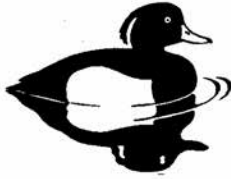


The Birds of Berkshire

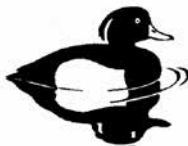


Annual Report
2012

Published 2015

Berkshire Ornithological Club

Registered charity no. 1011776



The Berkshire Ornithological Club (BOC) was founded as Reading Ornithological Club in 1947 to promote education and study of wild birds, their habitats and their conservation, initially in the Reading area but now on a county wide basis.

It is affiliated to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Membership is open to anyone interested in birds and bird-watching, beginner or expert, local patch enthusiast or international twitcher. The Club provides the following in return for a modest annual subscription:

- A programme of indoor meetings with expert speakers on ornithological subjects
- Occasional social meetings
- An annual photographic competition of very high standard
- A programme of field meetings both locally and further afield. These can be for half days, whole days or weekends.
- Regular mid week bird walks in and around many of Berkshire's and neighbouring counties' best bird-watching areas.
- Exclusive access to the pre-eminent site Queen Mother Reservoir (subject to permit)
- Conservation involvement in important local habitats and species. BOC members are involved in practical conservation work with groups such as Friends of Lavell's Lake, Theale Area Bird Conservation Group and Moor Green Lakes Group.
- Opportunities to participate in survey work to help understand birds better. The surveys include supporting the BTO in its work and monitoring for local conservation management.
- The Club runs the Birds of Berkshire Conservation Fund to support local bird conservation projects.

This Berkshire Bird Report is published by the Club and provided free to members. Members are encouraged to keep records of their local observations and submit them, electronically or in writing, to the Recorder for collation and analysis.

The informative and fully illustrated County Atlas and Avifauna, The Birds of Berkshire, published in 2013, can be purchased at www.berkshirebirdatlas.org.uk, price £35, and is available to members at meetings at the discounted price of £30.

For further details of the Club and membership visit www.berksoc.org.uk or contact the Hon. Secretary:

Sally Wearing, 9 Deans Farm, The Causeway, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JZ
telephone 0118 946 3125;
e-mail berksocsecretary@gmail.com

The Birds of Berkshire

Annual Report for 2012

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Edited by Chris Heard and Renton Righelato

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Introduction

Here is the Berkshire bird report for 2012. Although we have managed to publish three years of reports in the last eighteen months, we still have a way to go to get really up to date and for this we need your help! Firstly, I have stood in as managing editor for the last couple of years, but we are seeking a volunteer to take on this key role for the future. Secondly, please help us maintain a database that is complete and up to date by submitting records promptly, preferably on line at www.berksbirds.co.uk or as excel or .csv files to records@berksoc.org.uk. See below for submission guidelines.

Photography has become an important part of bird-watching and we are grateful to all those who have allowed us to publish their pictures. However, can I draw your attention to the Bird-watchers' Code published at the end of this report: birds should not be disturbed, nor should other bird-watchers or landowners. We will not publish photos where there are reasonable grounds to suppose the Code has been breached.

This year, 2015, the BOC and NDOC together have agreed a constitution and guidelines for the County Recorder and Berkshire Records Committee, which can be found on the BOC WebSite. The BRC membership will be a minimum of five to be agreed between the Clubs and the County Recorder and, importantly, the process of records review will be expedited.

Lastly, we regret that there were a number of errors in the systematic list for 2011 that were overlooked in editing. Errors of fact that we have found or have been brought to our attention are corrected in the Corrigenda at the end of the 2012 systematic list.

Acknowledgements

The preparation of the County bird report relies on the voluntary efforts of many people for data collection, species account writing, preparing articles, providing photographs, editing and, critically, the observers who put in their records. At the end of this report is a list of the observers whose records contribute to the reports. We hope the list is accurate: please let us know of any errors or omissions, for which we apologise.

We are grateful to the species account writers and others who have helped in editing the accounts (Richard Burness, Brian Clews, Rebecca Thomas, Sally Wearing), to the County Recorder, Chris Heard, chair of the Berkshire Records Committee, for the review of records and editing the systematic list. Our thanks also go to Patrick Crowley and colleagues, to Mike McKee, Tim Ball, Mike Turton and Renton Righelato who provided articles and to the photographers who generously provided their excellent shots. Thanks also to Robert Gillmor for his cover picture of the one of the Buff-bellied Pipits that visited Queen Mother Reservoir in December 2012.

Renton Righelato

Editorial Board: Tim Ball, Chris Heard, Ken Moore, Renton Rghelato (Chair), Marek Walford.

Submitting records

Sending your records promptly and electronically will enable the County database to be kept complete and up to date. To facilitate review and report preparation, records may be sent throughout the year and anyway should be filed within three months of a year end. If you are unable to send your records electronically, we may be able to help: please contact Renton Righelato¹.

Records can be entered on line at www.berksbirds.co.uk or sent by email to records@berksoc.org.uk as an excel file or as a CSV file.

Excel files should have the following eight columns in this order:

Species, Site, Grid reference, Arrival date, Departure date, Number, Notes, Observer, Breeding status.

Species: Required. If possible please use the species name from BWP. Please not use plurals. i.e. do not enter “Siskins” or “Canada Geese”, but “Siskin” or “Canada Goose”.

Site: Required. Please enter the site as the nearest landmark on an OS map and if necessary quantify this with a grid reference in the “Grid reference” field. Sites such as “my garden”, “River Thames”, “3 miles east of Reading” or “by the A33” are examples of inappropriate site names.

Grid reference: Optional. Four or six figure grid ref. The prefix, either “SU” or “TQ” should be included and there should be no spaces between characters. Grid references are only required for less well-known sites, or to give a very precise location within a large site.

Arrival date: Required. In the format “dd/mm/yyyy” i.e. “01/01/2005”. For records that refer to more than one day enter the first date in this field and the last date in the “Departure date” field.

Departure date: Optional. In the format “dd/mm/yyyy” i.e. “01/01/2005”.

Number: Required. Whole number only. i.e. the following are not valid: “c10”, “10+”, “1-2”, “many”. Enter any quantifying information in the notes field.

Notes: Optional. Use the notes field to enter information on age, sex, behaviour, breeding details etc. Any reference to other species made in this field will not be recorded for that species – please make a separate entry for each species.

Breeding Status: Optional. Please use the BTO breeding evidence codes: <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdatlas/methods/breeding-evidence>.

Observer: Required. Please enter your full name and include your middle names if you have any.

CSV files should use the same eight fields separated by commas (whether or not they contain data) and note that any field containing a comma should be enclosed in double quotes. Thus, for example: Siskin,”Searles Lane, Burghfield”,03/02/2001,,100,,MJJT

Confidentiality: Confidential records should be sent separately but in the same format, and noted as confidential in the covering email. The locations of records for rare breeding species will, in any case, be held in confidence.

Species requiring a description: Records of rarer species will be reviewed by the Berkshire records Committee and may require a description or additional notes – please see the BRC report *page 25*.

¹Renton Righelato tel 0787 981 2564, email renton.righelato@berksoc.org.uk

THE BERKSHIRE BIRD INDEX 2012

compiled by Renton Righelato

The Berkshire Bird Index (BBI) is a measure of the change in abundance of commoner species in the county, derived from the BTO's annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). BBS surveyors record all birds seen or heard along two 1 km transects within randomly selected 1 km squares during visits early and late in the breeding season. Visits are made in the early morning and take approximately 2 hours. The data are collected by the BTO, which publishes the regional and national trends. The BTO has provided us with the analysis of the Berkshire dataset, which was published from 1994 to 2009 as the BBI by Patrick Crowley, Jerry O'Brien and Chris Robinson and is now published in this annual report.

The index is a snapshot for the year of the ratio of a year's abundance to a base year. In the past, the base year for calculation of the Berkshire index was 1994. In the period 1994–1999 rather few 1 km squares were covered (20–26), however in 2000 the number increased to 74 and has been 73–111 since then (with the exception of 2001 when foot and mouth disease restricted surveying). In this report the year 2000 is used as the base year, to provide a more reliable starting point for calculating the index and measuring trends.

In general, the Berkshire index reflects the national trends for those species that are sufficiently abundant to calculate statistically valid changes. However, year on year changes can be large: in addition to actual changes in abundance, weather conditions during surveys, their timing and observer changes *etc* can introduce apparent fluctuations in abundance, hence trends may better be estimated by combining several years of data. So, in addition to the **index**, the average **trend** in abundance is shown, calculated as the slope of the least squares linear regression of the annual indices from 2000 to 2012.

Species increasing significantly in abundance nationally and in Berkshire over the period 2000 to 2012 include Red Kite, Buzzard, Jackdaw, Goldfinch, with increases in Great Spotted Woodpecker, Swallow, Blackcap and Whitethroat almost reaching significance at the 95% level. Species in decline nationally and in Berkshire include Lapwing, Cuckoo, Swift, House Martin, Mistle Thrush, Pied Wagtail, Willow Warbler, Starling, Greenfinch, Linnet.

Some species, however, appear to show local trends that differ markedly from the national (*BTO Birdtrends*), both upwards (Stock Dove, Rook) and downwards (Collared Dove, Blackbird, Chaffinch). The recent Atlas surveys, comparing 1987/9 data with 2008/11, show trends in the same direction as the BBI for Collared Dove and Stock Dove. Further analysis may be needed to confirm and understand these apparent differences between the national and local pictures and we would welcome comment from readers for publication in the next issue.

To take part in BTO surveys, contact the Berkshire BTO Reps: Ken and Sarah White: btobers.ken.sarah@googlemail.com

Thanks are due to Kate Riseley at the BTO and to Ken White for providing the Berkshire data and index analysis.

Bold indicates significant change 2000–2012: gain, black; loss, grey.

¹ Trends calculated by Excel's LINESST function to annual indices from 2000 to 2012. p<0.05,*; p<0.01,**; p<0.001,***.

² Indices for 2012 based on 2000, confidence limits provided by BTO.

Berkshire Bird Index trends from 2000 to 2012	Trend¹	Index²
Species	% per yr 2000–2012 (95% confidence limits)	
Canada Goose	1.3	1.0 (0.6–1.6)
Mallard	-4.4	1.0 (0.7–1.4)
Red-legged Partridge	1.0	1.1 (0.6–1.9)
Pheasant	0.2	1.2 (0.9–1.5)
Grey Heron	4.1	1.5 (0.7–3.5)
Red Kite	>100***	62 (18–208)
Buzzard	70***	3.6 (1.8–7.3)
Kestrel	-0.6	1.2 (0.7–2.1)
Moorhen	-5.2**	0.5 (0.3–0.8)
Lapwing	-8.5*	0.6 (0.4–1.0)
Stock Dove	13*	1.9 (1.1–3.4)
Woodpigeon	-2.4	1.0 (0.8–1.3)
Collared Dove	-6.4***	0.4 (0.3–0.6)
Cuckoo	-2.9***	0.5 (0.3–0.8)
Swift	-7.4*	0.4 (0.2–0.7)
Green Woodpecker	-3.7	0.7 (0.4–1.0)
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4.1	1.4 (1.0–2.0)
Magpie	-0.4	0.8 (0.6–1.0)
Jay	-3.3	1.2 (0.8–1.9)
Jackdaw	9.5***	1.7 (1.2–2.5)
Rook	11	2.2 (1.1–4.4)
Carrion Crow	-2.4	1.1 (0.8–1.5)
Goldcrest	-7.9	0.8 (0.5–1.2)
Blue Tit	0.7	1.1 (0.9–1.3)
Great Tit	-0.2	0.9 (0.7–1.1)
Coal Tit	-2.5	0.6 (0.4–1.1)
Skylark	-1.9*	0.9 (0.7–1.2)
Swallow	2.4	1.1 (0.7–1.7)
House Martin	-3.8**	0.5 (0.3–0.7)
Long-tailed Tit	-0.5	0.7 (0.4–1.0)
Chiffchaff	-1.3	1.9 (1.4–2.6)
Willow Warbler	-6.3***	0.3 (0.2–0.5)
Blackcap	8.4	1.6 (1.2–2.1)
Whitethroat	4.0	1.2 (0.8–1.9)
Nuthatch	-0.2	0.9 (0.6–1.4)
Wren	-4.4	0.8 (0.7–1.0)
Starling	-3.0	0.7 (0.5–1.0)
Blackbird	-2.3*	0.8 (0.7–0.9)
Song Thrush	-3.4	1.0 (0.7–1.4)
Mistle Thrush	-7.8**	0.4 (0.3–0.7)
Robin	-1.1	0.9 (0.8–1.1)
Dunnock	-2.4	1.0 (0.8–1.3)
House Sparrow	-5.3	0.5 (0.8–1.8)
Pied Wagtail	-8.9***	0.4 (0.3–0.7)
Chaffinch	-3.6**	0.7 (0.6–0.8)
Greenfinch	-8.1***	0.6 (0.4–0.9)
Goldfinch	5.8**	3.0 (2.0–4.6)
Linnet	-6.2**	0.4 (0.2–0.7)
Yellowhammer	-5.0**	0.5 (0.4–0.7)

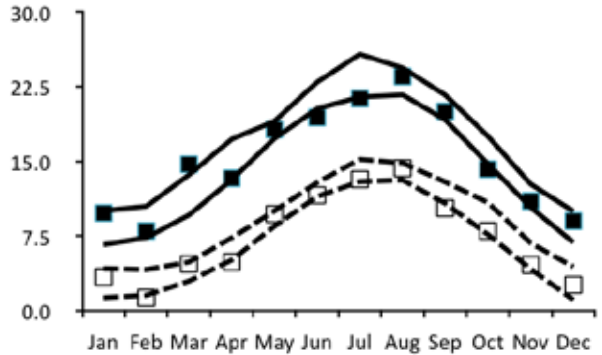
WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 2012

Renton Righelato

2012 was an unexceptional year. The figures below are based on data from the Met Office's Heathrow weather station. The pairs of continuous lines represent one standard deviation above and below the averages for the years 2000 to 2014. The squares represent the data for 2012.

Temperature

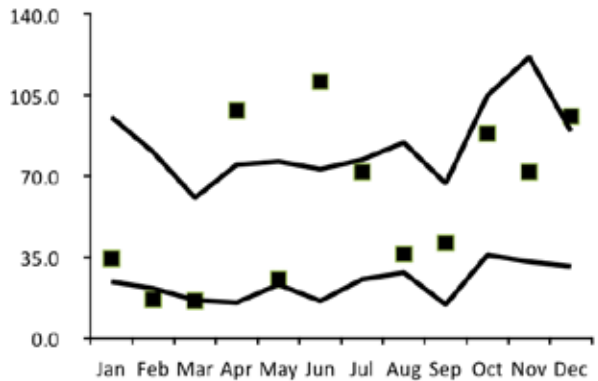
2012 Monthly average maximum (closed squares) and minimum (open squares). The lines indicate the upper and lower 68% confidence limits for the period 2000-14 for the monthly average maxima (continuous lines) and monthly average minima (broken lines).



Rainfall

Monthly rainfall (mm): lines upper and lower 68% confidence limits for 2000-14; squares 2012.

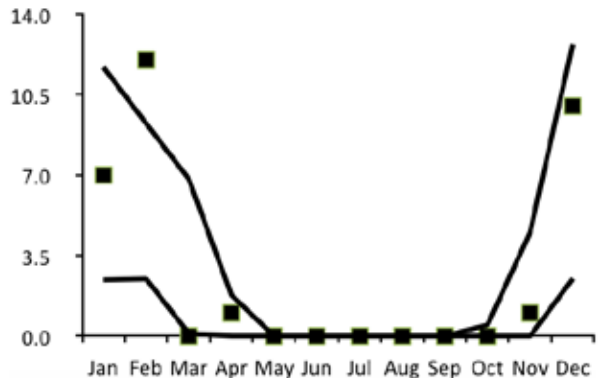
April and June were unusually wet months



Cold weather

Days air frost: lines upper and lower 68% confidence limits for 2000-14; squares 2012.

February was somewhat colder than normal.



MONITORING OF ANNEX 1 HEATHLAND SPECIES IN THE THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA BETWEEN BRACKNELL AND CAMBERLEY

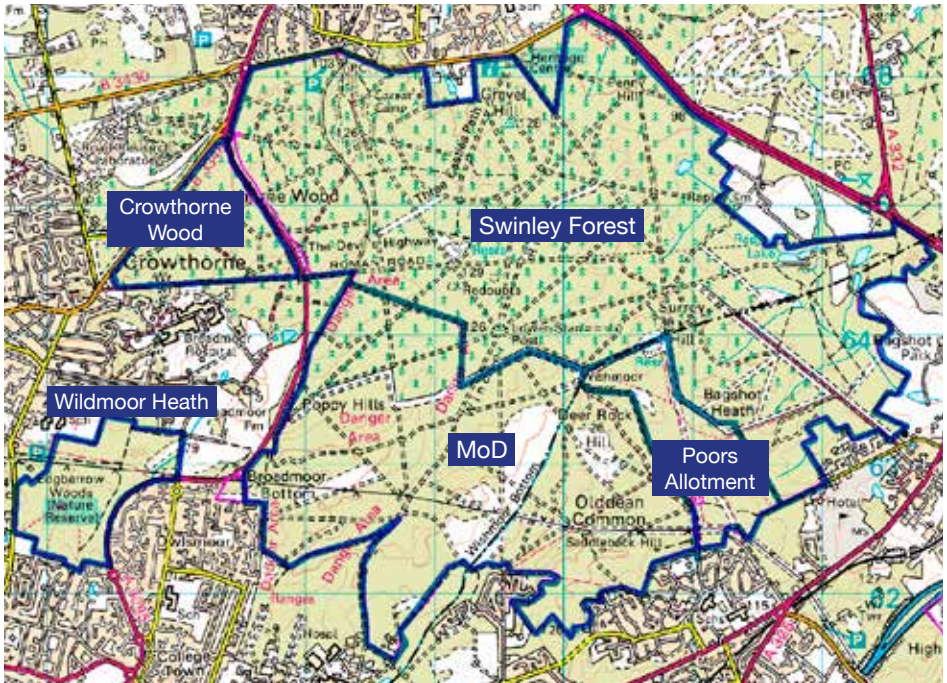
Patrick Crowley, Derek Barker, Chris Gent and Des Sussex

Introduction

During the 1970's and 1980's John Clark, then the editor of the Hants/Surrey Border Bird Report, was collating information collected by individuals who were bird-watching on some of the forestry and heathland sites in the Thames Basin that held populations of Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*), Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*). The BTO Dartford Warbler survey in 1994 was a trigger for John to organise these surveys on a more formal basis, so that by the early 2000's a body of data had been collected which could be used by English Nature (now Natural England, NE) to help decide the boundaries of the proposed Thames Basin Heathlands Special Protection Area (TBH SPA), which was eventually designated in March 2005. The TBH SPA now comprises 13 areas of lowland heath and conifer plantation extending through north-east Hampshire, south-east Berkshire and west Surrey. Each area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its specialised heathland flora and fauna and the SPA was established because collectively the sites hold internationally important populations of three species mentioned above, which



*Woodlark. Photo: Jerry O'Brien, Male Dartford Warbler. Photo: Jerry O'Brien
Nightjar. Photo: Michael McKee*



Map of Broadmoor to Bagshot, and Sandhurst to Owlsmoor SSSI's, part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA

require special protection in Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive. Some of the SSSI's were extended to include additional areas of conifer plantation (used by the three species) to enable those areas to be included in the SPA.

This article deals with two areas of lowland heath, which are contained in the forest and heathland between Nine Mile Ride (Bracknell), the A322 (Bracknell to Bagshot), the B3348 (Bracknell to Crowthorne) and the A30 in Camberley. Apart from Wildmoor Heath, a relatively small area which forms the Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI and which is jointly owned by Bracknell Forest Council and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, the whole of the rest of the area forms the Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI and much of it is now termed the Swinley Forest. The northern and south-eastern sections are owned mainly by the Crown Estate, with a small strip of the northern western corner east of the A3095 and the triangle of land between the B3348 and the A3095 called the Crowthorne Wood, being owned by the Forestry Commission. The southern section is mainly owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and comprises the Range Danger Area (which includes Broadmoor Bottom), Wishmoor Bottom and Olddean Common. An additional small area adjoining the MoD is Poors Allotment (owned by Windlesham United Charities and Poors Allotments). It should be noted that the Berkshire/Surrey county boundary runs through Wishmoor Bottom, so Olddean Common, Poors Allotment and Bagshot Heath are in Surrey. This Surrey section is included as it forms an integral part of this section of the SPA. Map of Broadmoor to Bagshot, and Sandhurst to Owlsmoor SSSI's, part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Natural England has the statutory responsibility to ensure that the TBH SPA is maintained in a satisfactory condition, and to do this it requires ongoing information about the population and distribution of the three Annex 1 species. Natural England has commissioned 2Js Ecology (run by John Clark and John Eyre), to co-ordinate a systematic monitoring programme, which has been carried out by a group of volunteers across the region, many of whom have been surveying the area for years.

MoD and Poors Allotment

The MoD land is used for military training by the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (RMAS), and most of it is open to the general public all the time. The Range Danger Area, which has live firing, is surrounded by a secure fence and is not accessible to the general public without special permission, which has been arranged for us through the RMAS Conservation Group. Because of pressure on the use of the ranges, Sundays are usually the only days when there is no firing, which greatly limits survey time.

The landscape is generally undulating, with small hills and plateaux, leading down to boggy areas in Broadmoor Bottom and Wishmoor Bottom. The habitat is mainly coniferous forest of Scots and Corsican pine, interspersed with large open areas. There are a few stands of deciduous trees of sweet chestnut, beech and oak, as well as some birch and willow. The open areas mainly consist of dry heath of mixed heather, grass and bracken, with very little gorse, and some bog. The Wish stream runs through Wishmoor Bottom into the RMAS. The open areas have varying amounts of sapling pine and birch which regenerate and grow rapidly, posing a constant threat to the open habitats. There are a number of wide rides and fire breaks as well as smaller paths across all the areas.

Poors Allotment is an area of heather, gorse, scattered pine and coarse grass, which suffered much vandalism by joyriders in the 1990's. A local voluntary body, the Heathland



View of Wishmoor Bottom. Photo: Patrick Crowley

Conservation Society, has worked hard over the years to reduce anti-social behaviour, improve the habitat and clean up litter, and despite regular fires it is a valuable part of the SPA.

Management in all areas has been mainly by cutting or pulling saplings of birch and pine carried out by contractors or volunteers, with some areas being mowed by brush cutters. A very recent development, as from 2012, has been grazing. The whole area has been fenced, and cattle have been introduced, but it is obviously far too early to assess its effects on bird populations.

Swinley Forest

The whole of Swinley Forest consists of commercial forest run by the Crown Estate and Forestry Commission. The distribution of large clearings and open areas varies with the rotational cycle of forestry, and it is these areas that are likely to hold any of the three Annex 1 species. Currently the north-west section has a large extent of suitable habitat, where the forestry management and large Swinley Forest fire in spring 2011 have provided open habitat. The replanted clear felled areas tend to be used by Woodlarks for a few years, and Nightjars can use them for approximately 10-15 years, depending on how quickly the trees grow. Dartford Warblers occasionally use them if the vegetation is suitable. In recent years foresters have taken additional measures to deter public access across newly created clear felled areas, which has benefited ground nesting birds. The only significant area of heather is in Caesar's Camp. Throughout the forest there are stands of deciduous trees, especially around Caesar's Camp and along the ride down to Lower Star Post, and also in the Rapley area. There are a number of wide rides and smaller tracks.

Wildmoor Heath

Wildmoor Heath, formerly often known as Edgbarrow Heath, is a relatively small area of lowland heath which runs down to some nice areas of bog, and has been managed for conservation for many years. It has areas of good heather and gorse which unfortunately have been burnt (usually by spring or summer fires) a number of times through the survey period.

Recording

The methodology for the surveys was based on the RSPB's *Bird Monitoring Methods*. For all three species the estimated number of territories has been used as the measure of population, as it is very difficult to prove breeding without an enormous amount of work. All sightings were recorded on maps, and at the end of the season, sightings from all visits were put together and grouped into likely territories. Key sightings to determine territories were males singing, pairs seen together, or birds feeding young.

Most of the survey work over the time period covered in this article was carried out by the authors, with Patrick Crowley concentrating on the MoD, particularly the Surrey side, while Derek Barker carried out a huge amount of work in Swinley Forest, surveying many other species as well as the three covered here. Since 2009 Des Sussex and Chris Gent have taken over the surveys of Swinley Forest and Wildmoor Heath.

Woodlark Surveys

Woodlarks are present on the various sites from mid February or March through to October. They are believed to winter on farmland, though some may move south to the continent.

They usually have their first broods in April and will often have a second. Volunteers were asked to make a minimum of four visits between mid February and late June, between 06:00 and 11:00 hrs, covering all suitable areas within the survey area. Woodlarks like reasonably large open areas with plenty of bare ground, with grass, heather or other low vegetation for nesting, and a few trees for song perches, all of which are found on lowland heath and areas of clear fell in forestry plantations. Woodlarks move very quickly onto recently burnt ground, where they will continue to breed for some years until the vegetation grows up.

Dartford Warbler Surveys

Dartford Warblers are residents in the UK and are almost exclusively found on heaths with heather and/or gorse in an open habitat, though they often use birch or pine saplings as song posts. They usually have their first broods in late April or early May, and often have a second brood. For surveying Dartford Warblers, it was recommended to make at least three visits, one from the beginning of April to mid-May, one between mid- and late May, and one in June, targeting areas of suitable habitat. As most surveyors know, fine sunny and calm days are best, but not enough of them coincide with surveyors' availability! Sightings were recorded as for Woodlarks.

Nightjar Surveys

Nightjars are summer migrants that arrive in mid May, and leave in August or September. They traditionally prefer lowland heath with scrubby vegetation and some tall trees to churr from and feed around. However, they have also increasingly taken to breeding in clear fell areas in forestry plantations, many of which were planted on old heathland, and they will remain in these areas for some years.

In the early years individual surveyors made several visits between mid May and mid July from half an hour before dusk until 1.5 hours after dusk, covering as many of areas of suitable habitat as they could manage. However, because of the limited time available each evening, the fact that Nightjars churr best on warm calm evenings, and the large areas to cover, surveys were often incomplete or were done at all. Consequently, since 2009 for the MoD area, we adopted a method used for the large military heathlands such as Pirbright and Ash Ranges, which entails getting 20 or more people together on one evening, splitting the area into sections, and getting one pair of surveyors to do a section each. This enables the whole area to be covered in one evening. The key to success is to carry out the survey on a fine warm evening and our surveys have usually been organised for the last 10 days in June or first few days in July, when the weather is usually at its most reliable. A reserve date was always booked in case of bad weather on the first date.

Results

The sections below contain estimates of numbers of territories for the three key species. It should be emphasised that the error bars are likely to be high, due to variables such as weather, disturbance, and observer effort, so the table below can only give a general idea of trends. Detailed results are not given for the Crowthorne Wood or Wildmoor Heath, as the numbers were generally quite low, and neither area was surveyed as regularly as Swinley Forest or the MoD land.

Woodlark Population

The population of Woodlarks in the MoD has fluctuated markedly between 1996 and 2012, with highs in 1997 and 1998 and then again in 2007 and 2008. The peak of 47 territories in

Table: Estimated Numbers of Territories of Annex 1 Heathland Species

Year	MoD and Poors Allotment			Swinley Forest		
	Woodlark	Nightjar	Dartford Warbler	Woodlark	Nightjar	Dartford Warbler
1991	—	21 (11)	—	—	9	—
1992	—	17 (7)	—	—	8	—
1993	—	—	—	4	—	—
1996	27 (8)	—	6 (—)	12	—	—
1997	38 (15)	—	c.11 (6)	—	—	—
1998	37 (17)	13 (6)	8 (4)	—	—	—
1999	22 (10)	—	20 (12)	3	12	1
2000	21 (12)	—	19 (12)	—	—	—
2001	29 (14)	—	21 (11)	10	—	1
2002	19 (7)	—	24 (9)	4	—	2
2003	20 (8)	29 (9)	34 (20)	11	13	3
2004	19 (7)	30 (14)	21 (8)	8	10	1
2005	24 (10)	—	23 (10)	8	—	1
2006	37 (16)	22 (11)	22 (10)	9	—	—
2007	47 (30)	28 (15)	43 (22)	9	—	1
2008	45 (21)	—	51 (24)	4	—	2
2009	37 (16)	37 (18)	1 (0)	5	14	0
2010	25 (12)	39 (12)	1 (0)	0	7	0
2011	25 (13)	37 (14)	2 (0)	0	16	0
2012	30 (13)	33 (17)	3 (1)	7	11	0

Figures in brackets indicate territories in Surrey; -- indicates no results available

2007 was probably a result of the large amount of clearance work carried out on neglected heathland areas after the designation of the SPA in 2005, since the main factor affecting Woodlark populations has been shown to be the presence of appropriate habitat. The photo of Olddean Common in the winter of early 2006 after heathland clearance emphasises the open nature of the habitat that Woodlarks particularly like. The decline since then to an average of 25 territories probably reflects re-growth in many areas, and the absence of major fires. There may also be an effect from a gradual increase in military training and in the number of walkers in some areas. The number of territories of Woodlarks from 1996 to 2012 in the Swinley Forest has been much lower than in the southern part of the SPA, and observer effort has been less consistent, so it is hard to see significant trends. Clear felling in the early 2000's probably explains the higher numbers in 2003-2007, and counts of zero in 2010 and 2011 probably reflect lack of observer coverage, although numbers had been dwindling due to regeneration of pine and vegetation.

The Crowthorne Wood has held between one and three Woodlark territories between 1999 and 2012, with the number varying according to the amount of open ground with low or no vegetation available.

Wildmoor Heath held one or two Woodlark territories in most years between 2003 and 2011, but there were none in 2012. In recent years the vegetation has grown up reducing the area of suitable Woodlark habitat to small patches. Disturbance from visitors has increased and this has certainly prevented Woodlarks from using suitable habitat in some years.



View of Olddean Common from Saddleback Hill, January 2006. Photo: Patrick Crowley

Dartford Warbler Population

The table shows how the population of Dartford Warblers has changed between 1996 and 2012. The time scale is shorter than for Woodlarks as we did not have full data before 1998, although approximate numbers are shown for 1996-7. Apart from a slight dip from 2004 to 2006, the trend was of a steady increase from a very low level up to probably unprecedented numbers in 2008.

The rise in population was attributed to an increase in suitable heather dominated heathland with patches of gorse, and most importantly, a run of mild winters. Dartford Warblers are

2008/2009 and 2009/2010 when our population dropped to a single territory in 2009 and was still struggling to recover in 2012. Populations were drastically reduced all over the south of England, but our birds were particularly badly hit. This is probably due to areas such as Wishmoor Bottom and Broadmoor Bottom being frost pockets in cold winters, and holding only a small amount of tall and mature heather and gorse, which may be important to the survival of Dartford Warblers in cold weather.

The population of Dartford Warblers has always been very low in Swinley Forest, due to lack of heather and/or gorse, with Caesar's Camp being the most reliable site for them, often holding one or two pairs. Unfortunately the cold winters of 2008-2010 finished them off. Most of Swinley Forest and Crowthorne Wood has little suitable habitat, but occasional birds and pairs have been seen in the breeding season.

Wildmoor Heath has usually had good heather and deep gorse, and the population reached 13 territories in 2003. A fire in 2004 reduced the number to 3, but it increased to 8 territories in 2007. Since then there has been a decline due to fires, and the cold winters referred to above. Prior to 2003 there appear to have been no systematic surveys.

Nightjar Population

The table gives figures for Nightjar populations in the few years when there was complete coverage of the whole area. In 1992 there was a national Nightjar survey, with a trial run in 1991. In 2004 there was another national survey, and in the years 2009-2012 the MoD area

was surveyed by the team method. As far as the figures allow, it appears that there has been an increase in numbers of Nightjars since 1991, which is probably due to improvement of the habitat. The higher numbers in the MoD area between 2009 and 2012 may reflect the greater effectiveness of the team surveys, where the entire area can be covered under as near to optimum conditions as possible.

The numbers in Swinley Forest appear to have been relatively stable over the years, but although it is an area well visited by birders, relatively few thorough surveys of Nightjars have been carried out. In the early 1990's the north-east part of the forest held a good number of birds at a number of large open clearings, including areas within approximately 100 m of the Look Out, which at that time was far less busy than it is now. The Crowthorne Wood has held 2-5 territories in most years, but there has been an apparent increase to 10 or 11 territories since 2009. Wildmoor Heath has held 2-4 territories in most of the years that it has been surveyed.

Nightjars are a long distance summer migrant, which recent studies by the BTO using geolocators have been shown to winter in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Unlike a number of other long distance migrants, Nightjar numbers have not declined recently and indeed have increased by 36% between 1992 and 2004, probably due to conservation measures.

Other Species

We do not have space in this article to say much about other species, but the whole area contains significant populations of other heathland species such as Tree Pipit, Stonechat, Cuckoo and Woodcock, which are birds of open areas within the forest. Good numbers of Willow Warbler and Garden Warbler are present in appropriate habitat. There are also small numbers of woodland species such as Redstart, Firecrest, and Spotted Flycatcher. In late summer and winter fluctuating numbers of Crossbill, Siskin, Brambling and Lesser Redpoll can be found. All of these species are counted 'casually' as a by product of the surveys of the three key species.

The Future

The surveys are continuing with work now being carried out by members of the Berkshire Ornithological Club (BOC) and other local bird watchers. The surveys are essential to the monitoring and conservation of the SPA and its valuable populations of heathland birds, and we would urge bird watchers who visit the area to submit sightings of the three Annex 1 Species to the Berkshire Ornithological Club including Ordnance Survey grid references for each bird seen, which can provide very useful extra information about numbers of territories. The area being covered is expected to expand as plans for clear felling of mature plantations are carried out in the mid and south-eastern part of the forest in the future. Help with the surveys would be very welcome from anyone who would like to volunteer. Familiarity with the songs and calls of Woodlarks and Dartford Warblers is very helpful, as is the willingness to walk! If you are interested please contact the BOC.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful for the support and help from the RMAS Conservation Group for arranging access for our surveys.

AMERICAN BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT – QUEEN MOTHER RESERVOIR, DECEMBER 2012

Michael McKee

On 12th December with temperatures dropping significantly overnight I headed up to Queen Mother Reservoir early in the morning, hopeful that the freezing conditions of about -5°C would bring something in. I did a quick circuit of the reservoir but with thick fog blanketing the reservoir visibility was only about 30 metres off the bank. I did, however, see both the Red-necked Grebe and Long-tailed Duck which had been present since November but not a lot else.

Later on that day with the fog lifting I decided to have another go to see if I had missed anything. I headed clockwise around the reservoir and by about 3.45pm, as I was heading along the north-western bank with the sun setting behind me, I noticed a pipit walking towards me along the concrete bank at the water's edge. I lifted my bins expecting to see a Meadow Pipit but this bird had black legs and a relatively plain mantle. My thoughts immediately turned to Rock and Water Pipit, but it didn't look dark enough to be a Rock Pipit. I looked for the whitish underparts that would surely confirm it was a Water Pipit but they were bright buff. It then flew up on to the track ahead giving a short high pitched "tsee tsee" call not too dissimilar to a Meadow Pipit. My heart was now racing and I quickly reached for my scope in my rucksack, but before I could get onto the pipit it flew and I lost it. I searched along the bank until it was dark but there was no further sign of it.

I realised that everything I had seen and heard pointed towards American Buff-bellied Pipit but I found it very hard to believe. I had only seen the bird for a few seconds and I questioned whether the light had played tricks on my eyes. Were the legs really black? Could the buff colour of the underparts have been the result of the setting sun behind me?



As part of its license from Thames Water for access to Queen Mother Reservoir, the BOC was able to issue day permits to birdwatchers who came from all over the UK (and a few from the continent) to see the pipits. Approximately 1,300 birders twitched the birds during their stay and £2600 was received in donations to the Club.



The first bird on Dec 16th, Marek Walford



The second bird on Dec 26th 2012, Marek Walford



The first bird, showing the effect of snow reflection, on Jan 18th 2013, Mike McKee



Both birds on January 9th 2013, Mike McKee

The following morning I was up early and at QMR for dawn. I headed along the north-western bank checking every Meadow Pipit carefully along the way. Then towards the western end of the bank I located the pipit feeding along the water's edge and walking in my direction. I crouched by the wave wall as it walked right past me only a few metres away confirming all the features I had seen the day before. It was indeed an American Buff-bellied Pipit and the first record for Berkshire.

The bird spent most of its time feeding on the concrete bank where it foraged for insects. On colder days it also waded into the water to retrieve insects from the surface.

On 26th December I headed up to the reservoir late in the morning for what would be my final visit of the year as I was heading up to Scotland that evening. I headed straight down the east bank and met two birders coming the other way who informed me they hadn't seen the Buff-bellied Pipit. I checked along its favoured area on the south bank but with no sign of it I doubled back to check again. As I approached the south-east corner the Buff-bellied Pipit flew in and landed at the water's edge just ahead of me. I crouched down and started to take some photos but as it moved away from me I noticed another pipit further along the bank. I looked through my bins and was met with a Buff-bellied Pipit. I flicked back and forth between both birds convinced that only one could be the Buff-bellied Pipit but they both were! I managed to get some photos of both of them before they flew off onto nearby fields, four minutes after my initial sighting.

I stood there looking at the photos on the back of my camera in a state of shock. One Buff-bellied Pipit in Berkshire was remarkable enough but two together was really hard to accept. Being slightly the worse for wear, after my Christmas Day excesses, I really wanted someone else to see both birds to prove I wasn't losing my mind! I rang Marek Walford who headed straight over. Shortly after he arrived the first bird was located along the bank on its own. As we watched it the second bird flew over calling. The first bird flew up to meet it, also calling, and they both landed together further along the bank. Despite our disbelief there were now two Buff-bellied Pipits at QMR. The newer bird was paler and brighter than the first bird and its legs were not as dark. It was also more wary although still showed very well.

Neither bird was seen again in December, but they reappeared together at QMR on 9th January 2013. During the remainder of their stay they also visited nearby Kingsmead Quarry. The last sighting of both birds together was at QMR on 22nd January with the final sighting of a single bird on 26th January by members of Newbury District Ornithological Club.



Great Northern Diver, Main Pit, Theale, Nov 11th, Roger Murfitt



Brent Geese, Woolhampton Gravel Pits, Jan 15th, Richard Gilham



Common Scoter, Queen Mother Reservoir, Nov 16th, Mike McKee



Garganey, Lea Farm, Apr 10th, Roger Murfitt



Ferruginous Duck, Woolhampton Gravel Pits, Feb 4th, Marek Walford



Black-tailed Godwits, Burnthouse Lane, Apr 28th, Richard Gilham



Grey Plover, Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwit, Queen Mother Reservoir, May 3rd, Mike McKee



Knot, Queen Mother Reservoir, May 19th, Chris Heard



Manx Shearwater, Queen Mother Reservoir, Sep 2nd, Andrew Moon



*Little Gull, Padworth Lane Gravel Pit,
Mar 24th, Marek Walford*



*Firecrest, juvenile male, Moor Green Lakes
(Eversley Gravel Pits), Nov 18th, Tim Ball*



*Water Pipit, Queen Mother Reservoir,
Nov 5th, Mike McKee*



*Redstart, Dinton Pastures,
Sep 18th, Tony Harden*



Siberian Chiffchaff, Eton Wick, Dec 12th, Marek Walford

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES IN BERKSHIRE - 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

The dreadful weather during the 'summer' of 2012 doesn't appear to have much effect on numbers recorded for most species, although only time will tell us the impact on breeding success. The weather was probably the reason for a number of species emerging later than normal. Hawkers and Darters which emerged later in the summer seem to have had a particularly good year. This was especially noticeable for **Migrant Hawker** (*Aeshna mixta*) with records up 42% over 2010, **Brown Hawker** (*Aeshna grandis*) with records up 80% over 2010 and **Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*) with records up by 95% over 2010. Numbers were also up for these species; 16 Brown Hawkers at Theale in August and 128 Common Darters at Padworth in September, both seen by Derek McEwan, were all-time county records and there were seven sightings between July and September with counts of over 50 adult Common Darters each time. Numbers of **Black Darter** (*Sympetrum danae*) were the highest recorded with a maximum of 42 adults recorded by John Ward-Smith and Des Sussex at Crowthorne Woods in July.

Some species suffered this year, presumably as a result of the weather. There were only eight sightings of **Common Club-tail** (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*) this year - well down on previous years. The maximum number of adults seen at any time was just three with a total of only six exuviae found at Goring viaduct and Caversham Promenade in Reading. It would be interesting to know whether the number of floods on the Thames over recent years has had an impact on numbers. There were two sightings away from the Thames, one near the R. Kennet at Theale, continuing the string of sightings on the Kennet in recent years, and one on the Downs at Aston Upthorpe. Records of **Brilliant Emerald** (*Somatochlora metallica*) **Four-spotted Chaser** (*Libellula quadrimaculata*) and **Broad-bodied Chaser** (*Libellula depressa*) were also down and numbers reported were not as high as in the previous two years.

Numbers of **Banded Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx splendens*), **Blue-tailed Damselfly** (*Ischnura elegans*), **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** (*Erythromma viridulum*) and **Large Red Damselfly** (*Pyrrosoma nymphula*) also fell again this year, though **Common Blue Damselfly** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) and **Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes sponsa*) did better than in 2011.

Some of the county's scarcer species managed to keep their names on the record sheets for 2012. Although numbers were down, **Hairy Dragonfly** (*Brachytron pratense*) was recorded at nine sites this year, including breeding at two sites in the Theale area. After only a single record in 2011, it was nice to see **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*) at three sites in west or north Berkshire (none in the east this time), including a number of exuviae at one site near Aldermaston. Unfortunately no **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies** (*Ischnura pumilio*) were found at Decoy Heath in 2012 following their reappearance last year (for the first time since the mid-1990s), despite monitoring of the site by BBOWT and visits by other recorders.

The really bright spots of the year were provided by three species. The arrival of **Scarce Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*) in the county has been anticipated for several years and one finally made it over the county boundary, spotted by Des Sussex at Shepherd Meadows on the R. Blackwater in July.

Many observers managed to see the emerging **Red-veined Darters** (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*) at Greenham and Crookham Commons. First recorded breeding in Berkshire in 2007 at the

same site, when over 200 exuviae were collected, there has only been one county record since then – of an adult male in May 2009, again at Greenham. This year the first exuviae and emergents were found by Adrian Hickman on 27th July with the last record being on 13th September; the total count of exuviae exceeded 320.

The third unusual species for the county was a single **Lesser Emperor** (*Anax parthenope*) at Greenham/Crookham Commons in August. This site did well this year, also recording the first sightings of **Small Red Damselfly** (*Ceriagrion tenellum*) for the site.

Once again this year there were records of **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** (*Cordulegaster boltonii*) from sites away from their normal breeding habitat – of note were the one at Lavell's Lake (Dinton Pastures), which was the second record for the site in two years, and one on a house wall near Wokingham town centre.

More details for all the species occurring in Berkshire are given in the annual report and newsletter, available from the email address below. If you have any records, please send them to me at berksdragonflies@gmail.com.

Mike Turton
County Dragonfly Recorder
berksdragonflies@gmail.com



Migrant Hawker, Loddon.

Photo: Mike Turton

REPORT FOR 2012 BY THE BERKSHIRE RECORDS COMMITTEE (BRC)

By Chris Heard

Committee for 2012: Chris Heard (Chairman), Ken Moore, Peter Standley

The BRC examines all records that involve rare species (see the accompanying lists), unusual dates and unusually large counts that are accompanied with descriptive notes. Unfortunately there are still a substantial number of records that have to be omitted from the report due to the lack of supporting notes. On occasions when the bird has been seen by a large number of observers the BRC may accept the record without further details. However the record may run the risk of being attributed to the wrong observer/s, or may be attributed to many observers (MO).

Species for which notes or descriptions are required fall into 3 categories: (Cat 1) Nationally rare species for which records first have to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and any record of a species new to Berkshire; (Cat 2) Locally rare species for which a full description is required (this includes all former BBRC rarities); (Cat 3) Locally scarce species (or commoner species seen at an unusual time of year or in exceptional circumstances) for which short supporting notes are required. The species in categories 2 and 3 are as follows:

Category 2

Bean Goose; Pink-footed Goose; American Wigeon; Green-winged Teal; Lesser Scaup (from 2015), Ring-necked Duck; Ferruginous Duck; Velvet Scoter; Fulmar; Manx Shearwater; Storm Petrel; Night Heron; Cattle Egret; Great White Egret; Purple Heron; White Stork; Spoonbill; Glossy Ibis (from 2013); Honey Buzzard; Black Kite; White-tailed Eagle; Goshawk; Rough-legged Buzzard; Golden Eagle; Redfooted Falcon; Spotted Crake; Corncrake; Crane; Kentish Plover; Dotterel; Pectoral Sandpiper; Purple Sandpiper; Red-necked Phalarope; Grey Phalarope; Pomarine Skua; Arctic Skua; Long-tailed Skua; Great Skua; Sabine's Gull; Ring-billed Gull; Caspian Gull; Iceland Gull; Glaucous Gull; White-winged Black Tern; Roseate Tern; Guillemot; Razorbill; Little Auk; Puffin; Alpine Swift; Short-toed Lark; Shore Lark; Red-rumped Swallow; Richard's Pipit; Olive-backed Pipit (from 2013); Dipper; Bluethroat; Marsh Warbler; Icterine Warbler; Melodious Warbler; Pallas's Warbler; Yellow-browed Warbler; Penduline Tit (from 2015); Bearded Tit; Golden Oriole; Woodchat Shrike; Hooded Crow; Rose-coloured Starling; Serin; Twite; Common (Mealy) Redpoll; Parrot Crossbill; Common Rosefinch; Lapland Bunting; Cirl Bunting; Ortolan Bunting; Little Bunting; all rare subspecies (e.g. Scandinavian Rock Pipit; Yellow Wagtail races and Siberian Chiffchaff) and all former national BBRC Rarity species.

