

The Birds of Berkshire

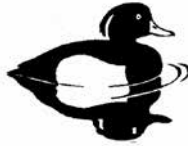


Annual Report
2015

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, price £35, and is available to members at meetings at the discounted price of £30.

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

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Annual Report for 2015

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Edited by Richard Burness and Renton Righelato

Published in 2018 by

BERKSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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ISBN 978-0-9553497-6-8

Price £7.50

Introduction

This report, published alongside the 2014 report, still leaves us with more to do to reach our goal of getting these annual reports out within 18 months of the year end. Record collection and record review are now in good shape and the bottleneck is compiling the species accounts. If you would like to help as a species account writer, please get in touch with Richard Burness, County Recorder and editor of the systematic list. With the county records database now available online, there is less need to write accounts as lists of records and more opportunity for analysis and discussion, which I hope both writers and readers will find more interesting.

One new searchable feature of the county records database that users might find helpful is the assignment of sites to topographical areas: swathes of broadly similar geology and habitat mix that can be used in analysing the distribution of records. A map showing the areas can be found on page 116.

We do hold small numbers of back copies of many of The Birds of Berkshire Annual Reports, which are available from the BOC Secretary in return for a small donation to the Club's Conservation Fund. If you would like to complete a run of reports, check what is available on the BOC website.

There are also just a few copies left of The Birds of Berkshire Atlas and Avifauna (2nd edition 2013), which can be obtained from Brian Clews (brian.clews@btinternet.com). On the BOC website you will find amendments that we have compiled to the avifauna that arose from additional information received on some significant records subsequent to the publication and from errors that have come to our attention (<http://berksoc.org.uk/country-atlas/the-book/>).

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 our County Recorder, Richard Burness, who has edited the Systematic List and to all the species account writers who are listed on page 30. Our thanks also go to Tim Ball, Andrew Merrick, Ken Moore, Renton Righelato, Lesley Staves, John Swallow, Mike Turton and Marek Walford, who provided articles, and to the photographers who generously provided their excellent shots. Thanks also to Robert Gillmor for his beautiful cover picture of the Red-necked Phalarope.

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 Burlsdon Way, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 2PH.

Records can be entered on line at www.berksbirds.co.uk or sent by email to the Recorder 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 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 27).

BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015

by Ken Moore

Ornithologically, the 2015 year has been one of the least eventful in Berkshire for many-a-year. The leader in the annual Berkshire Year Listing was the BOC's world traveller, Roger Stansfield, who recorded 169 species in the county, five more than the leader in 2014, but around 20 species below the previous few years.

On the 1st **JANUARY** the wintering **Great White Egret** was still at Great Shefford, the first of four in Berkshire this year. A wintering drake **Ring-necked Duck** was first observed for 2015 at Bray early in the month and a **Great Northern Diver** was at Theale Main Pit on the 2nd, followed by a **Black-necked Grebe** two days later at Searles Farm Lane. Information was limited during January from Queen Mother Reservoir, with records of both **Common Scoter** and **Black Redstart**. However, a private site nearby had a male **Serin** on two dates during the month - a very interesting record. On the 18th, a second-winter **Iceland Gull** was noted at Horton GPs. On the same day a drake **Scaup** visited Moor Green Lakes (and twice more during the month) and a **Bittern** was at Dinton Pastures CP.

In early **FEBRUARY** there was a single **Bittern** at the Moatlands Car Park Pit, Theale and a Glaucous Gull at Queen Mother Reservoir on the 14th, but little else.

On to **MARCH** - a male **Ring Ouzel** was at Queen Mother Reservoir for a day in mid-March; there was a **Great Grey Shrike** on the Downs near West Ilsley, a **Rock Pipit** at Queen Mother Reservoir and a **Goshawk** in West Berkshire, all towards the end of the month.

APRIL started with a **Garganey** at Burnthouse Lane on the 2nd, then on the 3rd two **Sandwich Terns** visited Theale Main Pit, whilst another (or perhaps the same) **Garganey** appeared at Fobney Island on the 4th, staying for a few days. At Queen Mother reservoir a male **Hen Harrier** was recorded on the 4th; there were two **Common Scoter** at Theale Main Pit the following day and six **Black-tailed Godwits** were found at Lea Farm on the 6th. **Ring Ouzel** numbers began to build in various locations and the 13th April was the Ring Ouzel Day with at least 52 counted on the western slope beneath the Gibbet at Inkpen Hill, Berkshire's highest ever count. For the next ten days, up to 14 were still around the same area, last being seen on the 21st. The first definite **Osprey** of the year was at Whistley Green, Twyford, on the 15th April and a **Turnstone** was seen at the New Workings at Moor Green Lakes the same day. On the 16th, a BOC midweek walk was treated to a male **Blue-headed Wagtail** at Crookham Common together with three *flavissima* males. Another Osprey at Theale Main Pit was seen on the 17th, with yet another on the 21st at Winnersh and a **Marsh Harrier** was over Field Farm GP on the 22nd. On the 26th there was a **Kittiwake** at Hosehill and a **Little Tern** at Theale Main Pit, where the next day a drake **Garganey** arrived. April closed with three **Black-tailed Godwits** at Hosehill on the 29th, two **Cranes** flying over Wishmoor Bottom the next day.

MAY brought perhaps the best birds of the Year. A **Red-backed Shrike** at Burnthouse Lane on the 17th May and a fabulous female **Red-necked Phalarope** at Theale Main Pit on the 30th. There were another two **Ospreys**, one at Woolhampton GPs and the other at Moor Green Lakes; a single **Ruddy Shelduck** at Moatlands GP, a single **Garganey** at the Loddon Reserve and two (no doubt escapes at this time of year) **Whooper Swans** at Moss End.

The highlights of **JUNE** were an **Icterine Warbler** trapped and ringed at Kintbury on 6th and a **Common Rosefinch** in a Greenham garden around the same date. Finally, a one-day visit by a **Sandwich Tern** on the 30th at Hosehill Lake.

During **JULY**, **Black-tailed Godwits** were well represented in Berkshire, with 28 at five sites (one on the 6th, 11 on the 13th, seven on 21st, three on 22nd and six on the 25th). At Queen Mother Reservoir on the 19th July there were two **Common Scoter** and a single **Turnstone** and **Kittiwake**.

In **AUGUST** 11 more **Black-tailed Godwits** (seven on 2nd, two on the 5th, one on the 16th and another on the 23rd). There was a **Knot** at Queen Mother reservoir on the 4th, a **Common Scoter** on the 10th at Dinton Pastures. Three **Black-necked Grebes**, one at Moatlands GP (staying until 26th) and two at Queen Mother Reservoir which arrived on the 22nd and remained until the 31st. At Aldworth on 23rd there was a **Marsh Harrier**, whilst in the east of the county three **Sandwich Terns** made a brief appearance at Queen Mother Reservoir on the same day. On 26th another **Marsh Harrier**, this time at Lower Farm GP, and two **Wood Sandpipers** at Moor Green Lakes.

SEPTEMBER brought eight records of that popular species, the **Bittern** at two different sites, all before the 15th. There was a single **Garganey** at Moor Green on the 9th, a **Ring Ouzel** at Greenham Common on the 17th, a **Great White Egret** on the 18th at Lea Farm and a **Marsh Harrier** on 19th at Searles Farm Lane.

OCTOBER -what a strange month – started with a very flighty, mobile **Black-necked Grebe** at Searles Farm Lane on the 4th, then little excitement until much later in the month. On the 20th a **Great Grey Shrike** took up residence at Cow Down, on the Ridgeway. Then on 27th another arrived and took up residence in the Brimpton GPs area.

On 2nd **NOVEMBER** a skulking **Dartford Warbler** was at Fobney Island, a very good record for the Reading area, and on the 4th a **Short-eared Owl** was there too. Up on the Downs, the **Great Grey Shrike** was seen for the last time and a **Hen Harrier** was hunting nearby. On the 9th an adult female **Garganey** was at Padworth Lane GP loosely mixed with a group of **Teal**. On the 15th, there was a winter adult **Mediterranean Gull** at Hosehill and the **Great Grey Shrike** was still in attendance in the Brimpton GP area. On the 20th, a **Purple Sandpiper** paid a brief visit to Queen Mother reservoir. On the 22nd November, five **Whooper Swans** flew West over Queen Mother Reservoir and were seen later along the Jubilee River on Dorney Wetlands. Lastly, the 25th was notable as the returning date for the drake **Ring-necked Duck** for another winter at Bray.

Highlights of **DECEMBER** included a **Goshawk** in West Berkshire on the 5th, a **Ring-necked Duck** at Bray GPs and **Ferruginous Duck** at Dinton Pastures, both of which stayed for most of the month, a **Great Grey Shrike** and **Hen Harrier** on the Downs near West Ilsley on several dates, a Black-throated Diver at Queen Mother Reservoir on the 20th and a **Cattle Egret** at Spencers Wood on the 21st.

Overall perhaps this was the year of the **Raven**, recorded from all over the County. Let us all hope the expansion continues.

***Branta* Hybrids in Berkshire in Spring 2015**

Richard Burness, Ken Moore, Marek Walford.

Whilst at Woolhampton GPs on 10th March 2015 Ken White, our local BTO rep. drew attention to eight small geese closely resembling Cackling Goose, *Branta hutchinsii*. Closer examination in the field and of photographs, however, showed some evidence of hybridisation. A few clearly had some features of Barnacle Goose *Branta Leucopsis* whilst the others more closely resembled one of the races of small Canada Goose or Cackling Goose *Branta* sp. It was the possibility of the latter that piqued interest. The birds were seen subsequently by other observers again at Woolhampton on several dates up until 4th April. They then switched their allegiance to Burnthouse Lane GP where they were first recorded on 10th April. They remained at this location until the last sighting on 17th April, although on 12th April they made an appearance at both of their favoured sites.

The birds were assumed to be siblings and/or fellow migrants as they kept together in a discrete group, never mixing with the local Canada Geese *Branta canadensis* or Greylag Geese *Anser anser*. Although all eight superficially resembled small Canada Geese closer inspection showed that several had a clear, almost white, belly (pale but not white in Canada Goose and Cackling Goose) and pale grey upper wings patterned with black feather edgings on the wing coverts that pointed to them having Barnacle Goose in their parentage. The others which superficially more resembled Canada Goose differed from Canada Goose by their small size, short black necks merging directly into dark breasts (and belly) and their noticeably stubby triangular bills. Their most likely dominant parent appeared to be Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii subsp.* Indeed, subsequent study of photographs showed that one bird at least had signs of the very dark (purple in adults) breast indicative of the *minima* subspecies, Dark Cackling Goose.

Who were their antecedents and where was their origin? The most likely answer lies in The Netherlands. Barnacle Goose first became established as a breeding bird in Holland in 1982. By 2012 the summer population in the southern provinces of the country (Zealand, North Brabant and South Holland) numbered nearly 14,000 breeding pairs, the colonisation being boosted by feral birds. There is also a feral population of Dark Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii minima* of about 200–300 pairs that are well established in the north of the Barnacle Goose range but mainly concentrated in the Netherlands (North Holland). This subspecies of Cackling Goose does not occur in the wild in the Western Palearctic, breeding in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (Alaska) and wintering south to Oregon and California. The proclivity of the Dutch feral population to interbreed with other feral and wild goose species has been noted, and the number of hybrids present in that country renders an accurate census difficult.

Studies have documented the long-distance dispersal of free-flying, but captive, populations of Barnacle Geese. It is a reasonable assumption therefore (but only an assumption) that our wandering spring birds originated in The Netherlands.



Branta hybrids, Woolhampton GPs, Mar 15th by Marek Walford.



Branta hybrids, Woolhampton GPs, Mar 15th by Marek Walford.

Common Rosefinch

Lesley Staves

In the middle of June, one of our members, Jan Appleby, emailed me a photo of a bird they couldn't identify that was visiting her son's feeders in his garden near Greenham. A quick glance made me think "oh, a nice male Linnet". I'm the sort of birder who always assumes that what I see is a common species, never thinking that I could be looking at a rarity. Anyway, a check in the field guide soon showed that it wasn't a linnet, so not being sure of anything else I sent the picture to Ian Weston and Jan Legg, who both came back with the same ID – a male Common (aka Scarlet) Rosefinch!

The family were thrilled to be hosting such a special bird. It had already been coming for several days, turning up at regular times to take sunflower hearts from the same feeder.

Thinking it had probably already gone (which is what usually happens to me!), I checked with the householder, Jim, and arranged to go that day. I arrived about 9.45, sat on the patio and within 10 minutes heard a call I had never heard before (I wrote down *wicky WEEE oo*) and there he was on a pole stay above the feeders surveying the garden, his crown feathers lifting each time he called. He gradually dropped closer to the feeders - Jim has around 10 of them – and went straight to the one Jim had indicated was his favourite. He stayed for several minutes then flew back up into the pines, called a couple of times and was gone. What a great experience!

Ian and Jan did go a couple of days later but unluckily the bird didn't show for them. We learned later that it stayed for around two weeks and it wasn't seen anywhere else as far as we know. Jan Legg compiled a report for the Berkshire Records Committee using Jim's and my statements and photographs, so we shall wait to see if it is accepted. Even if it isn't, we know we saw a Common Rosefinch and have the pictures and memories that won't fade.

Editor's note: the BRC accepted this well-supported record.



Common Rosefinch, Greenham, Jun 17th by Lesley Staves.



Bittern, Lea Farm, Aug 31st by Andy Tomczynski.



Lapwing and Ruff, Lavell's Lake, Dec 19th by Dave Rimes.



Purple Sandpiper, Queen Mother Reservoir, Dec 15th by Andy Tomczynski.



Cetti's Warbler, Lavell's Lake, Feb 25th by Mike Vogel.



Peregrine, Queen Mother Reservoir, Jun 15th by Chris Heard.



*Great Grey Shrike, Cow Down, Mar 27th
by Andy Tomczynski.*



*Swallows, Strand Water, Jun 6th by Mike
Vogel.*



Red-backed Shrike, Burnthouse Lane GPs, May 17th by Marek Walford.



Ring-necked Duck, Bray GP, Dec 28th by Marek Walford.



Icterine Warbler, near Kintbury, Jun 6th by Marc Arbuckle.

Icterine Warbler in the Kennet Valley near Kintbury, June 2015

John Swallow on behalf of the BDRG ringing team: Kevin May, Jerry Woodham, Andrew Camp, Marc Arbuckle and Fred Griffith.

After many years of thinking about visiting the island of Fair Isle I was thrilled to finally be there in early June 2015. While I was away other members of our ringing group (Berkshire Downs Ringing Group) were continuing our eighth summer of Constant Effort Site ringing sessions in the Kennet Valley near Kintbury. The team arrived as usual at 5am for the 4th of 10 sessions undertaken throughout the summer. The date was June the 6th long famous as the anniversary of “D-Day” but little did those present or myself on Fair Isle know that this date would stick in the mind for other reasons.

Regular net rounds had been producing the usual fare of Robins, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Wrens etc though a young Kingfisher on the first round would under normal circumstances be a notable “catch of the day”. Several more net rounds had been made when a bird in the net was found making a sound not dissimilar to an “alarming” reed warbler. While extracting you get used to the calls and chatter of common species and this was certainly unfamiliar to Mike. Alarm bells were starting to ring.

Once other birds had been processed, the mystery bird was processed by Kevin who proceeded to work out what this unusual catch might be. We always start by looking in the Collins Guide to narrow down the options and then check the “in the hand” identification features using Svensson. After some initial head scratching it soon became clear that this was indeed an unusual bird. Plumage and measurements pointed towards Icterine Warbler, its identity confirmed by the combination of head and bill shape, leg colour, plumage colouration (yellow under-parts, secondary panel and pale edges to tertials and greater wing coverts) and wing structure (*ie* long-winged 79mm, E=4, WP=3, 2=4/5). Still incredulous, the team sent a photo to me while I was away “looking for rare birds on Fair Isle” and after having seen two ‘Ickys’ there only that week I was able to quickly confirm the identification. Even though I was many miles away it was nice to be included in the action!

‘Our’ bird was not heard to sing before capture and it was not heard or seen again after release. It was perhaps just one of many Icterine Warblers passing through the whole UK that spring, but which are more easily detected at the network of coastal Bird Observatories.

There have only been three previous records for Berkshire, the first was at Theale Gravel Pits on 18th August 1963 and the most recent was of a singing male present at Denford on 2nd June 1989. Some Icterine Warblers have been known to stay and attempt to breed, the most recent proven record (2009) was of a bird feeding young in Scotland.

Red-necked Phalarope at Theale Main Pit

Andrew Merrick

It was the last weekend in May and I had decided to spend Saturday visiting a few sites further south in Hampshire and Sussex in the hope of connecting with a few species that, I thought, would be very unlikely to grace my native Berkshire.

The day began with a vigil at a well known raptor watchpoint in the New Forest. Upon arrival a Honey Buzzard was already wing-clapping over the small assembled group and with up to 3 Goshawks in the air together during the morning the day had started rather well. Next up, Titchfield Haven, and the somewhat elusive Greater Yellowlegs. Once more fortune was with me as it showed very well from the Pumfrett hide. Then decision time, whether to go for a Red-necked Phalarope that had been found in the morning at Pagham. Despite the deteriorating weather I decided to go but, although still present, remained frustratingly distant at the far end of Sidlesham Ferry. I headed home happy overall but a little disappointed in the quality of this last encounter.

Cue Sunday morning and after yesterday's adventures I decided to stay local and, as forecast, was greeted with rain. I didn't mind too much as bad weather can ground migrating birds that would otherwise fly on through.



Red-necked Phalarope, Theale, May 31st by Dave Walker.

Although I don't consider myself as having a "patch", I do get drawn to Theale Main Pit again and again. It's a place I've had a long association with, initially through fishing in the 80s and 90s (when I knew it as Big Ameys) and latterly through birding. To further cement the patch feel I had recently been recruited as a BTO WeBS counter for the site but my inaugural survey was still a couple of weeks away. Adrian Lawson (AVL) dubbed it "counting Coots" which turned out to be rather apt as there can be upward of 700 in residence on occasions.

Today, however, *Fulica atra* may as well be invisible for all the attention I was going to give it. Parking at the Fox and Hounds "Please don't park in front of the gate" parking spot, I made my way along the south bank to the first fishing swim that provides a good vantage point east across a large chunk of the lake. Low flying hirundines and Swifts dominated proceedings as is often the case in rainy weather but, after several sweeps of the scope, little else it seemed. Moving on to the "Warbler pylon" a small gap afforded a view to an area east of the Sailing club not easily obtainable elsewhere. Deploying the scope in that general direction my eyes were again met with a confusion of criss-crossing hirundines and Swifts. Visibility wasn't great but as luck would have it something bigger flitted into view amongst the swarm: a wader, Common Sandpiper was my immediate reaction. I expected it to fly to the Sailing club shore but, instead, it just dropped onto the water. Strange, maybe the conditions had caused the abnormal behaviour? I zoomed in and focussed and then started to shake a little as realisation dawned that I was surely looking at a phalarope. It was doing what phalaropes do, jabbing haphazardly at the surface in pursuit of near microscopic food items. Unmistakable, but which one? After yesterday's experience I had a pretty good idea and so it proved, a Red-necked Phalarope! The bill intermediate between Grey and Wilson's clinching it despite the range and conditions.

I watched a while longer to make sure I wasn't dreaming or making some ridiculous mistake but it still looked good so time to ring Adrian. He was soon on his way but decided to try from the Sailing club access road. The phone rang: "I can't find it"; "Where are you?"; "By the Sailing club entrance". I checked the birds position. By now it was further south but obscured by the pylon island for him. After repositioning to the Fox and Hounds side he was onto it and with relief all round put the news out.

I watched a while longer from my vantage point but left before most people arrived though did return for seconds in the evening and pleased I did so. Conditions had improved considerably and it was now showing very nicely off the north side of the Fox and Hounds point. It was clearly a stunning female, something I hadn't been able to establish first thing in the morning. Predictably, it was not seen the following day.

Later, Adrian put the find in perspective when he informed me that it was the first one in Berks for 14 years!^{*} The previous one being an Autumn bird at QMR in 2001. I did wonder if it could have been the same bird I'd seen the previous day in Sussex but after checking photos I don't think so, the Theale bird in more obvious full adult female plumage. Although a coincidence in terms of sightings, I had contrasting reactions. Slightly disappointed with the distant views of the Sussex bird that I hadn't found myself compared with excitement of initially poor views of one self-found at my local gravel pit. I guess there's nothing quite like finding your own!

^{*}*Editor's note:* subsequent to this find, an accepted record was received of a short stay bird at Queen Mother Reservoir in September 2013 (*Birds of Berkshire Annual Report 2014*).

Ringling at Hosehill LNR

Tim Ball, Reading and Basingstoke Ringling

Introduction

Theale Area Bird Conservation Group have put up a large number of nest boxes at Hosehill over a number of years. Monitoring was largely ad-hoc until 2007 when TABCG asked Reading and Basingstoke Ringling to monitor the boxes and ring the pulli. In 2009 we also started normal ringling sessions with just two sessions that year and four in 2010 and 2011 since then we've normally managed around nine sessions each year. Most of our mist netting sessions are near the main feeder and in the edge of the reed beds in the south west corner of the gravel pit. Since 2012 we have also managed one or two sessions each year in the paddock during the summer when there are no horses present, this has resulted in a good increase in the variety of species ringled, with better numbers of warblers and a few Nightingales ringled. In 2009 we started a Black-headed Gull colour ringling project which has been highly successful (see The Birds of Berkshire Annual Report for 2014).

Ringling Results

So far, we have ringled 5244 birds of 41 species and over half of them were pulli. 31 species ringled in a year is our best ever variety and that was achieved in 2015.

Over the years we have had some interesting ringling recoveries as well as the many Black-headed Gull recoveries.

- Two of the Canada Geese colour ringled at Hosehill as part of a study of geese movements near airports in 2003 have been seen fairly frequently until summer 2015.
- A Stock Dove ringled at Hosehill as a pullus in August 2013 was retrapped in Tilehurst in May 2014.
- A Blackbird ringled at Hosehill in February 2013 was retrapped in Scotland in August 2013 – demonstrating that some of our winter Blackbirds are migrants.
- A Reed Warbler ringled at Hosehill in July 2012 was retrapped in Portugal on its way south in August 2015, that was over 1,000 km to the SSW.
- A Blackcap ringled at Hosehill in July 2015 was retrapped at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory in September 2015 – suggesting that some migrants aim to cross the Channel where it is narrower.
- A Blue Tit ringled as a pullus at Hosehill in May 2010 was retrapped at Padworth Common 6km away in November.
- An adult Reed Bunting ringled at Icklesham, East Sussex in September 2012 was retrapped at Hosehill in January 2015 showing that some individuals of this species are quite mobile.

Quite a few of the birds we've ringled at Hosehill have been retrapped here as well and the age records are included in the supplementary information, as are the maximum distances recorded of birds ringled at Hosehill and birds caught at Hosehill having been ringled elsewhere.

Black-headed Gulls

We started a colour ringling project with Black-headed Gulls in 2009 and this is just a summary of it as it is producing huge amounts of data. We usually make two ringling visits to the artificial island in June with the assistance of TABCG who provide the boat and boatman. In most years we colour ring around 100 pulli with a few more being ringled with just metal rings. To date we have colour ringled 685 pulli here and 144 at other locations, these have

resulted in a total of 6627 records of the birds of which 6444 are birds ringed at Hosehill. In most years well over 70% of the Hosehill birds are reported at some time thereby proving that they fledged.

The BTO runs a national project called Retrapping Adults for Survival (RAS) with the aim of assessing year to year survival for adults of different species to identify trends in survival. Our Hosehill Gull project was registered for RAS in 2011 and is one of only two projects nationally for Black-headed Gulls and the BTO estimate that the adult survival appears to be relatively stable with a mean survival rate of 73%. So far 6 birds have been reported over 100 times – with the most being a 2009 bird with 144 records – these can show strong patterns of site loyalty and movements.

To date birds have been reported from 135 locations more than 20km away with records from the Channel Islands, France, Spain, Portugal and Eire. In the UK birds have been reported from Wales, Northern Ireland and 27 English counties. Fledglings can be mobile quite quickly – twice Hosehill fledglings have been reported from Eire just 5 days after they were last seen at Hosehill. Many birds are site loyal and many are seen back at Hosehill as adults, not many breed in their first summer so they can be mobile during the summer, in 2015 one of the 2014 cohort was seen at Hosehill in April and then at Tice’s Meadow, Surrey (32 km SE) at 10:35 on 15 May and back at Hosehill by 14:15 on the same day.

Some birds are demonstrating very regular migration habits. A 2010 bird (29C8) has been reported from France in October and November in both 2012 and 2013, and also in October 2015, and it has been seen at Hosehill every summer since it fledged including 2015. A 2009 bird (2X38) has been seen at Datchet every winter since it was ringed and at Hosehill every summer. A 2011 bird (23D8) has been seen at Helston Boating lake in Cornwall every winter since it was ringed and at Hosehill every summer and in every autumn since 2012 it has been reported from Wadebridge in Cornwall so it’s clearly using the same route to it’s wintering site. Some birds have also established fairly stable routines between distant colonies and wintering sites – one in Yorkshire for a few years in summer and winter and one in Cambridgeshire in summer.

Nest Box Monitoring

Available Boxes

There have been 53–61 useable nest boxes each year, the majority of which are small hole fronted boxes suitable for Tits.

Owl box	1–2	Small open fronted box	0–3
Kestrel box	0–1	Small hole fronted box	49–58 – various sizes
Mandarin box	0–1	Small Treecreeper box	0–1
Woodpecker box	0–2		

Monitoring was normally carried out from early April to mid-July with earlier and subsequent checks of the Owl boxes for Stock Doves and subsequent checks of the small boxes to check for eggs that failed to hatch and young that failed to fledge.

Results

Very few species apart from Blue and Great Tits have nested in the small boxes and full checks for second clutches were not carried out – nationally very few Blue Tits lay second clutches whilst a low proportion (probably <10%) of Great Tits have second broods. Typically, Stock

Doves use the Owl boxes, and in 2008 a Kestrel used one. The small boxes are spread all over the site and are in various habitats so the site has been divided into a few sub-sites and there are variations in the Tit success rates in these most years – see supplementary information.

Species Records

The site has been split into a number of sub-sites on the basis of habitat to allow a simple comparison of productivity between the habitats.

Kestrel In 2008 Kestrels used the available Owl box rather than the available Kestrel box and may possibly have usurped an adult male Barn Owl that was using the box early in the year. It appears that the nest was successful.

Stock Dove This species has a very protracted nesting season with a single pair having up to 5 or 6 nesting attempts in a year and we've recorded first egg dates from 27 February until 12 September. We have been monitoring their use of owl boxes since 2012 and virtually all clutches are 2 eggs with 3 egg ones uncommon. 33 clutches have been recorded in four years and the majority have been at least partially successful.

Song Thrush In 2012 a natural Song Thrush nest was found near one of the nest boxes and monitored. The outcome was probably successful with 4 young raised from 4 eggs.

Blue Tit Between 12 and 20 Blue Tit nests have been monitored each year and typically just under 80% of the eggs have resulted in fledged young. The average clutch size is around 9 eggs and the egg to hatching and hatching to fledging survival rates are quite variable year by year and by habitat (Fig 2). Full details are available in the supplementary information. Every year some of the young have been retrapped well after they fledged, and the record age we have had for a pullus retrapped at Hosehill is 5 years and 302 days and to date 8 pulli have been retrapped more than 3 years after they were ringed (just over 1% of the relevant pulli). As mentioned above, one pullus was retrapped 6 km away in November of the year it fledged suggesting that some are quite mobile and possibly indicating one of the reasons why we only retrap a fairly small proportion of them.

Great Tit Between 23 and 30 Great Tit nests have been monitored each year and typically around 75% of eggs result in fledged young- a slightly lower rate than for Blue Tits (Fig 4). The average clutch size is around 7 eggs and the egg to hatching and hatching to fledging survival rates are quite variable year by year and by habitat. Full details are included in the supplementary information. Every year some of the young have been retrapped well after they fledged, and the record age we've had for a pullus retrapped at Hosehill is 5 years and 41 days and to date 14 pulli have been retrapped more than 3 years after they were ringed (nearly 1.5% of the relevant pulli). No Great Tits ringed as pulli here have been retrapped anywhere else.

Coal Tit Only one Coal Tit nest has been found in the boxes and that was successful with 9 fledglings in 2014. We've only ever caught 13 full grown Coal Tits and none of these have ever been retrapped so it's not surprising that we haven't retrapped any of these pulli.

Nuthatch Only one Nuthatch nest has been found in the boxes and like the previous species that was successful with 8 fledglings in 2014.

Supplementary information can be downloaded from <http://berksoc.org.uk/recording/annual-reports/>

Figure 1: Blue Tit first egg dates

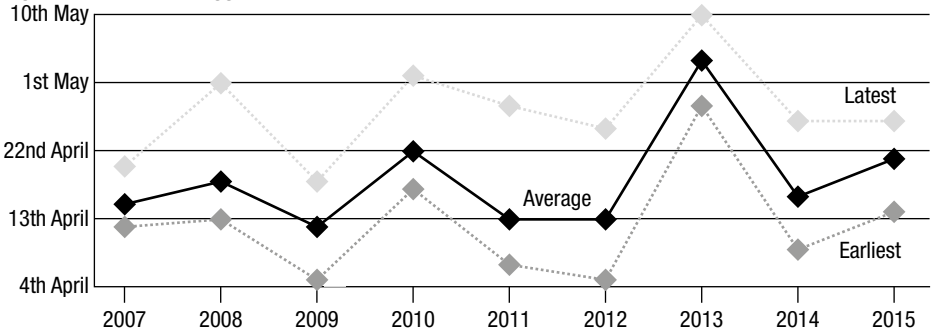


Figure 2: Blue Tit productivity

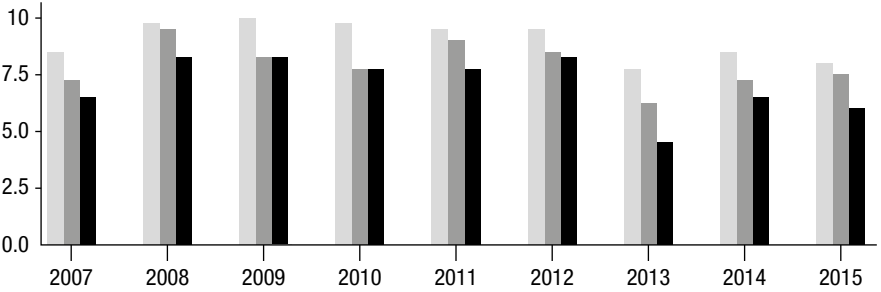


Figure 3: Great Tit first egg dates

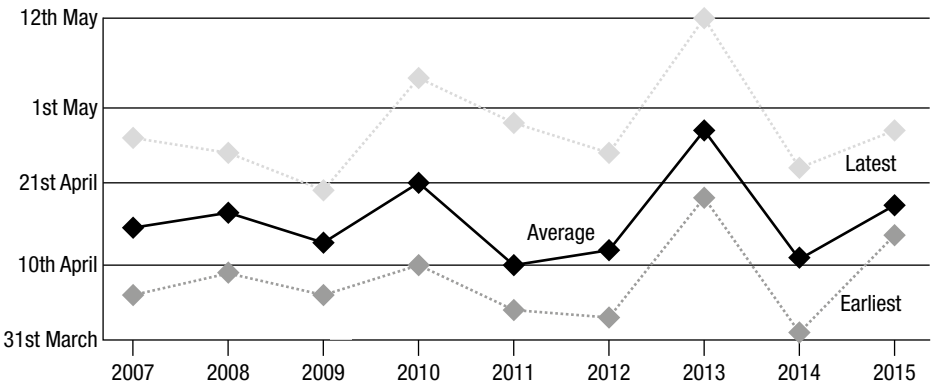
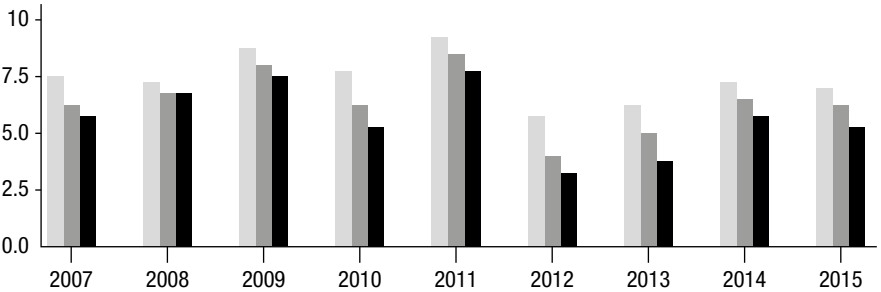


Figure 4: Great Tit productivity



THE BERKSHIRE BIRD INDEX 2015

compiled by Renton Righelato

The Berkshire Bird Index (BBI) is a measure of the change in abundance of commoner species in the county, derived from the BTO's annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). BBS surveyors record all birds seen or heard along two 1 km transects within randomly selected 1 km squares during visits early and late in the breeding season. Visits are made in the early morning and take approximately 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 annually in the years since 2000.

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 2015. 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 2015 include Red Kite, Buzzard, Jackdaw, Blue Tit, Blackcap, Goldfinch. Species in decline nationally and in Berkshire include 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.

This year shows a highly anomalous increase for Stock Dove, whose abundance had shown no significant change over the last 20 years.

