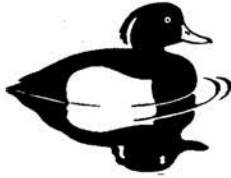


# The Birds of Berkshire

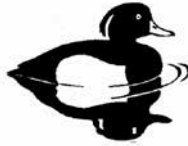


Annual Report  
2014

Published 2018

# 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 birdwatching 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](http://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](http://www.berksoc.org.uk) or contact the Hon. Secretary:

Sally Wearing, 9 Deans Farm, The Causeway, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JZ  
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e-mail [berksocsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:berksocsecretary@gmail.com)

# The Birds of Berkshire

*Annual Report for 2014*

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# Introduction

In addition to publishing *The Birds of Berkshire* Annual Reports, which are an analysis of the tens of thousands of records received each year, the BOC now makes available the records database through its website. This enables users to search records from 1996 onwards, providing much more information than can be published in the Annual Reports and making the data available much earlier than can be done with the hard copy reports. The details of this service, including the provisions for sensitive records, are explained at <http://berksoc.org.uk/recording/bird-records-archive/>

This report, along with the 2015 report, is published in 2018.

# 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 particularly grateful to Derek Barker, who single-handedly prepared the Systematic List for 2014, a Herculean task! Our thanks also go to Tim Ball, Richard Crawford, Ken Moore, Nigel Rampton, 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 Great Reed Warbler.

*Renton Righelato*

# 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 the Recorder: Richard Burness, 20 Bursledon Way, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 2PH.

Records can be entered on line at [www.berksbirds.co.uk](http://www.berksbirds.co.uk) or sent by email to the Recorder [records@berksoc.org.uk](mailto: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 do not use plurals. e.g. do not enter “Siskins” or “Canada Geese”, but “Siskin” or “Canada Goose”.

**Site:** Required. If possible, please use the site names as used in these reports. Otherwise, please enter the site as the nearest landmark on an OS map and specify the 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:** 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” e.g. “01/01/2005”.

**Number:** Required. Whole number only. e.g. 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”,03/02/2019,,10,Feeding in Alders,,MJT.

**Confidentiality:** Confidential records should be sent separately but in the same format, and noted as confidential and why 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 34.

# Birding Highlights of 2014

by Ken Moore

**JANUARY 2014**, in the soggy beginning of the New Year the flooded meadows between Theale and Reading held a record numbers of **Little Egret** – 27 counted on the 19th near Burghfield Bridge. A single **Black-necked Grebe** was present for a day at Theale Main Pit on the 7th. Ringtail **Hen Harriers** were seen near Bury Down and at Jealotts Hill. There were two **Little Gulls** and three **Kittiwakes** around the county. A good roost count of 320 to 400 **Pied Wagtails** in Central Reading was a regular feature during the month. At South Hill Park on the 8th January, a **Water Rail** was seen to grab a drinking **Goldfinch**, quickly drown it and then start to peck and pull at it.

At last, some better weather in **FEBRUARY**. The first **Oystercatchers** of the year arrived at Theale Main Pit on the 3rd and on the 22nd, 5 **Ringed Plovers** flew into the old Aggregate area at Lower Farm. Two were metal ringed, one being a colour ringed bird from a Hampshire Coastal project. A drake **Scaup** was seen at Moor Green Lakes, staying only a few days from the 20th. On the 27th, at Padworth Lane, a **Great White Egret** was seen flying over. During January and February, one lucky observer had up to 63 **Lesser Redpolls** in her Bracknell garden, plus regular visits of a **Mealy Redpoll**.

**MARCH** brought the first **Little Ringed Plover** of the year on the 16th at Padworth Lane Floods, an average date of arrival. Another drake **Scaup** arrived at Lower Farm on the 16th for a few days and 2 **Red-breasted Mergansers** briefly visited QMR on the 24th. There were 94 **Brambling** in Swinley Forest on the 23rd March and a mobile flock of 45 **Crossbills** there on the 27th. The first **Sandwich Tern** arrived on the 25th March at QMR, interestingly the same date as the two previous years. At least 8 **Mealy Redpoll** at Ascot Heath, of which 7 had been ringed, was the month's count. On the 26th again at QMR, a **Black Redstart**.

In **APRIL** there was a succession of **Marsh Harriers**, a total of four individuals, mostly at QMR. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Horton GP on 15th with a small group of **Lapwing**. Two **Bar-tailed Godwits** visited Dinton Pastures and QMR on the 21st, and at Eversley a group of 28 flew over the New Workings into Hampshire. There were remarkable numbers of **White Wagtails** during April, at least 50 birds at 8 different sites.

Three **Garganey** appeared towards the end of the month - a pair at Burnthouse Lane and a single drake at QMR. A dozen **Whimbrel** flew through QMR; two **Greenshank** visited Burnthouse Lane. A single **Black Tern** at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures was the only spring record of this species. A single **Turtle Dove** seen at Foliejon Park on the 29th was the first of the few seen this year. Nine Grasshopper Warblers were recorded during the month, hopefully under-recorded. And a candidate for Bird Of The Year arrived near to Spencers Wood on the 24th – a **White Stork** – which stayed that day and re-appeared a week later for a longer stay.

**MAY** is one of the best bird-watching months of the year and May 2014 did not disappoint. Two brief visits both on the 6th, a **Spoonbill** over Cockmarsh and a female **Red-footed Falcon** over Summerleaze Gravel Pit. A **Grey Plover** was at Lea Farm on the 10th, two **Avocets** visited QMR on the 14th and single **Wood Sandpipers** at Moor Green Lakes and Compton. **Sanderling** remained regular visitors to QMR, but they also visited the floods on the Downs on the Berkshire/Oxfordshire border, along with other waders and gulls. A summer-plumaged **Spotted Redshank** arrived at Burnthouse Lane on the 16th. QMR had a brief **Kittiwake** on the 18th and 3 more the next day. The Second Bird Of The Year was at Green Park, Reading on the 22nd May - a **Great Reed Warbler** - only a one day bird, but how superb it was. A total of 14 **Hobbies** over Horton GP on the 31st May was the highest count this year. And single **Turtle Doves** at three sites.

**JUNE** was a quieter month. QMR had a good run though - 3 adult **Kittiwake** on the 6th, a single **Sandwich Tern** on the 8th and a drake **Common Scoter** on the 14th. A farmer at Enborne photographed a **White Stork** during the month. A good month for **Turtle Dove** these days, with four separate sightings, one of which stayed at Padworth Lane for nearly a week. *Turtle Dove is now a rare bird and if anyone has been lucky enough to see evidence of breeding, please send in the record. Turtle Dove along with Lesser Spotted Woodpecker are now on the national Rare Birds Breeding Panel's reporting list.*

**JULY** mustered a **Black-necked Grebe** at QMR, a group of 5 **Garganey** at Eton Wick, a drake **Common Scoter** at Moatlands GP at Theale, and a **Spotted Crake** was found and photographed with a **Water Rail** at Slough Sewage Farm. 8 **Black-tailed Godwits** were recorded at 3 sites, a **Wood Sandpiper** at Slough Sewage Farm and **Turnstone** at QMR. At QMR there was an amazing count of at least 28 **Common Sandpiper**.

**AUGUST** began with 7 **Common Scoter** at QMR during early morning of the 6th, whilst the Downs had the fifth reported **Quail** of the year the following day. 4 **Black Terns** were at Theale Main on the 8th and 4 more at QMR on the 26th. A **Little Stint** arrived at Eton Wick for a four day stay. On the 25th August, 2 dark morph **Arctic Skuas** spent the early morning at QMR. Two **Honey Buzzards** were seen, one on 29th near Winter Hill and another on 31st over Eton Wick. Three **Marsh Harriers** were seen, one over Bury Down, one at Lea Farm, the third over the New Workings at Moor Green Lakes, and three or four **Ospreys**.

**SEPTEMBER** had five more **Ospreys** and 2 more **Marsh Harriers**. A **Little Stint** was at QMR and a **Curlew Sandpiper** and 2 **Ruff** at Eton Wick. A **Wryneck** was at Tutt's Clump on the 4th, another was at QMR on the 14th and another at Great Shefford was trapped and ringed on the same day. The 3rd September saw the first report of the **Great White Egret** at Lower Farm, which was still present in mid-November. On the 21st a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** spent 30 minutes at QMR another great bird for Berkshire. An immature **Garganey** was at Hosehill for a week, whilst 9 juvenile **Common Scoter** were at QMR on the 22nd. The 18th September saw a juvenile **Cuckoo** fly through Crookham Common. It was a good autumn for **Whinchat** with groups of six or seven being reported in different places.

**OCTOBER** QMR seemed the place to be this year, rather than the Isles of Scilly (where many of the Berkshire Birders were). QMR had **Purple Sandpiper**, **Grey Phalarope**, 2 **Bonxies**, supported by **Sanderling**, **Kittiwake** and dark-bellied **Brent Geese**. The first **Great Northern Diver** of the second winter period arrived at Theale Main. A **Great Grey Shrike** on the Downs from the 28th looks to be wintering there, a photogenic **Marsh Harrier** was at Lower Farm. Two **Yellow-browed Warblers** were found: one at Hungerford, trapped, ringed and photographed and another at Whiteknights Park, seen well by many. Perhaps the best bird was a **Lesser Scaup** drake at Wraysbury from the 29th.

**NOVEMBER** We seem to have returned to a soggy weather pattern, but none the less some interesting birds. The **Great White Egret** and **Great Grey Shrike** are still to be seen, another **Great Northern Diver** arrived at Theale Main on the 3rd and is still there and another was seen, briefly at QMR. 6 **Merlins** have been claimed so far this month, another headache for the BRC. A **Short-eared Owl** flew over Lea Farm on the 9th and one of the more spectacular sights was the flock of 920 **Golden Plover** at Remenham Hill on the 7th. Single Snow Buntings were seen at QMR twice in the month.

**DECEMBER** Two presumed wild Whooper Swans were seen at Moor Green Lakes on Dec 10th and Black Redstarts were noted at Arborfield Dec 13th and QMR Dec 19th into 2015. Ominously only one Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was reported, at DPCP on Dec 16th and Bitterns were thin on the ground with only two locations reporting birds. A first winter drake Ring-necked Duck at Bray GPs from Dec 22nd into 2015 was only the eleventh record and a group of three Bewick's Swans visited Lea Farm Lake on Dec 2nd.

# Finder's note – White Stork at Shinfield

*Nigel Rampton*

So the story begins with every morning whilst I get ready to go work I will look out across the fields from my bedroom window with my binoculars at the ready. Over the years I have been fortunate to see some good birds from here with birds such as Quail, Merlin and Black Redstart to name but a few. Having seen some 90 species from my back garden I am always wondering what the next new bird might be. A Stork certainly wasn't one of them.

After pulling the curtains that morning I immediately picked up a white shape in the furthest field viewable from my home in Spencer's Wood. My initial thought due to the distance away was why was anyone walking around the field at that time of morning, or any time really as it's generally off limits to walk there. So, grabbing my bins, I thought it worth checking out just in case it was a bird. What followed could only be described as a acute case of shock that eventually subsided to the actual words of 'White Stork'.

I then paused for approximately three seconds before the Birder in me also kicked in. 'I really needed to see if there was any leg jewellery, and if not, I need to see this bird fly in case it's escaped and had any clipped feathers' which sprang to mind with so many such sightings being dismissed over the years due to this. A quick panic emerged as to what to do next. First, I had to leave the window and grab my scope for proof of both. Fearing it would fly at any time, I managed to get back onto it after locating my scope. 'Great No jewellery at least'. Then I decided I can't wait for it to fly as it will be long gone before anyone gets a chance to see it, so it needs to go onto Berksbirds, which I did promptly. I also called my wife up who took a look at the bird after hearing the commotion playing out, whilst not into watching birds per-say has at least entertained her husband's interest over the years.

I then managed to get hold of my birding pal Mick Inskip and said get yourself over here now. I really needed to get at least one other Birder onto it hopefully (I don't think he would have forgiven me if I hadn't. I may have also positioned it slightly differently as I was still shaking). Anyway, the bird was still feeding in the field but still not opened its wings so the risk of escapee was still a possibility and playing noisily in my head. Eight minutes later, Mick and I were soon stood at the end of my garden watching a White Stork (as you often do in Berkshire).

Mick had to go soon after and didn't get to see it fly. But soon after his departure the bird flew, major panic emerged side by side with 'oh no it's flown' and 'oh yes' it has no short back and sides on the wings - then the panic soon became relief again as it flew to a dead tree top to which it stayed for quite some time while the masses emerged on the border to Swallowfield and Spencer's Wood. Having received a few calls mainly for directions, I then joined the ever-increasing mob of Berkshire borders birders congregating down the road. To think I have been birding in the UK for 30 years with no real rarity self finds was always a frustration of mine, but it was great to finally give back especially in my home town in Berkshire. I even managed to take several photos myself 'as it would have been rude not to'. The very next day the local newspaper also asked for an interview and took pride of place on most of page 5. They even used one of my images.

Needless to say that I was more chuffed so many others got to share seeing this beauty of a bird. It was equally impressive that it managed to hang on and be relocated a number of days later. I found this out at about 1am whilst staying at a friends home in Arizona. It was great as many further notifications would follow it daily or should I say 'nightly'.

So glad it was shared so often as I type smiling.





*White Stork, Spencers Wood, Apr 24th,  
Mike McKee. The fifth record for Berkshire.*



*Great Crested Grebe and Black-headed Gull, Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures, May 23rd, Alan Rymer. Two familiar species of our wetlands.*



*Great Skua, two adult types, Queen Mother Res., Oct 15th, Mike McKee.  
The eleventh record for Berkshire.*



*Little Egrets, Burghfield Bridge, Feb 4th, David Crawford.  
Record numbers visited this location in January.*



*Lesser Scaup, Wraysbury GPs, Oct 30th, Andrew Moon.  
The third record for Berkshire.*



*Caspian Gulls at Queen Mother Res., Aug 22nd (left) and Sep 25th (right), Chris Heard.*



*Mediterranean Gull, Queen Mother Res., Feb 16th, Marek Walford.*



*Ringed Plover (tundrae), Queen Mother Res., May 17th, Chris Heard.*



*Bar-tailed Godwit, Lea Farm GPs, Sep 7th, Marek Walford.*



*Sanderling, Queen Mother Res., May 19th, Mike McKee.  
A regular spring passage migrant especially at QMR.*



*Spotted Crane, Slough SF, Jul 10th,  
Chris Heard.*



*Turtle Dove, Winkfield, Jun 3rd,  
per Mark Whittaker.*



*Wryneck, Tutts Clump, Sep 4th, J Cooper.  
One of three autumn birds in 2014.*



*Cuckoo, juvenile, Dinton Pastures, Jul 8th,  
Richard Marsh. This once common species  
continues to decline.*

## Finder's note – Great Reed Warbler at Green Park, Reading

*The following is an abstract of Kevin Tubb's submission to the BBRC (accepted) on his find, reproduced here with his permission.*

I reached work at 7.30 am on 22nd May 2014 and went for a short walk before starting work. I was immediately drawn to the bird singing in Green Park. Singing in reed beds at north end. I work at 200 Brook Drive. The bird was singing near where boats are moored on jetty. I was on my own but am fairly proficient at bird song and immediately recognised it as not being Reed Warbler having heard Great Reed Warbler in other countries in Europe. Perfect match against YouTube recordings. It sung infrequently.

The weather was cool, and overcast - wet, drier later. Visibility was moderate, dependent on the rain but sometimes it was quite overcast.

Initially I heard the bird a few times before reporting on the berkbirds website. The song was a loud (it drowned the local singing Eurasian Reed Warblers), harsh song containing croaks, chirrups and squeaks. I then retired to work and the bird was subsequently confirmed by Marek Walford. I subsequently saw the bird, both in flight and in the reeds, at the original location and then later in different areas of reeds in the same general area.

**Size:** Song Thrush size (like a very large Reed Warbler in structure) and obviously much larger than Eurasian Reed Warbler. In flight size was again like that of Song Thrush. **Upperparts:** Chocolate brown with fairly long tail which looked rounded at the tip. **Underparts:** Orange-buff becoming paler from flanks to base of belly. Undertail coverts orange-buff as per underparts. **Head:** Off-white throat. Obvious broad pale supercilium with dark eye-stripe. Crown had a peaked appearance. **Bare parts:** Dark greyish legs. Bill large and robust, **Call:** A harsh "grrrk". **Behaviour:** Seen usually above green new stems of reeds, occasionally higher. Tended to sing when not moving. Actively feeding at various heights in the reeds, singing occasionally. When in amongst the reeds its presence was obvious from the large movements of the surrounding reeds.



*Reed Warbler and Great Reed Warbler at Green Park, Jerry O'Brien.*



*Great Reed Warbler at Green Park, Mike McKee.*



*Great Reed Warbler at Green Park, Jerry O'Brien.*



*White Wagtail, a female feeding hybrid (Pied/White) young at Queen Mother Res., Jul 11th, Chris Heard. The second confirmed breeding record for Berkshire.*



*'Channel' Yellow Wagtail at Queen Mother Res., May 17th, Chris Heard.*



*Sand Martin at Dinton Pastures, Aug 17th, Steven Day. Although still a locally common summer visitor, breeding records are now more sporadic than formerly.*



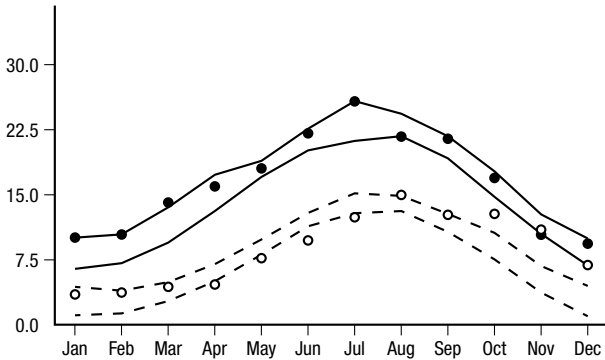
*Spotted Flycatcher, Swallowfield Church, May 19th by M. Terry.*



# WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 2014

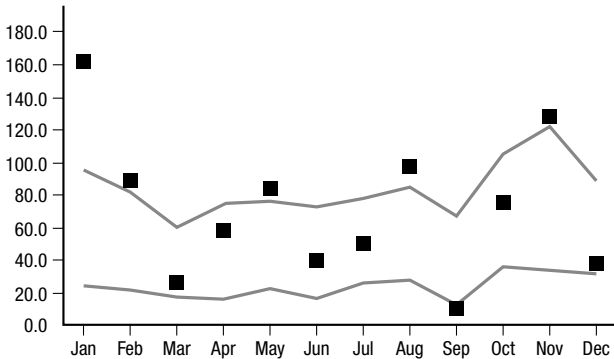
*Renton Righelato*

The 2013/14 winter was mild, with unusually high rainfall in January. Otherwise temperatures and rainfall were unexceptional. Data from Meteorological Office, Heathrow Weather Station.



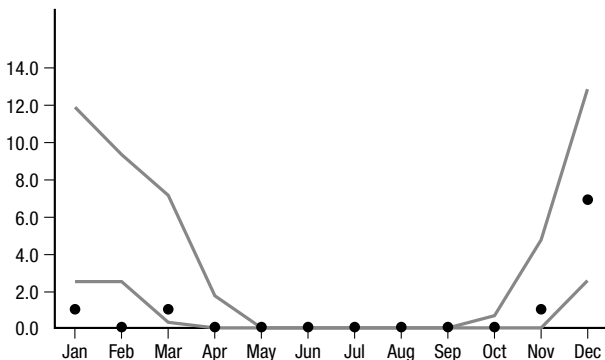
## Temperature °C

Average daily maximum (closed circles) and minimum (open circles) temperatures. Lines show the 67% confidence limits of the average of the period 2000–2014.



## Rainfall

Monthly rainfall in mm. Lines show the 67% confidence limits of the average of the period 2000–2014.



## Cold weather

The number of days in which the air minimum temperature fell below 0°C. Lines show the 67% confidence limits of the average of the period 2000–2014.

## **An analysis of TABCG warbler & Nightingale surveys 1998–2012**

Back in 1998, ten years after the Theale Area Bird Conservation Group was formed, several members expressed a desire to find out just how many warblers were breeding in the Theale & Burghfield gravel pits area. Much of the area was changing from prime wader habitat to reedbed and scrub, thus attracting an increasing number of warblers. It was also apparent that our area supported a healthy Nightingale population despite numbers dropping alarmingly across the country, so this species was also targeted. Song Thrush and Reed Bunting were also included, primarily because of their falling numbers, and in 2005, Bullfinch.

As I had previously conducted a survey of farmland birds on part of Englefield Estate, the task of organising the Theale survey landed on my lap. The survey area extended from Smallmead in the east to Wigmore Lane in the west, with the northern boundary running more or less along the length of railway between Southcote and Theale and the southern boundary taking in Pingewood, Hosehill and Bottom Lane pits.

A team of volunteer surveyors was assembled from within the group and each was allocated a site within the core area and sufficient maps, together with a set of instructions. A minimum of four visits was to be made early morning between mid-April and mid-May to record every contact with each species, whether it be song, call or sighting, and marked appropriately on each survey map. At the end of the survey all maps were handed to me for analysis and every position was plotted on individual species maps. Using methods and guidelines set out in the BTO's Common Bird Census instructions it was then possible to calculate how many singing males or territories were present.

In 2005, seven years after the inaugural survey, it was decided that it was time for a follow-up survey to be carried out. This was done in exactly the same way and in precisely the same locations as the 1998 survey in order to make direct comparisons between the two. Move on another seven years and we come to the 2012 survey, and how fortuitous it was that the BTO was organising a national Nightingale Survey this year. This dovetailed nicely with our own survey and only differed in that a couple of night visits between the hours of midnight and 03.00 were required; this was to gather evidence to test the theory that only unpaired males sang at night. The results from the surveys are as follows:

### **Number of singing males/territories**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>1998</b>
Cetti's Warbler	19	7	0
Grasshopper Warbler	0	0	3
Sedge Warbler	76	120	179
Reed Warbler	75	73	67
Lesser Whitethroat	12	5	9
Common Whitethroat	76	87	84
Garden Warbler	141	111	77
Blackcap	406	201	193
Chiffchaff	212	104	118
Willow Warbler	52	78	99
Nightingale	109	57	59
Song Thrush	111	54	40
Bullfinch	5	19	–
Reed Bunting	58	81	69

As you can see, some species are doing extremely well whilst others are struggling, the rest remaining fairly constant throughout the period.

Cetti's Warblers now seem firmly established around the pits although being susceptible to harsh winter weather there may be setbacks in the future. Grasshopper Warblers have always been sporadic visitors to the area, usually as passage migrants, but they appear to have become much scarcer in recent years. Sedge Warblers have decreased by 57% between the first and last surveys, some of this certainly due to loss of suitable habitat, for example, in 1998 Main Pit held 34 territories including 25 at the old Wader Pit end, in 2012 we found just two! Reed Warbler numbers have varied little, as have Common Whitethroat, whilst Lesser Whitethroat numbers seem to vary widely from year to year.

There's no doubt that amongst the winners during this 14-year period were Garden Warbler, Blackcap and Chiffchaff, all three species having similar habitat requirements – dense scrub interspersed with taller bushes and small trees, a habitat in abundance in the Theale & Burghfield GPs area. Garden Warbler numbers increased by 44% between 1998 & 2005, then increased by a further 27% by 2012, whereas the Blackcap population remained similar between the first two surveys but more than doubled in the last seven years. Chiffchaff numbers actually fell slightly between the first two surveys but, like Blackcap, more than doubled their numbers by 2012.

The status of Willow Warbler in the southern half of Britain is causing concern amongst ornithologists as numbers appear to be decreasing year by year, for reasons that are unknown at present. Our survey reflects this perfectly with 99 singing males/territories in 1998, dropping to 78 in 2005, then down to 52 in 2012, a drop of 48% in 14 years. Bullfinch is another species that has declined in recent years but presumably in the 1990s the local population must have been fairly stable as we didn't include them in our first survey, but in the new century circumstances alerted us to the fact they were struggling and so this species was added to the 2005 list. That year 19 territories were located – seven years later we found only five! Quite an alarming drop in such a short space of time!

The early survey revealed a healthy number of Reed Buntings in the area and numbers increased in 2005 before dropping considerably in 2012. I suspect this is partly due to habitat change as waterside margins become too overgrown and scrubby – great for some species but not for Reed Buntings. At the time of the first survey Song Thrush was another species that was low in numbers, but 40 territories seemed quite reasonable. An increase to 54 in 2005 was very encouraging, but a massive jump to 111 in 2012 would seem to indicate that a full recovery had taken place and there were more around now than 20 years ago.

And so we come to Nightingale, a species that is rapidly disappearing from many parts of the country but one that finds Theale & Burghfield GPs the perfect place to call home! Casual records submitted for the first TABCG report in 1989 revealed approximately a dozen singing males in the area. The first thorough survey in 1998 found 59 singing males and 57 were found in the second in 2005. This negligible drop was considered a successful achievement in view of the losses encountered in other parts of the country. An interim survey carried out in 2007 in response to proposed development threats again found similar numbers, 55–57 singing males. It was therefore astounding that in 2012 numbers had increased to 109 singing males/territories, and this in a year when poor spring weather made surveying conditions difficult.

One important factor that could possibly account for the increase is the fact that the habitat around the pits has now reached the optimum growth stage to sustain breeding Nightingales. For example, Moatlands held one singing male in 1998 but 10 in 2012, Hosehill three in 1998 and nine in 2012, Main Pit had 18 in 1998 but 32 in 2012. Burghfield GPs, which has always been the stronghold for this species, has actually seen a slight fall in numbers from 33 to 30, but these are older pits and are likely to have reached their optimum habitat stage in previous years.

Quite simply, the area has emerged as one of the best places anywhere in the country to hear and see Nightingales, but the future is uncertain, and efforts will need to be made if this enigmatic species is to remain a regular summer visitor to our area.

My thanks go Peter Hickman, Cathy & Derek McEwan, John Andrews, Adrian Lawson, John Lerpiniere, Martin Sell, Ken Spring, Roland Povey, Chris Robinson, Roger Stansfield, Andrew Cowdell, Mike Smith, Gavin Salisbury and Tim Scott, who have given their time and effort in order to obtain a clearer picture of some of the species that are attracted to Theale & Burghfield gravel pits.

*Richard Crawford*

## **BERKSHIRE BLACK-HEADED GULL RINGING PROJECT 2014 REPORT**

*By Tim Ball, Reading and Basingstoke Ringing*

### **Introduction**

In 2007 we ringed many of the Black-headed Gull pulli (chicks) at Moor Green Lakes and quickly had recoveries from Wales and France. Subsequently we heard about Cotswold Water Park Ringing Group's (CWPRG) successful project colour ringing pulli across the Severn and Thames Basins. We decided to join this project and geared up to ring the Moor Green pulli in 2008. Unfortunately, that colony failed in 2008 and again in 2009 so our plans for widening the project were brought forward and we ringed the Gulls at Hosehill Lake LNR.

Our objective is to gather data on the Berkshire breeding population of the Gulls including:

- Non-breeding dispersal and migration patterns
- Patterns of visiting natal colonies by immature birds
- Eventual breeding locations of Berkshire bred birds

John Wells, who runs the colour ringing project at Cotswold Water Park, registered his main site as a BTO RAS (Retrapping Adults for Survival) project last year and after a long discussion with the BTO the Hosehill site was also registered in January 2011. These are the only 2 Black-headed Gull projects in the UK and are breaking important new ground. There are currently over 160 RAS projects across the country studying over 60 species. The objective is to gather retrap information on breeding birds, which will allow the BTO to monitor the survival rates of a wide range of birds in a variety of habitats. Information on survival rates is important because it can help us to understand why bird populations may be changing. Knowing about changes in survival rates of birds is vital for effective conservation action, but all too often this information is sadly lacking. In most cases the projects involve catching a very high proportion of the breeding adults in the study area each year, obviously we're taking a different approach – by colour ringing enough pulli we should be able to get to the position that enough of the adults are colour ringed so that we can get a statistically relevant measure of year on year survival. Black-headed Gulls breeding strategies have a number of characteristics which will have an impact on how the data is analysed. Typically, only a small proportion of birds breed in their first summer and most start breeding in their 2nd or 3rd summers.

**Table 1: Birds ringed at Hosehill and seen locally each year**

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Colour Ringed		100	116	122	51	120	86
Known to have fledged		72 (72.0%)	97 (83.6%)	96 (78.7%)	17 (33.3%)	92 (76.7%)	63 (73.3%)
Seen locally during summer (Mar-Jul)	1st	34 (34.0%)	28 (24.1%)	37 (30.3%)	8 (15.7%)	25 (20.8%)	
	2nd	34 (34.0%)	24 (20.7%)	40 (32.8%)	10 (19.6%)		
	3rd	25 (25.0%)	21 (18.1%)	31 (25.4%)			
	4th	22 (22.0%)	21 (18.1%)				
	5th	20 (20.0%)					

During their pre-breeding period a proportion don't visit their natal colony at all but may return when they're ready to start breeding. It's believed that a high proportion of birds remain loyal to their breeding colony once they start breeding as long as the colony remains viable.

Hosehill counts as the official study area in this case and records from here will be used for the main analyses. The BTO will be able to deal with sightings from elsewhere that prove that birds have survived which weren't seen at Hosehill. They will also have to adjust the data for birds which return to the colony after one or more pre-breeding seasons away from Hosehill. Fully robust statistics need at least 30 returning birds each year and preferably 50. The number of birds seen locally each year show that the data is already useable.

Registering our project as a RAS scheme shouldn't detract from any of our original objectives – sightings of birds elsewhere in the breeding season will still contribute to these targets and the BTO will be able to allow for these when they calculate survival rates.

## Ringling Methods

Both the Moor Green and Hosehill colonies are on fenced islands and the Lea Farm colony is on fenced rafts, the fences offer some protection from predators but prevent the Black-headed Gull pulli from taking to the water readily. The fences at both colonies have holes and the one at Hosehill is low enough in places for some pulli to jump over. The fences certainly make it very difficult if not impossible for pulli to return to the islands unaided. On un-fenced sites Black-headed Gull pulli are naturally aquatic from a very early age and they form crèches of young on the water; this probably ensures that the young are safe from ground predators. Gull colonies are naturally quite chaotic places and even small chicks wander some distance away from their nests so any kind of formal monitoring of individual nests is impossible.

The colonies are regularly checked from the shore and generally two visits are made to each island to ring the young. Most but not all of the nests are quite well synchronised and two visits about 10 days apart are usually sufficient to ring a high proportion of the young. The visits are carried out by a small team of ringers and the time they are present on the island is limited. Because the fences make it difficult for any young that get off the island to return the boatman is equipped with a landing net so he can round up any escapees. The colonies return to normal very quickly after the team leaves the island – most of the adults have landed before the team has even reached the shore. Pulli are ringed with a standard metal



ring on one leg and an engraved colour ring on the other. The colour ring has the same internal diameter as the metal ring and is tall enough to fit 4 reasonably large characters without being so large that it can't be used on half grown pulli.

We normally limit the number of colour rings used each year and any additional pulli are just ringed with standard metal rings.

Following colour ringing regular shore based checks of the colonies and surrounding areas are made to record as many of the birds as possible before they disperse. Subsequently as many flocks of Black-headed Gulls as possible are checked to try and establish local movement patterns. Sightings from other people were reported via the routine national and international channels or through our web site.

## **Numbers of birds ringed**

### **Moor Green**

**2007** In 2007, as part of Newbury Ringing Group, we ringed pulli at Moor Green Lakes with metal rings. We had two visits to the breeding island on 4 and 15 June and ringed a total of 79 pulli. On 15 June we found the remains of 4 ringed birds which had died since the first visit. Subsequently the remains of a bird which had just about fledged were found during a work party on the nesting island. A few chicks were too small to ring and some birds still had eggs on the second visit to the island and it is almost certain that fewer than 100 chicks hatched and the number that fledged successfully was certainly much lower than this. 124 nests were counted on the island and it is likely that wet weather contributed to the low level of breeding success. In hindsight it is also possible that predation may have also had an effect.

**2008 to 2013** In 2008 and 2009 the colony was reducing and subject to almost complete failure, a storm contributed in 2008 and Mink predation was considered a likely culprit in both years. The colony was very late to get started in 2010 and very small – just 5 Black-headed Gull pulli, and only 2 of which were big enough to colour ring. On 12 July the colony was once again attacked by Mink and it was obvious that all the gull pulli and all unfledged Terns were killed. One of the gull colour rings was found during a work party on the island in October.

In 2011 the Common Tern and Black-headed Gull colony was again predated – this time when the birds were incubating eggs rather than after the majority of young had hatched as in previous years. The birds totally abandoned the colony after this event. After the problems with predation in previous years the colony was not used in 2012.

The main colony was not used in 2013, although two new small rafts were investigated and one pair bred, but the rafts aren't accessible for ringing.

**2014** The main colony was used reasonably this year with more than 20 pairs nesting. Unfortunately, the timing didn't coincide well with ringing team availability and so we had to do the ringing a bit earlier than we would have really wanted. 15 young were big enough to take colour rings and a further 20 young were too small for the colour rings but fine for metal rings.

### **Hosehill Lake LNR**

**2009** Following the Moor Green failure we arranged access to the Hosehill colony with Theale Area Bird Conservation Group (TABCG) and West Berkshire Council and carried out two ringing visits on 13 and 20 June. 100 pulli were ringed with colour rings and a further 54 just with metal rings, no firm count of the number of nests could be made because the birds had heavily disturbed much of the nest material.

**2010 to 2013** In 2010 we colour ringed a total of 116 pulli and metal ringed a further 11. It is difficult to monitor nesting activity from the shore and the reduction could be due to lower numbers breeding on the main island, smaller clutches or lower hatching success. More birds nested on the large island and small tern rafts than in 2009 so it's likely that the overall colony size actually increased. No attempt was made to ring pulli on the large island or tern rafts.

2011 was yet another good year at Hosehill. We colour ringed a total of 122 pulli and metal ringed a further 30, the total of 152 ringed is almost identical to the 2009 figure.

In 2012 the colony initially continued to expand and there were probably 40 to 50 pairs on the artificial islands, at least 50 pairs on the main island and perhaps 20–30 pairs on the small rafts, but then the weather changed and the rain came. Unfortunately the West Berkshire roads department had altered adjacent drainage in the autumn of 2011 and this directed more run-off into the lake and this resulted in very high water levels during 2012 which partially flooded the artificial island. Following discussions between TABCG and West Berkshire Countryside Service the roads department have now changed the main drainage and this should lower the risk of similar problems in future years. Due to the rain and partial flooding only about 60 young fledged from the artificial island whereas around 150 had fledged from here in each of the previous 2 years. The water levels were so high that the gravel edge of the island was completely under water and the birds either had to swim or were standing in vegetation meaning the rings weren't visible and we got no data on the initial fledging success rate. In previous years these records have shown that well over 70% of colour ringed birds stayed around for a short time after fledging.

2013 was a good breeding season at Hosehill with well over 100 pairs breeding in total and the artificial island was as packed as in most good years. Two ringing visits were carried out in June, with the assistance of TABCG. These resulted in 120 pulli being colour ringed and a further 33 being ringed with just metal rings. In July observations from the shore suggested that a fairly significant number of adult and recently fledged birds had died so 21 corpses were collected from the main island on 25 July and sent to DEFRA for analysis, unfortunately they had rotted away too much for them to identify the causes of death. 10 of the corpses were ringed birds – all were 2013 fledglings, several of which had been reported alive in the weeks before their corpses were collected. In spite of this nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the colour ringed birds are known to have fledged.

**2014** This year was a good year overall but most of the gulls were nesting on the main island and numbers on the artificial island were a bit down on previous years. As normal two ringing visits were made in June with the assistance of TABCG and a total of just 86 were colour ringed and a further 5 just metal ringed. 63 of the colour ringed birds are known to have fledged and at 73.3% this is the average rate here for the project to date.

## **Lea Farm**

**2011** The Friends of Lavells Lake asked us to ring the gulls and terns breeding on the Dinton Pastures complex this year. We made a single visit to ring the Black-headed Gull and Common Tern pulli on the rafts at Lea Farm Gravel Pit on 26 June. All the Black-headed Gull pulli were a suitable age for colour ringing and 39 birds were ringed. 2X53 which hatched and was colour ringed at Hosehill in 2009 was seen at Lea Farm several times during the summer and almost certainly bred there.

**2012 and 2013** This colony was well populated in 2012 and because the birds nest on rafts there were no issues with flooding. However, despite the fences on the raft edges the colony was predated and totally wiped out by Mink. The nearby colony on Sandford Lake nests on islands and these suffered badly from flooding, FOLL members managed to save around 20 young and put them in a boat moored to the island vegetation where they were seen to be

being fed by the adults for a week or so but a visit to ring the young found that they had all been predated as well.

In 2013 the colony was well populated and because the rafts were altered after the predation in 2012 there were no problems, good numbers of Black-headed Gulls and Common Terns nested and 19 Gull pulli were colour ringed.

**2014** The colony was very well populated. 64 Gull pulli were colour ringed, more than the total in previous years. A further 9 pulli were too small to colour ring so were just metal ringed.

**Fleet Pond**

**2013** There is a new colony of Black-headed Gulls on new artificial islands at Fleet Pond in Hampshire and this year the local ringers asked if they could join our colour ringing project. The colony is still very small and only 4 pulli were colour ringed and 2 were too small for colour rings so were just metal ringed.

**2014** The colony was apparently bigger this year but we didn’t have sufficient manpower to continue ringing here.

**Ringling Summary**

**Table 2: Annual Ringling Totals**

Year	Moor Green		Hosehill		Lea Farm		Fleet Pond		Total	
	Colour + Metal	Metal only	Colour + Metal	Metal only	Colour + Metal	Metal only	Colour + Metal	Metal only	Colour + Metal	Metal only
2007	–	79	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	79
2008	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
2009	–	–	100	54	–	–	–	–	100	54
2010	2	3	116	12	–	–	–	–	118	15
2011	–	–	122	30	39	–	–	–	161	30
2012	–	–	51	–	–	–	–	–	51	–
2013	–	–	120	33	19	–	4	2	143	35
2014	15	20	86	5	64	9	–	–	165	34
Total	17	104	595	134	58	9	4	2	738	249

**Results to Date**

**Metal Ringing** Metal ringing provides less data than colour ringing because results are dependant on other ringers catching ringed birds, people finding dead birds and reporting the ring or very occasionally bird watchers or photographers reading rings in the field. Two of the birds ringed at Moor Green in 2007 have been found dead – one in south Wales in its first winter and the other in France in its first summer. Since 2007 we have ringed well over 100 more birds with metal rings and we have had just one recovery from these birds – someone managed to read a metal ring on one of our birds in Wales. In 2013 one of the original 2007 birds was breeding at Hosehill and an observer managed to read it’s metal ring.

**Colour Ringing** When we started colour ringing at Hosehill we hadn’t appreciated how excellent this site is. Once the young have fledged many of them spend a lot of time loafing on the big island within easy range of a viewing screen. We are getting a large number of individual records of our colour ringed birds – see Table 3. Totals of different Hosehill birds seen in each month and season are given in Table 4.



As would be expected the monthly count of sightings shows a clear peak when the colony is occupied but we are getting a growing number of sightings at other times of the year. We were initially surprised by the number of birds back in the colony in April so we now do some checks in March and at the end of February and the value of those checks is shown by the number of sightings that were made (Table 3).

**Table 3: Count of colour ring records for birds ringed at all sites**

Year	Cohort	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009	2009 birds						5	186	1	3	0	1	1	197
2010	2010 birds													
	2009 birds	0	0	1	24	95	134	35	9	5	1	7	8	319
	2010 birds						178	157	6	0	3	2	7	353
	Total	0	0	1	24	95	312	192	15	5	4	9	15	672
2011	2009 birds	3	4	24	137	123	73	18	3	1	7	4	2	399
	2010 birds	2	3	10	39	81	56	10	4	2	2	1	1	211
	2011 birds						150	164	3	4	5	3	2	331
	Total	5	7	34	176	204	279	192	10	7	14	8	5	941
2012	2009 birds	2	10	33	91	32	15	7	0	1	11	3	2	207
	2010 birds	2	2	14	81	28	10	5	6	6	3	1	0	158
	2011 birds	8	4	8	42	56	45	8	0	0	7	2	0	180
	2012 birds						2	1	1	1	2	0	2	9
	Total	12	16	55	214	116	72	21	7	8	23	6	4	554
2013	2009 birds	2	9	66	102	39	52	26	1	1	8	3	3	312
	2010 birds	0	0	50	87	31	45	17	0	0	2	2	0	234
	2011 birds	2	4	63	254	68	116	48	3	0	7	4	2	571
	2012 birds	2	1	0	5	14	17	0	1	4	1	1	3	49
	2013 birds						84	90	3	2	0	1	0	180
	2013 birds						132	225	6	4	0	1	1	369
	Total	6	14	179	448	152	362	316	11	9	18	11	9	1,535
2014	2009 birds	1	0	17	71	47	30	2	4	6	3	2	1	184
	2010 birds	0	2	27	47	33	40	1	1	3	2	3	1	160
	2011 birds	2	1	76	129	63	52	8	4	6	6	4	2	353
	2012 birds	2	0	15	41	29	18	1	0	0	0	0	1	107
	2013 birds	0	4	5	22	75	39	1	3	1	5	1	2	158
	2014 birds						135	48	1	7	4	1	2	198
	Total	5	7	140	310	247	314	61	13	23	20	11	9	1,160
	Total	28	44	409	1,172	814	1,344	968	57	55	79	46	43	5,059

We have now had sightings from Portugal (2 locations), Spain (1 location), France (6 locations), Eire (13 locations across 8 counties), Wales (12 locations across 6 counties), Channel Islands (1 location), Northern Ireland (1 location) and spread across no less than 23 English counties between Cornwall, Greater London and North Yorkshire.

The records are beginning to build up a good picture of the birds' movements. Published literature suggests that whilst a few Black-headed gulls breed in their first summer most wait until they are at least 2 or 3 years old. In an attempt to understand seasonal movements, we have divided the year into three seasons:

- summer from March to July when colonies are occupied
- autumn from August to the end of October
- winter from November to the end of February

Apart from the summer period the divisions are slightly arbitrary and may well be adjusted as we get a better picture of movements. Initial results suggest that birds may return from winter quarters very quickly making it difficult to distinguish a standard “spring migration” period.

We have set a limit on local movements of 20 km in an attempt to differentiate between local wanderings and a more defined migration. A 20 km limit from Hosehill has the advantage that it encompasses all the main gravel pits and water bodies in central Berkshire (eg the Kennet Valley west to Newbury, Dinton and Twyford gravel pits and Moor Green Lakes) and our records have demonstrated that first summer birds in particular can move fairly rapidly around this area

**Table 4: Monthly sightings summary – all annual cohorts combined**

		Local ≤20 km		Distant >20 km		Percentage local			
		Month total	Season total	Month total	Season total	Month	Season		
First Year	Jun	225	395	61	21	80.7%	95.0%		
	Jul	319		5		98.5%			
	Aug	5		5		50.0%			
	Sep	5		7		41.7%			
	Oct	1		6		14.3%			
	Nov	0	3	7	25	0.0%	10.7%		
	Dec	1		6		14.3%			
	Jan	0		8		0.0%			
	Feb	2		7		22.2%			
	Mar	4		7		36.4%			
	Second Year	Apr	49	132	10	33	83.1%	80.0%	
		May	93		13		87.7%		
Jun		79	6		92.9%				
Jul		23	5		82.1%				
Aug		6	4		60.0%				
Third Year		Sep	3	9	5	13	37.5%	40.9%	
		Oct	2		6		25.0%		
		Nov	2		6		25.0%		
		Dec	3		5		37.5%		
		Jan	3		4		42.9%		
		Fourth Year	Feb	2	8	3	14	40.0%	36.4%
			Mar	41		2		95.3%	
	Apr		88	5		94.6%			
	May		65	4		94.2%			
	Jun		63	0		100.0%			
	Fifth Year		Jul	31	108	1	10	96.9%	91.5%
			Aug	3		6		33.3%	
Sep			1	2		33.3%			
Oct			1	11		8.3%			
Nov			0	3		0.0%			
Sixth Year			Dec	0	7	4	7	0.0%	50.0%
			Jan	2		1		66.7%	
		Feb	6	3		66.7%			
		Mar	46	3		93.9%			
		Apr	59	2		96.7%			
		Seventh Year	May	38	77	3	7	92.7%	91.7%
			Jun	33		2		94.3%	
	Jul		17	2		89.5%			
	Aug		1	2		50.0%			
	Sep		4	1		80.0%			
	Eighth Year		Oct	1	3	2	2	100.0%	60.0%
			Nov	1		2		33.3%	
Dec			0	2		33.3%			
Jan			0	1		0.0%			
Feb			0	0		-			
Ninth Year			Mar	10	20	0	1	100.0%	95.2%
			Apr	15		0		100.0%	
		May	17	0		100.0%			
		Jun	13	1		92.9%			
		Jul	2	0		100.0%			
		Tenth Year	Aug	1	5	2	2	33.3%	71.4%
			Sep	4		1		80.0%	
	Oct		1	0		100.0%			
	Nov		1	0		100.0%			
	Dec		0	1		0.0%			
	Eleventh Year		Jan	0	1	1	1	-	50.0%
			Feb	0		0		0.0%	
Mar			0	0		100.0%			
Apr			15	0		100.0%			
May			17	0		100.0%			
Twelfth Year			Jun	13	20	1	1	92.9%	95.2%
			Jul	2		0		100.0%	
		Aug	1	2		33.3%			
		Sep	4	1		80.0%			
		Oct	1	0		100.0%			
		Thirteenth Year	Nov	1	3	2	2	33.3%	60.0%
			Dec	0		2		33.3%	
	Jan		0	1		0.0%			
	Feb		0	0		-			
	Mar		10	0		100.0%			
	Fourteenth Year		Apr	15	20	0	1	100.0%	95.2%
			May	17		0		100.0%	
Jun			13	1		92.9%			
Jul			2	0		100.0%			
Aug			1	2		50.0%			
Fifteenth Year			Sep	4	3	1	2	66.7%	60.0%
			Oct	2		2		50.0%	
		Nov	1	2		33.3%			
		Dec	1	2		33.3%			
		Jan	0	1		0.0%			
		Sixteenth Year	Feb	0	2	0	4	-	33.3%
			Mar	10		0		100.0%	
	Apr		15	0		100.0%			
	May		17	0		100.0%			
	Jun		13	1		92.9%			
	Seventeenth Year		Jul	2	20	0	1	100.0%	95.2%
			Aug	1		2		33.3%	
Sep			4	1		80.0%			
Oct			1	0		100.0%			
Nov			1	0		100.0%			
Eighteenth Year			Dec	0	1	1	1	0.0%	50.0%
			Jan	0		0		0.0%	
		Feb	0	0		-			
		Mar	10	0		100.0%			
		Apr	15	0		100.0%			

## Survival Data

The oldest birds we have colour ringed are now 5½ years old and we’re continuing to build up a reasonable set of survival data for the Hosehill birds (Table 5).

**Table 5: Survival data for Hosehill birds**

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Number colour ringed	100	116	122	51	120	86	595
Known to have fledged	72 (72.0%)	97 (83.6%)	96 (78.7%)	17 (33.3%)	92 (76.7%)	63 (73.3%)	437 (73.4%)
Known to still be alive in June when 1 yr old	43 (43.0%)	41 (35.3%)	57 (46.7%)	13 (25.5%)	19 (15.8%)		173
Known to still be alive in June when 2 yr old	33 (33.0%)	28 (24.1%)	41 (33.6%)	6 (11.8%)			108
Known to still be alive in June when 3 yr old	25 (25.0%)	22 (19.0%)	20 (16.4%)				67
Known to still be alive in June when 4 yr old	20 (20.0%)	12 (10.3%)					32
Known to still be alive in June when 5 yr old	15 (15.0%)						15

In most years well over 70% of the ringed chicks are known to have fledged, and at least 35% were reported from somewhere when they were over a year old. In 2014, 15% of the 2009 cohort were proved to have reached over 5 years old, some of which hadn’t been reported in the previous year.

2014 was another good year for distant records and in total there have now been records of our colour ringed birds from nearly 100 different places more than 20km away from their natal colony. 105 of our birds have been reported from distant locations and of these 49 birds have subsequently been seen locally at least once.

### Records of Moor Green birds (2014)

Considering that the vast majority of birds ringed at Moor Green were not colour ringed it is not surprising that records of colour-ringed birds are not common. In 2013 one of the original 2007 metal ringed birds was observed at Hosehill on 2 dates in June where it was definitely breeding on one of the rafts. One of the colour ringed 2014 birds was seen at Burnthouse Lane GP (13km WNW) in September.

### Records of Hosehill birds

**2009 cohort** 21 birds from this cohort were reported during 2014 and 15 of them were from June or later meaning they had reached 5 years old. No birds returned locally for their first time in their 5th summer – all 15 that were reported locally had also been reported in previous years.

Highlights included 2X23 continuing its regular routine of summering at Hosehill and wintering at Datchet. 2X32 has been seen locally every summer including 2014 and in two winters (December 2011 and January 2014) has been seen at Albert Village in Leicestershire. 2X44 which was reported from Hythe in Hampshire in September 2012 and Cornwall in October 2012 was seen at Hythe again in June 2013 and August 2014. 2X94 was reported from Pembrokeshire in April and November 2010 and was then seen back at Hosehill during the summers of 2011, 2012 and 2013. In 2014 it was at Hosehill between March and 6 June but was then reported from Pembrokeshire again on 25 June an early migrant, but unfortunately we don’t know if it bred successfully or not.

**2010 cohort** 22 birds from this cohort were reported during 2014 (the same number as in 2013) and 12 of them were from June or later meaning they had reached 4 years old. One bird (27C9) returned locally for the first time in 2014, and that makes a total of 40 that have been reported locally after their first winter.

Highlights were 22C7 which was reported from Aberystwyth for the 17th time on 17 February (it has been reported from there at least once every year except 2013 and has never been reported from anywhere else except Hosehill in June and July 2010 just after it fledged); 27C9 which returned to Hosehill for the first time was last reported from Bristol in 2011.

**2011 cohort** 35 birds from this cohort were reported during 2014 and 31 of them were from June or later meaning they had reached 3 years old. 3 birds returned locally for their first time in 2014, their 3rd summer, and that makes a total of 53 that have been reported locally after their first winter.

Highlights included 23D8 which once again went back to Helston in Cornwall by the same route via the Camel Estuary. 22D8 and 26D3 hadn't been reported from anywhere since just after fledging but both returned to Hosehill in 2014. 24D2 had been seen at Hosehill just after fledging and in October 2012 and returned in May and was then seen in Waterford, Eire in August. 23J4 was reported from Portugal in January 2013 turned up further south in Portugal in January 2014.

**2012 cohort** 13 birds from this cohort were reported during 2014, following the difficulties proving birds fledged in 2012. One of these birds was seen for the first time anywhere and this takes the number of birds proved to have fledged up to 17 (33.3%). 6 birds were reported from June or later meaning they had reached 2 years old.

Highlights from the 2012 cohort were 28J9 which was reported from Cork Harbour, Eire in August and September 2013, it was then seen at Lea Farm on 4 April and at Hosehill later in April and in May 2014. 29J0 hadn't been reported since it was ringed but turned up in Cardiff on 28 December 2014. 20K4 which provided our first ever Spanish record when it was seen at Pinto Landfill, Madrid on 7 December 2013 was back at Hosehill in May 2014. 20K9 had only been reported twice before 2014 – in Gwynedd in August 2012 and Shropshire in January 2013 was back at Hosehill in April and May.

**2013 cohort** 28 birds from this cohort were reported during 2014 and 19 of them were from June or later meaning they had reached 1 year old. 25 birds returned locally for the first time in 2014.

Highlights included 26K5 which provided our first ever record from Essex on 8 April and was then seen at Moor Green between 20 April and 1 June. 21L6 was in Meath, Eire in February 2014 and then seen locally in May and June and provided our first ever Northern Ireland record on 13 August in Ballymena.

**2014 cohort** As in all previous years, except 2012, many of the fledglings were seen at Hosehill before they dispersed and 63 (73.3%) of 2014 cohort were proved to have fledged by the year end. By the year end 5 had been reported from distant locations – 2 in Cornwall, 1 in Devon, 1 in Port Talbot and 1 in Somerset.

### **Records of Lea Farm Birds**

**2011 cohort** Six of the 2011 cohort were reported during 2014. 25J9 was first reported from Newport in Wales on 16 July 2013, and then only 5 days later it was reported from Cork Harbour in Eire and on 21 April 2014 it was in Gloucestershire. 27J1 was seen in Devon in August 2011, at Lea Farm in April 2013 and back in Devon in July 2014. 27J3 has been

seen locally every summer including 2014 and in Cardiff in February and December 2013.

**2013 cohort** Seven of the 2013 cohort were reported during 2014. Highlights were 26L1 which was in Devon in August 2013, Back at Lea Farm in May and June 2014 and at Reading University in December. 26L2 was seen in Devon in June and at Moor Green in August 2014 – rather an odd movement timing. 26L9 which was in central Spain on 29 December 2013 was seen at the same place in February and March. 27L5 was seen in the same Spanish location in February, March and December 2014.

**2014 cohort** Six of this year's birds have been proved to have fledged and 2 were from distant locations. 23P4 was in Oxfordshire in September and 22P7 was in Devon in December.

### **Sighting of birds ringed elsewhere**

During 2014 six birds ringed by CWPRG were seen locally, the most significant was 2A98, a female which was ringed as a pullus in Gloucestershire in 2004. It was seen at Hosehill 3 times during 2009 and has been seen for long periods each summer since. It had at least one breeding attempt each year. This year it was seen between 9 April and 20 June. 2D93 was ringed in Gloucestershire in 2006 and seen there a few times just after fledging. There were no further records until it turned up at Hosehill on 5 May 2014 where it was seen several times in May and June, then it turned up in Portugal on 19 January 2015!

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like to acknowledge the support of and thank the following individuals and organisations:

John Wells of Cotswold Water Park Ringing Group is the national coordinator for this Black-headed Gull colour ringing project and has provided invaluable help and advice. He also deals with all sightings reported through national channels.

The Berkshire colour ringing project was initiated with the help of a project grant from the BTO.

Moor Green Lakes Group (MGLG) and Wokingham District Council have provided grants to help with costs. Access to the colony is provided by MGLG, Bruce Archer monitors the colony and helps us plan visits, he also arranges a boat and boatman with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and helps on ringing sessions.

Access to the Hosehill colony is provided by Theale Area Bird Conservation Group (TABCG) through Brian Uttley who acts as boatmen for the ringing sessions. West Berkshire Council Countryside Service funded the cost of rings at Hosehill Lake, as it is now managed by Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) they now fund the ring costs.

Access to Lea Farm is provided by Friends of Lavells Lake (FOLL) through Fraser Cottington who also acted as boatman for the ringing session. FOLL funded the cost of rings at Lea Farm.

Local ringers at Fleet Pond arranged island access and helped with ringing at this site and funded the cost of rings.

A number of local birdwatchers have helped gather sightings of the birds and it would be impossible to mention them all but Ken Moore, Roger Stansfield and Richard Crawford have all supplied many records.

# The Berkshire Bird Index 2014

*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 1km squares during visits early and late in the breeding season. Visits are made in the early morning and take approximately two hours. The data are collected by the BTO, which publishes the regional and national trends. The BTO have provided us with the data for the analysis shown here. Recent reanalysis of historic data by the BTO have resulted in some changes to earlier indices; the new analyses have been used here.

In Berkshire at least 72 squares were covered in the years since 2000, which was chosen last year as the base year for the index (prior to 2012, the base year used had been 1994, though in the period 1994–1999, far fewer BBS squares were surveyed).

The index is a snapshot for the year of the ratio of a year's abundance to the base year: 2000. The index is shown as the range within the 95% confidence limits. 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 2014. Statistically significant trends at  $p < 0.05$  are shown with a black background (positive) or a grey background (negative).

In general, the Berkshire results reflect the national trends for those species that are sufficiently abundant to calculate statistically valid changes. Species increasing significantly in abundance nationally and in Berkshire over the period 2000 to 2014 include Red Kite, Buzzard, Jackdaw, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Goldfinch. Species in decline nationally and in Berkshire include Lapwing, Cuckoo, Swift, House Martin, Mistle Thrush, Pied Wagtail, Willow Warbler, Starling, Greenfinch, Linnet.

Few species show local trends that differ markedly from the national (*BTO Birdtrends*), though Collared Dove, which is still increasing significantly nationally, shows a highly significant decline in Berkshire.

To take part in BTO surveys, contact the Berkshire BTO Reps: Ken and Sarah White: [btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com](mailto:btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com)

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

\* trend significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

<sup>1</sup> Data shown are for 2004 to 2014. The index based on the last five years is 1.8 (1.81–1.79).

<sup>2</sup> Data are for 2004 to 2014. The index based on the last five years is 1.09 (1.09–1.08).

