

# SYSTEMATIC LIST

## BIRD REPORT FOR 2006 and 2007

The species accounts for the systematic lists for 2006 and 2007 were prepared by Paul Bright-Thomas, Brian Clews, Richard Crawford, Ken Moore, Bill Nicoll, Sarah Priest, Marek Walford and Ken White.

Contributors of records to the systematic lists are usually identified by initials: a table of names and initials is shown at the end of the lists.

The systematic lists for 2006 and 2007 were edited by Chris Heard.

### Abbreviations and place names

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

### AGE/SEX

<b>Ad</b>	adult
<b>fs</b>	First summer
<b>fw</b>	First winter (plumage)
<b>imm</b>	Immature
<b>juv</b>	Juvenile
<b>s/p</b>	Summer plumage
<b>s/s</b>	Second summer
<b>s/w</b>	Second winter
<b>w/p</b>	Winter plumage
<b>w</b>	Winter
<b>3/s</b>	Third summer
<b>3/w</b>	Third winter
<b>4/s</b>	Fourth summer

### PLACES/LOCALITIES

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

# BIRD REPORT FOR 2006

## MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

*Locally common resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	26	24	8	6	–	–	–	–	58	81	87	49
Dinton Pastures CP	74	55	19	2	2	10	5	45	60	3	70	36
K&A Canal Newbury	69	58	73	–	88	57	–	27	42	87	–	97
R. Thames, Remenham	58	76	74	28	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	18
Theale/Moatlands GPs	88	32	20	–	–	51	–	8	41	34	32	111
R. Thames, Windsor Esplanade	201	304	–	–	–	342	–	–	–	210	208	221

NB. Theale and Moatland GPs have been combined, as often the Swans commute when excessive disturbance occurs at either site. Counts of up to 60 were received from nearly 70 sites. The count of 342 at Windsor Esplanade on Jun 30th (DF) is the highest ever recorded in Berkshire (18 more than Jan 2004, the previous record, also at Windsor Esplanade). **Breeding:** 39 pairs only recorded, with 117 cygnets noted, an obvious understatement of the breeding status of this species.

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

*Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

A flock of 17 Eurasian White-fronted Geese (a mix of adults and f/w) (KEM) flew in from south at 1550 hrs Feb 4th (with a small flock of Canada & Greylag Geese) at Pingewood GP. They settled on the West Pit for 5 minutes or so, lifted off and headed north. They were relocated on 5th (RHS) at Pingewood again and flew off north easterly at 13.55 (MFW). The usual feral adult, present for at least its sixth year, was being seen from Feb 17th on and off until Dec 31st in the Kennet valley, primarily between Brimpton and Padworth Lane.

## GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

*Common and widespread introduced resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	–	36	26	12	15	25	30	26	35	–	79	11
Borough Marsh	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	26	107	66	2	–
Cockmarsh	6	–	–	–	–	120	136	–	124	–	–	–
Great Meadow Pond	1	26	30	23	24	32	15	37	23	56	1	1
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	47	32	40	–	–	98	65	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	23	46	–	–	–	–	67	–	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	4	4	–	–	–	102	150	1	–	30
Theale GPs	156	149	109	39	45	–	–	–	50	–	88	122
Twyford GPs	–	–	6	9	8	–	–	80	66	–	–	2
Woolhampton GP	–	17	–	–	2	–	–	–	90	–	107	102
Wraysbury GPs	5	8	2	29	–	30	–	–	63	70	131	160

Counts of up to 60 were received from a further 58 sites, with higher individual counts being received from The Home Park, Windsor of 74 Feb 11th (CDRH) and 126 in a stubble field at Englefield Aug 8th (RCr); 96 at QMR on Aug 18th (CDRH); 160 at Switchback Rd., Cookham, Aug 24th (DJB) and 152 there Sept 3rd (WAS); 88 at Sonning Meadows on the Reading Blue Coat playing fields Sept 24th (ABT).

## GREY GOOSE sp.

On Oct 14th 4 unidentified grey geese flew over Great Thrift Wood heading south (DJB)

## SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

*Occasional escapee and feral resident at one site where it has bred*

4 were present in the Moor Green/Eversley area throughout the year (MO). Additionally, there were 4 'Blue Snow' Geese at Summerleaze GP Aug 16th (CDRH) and up to 3 of the same blue morph birds were in the Cookham area during August and September (WAS; DJB).

## CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

*Common and widespread introduced resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	505	401	375	–
Bray GPs	27	–	26	21	12	33	23	7	114	3	8	–
Burghfield GPs	21	8	105	–	5	–	–	–	–	56	14	53
Dinton Pastures CP	184	94	36	17	20	130	–	3	250	–	130	30
Great Meadow Pond	182	15	39	50	39	30	45	16	83	163	15	80
Lower Farm GP	120	115	120	18	41	42	121	237	100	239	307	250
R. Thames, Reading to Pangbourne	128	–	23	–	–	–	–	–	92	99	71	140
Summerleaze GP	168	6	22	13	–	–	–	400	300	20	–	48
Thatcham GPs	295	183	147	156	72	122	177	176	157	189	211	221
Theale GPs	126	90	109	7	21	–	–	–	84	–	74	82
Twyford GPs	20	–	–	8	–	–	–	205	50	–	–	–
R. Thames, Windsor Esplanade	158	194	–	–	–	155	–	–	–	157	107	108
Wraysbury GPs	61	47	59	12	2	2	–	–	58	68	192	136

Counts of up to 100 were received from a further 41 sites, with higher counts of 112 Cliveden Reach Jan 24th (WAS); 192 Remenham Feb 11th (DJB); 463 Cookham, Switchback Road Sep 3rd (WAS); 450 West End, nr Shurlock Row Sep 4th (DJB); 244 R. Thames, Remenham Farm meadow Sept 11th (GV); 253 Bearwood Lake Sep 20th (DJB); Sonning Meadows 364 Sep 30th (ABT); 100 Greenham Com Nov 10th (JL); finally 100 plus at The Home Farm, Windsor Gt Pk Nov 28th (RGS). **Breeding:** creches obscure the picture, but 36 pairs with 160 young were recorded.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

*A localised feral visitor/resident-reducing in numbers, year on year.*

Monthly maxima at the main site were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	57	7	2	4	3	–	3	–	44	51	50	50

Away from the main site, 2 were at Summerleaze GP Jan 11th and 31st (CDRH), with 1 there on Feb 2nd and 5th (CDRH) and 1 at Cookham Aug 6th (BDC) and Aug 11th to 31st (CDRH), 1 was at Summerleaze GP Aug 8th, 2 Aug 16th and 1 Sep 4th to 7th (CDRH), a flock of circa 40 were seen over Tickleback Row on Oct 13th (CDRH) and 1 was at Widbrook Common Dec 13th, 18th (BAJC) and 22nd (CDRH), with another at Aston the same day (CDRH). No breeding was confirmed this year.

**BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*

*Scarce passage migrant*

A first-winter Dark-bellied Brent *B.b.bernicla* was at Horton Fields from Feb 1st to Mar 21st (CDRH et al). On Apr 19th, a Brent Goose was located on the West Marsh at Jubilee River (SP) but was not identified as pale or dark bellied.

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

*Now locally common introduced resident / visitor*

There were at least 5 locations in West Berks indicating the spread there, as well as the East and Mid Berks strongholds.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood	–	1	2	2	–	–	4	6	2	2	–	6
BoroughMarsh/Charvil	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	41	22	37	12
Eversley/Moor Green	8	10	18	10	15	16	30	22	60	60	32	33
Summerleaze GP	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	104	98	3	–	–
Theale GPs	6	9	9	2	6	4	9	8	9	9	9	22
Great Meadow Pond	3	5	10	20	13	11	10	6	6	13	11	8

There were eight counts above 20 which do not form part of the above: – 24 Braywoodside Oct 7th (CDRH) and 52 Cockmarsh Jul 3rd (WAS). Switchback Rd., Cookham was quite exceptional with probably one of the highest County records at a single location, 106 on Aug 24th (DJB) and smaller counts of 63 Aug 6th (BDC), 95 Aug 11th (CDRH), 99 Aug 31st (CDRH), 64 Sept 3rd (WAS) and 43 Sep 14th (DF). Closeby, Summerleaze GP had probably part or all of the same flock with 104 on Aug 23rd (WAS) and 98 on Sept 1st (WAS). Finally the December WeBS count had 22 at Theale Main Pit. The albino bird was again at Charvil, associating with Canada Geese, on Jan 4th (CDRH). **Breeding:** 22 pairs were recorded breeding at 12 locations, with 81 juveniles.

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna**Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber listed)*

Overall, Shelduck were noted at 36 locations in the County. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Farm GP	4	9	10	13	2	2	1	4	–	–	2	1
Padworth Lane GP	3	3	6	8	6	4	16	12	–	–	1	1
Pingewood GPs inc Burnthouse Lane GPs	4	4	7	8	8	14	–	1	1	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	4	8	3	–	1	–	–	–	–
Thatcham GPs	4	8	12	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GPs	–	2	2	6	4	2	1	–	–	–	–	1

Additionally there were two other counts, in excess of 10, both 13 from Burghfield GPs – Apr 2nd (SAG) and Aug 13th (JA). **Breeding:** was noted at 5 sites, with 33 juveniles recorded. It was interesting to note that at one site the adults departed during the third week of August leaving at least 7 juveniles to fend for themselves. Gradually they all left, the last on Sept 3rd (MFW).

**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata**Localised and increasing introduced resident*

There were nearly 60 sites with Mandarin records, similar to last year, however there was an apparent increase in West Berks records. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	13	18	8	4	1	2	5	9	25	20
Sunninghill Park	49	4	–	–	15	12	–	–	–	–	–	–
Whiteknights Lake/Park	–	–	–	–	17	–	2	–	25	–	–	1

Once again, Windsor Gt Pk provided the highest count of the year with 83 on Jul 23rd (WAS). There were three counts in excess of ten (other than shown in the above table), Virginia Water (partly in Surrey) with 11 on Feb 16th (WAS), 12 at Hurst Green GP Nov 4th (MFW) and then 15 flying in to roost near Maidenhead Weir on Nov 5th (DF). **Breeding:** was recorded at 12 sites, but, inevitably, there was a high level of predation. Early in May at Whiteknights Lake 2 families were seen (one of at least eighteen ducklings, and another of 8), but by the end of the month 3 ducklings only survived (PG). It is thought that predation by Pike may have been responsible (PG). On May 13th, at Leiper Pond, in Windsor Gt Pk 12 ducklings were seen (DJB), closely followed by just 2 ducklings at Widbrook Com (BDC), then 2 broods of 8 in total at Sunninghill Park on May 25th, which were all still surviving on the 11th Jun (DJB). On June 12th 2 groups of 5 ducklings and 13 ducklings were at Pickleherring Pond in Windsor Gt Pk (CDRH), whilst the following day at Eversley GPs 8 ducklings were seen (BMA). Also on June 13th Brimpton in West Berks had a three quarter grown single youngster, still with its mother, on the River Enborne. Then on June 17th Lea Farm had 6 ducklings (BTB) with at least 2 until at least July 8th (BTB). On July 1st, 3 ducklings were seen at Romney Lock (WAS), as were a maximum of 6 fledged immatures at Burnthouse Lane from the end of July until August

18th (KEM; RCr), these 6 probably part of the Searle's Farm Lane suspected broods. Finally on Aug 27th, 2 fledged juveniles were at Rapley Lake (JEW).

## EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*

*Locally common winter visitor and rare summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	59	62	46	–	–	–	–	–	–	21	34	110
Burghfield GPs	86	72	37	–	–	–	–	–	183	471	397	202
Dinton Pastures CP	63	50	10	–	–	–	–	1	19	6	6	25
Lower Farm GP/Trout Lake	80	74	37	9	–	–	–	–	20	45	41	69
Eversley GPs	550	219	108	10	1	–	–	–	65	173	200	100
Moatlands GPs	–	–	30	2	–	–	1	1	12	–	81	90
Pingewood GPs	–	50	93	2	2	–	–	–	16	36	–	–
Summerleaze GP	1	50	18	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	–	–
Thatcham Discovery C. /GP/ Marsh	180	152	28	4	–	–	–	–	15	18	17	–
Theale GPs	219	221	90	10	1	–	–	–	40	–	175	18

Counts up to 50 came from at least a further 21 sites, with higher counts recorded of 118 at Wigmore Lane Feb 24th (RCr); 50 Pingewood, Burnthouse Lane Feb 26th with 80 there Mar 21st (RJB); 260 Allanbay Park Mar 13th (BDC); 165 Elephant Lake, Wigmore Lane Nov 4th (WeBS) and 87 Lea Farm GP Dec 29th (FJC). Once again, the first winter period saw Eversley GPs holding more birds than elsewhere, overall though the recorded numbers were up on 2005. As usual, the majority departed in March, leaving only 42 birds recorded at 9 sites. May saw 4 birds remaining at 3 sites, the last, a drake at Eversley GPs on 21st (BMA). No further records were received until the beginning of the second winter period, when 3 birds were at Great Meadow Pond Jul 9th (DJB). Recorded numbers were lower when compared to the same period last year.

## GADWALL *Anas strepera*

*Common winter visitor now breeding in several locations (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	54	92	112
Bray GPs	15	14	8	6	4	1	1	–	17	23	23	16
Burghfield GPs	149	136	29	–	–	–	–	–	59	288	233	261
Dinton Pastures CP	239	88	48	8	4	3	1	29	27	12	15	86
Dorney Wetlands	20	65	19	10	15	15	7	8	38	50	71	56
Eversley GPs	115	124	2	–	2	16	3	14	18	20	–	70
Great Meadow Pond	32	10	15	10	8	17	36	50	36	90	100	21
Lower Farm GP	65	156	72	52	15	7	26	57	59	53	28	52

Moatlands GPs	–	–	–	5	2	–	–	–	46	96	156	186
Thatcham GPs	118	136	163	37	10	4	6	14	42	47	9	27
Theale GPs	151	224	168	–	2	–	–	–	52	–	175	357
Wraysbury GPs	40	13	1	10	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Counts of up to 40 came from a further 36 sites with higher counts of 52 Orlitts Lake North Jan 23rd (DR); 52 Lower Farm Trout Lake Dec 23rd (IW; JL) and 150 Elephant Lake, Wigmore Lane Dec 17th (WeBS). **Breeding:** 10 pairs were recorded having bred across the County. Overall, breeding Gadwall remains on the increase, albeit very gradually. In Berkshire, Gadwall is on Category B of the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel list.

## COMMON TEAL *Anas crecca*

*Common winter visitor and rare summer visitor (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	50	36	18	12	2	1	1	2	14	27	29	21
Dinton Pastures CP	68	91	50	20	2	2	1	17	48	24	40	54
Dorney Wetlands	67	35	47	20	2	1	–	8	55	76	50	55
Eversley GPs	56	50	6	5	–	2	–	13	15	30	–	50
Great Meadow Pond	120	88	21	3	–	–	1	6	4	37	20	4
Lower Farm GP	110	50	18	8	3	2	2	11	53	51	65	46
Padworth Lane GP	30	–	30	12	2	2	5	8	12	–	17	–
Pingewood GPs	–	26	76	17	2	–	1	4	38	–	–	–
Thatcham GPs	92	29	56	3	–	–	–	2	4	15	15	10
Theale GPs	20	40	3	–	–	–	–	–	5	2	–	10
Wraysbury GPs	46	90	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	76	77

Up to 30 were recorded from a further 27 sites with higher counts of 31 Kingsmead GP Jan 15th (WeBS); 51 at Bracknell STW Mar 10th (MK), 35 at Slough SF Oct 19th (KPD) and finally Jubilee River with 55 Dec 30th (BDC). **First winter:** both the highest counts in this period were recorded during January – 120 at Great Meadow Pond (DJB), and 110 at Lower Farm GP (RJB). **Summer:** summering birds were on the increase, Bray GPs held a possible pair on May 1st (MFW) and then another/or the same drake occasionally from late June until mid July (DJB; CDRH et al). Slough SF had a pair May 17th (CDRH). Lavell's Lake had an apparent pair on May 1st (AR), followed by 2 birds Jun 29th (MFW; BTB), and singles twice in July (BTB; FJC). Maybe the single at Dinton Pastures CP Jul 22nd (DBow) was one of those birds. Yet another potential pair was at Eversley GPs (Colebrook) Jun 21st (BMA). A drake was at Jubilee River, Dorney W Jun 16th (KPD), with a pair there Jul 5th and at adjacent Slough SF Jul 6th (CDRH). Aug heralded arrivals for the Second Winter Period, 2 birds at Lavells Lake Aug 6th (MFW) built up during the month to a maximum of 17 on Aug 20th (FJC).

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos**Common and widespread resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	165	96	86	7	20	40	20	23	100	15	45	90
Dorney Wetlands inc Jubilee River	96	204	136	49	19	33	136	20	204	92	–	173
Lower Farm GP	33	9	–	13	17	14	30	77	120	62	30	45
R. Thames, Maidenhead	–	–	–	–	61	55	–	97	–	–	50	–
Thatcham GPs	180	140	106	97	93	156	141	131	117	112	156	150
Theale GPs	78	71	41	–	–	1	–	–	87	–	47	58
Wraysbury GPs	103	98	74	33	10	16	–	–	47	82	92	107

Counts of up to 100 were received from a further 60 sites, with higher counts of 152 Windsor Esplanade Jan 13th (DF) and 200 approx. on Feb 17th (DF); 350 R. Thames, Henley-on-Thames Sep 4th (RCM); 104 R.Thames, Lower Culham, Sept 12th (GV); 107 flew south east over Englefield Oct 4th (RCr). **Breeding:** as often with this species, only an unrepresentative 47 broods were noted.

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta**Scarce winter visitor*

**First winter:** the imm male and female from 2005, were at Eversley GPs Jan 1st (BMA) then until Jan 20th (on Jan 8th an additional male was reported (MDL)). On Jan 20th this small group became 6 (2m and 4 female) (DJB) growing to a max of 10 birds on Jan 31st (BMA). Although numbers fluctuated, they stayed until Feb 4th (MDL); thereafter a single male remained until Mar 18th (BMA). A female was found at Dinton Pastures CP Jan 12th (FJC), then 19th (AR) and finally on 30th (PBT), but on Feb 2nd, 7 were seen there (RBor). Apr 10th at Dinton Pastures CP another female was located (MFW) and present until Apr 23rd (PBT) – unfortunately it failed the ‘bread test’ hence was deemed an escape. On Jan 22nd Bray GPs had a visit by a drake (PNe) and Twyford GPs a visit by a female (MFW). At Wraysbury GPs there were 2 drakes on Jan 10th and a pair on Jan 13th (CDRH). In early February, a pair graced Woolhampton GPs for one day (MFW), and then, on 8th, a drake visited the West Marsh at Jubilee River (LSt). Lea Farm enjoyed Pintail visits also, with 2 females on Feb 11th (FJC; MFW) regularly until Mar 22nd, when only 1 was recorded until its departure on Apr 26th (MFW). At Burghfield Mill GP, a drake on Feb 11th (PBT) was seen again on 15th (RJB), and another on Mar 12th (PBT) at Theale Main. Interestingly, on Mar 3rd, 3 drakes were over both Hosehill Lake LNR (BU) and Theale Main (RJB). Pingewood GPs started its own sequence with a drake on Middle Pit Mar 12th (PBT), then 2 drakes Mar 13th (KEM) until Mar 23rd (NR; RCr), leaving a single drake until Mar 25th (KEM; LJF; MJF). A drake flew east at Charvil Meadows on Mar 16th (CDRH) and on 17th, 2 pairs arrived at Lower Farm, again for just one day (RF). A further record in an unexpected location, was a single bird which overflowed Gorrick Wood Plantation Apr 6th (FJC). **Second winter:** records commenced Sept 16th at Lower Farm GP with a female (MFW; SAG; AEDH). An eclipse male visited Great Meadow Pond on Sept 17th (DJB) and stayed until at least Oct 1st (DJB). Two females were at Padworth Lane GP on Sept 23rd



(KEM; MFW) until at least Oct 1st (TGB), then one remained until at least Oct 27th (RJB). At Searle's Farm Lane GP, a single was recorded on the WeBS October Count; it or another female remained until Oct 28th (KEM). November produced no records. December: 3 birds seen at Searle's Farm Lane GP on Dec 9th (including a drake) (JA) were followed by a single record by WeBS Dec 17th. At Grove Lake, Eversley GPs a pair were noted on Dec 6th (SDB; BMA). 2 pairs arrived at Lower Farm GP Dec 13th (GJS; JCh), then a female on Dec 29th (NC). Two drakes were located at Charvil (1 adult; 1 f/w) on Dec 25th (CDRH) and then, on 27th, another two drakes (again an adult and a f/w) were located at Bearwood Lake (DJB).

## **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

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

The first sighting was May 2nd at Midgham GP, a pair, (KS), remained until May 7th (MFW; KEM). In the interim, a male was seen at Lower Farm GP on May 4th (BJH/CDRH; RA), with 2 there on May 10th (CWi), showing possible interaction between these sites. QMR held a drake on May 15th (CDRH), another drake was at Lower Farm GP May 20th (George McKenzie; RAH/SAG). A drake was at East Marsh, Dorney W on May 21st (CRe), and another Jun 6th (KPD). Bray GPs had a moulting drake feeding with Teal (DJB; CDRH) 26th and 27th Jun, rapidly followed by another moulting drake on 29th at Dinton Pastures CP (BTB; MFW). Eversley GPs turned up an eclipse pair on the new workings (MDL) Jul 21st, whilst 1 was relocated (or a new bird?) on the scrape at Colebrook Lake Jul 31st (BMA) and Aug 1st (BMA; MDL; MNC). Pingewood GP had an eclipse drake on July 22nd (RCr; KS; BSt) until 27th (KEM; PBT). On a small pond by Dukes Ride in Windsor Gt Pk, another drake was located on Jul 23rd (SA). On Aug 17th, a juv was located at Lower Farm GP (KEM). At Padworth Lane GP in August, a pair on 17th and 18th (KEM) with just a single on 19th (MFW; TGB), then 2, an eclipse male and a juvenile, present on 21st (RJB; ZK) with the juvenile still there on the 29th (KEM). An adult female was at Bray GPs Sep 29th (CDRH). A female/f/w was seen in flight at Great Meadow Pond on Sept 17th (DJB), whilst the last record was a single Oct 7th at Hosehill Lake (JW).

## **SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

*Locally common winter visitor and rare summer visitor (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	40	32	45	2	–	–	1	–	6	40	17	13
Burghfield GPs	56	32	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	57	37	54
Dinton Pastures CP	16	27	14	8	–	–	3	5	14	40	11	8
Dorney Wetlands	15	15	2	2	–	2	1	11	45	51	7	–
Eversley GPs	58	43	117	5	2	7	–	–	5	22	–	23
Great Meadow Pond	13	–	5	5	1	2	–	12	75	86	22	10
Lower Farm GP	78	116	108	23	2	1	1	7	15	27	44	60
Moatlands GPs	14	116	129	12	–	–	2	10	40	–	–	4
Thatcham GPs	68	60	153	13	2	–	–	8	24	18	19	27
Theale GPs	81	101	115	15	–	–	–	–	87	–	89	57
Whiteknights Lake/Park	90	40	31	–	–	–	–	–	1	14	15	18
Wraysbury GPs	253	91	40	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	20

Counts of up to 35 were received from a further 28 sites, with higher counts of 45 University of Reading Jan 25th (RRi) and 40 Pingewood, Burnthouse Lane Mar 15th (RJB). The highest recorded counts for the first winter period were 253 at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury on Jan 22nd (CDRH) and 153 in the Thatcham Area Mar 2nd (BJW) and that of 89 in the second winter period, at Theale GPs (WeBS November) were down on 2005. Summering: Birds in May and June were quite numerous with a total of 13 birds in May at 8 sites, and 17 birds in June at 6 sites (including 3 different sites from May).

## **RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina*

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

The first winter period began with 5, including 4 drakes, at Searle's Farm Lane on Jan 1st (JA; RCr), then single drakes 2nd and 5th (RJB; KEM). Bray GPs, on Jan 15th held a single drake (WAS; BDC; KPD). A drake was at Dinton Pastures CP (Sandford Lake) Jan 11th (ASl) whilst 2 were noted Jan 12th (PNo). On Jan 21st, a single drake was again at Sandford Lake (FJC; MFW) and a f/w drake was at Horton GPs Jan 27th (CDRH). Both a male and female were at Bottom Lane Jan 7th (RJB) until Jan 21st, but then only the drake (occasionally visiting Hosehill LNR and Theale Main Pit) until 21st Feb (PMC). On Feb 11th, 5 were seen again, at Burghfield GPs (JA), but this time 3 drakes and two females. For the remainder of Feb, all March and April a drake was seen on 6 occasions in the vicinity (MO). A leucistic female, or two, seemed to be active during Jan, Feb and March, starting with Jan 26th at Sandhurst GPs (RJG) a first record, again there on Feb 2nd and 4th, but also on the 4th, it, or another, at Wraysbury Village Pit (CDRH); again at Horseshoe Lake, Eversley, on Feb 11th (MDL; BMA), and the 17th (MDL; DJB), whilst Sandhurst GPs was 'home' on Feb 28th (RJG), and Mar 7th (RJG). Whilst it, or the other one, had visited Grove Lake, Eversley GPs Mar 4th (RJG), and Wraysbury Village Pit Mar 11th (CDRH). Another sighting at Sandhurst Mar 15th (RJG) really does start to confirm two leucistic females were involved. Finally, one sighted between April 2nd and 19th at Wraysbury Village Pit (CDRH). On Feb 11th a f/w drake at Wraysbury Village Pit (CDRH) was seen regularly until Feb 24th (MO), including two visits to Horton GPs (CDRH). There were a few one day sightings – a drake at Dorney W on Jan 14th (WAS): was this the Bray GPs bird of the following day? There was also a drake from Jan 12th to 14th at Wraysbury GPs (PNe; RBor; JHey) – was this the same bird too? A drake was at Whistley Green, Twyford 19th Jan (RR). Thatcham GPs saw single birds in WeBS counts for Feb and March, and in the east, a new pair Mar 11th at Horton GPs (CDRH). In the west, the Trout Lakes and Lower Farm GP had a drake located Mar 7th (RAH), which stayed until Mar 23rd (SAb). Burghfield GPs with a single drake Jun 11th and 17th (JA) ended the first winter period. The second winter period began at Bray GPs on 23rd Oct (DJB) with a female, which was recorded until Nov 4th (WAS). The WeBS count for Nov recorded a single at Wraysbury GPs, followed by 2 drakes Dec 13th at Wraysbury GPs (CL). Finally, 4 (2m and 2 fem) were at Moatlands Main Pit Dec 16th (MFW; KEM).

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	302	206	103	8	–	1	1	36	46	63	65	73
Burghfield GPs	107	85	38	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	23	56
Dinton Pastures CP	40	103	25	1	–	1	1	–	1	–	7	29
Eversley GPs	10	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	18	52	30
Great Meadow Pond	46	29	22	1	–	7	86	66	96	83	50	18
Horton GPs	113	32	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	14	–
Moatlands GPs	135	110	262	1	1	1	2	6	44	14	–	57
Summerleaze GP	251	18	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	53	37	10
Thatcham GPs	79	64	65	3	1	1	1	1	5	8	32	42
Wraysbury GPs	412	135	60	1	–	2	–	–	–	14	90	120

Counts up to 30 were received from a further 35 sites with higher counts of 46 (33m 13f) Aldermaston Jan 20th (DRG); 32 Woolhampton, Feb 14th (BJW) and 52 Sept 23rd at Elephant Lake, Wigmore Lane (WeBS). May and June records were few. A drake stayed from late April until Aug 28th at Pingewood GPs (ABT; MO), with another female from May 7th until at least the beginning of Aug at Thatcham GPs (MFW; SAG). May 13th provided a drake at Boulters Lake (KEM) and a female at Lower Farm GP (IW; SAG; MFW). A drake was present at Lower Farm GP on May 22nd (NC; MO) until Jun 7th. At Lower Fm, were 2 female June 10th and a single on 17th (SAG), and during July a few sightings of 1 or 2 drakes there (MO). May 23rd produced a single drake at Midgham GP (KEM). Jun 2nd a single was at Dorney W (JHa), followed by 5 drakes on 10th at Padworth Lane GP (KEM). On Jun 14th, at Hosehill Lake, 2 drakes (BU): another on 28th (KEM). Also Jun 14th, a juv was at Dorney W (DJB) and on 19th 1 at Bray GPs (BDC), Jun 20th a drake on Lea Farm GP (ADB), followed by it, or another drake, on 21st at Lavell's Lake (FJC). A pair was at Great Meadow Pond from the 18th Jun (DJB), with 68 there on July 5th (CDRH). At Horton Field GP 8 moulting drakes were present from Jun 26th to July 1st (CDRH), and on Jun 30th 2 eclipse drakes were at Wraysbury Village Pit (CDRH).

**RING-NECKED DUCK** *Aythya collaris*

*Very rare vagrant*

Two Ring-Necked Ducks in a year is very good, these two birds represented the seventh and eighth records for Berkshire. One in each winter period, the first, an adult drake, was found at Theale Main Pit Mar 24th (KEM) and remained in the area until Apr 1st, visiting Hosehill Lake at least once (MO). The second, a fem/imm at Grove Lake, Eversley GPs, Nov 19th had gone by the next morning (JMC et al), but was first seen on Nov 18th, just over the the county boundary, at Yateley GP in Hants.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula**Common throughout the year*

Once again, there were good numbers of Tufted Duck, the First Winter period having a highest count of 465 in Jan at Wraysbury GPs, and in the Second Winter 726 at QMR Sept 16th (WeBS). Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	50	–	19	14	–	–	–	–	–	12	24	36
Bray GPs	238	182	165	43	28	15	22	57	167	142	189	178
Burghfield GPs	255	179	239	–	–	–	–	–	94	84	285	269
Dinton Pastures CP	206	156	141	18	10	8	12	13	14	13	64	178
Dorney Wetlands	–	170	219	40	12	35	55	10	122	200	–	155
Eversley GPs	20	107	27	–	10	34	25	–	–	15	–	60
Moatlands GPs	–	–	100	45	–	–	–	–	67	–	–	386
Queen Mother Reservoir	5	37	14	–	–	–	–	86	726	314	3	20
Summerleaze GP	81	38	26	28	–	–	–	–	–	23	24	65
Thatcham GPs	58	56	41	38	23	9	12	14	12	59	68	73
Theale GPs	198	256	191	–	–	–	–	2	67	–	110	666
Wraysbury GPs	465	282	125	–	6	19	–	–	51	96	401	429

Up to 60 were recorded from a further 48 sites, with higher counts of 99 at Horton GPs, Jan 15th (WeBS); 60 Padworth Lane GP, Mar 2nd (RJB); 79 Woolhampton GPs max count Sep 29th (GEW); On the Jubilee River, Manor Farm to Eton Railway Bridge 62 on Jul 3rd (DJB) and 133 on Oct 25th (DJB); Elephant Lake, Wigmore Lane had 268 Dec 17th (WeBS).

**Breeding:** was confirmed at 14 sites, with 27 broods being noted; however due to predation, fledging success was, no doubt, a lot less than the 134 ducklings recorded.

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

At Wraysbury GPs a f/w drake, present from Jan 16th to 20th (CDRH), was presumed to be the same bird seen here Dec 2005. At Theale, a f/w drake was first reported at Moatlands Jan 7th (JA). Then a drake and female at Theale Main Pit Feb 11–12th (MFW; FJC), (this had initially been reported on the 10th as a possible drake Common Scoter). They remained on Theale Main until Feb 21st (RCr), relocated at Burghfield Mill (KEM) and Moatlands, being seen, both together and individually, until Mar 22nd (NR). In the second winter an adult female, was at Moatlands Pit Nov 4th (RJB), followed by another female (hybrid not eliminated), at Moatlands Dec 2nd (RRi), and at Burghfield Mill Pit 6th (RJB). So just five records during the year (and one of those may have been a hybrid).

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra**Scarce passage migrant / winter visitor*

An imm/fem in the south east corner of Theale Main Pit on Feb 3rd (ABT; KEM) was then seen continuously until Mar 3rd (KEM). Another (no sex or plumage details) was recorded during the February WeBS count on 11th, on R.Thames between Reading and Pangbourne. Finally, a drake was at Theale Main Pit on Sept 27th (KEM; RHS).

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula**Locally common winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	18	15	18	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	12
Dinton Pastures CP	36	39	33	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	9
Eversley GPs	6	7	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3
Moatlands GPs	13	20	18	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	13
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	12
Theale GPs	14	15	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	2
Wraysbury GPs	40	30	15	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	12	21

Up to 10 were recorded from a further 11 sites with higher counts of 25 Horton GPs Jan 15th (WeBS); 11 Hurst Green GP, Twyford, Feb 4th (MFW); 12 Pingewood GP (6 males, 6 redheads) Mar 15th (RJB).

**SMEW** *Mergus albellus**Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	6	11	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Twyford GPs	10	9	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	11	10	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4

Peak counts in the first winter period were 11(3m) at Wraysbury GPs on Jan 15th (MFW) & 11 (2 m) there on Jan 22nd (CDRH), then 11 (1 m) at Bray GP Feb 2nd (CDRH) and 11 (4 ad.m; 1 f/w m) again at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 5th (CDRH). Counts of up to 2 were received from a further 6 sites with higher counts of 3 (1 m) at Bottom Lane GP (JSH), occasionally visiting Hosehill Lake (BU) and finally moving to Elephant Lake, Wigmore Lane GPs on Mar 19th (MRWS). The last sighting was 5 at Twyford GP on Mar 23rd (CDJ). The first returning birds were 2 redheads at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 6th (MHu), with a later peak of 4 (3 m, 1 still in ecl.) there on Dec 17th (CDRH) & 27th (MHu).

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser**Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	14	22	16	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	13
Wraysbury GPs	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	15

Counts of up to 5 came from 18 more sites including a few in April and May. Padworth Lane GP had 3, including a drake Apr 8th (KEM), and then a pair on the R. Kennet on both May 2nd and 4th (KEM). At Brimpton GP, a male and female Apr 12th (GEW) and

then a female overflow May 13th (MFW). During the second winter period, singles were noted at Theale Main Nov 4th (RJB) and 26th (JA), Brimpton GP Nov 22nd (RHS), and Woolhampton GP (with an apparent damaged left wing) Nov 28th (KEM). The number of Goosander recorded was much less than in the previous two years.

## **RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

*Uncommon but increasing resident and winter visitor in 2006*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	2	4	7	5	8	3	1	2	4	1
Lower Farm GP	2	12	14	9	4	2	3	6	8	8	11	7
Thatcham GPs	2	3	14	10	3	1	1	4	8	8	7	6
Wraybury GPs	12	16	40	17	–	–	–	–	5	–	4	12

Counts of up to 5 were received from a further 10 sites.

## **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

*A locally common introduced resident with numbers inflated in autumn at certain sites for shooting*

There were 186 records, 150 of which were for sightings of 1–4 birds. The highest counts probably reflect birds reared and released for shooting, for example: 56 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Gt Pk Sep 3rd (DJB); 77 at Compton Nov 4th (DJB) and 89 at Compton Oct 7th (DJB). **Breeding:** a pair was seen at Sole Common Mar 23rd (JLe) and another at Combe Wood March 26th (JLe); a pair were mating at Cookham May 11th (BDC); there were 2 pairs at Great Meadow Pond May 14th (DJB) and a pair at Hurst July 10th (DJB); a juvenile was at Brimpton Gravel Pit Aug 8th (GEW) and a family group with 8–10 juvs was there on Sep 4th (GEW); a juvenile was at Pingewood GP Sep 9th (KEM).

## **GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

*Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)*

124 records came from 52 sites. The majority (76) were for counts of 1–2 birds. Most records were from the west of the county and regularly-counted sites. High counts were: 10 birds at Brightwalton Aug 11th and 19th and Dec 15th (GDS); 12 birds at Cow Down Jan 16th (KEM) and Dec 9th (RJB); 14 birds Oct 4th and 10th at Englefield (RCr); 15 birds at Bury Down Jan 23rd (PH), at Englefield Sept 24th (RCr), at Leckhampstead Oct 12th (JL) and at Sulham Oct 31st and Jan 24th (JLe); 16 birds at Englefield Aug 30th and Oct 1st (RCr); 17 birds at Compton Nov 4th (DJB) and 21 birds at Englefield Sept 30th (RCr). **Breeding:** On May 3rd a pair flew across the road at White Waltham (DJB) and there were 4 pairs at Compton Downs May 11th (DJB); on May 8th breeding calls were heard at Englefield (RCr) and May 13th a bird was calling at night at Aldworth (MFW); another was calling at Westley Mill May 28th (MSFW); a leucistic male and a normal plumaged female were paired at Wellbottom Down on June 6th (CDRH); the same day 1 was calling at Winterbourne (MJT); June 18th a pair were ‘alarming’ in a wheat crop at Brightwalton (GDS). The first juveniles were reported July 18th at Brightwalton where a pair had at least 2 chicks (GDS); Aug 6th 2 juveniles were at Sulham (JLe); a pair with 8 chicks was seen in a garden at Brightwalton Aug 11th and 19th and returned there as a family group Dec 15th,

representing an excellent survival rate (GDS); at Englefield Sept 30th, there were 2 pairs with broods of 5 and 12 (RCr).

## **QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

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

This was a good year with at least 11 calling males, a probable migrant in Sept and a presumed family group of 7 in Oct. First of the year was calling vigorously at Compton Downs May 4th (CDRH). The next was May 30th singing from the Berkshire side of Seven Barrows (RJB). On May 31st and June 1st a bird was singing near Knowl Hill (CRc); what was assumed to be the same bird was still there June 10th (DJB). On June 16th 2 birds were heard at Roden Downs (MJT). On Lambourn Downs a bird was singing and seen in flight on June 24th (MFW) and again June 25th (KEM); 2 were calling from barley fields, at a different location on Lambourn Downs, June 29th (MJD); at least 1 calling at another location July 4th (CDRH); 1 on July 29th may have been one of the earlier two (PG). On July 22nd 3 birds were calling from wheat at Wellbottom Down (GDS). At Crookham Common a presumed migrant bird was flushed on Sept 16th (NC per AEDH). The last record was in Oct near Lowbury Hill when an exceptional bevy of 7 were flushed from a grassy area on 7th (DJB) and seen again on 8th (CDRH); they were presumed to be a family party and, as such, evidence of successful local breeding.

## **COMMON PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

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

There were 195 records from 31 locations, with many of the records from only a few sites. Two-thirds of the records (136) were for 1–2 birds. The highest counts were of birds released for shooting, for example 51 birds on July 30th and 80 birds on August 16th at Windsor Gt Pk (DJB). Birds were recorded in central Reading: a pair was present at Whiteknights Lake on March 31st and April 7th (PG). **Breeding:** there is a feral breeding population, the first breeding record of the year being a female with 3 young at Windsor Gt Pk on June 11th (DJB); another female with 3 young was at Cabbage Hill July 5th (DJB); a pair with 1 juvenile was seen at Dinton Pastures July 7th (LBM); the pair at Whiteknights Lake bred successfully with the female and 6 chicks present there July 16th (PG), and on July 17th a female with 6 fledglings was at Brimpton (GEW).

## **GOLDEN PHEASANT\*** *Chrysolophus pictus*

*Rare and localised introduced resident*

A male was seen April 28th on Streatley GC (IDP); another sighting, nearby at Thurle Down April 28th (BTB), may have been the same bird. On May 14th there was a male at Wraybury (per CDRH) and there was a pair at the Harris Garden, Whiteknights Lake, Reading, in mid August (per PG).

## **RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata*

*Rare winter visitor*

Following a gap since 2003, there was an adult at QMR Dec 23rd –26th (CDRH).

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer**Rare winter visitor / passage migrant*

No reports in the first winter then records of what were probably 4 birds in the second winter. A juvenile at QMR from Dec 1st (CDRH) was joined by a second juvenile from 7th (CDRH) then 1 or both were reported on 5 further dates until the end of the month, but at least 1 stayed on into January 2007. A third bird (possibly an adult) was seen overhead Dec 4th, but did not land on the reservoir (CDRH). At Theale GPs there was a juvenile bird Dec 6th (RJB) and Dec 7th (TABR). There were reports of 5 birds in Surrey during the same period.

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis**Common resident and apparent passage migrant*

595 records from 50 sites: 11 in the west, 15 in mid-Berks and 24 in the east. There were 10 counts of 20 birds or more. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	6	5	5
Eversley GPs	2	–	1	2	1	4	1	–	–	–	2	1
Horton GPs	17	8	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Jubilee River	8	24	20	8	1	–	4	18	15	9	30	23
Padworth Lane GP	5	–	5	2	–	–	–	22	23	16	22	19
Rapley Lake	–	–	–	4	11	12	7	2	–	–	–	–
Thatcham Marsh & GPs	4	3	7	9	8	6	15	17	14	8	4	4
Theale GPs	2	2	11	2	2	–	–	–	2	17	2	7
Woolhampton GPs	–	1	3	2	4	1	–	10	10	2	–	2
Wraysbury GPs	40	23	5	1	–	–	–	–	11	2	1	7

Distribution of this species changes from year to year. In some years there are high numbers at sites that usually hold only few birds, but the three sites at which highest counts were reported in 2006, i.e. Jubilee River, Padworth Lane GP and Thatcham Marsh are consistently well populated, but during different seasons. Jubilee River and Padworth Lane usually hold more birds in winter, while the number at Thatcham usually peaks in late summer, which was the case in 2005. Looking back over the distribution during the first half of this decade, these changes appear to be just annual fluctuations, and the population seems to be stable. **Breeding:** activities were seen at 15 sites and confirmed at 10 sites by the presence of unfledged young.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus**Common resident and winter visitor*

There were many records (over 750) from 64 sites, 10 in the west and 27 each in mid and East Berks. There were 11 counts of 50+ (5 of these were WeBS counts at Wraysbury), the highest being 125 at Theale GPs on Dec 1st (WeBS) with 50+ there Feb 13th (JHa) and again Dec 17th (RJB), and at Wraysbury GPs Jan 1st there were 102 (WeBS). **Breeding:** breeding activity was seen at 41 locations and confirmed at 40 of these by sightings of incubating birds or, more usually, by the presence of fledglings.



Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	44	45	29	12	8	8	7	3	9	19	39	42
Burghfield GPs	47	42	43	26	–	–	–	–	41	27	29	31
Great Meadow Pond	1	2	4	3	13	13	20	22	17	14	3	–
Horton GPs	37	29	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–
Kingsmead GP	26	17	11	–	–	–	–	–	4	6	–	–
Moatlands GPs	12	22	4	13	–	–	–	20	23	16	13	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	3	28	28	–	–	–	–	–	52	62	5	12
Summerleaze GP	5	4	5	3	–	–	7	–	–	16	4	3
Lower Farm GP and Trout Lake	12	3	2	3	5	2	5	4	7	3	3	1
Thatcham Marsh & GPs	21	5	16	7	11	9	8	12	11	13	15	17
Theale GPs	13	50	14	–	16	–	–	12	38	–	38	125
Twyford GPs	4	–	–	–	–	4	21	8	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	6	–	–	33	15	–	17	–
Wraybury GPs	106	73	74	18	4	29	–	–	18	43	74	102

## SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

There was one adult, which was seen by many observers, at or near Pingewood GPs from Feb 11th (PBT) to Mar 1st. After none in 2005, it appears that this species is reaching Berkshire less frequently than it did in the 1990s.

## BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant*

This year, with 4 birds, was a poor year compared to the preceding decade (1995 to 2004), when there were 8 birds or more in 7 of those 10 years. The first report was of a juvenile at Lower Farm GP on Aug 12th (CW*i*; MFW) then another juvenile at QMR on Oct 11th (CDRH) followed by an adult in winter plumage at Burghfield GPs Oct 20th (BU) and Oct 22nd (JA) and finally a first-winter bird at Horton Fields GP from Nov 16th to Dec 17th (CDRH et al).

## MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

*Very rare vagrant*

The first record since 2002: a bird found grounded in Kings Road, Reading on Sep 19th was photographed by a non-birder and was identified (by RAd) as this species. The bird, which appears un-damaged in the picture, was taken to Beale Park for attention, but survived for only 2 days. It is not clear why this bird had arrived in the area as the weather had been calm and settled, but another one was reported in Warwickshire on the same day, which may not be a coincidence.

**LEACH'S PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa**Rare vagrant*

QMR again produced a record of this species when one was viewed for just under 1 hour on Dec 7th (RDr).

**Recorders Comment:** The finder contacted Ken Purdey (Surrey) and he provided the following sequence of single sightings from the West London Reservoirs: QMR – no apparent news after 10.30am; Staines Res – 10.40–11.40am; Walton Res – 12.00–12.45pm; Queen Mary Res – 1.30pm onwards. This is suggestive of a single mobile individual, which finally settled at Queen Mary Res (the largest of the West London Reservoirs).

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo**Common winter visitor and now summer visitor*

There were over 600 records from 48 wetland or riverside areas spread all over the county. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	31	28	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	117	18
Burghfield GPs	59	28	32	–	–	–	–	–	20	19	35	47
Dinton Pastures CP	15	16	7	8	4	8	5	4	18	24	44	16
Eversley GPs	55	5	2	–	–	–	3	–	–	8	–	20
Horton & Kingsmead GPs	41	13	16	–	–	–	–	–	53	12	17	6
Queen Mother Reservoir	8	18	8	–	–	–	–	490	500	120	6	11
Summerleaze GP	3	9	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	27	2	4
Thatcham area (including Lower Farm)	34	39	30	11	3	2	7	13	11	14	29	28
Theale GPs	14	20	4	–	–	–	–	–	12	–	20	33
Twyford GPs	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	30	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	156	100	55	7	–	1	–	–	76	406	533	289

Counts of up to 17 were received from a further 45 sites with higher counts of 30+ at Aldermaston GP, Mar 24th (JPM); 23 flew east over Eton Wick, Oct 16th (DJB).

**Breeding:** on Apr 25th at a mid-Berks site, 8 birds were building nests (NC) and at another site, also in mid-Berks, on Mar 30th about 30 birds were breeding (JPM) but we do not know if they were successful. The low numbers recorded in mid and late summer suggest that breeding success is low.

**BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris**Scarce but increasing winter visitor*

Birds were present in four areas during the year. **First winter:** at Hosehill Lake LNR, a single bird was reported on 7 occasions between Jan 6th and Mar 27th (BU; RCr; PBT). At Burghfield Mill a single bird was seen Jan 29th and Mar 19th (BU). At Dinton Pastures CP up to 5 birds were present from the beginning of the year until Apr 1st (MO). Two were seen regularly from Tern hide, Lavell's Lake and up to 3 in the reedbed beside White Swan Lake, but plumage differences separated 5 different individuals. At Wraysbury GPs, one flew into the reeds at the 'Green Man' pit Feb 17th (CDRH). **Second winter:** singles

were reported at Hosehill Lake Nov 30th (BU) and Dec 12th (RCr) and at Wraysbury GPs (Heron Lake) Nov 1st and 19th (WeBS). At Dinton Pastures CP a single was present from Oct 13th until the end of the year (MO), almost always seen at Lavell's Lake.

## LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

*Uncommon resident which may be attempting to breed (Amber listed)*

The status of this species has changed rapidly since 1997 (when there was just a single record, only the seventh for Berkshire).

The table below summarises the year's records:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of sites	10	13	14	10	4	3	5	6	4	2	3	13
No of birds	18	18	22	12	5	4	8	9	5	3	5	19

There were 220 records from 48 locations across the county. Numbers peaked during the winter (Jan – Mar, Dec) when there were up to 22 recorded. The majority of records were of singles with 43 records of 2 and counts up to 7 were seen at possible breeding sites. Non-breeding high counts: 4 were near the R. Lambourn Jan 1st (ABT; AJP), 3 were at Burghfield GPs Jan 20th (KEM), 3 overflowed Dinton Pastures CP heading for Twyford Jul 15th (RR); 3 were at Eversley GPs Feb 13th and Dec 30th (BMA) and 3 were ringed at Bagnor Dec 31st (IW; JL). **Breeding:** an adult in breeding plumage was seen in mid-Berks Apr 28th (MJT, DJB), 3 birds roosted at a heronry in the east from Apr 24th until the end of May but did not display clear signs of breeding (CDRH) and 7 were present at a heronry in the west Mar 19th (SAG).

## GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

*Locally common resident and winter visitor in small numbers*

Common at most 'wet' sites throughout the county: counts up to 10 came from 66 sites, with higher counts of up to 13 at Great Meadow Pond in late July (DJB), up to 12 at sites in the Thatcham area in late Aug (SAG; RRK), 16 at QMR on Sep 15th (WeBS) and 12 at Kingsmead GP on Dec 2nd (WeBS). There were some high WeBS counts from Wraysbury, max of 50 in Nov. On Aug 22nd at Eversley GPs a bird was observed swallowing a foot-long pike! (BMA)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	15	21	118	–	–	–	–	–	11	7	5	10
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	–	–	–	–	13	10	11	8	7	4
Lower Farm GP	4	–	1	1	3	4	6	12	12	8	8	5
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	15	8	2	3
Theale GPs	3	2	8	2	–	–	–	–	6	–	9	12
Wraysbury GPs	43	43	96	5	–	4	–	–	30	42	50	64

Breeding occurred on at least 7 sites. At Burghfield GPs there were up to 118 birds and at least 29 nests from which 60+ young fledged.

**HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*

Rare summer migrant

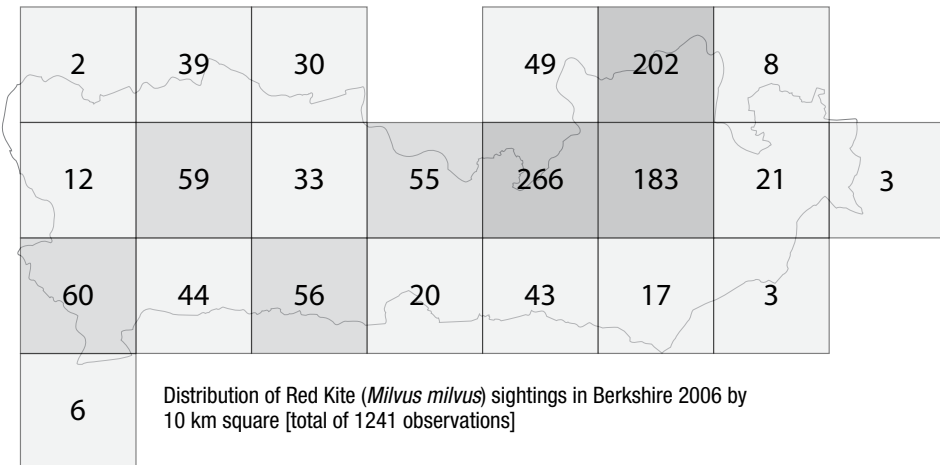
There were 2 records: a spring sighting of one flying west at Caversham Heights on May 1st (TGB), then an autumn record of a juvenile on Sept 15th, which came in at 150ft from the NE over Moatlands GP, circled, then continued south (KEM).

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

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

This is now a common bird in Berkshire, with 1241 records from 273 locations. It is well-distributed across the county, seen frequently in urban areas and suburban gardens as well as rural locations. For example a bird was in Friar Street, Reading Jan 26th (MJS), and another was stooping for food in a back garden in Maidenhead Jan 1st (DF). The distribution of records is shown by 10km square below:

This shows that the highest numbers of records came from the urban areas of Reading, Bracknell and Maidenhead. Most sightings were of 1 or 2, with two-thirds of the records being of a single bird. The highest counts of 19 + were from the Woolley Down roost, with maximum monthly counts of 55 Oct 3rd (GDS), 74 Nov 11th (GDS) and 56 Dec 15th (GDS). **Breeding:** A pair was present in the West Woodhay area Apr-July, fledging 4 young (RGS); birds were reported carrying nest material near Remenham Mar 3rd (DJB), at Crowthorne Apr 1st (MWo) and at Sunninghill May 7th (DJB). A juvenile with 2 adults was reported Jun 21st in the Cookham area (BDC); a pair and a juvenile with 4 other adults (one with yellow wing tag) were at Aston Jul 23rd (DJB); a juvenile with 3 adults was near Winter Hill Aug 5th (DJB); 7 including 2 juveniles were around Aston Sept 1st (DJB). In addition, territorial behaviour/display was noted: the first occasion was at Cow Down Jan 27th with 2 birds sparring (SAG); 3 displaying over a garden at Emmer Green Feb 11th (HRN); 2 displaying at Caversham Feb 21st (RDr); 2 at Lavell's Lake Mar 1st (FJC); 2 in courtship display and talon grappling at Shottesbrooke Farm Mar 13th (DJB); 2 displaying at Curridge Mar 20th (IW); a pair in display flight Apr 5th at Wokingham STW (DJB) and a pair near Yattendon Apr 25th (MJT). Several wing-tagged birds were reported: one at Cold Harbour Jan 10th with yellow tags on both wings (PBT); a bird with a yellow wing tag Feb 17th at



Westbrook (MSt); 5 birds including one with orange tag on right wing May 28th at Twyford (SPA); 2 birds, one with white left and red right tags, at Jealott's Hill Sept 13th (PJC). The Red Kites & Buzzards in Berkshire 2006 report (Chris Robinson Feb. 2007) estimated that there were a minimum of 51 pairs of Red Kites breeding or attempting to breed in Berkshire during 2006 and commented "A remarkable transformation in less than fifteen years!" **Feeding behaviour:** birds were following a plough (with gulls) Jul 8th at Englefield (RCr) and 19 followed a plough at Cold Harbour Jul 30th (DJB); 6 feeding on a field being mown Jul 3rd at Binfield (RJB); scavenging scraps from gardens Jul 9th at Woodlands Park (DJB).

## **MARSH HARRIER**     *Circus aeruginosus*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)*

There were 7 records. **Spring:** the year began with a male bird at QMR Apr 4th which circled and continued north (CDRH); May 2nd a female was seen flying west at Main Pit Theale (FJC); May 7th a male and female at Thatcham circled then drifted slowly north east (MFW). **Autumn:** a juvenile was at Great Meadow Pond Jul 30th (DJB); an imm female at Lower Farm Aug 5th (IW; JL); a juvenile flew south-west at QMR Aug 22nd (CDRH); the last sighting was a juvenile flying south, low, mobbed by a Rook, at Lowbury Hill Sept 24th (TGB).

## **HEN HARRIER**     *Circus cyaneus*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule 1)*

There were 2 records: an unusual spring record of an adult male flying NW over Windsor Gt Pk on May 29th (CDRH), and a ringtail along the Ridgeway at West Ilsley Oct 8th (PBT).

## **MONTAGU'S HARRIER**     *Circus pygargus*

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

There were 9 records. The first sighting was on Apr 21st in West Berkshire (G Parry); subsequent records were from the usual summering area on the Berks/Oxon borders between Apr 28th and Jul 22nd. These involved 2 birds on April 28th (BTB), a male on April 29th (MFW), a female on May 4th (KEM), a male watched for 20 minutes on May 11th (ABT), 1 (possibly 2) adult males on May 16th (RJB), an adult male on May 30th (RJB), an adult male on July 4th (CDRH), and a male flying north quartering the ground on July 22nd (GDS). On Jun 24th a female was seen over NE Reading (ABT).

## **GOSHAWK**     *Accipiter gentilis*

*Rare visitor*

Another year with no accepted wild records (note that a full description is required for this much mis-identified species); however, a presumed escapee was seen at Theale (see Escapes & Hybrids).

## **SPARROWHAWK**     *Accipiter nisus*

*Common and widespread resident*

The Sparrowhawk was well-recorded throughout the county with 608 records from 210 locations. Although a lot of the records were from the east of the county, this may reflect

the distribution of observers more than the distribution of birds. **Spring/Display:** the first reported display sighting was of a male and female at Moose Hill on Mar 23rd (PBT); then a male was seen displaying at Bowdown Woods on Mar 31st (NC); a territorial dispute between two pairs circling and chasing each other was observed at Moose Hill Apr 4th and again Apr 22nd (PBT); on Apr 7th two females and one male were circling high at Lavell's Lake (PBT). A male was displaying Apr 17th at Tilehurst (GJSu); a pair was displaying at Black Swan Lake (FJC) on May 9th and a pair was at Seven Barrows May 16th and 30th (RJB). **Breeding:** a pair with 2 young were at Hosehill Lake LNR Jul 16th (JA); a fledgling was calling at Farnborough Down Aug 12th (GDS); there was a juvenile at Whiteknights Lake Aug 13th (PG); one adult and two juveniles were at Purley-on-Thames Aug 19th (MJS); three, including two vocal juvs, were at Arborfield Mill Aug 1st (DJB); one adult female and two young were at Ashley Hill on Jul 28th (DJB); a pair and two young were at Burghfield Mill GP Aug 1st (JA); two pairs and young were at Southcote Jul 20th (JA); a pair and two young were at Hosehill on Jul 16th (JA); a male bird was carrying food at Woodlands Park on Jul 25th (DJB). Other Multiple Sightings: 4 birds were seen at Elcot Apr 27th (JD); 3 at Greenham Com Oct 7th (RRK); 3 at Snelsmore Com Apr 24th (RCu); 4 at South Ascot Apr 17th (DJB) and 3 at Thatcham Marsh Oct 8th (JL and IW). A good number of the records came from gardens; e.g. a female collided with a window and recovered after 15 minutes at Cookham May 10th (BDC). Quarry species are also recorded including Starling, Pied Wagtail, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Feral Pigeon, Collared Dove, Woodpigeon, Goldfinch, Dunnock and Blackbird.

## COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

*Common and widespread resident and passage migrant*

Buzzards were again well-recorded, with a total of 1102 reports. Most reports (897) were of 1 or 2 but there were a number of multiple sightings. The highest was 14 at Walbury Hill Jan 1st, where 10 birds were in the air together with Peregrine and Red Kite (ABT); 12 at Combe Gibbet on Mar 29th (KEM) and at Wokingham STW Apr 5th, comprising 3 local pairs challenging 6 birds passing through, displaying and talon-grappling (DJB). Display: other records of display were a pair locking talons at Combe Hill Jan 27th (TPo); a pair was at a previous nest site Mar 6th at Tickleback Row (BDC); 6 circling together and calling Mar 30th at Brimpton Mill (JPM); 3 displaying west of Lavell's Lake Apr 5th (FJC); on Apr 14th at Greenham Com a pair were displaying (GSte) and 3 were displaying and talon-grappling (NC); a pair in display flight May 12th at South Ascot (DJB); a bird constantly calling at last year's nest site at Ashley Hill Jun 1st (DJB); one 'power diving' and displaying Jun 22nd at Burringham Wood (BDC); 4 adults in territorial display at Ashley Hill Jul 1st (DJB). **Breeding:** the first evidence was of a pair mating in a tree at West Ridge Green on Mar 31st (ABT); another pair were mating at Cold Harbour Apr 10th (DJB); one was at a possible nest site at Jealott's Hill May 3rd (BDC); a juv on a pole at Curridge Jul 27th (IW); 3 newly-fledged juvs in a tree at Windsor Gt Pk Jul 29th (DJB); a fledgling near a nest site at Brightwalton Com Aug 2nd and 24th Aug (GDS); 2 fledglings calling and soaring Aug 4th at Coppington Down (GDS); 2 adults and a fledgling at Lambourn Woodlands Aug 4th, the adult 'chasing off a kite' (GDS); 2 fledglings calling at Boardhouse Plantation Aug 6th (GDS); a juv at Cold Harbour Aug 6th (DJB); 2 adults and 2 juveniles at Curridge Aug 21st (IW); a fledgling chased by crows and then by adult Buzzard at Woolley Down Aug 24th (GDS); 2 imm at Brimpton Aug 26th (GEW); 4 including an adult and a very noisy juv at Aston Sept 1st (DJB); an adult and 2 juvs at Moose Hill Sept 7th (PBT); an adult and a fledgling at Bowdown Woods Sept 16th (GDS); an adult with

at least one fledgling at South Fawley Sept 24th (GDS). The Red Kites & Buzzards in Berkshire 2006 report (Chris Robinson Feb. 2007) calculated that there were a minimum of 48 pairs of Buzzard which were breeding or attempting to breed in Berkshire during 2006, and commented “an amazing and welcome increase in such a short time”.

## **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)*

There were 15 records, probably involving 9 birds. **Spring:** the first was seen flying west over Gorrick Wood Apr 1st (DJS); on Apr 2nd 1 flew north over Combe Wood (RR); 1 flying west at Lower Farm Apr 8th was mobbed by gulls (IW; JL); another was heading north at Hosehill Lake Apr 12th (RJB); a bird over Englefield Apr 17th flew north east (RCr). May 12th there were 3 records, probably of the same bird, from Lower Farm, flying east (MJD; NC); Woolhampton (FJC; KEM; MGM); and Newbury (FJC). **Autumn:** the two records Sept 17th at Theale GPs (RHS) and Woolhampton (MJD) were presumably the same bird. The last, a very late sighting, was of a bird flying south at Eversley GPs Nov 5th (GR; JR).

## **KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

*A common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)*

349 records came from 113 sites the majority relating to single birds. **Breeding:** the first indication was a bird sitting next to a nestbox Feb 5th at Larks Hill (DJS); then Apr 16th 2 males were sparring over the water at Lower Farm (SAG); Apr 18th a pair were mating on power lines at Mount Skippets farm (MSFW); Apr 22nd a pair were in display flight at Cookham (BDC); Jun 1st a female was in an owl box at Eversley GPs (BMA) then Jun 21st a pair were hunting together at Jubilee R. (BDC). Juvenile birds were recorded from Blackpots Viaduct, Jun 27th (DJB); Wokingham STW Jul 17th (DJB); Swinley Forest Jul 19th (MSFW); Curridge Jul 27th and Aug 21st (IW); Windsor Gt Pk Jul 29th (DJB); Lower Farm Aug 26th (SAG) and Freeman’s Marsh Sept 3rd (SAG). **Feeding Behaviour:** on May 10th a female caught flying insects over a garden at Woose Hill (PBT); on May 3rd a male at Bushy Lees was seen to hide prey in a crevice in a dead tree (BDC). Interaction with other species: 2 males were mobbed by 2 Short-eared Owls at Cow Down Jan 2nd (SAG); a Kestrel robbed a Barn Owl of its prey Mar 5th at Woolley Down (GDS); a female/immature was mobbed by a Common Tern at Lower Farm GP Jul 30th (SAG).

## **RED FOOTED FALCON** *Falco vespertinus*

*Rare vagrant*

The only record, which was an unusually late one, was of a juvenile female (dubbed ‘buff and scruffy’) at Eversley GPs between Jul 8th (BMA) and 18th, when it was still feeding at 9pm (PBT). See account on *page 7*.

## **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

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

There were 23 records, from 13 locations, involving up to 14 birds: a probable 10 in the first winter period and 3 or 4 in the second. **First winter:** females were seen at Cow Down Jan 1st (ABT); and Cold Harbour Jan 2nd (MFW) and 13th (JEM) with a male Jan 7th (DJB) and Feb 3rd (CDRH); an adult male at Charvil on Feb 1st (CDRH), differed from the

Cold Harbour bird. At Bucklebury a male on Jan 12th was probably the same male nearby at Frilsham Jan 24th (both CDRH). A female/imm was at Compton Jan 24th (CDRH) and again Feb 13th, (ABT) and possibly the same bird at Lowbury Hill on Feb 4th (ABT); 1 was at Bury Down Feb 11th (CRE); then a female was at Theale Mar 4th (KEM); a very small, very brown immature male was at Pingewood Apr 18th (RJB); a male was at Thurlle Down Apr 29th (KEM); a female was on the downs May 13th (ACa). **Second Winter:** an adult male was at a regular location at Cold Harbour Oct 28th, seen again Nov 20th (DJB); a female was at Englefield Nov 9th (KEM); another at Cold Harbour Nov 22nd, where it tried and failed to take a Skylark (DJB); another chased a Skylark Dec 3rd at Bury Down (MJD) and possibly the same bird was seen Dec 19th (RRi); a male was at Amners Farm Dec 9th (RJB). The last record was a female/immature at Cold Harbour, probably the same bird seen there Nov 22nd (DJB).

## HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

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

350 records were received from 97 widespread locations. **Spring:** the first report was from Theale with a single bird Apr 17th (ACa) and widely thereafter. There were peak numbers mid-late May with 10 at Wraysbury May 7th (CDRH), 8 at Pingewood GPs May 9th (RHS) and 10 at Woolhampton May 25th (CDRH). **Breeding:** juvenile birds were reported from 10 locations between Aug 7th and Oct 2nd, although the later records are unlikely to denote breeding locations. **Autumn:** the largest gatherings recorded were 6 at Widbrook Com Sept 24th (BDC), 3 at Bearwood Lake Sept 20th (DJB), 3 at Moatlands Oct 1st (JA) and 3 at QMR Oct 2nd (CDRH). Last records were singles at Arthur Jacob NR Oct 7th (CDRH) and Greenham Com Oct 13th (NC).

## PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

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

The high mobility of this species makes it hard to assess the number of birds which visited the county. There were a total of 228 records reporting 261 sightings of birds from 42 locations. 192 of these records were for a single bird; the remainder were for 2 birds. Monthly totals for number of locations were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of locations	15	13	4	5	3	4	0	8	3	8	9	11

The situation was complicated by the presence of two escaped birds with jesses. There were 26 sightings of a male bird with jesses Mar 4th –Oct 28th and it attempted breeding in Mid Berks. There was a single sighting of a second male bird with jesses and bells Sept 7th (KEM) which could have been passing through. **Breeding:** there was a single known breeding attempt in central Berks. Apr 8th a male with jesses brought food to female on an old crow's nest in a pylon (MFW; DJB; SDa); Apr 28th the nest had collapsed (DJB); the pair was seen again May 21st (BDC; MG; BAJC) and May 25th when the male was begging food from a female feeding on feral pigeon (CDRH). May 19th, at an East Berks site, there was a territory dispute with a resident immature male chasing off an immature female (RDr; CDRH). **Prey items:** there were 8 records of pigeons as prey items, 4 of Lapwings, 1 of Starling, 1 of Moorhen and 1 of a duck. Interaction with other Species: these were reported with buzzards, kites and hirundines: Oct 3rd at Brightwalton Com a soaring and circling male bird was stooped at by Buzzard, and mobbed by kite and



hirundines (GDS); Oct 7th at the same site a male gliding high, eating small prey item on the wing, was mobbed by hirundines and dipped at by 2 Buzzards (GDS); Oct 29th at Greenham Com a low-flying bird joined 4 Buzzards circling over Bowdown Woods (NC).

## WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

*Uncommon winter visitor, rare in summer*

Recorded at 28 sites across the county. Monthly status:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	19	15	12	5	2	1	1	0	4	8	14	10
Minimum number of birds	32	23	21	8	2	1	1	0	5	12	27	18

**First winter:** recorded at 26 sites. Most counts were of 1–3 birds but Great Meadow Pond consistently produced higher counts with 4 Feb 5th and Dec 24th; 5 Nov 5th and 19th; and 6 Dec 10th and 17th (DJB). Elsewhere 4 were at Thatcham Marsh Mar 26th (IW; JL) , 4 at Lavell's Lake Nov 12th (FJC) and 2–3 pairs were at Brimpton GP throughout the year at (GEW). **Spring/Summer:** recorded at 6 sites. One was calling at Lavell's Lake Apr 7th (FJC), 1 was at Marsh Benham Apr 26th (JD) and 1 was calling at Hosehill Lake May 25th (TABR). At the more regular sites 1–2 were at Englemere Pond during Apr (MO), 2 were at Great Meadow Pond Apr 9th with 1 there Apr 16th (DJB) and 1–2 were at Thatcham Marsh during Apr-Jul (IW; JL). **Breeding:** unfortunately breeding wasn't confirmed at any of these sites. **Second winter:** birds started to reappear at wintering sites from early September with 1 Freeman's Mar Sep 6th (RF). Numbers built slowly to a peak on Nov/Dec when there were counts of 4 at Lavell's Lake Nov 12th (FJC) and 6+ at Great Meadow Pond Dec 10th (DJB).

## MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

*Common and widespread resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	8	7	6	–	–	–	–	–	14	19	31	11
Dorney Wetlands	–	8	20	14	2	3	22	6	–	–	–	–
Great Meadow Pond	–	20	–	–	–	–	15	30	15	–	15	–
Lower Farm GP	12	51	21	16	8	5	12	19	20	16	14	8
Thatcham GPs	22	45	27	4	4	3	4	8	16	17	21	23
Theale GPs	13	25	3	–	–	–	–	–	13	–	7	11
Wraybury GPs	13	19	18	4	2	2	–	–	30	13	22	26

The high count of 51 at Lower Farm GP was made Feb 4th (IW; JL) . Elsewhere high counts included 15+ Slough SF Jul 21st (DJB), 15 Freeman's Marsh Nov 4th (SAG), 18 Shepherd Meadows Mar 14th (CRW) and 20 Eversley GPs Jan 5th and 8th (PN) and Dec 31st (SFo). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 19 sites. Late broods were noted at Lower Farm GP where a pair had 1 very small juv Sep 10th (SAG) and at Lavell's Lake were a pair had 3 very small juvs Sep 16th (MFW).

**COOT** *Fulica atra**A common resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	388	234	162	–	–	–	–	–	262	390	428	417
Great Meadow Pond	150	–	50	40	60	80	220	278	122	73	58	30
Summerleaze GP	107	53	90	42	–	–	–	–	–	233	203	289
Thatcham GPs	213	193	149	13	19	24	21	38	41	45	44	42
Theale GPs	410	250	140	–	8	–	120	–	460	–	303	748
Wraysbury GPs	265	178	108	30	6	13	–	–	87	156	243	273

The high count of 748 at Theale GPs was made Dec 17th (WeBS). Elsewhere the only count to exceed 200 was 215 Woolhampton GPs Dec 10th (GEW). A bird with extensive white feathering was seen at Hurst Green GP Feb-Apr (MFW) and one with white greater coverts on both wings was at Lavell's Lake Aug 18th (MFW). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 23 sites.

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus**Uncommon but regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

**Spring:** records were received from 7 locations, probably involving 7 individuals. There was a run of records in the Dinton Pastures/Twyford area during April and May that may relate to the same long-staying individual, these are as follows: Lea Farm GP Apr 18th (BTB, FJC); Twyford GPs Apr 20th (MFW); Lea Farm GP Apr 27th (MFW); Lavell's Lake May 3rd (JGo) and 4th (log); Twyford GPs May 24th (CDRH) and 25th (MFW). Elsewhere there was 1 Lower Farm GP May 16th (SAG); 2 Theale Main Pit May 23rd (KEM et al); 1 Dorney W May 31st (CRe) and Jun 1st (RN); 1 over Brimpton GP Jun 1st (GEW) and 1 QMR Jun 2nd (CDRH) which circled the reservoir and flew off south west. **Autumn:** records were received from 4 locations, involving 5 individuals. Passage recommenced Jul 11th with 1 over Sandhurst (KLi), followed by 1 Eversley GPs Jul 26th (MDL; PBT), 1 Aug 8th (BMA), 1 QMR Aug 23rd (CDRH, MMc) and 1 over Thatcham Marsh Aug 25th (MJD). **Second winter:** unusually there was a winter record of 4 circling the lake at Arlington Business Park, Theale Nov 10th (DJB) seen from the observer's car as he drove along the M4.

**STONE CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicanus**Scarce and localised summer visitor (Schedule 1)*

The first two returning birds were seen in West Berkshire Apr 13th (ABT, CDRH). Up to 5 birds were seen throughout the summer. Evidence of breeding included a female sitting May 11th (DJB) and confirmed Jul 25th when 2 adults & 2 juvs were seen (ABT) and possibly one of the same juvs Aug 4th (DJB). A single bird at Coombe Hill on Sept 16th (PMC) was presumably a migrant. Notable autumn gatherings included 29–30 in West Berkshire Oct 7th (DJB) and c.30 Oct 8th (CDRH).

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule 1)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	–	–	–	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	–	–	1	2	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	3	6	5	5	4	6	–	–	–	–
Greenham Com	–	–	–	5	6	3	1	2	–	–	–	–
Lea Farm GP	–	–	–	4	2	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	1	4	4	4	7	2	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	–	2	3	1	2	1	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	7	8	6	2	5	5	2	–	–	–
Thatcham GPs	–	–	–	1	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–

**Spring:** the first arrivals were 3 at Eversley GPs Mar 16th (BMA), a slightly later date than usual. The highest count in March was 7 Pingewood GPs on 30th (KEM).

**Summer:** reported from 12 locations during May/June, with breeding attempted at 4 of these. At Dorney W 1 was sat on a nest May 1st (BDC). At Greenham Com a female was at a nest with 4 eggs Jun 2nd (DJB). At Eversley GPs 3ad and 2juv were seen Jun 16th (BMA) and at Lower Farm 2ad and 2juv were seen Jun 24th (SAG). **Autumn:** passage recommenced Jun 29th when 4 were at QMR (CDRH) and continued until the last record at Pingewood GPs Sep 11th (KEM). Most records were of 1–4 birds but 7 were at Lower Farm GP Jul 2nd (IW; JL), 5 Pingewood GPs Jul 29th and Aug 6th (KEM) and 6 at Eversley GPs Aug 11th (MFW).

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula**Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greenham Common	–	–	2	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Horton GPs	–	1	–	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	2	3	20	5	6	1	–	–	–	–
Midgham GP	–	–	–	2	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	1	9	1	1	–	2	–	–	–	–
Pingewood, Burnthouse Lane	–	–	–	3	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	1	3	–	3	2	–	–	–
Slough SF	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	–	–	–

**Spring:** first recorded Feb 17th at Horton GPs (CDRH), followed by 2 Lower Farm GP Mar 9th (HMG) thereafter becoming more widespread. Most counts were of 1–3 birds, though 9 were at Pingewood GPs Apr 23rd (KEM) and 20+ were at Lower Farm GP May 3rd (NC). **Breeding:** birds were at 9 locations during May with breeding successful at 2.

At Lower Farm GP a female was first seen sitting on May 21st (IW; JL) with the first chick noted Jun 10th (RAH) and 4 seen Jun 17th (IW; JL) but just 2 Jun 24th (SAG), though both of these fledged. At Horton GPs a pair fledged 1 juv (CDRH). **Autumn:** 3 adults were at QMR Jun 12th (CDRH) but passage commenced properly Jul 14th with 2 Slough SF (KPD) and continued until a lame bird was seen at Woolhampton GPs Oct 4th (CDRH).

## GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Common but local winter visitor and passage migrant*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bury Down	52	35	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	105	–
Cow Down (West Ilsley)	150	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	22	–	1
Dorney Wetlands	970	1500	350	–	–	–	–	–	1	200	450	992
Greenham Common	10	40	200	150	–	–	–	–	3	200	200	150
Lower Farm GP	2000	2000	3	15	–	–	–	–	21	500	2000	150
Thatcham	60	29	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	300	82	2
Woodlands Pk, M'head	–	500	–	76	–	–	–	–	–	–	150	12

**First winter:** recorded from 36 locations. There were 2 large concentrations of birds at either end of the county, in West Berks c2000 were at Lower Farm GP during Jan/Feb and in East Berks c1500 were at Dorney W in Feb. Elsewhere the only counts to exceed 500 were c800 Freeman's Marsh Feb 9th (RF), 500 Sheepdrove Feb 26th (ABT) and c500 Woodlands Park Feb 28th (DJB). Numbers dropped dramatically during Mar/Apr until the last record of 11 at Walbury Hill Apr 27th (CDRH). **Second winter:** recorded from 33 locations. An early returning bird was at Englefield Aug 26th (RCr) followed by 4 Sept records, with numbers starting to build up in Oct. As in the first winter there were large counts at Lower Farm GP, peaking at 2000 in Nov and Dorney W, peaking at 992 in Dec. Elsewhere the only counts to exceed 500 were c800 Fifield Oct 26th (DJB) and 500+ Charvil Nov 28th (HRN).

## GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

*Uncommon but regular passage migrant*

The only record was of a w/p bird at QMR May 1st (CDRH), which was attacked by a Peregrine and not seen again.

## NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

*Common breeder, and abundant migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	1150	850	140	1	–	35	142	150	–	17	–	550
Broad Common (Hurst)	–	600	–	–	–	–	120	–	303	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	1000	52	–	–	–	31	60	5	–	25	200	215
Dorney Wetlands	590	500	5	1	1	–	8	103	–	600	250	110

Eversley GPs	1000	1100	8	4	10	111	46	267	–	75	400	600
Lea Farm GP	1000	–	–	–	2	14	–	50	–	–	250	400

**First winter:** the high count of 1150 at Bray GPs was made Jan 11th (WAS). Apart from the main sites listed above there were few large records, the only record exceeding 400 being 400+ Lower Farm GP Jan 11th (IW; JL). A leucistic bird with pale yellowish-olive upperparts was at Frogmill Farm, Hurley Mar 3rd (CDRH). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding was noted at 11 locations and confirmed at 6 of these. At Lower Farm GP 3 chicks were seen May 1st (DJ), 5 May 6th (log) and 3 May 24th (AEDH). At the Jubilee River a nest with 4 eggs was found Apr 26th, with the pair still at the nest May 2nd when another female with 3 chicks was seen (DJB). At the Loddon Reserve, Twyford a pair with 2 chicks was seen May 25th and still present Jun 17th (MFW). At Sunninghill Park a pair with 2 chicks were seen Jun 11th (DJB). At Midgham GP 5 near full-grown juvs were seen Jun 23rd (KEM). At Greenham Com a pair with chicks was seen Jul 2nd (IW; JL). **Second winter:** numbers were lower than in the first winter period. The peak counts of 600 were at Dorney W Oct 29th (DCle) and at Eversley GPs Dec 6th (BMA). The only other counts to exceed 400 were 450+ Fifield Oct 26th (DJB) and 400 Charvil Nov 28th (HRN).

## **KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

One was at Lower Farm GP Jan 25–27th (MO). On Jan 28th it was reported as being taken by a Peregrine (ABT) but was then seen again on Jan 29th (RJB). At QMR on Dec 23rd one flew a circuit of the reservoir then gained height and flew off NE (CDRH).

## **SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant*

Eleven records, 10 in spring and 1 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 mostly w/p Eversley GPs Mar 24th (AWo et al), 2 (1 s/p, 1 partial s/p) May 18th (BMA); 1 s/p Moatlands GP May 9th (RHS et al); 5 (2 w/p, 3 s/p) QMR May 11th circled res with 4 Dunlin then flew off NE, 1 s/p May 19th, 4 s/p May 22nd, 2 s/p May 23rd, 1 s/p May 26th, 1 partial s/p May 29th, 3 s/p Jun 12th (all CDRH). **Autumn:** 2 adults QMR Aug 3rd (CDRH).

## **LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

*Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn*

The only records were a juv at QMR Sep 19th (CDRH) to 21st (CDRH; PMC) and 5 juvs at Eversley GPs Oct 1st (BMA).

## **PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*

*Very rare vagrant*

A lucky few got a late Christmas present when one was found at QMR late afternoon on Dec 26th (CDRH et al); it was not present the following day. This is only the fourth accepted record after singles at Thatcham GPs Nov 7th 1983 and QMR Sep 24th 2001 and Sep 20th 2002.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina**Common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Farm GP	1	1	–	1	3	1	–	2	6	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	1	4	–	–	3	3	–	–	–

**First winter:** singles recorded at 3 sites: 1 Lower Farm GP Jan 27th (GVW, KEM), 1 Dinton Pastures CP Jan 30th (PBT), 1 Lower Farm GP Feb 4th (SAG) and 5 N over Dorney W Feb 8th (CRc). **Spring:** 1 was at Hosehill Lake Mar 11th (MFW). Passage was slow during March with just a few records of singles birds and came to an abrupt end on Mar 24th when 2 were at Midgham GP Mar 24th (JPM). There were no further records until 1 at Eversley GPs Apr 17th (GR). There was light passage of 1–2 birds until the end of April. Passage peaked during May when birds were recorded at 9 sites. Most counts were of 1–3 birds apart from 4 W over QMR May 7th and 4 QMR May 11th (both CDRH). 1 at Lower Farm GP Jun 17th (IW; JL; SAG) was probably a late spring migrant. **Autumn:** passage recommenced Jul 29th with one at Padworth Lane GP (KEM). Passage continued through Aug-Sep but numbers were small. Most records were of 1–3 birds but 6 briefly dropped into Greenham Com Sep 16th (AEDH). The last record was 1 at Lower Farm GP Sep 24th (IW; JL). **Winter:** the only winter record was of 2 at Horton Fields pit Nov 28th (CDRH).

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor*

Four records, all in autumn. Juv Slough SF Aug 20th–26th (KPD; CDRH; MFW); 1 Lower Farm GP Aug 29th (LS et al); 1 Sep 17th (SAG) to Sep 25th (RF); 1 Oct 11th (GJS).

**JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyptes minimus**Uncommon localised winter visitor and passage migrant*

**First winter:** found at 6 sites, all records as follows: 1 Decoy Heath Jan 21st (MFW); 1 Lower Farm GP Jan 28th (AJP; MGP); 1 Bray GPs Jan 30th (WAS); 1 Dorney W Feb 6th (KEM) then on and off until Mar 28th (WAS); 5 Horton GP Feb 17th & Mar 3rd (CDRH); 1 Wraybury GP Mar 14th (WAS); 1 Lavell's Lake Mar 22nd with injured right leg (FJC et al) to Mar 30th (ANS). **Spring:** 2 Horton GPs Apr 1st and still present with a Common Snipe Apr 21st (CDRH); 1 Pingewood GPs Apr 2nd (ABT). **Second winter:** recorded from 3 sites. All records as follows: 1 Horton GPs Sep 27th, 2 Oct 2nd, Nov 4th, Nov 11th (all CDRH); 1 Wraybury GPs Oct 15th, Nov 6th, Dec 18th (all CDRH); 2 Greenham Com Oct 26th (NC) to Oct 28th (IW; JL).

**COMMON SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago**Common winter visitor, scarce in summer (Amber listed)*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	23	–	3	1	–	–	–	1	2	6	1	1
Dorney Wetlands	121	35	20	23	–	–	–	1	8	18	21	7
Lower Farm GP	2	1	6	1	–	–	2	10	18	30	36	9
Slough SF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	40	–	–	–

**First winter:** double figure counts came from 5 sites. An impressive 121 were at Dorney W Jan 19th (BB, BDC). Elsewhere, highest counts were 50 Wraysbury Feb 17th (CDRH) and 23 Lavell's Lake Jan 7th (FJC). **Spring/Summer:** numbers had reduced by April but there were still 45 at Wraysbury Apr 1st (CDRH) and 23 Dorney W Apr 2nd (KPD). The only May records were 1 Eversley GPs 1st and 17th (BMA). Autumn/winter: returning birds began to appear in July with singles at Lower Farm GP 23rd (IW; JL), Eversley GPs 26th (MDL; PBT), 2 Twyford GPs 27th (MHu), 2 Lower Farm GP 29th (IW; JL) and 1 30th (SAG). Double figure counts came from 6 sites with most coming from Dorney W/Slough SF and Lower Farm GP. Highest counts were 40 at Slough SF Sep 29th (CDRH) and 36 at Lower Farm GP Nov 16th (NC).

**WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola**Localised resident in small numbers; recorded more widely in winter (Amber listed)*

Records were received from 36 locations. **First winter:** reported from 18 locations, mostly 1–2 birds but 3 flew over Brimpton Jan 22nd (GEW), 3 apparently roding at Combe Hill Feb 4th (TPo) and 3 were flushed at Boardhouse Plantation Mar 14th (GDS). **Summer:** roding was reported from 10 locations. East Berks: most reports came from Swinley and Windsor Forests. Roding was reported from 4 locations in Swinley Forest where max counts were 2 Wishmoor Bottom Jul 2nd (DJB), 2 Caesar's Camp Jun 2nd (WAN), 2 Broadmoor MOD Jun 4th (DJB) and 2 Hut Hill Jun 5th (PBT). In Windsor Forest max counts were 5–6 roding Cranbourne Chase Jun 28th (DJB), 1 roding Great Meadow Pond Apr 30th (DJB), 1 roding Blacknest Gate Jun 11th (DJB) and 1 flushed South Forest May 13th (DJB). Elsewhere 2 were roding at Swinley Brick Pits Jun 4th (PM) and 1 was roding over a garden at Worlds End Hill, Bracknell Jun 10th (TS). Mid Berks: roding was reported from Padworth Com with a max count of 7 Jun 7th (RCW) and 1 Sulham Jun 17th (RCr). West Berks: roding was reported from 4 locations where the max counts were 4 Bucklebury Com Jun 12th (GJS), 4 Greenham Com Jun 9th (GJS), 6 Snelsmore Com Jun 30th (MJT) and 2 Stockcross Jun 3rd (SAG). In late May/June a nest was located at West Woodhay Ho containing 4 eggs, though no young were seen (RGS). Elsewhere 1 was at Marsh Benham Apr 27th (RF), 2 were at Wickham Heath Jun 14th (SAG) and 1 was flushed at Brimpton Mill Aug 10th (GEW) but no roding was reported at any of these sites. **Second winter:** a much poorer showing than the first winter period with birds only reported from 6 locations, all single birds apart from 3 at Bowdown Wood Nov 9th (MRD).

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa**Scarce passage migrant*

Seven records, 1 in spring and 6 in autumn. **Spring:** s/p adult Slough SF Apr 27th (SP et al). **Autumn:** adult Dinton Pastures CP Jul 14th (PMC et al), and an adult there Aug 12th (FJC, MFW); 4 east over Eversley GPs Jul 28th (BMA); adult islandica ssp. Slough SF Jul 10th (CDRH), adult transitional plumage Slough SF Aug 3rd (CDRH) to Aug 6th (KPD); 1 Lower Farm GP Oct 15th (RA).

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica**Scarce passage migrant*

Five records, all in spring. 6 (inc 4 s/p males) circled QMR on Apr 24th (CDRH), 1f, briefly accompanied a Grey Plover, on May 1st (CDRH); 1 w/p Eversley GPs Apr 25th (MO), 1 s/p May 12th to May 14th (MO); 3 reported Dorney W Apr 27th (per BDC).

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus**Uncommon passage migrant*

Fifteen records, 12 spring and 3 autumn. **Spring:** 1 Eversley GPs Apr 14th (BMA); 1 circled QMR then flew E Apr 18th, 1 flew NW Apr 30th, 2 landed briefly May 2nd, 1 May 6th, 3 (2 circled res, the other landed on inner bank) May 8th, 1 May 16th (all CDRH); 6 feeding in stubble at Brimpton Apr 21st (RRi) then flew W over Woolhampton GP (TGB); 1 Lower Farm GP Apr 23rd (IW; JL; NC), 2 May 7th (ABT; BJH) flying over, 1 May 24th (AEDH; GJS; RRC); 1 Greenham Com Apr 24th (RAH). **Autumn:** 1 calling Woodley Jul 20th (FJC); 2 Donnington Valley GC Aug 3rd (RAH); 3 circled QMR Aug 13th (CDRH).

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata**Uncommon passage migrant and now summer visitor in small numbers (Amber listed)*

**First winter:** 15 records, involving 17 individuals. 1 Pingewood GPs Feb 4th (KEM; RHS) and the same bird over Moatlands GP at dusk (MFW), 2 May 28th (KEM); 1 Bucklebury Mar 2nd (CDRH); 1 Eversley GPs Mar 4th (CDJ) to Mar 5th (RJG), 1 Apr 2nd (BMA), 1 Apr 29th (K Carter per AWo), 2 May 1st (MFW) flying over calling; 1 Lower Farm GP Mar 24th (RAH), 1 Apr 1st (IW; JL; RRK; NC); 1 heard over Dinton Pastures CP Mar 25th (AR); 1 Thatcham Apr 1st (BJW); 1 Greenham Com Apr 9–10th (NC); 1 Woolhampton GP Apr 19th (RHS) circled the pit then flew north; 1 Theale GPs Apr 26th flying over, 2 Apr 29th (both KEM). **Summer:** one pair summered in the Aldworth area and 3–4 pairs in the Lambourn area, though there was no evidence of breeding. First recorded in the Aldworth area Apr 15th (GDS) and on several further occasions with a max count of 2 May 11th (DJB) until the last record Jun 16th (MJT). First recorded in the Lambourn area Mar 12th (ABT) then regularly with a max count of 8 May 18th (MJT) until the last record of 5 Jun 24th (MFW). Away from the Downs there was 1 Brimpton/Woolhampton GP Jun 18th (GEW) and 1 Brightwalton Com Jun 18th (GDS). **Autumn:** 7 records, involving 7 individuals. 1 Shaw Jul 9th (IW) heard calling; 1 flew SE over QMR Jul 1st, 1 juv QMR Aug 5th and possibly the same Aug 8th (CDRH); 1 Brimpton GP Aug 10th (GEW) heard calling; 1 Eversley GPs Aug 12th (DJB), 1 Aug 20th (BMA); 2 Dorney W Aug 16th (PMC).



**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus**Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	–	3	3	–	2	3	–	3	3	2	1
Eversley GPs	2	1	1	–	–	1	9	7	4	5	1	1
Greenham Common	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	3	1	1	1	–
Lower Farm GP	2	2	1	4	–	1	3	5	3	4	2	1
Midgham GP	–	–	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	4	1	2	3	1	2	5	6	6	8	7	1
Pingewood GPs	–	2	4	3	2	–	1	4	2	–	2	1
Slough SF	1	–	2	–	–	3	8	13	10	–	5	1

**First winter:** most counts were of 1–3 birds but 4+ were at Padworth Lane GP Jan 7th and 8th (RJB) and 4 Pingewood GPs Mar 28th (RJB). **Spring:** counts of 1–3 continued to be recorded with the only higher count being 4 Lower Farm GP Apr 1st and 2nd (SAG). There were 3 May records: 1 Padworth Lane GP 1st (MFW), 2 Pingewood GPs 1st (KEM) and 1 Midgham GP 2nd (KEM). **Autumn:** return passage commenced Jun 9th with 1 Eversley GPs (BMA). Numbers built up steadily throughout July and by the end of the month counts of 6+ were regular with higher counts of 8 Slough SF Jul 25th (KPD) and 9 Eversley GPs Jul 29th (AWo). 1–6 continued to be recorded during August with the largest count of the year being 12–13 recorded at Slough SF Aug 18th (DJB; CDRH). Numbers declined soon afterwards, though 10 were at Slough SF Sep 22nd (KPD) and 8 were at Padworth Lane GP Oct 1st (TGB). Counts of 1–3 were reported during Oct with the only higher count being 4 Lower Farm GP Oct 6th (AEDH). **Second winter:** counts of 1–3 continued to be reported during Nov with higher counts of 7 Padworth Lane GP Nov 12th (KEM) and 5 Slough SF Nov 18th (CDRH). Counts of 1–2 were reported until Dec 12th with singles present at a few sites until the end of the year.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola**Scarce passage migrant*

Five records, 3 in spring and 2 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 Slough SF May 1st (KPD), 2 Greenham Com May 11th (CDRH); 1 Lower Farm GP May 11th (CDRH et al) to May 12th (MO). **Autumn:** 1 Eversley GPs Jul 23rd (MDL); 1 juv Slough SF Aug 16th (CDRH) to Aug 21st (MO).

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus**Scarce passage migrant*

The only record was of a juv at Eversley GPs Aug 8th (BMA) initially on Colebrook Lake before moving to the new workings, where it stayed until Aug 14th (MO).

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia**Uncommon passage migrant*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	–	1	3	–	–	3	1	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	3	2	–	–	–

**Spring:** recorded at 6 sites. Padworth Lane GP had the bulk of the records, after 1 Apr 30th (BTB, KEM), there were 2 May 6th–7th, 3 May 10th (all KEM), 2 May 11th (CDRH) and 1 May 12th–14th (KEM; TGB; MFW). Elsewhere, 3 were at Lower Farm GP May 6th (ACa) and 1 May 17th (NC); 1 Pingewood GPs May 7th (BTB; MFW); 1 Greenham Com May 7th (ABT; MFW); 1 over the Ridgeway at Bury Down May 7th (CRc); 1 Eversley GPs May 15th (BMA). **Autumn:** there was a much stronger return passage with birds recorded at 12 locations. The first record was 1 Pingewood GPs Jun 1st (RHS) to 4th (RCW). There was a gap of nearly a month before the next record of 1 Lavell's Lake Jul 1st (BTB; DBow; IDP). 1–2 were recorded throughout Jul and Aug with higher counts of 3 Eversley GPs Aug 12th (RJB), 3 Pingewood GPs Aug 13th–16th (KEM) and 3 Padworth Lane GP Aug 20th (TGB). 1–2 were still being reported during Sep before the last records on 16th when 1 was at Padworth Lane GP (MFW) and 1 flew W over Theale Main Pit (RJB).

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus**Locally common passage migrant and summer visitor in small numbers*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	2	4	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	–	–	3	4	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GPs	1	–	4	5	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lea Farm GP	–	–	3	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	1	3	5	4	3	2	1	–	–	–	–
Midgham GP	–	–	11	6	5	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	–	1	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	–	4	5	2	2	–	1	–	–	–	–
Thatcham area	–	–	–	3	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	–	–	4	2	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Twyford GPs	–	–	2	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	7	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

**First winter:** present at 3 sites during Jan and 2 sites during Feb. **Spring:** recorded at 13 sites during March. Most counts were of 1–4 birds with higher counts of 9+ Midgham GP Mar 25th (KEM) and 11 there Mar 28th and 29th (JPM). Records of 1–5 birds were received from 21 sites during April with the highest count being 6 Midgham GP Apr 15th (KEM). 1–4 were recorded throughout May. **Summer:** Despite birds being present at 10 sites during June the only evidence of breeding was an unfledged juv at Lower Farm GP Jun 28th (SAG)

which was last seen Jul 15th (SAG). **Autumn:** passage was first noted at Hosehill Lake Jul 5th (KEM) and was very light. Apart from summering birds records were received from just 2 sites during July and 4 sites during August. There were no records during September and the only October record was 1 QMR on 3rd (CDRH). **Second winter:** 1 was at Bray GPs Nov 2nd and 24th (DJB) and 1 was at Slough SF Nov 18th (CDRH). The only December record was 1 Bray GPs Dec 31st (CDRH). Counts of up to 2 were received from a further 10 sites with a higher count of 3 at Brimpton GP 1st Apr (GEW).

## COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

*Common passage migrant, rare in summer and uncommon in winter*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	2	2	–	2	3	1	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	–	–	–	1	2	–	4	2	–	1	–	–
Eversley GPs	–	–	–	2	2	–	3	2	1	–	–	–
Lea Farm GP	–	–	–	1	1	–	1	3	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	1	–	1	4	6	1	6	3	4	1	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	6	2	1	1	1
Pingewood GPs	–	–	–	2	2	–	3	5	2	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	1	–	2	4	–	6	15	7	–	–	–
Slough SF	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	6	2	–	–	–
Thatcham GPs	1	–	–	4	1	–	–	3	1	–	–	–

Recorded in all months of the year. **First winter:** the regular wintering bird at Padworth Lane GP (first recorded in 1999) was seen Jan 1st (KEM) to Mar 19th (MFW). Records at Thatcham GPs Jan 8th (WeBS) and Lower Farm GP Jan 15th (TGM) may relate to the same bird. However, 1 at QMR Feb 11th (WeBS) may have been an early migrant. **Spring:** the first definite migrant was at Lower Farm GP Mar 19th (MFW). There were no further records until Apr 2nd when birds were noted at Midgham GP (KEM, NR) and Theale Main Pit (KEM; NJD), after which records became widespread. Most counts were of 1–4 birds but 6 were at Lower Farm GP May 7th (BJH). Records at Bray GPs Jun 1st and 11th (WeBS) and Lower Farm GP Jun 3rd (IW; JL; RAH) possibly relate to late spring migrants. **Autumn:** return passage began Jun 20th at Moatlands GP (RJB). Most counts were of 1–6 birds but 8 were at Slough SF Jul 30th (DJB), 15 QMR Aug 19th (CDRH) and 7 QMR Sep 1st (RDr). Singles were recorded at 4 locations during October with the last (not including the Padworth Lane bird) being Wigmore Lane, Theale Oct 8th (RCr). **Second winter:** the Padworth Lane bird returned Oct 27th (RJB) and was last recorded Dec 17th (DJMi). The only other Nov record was 1 Searle's Farm Lane GP Nov 11th (JA).

## TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

*Scarce passage migrant*

Just 3 records. **Spring:** 1 Eversley GPs May 17th (BMA). **Autumn:** 5 juvs QMR Aug 17th, which were disturbed by a heron and flew off NE, (CDRH) and 3 different birds Aug 19th (MMc).

**LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicaudus**Very rare vagrant*

An intermediate morph juv was found at QMR on the afternoon of Sep 9th (CDRH), and then gave many a chance to see it by staying until at least midday on Sep 17th (CDRH). This is the 3rd record for Berkshire, following closely the second at the same site in August 2003. See account on *page 8*.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus**Scarce passage and winter visitor*

A typical year with records in all months except Jan, Jul and Nov, concentrated in east and Mid Berks. **First winter/Spring:** the early part of the year was graced by a number of adults at 8 sites, with possibly wandering individuals complicating the picture. The first of the year was an adult at QMR Jan 25th (CDRH). An adult was at an icy Moatlands GP Feb 11th (ABT), while the same day an adult was found at QMR, remaining to 22nd when joined by a f/w (CDRH). An adult was seen at Moss End Feb 24th (MRA), another at Moatlands GP on 25th (MFW) and 27th (SRi), and a third at Dinton Pastures CP 26th to 28th (MFW, KEM) and another adult was at QMR Mar 1st (CDRH). Dinton Pastures CP held possibly another adult Mar 4th (FJC), which was seen again nearby at Lea Farm GP on 9th (ADB), and an adult was present there again Mar 22nd and 23rd (PJC; MFW; AR). Further spring records were of adults at Smallmead Farm GP 21st (MGM), Eversley GPs on 25th (IHB) and Shinfield on 26th (RJG). QMR had a f/w in the roost Apr 10th (CDRH) and Slough SF had a f/w bird May 6th (RN). QMR recorded a number of mid-summer imm birds with a s/s Jun 4th, a f/s on 26th, a different f/s on 29th–30th and 1–2 f/s Jul 1st–11th (all CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** a rather weak late summer showing, but a total of at least 6 individuals in East Berks in December. The first record of the autumn was a juv at QMR Aug 22nd–24th (CDRH) but no further records until a juv moulting to f/w there Oct 17th (CDRH). A juv moulting to f/w was at QMR Dec 2nd with possibly the same bird Dec 13th (both CDRH). An adult and s/w were present there Dec 15th, with a different s/w seen on the same day at Summerleaze GP (both CDRH). An adult on Dec 24th was joined by a f/w on 27th, with 2 adults and a different f/w bird present on 28th, with one adult remaining to the close of the year, and a f/w bird was seen at Cippenham on Dec 29th (all CDRH). Note that an adult hybrid Mediterranean × Black-headed Gull – the first such sighting in Berkshire – was seen at QMR on Jan 30th (CDRH).

**LAUGHING GULL** *Larus atricilla**Very rare vagrant*

An adult found in December 2005 at Green Park was the first Berkshire record of this Nearctic vagrant, and it remained through the first quarter of 2006. It was first seen Jan 2nd at Theale Main GP (BJH), and the same day in the Moatlands GP gull roost (KEM; MFW), where it was seen throughout Jan and Feb, and last recorded there Feb 25th (RHS). From Feb 11th it was seen at the Reading Gate Retail Park (FJC; MFW), feeding with other gulls on fast food and regularly occupying a lamppost (MO). During this period it was also seen at nearby sites, including Pingewood GPs Feb 11th (KEM), Smallmead Farm GP Feb 15th (MGM), Green Park Feb 17th (AJP) and Mar 18th (JEW), and roosting at Theale Main GP Mar 25th (NRG) and Mar 28th (NR). In summer plumage from early March, it was last seen on Mar 29th (NR), still on its retail park lamppost. The record was accepted by BBRC (*Brit. Birds* 100: 46).

## LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

*Scarce passage and winter visitor*

A mixed year for this attractive species, with at least 37 birds at 7 sites in spring – one group apparently making an extended stay seen by many observers – but low numbers in autumn, with only 4 birds at 3 sites. **First winter/Spring:** the year opened with a f/w in the gull roost at Moatlands GP on Jan 3rd (RCr). There was an early start to spring passage with a flock of 9 (8 adults + f/w) which flew east across QMR on Feb 22nd (CDRH); possibly the earliest spring passage flock ever in the county. Peak passage began with 4 (2 ad, 2 f/s) at Eversley GPs on Mar 28th (AWo; BMA), and on the same day 3 at Theale Main GP (RHS), growing to 5 (2 ad, 3 f/s) by late afternoon (RJB et al) and 5 (ad, 4 f/s) simultaneously at Hosehill Lake (KEM; RJB). Peak counts of 5 f/s were then present at Hosehill Lake from Mar 29th to Apr 5th, (MO) with occasional visits to Theale Main GP; if these were the same birds throughout then this represents an exceptional spring stay for a group of passage birds. During the same period there were other passage records of a single f/s at Horton GPs Apr 1st, also seen briefly at QMR (CDRH), 2 f/s at Lower Farm GP Apr 3rd (BJH), and a f/s at QMR Apr 4th (CDRH). Later spring records were of 1 adult + 3 f/w at Horton GPs Apr 12th, 1 adult s/pl seen flycatching at Wraysbury GPs Apr 21st (both CDRH), and 2 adults at Theale Main GP the same day (RRi). Although there were no records in May, there were single f/s birds at Moatlands GP Jun 3rd (RJB) and at Horton GPs Jun 17th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** a juv was at QMR Aug 21st (ABT) and an adult moulting to winter plumage was at Lower Farm Aug 30th (SAG et al). The last record of the year was another adult at QMR Oct 16th (CDRH).

## BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

*Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant, which now breeds*

Records were received from almost 60 sites with many counts into 3 figures, and the largest roost counts exceeding 10,000 birds. **First winter/Spring:** in West Berks there were regular counts from Lower Farm GP, where the highest total was 150 birds on Jan 11th (RJB), while Thatcham Marsh recorded 350 on Feb 14th (BJW) and there were 170 at Freeman's Marsh Feb 28th (RGS). The roost at Moatlands GP held 10,000 birds on Feb 2nd, but this total was bettered by the largest count of the year, an estimated 12,000 at Theale Main GP on Mar 15th, with 518 nearby at Hosehill Lake on the same date (all RCr). Dinton Pastures CP held totals of 2500 on Feb 2nd (RBor) and Lavell's Lake had a similar number on 24th (PBT), while the largest counts away from water were 1000 in fields at Shurlock Row Mar 9th and 1100+ at Hurst Mar 21st (both DJB). In East Berks the highest count was of 400 at Old Slade GP Feb 8th (RDr). A leucistic adult was seen at QMR Feb 13th (CDRH). **Summer:** The breeding colony at Eversley GPs continued to increase with 188 nests counted, the first chick was seen May 23rd and by May 31st there were at least 50 juv (all BMA). Breeding also occurred at Lower Farm GP, where a min of 14 pairs (SAG) hatched at least 27 chicks (IW; JL), with the first chick seen May 14th (SAG), and possibly occurred at Jubilee R, where a fresh juv was seen Jun 14th (BDC; CDRH). At QMR there was a post-breeding influx of 70 adults joining c. 30 summering f/s birds on Jun 27th (CDRH) and the largest late summer count was of 350 at Pingewood GPs Aug 6th (RJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** at Lower Farm GP counts passed 100 on a handful of occasions, with the peak count being 500 on Nov 18th (IW; JL), with 200 at Thatcham Marsh Dec 15th (BJW). The highest mid-Berks count was 250 at Pingewood GPs Dec 2nd (RJB) and in East Berks there were 693 at Jubilee R. Dec 30th (BDC).

A bird with an early full hood was reported at Lower Farm GP Dec 13th (GJS) and a leucistic bird was seen heading towards the QMR roost over Jubilee R Dec 18th (CDRH).

## COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant*

Records were widely distributed but with a bias to mid and East Berks. After the usual late spring gap there was an early start to the return records, and, surprisingly, no juveniles were recorded in the summer months. **First winter:** high counts were 160 at Summerleaze GP Jan 1st (WeBS), 250 at Smith's Lawn in Windsor Gt Pk Jan 15th (DJB), 150 at Moatlands GP Feb 2nd, and a remarkable 500 in 45 minutes passing east over Emmer Green Feb 11th (HRN). Small numbers were at a wide range of sites across mid and East Berks, but there were few West Berks records, with 50 at Lowbury Hill Feb 4th (ABT), 15 at Lower Farm GP Feb 15th (DJ), 50 at Bucklebury Mar 4th (DJR) and 12 at Farnborough Down Mar 7th (GDS) being the only substantial numbers. **Spring:** 20 birds were at Eversley GPs Mar 9th (BMA), and 100 at Shottesbrooke Farm Mar 11th (DJB) but the largest flock of the spring was 130 remaining at Windsor Gt Pk Mar 26th (DJB). Later records were 5 at Eversley GPs Mar 29th (RBor), 3 at Summerleaze GP Apr 1st and still on 9th (WeBS) and a single at Kiln Green Apr 11th (REI). **Summer:** the run of mid-summer records was a little stronger than usual, comprising 2 ad + f/s at Horton GPs May 31st, with 3 f/s at the same site Jun 2nd (all CDRH), one at Dorney W Jun 20th (DT) and 4 (1 ad, 3 f/s) at QMR on Jun 26th (CDRH). Another f/s was reported at Dorney W Jul 5th, with an adult there 24th (both DJB), and an adult at Lea Farm Jul 16th (BTB). The first returning groups were 6 at QMR Jul 3rd (CDRH) 3 at Cold Harbour Jul 3rd (DJB) and 3 at Bray GPs Aug 12th (KPD). **Autumn/Second winter:** large flocks were again at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Gt Pk building from 100 Oct 15th to 300 Nov 26th (both DJB), the highest count of the period. Other counts were 36 at Summerleaze GP Dec 1st and 17th (WeBS) and 185 at Cookham Dec 12th (BDC). A s/s was at Lower Farm GP from Sep 24th (SAG) and f/w birds were reported from several sites, with 1 at Woolhampton GPs Sep 29th (KEM), 1 with 5 adults at Cookham Oct 19th (BDC), 1 at Lower Farm Nov 10th (DJB), 2 with 4 adults at Cock Marsh Dec 10th and 1 with 3 adults at Windsor Esplanade Dec 23rd (both DF).

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor and a recent breeder*

Records came from over 40 widespread sites throughout the year, with peak numbers in the winter periods, although there was a lack of data from the main roost sites in mid and East Berks, where it is usually the most numerous large gull species. More than 20 records came from 9 sites across the quietest months of May and June, but there was no further evidence of breeding following the first record in 2005. **First winter:** there were several large counts, starting with the largest, 900 at Lower Fm GP Jan 2nd (SAG), followed by 600 in the roost at Moatlands GP Jan 15th (SAG) and away from water there were 500 at Sheepdrove Feb 3rd (DJB). There were several other counts from downland sites including 20 at East Ilsley Down Jan 29th (MSh) and 17 at Bury Down Jan 30th (RBor). A colour-ringed individual (white JX5 on green ring, left leg) was seen at Moatlands GP Feb 11th (ABT). **Spring/Summer:** there were 100 at Bucklebury Ford Mar 4th (DJR), 74 at Thatcham GPs Mar 12th (WeBS), 62 at Pingewood GPs Mar 21st (RJB) and 200 at Row Down Apr 1st (ABT), the last large count of the spring. 50 were at Dorney W, including 3 ads, Jun 30th (DJB) and there were 141 at Englefield Jul 8th (RCr). A colour-ringed s/s bird (green PS) was at Pingewood GPs

Jun 17th (KEM) but in contrast to recent years there was no large summering flock recorded at this site. **Autumn/Second winter:** an early flock of 100 returning adults was at Smiths Lawn Aug 6th (DJB) and 100 at Green Park Aug 18th (TJB) and 312 at Moatlands GP Aug 24th (RCr). From the Downs there were counts of 110 on rape stubble at Farnborough Down Aug 15th (GDS), 104 at Old Down Oct 1st (ABT), and 230 at West Woodhay Down Oct 18th (RGS). There were 250 at Greenham Com Oct 29th (ABT) and by Nov 4th pre-roost (roosting?) flock at Lower Fm GP had reached 650 (SAG), rising to the largest count of the year of 1500 Nov 13th (RF). Amongst 120 birds at Eversley GPs Nov 14th there were 2 colour-ringed ads, ringed in Suffolk (BMA). There were 66 at Pingewood GPs Dec 2nd (RJB), 60 at Bagnor Cress Beds Dec 17th (IW; JL) and the Downs still held a flock of 250 at West Ilsley on Dec 26th (IFe).

## YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

*Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant and winter visitor*

Records came from 19 sites, mostly in mid and East Berks, with QMR holding the greatest numbers, although substantially lower than in 2005. **First winter:** early records were mostly ads, with maxima of 5 at Moatlands GP Jan 8th (ABT) and Smallmead Farm GP Feb 2nd (CDRH) and 3 at Pingewood GPs Jan 20th (KEM). There were also records of an adult at Bucklebury on Jan 12th (CDRH), a s/w at Lavell's Lake Jan 16th (FJC), 2 (ad + f/w) at QMR on Jan 21st and 3 adults there on Jan 25th (CDRH), an adult at Hurst Green GP Feb 4th and ad + f/w at Dinton Pastures CP Feb 26th (MFW). **Spring:** the first QMR record was 2 adults Mar 6th (CDRH). Dinton Pastures CP held a f/w + 3/w Mar 12th (MFW) and Pingewood GPs had a 3/w on 16th and an adult Mar 22nd (KEM) and Apr 8th (MFW). QMR had 3 records in April, of an adult on 10th a f/w on 14th and a s/s on 20th (all CDRH). **Summer:** an adult at QMR May 29th was presumably the first returning bird, with a growing group of adults and sub-ads there reaching 13 Jun 13th and 21 Jun 29th (all CDRH). Single adults at Pingewood GPs Jun 17th (KEM) and Jul 8th (TGB), with 2 there Jul 6th (CDRH), and Moatlands GP Jul 6th (RCr) were the only midsummer records away from the East Berks build-up. The first 2 juvs of the year were together with 14 adults at QMR Aug 1st (CDRH), with 4 juvs amongst 28 birds Aug 3rd and 5 juvs amongst 50 birds on 10th (both CDRH), the highest count of the year. There were summer records at 6 other sites, including 5 at Horton GPs Aug 16th (CDRH), but the only other sites to manage more than a single bird were Green Park, with 2 adults Aug 1st (PBou) and a 3/s Aug 18th (TGB), while an adult at Englefield Aug 2nd (RCr) was the only record away from water. **Autumn/Second winter:** there were still 19 birds present at QMR Sep 30th (ABT), but numbers were in single figures from Oct onwards. Moatlands GP had 3 Oct 29th (TABR) but only singles in the area thereafter. West Berks produced a few records with one over flying south at Greenham Com Oct 3rd (JL), single adults at Lower Farm GP Oct 28th, Nov 11th (both SAG) and Dec 6th (GSte), and ad + f/w at Padworth Lane GP Dec 30th (MFW). In Mid Berks, Eversley GPs held a f/w Nov 18th (CDJ), an adult Dec 15th (BMA), a s/w Dec 28th (RJG) and a further record Dec 31st (MDL), while Jubilee River finished it's year with one on Dec 30th (BDC). Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min. no. of birds at QMR	–	–	3	3	1	21	15	50	19	7	4	7
Number of other sites	2	5	5	1	–	2	2	7	1	3	4	7
Min. no. of birds at other sites	6	8	4	1	–	2	1	11	1	5	4	10

**CASPIAN GULL** *Larus cachinnans**Rare (under-recorded?) autumn/winter visitor*

A rather poor year after the record high in 2004 and a respectable dozen in 2005, with 11 records of perhaps only 8 individuals. **First winter/Spring:** an adult was seen at Smallmead Farm GP Jan 8th (MFW). A f/s at QMR on Mar 7th was seen again Apr 20th, having commenced its primary moult (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** a f/s bird was at QMR Aug 1st and at Wraybury GPs on 23rd (both CDRH), and relocated nearby in Surrey between Aug 11th and 29th (CDRH et al), evidently lingering in the area while it completed the moult of its flight feathers; this could have been the same bird as seen in spring, although its stay was surely not uninterrupted. A f/w bird was seen at QMR Oct 11th (CDRH) but did not stay to roost. December produced a s/w at QMR on 10th and again 17th (both CDRH), an adult at Smallmead Farm GP 17th (PBT) and a f/w in the QMR roost also on 24th (CDRH).

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus**Common passage migrant and winter visitor, increasingly resident in summer and now breeds (Amber listed)*

Until recently regarded as a winter visitor, this species is now a year-round fixture, in the form of loafing groups of summering immatures, and increasingly resident adults bringing the sounds of the seaside to our town centres. For at least some roost sites the main arrival of this species is as darkness falls, making it very difficult to obtain accurate numbers. **First winter:** the only large count in the winter months was 100 at Theale Main GP Feb 13th (JHa) with counts of 50 at Green Park Jan 14th (RJB), 27 at Lower Farm GP Jan 28th (S. Reddick, C. Michaelek), and 10 at Burghfield GPs Mar 1st (RBor) being the only other counts into double figures. **Spring/Summer:** 172 were counted at Pingewood GPs Mar 16th (RCr), 30 were seen over the Winnersh Triangle Apr 12th (PBT) and a high count of 300, mostly imm, was seen circling over Slough Apr 21st with 138 imms counted nearby at Dorney W on the same date (both DJB). A group of predominantly imms remained at Dorney W with 75 May 4th (DJB) and there were other spring records of small numbers of imms at Eversley GPs, Dinton Pastures CP, Hosehill Lake, Lower Farm GP and Thatcham Marsh. After the first Berkshire breeding record in Slough in 2005, a pair was confirmed as breeding in central Reading, seen feeding 2 young on an unspecified date (TBa). Although records away from water were few, there was a group of 20 feeding with corvids on a newly mown field at Combe Jun 1st (RHar), a notable West Berks record, and there were 28 of various ages at Englefield Jul 8th (RCr). A substantial number of birds remained at Dorney W throughout, peaking at 164 Jul 3rd (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** there were several good early autumn counts 135 at Cockpole Green Sep 1st, 80 in fields close to Wokingham STW Sep 6th, 24 at QMR Sep 12th (FCC), 145 at Cold Harbour Sep 30th and 78 at Windsor Gt Pk Oct 1st (all DJB). The only large mid-winter count was 150 at Cold Harbour Dec 30th (DJB). Two juvs of the northern race *argentatus* were reported at QMR Sept 3rd (CDRH), 1 juv *argentatus* was reported at Smallmead Farm GP Nov 19th (PBT) and 2 adults of the northern 'thayeri-type' were with other *argentatus* birds at Colnbrook Dec 18th (CDRH).

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides**Rare winter visitor*

After a record year in 2005, this attractive species returned to a typical sparse showing, with the only record of the year being a s/w on ice at Eversley GPs, Colebrook Lakes on Feb 5th (GR).



**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus**Rare annual winter visitor*

There was a single record of a f/w at QMR on Dec 26th (CDRH).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor*

2006 Now reported in all months at wetland sites across the county, although there were few counts from gull roosts – yet commonly present in small numbers – and no records from farmland away from water. **First winter:** the largest count was 226 (all adults apart from 2 f/w) at QMR on Jan 2nd (CDRH), with the other sizeable counts of 20 at Green Park Jan 19th (RJB) and 40 at Theale GPs Feb 13th (JHa), **Spring/Summer:** 12 adults were still present Mar 21st at Pingewood GPs (RJB), 2 adults were at Avington Apr 2nd (RGS) and 3 adults at Theale Main GP Apr 8th (DJB, MFW). 2 f/w were still present in the QMR roost Apr 10th (CDRH), and on the same date an ad + 3/s flew over Lavell's Lake (PBT) and 2 were at Lower Farm (GRW). Late spring records continued with an adult at Pingewood GPs May 1st (MFW), a f/s over Wooshill May 4th (PBT), and a f/s was at Theale Main GP May 16th (DJB), and into Summer with 2 f/s birds present at QMR Jun 17th and 26th (CDRH). **Autumn:** a 3/s bird was at Pingewood GPs Jul 8th (TGB) and the first adult was seen near Slough Jul 24th (DJB). Birds in juvenile plumage were seen at Smallmead Farm GP Nov 19th and Dec 17th (both PBT). **Second winter:** there were more flocks recorded in the second winter period, beginning with 76 (mostly ads) at QMR Nov 29th and the largest count being of 155 at the same site Dec 25th (both CDRH). Other counts included 13 at Pingewood GPs Dec 2nd (RJB) and 17 nearby at Smallmead GP Dec 16th (MFW).

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla**Scarce spring migrant and winter visitor*

A scattering of records over five months comprising 8 birds, but at only 2 sites. **Spring:** the first of the year was an adult that circled low over Hosehill Lake Mar 29th (TGB) before heading off N. Similarly, an adult seen at QMR Apr 3rd (CDRH) lingered only a few mins before departing E, but Apr 30th an adult spent most of the morning there and was joined by a second adult late morning (CDRH). Another adult spent a morning hour at QMR May 14th (CDRH) before departing SE with Black-headed Gulls, and the final in spring consisted of 2 adults at QMR early on Jun 4th (CDRH). **Autumn:** the only autumn record was a w/p ad, briefly joining other gulls on the concrete parapet, at QMR on Dec 17th (CDRH).

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger**Uncommon passage migrant*

At least 50 birds from 9 sites. **Spring:** the first record of the year was one at Bottom Lane, Theale GPs Apr 16th (KEM), becoming the 4th year in succession with a first record before Apr 20th, yet this had only happened once before 2003 (in 1980). The remainder of the spring records came typically in the first half of May, with 2 at Moatlands GP May 4th (KEM, RHS), later moving between there and Theale Main GP (MO) and 6 at Moatlands GP at dusk May 8th (RCW). There was a single at Hosehill Lake May 11th (CDRH), but the next day brought better numbers with a total of 9 (3 joined later by another 6) at Theale Main GP (KEM; HRN et al), and a single for most of the day at Eversley GPs (MO). **Autumn:** return passage began with 2 at Theale Main GP Jul 27th (PG), but the period Aug

17th–20th produced most records. Moatlands GP held an adult and juv Aug 17th (GBr), seemingly remaining until Aug 20th, when an adult and 2 juvs were present (RCr). A juv at Lower Farm on the morning of Aug 18th (NC) seems to have moved between there and Thatcham Marsh and Thatcham GPs until 20th (MO). 2 juvs at QMR Aug 18th (CDRH) had increased to 4 by 19th (ABT), with 2 remaining until 21st (CDRH). Another set of records followed from 27th, with a juv at QMR (CDRH), with 2 juvs the next day – one of which was almost caught by a Peregrine (PMC) – and 3 juvs on 29th and 30th (CDRH). A group of 3 was also seen at Moatlands GP on 28th (MFW). In September there were 4 at QMR on 9th with 7 there 11th and 4 on 13th (all CDRH). Sep 12th also brought singles to Dinton Pastures CP (RBor) and Woolhampton GP (KEM) until 14th, and a group of 7 at Theale Main GP (KEM). The final birds of the year were a brief juv (KEM) and pass-through adult (SAG) at Lower Farm GP Sep 20th and a late juv at Moatlands GP Sep 25th (RCr).

## LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

*Scarce passage migrant*

There were single records in spring and autumn, but neither lingered. **Spring:** an adult was apparently grounded in an early morning thunder storm at Colebrook Lake, Eversley GPs May 5th (BMA). **Autumn:** a juv was seen at QMR for 20 mins on Aug 27th (CDRH).

## SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

*Uncommon passage migrant, principally in autumn*

A low total, with records in 5 months and from 2 sites, totalling 10 birds. **Spring:** the first record of the year was an adult at QMR Apr 2nd (CDRH), seen to depart to the N by mid-morning. Lower Farm GP then hosted a pair Apr 23rd (NC, IW; JL). There was also a late spring record of 2 flying north at QMR May 29th (CDRH). **Autumn:** an adult at Lower Farm GP Jul 1st (GMac) was presumably a failed breeder, although seen to depart to the north east. An adult reported at Twyford GPs from Aug 6th to 20th (MO) was retrospectively identified, from photographs, as a first-summer Common Tern (an unforeseen pitfall, but the same mistake was also made in N.Bucks around this time). An adult was at QMR on the morning of Aug 27th and presumably the same bird was still present the following day (both CDRH). The last sighting of the year was a presumed family group of 2 adults and a juv at QMR on the morning of Sep 24th (CDRH) and possibly the same birds at Lower Farm GP on the evening of Sep 24th (RHS).

## COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

*Common passage migrant and localised breeder (Amber listed)*

A species coming under increasing pressure as a breeding bird, most probably through site rivalry with Black-headed Gull. Records were received from 55 sites and spanning the last day of March to early October, with spring numbers perhaps lower than in recent years. **Spring:** the first record was of 1 at Colebrook Lakes on Mar 31st, with 26 there Apr 1st (both BMA), followed by 1 at QMR Apr 3rd (CDRH) and 1 at Theale Main GP Apr 4th (KEM) and subsequent dates. Ones and twos were then seen at several sites, through the first half of April but the first substantial flock in West Berks was 19 at Thatcham Marsh Apr 13th (GJS), while the largest spring counts were of 73 at Eversley GPs May 1st (BMA) and 90 at Moatlands GP May 21st (BDC). There were 30+ at Hosehill Lake May 5th (BU), and, further east, Dinton Pastures CP had 45 May 8th (FJC) and 50 were at Horton GPs Jun 1st

(CDRH). **Summer:** there were 30 nests at Eversley GPs on May 1st (BMA) and although at least 1 juv hatched there was a widespread desertion of nests, thought to be caused by mink. At least 2 pairs attempted to nest on a spit at Lower Farm GP after being crowded off the rafts by Black-headed Gulls, but were unsuccessful, and at Thatcham Marsh there were 10+ nests May 28th, with the first chick on Jun 4th and 14 chicks ringed Jun 24th (IW; JL). There were 9 juv at Hosehill Lake Aug 12th, from late second broods after predation at Theale Main GP (BU). A probable s/s bird was at Bray GPs Jun 27th along with 11 adults (CDRH) and 1 with a red colour ring was at Windsor Gt Pk Jul 16th (DJB). **Autumn:** the largest count of the year was 101 at QMR Aug 16th (CDRH), with more than 20 birds present throughout the month. A f/s bird was at Hurst Green GP Aug 21st (MFW). 9 were at Bray GPs Sep 5th (WAS), with 2 f/w there Sep 15th (DJB), while 2 juv passed through Theale Main GP Sep 12th (KEM) and 1 juv flew through at QMR on Sept 24th (CDRH). The last record of the year was a late juv at Moatlands GP Oct 4th (KEM). Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	-	-	-	4	2	23	33	21	9	-	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP	-	-	-	12	45	11	4	4	1	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	1	26	73	4	1	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	-	7	17	3	8	5	-	-	-	-
Moatlands GP	-	-	-	14	90	12	-	14	-	1	-	-
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	-	3	25	-	-	101	6	-	-	-
Thatcham	-	-	-	6	8	11	22	1	-	-	-	-
Thatcham GPs	-	-	-	20	22	24	28	1	-	-	-	-
Theale GPs	-	-	-	30	30	-	8	12	5	-	-	-
Twyford GPs	-	-	-	8	22	13	11	3	-	-	-	-

## ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

*Uncommon passage migrant in small numbers*

A typical year, with 62 individuals at 8 sites in spring, and 14 birds from 4 sites in autumn.

**Spring:** 2 sites shared the first record of the year on Apr 23rd, with 2 adults at Colebrook Lakes, Eversley GPs (Chris Gent et al), and at least 1 of 3 terns that flew east over Moatlands GP (RJB) being identified as this species. Over the next week further records included QMR's first of the year on Apr 24th (CDRH), 3 at Moatlands Apr 28th (TGB) and 2 at Summerleaze GP the same day (CDRH), 1 at Bray GPs on 29th (CDRH), and a movement totalling 34 birds through QMR on Apr 30th (CDRH). May 1st brought records at several sites across the county, comprising 1 at Colebrook Lakes (BMA), 3 at Moatlands GP (KEM et al), 7 early morning birds at QMR and 1 at Summerleaze GP (both CDRH). The main spring passage concluded with 2 at Woolhampton May 2nd (BJW), but there were additional late May records with 2 high overhead at Theale Main GP on 24th (KEM) and two interesting records of possibly the same 2/s bird at Horton GPs on 23rd (CDRH) and Moatlands GP on 26th (ABT, KEM, photo MFW). **Autumn:** 14 birds from 4 sites. QMR opened with a run of August records, with 2 adults and 2 juv on 3rd, 1 juv on 10th, joined by an adult on 12th and 2 juv on 14th and an adult on 24th (all CDRH). Other August records were 1 juv at Theale Main GP 16th (KEM), another or the same at Moatlands GP 18th (TGB) and a juv at Dinton Pastures CP on 20th (BTB; MFW; FJC). There were only two September records, of a juv at Moatlands GP on 3rd and a juv at QMR Sep 12th

(CDRH), but there were 2 later records with a juv at QMR Oct 2nd (CDRH) and a final juv at Moatlands GP Oct 3rd (KEM).

## **FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia*

*Abundant urban resident*

Although this species is common in towns (e.g. in Reading, Newbury and Bracknell) we received no significant reports from town centres. All but 9 records came from rural sites in East Berks. There were 3 reports of over 100 birds – 250 at Dorney W May 28th (BDC); c950 in 2 flocks of c300 and c650 on bean stubble at Woodlands Park Nov 14th (DJB); and 112 at Remenham on Oct 27th (DJB). There were no breeding records.

## **STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

*Common resident and winter visitor*

Although the species is common throughout the county, about two thirds of the birds reported were in East Berks. The vast majority of records were of 5 birds or fewer; there were 10 records of between 25 and 50 birds and 6 records of 50 birds or more. Notable reports were of c200 in fields east of the Windsor Relief Road between Eton and Eton Wick Mar 14th (WAS); 130 at Cold Harbour (Knowl Hill) Sep 15th with 40 there Oct 15th (DJB); 72 at Remenham Oct 27th (DJB); 60 feeding at White Place Farm (Cookham) Dec 31st (BDC); and 50+ in bean stubble at Woodlands Park Oct 14th (DJB); **Breeding:** numerous singing birds were recorded in East Berks from Mar 14th to May 25th; further west, the only reports of singing were from Charvil, Clayfield Copse (Caversham) and Snelsmore Com. 6 territories were reported from South Forest, Windsor on May 25th (DJB), and 10 pairs were found in ‘a small part’ of Swinley Park wood May 2nd (WAN), suggesting that the whole wood held many more pairs. Breeding was confirmed by BDC at Pinkney’s Green May 10th, at 2 sites near Cabbage Hill, Bracknell Jun 16th, and at Binfield Jun 20th—all had eggs or young in owl boxes.

## **WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

*Abundant resident and winter visitor*

There were 16 records of 100 to 499 and 12 records of more than 500 – highest counts were: 4000+ going to roost in woodlands in Windsor Gt Pk Dec 17th (DJB) with 2200 there Nov 5th (DJB); 1500+ passed in a southwesterly direction over Wishmoor Bottom Oct 27th between 08: 00 and 09: 30 in parties of between 4 and 220. (DJB); c1000 at Moss End Feb 11th (BDC); c900 feeding on winter rape at Farnborough Down Jan 21st (GDS); 700+ in Windsor Gt Pk Nov 12th (DJB), a flock of c600 landed in beeches at Woolley Down Jan 8th (GDS). Although records came from all over the county, most of the big flocks were in the east of the county. **Breeding:** although a widespread breeding species, the only breeding reports were of possible breeding at Ashley Hill and Cookham Rise (BDC).

## **COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

*Widespread and common resident*

Records were evenly spread through the county. There were 21 reports of 10 birds or more, the highest four counts being 61 at the Jubilee River Nov 20th (KPD), 36 at Woolhampton Nov 8th (KEM), c30 at East Ilsley Down Jan 29th (MSh) and c 30 at Twyford Jan 2nd (SPA). There was one breeding report, a bird collecting nesting material at Charvil Jan 17th (HRN).

## TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

*Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor (Red listed)*

Birds were reported from 18 areas/sites, but the records from all but 4 of these locations appear to be of migrating birds. This year's records are substantially lower than last year's, so it appears that the decline of this species continues. A sequence of mid-summer records suggesting that breeding might have been attempted came from Brimpton, Binfield, Padworth Lane GP and Woolhampton but the only confirmation was the sighting of juvenile birds on Aug 3rd and 7th at Brimpton (GEW), where there were 6 birds on Aug 26th, the only count to exceed 3 birds. The earliest record was Apr 26th and the latest Sep 6th, both at Brimpton (GEW). The table shows the month by month abundance.

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September
Number of sites	3	8	11	5	5	1
Minimum number of birds	6	10	15	6	12	3

## RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

*Common but localised resident in East of County. Uncommon elsewhere*

This year all reports were from east of Reading town centre (there have been reports in previous years from further west). The majority were from sites along the R. Thames but many records (52 out of 186) came from the area between Henley, Bracknell and Windsor. The species seem to have expanded from its early stronghold in Windsor Gt Pk into much of East Berks over the last 10 years. There were 4 reports of 100 birds or more: 500+ were at Poyle Poplars just after dawn on Dec 10th (CDRH), 275 flew east over QMR between 6:30 and 7:30am Aug 28th (CDRH); 200+ were feeding on crab apples in Windsor Gt Pk Oct 29th (DJB) and 185 flew E over QMR Sep 6th (MMc). Of the remaining 182 records, 90% were of fewer than 20 birds. One with yellow wings (xanthochroistic?) flew W over QMR Sep 24th (CDRH) with several hundred dispersing westwards from roost (CDRH).

**Breeding:** there were reports of occupied nests from White Waltham in Apr and Cookham in May (BDC). Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	3	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	3	20	-	-
Dorney Wetlands	-	-	1	1	15	-	-	2	9	-	-	11
Great Meadow Pond	5	-	-	1	-	-	1	8	20	200	18	-
Maidenhead Court	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	18	5	6
Odney Island	57	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	11	2	5	4
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	275	185	-	-	-
Remenham	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	15	-	4
Wraysbury area	7	1	-	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	12

**Re 2005 Report:** the observation of flocks flying NE at QMR 'possibly to a new roosting site' has subsequently been shown to be the avoidance, by some flocks, of crossing the water-body (and Peregrine predation) – the flocks then turn SE when passing over Poyle.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus**Common summer visitor*

Reports came from 30 sites in West Berks, 17 in Mid Berks and 14 in the east (counting areas of Swinley Forest as 5 distinct sites). The table below summarises the distribution. The earliest was calling at Greenham Com Apr 10th (JL) and the latest at Lambourne on Aug 4th (JLe). The table of abundance by month shows no significant changes from 2005. The vast majority of records were of 1 bird and there were only 13 reports of 3 or more (of which 10 were from Swinley Forest). Significant reports were of 3 at Wraybury Apr 21st (CDRH), 4 around the firing range area of Swinley Forest May 21st (MSFW), 3 at Hut Hill (Swinley) Jun 1st (DJB), 3 at Thatcham Marsh Jun 2nd & 4th (DJB, IW/JL), and 4 at Lower Star Post (Swinley) Jun 6th (DJB). **Breeding:** little evidence was presented – at 11 sites birds were present consistently from April to June, but only at Dinton Pastures was better evidence available; on May 17th 1m & 1f were reported there (DBow) and on Jul 14th a juv old enough to fly was seen there (PMC) being harried by common terns.