To take part in BTO surveys, contact the Berkshire BTO Reps: Ken and Sarah White: 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 $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

¹ Data are for 2004 to 2015. The index based on 2010 is 11.0–0.7

² Data are for 2004 to 2015. The index based on 2010 is 3.6–0.8

Trends in commoner species in Berkshire, 2000–2015

Species	Trend 2000–2015 %/year	Index 2014/2000
Canada Goose	-0.61	0.75–0.32
Mallard	-2.14	1.3–0.76
Red-legged Partridge	-1.1	1.73–0.75
Pheasant	0.69	1.54–1.09
Red Kite¹	100***	13
Buzzard²	56***	6.51–2.33
Kestrel	-0.11	1.65–0.67
Moorhen	-1.26	0.99–0.52
Lapwing	-1.7	1.23–0.58
Stock Dove	22.3*	11.8–4.68
Woodpigeon	-0.38	1.23–0.91
Collared Dove	-3.23***	0.91–0.52
Cuckoo	-1.02**	0.68–0.33
Swift	-4.26**	0.45–0.16
Green Woodpecker	-2.27	0.93–0.5
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2.24	1.24–0.71
Magpie	-0.3	0.85–0.56
Jay	-1.61	1.53–0.79
Jackdaw	12.37***	2.66–1.54
Rook	9.06	6.61–2.54
Carrion Crow	-2.50	1.16–0.74
Goldcrest	-3.04	1.02–0.51
Blue Tit	0.15**	1.18–0.9
Great Tit	-0.630	0.95–0.69
Coal Tit	-1.440	1.67–0.76
Skylark	-2.150	0.88–0.61
Swallow	1.680	1.36–0.72
House Martin	-2.28**	0.51–0.26
Long-tailed Tit	-1.560	0.92–0.51
Chiffchaff	2.190	2.56–1.61
Willow Warbler	-2.54**	0.41–0.22
Blackcap	9.65***	2.06–1.36
Whitethroat	5.430	2.14–1.16
Nuthatch	5.650	1.7–0.9
Wren	-0.510	1.03–0.78
Starling	-2.17*	0.71–0.4
Blackbird	-0.680	0.93–0.74
Song Thrush	-0.520	1.27–0.82
Mistle Thrush	-2.030	1.31–0.7
Robin	0.190	1.24–0.98
Duncock	-0.80	1.3–0.91
House Sparrow	-2.230	1.27–0.7
Pied Wagtail	-4.42***	0.74–0.35
Chaffinch	-3.35**	0.57–0.43
Greenfinch	-5.25***	0.69–0.41
Goldfinch	3.96**	3.3–1.78
Linnet	-2.49**	0.77–0.41
Yellowhammer	-1.82**	0.68–0.44

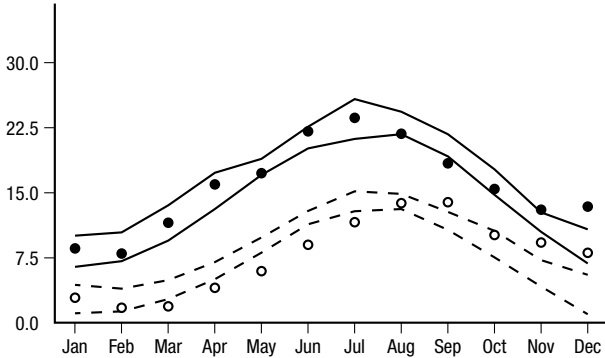
Weather Summary 2015

Renton Righelato

January and February were a little frostier than average and nights were cooler than normal in Spring and Summer. SAlthough rainfall in Aufust was unusually high, lower than average rainfall towards the end of the year led to somewhat lower water levels in the 2015/6 winter. Data from Meteorological Office, Heathrow Weather Station.

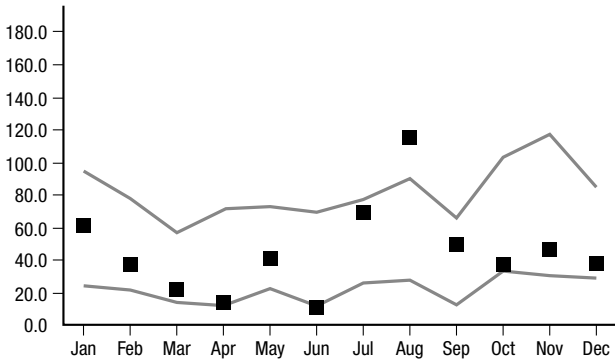
Temperature

Average daily maximum (closed circles) and minimum (open circles) temperatures. Lines show the 67% confidence limits of the average of the period 2000 – 2015.



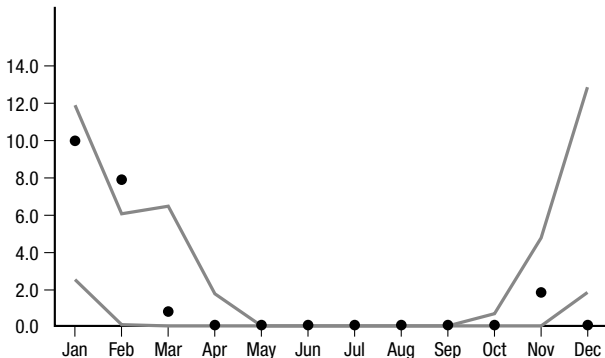
Rainfall

Monthly rainfall in mm. Lines show the 67% confidence limits of the average of the period 2000 – 2015.



Days air frost

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 – 2015.



DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES IN BERKSHIRE – 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Overall 2015 was not a great year for dragonflies. The weather was not favourable with no sustained spells of dry, sunny weather between May and the end of August, compounded by very wet weather during August. This, together with a downturn in recorder activity, resulted in the number of records submitted dipping significantly to the lowest number since 2010 and, for many species, a dip in the numbers recorded.

The first record of the year was a possible **Vagrant Emperor** reported on 15th April in the centre of Bracknell. The record coincided with a period of southerly winds which also brought in dust from the Sahara.

Apart from this, the season kicked off as normal with a record of **Large Red Damselfly** on 15th April followed by a **Broad-bodied Chaser** on 22nd April (earliest record for the county).

Small Red-eyed Damselfly continues to colonise new sites, although some populations seem to disappear after one or two years. It was recorded at nine sites, including counts of 20+ at Crookham Common and a site near Bracknell.

Variable Damselfly, a nationally important near-threatened species, was recorded in the usual area around Southcote on the R. Kennet, although numbers were at their lowest since 2003. There were no records from Cookham Common this year, probably because there were no visits made to the site to look for it.

Numbers of **Migrant, Southern and Brown Hawkers** were all down on normal levels, probably due to the poor weather in July and August affecting emergence. There were very late records for **Southern Hawker** on 17th and 27th November, reflecting similar late records elsewhere in the country.

The R. Thames population of **Common Clubtail** continues to decline, with very low numbers recorded and verbal reports from several observers of not having seen any during the year. A total of two exuvia, seven teneral (immatures) and a single adult were recorded from a stretch near Beale Park and there were no records from the normal hotspot at Goring viaduct.

Downy Emerald had a mixed year with good numbers at both Swinley Brick Pits (15) and Paices Wood (10) – best figures for both sites in the last 4 years; however, counts remained low at other sites. The only records for **Brilliant Emerald** came from Decoy Heath; there were no records from the Bracknell area for this nationally important vulnerable species

The poor weather in May and June had an impact on the numbers of **Four-spotted** and **Broad-bodied Chasers, Black-tailed Skimmer** and most of the damselflies. Likewise **Common, Ruddy** and **Black Darters** were hit by the wet weather in August, just as a lot of them were emerging.

An example of how quickly dragonflies and damselflies can colonise new ponds was evident from sightings at Kentwood Meadows. This area of open green space, including 4 ponds, was created in 2014 as part of one of the housing developments on the northern edge of Wokingham. On a single visit in 2015, seven species were recorded (including a single **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** and 100+ **Common Blue Damselflies**) with five of those species showing evidence of breeding. In addition **Common Darters** were recorded emerging, showing that they had found and successfully bred in the ponds in 2014.

The following species were recorded in Berkshire in 2015:

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

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 wish to submit records, the best way to do it is to use the recording pages on the British Dragonfly Society website (www.british-dragonflies.org.uk) – look under Recording and projects/Submit Records – or the iRecord Dragonfly app. Alternatively you can put them on a spreadsheet (available from the British Dragonfly Society website) and send them to me. Please do not use the facility for submitting dragonfly records on BirdTrack at present as there is currently a problem making these records available to county recorders.

Mike Turton

County Dragonfly Recorder

berksdragonflies@gmail.com

REPORT FOR 2015 BY THE BERKSHIRE RECORDS COMMITTEE (BRC)

Committee for 2015; Derek Barker(Secretary), Richard Burness (Chair), Ken Moore, Andrew Horscroft, Adrian Hickman and Hugh Netley.

The Berkshire Records Committee (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. On the occasion when the bird has been seen by a reasonable number of observers, the BRC may accept the record without further details. However, the find 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.

Please note that some alterations to Categories 2 and 3 have been made. Please read through them to ensure you are acquainted with these changes. Whilst these alterations have not been mandatory in this report, they will be mandatory for 2016 and onward.

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 Crane; 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; Gull Bunting; Ortolan Bunting; Little Bunting; all rare subspecies(e. g. Scandinavian Rock Pipit; Yellow Wagtail races and Siberian Chiffchaff) and all former national BBRC Rarity species.

Category 3 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.

Please note that Raven is no longer in Category 3. Due to its ever-increasing rarity, Turtle Dove will be added to Category 3 in 2016.

Review of records for 2015

Records that the Committee has not been able to accept are listed below.

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.

Appendix 1: Records considered ‘not proven’

Ring-billed Gull (2)	May 17th: Hurley
Goshawk	May 21st: Whiteknights Lake
Honey Buzzard	Jun 14th: Newbury
Caspian Gull	Dec 19th: Lower Farm GP
Osprey	Apr 21st: Winnersh
Short-eared Owl	Oct 18th: M4

Appendix 2: Awaiting descriptions/notes /further details

Bonaparte’s Gull	Dec 19th: Record not yet submitted to BBRC nor received by BRC.
Merlin	Oct 20th: Coldharbour, nr. White Waltham – need further details
Scaup	Sep 26th: Hythe Lake, Wraysbury - need notes/support details
Scaup	Apr 1st: Eversley GP/Moor Green Lakes – need notes/details
Black-necked Grebe	Oct 4th: Searles Farm Lane – insufficient detail, need further
Shag	Sep 6th: TNDC – no details, 2 records, same surname, different numbers of birds
Peregrine Falcon	Jul 11th: Newbury – need further details
Merlin	Jan 2nd: Bury Down – need further description/details
Merlin	Dec 9th: Bury Down – need further details
Merlin	Dec 24th: Bury Down – need further details
Merlin	Jan 12th: Chieveley – need further details
Merlin	Nov 25th: Compton Downs – need further details
Merlin	Jan 12th: Lambourn Woodlands – need further details
Merlin	Oct 22nd: QMR – need further details
Merlin	Mar 15th: Sheep Down – need further details
Merlin	Feb 21st: Theale GPs – need further details
Black-tailed Godwit	Apr 8th: Lavell’s Lake – need further details
Black-tailed Godwit	Aug 5th: Lower Farm GP – need further details
Kittiwake	Jan 1st: Theale Main GP – need details
Kittiwake	Apr 2nd: Theale Main GP - need details
Mediterranean Gull	Dec 3rd: Hosehill – need details, age etc
Mediterranean Gull	Mar 4th: Theale Main Pit – need details, age etc
Mediterranean Gull	Mar 10th: Wraysbury GPs – need details, age
Little Tern (3)	Aug 14th: Theale Main GP – need further details
Sandwich Tern	Aug 14th: Theale Main GP – need further descriptive details
Long-eared Owl	Dec 16th: Seven Barrows – need further details
Rock Pipit (2)	Mar 5th: Lands’ End GP, Twyford – further details required

Nightingale	May 19th: Hemmeton GC – need further details
Marsh Tit	Dec 21st: Braywick Nature Centre – need details
Marsh Tit	Apr 30th: Waltham St. Lawrence – need details
Marsh Tit	Nov 23rd – Whiteknights Park and Lake – need further details
Marsh Tit	Oct 31st: Wire Lock, K&A Canal – need description details
Great Grey Shrike	Nov 21st: Lower Farm GP – need further details
Arctic Tern	Aug 14th: Lower Farm GP – need further details
Caspian Gull	Dec 16th: Lower Farm GP – need further details to ensure ID
Caspian Gull	Dec 26th/27th: Lower Farm GP – need further details for ID
Goshawk	Mar 21st: Lower Farm Trout Farm Lake – need details for ID.
Jack Snipe	Jan 7th: Greenham Common – need further details
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Feb 15th: Lower Farm Area – need further details
White Wagtail	Mar 14th Lower Farm GP – need ID details, must include rump.
Yellow-legged Gull	May 12th: Lower Farm GP – need details
Yellow-legged Gull	Jul 27th Lower Farm GP – need details
Yellow-legged Gull	Aug 9th: Lower Farm GP – need details
Yellow-legged Gull	Lower Farm GP – need details

Appendix 3: Records found not to be proven

(Please note that appendices 1 and 3 will be combined for 2016)

Goshawk	May 21st: Whiteknights Park/Lake – description inadequate
Wood Sandpiper	Jun 27th Sandhurst STW – heard only
Wood Sandpiper	Jun 27th: Lavells Lake – wrong ID, was Green Sandpiper
Willow Tit	Jan 31st: Hampstead Marshall – need details, sighting is outside core population.
Nightingale	Jul 28th Purley on Thames – incorrect ID
Whinchat	Jun 5th: Moor Green Lakes – wrong ID, wrong time of year
Reed Warbler x2	Oct 6th: TNDC– time of year, too late, no description.
Whitethroat	Mar 3rd Burnthouse Lane GP – no ID details, wrong time of year, too early.
Marsh Tit	Apr 6th: Braywick – heard only
Tree Sparrow	May 15th: Thatcham, K&A Canal – no description; timing a little strange
Corn Bunting	May 19th: Langley Mead – no details, well away from core population.

Appendix 4: Records notes as possible/probable and not included in main Systematic List

Cattle Egret	Apr 27th: Whiteknights Lake/Park – probable
Honey Buzzard	May 20th: Bracknell – probable
Goshawk	Feb 20th: Tidmarsh – possible
Goshawk	Apr 28th: Wildmoor Heath – probable
Goshawk	May 3rd: Woodley – probable
Osprey	Apr 4th: Spencer's Wood – probable
Osprey	Apr 4th: Woolhampton – probable
Red-footed Falcon	Sep 26th: Swinley Forest – probable
Merlin	Jan 31st: Remenham – possible
Caspian Gull	Jan 18th: Colebrook Lake, Moor Green Lakes – probable
Water Pipit	Mar 12th: Burnthouse Lane/PGP3S probable
White Wagtail	Jun 25th: Sandford Farm, Woodley – probable
Nightingale	Jun 12th: Enborne – observer uncertain
Red-backed Shrike	Jun 3rd: Burnthouse Lane Floods – possible
Lesser Canada Goose	Feb 15th: Lower Farm GP – possible

Appendix 5: Records 2nd/3rd hand and therefore not acceptable without notes/photos

White Stork	Jun 30th: Crowthorne – second hand report
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2015 SYSTEMATIC LIST

Editor's Introduction

In presenting the systematic list for 2015 I must thank, once again, all those dedicated observers who submit their records both to the database and for scrutiny by the Berkshire Records Committee (BRC) and to our team of volunteer species account writers. I must emphasise that *every* record is of value. The three principals involved in the recording process, the Database Manager, the BRC and the County Recorder are determined that the hard work of the observer is not wasted and that the *maximum* value is secured from each report. Observers can help by ensuring that each element of their record is as precise as possible.

Firstly – what species is it? Assuredness of identification comes mainly with experience. However, there are many on-line aids to ID (BTO, RSPB etc.) and the county boasts many birders with a wealth of experience who are a valuable resource. Secondly – how many birds are present? If there are too many to count, you will find advice on estimation techniques on-line, especially on the BTO web site. Thirdly – what is it doing and in what habitat? The value of describing a bird's habits and activities cannot be overstated, neither can its habitat. Is it singing, displaying or showing other breeding behaviour? Is it on the ground or flying over? If it is flight in what direction is it flying? Is it in a forest, on the downs or on a gravel pit? Fourthly – where is it? Please try and take a precise location from an OS map accompanied by a six-figure grid reference. Grid references and GPS locations can now be obtained from mobile 'phone map apps. It might seem obvious but make sure that the location is in Berkshire! Finally – please get the correct date. The time of observation is also helpful.

Observers who submit records of rare or scarce species must support their sightings with descriptions, notes or photographs. Category 1 records go straight to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) for adjudication; Category 2 and 3 records are reviewed by the BRC. A list of these species is available in the BRC report earlier in this publication. Observers are sometimes wary of submitting records to the BRC, having concerns about putting their ID skills to the test. The BRC members are local birders who volunteer their time and expertise to review records. They are not biased and try to be as inclusive as they can. Regard them as a resource. You don't need to be an expert on avian anatomy to compile an acceptable description. Just let us know, in plain English, what you saw (or perhaps didn't see) on the bird that enabled you to identify it as you did.

This report for 2015 has been compiled by our team of Species Account Writers to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude: Adam Bassett, Fraser Cottington, Richard Crawford, Peter Gipson, Robert Godden, Andy Horscroft, Ken Moore, Steve Ricks, Renton Righelato, Roger Stansfield, Andy Tomczynski, Mark Whitaker and myself. We need a few more dedicated volunteers to spread the load - if you would like to help with future reports, please contact me.

Good birding!

Richard Burness

Abbreviations and place names

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

AGE/SEX

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

4/s Fourth summer

PLACES/LOCALITIES

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

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

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Locally common resident (Green Listed)

The monthly maxima at regular count sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	28	5	3	–	–	11	–	–	28	33	43	55
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lea Farm	17	9	18	14	–	9	2	7	19	48	46	53
Moor Green Lakes*	23	9	14	13	12	11	3	4	6	2	–	1
Lower Farm GP	6	4	5	5	4	3	3	3	2	4	3	2
QMR	2	1	3	–	–	–	14	20	8	–	2	–
Theale GPs	4	2	4	3	6	9	14	18	24	31	78	56
Windsor, The Promenade	239	245	248	261	271	237	249	253	293	221	201	223
Wraysbury/Horton	30	64	9	12	31	–	33	–	6	44	90	47

*This count may include some Hampshire birds

The highest count of Mute Swan for this year was, as usual, at the Windsor Promenade with 293 on Sep 21st. **Breeding:** Eighteen active nest sites were recorded (under recorded) with only 47 cygnets reported. A dedicated Mute Swan survey would be needed to record the true figure.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

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

Only two records of genuinely “wild” Whooper Swans were noted, and they were the same group on the same day. Five were seen flying west over QMR on Nov 22nd at 09. 35 (CDRH). They were then seen flying west along the Jubilee River (DAC). Additionally, a further sighting had occurred earlier in the year on May 25th of what were probably two feral birds at Moss End (MSFW). These two birds (an adult and a juvenile, perhaps 1st summer) were seen in the middle of a field whilst the observers were conducting a farmland survey.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

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

The monthly maxima at regular count sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moor Green Lakes	21	–	4	6	5	–	1	70	110	1	3	13
Padworth Lane GP	260	140	64	21	26	75	90	60	173	300	200	100
Streatley	131	110	–	13		97	168	–	–	81	–	175
Theale GPs Inc. Hosehill Lake	136	–	15	21	54	100	27	81	24	300	206	3
Pingewood GPs	118	125	160	–	–	–	130	106	–	–	–	–
Windsor Great Park	250	338	214	251	269	260	358	391	505*	213	180	10

*Certainly, a site record count and perhaps a county record

There were some records in excess of 200 which are in addition to the table above: 260 at Padworth Lane on Jan 18th (RJB), 202 on the Englefield Estate (stubble field area) on Aug 29th (RCr), 230 on Purley-on-Thames on Sep 12th (NJB), 300 at Padworth Lane GP on Oct 7th (ILGW), 300 at Hosehill Lake LNR on Oct 16th (AVL), 240 at Cheapside on Oct

17th (MSFW) and finally 205 at Theale Main GP on Oct 18th (WeBS). **Breeding:** another species under watches and under recorded for breeding purposes. When the Berkshire totals for recorded breeding are only 47 pairs with 143 juveniles, whilst another specific area of the county held a count of 160 juveniles then our records are not very representative. Especially when early year population figures suggest that the county held up to 1000 adult birds.

SNOW GOOSE *Chen caerulescens*

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

Just the one single feral resident remains of the original flock and was seen regularly in all months except November and December at Moor Green Lakes, usually with the feral Barnacle Goose flock (MO). Another single was seen with Canada Geese at Swallowfield Park on Jan 15th (DJB).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

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

Monthly maxima at regular count sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP/ Lea Farm	35	67	89	50	–	60	77	–	153	150	332	442
Moor Green Lakes*	177	44	100	40	44	74	120	444	250	72	140	8
Lower Farm GP	250	35	35	32	51	42	56	105	45	30	125	120
Thatcham Marsh	98	76	55	67	40	134	122	114	123	113	65	40
Windsor, The Promenade	127	86	131	49	32	57	79	–	153	–	101	215
Theale GPs	2	24	43	9	20	167	132	77	37	350	280	76
Woolhampton GPs	2	5	25	16	41	8	21	13	192	1	10	–
Wraysbury/Horton	18	67	36	48	14	–	4	–	2	264	260	17

*This count may include some Hampshire birds

Single counts in excess of 250 at locations other than those above were noted only twice; 277 were at Englefield on Aug 9th (RCr) and 304 were noted at Sonning on Feb 7th (RRi).

Breeding: 24 pairs were recorded with 106 young.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Localised and declining feral resident, extremely rare wild vagrant

The resident feral flock of Barnacle Geese favoured, as usual, the Moor Green Lakes area. There was a maximum of 26 birds in January and February 25 in March then reducing to nil in July. However, there were 23 in August and September then number stabilized to 22 for the rest of the year. In other locations; two were seen between Aston and Remenham on Jan 6th (DJB), a single was seen flying over Tilehurst during August, another at Borough Marsh during October, a single at Lower Farm GP also during October and finally another at lower Farm GP during December.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Common introduced resident in Mid and East Berks, more local in the West

It seems that Egyptian Goose has become more widely distributed within Berkshire this year. The table below shows additional counts, as well as the regular locations:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	–	–	4	3	22	47	52	–	–	–	–	2
Cockmarsh	–	–	–	–	–	–	54	21	–	–	4	
DintonPastures/LeaFarm	16	2	5	9	1	37	–	–	–	2	2	2
Moor Green Lakes*	12	3	26	16	19	36	67	62	30	53	70	39
Pingewood GPs	42	–	3	19	1	3	9	2	–	–	–	–
Remenham/Remenham Hill	17	–	–	–	–	8	24	–	10	35	–	4

*This count may include some Hampshire birds

Counts greater than fifty birds were also noted at Streatley with 71 on Sep 11th and 77 on Oct 10th (NJB). **Breeding:** as usual the figures are under estimated with only 14 locations at 73 young noted.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

The table below gives the regular site counts during the year for this very skulking species:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
DintonPastures/LeaFarm	5	3	2	1	–	–	–	1	1	1	2	1
Dorney Wetlands/ Jubilee River/Eton Wick	9	3	2	1	2	–	–	–	1	1	3	3
Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Thatcham Marsh	1	1	4	4	2	2	5	6	4	3	–	3
Theale GPs inc. Hosehill Lake	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	1	1	3
Windsor Great Park	10	4	5	3	2	–	2	2	4	6	3	2

During the three-month breeding season Water Rails were consistently recorded at only three sites. This has prompted the BOC Conservation Committee to conduct a survey during 2017 and 2018. It should be very interesting to see the results and any conclusions that may be drawn.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common and widespread resident in wetland habitats (Green Listed)

The monthly maxima for the regular count sites are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Boxford	–	9	9	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	19	–
DintonPastures/LeaFarm	24	27	24	12	–	–	4	–	1	3	14	18
Moor Green Lakes*	20	13	21	16	19	16	18	13	13	17	21	27
Wraysbury/Horton	2	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	2	25	24	–
Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford	6	16	12	–	–	4	–	–	7	–	–	–
Lower Farm GP	5	7	10	9	11	11	14	15	16	16	15	16
Thatcham Marsh	36	34	28	21	14	19	17	16	27	19	38	23

*These counts may include some Hampshire birds

There were few counts other than those in the table above of 15 or more. There were 25 at Hampstead Norreys on Jan 20th (JLe) with 18 on Jan 27th and 23 on Feb 3rd at Green Park, Reading (SAG).

COOT *Fulica atra*

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

The table shows the regularly counted sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bray GPs	112	69	51	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	80	65
Burghfield GPs	361	275	165	4	–	6	–	–	276	330	345	384
DintonPastures/LeaFarm	43	88	36	22	–	8	42	12	119	126	163	245
Lower Farm GP	111	100	80	94	70	89	93	53	33	22	36	38
Moor Green Lakes*	114	103	25	44	32	22	36	40	39	71	96	213
QMR	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	18	275	210	80	–
Thatcham Marsh	69	39	58	31	18	32	55	44	54	44	55	56
Theale GPs inc Hosehill	83	33	44	21	51	185	367	371	490	455	508	390
Windsor Great Park	27	56	50	66	138	181	268	294	75	145	135	60
Woolhampton GPs	153	117	53	51	20	80	156	215	253	61	20	–
Wraysbury/Horton	49	515	22	12	10	–	10	–	30	270	829	834

*These counts may include some Hampshire birds

There is little else to add, there being no significant counts other than those in the above table. It is worthwhile noting that the November and December counts for Wraysbury/Horton are the two highest of the year. No breeding records were received.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare resident, probably of introduced origin

The only record concerns a single bird on Moatlands Main Lake on May 10th (H Brownlow).

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Shelduck were reported from eight sites in East Berkshire, six sites in Mid Berkshire and seven sites in West Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	–	–	–	1	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	5
Dorney Wetlands/Eton Wick	7	6	4	16	5	–	1	–	–	1	2	6
Moor Green Lakes	6	3	6	2	13	4	–	–	–	–	1	1
Great Meadow Pond	1	8	11	6	4	3	–	–	–	–	–	1
Lower Farm GP	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	2
Padworth Lane GP	5	4	5	8	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Pingewood GPs	–	2	2	5	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	2	2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	1
Slough Sewage Farm	–	–	–	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	2	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Woolhampton GPs	4	4	6	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	2	3	6	8	4	1	1	–	–	1	1	2
Number of birds	6	8	12	22	9	1	1	–	–	1	1	5

The number for Moor Green Lakes in May includes 9 ducklings

First winter: reports of Shelduck followed the typical pattern with numbers rapidly picking up in the new year from the low levels of the previous autumn – this time the increase started in the last few days of 2014. The increase in numbers of birds and sites occupied is apparent from the summary table. Away from the regular sites, significant numbers through this period only occurred at three locations with maximum counts of four at Brimpton Mill Road Pits on Jan 24th (KEM), four on Eton Wick floods on Feb 20th (DJB, WS), eleven at the regular site of Great Meadow Pond on Mar 15th (DJB) and four at Eton Wick floods on Mar 22nd (SAG). **Summer:** numbers reached their peak in April and many of the reports referred to pairs. Isolated peak counts of 12 at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 14th (JCM) and ten at Eton Wick floods on Apr 17th (ABT) may involve the same birds. At Moor Green Lakes, two pairs were watched with nine young chicks on May 15th (RFM, MGLR), probably having used the underground nesting chamber on Plover Island. The subsequent series of reports documented the sad demise of the entire brood by the end of the month. Despite receiving reports of pairs at six other sites in May, there was no evidence of other breeding attempts. The table shows a widespread decrease in numbers starting in June prior to their departure to the moulting grounds and the last summer report was of a juvenile at Eton Wick floods on Jul 7th (DCI).

Second winter: the first Shelduck to return was a singleton at Dorney Wetlands on Oct 10th (KPD). The table shows numbers improving very slowly, with the pace picking up right at the end of the year with four at Eton Wick floods on Dec 28th (DAC *et al.*) and five at Lavell's Lake on Dec 31st (FJC) (The highest December count since 2003 when there were five at Moatlands GP). An interesting ringing recovery concerns a female Shelduck ringed as a nestling in June 2000, controlled in July 2003 and found freshly dead (aged 14y 7m) on Feb 11th in each case at Lower Basildon.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Locally common introduced resident

Mandarin Duck were reported from 24 sites in East Berkshire, 31 sites in Mid Berkshire and

10 sites in West Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	–	–	–	–	8	1	3	6	1	–	4	–
Moor Green Lakes	2	3	9	10	10	6	2	1	12	8	7	8
Great Meadow Pond	–	1	5	8	5	–	1	9	9	1	–	2
Maiden Erlegh Lake	11	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Whiteknights Park Lake	5	4	–	3	8	–	3	–	27	35	9	9
Windsor Great Park 1	3	4	2	5	2	8	–	3	–	–	8	–
Wraysbury GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	8	8	14	33	19	5	7	9	8	5	1	1
Number of birds	26	35	40	76	87	19	22	37	63	17	30	1

¹ Denotes counts made away from Great Meadow Pond

The summary table shows that this species continues to be widely reported across the county. For the regular sites, it is likely that the absence of reports from Wraysbury GPs is due to reduced coverage; elsewhere some significant counts were made: 25 on the R. Enborne at Brimpton on May 31st (KGW), 23 at Crookham on Sep 22nd (KGW), 25 at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Sep 24th (JA) and 30 in Prospect Park on Nov 7th (AVL). **Breeding:** young were noted at 16 locations and pairs were reported from a further 17 locations during the breeding season. At White Place Farm, Cookham a Little Owl box contained nine eggs on May 27th (BDC) and eight ducklings were watched at Roundmoor Ditch, Eton Wick on Jul 16th (DJB). The Nest Box monitoring at Moor Green Lakes recorded 56 eggs laid in five nest boxes, including a clutch of 19 eggs, but overall egg hatching success rate was a disappointing 7% (MGLR).

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

Wigeon were reported from nine sites in east Berkshire, thirteen sites in mid Berkshire and five sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Burghfield GPs	150	157	27	–	–	–	–	1	70	130	350	375
Dinton Pastures CP	75	200	161	2	–	–	–	3	14	130	200	302
Moor Green Lakes	147	113	34	6	–	–	–	–	19	91	53	339
Great Meadow Pond	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	3	7
Horton GPs	–	118	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
Lower Farm GP	151	60	32	–	–	–	–	1	–	26	44	35
Pingewood GPs	–	150	300	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	–
Theale GPs	84	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	18	170	218	126
Twyford GPs	230	90	20	–	–	–	–	–	29	146	121	335
Woolhampton GPs	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	95	103	183
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	5	3	2	1	–	–	1	1	2	3	3	1
Number of birds	165	122	36	1	–	–	1	2	2	4	12	1

First winter: 2015 saw typical numbers of Wigeon at the regular sites with peak counts of 230 across the Twyford GPs on Jan 19th (WeBS) and 300 at Burnthouse Lane GPs on

Mar 9th (KEM). Significant counts elsewhere included 60 at the Wilderness, Kintbury on Feb 12th (JLS). The departure for northern breeding grounds was particularly sudden; at some sites it appeared that numbers were boosted just before this departure, suggesting a temporary stop-over for birds wintering further afield or perhaps just locally. **Summer:** apart from a party of six at Moor Green Lakes LNR on Apr 8th (KPD), only pairs or singletons remained into April. The drake at Burnthouse Lane GPs persisted until Apr 27th (MO), after which no further reports were received in this period. **Second winter:** the first returning bird was a drake noted at Burghfield Mill GP on Jul 29th (RCr). The table shows numbers steadily increasing through the autumn, culminating in an impressive 1210 counted across just four sites (Burghfield GPs, Dinton Pastures CP, Theale GPs and Twyford GPs) during the period Dec 13th to 16th (WeBS) with another count of 339 at Moor Green Lakes on Dec 30th (JCM).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

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

Gadwall were reported from 13 sites in east Berkshire, 11 sites in mid Berkshire and 24 sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	–	–	12	2	–	–	–	2	11	–	5	–
Bray GPs	56	71	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	30	30
Burghfield GPs	176	132	18	–	–	–	–	–	85	120	168	283
Dinton Pastures CP	35	15	17	12	9	26	7	20	67	199	198	343
Dorney Wetlands	9	2	–	–	5	4	–	–	–	19	–	–
Moor Green Lakes	101	117	5	11	10	23	8	24	16	24	36	146
Fobney Island	–	8	6	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Great Meadow Pond	–	7	4	14	12	61	35	82	20	19	56	61
Harvey's Meadow Hungerford	2	3	2	6	2	3	–	–	–	4	–	–
Horton GPs	110	396	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	55
Lower Farm GP	82	40	10	38	56	47	68	21	9	27	26	62
Summerleaze GPs	29	26	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Thatcham GPs	3	3	9	37	36	5	–	3	3	9	9	3

First winter: the table shows that numbers of Gadwall increased to a peak of over 1100 birds in February; in fact, this total has become the norm in recent years while the figures for January were roughly half what can now be expected. The peak count of 396 was made at Horton GPs on Feb 12th (WeBS). However, numbers fell away rapidly in the second half of February, so that only around 10% of the maximum number remained into March, but these numbers were maintained going into the breeding season. **Summer:** successful breeding was recorded at five sites with single broods at Donnington with five juveniles on Jun 22nd (ARo), and at Dorney Wetlands where three ducklings were noted on Jun 30th (DJB). At Great Meadow Pond, one small duckling was seen on Jun 14th and another brood of 11 ducklings was there on Aug 23rd (DJB). In mid-June separate broods of six and eight were seen at Moor Green Lakes (RCM, NS), and broods of four and six were at Lower Farm GP on Jul 3rd (JLS). A female was sitting on a nest at Hosehill Lake LNR on Apr 24th (RJB), and pairs were observed during this period at six other sites but with no extra evidence of breeding. **Second winter:** numbers started to pick up in the autumn around mid-September, and this continued until the end of the year as can be seen from the table,

with few birds reported away from the regular sites. An impressive count of 702 (described by the observer as an incomplete count!) across three of the lakes at Wraysbury GPs on Nov 18th (WeBS) confirms the spectacular increase in numbers that Gadwall are experiencing, particularly at Wraysbury GPs, and which is described in *The Birds of Berkshire* (second edition, 2013).