**Trends in commoner species in Berkshire, 2000–2014**

Species	Trend 2000–2014 %/year	Index 2014/2000
Canada Goose	-0.34	0.68–0.29
Mallard	-1.82	1.41–0.82
Red-legged Partridge	-0.32	1.36–0.57
Pheasant	0.95	1.38–0.97
<b>Red Kite<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>100***</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Buzzard<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>58***</b>	<b>5.33–1.89</b>
Kestrel	0.56	1.55–0.62
Moorhen	-1.13	1.24–0.68
Lapwing	-1.92	1.25–0.58
Stock Dove	6.97	3.61–1.38
Woodpigeon	-0.39	1.08–0.79
Collared Dove	-3.73***	0.64–0.36
Cuckoo	-0.93*	0.91–0.47
Swift	-4.55*	0.49–0.18
Green Woodpecker	-2.34	0.8–0.43
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3.71	1.4–0.82
<b>Magpie</b>	<b>.43**</b>	<b>-0.72</b>
Jay	-1.93	1.31–0.65
<b>Jackdaw</b>	<b>.18***</b>	<b>-1.97</b>
Rook	9.92	5.78–2.2
Carrion Crow	-2.22	1.09–0.68
Goldcrest	-3.89	0.81–0.4
Blue Tit	0.71	1.38–1.05
Great Tit	-0.26	0.78–0.56
Coal Tit	-1.42	1.82–0.83
Skylark	-1.82	1.03–0.72
Swallow	2.04	1.29–0.68
House Martin	-2.11*	0.7–0.37
Long-tailed Tit	-1.66	0.65–0.33
Chiffchaff	1.68	2.31–1.44
Willow Warbler	-2.57**	0.5–0.29
<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>.7***</b>	<b>-1.36</b>
<b>Whitethroat</b>	<b>.09*</b>	<b>-1.45</b>
Nuthatch	5.83	2.34–1.26
Wren	-0.84	1.05–0.79
Starling	-2.1*	0.65–0.35
Blackbird	-0.53	1.08–0.86
Song Thrush	-0.01	1.81–1.18
Mistle Thrush	-2.71*	1.32–0.71
Robin	0.1	1.16–0.91
Duncock	-0.81	1.38–0.97
House Sparrow	-1.99	1.54–0.85
Pied Wagtail	-4.6***	0.86–0.42
Chaffinch	-2.57*	0.69–0.52
Greenfinch	-5.31***	0.59–0.34
<b>Goldfinch</b>	<b>.93***</b>	<b>-2.22</b>
Linnet	-3.04**	0.54–0.27
Yellowhammer	-1.77*	0.7–0.46

# DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES IN BERKSHIRE – 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

The mild Spring meant that the start of 2014 was more typical than in 2013 with numbers of records around or above average. This changed with the arrival of more changeable weather in August, when the numbers dropped off in the cool weather and then picked up again with the return of the warmer weather in September.

Berkshire was honoured this year by visits from two Emperors – a **Lesser Emperor** recorded at Binfield on 26th June and a probable **Vagrant Emperor** on 27th February near Faringdon – the first record for the county.

The first **Large Red Damselfly** of the year was seen on 8th April – the earliest since 2011. In general, numbers of the species emerging in the Spring – **Large Red Damselfly**, **Broad-bodied Chaser**, **Four-spotted Chaser** and **Hairy Dragonfly** – seem to have recovered from the poor Springs in the past couple of years. However **Downy Emerald** and **Common Clubtail** both appear to have had a poor year, although some of the downturn may be due to reductions in recorder cover. **Common Clubtails** were recorded from the usual breeding sites on the R. Thames at Caversham and Goring, although numbers continue to be worryingly low.

As in previous years, most records of **Beautiful Demoiselle** came from the Kennet Valley, where it was generally recorded in small numbers of less than 20, apart from a group of 70+ at Searles Lane. This year there were also records from several sites in the Bracknell/Crowthorne areas.

It looks like it wasn't a good year for **White-legged Damselfly** with numbers well down on 2013 and the final record coming in on 3rd August (the earliest finish ever). The highest counts came from Paice's Wood in July (54) and August (57); this compares with a maximum count of 160 in June 2013. Decoy Heath produced a maximum count of just 2, compared with 15 in 2013.

**Small Red-eyed Damselfly**, a recent arrival in Berkshire, was found at Fobney Island (the first record for the site), Hosehill, Decoy Heath and Allsmoor Pond (Bracknell).

There were just three records of **Variable Damselfly** at the usual site on the R. Kennet offshoot at Southcote, with a maximum count of 53 in early June. Two visits were made to the site at Strand Water, Cookham with three being recorded in June and four in July. The previous highest counts here were 20+ in 2007, 13 in 2009 and 50 in 2011. This species is on the decline in a number of areas and there is now cause for concern for its future at this site.

There were just two records of **Common Hawker**, a heathland specialist, both from Wildmoor. The other Hawkers – **Migrant**, **Southern** and **Brown** – all had good years with the highest numbers of sightings for both Brown and Southern for several years and the latest flight date on record (14th November) for Migrant Hawker.

**Hairy Dragonfly**, another recent arrival, was recorded at 13 sites. The maximum number at any one site was four at Thames Valley Park near Reading.

Records of **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** came from the heathland areas around Bracknell and Aldermaston/Greenham. Once again there were records away from its normal habitat with two records from Hosehill Lake and one from the centre of Ascot.



**Brilliant Emerald** continues to cling on in Berkshire. For the second year running there were just eight records in the year. However these came from seven sites (against just three in 2013), six of which were in the Bracknell area. There was also a record of two adults from Decoy Heath.

No records of **Scarce Chaser** again in 2014 – none since the only county record in 2012. This species probably crosses the R. Blackwater into Berkshire more often than we think, but is just not being spotted.

There was just one **Red-veined Darter** reported this year from the usual site at Crookham Common.

The following species were recorded in 2014:

Emerald Damselfly	Small Red Damselfly	Downy Emerald
Banded Demoiselle	Southern Hawker	Brilliant Emerald
Beautiful Demoiselle	Brown Hawker	Broad-bodied Chaser
White-legged Damselfly	Common Hawker	Four-spotted Chaser
Large Red Damselfly	Migrant Hawker	Black-tailed Skimmer
Red-eyed Damselfly	Emperor Dragonfly	Keeled Skimmer
Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Lesser Emperor	Black Darter
Azure Damselfly	Vagrant Emperor	Ruddy Darter
Variable Damselfly	Hairy Dragonfly	Common Darter
Common Blue Damselfly	Common Clubtail	Red-veined Darter
Blue-tailed Damselfly	Golden-ringed Dragonfly	

More details are given in the annual report and newsletter, available from the email address below or on the Berkshire Dragonflies Facebook group. If you have any records, please send them to me at [berksdragonflies@gmail.com](mailto:berksdragonflies@gmail.com) or enter them online using iRecord.

*Mike Turton*  
*County Dragonfly Recorder*  
*[berksdragonflies@gmail.com](mailto:berksdragonflies@gmail.com)*

# REPORT FOR 2014 BY THE BERKSHIRE RECORDS COMMITTEE (BRC)

Committee for 2014: Derek Barker, Chris Heard (Chair), Ken Moore, Robin Dryden, Peter Standley

The BRC examines all records that involve rare species (see accompanying lists), unusual dates and unusually large counts that are accompanied by descriptive notes. Unfortunately, a substantial number of records have to be omitted from the Systematic List due to a lack of supportive notes. If a bird has been seen by a reasonable 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 observers, or it may be attributed to many observers (MO).

Species for which notes/descriptions are required fall into three categories:

Category 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. Photographs/sketches would help to support full notes etc;

Category 2. Berkshire rare species for which a full description is required (this includes all former BBRC rarities);

Category 3. Berkshire scarce species (or commoner species seen at an unusual time of year or in exceptional circumstances) for which short supporting notes are required.

## Category 2 species

Bean Goose; Pink-footed Goose; American Wigeon; Green-winged Teal; Lesser Scaup; Ring-necked Duck; Ferruginous Duck; Velvet Scoter; Fulmar; Manx Shearwater; European Storm-Petrel; Night Heron; Cattle Egret; Purple Heron; White Stork; Spoonbill; Glossy Ibis; Honey Buzzard; Black Kite; White-tailed Sea Eagle; Goshawk; Rough-legged Buzzard; Golden Eagle; Red-footed 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; Dipper; Bluethroat; Marsh Warbler; Icterine Warbler; Melodious Warbler; Pallas's Warbler; Yellow-browed Warbler; Penduline Tit; 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(eg Scandinavian Rock Pipit; Yellow Wagtail races and Siberian Chiffchaff) and all former national BBRC Rarity species.

## Category 3 species

Bewick's Swan; Whooper Swan; White-fronted Goose; Brent Goose; Barnacle Goose; 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; Great White Egret; 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 (age/plumage); Little Gull (age/plumage); Yellow-legged Gull; Kittiwake; Little Tern; Sandwich Tern; Arctic Tern; Long-Eared Owl; Hoopoe; Lesser Spotted Woodpecker;

Wryneck; Woodlark (away from usual habitat); Rock Pipit; Water Pipit; White Wagtail (rump colour and full description required – esp., autumn records); Waxwing; Black Redstart; Ring Ouzel; Wood Warbler; Pied Flycatcher; Willow Tit; Red-backed Shrike; Great Grey Shrike; Tree Sparrow; Hawfinch and Snow Bunting.

We would also like to add Turtle Dove to Category 3, due to its ever-increasing rarity.

## Review of records for 2014

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, that do not have observer details and/or notes) Where descriptions are available but have not been provided, we would welcome them or further supporting information for any of these records.

Finally, please note that some alterations to Categories 2 and 3 have been made. Please read through them to ensure you are all acquainted with the changes. Whilst these alterations have not been mandatory in this report, nor will be in the following report of 2015, they will be mandatory for 2016 and onward.

### Appendix 1: Records considered ‘not proven’

Lesser Scaup ×1 drake	5th Nov: Sunnymead/Wraysbury GP – later date than those accepted by BBRC
Alpine Swift	15th Oct: Lavells Lake, DPCP – unconvincing description/report

### Appendix 2: Records pended - awaiting descriptions/notes/further details

Scaup drake	21st Jan: Eversley/Moor Green Lakes – need notes to ensure no obvious hybridisation.
Bittern	1st Oct: Caversham, Reading – need notes to assist with ID
Marsh Harrier	21st Apr: Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures – very brief view, need supporting notes
Marsh Harrier ×2 a pair	15th May: East Garston – need notes
Montagu’s Harrier ×2 a pair	17th Jul: Thatcham – need notes
Rough-legged Buzzard ×2	4th Nov: Berkshire Downs – record submitted via pager 3rd hand, no notes
Rough-legged Buzzard ×2	4th Nov: over Earley. – no notes
Rough-legged Buzzard ×2	4th Nov: Sheepdrove Farm – no notes to support
Merlin ×1	16th Feb: Cow Down, West Ilsley – need supporting details
Merlin ×1	27th Mar: Superity, Compton – need supporting notes
Merlin ×1	17th Oct: M4 Junction 12 – need support details
Merlin ×1	9th Nov: Earley, Reading – need supporting notes
Merlin ×1	11th Nov: New Diggings, Eversley – need supporting notes
Merlin ×1	13th Nov: Theale Main Pit – need further supporting details
Merlin ×1	14th Nov: Burnthouse Lane Floods, Pingewood – need supporting details
Merlin ×1	14th Dec: Cow Down, West Ilsley – need supporting details
Crane ×1	4th May: Nores Hill, Reading – need notes/description.
Sanderling ×5	14th Sep: Moor Green Lakes – need notes/description

Spotted Redshank ×1	26th Aug: Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures – heard only; need notes/description.
Sandwich Tern ×1	3rd Apr: Main Pit, Theale – need notes/description.
Caspian Gull ×1	12th Mar: Bucklebury – no ages/no support details/no description.
Caspian Gull ×1	2nd Feb: Bucklebury – no notes or description
Caspian Gull ×1	3rd Oct: Bucklebury – no notes/description.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker ×2	23rd Jan: Whiteknights Park and Lake – no reasonable notes
Wood Warbler ×1	18th May: Dinton Pastures - Need notes
Wood Warbler ×1	18th May: Ferry Lane, Aston-Need notes
Hawfinch ×1	4th Mar: Cold Ash. Need notes/description.
Siberian Chiffchaff ×1	12th Mar: Need notes/description, in addition-notes re call needed.
Red-backed Shrike ×1	16th Sep: Lower Farm GP -Need support notes
Willow Tit ×1	3rd May: Freemans Marsh, Hungerford. Need notes/description.

### **Appendix 3: Records found to be not proven**

Lesser Scaup ×1	5th Nov: Wraysbury GP – no records received by BBRC/BRC with extended date
Black Kite ×1	20th Jul: Eversley GPs – ot a satisfactory description.
Slavonian Grebe	6th Nov: Hosehill Lake – re-identified as a Black-necked Grebe
Slavonian Grebe	17th Aug: Main Pit ,Theale – rejected for date and lack of any supporting notes
Bittern ×1 1s	1st Jul: White Swan, Dinton CP – rejected for date (report was third hand).
Black Kite ×1	20th July Moor Green Lakes – unsatisfactory description.
Alpine Swift ×1	15th Oct: Lavell's Lake – unsatisfactory description.
Rock Pipit ×1	27th Oct: Eton Wick – insufficient support detail
Water Pipit ×1	20th Aug: Crookham Common – date, no description received

### **Appendix 4: Records noted as possible/probable – and not included in main Systematic List**

Marsh Harrier ×1	26th April: Maidenhead Thicket – only a 'probable'.
Ring-billed Gull ×1	20th Jan: QMR – a 'possible' only
Stone Curlew ×1	28th Feb: Frogmill/Hurley – observer advises 'thought to be this species'
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker ×1	14th Oct: Tilehurst – only 'indicative'.
Marsh Tit ×1	22nd Apr: Braywick – only 'possible'

### **Appendix 5: Records that are 3rd hand and therefore not acceptable without notes/photos**

Pied Flycatcher ×1	31st Aug: Theale GP
Osprey ×1	29th Jul: Lower Farm GP
Osprey ×1	23rd Apr: Southcote
Bittern ×1	1st Jul: White Swan, DPCP

# 2014 SYSTEMATIC LIST

*Compiled by D J Barker. Edited by D J Barker and R J Burness*

## Introduction

In 2014 206 native or self-sustaining feral species were recorded throughout the county. A further eight races/sub-species were also identified and a further fourteen species of unknown/escape origin were also recorded. The table shows the number of species (not including escapes) that were encountered each month during the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of species	120	120	142	157	153	134	142	147	147	141	128	118

Of the 206 species, 80 were primarily resident, 40 were primarily winter visitors, 31 were primarily summer visitors (half of which are declining) and 55 were generally regular passage migrants or rare/scarce visitors of which seven were vagrants, being recorded ten or less times in Berkshire. However 93 species were recorded in every month of the year and 106 species were confirmed as breeding with another ten species probably breeding.

## Abbreviations and place names

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

### AGE/SEX

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

### PLACES/LOCALITIES

<b>CP</b>	Country Park
<b>GC</b>	Golf course
<b>GP</b>	Gravel Pit(s)
<b>R.</b>	River
<b>SF</b>	Sewage Farm
<b>STW</b>	Sewage Treatment Works
<b>RES</b>	Reservoir
<b>SPA</b>	Specially Protected Area

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

## Tables

The monthly status tables depicted within the systematic list can reflect as much observer coverage as the true status of some species. However valuable information can be obtained even from the more common species if status tables are produced regularly and as accurately as possible. Totals can differentiate between good and bad years and can also help spotlight trends of increase or decrease.

I have used the colour codes from Birds of Conservation Concern Three (BoCC3) as this covers 2014. BoCC4 was introduced in 2015.

## References

The Birds of Berkshire county Reports; Moor Green Lakes Bird Report 2014; Newbury and District Ornithological Report 2014; Theale Area Bird Report 2014; Middle Thames Bird Reports; The Birds of Berkshire and Oxfordshire 1966; The Birds of Berkshire 1996 and 2013; British Birds

## MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

*Locally common resident (Green listed)*

The monthly maxima at the most regularly counted sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	21	4	13	–	–	–	–	–	44	51	47	47
Dinton Pastures	28	35	22	–	8	–	45	36	–	27	2	6
Eversley GPs	14	8	13	12	10	6	29	11	13	12	7	15
Hosehill Lake LNR	2	–	4	–	6	23	20	28	32	8	6	3
Lower Farm GP	2	5	3	4	7	13	15	20	19	7	4	3
Padworth Lane GP	13	8	22	12	24	6	–	3	–	–	5	6
Queen Mother Res	–	–	4	–	–	–	27	–	43	43	2	2
Twyford GPs	14	10	17	5	7	17	–	–	16	49	95	63
Windsor Promenade	265	291	311	296	266	286	298	284	312	201	256	221

Counts may include young birds

The high count of 312 on the R Thames at Windsor Promenade on Sep 19th (DF) was the highest Berkshire count since 2009 when 319 were present at the same location on April 2nd. Away from the tabled sites, high counts included 49 at Englefield on Feb 13th (RCr), 80 Kennet Mouth, Reading on Jun 15th (PG) and 90 at Horton GPs on Oct 30th (CDRH).

**Breeding:** was under-recorded and only reported from 28 locations involving 29 pairs.

## BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

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

The only record this year involved a group of three birds, two adults and a s/w at Lea Farm Lake on Dec 28th (FJC *et al.*). These birds were part of a small influx into south-central England at the time with other local records coming from Surrey and Oxfordshire. The status of this species in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	0	2	0	1
No. of birds	6	0	2	2	0	0	0	4	4	12	8	0	6	0	3

## WHOOPE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

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

The only record this year which is thought to involve wild birds was of two adults at Eversley GPs on Dec 10th (MGLR). This is the third consecutive year for records and the first time that wild birds have been recorded in three successive years since the 1970's. The status of this species in Berkshire since 2003 (when the feral population finally disappeared) is shown in the table. However two seen flying over Winkfield on Jan 21st (DMac) are now thought to be feral birds as subsequent reports from this area have been noted in 2015–16.

Year	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	2	1
No. of birds	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	1	9	2

## GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

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

**2013** Incomplete data: the count of 28 broods at Great Meadow Pond on May 26 was not the complete breeding total; a total of at least 47 pairs hatched young from late April through to early June (DJB).

**2014** This species continues to increase and spread throughout the county, records came from 58 locations, 27 in East Berks, 17 in Mid Berks and 14 in West Berks. The monthly maxima at the most regularly counted sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	27	27	33	14	10	18	2	80	82	80	29	25
Great Meadow Pond	378	174	468	297	276	296	222	354	380	400	56	200
Hosehill Lake LNR	2	2	8	5	20	-	-	15	-	20	-	140
Padworth Lane GP	92	70	19	8	29	41	-	-	-	-	126	127
Pingewood GPs	110	-	50	14	4	-	152	157	108	-	60	-
Purley on Thames	136	60	14	-	-	-	-	-	137	232	-	7
Streatley	135	-	119	48	69	-	-	-	-	138	245	180
Woolhampton GPs	-	-	15	3	33	31	-	11	86	5	26	-

Counts may include young birds

The high count of 468 at Great Meadow Pond occurred on Mar 9th (DJB). Away from the tabled sites, counts of over 100 were: 135 Theale Main GP on Jan 3rd (KEM), 180 Winkfield on Jan 22nd (CDRH), 145 Summerleaze GP on Feb 10th (DJB), 203 Englefield on Aug 15th (RCr), 150 Eton Wick on Sep 1st (PNe), 114 Brimpton GP on Sep 26th (JPM), 340 Horton GPs on Dec 8th (CDRH), 220 Old Windsor on Dec 8th (RMH) and 222 Borough Marsh on Dec 23rd (DJB). It is clear that some local populations are quite mobile and it is likely that some isolated site counts refer to nearby populations. For example, the population centered on Great Meadow Pond in Windsor Great Park is recorded from other parts of the park albeit in lower numbers and is probably responsible for some of the other counts in East Berks; the same can probably be said for the Thames populations east and west of Reading and some gravel pit complexes. **Breeding:** was under-recorded with records coming from just 15 locations, involving at least 51 pairs. Most of these were in mid and east Berks, the most westerly breeding record coming from Woolhampton GPs. Most locations recorded one to four pairs, higher totals came from Streatley with at least five breeding pairs (NJB) and Great Meadow Pond where only 21 pairs were confirmed (DJB), well down on the 47 breeding pairs of 2013.

## CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

*Common and widespread introduced resident*

The monthly maxima at the most regularly counted locations were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	84	48	78	-	-	-	-	-	112	21	2	-
Dinton Pastures CP	118	75	49	-	30	-	118	32	250	68	60	50
Eversley GPs	105	32	70	76	74	81	140	325	140	115	59	161
Eton Wick/ Dorney Wetlands	400	76	-	-	-	-	-	430	440	65	-	-
Great Meadow Pond	80	23	76	71	67	45	20	66	153	99	225	49
Hosehill Lake LNR	21	12	10	-	20	-	-	20	158	150	-	13

Lower Farm GP	42	14	25	12	8	9	28	126	150	151	81	125
Padworth Lane GP	111	69	30	16	18	17	-	-	-	-	5	-
Pingewood GPs	40	-	124	-	30	-	86	-	302	282	130	137
Purley on Thames	243	43	46	-	-	-	-	-	114	265	22	356
Thatcham NDC	25	81	75	74	52	115	121	24	98	36	13	95
Twyford GPs	20	51	152	32	16	67	-	-	38	15	-	165
Whiteknights Lake	20	34	4	8	28	35	-	-	-	1	30	30
Windsor Promenade	293	99	86	30	-	-	212	108	212	218	142	77

Counts may include young birds

The high count of 440 at Eton Wick occurred on Sep 1st (PNe). Away from the tabled sites, the only counts to exceed 350 were c 400 at Swallowfield Park on Feb 15th (DJB) and 422 at Englefield on Aug 15th (RCr). **Breeding:** was under-recorded, however breeding records were submitted from 23 locations involving at least 52 pairs.

## **BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

*Localised feral resident, extremely rare wild vagrant (wild population Amber Listed)*

The regular feral flock remained at Eversley GPs throughout the year, the monthly maxima are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	2	15	13	7	3	-	-	26	26	27	27	26

At least one pair bred rearing three young (MGLR). Elsewhere 10 (Eversley GP birds?) were found at Swallowfield Park on Feb 15th (DJB) and two were seen at Warfield on Feb 18th (DMac) and Feb 20th (MSFW). Later in the year one visited Great Meadow Pond on Nov 16th (DJB). All records refer to feral birds.

## **BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*

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

**2013** Add initials RDr to the QMR record.

**2014** There were no records until mid October when autumn passage accounted for all records. On Oct 15th one was reported from Queen Mother Res (MMc), this was followed by two flying west over Burghfield GPs on Oct 16th (AVL). Passage was very evident at Queen Mother Res on Oct 29th when a flock of 32 flew west at 0907hrs and was followed by a flock of 21 (15 adults and 6 juvs) which flew in from the SE at 0930hrs, remained for 10 minutes before departing (CDRH). The last record for the year involved a party of six (4 ads and 2 juvs) which flew into Queen Mother Res from the NE on Nov 17th (CDRH) remained for 20 minutes before departing to the SE. All birds apart from the Oct 16th record (no details) were assigned to the dark-bellied race B b bernicla. The status of Brent Goose since 2000 based on the year of arrival is shown below:

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05*	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	4	1	8	5	3	4	2	2	1	4	5	8	9	1	5
No. of birds	49	1	18	6	4	7	2	2	1	4	14	13	23	4	62

\*Involves one bird of the pale-bellied race *B. b. hrota*



## EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

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

The monthly maxima at the most regularly recorded locations were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	–	–	3	17	57	47	–	20	–	–	–
Dinton Pastures CP	3	2	5	11	–	–	7	6	–	11	12	3
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	2	–	–	12	–	8	6	11	–	100	–	–
Eversley GPs	6	7	9	25	15	16	18	22	40	32	34	6
Great Meadow Pond	7	7	19	20	22	20	9	9	15	6	18	53
Lower Farm GP	–	2	1	2	1	2	2	6	2	7	5	6
Pingewood GPs	2	9	20	17	7	–	43	–	–	–	5	–
Queen Mother Res	20	–	–	7	3	16	24	44	33	–	4	–
Streatley	–	–	9	11	7	16	–	–	–	100	–	28
Summerleaze GP	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	32	74	13	54
Thatcham NDC	1	1	2	2	1	10	21	5	–	2	2	–
Theale GPs	4	2	14	18	14	4	11	19	37	–	2	1
Whiteknights Lake	2	4	2	2	10	6	6	–	–	10	3	2
Wraybury GPs	2	–	1	–	2	15	18	–	12	4	–	–

Counts may include young birds

The two high counts of 100 occurred on Oct 11th at Eton Wick when birds came in to roost (CDRH) and Oct 25th at Streatley (NJB). **East and Mid Berks:** other high counts from this region included 38 Temple on Jan 31st (CDRH), 73 Cock Marsh on Jun 14th (PNe), 79 Drift Road on Aug 6th (RMH) and 47 at Englefield on Aug 15th (RCr). **Breeding:** was confirmed at 21 locations involving 30 broods. The largest concentration of breeding pairs was Great Meadow Pond where seven broods were recorded between Apr 6th and Jul 27th (DJB). **West Berks:** birds were only reported from Aldermaston GPs, Brimpton GPs, Crookham/Greenham Com, Lower Farm GP, Shaw, Streatley, Thatcham NDC/Marsh and Woolhampton GPs. Away from Streatley the highest count involved 21 at Thatcham NDC on Jul 19th (IW). **Breeding:** was confirmed at Streatley with three broods (NJB) and Woolhampton GPs where there was one brood (RRK *et al.*).

## SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

*Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor, a few winter (Amber List)*

**2013** Missing record involving the highest count of the year of 19 on the Review Ground and adjacent Long Walk, Windsor Great Park on May 12 (KPD) which increases the number of birds for May in the table to 30 and sites to 7

**2014** The winter floods of 2013/14 provided shelducks with acres of ideal habitat throughout the county which greatly increased the number of birds present in the county at this time. Birds were recorded from 36 locations, 11 in East Berks, 13 in Mid Berks and 12 in West Berks, the monthly maxima was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	19	19	8	12	22	20	2	1	0	1	2	1
Eversley GPs	1	4	5	11	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Great Meadow Pond	11	10	11	10	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Padworth Lane GP	10	11	8	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Queen Mother Res	2	3	8	10	7	14*	4*	4*	0	0	2	1
Woolhampton GPs	2	0	2	2	11*	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Elsewhere												
No of Sites	8	6	16	14	5	1	0	2	1	0	1	3
No of Birds	16	13	40	36	12	8	0	2	1	0	2	3
Recorded county total	61	60	82	85	68	48	6	7	1	1	7	8

\*Includes young birds

**First winter/spring:** the high counts for Eton Wick and Dorney Wetlands are unprecedented for the length of time these numbers were maintained; the high count of 22 on May 20th (KPD) is the fourth highest count for the county. Away from the main sites, high counts involved five at Borough Marsh on Mar 16th (ABT), nine on the Review Grounds, Windsor Great Park on Apr 19th and eight there on Jun 1st (KPD). **Breeding:** was only reported from two locations, a brood of eight was found at Woolhampton GPs on May 21st (KEM; JPM) and at Queen Mother Res where one pair was observed with two ducklings on Jun 14th, these successfully fledged in August (CDRH), another pair with three full-winged juvs were seen on Jun 22nd but these had bred elsewhere (CDRH). **Autumn/second winter:** after June numbers quickly declined as adults left the county to moult and by September the only bird remaining was at Hosehill Lake LNR on Sep 7th (MFW). An adult female at Eton Wick on Oct 7th which remained to the year's end (CDRH) was the first returning bird of the autumn and was followed by a further 13 birds at nine locations throughout the county.

## MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

*Locally common introduced resident*

Records were received from 76 locations: 41 in East Berks, 23 in Mid Berks and 12 in West Berks and is the highest ever site total for Berkshire. The monthly maxima is shown in the table, please note, the monthly status is influenced by the general habits of many observers who tend to avoid some of the more secluded areas where this species is present especially in the winter months.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	-	-	2	3	9	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	-	-	1	1	-	5	6	2	1	1	-	1
Eversley GPs	1	4	10	8	11	8	6	1	1	3	5	-
Frogmill Hurley	-	-	-	1	1	4	4	4	3	1	-	-
Great Meadow Pond	-	-	4	5	2	4	-	103	20	1	18	8
Prospect Park	26	22	-	4	19	-	-	-	-	-	3	8
River Thames Maidenhead	-	-	2	6	15	16	2	-	-	-	1	-
Whiteknights Park	12	7	2	-	9	2	8	-	-	15	3	8
Elsewhere												
No of sites	5	4	27	27	22	10	6	7	7	7	8	3
No of birds	18	28	75	57	69	25	45	18	22	26	25	24
Recorded county total	57	61	96	85	135	67	73	124	47	47	55	49

\*Counts may include young birds

The high count of 103 at Great Meadow Pond occurred on Aug 24th (DJB) and the highest Mid Berks count of 26 at Prospect Park, Reading occurred on Jan 29th (AVL). Away from the named sites in the table, high counts involved 20 in Cheapside on Feb 22nd (RJD), 22 Virginia

Water on Jul 10th (RMH) and 12 at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 31st (JMC) whilst in West Berks the highest totals were eight birds at Streatley on Aug 25th (NJB) and Aldermaston GPs on Dec 22nd (JPM). **Breeding:** single broods were reported from Brimpton Mill (GEW) which was the most westerly breeding record, Eton Wick (CDRH), Frogmill (SJF; FMF) Islet Park Maidenhead (DJB), Lea Farm Lake Dinton Pastures CP (MFW), Oval Pond, Padworth (PH), Prospect Park (AVL), Sonning (RDr), Sunninghill Park (DJB), Swinley Forest (DJB), Thrift Woods (RHa) and Virginia Water (RJD). Multiple broods were noted at three sites: on the R Thames at Maidenhead two broods were located, one of 14 ducklings on May 5th and another of four on Jun 12th (DF). At Eversley GPs although all three occupied nest boxes failed, there were broods of 10 on May 9th (RD), two on Jun 5th and 10th (RD; MHu) and a brood of seven on Jun 19 (DJB). Two or three broods were also noted at Whiteknights Park Lake from May to July (PG). Fledged juveniles were located at Aldermaston GP (JPM), Burnthouse Lane GPs (KEM) and Paices Wood (JLe) however younger birds were not seen at these locations so it is not clear where they originated.

## WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

Records were received from 27 locations, 9 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 8 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	26	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	4	42
Burghfield GPs	26	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	48	180	227
Dinton Pastures	–	–	68	–	2	2	1	4	147	130	8	100
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	20	4	12	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	–	–
Eversley GPs	523	420	50	–	1	–	–	–	22	26	113	121
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	80	126	29	2
Horton GPs	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	36	140	72	116
Hosehill Lake LNR	80	213	70	–	–	–	–	4	102	–	53	17
Lower Farm GP	43	2	20	–	–	–	1	2	24	30	70	62
Pingewood GPs	–	50	150	3	1	1	–	–	35	–	70	50
Queen Mother Res	6	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	13	3	–	6
Twyford GPs	210	327	24	–	–	–	–	–	3	252	187	314
Wraysbury GPs	25	–	11	–	–	–	–	2	50	1	2	6
Elsewhere												
No of Sites	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	3	2	7	3
No of Birds	215	40	202	2	0	0	1	0	7	34	28	19
Recorded county total	1182	1068	609	7	4	3	3	13	522	796	816	1082

**First winter:** winter flooding although providing additional habitat did also make access difficult to some prime locations such as Dinton Pastures and Wraysbury GPs hence the lack of February records. Eversley GPs held the largest numbers with 523 on Jan 11th (RCM). Away from the main sites, 70 were found at the Wilderness, Kintbury on Jan 11th (RHar) and floods near Arborfield held 100 on Jan 27th and 162 on Mar 4th (DJS). **Spring/summer:** the wintering population had departed by the end of March and no further birds were noted until late April when three were on Burnthouse Lane GP, Pingewood GPs on Apr 22nd (RHS), a pair at Queen Mother Res on Apr 27th (CDRH) and what may have been this pair (however the female had a damaged wing) on Horton Fields on Apr 29th (CDRH). May records consisted of two reports on May 11th: a female at Eversley GPs (RJG) and a pair at

Lea Farm Lake Dinton Pastures (MFW) which remained until Jun 3rd (PSc), the female then remaining in the area to at least Jul 29th (PSc). An injured drake was located at Burnthouse Lane GP on May 20th (TGB; KEM), remaining to Jun 17 (KEM). Further records occurred in July when what may have been early returning birds were seen at Streatley, a female on Jul 5th-8th (NJB) and at Lower Farm GP with one on Jul 11th (NC) and one on Jul 17th into Aug (IW). **Autumn/second winter:** the Lower Farm individual remained throughout Aug, being joined briefly by a second bird on Aug 17th (MIGW). Elsewhere early August sightings came from Lea Farm Lake with two on Aug 3rd (RM) and one Great Meadow Pond on Aug 9th (CDRH). The main winter arrival began in September, 147 at Lea Farm Lake on Sep 27th (MFW) being notable and by the month's end most of the regular wintering sites were occupied. From October onward Twyford GPs proved to be the favored location, the high second winter count of 314 being recorded there on Dec 8th (WeBS).

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

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

Records were received from 48 locations, 11 in East and Mid Berks and 26 in West Berks, the monthly maxima was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	10	-	6	1	1	-	-	4	-	2	2	7
Burghfield GPs	104	68	26	-	-	-	-	-	4	56	186	318
Dinton Pastures	84	80	2	5	4	33	6	80	120	94	68	83
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	93	87	83	9	5	3	-	12	8	22	6	33
Eversley GPs	76	74	10	6	10	10	-	6	27	20	65	89
Great Meadow Pond	7	-	12	11	10	33	33	60	100	165	126	28
Horton GPs	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	12	281
Hosehill Lake LNR	29	2	2	-	2	-	44	116	119	-	-	6
Lower Farm GP	32	22	26	10	9	41	115	120	70	59	53	72
Padworth Lane GP	40	88	51	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	8
Pingewood GPs	-	-	19	1	10	25	14	-	22	-	6	-
Thatcham NDC	-	2	2	5	4	3	2	2	9	13	1	1
Twyford GPs	36	68	12	4	1	2	-	-	20	83	91	188
Woolhampton GPs	14	-	8	3	8	-	-	-	16	2	8	-
Wraysbury GPs	178	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	73	187
Elsewhere												
No of Sites	9	2	7	11	12	7	1	3	3	3	7	4
No of Birds	117	46	57	38	40	17	2	5	11	27	89	88
Recorded county total	855	537	330	97	116	167	216	405	526	569	787	1389

Counts may include young birds

**First winter:** although well distributed throughout the county most site totals were below average during this period. Only Wraysbury GPs with 178 on Jan 7th (JMC) and Burghfield GPs with 104 on Jan 19th (WeBS) exceeded counts of 100. Away from the main sites the only notable total was 64 at Bray GP on Jan 19th (BDC). Numbers declined into the early spring and by May no site held more than 10 birds. **Summer/breeding:** from May through to July birds were reported from 26 locations. High totals during this time included 41 at Lower Farm GP on Jun 28th (IW; JL) which quickly increased to 115 on Jul 2nd (IW; MIGW) and 44 at Hosehill Lake on Jul 15th (RJB). Breeding was confirmed at Woolhampton GPs with a female with three young on May 11th (SW) and was followed by

three females with at least 12 young at Theale Main GP on May 17th (KEM), one brood of eight at Eversley GPs on May 29th (RFM; GDU), a brood of five at Crookham Com on Jun 5th (JL), two broods of three and eight at Lower Farm GP on Jun 16th (NC) and one brood of four at Great Meadow Pond on Jun 29th (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** from early autumn it was clear that larger numbers were returning to the county than had left earlier in the year. Totals had already reached three figures at Lower Farm GP and Hosehill Lake in August and by the end of the year seven locations had recorded over 100 birds at some time during the period, the highest counts being 310 at Burghfield GPs on Dec 14th (WeBS) and 281 at Horton GPs on Dec 31st (JMC). Away from the main sites, 60 were counted in Hamstead Park on Nov 1st (AEDH) and 51 at Summerleaze GPs on Dec 7th (WeBS). By the year's end wintering numbers were nearly back to the norm of recent years however when checking recorded December totals for every year back to 2010 it has shown a year on year small decline in numbers which may be of significance in the future.

## TEAL *Anas crecca*

*A common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in the summer, has bred (Amber List)*

**2013** Correction: remove race *A. c. nimia* from species scientific name as this is the Aleutian race.

**2013** Missing information: the highest county count of 230 at Eton Wick occurred on Jan 19th (CDRH).

**2014** Records were received from 36 locations, 12 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 14 in West Berks, the monthly maxima was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	36	30	40	26	–	2	3	11	94	22	33	120
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	19	45	91	8	–	4	5	45	167	215	18	270
Eversley GPs	13	8	8	16	–	6	8	16	34	15	16	30
Great Meadow Pond	8	7	12	5	–	2	5	42	81	7	14	21
Hosehill Lake LNR	25	10	–	–	–	–	1	1	8	2	9	3
Lower Farm GP	40	42	56	8	–	1	3	16	45	22	26	218
Padworth Lane GP	60	73	180	4	–	1	–	4	10	–	11	39
Pingewood GPs	48	100	100	6	3	5	3	3	32	17	6	100
Streatley	8	–	6	–	–	–	–	3	26	35	46	66
Elsewhere												
No of sites	5	5	8	4	1	1	1	2	7	9	7	9
No of birds	35	57	71	7	1	2	2	15	44	46	116	242
Recorded county total	292	372	564	80	4	23	30	155	541	381	295	1109

**First winter:** the year began with near record low figures for January; the total of 292 recorded birds being the lowest since 1994. Numbers picked up in Feb-Mar with the first winter high count of 180 at Padworth Lane GP occurring on Mar 19th (KEM), numbers then declined quickly as we entered the spring. **Spring/summer:** a minimum of 80 birds could still be found in April; 26 at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 2nd-3rd (MFW) being the highest count. By May the county had been almost totally abandoned, a drake at Theale Main GP on May 3rd (KEM) and three (2m 1f) at Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood GPs on May 20th (TGB; KEM) being the only records. An influx occurred in June with birds recorded from eight locations involving up to 23 birds. This influx began on Jun 3rd when a pair arrived at Burnthouse Lane GP (TGB) and was still present on Jun 7th

(KEM). A female was also found at Eton Wick on Jun 3rd and was joined by a pair on Jun 4th (CDRH), a moulting drake was seen there on Jun 11th (CDRH) and two drakes were present on Jun 13th (DJB). Padworth Lane GP held a drake on Jun 4th and 9th (KEM) and another drake was located at Lower Farm GP on Jun 7th and 15th (IW; JL). A pair was located at Horton GP on Jun 10th (CDRH) as were two at Lea Farm Lake (PSc) with at least the drake remaining until Jun 15th (RM). Four drakes appeared on the New Workings at Eversley GPs on Jun 13th (RCM) with two still present on Jun 15th (NS); later two pairs were seen on June 28th (RCM). Finally two females remained at Great Meadow Pond from Jun 22nd into July (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** July saw a small increase in numbers which accelerated in August, building up to a peak in September. The outstanding count during this period was 167 at Eton Wick on Sep 16th (CDRH) and numbers continued to increase here in October with 215 on Oct 9th (DJB). Elsewhere numbers began to decline as passage birds moved on leaving November as devoid of birds as January was. An influx in December meant that the year ended on a high; the counts of 270 at Eton Wick on Dec 3rd (CDRH) and 218 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 27th (IW) were the highest of the year, another count of 160 at Slough SF on Dec 18th (CDRH) probably involved Eton Wick birds.

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

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

This species is extremely under recorded; it is ubiquitous throughout our river systems and lakes and could be expected to turn up anywhere from a tiny roadside ditch, a reservoir or to a rainwater puddle in the middle of Swinley Forest. The monthly maxima at the most regularly counted sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GP	37	–	18	6	–	–	14	6	19	26	42	63
Dinton Pastures	8	14	15	–	6	–	63	75	–	201	129	143
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	62	–	–	35	–	–	176	324	–	275	–	–
Eversley GPs	56	46	30	35	43	62	68	58	84	54	50	34
Great Meadow Pond	28	17	22	44	38	46	114	140	46	29	80	60
Hungerford	–	–	–	–	–	50	65	100	70	–	55	
Lower Farm GP	32	25	7	25	33	15	10	19	18	72	37	35
Padworth Lane GP	23	30	34	23	22	17	–	–	–	–	5	24
Thatcham NDC	48	43	10	34	45	87	42	99	108	77	94	98
Whiteknights Park	38	33	2	–	9	6	–	–	–	16	–	30
Wraysbury GPs	44	14	21	–	25	24	–	–	–	67	28	135

The high count of 324 at Eton Wick occurred on Aug 25th (KPD). Away from the main sites, interesting counts involved 65 Pingewood GPs on Jul 31st (KEM), 88 Englefield on Sep 11th (RCr), 76 Herschel Park, Slough on Sep 20th (BDC) and 71 Virginia Water on Nov 19th (RMH). **Breeding:** was reported from 38 locations and involved 69 broods. This however, must be just the tip of the iceberg as this species is rarely systematically recorded. Most sites reported one to three breeding females with broods, higher totals came from Great Meadow Pond where nine broods totaling 68 ducklings were recorded during the summer (DJB) and at Woodlands Park where flooded fields provided ideal breeding habitat and at least seven broods were hatched (DJB).

## PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

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

**2013** Corrections: total number of birds recorded in the second winter according to the report is 25–29 birds not 22 (it would be 29 if the two records of 4 over Dinton Pastures on Oct 13th and 18th were of different birds). Delete one pair Theale GPs Jan 15th as date is incorrect. Delete the record for Thatcham on Oct 5th as the record refers to Lower Farm GP. The finder of the Eton Wick female on Jan 24th was CDRH.

**2013** Missing records: one pair Hosehill Lake, Theale GPs on Jan 1st (AMH); two females Great Meadow Pond on Oct 6th (DJB). This increases the October total of birds in the table to 13 (original total 11 not 10) and the second winter total to 27 to 31 birds.

**2014** Records were submitted from 17 locations, 7 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks and involved 32 separate records involving up to 87 birds, 86 of which arrived in 2014, this is the highest total of birds since the record year of 2003. The monthly status is shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	3*	2	9	1**	0	0	0	0	5	4	1	1
No. of birds	24*	13	26	2**	0	0	0	0	10	11	1	2

\*Includes 2013 wintering bird; \*\*Birds arrived in March, remaining into April

**First winter:** the 2013 female remained at Horton GPs to at least Jan 11th (CDRH). The first 2014 arrivals occurred in late January when a drake was located at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jan 25th – 30th (MFW *et al.*) and a flock of 22 flew north over Borough Marsh on Jan 26th (CDRH). A drake was present at Padworth Lane GP on Feb 2nd (RJB) and again on Feb 16th (KEM) whilst there was a succession of records from Theale Main GP with a female Feb 2nd (RJB), a drake Feb 12th, seven (3m 4f) on Feb 19th and three (1m 2f) on Feb 25th (all AVL). Late winter passage peaked in March with a pair at Horton GPs on Mar 2nd (CDRH), one or two drakes on floods at Arborfield on Mar 4th (DJS), two drakes at Burnthouse Lane GP on Mar 8th (KEM), one pair Padworth Lane GP on Mar 12th with the drake remaining to Mar 30th (RJB *et al.*). Ten (4m 6f, AVL) or eleven (CMc) were on Theale Main GP on Mar 12th, then one was reported from Eversley GPs on Mar 15th (NS), pairs at Moatlands GP on Mar 15th (SAG) and Great Meadow Pond on Mar 16th (DJB), a drake at Lavell's Lake on Mar 20th (FJC) and finally a pair at Theale Main GP on Mar 28th (KEM) and Apr 4th (RCr). **Autumn/second winter:** the first records of this period involved single eclipse drakes at Eton Wick on Sep 5th (CDRH; KPD) remaining to Sep 18th (MO), Lower Farm GP on Sep 10th (NC) and the Rowney Predator Lake, Woolhampton GPs on Sep 12th to 27th (KEM). Another eclipse drake was located at Lea Farm Lake on Sep 13th (BTB *et al.*) who had three birds there the following day (Sep 14th). Two eclipse or immatures were on Burnthouse Lane GP on Sep 14th to 18th (MFW) with one to Sep 20th (KEM) then back at Lea Farm Lake two were noted on Sep 21st–22nd (MFW *et al.*). In October, seven were reported from Hosehill Lake on Oct 4th (PEH) and a female was there on Oct 8th (AVL), a female/juv flew downstream at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 13th (CDRH) and a juv was located at Summerleaze GP on Oct 14th (CDRH) and the last record of this passage period involved a female at Theale Main GP on Oct 17th (RCr). The only winter records involved one at Theale Main GP on Nov 30th (AVL) and a pair briefly at Queen Mother Res on Dec 29th (CDRH).

## GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

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

**2012** Correction: The total number of records that appear in the 2012 report is 12 records involving 15 birds, not the 38 records involving 22 birds that are quoted in the report.

**2013** Delete the record for Longwater Road, Finchamstead on Apr 14th. Also delete the record of two at Burghfield GPs on April 22nd as both records were not accompanied by details to support their identification.

**2014** A just above average year compared to recent years with records received from seven locations throughout the county. Records involved six or seven birds in the spring and at least eight in the autumn. Spring passage: the first of the year involved a pair at Searles Farm Lane GP, Burghfield GPs on Mar 30th (MFW) and was followed by a drake which visited Queen Mother Res at dusk on Apr 20th (CDRH) and a pair at Burnthouse Lane GPs on Apr 21st (KEM; ABT) and again on the adjacent Burnthouse Lane floods on Apr 25th (RCo). A drake that was possibly of the latter pair was seen at Burnthouse Lane on May 9th (RJB; RHS) to May 12th (PBr; KEM). The last of the spring involved another drake at the New Diggings, Eversley GPs on May 16th (RCM). Autumn passage: the floods at Eton Wick provided ideal habitat for this species and from early July through to August birds were continually present. The first record at this site involved a single juvenile on Jul 5th (CDRH), by Jul 7th, two juvs were present and five birds (2 eclipse drakes, 2 juvs and 1 female) were located on Jul 10th (CDRH), this is the largest group recorded since eight at the same location on Aug 26th 1999. From then onward, up to four birds were seen daily (MO) until numbers declined in early August, the last sighting being one bird on Aug 9th (CDRH). Away from Eton Wick and somewhat later in the season, a juv frequented Hosehill Lake from Sep 16th to 24th (KEM *et al.*), one was at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Sep 21st (MFW) and finally a female was on Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures on Oct 10th (MFW; SDa) and 12th (WeBS). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table:

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07*	08	09	10	11	12*	13*	14
No. of records	12	9	8	8	10	14	18	10	16	8	5	7	12	9	11
No. of birds	19	12	11	11	14	16	22	11	20	14	6	6	15	11	15

\*Totals quoted in these reports are erroneous

## SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

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

Records were received from 27 locations, 10 in East and Mid Berks and 7 in West Berks, the monthly maxima was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	6	5	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	4	46
Dinton Pastures	2	2	3	4	1	–	3	12	52	71	14	30
Eversley GPs	87	78	26	–	–	–	–	5	15	38	14	44
Great Meadow Pond	3	–	13	10	–	4	4	27	33	18	20	28
Lower Farm GPs	30	41	54	19	2	–	4	15	26	21	43	140
Padworth Lane GP	–	6	18	5	1	–	–	2	3	–	19	4
Pingewood GPs	–	–	13	19	5	3	1	1	34	–	1	3



Slough SF	-	-	-	-	1	5	4	5	-	7	15	-
Thatcham NDC	-	-	2	2	-	-	1	14	6	1	4	4
Theale GPs	38	-	4	14	-	-	2	28	70	102	163	28
Twyford GPs	45	21	11	-	-	-	-	-	1	30	16	27
Whitknights Pk	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	40	73
Wraysbury GPs	48	5	12	-	-	-	-	-	22	6	15	18
Elsewhere												
No of sites	4	1	2	2	4	1	1	3	2	2	2	7
No of birds	43	2	8	17	10	6	15	5	11	6	15	67
Recorded county total	305	160	168	90	20	18	34	114	274	312	383	512

July totals include young birds

**First winter:** totals were disappointing throughout the period. It may be that numbers have been affected by the winter floods with some gravel pit complexes becoming totally flooded thus losing their shallows, causing birds to seek better feeding elsewhere. The only site to hold good numbers throughout was Eversley GPs with a high of 87 on Jan 8th (NS). **Spring/summer:** wintering birds had mostly departed by late March-early April so it was heartening to see that at least 20 birds could still be found shared amongst nine locations during May. The highest May count was five at Burnthouse Lane GPs on May 31st (KEM). Numbers were still high in June although by now only four sites held birds. In the east of the county it appeared that birds were moving between Slough SF and Eton Wick and it was at this latter site that breeding occurred; a female with 10 ducklings on Jul 2nd (CDRH), the first confirmed breeding in Berkshire since 2005. This brood was quickly reduced to three ducklings by Jul 9th but by Jul 31st all three were still present and were fully feathered although still not capable of sustained flight (CDRH). Another female with a fledged brood of three arrived at Eton Wick on Jul 20th (CDRH) so may have bred locally. **Autumn/second winter:** birds began to return to their wintering sites in August and numbers steadily increased right through into December. High counts involved 102 at Hosehill Lake on Oct 27th (KEM), 167 Theale Main GP on Nov 17th (RJB) and 140 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 27th (IW).

## RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

*Uncommon visitor of presumed feral origin which occasionally breeds*

Records were received from 11 locations throughout the county, 5 in East Berks and 3 in Mid and West Berks. The county status for 2014 is shown in the table:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	4	1	4	2	2	3	1	2	2	0	2	5
Minimum no. of birds	5	3	9	10	8	6	2	3	9	0	8	9

**First winter:** the 2013 wintering female at Bray GP was last seen on Jan 9th (CDRH), a pair was located at Theale Main GP on Jan 8th (AMH) and single drakes visited Lower Farm GP on Jan 11th (IW; JL) and Padworth Lane GP on Jan 13th (RJB). The only records for February involved a pair on Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Feb 18th (FJC) which on Feb 23rd was joined by another drake (PKe) and from then, throughout March one to three birds were regularly reported from various waters within the country park. The Theale Main GP pair re-appeared on Mar 3rd (AVL) and another pair took up residence on the adjacent Hosehill Lake on Mar 8th (AVL). Reports were regular from both waters throughout the rest of March and mating was observed on Hosehill Lake on Mar 27th (RCW). Other records involved a female visiting the flood at Eton Wick on Mar 14th (CDRH) and a pair at Thatcham NDC

on Mar 25th (GJS). **Spring/summer:** reports continued from both Dinton Pastures and Theale GPs. At the latter site three drakes and a female were on Hosehill Lake on Apr 3rd and further reports came from other Theale waters such as one pair at Bottom Lane GP on Apr 26th (SAG). At Dinton Pastures CP three drakes and the female were observed together on Sandford Lake on Apr 5th (MFW) and again on May 27th (PSc) and would suggest that four birds resided in the area throughout the time period, the last record involved the pair on Lea Farm Lake on June 5th (RM). Back at Theale Main GP a pair with two ducklings was found on May 8th (KEM) with one still present on May 10th (the 3rd breeding record for Berks after records in 2008 and 2011) but none were seen subsequently and by the end of May, Theale Main had been deserted. The Hosehill pair remained throughout the summer and one was also reported from Bottom Lane GP on Jun 5th (CMS) which may have been the bird reported from Padworth Lane GP on Jun 11th (KEM). **Autumn/second winter:** a female was present at Eversley GPs from Aug 23rd (RCM) to Aug 27 (GDu) and at Hosehill Lake the resident pair was joined by two drakes on Sep 10th – 12th (RCr). Five birds (1 ad drake, 1 ad fem and 3 imm/eclipse) visited Woolhampton GPs on Sep 27th (KEM) but these birds quickly moved on. There were no further records until November when three were back at Hosehill Lake on the 3rd, increasing to four on Dec 21st (AVL) then a single drake there and on Theale Main GP on Dec 29th – 31st (SAG; TGB). Further east, four 1st winter birds (3m 1f) were on Horton GP on Nov 24th increasing to five (an additional ad drake) on Nov 30th (CDRH). A 1st winter drake on Dec 5th (CDRH) and a female on Dec 12th and 31st (CDRH; JMC) were still at Horton whilst other December records involved a pair at Bray GPs from Dec 9th (BDC) into 2015, single drakes at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 2nd (CDRH) and 31st (JMC) and two there on Dec 29th (CDRH). Finally a pair was noted at Thatcham NDC on Dec 29th (SAG).

## **POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

*Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant, uncommon in summer but has now bred for seven consecutive years (Amber Listed)*

Records were only received from 21 locations, 9 in East Berks, 7 in Mid Berks and 5 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	129	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	86	104
Burghfield GPs	28	83	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5	30
Dinton Pastures CP	2	19	11	2	–	1	2	1	1	1	60	99
Eversley GPs	15	17	3	–	–	3	–	3	4	13	16	17
Great Meadow Pond	219	29	20	20	16	50	48	39	9	9	53	41
Horton GPs	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	18	100	10	53
Lower Farm GP	32	10	10	4	5	9	19	14	7	7	13	10
Padworth Lane GP	16	7	4	–	–	9	2	17	9	8	9	18
Thatcham NDC	11	21	29	4	4	8	4	2	1	–	2	8
Theale GPs	10	–	12	–	2	–	–	1	4	12	49	71
Woolhampton GPs	10	–	6	12	9	9	–	1	14	2	4	–
Wraysbury GPs	22	74	23	–	–	–	12	–	–	30	115	154
Elsewhere												
No of sites	7	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	3
No of birds	130	38	4	3	1	7	4	4	4	1	117	11
Recorded county total	646	298	124	45	37	96	91	82	71	201	539	616

**First winter:** the high numbers using Great Meadow Pond in December 2013 continued to increase, reaching a maximum of 219 on Jan 18th (WeBS) the highest Berks count of the year. The usually productive sites of Wraysbury and Horton GPs had extremely low totals as did most other locations and this may be due to the recent decline in the British population that will elevate Pochard to the Birds of Conservation Concern Red List in 2015. The only site other than Great Meadow Pond to register 100+ birds was Bray GPs with 129 on Jan 17 (DJB), away from the named sites in the table, 49 at Moatlands Main GP on Jan 18 (SAG) provided the highest count. **Spring/summer:** after March most winter locations were vacated and apart from Great Meadow Pond in the east and the gravel pits around Newbury through to Woolhampton in the west, birds had become scarce. From May birds were only resident in any numbers at four main locations: at Great Meadow Pond at least 16 birds were present in May and on June 1st breeding was confirmed when three females with broods totaling 15 young were seen. By Jun 22nd another three broods had been discovered and of the 26 young seen at least 13 fledged (DJB). Further west on Jun 23rd a pair with four young was located at Thatcham Marsh (MJD) and what was probably this brood, but with six young was noted on Jun 29th (SAG) and it is thought that three may have successfully fledged. Two pairs bred at Lower Farm GP hatching broods of two and four young (JL; JLS) and a female with a brood of seven was located on Woolhampton GPs on Jul 13th (GEW). This total of 10 breeding pairs is the highest total since at least the 1950s and the total of six at Great Meadow Pond equals the high totals of six breeding pairs in Windsor Great Park in 1964 and 1966 (per the MTNHS reports). **Autumn/second winter:** as usual the midsummer build up of birds at Great Meadow Pond provided the highest counts in the early autumn. After a dip in numbers in August-September, numbers began to increase in early October, 100 at Horton GPs on Oct 8th (CDRH) being noteworthy. Away from the named sites in the table, 83 were present at the nowadays under-watched Moatlands Main GP on Nov 29th (ABT). The last record of the year also produced the highest count of the second winter with 154 at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 31st (JMC).

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

*Rare vagrant*

The eleventh\*county record and the first since 2007 involved an advanced first winter drake at Bray GPs on Dec 22nd (CDRH *et al.*). The bird was seen by many observers and remained into 2015. Disturbance at its home of choice, the smaller of the two Bray pits meant that it occasionally could be found on the Jubilee River at Dorney Wetlands loafing with other aythya ducks, this occurred on Dec 24th (CDRH), Dec 28th and Dec 31st (DAC) but it would soon relocate back to Bray. The yearly status based on year of arrival since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	2	1*	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
No. of birds	0	2	1*	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

\* There were two records for the Moatlands GP area, a drake on May 13th to Jun 13th and an eclipse drake on Sep 12th, these are presumed to be the same bird so are counted as one record.

\*The number of records stated in previous reports and the county avifauna is erroneous; county records are as follows: 1 Apr 1959; 1 Dec 1977 to Apr 1978; 1 Mar –Apr 1999; 1 Apr 1999; 1 Jan 2001; 1 Nov 2001 to Jan 2002; 1 May – Jun and again Sep 2002; 1 Mar –Apr 2006; 1 Nov 2006; 1 Apr 2007 and the 2014 record.

## TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

*Common resident, numbers greatly increased in the winter (Amber Listed)*

After the Mallard, this is our commonest duck whose winter abundance may be even greater than that of the latter species. Records came from 59 locations, 29 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 20 in West Berks, the monthly maxima is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	16	28	14	–	–	–	–	5	–	2	10	13
Ascot Heath	19	22	16	13	8	6	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bray GPs	638	350	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	133	465	406
Burghfield GPs	320	218	250	–	–	–	–	–	84	175	362	373
Dinton Pastures CP	–	168	–	12	–	10	20	–	–	62	105	142
Eversley GPs	130	168	120	122	34	102	102	85	72	70	159	145
Great Meadow Pond	27	23	39	40	15	10	24	19	10	13	21	24
Horton GPs	552	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	270	243	308
Hosehill Lake LNR	70	20	21	–	12	–	–	10	10	–	–	3
Lower Farm GP	28	26	36	32	25	19	19	29	10	14	16	16
Padworth Lane GP	68	64	51	56	19	2	–	–	–	–	26	42
Queen Mother Res	44	61	8	–	1	–	9	–	220	167	53	38
Summerleaze GP	327	–	41	–	–	–	–	–	–	68	21	88
Thatcham Marsh	15	36	5	2	6	7	1	–	–	–	–	6
Thatcham NDC	25	50	56	22	8	20	35	78	28	27	10	30
Twyford GPs	193	144	151	50	13	4	–	–	20	35	91	134
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	40	102	29	49	–	24	51	33	61	–
Wraysbury GPs	667	90*	285	101	–	7	–	–	–	961	1251	1217
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	6	8	5	8	14	6	7	1	4	1	7	7
Number of birds	52	96	70	95	54	22	35	17	16	2	135	94
Recorded county total	3196	1564	1233	647	224	258	245	267	521	2032	3029	3079

\*Partial count

Although totals especially for the winter months appear quite impressive there are some localities where this species is plentiful i.e. Theale Main GP, Moatlands GP and Old Slade GP where counts are not available, whilst in the summer months Tufted Ducks tend to be overlooked. WeBS counts throughout the whole year would help to get a more accurate idea of the true status of all our duck species. **First winter:** the highest counts involved 667 at Wraysbury GPs and 552 at Horton on Jan 7th (JMC), 639 at Bray GPs on Jan 17th (DJB) and 327 at Summerleaze GP on Jan 18th (BDC). Away from the main sites no counts exceeded 39 birds. A leucistic female was present at Bray GP on Oct 26th and Dorney Wetlands on Nov 7th (CDRH). **Spring/summer:** records were received from 33 locations between the months of May and July, and breeding was reported from 10 of these involving 24 pairs. The highest concentrations of breeding pairs came from Eversley GPs where at least eight broods were noted (MGLR) and Lower Farm GP where up to four broods were reported (NDOC). The highest count during this period of 102 at Eversley GPs occurred on Jun 28th (NS) and Jul 1st (RCM). **Autumn/second winter:** the first large counts of this period came from Queen Mother Res with 152 on Sep 11th increasing to 220 on Sep 26th (PNe). Elsewhere it was not until October that numbers really began to increase with Wraysbury GPs leading the way with 961 there on Oct 28th and peaking at 1251 on Nov 20th (JMC). The high counts of 465 at

Bray GPs occurred on Nov 9th (BDC) whilst the 373 at Burghfield GPs occurred on Dec 14th (WeBS). Away from the main sites, 85 were at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 30th (KPD) and 80 flew west along the R Thames at Hurley on Dec 16th (SJF; FMF).

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila*

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

After the very poor year of 2013 (the worst since 1998) it was hoped that records would pick up in 2014, however this year was just as bad, the only records coming in the first winter. Both records involved single drakes, the first at Eversley GPs on Feb 20th-22nd (MO) and the other at Lower Farm GP on Mar 16th (NC). This bird was fairly elusive however and although the last sighting was on Apr 14th (BJW) it was only seen on the intervening dates of Mar 19th (KEM); Mar 20th, on Lower Farm Trout Lake (IW; JL) and Apr 8th (NC; MJD). The status of Scaup in Berkshire based on the year of arrival since 2000 is shown below.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	4	2	8	5	3	4	4	8	10	6	9	3	6	2	2
No. of birds	6	3	10	5	3	4	5*	9	11	6	13	3	6	2	2

\*1 bird possibly a hybrid

**LESSER SCAUP** *Aythya affinis*

*Very rare vagrant*

An adult drake found at the Sunnymeads GP, Wraysbury GPs on Oct 29th (CDRH) remained on show at this difficult to view location to Nov 1st (MO). It is the third record for Berkshire, the others being drakes at Woolhampton GP in 2007 and at Wraysbury GPs and Queen Mother Res in 2008. Record accepted by the BBRC for the above dates.

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

**2013** Additional date: The Queen Mother Res drake on Nov 15th remained to Nov 18th (BTB; TAG) not Nov 17th

**2014** An above average year with seven records involving 22 birds. All records were between June and November and consisted of an adult drake at Queen Mother Res on Jun 14th (CDRH; MMc), another adult drake at Moatlands GP on Jul 18th (RCr) then at Queen Mother Res there were seven including four drakes on Aug 6th (CDRH), nine juvs on Sep 22nd (CDRH), one female on Oct 2nd (CDRH) and a juvenile briefly there on Nov 12th (CDRH). Finally a drake and female/imm were observed at Theale Main GP on Nov 21st (AVL; KEM). The status of Common Scoter in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	4	0	6	8	6	2	3	5	4	5	2	5	7	11	7
Minimum no. of birds	15	0	9	12	97	3	3	6	23	9	3	8	14	15	22

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

*Locally common winter visitor, scarce in the west (Amber List)*

Records were received from 14 locations throughout the county, 6 in East Berks, 6 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks. The monthly maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	1	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4
Dinton Pastures CP	8	8	8	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	2
Eversley GPs	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Horton GPs	7	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	7	2
Moatlands GPs	4	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	11
Queen Mother Res	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Theale GPs	8	7	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	8
Twyford GPs	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	3
Wraysbury GPs	21	12	27	5	–	–	–	–	–	2	10	31
Elsewhere												
No of sites	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1
No of birds	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	1
Recorded county total	57	42	40	13	0	1	1	0	0	5	36	66

The close proximity of most of the named sites to at least one other named site will increase the possibility of birds moving from one location to another, because of this the county total can only be looked upon as an approximate number of birds within the county at any one time. **First winter:** as usual the highest counts came from Wraysbury/Horton GPs complex and a combined total on Jan 7th of 28 (JMC) was the highest 1st winter count and although lower numbers were reported in February (probably due to flooding), 27 were still present at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 6th (PNe) and 17 were still there on Mar 29th (CDRH). Theale and Dinton Pastures, the main Mid Berks sites, held similar numbers throughout the period and away from the named locations a pair visited Padworth Lane GP on Feb 16th (RJB). By April birds could only be found at three locations and the last record involved a drake at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 8th (MFW). **Summer:** surprisingly there were two records: an un-ringed first winter drake at Eton Wick on Jun 3rd (CDRH) and an adult female at Horton GPs on Jul 27th (CDRH) which was presumed to be the bird that summered at Wraysbury Res, Surrey. These records are the first summer records since 2009. **Second winter:** the first returning birds, an adult female and two juvs, were found on Summerleaze GP on Oct 12th (WeBS) and 19th (CDRH); two more were on Wraysbury GPs, a female on Oct 18th and a drake on Oct 31st (CDRH). By November all of the usual sites held birds, and numbers peaked in December with high counts of 11 at Moatlands GPs on Dec 29th (RCr) and 31 at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 31st (JMC). Away from the named sites, a 1st winter drake was present at Woolhampton GPs from Nov 1st to 26th (KEM), two were reported from Lower Farm GP on Nov 22nd (JLS) and a drake was on Summerleaze GP on Dec 26th (CDRH).

### **SMEW** *Mergellus albellus*

*Uncommon (and declining?) winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

Records came from only 6 locations, 2 in East Berks and 4 in Mid Berks, the monthly maxima is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Min no. of birds	11	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7

The appalling figures in the table, show 2014 to be the worst year for this species since 1984 and continues a pattern of ongoing decline that has been visible for a number of years and is

possibly due to our warming climate. **First winter:** at Wraysbury GPs there were 12 records in January, usually of one to three birds (MO) the only higher count involved seven (3 drakes) on Jan 25th (CDRH). Due to the severe flooding in this area in February there were only five records for the month and they follow a similar pattern as of January. The highest count involved six (3 drakes) on Feb 2nd (CDRH) and are believed to be the same birds as in January. The last record involved two birds on Mar 5th (CDRH); it appears that a minimum of seven birds wintered at this site. At Theale GPs, one or two redheads were reported from Theale Main and Hosehill Lake from Jan 3rd to Feb 12th (AVL *et al.*). A larger count of three redheads on Theale Main GP was seen on Jan 8th (RJB). Eversley GPs hosted a single drake from Jan 11th to 19th then again from Feb 7th to 25th (MGLR). What was once a popular site for this species, Twyford GPs has now been almost abandoned; there was only one report of a single bird at the Lands End GP on Feb 16th (WeBS). These records show that a minimum of only 12 birds were present in Berkshire in the first winter. **Second winter:** Burghfield GPs hosted the only November record; a redhead at Searle's Farm Lane GP, which arrived on the early date of Nov 8th (JA). It then disappeared until the end of the month before reappearing on Nov 29th-30th and Dec 13th (JA *et al.*). The main arrival was very late, there being no records until three on Dec 28th; a drake at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH) which increased to two drakes and a redhead on Dec 29th (CDRH) and Dec 31st (JMC), a pair arrived at Eversley GPs (NS) and remained into 2015 and at Dinton Pastures a drake was located on Sandford Lake (ABT). The above records give a total of only seven birds for the second winter. The table below shows the approximate number of birds present in Berkshire every year since 2000 based only on the highest count from each occupied site in both winter periods. And apart from 2010, shows a gradual decline over the 15 years.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10*	11	12	13	14
Approx no. of birds	60	63	72	60	43	48	46	39	20	27	71	36	47	25	19

\*indicates the hardest winter weather of the period

## RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (Green Listed)*

Two records per year, now appears to be the norm for this once more frequent visitor to Berkshire. This year both records occurred in the early spring at Queen Mother Res. The first involved an immature drake and a female that circled the reservoir twice before departing to the east on Mar 24th (CDRH). Another immature drake was accompanying four Great Crested Grebes on Apr 4th (RDR; CL). The yearly status of this species since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	5	5	7	6	4	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
No. of birds	5	8	11	10	4	2	0	0	0	1	3	5	3	2	3

## GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

*Uncommon winter visitor though regular at preferred sites, has summered (Green Listed)*

Records came from 21 locations this year, 10 in East Berks, 7 in Mid Berks and 4 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	25	29	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	78
Padworth Lane GPs	6	7	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Queen Mother Res*	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Theale GPs	11	9	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	14
Wraysbury GPs	14	8	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	15
Elsewhere												
No of sites	3	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
No of birds	6	16	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Recorded county total	63	71	47	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	123

\*all records refer to birds flying over the location

**First winter:** as usual the highest counts came from the regular roost at Eversley GPs. However the first winter totals were considerably less than in recent years, the high of 29 (15 drakes) occurring on Feb 25th (JMC). Other noteworthy counts from the main sites were 14 (9 drakes) at Wraysbury GPs on both Jan 7th (JMC) and Jan 25th (CDRH) and 11 at Theale GPs on Jan 28th -29th (AVL). Away from the main sites, birds were recorded from another 12 locations, the pick of these being eight on floods at Aldermaston on Feb 16th-17th (KEM) and further west up to three birds frequented the Lower Farm Trout Lake and GP from Feb 24nd (IW; JL) to Mar 22nd (JL). By April the only remaining birds were two drakes at Padworth Lane GPs which had enjoyed a good season for this species; the last report was of a drake on Apr 11th (KEM). **Second winter:** five localities recorded Goosander in November, the first being a redhead flying south over Queen Mother Res on Nov 8th (CDRH). Numbers were slow to build up and it was not until the end of December that numbers began to compare well with previous years. High counts at this time involved 14 (8 drakes) at Theale GPs on Dec 26th (RCo), eight (5 drakes) at Moatlands GP on Dec 29th (RCr), 78 (c50% drakes) at Eversley GPs also on Dec 29th (JMC) and 15 Wraysbury GPs on Dec 31st (JMC).

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

*Previously a rare breeding resident and uncommon winter visitor, now a rare visitor on the verge of extinction due to the national cull of this species to protect White-headed Duck populations in Europe.*

The only record in 2014 involved a female at Searle's Farm Lane GP, Burghfield GPs on Nov 23rd (JA). It seems that this introduced species brief time as part of Berkshires avifauna will soon be at an end.

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

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

Records were received from 75 locations, 24 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 40 in West Berks. The actual distribution of this species is confusing as many country estates turn large numbers out for the shoot every autumn and this probably sustains some populations that may otherwise die out. Throughout the year counts of 10 or more were reported from 18 locations, 13 of which were in the rural west of the county, the highest counts, which all occurred from Jan-Mar and Aug-Dec were **East Berks:** 22 Great Meadow Pond on Jan 19th (DJB). **Mid Berks:** 17 Englefield on Nov 29th (RCr) and **West Berks:** 40 Great Shefford Aug 15th and 18th (JLS), 30 Streatley Warren on Oct 26 (MSFW), 50 Combe on Nov 5th (IW) and 55 from six coveys on the Compton Downs on Nov 29th (DJB). All of these counts probably refer to released birds. **Breeding:** there were only two records submitted, an adult with nine young at Englefield on Aug 3rd (RCr) and a pair with six juvs at Aston on Sep 12th (DF).



## GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

*Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)*

**2012–2013** Missing breeding records: At Englefield 48 pairs bred in 2012 and 31 pairs bred in 2013 the decline between the two years was due to poor weather at a critical time in 2012. The Englefield population was estimated at 109 birds in autumn 2013 (RCr, Theale area Bird Reports)

**2014** Records were received from just 23 locations, 5 in East Berks 2 in Mid Berks and 16 in West Berks. This is a significant decrease in sites compared to 2013 and it must be stressed that of these 23 locations, 17 only recorded birds on one date and 16 recorded less than four birds. The table shows the monthly maxima taken from submitted, dated records.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bury/Cow Down	9	4	6	4	–	–	–	24	22	–	20	7
Compton Downs	2	2	–	4	1	1	–	7	–	11	8	4
Englefield	2	21	6	4	2	5	–	11	44	61	74	26
Windsor Great Park	–	–	4	2	2	–	–	–	–	22	12	10
Elsewhere												
No of sites	1	1	2	4	3	4	1	0	2	1	0	1
No of birds	2	3	3	8	5	5	2	0	10	13	0	1
Recorded county total	15	30	23	20	12	11	2	42	76	109	124	65

As the table shows, the main Berkshire locality for this species is the Englefield Estate, just west of Theale. Here careful management of the environment has increased the natural population substantially. It is at Englefield Estate that the only breeding records for the year came with up to 40 pairs known to have bred (TABR) and although the table only shows a high count of 74 (on Nov 24 RCr), game management staff had estimated an autumn population of around 230 birds (per TABR). Elsewhere birds were regularly reported from the North Berkshire Downs with high counts of 24 at Bury Down on Aug 19th (ABT) and 11 on the Compton Downs on Oct 25th (DJB). In East Berks the reintroduction of birds into Windsor Great Park is beginning to show results with a covey of 22 seen at Great Meadow Pond on Oct 19th (DJB). Away from Windsor the only East Berks records came from three locations in the Binfield area, where the highest count was just three birds at Jealott's Hill on Feb 3rd (RCM) and from Queen Mother Res where a male was seen on the perimeter track on Mar 19th (CDRH), when flushed the bird flew out over the Reservoir landed on the water before flying back to the shore! Away from Englefield, the only other Mid Berks record came from Padworth on Jun 9th (DJS). In the west, away from the tabled sites, four or more birds were seen at three locations and involved: six Hodcott Down, West Ilsley on Sep 9th (ABT), four Lambourn on Sep 15th (CDRH) and 13 at Bradley Wood Boxford on Oct 29th (GDS).

## QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

*Uncommon summer visitor in varying numbers, most common on the downs (Schedule One and Amber Listed)*

**2012** The first record of the year, a singing bird at Wellbottom Down on May 16th (DJB) is not mentioned in the species account although it does appear in the arrivals and departures section.

**2013** Correction: the record of six calling on Compton Down on Aug 8th, should have read Compton Downs (an amalgamation of sites generally to the north of Compton). Birds heard at Roden Down in June would probably have been some of these birds.

**2014** With only four records involving five birds (3 calling males), 2014 was the worst year since 1999. Records came from two East Berks locations and two downland locations in West Berks. The first of the year involved a presumed migrant that was flushed initially by walkers at Dorney Wetlands on May 13th (DAC) this was followed by two calling males near Liddiard's Green, Farnborough on Jun 1st (GDS). The usual influx of records in June did not materialize this year and one had to wait to July for the next record, a bird flushed at Moss End on Jul 1st (RCM). The final record of this disappointing year was of a single bird calling at dusk at Upper Lambourn on Aug 7th (CDRH).

**PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

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

This familiar species was reported throughout rural Berkshire and from a variety of habitats. It is the most popular game bird in Berkshire and the counties shooting estates turn out thousands every autumn for the shoot. In fact there are so many in some areas such as Combe, Streatley, Windsor Great Park, Remenham and parts of the Berkshire Downs, most observers pay no attention to them. The highest count submitted this year involved 70 on Walbury Hill on Nov 24 (IW). Breeding was massively under recorded, the only records coming from Burnthouse Lane (RCr), Crazies Hill (VFo; LFo), Eastbury (GDS) and West Heath (GDS) all of single nests or broods. Garden records came from Caversham with one on Mar 21st (RCW) and Pangbourne with one on Apr 11th (ATa).

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

*Scarce, but in recent years an annual winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

**2012** Correction: there were three individuals present in the first winter, not five. Please note with five individuals (3 in 1st winter and 2 in 2nd winter) 2012 was a record year for this species in Berkshire.

**2014** The 49th and 50th records for the county since 1900 were both recorded in the autumn. A winter plumaged adult arrived at Theale Main GP on Oct 15th (AVL *et al.*) and kindly remained for its many admirers until Nov 29th (KEM). On the contrary a juvenile that arrived at Queen Mother Res on Nov 9th only remained until Nov 11th (CDRH). This is the ninth consecutive year for records and with a total of 24 records involving 25 birds during this 9 year period it is nearly 50% of the counties total for the last 115 years, in fact there have been more birds in the first 15 years of the 21st century than there has been for the whole of the 20th century! The yearly status of the Great Northern Diver since 2000 is shown in the table (totals are based on year of their arrival).

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	1	0	2	0	0	4	1	3	3	2	4	5	1	3

All records involved one bird except in 2008 when there were two records involving 3 birds

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

*Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 52 locations, 24 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 17 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	8	6	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	4	1	8
Eversley GPs	10	10	18	7	14	13	29	30	12	10	8	10
Lower Farm GP	3	3	6	6	7	5	12	18	14	12	6	4
The Wilderness, Kintbury	–	3	8	–	1	1	2	2	3	–	1	1
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	8	4	9	13	8	11	10	8	7	13	6	12
Number of birds	14	7	19	16	16	21	16	26	33	28	13	17
Recorded county Total	35	29	51	29	38	40	60	76	64	54	29	40

Eversley GPs and Lower Farm GPs were the two main sites in 2014. Eversley GPs held 5 pairs, all of which bred (MGLR), the high count of 30 occurred on Aug 2nd (NS). At Lower Farm GP, three broods were noted in Jun/Jul (NC) and the high count of 18 occurred on Aug 8th (NC) and 23rd (IW). Away from the main sites the highest counts came from Hosehill Lake where an autumn build up began with two adults and five juvs on Aug 24 and continued to increase until reaching a peak of 20 on Sep 23rd (AVL). No other site count exceeded six birds. **Breeding:** apart from Eversley and Lower Farm, breeding was only confirmed at three other locations. At Leiper Pond, Windsor Great Park a nesting pair was located on Apr 18th (DJB) and subsequently three juvs were reported there on Jun 21st (SA). A pair had one chick at Thatcham Marsh on June 29th (SAG) and a pair with three near full grown young was at Burnthouse Lane GP on Jul 23rd (KEM).

## GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

*Common resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 43 locations, 22 in East Berks, 12 in Mid Berks and 9 in West Berks. The monthly maxima from the most regularly counted sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	12	–	12	6	4	4	–	–	–	13	12	11
Burghfield GPs	20	26	37	–	–	–	–	–	66	60	45	31
Dinton Pastures CP	17	31	13	–	–	–	14	13	–	27	17	11
Eversley GPs	3	2	7	17	10	20	29	30	25	26	11	7
Great Meadow Pond	1	–	6	8	16	16	13	18	17	8	8	3
Hosehill Lake LNR	11	7	6	7	4	–	–	30	16	15	–	1
Lower Farm GPs	2	3	4	4	3	3	5	8	14	11	8	4
Moatlands GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	42	52	12	9	–
Padworth Lane GP	6	5	6	6	6	2	5	–	–	–	6	6
Queen Mother Res	3	–	3	–	12	–	3	–	26	40	32	6
Thatcham NDC	5	12	10	8	8	9	4	4	3	3	3	3
Twyford GPs	15	19	22	17	8	16	–	–	14	48	36	37
Woolhampton GPs	14	–	11	13	13	4	–	46	72	28	12	–
Wraysbury GPs	25	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	33	58	43

Great Crested Grebes prefer fairly large water bodies such as our Gravel Pit complexes and it is at these that the species thrives. Birds can also be found on artificial lakes such as Great Pond in Sunninghill Park and it is well distributed along the R Thames and Jubilee River however it shuns our smaller rivers such as the Rivers Kennet and Loddon. **First winter:** although present at all its normal wintering sites, numbers were reasonably low, the largest

count being a disappointing 37 at Burghfield GPs on Mar 16th (WeBS). **Spring/summer:** birds were reported from 36 locations during the period and breeding was attempted at 21 of these with 18 producing 41 pairs with young. Three sites held five breeding pairs, these being Theale GPs (TABR) Eversley GPs (MGLR) and Great Meadow Pond (DJB). It was encouraging to see that two pairs reared young on the R Thames as the wash from boat traffic can often damage nests thus preventing successful breeding. **Autumn/second winter:** numbers increased from August and there were six locations that held 40 or more birds at some point during this period. The high count in the table of 72 at Woolhampton GPs occurred on Sep 7th (WeBS) however the largest numbers recorded in the county were to be found at Theale Main GP with 119 on Oct 27th and 65 there on Nov 10th (KEM) two of only three counts that came from this site all year.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber List)*

**2014** (along with 2010) was the best year for this species since 1997 when eight birds were recorded. **Spring passage:** there were three records involving four birds from late March to mid April. The first sighting was at Queen Mother Res where one was moulting into summer plumage on Mar 22nd (MMc). This bird was followed by two in partial s/p at Queen Mother Res on Mar 31st (CDRH) the same day that three Black-necked Grebes were present! A distant bird also in moult caused some identification problems at Theale Main GP on Apr 3rd before finally being nailed as this species by ABT; it remained until Apr 4th (MO). **Autumn passage:** the only record came from Theale Main GP where a single bird was located on Nov 27th (AVL *et al.*). After low numbers during the early part of the century, numbers have improved; the yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	2	2	2	4	4	0	2	4
No. of birds	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	2	2	2	5	4	0	3	5

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

**2013** Correction: remove the initials DJB from the Mar 24th Theale Main GP record and replace with (AVL, BU, and CMc).

**2014** After the record year of 2013, with only three records involving five birds, 2014 was the worst year since 2007! **First winter:** a single bird was reported from Theale Main GP on Jan 6th (AVL; RCo) and 7th (RCW; RM). **Spring passage:** involved three (1 s/p and 2 in partial s/p) at Queen Mother Res on Mar 31st (CDRH) located in the NE of the reservoir with two Slavonian Grebes nearby! **Autumn passage:** an early bird in s/p was present at Queen Mother Res for just Jul 19th (CDRH). The yearly status since 2000 is shown below.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	8	3	10	3	5	8	4	2	6	5	7	3	5	11	3
No. of birds	8	6	10*	3	9	10	4	2	7	9	8	7	6	19	5

\*Counts the January QMR and Horton birds as different individuals (not done so in the 2005 table)

## GANNET *Morus bassanus*

*Rare but increasing visitor (Amber Listed)*

An immature bird was observed flying NE over Dorney Wetlands at 0940hrs on Sep 27th (DAC). This is the 31st record for Berkshire of which 10 have been in the last 10 years. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	3**	1	1	2*	1	0	1	1

\*Counts the 2 Sep 26th sightings as the same individual. \*\*Includes the only record involving 2 birds

## CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Common winter visitor, increasing in the summer; the continental race P. c. sinensis now breeds (Green Listed)*

Records came from 71 locations throughout the county; terrestrial records came from our river valleys whilst ones away from water-bodies tended to be airborne. The monthly maximum counts from the most regularly counted sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	–	16	13	27	12	–	9	8	–	17	3	–
Burghfield GPs	20	16	6	–	–	–	–	–	6	10	49	37
Dinton Pastures CP	13	3	1	6	–	–	4	6	–	25	18	10
Eversley GPs	81	94	31	5	3	2	19	17	45	20	79	83
Great Meadow Pond	1	–	2	–	–	–	2	12	6	4	3	3
Hosehill Lake LNR	9	8	7	–	–	–	4	54	103	165	30	23
Lower Farm GPs*	40	11	24	20	13	25	13	26	25	13	17	27
Maidenhead Weir	9	7	7	6	6	–	–	–	8	9	8	–
Padworth Lane GP	3	3	1	5	4	2	–	–	–	–	13	24
Queen Mother Res	2	–	10	–	3	–	9	–	204	135	70	111
Thatcham NDC	5	5	5	3	3	1	3	3	4	14	5	12
Twyford GPs	9	2	9	1	–	–	–	–	–	5	11	21
West Meadows	–	–	–	5	4	1	1	2	18	1	2	18
Woolhampton GPs	8	–	5	1	4	3	3	2	10	3	18	–
Wraysbury GPs	43	–	22	–	23	–	–	–	–	50	–	33

\*Totals here represent both Lower Farm GP and Lower Farm Trout Lake

**First winter:** counts at most locations tended to be fairly small; 43 were seen at Wraysbury GPs on Jan 7th (WeBS) and 40 flew over Lower Farm GP in three groups all heading west on Jan 11th (IW; JL). By far the largest counts came from Eversley GPs with a maximum count of 94 in February (MGLR). **Spring/summer:** records came from 37 locations, away from the main sites; the highest totals were five at Eton Wick on May 31st (KPD) and five at Lower Way GP, Thatcham on Jun 26 (DEEP). Breeding was confirmed at four locations but due to the possibility of these colonies being disturbed by some members of the fishing fraternity, the locations will be withheld. At the first locality, 12 nests were occupied on Mar 20th (JL) but due to the lack of access at this private site later details are lacking. At least seven unfledged chicks could be seen at the second location on Apr 13th (JPM), one pair had one chick at the third location on Apr 15th (GJS) and at the fourth location, at least eight occupied nests with seven chicks were seen at a new colony on May 24th (CDRH). **Autumn/second winter:** numbers at Hosehill Lake began to increase in late August with 54 there on Aug 30th (KEM)

then 103 on Sep 7th (MFW) and peaking at 165 on Oct 19th (AVL). Elsewhere 204 flew west from Wraysbury Res Surrey toward Queen Mother Res on Sep 20th (CDRH) and 135 were actually on the reservoir on Oct 15th (RRI). Away from the main sites, there were 29 at Runnymede on Sep 30th (RMH) and 33 at Virginia Water on Dec 29th (RMH).

**BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

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

**2009** Missing records: one flying over reeds at Englemere Pond on Feb 1st (P Mannion) and one at Moatlands GP on Feb 7th (MFW) and Feb 14th (NR).

**2012** Correction: the record of one at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 23rd was submitted by S Day not Bird Guides and was also seen by the same observer on Dec 26th.

**2013** Correction: 12–13 birds were recorded from 8 locations, not 8–10 birds from 4 locations. The first observer of the Eversley GPs bird on Jan 30th was P Kendall not P Kedall.

**2014** A below average year with six birds recorded from four locations none of which were seen by many observers. **First winter:** the 2013 wintering bird was seen again in the White Swan Lake reedbed at Dinton Pastures on Jan 13th (TAG per FJC), the elusive 2013 wintering bird at Great Meadow Pond was seen again on Feb 16th (CDRH) and another was flushed from dead docks at Horton GPs on Feb 22 (CDRH) whilst the last of the period was at Woolhampton GPs on Mar 18th (KEM). **Second winter:** one was back at Great Meadow Pond, seen on four occasions from Oct 12th to Dec 21st (DJB). Apart from this record the only other sighting was of one at White Swan Lake on Dec 7th (T James per RM). Due to targeted conservation this species has increased in the UK and from 2015 it will be moved from the Red List to the Amber List (BoCC4). The county status since 2000 is shown in the table below. As birds regularly over-winter at their main wintering sites, bird totals are shown in two rows, one showing the total of birds seen, including over-wintering birds, the other shows the number of new birds reported. Note it is likely that some birds are regularly returning individuals.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	7	4	10	7	2	4	4	3	2	6	11	10	5	8	4
Total no. of birds seen in year	9	5	17	10	3–4	9	11	6	2	10	22	17	8	12–13	6
No. of birds that arrived in that year	7	5	14	7	2–3	8	6	4–5	2	10	20	10	6	11–12	4

**CATTLE EGRET** *Bubulcus ibis*

*Rare vagrant, all records since 2007*

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
No. of birds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	1

## LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

*Locally common resident that breeds in very small numbers (Amber listed)*

Records were received from 78 locations, 23 in East Berks, 24 in Mid Berks and 31 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield Bridge	27	20	2	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Crookham/Greenham Com	2	–	–	–	–	1	3	3	1	–	1	–
Dinton Pastures CP	–	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	–	1
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	2	–	2	4	1	–	4	3	3	1	–	1
Eversley GPs	11	6	5	2	1	1	1	9	8	9	9	11
Fobney Marsh and Island	13	–	5	5	2	1	2	1	–	–	–	–
Freeman's Marsh	1	–	1	–	2	–	3	1	3	–	–	4
Horton GPs	2	–	1	6	2	–	–	2	2	1	6	–
Lower Farm GP	–	19	19	–	1	–	1	6	9	5	3	–
Queen Mother Res	–	–	–	1	2	2	–	2	1	1	1	2
Theale GPs	1	–	1	1	–	1	–	–	1	3	4	5
Twyford GPs	3	7	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Wraysbury GPs	1	3	1	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	1
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	11	10	10	10	9	7	7	4	6	4	8	13
Number of birds	18	37	45	13	15	7	10	7	10	7	11	26
Recorded county total	81	94	85	45	28	15	26	36	39	30	43	53

**First winter:** it is clear that the severe flooding which occurred throughout Berkshire's river valleys in the first winter significantly increased numbers throughout this period. The high count of 27 on floods at Burghfield Bridge to the south of Reading which occurred on Jan 19th (JA) is easily the highest single count ever for Berkshire. Other high counts not shown in the table include 22 on floods in the Thatcham area on Feb 24th (PBy) and Mar 10th (per PEH); some of these birds were probably responsible for the count of 19 at Lower Farm GP on Feb 28th and Mar 1st (NC). **Spring/summer:** as the flood waters receded so did the number of Little Egrets and after April there were nearly no records of more than four birds anywhere in the county until August. The only exception was from a breeding site in east Berks where three pairs bred and up to four fledged juveniles were noted (CDRH). **Autumn/second winter:** although numbers began to increase in August and continued to do so throughout the period, numbers were never going to compare to the first winter. Eversley GPs provided the highest concentration of birds and ended the year with the period's highest count of 11 on Dec 31st (NS).

## GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

*Rare but increasing vagrant*

There were five records in 2014 but these may have involved just two birds. **First winter:** one was briefly at Padworth Lane GP on Feb 27th (TGB; RRI). **Autumn/second winter:** in the late summer one was located on Jul 23rd at Freeman's Marsh and was seen again there on Aug 5th (RGS). What was probably this bird then appeared at Lower Farm GP on Sep 3rd (NC; JLS) but quickly disappeared again although it was seen in flight heading west over Greenham Common on Sep 12th (JL). It finally settled down at Lower Farm GP on Sep 17th (JLS) and became regular there through to late November then reports became more sporadic and it was last seen on Dec 16th (MJD). A record at Great Shefford on Dec 30th

(per Ian Lewington) may relate to the same bird. The first record of Great White Egret was as recent as 2003 and by the end of 2014, 11–14 birds had been recorded in the county, its yearly status, based on each bird's year of arrival is shown below.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	-	-	-	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1*	0	1	2–3	2–4

\*This bird over wintered into 2011

## GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

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

This is a widespread and familiar species throughout the county's river valleys. Records from upland areas tend to be of birds in flight and this was the case in 2014. The monthly high counts at the most regularly counted locations are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	9	6	13	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	3	5
Dinton Pastures	1	1	3	3	1	-	2	12	1	3	4	3
Great Meadow Pond	1	-	2	2	1	3	4	3	5	3	3	3
Lower Farm GP	2	1	3	4	4	4	4	7	9	5	5	3
Twyford GPs	19	17	20	11	9	7	-	2	6	4	7	7

Away from the above locations, the only counts to exceed 10 birds were 23 just east of Hungerford on Jan 8th (DBu), 16 Denford Mill on Oct 31st (RGS) and 15 Harveys Meadow Hungerford on Nov 10th (JSW). **Breeding:** it is disappointing that for one reason or other, the Berkshire birding community tends to ignore the county's heronries. This year no information was received for three established heronries: Burghfield GPs, Donnington and Wraysbury. At other locations information was rather scant even though some of these sites are covered by WeBs! What information was provided is reproduced here: Theale Main GP had six birds present on Jan 19th (CMc) and three fledged juvs were seen on May 4th (AVL), at Twyford GPs although birds were present in the heronry in February and young were reported on Mar 17th (WeBS) the numbers of nesting pairs and offspring was not given, at Lower Farm Trout Lake there were five occupied nests in Feb-Mar (KGW; JL) but no subsequent information, Aldermaston GPs had two nests both with two young on Apr 3rd (JPM) and the small heronry beside Queen Mother Res only had one nest with one juv in May (CDRH; DJB).

## PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

*Rare vagrant*

The seventh record for Berkshire involved an adult at Horton GPs on May 31st (CDRH). First noticed flying from the direction of Heron Lakes Wraysbury GPs at 1340hrs the bird flew into a small reedbed where it remained unseen before departing to the north c30 minutes later. Although looked for it was never seen again. This is the first record since the popular adult which spent two days at Lavell's Lake in April 2000.

## WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

*Rare vagrant, some records are of known escapes*

The fifth and sixth records for Berkshire (not including some known escapes) involved an adult that was first located in the Spencers Wood/Swallowfield area on Apr 24th (NR *et al.*). The prompt release of news of this bird meant that many observers who had missed the



2004 individual had a second chance of seeing what is an extremely rare visitor to Berkshire. Unfortunately at 1110hrs the bird took flight and headed east, being seen over Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood by the fortunate (SRi). After this last sighting there were no more reports until May 1st when it was relocated in fields at Swallowfield Park (IDP), here it remained to May 2nd (MO). This bird or possibly another was then photographed in fields at Enbourne on Jun 15th (S Tompkins). Surprisingly there was a later report which involved a bird seen in flight and photographed over Burghfield GPs on Sep 14th (D. Hammant per MFW) which may have also been present on the 10th and 11th. This constitutes the seventh record for Berkshire.

**SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

*Rare passage migrant (Schedule One and Amber Listed)*

There were two records this year, the first involved one at Marlow GPs Bucks that was seen to depart to the south east over Berkshire on May 6th (ADB). The second records involved a bird flying high over Thatcham GPs (D A Cumming) and Lower Farm GP (NC) on Aug 22nd. These are the 24th and 25th records for the county, the yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	2
No. of birds	1	5	0	3	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	4	0	0	2

**HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*

*Rare passage migrant and summer visitor (Schedule One and Amber Listed)*

There were three records involving three birds, all occurred in the early autumn and began with an adult flying due south over Marlow GPs (Buckinghamshire) and was seen to enter Berkshire, over Winter Hill on Aug 29th (ADB). Next was an adult male circling Dorney Wetlands whilst being mobbed by a Red Kite on Aug 31st (RN) before departing to the south toward Windsor and this was followed by a dark morph juvenile which flew west over Eversley GPs on Sep 5th (RFM *et al.*).

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	31	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
No. of birds	34	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

*Common (locally abundant) re-introduced resident (Schedule One and Amber List)*

**2013** Missing counts: in the table Woolley Down is only represented with a count of 50 in January. However other counts were available, these being 32 on Feb 6th, 28 on Mar 11th, 28 on Nov 9th and 8 on Dec 14th (GDS).

**2014** With over 1200 records submitted, the Red Kite is the most recorded species in the county being very popular with the general public as well as bird watchers. It is a familiar site throughout the county, with only urban centres like Reading and Slough and thickly forested areas like Swinley Forest where it is less common. Counts of 10 to 20 are now fairly frequent, higher counts involved 51 Woolley Down on Jan 23rd and Feb 15th (GDS), 27 Theale Main GP on Apr 4th (AVL), 21 Hamstead Norreys on May 25th (JLe) 21 Tilehurst, Reading on

Jun 5th (CMS), 21 on the Ridgeway on Jun 17th (MHu), 25 Bradfield on Jul 3rd (BL), 50 Frogmill, Hurley on Oct 5th (SJF; FMF), 60 Aston on Oct 18th (DJB), 48 Windsor Great Park on Dec 14th (RMH) and 23 at Walbury Hill on Dec 30th (CDRH). **Breeding:** was under recorded, only four observers submitted records that involved either young or adults attending a nest. So the records here must be treated like the tip of an iceberg as it is very likely that the actual number of breeding pairs is far in excess of what is mentioned here. Successful breeding was recorded from Boxford and Easton (GDS); Maidenhead Thicket (BDC); Reading (JNe), Windsor Great Park (2–3 pairs), Thrift Woods, and Sunninghill Park (DJB). Active nests were also reported from Pinkneys Green (BDC) and Windsor Forest (DJB) but breeding success is not known. The success of the re-introduction of this species has meant that from 2015 it has been moved from the Amber to the Green List (BoCC4).

**MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

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

There were 12 records involving 10–12 birds in 2014, 8 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks. Spring passage: was confined to East Berks and began with a spate of records from Queen Mother Res in April, beginning with a 2nd year male on Apr 3rd then an imm female on Apr 10th, and adult female on Apr 20th and a female or imm male on Apr 22 (all CDRH). The last of the spring was an imm female at Eversley GPs on May 2nd (RJG). Autumn passage: the first record involved a juv at Bury Down on Aug 19th (ABT), a female or imm flew south over Lea Farm Lake on Aug 27th (MFW) and what may have been this bird was seen at Eversley GPs on Aug 28th (PKe). Two records on Sep 14th may be of the same bird: a female or imm flew SE over Woodley at 0658hrs (FJC) and a juv was hunting over the New Diggings at Eversley GPs at 0940hrs (KCr; RCM) and was still present at 1200hrs (PKe). A further two birds were noted in October; one was present at Lower Farm GP on Oct 11th (JA) and 12th (BL) and finally a juvenile was flying ENE over Queen Mother Res on Oct 15th (CDRH). The total of 10–12 birds equals the good year of 2004 and is only bettered by the record year of 2011. Since shortly after the turn of the century, the number of Marsh Harriers has slowly increased and birds can now be expected to appear almost annually at preferred locations such as Eversley GPs and Queen Mother Res. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table based on the year of their arrival.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Maximum no. of birds	3	3	3	3	12	7	7	8	7	11	8	13	10	11	12

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

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

**2013** Corrections: delete records for Wishmoor Bottom (only a probable) and Bury Down (no supporting details)

**2014** Records came from three locations involving four birds. **First winter:** a ringtail was reported from Jealott’s Hill on Jan 11th (KCr). In recent years the gallops and surrounding scrub and grassland to the north of West Ilsley at Bury and Cow Down has been the most reliable site in the county and this year was no different with a ringtail appearing on Jan 10th (DF; BDC) and remaining in the area until Mar 5th (CDRH). Autumn passage/**second winter:** an early passage ringtail (adult female) was hunting at Bury Down on Sep 4th (RN). The last record of the year involved another ringtail that was being harassed by two Ravens at Walbury Hill on Nov 24th (IW). The yearly status is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	3	4	2	7	1	3	2	8*	6	6*	5	10*	8*	2	4

\*estimated number of birds

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

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

Most records came from the usual area that remains confidential. Here one or two females were noted on four dates in May and June (MO). The only record away from the latter area involved a juvenile at Aldworth on Aug 1st (ABT).

## **SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

*Common and widespread resident (Green Listed)*

Although under recorded (many observers do not submit casual records), records were still submitted from 152 locations, 52 in East Berks, 44 in Mid Berks and 56 in West Berks. Of the 541 records submitted, only 39 involved more than one bird, records of three or more were: three Windsor Forest on Mar 8th and Apr 5th (DJB), three Dinton Pastures on Apr 11 (LRB) and three at Thatcham Marsh on Jul 13th (IW; JL). **Breeding:** there were very few reports of breeding and the only active nest was found in Windsor Forest on May 16th (DJB). Adults being accompanied by juveniles were noted at Ufton Nervet on Aug 3rd (KGW) and Streatley on Aug 10th (NJB). Ringing: there were two records both involving first year males: one was caught and ringed at the Wilderness on Feb 2nd (JLS) and the other was ringed at Blacknest on Mar 5th (RJD). Other records of interest involved two birds hunting together at Midgham GP killing and extracting a Reed Bunting from a ringers net on Aug 30th (JPM) and there were four reports of large females trying to masquerade as something else at Tilehurst on Mar 4th (TGB) and Windsor Forest on Mar 8th and May 19th (DJB) and Padworth Lane GP on May 15th (RJB).

## **BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

*Common and widespread resident and passage migrant (Green Listed)*

Buzzards are a familiar site throughout the less urban areas of the county with records being received from over 200 locations. Double figure counts involved: 10 Ascot Heath on Jan 19th (RJD), 13 Bagnor on Mar 4th (IW; JL), 10 Windsor Forest on Mar 8th (DJB), 10 Lavell's Lake on Apr 21st (LSe) and Apr 24th (DJB, FJC), 12 Greenham Common on Apr 24th (M L Savage), 21 hunting worms in fields near to Shurlock Row on Oct 9th (DJB) and 11 Walbury Hill on Nov 5 (IW). **Breeding:** was recorded from 25 locations, 6 in East Berks (involving 7+ pairs), 2 in Mid Berks and 17 in West Berks. Most breeding records refer to recently fledged young which are very vocal at this stage of their development. All breeding records came from just seven observers with GDS (14 records) and DJB (5 records) being the most prolific, this points to substantial under recording of breeding birds. Display was recorded from a further 10 locations involving at least 10 pairs and another pair was observed nest building in January (AVL) but the outcome is not known. Records involving unusual colour variants' included a bird with a bright white rump which resembled a ringtail harrier seen at Sonning on Jan 27th (CDRH) and a pale bird with a striking white head and chest, white underwings, white rump and tail base and pale grey forewings which could be clearly confusable with a Rough-legged Buzzard also at Sonning (same bird?) on Dec 20th (CDRH) and shows how extreme colour variants' may cause identification problems.

## OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

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

**2012** Correction: five records, one Kintbury Mar 30th, one Newbury Apr 4th (Birdguides), 1 Dinton Pastures on Apr 27th (Birdguides), two Benham Park on May 4th and one Kintbury on Aug 15th are at present not acceptable as there are no details accompanying the records.

**2013** Please note, one over Benham Park on Aug 28th was observed by J Golley and G Allen per JLS.

**2014** Twelve records involving 12 birds is slightly below the average of recent years. **Spring passage:** was poor with only two records. The first flew over Greenham Common on Apr 7th (RJP) and was followed by one reported from The Wilderness, Kintbury on May 2nd (RHar). **Autumn passage:** began with one at Lavell's Lake which departed to the north on Aug 7th (FJC) and was followed by one flying SW over Theale Main GP on Aug 9th (JLS). A three week gap ensued before the next report of one at Johnsons Pond, Windsor Gt Pk on Aug 30th (CRG) then it or others flew NW over Swinley Forest on Aug 31st (WAN) and over Cabbage Hill Bracknell on Sep 1st (MK). One which flew in from the north and briefly circled Eton Wick at 1216hrs on Sep 2nd (CDRH) had a missing or displaced primary in the right wing very like one that had been photographed at Otmoor, Oxfordshire on Sep 1st -2nd. Another flew south over Lower Farm GP also on Sep 2nd (NC) and may be linked to the sighting at The Wilderness on Sep 6th (RHar) whilst the last September record involved one over the New Diggings, Eversley GPs on Sep 12th (PKe). The last record of the year involved one heading south over Datchet and Old Windsor on Nov 15th (CDRH) this is the latest record for Berkshire since the exceptional record of one in Windsor Great Park in 1956 which was seen at Virginia Water on Nov 16th and Great Meadow Pond on Dec 2nd. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	13	13-16	14-15	8	11	13	9-10	8	15-16	12	9	16-17	14	13	12

Totals for 2012 do not include the Birdguide and second hand records

## KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

*Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 154 locations, 59 in East Berks, 29 in Mid Berks and 66 in West Berks. Nearly all records referred to one or two birds, three birds (not young) were recorded on 11 occasions and four were reported from Seven Barrows on Jul 10th (IW), Lower Farm GP on Jul 14th (IW), Thatcham Marsh also on Jul 14th (MJD), Walbury Hill on Jul 25th and Aug 15th (IW) and Inkpen Hill on Aug 1st (IW). The only record of five was at Lower Green Inkpen on Jul 13 (RHar) it is possible that some of these records involve juveniles but that has not been stated in the submitted records. **Breeding:** as is normal for a familiar species, breeding was under recorded with just 10 records submitted. A pair was attending a nest site at Silwood Park on May 16th (RJD), three chicks were ringed from a nest at The Wilderness on May 22nd (JLS), an adult was feeding a juv at Widbrook Common on May 23rd (JLP), a pair were feeding two juvs at their Fifield nest on Jun 5th (LRB), pairs reared two young at both Whiteknights Park (PG, CF) and Wokingham STW (DJB), four young were reared at Haw Farm Yattendon (WBCS), three young were reared at East Garston (WBCS) and a family party of four were at Eversley GPs on Aug 31st (RCM).

## RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

*Rare vagrant*

The first record since 2008 involved a female which spent fifteen minutes at Summerleaze GPs on May 6th (CDRH) and constitutes the 11th record for Berkshire. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1

## MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

*Authors note:* An increasing problem that has emerged in recent years is that of mis-identification of this species with that of the Sparrowhawk, there have been “Merlin” records that have clearly described classic Sparrowhawk hunting technique but gave no details to support identification as Merlin. Records that have been submitted that have not removed all possibility of the bird being a Sparrowhawk risk not being accepted.

**2013** Correction: replace initials of the Jan 10th Englefield bird with (KEM *et al.*)

**2014** A poor year with only four acceptable records, all occurring in the autumn/second winter and involved a female on the Lambourn Downs on Sep 15th (CDRH) which comfortably out-paced its Jackdaw pursuers, one which was observed stooping through Brayfield Farm Bray on Oct 20th (CDRH) and a female which flew south over Queen Mother Res on Oct 23rd (CDRH). There were no further records until December when one was reported from Lowbury Hill, Compton Downs on Dec 5th (ABT). Note a further nine records were submitted to the Database but unfortunately none came with supporting details, it is hoped that supporting details do become available for these records so that at least some can be included in a later report.

## HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule One and Green Listed)*

Records were received from 88 locations 34 in East Berks, 33 in Mid Berks and 21 in West Berks; the monthly status (based on the monthly max count at each location) is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>East Berks</b>												
No of sites	0	0	0	4	11	13	12	12	9	0	0	0
No of birds	0	0	0	4	36	33	25	18	12	0	0	0
<b>Mid Berks</b>												
No of sites	0	0	0	6	13	7	3	10	8	1	0	0
No of birds	0	0	0	6	28	8	3	10	12	1	0	0
<b>West Berks</b>												
No of sites	0	0	0	3	7	6	6	10	5	1	0	0
No of birds	0	0	0	3	7	6	6	11	6	1	0	0
Total no of birds	0	0	0	13	71	47	34	39	30	2	0	0

As the table shows the highest numbers are in the east of the county especially during the breeding season as most of the known breeding sites are reported in the east. The west of the county is quite poorly represented and all records from this region related to single birds except for two of two birds. **Spring:** the first record occurred at Moor Copse Tidmarsh on Apr 17th when a bird was observed mobbing a Buzzard (BCr) and was followed by singles at Burnthouse Lane (KEM), Grazeley (KEM) and Woolhampton GPs (MHu) on Apr 18th. By early May birds were fairly widespread and display was observed regularly over the Horton area from May 10th (CDRH). High counts involved seven over Wraysbury GPs on May 21st (CDRH), seven over Searle's Farm Lane GP on May 25th (JA) and an impressive 14 together at Horton GPs on May 31st (CDRH). **Summer:** after the late May peak, numbers began to fall as birds passed on or dispersed to breeding areas. However eight were seen over Wraysbury on June 7th and seven were still at Horton on Jun 10th and 14th and display was still being observed in the area, this time over Queen Mother Res on Jun 6th where six were observed hunting chafers on Jul 1st (all CDRH). Breeding records came from three traditional east Berks locations, two pairs rearing two young each and the third, one young (PJC). Away from these sites an adult was observed repeatedly entering a West Berkshire wood, constantly calling to possibly a second bird on Jun 22nd (PBT) whilst a very vocal recently fledged juvenile was in Windsor Great Park on Aug 3rd (DJB) and may have been locally bred. **Autumn:** most records during this time were of one or two birds with higher counts of three recorded at Lavell's Lake on Sep 3rd (FJC), Eversley GPs on Sep 4th-5th (R Jinks, RFM) and Calcot on Sep 9th-10th (DJB). It was at this time that W Berks only multiple records were had, both at Lower Farm GP with two on Aug 31st (IW) and Sep 10th (BL, GJS). The last records of the year were single birds over Twyford on Oct 19th (SPA) and a late bird at Lower Farm GP on Oct 28th (JCh).

## **PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

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

There are six core areas in Berkshire where Peregrines are virtually resident throughout the year, birds presumably from these areas or from nearby locations outside of the county make up the majority of records from the other 50 locations where birds have been reported. **The core areas:** in Newbury a single adult was present, usually on the old BT building from January to March and again from July through to December, a pair was seen on Jan 2nd (NC). At Theale GPs, one or two adults frequented the pylons in and around Theale Main GP from January to April and July through to December. A first winter was noted on Sep 21st (ABT). In Reading a resident pair (that may have been the Theale birds) was observed from January to October and three were reported high over Kennet Mouth on Feb 16th (DFI). The male was observed taking food items into a nest site in May (ABT) but unfortunately successful breeding could not be confirmed. In Bracknell the resident pair was still present, usually on the derelict 3M building. Birds were regularly seen from January through to June and mating was observed on Apr 7th (G Goldsmith). A vocal immature visited the location on May 19th (DF) and single adults were reported into October. In Slough a pair remained in residence from January into June but there was no further sightings reported. Finally at Queen Mother Res a pair remained in residence throughout the year. Three (2 ads 1 imm) were seen on Mar 25th (CDRH) and on Jun 8th breeding was confirmed when two fully feathered nestlings could be seen within the nest box (CDRH). One of these birds successfully fledged but unfortunately the other was found dead in the water on Jun 21st (MMc). Away from the main sites, several locations enjoyed regular sightings. The pick of these was Eversley GPs where birds were reported on 24 occasions in eight months and Dinton Pastures CP where

eight records covered seven months. The monthly status away from the core areas is shown in the table and is based on the highest monthly count from each location.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Minimum no. of birds	16	9	12	10	7	6	1	6	9	7	12	4

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

*Uncommon winter visitor and a rare summer resident (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 38 locations, 11 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 16 in W Berks. The highest monthly counts are shown in the table however one should treat these totals as a minimum, due to the secretive nature of this species.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pingewood GPs	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	2
Dinton Pastures CP	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4	3
Dorney Wetlands	9	-	2	-	-	2	-	1	2*	2	2	7
Eversley GPs	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
Great Meadow Pond	5	1	2	2	3	5*	2	1	3	8	10	6
Thatcham Marsh	-	-	1	2	1	5*	4	6	7	5	4	-
Elsewhere												
No of Locations	9	2	5	0	0	0	2	3	3	7	10	14
Min no of birds	9	2	6	0	0	0	2*	5	3	7	16	26
Recorded county total	24	5	15	4	4	13	8	14	19	25	37	45

\*Includes young or juveniles

**First winter (Jan–Mar):** the severe flooding experienced throughout much of January and February meant that many regular sites became less attractive to this species, Dinton Pastures and Thatcham Marsh being good examples. Good numbers were present at Dorney Wetlands in early January with nine noted on Jan 2nd (DJB) but apart from Great Meadow Pond with five on Jan 5th (DJB) no other location reported more than two birds.

**Spring/summer (Apr–Jul):** there were no April–May reports at all apart from the potential breeding sites of Great Meadow Pond and Thatcham Marsh. A single bird was noted at Burnthouse Lane GP, Pingewood GPs on Jun 3rd and 10th (TGB) and two were reported from Dorney Wetlands on Jun 17th (PDM). For the second consecutive year, breeding was confirmed at Great Meadow Pond when a pair was seen feeding three downy chicks on Jun 22nd (DJB) whilst at Thatcham Marsh a count of five included a pair with two calling young also on Jun 22nd (IW; JL). A juvenile was located with a Spotted Crake at Slough SF on Jul 10th (CDRH) the early date may imply that this bird had been raised locally and another bird was reported at West Meadows on Jul 23rd (JLS). **Autumn/second winter:** away from the main sites, August records involved one at The Wilderness on Aug 3rd increasing to three on Aug 16th (JLS), one was still at West Meadows on Aug 8th (JLS) and another was recorded from Woolhampton GPs on Aug 13th (KEM). Thatcham Marsh held good numbers with six on Aug 16th (IW) and seven on Sep 28th (IW; JL) but then numbers at this site began to fall. Overall numbers continued to creep upward as the year moved into the second winter period, the high of eight at Great Meadow Pond occurred on Oct 5th (DJB) and ten were noted there on Nov 16th (DJB). Hoschill Lake recorded five on Nov 28th (AVL) and counts of four were noted at the old settling beds at Twyford GPs on Dec 7th (DJB) and at Strand Water on Dec 22nd (M Vogel). The year ended where it began with seven at Dorney Wetlands on Dec 31st (BDC).

## SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

*Rare passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

A record for the second consecutive year after an absence of eight years involved Berkshires first ever July record; a juvenile located on the old settling beds of Slough SF on Jul 10th (CDRH). Seen with a juvenile Water Rail the bird was extremely shy and although looked for on Jul 11th it was never seen again.

## MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

*Common and widespread resident in wetland habitats (Green Listed)*

Frequently encountered in suitable habitat throughout the county, this is one our most familiar water-bird species and is generally under-recorded throughout its Berkshire range. There are some locations where monthly counts are taken and these totals can be seen in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	8	11	12	14	12	13	16	13	20	15	8	13
Lower Farm GP	7	9	8	5	4	6	11	12	10	23	17	6
Padworth Lane GP	4	10	3	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	4	4
Thatcham NDC	14	11	7	7	7	6	9	8	16	15	18	22
West Meadows	-	-	-	5	1	13	14	16	3	7	6	7

Away from the locations above, the highest counts recorded were: 21 Whiteknights Pk Lake on Feb 20th (S Connor), 21 Great Meadow Pond on Jun 22nd (DJB) and 30 there on Oct 5th (DJB), 19 Dinton Pastures CP on Nov 9th (WeBS), 17 Thatcham Marsh on Dec 12th (JL) and 18 Eton Wick on Dec 15th (BDC). **Breeding:** was massively under-recorded with records coming from only 14 locations involving 22 pairs.