Month (in 2006)	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Number of sites	38	37	17	1	1
Minimum number of birds	44	54	25	1	1

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba**Uncommon but widespread resident which has shown signs of increase in recent years (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed).*

Records came from 21 areas in West Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 14 in East Berks. The table summarises the distribution of birds by month and area. The large drop in numbers after July is probably not due to a sudden crash in the owl population, but is mainly due to the restrictions on observers following the foot and mouth outbreak, which lasted from August to October and into December in some areas. **Breeding:** birds were present in at least 7 areas through the breeding season, but with no reports of breeding behaviour. This might be because this species had a bad breeding year, a conclusion that is supported by a report from a local authority that promotes barn owl boxes. In that authority area, out of 23 boxes 9 were used by owls but of these only 1 had breeding owls during the season. Elsewhere, an abandoned clutch was found in East Berks on Jun 16th (BDC), a box in mid-Berks contained 1 juv on May 13th (JLe) and at another site in East Berks a box held 1 juv on Jul 26th (PBT). There were no other breeding records.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of areas	16	15	21	16	11	12	3	2	2	0	3	3
Minimum number of birds	18	17	26	20	14	14	3	2	2	0	3	3

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua**Widespread and locally common resident*

147 records of little owls were reported from 35 sites in East Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 14 in West Berks fairly consistently in every month of the year. Reports were of mostly 1 or sometimes 2 birds except for breeding records (see below). Calling was reported throughout the year, with no obvious peak in the breeding season; the monthly frequency of reports

of calling was – Jan– 1, Feb– 1, Mar– 5, Apr– 2, May– 3, Jun– 1, Jul– 3, Aug– 2, Sep– 6, Oct– 3, Nov– 0 and Dec– 1. **Breeding:** seems to begin in late April – a check of 7 little owl boxes near Burnham on Apr 23rd revealed that only 2 were occupied at that time. Breeding was confirmed at Greenham Com (nest with 1 chick & 1 unhatched egg, Jun 9th, NC), Wokingham (young heard Jun 26th, DJB), Nuptown, Warfield (young in a nest box Jun 7th, BDC), Cock Marsh (juvs in a nest box, but dead Jun 1st, parents apparently killed, BDC), Widbrook Com (adult on 3 eggs in a nest box, May 16th, BDC), The Moors, Cookham (adult on 3 eggs in a nest box, May 10th, BDC), Winkfield (adult & 3 juvs in a barn owl box, Jun 7th, BDC), White Place Farm, Cookham (2 nest boxes, 1 with adult & 4 eggs, the other with adult & 3 chicks, both May 11th, BDC).

## TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

*Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat, including urban areas*

A below average year: 137 reports came from 19 sites in West Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 28 in East Berks, mostly of 1 bird (101) or 2 birds (31), and there were 4 records of 3 birds. Most records described calling birds (and as this species is heard much more than seen, most of the records which did not include a comment were probably also of calling birds), and came in every month with a steady increase through the early part of the year, peaking in May, then a steady decline during June/July and a clear minimum in August to December. **Breeding:** pairs were reported at Ashley Hill Apr 27th (DJB), Woolley Firs, Maidenhead Jun 30th (BDC), Earley Apr 28th (MSFW), Swinley Forest Jun 1st (BAJC), Maidenhead (north) Sep 1st (BAJC) and at Whiteknights Park, Reading Apr 4th (PG). However, the records suggest a very poor breeding season. Apart from juvs heard near Brightwalton Jul 20th (GDS) and at Wishmoor Jun 18th (DJB), all the reports were negative. Near Cookham on May 15th no breeding was observed in 36 boxes but 9 boxes contained squirrels that had apparently frozen to death, and nearby at Quarry Wood on Apr 28th only 1 of 10 boxes held a tawny owl, but 3 held dead squirrels. Also in the same area, at Bisham Woods on May 5th, 2 out of 10 boxes inspected held deserted eggs, and an abandoned clutch of 2 eggs was found May 29th (all BDC).

## LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

*Resident in very small numbers and scarce winter visitor*

In Mid-Berks a winter roost (containing 3 birds when it was discovered on the last day of 2005) held 2 birds on Jan 1st, with 1 remaining until Jan 7th (MFW); some pellets found there contained mostly shrew remains. A regular West Berks roost site held c.15 birds in January (CDRH) and there was another W.Berks sighting of a singleton on Mar 12th (ABT). Birds were again present during the summer on the Berkshire/Oxfordshire border, but there was no confirmation of breeding.

## SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were 34 unique records of probably 11 birds. **First winter:** the party of Short eared Owls that had arrived in autumn 2005 stayed in the Cow Down/Bury Down area throughout the period Jan/Feb with high counts of 6 (mobbing a kite) Jan 22nd (CEI), at least 5 and probably 8 Jan 28th (MGP) and 8 on Feb 28th (ABT). From the end of Feb, they were only reported on Mar 2nd, when 2 were seen by CDRH, and on Apr 8th, when ABT reported 3. Elsewhere 1, possibly a wanderer from the Downs group, was at Bowdown Wood on Feb

4th (MRD), and at Eversley GPs singles (or possibly the same bird) were reported passing through, and being mobbed by crows and jackdaws, May 12th (SA; CDJ) and 14th (RJG). Passage/**Second winter:** 1 was seen at Lowbury Hill Oct 4th (CDRH), 1 stopped for a while at Greenham Com Oct 19th before being driven away by corvids (RR; NC) and 1 was seen back on the Downs Dec 20th (GSte; GJS).

## EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

Summary: a good year, especially as no systematic surveying of the East Berks heaths was done this year. A minimum of 57 birds were observed in the county at 13 sites: 4 in West Berks, 1 in Mid Berks and 8 in East Berks. The first records were May 9th when 4 arrived: 2 near Hut Hill, south of Bracknell (DJS), 1 at Gorrick Wood Plantation (BTB) and 1 at Cranbourne Chase (CDRH). The last record was on Aug 22nd near Windsor Ride, south of Bracknell. Highest numbers were reported from Greenham Com, where up to 7 pairs were present (NC), Padworth Com, where 6 birds were present Jun 2nd (RJB), Gorrick Wood, Crowthorne which held 6 birds on May 25th (RJG) and there were at least 21 birds in Swinley Forest between Caesars Camp and Wishmoor during the last week of May and the first week of June. **Breeding:** a total of 29 territories were established at 12 sites (churring males on dates at least a week apart) and pairs were observed at 7 sites. Reports of males substantially outnumbered reports of females so we cannot tell if all the territorial males were paired. There was no confirmed breeding.

## COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

*Common though declining passage migrant and summer visitor*

**Spring:** the first to be reported was at Summerleaze GP Apr 15th (MO) followed by small numbers (up to 10) each day until Apr 24th, when c60 were also over Burghfield GPs (JA). Flock sizes increased daily to c600 at Moatlands GP Apr 30th. After a lull (no records of over 50 birds) in the first 2 weeks of May, migration peaked from May 20th to 23rd, with c500 at Moatlands GP on 20th and 21st (RJB, BDC) then c750 there on 23rd (BU). **Summer:** there were no reports of breeding behaviour. Largest flocks between mid June and late July were c200 over Littlewick Green Jun 22nd (PBT) and 100+ feeding at Knowl Hill on Jul 1st (DJB). **Autumn:** a flock of 100+, the only 3 figure autumn record, was reported Jul 29th at White Waltham (FJC) and nearby at Woodlands Park (DJB). During August, the only reports of over 50 were 58 at Pingewood 10th (RCr), c60 at Burghfield GPs on 12th (JA) and 50+ at Woodlands Park on 16th (DJB). There followed almost daily records of small numbers during the last 2 weeks of August until the latest report from QMR of 1 from Sep 2nd–5th (CDRH; PJC).

## ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*

*Rare vagrant*

Berkshire shared in the national influx in Spring 2006 with two April sightings: 1 at Maidenhead on April 15th–18th (BDC et al), was first found over Sandringham Rd and was seen subsequently at Summerleaze GP, though more often over houses to the East than over the pit itself (it was also reported to have flown over the river into Bucks at one point and followed an earlier Bucks report nearby at Wooburn Green); 1 seen briefly at Greenham Common on April 23rd (TGB) was judged to be a separate bird. These represent the third and fourth county records.



**KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

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

Distribution: reported in every month, but the monthly number of records (and birds) varied with the season, reducing steadily from 43 records in Jan to 25 in July, then rising to 68 in Aug and 83 in Sep followed by a steady decline to 38 by the year end. These seasonal variations (seen in most years) may be due to broods leaving the nest in Aug then dying or leaving the area during the autumn and winter and possibly reduced observer coverage in summer months. Reports were usually of 1 or 2 birds. In West Berks, reports came from 9 sites on R. Kennet, 4 on R. Lambourn, 3 on R. Enbourne plus 2 at major gravel pit complexes close to the Kennet. An unusual record was of an immature bird caught and ringed at Greenham Com, far from water, Aug 15th (NC). In Mid Berks there were 9 sites along R. Thames, 6 on R. Kennet, 2 on the Pang, 1 on Foudry Brook, 1 on the Emmbrook, 2 on R. Loddon, only 1 on R. Blackwater (probably due to limited observer access) and 6 sites on lakes or gravel pit complexes. In East Berks there were sightings all along the Blackwater from Eversley GPs to the Surrey border, at 3 places on The Cut (north of Bracknell), all along the Thames from Cookham Dean to Dorney (but east of there, only at Eton and Old Windsor), at 3 places on the Jubilee River, throughout Wraybury GPs complex (and the nearby QMR and Horton GPs) and around Virginia Water. 96% of reports were of 1 or 2 birds. **Breeding:** was confirmed or probable at several places: At Thatcham Marsh Apr 5th and Jul 18th, 1m entered a hole used as a nest in 2005 (RAH). Near Jeallot's Hill on May 3, there was a nest beside The Cut (BDC). On May 23rd at Bull's Lock (K&A canal) a bird entered a nest hole carrying a fish. Beside the K&A canal at Newbury on 3 dates in late June and early July a pair were watched taking fish into a nest hole (JCh). Juvs were seen at Brimpton GP Jun 2nd (GEW), Thatcham Marsh Jun 4th (IW; JL) and at Whiteknights Lake Sep 10th (PG).

**HOOPOE** *Upupa epops*

*Scarce passage migrant*

There was a single report of 1 at Englefield (near Theale) on Oct 3 (RRos).

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

*Common resident*

This species is common (reported from about one quarter of 1km squares) and widely distributed throughout, in suitable habitat, but more often reported in the east. 70% of records refer to 1 bird, 16% to 2 birds, 6% to 3 and the remaining 8% of records refer to 4 or more. Highest reported numbers were 9 in an area west of Wishmoor on Apr 2nd (DJB), 6 in the vicinity of Rapley Lake on Apr 13th (DJB) and 5 on several occasions at Greenham Com (IW; JL). There were reports of calling in most months, with a slightly higher number in Apr and May. **Breeding:** a total of 3 nests were occupied at Moatlands GP and Burghfield GPs from April to June, with 2 of these nests producing 3 young each (JA). Juveniles were recorded at 10 places (mostly in the west, despite their apparent lesser abundance there) during July and August (MO).

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

*Common resident*

There were 389 records from across the county in suitable (woodland) habitat, with more

than half of all records from East Berks. As this bird rarely forms assemblies larger than family parties all the reports of higher numbers refer to an area, not to groups of birds together e.g. on Apr 2nd DJB found 13 birds between Wishmoor and Broadmoor. The highest number reported together were 2m + 4f in a Bracknell garden on Dec 23rd (JCr). **Breeding:** to judge by the larger than usual number of breeding records, which came from across the county, these birds had a good year. Unusually, there are too many breeding records to quote all of them. More than 30 reports of drumming covered the period from the start of February and the end of May. Between May 21st and Jun 28th there were 13 reports of occupied nests, most of them cases where young were seen, heard or adults took food to nest holes. Between Jun 7th and Aug 2nd there were 21 reports of juvenile birds, often with adults and in one case (at Wash Com on Jun 14th, (DSm)) dependent juvs were seen being fed away from a nest.

## LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

*Uncommon resident (Red listed)*

Birds were seen at 25 sites in the county, 4 in west, 9 in mid and 12 in East Berks (of which 4 were in Windsor Gt Pk). All reports were of 1 or 2 birds. **Breeding:** drumming was recorded at Padworth Lane GP Mar 23rd (MFW), Swallowfield Mar 30th (RCr) and Windsor Gt Pk May 3rd and 5th (CDRH). Pairs were seen at Theale GPs Mar 18th (JA), Southcote Apr 17th (JA), near Wargrave Apr 17th (ABT), Prospect Park, Reading between April and June (JA) and in Tilehurst Apr 1st (JA). There were no reports of juveniles. The pair at Prospect Park was reported to have bred though the nature of the evidence was not stated.

## WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

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

*(Schedule 1 and Red Listed)*

Reported from 6 sites in west, 4 in mid and 11 in East Berks, of which 8 sites were in or near Windsor Forest. Birds were present in all months but there were very few records in Jan, Nov and Dec. The sites were either heathland or felled forest. The largest number reported together were 11+ birds including some juveniles at Greenham Com Jul 2nd (IW JL). There were several records of larger numbers, but over a wider area, e.g. 16 spread over Greenham Com Aug 4th (JL) and 13 (8 singing, 1 pair and 3 others) between Wishmoor and Broadmoor Apr 14th (DJB). **Breeding:** a survey of East Berks heaths between February and July by DJB et al revealed 38 territories, in which 10 pairs were proved to breed, 1 pair raising 2 broods. At Greenham Com it is probable that at least 4 pairs bred and a bird was seen carrying food on Jun 17th (IW; JL), but despite 74 records from the site there is no other conclusive evidence. At 3 other sites in West Berks and 3 in Mid Berks the presence of pairs and/or territories indicates probable breeding.

## SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Seen throughout the year at 69 locations evenly spread across the county. The biggest flocks were at Englefield where flocks of 110 (ABT) and 174 were reported Jan 15th and 245 Sep 30th, 280 Oct 13th, 340 Nov 9th, plus too many other 100+ flocks to list them all (RCr; KEM). In East Berks, numbers were much lower, and flocks of 100+ at Knowl Hill Oct 10th (DJB), 90 at Shottesbrooke Farm Feb 11th (DJS) and 76 at Knowl Hill Jan 12th (DJB)

were the largest gatherings. Elsewhere, flocks of 100+ were at Lowbury Hill Feb 3rd (ABT), Compton Downs Oct 7th (DJB), and Bury Down Nov 10th (DJB). **Breeding:** in suitable habitat, mostly in the west, large numbers were present during the spring and early summer, e.g. c90 birds, many singing, at Englefield May 16th (RCr), 37 singing on the Compton Downs May 5th (DJB) and 35 singing at Greenham Com Jun 2nd (DJB). There were many other reports of singing between Feb 17th and Jul 1st at many sites (and a few outside this period). There were only 3 records of birds with food for young, which may be because this species is secretive as it approaches its nest, and so feeding is difficult to observe: the 3 cases were – near White Waltham Jul 24th (DJB), at Englefield May 16th (RCr) and Compton Downs May 11th (DJB)

## **SAND MARTIN**     *Riparia riparia*

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant*

Records came from the whole county but 95% were from the major wetland sites (Hungerford, Thatcham, Woolhampton, Theale, Loddon Valley, Eversley GPs, Jubilee River, Cookham). **Spring:** the first 2 were at Moatlands GP Mar 21st (RJB) followed by singles at Theale GPs on 24th (RCr) and at Moatlands again on 25th (KEM). The main influx arrived between 27th and 30th Mar with at least 300 over Theale GPs 27th (MO) and 400 there on 29th (TGB), 300 over Dinton Pastures 29th (MFW) and 100+ moving through Pingewood GPs in small groups on 28th (KEM). After 3 quieter days, a second but smaller influx occurred with 100+ at Summerleaze GP Apr 2nd (WAS), 100 at Theale GPs 3rd (PH), c100 arriving at Thatcham Marsh in small groups on 5th (RAH) and 100+ at Thatcham GPs on 6th (NC). **Breeding:** birds were seen using holes on various dates at 2 artificial sites at Dinton Pastures CP, 22 occupied holes at Lea Farm and 25 at Lavell's Lake (MFW). At Woolhampton there were 147 nest holes in a sand pile on May 18th (GEW). At a landfill site near Cockpole Green Apr 12th there were 25 nests (BDC). Smaller colonies were at Eversley GPs new diggings (7 nests Jun 21st, BMA), Jubilee River (6 nests Jun 27th, DJB) and Thatcham Marsh (c5 occupied holes in May/June, GJC/IW; JL). **Autumn:** there was a very light passage – the biggest August flock was up to 100 at Dinton Pastures on 13th (FJC) and there were c50 at Thatcham Marsh on 2nd (JHa), but most of the other reports were of fewer than 10 birds. In September, the biggest flock was c30 at Lower Farm GP on 2nd (SAG) with no other record over 10 birds. A few single digit groups were reported in early October with the last on 4th when 3 flew west over Woolhampton GP (KEM).

## **SWALLOW**     *Hirundo rustica*

*Abundant summer visitor and passage migrant*

Birds were widespread, and a high proportion of records came from places other than the major wetlands. **Spring:** the earliest birds were singles on Mar 26th at the Jubilee River (MRK) and at an unspecified place on the River Kennet (JKn). These were followed on the next day by a flock of c100 at Lower Farm GP (RA) and 25+ at Theale GPs (KEM). There was no obvious major influx; instead there was an extended period from early April until end of May when there were regular records of a few 10s of birds, and only 3 records of more than 100, i.e. 120+ at Moatlands GP Apr 11th (RCr), 100+ at Wokingham STW Apr 24th (DJB) and 120+ at Pingewood GPs May 2nd (KEM). **Breeding:** a disappointing year for breeding records: almost no evidence was presented, though the species was plentiful during the nesting season. Probable breeding was indicated by c20 swallows collecting mud at Lower Farm GP May 14th (PJO). The presence of juvs with adults at Bagnor Jun 25th (IW; JL), at Shottesbrooke Jun 27th (DJB), at Bracknell STW Jun 27th (DJB) and at Twyford

Aug 5th (SPA) were the only other reports (suggesting, but not proving, local breeding). **Autumn:** passage began in mid-August with c200 feeding over bean fields at Woodlands Park and c350 there on 24th (DJB). Six flocks of 100+ were reported between Aug 31st and Sep 23rd, the biggest being near Farnborough Down where 500+ were reported Sep 9th and 23rd (GDS). Oct 1st was quite a busy day with numerous flocks each of some 10s of birds across the county. Thereafter numbers slackened until Oct 12th when 2 were seen at Greenham Com (RR) and 2 at Twyford (SPA). The last record was a single at Greenham Com on Oct 21st (JL).

## HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

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

**Spring:** the first arrivals were in late Mar with 5 at Burghfield GPs 27th (AVL) and 2 at Theale GPs 28th. Small numbers were reported in early Apr, with 40 at Moatlands GP on 11th being the most. The main passage appeared to be the last 2 weeks of Apr with 200 at Summerleaze GP on 18th (BDC), c100 at Bray GPs 29th and 200+ at Windsor Gt Pk on 30th (DJB). In May, the only notable report was of 100+ at Lower Farm GP on 19th (NC).

**Breeding:** seems to have started late and continued into September. 9 reports were of occupied nests – 27 nests at Jeallott's Hill Apr 27th (PJC); 31 nests at Woodlands Park Jun 17th (DJB), 18+ nests in Eton Jun 30th (DJB), 3 nests at Bray Lock and 11 at Boveney Lock Aug 20th (GV), 3 nests still occupied at Newbury Aug 20th (SAG), 8 still occupied at Hambleden Lock Sep 1st (DJB) and 1 bird still visiting a nest in Crowthorne Sep 4th (BMA).

**Autumn:** there was considerable overlap between the end of the breeding season and autumn passage. The first large movement (or post-breeding flocking?) was at Theale GPs Aug 20th when 1000+ were present (JA), and several flocks of hundreds were reported during the following 2 weeks (while local juveniles were still in the nest) the largest being c400 at Cock Marsh Sep 3rd (WAS). A fairly steady passage followed with flocks of up to 50 being reported regularly, and larger flocks of 200 at Walbury Hill Sep 10th (ABT) and 150 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 20th (JL). There was a peak of activity in early Oct starting with 275 at Caversham Heights (TGB) and 300 at QMR on 2nd (CDRH), 100 through Dinton Pastures CP on 6th (FJC), c100 at QMR on 7th (CDRH) and c100 at Eversley GPs on 9th (MJM). After a few more reports of small groups, passage seemed to have ended when 2 birds flew east over Woodlands Park Oct 17th (DJB), which would be a very early last date, but there were 2 reports in December of 1 bird at Caversham Heights on 2nd (TGB) and 2 at Dinton Pastures CP on 12th (Mr & Mrs Holmes, per FJC), the latest ever Berkshire date by nearly 2 weeks.

## TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

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

**Spring:** first arrivals were singles Apr 7th singing at Snelsmore Com (RAH) and Swinley Forest (PJC). The only definite passage birds were 1 at Wraybury Apr 14th and 2 at Horton GPs Apr 18th (both CDRH). By the last week of Apr singing had been heard in all breeding areas. **Breeding:** most records were from the East Berks heaths (i.e. Swinley Forest, Wildmoor, Wishmoor, South Ascot, Finchampstead Ridges, etc), where there were 60 territories, but only 3 of these were confirmed as having bred. In West Berks, although there were only 10 territories (at Snelsmore Com, Curridge, Greenham Com, Bucklebury Com and Padworth Com) breeding was confirmed on 5 territories. In July, all reports were of breeding birds, e.g. 2 birds were present until 20th (male still singing on 14th) at Curridge. **Autumn:** there were no records of significant passage. The last report, of what was the only autumn passage bird, was on Aug 24th from the downs near Streatley (ABT). County status: 10 or so years ago, there were more territories reported in East Berks but far

fewer in west and Mid Berks. On balance, the total of territories seems to be fairly constant and assuming consistent observer coverage of heathland areas the records do not indicate any serious decline.

## MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

*Abundant migrant and winter visitor, locally common summer visitor*

Reported from 77 locations across the county, but more common in the west. 80% of the records were outside the breeding season. **Winter and Spring passage:** flocks were reported from the Downs, from gravel pits and sewage works across the county. Largest numbers were 45 on the Ridgeway at Bury Down Jan 17th (RJB) then 30 there Feb 15th (ANS), 29 at Brimpton Feb 3rd (GEW) then 48 there on 25th (ABT), c70 at Ascot Place Mar 3rd (BDC), 40 at Cockpole Green on Mar 6th (CDRH), at least 80 at Lower Farm GP Mar 13th (KEM), c50 at Combe Gibbet Mar 29th (WB), 30+ at Pingewood GPs Apr 1st (KEM, RJB) and 45 at Dinton Pastures CP Apr 4th (FJC). The largest number was from QMR where c600 per hour passed though on passage for 3 hours Apr 14th (CDRH). **Breeding:** between the end of spring migration (mid April) to the start of the autumn passage (mid August) birds were reported from Jubilee River and 9 locations on the downs in West Berkshire. There were no records in July. Signs of probable breeding (pairs, nest building or territories) came from near Lambourn, Compton Downs, Combe Hill and Jubilee River. Breeding was confirmed only at Greenham Com, where 5 or 6 birds were singing Jun 17th (IW; JL) but 4 males sang while 3 pairs fed young Jun 2nd (DJB). **Autumn passage:** during September, regular reports of up to 50 birds, which probably included a mix of local and passage birds, came from Greenham Com (JL; NC) increasing in October to c80 on 7th (IW) and 85 on 29th (ABT). Elsewhere during September, flocks at non-breeding sites included 29 at Englefield on 24th, 45+ on 26th and 110 on 30th (RCr), 30 at Brimpton on 26th (GEW) and 35 over Woose Hill in small groups on 26th (PBT). In October flocks of less than 40 were widespread; larger flocks were c40 at Charvil on 3rd (HRN), 100 at Englefield on 10th (RCr), 40 at Lower Farm GP on 13th and 50 at Walbury Hill on 13th (DJB). Winter: widespread flocks under 50 were reported on many days. At Englefield in November, there were 120 on 9th and 70 on 18th (RCr), while at Charvil there were 115 on 28th (HRN). During December, the biggest flocks were c50 at QMR on 8th (ABT), 75 at Charvil meadows on 11th (CDRH) and 60+ at Woolhampton GP on 16th to 19th (KEM).

## ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

*Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

There were 3 or 4 birds. **Spring passage:** there was 1 at Pingewood GPs on Mar 31st (RR). **Autumn passage:** 1 flew west along the Jubilee River Oct 11th (CDRH). At QMR there were single birds on Oct 11th and again Oct 15th (CDRH).

## WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

**Spring passage:** at least 2 and possibly 4 were at Midgham GP near Woolhampton from Mar 25th to Apr 5th comprising 2 in winter plumage Mar 25th (KEM), then 1 coming into summer plumage on Apr 1st (KEM), then 2 in summer plumage Apr 5th (CDRH). **Autumn passage:** 1 bird at Crookham Com Oct 9th was joined by a second and they were then seen at Greenham Com from Oct 10th to 12th (NC) with a flock of c 20 Meadow Pipits.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

*Common passage migrant and localised summer visitor in small numbers*

A poor year for breeding, but autumn passage was quite heavy. **Spring:** the first reports were of 1m with pied wagtails and meadow pipits at Twyford GPs on Mar 29th/30th (MFW, ADB) then 1m at Aldermaston Apr 2nd and 1 (possibly the same bird?) was reported at Midgham GP on the same day. Birds on spring passage (i.e. not showing breeding behaviour) were reported in 22 places up to mid May. Largest numbers were 2m + 5f at Englefield May 16th (RCr), 6 over QMR Apr 27th (CDRH), 2m + 3f at Twyford GPs Apr 25th and 5m at Brimpton Apr 11th. Also, there were 8 reports of 4 birds together, mostly in East Berks. **Breeding:** birds were present during the summer at Englefield, where on Jul 16th at least 1 juv was with 5 adults and on 25th a group of 8 juvs was seen (RCr). A pair bred in a barley field at Strand Water where a family party was seen several times during July (WAS). A female carried food at Lambourn on Jun 19th (RF). **Autumn:** a steady passage started at about Aug 15th when 5 flew southwest over Greenham Com (NC) and 15 were at Cock Marsh (WAS). After that, there were almost daily reports until early Oct from many places, most flocks being of fewer than 10 birds. In Sept, largest flocks were: 30 at Freeman's Marsh from 2nd (JBut) to 6th (SAG, RF), c100 at Cock Marsh on 6th (WAS), 36 at Charvil on 12th (HRN) and 16 there on 16th (ACa), c50 at Cock Marsh on 20th (WAS) and up to 18 at Cookham on 24th/25th (BDC); in most cases these birds were feeding among cattle. In Oct the only records were from QMR, where there were 7 on 1st, 9 on 2nd and 1 on 11th, the latest recorded this year (all CDRH).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

*Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

This species seems to be increasing in Berkshire and is widely recorded, but never in large numbers. The largest groups were family parties of 5 at several locks on the K&A canal (IW, DJB), 6 at Hungerford Marsh Nov 11th (GVB) and 9 at Wokingham STW Sep 19th (DJB). Reports came from 92 sites across the whole county, but with more in the east. **Breeding:** pairs and singing males were widely recorded but firm breeding evidence was relatively sparse. Breeding was confirmed at several locks along the Thames and along the K&A canal and on the Jubilee River. **Migration:** there was a slight peak of records in March which might indicate some movement but there was no indication of a large autumn migration.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

Reported from 57 places across the county throughout the year. Large flocks formed in winter usually at or near roost sites. Approximately 200 roosted at Reading railway station Feb 17th (DJS) with c60 there Oct 30th (VFo). Autumn roosts at Maidenhead Business Park and Windsor railway station numbered 50+ and 40+ respectively. Largest feeding flocks reported were c100 at Shepherd Meadows, Sandhurst on Dec 2nd (DJS), 100+ at Dorney Com on Oct 29th (DCle) and at Wokingham STW there were peak counts of c200 on Feb 17th (DJB) and c60 on Oct 30th (VFo). Apart from winter flocks, there was no sign of significant migrational movement in either spring or autumn. **Breeding:** birds were present in suitable habitat throughout the breeding period but there were few reports of breeding activity. Birds were carrying food for young at Wokingham STW on Jun 26th, Binfield on Jun 27th, Windsor Gt Pk on Jul 5th and Winter Hill on Aug 8th (all DJB); there were 2 family parties at Jubilee River on Jun 14th (BDC).

**WHITE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba alba**Uncommon passage migrant*

A minimum of 28 birds were reported in the county throughout the year but it could be as many as 50 as it is hard to tell how many stayed for more than a day or moved on to other local sites. **Spring passage:** in total at least 20 birds were seen in 8 areas, all but 2 reports being in April. Most records came from QMR where the first was a male on April 3rd and there were at least 5 on Apr 14th and 4 on 20th (when there were 60 at Farmoor Res in Oxon!), followed by another 4 on 24th and smaller numbers on several other days up until 30th (all CDRH). Also on Apr 24th there were 5 at Whistley Green (MFW). **Autumn passage:** there were between 8 and 13 birds at 5 sites. An adult male was at Greenham Industrial Park, Aug 18th (SAG), followed by a f/w at QMR on Sept 16th and 2 f/w there on Sept 27th (CDRH). Two f/w were at Slough SF on Sept 22nd and 1 f/w at Summerleaze GP on Oct 12th (CDRH). There were 4 at Charvil on Oct 3rd (HRN) and at QMR 1 or 2 on several dates between 1st and 13th Oct, including an adult female on 5th & 11th (all CDRH).

**WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulous**Irregular and scarce winter visitor*

Following the remarkable influx of record numbers in the winter of 2004/2005, it was perhaps inevitable that this year would disappoint. And so it was with just a single bird near Warfield Apr 21st (MC). None were recorded in the second winter.

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes**Abundant resident and winter visitor*

Most records received related to counts of singing birds at specific sites in spring and early summer, the higher numbers being 19 Shepherd Meadows Mar 14th (CRW), 14 at Wraysbury GPs Apr 5th (PNe), 14 there Apr 19th (CPo), 21 at Ashley Hill Apr 25th (BDC) and 24 along the Green Way (Maidenhead) Jun 1st (PNe). The only breeding records came from Brimpton where two broods of 5 were present Jun 27th (GEW) and Streatley Warren where at least 6 were being fed Aug 4th (DJB), which is quite late for a single-brooded species. At Moor Green, Eversley GPs, 42 territories were discovered. No less than 185 were ringed in West Berks whilst RRG ringed 64 at their East Berks sites.

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis**Widespread and common resident*

Only reported from 43 locations so clearly under-recorded. The only significant count was of 15 at Greenham Com Nov 6th (JL). In West Berkshire 185 were ringed, and 57 by RRG in East Berks. 30 territories were located at Moor Green Lakes (Eversley GPs).

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant resident*

Widely reported across the county, the more significant counts including 12 Shepherd Meadows Mar 14th (CRW), 16 Wraysbury GPs Apr 5th (CPo), 19 Snelsmore Com Apr 24th (RCu), 24 Clayton Park, Ashley Hill Apr 25th (BDC), 30 Dinton Pastures Sep 12th (RBor) and 20 Greenham Com Nov 6th (JL). Surveys along the Berkshire sections of the

Jubilee River indicated 30 territories in Apr and May (BDC). Moor Green, Eversley GPs held 38 territories. 266 received rings in West Berkshire, and a further 194 at RRG sites in the east.

## NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

*Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor*

Records were received from 17 locations, slightly down on last year. The first for the year was at Theale GPs Apr 2nd (JA), with 1 the following day at Burghfield GPs (NR). **Spring:** by Apr 18th there were 2 at Theale (RJB) and no less than 12 at Burghfield where 8 nest sites were later located (JA). The first at Greenham Com was Apr 13th (NC) and a pair caught and ringed Apr 20th after which 7 to 8 territories were located and 1 juvenile was caught & ringed there Aug 4th (NC). At Dinton Pastures, the first arrived Apr 14th (BTB) and 3 were singing by Apr 21st (SDi) and 4 noted Apr 28th (KIT), but no confirmation of breeding came from this site. Another regular site, Moatlands GP, had 4 singing from Apr 17th (RCr). Ones and twos were reported from 10 other West Berks locations during Apr and May but two East Berks sites also had records with a singing male on Apr 16th at Summerleaze GP (PNe) and a longer staying individual at Slough SF, a first record for the site, from Apr 26th (DJB; BDC) to May 4th (SSo). **Breeding:** young were noted at Theale GPs and Burghfield GPs Jun 11th (JA), whilst juvs were present throughout Jul and Aug at Greenham Com (NC). At Brimpton GP, 2 juvs were seen with adults between Jun 11th and Jul 8th (GEW). Departure: although most reports came between Apr and Jul, 2 were still present at Theale on Aug 2nd (JA), 1 at Dinton Pastures Aug 5th (SDi) and 4 at Burghfield GPs on Aug 15th (NC) but the last was 1 at Greenham Com on a fairly typical Aug 22nd (NC). Ringing activity in West Berks involved 14 birds whilst none were trapped elsewhere.

## BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

*Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

**Spring:** the only record in this season was 1 at Greenham Com Apr 10th and presumably the same on Apr 20th and 21st (NC). **Summer:** a bird was present in the county during this period, but no proof of breeding came from the two previously used sites. Autumn/winter: this period accounted for the majority of sightings this year with a first year female at Arlington Grange Farm, Curridge on Sep 27th (IW), 1 fem/f/w QMR Oct 5th and 6th (CDRH), 1 male at Aldermaston Oct 25th (RW) and finally 1 was present in Streatley Dec 12th (BSh). Overall, it was a fairly typical year.

## COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

*Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant*

Records came from 24 locations this year, a significantly higher number than normal. **Spring:** Apr 7th started the Redstart season with 1m at Greenham Com (NC), another male at Moss End (MRAn) and 2 males at Wishmoor Cross (PJC). On 8th, a female (Brightwalton) 3 males (Cow Down) and another male (Burnthouse Lane) continued the passage whilst the 9th saw 4 more males at Streatley Warren and another at Westridge Green. During the remainder of April, 52 individuals were recorded from 12 sites. **Summer:** during May and June, most records came from traditional well-watched sites. The Swinley area was found to hold 38 territories (slightly down on recent years) with 6 pairs confirmed breeding, one nest being located in the base of a dead tree and another in a Birch stump. Further nests were found in an Oak and a dead Pine (DJB). Greenham and Crookham Com each



held single males (MO). 1 pair with 3 juvs, 1 pair with 2 juvs and 1 other singing male were then present at Broadmoor Bottom MOD Jun 18th (DJB). **Autumn:** departure seemed to commence with a f/w at Bracknell STW Aug 19th (DJB), followed on 24th by a female in GDS' garden, an adult male at Cockmarsh on the 25th (WAS; CDRH) and 28th (BDC), a female with juv at Lough Down on 25th (ABT), another at Eversley GPs the next day (GR), and a female at Streatley Warren 27th (CRe). Passage continued through Sep with females or f/ws noted at Cockmarsh on 3rd and 10th (WAS; CDRH), Greenham Com 18th (CRe), Strand Water, Cookham 18th (WAS), and Greenham Com 21st (RF), this site recording the last for the year with a fem/imm Sep 23rd (IW; NC). The only ringing record was a single at Wraybury in Sep.

## WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

*Common passage migrant but no longer a summer visitor*

97 records from 23 locations indicated a good year. **Spring:** a male appeared at Greenham Com Apr 18th (SA) followed by another at Pingewood from the 20th for 4 days (MO). Other males passing through included 1 at Englefield Apr 22nd (ABT), 1 Eversley GPs Apr 23rd (GR; PBT), 1 at Eling Apr 23rd (NJB), 1 Aldermaston on 24th (KEM), 1 at Wildmoor Heath 25th (MDL), 1 at QMR on 30th (CDRH) and another at Whistley Mill the same day (MFW). Further records during this period from Greenham and Pingewood may well have been the same birds. During the first 2 weeks of May a few more passed through comprising a male at Dorney W May 2nd (DJB), the first female of the year recorded, at QMR May 4th (CDRH; ABT), another female at Greenham Com on the 9th, a single at Brimpton on 13th (CMR and his bird race team), and the last for spring, another female, at Broadmoor MOD May 14th (DJB). **Autumn:** we had to wait until Aug 19th for the first returning bird, near Brimpton GP (GEW), after which a steady flow of records came from 13 sites and involved at least 38 individuals, following the usual trend of more Whinchats in autumn than in spring. The higher counts, mainly in Sep, included 4 at Englefield Aug 30th (RCr), 5 at Compton (1m and 4 f/imm grouped together) Sep 2nd (ABT), 5 near Brimpton GP Sep 3rd and 4th (GEW), 3 Greenham Com on the 5th (NC), and 4 at Woolhampton GP Sep 17th (MJD). 2 recorded at Englefield Oct 4th and 10th (RCr) may have been separate individuals, but the last 2 of the year were at Greenham Com Oct 21st (JL). Only one male was reported amongst the autumn birds (although most records did not assign age or gender). One West Berks bird was trapped and ringed, whilst another was ringed in East Berks by RRG, unusually, in June. The only other recent June record was a male at QMR in 1999 and there have been no confirmed breeding records for several decades.

## STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; breeds locally with numbers dictated by habitat availability*

A commendable 389 records for this popular species came from 71 sites across the county, slightly fewer locations than in 2005 (23 West Berks, 18 Mid Berks, 30 East Berks). 96 reports covered the period Jan to Mar, mainly of ones and twos but with 7 (4m, 3f) on Cow Down Jan 1st (ABT) and on subsequent dates, and 5 (3m, 2f) Wishmoor Bottom Mar 25th (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** by April, numbers at the main breeding sites were established. At Greenham Com, a female was nest building Apr 8th (NC), a male was seen carrying food to a nest Apr 26th with at least one other active pair nearby (NC), and by Jun 2nd, a pair was seen feeding 4 juvs, another pair had 3 juvs and 3 additional males were present (DJB). A pair was also noted taking food to a nest Aug 21st (NC), presumably a second brood.

Meanwhile, at the heathland blocks in East Berks, surveys undertaken by DJB located 28 territories at Swinley Forest, which included 12 prs, 6 of which raised at least 17 young, Wildmoor Heath held 8 territories located with 2 pairs rearing at least 5 young, 1 pair nested at Caesar's Camp, whilst nest building and the feeding of young was observed at Broadmoor MOD amongst the 8 birds present, and Wishmoor Bottom had at least 4 pairs, 2 producing young. Evidence of breeding elsewhere came in the form of a juv at Brimpton Jun 12th (GEW). The only report from anywhere else during the summer period was of 2 at Moatlands GP May 26th (BMA). **Autumn:** Most Sep records came from the main breeding areas, with 15 at Greenham on 6th (NC). Another juv male, was at Brimpton Sep 5th (GEW), a male was at Englefield on 19th (RCr), with 2m there 30th, and singletons were at Lower Fm 15th (JL), Jubilee River 16th (KPD, and Compton 26th (ABT). On Sep 28th, Brimpton held a male and juv female (GEW), a female was at Old Down 30th (CRE) when a single male was at QMR (CDRH; ABT). By October, all these sites still held birds (with 13 at Greenham mid-month) whilst 2s and 3s could be found at Dorney W, Ascot race course, Combe Hill, Horton GPs, Wraysbury GPs and QMR. **Second winter:** Nov and Dec saw increasing distribution across the county, often just singles, but with at least 30 locations recording a pair, as often seems to be the case with over-wintering birds. Amongst the higher numbers were 5 Brimpton Nov 5th (GEW), 10 Greenham Com Nov 6th (JL), 6 Bury Down Nov 10th (DJB), and 5 Colnbrook Dec 28th (CDRH). Of interest, a leucistic individual was present for a few days in September at Greenham Com (JL; NC). Ringing totals in West Berks was 12. RRG did not trap any this year. The following table summarises the status of Stonechat records in Berkshire in 2006:

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greenham/ Crookham Com	–	2	4	5	7	16	4	10	15	15	10	6
Wildmoor	1	1	12	7	13	6	–	–	4	–	–	–
Swinley Forest	1	2	47	49	47	47	5	–	–	8	3	6
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
No of Birds	41	24	21	6	2	1	–	–	11	67	79	43
No of Sites	24	21	16	4	1	1	–	–	7	21	25	20
Overall total No of Birds	43	29	61	67	69	70	9	10	28	90	92	55

## WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Common passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

No fewer than 64 sites were visited by Wheatears this year, significantly up on recent years which averaged 44 sites. **Spring:** the first of the season was a group of 4 splendid males at Greenham Com Mar 26th (TPo), followed by 6 at Dorney W 27th, which increased to 13 by Mar 29th (CRE). Other high spring counts came from Greenham Com Apr 4th with 12 (PH), 19 (15 males) at QMR Apr 15th (CDRH), 20 Greenham Com Apr 20th (JL) and an impressive 28 at the pools of Crookham Com Apr 20th (JPM), whilst SDi was counting another 21 on the Greenham Com section to the west of this location on the same day, with yet another 16 that day at Sheepdrove Farm (ABT) indicating a significant movement at that time, with some 150 birds estimated to be in the county that week. By May 13th when the last spring bird was seen (KEM) only singles and 2s had been filtering through the county for the previous 3 weeks. **Autumn:** as would be expected, the return passage, which commenced with a single bird at QMR Aug 12th (CDRH), involved mostly lone

birds, though there were 7 at Compton Down Sep 9th (ABT) and another 7 at Bury Down Oct 10th (CDRH) was notable, especially as 2 leucorhoa were amongst them. A leucistic type with white wings/tail and tan colour was seen at Greenham Com Sep 13th (JL; NC). The last record was at Englefield Nov 11th (RCr). Assessing the number of individuals is always difficult as some small groups may dally a while whereas others are quickly replaced with follow-on parties. Two thirds of the reports came during the period March to May, and also accounted for the largest percentage of individuals, as the following chart demonstrates:

### Spring

Week ending	31/3	7/4	14/4	21/4	28/4	5/5	13/5
No of Sites	9	13	14	22	13	15	9
Min No of Birds	46	31	45	151	40	36	11

### Autumn

Week ending	18/8	25/8	1/9	8/9	15/9	22/9	29/9	6/10	13/10	20/10	09/11
No of Sites	3	7	6	5	7	3	4	4	6	3	2
Min No of Birds	3	10	8	17	9	6	6	9	14	6	2

## GREENLAND WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*

*Common passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

Greenland Wheatears, being a bit larger, browner on the back, and more rufous underneath, are picked out in most years by discerning eyes. However, just 2 birds were noted this year, comprising 1 fem/imm QMR Sep 27th and Oct 2nd (CDRH), and 2 fem/imms on Bury Down Oct 8th (CDRH).

## RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

*Scarce passage migrant*

With 18 records received, involving both seasons, it might have been a record year, but in fact possibly only 6 birds in spring and 2 in autumn accounted for these observations.

**Spring:** the first two on the same day, Apr 7th were at Greenham Com (ABT) and a male in a South Ascot garden (AHO). Then attention turned to Streatley Warren where, from Apr 9th when 2 males were found (ABT), up to 3 males and a female were seen at any one time by the 17th (MO) on which date just the female was noted (KEM). **Autumn:** the first returnee was a male on Cow Down, West Ilsley Oct 22nd (MFW) and the only other was another male at Greenham Com Oct 29th (NC).

## BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

*Abundant resident and common winter visitor*

This species' abundance results in under-recording, with most accounts involving winter groupings, although there were no significant numbers this year. Garden groups included 14 in Twyford Jan 1st (SPA), 15 in two neighbouring Newbury gardens Jan 8th (TPo), and 13 on apples in Maidenhead (DF) Jan 28th. Away from urban locations, 16 were at Bray GPs Jan 2nd (PNe), and 12 at Thatcham Jan 27th (BJW). A male was reported singing after dark by Newbury Police Station Jan 4th (TPo). Only 6 summer records referred to successful breeding. A wholly leucistic bird was at Bulls Lock, K&A Canal on Jul 18th (RAH), possibly the same bird reported as partially albino by a fisherman to SAG in January. Higher autumn

counts included 30 at Greenham Com (of which a flock of 14 was heading south) on Oct 13th (NC) and 12 feeding together on hawthorn at Upper Bucklebury Nov 8th (NC). Other food items recorded were rowan and holly berries. Ringing totals in West Berks were 202 with RRG capturing 52 at their Berkshire sites.

## FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

*Common winter visitor, very rare in summer*

**First winter:** the number of three-figure flocks had just started building up in Dec 2005, and this continued into New Year's day this year with 100 at Aldworth (PRi), 150 at Ankerwycke Pk, Wraybury (JEW), and 116 at Widbrook, Cookham (DF). By mid-January, slightly larger flocks could be found such as 200 Coldharbour (JEM), increasing to 400 a few days later (DJB), 300 at Jealotts Hill (RCr) and 280 at Sonning (RJB). By February, 600 could be found at Winkfield (BDC) and 500 in Easthampstead Park (DJS), somewhat overshadowed by an impressive 1000 at Felix Farm, Shurlock Row Feb 28th (DJB). Numbers dwindled rapidly during early April, the last of the season being 7 at Streatley Warren Apr 17th (KEM).

**Second winter:** the first to be spotted were 10 at Combe Sep 30th (RHAr), and it was 10 days before the next 7 were reported on Oct 9th at Remenham (ANS), after which birds were trickling in for about a month. The first sizeable flock of the season was one of 300 at Swinley Forest Nov 2nd (DJS), and 260 were at West Woodhay Nov 4th (IW; JL). Another 300 were at Compton Dec 13th (WB), after which, apart from 500 at Bury Down Dec 31st (RRi), several flocks of 100 to 150 roamed West Berks sites waiting to be discovered in January 2007. Food items reported during the year included apples, but many reports were of birds in fields, paddocks or on the plough, presumably seeking invertebrates. In the majority of reports of mixed flocks, Fieldfare greatly outnumbered Redwings.

## SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

*Common resident and winter visitor*

Song Thrushes remain underreported. **First winter:** birds were already singing by the end of 2005, so several were in full flow as January progressed, and in fact song was recorded in every month up to July. Whilst most records were of ones and twos, there were 6 feeding together on winter wheat on Brightwalton Com Feb 2nd (GDS). A leucistic bird was located at Thatcham Marsh Feb 3rd (DJB). **Breeding:** a family party at Cranbourne Chase in May, pairs feeding young at White Waltham and Fifield in June and a juv in Windsor Forest in July were the only confirmed breeding records (all DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** the only significant count in this period was of 40 passing over Greenham Com during the morning of Oct 16th (NC) and the year closed appropriately with 3 singing males at Eversley GPs on Dec 31st (BMA).

## REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

*Common winter visitor*

There were almost exactly the same number of reports of Redwings as of Fieldfares, and most of the sites were the same too. However, apart from 200 which started the year off at Ankerwycke Park Jan 1st (JEW) and 150 at Great Shefford Jan 26th (FGM), most groups were in double figures. 1 was caught and ringed at Greenham Jan 4th (NC). February saw an upturn with 300 at Windsor Gt Pk Feb 13th (CDRH), 350 at Crowthorne on 22nd (BMA), and 150 at Felix Farm on 28th (DJB). The Crowthorne flock increased to 500 by Mar 14th (BMA) after which groups dwindled to double figures until the last singleton departed on

the fairly typical date of Apr 11th from Winterbourne (MJT). **Autumn/Second winter:** the first returning bird was on an equally typical date of Sep 30th over Reading (RCr per T Ba), the next being 50 over Tilehurst Oct 9th (JA). There then seemed to be a pulse of arrivals around Oct 16th and 17th when several double figure groups were reported from 8 locations. But the few days between Oct 26th and 30th appeared to herald the main arrival with 17 double-figure flocks, plus 590 over Wishmoor Bottom in one and half hours Oct 27th (DJB) and 120 over Greenham Com on 30th (NC). Throughout Nov and Dec, birds seemed to spread out into smaller gatherings, and amongst one of 13, a singleton was caught and ringed at Padworth Com Nov 22nd as was another at Greenham Com Dec 16th (NC). The year petered out with mainly over-flying groups being reported and a few in gardens.

## **MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

*Common resident*

Reported from 91 sites, down a little on last year but significantly up on 2004, but only by virtue of the relatively few records submitted. ‘Storm Cocks’ were in full song from the very outset of the year, most groups having split up, leaving just 6 together at Sunninghill Park Jan 14th (DJB) and 10 in the West Ilsley area Mar 4th (DJR). A partial albino with white head, upper throat and mantle was found at Farnborough Jan 29th (GDS). **Summer/Breeding:** Apr 29th saw the first breeding record, of a pair feeding young at Boxford (MSt). Other juvs were noted at Westbrook and Sunninghill Pk in May (MSt, DJB), and DJB found three family parties in the Windsor Forest complex in June. **Autumn/Second winter:** Mistle Thrushes traditionally form post-breeding flocks but the only examples of this were 21 at East Garston on Jul 4th (CDRH), 10 at Wickham Heath Jul 22nd (SAG) and another 10 at Combe Jul 31st (RHar), making for a poor result this year. Later, a group of 8 were feeding on berries together in Burnt Hill Nov 7th (WB) from when most accounts were of single birds but 7 were of birds already in song.

## **CETTI'S WARBLER** *Cettia cetti*

*Localised resident in small numbers (Schedule 1)*

This species continues to expand both in numbers and range, being reported from 26 sites and involving 57 birds. There was a significant spread in East Berks where it was reported from Bray GPs, Englemere Pond, Eversley GPs, Great Meadow Pond, Swan Pond and Wraysbury GPs. Most records consist of one or two birds, with higher counts of up to three at Dinton Pastures Apr-Dec (MO) and Freeman's Marsh Mar-Nov (RF), four at Moatlands GP Mar-June (JA), and six territories at Woolhampton GP (GEW). Highest count came from Thatcham Marsh where 13 singing males were located Jun 2nd (DJB). Breeding was confirmed at Woolhampton where one was seen carrying nest material Apr 27th, and food to the nest May 25th (GEW), one was seen carrying food at Dinton Pastures Apr 21st (SDi), at Thatcham Marsh the first juvenile was ringed Jun 18th (IW; JL) and a juvenile was ringed at Kintbury Cress Beds in August (RGS).

## **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

*Scarce summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant*

**Spring:** main arrival period was the second half of April, the first record being one at Lea Farm GP on 19th (PBT) which preceded two at Freeman's Marsh the following day, with one on 24th (RF). Singles were at Kintbury on 22nd (JLS), Remenham on 23rd (MSFW) which was also noted 24th–26th (ANS, RCW), Burghfield Mill on 24th (WB) then on

26th birds were noted at Dorney W (DWLog), Eversley GPs (MDL) and Bottom Lane, Theale (KEM); the Bottom Lane bird was also heard on 27th (KEM) and 28th (DJB). The only later arrival was one at Thattham Marsh May 6th (ACa). **Summer:** Disappointingly, none were reported during the summer. **Autumn:** 4 records; an early returning bird was at Dorney W Jul 21st (DJB), singles, considered by the observer to be different birds, were at Wraysbury GPs Aug 11th and 17th (CDRH) and finally, a juvenile was ringed at Thattham Marsh Sep 17th (IW; JL).

## **SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Common summer and passage migrant*

Reported from 41 sites this year. **Spring:** first singing birds were reported in April from Main Pit, Theale on 1st (KEM, KS, NR), Lavell's Lake on 2nd (ADB), Hosehill Lake on 3rd (PH), and Thattham Marsh on 6th (NC), with 2 at Burghfield Mill on 12th when 3 were at Field Farm GP (RCr) and 1 at Moatlands (RCr). Higher counts consist of 16 singing at Thattham Marsh Apr 23rd (IW; JL) with 14 there Jun 2nd (DJB) and 11 caught and ringed May 28th (IW; JL), and 12 singing at Wraysbury GPs May 4th (CPo). At Strand Water a count of 20 Jul 2nd (WAS) consisted of 4 family parties, whilst other breeding records came from Eversley GPs where 1 was collecting food Jun 9th (BMA), Dinton Pastures where a family party was present Jul 3rd (SDi), Dorney W where food carrying was observed Jul 10th (DJB), and a juvenile was ringed at Thattham Marsh Jun 18th (IW; JL). **Autumn:** September records consist of singles at Southcote on 1st (ACa), Dorney W on 7th (BDC) and Lavell's Lake on 24th (FJC), 9 were ringed at Thattham Marsh on 17th (IW; JL), and at Great Meadow Pond singles were present on 3rd & 13th, with 2 Oct 1st (DJB). Finally, a late bird was at Hosehill Lake Oct 8th (BU).

## **REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant*

As in 2005, reported from 35 locations, mostly wetland sites but out of habitat birds were at Greenham Com May 4th (NC), a Dedworth garden May 13th (DAC) and a maize field at Englefield Sep 30th (RCr). **Spring:** the recent trend for this species to arrive earlier each year came to a halt in 2006 with the first report being at Hosehill Lake Apr 18th (BU), a more expected date. On the 20th 2 were at Burghfield Mill (KEM), 1 at Lower Farm GP (AJP) and 1 at Lavell's Lake (MFW). Numbers then rapidly increased, e.g. 5 at Brimpton GP Apr 22nd (GEW) and 5 Thattham Marsh on 23rd (IW; JL). **Summer:** good numbers were reported from several sites including 21 singing at both Burghfield Mill Apr 29th (RCr) and Thattham Marsh Jun 2nd (DJB) where 19 were ringed May 28th (IW; JL), 22 singing at Great Meadow Pond May 7th (DJB), 21 at Dorney W Jun 5th (BDC), and 20 at Strand Water Jun 9th (WAS). At Searle's Farm Lane, Burghfield GPs a count of 26 in June included 14 young in 3 easily viewed nests (JA), and other breeding records came from Bray GPs with 3 family parties totalled 12–15 birds (WAS), Eversley GPs where 2 were collecting food Jun 9th (BMA), Dorney W where food was taken to 2 nests (BDC), Strand Water where 2 family parties were seen Jul 23rd (WAS), Great Meadow Pond where 6 juveniles were seen Jul 16th and several were part of a count of 25 Jul 30th (DJB), and Woolhampton GP where a juvenile was seen Jun 29th (GEW). **Autumn:** tardy birds were at Lower Farm GP Sep 16th (IW; JL), Eversley GPs Sep 17th (BMA), Great Meadow Pond Sep 24th (DJB) and Main Pit, Theale Oct 2nd (JA). 11 were ringed at Thattham Marsh Sep 17th (IW; JL) whilst the last record was 1 at Great Meadow Pond Oct 8th (DJB).

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Common summer migrant, and uncommon but regular winter visitor*

There were fewer reports during both winter periods this year, though as this species has become a regular garden visitor it may be a case that it is under-reported.

**First winter:** reported from 34 locations involving 57 birds, mostly ones & twos, and as in previous years, mostly from gardens. Records of 3 came from one site in East Berks and three sites in mid-Berks, whilst 2 males and 4 females were ringed Jan-Mar in a Theale garden (JPM).

**Spring/Summer:** sporadic garden records continued through March and into April, therefore clouding the issue of first returning spring migrants, but a glut of records in the last few days of March away from urban areas would point to these being new arrivals. On 29th 3 were singing at Hosehill (NR) with 1 at Lavell's Lake (ADB), singles were at Strand Water (WAS) and Jubilee River (PWil) on 30th, and 1 was at Twyford GPs on 31st (KIT). Good numbers were reported from a number of sites including 18 at Bray GPs Apr 14th (WAS), 27 singing at Burghfield GPs Apr 15th (JA), 13 at Dinton Pastures Jun 29th (RBor), 16 singing at Thatcham Marsh Jun 2nd (DJB), and 20 at Wraysbury GPs Jun 5th (PNe). Surveys by DJB at Windsor Forest revealed 94 territories (up from 80 in 2005) and at Swinley Forest 166 territories (up from 99 in 2005). Breeding was noted at Bearwood Lake, Jealott's Hill, Kintbury Cress Beds, Thatcham Marsh and Great Meadow Pond. **Autumn/Second winter:** increasing numbers were at Theale Main Pit in late July where 15 were under the pylon on 25th, with 25 there Aug 5th (RCr) and 12 the following day (RJB). Elsewhere, 12 were at Cockmarsh Sep 3rd (WAS) and 14 were ringed at Thatcham Marsh Sep 10th & 12 Sep 17th, with 1 Oct 29th (IW; JL). 1 ringed at Greenham Com Nov 1st (NC, JL) could be considered the last summer migrant but Nov 6th saw the first garden record of the winter period in Bracknell (DEa), followed by others in gardens at Emmer Green on 18th (ABT), Bullbrook (RJB) and Caversham (TGB) both on 20th. Records came from 16 sites in Nov/Dec, totalling 19 birds.

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant*

One at Douglas Lane, Wraysbury Apr 19th (CDRH) and three at Wraysbury GPs the same day (CPo) were the first returning birds, closely followed by singles at Hosehill Lake (KEM), Greenham Com (NC) and Dinton Pastures (CRe) all on 20th, Moor Copse on 21st (WB), Theale Main Pit on 22nd (RJB), and Moatlands (ABT), Lower Farm GP (NC; MJD), Lambourn (RF) and Eversley GPs (BMA) all on 24th. Highest counts during spring/summer were 11 singing at Burghfield GPs May 21st (JA), 12+ at Greenham Com May 4th including 6 ringed (NC) and 31 territories found during DJB's survey of Swinley Forest who noted a continual decline in numbers, possibly due to scrub clearance and poor weather during May. **Breeding:** was noted at Sonning Meadows Jun 17th (ABT) where one was carrying food, two juveniles were ringed at Greenham Com Jun 28th (NC), a family party was observed at Strand Water Jul 23rd (WAS), and five pairs were seen with young at Burghfield GPs in July (JA). **Autumn:** Autumn passage was generally low-key, although 10 were at Main Pit, Theale Jul 31st (JA, RPo) and at Greenham Com 26 birds were recorded during August with 22 ringed on seven dates (NC). Singles at Twyford GPs Aug 24th (PBT) and Greenham Com the same day (NC) were followed by a late bird at Walbury Hill Sep 10th (ABT), a rather early end to autumn passage.

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca**Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant*

A slightly better year for this species with 73 singing males reported in spring from 64 locations. Arrived in force on Apr 22nd when singles were at Greenham Com (JL), Summerleaze GP (BDC), Thatcham GPs (RRK) and two at Cockmarsh (PNe), then one at Lea Farm on 23rd (BTB) and one at Lavell's Lake on 24th (BTB, FJC). **Spring:** most spring records consisted of one or two birds, but three were at Thatcham Marsh Apr 29th (RRK) and 10 were at Wraysbury Scrub May 7th (CDRH). One was in a Brightwalton garden May 5th (GDS) and 1 was present in Maidenhead gardens for a week at the end of May (CDRH). **Breeding:** records were limited to an adult with three juveniles at Brimpton GP Jun 11th (GEW) and one taking food to the nest at Jubilee River Jun 15th (BDC). **Autumn:** main autumn passage occurred mid-August/beginning September; 3 were at Theale Main Pit Aug 6th, with 5 there on 13th (JA), at Cockmarsh 3 were present Aug 25th (CDRH) with 4 on 27th, 5 on 29th, 4 Sep 2nd and 8 Sep 3rd (WAS), and at Greenham Com 6 birds were ringed on five dates Jul 27th–Sep 4th (NC). An adult in a Caversham garden Aug 13th was unusual, and this was followed by a juvenile present Aug 18th–25th feeding on elderberries (TBa). Last dates were singles at Theale Main Pit (JA) and Greenham Com (SDi) both Sep 8th.

**WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis**Common summer visitor and passage migrant*

Reported from 78 locations across the county. **Spring:** first noted at Speen Apr 11th where a female was present (PJO), with 1 singing at Wraysbury GPs 12th Apr (CDRH). These were closely followed by 2 at Eversley GPs 14th (MDL, BMA), 1 at Lea Farm GP the same day (MJM) then, singles at Burnthouse Lane (KEM), Bagnor Cress Beds (IW; JL) and 3 at Streatley Warren (NR) all on 16th. **Spring/Summer:** double-figure counts during spring and summer came from numerous sites; 11 singing at Slough SF May 2nd and 6th (DJB), 10 Wraysbury GPs May 1st (SFo) 10 there May 4th (CPo), also 16 there Jun 5th (PNe), 11 Wishmoor Bottom May 14th (DJB), 10 Lands End May 12th (GSte), 12 Dorney W Jun 28th (BDC), 11 territories Bracknell STW Jun 27th (DJB), and 51 territories Compton Downs May 11th (DJB). **Breeding:** a very early record of one carrying nest material at Burnthouse Lane Apr 17th (RCr) is likely to have arrived only a few days previously. Other evidence of breeding came from Bagnor Cress Beds, Bray GPs, Brimpton, Knowl Hill, Cow Down, Dorney W, Lower Farm GP, Strand Water and Widbrook Com. **Autumn:** in July 10 were at Dorney W on 21st (BDC) and also at Theale Main Pit on 25th (RCr). During Aug, 28 were at Streatley Warren on 4th (DJB), 12 at Wraysbury GPs on 8th (WAS) and 10 at Bray GPs on 29th (WAS). Widely reported during the first week of September, there were late records from Combe Hill on 9th (DJB), Fifield also on 9th (MSFW), and finally, Greenham Com on 21st (NC, JL) and 22nd (JL).

**DARTFORD WARBLER** *Sylvia undata**Resident in small numbers in suitable habitat, rare away from breeding sites (Schedule 1 and Amber listed)*

Apart from the regular populations on the East Berks heaths and Greenham Com, it was pleasing to report that this species was seemingly gaining a toe-hold in other areas, with records coming from a site in mid-Berks and an additional site in West Berks. Diligent survey work by DJB on the East Berks heaths produced a total of 12–16 territories during March–Jun with at least 4 pairs confirmed breeding, but with unknown success. Up to 3



territories were found at Broadmoor Bottom, 5 territories were at Wishmoor Bottom and 3 pairs were located at Wildmoor Heath. Singing birds were at Wellington College Heath Apr–May (DJS), South Ascot Apr 17th (DJB), and Swinley Brick Pits also Apr 17th (DJB). Later in the year 9 at Broadmoor Bottom Dec 28th included 6 singing males (DJB), whilst 11 were at Wishmoor Oct 27th with 12 there Dec 28th (DJB). 1 was at Owlsmoor Reserve Nov 4th (DJS) and 1 or 2 were reported from Caesar’s Camp throughout the year (MO). At Greenham Com, where birds were reported Feb–Dec, a pair feeding young plus another pair and a singing male were seen Jun 2nd (DJB). A juvenile was seen Jul 12th and other juveniles were ringed in Sep/Oct (NC). 8 were located Sep 19th and 10 Nov 6th (JL). In addition, 1 was at Snelsmore Com Apr 1st (BJW), and at Padworth Com 3 were seen Jan 13th (NC), 1 was singing Apr 15th and throughout the summer (NC) and 1 was also reported May 21st (KTu).

## WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

*Formerly an uncommon summer visitor, now an increasingly rare passage migrant (Red Listed)*

Another poor year with two records but from the same location; one at Bucklebury Com Apr 30th (RF), was followed by another report there Jun 4th (DJ Reynolds). It’s speculation as to whether the records refer to the same bird, or whether the time lapse indicates two separate individuals.

## CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor*

Reported from 20 locations Jan/Feb numbering 38 birds, mostly ones and twos, but three were at Calcot (ABT), five at Moatlands GP (JA) and five at Sandhurst (DJS, CRW). **Spring/Summer:** the usual problem of differentiating over-wintering birds from new arrivals is an annual headache. Birds noted early March but not at sites reported in February consist of singles at Maidenhead on 3rd (JEM), Thatcham on 6th (RAH), Bottom Lane, Theale on 7th (RJB) and Wokingham STW on 8th (DJB). By mid-month birds had also been recorded at Dorney W, Burghfield GPs, Crookham Com and Fobney Marshes. High counts consist of 10 at Hosehill Lake Mar 28th (JLe), Kintbury Cress Beds Apr 3rd (RGS) and Dinton Pastures Jun 29th (RBor), 18 Wraysbury GPs Apr 5th (PNe), and survey work by DJB located 13 territories at South Ascot, 36 at Windsor Forest, and 106 at Swinley Forest (down from 149 in 2005 and 221 in 2004, possibly as a result of felling of woodland blocks and scrub). **Breeding:** the only reports were of one carrying food at Dinton Pastures Apr 21st (SDi), a pair feeding young at Swinley Forest (DJB), and 7 nests found at Burghfield GPs which produced good numbers of young (JA). **Autumn/Second winter:** the only report of note was 14 at Great Meadow Pond Sep 10th (DJB). During Nov/Dec reports came from 12 locations numbering 19 individuals, mostly ones and twos but 3 Wraysbury GPs Dec 17th (JHa, SFo), and at least 5 at Arthur Jacob NR, Horton on Nov 28th (CDRH) which included two showing characteristics of the Siberian race *P.c. tristis* (see below).

## SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus (collybita) tristis*

*Rare winter visitor*

Arthur Jacob NR, Horton: two together on Nov 28th showed all the characteristics of the Siberian race *P.c. tristis* (CDRH); both were heard giving the characteristic ‘sad’ call on Dec 9th (and subsequently) and were seen intermittently into January 2007. This is the first Berkshire report in which this form – or incipient species – has been listed separately from Chiffchaff.