TEAL *Anas crecca*

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

Teal were reported from 15 sites in east Berkshire, 15 sites in mid Berkshire and 14 sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	–	–	1	3	–	–	–	3	1	–	34	20
Bray GPs	3	5	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Dinton Pastures CP	62	100	40	20	4	–	2	14	11	30	90	46
Dorney Wetlands	70	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	30	9	–	–
Eton Wick Floods	69	40	–	8	–	–	2	17	54	82	40	–
Moor Green Lakes	36	6	23	26	2	2	4	11	44	42	20	43
Great Meadow Pond	16	11	5	6	–	–	1	4	5	100	2	93
Lower Farm GP	150	363	55	42	4	–	11	22	26	112	225	156
Pingewood GPs	100	10	60	8	15	2	–	10	25	–	2	–
Slough Sewage Farm	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	16	–	–
Theale GPs	3	6	2	2	–	–	–	3	4	11	7	12
Woolhampton GPs	–	6	1	–	–	–	–	1	16	1	–	–
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	8	11	11	11	3	–	–	6	5	8	12	11
Number of birds	153	214	157	84	5	–	–	35	54	79	148	149

First winter: numbers present in January were comparable to recent averages, but they were maintained into February (normally numbers reduce by about 40%), before starting to decline in March. An impressive 363 was a short-lived peak at Lower Farm GP on Feb 7th (IW, JL), and away from the regular sites, the best counts were 59 at Padworth Lane GP on Jan 18th (RJB) and 54 at Fobney Meadows on Mar 29th (ABT). A party of ten on a pond in a small copse at Walbury Hill on Mar 7th was a noteworthy find (ABT). **Summer:** no evidence was received to confirm breeding this year, but a handful of Teal were present throughout the breeding season. Numbers quickly dropped away in May, so that after the first week just six sites (Hyde Farm, Lea Farm Lake, Lower Farm GP, Moor Green Lakes, Padworth Lane GP and Thatcham) hosted a total of ten birds. Thereafter, significant reports were a pair at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 11th (NS, RCM), two birds at Burnthouse Lane GPs on Jun 29th (RCr) and a pair at Eton Wick on Jul 7th (DCI). Apart from eleven that arrived at Lower Farm GP on Jul 18th (IW), numbers remained at a low level until the middle of August. **Second winter:** the main arrival of wintering birds started in the second half of August with some good counts by the end of the month: 17 at Eton Wick floods on Aug 28th (DCI), 22 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 31st (IW) and 14 near the Streatley STW on Aug 31st (NJB) there was also 14 at Padworth Lane GP on Sep 11th (KEM). On Oct 11th there was an isolated peak of 100+ at Great Meadow Pond (DJB) on a day when flocks were coming and going, and the next day a female was surprisingly found at a small and very public pond in Woodley (FJC). The maximum count in this period was of 225 at Lower Farm GP on Nov 27th (JLS).

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

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

Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	16	14	4	11	8	12	38	42	45	–	54	40
Dinton Pastures CP	65	25	60	20	–	1	65	5	134	73	63	98
Moor Green Lakes	52	42	40	31	30	57	75	33	39	68	50	83
Great Meadow Pond	40	19	35	27	22	47	46	60	32	47	54	50
Lower Farm GP	45	28	12	16	22	28	25	48	30	66	29	22
Thatcham NDC & GPs	73	79	35	55	50	80	130	9	54	88	90	125
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	30	31	40	38	29	30	33	28	29	25	30	29
Number of birds	691	551	408	387	239	377	824	770	697	629	831	838

Mallard remains the most widely distributed duck species in the county. The table shows high numbers were achieved in early summer following local breeding. Although the numbers reached their annual peak in late autumn (after a decline in early autumn), the magnitude of the winter influx was relatively small. This supports the point made in *The Birds of Berkshire* (second edition, 2013) that Mallard has been moved to the amber list because of reduced continental immigration. There was one ringing recovery – a ring recovered in Reading on Mar 15th was traced to a bird ringed as an adult male at Nazareth, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium on July 26th, 2006. **Summer:** Mallard were reported to have bred at 20 locations raising 42 broods. Six broods were noted at both Great Meadow Pond and at Foundry Brook, Reading (DJB). The largest brood comprised 13 young ducklings in Whiteknights Park on Apr 11th (PG).

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

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

Pintail were reported from five sites in east Berkshire, five sites in mid Berkshire but no sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	5	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	4	3	3	3
Number of birds	9	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	12	8	4	4

First winter: the new year started with two drakes at Moor Green Lakes on Jan 1st and 2nd (NS). Then on Jan 23rd four males and five females were found on the partly frozen Moatlands Main Lake (RCW *et al.*). It is most likely that a party of three males and two females at Searle's Farm Lane GP the next day (JA, TAG) and a party of two males and one female seen on Jan 25th at Searle's Farm Lane GP (RA), Hosehill Lake LNR (AVL) and Padworth Lane GP (KEM) were part of the original flock. The only other winter record was of one at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 4th (NS). **Second winter:** many reports in this period relate to single day or short stay observations, with the possibility that the same birds may have moved between sites giving rise to multiple reports. The first autumn bird was at QMR on Aug 20th (CDRH). A party of five females or immature were watched at Lavell's Lake on Sep 9th (TAG, G Turner), but seemed nervous and finally headed off south. Also, in this complex, two to four birds were at Sandford Lake on Oct 2nd to 3rd (MFW, RM), two birds were at Lea Farm Lake on Oct 12th (MFW) and the only long-staying bird, a female usually reported from Lavell's Lake, remained between Nov 14th and Dec 23rd (BTB *et al.*).

Other early reports are of a female at Great Meadow Pond on Sep 13th (DJB), and an eclipse drake and a female at Wraysbury GPs on Sep 21st (CDRH). Counts of more than two were of a male and three females at Searle's Farm Lane GP on Sep 27th (JA), and three females at Wraysbury GPs on Oct 27th, with just one remaining until Oct 30th (CDRH). The short primary projection on this female suggested to the observer that the bird may have completed its flightless period of moult at that location. Finally, a f/w was at Jubilee River on Oct 1st (CDRH), a drake was at Moor Green Lakes between Nov 26th and 29th (KCr, I Oldcorn, RCM), a female stayed for ten minutes at QMR on Dec 7th (CDRH), and Padworth Lane GP held two females on Nov 15th (RJB) and a pair on Dec 12th (KEM).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

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

2015 was another poor year for this species with just ten birds reported. **Spring:** only six birds were recorded in this period starting with two drakes at Burnthouse Lane GP on Apr 2nd (KEM, ABT, RCW). Then a drake was well watched at Fobney Island between Apr 4th and Apr 10th (DAMD *et al.*). The remaining reports were of isolated sightings: a drake at Theale Main Pit on Apr 27th (AVL), one at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford on May 8th (JSW) and another drake asleep on the island at the Loddon BBOWT reserve, Twyford on May 16th (DFI). **Autumn:** a female was on Colebrook South, Moor Green Lakes on Sep 9th (GDu), and another female was at Padworth Lane GP on Nov 9th (KEM). At Wraysbury GPs, a f/w drake that arrived on Nov 5th was reported from various pits in the area until Nov 27th (CDRH, WeBS) and on Nov 20th was joined by a female on Hythe Lagoon (CDRH, PNe). According to *The Birds of Berkshire* (second edition, 2013), there are just two instances where Garganey have been reported on later dates in a year.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

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

Shoveler were reported from ten sites in east Berkshire, twelve sites in mid Berkshire and seven sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	19	24	3	2	–	–	–	1	4	–	6	3
Burghfield GPs	180	120	21	–	–	–	–	–	3	29	80	40
Dinton Pastures CP	14	16	20	18	3	2	2	13	7	20	60	46
Dorney Wetlands & Slough SF	1	–	–	2	2	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Moor Green Lakes	38	50	9	8	–	1	–	2	13	37	38	53
Great Meadow Pond	11	5	8	11	–	1	3	17	3	4	11	34
Lower Farm GP	42	70	110	54	1	3	5	24	36	55	33	105
Moatlands GP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Queen Mother Reservoir	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	–	–
Thatcham NDC& GPs	–	1	32	1	2	–	–	–	8	71	82	3
Theale Main & Hosehill Lake	45	7	1	4	–	1	–	31	54	38	77	15
Twyford GPs	63	79	49	1	–	–	–	–	35	11	10	10
Whiteknights Park Lake	4	10	4	–	–	–	–	–	4	2	12	8

Woolhampton GPs	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	16	4	-	-	-
Wraysbury GPs	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	70	65	39
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	4	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	5
Number of birds	19	28	65	48	2	1	1	8	1	4	9	34

First winter: most of the reports were from the regular sites identified in the table, but 50 at Burnthouse Lane GPs on Mar 9th (KEM) were notable. Otherwise the highest counts came from Burghfield GPs with 180 on Jan 4th (JA) and 120 on Feb 8th (WeBS), and an isolated peak of 110 at Lower Farm GP on Mar 4th (GJS). Good numbers remained through most of March, but most wintering birds had departed by the middle of April. **Summer:** Shoveler were observed at seven locations during the breeding season, with pairs present at three or more, but no evidence was received to suggest that breeding had been attempted. **Second winter:** the first signs of birds returning for the autumn occurred around the middle of August when two arrived at QMR on Aug 12th (PNe), and several sites recorded their first counts into double figures: 15 at Hosehill Lake LNR on Aug 14th (KEM), 12 at Great Meadow Pond on Aug 16th (WeBS) and 16 at Woolhampton GPs on Aug 16th (KGW, WeBS). Numbers then continued to build quickly such that the county total in November was some 70% above the average of peak counts in recent years. The highest count of the period was 105 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 22nd (IW).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Uncommon visitor of presumed feral origin which has occasionally bred

Monthly maxima are summarized in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	2	3	2	5	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	3
Number of birds	4	11	7	11	9	3	6	4	6	13	4	5

First winter: birds were reported throughout the period in the Theale area with two drakes at Hosehill Lake LNR from the start of the year (MO), occasionally appearing on Theale Main GP and towards the end of the period appearing here more regularly with numbers reaching five on Apr 24th (AVL). Nearby, a drake and a duck were at Woolhampton GPs on Feb 15th (SAG) and two drakes and two ducks were at Burghfield GPs on Mar 8th (WeBS). In the east of the county, a pair was at Bray GPs on Jan 3rd (DJB), and a flock of eight, including five drakes, remained at Horton GPs between Feb 2nd and Feb 14th (CDRH *et al.*). **Summer:** a pair bred successfully at Hosehill Lake LNR. Six ducklings were observed there on May 17th (AVL), and up to three juveniles continued to be reported until mid-August (MO). This probably accounted for sightings of family parties that included two juveniles at Bottom Lane GP Jun 29th to Jul 1st (BM, RM) and three juveniles Theale Main GP on Jul 27th (ABT). During this period, one or two birds were frequently reported from the Burghfield area (MO), while a drake at Sandford Lake on May 5th was shunted from island to island by other the birds (LGL). **Second winter:** the pair at Hosehill Lake LNR continued to be reported until the end of the year (MO) though four were present on Sep 7th (AVL). Theale Main GP hosted two drakes and a duck from Nov 13th – 22nd (AVL *et al.*) with a drake lingering until Dec 15th and a pair there on Dec 8th (KEM). However, most of reports in this period originated from Dinton Pastures CP, starting with a female and juvenile on Sep 9th (LSe), though the lack of previous reports suggests that this relates to breeding elsewhere. Subsequently, up to two birds were observed until the end of the year on Lavell's Lake and Sandford Lake (MO). The remaining reports from this period concern

a flock of six (five drakes) that circled over QMR on Oct 24th (CDRH) and was relocated later that day at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH), another drake at QMR flying with Pochard on Nov 22nd (CDRH), and a drake at Burghfield GPs on Dec 13th (NJB, WeBS).

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

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

Pochard were reported from nine sites in east Berkshire, seven sites in mid Berkshire and seven sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	12	8	6	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	6	8
Bray GPs	139	140	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	13	9
Burghfield GPs	23	29	13	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	15	30
Dinton Pastures CP	73	148	44	3	–	2	–	–	2	12	26	8
Dorney Wetlands	38	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	9
Moor Green Lakes	18	19	6	3	–	5	2	1	3	6	19	24
Great Meadow Pond	40	22	20	23	13	41	37	74	36	23	7	4
Lower Farm GP	22	30	9	8	7	20	15	18	15	9	15	18
Moatlands GP	–	350	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	80	–
Thatcham GPs	10	8	34	4	5	8	1	5	4	4	16	14
Theale GPs	85	140	11	–	–	–	1	–	1	9	50	14
Twyford GPs	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Woolhampton GPs	16	25	28	15	9	5	2	29	4	21	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	–	37	3	–	–	–	–	–	45	20	2	37
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	3	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	4
Number of birds	49	38	9	7	3	3	2	9	45	21	22	17

First winter: the table shows that peak numbers were achieved in February and indeed all the counts of 140 or more occurred in the period Feb 2nd to 8th (MO), with an impressive 350 at Moatlands GP on Feb 8th (NJB). Numbers declined rapidly after mid-February, so that by April birds essentially only remained at sites where they would retain a presence through the summer. **Summer:** the table shows that Pochard were present in good numbers during the breeding season. Six sites had males and females remaining for prolonged periods, and at three of those sites successful breeding was confirmed resulting in a total of six broods, so another good year for this species. At Lower Farm GP a brood of up to eight ducklings was watched from Jun 2nd onwards (MJD, JLS, KEM). Nearby at Thatcham Marsh a female was seen with four young on May 27th (MJD) while at the Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre a female was present with two chicks on Jun 30th (GJS). At Great Meadow Pond, three broods were produced: a female with six small ducklings on Jun 28th (DJB) and separate broods of one and two downy chicks on Jul 12th (DJB). At Woolhampton GPs a pair were observed copulating on Apr 24th (GEW); however, a report of two families of full grown juveniles at Woolhampton GPs on Aug 16th (WeBS) probably concerns birds that bred elsewhere since the plentiful reports from this site earlier in the breeding season referred to a single female, up to six drakes but no suggestion of young birds (KEM *et al.*).

Second winter: returning wintering birds started to appear after mid-August, and by the end of the year birds were widely spread over many sites. The maximum count was 80 at Moatlands GP on Nov 29th (JA), but away from the regular sites there was a good count

of 45 at Padworth Lane GP on Sep 26th (KEM). In the early autumn, some Pochard were reported wearing nasal saddles – separate birds at Padworth Lane GP on Sep 9th and Oct 6th (KEM), and a third at Woolhampton GPs on Aug 16th (KGW) for which the observer’s researches suggested that the bird had been previously controlled in Nantes, France.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Rare vagrant

First winter: the drake reported in 2014 remained into the new year at Bray GP, usually asleep with the Tufted Ducks on the northern pit of the complex (MO), though on Jan 18th it was associating with a male *Aythya* hybrid (CDRH). It was last reported on Feb 11th (P Whittaker), but in that period it was observed in the mornings of Jan 24th and 25th with the duck flock at Dorney Wetlands (DAC, BJH), before returning to Bray GP by midday on Jan 25th (TAG). **Second winter:** presumably it was the same individual that returned to the same lake at Bray GP on Nov 25th (CDRH), and here it remained until the end of the year (MO).

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

The only bird to be reported was a drake found on Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 6th (J Vaughan). It subsequently took up residence with the Tufted Ducks on White Swan Lake where it stayed into the new year, often hiding from view and appearing wary. A photograph taken on Dec 8th revealed a metal ring on the left leg (ABT).

Editorial note. This bird, and subsequent records, have been identified by the number on the metal ring as being part of a German re-introduction project whereby captive-bred birds have been released at Lake Steinhude near Hamburg.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

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

Tufted Duck were reported from 23 sites in east Berkshire, 15 sites in mid Berkshire and 14 sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston GPs	20	22	24	22	6	4	4	10	6	–	10	12
Ascot Heath	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bray GPs	595	750	82	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	200	192
Burghfield GPs	247	257	192	–	–	–	–	–	75	251	245	281
Dinton Pastures CP	141	87	120	50	–	15	13	7	63	55	53	118
Moor Green Lakes	273	117	188	91	47	52	94	72	53	54	88	248
Great Meadow Pond	20	29	44	68	12	12	33	35	18	35	49	45
Horton GPs	–	308	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	12	–	191
Lower Farm GP	25	30	40	41	16	24	37	38	18	18	14	25
Queen Mother Reservoir	24	9	10	–	2	–	6	48	650	450	75	20
Thatcham NDC	31	50	30	27	23	15	10	15	20	20	21	28
Theale GPs	11	9	57	68	41	26	12	41	13	12	72	38
Theale Main Lake	–	8	–	–	3	51	37	66	94	155	715	286
Twyford GPs	89	215	185	61	13	20	10	13	35	58	52	156

Woolhampton GPs	153	61	66	91	38	77	53	57	2	17	25	–
Wraysbury GPs	192	904	75	18	3	–	2	–	336	400	399	704
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	6	11	6	8	12	6	4	3	12	5	9	9
Number of birds	367	478	90	50	49	17	12	32	116	39	248	189

First winter: numbers reached a peak in the first half of February with over 3300 birds reported throughout the county representing roughly double the average of recent years. The highest counts were 750 at Bray GPs on Feb 2nd (WeBS), 904 at the Wraysbury GPs complex on Feb 12th (JMC), 308 at Horton GPs on Feb 12th (JMC), 250 at Jubilee River on Feb 4th (DCI) and 215 at Twyford GPs on Feb 9th (WeBS). **Summer:** there were reports of 13 broods at eight sites with pairs noted in the breeding season at a further four sites. These figures are low relative to recent years, but many counts of birds were received without extra details, so the true figure could be significantly higher. The first brood of nine ducklings was found on Jun 16th at Thatcham Marsh (GJS), while a female with three half-grown young was present at Moor Green Lakes LNR on Sep 5th (RCM). **Second winter:** the arrival of wintering birds was particularly noticeable in the east of the county in September. At QMR numbers steady increased through the month reaching 650 on Sep 27th (PNe). Other high counts in the period were 715 at Theale Main GP on Nov 15th (WeBS) and 704 across the Wraysbury GPs on Dec 23rd (JMC). The total of maximum counts in December is 2533 which slightly exceeds the average of recent years.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

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

The run of poor years continues with just one or two individuals reported. **First winter:** at Moor Green Lakes a male was found on Colebrook Lake North on Jan 18th (RCM, GR). It made further appearances on Jan 23rd and Feb 2nd (MO) on various lakes in the complex, and then this or a different individual was reported there on Colebrook Lake South on Apr 1st (PKE).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Ten birds reported during the year mainly at the county's two most favoured sites either singly or in parties of two for single day visits (with just one exception). This represents a typical showing for this species in all respects.

First winter/spring: a drake found at QMR on Jan 1st was still present on Jan 14th (CDRH *et al.*), a surprisingly long stay for an adult. Later in the spring at QMR a drake arrived in the morning of May 17th and spent the day there (CDRH, WeBS), and a duck was present there on May 26th (CDRH). A pair spent several hours at Theale Main GP on Apr 5th (NC *et al.*). **Autumn:** two drakes were at QMR on Jul 19th (CDRH, ABT). A female at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 10th (MFW *et al.*) was the first at that site for 12 years. Finally, two adult drakes were at Theale Main GP on Oct 18th (WeBS).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

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

Goldeneye were reported from five sites in east Berkshire, eight sites in mid Berkshire and one site in West Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	5	3	4	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Moor Green Lakes	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2
Horton GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Moatlands GP	4	21	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Queen Mother Reservoir	2	–	–	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	2	–
Theale GPs	8	7	9	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	8
Wraysbury GPs	17	31	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	18
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	1	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	1
Number of birds	4	3	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	3

First winter: numbers of Goldeneye increased through January to reach a peak in February with maximum counts of 21 at Moatlands GP on Feb 8th (JA) and 31 across the Wraysbury GPs complex on Feb 12th (WeBS). Nevertheless, overall numbers were around 50% down compared to the average in recent years. Many birds had left by the last week of February and the only birds remaining into April were a pair that were displaying and mating on Apr 3rd and were last seen on Apr 7th (RM, MFW) and a *f/s* drake at Hosehill Lake LNR and Theale Main GP Apr 24th to 26th (KEM *et al.*). **Summer:** there was a remarkable record of five Goldeneye (three eclipse drakes, a *f/s* drake and a female) at QMR on Jun 15th (CDRH), presumably the same birds that were reported a few days earlier at Staines Reservoirs (Surrey). June records of this species in the county are very rare and comprise a summering female in 1983 that may have been injured, and in 2009 a male at Woolhampton GPs and a female at QMR. **Second winter:** the first returning bird was noted at Wraysbury GPs on Oct 30th (CDRH). Numbers remained low as can be seen from the table, and the higher December numbers were not achieved until the last two weeks of the year. The period's peak count of 18 was made at Wraysbury GPs on Dec 23rd (WeBS).

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Uncommon (possibly declining?) winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Smew were reported from two sites in east Berkshire, three sites in mid Berkshire but no sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moor Green Lakes	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Theale GPs	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Twyford GPs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wraysbury GPs	3	5	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	1	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Number of birds	1	3	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1

First winter: twelve birds were reported in this period which continues the trend of declining numbers, thought to be due to a higher probability of ice-free conditions in the Baltic Sea. The prime site for this species is Wraysbury GPs where Smew were present from Jan 1st until Mar 1st with up to three reported through January (MO) and up to five between Feb 8th and 25th (CDRH). A drake and a female Smew were present at Moor Green Lakes from Jan 21st and were joined for the day on Jan 21st by another red-head (MO). After Feb 10th all three birds were regularly seen together close to the viewing screen on Colebrook South Lake until Feb 23rd (MO). A long-staying female found on Jan 4th at Searle's Farm

Lane GPs (JBi *et al.*) was reported occasionally until Apr 8th - *The Birds of Berkshire* (second edition, 2013) quotes just three occasions when Smew have been reported after the end of March. The remaining reports concern a drake at Bottom Lane GP, Theale between Jan 6th and 11th (RCW *et al.*) and two redheads at Padworth Lane GP between Feb 7th and 9th (KEM, RJB). **Second winter:** the first returning bird was a female reported only on Nov 23rd at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH). Four weeks elapsed before the next record there, a drake from Dec 21st until at least Dec 30th (PNe *et al.*) with five (two drakes, a pair and a single red-head) present on Dec 31st (CDRH). Elsewhere a female found at Searle's Farm Lane GP on Dec 7th was seen intermittently until Dec 28th (KEM, AVL, JA).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

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

Goosander were reported from six sites in east Berkshire, seven sites in mid Berkshire and four sites in west Berkshire. Monthly maxima are given in the following table:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moor Green Lakes	30	32	8	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	20	40
Moatlands GP	11	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Padworth Lane GP	9	10	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	14
Theale GPs	15	7	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Wraysbury GPs	16	14	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Elsewhere												
Number of sites	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	7
Number of birds	11	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	12

First winter: the peak count in the period was 32 coming in to roost at Moor Green Lakes LNR on Feb 10th (JMC). Away from the regular sites quoted in the table, two flew north up the R. Thames at Streatley on Jan 4th (NJB), up to five were at locations in Windsor on Jan 30th and 31st (D Tyler, KPD), two were at Aldermaston GP on Feb 11th (JPM) and four were at Heath Pond, Finchampstead at dusk on Mar 6th (RCM). Just five birds remained into April and the latest to depart was a male that lingered at Wraysbury GP until at least Jun 17th (CDRH). **Second winter:** the first birds of the autumn were noted on typical end of October dates: two females at Searle's Farm Lane GP on Oct 24th (JA) and three females at Lavell's Lake on Oct 25th (FJC). These birds were presumably passing through as the next reports came three weeks later as part of a larger arrival. At Moor Green Lakes LNR, the first appeared on Nov 17th (NS), increasing to 20 on Nov 26th (AK). The usual pattern was observed here with a moderate daytime population of up to ten birds scattered around the Moor Green complex, with birds frequently seen flying along the valley of the R. Blackwater west of the reserve, and a pre-roost influx at dusk building up to a maximum count of 40 (including 17 drakes) on Dec 27th (RCM). The only other sites to host extended stays were Padworth Lane GP where between two and six were seen on many dates between Nov 22nd and Dec 28th (MFW *et al.*) with a maximum of 14 on Dec 12th (KEM), and Theale Main GP where up to six were present between Dec 7th and 30th (KEM *et al.*). Single birds visited Lower Farm GP, Wraysbury GPs, Whiteknights Park and Jubilee River for brief stays. Away from the usual locations a drake was on the marina at Cleeve Court, Streatley Dec 19th and 20th (NJB) and a drake (maybe the same individual) was seen nearby at Beale Park, Pangbourne on Dec 29th (ATa).

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Records for this introduced gamebird were received from over 60 locations. The higher counts below relate almost certainly to birds put down by gamekeepers for shooting: twenty-six birds were counted at Clapton on Apr 30th (JL), 30 were recorded at Mount Hill, Bagnor on May 20th (JL), 30 had been newly released at Combe Gibbet on Sep 11th (IW), there were 37 birds at Weston on Sep 24th (JLe). Breeding was recorded at two sites: two chicks were seen at Windsor Great Park Jul 26th (DJB), and several recordings of adults with chicks were received from Englefield, the largest being two groups of eight and four on Sep 6th (RCr).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Localised and declining resident (Red Listed)

This declining species was reported from eighteen locations. Three in east Berks, four in mid Berks and eleven in west Berks. Down from about 40 locations in 2013. Most of locations being in the Northwest of the county. Hopefully this is down to a lack of reporting of the species rather than a genuine decline. Englefield features strongly again, where this species seems to flourish. This is a consequence of habitat maintenance and protection by the landowners. (This site had regular counts of over 40 with maximum counts of 131 on Sep 29th and 106 on Oct 1st (RCr) and a minimum of 66 pairs were proven to have bred.) The east Berks records came from Windsor Great Park, Long Walk area and Great Meadow Pond where the birds probably all derive from re-introduced stock. The other east Berks site was Jealot's Hill with 9 on Jan 8th (KCr). In mid Berks, apart from Englefield, birds were reported from Great Lea Common with one on Mar 8th (TGB) and six at Remenham on Oct 13th (SKP).

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

Another poor year for this delightful little species. The last classic "Quail year" being 2011. Singing males were noted at several sites on suitable downland in the Northwest of the county: The first of the year was one recorded singing on Roden Down on May 27th (DJB), a male was singing at Wellbottom Down, Lambourn on Jun 24th (ABT), at least five males were singing in the Aldworth area on Jun 30th (RRi), up to four were heard singing in the same general area during July (MO), three possibly four were at Sheepdrove, Lambourn on Jul 13th (JLS) and finally four were heard singing at Roden on Jul 27th (LGRE).

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

A few very large counts of birds released for shooting were received in late summer/early autumn. Unusual sightings of the species were of a bird at the water's edge at White Knights Park on Apr 4th (P W Johnstone) and a male walking along the footpath towards Asda at Lower Earley on Nov 21st (DJM), and Without doubt some wild breeding occurs, but the bulk of the birds recorded are of birds released a little while before their demise. Of the genuinely wild breeding birds few or none are reported.

LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

Rare introduced resident

A Male of this beautiful category C species was observed wandering around Nuthurst, Bracknell May 8th (D Carpenter). Without doubt an escapee from a nearby collection. Few if any of this species are believed to be surviving in a wild state in Britain, the main group in Bucks/Northants having all died out due to habitat destruction when a golf course was built on their main breeding area.

BLACK THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare winter visitor

Just one of this far from annual species was recorded in 2015. A winter plumage adult was seen in the Northeast corner of QMR at 15.45pm on Dec 20th (CDRH) and was subsequently viewed down to 50 yards but unfortunately there was no sign the following morning.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce and in recent years an annual winter visitor (Amber Listed)

A very lean year for this, the commonest diver to be seen within our county boundaries. A juvenile was discovered late in the day at Theale Main GP on Jan 2nd (KEM et al). This individual remained faithful to this site, occasionally visiting the adjacent Moatlands GP, until finally being reported on Apr 17th (AVL).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)

Records were received from nearly 50 locations throughout the county, many of which were of pairs on small pools or lakes. High counts were noted at: Moor Green Lakes with 10+ birds on Apr 1st (NS), and 17 at this location on May 5th (NS). Breeding was recorded at several well-watched sites; the earliest record was of a pair nest building on May 9th at Moor Green Lakes (RCM). A very late breeding record was of a pair with chicks at Donnington, Newbury on Sep 11th (ARo). The abundance of this species in our county is clearly due to the many gravel extraction complexes that we have. Although there is concern at the reduced number of records received and whether this indicates a population decline.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

Another abundant species within our boundaries in Berkshire. However, as with Little Grebe, there are concerns that the reduction in records received reflects a genuine decrease in population. Counts of 50 birds or more occurred at four sites. Peak counts were; 50 at Wraysbury GPs on Feb 17th (JMC), 74 at Theale Main GP on Sep 4th (KEM), 65 at Woolhampton GPs on Sep 13th (WeBS) and 75 at QMR on Sep 20th (PNe). Breeding appeared to be very successful with evidence of breeding being received from 23 sites across the county including seven juvs seen at Thatcham Marsh on Aug 9th (SAG), six juvs at Theale Main GP on Aug 15th (KGW), ten "stripey's" were seen at Woolhampton GPs on Aug 16th (WeBS), and several broods were observed at Moor Green Lakes during August (RCM). In the east several pairs were successful at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park (DJB).

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

A total of four records involving five birds were reported in 2015, one in the first period and four in the second. A bird initially found at Searles Farm Lane GPs on Jan 4th (ABT et al) was seen regularly at this site by many observers until finally reported on Jan 23rd (RHS). The Autumn/winter period produced an individual at Moatlands GP, Theale on Aug 15th (RCr), what was almost certainly the same bird was seen at the same site on Aug 23rd (JA) and subsequently on Aug 26th (KEM). Two juvs were found at QMR on Aug 22nd (PNe) and seen regularly until Aug 31st (MMc). Another, this time an adult, was discovered on Dec 4th at QMR (MMc), and was last seen at the site on Dec 12th (WeBS). This constitutes an average year for this species, but with surprisingly few during the winter period.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

This species continues to do well in our county, much to the dismay of many local fishermen. Records were received from all locations where water is close-by. There were some high counts: in the first winter period 66 birds were recorded at Theale Main Pit on Jan 3rd (KEM), 105 at Moor Green Lakes on Jan 30th (JMC) and 65 at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Feb 8th (WeBS). During the second winter period there were 64 at Lower Farm GPs on Sep 12th (IW), the numbers counted at QMR between Aug 8th and Oct 22nd peaked at 300 on Oct 22nd (PNe) and there were 115 at Moor Green Lakes on Nov 27th (JMC). Breeding was recorded at the usual well-watched sites with good numbers of young being reported. Of interest a leucistic plumaged bird was reported on several dates at Lower Farm GPs (GJS).

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

Once again, a good showing with seven individuals from four locations. Dinton Pastures CP featured strongly again this year. **First winter:** an individual was seen on two dates in January on the 4th and 11th at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park (DJB), a bird at Dinton Pastures CP, first noted on Jan 10th (MFW) was then reported regularly by many observers until last noted on Jan 23rd (D Williams-Jones). A bird was disturbed from a reedbed at Moatlands GP, Theale on Feb 7th (JA). Finally, in the first period, a bird was observed in flight over Bracknell on Apr 7th (DAMD). **Second winter:** a bird initially found at Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 31st (GSE), was seen on a few dates by several observers until last noted on Oct 10th (TOA), a bird was seen at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Oct 4th and 18th (DJB). And a new bird at Dinton Pastures CP was recorded on two dates, firstly on Dec 26th (R Booth) then again on Dec 29th (BTB). This species continues to winter regularly in our county, a pity none so far have stayed to breed.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Rare vagrant, all records are since 2007

Just one record of this small Heron species this year but records appear to be increasing in our county in recent years reflecting the national trend. A bird was seen in sheep fields by White House Farm, Spencer's Wood on Dec 21st (D W Hampton). It was flushed by workmen after a short time and unfortunately could not be relocated.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

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

A very familiar species in Berkshire now, with records for all months. Birds were reported from over 80 locations from the east to the west of the county with high counts being received as follows: six birds were seen at Hamstead Norreys on Jan 20th (JLe), seven were at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 10th (NS), 10 at Hurst Pool on Aug 20th (DJB) with 11 there on Aug 21st (DJB), there were 14 at Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 22nd (RCW), eight were at Lower Farm GPs on Oct 12th (GJS) seven individuals were at Bottom Lane, Theale on Nov 22nd (JA) and six birds were at Moor Green Lakes on Dec 6th (RCM), Probable breeding was only reported from a site in West Berks, with perhaps three nests visible on Apr 21st (ABT). Birds in breeding plumage were reported at other sites during spring and summer but they can travel and feed a considerable distance from their nesting location.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Rare but increasing vagrant

This species has become annual in recent years, considering its rarity in the years previous, reflecting the national trend. There were six records in 2015, involving four or five individuals. A bird spent the day at Great Shefford, feeding in the river Lambourn on Jan 2nd (GDS et al), what was almost certainly the same bird was observed at Lower Farm GPs, on Jan 5th & 6th (MO). The next was a flyover at 08. 00 on Mar 14th at QMR (CDRH), the bird passed directly overhead then turned Southeast into Surrey, descending towards Staines Moor. Another bird, possibly the same as above, flew into Dorney Wetlands at 18. 51 and landed on West Marsh, before flying off East eight minutes later on Apr 24th (CDRH). This bird had multiple rings and was traced as being ringed as a nestling at Besne, Loire Atlantique, Northwest France on May 13th, 2013 (per LGRE), the ring number was CA76117. A bird flew into the eastern corner of Lea Farm GP, Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 18th (AR), it stayed only from 10. 37 until 10. 41, before being hassled by Lapwings and promptly flying off. A second record for Lower Farm GPs involved a bird first observed on Sep 21st (IW) which was last seen on Sep 28th (D F Long).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

A very familiar site in our county, and abundant in most wetland areas. The table below indicates the monthly maxima at the most regularly reported sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dinton Pastures CP	4	3	8	2	2	3	5	0	3	1	1	5
Moor Green Lakes	5	2	1	2	4	6	5	3	2	4	1	0
Great Meadow Pond	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	1
Lower Farm GPs	1	6	3	4	3	7	4	8	10	5	4	1
Searle's Farm Lane GP	13	10	12	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	7	4
Twyford GPs	12	16	12	10	6	2	0	3	1	3	4	3

It is interesting to note that at one of the sites with the highest numbers it was only recorded on the winter WeBS counts, so nothing was noted during the summer months. Breeding was recorded from six sites, mainly from the well-known Heronries in the county, however many more sites would have produced young.

COMMON CRANE *Grus Grus*

Rare vagrant

This species continues to be a rare sight in our county, many active birders are patiently waiting for a 'stayer'. There was just one record involving two birds in 2015. These were observed flying West/Northwest over Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on Apr 30th (NR). This appears to be a typical date for spring dispersal.

HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Rare summer migrant

Just one positive record this year. A bird flying south over Wildmoor Heath BBOWT, Crowthorne on Aug 15th (DAMD), a typical late summer/early autumn date for this migrant.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

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

Easily the most recorded of the birds of prey. The number of reports has been steady for the last three years having increased year-on-year since the introduction scheme in the 1990s. Are they now being under-recorded due to familiarity or are they approaching saturation? The largest multi-bird sightings for each month are in the chart below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldworth/Compton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	12	-	-	-
Cookham Rise	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	14	26	-	-	14
Earley	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Englefield	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Furze Platt	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hampstead Norrys	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hermitage	-	-	-	-	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungerford	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hyde Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	-
Jealott's Hill/Shurlock Row	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	30	-	-	-
Lea Farm/Lavells Lake	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Purley-on-Thames/ Pangbourne area	-	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Remenham	15	-	25	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Streatley	-	-	-	22	-	12	-	-	-	11	-	-
Theale/Pingewood/ Burghfield Area	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tilehurst	15	-	-	-	24	31	-	10	-	-	-	-
Walbury Hill/Combe area	10	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-
Windsor	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White Waltham/Hurley/ Twyford area	22	-	-	21	-	10	-	14	40	-	-	11
Woodlands Park Fields	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	72	-	-	-
Wooley Down	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woolhampton/ Aldermaston	-	-	-	-	11	10	-	-	-	-	-	-

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

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

A typical year with five records in the spring and five in the autumn. The first flew over Moor Green Lakes on Apr 20th (NS) the next, an adult female, was at Moatlands GP on Apr 22nd it eventually flew North over Reading being mobbed by two red kites (ABT). One was at Moor Green Lakes on May 6th (NS, RJG). An adult male was seen at Horton GP on May 17th being mobbed by a common tern, with a female at the same site a few days later on the 21st (CDRH). Autumn records began with a juvenile at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Aug 16th, the first record at the site since winter 2011/12 (DJB). A juv flew over Aldworth Down on Aug 23rd (NJB), with an adult female nearby over Roden Down on the 25th (ABT). Another female was reported at Lower Farm GP on Aug 29th (JA) and finally another female was at Searles Farm Lane GPs, Pingewood on Sep 19th (JA).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

An average return this year of seven reports relating to probably four or five birds. The first, and the only spring record, was of an adult male flying NW through QMR on Apr 4th (MMc). There were no other reports until the second winter, when a ringtail was reported over Bury Down and later Cow Down, West Ilsley on Nov 4th (RR) and an adult male was recorded at Brimpton GPs on the 28th (GEW). A ringtail was watched hunting at Bury Down on Dec 2nd (ABT) and what could have been the same individual was recorded on three consecutive days in the Bury Down/Cow Down area from Dec 9th to 12th (RRi, RD, RHS).

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare visitor

There were several reports, two of which were submitted, adjudicated and deemed acceptable by the Berkshire Records Committee. There was a female reported from the west of the county on Mar 20th (RRi) and another (or the same) female in the same location on May 12th (RGi).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common and widespread resident (Green Listed)

An average year as far as reports are concerned, with records coming from all areas and appearing to be consistently spread over the county. As expected most of reports are of single birds, with a few counts of two and only one count of three together at Lower Farm GP (IW). Once again, there are many reports coming from suburban gardens where several different prey species have been noted. As with most raptors, there is limited evidence of breeding, which is surprising given the widespread distribution of the species.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Common and widespread resident and passage migrant (Green Listed)

Like Red Kites, Common Buzzards are now so common-place in the county that they are probably under-recorded. There were at least five pairs reported breeding in the west of the county and another at South Ascot, which is clearly a misrepresentation of the actual number of breeding pairs. The largest count for this year was at Shurlock Row where there were 23 on Oct 27th (DJB). Monthly maximum counts for the most regularly reported sites are in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldermaston/Brimpton Padworth/Woolhampton area	4	5	4	4	2	2	6	1	1	1	1	2
Bury Down/Cow Down/ Brightwalton West Ilsley area	2	–	–	1	–	4	1	1	4	–	1	1
Combe/Walbury Hill area	10	8	6	8	4	1	7	4	4	4	6	3
Greenham Common/ Lower Farm/ Thatcham area	1	3	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	1	1	2
Pingewood/Theale GP area	2	7	9	3	1	4	4	10	4	4	1	5

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

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

The first record of the year was at Moor Green Lakes on April 2nd (JWe), then one headed north over QMR on the 4th (CDRH). There was then a lull until the middle of the month when one was at Lower Green, Inkpen on the 14th (RHar) and one headed North over Calcot on the 17th (AVL, JA). One was flushed from its oak tree roost at Welford Military Base on the evening of May 3rd (GDS) with one at Woolhampton GP on the 9th (H Brownlow). One flew west along the valley at Moor Green Lakes on May 17th (RCM) and one flew NNE over QMR on the 24th (CDRH). One was seen to catch a fish at Woolhampton GP on Jul 8th (JPM), the nearest there was to an Autumn record!

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread resident (Amber Listed)

Records have come from all corners of the county, with 95% of the reports being of one to three birds. Counts of four or more are as follows: four (two pairs) at East Garston Down on Apr 7th (ABT) with four nearby at East Garston on Jun 26th. Three recently fledged juveniles were with an adult at the Wilderness, Kintbury on Jun 27th (JLS), three juvs were seen with an adult at Woodlands Park Fields, White Waltham on Aug 22nd (DJB). Five were seen at Kintbury on Jul 10th (JPM). In addition to these there were several proven instances of successful breeding: an adult was seen with a juv at Streatley Farm on Jul 13th (NJB), Three young in a nest hole in Pangbourne on Aug 5th (ATa) and a pair with a juv at Moor Green Lakes on Sep 25th (RFM).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

A typical year with most of the records coming from the west of the county. Several of these records come from the same area and conceivably concerned the same birds. The first record of the year was of a male at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Jan 2nd (RHS) with another male at East Garston Down on the 8th (ABT). A male was seen at Bucklebury on the 20th (JLe), with a female at East Garston Down on 22nd (ABT). There were no records in February. A female was seen at Brightwalton on Mar 2nd, then were two reports of possibly the same female bird at West Ilsley on the 4th (AVL) and 15th (RHS). Autumn records started with an immature at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Sep 9th (ABT); the following day a fem/imm was

at Compton (CDRH). There was just one November record, an imm/female at Cow Down on the 5th (ABT). Finally, a female was seen successfully pursuing a Redwing at Streatley on Dec 20th (NJB).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

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

A typical spread of records from across the county, with all the main areas being represented, though for the second year running, significant flocks have not occurred. The first record of the year was of two at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 18th (R Hayward). The highest multi-bird totals from the main sites are as follows: four hawking over the water at Moatlands on May 1st (ABT, RHS), four at Burnthouse Lane on the 11th (AVL) and six at Lavells Lake on May 13th (FJC). Four were at Woolhampton GP on Jun 3rd (KEM) with 13 at Horton GP on the same day (CDRH). There were four apparently in a family group at Gorrick Wood Plantation, Wokingham on Sep 9th (RCM). The rest of the records (around 240 reports) were of less than three birds. The last of the year was reported from Moor Green Lakes on Oct 4th (LGL).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

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

As previously there were several site-faithful, long-staying birds, present throughout the year as follows: one or two birds were present around the gasometer east of Reading town centre, seen catching and eating feral pigeons on many occasions (MO). Two birds were present on and off throughout the year in Bracknell town centre, again the main prey items were feral pigeon (MO); several birds were regularly seen around the Lower Farm GP area. A pair made use of a nest box at QMR raising four young (MO). A male and a female were seen throughout the year, though rarely together, on the island pylon at Theale Main GP (MO). Although the previous breeding site in Slough wasn't watched throughout the year a male and a female were seen on Jan 14th and what was probably a female on Oct 18th (both DF).

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

Records for this recent colonist continue to increase and in 2015 it was reported in every month of the year except October, November and December. The first of the year was a single at Moor Green Lakes on Jan 21st (NS) then there was a gap until the first returning breeding bird was seen at Theale Main GP on Feb 5th (AVL, RHS). Breeding was confirmed at Dinton Pastures CP, Moor Green Lakes and Theale Main GP (three pairs) with probable breeding at Twyford GPs. Passage birds were reported from a further twelve locations. Reports mainly referred to one or two birds and it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between local breeding birds and migrants, but spring passage appeared to occur during April and May with return migration/dispersal commencing in July. Autumn migration quickly tailed off with only four sightings in August and one in September. Of interest a bird with a metal BTO ring was present at Pingewood GPs on May 21st and Jul 6th (KEM).

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

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

There were five confirmed breeding pairs in the traditional sites in the northwest of the county which produced at least four young of which at least two fledged. One of the adult males was seen to have a pale green ring over a blue ring on the left leg (ABT). A pair with two half-grown juveniles were still present between Oct 2nd and Oct 8th, rather late dates for these summer visitors. Away from the usual breeding areas, there was one at Bury Down on Apr 8th (CDRH) and an adult was found at Lower Farm GP on the unusual date of Jun 13th (JA, RP).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

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

There were two very early birds this year with singles at Lower Farm GP on Mar 7th (GDS) and at Brimpton Mill Road Pits on Mar 8th (KEM). These were among the earliest reported in the UK. Spring passage and the arrival of breeding birds began in earnest in mid-March with birds being reported from sixteen sites in March, April, and May. There were long-staying (or multiple arrival) reports from: Brimpton Mill Road Pits between Mar 8th and May 20th (KEM et al) with a peak of four on Apr 12th (KEM); Lower Farm GPs between Mar 7th and Aug 5th with a peak of five on Jul 3rd (IW); Pingewood GPs between Mar 14th and May 23rd with a peaks of eight on Mar 30th (AVL) with six there on Apr 4th (one with a metal ring on the right leg) (KEM); Moor Green Lakes between Apr 2nd and Aug 18th with peaks of five on Apr 14th and Jun 25th (both NS); Dinton Pastures CP between Apr 5th and Aug 6th peaking at three on Apr 7th (MFW); Fobney between Apr 6th and May 30th with peaks of eight on Apr 17th (ABT) and Apr 21st (AVL) and ones and twos seen at Padworth Lane GP between Mar 29th and May 23rd (MO). Presumed spring migrants were also reported from a further nine sites. It is difficult to sometimes distinguish between locally bred juveniles and autumn migrants, but birds noted at Crookham Common, Pingewood GPs, Eton Wick, Hosehill LNR and Midgham would appear to be the latter. **Breeding:** at least six confirmed pairs and two probable pairs bred at eight sites spread throughout the county.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Declining summer visitor, uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

The first report of the year concerned three at Lower Farm GP on Feb 28th (IW, JL). These were swiftly followed by records from a further six locations during March. Of note was a female with a green colour ring on its right leg first seen at Brimpton Mill Road GP on Mar 7th (KEM) (which remained until Apr 27th) and one obvious migrant on a flooded field near Mortimer on Mar 22nd (RCr). Passage continued throughout April and May, including records from a further four locations, but quickly tailed off at the end of May. There were reports from only four sites during June and July; Pingewood GPs, Dinton Pastures CP, Moor Green Lakes and Lower Farm GP with perhaps a wanderer from the latter accounting for a bird seen on Crookham Common on Jul 19th (IW). In contrast to the spring, autumn migration was poorly marked; one or two lingered at Dinton Pastures CP, Lower Farm GP and Moor Green Lakes through August with the only clear migrant seen at QMR on Aug 14th (MMc). The last of the year were two at Lower Farm GP on Sep 21st (IW). **Breeding:** a pair (including the colour-ringed female) attempted to breed at Brimpton Mill Road GP but had to contend with the site being in-filled; possible breeding was reported from Lower Farm GP.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Locally common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First winter: reported from thirteen locations, some involving casual fly-overs. Established flocks were noted at Greenham Common, Remenham Hill, the downs to northwest of the county, Woodlands Park Maidenhead and near to the North Hants Downs. Maximum counts; 231 at Woodlands Park Maidenhead on Jan 19th (DJB), 200 on Greenham Common on Jan 27th (DWH), 200 at Remenham Hill on Mar 15th (ABT) and 60+ on Cow Down on Mar 21st (ABT). **Second winter:** there was an exceptionally early summer plumaged bird at Englefield on Aug 2nd (RCr) then a gap of a month before September records from Greenham Common, Walbury Hill and Englefield. More scattered than during the first winter period for the remainder of the autumn and winter with reports coming from seventeen locations; some being casual fly-overs although some birds lingered for a week or two. Notable counts: 160 at Greenham Common on Oct 25th (DWK), 80 at Remenham Hill on Oct 27th (ABT), 80 in the Combe area on Oct 30th (RHar), 100+ on Bury Down on Nov 12th (ABT), 40 at Woodlands Park Maidenhead on Nov 21st, 70 in the Cold Harbour area on Dec 2nd (both PNe), 70 on Walbury Hill also on Dec 2nd (IW) and an exceptional 1,000 at Dinton Pastures on Dec 31st (FJC).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

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

Despite its continued national decline Lapwing is still a ubiquitous bird in Berkshire with reports coming from all suitable habitat, being only absent (as expected) from the forests of the southeast and the large metropolitan areas. Lapwings tend to flock at all times, but summer flocks rarely exceeded one hundred and low double figures was more the norm.

First winter: surprisingly the highest winter count came from the land fill site near Dinton Pastures CP. Birds counted between Jan 6th and Mar 22nd peaked at 500 on Feb 8th and 10th (MO). Elsewhere there were 310 on Aldworth Downs on Jan 24th (NJB), 270 at Streatley Farm on Feb 7th (NJB) and 300 at Jubilee River on Feb 9th (RCM). **Breeding:** reports of confirmed breeding came from sixteen sites in a variety of habitats, from the downland to the north, to the gravel pits to the south and to Windsor Great Park to the east.

Second winter: the first three-figure counts of the autumn/second winter came in July with 140 at Eton Wick on the 21st (PNe) and 100 at Moor Green Lakes on the 31st (RFM). In August there were 100 at Padworth Lane GP on the 11th (KEM), 104 on the land fill site near Dinton Pastures CP on the 25th (MFW) and 124 at Lower Farm GP on the 31st (IW). Interestingly the numbers then began to increase but only in the low-lying areas of the county with the first large flock not being seen on the downs until December. In that month there were 200 at Bury Down on the 11th (IW), a peak of 200 at Fobney Meadows on the 20th (AVL), a peak of 152 at Lower Farm GP on the 22nd (IW), 100 at Horton GPs on 23rd (WeBS) and a peak of 241 at Moor Green Lakes on the 28th (MHu). Notable passage: thirty-four flying west over Bray GPs on Nov 22nd (SAG) and 55 south over Streatley on Dec 26th (NJB).

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Just three records of this scarce visitor, all at QMR; one on Jul 24th (CDRH), a summer plumaged bird on Aug 4th (CDRH, MMC) and the last on Oct 28th (CDRH).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce but regular passage migrant (Green Listed)

Just thirteen records involving twenty-six to twenty-eight birds at three locations. **Spring:** the first of the year were two seen at QMR on May 6th (CDRH), these were followed by another at the same location on May 9th (CDRH, ABT), one there on May 16th (CDRH) and six on May 18th (CDRH). At Lower Farm GP one deemed to be moulting from spring into summer plumage was present on May 19th and 20th (MO). Three were seen at QMR on May 26th with a single there on May 29th (CDRH, ABT). The last of the spring were a flock of six at QMR on Jun 1st (CDRH). **Autumn:** the first returning birds were two at QMR on Jul 20th (CDRH) and a moulting adult at Lea Farm Lake on Jul 29th (A Burns *et al*). There was one at QMR on Aug 11th (AA, CDRH) and what may have been the same bird was reported on Aug 13th and 14th (CDRH, MMc) with the last of the year at the same location on Aug 31st (CDRH, MMc).

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Very rare vagrant (Amber Listed)

Just a single record of this increasingly scarce visitor. A first winter at QMR on Nov 20th (PNe *et al*).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

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

There were records from nine locations involving at least sixty-five birds. **First winter:** there was a single record of a winter plumaged bird at Dorney Wetlands on Jan 1st (DJB, BJH, JCM). There were no February records, but the spring migration commenced with singles at Fobney Meadows on Mar 20th (ABT), Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 23rd (BTB, MFW) and Lower Farm GP on Mar 28th (JA). **Spring:** three to five birds were present at Pingewood GPs between Apr 16th and May 24th (MO), but passage was most marked at Moor Green Lakes with two on Apr 25th (RCM), eleven on Apr 26th (RCM, RJG), a single on May 7th (NS), seven on May 9th (NS) and one on May 18th (NS). During this period ones or twos were also reported from Hosehill LNR, Dinton Pastures CP, Lower Farm GP and QMR (only one record!). The only June report was of a single at Moor Green Lakes on the 20th (RD). **Autumn:** the first returning migrant was reported from Moor Green Lakes on Jul 13th (CRG) with July records also coming from Pingewood GPs, Hosehill Lake LNR, Lower Farm GPs and QMR. August and September produced records from four sites, the bulk coming from QMR where there were a notable ten on Aug 28th (MMc). The last of the season was one heard at Dinton Pastures CP on Oct 5th (MFW). **Second winter:** one at Dinton Pastures CP on Nov 3rd (RM) and one at QMR on Nov 23rd (RHS) were the last of the year. There were no December records.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Red Listed)

Up to nine birds reported from four sites. A reasonable return for this scarce migrant. The only winter record was of one at Dinton Pastures CP between Jan 1st and Jan 6th (MO). The only spring record was of two at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 4th (NS). In the autumn a juvenile was seen at Eton Wick on Aug 21st and 22nd (DAC, ABT), one to four birds were present at Moor Green Lakes between Sep 19th and Oct 10th (MO) also on Sep 19th there was a single at Lower Farm GP (JA).

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

At least 20 birds recorded from seven locations. The first of the year was reported from Moor Green Lakes on Jan 11th, (RCM) the next was seen at Decoy Heath BBOWT on Jan 16th (DJB) and the third January bird was seen at Dorney Wetlands on 24th (DAC). Up to nine birds were present at Horton GP during February (CDRH). At least one was present at Moor Green Lakes between Mar 10th and Apr 23rd (NS *et al*) and during the same period one was flushed near Southcote Lock on Apr 7th (JA). The only Autumn records involved another at Moor Green Lakes on Oct 10th (NS) with another on the same date at Pingewood GPs (KEM) which was seen until the end of the month. The second winter period produced one on Greenham Common between Nov 16th and 24th (JL, IW) and two at Pingewood GPs on Dec 13th (KEM) and there were two to three at Horton GPs during November and December (CDRH).

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

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

Although no longer a breeding bird, Snipe were reported in every month of the year. Common in winter in all the expected wet areas – reed beds, fringes of pools and lakes, marshy fields – it also turned up in some unexpected places – Padworth Common, Wildmoor Heath, Walbury Hill and even on the Ridgeway. **First winter:** some of the higher counts; 55 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 31st (FJC) (the highest count of the year), 15 at Brimpton GPs also on Jan 31st (GEW), 14 at Moor Green Lakes on Feb 22nd (RCM), 15 at Padworth Lane GPs on Feb 27th (KEM), 20 near Moatlands GP on Mar 9th (KEM), 20 at Pingewood GPs also on the 9th (KEM), 19 at Lea Farm Lake on Mar 18th (RM) and 18 at Calcot Linear Park on Mar 27th (CMc). **April, May and June:** numbers quickly dwindled to single figure counts after the end of March although there were still 19 at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 6th (NS). By June the only birds in the county were two at Lower Farm GP which stayed through the month (MO). **Summer:** the two birds lingering at Lower Farm GP continued to be present throughout July (MO), with the first autumn migrants returning to Crookham and Greenham Commons, Eaton Wick, Fobney Meadows, Dinton Pastures CP and Moor Green Lakes during August. **Second winter:** numbers in the second winter period never reached the peaks experienced during the first winter. Except for the wintering birds at Streatley STW, the highest counts occurred during September and October highlighting a marked autumn passage. Notable counts: 14 at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 11th (BJH), 14 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 19th (JA, IW), 16 at Moor Green Lakes on Oct 10th (NS), 12 at Pingewood GPs on Oct 11th (KEM), 19 at Lea Farm Lake on Oct 15th (RM), 20 at Lavell's Lake on Oct 18th (FJC), 11 at Thatcham Marsh on Dec 16th (IW, JL) and the flock at Streatley STW between Sep 13th and Dec 27th peaked at 42 on Dec 24th (NJB).

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

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

Probably under-reported because of its nocturnal habits. **First winter:** reported in small numbers from fifteen locations, mainly forested areas but with the occasional wanderer around the gravel pits. Single figures only, apart from two at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 23rd (MFW), five in Gorrick Wood Plantation on Feb 15th (BTB) and three at Holliday's Plane, Windsor Forest on Mar 19th (KCr). **Spring/summer:** more restricted to suitable breeding habits during the summer months. Reported from nineteen locations with displaying birds noted at Buttersteep Hill, Greenham Common, High Standinghill (Windsor Forest),

Crowthorne Woods, Roundoak Piece, Swinley Forest and Wishmoor Cross. Reported from only three locations during July and not at all during August and September. **Second winter:** much less widespread during the second winter period with reports of single birds coming from only ten sites.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)

Fifty birds reported from ten locations. **Spring:** the first of the year was at Moor Green Lakes on Mar 25th (NS). This was followed by two April records; six at Dinton Pastures CP on the 6th (FJC) and three at Hosehill Lake LNR on the 29th (KEM, ABT). **Autumn:** one in summer plumage at Hosehill Lake LNR from Jul 6th to 8th (RCr, ABT), 11 summer plumage birds at Eton Wick on Jul 13th (KPD), three (*islandica* race) at Dinton Pastures CP on Jul 22nd (PNe), seven (*islandica* race) at Pingewood GPs on Jul 21st (KEM *et al*), six at Padworth Lane GP on Jul 25th (SAG), seven at Burghfield GPs on Aug 2nd (JA), one at Summerleaze GP from Aug 12th to 14th (CDRH), one at Pingewood GPs Aug 16th to 19th (MO), another at Pingewood GPs Aug 20th to 22nd one at Burghfield GPs on Aug 23rd (JA) and finally one at QMR on Aug 30th (CDRH).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant (Schedule One and Red Listed)

There were eighteen records of this migrant through the year, thirteen in the spring and five in the autumn, involving at least 22 birds. **Spring:** the first of the year was at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 20th (PAWi), this was followed by eight at the same location on Apr 23rd (NS) with presumably the same eight being seen again on Apr 26th. Also, on Apr 23rd singles were reported from Pingewood GPs (PH) and Lea Farm Lake (FJC, MFW), another two were reported from QMR on Apr 23rd (CDRH) with a single there on 25th – 26th (CDRH). There was one nearby at Horton GP on Apr 26th (CDRH) two appeared at QMR on Apr 27th (CDRH) with another at Pingewood GPs on Apr 30th (JBS), one at QMR on May 1st (CDRH), two at QMR on May 8th (CDRH) one at Moor Green Lakes on May 5th and finally three at QMR on May 8th (CDRH). **Autumn:** the first returning bird flew over Hosehill Lake LNR on Jul 15th, one (heard only) flew over Pingewood GPs on Jul 25th (RJB). At QMR there were three on Jul 26th (PNe), one on Aug 3rd (CDRH), one on Aug 7th (CDRH) and one on Aug 20th (CDRH).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

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

A species of conservation concern, it is no longer a winter visitor being reported only between March and September. **Spring:** eight records of single migrants (some heard only) at three locations between Mar 8th and May 7th. **Summer:** first reported from the summering areas in the northwest of the county on Mar 13th (JCM) and at Welford Military Base on Mar 21st (RJC). The last report from the latter was on Jun 18th and from the former Jul 25th (NJB). **Breeding:** a pair were present on Compton Downs on May 15th (DJB) but otherwise no breeding records were received. **Autumn:** the only autumn records concerned one to four birds at QMR (MO) on four dates, one at Crookham Common (JL), one at Greenham Common (IW) and the last at QMR on the unusually late date of Nov 22nd (CDRH).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

No breeding or wintering records this year, the bird being present only in Spring and Autumn. **Spring:** the first of the year were reported on Mar 20th at Fobney Meadows (AVL) and Lea Farm Lake (BM). Thereafter they arrived on a broad front through April at all the expected waterside locations; gravel pits, reservoirs, rivers and canals. Peak migration occurred towards the end of April. Reported mainly in ones or twos apart from three at Moor Green Lakes between Apr 25th and 30th (NS, RCM), four at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 26th (RM), four at QMR on Apr 27th (ABT) and three at Lea Farm Lake on Apr 30th (MFW). Migration then slowly tailed off through May until the last was seen at Green Park on May 26th (SAG). **Autumn:** the first returning bird was seen at Lea Farm Lake on Jul 2nd (AR) they were reported from a further ten sites, mainly in ones and twos although there were three at Lea Farm Lake on Jul 17th (MFW). Peak migration occurred during late August with some notable counts; eight at Theale Main GP on Aug 19th (RJB), eight flying up the Thames at Sreatley on Aug 25th (NJB), an unprecedented 26 at QMR on Aug 25th (CDRH, PNe), five at Lea Farm Lake on Aug 27th (MFW), five at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 29th (RCM) and 10 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 31st (BJH, IW). Passage then began to tail off through September and October with the last of the year being a single at Moor Green Lakes on Oct 14th (NS).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Although primarily a passage migrant and winter visitor Green Sandpiper was recorded in every month of the year except May. **First winter:** reported from thirteen locations, two in east Berks, four in mid Berks and seven in west Berks. The west Berks sites being Brimpton Mill, Easton, Freeman's Marsh, Lower Farm GP, Midgham Quarry, Welford and Woolhampton GPs. Single birds only were reported apart from two at Easton on Jan 1st (DJR), two at Freeman's Marsh on Jan 24th (KTa), three at Brimpton Mill Road GP on Feb 15th (KEM) peaking at five on Apr 3rd (KEM) three at Pingewood GPs on April 8th and 23rd (KEM) and two at Freeman's Marsh on Feb 22nd (KTa). **Spring:** passage became noticeable from mid-March reaching a peak in late April. Reported from twelve locations with maximum numbers: four at Brimpton Mill Road GPs on Mar 21st (KEM) and one to three at Pingewood GP between Apr 2nd and Apr 27th (MO). Numbers at Brimpton Mill Road GPs peaked at five on Apr 3rd (KEM) and there were three at Lower Farm GP on Apr 19th (NC) and Apr 22nd (GJS). The last records of the spring involved singles at Pingewood GPs (KEM) and Theale Main GP on Apr 27th (AVL). There were no May records. **Autumn:** the first was reported back at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 6th (RCM) and was followed by other records from Pingewood GP, Moor Green Lakes, Lower Farm GP, Padworth Lane GP and Summerleaze GP. Passage gathered pace during July and August with a peak being reached towards the end of July when there were four at Moor Green Lakes on Jul 13th (ABT) three to four at Dinton Pastures CP between Jul 17th and Jul 31st (MO) four to five at Pingewood GP between Jul 20th and 28th (MO) and four at Padworth Lane GP on Jul 27th (KEM): then during August with thirteen at Lea Farm Lake on Aug 3rd (BTB), eight at Pingewood GP on Aug 9th and 22nd (KEM), nine at Eton Wick on Aug 22nd (DAC), five at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 23rd (RCM) and four at Padworth Lane GP on Sep 20th (KEM). Thereafter numbers decreased, and they took up their winter quarters. **Second winter:** present through November and December in ones and twos at thirteen locations, four in east Berks, three in mid Berks and six in west Berks.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

Spring: six birds were reported, all within the space of four days; one at Cock Marsh on Apr 23rd (PNe), two at Dorney Wetlands on Apr 23rd and 24th (RD, CMc), two at Moor Green Lakes between Apr 23rd and 24th (RCM) one remaining until 27th (MO) and one at Pingewood GPs on Apr 24th (BTB). **Autumn:** the first returning migrants were noted on July 11th with two at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (SDa) and one Hosehill Lake LNR (KEM, JLe). These were followed by singles at Moor Green Lakes on Jul 13th (CRG) and Jul 17th (RCM) and one at Hosehill Lake LNR on Jul 31st (LRB). August records involved one at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 10th (GDu) two there on Aug 15th (RCM), one at Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 19th (BTB) and the 20th (LGL), two at QMR on Aug 19th (PNe) one at Eton Wick on 22nd and 23rd (DAC), six flew southeast at Lea Farm Lake on Aug 24th (MFW) also on Aug 24th there was one at Pingewood GPs (RCr). The latest birds were singles at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 25th (RCM) to 28th (GDu) and at Woolhampton GPs on Aug 27th (KEM).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Just a single confirmed record of this scarce visitor. Two were seen and heard at Moor Green Lakes at 14.00 on Aug 29th (ABT). Subsequently just one bird was recorded on the evening of the 29th and through the 30th (RCM).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

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

Present between February and September only, there were no wintering birds in either winter period. **Spring:** the first of the year was a single at Padworth Lane GP on Feb 27th (KEM). The main passage took place in March and April, with peaks in the last two weeks of March and in mid-April. During this period, it was recorded at fourteen expected wetland locations. Maximum counts: five at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 7th (KEM), four at Pingewood GPs on Mar 19th (KEM), four at Moor Green Lakes on Mar 21st (NS), six there on Mar 30th (NS), five at Brimpton Mill Road GP on Mar 31st (KEM), up to six present at Moor Green Lakes between Apr 10th and 13th (RCM, RFM), the numbers at Brimpton Mill Road GPs peaked at eight on Apr 13th (KEM) and there were six at Brimpton GPs on Apr 17th (CMc). **Summer:** birds were reported from thirteen sites, nine in May and nine in June. **Breeding:** evidence of breeding activity was provided for Pingewood GPs, Crookham Common, Hosehill Lake LNR. However, breeding was only confirmed at Moor Green Lakes where two pairs bred (RCM), rearing at least one juvenile. **Autumn:** probable migrants were first noted at Hosehill Lake LNR on Jul 2nd (KEM) and Lower Farm GPs on Jul 6th (NC). Thereafter migration was intermittent throughout the month and quickly tailed off with reports from only four locations during August and one in September a single at QMR on Sep 8th (PNe, ABT).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A poor year with just three records, one in the spring and two in the autumn. One at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 15th (GDu, TR) an adult at QMR on Jul 19th (CDRH *et al*) with another moulting adult there on Sep 15th (CDRH).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare vagrant

Just one of these delightful but rare visitors was seen this year and it stayed for just one day. A summer plumage female found at Theale Main GP on May 31st (Andrew Merrick, AVL *et al*). This was only the seventh record for the county.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

There were six records of Kittiwake, five in the spring and one in the autumn. The first was at QMR on Mar 27th (CDRH) and the other March record concerned one at Theale Main GP on the 29th (AVL). One was present at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 1st (NS), one at QMR on Apr 13th (CDRH) with one at Hosehill LNR on Apr 26th (AVL *et al*). The single autumn record was one photographed at QMR on Jul 19th (ABT) March and April are peak months for Kittiwake sightings.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

The number of records submitted for the year was 1013 from 120 locations right across the county. **First winter:** the highest January count received was of 450 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 18th (WeBS). Of 101 counts, submitted for January 20 were of a 100 or over with over 50% of these being from Dinton Pastures CP. Two ringed birds were observed at Datchet on Jan 24th (KPD). One was ringed at Bedfont Lake, Greater London on June 17th, 2010, seen previously at Datchet in September 2011 and latterly in December 2013, with several sightings in between. The other was ringed at Pitsea landfill site in March 2010. On Feb 1st a leucistic individual was noted in the roost at Moatlands GP (ABT). There were 102 counts in February with the highest total being 3,500 for Dinton Pastures CP (including Lea Farm Lake) on Feb 8th (RRi). In March, higher counts were being seen at their breeding areas, but the highest single count was 500 birds at Compton Downs on Mar 14th (NJB). Four hundred and fifty were at Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 8th (WeBS), 350 at Hosehill LNR, Theale on Mar 14th (TGB), 400 at Lea Farm GP on Mar 23rd (K Seymour) and 139 at Moor Green Lakes also on Mar 23rd (RFM). **Spring/summer:** the numbers at Moor Green Lakes built up to 350 on Apr 17th (RFM) At Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale the highest count was 244 on Apr 18th (WeBS). During May at least 58 nests were built on the islands and rafts at Moor Green Lakes with the first young hatched on May 23rd (RCM). During June there were 76 birds counted at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 3rd (NS) and 126 at Hosehill LNR on Jun 13th (WeBS). The only reference to young at Hosehill LNR, Theale was of 50 chicks ringed on Jun 7th (SAG). Fourteen juveniles were noted at Sandford lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jun 14th (RM). At least 18 young were noted at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 28th (RCM). The highest counts for July came from three sites; 115 at Lower Farm GP on Jul 19th (IW), 160 at Moor Green Lakes on Jul 31st (RFM) and 270 at Eton Wick on Jul 21st (PNe). A ringed bird at Datchet on Jul 25th was ringed at Hosehill LNR, Theale in 2009 returning for its sixth autumn at this location. **Autumn/second winter:** higher counts were noted throughout August with the highest being 535 at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 27th (NS). The next highest count was 350 at Datchet on Aug 21st (SLF). The peak count at Lower Farm GP was 275 on Aug 26th (JLS). A Latvian ringed bird, ringed on April 2nd, 2012, at Riga, returned for its fourth autumn to the River Thames at Datchet where it was seen on Aug 23rd (KPD), and where it had been recorded on 13 occasions previously over the past four years. Moor Green Lakes' highest count for September was 470 on Sep 8th (RCM) for and

Lower Farm GP it was 270 on Sep 21st (IW). However, the highest monthly count was 500 birds on ploughed fields at Summerleaze GP, Maidenhead on Sep 26th (BDC). Other high counts for September were 150 at Maidenhead Thicket on Sep 30th (PNe), 150 at QMR on Sep 20th (PNe) and 140 at White Waltham Airfield on Sep 18th (PNe). At Datchet on Sep 27th (KPD) a bird ringed as a chick at Bedfont CP, Greater London, on Jul 2nd 2014 was noted. This bird was also seen again at the same location on Oct 10th and Oct 31st (KPD). The Latvian bird seen in August was also seen on Oct 10th (KPD). On Oct 11th a bird ringed as a chick at Zbiornik Przykona, Radyczyny, Turek, Wielkopolskie, Poland was also seen at Datchet (KPD). The highest count of the year was 4000 at the roost on Theale Main GP on Oct 22nd (RCr). During November, the highest count was 850 at Dinton Pastures CP on Nov 11th (WeBS). At other locations, there were 315 birds on Nov 9th (NS) at Moor Green Lakes, 300 on the Jubilee River Nov 18th (RCMo) and 277 at Whiteknights Park and Lake, Reading on Nov 15th (DFI). On Nov 22nd a bird ringed at Fleet Pond, Hampshire on July 10th, 2015 was at Datchet (KPD). There were 280 birds at Lower Farm GP on Dec 2nd (IW) and 305 at Moor Green Lakes on Dec 30th (JMC). Whiteknights Park and Lake, Reading continued to attract birds with 247 on Dec 8th (DFI). However, the most significant numbers were at Dinton Pastures CP where 500 plus were noted on Black Swan Lake on Dec 8th (ABT). On Dec 13th 3,000 were counted at Dinton Pastures CP (J D Gordon) with 1,300 present, at Lea Farm Lake alone (WeBS). Six hundred birds were still present at Dinton Pastures CP on Dec 16th (WeBS), there were 1,000 at Lower Farm GP on Dec 23rd (KEM) and on Dec 24th 500 were counted at the roost at Theale Main GP (SAG).