Category 3

Bewick's Swan; Whooper Swan (unless feral); White-fronted Goose; Brent Goose; Barnacle Goose (unless feral); Garganey; Scaup; Eider; Long-tailed Duck; Common Scoter; Red-breasted Merganser; Quail; Red-throated Diver; Black-throated Diver; Great Northern Diver; Red-necked Grebe; Slavonian Grebe; Black-necked Grebe; Leach's Storm Petrel; Gannet; Shag; Bittern; Marsh Harrier; Hen Harrier; Montagu's Harrier; Osprey; Merlin; Avocet; Grey Plover; Knot; Sanderling; Little Stint; Temminck's Stint; Curlew Sandpiper; Black-tailed Godwit; Bar-tailed Godwit; Whimbrel; Spotted Redshank; Wood Sandpiper; Mediterranean Gull; Little Gull; Yellow-legged Gull (spring records); Kittiwake; Little Tern; Sandwich Tern; Arctic Tern; Long-eared Owl; Hoopoe; Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (where i.d. is based on drumming only); Wryneck; Woodlark (away from usual habitat); Rock Pipit; Water Pipit; White Wagtail (rump colour needed and full details for autumn

records); Waxwing; Black Redstart; Ring Ouzel; Wood Warbler; Pied Flycatcher; Willow Tit; Redbacked Shrike; Great Grey Shrike; Raven; Tree Sparrow; Hawfinch; Snow Bunting.

Review of records for 2012: Records that the Committee has not been able to accept are listed below; although as comprehensive as possible, some of the unaccepted records may not have been included (and we do not include reports from social media). Note that * indicates that no description was received; 'date' indicates an unusual sighting; and 'count' indicates a highly unusual number.

White-fronted Goose	3, QMR 18/12*
Brent Goose	1, Frogmill/Hurley 12/10*
Garganey	2, Kintbury 16/5*; 4, Hurley, 4/6*; 3, Lea Fm scrape 4/11
Common Scoter	4 new diggings EGP 7/5 & 12/5*
Great White Egret	1, Hungerford
Red-necked Grebe	2, Wigmore La, Theale 18/11*
Rough-legged Buzzard	1, Sheepdrove 4/11
Montagu's Harrier	1, Eton wick 23/9*
Goshawk	1, Beech Hill 14/4*
Merlin	1, M4 W of jctn 8/9 23/1; 1, Leverton 24/2*; 1, Hosehill 1/5*; 2, Remenham 1/6*; 1, Streatley 15/7*; 1, Wraysbury 12/12*
Hobby	1, Hosehill Lake 2/11*
Grey Plover	1, Lower Farm 11/2*; also 1, 19/4* and 1, 8/10 *
Knot	1, Lower Farm 1/4*
Sanderling	1, Lavell's Lake 1/2*
Bar-tailed Godwit	24, Lower Farm 3/5*
Common Sandpiper	1, Jubilee River 17/10*
Turnstone	1, Lower Farm 1/5*
Caspian Gull	1, Knowl Hill 7/2-8/2, 14/2*; Lower Farm 12/12*
Sandwich Tern	4, Dinton pastures, 4/10*
Turtle Dove	2, Binfield 15/6*; 5, Hambridge Lakes 17/5*; 1, Hungerford 22/6*; 2, Hurst 18/7*
Short-eared Owl	1, Aldermaston 24/4*
Swift	11, Twyford 27/11*
Bee-eater	1 (heard only), Windsor 26/5*
Hoopoe	1, Combe 27/3*
Water Pipit	1, Eton Wick 8/11*
White Wagtail	1, Walbury Hill 28/3*; 1, 2/4*; Bucklebury 1/11-2/11*
Waxwing	c.30, Winnersh 20/2*; 11, Moss End 15/11*
Black Redstart	1, Woolhampton GP, 11/5*
Redstart	1, Padworth Lane GP 29/3*
Greenish Warbler	1, Lower Farm GP 19/8
Wood Warbler	2, Wokingham 2/6*
Willow Warbler	1, Dorney Wetlands 3/12*
Mealy Redpoll	6, Wraysbury 14/1*; 2, Ashley Hill Forest 17/2*; 33, Burchett's Green 29/2*; 2, Ascot Heath 8/12*; 3, Jubilee River 10/12*; 7, Aldworth 17/12*
Twite	2, Lower Farm 6/2*
Hawfinch	1, Streatley 28/10*
Corn Bunting	4, Greenham Common 19/2*.

THE SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 2012

Species accounts were compiled by the account writers shown below. The List was copy-edited by Richard Burness, Rebecca Thomas and Sally Wearing. Scientific editing was by Chris Heard.

Species	Account Writer
Mute Swan – Egyptian Goose; Escapes and Hybrids	Ken Moore
Ruddy Shelduck – Ruddy Duck	Robert Godden
Red Kite - Peregrine	Steve Ricks
Red-legged Partridge – Grey Heron	Andy Horscroft
Oystercatcher - Turnstone	Marek Walford
Pomarine Skua – Arctic Tern	Andy Tomczynski
Rock Dove - Cuckoo	Adam Bassett
Barn Owl – Nightjar, Robin - Mistle Thrush,	Renton Righelato
Water Rail, Moorhen – Great Bustard	Mark Whitaker
Swift – Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Peter Gipson
Woodlark - Dunnock	Richard Crawford
Cetti's Warbler - Firecrest	Roger Stansfield
Spotted Flycatcher - Tree Creeper	Fraser Cottingham
Great Grey Shrike - Starling	Richard Burness
House Sparrow – Corn Bunting	

Abbreviations and place names

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

AGE/SEX

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

PLACES/LOCALITIES

CP	Country Park
GC	Golf course
GP	Gravel Pit(s)
R.	River
SF	Sewage Farm
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
QMR	Queen Mother Reservoir

Please note that the Moor Green Lakes LNR is represented under Eversley GPs

2011 Report Corrigenda

Despite the efforts of the editors and proof-readers, quite a number of errors crept through in the last (2011) report. Thanks are due particularly to Derek Barker and to Brian Clews for detailed comments. For typographical errors and for some omissions of initials where multiple observers were involved, we apologise; errors of substance that we are aware of are corrected below.

P 26, **Bewick's Swan**: delete account (2010 account had been carried forward in error).

p 42, **Red-legged Partridge** line 1: The highest counts were as follows: 37 birds in three coveys of 12, 17 and 8 at Compton Downs on Sept 9th (DJB),...

p 42, **Quail**: line 1: An above average year for this charming little bird, with at least 36 birds recorded at 17 locations across the Berkshire Downs. Birds were reported from Aldworth.....

p 47, **missing account**:

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare passage migrant

A good year for this species with 4 birds recorded, which after becoming quite regular, has not been recorded in the county since 2007. The first, an adult in breeding plumage, was found early morning at Lower Farm GPs on May 5 (NC), then subsequently seen by (MO) until moving off north after a couple of hours. A juvenile, (a very immature bird – perhaps UK bred) was also at Lower Farm GP's on Oct 9 (CDRH) a third record for this site was an adult seen briefly on Oct 21 (NC). The fourth and final record was a bird at Woolhampton GPs on June 16 (KEM).

P 47, **Honey Buzzard**, line 3: ...flew SW over Thrift Wood...

p 48, **Marsh Harrier**, line 14: overwintered (DJB),...

p 51, **Hobby**, line 3: ...8 at Dorney Wetlands on May 14th (ABe),..

p 64, **Great Skua**, line 3: This was the 9th record (11 birds).

p 74, **Cuckoo**, table delete "1" for September

p 94, **Black Redstart**, line 7: delete "and with another there on Nov 26 (CDRH *et al.*)"

p 95, **Wheatear**, line 7: latest records were on May 17th,....

p 93, **Fieldfare**: delete August and September records from table.

p 97, **Garden Warbler**, line 14: replace "...a surprising six were at Harvey's Meadow on 17th (JLS)" with "...one was at Harvey's Meadow on 17th Sep (JSWo),"

p 103 **Magpie**, line 4:...12 at Greenham common on Oct 14th (JI, IW)

p 109 **Common Crossbill**, penultimate line, add: 8 over Eton Wick on Oct 20 (DJB),

p 122, **Extreme dates** (corrections in italics):

Species	ARRIVAL			DEPARTURE		
	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Garganey	Old Windsor	<i>May 1</i>	SK	Hurst Green GP	Oct 2	IDP; AR
Osprey	<i>Pingewood GPs/ Eversley GPs</i>	<i>Mar 26</i>	<i>RHS/DNTR</i>	Queen Mother Reservoir	Sep 7	CDRH
Whinchat	Wargrave Marsh	<i>Apr 21</i>	CDRH	Lea Farm	Oct 9	FJC
Grasshopper Warbler	Thatcham Marsh	Apr 10	JL; IW	Horton	<i>Sep 19</i>	CDRH

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Locally common resident

The monthly maxima at regular count sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	54	51	36	–	–	–	–	–	43	78	49	48
Dinton Pastures CP	50	57	61	6	–	–	–	30	–	23	16	10
Eversley GPs ¹	40	38	44	19	21	21	23	27	32	23	29	42
Lower Farm GPs	3	9	5	6	5	5	3	4	4	6	6	11
Newbury, The Wharf	39	28	30	–	–	38	–	–	–	–	31	–
Theale GPs	63	63	9	29	–	–	–	–	–	65	52	24
Windsor, The Promenade	218	–	225	233	225	236	226	144	251	169	249	154
Wraysbury/Horton GPs	51	4	6	3	2	–	–	–	–	9	14	33

¹ NB. This may include some Hampshire birds

The highest count of Mute Swan for 2012 was, as usual, at the Promenade in Windsor on Sep10th (DF), a figure of 251. **Breeding:** only 34 nest sites were recorded during the year, with 109 cygnets reported, very much under-recorded and a Mute Swan breeding survey should perhaps be considered.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

A scarce and declining passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Four (3 adults and a juvenile) circled over Dorney Wetlands on Jan 2nd (Dave Carter per CDRH). Two adults were at Moor Green Lakes, Eversley GP on Feb 16th (photos: berksbirds).

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

A scarce passage and winter visitor, formerly a feral resident (Amber Listed)

Only one record this year, a single adult bird on Feb 25th flew over Lower Farm Gravel Pit (JA).

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor

The first-winter Tundra Bean Goose *A.f. rossicus*, present since November 2011, was still at Great Meadow Pond during January (DJB, CDRH), being last seen there on Feb 5th(DJB). What was presumably the same bird was then seen with a flock of Greylag Geese at Horton GP on Feb 6th (CDRH).

[A report of a Tundra Bean Goose at Thorpe Park, Surrey the following day (7th Feb) may also have involved this bird]

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Scarce winter visitor

A first-winter was found at Borough Marsh, Wargrave on May 8th (CDRH) but it flew off into Oxfordshire. It was then seen subsequently on May 14th and 17th (CDRH).

Recorder's comment: This wary first-winter - always the first one of the goose-flock to flush - might seem rather late for a wild migrant. But, in fact, the majority of Berkshire's wild Pinkfeet are Spring migrants. There was also a short-stayer in Northants on May 9th and another arrived on Scilly on May 10th (interestingly, in the 2008 Isles of Scilly Bird Report, an analysis of wild goose records by Nigel Hudson reveals that five of the Scilly records of Pink-footed Geese since 1962 were of singles in April-May).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon but regular winter visitor, scarce passage migrant

An adult European White-fronted Goose arrived by the Thames at Purley on Feb 11th with 37 Greylag Geese (NJB), but only stayed one day. During the second winter period, two adult European White-fronted Geese, with 200 plus Greylags, came into Hosehill Lake on Oct 28th (AVL), staying until Nov 1st (CDRH, KEM, RHS).

Recorder's comment: The majority of White-fronted Geese arrive at their English wintering sites during December so the October sighting, above, was very early. In fact, excluding presumed escapees, it is the earliest in Autumn since 12 flew over Holyport on Oct 17th 1993; the earliest ever was the flock of five which flew over Ham Island on 19th October 1958.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common and widespread introduced resident (northern wild populations are Amber Listed)

The monthly maxima figures at the main sites for 2012 were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pingewood GPs	81	76	-	-	10	-	81	137	-	-	44	-
Eversley GPs ¹	27	17	10	10	5	9	26	50	157	33	30	35
Padworth Lane GP	2	96	46	18	18	75	92	-	-	160	29	2
Theale GPs	78	-	84	19	5	-	55	-	1	184	-	100
Windsor Great Park	216	289	306	365	351	100	65	85	354	3	-	1

¹ NB. This may include some Hampshire birds

Other individual counts exceeding 100 and not shown above were: 123 at Borough Marsh, Wargrave on Sep 28th (DJB), 103 at Rowney Predator Lake, Woolhampton Gravel Pits Sep 16th (WeBS), 228 at Winkfield Mar 10th (CDRH), 137 at Windsor Promenade May 21st (DF). **Breeding:** once again, this species, along with Mute Swan and Canada Goose, was under recorded. All these species need periodic surveys to establish more accurate breeding and total population figures.

SNOW GOOSE *Chen caerulescens*

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

The remaining white-morph Snow Goose at Moor Green Lakes, Eversley was joined by a blue-morph bird on Jan 17th (PEH). However the blue-morph bird disappeared on Aug

20th (RFM). The white-morph bird remained until Nov 1st (RCMu), when it was last seen on the New Diggings at Moor Green Lakes.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common and widespread introduced resident

The monthly maxima at regular count sites were :

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	29	70	61	–	–	–	–	–	50	57	15	21
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lea Farm	250	104	38	29	–	42	48	200	11	33	22	123
Eversley GPs ¹	210	315	60	52	50	67	180	360	409	116	45	150
Lower Farm GPs	210	175	28	24	34	44	39	60	36	36	92	187
Pingewood GPs	–	35	–	–	28	1	120	107	–	–	–	–
Remenham/ Remenham Hill	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	200	221	198	187
Thatcham Marsh/GPs	29	82	48	24	58	71	106	85	147	35	7	22
Theale GPs	47	78	84	83	14	–	–	–	20	66	44	19
Twyford GPs	23	39	64	45	19	65	23	140	111	112	25	49
Windsor Great Park	31	78	86	90	69	18	10	10	174	78	1	12
The Promenade, Windsor	161	–	111	67	–	155	204	184	330	256	148	121
Woolhampton GPs	25	–	10	20	19	–	–	40	–	–	–	–

¹ NB. This may include some birds in Hampshire

Other than the above, there were additional counts in excess of 150 at the following sites: 134 on the River Thames, Reading Feb 11th (WeBS), 374 at Streatley Feb 12th (PEH), 198 at Queen Mother Reservoir Jul 28th (CDRH), 404 at Queen Mother Reservoir Aug 7th (CDRH), 304 at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill Sep 1st (DJB) and 214 at Borough Marsh on Sep 28th (DJB).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Localised and declining feral resident, extremely rare wild vagrant

Unlike 2011, this year only one distinct ‘group’ plus a number of single birds were recorded. The group was centred around the Moor Green Lakes area. The initial record was on Jan 7th (MGLR), and the group was present until the end of the year. However the number recorded in the group varied from 15 up to 19 towards the end of the year; it is probable that the highest count was due to the inclusion, at times, of a hybrid Barnacle x Snow Goose and the Snow Goose. It should also be noted that JMC reported that four Barnacles were raised locally, at Wellington Country Park (Hants). Single Barnacle Geese were recorded at Bearwood on Jan 6th (THar), at Borough Marsh, Wargrave on May 10th (CDRH), at Dinton Pastures CP Aug 1st (GWils), Lea Farm GP Jun 21st (SDay) until Aug 26th (MFW). Finally, there was a single bird at Whiteknights Park and Lake on Jun 24th (PG).

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Most of the Brent Geese recorded were dark-bellied but some were not assigned to a race. There were only two records during the first winter period: two on Rowney Predator Lake, Woolhampton and fields to the east on Jan 15th (GEW *et al.*) and a first winter at Summerleaze Gravel Pit on Mar 26th (CDRH). During the second winter period, the first record was of a single bird at the New Diggings, MGLR area, on Oct 9th (MGM, RFM). The next two records were from Queen Mother Reservoir: a single dark-bellied adult on Oct 24th, and then five (4 adults & a juv.) the following day (both CDRH). To finish off October, seven birds were recorded overflying Moatlands Gravel Pit, Theale GP on the 28th (JA). There were three records in November: three birds at Queen Mother Reservoir on the 20th (MMc), and then two adults at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 30th (CDRH). Nearby, a single adult briefly joined a gull flock in fields at Colnbrook on Nov 25th (CDRH).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Common introduced resident in mid and east Berkshire, more local in the west

Another year of expansion within Berkshire. The monthly maxima at the regular count sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures/ Lea Farm	1	–	5	11	15	15	–	–	8	2	–	2
Eversley GPs ¹	40	10	14	14	14	12	55	68	158	105	75	3
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	3	–	4	–	15	44	22	–	–	5
Remenham/ Remenham Hill	8	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	35	2	–	2
Theale GPs	11	2	3	9	7	8	15	17	55	–	8	6
Windsor Great Park	8	26	39	25	11	16	15	–	10	–	12	15

¹ NB.This may include some Hampshire birds

There were additional counts in excess of 50 birds at the following sites: 103 at Holyport on Aug 24th (CDRH), 68 at Eton Wick on Sep 14th (CDRH), 78 at Bottle Lane on Oct 22nd (DJB) and 74 at Aston on Nov 2nd (CDRH). **Breeding:** prolific. Again, this was under recorded, but they will breed in any month of the year and in good numbers. Their ability, in many instances, to be very good parents help their offspring to be very successful.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare resident, probably of introduced origin as well as occasional migrants (presumably of feral origin, but truly wild birds a possibility)

Following two years with no reports of this species, two were seen on Feb 25th flying over Newbury Racecourse towards Greenham Road (PGo).

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor (Amber Listed)

Shelduck were recorded from 27 locations: seven in west Berkshire, nine in mid Berkshire and 11 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	2	2	4	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dorney Wetlands	2	2	4	12	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Eversley GPs	2	1	7	5	9	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Great Meadow Pond	2	3	7	11	8	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	3	3	3	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	3
Padworth Lane GP	3	10	8	10	5	9	2	–	–	–	–	2
Pingewood GPs	–	4	4	2	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	1	3	7	6	9	6	–	–	1	–	2	–
Slough Sewage Farm	–	–	2	5	24	11	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	3	1	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GPs	6	3	4	3	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	2	1	3	5	4	2	2	1	–	1	–	3
Number of birds	3	2	5	29	25	10	9	7	–	1	–	3

First Winter: Entering 2012, Shelduck numbers remained at the low numbers of the previous December and reports from the main sites typically involved one or two birds, although Woolhampton Gravel Pits briefly held six on Jan 16th (PD *et al.*). The same general situation continued through February, this time with Padworth Lane GPs experiencing a surge in numbers peaking with ten on Feb 21st (RCo *et al.*). The Spring arrival saw numbers increase widely during March and April at the main sites. The high count of 24 was at Slough SF on May 21st (CDRH), accompanied by a *Tadorna* hybrid. Elsewhere three pairs were on fields at Horton on Apr 14th (CDRH) and 18 were on the Review Ground, Windsor on Apr 27th (CDRH, KPD), but very few found their way to other locations. **Breeding:** Although good numbers of Shelduck continued to be reported during the early summer, there were only two cases where breeding was proven. An adult with seven half-grown ducklings was watched at Midgham GP on Jul 21st (JPM). At Padworth Lane GP, four young were found on Jun 2nd and their numbers were seen to decline over the following days (KEM *et al.*). At Moor Green Lakes, two pairs were recorded until the middle of June (MO) and on May 21st it appeared that a male was on guard at a possible nest site. At Amner's Farm, Pingewood, a pair was reported throughout the period until Jul 20th (KEM *et al.*). In Windsor Great Park, ten were reported from the Review Ground on May 20th (KPD), and two pairs remained on Great Meadow Pond until mid June (DJB). On a sad note, a dead Shelduck was seen on the M4 alongside Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 27th (PB-T) and July 12th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** According to the records received, Shelduck all but disappeared from the county through the autumn and early winter. A juvenile at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 25th (CDRH), an adult female at Heron Lakes, Wryasbury on Oct 23rd (CDRH) and two at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 21st (CDRH) were the only sightings in those three months. Then in December singles were reported from a number of sites in the east of

the county: Dorney Wetlands from Dec 7th to 13th (CDRH *et al.*), Ankerwycke Dec 29th (CDRH), Horton GPs Dec 30th (CDRH) and Cock Marsh Dec 30th (CDRH). Further west, up to three were at Lower Farm GP between Dec 1st and 3rd (JA *et al.*) and up to two were reported from Padworth Lane GP between Dec 27th and 28th (PEH, SAG).

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Locally common introduced resident

Mandarin Duck were recorded from 55 locations: eight in west Berkshire, 22 in mid Berkshire and 25 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	12	–	–	13
Eversley GPs	–	4	3	5	4	2	1	1	3	8	–	6
Great Meadow Pond	–	7	11	10	3	1	1	22	22	142	3	–
Maiden Erleigh Lake	4	9	–	3	13	–	–	–	–	1	11	6
Whiteknights Park Lake	40	–	–	–	8	2	3	–	–	8	–	4
Windsor Great Park ¹	–	8	9	6	4	–	6	2	1	–	5	–
Wraysbury GPs	2	–	–	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	3	4	11	17	15	8	5	4	6	8	3	4
Number of birds	7	9	25	39	48	14	9	16	22	39	20	14

¹ denotes counts made away from Great Meadow Pond

Mandarin Duck continues to be reported from its traditional sites, though the fluctuations in numbers seen in the preceding table are probably a reflection of the specie’s elusive nature at times and uneven observer coverage. The largest counts were of 40 in Whiteknights Park on Jan 1st (PEH) while on Oct 21st, a spectacular 142 on Great Meadow Pond (DJB) were seen to arrive in six flocks, presumably disturbed from nearby sites. **Breeding:** Birds were widely recorded during the breeding season, but there were few reports of breeding outcomes. In the east of the county, a female was seen with two young on Great Meadow Pond on May 27th (DJB) while a pair and one juvenile was on Ox Pond on Jul 15th (MHu). In mid Berkshire a female had 12 young chicks at Maiden Erleigh Lake on May 1st (LGL), a female with seven chicks was reported from Green Park, Reading on May 12th (PG), a female was seen with one chick at Fobney Island on May 28th (RCr), while a female with two ducklings was on Whiteknights Lake on Jul 5th (LBM). Finally at Searle’s Farm Lane GP, a female with seven ducklings was watched on the late date of Aug 28th (JA). In the west of the county, breeding was suspected at Paice’s Wood, Wasing (JLe) and at Woolhampton GPs (GEW, KEM).

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

Wigeon were recorded from 24 locations: four in west Berkshire, eight in mid Berkshire and 12 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	280	236	90	–	–	–	–	–	4	108	169	330
Dinton Pastures CP	151	500	98	8	–	–	–	1	–	42	3	–
Eversley GPs	391	278	66	11	–	–	–	1	31	157	219	225
Great Meadow Pond	212	160	64	34	–	–	6	2	48	55	10	3
Horton GPs	21	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	27
Lower Farm GP	28	68	35	1	–	–	–	2	–	19	8	20
Pingewood GPs	–	215	5	2	–	–	–	–	48	–	–	–
Theale GPs	270	120	62	5	1	–	–	9	75	90	96	122
Twyford GPs	60	61	19	–	–	–	–	–	44	93	51	145
Woolhampton GPs	6	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2
Wraysbury GPs	14	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	40	194	44	47
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	4	6	5	1	–	1	–	–	2	4	5	5
Number of birds	65	61	16	1	–	1	–	–	4	24	205	105

First Winter: In the first winter period, the highest counts came from Dinton Pastures CP with 500 on Feb 12th (WeBS) and Eversley GPs with 391 on Jan 14th (JMC), while the count of 212 on Jan 15th was the observer's all-time record count for Great Meadow Pond (DJB). The only sizeable flocks in the west of the county were noted at Lower Farm GP, peaking at 68 on Feb 25th (IW). Numbers throughout fell away rapidly through March, and after the first week of April, counts were down to single figures at just four sites. **Summer:** Very few reports were received during the Summer: a drake was present on Theale Main Pit between May 1st and May 11th (KEM, MFW). Another drake was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 13th (CDRH), while a party of six was in Windsor Great Park on Jul 21st (CDRH). **Second Winter:** Small numbers started to appear at many sites in August with the first singles at Eversley GPs on Aug 11th (MGLR) and at Great Meadow Pond on the 12th (DJB). Larger flocks were reported after the middle of September. At the main sites, maximum counts were made at Colne Mere, Wraysbury with 194 on Oct 25th (JMC, WeBS), at Eversley GPs with 225 on Dec 12th (JMC) and at Searle's Farm Lane GP with 330 on Dec 23rd (JA). Elsewhere a flock of 150 was reported from the Arborfield Flood Meadows on Nov 26th (DJB).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Common winter visitor, uncommon summer resident which breeds in small numbers (Amber Listed)

Records were received from about 50 locations and the monthly high counts at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	4	4	4	2	–	–	–	–	5	–	–	4
Bray GPs	58	50	59	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	4	72
Burghfield GPs	186	297	30	–	–	–	–	–	26	63	147	263
Dinton Pastures CP	214	200	37	10	–	10	5	9	20	24	68	45
Dorney Wetlands	17	108	14	2	4	8	–	–	15	11	19	42
Eversley GPs	184	175	23	7	8	4	3	4	10	30	75	172
Great Meadow Pond	248	249	110	59	14	28	28	38	127	112	69	3
Harveys Meadow, Hungerford	2	7	4	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Horton GPs	45	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	74	84
Lower Farm GP	77	110	135	101	26	13	10	30	19	59	27	89
Summerleaze GP	7	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	6	15
Thatcham GPs	9	41	40	55	19	3	2	3	6	3	4	–
Theale GPs	286	201	3	3	2	–	–	103	114	56	60	124
Twyford GPs	65	64	8	4	–	4	10	7	6	26	64	169
Woolhampton GPs	8	14	2	2	1	18	–	13	13	8	4	36
Wraysbury GPs	171	14	4	1	1	–	–	–	–	233	102	281
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	3	7	7	10	15	2	2	–	1	1	3	4
Number of birds	124	65	43	37	37	31	14	–	1	1	20	71

First Winter: Peak counts of 297 were noted at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Feb 12th (WeBS), 286 on Theale Main Pit on Jan 15th (RJB) and 249 at Great Meadow Pond (a site record) on Feb 26th (DJB), but the record high counts at Horton GPs in 2011 were not repeated in 2012. At most sites wintering birds had departed by the middle of April.

Summer/Breeding: There were four reports of breeding attempts: on May 27th, a pair with five ducklings was at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford (JSWo) and on May 31st a nest with 12 eggs was found at Fobney Island (RRi). On Jun 30th, nine ducklings were seen at Lower Farm GPs (IW, JL) while at Slough Sewage Farm a female with nine ducklings was located on Jul 8th (CDRH), with just seven ducklings remaining on Jul 14th (KPD). Gadwall were recorded at approximately 24 other sites through the summer months with peaks of 18 at Woolhampton GPs on Jun 23rd (WeBS), 15 at Burnthouse Lane floods on Jun 17th (PB-T), while at Great Meadow Pond numbers reached 28 on Jun 24th and Jul 1st (DJB).

Second Winter: The first indication of birds returning was seen at Hosehill Lake LNR where 103 were counted on Aug 14th (RCr), and the other main sites saw their numbers increase thereafter. The highest count of 263 was made at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Dec 16th (WeBS). Counts from other locations in the period were few and low, the exception being 57 recorded on the flood at Eton Wick on Dec 31st (KPD).

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor, rare in summer though has bred (Amber Listed)

Teal were recorded from 35 locations: ten in west Berkshire, eight in mid Berkshire and 17 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	114	14	4	–	–	–	–	–	9	7	–	26
Bray GPs	16	5	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	26
Dinton Pastures CP	34	81	10	7	–	–	–	4	24	29	8	–
Dorney Wetlands	3	158	5	–	–	–	–	3	–	2	–	50
Eversley GPs	30	46	17	23	–	1	2	3	14	7	9	105
Great Meadow Pond	26	45	14	6	–	–	–	6	10	6	13	21
Lower Farm GP	114	101	21	11	–	1	3	16	18	40	29	110
Pingewood GPs	62	–	20	6	–	–	–	–	2	–	20	–
Slough Sewage Farm	115	–	88	–	–	2	2	11	16	74	83	175
Theale GPs	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	3	2	10	8	98
Woolhampton GPs	22	76	–	4	–	1	–	1	2	–	1	8
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	6	11	7	4	2	–	2	5	3	4	6	7
Number of birds	47	122	47	31	3	–	2	11	19	21	38	275

First Winter: At most of the main sites, numbers in January were lower than at the end of 2011, although Aldermaston GPs saw a significant increase when 114 were counted standing on the frozen lake on Jan 17th (JPM). Generally, numbers gradually reduced as the winter progressed, but in the east of the county an influx was noted around the end of January with 115 at Slough Sewage Farm on Jan 28th (CDRH) and 158 at the Dorney Wetlands on Feb 11th (DJB), while Padworth Lane GP experienced a peak of 75 on Feb 4th (PD). By April, counts at most sites were down to single figures, exceptions being 23 at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 7th (MGLR) and 17 at Thatcham on Apr 16th (BJW). **Summer:** Teal were reported from seven sites between May and early July with up to two birds at Slough Sewage Farm (CDRH, KPD), Summerleaze GPs (CDRH), Eton Wick (CDRH), Moor Green Lakes LNR (MGLR, RCMu), Woolhampton GPs (WeBS), Padworth Lane GP (KEM, MFW) and Lower Farm GPs (IW, JL). There was no evidence of breeding; indeed the report of a drake and a duck at Padworth Lane GP on May 5th (MFW) was the only suggestion of a pair being present. **Second Winter:** During August many sites were reporting three or four birds, and thereafter numbers built up gradually at the main sites. By the end of the year, 110 had been recorded at Lower Farm GP on Dec 2nd (NC) and 105 were at Eversley GP on Dec 28th (JMC). A flock of 175 birds at Slough Sewage Farm on Dec 23rd (CDRH) and a flock of 214 (the largest of the period) on the floods at Eton Wick on Dec 13th (DJB) may have involved the same birds.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

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

Monthly maxima at selected sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	23	7	4	–	1	–	20	–	35	26	–	66
Dinton Pastures CP	25	26	79	6	5	–	–	32	20	49	77	4
Eversley GPs	94	51	37	32	22	28	50	35	77	61	43	163
Great Meadow Pond	46	42	35	35	31	50	24	47	85	108	21	24
Lower Farm GP	16	50	10	9	13	14	15	16	10	30	29	25
Thatcham NDC and GPs	144	188	59	90	53	65	65	95	98	109	79	76
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	27	22	25	42	29	20	15	11	16	20	28	17
Number of birds	560	586	291	459	223	196	371	284	346	884	549	405

Reports were received from 96 localities throughout the year, with a peak of 281 on the River Thames at Windsor on Oct 21st (KPD). Successful breeding was recorded at 21 sites and a nest with 13 eggs was located at Great Meadow Pond on Mar 18th (DJB). At the start of the year, the wintering population had generally departed by the end of February. After the summer, numbers started to increase gradually in September reaching the annual peak for the county in October.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers (Amber Listed)

Pintail were recorded from 13 locations: six in west Berkshire, four in mid Berkshire and three in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	3	11	4	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	–	1
Number of birds	4	39	6	–	–	–	–	–	2	5	–	1

First Winter: The year started with a female at Eversley GPs on Jan 4th (PJC) which was followed by a pair on Jan 7th (RCMu) and a long-staying female between Jan 30th and Mar 19th (BMA *et al.*). There was also a drake at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury on Feb 4th (CDRH). There was a female at Woolhampton GPs on Feb 23rd (KEM) and the two drakes there on Mar 1st (KEM) were probably the same two drakes observed between Feb 11th and Mar 6th at Padworth Lane GPs (MFW *et al.*), while four drakes were present there on Feb 21st (RCo). At Theale Main Pit, four drakes and three ducks were found on Feb 4th (MFW), decreasing to three the next day (ABT, KEM), with a drake there on Feb 13th (JA), and nearby a female was at Moatlands GP on Feb 19th (CMc). Up to two drakes and a female were present at Dinton Pastures CP between Feb 8th and Mar 3rd (FJC *et al.*). A drake at Purley on Thames on Feb 11th (NJB) was the first that the observer had seen on the River Thames in 40 years of bird-watching! In a winter with an above average number of records, there were also a few sightings in the west of the county, probably involving the same birds: a drake at Leverton on Jan 23rd (PBy), a drake at Donnington Grove, Newbury on Jan 25th (IW), a male and a female at Lower Farm GP on Feb 11th (IW, JL, SAG) with just the male present the next day (CBur), and finally a drake at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre on Feb 17th (JCh). The largest

group of the first period winter was a flock of 17 (9 drakes) which joined the gull-roost at QMR on Feb 25th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** Late summer passage was noted in the east of the county with a female or juvenile in Windsor Great Park on Sep 16th (DJB) and on Sep 19th (CDRH), and a juvenile male at Heron Lakes, Wraysbury GPs on Sep 17th (CDRH). An adult female was noted skulking on a few occasions at Colne Mere, Wraysbury GPs between Oct 18th and Oct 28th (CDRH). Also on Oct 28th two drakes lacking the elongated tail feathers were initially found at Theale Main Pit and then relocated at Searles Farm Lane GPs the same day, and this last site also hosted a drake on Dec 10th and 11th (AVL, CMC).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Regular passage migrant in small numbers and rare summer visitor, has bred (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

2012 was an improvement over recent years with 38 records involving around 22 birds, and reports coming from one site in the breeding season. **Spring:** The first report was of a male seen flying north over the canal at Bottom Lane GP during the TABGG walk on Mar 18th (JA). Nearby, Hosehill Lake LNR hosted a drake on Mar 23rd (MO) and another on May 26th (AVL, KEM). Other March birds were a drake on Grove Lake on Mar 24th (EN, JHew, MGLR) with three there on Apr 7th (MGLR), and a pair on Redwood Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 20th which apparently remained until Apr 11th (MO). **Summer:** There was an eclipse drake at Lea Farm Lake on Jun 4th (G Emmet). **Autumn:** Seven birds, mostly singles, were noted in the autumn from a number of sites. The first was an adult at Dorney Wetlands which had flushed off Dorney Common flood-pool on Jul 28th (CDRH), followed by a juvenile there on East Marsh on Sep 15th (CDRH). A juvenile female was reported from Lea Farm Lake between Aug 28th and Sep 7th (MFW *et al.*), a female was found at Hosehill Lake LNR on Sep 21st (AVL), and three reports of a juvenile at Wraysbury GPs between Sep 19th and Oct 20th were thought to relate to the same bird (CDRH).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in summer though occasionally breeds (Amber Listed)

Shoveler were recorded from 30 locations: six in west Berkshire, 11 in mid Berkshire and 13 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	13	8	7	–	–	–	–	–	10	22	–	19
Burghfield GPs	50	57	10	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	4	4
Dinton Pastures CP	12	14	39	6	2	4	1	12	44	27	6	–
Dorney Wetlands/ Slough SF	3	6	2	–	4	3	–	12	–	8	18	24
Eversley GPs	45	92	36	5	2	–	–	3	6	23	23	63
Great Meadow Pond	14	1	12	12	2	–	–	41	77	50	22	1
Lower Farm GP	137	153	95	6	4	1	1	17	21	23	18	50
Moatlands GPs	–	150	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	20	–	140
Pingewood GPs	–	15	44	9	–	–	2	3	4	–	1	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	1	–	6	2	–
Thatcham NDC and GPs	82	95	53	2	1	–	–	12	21	17	3	2

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Theale Main & Hosehill	19	105	15	2	2	2	–	18	8	13	4	80
Twyford GPs	19	17	2	–	–	–	2	–	1	6	12	22
Whiteknights Park Lake	42	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	1	14	–	5
Woolhampton GPs	4	26	7	1	–	1	–	2	9	4	10	14
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	6	7	2	1	3	–	2	1	1	2	3	4
Number of birds	69	80	19	4	4	–	2	10	1	47	73	35

First Winter: Peak numbers occurred in February during a very cold spell. 153 were at Lower Farm GP on Feb 18th (IW, JL), 150 at Moatlands GP on Feb 14th (KEM) and 105 at Theale Main GP on Feb 12th (RJB, WeBS). By April, numbers were down to single figures at all sites and virtually all had gone by the middle of May. **Summer:** Small numbers were reported sporadically through the summer but there was no evidence of breeding. At Lower Farm GP a male and a female were separately reported during July (IW, JL, NC), and at Slough Sewage Farm, two drakes and a female appeared on Jun 3rd (CDRH) reducing to one drake by Jun 17th (KPD, CDRH). A juvenile was on the flood at Eton Wick on July 27th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** Birds started returning in the middle of August when 12 were counted at Lower Farm GP on Aug 11th (IW), 11 were at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Aug 12th (DJB) and ten arrived on the flooded field at Eton Wick on Aug 15th (CDRH). Thereafter numbers increased steadily throughout. Away from the main sites, 20 were on flood meadows at Arborfield on Nov 26th (DJB). Despite receiving just two reports of Shoveler from Moatlands in this period, the flock of 140 there on Dec 23rd (JA) was the only flock to exceed 100 birds in the second winter.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce visitor of presumed feral origin, has bred

This species was recorded throughout the year with monthly maxima as follows:

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

First Winter: Apart from the resident drake at Thatcham which stayed throughout 2012, just one bird remained in January from the small influx of the previous autumn, a female which frequented Bottom Lane GPs. Reports of a single female continued through February from various gravel pits in the Theale area, joined by a drake at Theale Main Pit on Feb 11th (ABT). There were four (2 drakes) at QMR on Feb 5th (CDRH). Numbers increased in March with a pair at Moor Green on Mar 6th and 7th (BMA, MGLR, RFM), two at Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 26th (BGU), and a pair at Hosehill Lake, with three there on Mar 18th (KEM). **Summer:** Most reports from the Theale area concerned a pair at Hosehill Lake with two pairs there on Apr 7th (SRi) and on May 26th (AVL), and probably the same four birds were at Pingewood GPs on May 31st (KEM), but there was no proof of successful breeding. Sporadic sightings continued in the area through the summer. A pair was also at Lands End GP on Apr 17th (SAB). **Second Winter:** In addition to the regular drake at Thatcham and up to four in the Hosehill Lake area, the only new arrivals were one drake at Streatley on Nov 18th (NJB), three drakes and a female on Wraysbury Village Pit on Nov 28th (CDRH) reducing to just one drake on Dec 1st (CDRH, MMc) which stayed until

Dec 29th on the adjacent BA pit (CDRH), and finally one drake at Baylis Pond, Slough on Dec 11th (BGU, GJ).

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer though occasionally breeds (Amber Listed)

Pochard were recorded from 27 locations: five in west Berkshire, eight in mid Berkshire and 14 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	29	18	16	–	–	–	–	4	6	8	–	13
Bray GPs	93	60	59	–	–	–	–	–	–	12	98	161
Burghfield GPs	43	32	35	–	–	–	–	–	6	–	46	40
Dinton Pastures CP	67	90	17	–	1	–	–	–	2	17	48	60
Dorney Wetlands	11	175	4	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	11	30
Eversley GPs	22	21	10	–	8	1	1	–	2	16	29	62
Great Meadow Pond	35	51	36	10	7	3	28	52	30	62	35	69
Lower Farm GP	47	25	29	8	11	12	10	24	20	23	20	21
Moatlands GPs	96	250	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	6	60	86
Thatcham Marsh/GPs	36	57	28	8	6	8	2	9	4	23	15	18
Theale GPs ¹	84	22	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	35	58	43
Twyford GPs	11	15	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	19	14
Woolhampton GPs	39	81	10	5	7	6	1	12	7	30	53	68
Wraysbury GPs	97	30	1	–	–	–	14	12	–	115	237	220
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	5	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	4	2	5	2
Number of birds	38	11	27	5	1	14	9	12	50	5	48	34

¹ Excluding Moatlands

First Winter: Maximum counts came from Moatlands Main Lake where 250 were counted on Feb 19th (CMC) and from Dorney Wetlands which held at least 175 on Feb 11th (DJB). There were few reports away from the main sites summarised in the table, though Padworth Lane experienced a brief peak of 24 on Mar 1st (PEH). After early April, numbers were down to single figures at each site, but these numbers continued or even increased into May, especially at sites that hold a good summering population such as Great Meadow Pond and Lower Farm GP. **Summer/Breeding:** 2012 was another good year with breeding confirmed at three sites. A female with three ducklings was found at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 23rd, and the full brood of seven ducklings showed on Jun 30th (SAG). At Great Meadow Pond, a female and two chicks was first reported on Jul 1st on the Sewage Treatment Works ponds, and were still in the area until at least Aug 12th (DJB, CDRH). At Lower Farm GPs, a female with four young ducklings was found on Jun 30th (JA *et al.*). Small numbers were also present at ten other sites during the summer. **Second Winter:** The largest counts were made in the east of the county where 237 were recorded at Wraysbury GPs on Nov 29th (JMC) and 161 were at Bray GPs on Dec 19th (BDC). Away from the main sites, the highest count was of 40 at Old Slade on Sep 26th (CDRH). In the west of the county, despite holding some of the highest numbers of Pochard during the summer, the maximum count at Lower Farm GP reached just 23 on Oct 13th (IW, JL).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

Several reports were received of a drake in the first winter period, and it is presumed that they refer to the same individual that was present at Dinton Pastures CP at the end of 2011. It was located at Woolhampton GPs on Jan 14th and 15th (KEM *et al.*), and was reported from there again between Feb 1st and 12th (KEM *et al.*). Five days later a drake was found at Bray GPs and this bird stayed until Feb 23rd (CDRH *et al.*).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, numbers increasing in winter (Amber Listed)

Tufted Duck were recorded from 54 locations: 14 in west Berkshire, 15 in mid Berkshire and 25 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	52	18	20	10	12	–	2	–	8	10	–	18
Ascot Heath	–	–	9	11	5	–	–	3	20	65	62	10
Bray GPs	400	187	370	37	9	–	–	–	76	179	264	593
Burghfield GPs	270	241	227	–	–	–	–	–	34	126	662	272
Dinton Pastures CP	110	147	104	12	–	1	3	18	8	74	171	37
Eversley GPs	301	266	231	71	26	45	91	116	127	115	142	337
Great Meadow Pond	36	59	72	60	26	17	8	1	8	30	37	25
Horton GPs	521	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	191	436	615
Lower Farm GP	33	28	50	40	23	20	29	30	14	15	20	54
Queen Mother Reservoir	18	468	7	–	2	–	105	–	160	143	42	42
Thatcham NDC	42	64	22	32	13	4	48	31	33	25	16	37
Theale GPs ¹	60	38	–	–	–	1	17	6	–	34	37	57
Theale Main GP	325	377	184	105	–	–	9	6	–	–	254	244
Twyford GPs	52	76	55	21	15	12	14	21	13	11	81	35
Woolhampton GPs	113	175	52	53	38	23	40	8	83	90	47	137
Wraysbury GPs	748	150	126	72	–	–	–	–	–	855	683	925
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	11	8	10	12	19	9	8	4	7	5	11	9
Number of birds	825	923	227	130	126	33	47	54	61	241	171	400

¹ Excluding Main Pit

First Winter: Large numbers were reported at many locations in the period suggesting that the wintering population in the county was roughly double the average for recent years quoted in “The Birds of Berkshire” (second edition, 2013), though this may be due in part to birds moving between sites. The highest numbers were 750 at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 11th (DJB), 468 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 12th (WeBS) and a combined count of 1269 at Wraysbury and Horton GPs on Jan 10th (JMC). By the middle of March numbers had reduced considerably. **Summer/Breeding:** Breeding was confirmed at nine sites, with at least six successful broods at Eversley GPs (MGLR, RCMu). At Lower Farm GP where two broods were reported, it was thought that high water levels had affected the productivity.