## COOT *Fulica atra*

*Common resident and winter visitor generally to more open waters (Green Listed)*

The monthly high counts at the most regularly counted sites are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	179	103	59	-	-	-	-	-	258	362	365	416
Dinton Pastures CP	113	18	20	9	9	-	160	114	-	165	126	102
Eversley GPs	208	86	38	38	26	43	58	60	74	88	70	154
Great Meadow Pond	49	10	40	46	104	219	244	305	240	179	204	336
Horton GPs	226	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	140	226	478
Hosehill Lake	220	20	10	-	15	-	-	150	100	-	-	102
Lower Farm GP	38	25	27	27	35	104	178	260	270	277	214	110
Padworth Lane GP	35	30	21	13	16	11	-	-	-	-	24	30
Summerleaze GPs	142	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	139	160	160
Thatcham NDC	21	22	10	11	17	24	37	67	50	54	58	56
Twyford GPs	79	40	54	27	24	25	-	-	38	111	161	182
Woolhampton GPs	108	-	60	141	40	60	-	200	218	191	133	-
Wraysbury GPs	307	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	329	450	531

The high count of 531 at Wraysbury GPs occurred on Dec 31st (JMC). Although this was the highest count submitted, there were no records from Theale Main GP, a location that regularly holds very large numbers of Coot throughout the year and as recently as 2012 this



site held over 700 birds in both Jan and Dec. **Breeding:** was under recorded, for-instance there was only one breeding record (Frogmill, Hurley) from the many pairs that inhabit the River Thames. Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites, the largest numbers concerned six broods at Green Park on May 23rd (BDC) and at Great Meadow Pond where 11 pairs definitely bred (DJB) but it is thought by the observer that many more pairs bred within the reedbeds.

## OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

*Scarce but increasing summer visitor, passage migrant and scarce winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

The slow but steady colonization of Berkshire continues, records were received from 28 locations in 2014, 11 in East Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	-	1	3	4	2	3*	6	-	-	-	-	-
Dorney Wetlands	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	1	1	3	4*	5*	5	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	-	1	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pingewood GPs	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Queen Mother Res**	-	-	1	1	4	1	4	1	-	-	-	-
Summerleaze GP	-	-	1	-	2	2	4*	-	-	-	-	-
Theale GPs	-	4	3	2	7*	4	1	-	-	-	-	-
Twyford GPs	-	-	2	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wraysbury GPs	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elsewhere												
No of sites	0	0	2	8	7	1	5	0	0	0	0	0
No of birds	0	0	3	11	16	1	7	0	0	0	0	0
Recorded county total	0	6	19	32	45	22	28	1	0	0	0	0

\*Includes young birds. \*\*QMR is primarily a passage location; monthly totals involve all birds recorded passing through this location each month.

**Spring:** the first arrivals occurred in February, the earliest being two at Theale Main GP on Feb 3rd (AVL) increasing to four by Feb 20th (AVL) and one Eversley GPs on Feb 8th (NS). The main arrival began in March with birds recorded from 12 locations including all of the previous year's summering sites. Passage continued through April and into May, the highest count of the year occurred at this time, seven at Searle's Farm Lane GP on May 5th (JA) and was thought to include some passage birds. **Breeding:** was attempted at five localities, the main site was Theale Main GP where one pair hatched three young (AVL) and another pair were thought to have attempted to breed. One pair reared one chick at Dinton Pastures (MO) however nearby at Twyford GPs a breeding attempt was not covered sufficiently to be sure of the outcome. There were two new breeding sites this year. At Eversley GPs a pair bred amongst the Black-headed Gull colony and reared two young (MGLR) whilst a pair hatched two chicks at Summerleaze GP on Jul 4th but they were not seen subsequently (CDRH). Other sites holding birds during the breeding period included Padworth Lane GPs, Woolhampton GPs and Wraysbury GPs and may provide future breeding locations. Once the breeding season was over birds soon vacated sites and the last record of the year involved one at Queen Mother Res on Aug 11th (CDRH). As with any open ground nesting species, the availability of safe locations to nest in Berkshire is limited. Although Oystercatchers appear to be making progress, these small populations remain vulnerable to disturbance and predation and it would not take

much to tip the balance out of their favor. Protection and habitat creation is the way forward and could come with added incentives such as maintaining or even increasing populations of other species that depend on these habitats.

## **AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

*Scarce but now a regular passage migrant (Schedule One and Amber Listed)*

There were three records this year, two in the spring and one in the summer. The first was a single bird at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 10th (PNe) and was followed by two at Queen Mother Res on May 14th (DF, CDRH, MMc). The summer record involved a single bird at Eversley GPs on Jul 12th (NS) and is the fifth record from this location in the last five years. The status of Avocet in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	1	0	1	4	4	0	0	2	2	3	3	3	5	3	3
No. of birds	3	0	1	12	4	0	0	2	4	3	4	4	11	4	4

## **STONE CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicephalus*

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

**2013** Missing records: Berkshire Downs, 27 on Aug 31st and 33 on Sep 7th (J O'Brien)

**2014** Away from the Downs, single birds were noted at Greenham Common on Mar 29th (AVL) and Englefield on Apr 25th (RCr). On the Berkshire Downs birds were first recorded on Mar 27th (IW) and as the spring commenced, birds were found in four separate locations. Breeding data from submitted records is limited but in the journal British Birds, five pairs are reported as confirmed breeding with a total of five young reared (Rare breeding birds in the UK 2014). However there is a submitted record of a pair with two well grown juvs on Jun 9th (SCo; RJC). The last record involved two heard calling after dark on Sep 23rd (CDRH).

## **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

*Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant (Schedule One and Green Listed)*

Records came from 22 locations, 7 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 5 in West Berks. The monthly status, taken from the highest counts at each site, is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	0	5	17	11	7	7	4	0	0	0	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	18	36	28	29	23	5	0	0	0	0

**Mar/Apr:** the first record of the year involved one at Padworth Lane GP/Floods on Mar 16th (KEM). Numbers quickly increased at this site and peaked at 10 on Mar 25th (KEM). Other March records involved four at Burnthouse Lane on Mar 22nd (ABT), one Bucklebury on Mar 25th (ABT), one over Woolhampton GPs on Mar 28th (KEM) and one at Eversley GPs on Mar 29th (NS). Birds were widespread in April with some passage birds being found at remnants of the winter floods. The highest count came from Queen Mother Res with five on Apr 18th (CDRH), birds frequently visiting this site from the nearby private gravel workings on Horton Fields. **May/Jun:** passage was on the wane by early May and most birds present from the middle of the month were those on breeding territories for instance the high numbers at Padworth Lane earlier in the spring had now declined to just

one or two birds in May. Breeding was noted at five locations: at Burnthouse Lane a nest with eggs was noted on May 2nd (ABT), a pair was observed mating on May 15th (AVL) and five adults and three juvs were seen on Jun 25th (RCr); A pair was seen with three young at Green Park on May 20th and Jun 12th (BDC); a pair had three young at Finchampstead on Jun 5th (RD); at Queen Mother Res, two adults were recorded with one and three juvs on Jun 21st and 22nd (MMc; CDRH) and are presumed to be birds from the adjacent Horton Fields Quarry. Unfortunately a breeding pair at Eversley GPs failed (MGLR) and a pair on floods at East Ilsley although observed mating on May 2nd (ABT) were last seen on May 30th (DJB). Other locations where birds were present in June were at Woodlands Park with a pair on Jun 3rd and one till Jun 19th (DJB) and Lavell's Lake with one from Jun 11th to 23rd (PF *et al.*). An alarming development this year was the total abandonment of Crookham and Greenham Commons which was once an important breeding area for this species, it is likely that disturbance may have been the main contributing factor. In the journal *British Birds*, the Rare breeding birds in the UK 2014, gives a total of 12 confirmed or probable breeding pairs for Berkshire. However submitted records do not equate to this total and so this report may not be giving a completely accurate picture of breeding events in the county in 2014. It is hoped that county recording and *British Birds* can work together and produce exact totals in the future. **Jul/Aug:** passage was underway by early July and this month provided the year's highest count of 11 at Burnthouse Lane GP on Jul 4th (KEM). August records came from Burnthouse Lane, Eton Wick, Lea Farm Lake and Queen Mother Res where the last, a recently fledged juv was seen from Aug 22nd to 30th (CDRH).

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

*Declining summer visitor, uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 13 locations, 4 in East Berks, 3 in Mid Berks and 6 in West Berks; the monthly maximum is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eton Wick	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	1	2	-	-	-
Greenham Common	-	3	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Farm GPs	-	4	6	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Padworth Lane GP/ Floods	-	-	3	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Queen Mother Res*	-	-	-	2	9	-	-	5	6	1		
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	0	0	0	1	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Number of birds	0	0	0	1	24	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Recorded county total	0	7	13	16	47**	5	1	6	8	1	0	0

\*Totals equate to all birds seen at this passage location during each month. \*\* includes 2 counts of 8 from the same location but far enough apart to be treated as separate birds.

**Spring passage:** began in mid February in West Berks with five at Lower Farm GP on Feb 13th (NC) and three nearby at Greenham Common on Feb 17th (IW). At Lower Farm, birds were attracted to the open gravel area created when the old workings were demolished. Numbers increased to six here on Mar 8th (IW; JL) and remained at this level to Apr 9th (MO). At Greenham numbers increased to four by Mar 15th (IW) and remained at this level until Apr 8th (IW; JL) but were not reported subsequently. One arrived at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 15th (KEM) and three were there on Mar 30th (RJB). After one at East Ilsley on Apr 24th, numbers increased to eight on May 2nd and 13th (ABT). Queen Mother Res recorded

birds on six days throughout April and May, the highest count being four on May 10th (ABT). Eton Wick recorded five on May 11th (RN) whilst Padworth Lane peaked at six on May 13th (KEM). Individuals showing characteristics of the northern race *tundrae* were noted at Queen Mother Res on May 10th and 17th and a different bird at Horton GPs also on May 17th (CDRH). **Summer:** was very disappointing, nearly all birds had left potential breeding sites in May and apart from one at Burnthouse Lane on Jun 4th (KEM) the only June records involved a pair at Woolhampton GPs from May 22nd (IW) to Jun 5th (KEM) and a pair that nested at Brimpton GPs, laying four eggs but there was no further reports after Jun 7th (GEW). **Autumn passage:** records were confined to Eton Wick with one on Aug 18th (ADB), two Sep 4th (PNe) and one juv Sep 7th (CMc; CDRH) and Queen Mother Res where there were 10 records involving 12 birds, the last of the year was a juv at this site on Oct 8th to 12th (CDRH).

## GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 26 locations, 11 in East Berks, 4 in Mid Berks and 11 in West Berks. The monthly maxima is shown in the table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Greenham Common	50	57	122	120	–	–	–	–	3	36	250	100
Woodlands Park Fields	400	150	170	62	–	–	–	–	1	58	60	99
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	4	2	5	2	–	–	–	–	2	5	8	5
Number of birds	561	98	1085	217	–	–	–	–	2	1103	1827	584
Recorded county total	1011	305	1377	399	–	–	–	–	6	1197	2137	783

**First winter:** birds were reported from 16 locations, counts of over 200 involved 400 at Woodlands Park on Jan 3rd (DJB), 500 Borough Marsh (the only records from this usually popular site) on Jan 24th and 28th (CDRH), 400+ distantly over Lea Farm Landfill on Mar 22nd (MFW) and 215 at Broadcommon Hurst also on Mar 22nd (ADB) these probably refer to some of the Lea Farm birds. Three flocks totaling 240 birds were seen from Queen Mother Res circling Colnbrook on Mar 31st (CDRH) and 200 were reported from Combe Hill on Apr 3rd (SW). The last record of the period was one at Woodlands Park on Apr 14th (DJB).

**Second winter:** records came from 19 locations beginning with one flying low over Windsor Great Park near to the Long Walk on Sep 11th (DAC). Totals were higher than that of the first winter, the largest flocks being reported from Mid and East Berks. At Remenham Hill numbers built up from 320 on Oct 17th (DJB) to 531 on Oct 23rd (CDRH) and peaked at 920 on Nov 7th (ABT). At least 300 were flying to the north of Lea Farm Landfill on Oct 27th (FJC) and at Eton Wick 784 were located on Nov 18th and 350 were still in the area on Dec 17th (DJB).

## GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

*Uncommon but regular passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

This species is just about maintaining its tenuous position as an annual visitor to Berkshire; the only record involved a first summer at Lea Farm Lake on May 10th (BTB *et al.*). The yearly status since 2000 (the last blank year) is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	3	6	2	4	2	1	3	2	1	1	5	4	1	1
No. of birds	0	3	12	2	8	5	1	4	2	1	1	7	4	1	1

## LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

*Locally common summer resident, common winter visitor and passage migrant, is in long term decline (Red Listed)*

Records were received from 97 locations, 23 in East Berks, 25 Mid Berks and 49 in West Berks. The monthly maxima are shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	–	120	–	1	–	50	102	119	17	60	110	450
Dorney W/Eton Wick	295	175	1	8	2	25	1	160	120	50	200	145
Englefield	–	63	67	60	60	–	–	–	111	120	–	83
Eversley GPs	250	203	5	5	4	44	117	87	105	20	150	130
Great Meadow Pond	–	–	4	9	8	18	46	52	44	8	–	–
Greenham Common	–	56	–	2	13	45	51	70	–	–	4	3
Lower Farm GP	30	–	11	1	4	47	138	22	70	139	133	102
Padworth Lane GP	90	92	20	17	12	6	–	–	–	–	31	–
Pingewood GPs	500	–	–	1	11	94	80	60	55	50	90	183
Theale GPs	–	–	50	2	2	–	10	9	30	50	50	50
Woolhampton GPs	–	–	4	8	11	–	–	–	150	14	11	–
Elsewhere												
No of W Berks sites	5	5	12	13	10	17	4	3	5	4	2	5
No of birds	1342	495	69	81	58	132	93	301	555	376	35	240
No of M Berks sites	2	7	4	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
No of birds	1350	178	19	22	8	1	0	3	0	0	0	10
No of E Berks sites	1	1	5	5	6	3	1	0	0	1	2	2
No of birds	95	19	12	20	34	9	99	0	0	2	98	310
Recorded county total	3952	1401	262	237	227	471	737	883	1257	889	912	1706

**First winter:** birds were reported from 50 locations, and for numbers, January was clearly the best month of the year. All counts in excess of 300 were as follows: 392 Streatley on Jan 5th (NJB), 400+ in Bucklebury pig fields on Jan 11th (RCr), 500 at Burnthouse Lane, Pingewood GPs also on Jan 11th (KEM), 1100 on Borough Marsh on Jan 27th (DJB) and c400 at Easton Hill on Feb 4th (IW; JL). **Spring/summer:** records came from 64 locations however many of these records involved transient birds and territorial behavior was only noted at 33 locations of which breeding was proved at only 16 of these and involved 57 pairs. Most of the confirmed breeding records came from West Berks; Mid Berks provided four sites and East Berks only three! Englefield proved to be the most important site with at least 30 pairs breeding (D Wiggins per TABR). **Autumn/second winter:** from July, post breeding flocks had began to form and there were counts of 100+ from Lower Farm GP with 138 on Jul 9th (GJS), Eversley GPs with 117 on Jul 11th (RCM) and Lea Farm Lake with 102 on Jul 27th (FJC). Although 200 were reported from Brimpton Mill Road GP on Aug 14th (KEM) and at Eton Wick on Nov 17th (DCI), numbers were generally much lower throughout August to November. December did improve a little but numbers remained disappointing, the highest counts being 450 at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 8th (WeBS) and 240 at Bray on Dec 21st (P Hadland).

## SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

*Scarce but regular passage migrant (Green Listed)*

There were 16 records involving at least 27 birds in 2014. The monthly distribution of records is as follows.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	0	0	0	0	11	0	1	1	0	2	1	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	0	0	26	0	1	1	0	2	2	0

**Spring passage:** began with a bird on floods at East Ilsley on May 2nd (ABT) then one in w/p at Eversley GPs on May 6th (RJG). Passage was then restricted to Queen Mother Res and were recorded as follows: one s/p May 12th-13th (CDRH *et al.*), two May 15th (CDRH; MMc), two or three May 19th (MMc), three through heading north May 20th (CDRH), five (2 grey, 2 brown and 1 partial) in the evening of May 22nd (CDRH), seven (6 grey 1 brown) at 1015hrs (CDRH) then eight in the afternoon (RN; CDRH) on May 23rd, two on May 24th (DJB *et al.*) and finally one on May 26th (MMc; CDRH). **Autumn passage:** was surprisingly protracted with records in four months beginning with an adult at Queen Mother Res on Jul 28th (CDRH) and another adult there on Aug 22nd (CDRH; MMc). There were then three later records from Queen Mother Res: a juv on Oct 12th (CDRH), one w/p Oct 16th (CDRH; MMc) and finally two in w/p on Nov 14th (CDRH). The October records are the first since 1989.

## LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

*Scarce passage migrant, principally in autumn (Green Listed)*

The poor run of years continues and must now be regarded as the new norm. After the blank year of 2013 (the first since 2005) there was a welcome return to records with two records, both coming from the east of the county. The semi-permanent floods at Eton Wick and the adjacent Bucks site of Dorney Common attracted the first record a juvenile there on Aug 20th (DAC; LGRE) to Aug 23rd (MO). Another juv visited Queen Mother Res on Sep 24th (CDRH). The status of Little Stint in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records in Spring	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Records in Autumn	3	14	1	1	4	0	2	4	5	3	2	1	1	0	2
Minimum no. of birds	3	24	4	2	5	0	6	5	7	4	3	1	1	0	2

All spring records involved single birds.

Looking at the information in the table it suggests that the Little Stint is in decline as a Berkshire bird. The halcyon days of Slough SF in the 1990's is now a distant memory and the lack of suitable habitat is probably the major contributor to the lower numbers recorded in recent years. Although small numbers do continue to use our gravel pits and other wetlands, the lack of old sewage farm settling beds will probably mean that numbers will remain low for the foreseeable future.

## CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

*Scarce passage migrant (Green Listed)*

This species remains one of the rarer of our more “regular” wading bird species. One juvenile found in the evening of Sep 14th at Eton Wick (CDRH) is only the third record since 2007, a year what was the best for this species since 1969! The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	1	2	1	0	1	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
No. of birds	1	6	1	0	1	4	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	1	1

## PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

*Very rare vagrant (Amber Listed)*

The sixth record for the county was found at Queen Mother Res in the evening of Oct 13th (CDRH). Shortly after its discovery heavy rain moved in and unfortunately the bird was not seen again. This species has become something of a Queen Mother Res specialty with the last five records all coming from this location, none of the records including the first at Thatcham in 1983 have remained for more than a day. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

## DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

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

Records came from 15 locations, 6 in East Berks, 4 in Mid Berks and 5 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of East Berks records	1	1	1	5	10	0	4	4	4	0	0	4
No. of birds	1	1	1	8	24	0	4	6	4	0	0	7
No. of Mid Berks records	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
No. of birds	1	0	0	1	6	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
No. of West Berks records	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
No of birds	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Recorded county total	2	1	1	9	47	0	5	9	6	0	0	7

Although the number of locations is fairly evenly spread throughout the county, it is clear from the table that East Berks and in particular Queen Mother Res received the lion’s share of birds. **First winter:** a fairly poor showing this year, the only records being one with Golden Plovers at Borough Marsh on Jan 29th (CDRH), one Queen Mother Res on Jan 30th (CDRH) another there On Feb 28th and Mar 1st (CDRH, MMc) and one Dorney Wetlands on Mar 8th (KPD). **Spring:** April and May were the most productive months with 20 records involving 56 birds. The first spring record was one at Queen Mother Res on Apr 3rd (CL, CDRH). One or two birds were recorded on a further 10 occasions, higher counts involved: three Queen Mother Res on Apr 22nd (CDRH, MMc), five there on May 1st (CDRH), three Padworth Lane GP also on May 1st (KEM), three East Ilsley on May

1st -2nd (ABT), seven Eversley GPs on May 7th (RFM), three Lea Farm Lake on May 8th (AR), three East Ilsley on May 10th (ABT) increasing to 12 on May 11th (AVL), three through Horton GPs and four at Queen Mother Res on May 11th (CDRH). The last spring record involved a lame bird at Eversley GPs on May 14th to 22nd (MGLR). **Autumn:** passage commenced from July with a one legged bird at Eversley GPs on Jul 8th-10th (JWe, MSe, BM). Although there were a further 17 records, only two were of more than one bird, both being of two birds at Queen Mother Res on Aug 4th (MMc) and Aug 11th (CDRH). The last passage record involved one at Theale Main GP on Sep 25th (AVL; KEM). **Second winter:** birds were only recorded in December with records at Queen Mother Res of one Dec 3rd (MMc), one Dec 19th (MMc) and four through on Dec 27th (CDRH). The last of the year was a single bird at Eton Wick on Dec 28th (DAC).

## **RUFF** *Calidris pugnax*

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

It was a slightly below average year for records and for the number of birds. There were seven records involving 12 birds, all in the autumn. The first involved one at Lea Farm Lake on Jul 23rd (BTB), there followed a succession of records from Eton Wick with one juv on Aug 17th (J Rose), four juvs on Aug 25th (BDC) and two juvs on Aug 28th (CDRH) to Sep 10th (JCM). Two juveniles were then found at Lower Farm GP from Sep 16th (NC; MJD) to Sep 26th (MJD) with one remaining to Oct 4th (IW; JL). The last records of the year involved a juv at Eton Wick from Oct 3rd to 20th (CDRH) what was briefly joined by a second, larger bird on Oct 19th (CDRH). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	9	12	13	9	9	5	4	8	3	5	9	10	6	14	7
No. of birds	16	15	21	10	10	15	4	10	4	8	9	16	19	31	12

## **JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

**First winter:** with only three records involving six birds, this is the worst first winter showing since 1994 when there was only one record from January to March. The severe flooding throughout Berkshire at this time probably accounts for the low number of records as birds may have been forced to disperse from some of their favored locations. The records were as follows: one Freeman's Marsh on Jan 5th (PBy), four from a confidential location on Jan 11th (KEM) and one Burnthouse Lane GP on Feb 26th (KEM). **Second winter:** was somewhat back to normal. The first record involved one with 28 Snipe at Horton GPs on the early date of Sep 26th (CDRH). There were no further records until late November with one at the same confidential location as in the first winter on Nov 27th (KEM; RRi). There followed four late December records, all of single birds at Dorney Wetlands on Dec 28th (DAC) and Dec 31st (BDC; JCM), Eversley GPs (RCM) and Fobney Meadows (AVL) both on Dec 29th.

## **SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago*

*Locally common but declining winter visitor and passage migrant, formally bred (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 43 locations, 12 in East Berks, 16 in Mid Berks and 15 in West Berks. The monthly maximum totals are shown in the table.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	12	16	9	2	–	–	1	3	2	9	23	55
Dorney W/Eton Wick	15	2	11	20	–	–	2	3	24	52	25	3
Eversley GPs	20	60	7	2	–	1	–	3	9	12	2	16
Horton GPs	–	65	–	–	1	1	–	–	28	30	–	–
Lower Farm GP	2	–	–	1	–	–	2	8	33	27	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	6	13	1	–	–	9	1	12	3	–	15
Elsewhere												
No. of East Berks sites	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	0
No. of birds	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	32	0
No. of Mid Berks sites	3	4	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	4	3
No. of birds	42	7	18	4	0	0	1	0	0	7	15	9
No. of West Berks sites	2	3	4	1	0	0	0	1	5	5	5	7
No. of birds	10	4	8	1	0	0	0	3	13	15	12	8
Recorded county total	101	167	68	32	2	2	15	23	121	156	109	106

**First winter:** records came from 19 locations, however very few of these recorded birds in significant numbers. Away from the named locations only Borough Marsh held 10 or more birds, the high at this site was 40 on Jan 16th (CDRH). The high counts of 60 at Eversley GPs (JMC) and 65 at Horton GPs (CDRH) both occurred on Feb 16th and may refer to an influx of birds into the county at this time. March was a disappointing month; passage was very light and most winter locations had been abandoned by the month's end. **Spring:** April records came from eight locations with most records being of just one or two birds; however 20 circled Dorney Wetlands before flying into Slough SF on Apr 3rd (DJB). The next highest count was just four at Padworth Lane GP on Apr 14th (NJB). There were three records in May but probably only involving two birds with one at Horton GPs on May 4th-5th and what was possibly this bird seen again on May 20th – 30th and Jun 6th (CDRH). Another was reported flying over the observer's garden at Jealott's Hill on May 15th (KCr). Apart from the Horton bird the only June record involved what was probably an early returning migrant at Eversley GPs on Jun 28th (NS; RCM). **Autumn/second winter:** after the Eversley bird the next record involved two at Eton Wick on Jul 3rd (CDRH). Numbers were slow to increase until September when flocks of 24 were noted at Eton Wick on Sep 20th (CDRH) and 28th (DAC), 28 at Horton GPs on Sep 26th increasing to 30 on Oct 1st (CDRH) and 33 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 27th (JL). Passage continued into October with a peak count of 52 at Eton Wick on Oct 29th (ADB). Numbers declined a little in November/December however there were 30 at Slough SF on Nov 2nd (CDRH) and 55 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures on Dec 18th (MHu).

## **WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

*Localised and declining resident, widespread winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

**2013** Correction: Delete the record of two roding at Knowl Hill as this record refers to Knowle Hill Surrey. Delete the record of two roding Sunningdale as these refer to Chobham Common Surrey and delete the record of two roding Windsor Great Park as this record also referred to an area on the Surrey side of the Great Park.

**2014** Records were received from 36 locations, 15 in East Berks, 6 in Mid Berks and 15 in West Berks. **First winter:** birds were reported from 19 locations with most records involving just one or two birds accidentally flushed. Four were reported from Greenham Common on Mar 8th (RJC) and in the Combe area birds were frequently encountered during shoots and

night time game keeping activities. An early report of roding involved two birds in Windsor Forest on Mar 17th (RMH). **Spring/summer:** recorded from 19 locations, most involving roding birds; the highest counts from all sites were: one West Meadows Apr 13th (JLS), one roding Swinley Brickpits Apr 15th (DJB), one roding Windsor Great Park May 7th (RMH), two roding Caesar's Camp and Hut Hill area of Swinley Forest May 11th and 18th (SA; DMac), two to four roding New Town Ride Swinley Forest May 14th (PBT), one roding Gorrick Plantation May 15th (PBT), one South Forest, Windsor Forest May 19th (DJB), two roding Bucklebury Common May 22nd and Jun 11th (GJS), one Frilsham May 23rd (RCr), one roding Broomhall, Sunningdale May 23rd (SA), two roding High Standinghill Woods May 29th (DJB), two Greenham Common May 30th (NM) and Jun 5th (MJD), one roding Wood End Jun 2nd (DJB), five Roundoak Piece Jun 2nd (CMc), six roding South Ascot Jun 5th (DJB), two to four roding Padworth Common Jun 12th (TGB), four Snelmore Common Jun 20th (T Jones), one roding Wishmoor Bottom Jun 22nd (RCM) and two Nalder Plantation on Jun 25th (JLS). There were only two records in July; there was late roding at Bucklebury Common with two on Jul 15th (GJS) and one was reported from Nalder Plantation on Jul 26th (JLS). **Autumn/second winter:** winter migrants began to supplement the resident population and birds were recorded from 11 locations. The first report since July involved two at Ascot on Oct 30th (J Mills) then single birds were noted at six locations whilst two were seen at West Woodhay Down at dusk on Dec 30th (CDRH).

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

*Scarce passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)*

There were 11 records involving 40 birds from 7 locations, 4 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 1 in West Berks. **Spring:** passage was the worst since 2008 when there were no records; the only record in 2014 involved a s/p bird of the Icelandic race *islandica* at Horton GPs on Apr 15th–18th (CDRH). **Autumn:** passage was much improved during this period; the first migrants appeared on Jul 4th with five s/p of the race *islandica* at Slough SF (CDRH) and two at Hosehill Lake (RCo; CMc). At Dinton Pastures one was located at Lea Farm Lake on Jul 23rd (BTB) then 21 (the largest flock since 2007) were present briefly at Lavell's Lake on Aug 9th (RAGP; JCM) with another bird at Lea Farm Lake on Aug 14th (MFW). Two adults were then located at Eton Wick on Aug 18th (ADB) with a juv also seen at Eton Wick and Dorney Wetlands on the same date (ADB; CDRH). The only West Berks record involved three at Lower Farm GP on Aug 30th (IW) whilst back in the east two s/p, race *islandica* were found at Eton Wick on Sep 5th (KPD; CDRH) remaining to Sep 8th (PNe). **Second winter:** one was present on the flood at Eton Wick on Nov 29th (DAC). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	10	17	13	12	8	8	7	14	18	10	15	17	9	21	11
No. of birds	17	19	19	38	25	30	10	63	36	18	52	26	17	69	40

The total of 38 birds in 2003 was at the time a record year. Since then that total has been exceeded on four occasions with the latest record total set in 2013 (not mentioned in the 2013 report). With the current decline in the British breeding population it is likely that a high proportion of birds moving through Berkshire are of the Icelandic race *L. l. islandica*.

## BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

*Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

There were four records involving 33 birds in 2014. **Spring:** a light passage occurred in late April with two low over Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures (FJC) and a male and female in s/p flying through Queen Mother Res, departing ESE (CDRH) and were probably the same birds reported later at Staines Res, Surrey all on Apr 21st. Five days later a flock of 28 flew over Eversley GPs on Apr 26th (RJG). **Autumn:** the only record involved one found at Lea Farm Lake on Sep 7th–8th (FJC *et al.*). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	5	0	3	2	8	0	5	4	2	3	0	8	8	0	4
No. of birds	6	0	3	2	35	0	12	76	2	3	0	64	65	0	33

## WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

*Uncommon passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)*

There were 19 records involving 30 birds this year, all in East Berks and all but two at Queen Mother Res. **Spring:** at Queen Mother Res, records were as follows: one flying E on Apr 18th, one Apr 20th, four flying E and later one flying NW on Apr 22nd, one Apr 23rd, one flying E and later two flying SW on Apr 26th, one flying NE on Apr 27th, two May 5th, one May 12th and one May 20th (all CDRH). Elsewhere one flew N over Dorney Wetlands on May 6th (DCI) and five were found at the New Workings at Eversley GPs on May 8th (RJG). **Autumn:** records were confined to Queen Mother Res and involved single birds on Jul 15th flying SSW, Jul 21st, Jul 28th, one heard but not seen on Aug 2nd (all CDRH), one Aug 26th (MMc; CDRH) with a further three through later on the same day (CDRH). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	4	7	11	21	19	18	15	15	24	24	14	24	20	12	19
Minimum no. of birds	5	18	18	57	49	29	26	53	54	113	63	36	48	31	30

## CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

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

Records were received from 19 locations, 4 in East Berks and Mid Berks and 11 in West Berks. **First winter:** the only true winter records occurred at Theale Main GP where one was seen on Jan 27th (AVL) and Eversley GPs with one on Feb 7th (RJG; MHu). One flying north over Frilsham on Feb 26th (RCr) may refer to an early spring migrant. **Spring:** migrants and the first returning summering birds were reported in March with two on the Compton Downs on Mar 17th (ABT), one East Ilsley on Mar 18th (PH), one Leckhampstead on Mar 23rd (RJC) and four at Superity Farm Compton on Mar 27th (IW). April passage involved single birds at Eversley GPs on Apr 10th (RJG), Borough Marsh on Apr 14th (ABT), East Ilsley on Apr 24th (CDRH) and Brimpton GPs on Apr 26th (GEW). Song was heard at Welford MoD on Apr 11th (GDS) but there were no subsequent reports. **Summer:** from May to June birds were generally recorded at summering locations, the exception being one at Purley on Jun 15th (MJS). Summering was recorded from the Compton Downs where

up to three birds were reported (JL) and the Lambourn Downs where at least six were present from late May (IW) into June with two in display-song flights on June 8th (GDS). Other locations where birds were noted involved a pair at Woolley Down on Jun 12th (GDS) and one at West Ilsley on June 16th (RJC). It appears that breeding did not occur as there were no further records until the autumn. **Autumn:** there were seven records from five locations commencing with one flying south over Streatley on Aug 2nd (NJB) then one over Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures on Aug 27th (FJC), one over Summerleaze GP on Aug 30th (CDRH), one Eton Wick on Aug 31st (CDRH), one Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures (RM) and a juv at Eton Wick (CDRH; KPD) on Sep 5th. Finally one circled Queen Mother Res on Oct 30th (CDRH).

## COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

Birds were reported from 29 locations, 8 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 10 in West Berks. The monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	-	-	-	1	3	-	1	5	2	-	-	-
Dorney W/Eton Wick	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	-	2	1	-	6	2	2	-	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	6	3	-	-	-
Queen Mother Res	-	-	-	1	3	1	28	7	2	1	-	-
Theale GPs	-	-	-	1	1	-	6	1	1	1	-	-
Elsewhere												
No of sites	-	-	-	4	6	1	8	8	4	1	-	-
Minimum no of birds	-	-	-	7	8	1	22	13	5	1	-	-
Recorded county total	0	0	0	14	18	2	64	35	15	4	0	0

**Spring:** the first record of the year involved a single bird at Padworth Lane GP on Apr 10th (KEM). April records came from a further eight locations all involving one or two birds, the only record to exceed two involved three on floods at East Ilsley on Apr 22nd (ABT). Passage remained light in May however it is likely that eight or more passed through Queen Mother Res during the month. The last spring record involved two at Queen Mother Res on May 30th (CDRH). Autumn: passage began in late June with single birds at Queen Mother Res on Jun 23rd (CDRH) and at Lower Farm on Jun 25th (IW; GJS) and 28th (JL). Passage quickly increased and peaked in July with substantial counts involving six Hosehill Lake on Jul 10th (KEM), nine on the RThames at Streatley on Jul 20th (NJB), six Eversley GPs on Jul 25th (RCM) and five at Slough SF on Jul 31st (CDRH). High counts continued into August with six Padworth Lane GP on Aug 7th (KEM) and seven Queen Mother Res on Aug 10th (CDRH). However, by far the largest count involved a minimum of 28 at Queen Mother Res on Jul 19th (CDRH) which is the highest count in Berks and at Queen Mother Res since 1999. The last record involved one bird at Eton Wick on Oct 16th (BDC).

## GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

*Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 35 locations, 14 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 13 in West Berks. The monthly maximum counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures	–	–	–	1	1	–	4	4	3	1	–	–
Dorney W/Eton Wick	3	–	2	3	–	2	1	4	4	2	1	1
Eversley GPs	2	1	1	1	–	4	3	3	5	1	2	–
Lower Farm GP	1	1	1	–	–	1	1	2	3	2	2	1
Padworth Lane GP	1	1	–	2	–	–	–	2	1	1	–	–
Pingewood GPs	–	1	1	1	–	1	1	2	3	1	–	–
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	3	1	4	4	1	2	6	12	7	6	6	8
Minimum no of birds	4	1	4	4	1	7	15	23	13	9	7	8
Recorded county totals	11	5	9	12	2	15	25	40	32	17	12	10

**First winter/spring:** birds were reported from 18 locations of which 14 recorded no more than one bird. Two were seen at Queen Mother Res on Jan 5th, 11th and 12th (CDRH) and at Eversley GPs from Jan 11th to 15th (RCM; RFM). Three were noted at Eton Wick on Jan 24th (PBT) then apart from three at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 3rd (DJB) all other records involved just one or two birds. As usual May is the poorest month for records, this year there were two both of single birds at Lea Farm Lake on May 9th (AR) and flying upstream along the R Thames at Frogmill Hurley on May 21st (SJF; FMF). **Autumn/second winter:** records came from 28 locations and as usual passage began in June with records coming from six locations with high counts of four Eversley GPs on Jun 20th (RCM) and six at Slough SF on Jun 30th (CDRH). Five were still present at Slough SF on Jul 4th–6th (CDRH) and five were reported from Eversley GPs on Sep 16th (RFM). Away from the main sites, there were four at Midgham GPs on Sep 13th (JPM) and four were on Horton Fields Quarry on Oct 26th (CDRH) otherwise sites recording birds from October through to the year's end reported no more than one or two birds at any one time.

## SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

*Very scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

The first record since 2011 involved a summer plumaged bird at Burnthouse Lane GP, Pingewood GPs from May 16th (BM *et al.*) to May 18th (MO). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	4	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
No. of birds	0	6	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1

With only eight records involving eight birds in the last 10 years it seems that this species is becoming even rarer. The last record involving more than one bird was at Lower Farm GP on Sep 24th 2001 when three were present.

## GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

*Uncommon passage migrant, rare in winter (Schedule One and Green Listed)*

Records were received from 8 locations, 4 in East Berks and 2 in Mid and West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table and is based on the month of arrival.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	4	3	0	0	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	2	4	3	2	0	6	5	0	0	0

**Spring passage:** began with two at Eversley GPs on Mar 14th (RJG) which is the first March record since 2010. April records involved one at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 16th (D J Barnes), two Burnthouse Lane GP on Apr 26th (KEM) to Apr 29th (AVL) and one at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 26th (BTB) and Apr 29th (FJC). The only May records came from Eversley GPs where one was present on May 10th (RCM) and two there on May 17th (RJG; NS). The last spring record involved a late s/p adult at Queen Mother Res on Jun 6th (CDRH). **Autumn passage:** began early with an adult at Queen Mother Res on Jun 23rd (CDRH). There were no further records until August when three were located at Queen Mother Res on Aug 16th (CDRH). Elsewhere singles were noted at Greenham Common on Aug 22nd (MJD), Lower Farm GP on Aug 27th-31st (JLS; IW; NC) and Eversley GPs on Aug 29th to Sep 1st (RCM; GDu). Passage continued in September with three juvs at Horton Fields Quarry on Sep 11th, these birds relocated to Queen Mother Res after being flushed (CDRH). On Sep 12th four juvs were on Queen Mother Res (PNe; CDRH) remaining to Sep 22nd (MFW) with two lingering to Sep 24th (CDRH). Another bird flew over Queen Mother Res on Sep 13th (CDRH) and further sightings (QMR birds?) involved two juvs at Horton Fields on Sep 27th with one lingering to Oct 3rd (CDRH).

## WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

*Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

There were four records this year, two in spring and two in autumn. **Spring:** the first involved one on floods between Compton and East Ilsley on May 16th (SCo) then one visited Eversley GPs on May 17th (RJG *et al.*). **Autumn:** a juvenile briefly visited Slough SF on Jul 30th (CDRH). Nearby at Dorney Common Bucks, two juvs spent several days at this locality and were seen to fly into Berks at Eton Wick on Aug 7th and 10th (DAC). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of spring records	0	2	2	1	0	1	3	2	3	0	0	2	1	0	2
No. of autumn records	4	5	1	2	2	3	2	1	0	3	2	4	1	5	2
No. of birds	3-4	6-7	3	3	2	7	6	4	3	4	3	6	2	5	5

The table shows a fairly stable status in the 15 years since the Millennium. Two thirds of records occurred in the autumn and with a minimum of 62 birds recorded, the yearly average is just over four birds. The highest count throughout the period was four at Burnthouse Lane GP in May 2005.

## REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

*Uncommon and declining passage migrant and summer visitor which now only breeds in very small numbers, scarce in winter (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 19 locations, 5 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 6 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	0	3	9	12	9	6	4	1	3	1	1	2
Minimum no. of birds	0	4	22	29	13	9	10	1	6	1	1	2

**Spring:** passage began with three records in February: two at Lower Farm GP on Feb 13th (NC), one Lea Farm Lake on Feb 25th (PSc) and one at Borough Marsh from Feb 28th (CDRH) to Mar 4th (ABT). Passage increased in March with the month's highest count being seven at Padworth Lane on Mar 13th (KEM). Away from Padworth Lane Floods and GP, numbers were low, the highest being four at Eton Wick on Mar 22nd (BJH). Distribution peaked in April with birds recorded from 12 locations with Padworth again holding most birds with six on Apr 16th (KEM). Song was heard at Fobney Water Meadows on Apr 1st (JLe) but there were no other reports of breeding behavior. **Breeding:** although still present at nine locations in May and six in June, for the first time since 1981 (when probably under-recorded) there were no confirmed records of successful breeding anywhere in the county. **Autumn/second winter:** July birds were noted at Hosehill Lake with two on Jul 4th (KEM) and one on Jul 20th (AVL); single birds were noted at Queen Mother Res on Jul 6th, 12th-13th and 24th (CDRH), one was reported from Lower Farm GP on Jul 14th (MIGW) and two were at Eversley GPs also on Jul 14th (GDu). There was only one record in August, a single bird at Theale Main GP on Aug 19th (KEM) however September fared better with one juv at Eton Wick on Sep 1st (CDRH) then three were reported from Lower Farm GP on Sep 2nd (NC) and two were at Queen Mother Res on Sep 22nd (CDRH). As we entered the second winter, single birds were seen at Queen Mother Res on Oct 10th-11th, Nov 24th to 29th and Dec 4th (CDRH). The last bird of a very disappointing year occurred at Eton Wick on Dec 6th (CDRH).

The decline of this species in Berkshire can probably be attributed to three main factors; these being loss of habitat, disturbance and predation. Changes in land use such as the draining of wetlands and opening up areas for human recreation has affected many ground nesting species especially waders. Once quiet water meadows have now become popular areas for human recreation i.e. walking dogs, for example the last successful breeding at Cock Marsh was in 1985 and since then the site has become increasingly popular for dog walking. Open areas around gravel pits are now overgrown whilst other sites that used to be managed for wildlife, like the island on Moatlands GP is no longer managed. At other locations like Hosehill Lake the heavy predation of chicks by crows and moorhens caused unsustainable losses to a once healthy population of up to eight pairs and now the site is a Black-headed Gull colony which is not ideal for Redshank. Since 1985 the best year for productivity was 1997 when up to 23 young fledged. Since then productivity has been much lower and from 2008 to 2013 only one or two pairs have successfully bred annually; which has led to the inevitable eventually happening in 2014 when no young were reared at all.

## TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

*Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

With only four records, this year was below average and after the record year for bird numbers in 2013, 2014 was the poorest since 2009, all records came from Queen Mother Res. **Spring:** two records both involving single summer plumaged birds on May 6th (MMc; CDRH) and May 11th (CDRH). **Autumn:** a summer plumaged bird was located on Jul 19th (CDRH) and finally two flew low to the south east on Aug 10th (CDRH). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of sites	8	3	8	12	8	3	3	6	3	4	8	11	9	10	4
No. of birds	9	3	10	26	10	4	9	11	3	4	10	11	12	40	5

## [RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*]

*Rare vagrant, five previous records involving seven birds (Schedule One and Red Listed)*

2013 Missing record: The sixth record for the county involved an adult in worn summer plumage at Queen Mother Reservoir late on Sep 8th (CDRH). Despite searching, the bird was not seen the following day.

## GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

*Rare visitor usually after autumn storms (Not Listed)*

The 30th record for Berkshire involved a first winter at Queen Mother Res on Oct 14th (CDRH; PNe). This is the seventh record this century, so averaging one sighting every two years and it is the first October record since the Great Storm of October 1987. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1

All records involved one bird.

## ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

*Rare passage migrant (Red Listed)*

2014 was a good year for this species, with two records involving four birds, both at Queen Mother Res and both in the autumn. On Aug 25th two dark morph adults circled the reservoir from 0710hrs to 0910hrs before departing south east (MMc; CDRH) and was followed by a dark morph adult and a juvenile circling the reservoir for five minutes on Oct 14th (CDRH). These are 24th and 25th records for the county which includes the first record, a rather vague account of one being killed near to Broadmoor in 1877 (Noble 1906) and one would wonder if such a record would be acceptable today? The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	4

There have been 20 records since the construction of the Queen Mother Res in 1974 and the importance of this massive water body (in a Berkshire context) is borne out by the fact that



since 1986 of 13 records to 2014, the only record away from Queen Mother Res was one at Dinton Pastures CP in October 1990.

## **GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua*

*Rare vagrant (Amber Listed)*

The third record in the last four years involved two adult types which flew into Queen Mother Res at 0814hrs remaining on the water until departing NNE at 0920hrs on Oct 15th (MMc; CDRH). This would be the eleventh record for the county, involving 13 birds. However this does not include a record of three flying south over Wraysbury Res Surrey heading toward Berkshire on Oct 16th 1987 that appears in both the 1996 and 2013 avifaunas!

## **SABINES GULL** *Xema sabini*

*Rare vagrant (Not Listed)*

For the second consecutive year this attractive species has been recorded in the county. A juvenile briefly visited Queen Mother Res on Sep 21st. Arriving at 0750hrs it remained to only 0818hrs when it departed ESE (CDRH). This and the 2013 bird are the only records this century and apart from 1987 when it was estimated that 14 birds (8 adults and 6 imm) were blown into Berkshire during the Great Storm on Oct 15th-16th only single birds have been recorded; in 1994, 1999, 2013 and 2014 all from Queen Mother Res.

## **KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

With seven records involving 12 birds, 2014 was the best year for records since 2007. **First winter:** two adults (1 heavily oiled) were found at Queen Mother Res on Jan 4th, one remained until the morning of Jan 5th but departed to the south at 0800hrs (CDRH). A moribund adult was found at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jan 11th (BTB) unfortunately it died soon after. **Spring:** after an adult was observed flying east over Theale Main GP on Apr 27th (ABT) there were three records from Queen Mother Res all involving adult birds. The first briefly visited the reservoir on May 18th, on May 19th, three adults were attracted to the gull roost but did not linger and flew off NE, and finally three more adults were present on Jun 6th (all CDRH). **Autumn:** the only record involved an adult flying through Queen Mother Res on Oct 14th (ADB) heading ENE. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	4	6	5	6	11	6	9	4	3	4	4	1	4	7
No. of birds	0	6	6	15	9	102	8	72	4	3	14	5	1	4	12

## **BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

**2013** Correction: Four chicks were noted at Lavell's Lake DPCP (Jun 22nd SAB and Jul 9th JLS), not one chick as stated in the report.

**2014** Our most common gull, this species is a familiar sight throughout the county during the winter and numbers continue to increase in summer where breeding was confirmed at five locations in Mid and East Berks. Although widespread, regular counts were only submitted from four highly populated locations and these are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP*	45	420	24	40	10	–	30	21	–	96	850	1600
Eversley GPs	170	420	87	30	90	120	110	450	735	800	930	275
Lower Farm GP	55	44	20	8	8	6	100	88	134	441	700	1000
Thatcham NDC	83	110	14	2	4	10	21	139	76	124	153	170

\*Breeding colony not surveyed

**First winter:** high counts involved 1000+ at Borough Marsh on Jan 2nd (DJB), 3100 Widbrook Common on Jan 15th (BDC) and 2500 at Borough Marsh on Mar 9th (ABT). After these records the next highest count involved just 650 at Frogmill Hurley on Mar 1st (SJF; FMF), it may be that the extensive flooding at the time provided birds with ample feeding habitat throughout the county, thus only concentrating numbers at a few popular locations. It is disappointing that the large gull roosts at Queen Mother Res and Theale GPs were once again not counted in either winter period. Identification pitfalls were provided with a partial albino at Queen Mother Res on Jan 3rd and a leucistic adult at Widbrook Common on Feb 19th (both CDRH). **Breeding:** was reported from five locations. At the main site of Hosehill Lake, over 100 pairs were nesting and a visit by ringers in June resulted in 91 chicks being ringed of which 86 were also colour-ringed. Although not well covered, the colony at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures had also increased and 73 young were ringed with 64 of these also colour ringed (Berkshire Black-headed Gull Ringing Project). At Eversley GPs, at least 43 pair's nested and 51 juvs were counted there on Jul 24th (RFM; GDu). Two pairs had three unfledged juvs at Wraysbury GPs on Jul 2nd (CDRH) and at the under-watched Twyford GPs a small colony was not adequately covered, the only data submitted involved birds nesting on May 19th (WeBS). **Second winter:** the highest counts involved 700 at Switchback Road, Maidenhead on Sep 4th (BDC), 900 Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Nov 9th (WeBS), 930 Eversley GPs on Nov 12th (JMC), 1000 Lower Farm GP on Dec 3rd (GJS) and 1600 at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 7th (WeBS). Ringed birds were noted at several locations including six colour ringed birds at Burnthouse Lane GP on Sep 13th (KEM) and on the R Thames at Datchet the Latvian adult ringed in April 2012 (as an adult) was seen again on Nov 1st (KPD) having previously been recorded here in the winter of 2012/2013.

## LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

**2012** Correction: The total number of birds seen during the year based on records in the 2012 species account is 35–38 birds not at least 42 as stated.

**2014** Following the poor year of 2013 (the worst since 1992) numbers were back to something like normal. There were 21 records involving 56 birds from just seven locations, all in Mid and East Berks. **First winter/spring:** the only true winter record of the year involved two w/p adults at Queen Mother Res on Jan 30th (CDRH). There followed a gap of over a month before the next record, a f/w at Borough Marsh on Mar 6th (CDRH) which preceded the beginning of the main spring passage by two weeks which began at Theale Main GP with a w/p adult and a f/w on Mar 21st (TGB; KEM) to Mar 22nd (AVL). Further records at Theale Main GP involved 1 (not aged) reported on Mar 24th (GJS) and an adult with a partial hood on Mar 26th (KEM). At Queen Mother Res a s/p adult was present on Mar 31st and three adults (2 in s/p) flew through heading NE on Apr 3rd (both CDRH). A probable s/s was observed at Wraysbury GPs on Apr 2nd (CDRH) whilst at Theale Main GP, one (not aged) was reported on Apr 2nd (RCo) and was followed by six (4 adults 2 f/s) on Apr 3rd (ABT) and 12 (not aged) on Apr 7th (AVL). A f/w visited both Lea Farm Lake (MFW) and Lavell's

Lake (RHS) on Apr 8th and another f/w was located on Theale Main on Apr 9th (KEM). Surprisingly this was the last record of the spring, as passage usually extends into May and June. Autumn: passage was restricted to the east of the county. At Queen Mother Res single different juveniles made brief appearances on Aug 27th and Aug 29th (CDRH). There were no further reports until October when passage was observed at both Horton GPs and Queen Mother Res. This late passage began with one f/w flying through Queen Mother Res and then stopping to feed at Kingsmead Lake, Horton GPs on Oct 7th. There followed records of a w/p adult at Queen Mother Res, departing to the east on Oct 13th, two w/p adults flying SE over Queen Mother Res on Oct 14th, four w/p adults flying east over Horton Fields on Oct 15th then on Oct 17th, 12 (10 adults 2 f/w) were watched at Horton GPs before some moved to Queen Mother Res where 10 (8 ads 2 f/w) were still present early on Oct 18th (all CDRH). The last record of the year involved a w/p adult flying SW over Horton GPs on Oct 30th (CDRH). The status of Little Gull in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	6	5	21	31	27	36	17	23	20	10	15	22	18	6	21
No. of birds	12	11	41	113	81	108	40	45	33	20	22	57	35	7	56

## MEDITERREAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

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

Records were received from 17 locations this year, 11 in East Berks, 5 in Mid Berks and 1 in West Berks. Birds can be highly mobile during their stays in Berkshire and their changes in appearance through moult make it difficult to know how many birds may be involved in records at times of frequent sightings by many observers. Of the 88 reports (based on dated reports in the Database) that were submitted, it is estimated that a maximum of 56 birds were involved however this total may be significantly less due to the already mentioned mobility of the species, however at Queen Mother Res up to 30 birds were individually identified throughout the year. The table shows the monthly totals seen at the main site (Queen Mother Res) and elsewhere, bracketed totals involve birds known to have also been seen at Queen Mother Res.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Queen Mother Res	3	3	1	2	0	2	6	3	3	2	4	5
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	3	5	4	1	0	3	1	1	0	3	3	1
Maximum no of birds	3(1)	5	6	2	0	3(1)	1	1	0	4	3	1
Maximum county total	5	8	7	4	0	5	7	4	3	6	7	6

**First winter:** a f/w and an adult (both first seen in 2013) were on Queen Mother Res on Jan 3rd with the f/w seen again on Jan 7th and 20th (CDRH) while an adult was reported on Jan 21st (KEM; DNTR) and again on Jan 22nd, 25th and 31st (MO) also being seen at Colnbrook on the two latter dates (CDRH). Elsewhere an adult was seen at Dorney Wetlands on Jan 11th (RN) and one was located at Sonning Meadows on Jan 30th (CDRH) and an adult was noted at Bisham on Feb 4th (CDRH). Two adults (first seen in Dec 2013) both with expanded black on the face were on Queen Mother Res on Feb 7th (CDRH) and were followed by two adults in partial s/p at Temple on Feb 15th with one still present on Feb 18th and seen again at Widbrook Common on Feb 19th (CDRH). Meanwhile at Queen Mother Res, three adults, one in s/p and two with partial hoods (not the Temple birds) were found on

Feb 17th with two again on Feb 24th (CDRH). An adult was reported from Lea Farm Lake on Feb 21st (PSc) and an adult with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  complete hood was at Borough Marsh on Feb 24th (CDRH) and what may have been this bird then appeared at Queen Mother Res on Mar 2nd (CDRH). Adults were then noted at Sonning Meadows (s/p) on Mar 3rd and 6th (CDRH), Dorney Wetlands (s/p) on Mar 8th (KPD), three at Borough Marsh on Mar 16th (ABT) and one s/p at Hosehill Lake on Mar 17th (TGB). **Spring/summer:** the first record for a month involved two s/p adults at Queen Mother Res on Apr 18th (CDRH) which were seen later that day at Staines Res Surrey and were conceivably the same birds seen at Hosehill Lake on Apr 19th (KEM; CMc). There were no May records and the next bird to appear was a f/s at Queen Mother Res on Jun 8th which was followed by another f/s at Slough SF on Jun 15th and 22nd (CDRH). An adult visited Eversley GPs on Jun 20th (M G Philpott) and an adult in s/p was noted at Queen Mother Res and later at Eton Wick on Jun 25th (CDRH) **Autumn/second winter:** early records involved the first juvenile of the year at Queen Mother Res which also hosted an adult on Jul 15th (CDRH), the juv being still present on Jul 16th (MMc). A different juvenile, still being attended by a parent was found at Queen Mother Res on Jul 17th and later another adult was seen in the roost (CDRH). A juvenile continued to be seen on several dates throughout the rest of July and the Queen Mother roost held an adult on Jul 25th and a s/w on Jul 27th (CDRH). Elsewhere a juv was present at Slough SF on Jul 30th (CDRH). The July juv was seen again at the Queen Mother Res roost on Aug 3rd with another juv moulting into f/w there on Aug 4th and 14th (CDRH), then a f/w appeared there on Aug 25th -26th (MMc; CDRH). Summerleaze GP hosted the next bird, a s/w on Aug 31st (CDRH) then back at Queen Mother Res there were three records of different juvs (2 going into f/w) during September these being recorded on Sep 6th, Sep 9th-10th and on Sep 29th to Oct 5th (CDRH). The only West Berks record which involved a f/w occurred at Lower Farm GP on Oct 1st (NC; GJS *et al.*), then back at Queen Mother Res a w/p adult was seen on Oct 9th and 21st (CDRH). A f/w visited Summerleaze GP on Oct 14th (CDRH), the only record from Theale Main GP this year involved a w/p adult in the roost on Oct 17th then back at Summerleaze GP a w/p adult was present on Oct 23rd and Nov 1st the same day a f/w was seen at Queen Mother Res and was followed by one adult in w/p in the roost on Nov 14th-15th, a s/w on Nov 20th and a new w/p adult on Nov 21st (all CDRH). One of the QMR adults may have been responsible for the records on the R Thames Windsor on Nov 29th and at Dorney Wetlands on Nov 30th RN; DAC); a f/w was also at Dorney on Dec 3rd (CDRH). For the rest of the year, all records came from Queen Mother Res where five birds were logged during the month involving an adult on Dec 4th and 27th – 28th, a s/w and a new adult on Dec 12th, a f/w on Dec 9th and another smaller f/w on Dec 28th (all CDRH).

## COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

This overlooked species is a common and widespread visitor to both Mid and East Berks, however it is uncommon in West Berks although numbers do fluctuate here from year to year. **First winter:** records were submitted from 34 locations, 20 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 3 in West Berks. High counts involved 440 at Great Meadow Pond on Jan 5th (DJB), 120 Eversley GPs on Jan 6th (NS), 318 Widbrook Common on Jan 15th (BDC) 150 Smiths Lawn, Windsor Great Pk on Jan 19th (DJB), 125 Purley on Thames on Feb 22nd (NJB), 153 Frogmill Hurley on Mar 6th (SJF; FMF) and 125 at Sonning Meadows on Mar 14th (ABT). The highest West Berks counts were 13 at Woolhampton GPs on Jan 19th (WeBS) and at Bucklebury on Feb 2nd (NC). The only April records involved one at Hosehill Lake on Apr 15th (AVL) then two there on Apr 19th (CMc) and a f/s at Queen Mother Res on

Apr 28th (ABT) and May 2nd-3rd (CDRH). **Summer:** every year, very small numbers of first summer and occasionally second summer birds remain in East Berkshire throughout the late spring and summer, usually in the Queen Mother Res area. One f/s was located at Horton GPs on May 31st (CDRH), then 2 f/s were at Queen Mother Res on Jun 2nd followed by single f/s at this site on several dates throughout the rest of June (CDRH). What was probably one of these birds was also observed fly-catching at Dorney Wetlands on Jun 25th (CDRH). **Return passage/second winter:** birds were reported from 28 locations, 18 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks. Return passage began early this year with an adult seen at Queen Mother Res on Jun 23rd (CDRH) the earliest since 2008. In July, numbers slowly began to build up at Queen Mother Res from one adult on Jul 1st to 15 birds, including the autumn's first juv on Jul 25th (CDRH). July birds were also recorded from Summerleaze GP (CDRH), Wokingham (PBT), Eton Wick (PBT) and at Smiths Lawn where five adults were present on Jul 27th (DJB). Birds were extremely scarce through August and September (were they overlooked?), the only submitted August record involved one bird at Frogmill Hurley on Aug 28th (SJF; FMF), September records came from five locations but none exceeded two birds but included one at Lower Farm GP on Sep 14th (JLS). Records increased in October and the highest counts all came from October to December with Smiths Lawn holding 250 on Oct 26th and 600+ on Nov 30th (DJB) with a further 550 nearby at Great Meadow Pond also on Nov 30th (DJB). The highest counts from Mid and West Berks during this period were 60 at Remenham Hill on Nov 24th (ABT) and 50 at Lowbury Hill on Dec 5th (ABT). Unfortunately there were no counts from the large gull roosts at Queen Mother Res and Theale GPs in either winter!