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

This species was recorded on fourteen dates in April involving at least 54 birds. In contrast there was just one May record involving two birds. There were only two autumn records, one in July and the other in September. The first birds of the year were two, an adult and first winter, on Apr 9th at Theale Main GP (AVL, KEM, ABT). The following day, Apr 10th at mid-day, 12 birds (10 ad s/p, and 2 ad w/p) were present there (DJB, KEM). Single birds then lingered at the same location until Apr 14th (RRi, NR). On Apr 18th again at Theale Main GP three birds were present (including two adult s/p) (AVL, TAG, KEM). On Apr 21st three were reported at Wraysbury GPs (CDRH) and eight at Dinton Pastures CP (MFW). On Apr 22nd there was one at Theale Main GP (KEM, ABT, RHS) and one at Moatlands GP (JA) with two being present at Theale Main GP the following day (KEM, ABT, CMc). Away from the usual locations there was one at Cock Marsh, also on Apr 23rd (PNe). Finally, for April there was an impressive seventeen counted at Horton GPs on Apr 24th (CDRH). May's only record was of two at Theale Main GP on May 18th (ABT). There were just two autumn records; a juvenile at Hosehill Lake LNR on Jul 13th (AVL et al) and one at QMR on Sep 9th (CDRH).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

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

Birds were seen in nine months of the year (not March, May or August) and at six locations. Given that submitted records did not always including age or time of sighting, analysis of the data indicates there were at least 25 individual birds seen during the year. The first bird of the year was found at Dorney Wetlands on Jan 11th where it was seen for ten minutes before flying off (RN, DAC). A first winter was found at QMR on Jan 20th (PNe). On Feb 2nd an adult w/p was at QMR on the north bank at 08:45hrs (DJB). On Apr 2nd, a second summer (s/s) individual was seen on the island at Hosehill LNR at midday (AVL). This bird was seen later at

18:00 at the same location, whilst at 18:30 two adults behaving as a pair were sat on the water at Theale Main GP (ABT). The s/s bird stayed at Hosehill LNR a further six days until Apr 8th (MO). On Apr 5th this bird was joined by another s/s bird which had more advanced plumage (KEM, ABT). Both birds were still present the following day Apr 6th at 07:15 (ABT, RJB, LSe). On Apr 5th a s/s was also at Moor Green Lakes displaying to Black-headed Gulls on the "Tern island" Colebrook Lake North, (RCM, NS, MSe) and staying there until Apr 9th (MO). Several days later, on Apr 15th a bird was present at Hosehill LNR island (LGL). Presumably this was the adult s/p bird, with a metal ring on its left leg, seen at this location the next day, Apr 16th (ABT) and then Apr 18th (AVL). Possibly this ad s/p bird was then seen at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 19th (RCM) and Apr 20th (RFM) displaying to Black-headed Gulls. No further sightings were recorded in April and none in May. On Jun 5th eight birds were seen at Hosehill Lake LNR on the island at 11:51 (AVL), the highest single count for the county. Six of these birds (2 ad and 4 f/s) were still present at 14:30 (ABT) but seen to fly off west at 14:37. A single bird was found at Lower Farm GP on Jul 12th (TW, NC) and Jul 18th (NC). On Jul 22nd, a single juvenile bird was found at QMR (RHS, KEM) at 12:30. Also on Jul 22nd a juvenile was found at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (MFW) and was still present at 10:45 (FJC) and 12:10 (RM). A juvenile moulting into 1st w plumage at Lower Farm GP on Sep 1st (NC) may have been the same individual seen on Sep 29th again at Lower Farm GP (NC, MD). On Oct 3rd an adult was present at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pasture CP (MFW). At 14:10 on Nov 15th an adult w/p bird arrived at Hosehill Lake LNR (TGB, KEM) and the same bird being seen again on the adjacent Theale Main GP on Nov 19th (KEM) at 15:30 and perhaps the same bird at Theale Main GP on Dec 3rd (KEM).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Two hundred and seventeen records were received from 48 sites, although some of these had further records submitted for different parts of these sites. Most of records were of small counts. There were eight records with counts of over a 100, 40 counts between 10 and 100 and 169 counts of less than ten. The highest counts, as is typical, were recorded during the winter months. **First winter:** the highest count for this part of the year was of over 500 birds at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Jan 11th (DJB). 100 plus were noted at Remenham Hill on Jan 18th (ABT). On Feb 11th 124 were seen at Moatlands GP, Burghfield in the roost (RCr). Seventy-four were present at Poet's Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Feb 12th (RGi) and 36 on the same day at Horton GP (WeBS). **Spring:** the highest count of the year was recorded at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Mar 1st with 800 plus present (DJB). On Mar 15th 56 were at Remenham Hill (ABT), forty-one were also counted at New Diggings, Moor Green Lakes on Mar 16th, (RFM). on Mar 24th, 45 were at Streatley Warren (ABT), and then 41 at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Mar 25th, (ABT), on Mar 26th 162 were counted at Remenham Hill (ABT). The last record of the Spring was of a first winter bird at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 5th (MFW). There were no June records submitted. **Summer:** the first record of a returning bird was a single on Jul 16th recorded at Moor Green Lakes (NS). Thereafter records were of numerous counts below five with one of ten at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park on Aug 30th (DJB). **Autumn and second winter:** counts sizes submitted were very low throughout September and October with the highest individual count being nine at Wraysbury BA GP on Oct 23rd (PLe). On Nov 11th 400 were recorded at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park (DJB). 150 were counted at Hyde Farm, Pinkneys Green, on Nov 18th (PNe). This same location had 110 birds on Dec 7th (PNe). All other records for this period were well below fifty, except for 50 at Coldharbour, Knowl Hill on Dec 12th (PNe) and 51 at Horseshoe Lake, Sandhurst on Dec 30th (RCM). The overall pattern of occurrences reflects the *Birds of Berkshire 2nd edition*

2013, with highest counts in the east of the county and birds distributed mainly in the east and on the downs in the north of West Berkshire.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

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

A total of 642 records were submitted from 94 locations, predominantly from mid and west of the county. Of these records 26% were counts of single birds only. Counts of two birds or less contributed to 45% of records. Likewise, counts of ten or less, 77%, and 100 or less, 93%. Although birds were present in all months of the year there were only three records suggesting breeding attempts in the county. The highest counts were predominantly from August to December at regular roost sites such Lower Farm GP, Theale Main GP or the West Berkshire Downs. During the first-winter the only significant count from Lower Farm GP was 1380 on Jan 5th (PEH). The data submitted would indicate a tailing-off of numbers from roost sites during the early months of the year. Away from the roost sites the highest count for January was 150 at Snelsmore Common CP on Jan 11th (JL). During February, the highest count was 150 on Feb 1st (JL, IW) at Boxford. Birds remained at Boxford into March with 120 counted there on Mar 3rd (RJCL). But the highest March count was 300 plus at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn on Mar 25th (ABT). Evidence of possible breeding in South Reading was provided by records of birds gathering and carrying nesting material from Fobney Meadows, Reading on May 8th and May 9th. There were many records for April and May all in single digits except for 85 at Fognam Farm, Lambourn on May 21st (ABT) and 11 flying west, at Marsh Benham on May 22nd (DJB). Highest counts for June, probably of non-breeding birds or returning birds, were 40 at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great park on Jun 16th (DJB) and 32 at Lower Farm GP on Jun 24th (GJS). The only other evidence of local breeding was of a juvenile begging for food at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jul 28th (RM). Also, on Jul 28th 200 birds were counted on Hodcott Down, West Ilsley (ABT). On Aug 7th 200 birds were counted at Lower Farm GP (JLS). Counts elsewhere remained low throughout August with maximum counts of 40 at QMR on Aug 18th and 19th (PNe). However, birds were returning by the month's end as evidenced by a count of 3,000 plus birds feeding on fields at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Aug 27th (ABT). (Most of these birds remained in the area with 2,000 counted at Starveall, Aldworth on Sep 5th (ABT)). On Aug 29th, 270 birds were seen at partially flooded pig-fields at Wickham (GDS). A count of 270 was also recorded at Moor Green Lakes on Sep 4th (NS) with 220 at the same location on Sep 8th (RCM). Birds continued to feed in the West Ilsley area with 600 counted on Bury Down on Sep 24th (IW). Movement between feeding areas and roost sites was evidenced by a count of 1,231 birds flying south east towards Theale Main Pit during a 20 minutes period of observation on Sep 30th (RCr). About 220 birds were feeding on recently ploughed fields at Streatley Warren on Oct 17th (SAG) but the highest count of this period came from Lower Farm GP with 3500 on Dec 23rd (KEM).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

Two hundred and seventy-seven records were submitted from 68 locations. All the high counts were mostly from the east of the county, predominantly from QMR. Only 4% of counts were of, or exceeded, 100 and 28% of counts were of ten or above. Birds were seen in all months of the year. Surprisingly the highest counts were during the summer and early autumn possibly because no winter roost counts were undertaken. The highest count for January was of 25 birds at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 18th (WeBS). The highest count for February was 54 on Feb 5th at Moor Green Lakes (NJG). Lea Farm

Lake, Dinton Pastures was again the highest count location for March with 15 on Mar 8th (WeBS). It is revealing to see that the highest count in April was on the Berkshire Downs with 70 birds, mostly sub-adults at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Apr 4th (ABT). A count of 41 was noted on Apr 24th (ABT) at the weir on the Jubilee River. The April count on the downs was replicated in May with 120 birds, all sub-adults, at Hodcott Down, West Ilsley on May 20th (ABT). During June, Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park, appeared to be the favoured location with counts of 60 on Jun 7th and 150 on Jun 14th (DJB), all birds being immatures and sub-adults. On Jul 12th there were 43 at Meadow Great Pond, Windsor Great Park (DJB), whilst Smith's Lawn attracted more birds during the following month with over 400 on Jul 26th (DJB). At QMR there were 100 on Jul 26th, 80 on Jul 28th and 150 on Jul 29th (PNe). Clearly, the very east of the county was the most attractive location for this species during the summer. The trend continued into August with the following counts all at QMR: 70 Aug 2nd, 50 Aug 12th, 40 Aug 16th (all PNe), 200 plus on Aug 17th (ABT), 85 Aug 18th, 100 Aug 19th, 60 Aug 20th, 75 Aug 23rd, 35 Aug 26th (all PNe). QMR continued to be the focal point during September with a peak count of 150 on Sep 20th (PNe). In the autumn birds reappeared on the Downs, with 100 seen on Bury Down, West Ilsley on Sep 24th (IW). At Hurley Bottom, 140 birds were seen on Sep 30th (PNe). From October to December counts were much reduced overall, with the highest being 65 at QMR on Oct 22nd (PNe). By far the highest count during November was 44 (mostly adults) at Moor Green Lakes on Nov 16th (RFM). The highest count during December was 35 at Coldharbour, Knowl Hill on Dec 15th (PNe) followed by 31 at Moor Green Lakes on Dec 18th (RFM) and 30 at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Dec 30th (PSc). No evidence of birds breeding in the county was submitted, which is surprising given the red list status of this species. Perhaps the only indication of breeding was of the presence of an adult bird seen at Green Park, Reading on Jun 1st and 11th (SAG).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

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

The records indicate that there were between 50 to 60 birds seen during the year at eleven sites on 48 dates. Most were seen from July and all months to the end of the year. **First winter:** the first record was of an adult with Herring gulls on fields at West Ilsley on Jan 2nd (RJB). This bird was possibly one of the three adults seen in the roost (15:15hrs) at Theale Main GP on the same date (Jan 2nd) (KEM, AVL, SRI). An adult was then seen subsequently in the Theale Main GP roost on Jan 3rd (KEM), Jan 4th (RHS), and Jan 14th (KEM). An adult was also present in the roost at Lower Farm GP on Jan 5th (PEH). An adult frequented Brimpton Mill Road Pits on Jan 10th, 13th, and the 24th (KEM). On Feb 4th two adults were present in the roost at Moatlands GP, Theale (ABT). Possibly the same adult was again in the Moatlands GP, Theale roost on Feb 11th (RCr). An adult was at Crookham Common Pools on Feb 25th at midday before flying west (KEM, RHS). The last bird for this period was an unaged bird seen at Lower Farm GP on Apr 24th (JL) which is quite late. **Autumn/second winter:** the first returning bird was an individual at Lower Farm GP on Jul 1st (GJS, BL). Another bird, an adult, was also present on the same date (Jul 1st) at Moor Green Lakes (BM). Possibly this bird was the same bird seen at this location on Jul 8th (NS) and Jul 20th (RFM). On Jul 24th two adults were seen in the morning at QMR (ABT). On Jul 25th a third-year bird was seen at Moor Green Lakes (RCM) at 08:00. It was well into August before further records were submitted, with two birds, an adult and sub-adult, seen in a large gull flock on the downs at West Ilsley on Aug 11th (ABT). On Aug 15th three birds, unaged, were seen at Lower Farm GP (IW). The next day, Aug 16th two adults were at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park (DJB). Perhaps one of these birds were present at QMR on Aug 17th where an adult was seen (ABT). An adult was also seen at QMR on Aug 22nd (PNe). At Lower Farm GP a second summer

individual was identified on Aug 23rd (JLS). The next day, Aug 24th, three adults were seen at QMR (DJB). Perhaps these were the same three adults seen on Aug 30th at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park (DJB). The previous day, Aug 29th, an adult was present in the morning at Lower Farm GP (JA). The first 1/w bird for this period was identified at Theale Main GP at 14:45 on Sep 9th (KEM). On Sep 20th a single bird was at QMR (PNe), with another single bird at Moor Green Lakes on Sep 29th (NS, D W Hampton). In mid-October, an adult was seen standing on a buoy on Oct 18th (WeBS). The last October record was of a single bird at Theale Main GP on Oct 27th (AVL). In November, a single bird was at Moor Green Lakes on Nov 10th, (BM, BA Osborne). On Nov 13th a single bird was on Theale Main GP (AVL) then up to three were present between Nov 18th and Dec 10th (KEM). For the remainder of the year most of records came from Lower Farm GP. At this location, there was a single bird on Nov 11th (JLS) then again on Nov 27th (JLS); three adults on Nov 28th (JA); a single on Dec 1st (IW). Away from this location an adult was seen at Moatlands GP, Theale on Dec 3rd (ABT). Back at Lower Farm there was a single adult on Dec 15th (JLS) and 17th (JLS, ABT); five birds (four adults and a first winter) on Dec 20th (ABT); a single bird on Dec 22nd (IW); (there was another single at Theale Main GP on Dec 24th (ABT)) at Lower Farm there were six on Dec 23rd (KEM) three on Dec 26th (IW), five on Dec 28th with six on Dec 29th (both KEM) a single bird on Dec 30th (G L Sand) and a high count of nine (of mixed ages) on Dec 31st (KEM).

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce autumn/winter visitor (Not listed)

At least eight different birds were seen during the year from two sites predominantly in the first winter and second winter periods. The first record of the year was a first winter on Jan 3rd at QMR (CDRH). Recognizable plumage features made it identifiable as the same bird as on Jan 26th and 31st. It was seen with another f/w on Jan 26th at QMR (CDRH). A second winter was seen on Jan 20th at QMR (CDRH) giving a total of at least three different birds seen at that site during January. The f/w birds seen at QMR on Feb 3rd and 8th (CDRH) were presumed to be the same birds as seen in January. A different f/w at QMR on Feb 14th (CDRH) appeared to be the same bird photographed at Hedgerley landfill, Buckinghamshire a few days earlier. On Feb 9th and 10th a Polish ringed bird was seen and photographed at Knowl Hill landfill (CDRH). At QMR a f/w, possibly the "Hedgerley bird" was seen on Mar 8th and 17th (CDRH). Another f/w was seen at QMR on Feb 19th and then again on Apr 4th (CDRH). The rare summer record was of a very worn first summer bird at QMR on Jun 7th (CDRH). The only autumn records were of a f/w seen and photographed at QMR on Oct 6th and then again on Oct 16th (CDRH) and a 3rd w at Theale Main GP on Nov 18th (KEM).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Rare winter visitor (Amber Listed)

The only record of this recently annual species involved a 1st winter that circled Horton GPs with other large gulls before departing to the west on Jan 18th (CDRH).

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare winter visitor

The first record since 2012 involved a 2nd winter at Queen Mother Res on Feb 14th (CDRH). This bird (a rather small individual) was also recently seen and photographed at Island Barn Reservoir, Surrey. Klaus Malling Olson, the author of Gulls of Europe, upon

seeing the photographs confirmed the identification as a small female. This is only the third record since 2008 after eleven records involving twelve birds from 2000 to 2008.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Typically, most records were during the winter months, although there were only 36 records from 16 locations during the year with, surprisingly, the highest count being only six. There were no records received for May, June or July. **First winter:** the first record of the year was a second winter bird at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 1st (MFW) followed by two (an adult and third winter) at the same location on Jan 4th (MFW), then a single bird on Jan 11th (RM). Single birds were present at Theale Main GP roost on Jan 7th and 10th (AVL). The only records for the first winter period for QMR were single birds on Jan 11th (ABT) and Jan 16th (DJB). On Jan 17th (JPM) a single bird was present, then two on Jan 18th (JPM) at Brimpton Road, Aldermaston. There were further sightings of a single bird at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Jan 18th (WeBS) and Jan 20th (RM). On Jan 23rd an adult was standing on the ice at Searles Farm Lane GP (RHS). Again, at Lea Farm Lake there were two (an adult and first winter) on Jan 25th (MFW). The last January record was of an adult at Brimpton Mill Road Pits on Jan 26th (KEM). Two birds were seen flying west over Tilehurst on Feb 2nd (TGB). Then three adults were present at Knowl Hill Landfill on Feb 6th (ABT). There was a single adult at Lea Farm Lake on Feb 10th (ABT). A single bird was at Bagnor on Feb 21st (JL, IW) whilst a first winter bird was at Brimpton Mill Road Pits on Feb 25th (KEM). The only record for March was at Fobney Meadows, Reading on Mar 23rd (AVL) and the only April record was at QMR on Apr 8th (ABT). **Autumn/second winter:** there was one record for August, this being a single bird at Theale Main Pit at 20:40 on Aug 21st (ABT). An adult, standing on a buoy, was at Theale Main Pit on the afternoons of Sep 7th and 9th (KEM). At QMR an adult was seen on Sep 20th (PNe). During October, a single bird flew west over Tilehurst on Oct 10th (TGB), two birds were seen in a field near Combe Gibbet, Inkpen on Oct 20th (JCM), and the highest count of the year of six birds at QMR on Oct 22nd (PNe), then a single bird on Oct 30th (PNe) at the same location. On Nov 18th an adult was at Moatlands GP, Theale (RCr). Five birds were at QMR on Nov 20th (PNe). On Nov 22nd two birds were seen flying east over Padworth Common (TGB), whilst on Nov 22nd two birds flew north west over Reading University (DFI). The last record of the year came from Moor Green Lakes on the morning of Dec 17th (MHu).

Editorial note: counts of the gull roost at Lower Farm GP during December produced a maximum of 5,000 gulls sp. On Dec 23rd, 29th and 31st.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant

Four birds were seen in total during the year, on three dates at three locations. This total is about the long-term average for this species. The first spring record was at QMR on Apr 23rd when a bird was seen arrive at 09:59 then flying a circuit of the reservoir before departing 12 minutes later (CDRH). On Apr 26th, a single bird was noticed flying “to and fro” on the north side of Theale Main GP at 11:45 whilst the observer (ABT) was watching a Kittiwake (ABT, KEM, RHS). The tern was still present at 17:00. Surprisingly there were no further records in spring, especially as the month of May is usually the peak month for records. The return passage consisted of just a single record of two birds at Lower Farm GP on Aug 14th (IW, NC).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A maximum of 38 birds were seen at five sites during the year. Spring passage was almost non-existent with only one date, Apr 25th when birds were seen. This was a flock of 17 at Theale Main GP at 06:45 (AVL) that did not linger. Surprisingly, there were no records for May, a month in which they have been regularly reported over the years! The return passage began with three moulting adults at QMR on Aug 1st (CDRH) that stayed all day. Twelve days later, on Aug 13th, three more birds were recorded at QMR (CDRH). These were an adult and juvenile which departed at 10:45, and then another juvenile later in the day. On Aug 14th, a juvenile was found at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures (MFW). Later in the day, at 15:35, three birds, an adult and two juveniles, were found at the same location (ABT). Two of these birds later flew south leaving a juvenile. Although this bird was seen to fly off at 18:24 (TAG), it probably returned and then remained for nine days until Aug 22nd (BTB, MO), possibly a record stay. On Aug 14th, a single bird was present at Lower Farm GP (IW, NC) and at Theale Main GP three were noted (KEM, ABT, RCW) with a w/p adult there on Aug 15th (WeBS). On Aug 26th two birds were seen at Moor Green Lakes at 14:30 (MHu), but only one, a juvenile, remained. Being seen later in the day at 18:20 (RCM). This bird remained on consecutive days until Aug 29th and was probably the same bird as seen on Sep 2nd, (MO). The last record for the year was of four birds, two adults and two first winters at Theale Main GP on Sep 12th at 16:18, present until at least 17:33 (ABT).

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A total of twelve birds were seen at three locations on seven dates during the year. The first bird of the year was at Theale Main GP at 08:20 on Apr 3rd (RCr). This bird was joined by another at 10:30 during a shower (AVL) and then they flew off together. On Apr 26th a bird flew north-east over QMR at 08:11 (CDRH). On Jun 28th two full breeding plumage adults were seen sat on a buoy from 08:00 until 08:34 when they departed south-east (CDRH). At this very late date presumably they were failed breeders or non-breeders. Another possible non-breeder was present at Hosehill LNR on Jun 30th at 11:11 (AVL) and remained to at least 13:18 (MO). The first returning birds were reported on Aug 23rd when there were four birds (3 ad, 1f/w) at QMR from 06:45 until 07:12 (CDRH, PNe) when they flew south east and were seen an hour later at Staines reservoirs in Surrey. The last record of the year was at QMR when two winter plumaged adults, arriving at 12:55 on Aug 31st (CDRH) and landed on the pier before departing after a five-minute stay.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

A total of 591 records were submitted from 50 locations. **Spring:** birds arrived on cue in early April with the first record on Apr 7th of a bird flying along the River Kennet, at Fobney Meadows, Reading (PG). First records for the main breeding locations were Apr 9th at Theale Main GP (ABT, KEM, AVL), Apr 12th at Dinton Pastures (FJC), Apr 15th at Lower Farm GP (GJS *et al*), Apr 15th at Moor Green Lakes (GDu), and then QMR on Apr 24th (ABT). Counts (from 79 records submitted), throughout early April were very low with a slight rise from mid-April. Maximum counts for all sites, except Theale GPs did not exceed four during the month. Five birds were present at Theale Main GP on Apr 17th (RHS) and thereafter rose to eight on Apr 23rd (ABT, KEM), then 12 on Apr 24th (RJB), and peaked at 22 on Apr 25th (AVL). A total of 149 records were submitted for May. The highest count

was 28 at Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River (BDC) followed by 15 at Wraysbury BA GP on May 29th (Ple). Birds began to establish themselves at breeding sites with peak counts of three at Lower Farm GP May 20th (BL), four at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre on May 26th (GJS), five at Hosehill LNR, Theale on May 27th (AVL), ten at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 28th (RM) and 14 at Moor Green Lakes on May 16th (RCM). **Summer:** records submitted for June and July were 96 and 158 respectively. These indicate breeding was attempted at eight sites with success at seven. **Breeding:** in the west of the county, breeding on tern rafts at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre resulted in two pairs raising six fledglings that were observed on Jul 14th (GJS). At nearby Lower Farm GP, a pair was seen nest building on a raft on Jul 3rd, but no chicks were reported subsequently. At Padworth Lane GP a pair bred and produced two chicks that were seen on Jul 7th (KEM) which had fledged by Jul 29th (KEM). In the Theale area, two pairs bred at Hosehill LNR, one on the island and the other on a raft, being reported on Jun 10th (KEM, TGB). Three chicks were seen on the raft on Jun 15th (RCr) but the nest on the island was thought to be lost on Jun 28th (KEM). At Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP, up to 14 adult birds were present with just three chicks on Jul 6th (D Hampton) although four chicks had been seen on Jun 26th (AR). One juvenile remained with three adults into August as observed on Aug 19th (MFW). At nearby Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures CP, a pair with three juveniles were seen on Jun 16th (RM). Just to the north of Lea Farm Lake breeding had also occurred at the Loddon BBOWT reserve at Twyford GPs with nine adults seen with four chicks on Aug 8th (RD). In the south of the county an estimated five nests were seen on the “tern island”, Moor Green Lakes on Jun 5th (RCM). On Jun 19th six adults and six chicks were observed (RCM) and then five adults with five juveniles on Jul 13th (ABT). During July the largest flock counts were 27 birds at Theale Main GP on Jul 29th (ABT), 21 at Dinton Pastures CP on Jul 22nd (PNe) and 14 at QMR on Jul 15th (ABT). **Autumn:** during August post breeding and return passage birds increased counts with the highest count being 60 at QMR on Aug 14th (RRi). This was the highest single count of the year. On Aug 22nd 41 birds were at Theale Main GP (KEM). Numbers then rapidly tailed off at the end of August and there were only seven records for September with the last being on Sep 9th, two immature birds at Theale Main GP (KEM).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring: the spring migration began in late April, on typical dates. Most records are of small groups of birds, but occasional larger groups appeared. There was a suggestion of a broad movement of birds indicated by the appearance of nine birds at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 25th (NS, A. Stoney) and three birds at Theale Main GP (NR et al). A single bird was seen at Moor Green Lakes the following day, Apr 26th (RJG) and another single bird at QMR (CDRH). The last April sightings were of three birds at Theale Main GP on Apr 29th (KEM). Two birds were seen at Theale Main GP, early afternoon after heavy rain, on May 5th (ABT). The only other May record was of two birds that stayed for a few minutes at Theale Main GP on May 26th (KEM). The Spring passage occurred on only five dates with a total of 21 birds. **Autumn:** the return passage comprised of only eight birds in total, all during August. The first records were on Aug 14th with a juvenile seen at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP (AR) at 11:00hrs that stayed for a short while, and another juvenile at QMR that arrived with a flock of Common Terns late morning (CDRH). A single immature bird that did not linger was seen at Theale Main GP on Aug 19th (KEM), and then at the same location, there were three birds on Aug 22nd (KEM). QMR hosted the last two sightings of the year with a juvenile on Aug 25th (CDRH) and another juvenile, that stayed for less than an hour, in the early morning of Aug 29th (CDRH).

“COMMIC TERN” *Stern hirundo/paradisaea*

Of a large group of 65+ birds that flew through Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 25th, some were specifically identified as Arctic Terns (FJC).

ROCK DOVE / FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Common urban resident (Wild Rock Dove is Green Listed)

First winter: under-recorded, with the only sizeable counts being 55 birds at Reading on Jan 10th (KS) and 50 birds at Newbury town centre on Jan 26th (JL). **Breeding:** the only breeding record was of a pair with two squabs at Maidenhead on the early date of Jan 26th (BDC). Although recorded over the summer months there was no further evidence of breeding. The peak summer count was 25 at Newtown primary school on Jun 11th (LBM).

Autumn/second winter: contrary to previous years, there were no sizeable post-breeding flocks recorded in 2015, so again possibly under-recorded. The only large count of the year was 200 at Newbury Wharf on Nov 12th (KTa).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

First winter: widely reported across the county, though generally in single figures. Highest counts during this period were mostly in east and mid Berkshire: 40 at Burnthouse Lane GP (S) on Jan 14th (RJB); 70 at Field Farm GPs, Theale on Jan 28th (KEM, RRI); 100 at Mount Scipett Farm, Fifield on Feb 12th (MSFW); 40 at Hyde Farm on Feb 24th (PNe); 40 at Sonning Meadows on Mar 6th (ABT) and 80 at Englefield on Mar 10th (RCr). The only high count from west Berkshire was 150 at Cow Down, West Ilsley on Mar 18th (CL).

Breeding: recorded from 62 sites across the county during the breeding season, mainly in single figures, but evidence of breeding and breeding behaviour was only reported from eight sites: Great Meadow Pond, Windsor, one singing on Apr 5th and four singing on May 10th (DJB); one singing at Woodley Hill House, Earley on Apr 6th (MSFW); one investigating a tree hole at Cookham on Apr 19th (SMe); one singing at Maidenhead Thicket on Apr 25th (BDC); 11 territories at High Standinghill Woods, Windsor on May 4th (DJB); two singing at Swinley Forest on May 7th (DJB); 11 singing males plus a pair at Swinley Park on May 13th (DJB); single pairs with one juvenile were noted at nest boxes at Burghfield and Theale on Jun 11th (JLe). High counts during this period were 168 at Hyde farm on Apr 28th (BDC) and 100 at Smith's Lawn, Windsor on May 31st (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** no further large counts were noted until 60 at Englefield on Aug 20th (JLe) and 200 at Snowball Hill, Woodlands Park on Aug 22nd (DJB). Further counts over 50 were 51 at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 17th (BDC), 72 at Englefield on Sep 18th and 73 still at Englefield on Oct 1st (RCr). Flock sizes continued to drop off during November and December with the highest numbers reported in west Berkshire, 30 at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Dec 11th (RJB) and 30 at Sheepdrove Farm, Lambourn on Dec 18th (ABT).

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

First winter: widely reported across the county, with many three figure counts. The largest flocks in the period were 1500 feeding on stubble at Remenham Hill on Jan 26th (RRI), 1500 at Cannon Court Farm, Maidenhead on Feb 10th (BDC), 1000 at Englefield on Feb 18th (RCr), 1000 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Feb 22nd (DJB) and 1500 at Straight Mile, Shurlock Row on Feb 23rd (DJB). **Breeding/summer:** numbers tailed off from April through June, with most counts only single or double figures. Breeding is under recorded,

the only evidence of breeding submitted was a juvenile from a second brood in Cookham Rise on May 29th (BDC). **Autumn/second winter:** flock sizes continued to be modest through late summer with monthly peaks of 77 at Pinkneys Green on Jul 5th (PNe), 150 at Hyde Farm on Aug 19th (PNe) and 100 at Welford Military Base on Sep 5th (RJC). During October there was just one three figure count, 500 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Oct 25th (DJB). The usual late autumn passage of this species was not seen in large numbers in 2015 and flock sizes appeared generally lower than during the first winter period. There were 800 in a stubble field on the Ridgeway on Nov 3rd (JCM) and 169 at Virginia Water, Windsor Great Park on Nov 9th (RMH). A regular watcher recorded his first Autumn flock of 50 south east over Woose Hill, Wokingham on Nov 9th (PBT), while 100 flew south over Padworth Lane GP on Nov 15th (RJB) and a further 106 flew over Woose Hill on Nov 16th (PBT), By far the largest count of the year was 4000 over Woodley on Nov 18th (FJC), but these were flying north, so may have been local birds. 350 flew west over Shinfield Park on Nov 19th (DFI). By December, large flocks had appeared back on the hills with 1100 at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Dec 11th (RJB). Significant three figure counts were 154 at Combe Gibbet, Inkpen Hill on Dec 2nd (IW), 200 at Boxford on Dec 4th (RJC), 170 at Eastbury Down, Lambourn on Dec 4th (IW), 210 at Whiteknights Park, Reading on Dec 6th (DFI), 116 at Walbury Hill, Combe on Dec 14th (IW) and 120 at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill on Dec 15th (PNe).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident (Green Listed)

This species continues to be widely reported across the county, but in low numbers. There are very few double figure counts. **First winter:** the highest count of the year was 56 at Elton Farm, East Shefford on Jan 2nd (GDS) and there were 27 at Pinkneys Green on Feb 22nd (PNe). One was seen carrying nest material at Boxford on Mar 21st (GDS). **Summer:** breeding records continue to be under reported, with no breeding evidence submitted during the summer. All records during this period are of one to five birds apart from 19 at Pinkneys Green on Jul 5th (PNe). **Autumn/second winter:** no large flocks were noted until November when there were 43 at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre on Nov 24th (GJS). In December, there were 32 at Broadview Farm, Jealot's Hill on Dec 14th (RCM) and 40 at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre still on Dec 17th (GJS). A courting pair was noted at Spencer's Wood on Dec 23rd (DWH).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

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

Turtle Dove continues its serious decline in the county with just 14 records from five locations involving as few as seven birds. **Summer/breeding:** the first record of the year was a returning male at Hodcott Down, West Ilsley heard singing on May 17th (per ABT), still there on May 21st and Jun 25th when it was in display flight (ABT). Two birds were at Aldermaston GPs on May 27th (JL). A bird was seen in a garden in Maidenhead Thicket feeding under bird feeders with Collared Doves on May 31st (NE). A pair were at Padworth Common on Jun 15th (TGB) with territorial behaviour noted on Jun 27th (TGB) and still there on Jun 30th (KEM). A single bird was reported from the same site on Jul 19th (RD), Aug 8th (TGB) and Aug 17th (MSFW). **Autumn:** a single bird was at Brimpton GPs on Aug 13th and 15th (GEW).