There were three broods at Hosehill Lake LNR (KEM, MFW), and on Jul 23rd, a female was watched with 16 ducklings (CMc)! **Second Winter:** Again, winter counts were high. Early in the period, an impressive flock of 885 was counted at Wraysbury GPs on Oct 25th, including a female with a French nasal band (JMC). Other large counts were 662 at Burghfield GPs on Nov 18th (NJB), 593 at Bray GPs on Dec 19th (BDC) and a combined count of 1540 at Wraysbury and Horton GPs on Dec 18th (JMC). Ascot Heath experienced its all-time record numbers, rising to 65 on Oct 31st (RJD).

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Scarce though annual winter visitor and passage migrant (Red Listed)

2012 was a poor year for this species with just six birds recorded. **First Winter:** A female was found at Theale Main Pit on Feb 12th (RJB), and a first winter female was present on Village Pit, Wraysbury between Mar 13th and Mar 27th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** At Wraysbury an adult drake moulting out of eclipse was on Village Pit on Oct 14th (CDRH) and was relocated on Hythe lagoon the next day before flying off (CDRH). At Dinton Pastures, a drake was present on Nov 7th (RSJ). At Bray GPs, a first winter female put in appearances between Nov 24th and Dec 27th (CDRH), while a second first winter was there between Nov 25th and Dec 4th (CDRH). A third bird present at the end of November was presumed to be a Scaup x Tufted Duck hybrid (CDRH).

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Rare winter visitor

An early morning visit in pouring rain to Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 26th paid off with the discovery of a female or first winter which subsequently stayed until the end of the year (CDRH, MMc *et al.*).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

A good year for this species with reports of 14-16 birds at four locations. **Spring:** A drake was found on Mar 19th at Padworth Lane GPs and remained until Apr 10th (KEM *et al.*). On May 2nd, a flock of six females was found at Theale Main Pit, apparently freshly arrived and they remained there for the day (RJB *et al.*); there has only been one larger flock in spring, 30 males on Apr 25th 1993 also at Theale Main Pit. **Autumn:** A series of records relating to six birds followed from QMR. A drake was present on Oct 6th (MFW), followed by another drake on Oct 22nd (CDRH). There were 3 (2 drakes, 1 fem/juv) on Oct 26th (CDRH) and then a single juvenile on Oct 30th (CDRH). Finally a drake was present between Nov 16th and Nov 18th (MMc *et al.*).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Locally common winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Goldeneye were recorded from 15 locations: three in west Berkshire, six in mid Berkshire and six in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	13	20	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	6
Eversley GPs	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Horton GPs	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	7
Moatlands GPs	6	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	10
Theale GPs ¹	8	8	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	8
Wraysbury GPs	52	12	32	–	–	–	–	–	–	12	27	53
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	2
Number of birds	10	7	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	10

¹ Excluding Moatlands

First Winter: A typical January, with around 100 birds recorded, then somewhat lower than normal counts in February and March. The last birds of the winter were on Mar 28th, with two pairs at Lea Farm (DPN) and three females at Hosehill Lake (PB-T). **Second Winter:** The first of the autumn and well ahead of the main arrival were two adult females at Wraysbury GPs on Oct 4th accompanied by an influx of Tufted Ducks (CDRH). At the same site, a drake was present on Oct 15th (CDRH) and a drake and a female on Oct 17th (CDRH), but by the end of October there were regular reports from Wraysbury GPs and Theale GPs. The majority of reports in this period came from the regular sites shown in the preceding table. Away from those locations, a female was at Lower Farm GPs on Oct 24th (MO), another female was at Brimpton GPs on Nov 26th (GEW), a drake was at Summerleaze GPs on Dec 12th (CDRH), while at Bray GPs an adult drake was present between Nov 19th and Nov 30th (CDRH) and a juvenile was there between Nov 22nd and Nov 25th (CDRH).

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Uncommon winter visitor but regular at preferred sites (Amber Listed)

Smew were recorded from seven locations: four in mid Berkshire and three in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at these sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moor Green Lakes	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	2	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
Twyford GPs	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Wraysbury GPs	7	26	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Number of birds	1	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2

First Winter: Smew were recorded from the start of the year until Mar 10th with a pronounced increase in numbers for a week in early February. As usual, largest numbers were reported from Wraysbury GPs, with two to eight present until Mar 5th, but for a week in early February there was an influx with peaks of 24 on Feb 5th (BGu, CDRH) rising to 26 on Feb 8th (CDRH). At the other regular sites, a female remained at Moor Green Lakes from Feb 4th to Feb 23rd (RCMu *et al.*). One or two redheads were at Theale GPs from Jan 2nd until Mar 10th with a peak of three between Feb 2nd and Feb 4th (KEM *et al.*). At Twyford GPs, a redhead on Feb 5th (MHT) was joined by another on Feb 7th (LRB), and then by a male on Feb 11th (DBI), though not subsequently recorded from there. Away from the regular sites, a redhead was at Horton GPs on Jan 10th (JMC). The last report was of a redhead at Hosehill Lake LNR and Bottom Lane GP on Mar 10th (HWh, MFW). **Second Winter:** The first reports were on Dec 1st with a redhead at Horton GPs (CDRH) and two at Wraysbury GPs (MMc) where numbers increased until there were seven including three drakes on Dec 30th (CDRH *et al.*). One or two were at Theale GPs from Dec 4th (PMC *et al.*) with a peak of three on Dec 17th (AVL). The only other reports were of isolated sightings: a redhead on Dec 12th at Searle's Farm Lane GP (KEM) and another on Dec 27th at the Loddon BBOWT Reserve (ADB).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

2012 continued the run of poor years for this species, and again there were no spring records. Both reports came from Theale Main Pit – a juvenile on Nov 15th (AVL), and a male and female were photographed there on Dec 25th (CDRH).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon winter visitor though regular at preferred sites, has summered

Goosander were recorded from 24 locations: four in west Berkshire, nine in mid Berkshire and 11 in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima at these sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Eversley GPs	47	67	25	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	21	64
Moatlands GPs	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	1	16	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs ¹	5	20	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9
Wraysbury GPs	18	20	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	32
Elsewhere	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of sites	5	14	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	5
Number of birds	10	51	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	11

¹ Excluding Moatlands

First Winter: Eversley Gravel Pits remained the premier location for Goosanders in the county, with numbers at Grove Lake boosted at dusk with birds flying in to roost. The peak count of 67 occurred on Feb 3rd (RCMu). Good numbers remained into March with 25 on Mar 2nd (RCMu), and the three on Mar 26th (RFM) were the last to be reported in the county for the first winter period. Wraysbury GPs also held good numbers until mid February with J20 on 1st (CDRH). According to *The Birds of Berkshire* (second edition,

2013), redheads usually outnumber drakes, but this was consistently not the case at Eversley GPs and Wraysbury GPs where the proportions of drakes in the largest flocks reached 58%. At their other regular sites, numbers peaked at Theale GPs between Feb 11-12th with 20 (MFW, RJB, WeBS), at Padworth Lane GP with 16 on Feb 25th (KEM) and at Jubilee River with six on Feb 13th (BDC). Elsewhere, ones and twos were reported from a number of sites but more notable sightings were 14 on Feb 19th on the River Thames at Windsor between Albert Bridge and Ham Island (DJB), seven at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 9th (CL), 4 at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 18th (CDRH), seven at Virginia Water on Mar 1st (DF), three at Heath Lake on Jan 3rd (IT) and four drakes at Cheapside on Feb 16th (PM). **Second Winter:** A redhead at Ascot Heath on Oct 9th (RJD) was three weeks ahead of the main arrival at the end of the month, and one of the earliest arrival dates on record. At Eversley GPs, a redhead was reported from Oct 28th (MGLR *et al.*), but by Nov 30th numbers had increased to 21 at the roost (JMC), and to 64 on Dec 30th (JMC). At Dinton Pastures CP, a redhead was present from Nov 3rd (FJC *et al.*) with two there on Dec 21st and 22nd (SDay). At Wraysbury GPs, the first was reported on Nov 27th (MHu), and numbers steadily built up in December with 32 there on Dec 18th (JMC). At Lower Farm GP, single redheads were reported on Oct 30th (PEH), and also between Dec 3rd and 12th (JRSto, NC), while up to four were reported from Queen Mother Reservoir between Dec 3rd and 13th (CDRH, FJC, PEH). A redhead was present at Searle's Farm Lane GP on Nov 25th (KEM), and the birds were present at Theale GPs from Dec 3rd with two redheads (KEM), peaking at nine between Dec 11th and 13th (AVL, KEM). Finally, two redheads were on Virginia Water on Dec 15th (CDRH).

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Scarce and declining visitor due to the continued national cull of this species

Ruddy Ducks were recorded from two locations: one in mid Berkshire and one in east Berkshire. Monthly maxima are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	1	2	–
Number of birds	–	2	5	4	3	2	1	–	–	1	4	–

Apart from a female or immature at Hosehill Lake LNR from Oct 28th to Nov 3rd (JA *et al.*), the only other reports relate to a remnant population in Windsor Great Park where 4 were present from Mar 10th to April 22nd (CDRH, DJB), peaking with 5 (1 male and 4 females) on Mar 25th (DJB). It should be noted that, because of the continuing cull of this species in the UK, some observers are reluctant to report Ruddy Duck.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Locally common introduced resident with numbers inflated in autumn at certain sites for shooting

Records were received from 63 locations. The highest counts were as follows: 38 birds in two coveys at Aston on Sep 9th (MSFW), 53 at Welford on Sept 9th (RJCL), 73 birds, probably all recently released, at Compton Downs Sep 15th (DJB), 100+ birds that had all just been released from pens at Walbury Hill, Combe Sep 25th (IW, JBu), 45 at Remenham Nov 9th (DF), and finally 60 at Lower Green, Inkpen Nov 27th (RHar). It is interesting that most of these counts are in September, a good time to release birds for shooting presumably. Just one breeding record, a bird on 14 eggs at Englefield Jul 18th (JLe). One wonders how long this species would remain on the British list if introductions ceased.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)

Records were once again on the rise, with birds being recorded from 42 locations, up from 35 in 2011. The majority of records were from the west of the county. An amazing record of 99 birds, presumed reared, was reported from Henley Farm, Chaddleworth on Oct 10th (GDS). Other high counts included: at least 30 birds at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Feb 2nd (RRI), 34 in coveys of ten, eight, seven, six and three at Englefield Sep 9th (RCr), 22 in coveys of sixteen, four and two at Compton Downs Sep 15th (DJB). There were no records of breeding, however numerous records were received of birds during the breeding season. In East Berks one was found freshly dead in Windsor Great Park on Sep 19th (CDRH).

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Uncommon summer visitor in varying numbers, most common on The Downs (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

This elusive little species was recorded at just eight locations, probably involving ten birds: a calling bird at Roden Down, Compton on Jun 2nd (PB-T), one calling at Dorney Wetlands on Jun 4th - 6th (CDRH, WAS), two calling at Seven Barrows, Lambourn on Jun 16th (RJB), a calling bird at Lavells Lake in the car park field on Jun 20th (WAS), another at Weathercock Hill, Lambourn on Jul 22nd (RJB), a minimum of four birds at Wellbottom Down, Lambourn on Aug 5th (SAG), a calling bird at Binfield on Aug 11th (LRB) and finally a single bird was heard calling at Sheepdrove, Lambourn on Aug 17th (JLe). This constitutes an average year for this species and compares poorly with the total of at least 36 birds recorded in 2011, the highest total so far in this century.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Widespread and locally abundant introduced resident in rural areas, large numbers are released annually for shooting

Records were received from numerous locations; most, if not all, of the higher counts would have been from recent releases for shooting. Unusual sightings were an Albino male at Holtwood Farm Mar 11th (SAG) (although perhaps not that surprising as apparently shooters are fined if they shoot Albinos!) and a bird running along the urban Fairford Road, Tilehurst, on Sep 16th (GJSu).

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Rare winter visitor

Just a single record was received of this far from annual species. At Queen Mother Reservoir, a bird circled low over the reservoir then flew off south east at 09:00hrs on Dec 10th (CDRH). This individual was almost certainly the bird then found on Dec 16th at Queen Mary Reservoir, Surrey before making return visits to QMR in 2013.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)

A pretty good year, with five individuals being recorded during the first winter period, and two during the second. A juvenile was on the water at Queen Mother Reservoir until 11:15hrs on Jan 12th (CDRH), then circled and flew off high towards the north. Another

juvenile was present from Feb 3rd (CDRH, CL) until Feb 12th when it was joined by a first summer bird (CDRH). These two individuals remained until Apr 14th (MMc), then just one was recorded regularly until Apr 24th (CDRH). The second winter period produced a bird at Theale Main Pit on Nov 4th (per BGu), which remained until it was finally noted on Nov 18th during a WeBS count (RJB). To end the year, a juvenile was present at Queen Mother Reservoir from Dec 16th (MMc) until Dec 20th (CDRH, MMc), being regularly noted between these dates (MO).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 50 sites evenly spread throughout the county. Some high counts were as follows: seven at Wraysbury GPs Jan 10th (JMC), 14 birds at Dorney Wetlands/Jubilee River on Feb 11th (DJB), with 22 in the same area on Feb 13th (BDC), eight at Lower Farm GP on Apr 4th (IW) and seven at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 11th (MGLR). Breeding was recorded at several sites up and down the county with young being noted between April and September.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Records were received from 47 locations, with the monthly maxima as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brays GPs	10	–	8	15	11	6	–	–	11	6	15	10
Eversleys GPs	14	14	18	–	–	–	21	–	21	24	11	12
Queen Mother Reservoir	9	60	10	12	22	45	48	–	14	21	13	10
Theale GPs	8	10	17	13	–	–	17	49	64	77	54	37
Wraysbury GPs	31	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	49	54	49

Breeding was confirmed from 27 sites including: four juveniles at Lower Farm GP on Aug 8th (IW, JL), several records of adults with young at Moor Green Lakes (MO), and a pair with only half grown young at Theale Main Pit as late as Oct 6th (MFW).

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Scarce and declining winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

This is now the fourth year running that just a single record of this scarce Grebe has occurred. A first winter bird was found on Nov 11th at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH), and was then seen regularly until Dec 18th (MO).

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Again a relatively average year for this species, with just five records including six birds. An adult in full summer plumage was present on the BA pit, Wraysbury GPs on Mar 22nd (CDRH), but could not be relocated the following day. An adult in s/p was seen by several observers at Colebrook Lake, Eversley GPs on Mar 23rd (MGLR), two adult s/p birds were

present at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 9th (B May), then later in the year a juvenile was at the same site on Sep 3rd (AR). The final record for the year was a first winter at Theale Main Pit on Sep 29th (KEM), and this was regularly reported until Oct 6th (MO).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Very rare vagrant

This is the second year in a row that this seabird has been recorded in the county. Not surprisingly the location was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 9th (MMc), and it was observed for most of the day (MO).

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common winter visitor, uncommon but increasing in summer; the continental race P. c. sinensis now breeds

The monthly maxima for the most recorded sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	10	13	15	15	15	35	–	8	5	10	–	3
Dinton Pastures CP	10	8	9	1	–	–	–	9	–	14	12	18
Eversley GPs	40	50	35	9	3	4	16	14	21	50	108	70
Lower Farm GP	41	30	21	9	25	15	11	15	13	10	16	10
Queen Mother Reservoir	40	30	23	25	19	–	18	–	13	13	18	4
Theale GPs	15	35	2	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	67	15
Woolhampton GPs	15	18	5	1	3	–	–	1	–	9	–	9
Wraysbury GPs	52	8	3	7	–	–	–	34	–	37	20	74

Breeding was proven at five sites with chicks being observed from early April. Seven nests with 16 chicks were recorded at one site and seven nests with 18 chicks at another.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

2012 produced just one record of this seabird, following the two in 2011. A bird of adult type was observed briefly at Wraysbury GPs on Apr 14th before being relocated with Cormorants at Horton GPs (CDRH). This species has been recorded annually in recent years, except in 2010.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

Slightly down on the previous years' sightings, with eight birds being recorded from five locations. Dinton Pastures CP maintained its dominance of records in the county; a bird remaining from the previous year on Jan 1st (SDay) was joined by a second on Feb 3rd (RPr, SDay), and these two were seen regularly until Feb 27th (MO). An adult was recorded at Eversley GPs on Feb 13th (BMA) and seen regularly until Mar 3rd (MO). Further east in the county at Dorney Wetlands, one was seen on Feb 7th (CDRH) and a bird was flushed during maintenance work on Feb 23rd (JAd), and recorded again on Feb 29th (BDC).

One bird was recorded at Windsor Great Park on Feb 26th (DJB). A bird was flushed from a reedbed at Rowney Predator Lake, Woolhampton GPs on Mar 1st (KEM). In the second winter period, a bird was observed at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 25th (C Barnes, G Marsh, PJSt), and one at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 23rd (per BGu). Overall, with things looking up for this species countrywide, we should be able to look forward to regular sightings, and perhaps even breeding in our larger reedbeds in the future.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Rare vagrant

The fourth record for Berkshire involved a bird first seen at Hosehill Lake, Theale on Mar 20th (AVL). It was then relocated on Mar 21st at Home Farm, Sulhamsted and was then recorded regularly at both sites until April 5th (MO). In recent years this species has become a slightly more regular visitor so perhaps we can look forward to more occurrences in the future.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon but increasing visitor, now breeding (Amber Listed)

Records for this once rare little heron were received from 60 locations evenly spread throughout the county. The highest counts were: 11 birds at Freemans Marsh on Jan 16th (RF), six at Hungerford on Jan 22nd (per BGu), eight birds at Pingewood GPs on Apr 9th (KEM), five at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 14th (RN), nine seen flying as a flock at Bagnor on Apr 22nd (ABT), eight at Lower Farm GPs on Oct 1st (RW), 12 at Theale GPs on Main Pit on Nov 8th (AVL) and finally ten at Burghfield Bridge on Dec 31st (AVL). Although birds were reported in good numbers throughout the year, including the summer, the only confirmed breeding was in East Berkshire where two pairs were thought to have attempted breeding and two juveniles were observed on the edge of the nest on June 12th (CDRH).

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Rare but increasing vagrant

Just one record in 2012: a bird was observed flying east over Queen Mother Reservoir at 17:10hrs on Apr 4th (CDRH), before descending and landing at Staines Moor, but could not be relocated there later. This is now the fourth year running that this species has occurred in the county, albeit briefly, and seems to reflect the higher numbers being recorded nationwide.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor

This species continues to produce impressive high counts throughout the county in most months. Breeding was recorded at six sites, with young as early as Mar 9th. Aldermaston GPs and Donnington Grove, Newbury, produced high counts of occupied nests, with seven and eight respectively and Lower Farm GPs ten (DJB).

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

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

A fairly normal year for what is now the most regularly and widely reported of the raptor species in Berkshire. The species has continued its spread away from the original release site in the Chilterns and is now fairly widespread across central Southern England. The species was reported on the vast majority of days throughout the year, with nearly 1100 recorded sightings, fractionally more than Common Buzzard; the maximum monthly double-figure counts at the four best watched sites (thanks mainly due to BDC, DJB, GDS) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cookham area	12	–	26	16	–	25	–	22	21	20	18	15
Maidenhead area	20	15	–	34	49	–	–	30	19	27	35	40
Wooley Down	40	45	45	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	34
Hurley/Twyford area	–	–	–	–	14	11	16	–	17	–	–	–

In addition to these multiple counts, there were numerous other large counts reported on single occasions; the most noteworthy of these were 34 at Yattendon in May (JLe), 34 at Knowl Hill in June (PNe) and 35 at White Waltham in November (PNe), which may have been some of the same birds as the Hurley/Twyford group,

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule One and Amber List)

A fairly typical spread of records, with the majority coming in the autumn. A subadult male first seen at Horton GP and then present in the Windsor Great Park area since November 2011 was first seen on New Year's Day and subsequently seen on several occasions until Feb 26th (DJB (CDRH)); it also made return visits to Horton GP on Feb 9th and 27th (CDRH), which was the last date it was seen. This is the first documented overwintering of a Marsh Harrier in Berkshire. A female flying west over Queen Mother Reservoir on the 2nd May (CDRH) was the only spring record. At Twyford GP a male flew East on July 20th (ADB). At Dinton pastures a female/juv was reported over Lea Farm on the 21st August (RAGP) and a female circled over Lavell's car park on Sep 13th (LSe). A juvenile flew low to the SW at QMR on Aug 23rd (CDRH) and at Pingewood GPs a juvenile circled over Burnthouse Lane, mobbed by gulls, on the 27th (AVL). On the Downs a female/juvenile was hunting over Blewbury Down on the 25th August (MFW) and possibly the same bird was at Compton Downs on Sep 7th (CDRH), but a juvenile hunting over fields at Aldworth on the 3rd September (CDRH) was thought to be a different bird. Finally, a juvenile circled with a Buzzard high over Woosehill on the Sep 22nd (PB-T).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule One and Red Listed)

A typical scattering of records with a couple of well observed individuals in the Cow Down/Bury Down area. The first, a female, was found at Bury Down on Jan 23rd (RJB), then an adult male on Feb 3rd in the same area (RRI). A "ringtail" was found at Old Down on Feb 23rd (ABT), with probably the same bird the next day at Bury Down (SA), and on Feb 28th at Cow Down (IW, JBu); an adult male was seen in the same area on Feb 24th (RHS). A bird (no age or sex given) was reported harassing owls on Bury Down on Mar 2nd (RAGP); a

female on Cow Down was seen on Mar 11th (RRi) with probably the same ringtail on Mar 12th (CDRH). Possibly the same bird was in the area on Mar 20th (ABT) with another at Wellbottom Down on Mar 24th (GDS). A ringtail was reported at Walbury Hill, Combe on Oct 18th (JA) and finally a ringtail at Bury Down on Dec 1st (MJT).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

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

There were three records of this sensitive species, all from West Berkshire: the first was a female, on Apr 18th (ABT) with another or the same adult female in the same area on Jun 16th (RJB) and a ringtail in rather fresh plumage showed well on July 5th (CDRH).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common and widespread resident

A difficult species to count with any certainty, with birds invariably recorded as singles. The species is recorded throughout the year, fairly consistently across the county with over 550 records from over a hundred locations, increasingly in suburban gardens. There is scant actual evidence of breeding, though the relative abundance of the species and the number of reports of juvenile birds shows that breeding is severely under-recorded. The only two confirmed breeding records were a pair observed at a nest site in Windsor Great Park (DJB) and another at Whiteknights Park (PG).

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common and widespread resident and passage migrant

Another raptor species which continues its spread eastwards; Common Buzzard is now the second most frequently recorded bird of prey species in the county, a situation which would have been unbelievable as recently as 15 years ago. The distribution of records is similar to last year, and although the majority of records still come from west of Reading, there is a definite shift towards the east of the county. Although the number of records submitted increased from last year, the actual numbers of birds did not appear to have changed significantly. The double figure counts were: 11 at West Woodhay Down on Jan 12th (IW), ten at Compton on Mar 9th (DJB), ten at Bagnor Cress Beds on Mar 20th (IW, JL), 12 at Lower Farm on May 5th (DJR), ten at Woolley Down on Aug 29th (GDS), 13 at Combe on Aug 31st (DJB), 16 at Walbury Hill on Sep 9th (IW, JBu), and 11 at Englefield on Nov 2nd (RCr). The remainder of the records (just over 1000) were mainly of ones and twos, coming from nearly 200 different sites.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

There were 18 records submitted; 12 of these were in spring. The first records of the year were on Mar 18th, with one at Denford Mill, Hungerford (RDW) and one over Tilehurst (RCr). There was one over Tilehurst on Mar 30th (JA) and another on the same date reported by the River Keeper at Kintbury (per JLS). There was one at Newbury on Apr 4th (BGU); later in the month one was at Queen Mother Reservoir on the 25th (CDRH) and one at Dinton Pastures on the 27th (BGU) and at Hungerford one flew over the B4192, carrying a fish, on Apr 30th (Neil Tarling). May records consisted of two reported by River Keepers from Benham Park on the 4th (per JLS), then another or the same one on the

7th nearby at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford (JSWo), then on the 9th at Denford Mill, Hungerford (RGS). One circled around Hosehill Lake, Theale on May 13th (AA, KEM, RHS), with two over Newbury on the 16th (ARo). Finally for the spring, one circled Queen Mother Reservoir on May 19th before flying off north (CDRH). On Jul 28th, one was seen over Brimpton GP (GEW), before being seen shortly after over Midgham (JPM). One was reported by the River Keeper at Kintbury on Aug 15th (per JLS), and one in the same area on Sep 4th (ARo) with presumably the same the next day (JSWo). Finally, there was one over Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 6th (MMc).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)

There were 620 records submitted this year, with the vast majority consisting of singles or pairs. Multiple counts, mostly family parties, were: five at Lower Farm, Newbury in June (IW, JL), four at Hyde Farm in July (PNe), four at Inkpen in July (RHar), four (a pair feeding two juveniles) in July at Windsor Great Park (MHu), four in August at Moor Copse, Tidmarsh (RR), five (a pair and three recently fledged young) at Silwood Park, Sunninghill in August (RJD), four in September (a pair and two juveniles) over Ascot Heath (RJD) and four at Compton Downs in September (DJB).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant which has increased in recent years (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

There were 19 records submitted: 11 from the new year into spring, two in the summer and the remainder from October onwards. There were two records from Cow Down in January, the first on the 2nd (PEH) then a female on the 15th (ABT). Also in January were one at Dinton Pastures on the 6th (FJC) and a female flew up the river at Remenham on the 12th (RCW) then presumably the same bird at the same site the next day (RHS). One was reported at Theale on Feb 21st (DJS), There was one unsexed individual at Cow Down on Mar 11th (RRi) and a female at Lowbury Hill, Compton on Mar 28th (CDRH). There was an early record of a male at West Ilsley on Aug 25th (MFW). Moving onto the autumn, a female/immature was seen twice at Compton Downs on Oct 10th (CDRH). One flew over Lavells Lake on Oct 31st (FJC, LSe), with another at Englefield on Nov 11th (RCr).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule One)

Regularly recorded from right across the county, but particularly from sites with large gatherings of hirundines, commencing with one at Lea Farm on Apr 14th (LRB, KCr) Although the numbers were generally consistent with recent years, there was a reduction in large gatherings. Maximum counts were as follows: five at Woolhampton GPs on Apr 30th (PEH), five at Eversley GPs on May 3rd (CJ), five over the Thames at Wargrave on May 14th (CDRH), five at Lower Farm Trout Lake, Thatcham on Jun 1st (PEH), five on Jun 2nd at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH), nine on Jun 13th at Horton GPs (CDRH), four at Theale GPs on Jun 25th (KEM), four at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 15th (CDRH) and five at Moor Copse, Tidmarsh on Aug 9th (RR). The remaining records, consisting of nearly 350 submissions, were mainly of ones and twos. The last record of the year was a juvenile which lingered at Horton GP from Oct 4th to 13th CDRH).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon but increasing visitor which bred in the county for the first time in 2010 (Schedule One)

A fairly typical year with several long-staying birds at traditional sites. The long-stayers included a pair that was present all year on the 3M building in Bracknell and apparently bred successfully (MO). There was also breeding success in the Theale area, where birds were present all year, with two juveniles seen being fed by the adult female on several occasions (MO). There were two and occasionally three birds present for the whole year at Queen Mother Reservoir (MO) and one or two birds around Reading town centre from January to April and again from October onwards (MO). What was probably a single bird was present at Moor Green Lakes from January to March and, after a couple of sightings in June, returned in September and stayed until November (MO). There were one and occasionally two birds present from January to April around Slough Trading Estate, which returned in September and remained into December (MO). A male was present throughout January at Lower Farm, Newbury (MO) and another seen several times throughout the year at Streatley (NJB). In addition to these long-stayers, birds were regularly recorded at Pingewood, Dinton Pastures, Colnbrook & Wraysbury (perhaps from Queen Mother Reservoir) and Combe/Walbury Hill area. There were, of course, many one-off sightings from across the county.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Uncommon winter visitor and a rare summer resident

Notoriously difficult to see, Water Rails are undoubtedly much more abundant and widespread than is suggested by the 248 records received, which came from 28 locations in the first winter period (January to February) and 26 sites in the second winter period (October to December). The table gives the maximum number recorded for each month at the most regular sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/ Jubilee River	5	12	5	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	3	11
Freeman's/Hungerford Marsh	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	2
Thatcham Marsh	2	4	1	2	1	–	1	1	1	1	3	1
Windsor Great Park	2	6	3	3	–	1	–	1	3	4	5	3
Woolhampton	1	3	2	1	2	–	–	1	1	1	2	1

In the breeding season (April to June), Water Rails were recorded at nine sites: Windsor Great Park, Thatcham Marsh, Beansheaf Farm, Woolhampton GPs, Moor Green Lakes, Denford Mill Hungerford, Moatlands Taxi Pit, Southcote Reading and Dorney Wetlands. However, the only evidence of breeding was in Windsor Great Park, where a pair was observed and a bird heard singing in late April and early May (DJB).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common and widespread resident in wetland habitats

The monthly maxima at the regularly counted sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	14	–	6	–	–	4	–	6	–	4	9	12
Eversley GPs	26	10	14	–	–	–	–	–	10	26	22	14
Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford	9	10	8	6	2	3	–	–	6	4	10	8
Lower Farm GP	9	16	10	9	6	10	5	10	11	9	5	5
Thatcham Marsh	22	27	15	8	6	3	8	9	11	20	20	16
Theale GPs	6	2	4	4	–	–	–	–	–	8	7	6

High counts at other sites included 35 on the Jubilee River on Feb 13th (BDC) and 22 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor, on Sep 9th (DJB).

COOT *Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor to open water

Coots prefer larger water bodies, with Theale GPs, as usual, attracting the largest numbers in winter. No counts were received for Berkshire's largest water body, Queen Mother Reservoir, which typically holds relatively small numbers of Coot.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	159	297	132	–	–	–	–	–	66	239	276	439
Dinton Pastures CP	36	38	20	–	–	–	87	113	109	51	26	–
Lower Farm GP	48	75	52	39	15	19	19	30	23	72	18	63
Summerleaze GP	52	–	20	14	–	–	–	–	25	–	133	–
Thatcham Marsh GPs	34	54	25	21	17	27	36	53	69	81	92	57
Theale GPs	726	466	192	90	–	–	102	–	–	445	799	1182
Windsor Great Park	101	85	80	70	62	124	206	258	305	267	133	15
Woolhampton GPs	239	235	151	71	52	135	201	176	139	154	127	124
Wraysbury GPs	350	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	215	498	454

CRANE *Grus grus*

Rare vagrant (Amber List)

On May 5th three Cranes toured central Berkshire. They were first reported circling over Eversley GPs at 11:00hrs (Ken Bradley), presumably the same party was seen over Pingewood GPs three hours later (KEM, RG) heading north east, then seen ten minutes later over Earley (RA), and then over Wargrave heading into Oxfordshire (AMH). They were then watched from Pinkney's Green, approaching from the N side of Ashley Hill, passing over Temple and continuing NNE into Buckinghamshire at 14:50hrs (CDRH).

GREAT BUSTARD *Otis tarda*

A former resident, until 2011, not recorded for well over a century

On the morning of Jun 9th, a Great Bustard from the Salisbury Plain re-introduction programme was found on the Berkshire Downs near Streatley at 08:30hrs (RCo). The bird, a first summer female bearing the wing tag “Black 17”, was observed feeding methodically in stony set-aside (CDRH). It remained through the very wet afternoon, but was not seen the next day.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Regular and increasing passage migrant, scarce breeder and occasional winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	2	4	3	2	5	1	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	2	1	3	4	1	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	1	1	–	–	3	–	–	–	1	–
Theale GP	–	2	4	3	1	5	6	–	–	–	–	–
Twyford GP	–	–	4	2	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	–

Spring: Singles were at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 25th (CDRH) and Apr 28th (CDRH). One was at Woolhampton GP on Mar 26th (KEM) and two were at Eversley GP on May 4th (MGLR). **Breeding:** There were breeding attempts at Theale GP, Twyford GP and Dinton Pastures CP. At Theale, the first returning birds were recorded on Feb 17th (CBur, PEH) when two birds were seen at Main Pit. These birds were joined by a second pair on Mar 9th (DJB). All four birds were seen until Mar 24th (MFW), after which there was only the occasional record of three birds. By Mar 20th, one bird was sitting on one of the islands at Main Pit and the first chick was seen on Apr 24th (RHS) when it was estimated to be four to five days old. This chick fledged successfully and the family party were seen throughout the summer until the last record on Jul 1st (RCr). At Dinton Pastures, a pair arrived on Feb 29th (FJC). A nesting attempt was suspected on the overgrown islands on Sandford Lake and confirmed on Jun 10th when three chicks were seen (SDay). This was the first breeding record for the site but sadly the lake flooded and the chicks drowned. At Twyford, the first birds were seen on Mar 2nd (MHT), an occupied nest was seen on Apr 9th (WeBS) and two chicks were seen on May 6th (MFW). Sadly this breeding attempt was also short-lived as only one chick could be found the following day (TWarw). It was still surviving on May 10th (SAB) but could not be found on May 21st (WeBS). **Autumn:** Singles were at Eversley GP on Jul 17th (MO), Jul 20th (CRG) and Aug 13th (RFM). One was at Lower Farm GP on Jul 21st (IW, JL, SAG). A juvenile was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 25th (CDRH) with three summer plumage adults there on Jul 31st (CDRH). Two circled Horton GP on Sep 9th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** One was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 22nd (DF, KEM, MMc).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare passage migrant (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

A good year with five records, all in the spring. One was at Pingewood GP on Mar 14th

(KEM *et al.*). A flock of seven were on the new workings at Horton on Mar 21st (CDRH) and were presumably the same birds that were seen at Staines Reservoir, Surrey on the same day. At Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 24th one flew in and settled on the east shore for 20 minutes before flying off east (CDRH). One flew east to west calling over Eversley GP on May 4th (RFM). Finally, one was at Lower Farm GP on May 30th (IW *et al.*).

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Scarce and localised summer visitor, very rare away from breeding grounds (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

Most records came from traditional sites on the Downs but one was heard calling at Bucklebury Common on Jul 15th (DJR). On the Downs, the first bird was seen on Mar 24th (MFW). A pair with two juveniles was seen on May 15th (DJB) and another pair with two juveniles were seen at a different site on Jun 30th (RJB). A flock of seven were found on Sep 7th (CDRH) before the last record of two birds on Oct 10th (CDRH).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule One)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Crookham Common	–	–	–	3	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Eversley GP	–	–	2	5	5	6	4	–	–	–	–	–
Fobney Island	–	–	–	2	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	–	2	2	2	6	4	–	1	–	–	–
Padworth Lane GP	–	–	–	3	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pingewood GP	–	–	2	4	2	2	8	1	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	1	3	2	2	6	1	–	–	–	–
Summerleaze GP	–	–	1	6	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GP	–	–	–	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	1	8	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Spring: First recorded at Summerleaze GP on Mar 16th (CDRH) and a further five sites had recorded one to two birds by the end of the month. Numbers increased during April with peak counts of six at Summerleaze GP on Apr 6th (BDC), five at Eversley GP on Apr 7th (RCMu) and eight at Woolhampton GP on Apr 14th (RGi). **Summer:** Birds were recorded at 14 sites during May/June. Although there were several reports concerning displaying birds, there were only two records of confirmed breeding. At Lower Farm GP, a pair with four juveniles was seen on Jun 27th (PEH). At the new diggings at Eversley GP, one was sitting on a nest on Jun 22nd (RCMu) and was still sitting on Jul 5th but the outcome of this attempt is not known. **Autumn:** Passage was very light during July with a peak count of eight at Pingewood GP on Jul 8th (MFW). There were only three records in August, the last being a juvenile at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 17th to 18th (CDRH). A late bird was seen at Lower Farm GP on Sep 8th (IW, JL).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Declining summer visitor, uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	–	–	1	1	1	4	–	1	–	–	–	–
Greenham Common	–	4	5	4	4	5	4	–	–	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	–	1	2	2	2	2	8	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	2	1	3	1	2	–	–	–
Woolhampton GP	–	–	–	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Spring: The first record was of four birds at Greenham Common on Feb 19th (JL). Most counts were of one to four birds but five were at Greenham Common on Mar 30th (IW, JL).

Summer: Birds were recorded at eight sites during May but breeding was only confirmed at Greenham Common and Lower Farm. At Greenham, two pairs were sitting, one of which was seen with three chicks on May 20th (IW, JL). On May 28th one pair still had two chicks but the other nest had been deserted. By the end of June the remaining two juveniles had fledged successfully and the failed pair was sitting again (GRW). However, this second attempt also failed and the nest was empty on Jul 4th (JL). On the old gravel workings at Lower Farm, a pair was sitting during July but the outcome is unknown. **Autumn:** The first migrants were two adults and a juvenile at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 4th (CDRH). There was light passage through July to September. Most records were of single birds but two flew west over Midgham GP on Jul 21st (JPM) and two juveniles were at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 20th and 21st (CDRH), which was also the last record of the year.

RINGED PLOVER (*tundrae*) *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*

There were several records of birds showing characteristics of this northern form in late spring and one in the autumn. One was at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 27th (CDRH). Two were at Slough Sewage Farm on Jun 2nd and were joined by another bird on Jun 3rd to 5th, while six birds were present on Jun 4th (CDRH). A juvenile was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 9th (CDRH).

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands	30	24	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	100
Greenham Common	400	100	300	92	–	–	–	–	–	17	1	1
Hawthorn Hill	–	40	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	160
Woodlands Park	25	9	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	5	–	185

First Winter: Recorded at 19 locations. Continuing the pattern of recent years, there were very few large counts. The only location that held more than 250 birds was Greenham Common, where there were 400+ on Jan 12th (JL) and 300+ on Mar 26th and 27th (JL). The Greenham birds lingered into April where there were still 92 on Apr 10th (JL) before dwindling to two birds on Apr 20th (IW). Elsewhere, there were four at Wormhill Bottom,

Lambourn on Apr 8th (ABT), 15 in summer plumage at Compton Downs on Apr 20th (ABT), and two in s/p flying north east over Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 28th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** The first returning bird flew north over Woodlands Park on Aug 10th (DJB) which the observer noted as being his earliest ever autumn bird in Berkshire. This was further emphasised as the next bird wasn't recorded until Sep 15th (DJB) when one was seen flying north at Compton Downs. Thereafter records became more widespread, albeit in small numbers. The only counts to exceed 150 were 295 at Remenham Hill on Nov 2nd (CDRH), 185 at Woodlands Park on Dec 4th (DJB) and 160 at Hawthorn Hill on Dec 30th (CDRH).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Three records: one in the first winter period and two in the spring. **First Winter:** One flew NE over Queen Mother Reservoir calling with 40 Golden Plover on Feb 5th (CDRH) **Spring:** One in winter plumage flew west over Pingewood GP on Mar 16th (RJB). One was at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 4th (MMc) and one in winter plumage flew north there on May 5th (DJB).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Locally common summer resident, common winter visitor and passage migrant (Red Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	450	–	4	5	2	–	50	67	–	3	78	–
Woolhampton GP	600	–	80	6	13	27	2	66	40	11	20	–

First Winter: Counts were very low; the only counts to exceed 300 were 600 at Woolhampton GP on Jan 10th (PEH), 341 at Amner's Farm, Pingewood on Jan 23rd (KEM), 600 at the same site on Feb 16th (RJB), and 450 at Lea Farm Lake on Jan 28th (WeBS). **Summer:** Evidence of breeding was noted at 26 sites and confirmed at 12 of these. A "pied" individual was seen regularly at Lower Farm GP between April and July (MO). **Second Winter:** Counts were again very low; the only counts to exceed 200 were 200+ at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 1st (BAJC), 200 at Bucklebury on Dec 1st (RF), 200 at Cock Marsh on Dec 2nd (BCr) and 200+ at Lower Farm GP on Dec 29th (IW, JL).

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Five records involving 15 birds.: **Winter:** One was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 5th (CDRH). **Spring:** One flew south west over Queen Mother Reservoir on May 9th (MMc) and two summer plumage birds were there (though hidden from view during the Royal Fly Past) on May 19th (CDRH). **Autumn:** an adult in worn summer plumage was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 30th to Sep 1st (CDRH). In the evening of Aug 31st, a flock of ten flew in from the north, circled the water and attempted to land (CDRH). Finally, a juvenile moulting into first winter plumage was at Lea Farm lake on Sep 24th (AR). This was the first record for Dinton Pastures.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce but regular passage migrant

There were 13 records, comprising 31 individuals. **Spring:** most records came from Queen Mother Reservoir, as follows: one in fresh summer plumage on May 17th (CDRH, MMc), two flew through on May 26th (CDRH), one in fresh summer plumage on May 27th (CDRH), four summer plumage on Jun 3rd (CDRH), nine on Jun 4th (CDRH), and seven on Jun 8th (CDRH). Elsewhere, one in summer plumage was at Pingewood GP on Jun 4th (MFW *et al.*) and one s/p was on the New Diggings at Eversley GP on Jun 17th (GR). **Autumn:** all records came from Queen Mother Reservoir, as follows: adult in worn s/p from Jul 17th to 18th (CDRH), ad moulting into winter plumage on Jul 20th (CDRH), and an ad moulting into w/p on Aug 5th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** one was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 5th (MMc).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn

A long-staying juvenile was on the floods at Eton Wick from Sep 24th (KPD) to Oct 5th (CDRH).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant

A juvenile was on the floods at Eton Wick from Sep 18th (CDRH) and seen by many observers up to Sep 23rd (KPD). This was the 17th record for Berkshire.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Fairly common passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor (Red Listed)

First Winter: The first record of the year was of one at Borough Marsh on Feb 1st (RGi). There were singles at three other sites during February and two were at Pingewood GP on Feb 25th (KEM). **Spring:** Singles were at four sites during March. There were just two records in April: singles at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 10th and Apr 25th (CDRH). Birds were much more widespread during May. Most records were of one to four birds but eight were at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 4th (DJB). Four sites recorded birds during June before the last record of the spring at Pingewood GP on Jun 18th (KEM). **Autumn:** Passage recommenced on Jul 7th with one at Eversley GP (JMC). A light passage continued through August and September. Most counts were of one to two birds but four juveniles were at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 17th (CDRH, MMc). One lingered at Eton Wick into October and was last seen on Oct 3rd (WMO). There were no records during the second winter period.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Six records: two in the first winter period, one in the spring, two in the autumn and one in the second winter period. **First Winter:** Two were at Kintbury on Feb 1st (DJS) and one was at Lea Farm Lake on Feb 2nd (FJC). **Spring:** One was at Lea Farm Lake on May 22nd to 24th (PEH *et al.*). **Autumn:** a juvenile was at Eton Wick on Aug 12th to 19th (CDRH *et al.*) and one at Burnthouse Lane on Aug 19th (KEM). **Second Winter:** an impressive 13 were seen on floods at Borough Marsh on Dec 3rd (CDRH).

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon and localised winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First Winter: Recorded at five sites. Most records came from Lavell's Lake; all singles as follows: Jan 1st (MO), Jan 22nd (WeBS), Jan 28th (MO), Feb 20th (SDay), Mar 13th (WeBS) and Mar 15th (ABT). Elsewhere, singles were at Horton GP on Jan 22nd (CDRH), Freeman's Marsh on Feb 2nd (GRW) and Dorney Wetlands on Feb 10th (WMo) and there were six at Horton on Feb 6th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** Recorded at just two sites. Singles were at Horton GP on Oct 13th, Dec 1st and Dec 22nd and with three there on Nov 13th (all CDRH). At Queen Mother Reservoir one was flushed at close range from the track on Nov 26th (CDRH). This individual was only the third record for the site.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Common but declining winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer and no longer breeds (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands	2	80	20	-	-	-	-	-	13	26	1	8
Eton Wick	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	8	10	31	5	18
Eversley GP	6	5	5	4	-	-	-	-	1	4	16	40
Lower Farm GP	4	3	1	1	-	1	-	7	10	21	30	32
Pingewood GP	10	10	19	11	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Woolhampton GP	8	3	6	3	-	-	-	-	1	3	7	25

First winter/Spring: Double figure counts were received from four sites. The highest counts were both made as a result of disturbance by maintenance work: 100+ were at Fobney Meadows on Jan 17th (AVL) and 80 were at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 23rd (JAd). Records were widespread during April until the last records on the 24th. There were no records during May. **Summer:** There were two records during the summer months, one at Slough Sewage Farm on Jun 5th (CDRH) and one at Lower Farm GP on Jun 16th (SAG). There were no indications that either of these records related to breeding attempts. **Autumn/Second Winter:** The first returning bird was at Eton Wick on Jul 31st (CDRH). Records increased throughout August and birds were widespread by September, although counts were low. Double figure counts were received from nine sites but the only counts over 35 were 70+ at Borough Marsh on Dec 15th (CDRH) and 40+ at Eversley GP on Dec 31st (AHut).