## **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

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

This is the most common of our large gulls; large numbers can potentially be seen throughout the county in habitats ranging from downlands, wetlands to urban areas. Being such a familiar species it tends to be under recorded with most observers only submitting large counts. **First winter:** a surprisingly few large counts were submitted during this period. Counts of approximately 1000 birds were made at Theale GPs on Jan 11th (KJa) and Jan 13th (KEM) whilst c700 were on Padworth Lane Floods on Feb 1st (SAG). Apart from these totals counts were generally much lower i.e. only 135 at Lower Farm GP on Jan 6th (IW) and 80 at Eversley GPs on Jan 27th (NS). **Spring/summer:** records were received from 39 locations from April to July. The highest count in the period was 130 late wintering birds at Eastbury Down on Apr 1st (JD). Otherwise very few records reported more than 10 birds and from May onward the highest totals reported were 13 at Tilehurst, Reading on May 23rd and Hosehill Lake on May 25th (both TGB). Birds were present at potential breeding sites in Reading and Slough but due to the urban nature of these locations and the reluctance of observers to visit such places, breeding was not confirmed this year. A pair attending three recently fledged juvs at Queen Mother Res on Jul 10th (CDRH) confirmed local breeding but it is not known if the breeding site was in Berkshire. **Autumn/second winter:** records indicate that birds were much more numerous during this period. Records involving more than 100 birds came from 18 locations; the highest counts being: 500 West Ilsley on Aug 19th (ABT), 1400 Theale Main GP on Sep 12th (RCr), 1555 Eversley GPs on Sep 17th (RCM), 834 over Twyford on Sep 22nd and 1104 on Oct 1st (PA), 1500 Eversley GPs on Oct 16th (JMC), 2000+ Lower Farm GP on Oct 22nd then 3500 there on Nov 5th and Dec 3rd (all GJS), 1190 Twyford on Nov 16th (PA; SPA) and counts of c1000 at Easton Hill (JL) and Sole Fm Boxford (IW) on Nov 25th and Theale Main GP on Nov 29th (SAG). No counts came from the Queen Mother Res roost.

## HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant predominately in the east; increasing summer resident which now breeds (Red Listed)*

Records were received from 48 locations, 23 in East Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 11 in West Berks. **First winter:** there were very few counts that exceeded 15 birds except in the West where 70+ were noted at Bucklebury on Mar 10th (NC) and surprisingly 100 were reported from Superity Farm Compton on Mar 27th (IW) with 200 in that area (Compton) on Mar 28th (DJR). **Spring/summer:** records came from 30 locations with 18 of these recording birds in May/June. Fifty were on the East Ilsley floods on Apr 10th (ABT) and 23 at Superity Farm Compton on Apr 19th (IW; JL) were the highest April counts. In late May larger numbers were reported especially in the east where 80 were noted in roadside fields at Slough on May 25th (CDRH) and at Queen Mother Res a count of c400 (90% immatures) on May 29th (CDRH) was unexpected and 17 visited Lower Farm GP on May 31st (IW; JL). Two hundred and eighty feeding on flies at Queen Mother Res on Jun 1st (CDRH) was the highest June count, other locations reporting 10 or more birds at this time were Dorney Wetlands, Great Meadow Pond, Reading, Slough and Eversley GPs where 37 were present on Jun 27th (RFM). A leucistic adult was located at Queen Mother Res on Jun 30th (CDRH). Breeding was not proved this year however the high number of summering birds present in under watched built up locations would suggest that it did probably occur and the presence of juveniles at Queen Mother Res from Jul 15th (CDRH) would support local breeding. **Autumn/second winter:** numbers were at their highest in East Berks where 100+ were reported from Queen Mother Res on Jul 22nd (PNe) and later in the autumn 810 were on fields at Cold Harbour on Aug 15th increasing to 1348 on Oct 11th (DJB); no other counts exceeded 100 birds. Another leucistic adult (resembling an Iceland Gull) was found at Queen Mother Res on Aug 20th-30th whilst a very large f/w resembling a Smithsonian Herring Gull was there on Nov 16th mixing with at least 30 Scandinavian Herring Gulls (*L. a. argentatus*) the first of which had returned to Queen Mother Res on Aug 29th (CDRH).

## YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

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

Records were received from 16 locations, 6 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 8 in West Berks. Birds were recorded in every month but the autumn remains the principle time for this species. Although it appears to be more widespread in West Berks, the largest counts continue to come from the east, especially in the Queen Mother Res/Horton area. The table shows the monthly totals.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eversley GPs	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	5	5	-
Lower Farm GP	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1
QMR/Horton Fields	4	2	3	2	3	7	29	40	18	4	3	4
Theale Main GP	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3
Elsewhere												
No of Sites	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4	3	2	2	2
No of Birds	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	15	11	3	4	2
Recorded county total	8	4	6	2	3	9	31	59	35	14	14	10

**January/May:** small numbers were reported from six locations during this period. At Queen Mother Res, birds were noted on several dates at the roost with a maximum of four adults

on Jan 24th (CDRH), one adult and two sub-adults were recorded in March with one still on Apr 1st, otherwise the only April record involved a s/s seen on Apr 28th-29th also visiting Horton GP on the 28th (CDRH). A sub-adult was noted on May 9th and 19th whilst two f/s birds were present on May 23rd-24th (CDRH). Elsewhere there was one adult at Eversley GPs (RFM; GDu) and two adults at Theale Main GP (KEM) on Jan 13th, one (not aged) in the roost at Moatlands GP on Jan 24th (ABT), two (not aged) were located at Bucklebury on Feb 2nd (NC) then two (near adult and adult) there on Mar 5th (CDRH) and three reported on Mar 10th (NC). **June/December:** the first returning birds began to appear in June. A Queen Mother Res five or six immature birds were noted on different dates throughout the month, the first returning adult appeared on Jun 23rd (CDRH). Elsewhere a 3/s was seen at Lower Farm GP on Jun 21st (JL) and a s/s (probably a QMR bird) was in Colnbrook on Jun 29th (CDRH). The main arrival began in July and peaked in August. The highest count involved 40 (39 ad 1 juv) on Horton Fields on Aug 11th (CDRH), away from the Queen Mother Res area the only counts to exceed four birds were five adults at Bury Down on Sep 15th (CDRH) and five in the roost at Eversley GPs on Sep 25th, Oct 16th and Nov 12th (JMC).

## CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

*Scarce autumn/winter visitor (Not Listed)*

There were 17 records involving a maximum of 19 birds from six locations throughout the county, the table shows the monthly status for the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3
No. of birds	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	4	5

**First winter:** began with a s/w at Cookham on Jan 16th, there followed a f/w at Queen Mother Res on Jan 19th-20th, a f/w at Borough Marsh on Mar 2nd and another f/w at Bucklebury on Mar 5th (all CDRH). **Spring/summer:** the first June record for Berkshire occurred at Queen Mother Res when a f/s was located on Jun 1st (CDRH). **Autumn/second winter:** most records came from Queen Mother Res and these are dealt with first. The first records of the autumn involved juveniles at Queen Mother Res on Aug 18th, two on Aug 30th and one moulting into f/w plumage on Sep 20th and 28th (CDRH). There were no further records until November when a single f/w bird was located in the roost on Nov 9th, another f/w (this one was limping) was present on Nov 15th and 16th and a week later three 3/w's involving two new birds were found on Nov 23rd. The next QMR record involved a 3/w (the Waltham bird?) on Dec 4th and finally an adult was present on Dec 28th and 31st (all CDRH). Away from Queen Mother Res, an adult was located at the Theale Main Pit roost on Oct 17th (CDRH), a 3/w was among gulls resting on fields at Waltham St Lawrence on Dec 1st (CDRH) and finally what was probably the same adult was in the Theale Main GP roost on Dec 29th and 31st (KEM; RHS). The table below shows the species county status since 2000, totals may include birds seen in the previous year.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Approx. no. of birds	2	4	4	11	23	12	8	16	18	11	9	15	18	11	19

## ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

*Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

For the first time ever, five different birds were recorded in Berkshire in a single year. The previous record total involved four birds seen in 2005 and repeated in 2012. **First winter:** a f/w was seen in the Queen Mother Res roost on Feb 24th (CDRH). In West Berks, floods between Compton and East Ilsley had attracted unusually large numbers of gulls and these included a f/w Iceland Gull photographed on Mar 4th (SCo). There were no further sightings until Mar 17th when ABT located three birds, 2 f/w and 1 f/w or s/w and was able to photograph them together. At least two of these birds continued to be seen in the area, occasionally ranging further afield i.e. one by the Churn Road at Compton on Mar 20th (ABT) and Mar 22nd (RJG) and one near West Ilsley on Mar 20th (GJS) and Mar 22 (M l'Anson). The last sighting involved one bird on Apr 10 (ABT). **Second winter:** a 3rd winter was observed bathing at Horton GPs on the early date of Nov 11th (CDRH) it departed to the north but was seen again at Queen Mother Res on Nov 17th (CDRH). During its travels it was also seen at Barnes WWT Reserve London on Nov 13th and was photographed at Calvert Lakes Bucks. This is the second earliest second winter record for Berks after an adult at Queen Mother Res on November 9th and 10th 2007. The status of Iceland Gull in Berkshire since 2000 is shown below.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	3	2	2	1	2	4	1	3	1	2	2	3	4	3	5

## GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

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

Records were received from 21 locations, 14 in East Berks, 5 in Mid Berks and 2 in West Berks. The monthly maximum site totals are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Queen Mother Res	21	-	-	4	2	1	1	2	5	11	30	52
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	6	5	2	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	4	3
Number of birds	60	7	3	1	-	1	-	-	1	3	36	23
Min. recorded county total	81	7	3	5	2	2	1	2	6	14	66	75

**First winter:** the vast majority of birds were recorded in January with high counts of 11 (10 ads 1 f/w) Cock Marsh on Jan 15th, 25 ads Withy Bridge, Langley on Jan 19th, 20 (13 ads) over Borough Marsh on Jan 22nd and 21 (16 ads) at Queen Mother Res on Jan 25th (all CDRH), the closeness of the records may indicate an influx into the county at the time. All other records involved just one to three birds, the pick of these being two at Theale Main GP on Jan 1st (RCr), three over Wokingham on Jan 20th (PBT), one Lower Farm GP on Feb 13th (GJS) and two over Windsor Great Park on Mar 30th (RJD). **Spring/summer:** most records at this time came from Queen Mother Res where records involved a minimum of four birds (1 sub ad and 3 f/s) to a max of nine birds (3 sub ad and 6 f/s) recorded on six dates from Apr 22nd to Jul 10th (all CDRH). Elsewhere, a sub adult (a QMR bird?) was seen at Horton GPs on Apr 27th (CDRH) and one (not aged) was flying west over Greenham Common on Jun 20th (IW; JL). **Autumn/second winter:** birds continued to be seen at Queen Mother Res in August and September, the first record away from this site occurred at Runnymede with one on Sep 30th (RMH). Numbers increased in November



with high counts of 18 flying south at Lavell’s Lake on Nov 5th (FJC), 30 (27 ads) at Queen Mother Res on Nov 16th (CDRH) and 12 at Waltham St Lawrence on Nov 18th increasing to 21 ads on Dec 1st and 12th (CDRH). The year ended with 52 (90% adults) at Queen Mother Res on Dec 28th (CDRH).

**GULL SPECIES**

An all white gull flying north east over Queen Mother Res in the morning of Apr 25th was considered to be an albino but was not identified to species (CDRH)

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

*Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

**2011** Delete records of two Whiteknights Pk Lake on Apr 22nd, three at Theale Main GP on Aug 27th and one Theale Main GP on Sep 2nd as all are Birdguides records that are not supported with any details.

**2012** Delete the record of two at Lea Farm Lake, DPCP on May 4th as it is a Birdguides record with no supporting details.

**2014** After the worst year this century in 2013, 2014 was not much better. There were seven records involving just 13 birds. **Spring passage:** the only record involved a single bird at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Apr 27th (BTB *et al.*), meaning for the first time since at least 1974 there were no May records! **Autumn passage:** began with four adults at Theale Main GP on Aug 8th (KEM *et al.*) followed by a different moulting adult there on Aug 9th (KEM) to Aug 10th (MO) which was briefly joined by a second bird on Aug 9th CMc). Three w/p adults and a juv at Queen Mother Res on Aug 26th (CDRH) were followed by a moulting adult on Aug 28th (CDRH). The last record of the year involved a late adult over Lea Farm Lake and Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Oct 3rd (FJC; RM). The yearly status of this species since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of Spring birds	84	41	5	18	14	12	20	18	75	42	11	28	12	5	1
No. of Autumn birds	5	23	21	20	50	12	45	1	24	59	32	74	5	2	12
Yearly total	89	64	26	38	64	24	65	19	99	101	43	102	17	7	13

The table shows that this species visits Berkshire in highly variable numbers from year to year. Neither spring nor autumn dominates and incredibly the total of 771 birds seen during this period is evenly split between spring (386 birds) and autumn (385 birds). The yearly average is just over 51 birds, so it may be of significance that the last three years have been well below average and are the three worst years for this species this century. Only time will tell if this recent fall in numbers is the beginning of a real decline in numbers visiting Berkshire.

**SANDWICH TERN** *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

*Uncommon passage migrant which has declined in recent years (Amber Listed)*

**2012** Correction: The first record of the year at Queen Mother Res occurred on Mar 25th and not Mar 23rd as stated in the report; however it is still the earliest accepted record for the species.

**2014** Six records all from Queen Mother Res involving just ten birds is below average compared to bird totals in the previous 10 years. **Spring passage:** for the third consecutive year one was seen at Queen Mother Res on the record early date of Mar 25th (CDRH).

There were two further records from Queen Mother Res, both involving single birds: one circling the reservoir May 1st (CDRH) and another circling and calling loudly from 0851 to 0856 which departed to the SE on Jun 8th (CDRH) which was reported “back” at King George VI Res, Surrey in the afternoon. **Autumn passage:** three records all from Queen Mother Res involved seven birds, beginning with two adults on Aug 8th (CDRH), then two were observed flying south on Aug 28th (RGI) and finally three were present at 1100hrs on Sep 18th (PNe). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06*	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of Spring birds	2	0	8	34	7	2	5	2	6	5	3	1	7	5	3
No. of Autumn birds	41	27	35	22	13	4	8	4	22	2	7	14	7	2	7
Yearly total	43	27	43	56	20	6	13	6	28	7	10	15	14	7	10

\*Counts the 2 records of 2 adults and a juv at both QMR and Lower Fm GP on Sep 24th as different birds

Analysis of the totals in the table shows a marked decline in records in the last 10 years. From 2005 to 2014 the yearly average is just 11.6 birds compared with an average of 30.3 birds from 1995 to 2004. Since 1990, four of the six years where numbers did not reach double figures occurred from 2005; it appears that this decline has affected autumn passage whilst totals in the spring have generally remained fairly constant.

## COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

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

Records were received from 34 locations, 13 in East Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 7 in West Berks, the minimum number of birds reported throughout the summer is shown in the table, and these totals are based on the maximum monthly counts from each site.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	0	0	16	17	15	14	10	3	0	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	60	143	54	80	75	3	0	0	0

**Spring:** the first bird of the year arrived at Theale Main GP on Apr 3rd (KEM; PNe; RDR) and was followed by another bird there on Apr 4th (KEM; TGB) and one at Sandford Lake on Apr 8th (MFW). The first large counts did not occur until the end of April with 13 at Theale Main GP on Apr 27th (RGI) and 13 at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 30th (MFW). The largest counts in May involved 17 at Burghfield GPs (JA) and 12 at Sonning Lock (RCW) on May 5th, followed by at least 21 at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures on May 12th (RM), 16 Dorney Wetlands on May 13th (DAC) and 20 at Wraysbury GPs on May 17th (CDRH).

**Breeding:** was confirmed at only four locations this year. At Dinton Pastures CP birds nested on Lavell’s Lake (1 pair), Lea Farm Lake (2 pairs) and Sandford Lake (5+ Pairs) with small numbers of chicks seen at Sandford and Lea Farm (RM). There were five nesting pairs at Twyford GPs in May and a chick was noted on Jun 16th (WeBS). Four or five pairs nested amongst the Black-headed Gull colony at Eversley GPs with at least three broods seen on Jul 15th (RCM) and five pairs nested at Wraysbury GPs with seven well grown chicks present on Jul 2nd (CDRH). The total of just 23 breeding pairs for the whole county is cause for concern and for the first time since the late 1980’s there was a total lack of breeding records from Reading westward. The loss of the Common Tern as a regular breeding species may become a distinct possibility in the near future if action to protect their breeding grounds from disturbance and invasive species is not implemented. Autumn: small numbers were noted on passage at several widespread locations, however only Theale Main GP and Queen Mother Res recorded substantial numbers. At Theale Main GP there were 15 on Jul 9th (KEM) and in August 20 were present on the 9th (JLS) increasing to 27 on the 10th (KEM).

Queen Mother Res recorded 13 on Jul 21st and 26th, 20 on Aug 8th-9th, 25 on Aug 10th and 17 on Aug 28th (all CDRH). The only September records involved single birds at Theale Main GP on the 2nd (KEM) and at Donnington Castle on Sep 5th (JCh).

**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

*Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

There were 13 records involving 17 to 19 birds this year making it the worst year since 2009 when 14 birds were recorded. **Spring passage:** began with two birds at Theale Main GP on Apr 19th (ABT *et al.*), these or another two were still present the next day (NR) and one was also located at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 20th (MFW). Back at Theale Main GP, four were present on Apr 27th (KEM) and the first records from Queen Mother Res involved one which flew NE on May 6th (CDRH) and another there also departing to the NE on May 8th (ABT). Another bird flew through Lea Farm Lake on May 8th (MFW) and one flew west through Eversley GPs on May 10th (RJG). The last birds of this fairly light spring passage occurred at Theale Main GP with singles on May 12th and May 17th (KEM) and Horton GPs with another single on May 17th (CDRH). **Autumn passage:** was also disappointing with only two records, both at Queen Mother Res. On Aug 16th a single adult circled the reservoir for 15 minutes (CDRH) and on Aug 23rd an adult and a s/s (a rarely seen plumage in Berkshire) were present from 0750hrs to 0820hrs, after fishing successfully both birds departed high to the SE (CDRH). This is the first year since 2002 that no juveniles were recorded. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of Spring birds	1	1	47	21	40	122	62	12	38	6	29	19	153	35	14
No. of Autumn birds	0	5	0	17	2	2	14	5	13	8	4	19	5	5	3
Yearly total	1	6	47	38	42	124	76	17	51	14	33	38	158	40	17

**COMMIC TERN (COMMON/ARCTIC TERN)** *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

On Aug 26th a compact flock of 15 terns circled high above Queen Mother Res for 20 minutes, though often obscured by low cloud they were thought to probably be Common Terns (CDRH).

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia*

*Common urban resident (Wild Rock Dove is Green Listed)*

Although a common species within our towns, there were few records of significance submitted this year. The highest counts were 80 in Newbury Town Centre on Feb 4th (JL), 65 Marsh Meadow, Cookham on Aug 30th (BDC), 60 Wokingham on Sep 8th (BJ) and 70 in Hungerford on Nov 19th (RGS). No breeding records were submitted.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

*Common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

This species remains common and widespread throughout the county. Records came from 127 locations, 43 in East Berks, 29 in Mid Berks and 55 in West Berks. **First winter:** birds were reported from 59 locations however most records involved very small numbers. The highest counts were 152 at Temple on Feb 23rd (CDRH) and 79 at Englefield on Mar 10th (RCr). **Spring/summer:** records came from 88 locations the highest count being 110 on Smiths Lawn on May 17th (CDRH). Evidence of breeding was widespread; some

of the highest totals came from locations where nest boxes have been provided for owls and Mandarin Ducks. At Eversley GPs there were 16 breeding attempts, 29 eggs were laid in nest boxes and 15 young fledged (MGLR). There were nine attempts at Hosehill Lake with 20 eggs laid in nest boxes and 13 young fledged including one pair that was triple brooded and successfully reared five young (HRR) and at Padworth Common six young fledged from four nest boxes (PCRR). Birds were surveyed in Windsor Forest where 29 pairs were mapped all using natural nest sites (DJB) and a further nine pairs were located in Swinley Park (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** late breeding pairs were found in nest boxes at Theale, Tidmarsh and Wigmore Lane in September (JLe). Once the breeding season was over birds began to congregate in flocks, beginning with 300 on stubble at Woodlands Park on Sep 1st increasing to 560 there by Sep 5th (DJB). Other substantial counts involved 120 at Burnthouse Lane on Sep 20th (KEM), 100+ at Remenham on Nov 1st (ABT), 202 at Horton GPs on Nov 3rd (CDRH) and 180 at Eastbury on Nov 6th (RGI).

## **WOOD PIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

*Abundant resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

2014 was a disappointing year with only a few large counts reported. **First winter:** the largest counts came from the far SE of the county where 5000+ were flying north over Blacknest and Windsor Great Park on Jan 3rd (RJD; HH) and 4000+ were leaving their roosts at Great Meadow Pond on Jan 12th (DJB). Elsewhere 1600 were observed flying NNE over Queen Mother Res on Jan 5th (CDRH), 498 flew north over Wooshill Wokingham on Jan 20th (PBT) and 600 on crops at Winterbourne on Mar 27th (GDS). **Spring/summer:** although there were many records throughout the county at this time, most either involved small numbers or breeding records and no large gatherings were reported. **Autumn/second winter:** flocks began to appear in Aug-Sep but the first large flocks did not show until October when early morning migration was noted at three locations on Oct 27th with 2000 over Lavell's Lake (FJC), 1000 over White Waltham (DJB) and 880 over Wooshill Wokingham (PBT) all heading SW. Surprisingly there was only one other record involving high numbers, this being 1000 at Leckhampstead on Nov 1st (GDS).

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

*Common resident (Green Listed)*

Although widely reported in small numbers, it is clear that this species is largely ignored by most observers. The largest counts reported were: 30 at Long Lane Cookham on Jan 14th (BDC), 16 Strand Water on Mar 8th (BDC), 26 Wantage Road, Reading on Sep 26th (SAG), 30 Thatcham NDC on Nov 18th (GJS) and 20 Thatcham on Dec 13th (BJW). Breeding records were few and far between, only coming from Bracknell (RJD; MHu) and Twyford (SPA).

## **TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

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

Records were only received from 10 locations this year and involved probably only 11 birds. Of these 10 locations only four recorded birds on more than one date and for the first time, it appears that Turtle Doves did not even attempt to breed in Berkshire. The first birds were reported on Apr 29th when one was singing at Foliejon Park (MSFW) but not subsequently and one was seen at Aldermaston GP (JPM). This bird was noted on many dates until Aug 1st and on Jun 22nd a second bird (presumably a female) was seen, however it was not seen

again (JPM). One was photographed under garden feeders in Winnersh on May 26th-27th (J Cole). Another long staying bird appeared at Hodcott Down, West Ilsley on May 27th and was seen again on Jul 4th and 28th (ABT). Surprisingly a bird was photographed in the same Winkfield garden as last year on Jun 3rd (per MSFW). One was singing at Padworth Lane from Jun 9th to 17th (KEM *et al.*) whilst another bird was photographed at Bonhomie Court Hurst on Jun 14th (per MSFW). The final three records all involved one day birds at Lands End, Farnborough on Jul 7th (BL; GJS), Woolhampton GPs on Jul 8th (JPM) and Padworth Common on Jul 20th (CF). The extent of the decline of this species in Berkshire is well documented. By extracting records from the county reports and the county database from 2005 to the present day, the extent of this alarming decline can be seen in the table below.

Year	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Min no. of birds reported	59	33	34	27	20	22	21	18	14	11

In Berkshire it appears that the tipping point as a breeding species has already been passed and it is quite likely that the Turtle Dove will completely disappear from the county within a few years, a sad indictment of mankind's indifference to the natural world.

## **RING-NECKED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

*Common feral resident in the east of the county, uncommon elsewhere*

Records were submitted from 74 locations, 59 in East Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 1 in West Berks. The total of 59 locations in East Berks must be taken as a minimum as this species is widespread and to some degree is ignored by some observers. The table shows the monthly status throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>East Berks</b>												
No of sites	18	8	15	10	18	7	12	6	12	12	11	17
No of birds	489	59	89	89	91	24	217	50	992	172	198	479
<b>Mid Berks</b>												
No of sites	2	2	3	5	2	2	3	1	4	3	4	3
No of birds	3	5	8	17	4	23	18	1	16	8	16	29
<b>West Berks</b>												
No of sites	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of birds	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**First winter:** in the east, high counts generally came from the area surrounding the new roost which has become established in trees beside the M4 opposite Slough SF. These included 84 flying west over Dorney Wetlands at dawn on Jan 2nd (DJB) and 250 at the roost on Jan 30th (DCI). In Mid Berks there were no counts that exceeded four birds whilst in the west the only record of the year involved one at Thatcham on Feb 6th (P Eeles). A pair was prospecting a potential nest site at Cookham Dean on Jan 14th (BDC). **Spring/summer:** high counts involved 32 at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 22nd (DJB), 20 in central Reading on June 21st (E Wang), 70 going to roost at Slough SF on Jul 11 (LGRE) and 59 in Windsor Great Park on Jul 29th (RMH). Breeding was only confirmed at two locations with a pair with two juveniles at Frogmill Hurley on Jun 6th (SJF; FMF) and two pairs feeding young in nests in oaks at Spital, Windsor Great Park on Sep 4th (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** counts exceeding 35 in East Berks involved 50 at Frogmill Hurley (SJF; FMF) and an impressive 502 going to roost over Eton Wick (LGRE) on Sep 14th, 150+ at Great Meadow

Pond on Sep 28th (DJB), 112 at Runnymede (RMH) and 60 flying east over Maidenhead to roost (BDC) on Sep 30th. Numbers were lower from October to December with 38 at Pinkneys Green on Oct 1st (LJF), 60 Great Meadow Pond on Oct 5th (DJB), 230 going to roost over Eton Wick on Nov 19th (DCI), 100 over Slough SF on Nov 22nd (BDC), 40 Maidenhead Court on Nov 23rd (DF) and 44 in Windsor on Dec 19 (DF). The highest Mid Berks counts came from Remenham with a peak of 21 on Dec 31st (MFW). Apart from the February Thatcham bird, there were no records west of Reading.

## CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

*Locally common though declining summer visitor (Red Listed)*

A slightly better year than the late spring year of 2013, records were received from 96 locations, 27 in East Berks, 23 in Mid Berks and 46 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	-	-	-	41	63	30	4	3	2*	-	-	-
Min no. of birds	-	-	-	47	88	36	5	3	2*	-	-	-

\*sites are adjacent and may refer to the same bird

The first record of the year was of one calling at Kintbury Cressbeds on Apr 8th (RGS) which is the most regular first returning date this since 2000 (5 times in 15 years). The table shows the approximate number of birds recorded per week throughout the spring.

Week ending	Apr 12	Apr 19	Apr 26	May 03	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31	Jun 07	Jun 14	Jun 21	Jun 28
No. of birds	7	20	41	37	48	43	42	29	37	24	12	8

Most counts involved one or two birds; counts involving three came from South Ascot on Apr 21st (DJB), Boxford on May 14th (RJC), Wishmoor Bottom on May 15th (DJB), Harveys Meadow, Hungerford on May 18th (JLS) and Barton Court, Kintbury on Jun 8th (JLS). The only count to exceed three involved four at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on May 10th (ABT). A rufous morph was observed at Barton Court on May 31st (JLS) and is the first record of this colour variant in the county since 2005. **Breeding:** was confirmed at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures when a juv was observed being fed by Reed Warblers on Jul 6th (RAn) and at Woolhampton GPs where a nestling was found in a Reed Warblers nest on Jul 15th, it later fledged on Jul 20th (GEW). Independent juveniles were also seen at Thatcham Marsh with two on Jul 10th (MJD) and one at Freemans Marsh on Jul 25th (IW), the early dates of these records would suggest that they had been reared on site. Locally bred juvs or possible migrants were also reported from Dorney Wetlands on Aug 6th (CDRH) and Aug 13th (PKe), other birds that were not aged by the observers but one would presume them to be juveniles were reported from Brimpton on Aug 8th (JPM) and high over Ufton Nervet, being mobbed by corvids on Aug 27th (PH). The last records of the year occurred in September with a juv seen at Greenham Common on Sep 10th and 12th (JL; IW) and what may have been the same bird on the adjacent Crookham Common on Sep 18th (ABT). This is the latest recorded departure date since one at Eversley GPs on Sep 25th 2004.

## BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

*Uncommon but widespread resident (Schedule One and Amber Listed)*

There were far fewer records submitted via the database in 2014 (148 records) compared to 2013 (248 records). Initially one may think that this is due to a substantial decline in numbers due to the disastrous breeding season of 2013. However 2014 was a vole year and this produced record breeding results. The fact that birds were able to easily find enough food probably meant that birds were not forced to hunt in daylight whereas in 2013 birds were closer to starvation and so had to hunt for longer periods of time including the unfavorable daylight hours. Database records were received from 51 locations, 12 in East Berks, 14 in Mid Berks and 25 in West Berks. This shows how under recorded the species was this year (2011 74 sites, 2012 66 sites) but it still gives an indication of how the population is distributed throughout the county. Most casual records involved just one or two birds; higher counts involved three Windsor Great Park on Jun 30th (S M Whitehouse), seven Sheepdrove on Jul 24th (JLS) and three Warfield on Dec 20th (DAMD). **Breeding:** there were only two breeding records for East Berks: adults were seen hunting at Colnbrook in May and June, taking prey to the nest in a hollow ash tree (CDRH) and at Eversley GPs a pair hatched six young in one nestbox whilst in another there were 12 infertile eggs (MGLR). In Mid and West Berks the Pang Valley Barn Owl Group had a record year! Of 125 nestboxes checked, 45 fledged 173 chicks, giving a success rate of 36% of all boxes checked and an average brood size of 3.84 young. At least one third of all chicks fledged were from second broods which is remarkable when in a normal year, most breeding pairs would only attempt one brood. At Sheepdrove, Lambourn a chick estimated at being 44 days old was ringed on Nov 4th (JLS). As with 2013 the table below shows the yearly breeding results of the Pang Valley Barn Owl Group.

Year	10	11	12	13	14
Boxes monitored	91	111	123	119	125
Boxes successful	10	18	27	0	45
Chicks fledged	29	54	72	0	173
Average brood size	2.9	3.0	2.7	0	3.84

## LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

*Widespread resident, evidence of decline in recent years (introduced species so not listed)*

Records were received from 47 locations, 27 in East Berks, 9 in Mid Berks and 11 in West Berks. After 2013 this total is the worst this century and even more cause for concern was the fact that 35 locations recorded birds on only one date. Although this may just reflect the level of coverage at some sites, it may also show that birds are now at dangerously low densities, a precursor to local extinctions? The number of locations where birds were found from 2000 to 2014 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of sites	58	50	68	59	73	75	63	67	63	60	79	65	51	44	47

From 2000 to 2014 the average number of locations where birds are reported from is a little over 61 per year. This is a total that has not been met for the last three years and of the four worst years since 2000, three have been since 2011! The high total in 2010 probably reflects the increased coverage of the Bird Atlas and not an increase in the population. Most records involved just one or two birds, higher counts involved three Padworth Lane GP on Mar 26th

(TGB), three near Legoland, Windsor Gt Pk on Jul 1st and four there on Oct 10th (RMH). **Breeding:** was confirmed at only three locations: at Whiteknights Park a juvenile was located on Jun 8th and an adult was attending three juvs on Jun 24th into July (PG), one pair bred at Eversley GPs with two juvs noted in late June (RCM; RFM) and an adult was attending three juvs at Spital, Windsor Great Park on Aug 4th (DJB).

## **TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

*Widespread resident, common in suitable habitat including some urban areas (Green Listed)*

This is the most common of our owls; records were submitted from 101 locations, 43 in East Berks, 23 in Mid Berks and 35 in West Berks where it is probably under-recorded. Being strictly nocturnal, most records were of birds heard calling at night and this year there were some surprisingly high counts involving four at Frilsham on Jun 7th (RCr), nine Combe on Jul 28th (JSa), six Crimp Hill, Old Windsor on Sep 1st (RMH), five Lower Green, Inkpen on Sep 3rd (RHar) and four Hosehill Lake on Oct 12th (RCr). **Breeding:** the distinctive squeaking call of young birds make the locating of breeding pairs with young reasonably straight forward and in 2014 breeding was confirmed at 17 locations (including 6 sites in Windsor Gt Pk/ Forest) involving at least 22 pairs which is a huge improvement of the one pair reported breeding in 2013. Single breeding pairs were noted at Boxford (GDS), Denford Mill (RGS), Gorrick Wood (EN), Crimp Hill (RMH), Snelsmore Common (GDS), Stanmore (GDS), Swinley Forest (DJB) and Whiteknights Park (PG). Areas that recorded multiple breeding pairs were: Cookham Dean with two pairs (BDC), Padworth Common with two successful attempts from three (TGB), Pinkneys Green with two pairs (ANS) and Windsor Great Park and Forest with at least six pairs (RMH; RJD; DJB).

## **LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*

*Rare resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

The only records this year came from the same West Berks location with two on Jan 16th (IW) and Jan 23rd (IW; JL). In the second winter one was seen hunting near to this location on Dec 8th (ABT).

## **SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

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

**First winter:** the small population that has regularly wintered on the West Ilsley gallops (Bury and Cow Downs) was reported regularly throughout January and February. The highest monthly totals at this location was four on Jan 20th (PH; ABT), six on Feb 16th (LBM) and three on Mar 6th (RJB) which was also the latest recorded date for this site. Away from West Ilsley, two were observed at a daytime roost on the Compton Downs on Jan 11th (DJB) and one was seen at Superity Farm Compton on Mar 27th (IW). **Spring:** the only record involved one back at Bury Down on Apr 27th (ABT) but it was not seen subsequently. **Autumn/second winter:** passage was observed at Queen Mother Res with single birds noted on Oct 14th, 16th and 17th (CDRH); the closeness of these records may indicate that only one bird was involved. Other migrant records involved one bird circling Lea Farm Lake for five minutes on Nov 9th (FJC) and another flushed off the bank of Queen Mother Res on Nov 17th (CDRH). Wintering birds were reported back at Bury/Cow Down on the early date of Oct 28 with four present on Oct 30th (ABT) then five on Nov 15th (DWK) then down to two on Dec 30th (ABT). Finally one was watched hunting over Walbury Hill at dusk on Dec 30th (CDRH).



## NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

Records were received from 13 locations, 7 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 4 in West Berks. The first returning bird was reported churring at Roundoak Piece, Padworth on the early date of Apr 30th (PH) and was heard again on May 3rd (PH) and two were present on May 6th (JCM). There were no other reports from elsewhere until May 14th when birds were reported from Swinley Forest (PBT) and Greenham Common (CDRH). By early June all the usual sites had been occupied, the table shows the species site status throughout the summer.

Site	Site Details	Date/s	Observers
Broomhill Sunningdale	2 churring	May 23rd	SA
Bucklebury Common	2 churring plus 1 calling	May 22nd, Jun 11th	GJS
South Ascot	4 churring	Jun 5th	DJB
Gorrick Wood	2 churring	May 15th and Jun 16th	PBT, PJC
Greenham Common	At least 1 pair	May 14th, May 30, Jun 5th	CDRH, NM, MJD
Nalder Plantation	3 males	Jun 25th	JLS
Padworth Common	4 churring, 3+ females	May 18th, Jun 12th – 18th	TGB
Roundoak Piece*	Up to 5 reported*	May–Jun–Jul	Many observers
Snelsmore Common	Max of 3 churring	Jun–Jul	GDS, MJF, LJF
Swinley Forest	41 territories	May–Jun–Jul	Many observers
Wellington College Heath	1 territory	May–Jun	DJS
Wildmoor Heath	3 churring 1 female	Jun 14th	DAMD
Wood End	2 churring 1 female	Jun 2nd	DJB
Total	70 churring/territorial males		

\*Records from this location generally lacked details, two birds were churring males.

Swinley Forest remains the species stronghold in Berkshire; the total of 41 territories is slightly up on 2013 and was made by an organized team of observers each covering selected areas of the SPA. Although there were no cases of confirmed breeding, it is likely that it did occur at most of the main locations. What was either a female or juvenile was reported from Greenham Common on Aug 22nd (MJD) and was the last record of the year. The table shows the yearly status since 2004, the year of the last BTO survey.

Year	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of churring males	73	37	41	45	35	44	79	68	55	75	70

Data had to be extracted from the 2006, 2007 and 2009 databases as report accounts were vague.

Note recent well targeted conservation action in the UK has helped a national recovery of this species which has led to the Nightjar to be moved from the Red List to the Amber List in 2015 (BoCC4).

## SWIFT *Apus apus*

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

**Spring:** the first record of the year involved a single over Lavell's Lake on Apr 17th (FJC). April records came from a further 12 locations however the only double figure counts were 25+ at Theale Main GP on Apr 26th (AVL) and 10 Moatlands GP on Apr 27th (RGi). Numbers increased during May with seven locations recording over 100 birds, the largest counts being 400 Dorney Wetlands on May 10th (DAC), 500 Theale Main GP on May 10th-11th (ABT; RCr), 300 Burghfield GPs on May 25th (JA), 300+ Queen Mother Res

on May 27th (DJB) and 1000+ over Theale Main GP on May 28th which increased to 1200 on Jun 4th (RCr). As passage came to an end, local numbers dropped and although some favored locations still held substantial numbers i.e. c650 feeding over Woodlands Park fields on Jun 19th (DJB), most reports through June and July involved less than 100 birds. **Breeding:** although not confirmed anywhere in Berkshire in 2014, birds were still common and widespread throughout, and screaming parties were noted at many built-up locations including some known breeding areas. **Autumn passage:** large parties of birds are usually encountered moving through the county from mid July onward, but this year numbers were much lower. There were no counts exceeding 100 birds reported anywhere in July and although passage birds were noted at 31 locations during August the only large counts involved 140+ over Woodlands Park Fields (the first large count here since June) on Aug 5th (DJB) and 200 at Queen Mother Res on Aug 6th (CDRH). Passage was all but over by the end of August the only September records involved singles over Greenham Common (IW; JL), Lavell's Lake (FJC) and Queen Mother Res (CDRH) all on Sep 3rd.

### **KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

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

Records were received from 103 locations, 40 in East Berks, 25 in Mid Berks and 38 in West Berks. As some locations are close to others, it is likely that on occasion, records at adjacent sites may involve the same resident pairs whereas at larger sites such as gravel pit complexes records are more likely to involve more than one resident pair. Birds were recorded from most of our rivers, larger streams and nearby still-waters, the table shows the site distribution along our rivers, note any still water site adjacent to a river is included in the river name.

Watercourse	No. sites	Watercourse	No. sites	Watercourse	No. sites	Watercourse	No. sites
R Blackwater	1	Emmbrook	1	R Kennet	27	Roundmoor D	2
Burghfield Br	1	R Enbourne	2	R Lambourn	9	R Thames	19
Colnbrook	2	Foudry Br	1	R Loddon	4	Winterbourne	1
The Cut	4	Holybrook	2	Maidenhead D	4	Elsewhere	12
R Dun	2	Jubilee R	4	R Pang	5		

R = River, Br = Brook, D = Ditch

The table shows that our two most important rivers remain the Kennet and Thames and it is encouraging to see that the River Lambourn is also well represented. Obviously site numbers are influenced in how much access there is to each watercourse i.e. the Rivers Blackwater and Loddon flow through large areas that are difficult to access so most records come from their adjacent gravel pit complexes of Eversley GPs, Dinton Pastures and Twyford GPs. Compared to 2013 sites appear to be down a little but this may be simply down to different methodology used by the account authors, the monthly status based on monthly maximum site counts is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of locations	29	20	26	21	16	27	29	21	33	22	20	24
Minimum no. of birds	36	27	41	25	19	34	33	32	58	28	26	34

The low total for May would be due to nesting and incubation of eggs whilst the higher totals in the summer and early autumn would be due to the increase in population after the breeding season. **Breeding:** unfortunately there were few records that involved breeding birds however juveniles were noted at Bray GPs (SAG), Cookham (BDC), Eversley GPs

(MSe), Padworth Lane GP (KEM), Streatley (NJB) and Woolhampton GPs (GEW). An active nest was located at Virginia Water in late April but there were no further signs of activity after Apr 26th (RJD).

## **WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla*

*Rare passage migrant, formally bred (Red Listed)*

There were three records this year, all in the autumn; one was photographed at Tutts Clump, Rotten Row on Sep 4th (J Coghill per DJR). Another spent two days at Queen Mother Res on Sep 14th-15th (CDRH, MMc *et al.*) and a third was ringed and photographed at East Shefford STW also on Sep 14th (A Parkes). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table below.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of spring records	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
No. of autumn records	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	3
No. of birds	2	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	1	3

The table shows a small increase in records over the last five years with half of this centuries birds being seen from 2010. However this species no longer breeds anywhere in Britain (last confirmed breeding was in 2002) and the yearly Berkshire average since 2000 is only a little over one bird per year. It is likely that in the long term this figure may decrease even further.

## **GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

*Common resident (Amber Listed)*

This widespread and familiar species was reported from 140 locations, 56 in East Berks, 26 in Mid Berks and 58 in West Berks. Counts exceeding four birds were surprisingly few and were as follows: six at Burghfield GPs on Apr 6th (RCr), five along the Jubilee River at Chalvey on May 5th (PAW) and eight at Crookham Common on Jul 21st and Greenham Common on Aug 5th (IW). Breeding: was confirmed at 14 locations involving 16 pairs. All of these records involved fledged juveniles, some still being fed by the adults. The only ringing record this year involved a female ringed at Blacknest on Jan 12th (RJD); at least two 1st winter males were retrapped at Ascot Heath in January and March (RJD).

## **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

*Common and increasing resident (Green Listed)*

Our most common and widespread woodpecker, records were received from throughout the county although the species is scarce in the more sparsely tree covered areas of the northwest. Counts of five came from seven locations; higher counts involved 10 trapped (2 ringed, 8 retraps) at Blacknest on May 31st (RJD) and nine seen at Wick Hill, Finchampstead on Jun 6th (BLo). At Blacknest nine different birds were ringed from January to May and evidence points to seven pairs visiting the ringing site in the spring, on May 31st all birds trapped had brood patches (RJD). **Breeding:** 19 breeding pairs were located at nine locations and fledged juveniles were reported from a further 12 locations.

## LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

*A very scarce resident, whose numbers continue to decline (Red Listed)*

Birds were reported from just 15 locations, 2 in East Berks, 4 in Mid Berks and 9 in West Berks. Twelve of these locations only reported single birds on just one date. The other three locations held longer staying individuals with two possibly recording two or more birds. The plight of this once relatively common species now appears desperate in Berkshire and although it can be elusive, there were no records from any of the main East Berks strongholds such as Windsor Great Park and Caesars Camp even though these sites frequently attract observers.

**First winter:** a male seen at several locations within Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 2nd (DJW), Jan 3rd (FJC), Jan 28th (PSe; PF), Jan 31st (RM) and Feb 1st (AR) and may have been the same bird that was reported from Lavell's Lake on Nov 27th 2013. Another bird was heard calling (but not seen) at Kintbury Cressbeds on Jan 2nd and 19th and again on Mar 4th and 9th (RGS). A male was seen at Fobney Island on Feb 3rd (RRi), one was heard calling at Frogmill Hurley on Feb 18th (SJF; FMF) and one was at Greenham Common on Mar 2nd and 8th (RJC) and nearby at Greenham on Mar 20th (JL). **Spring:** there was a cluster of April records beginning with one calling at Prospect Park, Reading on Apr 4th (JLe) then one on feeders at Denford Mill on Apr 14th (RDW), one Mount Hill, Bagnor on Apr 17th (JL) and two reportedly heard at Kintbury Cressbeds also on Apr 17th (RGS). The only May record involved one at Bucklebury Common on May 20th (RSJ). **Summer:** the only record was of one seen at Lower Farm GP on Jul 2nd (IW). **Autumn/second winter:** there were five records of single birds at Chamberhouse Marsh, a male on Sep 10th (NC) Eversley GPs on Sep 27th (MFW), Freemans Marsh on Oct 30th (RGS), Hosehill Lake on Nov 6th (AVL) and finally back at Lavell's Lake on Dec 16th (PSc). From May to the year's end only seven birds were reported, all appeared on just one date and so it could be assumed they were birds wandering forlornly looking for a companion. The table below shows the yearly status since 2010, unfortunately data is not complete in reports prior to 2010 but the figures for just this five year period show a 50% drop in numbers and locations.

Year	10	11	12	13	14
No. of locations	31	29	24	15	15
No. of autumn records	37	38	29	24	17

## WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

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

Records were received from 15 locations, 4 in East Berks (Swinley Forest counted as one), 4 in Mid Berks and 6 in West Berks. **Jan/Feb:** three wintering birds were present at Poor's Allotments, Ufton Nervet on Jan 1st (RCr) and were followed by single singing birds at this site (PH) and at Greenham Common (JL; IW) on Jan 19th. One flew south over Bury Down on Feb 10th (RJB) then one was singing at Poor's Allotments on Feb 16th and 18th (PH), five were reported from Greenham Common Feb 17th (IW), one singing at Padworth Common on Feb 19th (JLe) and one singing at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on Feb 21st (PNe; GDS). **Mar/Jun:** records came from 11 locations and involved at least 49 territories or singing males. The main sites were Swinley Forest SPA where 20 territories were located in a partial survey of the site (PJC; DJS *et al.*); there were 13–14 territories within the Greenham/Crookham Commons (AEDH; IW; JL) and six territories in South Ascot (DJB). Elsewhere two territories were located in Poor's Allotments (PH) and Swinley Park (DJB) and single territories were reported from Padworth Common (PH; TGB) and

Woolhampton GPs (TGB; ABT). One day singing birds were noted at Leverton on Mar 8th (PBy), Paices Wood on Apr 17th (JLe) and Roundoak Piece on Jun 1st (PH). Another record came from Lower Farm GP, a single bird on Jun 15th (IW; JL) but lacked any details. There were no records from the previously regular locations of Gorrick Wood, Snelsmore Common and Wildmoor Heath. This may be due to invasive scrub changing the habitat or the lack of coverage from observers. However at other locations such as Greenham Common, Swinley Forest and Ascot, habitat has been created by active management and forest clearance and this should help maintain numbers in Berkshire. **Breeding:** was confirmed at Greenham Common (3 pairs) (ADEH) and Swinley Forest where single family parties were note from two locations on Jun 20th (ABT) and Jun 22nd (BDC). **Jul/Dec:** Most records came from the well watched Greenham Common with birds seen regularly from July to the last record of one on Nov 19th (JL). There were some high counts at this site, especially from the area around the Fire Plane with a maximum count of 16 occurring on Sep 2nd (MJD). Away from Greenham four were located at the Silver Lane, Padworth Common fuel depot on Sep 5th (GJSu) and five at Wishmoor Bottom on Sep 12th (DJB). There were two October records of single birds flying over Hungerford (CF) and Queen Mother Res (CDRH) both on Oct 19th and indicates passage through the county.

## SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

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

Although under-recorded, records were still received from 115 locations throughout the county with 32 in East Berks, 21 in Mid Berks and 62 in West Berks. The monthly total of occupied locations based on records received is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	21	24	42	46	34	30	13	7	12	24	22	9

The table shows a bias toward the spring when singing birds are more obvious and an apparent scarcity in the late summer when birds are more elusive. What is apparent are the comparatively low monthly totals of what was once a ubiquitous species throughout rural Berkshire and reflects the gradual decline this species has undergone since the 1970's. **First winter:** was a quiet period for this species. The lack of severe winter weather meant that there were no hard weather influxes and throughout January no count exceeded 35 birds. The only record of significance was made at Englefield when 120 (25 singing) were counted at Englefield on Feb 2nd (RCr). **Spring/summer:** records came from 64 locations from March to July and it is believed that most records involved territorial birds. High totals involved 50 at Englefield on Mar 9th (RCr), 11 singing at Sulham on Apr 2nd (TH), 35 Superity Farm Compton on Apr 19th (IW; JL), 13 singing at Jealott's Hill on May 2nd (RCM), 20 Herons Nest, Theale GPs on Jun 3rd (TGB), 27 Wellbottom Down on Jun 5th (RJC) and 23 at West Ilsley on Jun 16th (RJC). Survey results showed that there were 19 territories at Greenham Common which continues the decline since 2009 when there were 32 territories and once again there was no evidence of successful breeding which is due to lack of ideal habitat and disturbance from the general public (AEDH). At Woodlands Park 10+ territories were present in April/May (DJB). The only confirmed breeding records came from Ascot Heath (RJD) and Leckhampstead (GDS) both involving one pair. **Autumn/second winter:** as usual, birds were scarce (less visible) in the Aug/Sep period and it was not until October that a substantial increase in numbers became apparent. The highest count of the year involved 200 at Englefield on Oct 9th (RCr) other three figure counts involved 110 by Drift Road near Fifield on Oct 24th (RMH), 150 on Remenham Hill on Nov 7th (ABT), 100+ on the Compton Downs on Nov 10th (ABT) and 130 at Englefield on Dec 6th (RCr).

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

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

Records were received from 35 locations, 12 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 15 in West Berks. **Spring passage:** was later than usual, the first record being of four at Lower Farm GP on Mar 19th (GJS), the latest since 2006 when the first arrivals appeared on Mar 21st. The main arrival began on Mar 20th when birds were reported from six locations including 100+ moving west over Padworth Lane Floods in 1.5 hrs (KEM) and were followed by large gatherings of 200 over Woolhampton GPs on Mar 23rd (GEW) and 100 over Wraysbury GPs on Mar 27th (CL). Passage continued into April with birds being reported from 23 locations and high totals were noted at Lower Farm GP with c100 on Apr 8th (NC; MJD) and 18th (IW; JL), c100 Queen Mother Res and 90+ over Horton GPs both on Apr 18th (CDRH) and c100 over Theale GPs on Apr 20th (AVL). **Breeding:** evidence of breeding first emerged in April when four birds were seen investigating drainage pipes in the bank of the R Kennet at Reading on Apr 14th (PSc) and 20 birds were observed gathering nest material from paddocks near to Hosehill Lake on Apr 23rd (CMc). An artificial bank beside the R Lambourn at Hunts Green appeared well populated with 50+ birds there on May 30th (DJS) and a pair was using the artificial bank at Lea Farm Lake on Jun 24th (PSc). However these were the only records submitted and it is not clear if any birds successfully bred in the county! **Autumn passage:** flocks began to appear in July with up to 60 at Woodspeen on Jul 2nd, 17th and 50 on Jul 29th (IW). High numbers were present at Theale GPs from Aug 10th to 30th, peaking at c300 on Aug 29th (RCr). Other notable counts involved 50+ at Great Meadow Pond on Aug 17th (DJB), 200 Burnthouse Lane on Aug 20th (KEM) 100 Eversley GPs (GDU) and 120 at Hosehill Lake (RCr) both on Aug 27th. Numbers were much lower in September, the largest flock being only 30 birds at Hosehill Lake on Sep 13th (TGB) so it came as a surprise when 50+ were reported from Eversley GPs on Oct 7th (RFM). The last record of the year involved four birds at Bussock Camp Winterbourne on Oct 9th (IW; JL).

## **SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

**Spring:** the first of only two March records this year involved a bird at Bray GP on Mar 23rd (SAG) another single was noted at Queen Mother Res on Mar 31st (CDRH). Spring passage was disappointing, although widespread; the highest counts in April were only c100 at Queen Mother Res (CDRH) and Theale GPs (AVL) on Apr 20th and reflect the recent downward trend in numbers moving through the county at this time. There was little improvement in May where numbers only exceeded 100 at Theale GPs, peaking at 150 on May 9th (RJB). **Summer:** By mid May birds were a common site throughout rural Berkshire and although under-recorded, records still came from over 80 locations albeit usually in small numbers. Significant counts at this time involved 30 Hosehill Lake on May 26th (TGB), 40 Eton Wick on May 28th (DCI), 50+ Theale Main GP on Jun 4th (KEM), 18 on the Ridgeway on Jun 17th (MHu) and 48 including 18 juvs at Twyford on Jul 15th (SAB). Although only confirmed at nine locations it is probable that breeding occurred at many sites away from the public eye. **Autumn:** passage commenced from mid August and good numbers were found congregating at many locations especially around water-bodies. Counts exceeding 100 were 200 at Theale Main GP on Aug 15th and 27th (RCr), 150 Lea Farm Lake on Aug 17th (RM), c200 Eversley GPs on Aug 19th and 27th (RCM), 110 Padworth Lane GP on Aug 30th (SAG), c500 Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 30th (FJC) and 150+ there on Sep

5th (LSe), 450 Woolhampton GPs on Sep 6th (KGW), 100+ Greenham Common on Sep 8th (MJD), 160 Purley on Thames on Sep 21st (NJB) and 100 at Leckhampstead on Sep 26th (GDS). October records came from 14 locations with 20 at Brimpton GPs on Oct 8th (GEW) being the highest count. The last records of the year occurred mid month with 10 at Queen Mother Res (DF; TAG) and one Lower Farm GP (JLS) on Oct 14th and two over Bracknell on Oct 15th (DAMD).

## **HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbicum*

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

**Spring:** the first record of the year involved a single bird at Woolhampton GPs on Mar 30th (GEW). There followed a steady trickle of records in early April with the first double figure count of 10 occurring at Lower Farm GP on Apr 8th (NC). Birds were widespread by mid April however numbers remained fairly low, the only April count of significance being 100 at Theale Main GP on Apr 20th (AVL). Numbers improved in May and an influx around May 8th-9th accounted for some of the highest counts of the spring with 120 Lower Farm GP (IW) and 200 Woolhampton GPs (MJD) on May 8th and 350 over Theale Main GP on May 9th (RJB). Later high counts involved 150 Lower Farm GP on May 24th (IW), 200 Theale Main GP on May 26th (KEM) and 100+ there on Jun 4th (KEM). **Summer:** although under-recorded, records for June and July came from 41 locations and breeding was confirmed at Leckhampstead where 11 nests were located on Jun 29th (GDS), College Rd Reading with one plus nests on Jul 29th (MSFW) and Yew Tree House Kintbury where ten young were ringed from four nests in August (JLS). At least 12 nests were active in Woodlands Park during the summer (DJB) and several pairs bred near to the Royal School in Windsor Great Park (DJB). Birds were also observed collecting mud at Lilly on May 15th (GDS). **Autumn:** passage began in late July with 50 over Lower Farm GP on Jul 27th (IW; JL). In August, 100 were noted over Eversley GPs on Aug 11th (RFM), another 100 were at Theale Main GP on Aug 12th (KEM) increasing to 350+ by Aug 15th (RCr). Great Shefford held 100 on Aug 13th which increased to 125 by Aug 18th (JLS), 150 were noted at Lower Farm GP on Aug 14th (IW; JL) and 200+ were over Great Meadow Pond on Aug 17th (DJB). The largest flock of the year occurred at Dinton Pastures CP where c500 mixed with a similar number of Swallows on Aug 30th (FJC). High September counts involved 120 at Brimpton GPs on Sep 6th (GEW) and 100+ remained at Eversley GPs on Sep 25th-26th (RD; RFM). Records came from 12 locations in October including 36 over Englefield (RCr) and 40 Theale Main GP (AVL) on Oct 9th, 60 Spray Road Inkpen on Oct 10th (RHar) and 12 Queen Mother Res on Oct 14th (PNe; DF). The last record involved a single bird flying south over Thatcham on Nov 1st (RRK).

## **TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

*Local and declining summer visitor, very uncommon passage migrant (Red Listed)*

Records were received from 12 locations, 6 in East Berks and 6 in West Berks. For the second successive year there were no records from the heath and forest lands in the Padworth/Mortimer area. **Spring:** the first returning birds (2) appeared at Wishmoor Bottom on Apr 9th (PJC). Away from the usual heath/forest edge habitat, birds were reported from the Combe area with three on Apr 14th (RHar) and one on Apr 21st (IW). By late April eight heath/forest locations had been occupied, the table below shows the number of territories located within these areas.