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus**Common and widespread summer visitor and passage migrant*

First of the year was one at Main Pit, Theale Mar 27th (JHa) with 3 the following day (RJB) and singles at Hosehill Lake (NR; JLe) and Aston (ANS), and 4 at Dinton Pastures (ADB). On 29th 3 were at Brimpton GP (GEW) and other March records came from Aldermaston GP (JPM), Twyford GPs (JLS) and Strand Water (WAS) where singles were present on 30th, as were 2 at Gorrick Plantation (PJC), 3 at Eversley GPs (BMA), and one was at Bray GPs on 31st (DJB). Double-figure counts consist of 12 singing at Thatcham Marsh Apr 5th (RAH), 16 at Wraysbury GPs Apr 19th (CPo), 10 Twyford GPs Aug 21st (DJB), and surveys by DJB resulted in 10 territories found at Windsor Forest, 12 at South Ascot, and 108 in Swinley Forest (down from 121 in 2005). The only breeding record submitted was a pair feeding young at Wildmoor Heath May 29th (DJB). Most birds had departed by August but in September records came from Compton on 2nd (two juvs, ABT), Greenham Com on 5th (JL), Eversley GPs (BMA) and Woolhampton GP (BJW) both on 13th, and finally a late bird was at Horton GPs Oct 2nd (CDRH).

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus**Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor*

Widely reported throughout the year, mostly single-figure counts, but higher totals included 20 at Denford Trout Farm Feb 20th (RGS), 10 Greenham Com Sep 19th with 15 there Nov 6th (JL), 10 Thatcham Marsh Oct 8th and 29th (IW; JL), whilst DJB's surveys revealed 152 territories in Windsor Forest, 43 at South Ascot, 82 in Swinley Park, and an impressive 446 in Swinley Forest. Breeding activity was noted at Braywick Park, Ashley Hill, Swinley Forest and Windsor Forest.

**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)*

**First winter:** 1 at Finchampstead Ridges Feb 9th–11th (BMA, GR, RJB) was the only record. **Spring/Summer:** Derek Barker's annual survey of this species in East Berks located 54 territories (down from 67 in 2005) and found 1 pair feeding several young on June 10th and 1 pair feeding 6 newly fledged juvs on June 24th (DJB). Elsewhere, it is pleasing to report that a number of other sites held pairs or singing males: at Ambarrow Corner, Sandhurst two males were present Apr 8th and a pair was present May 16th–31st (DJS); three pairs were located at Ashley Hill Apr 17th (ABT); a pair was present Padworth Com May 10th (GEW) and one was singing at Roden Down May 11th (DJB), an unusual location. **Second winter:** 3 records; 1 ringed Greenham Com Sep 27th (NC; JL), 1 Snelsmore Com Oct 5th (JCh), and 1 Finchampstead Ridges Dec 17th (GBr).

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata**Widespread but thinly distributed summer visitor and passage migrant, which has declined in recent years (Red Listed)*

Records came from a fairly typical 66 sites this year, of which 35 were in West Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 16 in East Berks. **Spring:** the first arrival on Apr 23rd at Whiteknights Park (PG) was slightly early. The next appeared, at Widbrook Com May 2nd (WAS), followed by two May 3rd at Buck Farm House, Jealotts Hill (BDC) and Padworth Lane GP (KEM).

The main arrival appeared to be between May 7th and 20th at 21 sites including 5 singing at South Ascot May 12th (DJB). **Breeding:** work by DJB uncovered the following territories: 2 Cranbourne Chase, 33 Swinley Forest, 8 Swinley Park and 5 South Ascot (around the golf course). Singing birds were reported from 11 other sites up to Jun 10th and courtship reported from Bowdown Woods (RRi) and Aldworth Downs (ANS). Nest building was observed at Rapley Lake May 23rd (DJB) and another pair laid an egg in a nest box near Kintbury Cress Beds (RGS) but the egg was later found outside the box. Another nest was found at Englemere Pond with a chick Jun 3rd (CDJ), and another, in a previously-used rose arch in MJT's garden Jun 9th, also produced nestlings by Jul 1st, whilst another nest attempt was reported from Arlington Grange Farm (IW). Reports of adults with juvs came from Streatley Warren (SPA), California Farm (GDS), Newbury FC ground (SA), Hamstead Lock (IW; JL), Farnborough Down (GDS) and, on Jul 27th, Padworth Lane GP (KEM). Adults and young were at Wickham Green Jul 28th (GDS) and Lough Down on 29th (ABT). More records of adults with young continued through Aug, but as the species is known to travel in family parties, separating local breeding from groups on passage becomes difficult. Such groups were noted at Donnington Castle 8 Aug 3rd (RAH), Streatley Warren 8 Aug 4th (DJB), Cockmarsh 3 Aug 5th (DJB), Lardon Chase 4 Aug 5th (MJM), Bearwood Lake 4 Aug 10th (DJB), Padworth Lane GP 3 Aug 28th (KEM) and Eversley GPs 2 Aug 30th (RJG), but an adult feeding a recently fledged chick at Cranbourne Gate, Windsor Aug 10th appears to have been a much more local account (CDRH). **Autumn:** in addition to the parties listed, other Aug sightings came from 7 sites, including no fewer than 13 at Lough Down Aug 15th (ABT), and 6 together in Windsor Park Aug 22nd (CDRH). The first few days of Sep saw twos and threes, mainly at sites already mentioned, but 2 at Walbury Hill Sep 10th (ABT) and 1, a juv, at Woolhampton Sep 12th (KEM) were most likely birds on the move, as were the very last of the season, a party of 3 inc 1 juv at Theale Main Pit on Sep 16th (RJB), a fairly typical last date. A juv was ringed by NRG, and 3 birds by others in West Berks.

## **PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

*Scarce but annual passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

There were three spring records this year, comprising 1 male at Lavell's Lake Apr 17th (BTB; MFW per AR; KEM), 1 female at Greenham Com Apr 19th (RAH) and 1 male at Eling Apr 23rd (NJB). The sole autumn sighting was of 1 female at Theale GPs Aug 5th (JA). Continued declines in their traditional breeding areas may lead to even fewer Berkshire records in the future.

## **BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

*Scarce winter visitor and rare summer visitor*

Visiting in five of the previous twelve seasons, this year's offering consisted of a pair at Horton GPs Nov 7th, feeding quietly on Reedmace in an overgrown ditch (CDRH). There was no sign the following day, despite extensive searching.

## **LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

*Widespread and common resident*

Of sixty first-winter records, ten were of groups between 10 and 20, whilst only one was of a larger group, being 24 at Bray Jan 2nd (PNe). **Breeding:** the first reports of nest building came from Dorney W Mar 29th (BDC), at Wildmoor Heath Apr 8th and Bottom Lane GP Apr 28th (both DJB), whilst the first juvs were seen at Bowdown Woods May 21st (BDC)

and a family with 8 juvs at Wishmoor Bottom May 28th (DJB). Larger groups included 11 juvs at Great Meadow Pond May 28th and 16, mostly juvs, Jun 16th at Cranbourne Chase and most of a group of 34 in a mixed flock with tits at Bray GPs Jul 7th (all DJB). There were 9 other accounts of parties including juvs up to Sep 3rd when 40 were at Strand Water, Cookham (WAS). **Autumn:** there is always overlap between groups which are still family parties and other gatherings at this time of year, but larger groups commenced Aug 21st with 40 by the Thames opposite Cliveden (GV), 60 at Theale GPs Sep 16th (RJB), 40 at Burghfield GPs Nov 18th and 42 at Bottom Lane, Theale the same day (both RJB). Apart from 8 reports of groups of twenty or so, there were no significant flocks reported by the end of the year. Ringing in West Berks involved 169 birds whilst RRG caught 109.

## **BLUE TIT** *Parus caeruleus*

### *Abundant resident*

Several groups of double figure counts were recorded, and BJW came across 11 different flocks of 10 to 12 birds at various places, and a group of 18 at Snelsmore on Aug 7th. Flocks involving 20 or so birds came from 8 locations, whilst numbers in the 30's came from 4 places, including DJB's garden on Mar 11th where 1 bird with a deformed bill (50% longer, upturned and splayed at tip) used twigs to guide food items into its bill. The largest count was c70 comprising 10 family parties in South Forest, Windsor Jun 24th (DJB). As usual, many Blue Tits found themselves participating in ringing activity. No fewer than 1402 adults and 958 pulli were ringed in West Berks, where the oldest bird recaptured had been ringed in 2000. One of the birds ringed this year at Bagnor Cress beds was found dead on Jun 3rd in Shalbourne, Wilts, 15km away. In East Berks, RRG ringed 493 adults and 782 pulli. At one Berks site, comparisons were made over 5 years to monitor the relationship between number of broods and size of broods, and the correlation can be seen from the following table, indicating that fewer broods led to bigger broods.

### **Record of number of broods started, and pulli ringed**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Pulli ringed	917	792	1000	767	782
Broods started	107	175	161	204	178
Pulli per brood	8.6	4.5	6.2	3.8	4.4

Source – RRG Ringing Report for 2006.

## **GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

### *Abundant resident*

As is usual, Great Tits were reported in territorial song from early January, and no fewer than 34 could be found at Shepherds Meadows Mar 14th (CRe). Monitoring of territories in East Berks by BDC located 41 at Lot Wood/Carpenters Wood, Ashley Hill, 12 at adjacent Bowsey Hill, 8 at nearby Lindenhill Wood, 5 at Waltham Place, 7 at Buck Farm House, Jealotts Hill, 5 at Bushy Lees, Billingbear and 11 at Burringham Wood, Shottesbrook. None of the sites had nest boxes, and every available territory seemed to be occupied. A pair was tending 7 eggs in a Little Owl box at Widbrook Com May 16th and another such box was occupied by a pair with 8 eggs on Jun 1st, both requiring huge amounts of nesting material (BDC). Yet another pair had 6 chicks in a Tawny Owl box in Bisham Woods on May 29th (BDC). South Forest had 8 family parties totalling 50 birds Jun 24th (DJB) but generally, information submitted did not indicate typical successful brood sizes. NC ringed 14 at Padworth Com in November, whilst elsewhere in West Berks, no fewer than 733 adult and 619 pulli were

ringed, the oldest re-capture being from 2001. RRG trapped 216 at E Berks sites.

## COAL TIT *Parus ater*

*Common resident*

Reported from 45 locations, the Coal Tit remains under recorded, but their quite common presence in suitable habitat was in evidence from DJB's records of 32 songsters in Swinley Forest, 14 at Swinley Park, 8 on Cranbourne Chase, 19 at Wishmoor/Poppy Hills, 12 at Broadmoor and 21 at South Forest, all during Apr and May. At these sites, 14 family parties were noted later with several of 5 and 6 juvs, and 7 being the highest (Swinley Forest, Jun 6th). Breeding was reported by others from just 3 locations. There were only 2 accounts of birds using garden feeders. NC ringed 6 at Padworth Com in Nov and 2 at Greenham Com in Dec. Another 38 were ringed elsewhere in West Berks and RRG caught 26 in East Berks. The most impressive record however was of approximately 100 in a mixed flock with about 50 Goldcrests and 20 Long-tailed Tits in Swinley Park Dec 26th (WAN), reflecting a similar count here in 2004.

## WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

*Uncommon and declining resident, now almost confined to West Berkshire (Red listed)*

Away from the regular site at Combe, reports came in from just 8 other sites during the year, which reflects the ongoing reduction in range of the species in the county (18 sites in 2003, 12 in 2004 and 11 in 2005). 1 bird was at the Theale feeding station on 2nd & 6th (KEM; RCW) and 1 was caught and ringed at Kintbury Cress Beds Jan 12th (RGS). This bird, like one caught there Dec 2005, was a first winter, and may add to suspicions that breeding did take place in the county that year. \* Another was reported at Lands End Jun 6th (GSte) and on the K & A Canal, nr West Fields, 2 more individuals were present Jul 29th (JBRi). 2 birds were both seen and heard in song at Walbury Hill April 8th (ABT). At Combe, the only 'stronghold' for the species, 1 and occasionally 2 birds were found on several dates (ABT; KEM; NR) and 3 together Apr 2nd (ASI). Surveying there in July, JL found 6 territories, but no specific proof of breeding was reported this year. The same site held up to 3 birds by the end of the year (DJB). Elsewhere, autumn records involved 1 bird Oct 7th at Walcot Farm, Kintbury (JL;IW). Recovery for the species continues to look unlikely.

## MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

*Locally common resident outside E Berks where now uncommon (Red listed)*

No fewer than 179 reports of this declining species was refreshing, but only 52 sites were involved, a big reduction on last year's 82. Of these, only 10 were in Mid Berks and 8 in East Berks. **First winter:** 38 reports came in during January from 12 locations, mostly of ones or twos, but with 3 at Bottom Lane on several occasions (MO). February saw 21 records from 14 sites, with similar numbers, including 3 at Foliejon Park on 9th (MSFW) whilst, by the end of March, up to 5 were being seen at Bottom Lane and 6 at Combe Wood. **Summer:** accounts of successful breeding included a pair feeding young at a nest in Moor Copse May 7th (JLe), an adult and 5 juvs at Marsh Benham Jun 2nd (DJB), an adult feeding a juv at Woolhampton Jun 4th (GEW), and 2 juvs being fed in Windsor Forest Jun 5th (DJB). Although young were not seen at Bottom Lane, an adult was noted carrying food as late as Aug 20th (JA). In addition, NC trapped 2 imms at Greenham Com Sep 17th. **Autumn/Second winter:** 44 reports covered the last 3 months of the year with records from mostly the same sites as previous months but 8 different locations also held ones or

twos. However, 7 were at Combe Gibbet Oct 21st (ABT) and 4 were at Greenham Com, where 2 were caught and ringed, Oct 27th (NC), plus another on Dec 16th. The only reports of birds using feeders were from the Bottom Lane feeding station at Theale and in a nearby garden. Other ringing results included 34 adults in West Berks, up on both previous years, but none were trapped in East Berks.

## **NUTHATCH**     *Sitta europaea*

*Widespread common resident*

One of the species more likely to be encountered in the wooded areas of Mid Berks and East Berks, the 242 reports covered 78 sites, including 8 gardens. Over 50% of the reports were of single birds; 25% were of 2. There were 15 records of 3 together and a few of 4 or 5. At High Standing Hill Wood, Windsor, 7 were observed Jun 5th (DJB), and the same count was made at Finchampstead Ridges Dec 26th (BMA), whilst 9 were in South Forest Jun 24th (DJB). **First winter:** of the large number of records for the first 3 months, only 5 specifically mentioned calls being heard, although it is likely a bigger percentage were determined by this means. Both the Bottom Lane feeder and the one at Eversley GPs were recorded as being used by Nuthatch in this season. **Spring/Summer:** display was first reported at Thatcham Marsh Mar 14th (JHa) and by Mar 26th a pair was using mud on a large tree hole at Greenham Com (SAG). At Lot Wood, Ashley Hill, 22 territories appeared to be held on Apr 5th with 6 more at adjacent Clayton Hill Wood and another 2 at nearby Lindenhill Wood (BDC). DJB located 3 pairs, including 2 pairs feeding young at Windsor Forest on May 6th and of 13 found at Swinley Park on Jun 6th, family parties of 3 and 4 juvs were seen (DJB). Breeding was confirmed in 8 other locations, including the use of a nest box at Brimpton (GEW). There were 3 records of birds, including juvs, using garden feeders in this season. Ringing in West Berks involved 18 adult and 11 pulli whilst 13 were ringed by RRG in East Berks.

## **TREECREEPER**     *Certhia familiaris*

*Common resident*

Reported from 71 locations, only 2 of which were in gardens, most records were of 1 or 2 birds, and one third of all records covered just the period Jan and Feb. All the bigger counts involved family parties in the breeding season, apart from 6 at Swinley Forest Apr 28th (DJB) and 7 songsters were on territories in Lot Wood, Ashley Hill Apr 5th (BDC). **Breeding:** the first report of successful breeding came from Bushy Lees with young being fed May 5th (BDC). 5 (2ad; 3juvs) were at Braywick Park Jun 28th (BDC) and another 5 (2 singing plus 1 adult feeding 2 juvs) were at High Standinghill Wood Jun 5th (DJB). 6 (1 singing and a separate family group) were at Waltham Place Wood Jun 26th (BDC), 9 at South Forest, Windsor on May 23rd included families with 2 juv and 3 juv respectively (DJB), whilst on the same day another 9 at Swinley Forest included a family party with 3 recently fledged juvs (DJB). The largest count was at Lot Wood, on Jun 6th, with two family parties totalling 11 birds (BDC). 24 were ringed in West Berks whilst 9 were trapped by RRG in East Berks locations.

## **JAY**     *Garrulus glandarius*

*Common resident and uncommon passage migrant*

Records for this distinctive bird were not numerous, and over half came from West Berks, with 20% from Mid Berks and the remainder in the east. Counts of up to 2 were received

from 43 sites. **First winter:** no large groups, but 4 were in a Finchampstead garden Mar 14th (ES) and there were four counts of 3. The only report of digging for food possibly previously buried came from BAJC's garden in Maidenhead on Feb 3rd, and DF, SPA and VFO reported birds coming to feeding stations. **Breeding:** for such a colourful and raucous bird, it attracts few accounts of breeding. Just a single record, of a family party of 5 at Burringham Wood on Jun 22nd (BDC), comprised the evidence for 2006. **Autumn/Second winter:** a season in which Jays become far more active and obvious resulted in 50 records from 19 sites, the higher numbers including 6 at Dinton Pastures Nov 30th (CWFO), 7 at Strand Water, Cookham Nov 6th (WAS) and 8 at Cockmarsh Oct 9th (WAS). Despite the good number of records however, not one mentioned any carrying or burying of acorns. RRG ringed 5 in E Berks.

## **MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

*Abundant resident*

Widely reported across the county but by just 39 observers. A few groups of up to 20 were reported but larger gatherings included 35 at Slough SF Feb 13th (DJB), 26 Dorney W Mar 4th (probably the same group) (JEW) and a 'dawn gang' of 25 at North Wellington College Nov 7th (DJS). BDC counted 67 along the Berks sections of the Jubilee River Mar 24th. Accounts of 'mobbing' of other species included Kestrel and Red Kite (GV) and herons and crows (SAG).

## **JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

*Abundant resident*

Far fewer records were received for Jackdaw than Magpie, but flock sizes were of course much bigger, the largest of which included 250 hawking insects over Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Jun 4th (DJB), 275 feeding at White Place Farm, Cookham Dec 23rd (BDC), 300 at Dinton Pastures Nov 30th (RBor), 350 Tickleback Row Apr 3rd, 700 going to roost at Bracknell STW Jun 27th (both DJB), and 800 flying over QMR at dusk Mar 1st on their way to their nightly roost nearby (CDRH). Up to 1000 may have been amongst Rooks at East Garston Nov 22nd (GJS), but the most impressive sighting will have been the estimated 5000 leaving the Greenham Com roost at dawn on Oct 29th (ABT). For such a numerous species, relatively few records of breeding were submitted. Nests were located at Waltham Place (BDC), Swinley Park (WAN), and juvs were noted at Burnthouse Lane (RJB) and Shottesbrooke Park (BDC). Broods were also raised in a Tawny Owl nest box at Quarry Wood, Cookham (BDC) and a Barn Owl box at Binfield (BDC). Just 1 bird was ringed, by RRG, in E Berks.

## **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

*Abundant resident*

Persistent noise makes it impossible not to know if one lives near a Rookery, but there have been relatively few studies of the county's rookeries over the years. A national BTO survey in 1975 showed a wide distribution in the county, with concentrations of the larger groups in West Berks and north East Berks, with ten rookeries of more than 100 nests and one with no fewer than 282 (East Garston). A survey by NDOC in 1991 in specific 10km squares in W Berks indicated birds apparently moving between rookeries in the intervening years. The massive East Garston rookery had reduced to 33 by then. An assessment of our rookeries from casual records was undertaken by Berks Bird Bulletin over the 2005/2006 winters

covered just 91 rookeries, a smallish percentage compared with 1975. Nonetheless at least 3 of these contained over 100 nests (just 10 did so in the national survey), and 16 had over 50 nests. There were no nest counts from East Garston this time however. **Spring/Summer:** a small rookery of 9 nests was reported at West Woodhay Down (RGS), but the only record of any juvs for the year was of many amongst 446 birds at Ashley Hill Jun 7th (BDC). Counts: apart from the one just mentioned, 200 were counted crossing the Thames near Cliveden (probably to a roost) on Aug 21st (GV) and several hundred were amongst a mixed flock with Jackdaws at East Garston Nov 22nd (GJS).

## **CARRION CROW**     *Corvus corone*

*Abundant resident*

Far more records for Carrion Crow were received than for Rooks, with about half from West Berks, less than 10% from Mid Berks and the remainder from the east. The only large counts however were of 70 at Bracknell STW in both Jan and Sep (MK) and 300 at Langley May 11th on their way to roost (MMcM), described as 'like a black cloud'. Birds are sometimes seen with white feathers in the wing and SAG noted such a feature at Lower Farm on Jan 22nd and at Dinton Pastures Dec 14th. Food items reported included an unfortunate Canada Goose gosling which was snatched in front of its parents at Lower Farm in May, but which escaped by virtue of being too heavy to carry away (SAG). An entire clutch of Mallard's eggs were consumed by a pair at Dorney W on May 28th (BDC), probably the adults from a nest with juvs (2) in a tree overlooking the Dorney W site.

## **RAVEN**     *Corvus corax*

*Scarce but increasing visitor (breeds in Wiltshire)*

A slight reduction on the number of records submitted (22) compared to 32 last year, involved 11 sites, but the recent trend for some sightings to be away from the more traditional W Berks sites continued with reports from mid and East Berks. **First winter:** right from Jan 1st, when 2 birds were seen mobbing a Buzzard (SAG), Ravens were being reported around their traditional haunts of Combe Hill, Walbury Hill, and Inkpen Hill (DJB; TPo; MFW) and a feeding flock of 12 were seen on the W. slope of Combe Hill on Feb 2nd (Barry Goater). **Spring/Summer:** 2 birds were present over Brimpton on Feb 19th (GEW), and 2 were again at Combe Gibbet Apr 2nd (RR), other sightings in that area were only of a single bird until 2 again May 21st (BAJC; MG), suggesting that the other bird had been on a nest somewhere; given the very next report from there involved no less than 5 birds on Jun 16th (JD), the prospect seems likely. Away from this traditional area, a single bird was at Littlewick Green, near Maidenhead May 9th (PMC) and another was over Dinton Pastures Jun 4th being mobbed by smaller corvids (BTB). **Autumn/Second winter:** numbers reported in West Berks reverted to singles (Walbury Hill Oct 4th AEDH, and Combe Hill Nov 15th CDRH) or twos (Combe Gibbet and Inkpen Hill Nov 2nd (DF and KEM), and 1 over Woolley Down Oct 14th (GDS) with 2 there Oct 28th (GDS). The last report of the year came on Dec 17th when 1 was heard at Bagnor Cress Beds (IW; DL; TGB).

## **CORVIDS sp.**

Mixed flocks involving Jackdaws, Rooks and Carrion Crows, were reported as follows: 50 Denford Trout Farm Feb 25th flying north east (RGS), 1920 Moss End Mar 13th, mostly Rooks, with many juvs, all in one field (BDC), 400 Old Windsor Jul 21st (NA), 200 at Sonning Jul 25th (NA) and 100 at Reading, University Farms Oct 10th and 17th (NA).



**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris**Common resident and winter visitor, formerly abundant (Red listed)*

A good number of reports were received for this entertaining species, although a third of all records came from one site, and a quarter of them involved just 2 other locations.

**First winter:** there were 16 double-figure counts but the only larger groups noted were 200 at Easthampstead Park Feb 4th (DJS), 300 at East Hendred Down Feb 5th (M Shurmer), 250 in Crowthorne and 200 at Winkfield Row on Mar 14th (both BDC). The biggest group reported in this season however was of approximately 1000 swirling together in response to a passing Sparrowhawk at Felix Farm, Shurlock Row Mar 6th (BDC).

**Spring/Summer:** the first record involving juvs came from Woose Hill May 13th (PBT). SPA's and NA's daily monitoring around their Twyford home resulted in several counts of 30 to 50, with juvs first noted May 19th but by Aug numbers swelled to 70's and 80's with 100 counted on Aug 14th. BJW's monthly counts at Thatcham saw similar numbers, but with 100 on just one date, Aug 21st. In like vein, numerous counts at Lower Farm by IW, JL and SAG included a count of 225 on Jul 29th. A group of 500 at Greenham Com on Aug 12th was described as comprising mostly juvs (MFW). **Autumn/Second winter:** by Oct 21st the Lower Farm flock had expanded to 500 (JL) and a similar number could be found at Fifield the same week (DJB), who also noted 535 flying south west over Great Meadow Pond 3 days later. Two flocks of 600 were at Cockmarsh Sep 16th (WAS) and Cold Harbour on Oct 15th (DJB), the same observer subsequently found 1000 at Hatch Gate Farm, near Hurst Nov 2nd. The largest gathering of the year however consisted of 2000 birds roosting at the Brimpton GP reedbed Nov 1st (GEW). The familiar chattering behaviour Starlings are famed for was reported just once, at Combe Hill Mar 4th (JWilc) and no records of mimicking were forthcoming. Clearly a canny bird, as none fell foul of ringers' nets this year.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus**Common but declining resident (Red Listed)*

Widely reported, most commonly from suburban areas and private gardens. Counts involving 10+ came from only a dozen sites, with only half of those involving 20+ birds. The largest flock was 70+ at Cold Harbour Aug 19th (DJB), while regular visitors to a Woodlands Pk garden peaked at 60 visiting the pond Aug 16th (DJB) and several parties totalling about 50 birds were in Cookham Apr 23rd (BDC). Other gatherings included flocks of 35 in Twyford Jul 31st (NA); 30 in North Town Maidenhead Sep 8th and Nov 1st and a family party of 20 in a north Maidenhead garden Jun 11th (DF). It can be safely assumed that breeding takes place in many of the suburban areas from which it is recorded, but actual evidence of success is not great, although records of adults taking food to nests and 3 reports of juvenile birds from late May and other family parties supports this view.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus**Formerly a not uncommon resident, now a rare and declining visitor (Red Listed).*

Sadly just a single record this year: 1 visiting a maize-field at Aston on Jan 4th (CDRH).

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs**Abundant resident and winter visitor*

Most of the larger flocks were reported in the first winter period with 200+ in Shinfield 6th and 28th Jan (DJB); 200 on the Englefield Estate Jan 11th (RJB); 200 at Compton Feb 3rd

(ABT) and 100 Row Down Mar 12th (ABT). The only other three figure count was during the summer with 100 feeding on oilseed rape at Cold Harbour Jul 23rd (ABT). The only significant second winter count was a flock of 75+ at Combe Hill Sep 9th (DJB). Whether the apparent shortage of larger flocks during the latter part of the year is significant, or merely under-reporting, remains to be seen.

## **BRAMBLING**     *Fringilla montifringilla*

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

Reported from 75 locations, 71 in the first winter period, but only 13 in the second winter. **First winter:** continuing on from the second winter period of 2005 widespread reports continued through the first part of the year and well into April, reflecting the size of the winter influx. First winter flocks included c500 at Remenham on Jan 4th (CDRH), with 100+ there Feb 27th (DJB); 100 at Swinley Forest Brick Pits Apr 9th (PBa); 80+ near Hut Hill/Caesar's Camp Apr 22nd (DJB); c80 Shinfield Jan 28th (DJB); 70+ Inkpen Hill Jan 2nd (IW JL) and 64 around Pheasant feeders at Combe Hill Jan 6th (DJB). Many sightings were from gardens and other sites with feeding stations, including Dinton Pastures which had 30+ Mar 30th (RRi). The latest first winter report was of 2 birds in Swinley Park Apr 29th (DJB). **Second winter:** noticeably fewer reports later in the year, mainly single birds. The first record of 1 came from Greenham Com Oct 4th (JL). The largest flock was 14 birds at Great Meadow Pond Nov 19th (DJB), while there were 10 at Dinton Pastures Dec 3rd (FJC) and c10 at Upper Star Post, Swinley Forest Dec 17th (WAN).

## **GREENFINCH**     *Carduelis chloris*

*Common, widespread resident and winter visitor*

No large flocks were reported in the first part of the year, continuing the trend apparent in 2005; although increased reports from the second half of the year would seem to indicate that there is no cause for concern. **First winter:** early year flocks included 30 in a Tilehurst garden Jan 6th (JLe); c20 Freeman's Marsh Feb 3rd (RF); 15 in a Bracknell Garden Jan 22nd (KCr); 14 Maidenhead Court Feb 23rd (SAG) and 14 regularly in a Twyford garden Feb 23rd (SPA). **Summer:** there were few reports of breeding with juvenile birds reported from only 5 locations, the earliest being May 24th in that very well watched Twyford garden (SPA). **Second winter:** the most notable second winter gatherings were around Bury Down where reports peaked with a count of 200 Nov 9th (RJB). Elsewhere c120 were at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill Sep 1st (DJB); 68 at Englefield Jul 30th (RCr); 50 at Greenham Com Sep 25th (NC) and c50 at Cookham Sep 2nd and Dec 29th (both WAS).

## **GOLDFINCH**     *Carduelis carduelis*

*Common and widespread resident*

Widely reported across the county with smaller and larger gatherings fairly evenly spread throughout the year; all of which is pointing to the continued success of this species. **First winter:** the largest count was of c100 at Tidmarsh Jan 15th (JLe), while a flock around Thatcham House peaked at 50 Mar 6th (GJS). This bird frequently visits gardens and feeding stations, where flocks included a peak of 40+ in Woodlands Park, Maidenhead Mar 7th (DJB); 30 in KCr's Bracknell garden Jan 8th and 25 at Maidenhead Court Jan 15th (DF). **Summer:** despite the continued success of this species, there were only a small number of breeding confirmations with juvs reported from 10 locations, with early reports in late May and early June. **Second winter:** high counts included c100 at Strand Water,

Cookham Sep 1st (WAS); 100 Cow Down Oct 26th (ABT); 75 Greenham Com Sep 5th (JL); 75 Cow Down Dec 17th (SAG); 70 Woolhampton Aug 20th (GEW) and 55 Padworth Lane GP Nov 24th (KEM).

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor*

Following on from the second winter period of 2005, Siskin were reported widely during the early part of the year. The second winter period was much quieter, with reports from 24 locations, compared with 94 locations in the first winter. **First winter:** many of the larger flocks were reported from around gravel pit areas, rather than more wooded areas. Flocks in the Theale area peaked at 200 at Bottom Lane Feb 19th (CMc) and 200 at Searle's Farm Lane GP Mar 15th (PH). Sonning Meadows played host to flocks totalling 150 Jan 9th (ABT) and Jan 11th (TGB), while elsewhere 110 were at Tidmarsh Jan 15th (ABT); 100 at Ufton Lock on the K&A Canal Jan 2nd (PH); 100 Eversley GPs Jan 7th (PJC); 100 Burghfield GPs Jan 8th (JA); 100 at Ankerwyke Jan 23rd (CDRH); 100 Dinton Pastures CP Feb 24th (MFW); 100 Swinley Brickpits Jan 7th (RJB); 80 Whiteknights Lake Feb 1st (PG) and 80 at Brimpton GP Feb 23rd (GEW). **Spring/Summer:** reports continued until the start of July when they ceased until early October. In the Swinley Forest area, breeding was confirmed with recently fledged juvs at Upper Star Post May 16th (DJB) and juvs at Caesars Camp Jun 1st (DJB) and at Swinley Brickpits Jun 7th (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** many of the fewer reports were single figure counts and mainly from the western parts of the county, away from any local breeding areas. Signs of a more substantial influx became apparent late in the year when the only large flocks were reported late in Nov and Dec, with 200 at Broadmoor Bottom Dec 30th (WAN); 80+ paused briefly at Kintbury Cress Beds, before heading east Nov 27th (RGS); 50 were at Eversley GPs Dec 31st (Sfo). Elsewhere there were 40 at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury Dec 13th (CDRH); 20 at Bottom Lane Theale Dec 19th (KEM); 10+ Bucklebury Com Nov 14th (NC); 10 Denford Trout Farm Nov 17th (RGS) and 10 Brimpton GP Dec 3rd (GEW).

## **LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

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

Reported from 55 sites throughout the year, in flocks of varying sizes outside the breeding season. The majority of the larger flocks came in the later months. **First winter:** the largest flock of 100 was at Inkpen Feb 14th (JD), while 80 were at Remenham Feb 27th (DJB); 75+ at Eversley GPs Jan 10th (BMA) and Jan 20th (DJB). Bury Down held 60 birds Jan 17th (RJB); while flocks of 50 were at Shinfield Jan 3rd (DJB) and Charvil Jan 17th (HRN). A late spring gathering of 57 birds was at Sheepdrove Organic Farm Apr 20th (ABT). **Spring/Summer:** records continued through the summer months, primarily of pairs or single birds in suitable breeding areas, until August when post-breeding flock sizes started to increase. Evidence of breeding activity came from Greenham Com where males were singing, a pair nest-building and fledglings being fed Jun 2nd (DJB) and 7 recently fledged juvs were at QMR Jun 14th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** an early flock of 400 at Horton Fields Aug 14th (CDRH) was exceptional, although a flock of 30 was nearby at QMR Aug 19th (ABT) and c80 on Farnborough Downs Aug 24th (GDS). Flock sizes increased into the autumn, with the largest count coming from Englefield where there were 410 Oct 13th (RCr). Other large flocks included c300 at Braywoodside Oct 7th (CDRH); 200 at Brimpton Oct 10th (GEW); 150 at Compton Oct 1st (ABT); 150 in a ploughed field

at Purley Nov 12th (RCr); 120+ at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill Oct 12th (DJB); 100+ at QMR Sep 11th (ABT); 100+ at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead Oct 12th (DJB) and c100 at Strand Water, Cookham Oct 23rd (WAS).

## **TWITE**     *Carduelis flavirostris*

*Scarce and decreasing passage migrant and winter visitor*

One visited Slough SF on Nov 18th (CDRH), landing briefly in the vegetated sludge-beds before flying overhead and off north east (over the M4). It was later relocated on waste ground at Cippenham, but was only seen in flight, and didn't attach itself to the local Linnet flock.

**Recorder's comment:** Due to a shortage of relevant experience with some members of the BRC, outside opinion was sought (from Norfolk & Dorset). Both recommended acceptance of this record – citing the key plumage and structural features that were observed in the first sighting, and which were confirmed when it was briefly relocated nearby. It may also be worth noting that, 10 days earlier, a Twite was seen briefly at Steps Hill, in Bucks (see Buckinghamshire Bird Report 2006).

## **LESSER REDPOLL**     *Carduelis flammea*

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

Fairly widely reported from 63 sites across the county, with about 75% of the reports coming from the first four months. **First winter/Spring:** much the largest numbers came from Wishmoor Bottom, where on Apr 28th (DJB) there were c300 birds in total. Other substantial gatherings included 50 at Bucklebury on Jan 12th (CDRH), 50 at Sonning Meadows Jan 22nd (ABT) and similar size flocks at Brimpton GP Feb 19th (GEW), Padworth Apr 25th (GEW) and near R. Thames at Sonning Jan 10th (HRN). Elsewhere there were 40 in South Ascot Apr 17th (DJB); c40 at Hut Hill, Swinley Forest Apr 28th (MSFW); 30+ at Arborfield Jan 23rd (DJB); 30 at Wraybury Jan 25th (CDRH); 30 at Lower Farm GP Jan 28th (AJP) and 30 at Box Wood, Hermitage Apr 11th (JBU). The last reports consisted of single birds at Caesars Camp May 3rd (MFW), Moose Hill May 3rd (PBT), Cranbourne Chase May 6th (DJB) and Wishmoor Bottom May 9th (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** first signs of autumn passage began with 3 birds in Swinley Forest Sep 6th (ACa), followed by a single bird at Padworth Sep 29th (NC). With the second winter proving a fairly thin period for this species, the flock of c110 at Wishmoor Bottom Oct 27th (DJB) was exceptional. Elsewhere there were c25 at Cookham Dec 29th (WAS) and 20 at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures Nov 15th (PBT); 18 around Swinley Brickpits Oct 27th (DJB); 15+ at Greenham Com on same date and 10 at Brimpton GP Oct 29th (GEW).

## **MEALY REDPOLL**     *Carduelis cabaret*

*Rare winter visitor*

The first 2 months of the year brought a small burst of records of this rare visitor, consistent with the few reports of late 2005. The birds were mostly seen in the company of Lesser Redpolls and other finches, aiding identification by allowing comparison of size and plumage etc. A mixed flock of Lesser Redpolls and Siskins by the R. Thames at Sonning was found to contain at least one of this species Jan 10th (HRN), with at least 3 (incl 1 adult male) Jan 11th (CDRH) and 2 (1 adult male) on Feb 8th (RJB). The birds ranged across the river from Berks into Oxon and were seen by a number of observers; another bird was then reported

nearby at Borough Marsh Jan 22nd (ABT, MSFW). A redpoll sp. with Lesser Redpolls at Bower Farm near Aldworth on Feb 2nd appeared to show unstreaked white on the rump but was seen too briefly to permit identification as anything rarer. At Bucklebury 2 (1 with a partly-white rump) were with c50 Lesser Redpolls Jan 12th (CDRH); 1 was at Moatlands GP Jan 29th (PBT); a further female was at Brimpton GP Feb 12th (GEW), and the last report was of 1 in alders by the R.Thames at Aston Feb 21st (CDRH).

**Recorder's comment:** this series of records continued the influx that started in the late autumn of 2005. Since all of these records were in the mid-to-late winter period they avoided the problem of early spring records – when Lesser Redpolls can look greyer as their plumage becomes increasingly bleached and worn. Some Mealies can show apparent white on the rump – as demonstrated by a bird at Summerleaze GP in November 1994 (see entry in Birds of Berkshire Bird Report for 1994).

## COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

*Regular (irruptive) winter visitor in variable numbers and occasionally breeds (Schedule 1)*

With the exception of 3 end-of-year records all of the sightings came from the first part of the year, with the majority coming from the wooded areas of south-East Berks. **First Winter/Spring/Summer:** records continued into Jun, with the latest being 8 birds at Upper Star Post Jun 11th (WAN). In the Swinley Forest area flocks were reported through the first part of the year and varied in size, with larger flocks typically numbering c20 birds. On Apr 22nd DJB recorded 2 flocks totalling 89 birds around Caesars Camp and the MoD Danger Area. Not far away, 34 were at Wishmoor Bottom Jan 21st; 27 were in South Ascot Mar 3rd (DJB); 24 at Broadmoor MOD May 14th (DJB); 18 at Gorrick Wood Plantation Apr 14th (BMA) and 25 in nearby Crowthorne Feb 8th (MGM). The report of 35 at Greenham Com Jan 4th (NC) was the most notable away from the usual areas, while 1 was at Snelsmore Com May 12th (MJT) and 1 stopped to bathe in a Bracknell garden pond a few feet from the house Feb 14th (DEa). Breeding was confirmed in the Upper Star Post area of Swinley Forest where DJB reported family parties, including begging juvs, May 16th. **Autumn/Second winter:** there were no autumn records and the only second winter reports came from Caesars Camp, where 2 were seen Nov 12th (WAN), and Wishmoor Bottom, where there was 1 Dec 24th (WAN) and 2 flew over Dec 28th (DJB).

## BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Locally common and widespread resident, occasional passage migrant (Red Listed)*

Widely reported from 98 sites in total, albeit substantially less than in the exceptional year of 2005, reports spread throughout all months. About 75% of reports were of 1 or 2 birds, with very few being of more than 4. The only report above single figures was of at least 10 at Greenham Com Oct 27th (NC). Elsewhere 6 visited a Binfield garden Jan 25th (JG); 6 were at Thatcham Feb 4th (BJW); 5 at Greenham Com Sep 19th (JL) and 5 at Thatcham Oct 29th (IW JL). **Breeding:** juv birds were reported from 10 locations, probably confirming local breeding success.

## HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

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

The only record came from a garden near Wildmoor Heath, between Mar 7th and Apr 4th (Valerie Lord-Castle), where the bird was captured on video.

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis**Rare winter visitor*

No records this year, breaking a run of 3 consecutive years with records of this rare visitor.

**LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant*

No records this year

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella**Declining but still fairly common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

Reported widely from 85 sites in areas with suitable farm and downland habitat. Records were from all months, but more came from the earlier months when most large flocks were seen. **First winter:** the west of the county held the largest flocks, including 150 at Compton on Jan 24th (CDRH); 100+ at Lowbury Hill Feb 3rd (ABT); 100+ at East Garston Feb 26th (ABT); 100 at East Hendred Down Feb 5th (MSh) and 50 at Compton Feb 3rd (ABT). Elsewhere, in the Maidenhead/Henley area, there were 50 at Malders Lane Feb 5th (LJF); 40 at Pinkneys Green Jan 9th (PNe) and 40 at Cockpole Green Mar 6th (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** singing males were reported from early Mar through into early Aug. On May 11th at Compton Downs DJB counted 9 pairs and 24 singing males. Evidence of confirmed breeding was very limited although DJB recorded the feeding of juvs Aug 4th at Streatley Warren. **Autumn/Second winter:** only a few flocks reached double figures, possibly indicative of a poor breeding season, or smaller winter influx. The largest was 40 at Bury Down Nov 9th (RJB), while a flock at Cow Down peaked at 30 Oct 26th (ABT) and Nov 27th (SAG). Elsewhere there were 12+ at Cold Harbour Sep 30th (DJB) and 9 at Englefield Oct 29th (RCr).

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus**Locally common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

Well reported throughout all months of the year from 68 sites, although not apparently as numerous as 2005. **First winter:** the largest flock of the year was at Remenham Feb 27th, numbering over 75 birds (DJB). Other substantial gatherings included c30 at Shinfield Jan 6th (DJB); 25+ Hosehill Lake Feb 5th (BU); 24 in sallows Wishmoor Bottom Jan 1st (DJB); 16 visiting feeders at Lavell's Lake Mar 1st (FJC) and 15+ Thatcham Jan 15th (IW; JL). Occurring well away from their usual habitats 12 visited a Wash Com garden Jan 31st (DSm) and 14 visited a feeding station in Earley Mar 12th (MSFW). **Spring/Summer:** singing males were reported from over 40 sites, most notably 15 around Burghfield GPs Apr 1st (JA). **Autumn/Second winter:** a few double figure flocks were reported from late Sep, but much the largest gathering was of c50 at Remenham Dec 23rd (DJB). Elsewhere maximum counts were 20 at Thatcham Marsh Oct 29th (IW; JL); 16 at Englefield Sep 24th (RCr) and 15 at Greenham Com Nov 6th (JL). No other counts were greater than 4, with most records being of only 1 or 2 birds.

## CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

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

As in previous years, the majority of reports came from 26 sites in the downland areas, with a few reports from areas west of Maidenhead. **First winter:** Lowbury Hill held the largest gatherings with 100+ Jan 21st (DJB) and Feb 3rd (ABT). There were 60 at Warren Down, Lambourn Jan 12th (CDRH); 65 at Bower Farm Feb 11th (ABT); 40 East Hendred Down Feb 5th (MSh); 20 West Ilsley Feb 28th (ABT); 15 East Ilsley Jan 27th (JBak) and 15 on maize at Farnborough Down Mar 9th (GDS). Away from the Downs, 8 were at Remenham on Jan 4th (CDRH); 5 were at Wood Lane near Jubilee R. Feb 6th (BDC); 5 at Jealott's Hill Feb 18th (BDC) and Cold Harbour held 2 during Mar (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** flocks continued to be reported with 10+ at Roden Downs Apr 15th (GDS) and 17 at Sheepdrove Organic Farm Apr 20th (ABT). Singing birds were at 25 sites, but there were no reports of fledgling or juv birds to confirm breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** no records during Sep, but by Oct some flocks were being seen. 10 were at Bury Down Oct 8th (SAG), where groups totalling 92+ were counted Nov 10th (DJB); at Cow Down there were 43 on Oct 26th (ABT) and a flock of 17 was flushed from a hedgerow at Farnborough Down Dec 17th (GDS). Away from the downs, 10 were at Cold Harbour Nov 18th (DJB) and 1 at Remenham Dec 23rd (CDRH).

## ESCAPES AND HYBRIDS 2006

### FERAL/ESCAPES

#### **Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

Records came from 10 locations, mostly historically regular sites such as Lower Farm (IW;SAG) where 2 were present on Jan 1st, then seen at The Wharf, Newbury the following day. Dinton Pastures had 1 from Jan 4th to 11th (MFW). By Jan 25th the 2 Lower Farm birds had relocated to Hosehill Lake, Theale (unknown observer 'HS') and were then noted there from Feb 6th (BU) after which 1 or 2 were reported through all of Feb and most of March, apart from Feb 12th on which day they were observed at Hurst Green GP (DJB). Throughout that period, another 2 birds were being regularly recorded at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor (DJB) apart from on two dates when what were presumably the same individuals were at Windsor Esplanade on Jan 13th and Feb 3rd (DF). Both pairs subsequently bred, the Newbury birds disporting 3 cygnets on Jun 14th (SAG), subsequently reducing to 2 by Jun 25th (SAG). The Windsor birds commenced nesting on May 7th and 4 cygnets were seen on Jun 11th but by Aug 16th, only 3 were left, and this family party was joined briefly by 3 other adults on Sep 13th (DJB). By November, 2 other cygnets were missing, presumed departed, but then 2 juv corpses were located on Dec 13th, presumed predated by foxes (CDRH).

#### **Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

One, an adult, at Padworth Lane GP on the 27th Jun (KEM), was, no doubt, feral and possibly the same one from the past few years? One wearing a blue ring on its right leg was at Eversley GPs Sep 16th (BMA).

#### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

The usual group of 5 wandered around the same East Berks sites as last year, mirroring the same sequence of locations, being noted on the Thames at Cookham from Feb 1st to the month's end (CDRH), (who saw another at the same time at Twyford Feb 1st ) and then 4 again on the Thames opposite Marlow Apr 8th (RCM). A pair turned up at the Jubilee River on Aug 20th (MHe) (where sightings have been regular in subsequent years) and presumably the same birds were then at Summerleaze GP from Aug 17th and into September (CDRH). In West Berks meanwhile, 3 were at West Woodhay House Lake (again as last year) from Jan 1st to May 5th (RGS). 4 were at Home Farm, Avington Mar 31st (RGS) and 2 at Hope Farm, Kintbury on Apr 1st (JLS). Later in the year, birds were seen at several locations including 3 at Hungerford Marsh Aug 20th (GVW), 1 over QMR Sep 9th (CDRH), 1 Sonning Meadows Sep 24th to 30th (ABT), 1 Borough Marsh Sep 27th to 30th (CDRH) and again Nov 24th (DJB). November also returned a record of one over-flying Greenham on the 5th and landing at Lower Farm (NC). There were no breeding records this year.

#### **Ross's Goose** *Anser rossii*

All reports this year were from West Berks sites, commencing with 1 at Greenham Common Jan 1st (NC) and presumably the same individual then reported from Lower Farm Jan 14th (IW;JL), Thatcham Marsh Jan 18th (GJS) and variably at both latter sites up to May 29th (SA) apart from a sojourn on Freeman's Marsh May 24th (RF), before ending up again at Greenham on May 31st (GJS). After this it was not reported again for the remainder of the



year. It was presumably the same bird throughout but interestingly the report at Freeman's Marsh, and one at Lower Farm Feb 13th (RHS) mentioned a metal ring on its left leg.

### **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

In spring two birds flew in to Long Lane, Cookham on Apr 5th(BDC), whilst in the autumn a female/immature was noted at Lower Farm GP on Aug 17th, remaining until Sep 1st. Then a four week gap, when it, or another, arrived at Hosehill Lake on Sept 17th (RHS) visiting Theale Main Pit the following day, and then back to Hosehill Lake until 21st Sept (DJB). Another female was at Padworth Lane GP Aug 17th to 21st.

### **Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*

All records this year come from the traditional site of Whiteknights Park Lake where 8 were present Jan 18th, reducing to 4 males and 1 female on Feb 25th. A single bird was noted on Sep 29th and up to 2 were there from Nov 18th until Dec 28th. (LBM;PG)

### **Laysan Duck** *Anas laysanensis*

Amidst rumours of three being present at Lower Farm on Sep 3rd, just a single example of this striking Hawaiian bird was actually reported, with the last sighting being one flying over the lake on Sep 29th (MO).

### **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

All the known sightings of Ferruginous Duck in Berkshire this year refer to the ESCAPE (first located on Dec 12th 2005 at Jubilee River, near to Wood Lane bridge, and often coming to bread). Dorney W and Slough SF were the two main haunts of this drake. (ASL)

### **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

There was a sighting of a presumed falconer's bird, with a ring on its leg, Feb 18th at Theale GPs (RDen)

### **Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*

The six records for this year comprised 1 at Stanford Dingley on Jun 16th (JD), another at Moatlands GP on Aug 4th (DJB), 1 at Wraysbury on Sep 1st (CDRH, 1 at QMR on Sep 10th successfully evading four attacks by a Peregrine (CDRH) and 1 flying over Lower Farm on Sep 23rd (DJe). The last was an imm over Wildmoor Heath Dec 30th (WAN).

### **Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyana*

Whether one of the free-flying birds from Paignton Zoo or not, one found at Reading Services on Oct 29th was a surprise for Alan Absolom. It remained into the following month and was last seen on Nov 12th (KEM).

### **Missing record from 2005 Report**

### **Hartlaub's Turaco** *Tauraco hartlaubi*

An individual reported from a Yateley garden in March was seen by a group walking along the Blackwater River on a garden wall near Horseshoe Lake, Eversley GP, Apr 23rd (BDC)

## **HYBRIDS**

### **Greylag × Canada Goose**

1 at Freeman's Marsh Apr 24th and May 24th (RF).

### **Greylag × (White-fronted Goose?)**

One at Great Meadow Pond was noted from Feb 19th and eventually paired with a Greylag Goose and had a single chick on May 7th. (DJB)

### **Canada × ?**

Lower Farm had 1 Nov 10th which 'may have accounted for the recent reports of a Bar-headed Goose at this site as it looks superficially like a juv Bar-head'. (DJB).

### **Canada Goose × Bar-headed Goose**

One was at Summerleaze GP on Apr 8th (CDRH)

### **Snow Goose × ?**

One Blue phase type with a pale silver-grey mantle contrasting with the rest of the dark body plumage was at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Sep 24th and Oct 1st (DJB); this may have been the same as the Eversley hybrid, below.

### **Emperor Goose × (blue morph) Snow Goose**

One was present at Eversley GP on Aug 10th and 11th (CDRH; MFW).

### **Mallard × Gadwall**

The returning drake was at BA Pit, Wraysbury GP on Nov 6th (CDRH) and, as in previous years, it was also seen at Great Meadow Pond on several dates between Oct 29th and Dec 17th (DJB).

### **Mallard × ?**

Three were present at Lower Farm on Apr 1st (NC)

### **Mallard × Pochard ?**

A female (probable Pochard × Mallard) was at Midgham GP on Apr 22nd (MFW)

### **Gadwall × ?**

A drake with two-toned head – greenish-grey cap/eye-patch contrasting with pale rufous cheeks & throat (possibly indicating Wigeon genes?) was at Orlitts Lakes on Nov 4th (CDRH).

### **Red-crested Pochard × Pochard**

A drake was present at Village Pit, Wraysbury on Nov 8th (CDRH).

## ***Aythya* hybrids**

As in earlier reports, these are grouped according to which species they most resemble, rather than by their parentage, which is often speculative, but is indicated in brackets where suggestions have been made by the observer.

### **Ferruginous-type hybrid**

A striking and confiding example was found on the Jubilee River on May 12th (BDC) and having been observed coming to bread, considered a hybrid. (The bird has continued to be seen at this location in subsequent years, but disappears for long periods to an unknown location). A fem/imm, presumed to be a second-generation hybrid (showing slight resemblance to imm Scaup) was again at Bray GP on Nov 3rd (CDRH) whilst a drake (Paget's Pochard type) was at Wraysbury GP Nov 8th (CDRH).

### **Lesser Scaup-type hybrid**

Several of these were noted during the year, the first reported from Burghfield GP on Feb 16th resembling a drake Scaup (KEM). A female was at Moatlands GP on Apr 5th (CDRH). A male (Tufted × Pochard) was at Brimpton GP on Apr 7th (GEW).

### **Scaup-type hybrid**

A female Scaup look-a-like was at Moatlands GP on Feb 5th (MFW) and Apr 5th and 11th (KEM). An adult female (Pochard × Scaup) was at Bray GP on Nov 5th and may have been easily mistaken for Scaup (CDRH), and presumably the same bird was seen by DJB there a little earlier on Nov 2nd (likely to be the same bird that was at Woolhampton GP in April 2005 and at Moatlands GP from Oct 2002–Jan 2004. CDRH).

### **Tufted Duck type hybrid**

A drake (Pochard × Tufted Duck), recalling drake Ring-necked Duck (grey flanks, blunt crest, greyish wing-bar) was at Horton GP from 1st to 16th Dec (CDRH) and subsequently moved to QMR on Dec 23rd. A Tufted Duck-type hybrid was at Bray GP Feb 5th (CDRH) and considered to be the Horton bird whilst it or another at Bray on Apr 11th, a drake with dark brown almost black upper parts, flanks grey with hint of brown, a small tuft and small grey bill with black tip, was also considered to be a Pochard × Tufted hybrid (DJB).

### **Redhead-type hybrid**

A drake (Pochard × Ferruginous Duck?), resembling drake Redhead – including yellow eyes & correct bill-pattern, was at Wraysbury GP on Nov 6th (CDRH).

## **Gull Hybrids**

### **Mediterranean Gull × Black-headed Gull**

A winter adult was at QMR on Jan 30th, but already with quite a lot of black on the head (CDRH). Although long expected, this represents the first (and so far only) Berkshire record of this hybrid.

## 2006 Earliest and Latest Dates of Summer Migrants

ARRIVALS				DEPARTURES		
Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Hobby	Apr 17	Hosehill Lake	ACa	Oct 13	Greenham Common	NC
Little Ringed Plover	Mar 16	Eversley GP	BMA	Sep 11	Pingewood GP (N)	KEM
Common Tern	Mar 31	Eversley GP	BMA	Oct 4	Moatlands GP	KEM,RCr
Turtle Dove	Apr 26	Brimpton	GEW	Sep 6	Brimpton	GEW
Cuckoo	Apr 10	Greenham Common	JL	Aug 4	Lambourn, Watts Bank	JLe
Nightjar	May 9	3 sites	BTB,CDRH, DJS	Aug 22	Swinley Forest	BAJC
Swift	Apr 1	Muddy Lane GP	GJS	Sep 5	Queen Mother Res	PMC, CDRH
Sand Martin	Mar 21	Moatlands GP	RJB	Oct 4	Woolhampton GP	KEM
Swallow	Mar 26	2 sites	JKn,MRK	Oct 21	Greenham Common	JL
House Martin	Mar 27	2 sites	AVL,DMF	Dec 10	Lavell's Lake	per FJC
Tree Pipit	Apr 2	Crowthorne Woods	DJS	Aug 24	Lough Down	ABT
Yellow Wagtail	Mar 29	Twyford GP	MFW	Oct 11	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Nightingale	Apr 2	Main Pit	JA	Aug 22	Greenham Common	NC
Redstart	Apr 7	4 sites	MRA,n,NC, PJC	Sep 23	Greenham Common	IW,NC
Whinchat	Apr 18	Greenham Common	SA	Oct 21	Greenham Common	JL
Wheatear	Mar 26	Greenham Common	TPo	Nov 11	Englefield	RCr
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 19	Lea Farm GP	PBT	Sep 17	Thatcham Marsh	IW JL,JL
Sedge Warbler	Apr 1	Theale Main Pit	KEM,NR	Oct 1	Great Meadow Pond	DJB
Reed Warbler	Apr 19	Hosehill Lake	KEM	Oct 8	Great Meadow Pond	DJB
Garden Warbler	Apr 19	Wraysbury GP	CDRH	Sep 10	Walbury Hill	ABT
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 22	4 sites	BDC,JL, PN	Sep 8	2 sites	JA, SDie, RRK
Whitethroat	Apr 9	Summerleaze GP	BDC	Oct 21	Greenham Common	JL
Wood Warbler	Apr 30	Bucklebury Common	RF	Jun 4	Bucklebury Common	DJR
Willow Warbler	Mar 27	Theale GP	JHa	Oct 2	Arthur Jacobs NR	CDRH
Spotted Flycatcher	Apr 23	Whiteknights Lake/ Park	PG	Sep 16	Theale Main Pit	RJB

## 2006 Earliest and Latest Dates of Winter Migrants

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS		
Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Golden Plover	May 16	Dorney Lake	KPD	Aug 26	Englefield	RCr
Rock Pipit	Mar 31	Pingewood GP	RR	Oct 11	2 sites	CDRH
Fieldfare	Apr 17	Streatley Warren	KEM	Sep 30	Coombe	RHar
Redwing	Apr 11	Winterbourne	MJT	Sep 30	Reading	RCr
Brambling	Apr 29	Swinley Park	DJB	Oct 4	Greenham Common	JL
Lesser Redpoll	May 9	Wishmoor Bottom	DJB	Sep 6	Swinley Forest	ACa

# BIRD REPORT FOR 2007

## MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

*Locally common resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GP	41	20	11	–	–	–	–	–	68	68	77	107
Lower Fm GP	13	9	12	19	10	18	29	28	12	10	45	8
Newbury, The Wharf	94	95	–	82	85	52	–	63	30	51	1	50
R. Thames, Windsor Esplanade	211	271	–	287	–	244	235	281	242	–	259	–

Counts of up to 60 were received from many further sites with higher counts of 71 on Feb 16th (DF); 86 on Feb 23rd (CDRH) and 92 on Mar 5th (DJB) on the Remenham stretch of the Thames. **Breeding:** a total of 30 pairs at 19 sites with perhaps, at best, 93 young recorded. The same under-recording happens each year, and then one wonders just how many did fledge?

## BEWICK'S SWAN

*Cygnus columbianus*

*Scarce winter visitor*

Just one sighting this year: 4 (2 adults; 2 juvs) were seen by an observer looking for the Bean Goose at Remenham, on Jan 3rd, but departed soon after (RDr).

## BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

*Rare winter visitor*

First located by CDRH, an adult of the Tundra race (*rossicus*) was at Remenham on Jan 2nd and was seen by M/O as it remained in the area until Jan 8th (CDRH et al).

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

*Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

Eight (mostly adults) flew SSE during the morning of Jan 25th over Loddon Drive, Charvil (CDRH). On Mar 6th, a single adult was on Charvil Meadows LNR (CDRH) 'certainly not the usual feral bird from the Theale/Padworth area', it would not come close enough (due to the floodwaters there) to take the 'bread test'.

## GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

*Common introduced and increasing resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Benham Valence/ Benham Park	–	–	5	6	–	–	–	–	67	45	41	14
Borough Marsh	18	–	45	–	10	–	23	101	189	–	–	–
Burghfield GP	61	2	9	–	–	–	–	21	5	–	–	31

Padworth Lane GP	–	2	68	32	35	–	50	160	185	276	–	1
Pingewood GP	–	–	23	4	–	–	40	97	–	–	–	35
Theale GP	113	98	18	19	36	52	–	7	–	–	54	25
Twyford GP	62	–	33	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	86
Wraysbury GP	15	18	16	35	6	12	–	9	17	17	18	14

Counts of up to 60 were received from many further sites, with higher counts of 109 Wigmore Lane GP Jan 21st (WEBS) & 144 Charvil Feb 12th (CDRH). Whilst Cookham, Switchback Rd., had 224 on Sep 6th, 140 Sep 24th and 120 Oct 3rd (all BDC), that Summerleaze GP on Sep 22nd had 240 would seem to be all part of the same flock, those at Cockmarsh with 171 on Jun 12th (WAS) (including 23 juvs) could surely be involved too. Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park had counts of 110, 151 and 162 on 3 days in August (DJB).

**Breeding:** as is usual with this species, there is under recording, with breeding recorded at only nine sites, with a total of 20 pairs, and 85 possible young noted.

## SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

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

In the NE of the County, up to 3 ‘blue morph’ Snow Geese were present in the general area of Cookham (CDRH) during August and September, whilst a single ‘blue morph’ had been in the Charvil area in early March (CDRH). Moor Green Lakes held, as usual, white morph Snow Geese – a quantity of 4 were present during the year (MO).

## CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

*Common and widespread introduced resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Benham Valence/ Benham Park	–	–	20	20	–	–	–	–	100	135	–	–
Borough Marsh	–	–	–	–	218	–	200	300	78	–	–	–
Bray GP	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	412	15	3	36
Burghfield GP	49	54	72	–	–	–	–	–	10	16	97	3
Cookham, Switchback Rd	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	482	200	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	122	70	47	10	10	–	–	400	154	–	80	5
Dorney W	6	–	–	–	–	86	71	529	20	–	–	–
Eversley GP	100	22	–	8	63	80	179	320	400	–	14	8
Lower Fm GP	250	188	53	20	80	–	50	170	130	350	130	150
R. Thames, Reading–Pangbourne	67	104	12	–	–	–	–	–	108	46	311	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	163	4	12	8
Thatcham	243	186	141	73	83	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Thatcham GP	50	70	55	40	32	87	148	67	150	161	84	100
Theale GP	111	228	38	142	62	50	–	35	–	–	1	3
R. Thames, Windsor Esplanade	170	141	–	107	–	–	310	112	432	–	207	–

Counts of up to 100 were received from a further 39 sites with higher counts of 300 Home Fm (Avington) Jan 10th (RGS); 160 Bagnor Cress Beds Feb 3rd (JL); Pingewood GP with 174 there Aug 5th and 265 Aug 16th (KEM); 150 approx Hungerford Aug 21st flying East (RGS); 100 Wargrave Aug 22nd and 100+ Sheeplands Fm (NA); 400 Lea Fm GP Aug 25th (MFW); 200 Summerleaze GP (north of) Sep 23rd c200 flying towards Marlow (DF); 110 Finchampstead Oct 25th (BMA); 179 Remenham Nov 8th (DF) and finally 132 on Nov 11th at Great Meadow Pond in Windsor Great Park (DJB). **Breeding:** again, breeding must be under-recorded with breeding noted at 19 sites with at least 30 pairs involved and with at least 128 young. Of interest, a 'small' Canada Goose appeared with a flock of Canada Geese at Lower Fm GP on the Dec 8th (NC; IW; JL; JCr), with a few other observers (TGB; KEM) seeing ostensibly the same bird the following day and believing it to be of the subspecies *B.c. parvipes*. However, one of the original observers on the first day was sure that the photographs taken the next day were of a different bird, and there the matter stayed.

**Recorders comment:** The Lower Farm sighting seems to be the first county record of an apparent *B.c. parvipes* ('Lesser Canada Goose'), which is a potential vagrant to the UK. There is also a previous record of an apparent *B.c. interior* ('Todd's Canada'), which was last seen in East Berkshire in Dec 1989; interestingly, this was the first vagrant race to be officially added to the British List (on the basis of two apparent interior in Grampian during November 1992, one of which had been neck-collared in Maryland USA, in February 1992; see *Brit Birds* 104: 561–562).

The recently separated Cackling Goose *B. hutchinsii* has also been recorded in the county but apparently only in the western form *B. h. minima* – which is an implausible vagrant to Europe and is not uncommon in captivity (eg (i) on the R. Thames at Henley on Sept 10th 1981 and (ii) at Bray GP on May 23rd 1996). However, it should be noted that the two-way split has not been universally accepted and further subdivisions remain possible.

## BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

*Rare vagrant and localised feral visitor/resident*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	49	45	2	–	1	–	–	30	38	–	–	33

Counts were received from a further 11 sites, including 8 at Arborfield floods on Feb 24th (DJB).

## BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

*Scarce passage migrant*

One adult dark-bellied race (*B. b. bernicla*), flew in to QMR Oct 6th at 10.20am and loitered with gulls for 25 minutes before flying off east (CDRH); 1 Mortimer Nov 23rd, adult dark-bellied, just south of Wokefield Park GC, on flooded fields beside the Mortimer/Grazeley road (KEM).



**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiacus**Now locally common introduced resident / visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	11	3	5	22	17	3	3	10	9	2	2	–
Theale GP	4	5	3	2	2	12	5	3	8	20	5	–
Eversley GP	16	4	23	20	8	–	4	70	77	108	87	–
Borough Marsh/Charvil	7	26	–	–	–	–	28	36	58	–	–	–

Counts of up to 25 were received from another 56 sites with additional counts of 40 at Cockmarsh in June, 116 at Cookham, Switchback Rd on Sep 6th, Braywoodside with 53 on Oct 8th, 60 at Purley on Oct 28th and finally 40 at Shurlock Row on Sep 3rd. **Breeding:** recorded at 14 sites, involving 14 pairs, with 75 young noted, whilst this is probably reasonably accurate, the expansion rate of Egyptian Goose within the county is quite extraordinary. Of note, the earliest goslings recorded were 7 (just a few days old) at Eversley GP on Jan 8th, 2008.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** *Tadorna ferruginea**Rare resident, probably of introduced origin*

During the course of the year there were just 4 different sightings. Three of these were of two birds together and, looking at the the dates and locations, it is possible that this was the same duo at White Place Fm, Cookham on Mar 23rd (BDC), then Widbrook Com on Apr 14th (BAJC), followed by Cookham Rise on May 10th, flying North (CDRH). The fourth sighting was of a single, flying SW over Bray on Nov 22nd (CDRH).