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Localised resident in small numbers, winter visitors more widespread (Amber Listed)

First Winter: Recorded at 27 sites. Most records were of single birds but two were in Ufton Woods on Jan 13th (RHS), The Wilderness, Kintbury on Mar 10th (JLS), Washmore Hill, East Garston on Mar 10th (ABT) and at Padworth Common on Mar 25th (TGB). An adult was caught and ringed in a Burghfield Common garden on Mar 9th (KTu). **Summer:** Recorded at 18 locations of which 11 reported roding birds. Maximum counts of roding birds were: three Sandhurst Royal Military Academy (PJC *et al.*), one Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford (JSWo), one Greenham Common (PEH, SAG), seven Windsor Great Park

(MSFW), two Hut Hill, Swinley Forest (MO), one Roundoak Piece (PD), nine Snelsmore Common (SCI), one Padworth Common (MO), one Stockcross (SAG), one Bucklebury Common (GJS), and one South Forest (BAJC). **Second Winter:** Recorded at 17 sites. All records were between October and December. Most records were of singles but two were at Kintbury Cress Beds on Nov 25th (RGS), Bowdown Woods on Nov 28th and Dec 12th (MRD), and Fence Wood on Dec 5th (JBu). One was found dead near Reading Station on Oct 31st (JLe).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)

There were nine records involving 17 birds reported from five locations. **First Winter:** One was at Eversley GP on Feb 27th (MGLR). **Spring:** Four were at Hosehill Lake on Mar 28th (AVL, RCo) and another was there on Apr 19th (KEM). Two *islandica* birds were on the floods at Burnthouse Lane on Apr 28th to 30th (MO). **Autumn:** Two were at Hosehill Lake on Jun 27th (AVL). An adult *islandica* was at Slough Sewage Farm on Jul 2nd (CDRH). Four s/p birds were feeding on Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Jul 8th (DJB). Finally, an ad *islandica* was at Pingewood GP on Jul 11th (KEM).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

Eight records, all in the spring. A flock of 27 flew north east over Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 23rd (CDRH) and one flew east there on Apr 29th (CDRH). One was on the floods at Burnthouse Lane on Apr 28th and 29th (MO). A summer plumage bird was at Fobney Meadows on May 2nd (ABT). A flock of 15 (half in obvious s/p) flew north over Queen Mother Reservoir on May 2nd (CDRH). A total of 20 were seen at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 3rd: one at 07:00hrs, four at 08:55hrs (MMc) and a flock of 15 (4 in s/p) flying north east at 14:12hrs (CDRH).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)

Nineteen records from five locations. **Spring:** Passage occurred between Apr 21st and May 16th. Most records came from Queen Mother Reservoir as follows: two flew WNW on Apr 21st (CDRH); two flew NW and one flew in from the south east and dropped into Horton Fields on Apr 23rd (CDRH); one flew SE on Apr 24th, two singles flew SE on Apr 25th; eight flew north on Apr 28th (ABT, MMc); one flew east on May 1st (MMc); one flew WNW on May 4th (CDRH); one was on the east bank on May 5th (PEH); five flew NNW on May 9th (CDRH); and one flew SE on May 16th (CDRH). Elsewhere, one was at Eversley GP on Apr 22nd (MGLR) and seven briefly dropped into the new diggings before flying off SE on Apr 30th (RFM); one was on the floods at Burnthouse Lane on Apr 29th (MFW *et al.*); eight flew east over Wraysbury GP on May 2nd (RJD); one flew east at Snowball Hill, Woodlands Park on May 3rd (DJB). **Autumn:** There were just four records between Jul 18th and Aug 9th, all at Queen Mother Reservoir: two flew west on Jul 18th; one flew east on Jul 21st; one flew NE on Jul 22nd; one dropped in briefly on Aug 9th before flying off NE (all CDRH).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Uncommon to scarce passage migrant and winter visitor also a summer visitor in small numbers (Amber Listed)

First Winter: Two were at Lea Farm Lake on Feb 7th and three were there on Feb 10th (FJC). One flew east at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 29th (BDC) and one was at Lower Farm GP on the same day (GJS). **Spring:** Birds returned to their breeding grounds during March but migrants were at Thatcham on Mar 6th (BJW), Amner's Farm, Pingewood on Mar 14th (RGI), Pingewood GP on Mar 14th and 15th (KEM *et al.*), Hosehill Lake on Mar 28th (AVL), Crookham Common on Apr 5th (RCo), Dorney Wetlands on Apr 20th (WAS), Queen Mother Reservoir on May 4th (CDRH), and Eversley GP on May 17th (MGLR). One was seen displaying at Cow Down on Apr 18th (ABT). **Summer:** Birds summered on the Downs at Lambourn and Compton. At Lambourn the first returning birds were seen on Apr 8th when seven birds were present (ABT). Up to six birds were seen throughout the summer until the last record of five on Jun 16th (RJB). There was no evidence of breeding. At Compton the first returning bird was seen on Mar 9th (DJB) and a pair was seen on Apr 20th (ABT). A nest was found in an area of uncut grassland on May 16th (DJB). The outcome of this nest is unknown but two birds were heard in the area on Jun 13th (IW, JBU). **Autumn:** One was at Pingewood GP on Jun 12th (KEM); two flew north west at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 15th (CDRH); one flew south east at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jun 26th (CDRH); and one was heard at Lower Farm GP on Aug 1st (IW). **Second Winter:** one was at Sonning Meadows on Dec 11th and 12th (CDRH).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GP	-	-	-	3	1	-	2	2	1	-	-	1
Lower Farm GP	-	-	-	3	5	-	4	1	-	-	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Queen Mother Reservoir	-	-	-	3	5	1	15	12	1	-	-	-
Slough SF	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	2	-	-	-
Theale GP	-	-	-	4	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-

First Winter: one was at Ham Island Sewage Farm on Feb 11th (RMH). **Spring:** an early bird was at Dorney Wetlands on Mar 15th (BAJC) and on several dates until Apr 1st (KCr) before passage started properly on Apr 9th with one at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH, MMc). Thereafter counts of one to three were widespread with higher counts of five at Padworth Lane GP on Apr 23rd (KEM) and four at Theale Main Pit on Apr 27th (PEH). Records were received from 13 sites during May. Most counts were of one to four birds but five were at Lower Farm GP on May 4th and 5th (MFW, RSJ) and five were at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 9th (DJB, MMc). **Autumn:** There were three records in June: one at Queen Mother Reservoir on 2nd (CDRH), singles at Pingewood GP on 4th and 21st (KEM) and one at Lea Farm Lake on 23rd (HWh). Numbers built up throughout July, peaking in August and dropping off during September. Double figure counts included 15 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 8th (CDRH) and 12 there on Aug 17th (CDRH). There were four October records: one at Lavell's Lake on 4th (FJC), one at Theale Main it on 5th (PEH) and one at Datchet on 13th (KPD). **Second Winter:** one was at Eversley GP on Dec 1st (MGLR).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	1	1	–
Eton Wick	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	5	4	1
Eversley GP	1	2	3	2	–	1	2	2	4	2	1	17
Lower Farm GP	2	2	2	2	–	1	3	3	3	1	1	1
Padworth Lane GP	1	3	2	2	–	–	1	–	1	1	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5
Slough SF	–	–	1	1	–	–	5	5	3	2	–	–

First Winter: Records were widespread during January to February. Most records were of one to two birds but three were at Padworth Lane GP on Feb 25th and 28th (KEM).

Spring: Records were widespread, albeit in small numbers during March to April. The only May record was of one at Dorney Wetlands on 1st (WMO). **Autumn:** Passage resumed on Jun 23rd when one was flushed from a large puddle in a clear-fell area at Mortimer (MSFW). Records were soon widespread and passage continued into October. Most counts were of one to four birds but five were at Slough Sewage Farm on Aug 29th and 30th (CDRH) and five were at Eton Wick on Oct 25th (PB-T). **Second Winter:** By November most records were of one to three birds at regular wintering sites. However, five were at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 6th (CDRH), no doubt displaced from frozen ditches and pools.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant, rare in winter (Schedule One)

Eleven records from eight locations. A poor year! **Spring:** The first records of the year were at Padworth Lane GP on Apr 17th (PEH) and presumably the same bird on Apr 19th (KEM). One was at Pingewood GP on May 2nd to 6th (MO) with two there on May 3rd (AVL). One was on flooded fields at Woolhampton GP on May 5th (CBur) with two there on May 9th (KEM, PBran). One was on Horton Fields on May 6th (CDRH). **Autumn:** The first returning bird was an adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jul 6th (CDRH). There was a run of records from Lea Farm Lake as follows: one on Jul 31st (AR), one on Aug 16th and 17th (AR), and two on Sep 1st (AR). Elsewhere, singles were at Lower Farm GP on Sep 6th (RSJ) and possibly the same bird was at Crookham Common on Sep 6th (MJD) to 8th (PEH).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)

One was at Eversley GP on May 22nd (MGLR) and one was at Crookham Common on Aug 8th (PEH).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Common passage migrant, scarce in summer and winter, has bred (Amber Listed)

Monthly maxima at the main sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands	-	-	3	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eversley GP	-	-	6	6	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	1	4	5	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slough SF	-	-	2	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theale GP	-	1	3	3	4	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
Woolhampton GP	-	-	1	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

First Winter: There were no January records but birds were recorded at four sites during February. **Spring:** Passage was widespread between March and May. Most records were of one to five birds but six were seen at Eversley GP on several occasions. **Summer:** Breeding was confirmed at Hoshill Lake where a pair with two juveniles was seen on May 26th (AVL, KEM). They were still present on May 29th (RCr) but were not seen thereafter. **Autumn:** Passage was very light with just five sites recording birds during July. There was only one record in August, a single at Pingewood GP on 3rd (KEM). There were no records in September and just two in October: two at Queen Mother Reservoir on 6th (MFW, RGi) and one there on the 22nd (CDRH). **Second Winter:** One was at Eversley GP on Nov 25th (GJK).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Ten records: five in the spring and five in the autumn. **Spring:** One was at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 2nd (CDRH) with a different individual there on May 3rd (MMc). One was at Pingewood GP on May 4th (RRi). Finally, an adult in summer plumage was at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 28th (CDRH, MMc, PEH). **Autumn:** Three flew south west at Lower Farm GP on Aug 17th (IW, NC). A juvenile with a damaged eye was found at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 18th (CDRH). Two juveniles (including one with a damaged leg) were present from Aug 23rd to 28th, with one remaining to the 31st (CDRH). One was at Eversley GP on Aug 25th (MGLR). Finally, a juvenile was at Lea Farm Lake from Sep 11th to 15th (TAG *et al.*).

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Very rare vagrant

The only record was on April 29th at 07:20 hrs at Queen Mother Reservoir (ABT). Located resting on the water, distant from the sailing club, and at the extreme south end of the reservoir in foul weather, poor visibility and a strong northerly wind, the skua was initially thought to be an Arctic. At closer proximity, it became clear that it was a pale morph Pomarine Skua with full tail streamers, which was confirmed by photographs taken at that time (MMc). It drifted off south in low cloud and rain at 08:17 hrs.

Recorder's comment: A typical short stayer - all of Berkshire's Spring records of skuas have been very brief - and it is only the second Spring record of Pomarine; the other Spring record was of a flock of 13 on April 25th 2003.





Long-tailed Skua, Queen Mother Reservoir, Sep 17th, Mike McKee

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Vagrant

A skua seen distantly flying south over Queen Mother Reservoir and continuing over Windsor Great Park at 07:35hrs on Sep 17th (CDRH, MMc) was initially considered to be an Arctic Skua. Fortunately, photos taken of the bird (MMc), enabled to it be correctly identified as a light morph juvenile Long-tailed Skua. This was the sixth county record. Remarkably, the seventh county record was seen only six days later on Sep 23rd at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). The bird, an intermediate-morph juvenile, flew in at 18:08hrs but only remained a few minutes before flying west.

Recorder's comment: As time goes by the occurrence patterns of passage skuas are becoming clearer, although this was the first time that two Long-tails have been recorded in the same year. However their identification gets no easier! As noted in the previous species account, this year's Pomarine was initially broadcast as an Arctic Skua and the first of these Long-tails was only correctly identified when MMc's photos were posted on the internet and left no room for doubt.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

The only record was of a summer plumage adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on April 4th (CDRH) at 10:55hrs, remaining for half an hour before flying west.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

First Winter: Reported at numerous sites throughout the winter, with highest counts of 827 at Woolhampton GPs on Jan 12th (PEH); 500 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 14th (AR) including a leucistic bird; 900 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 18th (PB-T) on ice and 1021 on Jan 22st (WeBS); and 605 at Lower Farm GP, Newbury on Jan 25th (PEH). A colour ringed individual 2X23 was present on the River Thames at Datchet on Feb 5th, 19th and 26th (KPD). The highest February count was 1100 at Dinton Pastures CP on Feb 12th (WeBS). At Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale a ringed bird 2X87 was present on Mar 2nd (PEH). Also, at Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale a leucistic adult was observed on Mar 9th (DJB, KEM). Another leucistic individual that was seen at Queen Mother Reservoir from Mar 13th to 26th (CRDH) was identified as a first winter. **Spring/Summer:** Nesting activity was observed at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 18th with 25 pairs (PB-

T). At Padworth Lane GP, a chick was noted on Jun 6th, then three on Jun 18th (KEM). At Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP, on Jun 23rd all chicks were missing, assumed predated by mink (FJC). At Moor Green Lakes on Jul 10th seven fledged juveniles were noted (BMA), then on Jul 19th there were 14 juveniles (RFM). One juvenile was on the old workings at Lower Farm GP, Newbury on Jul 18th (PEH). At Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale on Jul 29th there were 23 juveniles (PEH). At the same location, individuals with ring numbers 25D2, 26D7, 22D6, 2X72, 25CZ, 207 and, 2X05 were recorded on Jun 9th (MFW). The first juvenile of the summer to arrive at Queen Mother Reservoir was on Jun 28th (CDRH). The highest counts during the summer were 200 adults at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Jul 8th (DJB), 250 on Jul 16th on Burnthouse Lane floods (KEM) and 260 at Weycock Hill, Waltham St Lawrence on Aug 26th (PNe). In September there were 300 at Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead on Sep 9th (BDC), then 450 at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead on Sep 30th (BDC). **Second Winter:** During October, 1790 were counted on Oct 9th at Twyford (PA). At Pitlands Farm, Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill there were 500 on Oct 30th (BDC) and on the same day 1500 at Lower Farm GP, Newbury (NDOC). Highest counts in November were 600 at Stanlake Park, Twyford on Nov 26th (NA), 1400 at Dinton Pastures CP on Nov 18th (WeBS), and 1174 at Twyford on Nov 19th (PA). The WeBS count at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 26th was 800. The last count of the year was of 600 at Stanlake Park, Twyford, on Dec 31st (NA). At Datchet on the River Thames, a returning wintering bird fitted with a metal BTO Ring No. EX51513 was noted on Sep 23rd and again on Oct 20th (KPD). This bird had been seen on nine previous occasions on the Thames at Datchet between September and December 2011. It was ringed by the Runnymede Ringing Group as a nestling, on Jun 17th 2010 at Bedfont Lakes, Greater London. An individual present on the Thames at Datchet on Sep 23rd, Sep 29th, Oct 10th, Oct 27th and Nov 3rd (KPD) was fitted with a metal BTO Ring No. EX70346. It had been ringed at Pitsea Landfill Site on Mar 10th 2012 by the North Thames Gull Group. A colour ringed 2X23 individual was present on the River Thames at Datchet on Oct 7th, Oct 13th, Oct 28th, Nov 10th and Dec 16th (KPD). An individual ringed as No. S2646 in Latvia at Riga on April 2nd 2012, but presumed to be born in 2010 or before, was on the Thames at Datchet on Oct 27th, Oct 28th, Nov 3rd and Nov 25th (KPD).

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

A total of at least 42 birds were recorded on 19 days. The earliest was a first winter at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 3rd (CL) and 4th (CDRH). **Spring:** The end of March saw the first spring birds with one adult winter (KEM, MFW) at Padworth lane GP on Mar 24th. Two (an adult winter and a second winter) were at Woolhampton GPs on Mar 26th (ABT, KEM, PEH), and at 18:00hrs four adult winter were seen at Theale Main GP but did not linger (ABT). Another brief sighting was at Queen Mother Reservoir with two (an adult summer and a first summer) staying five minutes on Apr 3rd (CDRH). The following day, Apr 4th, saw two first summers at Horton GPs (CDRH). This was followed by what appears to be the peak passage over several days in late April with a single adult summer at Theale Main GP on Apr 17th (KEM), only staying five minutes. A single second summer was found at Sandford lake, Dinton Pastures on Apr 20th (FJC, PB-T). The highest single count of the year was at Queen Mother Reservoir with six (four adult summer and two first summer) on Apr 23rd (CDRH). On April 24th, one first summer was at Theale Main GP (KEM, PEH, RGi). On April 25th one flew north east over Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) and three (a summer adult and two first summer) were at Theale Main GP (ABT, KEM, PEH). One of the first summer birds probably lingered at Theale Main GP until April 26th (NR) and April 27th

(MPr, PEH). The last spring record was on May 7th when one first summer bird flew straight through at Theale Main GP (RCr). **Late Summer/Autumn:** The first returning birds were four (a second winter and three juveniles) at QMR on Aug 14th (CDRH). The only September record was of a juvenile at QMR on Sep 2nd (CDRH) which was probably the same bird seen the following day at the same location. Queen Mother Reservoir provided the remaining records for the year with an adult winter on Oct 21st (CDRH), an adult winter on Oct 24th (CDRH) and finally two (an adult winter and a first winter) on Nov 27th (CDRH).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant and winter visitor, less frequent in summer (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

Records occurred in every month except May, on 54 days of the year with fifty percent of records coming from Queen Mother Reservoir. Different times and aging of birds suggest a maximum of 44 different birds. **First Winter:** Single adult winter birds were seen at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 3rd, 4th and 6th (CDRH) with two adults on Jan 11th (MMc), 13th and 29th (CDRH). On Jan 16th there were three birds (two adults and one second winter) with three adults on Jan 17th at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). Winter adult birds were seen at Summerleaze GPs on Jan 7th, 18th and 19th (CDRH) and at Moatlands GP, Theale, on Jan 22nd (MFW). In February single winter adults were seen at Cippenham on Feb 24th (CDRH), at QMR on Feb 1st to 5th (CDRH), Feb 9th (KEM) and Feb 29th (CL); additionally, there was a second-winter at QMR on Feb 2nd (CDRH). **Spring:** The first March record was of an adult with almost a full hood on the east marsh of Dorney Jubilee River on Mar 9th (BAJC). Also on Mar 9th, a summer adult was located at Theale Main GP (DJB, KEM). Two adults were at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River on Mar 11th (JRos), with another single adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 13th (CDRH). On Mar 16th at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River a winter plumage adult was present (BDC). It was almost a month before any further sightings. On Apr 10th, a first winter was present at Horton GPs until 18:00hrs (CDRH). All further April records came from Dinton Pastures CP. A second summer was located at Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures on Apr 12th (FJC). Presumably the same bird was then seen on Apr 15th, 16th 17th 18th, 19th and lastly on the 21st at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures (MO). **Summer:** Three vocal summer plumaged adults flew onto Horton GPs briefly on Jun 10th (CDRH) then split up as they departed with two being seen ten minutes later at King George VI Reservoir, Surrey. On Jun 28th, a summer plumage adult flew over Horton Fields (CDRH) and two (one summer plumage adult and one first winter) were at Pingewood GP (KEM). At the latter location, a second summer appeared on Jul 13th (KEM). A second summer was seen at Horton GPs on Jul 21st (CDRH) catching flying insects with Black-Headed Gulls. Also on Jul 21st, a summer plumage adult flew over Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). On Jul 22nd, an adult (half hood) flew into Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) while another adult (95% complete hood) was located in the roost there on Jul 24th (CDRH). A fresh juvenile was seen at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 2nd then again on Aug 8th while another juvenile, a darker individual, was located in the roost on Aug 16th (CDRH). The only September record was of a first winter on Sep 27th at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). **Autumn/Winter:** A first winter flew into Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 9th (CDRH). An adult winter was in the QMR roost on Oct 11th, 17th and 18th (CDRH, DJB). Another adult winter (more extensive mask and predominately red bill) was in the roost on Oct 20th and 21st (CDRH). There was also a first winter in the QMR roost on Oct 21st (MFW). On Nov 15th, an adult winter was around the islands at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River (CDRH) with a different adult winter (face mask different) at QMR on Nov 16th (CDRH). An adult was also at QMR on Nov 23rd (PB-T). December QMR records

comprised an adult winter on Dec 2nd (CDRH) and two (an adult winter and a first winter) in the roost on Dec 13th (CDRH). On Dec 3rd, two different first winters, as determined by head pattern, were at Borough Marsh, Wargrave, and at Temple on floods (CDRH). An un-aged bird was at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River on Dec 6th (WMo). Possibly the same bird, a first winter, was also at the same location on Dec 24th (CDRH). Last record of the year was an adult at Ankerwycke on Dec 29th (CDRH).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First Winter: January started with high counts at Windsor Great Park with 263 on the Great Meadow Pond on Jan 1st (DJB) and with 300 on Smiths Lawn on the same day, deemed to be different birds. Also, on Jan 1st, 250 were seen at Plaistow Green Polo Grounds, Winkfield (DJB). Birds lingered in the Windsor area with 153 at Meadow Great Pond, Windsor on Jan 8th (BJB) and 200 at Water Oakley, Windsor on Jan 20th (DJB). 200 were at Maidenhead Thicket on Jan 23rd (PNe). The only count of note in January away from these areas was 86 at Moor Green Lakes on Jan 7th (MGLR). The highest count for this period was 730 at Streatley on Feb 5th (NJB) which accounted for about 40% of a large mixed gull flock. On Feb 10th, and a count of 538 at Moatlands GP, Theale was noted as unusually high for this location (RCr). Only small numbers were noted at various locations across Berkshire during the remainder of February except for 100 at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn on Feb 26th (ABT). March records were also low with the highest being 38 at Moor Green Lakes on Mar 3rd (MGLR) and 48 at the Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Mar 11th (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** By April records were only of one or two birds at a few locations, with fewer in May. Only nine records were submitted for these months, predominantly from locations in the east of the county. The only June record was of a first summer at Queen Mother Reservoir that stayed for three days, Jun 11th to 13th (CDRH). July records amounted to ten in East and mid Berkshire, mostly single birds except for four (two adults and two first summer) at Horton GPs on Jul 21st to 26th (CDRH). The highest was of eight at Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Jul 29th (DJB). August continued in the same vein with only seven records submitted; the maximum count being four adults at Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Aug 26th (DJB). **Autumn/Second Winter:** Low numbers, with only eight records of mostly single birds, continued into September. The stand out record was of 200 at Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead on Sep 4th (BDC). 20 were following a plough at Switchback Road, Maidenhead on Sep 30th (BDC). 24 records were submitted for October of which 15 were of single birds in east Berkshire. It would appear all the Common Gulls in Berkshire were at Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Park with 600 on Oct 21st (DJB). The next highest counts were of ten on Oct 28th (MGLR) and ten on Oct 29th (RFM), both at Moor Green Lakes. There were nine at Dinton Pastures CP on Oct 14th (WeBS), and six at Moor Green Lakes on Oct 17th (JMC) and Oct 20th (RCMu). November saw a significant rise in records with 46 spread over 26 locations. Again counts were low with the highest being 80 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Nov 11th (DJB). Moor Green Lakes had an average count of 13, ranging from two to a maximum of 23 (Nov 23rd) over 14 dates in November (BO *et al.*). There were seven at Remenham on Nov 9th (DF), five at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 13th (BAJC), four on Ascot heath on Nov 18th (RJD), six at Dinton Pastures CP on Nov 18th (WeBS), ten on Southcote meadows on Nov 27th (AVL) and 15 at Hyde Farm on Nov 28th (PNe). Eighteen records were submitted for December; the highest count was 28 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 10th (JRSto). There were 24 at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead on Dec 16th (WeBS). At Waltham St. Lawrence on Dec 4th there were 18 (PNe). The highest of four counts in December at Moor Green Lakes was 14 on Dec 3rd (RFM).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

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

There were a total of 592 records from 66 locations, predominately from west Berkshire.

First Winter: January produced by far the highest counts with significantly lower numbers in February and March. The highest count was 4810 at Lower Farm GP on Jan 22nd (PEH). Other counts for Lower Farm GP during January included: 860 on Jan 2nd (PEH), 370 on Jan 3rd (PEH) of which three were colour ringed, 2680 on Jan 4th (PEH), 2500 on Jan 14th (SAG), 1120 on Jan 15th (MIGW), 3004 on Jan 19th (PEH) with two colour ringed, 3085 on Jan 25th (PEH), 3808 on Jan 26th (PEH) and 4650 on Jan 27th (GRW, PEH). These birds would usually disperse onto the west Berkshire Downs during the day as evident from 2000 noted at Easton Hill pig farm on Jan 5th (IW, JL). The only other roost site would appear to be Theale Main GP which held 3000 on Jan 30th (RCr). The highest record for February was of 500 at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn, on Feb 26th (ABT). The highest count from Lower Farm GP was 75 on Feb 26th (MIGW). On Feb 27th there were 80 on Crookham Common (IW). On Feb 19th there were 60 at Combe (RHar) and 105 on Feb 12th at Wigmore Lane GPs (WeBS). Numbers in March petered out with only a maximum of 100 seen flying over Skinners Green on Mar 13th (TPO). Lower Farm GP records continued with all its counts being below a hundred, notably 83 on Mar 3rd (PEH), 60 on March 11th (MIGW) and 81 on Mar 12th (PEH). Records at the end of March and throughout April averaged one or two individuals at various locations across Berkshire.

Spring/Summer: The low numbers in winter continued into spring. Highest counts were at Lodden Drive, Charvil with 15 on May 1st (DJB), 17 at Woolhampton GPs on May 11th (PEH), 17 at Lower Farm GP on May 14th (PEH) and 18 on May 19th at Lower Farm (IW, JL), these being noted as mainly immature birds. Seven were over Wellbottom Down, Lambourn on May 27th (IW, JL). June counts were low, with seven, the second highest, at Lower Farm GP on Jun 16th (IWE, JL) followed by 18, the highest, at Lower Farm GP on June 30th (SAG) with all birds appearing to be third summer. During July, half the county records came from Moor Green Lakes with highest count being 19 on July 17th (RFM), which comprised 16 adults with three juveniles. The highest count for July was of 21 birds seen flying over Boxford Common on Jul 25th (IW, JL). August saw a build up of birds returning from breeding areas with the highest count being 172 at Lower Farm GP on August 9th (PEH). This was the first count over a hundred since March. On Aug 16th, 110 were at roost at Moor Green Lakes (JMC). On Compton Down, 425 were present on Aug 25th (PEH). August finished with 655 at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 30th (JMC). No records of breeding birds in the county were submitted. **Second Winter:** A large flock of birds, 3200, was at Bucklebury Ford on Sep 5th (DJR) probably attracted by the nearby pig farm. On Sep 9th, 400 were at roost at Moor Green Lakes (JMC). 150 were at Fawley on Sept 29th (JD). On Oct 6th, 28 were at Walbury Hill, Combe (DJB). The roost at Moor Green Lakes reached 1920 on Oct 7th (JMC), interestingly all arriving from a south west direction. A high count of 900 coming off ploughed fields was noted at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn, on Oct 10th (CDRH). The roost at Lower Farm began to increase, with 300 on Oct 24th (GJS) and 2500 on Oct 31st (MGU). Presumably many of these birds had spent the day at Easton Hill pig farm, where over a 1000 were present on Oct 31st (IW, JL). On Nov 1st, 2000 were by the River Pang at Bucklebury (DJR). On Nov 3rd, the Theale Main GP roost was also increasing with 900 counted (SAG). The Lower Farm GP roost reached 3000 on Nov 7th (MGU). The Theale Main GP roost reached 3200 on Nov 19th (RCr) with 2500 at the Lower Farm GP roost on the same day (JRSto). The Lower Farm GP roost continued into December with 3000 at least on Dec 10th (JRSto). A WeBS count on Dec 16th at Wigmore Lane GP produced a total of 300.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

Of 206 records, 87% were of less than ten birds. **First Winter:** On Jan 2nd, 400 were at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill (DJB). This was followed by 280 at Weycock Hill, Waltham St Lawrence on Jan 23rd (PNe). The only count above ten in January was 20 at Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures on Jan 14th (FJC). Thereafter there was no count above five until Mar 11th with 12 birds at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead (WeBS) and 11 over Lower Farm GP on Mar 17th (IW, JL). **Spring/Summer:** ten adults were observed landing on flat roofs in Slough on Apr 13th (DF) with the suggestion they may have been nesting. Seven were seen soaring low over central Reading on Apr 23rd, also suggesting returning breeding birds. A flock of 76 immature birds were seen on floods on the Review Ground at Windsor Great Park on Apr 26th (KPD). Other flooded fields at Lodden Drive, Charvil, attracted 200 mostly immature birds on May 3rd (ABT). The next highest count in May was at Queen Mother Reservoir with 24 on May 28th (PEH). More immature birds were at Dorney Wetlands (54) on the weir on Jun 12th (CDRH) and 90, mostly immature, at QMR on Jun 13th (CDRH). Two recently fledged juveniles were seen at QMR on Jul 13th (CDRH), suggesting local breeding. On Jul 15th, two adults and a juvenile were at Windsor Great Park (MHu), Moor Green Lakes on Jul 19th (RFM) and at Wooshill on Aug 18th (PB-T). An adult with a juvenile were present at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 10th (RFM) and at Bray on Aug 17th (PB-T). A single juvenile was at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 20th (RFM). **Autumn/ Second Winter:** Returning birds gathered at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill with 550 on Sep 1st (DJB). A flock of 500 were at Warren Row on Oct 30th (BDC). Possibly the same group of 500 were noted at Weycock Hill, Waltham St Lawrence on Dec 4th (PNe). The only other flocks of any note were of 40 at Bucklebury on Nov 1st (DJR); 21 at Wooshill on Nov 1st (PB-T); 18 at South Lake, Reading on Nov 22nd (LGL) which continued to be seen there until at least Dec 28th, and 25 over Wyvale Garden Centre, Windsor on Nov 22nd (DF). The only roost count submitted was of 27 birds at Colebrook North Lake, Moor Green Lakes on Dec 8th (JMC).

HERRING GULL (*argentatus*) *Larus argentatus argentatus*

Records identified as the Scandinavian race of Herring Gull were of a first winter, “presumed *argentatus*”, at Knowl Hill tip on Jan 23rd (CDRH) and again at the nearby Castle Royle golf course on Jan 24th (CDRH). The first returning bird was a summer adult at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 14th then two adults on Aug 31st (CDRH). On Sep 28th and 29th at QMR a large adult with raspberry pink legs was noted (CDRH) and a “*thayeri* type” individual on the latter date (CDRH). An “*argentatus* type” was reported at Lower Farm GP on Nov 17th (JA).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Uncommon but increasing autumn passage migrant, a few winter (Amber Listed)

129 records were submitted with peak counts in July and August. **First Winter:** The peak count in January was four adults on Jan 4th at Lower Farm GP and again on Jan 26th (PEH). Two adults with two second winter were in the roost at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 17th (CDRH). A second winter and a juvenile with a red ring (PU7T) on its left leg were at Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures CP, on Jan 14th (FJC). Three adults were located in the Theale Main GP roost on Jan 23rd (KEM). Two adults were again in the Theale Main GP roost on Feb 4th (KEM). All subsequent records up to mid June were of single birds at seven locations except three (two sub-adults and one first summer) in the roost at QMR on Mar

26th (CDRH). **Summer:** An adult, the first of the summer was at QMR on Jun 10th with a sub-adult there on the 11th (CDRH). The adult, now showing wing moult, was present again at QMR from Jun 26th to Jul 2nd (CDRH). On Jul 3rd, five adults were on the north bank of QMR (CDRH), while on Jul 2nd at Horton Fields there were four birds (three adults and one sub-adult) and four (all adults) on Jul 7th (CDRH). The count at Horton Fields rose to seven (all adults) on Jul 8th. At Moor Green Lakes, a single adult was present from Jul 7th through to the end of August except on Jul 19th and 24th when it was joined by a third summer individual. Then on Aug 30th five birds (four adults and a juvenile) were at Moor Green Lakes. At QMR the numbers rose to 40 on Jul 20th and 24th (CDRH) but the highest July count was on the adjacent Horton Fields with 42 present on Jul 29th (CDRH) of which 41 were adults. During August, counts at Horton Fields rose from 32 on Aug 1st (including three first summers) to a peak of 58 on Aug 4th which included five first summers (CDRH), then dropping to 49 on Aug 29th (CDRH). On Aug 13th, it was estimated that there were up to 80 birds present across three sites: QMR, Horton Fields and Colnbrook landfill site (CDRH). The first juvenile of the year at QMR was noted on Aug 4th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second Winter:** Counts reduced significantly in September, peaking at seven at Colnbrook on Sep 27th (CDRH). Away from the usual locations, three were seen at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Sep 22nd and then later on Nov 1st (DJR). During October, three were at Moor Green Lakes in the roost on Oct 7th (JMC) then five on Oct 17th (JMC). An adult associating with a flock of Lesser-Black Backed Gulls was at Crookham Common on Oct 25th (AEDH). A single bird was seen by the River Pang at Bucklebury on Nov 1st (DJR). On Nov 3rd, three (two adults and one sub-adult) were at Borough Marsh, Wargrave (CDRH). The highest November counts were of four (two adults and two third winters) at Lower Farm GP on Nov 17th (JA), and four (one adult, one second winter and two first winters) at QMR in the roost on Nov 18th (CDRH). Low numbers occurred throughout December, predominately at Lower Farm and Theale Main GP with the highest being six (JRSto) at Lower Farm GP on Dec 10th (three adults, one fourth winter and two second winter). Two adults were at Bucklebury on Dec 16th (CDRH), two adults at Theale Main GP on Dec 12th (KEM) and two (a winter adult and a second winter) at QMR on Dec 13th (CDRH).

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce autumn/winter visitor

A total of 29 records were submitted from seven locations. Two thirds of these records were from one diligent gull observer! All but three records were from east Berkshire. **First Winter:** There were two birds in the county in January: an adult in the gull roost at Moatlands Main Lake on Jan 2nd (MFW) and a first winter at Queen Mother Reservoir on Jan 29th (CDRH), apparently a bird that was present in Dec 2011. A first winter was at Theale Main GP on Feb 5th (KEM). The only March record was of a small first winter at Horton GPs on Mar 17th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second Winter:** A moulting first summer, presumed female, was found at Horton Fields on Aug 6th (CDRH). This bird was seen again at QMR on Aug 7th, 8th and 19th (CDRH). A moulting third summer was at Horton Fields and later in the day at QMR on Aug 13th (CDRH). Two, the moulting first summer and a summer adult, were in the roost at QMR on Aug 14th (CDRH). The month finished with a first winter in the roost at QMR on Aug 28th and 30th (CDRH). This brought the August total to six individual birds in east Berkshire. All September records came from QMR, with three individuals: first winter on Sep 5th, another first winter on Sep 9th, presumably the same bird on Sep 25th, and a first summer on Sep 17th (CDRH). On Oct 8th, a fourth winter was at Colnbrook (CDRH), a first winter was at Horton GPs on Oct 21st (CDRH) and, lastly for October, a second winter at QMR on Oct 30th. This brought the autumn total to at least eight individual birds (CDRH). The

second winter bird seen in October was seen again in the QMR roost on Nov 5th (CDRH). A first winter was at QMR on Nov 11th (MMc), Nov 12th (CDRH) and Nov 14th (MMc) and possibly the same on Nov 26th (PB-T). An adult was at Horton GPs on Nov 17th (CDRH). Another first winter was in the QMR roost on Dec 12th (CDRH), considered by the observer not to be the November bird. At Knowl Hill landfill tip, a very large first winter, considered the same bird seen at QMR during October and November, was present on Dec 16th (CDRH). Cock Marsh floods provided two first winter birds on Dec 30th and then three first winters on Dec 31st (CDRH), which were also seen at the nearby Little Marlow Gravel Pits in Buckinghamshire. This brought the Autumn/Winter total to at least 10 birds in east Berkshire.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)

First Winter: The first record for the year was at Queen Mother Reservoir with a second winter bird in the roost on Jan 29th (CDRH). On Feb 3rd, a second winter, perhaps the same bird as at QMR, appeared at Searles Farm Lane GP, standing on ice in the pre-roost (RCr). Another second winter, determined by different plumage details, then appeared on several dates in the roost at QMR: on Feb 26th (CDRH), Mar 15th (CDRH, CL), Mar 16th (ABT, PB-T), Mar 17th (PEH), Apr 4th (CDRH), presumed same bird but not aged on Apr 6th (MMc), and then daily in the roost from Apr 10th to Apr 13th (CDRH). The same bird flew north over QMR on the morning of May 20th, identified by its wing moult pattern (CDRH). This was the latest ever Berkshire record for this species. A third individual for the winter was a first winter in the roost at QMR on Mar 10th (CDRH). There were no further records for the year.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare but annual winter visitor

A first winter bird frequented east Berkshire during January and February. It was first seen at Horton GPs on Jan 22nd (CDRH) and considered not to be the Woodley bird of Dec 2011. It was then relocated on Jan 23rd at Weycock Hill, Waltham St Lawrence (PNe) and later the same day at Knowl Hill landfill site (CDRH). The bird was seen at Knowl Hill landfill site again on several dates in February: Feb 1st (PNe), Feb 3rd (BAJC, PB-T), Feb 4th (ABT, JFord), Feb 7th and 8th (RHai), Feb 9th (RCE *et al.*) and lastly on Feb 12th (MFW). This bird was also seen in the QMR roost on Jan 28th and 30th (CDRH) and again on Feb 13th (CDRH).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

This species was recorded in every month of the year right across the county with peak counts in January and December. There were 38 at Colnbrook on Jan 1st comprised of 36 adults and two juveniles and 16 (14 adults and two juveniles) at Horton GPs on the same day (both CDRH). On Jan 20th there were 22 (20 adults and two juveniles) at Knowl Hill (CDRH) and six (four adults and two juveniles) at Horton GPs on Jan 29th (CDRH). All records after that from numerous locations up to the end of October consisted of only one or two birds. On Oct 28th there were 16 (13 adults) at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). On Nov 18th, there were six at QMR (LSe). 20 (19 adults) were at Knowl Hill on Nov 28th (CDRH). At Waltham St Lawrence there were 23 (22 adults) on Dec 4th (CDRH). There was an increase in numbers towards the end of December, with 34 adults on Dec 24th at

Colnbrook (CDRH), then 40 adults at Cock Marsh on Dec 30th and at least 86 at the same location, the highest count of the year, on Dec 31st (CDRH).

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant

There were three records for the year, all at Queen Mother Reservoir in the Spring. A group of three were seen on April 28th (MMc). There have only been 15 records of a group of three or more in the county in the past 66 years. On June 2nd a single bird stayed for 20 minutes before departing south east followed by another single bird arriving from the south west 35 minutes later flying straight through to the north east (CDRH).

Recorder's comment: a couple of fairly typical Spring records, which do little to dispel the impression of a long-term decrease in records; there hasn't been an Autumn sighting since a juvenile was at QMR on Aug 27th 2006. However on 15th August 2012 a remarkable flock of 19 (including two juveniles) was present just yards beyond the county boundary at Little Marlow GP, Buckinghamshire.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A total count of only 18 birds for the year is at the low end of the range of annual totals. The first birds of the Spring occurred on April 25th with singles at Lower Farm GP (GJS) and Theale Main GP (PEH) and two at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). A single bird stayed at Theale Main GP from April 28th to the 29th (MO). There was another single bird at Woolhampton GPs on April 30th and the May 1st (KEM, DJR). Also on May 1st a single bird was present at QMR (MMc). Two birds were reported at Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures on May 4th (BGU). On May 19th two birds were at Theale Main GP (KEM *et al.*). Also on May 19th there was a single bird at Woolhampton GPs (GEW), which stayed to the following day May 20th (RD, RF). On May 27th a single bird was at Horton GPs (CDRH). The only record for June was on June 3rd of a single bird at Queen Mother Reservoir for a brief period early morning (CDRH). The first bird of the return passage was a juvenile on Aug 16th on Black Swan lake, Dinton Pastures (FJC). The highest single count of the year was of three juveniles at midday at QMR on Aug 19th which departed with a migrant flock of Common Terns (CDRH). The last bird of the year was an adult winter plumaged bird at Theale Main GP and the adjacent Hosehill lake LNR on Sept 24th and 25th (KEM, RCr, JA).

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

The earliest ever county record was of two birds circling over QMR mid morning on March 23rd (CDRH). The next record was also from QMR on April 17th (CDRH *et al.*) perched on a buoy at times and was still present the following morning. A group of four were seen at Lower Farm GP on April 25th (BL *et al.*). QMR was visited by two summer adults on June 28th for 24 minutes before departing at 13:00hrs but then relocated briefly 45 minutes later at Horton GPs (CDRH). On July 26th three birds (two winter plumage and a first summer) circled the north end of QMR (CDRH). Again at QMR, two winter plumage adults flew west to east over the reservoir on Aug 15th (CDRH) making this the fifth consecutive month of records at the reservoir. This brought the total for the year to 14 birds which is lower than the average for recent decades.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

It appeared to be a very poor breeding year with evidence of only five chicks confirmed at five breeding sites. Records were submitted for 47 sites. **Spring:** The first record of the year was of one flying up the River Thames at Remenham on April 1st (RCW). The next record was over a week later on April 10th with a single bird at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (ADB) and two at Bray pits (WAS). These were followed by one at Thatcham Discovery Centre on April 12th (GJS) and one at Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures on April 14th (LSe). Thereafter there were records for every day during April at sites right across the county. The largest flock was of 35 birds at Theale Main GP on April 25th (KEM). The next highest was 25 birds at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead on April 30th (CDRH). On the same day 19 flew through at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). On April 29th there were 18 at Theale Main GP (ABT). On April 27th 15 were at Theale Main GP with 11 still present the following day (KEM). On April 26th 12 were at Maiden Erlegh Lake, Reading (LGL). Flocks of ten birds were seen at QMR April 23rd (CDRH); at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead (DCle); and Theale Main GP on April 24th (KEM); and at Maiden Erlegh Lake, Reading on April 30th (ABO). Unlikely sites for records were from Northcourt Avenue, Reading with two on April 26th (HWh) and two over the roundabout at Woose Hill, Wokingham on April 27th (EN). Records were submitted for every day, except for two, in May with migrants moving though and others settling onto nesting sites. Twenty birds at Theale Main GP on May 1st (KEM) and 21 on the buoys on the Jubilee River on May 13th (KPD) were the highest monthly counts. **Breeding:** Nesting behaviour was evident at Thatcham Discovery Centre, with 19 birds on May 29th (GJS) and four birds at Moor Green lakes on the same day (RFM). The highest count for June was 18 at QMR on June 4th (CDRH), two of which were nesting on the pier. There were 12 birds on the tern raft at Thatcham Discovery Centre on June 5th and ten on June 15th (IW, JL). Unfortunately they appeared to have deserted the raft on June 25th (IW, JL). But there were two there on June 26th possibly undertaking a new breeding attempt. Breeding behaviour was also observed with a pair at Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford on June 10th but the whereabouts of the nest was not determined. The first definite evidence of successful breeding was at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead, when a pair with a nearly fledged chick was observed on July 2nd and two chicks out of the nest on July 6th (CDRH). On July 12th 12 birds were at Lea Farm lake, Dinton Pastures, with two sitting birds on a raft with one fledged bird still present following mink predation. The only other confirmed breeding reported for July was of two juveniles raised at QMR with 12 other birds there on July 21st (CDRH). The highest count for July was 22 birds at Theale Main GP on July 12th (KEM). Six were present at Moor Green GPs on Aug 2nd (RFM) and eight on Aug 14th (PBou) but although birds had been present at this site all summer in low numbers there was no recorded evidence of breeding. **Autumn:** On Aug 11th seven birds flew through QMR which also had two lingering juveniles present. A large flock of 48 birds flew in and circled QMR and departed within 15 minutes on Aug 19th (CDRH), being the highest count of for year. Another smaller flock of 11 flew through QMR on Aug 24th (CDRH). The next record was of two at Moatlands Main lake on Sept 9th (MFW) and then not until Sept 24th when ten were seen at Theale Main GP (KEM). Very small numbers continued to be seen at Theale Main GP until one, the last individual, on Oct 4th (KEM). The last record of the year came from QMR with five (one adult and four juveniles) on Oct 8th (CDRH).