Site	No. of territories	Observer/s
Broadmoor Bottom Danger Area, Swinley Forest	5	PJC
Bucklebury Common	3-5	ABT, RCr
Greenham Common	1	AEDH
Snelsmore Common	2	BJW, GDS
South Ascot	9	DJB
Swinley Park	1	DMac, DJB
Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest	6	Many Observers
Wood End, Sunninghill Park	2	DJB

The totals above show only 31 territories, however it is clear that some areas have been totally underwatched i.e. there were no records from the large areas of good habitat in the north western part of Swinley Forest and the nearby Wildmoor Heath. Elsewhere further records from out-of-habitat areas include singles at Combe on May 5th (IW), Winterbourne Holt on May 7th (IW) and West Woodhay Down on Jun 9th (IW). As no details came with these records it is difficult to know if these birds were potential summering birds or just passing migrants however late the date may be. Records from Combe of two on Jul 15th and one on Jul 22nd (RHar) probably refer to autumn migrants. **Breeding:** was only confirmed from South Ascot where two pairs were feeding young on Jun 5th (DJB). **Autumn:** surprisingly there were only two reports, a single bird at Greenham Common on Aug 24th (RJP) and one flushed at Colnbrook on Sep 29th (CDRH).

## MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon and declining summer resident (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 76 locations, 24 in East Berks, 17 in Mid Berks and 35 in West Berks; the monthly status derived from submitted records is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of locations	12	11	20	13	4	4	4	6	35	24	22	15
Minimum no. of birds	71	80	224	130	24	28	34	29	1,848	448	159	201

Although the above figures are lower than the true county totals during times of abundance, what is startling is the small number of locations that birds were reported from during the breeding season, a time when observers tend to submit all of their sightings. September clearly stands out as the most populous month as this is the time of peak autumn passage. **First winter:** the widespread flooding that occurred in January and February probably affected the recording of this species in two ways. Firstly much of the favoured habitat was probably submerged and secondly the floods probably hampered access to these locations thus limiting the number of records. The only count of significance in January involved a peak of 44 birds at Ascot Heath on Jan 31st (RJD) no other count exceeded five birds. February was only slightly better with double figure counts coming from Easton Hill with 12 on Feb 4th (IW; JL), 29 still at Ascot Heath on Feb 10th (RJD) and 18 at Great Shefford on Feb 19th (GDS). Spring passage: although lower than usual, numbers did improve in March and April as small flocks moved through the county, double figure counts involved 29 again at Ascot Heath on Mar 4th plus one singing there on Mar 23rd (RJD), 40 Queen Mother Res on Mar 9th (CDRH), 23 Eversley GPs on Mar 10th (RFM), 20 Crookham/Greenham Commons on Mar 20th (IW; JL) and Apr 7th (RJP), 40 on Combe Hill on Mar 29th with 18 still present on Apr 14th (RHar) and 60 at Queen Mother Res on Apr 1st (CL). Summer: from May through to July birds were only reported from 10 locations. The most important site was Greenham Common where



survey work located a stable population of 20 territories with breeding confirmed for three pairs (AEDH). Elsewhere two were reported from East Ilsley on May 5th (JCM), one held territory at Colnbrook from May 5th to 21st (CDRH), one was singing on the Lambourn Downs on May 17th (PBT), one Seven Barrows on Jun 10th (IW), one Superity Farm Compton on Jun 10th (JL), one Woolhampton on Jun 26th (MIGW), four on Walbury Hill on Jul 9th (IW), five Combe Hill on Jul 15th (RHar) and a family party of a pair with three juvs were found on Park Farm Down on Jul 18th (CDRH). **Autumn/second winter:** numbers remained at summertime levels during August. The only probable migrant was one bird at Prospect Park Reading on Aug 28th (AVL). Passage slowly increased in September and by mid month the first large flocks had begun to appear. The September max counts at the main sites were as follows:

Site	No.	Date	Observer	Site	No	Date	Observer
Bury Down	400	Sep 15	CDRH	Sonning Meadows	50	Sep 23	ABT
Cow Down	91	Sep 16	ABT	Compton Downs	80	Sep 28	NJB
Burnthouse La	100	Sep 16	RJB	Englefield	50	Sep 28	RCr
Colnbrook	80	Sep 16	CDRH	Great Meadow Pond	100	Sep 28	DJB
Lowbury Hill	50	Sep 19	ABT	Brimpton GPs	50	Sep 30	GEW
Woolhampton GPs	86	Sep 19	KEM	Streatley Warren	94	Sep 30	ABT
Queen Mother Res	150	Sep 22	CDRH	Woodlands Park	100	Sep 30	DJB
Walbury Hill	90	Sep 22	IW				

The high count of 400 was observed going to roost in a field of kale. Passage began to subside in October and although five counts exceeded 40 birds, the only count to reach 50 involved that number at Brimpton GPs on Oct 30th (JPM). Numbers continued to decline into Nov/Dec and the only large count was 60 at Queen Mother Res on Dec 17th (CDRH).

## ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

*Scarce passage migrant and a rare winter visitor (Green Listed)*

**2013** Correction: The record at Theale Main GP on Mar 24th was also seen on Mar 25th – 26th. Replace the initials DJB with (MO)

**2014** Records were confined to just Queen Mother Res. First winter/spring passage: the only record involved an individual located at Queen Mother Res on Feb 25th (CDRH). Autumn passage: passage began in mid September with one at Queen Mother Res on Sep 16th (CDRH), single birds were then noted at this location on Sep 20th, Sep 29th-30th, Oct 8th (all CDRH) and Oct 12th (MFW). Two were found on Oct 14th (CDRH) and had increased to six on Oct 15th (MMc; CDRH) then singles were present on Oct 16th (MMc) and Oct 18th (DJB) with two there on Oct 24th (CDRH). The status of Rock pipit in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table, the number of birds is an estimate based on report records, unfortunately autumn records from the 2001 and 2002 reports are not complete. There were no records for Jan, Jun, Jul, Aug and Dec.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
QMR Feb records	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Elsewhere Feb records	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QMR Mar – May	3	0	0	1	2*	2*	0	0	0	0	0	2*	0	0	0
Elsewhere Mar – May	1*	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1*	0	0	1	0	1	0
QMR Sep –Nov	11	8+	6+	1	8	7	2	5	9	15	16	4	11	11	15
Elsewhere Sep –Nov	2	1	4	7	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0
Estimated yearly total	17	10	10	10	11	10	4	6	10	17	17	7	12	13	16

\*-Includes single records of one bird of the Scandinavian race *littoralis*.

**[SCANDINAVIAN ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus littoralis*]**

**2013** Correction: The two birds at Queen Mother Res from Mar 6th to 16th with one remaining to Mar 28th were found by CDRH. Delete the record at Theale Main GP on Mar 24th – 26th as it was of the race *petrosus* and seen by MO.

**WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta***

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

There were four records this year all from East Berks. **Spring:** the only record involved a summer plumaged bird which was located at Eversley GPs on Mar 23rd (RJG). **Autumn:** there were two mid October records; the first involved one which was flushed at Horton GPs on Oct 12th which flew towards Staines Moor Surrey (CDRH) the other record involved a bird at Queen Mother Res on Oct 14th-15th (CDRH; RRI). **Second winter:** one was seen at Eversley GPs on Dec 17th (RJG). The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	3	1	2	12	4	6	3	1	2	1	5	2	6	3	4
Estimated no. of birds	3	1	2	14	5	6	4	2	2	2	5	3	14	3	4

**YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava***

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

**2013** Correction: Delete the date of February 9th in the Summer Arrivals column on page 117 of the 2013 report (no such record exists) and replace with Cow Lane, Reading April 9th (ABT) as in the species account.

**2014** Records were received from 52 locations, 16 in East Berks, 11 in Mid Berks and 25 in West Berks. The majority of records involved birds on passage, the low number of records indicative of summering/breeding reflect the decline this species has undergone in Berkshire since the 1970's. The status of Yellow Wagtail, based on totals over 14 day periods from April to October is shown in the table. Note only the maximum site count has been taken when a site has multiple counts in the same time period.

14 day period	No of sites	Min no of birds	14 day period	No of sites	Min no of birds
Apr 1st to 14th	6	6	Jul 8th to 21st	5	24
Apr 15th to 28th	11	46	Jul 22nd to Aug 4th	3	6
Apr 29th to May 12th	8	17	Aug 5th to 18th	4	51
May 13th to 26th	5	12	Aug 19th to Sep 1st	12	34
May 27th to Jun 9th	8	16	Sep 2nd to 15th	18	138
Jun 10th to Jun 23rd	6	17	Sep 16th to 29th	7	25
Jun 24th to Jul 7th	4	8	Sep 30th to Oct 13th	2	3

**Spring (Apr/May):** The first record of the year involved a single bird at Queen Mother Res on Apr 9th (MMc). This, along with 2013 (April 9th) is the latest returning date this century, the earliest being Mar 19th 2004. All of the latest returning dates have occurred in the last four years and may be a reflection of the birds continuing national decline. There were only five more reports to Apr 14th; all of single birds, the first multiple count involved four males at Colnbrook on Apr 15th (CDRH). Throughout the rest of April and May numbers

remained low, the highest counts being five Compton on Apr 19th (IW; JL), seven Queen Mother Res on Apr 21st (CDRH) increasing to nine on Apr 22nd (MMc; CDRH), seven East Ilsley on Apr 22nd (ABT) increasing to 13 on Apr 24th (CDRH) and six (2 pairs and 2 singing) at Great Shefford on Apr 24th (CDRH). The only May record to exceed five birds was six at East Ilsley on May 1st and 3rd (ABT). There was no repeat of the exceptional spring count of 120 at Great Shefford on April 26th 2013 which was the highest spring count since c200 at Slough SF on April 18th 1953. **Summer (Jun/Jul):** records came from nine locations in both June and July and totalled 15 locations throughout the whole period. Most locations reported birds on only one date but this probably reflects the frequency of observer visits rather than the true status of birds at this time of year as invariably most records (especially in June) would involve territorial birds. Most reports came from West Berks with a June high count of five at Superity Farm Compton on Jun 10th (JL), the only record from Mid Berks was of two pairs summering at Englefield (D Wiggins per TABR) whilst in East Berks one was located in wheat fields at Waltham St Lawrence on Jun 24th (SKP) and a pair successfully bred in wheat at Woodlands Park (DJB). In the west a pair was observed carrying food to a wheat field nest site at East Ilsley on May 30th (DJB) and one was feeding young in a bean crop at Woolley Down on Jun 12th (GDS). These three records are the only ones that confirmed breeding although 13 birds seen in the Wellbottom Down/Whit Coombe area on Jul 18th (CDRH) included juveniles and it was presumed by the observer that they bred in the area. However these locations are adjacent to the county boundary and the exact breeding location is not known. **Autumn (Aug/Oct):** birds were most frequently reported throughout this period with records coming from 31 locations. High counts involved 24 at Old Down between West Ilsley and Farnborough on Aug 7th (ABT), 20 Great Shefford STW on Aug 13th increasing to 25 on Aug 15th then back to 20 on Aug 18th (JLS), 13 Sonning Meadows on Aug 26th (ABT) and 12 there Aug 28th (RHS), 20 going to roost at Lambourn on Sep 2nd (CDRH), 10 Wokingham STW on Sep 5th (DJB), 20 Wood Lane, Eton Wick on Sep 6th (RN), nine Spencers Wood on Sep 7th (NR), 20 Queen Mother Res on Sep 8th (CDRH) (where birds were reported on a further 13 dates) and 12 Crookham Common Pools on Sep 11th (GJS). Passage had all but ended by the end of September, the only October records being one Colnbrook on Oct 1st (CDRH) and one at Cock Marsh on Oct 11th (BDC). The only record involving a European race was of a singing male Channel type (*flava/beema*) at Queen Mother Res on May 17th-18th (CDRH).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

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

Records were received from 110 locations, 32 in East Berks, 31 in Mid Berks and 47 in West Berks. The majority of records came from wetland habitats especially those of fast flowing sections of rivers such as shallows, mills and weirs along the Rivers Kennet, Thames, Lambourn, Pang and Loddon. Birds were resident at a number of less typical locations such as sewage treatment works (such sites have been used for many years in Berks), built up town centres and industrial areas. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	27	23	21	24	27	29	7	13	27	27	25	21
Minimum no. of birds	31	28	31	53	67	66	11	35	52	49	36	25

The table shows that reported monthly site totals are fairly constant throughout the year apart from Jul/Aug when lower numbers may be a product of less bird and observer activity. This (for 2014 at least) shows that there may be less winter immigration into Berkshire than has previously been assumed and that birds appearing at wintering localities may be more a

product of local dispersal from summering areas. **Summer/breeding:** from April through to July birds were reported from a total of 56 locations and breeding was confirmed at 13 of these. Confirmed breeding from single pairs came from near Ascot Heath where a locally bred juv was seen on May 21st (RJD) and also from Eversley GPs (RJG *et al.*), Eddington (JLS), Frogmill Hurley (SJF; FMF), Bulls Lock Thatcham (BL; KGW), Moatlands GP (RJB), The Wilderness (JLS), Westbrook (GDS), Virginia Water (RJD) and Woolhampton (KGW). Sites with more than one breeding pair or second broods were Fobney Island, probably a double brooded pair (AVL), Streatley STW, two pairs or a second brood (NJB) and Wokingham STW where two pairs bred (DJB). Singing birds were noted at many sites, the finding of three or four territories in Reading Town Centre in Apr/May (RRi; ABT) being the most noteworthy. **High counts:** apart from family parties counts of more than four are unusual, submitted counts of five plus are shown here: five Barton Court Apr 23rd (JLS), six Padworth Lane GPs Apr 30th (TGB), nine The Wilderness May 17th (RHar), eight West Meadows Jun 5th (IW), eight Great Shefford STW Aug 18th (JLS), eight Great Meadow Pond Aug 24th (DJB) and six Streatley STW on Sep 9th (NJB). \*It is possible that some of these records may refer to family parties but this has not been stated in the submitted records. The recent sharp decline that this species has undergone has meant that from 2015 the Grey Wagtail has been moved from the Amber list to the Red List (BoCC4) British Birds Dec 2015.

## WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

### *Uncommon passage migrant*

**Spring:** records were received from 9 locations, 4 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 3 in West Berks. For the second consecutive year, record numbers were reported with a minimum of 67 birds. The first of the year was a male at Queen Mother Res on Mar 13th (CDRH) and was followed by one at Aldermaston on Mar 22nd (PBT) and another male at Queen Mother Res from Mar 26th to 29th (CDRH; PNe). The main arrival occurred from Apr 1st to 20th, the table below shows the daily maximum counts throughout this period.

Apr	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Burnthouse Lane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Eton Wick	2		2	5	-	-	-	3	-	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Eversley GPs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Great Shefford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Padworth Lane GP	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
QMR	-	-	-	1	-	1	10	9	17	20	20	20	20	9	9	6	6	3	3	3
Woolhampton GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	0	2	7	0	1	10	14	19	24	22	22	23	11	9	7	6	5	3	3

\* A female observed gathering food at Horton GPs on Jun 4th 2008 was relocated feeding 2 juvs 100yds inside Surrey at Wraysbury Res on Jun 11th, it is not known if the actual breeding site was in Surrey or Berkshire. The first definite record of Berkshire breeding occurred at Slough SF in 2012.

At Queen Mother Res numbers built up to a max of 20 from Apr 10th to 13th (CDRH, MMc) with 90% being males and is believed to be largest ever single count for Berks. Elsewhere the highest count involved the five at Eton Wick on Apr 4th (PNe). After Apr 20th there were no further records until Apr 24th when four (2m 2f) were at East Ilsley (ABT; CDRH). These were followed by single birds at Burnthouse Lane GPs on Apr 26th, 28th and May 12th (RJB), East Ilsley on May 1st and 3rd (ABT), a female at Padworth Lane GP on May 13th (KEM) and one bird at Eversley GPs on May 20th (RCM). At Queen Mother Res, a male and female were noted on May 1st then two females on May 2nd and different

females on May 13th, 14th and 18th (CDRH). The last female remained into June, paired with a Pied Wagtail and was seen with four hybrid fledglings on Jul 1st – 6th then two juvs on Jul 11th -13th (CDRH). This is only the second\* ever breeding record involving this race in Berkshire and one of only two breeding records anywhere in mainland Britain in 2014. **Autumn:** there were three records. At Queen Mother Res a 1st winter was located on Sep 9th and was joined by a second 1st winter on Sep 10th (CDRH). The last record of an extraordinary year involved another 1st winter at Colnbrook on Oct 7th (CDRH).

## **PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

*Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

Although still common and widespread throughout the county, the recent trend toward lower numbers continued in 2014. Although under recorded, records still came from over 100 locations however only six recorded numbers of 50 or more. These were 100 Sandhurst STW on Jan 17th (RJG), 320 roosting by John Lewis in Reading on Jan 18th (MSFW) increasing to c400 on Jan 23rd (R Sajdak per RM), 70 Brimpton on Feb 7th (GEW), c100 roosting in Wokingham on Mar 1st (RD), 80 roosting at Reading Station on Nov 7th (RRi) and 50 Eton Wick on Nov 19th (DCl). A further 13 locations reported 20–49 birds. **Breeding:** was reported from Ascot Heath (RJD), Bucklebury (BL), Burnthouse Lane (RJB), Eversley GPs (MGLR), Frogmill (SJF; FMF), Sandhurst STW (RCM), Padworth Lane GPs (RJB) Queen Mother Res (see White Wagtail for details; CDRH), Shinfield Grange (JBi) and Wokingham STW (DJB).

## **WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

*An abundant resident (Green Listed)*

This is one of our most numerous species and due to this it tends to be overlooked. However in 2014 just over 1000 records were submitted to the Database covering 135+ locations from 66 observers. This increase in records has resulted in many more counts that exceeded 20 birds than usual. The highest counts involved 32 at Enbourne on Apr 11th with 36 there on Jun 11th (RJC), 61 Eversley GPs on Apr 12th (NST), 109 singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th (RCr), 26 Boxford on May 14th (RJC), 22 Winterbourne on Jun 2nd (JL), 29 Barton Court on Jun 8th (JLS) and 21 Rooks Nest Fm Longmoor on Jun 20th (BLo), a further 19 locations reported counts of 10–19. The count of 109 at Burghfield GPs is the highest recorded site total for Berkshire since 1999 when 254 territories were mapped covering the somewhat larger area of Theale GPs, Burghfield GPs and Southcote. Regular counts by RCr at Burghfield GPs have shown an increase in the number of singing males from 41 in 2003, 88 in 2013 to 109 this year. It is unfortunate that singing details did not come with any of the other totals mentioned in this account, a factor that devalues those records. Surprisingly breeding was only confirmed at seven locations.

## **DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

*Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)*

Although a familiar species throughout the county, especially in gardens, this species has shown a moderate decline of around 30% in the last 25 years in the UK. Most of the 967 records submitted to the Database involved counts of one to ten birds, higher numbers were 11 Warfield on Feb 28th (LRB), 13 Wraybury GPs on Mar 6th (PNe), 24 of which 19 were singing at Ascot Heath on Mar 12th (RJD), 13 Waltham St Lawrence on Apr 13th (PNe) and 13 singing (compare to that of Wren!) at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th (RCr). **Breeding:** was

largely under-recorded. The only records that gave evidence of breeding came from: Ascot Heath (RJD), Blacknest (RJD), Frogmill (SJF; FMF), Green Park (BDC), Herschel Park, Slough (BDC), Mill Ride, Ascot (SA) and Twyford (SPA).

## **ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

*Abundant resident (Green Listed)*

The Robin is one of the most numerous of species to be found in Berkshire. It is ubiquitous throughout the county being found in a wide variety of habitats although its abundance is lower in urban town centres and some areas of downland where cover may be less accessible. There were over 1300 records submitted to the 2014 Database with most involving casual records involving fairly low numbers of birds. However some individuals did submit counts of over 20 birds, these coming from 10 locations. The maximum counts at these were: 30 Hurley Bottom Feb 7th (PNe), 38 Wraysbury GPs Mar 6th (PNe), 28 Hyde Farm, Pinkneys Green Mar 9th (PNe), 27 (16 singing) Ascot Heath Mar 12th (RJD), 29 Eton Wick Apr 10th (RMH), 24 Waltham St Lawrence Apr 12th (PNe), 43 singing Burghfield GPs Apr 13th (RCr), 29 Twyford May 12th (SAB), 24 Welford Aug 31st (RJC) and 26 Enbourne on Sep 6th (RJC). Records involving 10 to 20 birds came from a further 40 locations. Breeding was under recorded but was confirmed at 14 sites. At Blacknest, of a total of 10 trapped and ringed on May 31st, nine were juveniles (RJD).

## **NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

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

**2012** Missing information: the Berkshire results of the 2012 BTO National Nightingale Survey have not been published in either the 2012 or 2013 county reports. The survey revealed that Berkshire held 166 singing males which is a significant increase on previous BTO survey totals i.e. 91 in 1980 and 111 in 1999. The population in its main Berkshire stronghold at Theale/Burghfield GPs was 109 (TABR) or 106 (BTO) singing males which is a total of national importance.

**2013** Correction: the colour listing is given as Red Listed, this is incorrect as at the time it would have been Amber Listed (BoCC3) however it has since been elevated to the Red List in 2015 (BoCC4)

**2014** Nationally the Nightingale is a species in serious decline. Data from 1980 to 1998 show that populations in our neighbouring counties have declined enormously i.e. 78% in Oxfordshire, 79% in Wiltshire, 70% in Hampshire and 86% in Buckinghamshire. However in Berkshire the story has been the opposite with an overall population increase from 1980 to 2012 of 45%. Even though the population has increased, its range within the county has contracted and it no longer breeds in East Berkshire (Birds of Berkshire 2013) and its main strongholds to the SW of Reading are under threat from development and habitat change. In 2014 records were received from 15 areas, all but one in or adjacent to the Kennet Valley. There were no surveys this year so the actual number of birds recorded were much lower than 2012 and only involved approximately 65 singing males. A summary of the status at all locations is as follows: **Burghfield GPs**, first returning county record was one noted on Apr 10th (RCr) then reported regularly through April and May with a high of 14 singing males on Apr 28th (RCr) and 11 singing on May 5th (JA). There was an isolated late record of one on Aug 2nd (JA). **Theale area GPs**, first reported on Apr 11th (RCr) maximum site totals were 11 singing Theale Main GP on Apr 18th (AVL), six Moatlands GP on Apr 18th (RCr), five Hosehill Lake on May 10th (AVL) and three at Herons Nest on Jun 3rd

(TGB). Breeding was confirmed at Hosehill Lake with one juv on Jun 18th (CMc) and at least seven juvs on Jun 19th (AVL) and at Moatlands GP with one juv on Jun 22nd (SAG). The last record for the site and county involved one at Moatlands GP on Aug 8th (RCr). **Brimpton GP area**, first reported on Apr 12th (GEW), four were singing on Apr 17th, May 4th and 16th (GEW, RCr). **Aldermaston GP**, one was present on Apr 12th to May 16th at least (JPM). **Dinton Pastures**, after one on Apr 13th (MFW) there appeared to be three territories established within the country park. Highest count was four (2 together and 2 singing) on Apr 24th (BAJC) the last record involved one adult with possible juvs nearby on Jun 22nd (RD). **Crookham/Greenham Commons** first was one on Apr 14th (JL). Survey work led by AEDH located nine territories with records regular to Jun 29th (JL). **West Meadows**, one singing Apr 17th, 30th and May 23rd (IW; JLS) then two to four reported together on Jun 3rd and 5th (M Lund) a family party? **Pingewood**, two on Apr 18th (RCr), **Green Park Reading**, one singing near to the Madejski Stadium on Apr 22nd (DJM), **Woolhampton**, one singing Apr 23rd (MJD), May 5th (SW) and Jun 7th (MJD), **Burnthouse Lane**, one May 16th (RCr), **Smallmead Recycling Centre**, one singing May 18th (MSFW), **Thatcham Marsh**, one singing May 15th to Jun 12th (MJD, RRK), **Hamstead Marshal**, one on Jun 6th (RHAr) and **Fobney Island**, one calling on Jun 22nd (AVL).

## BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

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

**2011** Record clarification: there was only one bird present at Queen Mother Res on Nov 26th.

**2014** was a better than average year based on the previous 10 years with nine records involving 13 birds. **Spring:** the first record of the year involved a male at Greenham Common on Mar 17th (JL). This was followed by an elusive female at Queen Mother Res on Mar 26th and 28th (CDRH) and a female type with wheatears on Inkpen Hill on Apr 9th (CDRH). Encouragingly two singing males were heard in central Reading on Apr 27th (RRi) and a pair was seen here on May 4th (BTB) and May 25th (ABT). Away from Reading a migrant was observed briefly at Queen Mother Res on Apr 28th before departing north (CDRH). **Summer:** the Reading pair remained into June and for the first time since 2010 (and only the fourth year this century) successfully bred, a male being photographed attending a juvenile on Jun 10th (DNTR) and three juvs seen on Jun 11th (RHS). This breeding pair was one of only 25 confirmed breeding pairs in Britain in 2014 (Holling, British Birds, Sept 2016) **Autumn:** the only passage record was of an early bird at Popes Meadow, Binfield on Jul 9th (DAMD). **Second winter:** this species has become a much less frequent visitor to Berkshire at this time of year in recent years so two December records were surprising. Both occurred on Dec 12th and involved fem/imm birds, one was located at Arborfield Cross (RAd) was probably a late migrant moving through, the other was found at Queen Mother Res (MMc; CDRH) and settled down and remained to winter, being seen into 2015. The number of Black Redstarts recorded in Berkshire since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	6	4	17*	13*	4	10	6	5	6	6	13*	6	11	6	13*

\*Includes locally bred young birds: 2 in 2002, 2003 and 2010, 3 in 2014.

The continuing national decline of this species means that from 2015 it will be elevated from Amber (BoCC3) to the Red List (BoCC4).

## REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

*Local and declining summer visitor, uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

Although still a fairly frequent passage migrant to Berkshire, Redstarts have undergone a quite significant decline as a breeding species. Records from the only regular breeding location in the county (Swinley Forest SPA) have shown a steady decrease in numbers since 2006 and although Redstarts are no longer regularly surveyed in this area, casual records from many observers plus those from the observer who used to survey the species reflect this continued downward trend. The table shows the number of territories found in Berkshire from 2000 to 2014.

Year	00**	01*	02*	03*	04*	05*	06*	07*	08*	09	10**	11	12**	13	14
Swinley Forest SPA	34	51	44	46	55	46	38	35	20	10	19	10	13	7	8
Elsewhere	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	2
Total	34	52	44	46	56	46	40	35	20	12	21	12	14	8	10

\*Years when surveyed fully in the SPA, \*\*Years when only a partial survey was done in the SPA

There are several reasons for this decline; firstly there has been a moderate decline in the British population of around 31% in recent years (BoCC3). On a more local scale, the level of disturbance in these woodlands has increased greatly in recent years and this may affect breeding success. Another factor in this decline may be due to many of the plantations within Swinley Forest having now reached the age when they are to be harvested for their timber. Felling of woodland blocks may adversely affect Redstarts through loss of habitat in the short term but may also be beneficial long term as newly planted areas develop. **Spring passage:** away from the summering areas there were 11 records involving 14 birds from eight locations, all but one in West Berks. These were one male Lower Farm GP on Apr 8th (NC), one male West Woodhay Down on Apr 9th (CDRH), two Inkpen Hill (IW) including a male (MJT) and one male Burnthouse Lane GPs (ABT) on Apr 10th, one singing at Combe Hill on Apr 11th (JHa), one male Bower Farm Aldworth on Apr 12th (ABT), a male Inkpen Hill on Apr 13th and 14th (MJD; RHar), one Woolhampton Apr 14th (BJW), three Inkpen Hill on Apr 21st (IW) and one female Lambourn on Apr 24th (CDRH). **Summer:** summering birds began to appear on their breeding grounds from Apr 11th with one singing Wishmoor Cross, Swinley Forest SPA (DJB). Although one to three birds were regularly reported throughout April in the Wishmoor area there were no other records from the SPA apart from eight singing from Wishmoor to Rapley Lake on May 15th (DJB). Elsewhere one was singing in the Windsor Forest breeding area on Apr 18th and May 5th (DJB) and a male in South Ascot on Apr 21st (DJB) had been joined by a female by May 14th (DJB). There were no confirmed breeding records. **Autumn:** with 31 records involving 50 birds from 19 locations, passage was above average. The first record involved one by the roadside at Walbury Hill on Jul 12th (CDRH). There followed: two Upper Lambourn on Jul 18th then five there Aug 7th (CDRH), two Hodcott Down Aug 7th (ABT), one Cow Down and one West Ilsley Aug 19th (ABT), two Eastbury Grange Aug 20th (ABT), one Inkpen Hill Aug 23rd (G Farnell), two Wigmoreash Pond Inkpen Hill Aug 24th (SAG), four Crookham Com Aug 24th (RGi), three Sonning Meadows Aug 27th (ABT), one ringed Brimpton GPs Aug 27th (JPM), one Colnbrook Aug 27th (CDRH), one Walbury Hill Aug 28th (IW), one Lavell's Lake Aug 30th (MO), one Summerleaze GP Aug 30th with two there Aug 31st (CDRH), two Whiteknights Park Aug 31st (DFI), one Colnbrook Aug 31st (CDRH), three Greenham Com Sep 2nd (RCo), two Upper Lambourn Sep 2nd (CDRH), one Queen Mother Res Sep 3rd (CDRH), one Greenham Com Sep 4th-5th (MJD; JL), one Wraysbury GPs Sep 5th (CL), two Lavell's Lake Sep 8th (RM), one Sonning Meadows Sep 9th (ABT), one Brimpton Sep 9th (GEW), two Greenham Com Sep 10th (JL), one Lambourn Sep 15th (CDRH), one Crookham Common Sep 18th (ABT) and a late bird at Crookham Common on Oct 9th (NC).



## WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

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

**2012** Correction: delete the record of one Greenham Common on Jun 30th (Date and no accompanying details)

**2014** Birds were reported from 32 locations, 7 in East Berks, 6 in Mid Berks and 19 in West Berks, the monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of locations	0	0	0	3	7	0	2	16	19	0	0	0
No. of records	0	0	0	3	10	0	2	21	33	0	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	4	13	0	2	40	63	0	0	0

**Spring passage:** was poor with the majority of records occurring in East and Mid Berks, the first records occurred on Apr 24th with two males at Spencers Wood (MO) and a female at Burnthouse Lane GPs (KEM). These were followed by a female at Queen Mother Res on Apr 29th (CDRH), single males at Dorney Wetlands on May 2nd (DAC) and May 5th (DCI), a male Eversley GPs on May 3rd (RCM; JCM), a male Woolhampton GPs on May 4th (KEM), three (2m 1f) at Southcote Meadows on May 5th (JA), a female Queen Mother Res on May 6th (CDRH), one female Eversley GPs on May 8th-12th (RJG; A Stoney *et al.*), a male and female at Burnthouse Lane GPs on May 9th (RJB) with the male still present on May 10th (AVL), one male Queen Mother Res on May 12th (CDRH) and finally a male at Spencers Wood on May 13th (NR). Autumn passage: was much heavier with most records occurring in the west of the county. The first birds were seen in late July with a male on the Compton Downs on Jul 28th (ABT) and an adult on the Lambourn Downs on Jul 30th (CDRH). All other records occurred in Aug/Sep with nearly daily reports from Aug 20th to Sep 23rd with a peak day count of 11 birds gleaned from four locations on Sep 6th. Most records involved one to three birds, higher counts were five Upper Lambourn on Aug 7th (CDRH), four Brimpton (GEW) and four Walbury Hill (IW) on Aug 28th, four Englefield on Aug 31st (RCr), six Lambourn on Sep 2nd (CDRH), six Burnthouse Lane GPs on Sep 6th (KEM), five Colnbrook on Sep 7th (CDRH), four Crookham Common on Sep 10th (NC) and four Burnthouse Lane GPs on Sep 17th (KEM). The last record of the year was of two birds on the Compton Downs on Sep 28th (NJB).

## STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

*Locally common summer resident, uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 44 locations, 18 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 16 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table; totals are based only on maximum counts at all locations.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	6	13	8	4	5	7	5	5	18	26	18	15
Minimum no. of birds	13	24	18	31	35	31	43	25	83	62	41	38

**First winter:** the low numbers evident in December 2013 continued into 2014 with birds located at just six localities. High counts involved three birds at Eversley GPs (RFM) and Horton GPs (CDRH) on Jan 2nd and at Greenham Common on Jan 25th (RJP). Although the number of occupied sites increased in February, numbers did not exceed three birds from any locality and birds were already departing from their wintering areas, so by March most records came from potential breeding sites including seven at Greenham Common on Mar

31st (MJD). **Spring/summer:** by April all records came from breeding areas, at Crookham/Greenham Commons a survey located 10 territories with six pairs confirmed as breeding (AEDH). Breeding was also reported from Swinley Forest where two pairs were feeding young at Wishmoor Bottom on May 15th (DJB) and a family of 4 juveniles were noted at Crowthorne Woods on Jun 20th (ABT). A family party was observed at Wildmoor Heath on Jul 14th (DJS) and a family party was noted on several dates at Eversley GPs in July (MO). The low totals from the East Berks Heathlands are disappointing, however it is likely these low numbers are a product of under-recording as database evidence appears to show very little coverage of these sites during the summer apart from targeted survey species such as Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler. Summer records also came from South Ascot where a male was on suitable breeding habitat on May 14th (DJB), Great Meadow Pond, a dispersing juv on Jun 1st (DJB) and one on Ascot Heath on Jun 16th (RJD). **Autumn/second winter:** during July and August most records came from summering areas, the only records that involved either dispersing birds or early immigrants involved two adults on the Lambourn Downs on Jul 30th (CDRH) and a male and juv at Several Down, Compton on Aug 24th (ABT). Records increased greatly as autumn immigration increased in September however the highest counts still came from breeding sites i.e. 20 Greenham Common on Sep 10th (NC), 19 including some juvs from second broods at Wishmoor Bottom on Sep 12th (DJB) and 7 at Eversley GPs on Sep 26th (RCM). High counts of migrants involved four at Walbury Hill on Sep 22nd (IW) increasing to five on Oct 2nd (ABT), four Brimpton on Sep 23rd increasing to eight on Oct 4th (GEW) and four Sonning Meadows on Sep 29th-30th (ABT). Numbers declined a little from late October into December as breeding site numbers diminished. However numbers remained much higher than the first winter with high counts of four or five at Bury Down on Dec 13th (RRi) and seven at Colnbrook on Dec 24th (CDRH).

## **WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Common passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

**2013** Correction: delete the November total of six from the table, there were no November records in 2013.

**2014** Records were received from 50 locations, 14 in East Berks, 12 in Mid Berks and 24 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table and is based on all records submitted. Some site totals are generally estimates as it can be difficult to differentiate between long staying birds and new arrivals.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burnthouse Lane GPs	-	-	3	8	2	-	-	1	5	-	-	-
Colnbrook	-	-	-	7	1	-	-	7	2	-	-	-
Compton Downs*	-	-	1	6	1	1	-	7	13	10	1	-
Crookham/Greenham Com	-	-	10	22	2	-	-	8	15	6	-	-
Inkpen Hill/Combe Gibbet	-	-	-	27	2	-	-	12	1	1	-	-
Queen Mother Res	-	-	9	33	22	-	1	18	14	12	-	-
Elsewhere												
Number of Locations	-	-	5	24	12	-	1	12	10	2	-	-
Number of Birds	-	-	11	59	15	-	1	19	19	3	-	-
Estimated monthly totals	-	-	34	162	45	1	2	72	69	32	1	-

\*Compton Downs covers the area from Aldworth west to the A34 and includes Lowbury Hill

**Spring passage:** the year began with a male reported from Greenham Common on Mar 9th (NC) and was followed by another at the same location on Mar 15 (IW). The first multiple

record came from Queen Mother Res with two males and a female on Mar 17th (CDRH) and by the end of the month, birds had been recorded from nine locations with peaks of seven at Brimpton on Mar 23rd (GEW) and Greenham Com on Mar 24th (ABT). April was the month of strongest passage, the highest counts being eight at Cow Down on Apr 10th (ABT), 14 Inkpen Hill on Apr 10th and 10 there on Apr 21st (IW), eight Greenham Com on Apr 14th (JL) and 12 at Queen Mother Res on Apr 17th (CDRH) and 10 on Apr 24th (CL). Apart from Queen Mother Res where passage remained constant peaking at eight on May 2nd (CDRH) and seven on May 8th (ABT), numbers fell away quite quickly in May and apart from the latter site no record exceeded two birds. The last spring record involved a single bird on the Compton Downs on the late date of Jun 6th (RJC). **Autumn passage:** commenced in late July with a juv at Old Down, West Ilsley on Jul 28th (ABT) and one at Queen Mother Res on Jul 30th (CDRH). Most reports involved one to five birds, higher counts involved seven on Inkpen Hill/Gallows Down area on Aug 10th (PBy) and Aug 13th (IW), six juvs on the Compton Downs on Aug 24th (ABT), six Queen Mother Res also on Aug 24th (CDRH), seven including six males at Colnbrook on Aug 31st, six Lowbury Hill on Sep 11th (ABT) and ten on the Compton Downs, six at Roden Down and four on Lowbury Hill on Oct 2nd (CDRH). The last records of the year were of single birds at Queen Mother Res on Oct 31st (CDRH) and Lowbury Hill on the later than usual date of Nov 3rd (ABT).

**GREENLAND WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*

Birds of or resembling this race was reported in both migration periods. A female was present at Colnbrook on Apr 26th-28th (CDRH), different single males were noted at Queen Mother Res on Apr 28th and 29th (CDRH) then two males were present there on May 1st-2nd and another male on May 9th (CDRH). A very bright individual that was possibly this form was noted on the Compton Downs on May 3rd (ABT); the last spring record involved a female at Padworth Lane Floods on May 15th (KEM). Autumn records involved two on Lowbury Hill on Oct 2nd (CDRH), a possible at Queen Mother Res on Oct 8th-16th (CDRH) and a 1st winter at Englefield on Oct 9th (RCr).

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

*Scarce passage migrant (Red Listed)*

Records were received from five locations, three in the East and two in the West. **Spring passage:** began with a male in the Inkpen Hill/Gallows Down area on Apr 4th (RCo) this was followed by six (4m 2f) there on Apr 8th (ABT). Further reports of what may have been some of these birds occurred on Apr 10th, a male (J Absolom; MJT), two males on Apr 11th (JHa; RHS), two on Apr 12th (RGi), three (1m 2f) on Apr 13th (MJD), one on Apr 16th (RHar) and lastly two males on Apr 18th (JHa). Nearby a pair was noted on West Woodhay Down on Apr 9th (CDRH), further east the last spring record occurred at Queen Mother Res with a male there on Apr 28th (ABT). **Autumn passage:** the only records came from East Berks with one over Wishmoor Bottom on Oct 22nd (MHu) and a male at Ascot Heath on Oct 25th (HH). Although declining in Britain, numbers recorded moving through the county have remained fairly constant since an improvement in numbers in 2003, averaging at just over ten birds per year. The number of birds recorded each year since 2000 is shown in the table, totals for some years i.e. 2007 and 2014 can only be treated as an estimate.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	2	15	2	13	8	18	7	3	16	8	12	7	12

## BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

*Abundant resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

This ubiquitous species is a familiar site throughout the county with probably many thousands of pairs breeding in the county each year. Being such a common bird it is often overlooked and it is likely that every year many interesting records are lost due to under recording. Interesting records and high counts are shown here: 28 Enbourne on Apr 11th (RJC), 25 Waltham St Lawrence Apr 12th (PNe), 23 singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th (RCr), 26 Barton Court on Apr 23rd (JLS), 25 Hyde Farm Pinkneys Green on May 31st (PNe), 29 Enbourne on Jun 11th (RJC), 24 Chaddleworth Jun 24th (RJC), 37 Greenham Com on Nov 3rd (IW), 30 Freeman's Marsh on Nov 19th (RGS), 34 Hyde Farm on Nov 20th (PNe), an influx of 35+ Great Meadow Pond, many being first winter males on Nov 30th (DJB), 27 Welford on Dec 3rd (RJC), 25 Leckhampstead on Dec 5th (RJC), 27 West Meadows on Dec 10th (IW) and 18 in one small Cookham garden feeding on apples on Dec 31st (BB).

## FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant has bred (British breeding population is Schedule One and Red Listed)*

Records were received from 111 locations throughout the county, the table shows the monthly status based on the highest monthly counts at all locations.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	43	29	43	12	-	-	-	-	1	10	41	26
Minimum no. of birds	2284	1689	3289	229	-	-	-	-	2	41	3135	885

Compared with totals in 2013 numbers appear substantially lower for 2014, however this may be down to different methodology in compiling tables as it appears that all records were included in the monthly totals in 2013.

**First winter:** birds appeared to be well distributed throughout the county with records submitted for 80 sites. There were 20 records of flocks numbering 100 to 299 reported, higher counts involved 300 at Lea Farm Pinkneys Green on Jan 2nd (MJF; LJF), 411 at Englefield on Feb 6th (RCr), 300 on the Compton Downs on Mar 5th (ABT), 500 at Charvil Meadows on Mar 8th (CDRH), 400 West Ilsley on Mar 10th (JCM) and 450 at Old Warren, Fawley on Mar 11th (ABT). The concentration of high counts in early March together with numerous reports of lower numbers point to an influx of migrants into the county at this time. By the end of March numbers had dwindled considerably, 100 on the Compton Downs on Apr 3rd being the only three figure count that month. The last departing birds were noted in mid April with two at Sonning Meadows on Apr 17th (ABT) and one on the Review Ground, Windsor Great Park on Apr 19th (KPD). **Second winter:** the earliest returning record since 2009 involved two birds at Streatley Warren on Sep 30th (ABT). During this period birds were not as common as in the first winter and records were only submitted from 60 locations. The lower numbers meant that there were fewer records involving 100 or more birds, there being only nine reports of 100 to 299 birds. Higher counts all came from West Berks with 500+ on the Compton Downs on Nov 10th (ABT) increasing to c600 on Nov 29th (DJB), 310 on Greenham Common on Nov 20th (IW) and c500 on Bury Down on Nov 24th (PJC) with c300 still present on Dec 15th (BCr).

## SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

*Common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)*

Although still on the Red List, local records and the recent BTO national survey appears to show that this species is at least holding its own in the county. Records were received from 153 locations in 2014 which is a substantial decrease on totals prior to the National survey in 2010 (226 sites), however this is probably due to less coverage by observers than any substantial decline in numbers. **First winter:** song was heard in January at many locations, high counts involved at least ten singing in Braywick Park on Jan 15th (BAJC) and counts of 13 on both Jan 31st and Feb 4th at Ascot Heath included seven singing on the former date and 9 singing on the latter date (RJD). **Spring/summer:** 11 were reported from Boxford on Mar 29th (RJC) and in April ten territories were located on Ascot Heath, with many birds feeding young on Apr 22nd (RJD). Ten were noted at Enbourne on Apr 24th (RJC) and 27 were singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 28th (RCr) which was up from the 2013 total of 16 singing. Partial surveys of Crown Estate lands in the east of the county resulted in 37 territories in Windsor Forest, 12 territories in South Ascot and 13 territories in Swinley Park with breeding confirmed at all of these locations (DJB). **Breeding:** including the sites already mentioned; breeding records only came from 12 locations. Although a disappointing total, this is almost certainly due to under recording and a lack of details accompanying many records. During the breeding season (April to July) 272 out of a total of 346 records submitted to the database had no accompanying details apart from the count! **Autumn/second winter:** immigration was noted at Colnbrook on Oct 19th when five greyer backed continental birds were noted increasing to ten on Oct 25th (CDRH). Englefield also experienced an influx with at least 19 in game strips on Nov 29th then increasing to 24 birds including 15 together on stubble on Dec 10th (RCr).

## REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant, very rare in summer (British breeding population is Schedule One and Red Listed)*

**2013** Additional information: The exceptional numbers recorded in April 2013 is unprecedented this century. The unusually cold spring obviously delayed migration and birds were reported from 59 locations and involved a minimum of 2300 birds. Seven locations recorded 100 or more birds and a further ten recorded 50–99. The highest count was c200 at Eversley GPs on Apr 7th (JMC).

**2014** This widespread and familiar wintering species was reported from 160 locations, 118 in the first winter and 98 in the second winter; however these totals must be treated as a minimum as this species is likely to be under-recorded. The monthly status based on maximum site counts is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	58	48	69	5	–	–	–	–	2	35	47	50
Minimum no. of birds	2625	1126	1585	19	–	–	–	–	3	973	1500	1082

Table does not include records of un-estimated high numbers occurring on Jan 29th, Feb 4th and Oct 14th.

**First winter:** although widely recorded, most records involved fairly small numbers. The only counts to exceed 100 birds involved 200 at Lea Farm Pinkneys Green on Jan 2nd (MJF; LJF), 120 Ascot Heath (RJD) and 109 Ashley Hill (PNe) both on Jan 11th, 250+ Woodlands Park Fields on Jan 23rd increasing to c300 on Feb 13th (DJB) and 400 at Holyport on Jan 25th (SKP). There were two records involving “huge numbers” at Burghfield Bridge on Jan 29th and Feb 4th (AVL). Although more widespread in March as migration through the county

peaked, numbers could not match those of January, the highest counts were all estimates of 100 birds at Borough Marsh on Mar 4th (ABT), Carters Hill, Binfield on Mar 6th (DJB), Hurst on Mar 10th (DJB) and Southcote on Mar 15th (AVL). Birds were only noted at five locations in April, the last being of five birds on the Review Ground in Windsor Great Park on Apr 12th (KPD). **Second winter:** there were two September records, two at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 27th (DAC) and one Mill Ride Ascot on Sep 29th (SA). Passage quickly increased in October, records included 100 south over Datchet on Oct 14th (CDRH), “hundreds if not thousands” over Bracknell after dark on Oct 14th (DAMD), 106 at Greenham Com on Oct 19th (IW) and 150 south west over Queen Mother Res on Oct 23rd with another 140 there on Nov 1st (CDRH). However there were no really large movements that were visible during daylight hours. Three hundred moved south over Frogmill, Hurley on Nov 13th (SJF; FMF) and 132 flew north over Bagnor on Nov 19th (JL). Numbers lessened a little in December, the largest counts being just 150 on Bury Down on Dec 15th (BCr) and 103 at Waltham St Lawrence on Dec 22nd (PNe). Overall records would suggest a rather poor year, the generally mild and wet weather conditions especially in the first winter probably affected wintering totals as the weather would not have caused any hard weather movements or influxes.

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

*Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)*

**2013** Correction: In 2013 Mistle Thrush was Amber Listed (BoCC3) not Red Listed as stated. Status will move to Red List in 2015 (BoCC4).

**2014** Records were received from 120 locations, 46 in East Berks, 27 in Mid Berks and 47 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	36	27	34	40	35	21	16	9	14	19	23	16
Minimum no. of birds	65	57	64	82	73	51	47	69	41	94	48	27

The table shows that numbers reported peaked in the spring when many observers report breeding and in the autumn when post breeding flocks are encountered. Song was reported widely from January through to May and breeding was confirmed at 17 locations, all but one involving single pairs, the exception being two pairs in South Forest Windsor (DJB). Post breeding flocks began to appear from July with 12 at Smiths Lawn Windsor Gt Pk on Jul 27th (DJB) and was followed by 19 on the Lea Farm Landfill, Hurst on Aug 20th (BTB), 17 Prospect Park Reading on Aug 26th (AVL), 13 Eversley GPs on Aug 27th (RCM), 13 Queen Mother Res on Sep 18th (CDRH), 18 Spray Road Inkpen on Oct 10th (RHar), 10 Great Meadow Pond on Oct 26th (DJB) and 22 at Braywick on Oct 29th (BDC).

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

*Locally common resident (Schedule One, Green Listed)*

Records were received from 48 locations throughout the county 8 in East Berks, 16 in Mid Berks and 24 in West Berks; the monthly status is shown in the table and is based on the maximum monthly site counts for all locations.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	12	13	22	31	23	16	9	15	19	17	19	14
Minimum no. of birds	19	15	46	82	47	38	19	30	58	46	35	23

Due to this species tendency to remain deep in cover, it is presumed that most records refer to singing birds except for occasional ringing records. The highest numbers of both sites and birds (spring and autumn) reflect the periods when song is most frequent, the low totals in July correspond to the species quietest month. High counts involved five singing at Wraybury GPs on Mar 27th (CL), nine singing Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th (RCr), eight singing Thatcham Marsh on Apr 21st (BDC *et al.*) and six singing at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 22nd (DJB). Further reports but without any details came from The Wilderness with six on May 17th (RHar) and further counts of eight at Thatcham Marsh in June, August and September, with a higher count of 15 on Oct 5th (IW; JL). Finally there were six singing back at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 16th (JCM). **Breeding:** although the Rare breeding birds in the UK 2014 report 53 singing males/territories for Berkshire (Holling *et al.*; British Birds), analysis of records from the Database and NDOC show that from March to June between 103 and 118 singing birds/territories were located from 39 locations, six in East Berks involving 19 to 23 singing birds, 12 in Mid Berks involving 28 to 30 singing birds and 21 in West Berks involving 58 to 69 singing birds. The highest concentrations of territories were around Thatcham Marsh it's surrounding gravel pits and Chamberhouse Marsh where data provided by the NDOC estimated a minimum of 33 territories in the area. Breeding was confirmed at five locations involving and adult feeding two juvs at Great Meadow Pond on Jun 29th (DJB), a family of three recently fledged young at Hosehill Lake on Jul 11 (AVL) and later ringed on Aug 24th (TGB) and several juveniles caught and ringed at three West Berks locations in July and August (JPM, IW, JL).

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

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

**2013** Correction: The records for West Meadows and between Dreweat's Lock and Hamstead Lock (not Marshall) on Apr 30th and May 22nd (IW) refer to the same bird thus making a spring total of nine records not ten.

**2014** Records were received from just eight locations this year and probably involved no more that eleven or twelve birds. All records except for one came from West Berks. **Spring:** a reeling bird at Freeman's Marsh on Apr 12th (RGS) was the first of the year; two were heard at Hungerford Marsh on Apr 15th (ABT) and on the same day one was reeling at Lea Fm Lake (MFW) and later near to Lavell's Lake (RM). One was noted at West Meadows on Apr 17th and 30th (IW) then two were reeling at Thatcham Marsh on Apr 26th with one still present on Apr 27th (RRK). Single birds were reported from The Wilderness on Apr 26th and 29th (RHar) and one was reeling at Monkey Marsh Lock, Chamberhouse Marsh on Apr 30th (AEDH), there were no May records. Summer: one was reeling on Jun 7th (RRK) at the same location within Thatcham Marsh that a bird was heard on Apr 26th and could indicate summering. Another was reeling at Rack Marsh Bagnor on Jun 27th (DJS) and to end what was another poor year for this species, one was reported from The Wilderness on Jul 6th (JLS). The yearly status of this species since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Minimum no. of birds, Spring	7	11	6	6	13	12	10	14	20	11	16	14	8	9	10
Minimum no. of birds, Autumn	0	3	0	2	4	1	4	3	5	3	3	1	2	2	1

Although numbers are not as low as the years 2000 to 2003 the last three years have shown the lowest numbers in the eleven since 2003 and may mean that the slight upward trend from 2004 to 2011 may be at an end.

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

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant which may be declining locally (Green Listed)*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	0	1	25	19	15	12	11	15	0	0	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	2	100	77	63	70*	34	25	0	0	0

Records were only received from 46 locations, 11 in East Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 20 in West Berks. The monthly status based on each sites highest monthly count is shown in the table. The table shows worryingly low numbers in both sites and birds; however it is likely to have been under recorded as many observers tend to report just their first and last sightings. **Spring:** the earliest returning record since 2004 involved two birds at Wraysbury GPs on Mar 31st (CL). The next records involved single birds at Dorney Wetlands (DAC; KCr) and West Meadows (JLS) on Apr 5th, after this date birds quickly became widespread. High counts involved 12 singing at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 22nd (DJB), nine singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 28th (RCr), 12 at The Wilderness on Apr 29th (RHar), 12 West Meadows on Apr 30th (IW), 10 Thatcham Marsh on May 3rd (IW; JL) and eight at Boxford on May 14th (RJC). An interesting record involved one bird singing from oilseed rape next to the East Ilsley floods on May 13th (ABT). **Summer:** although still relatively widespread, very few sites reported birds in any number. The highest June totals were 13 at The Wilderness on Jun 14th (JLS), eight Dorney Wetlands on Jun 17th (PDM) and six at Thatcham Marsh that included a juvenile on Jun 22nd (IW; JL). The only other confirmed record of breeding came from Lavell's Lake where a pair was feeding young on Jul 11th (AR). **Autumn:** numbers in July were inflated by ringing results from Thatcham Marsh where a total 40 birds were caught and ringed on three dates in July, Jul 7th, 13th and 26th and eight ringed on Aug 3rd (IW; JL). Apart from the Thatcham records, the only records to involve more than five birds from July onward were nine at The Wilderness on Jul 6th (JLS) and six on West Meadows on Jul 29th (IW). A further 49 records were submitted for August and September however no record exceeded 4 birds, the last of the year involved single birds at Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and Thatcham Marsh (IW; JL) on Sep 28th and one at Eton Wick on Sep 29th (CDRH). Records submitted this year point to a decline in the population within Berks. Evidence backing this also comes from totals in the recent BTO national survey where occupied tetrads had dropped from 128 in 1987–89 to 94 in 2007–2011 and in the Theale Area Bird Conservation Group warbler surveys where the number of singing males/territories had dropped from 179 in 1998 to just 76 in 2012. Other sites have also shown declines i.e. at Dinton Pastures CP where at least ten were singing in 2005 but only 4 singing birds were reported in 2014 and at Moatlands GP where 11 were singing in 2005 but only one was reported in 2014.

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

*Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Green Listed)*

Records were received from an encouraging 44 locations, 13 in East Berks, 8 in Mid Berks and 23 in West Berks. As one would expect from such a strict habitat specialist most records came from the county's reedbeds although a few passage birds were recorded in different habitats particularly scrub and hedgerows near water. **Spring:** the first record involved a singing bird at Brimpton GPs on Apr 10th (KEM) and 11th (GEW). Birds were reported from a further 15 locations in April but the only double figure count involved 11 singing at Great Meadow Pond on Apr 27th (DJB). May produced records from 19 locations, high counts being 14 singing at Great Meadow Pond on May 4th and Jun 1st (DJB), 16



Woolhampton GPs on May 22nd (IW), 12 Eversley GPs on May 22nd (RFM; GDu) 12 Green Park, Reading on May 23rd, 10 Hosehill Lake on May 25th (TGB) and 20 Thatcham Marsh on May 26th and Jun 1st (IW: JL). **Breeding:** was only confirmed at Dinton Pastures CP (RM), Eversley GPs (MGLR), Great Meadow Pond (DJB), Green Park (BDC) and Hosehill Lake (TGB) however records would suggest that sizable breeding populations were also present at another nine locations i.e. the high numbers recorded at Thatcham Marsh and West Meadows on several dates in May, June and July. **Autumn:** passage was underway by late July and numbers began to build from early August. August 3rd appeared to be a good day with 35 at Thatcham Marsh (JL), 20 Great Meadow Pond (DJB) and 15 at Hosehill Lake (TGB). Twenty one were reported from West Meadows on Aug 14th and 15 were still present at Thatcham Marsh on Sep 7th (IW; JL). Numbers quickly declined throughout the rest of September and the last records of the year were in early October with one at Woolhampton GPs on Oct 2nd (JPM) and 2 at Hosehill Lake on Oct 5th (TGB).

## **GREAT REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

*Very rare vagrant (Not Listed)*

The fourth record for Berkshire involved a singing bird located in a small reedbed at Green Park Reading on May 22nd (KIT *et al.*). Located by its song in the morning the bird remained throughout the day, singing intermittently and showing occasionally. Being the first county record for 24 years and found in a public area the bird proved to be very popular and with patience most visiting observers attained reasonable views. Unfortunately the bird appeared to have moved on overnight as it was not present the next morning. Previous records involved single birds at Thatcham Marsh on Jun 1st-2nd 1960, and one ringed there on May 30th 1970 and a long staying individual at the private Great Meadow Pond from May 22nd to Jun 16th 1990 (ringed on May 27th).