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Common resident in the east of the county, uncommon elsewhere

Having spread westwards into mid Berks, especially along the Thames Valley, this species is now reported regularly as far west as the east of Reading. It remains a rare bird in west Berkshire and in fact there were no records in 2015 from this part of the county. The table below shows the monthly site status based on the records received.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites in west Berks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Sites in mid Berks	4	1	4	4	2	6	3	1	2	1	3	7
Number of Sites in east Berks	13	6	7	7	11	5	11	14	14	7	15	16

First winter – east Berks: the first report of the year was of 32 at Dorney Wetlands on Jan 1st there were then 51 at Bray GPs on Jan 3rd (DJB). However, the highest counts in the east of the county came from the regular roost site along the M4 at Cippenham, Slough where 500 were reported on Jan 5th (BDC), there were 38 at Legoland, Windsor on Jan 16th (RMH) then 1990 in the Cippenham roost on Jan 18th (DAMD), 1500 there on Jan 27th (BDC) and there were 30 at Eton Wick on Feb 12th (KEM). Numbers had fallen at Cippenham to 250 by Mar 7th (DJB). **Mid Berks:** in contrast, the highest count in mid Berks was five at Remenham on Feb 21st (PAL). **Spring/summer – east Berks:** east Berkshire had the highest counts, with 192 at Dorney Wetlands on May 2nd (DJB), 30 at Legoland, Windsor on May 30th (RMH) and 45 at the M4, Windsor on Jun 1st (MMc). **Mid Berks:** in mid Berkshire there were six at Twyford on May 25th (SAB), but the highest ever count at this site was 40 on Jul 7th (RCWD) and may have been evidence of successful local breeding. **Breeding:** breeding was generally under reported, certainly from the east of the county where numbers are highest. There were two reports from mid Berkshire, five inspecting nest holes at Aston on Apr 27th (ANS) and two probably breeding in Ruscombe on Jun 14th (ABT). In east Berkshire, the only report was of two recently fledged juveniles in Bracknell on Jun 21st (RJB) and two possibly three pairs breeding at Great Meadow Pond (DJB). **Autumn/second winter:** the highest counts were again from the roost site along the M4 near Slough Sewage Farm. There were 600 on Aug 15th (DCI), 250 on Oct 9th (MJS) and a massive 3013 on Dec 8th (LGRE). Elsewhere, there were 550 at Eton Wick on Nov 23rd (DCI) and 150 at Dorney Wetlands on Dec 29th (SAG). In mid Berkshire the highest count was seven at Hambleton Lock, on the River Thames on Dec 7th (ANS).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Locally common though declining summer visitor (Red Listed)

Reported from 73 sites across the county, which is a decline on the 96 sites reported in 2014. There were almost twice as many sites in west Berkshire (30) as east Berkshire (16), with 27 in mid Berkshire.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of reported sites	0	0	0	36	59	23	2	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum number of birds	0	0	0	40	75	28	2	0	0	0	0	0

Spring: the first bird of the year was at Upper Bucklebury on Apr 8th (BL), quickly followed by one at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on Apr 9th (MHu) and Lea Farm Lake, Dinton

Pastures CP on Apr 10th (MFW), with two birds at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 12th (RCW), with widespread records thereafter. Most records in April/May relate to single birds and occasionally two birds, but higher concentrations were three at Thatcham Marsh on Apr 26th (IW, JL) and on May 16th (IW), three at Woolhampton GPs on May 4th (RCr) and three at Hamstead Marshall on May 22nd (RHar). Birds were still being reported widely until the middle of June but fell away sharply as birds stopped calling and singing and/or left the county. The last adult reported in the county was a single at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 21st (RCM). **Breeding:** there was confirmed breeding at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP where a juvenile was being fed by Reed Warblers on Jul 7th (RM) and was last seen on Jul 18th (RM). Another juvenile, which may have been bred locally due to the early date, flew over Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Jul 11th (RCr). The remains of a dead juvenile found at the same site on Jul 20th (RCr) was the last record of the year.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon but widespread resident (Schedule One and Amber Listed)

Barn Owls are fairly evenly distributed across the county, mostly on farmland, with 180 reports from 71 1km squares: in west Berkshire, 32 (5. 0% of 1km squares), in mid Berkshire, 19 (5. 8%) and in east Berkshire 20 (4. 5%). Following a very successful breeding year in 2014, the number of records and the number of squares occupied in 2015 were somewhat higher than the previous year, when 148 records came from 59 1km squares (west Berkshire 30, mid Berkshire 16, east Berkshire 13). A large proportion of records derive from Moor Green Lakes (38% in 2015 and 39% in 2014), where three boxes were occupied but only one clutch appears to have been laid and no young fledged. Of the boxes in east Berkshire monitored by the Bisham Barn Owl Group, ten were occupied but breeding only attempted at four. One pair was successful, fledging two young. Of the 136 boxes in mid and west Berkshire monitored by the Pang Valley Barn Owl Group, in 15 boxes (9%) 31 young were fledged, a below average year. However, a total of 55 Barn Owls were ringed in the county in 2015. A bird found dead on the A34 near East Ilsley on Dec 23rd was thought to have been killed by traffic (GDS) and an adult found shot near Farnborough on Sep 29th had been ringed as a pullus eight years earlier at Hamstead Norreys (BTO Ringing Report).

Barn Owl boxes monitored by the Pang Valley Barn Owl Group

Year	10	11	12	13	14	15
Boxes monitored	91	111	123	119	125	136
Boxes successful	10	18	27	0	45	15
Chicks fledged	29	54	72	0	173	31
Average brood	2.9	3.0	2.7	0	3.8	2.1

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

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

Records of this delightful species are becoming fewer, with birds reported from only 38 1km squares (2012 - 49, 2013 - 42, 2014 - 48): five in west Berkshire (0. 8% of squares), 12 in mid Berkshire (3. 6%) and 21 in west Berkshire (4. 7%). Birds were reported calling, holding territory and occupying holes at many of these sites. At Legoland, adult birds were calling from four sites on Jun 22nd (RMH). Disappointingly however, there were no records of successful breeding and only one juvenile bird was reported, at Lea Farm, Hurst, on Aug 22nd (FJC, RM).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

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

Common in woodlands across the county, reports came from 79 1km squares (west Berkshire 27 (4. 2% of squares), mid Berkshire 19 (5. 7%), east Berkshire 33 (7. 7%)), in many of which several birds were noted. Most records were of calling birds, usually at night, though daytime hooting was noted during September at Sheepdrove (JLe). **Breeding:** the earliest young reported were on Apr 27th at Padworth (TGB), with subsequent reports from many sites. At Wargrave Marsh there was evidence of two broods on May 25th (DJB) and at Virginia Water there were two nests, one with two young on Jun 19th (RMH). **Prey:** the only food item noted was a Pheasant at Catmore Farm on Mar 27th (GDS), though the owl was not seen to have killed the much larger bird. **Ringling:** like Barn and Little Owls, their ready use of boxes for breeding and roosting facilitates ringling of Tawny Owls. In addition to the ringling of chicks earlier in the year, three full grown birds were ringed by Paul Wareham on Nov 26th at Bisham Woods (BDC).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Rare resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

Only winter reports were received, all from west Berkshire. The maximum count at a regular winter roost site was six birds, in January.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

First winter following a maximum of five birds in November 2014, in February and March 2015 up to six birds were present at the West Ilsley roost (MO), with numbers falling in April and the last record of a single bird on May 1st (NR). Elsewhere, all reports were of single birds from downland sites: Catmore on Jan 6th (GDS), East Garton Down on Jan 22nd (ABT), Fawley on Jan 24th (GDS) and Walbury Hill on April 7th (ABT). **Second winter:** no birds were reported at the West Ilsley roost. there were, however, five credible reports from river valley areas in east and central Berkshire: at Remenham on Oct 26th (ADB), on Fobney Island NR on Nov 4th (RRi), on gravel workings near Colne on Nov 12th (MMc), at Woolhampton GPs on Nov 23rd (GEW) and at Westley Mill on Dec 13th (MSFW).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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

The first record of the year was of a bird calling at Roundoak Piece on May 7th (PD) and by the end of May singing males were noted at many of the breeding sites in the table. There were no reports from several sites at which territorial birds were present in recent years, such as Snelsmore Common, Windsor Forest, Sunninghill Park. We would be grateful for negative reports where birds were not found at a likely site. The Berkshire part of the Thames Basin Heath SPA held 39 territories. The number of territories at all sites, 59, was within the range observed in the last five years (55 – 79). The only report of juvenile birds was of two or three on Padworth Common on Jul 30th (TGB). Males were reported churring late in the breeding season, indeed the last Nightjar record for the year was of a brief churring on Aug 17th at Gorrick Wood (PBT).

	Territories (churring males ¹)	Observers
Bucklebury Common	3	GJS
Greenham Common	1 (4)	DWK, JLS
Nalder Plantation	1 (2)	JLS
Padworth Common	3 (4)	TGB (CWFo)
Roundoak Piece	4 (5)	RCr (ABT)
Mortimer Common	1	PD
Gorrick Wood	1	PJC (PJC)
Swinley Forest area	27	SPA survey
MoD Camberley	12	SPA survey
Forest Park, Bracknell	1	TS
Buttersteep, South Ascot	5 (6)	DJB
Wildmoor Heath	0 (1)	SPA survey (RJG)

¹ the maximum number of birds reported for a site, where different, is shown in parenthesis.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

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

Spring: the first birds, both singles, were recorded on Apr 18th (slightly later than some recent years) at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures (PJC) and Woolhampton GPs (GEW). The first three figure count was 200 on May 9th over the river Thames at Cock Marsh, Cookham (J Ros) and there were 150 at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 30th (FJC). However, a string of much larger counts was recorded at Theale GPs in late May and early June peaking with a minimum of 800 at Theale Main GP on Jun 1st (RCr). Unlike previous years there were no large counts from Queen Mother Reservoir, in fact no reports at all in this period, indicating either no significant numbers or a lack of observer coverage and attention. As per usual all large counts were associated with substantial still or moving water bodies emphasising the specie's dependence on the small insects they provide. **Summer:** this is always a difficult species to prove breeding, the high and often inaccessible nest sites, in urban areas not favoured by birdwatchers, lead to sparse and sometimes less than compelling breeding evidence. Reports of birds returning to regular territories and screaming aerial parties later provided strong circumstantial evidence of breeding having taken place. Only three records showed clear indications; on Jun 8th five pairs nesting in the roof of a hotel being demolished in Maidenhead were saved by the intervention of a police wildlife officer (BDC). On Jun 12th one was seen flying up into the corner eaves of a house in Wilson Road, Reading (SAG) and on Jul 7th four adults were seen apparently bringing food to a nest site in Newbury (M and I Gardner). Widespread declines in this species may warrant increased attention from observers to try to locate breeding sites in urban areas. Aside from the high numbers at Theale GPs which continued into early July, for example 400 on the 13th (RCr), the highest count was 100 at Moor Green Lakes on Jul 25th (RCM). **Autumn:** as usual, numbers fell away during August but unlike some previous years there were no pre-migration large gatherings recorded and the last birds (by all of 90 minutes) were at least 5 over Theale Main Pit on Sep 16th (AVL).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

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

This avian gem inhabits most of the lakes, gravel pits, rivers and brooks county-wide. There was also a single record from QMR and reports of garden visits. **First winter:** it was reported from about 47 sites in January and February. Apart from one record of three birds, all reports involved one to two birds. One at Pope's Meadow, Binfield was seen to catch a minnow from

the balance pond on Feb 21st (DAMD). **Summer/breeding:** it was reported from about 66 sites between March and July, breeding having been confirmed at four. Later reports in June and July may possibly involve juveniles dispersing from other sites. On the assumption that records of two birds together in summer relate to pairs, possible breeding was reported from 18 sites, mainly along the Kennet valley. Working from west to east: there was a pair from March to May at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford, with four there on May 10th (JSWo); a pair at The Wilderness, Kintbury on Apr 11th and May 9th (RHar); a pair at West Meadows, Marsh Benham on May 30th (IW); a pair at Brimpton Mill on Mar 26th (GEW); a pair at Woolhampton GP on Mar 6th (WeBS); a pair on the River Enborne at Aldermaston on May 4th (RCr); a pair near Streatley STW on Apr 25th (NJB); one was seen carrying a fish at Padworth Lane GP on Jun 30th (MSFW) and a high count of two to four were present there the same day (PEH); a pair were sunning themselves at Sulhamstead Lock on Jun 7th (SAG); a pair were seen in courtship display flight at Hosehill Lake LNR Theale on Feb 15th (AVL); a pair along the Sul Brook, Pangbourne on Jan 17th (GJSu) and Feb 22nd (ATa); one carrying a fish at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jun 8th (RM); a pair busy carrying food to a nest-hole at Aston at 20:30 on Jun 5th (ANS); two at Moor Green Lakes on Jun 21st may have been a pair (TGB) and a juvenile was reported with an adult male there on Aug 8th a pair at Cockmarsh on Apr 23rd (PNe); two at The Odney Club, Cookham on Jun 22nd (MV) may have been a pair; three at Windsor Great Park on Mar 18th (HWE) and a pair on the River Thames between Ham Lane and the B3021 at Old Windsor on Apr 14th (R M Turner). Other locations included the River Lambourn, River Pang, Holy Brook, Emm Brook, The Cut, York Stream and Grand Union Canal Slough Arm. There were two unexpected occurrences: one at Swinley Brickpits, South Ascot on May 20th (DJB) was a rare visitor there and one at Herschel Park, Slough on Jul 11th (BDC) was believed to be the first sighting for the park. **Autumn/second winter:** there were reports from over 70 sites between August and December, involving one to four birds although they were mainly singles. A presumed roadkill was found at Frilsham on Sep 1st (BL). One at Queen Mother Reservoir on Sep 10th (PNe) was their only record this year. Two flew past NJB in his garden at Cleeve Court, Streatley on Sep 13th. One was attracted to the flood at Eton Wick on Sep 21st (KPD). An unusual report was of one perched on the top of a tall birch tree in AVL's garden in Southcote, Reading on Oct 9th, the nearest water being over 600 yards away.

Editorial note: the species account writer made a particular study of Kingfisher in 2015 and provides a useful summary of the geographical distribution of this species in the county.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident (Amber Listed)

Records came from throughout the county except for the more open downland and the centres of some urban areas due to the lack of suitable arboreal breeding habitat. Several records mention the specie's liking for areas of short cropped grass when hunting for food. There were four equal highest counts of seven, without any juveniles involved, these were: Burghfield GPs on Apr 5th (RCr), Greenham Common on Jul 29th (IW), at the same location there were very possibly the same birds on Aug 1st (RJP) and finally at Queen Mother Reservoir on Aug 19th (PNe). These high counts were broadly similar to previous years. **Breeding:** there were seventeen records, a total which is within the usual range. All of these were sightings of the distinctively marked juveniles away from the nest sites which are far less obvious than the noisy Great Spotted. Apart from this there was a pair seen engaging in courtship display at Bowdown Woods, Greenham on Apr 6th (MJM). In the early breeding period there was a record of a dramatic 'mock fight' display on the ground between two males at Greenham Common on Mar 11th (RR).

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and increasing resident (Green Listed)

This is the most common and widespread woodpecker which breeds throughout the county apart from some of the higher ground and a few urban areas which lack suitable arboreal breeding habitat. The highest count was eight, three of which were drumming in South Forest, Windsor Forest on Apr 6th (DJB). There were seven including two pairs and one drumming in Swinley Park on Apr 18th (DJB) and six again in South Forest consisting of three pairs attending nest holes with young on May 25th (DJB). Away from the forests in the east of the county there were six counts of five reported at Greenham Common on Feb 12th (JL), Winterbourne on Apr 28th (JL), Thatcham Marsh on Jun 4th (RJC), Welford Military Base on Jun 18th (RJC), Frogmill Spinney, Hurley on Sep 30th (PNe) and Boxford on Dec 4th (RJC). These counts are broadly in line with previous years. **Breeding:** at least 24 pairs were confirmed to have bred at 20 sites which is fewer than some previous years and might reflect less inclination for observers to submit reports due to the species' apparently more common status. The total number of reports was around 20% down on two years before but crucially there were far fewer indications of possible breeding so perhaps a species not to be taken for granted. The highest number of active nests at one location was the three in South Forest.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce resident whose numbers continue to decline (Red Listed)

Sadly, this species decline continues with records from only 12 locations (this compares with 29 in 2011); six in west Berks, three in mid Berks and three in east Berks. Again, there were no reports from the former stronghold of the Windsor Forest and Great Park area and it must be assumed that the species continued existence there is now in some doubt. Increased competition for nest sites from other species and other woodpeckers might be part of the cause. Of the aforementioned sites only four (Bradfield, Dinton Pastures CP, Greenham Common and Thatcham Marsh) recorded birds on more than one occasion which could point to wandering birds. There was one report of a possible pair at Bottom Lane GPs though the observer was not sure of the presence of the female. Sadly, all other reports were of singles and with no juveniles, or even birds of opposite sex at the same site. This species' breeding status in the county must be under some threat.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

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

Something of a Berkshire speciality, the Woodlark has been treasured and well monitored in its principal areas of Greenham Common and Swinley Forest. At least 21 territories were found, well down on recent years, though to some extent due to poorer coverage in Swinley Forest. **First winter:** birds returning to their breeding grounds arrived on Feb 8th at two sites: Greenham Common, where four were found (JL, IW) and the Poor's Allotments, Ufton Nervet, where one was in full song (PH). Numbers at Greenham Common increased to ten on Feb 20th (JL) and by the end of the month two further sites were occupied, there being two near the Old Rectory Padworth on Feb 27th (GJSu) and three at Wishmoor Bottom the same day (DJB). **Spring/Summer:** the information is summarised in the table (for details of Swinley Forest Special Protection Area, see Crowley *et al.*, 2012, *The Birds of Berkshire 2012*, 9–16).

	No. territories	Max count (incl. young)	Observers	Notes
Snelsmore Common	1	3	RGi, RH, IW	
Greenham/Crookham Common	3+	19	MJD, GJS, ABT+	1 pr confirmed breeding
Paices Wood, Wasing	1	1	JLe	
Decoy Heath, Aldermaston	1	1	JLe	
Padworth	1	2	GJSu	1 pr confirmed breeding
Padworth Common	1	2	TGB, KEM, JLe	1 pr likely breeding
Ufton Nervet	1	6	PH, GEW	
Swinley Forest SPA:				
Crowthorne Woods	3	1	CRG	2 pr confirmed breeding
MOD Heathland/Wishmoor B	3	5	DJB, RJG	
Sandhurst Royal Mil Academy	?	?		No records received
South Ascot	4	6	DJB	1 pr likely breeding

Autumn: nearly all the reports were for Greenham Common, where the highest count was 12 on Sep 13th (DWK), with eight still present on Oct 1st (IW), and four on the latest date of Nov 10th (IW). Elsewhere one flew over Padworth on Oct 23rd (GJSu) and three flew S over Walbury Hill on Oct 26th (IW). Curiously, as in 2013, there were no reports for Wishmoor Bottom.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

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

Still plentiful in open countryside, BBS surveys suggest that the Skylark has declined to an extent since 2000, although the evidence is not yet conclusive. Numbers outside the breeding season were below par this year. The approximate numbers of localities from which it was reported are presented below.

Localities	west Berkshire	mid Berkshire	east Berkshire
January-March	21	12	7
April-August	40	10	30
September-December	21	8	16

First winter: it was reported in disappointing numbers and with little to draw attention to. In January and February, only three flocks exceeded the 20 mark, all west of Reading: 34 at Padworth Lane floods on Jan 22nd (RJB), 20 at Sulham/Purley on Feb 10th (JLe), and 60 at Englefield on Feb 18th (RCr). Song was first recorded on Feb 10th, when two were aloft in full song at Purley (ATa), then on Feb 14th, when seven were present at Padworth Lane floods (RJB). In March, little movement was observed, and a mediocre showing included 20+ at Remenham Hill on Mar 1st (MFSW), a loose flock of 30+ in stubble near Banhams Farm, Fifield on Mar 6th (MFSW), 21 at Walbury Hill on Mar 11th (IW) and 19 at Remenham Hill on Mar 19th (ABT). **Spring/Summer:** although breeding was presumably widespread, it was confirmed only at Woodlands Parks Fields, Maidenhead, where the first juvenile was seen on Jun 12th (DJB). Higher counts included 60 at Englefield on Apr 6th (RCr), 26 at Compton Downs on Apr 9th (IW), 50 at Englefield on Apr 28th (RCr), 24 at Bury Down on Apr 30th (MJD, RRK), 21+ along The Ridgeway from Starveal to Blewbury Down on May 15th (DJB), 27 along The Ridgeway from Streatley Warren to Roden Down on May 27th (DJB) and 21 at Compton Downs on Jul 17th (PNe). MSFW points out that eight plus at Holyport on Jun 21st is a high density for that part of the county.

Autumn/Second winter: there was an influx in October. Migrants passing through were initially in short supply, beginning Sep 19th, when six over Cookham Dean (BDC), followed by one to the south at Wigmoreash Pond on Sep 20th (SAG), then a few more until one over Whiteknights Park, Reading on Oct 25th (DFI). Counts only managed to pass 40 at four well-watched sites: at Englefield there were 40 on Sep 23rd, 100+ on Sep 29th, 80 on Oct 10th and 140 on Oct 14th (RCr); at Woodlands Park Fields, Maidenhead 50 on Oct 7th, 75 on Oct 13th, 150 on Oct 15th and again on Oct 22nd (DJB); at Compton Downs 60 on stubble on Oct 10th (NJB); and at Combe Hill 56 flew up from a freshly sown field on Oct 26th (IW). Numbers fell in November and December, with a maximum of 33 at Eastbury Down, Lambourn on Dec 4th (IW). Song was noted at Tilehurst on the late date Nov 4th (WB).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

The low number of breeding records appears reflect either under-reporting or a genuine decline. **Spring:** passage commenced on time with 16 at Lower Farm GP on Mar 13th (NC) and seven there on Mar 14th (JL, IW), followed by one at Borough Marsh, Wargrave on Mar 15th (ABT). Lower Farm GP hosted much of the action in March, with 16 on Mar 16th (RHS), 10 on Mar 19th (GJS), six on Mar 20th (C Bur), and 20 on Mar 21st (JPM). Elsewhere there was one at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Mar 18th (RM), three at Woodspeen on Mar 20th (IW), three at Searle’s Farm Lane GP on Mar 21st (JA) and three at Thatcham Marsh (BJW) the same day, three at Woolhampton GP on Mar 24th (RCo) and one at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures on Mar 26th (RM). The main passage came late insofar as it was lighter than normal in April but much heavier than normal in the first half of May. In April, counts struggled to exceed 40, with c50 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 1st (GJS), 50 there on Apr 11th (JL, IW), 41 at Thatcham Marsh on Apr 12th (RRK), 300 at Lower Farm GP on April 26th (NC) and 100 there on Apr 29th (IW). Some very good counts for May included 200 at Lower Farm GP on May 5th (MJD), 100 at Theale Main GP the same day (AVL), 100 at Lower Farm GP on May 6th (IW) with 150 there on May 9th (NC), 140 at Huntsgreen Farm, Woodspeen on May 23rd (BR) and 50+ at Theale Main GP on May 29th (KEM). **Breeding:** the information received of birds around nesting holes was sparse this year; the four localities concerned are summarised in the table. Nine localities were recorded in 2013 and breeding activity appears to have been lower or under-reported; more counts of holes in use and young would be welcome. The wall at Hosehill Lake was in use, with young visible, as late as Aug 22nd (CMc).

Locality	No. adults nearby	No. holes used	Observers
Woodspeen (artificial bank)	140	approx. 140	JL, IW
Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale (artificial bank)	35		RCr, LGL, CMc, KEM
Kennetmouth, Reading	5	1	LBM
Black Pott’s Viaduct, Jubilee River	7		RMH

Autumn: congregations are normal in July, ringing recoveries having shown that they can include passage migrants (see *The Birds of Berkshire*, 2nd edition 2013) as well as local birds. Flocks were larger than usual this year, although not exceptional: triple figure counts were made up of 300 at Theale Main GP on Jul 13th (RCr), 250 at Moatlands Lake on Jul 25th (RCr), 400 at Theale Main GP on Jul 25th (RJB) and 100 at Theale Main GP on Jul 29th (RCr). Passage slackened in the first three weeks of August, then recovered to a similar level, with c300 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 24th (MJD), then daily counts were received for Theale Main GP of c100 on Aug 24th (KEM), c200 at on Aug 25th (KEM), 100+ on Aug 26th (AVL) and 300 on Aug 27th (RJB). The month ended with 100 at Lower Farm GP on

Aug 31st (IW). However, September produced relatively small flocks capped at 30 until a conservative estimate of 100 appeared at Theale Main GP on Sep 14th (AVL); only singles followed, apart from 50 at Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale on Sep 16th (AVL) and 20 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 19th (IW). Passage ended with an isolated and notable record in October of 100+ Sand Martins and House Martins at Hosehill Lake on Oct 6th (AVL). Remarkably, many last sightings fall in the narrow band between Oct 3rd and 6th.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Suggestions of breeding were confined to eight sites, which does not do justice to this delightful bird, common in rural parts of Berkshire. **Spring:** a moderate passage began half-heartedly and peaked in the last week of April, a week later than average. The first arrivals appeared on Apr 1st with three at Harvey's Meadow, Hungerford (JSW), two at Lower Farm GP (GJS), and two at Woodlands Park Fields, Maidenhead (DJB), followed by six at Lower Farm GP on Apr 2nd (IW) and four at Burnthouse Lane GP also on Apr 2nd (KEM, RHS). The trickle continued with two at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 3rd (ABT), two at Sandford Farm, Woodley on Apr 3rd (NE) and one at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures on Apr 4th (MFW). For about three more weeks counts were rather low; those above 35 were 40 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 4th (JL, IW), 60 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 11th (JL, IW), 70 at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 11th (NS), 40 at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre (Muddy Lane GP) on Apr 14th (GJS) and 50 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 18th (JL, IW). The last week of April brought the normal build-up of flocks, including 200 at Theale Main GP on Apr 25th (RCr), 100+ at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 26th (RM), c60 at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 26th (RCM), approximately 100 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 27th (BL) and 100+ at Theale Main GP on Apr 27th (AVL). A flock of 45 at Bray GPs on Apr 26th contained a bird with white tail streamers and end of body (SAG). Passage dipped in the first week of May, with 40 at Lower Farm GP on May 2nd (JLIW) and May 3rd (RRK), 30 at Burnthouse Lane GPs, Pingewood on May 5th (AVL), 30 at Lower Farm GP on May 5th (MJD) and 100 at Theale Main GP also on May 5th (AVL). Passage waned in the remainder of the month, excepting 120 at Lower Farm GP on May 14th (IW) and 100+ at Theale Main GP on May 29th (KEM). **Breeding:** indications of breeding were reported from eight localities: Kintbury, Boxford, Farnborough, Brimpton, Cookham, Newell Green, Holyport and Knowl Hill. A pair were breeding at Bradley Wood Cottages, Boxford on Jun 16th and four fledglings were flying on Jul 17th (GDS). A pair were nesting in a barn at Manor Farm, Brimpton on Jun 19th (JPM). A party of 20+ around Stroud Farm, Holyport on Jun 21st included many recent fledglings (MSFW). A pair with three young at Newell Green on Jul 29th very likely bred there (MSFW) and there was a flock of 20 at Knowl Hill which included juveniles on Aug 7th (BDC). There was a late record of juveniles perched on a dead tree being fed by parents at Strand Water, Cookham on Sep 6th (MV). **Autumn:** passage was strong. Early signs of migrants were 40 at Lower Farm GP on Jul 24th (IW), 75+ at Wokingham STW on Jul 24th (DJB) and 50+ at Walbury Hill, Combe on Jul 31st (DJB). Passage remained fair in the first three weeks of August and then escalated. Triple figure counts were 300 at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Aug 23rd (JA), 150 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 24th (JLS), c700 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 24th (NC,MJD), c300 at Theale Main GP on Aug 24th (KEM), c400 at Theale Main GP on Aug 25th (KEM), 100 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 26th (IW), 100+ at Theale Main GP on Aug 26th (AVL), 200 at Theale Main GP on Aug 27th (RCr), 200 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 31st (IW) and 600 at Theale GPs on Aug 31st (AA). High numbers were sustained through the first three weeks of September, many moving S or SE, and included c100 at Wokingham STW on Sep 1st (DJB), 1000+, probably many more, at Theale Main GP on Sep 4th (RCr), 100 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 5th (IW), 100 at Welford Military Base on Sep 5th (RJC), a steady movement south

of 200 at Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford on Sep 10th (RRK), 120 at Lower Farm GP on Sep 12th (IW), 100+ at Theale Main GP on Sep 14th (AVL), 100+ at Wokingham STW each day between Sep 14th and 18th (DJB), a steady movement south of 150+ over Greenham Common on Sep 17th (AEDH), 250 ("likely double") over Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on the same day (FJC), as well as 100+ at Widbrook Common, Maidenhead also on the same day (MV), 200 north of Streatley on Sep 20th (NJB), and a steady trickle of 100 through Bury Down, West Ilsley on Sep 24th (IW). Passage dwindled in October into mostly single figures, although there were perhaps 23 at Purley on Oct 17th (NJB). Singles passed through daily from Oct 20th to Oct 25th, on which date came one at Woose Hill, Wokingham (PBT). The last record of the year involved a 1st winter at QMR on Dec 1st (CDRH) which is the latest record since at least 1974.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

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

Although so familiar around human habitations, this species should not be taken for granted, as it may well have declined by over 50% in Berkshire since 2000 (see the Berkshire Bird Index 2015). **Spring:** fifteen at Lower Farm GP on Mar 28th (MIGW) provided the first record of the year, a normal arrival date. Next were four at Theale Main GP on Mar 31st (AVL) and 50 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 1st (GJS). The first three weeks of April yielded mainly single figure records; those above 30 comprised 60 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 11th (JL, IW), 45 there the following day (MIGW) and 36 flying north through Streatley on Apr 19th (NJB). Numbers proved to be unremarkable during the rest of April, only surpassing 30 on four occasions: 32 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 24th (IW), 60+ at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 26th (RCM), 30 at Lower Farm GP on Apr 27th (JLS) and 50+ at Theale Main GP on Apr 27th (AVL). As usual, much larger flocks arrived in May, including 100 at Lower Farm GP on May 5th (MJD) and 100 at Theale Main GP the same day (AVL), 350+ at Black Swan Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on May 6th (FJC), 100 at Lower Farm GP on May 15th (JLS) and again on May 19th (JLS), c100 at Moor Green Lakes on May 19th (RCM) and remarkable counts for the end of May were made at Theale Main GP with 300+ on May 29th (KEM) and 200+ on May 31st (RRi). **Summer/breeding:** unusually high numbers continued into June, notably 150 at Theale Main GP on Jun 1st (RCr), 100+ at Woolhampton GPs on Jun 9th (KEM) and 350+ at Theale Main GP the same day (KEM). Indications of breeding were observed at Kintbury, Brimpton (six active nests, (GEW)) Burnthouse Lane GP, Twyford, Jennet's Park Bracknell, White Waltham, Winkfield, Cookham, The Odney Club Cookham (six nests on one accommodation block, (BDC)), Englemere and Windsor Great Park (some 50 nests in use on the Royal School Building and many other buildings having breeding birds (BDC, DJB)). No nests could be found in a well-covered survey square at QMR on Jul 5th (RMH). **Autumn:** in July several gatherings reached 50–60 and there were 100+, including many juveniles, at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Jul 12th (DJB). Similar gatherings occurred in August until numbers rose in the last week, with 200 at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Aug 23rd (JA), c500 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 24th (MJD), c400 at Theale Main GP on Aug 24th and 25th (KEM), 100 at Hosehill Lake LNR, Theale on Aug 26th (AVL), 100+ at Theale Main GP on Aug 26th (AVL), 150 there on Aug 27th (RJB), and 100 at Lower Farm GP on Aug 31st (IW). Momentum gained in September, surging in the first week. Amid many sizeable flocks were a dozen of 200+, as follows: 500 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 4th (FJC), 200 at Searle's Farm Lane GPs on Sep 4th (JA), a massive 2500+ ("probably many more") at Theale Main GP on Sep 4th (RCr), 200 at Welford Military Base on Sep 5th (RJC), 500 at Streatley on Sep 13th (NJB), 250 at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Sep 17th (FJC), 300 at Bradfield on Sep 19th (P D Moore), 500 passing through Streatley on Sep 20th (NJB), 200 at Thatcham Marsh

on Sep 20th (IW), 200 at Lavell's Lake on Sep 23rd (FJC), 200 moving mainly west over Bury Down, West Ilsley on Sep 24th (IW) and 200 at Moor Green Lakes the same day (RCM). In an abrupt drop, no more than 10 were seen anywhere for the rest of the month. Nevertheless, October featured an exceptional count of 500+ ("conservative estimate of a huge flock feeding over the pit in the rain") at Hosehill Lake on Oct 6th (AVL), with c100 juveniles there on Oct 8th (AVL) but none on Oct 11th (DAMD). No further sightings were made until two at Woodlands Park, Maidenhead on Oct 17th (DJB) and two at Lavell's Lake on Oct 18th (FJC), an early final departure date.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

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

The substantial decline in Berkshire may be accelerating. **Spring/summer:** no distinct passage birds were found away from breeding areas and first to return were no fewer than six males, all in song, at Wishmoor Bottom on Apr 9th (MHu). Then came one at Greenham Common on Apr 13th (JL), four in song at Swinley Park on Apr 18th (DJB) and one at Snelmore Common on Apr 22nd (JL). The information received is summarised in the table. About 17+ territories were reported, with breeding confirmed in three: a sad situation compared with the 74 territories in 2005, and the 42 territories just two years ago in 2013, though the reduction in territories seems due in part to poorer coverage.

Locality	No. territories	Max count (incl. young)	Observers	Notes
Walbury Hill	1?	1	IW	Single report Jun 1st
Snelmore Common	1	2	JL, GDS, IW+	
Greenham/Crookham Common	1?	2	JL, IW+	
Bucklebury Common	2	4	RCr, KEM, RP	
Padworth Common	3+	3	TGB, MSFW+	1 pr confirmed breeding
Swinley Forest SPA:				
Crowthorne Woods	2?	3	ABT	Single report Apr 28th
MOD Heathland/Wishmoor B	3+	5	MO	
Sandhurst Royal Mil Academy	?	?		No records received
Swinley Park	4	4	DJB, MSFW	1 pr confirmed breeding
Buttersteep, South Ascot	2	3	DJB, MSFW	1 pr confirmed breeding
Swinley Brickpits, South Ascot	1	1	RD, MSFW	

Autumn: just one at Greenham Common on Sep 2nd (JL, IW) to end an ominous year.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

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

The dramatic decline of this formerly common species in Berkshire was highlighted this year, because the only indications of breeding came from fragmentary reports of one or two singing birds. It was much more widespread outside the breeding season. The approximate numbers of localities from which it was reported are presented below.