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

Rare vagrant

There was one record at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 9th (MMc). This follows the record for the previous year when a bird was found at QMR on exactly the same date by the same observer! But, unlike the previous year's bird, which stayed for five days, this bird stayed for a short period before departing the same day. One had been at Staines reservoir, in Surrey, at 08:40hrs but departed presumably to QMR where it was seen before 9:00hrs, and then returned to Staines about 10:00hrs and flew off high at 10:45hrs. This year's bird is the sixth county record.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Passage followed the normal annual pattern with most birds (153 total) seen at the end of April and early May with lower numbers (five total) returning in the Autumn. The spring total was above average. **Spring:** The first migrant of the year was a single bird on April 17th at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). This was followed by a single bird at Theale Main GP on April 22nd (KEM). On April 23rd two flocks of three and 15 (18 in total) flew through QMR (CDRH). The following day birds appeared at four sites: one resting on the island at Hosehill Lake NR (TGB); a maximum of three at Theale Main GP (KEM *et al.*); two at Old Slade STW and lake (CDRH); and a total of nine in small groups through QMR in the morning (CDRH). On April 25th two flew through QMR (CDRH) and one through Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (RRi), and a flock of 30 present at 12:00hrs at Theale Main GP (ABT) being the highest count of the year. A single bird was seen at QMR (CDRH) and two at Theale Main GP (KEM) on April 26th. On April 28th two birds were feeding at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead (CDRH); four were at Woolhampton GPs (BGU) and 16 at Theale Main GP (BGU). A maximum of ten were at Theale Main GP on April 29th (BGU) and at the same location one sat on a buoy on April 30th (PD). Birds continued to pass through in early May with five at QMR (MMc); one for 15minutes at Woolhampton GPs (KEM) and six at Theale Main GP (KEM) on May 1st. On May 2nd five flew through QMR (CDRH) and two were present at Theale Main GP (TGB). On May 4th three flew quickly north through Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (FJC) and a total of nine through QMR (CDRH). On May 5th a flock of ten landed briefly on a sand bar at Summerleaze GPs, Maidenhead before moving off north east at 08:37hrs (CDRH). Two flew though at QMR on May 9th (CDRH). The spring passage finished with three birds at Woolhampton GPs on May 16th (KEM). **Autumn:** The return passage was very poor with birds only seen on three dates over three months. Two adults were at QMR on July 21st for 20 minutes (CDRH). Two immature birds were at Theale Main GP on Sept 29th (KEM) and finally, the last sighting of the year was one first winter at Theale Main GP on Oct 3rd (JA).

ROCK DOVE / FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant urban resident

A pair with two young was in a nest at Eton on Jan 12th (DJB). Seven nests were noted under the roof of a temporary bus station in Reading Feb 23rd (SAG). Nesting was also noted at Newbury Station, when four juveniles were seen on Apr 3rd (SAG). The largest counts were 210 at Cookham Rise on Dec 18th (BDC) and 200 at Reading on Oct 12th (JLe).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

First Winter: Quite widely reported but mainly in single figures. The only sizeable counts were 30 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Jan 1st (DJB), 30 at Frogmill, Hurley on Jan 27th (SJF FMF) and 30 at Sonning Meadows on Mar 30th (ABT). **Breeding:** Evidence of breeding was fairly widespread, with pairs and nesting behaviour noted in West, Mid and East Berks. At Silwood Park, Sunninghill there were three singing males and several birds at nest holes on Apr 20th (RJD). A survey of the Windsor Forest and Swinley Forest areas in the East between May 25th and Jun 1st found six pairs plus 17 singing males (DJB). Evidence of late breeding was seen again when a pair with two young were found at Shefford Woodlands on Oct 1st (JPM). **Autumn/Second Winter:** The period Aug-Oct produced the highest counts of the year, with 60 at Moor Green on a newly cut hay field on Aug 27th (RCMu), 140 at Horton GP on a freshly tilled field on Sep 17th, with a similar number still there on the 27th (CDRH), 700 at Hawthorn Hill in a single field on Sep 19th (CDRH), 90 at Englefield on Oct 5th (PEH). A small passage was noted at Ascot Heath in the autumn, when single figure counts were seen flying south with Woodpigeons between Oct 21st and Nov 13th (RJD).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

First Winter: Four sites had counts of over 500. In the East, Great Meadow Pond had 900 Jan 1st, 1750 Jan 8th, 1700 Jan 15th and 2000 Feb 19th, indicating a regular wintering flock (all DJB). In the West, Bagnor Cress Beds had 500 Jan 10th and 700 Mar 1st (IW JL); Sheep Down, West Ilsley had 530 Jan 22nd (PEH) and Compton Downs had 1000 Mar 9th (DJB) **Post Breeding:** There was a high count of 500 at Great Meadow Pond Jul 8th (DJB). **Second Winter:** Significant Autumn passage was noted between Oct 15th and Nov 6th and birds were all noted to be flying south. Regular watching at sites during the first couple of hours of daylight produced the following counts: Ascot Heath 467 Oct 15th, 2155 Oct 27th, 1335 Oct 28th, 1244 Nov 5th and 689 Nov 6th (all RJD); Cold Harbour 1000 Oct 18th (DJB); Queen Mother Reservoir 600 Oct 27th (CDRH); Woose Hill 545 Oct 27th (PB-T). Oct 27th was the heaviest passage day with 3300 birds logged. Large flocks noted as the winter progressed are more likely to have been regular wintering birds: Cold Harbour 1500 Oct 30th (BDC), Englefield 600 Nov 10th (LSe), Great Meadow Pond 600 Nov 11th and 1000 Nov 18th (DJB), Lower Green, Inkpen 800 Nov 27th (RHar), Bagnor Cress Beds 800 Nov 30th (IW JL), Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead 600 Dec 22nd (BDC).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident

This species continues to remain common and widespread throughout the county, so is probably under recorded. Most reports were of counts less than ten. Highest counts were 81 Long Lane, Cookham Sep 30th (BDC), 40 on wires Hornbuckle Farm, Hawthorn Hill Dec 23rd (DJB), 30 roosting in trees Thatcham Jan 15th (IW JL) and 32 there on Nov 13th (GJS), 16 Englefield Oct 7th (SAG). Breeding was under-recorded, with only two records of mating and nesting behaviour; one from the east and one from the west of the County.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Now an uncommon and extremely local summer visitor which continues to decline (Red Listed)

A further drop in records, with just eight sites reporting birds. Of these, only four had birds for any period of time and only one had evidence of successful breeding. The first spring record was on the early date of Apr 4th when a singing male was at Aldermaston GP (JPM). Birds were recorded regularly at four sites across the county. At Aldermaston GP, the singing male from Apr 4th had found a mate by May 27th. A single bird was still singing on Jul 31st and a juvenile was seen on Sep 5th (JPM). At Foliejohn Park, there was a singing male on May 18th, Jun 22nd and Jul 1st, but unfortunately no evidence that he ever found a mate (MSFW). At Holyport, there were two birds on May 27th (RD) and one or two were seen until Jun 5th (MO) with mating noted on Jun 1st (DJB), but again no further evidence of successful breeding. At Woolhampton, the first arrival was singing on Apr 28th (JPM) and reported on many dates until May 18th (MO). Two were seen on Jun 18th (GEW), which was the final sighting. Further records probably relate to passage birds, though two of these are from mid June, so are possibly from undiscovered breeding sites. One on wires at Brimpton on Apr 30th and another in flight on Aug 25th (GEW), one singing at Thatcham Marsh on May 8th (RRK) and one singing briefly there again on Jul 28th (IW, JL). An intriguing record relates to a juvenile photographed in a garden in Caversham on Aug 12th (G Killgallon per CDRH) – was this a passage bird or further evidence of local breeding?

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Common resident in the east of the county, uncommon elsewhere

The continued westward spread of this species, especially along the Thames Valley has now made it a fairly common resident as far west as the east of Reading, however it is still a rare visitor further west. The monthly site status based on records received is shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites in west Berkshire	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sites in mid Berkshire	4	1	7	2	5	4	6	3	5	4	4	6
Sites in east Berkshire	12	10	9	8	10	7	5	9	12	10	16	13

First Winter: The highest counts in the East of the county were 257 over Wraysbury GP on Jan 1st (PEH). A roost in trees on the North bank of the M4 at Cippenham, Slough numbered 500 birds on Jan 2nd (PJS) and Jan 12th (CDRH) still 400 on Feb 25th, when they were being stalked by a Buzzard (CDRH). Two hundred and eighteen were recorded at Dorney Wetlands on Feb 11th (PEH) presumably flying to the Cippenham roost. In the West, the only record of the year was on Mar 8th when one flew high west over Boxford Common (JL). The highest flock in mid Berkshire was ten at Remenham on Jan 15th (SAG).

Spring/Summer: In the East, the Cippenham roost continued to be used, with 250 birds on May 25th (DLC) and 400 on May 28th (CDRH). One hundred and ten birds flying west at Dorney Wetlands on May 8th (DJB) were presumably leaving the roost. In mid Berks, the highest count was 22 birds at Twyford on July 5th (SPA). On the border of mid and west Berkshire one flew north over Padworth Lane GP on Jun 4th (MFW). Breeding records are under recorded and there were only two reports of juveniles: one ad and one juvenile at Holyport on May 30th (SA) and a pair with six juveniles at Frogmill, Hurley on Jun 21st (SJF FMF). **Autumn/Second Winter:** In the East, pre-roost flights were noted at Frogmill, Hurley throughout the year, peaked at 100 flying east on Nov 7th (SJF FMF). In December, flocks were noted flying NW over Pinkneys Green early mornings, peaking at 90 birds on

the 3rd (LJF). Sixty birds in a pre-roost flight at Eton Wick on Dec 10th included a mostly yellowish (flavescent) bird (CDRH). A pre-roost gathering of 120 at Hythe End on Dec 15th flew off ESE (CDRH). The Cippenham roost counts numbered 200 on Dec 18th (RCW). In mid Berks, a flock of 90 birds was seen eating maize on a game strip in Remenham on Dec 31st (CDRH).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Locally common though declining summer visitor (Red Listed)

Reported from 96 sites, a fall of 23% over 2011, possibly as a result of less BTO Bird Atlas work being undertaken. The table shows the monthly status based on records received:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of occupied sites	0	0	0	37	74	24	1	0	1	0	0	0
Minimum number of birds	0	0	0	40	99	32	1	0	1	0	0	0

Spring: The first birds of the year were on Apr 3rd at Padworth (KTu) and Swinley Forest (CRG). Further birds were seen at Bury Down (IDP) and Swinley Forest (CRG) on Apr 4th and Padworth Common on Apr 5th (TGB) and appeared quite widespread thereafter. Most Apr/May records involved 1-2 birds; however three were noted at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on May 2nd (RGi), The Wilderness, Kintbury on May 8th (RHar) and again on May 26th (JLS), Thatcham Marsh on May 13th (IW JL) and Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 27th (AR). Although still widespread in early June, records soon dwindled as birds stopped calling and/or left the county. From Jun 16th to the month’s end records were only received from six sites and the last adult was reported on Jun 27th at Sulhamstead (RF).

Breeding: This is probably under recorded, as several sites reported both males and females being present during the breeding season. The only evidence of successful breeding was of a large chick in a Dunnock’s nest at Tidmarsh on Jun 1st (JLe). **Autumn:** Two juveniles were reported, which could relate to local breeders or migrants: one seen at Colnbrook on Jul 27th (CDRH) and one at Lavells Lake on Sep 3rd (AR).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon but widespread resident (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

Records were received from 66 sites, 33 in west Berkshire, 19 in mid Berkshire and 14 in the East of the county. Outside the breeding season, most records were of single birds hunting or roosting in owl boxes. A starving male found trapped in a stack of skips at Heron’s Nest, Theale on Nov 28th, was removed and fed by TGB, then thought to have made a good recovery. On Dec 12th a bird was seen flying steadily west along the south bank of Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH). **Breeding:** a good year, with 72 chicks believed to have fledged from the 123 boxes monitored by the Pang Valley Barn Owl Group in West and mid Berkshire, compared with 54 fledged in 2011 and 39 in 2010. In the east of the county successful breeding was reported at the New Diggings, Moor Green Lakes, (PKe) and at Winter Hill, Cookham, (BDC). A bird was observed taking food to a nest site at Frogmill, Hurley in June (SJF; FMF) and three birds were present at Legoland on Sep 9th. Second broods, fledged in September, were reported from several sites.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Widespread and locally common resident

In contrast to the Barn Owl, Little Owl abundance is greater in the East of the county. Although there were somewhat fewer records this year, perhaps due to the end of atlas surveys, reports were received from 51 locations, 12 in west Berkshire, ten in mid Berkshire and 29 in east Berkshire, including six locations in Windsor Great Park. With the exception of family parties, records were of single birds or pairs, mostly calling or sitting near roost or nest holes. **Breeding:** confirmation of breeding was received for only a few sites: Easthamptead Park (MHu); Whiteknights Park (PG), Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park (DJB), Wokingham STW (DJB), Jealott's Hill Farm (D A Mackenzie-Dodds) and a late brood at Legoland on Sep 17th (RMH). However, as Little Owls are resident and generally range only short distances, it is likely that breeding occurred at or near most of the locations in which they have been recorded (the 2007-11 atlas surveys confirmed breeding at 51 sites plus probable breeding at a further 26 sites).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat including some urban areas

Tawny Owls are common in woodland across Berkshire. Records were received from 93 locations. Most records were of birds singing or calling, sometimes with several audible at a site, eg four at Inkpen on Mar 11th and Oct 10th (RHar), three males singing and a female calling at Farley Hill on Sep 9th (PB-T) and 4-6 birds at Padworth Common on Aug 9th (TGB). Although most records were of nocturnal activity, daytime singing or calling was reported by many observers. As with Barn Owl, this species is subject to significant road kill; two dead birds (RJD, BL) and a bird hunting along a road (FMF, SJF) were reported this year. **Breeding:** Fledged young were reported at only seven locations. However, as most of the records in which the method of observation was reported were of singing birds, it is probable that breeding occurred at or near most of the locations at which birds were recorded (the 2007-11 atlas surveys confirmed breeding at 81 sites plus probable breeding at a further 22 sites).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Rare resident and scarce winter visitor

All records of Long-eared Owl were in west Berkshire; because of the sensitivity of the species, further site details will not be given. Three records from late February to June relate to birds singing or calling at different potential breeding sites in Berkshire and one to a juvenile in Berkshire close to a known site in Oxfordshire. The usual roost site held 14 birds in January and 15 in December.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First Winter: At the wintering site near West Ilsley, the peak count was nine on Jan 15th (ABT), with up to four being recorded through February and three in March (MO); the last record of the Spring was of three birds on April 27th (ABT). On Jan 29th three birds were seen at Woolley Down, five there Feb 5th, with two or three on various dates until the last record of the Spring of three on Apr 14th (all GDS). Five birds from a roost in Oxfordshire briefly entered Berkshire air space on Mar 9th (DJB) and two were hunting at Wellbottom Down on Apr 24th (GDS). All other records were of single birds at: Riseley on Jan 8th (CCI),

Lands End, Farnborough on Feb 5th (GDS), Boxford on Feb 10th (ADow), Hungerford on Feb 10th (TBu), Sheepdrove on Mar 1st (CDRH), Moor Green Lakes Mar 2nd (RJHa), Lower Green, Inkpen Mar 11th (RJHa), Lowbury Hill, Compton Mar 12th (CDRH), Brimpton Apr 24th (JPM), Compton Downs Apr 27th (ABT), Queen Mother Reservoir Apr 29 (MMc), Moor Green Lakes Apr 30 (IDP) to May 4th (BMA), Stanford Dingley May 4th (BAJC), Kintbury cress beds May 20th (RGS). **Breeding:** Other records at a site in west Berkshire in May and July may relate to a possible breeding site, although birds seen well (CDRH), or aged from photos (Ian Lewington per CDRH), only showed adults. **Second Winter:** Rather few records: the earliest winter report in the West Ilsley area was of a single bird on Nov 11th, with three on Nov 18th (both anonymous, per Birdguides), Two were seen at Woolley Down on Nov 10th and one on Nov 17th and 25th (GDS) and one at Lowbury Hill on Dec 21st (CDRH).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Regular summer visitor in small but fairly stable numbers in suitable habitat (Red Listed)

The first arrival noted was at Nut Hill, Swinley Forest on May 15th (MSFW), with the main sites occupied in the second half of May: The earliest reports at other locations were (single birds unless otherwise stated): Caesar's Camp May 22nd (PB-T), Nalder Plantation May 23rd (JLS), Gorrick Wood May 24th (IDP), Wishmoor Bottom May 25th (DJB), six birds at Roundoak Piece on May 26th, Bucklebury Common on May 28th, Padworth Common June 2nd (RGi), two at Greenham Common June 8th (GEW). The table records the maximum numbers of birds reported and, in brackets, the number of churring males at each site. The total number of churring males recorded was 55, somewhat lower than the 68 in 2011, which was down on the 79 in 2010.

Site	Birds	Observer(s)
Bucklebury Common	2 (2)	RF
Upper Bucklebury	3 (3)	BL
Greenham Common	3 (1)	SAG,PEH,
Nalder Plantation	3 (2)	SAG
Padworth Common	2 (1)	RGi
Roundoak Piece	6 (3)	KEM <i>et al.</i>
Snelsmore Common	4 (3)	MJT
Gorrick Wood	2 (2) ¹	PJC
Swinley Forest	33 (33) ¹	CRG, DJS, PJC
Wildmoor Heath	5 (5) ¹	DJS

¹ Data from Berkshire from the Broadmoor to Bagshot section of Thames Basin Heaths survey provided by Patrick Crowley

SWIFT *Apus apus*

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

Spring: The first of the year were two birds over the N bank of Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 18th (CDRH). Numbers built much more quickly than in 2011 with the first 200 count at Theale Main GP on May 2nd (RJB). There were no larger counts in May with similar numbers reported from Thames Valley Park on May 11th (RDR), Queen Mother Reservoir on May 14th (DJB) and Rowney Predator Lake on May 31th (MJD). The importance of aquatic sites for providing the species' insect diet is evidenced by all of the 100+ counts this

year, bar the last, coming from such locations. **Summer:** Again screaming aerial parties provided strong circumstantial evidence of breeding having taken place in built up areas, but finding hard evidence of precise locations was, as usual, very difficult. The only report was of a bird disappearing into the eaves of a house in Wantage Road, Reading on Jun 14th (SAG). Maximum counts were slightly lower in this period than last year with over 500 at Theale Main GP on Jun 8th (RCr) and 9th (RJB). Flocks of over 100 were recorded on nine additional occasions including the last of 100 high over Woodley on Jul 10th (FJC). **Autumn:** Numbers fell away during Aug with a trickle into Sep, the last being two with a large flock of hirundines over Theale Main Pit on Sep 25th (JA).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

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

Birds were recorded from fewer locations this year (115), which could reflect a decrease in observer effort after the end of the Bird Atlas. Again the geographical spread was county-wide wherever suitable habitat occurs. The table below shows the monthly status based on the records received. Please note that records from the same grid square in the same month are assumed to be duplicates.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of Sites ¹	27	25	20	20	18	14	19	23	31	30	19	20
Min Number of birds	36	38	35	26	29	21	27	31	45	40	25	25

¹ All records from Dinton Pastures are considered as one site

Unlike the previous year there is no obvious dip in numbers during the winter which is likely to be the result of less severe weather.

The following list has tried to avoid duplication and includes still waters close to the rivers listed:

River	No. of Sites
River Blackwater	4
River Colne	1
The Cut	4
The Emmbrook	2
River Enbourne	2
Jubilee River	4
River Kennet	30
River Lambourn	3
River Loddon ¹	3
River Pang	1
River Thames	18
York Stream	1
Other Sites	11
Total	84

Nearly all records were of 1-3 birds. The highest count was five at Harveys Meadow, Hungerford on Feb 19th (JSWo). **Breeding:** 17 pairs were detected during the breeding

season (March–July) with three additional instances of courtship display and two reports of birds near nest sites. These totals are very similar to 2011. Confirmed breeding came from Thatcham Marsh with the ringing of a juvenile on Jun 5th (IW/JL) and three birds were seen flying together on Sep 17th at Aldermaston (JPM).

WRYNECK *Fynx torquilla*

Scarce passage migrant, formerly bred (Red Listed)

A relatively good year by modern standards with one late spring and one early autumn record compared with none the previous and many other recent years. A bird was found in woods on Bull Lane, Riseley on the afternoon of May 18th by Jenny Coomber, it was seen by the same observer at 12:45 hrs on May 19th but appeared to have left by 14:00 hrs. The second bird was found, during the normal peak period for migrant records for this species, at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 29th by FJC at 10:54 hrs. This was early enough in the day to give a number of others the rare opportunity of seeing and photographing this species, though some were unlucky. The bird stayed on view into the evening but had gone the next day. This species last bred in Berkshire in 1955/6 but a male held territory in May/June 2001.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident (Amber Listed)

Records came from throughout the county with the exception of the more open downland and the centres of some urban areas due to the lack of suitable breeding habitat. High counts were less impressive than in 2011 with six at Charvil on Apr 5th (SAB), six at Snow Hill, Windsor Great Park on Sep 15th (RMH), six at Sunningdale on Oct 3rd (RMH) and 'five plus' at Greenham Common on Aug 13th (IW) and Aug 31st (IW/JL). **Breeding:** There were fifteen records which is one less than 2011. All but three of these were provided by fledged juveniles as nests seem to be significantly harder to locate than those of their noisy black and white cousins. **Ringing:** Three birds were ringed at Ascot Heath on Sep 23rd 30th and Oct 7th (RJD) and one at Greenham Common on Mar 6th (IW/JL).

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and increasing resident

This is the most common and widespread woodpecker which breeds throughout the county with the exception of some of the higher ground and a few urban areas which lack suitable breeding habitat. High counts include seven at Nores Hill, Reading Febr 13th (JNe), ten in South Forest, Windsor Forest Mar 10th (DJB), eight at Silwood Park, Sunninghill Park on Ap 20th (RJD) and nine in High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest on Jun 1st (DJB). These counts are substantially lower than 2011 which might be an indication of breeding success or possibly lower observer attention after the Bird Atlas. **Breeding:** At least 38 pairs were confirmed to have bred at 26 sites, though breeding undoubtedly occurred at a number of other locations (the records received indicated up to 104 pairs at 76 sites during the breeding season which include those mentioned above). These records showed a modest decline from 2011 but may be to do with end of the atlas and the resumption of 'normal' levels of observer activity. Sites with more than two breeding pairs included High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest where there were five occupied nests with young on Jun 1st (DJB), Whiteknights Park hosted three pairs with occupied nests on May 17th and 25th (PG) and Swinley Park had three pairs attending young at nests on May 26th (DJB).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce resident, whose numbers continue to decline (Red Listed)

A very similar geographical spread of records to last year but from fewer locations, 24 instead of 30; nine in west Berkshire, seven in mid Berkshire and eight in east Berkshire indicating further decline. Some of these sites are not very far apart and could relate to the same birds in view of their scarcity. Of these sites, 15 recorded the species on only one occasion which could point to wandering birds. Only four sites definitely recorded more than one bird compared with six in 2011. **January–March:** The first record in this period was a male at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 8th (DF/FJC). This was followed by one at Bearwood on Jan 10th (THar). One was at Bottom Lane GP, Theale on Jan 15th (CMc *et al.*) and a female in poplars at Sunninghill Park on Jan 28th (DJB). One was again found at Dinton Pastures CP on Feb 4th (SDay/IDP) and a female seen feeding in trees along Bracknell Road, Crowthorne on Feb 9th (PJC). The Dinton Pastures CP area again produced a male along the lane from the Aviation Museum to Sandford Mill on Feb 23rd (RR) and not too far away, one at Wheble Drive, Woodley on Feb 25th (PRF). One was near Newbury Racecourse on Feb 25th (DSm) and Snelsmore Common produced a drumming male on Feb 27th (JL). A male was drumming and calling at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures daily from Feb 27th to Mar 2nd (AR, BO, RAGP, RHS, KIT), meanwhile one was calling at High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest on Mar 1st (DJB). Two birds were calling and chasing each other in Clayfield Copse, Reading on Mar 11th (RDr) and one was at Lower Denford the same day (RHar). One was over the yachting club car park at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Mar 14th (DSe) and a female was found at Paices Wood, Wasing on Mar 20th which was seen and heard again the following day (JLe/PH). A bird was heard at Frogmill, Hurley on Mar 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 30th (SJF/FMF) and one was also heard at Kintbury Cress Beds on Mar 24th (IW/JL) with the same observers being fortunate to find another the following day at Thatcham Marsh. Finally in this period, a male was in alders by the river near Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures on Mar 31st (MJM). **April–June:** The male found on Mar 31st remained along the River Loddon near Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures from Apr 1st to 3rd (ABT, DJB, RD, LTh, GRo) being joined by a female on Apr 1st (RJG). Meanwhile a male was observed drumming at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Apr 1st with a female being seen at the same site on Apr 22nd (both DJB). The Sandford Lake female was seen again by the River Loddon on Apr 7th (BR) and one was drumming at Theale Main Pit the same day (RJB). One was at Wishmoor Cross, Swinley Forest on Apr 13th (RAng) and another at Datchet GC on Apr 28th (PE). A female was seen at a nest hole in Dinton Pastures on May 6th and the male seen with her on May 12th (both MFW). Meanwhile a bird was calling at Wargrave Marsh on May 7th (DJB). Finally two birds were calling at Mount Hill, Bagnor on Jun 5th (JL). **July–September:** A bird was calling all morning at Kintbury Cress Beds on Jul 22nd (RGS) but was likely to have been the same bird recorded here back in March. A male was feeding and drumming occasionally in Silwood Park, Sunninghill on Jul 29th (RJD). The relatively reliable Sandford Lake site produced two Sep records on 20th (JFos) and 25th (RCW, AA, R Sajdak). There were no confirmed breeding records again this year with the Sandford Lake pair the strongest indication. **October–December:** Very few records during this period compared with 2011 and none at all in the final two months when the loss of leaves usually makes this species easier to see. One was seen at Sandford Lake on Oct 24th (RSJ) and finally one was at Hosehill Lake, Theale on Oct 26th (AVL).

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

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

Berkshire supports a significant proportion of Britain's breeding Woodlarks, predominantly on the heathland in the Swinley Forest/Sandhurst area, where it is locally common. Although no proof of breeding was received, 37+ territories were held between Mar and Jun, rising to 44+ if Feb records of songsters are taken into account. Allowing for differences in observer coverage, this year seems at least as good as 2011, even though it was reported from fewer areas. In winter, there is a reduction in reports from the breeding sites, which appears to reflect a degree of dispersal, and it was reported nowhere in Nov or Dec. **January–February:** one singing at Greenham Common on Jan 11th (JPM) was the earliest record, then 1–2 regularly singing, and counts of three on Feb 25th (TPo) and four Feb 27th (IW). Just one early record for Wishmoor Bottom concerned four together on Jan 27th, including one in song (DJB). It was observed at Ufton Nervet from Feb 20th, when among four was one in song (RCr). There were single observations of four in song across Bucklebury Common on Feb 21st (DJS) and seven at South Ascot Feb 24th (two singing, one pair and three flying around) (DJB). **March–June:** Summering or likely breeding took place in eight areas, compared with 12 in 2011: Leverton near Hungerford, one territory (PBy); Snelmore Common, one territory (JL; IW); Greenham Com, 4+ territories (MO) though no proof of breeding; Bucklebury Com, five birds (DJR); Wasing, one territory (JLe); Padworth Common, one territory (PH); Roundoak Piece, one territory (PH); and Swinley Forest SPA, 28 territories (PJC *et al.*) though no proof of breeding. Additionally, there were singles at Walbury Hill, Thatcham Marsh and Sunningdale. **July–October:** The bulk of reports relate to Greenham Com, where 1–5 birds were encountered up to Oct 12th, with nine on Sep 18th and a total of 19 across the common on Sep 19th (JBU; IW). Elsewhere, there were 1–2 birds at Bucklebury, Bucklebury Common, and Lower Farm GP, and four at Ufton Nervet on Jul 6th (PH). The last sighting of the year was one flying west over Lavell's Lake on Oct 29th (FJC), providing Dinton Pastures with its first record.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

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

Reports of numbers both breeding and outside the breeding season were appreciably down, although this may be in part because survey work for the Atlas finished in 2011. **First Winter:** It was reported in relatively small numbers from 24 (broad) locations in Jan and Feb; the only count above 30 was 60+ at Woolhampton GP on Jan 14th (KEM). No movements were noted. **Spring/Summer:** It was widely reported from 75 locations between Mar and Jul. However, counts above 20 were down on previous years and only received for four locations: East Grange, Lambourn, where 100 on Mar 3rd (ABT); Compton Downs, where 54 on Mar 9th and 40 on 16th May (DJB); Aldermaston, where 26 on Mar 13th (KEM); and Englefield, where 50 on Mar 6th and 70 on Jul 1st (RCr). Of some concern, the only confirmed breeding in Berkshire was of one carrying food at Woodlands Park Fields on Jun 6th (DJB), as well as an anecdotal report from Sep 4th that a farmer ploughed a field at Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead which had about 12 nests in it (BDC); this is a fall from the six confirmations in 2011. **Autumn/Second Winter:** It was reported from 40 locations. The usual small movements took place in Oct and Nov, especially to the West, Southwest or South. On Oct 10th, 21 flew south over Boxford Common (JL; IW); on Oct 20th, 15 flew west/southwest over Lavell's Lake (FJC); and on Oct 30th, 19 singles flew northwest over Walbury Hill in ten minutes (JRSto). On 13 dates up to Nov 9th at Ascot

Heath, RJD recorded a total of 52 migrants flying over. Disappointing numbers, well below 100, continued to characterise the final part of the year, the highest being 70 at Englefield on Sep 27th and Oct 14th (RCr), 70+ at Lower Farm Gravel Pit on Oct 20th (NC *et al.*), and 68 together at Widbrook Common on Nov 28th (BDC).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A normal spring passage preceded a very light autumn one. **Spring:** Arrivals began with two at Lea Farm, Dinton Pastures on Mar 16th (AR), six at Eversley Gravel Pit on Mar 17th (MGLR) and three at Streatley the same day (NJB), a normal date. Light passage (1-6) followed, mainly at the gravel pits, until c30 appeared at Woolhampton Gravel Pit on Mar 31st (KEM), and the next day at Thatcham Marsh c20 were feeding plus c46 flew northeast (JL; IW). The highest counts of 50 or more nearly all fell in the first half of April, including 50 at Eversley GP on Apr 4th (BA; RFM), c200 at Woolhampton GP on Apr 5th (KEM) and 60 at Thatcham the same day (BJW), 160 Lower Farm Gravel Pit on Apr 14th (DJB), c60 Padworth Lane Gravel Pit on Apr 9th (KEM), c120 Thatcham Marsh on Apr 15th (JL; IW) and 145+ Woolhampton GP the same day (PEH). Thereafter passage diminished, apart from c75 at Theale Main Gravel Pit on Apr 22nd (KEM). **Breeding:** Activity at nest-holes was reported from eight sites, an improvement on the previous year: Hunts Green, Boxford, 27 occupied holes in a new artificial bank Jun 6th (GDS); Woodspeen, c20 holes on May 17th (JL; IW) and 55 holes and 50 birds on Jul 5th (JL); Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre, nine+ holes occupied on May 22nd (GJS); the River Kennet near Lower Brook Street, Reading, two broods were being fed on Jul 25th (SuW); Lea Farm, Dinton Pastures, three+ entering holes on Apr 10th (RCMu); Lavell's Lake, ten entering nesting block on Apr 24th (RAGP); Black Potts Viaduct, Eton, two+ holes occupied and a family party in the air on Jun 17th (KPD); and the River Thames at Windsor, four occupied natural holes, two of which had chicks peering out, on Jun 17th (KPD). **Autumn:** Passage was exceptionally light, and only two counts managed to reach 50: both were for Theale Main GP, on Aug 30th (RJB) and Sep 25th (JA). The final records consisted of singles at Woolhampton GP on Oct 2nd (KEM) and Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works on Oct 3rd (DJB), a typical last date.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A light initial spring passage gained strong momentum in late April and early May, to become much heavier than in the previous year. Breeding is presumed to have been widespread, though little information was submitted. Autumn passage was also heavy. **Spring:** By recent standards, four at Woolhampton Gravel Pit on Mar 18th (SaW) is a typical arrival date, though it would have been very early prior to 1994. No further sightings were made, however, until one at Woolhampton GP on Mar 26th (NC; KEM) and two at Bucklebury on Mar 30th (GDS). A trickle of 1-5 birds continued until Apr 5th, which saw 30+ at both Woolhampton GP (DJB; KEM) and Padworth Lane GP (SDA). Passage remained modest in the first three weeks of April, counts passing 40 being 50+ through west at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 12th (CDRH), 60+ Woolhampton GP on Apr 14th (RGi), and 40+ Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre on Apr 21st (PEH). Passage then surged with many flocks exceeding 100: c125 at Theale Main Gravel Pit on Apr 22nd (KEM), 300 there on Apr 25th (RCr), 100 through west at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 27th (CDRH), 400 at Theale Main GP on Apr 28th (RJB), 100+ at Lower Farm GP on May 3rd (IW), 150+ at Wraybury GP on May 5th (RJD), c150 at Eversley GP on May 5th (BMA), 100+ over Thatcham Marsh on May

5th (JL; IW), 120+ at Horton Gravel Pit on May 6th (PEH), roughly 800 at Theale Main GP on May 6th (RRI), 700+ there the next day (RCr), c100 at White Waltham Sewage Farm on May 7th (DJB), 300+ at Theale Main GP on May 8th (RCr), and 115+ at Lower Farm GP on May 10th (PEH). **Breeding:** Disappointingly, evidence of breeding came from just four sites: Boxford Common (JL; IW); Blewbury Down (perhaps in Oxfordshire, JBu; IW); Spencers Wood (GBro); and Mezil Hill barns, Great Meadow Pond (DJB). **Autumn:** Build-up of passage became evident when 100+ gathered at Marsh Benham on Jul 29th (MJD). However, many further counts of 100+ spread across the county were made between Aug 21st and Oct 9th. Substantial counts included 271 over southeast at Ascot Heath on Sep 25th, 1,466 over south there between 07:15 to 09:00hrs on Sep 28th, 315 over south there on Oct 3rd (all RJD), 250 over east/southeast at Dinton Pastures on Sep 26th, 500-1,000 there on Sep 27th, and 300 over southeast there in 1.5 hours on Sep 28th (all FJC). After many reports of 1-32 birds between Oct 10th and Oct 29th, three stragglers remained on Nov 5th at Lea Farm, Dinton Pastures (SDay), equalling the latest date for that site though typical for Berkshire.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

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

Both spring and autumn passage were heavier than usual, while information received about breeding was poorer than usual. **Spring:** The appearance of three birds at Woolhampton GP on Mar 29th (IS) was a normal arrival date for recent times. Also normal were light numbers (just 1-6, single counts of 10, 20 and 30) across the county until a flock of c300 was observed at Theale Main GP on Apr 22nd (KEM). This marked the start of a relatively heavy passage which resulted in 12 counts of 50+ birds being made mainly at the gravel pits, finishing with 50+ at Lower Farm GP on May 19th (JL; IW), and including peaks of 300 at Theale Main GP on Apr 28th and 120 there on May 2nd (both RJB), and 150+ at Thatcham Marsh on May 3rd (JL). **Breeding:** As with many common species, the four reports received of breeding belie its actual status. These were of 20+ collecting mud for nesting at Greenham Common on May 30th (JL; IW); eight flying to the eaves of Mian House, East Garston Down on Jun 30th (GDS); 12 by the “usual nest site” at Winkfield on Jul 22nd (SA); and two feeding young in a nest by Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Aug 19th (LRB), a normal date for this species. **Autumn:** Unlike the Sand Martin, there was a heavy and protracted autumn passage, which reached a peak on Sep 30th. Although a suspicion of early passage came with a gathering of 100+ at Lower Farm GP on Jul 1st (NC), the date probably indicates local dispersal. Many gatherings of 100 or more were witnessed from Aug 17th, when again 100+ at Lower Farm GP (NC; IW). Passage intensified from Sep 16th, when 300+ at Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and 160 at Welford (RJCl); followed by 300+ over west at Lavell’s Lake on Sep 20th (FJC); roughly 200 at Theale Main GP on Sep 25th (JA); 750+ feeding over Great Meadow Pond on Sep 30th (DJB), roughly 500 at Moatlands Gravel Pit the same day (JA), and 250 over south in one hour at Searles Farm Lane Gravel Pit also the same day (JA); 250 at Theale Main GP on Oct 3rd (JA); 200+ over Dinton Pastures on Oct 4th (FJC); 200+ at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 11th (CDRH); and “hundreds flying east for about one hour mid-morning” the same day (SJF; FMF). Passage virtually ceased after Oct 11th, when only three at Dinton Pastures on Oct 13th (FJC) and one flying over north at Woose Hill on Oct 26th (PB-T), a typical last departure date.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi*

One at Colnbrook on Oct 7th (CDRH) was seen well in low-level flight, and heard calling, as it alighted in long grass, but it eluded relocation, possibly deterred by the arrival of two Sparrowhawks (and some moped riders!). This is the seventh record for Berkshire, six of which have fallen between Sep and Nov, with one in Apr.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

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

A reduction in the breeding records submitted may be due in part to reduced coverage, though repeated survey work at Swinley Forest gave a suggestion that the Tree Pipit continued its decline in 2012. Fewer spring migrants were reported. **Spring:** It was present at Swinley Forest on Apr 1st (PJC), a normal arrival, and then at Snelsmore Common on Apr 5th (BJW). There were only two reports of migrants away from the breeding areas, one at Ascot Heath on Apr 13th (RJD) and one at Wraysbury Gravel Pit on Apr 21st (C Wilson). **Breeding:** Records pointed to 46 territories, as against 56 in 2011. There were two territories at Snelsmore Common (JL; IW), down from six in 2011; two territories at Greenham Common (JL; MJT; IW); 12 birds (six territories?) at Bucklebury Common (DJR); three territories at Padworth Common (TGB); one territory at Roundoak Piece (PBran; PH); three territories at Wildmoor Heath (DJS), up from two in 2011; eight territories at Swinley Forest (MOD Heathland), with one carrying food (PJC), down from ten in 2011; 15 territories at Swinley Forest (Sandhurst Royal Military Academy) (PJC), down from 18 in 2011; and six territories at Swinley Forest (Crowthorne Woods) (DJS). **Autumn:** Migrants were restricted to Aug and comprised one over Silwood Park Aug 18th (RJD), three over Crookham Common Aug 27th (PEH), 4-6 over Walbury Hill Aug 27th (JRSto, IW), two at Greenham Com Aug 28th (JL), one over Lower Farm Gravel Pit Aug 28th (PEH), one at Snelsmore Com Aug 30th (IW), one Walbury Hill Aug 31st (DJB) and one over Silwood Park the same day (RJD), an early last departure date.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

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

Numbers were somewhat on the low side, and evidence of breeding was sparse. **First Winter:** This was an uneventful period and no movements were noted. It was reported from 40 locations in typically small numbers, with five counts exceeding 35: 50 at Brimpton Gravel Pit on Jan 16th (GEW); 55 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 11th (DJB); 37+ at Woolhampton GP on Mar 1st (PEH); 50+ at Greenham Common on Mar 21st (JL); and 46+ at Walbury Hill on Mar 28th (PEH). The established roost on Padworth Common attracted 15 on Jan 6th and ten on Jan 29th (TGB), fewer than in previous winters. At Greenham Com on Mar 19th, 2-3 birds were displaying (IW). **Spring/Summer:** Evidence of spring passage came in the form of 51 at Crookham Common on Apr 1st (PEH), five over north at Walbury Hill on Apr 3rd (PEH), 50 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 8th (CDRH), one there over west/northwest on May 4th (PEH) and three there, two flying over, on May 17th (CDRH). The Meadow Pipit has been declining as a breeding species in Berkshire since 1990 and this year was very poor. Breeding was only confirmed at one location and suggested at 2-3 others: East Garston Down, three+ in song flights on Jun 3th (GDS); Cow Down, six singing on Apr 20th (ABT); Greenham Com, two singing on May 10th (IW) and ten+ included some juveniles on Jul 20th (JL; IW); and Dorney Wetlands, one was "seemingly on territory" on Jul 17th (BDC). **Autumn/Second Winter:** Autumn passage was fair. First signs were c 20 on the top of Walbury Hill on Aug 27th (IW), one

at Queen Mother reservoir on Aug 30th (CDRH), one at Ascot Heath on Sep 2nd (RJD), nine at Englefield on Sep 6th (RCr) and 23 over Woose Hill on Sep 12th (PB-T). Many movements were then observed until Nov 7th, mostly to the south-southeast, the most noteworthy of which were 35 over south at Lavell's Lake on Sep 17th (FJC), 150 over south at Ascot Heath on Sep 28th (RJD), 60 over south/southeast at Lavell's Lake the same day (FJC), 50 over Lavell's Lake on Oct 4th (FJC), 81 over Theale Main GP on Oct 5th (PEH), c35 over Lavell's Lake on Oct 7th (FJC), and 39 over northwest at Walbury Hill in ten minutes on Oct 30th (JRSto). Higher counts of birds on the ground included 55 at Great Meadow Pond on Sep 30th (DJB), 60+ at Englefield on Oct 5th (PEH), c30 at Ascot Heath on Oct 10th (RJD), 118 at Englefield on Oct 14th (RCr), 70 there on Oct 23rd (RCr), and 35+ feeding in a cattle field at Irish Hill, Kintbury on Nov 15th (JBU; IW). December had no more than a dusting of 1-6 birds.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Another below par year produced about six records, limited to October and November. Lumping reports yielded five records for Queen Mother Reservoir, although more birds may have been involved than are shown in the following figures. There were three on Oct 11th down to two Oct 13th (CDRH) and two Oct 14th (MFW); two on Oct 21st (MFW); two on Oct 28th (MFW); one Nov 6th to Nov 10th (CDRH; MMc; NSlu); and one Nov 16th (CL). Away from Queen Mother Reservoir was one at Eton Wick on Nov 7th and 8th (CDRH; NSlu).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

A total of six records occurred in November and December, above average for this century (but quite possibly involving just 5-6 birds). Most of the reports related to Queen Mother Reservoir, where there were one on Nov 5th (MMc), one from Nov 18th (CDRH) to Nov 27th (PEH; LS), four on Nov 19th - with the additional group of three birds flying off to the East - (CDRH), and two on Dec 13th (CDRH). There was also a group of five at Horton GP on Dec 8th (CDRH), which were thought to be the same group that was wintering close by at Wraysbury Reservoir, Surrey (per Dave Morris), although two at Horton GP on Dec 16th almost certainly roosted on-site (CDRH).

BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT *Anthus rubescens*

One identified at Queen Mother Reservoir on Dec 13th (MMc) was an unexpected first for Berkshire of this Nearctic rarity, whose nearest breeding population inhabits Greenland. It came as close as two feet to observers. In an astonishing development, a second bird was found alongside the first by the same observer on Dec 26th. Both records accepted by the BBRC (*Brit. Birds* 106: 627) Although neither was subsequently reported up to Dec 31st, both reappeared in Jan 2013, including at nearby Horton GP. As access to the reservoir is generally restricted to BOC members, arrangements were made by the BOC for access by non-members, whose donations raised over £2,000 for the club. See article *page 17*.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Common but declining passage migrant uncommon and local summer resident (Red Listed)

Indications of possible and confirmed breeding were alarmingly down on 2011, although reduced observer effort or reporting may be a factor in this. Both passages were light. **Spring passage:** The first of a light spring passage arrived at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 7th (MMc), a normal date, followed by one at Eversley GP on Apr 13th (JRe). The rest of the month produced a sprinkling of 1-2 birds at nine sites. Numbers in May stayed generally low at 1-6 birds, some overflying to the north or northeast; higher counts consisted of seven at Ascot Heath on 1st (RJD), six reported at Woolhampton Gravel Pit on 1st (KEM), eight at QMR on 3rd May (ABT), 20+ flushed by a raptor at Burnthouse Lane GP on May 4th (ABT), and 15 at QMR on May 4th (PEH). **Summer/Breeding:** Evidence of breeding, mostly of presence in suitable habitat, was reported for only 7-8 sites, falling from 17 in 2011, and sites where breeding was confirmed slumped from 13 in 2011 to one. The sites were: Wellbottom Down with at least seven on May 16th (DJB), one on Jun 2nd (MFW); three males on territory Lambourn Downs on Jun 9th (CDRH); Lower Green, Inkpen where one had been present for over a week on Jun 19th (RHar); Compton Downs with two males on Jun 13th (JBU; IW); Bucklebury Common with up to three from Jul 15th (DJR); apparently two pairs in a bean field at Cold Harbour on May 5th (DJB); and one pair Horton fields between Jun 3rd and Jul 6th, the female gathering food on Jun 30th (CDRH). A probable non-breeder was a male at Burnthouse Lane GP on Jun 25th (KEM). **Autumn passage:** Passage proved even lighter than in 2011 and began with four flying south over Lower Farm GP on Aug 1st (IW), a typical direction for the movements reported. Unusually, the next record did not come until one at Gallows Down, Inkpen on Aug 21st (JBU; IW). Low numbers of 1-3 birds continued until Sep 8th, apart from five at Ascot Heath on Sep 4th (RJD). This site produced ten on Sep 9th and 13+ on Sep 10th, with eight+ of these going into roost with Pied Wagtails (RJD). Counts remained low (1-6) in the rest of September, except for 11 at Eton Wick on Sep 18th (ANS) and 13 flying east-southeast over Dinton Pastures on Sep 23rd (FJC). Passage tailed off with singles over Eton Wick on Oct 2nd (PEH) and Oct 6th (PJSt), two at Lower Farm Gravel Pit on Oct 4th (NC), one over Greenham Common on Oct 9th (JL; IW) and one at Englefield on Oct 11th (RCr), a normal final departure date.

