	MRD	Griffin	M	
Douglas	B		Guilfoyle	R T	
Dryden	R	RDr	Haines	R	RHai
Duncan	K P	KPD	Hardie	R J	RJH
East	D		Hardy	R	RHar
Edwards	N		Harland	B	
Edwards	P	PEd	Harland	G	GH
Edwards	T		Harle	C	
Eggleton	K		Harney	S	
Ellis	C		Harwood	R A	
Ellis	M		Haseler	J	
Elphick	I		Hawtree	J	JHa
Elwood	C		Haynes	R A	RAH
Evans	G	GE	Heard	C D R	CDRH
Evans	H W	HWE	Heffer	S	
Eyre	J A		Helgar	W	
Farnsworth	F M	FMF	Hemmett	T	
Farnsworth	S J	SJF	Herring	T	THe
Farrell	G R		Heyes	J	
Field	J		Hickman	P	PH
Fielder	S		Hobbs	A	
Finch	L J	LJF	Hollands	B J	BJH
Finch	M J	MJF	Holmes	M	MHo
Firth	T		Hook	J	
Fisher	B		Housely	D	DHo
Fisher	R		Howcroft	K	
Fisher	S		Howes	B	
Fitzgerald	B		Hughes	S	SH
Fitzpatrick	B		Humphrey	C C	
Fookes	N		Humphries	A	
Foote	S		Humphries	C	
Forster	L	LFo	Humphries	D	
Forster	V	VFo	Hunt	D J	
Foskett	D		Hunt	J S	JSH
Fostekew	K	KF	Hunt	M	MHu
Frankum	R	RF	Ireland	M	
Fry	D		Jacobs	R S	
Fuge	R		Jarrett	D	
Fuller	D	DF	Jenkins	D	DJe
Gibson	T		Johnson	A C	ACJ
Gifford	D		Jones	C D	CDJ
Gilmore	C		Jones	P	
Gipson	P	PG	Jones	R	
Girling	K		Jones	S	
Gladstone	A	AG	K Chard	K	
Glomber	G		Keel	R R	RRK
Glover	D R		Keil	I J	
Godden	N R	NG	Kettell	M	MK
Godden	R J	RJG	Kimber	G	GK
Gompertz	R		King	T	
Goodey	J	JG	Kipps	M R	
Goodship	H M	HMG	Knibbs	J	
Goriup	P		Knight	J	JKn
Gott	C		Knight	Mrs	

Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report	Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report
Knight	T	TK	Ness	R	RN
Kwantes	L		Netley	H R	HRN
Lamdin	T		Newbound	P J	PNe
Lamsdell	C	CL	Newport	G	
Langton	K		Niblock	P	
Laughton	R		Nicol	W A	WAN
Lawson	A V	AVL	Nuttley	J	
Lea	P		Orr	P J	PJO
Lee	D		Osman	M	
Legg	J	JL	Overy	D	
Lenney	M D	MDL	Owen	J	
Lerpiniere	J	JLe	Packard	R J	
Lincoln	D M		Paine	I D	
Littler	K	KLi	Parker	A	APa
Long	D		Parkes	A J	AJP
Lovegrove	M		Parmenter	D	
Lyle	R A		Parr	M	MPa
Mace	G L		Pavlou	S	SP
Mackenzie	G	GMac	Perry	J I F	
Main	C		Phillimore	A	
Main	J		Phillips	A	
Mains	G		Poole	C R	CRP
Male	A		Pope	W	WP
Marlow	T	TM	Poulter	B	
Marsh	D B		Poulter	M	
Marshall	P		Povey	R	RPo
Martin	J P	JPM	Powell	T	TPo
Martin	K		Prell	J	
Maynard	T G	TGM	Price	M	
McCarthy	M G	MGM	Price	R	
McCartney	B	BMc	Prince	M G	MGP
McCartney	R	RMc	Pugh	D K	
McEwan	C		Pye	A	APy
McEwan	D		Raine	A	ARa
McGinnety	F G	FGM	Rampton	N	NR
McGowan	J E		Randall	G	GR
Mckee	M J	MMc	Raper	M J	MR
McMahon	A		Rear	D	DR
McNeil	J		Reedman	R	RR
Meads	S		Reeve	C	CRe
Meardon	M G		Reid	J	JRe
Mearton	R		Ricks	S	SRI
Michael	T		Righelato	R	RRi
Millett	A		Rimes	D N T	DNTR
Mitchell	J E		Rix	J B	JBRi
Monaghan	K		Robinson	C M	CMR
Moore	K E	KEM	Rose	J E	
Moore	R C		Rowing	G	
Moreland	T		Rymer	A	AR
Morgan	B		Sadler	J	
Morgan	M		Sales	M A	MAS
Morris	D R		Salter	F	
Morris	R		Scholey	G D	GDS
Morton	H		Scott	S	
Mundy	G		Sell	M R W	MRWS
Napper	E		Sharkey	B	

Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report	Surname	1st name initials	Initials used in report
Sharp	R		Warden	R M	RMW
Shurmer	M		Ward-Smith	J	
Simmonds	M V		Waring	M	
Simpson	P J		Warne	R	
Slater	A	ASl	Warnes	T	
Smallridge	D		Warren	J E	JEW
Smart	S		Warren	P	
Smith	D W		Waterer	R D	
Smith	M	MSm	Watson	R	
Smith	M J	MJS	Watts	R C	RCW
Smith	R G	RGS	Wearn	C	
Spencer	J W		Webb	G R	GRW
Spring	K	KS	Webster	C	
Stacey	M E		Weeks	S	
Stacey	T		Wenman	J	
Stacey	W A	WAS	Weston	I	IW
Stanley	R C		Whitaker	M S F	MSFW
Stansfield	R H	RHS	White	C	CWh
Staves	G		White	D J	DJW
Staves	L	LS	White	P	PWh
Stephen	M	MSte	Wilcockson	A	
Stewart	G	GSte	Wilcockson	J	
Stewart	G J	GJS	Wilding	J	JW
Stollery	J	JS	Williams	C	
Stow	A N	ANS	Williams	G	
Stuttard	M	MSt	Williams	P	
Sumner	G J	GJSu	Willmington	M	
Sussex	D J	DJS	Wilson	C R	CRW
Swallow	J L	JLS	Wilson	G E	GEW
Swann	C		Wilson	R D	RDW
Sweetland	J		Wilson	R G	
Sweetland	T	TS	Wilson	S	SWi
Tanner	L		Wise	G	
Taylor	D		Witts	S B	SWit
Taylor	K	KTa	Wollerton	C	
Taylor	M J	MJT	Wood	D M	
Thomas	M		Woods	J	
Thomas	T		Wordley	G V	GVW
Tickle	V		Worgan	A	AWo
Tilbury	P D		Wright	P	
Tobitt	W		Yates	K	
Tomczynski	A B	ABT	Young	R	
Tompkins	B				
Trodd	P				
Tubb	K I	KIT			
Turner	C		Many Observers		MO
Turton	M		Moor Green Lakes Report		MGLR
Twyford	I	IT	Newbury Ringing Group		NRG
Uttley	B	BU	Runnymede Ringing Group		RRG
Vine	G		Theale Area Bird Report		TABR
Walford	M F	MFW	Theale Area Bird Conservation Group		TABCG
Walker	B J	BJW			
Walker	K				
Wallen	M S				
Walling	J J				



- | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 SU 333 686 | Freemen'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 Wraybury Gravel Pits, (Sunnymeads) |
| 20 SU 680 705 | Burghfield Gravel Pits (Searles Farm) | 40 TQ 010 735 | Wraybury Gravel Pits (Village Pit) |
| 21 SU 688 685 | Pingewood Gravel Pits (Burnthouse Lane) | 41 TQ 010 755 | Horton Gravel Pits |
| 22 SU 735 720 | Whiteknights Park | | |



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

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

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

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

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