Localities	west Berkshire	mid Berkshire	east Berkshire	Total
January-April	30	10	10	50
May-August	7	1	0	8
September-December	26	21	17	64

First winter: flocks were hardly noteworthy in January and February, the highest counts being 30 at Bury Down on Jan 5th (RRK), 40 at nearby Cow Down on Feb 7th (ABT) and 25 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Feb 8th (DJB). **Spring:** as usual, birds on passage inflated numbers in March and April. In March, numbers at Burnthouse Lane GP rose from 12 on Mar 1st (RJB) to 50+ on Mar 9th (AVL) and 67 on Mar 16th (ABT). Two were in song at Greenham Common on Mar 10th (ABT), although no further singing was reported from that site. There were c50 at Cow Down on Mar 17th (RCW), 55 at Bagnor on Mar 18th (JL, IW), 100+ at Park View Farm on Mar 20th (MHu), 49 at East Garston Down on Mar 25th (ABT), and 42 heading N and NW in one hour over Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on Mar 27th (FJC). Higher numbers in April fell in the first two weeks with little subsequent movement: 70+ at Field Farm GP, Theale on Apr 3rd (KEM), 48 at Walbury Hill on Apr 6th (IW), 84 in a single flock at East Garston Downs on Apr 7th (ABT), 38+ at Burnthouse Lane GP on Apr 13th (KEM), 40 at Greenham Common the same day (MJL), and 30 at Combe Gibbet on Apr 14th (JLS). **Summer/breeding:** all but one of the records between May and August related to west Berkshire: Combe Gibbet, Walbury Hill, Welford Military Base, Newbury, Sheep Down, Greenham and Crookham Commons, and Langley Mead, Shinfield. It is dismaying that, apart from one in song at Walbury Hill on Apr 10th and again on Jul 31st (DJB), there were no indications of breeding. **Autumn/second winter:** as usual, a surge in reports from mid-September of small flocks and birds flying over marked the start of passage. Higher counts consisted of 23 at Crookham Common on Sep 16th (IW) and 32 there on Sep 19th (JL), 30 on Compton Downs on Sep 19th (NJB), 70 at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP, mostly heading south, on Sep 19th (FJC), 40 on a ploughed field at Summerlease GP on Sep 19th (BDC), 70 at Burnthouse Lane GP on Sep 20th (KEM) with 50+ there on Sep 21st (AVL), 32 at Greenham Common on Sep 22nd (IW), 30 at QMR on Sep 23rd (PNe), 24 at Bury Down on Sep 24th (IW), 150 on landfill near Lavell's Lake on Sep 26th (FJC), 65 at Streatley Farm on Sep 27th (NJB) and 39 at Walbury Hill on Sep 28th (IW). Smaller numbers followed in October, just two climbing above 30, which were 32 at Combe on Oct 7th (RHar) and 34 at Borough Marsh, Wargrave on Oct 27th (ABT). The year continued to wind down, producing a highest November figure of only 25 at Smallmead Tip on Nov 16th (AVL) and a highest December figure of 20+ there on Dec 10th (AVL).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

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

Records showed the normal pattern for recent years. **Spring passage:** one reported at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 22nd (RN) may have been the *A. p. littoralis* reported earlier in the day. **Autumn passage:** there were nine singletons at QMR on Sep 27th, Oct 3rd, Oct 4th and 5th, Oct 10th, Oct 24th and 25th, Oct 28th (all CDRH), and Oct 30th (PNe), followed by two on Nov 1st and one on Nov 2nd (both CDRH).

ROCK PIPIT (LITTORALIS) *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

A bird photographed at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 18th (CDRH) showed rather subtle characteristics of the Scandinavian race. A more obvious bird appeared there on Mar 19th (CDRH), and a different individual was present on Mar 22nd (CDRH).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

Five records involving up to eleven birds. **First winter:** one with Meadow Pipits at Horton on Jan 11th (CDRH) flew off SE. **Spring passage:** none were reported **Autumn passage:**

one stayed at Queen Mother Reservoir from Nov 22nd to Nov 28th (MMc *et al.*), being joined by a second on Nov 27th (CDRH). Towards the end of the year there was another sighting of a single at Horton on Dec 19th (CDRH) and additionally at an undisclosed site, there was a count of five on Dec 18th increasing to seven on Dec 23rd (both CDRH). [The unusual numbers at this site are thought to be due to temporarily ideal feeding conditions and an unusually mild December.]

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

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

It is likely that this species is under-recorded despite the well-documented and significant decline both across the county and nationally. **Spring:** the first for the year was at Burnthouse Lane GP with a male on Apr 8th (P Brant), then there were one or two passage birds at Moor Green Lakes from Apr 11th (RCM) which stayed into May (NS, ABT, RJG) then at least three males at Burnthouse Lane GP on the 13th (KEM) At Padworth Lane GP there were three on Apr 16th (RJB). There was one at Greenham Common on Apr 14th (JL) three on 16th (ABT) and four on Apr 21st (AEDH) with up to four at Burnthouse Lane on Apr 24th (RJB). Just one date for passage at Lea Farm Lake with three on Apr 26th (MFW *et al.*). During May there was one at Moor Green Lakes on May 22nd (RCM). That and one on May 24th at Emmer Green (ABT) may have been late passage birds. A smattering of other singles at locations which included Welford (RJC) Theale Main GP (AVL) and Manor Farm, Brimpton (JPM). **Breeding:** present at Waltham St. Lawrence from Apr 12th to Aug 8th with juveniles being seen (SKP). There were three on Burnthouse Lane floods on May 11th (LGL), five (including four females) on May 13th (AVL) and at least one pair seen carrying food from late June in the same area. Two birds were present at Compton Downs from May (RNM, GF, LSe) staying into June. Two pairs were reported from Brightwalton Common on June 7th (GDS). A male carrying food was seen at Streatley on Jun 14th (NJB). There was a pair with a fledgling at Eastbury on Jul 5th (GDS) and two juveniles were at Waltham St. Lawrence on Aug 4th (SKP). One to two were seen in the spring and summer at several other sites but with no evidence of breeding. **Autumn:** mostly unremarkable passage at the same sites as spring plus a few others. At QMR passage started on Aug 16th then picked up during August and September. The biggest single count was of 18 on Aug 23rd (PNe). There were also two on Compton Downs on Aug 23rd (NJB), at Lower Farm GP there were eight on Aug 24th (MJD), there were two at Greenham Common on Aug 25th (JL), with eight on Compton Downs on Aug 27th and 29th (ABT), eight at Great Shefford STW on the 28th (JLS), four at Lower Farm GP on Aug 30th (RRK) with six on the 31st (BJH) and four at Freeman's Marsh on the 31st (SAG). Ten were at QMR on Sep 2nd (PNe). There were four at Deans Copse Road, Burghfield on Sep 5th (KEM), nine at Eton Wick on Sep 4th (PNe), three at Greenham Common on Sep 9th (IW, ND, MJD), five there on Sep 11th (MJD) and then fifteen on Sep 14th (DWK) with another fifteen at Dorney Wetlands on Sep 17th (BDC) and eight on Sep 19th at Dorney Common (PKe). Also, on the 19th there were six at Lower Farm GP (IW). There were one to two at Moor Green Lakes through September. Birds were reported from Widbrook Common and Wokingham into September and the last birds of the year were both on Oct 1st at Marsh Meadow, Cookham (BDC) and Greenham Common (IW).

YELLOW WAGTAIL (FLAVA) *Motacilla flava flava*

There was one Blue-headed Wagtail on Apr 16th at Crookham/Greenham Common (ABT, RRi *et al.*) and one at QMR on the same day (KEM).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Locally common resident and winter visitor (Amber Listed)

If it is possible to measure the abundance of a species by the number of locations from which it is recorded, then the count of around 135 is a positive one. As per all usual reports, between one and three were recorded at all sites, with several reporting four to six birds, such as six on Mar 15th on Padworth Lane floods (RJB), eight on Aug 18th at Moor Green Lakes new diggings (MHu), six on Aug 28th at Great Shefford STW (J L Sand), six on Sept 8th at Moor Green Lakes (RCM) and five at Freeman's Marsh on Dec 3rd (IW). **Breeding:** they either bred or attempt to breed and most of the sites from which they were reported and both attempt and success are no doubt under recorded. **Passage:** perhaps unnoticed in many locations, the autumn passage in August and September provides the best chance to see small flocks of this characterful and charming species. Most notable autumn counts did not exceed six.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Uncommon passage migrant

Two (probably females) at Padworth Lane on Mar 15th (RJB), one on Mar 17th at Brimpton Mill Road GP (W) (KEM), one on Apr 9th at Burnthouse Lane GP (BTB), also on the 9th one on Compton Downs (IW) with three at Burnthouse Lane on the 13th (ABT), two at Moor Green Lakes on Apr 13th (remaining until the 28th) (RFM) another at Burnthouse Lane from the 16th (RJB) to the 19th (SRi), one on Apr 26th at Lea Farm Lake (MFW), one on Apr 29th and 30th at Lower Farm GP (MJD, IW) and finally one on May 9th at Dorney Wetlands (BDC),

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (Green listed)

Such an abundant species is often only noticed by its winter flocks, which can vary in size, but occur throughout the county. Many sites recording flocks of 20–30, larger counts include 50 at Brimpton on Feb 1st (GEW), 70 on Mar 8th at Burnthouse Lane GP (KEM) then 104 there on 14th (KEM), 50 at Dean Copse Road on Sep 30th (KEM), 200 at the Madjeski Stadium on Oct 31st (RCr) (the county's highest count of the year) 52+ on Nov 20th at QMR (PEH) and 70 on Dec 21st at Moor Green Lakes (RFM).

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident (Green listed)

Like Wren, Blackbird and Song Thrush, this abundant species, conspicuous because of its song, is frequently reported: almost 1,300 records in 2015 (half of them from the assiduous monitoring of west Berkshire sites by Jan Legg and Ian Weston). It is difficult to draw trends from such, largely casual, records; however, the survey-based Berkshire Bird Index for 2015 shows no significant changes since 2000. Robin densities can be quite high in some habitats, particularly woodland edge, scrub and gardens. For example, there were 42 at Pinkney's Green on Feb 22nd (PNe) and at Burghfield GPs there were 71 singing on Apr 5th (RCr) both sites that offer a noisy dawn chorus, with high densities of Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Wrens as well as Robins. **Breeding** nest building was reported in gardens from mid-February in Reading (TGB) and Ascot (SA) and the first report of young being fed was on Apr 6th at Sutherland Grange (BDC).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident (Green listed)

Excellent survey work gave some surprising figures: 30–34 between April and June at Enborne (RJC), 33 at Barton Court, Kintbury on Apr 19th (JLS), 124 at Burghfield GPs on Apr 22nd (RCr), 23 at Alder Moor, Woodley on Apr 24th (B Loads), 24 at Boxford on May 23rd (RJC), 34 at Barton Court, Kintbury on Jun 9th (JLS), 42 at Maidenhead Thicket on Jun 12th (PNe) and 13 at Ashley Hill, Warren Row on Jun 19th (PNe). These, along with numerous other counts of 1–10 birds across Berkshire, show that Wren is abundant, but coverage is patchy.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Common though possibly declining resident (Amber Listed)

Under counted, like Wren, but perhaps to an even greater degree. Dunnock numbers appear high where attention has been made to get accurate figures, 14 at Pinkney's Green on Feb 22nd (PNe), 10 at Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford (IW), 15 – 21 at Burghfield GPs between April and May (RCr), 16 at Pinkney's Green on Jul 5th (PNe), 16 at Crookham Common on Oct 3rd (JL) and 11 at Cold Harbour, Knowl Hill on Nov 12th (PNe).

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

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

Most of Berkshire's Nightingale records are from the Lower Kennet Valley, a nationally important stronghold of this much-loved species, which has been in decline over much of the UK. The first arrival recorded was on Apr 10th, a typical date, at Theale Main GP (DJB), followed quickly by birds found singing at most of the probable breeding sites (see table). Almost all records were in the Kennet valley, where sites appear to have been occupied from Marsh Benham in the west to Fobney Lock, Reading, in the east. The great majority were concentrated around gravel pits in the Theale and Burghfield areas, and a small population on Greenham Common. Further east, there were territorial birds at Dinton Pastures and a single record at Whiteknights Park, Reading, on May 21st (CFo). In mid-June and early July, birds were seen feeding young at Searles Farm Lane GPs on Jun 15th (RCr) and at Sandford Lake, Dinton Pastures on Jul 20th (MFW). There were no records from The Wilderness, Kintbury and the Kennet and Avon Canal at Lower Denford – sites that have often held territories. There were two records after the end of July, both at Greenham Common, the last on Aug 22nd (JL).

Site	Earliest record (if different)			Maximum territorial birds ¹		
Marsh Benham				1	May 10th	JLS
Hampstead-Dreweats Locks K&A Canal				1	June 4th	DJB
Greenham Common	2	Apr 11th	JPM	4	May 15th	RJP
Thatcham Marsh				2	May 16th	IW
Brimpton GPs	3	Apr 17th	GEW	4	Apr 24th	GEW
Midgham				2?	May 21st	MJD
Woolhampton GP				1?	Apr 23rd	BL
Burghfield GPs	1	Apr 11th	JEA	20	Apr 22nd	JA
Moatlands GP	1	Apr 18th	SAG	5	May 3rd	RCr
Theale Main GP	1	Apr 10th	DJB	9	Apr 24th	AVL
Hosehill Lake	1	Apr 14th	RCr	4	Apr 30th	AVL
Fobney Meadows				1	Apr 21st	JLe
Dinton Pastures	1	Apr 15th	S Day	2	May 29th	RD

¹Birds reported singing; records that do not specify that the bird(s) were singing are marked “?”

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

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

There were few records in 2015. The bird present from December 2014 at QMR (considered a female or 1st winter) was seen up to Feb 15th (CDRH, MMc). A bird was found at Greenham Common on Feb 11th (GJS). There were no autumn or second winter records. A search on May 4th (RRi) found nothing at the regular breeding site in Reading town centre though a snatch of song was heard there on Jul 13th (ABT).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Localised summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Redstarts can occur almost anywhere in the county on migration, but most records come from the downs and Crookham/Greenham Common. Outside the breeding area of the east Berkshire heaths there were 42 records, from 17 sites across the county, though remarkably few, involving only four or five birds, from the main breeding areas on the east Berkshire heaths.

Spring: there were fewer spring records than in recent years: the first, a male at Hungerford Marsh on Apr 14th (ABT) and a female at Gallows Down, Inkpen (NC) on the same date, was followed by another in the far west of the county the next day, a female at Combe Wood (RCWD) on Apr 15th. Other records away from the east Berkshire heaths were at Main Pit, Theale, on Apr 23rd (AVL), Holies Hanging, Streatley, on May 4th (S La) and a female at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures, on the same day (MFW). **Breeding:** there were only five records from the east Berkshire heaths, between Apr 23rd and May 13th: single birds were seen at Wishmoor Bottom, South Ascot and Swinley Park and two in Swinley Forest, where the observer noted that he located only two singing males on May 7th, one in the MoD Danger area heard from Windsor Ride and one just east of Surrey Hill, and commented that "with no records from Windsor Forest this year it appears that the local population has crashed!" (DJB). **Autumn:** most of the year's records (38) were in the post-breeding period. On the east Berkshire heaths, a male and female were at Wishmoor Cross on Jul 15th and one at Park View Farm, Bracknell on Jul 17th (both MHu). The first away from likely breeding areas was at Whiteknights Park on Jul 4th (H Brownlow) then a male at Colebrook on Jul 31st (CDRH) with three there between Aug 28th and Sep 1st and the last on Sep 19th at Burnthouse Lane (SRi). In the river valleys there were records at Wraybury GPs, Slough, Widbrook Common, Maidenhead, Lavell's Lake, Burnthouse Lane, Woolhampton GPs, Brimpton, Kintbury, all single birds except for Lavell' Lake, where a male and female/juvenile were together on Aug 27th and there were two males on Aug 30th (both FJC). There were fifteen autumn records from Crookham/Greenham Common, involving at least ten birds from the downland, there were seven records, involving about thirteen birds, including three on Sheep Down, West Ilsley, in August (ABT) and five at Walbury Hill, Combe, in September (IW).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

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

There was a decrease in records received this year, a minimum of 98 birds compared to 122 in 2014. **Spring:** most of the spring records were between Apr 14th, when one was at Combe Gibbet (RJC) and Apr 30th. There were four records from the Compton/Ilsley Downs area, with a maximum of three at Compton on the 26th (RHS), there were also spring records from Burnthouse Lane GP and Fobney Meadow (the latter producing the highest spring total of four on the 26th (AVL)) plus single records from Dorney Wetlands, Hyde Farm and Moor Green Lakes. There were then no records until May 12th when two were at Burnthouse Lane GP with another being seen there on the 19th (AVL).

Week	Apr 10–16	Apr 17–23	Apr 24–30	May 1–7	May 8–14	May 15–21
Sites	3		6		1	1

¹ Birds at the same site were regarded as new after a gap of four days

Autumn: migration was first noted on Aug 16th with singles at Compton Downs and Queen Mother Reservoir, and thereafter records were regular until Sep 26th, save for a gap between the 6th and 11th. In August and September there were seven records from the Compton/Isley Downs area, with highest count of six at West Isley on the Aug 25th (ABT). Fourteen records from Lower Farm GP, Brompton, Englefield and Burnthouse Lane GP with a highest count of five at Englefield on Aug 30th (SRi), and records on 12 dates from Greenham and Crookham Commons, where the highest count was four at Greenham Common on August 20th (AMc). There was a scattering of records from elsewhere in the county, the highest count being three at Streatley on Sep 6th (NJB) and the highest count for Compton Downs came with four on the Sep 12th (NJB). Another four were reported at Crookham Common on Sept 16th (IW) after which there was a gap of over two weeks before two October records, one at Moor Green Lakes on the 14th (NS) and a juvenile at Burnthouse Lane GP on the 15th (AVL).

Week	Aug 15–21	Aug 22–28	Aug 29– Sep 4	Sep 5–11	Sep 12–18	Sep 19–25	Sep 26– Oct 2	Oct 3–9	Oct 10–16
Birds ¹	10	11	15	11	20	8	1		2
Sites	5	6	10	6	7	5	1		2

¹ Birds at the same site were regarded as new after a gap of four days

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

Locally common summer resident, uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor (Green listed)

The distribution of Stonechat records has not changed substantially from that shown in the county atlas surveys of 1987–89 and 2007–2011, though numbers can vary considerably from year to year (Righelato, 2014). Outside the breeding season, most of birds were found as singles or pairs spread out across the Berkshire Downs and along the river valleys, with relatively few birds found in their heathland breeding areas. The table summarises the distribution across the main habitat types through the year.

Area (sites)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Downs (10)	17	4	20	–	–	3	–	–	9	11	12	4
Berkshire Downs (9)	6	4	18	–	–	3	–	–	7	9	11	4
Walbury/Combe (1)	11	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	–
Heaths (10)	6	11	12	15	16	12	14	12	19	7	3	1
Crookham/Greenham	4	6	7	8	5	4	6	12	18	5	3	1
E Berks heaths (8)	1	5	5	7	11	8	8	–	1	2	–	–
Other (1) ¹	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
River valleys (17)	12	14	9	3	3	3	1	3	11	11	14	12
Kennet (9)	3	8	4	–	–	–	–	–	8	5	7	10
Loddon/Blackwater (3) ²	4	4	2	5	3	3	3	1	3	3	4	2
Thames (5)	5	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	5	2
Other (1) ³	1	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
County total (38)	36	29	45	18	19	18	15	14	39	29	29	17

¹ A bird at Bucklebury (DJR); ² April to July records were only at Moor Green Lakes; ³ In the area north of Bracknell, a bird was recorded at Warfield in January (DMac) and four there in March (RCM).

First winter: in 2015, following another mild winter, numbers were higher in January to March than any year since 2008, which was followed by two cold winters. The high numbers

on the Downs were largely due to records of 11 on Walbury Hill on Jan 26th (K Seymour) and a record of eight pairs around Bury Down on Mar 4th (AVL). **Breeding:** in May, a pair of adults feeding young were noted at Buttersteep, South Ascot, and two pairs at Wishmoor Bottom (DJB). Adults were present at Moor Green Lakes from March to July and juveniles were seen in May and June. Although several pairs were present on Crookham/Greenham Common through the summer, no evidence of confirmed breeding was submitted. The only summer records on the Downs were of two at Seven Barrows on June 4th (A Bolton) and one nearby on Wellbottom Down on June 24th (ABT), though no evidence of breeding was reported. **Autumn/second winter:** the highest count of the year was 18 at Greenham Common on Sep 24th (MJD). Elsewhere counts of up to 6 on Sep 25th (NJB) were recorded on the Compton Downs between the Ridgeway and East Ilsley and four on Bury Down on Dec 9th (RRi), two pairs in the Fobney Meadows area on Dec 10th and 20th (AVL) and single birds or pairs at seventeen other downland or river valley sites.

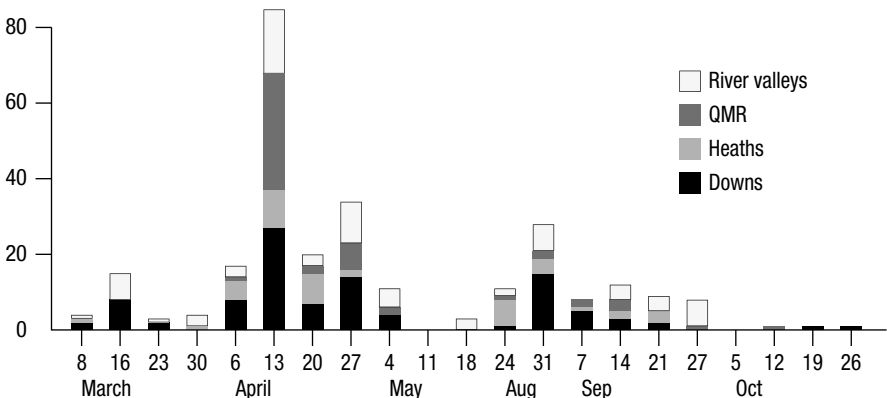
Reference: Righelato, R. C. , 2014. *The Birds of Berkshire Annual Report* for 2010, 6–9.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant (Amber Listed)

Spring the first spring arrival was a single bird recorded on Mar 12th at Moor Green Lakes (NS), followed by two at West Ilsley on the 13th (ABT). Records were then received almost daily until 9th May, with a gap between Mar 25th and 30th. Most records came from the centre and west of the county, particularly the Compton/Ilsley Downs, the south-west Downs, Crookham and Greenham Common and the lower Kennet valley, and only about 20% from east of Reading. Nearly 40% of the birds in 2015 were found on the Downs, 15% on Crookham/Greenham Common, 19% at Queen Mother Reservoir and the remainder spread widely through the river valleys and the other heaths. There was a marked peak in passage in the middle of April, with high counts of 31 at Queen Mother Reservoir on Apr 14th (CDRH) and 20 at Compton Downs on the 16th (ABT). Other notable counts were nine at Greenham Common on the 13th (PD) and Bury Down on the 15th (RRi), eight at Walbury Hill on the 15th (IW) and seven at Greenham Common on the 20th (JL). A second peak occurred at the end of the month, with six at Fobney Meadows on the 29th and 12 in the Compton/Aldworth area on the 30th (ABT). After May 9th, the spring passage concluded with up to three at Burnthouse Lane GP on the 18th and 19th, one at Greenham Common on the 19th, followed by a very late adult male at Crookham Common on Jun

Wheatear: Birds recorded per week, by topographical area.



3rd (DWK). **Autumn:** passage was first noted at Greenham Common, with one on Jul 29th (IW, JL), but was slow until mid-August, with just four more records before the 17th, but records were then almost daily until Oct 1st. In the east there were records on 18 dates from Queen Mother Reservoir, including eight on Aug 25th. ABT counted seven at both Cow Down and Sheep Down, West Ilsley on Sept 5th, but there were no other counts of more than five in the autumn. Records from built-up areas comprised one at allotments at Arthur Newberry Park, Tilehurst on Sept 5th (JLe) and one at AWE Aldermaston on Sept 23rd (DBu). The autumn also produced the only bird of the Greenland race (*O. o. leucorhoa*), one at Englefield on Sept 29th (RCr). Late records after Oct 1st comprise singles on the 4th at Brimpton (GEW), at Queen Mother Reservoir on the 12th (PNe), on the Ridgeway (unspecified location) on the 23rd (JCM) and the last at Remenham Hill on the 27th (ABT).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

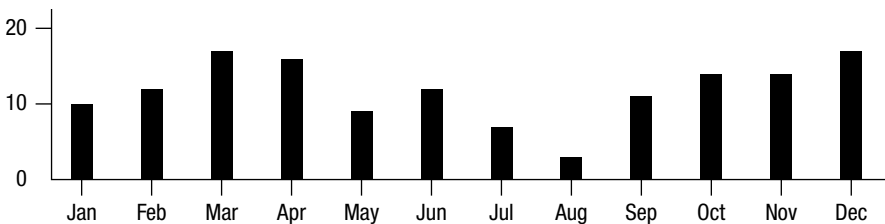
Scarce passage migrant (Red Listed)

Spring: it was a remarkable spring for Ring Ouzels, with the largest party ever recorded in Berkshire. On Apr 13th, an extraordinary influx of at least 52 birds (P Bran, J Hale) occurred at Walbury Hill. Whilst most moved quickly on, at least ten birds were reported most days up to Apr 21st, with 4 on Apr 14th (ABT), 17 on Apr 15th (IW, MHu, JA), 12 on Apr 19th (LSe) and the final three on Apr 23rd. The influx in Berkshire followed the arrival of at least 41 birds at Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire a few days earlier on Apr 10th (www.goingbirding.co.uk/bucks/birdnews accessed Sep 3rd 2017). Prior to 2015, the largest party recorded in Berkshire was one of at least 30 in Windsor Great Park on October 5th 1966. The first bird of the spring was a male at Queen Mother Reservoir on Mar 12th (RHS). Males were found on playing fields at Emmer Green on Apr 6th (DJW), at Walbury Hill on Apr 8th (PBT), at Bury Down on Apr 8th (CDRH) and at Streatley Warren on Apr 10th (ABT). On Apr 11th, a female was at Greenham Common (RRi) and a male at Pingewood GPs from Apr 12th (ABT) stayed to 14th (RCW). On Apr 13th, the day of the large influx at Walbury Hill, two males were found on Greenham Common (PD) and one or two birds reported there on most dates to Apr 21st. Single males were seen at Reading Services on the westbound M4 on Apr 21st (JA) and at Windsor Great Park on Apr 22nd (SMe). **Autumn:** the only autumn record was of a male at Greenham Common on Sep 17th (AEDH).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident and winter visitor (Green listed)

The 2015 Berkshire Bird Index, derived from the results of the Berkshire 1 km squares surveyed for the national BTO Breeding Bird Survey, shows no significant change in abundance since at least 2000. Records received into the County Database, 1258 in 2015, were evenly spread through the year. Almost half of the reports (579) came from two birdwatchers who provide a useful dataset for Greenham Common (JL, IW). Their monthly maxima for Greenham Common, shown in the figure, reflect the total numbers reported (less systematically), which were highest in winter and spring, falling in the late summer months. Some noteworthy high



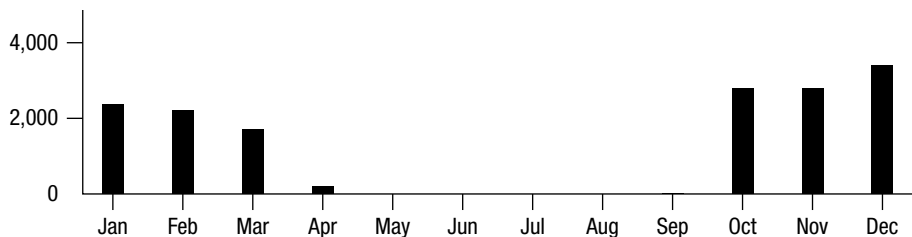
counts were 40 at Pinkneys Green on Jul 5th (PNe), 32 at Welford Military Base on Jun 18th (RJC), 33 at Barton Court on Jun 9th (JLS) and 35 at Boxford on Nov 25th (RJC).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant has bred (British breeding population is Schedule One and Red Listed)

As for Redwing, the overall numbers of Fieldfares reported were the lowest in the last four years. **First winter:** from January to March there were reports from across Berkshire of parties often up to a few hundred, the highest being 450 at Sheepdrove on Feb 11th (JLS) and 450 at Compton Downs on Mar 1st (NJB). The latest records were in west Berkshire on Apr 9th with one at Gallows Down, Inkpen, (ABT) and six at Hamstead Holt Farm, Kintbury (JLS). **Second winter:** on Sep 27th, a party of 20 were reported at Brightwalton (S Collier), followed over two weeks later by arrivals elsewhere: on Oct 14th 77 at Moor Green Lakes (NS) and one at Dinton Pastures (AR). Over the next few days parties were reported from across the county, including a total of 307 over Walbury Hill on Oct 19th (IW). In November and December there were numerous reports of over 100 birds, the highest being 700 at Cold Harbour on Dec 2nd (DJB). Unfortunately, the great majority of records contain insufficient information to draw conclusions on preferred foraging habitat, though the larger numbers of birds are generally found on the Downs or other open arable or pasture areas. Similarly, few records report the direction of movement of overflying parties; from the information available, movement in October and November is predominantly towards the south and west, but too few spring records report direction of flight to draw conclusions.

Fieldfare: sum of daily totals recorded – bird-days per month



SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor (Red Listed)

The abundance of Song Thrushes in the County has changed little in recent years: the Berkshire Bird Index for 2015 shows no significant change since 2000 and *The Birds of Berkshire Atlas*, 2nd edition (2013) showed no change in distribution between the 1987–9 and the 2008–11 surveys. Consistent with this stable situation, records received for 2015 include similar peak counts to previous years at regularly observed sites. Onn Feb 15th eight were singing at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park, (DJB), on Apr 5th 28 birds were singing at Burghfield GPs (RCr), on Apr 21st eight were reported at Greenham Common (RJC). The earliest report of birds feeding young was on Apr 18th at Swinley Park (DJB) and a bird reported collecting food at Moor Green Lakes on Aug 18th may have been feeding young in an unusually late breeding attempt (MHu). Singing was reported throughout the year except August and September, with the peak months being February to April. A bird imitating Red Kite calls was noted at Lower Farm GP on May 8th (BL). Parties of more than a few Song Thrushes are not often seen: the largest reported this year was a party of at

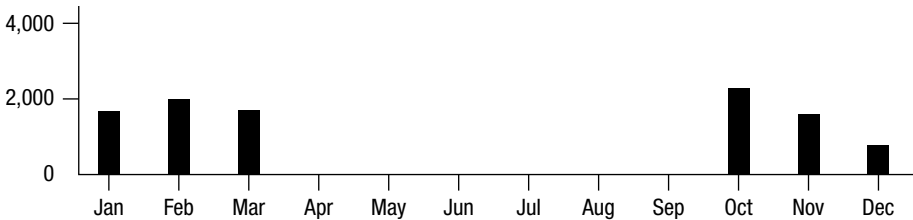
least ten at Hyde Farm, Maidenhead, on Feb 24th (PNe). There were few reports of birds apparently on passage: an influx of 11 was noted at Great Meadow Pond on Oct 18th (DJB) and one flew in high from the east at Woose Hill, Wokingham on Nov 5th (PBT).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

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

The numbers of Redwings (and Fieldfares) reported were on the low side in 2015: average monthly totals were the lowest of the last four years. More Redwings, both in numbers of birds (62%) and numbers of records (56%), were reported from east and mid Berkshire than from west Berkshire (for Fieldfares, proportionately fewer, 51% of both birds and records were in east and mid Berkshire). **First winter:** two thirds of the counts in 2015 of 100 or more (21) were in the January to March period, the highest being 270 at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on Jan 25th (DJB) and 320 at Hyde Farm on Feb 24th (PNe). Later in the winter, birds were reported singing at Moor Green Lakes on Feb 28th (RCM) and at Padworth Lane GP on Mar 3rd (PEH). The latest records were 30 at Compton Downs on Apr 9th (IW) and one at Greenham Common on Apr 13th (MJ Latham). **Second winter:** the earliest arrivals were a bird at Searles Farm GPs on Sep 27th (JA) and two heard over Bracknell on Sep 28th (DAMD). Over the following week, birds were reported from across the county. The highest counts were of 200 flying southwest over Dinton Pastures on Oct 15th (FJC) and 120 flying west over Moor Green Lakes on Oct 17th (RCM).

Redwing: sum of daily totals recorded – bird-days per month



MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common though declining resident (Amber Listed)

The Mistle Thrush has declined steeply in abundance in Great Britain since the 1970s but with some suggestion of stabilisation over the last few years (BTO Birdtrends). The Berkshire Bird Index, which started in 1994, reflects the national trend, the 2015 index showing a 36% fall since 1994, similar to the 32% fall in the national index. This decline is not reflected in the number of records received, which, with the growth of Birdtrack submissions, have increased substantially, to 405 in 2015. Most records are for the winter months and early spring, with singing reported January to April and starting again in November. The only winter records of more than seven birds were on Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park, where 13 were seen together on Feb 22nd (DJB) **Breeding:** a bird was reported sitting on a nest on Feb 20th in Lower Earley, Reading, though the nest was subsequently abandoned. In April a second attempt was made, and the adults seen bringing food in May (DJM). Elsewhere, nest building was reported in March (GDS) and birds feeding young in April (KEM). Magpies were seen taking eggs from a nest at The Odney Club, Cookham, on May 26th (BDC). **Post-breeding:** parties of four to ten birds were reported frequently from June to October and there were occasionally larger groups: 23 were feeding on the galleons on Woolley Down

on Jul 25th (GDS), 58 were seen over Silver Lane, Padworth on Aug 19th (GJSu) and there were 15 at Greenham Common on Sep 21st (RJC).