YELLOW WAGTAIL (*flava* / *beema*) *Motacilla flava flava* / *beema*

Scarce passage migrant

A female or first-summer male present with five Yellow Wagtails at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 3rd showed features of the *flava* × *flavissima* hybrid (“Channel Wagtail”) (CDRH; MMc; ABT).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

The Grey Wagtail is distributed across Berkshire, favouring river valleys in the breeding season and occurring more widely at other times. It was reported from just 38 locations: 15 in west Berkshire, eight in mid Berkshire, and 15 in east Berkshire. This extends a substantial decline from 126 locations in 2009 and 86 locations in 2011. Most reports consisted of 1-3 birds. There were a handful of higher counts: four flew over Thatcham Marsh on Aug 18th (JL; IW); four were noted at Eversley Gravel Pits on Aug 24th and 27th and Sep 12th (GD; CG; RFM); six were at White Waltham Sewage Farm on Sep 13th (DJB); and six were at Eton Wick on Oct 4th (NSlu). Fortunately, breeding was confirmed at 14 locations: Silwood

Park, a male was collecting food on Apr 20th (RJD); Loddon Bridge, Earley, an adult was feeding young on Apr 29th (SDay); Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works, two pairs and one nest on May 1st (DJB); Streatley, two recently hatched young on May 5th (NJB); Marsh Benham, a pair nesting under the weir bridge on May 16th (DJB), and later a pair feeding young on Jul 29th (MJD); Moor Copse, Tidmarsh, one adult with one young on May 16th (JLe); Avington Estate, a male carrying food on May 23rd (GDS); Fobney Island, River Kennet, one pair feeding young at nest on May 23rd (MFW) and a second pair present the other end on the same day (GDS); Sindlesham Mill, a pair mating on Jun 12th (DJB); Eversley Gravel Pit, an adult and two young Jun 25th (GD; RFM) then later reports; Great Meadow Pond, one pair and one+ young Jul 8th (DJB); Braywick Park Cut, pair feeding one young on Jul 13th (DF); Snelsmore Common, two adults and four young around the pond on Jul 30th (IW); and Dorney Wetlands, an adult and two young on Aug 23rd (KPD).

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Uncommon passage migrant, annual in Spring, mostly overlooked in Autumn.

Spring passage: Passage was exceptionally extended from Mar 3rd to May 28th. It involved about 30 records of about 38 birds at eight sites, the second highest number of birds ever. March: one adult male at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 17th (CDRH); one male, one female at Greenham Common on Mar 23rd (ABT); one at Eversley Gravel Pit on Mar 25th (MGLG); one male at Woolhampton Gravel Pit on Mar 28th (KEM) and one at Lower Farm GP on Mar 31st (JL; IW). April: A stream of birds passed through QMR in April: one male on 3rd (CDRH); one on 7th (MMc); one male and one first summer flew off south on 8th (CDRH); three on 12th (MMc); one on 13th (MMc); one male on 14th (CDRH); two on 15th (EN); one male 17th-19th (CDRH); one female, probably first summer, on 26th (CDRH). Birds were seen at four further localities: one at Lower Farm GP on Apr 4th (PEH); one at Cow Lane, Reading on Apr 26th (ABT); one female Burnthouse Lane Gravel Pit on Apr 27th (KEM); two at Lower Farm GP on Apr 28th (MO); and one female at Woolhampton GP on Apr 30th (PEH). May: one male, one female at Woolhampton GP on May 1st (KEM); one male there May 2nd (KEM); one female at Burnthouse Lane GP on May 4th (PEH); two at Woolhampton GP on May 4th (RD); one first summer male at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 6th (CDRH); one male at Woolhampton GP on May 11th (LSe); one adult male at Queen Mother Reservoir on May 20th-21st (CDRH); and one adult female there May 28th (CDRH). **Summer:** Interestingly, there were two summer records of this continental race. A first summer female gathering food at Slough Sewage Farm on Jun 5th was also seen on Jun 16th and Jul 3rd (CDRH). A similar instance in which a female was observed feeding young occurred in 2008. A female look-alike (or hybrid) featuring patchy grey on nape, and smokey grey on mantle (and rump?) was present at QMR with a male Pied Wagtail on Jun 18th (CDRH). **Autumn passage:** Despite the strong spring passage, the autumn one fell back to average, with a clutch of records for QMR (all CDRH): one ad female on Sep 3rd; one f/w on Sep 9th; one f/w on Sep 20th-21st; one on Sep 26th; 2, both f/w, on Oct 5th; and one f/w on Oct 11th.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

This widespread species had an ordinary year. **First Winter:** Numbers were fairly low and just five counts above 20 were received: a pre-roost gathering of 100+ at Maidenhead Station on Jan 2nd (DF); 22 flying over Lea Farm, Dinton Pastures towards a roost at Winnersh Triangle on Jan 18th (FJC); 80+ at Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works on Jan 26th (DJB); 265 at

Ham Island Sewage Farm on Feb 11th (RMH); and c100 roosting in a tree in Broad Street, Wokingham on Feb 25th (RD). An observation of 2-3 flying north over Combe Gibbet on Mar 11th (SAG) probably related to birds returning to their breeding quarters. **Breeding:** Likely or confirmed breeding was reported from nine localities. A regular nesting pair was present in stacked scaffolding at Aplant Acrow, Colnbrook on Apr 2nd (KGW); a pair was carrying food at Spencers Wood on Apr 13th and was feeding a second brood on May 2nd (GBro); mating was observed among a flock of 12 at Padworth on May 5th (LGL); four including young were seen at Greenham Common on May 20th (JL; IW); a pair was feeding young at Long Lane Farm, Touchen End, on May 27th (RJD); a pair with five young at the sewage farm, Eversley Gravel Pit on Jul 4th (GD; RFM); and a male was carrying food at Great Meadow Pond on Aug 5th (DJB). Elsewhere, juveniles likely to have been reared nearby were seen at Lower Farm Gravel Pit (JL; PEH; IW) and Wokingham STW, where ten juveniles on Jun 18th (DJB). A pair was present at Compton Downs on Jun 13th (JBU; IW). **Autumn/Second Winter:** Numbers reported were normal and nowhere near the maxima of 1,000+ encountered 3-4 decades ago. However, it is likely that some larger roosts were overlooked. Detailed information concerning a roost at Ascot Heath was submitted by RJD. The first high count was 63 on Aug 26th, rising to 134 in a pre-roost gathering on Aug 30th when there were possibly up to 200 birds in the roost; 150+ entered the roost between 19:15 and 19:30hrs on Sep 4th and c100 were in the roost on Oct 6th; the final high count was c70 on Oct 20th, suitable roosting sites having been felled by November. Good counts at other locations included a pre-roost gathering of 54 at Cippenham on Sep 24th (KPD); 54 on the cricket pitch at Sulhamstead on Oct 5th (PEH); a gathering of 55 by Tesco, Oxford Road, Reading on Oct 23rd (SAG); 200+ at Wokingham STW on Nov 2nd (DJB); 100+ in Sainsbury's car park, Calcot on Dec 6th (JMcN); 63 feeding around the flood at Eton Wick on Dec 16th (KPD); and 75+ in fields near the airstrip building at Englefield on Dec 27th (PEH).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irregular winter visitor in varying numbers, locally common in eruption years

Only two years after the large invasion in 2010/11 came a smaller invasion in 2012/13. **First Winter:** There were six beside the A339 at Newbury Wharf on Feb 17th (TBu). **Second Winter:** A large influx into Berkshire commenced on Nov 7th when c15 flew west at Dorney Wetlands (CDRH). They were reported in increasing numbers at 15 sites through December, the maximum counts for each site totalling 310 birds (though moving birds may have been counted more than once). A flock of 17 in the Meadow Way estate, Caversham on Dec 1st (JBi; RRi) rose to 33 on Dec 3rd (RD), then no reports until 30 on Dec 14th (JBi). One-day records of 12 flying over Maidenhead Golf Course on Dec 7th (BCr) and 40 by the A4 at Hungerford on Dec 8th (JSWo) were probably of birds moving through. A succession of reports for Dorney Wetlands began with eight on Dec 10th (RCM), increasing to c22 on Dec 14th (CDRH), 30 on Dec 21st (SBr) and 34 on 30th (JRos). It was not reported in Bracknell until six were seen in Butler Drive on Dec 10th (MHu) then nine on 11th (MJo), when PB-T noted they were taking frost crystals from a roof ridge, presumably as a source of water. About two weeks later, 51 were in the same area on Dec 27th (MHu), rising to 71 on Dec 30th (DAMD). A party of 15 was found near the Black Boy roundabout, Shinfield on Dec 11th (DFI). There were 12 behind The Star at Pangbourne on Dec 12th (PEH) and 13th (SHar), then 13 at Molly Millar's Lane, Wokingham on Dec 15th (GR), building to 24 on Dec 19th (DJB), with 20-25 on 20th (TWarw). Perhaps moving in from Caversham, five turned up at Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green on Dec 19th (HRN), increasing to 20 on 27th (MFW) and 28th (PEH). It is possible the Wokingham birds moved to Merryman Drive, Crowthorne, where 20 on Dec 21st (IT). The year ended well with sightings at four

further sites: two flew over the A4 at Charvil on Dec 23rd (CDRH); one at Whiteknights Park on Dec 23rd (PG); 12 at the community centre, Wokingham Road, Earley on Dec 26th (TOA); and six at Grazeley on Dec 28th (EN).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident, local numbers may be affected by adverse winter weather

Considered to be the commonest bird in Berkshire, the Wren is frequently overlooked for recording purposes but there were 712 records (including a few duplicates) for this year, 433 of them being received via Bird Track. Counts of 20+ were received for nine sites: Barton Court, Kintbury, where 20 on Apr 20th (JLS); Welford, where 20 on Apr 23rd and 23 on May 11th (RJCl); Boxford, where 20 on Mar 23rd, 24 on Apr 21st, 22 on May 3rd and 20 on May 5th (RJCl); Frilsham, where 32 on Apr 30th (RJL); Burghfield Gravel Pit, where 88 singing plus 14 others on Mar 11th and 81 singing on Apr 20th (RCr); Warren Row, where 34 on Jun 25th (PNe); Cookham Dean, where 28 on May 30th (PNe); Bray Gravel Pit, where 23 on Jun 1st (PNe); and Silwood Park, where 22 singing plus eight others on Apr 20th (RJD). An amusing note was provided by PB-T of one at Woose Hill on Dec 11th: "had a green caterpillar about an inch long and was trying to bash something distasteful out of it. In the end, ate it whole, then gagged a bit then stood on one leg while it went down. Brekkie!"

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Common though possibly declining resident (Amber Listed)

Like the Wren, this species is generally under-reported but this year produced 643 records (including a few duplicates), of which 367 were received via Bird Track. Counts of 10+ were made from 11 sites, with the maximum count for each site being presented in the following. There were 14 at Lower Green, Inkpen on Mar 20th (RHar); ten at Welford on Oct 30th (RJCl); 11 at Enbourne on Mar 19th (RJCl); 14 at Boxford on Nov 29th (RJCl); 20 singing plus four others at Burghfield Gravel Pit on Mar 11th (RCr); 11 at Hurley Bottom on Nov 30th (PNe); 15 at Paley Street on Jun 18th (PNe); 18 at Bray Gravel Pit on Jun 1st (PNe); ten singing and seven others at Ascot Heath on Apr 23rd (RJD); and eleven at Eton Wick on Dec 12th (RMH). RJD wonders whether an appearance of 13 at Ascot Heath on Oct 2nd reflected a small influx.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident

Common and widespread species such as the Robin go largely unreported and it is only systematic surveys such as the atlas and breeding bird surveys that reveal their status. The Berkshire Bird Index, based on the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey, shows no change in abundance between 2000 and 2012, in line with national trends. In suitable habitat, Robins can be abundant: on Mar 11th 68 birds were singing at Burghfield GPs (RCr), 31 at Silwood Park on Apr 28th (RJD) and 46 birds were reported at Maidenhead Thicket on May 22nd (PNe). A count of 75 at Sunningdale on Oct 3rd may have included migrating birds (RMH). Many of the 883 records received relate to breeding behaviour. Nest building was reported in North Ascot as early as Feb 25th and young were being fed by Mar 30th (RJD). There was a newly fledged bird as early as Apr 16th in an Ascot garden (SA) and as late as Aug 23rd at Dorney Wetlands (BDC).

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Uncommon and local summer visitor, rarely encountered on passage (Amber Listed)

The earliest record for the year was at Brimpton GPs on Apr 8th (GEW), with most of the usual sites reporting birds by the end of the month. One passing through Reading spent the night in a Christchurch Road garden on Apr 30th keeping the observer awake (PG). The table shows the earliest record for sites at which birds may have bred and, in brackets, the maximum number of birds apparently holding territory. Sites at which birds had been reported in 2011 but not 2012 were: Lower Farm GP, Golf Course, Theale, Herons Nest, Theale, Sheffield Bottom, Wildmoor Heath.

Site	Earliest site record ¹			Maximum territorial birds ¹		
The Wilderness, Kintbury	1 (1)	May 4	JLS	1 ?	May 6	IW
Hamstead Marshall	1 ?	May 9	Rhar	1 ?	May 19	Rhar
West Meadow, Marsh Benham	1	May 6	JLS	1	May 16	JLS
Hamstead–Dreweats Locks, K&A canal	1 (1)	Apr 27	IW	2 (2)	May 6	IW
Enborne	1 ?	Apr 14	RJCI	1 ?	May 11	RJCI
Greenham Common	1 (1)	Apr 12	JL	9 (9)	May 14	TPo
Thatcham Marsh	1 (1)	May 4	IW	2 ?	May 7	IW
Colthrop	1 ?	Apr 21	KGW	2 (2)	May 5	Swhit
Brimpton GPs	2 (2)	Apr 8	GEW	6 (3)	May 10	GEW
Aldermaston GP	2 (2)	Apr 20	JPM	2 (2)	May 5	JPM
Woolhampton GP	2 (2)	Apr 28	GEW	6 (3)	May 11	GEW
Sulhamstead	3	Apr 27	RF	–	–	–
Burghfield GPs	11 (11)	Apr 20	RCr	18 (18)	May 9	RCr
Moatlands GP	3 (3)	Apr 23	RCr	4 (4)	May 17	Jle
Theale Main GP	1 (1)	Apr 14	CMc	17 (17)	May 8	PH
Hosehill Lake LNR	1 (1)	Apr 13	IDP	4 ?	May 29	RCr
Moatlands Taxi Pit	–	–	–	1	May 5	MFW
Bottom Lane	–	–	–	6 (6)	May 29	RCr
Dinton Pastures CP	1 (1)	Apr 18	PJC	3 ?	Apr 21	LRB, Lse

¹ Numbers in brackets are the number of birds reported singing or holding territory; ? indicates no note of singing or territorial behaviour provided

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

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

Spring: a male was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 15th (CDRH, CL), followed the next day by a male at Greenham Common (LF). On Mar 28th, two were seen at Combe Gibbet (PEH); there was one at Eversley GPs on Apr 9th (MGLR), one at QMR on Apr 30th (CDRH) and one in a Tilehurst garden on May 1st (GJSu) **Breeding:** this year there were no confirmed breeding records and no birds reported at the central Reading breeding site, though a bird was heard singing from a rooftop in Cheap Street, Newbury on Jun 23rd (IW). **Autumn:** at QMR a bird was present from Oct 9th–14th and again on Oct 19th (CDRH). A female/immature bird was found at Caversham Park, Reading on Oct 13th (PSc) and again the next day (RD, PEH). The last record of the year was at QMR on Nov 28th (CDRH).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring: The first arrival reported was a male at Easthampstead Park on Apr 11th (MHu), followed by males on Apr 13th at Colnbrook (CDRH), Cow Down (KIT) and Wraysbury GPs (CDRH). On Apr 14th there was one at Lower Farm (MIGW), on Apr 15th at Clayfield Copse, Reading (HRN, ABT), at a site at which Redstarts had been noted in April in 2011 and 2008 (ABT), and on Apr 16th at Lavell's Lake (FJC). Passage continued through the rest of April and the first week of May with records of males at Folly Farm, West Ilsley, on Apr 20th (ABT), Wraysbury GPs on Apr 21st (Colin Wilson) and Farley Hill on Apr 22nd (PB-T). The first female reported was at Kings Road, Windsor on Apr 22nd (KPD), followed by females at Boxford Common on Apr 27 (JL), Woolhampton GPs on May 2nd (KEM) and Pingewood GPs on May 4th (KEM, ABT). **Breeding:** At the main breeding area, Swinley Forest, numbers were similar to 2011, but well below the peak years of around 40 territories in 2000-2005. Surveys of the MOD heathland and the Royal Military Academy land revealed eight territories (PJC). A further five territories were counted in a partial survey of Crowthorne Woods between MOD Heathland and Nine Mile Ride (CRG). A separate count in Swinley Forest, found ten singing males (DJB). A pair also bred on the Lambourn Downs, with two juveniles fledged on Jul 5th (CDRH). No evidence of breeding was received for other areas in Berkshire. **Autumn:** post-breeding dispersal and return passage started with a moulting male at Swinley Brickpits on Jul 27th (CDRH) and a male at West Woodhay Down on Jul 29th (IW, JL). The main passage was in August and September with a total of 36 records probably involving 40-50 birds. The majority (67% of records) came from west Berkshire, where at least five birds were seen at Walbury Hill on Aug 31st (DJB) and on Sep 7th (RJCl) and two were at Greenham Common on Sep 3rd. Among the records for the mid and east of Berkshire were two birds at Lavell's Lake on Sep 3rd (GR) and a single bird there to Sep 17th. A female or immature was in a garden at Jealott's Hill on Sep 4th (KCr) and a male in a garden at Frogmill, Hurley on Sep 17th (SJF, FMF). The last record of the year was of a first winter bird at Walbury Hill on Oct 6th (DJB).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon and declining passage migrant which formerly bred (Amber Listed)

Spring: The first bird of the year was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 28th (MMc). Spring passage was typically brief, with 19 records involving up to 23 birds at 13 sites between Apr 28th and May 14th. All sightings were of single birds except for twos at Englefield on May 2nd (RCr), at the New Diggings at Eversley GPs on May 6th (MGLR) and at Pingewood GPs on May 8th (KEM, AVL). Other sites with records were: Woodlands Park, Coldharbour, Aborfield, Pingewood GPs, Woolhampton GPs, Greenham/Crookham Common, Woolley Down.

	Apr 24-30	May 1-7	May 8-14
Birds ¹	2	12-13	7-8
Sites	2	10	5

¹ the first count refers to the minimum number of birds recorded in the week; where a second figure is shown it refers to the count assuming all birds arrived fresh each day.

Autumn: There was single record at Greenham on June 30 (CMRy); otherwise the return passage began on Aug 12th with single birds at Greenham Common (IW, JL) and Eversley GPs (MGLG). Passage finished on Oct 1st with a bird at Freeman's Marsh (PEH). The highest counts were at Walbury Hill, where 11 were recorded on Sep 7th (RJCl);

elsewhere the highest count was three at Ascot Heath on Sep 4th (RJD). Sites with records in the autumn were: Colnbrook, QMR, Dorney Wetlands, Eversley GPs, Spencers Wood, Pingewood GPs, Englefield, Brimpton, Greenham/Crookham Common, Freeman’s Marsh.

	Aug 8–14	Aug 15–21	Aug 22–28	Aug 29 – Sep 4	Sep 5–11	Sep 12–18	Sep 18–24	Sep 25 – Oct 1
Birds ¹	2	7–8	16–45	15–22	16–20	7–15	2–3	1
Sites	2	4	8	7	7	3	2	1

¹ the first count refers to the minimum number of birds recorded in the week; where a second figure is shown it refers to the count assuming all birds arrived fresh each day.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Locally common summer resident, uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were received from 32 sites, treating the whole of Swinley Forest and the MOD heathland as a single site and Greenham and Crookham Commons as one. Fifteen sites were in west Berkshire, four in mid Berkshire and 13 in the east of the county. The minimum numbers of birds reported each month are shown in the table. Counts were broadly similar to those in 2011 and somewhat lower than in 2010. **First Winter:** although the majority of records in Jan and Feb were from farmland and gravel pits, more birds were reported on heathland than last year, perhaps reflecting a fairly mild winter. At Dorney Wetlands on Feb 11th there were three birds (PEH) and three also at Eversley GPs on Feb 23rd (RFM). There were four (2 males and 2 females) at Greenham Common on Feb 9th (JBU, IW). **Breeding:** by Mar the majority of birds were on their breeding areas: the east Berkshire heaths and Greenham Common. A survey of the former found 11 territories in April/May (PJC) and adults feeding young and a juvenile were reported in May (DJB). At Greenham Common, where four pairs were seen in March (IW), two groups of recently fledged birds were present on May 18th (JL, IW). At Eversley GPs a pair was present in Mar and Apr, but no confirmation of breeding was received. A pair also bred on Lambourn Downs, with two juveniles fledged on Jul 5th (CDRH). **Autumn/Second Winter:** there were many reports of family parties at Greenham Common from Jul to Oct, with a peak count of 20 birds on Sep 19th (JBU, IW), falling to nil (no records received) in Dec. On the east Berkshire heaths, there were 13 birds at Wishmoor Bottom on Nov 9th (DJB).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kennet Valley	2	4	1	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	–	–
Other gravel pits ¹	3	4	3	2	–	–	–	3	2	7	4	2
Berkshire Downs	–	–	2	2	–	–	4	1	2	2	2	2
E Berkshire Heaths	3	–	6	11T	7	3	7	10	–	3	13	–
Greenham Common	2	4	8	4T	12	7	12	12	20	8	1	3
Elsewhere: birds	2	5	3	–	3	–	–	3	2	12	1	–
sites	1	3	3	–	1	–	–	2	1	7	1	–
Totals	12	17	23	19	22	10	23	31	28	33	21	7

¹ includes Dorney Wetlands T – territories

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant (Amber Listed)

2012 was a fairly average year for Wheatear passage. The table shows the estimated minimum number of birds for each month; actual numbers may well have been considerably higher because of day to day turnover. **Spring:** records were received for 49 sites, 14 in west Berkshire, 13 in mid Berkshire and 22 in the East of the county. The first arrival was a male at Greenham Common on Mar 5th (JL), followed ten days later by two more at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) and a further 16 birds in the last two weeks of the month. The peak passage was in Apr, with high counts of nine at Brimpton on Apr 5th (GEW), nine at Queen Mother Reservoir on 13th (MMc) and nine at Easthampstead Park, Bracknell on 14th. The last week of April brought the highest counts, with 14 at Crookham Common on Apr 26th (JL), 15 at QMR on Apr 27th (CDRH) and 14 at Woolhampton GPs on the same day (KEM). May 1st brought the highest count of the spring passage, with 18 at QMR (CDRH). The last record for the spring was of two birds at Greenham Common on May 18th (JL, IW). Whereas in Mar, the great majority (82%) of the birds for which sex was reported were males, during May the reported sex ratio was approximately 1:1. **Autumn:** The first returning bird was at QMR on Jul 17th (CDRH). Passage built up in August, with a high count of six on Gallows Down, Inkpen (JBU, IW). During the first ten days of September Ascot Heath held 5-7 birds most days (RJD). At QMR there were eight on Sep 1st (PNe) and “up to 16” on Sep 3rd (RCW). Numbers fell after mid September and the last record of the year was of a single bird at Lowbury Hill, Compton on Oct 14th (PB-T).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	5	36	20	–	–	5	18	2	–	–
Gravel Pits ¹	–	–	3	33	28	–	–	1	8	–	–	–
Berkshire Downs	–	–	2	13	28	–	–	6	5	–	–	–
Walbury/Inkpen Hill	–	–	4	7	1	–	–	9	7	–	–	–
E Berkshire Heaths	–	–	1	4	2	–	–	5	7	1	–	–
Greenham Common	–	–	3	14	9	–	–	3	5	1	–	–
Elsewhere: birds	–	–	1	54	35	–	–	10	25	1	–	–
sites	–	–	1	17	14	–	–	9	10	1	–	–
Totals	–	–	19	161	123	–	–	39	75	5	–	–

¹ includes Dorney Wetlands

WHEATEAR (*leucorhoa*) *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*

Scarce passage migrant, probably overlooked

Four birds showing the characteristics of the Greenland race were reported in Wraysbury Scrub on May 5th (RJD). An apparent female or immature *leucorhoa* was at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 25th (CDRH) and a first winter was trapped and ringed at Ascot Heath on Sep 29th (RJD).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant (Red Listed)

There were records of Ring Ouzels at seven sites, involving at least 11 birds. **Spring:** the first bird was an adult male at Walbury Hill on Mar 28th (PEH), followed by two males at the same site on Apr 5th (ABT). A male was found at Easthampstead Park, Bracknell on

Apr 8th (MHu) and remained the next day (JBS, KIT). On Apr 14th a male was found at Gallows Down, Inkpen (DF), joined by a female the next day (RRi) and the pair stayed to Apr 23rd (TPo). On Apr 25th a female was reported in a Wokingham garden (PKe) and on 27th a male was photographed at Oakwood Park Kennels, Bracknell, followed by a female photographed there the next day (both PCarp). On May 6th a first summer male was found at Pinkneys Green, staying to the 8th. (ANS, CDRH *et al.*). **Autumn:** two records: a first winter male was at Walbury Hill on Oct 15th (JRSto) and a first winter male was with Redwings at Bray on Oct 16th (CDRH).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

As most observers do not, outside organised surveys, systematically report the commoner species, an assessment of status is best obtained from the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey, which we use for the Berkshire Bird Index. The trend over the period 2000 to 2012 shows a weakly significant, small decline of 2% per year. The national abundance shows no significant trend over the same period (BTO Birdtrends). The records submitted to berkshbirds and birdtrack tend to focus on the exceptional. For example, on Jan 26th a nest with a newly hatched chick and an egg was seen on a window ledge outside an outbuilding in Thames Valley Park (RDr). A not quite so early pair was observed nest-building on Feb 23rd in North Ascot, where two pairs were already feeding young on Mar 26th (RJD). The first week in Apr brought the first records of fledged young at Shaw on 4th (IW) and Woose Hill on the 7th (PB-T). The higher counts came mostly in November when some Blackbirds are migrating: 36 at Valley Road, Newbury on Nov 9th (RJCl), 25 at Lower Green, Inkpen on the 13th, at least 25 feeding in Hawthorn on the 15th (JBU, IW), 51 at Maidenhead Thicket on 29th (PNe). In December at least 35 were counted along the Kennet and Avon Canal from Hampstead Lock to Dreweats Lock on the 11th (JBU, IW) and a "notable influx" of 21 was recorded at Woolhampton GPs on 17th (GEW).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, has bred (Schedule One and Red Listed)

This highly mobile species roams widely across farmland, scrub and gardens in Berkshire, often in large flocks. The figures in the table are the totals of the numbers of birds reported each day; they therefore may be an overestimate of the numbers of birds involved, but nonetheless give an indication of the month to month changes. 41% of the birds recorded were in west Berkshire, 23% in mid Berkshire and 36% in east Berkshire. **First Winter:** on Jan 2nd at least 1,000 were flushed by a Sparrowhawk at Coldharbour (DJB), on 23rd January there were estimated to be over 400 between Loddon Drive, Charvil and Wargrave (DJB) on Feb 4th, 220 were counted in trees around gardens in Lower Earley (DJMi), on Feb 6th there were c.400 on the (thawing) East bank of Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH) and there were about 300 at Dorney Wetlands on Mar 9th (PNe). There were eight other counts of 200 or more and 20 counts of 100-199. The last departing bird was on Apr 22nd at Windsor Great Park (KPD). **Second Winter:** the first arrival was seen on Oct 2nd at Ascot Heath (RJD). Three hundred and eighty birds flew NW over Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 27th and a further 340 the next day (CDRH). Also on Oct 28th 231 were counted flying W/NW over Ascot Heath and 759 flew W/NW there on Nov 6th (both RJD). There were 220 at North Heath on Nov 11th (IW) and 230 along the Kennet and Avon Canal between Hampstead Lock and Dreweats Lock on Nov 15th (JBU, IW). There were a further 15

counts of between 100 and 200. Feeding was reported on Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Rosehips, Rowan, apples, stubbles, paddocks, garden lawns.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	58	63	32	14	–	–	–	–	–	28	58	32
Birds	4,067	3,624	3,160	329	–	–	–	–	–	2,045	3,809	903

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)

As noted above for the Blackbird, trends in abundance of Song Thrushes in Berkshire are best assessed using the BTO’s Breeding Bird Survey data. These show no significant change between 2000 and 2012, in common with the national trend. Most of the records received in the County database were of single birds, occasionally two or three, in gardens, woodland or scrub. Some larger numbers recorded in the breeding season were: 13 singing at Burghfield GPs on Mar 11th (RCr), 14 (seven territories) at Ascot heath on Apr 16th, a “big increase” on the previous year (RJD) and 18 at Bray GPs on June 1st (PNe). Apparent passage was noted in the **Autumn**: at Greenham Common four flew over high northwards on Sep 21st (JL, IW), at Ascot Heath on Oct 7th at least 12 birds appeared to drop in and six flew over Woose Hill on Oct 11th (PB-T). Interestingly, a bird ringed in Berkshire in November 2010 was found dead in Belgium in May 2012.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, very rare in summer (Schedule One and Red Listed)

Like the Fieldfare, Redwings are highly mobile, found singly, in small parties or in larger flocks feeding in fields, berry-bearing trees and bushes and in gardens. The figures in the table are the totals of the numbers of birds reported each day; they therefore may be an overestimate of the numbers of birds involved, but nonetheless give an indication of the month to month changes. Overall the numbers of Redwings and Fieldfares are similar; however, unlike the Fieldfare, for which the largest proportion (41%) was in the west of the county, the majority of Redwings (51%) were reported from east Berkshire (30% west Berkshire, 19% mid Berkshire). **First Winter**: the highest count was of 230 birds on Crookham Common on Feb 27th (IW) and there were only 18 counts of 100 or more, similar to the reports in the second winter of 2011. The last departing bird was at Bracknell on Apr 8th (MHu). **Second Winter**: the earliest arrival was reported at Hosehill Lake on Sept 21st (AVL), with one two days later at Ascot Heath (RJD). On Oct 7th 245 birds were seen flying N/NW over Windsor Great Park (DJB). Several high counts came from Ascot Heath, with 570 flying N/NE on Oct 11th and 988 passing over W/NW on Oct 28th (RJD). At least 500 were feeding in stubble at Burghfield bridge on Nov 27th (AVL).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sites	68	69	35	4	–	–	–	–	5	47	44	33
Birds	3,034	2,281	1171	23	–	–	–	–	18	5,150	3162	932

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)

The Berkshire Breeding Bird Survey data show a significant decline in abundance of Mistle Thrushes of 6%/year between 2000 and 2012, closely reflecting the national statistics for this species and the Berkshire Atlas data. Despite their prominent singing posts, remarkably few reports confirming breeding were received. Collection of mud for nest building was noted on Greenham Common (JL, IW), a recently fledged bird was seen at Moatlands on Apr 28 (PH), birds collecting food were noted at Silwood Park on Apr 20th (RJD) and Greenham Common on May 20th (JL, IW) and birds feeding fledged young were noted at Windsor Great Park on Jun 3rd (SA). Families of Mistle Thrushes may combine to form post-breeding flocks, some larger examples of which were a party of 15 at Lower Farm GP on Jul 7th (NC, CMc), 24 feeding on Newbury Racecourse on Aug 15th (IW) and 46 at Lower Farm on Aug 29th (NC, IW). On Jul 15th a party of 35 were in a field with cattle in Windsor Great Park and a flock of 19 was on Smith's Lawn there on Jul 29th (DJB).

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Locally common resident (Schedule One)

This species appears to be doing very well with a substantial increase noted, both in numbers and locations used, particularly in central and eastern areas of the county. Numbers of sites holding singing birds in mid-Berks increased from 12 in 2011 to 17 in 2012, and in east Berkshire from four in 2011 to nine in 2012; west Berkshire sites used remained at 18, thus giving a total of 44 sites in 2012 compared to 34 the previous year. Many of the sites held just one or two birds, with up to five found at 11 sites and higher numbers as follows: up to seven singing Dorney Wetlands, Woolhampton GPs and Thatcham Marsh (MO), up to six Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford (JSW) and Marsh Benham (JLS), and a thorough survey of the Theale & Burghfield GPs by TABCG recorded 19 territories, up from seven in 2005. Evidence of breeding came from Brimpton where one was carrying food to a nest site (GEW), Great Meadow Pond where an adult was feeding four juveniles (DJB), Woodspeen where a female with a brood patch was caught (JL), Woolhampton GP where a juvenile was ringed Aug 19th (JPM), and Thatcham Marsh where a total of 23 were caught and ringed during the year (IW,JL) which included a number of juveniles.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

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

A poor year for this species with just eight, possibly nine birds seen in spring and two in autumn. First noted at Lower Farm GP Apr 14th when two were present (MGW) followed by singles at Thatcham Marsh on 17th (AEDH) and May 6th (SAG), Harvey's Meadow Apr 21st (JSW), West of Craven Road, Newbury Apr 23rd (AEDH,MO) & 24th (PH), Four Points, Aldworth Apr 30th (RRi), The Wilderness, Kintbury May 2nd & 12th (RHar) and Dorney Wetlands May 8th (DJB). Autumn passage consisted of singles at Dorney Wetlands July 17th (WAS) and Woodspeen Aug 10th (JL).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Spring: First arrivals were two Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford Apr 1st (JSW), singles Main Pit, Theale Apr 7th (RJB), Thames Valley Park on 12th (RDr) and Wraysbury GP on 13th

(CDRH), followed by four Dorney Wetlands on 14th (RN) and one Great Meadow Pond on 15th (DJB) and three Thatcham Marsh also on 15th (IW,JL). Numbers increased rapidly after this date with May producing the highest counts; 20+ Thatcham Marsh on 7th (IW,JL), 17 Boxford on 13th (RJCl), 17 also Dorney Wetlands on 8th (DJB), ten Marsh Benham on 16th (JLS), nine Wraysbury Scrub on 2nd (RJD) and Hungerford Marsh on 13th (SAB) and seven Kintbury Cress Beds on 12th (IW,JL). A thorough survey of Theale & Burghfield GPs revealed 76 territories, a substantial decrease from 120 in 2005 and 179 in 1998. **Summer:** Very few breeding records were submitted; an adult was taking food to a nest near Ufton Lock, K & A canal June 24th (PH), a family party was observed at Dorney Wetlands July 17th (DJB) and 13 juveniles were ringed at Thatcham Marsh during summer/early autumn. Juveniles ringed at Woolhampton GP Aug 1st & 19th (JPM) were possibly migrants. **Autumn:** Apart from ten at Woodspeen Aug 10th (JL) there was no other significant count made, but passage continued well into Sep with records coming from 12 sites, the last being two Hosehill Lake on 22nd (RJB), one Burnthouse Lane GP also on 22nd (RJB), two ringed Thatcham Marsh on 23rd (IW,JL), one Eton Wick on 27th (NSCu) and finally one Great Meadow Pond on 30th (DJB).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant

One singing at Brimpton GP Apr 8th (GEW) heralded the start of spring arrivals, this was followed by two at Dorney Wetlands on 11th (WAS), one Twyford GPs on 14th (SBr), two Thatcham Marsh on 15th (IW,JL) and three Great Meadow Pond also on 15th (DJB). This species was reported from 41 sites with double-figure counts coming from the following locations:

Dorney Wetlands: 16 Apr 29th (WAS), 41 singing May 8th (DJB), 41 Jul 28th (BDC)
Great Meadow Pond: 24 May 13th (DJB)
Woolhampton GP: 10 Jun 20th (RFR), 26 around the area during the summer (GEW)
Burghfield/Theale GPs: 75 territories during survey (86 in 2005, 67 in 1998) (TABR)
Woodspeen: 10 Jul 26th (JL)
Thatcham Marsh: 14 singing May 7th, 24 Jul 28th (IW,JL), 145 ringed during summer/autumn (IW,JL)

Breeding was reported from Dorney Wetlands, Great Meadow Pond, Eversley GPs, Thatcham Marsh and Woolhampton GP. Notable records include a nine-year old bird caught at Thatcham Marsh June 17th (IW,JL) and a juvenile picked up dead after flying into an office window at Whitley, Reading Aug 31st (MFW). Autumn passage extended almost to the end of October this year with one Eton Wick on 1st (RHS) & 6th (PJSt), Lavells Lake on 4th (FJC), two, possibly three Hosehill Lake on 6th (AVL), three Thatcham Marsh on 7th (IW,JL), two Dorney Wetlands on 11th (CDRH) and an exceptionally late bird at Moatlands GP on 27th (MFW), just two days short of the latest-ever record for Berkshire.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant, uncommon (but increasing?) in winter

First Winter: Records came from 51 locations involving 81 birds, most reports being of one or two birds with exceptions being three in an Earley garden (RHS), three at Hungerford Feb 3rd (RGS), four in a Cookham garden Jan 30th (BDC), and ringing evidence revealed at least eight individuals using a Caversham garden (TGB). **Spring/Summer:** With many birds remaining in their winter garden habitat well into March, trying to determine true

spring migrants becomes trickier each year. One singing at Burghfield GPs Mar 11th (RCr) would seem to be a valid contender for the title of first spring arrival, particularly as none had been reported from this site during January and February, and with others arriving there during the rest of the month with three on 20th, seven on 24th and 23 on 28th (RCr). Other non-garden sites hosting males mid-March include one at Summerleaze GP on 12th (BDC), one at Inkpen on 17th (RHar) and one at Bottom Lane, Theale GPs on 19th (KEM). The last week of March produced records from 26 sites, mostly one or two birds but with four at Boxford Common (RJCl). Numbers at Burghfield GPs increased to 44 Apr 1st and 57 Apr 20th (RCr), whilst elsewhere, double-figure counts came from 30 sites with 20+ counts in spring & summer consisting of 20 Maidenhead Thicket May 22nd (PNe), 21 Wraysbury Scrub Apr 15th and 23 May 2nd (RJD), 22 Welford May 11th (RJCl), 22 ringed Hosehill Lake July 15th (TGB), 23 Eversley GPs Apr 21st (RJD) and 25 Swinley Forest May 25th (DJB). It is apparent that this species has become common and abundant in Berkshire in recent years and if further evidence is needed results from the Theale & Burghfield GPs survey indicate that a staggering 406 territories were found, a 102% increase on the 201 found in 2005. Specific breeding records were submitted from Swinley Forest, Eversley GPs, Hosehill Lake, Greenham Common, Thatcham Marsh, Dorney Wetlands, Ascot Heath and Hurley, but presumably took place at many other sites. **Autumn:** Main autumn passage took place late August into September when some impressive counts were achieved: 30+ Wraysbury Scrub Aug 26th (RJD), 30 ringed Midgham GP Sep 8th with 20 ringed there Sep 15th (JPM), and 27 Marsh Benham Sep 8th (JLS). The main exodus occurred in the last week of September but October records came from seven sites including Lavell's Lake where one or two were present throughout the month (FJC). **Second Winter:** Individuals started arriving in gardens from the first week of November and during the last two months of the year 51 birds were reported from 27 locations with the highest numbers being up to eight in a Caversham garden (TGB), up to four in a Southcote garden (AVL) and three in an Emmer Green garden (HRN).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Early arrivals were reported from Eversley GPs Apr 9th (PHu), Bowdown Woods on 10th (RWeI) and Wraysbury GPs on 13th (CDRH) with next birds not appearing until 20th when singles were at West Woodhay Down (PEH), Greenham Common (IW) and Hosehill Lake (PH), closely followed by one at Main Pit, Theale (RJB) and two at Inkpen (RHar) on 21st. By Apr 27th six were at Burghfield GPs (RCr) and four were at Brimpton (GEW). Highest counts during Spring/Summer were eight Snelsmore Common May 5th (IW,JL), ten Eversley GPs May 10th (RFM) and 15 Wraysbury Scrub May 15th (RJD), but the survey of Theale & Burghfield GPs revealed a very healthy 141 territories, up from 111 in 2005 and 77 in 1998. Very few breeding records were submitted; an adult was feeding three young at Twyford GP June 13th (DJB) and single juveniles were ringed at Hosehill Lake July 15th (TGB) and Aldermaston GP July 31st (JPM), whilst a juvenile ringed in a Caversham garden Aug 10th (TGB) is likely to be a migrant as most birds had departed by the end of that month. September records consist of singles at Midgham GP on 8th (JPM), Main Pit, Theale on 8th & 11th (RCr), Lavell's Lake on 17th (FJC) and Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford on 21st (JSW).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant

First arrival was one at Lower Farm GP Apr 26th (IW) quickly followed by singles at Hamstead/Dreweatts Lock, K & A Canal on 27th (IW), Burnthouse Lane GP also on 27th (KEM), and Dinton Pastures (MJM) and Brimpton (GEW) on 28th. One or two were reported from 48 sites during the summer, with three at Fifield Jun 1st (PNe), four at Burnthouse Lane May 16th (AVL) and five at Wraysbury Scrub May 5th (RJD). The Theale & Burghfield GPs warbler survey located 12 territories, up from just five in 2005 and nine in 1998. Only one breeding record was submitted; a family party of five at Lower Farm GP June 23rd (IW,JL). Most birds had departed by the end of August, exceptions being nine ringed Wraysbury GPs on Sep 1st (RRG) and singles Greenham Common on Sep 6th (IW,JL) and Dorney Wetlands on Sep 15th (WMO).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First reported from K & A canal, Reading Apr 1st (SWells), an early date, followed by singles at Eversley GPs on 7th (RCM,MGLR), Dorney Wetlands on 11th (WAS), Woolhampton GP on 13th (KEM), Slough SF on 14th (RN), Brimpton (GEW) and Burnthouse Lane GP (KEM) on 15th and Twyford GP on 16th (SAB). Widely reported from across the county during the summer with 10+ counts consisting of ten Ascot Heath May 8th and 13 on 16th (RJD), ten Wishmoor Bottom May 17th (MHu), ten West Woodhay Down July 29th (IW,JL), 11 Eversley GPs May 16th (RFM), 11 Englefield Jul 1st (RCr), 15 Boxford May 13th (RJCl), 15 Fifield June 1st (PNe), 17 Stanmore June 21st (RJCl), 20 Wraysbury Scrub May 2nd, 27 there on 5th and 20 Aug 26th (RJD), and 25 Compton Downs May 16th (DJB). The Theale & Burghfield GPs survey found 78 territories, slightly down from 87 in 2005 and 84 in 1998. As with most warbler species, it seems observers pay little attention to the species once breeding activity commences, with confirmed breeding only reported from Brimpton, Hosehill Lake and Eversley GPs. Autumn migration occurred throughout August and well into September, the latest sightings being one Thatcham Marsh on 23rd (IW,JL), two Windsor Great Park on 26th (DJB) and one Dinton Pastures on 27th (FJC), with the final honour going to one Lower Farm GP Oct 6th (IW,JL).

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Localised resident in small numbers, rare away from breeding habitat (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

A slight improvement on last year but numbers still remain low. Up to six were present at Greenham Common all year (IW,JL,MO), two were seen there with nest material Apr 18th (JMcN) and a juvenile was ringed July 23rd (IW,JL), at Crookham Common singles were present Jan 18th & 25th, Feb 12th (PEH) and Mar 13th (RGi) with up to three the rest of the year (MO). Up to four were at Wishmoor Bottom between January and November (MO) with seven there Nov 9th (DJB) and one was seen at a nest July 30th (PEH). Elsewhere, singles were at Caesars Camp Mar 19th (PEH) & 21st (MK) with others reported from Newbury May 24th (PJO) and Sunningdale Aug 15th (RMH).



YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare vagrant

One at Ascot Heath Oct 20th (RJD) is the fifth record for Berkshire. The field notes by R J Dale, above, say it all.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

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

No improvement in fortune for this species with just one spring record of one at Swinley Park May 26th (DJB).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor

First Winter: one or two were found at 14 sites, with three Dorney Wetlands Jan 6th and five Feb 9th (MJF), five at Eton Wick Feb 7th and seven there on Feb 17th (both CDRH), three Sandhurst STW Jan 31st (RHS), three Streatley STW Feb 6th (PEH) & 18th (GJSu) with four there Feb 7th-12th (PEH), and six Ham Island SF, Old Windsor (RMH). **Spring/Summer:** Singles at Hosehill Lake Mar 7th (KEM), Brimpton Mill (KEM) and Woolhampton GP (RF) on 10th, Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and Lower Denford (RHar) on 11th, with two Burghfield GPs (RCr) and four Whiteknights Park (HWh) also on 11th heralded the start of spring passage which by the end of the month was in full swing. Counts of 10-20 came from 30 sites but higher numbers came from autumn ringing sites such as Brimpton GP where 21, mostly juveniles, were ringed Jul 29th (JPM), Greenham Common where 22 were ringed Sep 3rd (IW,JL) and Padworth Common with 30 Aug 18th and 25 Sep 22nd (TGB). Burghfield GPs held 34 singing males Mar 24th, 39 Mar 28th and 44 Apr 20th (RCr) and a survey of Theale and Burghfield GPs carried out during the summer resulted in 212 territories being located, up from 104 in 2005 and 118 in 1998. With birds being reported throughout October there was no discernible cut-off between late autumn migrants and early winter arrivals. **Second Winter:** Excellent numbers were reported; one or two were located at 15 sites, with three Brimpton Mill Dec 2nd (GEW), three also at Dorney Wetlands Nov 29th (BDC), and at Eton Wick numbers increased from three Nov 9th (ADB) to five Nov 29th (BDC), eight Dec 7th (CDRH) and peaked at ten Dec 11th (CDRH) which included a bird showing characteristics of the *abietinus* race.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Very scarce winter visitor

At Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick birds were present in both winter periods; one was noted Feb 10th (DNTR) with two present the following day (DAC,CDRH) until 15th (MO), and one remaining until Feb 23rd (CDRH). At the end of the year, one was present at Eton Wick from Dec 7th (CDRH) until 30th (MO). Elsewhere there were reports of two at Streatley STW Feb 15th (BGU) and one at Lower Farm GP Mar 11th (BGU).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

First arrival was at Greenham Common Mar 19th (IW) followed by singles at Green Park (NR) and Hosehill Lake (KIT) on 27th, Main Pit on 30th (RCr) and Twyford GP on 31st (MHT), with birds at Eversley GPs (RCM,MGLR), Harvey's Meadow (JSW), Dorney Wetlands (KCr) and Burghfield GPs (RCr) all Apr 1st. In spring and summer double-figure counts came from Snelsmore CP with 12 May 4th and 14 June 1st (JL), Greenham Common with ten Apr 12th (JBU,IW) and 12 Apr 20th (IW), and Harvey's Meadow with ten Apr 21st (JSW), elsewhere six or seven were reported from ten sites. A thorough survey of Theale & Burghfield GPs found 52 territories, down from 78 in 2005 and 99 in 1998, seemingly reflecting the current trend for southern Britain where there is a general decline in numbers. A prolonged autumn passage during which good numbers were located at several sites may be indicative of a good breeding season, either locally or further afield; at Greenham Common 20 were ringed Aug 20th with ten present the following day and 20 again Aug 28th (IW,JL), 25 were at Snelsmore CP Aug 30th (IW), 15 were at The Wilderness, Kintbury Aug 5th (JLS) and ten were at Walbury Hill Aug 21st (JBU,IW). In September 17 were ringed at

Greenham Common between 3rd-19th (IW,JL) and singles were reported from seven other sites during the month, with eight Silwood Park on 1st (RJD) and two at Snelsmore on 7th (IW,JL), last was one at Brimpton GP on 30th (JPM). Finally, two late birds were reported; one with a damaged or deformed bill at Queen Mother Reservoir Nov 14th (MMc) which would have been the latest-ever date for Berkshire by five days, (but one was present at Summerleaze GP from 13th -22nd December 1992) (CDRH *et al.*).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor

Single-figure counts came from 126 sites, with higher counts as follows: ten at Thatcham GP Sep 28th (IW), ten Thatcham Marsh Oct 14th (IW,JL), ten Eversley GPs Nov 25th (GJK), 12 Woolhampton GP Oct 24th (JBU,IW), 13 Ashley Hill May 23rd (PNe), 15 Padworth Common Sep 22nd (TGB), 18 South Forest, Windsor Great Park May 11th (DJB) with 11 there May 19th (RJD) and 23 May 28th (DJB), and 35 singing Swinley Park May 26th (DJB). Breeding was reported from Boxford Common, a Finchampstead garden, Great Meadow Pond, Greenham Common, Ascot, Touchen End and Wooshill.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

A scarce visitor to Berkshire in all seasons, also a locally common summer visitor to suitable woodlands throughout the county (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

First Winter: Only reported from Dell Road, Finchampstead where two were seen Jan 8th (NR,RCo) and one Jan 11th-31st (MO). **Spring/Summer:** Records came from 15 locations this year (nine in 2011) starting with one Nine Mile Ride Mar 10th (RCM), one Fence Wood, Hermitage Mar 16th (JBU), two Broadmoor Farm also Mar 16th (RJG), one in a Crowthorne garden Mar 17th (IT), singles Heath Ride, Finchampstead (RCM) and High Wood, Reading (PG) Mar 18th, one Silwood Park Mar 28th (RJD), one Lily Hill Park, Bracknell (PJS) also on 28th, one Caesar's Camp Apr 1st (ABT), one Windsor Great Park Apr 6th (ABT) & 29th (MSFW) and May 15th (SA), one Maidenhead Thicket May 22nd, 23rd & 28th (PNe), two Whiteknights Park, Reading June 27th (RJD) and finally 26 territories were found in east Berkshire by DJB, the much lower than normal total due to very poor weather during spring & summer which curtailed survey work. **Autumn:** Passage birds were ringed at Aldermaston GP Sep 30th (JPM), Greenham Common Oct 19th (IW,JL) and Eversley GPs Nov 18th (TGB). **Second Winter:** One was reported from Ankerwycke, Wraybury, on Dec 8th (CDRH).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

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

Recorded at 46 sites this year. The table shows the monthly adult numbers at these locations, with the number of juveniles seen in brackets.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Number of sites	1	13	9	11	12	3
Number of birds	1	14	13 (5)	21 (13)	31 (5)	3

Spring: the first record of the year was on Apr 30th when one was in a Brimpton garden collecting cobwebs (GEW). The majority of subsequent sightings for the year were in mid

May to mid June. **Breeding:** no young were reported in May this year but June produced several sightings of juveniles being fed by their parents. The Brimpton garden site pair had two attempts, but unfortunately both nests were predated. The Grazeley churchyard area produced 11 birds from as many as three family groups, seen in the recreation ground next to the village hall Jul 14th (RCr). The usual territory at Temple Golf Course had sightings from Jun 12th with a successful pair seen feeding fledglings on Aug 22nd (CDRH). **Autumn:** late reports of single individuals came from Midgham GP, seen fly catching from wires Sep 15th (JPM), Dorney Wetlands Sep 16th (KPD) and from Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 26th (FJC).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Scarce and declining passage migrant and very rare summer visitor (Amber Listed)

The only reported sighting this year came from Greenham Common when a female was seen on Apr 11th (IW, JL).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Very scarce winter visitor and very rare summer visitor that has bred (Amber Listed)

Another good year for this species in Berkshire with two sites hosting birds. Two males were being seen from Feb 2nd until Mar 3rd at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River (MO). They frequented the phragmites reed beds on the south side of the river, often calling loudly and seen well at times. The second site was Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park when a calling bird was heard in reeds for about 15 minutes but not seen Feb 26th (DJB). Then on Mar 11th the same observer saw a pair "giving fantastic views" at the same location and again on Mar 18th

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common and widespread resident

Recorded from 123 sites throughout the year. Nesting was observed at a minimum of 17 of these locations and over 50 juveniles were seen subsequently. Mist netting was recorded at six sites resulting in 69 birds being ringed. High count numbers were 30 at Englefield Oct 23rd (RCr), 32 at Sunningdale Oct 3rd (RMH) and the highest count was at Wraysbury GPs when 48 birds were seen Nov 16th (PNe).

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident

Still an all-year-round regular visitor to garden bird feeders. Six chicks were in an information news letterbox on the hide door, according to the Moor Green Lakes Report on May 27th. High counts of 40 were recorded at Bagnor Cress Beds Mar 1st (IW, JL), Wraysbury GPs mid Jan (TBl), Fifield Jun 1st (PNe) and Thatcham GPs Sept 28th (IW). The highest count however was 45 from Snelsmore Common CP on Feb 13th and again on Jun 8th in occupied nest boxes (IW, JL).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident

Another garden feeder regular, mainly in the winter months. An interesting observation was a nest with feathered young at Brimpton found in a tree planter tube on May 19th (GEW). Five mist-trapping sites throughout the county this year ringed a total of 189 birds. High counts were recorded at Snelsmore Common CP with 29 in occupied nest boxes on Jun 8th (IW, JL) and 35 individuals seen in Sunningdale on Oct 3rd (RMH).

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common and locally abundant resident

Recorded from 91 different locations throughout the county, usually with conifers or pines nearby. Very often on garden feeders at any time of the year. An interesting record of nine juveniles caught and ringed in September and four in October, all in a Caversham Heights garden (TGB). five other sites had juveniles identified this year; one was ringed at Greenham Common Jun 28th (IW, JL), one ringed at Crookham Common Jul 24th (JPM), a single was visiting a Twyford garden in July (SPA), one at Maidenhead Court on Aug 14th (DF) and one was seen at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Jun 17th (DJB). Highest count was 20 at a feeder on Snelsmore Common CP Oct 28th (IW, JL), on a day when seven new birds were ringed and 13 were retraps.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Uncommon and declining resident, now confined to W Berkshire (Red Listed)

All the records of this species are still coming from the far west Berkshire stronghold, at four main sites around Combe. Numbers of birds identified were up to four on Apr 13th (KIT), four on Nov 1st (IW, JL) and five in a family group Aug 21st (JBU, IW). One bird was seen to be yellow colour ringed on its left leg Mar 28th (RGi). Two other reports of single birds, well away from the main area, were from Denford Mill, Hungerford Jan 8th (JLS) and Hampstead Norreys Feb 13th (C A Wells).

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

A locally common resident in west Berkshire and an uncommon resident in Mid and east Berkshire where the national decline has been more pronounced (Red Listed)

Recorded at 48 different sites, with the vast majority in the western half of the county and just four in the eastern half. The table shows the monthly status of adults throughout the county based on records received, with juveniles in brackets.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Berkshire birds	33	33	29	19	17(2)	4(1)	18(2)	13	12(1)	11	18	23
East Berkshire birds	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Total (minimum)	33	33	31	20	19	7	20	13	15	12	21	23

Evidence of successful breeding was recorded along the Kennet and Avon Canal, between Hamstead and Dreweatt's Locks with two adults and two young seen May 31st (IW). Further juveniles were identified at Boxford Common with one on Jun 19th and one juvenile ringed at Thatcham Marsh on Sept 9th both (IW, JL). High counts of ten at Combe Wood, Combe on Jul 25th (CDRH) which included a family party. Also at the same site ten were recorded on Jan 14th (DJB) including an orange colour ringed bird.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and widespread woodland resident

Records were received from 126 sites this year. Breeding was confirmed at ten locations. At Avenue Bridge on the River Lambourne, Shaw, Newbury a pair were seen feeding young and removing faecal sacs from a nest hole on May 5th (JCh), at Snelsmore Common CP six birds were in occupied nest boxes, with one brood being ringed May 8th (IW, JL), at Harveys Meadow, Hungerford a pair was feeding three chicks in a garden May 19th (JSWo) and in a Brimpton garden wood young were being fed at a nest hole on May 20th (GEW). Further family parties were observed with two at Swinley Park May 26th (DJB) and another one at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Jun 3rd (DJB). The highest count was 18 at High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest on Jun 1st (DJB) which included two family parties of four and seven birds plus a pair at a nest hole.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident

Reports were received from 97 separate locations evenly distributed across the county. In a Brimpton garden one was visiting a bird table on Jan 28 (GEW). **Breeding:** At least one pair in Whiteknights Park, Reading was regularly being seen around the main lake. An adult was seen to be carrying nest material on Apr 1st and food for young on Apr 21st. A second brood was suspected, when a pair was seen feeding young in a nest located 3-4 metre high on Jun 22nd (PG). At Greenham Common an adult was seen with two or three recently fledged young on May 18th (IW, JL). Two adults were seen feeding a juvenile at White Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jun 1st (SDay). The only ringing record came from Boxford Common when two were caught and ringed on Aug 22nd (IW, JL). The highest count came from South Forest, Windsor Forest with nine, of which six were singing on May 11th (DJB).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor

Just two individuals reported, both in the first winter period. One Eastbury Down, Lambourn Jan 28th (MJBr), but not recorded again until Feb 27th (JD). The second individual reported at Farley Hill Mar 31st (ABO), sadly only staying until Apr 1st (CDRH, RCo, PB-T).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident

First Winter: No significant counts, seven on Mar 19th Lavell's Lake (PB-T), seven Lower Farm Apr 4th (GJS), eight on April 20th Silwood Park (RJD) **Spring/Summer:** As always, reported across the County, 1-4 birds mostly. **Autumn/Second Winter:** 11 on Sept 1st at Boxford (RJCl), 15 on Sep 23rd at Brimpton (GEW), 13 in one passage flock Ascot Heath Sept 28th (RJD), ten on Sep 30th Great Meadow Pond (DJB), at least ten on Greenham Common Oct 3rd (IW, JL), 14 on the same day at Sunningdale (RMH), ten on Oct 4th at Paices Wood (PEH), 11 on Oct 6th Walbury Hill (DJB), 15+ Hampstead Park Nov 7th (JBU, IW), 14 on Nov 11th Lavell's Lake (J Burchardt), nine on Nov 29th at Maidenhead Thicket (PNe).

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant breeding resident

No roost counts above 30 this year, 12 on Jan 26th at Twyford (SAB), 26 on Feb at 7th Wokingham STW (DJB), 11 on March 19th at Enbourne (RJCl), 22 on April 1st (Jubilee River (KPD), 13 on April 6th at Sindlesham Meadows (MHT). ten on 1st June Fifield (PNe), 11 on 9th June at Ashridge Manor Farm (AHarr), 6+ 13th Blewbury Down (JBU, IW), 16 Warren Row June 25th (PNe). Ten on Oct 17th at White Place Farm (DF), 24 on Nov 2nd Eton Wick (RMH) and 29 there on Dec 2nd (RMH). Greenham Common has a consistent year round population of 10-16 birds (IW, JL).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant breeding resident

Widespread across the County, larger counts of at least 500 on Jan 29th Moss End (DF), 450 on Feb 11th Hampstead Park (SAG). Five hundred on Sept 21st Oakley Green (BDC), 500+ Hornbuckle Farm, Hawthorn Hill on Sept 24th (DJB), 400 Hyde Farm on Sep 30th (BDC).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant breeding resident especially in rural Berkshire

Three hundred Easton Hill Jan 5th (JL), 375 Cold Ash on Jan 28th (T White), at least 500 on Jan 22nd Bury Down (RSJ), 160 Boxford Mar 16th (RJCl), 300 Cannon Court Farm Sept 28th (BDC), 380 Hyde Farm Sept 30th (BDC), 600+ Cow Down on Oct 14th (KGW), 160 Fence Wood Oct 23rd (JBU).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant breeding resident

High counts involved 152 in North Ascot on Mar 24th (RJD), 170 in Hyde Farm on Sep 30th (BDC), all other records were of counts below 100 and despite a widespread distribution, very few breeding records were reported.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce but increasing visitor, now breeds

Records were received from over 60 locations, as always the majority in west Berkshire with about 20 in mid and east Berkshire. The stronghold remains around Combe and Walbury Hill, where the population seems to average between 10 and 20. Ones and twos widespread across the county and not just in winter periods, suggest established breeding across the County where habitats are suitable: four West Woodhay Down on Jan 17th (IW), four Washmore Hill, East Garston on Feb 26th (ABT), four Brimpton on March 13th (GEW), 17 Gallows Down, Inkpen Aug 21st (JBU & IW), 14 Combe Gibbet/Inkpen Hill Aug 27th (SAG), six Cookham on Sep 24th (BDC), four Remenham Sep 28th (DJB), a remarkable 37 Combe Gibbet/Inkpen Hill Oct 13th (EE Green per CDRH), 20 at Combe/Walbury on Oct 24th (TPo), eight Lower Green, Inkpen on Nov 5th (RHar), 14 Combe on Nov 27th (R Har), ten there on Dec 12th. Two over Horton GP on Oct 5th (CDRH) were notable in view of their scarcity in the NE of the county (indeed it is still a rarity at Staines, just a few miles further East).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

High counts this year involved 300 Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood on Mar 3rd (RJB), 400 Compton Downs, Compton on Mar 9th (DJB), 600 Walbury Hill, Combe on Mar 9th (PEH), 200 Lower Farm GP, Newbury on Mar 17th (IW & JL), 500 Switchback Road, Maidenhead Sep 30th (BDC), 500 West at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP Oct 20th (FJC), c1200 W/NW on Oct 28th Ascot Heath (RJD), c1000 Englefield on Oct 23rd (RCr), 500 Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale on Oct 30th (AVL). Flocks of 30-200 noted at many other locations across the county. Breeding was reported from many, usually urban, localities.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident (Red Listed)

The House Sparrow remains a species which is much under-reported making it difficult to assess its continued decline. However, hopefully as a response to appeals for more records, there were reports from nearly 80 locations across the county in 2012 with a bias towards central and metropolitan areas reflecting the findings of the 2007-11 atlas survey. Notable flocks: 50+ at Heywood Farm, Woodlands Park, on Jan 26th (DJB), 33 at Ashbridge Manor Farm, Wokingham, on Apr 22nd (AHarr), 31 at Hurley Bottom on May 23rd, 43 at Knowl Hill on May 28th, 35 at Bray GPs on Jun 1st and 55 at Cox Green on Jun 18th (all PNe).

Breeding: birds were observed gathering nest material at Cookham on Jan 25th (BDC), a pair was nest building at North Ascot on Feb 17th (RJD), a pair which bred in Jupiter Way, Maidenhead, between Mar 22nd and Jun 28th produced two juveniles (AHarr) and one was seen carrying food in Wokingham on Apr 22nd (AHarr).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

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

Sadly this one-time Berkshire breeding bird was reported from only two locations. There were one or two birds in a hedgerow at Remenham between Jan 1st and Feb 11th (DJB et. al.) and one in a thorn hedge in Theale on Feb 21st (DJS).

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Common and widespread (and certainly under-recorded) but present in smaller numbers on the downland to the northwest of the county. **First Winter:** flocks numbering 50 or greater – 160 at Remenham on Jan 10th (RDr), 50 at Aldermaston on Jan 16th (KEM), 80 at Waltham St. Lawrence on Jan 23rd (PNe), 100 in game cover at Long Lane, Cookham, on Jan 30th (BDC), a flock at Jealott's Hill Farm between Jan 6th and Feb 2nd peaked at 250 on Feb 1st (RCMu), 55 at Warfield on Feb 6th (LRB) and 60 in a Brightwalton Common garden on March 4th (GDS). **Breeding:** a pair nested in a box in a garden hedge in Brimpton with young being fed there on May 20th (GEW) and a female was seen feeding young in a nest at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest, on Jun 17th (MHu). In addition there were multiple reports of singing birds at another 11 locations. **Autumn passage:** reported from three sites – at Ascot Heath passage was noted on 14 dates between Oct 9th and Nov 9th with notable maxima being 78 WNW on Oct 28th, 147 WNW on Oct 29th, 257 W on Oct 30th, 85 W on Nov 2nd and 199 W on Nov 6th (all RJD). Elsewhere there were 50 NW Over Lavell's Lake on Oct 7th (FJC) and 60 NW over Moose Hill, Wokingham, on Oct 20th,

20 W there on Oct 29th and 48 W on Oct 30th (all PB-T). **Second Winter:** there were fewer notable flocks than in the first winter period – 100 at Easton Hill on Oct 31st (IW, JL) and 200 at Bucklebury Ford on Nov 2nd (DJR) being the exceptions.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

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

Less abundant than in previous years but still reported from 60 locations, 17 of which were gardens. Reports were more prevalent from the low-lying forest and parkland areas of east and central Berkshire with very few records from the high ground to the north and south.

First Winter: the peak counts were made in March, which would indicate that the flocks of wintering birds were swelled by migrants. Notable counts – 40 at Virginia Water on Jan 16th (PNe), 30 there on Feb 28th (EP), 300 in South Forest, Windsor Forest, on Mar 8th (CDRH), 85 there on Mar 10th (DJB) and 95 in Dukes Lane, Windsor Great Park, also on Mar 10th (DJB). **Spring:** birds lingered into April in small numbers at 11 locations with an exceptional record of a singing male seen at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest, on May 12th (NC, AMH, KEM). **Second Winter:** reported in single figure numbers from 34 locations, the only double figure count being 11 in a garden in Mill Ride, Ascot, on Oct 30th (SA).

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Common and widespread resident and winter visitor

The species can still be considered a common bird, being reported from well over 100 locations in all suitable habitats but being less prevalent in the northwest of the county. However, it was less numerous than the previous year and the flock sizes were much reduced. Notable counts: 20 on garden feeders in Greenham on Jan 16th (JL), 55 in Long Lane, Cookham, on Jan 30th (BDC), 30 in Dinton Pastures CP on Feb 10th (SDay), 50 at Waltham St. Lawrence on Sep 11th (SKP), 20 at Ascot Heath on Nov 24th (RJD) and 20 in Woodlands Park, Maidenhead, on Dec 30th (DJB). **Autumn passage:** noted passing over Ascot Heath in small numbers on seven dates between Sep 25th and Nov 2nd, the peak being 14 west on Nov 2nd (RJD). **Breeding:** a pair accompanied by at least three juveniles was in Great Meadow, Windsor Great Park, on May 6th (DJB). In addition singing and/or displaying was reported from another 12 locations.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread resident

A ubiquitous bird present in all suitable habitats county-wide, with winter flocks gathering in both the downland to the northwest and southwest and the low-lying areas of east and mid Berkshire. It is a common and popular sight on garden feeders and 70 were trapped and ringed at feeders on Crookham Common through the year (JPM). Flocks in the second winter period included many juveniles. **First Winter:** notable counts – 50 in trees near gardens in Bracknell on Jan 23rd (DLoy) and 70 in a mixed finch flock at Lower Green, Inkpen, on Jan 24th (RHar). **Breeding:** a pair were prospecting a nest site in North Ascot on Apr 2nd (RJD), an adult was on a nest at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford, on May 19th (JSWo), a pair with a juvenile was at Maidenhead Court on Aug 14th, a pair with three juveniles was at the same site on Sep 10th (both DF) and two juveniles were being fed from garden feeders in Skinners Green on Sep 15th (TPo). Singing birds were reported from another two sites and, in addition, Late Summer/early Autumn juveniles were reported from a further five locations. **Autumn passage:** a light passage over Ascot Heath on five dates

between Oct 11th and Nov 9th with the peaks being 24 south on Oct 29th and 19 west on Nov 6th (RJD). **Second Winter:** notable flocks - 100 at Arthur Jacob LNR, on Aug 26th (RJD), 60 at Crookham Common on Aug 28th (JBU, IW), 75+ at Cock Marsh on Aug 30th (DJB), 60 at Wokingham STW on Sep 26th (DJB), 50 at Walbury Hill on Oct 6th (DJB), 60 at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 7th (CDRH), a flock at Colnbrook peaked at 80 on Nov 10th (CDRH) and a flock on Bury Down peaked at 200 on Dec 5th (JMcN).

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in summer

This delightful bird was reported in all months of the year but for the second consecutive year there was just one record for August. As is to be expected the maximum winter concentrations were in the pine forests of the southeast and in the Alders along the waterways. Flocks were more prevalent and noticeably larger during the second winter period. Like the Goldfinch, the Siskin has become an increasingly common sight at garden bird feeders. **First Winter:** notable counts – a flock at Eversley GPs between Jan 4th and Jan 25th peaked at 100 on Jan 4th (RFM), 40 at Ashley Hill Forest, Warren Row, on Jan 23rd (PNe) with 50 there on Feb 17th (BAJC), 80 at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on Feb 3rd (RJB) and 80 in Swinley Forest on Mar 23rd (DJB). April/May/June/July: there were single figure records of birds lingering through the summer at 11 locations, five of which were gardens. **Breeding:** no confirmed breeding records were received but a male and two juveniles were present in Scots Pines in Swinley Forest on Jun 1st (PJC), a male with a juvenile were on feeders in a Bracknell garden on Jun 15th (DEa) and two adults with three juveniles were on feeders in a Crowthorne garden on Aug 21st (IT). **Autumn passage:** there was evidence of a light autumn passage from seven locations between Sep 16th and Nov 15th; the peak counts being – 30 south over Eton Wick on Oct 4th (NSlu), 20 over Thatcham Marsh on Oct 7th (JL, IW), 22 south over Ascot Heath on Oct 11th (RJD) and 17 over Woose Hill, Wokingham, on Oct 29th (PB-T). **Second Winter:** notable flocks – 50 at Bagnor Cress Beds on Oct 5th (JL), 82 at Moor Copse, Tidmarsh, on Oct 12th (MHT), 58 at Moatlands GP, Theale, on Oct 22nd (RCr), 100 at North Ascot on Nov 24th (RJD), 50 in Nursery Lane, North Ascot, on Nov 27th with 180 there on Dec 4th (RJD), 60 at Searles Farm Lane, Burghfield, on Dec 1st (JA) with 50 there on Dec 12th (KEM) and 50 at Freemans Marsh, Hungerford, on Dec 25th (GDS).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Locally common though declining resident, more common on passage and in winter (Red Listed)

Reports of this common and widespread bird came from nearly 100 locations with a bias towards the northwest of the county and with far fewer reports from the southeast. There were numerous large winter flocks and the highest counts were reported from Moatlands GP, Jealotts Hill Farm, Bury Down and at Englefield. **First Winter:** flocks numbering 100 or greater – 100 at Sonning Meadows on Jan 2nd (ABT), a flock at Heywoods Farm, Woodlands Park, between Jan 17th and Jan 31st peaked at 110 on Jan 17th (DJB), a flock at Jealotts Hill Farm between Jan 6th and Feb 2nd peaked at 250 on Feb 1st (RCMu), the flock at Field Farm, Moatlands GP, seen between Feb 11th and Mar 12th peaked at 200 on Feb 11th (RCr) and there were 100 at Beech Hill on Feb 16th (DJB). **Breeding:** nest building was noted at Greenham Common on Mar 12th (JBU, IW), a pair with nest material at Crookham Common on Mar 13th (RGI) and a female was collecting nest material at Brightwalton Common on Mar 22nd (GDS). Late summer juveniles were recorded at Greenham Common and Brimpton GP. **Autumn passage:** there was evidence of passage from three locations; at Lavells Lake on Sep 28th and Oct 9th with the maximum seven southeast on Oct 9th (FJC), at

Ascot Heath between Oct 3rd and Nov 6th with the highest count 26 south on Oct 4th (RJD) and at Woose Hill between Oct 13th and Nov 29th with 18 south on Oct 13th the maximum (PB-T). **Second Winter:** flock sizes were swelled by juvenile birds; counts of 100 or more – 200 on Compton Downs on Sep 6th (GRW), a flock on the Englefield Estate between Aug 30th and Dec 27th peaked at 300 on Sep 6th (RCr), 100 at Bill Hill on Sep 24th (DJB), 100 at Botmoor Way, Chaddleworth, on Oct 31st (JL, IW) and the flock on Bury Down between Sep 22nd and Dec 2nd peaked at 260 on Nov 28th (RJB).

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

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

Present in reasonable numbers in the expected habitats of the forests, woodlands and waterways of central, southern and eastern Berkshire. Absent from the downland in the northwest and southwest of the county. Winter flock numbers were higher than 2011 but again there were no records for June, July or August and no evidence of breeding. This is another finch that has been increasingly attracted to garden feeders. **First Winter:** notable flocks – 93 on garden feeders in Bracknell on Jan 7th (JCoo), a flock on Padworth Common between Jan 6th and Mar 25th peaked at 80-100 on Jan 29th (TGB), a flock in Ashley Forest, Warren Row, between Feb 29th and Mar 10th peaked at 60 on Feb 29th and there were 235+ in Swinley Forest on Mar 23rd (DJB). **Breeding:** there was no evidence of breeding this year but birds were present during May in suitable habitats in Swinley Forest, Windsor Forest and at Wick Hill. **October passage:** there were many reports of over-flying birds but there was some evidence of passage in small numbers during October. One southwest over Freemans Marsh, Hungerford, on Oct 1st (PEH), at Ascot Heath noted on five dates between Oct 3rd and Oct 31st with a peak of 11 west on Oct 31st (RJD), at Woose Hill reported on four dates between Oct 13th and Oct 30th with a peak of four east on Oct 13th (PB-T), one west over Lavells Lake, Dinton CP, (FJC), two northeast over Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 26th with two north there on Oct 28th (CDRH). **Second Winter:** present in lower numbers than the first winter period, notable flocks – 20 over Dorney Wetlands on Nov 7th (CDRH), 20 at Horton GPs on Nov 16th (CDRH), 20 at North Ascot on Nov 19th (RJD), 20 at Eversley GPs on Dec 16th (TGB) and 30 at Bottom Lane, Theale, on Dec 30th (RCr).

MEALY REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*

Rare winter visitor

An average showing for this uncommon winter visitor. There were seven records involving at least 18 birds including at least three seen on garden feeders. **First Winter:** two in Bracknell on Jan 17th (JCoo), at least one adult male was seen and photographed on feeders in Bullbrook, Bracknell, on five dates between Jan 19th and Feb 15th (RJB). **Second Winter:** two, including an adult male, trapped and ringed at Eversley GPs on Dec 16th (TGB).

In the 2011 report, we incorrectly stated that the earliest sighting of Mealy Redpoll in Berkshire was October 30th, whilst there was one at Queen Mother Reservoir on Oct 3rd 2005.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Regular (irruptive) visitor in variable numbers (depending on cone crop), occasionally breeds (Schedule One)

Reported from a number of locations around the Pine forest and mixed woodland habitat of south, east and central Berkshire, with established flocks concentrated in sites such as Swinley

Forest and fly-over birds being reported in the proximities. There was no evidence of any major influx of this invasive species but it is interesting to note that maximum numbers were recorded during May, flocks being swelled, perhaps, by the juveniles of this early nesting bird. **First Winter:** small numbers were reported from 26 locations; flocks numbering greater than 20:- 22 at Padworth on Jan 4th (GJSu), 25 in Fence Wood, Hermitage, on Jan 6th (JBu), 30 at Swinley Brickpits, South Ascot, on Jan 29th (MSFW), 20 in Swinley Forest on Feb 9th (DJS) and 33 at South Ascot on Feb 24th (DJB). **Breeding:** courtship activity was noted at Englemere Pond NR on Feb 27th (LRB) and nest material was seen being gathered in South Forest, Windsor Great Park, on Mar 8th (CDRH) where a pair with three juveniles was seen on Apr 22nd (DJB). Juvenile birds were also seen at Roundoak Piece and Wishmoor Bottom. In addition there were singing birds at Brimpton, South Ascot, Crowthorne Woods and in Swinley Forest. April/May/June: reported from 16 locations with the largest flocks being – 25 at Lower Star Post, Swinley Forest, on May 6th (RCO), 44 over Lavells Lake, Dinton CP, on May 14th (FJC), 30 at The Lookout, Swinley Forest, on May 14th (DLo), 30 in Swinley Forest on May 20th (TS), 60 at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest, on May 25th (DJB) and 20 in Windsor Great Park on Jun 4th (SA). July/August/September: reported in single figure numbers (mainly over-flying birds) at 13 locations. **Second Winter:** reported in only low numbers from ten locations, largest flocks – 14 in Swinley Forest on Oct 15th (DLo) and 20 at Brimpton on Oct 30th with 20 again there on Nov 18th (GEW).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Uncommon resident, long term decline appears to have stabilised (Amber Listed)

Reports were received from 120 locations, a slight increase on the previous year. The species was widely but thinly spread in its typical rural habitat (including gardens) and generally absent from the downs, but even there it was recorded in suitable woods and hedgerows. Whilst not a gregarious bird, 17 were counted within a one mile radius of Lower Green, Inkpen, on Jan 22nd with 11 there on Nov 2nd (RHar). **Breeding:** at Thatcham Marsh an adult was seen feeding a juvenile on Jun 4th (SAG) and three more juveniles were trapped and ringed later in the summer (JL,IW). In addition late summer juveniles were reported from Brimpton, Caversham Heights, Compton Downs, Greenham Common, Walbury Hill and West Woodhay Down, A singing male was noted near Bracknell STW on Apr 15th (MSFW).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce visitor, formerly an uncommon resident (Red Listed)

Six birds were reported from four locations, all in the second winter period. Sadly, a now typical showing of this erstwhile resident. One was at Basildon Park on Mar 13th (Ian Lewington), a male and two females were at Combe on Dec 16th (CDRH), one flew west over Woose Hill, Wokingham, on Nov 6th (PB-T) and a male was in Combe Wood on Dec 31st (PB-T).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Three birds were reported from two locations representing a good year for this delightful and approachable species. At Queen Mother Reservoir, where it is becoming almost annual, there was an adult male on Oct 21st and 22nd (CDRH) with a first winter bird at the same location on Nov 16th and 17th (CDRH *et al.*). In addition, one flew south over Ascot Heath on Nov 6th (RJD).

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

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

Reported from just over 80 locations, matching the previous year's return. The Yellowhammer is very much a bird of open fields, farmland and commons. It was noticeably absent from much of the southeast and east of the county (there were no significant occurrences east of Maidenhead) and one flying over Queen Mother Reservoir on Nov 17th (MMc) represents the sole eastern record, as in 2011. The species becomes more gregarious during the winter with flocks gathering in suitable habitats, especially on the downs. **First Winter:** significant counts – 25 at Burchetts Green on Jan 7th (CDRH), the flock on Bury Down/Cow Down between Jan 13th and Feb 28th reached its peak at 50+ on Jan 15th (ABT) and there were 30 at Poors Furze, Lambourn, on Mar 10th (ABT). **Breeding:** three territories were located at White Waltham SF on Mar 26th (DJB), a male was observed feeding a fledgling at Holyport on Jun 2nd (KMS) and there were four young in a family party with three other juveniles at Knowl Hill on Aug 3rd (DJB). In addition singing birds were recorded at a further 15 locations. **Second Winter:** fewer significantly large flocks were seen during this period (the maximum count at Bury Down/Cow Down was 10). The highest counts – 20 at Botmoor Way, Chaddleworth, on Oct 31st (JL, IW), 20 at Fawley on Dec 21st (JD) and 25 at Remenham Hill on Dec 27th (CDRH).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Locally common resident and winter visitor, population showing signs of stabilising after long term decline (Amber Listed)

Records were received from 85 locations, considerably fewer than the previous year, mainly from the gravel pits, waterways and damp woodlands that form the birds natural habitat. However, it was also present on heaths, in arable crops (especially Rape), on the downs and in gardens. Although the Reed Bunting congregates in these alternative habitats in the winter there are also an increasing number of summer records. **First Winter:** reported from over 50 sites, including six gardens. Maximum counts – a large flock taking advantage of game cover at Remenham between Jan 1st and Mar 12th peaked at 72 on Jan 1st (DJB), 20 at Jealotts Hill Farm on Jan 6th (RCMu), 70 were counted on open wetland habitats in Crowthorne Woods on Feb 9th (DJS), 14 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park, on Feb 26th (DJB) and 23 at Englefield on Mar 6th (RCr). **Breeding:** a female was seen collecting nest material in Thames Valley Park on Mar 14th (RD), a female was carrying food at Eversley GPs on May 23rd, three females with brood patches were trapped at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 5th (JL, IW) and a female was carrying food at Lower Farm GP on Aug 4th (JL, IW). Late summer juveniles were reported from Brimpton GP, Dorney Wetlands, Englefield, Great Meadow Pond, Eversley GP and Thatcham Marsh. In addition singing birds were reported at a further 21 sites. **Second Winter:** reported from 30 sites; largest counts – 12 at Englefield on Sep 6th (RCr), 20 at Horton Fields on Oct 8th (CDRH), the large flock reported at Remenham between Oct 18th and Dec 27th peaked at 86 on Dec 27th and there were 20 in a Southcote garden on Dec 11th (AVL).

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

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

Reported in all months of the year but from only 21 locations, 15 of these being in the downs in the northwest of the county where it was present throughout the summer and also congregated in flocks during the autumn and winter. Although there were few reports away from its heartland, the sightings from Knowl Hill and Castle Royle give hope that it may be still present in this former breeding area. Northwest Berkshire: **First Winter:** flock sizes were noticeably larger during the first winter period. Interestingly, most of the maximum counts were in March – the Cow Down/Bury Down flock reported between Jan 1st and Feb 28th peaked at 200 on Feb 3rd (RRi), 58 on the Lambourn Downs on Mar 1st (CDRH), 71 on Compton Downs on Mar 9th (DJB), 40 at Aldworth on Mar 17th (ABT) with 30 there on Mar 28th (CDRH). **Breeding:** very little evidence of breeding was reported apart from a bird seen carrying nest material at Wellbottom Down, Lambourn, on Jun 2nd (MFW). In addition singing birds were noted at Blewbury Down, Compton Down, Cow Down, Park Farm Down, Poor's Furze, Roden Down and Woolley Park. High summer counts included 80 in the Sheepdrove area on May 16th (JLS) and 20 on Compton Downs on Jul 15th. (DJR). **Second Winter:** reported from Bury Down between Aug 26th and Dec 2nd with a maximum of 50 on Dec 2nd (MJT) and there were 140 on Lambourn Downs on Nov 14th (CDRH). Rest of Berkshire: one Walbury Hill, Combe, on Jan 14th (DF), at Castle Royle GC a male which was singing on Mar 25th and Apr 22nd was still present on May 25th (MSFW), one at Knowl Hill on May 25th and 28th (PNe) and two southeast over Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford, on Oct 1st (PEH).

ESCAPES and FERAL SPECIES

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Mootlands GP commenced the year with a single bird on Jan 2nd (MFW), this bird being regularly seen at Mootlands GP until Nov 18th (MFW). On Jan 12th two adults were located on the Thames at Caversham (RDR), whilst three were recorded there on Mar 12th (RDR).

In the second winter period, three were at South Lake, Bulmershe, Reading on Oct 16th and the following day a single was at the same location, as was it, or another, on Nov 8th. During this period, single birds also appeared at Whiteknights Park and South Lake on Oct 25th (LBM, PG), staying until Nov 15th. One of the observers wondered if the South Lake and the Whiteknights birds were one and the same. On Oct 19th, two were recorded at Moor Green Lakes, Eversley (MGLR) for the day only. Two were seen at Thames Valley Park (SU7474), on Nov 29th (JLS), again for the one day. Finally, three birds were at Kirton's Farm, Burghfield on Dec 16th during a WeBS count.

Chinese (Swan) Goose *Anser cygnoides*

Two were seen at Padworth Lane GP on May 19th (MFW).

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Summerleaze GP, Maidenhead, was the most reliable Berkshire site during 2012. The first sighting was on Jan 15th (CDRH) and the bird remained until July 2nd (CDRH). During this period, the Bar-headed was paired with a Greylag Goose. There is no record of any young. A single bird was at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River on Feb 26th (RD) with a group of Greylag Geese, possibly the Summerleaze bird. Two were reported at Widbrook Common on Aug 3rd (L. Lillie) another individual was, again with Greylags, at Cockmarsh (SU8886) on Dec 29th (CDRH).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

This year there would seem to be a possible three drakes at the two Reading sites or near-daily commuting by the normal two drakes. As the year began, two drakes were at Whiteknights Park on Jan 1st (PEH), with a single on Jan 11th at Maiden Erleigh Lake (S Day). Then two at Whiteknights Park on Jan 19th (PG), and on Feb 9th (PG). One was at Maiden Erleigh Lake on Feb 28th (S Day) and at Whiteknights Park on Mar 12th a single male was paired with a female Mandarin (LBM), reported again on Mar 24th (PG). At Maiden Erleigh Lake, there was a single drake on Apr 1st (CDRH) with further single drakes at Whiteknights Park on Aug 26th and Oct 17th (both PG) and at Maiden Erleigh, single birds were seen on Oct 19th, Nov 4th, Nov 19th and finally Nov 21st (all PG).

South African (Cape) Shelduck *Tadorna cana*

An individual, first seen on Jun 30th (GJS) at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre showed regularly over the next few months at both the Discovery Centre and Lower Farm GP, being last seen at Thatcham on Oct 30th (GJS).

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadomoides*

A single bird was seen at Lower Farm GP on Oct 4th (NC)

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

One bird, a female with a plastic ring was feeding from a bird table at Brimpton Dec 9th (GEW).

Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

A bird at High Wood, Reading, gave close views on Oct 16th (JCLa).

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

On Jan 4th a single was seen flying with Buzzards over White Place Farm, Cookham (PGai).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

An immature male known to be of captive origin was at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead on Sep 24th (DJB).

HYBRIDS

Canada Goose × Greylag hybrid

Possibly the same bird was seen three times in August and once early September, initially on Aug 4th at Pingewood GPs (MFW). Another seen in Windsor Great Park on Sep 9th (DJB).

Bar-headed Goose × Greylag hybrid

The long-staying 'white-fronted' hybrid was still present in Windsor Great Park on 15th April and 9th Sep (both DJB).

***Tadorna* hybrids**

The first of the year was seen on Apr 27th, an apparent RUDDY SHELDUCK × SHELDUCK on the flooded Review Ground, Windsor Great Park. It later flew to Queen Mother Reservoir accompanied by a drake Shelduck (CDRH). At the Review Ground on May 10th and 20th, two different *Tadorna* hybrids were present (KPD): the first was noted as a RUDDY SHELDUCK × SHELDUCK, the second bird on the 20th noted as a female SHELDUCK X RUDDY SHELDUCK. At Slough Sewage Farm on May 15th, a presumed drake probable SHELDUCK × AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK) was photographed and noted to be the same as had been present on Apr 27th (CDRH). On May 25th, again at Slough Sewage Farm, two hybrids were present, the presumed drake of the 15th and a presumed female, possible SHELDUCK × AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK. The female remained to the following day. The drake from these two hybrids was seen again at Slough Sewage Farm on June 6th. On Nov 10th a female type possible SHELDUCK × PARADISE or AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK was on the Thames at Wraysbury (CDRH) and seen again nearby at Ankerswycke on Dec 29th (CDRH).

***Larus* hybrids**

Mediterranean × Black-headed Gull

An adult was present in the roost at Queen Mother Reservoir on Feb 5th and Mar 14th (CDRH); the primary pattern was reminiscent of a 2w Mediterranean Gull and thus clearly different from the only previous Berkshire record of this hybrid, at QMR on Jan 30th 2006.

Caspian × Herring Gull

An adult thought to be this hybrid was seen distantly at Horton GP in late Jan and then again, more closely, on Feb 6th (CDRH).

Yellow-legged Gull × Lesser Black-backed Gull

At Queen Mother Reservoir a probable 1st summer was seen from Aug 31st to Sept 2nd (CDRH).

Falcon hybrid

A large hybrid falcon, of 'Saker' type, was seen briefly at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 29th 'tussling' with a Herring Gull ('the falcon was nearly as big as the gull'). The absence of head markings, together with its size, suggested possible Gyr Falcon genes (CDRH).

***Aythya* hybrids**

Where observers have reported sex and age, all were adult drakes.

Scaup-type hybrid (Scaup × Tufted Duck)

The returning drake seen in 2011 was first recorded in 2012 at Woolhampton GP (Rowney Predator Lake) on Jan 7th.(KEM), staying until Mar 29th. There was no record in the second winter period.

Lesser Scaup type hybrid (Tufted Duck × Pochard)

The first of the year Jan 1st was seen at Searles Farm Lane GP (MFW) and was seen on and off until Mar 10th (MFW). One was present at Lower Farm GP on Jan 2nd for the day (PEH). Then on Jan 8th another regular returned at Woolhampton GPs (Rowney Predator Lake) and was there for most of February, last seen on April 7th (KEM).

On Feb 22nd another was seen at Bray GP (DAC) for just one day. Next a drake was found on April 11th (KEM), staying ten days until 21st (KEM) at Padworth Lane GP. On July 27th until July 31st and again from Aug3rd - 5th one was at Queen Mother Reservoir (CDRH).

On the Nov 7th, one was at Heron Lake, Wraysbury (CDRH). The next record was at Bray GP on Nov 19th staying until Nov 30th (CDRH). The bird then returned on Dec 2nd and stayed for three days (CDRH). Another or perhaps the same bird was located at Dorney Wetlands on Dec 14th (CDRH).

Tufted Duck type (Pochard × Tufted Duck)

The usual returning bird arrived at Wraysbury GPs on Jan 6th, staying until the 20th (CDRH).

Redhead type (Pochard × Ferruginous Duck)

A bird was at Bray GP from Nov 17th until the 24th and again from Dec 1st for another few days, last seen on the 3rd (both CDRH).

Ferruginous Duck type (Ferruginous Duck × Pochard)

Presumably the same returning bird to the Horton/Wraysbury area was first seen this year on Jan 26th at Horton GP (CDRH), the next being at Colebrook Lake, Eversley GPs, on Feb 5th (PB-T) and probably the same bird seen again on Mar 10th (RCMu). The Horton bird, or perhaps another, was seen at Heron Lake, Wraysbury on Mar 3rd (CDRH).

The second winter period for this hybrid began on Sep 5th when one was recorded at Lower Farm GP (J.Stockwell); another was then recorded at Eversley GPs from Nov 2nd until Nov 17th (RCMu) and no doubt this was the same bird observed there on Dec 12th (JMC).

Report on Berkshire Bird Ringing in 2012

Tim Ball

A total of just under 18,000 birds of 86 species were ringed in the County during 2012. This total comes from the national figures collated by the BTO and includes all birds ringed in the county including those ringed by ringers based outside Berkshire. A few birds (mostly scarcer raptors) ringed at confidential locations are likely to have been omitted from the totals by the BTO.