## **BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant, uncommon but increasing in winter (Green Listed)*

Blackcaps are one of our most widespread of our summer visitors, being reported from a variety of habitats throughout the county. It is also a frequently reported wintering species that has utilised many suburban gardens especially where food is provided for birds. Although records were received from 210 locations in the county, this would only be a proportion of the sites that had been used by the species as evidence from the latest BTO national survey show birds to be present in almost all of Berkshire's tetrads and the Berkshire Bird Index has shown a population increase of over 100% this century. **First winter (Jan-Feb):** records came from 36 locations (most being gardens) and involved a minimum of 48 birds, 27 males, 13 females and 8 not sexed. All records involved one or two birds on any given date but it is likely that locations reporting birds throughout the period may have entertained considerably more birds as winter ringing records from previous years show i.e. 14 birds ringed in a Caversham garden in winter 2009-10 even though the highest day count was only two! The only site to have definitely more than two birds was at Emmer Green with two females on Jan 12th and a male on Jan 16th (HRN). **Spring/summer (Mar-Jul):** birds were reported from 40 locations in March. Obviously some early records referred to wintering birds and these overlapped with the first spring migrants. As the month progressed, garden records diminished and near to the end of the month counts of singing birds in breeding habitat increased and culminated in 18 singing at Burghfield GPs on Mar 29th (RCr). April was the busiest month with records coming from exactly 100 locations and May and June also reported birds from a large number of sites. High counts during this period included 30 singing at Southcote on Apr 7th (AVL), 27 at Eversley

GPs on Apr 12th (NST), 16 Waltham St Lawrence also on Apr 12th (PNe), 80 singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th and 60 singing there on Apr 28th (RCr), 21 Enbourne on Apr 24th (RJC), 22 singing at Rapley Lake, Swinley Forest on May 15th (DJB), 13 singing at Great Meadow Pond on May 18th (DJB), 18 Wraysbury BA Pit on Jun 29th (RMH) and 15 at Greenham Common on Jul 22nd (JL). Surveys in East Berks located 65 territories in Windsor Forest, 26 territories in Swinley Park and 17 territories in South Ascot (DJB). Breeding was under recorded and was only reported from ten locations. **Autumn/second winter (Aug-Dec):** passage was most evident throughout August and September, high counts involved 20 Midgham GPs on Aug 3rd (JPM), 13 Freeman's Marsh on Aug 20th (IW), 40 Wraysbury GPs on Sep 1st (DCu), 17 Brimpton GPs on Sep 2nd (JPM), 15 Thatcham Marsh on Sep 7th (JL; IW) and at Greenham Common where 108 were caught in five ringing visits throughout September (IW; JL). Records only came from 11 sites in October with five at Greenham Com on Oct 3rd (JL) the highest count and 12 sites in November involving a minimum of 16 birds. Wintering birds were recorded from 28 sites in December involving at least 39 birds (21 males, 11 females and 7 not sexed). Like the first winter, most counts were of one or two birds and the only locations to definitely have at least three were at Cookham Rise where a male and two females were noted on Dec 9th (BDC) and at Woodley where two males were seen on Dec 20th and a pair was seen on Dec 31st (RM).

## GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 55 locations, 21 in East Berks, 13 in Mid Berks and 21 in West Berks. The number of sites where reported each month is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of locations	0	0	0	21	39	25	9	7	4	1	0	0

**Spring:** the first records involved singles at Denford Mill on Apr 10th (RGS) and Hosehill Lake on Apr 13th (RJB). Numbers slowly built up during the rest of April until the end of the month when an influx produced some of the highest counts of the year, involving 11 singing at Eversley GPs on Apr 26th (RCM), 20 singing at Wraysbury GPs on Apr 27th (CDRH) and 26 singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 28th (RCr). Birds were widespread during May although the peak counts reported were lower than the previous months, high counts involved 10 at Paices Wood, Wasing on May 4th (TGB) and 10 at Twyford GPs on May 5th (SAB). **Summer/breeding:** breeding was confirmed at Ascot Heath (RJD), Brimpton GPs (GEW), Eversley GPs (RCM), Hosehill Lake (AVL), Dinton Pastures CP (RM), Woolhampton GPs (JPM) and Theale Main GP (RCr). The highest count during this time involved 12 at Eversley GPs on Jun 22nd (TGB). **Autumn:** numbers being reported began to fall during July and accelerated during August and September as birds departed from the county. The last records all appeared to be in the first week of September with one at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 1st (DCu), one Theale Main GP on Sep 2nd (RJB), two Greenham Common on Sep 4th (JL) and finally one Walbury Hill on Sep 5th (IW). However a month later one was caught and ringed at Thatcham Marsh on Oct 5th (IW; JL). This is the latest departure date since 1986 when one was seen at Smallmead GP on Oct 31st. LESSER

## LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

*Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 54 locations, 23 in East Berks, 15 in Mid Berks and 16 in West Berks, the monthly status based on site high counts are shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	0	0	20	17	21	6	11	9	0	0	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	0	29	21	24	9	15	10	0	0	0

**Spring:** first reported on Apr 10th with single singing birds at Bray GPs (BDC) and Burnthouse Lane (ABT). Most records involved singing birds but numbers were unfortunately low, the only counts exceeding two birds were of three (two singing) at Jealott's Hill on Apr 13th (KCr) and three singing from roadside hedgerows between Woolhampton GPs and Brimpton GPs on May 4th (RCr). **Summer/breeding:** unusually June accounted for more occupied sites than any other month and of only three confirmed breeding records, two occurred in June with three young noted at Wraysbury GPs on Jun 2nd (CDRH) and two fledglings at Dorney Wetlands on Jun 26th (CDRH). The other breeding record involved adults feeding young at Woodlands Park on Jul 2nd (DJB). July was the opposite of June, having the least reported records. Song is usually over by this month but one still sang at Hodcott Down, West Ilsley on Jul 4th (ABT). **Autumn:** passage was light during this period and again there were no counts exceeding three birds. The only record of three came from Wraysbury GPs where three were seen together on Aug 2nd (CDRH). Wraysbury GPs (CDRH) and Eversley GPs (MGLR) provided the last records of the year with singles at both sites on Sep 23rd.

## WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

*Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)*

The Whitethroat is one of our most common summer visitors and can be found in a variety of habitats from downland, hedgerows, scrub "wasteland", nettle and sedge beds and lowland heath. Records were received from 105 locations in 2014 but this is probably well below the true number of occupied sites as this is a common bird which is under recorded. **Spring/summer:** the first returning records involved one at Lower Farm GP on Apr 10th (RSJ), being followed by singles at Eversley GPs (RJG; NS) and Larks Hill Bracknell (DMac) on Apr 12th. High counts involved 15 including 12 singing at Ascot Heath on May 4th (RJD), 17 at Boxford on May 14th (RJC), 24 on the Compton Downs on Jun 13th (MJD) and 20 at Eversley GPs on Jun 22nd (TGB). Breeding was probable at many locations but due to insufficient details in many records, could only be confirmed at six! These being Ascot Heath (RJD), Boxford (GDS), Brimpton (GEW), Eversley GPs (MGLR), Dinton Pastures (RM) and Strand Water (BDC). **Autumn:** although still regularly reported from July to early September (with highs of ten Crookham Com on Aug 4th (IW), 18 Greenham Com on Aug 22nd (MJD) and 35 reported from Wraysbury GPs on Sep 1st (DCu), numbers then declined sharply and after Sep 10th there were only nine records involving 9–12 birds from six locations. The last of the year were two birds at Eversley GPs on Sep 21st (TGB) and one at Queen Mother Res on Sep 28th (CDRH).

## DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

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

**2012 and 2013** Correction: delete records from Sunningdale as in both years these records refer to Chobham Common, Surrey.

**2014** A better year than in 2013 with population recoveries noted at the main heathland breeding grounds. **First winter:** comparatively few records were submitted for this period and all came from heathland sites. At Crookham/Greenham Commons single birds were noted on Jan 10th (IW) and Jan 13th (JL) then further records of single birds in February

although one or two were noted on Feb 16th (RGI). At Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest SPA, single birds were reported on Feb 2nd (RD) and Feb 21st (PNe) and Mar 11th (RCW). **Spring/summer:** all records came from the three heathland locations where this species is resident. At Crookham/Greenham Common a survey organised by AEDH located six territories of which at least one pair bred. Although a decline on the totals from 2012, it is still a significant improvement from totals recorded in 2013. At the underwatched Wildmoor Heath, a pair was in residence from at least Mar 14th (RD), song was heard on May 5th (RJG) and a family party of four plus was noted on Jul 14th (DJS). At Wishmoor Bottom three birds (two singing) were noted on Apr 21st (RCM) and single males were noted on several dates in May (MO). Breeding was confirmed when an adult was feeding a juvenile on Jun 16th (RJB) and what was probably a second pair which was feeding young on Jul 29th (CDRH). To summarise, it appears that at least nine territories were occupied in 2014 and five pairs bred successfully. **Autumn/second winter:** totals at breeding sites involved one at Wildmoor Heath on Sep 3rd and two on Nov 29th (DJS), six at Wishmoor Bottom and another bird nearby at Lower Star Post, Swinley Forest on Sep 12th (DJB) and four (three males one female) at Wishmoor Bottom on Oct 10th (DJB) and again on Oct 22nd (MHu). At Greenham a late breeding pair was observed feeding two juvs on Aug 19th (JLS) (bringing the confirmed breeding total to two for this site) then five were reported on Sep 18th (RGI), 4 Oct 22nd (IW), 3 Nov 4th (RJC) and then one or two regularly during Dec (MO). Elsewhere single males were seen on the New Workings at Eversley GPs on Oct 20th (T Reid; RFM) and at Colnbrook on Nov 9th and 16th (CDRH).

## **YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

*Rare but increasingly recorded vagrant (Not Listed)*

**2013** Correction: The photograph showing the Dinton Pastures CP bird should be dated Oct 18th not 17th.

**2014** The eighth and ninth records for the county involved one caught and ringed at Harveys Meadow Hungerford on Oct 2nd (JSW) and a first winter at Whiteknights Park on Oct 24th (DFI *et al.*). This once rare vagrant has now been annual since 2012 with five records in these last three years. All records apart from the first which resided in a Thatcham garden from Dec 6th 1986 to Jan 7th 1987 and one located in November 2009 have been in October. The species status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	2

Note all records involved single birds.

## **[WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*]

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

**2013** Correction: Delete the record from Moor Copse on Apr 28th as there are no details accompanying the record

**2014** Although three records were submitted, all came without details so were deemed unacceptable. This is the second blank year since 2000; the yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	7**	1	0	2*	1	1	2	4	3*	5	2	1	1	2	0
No. of birds	10	1	0	2	1	1	2	5	3	5	2	1	1	2	0

All records were in spring except \*\*=2 autumn records, \*=single autumn records

## **CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor (Green Listed)*

This is a common and widespread species throughout the county; the only habitats where you are unlikely to record the species are the concrete and brick centres of our larger towns where cover can be sparse. **First winter (Jan-Feb):** records came from only 14 locations and involved a minimum of 31 birds. Half of these locations were situated in the east and all apart from Braywick where one was singing on Jan 15th and 28th (BAJC) are regular wintering locations. Eton Wick once again held the highest numbers with nine on Jan 3rd (BDC) increasing to 11 on Feb 3rd (DMac). Elsewhere two were reported from Sandhurst STW (DJS; RJG) and Wraybury GPs (PNe) and singles were noted at Horton (CDRH), Bray GP (SAG), and Eversley GPs (NS). In Mid and West Berks counts of three were reported from Streatley STW on Jan 25th (NJB) and at Padworth Lane on Feb 16th (RJB). There were two at Lower Denford on Jan 6th (RHar) whilst Hosehill Lake (CMS), Kintbury Cressbeds (RGS), Thatcham Marsh (IW) and Theale Main (MO) all recorded one bird. **Spring/summer (Mar-Jul):** numbers increased in March as the first waves of spring migrants arrived, ten were singing at Hosehill Lake on Mar 20th (AVL), higher counts followed including 15 Padworth Common on Mar 24th (TGB) and 30 singing at Burghfield GPs on Mar 29th (RCr). Later in April and May, there were 15 at Paices Wood on Apr 5th (TGB), 21 at Enbourne on Apr 11th (RJC), 18 at Eversley GPs on Apr 12th (NST), 24 were still singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th and 28th (RCr) and 23 were singing between Surrey Hill and Rapley Lake in Swinley Forest on May 15th (DJB). Surveys in East Berks produced totals of 25 territories in South Ascot, 17 territories in Swinley Park and 44 territories in Windsor Forest (all DJB). Breeding was under recorded, being confirmed at only eight locations; however records show their presence at many locations during the breeding season and data from the 2007–2011 BTO survey show breeding confirmed at over 200 tetrads within the county. **Autumn/second winter:** passage became evident from mid August with 18 recorded at Padworth Com on Aug 16th (TGB). Higher numbers occurred in September with 135 ringed at Greenham Common throughout the month (JL; IW) and 64 ringed at Brimpton GPs from Sep 2nd to 4th (JPM). Sight records involved 21 at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 6th (DJB) and 20 at Fobney Meadows on Sep 16th (JLe) and Wraybury GPs on Sep 29th (CDRH). Passage declined in October and apart from 25 at Harveys Meadow on Oct 2nd (JSW) no counts exceeded 15 birds. The second winter period was much better than the first winter with records coming from 32 locations, 19 of which held birds in December. Early November records involved mainly late migrants and nine sites did not record birds after Nov 14th. After the latter date at least 46 birds were still present in the county. Generally most records involved one or two birds, higher counts were four at Eton Wick on Nov 24th with three into Dec (CDRH), three Hosehill Lake on Nov 25th (AVL) with two in Dec, three Eversley GPs on Dec 5th (RFM *et al.*), six Sandhurst STW on Dec 8th (PJC), three Horton GPs on Dec 12th–25th (CDRH) and five at Wraybury GPs on Dec 20th (PNe).

## SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

*Very scarce winter visitor*

**2012** Correction: Delete records of two Streatley Feb 15th and one Lower Farm GP Mar 11th (Birdguides) as neither record was submitted with accompanying descriptions or any other details.

**2014** There were two records of birds that fitted the plumage criteria of this “species/sub species” however all birds remained silent so the characteristic sad heep/ peep call was not heard. Both records came in the second winter. One showing all the classic tristis plumage with buffish-white supercilium and underparts without any yellow tinges, beige upperparts with greenish edging to wings and tail, was located at Horton GPs on Dec 7th (CDRH). The other “a very grey and white bird with a tinge of green along the edge of the primaries, otherwise no green or yellow tones” was located at Sandhurst STW on Dec 8th (PJC) the following day this bird was joined by a second similar looking individual (PJC). Note there have been records of presumed tristis, according to plumage features that have, when heard calling, given the hweet/hoet call of birds of the European race i.e. Bray GP Dec 2002 to Jan 2003.

## WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

Records were received from 98 locations throughout the county, the monthly site totals where birds were found is as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites recording birds	0	0	8	74	32	24	12	25	14	3	0	0

Not surprisingly the busiest month was April as this is the period of peak spring passage. The number of records for the months of April to June was 154 in April, 57 in May and 44 in June. Although birds are not always recorded by observers, these figures still point to a substantial decline in our breeding population. An example of this decline comes from a record from one of its former strongholds where on May 16th 2002 DJB located 39 singing males on a walk from Wishmoor Bottom to Rapley Lake in Swinley Forest. A walk by DJB on May 15th 2014 covering almost exactly the same route and with much the same habitat, recorded a total of just five singing males, a decline of nearly 87%! **Spring:** an early bird singing at Denford Mill on Mar 21st (RDW) was followed by a further seven March records including singing birds at Burghfield GPs (RCr) and Woolhampton GPs (MJM) on Mar 23rd. Birds quickly became widespread in April with passage peaking from Apr 10th to 13th and again from Apr 20th to 26th. High counts involved eight Burnthouse Lane GPs on Apr 10th (MHu), eight singing at Burghfield GPs on Apr 13th (RCr) and another eight at Padworth Common also on Apr 13th (TGB). The standout April record involved an estimated 20 singing at Inkpen Great Common on Apr 20th (RGS) no other counts came close to this total in 2014. Even by early May records were in decline as birds had already passed through to more northern breeding grounds, counts of eight at Paices Wood, Wasing on May 4th (TGB) and at Snelsmore Common on Jun 14th (MJL) being the only records to exceed five birds in both months. A record of an adult carrying food on the Compton Downs on May 30th (DJB) was the only record that pointed to local breeding. **Autumn passage:** began in July and continued into October. The highest counts were ten Greenham Common on Jul 22nd (JL), nine West Meadows on Jul 29th (IW), nine Walbury Hill on Aug 8th (IW) and twelve Greenham Common on Sep 3rd (IW; JL). There were three records all of single birds in October at Woolhampton GPs, ringed on Oct

2nd (JPM), in a Wokingham garden on Oct 10th (RD) and briefly singing at Hosehill Lake on Oct 17th, which coincided with an influx of Chiffchaffs (AVL).

## **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

*Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

Although records were submitted from 126 locations throughout the county, this species is still under recorded and would almost certainly be present in all (especially coniferous or mixed) our woodlands large and small as well as gardens and other locations where suitable habitat is provided. Its abundance is shown in the results of the recent BTO atlas (2007–11) where breeding was confirmed in 151 tetrads and was probable or possible in another 168 tetrads which is very similar to the 1987–89 atlas totals. Most records involved one to ten birds and unfortunately very few recorded confirmed breeding. Surveys were carried out by DJB in Crown Estate woodlands and resulted in 210 territories mapped in five woodland blocks. Counts of note involved 30 singing in the Rapley Lake, Surrey Hill area of Swinley Forest on May 15th (DJB), 13 Fence Wood on Jun 15th (IW), 14 Kintbury Cressbeds on Oct 26th (IW; JL) and 15 Greenham Common on Nov 20th (IW; JL).

## **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)*

Records were received from 26 locations, 15 in East Berks, 2 in Mid Berks and 9 in West Berks. **First winter:** records during this period came from Blacknest where a ringed male (presumed to be the male ringed on Dec 16th 2013) was observed on Jan 11th; later a bird was heard calling at the same location on Feb 17th (RJD). A popular singing male was located at Whiteknights Park on Feb 2nd (DHu) and remained to Feb 22nd (BTB; MO) **Spring/summer:** this species can sometimes be found back on its summering sites as early as late February and this was the case in 2014 when three were singing in Fence Wood on Feb 21st (NC). From March to June, records came from 22 locations with song reported from 19 of these. In the Crown Estate and MoD lands from Swinley Forest to Windsor Forest a partial survey by DJB located 56 territories from six woodland blocks. Although breeding was not confirmed, nest building was observed at three locations (DJB; ABT). Song was also recorded from Blacknest on Mar 10th with a male trapped and ringed there on Mar 12th (RJD), one near Ascot on Apr 4th (DAC), three were singing at the same 2013 Inkpen location on Apr 6th (RRi), one near Streatley on Apr 12th (ABT), one Maidenhead Thicket (same location as in 2012–13) on Apr 26th (BDC *et al.*), one Little Sandhurst on Apr 30th through May (DJS), one Brimpton Mill on May 1st (AEDH) and May 9th (KEM), two Fence Wood on May 1st (ABT), one Burnt Hill on May 4th (RCr), one Finchampstead Ridges on May 5th (RCM), two Frilsham on May 5th with a possible family party on Jun 10th (RCr), three singing at Ashampstead on May 5th (PBT) and two at Silwood Park throughout May (RJD). Other spring records that did not involve singing birds were reported from Boulters Court Maidenhead with one on May 9th (C Walker), one reported at Snelsmore Common on Jun 14th (MJL) and one located in a tit flock on Jun 23rd at Sunninghill Park (RJD). To summarise, it appears that up to 75 singing males/territories were located in the county this year. However certain areas were under recorded and a comprehensive survey covering all suitable areas may increase the known Berks population by a considerable amount. **Autumn/second winter:** there were five records during this period beginning with one at Greenham Common on Sep 10th (JL). This was followed by a flurry of October records with singles at Burghfield GPs on Oct 12th (JA), Greenham Common on Oct 15th (JL) and Little Sandhurst on Oct 26th and again on Nov 21st (DJS).

## SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

*Declining summer visitor and passage migrant (Red Listed)*

Records were received from 37 locations throughout the county, 11 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 16 in West Berks. The county status based on submitted records was as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	0	0	0	12	9	8	16	4	0	0	0
Min no. of birds	0	0	0	0	20	12	18	40	6	0	0	0

**Spring/summer:** first recorded on May 10th when one bird was located at Burghfield Common (RGi). There followed records from a further 11 locations in May but of these, birds were only reported once (including the May 10th record) at eight of these locations although this may partially be due to under recording it is also probable that some were just passing migrants. Locations where birds appeared to be on territory included one singing at Swallowfield Church on May 15th (BTB) then one or two reported regularly to at least May 21st (MO), three at Temple on May 18th (CDRH), one singing at Great Meadow Pond on May 18th to Jun 8th (DJB) and a pair present in Windsor Forest on May 19th to at least Jun 2nd (DJB). Further June records came from Combe (DJB) also in July (CDRH), Liddiard's Green (GDS), Streatley (MHu), Marsh Benham (NC), Stanford Dingley (D Hastings; BAJC) and West Meadows where also recorded in July (IW) whilst in July there were isolated records from Moor Copse, Tidmarsh (DNTR) and Shaw (IW). **Breeding:** was confirmed at Bowdown Woods where an adult and juv were noted on Jul 12th (RHS) and where up to four birds were noted on Jul 18th and Aug 31st (MJD) but had no other details. A pair was feeding two plus young in a nest at Temple on Aug 3rd with three juvs there on Aug 18th (CDRH), a pair feeding two juvs at Freeman's Marsh on Aug 7th (IW) and a pair feeding two juvs near to Lower Farm GP on Aug 31st (IW; NC) that may have been the Bowdown Woods birds or a migrating family party as there had been no previous records from this location. Finally a pair were observed feeding young at Brimpton during the summer (per GEW). Autumn passage: August proved to be the best month of the year as migrants moved through the county. Including summer locations, birds were reported from 16 sites and involved a minimum of 40 birds including both adults and juvs/1st winters. Apart from breeding records most reports involved just one or two birds; higher counts of three migrants came from Lavell's Lake on Aug 24th (RM; BTB; TAG), Summerleaze GP and Colnbrook both on Aug 31st (CDRH). September records involved one Upper Lambourn on Sep 2nd (CDRH), one still at Lavell's Lake on Sep 3rd (FJC), one Wraysbury GPs on Sep 5th (CL), two Sonning Meadows on Sep 6th (ABT) and finally another sighting at Lavell's Lake on Sep 12th (RM; FJC; AR).

## [PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*]

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

Although one record was submitted, it came without supporting details and due to this species current rarity, cannot be accepted. The yearly status of this species since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	2	1	1	1	6-8	2	4	0	2	0	1	0	1	3	0

2014 is the fourth year this century with no acceptable records and with only 13 birds recorded since the good year of 2004 the downward trend appears to be accelerating. Nationally this decline has heightened concerns for this species, thus from 2015 it has been elevated to the Red List (BoCC4).



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

*Common and widespread resident (Green Listed)*

There were over 670 records submitted of this common resident with counts of 20+ coming from 17 locations, the highest being 40 Great Meadow Pond on May 18th (DJB), 30 Sandford Lake Dinton Pastures on Jul 10th (RAGP), 40 at Frogmill, Hurley on Aug 8th (SJF; FMF), 34 Theale Main GP on Nov 13th (RCr), 50 Hosehill Lake on Nov 28th (RCr), 30 Waltham St Lawrence on Dec 22nd (PNe) and 35 at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 24th (PNe).

**Breeding:** although probably widespread, breeding was only confirmed at 14 locations, an extreme case of under recording!

## **BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

*Abundant resident (Green Listed)*

This is one of our most common species with records coming from all parts of the county. The majority of records came from gardens however the most notable records came from ringing sites. At three locations, nestbox schemes resulted in the following totals: Eversley GPs had 45 young fledged from five nest boxes and a total of 76 birds were ringed (MGLR), Hosehill Lake had 16 monitored nesting attempts with 102 young reared from 142 eggs laid, 265 adults and young were ringed (HRR). Padworth Common had 18 nesting attempts with 170 pulli ringed of which 167 fledged, a further 109 adults were ringed (PCRR). Ringing records also came from several West Berks locations and resulted in 2826 birds ringed in 2014 (NDOC). Elsewhere a high count of 80 at Blacknest on Jan 12th included 56 birds ringed (RJD). Other records, not involving ringing included 35 Whiteknights Park on Jan 29th (DHu), 36 Wraysbury GPs on Mar 6th (PNe) and c60 at Frogmill on Aug 8th (SJF; FMF).

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

*Abundant resident (Green Listed)*

This is another common and widespread species which its familiarity causes it's under recording. High counts including some ringing totals were 21 Virginia Water on Jan 14th (RMH), 20 Padworth Common on Jan 19th plus similar counts for Feb 2nd, Nov 9th and Dec 13th (TGB), 21 Whiteknights Park on Jan 19th (DHu), 40 Hosehill Lake on Mar 2nd plus similar counts for Aug 3rd and Sep 13th (TGB), 28 Wraysbury GPs on Mar 6th (PNe), 20 Hyde Fm Pinkneys Green on Mar 9th (PNe) and 40 Snelsmore Common on Nov 6th (IW). Nest box ringing schemes were as follows: at Eversley GPs there were 20 monitored nesting attempts, 159 eggs were laid and 119 young fledged, 145 birds (both adults and young) were ringed (MGLR). Hosehill Lake recorded 27 nesting attempts, the average clutch size was 7.2 eggs, 156 young were reared and 267 birds (both adults and young) were ringed (HRR). At Padworth Common there were 10 nesting attempts with 74.6% of all eggs resulted in fledged young, a total of 65 birds were ringed (PCRR). Data from the 2014 NDOC report showed that 1,458 birds were ringed in their area (NDOC).

## **COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

*Common and locally abundant resident (Green Listed)*

Although fairly thinly distributed in many parts of the county, in some areas where conifer woodlands are widespread it can be the most common tit species present. Its main strongholds stretch along the southern boundary of the county from Windsor Forest through Swinley Forest to the conifer woodlands between Mortimer and Padworth. Other well populated

areas are the conifer plantations following the M4 from Reading to Newbury. There were no surveys this year so totals are generally down on previous years. High counts included 20 Snelsmore Common on Jan 12th (JL), 15 Virginia Water on Jan 14th (RMH), 15 Wishmoor Cross on Feb 18th (MHu), 14 including 11 singing at Cranbourne Chase on Apr 23rd (DJB), 14 Fence Wood on Jun 15th (IW; JL), 19 birds from four family parties at Swinley Park on May 29th (DJB), 20 Snelsmore Common on Dec 19th (IW) and 15 Padworth Common on Dec 21st (TGB). **Breeding:** was largely overlooked, the only confirmed records apart from Swinley Park came from Ascot (SA), Blacknest (RJD), Carpenters Wood Pinkneys Green (BDC), Hosehill Lake (HRR), Twyford (SPA) and Windsor Forest (DJB). A total of 24 were ringing at Padworth Common throughout the year (PCRR).

**WILLOW TIT** *Poecile montanus*

*Very scarce and declining resident, now confined to West Berkshire (Red Listed)*

The decline of this species continues and any viable populations are now entirely confined to extreme SW of the county in the Combe area. Records from other areas are now so rare that they may represent just the last remnants of former populations and even in the Combe area a study by JLS has revealed that the species is showing signs of decline. Combe Wood remains the most reliable site in the county with birds present throughout the year (MO). High counts involved ten birds recorded in the Combe Wood and the Sheepless Hill tetrads on Mar 29th (JLS) and two pairs were observed on Apr 29th (O Frampton). Away from Combe Wood nearby records involved one on Inkpen Hill on Jan 2nd (IW; JL) and at Walbury Hill one was seen on Mar 28th (RJC), two on Aug 1st and Sep 5th (IW) and Sep 6th (RJC). Note all records, especially those away from the SW Berks core area must be accompanied by descriptive notes.

**MARSH TIT** *Poecile palustris*

*Locally common resident in West Berks and an uncommon resident in Mid and East Berks where the national decline has been more pronounced (Red Listed)*

Records were received from 50 locations, 3 in East Berks, 7 in Mid Berks and 40 in West Berks. The county status based on records submitted and only using the highest monthly count from each site was:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
W Berks sites	12	10	10	15	6	9	6	5	4	7	8	8
Min no. of birds	22	26	22	29	20*	45*	13*	11	7	13	13	12
M Berks sites	3	3	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1
Min no. of birds	3	5	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2
E Berks sites	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Min no. of birds	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total no. of birds	25	31	26	36	20	45	14	11	7	17	15	15

\*Includes a number of juveniles, 8 in May, 15 in June and 1 in July

Although still widespread in West Berks, the situation in Mid and especially in East Berks is becoming dire. Indicators to the effects of the national decline in Berks is that in 2013 birds were reported from 16 more locations than in 2014, totals in the 2013 table bettered 2014 in 11 of the 12 months and totals in the 2014 table indicated a decline from the first winter to the second winter. **East Berks:** there were only three records from three locations throughout the year. The first involved a singing male at Nobbscreek, Windsor Forest on

Mar 31st (DJB) despite searching no other birds were seen at this once regular location. The other records occurred on Oct 19th when two were located at Bowsey Hill (MSFW) and on Dec 22nd with one at Waltham St Lawrence (PNe). **Mid Berks:** all records came from the south or west of Reading and apart from one isolated July record; there were no reports from May to September. Of the seven Mid Berks locations only Moor Copse Tidmarsh and Hosehill Lake exceeded three records. Notable records included one singing at Wokefield Common on Mar 14th (JLe), six (a family?) reported from Moor Copse on Apr 28th (MJL), one Moor Copse on Jul 15th (JLe) and one ringed at Hosehill Lake on Nov 3rd (TGB). **West Berks:** high counts involved eight Combe Wood on Feb 2nd (MJD; NC), seven Bowdown Woods on Jun 12th (MJD) and five at West Meadows on Jul 8th (IW), counts of four came from a further five locations. **Breeding:** was only confirmed in West Berks and involved a female with a brood patch, indicative of breeding, caught and ringed at Brimpton GPs on Apr 15th (JPM), a pair feeding eight young in Bowdown Woods on May 27th (MJD), one pair with three young just west of Aldermaston on Jun 3rd (RCr), a count of 15 which included two family parties consisting of five and three young at Combe Wood on Jun 5th (DJB) with another juv noted there on Jul 12th (CDRH) and at Woolhampton GPs where a pair was feeding four juvs on Jun 28th (KGW).

## **NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

*Common and widespread woodland resident (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 106 locations throughout the county. High counts involved: eight Fence Wood on Jun 15th (IW; JL), ten including five singing in High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest on Mar 31st (DJB), nine Swinley Park on Apr 12th and 19 there including one family party on May 29th (DJB), nine including a family party in South Forest, Windsor Forest on Jun 2nd (DJB) and ten Boxford on Sep 10th (RJC). Apart from sites already mentioned, breeding was also confirmed at Aldermaston GP (JPM), Combe Wood (DJB), Eversley GPs (RCM), Finchampstead Ridges (RCM), High Standinghill Woods (DJB), Hosehill Lake (HRR; DAMD), Maiden Erlegh, Reading (SDa), Windsor Great Park (MHu) and Wishmoor Cross (MHu).

## **TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

*Common resident (Green Listed)*

Although common, this is a fairly elusive species whose presence is often given away by its high pitched and distinctive calls and song. Records were received from 103 locations throughout the county. High counts involved ten including two singing in Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest on Apr 23rd (DJB), ten including one pair with two juvs plus three singing in High Standinghill Woods on May 16th (DJB), twelve including a family party of six plus three singing at South Forest Windsor on May 19th (DJB) and twelve involving two family parties and one singing at Silwood Park on May 26th (RJD). Breeding was also noted at Blacknest, one juv ringed (RJD), Green Park (BDC), Great Meadow Pond (DJB), Shinfield Park (DFI) and Woolhampton GPs (MJM) with one juv ringed (JPM).

## **GOLDEN ORIOLE** *Oriolus oriolus*

*Rare passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)*

One was heard singing (song recorded) from 1010hrs to 1120hrs in a small copse close to Eversley GPs on May 17th (RCM). This is only the third record this century following the brief sighting on one at Wraysbury GPs in 2013 and the popular individual at Clayfield

Copse in 2002 and is the tenth record since 1950. Note the length of time this bird was singing would indicate it being a male, however as it was not seen and as both sexes do sing, one cannot be certain.

## [RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*]

*Rare passage migrant, formerly bred (Red Listed)*

**2013** Missing record: a first winter was photographed at Colnbrook on Sep 24th (CDRH). This takes the 2013 total to two records, the first time since 1974 (three records) that Berkshire has enjoyed multiple sightings of this once common species.

**2014** There were no acceptable records submitted for 2014, the yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0

## GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

*Scarce winter visitor (Not Listed)*

With three records involving three birds, 2014 along with 2011 was the best year this century. All three records occurred in mid to late autumn, with a first winter located at Colnbrook on Oct 20th (CDRH) followed by a wide ranging bird that took up temporary residence on the West Ilsley Gallops, first seen on Cow Down on Oct 28th (ABT) it was seen regularly either on Cow or Sheep Down as far south as the West Ilsley to Farnborough Road being last seen on Nov 18th (JCM). Finally one briefly visited Wishmoor Bottom on Nov 1st (R Dinnadge). The yearly status since 2000 based on wintering birds year of arrival is shown in the table:

Year	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	2	1	3

Note all records involved single birds.

## JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

*Common resident (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 140 locations throughout the county and involved just over 700 records. Most records involved one to five birds, higher counts were spread throughout the year and these along with other interesting records were as follows. **Jan-Mar:** high counts involved six at Woodspeen on Jan 15th (JL), thirteen at Whiteknights Park on Jan 28th (DHu) with eight still on Jan 30th (J Blackford), seven Dinton Pastures (GJS) and six at Snelsmore Common (IW) both on Mar 31st. At Cranbourne Chase, Windsor, four were noted together on Mar 29th, song was heard as these birds interacted and a repertoire of soft mewing and fluty calls interspersed with a series of soft pops and clucks were heard (DJB). **Apr-Jul:** six were noted at Wick Hill, Finchampstead on Apr 11th and Jun 6th (BLo), eight were scattered throughout South Forest, Windsor on Apr 18th (DJB) and six were noted in Maidenhead Thicket on Apr 24th (BDC). Nest building was observed at Blacknest on Apr 26th (RJD) and a ringed female with a brood patch was retrapped at Ascot Heath on May 5th (RJD). Birds were reported from another 64 locations during the period however this species is not really looked for and breeding birds can be extremely secretive, hence there were no records of young birds anywhere. **Aug-Dec:** four at Englefield on Aug 31st with another five seen nearby (RCr) was

the only record of note in August. Local movements and immigration in September provided most of the highest counts of the year including nine at Boxford on Sep 10th (RJC), eighteen flying north over Horton GPs on Sep 18th (CDRH), eleven Greenham Common on Sep 23rd (IW), sixteen flying south east over Lavell's Lake on Sep 27th (FJC) and ten at Thatcham Marsh on Sep 28th (JL). Later in the year the highest counts reported involved six at Eversley GPs on Oct 12th (TGB) and five in a Twyford garden on Dec 25th (LFo).

## **MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

*Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)*

**2013** Correction: The largest count in the county was at Eton Wick with 58 on Oct 1st, not 57 at Thames Valley Park on Nov 10th.

**2014** This abundant species is a familiar sight throughout the county. There were numerous records of one to nine birds and there were 47 records from 26 locations involving ten or more birds. The highest counts involved 56 at Eton Wick on Jan 28th (RMH), 30 Wokingham STW on Jan 28th (DJB), 21 Jealott's Hill on Feb 3rd (RCM), 16 Greenham Common on Feb 17th (IW), 45 Eton Wick plus 36 there on Mar 11th and 39 on Apr 10th (RMH), 18 Temple on Feb 23rd (CDRH), 25 Windsor Great Park on Apr 25th (RMH), 17 Strand Lane, Cookham on Sep 25th (BDC), 16 Lower Farm GP on Oct 17th (IW; JL), 33 Colnbrook on Oct 25th (CDRH), 40 Earley on Nov 1st (RHS) and finally the largest count of the year of 60+ at Wokingham STW on Dec 3rd (DJB). Breeding was under reported but at Cookham eight nest sites were located within the village on Mar 3rd (BDC). Although an omnivorous species, reports of predation of adult birds of other species are rarely reported so one attacking and carrying off a Goldfinch from an Ascot garden on Nov 21st (SA) is of note.

## **CORVIDS**

A flock of c700 at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Jan 10th consisted mostly of Jackdaws and Carrion Crows (BDC) another mixed flock of Jackdaws and Rooks numbering c2000 was observed at Easton on Jul 26th (GDS).

## **JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

*Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)*

2014 was a disappointing year with no really large counts submitted. Thirteen locations did record 100–200 birds; larger counts involved 350 at Felix Fm Binfield on Jan 17th (BDC), 1080 over Old Windsor in 15 minutes on Apr 3rd (RMH), 540 at Ham STW on Aug 12th (RMH), 600 in a pre-roost gathering at Oakley Green Cemetery on Sep 29th (BDC) and c500 at Remenham on Nov 30th (ABT). Apart from high counts, an interesting record came from Windsor Great Park where an individual resembling a Nordic type showing a prominent white half collar was seen on May 17th (CDRH). This bird was first seen on May 3rd 2013 by CDRH but was not mentioned in the 2013 report.

## **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

*Abundant breeding resident in rural West Berkshire, less common further east (Green Listed)*

Although still a familiar sight throughout most of the county, breeding details from the latest BTO atlas (2007–11) has shown a slight decline in distribution especially in East Berks where habitat types and development has restricted its range. Apart from a mixed flock of 2,000 involving Rooks and Jackdaws at Easton, Rooks were under recorded, there being no

counts submitted that exceeded 200 birds. Apart from breeding sites, records of 100 or more came from 11 West Berks locations, the highest being 120 at Welford on Mar 22nd (RJC), 114 Clapton on Apr 24th (JL), 200 Wellbottom Down on Jun 1st and 5th (RJC), 140 Seven Barrows on Jun 10th (IW) and 150 Leckhampstead on Dec 5th (RJC). The largest count reported from Mid and East Berks involved c200 at Felix Fm Binfield on Jan 17th (BDC) Elsewhere there were 45 at Hennerton, Wargrave on Jan 12th (K Seymour), 50 Twyford on Jul 15th (SAB) and 57 at Hyde Farm Pinkneys Green on Nov 20th (PNe). **Breeding:** although not surveyed this year, some rookeries were checked and nest totals are as follows: Langley Farm Beedon, 36 nests (GDS), Port Down, Hungerford had 52 nests in the crossroads rookery (RGS), Upper Farm Ownham had 38 nests (GDS), Rosehill Hurley had 72 nests (SJF; FMF) and is probably the largest rookery in East Berks, Waltham Place had 16 nests (BDC) and Winterbourne Church had 23 nests (GDS).

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

*Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)*

The Carrion Crow is ubiquitous in Berkshire and like most of our corvid species is under recorded. However there were still over 1100 records submitted and 21 locations reported counts exceeding 20 birds. The highest count involved c300 at Felix Fm Binfield on Jan 17th (BDC), all other counts were below 150 birds, the largest being 52 together at Great Meadow Pond on Jan 12th (DJB), 40 Walbury Hill on Nov 5th (IW) and 125 on Fobney Meadows on Dec 29th (AVL).

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

*Now an established and locally common resident in SW Berks, elsewhere an increasing resident and passing visitor (Green Listed)*

Records were received from 111 locations, 23 in East Berks, 27 in Mid Berks and 61 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table; totals are taken from each locations highest monthly count.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Combe/Walbury area	17	19	10	11	2	3	17	14	9	13	12	12
Dinton Pastures CP	-	-	2	3	2	-	2	2	3	-	-	1
Greenham Common	-	-	1	4	-	1	-	-	2	2	-	-
Snelsmore Common	2	1	2	2	5	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Windsor Pk/Forest	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	3
Elsewhere												
West Berks sites	10	5	10	8	6	4	3	7	13	6	8	5
Min no. of birds	18	7	11	16	11	8	4	12	19	10	12	11
Mid Berks sites	1	2	4	4	1	1	0	4	7	5	7	9
Min no. of birds	1	3	11	5	1	1	0	4	11	5	7	16
East Berks sites	4	4	3	3	2	1	0	0	3	3	4	0
Min no. of birds	7	7	5	5	4	1	0	0	4	4	8	0
Total min no. of birds	45	37	43	48	27	17	23	33	49	35	41	43

The high counts at the main site section of the table occurred on Feb 16th at Combe (RHar) and on May 25th at Snelsmore Common (JL). Away from the main sites, no location recorded more than four birds. Counts of four away from West Berks were at Cookham Rise

on Jan 19th (BDC), circling Borough Marsh on Mar 10th (CDRH) and at Englefield on Dec 10th (RCr). Two seen at Colnbrook on Nov 14th (CDRH) was the most easterly record of the year and probably this century. **Breeding:** there were no confirmed records of successful breeding in 2014 however a discarded egg shell was found near to a previous breeding site in Windsor Forest on Apr 18th (DJB) and breeding activity was noted from four areas in West Berks (NDOC). Pairs in display flight were noted at Inkpen on Apr 6th (RRi) and South Ascot on Apr 21st (DJB).

## STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Another poor year with very few records submitted that involved large numbers, this is another species that under recording prevents us from knowing its true status within the county. Twenty two sites recorded between 100 and 200 birds, higher counts involved 400 on Widbrook Common on Jan 15th (BDC), 250 at Warfield on Feb 28th (LRB), 450 at Cookham Rise on Aug 25th (BDC), 350 beside Switchback Road Maidenhead on Sep 4th (BDC), an estimated 500 at Remenham Hill on Nov 7th (ABT), c300 Bury Down on Nov 20th (MHu) and c500 going to roost at Eversley GPs on Dec 25th (NS). **Breeding:** records were few and far between and are probably a result of under recording especially in Mid and East Berks where during the 2007–11 atlas the breeding distribution has changed little since the 1987–89 atlas. However evidence from the 2011–13 atlas points to a large reduction in the breeding distribution in the more rural west of the county where this species has probably suffered from modern farming practices amongst others.

## HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

*Common but declining resident (Red Listed)*

Although still a reasonably common and widespread species throughout the county, records were only submitted from 88 locations, 28 in East Berks, 27 in Mid Berks and 33 in West Berks, the table shows the monthly status based on the records provided.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	22	24	22	29	24	19	10	6	9	5	7	13
Min no. of birds	195	282	154	227	162	145	107	109	141	41	70	95

If the totals within the table are anywhere near accurate then the House Sparrow is in real trouble in Berkshire. However this species is one of the most overlooked in the county and many of the records submitted are from observers own gardens. It is hoped that as many of our common species become rarer, more observers will record their sightings. What the table does show is a startling reduction in records from July to the end of the year which if reflective to the true status then the population may be crashing, but this may only be confirmed in future reports. Nine locations reported 25 or more birds; the largest counts involved 71 in three flocks at Englefield on Feb 6th (RCr), a max of 35 at Eton Wick on Feb 19 (RMH), 31 at Enbourne Farm on Apr 9th (RJC), a max of 50 in Thatcham on Jun 7th (MIGW) and 60+ at Hurst on Sep 21st (IDP). Breeding was only reported from Boxford (GDS), Frogmill (SJF; FMF), Inkpen (NCh), Maidenhead (GRF) Southcote (AVL) and Twyford (SPA) but was thought to have occurred widely throughout the county.

## CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

*Common resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)*

Although under recorded, over 1100 records were submitted from throughout the county in 2014. There were very few counts that exceeded 40 birds and for the first time since this species has been included in reports (other than confirming their presence) there were no counts of 100 or more! The largest counts were 40+ Swinley Forest on Jan 19th (TS), 59 Englefield on Feb 6th (RCr), c50 Brimpton on Mar 3rd (GEW), 50 Stanmore on Mar 28th (GDS), 40+ Lavell's Lake on Oct 2nd (FJC), 88 South Fawley on Nov 6th (RGi) and 42 at Hyde Fm Pinkneys Green on Nov 20th (PNe). **Breeding:** very few records were received and were confirmed at only Ascot Heath and Blacknest (RJD); however evidence from the recent BTO atlas (2007–11) shows a breeding distribution similar to that of 1987–89 with birds noted in all but three tetrads throughout the county and breeding confirmed in 326 out of 394 tetrads. It is possible that population densities have declined in recent years. Undoubtedly under recording has influenced numbers reported, but the frequency of reports of large flocks in the non-breeding seasons in recent years appear to have dropped compared to the 1990's and early 2000's when there were fewer observers submitting records and when common species were given less coverage in the county reports. **Ringling:** there was little information received involving ringling totals in the county however 224 birds were ringed in the NDOC area throughout the year and at Blacknest at least 33 birds were ringed in Jan (18) and March (15) and a dead male found after hitting a window on Feb 17th had been ringed on Oct 13th 2011 at Grembergen, Oost-Vlaanderen Belgium (RJD). Also at this location a male and female were trapped on May 31st but were not ringed due to both birds suffering from the *Fringilla papilloma* virus, both birds were missing a foot, however they were otherwise in good condition and breeding as the female had a brood patch (RJD).

## BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

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

In what was another poor year, birds were reported from 20 locations, 11 in East Berks, 4 in Mid Berks and 5 in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	10	9	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0
Min no. of birds	40	93	182	94	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0

**First winter:** the majority of records came from SE Berks where small numbers were noted at eight locations in Jan/Feb with high site counts of one at Mill Ride Ascot on Jan 13th and Feb 8th and 22nd (SA), four Blacknest on Jan 15th (RJD), ten Swinley Forest on Jan 19th (TS), five Wishmoor Bottom/Cross on Jan 21st (MHu), 50 Windsor Forest on Feb 10th (CDRH), six Broadmoor Fm Crowthorne on Feb 13th (RD), 20 at Virginia Water on Feb 19th (PNe) and one Eversley GPs on Feb 27th (PKe). Elsewhere ten were reported from Sulham Woods on Jan 5th (RCo) with six nearby at Sulham on Jan 10th (RCo) (same flock?), singles were noted at Bagnor on Jan 8th (JL), Boxford on Jan 15th (JL) and Eastbury Down on Jan 16th (IW), three were noted at Weston on Feb 17th (GDS) and finally five at Hermitage on Feb 21st (NC). **Spring passage:** numbers built up in March and apart from two at Twyford on Mar 14th (SPA) all records came from eight SE Berks locations. At Swinley Park 20 were present on Mar 1st (RD) with 15 still there on Apr 12th (DJB). Windsor Forest still held 50+ on Mar 8th (DJB) however numbers soon dwindled with the last report being three on Apr 3rd (DJB), one was noted at Eversley GPs on Mar



23rd (GDu) and on the same day 94 were seen to go to roost in Swinley Forest (CDRH). Numbers at Mill Ride Ascot had risen to five on Mar 24th with three still on Apr 7th (SA) and numbers at Blacknest peaked at 9 on Mar 28th with seven still on Apr 6th (RJD), a large flock of 64 were seen at Wishmoor Bottom on Apr 11th (DJB) and finally two were in South Ascot on Apr 21st (DJB). At Blacknest five birds were ringed one in Jan and four in March (RJD). **Autumn passage:** was very disappointing with only five records from four locations. The first record involved one calling whilst flying over Great Meadow Pond on Oct 12th (DJB) this was followed by one in a finch flock at Padworth Lane GP on Oct 26th (KEM) then two in Swinley Forest on Nov 13th (MHu), one back in Mill Ride Ascot on Nov 24th (SA) and one over Great Meadow Pond again on Nov 30th (DJB).

**GREENFINCH** *Chloris chloris*

*Common and widespread resident and winter visitor, has shown signs of a decline in recent years (Green Listed)*

The Greenfinch remains a common and widespread species throughout most of the county. Although there has been some local contractions in the breeding range especially in the northwest and southeast of the county, results from the 2007–2011 Atlas actually shows a small increase in the number of tetrads where breeding was confirmed compared to 1987–89, however the number of probable breeding tetrads has shown a significant decline. The lack of large flocks outside of the breeding season has also highlighted the probability that this species is declining in Berkshire. The reasons for this is unclear but may involve modern farming practices, disease and climate change and where once flocks numbering in their hundreds were fairly regular, today any three figure count would be exceptional. The table shows the average of the five highest counts recorded in each year since 1994 and highlights the highest yearly count to 1988.

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Average	27.2	43.2	35	43.4	50.2	54.2	58	36.4	97.6
Highest count	35	70	55	75	90	100	100	60	200
No. of 100+ counts	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Year	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Average	45.4	58.4	71.6	94	55	108	78	74.6	50
Highest count	50	81	150	100	110	250	150	150	50
No. of 100+ counts	0	0	1	4	1	2	2	1	0
Year	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Average	50	86	95	na	na	na	na	na	Na
Highest count	80	100	135	330	130	500	103	100	300
No of 100+ counts	0	2	3	na	na	na	na	na	Na

na= details not available, note many of the high counts are estimates

The highest counts reported in 2014 involved 16 Greenham Common on Mar 16th (IW), 16 Ascot Heath on Mar 24th (RJD), 35 Starveal Aldworth on Aug 15th (DJB), 35 Greenham Common on Nov 9th (JL), 25 Whiteknights Park on Dec 5th (P W Johnstone) and 25 at Boxford on Dec 14th (GDS). These figures probably represent the lowest “high counts” ever for Berkshire. **Breeding:** was reported from Ascot Heath (RJD), Blacknest (RJD), Frogmill Hurley (SJF; FMF), Great Shefford (JLS), Ockwells Park Maidenhead (RH), Twyford (SPA) and Woodlands Park (DJB).

## GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

*Abundant and widespread resident (Green Listed)*

This species is a familiar sight throughout the county with records being submitted from 155 locations. With its main non-breeding food source (thistles) abundant and being readily attracted to garden feeders, this is one of the few species of finch that appears to be doing well in Berkshire. **First winter:** there were no exceptionally large flocks reported, the largest being 45 at Bradley Wood Boxford on Jan 23rd (GDS), 60 Queen Mother Res on Jan 30th (CDRH), 58 at Green Park on Feb 3rd (SAG), 49 Pangbourne on Feb 9th (GJSu), 65 to garden feeders in Woodlands Park on Mar 3rd to 6th (DJB) and 60 Bury Down on Mar 6th (RJB). **Spring/summer:** due to flocks dispersing, there were no large counts reported from April to June although records did come from over 70 locations. Breeding was confirmed in 13 areas (usually juvs in mobile flocks) but probably occurred widely throughout the county but many records provided no details except numbers. July provided the first post breeding flocks with 25 at Greenham Common on Jul 22nd (IW) increasing to 64 on Jul 30th (JL) and 30 juvs at Burnthouse Lane also on Jul 30th (RJB). August provided the first really large flocks of the year with numbers being clearly supplemented by juveniles. A flock of c200 was reported from Burnthouse Lane on Aug 10th (AVL) with 45 mostly juvs still present on Aug 21st (RJB), 250 (mostly juvs) were noted at the Field Farm Landfill site on Aug 27th to 31st (RCr) and 64 juvs were counted at Englefield on Aug 31st (RCr). **Autumn/second winter:** high counts involved 90 at Colnbrook on Sep 1st with 80 still present on Oct 18th-30th (CDRH), 100 Walbury Hill on Sep 6th (RJC), 260 at Englefield on Sep 13th with 310 there on Oct 2nd (RCr), 120 at Lambourn on Sep 15th (CDRH), 100+ at Streatley Warren on Sep 30th (ABT). From November numbers declined, the only counts that exceeded 50 were 60 Eversley GPs on Dec 7th (NS) and 70 at Padworth Lane on Dec 26th (RCr). **Ringling:** operations at Ascot Heath and Blacknest from January to June led to a total of 71 birds being ringed (RJD), whilst in West Berks a total of 358 were ringed from various locations throughout the NDOC area. One, ringed at Crookham Common in Nov 2013 was recaptured at Bardsey Island Wales in April 2014 (NDOC).

## SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

*Common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in summer (Green Listed)*

Records were submitted from 65 locations throughout the county, 27 in East Berks, and 19 in both Mid and West Berks. The table shows the monthly status throughout the year based on the highest monthly count from each location.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	26	25	26	10	4	3	1	0	0	10	8	7
Min no. of birds	480	288	282	34	11	4	1	0	0	36	57	48

The table shows that 2014 was a disappointing year. Although reasonable numbers were reported in the first winter, the second winter was poor with evidence from previous reports pointing to it being the worst since 1984. **First winter:** records came from 54 locations with most reporting 1–19 birds. Fourteen sites reported 20–30 birds and higher counts came from six locations involving 40+ at Sandhurst STW on Jan 5th (DJS), 50 Eversley GPs (RFM) and 35 at Woodspeen (IW; JL) on Jan 15th, c100 Theale Main GP on Jan 21st (AVL), 40 back at Eversley GPs on Mar 3rd (MHu), 50 Wildmoor Heath on Mar 19th (DJS) and 35 in South Forest, Windsor on Mar 28th (DJB). **Spring/summer:** apart from a record of two presumed late wintering birds at Greenham Common on Apr 3rd (IW; JL) all April records came from the southeast of the county where small numbers remain to summer. The highest

count involved nine in Swinley Park on Apr 12th (DJB) but the most significant record came from Blacknest where a pair was trapped on Apr 16th, the male was ringed but the female was promptly released as it had a brood patch which would indicate breeding (RJD). May records came from three traditional East Berks summering areas (DJB) whilst an isolated record of two at Burnthouse Lane on May 20th (TGB) is intriguing. The three June records all came from sites where birds were not seen in May, In Windsor Forest 1 flew over on Jun 2nd (DJB), 2 were seen at Blacknest on Jun 14th (RJD) and 1 was seen at Wishmoor Bottom on Jun 16th and Jul 1st (RJB). **Autumn/second winter:** as already mentioned this period was very quiet. After no records for Aug-Sep the first returning birds were noted on Oct 10th with two at Shinfield (RCr) and were followed by two at Hampstead Marshall on Oct 11th (RHar). These were followed by scattered records from eight other locations in October, the highest count being just nine at Greenham Common on Oct 28th (IW; JL). Things did not improve as autumn entered winter and the only records of note involved 30 at Greenham Common on Nov 27th (IW; JL) and a paltry 18 at Moor Copse on Dec 31st (SAG).

**LINNET** *Linaria cannabina*

*Still a widespread but thinly distributed breeding resident which unfortunately continues to decline, also a locally common winter visitor (Red Listed)*

Records were submitted from 91 locations, 24 in East Berks, 19 in Mid Berks and 48 in West Berks. The monthly status based on monthly high counts from all locations is shown in the table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East Berks sites	5	5	4	10	7	2	3	2	5	2	5	3
EB min no. of birds	293	117	23	58	31	10	10	6	83	60	122	57
Mid Berks sites	2	3	1	6	5	1	3	2	4	3	3	3
MB min no. of birds	118	33	2	26	15	5	4	39	332	85	182	205
West Berks sites	9	4	11	16	11	15	10	10	8	9	6	5
WB min no. of birds	381	42	130	152	57	137	90	413	342	213	147	137
Total no. of sites	16	12	16	32	23	18	16	14	17	14	14	11
Total no. of birds	792	193	155	236	103	152	104	458	757	358	451	399

As the totals in the table are not the results of a comprehensive survey, the totals shown can only be used as a guide to the status throughout the county, however as 65 observers submitted records it is worrying that totals for East and Mid Berks are so low and bird numbers were only this high due to ten locations reporting flocks that numbered 100 or more. In the **first winter** 160 were located at Cold Harbour with another 100+ nearby at Shottesbrooke on Jan 2nd (DJB) and 200+ were on Sheep Down West Ilsley on Jan 30th (RRi). All other high counts came in the period **Aug-Dec** with 100+ at Aldworth on Aug 28th (ABT) and what may have been the same flock on the Compton Downs on Aug 29th (ABT). A build up of birds at Englefield began with 174 on Sep 3rd peaking at 300 on Sep 13th with 200 still present on Sep 20th (RCr). There were 160 at Streatley Warren on Sep 30th (ABT), 120 at Bradley Wood Cottages, Boxford on Oct 2nd (GDS), 150 at Remenham on Nov 4th (RRi) and Dec 23rd (DJB) and 120 in two flocks at Eastbury Bottom on Nov 6th (RGi). **Breeding:** from April to July birds were recorded from 57 locations and although confirmed breeding records were incredibly few, this is thought to be a product of under recording as the 2007–2011 Atlas still shows a widespread breeding distribution throughout the county although there are signs of decline. Evidence of breeding came from Greenham Common with nest building observed on Apr 29th (KGW) and at least 50 birds were present there on Jun 6th (A S Perry). Two juveniles

were present in a flock of eight at Cookham Rise on Jun 24th (BDC) and three including one juv was noted at Wildmoor Heath on Jul 14th (DJS).

## LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

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

Records were received from 59 locations, 29 in East Berks, 10 in Mid Berks and 20 in West Berks. The monthly status based on the monthly high counts or known ringing totals at all sites is shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East Berks sites	11	8	16	12	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
EB min no of birds	120	110	105	171	1	0	0	0	0	1	9	55
Mid Berks sites	5	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
MB min no of birds	40	21	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9
West Berks sites	9	9	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	1
WB min no of birds	76	70	99	27	0	0	0	0	0	37	7	1
Total number of sites	25	22	29	17	1	0	0	0	0	6	4	6
Min total no of birds	236	201	226	198	1	0	0	0	0	39	18	65

The totals in the table are disappointing and although more numerous in the first winter period, important sites like Swinley Forest were under-watched and failed to provide records of the high numbers that usually move through in the late winter-early spring. The second winter was dismal and reflected the low numbers seen in Siskin. **First winter/spring:** the highest Mid Berks count was 30 at Padworth Lane GP on Jan 30th (MJD) whilst the highest West Berks count was 35 at Freeman’s Marsh on Jan 31st (RGS). All other counts of 30+ occurred in East Berks, the most notable being 63 attracted to garden feeders in Bracknell on Feb 6th (JCo), 80+ at Ascot Heath on Mar 23rd (RJD) and 140 at Wishmoor Bottom on Apr 11th (DJB). A singing male was noted at South Ascot on Apr 21st (DJB) but not subsequently whilst the only May record involved one caught and ringed at Ascot Heath on May 5th (RJD). **Second winter:** passage and wintering birds were few and far between. The first returning bird was noted at Lower Farm GP on Oct 15th (PEH) and apart from 33 at Greenham Common on Oct 30th (IW; JL), 15 at Frogmill, Hurley on Dec 5th (SJF; FMF) and 40 at Eversley GPs on Dec 20th (PJC) numbers at any of the other nine locations where reported did not exceed nine birds. **Ringing:** ringing totals included 147 ringed at Ascot Heath from January to May (RJD), 13 adults ringed at Padworth Common (PRR) and 219 were ringed at various locations within West Berks (NDOC). Recoveries included one ringed at Greenham Common in Jan 2011, recaptured at Shebster near Thurso Scotland in April 2014 and one ringed at Aldermaston GPs in April 2014, recaptured at Whiteash Hill Scotland in December 2014 (NDOC).

## MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*

*Scarce winter visitor, numbers vary from year to year (Green Listed)*

An above average year, the practice of providing feeding stations in areas that are regularly used for ringing has greatly increased the numbers of birds recorded in the county as many are now identified in the hand. It should be highlighted that due to the variations in plumage in both Lesser and Mealy Redpolls, some sight only records of Mealy Redpoll may not be accepted if descriptions are not provided. All records came in the **first winter** with birds reported from seven locations involving over 40 birds. **Ringing:** results from ringing sites were as follows: at Ascot Heath birds were present from Jan 11th to Apr 13th (one bird), 24 birds were caught and

ringed at least 15 were retrapped and one was controlled, there were also sightings of un-ringed birds on 13 dates. High counts involved eleven (6 ringed and 5 re-trapped) on Mar 23rd and eight on Mar 29th (RJD). At Aldermaston GP five birds were caught from Feb 21st to Mar 27th, four of which were ringed and one that had been captured on Feb 26th, had been ringed at Dukes Warren in Surrey in October 2013 (JPM). At Greenham Com, at least seven birds were noted from Mar 2nd to Apr 6th. Three birds was trapped and two were ringed the other had been ringed at Kilnsea Humberside in Oct 2013; all other birds were sight records (IW; JL). Other sight records involved one at Hermitage on Jan 31st (JBu), one in a Bracknell garden on Feb 6th to 10th then two on Feb 15th (JCo), two with 20 Lesser Redpolls at Brimpton GPs on Mar 10th (GEW) and a first winter at Blacknest on Mar 27th (RJD).

## COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

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

There were 48 records from 13 locations (Swinley Forest is treated as one site), seven in East Berks, one in Mid Berks and five in West Berks. The monthly status is shown in the table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Main sites												
South Ascot	10	-	51	9	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swinley Forest SPA	13	10	45	10	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swinley Park	-	7	3	6	57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elsewhere												
Other E Berks sites	3	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Min no. of birds	20	3	9	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mid Berks sites	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Min no. of birds	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Berks sites	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Min no. of birds	1	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total no. of birds	44	45	108	30	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**First winter:** from January to March birds were reported from twelve locations with the south east of the county providing the majority of records. It was in this SE corner of Berks that all the main locations are situated, the large areas of predominantly conifer woodland from Windsor to Finchampstead providing ideal habitat for this species. High counts from the main sites included thirteen Crowthorne Woods, Swinley Forest on Jan 2nd (PBT), seven Swinley Park on Feb 17th (DMac), 45 Swinley Forest on Mar 27th (CDRH) and 51 at South Ascot on Mar 28th (DJB). Other East Berks records involved two over Dorney Wetlands on Jan 2nd (DAC), eight at Blacknest on Jan 8th and nine plus there on Jan 25th (RJD), three Gorrick Wood on Feb 16th (RD) with five there on Mar 10th (EN) and there were six further records of one or two birds at Windsor Forest (DJB; CDRH) and Blacknest (RJD) during March. In Mid Berks birds were surprisingly absent from the conifer woodlands between Mortimer and Padworth, however there were records from suitable areas in West Berks involving one Greenham Common on Jan 25th (RJP), twelve at Snelsmore Com (IW; JL) and ten at Hermitage (NC) both on Feb 10th, two Bucklebury Com on Feb 18th (NC) and one over Frilsham on Feb 26th (RCr). **Spring:** records came from five locations. Very few were reported in April, the maximum count being ten at Wishmoor Bottom on Apr 27th (C Bradshaw) but in May there were higher counts (were juvs involved?) at Swinley Park

with 57 in five flocks on May 3rd (DJB) and 34 at South Ascot on May 14th (DJB). The only record away from the east involved six flying east over Emmer Green on May 3rd (ABT), the last record of the spring and in fact the year was back in Swinley Forest when eight were located at Wishmoor Bottom on May 15th (DJB).

**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Uncommon but widespread resident, the long term decline appears to have stabilised (Amber Listed)*

Records were received from 132 locations, 38 in East Berks, 32 in Mid Berks and 62 in West Berks. After 2005 (158 locations) and 2013 (138 locations), 2014 appears to be the best year for recorded distribution this century and backs up the stabilisation and perhaps a beginning of a recovery in population mentioned in the 2013 report, also the Theale area Bird Report states that the local population appears to be in a much healthier state than just a few years ago. The table shows the distribution of records throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E Berks sites	8	9	9	8	6	4	6	3	2	2	5	5
Min no. of birds	13	16	21	16	11	5	7	5	3	2	16	13
M Berks sites	9	11	6	3	8	4	4	4	3	5	7	13
Min no. of birds	27	24	10	8	12	5	7	9	5	10	29	33
W Berks sites	17	18	18	21	16	20	12	12	9	8	10	14
Min no. of birds	54	58	50	41	39	40	26	42	24	17	30	33
Sites total	34	38	33	32	30	28	22	19	14	15	22	32
Birds total	94	98	81	65	62	50	40	56	32	29	75	79

A comparison of the last table showing the monthly status in 2010 show that all but four of the 24 totals in 2014 have shown an increase on the 2010 totals. Although these figures are influenced by observer coverage, the high level of plus counts (20) to only three minus and one unchanged total would indicate an upward trend. The higher totals in the winter periods may partly be influenced by dispersal or immigration into wintering areas i.e. at Great Meadow Pond where coverage is constant throughout the year, birds are regularly noted in the winter months but are usually absent in summer. High counts of five or more came from 21 locations, the highest counts tended to be in the middle and west of the county with ten at Greenham Com on Jan 5th (IW; JL), twelve at Theale Main GP on Jan 21st (AVL), twelve Combe Wood on Feb 7th (MJD) and nine at Hosehill Lake on Nov 30th (AVL). In the east numbers were lower, the highest counts being six at Eversley GPs on Jan 25th, Dec 7th and 31st (NS) and at Wishmoor Bottom on Nov 1st (RJG). Six regularly to garden feeders at Emmer Green from Nov 11th to Dec 19th (DJW) is unusual. **Breeding:** from April to July birds were reported from 73 locations however actual evidence of breeding was only reported from Upper Bucklebury where nest building on Mar 26th (BL), nest building at Wildmoor Heath on Apr 14th (DJS), a pair with three juvs near to Ashampstead on Jun 22nd (PBT), a female with one juv at Moatlands GP on Jul 6th (SAG), single juvs at Hosehill Lake on Aug 4th (KEM) and Brimpton GPs on Aug 22nd (GEW) and three juvs at Walbury Hill on Aug 27th (DJB). **Ringling:** 104 were ringed in West Berkshire during 2014 (NDOC).

**HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

*Scarce and declining visitor, formerly an uncommon resident (Red Listed)*

**2011** Correction: Only two locations held birds in 2011, Welford and Windsor Great Park, other records were not proven. The observer of the Jan 1st record was A M Horscroft.

**2014** The only record this year involved a bird photographed at Basildon Park on Mar 6th (D E Tyzack). The status of this species since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03*	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of sites	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	4	2	1
Minimum no. of birds	0	0	4	0	0	4	1	1	1	7	2	3	6	8	1

\*One was seen in 2003 but had arrived late in 2002

## **SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

*Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)*

There were two records in 2014 both in November at Queen Mother Res. The first, a female/imm was located along the north bank of the reservoir on Nov 2nd and was seen again on Nov 4th (CDRH). The second bird, a female with less white on the wing than the Nov 2nd bird was first observed flying over the reservoir before being relocated on the south bank on Nov 23rd (CDRH), after 40 minutes the bird left to the east. These represent the twelfth and thirteenth records this century, eight of which have come from Queen Mother Res. The yearly status since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	00	01	02	03*	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of records	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	2
No. of birds at QMR	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	2
No. of birds elsewhere	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Total no. of birds	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	3	1	2

## **YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citronella*

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

This species continues to decline throughout the county, yet, it is still widespread throughout West Berks; however this is not the case in Mid and East Berks where the decline appears to be more prevalent. Yellowhammers to the east of Reading are now confined to farmland areas from Maidenhead and Cookham south to Binfield and Wokingham and west to Reading and here the population densities appear considerably diminished. In 2014 birds were reported from 98 locations, 21 in East Berks, 16 in Mid Berks and 61 in West Berks. Note birds were only reported once from 48 of the 98 locations and this is hoped to be a sign of under recording, the table shows the monthly status based on the maximum counts from all sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E Berks sites	2	6	5	6	7	8	3	2	0	2	2	1
Min no. of birds	20	33	11	11	15	16	3	2	0	5	18	2
M Berks sites	0	1	2	5	6	3	1	0	1	1	3	3
Min no. of birds	0	24	4	11	9	3	1	0	36	11	37	31
W Berks sites	10	9	21	22	12	16	12	7	9	8	8	6
Min no. of birds	125	125	192	85	44	98	40	15	77	82	147	94
Total no. of sites	12	16	28	33	25	27	16	9	10	11	13	10
Total no. of birds	145	182	207	107	68	117	44	17	113	97	202	127

As the table shows, the minimum number of birds seen per month is extremely low. In East Berks there were only two records exceeding ten birds, these were 15 at Jealott's Hill

on Feb 3rd (RCM) and 15 at Woodlands Park Fields on Nov 25th (DJB). High counts in Mid Berks were slightly better with 24 at Englefield on Feb 6th (RCr) and 36 at Sonning Meadows on Sep 29th with 30 still present on Nov 6th (ABT). In the west counts of 20 or more came from twelve locations, the highest counts being 60 on the Compton Downs on Feb 2nd (GDS) with 55 there on Oct 25th (DJB), 50+ at Old Warren, Fawley on Mar 11th and Nov 5th (ABT). Counts of 40 were also noted at West Ilsley on Mar 10th (JCM) and Streatley Warren on Nov 3rd (ABT). **Breeding:** from April to July records came from 66 locations and especially in Mid and East Berks many recorded singing birds. However there were only four records that had accompanying details confirming breeding, these being a pair feeding young on the Compton Downs on May 30th (DJB), one carrying food at Strand Water, Cookham on May 31st (BDC), a female feeding young at Long Lane, Cookham on Jun 24th (BDC) and a pair feeding young at Brimpton on Jul 14th (GEW). During this period the highest count involved 19 at Wellbottom Down on Jun 5th (RJC).

## REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

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

2014 was a poor year with records received from only 80 locations throughout the county, 23 in East and Mid Berks and 34 in West Berks. The monthly status based on records received is shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	20	23	30	24	23	20	11	8	13	12	18	18
Min no. of birds	65	110	98	64	73	65	26	31	47	38	86	79

As always the totals in the table are based solely on records submitted and so can be as much a reflection on individual observer's habits and what sightings they regard as recordable as to the true status of the species. What the tables can do is warn us of possible changes to the species status, either short or long term. The totals in this table are worrying as they include fairly low totals from previously important sites that are well watched such as Thatcham Marsh (no double figure counts all year), Dorney Wetlands (highest count just 15) and Remenham where wintering numbers have more than halved. Hopefully this downward trend will be short lived. **First winter:** during the period January to March, birds were reported from 42 locations throughout the county. High counts were very disappointing and only four sites reported ten or more birds, these records involved 10 at Remenham on Jan 2nd and Feb 6th (DJB), 12 at Jealott's Hill on Jan 10th (KCr) with 10 there on Feb 3rd (RCM), 10+ at Eversley GPs on Feb 22nd (NS) and a peak of 26 at Englefield on Feb 26th with 14 still present on Mar 9th (RCr). **Spring/summer:** records came from 41 locations with most records involving one to three birds. The highest count of the period was just 15 birds at Dorney Wetlands on Jun 17th (PDM), elsewhere song was noted at many locations and at some locations counts of territories were made, the highest being four at Fobney Meadows (AVL), Great Meadow Pond (DJB), Eversley GPs (RCM) and Padworth Lane (RJB; IW). Breeding was confirmed at all of these sites bar Fobney Meadows and was also reported from Hosehill Lake (AVL) and Woolhampton GPs (KGW). Although there were comparable totals from other sites none came with any details. Potential breeding records away from their usual habitats involved one or two territorial males in oilseed rape at Bury/Cow Down in April and May (ABT) and two pairs in beans at Woodlands Park Fields throughout June (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** although reported from 40 locations, 25 of these only reported birds on one occasion and the monthly average was lower than at any other time during the year. Englefield was the host of the first reasonably sized flock with 18



feeding close to the airstrip on Aug 31st (RCr) and totals remained in double figures here throughout September and October. Larger numbers had returned to Remenham with 30+ seen on Nov 4th (RRi) and Nov 8th (ABT), 15 were counted at Hosehill Lake on Nov 29th (TGB) and it looked as if numbers could improve into December. However this was not the case and the highest count was only 10 at Bucklebury on Dec 29th (DJR).

## CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

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

Sightings were confined to the downs of NW Berkshire where records were submitted from 24 locations. The table shows the monthly status throughout the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bury/Cow Down	96	90	16	55	–	3	–	–	–	90	40	50
Compton Downs	60	20	75	25	6	12	1	14	2	47	80	50
Elsewhere												
No. of sites	2	0	8	3	7	6	4	2	2	0	4	1
Minimum no. of birds	80	0	130	24	33	44	112	30	108	0	236	3
Total no. of birds	236	110	221	104	39	59	113	44	110	137	356	103

**First winter:** the high count of 60 on the Compton Downs occurred on Jan 5th (ABT) whilst the high count of 96 at Cow Down occurred on Jan 20th and what was probably the same flock of 90+ occurred on Bury Down on Feb 26th (CDRH). Elsewhere 60 were on East Garston Down on Jan 2nd (ABT), 20 on Eastbury Down on Jan 23rd (IW; JL) 20 at Fawley on Mar 7th (JD), singles singing at East Garston and Sheepdrove on Mar 9th (MJT), one West Ilsley on Mar 10th (JCM), an impressive 100+ at Old Warren, Fawley on Mar 11th (ABT), one Leckhampstead on Mar 23rd (RJC) and one near Winterbourne on Mar 27th (GDS). **Spring/summer:** 25 (mostly singing males) were noted on the Compton Downs on Apr 5th (MJT) and 55 were noted at Bury Down on Apr 9th (CDRH). Records from other sites during this period involved eight at Great Shefford on Apr 9th (CDRH), 15 Superity Fm Compton on Apr 19th and Jun 10th (JL), one singing East Ilsley on Apr 26th (NJB) then four on May 5th (JCM), three at Eastbury on May 16th (JD), two singing on the Lambourn Downs on May 17th (PBT) then 5 there on Jun 9th (RJB) and 1 singing on Jul 17th (RRK). Five were also singing at Upper Lambourn on May 17th (PBT), four were reported from Wellbottom Down on May 23rd (LGRE) with ten there on Jun 5th (RJC), five were nearby at Seven Barrows on May 30th (IW) and ten were at Old Warren, Fawley on May 31st (ABT). Eight were noted at West Ilsley on Jun 16th (RJC) and 2 were on Eastbury Down on Jun 26th (JLe); as the season crept toward autumn a flock of 106 was located on stubble at Upper Lambourn on Jul 30th (CDRH) and is the largest July flock this century. Unfortunately there were no records that confirmed breeding and evidence points to less coverage than usual for this species during the summer months. **Autumn/second winter:** the count of 90 at Cow Down occurred on Oct 30th (ABT) the same observer then located 80 on the Compton Downs on Nov 10th. Away from the main sites 20 were located on Several Down on Aug 24th (ABT) followed by 85 at Lambourn on Sep 2nd (CDRH), 23 at Sheep Down on Sep 28th (JLe) which had increased to 40 by Nov 4th (JLS), 100+ at Old Warren on Nov 5th (ABT), 21 Eastbury Bottom on Nov 6th (RGi), 75 nearby at Eastbury Grange on Nov 18th (ABT) and finally counts of 50 at both Bury Down on Dec 13th (RRi) and Compton Downs on Dec 15th (ABT). 2014 appears to be the first year in modern times that birds have not been reported from East Berkshire. The long term decline which has seen this species disappear from this region over the last 30–40 years has now

come to its sorry end. The last stronghold between White Waltham and Knowl Hill held on gamely for ten years but with no other populations nearby to help sustain it, it was always just a matter of time before they succumbed. The West Berks population appears to be fairly healthy but if farming practices and changes in land use begin to fragment this population it could eventually go the same way as other populations elsewhere in the county and country.

# ESCAPES, FERAL SPECIES AND HYBRIDS

## ESCAPES AND FERALS

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

Records came from four locations but probably involve the same individuals. Most records came from central Reading where a number of birds have been resident since 2008. Records here involved two on Feb 16th (DFI), four Mar 23rd (PG), two Apr 4th (ABT), two pairs on Jun 15th (PG), one Jul 24th (P A Sketch), two Sep 7th and 21st (PG) and Dec 11th (SAG). Nearby two visited Dinton Pastures CP on May 12th (MFW; SDA), three were on the Thames at Pangbourne on Aug 29th (G M Waterman) and one visited Twyford GPs on Dec 8th (WeBS).

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

The only records all involved a single individual resident in the NE of the county. This bird was seen throughout the year at Summerleaze GP (CDRH *et al.*) and nearby at Widbrook Common from Jan 15th to Mar 13th (CDRH) and also visited the RThames at Maidenhead on Mar 3rd (BAJC) and White Place Fm Cookham on Mar 12th (DF).

### **Snow Goose** *Chen caerulescens*

The single remaining bird was reported from Eversley GPs in Jan to May, Aug, Nov and Dec (MO). One was reported flying over Wokingham on Mar 2nd (LFO).

### **Hawaiian Goose** *Branta sandvicensis*

One was observed in floods next to the A4 at Englefield on Mar 24th (PEH).

### **South African (Cape) Shelduck** *Tadorna cana*

What may have been the 2013 bird took up temporary residence at Thatcham NDC from Jun 26th to Sep 16th (GJS).

### **Muscovy Duck** *Cairina scutulata*

Three were regular at Thatcham NDC for most of the year (NDOC). An adult male arrived at Brimpton GPs on Dec 22nd and remained into 2015 (GEW).

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

At Maiden Erleigh Lake, Reading the single drake that appears to winter here was seen from Jan 10th (RHS) to Feb 13th (LGL), then again on May 3rd (JBi). Two, a drake and female were reported at the same location on Dec 21st (PF) however no descriptive notes were provided of the female so the possibility of it being one of the resident female Mandarin Ducks cannot be ruled out.

### **Ringed Teal** *Callonetta leucophrys*

A female was reported from Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jul 17th (FJC).

### **Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Four were accompanying an African Spoonbill in the grounds of a house that backs on to Wraysbury Lake from Nov 26th to 28th (CDRH)

## **African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*

An immature which had been wing clipped was beside Wraysbury Lake on Nov 26th to 28th (CDRH).

## **Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris*

One was reported from West Meadows on Dec 21st (JLS)

## **Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*

Reports came from Clapton with two on Apr 24th and one on Jun 3rd (JL) and in Windsor Great Park where a long staying male was seen on May 16th and Aug 13th (RMH).

## **Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Two records; a male was observed flying around and calling at Horton GPs on May 21st (CDRH) and one was noted at Theale Main GP on Jul 6th (KEM).

## **Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulates*

Single blue varieties were reported from Maidenhead Fire Station on Apr 16th (MG) and over Queen Mother Res on Nov 15th (CDRH).

## **HYBRIDS**

### **GEESE**

#### ***Anser* hybrid**

The long staying "White-fronted type Goose" remained in Windsor Great Park, being seen on Aug 9th and Sep 8th (CDRH).

#### **Canada × Greylag Goose**

One was present at Great Meadow Pond, being seen on Jan 12th, May 25th and Aug 3rd (DJB) and Aug 8th (CDRH) with two present there on Sep 7th (DJB), Sep 8th (CDRH) and Oct 12th (DJB). Another flew over Queen Mother Res on Apr 26th (CDRH).

#### **Snow × Canada Goose**

One seen at Winkfield on Jan 24th-25th (CDRH) was seen nearby at Warfield House on Feb 20th and Mar 2nd (MSFW).

#### **Snow × Barnacle Goose**

One was reported from Eversley GPs on Jan 12th (G and S Studd).

#### ***Anser* × *Branta***

One at Virginia Water on Dec 29th (CDRH) was not one of the Great Meadow Pond birds, being smaller bodied and billed with darker plumage.

## **DUCKS**

### ***AYTHYA* HYBRIDS**

#### **Pochard × Ferruginous Duck**

A female was located at Bray GPs on Jan 2nd (DJB). The regular returning drake at Eversley GPs was noted on Feb 8th (JMC) and Feb 23rd (RMC; GR); this bird has wintered in the Blackwater valley for the last 12 winters (JMC).

#### **Pochard × Tufted Duck, Lesser Scaup type**

A drake was present at Bray GPs on Jan 17th (DJB) and Feb 11th to 22nd (CDRH). Also an eclipse drake was located at Queen Mother Res on Sep 29th and Oct 2nd-4th before moving to Horton GPs where seen on Oct 8th and 16th (CDRH).

#### **Pochard × Tufted Duck**

One was reported from Padworth Lane GP on May 11th, 14th and 17th (KEM); a drake was present on Woolhampton GPs on Sep 17th (KEM) whilst at Bray GPs reports of a drake came on Oct 9th (CDRH), Nov 19th (BDC), Dec 1st (CDRH) and Dec 27th (BDC). This or a similar bird was seen on Dorney Wetlands on Dec 24th and 31st (CDRH) and another was on Wraysbury GPs from Nov 28th to Dec 12th (CDRH).

#### **Redhead type**

A drake appeared on Horton GPs on Nov 19th and Nov 30th and also showed on Sunnymeades GP, Wraysbury on Nov 26th and Dec 1st (CDRH).

#### ***Aythya* hybrid**

One reported from Lower Farm Trout Lake on Mar 20th (JL) came with no other details. Another, this time a drake was noted at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 18th, 20th and May 12th (MFW).

## **GULLS**

#### **Lesser Black-backed Gull × Herring Gull**

One sub adult probably a hybrid of these two species was seen at Charvil on Jan 24th (CDRH). A third winter was at Queen Mother Res on Nov 16th (CDRH).

#### **Presumed Glaucous × Herring Gull**

A first or second winter was present at Queen Mother Res on Dec 19th (CDRH).

# Extreme Dates of Winter and Summer Migrants

## WINTER

Species	DEPARTURE			ARRIVAL		
	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Pintail	Theale Main GP	Apr 4	RCr	Eton Wick	Sep 5	KPD, CDRH
Goldeneye*	Lea Farm Lake	Apr 8	MFW	Summerleaze GP	Oct 12	WeBS
Smew	Wraysbury GPs	Mar 5	CDRH	Burghfield GPs	Nov 8	JA
Goosander	Padworth Lane GP	Apr 11	KEM	Queen Mother Res	Nov 8	CDRH
Bittern	Woolhampton GPs	Mar 18	KEM	Great Meadow Pond	Oct 12	DJB
Merlin				Lambourn Downs	Sep 15	CDRH
Golden Plover	Woodlands Park	Apr 14	DJB	Windsor Great Park	Sep 11	DAC
Jack Snipe	Burnthouse Lane GPs	Feb 26	KEM	Horton GPs	Sep 26	CDRH
Short-eared Owl	Bury Down	Apr 27	ABT	Queen Mother Res	Oct 14	CDRH
Rock Pipit	Queen Mother Res	Feb 25	CDRH	Queen Mother Res	Oct 24	CDRH
Water Pipit	Eversley GPs	Mar 23	RJG	Horton GPs	Oct 12	CDRH
Fieldfare	Windsor Great Park	Apr 19	KPD	Streatley Warren	Sep 30	ABT
Redwing	Windsor Great Park	Apr 12	KPD	Dorney Wetlands	Sep 27	DAC
Brambling	South Ascot	Apr 21	DJB	Great Meadow Pond	Oct 12	DJB
Lesser Redpoll	Ascot Heath	May 5	RJD	Lower Farm GP	Oct 15	PEH

Notes

\*Does not include the two summer records at Eton Wick and Horton GPs

## SUMMER

Species	ARRIVAL			DEPARTURE		
	Location	Date	Observer	Location	Date	Observer
Garganey	Burghfield GPs	Mar 30	MFW	Lavell's Lake	Oct 12	WeBS
Quail	Dorney Wetlands	May 13	DAC	Upper Lambourn	Aug 7	CDRH
Osprey	Greenham Common	Apr 7	RJP	Old Windsor	Nov 15	CDRH
Hobby	Moor Copse	Apr 17	BCr	Lower Farm GP	Oct 28	JCh
Oystercatcher	Theale Main GP	Feb 3	AVL	Queen Mother Res	Aug 11	CDRH
Stone Curlew	Berkshire Downs	Mar 27	IW	Berkshire Downs	Sep 23	CDRH
Little Ringed Plover	Padworth Lane GP	Mar 16	KEM	Queen Mother Res	Aug 30	CDRH
Ringed Plover	Lower Farm GP	Feb 13	NC	Queen Mother Res	Oct 12	CDRH
Common Tern	Theale Main GP	Apr 3	KEM, PNe, RDr	Donnington	Sep 5	JCh
Turtle Dove	Aldermaston GP, Foliejon Park	Apr 29	JPM, MSFW	Hodcott Down	Jul 28	ABT
Cuckoo	Kintbury Cressbeds	Apr 8	RGS	Crookham Common	Sep 18	ABT
Nightjar	Roundoak Piece	Apr 30	PH	Greenham Common	Aug 22	MJD
Swift	Lavell's Lake	Apr 17	FJC	Three locations	Sep 3	IW, JL, FJC, CDRH
Sand Martin	Lower Farm GP	Mar 19	GJS	Winterbourne	Oct 9	IW, JL
Swallow	Bray GP	Mar 23	SAG	Bracknell	Oct 15	DAMD
House Martin	Woolhampton GPs	Mar 30	GEW	Thatcham	Nov 1	RRK
Tree Pipit	Wishmoor Bottom	Apr 9	PJC	Colnbrook	Sep 29	CDRH
Yellow Wagtail	Queen Mother Res	Apr 9	MMc	Cock Marsh	Oct 11	BDC
Nightingale	Burghfield GPs	Apr 10	RCr	Moatlands GPs	Aug 8	RCr
Redstart	Lower Farm GP	Apr 8	NC	Crookham Common	Oct 9	NC
Whinchat	Spencers Wood, Burnthouse Lane	Apr 24	MO, KEM	Compton Downs	Sep 28	NJB
Wheatear	Greenham Common	Mar 9	NC	Lowbury Hill	Nov 3	ABT
Ring Ouzel	Inkpen Hill	Apr 4	RCo	Ascot Heath	Oct 25	HH
Grasshopper Warbler	Freeman's Marsh	Apr 12	RGS	The Wilderness	Jul 6	JLS
Sedge Warbler	Wraysbury GPs	Mar 31	CL	Eton Wick	Sep 29	CDRH
Reed Warbler	Brimpton GPs	Apr 10	KEM	Hosehill Lake	Oct 5	TGB
Garden Warbler	Denford Mill	Apr 10	RGS	Thatcham Marsh	Oct 5	
Lesser Whitethroat	Bray GP, Burnthouse Lane	Apr 10	BDC, ABT	Wraysbury, Eversley GPs	Sep 23	
Whitethroat	Lower Farm GP	Apr 10	RSJ	Queen Mother Res	Sep 28	
Willow Warbler	Denford Mill	Mar 21	RDW	Hosehill Lake	Oct 17	
Spotted Flycatcher	Burghfield Common	May 10	RGi	Lavell's Lake	Sep 12	

## Scarce or Rare Species 2000–2014

The yearly status (2000–2014) of the more regular species that were **not** recorded in 2014 are shown below, yearly totals are based on the year of the birds arrival.

### BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	22	17	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

### PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	1*	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	1	0
No. of birds	0	1*	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	1	1	0

\*Presumed escape

### WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	3	4	2	2	0
No. of birds	0	7	2	1	27	5	17	9	4	0	134	12	3	12	0

### FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	0
No. of birds	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2*	0	0

\*Records at Woolhampton and Bray may involve the same bird.

### RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	1	0	1	0	1*	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0

\*record square bracketed in report as it may not have entered Berks

### BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0

### RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0

### MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0

### LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0



**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	7+	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	2	1	2	0
No. of birds	3*	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	2	0	4	1	3	0

\*at least 7 records that may have involved only 3 mobile birds

**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
No. of birds	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Note the frequency of records would undoubtedly be higher but unfortunately a number of observers refused to submit any identification notes.

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD** *Buteo lagopus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

**COMMON CRANE** *Grus grus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0

**DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	2	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	5	2	0	0	0	2	0

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	3	4	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	3	5	1	0
No. of birds	0	0	3	4	3	0	2	91	34	0	0	4	15	1	0

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** *Calidris temminckii*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	3	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
No. of birds	0	3	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Note from being nearly annual, there has been only one record the last nine years!

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	2*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0

\* Two records at Eversley GPs and Slough SF in November are thought to involve the same bird (BBR 2003)

**POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

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

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0

**RING-BILLED GULL** *Larus delawarensis*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	0
No. of birds	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	0

**LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	2	1	1	1	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	3	3	1	0
No. of birds	3	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	3	5	1	0

**HOOPOE** *Upupa epops*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
No. of birds	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

**WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulous*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	1	8	1	5	2	++	1	0	2	2	++	++	++	++	0
No. of birds	1	154	1	18	28	++	1	0	6	12	++	++	++	++	0

Numbers in the unprecedented major irruptions that occurred in the winters of 2004/05; 2010/11 and 2012/13 can only be guessed at as flocks were very mobile and dynamic hence the notation "+".

**BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	0
No. of birds	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	3*	3	4	1	0

\* Three birds found in 2010 overwintered into 2011, another three were reported from a different site in 2011.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	2	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	0
No. of birds	4	0	6	5	2	2	1	1	0	2	12	25*	3	0	0

\* The flock of twelve in 2010 had increased to seventeen in 2011.

**LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Records	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
No. of birds	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

# CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Records were received from the following observers in 2014

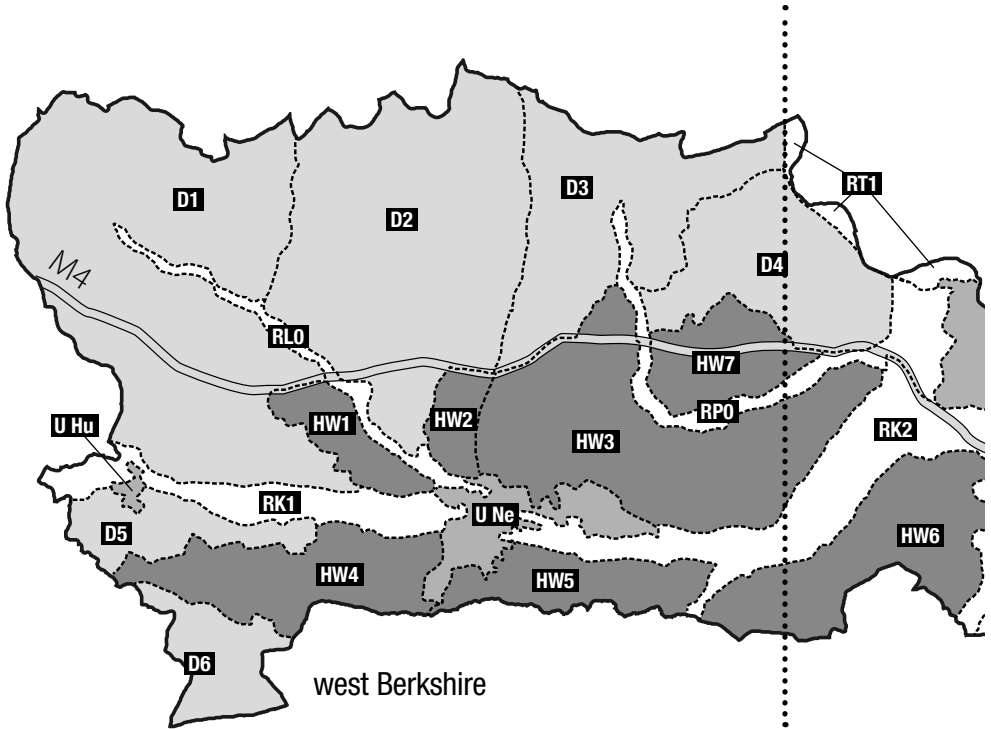
Abbott S D.....SA	Burfoot G D	Dellow J.....JD
Absolom A	Burness R J.....RJB	Dewey S
Absolom J	Butler D.....DBu	Di Tomaso A C
Adam N	Butler J	Dinnadge R
Adam P.....PA	Bysh P.....PBy	Dixon J
Adam SP.....SPA		Dodds D A M.....DAMD
Adams T.....	Caldwell C	Dodgington C
Addison R.....RAAd	Callister T	Dove P
Adnams R	Camp A I	Downer C J
Alexander T O	Camp J P	Drewitt E J A
Amphlett M J	Campbell G	Dryden R.....RDr
Andrews J E.....JA	Carpenter D	Duckworth N A
Angus R.....RAn	Carter A C I	Duffus G.....GDu
Aylard R	Carter D A.....DAC	Duncan.....KPD
	Catterson J F	Duszynski N
	Chalmers L	
Bailey A	Chester N.....NCh	East D
Bailey L	Chick AP	Edwards N
Baker J	Chivers J L.....JCh	Eeles P
Ball T G.....TGB	Claridge R J.....RJC	Elliot-Moustache G
Barker D J.....DJB	Clark B A J.....BAJC	Ellis K
Barker J R	Clark F C	Evans G
Barnes D J	Clark J M.....JMC	Evans H W
Barnes L	Clark R	Evans L G R.....LGRE
Bassett A D.....ADB	Clark R J	Eve A
Bassett D C	Clay K	Facey R
Batiste E	Cleal D.....DCI	Fairley M
Baulcomb G	Cleere N.....NC	Farnell G
Baxter R	Clews B D.....BDC	Farnsworth F M.....FMF
Beaney V R	Cockman J	Farnsworth S J.....SJF
Bee S D	Coghill J	Farrell G R
Beever D	Cole J	Fielker M N
Beglow B.....BB	Collier S.....SCo	Finch L J.....LJF
Bennett B T.....BTB	Collins C J	Finch M J.....MJF
Berryman A	Collins R.....RCo	Firth T
Bishop J.....JBi	Connor S	Flack D.....DFI
Blackford J	Cooke S C	Ford K J
Blackford J	Cooper J.....JCo	Fordham J
Blackmore D	Corfield G W	Foster C.....CF
Blundell L R.....LRB	Cottingham F J.....FJC	Foster C W
Bolton A	Crathorne B.....BCr	Foster L.....LFo
Booth A	Crawford R.....RCr	Foster V.....VFo
Boswell S A	Creed K.....KCr	Foulds P.....PF
Boult P	Crowley P J.....PJC	Frampton O
Boyd D A	Crump Rev D	French S
Bradshaw C	Cuff M J	Fuller D.....DF
Brant P.....PBr	Culham D A.....DCu	
Breaks M T	Cumming D A	Garlick C A
Briggs C A	Curson L	Garner-Langham L.....LGL
Bright-Thomas P.....PBT		Gawlick A
Brook R	Dale R J.....RJd	Gent C R.....CRG
Brooker S	Davey G	Gibbs R.....
Brooke-Taylor D	Davis C R W	Gilham R.....RGI
Brown S A.....SAB	Dawson R.....RD	Gipson P.....PG
Brown W	Day S.....SDa	Gleeson L
Buchanan J.....JBU	Dear M J.....MJD	Glover T
Bucknell N J.....NJB	Deayton R	Godden N
Burch C	Dell N	
Burden P		

Godden R J.....	RJG	Jones K	Mitchell M J.....	MJM	
Golder D		Jones PD	Moor Green Lakes Report.....		
Goldsmith G		Jones T	MGLR		
Gostling M H.....	MG	Keel R R.....	RRK	Moore K E.....	KEM
Gott C		Keen D		Moran N J	
Graham A		Kelly M		Morgan J C.....	JCM
Graham S A.....	SAG	Kelson D W.....	DWK	Morris P D.....	PDM
Green C		Kendall P.....	PKe	Morris R A	
Greenwell M		Kennelly A D		Movsovic R A	
Groom L		Kerr K		Murfitt R C.....	RCM
Guiver J		Kettell M.....	MK	Napper E.....	EN
Guyatt T A.....	TAG	Kettell M M		Nash D	
Hadland P		Kew P L		Naylor P	
Hale J.....	JHa	King G J		Needs J.....	JNe
Hall H		Kirby M		Ness R.....	RN
Halsey R		Knight A R		Netley H R.....	HRN
Halsey S A		Knight D C		Newbound P J.....	PNe
Harden T		Kujawa S		Newbury and District Ornithological Club.....	NDOC
Hardy R.....	RHar	Lamb A		Nicholls J	
Harrison A		Lamsdell C.....	CL	Nicol W A.....	WAN
Hastings D		Langton L		Noble S D	
Hawtree J N		Larkins S		O'Brien J	
Haydon R M.....	RMH	Latham M J.....	MJL	Oldcorn I	
Haywood R.....	RHa	Lawson A L.....	AVL	Olive P	
Healey S J		Leach G		Osbourne B A	
Heard C D R.....	CDRH	Legg J.....	JL	Overall J	
Hemmett T.....	TH	Lerpiniere J.....	JLe	Padworth Common Ringing Report.....	PCRR
Hemmings M.....		Lerpiniere R J		Paine I D.....	IDP
Hickman A E D.....	AEDH	Lewis P		Painter C	
Hickman P.....	PH	Lloyd-Parry J.....	JLP	Pang Valley Barn Owl Group	
Higgins S		Loades B.....	BLo	Park N	
Hipperson H.....	HH	Lund M		Parkes A	
Hogan P		Lyle B.....	BL	Payne D E E.....	DEEP
Hoit M		M Calix		Pearson J	
Holland B J.....	BJH	Mackenzie D.....	DMac	Percival S G	
Horscroft A M.....	AMH	Main J		Perrier G	
Hosehill Ringing Report.....	HRR	Mann L B.....	LBM	Perry A S	
Hudson C W		Mannion P		Philpott M G	
Humphrey P		Many Observers.....	MO	Platt M S	
Hunt D		Marchant J H		Poole C	
Hunt M.....	MHu	Marriner N.....	NM	Pottinger D	
Hunter D.....	DHu	Marriott C		Pounds M	
Hutchins P E.....	PEH	Marrs P		Povey R.....	RPo
Hutchison A		Marsh R.....	RM	Powell R S V	
Hyde C		Marshall M		Poynter M	
I'Anson M		Martin J P.....	JPM	Price R A G.....	RAGP
J Ryall		Massie D		Proddow S K.....	SKP
Jackson E D.....		May B.....	BM	Pyrah R J.....	RJP
Jacobs R S.....	RSJ	McCarthy M G		Rampton N.....	NR
James M		McEwan C.....	CMc	Ramsbottom D	
James T		McGinnety F G		Randall G.....	GR
Jenkinson N		McKee M J.....	MMc	Ratcliffe K	
Jinks R		McMahon A		Rawlings N D	
Johnson A C		McNeill J M		Reed C	
Johnstone P		McSherry J E		Reedman R	
Johnstone P W		Meads S M		Reeve B	
Jones B.....	BJ	Milligan R F.....	RFM		
Jones C		Mills D J.....	DJM		
Jones C M		Mills J			

Reid J		Stansfield R T		Walker B J.....	BJW
Reid T		Stewart G J.....	GJS	Walker C	
Reynolds D J.....	DJR	Stoneman K		Wallace R	
Rick D		Stoney A		Wang E	
Ricks S.....	SRi	Stow A N.....	ANS	Warren J E	
Righelato R.....	RRi	Strachen P		Waterman G M	
Rimes D N T.....	DNTR	Strong P		Watson M I G.....	MIGW
Rivoire J R		Stronge L		Watts R C.....	RCW
Roberts A		Studd G		Webb R	
Robson C		Studd S		Webster H	
Rogers T		Sulway D		Weiss P	
Rose C		Sumner G J.....	GJSu	West Berkshire Countryside	
Rose J		Sussex D J.....	DJS	Society.....	WBCS
Rowing C G M		Sutton P		Westmacott J.....	JW
Runnacles S		Swallow J L.....	JLS	Weston D J	
Ryland C		Swash A		Weston I L G.....	IW
Rymer A.....	AR	Sweetland T.....	TS	Wetland Bird Survey.....	WeBs
				Wheeler M J	
Sadler J.....	JSa	Taylor A.....	ATa	Whitaker M S F.....	MSFW
Sajdak R		Taylor K.....	Kta	Whitby R	
Sanger C M.....	CMS	Taylor M J.....	MJT	White D J.....	DJW
Saunders I		Theale Area Bird Report...	TABR	White K G.....	KGW
Savage M L		Theobald R C		White S.....	SW
Scholey G D.....	GDS	Thomas M		Whitehouse S M	
Scott E		Thomson S		Whitfield J	
Scott S		Thornton G		Whittaker S	
Scudamore P.....	PSc	Todd A H		Why M	
Seligman P M		Tomczynski A B.....	ABT	Wiggins D	
Seward L.....	LSe	Treen P		Wildish M F	
Seward M.....	MSe	Trout N S.....	NST	Williams P A.....	PAW
Seymour K		Truby N		Williams R	
Shannon J		Tubb K I.....	KIT	Williamson C S	
Sharp A H L		Turner D R		Wilson G E.....	GEW
Sheridan J B		Turner R M		Winter D	
Shinwari M		Turton M H		Womack G P	
Silver N.....	NS	Tyler D		Wood S D	
Simpkin D		Tyzack D E		Woodham J S.....	JSW
Sketch P				Wright D	
Slater A		Uttley B.....	BU	Yeoman Walker R	
Smedley R				Young C A	
Smith M J.....	MJS	Vaughan J		Young M	
Smith R G.....	RGS	Vogel M			
Smith W					
Stansfield R H.....	RHS	Walford M F.....	MFW		

# Topographical areas – a resource for records analysis

To facilitate analysis of bird records in relation to habitat types, all sites in the bird record database have been assigned to one of 37 topographical areas grouped into five broad topographical classes (TC): Downs, heathlands, river valleys, the Eastern plain between Reading and Windsor and the urban areas. The classes relate to the underlying geology and



**TC: The Downs/Chalk areas**

- Lambour Down
- Farnborough Downs
- Compton/Aldworth/Illesley Downs
- Eastern Downs & Woods
- North Hampshire Downs - S Hungerford
- North Hampshire Downs - Combe/Walbury heights
- Remenham/Hurley/Cookham Plateau

**DC TC: Heaths/Heathland Woods and associated areas**

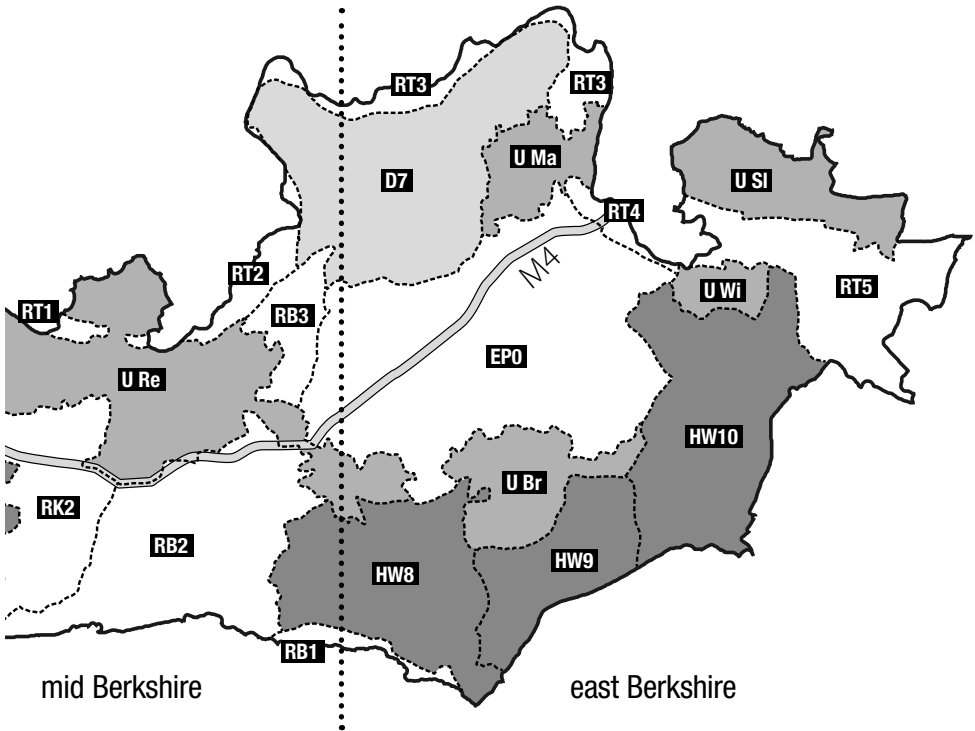
- D1** Wickham Heath
- D2** Snelsmore Common
- D3** Curridge/Hermitage & Bucklebury Plateau
- D4** Inkpen Plateau
- D5** Greenham/Crookham Plateau
- D6** Wasing/Burghfield
- D7** Yattendon/Frilsham
- Crowthorne/ Finchampstead
- Swinley Forest
- Windsor Great Park & Forest

**HW**

- HW1**
- HW2**
- HW3**
- HW4**
- HW5**
- HW6**
- HW7**
- HW8**
- HW9**
- HW10**

topography, which, together with human activities, determine the types of habitat to be found. The 5,000 or so sites for which there are bird records in our database have been assigned to the appropriate area, allowing records to be analysed by these habitat-related classes.

Thanks are due to Neil Bucknell for his detailed analysis of Berkshire topography and to Robert Godden, Renton Righelato and Marek Walford, who, together with Neil, assigned the sites in the database to their topographical areas.



**TC: River valleys**

- Thames: Goring Gap to Reading
- Thames: Reading to Wargrave
- Thames: Remenham to Maidenhead
- Thames: Jubilee River to Windsor
- Lower Thames & Colne
- Kennet: West of Newbury & Dun
- Lower Kennet & tributaries
- Lambourn valley
- Pang Valley and Sul Gap
- Blackwater
- Loddon Valley above Winnersh
- Lower Loddon

**R TC: Eastern Plain**

- RT1** Twyford/Binfield/Windsor Plain
- RT2**
- RT3**
- RT4**
- RT5**
- TC: Urban Areas**
- RK1** Hungerford
- RK2** Newbury-Thatcham
- RLO** Greater Reading
- RPO** Bracknell
- RB1** Maidenhead
- RB2** Windsor
- RB3** Slough & Langley

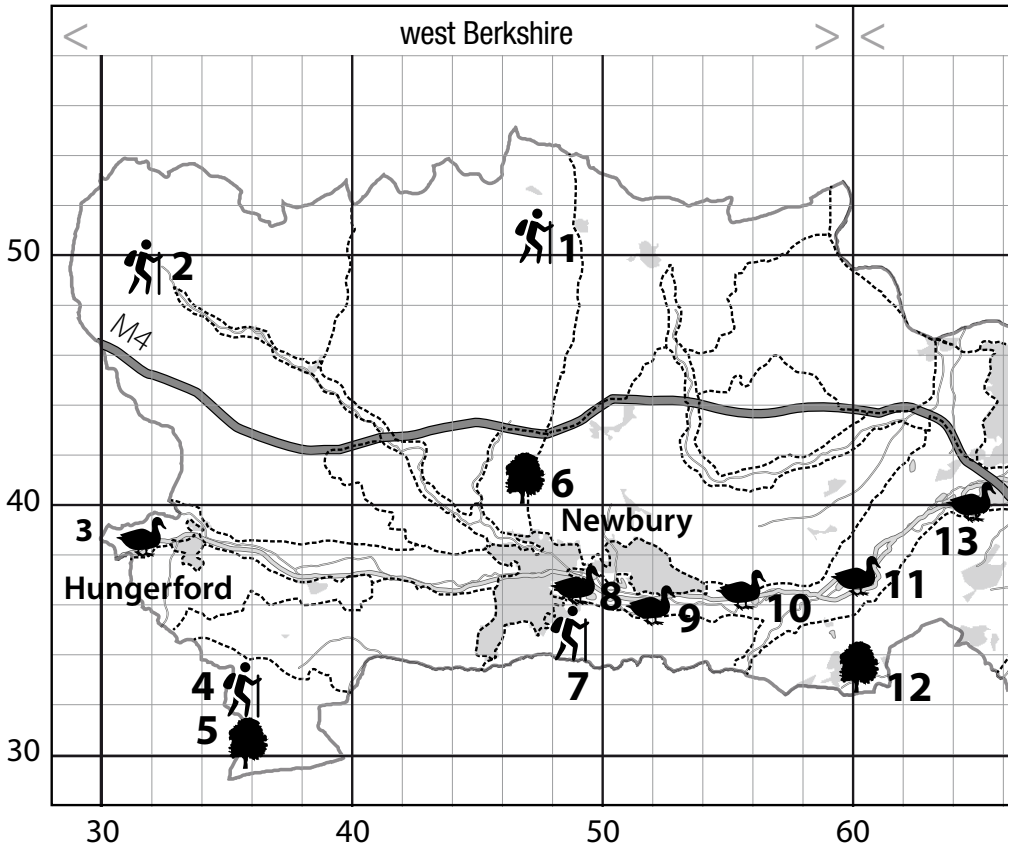
**EP**





**EP0**

**UR**

- U Hu**
- U Ne**
- U Re**
- U Br**
- U Ma**
- U Wi**
- U SI**

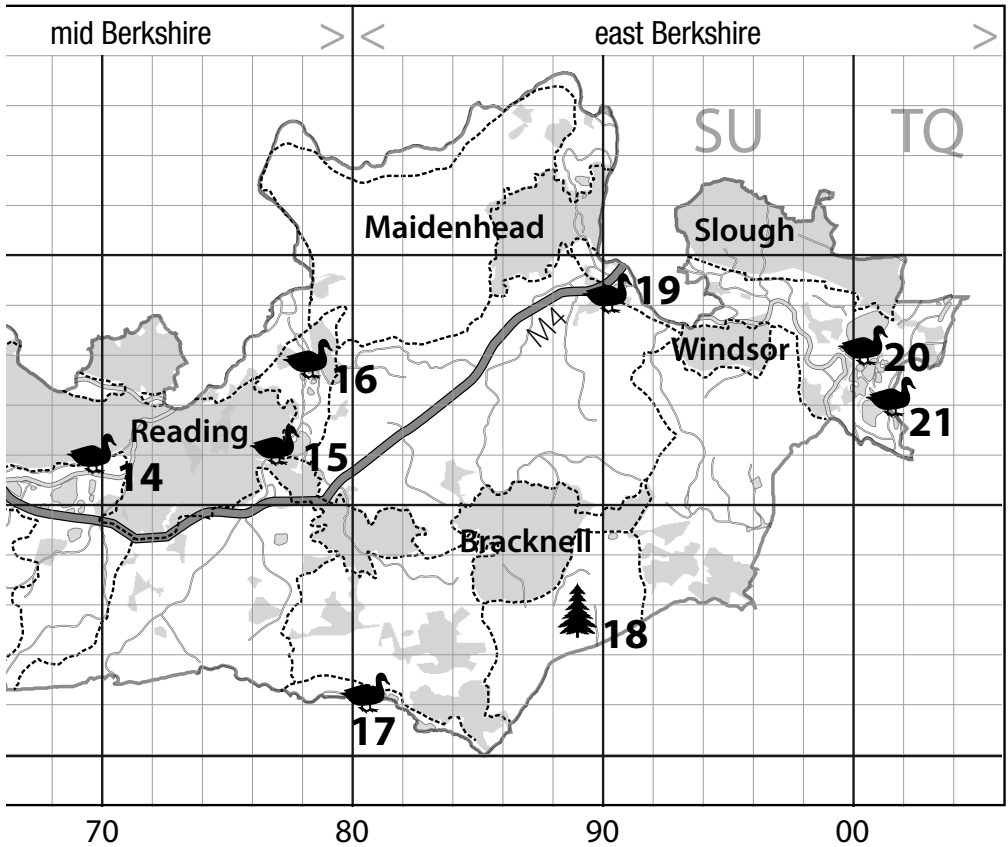
# Some birdwatching sites in Berkshire



- Key**
-  Downland and commons
  -  Wetlands
  -  Mostly coniferous woodland
  -  Mostly broadleaf woodland



Some of the better-known birding sites in the County are shown here.  
 For access details and more information visit <http://berksoc.org.uk/countysites/>



- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Berkshire Downs: West Ilsley | 12. Padworth Common                   |
| 2. Berkshire Downs: Lambourn    | 13. Theale & Hosehill Lakes           |
| 3. Freeman's Marsh              | 14. Fobney Island and Meadows         |
| 4. Walbury Hill                 | 15. Dinton Pastures and Lea Farm Lake |
| 5. Combe Wood                   | 16. Twyford Lakes                     |
| 6. Snelsmore Common             | 17. Moor Green Lakes                  |
| 7. Greenham & Crookham Commons  | 18. Swinley Forest & Wishmoor Bottom  |
| 8. Lower Farm Gravel Pit        | 19. Dorney Wetlands                   |
| 9. Thatcham Marsh               | 20. Queen Mother Reservoir            |
| 10. Woolhampton Gravel Pits     | 21. Wrysbury Gravel Pits              |
| 11. Padworth Lane Gravel Pit    |                                       |

# County Directory

## COUNTY BIRD RECORDER

Richard Burness, 20 Burlsdon Way,  
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 2PH.  
Email: [records@berksoc.org.uk](mailto:records@berksoc.org.uk)

## BERKSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

[www.berksoc.org.uk](http://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 946 3125

Email: [berksocsecretary@berksoc.org.uk](mailto:berksocsecretary@berksoc.org.uk)

## NEWBURY DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

[www.newburybirders.co.uk](http://www.newburybirders.co.uk)

*NDOC was founded in 1959 with the aim of promoting study and interest in birds and all aspects of their behaviour and habitats. Today the Club has a membership of around 100 and is open to all, experts or beginners, and visitors are always welcome at our events. Field visits are arranged throughout the year to local sites in West Berkshire and neighbouring counties, with day excursions further afield. Longer stays are arranged to more distant places, including abroad, with Club members recently visiting Georgia, Turkey and Morocco.*

*During the winter months, invited speakers come to talk on a variety of bird topics, and occasional social events are also held.*

*Members receive a copy of the Club's Annual Report based on local bird sightings within West Berkshire and small areas of adjoining counties, and also a copy of the quarterly newsletter "Field Views" containing the events programme for the coming months.*

Mrs L Staves, 39 Priory Avenue, Hungerford,  
RG17 0BE

Tel. 01488 682301

Email: [info1@ndoc.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:renton.righelato@berksoc.org.uk)

[www.berksbirds.co.uk](http://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](mailto:btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com)

## FRIENDS OF LAVELL'S LAKE

*Conservation volunteers managing Lavell's Lake LNR and Lea Farm Lake near Dinton Pastures Country Park, Wokingham. Bird walks, work parties, occasional meetings and newsletters.*

Chairman Fraser Cottington at

[Fraser.cottington@ntlworld.com](mailto:Fraser.cottington@ntlworld.com) or see [www.foll.org.uk](http://www.foll.org.uk)

## MOOR GREEN LAKES GROUP

[www.mglg.org.uk](http://www.mglg.org.uk)

*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](mailto: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/](http://www.freeWeBS.com/tabcg/)

Cath McEwan, Secretary,

Email: [Catherine@cmcewan.fsnet.co.uk](mailto: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](http://www.rspb.org.uk) or directly from:

East Berks Local Group

[www.eastberksrspb.org.uk/](http://www.eastberksrspb.org.uk/)

Reading Local Group

[www.reading-rspb.org.uk/](http://www.reading-rspb.org.uk/)

Wokingham and Bracknell Local Group

[www.wbrspb.btinternet.co.uk/](http://www.wbrspb.btinternet.co.uk/)

# The bird-watching code

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

## The interests of the bird come first.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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