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna**Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	6	14	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Charvil	1	5	5	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney W	2	–	2	2	7	2	–	–	–	–	–	2
Lea Fm GP	–	–	4	10	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	5	3	3	2	2	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Padworth Lane GP	2	1	17	6	21	4	–	–	1	–	–	1
Pingewood GP	2	2	6	6	3	2	–	2	–	–	–	1
Windsor Great Park	1	4	2	8	10	13	–	–	–	–	–	–

Counts were received from a further 41 sites. The figure of 21 during May at Padworth Lane GP included 8 young birds, one of just two breeding records for the year. Woolhampton GP was the second with just a single young bird, again during May, having already lost its other young ones.

**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata**Localised and increasing introduced resident*

Records were received from 61 locations; 35 in East Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 11 in West Berks. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	14	37	6	8	4	3	2	5	2	–	35	11
Padworth Lane GP	–	2	–	–	2	–	–	–	101	–	–	–
Whiteknights Lake/Park	31	35	19	–	25	–	–	25	35	20	–	–
Windsor Great Park	–	–	–	–	5	6	–	60	–	–	–	–

The high count of 101 at Padworth Lane GP was made Sep 18th (KGW). Elsewhere 22 were at Cheapside Jul 1st (PM), 10 Ray Mill Island Mar 5th (DJB) and 10 Cranbourne Chase Apr 10th (DJB). **Breeding:** broods were recorded at 14 locations: Wargrave Marsh: 1 brood of 5 May 14th (DJB); Leiper Pond, Windsor Great Park: 1 brood of 6 May 19th (DJB); Romney Lock: broods of 6 and 4 May 22nd (WAS), 1 brood of 6 Jul 9th (WAS); Datchet: 1 brood of 5 May 22nd (WAS); Cookham Lock: 1 brood of 6 May 25th (WAS); Old Windsor Lock; 1 brood of 4 Jun 1st (WAS); Dinton Pastures CP: 1 brood of 4 Jun 2nd (FJC); Russel's Pond, Windsor Great Park: 1 brood of 5 Jun 5th (MTr), still present Jun 14th (MTr); Lea Fm GP: 1 brood of 6 was seen Jun 6th (ADB), dropping to 4 Jun 10th (FJC) but 2 broods of 5 and 3 were seen Jun 13th (FJC) with just 1 brood of 5 surviving Jul 15th (FJC); Burghfield GP: 1 brood of 7 Jun 10th (JA); Great Meadow Pond: 1 brood of 2 Jul 1st (DJB); Fobney Marshes: 1 brood of 2 Jul 7th (RCr); Eversley GP: 1 brood of 7 Jul 30th (BMA) was down to 4 Jul 31st (RJB) and still present Aug 18th (BMA); Frogmill: 1 brood of 4 Aug 3rd and still present Aug 15th (SJF; FMF).

**EURASIAN WIGEON** *Anas penelope**Locally common winter visitor and rare summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	62	64	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	16	70
Burghfield GP	170	193	23	–	–	–	–	–	83	112	178	480
Dinton Pastures CP	14	10	3	–	–	–	–	–	15	30	70	170
Eversley GP	150	250	65	3	–	–	–	–	34	201	369	149
Great Meadow Pond	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	34	2
Lea Fm GP	–	180	106	33	1	–	–	–	3	7	–	70
Lower Fm GP	120	100	35	8	–	–	–	1	11	31	62	160
Lower Fm Trout Lake	20	20	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	9	–	100
Moatlands GP	106	126	12	20	–	–	–	1	19	–	–	120
Pingewood GP	–	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	26	136	–	–
Theale GP	130	40	–	–	2	–	–	–	20	–	67	90
Twyford GP	156	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	16	–
Wraybury GP	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	3	13	–	60	20

**First winter:** the high count of 250 at Eversley GP was made Feb 1st (BMA). Elsewhere the only notable count was 200+ Arborfield floods Jan 5th (DJB). As usual numbers declined during March and by April birds could be found at just 8 locations. In May a drake remained at Lea Fm GP till 4th (AR) and another drake remained at Theale Main Pit till 19th (KEM). In June a female was seen at Wraysbury GP Jun 15th, with a pair there Jun 21st (CDRH). **Second winter:** the first returning bird was seen at Dorney W Jul 22nd (BDC) with the main influx occurring in late September. The high count of 480 at Burghfield GP was made Dec 8th (JA).

## GADWALL *Anas strepera*

*Common winter visitor now breeding in several locations*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bearwood Lake	103	6	18	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	69	60
Benham Park	–	–	4	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bray GP	26	14	4	–	25	–	–	–	2	10	12	23
Burghfield GP	215	189	23	–	–	2	–	–	58	65	84	195
Dinton Pastures CP	109	20	12	4	3	6	–	8	8	8	65	280
Dorney W	9	–	–	2	18	20	–	–	35	14	16	6
Eversley GP	25	35	7	2	–	9	5	–	20	–	38	–
Great Meadow Pond	12	26	7	7	12	20	8	60	44	–	122	18
Jubilee R.	31	24	12	–	–	–	–	–	30	–	23	–
Lea Fm GP	–	–	11	14	24	14	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	86	42	15	13	17	9	10	20	40	26	42	72
Moatlands GP	108	–	–	–	–	–	–	42	22	–	165	215
Orlitts Lake (N)	14	14	6	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	50
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	–	9	–	–	26	–	6	–	–	38
Summerleaze GP	21	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	18
Thatcham Marsh	12	42	33	14	6	4	–	4	11	–	31	4
Theale GP	260	90	–	16	16	12	–	–	31	–	87	106
Woolhampton GP	–	41	4	6	3	–	–	17	–	–	3	2
Wraysbury GP	36	36	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	90	20

The high count of 280 at Dinton Pastures was made Dec 22nd (FJC). Elsewhere the only count to exceed 50 was 77 Pingewood GP Oct 27th (KEM). **Breeding:** birds were recorded at 14 locations during June/July and breeding was confirmed at 3 locations. At Lea Fm GP there was a brood of 8 May 26th (MFW) and broods of 7 and 5 Jun 6th (FJC) with broods of 5 and 4 still present Jun 14th (FJC), the first confirmed breeding records at Dinton Pastures since 1999. At Eversley GP there was a brood of 8 Jun 14th with 3 surviving Jul 18th (BMA) and at Lower Fm GP there was a brood of 8 Jun 30th (JA) with 7 surviving Jul 10th (NC).

**TEAL** *Anas crecca**Common winter visitor and rare summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	76	–	–	–	–
Bray GP	16	30	3	–	–	–	–	8	22	18	33	34
Dinton Pastures CP	81	54	29	18	–	1	–	14	35	37	42	63
Dorney W	57	–	–	10	–	1	–	1	5	30	25	21
Eversley GP	100	50	7	5	–	–	3	10	30	–	83	18
Great Meadow Pond	16	6	6	8	–	–	–	1	1	–	26	9
Lea Fm GP	–	–	24	12	–	–	1	5	30	27	6	–
Lower Fm GP	97	62	18	4	1	–	4	7	8	50	54	93
Moatlands GP	50	50	65	102	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	60
Pingewood GP	–	–	18	4	2	–	88	–	26	47	5	64

**First winter:** the high count of 100 at Eversley GP was made Jan 13th (TJo). Numbers fell off during April but there were still 102 at Moatlands 4th (KEM). **Summer:** a few birds lingered into May. Three were at Padworth Lane GP May 3rd (RJB), 2 drakes were at Pingewood Lane GP May 5th (KEM) and a drake was still at Lower Fm GP May 19th (KEM). In June drakes were at Lavell's Lake Jun 8th (AR), Dorney W Jun 8th (KPD) and 2 drakes at Slough SF Jun 16th (CDRH). **Second winter:** the first returning bird was at Eversley GP Jul 7th (BMA) with birds recorded at 3 other sites by the end of the month. A large arrival was noted by MFW at Pingewood Lane GP on Jul 23rd where numbers rose from 21 to 88 overnight.

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos**Common and widespread resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	61	35	35	5	10	–	–	33	8	12	130	30
Dorney W	32	–	–	5	–	20	–	139	50	47	–	–
Jubilee R.	174	169	142	–	–	–	127	–	134	114	124	–
Lower Fm GP	30	15	6	10	10	7	10	7	80	60	80	100
R. Thames, Reading to Pangbourne	1	9	17	–	–	–	–	–	13	12	126	–
Thatcham GP	82	54	96	33	67	162	66	96	98	147	169	127

The high count of 174 on the Jubilee R. was made Jan 24th (BDC). Elsewhere, high counts included 100 Bagnor Cressbeds Sep 11th (JL) and Oct 4th (IW; JL) and 90 Heath Lake Dec 28th (BMA). **Breeding:** under-recorded but breeding was confirmed at 23 locations.

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta**Scarce winter visitor*

**First winter:** Small numbers were reported from eight sites. At Lower Fm GP a pair was present on Jan 1st (IW; NC) and 2m and 1f were there Jan 4th (SAG). Lower Fm also hosted the last record of the period when a drake flew over east Mar 24th (IW, JL). At Twyford GP a pair was present Jan 1st (BTB, MFW). A pair was at Burghfield GP Jan 2nd (KEM) and 5 were reported there Feb 1st and Feb 18th (WEBS). A flock of 11 were seen at Arborfield floods on Jan 5th (DJB) comprising 7 adult drakes, 1 f/w drake and 3 females. There were a series of records at Eversley GP starting with 2 Jan 19th (BMA) then either a single male or a pair until Feb 3rd when 2 males were seen (BMA; MDL) which remained till Feb 13th (MJD) and then a single male was present Feb 16th (JGo) to 24th (MDL). At Lavell's Lake a female flew over Jan 20th (FJC, MFW). At Theale GP 2 were present Jan 28th (JA), 1m Jan 31st (CDRH) and 1male Feb 25th (BU). **Second winter:** The first returning bird was a female or juv at Everlsey GP Sep 5th (RJB), quickly followed by a juv at QMR Sep 8th (ABT). At Wraysbury there was a female, an eclipse drake and a f/w drake at Heron Lake Sep 27th (CDRH) and another f/w drake at Village Pit the same day (CDRH) followed by 9 (including 6 drakes) Oct 28th (CDRH), 2 drakes Nov 11th (CDRH) and 1 female Nov 19th (CDRH). There were several records at Lower Fm GP starting with an eclipse drake Sep 29th (IW; JL; NC) which remained until Dec 13th (CDRH). Also, during this period were 2 Oct 24th (GJS) and 1f Oct 27th (SAG) and 30th (KEM). 2 drakes were present Dec 16th (SAG) and 22nd (NC) then 3 drakes Dec 27th (JL) to 31st (NC). At Theale GP 3 flew east over Bottom Lane Sep 30th (RCW). Elsewhere 1 was at Woolhampton GP Nov 11th (RCW) and females were at Pingewood GP Nov 26th (MFW) and Dec 9th (PBT).

**GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula**Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

Records were received from 7 locations, involving 14 birds. **Spring:** A pair was on the small pool to the west of Rowneys Predator Lake at Woolhampton from Mar 27th (RRi) to Apr 8th (NC). A drake was at Moatlands Apr 9th (RCr) and 14th (JA; RPo). Further drakes were at Lower Fm GP Apr 28th (IW; JL), Slough SF Apr 29th (RN et al) and at Lavell's Lake May 21st (BTB; AR; IDP). **Autumn:** A female began a long stay in the Lavell's Lake area Aug 3rd (AR et al), commuting between there and Lea Fm GP into October. There was some confusion over the bird's sex, being reported as male and female during its stay! However, on Sep 16th MFW found 2 birds at Lea Fm GP, an adult male in eclipse and an adult female. Both birds were seen again on 20th (MFW) and 24th (FJC). It seems likely both birds were in the area, but rarely at the same time! The last definite report of the female was Sep 28th (FJC) and the m Oct 22nd (ADB; FJC). Elsewhere, a juv was at Heron Lake, Wraysbury Aug 27th to Sep 15th (CDRH) and a female was at Burghfield Mill GP, Theale Sep 10th (ABT).

**SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata**Locally common winter visitor and uncommon breeder*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	12	15	2	6	–	–	–	–	9	28	25	20
Burghfield GP	26	18	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	10	27	22
Pingewood Lane GP	23	–	6	9	–	–	–	7	3	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	21	9	18	9	–	–	–	3	17	17	16	39
Dorney W	12	–	–	–	2	–	–	4	20	22	18	12
Eversley GP	100	30	45	25	–	–	8	2	22	2	21	20
Great Meadow Pond	21	33	21	9	–	–	–	12	37	–	21	12
Lea Fm GP	–	–	6	7	–	–	4	18	30	12	–	–
Lower Fm GP	77	39	63	30	3	2	–	15	12	54	20	38
Moatlands GP	12	40	30	37	–	–	–	5	21	6	22	63
Slough SF	–	–	–	5	–	1	–	4	38	15	–	–
Thatcham Marsh	32	13	37	19	1	–	–	25	21	80	69	32
Theale GP	157	75	–	–	–	2	–	–	8	–	20	9
Whiteknights Lake/Park	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	30	14
Wraysbury GP	11	28	–	–	–	–	–	27	104	80	5	–

**First winter:** the high counts of 100 at Eversley GP was made Jan 13th (TJo) and 157 at Theale GP Jan 21st (WEBS). There were no other significant counts made outside of the above sites. **Summer:** most birds had departed by May but a drake was still at Searles Lane, Burghfield May 5th (JA) and a pair was at Slough SF May 15th (BDC). In June 3 (including 2 drakes) were at Summerleaze GP Jun 2nd (CDRH), a pair were at Hosehill Lake Jun 3rd (BU) and a drake was at Slough SF Jun 22nd (CDRH). A pair summered at Lower Fm GP but there was no evidence of breeding. **Second winter:** the first returning bird was a female/eclipse/juv at Padworth Lane GP Jul 7th (RJB). Small numbers were reported during July, with double figure counts regularly being reported by the end of August and higher counts reported from mid September. The high count of 104 at Wraysbury GP was made Sep 9th (CDRH). The only notable count outside the above table was 22 at South Lake Dec 29th (PG).

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina**Scarce winter visitor*

Nine records involving 17 birds at 9 sites. However, the presence of several long-staying birds meant that the species was “available” in the county most of the winter. **First winter:** a long-staying drake was at Dinton Pastures from Jan 30th (BTB; MFW) to Mar 26th (ADB). Another long-staying bird, a fem, was at Bray GP Feb 6th (DJB) to Mar 29th (DJB). Elsewhere, 2 were at Wigmore Lane, Theale Feb 18th (WEBS) and 3 (including 1 drake) were at Great Meadow Pond Mar 7th (CDRH). **Second winter:** a female was at Dorney W Oct 15th (DJB). A pair took up residence at Woolhampton GP from Oct 27th (KEM) to Nov 15th (PBou). One was at Burghfield Mill, Theale Oct 30th (per log book). Two drakes and a female were in the Theale area from Nov 10th (AWa) to Dec 22nd (KEM), initially at Hosehill before relocating to Main Pit. Two pairs reported on Dec 16th (JA) presumably included these birds with an additional female dropping in. The only other record was of 2 at Village Pit, Wraysbury Dec 9th (WEBS).

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant, rare summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	93	150	17	–	–	–	–	4	6	65	153	360
Burghfield GP	46	126	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	7	42
Dinton Pastures CP	37	30	15	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	13	10
Dorney W	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	20	23	101	5
Eversley GP	100	40	–	1	–	1	2	4	3	44	–	2
Great Meadow Pond	55	50	30	2	1	16	35	63	168	–	10	16
Jubilee R.	22	12	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	134	–
Lower Fm GP	45	18	8	8	4	5	8	10	16	24	24	60
Moatlands GP	50	60	15	–	–	–	–	6	41	62	47	223
Summerleaze GP	–	45	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	68
Thatcham Marsh	48	45	36	1	1	1	–	9	8	11	33	43
Theale GP	70	39	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	7	30	–
Woolhampton GP	–	28	5	–	2	–	5	3	4	1	26	65
Wraysbury GP	110	90	–	–	4	–	2	60	–	9	40	40

**First winter:** the high count of 126 at Burghfield GP was made Feb 1st (WEBS). Outside of the main sites there were no counts greater than 25. **Summer:** birds were reported from 12 locations during Apr-Jun but there was no definitive proof of breeding. Seven juvs at Great Meadow Pond Jul 1st (DJB) were not hatched there but five juvs at Lower Fm GP Jul 21st (SAG) were thought by the observer to probably have been bred in the area. **Second winter:** the high count of 360 at Bray GP was made Dec 20th (DJB). Away from the main sites there were no counts greater than 25.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** *Aythya collaris*

*Véry rare vagrant*

A female was at Dorney W Apr 17th (JO'B et al) before moving to Slough SF 18th (KPD) where it remained until Apr 23rd (CDRH; ABT; BTB). This is the 9th accepted record, though 2 were seen in 2006 and another 3 have been seen since 2000.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** *Aythya nyroca*

*Rare winter visitor*

A female was at Wigmore Lane GP, Theale Nov 15th (KEM et al), remaining to the end of the year and into 2008. This was the 24th accepted record and the first since 2003 when a juv was at Wraysbury GP/Old Slade GP during October/November.

The escaped drake remained at Dorney W, first seen Jan 13th (DJB; JEW) and last seen Sep 29th (RN). It was also seen at Bray GP on May 9th, displaying to Tufted Ducks (CDRH). On Apr 20th CDRH again noted that the bill tip pattern “suggests genetic impurity or inbreeding”.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula**Common throughout the year*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	243	100	60	35	11	–	28	62	154	206	274	358
Burghfield GP	281	302	194	–	–	–	–	–	9	53	162	161
Dinton Pastures CP	194	65	73	10	20	2	–	8	6	6	165	31
Eversley GP	200	100	–	60	–	11	35	34	20	–	50	–
Great Meadow Pond	26	44	63	76	20	8	13	22	18	–	10	17
Jubilee R.	114	114	89	–	–	–	–	–	51	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	15	25	26	25	46	33	25	31	23	15	31	60
Lower Fm Trout Lake	50	40	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	100
Moatlands GP	400	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	351	449	704	484
Old Slade GP	38	80	12	52	–	–	–	46	–	–	22	40
Summerleaze GP	92	82	–	–	–	–	–	–	20	39	75	78
Thatcham GP	44	44	38	40	10	8	7	17	26	27	48	30
Theale GP	918	449	92	40	66	62	–	–	–	–	256	312
Woolhampton GP	–	–	64	–	35	–	–	–	–	–	141	80
Wraysbury GP	580	490	72	4	6	207	6	11	9	23	130	850

Counts of up to 44 were received from a further 41 sites with higher counts of 51 Sunnymeads GP (S) Jan 21st (WEBS); 50 Slough SF Apr 23rd (ABT), 63 Thatcham May 4th (BJW). The high count of 918 at Theale GP was made Jan 1st (WEBS) and the count of 850 at Wraysbury GP was made Dec 19th (DGC). **Breeding:** confirmed at 8 locations with a minimum of 20 broods reported. Lower Fm GP and Eversley GP were particularly productive with both sites producing 5 broods.

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

7–9 birds were reported from 6 sites. **First winter:** the year started with a f/w drake at Smallmead GP, Burghfield GP Jan 4th (CDRH et al) which was either there or at Searles Lane, Burghfield GP until Feb 11th (TABR). Another drake was at Searles Lane Mar 23rd (RJB) and Pingewood GP Apr 6th (MFW). **Second winter:** a drake was at Woolhampton GP Oct 8th (GEW), followed by 2 there Nov 1st (NC) and 1 drake Nov 2nd (GEW) and Nov 3rd (GR). A juv was at Bray GP Oct 28th to 29th (CDRH). A drake was at Searles Lane, Burghfield GP Nov 2nd (KEM) and Nov 3rd (RCr; JA). A f/w drake settled in at Wigmore Lane, Theale GP Nov 15th (KEM) and remained to the end of the year. During this time an adult drake was seen at Searles Lane Nov 29th (KEM), Dec 15th (JA) and 16th (WEBS).

**LESSER SCAUP** *Aythya affinis**New to Berkshire List*

An adult drake was at Rowneys Predator Lake, Woolhampton Oct 27th (KEM) to Nov 16th (NC). Although present for 2 days previously the identification wasn't confirmed until it



was seen by CDRH on 30th. The identification process wasn't helped by the presence of a convincing looking hybrid which at first was never present at the same time as the Lesser Scaup! One of the highlights of the year and a long overdue addition to the Berkshire List.

## COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

*Scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor*

Five records involving six birds. One was at Pingewood Lane GP, Pingewood Apr 7th (RJB). All other records came from QMR where there was a first-summer drake May 21st (CDRH), a female Jun 16th (CDRH), a female/imm on Jul 9th, which was only on view for about 5 mins (ABT) and 2 adult drakes Oct 13th (CDRH).

## COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

*Locally common winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GP	11	7	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	12	12
Dinton Pastures CP	21	18	20	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	10
Moatlands GP	19	11	10	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	12
Queen Mother Reservoir	10	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Theale GP	15	10	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	11
Wraysbury GP	50	55	30	15	–	–	–	–	–	13	24	40

**First winter:** recorded at 12 locations. As usual Wraysbury GP held the highest numbers with the peak count being 55 on Feb 9th (CDRH). Away from the main sites 12 were at Twyford GP Feb 17th (MFW). Birds were still present at 6 locations during April, with the last being a female at Moatlands on 14th (JA). **Second winter:** the first returning bird was a juv at Heron Lake, Wraysbury on Oct 19th (CDRH). Birds were recorded at a further 4 sites by the end of the month, including an influx of 13 birds at Wraysbury GP on 28th (CDRH). Birds were recorded at 15 locations during the second winter period. Again, Wraysbury held by far the greater numbers, with the peak count being c40 Dec 15th (CDRH).

## SMEW *Mergus albellus*

*Uncommon winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	2	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GP	19	7	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10

**First winter:** The counts of 19 at Wraysbury GP occurred on Jan 1st (WEBS) and 4 at Bray GP on Feb 1st (WEBS). Counts at the previously regular site of Twyford GP were very disappointing with just 2 (including 1 drake) on Jan 23rd (CDRH). Elsewhere, a redhead was at Hosehill Lake Feb 1st (AMH; KEM) with 2 redheads there Feb 18th and 25th (MFW). Unusually, there was a West Berks record with 2 redheads at Lower Fm Trout Lake Feb 10th (SAG). Birds were still present at Bray GP and Wraysbury GP in March with the

last record being a pair at Bray on Mar 17th (MTr). **Second winter:** the first returning birds were at Wraysbury Dec 9th (WEBS) and Wraysbury was the only site to host birds during the second winter period, with a peak count of 10 on Dec 9th (WEBS).

## GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

*Uncommon winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	19	23	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	7	14	43
Wraysbury GP	10	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	11

**First winter:** numbers at the Eversley GP roost peaked at 23 Feb 6th (KEM). Away from the main sites a male and a redhead were at Searles Lane, Burghfield GP Jan 2nd (KEM), a male was at Dinton Pastures Jan 2nd (BTB) and flying over Jan 3rd (MFW), a male and a redhead at Woolhampton GP Jan 2nd (GEW), a female was at QMR Jan 23rd (CDRH), a female was at Bray GP Jan 24th (MJF; LJF) and 27th (WAS; KPD; FJC), a pair was at QMR Mar 1st (CDRH), and a male was at Heath Lake Mar 14th (IT) and 22nd (BSa). A few birds lingered at Eversley GP into April with the last recorded there on Apr 16th (BMA).

**Second winter:** a very unusual summer record involved 3 birds landing in a lock cut on the river at Cookham Aug 9th (MG). In addition, 2 redheads at Hosehill Lake Sep 16th (JA, RR) were exceptionally early. Seven birds at Eversley GP Oct 29th (LRB) were still relatively early, followed by a redhead at Wraysbury GP Nov 8th (CDRH). The main arrival was from Nov 23rd when 10 were at Eversley GP (DJB). The peak count of 43 at Eversley GP was made Dec 21st (JMC). Away from the main sites 1–4 were recorded at 9 sites.

## RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

*Uncommon resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	–	2	3	6	5	4	4	7	6	–	7	–
Lower Fm GP	5	7	9	5	3	5	3	4	10	8	11	11
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	9
Wraysbury GP	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	8	1	1

Records were received from 16 sites, 4 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 4 in West Berks. The peak counts of 11 at Lower Fm GP were made Nov 10th (IW; JL) and Dec 13th (CDRH). Away from the main sites most counts were of 1–3 birds but 4 were at Bray GP Jan 23rd (CDRH) to 24th (DJB) and 5 were at Wigmore Lane, Theale Jan 21st and Feb 18th (WEBS). **Breeding:** At Great Meadow Pond 4 newly hatched ducklings were seen on Aug 5th but there was no sign of any on 8th (DJB). Although adult birds were present at Lower Fm GP throughout the summer no juvs were seen.

## RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

*A locally common introduced resident with numbers inflated in autumn at certain sites for shooting*

There were 104 records from 54 locations; 77 of these were for sightings of 1–3 birds. The highest counts probably indicate groups of birds released for shooting, for example: 50 at West Woodhay Down on Nov 11th (RGS); 52 at Frogmill on Aug 9th (SJF; FMF); 120 at Combe on Sep 23rd (SAG) and 125 at Aston on Sep 22nd (MSFW). **Breeding:** the only record relating to breeding was a territorial dispute between two birds at Ashampstead on Mar 30th (RRC).

## GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

*Localised and declining resident (red Listed)*

There were 100 records from 46 locations, with the majority (56) being for 1–2 birds. Most records were from the west of the county. Large counts included 10 birds at 3 locations: Bury Down on Jan 21st (MJD), Stanford Dingley on Feb 1st (JLe) and West Ilsley on Nov 27th (ABT); 11 birds at Cow Down on Dec 22nd (MFW); 12 at Bury Down on Dec 27th (RJB); 13 at Compton on Sep 21st (ABT); 15 at Sulham on Jan 1st (JLe); 20 at Bury Down on Dec 21st (CDRH); 22 at Sheepdrove on Dec 13th (BDC) and 44 at Bury Down on Dec 23rd (EU). The larger counts in West Berks are strongly indicative of artificial releases (as with Red-legged Partridge). **Breeding:** a bird was calling at Cow Down on Jan 14th (MFW); a pair were at Stanford End on Mar 19th (DJS) and another at Streatley Warren on Apr 10th (DJS); a male was calling at dusk at Westley Mill on Apr 16th (MSFW); a pair was seen at Hook End Fm on May 22nd (LS) and another pair at QMR on Jun 18th (CDRH); there were 2 pairs at Welford Fms on Jun 20th (DJS) and a bird was calling at Littlewick Green on Jun 26th (PBT). The only definite breeding record was a pair with 4 full-grown young seen at Brightwalton on Sep 23rd, Nov 24th and Dec 26th (GDS). During Oct up to 4 were present at Colnbrook, possibly a family from the earlier QMR pair (CDRH).

## QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

A possible 14 birds were recorded from 8 locations, although there may be some overlap as some locations are quite close together. The first record of the year was a singing bird in the Coldharbour/Knowl Hill area on May 13th (RN) and 14th (MSFW). On May 26th 3 birds were at Seven Barrows (RJB) and on the same day 2 calling males (possibly 2 of the 3) were at Well Bottom Down (GDS). On Jun 4th 2 birds were at Warren Down (MMan). On Jun 9th there was a calling bird at Well Bottom Down (ABT) and on the same day one was calling from a wheat crop at Woolley Down (GDS). The next 3 records (MFW) were all from the Berkshire Downs area: on Jun 24th a bird was calling; on Jul 1st 2 birds were present (1 in flight) and on Jul 8th, 3 birds were present. On Jul 9th there were 4 birds at Seven Barrows (RJB) and on Jul 12th 2 were calling from a bean field at Sheepdrove (JL). The last record of the year was a calling bird 28th Aug at West Woodhay Down (JL; IW).

## COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

There were 157 records from 41 locations, with two-thirds of them (106) for 1–2 birds. Highest counts were of 30 birds at Combe on Mar 26th and Apr 5th (RP). There was a wide

range of plumage including dark blue/green melanistic birds at Combe on Mar 26th (RP) and on Dec 2nd (RD<sub>r</sub>); an albinistic female at Donnington Valley on Mar 28th (SAG) and a very pale bird on Feb 12th at Dinton Pastures (MFW). **Breeding:** there were only 2 records: a female was observed on a nest on May 9th at Eversley GP (BMA) and 5 imms were at Lower Fm GP on Sep 15th (SAG).

## GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

*Rare winter visitor*

A juv was at QMR from 8th December 2006 until the end of March 2007 (CDRH). Another was found at the same reservoir on Dec 9th (BC<sub>r</sub>) and proved to be yet another juv, which stayed into 2008 (CDRH).

## LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

*Common resident and probable passage migrant*

Reports came from 50 sites evenly spread through the county. Numbers were similar to 2006. The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	–	2	3	6	5	4	4	7	6	–	7	–
Lower Fm GP	5	7	9	5	3	5	3	4	10	8	11	11
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	9
Wraybury GP	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	8	1	1

It is difficult to make general observations about Little Grebe populations from year to year because they fluctuate. However this was a typical year, with numbers peaking in November and reached a minimum in June. Whether this is due to migration or winter attrition is not clear, and a combination of both is likely. As in 2006, summer populations were relatively high further west in the county. Overall, county numbers seem to be stable. **Breeding:** there were few reports of nests (as these birds usually conceal the nest) but breeding was confirmed at 10 sites between early July and early October, in all cases by the presence of juvs.

## GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

*Common resident and winter visitor*

Records came from 33 sites across Berkshire. Only 1 record was received from Burghfield GP where there is sometimes a large population. Numbers reported were about 30% lower than in 2006. The monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great Meadow Pond	–	2	3	6	5	4	4	7	6	–	7	–
Lower Fm GP	5	7	9	5	3	5	3	4	10	8	11	11
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	9
Wraybury GP	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	8	1	1

**Breeding:** was confirmed at 21 sites by the presence of chicks or flightless young. Occupied nests were observed at 5 these sites. A nest at Brimpton GP was already occupied on Feb 1st (GEW).

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritas**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were records of 2 birds, one in the first winter period and one in the second. A single bird in w/p was found at Bray GPs on Jan 23rd that stayed until Feb 18th (CDRH). It was very probably the same bird that appeared on several occasions at King George VI Res (Surrey) during the same period (Pete Nayler per CDRH). The other record was of a bird seen and photographed at Heron Lake, Wraysbury GPs on Dec 14th (CDRH) that stayed until 21st.

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were records of 2 birds: one in s/p was at Woolhampton GP from Mar 17th to 25th (KEM et al). The other was a w/p adult at QMR on Sep 7th (CDRH).

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus**Very rare vagrant*

This species is recorded in the county about once in ten years on average, so a follow up so soon after the 2006 record is unusual. One was seen distantly at the western end of QMR on the morning of Sep 16th and what was presumably another was seen there on 25th (both CDRH). Access to the reservoir was severely limited by the foot and mouth restrictions at the time. The September dates are typical for this species and the great majority of Berkshire records have been in September.

**GANNET** *Morus bassanus**Rare vagrant*

There were a remarkable two records of three birds (the 23rd and 24th records for the county). Two juvs flew south over the Aldworth Downs east of Lowbury Hill at about 11: 45hrs on Sep 28th (DJB). These may well have been the same 2 juvs that flew south over Farmoor Res (Oxon) two days previously. The other record was from QMR where a sub-adult (probably 4th year) was initially on the water, then circled several times over the western end of the reservoir, before flying off towards the southwest on Dec 3rd at 11: 07hrs (CDRH); flying right past two primed Thames Water employees as it departed. Gannet records in Berkshire are not strongly seasonal but this was the first December record.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo**Common winter visitor; breeds in small numbers*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	5	12	2	–	–	–	–	–	2	38	34	14
Burghfield GP	39	29	6	–	–	–	–	–	8	9	30	20
Dinton Pastures CP	16	15	12	6	3	1	–	3	12	10	27	10
Eversley GP	20	15	11	1	–	–	–	–	12	–	50	23
Jubilee R.	2	–	–	5	–	6	8	–	7	–	14	–

Lower Fm GP	31	18	17	11	5	1	15	22	19	17	65	63
Lower Fm Trout Lake	35	17	19	9	3	–	–	–	13	–	36	29
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	12	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	23	–
Summerleaze GP	2	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	16	11	5	5
Thatcham	25	16	21	20	1	–	–	13	10	13	20	26
Theale GP	20	43	36	2	4	4	–	–	–	–	53	46
Wraysbury GP	64	214	39	24	–	2	6	39	5	71	114	276

Recorded from 55 sites representing all major, and many minor, water bodies across the county. This species appears mostly from October to March with the peak county total this year of 400 in November over all sites. Numbers reported are much lower than usual and this is almost certainly linked to reduced access in the east of the county due to foot-and-mouth restrictions. **Breeding:** no breeding evidence was presented this year.

## EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant*

There was just a single record of a juv at QMR from Dec 11th to 31st (CDRH); and still present in 2008.

## BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

*Scarce but increasing winter visitor*

At least 5 different birds were recorded at three major wetland sites during the year. **First winter:** at Dinton Pastures CP the bird that arrived on Oct 13th 2006 was reported by several observers during January. It was joined by a second bird, which was paler and more rufous – and so easily distinguished – on or about Feb 2nd (FJC) and both were seen regularly by many observers at the roost at Lavell's Lake and elsewhere until Mar 27th, when both birds were seen to fly off northwards (FJC), and were not reported again. The only report from Thatcham Marsh was of a single bird that flew in on Jan 23rd (JCh). At Theale GPs, one was seen at Hosehill Lake on Jan 15th (CDRH) and on Jan 30th it was joined by a second (MJD), after which a single bird was reported by five observers until Feb 3rd. **Second winter:** on Dec 19th at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP a rufous coloured individual was seen in the main island reed bed (FJC).

## CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

*Very rare vagrant*

One at Lower Fm GP on Oct 14th (SAG) was the first record (of a wild bird) for Berkshire. It remained for most of the day and was seen by many observers. In the evening it went to roost in willows with a Little Egret (CDRH; D.J.Britton) but was not seen subsequently. Record accepted by BBRC (Brit Birds 101:528).

## LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

*Increasing resident which is breeding in very small numbers*

There were 415 records from 90 observers at 44 sites across the county. This species is increasing in number and distribution in the county at a remarkable rate. For several years

the totals of bird numbers and sites have been more or less doubling annually, so if this goes on this species could soon become the county's commonest Ardeida. The monthly totals are shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	14	9	13	4	11	19	11	12	10	6	15	14
Minimum number of birds	28	23	27	8	19	40	34	34	28	11	23	31

**Breeding:** birds were reported during the period April to July from 23 sites, most of them close to known colonies of Grey Herons where they might have bred. Breeding was confirmed in E.Berks, where 3 young were seen being fed by the adults at a nest in June (CDRH) and then in Mid Berks where 1 juv was confirmed in a nest in July (JA et al). Not unexpected, but these are nevertheless the first-ever breeding records for the county.

## GREAT WHITE EGRET *Egretta alba*

*Very rare vagrant*

One flew over the yacht club at QMR on Dec 24th (CDRH), but did not land, and headed off in the direction of Staines Moor – where one had been present for several days: the 6th bird in the county, after the first in 2003.

## GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

*Locally common resident and winter visitor in small numbers*

There were 535 records from 67 observers at over 80 sites throughout the county. As these birds sometimes feed in wet fields and ditches, they are often found far from significant water bodies, but the largest concentrations were from the main wetland sites, as the table shows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	1	4	–	–	–	12	1	–	1	3	1	3
Burghfield GP	21	17	21	36	–	14	–	–	7	1	3	1
Dinton Pastures CP	4	6	3	3	5	2		2	2	1	8	2
Eversley GP	5	5	–	2	–	–	1	2	3	–	1	–
Lower Fm GP	13	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	8	5	5	7
Theale GP	7	13	6	6	8	10	–	–	–	–	5	6
Windsor Great Park (Great Meadow Pond)	6	6	5	3	4	3	6	5	3	–	3	3
Wraysbury GP	42	41	45	49	40	36	17	14	37	19	21	30

\* Wraysbury high counts are all WEBS

**Breeding:** confirmed breeding was reported at 4 sites (Wraysbury, Heath Lake, Burghfield GP and Donnington Valley GC) where occupied nests were seen and in 2 cases young were seen at the nest. Juvs were seen at Padworth Lane GP during July and early August with 6 there on Aug 2nd (RJB) but it is not clear where they originated. Juvs were also reported from Woolhampton GP on Jun 10th (SAG) and Pingewood GP in July/August (RJB). There were no records from the many other regular breeding sites.

**SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

*Very rare vagrant*

There were 4 records between May 4th and 17th beginning with 1 at Jubilee R. (WMo), then on 14th an adult in breeding plumage and a first-summer were seen by several observers at Lea Fm GP, Dinton Pastures CP (T. James et al), followed by 3 seen at Jubilee R. on 16th (ADB) and finally 2 flew south over Bracknell on 17th (JRe). The total of 5 records involving up to 9 birds constitutes a record year for this species in Berkshire. These reports coincide with similar reports from neighbouring counties indicating a significant influx. Later in the year a single juv was seen on Dec 13th & 14th at Jubilee R. (TGa; TPr).

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

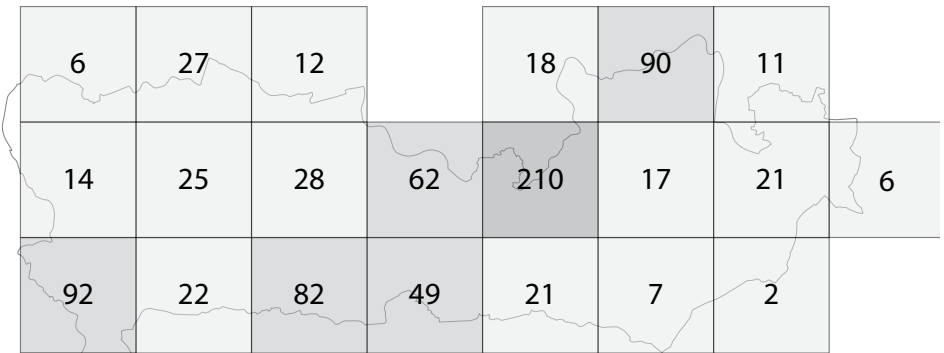
*Common re-introduced resident (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed)*

This is now a familiar and common bird in Berkshire. There were 899 records from 233 locations, well-distributed across the county. A majority of the records (60%) were of single birds. Red kites are now seen frequently in urban areas and many of the records are of birds flying over gardens. One was recorded (DJMi) as frequenting McDonalds in Lower Earley! The distribution of records is shown by 10km square below:

The pattern remains essentially the same as that shown in 2006, with only small differences probably resulting from changes in observer effort. The highest counts (GDS) were of birds at the Woolley Down roost with monthly maxima shown below:

6th Jan	8th Feb	22nd Sept	31st Oct	3rd Nov	15 Dec
78	55	37	112	68	111

The figure of 112 on Oct 31st is a modern-day record for Berkshire. **Breeding:** there were several records of successful breeding. In NW Berks a pair were seen in courtship display flight on Feb 3rd and young were calling in the same location on Jul 28th and Aug 11th (GDS); a pair were found at a nest in Mid Berks on Jun 6th (CDRH); another NW Berks pair were at the nest Apr 12th and May 13th but the nest was later abandoned (GDS); birds were calling at a known nest site in West Berks on Apr 4th (LS); noisy juvs were recorded from another site in West Berks Aug 4th–13th (LS); a juv was recorded in Mid Berks on



Distribution of Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) sightings in Berkshire 2007 by 10 km square [total of 899 observations]



Aug 10th (SJF; FMF). In addition there were a number of records relating to display, for example over Caversham Mar 8th (RCW) and over Purley-on-Thames Apr 9th (MJS). **Prey items:** a bird at Kintbury swooped down for a dead rabbit on the edge of the A4 on Jun 9th (MJT); 2 at West Woodhay were hunting over a meadow while the grass was being cut, Jul 13th (LS); 11 were feeding over hay-making at Pinkney's Green Aug 1st (CDRH); 2 were feeding on dead fish at Borough Marsh Sep 2nd (HRN); a bird was seen drinking and bathing at Pingewood Lane GP Sep 21st (KEM)

## **MARSH HARRIER**     *Circus aeruginosus*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)*

There was a single spring record and 7 autumn ones, the latter probably representing a total of 5 birds. **Spring:** a female flew north at Lavell's Lake on May 26th (FJC). **Autumn:** on 4th August at Lavell's Lake an imm female flew over south; on the same day at Hurst a Marsh Harrier (possibly the same bird) was chased by a Sparrowhawk (BH); on Aug 26th at Greenham Com an imm m flew south and was also seen at Lower Fm (NC; IW; JL); on Sep 6th a juv was seen on the Berkshire Downs repeatedly diving into a maize field, eventually capturing a small prey item and then being harried by 4 Red Kites (CDRH); on Sep 29th an imm female flew south over Caversham (TGB) and on the same day a female/juv was seen heading south at Colnbrook (CDRH), eventually disappearing from view into low cloud!

## **HEN HARRIER**     *Circus cyaneus*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule 1)*

There were 14 records with birds reported from 9 sites, probably involving a total of 6 or 7 birds. **First winter:** there were a probable 4 birds: the first was a male flying west at Eastbury Fields on Jan 2nd (ABT); on 15th March a ring-tail was flying north at Calcot (DMcE); on 26th March a male was soaring with Red Kites at Combe (RP); on 2nd April a male flew north at Greenham (RRob). **Second winter:** there were probably 2 or 3 birds: on 10th Nov a f/w bird was seen at East Garston Down (ABT) and a f/w bird, possibly the same one, was at Cow Down on 27th Nov (ABT); in late December a ring-tail – reported as an adult female by CDRH – was seen in the Bury Down/Cow Down area: on Dec 20th (RJB); 21st (CDRH; IFe); 22nd (MFW); 27th (CRe); 31st (BDC); there was also an adult male at Brimpton on 30th Nov (GEW).

## **MONTAGU'S HARRIER**     *Circus pygargus*

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

There were four sightings, from the usual summering area on the Berks/Oxon border. The first was a male on Apr 29th (BTB); on Jun 6th a 3/s m (KEM); on Jul 6th a r/t (BDC) and the last was on Jul 8th when a male and female were observed together, taking turns hunting (N A Kaduck). Additionally, a juv circled Lea Farm GP for 3 mins on Aug 26th before departing to the south-west (FJC).

## **SPARROWHAWK**     *Accipiter nisus*

*Common and widespread resident*

The number of records for Sparrowhawk was down on 2006, with 436 records from 145 locations. **Spring/Display:** the first reported display sighting was of a male and female in

rollercoaster display flight on Feb 26th at Woose Hill and display was recorded there again on Mar 12th (PBT). Two birds were observed flying together at Donnington Castle on Mar 9th (JCh); a female was seen in territorial flight on Apr 8th at Farnborough Down (GDS); a male was displaying and calling on Apr 20th at Greenham Com (ABT) and two males were in territorial dispute on May 14th at Lavell's Lake (JBee). **Breeding:** on Jun 18th a fledgling was heard calling from a nest in a conifer (interestingly only 50m from a buzzard's nest) at Brightwalton Com (GDS): the male parent was heard making soft calls to the fem, calling her off the nest, typical of prey-delivery. On Jul 22nd, and again on Aug 4th, a juv was seen at Padworth Lane GP (KEM). On Jul 23rd a female and two juvs were seen at the nest at Cookham Dean (BDC); a female was observed feeding two juvs on the Jubilee R. near Eton on Jul 25th (BDC); two fledglings were heard calling from a wooded ridge at Woolley Down on Jul 28th (GDS); a juv female took a fledgling Robin in a garden at Brightwalton Com on Aug 16th (GDS). **Prey:** Quarry species recorded were: Goldfinch (7 records), Blackbird (4 records), Collared Dove (2 records), Woodpigeon (2 records), Starling (2 records), Blue Tit (2 records), Robin, House Sparrow, and Long-tailed Tit. A female attacked a Lapwing over Lower Fm GP on Nov 13th (SA). **Species Interactions:** A number of records mention interactions with other bird species: Sparrowhawks were seen soaring with Buzzards, soaring with Red Kites, being mobbed by crows (4 records), mobbed by Swallows, mobbed by a Meadow Pipit, and mobbing a Red Kite. **Ringings:** A first year female was ringed at Bagnor Cress Beds on Mar 11th (JL) and an imm male at Greenham Com on Aug 26th (NC).

## COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

*Common and widespread resident and passage migrant*

There were again a large number of observations: 970 records of a total of 2278 birds seen. Most reports (696) were of 1 or 2 birds, while the highest number of birds seen together was 20 at Walbury Hill on Apr 6th (FJC) and Cow Down on the Feb 21st (RJB), and 19 at Brightwalton Com on Oct 14th (GDS). Most multiple sightings were pre-breeding season gatherings or possibly movements: 17 birds on Feb 11th; 16 on Apr 18th; 15 on Feb 11th, Mar 2nd and Mar 26th mostly on the downs at the western end of the county. Display: the earliest record was a pair displaying at Greenham Com on Jan 31st (NC); 3 soaring birds were chasing each other on Feb 7th at Chaddleworth (GDS) and birds were circling and calling over a previous nest site at Widbrook Com on Feb 19th (BDC); 4 birds in a group of 7 were displaying at West Woodhay on Feb 26th (LS) and on the same day 5 birds were displaying at Bowdown (NC); a bird was displaying at Baynes on Mar 6th (NC); many of the 15 birds at Walbury Hill on Mar 26th were displaying (NC); 5 birds were displaying at Lavell's Lake on Mar 29th (FJC) and on the same day a pair was displaying at Wickham Heath (MJT); of 3 birds present, 2 were in display flight at Compton Down on Apr 9th (ASL); 2 birds were displaying at Hell Corner Fm on Apr 15th (LS); 3 were displaying over a garden at Winterbourne on May 19th (MJT) and birds were displaying on May 20th at Greenham Com (GDS). **Breeding:** the earliest breeding record was of a bird carrying nest material on Feb 18th at Kintbury (RRC); a pair was mating in a pine tree at Brimpton on Feb 25th (GACJ); nest-building was observed at Bagnor Cress Beds on Mar 13th (JL); 2 of a group of 4 birds were mating at Greenham Com on Apr 4th (IW); a pair was mating in a traditional nest tree at Woolley Down on Apr 6th (GDS); mating was also observed at Brightwalton Com on Apr 15th (GDS); on Apr 15th a female was seen flying from a nest at Lyddiards Green and a fledgling was seen in the nest there on Jul 19th (GDS); a pair were noted nesting in a wood at Curridge on May 22nd (IW); a fledgling was calling near a nest on Jul 11th and 15th (Farnborough Down & Hoe Benham) (GDS); a fledgling was chased by 4 Kestrels (3 of them juvs) on Aug 5th at Farnborough Down (GDS); 3 juvs

were sitting in trees at Curridge on Jul 25th (IW); 2 fledglings were seen at Woolley Down on Jul 27th (GDS); an adult and a calling juv were at Hell Corner on Jul 31st (LS); a juv was calling at Yattendon on Jul 31st (LS); young birds were at Sole Com on Aug 5th (IW); 4 birds including a pair engaged in a food pass were at Lea Fm GP on Aug 8th (JBee); a juv was at Cookham on Sep 22nd (BDC). A notably pale individual at Coombe Wood was harried by 'hoards' of raptors on Oct 24th (TPO). **Feeding:** There was only a single feeding record, of a bird on a discarded turkey carcass on Dec 27th at Cookham Rise (BDC). **Plumage:** A broad spectrum of plumage was described, from very pale to very dark.

## **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule 1)*

There were 10 records from 9 locations involving 8 birds. **Spring:** the first bird was an adult seen flying SW at Lower Fm on Mar 14th (NC; SAG); on Mar 25th there was one at Farnborough Down (GDS); on Apr 1st a bird at Whiteknights Lake flew NNW (PG); on Apr 14th at the Wilderness a bird carrying a fish flew off north (IW; JL); on Apr 28th a bird at Englefield was heading north (ACa). An exceptionally late Spring migrant was seen in the Hungerford area on Jun 10th, flying north, high (EEG, JBut). **Autumn:** there were only two sightings: on Sep 29th a bird flew south at Whistley Mill GP, mobbed by Black-headed Gulls (CDJ); on Sep 30th an adult in an oak tree at Pingewood Lane GP, then flew off south (GR).

## **KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

*A common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)*

There were 336 records at 112 sites, with a large majority relating to single birds. **Breeding:** the first indication of breeding was a bird in an owl nest box at Eversley GP on Feb 16th (JGo), though on Jun 6th 3 dead eggs were found there (BMA). The first proof of successful breeding was on Jun 29th when an adult with 2 full-sized young demanding food were found at Shaw (RRC) and other records of juv birds came from Curridge on Jun 29th and Jul 10th (IW); Sheepdrove Fm on Jul 12th (JL); Woolley Down on Jul 14th (GDS); Winterbourne on Jul 15th (MJT); Padworth on Jul 16th (KEM) and Jul 19th (RJB); Lower Fm on Jul 19th (RJB) and Jul 21st (IW; JL); Aston on Jul 23rd (ANS); Bagnor on Jul 29th (SAG); Farnborough Down on Aug 5th (GDS); Widbrook Com on Aug 25th (BDC); Winter Hill on Aug 26th (BDC); Moor Green Lakes on Sep 5th (RJB); Dorney W on Sep 14th (BDC); Cookham Dean on Sep 15th (BDC). There was a late record of a pair mating in Maidenhead on Sep 26th (DF). Interaction with other species; a male mobbed a pair of Buzzards at West Ilsley (SAG) on Feb 21st; a juv male was mobbed by Magpies and crows in Cookham on Oct 14th (BDC), and 15 Pied Wagtails pursued a bird at Eversley GP (JPE) on Nov 2nd.

## **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

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

There were 22 records from 15 locations involving up to 15 birds: a probable 6 in the first winter period and 8 or 9 in the second. The number of records was thus very similar to 2006. **First winter:** The first bird of the year was a female/imm at Cold Harbour on Jan 7th (MFW); the next was not until Mar 5th, when a male was seen at Compton chasing a Meadow Pipit (ABT); on Mar 6th and again on Apr 5th, a possible hybrid, presumably a falconer's bird, was seen at QMR: it was large, rufous-tinged and demonstrated unusual hunting behaviour, stooping on a passerine from a considerable height (CDRH); on Mar 11th a female was seen carrying prey at Combe (ABT); on Mar 18th an adult m was at Brightwalton (GDS),

possibly the same bird as seen previously at Compton; on Apr 16th one was at Bury Down chasing a small passerine (CDRH); on Apr 30th a very small bird, probably a young male, was flying NW at Main Pit Theale (RJB). **Second winter:** The first bird was a female/juv on Sep 5th at Englefield, heading south (RCr); the following day a bird crossed Borough Marsh (LRB); on Sep 9th a juv was watched for 40 mins on a kill at West Ilsley while it fed and preened (ABT); on Oct 21st a female was in sustained pursuit of a Skylark at Remenham Hill (RJG) and on the same day, also at Remenham Hill, a female-type was seen, presumably the same bird (CDRH); on Oct 31st a bird was again at Englefield (RJB), possibly the same as that seen there in early September; on Nov 13th a male was flying south at Hosehill (RJB); on Dec 10th and 27th there was a male on a ploughed field at Hyde Fm (PNe); there were 4 December sightings at Bury Down: on Dec 20th a female/imm (RJB), on Dec 21st a female (CDRH), on Dec 23rd (RRi), and on Dec 30th (DJMi), all presumably the same bird. The last of the year was a male at Borough Marsh which caught a passerine on Dec 31st (ABT).

## HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

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

382 records were received from 60 locations across the county. **Spring:** first reported from Earley on Apr 15th (NA) with single birds thereafter until 3 at Wraybury on Apr 27th (CDRH) and 5 at Woolhampton GP on Apr 30th (KEM). May records included 5 at Moatlands on May 3rd (MFW), 6 at Theale (RBor) also on May 3rd, 11 at Main Pit Theale on May 4th (ABT) and a peak count of 17 at Woolhampton on May 5th (KEM). There were 7 at Horton GP on Jun 1st (CDRH) and on Jun 16th there were still 7 at Woolhampton (KEM). **Breeding:** juvs were reported from 12 locations between Jul 29th and Sep 27th, although the later of these are probably the result of juv dispersal. **Autumn:** there was a trickle of single birds recorded from Sep 22nd onwards, the last record being at QMR on Oct 17th (CDRH).

## PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

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

The high mobility of this species makes it hard to assess the number of birds which visited the county. There were a total of 240 sightings of birds from 214 records in 46 locations. The majority of these were for a single bird but there were 23 sightings of 2 birds and 1 of 3 birds. Monthly totals for number of locations were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	10	11	5	6	4	8	3	12	8	13	11

An escaped individual with jesses, seen frequently the previous year, was seen at Theale on Mar 2nd (KEM) and again at Burghfield on Nov 15th (MFW); a small sub-adult male, ringed on both legs, was seen at QMR on Aug 2nd eating a racing/feral pigeon (CDRH). **Breeding:** at least 4 different adult/imm birds were seen in May at QMR (CDRH); on May 10th a small 1st summer male and juv/1st summer female were seen together at this location and seen together there again on May 30th (CDRH) A juv bird was at Pingewood Lane GP on Sep 5th (KEM; RHS) and 17th (MFW); a juv was at Lea Fm GP on Sep 20th (MFW); there was a juv m at Remenham Hill on Oct 18th and again on Oct 29th (CDRH). **Winter:** most winter sightings were from gravel pits; this may indicate a genuine habitat preference or possibly reflect observer effort. However there were a number of sightings of a single bird in central Reading between May and November and on Sep 23rd 2 birds were seen there (TGB). A bird was found dead on the road at Wickham on Dec 16th (APa).

**Prey items:** Woodpigeon and feral pigeon were the most frequently-noted prey items, but 2 birds were seen stooping on a Lapwing chick on Boxford Com on Jun 13th (IW; JL) and on Mar 8th, on the central tower at QMR, dead prey included 4 dead Jackdaws, 1 Moorhen and 1 Redwing, all uneaten (per CDRH). **Interaction with other species:** On May 4th a bird at Theale was seen soaring with Hobbies (TGB).

## **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

*Uncommon winter visitor, rare in summer*

Recorded at 29 sites across the county. Monthly status:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	8	10	5	6	2	1	1	3	4	7	15	18
Min. number of birds	14	14	6	8	2	1	2	7	8	15	30	38

**First winter:** recorded at 13 sites. Most counts were of 1–2. Only two sites produced higher counts with 5 at Great Meadow Pond Jan 14th (DJB) and 3 at Hosehill Lake Jan 30th (KEM). Numbers were well down on previous years and by more than half on 2006 numbers. **Spring/Summer:** recorded at 10 sites. Two were at Freeman's Marsh Apr 3rd (RF), 1 Lower Fm GP Apr 4th (NC), 2 Southcote Lock Apr 8th with 1 there Apr 29th (JA), 1 Hosehill Lake Apr 18th (BU), 1 Dorney W May 31st (CDRH), and 1 on R. Kennet at Kintbury Aug 1st to 31st (R Hand). At the more regular sites 1 was at Brompton GP May 30th (GEW), 2 Great Meadow Pond Apr 22nd with 1 there Jun 10th (DJB). 2+ were at Thatcham Marsh during Apr with 2+ there in Jul and increasing to 5+ in Aug (IW; JL; NC). Despite there being no records in May and Jun a juv was trapped (though subsequently escaped) Jul 1st (IW; JL), suggesting the species probably bred at the site. **Second winter:** birds started to reappear at wintering sites from late Aug with 1 Lavell's Lake Aug 25th (FJC). Numbers built slowly to a peak on Nov/Dec when there were counts of 4 Great Meadow Pond Nov 25th (DJB), 5 Dorney W Dec 12th (BDC) and 7 Woolhampton GP Dec 23rd (GEW). Numbers had recovered from the apparent decline in the first winter period, recorded at 8 more sites in Dec 2007 than in 2006.

## **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

*Common and widespread resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	2	5	3	5	3	5	–	4	6	5	25	10
Freeman's Marsh	3	–	–	5	7	–	–	15	22	–	–	–
Jubilee R.	–	33	21	–	–	–	–	–	17	–	30	–
Lower Fm GP	50	9	11	10	8	2	15	10	17	15	15	21
Thatcham GP	27	19	13	6	2	2	4	11	9	24	30	32

The high count of 50 at Lower Fm GP was made Jan 7th (NC). Elsewhere high counts included 35 Moatlands GP Nov 11th (JA), 31 Cookham Rise Dec 30th (WAS) and 21 Great Meadow Pond Feb 12th (DJB). **Breeding:** breeding was confirmed at 14 sites. Early/late broods were noted at both ends of the spectrum with an adult and 5 small juvs crossing the road at Pingewood Lane Mar 24th (BDC) and an adult and 3 small juvs at Cookham Rise Sep 30th (NAD).

**COOT** *Fulica atra**A common resident and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moatlands GP	250	179	100	–	–	–	–	–	200	228	256	264
Lower Fm GP	70	77	80	50	59	140	200	107	79	89	110	118
Theale GP	708	516	94	76	63	104	118	–	290	–	485	495
Wraysbury GP	108	80	43	28	14	18	11	12	15	21	250	68

The high count of 708 at Theale GP was made Jan 21st (WEBS). Elsewhere high counts included 264 Burghfield GP Dec 16th (WEBS); 226 Woolhampton GP Aug 17th (GEW) and 212 Great Meadow Pond Sep 9th (DJB). A leucistic individual with pale brown plumage and a pink-tinged bill was in the Wraysbury area in Aug and still present in Dec (CDRH).

**Breeding:** breeding was confirmed at 14 sites.

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus**Uncommon but regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

26 records involving 29 individuals. **Spring:** Recorded at 9 locations: 1 Moatlands GP Mar 26th (RCr); 1 Eversley GP Apr 9th (BMA); 1 Lea Fm GP Apr 9th (FJC) and Apr 20th (BTB, FJC, MFW); 1 Padworth Lane GP Apr 9th (KEM); 1 Dorney W Apr 21st (MMc), May 13th (WMo) and May 15th (BDC); 1 Theale Main Pit Apr 23rd (KEM); 1 circling Englemere Pond Apr 29th (TS); 1 Woolhampton GP May 2nd (KEM; NC) and May 13th (KEM; MJD); 1 Theale Main Pit May 14th (KEM; PH); 1 E over QMR Jun 3rd (CDRH) and 1 Jun 5th (CDRH). **Autumn:** Recorded at 9 locations: 1 Lower Fm GP Jul 10th (NC); 1 worn s/p adult QMR Jul 12th (CDRH), 1 fresh adult Jul 19th (CDRH), 1 adult Aug 23rd (CDRH); 1 heard over Woodlands Park at night Jul 22nd (DJB); 1 Eversley GP Jul 24th (BMA); 3 SW over Bray GP Jul 25th (DCle); 2 NNW over Woolhampton GP Jul 28th (KEM); 1 Hosehill Lake Aug 1st (NH); 1 Borough Marsh Aug 21st (HRN et al); 1 heard calling over Combe Hill Oct 14th (SAG).

**AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta**Rare passage migrant*

Two records: 1 Woolhampton GP Mar 22nd (SNP et al) and 1 Eversley GP Apr 20th (BMA).

**STONE CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicnemus**Scarce and localised summer visitor*

First recorded on the Downs on Mar 25th (MSFW) and present at 5 locations throughout the summer. ABT, along with an RSPB Project Officer, located 5 pairs on Apr 18th. There was no evidence of breeding reported. There were no large autumn gatherings reported with the highest count being 8+ flying over at dusk Sep 4th (CDRH). 4 were still present Oct 3rd (GJS) before the last report of “several calling” Oct 18th (CDRH). Unusually there were 2 records away from the Downs: 1 Englefield Apr 11th (RCr et al) and 1 Cookham Rise May 10th (BDC et al), which was noted by CDRH as having a red ring on the left leg and a grey BTO ring on the right leg.

## LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

*Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney W	–	–	–	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	3	8	8	19	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greenham Com	–	–	1	4	3	2	3	2	–	–	–	–
Lea Fm GP	–	–	2	8	5	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Fm GP	–	–	–	2	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	3	2	2	–	7	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	4	7	5	9	9	2	2	1	–	–

Recorded at 21 locations. **Spring:** first recorded at Lea Fm GP Mar 12th (ADB) and at another 3 sites by Mar 18th. Most counts were of 1–6 birds but 7 were at Pingewood GP Apr 6th and 9th (MFW), 8 Lea Fm GP Apr 9th (BTB) and 8 Eversley GP Apr 10th (GR). **Breeding:** recorded at 15 locations during May–Jun with breeding confirmed at 5 of these. At Eversley GP 4–5 pairs hatched 8–9 young but only 1–2 survived (BMA). In the Theale area, a 3 week old chick was seen at Field Fm GP Jun 10th (JA), 1 juv was noted at Main Pit Jun 27th (KEM) and at Pingewood GP 2–3 pairs hatched 6+ young (KEM). At Horton GP 1 barely-fledged juv was seen Jun 18th (CDRH). **Autumn:** the first definite migrant was an adult at QMR Jul 9th (CDRH). Most counts were of 1–6 birds but higher counts included 17 (including 8 juvs) Pingewood GP Jul 3rd (KEM) and 7 (inc 6 juvs) Padworth Lane GP Jul 12th (KEM, RJB). Birds were reported at 9 locations during July but by August numbers had tailed off dramatically with birds reported from just 3 locations. By September records were confined to Pingewood GP where a juv was seen 2nd (KEM) and 15th (RJB) and a lame adult was present throughout, and last seen on the very late date of Oct 6th (KEM).

**Recorder's comment:** The lame adult above, which lingered at Pingewood GP until Oct 6th, represents the latest Autumn date since a (previously unpublished) record of a juv that was present at Summerleaze GP on Oct 6th –11th in 1980 (CDRH).

## RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

*Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney W	–	–	–	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	2	1	8	1	–	2	–	–	–	–
Greenham Com	–	–	3	2	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	–
Horton GP	–	2	2	1	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	1	1	4	–	–	2	2	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	20	2	1	4	1	–	–	–

**Spring:** typically for this species the first record occurred in February, some weeks before Little Ringed Plover, when a pair were found at Horton GP Feb 22nd (CDRH).

Most records during Mar-Apr were of 1–2 birds but 3 were at Greenham Com Mar 8th (CDRH) and Mar 11th (MJD). Records were received from 9 locations during May. Although some pairs had settled down to breed passage continued well into May, with some of these birds being of the smaller *tundrae* type: 1 Horton GP May 27th (CDRH) and 3 QMR May 28th (CDRH). The high count of 20 at QMR was made May 21st (CDRH).

**Breeding:** breeding was confirmed at 3 locations with summering birds at another 2. At Crookham Com 2 pairs were sitting Apr 20th (AEDH); at Eversley GP 5 adults and 1 juv were seen May 28th (MFW) and at Greenham Com a pair with a small chick were seen Jun 17th (SAG). **Autumn:** passage resumed Aug 14th with 4 (1 adult + 3 flying SE) at QMR (CDRH) and ended Sep 26th with 1 juv Bray GP (CDRH). Most counts were of 1–2 birds but another 4 were at Borough Marsh Aug 23rd (HRN).

## **DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

*Rare passage migrant*

One, probably a male, was located on the Downs Apr 20th (MSh).

## **GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Common but local winter visitor and passage migrant*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	–	100	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	250	548
Bury Down/Cow Down	250	1000	1000	12	–	–	–	–	52	–	40	–
Dorney W	1000	450	17	–	–	–	–	–	6	3	950	500
Eversley GP	–	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	15	–	480
Greenham Com	–	500	50	110	–	–	–	1	12	300	500	400
Lower Fm GP	7	30	40	–	–	–	–	–	1	500	1000	500
Remenham	250	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Records were received from 49 locations. **First winter:** only 4 locations held flocks of 500+ birds. Max counts were as follows: 1000 Dorney W Jan 13th (MFW), 800 Bray GP Jan 30th (KEM), 500 Greenham Com Feb 4th (ABT), 1000 Bury Down Feb 25th (JD). Most birds had left by April though there were still 400 at Remenham Hill Apr 4th (CDRH). An injured bird lingered at Greenham Com until Apr 27th (NC). **Second winter:** early returning birds were 1 over Greenham Com Aug 26th (NC) and 3 at Borough Marsh Aug 30th (DJB). There was a scattering of September records before numbers started to build in October. 4 locations held flocks of 500+ birds. Max counts were as follows: 1000 Lower Fm GP Nov 10th (IW; JL), 600 Woodlands Park Nov 10th (DJB), 950 Dorney W Nov 22nd (BDC), 548 Borough Marsh Dec 6th (HRN).

## **GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*

*Uncommon but regular passage migrant*

A poor year with only 3 records, all in autumn. Two flew west over Dorney W at 08.20hrs on Oct 3rd (DJB) with one seen later in the day at Dorney Lake (Bucks). A juv was at Pingewood GP Oct 14th (ABT) and one lingered at Dorney W Dec 26th to Dec 29th (CRe et al).



**LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*

*Common breeder, and abundant migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	180	–	–	–	1	6	253	315	20	30	237	450
Bray GP	500	51	1	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	12	510
Eversley GP	550	900	–	20	6	50	196	270	400	343	235	400

**First winter:** high counts were 500 Bray GP Jan 1st (WAS), 500+ Arborfield floods Jan 5th (DJB), 900 Eversley GP Feb 1st (BMA), 500 Pingewood Feb 9th (RCr), 500 Aldworth Downs Feb 20th (DJS). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding was recorded at 11 locations and proven at 9 of these. In Windsor Great Park 2 adults and 1 half grown chick were seen Jun 10th (DJB). At Woolhampton GP 4 chicks were seen May 24th (MJD). At Greenham Com 4 very small chicks were seen Apr 30th (AEDH). At Ruscombe 2 adults and 1 chick were seen May 13th (MFW). At Eversley GP 3 birds were on eggs and another pair had 2 chicks May 8th (DJB). Three chicks were at Englefield May 23rd (RCr). At Horton GP 3 clutches were located May 25th (CDRH) of 4, 4 and 2 eggs. At Woolhampton Quarry 2 adults and 1 chick were seen May 26th (GEW). An adult and 3 chicks were at Kintbury Jun 27th (JD). **Second winter:** there were 40 counts of 200 to 400 in the period. 500 were at Borough Marsh 5th December (DJB), HRN counting 450 on 6th. Elsewhere a count of 500 came from Bray GP 9th Dec (BDC) with 1000 counted in a pig field at Bucklebury on 31st December (NC). The highest count of the period was 1026 also in a Bucklebury pig field on 30th Nov (RCr).