Table 1 demonstrates that 2012 was not a very good year for ringing in Berkshire which resulted in nearly 7,000 fewer birds being ringed than in 2011 and the variety at 86 species was 9 fewer than were ringed in 2011. A lot of the differences were due to a poor breeding season for many passerines and 5,043 pulli of 37 species were ringed in 2011 compared to just 2,634 of 32 species in 2012. Several nest box monitoring projects reported a poor year with very low success rates despite more nesting attempts than in previous years. In many instances the poor breeding success was caused by the very wet spell of weather in the middle of breeding attempts.

Species highlights include Woodcock, Cuckoo, Dartford Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler and Common Redpoll – singles of all five species being ringed.

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

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

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

In 2012 there were still four CES projects operating in Berkshire – Thatcham (started 1992), Wraysbury (started 1993), Lavell's Lake (1987-96 and restarted in 2010) and Kintbury (started in 2007). The Reading and Basingstoke Ringing Black-headed Gull colour ringing project which started in 2009 and was registered as a RAS project in 2010.

Table 1: Birds ringed during 2011

Species	Pulli	FG	Total
Mute Swan	5	2	7
Egyptian Goose	4	2	6
Mandarin Duck		2	2
Mallard		4	4
Red Kite	5	11	16
Sparrowhawk		19	19
Kestrel	8	3	11
Water Rail		2	2
Moorhen		9	9
Ringed Plover	6		6
Lapwing	31		31
Snipe		3	3
Woodcock		1	1
Black-headed Gull	60	2	62
Stock Dove	53	7	60
Woodpigeon		25	25
Collared Dove		13	13
Ring-necked Parakeet		1	1
Cuckoo		1	1
Barn Owl	67	5	72
Little Owl	5	1	6
Tawny Owl	3	4	7
Nightjar	8	5	13
Kingfisher		28	28
Green Woodpecker		18	18
Great Spotted W'pecker		89	89
Magpie		19	19
Jay		29	29
Jackdaw	5	70	75
Rook		11	11
Carrion Crow		1	1
Goldcrest		341	341
Firecrest		6	6
Blue Tit	1353	2914	4267
Great Tit	838	1320	2158
Coal Tit	7	261	268
Willow Tit		7	7
Marsh Tit		68	68
Swallow	66	23	89
House Martin	12	25	37
Cetti's Warbler		40	40
Long-tailed Tit		576	576
Chiffchaff	5	975	980
Willow Warbler	1	248	249

Pulli = chicks, FG = Full grown			
Species	Pulli	FG	Total
Blackcap		1318	1318
Garden Warbler		210	210
Lesser Whitethroat		31	31
Whitethroat		309	309
Dartford Warbler		1	1
Grasshopper Warbler		1	1
Sedge Warbler		180	180
Reed Warbler	1	486	487
Nuthatch	41	78	119
Treecreeper		56	56
Wren		365	365
Starling	11	99	110
Blackbird	9	425	434
Fieldfare		38	38
Song Thrush	9	131	140
Redwing		59	59
Mistle Thrush		4	4
Spotted Flycatcher	2	2	4
Robin	3	514	517
Nightingale		10	10
Redstart		3	3
Stonechat		4	4
Wheatear		7	7
Dunnoek	3	454	457
House Sparrow	5	68	73
Yellow Wagtail		45	45
Grey Wagtail		8	8
Pied/White Wagtail		87	87
Tree Pipit		6	6
Meadow Pipit		67	67
Chaffinch	2	489	491
Brambling		3	3
Greenfinch		654	654
Goldfinch		726	726
Siskin		180	180
Linnet	5	125	130
Lesser Redpoll		291	291
Common Redpoll		1	1
Bullfinch		135	135
Yellowhammer		80	80
Reed Bunting	1	143	144
Corn Bunting		3	3
Totals	2,634	15,087	17,721
Species	32	84	86

Berkshire Ringing Recoveries highlights for 2012

Cormorant

BLB	Nestling	03-05-2012	Mol: 51°11'N 5°7'E (Antwerpen) Belgium
B4912	Alive (colour marks seen)	24-09-2012	Moor Green Lakes 416km W 0y 4m 21d

Red Kite

HT43972	First-year	28-07-1993	Site Confidential (Hampshire)
	Caught by ringer	01-06-2012	Caversham Heights 33km NE 18y 10m 4d
HT67345	Nestling	18-06-1996	Site Confidential (Buckinghamshire)
	Freshly dead (injury)	07-05-2012	Henley-on-Thames 15km S 15y 10m 19d
GC68027	Nestling	13-06-2012	near Sonning Common (Oxfordshire)
	Caught by ringer	05-12-2012	Caversham Heights 2km 0y 5m 22d

The longevity record for this species in the UK is 23 years 10 months 18 days and the first one detailed here is the third longest ever recorded in the UK.

Sparrowhawk

ES77063	Adult Female	04-08-2001	Wraysbury Gravel Pits
	Freshly dead	27-09-2012	Staines (Surrey) 6km SE 11y 1m 23d

The longevity record for this species is 17 years 1 month 11 days, and this is the fifth longest ever recorded in the UK.

Black-headed Gull

A selection showing where some of Berkshire bred birds go and where some of our winter visitors come from:

EX30226	Nestling	11-06-2011	Hosehill Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	27-02-2012	Whitegate, Cork Harbour (Cork) 496km W 0y 8m 16d
EX30219	Nestling	12-06-2010	Hosehill Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	19-09-2012	Rostellan (Cork) 492km W 2y 3m 7d
EY09022	Nestling	16-06-2012	Hosehill Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	27-09-2012	Rostellan (Cork) 492km W 0y 3m 11d
EY09017	Nestling	16-06-2012	Hosehill Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	31-10-2012	Rostellan (Cork) 492km W 0y 4m 15d
EX30257	Nestling	04-06-2011	Hosehill Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	30-06-2012	Ballyneety, Dungarvan (Waterford)
PLG	Adult	04-06-2011	Zb Przykona, Radyczyny, Przykona
FN97555	Alive (colour rings seen)	21-01-2012	Lea Farm Gravel Pit, Hurst 1,346km W 0y 7m 17d
PLG	Nestling	10-06-2008	Zb Przykona, Radyczyny, Przykona
FN76864	Alive (colour rings seen)	01-08-2012	Little Marlow Gravel Pit 1,334km W 4y 1m 22d

Mediterranean Gull

PLG	Nestling	10-06-2011	Nyski, Wojcice, Otmuchow (Opole)
FN74279	Alive (colour rings seen)	20-10-2011	Dinton Pastures Country Park 1,272km W 0y 4m 10d

Lesser Black-backed Gull			
GN21033	Nestling	02-07-1999	Bristol (Avon)
	Alive (colour marks seen)	06-04-2000	Matosinhos (Douro Litoral) Portugal
	Alive (colour marks seen)	26-03-2002	Gloucester Landfill Site, Hempsted (Gloucestershire) 47km NNE 2y 8m 24d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	30-11-2003	near Newbury 91km E 4y 4m 28d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	19-12-2007	Lower Farm GP 87km E 8y 5m 17d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	08-02-2012	Lower Farm GP 87km E 12y 7m 6d
FP86820	First-year	20-10-2007	near Hempsted, Gloucester (Gloucestershire)
	Alive (colour marks seen)	13-04-2008	la Cueva, Valdes (Oviedo) Spain 974km SSW 0y 5m 24d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	08-02-2009	Colmenar Viejo (Madrid) Spain 1,251km S 1y 3m 19d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	05-01-2010	Colmenar Viejo (Madrid) Spain
	Alive (colour marks seen)	30-07-2010	Tice's Meadow, Badshot Lea (Surrey) 1,251km S 2y 2m 16d
	Alive (colour marks seen)	24-12-2010	Saint-Vaast-La-Hougue(Manche) France
	Alive (colour marks seen)	04-03-2011	Moor Green Lake 114km ESE 3y 4m 12d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	12-08-2012	Moor Green Lake 114km ESE 4y 9m 23d
NOS	Adult	15-08-2005	Tussan, Vestvagoy (Nordland) Norway
4110100	Alive (colour rings seen)	24-02-2006	Green Park Business Park, Reading 2,017km SSW 0y 6m 9d

Kingfisher			
SA88149	First-year Female	30-06-2012	Wraysbury Gravel Pits
	Freshly dead (cat)	03-09-2012	Stonebridge, Dorking (Surrey) 30km SSE 0y 2m 4d
An unexpected end for a bird like this!			

Magpie			
EW64934	First-year	27-01-2009	Burghfield Common
	Freshly dead (cat)	12-03-2012	Burghfield Common 2km 3y 1m 14d

Goldcrest			
ATT360	First-year Male	04-12-2011	Dinton Pastures, Hurst, Reading
	Caught by ringer	15-03-2012	Hilbre Island, Wirral (Merseyside) 268km NW 0y 3m 11d

Cetti's Warbler			
Y118637	First-year Female	30-09-2011	West Meadows, near Bradford's Farm
	Caught by ringer	06-05-2012	Chew Valley Lake (Avon) 85km W 0y 7m 6d
A "resident" species that does move around a bit!			

Chiffchaff

DXN788	First-year	21-08-2012	Greenham Common
	Caught by ringer	15-09-2012	Sandwich Bay Estate (Kent) 187km E 0y 0m 25d
DNA041	First-year Male	13-09-2010	Woolhampton Gravel Pit
	Caught by ringer	01-04-2012	Blythe Valley (West Mids) 118km NNW 1y 6m 19d
	Caught by ringer	14-04-2012	Blythe Valley (West Mids) 118km NNW 1y 7m 1d
DXP805	Full-grown	24-08-2012	Greenham Common
	Caught by ringer	20-09-2012	Squire's Down (Dorset) 87km WSW 0y 0m 27d
Some retraps that illustrate timing and directions of migration.			

Willow Warbler

DJN951	First-year	12-07-2011	Bessacarr, near Doncaster (South Yorkshire)
	Caught by ringer	28-04-2012	West Meadows, near Bradford's Farm 233km S 0y 9m 16d
CNC863	First-year	07-08-2010	Wraysbury Gravel Pits
	Caught by ringer	14-04-2012	Wharf Lane, Portishead (Avon) 153km W 1y 8m 7d
EDA456	Full-grown	08-04-2012	Portland Bill (Dorset)
	Caught by ringer	13-05-2012	Padworth Common 133km NE 0y 1m 5d
	Caught by ringer	02-06-2012	Padworth Common 133km NE 0y 1m 25d
Apparently the one from Portland Bill was actually the very first recovery for this species that they have had from east of North rather than north or west of north.			

Blackcap

L851319	Juvenile Male	23-07-2011	Wraysbury Gravel Pits
	Caught by ringer	02-10-2012	Terril de Pinchonvalles, Avion (Pas-de-Calais) France 264km ESE 1y 2m 9d
L605346	First-year Female	09-10-2010	Wraysbury Gravel Pits
	Caught by ringer	25-04-2011	Giflitz, Waldeck-Frankenberg (Kassel) Germany 673km E 0y 6m 16d
X706346	Juvenile Female	22-08-2009	Thatcham Marsh
	Caught by ringer	14-05-2010	Meijendel, Kavel, Wassenaer (Zuid-Holland) The Netherlands 394km E 0y 8m 22d
A Nice collection of foreign records.			

Reed Warbler

L115169	Juvenile	30-07-2010	Woolston Eyes, Warrington (Cheshire)
	Caught by ringer	11-05-2012	Harvey's Meadow, near Hungerford 230km SSE 1y 9m 11d
L120673	Juvenile	11-07-2010	Thatcham Marsh, Thatcham
	Caught by ringer	17-08-2012	Moliets de la Pipe, Moliets-Et-Maa (Landes) France 837km S 2y 1m 6d
FRP	Adult Female	09-08-2008	Conchemarche, Mortagne-Sur-Gironde (Charente-Maritime) France
5448120	Caught by ringer	14-05-2012	Woolhampton Gravel Pit 657km N 3y 9m 5d

Waxwing

NW49418	First-year Male	30-10-2010	Ballater (Grampian Region)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	15-11-2010	Montrose, Angus (Tayside) 52km SE 0y 0m 16d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	13-02-2011	Bracknell 646km SSE 0y 3m 14d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	27-10-2012	Horten (Vestfold) Norway 834km ENE 1y 11m 27d
A good example of how mobile this species is.			

Blackbird

RA46400	Adult	05-12-2010	Jealott's Hill
	Caught by ringer	11-11-2012	de Koog (Texel) The Netherlands

Song Thrush

RX98746	First-year	14-11-2010	Greenham Common
	Long dead (hit by car)	14-05-2012	Loppem (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium

Meadow Pipit

L959401	First-year	15-10-2011	Clow Bridge (Lancashire)
	Caught by ringer	14-10-2012	East Shefford Stw, near Great Shefford 260km SSE 0y 11m 29d

Chaffinch

SVS	Adult	17-05-2009	Bjuroklubb (Vasterbotten) Sweden
1ER13463	Dead	15-02-2012	Woodley 1,949km SW 2y 8m 29d

Brambling

L912013	First-year Male	20-02-2011	Greenham Common
	Freshly dead (hit glass)	02-05-2012	Lehtikangas, Partiokatu, Kajaani (Oulu)

Goldfinch

Y643038	First-year	20-01-2012	Aldermaston Gravel Pit
	Caught by ringer	12-04-2012	Kings Moss (Greater Manchester)
Goldfinches are a classic partial migrant and a proportion of Berkshire's winter birds come from elsewhere.			

Siskin			
Y303545	Juvenile Male	02-08-2011	Shebster (Highland Region)
	Caught by ringer	25-01-2012	Burghfield Common 812km S 0y 5m 23d
L473313	Adult Male	15-09-2011	Clochan, near Buckie (Grampian Region)
	Caught by ringer	13-02-2012	Burghfield Common 702km S 0y 4m 29d
X265061	Juvenile Male	21-07-2008	Inverurie (Grampian Region)
	Caught by ringer	20-02-2012	Burghfield Common 660km S 3y 6m 30d
Y022698	First-year Female	13-02-2012	Burghfield Common
	Caught by ringer	18-04-2012	Drumla, Kildonan (Strathclyde) 522km NNW 0y 2m 5d
	Caught by ringer	21-04-2012	Drumla, Kildonan (Strathclyde) 522km NNW 0y 2m 8d
L834459	First-year Male	15-03-2011	Aldermaston Gravel Pit
	Caught by ringer	28-09-2012	Nidingen (Halland) Sweden 1,070km NE 1y 6m 13d
SVS	Adult Male	05-05-2012	Reningsverket, Djaknebole
CR83131	Freshly dead (hit glass)	04-12-2012	Boulter's Lock, Maidenhead 1,827km SW 0y 6m 29d
Siskins clearly travel large distances around the UK with some travelling to and from the continent.			

Lesser Redpoll			
L002635	First-year Male	18-09-2010	Easter Inch Moss, Blackburn (Lothian)
	Caught by ringer	11-12-2012	Burghfield Common 524km SSE 2y 2m 23d
Y020935	First-year	22-10-2011	Padworth Common
	Caught by ringer	18-03-2012	King's Wood (Kent) 140km E 0y 4m 25d
Y231598	First-year Male	08-10-2011	King's Wood (Kent)
	Caught by ringer	20-10-2012	Ascot Heath 112km WNW 1y 0m 12d
L281900	Adult Male	23-03-2011	Caversham Heights
	Caught by ringer	28-01-2012	Wibrin (Luxembourg) Belgium 494km ESE 0y 10m 5d
	Caught by ringer	06-03-2012	Wibrin (Luxembourg) Belgium 494km ESE 0y 11m 12d

These ringing totals and recovery details are taken from Robinson, R.A. & Clark, J.A. (2015) The Online Ringing Report: Bird ringing in Britain & Ireland in 2012 BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 18-August-2015).

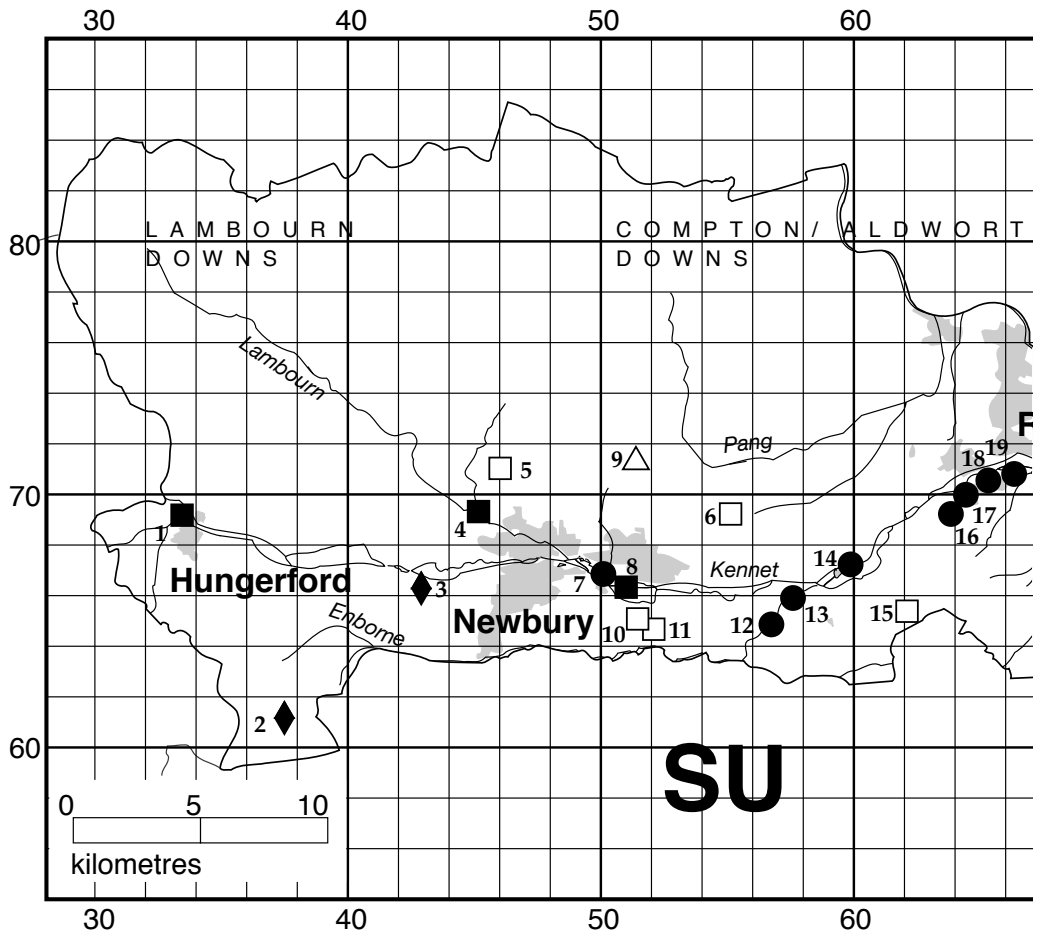
Extreme Dates of Winter and Summer Migrants

WINTER

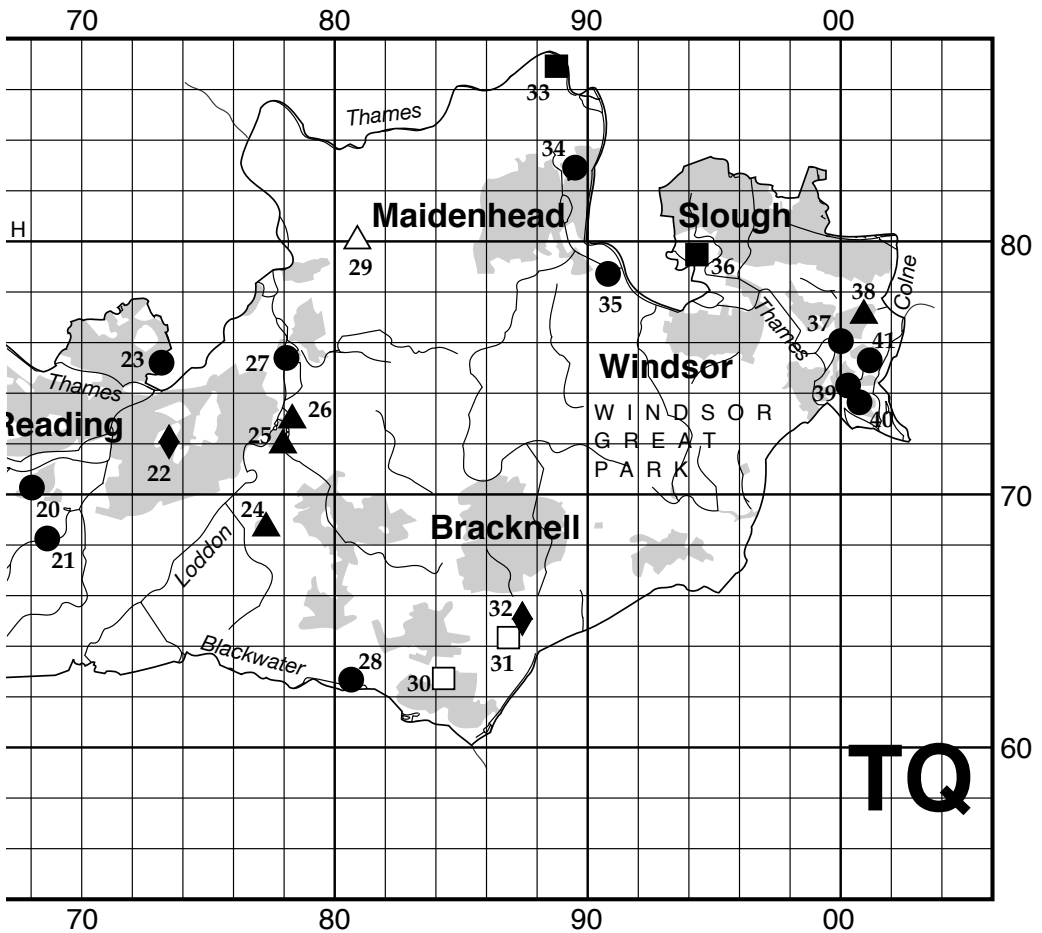
Species	DEPARTURE			ARRIVAL		
	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Pintail	Moor Green Lakes	Mar 19	MGLR	Great Meadow Pond, Windsor	Sep 16	DJB
Scaup	Wraysbury GPs	Mar 27	CDRH	Wraysbury GPs	Oct 14	CDRH
Goldeneye	Lea Farm GP	Mar 28	DPN	Wraysbury GPs	Oct 4	CDRH
Smew	Theale GPs	Mar 10	HWh; MFW	Horton GPs	Dec 1	CDRH
Goosander	Moor Green Lakes	Mar 26	RFM	Ascot Heath	Oct 9	RJD
Bittern	Lea Farm (R Loddon)	Mar 16	AR	Lavell's Lake	Nov 5	Birdguides
Merlin	Lowbury Hill	Mar 28	CDRH	West Ilsley	Aug 25	MFW
Golden Plover	Queen Mother Reservoir	Apr 28	CDRH	Woodlands Park	Aug 10	DJB
Jack Snipe	Lavell's Lake	Mar 15	ABT	Horton GPs	Oct 13	CDRH
Snipe	Woolhampton GPs; Widbrook Common	Apr 24	KEM; CDRH	Eton Wick	Jul 31	CDRH
Short-eared Owl	Moor Green Lakes; Stanford Dingley	May 4	BMA; BAJC	Woolley Down	Nov 10	GDS
Rock Pipit	–	–	–	Queen Mother Reservoir	Oct 11	CDRH
Water Pipit	–	–	–	Queen Mother Reservoir	Nov 5	MMc
Waxwing	Newbury Wharf	Feb 17	Tbu	Dorney Wetlands	Nov 7	CDRH
Fieldfare	Windsor Great Park	Apr 22	KPD	Ascot Heath	Oct 2	RJD
Redwing	Bracknell	Apr 8	MHu	Hosehill Lake	Sep 21	AVL
Brambling	Wishmoor Botton	May 12	KEM	Woose Hill	Oct 14	PB-T
Lesser Redpoll	Wishmoor Bottom	May 20	GR	Ascot Heath	Sep 25	RJD

SUMMER

ARRIVAL				DEPARTURE		
Species	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Garganey	Bottom Lane GP	Mar 18	JA	Wraysbury GPs	Oct 21	CDRH
Quail	Wellbottom Down	May 16	DJB	Sheepdrove	Aug 17	JLe
Osprey	Denford Mill, Hungerford/Tilehurst, Reading	Mar 18	RDW/RCr	Brimpton GPs	Jul 28	GEW
Hobby	Lea Farm, Hurst	Apr 14	LRB; KCr	Horton GPs	Oct 13	CDRH
Stone Curlew	Berkshire Downs	Mar 24	MFV	Berkshire Downs	Oct 10	CDRH
Little Ringed Plover	Summerleaze GPs	Mar 16	CDRH	Lower Farm GP	Sep 8	JL
Ringed Plover	Greenham Common	Feb 19	JL	Queen Mother Reservoir	Sep 21	CDRH
Common Tern	Remenham	Apr 1	RCW	Queen Mother Reservoir	Oct 8	CDRH
Turtle Dove	Aldermarston GPs	Apr 4	JPM	Aldermarston GPs	Sep 5	JPM
Cuckoo	Padworth/ Swinley Forest	Apr 3	KTu/CRG	Lavell's Lake	Sep 3	AR
Nightjar	Hut Hill	May 15	MSFW	Greenham common	Sep 10	PEH
Swift	Queen Mother Reservoir	Apr 18	CDRH	Theale GPs	Sep 25	JA
Sand Martin	Lea Farm GP	Mar 16	AR	Wokingham STW	Oct 3	DJB
Swallow	Woolhampton GPs	Mar 18	SaW	Lea Farm GP	Nov 5	SDay
House Martin	Woolhampton GPs	Mar 29	IS	Woose Hill	Oct 26	PB-T
Tree Pipit	Swinley Forest	Apr 3	CRG	Combe Hill/Silwood Park	Aug 31	DJB/RJD
Yellow Wagtail	Queen Mother Reservoir	Apr 7	MMc	Engelfield	Oct 11	RCr
Nightingale	Brimpton GPs	Apr 8	GEW	Crookham Common	Aug 21	PEH
Redstart	Easthampstead Park	Apr 11	MHu	Walbury Hill	Oct 6	DJB
Whinchat	Queen Mother Reservoir	Apr 28	MMc	Freeman's Marsh	Oct 1	PEH
Wheatear	Greenham common	Mar 5	JL	Lowbury Hill/ Bury Down	Oct 14	PB-T/ KGW
Ring Ouzel	Walbury Hill	Mar 28	PEH	Bray	Oct 16	CDRH
Grasshopper Warbler	Thatcham Marsh	Apr 17	AEDH	Woodspeen	Aug 10	JL
Sedge Warbler	Harvey's Meadow	Apr 1	JSWo	Great Meadow Pond	Sep 30	DJB
Reed Warbler	Brimpton GPs	Apr 8	GEW	Moatlands, Theale	Oct 27	MFV
Garden Warbler	Bowdon Wood	Apr 10	RWel	Harvey's Meadow	Sep 21	JSWo
Lesser Whitethroat	Lower Farm GP	Apr 26	IW	Burnthouse Lane/ Compton Downs/ Dorney Wetlands	Sep 15	KEM/ DJB/ WMO
Whitethroat	Moor Green Lakes	Apr 7	RCMu	Lower Farm GP	Oct 6	IW; JL
Willow Warbler	Greenham Common	Mar 19	IW	Queen Mother Reservoir	Nov 14	MMc
Spotted Flycatcher	Brimpton	Apr 30	GEW	Lavell's Lake	Sep 26	FJC



- | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|---|
| 1 SU 333 686 | Freeman's Marsh | 23 SU 735 745 | Caversham Lakes/Henley Road GP – Oxon |
| 2 SU 375 616 | Walbury Hill/Combe Wood | 24 SU 773 685 | Bearwood Lake |
| 3 SU 428 662 | Hamstead Park | 25 SU 780 725 | Dinton Pastures CP Country Park |
| 4 SU 452 694 | Bagnor Cress Beds | 26 SU 783 730 | Lavell's Lake |
| 5 SU 460 710 | Snelsmore Common | 27 SU 783 757 | |
| 6 SU 555 690 | Bucklebury Common | and 785 750 | Twyford Gravel Pits |
| 7 SU 502 665 | Thatcham/Muddy Lane/Lower Farm GPs | 28 SU 807 625 | Moor Green Lakes (Eversley Gravel Pits) |
| 8 SU 505 665 | Thatcham Marsh | 29 SU 807 800 | Bowsey Hill |
| 9 SU 515 715 | Fence Wood | 30 SU 842 625 | Wildmoor Heath (aka Edgebarrow Heath) |
| 10 SU 500 646 | Greenham Common | 31 SU 877 630 | Swinley Forest (Wishmoor area) |
| 11 SU 526 643 | Crookham Common | 32 SU 875 655 | Swinley Forest, Crowthorne Woods
(Caesar's Camp and The Lookout) |
| 12 SU 568 652 | Brimpton Gravel Pits | 33 SU 885 870 | Cockmarsh |
| 13 SU 570 660 | Woolhampton Gravel Pits | 34 SU 895 825 | Summerleaze Gravel Pits |
| 14 SU 596 668 | Aldermaston Gravel Pits | 35 SU 908 788 | Bray Gravel Pits |
| 15 SU 620 648 | Padworth Common | 36 SU 935 795 | Dorney Wetlands, Slough Sewage Farm
and Jubilee River |
| 16 SU 697 648 | Hosehill Lake | 37 TQ 000 760 | Datchet Common Gravel Pits |
| 17 SU 653 703 | Theale Gravel Pits (Wigmore Lane area) | 38 TQ 008 770 | Queen Mother Reservoir |
| 18 SU 655 705 | Theale Gravel Pits (Theale Main) | 39 TQ 005 745 | |
| 19 SU 665 707 | Theale Gravel Pits
(Moatlands and Field Farm) | and 010 735 | Wraysbury Gravel Pits, (Sunnymeads) |
| 20 SU 680 705 | Burghfield Gravel Pits (Searles Farm) | 40 TQ 010 735 | Wraysbury Gravel Pits (Village Pit) |
| 21 SU 688 685 | Pingewood Gravel Pits (Burnthouse Lane) | 41 TQ 010 755 | Horton Gravel Pits |
| 22 SU 735 720 | Whiteknights Park | | |



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

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

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Abbott, S D..... SA	Bucknell, N J..... NJB	Devery, P
Absolom, A..... AA	Bunce, T..... TBU	Dewey, S
Adam, P..... PA	Burch, C..... CBur	Dickenson, S..... SDic
Adam, N..... NA	Burchardt, J	Dimond, S..... SDi
Adam, S P..... SPA	Burden, P..... PBU	Dixon, J
Adams, R..... RAdA	Burfoot, G D..... GDB	Dodd, N..... NDo
Addison, R..... RAd	Burness, R J..... RJB	Dodds, D A M..... DAMD
Adey, J..... JAd	Burt, R..... RBur	Dormer, M R..... MRD
Adnams, R..... RA	Busby, R	Dowling, D..... DD
Agombar, D..... DA	Butler, E..... EBU	Downes, A..... ADow
Alan, A	Butler, J..... JBU	Driver, P W..... PD
Alexander, T O..... TOA	Bysh, P..... PBy	Dryden, R..... RDr
Allen, C..... CAI	Capewell, R R..... RRC	Duffus, G..... GDu
Andrews, J E..... JA	Carpenter, P..... PCarp	Duncan, K P..... KPD
Angus, R..... RAng	Carr, D G..... DGC	Earle, P..... PE
Apperley, J..... JAp	Carter, D A..... DAC	East, T A..... TAE
Archer, B M..... BMA	Chaffe, M N	East, D..... DEa
Armstrong, C..... CArm	Chambers, G	Eaton, M A
Austin, M	Chapman, J..... JCha	Eeles, P..... PEe
Avis, D V	Charles, N..... NCh	Eldridge, T
Badziak, O E M..... OEMB	Charnley, S..... SChar	Elliott-Moustache, G
Bailey, L	Chatten, S M	Fairley, M
Baker, J..... JBak	Cheeseman, A..... ACh	Farnell, G..... GF
Baldock, A	Chivers, J L..... JCh	Farnsworth, F M..... FMF
Ball, S..... SB	Clacey, C..... CCl	Farnsworth, S J..... SJF
Ball, T G..... TGB	Claridge, R J..... RJCl	Farrell, G R..... GRF
Bamford, P..... PBa	Clark, F C..... FCC	Farrell, C..... CFa
Barker, D J..... DJB	Clark, B A J..... BAJc	Fewtrell-Smith, I..... IFe
Bassett, A D..... ADB	Clark, J M..... JMC	Finch, L J..... LJF
Beaney, V R..... VRB	Clarke, S..... SCl	Finch, M J..... MJF
Beever, J..... JBee	Clarkson, G	Firth, T..... TFi
Beever, D..... DBe	Cleal, D..... DCle	Fisher, I J..... IJF
Beglow, B..... BB	Cleere, N..... NC	Fisher, S L..... SLF
Bell, C..... CBel	Clements, F A	Flack, D..... DFl
Berryman, A..... ABe	Clews, B D..... BDC	Floyd, L..... LF
Birdguides..... BGu	Cockman, J	Flynn, P
Bishop, J..... JBi	Cohen, P A..... PCo	Fordham, J..... JFord
Blackmore, D..... DBl	Collins, R..... RCo	Forster, L..... LFo
Blundell, L R..... LRB	Coomber, J..... JCoom	Forster, V..... VFo
Blythe, T..... TBl	Cooper, J..... JCo	Foskett, D..... DFo
Bollen, C F	Cottingham, F J..... FJC	Fostekeew, K..... KF
Booth, A..... ABo	Crathorne, B..... BCr	Foster, J..... JFos
Boult, P..... PBou	Crawford, D..... DCra	Foster, C..... CF
Bow, E	Crawford, R..... RCr	Foster, C W..... CWFo
Brant, P..... PBran	Creed, K..... KCr	Foulds, P R..... PRF
Breaks, T	Cronin, A..... ACro	Frankum, R..... RF
Briggs, B D..... BDB	Cropper, P M..... PMC	Fry, D..... DFr
Briggs, C A..... CAB	Crowley, P J..... PJC	Fuge, R..... RFug
Bright-Thomas, P..... PB-T	Crump, D	Fuller, D..... DF
Britton, D J..... DJBri	Cuff, M J	Gaines, P..... PGai
Broadley, D..... DB	Dale, C..... CDa	Gardner, A
Brooks, R	Dale, R J..... RJd	Garner-Langham, L..... LGL
Brown, G..... GBro	Dawson, R..... RD	Gent, C R..... CRG
Brown, M..... MB	Day, S..... SDay	Gibson, T..... TGi
Brown, W..... WB	Dear, M J..... MJd	Giles, N G..... NGG
Brown, S..... SBr	Deasy, J..... JDea	Gilham, R..... RGi
Brown, S A..... SAB	Deayton, R..... RDea	Gipson, P..... PG
Bryant, M J..... MJBr	Dell, C	Glover, D..... DGI
Buchanan, J..... JBU	Dellman, K..... KDel	Godden, R J..... RJG
Buckler, D..... DBuc	Dellow, J..... JD	Goldsmith, G..... GGo

Gonder, R.....	RGon	Jones, B.....	BJ	Muddell, S L	
Goodchild, J.....	JGo	Keel, R R.....	RRK	Mulcahy, P.....	PMu
Goriup, P.....	PGo	Kelson, D W.....	DWK	Murfitt, R C.....	RCMu
Gostling, M H.....	MG	Kendall, P.....	PKe	Musgrove, A	
Gott, C.....	CGo	Kernahan, G.....	GKe	Napper, E.....	EN
Graham, S A.....	SAG	Kettell, M.....	MK	Nash, D.....	DNas
Grassie, K		Kettell, M M.....	MMK	Nash, D P.....	DPN
Graves, S		Kimber, G.....	GK	Needs, J.....	JNe
Gray, T.....	TGr	King, G		Ness, R.....	RN
Griffin, M A.....	MAG	King, G J.....	GJK	Netley, H R.....	HRN
Grist, D M.....	DMG	Knight, D C.....	DCK	Newbound, P J.....	PNe
Gross, R D		Kujawa, S.....	SKu	Noble, R.....	RNOB
Gurr, M		Lambeth, C		Ord, D.....	DO
Haines, R.....	RHai	Lamsdell, C.....	CL	Orr, P J.....	PJO
Halsey, R		Langridge, J C.....	JCLa	Osborne, B.....	BO
Hard, R J.....	RJHa	Langton, K.....	KL	Osborne, B A	
Harden, T.....	THar	Langton, L.....	LL	Owen, J.....	JOW
Hardy, R.....	RHar	Larkins, S.....	SLa	Paine, I D.....	IDP
Hare, D R.....	DRHa	Latham, M		Pang Valley Barn Owl Group,	
Harley, S.....	SHar	Lawson, A V.....	AVL	Parsons, R.....	RPa
Harrison, A		Leerjet, E.....	EL	Patterson, D.....	DPat
AHarr		Legg, J.....	JL	Paul, A	
Haseler, J.....	JH	Lerpiniere, R J.....	RJL	Payne, D E E.....	DEEP
Hastings, D		Lerpiniere, J.....	JLe	Phillips, H.....	HP
Hawtree, J N.....	JNH	Lillie, L		Piddington, S.....	SPi
Haydon, R M.....	RMH	Lloyd, D.....	DLoY	Platt, M S.....	MSP
Haynes, W J		Lloyd-Parry, J.....	JLP	Pope, W.....	WP
Haynes, R A.....	RAH	Lomas, P J.....	PJL	Pottinger, D.....	DPo
Hazell, C.....	CHaz	Lowther, D.....	DLo	Poulter, B.....	BPo
Heard, C D R.....	CDRH	Lyle, R.....	RLy	Povey, R.....	Rpo
Hemmings, M.....	MHe	Lyle, B.....	BL	Powell, A.....	AP
Hendrie, B		MacAlpine, W		Powell, T.....	TPo
Hewitt, J		Mackenzie-Dodds, D A		Price, R.....	RPr
JHew		Mann, L B.....	LBM	Price, M.....	MPr
Hickman, A E D.....	AEDH	Mannion, P.....	PM	Price, R A G.....	RAGP
Hickman, P.....	PH	Marriner, N.....	NM	Pritchard, D M	
Hill, A.....	AHi	Marrs, P.....	PMar	Proddow, E.....	EP
Hipperson, H.....	HH	Martin, R.....	RMa	Proddow, S K.....	SKP
Horscroft, A M.....	AMH	Martin, J P.....	JPM	Pyrah, R J.....	RJPy
Housley, D J.....	DJHo	Martin, P D		Rampton, N.....	NR
Howarth-Booth, C.....	CHB	Matthews, D		Ramshaw, G	
Howes, B.....	BH	McCarthy, M G.....	MGM	Randall, G.....	GR
Hughes, P		McEwan, C.....	CMc	Ratcliffe, D B	
Humphrey, P.....	PHu	McKee, M J.....	MMc	Rawlings, N D	
Hunt, M.....	MHu	Mckie, A		Reedman, R.....	RR
Hutchins, P E.....	PEH	McMahon, A.....	AMc	Reeve, B.....	BR
Hutchison, A.....	AHut	McNeill, J M.....	JMcN	Reid, J.....	JRe
Hyde, C.....	CHy	Meads, S.....	SMe	Reymach, D	
I'Anson, M.....	MIAn	Melia, N.....	NMe	Reynolds, D J.....	DJR
Ingleston, R		Milligan, R F.....	RFM	Rhys-Parry, G J A	
Jacobs, R S.....	RSJ	Mills, D J.....	DJMi	Ricks, S.....	SRI
Jakubowski, R.....	RJ	Mills, J.....	Jmi	Righelato, R.....	RRi
Jepson, G.....	GJ	Mitchell, J E.....	JEM	Rimes, D N T.....	DNTR
Jepson, P.....	PJe	Mitchell, M J.....	MJM	Rivoire, J R.....	JRR
Jones, K B.....	KBJ	Moor Green Lakes		Roberts, A.....	ARo
Jones, G W.....	GWJ	Report,.....	MGLR	Robson, C.....	CR
Jones, T.....	TJon	Moore, R C.....	RCM	Rogers, T.....	TR
Jones, C.....	CJ	Moore, K E.....	KEM	Rose, J.....	JRos
Jones, C.....	CJo	Moran, N J		Routledge, M J	
Jones, R J		Morell, A		Rowing, G.....	GRo
Jones, M.....	MJo	Morgan, W.....	WMO	Royal, M J	
Jones, S.....	SJo	Mountjoy, L.....	LMO	Runnacles, S.....	SR

Runnymede Ringing Group	RRG	Sussex, D J	DJS	Wellenkamp, R	RWel
Rylands, K	KR	Sutton, P	PSu	Wells, J N	JNW
Rylett, C M	CMRy	Swallow, J L	JLS	Wells, S	
Rymer, A	AR	Sweetland, T	TS	Wells, T J	TJW
Sallit, J	JSal	Swift, RW		Wells, C A	
Saunders, I	IS	Taylor, D	DT	Weston, D J	DJWe
Scholey, G D	GDS	Taylor, M J	MJT	Weston, I L G	IW
Scott, S	SSc	Theale Area Bird Report .	TABR	Whitaker, M S F	MSFW
Scudamore, P	PSc	Theobald, R C	RCT	Whitall, H	HWh
Seward, D	DSe	Thomson, S	STho	White, S	SuW
Seward, L	LSe	Thorn, L	LTh	White, D J	DJW
Shaw, A		Thornton, G	GT	White, Sa	SaW
Shea, K M	KMS	Tilby, J		White, K G	KGW
Shepherd, P		Tomczynski, A B	ABT	White, T	
Sheridan, J B	JBS	Toms, M P		Whitfield, J	
Simpkin, D	DSi	Treen, P		Wilcockson, J	JWilc
Sketch, P A		Trout, N S		Wildfowl counts,	WeBS
Sklar, M	MSK	Tubb, K I	KIT	Wildish, M F	MFWi
Slater, A	ASl	Tucker, K	KTu	Wilkinson, C	CWil
Sluman, N	NSlu	Tucker, S	STuc	Williams, L	
Smallridge, D	DSm	Turner, D R	DRT	Williams, R	RWi
Smith, A	ASm	Turton, M H	MHT	Williams, P A	PAWi
Smith, W	WS	Twyford, I	IT	Williams, G	GWil
Smith, R G	RGS	Upton, B	BUpt	Wilson, E	
Stacey, W A	WAS	Uttley, B	BU	Wilson, R B	
Stannard, J		Walford, M F	MFW	Wilson, R D	RDW
Stansfield, R T	RTS	Walker, T	TWa	Wilson, C	
Stansfield, R H	RHS	Walker, B J	BJW	Wilson, G	GWils
Stemming, J		Walsh, E	EWa	Wilson, G E	GEW
Stevens, P J	PJSt	Ward-Smith, J	JW-S	Winyard, J M	JMW
Stewart, G J	GJS	Waring, C		Wood, M	
Stockwell, J		Warwick, T	TWarw	Woodham, J S	JSWo
Stockwell, J R	JRSto	Watson, R	RW	Woods, A	AWoo
Stow, A N	ANS	Watson, M I G	MIGW	Wright, P	PWr
Sumner, G J	GJSu	Watts, R C	RCW		
		Webb, G R	GRW		

County Directory

COUNTY RECORDER

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

BERKSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB www.berksoc.org.uk

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

Secretary, Sally Wearing, 9 Deans Farm, The Causeway, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JZ
Telephone 0118 969 4197
Email: berksocsecretary@berksoc.org.uk

NEWBURY DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB www.ndoc.org.uk

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

Membership Secretary, Karen Eggleton,
4 Thornfield, Headley, Thatcham, Berks,
RG19 8AQ
Telephone 01635 269566
Email: info1@ndoc.org.uk

BIRDS OF BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION FUND

Charitable Fund managed for the benefit of Berkshire's birds.
Enquiries and applications to: Renton Righelato
Telephone 0787 981 2564
Email: renton.righelato@berksoc.org.uk

www.berksbirds.co.uk

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

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY (BTO)

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

Telephone 01635 268442
Email: btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com

FRIENDS OF LAVELL'S LAKE

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

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

MOOR GREEN LAKES GROUP

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

Membership Secretary: David Bishop, 7 Ambarrow Crescent, Little Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 8JA
Email: dave.bishop@mglg.org.uk

THEALE AREA BIRD CONSERVATION GROUP

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

www.freeWeBS.com/tabcg/
Cath McEwan, Secretary,
Email: Catherine@cmcewan.fsnet.co.uk

LOCAL RSPB GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

The bird-watching code

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

The interests of the bird come first.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Know the law

In England, Scotland and Wales, it is a criminal offence to disturb, intentionally or recklessly, at or near the nest, a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Disturbance could include playback of songs and calls. The courts can impose fines of up to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rare breeding birds are at risk from egg-collectors and some birds of prey from persecution.

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

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

At any time in the breeding season flushing rare visitors can be very disruptive to other species that are breeding in the area and so shouldn't be done.