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

One, in partial s/p was on the new workings at Eversley GP May 28th (IHB et al). A flock of 90 flew SW over QMR with 17 Bar-tailed Godwits on Aug 19th (CDRH).

**Recorders comment:** Most of the latter flock showed the salmon-washed underparts typical of juveniles; they were counted three times as they passed over – so the count is believed to be fairly accurate. This could be equal to the previous largest-ever flock, over Wraysbury GPs in Aug 1968, because that was only reported as “circa 100”.

**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

*Scarce but increasing passage migrant*

Nine records, all in spring, involving 33 birds. 4 (inc 2 s/p) were on the new workings at Eversley GP May 28th (MO) and May 29th (GR). All other records came from QMR where there was strong passage between May 9th and May 31st. All records as follows: 3 s/p May 9th, 1 s/p May 10th, 3 (1 partial s/p) May 11th, 1 fresh s/p May 14th, 10 (9 s/p 1 mostly w/p) May 21st, 3 s/p May 27th (all CDRH), 4 May 28th (MMc) and 4 s/p May 31st (CDRH).

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

*Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn*

Five records involving 5 birds, 1 in spring and 4 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 s/p Eversley GP May

1st (BMA). **Autumn:** juv Eversley GP Aug 11th (IB et al) to Aug 16th (GR; KEM); juv Borough Marsh Aug 19th (ABT et al) to Aug 20th (MO); juv Pingewood Lane GP Sep 22nd (KEM et al) and a different juv there Sep 27th (MFW et al) to Sep 29th (MO).

## CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

*Scarce passage migrant*

Three records involving 9 birds, all in autumn. Adult + juv Borough Marsh Aug 24th (ABT et al) and 4 there Sep 7th (ABT, HRN et al) to Sep 9th (MO) and 2 still there Sep 10th (ABT; KEM). Elsewhere 3 juvs were at Eversley GP Sep 23rd (BMA).

## DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	2	-	-	-
Eversley GP	-	1	-	2	7	-	3	3	4	-	-	1
Lea Fm GP	-	-	-	-	9	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	-	1	35	-	3	1	1	-	1	-

**First winter:** the only early winter record was 1 with Lapwings at Eversley GP Feb 24th (MDL). **Spring:** 1 was at Pingewood GP Mar 4th (MFW) followed by 1 NE over Tilehurst Mar 23rd (RCr) and 2 w/p at Pingewood GP Mar 31st (BTB; KEM; MFW). Following a remarkably similar pattern to 2006 there were no further records until 1 s/p at QMR Apr 22nd (CDRH) with 1–2 birds recorded to the end of April. Passage peaked during May with birds being recorded at 10 locations. Most records were of 1–4 birds with higher counts of 10 at QMR May 9th (CDRH), 7 Eversley GP May 11th (BMA), 35 QMR May 10th (CDRH), 9 Lea Fm GP May 11th (AR), 18 QMR May 11th (CDRH) and 6 Greenham Com May 12th (ABT). The only June record was 1 Dorney W Jun 1st (WAS). **Autumn:** passage resumed Jul 15th with 3 s/p at QMR (CDRH). Passage was light during July but started to build from mid August. Most counts were of 1–3 birds with the only higher count being 4 (3 adults + 1 juv) at Borough Marsh Aug 15th (CDRH). The last records were 2 at Pingewood Lane GP Sep 29th (KEM; PJC) and a juv at Slough SF on Sep 28th–29th (CDRH). **Second winter:** there were several late autumn records: 1 Pingewood GP Nov 5th (KEM); 1 QMR Nov 13th, 15th and 16th (CDRH); 1 Charvil Nov 27th (CDRH); 1 Eversley GP Dec 11th (LTh) and 3 Lower Fm GP Dec 17th (NC).

## RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor*

Eight records involving 10 birds, all in autumn. All records as follows: juv Eversley GP Aug 16th (MO), juv again Sep 10th to Sep 23rd (MO); 1 landed briefly at QMR Aug 30th (CDRH); 1 Lower Fm GP Oct 17th and 18th (NC); 3 Pingewood Lane GP Aug 22nd (ABT et al), 1 Aug 23rd (RJB), juv Sep 4th (PBT) and 5th (KEM), 1 Oct 10th to 15th (MFW et al).

**JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyptes minimus**Uncommon localised winter visitor and passage migrant*

**First winter:** recorded at 5 sites. Dorney W: 1 Feb 25th (RN); Pingewood GP: 1 Jan 27th (KEM), 1 Feb 24th (BT); Padworth Com: 1 Feb 3rd (TGB), 2 Mar 3rd (TGB, JLS, NC), 2 Mar 7th (PH; RHS), 1 Mar 10th (MFW); Brimpton GP: 1 Feb 27th (GEW); Woolhampton GP 1 Mar 27th (NC). **Spring:** 1 Horton GP Apr 5th to 9th (CDRH). **Autumn:** recorded at 8 sites. Widbrook Com: 1 Sep 27th (CDRH); Decoy Heath: 1 Nov 23rd (DJB); Lavell's Lake: 1 Oct 23rd (PM) to 24th (KIT; PBT), 1 Dec 28th (FJC); Greenham Com: 4 Oct 8th then 1–3 during October, 2 Nov 4th, 2 Dec 16th and 22nd and 1 Dec 27th (all NC); Horton GP: 1 Sep 30th, 1 Oct 13th, 3 Oct 29th, 2 Nov 3rd, 1 Nov 17th, 3 Dec 1st, 5 Dec 29th (all CDRH); Dorney W: 1 Dec 4th (BDC); Pingewood Lane GP: 1 Nov 10th (MFW), 3 Dec 1st (MFW), 4 Dec 2nd (RCr), 1 Dec 8th (MFW), 1 Dec 29th (ABT, KEM); Woolhampton GP: 1 Nov 5th and 7th (NC), 1 Nov 19th (KEM), 1 Dec 11th (KEM).

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

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney W	21	40	20	6	–	–	–	–	3	5	53	47
Lower Fm GP	6	34	9	3	–	–	–	8	21	25	22	10
Padworth Lane GP	4	26	39	1	–	–	–	–	11	1	9	20
Pingewood GP	9	9	6	4	–	–	–	4	8	22	18	69

**First winter:** double figure counts were received from 5 sites. Counts over 30 were 34 Lower Fm GP Feb 9th (MJD), 40 Dorney W Feb 28th (BDC) and 39 Padworth Lane GP Mar 8th (KEM). **Spring/Summer:** birds were recorded throughout April in small numbers. The only May record was 1 Eversley GP May 2nd and 7th (BMA). On the 2nd a bird was seen performing a display, running around with tail up and wings dropped, though no other bird was seen and there were no further sightings after 7th. Unusually, there was a summer record, 1 Greenham Com Jun 10th (JL), though there was no evidence of breeding. **Autumn/Second winter:** the first returning birds appeared in August with 4 Pingewood Lane GP Aug 4th (KEM). Double figure counts were received from 7 sites. Counts over 40 were 53 Dorney W Nov 6th (BDC), 69 Pingewood Lane GP Dec 1st (MFW), 46 at Dorney W Dec 4th (BDC).

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

Records were received from 44 locations. **First winter:** reported from 11 locations, mostly 1–2 birds but 4 were at Gorrick Wood Plantation Feb 6th (RJG) with 3 there Feb 11th (BTB) and 2 Feb 22nd (MDL); 2 Great Meadow Pond Feb 18th (DJB) and 2 Padworth Com Mar 3rd (TGB) and Mar 6th (RHS). **Summer:** reported from 22 locations with roding recorded at 15 locations. East Berks: again, most reports were from Swinley and Windsor Forests. Reported from 6 location in Swinley Forest where max counts were 1 Caesar's Camp May 22nd (JEW), 1 Hut Hill May 22nd (PBT), 2 Broadmoor Jun 3rd (DJB), 1 Wishmoor Bottom Jun 3rd (DJB), 3 Lower Star Post Jun 5th (DJB) and 1 Wishmoor Cross Jun 5th (DJB). Reported from 4 locations in Windsor Forest where max counts were

3 Ascot Gate May 19th (DJB), 8 Cranbourne Chase May 20th (DJB), 4 Highstanding Hill Woods May 22nd (DJB) and 10 South Forest Jun 1st (DJB). Elsewhere, 1 was at Ashley Hill Wood Apr 2nd (ABT), 1 was reported roding at Wildmoor Heath Apr 30th (DJS); 1 was at Englemere Pond Jun 1st (PM) and 1 was flushed at Dukeshill Allotment Jun 4th (DJB). Mid Berks: reported from just 3 locations with max counts of 1 Decoy Heath Apr 8th (JLe), 5 Padworth Com 5th May 15th (JA) and 2 Mortimer May 16th (RCr). West Berks: Reported from 5 locations with max counts of 5 Snelsmore Com May 13th (MJT), 2 Bucklebury Com May 19th (JA), 1 West Woodhay Jun 3rd (LS), 1 Stockcross Jun 3rd (SAG) and 1 Greenham Com Jun 21st (GDS). **Second winter:** reported from 13 locations, all singles apart from 2 flushed at Woolley Down Nov 24th (GDS).

## **BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

*Scarce passage migrant*

14 records, 2 in spring and 12 in autumn. **Spring:** 3 over Cox Green Mar 10th (DJW) and 3 Pingewood Lane GP Apr 6th (AMH; KEM). **Autumn:** 2 s/p Borough Marsh Jul 2nd (DJB et al), noted by CDRH as being a m and fem, the m at least being of the Icelandic race, 2 s/p Jul 26th (ABT), 1 Aug 12th (ABT), 1 Sep 22nd (JEW); 1 s/p Eversley GP Jul 9th (GBr; RJG) with 7 s/p there Jul 10th (BMA), 1 s/p Jul 27th (MO) and possibly the same s/p Icelandic race bird Jul 30th (PBT), 8 Aug 7th (BMA), 28 Sep 2nd (MJM), 1 Sep 10th (GR); 2 Padworth Lane GP Jul 11th (KEM et al) including 1 s/p of the Icelandic race; 3 s/p Pingewood Lane GP Jul 21st (KEM; RJB).

## **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

*Scarce passage migrant*

4 records, 2 in spring and 2 in autumn. **Spring:** 4 (3 s/p and 1 female) flew N then NE over Horton Apr 27th (CDRH); 1 s/p Hosehill Lake Apr 29th (ABT et al); 54 flew N over Woodley Apr 29th (FJC). **Autumn:** 17 flew SW over QMR, with 90 Knot on Aug 19th (CDRH).

## **WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

*Uncommon passage migrant*

15 records, 9 in spring and 6 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 Crookham Com Apr 22nd (MJD); 4 circling over Theale Main Pit for 15 minutes Apr 24th (MGM); 3 records from QMR: 1 NE Apr 29th (CDRH), 9 flew N in groups of 6 and 3 May 11th (CDRH), 1 flew off low SE May 19th (CDRH); 1 E over Dinton Pastures Apr 30th (MFW); 1 Eversley GP May 1st (BMA; GR); 1 Woolhampton GP May 6th (GF, NC); 1 Lower Fm GP May 7th (IW; JL; NC); 3 feeding in a ploughed field at Englefield May 11th (RCr, RJB); 3 heard calling Compton May 16th (ABT). **Autumn:** 11 flew SW over QMR Jul 20th (CDRH), 1 flew NE Jul 29th (CDRH), 1 flew NE then landed on Colnbrook tip Sep 29th (CDRH); 4 Eversley GP Apr 27th (KEM; RBor; RHS); 1 calling over Padworth Lane GP Aug 11th (JA); 5 SW over Lower Fm GP Aug 18th (IW, NC), 1 Oct 20th

## **CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

*Uncommon passage migrant and now summer visitor in small numbers*

**First winter:** just 2 records: 1 NE over Woodley Jan 27th (DJMi) and 1 in flooded meadows at Sonning Mar 9th (CDRH). **Summer:** birds were noted in two main areas throughout the

summer: near Compton and near Lambourn. After 5 were seen at the Oxfordshire side of Compton Mar 5th (ABT) there were only a further 4 records of 1 bird in the area, the last on Jun 27th (RF). First recorded in the Lambourn area Apr 16th (ABT) and throughout the summer, with a max count of 10 Apr 29th (ABT), until the last record of 2 on Jul 9th (RJB). Again, there was no evidence of breeding. **Autumn:** 12 records, involving 13 individuals. 1 Wishmoor Bottom Jun 11th (RJB); QMR: 1 over S Jun 16th (CDRH), 2 over S Jun 26th (CDRH); 1 Aldermaston Jun 20th (GEW); 1 Borough Marsh 25th–26th Jun (CDRH); 1 NNW over Knowl Hill Jun 27th (CDRH); Eversley GP: 1 Jul 9th (BMA; MDL), 1 Jul 13th (MDL); 1 S over Windsor Marina Jul 16th (KPD); 1 N over Combe Hill Aug 19th (IW); 1 Pingewood GP Aug 23rd (NR); 1 over Bray Sep 7th (DCle). **Second winter:** 1 flew SE over QMR Nov 19th (CDRH).

## SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

*Scarce passage migrant*

Two records, both in **Autumn:** 1 Pingewood GP Aug 25th (MFW) and 1 juv Borough Marsh Sep 1st (HRN et al).

## GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

*Uncommon passage migrant*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	5	1	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	–	–	3	–	1	2	1	–	–	–

**Spring:** only recorded at 4 sites with passage first noted at Eversley GP where singles were reported Apr 10th (BMA), Apr 30th to May 1st (BMA; GR) and May 28th–29th (BMA), the last bird of the spring. Elsewhere, 1 was at Lavell's Lake May 1st (MFW) and another commuted between Lavell's Lake and Lea Fm May 10th (RR) to 14th (MJT). One was at Woolhampton GP May 1st (KEM) and 3rd (KEM; MJD). One was at Pingewood GP May 4th (KEM, PH) and 5th (KEM). This site also hosted the only multiple occurrence of the spring when 3 were present May 13th (ABT; KEM). **Autumn:** typically, return passage was much stronger with birds recorded at 11 locations. Passage resumed in July but was very light with only 2 records: 1 Lea Fm GP Jul 14th (Burt May et al) and 1 Pingewood GP Jul 14th (DMc, KEM). The next record was 1 Bray GP Aug 3rd (WAS). Passage really started to pick up from Aug 11th. Most records were of 1–3 birds with higher counts of 4 Eversley GP Aug 11th (GR) and 5 there Aug 12th (GR). Records of 1–3 birds were recorded throughout Sep. There were 2 Oct records: 1 Lavell's Lake/Lea Fm GP Oct 3rd (CR) to 26th (JPe) and 2 Lower Fm GP Oct 13th (IW; JL; RGS). **Second winter:** unusually there was a late winter record of 1 Lower Fm GP Dec 18th (KEM).

## WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

*Scarce passage migrant*

Three records, 2 in spring and 1 in autumn. **Spring:** 2 on the new workings at Eversley GP May 1st (BMA et al); 1 Horton GP May 25th (CDRH). **Autumn:** juv Greenham Com Aug 17th (CDRH).

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus**Locally common passage migrant and summer visitor in small numbers*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Crookham Com	-	-	4	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dinton Pastures CP	-	-	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dorney W	-	-	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Eversley GP	-	-	4	6	6	8	2	1	1	1	-	-
Greenham Com	-	-	-	7	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Horton GP	-	-	1	-	3	6	4	-	-	-	-	-
Lea Fm GP	-	4	5	4	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Fm GP	-	1	1	4	3	3	1	-	-	1	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	-	4	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woolhampton GP	-	-	4	6	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-

**First winter:** there were no records during Jan and birds present at 3 sites during Feb.

**Spring:** Birds were recorded at 15 sites during Mar. Most records were of 1–5 birds but 9 were on flooded fields near Brimpton on Mar 17th (GEW). Counts of 1–6 were received from 12 sites during Apr with the highest count being 7 at Greenham Com Apr 2nd (JL). 1–6 were recorded throughout May. **Summer:** birds were present at 10 sites during Jun. Breeding was successful at Eversley GP with four pairs fledging 5 juvs; 2 well grown juvs were seen from separate broods Jul 1st (BMA), 2 very small juvs were seen Jul 3rd (LTh), and another recently fledged juv was seen Jul 1st (BMA). At Horton GP a pair fledged 2 juvs (CDRH). **Autumn:** passage resumed Jul 3rd with a bird at Moatlands GP (RCr). Away from breeding/summering sites birds were recorded at 3 locations during Jul and 4 during Aug. The only Sep record was 1 at Eversley GP Sep 23rd (BMA). There were 5 records from 4 sites during Oct. **Second winter:** 1 was at Bray GP Nov 12th (BDC) and 24th (KPD) to 25th (CDRH) and 1 was at Dorney W Nov 12th (CRE) The only Dec record was 1 Bray GP Dec 26th (DJB). This sequence of late winter records closely matches events of 2006, suggesting the records relate to a returning wintering bird.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus**Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brimpton	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	1
Eversley GP	-	1	-	2	1	3	6	8	8	4	4	2
Horton GP	-	-	1	2	-	1	3	-	1	1	2	1
Lower Fm GP	1	1	1	1	-	2	4	4	2	1	1	1
Padworth Lane GP	1	4	3	2	-	2	9	3	6	2	1	2
Pingewood GP	1	-	1	3	1	1	3	6	3	2	5	2
Slough SF	1	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	6	2	-	-
Woolhampton GP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	2

**First winter:** most records were of single birds with occasional accounts of 2–3 and 4 Padworth Lane GP Feb 7th (KEM). **Spring:** counts of 1–2 continued to be recorded throughout April with the only higher count being 3 Pingewood GP Apr 15th (KEM). There were 4 May records: 1Pngewood GP May 3rd (MFW) and 5th (KEM; PH); 1 Eversley GP May 4th (BMA); 1 Lavell's Lake May 4th (AR; CWFo) and a very late bird at Woolhampton GP May 21st (MJD). **Autumn:** passage resumed just 12 days later with 1 at Horton GP Jun 3rd (CDRH). Counts of 1–3 were recorded during Jun. Numbers started to build from mid Jul with regular counts of 6/7 and higher counts of 8 Padworth Lane GP Jul 11th (KEM) and 9 there Jul 19th (KEM). Passage continued in a similar vein throughout Aug with regular counts of 5–6 and higher counts of 9 Borough Marsh Aug 20th (MFW). Counts started to fall after mid Sep with no counts greater than 4 to the end of Oct. **Second winter:** counts of 1–3 continued to be reported during Nov with higher counts of 4 Eversley GP Nov 1st (BMA) and 5 Pingewood GP Nov 4th and 11th (KEM). 1–2 were present at several sites to the end of the year.

## COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

*Common passage migrant, rare in summer and uncommon in winter*

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Borough Marsh	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	2	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	3	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	–	2	2	–	3	6	1	2	–	–
Lea Fm GP	–	–	–	4	1	–	2	1	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	1	2	3	–	3	3	4	1	–	1
Pingewood GP	–	–	–	1	2	–	3	4	4	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	1	3	4	5	9	4	–	–	–
Theale GP	–	–	–	1	1	–	1	3	1	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	3	3	–	5	–	–	–	–	–

Recorded in most months of the year, with only November drawing a blank. **First winter:** the regular wintering bird at Padworth Lane GP was present during the early months of the year. The only other record during the first 3 months of the year was 1 at Greenham Com Mar 13th (SA). **Spring:** away from Padworth Lane GP the first Apr record was 1 Benham Valence Apr 17th (IW). Records became more widespread after this date, though counts were generally low, the highest being 4 at Lea Fm GP Apr 21st (MJM). The last spring migrant was 1 at Lea Fm GP May 30th (ADB). **Autumn:** migration resumed less than a month later with 1 QMR Jun 25th (PMC). Most counts were of 1–5 birds but 8 were at QMR Aug 23rd (CDRH) with 9 there Aug 25th–27th (CDRH). Singles were recorded at 4 locations during October with the last (not including the Padworth Lane bird) being 2 Eversley GP Oct 11th (LTh). **Second winter:** The Padworth Lane bird wasn't recorded during Nov but was back again Dec 11th (KEM) to 29th (RJB).

## TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

*Scarce passage migrant*

6 records, 2 in spring and 5 in autumn. **Spring:** 1 Dorney W May 13th (WMo); 1 QMR May 28th (CDRH; MMc). **Autumn:** Eversley GP: 2 s/p Jul 20th (BMA, MDL), 3 Jul 27th

(BMA), 1 Jul 28th–29th (MO); 1 flew W turning N over QMR Jul 29th (CDRH); 3 roosting on the sailing club raft Theale Main Pit Aug 14th (RCr).

## **POMARINE SKUA**     *Stercorarius pomarinus*

*Véry Rare vagrant*

A superb year for skuas closed with two records of this species. A dark morph juv was seen to arrive at QMR on the morning of Nov 10th but, after harassing a few gulls, it departed N after only 15 minutes (CDRH). Remarkably, a paler intermediate morph juv was found at QMR feeding on a Black-headed Gull on the morning of Nov 20th (CDRH) and fortunately this one remained until 22nd (MO). These are the 5th and 6th records for Berkshire, and occurred during a period with an influx of at least 8 other inland records in England, including birds in Surrey and Oxon. All three small Skua species were also recorded at QMR in 2003.

## **ARCTIC SKUA**     *Stercorarius parasiticus*

*Rare vagrant, principally in autumn*

One light morph was seen to pass N over QMR on May 27th (ABT), but did not linger, and is only the second spring record for the county. Three dark/intermediate morph adults were at QMR at midday on Aug 14th (CDRH), before departing to SW. These constitute the 19th and 20th records for Berkshire, and the group in August is only the second record of more than one bird.

## **LONG-TAILED SKUA**     *Stercorarius longicaudus*

*Véry Rare vagrant*

An intermediate morph juv arrived from the east at QMR on Aug 21st (CDRH) but after persistent mobbing by a juv Herring Gull it departed low to the West after only 12 minutes. This is the 4th record for Berkshire.

## **MEDITERRANEAN GULL**     *Larus melanocephalus*

*Scarce passage and winter visitor*

A good year with records in all months apart from May, estimated as 42 birds from 15 sites – there were possibly as many as 23 individuals at QMR alone. **First winter:** at Moatlands GP there was a f/w from Jan 3rd (ABT) to 14th (MFW), with 2 f/w on Feb 7th (CDRH), and an adult on Jan 26th (PBT) and the same or another on Feb 26th (KEM, RHS). At QMR there was an adult from Jan 3rd (HRN) and the same or another on Jan 13th and 14th (CDRH) with a f/w from Jan 5th, and the same or another on Jan 14th and 15th (CDRH, PMC). In February there were regularly multiple birds present at QMR, with f/w and s/w on Feb 6th, f/w and adult on Feb 8th, 2 adults on Feb 17th and peaking on Feb 18th with 3 adults plus a f/w in the roost, with a new pair of adults on Feb 25th (all CDRH), making a total of at least 7 birds at QMR during the month. There was also a record of 3 birds together – f/w, s/s and adult/s – at Windsor Great Park on Feb 23rd (CDRH) and a ringed adult was seen at Fifield on Feb 28th (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** at QMR there was a f/w (seemingly the same as at Windsor a week earlier) and adult on Mar 2nd and an adult again at Windsor Great Park on Mar 5th (both CDRH). March saw passage records at a number of other sites, with a w/p adult at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 6th (RJB), a f/w at Sonning on Mar 9th (CDRH), a new



f/w at Remenham on Mar 20th (CDRH) and a f/w at Hosehill Lake on Mar 22nd (KEM). There was a s/s at QMR on Apr 8th and a pair of adults circled there, calling, before leaving ENE on Apr 22nd (CDRH). An early s/p adult flew E over QMR on Jun 3rd (CDRH) and a ringed adult was seen at QMR on Jul 15th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** the first juv of the year was at Upton Court Park, Slough on Jul 20th, with a different juv, very fresh and short-billed, at Charvil on 21st, together with an adult (both CDRH). Presumably the same adult was at nearby Borough Marsh on Jul 22nd and 24th (HRN, ABT) with a s/s from Jul 23rd–26th (ABT). A juv was at Pingewood GP on Jul 22nd (KEM), and a juv was at QMR from Aug 1st–28th, with 3 juv on Aug 2nd and an unringed adult on Aug 8th (all CDRH). A juv was on nearby Horton Fields on Aug 16th and a colour-ringed adult (from France) was there on Aug 17th (both CDRH). Pingewood GP held a f/w from Sep 6th (KEM) to 10th (MFW) and QMR had a f/w in the roost on Sep 14th (CDRH). Records tailed off from October, with only a moulting juv at Jubilee R on Oct 7th, a f/w at QMR on Oct 10th, and a w/p adult – with a distinctive bill, and not seen previously – at QMR on Nov 21st, and the only second winter record being a f/w at Charvil at on Dec 4th (all CDRH).

## LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

*Scarce passage and winter visitor*

At least 45 individuals. **First winter:** a f/w at QMR on Feb 24th was the only record of the first winter period (CDRH). **Spring/Summer:** a f/w briefly joined the QMR roost on Apr 5th before moving N with Black-headed Gulls, and a s/p adult moved N on Apr 12th (both CDRH). At Eversley GP there was an adult on Apr 12th (J. Clark), while there were 4 birds present the next day (N. Silver), and 2 adult + 1 f/s on 19th (C. Gent). At Theale Main GP there were 3 adults on Apr 14th (RCr, KEM), with 9 adults + 1 f/w on 16th (KEM), and 2 at Theale Main GP on 22nd (JA), and a f/s at Hosehill Lake on Apr 23rd (BU). At Eversley GP there was a w/p adult (BMA et al) in the evening of Apr 24th while there was 1 at Lower Fm GP on the same date (JL). E.Berks started a run of records with 4 f/s briefly in the QMR roost, but they departed NE (CDRH). There were then 2 f/s present at QMR on the morning of May 13th, followed by a f/s at Horton GP on 4 dates between Jun 1st and 11th, and a different f/s at Wraysbury GP on Jun 3rd and Horton GP on 10th (all CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** the first record of the autumn was a f/w at Theale Main GP Sep 12th (RHS), and the same site held a s/w on Sep 28th (RHS, KEM), remaining until 29th (ABT). Dinton Pastures CP had a w/p adult on 29th before it departed SW mid-morning (FJC), but by late afternoon on 30th there were 3 adults at the same site (MFW). QMR had the last three records of the year, with adult + f/w on Oct 9th, a w/p adult on Nov 20th and an adult on Dec 15th (all CDRH).

## BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

*Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant, which now breeds*

Consolidating its presence as a breeding species, although the poor weather led to low productivity. **First winter/Spring:** there were 1200 at Hurst on Jan 2nd (DJB), but the highest counts of the winter were 2000 in Windsor Great Park on Feb 12th and again on Mar 2nd (MTr), and 2000 gathered in sheep fields at Shurlock Row Feb 11th to 14th (DJB), with 1500 still present on Feb 21st (PBT) and 800 on Mar 1st (DJB). Regular counts from Thatcham Marsh peaked at 327 on Jan 1st (GJS), and at Lower Fm GP the maximum count was 200 on Jan 19th (NC), while there were 170 at Bagnor Cress Beds on Feb 3rd (JL). In Mid Berks there were 150 at Lavell's Lake on Feb 3rd (CWFO) and 150 at Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 1st (RBo) and in East Berks there were 587 birds counted at

Jubilee R on Feb 28th (BDC). Two *leucistic* birds were seen at QMR on Feb 17th (CDRH). **Summer:** at Eversley GPs there were 163 nesting attempts and the first juv was seen on May 28th (BMA); wet weather took its toll and only 79 young were ringed on Jun 24th, with only 74 fledging (MGLR). At Hosehill Lake approximately 40 pairs bred (TABR) and there were 53 juv present on Jun 30th (MFW). At Lower Fm GP up to 15 juv were fledged, with the first seen on May 20th (SAG), and a pair nested at Thatcham Marsh (GJS). This species nested at Dinton Pastures CP for the first time, with a pair on Lavell's Lake twice losing their nest to flooding (MFW; FJC). The first juv of the year at QMR was seen on Jun 18th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** the highest count of the year was 2500 birds at Borough Marsh on Jul 31st (DJB), with 1000 still present on 18th (ABT). A total of 1500 were counted going to roost at Theale Main GP on Sep 20th (RCr) and 1000 were counted at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 15th (MFW). The highest count at Lower Fm GP was 1000 on Oct 31st (GSte), 750 on Nov 21st (NC) and counts at Thatcham Marsh reached 225 on Nov 1st and 9th (GJS). A count of 355 at QMR on Nov 22nd (FCC) was just a sample of the large numbers using the site for roosting.

## COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were records from 27 sites and in all months, including the usually quiet months of May and June. This species is under-recorded, with no counts from the largest gull roosts, although there were access restrictions in place at QMR in the autumn due to the Surrey outbreak of foot-and-mouth. **First winter/Spring:** the year opened with 70 at Streatley Warren on Jan 1st (PBT), 60 at Eversley GPs on Jan 13th (BMA) and 82 at Windsor Great Park on Jan 14th (DJB). Numbers peaked in early spring, with 270 at Westridge Green on Feb 25th (ABT), 600 at Windsor Great Park on the same date, and the largest count of 800 at Remenham on Mar 20th (both DJB). There were still 150 at Remenham on Apr 2nd (DJB), with 6 at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 3rd (MFW) and a late f/w at Eversley GP on Apr 23rd (KEM). There was a passage of 10 f/s through QMR on the evening of May 1st, with occasional singles until 2 adults and 2 f/s on May 21st and 3 f/s on May 23rd (all CDRH). **Summer:** there was a f/s at QMR on Jun 1st and 2 f/s passed through on Jun 21st (CDRH), and there was also a midsummer record of a f/s at Lea Fm GP on Jun 6th (ADB). The first returning adults were 2 with 2 f/s at QMR on Jul 9th (CDRH), with 1 adult at Bray GP on Jul 14th (WAS), 1 adult at Woolhampton Quarry on Jul 22nd (GEW) and 1 at Pingewood GPs on the same date (KEM). There were 5 at Borough Marsh from Jul 24th (ABT) and 1 adult at Eversley GPs from the 27th (KEM, RHS). The first juv of the year was at QMR, with 8 adult and 1 s/w, on Aug 2nd, with 15 adult on 8th and 3 juv there on 28th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** the first substantial count of the autumn was 40 at Strand Water on Nov 3rd (BDC) and the largest winter count was of 400 at Windsor Great Park on Dec 9th (DJB), with 95 at Crowthorne on Dec 28th (BMA) and 80 in fields at Frogmill on Dec 30th (SJF, FMF).

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor*

This remains the most numerous of the large gull species throughout the winter period, although the highest numbers occur during autumn passage. There was again no further evidence of breeding, but there were 18 records throughout the late spring and summer period, from 9 sites. **First winter/Spring:** there were regular counts at Lower Fm GP, building from 170 on Jan 6th to 2000 on Jan 31st (GJS), the highest count of the first winter

period. At Eversley GP there were 130 Jan 14th (BMA). Away from the main roosts, there were 300 at Inkpen on Jan 29th (RGS), 22 at Walbury Hill (JL) and 30 at Kintbury on Feb 18th (RRC). The last 3-figure count of the winter period was 300 on Mar 7th at Lower Fm GP (SAG). There were 2 adult at Jubilee R on Apr 16th (KPD) and 4 heading W at Lower Fm GP on Apr 21st (IW; JL), with up to 4 present in May (NC) and 1 imm at Lavell's Lake on May 12th (MFW), but the largest spring gatherings were at Pingewood GP with 26 – only 4 adults – on May 4th and 28 on May 22nd (both RCr). **Summer:** there was 1 at Lavell's Lake on Jun 1st (BAJC), a colour-ringed s/s was at Pingewood GP on Jun 17th (KEM) and 1 passed over Eversley GP on Jun 19th (BMA). 2 adults were at Lea Fm GP on Jun 10th (FJC), within 2km of the 2005 breeding location, but there was no other evidence to support further breeding. Large summer counts were 90 at Pingewood GP on Jun 2nd (RJB), 100, mostly s/s and ad, at Woolhampton GP on Jun 9th (KEM) and 150 drifting high SE over Curridge on Jun 13th (IW). **Autumn/Second winter:** there were 50 at Bucklebury on Jul 16th (NC), and 55 at Borough Marsh on Jul 24th (ABT) rising to 200 on Jul 31st (DJB), with 100 at Eversley GP on Jul 30th (BMA). The highest count of the year was a minimum 10,000 birds at Theale Main GP on Sep 20th (RCr). There were several early autumn records from the Downs, with 100 in fields at West Woodhay Down on Aug 30th (RGS), 28 S over Combe Gibbet on Sep 23rd (SAG), and 500 at Compton on Sep 29th (ABT), with 60 at Crookham Com on Oct 18th (BDC). The highest counts of the second winter period came from Lower Fm GP with estimates of 10,000 in the late afternoon of Oct 31st and Nov 7th (GSte), 5,000 on Nov 10th (IW, JL), and 4000 on Nov 21st (NC, GJS), with 600 still present on Dec 19th, including 3 colour-ringed birds and 1 metal-ringed (NC). Although roosting has been suspected at Lower Fm GP, many of the 850 at Lower Fm GP on Nov 3rd were seen to depart after sunset (SAG). Substantial numbers were still using the Downs into winter, with 1300 at Sheepdrove Fm on Oct 6th (DJB), 500 at Warren Fm, Stancombe Down on Nov 10th (ABT) and 1,000 at Sheepdrove Fm on Dec 31st (BDC).

## **YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** *Larus michahellis*

*Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant and winter visitor*

There were records in all months from 17 sites. Jan-Mar: the year opened with the largest count of the winter, 7 adults in the roost at Moatlands GP on Jan 1st (PBT), with several subsequent records of adults in the roost (ABT, MFW). Presumably some of the same birds were seen nearby at Smallmead Fm and Pingewood GPs with 3-4 adults on several dates (KEM et al), including 4 adults with 2 f/w at Smallmead Fm GP on Jan 15th (CDRH), and on 27th when there were 3 adults there and 2 adults at Pingewood GP (both KEM). Nearby at Fobney Marshes there were 2 adults on Jan 20th and a s/w on Feb 26th, with perhaps the same bird seen in the Moatlands GP roost on Mar 8th (both CDRH). An adult was at Eversley GPs on Jan 19th (BMA) and there were two records from West Berks, both at Lower Fm GP, of an adult on Jan 29th (MJD) and a s/w at Lower Fm GP on Feb 19th (NC). There were also only 2 records from E. Berks, where a subadult flew E at QMR on Feb 16th and a f/w at Horton GP on Mar 13th (both CDRH). Apr-Jun: there was a run of Apr records at QMR, of an adult + subadult in the roost on Apr 2nd, with the latter again on Apr 7th, a f/s on Apr 10th and an adult on Apr 22nd (all CDRH). The only May record was a s/s for 20 mins at QMR on Apr 21st but regular records resumed there from Jun 14th with 2 (ad entering wing-moult and a worn f/s) and there were 2 adults, 2 s/s and 2 f/s on Jun 16th, and 3 adult and 2 s/s on 25th (all CDRH). There was also an adult at Pingewood GP on Jun 14th (KEM) and an adult at Horton GP on Jun 16th (CDRH). Jul-Sep: numbers at QMR built quickly from 16 (14 adult, 2 subadult) on Jul 3rd, to 28 ads/subads on Jul 9th and peaked at 64 (60 adults + 3 f/s + 1 juv) on Jul 19th, while 2 juv on 18th were the first of

the year (all CDRH). Numbers remained at these levels for several weeks, with 40 (37 adult, 1 s/s, 1 f/s and 1 juv) on Aug 22nd (CDRH). Presumably some of the same birds were also at Colnbrook Landfill, where there were 36 on Jul 28th, including 1 juv and 3 f/s, followed by regular counts in double figures, concluding with 12 adults on Sep 27th (all CDRH). An adult was at Charvil on Jul 2nd, again on 21st, and joined by a subadult on 30th (all CDRH), while 10 were at Borough Marsh on Jul 24th with 5 there on Aug 5th and 1 still on Aug 12th (all ABT). At Eversley GPs there were regular records starting with a s/s on Jul 6th (BMA), a 3/s on Jul 9th (RJG), 2 s/s on Jul 17th (MDL) and 2 adult on Jul 25th (BMA), peaking with 3 adults and a 3/s on Jul 29th (PBT). There was an adult at Pingewood GP on Jul 21st (KEM) and Aug 13th (MFW), 1 adult and 1 juv at Theale Main GP on Aug 17th (RCr), a f/w at Pingewood GP on Sep 6th and an adult there on Sep 19th (both MFW). Oct-Dec: the larger counts were 4 adults at QMR on Oct 22nd (CDRH), 3 (ad, s/w, f/w) at Smallmead Fm GP on Nov 10th and 12th (MFW), 3 adult on ice at Burghfield GP on Dec 22nd and 6 adults there on Dec 27th (both KEM), with 2 adult + 1 f/w at Pingewood GP on Dec 8th (MFW) and 3 adult on Dec 26th (both KEM). An adult was at Moatlands GP on Nov 11th (KEM), 1 adult and 1 f/w on Nov 17th (MFW), with 5 adults and 1 subadult there on Nov 22nd (CDRH), 4 adult and 1 f/w on Dec 8th (ABT) and regular records of 1–2 adults there through Dec (MO). There were widespread records of small numbers throughout this period, including a f/w in a ploughed field at Remenham on Oct 22nd (PBT), 1 adult at Virginia Water on Nov 18th, 1 adult at Charvil on Dec 14th (both CDRH) and 1 at Jubilee R on Dec 24th (ACoo), Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min. no. of birds at QMR	–	1	–	2	1	9	64	40	–	4	4	5
Number of other sites	6	6	2	1	–	1	5	7	4	5	7	6
Min. no. of birds at other sites	12	11	2	1	–	1	54	23	22	5	15	13

## CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

*Rare (under-recorded?) autumn/winter visitor*

A better year than 2006 with over 40 records of at least 16 birds. Birds are quite possibly travelling between sites and returning across seasons and years, and several identifiable (colour-ringed or maimed) individuals may allow this to be confirmed in the future. **First winter/Spring:** a f/w was at Smallmead Fm GP on Jan 4th and again on Jan 15th, this time with a second f/w bird (both CDRH). Presumably one of these two birds was seen in the Moatlands GP roost on Jan 14th (MFW) and on the same date the s/w from December 2006 was seen again at QMR (CDRH). An adult was seen at Smallmead Fm GP on Jan 20th (FJC), and the same or another was in the Moatlands GP roost on Feb 18th (MFW). A s/w was at Burghfield GP on Jan 22nd, and in the Moatlands GP roost on Jan 25th, 31st and Mar 8th, and was joined by another s/w on Jan 25th (all CDRH). A s/s was at QMR on Apr 1st and 9th, and a f/w was in the roost there on several dates between Apr 2nd and 13th (all CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** the first autumn record was a f/s at QMR on Jul 11th and 12th, different from the winter birds and the earliest-ever return date (CDRH). The same f/s was then at QMR on Jul 15th and 19th, Aug 14th and 16th, and Sep 7th, and nearby at Colnbrook Landfill on Aug 18th, while the latter site held the only juv of the year, moulting to f/w, on Sep 17th (all CDRH). A f/w (presumed female) found at QMR on Oct 22nd was colour-ringed in Poland, with green ring on right leg and metal ring on left, and was present on several dates between Nov 4th to 26th, and on Dec 4th, 15th and 31st (all CDRH). This long-stayer was joined by another f/w on Nov 24th (ABT) and a s/w on

Dec 15th, which was seen again on Dec 24th and 27th; on this last date a 3/w bird was also present, together with 1 or 2 f/w birds, making at least 5 individuals at QMR in December (all CDRH). An adult was at Pingewood GP on Nov 15th (KEM), and an adult with only 1 leg was on nearby fields on Nov 19th (MFW) and again on Nov 21st (per Birdguides), and on the same date an adult was seen at Wigmore Lane GP (RJB). At Borough Marsh there was a s/w on Nov 27th, before flying W (CDRH).

**Recorders comment:** The vast majority of the county records of this species have come from a small number of favoured sites and observers are reminded that identification notes are required, particularly when any are reported from new locations. Note that, from 2006, the LNHS Bird Report imposed a moratorium on published records of this species, while a subcommittee examines the extent of previous misidentifications!

## HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor, increasingly resident in summer and now breeds (Amber listed)*

Now firmly established as a year-round presence. **First winter:** the largest count in this period was 30 at Lower Fm GP on Jan 9th (NC), with very few records from other sites. There was 1 adult at Windsor Esplanade on Jan 11th, 2 3/w at Eversley GP on Jan 19th (BMA) and 1 at Bagnor Cress Beds on Feb 3rd (JL). An adult at Dinton Pastures CP on Feb 4th had apparently pure white primaries (MFW). **Spring/Summer:** a f/w and s/p adult of the Scandinavian race *argentatus* were present at QMR on Apr 11th (CDRH), alongside a number of more local birds. There were 150 at Dorney W on Apr 10th (DJB), 100 at Pingewood GP on Apr 26th (DJB) and 168 – mostly imm – there on May 22nd (RCr). There were 9 at Whiteknights Lake on Apr 8th and 22 circling over on May 7th (both PG) and breeding was again confirmed in Reading with a pair seen at a nest at the University on May 23rd–24th (AA,PG). 2 adults were seen in Newbury on Apr 29th, but presumed to be on passage (SAG). A pair was present on May 5th and subsequent dates in Wokingham as in the previous two summers, and a juv begging from adults from Aug 25th and present until Oct 17th may have been locally bred (PBT). A 3/s colour-ringed bird was seen at Pingewood GP Jun 9th (KEM), and there were 8 f/s birds at Lea Fm HP on Jun 10th (FJC). There were 225 over Slough on Jun 12th (DJB), but a higher summer count of 500 at QMR on the evening of Jun 16th was probably also local birds (CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** There were 100 at Bucklebury on Jul 16th (NC), 100 at Borough Marsh on Jul 29th and 270 there on Aug 8th (ABT), with 200 at Windsor Great Park on Aug 5th (DJB). Early records of *argentatus* included 3 s/w at Colnbrook Landfill on Aug 18th, 1 subad, 1 s/w and 1 juv there on 19th, and a s/p adult at QMR on Aug 22nd (all CDRH); this race clearly returns earlier than previously supposed. There were 60 – mostly adults – on tilled fields in Wokingham on Sep 19th (PBT) and there were 30 at Lea Fm GP on Nov 6th (FJC). The highest count from the second winter period was 60 at Borough Marsh on Nov 25th (ABT), with 43 at Burghfield GPs on Dec 15th (JA) and 42 at QMR on Nov 22nd (FCC). A colour-ringed adult – orange ring with “0531” in green – seen at Pingewood GP on Sep 18th and Oct 14th (MFW) was ringed in Hertfordshire in Nov 2003, and the only other subsequent observation to date had been 2 weeks later at Lea Fm Landfill. Another colour-ringed (red) bird was at QMR on Nov 24th (ABT) and a leucistic adult was at QMR on Dec 25th (CDRH).

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides**Rare winter visitor*

A good year, with 3 birds, and a new earliest arrival date. **First winter/Spring:** a f/s flew over QMR from SSE on Apr 1st and was later located at Hedgerley in Bucks; the same bird was present in the QMR roost on 2nd and 3rd (all CDRH). **Autumn/Second winter:** an adult at QMR on Nov 9th and 10th (CDRH) was the earliest ever Berkshire autumn record by almost 4 weeks, although there were other even earlier records in southern Britain. A f/w was at QMR on Nov 15th (CDRH) and the earlier adult was seen again at QMR on Nov 16th and 17th (CDRH; OM) and what was presumably the same adult was seen again on Dec 27th (CDRH).

**KUMLIEN'S GULL** *Larus glaucooides kumlieni**Rare vagrant*

After two blank years, a pale adult was in the roost at QMR on Feb 15th (CDRH), but did not return on subsequent evenings. This was not the bird seen in Oxfordshire the next day, and nor was it the bird seen in Berkshire as an adult in 2004 (which was presumed to be the returning imm from 2001), and is therefore the 3rd Berkshire record of this form.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus**Rare annual winter visitor*

A f/s passed over QMR on May 2nd (having been seen at sites in Surrey the previous day) and was present there again on the evening of May 4th, becoming the latest ever Berkshire record and the first ever in May (CDRH).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor*

Records from 11 sites, including at least 5 birds over the summer, and a new record count at the end of the year. **First winter:** a group of 47 at Smallmead Fm GP on Jan 22nd (RCr) was the only substantial count, while 2 adult + 1 f/w were in the roost at Moatlands GP on Jan 14th, with 2 adult there on Feb 18th (both MFW). Singles were reported from a small numbers of other sites, with Lea Fm GP holding 3 adults on Jan 21st (MFW). **Spring/Summer:** although there were no counts from early spring, up to 3 imm were seen intermittently at QMR during May, with a f/s on Jun 16th and 18th, a subadult on Jun 19th (all CDRH). At Pingewood GP there was an adult on May 8th (RCr), with 3 there on Jun 14th (KEM). **Autumn/Second winter:** an early returning adult was at Slough Trading Estate on Jul 20th (DJB), and at QMR there was a f/s on Jul 16th, 2 adults on Aug 22nd, and 2 adults again on Sep 14th. An adult was at Colnbrook Landfill on Aug 12th and 18th, with a juv there on Sep 9th, while at Colnbrook there were 12 adults on Sep 22nd–23rd (all CDRH). There were also 2 at Dorney W on Sep 5th (RPi). In Mid. Berks there were 6 adults + 1 f/w at Smallmead Fm GP on Nov 12th, and 15 there on Dec 30th, while a regular gathering in fields at Pingewood peaked at 27 on Nov 20th, and nearby at Pingewood GP there were 57 adults on Dec 4th (all MFW). From West Berks the only counts came from Lower Fm GP with 2 imm and 1 adult seen through Dec (NC). At QMR there were 50 on Nov 13th but 255 on Dec 25th equalled the county record from 2005, which was then surpassed on 26th by an estimated 500, including at least 25 juv, setting a new Berkshire record (CDRH).

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla**Scarce spring migrant and winter visitor*

There were multiple records in both spring and autumn, totalling at least 66 birds from 3 sites, although dominated by mid-November passage at QMR. **Spring:** the year opened with a weak-looking adult at Hosehill Lake on Mar 3rd (KGW), followed by a group of 4 s/p adults and 4 w/p adults at Woolhampton GP on Mar 18th (MJD; GEW), and a s/p adult in the QMR roost on Mar 20th (CDRH). Spring passage ended with a group of 13 at QMR on May 28th (MMc). **Autumn:** there was a concentrated passage through QMR, beginning with at least 40 passing through on the afternoon of Nov 9th, 3 adults on 10th and 3 adults on 11th, 2 on 12th and 1 still present on 14th (all CDRH).

**LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons**Scarce passage migrant*

There was a single record of this diminutive tern at QMR where 2 were with Common Terns on Jun 18th (CDRH); they rested on the N shore before being flushed by a Hobby and departing NE.

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger**Uncommon passage migrant*

A reasonably good spring produced 18 birds – with groups of 4, 5 and 6 – but autumn disappointed with only a single bird. **Spring:** the first record of the year was of 1 at Hosehill Lake on Apr 30th, heading N towards Theale Main GP where it was presumably part of the group of 4 seen shortly afterwards by the same observer (RJB). These birds then relocated to Moatlands GP (MO) where they remained until dusk on May 2nd (MJT). There were 2 present at Theale Main GP on 3rd (KEM) which may have been the remainder of the group of 4, or new arrivals. There was 1 at Theale Main GP late afternoon on May 13th (KEM), but by dusk there were 6 birds present (ABT). A single s/p bird was at Dinton Pastures CP on May 14th (MO), a group of 5 was at Woolhampton GP on May 21st (RCr) and a single was at Moatlands GP on May 22nd (MJD). **Autumn:** only 1 record, of a juv at Theale Main GP on Aug 13th (KEM). The table below shows spring/autumn numbers and first/last dates over the last 12 years.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Spring	53	32	18	18	84	41	5	17	13	11	20	18
First date	Apr 20th	May 3rd	Apr 30th	May 5th	May 1st	Apr 25th	May 7th	Apr 15th	Apr 18th	Apr 19th	Apr 16th	Apr 30th
Autumn	17	33	102– 152*	100	5	23	21	20	50	12	31	1
Last date	Sep 2nd	Sep 11th	Sep 30th	Aug 12th	Sep 10th	Oct 11th	Aug 19th	Sep 17th	Sep 2nd	Sep 12th	Sep 25th	Aug 13th

\*50–100 estimated over QMR on Sep 1st.

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis**Uncommon passage migrant, principally in autumn*

Continuing the run of poor years there were 4 records and only 6 individuals, all at one site.

**Spring:** 2 adults were resting on buoys at QMR on Apr 19th (CDRH). **Autumn:** a s/p adult was feeding with Common Terns at QMR on Jun 22nd, with another 2 adults briefly on 24th (both CDRH). The final record of the year was of a moulting adult again at QMR on Jul 20th (CDRH). The table below shows spring/autumn numbers and first/last dates over the last 12 years, and does seem to indicate a downwards trend.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Spring	7	2	9	4	2	–	8	34	7	2	5	2
First date	Apr 7th	May 3rd	May 1st	Apr 3rd	May 1st		Apr 6th	Apr 17th	Apr 2nd	May 3rd	Apr 2nd	Apr 19th
Autumn	8	19	41	22	41	26	35	22	13	4	7	4
Last date	Aug 22nd	Sep 25th	Sep 13th	Sep 10th	Sep 20th	Oct 8th	Sep 13th	Oct 11th	Oct 13th	Sep 13th	Sep 24th	Jul 20th

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo**Common passage migrant and localised breeder (Amber listed)*

A year with later first arrival dates than recently, and peak spring numbers also low. Breeding was recorded from at least 5 sites, although poor weather is likely to have had a substantial impact on productivity. **Spring:** the first record of the year was of one at sunrise roosting at Eversley GPs on Apr 11th (BMA), with 1 at Wraysbury GP (CDRH) and 2 at Thatcham Marsh (GJS) on the same day. The first for Lower Fm GP was 1 on Apr 12th (RHOT) and the first for QMR was 1 that flew E on the evening of 13th, followed by 4 also heading E on the evening of 15th (both CDRH). On 15th there were also 9 at Eversley GPs (MJM), and the first for Dinton Pastures CP was also on this date (FJC). Counts of 26 were made at Theale Main GP on Apr 22nd (JA; RJB) and 20 at Eversley GPs on 24th (RJG), but the largest count of the year was 71 at Moatlands GP on Apr 25th (RCr). There were 12 were at Summerleaze GP on Apr 25th and 15 at Orlitt's Lake, Colnbrook on May 2nd (both CDRH), with 10 at Aldermaston GP on May 13th (JLe). There were counts of 20+ at Moatlands GP and Theale Main GP in early May (MO) but 40 were at Theale Main GP on May 12th and 29 at Twyford GP on 26th (both MFW). **Summer:** at Thatcham Marsh there were up to 8 pairs on May 19th, with 6 juv on Jun 22nd and 8 juv on Jul 6th (all GJS). At Theale Main GP a pair was nesting on Jun 3rd (BU) while at Hosehill Lake 9 pairs nested (TABCG), although there was no confirmation of success at either site. At both Lavell's Lake and Lea Fm GP pairs showing interest in shingle islands, but there was no nesting. At Eversley GPs 2 pairs showed signs of nesting in May, although they had deserted after a few days (BMA), possibly under pressure from the record numbers of Black-headed Gulls nesting there. At Jubilee R a pair was on a nest on May 24th (BDC), while a pair there were with 3 juv on Jul 6th (KPD) and still present on 22nd (BDC) after heavy flooding on 20th, although all islands were submerged by 24th. At Lower Fm GP an unfledged chick was washed from its nest by flooding on Jul 22nd (SAG). At Bray GP there were 8 adult + 12 juv on Jul 7th (KPD) which may have been locally bred, while at Twyford GP there were 6 adult + 6 juv on Jul 14th (MFW). There were 10 at Woolhampton GP on Jun 28th (KEM), and a group of 7 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jun 22nd included a possible f/s with a black bill (DJMi). **Autumn:** there were 22 at QMR, including a f/s, on Jun 30th, 42 on Jul 1st, and 50



on Jul 6th, with the f/s present again on 9th (all CDRH). A pair was seen mating at Lea Fm GP on the unusual date of Jul 8th (FJC), 5 were at Great Meadow Pond in Windsor Great Park on Jul 15th (DJB) and an adult was seen mobbing a Hobby at Frogmill on Aug 10th (SJF; FMF). There were 40 at Theale Main GP on Jul 21st (RJBS). There were 45 at QMR on Aug 2nd, while 29 were present on Aug 21st, including a group of 17 that passed straight through (all CDRH). A juv was at Theale Main GP from Sep 22nd (MFW) to 28th (DJB; KEM; RHS) while an adult present from 28th (KEM) to 30th (RCW) was the last of the year. Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GP	–	–	–	–	2	17	20	–	–	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	26	14	7	1	1	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	–	20	31	6	–	4	–	–	–	–
Lea Fm GP	–	–	–	3	11	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Moatlands GP	–	–	–	71	29	16	–	16	–	–	–	–
QMR	–	–	–	4	14	8	50	45	1	–	–	–
Thatcham GP	–	–	–	12	13	21	16	1	–	–	–	–
Theale GP	–	–	–	37	40	26	44	3	1	–	–	–
Wraysbury GP	–	–	–	4	30	5	–	–	–	–	–	–

## ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

*Uncommon passage migrant in small numbers*

A poor year for this marathon migrant, with only 12 birds in spring and 5 in autumn, although the occurrence of both f/s and s/s records was notable. **Spring:** the first record of the year was of 2 at Moatlands GP on Apr 21st, with another present on Apr 25th (both ABT). At Wraysbury GP there was 1 on May 1st (CDRH), and on May 4th there was 1 at Eversley GPs (BMA) and 2 at Theale Main GP (ABT). Passage continued on May 11th with 1 briefly over the BA Lake at Wraysbury GP (CDRH), and then a remarkable record away from water with 1 seen passing over Wishmoor Cross in Swinley Forest on May 12th (RCr). The spring period closed with 2 at Theale Main GP on May 17th, and another there on May 20th (both KEM). **Autumn:** the first autumn bird was a presumed s/s at QMR on Jul 20th (with ~30 Common Terns). The first juv was at Moatlands GP from Aug 14th to 18th, being seen occasionally at Theale Main GP during its stay (KEM et al), while a f/s was reported there on 20th (ABT). Another juv was at Dinton Pastures CP from Sep 28th (FJC) to 30th (MFW; MJM), and an adult also found on 28th at Theale Main GP (RHS et al) stayed on until Oct 1st (KEM) was the last record of the year. The table below shows spring/autumn numbers and first/last dates over the last 12 years.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Spring	13	17	79	24	1	1	47	21	40	122	62	12
First date	Apr 18th	Apr 25th	Apr 24th	Apr 20th	May 23rd	May 30th	Apr 17th	Apr 6th	Apr 15th	Apr 23rd	Apr 23rd	Apr 21st
Autumn	10	12	12	4	–	5	–	17	2	2	14	5
Last date	Oct 2nd	Oct 12th	Sep 1st	Sep 30th		Oct 10th		Sep 30th	Oct 6th	Oct 7th	Oct 3rd	Oct 1st

**LITTLE AUK** *Alle alle**Rare vagrant*

The 14th and 15th Berkshire records were the first since 1999, and part of a widespread influx of the species after autumn storms, with record numbers from watchpoints in the North-East, many of which were seen to head inland. A flock of 8 found at QMR on Nov 14th (CDRH) was the first multiple record for the county and appears to be the second largest group ever recorded inland in the UK (a flock of nine flew N. at Carr Vale in North East Derbyshire on Oct 31st 1995). Although diving actively (and simultaneously) when found, all flew off E after just eight minutes. A second opportunity to connect with this species was presented on the 15th when another bird was located at the S end of QMR and, after reappearing by the yacht-club, was present until dark (CDRH et al); unsurprisingly, after sharing a reservoir with several thousand gulls, the bird was not present the next day.

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia**Abundant urban resident*

Very similar to 2006: 5 flocks of 100+ were reported, all during autumn in the Maidenhead area, the largest flock being c550 at Woodlands Park on Sep 29th (DJB). Again there were no breeding records received.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas**Common resident and winter visitor*

Records were evenly spread across the county in all months. Most records were of fewer than 30 birds but there were 16 reports of between 30 & 100, and 4 reports of over 100, the largest flocks being 175 on the Lambourn Downs on Oct 6th (DJB) and 550 at Horton GP on Dec 14th (CDRH). **Breeding:** all records of breeding behavior came from East Berks. There were many reports of singing and of pairs in Swinley Forest and some from Windsor Forest e.g. c30 pairs in Swinley Park on Apr 12th (WAN) and 2 pairs and 2 singing in South Forest, Windsor on Jun 5th (DJB). Breeding was confirmed in owl boxes at Eversley GP on Jun 6th (BMA), Moor Copse on May 14th (JLe), Cookham Dean on Jun 1st (BDC) and Bisham on Jun 4th (BDC). Nests in natural cavities are harder to find but a pair were feeding young in a cavity in an oak on May 16th at Swinley Park (DJB).

**WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus**Abundant resident and winter visitor*

There were 27 reports of 100 to 500 and 13 reports of 500+ including 6 reports of 1000+. Most of the big flocks were in the Downs (in contrast with 2006) with highest reported numbers being 3000+ in the Compton Downs on Nov 3rd (DJB) and c1800 near Lambourn on Dec 13th (BDC) while the maxima in the rest of the county were c1200 at Wooshill on Oct 30th (PBT) and c800 at Widbrook Com on Mar 3rd (BDC). **Breeding:** there were no reports of breeding despite the species abundant presence throughout the season.

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto**Widespread and common resident*

The picture was very similar to 2006. Typically for a very common and visible species, we received fewer than 100 records, and very few reporting breeding behavior (e.g. singing).

There were 13 reports of 10 or more together, all in the last 4 months of the year, the maxima being c20 near Aston on Oct 26th (SJF, FMF) and a similar number at Woodlands Park on Nov 20th (DJB). A pair in a garden near Maidenhead raised 6 young in 3 broods (DJB), the only confirmed breeding record.

## TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

*Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor*

The pattern was very much like 2006. 72 records came from 25 sites, fairly evenly spread in the county, but with only 1 or 2 reports from each site, usually of just 1 bird. The exception was the Brimpton/Woolhampton area, which provided 32 records, and the Ruscombe and Theale GP areas with 7 records each between May and July. The earliest report was 1 at Boxford Com on Apr 12th (IW; JL) then 2 at Woolhampton GP on May 5th (MJD). The latest records were 1 at Woolhampton GP on Aug 27th and 1 at Pingewood GP on Sep 8th (MFW). **Breeding:** there was no confirmed breeding, but possible breeding was indicated by: a copulating pair at Brimpton on Jul 18th (GEW), 2 pairs near Mortimer on Jun 12th (DJS), a singing male and another carrying nest material at Ruscombe May 25th (PBT) and a pair at Jeallott's Hill Jun 14th (PJC).

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September
Number of sites	1	11	11	7	7	1
Minimum number of birds	1	15	15	9	10	1

## RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

*Common but localised resident in East of County. Uncommon elsewhere*

There were 193 reports from east of Reading (where the distribution was very similar to 2006) but there were also 3 from west of Reading; 2 at Fobney on Jul 24th (AA), 1 at Thatcham Marsh on May 20th (IW; JL) and 1 at Lambourn on May 16th (JPB). The biggest flocks were reported in the Wraybury area during the winter months, the largest being c1400 roosting at Hythe End on Dec 22nd (CDRH). There were 3 other flocks of 100+ (as in 2006). **Breeding:** during February, pairs were seen inspecting prospective nest cavities at Cheapside, Ascot on 2nd (WAN) and at Aston on 7th (ANS). There was no proof of breeding received, though the steady increase in numbers over the years suggests that this species is breeding successfully in Berkshire.

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aston	–	5	–	–	–	–	9	–	–	–	–	12
Borough Marsh	1	–	2	–	5	–	–	3	34	–	–	–
Dorney W	–	–	–	16	–	3	–	–	2	–	4	–
Frogmill	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	45	45	–	27	30
Maidenhead Court	26	4	–	3	–	–	20	51	5	–	2	–
Maidenhead, North Town	140	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	60	1	–
Odney Island	2	4	–	16	–	–	–	–	–	–	20	–
Windsor	80	1	–	–	–	11	–	–	–	–	2	–
Wraybury area	373	3	–	–	–	3	–	–	20	–	200	1400+

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus**Common summer visitor*

Reports arrived from 74 evenly distributed sites. The table below summarises the distribution. In West and Mid Berks numbers were similar to 2006 but in East Berks reports were up significantly. The first record came on Apr 14th when 5 single birds turned up at Lower Fm GP (AA), Greenham Com (RRK), Thatcham Marsh (NC), Woolhampton GP (PHos) and Moatlands GP (JA). Thereafter they were reported daily from sites across the county. There were 20 reports of multiple birds referring to areas of habitat, the largest number being 6 in Swinley Forest between Wishmoor and Rapley Lake on May 11th (DJB). **Breeding:** birds were present at 17 sites throughout much of April/May/June, indicating probable breeding there. At Dinton Pastures CP, Waltham St Lawrence and Woolhampton GP, pairs were observed. There was no higher evidence of breeding. The latest record was from Moatlands GP where a juv was seen on Aug 19th (JA).

Month (in 2007)	April	May	June	July	August
Number of sites	41	49	12	0	1
Minimum number of birds	59	71	19	0	1

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba**Uncommon but widespread resident which has shown signs of increase in recent years (Schedule 1 and Amber Listed).*

The records show that the distribution this year was similar to 2006 (21 sites in the west, 9 in the middle and 15 in the east) but only 14 sites were those reported in 2006. This lack of overlap between years could mean several things, but it probably is the result of limited observer activity combined with a population of roving individuals in addition to a territorial population. Based on the records in 2006 and 2007, there could be between 6 and 18 pairs in the county. The table below shows the distribution by month and by area. Most reports were of single birds and any report of more than 2 usually consisted of adults with juvs, but there was 1 report of no fewer than 6 adult birds in a small area of prime habitat in West Berks on May 22nd (BDC). **Breeding:** 2007 was a good breeding year for this species. Successful pairs were reported in 5 places each of which raised between 2 and 4 young. In addition, in the same local authority area as mentioned in 2006, 10 of 23 boxes were occupied by Barn Owls of which 7 had breeding owls. Elsewhere, there were a few other reports of pairs but no indication of their breeding success.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of areas	6	3	5	2	6	13	3	5	7	4	7	9
Min number of birds	6	3	6	3	14	25	9	8	7	4	7	9

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua**Widespread and locally common resident*

There were 280 records, from 18 sites in the west of the county, 20 in the middle and 29 in the east, spread fairly regularly through the year. Most records were of 1 or 2 birds, and higher numbers were always of family groups or birds heard over an area. Calling was heard in every month from a total of 24 sites, September and November being the noisiest months. **Breeding:** confirmed at Jubilee R.: 2 birds beside a nest hole on Apr 4th (BDC),

Bradfield; young in a nest box on May 19th (JA), Inkpen; young heard at a nest on May 24th (LS), Cookham; juvs in a nest box on Jun 1st (BDC) and Kintbury; adult + 5 young on Jun 4th,(JD).

## TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

*Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat, including urban areas*

The general distribution of birds was similar to 2006, but it was a better breeding year. There were 185 records fairly evenly spread around, but slightly more in the west (38 West, 26 Mid, 29 East Berks). **Breeding:** there was evidence of pairs or confirmed breeding from 18 sites, and breeding was possible at many of the 93 sites. Breeding was confirmed by the presence of downy or recently fledged young at Moatlands GP on May 5th (RJB), Bowdown Wood on May 17th (NC), Farnborough Down on May 18th (GDS), Thatcham Marshes on May 19th (MJT), Cranbourne Chase on May 20th (DJB), Windsor Forest on May 22nd (DJB), Swinley Forest on May 29th (DJB), Windsor Great Park on Jun 1st (DJB), Woolley Down on Jun 6th (GDS) and Aldworth Downs on Jun 20th (MFW). At Bisham Woods there were 4 nest boxes all with abandoned eggs.

## LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

*Resident in very small numbers and scarce winter visitor*

There were 6 unique records from 3 sites. The only breeding record came from the usual area on the Oxfordshire border with birds noted on several dates from May 24th and 2 juvs were seen there, with at least 1 adult, on Jun 20th (MFW; RDr); on Oct 18th 1 (of 2) birds there was heard giving a gruff three-note contact call (CDRH). At another site 2 birds were present on Mar 2nd and 5 were roosting there on Nov 28th (ABT). At the regular roost-site in West Berks there were at least 12 birds in December (CDRH).

## SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were 27 unique records for the year involving probably 13 birds. **First winter:** up to 4 were seen at the regular wintering area in the Downs between Jan 10th (GJS) and Mar 3rd (DAMD). **Autumn passage:** the first for the autumn flew over near Compton, pursued by crows and a Kestrel, on Sep 4th (CDRH). 1 flew south over Lower Fm GP on Sep 29th (NC; IW; JL). On Nov 5th, one spent about 40mins around QMR (CDRH). **Second winter:** singles were seen on the Lambourn Downs on Nov 28th (ABT) and at East Garston on Dec 13th (CDRH). There were 12 records of up to 5 birds from the West Ilsley area between Nov 16th and Dec 31st (MO).

## EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

Another good year with at least 61 birds at 19 sites in 9 areas (Bucklebury Com, Gorrick Wood Plantation, Mortimer area, Padworth Com, Snelsmore Com, Wickham Heath, Swinley Forest, Wildmoor Heath and Windsor Forest including Windsor Great Park). As nearly all the birds reported were churring males, the true total was probably over 100. Birds arrived early (the weather was mild) the first reported being 3 males displaying and churring in Swinley Forest on Apr 28th (MSFW) followed by 1 male at Bucklebury Com

on 30th (NC). The latest reports were of 1 still singing at Gorrick Wood on Jul 25th (DJS) and finally 1, probably imm, at Wildmoor Heath on Aug 19th (DJS). At one site in Swinley Forest, several people reported 5 males singing in a kilometre square with at least 1 female in attendance. **Breeding:** was probable on at least 24 territories at 10 sites in 6 areas, based on males singing over an extended period or singing in competition. Females were seen at all the sites in Swinley Forest, but none elsewhere. There was no confirmed breeding.

## COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

*Common though declining passage migrant and summer visitor*

**Spring:** The first record was from Maidenhead where there were 2 on the very early date of Mar 30th (BAJC) and there were no more until Apr 18th when a total of 7 were seen at Newbury (AEDH), Dinton Pastures CP (KEM) and Colnbrook (CDRH). Thereafter there were daily reports of fairly small numbers, with a small surge on May 3rd & 4th, but the main influx was from May 26th to 30th, with c350 at Burghfield GP on May 27th (JA), 400+ at Theale GP on May 28th and 200+ there on May 29th (KEM), as well as several 100+ flocks elsewhere. **Summer:** a small, informal survey carried out by BOC/NDOC found approximately 46 nests in the following places: Hungerford Newton, Kintbury, Newbury, Pangbourne, the Reading area, Wokingham, Finchampstead, Sandhurst, Bracknell and Maidenhead. The records provided some further evidence of **Breeding:** up to 15 birds were over Twyford on most days during June/July (SPA); at Woolhampton aerial mating was observed on May 23rd (ABT); and at a school in Reading on Jul 6th a bird was seen entering a hole in a brick wall (DJMi). The largest summer flocks were 100+ at Lower Fm GP (IW) and a similar number over Windsor Park polo field (DJB), both on Jun 24th. **Autumn:** passage was not very pronounced. Flock sizes built up from 150 at Lower Fm GP on Jul 18th (FJC) to 250+ passing over Grazeley on Jul 27th (KEM) and peaked at 600+ passing over Jubilee R. on Jul 31st (DJB) before reducing to c100 over Woodley on Aug 5th (FJC) and declining to flocks of c20 or fewer thereafter. The last records were both from Lower Fm GP; 2 there on Aug 30th (NC) and again on Aug 31st (DJB).

## KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

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

The distribution around the county and through the year was almost the same as in 2006, i.e. there were no statistically significant differences. **Breeding:** birds were reported at 56 sites in at least 1 month March to July and reported throughout those months at 14 sites. Pairs were reported at Theale GPs on Sep 1st (JLe), Aston on Jul 23rd (ANS), Dinton Pastures CP on May 26th (MFW) and Romney Island on Apr 17th (DF). Adults carrying food were seen at Bray GP on Jul 7th (WAS) and Dinton Pastures CP on May 14th (MFW). Juvs were reported at Boulter's Lock on Aug 3rd (WAS), Brimpton on Aug 8th (GEW) and Eversley GPs on Jul 26th (BMA).

## HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

*Scarce passage migrant*

The only report of the year was of a single bird that perched on wires over a garden near Wokingham on the evening of Jun 1st (SMa).

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis**Common resident*

The number of records, county distribution, and numbers reported per record were virtually identical to 2006. There were only 8 reports of calling birds (about one third of the 2006 reports). **Breeding:** a few pairs were reported but the main signs of successful breeding were reports of juvs in the period June to September from 10 widely distributed sites.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major**Common resident*

A very similar picture to 2006 – there were 372 records covering the entire year and the whole county, but with more records from the east, where there is more suitable habitat. The largest number reported was 11 that were found in 2 hours across one tetrad and the largest single group reported was 7 together, probably 2 families, at Aldermaston Jun 10th (RCr). **Breeding:** there were 25 reports of drumming from Jan to Jun (and none later than that) of which 20 were in March and April. In the period March to July, there were 41 records of confirmed breeding from 26 sites and pairs were reported from 3 more sites.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos minor**Uncommon resident*

There were 35 records from 7 sites in West, 6 in M. and 12 in East Berks, all but one of single birds. The table below summarises the seasonal distribution. **Breeding:** birds were drumming at Upper Bucklebury on Feb 9th (NC), near Maidenhead on Apr 2nd (WAS) and at Brimpton Com on Oct 3rd (JLe).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	3	5	4	3	5	2	0	2	0	1	3	4
Number of birds	3	5	4	3	5	3	0	2	0	1	3	4

**WOODLARK** *Lullula arborea*

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

Birds were reported in all months and the pattern of distribution was virtually identical to that in 2006. The largest single group was a party of 9 birds feeding at Greenham Com on Sep 15th (GDS). **Breeding:** DJB et al found 41 territories in East Berks, there were 12 territories at Greenham Com and there were at least 3 other territories in the county. Pairs fed young at 4 locations in Swinley Forest during April & May (DJB) and at Snelsmore Com on Jun 19th (IW JL). Family parties were located at 5 places in Swinley Forest during May and June (DJB, MFW, WAN).

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis**Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

There were 290 records from 87 sites, with a slightly western bias. Most of the reports of big numbers were from Englefield where there were 100+ numbers in Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Oct & Dec (RCr; RJB). Elsewhere, all the big flocks reported were on the Downs or near

Maidenhead. Largest flocks were c240 at Bury Down on Dec 20 (RCr), 230 at Englefield on Oct 31st (RCr), 105 at Strand Water on Nov 3rd (BDC) and 110+ at Cold Harbour on Nov 20th–22nd (DJB). There were 15 other records of 100 or more. **Breeding:** birds were present during more than one of the spring months (Mar to Jul) on 8 sites in the west, 4 in M. Berks and 3 in the east (though they were present on at least one occasion Mar – Jul at 23, 11 and 13 sites). They seem to be a sparse breeder in East Berks nowadays with only a few reports of small numbers, e.g. “a few pairs” at Eversley GPs (BMA) and only 2 singing in Windsor Great Park on Apr 15th (DJB). The stronghold seems to be at Englefield (though regular observing here is a factor) with c150 present on Apr 8th of which 35 were singing. There appear to be good numbers on the Downs, e.g. 11 singing at Walbury Hill on Apr 28th (DF), but low observer activity might understate the numbers here. There were surprisingly few reports from Greenham Com, e.g. 5 singing on the morning of Mar 27th (JBri) was the highest report. The only confirmed breeding was at Englefield where several were feeding young on Jun 28th (RCr).

## **SAND MARTIN**     *Riparia riparia*

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant*

As usual, more than 90% of the 251 records came from Berkshire's 8 major wetland complexes. **Spring:** the earliest reports were from Lower Fm GP where 1 arrived on Mar 15th (NC) followed by 3 on Mar 16th (MJD), then there were daily reports of small parties from across the county, until numbers peaked over 3 days from Mar 29th to Apr 1st, when there were 50 to 70 at Woolhampton GP (MO). From May 3rd, when there were 140 at Padworth Lane GP (RJB), flocks of 100+ were reported several times. **Breeding:** nesting colonies were reported at Newbury Station (7 prs), Thatcham GP (4+ prs), Dinton Pastures (56 prs) and at nearby Lea Fm GP (c20 prs) and the Jubilee R. (7 prs). The colony at Eversley could not be located (but was probably still somewhere in the area) and at Woolhampton there were no nests as the sand pile has been removed. **Autumn:** birds were still using nest holes at Lea Fm GP on Aug 30th (FJC) and on Sep 22nd (MFW) while a few passage birds were being seen away from summering sites, e.g. c20 over Maidenhead on Aug 23rd (DF) and c20 at Bagnor on Sep 7th (JL), and at QMR small flocks were seen migrating SE most days during July (CDRH), but there were few other signs of passage until the second half of September when several 100+ flocks appeared, e.g. c300 at Lea Fm GP on Sep 20th, 140+ going south over Moatlands GP in groups on Sep 23rd (JA) and c100 over Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 28th (MFW). The last ones were stragglers in big flocks of Swallows and House Martins, 3 at Woolhampton GP on Oct 1st and 1 at Brimpton GP on Oct 6th (KEM).

## **SWALLOW**     *Hirundo rustica*

*Abundant summer visitor and passage migrant*

There were 343 records from 67 sites across the county. **Spring:** the first to arrive were singles: at Brimpton on Mar 17th (GEW), at Woolhampton GP on 22nd (KEM) and another there on 24th (RCr). Passage was fairly light with the peak in the second week of April, e.g. 120 at Moatlands GP on Apr 10th (RCr) and 200+ at Brimpton on Apr 15th. **Breeding:** the regular records contained reports of breeding from Hungerford Newton, Eversley GPs, Brimpton, Woolley Park, Frilsham, Shurlock Row, Inkpen and Woodlands Park, and a small, informal survey conducted by BOC/NDOC found 115 occupied nests in 17 other places and probable breeding in 8 more places. **Autumn:** passage began around Aug 15th when there were c100 birds at Eversley GPs (BMA) and was well under way on Sep 9th, when there were still young in a nest near Kintbury (LS), and it continued strongly



until about Oct 2nd, when c250 fed over a sweetcorn field at Combe (RHAr). Sep 23rd saw a major southward movement which was noticed in several places, the highest numbers being seen over Theale with an estimated 2000+ per hour for several hours in the morning, and including lesser, but still large numbers of House Martins (JA). The tail-enders trickled through until Oct 24th when 1 was seen at Marsh Benham (SAG).

## HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

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

There were 260 records from 51 sites (covering 81 grid squares) across the county. **Spring:** the first was 1 on Mar 26th at Dinton Pastures CP (FJC) then 1 at Pingewood GP on 31st (JRe). Passage was very light through April and early May then in the second week of May large numbers moved through, e.g. c800 over Theale GPs on May 10th (RCr), c320 in under an hour moving north at Englefield on May 11th (RCr), 100+ at both Eversley (BMA) and Thatcham (NC) on May 11th and 750+ at Brimpton on May 15th (NC). **Breeding:** the records refer to a total of 21 nests at Brightwalton, Bray, Maidenhead and Old Windsor, however a small, informal survey of breeding House Martins by BOC/NDOC located 201 nests at 17 widely spread sites (different to those covered by the formal records) plus another 14 sites where breeding was probable but nests were not seen. The survey was neither large enough nor rigorous enough to give an accurate picture for the county. **Autumn:** passage took place from about Aug 20th, e.g. 250+ over Charvil (DJB), to Oct 3rd, e.g. c100 circling Aldworth church (WB), with a distinct peak around Sep 23rd/24th, e.g. 700 moving through Thatcham in 2 groups about an hour apart (NC). The largest number reported was 1000+ per hour passing over Theale on Sep 23rd with an even larger number of Swallows (JA). The last to leave were 2 at Remenham "Hill" on Oct 18th and 1 on Oct 21st (CDRH).

## TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

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

There were 90 records from the same areas as in 2006 but a cluster around Combe Hill was unusual and may indicate colonization in this area. **Spring:** first records were 3 singing in Swinley Forest on Apr 8th (DJB) then 1 singing near Snelsmore Com on 10th (IW). Away from breeding areas 10 migrants were reported during late April and early May. **Breeding:** in Swinley Forest DJB located 68 territories (and confirmed breeding) during April to June. Elsewhere there were probably 3 territories at Snelsmore, maybe 1 or 2 near Combe Hill, 1 at most at Greenham Com, 4 at Bucklebury Com and 2 or 3 at Padworth Com, where 1 was feeding young on May 29th (AEDH). **Autumn passage:** in September, 5 were at Wraysbury on Sep 5th (CL) and the last was 1 at Wraysbury on Oct 5th (CDRH).

## MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

*Abundant migrant and winter visitor, locally common summer visitor*

A similar picture to 2006. There were 299 records from 66 sites; 76% of the records were outside the breeding season (i.e. more than 90% of birds were reported outside the period March to July). Is this species under-reported or is its status as a breeder in the county at risk? **Spring passage:** numbers peaked in late March with c200 passing Walbury Hill going north on 27th (RRi). **Breeding:** there were very few breeding season records and none of these confirmed breeding, but showed that it was possible at a handful of places in the Downs. Even at Greenham Com birds in habitat were recorded on only 3 occasions in April and May. **Autumn passage:** there was a heavy passage from Sep 22nd to Oct 6th, e.g. 130 at Englefield

on Sep 28th (RCr), c150 at Weathercock Hill on Oct 6th (DJB) and c200 at Greenham Com (IW) on the same day. Winter: in Nov all reports were of fewer than 20 together. In Dec there were 7 flocks of 20 to 40 e.g. 22 at Winterbourne on Dec 11th (JL), 34 at Jubilee R. on Dec 12th (BDC), 25 at West Ilsley on Dec 21st (DJB) and 39 at Charvil on Dec 30th (ABT).

## **ROCK PIPIT**     *Anthus petrosus*

*Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

There were at least 4 and probably 6 birds. **Spring passage:** there was one at Dorney W on Mar 11th (WAS). **Autumn passage:** All records were from QMR during October – on Oct 5th there were 3, and singles on Oct 16th and Oct 22nd (CDRH).

## **WATER PIPIT**     *Anthus spinoletta*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor*

**Autumn passage:** 2 were with a Rock Pipit at QMR on Oct 22nd and all 3 birds flew off together towards the northeast (CDRH).

## **YELLOW WAGTAIL**     *Motacilla flava flavissima*

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

There were 156 records from 30 sites. Another poor breeding year with the majority seen during autumn passage. **Spring:** the first of the season was 1 on the Lambourn Downs on Mar 26th (BDC) then over a week passed before the second one at Eversley GPs on Apr 9th (GR). **Passage:** numbers increased week by week until w/e May 20th, when there were 22 in total during the week including at least 5 together on the Compton Downs (DJB). The total number of birds reported in the county from w/e 1st Apr to w/e 20th May was 59. **Breeding:** was probable at Englefield where pairs were seen on various dates and on Jun 28th they were agitated but no young were seen (RCr). A pair bred at Farnborough Down where a male took food to a nest on May 13th (GDS). On Jun 23rd a bird carried food for young at Bisham (PNe) and at Woolley Park on the same day a male carried food (GDS). **Autumn Passage:** the biggest flocks were all at Borough Marsh, Charvil with 22 on Sep 1st (CDRH) and 15 on Sep 3rd (ABT). Passage was regular during the 4 weeks to Sep 16 with 160 birds reported in that period. Numbers fell quickly after that until 1 was at Englefield on Oct 5th (RCr) and the last at Dinton Pastures CP on Oct 26th (JPe).

## **BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL**     *Motacilla flava flava*

*Scarce passage migrant*

This subspecies is rarely identified in Autumn, but an adult male in winter plumage at QMR on Aug 22nd (CDRH) was presumed to be *M. f. flava* because of distinct blue-grey feathering on the nape & ear-coverts, as well as a few black spots on the breast (which are not shown by adult *flavissima* according to 'Pipit & Wagtails' by Alstrom & Mild).

## **GREY WAGTAIL**     *Motacilla cinerea*

*Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

There were 451 records from 126 grid squares in 82 areas over most of the county. Largest groups were several family parties of 6 birds (DJB; AN) and several reports of 5 together

(KEM; WAS; LS). **Breeding:** birds were present regularly through the breeding season at 9 sites. Pairs were recorded at 12 sites. Breeding was confirmed at 8 sites. **Migration:** once again the only sign of migration was a peak of reported numbers in the spring (March/April).

## **PIED WAGTAIL**     *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor*

There were 177 records from 35 places across the county. Winter flocks seem to have been much smaller than in 2006, e.g. 80+ at Maidenhead railway station on Jan 29th (DF), c100 roosting at Greenham on Dec 22nd (IJK) and 43 on Nov 13th at Windsor railway station (DF). There was no report of the usual roost at Reading Station. **Migration:** numbers show distinct peaks in Feb/Mar and Oct/Nov, e.g. in the early part of the year there were 100+ at Charvil on Mar 22nd (HRN), c60 at Englefield on Feb 10th (RJB) and in the autumn there were 123 at Charvil on Oct 28th (ABT) and 82 at Englefield on Oct 27th (RCr). **Breeding:** at 10 places there were records of birds on more than one occasion during the breeding season but there were few clear signs of breeding except at Great Meadow Pond, a pair fed chicks on May 20th (DJB); Eversley GPs, a pair fed fledged young on May 15th (BMA); Thatcham, feeding young on May 31st (DL); Curridge, female carrying food May 22nd (IW) and Inkpen (nest in a boar house Jun 12th (LS).

## **WHITE WAGTAIL**     *Motacilla alba alba*

*Uncommon passage migrant*

At least 20 and probably nearer to 35 birds were reported at 9 sites during the year. **Spring passage:** from Mar 10th to 23rd there were 4 reports of up to 7 birds at Borough Marsh, Charvil (ABT; DJB; HRN) and at Pingewood GP there was 1 on Mar 21st (KEM). From Apr 9th to 16th there were 4 reports of up to 3 at Pingewood GP (MFW; KEM) and elsewhere there was 1 at Ufton Nervet on Apr 13th (KEM) and 1 at Theale on Apr 23rd (RJB). **Autumn passage:** There were 3 (not aged) at Borough Marsh on Sep 1st (ABT) and single first-winters at QMR on Sept 9th, Sept 15th, and Oct 5th (CDRH). Singles turned up for just 1 day at 4 other sites, with the last, a first-winter, at Wrays GP on Oct 15th (CDRH).

## **WREN**     *Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Abundant resident and winter visitor*

A good percentage of records submitted came from remarkably persistent monthly counts from West Berks sites by JL, IW, SAG and NC. In most cases this resulted in just a single bird, or occasionally 2 or 3, but 10 were at Greenham Com on Mar 13th and 17 were counted at Boxford Com on Apr 26th. JBu also religiously checked Box Wood, Hermitage approximately fortnightly to keep a check on the small number there. The biggest count of the year was 34 singing males counted by BDC along the Berks sections of the Jubilee R. on Mar 3rd whilst JL found 17 across Boxford Com on April 26th. **Breeding:** DJB found young being fed on the Devils Highway May 22nd and another 6 being tended Jun 17th elsewhere in Swinley Park, whilst a pair used the same sliding door crevice at Wokingham STW as the previous year. A pair nested through July and August in a creeper at Hell Corner Fm (LS). The only other juvs reported were in GEW's garden Jun 14th. A total of 401 Wrens were ringed across the county.

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis**Widespread and common resident*

The 154 records received were spread evenly across the county, with the higher winter counts including 17 at Dinton Pastures in Feb (RBor), 12 at Boxford Com (IW; JL) in Nov and the same number at Lower Fm in Dec (JL). **Breeding:** the first juvs recorded were May 11th in Twyford (SPA), with more at the same location Jul 12th probably a second brood. adults were still feeding young Aug 12th in Cookham Dean (BDC). Ringing totals were 402 from the various ringing stations and the only 2 recoveries were of very local birds. The longevity for the species remained at 11yrs, 3 months 7 days.

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula**Abundant resident*

Over 250 records came in for this emblematic bird, the higher counts including 23 along a Cold Harbour atlas route Nov 17th (DJB), 38 in Windsor Great Park in Feb (PNe) and 40 along the Berkshire sections of the Jubilee R. in Sep (BDC). Other counts over 20 came from Dinton Pasture Nov 16th (RBor) and Wraysbury Dec 19th (DGC). **Breeding:** nest building was first noted at Caversham Feb 16th (TGB) but the first young were not reported until Apr 24th (SPA) in Twyford. Speckled young were still present at Hell Corner Fm on Aug 2nd (LS). 542 were ringed and included 2 with foreign connections (Netherlands and France) whilst 2 local recoveries involved a bird ringed as a juv at Wilderness, Kintbury Jul 29th 2006 being recovered as prey remains on Feb 17th at the same location, and a juv ringed at Wraysbury Jul 14th taking just 3 days to find a nearby window with which to collide and expire.

**NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos**Uncommon and local passage migrant and summer visitor*

Of the 17 locations holding Nightingales this year, 10 were in West Berks and 7 in Mid Berks. There were no records from Wraysbury or other East Berks sites, and only one record submitted from Aldermaston. **Spring:** the first notes of this delightful songster were heard by a dawn chorus group at Dinton Pastures Apr 1st (BDC et al), followed by 1 at Moatlands Apr 10th (KEM). By Apr 14th, 3 could be found at Dinton Pastures (BTB) and this signalled the main arrival as within the next two days, there were 5 at Moatlands (ABT), 3 at Theale (RJB) and 4 at Greenham Com (NC). Singing males increased to 4 at Dinton by Apr 21st (MJM) and to 5 at Theale by the 26th (BU) whilst 3 more were singing at Crookham Com Apr 25th (AEDH). There were no fewer than 17 found at the Burghfield GP complex on Apr 29th (JA). The only birds reported away from these main sites were 1 at Marsh Benham Apr 25th (TPo), 1 Brunnsden Lock Apr 29th (JD), 1 at Thatcham Marsh Apr 30th (NC) and another at Brimpton GP May 2nd (RCr), whilst the canal at Hampstead held a singing bird May 18th (DJB; IW) and 1 was singing at Snelsmore May 19th (IW; JL). Just 1 singing male was noted at Aldermaston May 13th (JLe). By May 3rd, 7 songsters could still be found at Burghfield/Kirtons Fm (ABT), and 6 at Theale (RBor). **Breeding:** the first juv recorded was at Moatlands Jun 2nd (RJB) and JA found a nest at Burghfield that day, subsequently noting 4 birds carrying food at the end of the month and 3 other nests containing young on Jul 7th. Another juv was with an adult at Brimpton GP Jun 19th (GEW). By mid June, the birds went very quiet and only 1 record was received in July, 1 on Greenham Com on 15th (SAG). One was at Theale on Aug 4th (RCr) and on the 19th (JA) whilst 2 were at Greenham on the 10th (JL), the site which held the last report for the year on Aug 29th (NC), which is the latest date for some years.

## BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

*Scarce passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

A pair were reported in Reading on Jan 28th –30th (LV), followed by several records later in the year (MO), but no proof of breeding was obtained. The first Spring migrant was at Westmorland Park, Bracknell on Mar 27th (RRol). A female was noted on Lambourn Downs Jun 7th (JPB) and another female was fly-catching at Benham Park Nov 6th (SAG). There were no records from the former stronghold of Aldermaston in what turned out to be a poor year for the species.

## COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

*Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant*

The first record of the year was of 2 birds on Mar 18th (GR) at Eversley GP, one of just 10 locations across the county to host Redstarts this year, significantly down on an excellent 2006. **Spring:** birds were next reported at Greenham Com where a male was found on Apr 10th (NC) and at Broadmoor on Apr 15th (RCr). Another male arrived at Hosehill Lake on Apr 16th (RFug), and a female was at Combe Wood Apr 22nd (NR), after which most reports were from the traditional stronghold of Swinley Forest/Wishmoor. **Summer:** a male was at Wishmoor Cross on Apr 21st (BTB) and 28th (GR) whilst MSFW located 7 males between the firing range and Rapley Lake on May 20th. Possibly one of these was then noted with a female at Wishmoor Bottom Jun 11th (RJB) and Jun 23rd (MFW). More detailed work by DJB located singing ms at Poppy Hills (1), Broadmoor Bottom (2), Lower Star Post (1), Devils Highway (5), New England Hill (4), Surrey Hill (1), Wishmoor (4), Wishmoor Bottom (2), Kings Ride (3) and the Mill Pond/Rapley section (12), with an overall assessment of there being 30 territories across the heath, somewhat lower than recent years. **Breeding:** DJB found 2 nests on Wishmoor, one in a root ball of a fallen conifer and another in a Birch, containing young. Elsewhere, an imm with adult was found at Brimpton GP, another regular site, on Jul 11th (NC). **Autumn:** 1 fem/juv was on Cockmarsh Aug 13th (WAS) and another was near Brightwalton Com Aug 25th (GDS) and 2 ms were on Cow Down Sep 1st (CRe), whilst the last of the year was at Wraysbury, an imm male, on Sep 5th (CL), bringing a less than vibrant year for the species to a close. 2 birds were ringed but no details were available.

## WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

*Uncommon passage migrant but no longer a summer visitor*

As in 2006, 23 sites were visited by Whinchats in 2007, the first 2 being at Crookham Com on the early date of Apr 4th, with one being a male in song (NC). **Spring:** a male at Greenham Com Apr 16th (NC) was followed by males at Woolhampton on Apr 17th (KEM), 2 males at Windsor Great Park Apr 22nd (DJB) and Chamberhouse Marsh Apr 23rd (NC), on which day 2 were at Dorney W (WMo) and a female was at Pingewood GP (KEM; RJB). On Apr 24th birds at Dorney W increased to 2m 1f (WMo) whilst 2 appeared at Lower Fm (JL), another 2 were at Thatcham Marsh (RAH), 1 at Cabbage Hill (MK) and Greenham Com had a male and female (NC). New birds appeared at Jeallot's Hill on the 27th (PJC) and at Compton on the 28th (ABT) after which a there was a gap until May 13th when 1 was at Englefield (MJD) followed by a male next day at Farnborough Down (GDS). 1 female at Englefield on May 18th (PBT) may have been the earlier bird there but 1 on Greenham Com May 19th (JA) was the last of the spring sightings. **Autumn:** it was at Englefield again on Aug 17th that the first autumn returnee was found (RCr) and 2 juv were

at Pingewood GP on Aug 18th (KEM). There followed a fairly protracted passage during which some 26 birds were seen at 14 locations, the higher numbers including 3 at QMR Aug 23rd (CDRH), 4 at Englefield Aug 31st (RCr) and 6 at Roden Down Sep 1st (ABT). A 1st year bird was ringed at Thatcham Sep 9th (IW; JL). The rate of sightings had slowed by Sep 29th when 1 was at Eversley GP (GR) and the last record of the year was of 1 at Brimpton GP on Oct 4th (GEW).

## STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; breeds locally in small numbers*

A remarkably consistent number of records, 385, compares well with 2006, but with a more impressive 96 locations involved (half in West Berks, with Mid Berks and East Berks sharing the remainder equally). A third of all records covered the period Jan to Mar. Counts of up to 2 were received from 59 sites but higher counts in the first winter included 12 around West Ilsley Feb 11th (ABT), 10 on Crookham Com Mar 12th (KEM), another 9 nearby in the central parts of Greenham Com Feb 15th (NC) and 9 on Bury Down Feb 5th (KEM).

**Spring/Summer:** birds were on territory by early April and indeed, on the early date of Apr 6th, a pair was seen carrying food on Windsor Ride, Wishmoor (DJB). By Apr 8th 4 pairs and 7 singing males could be found on Broadmoor RDA and pairs here were feeding young by Apr 22nd (DJB). Across the Swinley Forest area as a whole, at least 26 territories were located, with at least 7 pairs producing young (2 pairs each raising 4 juvs) and another 5 pairs possibly doing so whilst Wildmoor Heath had another 8 territories (DJB). At Greenham Com, there were no fewer than 20 to be found on Apr 28th (LBM) and 1 pair had 3 well grown juvs by May 4th (NC), and another pair had 5 juvs on Jul 31st (NC). Further breeding success came from Padworth Com with a family party on May 29th (AEDH) and a juv at Eversley GP Aug 30th (BMA) may have resulted from the pair present there all summer. What were probably dispersing juvs included 1 at Compton Sep 1st (ABT), 3 at Englefield Sep 14th (RCr), 1 at Woolhampton Sep 15th (KEM) and 2 at Frogmill, Bisham Oct 11th (SJF; FMF). **Autumn/Second winter:** 150 reports covered the last three months of the year, and apart from the 5 caught and ringed at Greenham Com on Oct 3rd (NC), most were of 1 to 3 birds. Single males were at 18 locations, whilst only 6 lone females were recorded. Sites with over-wintering pairs amounted to 22, some of which increased to 3 or 4 towards year's end. Highest November counts included 8 at Wishmoor Bottom (RJB) and 9 along the Berks sections of the Jubilee R. (BDC), whilst in December there were 6 at Southcote and Holy Brook (AVL) and 10 at Sheepdrove Fm near Lambourn on the 13th (BDC). In addition to the 5 above, 17 birds were ringed across the county. The following table summarises the status of Stonechats in Berkshire in 2007:

### Stonechat Status in 2007.

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greenham/ Crookham	2	7	9	20	3	17	9	5	–	9	1	3
Wildmoor	2	1	12	7	7	3	3	–	–	–	4	–
Swinley Forest	4	8	47	36	20	36	–	–	1	5	8	–
<i>Elsewhere</i>												
No of Birds	39	62	19	0	6	1	–	3	26	69	70	67
No of Sites	18	25	7	0	2	1	–	2	11	28	20	26
Overall total No of Birds	47	78	87	63	36	57	12	8	27	83	83	70

**WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe**Common passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

Wheatears appeared at 55 locations in 2007, a little higher than recent averages, the first being a male at Greenham Com on Mar 8th (NC). **Spring:** the next was a female at Caesar's Camp on Mar 12th (JEW) after which a steady influx of males at 8 other sites occurred before the month's end. It is difficult to be sure how many of the birds reported in early April referred to late March arrivals at the same sites, but if these had moved on straight away, another 32 individuals (8 of which were females) moved in during the first 2 weeks of the month, the highest count being 10 at Greenham Com on April 10th (NC). The second half of April saw 19 new sites receiving birds including 7 at Walbury Hill on Apr 21st (MFW), 5 at QMR on Apr 22nd (MMc) rising to 13 on the 24th (CDRH), and no fewer than 20 counted at Greenham Com on the 28th (RR). Birds continued to be reported throughout the month of May, but in much smaller numbers, typically 1 to 3, but with a higher percentage of records including females (20 out of 39). The last of this comparatively extended passage season was a male at Greenham May 29th (AEDH). **Autumn:** it was July 30th before any returnees were spied and 2 were detected that day; 1 at Ambarrow Fm (BMA), and the other at Swinley Forest (WAS; CDRH). This signalled a steady trickle of birds through the month of August, mostly at traditional sites, the highest count of the month being 5 at QMR on the 17th–20th (MMc; CDRH), and it was a similar picture for September, 4 being the largest gathering at West Woodhay on Sep 22nd (IW; JL). October's highest count was 3 at Lambourn Downs Oct 6th (DJB) and the last of the year were 2 at Combe Hill Oct 20th (TPo).

**Wheatear Sightings 2007****Spring**

Week ending	11/3	18/3	25/3	1/4	8/4	15/4	22/4	29/4	6/5	13/5	20/5	To 29/5
No of Sites	1	4	1	5	5	14	15	16	6	8	6	6
Min No of Birds	1	4	1	5	6	33	68	78	20	16	8	6

**Autumn**

Week ending	5/8	12/8	19/8	8/9	26/8	2/9	9/9	16/9	23/9	30/9	7/10	To 20/10
No of Sites	4	3	1	5	6	5	4	4	8	1	2	4
Min No of Birds	4	5	5	17	11	9	5	7	15	3	3	5

**GREENLAND WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe (oenanthe) leucorhoa**Common passage migrant and rare summer visitor*

CDRH picked out four individuals this year, the only spring example being a female at QMR on May 10th and 11th, exhibiting a very upright stance, long primary projection and strongly rufous-toned ear-coverts indicative of leucorhoa. In the autumn period, 1 was seen at Horton GP on August 25th and then two more in September comprised a fem/1w at Colnbrook on the 23rd and another fem/1w at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill on the 30th.

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus**Scarce passage migrant*

No fewer than 11 sites hosted Ring Ouzels this year, involving at least 14 birds. **Spring:** the season got underway on the earlyish date of Mar 17th when a female was found on Walbury Hill (TPo), with 2 there on 23rd (ABT). There was something of a gap to Apr 10th when one

was both seen and heard on Greenham Com (PH), the following day saw a male arriving at Englefield (RJB), later noted to be ringed pink over lime (KEM). Ed – making this bird from one of the 5 Scottish study sites. Also on Apr 11th a male was found at Twyford GP, staying to the 12th (MO). Another male was located at Paices Wood on Apr 16th (JLe) whilst yet another was at Woodside on Apr 17th (GE). 2 more birds were seen on Crookham Com Apr 20th (AEDH) and one of these or a separate individual was seen flying over Greenham Com later that day (ABT) but attention then turned once again to Walbury Hill where, on Apr 21st, a male and female arrived (MFW), increasing to 2 males and 2 females over the next few days before the last being seen here on Apr 25th (MO). But the last for spring was a female giving alarm calls at Wishmoor Bottom May 5th (JA). **Autumn:** only 3 birds contributed to the autumn passage, and one of those, an apparent female, was dead when caught by a cat at Frogmill, Hurley on Sep 29th having apparently shown too much interest in a window (SJF; FMF). A male was then on Greenham Com Oct 3rd and 4th (NC) whilst the last of the year was at Slough SF on Oct 7th (CDRH).

## **BLACKBIRD**     *Turdus merula*

*Abundant resident and common winter visitor*

Widely reported throughout the year as might be expected, the main counts over 20 were all in the 2nd winter, and included 22 together at Littlewick Green Nov 14th (BDC), and five sites with 25: Boxford Com (IW; JL), Lower Fm (JL), Newbury (SAG), Snelmore Com (BJW) and Greenham Com where 13 of them were caught and ringed (NC). DGC had 30 at Wraysbury GP Dec 19th and 32 were along the Jubilee R. Nov 22nd (BDC). 48 were spread around the Cold Harbour area on Nov 17th (DJB), who had earlier had 50 around Thatcham Marsh Oct 12th, mainly 1st year males. The highest count, of 60, came from Freeman's Marsh Nov 5th (RGS). Ringing totals across the county were 431 and a recovered bird at Chamberhouse Marsh on Apr 3rd had been ringed in the Netherlands 15th Oct 2006 as a 1st year female.

## **FIELDFARE**     *Turdus pilaris*

*Common winter visitor, very rare in summer*

**First winter:** most of the larger flocks at the end of 2006 could still be found in January, but things were soon to get even better as a flock of 1000 appeared at Sheepdrove Fm, Lambourn, on Jan 2nd (ABT) and this group grew to an estimated 1800 by Mar 30th (BDC). Other large flocks around this time included 600 at Littlewick Green Jan 10th (ADB), 500 at each of Cow Down Jan 14th (MFW), Sonning Jan 15th (CDRH) and Aldworth Jan 17th (WB) with 400 at Braywoodside Jan 14th (DJB). Three-figure flocks could be seen at 5 other places in January, 6 different places in February and a total of 5 places in March. The last to be seen was by Membury services on Apr 23rd (CDRH). **Second winter:** the first to be spotted were 4 at Jealott's Hill on Oct 3rd (PJC), followed by a trickle of small numbers until 50 were found at Greenham Com Oct 15th (NC) which seemed to augur the main arrival with the 18th and 19th seeing 100 at Twyford (CDRH), 160 at Remenham Hill (CDRH), 200 at Tilehurst (GJSu), 110 at Woodley (FJC), 120 in Wokingham (PBT) and 700 at Roden Downs (CDRH). There were only 4 three-figure flocks in November but one of 400 at Sheepdrove (ABT) increased to 1200 on Dec 12th (BDC). Another huge flock was the 1000 at Cold Harbour Dec 28th (DJB) whilst the last day of December witnessed 500 at Sonning (ABT). Very few records in either season referred to Redwings being present amongst the Fieldfares. At Caversham Heights, a female was caught and ringed Dec 7th (TGB) and 7 others were ringed during other trapping activities across the county.



## SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

*Common resident and winter visitor*

**First Winter/Spring:** of the 20 or so individuals recorded in January, only 3 were reported as singing but probably most of them were in fact. An individual at Pingewood GP on Mar 18th had very striking white feathers in the tail (PBT). **Breeding:** the first evidence of breeding were adults carrying food at Thatcham on Apr 19th (GJS) and a pair were tending 4 well-grown young on Apr 20th in a Maidenhead Court garden (DF). A stoical pair attended an exposed nest on an open trailer in the midst of farming activity at Kintbury during May (LS). Juvs were recorded at Wildmoor Heath May 10th (DJB), Cranbourne Chase May 23rd (DJB), Marsh Meadow, Cookham Jun 1st (BDC) and at Pingewood Jun 2nd (RJB) and a fresh juv still with a streaky head and large pale tips to greater coverts was reported at Woose Hill on the late date of Sep 26th (PBT). Significant survey work by DJB between May and June across the Wildmoor to Windsor heath-land and forest located no fewer than 87 territories. **Second winter:** the only largish count was of 10 at Hungerford Com Dev 11th (JWilc) and the same number was at Lower Fm (Winterbourne) Dec 11th (JL). 142 were ringed during county-wide trapping activities.

## REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

*Common winter visitor*

Well over 300 records for this delightful winter visitor ensured that its widespread occurrence did not go unnoticed. **First winter:** apart from 100 at Brimpton on New Year's Day (DJR), January was a reflection of the end of 2006 with just small groups scattered widely across the county. It was Jan 30th before a flock of 500 was seen at Charvil (HRN) and Feb 9th before the next biggest, 300 at Braywick Park (WAS) and 200 at Strand Water, Cookham in synchronous 'chuntering' (BDC), the same number being counted in Windsor Forest Feb 16th (DJB). 'Singing' was also recorded by many birds in a flock of 50 at Sandhurst on Mar 10th (RJG). Numbers then dwindled until what was the last sighting, on Apr 6th, again at Charvil (NA). **Second winter:** first to be seen was a singleton over Canon Court Fm, Cookham Sep 22nd (BDC) with small groups moving in during the next few days, including 48 at Summerleaze GP Sep 28th (CDRH) and 41 at Thatcham Sep 30th (IW; JL). The first bigger flocks, each of 100, were at Thatcham Oct 14th (IW; JL), Woose Hill the same day (PBT) and Ufton Lock on Oct 22nd (WB), but an impressive 700 passed southwards over Frogmill on Oct 28th (SJF; FMF). This however was not a precursor of other large groups as, apart from 400 at Sheepdrove on Dec 17th (BDC), the only other sizeable count was of 200 at each of Lambourn (JLe) and Sonning Meadows (ABT) on the very last day of the year. TGB ringed 2 at Caversham heights Jan 13th, another on Nov 22nd and 3 on Dec 11th whilst NC ringed one at Greenham Com on Oct 3rd. Other Berkshire trapping activities resulted in 73 being ringed. The most common food source mentioned was Holly berries, with Cotoneaster and Ivy also noted. Only 5 records referred to accompanying Fieldfares.

## MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

*Common resident*

Storm Cocks were recorded in 71 different locations, mainly reflecting popular sites for bird-watching, so hopefully not an indication of decline from its presence in 95% of tetrads at the time of the last Atlas. **First winter:** song was first recorded in Earley Jan 13th (RR) and Hell Corner Fm on the 16th (LS), both birds utilizing an Oak tree as their preferred dais. **Breeding:** the first evidence of breeding success was 2 juvs at Bottom Lane GP May 11th

(RJB) followed by 2 more at Hell Corner Fm May 22nd (LS) and 2 more at Brimpton May 25th (GEW). 1 juv was at Pingewood Lane on Jun 2nd (RJB) and a family party with 4 juvs was at Arlington Grange Fm Jun 4th (IW). Surveys across the Wildmoor to Windsor countryside by DJB resulted in 23 territories which he believes represents a serious decline. **Autumn/Second winter:** first of the gatherings was a party of 14 at Arlington Grange Fm on Jul 10th (IW) with 12 at Hell Corner Fm Jul 13th (LS). But the largest late-summer group of the year was 23 at Moor Copse on Jul 25th (PH). Later, DJB had 19 on Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Dec 30th. Just 5 birds were ringed across the county.

## **CETTI'S WARBLER** *Cettia cetti*

*Localised resident in small numbers (Schedule 1)*

The encouraging numbers found in East Berks in 2006 failed to continue into 2007, the species only being reported from three sites there whilst Mid Berks held birds at nine sites and West Berks 18 sites, once again mostly within the Kennet valley. Most records were of one or two birds, with higher counts consisting of three Freeman's Marsh Apr 25th (RF), three Lower Fm GP Sep 8th (IW; JL), four Dinton Pastures Mar 31st (BTB), four Chamberhouse Marsh Apr 11th (NC), four The Wilderness Apr 14th (IW; JL), seven Woolhampton GP Apr 9th (IW; JL) with 10 there May 20th (GEW), and 13 Thatcham Marsh Oct 12th (DJB). The only proof of breeding was two juvs at Woolhampton GP Jun 16th (GEW) and a juv at Thatcham Marsh Jul 14th (IW; JL). A juv at Aldermaston Oct 22nd (JPM) may also indicate a local breeding.

## **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

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

**Spring/Summer:** after singles at Woolhampton GP Apr 14th (RF) and Dinton Pastures Apr 20th (BTB), one at Chamberhouse Marsh also Apr 20th (NC) preceded a glut of records from this site; 4 were present on Apr 21st including 3 caught and ringed (NC), 3 on Apr 22nd (ABT; NC), 4 again on Apr 28th including a new bird and also 2 caught and ringed that were probably migrants, and 3 on Apr 30th that included a new migrant (NC). Elsewhere, singles were at Kintbury Apr 22nd (ACa), Whiteknights Lake, Reading on Apr 23rd (PG), Wraysbury GP on Apr 29th (MSFW), Burghfield GPs also on Apr 29th (JA), and Jubilee R. May 6th (WMo), May 15th (WMo; BDC) and May 16th (PNe). Two were at Chamberhouse Marsh May 19th (KEM). In June one was at Freeman's Marsh on Jun 15th and again July 3rd (RF). **Autumn:** one at Woolhampton Jul 11th (NC) may conceivably have been an early migrant in view of the absence of summer records from this site, whilst birds at Bagnor Cress Beds Sep 4th (JL) and Wraysbury GP Sep 27th (CDRH) most certainly were.

## **SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Common summer and passage migrant*

**Spring:** arrived slightly later than 2006 with first birds reported from Moatlands GP Apr 5th (JLe) then Lavells Lake (PROs) and Thatcham Marsh (IW; JL) on Apr 8th, and Woolhampton GP on Apr 9th (PHos). Highest counts were 10 Thatcham Marsh Apr 22nd and 29th and May 6th, with 12 caught there Jun 23rd (IW; JL), 16 Hosehill Lake Apr 24th (RCr), 10 Freeman's Marsh Apr 25th (RF) and 11 Jubilee R. May 15th (BDC). **Breeding:** birds seen carrying food were reported from Lavells Lake Jun 4th (JBee), Waterloo Meadows, Reading Jun 7th (MSFW) and Sonning Meadows Jun 10th (ABT), whilst 8 ringed at Thatcham Marsh Jun 17th included 3 juvs and 8 ringed there July 1st

included 6 juvs (IW; JL). A juv was noted at Eversley GP Jul 10th (BMA). **Autumn:** passage birds away from traditional habitat were noted at Englefield where 2 or 3 were present in a maize field Aug 17th – Sep 4th (RCr). 12 at Great Meadow Pond Sep 9th (DJB), a notable autumn count, whilst late September birds were reported from Wraybury GP 2 juvs on Sep 21st (CDRH), Horton GP (CDRH) and Woolhampton GP (KEM) on Sep 22nd, and Thatcham Marsh on Sep 23rd (IW; JL). A very late bird was reported from Lavells Lake Oct 17th (AR).

## **REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant*

Only reported from 28 locations this year. **Spring/Summer:** first recorded at Woolhampton GP Apr 18th (RF) followed by birds at Dinton Pastures (MJM) and Lower Fm GP (IW; JL) on Apr 21st, Lavells Lake (MFW), Hosehill (BU) and Great Meadow Pond (DJB) all on Apr 22nd, with two at Hosehill on Apr 23rd (KEM) and no less than 13 there the following day (RCr). Four were at Burghfield Mill on Apr 23rd (RJB). Widely reported after this date. Highest counts received were 25 Jubilee R. May 15th (BDC) with 27 there May 24th (BDC, MGM), 21 Woolhampton GP Jul 19th (GEW) and 18 Great Meadow Pond May 6th (DJB). Ringing at Thatcham Marsh by IW and JL provided totals of 10–15 birds on seven dates May – July with 23 caught Jun 17th and 26 Jul 14th. Specific breeding records came from Thatcham Marsh, Freeman's Marsh, Great Meadow Pond, Eversley GP and Frogmill, though presumably successful breeding was achieved at many reedbed sites in other parts of Berkshire but went unrecorded. **Autumn:** this species could still be found at a number of sites in late September; singles at Woolhampton GP (MFW), Pingewood Lane GP (KEM) and Burghfield Mill (MFW) all on Sep 15th, 5 at Thatcham Marsh on Sep 16th with 3 on Sep 23rd and 4 on Sep 30th (IW; JL), 2 at Arthur Jacob NR on Sep 22nd (CDRH), one at Woolhampton GP on Sep 29th (KEM). The final record was a late bird at Thatcham Marsh Oct 14th (IW; JL).

## **BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Common summer migrant, and uncommon but regular winter visitor*

Jan/Feb: reports came from 18 locations involving 24 birds, mostly from gardens, and most records were of ones and twos, but up to four (three male, one female) were in an Earley garden (RRe). **Spring/Summer:** with birds continuing to be reported throughout March the difficulty of pinpointing the first spring migrant cropped up again; one at Woolhampton GP on Mar 23rd (NC) has to be a contender, but eight at Combe on Mar 27th (RHai) most certainly were. These were followed by birds at Avington (DR), Dinton Pastures (ADB), Maidenhead (BAJC) and Moatlands GP (RCr) all on Mar 28th. Counts of 12 or more came from Lavells Lake, 12 Apr 10th (JBee); High Standing Wood, 12 Apr 28th (DJB); Wraybury GP, 14 June 2nd, (PNe); Cranbourne Chase, 16 May 23rd, (DJB) and Burghfield GPs, 46 Apr 29th, (JA). The survey of East Berks heaths by DJB revealed 185 territories. Very few breeding records were submitted; a female feeding three fledglings at Lavells Lake June 6th (ADB), three juvs ringed at Thatcham Marsh June 23rd (IW, JL) and a family party at Aston July 23rd (ANS) were the only records. **Autumn/Second winter:** notable counts were 14 under the pylon at Theale Main Pit Jul 28th with 15 there Aug 4th (RCr), 12 at Burghfield GPs Aug 12th (JA), 16 caught at Thatcham Marsh Sep 2nd (IW; JL), 13 at Lavells Lake Sep 5th (JBee), and 12 at West Woodhay Down Sep 22nd (IW; JL). Birds continued to be reported well into November. During Nov/Dec 36 birds were reported from 25 locations, all sightings were of 1–3 birds.

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin**Common summer visitor and passage migrant*

One at Crookham Com Apr 15th (MJD) preceded birds at Lavells Lake on Apr 19th (JBee), 2 at Greenham Com on Apr 21st (IW; JL), 1 at Hosehill on Apr 22nd (BU) and 2 at Woolhampton also on Apr 22nd (RRK). Only low numbers were noted during the summer, the highest counts being 12 Wraysbury GP Jun 2nd (PNe), 9 Eversley GP May 8th (DJB) with 6 there May 5th (PJC), 7 Lavells Lake Apr 24th (JBee), 6 Burghfield GPs Jul 14th (JA), and 5 Snelsmore Com May 19th (IW; JL) and Theale Main Pit Aug 19th (JA). DJB's survey of East Berks heaths revealed 26 territories. At Greenham Com NC recorded 5 Aug 1st but stated that only 2 juvs had been caught when numbers are normally much greater at this time of year. With no breeding records submitted and poor autumn passage noted, 2007 can be considered a very poor year for this species. A few late birds were to be found in September; 1 at Compton on Sep 1st (ABT), 1 caught at Greenham Com on Sep 13th (NC), 1 at Horton GP on Sep 16th (CDRH), and finally a late bird at Theale Main Pit on Sep 30th (RCW).

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca**Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant which has declined in recent years*

Arrived much earlier than in 2006 with the first returning bird found at South Fawley Apr 13th (ABT) closely followed by one at Dinton Pastures on Apr 14th (SDi; MJM; BTB), then singles at Fobney Marshes on Apr 15th (RCr) and Burnthouse Lane GP the same day (KEM; ABT; RCr), and Greenham Com (AEDH) and Jealott's Hill (PJC) on Apr 16th. By Apr 21st birds were reported from six other locations. As in the previous year most records were of one or two birds, with 3 at Brimpton GP June 10th (RCr), 4 at Eversley GP May 25th (JPe), 4 also at Temple GC May 9th (BDC), 5 at Burghfield GPs Aug 12th (JA) and 3 at Theale Main Pit Aug 26th (JA). Breeding records came from Brimpton where 2 juvs were seen Jun 19th and an adult was carrying food on Jun 20th (GEW), and also from Burghfield GPs where a family party of 2 adults with 3 youngsters was seen Jul 29th (JA). Autumn passage was insignificant; apart from the aforementioned groups of 5 and 3 at Theale Main pit in August, virtually all records were of single birds. In September this species was noted at Woolhampton GP (RRK), Greenham Com (NC), Lavells Lake (JBee), Theale Main Pit (JA), QMR (CDRH) and Wraysbury GP where one on Sep 16th was the last date (CDRH).

**COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis**Common summer visitor and passage migrant*

Reported from 69 sites this year. **Spring/Summer:** first reported from Lavells Lake Apr 13th (FJC) followed by 1 at Wraysbury GP on Apr 14th (CDRH), then singles at Eversley GP (BMA) and Combe (ABT) on Apr 16th. Four were at Dinton Pastures Apr 18th (ADB) and thereafter this species became widely reported and in increasing numbers. Double-figure counts consist of 11 Sonning Meadows Jun 10th (ABT), 12 Pingewood GP May 5th (RJB), 13 Stanford Dingley May 16th (BAJC), 14 Wraysbury GP Jun 2nd (PNe) and also 14 Compton Downs Aug 28th (DJB). A survey of East Berks heaths undertaken by DJB resulted in 33 territories being located. **Breeding:** specific breeding activity was reported from Brimpton, Eversley GP, Brightwalton, Rack Marsh, Waterloo Meadows, Sheepdrove, Swan Pond, Thatcham Marsh and Wishmoor, but is likely to have taken place at many more sites. **Autumn:** reported in September from Pingewood GP, Compton, QMR, Widbrook Com, Woolhampton GP and Greenham Com where the last bird was seen Sep 15th (NC). All records were of single birds except 4 at Compton on Sep 1st.

**DARTFORD WARBLER** *Sylvia undata*

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

DJB's survey of this species on the East Berks heaths revealed 22 territories, with at least seven pairs known to have bred and at least 11 juvs fledged. Many reports were submitted by numerous observers throughout the year but specific breeding records came from DJS who reported a pair feeding 2 juvs at Wellington College Heath May 22nd, 2 carrying food at Broadmoor Bottom Jun 12th, and three pairs present at Wildmoor Heath. At Caesars Camp a pair seen with juvs Jun 14th was in an area where previously a pair had been seen carrying food (MJT). In West Berks a singing male was present at Bucklebury Com Apr 24th & 25th (NC) and at Greenham/Crookham Com up to eight territories were established (NC), with food carrying and fledged young observed. In winter a bird was present at Bury Down Jan 2nd, 25th (MJD), 27th (BSt) and Feb 1st (ABT); this bird had been present Dec 26th 2006.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

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

A welcome increase in records after the poor showing in 2006; singles were reported in spring from Ufton Wood Apr 27th (JGil) and Englemere Pond the same day (GR et al), this bird remaining until the following day (IDP). At Snelsmore Com two were present May 11th (JL) and June 17th (MJD; RRK) with one May 13th –June 19th (MO), and one was at Greenham Com May 18th (NC).

**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor*

**Jan/Feb:** much less in evidence than the previous year with 22 birds reported from 17 locations, mostly ones and twos, but three at both Wraysbury GP (RHai) and Woolhampton GP (RAH) Jan 1st. Singing birds were noted at Coley Fm Feb 14th (DJS) and Kennetmouth, Reading Feb 23rd (ADr). **Spring/Summer:** although two were at Coley Fm Mar 2nd (DJS) and one was at Jubilee R. on Mar 3rd (BDC), singles at Burghfield GPs (RHS), Bottom Lane, Theale (KEM) and Napier Road, Reading (ABT) – all on Mar 8th – must be likely contenders for first returning migrants as by 11th this species was widespread, being reported from Charvil, Dinton Pastures, Greenham Com, Padworth Lane, Thatcham Marsh, Theale Main Pit, Whistley Green, Winterbourne and Great Meadow Pond (MO). Counts of 10 or more were received from Spencers Wood, 10 Mar 27th, (GBro); Woolhampton GP, 10 Mar 24th & 31st, (IW; JL); Baynes Reserve, 10 Apr 2nd, (NC); Thatcham Marsh, 11 Apr 6th, (BJW); Lavells Lake, 13 Apr 10th, (JBee); Kintbury, 14 Mar 23rd, (DR); Newbury, 15 along the canal Apr 5th, (JBri) and 20+ Chamberhouse Marsh where NC noted an influx Apr 20th with seven caught & ringed. DJB's survey of E.Berks heaths resulted in 227 territories being found, a welcome increase on previous years. **Autumn:** double-figure counts were received from five sites; 10 Greenham Com Sep 15th with 12 there Oct 3rd (NC); 10 Thatcham Marsh Sep 2nd with 19 on Sep 23rd and 14 on Sep 30th (IW; JL); 10 Lavells Lake Sep 20th (MFW); 10 West Woodhay Down Sep 22nd (IW; JL) and 14 Great Meadow Pond Aug 12th where DJB noted an influx Sep 2nd when 29 were present. Single birds were reported from numerous sites in late October. Nov/Dec: of 28 birds found at 20 locations, most reports referred to singles, but two were at Burghfield Mill Nov 11th (PBT), three were at Horton GP Dec 11th including a possible tristis type individual (CDRH), and four were at Wigmore Lane, Theale Dec 3rd (MSt). One at Lower Fm GP during December was also considered to be an eastern race bird (NC).

**SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus (collybita) tristis**Rare winter visitor*

Arthur Jacob NR, Horton: two (first seen on Nov 28th 2006) were seen – sometimes singly, sometimes together – on several dates up until Jan 16th (CDRH). Both showed all the visual characteristics of the Siberian race *P.c. tristis* and were heard giving the characteristic ‘sad’ call-notes on Jan 5th.

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus**Common and widespread (but declining) summer visitor and passage migrant*

**Spring:** arrived over a week later than normal with first arrivals not seen until Apr 6th when the species seemed to arrive en masse; singles were at Kintbury Cress Beds (RGS), Lea Fm GP (FJC) and Thatcham Marsh (BJW), whilst two were at Greenham Com (AEDH) & Wishmoor (DJB). By Apr 9th birds had also been reported from another 12 locations. Highest spring counts were seven Greenham Com Apr 14th (GDS), eight at The Wilderness also Apr 14th (IW, JL) and eight Snelsmore Com May 4th (BJW). **Summer:** six were at Gorrick Plantation June 10th (BMA) and six were also at Inkpen Com June 12th (LS). DJB’s survey of East Berks heaths resulted in 110 territories being located. Specific breeding records consist of a nest containing five eggs at Greenham Com May 5th (NC), one carrying food at Brimpton June 18th where an adult with three juvs were seen July 2nd (GEW), five young being fed by an adult Burghfield GPs June 16th (JA), and five juvs together Lambourn Downs July 14th (PBT). **Autumn:** apart from seven near Brightwalton Aug 11th (GDS) and also seven at Burghfield Mill Sep 2nd (JA) passage was barely discernable, although single birds were located at several sites well into September with three at Frogmill on Sep 9th (SJF; FMF) and also at Eversley GP on Sep 13th (JPe). Late birds were at Greenham Com on Sep 26th (NC) and Wishmoor on Sep 27th (JEW) but one was reported from Burghfield GPs Oct 6th (CKT), the last date.

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus**Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor*

Although widely reported, most observers submitted only single-figure counts, the exception being DJB whose exhaustive survey work revealed the following totals: 47 singing Windsor Forest (South) May 8th, 45 singing Cranbourne Chase May 23rd, 11 Beenhams Heath May 24th, 36 High Standing Wood May 31st, 29 singing South Ascot June 4th, and an incredible 630 territories in the East Berks heaths area.

**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)*

**First winter:** one at Finchampstead Ridges Jan 19th – Feb 26th (MO) was presumably the bird reported there in December 2006. The only other record was one in a South Ascot garden Feb 22nd (PM). **Spring/Summer:** DJB’s survey of the East Berks heaths revealed a total of 72 territories, a welcome return to normal numbers. Poor weather in May & June prevented breeding evidence from being recorded. Elsewhere, a pair was at Bowsey Hill Woods Mar 24th (ABT), one was singing at Ambarrow Court Mar 25th (DJS), another singing bird was at Arborfield Mill May 2nd (DJB), one was at Wagbullock Hill May 20th

(MSFW) and two were singing at Windsor Great Park June 17th (MSFW). **Autumn:** passage birds were caught & ringed at Greenham Com Sep 29th & Oct 13th (NC) and two were present at Clinton's Hill, Bracknell Nov 26th (BDC; GMar; GC).

## SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

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

Just 42 sites were blessed with Spotted Flycatchers this year, a significant drop on 2006. West Berks had 15 locations, Mid Berks 12 and the remaining 15 were in East Berks.

**Spring:** we had to wait until May 16th before the first arrival at Swinley Park (DJB) followed on May 17th at Warren Fm, Streatley, where 3 were found (SPA), but the next 5 days saw singles at 10 locations and 2 together in MJT's Winterbourne garden. Even in mid June, birds were being found at new locations and an interesting account was of an adult feeding another bird at Beale Park on Jun 16th which may have been courtship activity rather than feeding of a juv (PBT). **Breeding:** the first evidence of breeding was of a pair attending a nest at Marsh Benham Jun 17th (ABT) after which a nest containing 4 eggs was discovered in a nest box at Brimpton on Jun 23rd (GACJ). Newbury Football Club ground hosted a pair and food carrying there was noted on Jun 27th (RRK) after which juvs were located at Frogmill (SJF; FMF), Moor Copse (JH), Bottom Lane Floods (KEM), and Wigmore Lane (KEM). Poor June weather hampered DJB's annual survey across the heaths and woodlands between Wildmoor and Windsor, but nonetheless, 20 territories were found. **Autumn:** a family group was at Lardon Chase on Aug 11th (MJM), another at Hell Corner Fm on Aug 14th (LS) and an adult was feeding two fledged juvs on a branch at Sonning Meadows Aug 28th (ABT). The last juvs to be referred to were 2 with an adult at Wargrave Aug 24th (CDRH) and the very last to be seen this year was on Sep 25th in MJM's Reading garden. Just 5 birds were ringed this year.

## LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

*Widespread and common resident*

Typically vociferous parties were in evidence right from the start of the year with some of the bigger parties being 30 at Searle's Fm Jan 13th (RJB), 30 again at Eversley GP the same day (TJo), 40 at Moatlands, also on Jan 13th (RJB) and numerous smaller groups, although only one record mentioned other species being present amongst them. **Breeding:** traditionally an early breeder, nest building was first observed on Feb 18th on the canal-side near Theale (CMc) and another being built at Brimpton was near complete by Mar 12th (GEW). Other nests were discovered at Pangbourne (GWil) and Templeton (DR). Young were not seen however until May 10th at Wildmoor Heath (DJB), and May 18th at Farnborough (GDS) whilst DJB also noted youngsters amongst flocks at Windsor Forest May 31st, Broadcommon Hurst Jun 14th, Dorney W Jun 25th and Great Meadow Pond Aug 5th. **Autumn/Second winter:** post-breeding groups were soon gathering with 50 at Speen Moor on Aug 7th (JL) and another 50 at Thatcham Marsh Sep 30th, 22 of which were trapped and ringed (IW; JL). Bottom Lane GP held 45 on Nov 11th (RJB) who also found another 40 at Searle's Fm Nov 17th. Another 40, including juvs, were along Maidenhead Ditch on Aug 25th (WAS). The biggest count however came from Thatcham Marsh Oct 12th when DJB counted a total of 103 in 7 separate groups there. No fewer than 491 were trapped and ringed across the county during the year.

**BLUE TIT** *Parus caeruleus**Abundant resident*

Counts were received from 46 sites with highest count of 75, including juvs, in Swinley Park Jun 17th (DJB) and 63 across parts of Windsor Great Park Feb 15th (PNe). The larger flocks during the year also included 31 on Boxford Com Nov 16th (IW; JL), 25 at Marlston Fm Dec 9th (JWilc), 20 Bisham Woods Jan 20th (JEW) and 20 Eversley GP Feb 1st (SFo). The first report of breeding was of a pair mating on Apr 18th near Brightwalton Com, the pair eventually only raising 3 young. Once again, DJB had a bird in the garden with a bill deformity, on Jan 21st, this time with an upper mandible 3x normal length and decurved. One wonders what Derek is feeding them on! R&B Ringing trapped 18 this year whilst other activity across the county resulted in no less than 4952 being ringed.

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major**Abundant resident*

The highest count early in the year was of just 28 spread out across Windsor Great Park on Feb 15th (PNe), whilst 20 were around Eversley GP Feb 1st (SFo) and the same number at Dinton Pastures on Feb 26th (RBor). By the time juvs were present, counts of 50 came from High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest May 31st and Swinley Park on Jun 17th (DJB). However, only one brood higher than 4 or 5 was reported, a family party of 10 at Lower Fm (NC), so perhaps not a good year for production. Having said that, of 2841 that were ringed this year,  $\frac{3}{4}$  were either pulli or juvs.

**COAL TIT** *Parus ater**Common resident*

Records came in from 58 locations, doubtless a small percentage of the true distribution of this charismatic tit. The only winter count to exceed 5 was 7 at Wishmoor Bottom on Jan 15th (RJB). Garden records amounted to 7 different locations, often with bird feeders being the attraction, peanuts and sunflower seeds recorded as being taken. A pair was inspecting a nest box in WB's Tilehurst garden on Mar 26th. Surveys by DJB in Swinley Forest produced 21 territories between Bracknell Rd & Rapley Lake on Mar 24th, another 15 territories at Crabourne Chase on Apr 21st and 24 songsters at Broadmoor RDA on Apr 8th, 31 singing north of Lower Star Post Apr 27th and no less than 54 territories between Hut Hill and Pudding Hill on Apr 13th. When the entire summer-long survey was complete, a staggering 544 territories had been located across the East Berks heaths and forests, making this one of the most comprehensive pieces of work for this species in the county. The total number of territories included: 237 in Swinley Forest, 6 Wildmoor, 72 Swinley Pk, 52 S Ascot and 109 in Windsor Forest. Even this was considered a conservative count; and all before the Atlas season opened!

**WILLOW TIT** *Parus montanus**Uncommon and local resident now confined largely to West Berks*

This year, Willow Tit was recorded at 9 different locations, so similar to 2006. The main site, Combe Wood, had 3 on Jan 27th (GBr) but 6 were located on Feb 23rd (MJD), and 3 singing birds there on Mar 26th suggested 3 pairs on territory. First winter records in other places included 1 at Aston Feb 7th (ANS) and 1 at Padworth Lane GP Feb 10th (RJB).

**Breeding:** the encouraging sight of a bird excavating a nest cavity greeted IW and JL at



Boxford Com on Apr 12th and even more welcome was the feeding of at least 2 young there on May 23rd. At Combe Wood 2 pairs were creating nests on Apr 9th (MJD). **Autumn/Second winter:** apart from the sites already mentioned, 3 were at The Wilderness on Jul 22nd (IW), 1 was at Thatcham Marsh Sep 30th (IW; JL) and another was at Freeman's Marsh Nov 5th (JBRi). Despite potential breeding at Combe, just 2 could be found there by Dec 21st (DJB; FJC). Ringers banded 3 juvs this year.

## MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

*Locally common resident outside East Berks where now uncommon*

Just 61 sites with Marsh Tits this year, 37 in West Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 10 in East Berks. **First winter:** several sites had 1 or 2 throughout this period but there were 4 at Bottom Lane GP on NewYears Day (RJB) and 5 at Winterbourne Holt on Jan 28th (IW; JL). 4 were at Combe Wood from Mar 10th (MFW). Of 4 at High Standinghill Wood, Windsor on Apr 7th, 1 was singing (DJB). **Breeding:** a pair bred at Woolley Down, fledglings being seen on Jun 13th (GDS). A pair with a juv was seen at Bowdown Wood on Jun 9th (SAG) and a juv was found at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 23rd (IW; JL). The Wilderness had 5 on Jul 15th (IW). **Autumn/Second winter:** a pair traditionally present at Foliejon Park during the summer were absent until Oct 7th (MSFW) whilst 3 were at Winterbourne Holt Oct 28th and 4 there on Nov 11th (IW; JL). By December, 5 could be found at Eling on the Dec 3rd (JLe), another 5 at Combe on Dec 5th (DJB; FJC) and 4 at both Snelsmore Com on Dec 16th and Curridge on Dec 16th (IW). Feeder contents attracting Marsh Tits into gardens included peanuts (LS) and seeds (GDS) whilst dead Thistle heads were to the liking of 1 at Thatcham Marsh (RRK). 2 were ringed at Padworth Com Dec 16th (TGB) and elsewhere a healthy total of 70 were ringed including 16 pulli and 26 juvs.

## BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

*Scarce winter visitor and rare summer visitor*

Yet another year which saw Bearded Tits in the county, not only the 1 (or possibly 2) at Thatcham GP Nov 3rd (NC), but c.2 birds heard at Lower Fm GP on Dec 22nd were considered to probably be this species (RAH).

## NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

*Widespread common resident*

Birds were reported from 84 sites, 29 of which were in West Berks, 12 in Mid Berks and 43 in East Berks. **First winter:** the majority of records were of just 1 or 2 birds, many of which were just heard, but 6 were active in just one sector of Bowdown Woods on Feb 11th (NC) and 13 were counted in Windsor Great Park on Feb 15th (PNe). Of 6 at Winterbourne Holt on Mar 11th, 4 were trapped and ringed (IW). An adult flew into a window at Hell Corner Fm on Feb 4th but recovered (LS). **Breeding:** the first indication of breeding was a bird inspecting a previous year's nest hole at Greenham Com on Mar 11th (SAG), but it was May 5th before the next record, of a pair using a nest box at Snelsmore Com (IW). Young were first noted at Hell Corner Fm on May 29th (LS), the same day a family party was seen at Eversley GP (BMA). Adults were feeding 5 young in the Rowbarge garden at Woolhampton on Jun 2nd (RRK) and similar behaviour was witnessed around this time at Hosehill Lake (RJB) and Shurlock Row (Rall). Unfortunately, 2 of the fledglings at Hell Corner Fm, as if inheriting the trait from their parent, submitted fatally to a window on Jun 3rd. Further commendable work by DJB across the East Berks heaths and forests between March and

July located no fewer than 68 territories, 11 in Swinley Forest, 16 Swinley Park and 41 in Windsor Forest. At least 15 pairs were confirmed as breeding. The totals for Windsor Forest is an under-estimate as Cranbourne Chase (5) and High Standinghill Woods (6) were not as intensively covered compared to other areas. **Autumn/Second winter:** even family groups seem to split up fairly quickly as few records of more than 2 or 3 birds came in for the last quarter, 8 being the highest count, at Finchampstead Ridges on Dec 26th (BMA). Where birds were reported using feeders, peanuts were the most popular choice though seeds were taken on at least one occasion. A total of 123 Nuthatches were ringed in Berkshire this year.

## TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

*Common resident*

Sightings came from 84 locations, fairly well spread out across the county. A third of all records related to the first quarter of the year, when the birds are more obvious. Of these, the majority were of single birds, but 13 accounts were of 2 birds together. Only a single garden record was received in this season, in Bracknell on Mar 4th (JCr). **Breeding:** surveys across the heaths and woodland of East Berks revealed at least 70 birds present, many in song (DJB). Adults were taking food to a nest on Apr 15th near Brightwalton (GDS). Adults were feeding 2 young at a nest behind bark on a Scots Pine in Swinley Park on May 16th (DJB). A family group was at Wigmore Lane on May 19th (JLe) and on May 23rd a nest with young was found behind bark, this time on a dead Oak at Windsor Forest (DJB). Another family party was at Bagnor Cress Beds on May 24th (IW; JL) and on the same day DJB saw an adult feeding a juv at Beenhams Heath. A nest was found in a fir tree in Bowdown Wood on Jun 3rd (MRD) and a family party seen at Finchampstead Ridges on Jul 18th (BMA). **Autumn/Second winter:** as soon as breeding was over, sightings reduced to just ones or twos, although 4 were at Frilsham on Nov 28th (RCr). Ringing across the county involved 84 individuals, 45 of which were juvs.

## GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

*Scarce winter visitor*

Following a remarkable run of records with Great Greys in 11 of the last 17 years, there was another to be enjoyed this year. A much-watched individual arrived at Wishmoor Bottom on Oct 14th (CDJ et al) and, despite occasional forays over the border with Surrey, stayed until Dec 29th when it flew into private MOD land and was not seen again (although a brief sighting the following February may well have been the same bird). During its stay, it was observed hawking insects (CDJ) and also pursuing Meadow Pipits (CDRH; PJC).

## MAGPIE *Pica pica*

*Abundant resident*

This most charismatic but perhaps unpopular member of the corvid family was reported by 45 observers, most records of which were of ones to threes but there were 50 double-figure counts, and those over 20 included no less than 30 in a Crowthorne garden Nov 11th (PJC), possibly mobbing an unseen owl, 39 at South Hill Park, Bracknell Nov 8th (JEW) whilst counts along the Jubilee R. from Dorney W to the eastern end included 101 on Mar 3rd and 123 28th Feb, most of which were around the Eton playing fields section (BDC). **Breeding:** carrying of nest material was first observed in Cookham Rise Jan 16th and on the Jubilee R. Jan 24th (BDC) and at Lower Fm Mar 14th (SAG). However, no reports of successful breeding were forthcoming. Just 8 Magpies were ringed.

**JAY** *Garrulus glandarius**Common resident and uncommon passage migrant*

Although recorded in 75 locations, the majority were the popular birding spots so many others go unnoticed. Only 15% of records came from Mid Berks, with West and East Berks sharing the remainder equally. Groups are occasionally seen together disputing territory early in spring but the only account of this came from Searle's Fm Lane GP April 1st (RCr). An interesting observation of a Jay imitating the call of a Buzzard was made at Eversley GP April 16th (BMA). **Breeding:** just a few reports of breeding success for this surprisingly secretive species, with 2 family parties with 2 and 3 young respectively in South Forest, Windsor on Jun 5th (DJB) and a family party of 5 in a Maidenhead garden on Aug 1st (DF). **Autumn/Second winter:** just possibly a family party of 6 flew over Brimpton together on Sep 25th (GEW) with other groups comprising 9 at Frilsham Nov 29th (RCr) and no fewer than 15 on Boxford Com on Nov 6th (IW; JL). Food items recorded included Hawthorn berries and acorns (SAG) and peanuts (SPA). Ringers trapped 22 Jays across the county.

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula**Abundant resident*

The biggest counts of the year were 1000 at the usual Felix Fm, Binfield site on Jan 4th (DJB) and 516 counted going to roost near Cranbourne Chase Apr 10th (DJB), plus 500 at Englefield Jul 15th (DMc; RCr), 400 at Winkfield on Nov 8th (JLe), 225 at Windsor Great Park Feb 15th (PNe) and 200 at each of Datchet Feb 3rd (SLF) and Arlington Grange Fm Jul 25th (IW). An adult resembling the 'Nordic' race, with a paler nape and whitish collar, was present throughout May in Windsor Great Park (CDRH). **Breeding:** a pair was feeding young at a nest hole in Swinley Park Apr 26th (DJB) and another pair doing likewise in GEW's wood May 30th. Some of the first juvs reported in Windsor Great Park were being predated by Carrion Crows on Jun 4th (CDRH), but successful fledging was noted at Woolley Down Jun 13th (GDS). **Second winter:** no reports were received concerning significant roosts. There was an interesting report of several calling 6 hours after dark whilst flying over Cookham, where the nearest main roost is at Little Marlow GP in Bucks 3km away, on Nov 16th (BDC). 26 were ringed this year.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus**Abundant resident*

**First winter:** the larger groups in this season were 100 at West Ilsley Jan 21st (SAG) and 150 at Bury Down on Feb 1st (RBor). One individual with a grey body and pale wings was seen at Bucklebury on Jan 23rd (JFo). The unusual sight of Rooks snow-bathing was observed on a Twyford garden lawn Feb 8th (SPA). One with a bill twice the normal length was at Sheepdrove Fm on May 14th (BDC) and a leucistic bird was at Seven Barrows on May 26th (RJB). NC observed the potential pitfall of a bird with a moulted tail looking very Raven-like at Greenham Com on Aug 12th. **Breeding:** the first record of a bird seemingly settled on a nest was in a small Rookery of 10 nests at East Ilsley on Feb 16th (SAG). Mating was observed at White Place Fm, Cookham on Mar 3rd, 1½ km from the nearest Rookery (BDC). The first young reported were at Farnborough on May 13th (GDS). DR charted several Rookeries and the results, with others, are in the following table. **Autumn/Second winter:** the highest count was of 1000 at Englefield on Jul 15th (RCr) whilst 225 were at Marlston Fm on Dec 9th (JWilc). At Woose Hill, a bird with silvery

wing patches, like some Crows, was seen on Nov 9th (PBT). The most unusual food item reported during the year was discarded chips outside a fast food shop in Newbury on Mar 25th (SAG).

### Rookeries reported in 2007.

Site	Ref	Nests	OBS
Cookham, Saches Island	SU903857	10	BDC
East Ilsley	SU4981	10	SAG
Elcot	SU397697	81	DR
Farnborough Down	SU424821	72	GDS
Inglewood House	SU364667	21	DR
Inkpen, Lower Green	SU359643	74	DR
Inkpen, Lower Green	SU355645	28	DR
K&A Canal, Lock 76	SU363681	24	DR
Kintbury, Newbury Street	SU387667	14	DR
Kintbury Park	SU386672	10	DR
Laylands Green, Dongalls Wood	SU389662	67	DR
Portdown	SU345680	55	DR
Portdown (E)	SU353678	abandoned	DR
Templeton	SU357663	18	DR
Barrymores	SU385663	16	DR
Barton Court	SU383683	19	DR
Fosbury House	SU387652	25	DR
Holt Lodge Fm	SU387646	6	DR
Hungerford, The Priory	SU340674	98	DR

## CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

*Abundant resident*

Reported from all sectors across the county and in most available habitats. No large gatherings were reported this year, the biggest groups being just 71 at Borough Marsh on Apr 15th (ABT) and 70 at Englefield on Jul 15th (RCr). Nest building was first noted on Apr 6th at Lower Fm (SAG) and Marsh Meadow, Cookham on Apr 16th (BDC). No details of successful breeding were received this year. On Jun 21st 2 birds were observed anting near Brightwalton Com (SAG) and one was seen eating a small rodent at Lower Fm on Sep 23rd (SAG).

## RAVEN *Corvus corax*

*Scarce but increasing visitor (breeds in Wiltshire)*

No fewer than 27 sites were involved in the 51 records submitted, and whilst most were from West Berks locations, reports came from 5 Mid Berks and 5 East Berks localities, as birds wander and probably also cross from adjacent counties where breeding now occurs.

**First winter:** the only January report was from Frogmill on Jan 21st where a lone bird was both seen and heard (RJG). February's observations were mainly of 2 birds concentrated around the traditional Walbury area, although there were 4 together there on Feb 25th (BTB). Two were also seen at another regular site near Streatley on Feb 23rd (DJS). The

Walbury region featured greatly in reports through March and April, but during this period 3 were seen at Farnborough Down on Mar 13th (GDS), 2 were at Brightwalton on Mar 16th (GDS) and 2 were at Wellbottom Down on Apr 16th (ABT). Only 1 record came in from the Walbury/Combe area in May and June, but one was at Sheepdrove Fm on May 11th (BDC). **Breeding:** the first potential evidence of breeding was the sight of 3, then 6 birds together over Combe on Jul 8th (IS; RHS) whilst 1 of 2 birds over Compton Downs Aug 28th called in a manner suggesting a juv (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** hardly any reports came from the Combe area, but 1 or 2 birds were recorded at widely separated locations including West Berks sites such as Freeman's Marsh (RF), Sheepdrove (BDC), The Wilderness (IW), Farnborough (GDS), Curridge (IW; JL; IS), West Ilsley (ABT) and Greenham Com, where 4 were present on Nov 22nd (NC). In M.Berks, birds were at Lower Basildon (WB), Padworth Com (TGB), Moor Copse (MR) and Caversham Heights, where 4 passed over on Sep 27th (TGB). In East Berks, Ravens were seen at Remenham Hill on Oct 18th (CDRH), Wokingham Nov 23rd (PBu), Windsor Great Park Nov 23rd (MSFW), Wishmoor Bottom Nov 24th (SCI) and finally 2 over Cranbourne Chase Dec 15th (DJB). Several reports mentioned the tumbling behaviour so identified with this species, whilst mobbing birds included Jackdaws (IW; JL), a female Hobby (SJF; FMF) and Crows (BDC; NR). An interesting interaction with Magpie was observed by Adam Bassett at Walbury Hill on Mar 29th when a Raven landed with a mouse in its bill which it then deposited in a small dip before departing, only to return immediately it saw a Magpie attempt to find the prey, the Raven eating it before flying off (per KEM).

## CORVIDS sp.

Groups of 1000 at Hurst on Feb 7th (NA), 1100 at Sheepdrove on Jun 11th (BDC) and 3000 at Spinning Wheel Lane, Binfield on Nov 29th (BDC) were impressive enough but the spectacular sight of between 10,000 and 15,000 on Crookham Com on Jan 26th must have been quite an experience for the observer (GJS).

## STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

*Common resident and winter visitor, formerly abundant*

With the massed five-figure swirling clouds of roosting Starlings a thing of the past in Berkshire, most records were of day-time flocks and general behaviour. **First winter:** the highest counts were of 500 at Sheepdrove Fm Jan 2nd (BDC), the same number at Bury Down on Mar 1st (RBor), 300 at West Ilsley Feb 11th (ABT) and 200 at Windsor Great Park Feb 12th (MTr). At Hell Corner Fm, 1 was singing from inside a hole in an Oak tree on Mar 21st (LS). **Breeding:** the first juvs reported were in Newbury on Apr 7th, at which time another pair were still nest building in the observer's garden. A month later, another pair was still nest building nearby (SAG). adults were still feeding fledglings at Thatcham on Jun 1st (PCL). Nest sites reported included eaves of both new and old properties, the aforementioned Oak tree and an old woodpecker hole adjacent to an occupied Jackdaw's nest. **Autumn/Second winter:** numbers soon built up once young joined the throng and 1000 were swirling together at Dorney W on Aug 21st (BDC; WAS) and the same number was at Woolhampton GP on Oct 30th before heading to the Brimpton GP roost (DJB). Even bigger numbers could be found at Lower Fm where 2000 were present on Nov 10th (IW; JL) the same number at Lavell's on Nov 21st flattening the reed beds after several nights use (AR) and also at Greenham Com on Dec 22nd (IJK). The most impressive performance however was given by a flock of 5000 at Thatcham GP on Nov 11th (GJS) but just 29 were ringed across the county.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus**Common but declining resident (Red Listed)*

A reduction in reports of sizeable flocks would seem to support the belief that this species continues to decline slowly across the county. Once again, the largest flock was reported from Cold Harbour, where 60+ were seen Sep 1st (DJB), while a week later on Sep 8th 50+ were reported from a Woodlands Pk garden (DJB) and 40 were south of Maidenhead at Hornbuckle Fm off the Drift Rd Nov 13th (DJB). Elsewhere only 3 flocks in excess of 20 were reported, with a high count of 26 at Kintbury Aug 5th (NBI), c20 in a hedge at Shottesbrooke Fm Nov 17th (DJB) and c20 at Muddy Lane GP Thatcham Jan 20th (IW JL). Double figure counts came from only 4 other sites with 13 at Littlewick Green Nov 14th (BDC), 13 in North Town Maidenhead Sep 21st (DF) and 11 at Forest Park Bracknell Jan 27th (JCr), while BDC's Cookham garden was host to poor numbers throughout with a maximum of 12 Nov 14th, although a flock of 11 did include some juvs Aug 20th. Other sightings from across the county were in single figures, with some evidence to show nesting and breeding at traditional sites. Ongoing counts from SPA's Twyford garden also support the continued decline of this species with a maximum of only 5 seen Jul 9th with more typical numbers being only 1 or 2, compared with counts from 2005 (when double figure counts occurred throughout the first part of the year with a maximum of 20 in Feb).

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus**Formerly a not uncommon resident, now a rare and declining visitor (Red Listed).*

Only one record this year, with a single bird being seen under garden feeders with Greenfinches in a Purley on Thames garden Jan 16th (MR).

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs**Abundant resident and winter visitor*

Continuing the trend from the second winter of 2006 the earlier part of the year provided relatively few reports of large flocks, probably reflecting a smaller winter influx than usual. First winter counts included a flock which grew to c200 at Mount Hill, Bagnor Feb 27th (JL); 100+ at Round Hill, Swinley Forest Mar 30th (DJB) and 100 at Walbury Hill Mar 10th (RGS). There were 2 reports of juv birds in Twyford May 28th (SPA) and 1 being fed at Hell Corner Fm Jun 4th (LS). The majority of the large flock reports came from the second half of the year, with second winter counts including 350+ in a mixed flock of finches and buntings at Remenham Dec 28th (DJB); 300+ feeding on spilled grain at Streatley Warren Oct 22nd (ABT); 300 Sheepdrove Organic Fm Dec 31st (BDC); 200 Widbrook Com Nov 3rd (BDC); 180 around the pig farm at Bucklebury Nov 28th (RCr) and c150 at West Woodhay Down Dec 24th (LS).

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla**Winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers (Schedule 1)*

A relatively quiet year for records of this winter visitor, with more reports coming from the second winter period. Many reports were single figure counts, often of single birds, until an influx late in the year boosted numbers. Reports came from a variety of locations across the county. **First winter:** as usual Swinley Forest held the largest numbers with the highest count being 300+ around the Upper Star Post area Apr 6th (DJB). In the same general area 100+ were in beech woodland in Swinley Park during Mar (DJB), while a bit further south at

Wishmoor Bottom numbers rose during early April to reach 100+ on Apr 7th (MFW) and Apr 8th (DJB). The latest first winter report were of 100+ around Swinley Forest Apr 13th (DJB) and 5 on Apr 15th (MSFW). **Second winter:** birds started arriving quite early, but in no great numbers, with the first being 2 at a feeding station in Binfield Sep 29th (PSB), while other reports of single birds continued through Oct and Nov. However no double figure flocks were reported until late Dec when 50 were at Horton Dec 22nd (CDRH); 10 at Sreatley Warren Dec 27th (ABT); c50 Remenham Dec 28th (DJB); 12 West Ilsley Dec 30th; 10 Sheepdrove Organic Fm Dec 31st (BDC) and 40+ Remenham Dec 31st (CDRH).

## **GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

*Common, widespread resident and winter visitor*

A noticeable shortage of larger flocks reported this year, hopefully indicative of under reporting of this common species rather than anything more significant. **First winter:** only a handful of counts in double figures with the highest being c20 on most days in Jan at Greenham Com (JL). Elsewhere there were 13 in a Tilehurst garden Feb 20th (WB); 10 in Twyford Jan 13th (SPA); 10 at Eversley GP Jan 14th (BDC) and 10 at Strand Lane, Cookham Feb 11th (BDC). **Summer:** evidence of breeding was very thin, with the only reports of juv birds coming from Compton Downs Aug 28th (DJB) and a Twyford garden May 8th (SPA). **Autumn/Second winter:** the only substantial counts came from Greenham Com where 60 occurred Oct 13th (NC) with a total of 35 being there Aug 12th. Elsewhere there were 15 in Crowthorne Nov 6th (BMA); 13 in Woose Hill Nov 21st (PBT); 10 at Strand Water, Cookham Sep 29th (BDC) and 10 at Boxford Com Nov 2nd (JL).

## **GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

*Common and widespread resident*

Continuing the trend of recent years, this finch was widely reported across the county throughout the year. **First winter:** several sizable flocks were reported with c100 at Combe Wood Mar 21st (PBT); 2 flocks totalling 70 birds at Park Way, Newbury Jan 14th; c60 at Bury Down Feb 12th (JLe); 45 Cow Down Jan 21st (SAG); 20+ at feeding station at Greenham Com Jan 19th (NC) and 18 at Bowdown Wood Jan 13th (SPA). **Summer:** almost certainly under reported during the breeding season, but juvs were recorded at 4 locations, most notably at Greenham Com Aug 17th where a flock of 80+ included many juvs; Marsh Meadow, Cookham where 8 juvs were present Aug 26th (BDC) and at Sreatley Warren Fm Aug 29th (SPA) where a flock of 20 consisted mostly of young birds. **Autumn/Second winter:** Weathercock Hill, Lambourn held the largest gathering of 110 birds Oct 6th (DJB), while 90 were at Marsh Meadow, Cookham Nov 13th (BDC); 50 were feeding on burdock seeds at Woolley Park near Brightwalton Dec 15th (GDS); 50+ at Moatlands GP Dec 24th (KEM); 40+ Greenham Com Oct 6th (IW) and 40 at Combe Gibbet Oct 7th (SAG).

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce summer visitor*

The promise from late 2006 of a substantial winter influx was not fulfilled in the early part of 2007, with relatively few early year reports and no large flocks. Many more reports came from the second winter period with reports from over 50 sites. **First winter:** 25+ were at Round Hill Mar 30th (DJB); 25 around South Ascot Mar 3rd (DJB); a flock of 12 was reported from Eversley GP Jan 12th (RR) and Jan 14th (BDC); 10 at Leverton, near Hungerford Jan 2nd and 10 at Greenham Com Feb 21st (NC).

**Spring/Summer:** reports of 1 or 2 birds continued through into Jun, with the latest a flyover flock of 5, which was probably a family party, in Swinley Park Jun 17th (DJB), but there were no records of confirmed breeding, although a sickly juv was reported from Emmer Green Aug 28th (HRN). **Autumn/Second winter:** birds started to arrive in late Sep, sightings coming from the west of the county, with 1 at Kintbury Cress Beds Sep 21st (RGS) and 11 over Thatcham Sep 30th (IW JL); 2 were at Eversley GP Sep 29th (RJG). Flock size and frequency increased as the year went on, with 50 around Hut Hill, Swinley Forest Oct 14th (MSFW); 20 at Greenham Com Oct 19th (NC); 16 by the Emm Brook, Woose Hill Nov 5th (PBT); 40 feeding in stubble Tidmarsh Nov 19th (WB); 40 at Arthur Jacob NR, Horton Nov 27th (CDRH); 80 in alders at Calcot Dec 4th (RCr); 60 at Sandford Lane Dinton Dec 12th (DJB); 40 in alders near Sandford Lake Dec 21st (FJC); 80 at Eversley GP Dec 23rd (MJM); 40 at Brimpton Dec 26th (IS) and 70 at Bottom Lane GP, Theale Dec 31st (KEM).

## LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

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

Records well spread throughout the year from some 60 sites across the county, with larger flocks during the winter periods. **First winter:** the largest single flock was of 140 birds at Cow Down Feb 21st (RJB). At Sheepdrove Organic Fm the count reached 100 on Jan 28th (ABT); 60 were on landfill at Lea Fm GP Feb 4th (FJC); 50+ at Compton Feb 3rd (ABT) and c50 at nearby Mount Hill Apr 3rd (JL). Several other flocks of 30+ birds were reported, mainly from the west of the county, with 35+ at Rowneys Lake, Woolhampton Mar 6th (KEM); 30+ at Streatley Warren Jan 8th (DJS); 30+ at West Woodhay Down Mar 10th (IW JL) and c30 at Walbury Hill Mar 27th (DR). **Spring/Summer:** evidence of breeding was very limited, with singing males reported from a few locations and birds at Brimpton included several juv birds mid-Jul (GEW). Of interest was a very pale yellow, leucistic bird at Greenham Com Jun 16th (SAG). A flock of 60 was at Brimpton Aug 13th (GEW) and at least 71 birds were counted around Greenham Com Aug 17th (DJB) with several juvs being amongst them. **Autumn/Second winter:** much the largest flock consisted of 270 birds at Englefield Oct 31st (RCr). Other sizable gatherings included 30+ at Pingewood Lane GP Sep 16th (KEM); 108+ in stubble at Cold Harbour Oct 20th (DJB); 40+ at Rowneys Lake, Woolhampton Nov 10th (KEM); 100+ in Cippenham Nov 12th (DJB); 28 at Frilsham Nov 29th (RCr); 30 at Bury Down Dec 20th (RJB); c70 at Sulham Dec 25th (JLe) and 30 at Cow Down Dec 31st (BDC).

## LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

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

A relatively poor year with records from only 40 sites; with about two thirds of the records coming from the second half of the year. **First winter/Spring:** continuing the trend from late 2006, reports from the early winter period were fairly limited with few large flocks being reported, indicating a relatively small winter influx. A total of 175+ were located SE of Upper Star Post, Swinley Forest Apr 6th (DJB) and 70+ at Wishmoor Cross on the same date (DJB). The largest single gatherings were of only 20 birds, seen at Brimpton GP Jan 1st (GEW), Charvil Jan 7th (MSFW) and Wishmoor Bottom Apr 7th (CDJ), although 50+ birds were counted around Swinley Forest Mar 16th (DJB). The only other double figure counts were of 10 birds at Wildmoor Heath Mar 15th (DJS) and 10 at Gorrick Wood Plantation Mar 16th (DJS). Records dried up in early April, although a very late record of a single bird at Greenham Com Jun 10th (JL) was an exception.



**Autumn/Second winter:** early arrivals include 2 at Smallmead Sep 15th (MSFW); single birds at Greenham Com Sep 21st (NC) and over Woose Hill Sep 27th (PBT). Large flocks were hard to find although, late in the year, c50 were at Frogmill Dec 30th (SJF FMF). Flocks at Woolhampton GP on Nov 12th (NC) and Dec 30th (KEM) numbered c20 and the only other flocks above 10 included 15 near Theale High St Dec 4th (RCr); 15 at Brimpton GP Dec 30th (GEW) and c10 at Bagnor Cress Beds Dec 30th (IW JL).

## **COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

*Regular (irruptive) winter visitor in variable numbers and occasionally breeds (Schedule 1)*

Only some two dozen reports this year, with all but one from the early part of the year. Most records came from the usual areas in SE Berks, where records came from Wishmoor Bottom, 2 on Jan 1st (NR) and 7 (the highest count of the year) on Jan 15th (RJB). Later there were 5 at Wishmoor Bottom Mar 2nd (DJB); 5 in Swinley Park Mar 10th (DJB) and 3 at Caesar's Camp May 19th (BDC; MG). Elsewhere the only reports were of 4 over Wildmoor Heath May 21st (DJS) and 3 over Padworth Com Jun 9th (TGB). Despite the low recorded numbers, breeding was confirmed in Swinley Forest where a juv was observed at close range May 19th (PBT; MMc; MJT) and a female seen feeding 2 juvs May 29th (DJB). The only second winter reports came from Wishmoor Bottom where there were 2 on Oct 17th (NR).

## **BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Locally common and widespread resident, occasional passage migrant (Red Listed)*

With a similar number of reports as last year, from over 80 sites evenly distributed across the county and throughout the year, the evidence points to the stability of the population. However, interestingly, an increased proportion of reports consisted of only 1 or 2 birds (approaching 85%, compared with about 75% in 2006). Higher counts included 11 at Washmore Hill Nov 11th (ABT); 8 at Ashampstead Bottom Dec 24th (WB); 7 Frilsham Nov 23rd (RCr) and 7 Freeman's Marsh Dec 14th (ABT). **Breeding:** worryingly there was the noticeable shortage of breeding evidence, with the only reports being of a juv at Broadcommon Hurst Jun 13th (DJB) and another at Eversley GP Aug 10th (BMA).

## **HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

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

A single female was seen in South Forest, Windsor Gt Park on several dates during March (E.E.Green per CDRH) and again on Apr 14th (DJB).

## **SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Rare winter visitor*

One was observed at QMR on Nov 24th, where it was seen to circle low over the pier, before being chased off by a Pied Wagtail (CDRH).

## **LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*

*Rare winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were two sightings of this species. A first-winter was found on Oct 20th feeding with Skylarks in a ploughed field at Remenham Hill (CDRH); it stayed until Oct 22nd and was

seen by several subsequent observers. A second bird (probably an adult) was at Bury Down Dec 21st, again with Skylarks (CDRH), and was subsequently reported nearby (in Oxon) into Jan 2008 (R.Wyatt per N. Hallam).

## **YELLOWHAMMER**     *Emberiza citrinella*

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

Recorded at a slightly lower level than in previous years, with records from 70 sites. **First winter:** Bury Down hosted much the largest gathering with c120 recorded there Feb 15th (RJB), while at nearby Cow Down 60+ were counted Feb 13th (SPA). Other flocks included 30 on stubble at Brimpton Jan 13th (GEW); c20 at Mount Hill Feb 27th (SPA) and 14 at Hindhay Fm, Pinkneys Green Jan 4th (MJF LJF). **Spring/Summer:** from early March singing males were in evidence at some 20 sites, although actual breeding evidence was limited, with an early report of a juv at Eversley GP Jun 13th (BMA); at least 10 juvs in a flock of 52+ birds on Compton Downs Aug 28th (DJB) and an adult carrying food at Walbury Hill Aug 31st (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** high counts included 65+ on the Ridgeway Nov 3rd (DJB); 50+ at Lone Barry Fm Dec 22nd (ABT); 30 Bury Down Dec 20th (RJB); 28 Compton Sep 1st (ABT); 20 Streatley Warren Dec 27th (ABT); 18 Sheepdrove Organic Fm Dec 31st (BDC); 17 Boxford Com Nov 6th (IW JL) and 16 Cookham Strand Water Nov 3rd (BDC).

## **ORTOLAN BUNTING**     *Emberiza hortulana*

*Rare autumn visitor*

A juvenile was trapped, ringed and photographed at Wraysbury on Sept 5th (RRG, TOA, CL et al). This is only the third county record, with the previous sightings being of one at Silwood Park on the rather late date of Oct 28th, in 1958, and a second-hand report of three being shot near Cookham in the early 1860s.

## **REED BUNTING**     *Emberiza schoeniclus*

*Locally common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

Well reported across the county, from some 70 sites, and during all months of the year. Records consisted mainly of 1 to 4 birds and, although there were a few larger gatherings, they were not as high as those in previous years. **First winter:** in the west of the county, Mount Hill held the largest flock which peaked at 50+ birds with a large flock of Chaffinches Feb 22nd (JL). Several other gatherings of up to 10 occurred, but higher counts included 20+ at Hosehill Lake Jan 28th (BU); 12 feeding in reeds at Dorney W Feb 1st (RR); at least 12 at Rowneys Lake, Woolhampton Mar 28th (KEM) and 10 in stubble at Brimpton Jan 13th (GEW). Its willingness to visit gardens and feeding stations was illustrated by a flock of 10 in a Wash Common garden Feb 8th (DSm). **Spring/Summer:** there were 16 reports of singing males from a variety of probable breeding areas. At Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park a female was seen feeding young near a probable nest site Jun 3rd (DJB); at Brightwalton a male was seen carrying food in an oil seed rape field Jul 19th (GDS) and at Lower Fm GP a recently fledged juv was seen Aug 12th (SAG). **Autumn/Second winter:** there were very few substantial flocks during this period. Surprisingly, many of the larger gatherings were in gardens, with 20 in a Southcote garden on Dec 28th (AVL), 10 in a garden very close to Reading town centre Dec 15th (AVL) and 10 in suburban Caversham Dec 24th (RCr). Elsewhere there were 14 in a maize field at Englefield Oct 5th (RCr); 10 at

Thatcham Marsh Dec 30th (IW; JL); 9 at Old Warren Fm Nov 11th (ABT) and 5 at Dorney W Nov 6th (BDC). All other second winter records were of between 1 and 3 birds.

## **CORN BUNTING**     *Miliaria calandra*

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

A better year for records of sizable flocks, with records coming from the traditional sites. **First winter:** numbers on Bury Down increased to 70+ on Feb 15th (RJB), while there were 50+ at West Ilsley Feb 11th (ABT) and 50 at Cow Down Feb 18th (SAG). Streatley Warren held 25 Jan 27th (ABT) and 15 flew over near Brightwalton Com Mar 25th (GDS). Elsewhere in the county 8 were at Remenham Jan 15th (CDRH) and 2 at Bottle Lane, Littlewick Green Feb 21st (MSFW). **Spring/Summer:** there were over 20 reports of singing males, reported from the usual downland sites and a few areas west of Maidenhead, but only 1 confirmed breeding report of a juv being fed on Compton Downs Aug 28th (DJB). **Autumn/Second winter:** the gathering of c200 on Bury Down Aug 9th (CDRH) was exceptional, although large numbers continued to be seen in the area with 97, including a flock of 60, being reported Dec 20th (RJB). A flock of 86 at Sheepdrove Organic Fm Dec 13th (BDC) included 1 singing bird. Other flocks included 60+ at Roden Down Oct 18th (CDRH); 41 East Garston Down Dec 22nd (ABT); 31 Lowbury Hill Oct 22nd (ABT); c30 on Bury Down Dec 21st (DJB) and 10+ in maize at Farnborough Down Dec 23rd (GDS). Away from the Downs there were c40 at Remenham Hill Oct 18th (CDRH) and 3 in a hedge north of Summerleaze GP Sep 23rd (DF), apparently in the 'same hedge as they were regular in 80's'.

## ESCAPES AND HYBRIDS 2006

### FERAL/ESCAPES

#### **Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

The usual pair was at Great Meadow Pond from Feb 4th (CDRH) and by Apr 25th had 2 freshly hatched cygnets. These birds were fully-feathered but still flightless on Jun 30th and by Nov 18th just 2 adults remained – the juvs presumed to have fledged – probably the first time that young have successfully departed from the site (CDRH); the 2 adults were still present in Dec.

Meanwhile, 2 others were at Woolhampton GP from Apr 6th (MFW) but no reports of breeding were received. Presumably the same 2 birds were at Burghfield GP Nov 2nd to 29th (KEM).

#### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

The first records of the year came from Charvil/Borough Marsh where 2 birds were present from Jan 1st to Feb 23rd and again on Aug 12th (ABT), 24th (CDRH) and still present on Nov 22nd (CDRH). Three were at West Woodhay on Jan 25th (RGS) whilst one was seen at Savernake Lake, Bracknell on Apr 4th (GLS) and 1 at Cheapside Apr 15th and Jul 1st (PM), the same observer finding one at Swinley Brick Pits May 31st, whilst a single bird was at Windsor Park on Aug 18th (MHu). Twyford GP hosted a singleton on Dec 15th (MFW) which transpired to be the last record of the year.

#### **Swan Goose** *Anser cygnoides*

Two birds were seen circling over Datchet Moor GP before turning towards Wraysbury on Feb 25th and were definitely of the wild type (seen previously by the observer in Korea) – having a slim build and very long, black bill – lacking any bump on the culmen (which is distinct in ‘Chinese’ Goose, the common name for the domesticated variety) (CDRH). The only other bird was a ‘Chinese Goose’ seen at Thatcham GP from Jul 6th to the year’s end (GJS).

#### **Ross’s Goose** *Anser rossii*

One was amongst a large number of geese on Switchback Rd, Cookham on Sep 6th (BDC).

#### **Ringed Teal** *Callonetta leucophrys*

A single bird was at Woolhampton GP Mar 12th, 13th and 23rd (KEM; GEW).

#### **Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*

Records from Whiteknights Park Lake continued on Jan 14th with 2 drakes (PG) which were still present to Mar 25th though two seen at Maiden Erlegh Lake on Mar 21st (JLe) (and a single bird there Oct 31st) were presumably the same birds. They remained at Whiteknights throughout the summer and were last recorded there on Dec 2nd (PG).

## **Saker type**

A bird soaring over QMR on Apr 6th was observed to have jesses (CDRH) but another bird over Widbrook Common on Sep 27th and 28th did not. This bird was seen flying NE on the 27th, being mobbed by a Red Kite, before attacking pigeons. On the 28th, it was viewed from Summerleaze GP, disturbing gulls & corvids in the Pinkneys Green area (CDRH). What was considered to be the same bird was then seen at QMR on Nov 8th, initially resting on the North bank before flying over Datchet, scattering pigeons & corvids, before returning to the reservoir, where it was seen again on Dec 1st. (CDRH). Given the number of falcon hybrids in captivity, the purity of these sightings is open to question and it may be significant that it was noted as having adult-like plumage but with the legs/feet definitely grey (which indicates a juvenile).

## **Guineafowl**

Four, probably Helmeted Guineafowl, were at White Waltham on Jun 6th (PBT).

## **Lorikeet sp.**

One was over Maidenhead Court on Nov 19th (BDC).

## **HYBRIDS**

### **Greylag × Canada Goose**

A bird apparently of this mix was at Englemere Pond on Mar 30th (MSFW) who believes it to be the same individual seen at Windsor Great Park in Nov and Dec 2004.

### **Greylag × Snow Goose**

Wargrave Marsh held such a bird on May 14th (DJB).

### **Barnacle × ?**

A bird with obvious Barnacle traits was seen at Braywood Farm on Nov 13th (DJB).

### **Blue Snow Goose × Barnacle Goose**

A juvenile was at Summerleaze GP with its parents (a Barnacle and a Blue Snow Goose) on Sep 21st and 22nd accompanied by 2 adult hybrids which may have been previous progeny from the same pair (CDRH).

### **Emperor Goose × (blue) Snow Goose**

One was at Eversley GP on May 1st (MFW)

## **Emperor Goose × Bar-headed Goose**

One was at QMR on Aug 21st and 22nd and again on Sep 2nd and Nov 16th, and appeared much like an Emperor Goose from a distance, but the mantle was too pale and there was a white stripe down the sides of the neck; closer views revealed a few black streaks on nape (where the bars would be on a Bar-headed Goose) (CDRH).

## **Mallard × Gadwall**

The drake first reported in 2002 returned to BA Pit, Wraysbury on Dec 6th (CDRH). The same drake now spends more of its time at Great Meadow Pond, where it was seen on Jan 28th (DJB) and Nov 18th (CDRH).

## ***Aythya* hybrids**

**As in earlier reports, these are grouped according to which species they most resemble, rather than by their parentage, which is often speculative, but is indicated in brackets where suggestions have been made by the observer.**

## **Ferruginous-type hybrids**

A female, probably a second-generation (Pochard × Pochard × Ferruginous) was at Horton Fields Pit on Jan 24th (CDRH). An adult drake (Pochard × Ferruginous) was at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Feb 25th and again on Nov 11th (DJB) whilst another could be seen at Woolhampton GP on Sep 9th showing bright yellow eyes, a white wing-bar on the secondaries, and dusky primaries (CDRH). Four days later a similar (same?) bird was at Heron Lake, Wraysbury (CDRH). Then a juvenile (possibly Ferruginous × Tufted) hybrid was at the Wraysbury complex on Nov 24th and 25th, showing white eyes but dull body colours (retained juv plumage) and restricted white on the under-tail coverts; it was smaller than adjacent Tufted Ducks with a broader/whiter wing-bar and performed the classic head-throw display of a Ferruginous (CDRH). Then on Nov 26th a drake hybrid arrived at Wrays GP, possibly the same bird as seen here in Nov 06 (CDRH).

## **Scaup-type hybrids**

The female (presumed Scaup × Pochard) returned to Moatlands GP on Jan 19th (DJB – who believed it to be the same bird seen at Bray in the previous month), remained to early April (KEM), and was still present on Aug 30th (CDRH).

## **Tufted Duck type hybrids**

A drake (Pochard × Tufted Duck) was at Horton Fields Pit on Jan 5th to 8th (CDRH) and a sootier individual was at Heron Lakes, Wrays GP on Jan 13th. Another drake was at Smallmead GP on Jan 15th (CDRH).

## **Lesser Scaup-type hybrid**

A female (Pochard × Tufted Duck) was seen at Woolhampton GP on Apr 11th and 12th (KEM) and several dates to the year's end (MO), making visits during that time to Burghfield, Theale and Padworth Lane GPs, inviting debate about its actual mix throughout. Also a drake was seen at Woolhampton GP on Oct 30th (CDRH). A fem/juv (still with an

all-dark bill) appeared at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury on Aug 30th, and was then seen at Wrays village pit on Sept 1st (CDRH). An adult drake, presumed to be a returning bird, was at various waters in the Wrays GP area between Nov 2nd and Dec 24th (CDRH).

### **Pochard-type hybrid**

A drake was at Heron Lakes, Wrays GP on Mar 1st. Possibly the same drake was at OSNR on Nov 5th (both CDRH).

## **Gull Hybrids**

### **Caspian Gull × Herring Gull**

A single bird (presumed *cachinnans* × *argentatus*), in second-winter plumage, was in the QMR roost from Aug 11th to Sep 6th (CDRH), having first been seen at Wraysbury Res, Surrey, on Aug 11th–12th (CDRH). A first-winter at QMR on Nov 26th and 27th was a passable *cachinnans* at rest – but showed a dull rump and underwings in flight (CDRH).

### ***Larus* sp.**

An interesting bird caught the eye of CDRH at QMR on Nov 26th at which time it was considered a possible first-winter white-winged gull (Herring × Glaucous or Iceland) – resembling a Kumlien's Gull but showing rump contrast and internal patterning on the tertials. By Dec 12th however, it was thought more likely to be a leucistic imm Herring Gull (CDRH).

## 2007 Earliest and Latest Dates of Summer Migrants

ARRIVALS				DEPARTURES		
Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Hobby	Apr 15	Earley, Wilderness Road	NA	Oct 17	QMR	CDRH
Little Ringed Plover	Mar 12	Lea Farm GP	ADB	Oct 6	Pingewood GP (S)	KEM
Common Tern	Apr 11	3 sites	BMA, CDRH, GJS	Sep 30	Theale Main Pit	RCW
Turtle Dove	Apr 12	Boxford Common	IW JL	Sep 8	Pingewood GP	MFW
Cuckoo	Apr 14	5 sites	AA, RRK, NC, PHos, JA	Aug 19	Moatlands GP	JA
Nightjar	Apr 28	Swinley Forest	MSFW	Aug 19	Wildmoor Heath	DJS
Swift	Mar 30	Maidenhead, Boyne Valley Road	BAJC	Aug 31	Lower Farm GP	DJB
Sand Martin	Mar 15	Lower Farm GP	NC	Oct 6	Brimpton GP	KEM
Swallow	Mar 17	Brimpton	GEW	Oct 24	Marsh Benham	SAG
House Martin	Mar 26	Dinton PasturesCP	FJC	Oct 21	Remenham Hill	CDRH
Tree Pipit	Apr 8	Swinley Forest	DJB	Oct 5	Wraysbury	CDRH
Yellow Wagtail	Mar 26	Sheepdrove Organic Farm	BDC	Oct 26	Lea Farm GP	JPe
Nightingale	Apr 1	2 sites	BDC, RGS	Aug 29	Greenham Common	NC
Redstart	Mar 18	Eversley GP	GR	Sep 5	Wraysbury GP	CL
Whinchat	Apr 4	2 sites	NC	Oct 4	Brimpton	GEW
Wheatear	Mar 8	Greenham Common	NC	Oct 20	Combe Hill	TPo
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 14	Woolhampton GP	RF	Sep 27	Wraysbury	CDRH
Sedge Warbler	Apr 5	Moatlands GP	JLe	Oct 17	Lavell's Lake	AR
Reed Warbler	Apr 18	Woolhampton GP	RF	Oct 14	Thatcham Marsh	IW JL
Garden Warbler	Apr 15	Crookham Common	MJD	Sep 30	Theale Main Pit	RCW
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 13	South Fawley	ABT	Sep 16	Wraysbury GP	CDRH
Whitethroat	Apr 13	Lavell's Lake	FJC	Sep 15	Greenham Common	NC
Wood Warbler	Apr 27	2 sites	GR et al, JGil			
Willow Warbler	Apr 13	5 sites	RGS, FJC, AEDH, BJW, DJB	Oct 6	Burghfield GP	CKT
Spotted Flycatcher	May 16	Swinley Park	DJB	Sep 23	Reading garden	MJM



## 2007 Earliest and Latest Dates of Winter Migrants

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS		
Species	Date	Location	Observer	Date	Location	Observer
Golden Plover	Apr 27	Greenham Common	NC	Aug 26	Greenham Common	NC
Rock Pipit	Mar 11	Dorney Wetlands	WAS	Oct 5	Queen Mother Res	CDRH
Fieldfare	Apr 23	Membury	CDRH	Oct 4	Jealott's Hill	PJC
Redwing	April 6	Charvil	NA	Sept 22	Cookham Common	BDC
Brambling	Apr 15	Swinley Forest	MSFW	Sep 29	Binfield	PSB
Lesser Redpoll	Jun 10	Greenham Common	JL	Sep 15	Greenham Common	MSFW

# CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

<b>Surname</b>	<b>1st name initials</b>	<b>Initials used in report</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>1st name initials</b>	<b>Initials used in report</b>
Abbott	S	SA	Briggs	CA	CAB
Absolom	A	AA	Bright-Thomas	P	PBT
Adam	N	NA	Brittan	DJ	DJBr
Adam	P	PA	Brookes	G	GBr
Adam	SP	SPA	Brown	G	GBro
Adams	N	NAd	Brown	I	IB
Addison	R	RA	Brown	S	SBr
Adey	J	JAd	Brown	W	WB
Adnams	R	RA	Bubb	R	RBu
Alexander	TO	TOA	Buchanan	J	JBu
Alliss	R	RAI	Buchta	C	CBu
Amor	M	MAM	Buckland	N	NBuc
Anderson	MR	MRAn	Bucknell	NJ	NJB
Andrew	R	RAn	Bull	P	PBul
Andrews	J	JA	Burden	P	PBu
Andrews/Povey	J/R	JA RPo	Burgum	N	NBur
Angus	R	RAng	Burness	RJ	RJB
Archer	BM	BMA	Butler	D	DBu
Austin	S	SAu	Butler	J	JBu
Avery	M	MAv	Callam	DD	DDC
Baker	J	JBak	Callam	DF	DFC
Ball	JP	JPB	Cameron	A	ACa
Ball	TG	TGB	Camp	A	ACam
Bamford	P	PBa	Campbell	I	ICa
Banks	PS	PSB	Candelin	G	GCa
Barker	DJ	DJB	Capewell	RR	RRC
Barker	NH	NHB	Carr	DG	DGC
Barnes	DJ	DJBa	Carson	A	ACar
Barnes	LM	LMB	Carter	DA	DAC
Barnes	T	TBa	Carter	P	PCar
Bassett	AD	ADB	Chadwick	D	DCh
Bassett	DC	DCB	Chadwick	S	SCh
Batho	GS	GSBa	Chambers	EG	EGC
Bee	SD	SDB	Chapman	J	JCha
Beecroft	P	PBe	Cheetham	G	GC
Beever	J	JBe	Chivers	JL	JCh
Beglow	B	BB	Clark	BAJ	BAJC
Bennett	BT	BTB	Clark	FC	FCC
Bird Line South East		BSE	Clark	JM	JMC
Blackmore	D	DBI	Clarke	S	SCI
Blissett	N	NBI	Cleal	D	DCle
Blundell	LR	LRB	Cleere	N	NC
Bond	R	RBo	Clements	J	JClem
Booth	A	ABo	Clews	BD	BDC
Borwick	R	RBor	Clews	R	RCle
Boult	P	PBou	Clifford	MN	MNC
Bowden	J	JBo	Cload	D	DClo
Bowler	D	DBow	Cload	P	PCI
Bowler	V	VB	Clough	J	JClo
Boyd	DA	DAB	Coleman	J	JCol
Boyland	B	BBo	Collings	H	HC
Bradbury	C	CBra	Collings	M	MC
Bradley	C	CBra	Collins	M	MColl
Bradley	P	PBra	Cooper	A	ACoo

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Cottington	FJ	FJC	Farrier	M	MFa
Cowell	C	CCow	Ferguson	DM	DMF
Crathorne	B	BCr	Ferguson	G	GFe
Crathorne	L	LC	Fewtrell-Smith	I	IFe
Crawford	R	RCr	Fielder	S	SFi
Creed	K	KCr	Finch	LJ	LJF
Crispin	J	JC	Finch	MJ	MJF
Crompton	T	TC	Finch	MJ&LJ	MJF LJF
Cronin	A	ACro	Firth	T	TFi
Cropper	M	MCr	Fisher	SL	SLF
Cropper	PM	PMC	Fitzpatrick	B	BF
Crouch	J	JCr	Flinton	B	BFi
Crowley	PJ	PJC	Foote	S	SFo
Crozier	HVJ	HVJC	Ford	J	JFo
Crozier	JDW	JDWC	Fordham	W	WFo
Culley	T	TCu	Forster	L	LFo
Curtis	R	RCu	Forster	V	VFo
Dalton	NJ	NJD	Forster	V & L	VFo LFo
Davies	EC	ECD	Forsyth	J	JFor
Davies	N	ND	Foskett	D	DFo
Davies	S	SDa	Fossey	A	AFo
Davies-Elsbury	D	DDE	Fostekew	K	KF
Dawson	R	RD	Foster	CW	CWFO
Deacon	P	PDe	Frankum	R	RF
Dear	MJ	MJD	Fritz	I	IFr
Dellow	J	JD	Fuge	R	RFug
Denness	A	ADen	Fuller	D	DF
Densley	R	RDen	Gaines	P	PGai
Dimond	S	SDi	Gale	T	TGa
Dinnadge	R	RDi	Gee	W	WGe
Dodds	DAM	DAMD	Gessey	M	MGe
Dodington	C	CD	Gibson	T	TGi
Dodington	T	TDo	Gilbert	K	KG
Donaldson	A	AD	Gillingham	J	JGil
Dormer	MR	MRD	Gipson	P	PG
Dorrington	G	GD	Girling	K	KGi
Drewitt	E	EDr	Glanville	M	MGI
Driver	A	ADr	Glen	A	AGle
Dryden	R	RDr	Glombek	G	GGlo
Duffy	M	MD	Glover	DR	DRG
Duncan	KP	KPD	Godden	NR	NG
East	D	DEa	Godden	RJ	RJG
East	TA	TAE	Godsiffe	E	EGo
Edie	T	TEd	Gompertz	R	RGo
Edwards	G	GEd	Good	CA	CAG
Eggleton	K	KE	Goodchild	J	JGo
Elder	R	REl	Goodey	J	JG
Ellis	C	CEl	Goodie	C	CGoo
Elphick	IM	IME	Goodship	HM	HMG
Emms	BJ	BJE	Gostling	MH	MG
Englefield	J	JEn	Gough	SJ	SJG
Evans	HW	HWE	Graham	SA	SAG
Evans	T	TEv	Grantham	M	MGra
Farnell	G	GF	Green	EE	EEG
Farnsworth	SJ & FM	SJF FMF	Griffin	M	MGr
Farrell	GR	GRF	Griffiths	E	EG

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Grist	M	MGri	Jenkins	D	DJe
Guilfoyle	RT	RTG	John	GAC	GACJ
Haines	R	RHai	Johnson	AC	ACJ
Haines	W	WHa	Jones	B	BJ
Hall	A	AHal	Jones	CD	CDJ
Hall	N	NH	Jones	J	JJ
Halls	A	AH	Jones	K	KJo
Halsey	S	SHal	Jones	P	PJon
Hand	RM	RHa	Jones	S	SJo
Hardie	RJ	RJH	Jordan	T	TJo
Hardy	R	RHar	Josey	R	RJos
Harmer	A	AHar	Kaduck	NA	NAK
Harney	S	SHa	Kalisz-Vel-Kalisiak	J	JKVK
Harrison	L	LHa	Kang Tan	C	CKT
Harrold	M	MHa	Karpowicz	Z	ZK
Haseler	J	JH	Keel	RR	RRK
Hawker	G	GHaw	Keil	IJ	IJK
Hawkins	KJ	KJHa	Kendall	J	JKe
Hawtree	J	JHa	Kettell	M	MK
Haydon	R	RHay	King	D	DK
Haynes	RA	RAH	King	M	MKi
Heard	CDR	CDRH	Kipps	MR	MRK
Heffer	S	SHe	Knight	J	JKn
Hemmett	T	TH	Knight	T	TK
Hemmings	M	MHe	Lamsdell	C	CL
Henshilwood	DA	DAH	Lawrence	TJ	TJL
Herring	T	THe	Lawson	AV	AVL
Hewitt	R	RHe	Lea	P	PL
Heyes	J	JHey	Leask	G	GL
Hickman	AED	AEDH	Lee	D	DLe
Hickman	P	PH	Legg	J	JL
Hilton	J	JHil	Lenney	MD	MDL
Hitchcock	J	JHi	Lerpiniere	J	JLe
Hollands	BJ	BJH	Littler	K	KLi
Hopgood	B	BHo	Long	C	CLo
Hopkins	G	GHo	Long	D	DL
Horscroft	AM	AMH	Lovell	M	MLo
Horten	A	AHo	Lund	J	JLu
Hoskin	R	RHos	Luzmore	D	DLu
Hosking	P	PHos	Macahall	G	GMa
Hotchkis	R	RHot	Mackenzie	G	GMac
Housely	D	DHo	Maniakowski	M	MMan
Howe	R	RHo	Mann	LB	LBM
Howells	KE	KEH	Mannion	P	PM
Howes	B	BH	Manston	S	SMa
Huckle	J	JHu	Many Observers		MO
Hudson	D	DHud	Marlow	T	TM
Humphrey	CC	CCH	Marshall	SK	SKM
Hunt	JS	JSH	Martin	G	GMar
Hunt	M	MHu	Martin	JP	JPM
Hutchins	R	RH	Martin	K	KMa
Huttner	I	IH	Martin	R	RMa
Hyde	C	CHy	Maynard	TG	TGM
Ireland	M	MI	McCarthy	MG	MGM
Irlam	A	AI	McCartney	B&R	BMc RMc
Jarrett	D	DJ	McEwan	C	CMc

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McEwan	D	DMcE	Powell	T	TPo
McGinnety	FG	FGM	Poynter	M	MPoy
Mcgowan	JE	JEMc	Pratt	G	GP
McKee	MJ	MMc	Prell	J	JPr
McMahon	A	AMc	Price	R	RPr
McManus	M	MMcM	Priest	SN	SNP
McQuaid	M	MM	Prince	D	DPr
Meads	S	SMe	Prince	MG	MGP
Mercer	D	DMe	Proud	T	TPr
Metcalf	O	OM	Puddle	D	DP
Miles	S	SMi	Pyrah	R	RPy
Mills	DJ	DJMi	Rampton	N	NR
Mills	J	JMi	Randall	G	GR
Mitchell	JE	JEM	Raper	MGT	MGTR
Mitchell	MJ	MJM	Raper	M	MR
Montegriffo	NJ	NJM	Rear	D	DR
Moor Green Lakes Report		MGLR	Reedman	R	RR
Moore	KE	KEM	Reeve	C	CRe
Moore	RC	RCM	Reeves	S	SRe
Morgan	W	WMo	Reid	J	JRe
Morris	DR	DRM	Reynolds	DJ	DJR
Morris	R	RMo	Richardson	N	NRi
Morton	H	HMo	Richardson	P	PRi
Mundy	G	GM	Richardson	V	VR
Murfitt	R	RM	Richings	O	OR
Mynott	L	LMy	Ricks	S	SRi
Napper	E	EN	Rigelato	R	RRi
Ness	R	RN	Rimes	DNT	DNTR
Netley	HR	HRN	Rivoire	J	JRi
Newbound	PJ	PNe	Rix	JB	JBRi
Newbury Ringing Group		NRG	Roberts	P	PRob
Newport	G	GN	Roberts	R	RRob
Nicoll	WA	WAN	Robinson	CM	CMR
Norris	R	RNo	Robson	C	CR
North	A	AN	Rogers	T	TR
Northcote	P	PNo	Rolfe	M	MRO
Nuttley	J	JNu	Roll	R	RRol
Oakley	J	JOa	Rose	P	PRos
O'Brien	JW	JO'B	Rose	R	RRos
Orr	PJ	PJO	Rous	H	HR
Osborne	ID	IDO	Rugg	D	DRu
Ounsley	R	RO	Runnymede Ringing Group		RRG
Owen	J	JOw	Rylands	K	KR
Paine	ID	IDP	Rymer	A	AR
Parker	A	APa	Sales	MA	MAS
Parkes	AJ	AJP	Sandercock	B	BSa
Pearson	J	JPe	Sargeant	S	SSar
Peck	R	RP	Saunders	GL	GLS
Percival	C	CPe	Saunders	I	IS
Phelps	C	CPh	Scholey	GD	GDS
Pierce	R	RPi	Scott	E	ES
Plenty	T	TP	Scott	S	SSc
Plunkett	J	JPl	Sell	MRW	MRWS
Poole	C	CPo	Sharp	R	RS
Pope	W	WP	Shaw	B	BSh
Poulter	B	BPo	Shurmer	M	MSh

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Simmons	M	MSi	Turton	M	MTur
Simpkin	D	DSi	Twyford	I	IT
Simpson	PJ	PJS	Unknown		???
Skelton	A	ASk	Urquhart	E	EU
Skilton	V	VS	Uttley	B	BU
Slater	A	ASl	Vaughan	L	LV
Smallridge	D	DSm	Vine	G	GV
Smart	S	SSm	Walford	MF	MFw
Smith	DW	DS	Walker	BJ	BJW
Smith	K	KSm	Walker	S	SWa
Smith	MJ	MJS	Walker	T	TWa
Smith	Maureen	MSmi	Walling	JJ	JJW
Smith	RG	RGS	Wallington	A	AWa
Souter	S	SSo	Walther	L	LW
Stacey	WA	WAS	Ward	T	TWar
Stachnicki	T	TSta	Waring	M	MWar
Stalker	B	BSt	Warnes	T	TW
Stansfield	RH	RHS	Warren	JE	JEW
Staves	G	GSt	Watson	H	HWa
Staves	L	LS	Watson	R	RW
Stewart	GJ	GJS	Watts	PJ	PJWa
Stewart	G	GSte	Watts	RC	RCW
Stoddart	G	GSto	Webb	GR	GRW
Stollery	J	JS	Weeks	S	SW
Stow	AN	ANS	Weston	I	IW
Stratton	J	JStr	Weston/Legg	I/J	IW JL
Strom	L	LSt	Wetland Bird Survey	counts	WEBS
Stuttard	M	MSt	Whitaker	MSF	MSFW
Summer	GJ	GJSu	White	DJ	DJW
Sussex	DJ	DJS	White	KG	KGW
Sutton	P	PSu	Whitehead	S	SWHi
Swallow	JL	JLS	Whitney	M	MWh
Sweetland	T	TS	Wilcockson	J	JWilc
Taplin	K	KTap	Wild	J	JWil
Taylor	AJ	AJTa	Wilding	J	JW
Taylor	A	ATa	Wildish	M	MWil
Taylor	CD	CDT	Williams	C	CWi
Taylor	D	DT	Williams	G	GWil
Taylor	L	LTa	Williams	P	PWil
Taylor	MJ	MJT	Wilson	CR	CRW
Theale Area Bird Report		TABR	Wilson	GE	GEW
Thomas	M	MT	Wilton	IJ	IJW
Thompson	F	FT	Winder	C	CWIn
Thompson	J	JTh	Witts	A	AWit
Thorn	L	LTh	Wood	PS	PSW
Thornton	G	GT	Woods	A	AWoo
Tigwell	E	ET	Woods	C	CWoo
Tomczynski	AB	ABT	Woolfries	SA	SAW
Tomey	K	KT	Woolmer	M	MWo
Toms	M	MTom	Wordley	GV	GVW
Townsend	M	MTo	Worgan	A	AWo
Trend	M	MTr	Wright	M	MWri
Tubb	KI	KIT	Wright	P	PWr
Tucker	K	KTu	Young	G	GY
Tuff	RJ	RJT	Young	R	RY
Turner	S	ST			



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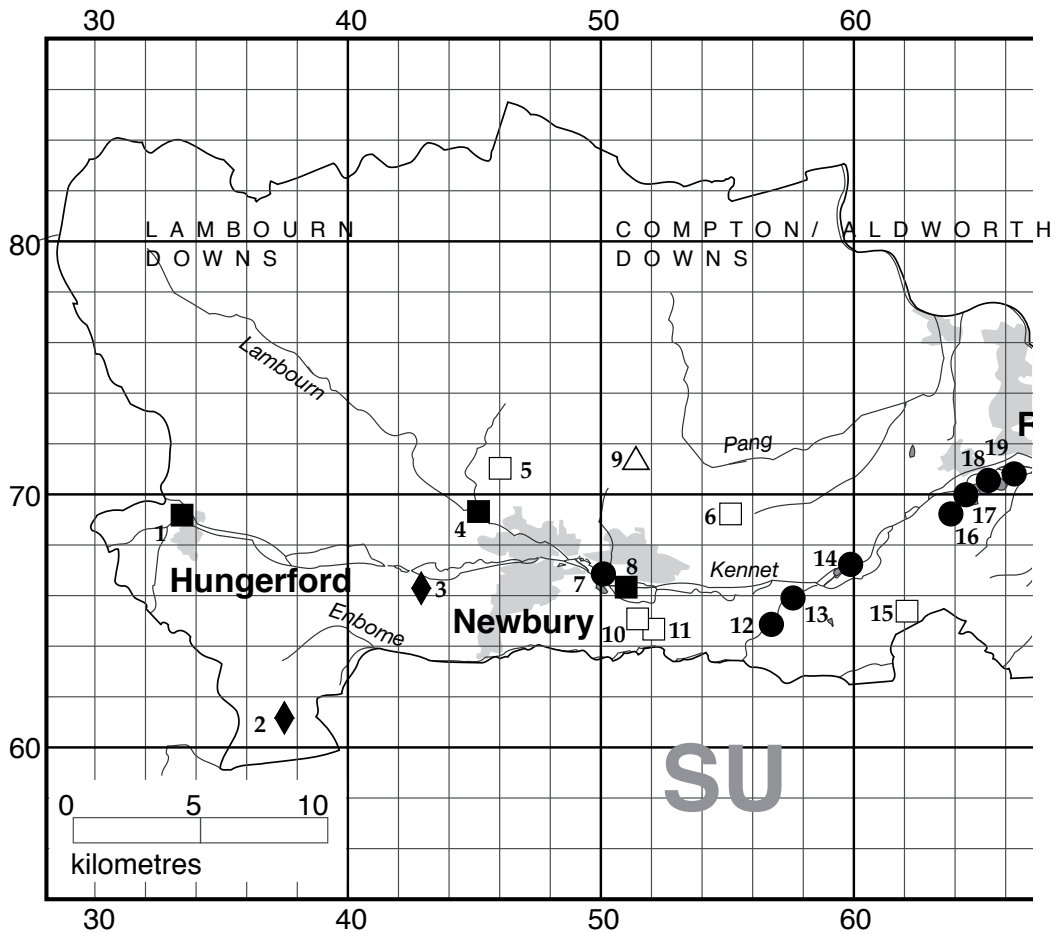
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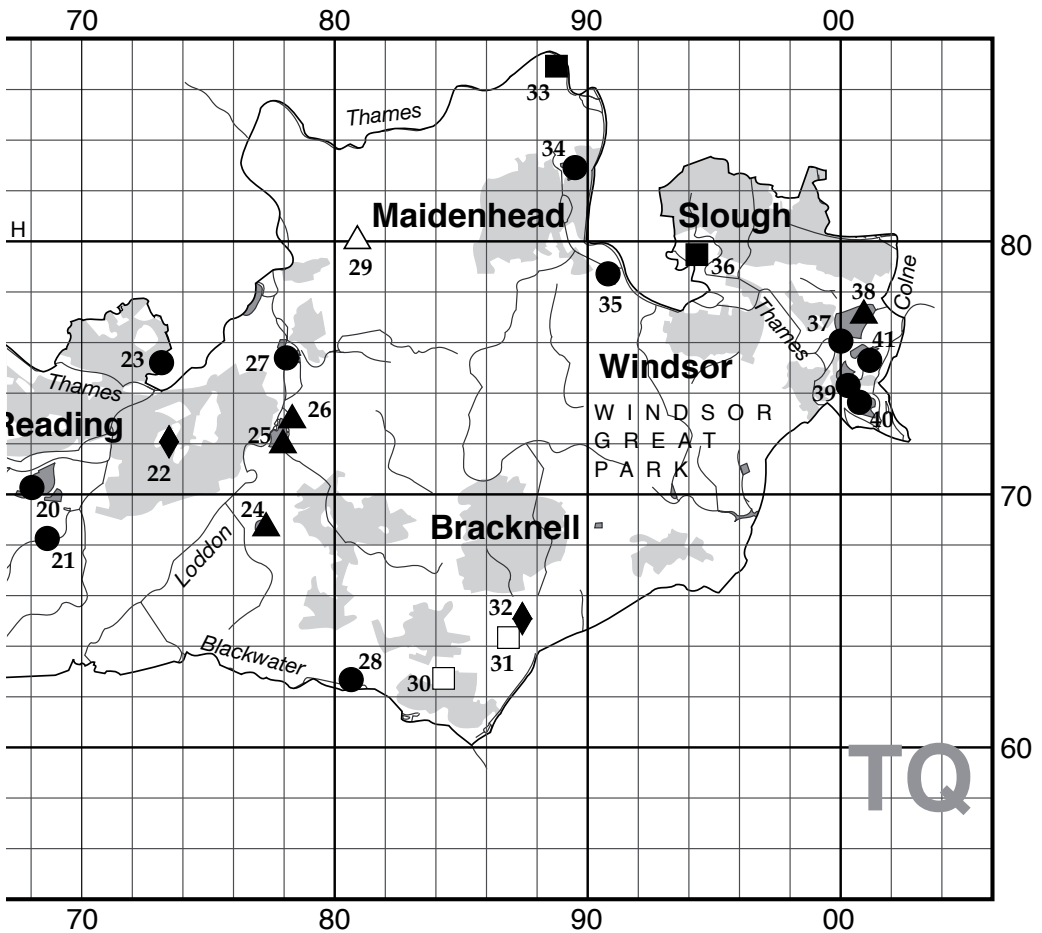
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- |    |            |   |    |             |  |
|----|------------|---|----|-------------|--|
| 1  | SU 333 686 | Freeman's Marsh                               | 23 | SU 735 745  | Caversham Lakes/Henley Road GP – Oxon                            |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





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](http://www.berksbirds.co.uk) or [www.birdsofberkshire.co.uk](http://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.

# The Burleigh



The Burleigh is pleased to have been an accommodation provider to the BOC during their visits to North Norfolk for over 15 years.

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For further information please contact Ram or Sharon on 01485 533080 or by e-mailing [reservations@theburleigh.com](mailto:reservations@theburleigh.com)

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