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Locally common resident (Schedule One and Green listed)

Reported throughout the year from 33 to 34 locations, slightly fewer than 2014. Most records occurring March – October, with well over 100 singing males involved. Although the Kennet Valley is the stronghold for this species several wetland sites in the east of the county also hosted populations, Dorney Wetlands for example holding nine singing males on May 2nd (DJB). Most sites held one to three singing males, but higher counts consist of six singing males at Burghfield GPs (RCr), six Harvey's Meadow (JSWo), five Moatlands GP (RCr), four at Woolhampton GP (WeBS, MO), three at Marsh Benham (DJB) and up to four at The Wilderness, Kintbury (RHar, JLS), but the highest counts of all came from Thatcham Marsh with 38 on Apr 10th, 27 May 17th, 25 on Jun 24th (all RJC) and 17 singing on May 22nd (DJB). Despite the widespread population, proof of breeding was difficult to come by, the only juveniles noted were at Great Meadow Pond Jun 7th (DJB), one ringed at Hosehill Lake LNR on Jul 31st (TGB) four present there on Aug 19th (AVL), with two ringed there on Sep 20th (TGB).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

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

An exceptionally poor year for this species, possibly as few as seven birds at five locations. The first of the year was one at Thatcham Marsh on Apr 12th (JL). This was followed by one at The Wilderness, Kintbury from Apr 18th – 29th (RHar), one at Horton GP on Apr 26th (CDRH), one at Thatcham Marsh from May 4th – 10th (MO) but with two there on May 6th (JLS), one at Wargrave Marsh on May 26th (DJB) and one at the Wilderness, Kintbury between Jun 14th and Jul 5th (JLS).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant which may be declining locally (Green listed)

After a very early bird at Moatlands GP on Mar 25th (JA) the next arrivals were not until Apr 7th (PG) & 11th (ABT) at Fobney Meadows, followed by birds at Dorney Wetlands on 14th (JCM), Lower Farm GP (GJSt) and Hosehill Lake (AVL, JPM) on 15th, and Dinton Pastures (MFW) and Fobney Island (AVL) on 16th. Widespread after this date with records coming from 43 mainly wetland sites, highest counts being 18 singing Dorney Wetlands May 2nd (DJB), 11 The Wilderness, Kintbury May 4th (JLS) and at Thatcham Marsh 15 were present May 4th and 12 on May 16th (IW) with 10 on several other dates. Few breeding records were submitted, just an adult feeding young at Cleeve Court Jun 20th (NJB) and a family group of six at Searles Farm Lane GP Jun 29th (RCr). Most birds had departed by the end of August, but a few could still be located in September, the latest being singles at Lavell's Lake on 26th (FJC), Great Meadow Pond on 27th (DJB), Englefield on 29th (RCr) and a tardy bird at Thatcham Marsh Oct 4th (IW).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant (Green listed)

This species began to appear in the second week of April with singles at Lavell's Lake, Dinton Pastures CP on 10th (JBi), Woolhampton GPs on 13th (PWD), Hungerford Marsh

(ABT) and Brimpton GP (GEW) on 14th, five at Dorney Wetlands also on 14th (BCr) and one Hosehill Lake on 15th (RCr). Numbers rapidly increased from thereon and reported from 37 locations with some sites holding healthy populations: Dorney Wetlands hosted 41 singing males on May 9th (BDC), up to 32 singing males were at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park May 17th (DJB), 25 were singing at Thatcham Marsh Jun 6th (IW) with 35 there Jul 5th (IW), 13 were at Hosehill Lake Jun 6th (RCr) and 10 were at Woolhampton GPs Jun 12th (JPM) and also at The Wilderness, Kintbury Jul 25th (JLS). Many young were reported from Great Meadow Pond in July and August (DJB) and young were also noted at Hosehill Lake in July (RCr) but presumably breeding took place at most locations where birds were present in the summer. Most had departed by early September, but late birds were at Dorney Wetlands Sep 19th (BJH), Thatcham Marsh on 20th (five) and 29th (IW) and at Hosehill Lake on 25th (AVL).

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*

Rare vagrant

One was trapped and ringed at a private site in Kintbury Jun 6th (Berkshire Downs Ringing Group per JLS) and is only the fourth Berkshire record, the others being at Theale GPs in 1963, Burghfield GPs in 1970 and Denford in 1989 (Birds of Berkshire 2nd edition 2013). There are a further five Berkshire records of *hippolais* warblers that were either Icterine or Melodious that were not specifically identified. These were in 1967, 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1986. However, the descriptions submitted for the 1974 and 1975 records suggest that these too were Icterine Warblers.

Editorial note: see article in this edition of *Birds of Berkshire Annual Report*.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

Jan/Feb: reported from 43 locations, mainly garden, involving 70+ birds. Most records concerned one to three birds but with four at Cookham (BDC), Woodley (FJC), Pangbourne (ATa) and Tilehurst (JLe). There's no doubt that they occur in many more gardens than get officially reported so the true figure is likely to be substantially higher than that given.

Spring/summer: with many wintering birds remaining well into spring it's becoming almost impossible to differentiate between lingering winter visitors and newly arrived spring migrants, especially as some wintering birds are prone to burst into song as warmer weather begins to arrive. Records in mid-March included individuals at Ruscombe on 13th (IS), Theale Main GP on 15th (RHS), Roden Down, Compton on 18th (ABT), Welford on 21st (MJM) and Burghfield GPs on 22nd (RCr) where three were present on 25th (JA, RCr), four on 27th and eight singing on 31st (RCr). In April this species became widespread and numerous with double-figure counts coming from no less than 24 sites: highest counts with Burghfield GPs holding 32 singing males Apr 18th, 61 May 13th, 44 Jun 13th and 33 Jun 29th (RCr), 27 Thatcham Marsh Jun 4th (RJC), 20 Moor Green Lakes Aug 1st & 23rd (TGB), 24 Midgham Quarry Aug 6th (JPM), 20 Greenham Common Sep 18th (JL). Although peak autumn passage occurred in August/September, October records came from 12 sites, mostly ones and twos, but 10 were at Greenham Common on 2nd (JL) and seven were at Crookham Common on 3rd (JL). There was a 10-day gap between one at Thatcham Marsh on 18th (IW, JL) and one at Greenham Common on 28th (IW, JL) with one ringed Woolhampton GP on 31st (JPM), these last two could possibly have been newly-arrived winter visitors. **Nov/Dec:** reported from 15 locations involving 21 birds, but as in the first winter period, the true figure is likely to be much higher.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Green listed)

First arrivals were reported from Moor Green Lakes Apr 15th (GDu), Padworth Lane GP on 17th (IW, JL), Dinton Pastures on 18th (FJC), Burghfield GPs also on 18th (three) (RCr), Inkpen on 19th (RHar) and Woolhampton GPs also on 19th (KGW). Numbers gradually increased through the rest of the month into May with most records consisting of one to four birds; higher numbers were reported from Snelsmore CP with six May 4th (GDS), Moor Green Lakes held seven May 16th (RCM), 12 May 10th and 10 Jun 21st, Jul 11th & Aug 1st (TGB), 12 were singing at Hosehill Lake May 4th and eight May 30th (RCr), between Aston and Remenham six were counted Jun 1st (DJB), Greenham Common with six Jul 31st (IW) and five Aug 7th (IW,JL) but the largest concentration was at Burghfield GPs where 30 were singing May 13th and 13 Jun 13th (RCr). Few breeding records were submitted: one carrying food at Hosehill Lake May 26th (AVL), an adult with two juveniles at Brimpton Jun 10th (GEW) and a family group of six at Moatlands GP Jul 20th (RCr). Most birds had departed by the end of August, but September records came from Woolhampton GP on 3rd (RJB), Midgham GP (JPM) and Greenham Common (IW, JL) on 4th, Burnthouse Lane GP (AVL) and Thatcham Marsh (RMO) on 6th, and finally two at Dorney Wetlands on 11th (BJH).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Thinly but widely distributed summer visitor and passage migrant (Green Listed)

After one Burnthouse Lane GP Apr 16th (JCM) there were no more reports until 22nd when birds were at Burghfield GPs (JA) and Field Farm GP (JA), closely followed by individuals at Lower Farm GP on 23rd (MJD), Brimpton GP (GEW), Theale Main GP (two, AVL) and Dorney Wetlands (three, ABT) on 24th, and Nuptown on 25th (RCM). Three were at Field Farm GP on 25th (JA) and apart from an adult with two juveniles at Burnthouse Lane GP Jul 9th-13th (AVL, RJB) and three at Greenham Common Aug 7th (IW, JL) with four there Aug 18th (JL) all records submitted concerned one or two birds from 45 locations. September records consist of singles at Dinton Pastures CP 1st (FJC, MV) to the 3rd (RM), 10th & 17th (FJC), Greenham Common on 4th (JL), 11th (MJD) & 18th (IW, JL), Burghfield GPs on 4th (JA), Dorney Wetlands on 11th (BJH), Walbury Hill on 11th (IW), Coldharbour, Knowl Hill on 19th (DJB) two at Shepherds Meadow also on 19th (CMG) and finally a late bird at Walbury Hill on Sep 24th.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant (Amber Listed)

One Moor Green Lakes Apr 6th, two there on 11th and four on 13th (NS) preceded others at Padworth Lane GP (DJB) and Greenham Common (two) (IW, JL) on 14th, Dinton Pastures on 15th (FJC), Bury Down (ABT) with two Burnthouse Lane GP (RJB) and four Fobney Island (AVL) all on 16th. Widespread and well distributed after this date with downland sites being a particularly favourable place to find them; 20 (16 singing) were present at Compton Downs May 15th (DJB) with 17 there Jun 25th (RJC) and a count of 37 (26 singing) was made along the Ridgeway from Streatley – Roden Down May 27th (DJB). Elsewhere, 10 were singing at Slough SF Apr 28th (BDC), 10 were at Thatcham Marsh May 7th with 11 Jun 4th (RJC), 11 were singing at Burghfield GPs May 13th (RCr), 11 were at Clapton Jun 4th (JL), 12 were at Moor Green Lakes May 10th with 10 Jun 21st and 20 Jul 11th, Aug 1st & 23rd (TGB), and 17 were at Enborne Jun 16th (RJC). Confirmed breeding was reported from 11 sites but presumably took place at many more. In line with other warbler species

most had left by the end of August but late September records consist of two Crookham Common on 16th (IW), one Dinton Pastures on 18th (AR), three Greenham Common on 18th (IW, JL) with two there on 22nd (IW), one Coldharbour on 19th (DJB) and finally one at Greenham Common on Sep 24th to 25th (IW, JL).

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

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

The bulk of records came from the east Berks heaths and Greenham & Crookham Commons. At Crookham up to five were reported Feb 25th-Oct 10th (MO) with nine Aug 9th (JPM) and six Oct 3rd (JL) whilst Greenham held up to five throughout the year (MO) with 10 Mar 10th (ABT) and nine, including five juveniles, Sep 13th (DWK). Also, three juveniles were reported there Jun 18th (JL). Meanwhile in the east of the county three pairs were present at Wildmoor Heath Feb 21st where juveniles were noted later in the year (DJS). In the Swinley Forest SPA birds were reported from four or five locations: seven were at Wishmoor Bottom on Jan 2nd and six on Mar 27th (DJB) but although present here throughout the year, they were under-recorded thereafter with a maximum count of only two singing males on May 7th (DJB) one was at Poppy Hills Jan 23rd (DJS), a male was noted in the Crowthorne Woods triangle on Feb 17th with another there on Oct 11th (DJS), two were at an undisclosed location in Swinley Forest Jul 17th (RD) and one at Caesar's Camp Sep 20th (DMac). Away from the SPA, one was present at Wellington College Heath on Aug 23rd (DJS). Wanderers away from the main sites consist of a male at Moor Green Lakes Jan 5th (RFM) and a female there Sep 25th (RFM) & Oct 3rd (RCM), one Fobney Island Nov 2nd (ABT) and one with a Stonechat at Colnbrook on Dec 20th (CDRH).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor and scarce but increasing winter visitor (Green Listed)

Jan/Feb: widely reported from 39 locations, most records consisting of one or two birds with three at Wrybury GP Jan 4th (DWr), Sandhurst STW Jan 5th (PJC), Moor Green Lakes Feb 2nd (MHu) and Streatley STW Feb 7th & 15th (NJB) but impressive numbers could be found at Roundmoor Ditch, Eton Wick with up to eight in January and 10 in February (MO) with 13 counted Feb 12th (KEM). **Spring/summer:** with so many wintering birds remaining into March and beyond there is an inevitable overlap with incoming spring migrants and to accurately determine between them is becoming difficult. Birds singing in early March from new locations include singles at Dinton Pastures CP (EN) and Emmer Green (ABT) on 6th, Padworth Lane GP on 7th (SAG) and Twyford (RCWD), Earley (RHS), Lower Padworth (PEH), Bray GP (SAG) and Brimpton Mill (GEW) all on 8th, with three at Burghfield GPs also on 8th (NJB). By the third week of March numbers were pouring in and continued so to do throughout April, 10+ counts being received from 14 sites and 20+ counts as follows: 20 Harvey's meadow Apr 6th (JSW), 24 Burghfield GPs Mar 25th with 30 on 27th, 25 Apr 5th, 29 on 12th and 21 May 13th (RCr), 26 Enborne Apr 4th (RJC) and 29 Thatcham Marsh Apr 10th (RJC). **Autumn:** during August, September and into October, with the population swelled by juveniles, 17 locations held 10+ birds and higher counts are as follows: 20 Padworth Common Aug 8th (TGB), 20 Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park Sep 13th (DJB), 20 Woolhampton GP Sep 17th (RJB), 20 Moor Green Lakes Oct 4th (TGB), 29 Dorney Wetlands Sep 17th (BDC), 30 Thatcham Marsh Sep 13th (JL) & 20 on 20th (IW), but numbers at Greenham Common surpassed these with 20 Aug 7th, 28th & Sep 4th, 30 Sep 10th, 40 on 18th, 25 on 29th and 30 Oct 2nd (JL).

Nov/Dec: with reports continuing into the last week of October there appeared to be no discernible cut-off point between late autumn migrants and wintering birds. One or two were reported from 21 locations with three Hosehill Lake Nov 4th (AVL), four along the Roundmoor Ditch, Eton Wick on Nov 16th (CDRH) and four Dorney Wetlands Nov 23rd (DCI).

CHIFFCHAFF (*TRISTIS*) *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Very scarce winter visitor

One mobile but very vocal individual at Horton GPs on Jan 1st (CDRH), two thought to be of this subspecies at Sandhurst STW Jan 5th (PJC) and one showing very well at Bray GPs on Jan 12th (CDRH). In the second winter period there was an early migrant at the Roundmoor Ditch, Eton Wick on Nov 16th (CDRH) which coincided with a major arrival along the north and east coasts.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

An exceptionally early bird was reported from Roden Down, Compton Mar 18th (ABT) and proved to be the only March record, next arrivals were not noted until Apr 1st and 2nd when one was singing at Moor Green Lakes (NS, RD), one was at Lower Farm GP on Apr 2nd (IW), two at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 3rd (MFW) and one was at Theale Main GP on 4th (ABT). Main arrival occurred mid-April when 12 were singing at Burghfield GPs on 12th (RCr), eight were at Greenham Common on 13th & 14th (JL) with nine on 21st (RJC) and 10 were at Hosehill Lake LNR on 15th (AVL). Many of those at Burghfield GPs and Hosehill Lake were thought to be passage migrants as few were reported during the summer months. At Padworth Common eight were present May 2nd (TGB) and locations where six were reported were Moor Green Lakes Apr 13th (NS) & 14th (TGB), Bucklebury Common May 7th (RCr), Swinley Forest May 7th (DJB), Crookham Common May 10th (IW, JPM) and Snelsmore Common Jun 3rd (IW). Autumn passage extended into September with singles noted at 12 sites with two Lower Farm GP on 3rd (ABT), Roden Down on 4th (ABT) and Crookham Common on 5th (JL), but notable passage occurred at Greenham Common where six were present on 4th (JL), eight on 10th (JL) and three on 18th (IW) with the last bird noted Sep 25th (RJC).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common, locally abundant resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

Single-figure counts were reported from 142 individual locations with 10+ counts coming from 15 of those sites. Counts of 20 or more were 30 singing at Cranbourne Chase May 21st (DJB), 26 Swinley Park May 13th (DJB), 22 South Forest, Windsor May 11th & 25th (DJB), 20 Whiteknights Park Oct 16th (PWJ) with 22 there Oct 25th (DFL), 20 Moor Green Lakes Oct 25th (TGB), 22 Greenham Common Nov 3rd (IW) and 30 Southcote Nov 19th (AVL). Despite the huge numbers of records submitted throughout the year breeding was only noted at Tilehurst, Twyford and Swinley Forest.

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)

This species continues to do well and would appear to be spreading across the county with summer records coming from 19 sites in addition to those in the East Berks heaths. **First winter:** one or two were present at Whiteknights Park, Reading Jan 18th – Mar 26th (JBi *et al*) and singles were reported from Prospect Park, Reading Jan 31st (ABT), Finchampstead Feb 9th (KEM) and Quarry Wood, Cookham Mar 1st (RCWD). **Spring/summer:** singles were reported from the following sites; Bishopsgate, Windsor Great Park, on Mar 10th (K Kerr), Little Sandhurst on Mar 29th and singing there from Apr 19th through spring (DJS), Streatley singing from Apr 13th to 21st (ABT), Beenham, where seen collecting nest material on Apr 13th (JLe), Earley where singing in gardens from Apr 16th to Jun 20th (MSFW), Snelsmore Common on Apr 27th (RGi), Roundoak Piece Padworth singing on My 22nd (PBr), Blacknest singing on May 24th (DJB), Sulham Woods a male on May 28th (RCo), Bowden Woods singing on May 30th (MJM), Maidenhead Thicket on Jun 1st to 3rd (BDC), Odney Club Cookham on Jul 10th (BDC) and Burnt Hill on Jul 3rd (RCr). Higher counts included two at Kintbury Chase on Apr 12th (RRi), three singing at Finchampstead Ridges on May 4th and two singing on Jun 14th (RCM), three were reported from Hermitage on Jun 7th (MJL), two at Cold Ash on Jun 14th (PGo) and two at Cheapside Ascot on Jul 1st (BDC). DJB recorded 39 territories at five woodland blocks with breeding confirmed at one location during the summer in Crown Estate and MoD lands in East Berks. **Autumn/second winter:** two were ringed at Crookham Common Sep 12th (JPM), three were at Greenham Common Sep 25th (IW,JL) with one Oct 20th (IW,JL) & 23rd (IW), singles were at Moor Green Lakes Oct 23rd (GDu) and a 1st winter female was ringed there on the 25th (TGB), Little Sandhurst Oct 26th (DJS), Woolhampton GP Oct 27th (KEM), Bullbrook, Bracknell Oct 31st (RJB), a 1st winter male ringed in a Tilehurst garden on Oct 31st (TGB), Lea Farm Lake Nov 23rd (AR,RM), Lavell's Lake Dec 3rd (JCM) and Twyford also Dec 3rd (JCM) another 1st winter male was ringed in the same Tilehurst garden on Dec 23rd (TGB) whilst up to five were ringed and seen regularly at Whiteknights Park Oct 12th to Nov 26th (MO).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Declining summer visitor and passage migrant (Red Listed)

Reports from 55 sites represents an increase over recent years. Most sites are in west Berkshire with 28, 10 in mid Berkshire and 17 in east Berkshire. The table below shows the monthly number of adult birds at these sites with the number of juveniles seen in brackets: -

	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Number of Sites	16	17	8	19	13
Number of Birds	23	29 (6)	8 (5)	29 (1)	16

Spring: the first date was May 4th when one was seen at Slough SF (DAC). **Breeding:** a regular nest box site in Upper Bucklebury seemed to be doing well with four chicks seen on Jun 28th but two days later they had disappeared. Probably predated by Great Spotted Woodpeckers. A further attempt also failed on Aug 1st, again predated but this time Crows were thought to be the culprits (BL). Better news from another regular site at Swallowfield Church, Swallowfield this year with two juveniles being fed on Jun 21st (ALHS). Further fledging was confirmed at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest with four juveniles being seen

on Jul 30th (MHu). **Autumn:** a good passage this year with many migrants being seen at various sites. There were four near Eastheath Wokingham on Aug 23rd (PKe), four at Black Swan Lake Dinton Pastures CP on Aug 25th (MFW, BTB) increasing to five by Aug 27th (FJC) and two were hawking and perching in scrubby woodland at Imperial College, Silwood Park, Sunninghill on Sep 9th (P Chapman). The last date was Sep 26th where one was observed at Whiteknights Park, Reading close to and then within the Wilderness (DFI). Only one adult and one juvenile were ringed this year at undisclosed sites (BTO website).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common and widespread resident (Green Listed)

Reported from 137 sites throughout this year. **Breeding:** a group of seven juveniles all huddled together on a branch, being fed by adults was observed at Bagnor on May 5th (IW). A similar activity was seen at Moor Green Lakes on May 7th with six young birds all sitting together on a tree branch (LGL). A high count of 28 in three family parties were at Searle's Farm Lane, Pingewood on Jun 29th (RCr), with 30+ at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Aug 30th consisting of mostly juveniles (DJB). But the maximum count was of 45 at Wraysbury GPs on Nov 11th (PNe). Ringing totals for the whole county, taken from the BTO website were of 109 juveniles, 145 adults and 263 unaged birds. There were also 268 retrapped and 5 recoveries. A full-grown bird trapped and ringed (CNB633) on October 28th, 2009 at Wraysbury GPs was retrapped on Jan 23rd this year, at the same site, making it at least 5 years, 2 months and 26 days old.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident (Green Listed)

Reports came in from 162 different sites this year equally distributed across the county. **Breeding:** six young were seen in Lower Earley, Reading on May 25th (G Turner) and the same number were seen in a Boxford back garden where fledglings were being fed by their parents in an oak tree on Jun 7th (GDS). A total of 20 birds in three family parties were at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor on Jun 14th (DJB). A high count of 41 birds were at Maidenhead Thicket on Jun 12th (PNe), with a maximum count of 46 at Snelmore Common CP, Newbury on Nov 26th (IW). Ringing results from the BTO website were 1633 pullus, 2043 juveniles, 960 adults and five unaged for the year throughout the county. 1559 were retrapped and there were eight recoveries.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident (Green Listed)

Reported from 142 sites throughout the county. The highest count was of 39 in two large groups, with one comprising 15 individuals, in Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park on Jan 14th (RMH). A colour ringed juvenile seen on an Earley garden bird table had a BTO ring on its right leg and a large yellow band/ring on its left leg (TAG). First seen on Jul 28th and again on Sep 27th when it was identified as an immature male. No information has been obtained as to any colour ringing schemes in the surrounding area, so it may have come from further afield. Ringing reports on the BTO website were of 890 pullus, 744 juveniles, 479 adults and three unaged. There were 784 retraps and 10 recovered rings. A juvenile male trapped and ringed (X053171) at Thatcham Marsh on July 26th, 2008 was retrapped at the same site, for its fourth time, on Apr 5th this year making it at least 6 years, 8 months and 10 days old.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common and locally abundant resident (Green Listed)

Recorded from 88 different sites right across the county primarily where pines or conifers occur. Increasingly being seen on gardens feeders especially in the winter period but not exclusively so. **Breeding:** four juveniles seen at Temple Golf Course, Hurley, Maidenhead on Jun 16th (BDC) were the only reported young on the usual reporting platforms, (but see below the ringing records from the BTO website). In a Woodley, Reading garden one bird was seen to make multiple visits in quick succession to the sunflower heart feeders, then dropped down below a tree to cache food under dead leaves Nov 16th (RM). This behaviour has also been observed at other sites including hiding seeds in an Earley back garden lawn (RHS). The highest count was of 30 at Snelsmore Common CP on Nov 8th (IW, JL). Ringing records for the year in Berkshire from the BTO website produced seven pullus, 237 juveniles, 81 adults and two unaged birds. There were also 237 retrapped and four recoveries. A first-year bird, originally trapped and ringed (L324297) at Greenham Common, Newbury on September 19th, 2010 was controlled at the same site on Jan 4th this year giving it an age of at least 4 years, 3 months and 16 days.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Very scarce and declining resident now confined to West Berkshire (Red Listed)

Of the 35 reports, throughout the year, the clear majority are still from the Combe/Walbury Hill area in the west of the county. The maximum count was of six, spread over two locations with a group of four and a separate pair in Combe Wood on Nov 26th (RHar). There were two reports of birds with colour rings attached, both in Combe Wood; two pairs seen, one bird colour ringed, red and orange, on Jan 7th (RHS) and a bird with a blue ring on its leg, on Mar 30th (D Wright). There was one report from well away from the core area, one seen at Winterbourne on Apr 28th (J L). From the BTO website ringing records were of three unaged and four retrapped birds in the county.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

A 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 45 sites across the county, with 28 in west Berkshire (SU60 westwards), 13 in mid Berkshire (SU60 to SU80) and four in east Berkshire (SU80 eastwards). The table shows the monthly distribution of individuals sighted with reported juveniles in brackets (note – see below for extra numbers of ringed juveniles). What the table illustrates most markedly is the continued decline of this species across the county, especially in mid and east Berkshire. (In 2014 it was reported from 50 locations – 40 in west Berks, seven in mid Berks and three in east Berks.).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Berkshire	24	30	35	11	7	18 (3)	8 (2)	17	12	16	20	30
Mid Berkshire	8	6	2	5	1	0	0	0	4	6	12	4
East Berkshire	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeding: a pair of adults plus at least three fledged juveniles were seen at Brimpton GPs on Jun 7th (RCr) and two young at Aldermaston GPs on Jul 22nd (JPM) were in post juvenile moult. The maximum count was of ten at Combe Wood, Combe on Mar 1st (JLS). Records of ringed birds for the year were obtained from the BTO website and are as follows: - 27

juveniles, 18 adults, six unaged and 67 retrapped individuals. A first-year female bird trapped and ringed (Y881440) on October 27th, 2012 at Harvey's Meadow, near Hungerford was retrapped for its fourth time on Apr 16th this year at the very same site. This gave it an age of at least 2 years, 5 months and 20 days.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and widespread woodland resident (Green Listed)

Records were submitted from 109 areas this year. **Breeding:** first for the year was noted at Cranbourne Chase when a pair were feeding two young at a nest hole on May 21st (DJB). At least a further six regular sites had reports of young across the county. **Counts:** high number of 16 birds were seen in South Forest, Windsor Forest on Apr 6th (DJB), but this number was exceeded by a count of 17 in Swinley Park on Apr 18th (DJB). Ringing records from the various Berkshire ringing groups sent to the BTO were of 96 pullus, 14 juveniles, 18 adults, 22 unaged and 46 retrapped birds plus one recovered ring. A fully grown male bird trapped and ringed (TS33346) on November 3rd, 2012 at Crookham, near Thatcham, and was recaptured this year on Nov 12th only two kilometers away at Crookham Common East for its third time, making it at least 3 years and 9 days old.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident (Green Listed)

Reported from 86 different locations across the county this year. **Breeding:** nest building was observed in the same tree as previous years at Wishmoor Bottom, Swinley Forest on Apr 9th with young being fed on Jul 3rd (MHu). A maximum count of ten with five singing at Swinley Park on Apr 18th (DJB). Ringing records from the BTO website showed 33 juveniles, 17 adults, nine unaged and 16 retrapped birds this year.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Rare passage migrant formerly bred (Red Listed)

Just the one record of this once regular breeder. An adult female was found at Burnthouse Lane GPs on May 17th (A Merrick *et al*). The bird showed well for the rest of the day but unfortunately could not be relocated the following day. This was the sixth record since 2000.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor (not listed)

Two records of this species in 2015, one at each end of the year. The first was discovered at Cow Down, West Ilsley Mar 14th (ABT). The bird was subsequently seen on a regular basis by (MO) until finally reported on Apr 4th (ABT). The second was at Brimpton Lakes on Oct 23rd (JWalker). This bird also proved to be quite a long stayer and was seen intermittently by (MO) until Nov 27th (GEW). This constitutes an above average year for this species which has been annual since 2009.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident (Green Listed)

There were just three double figure counts for this secretive species of Corvid in 2015. Ten birds were recorded at Land's End, Twyford GPs Oct 26th (SAB), twelve individuals were seen at Whiteknights Park and Lake on Oct 25th (DFL) and ten were at Alder Moor,

Woodley Mar 27th (B Loades). Some other counts greater than five were: six were at High Standinghill Woods, Windsor Forest Feb 27th (DJB), six at Boxford Mar 4th (RJCL), six were at Charvil Meadows Apr 10th (B Loades), seven at Cockmarsh Apr 23rd (PNe), six at Thatcham Marsh on several dates (MO), and finally seven birds were recorded together at Twyford on Nov 17th (SAB). There were no records of breeding received, however this species is very secretive during the breeding season, so this may not be surprising. A very interesting record was received of a Jay catching, (in mid-air), a Goldfinch and consuming it on the ground at Braywick Nature Centre Jun 11th (J Mills per BDC).

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)

This very familiar species was recorded from many sites throughout the county in a variety of habitats. Some high counts include: 19 at Dorney Wetlands Feb 19th (BDC), 22 birds were recorded at Ashenbury Park, Woodley Mar 27th (B Loades), 17 were at QMR Sep 4th (PNe), 70+ birds were mobbing a Mink at Wokingham STW Oct 13th (DJB), 30 at Whiteknights Park and Lake Oct 17th (G Sinclair), 18 at Cox Green, Maidenhead Nov 21st (PNe) and 80 were observed at Wokingham STW on Dec 11th (DJB). Very little in the way of breeding evidence was received, apart from a few birds reported carrying nesting material, however this is a case of lack of reporting, rather than the lack of breeding taking place.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)

Some very large counts were received of this species in 2015, among the highest: 500 were amongst a mixed Corvid flock of 1,500 – 2,000 birds at Remenham Hill Jan 30th (RRi), 500 birds were at Hurley Bottom Jul 11th (PNe), 300 were at Dinton Pastures CP Jul 22nd (PNe), 330 at Bisham Jul 15th (PNe) and 300 were at Bagnor Cress Beds Nov 2nd (JLS). Some impressive counts which mirror those made in recent years, so little evidence of change.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant breeding resident in rural West Berkshire, less common further east (Green Listed)

A very familiar bird in our county but much more abundant in the west, the larger counts were as follows: 200 were at Remenham Hill Jan 30th (RRi), 300 birds were at Welford Mar 21st (RJC), 300 at Dinton Pastures CP Jul 22nd (PNe), and 180 at Coldharbour, Knowl Hill Sep 18th (PNe). Not much in the way of breeding records were received, however one observer reported 42 nests occupied at a Rookery in Welford on Feb 21st (RJC), this constituted 80% of the nests present being used at that time.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant breeding resident (Green Listed)

Counts for this Corvid are not generally as high as some others due to their more solitary lifestyle, however there were a few quite high numbers recorded in 2015: 24 were recorded at Honeybottom, Bagnor Jan 7th (IW), an exceptional count of 800 birds in three mixed flocks of Corvids were witnessed at Remenham Hill on Jan 30th (RRi), 120 were at Strand Water, Cookham Apr 4th (BDC), a high count of 70 birds was at Manor Farm, Brimpton Jul 15th (JPM), 23 at Oakley Green, Windsor Jul 21st (PNe) and there were 17 at QMR Oct 12th (PNe).

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Now an established and locally common resident in SW Berks, elsewhere and increasing resident and passing visitor (Green Listed)

This species is becoming increasingly more familiar in Berkshire. Ravens were reported from 52 different sites throughout the county, however the majority were in the mid and western areas. Three birds were at Fobney Meadows Jan 30th (AA), three at Harvey's Meadows, Hungerford Jun 18th (JLS), a maximum of 40 birds were recorded in the Combe area on Jul 31st (DJB) and regular double figure counts were received from this area all year, the highest count being 57 over Walbury Hill also on Jul 31st. Three were soaring together over the Landfill site at Lea Farm Lake, Dinton Pastures CP Aug 2nd (BTB) and four were recorded at Hosehill Lake LNR Aug 8th (CMc). Few reports of breeding were received; a nest with two young at a usual site near to Windsor on May 2nd (DJB) and three recently fledged juvs at Whistley Green Hurst on Jul 26th (CDRH) were the only records.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Some very high counts and impressive murmerations were received as follows: up to 1,500 were on the Landfill site near Dinton Pastures CP Feb 8th (RRi), 1,000 were at Cow Down, West Ilsley Mar 17th (RCW), 1,500 roosted at Moor Green Lakes, Eversley Oct 1st (RCM), 2,047 [counted from a photograph], roosted in reeds at New Diggings, Moor Green Lakes Nov 1st (RGi), and a murmeration of approx. 5,000 birds roosted in the reeds at Thatcham Marsh Dec 1st (GJS). There were a few reports of breeding received for the county, mainly from urban localities.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident (Red Listed)

This species continues to be reasonably widespread, although a little thinly in some areas. Sightings were received from 62 locations, with high counts as follows: 28 at Lower Green, Inkpen on 15th Apr (RHar), 40+ were recorded on several dates in May, at Thatcham (MIGW), an impressive 50 birds were recorded at Eton Wick Aug 8th (PNc), 33 were at Remenham Hill Aug 21st (ABT), and 27 were at Welford on Nov 26th (RJC). So overall despite their decline in some areas throughout the country in recent years, a reasonable showing. Breeding was recorded at only three sites, these being: four fledglings seen at Brimpton on Jun 3rd (GEW), fledglings being fed at Boxford Jun 7th (GDS) and finally at Southcote, Reading where birds were observed carrying nesting material on the early date of Feb 16th (AVL).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

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

There were no confirmed reports of this species this year. Further evidence of the continued national decline.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident and winter visitor (Green Listed)

High counts for this very familiar finch were received as follows: 50 at Sulhamstead Abbots Jan 10th (PH), 150 were noted at Hogs Hole, Combe on Feb 27th (IW), with 100 at the same site Mar 4th (IW), 100 were observed at Arborfield Mar 3rd (ABT), 40 at Englefield Oct 25th (RCr), 40 birds were at Moor Green Lakes Nov 29th (RCM), 31 at Whiteknights Park Nov 7th (DFI), 30 at Sheepdrove, Lambourn Dec 18th (ABT). Surprisingly there was only one report of breeding activity. This was from Boxford, with four fledglings being seen on a lawn on Jun 21st (GDS). Clearly this doesn't reflect the breeding status of this species in our county, as it is a very common sight throughout.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

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

Although no large groups were recorded in 2015, records were none the less received from 30 locations throughout the county, many of which were in the observers' gardens. The last of the first winter period was a male at Dinton Pastures CP on Apr 19th (FJC). The first of the second winter was reported from Sandford Farm Woodley on Oct 13th (NE). The highest counts were as follows: seven in a garden in Woodley Feb 8th (FJC), ten birds were at Basildon Park on Feb 25th (JH), six at Hogs Hole, Combe Feb 27th (IW), ten at Arborfield Mar 3rd (ABT) and 15 birds in a mixed finch flock at Windsor Great Park Apr 6th (S Chalmers). Overall a reasonable and widespread showing but lacking the large numbers that some years produce.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Common and widespread resident and winter visitor, has shown signs of a decline in recent years (Green Listed)

A familiar and widespread bird in our gardens, so not surprisingly many of the records received were from this source. Taking the annual average flock size as a guide it appears that numbers have declined by 30% during the last 20 years. This decline has continued over the past two years. (D J Barker: Birds of Berkshire Annual Report 2014). Some of the higher counts were as follows: an impressive 35 birds were recorded at Bagnor Nov 8th (JL), 20 were at Brimpton Church Dec 13th (GEW) and 29 were seen in Bray Dec 27th (MHe). Breeding was recorded at Brimpton, where an adult was seen feeding a fledgling Jul 14th (GEW) and at Boxford, where three fledglings were seen on Aug 29th (GDS). Interestingly an adult male was found dead in a garden in Ascot Nov 2nd (SA), the bird had no sign of disease or any other indication of how it died, but had been ringed at elsewhere, Ring number TX96462.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread resident (Green Listed)

This abundant and widespread species was recorded from throughout the county. Most of reports were from garden watchers. Some impressive high counts were received including: 100 at Fobney Island Aug 26th (RRi), 100 birds including many juvs were at Brimpton Aug 28th (GEW), 200 birds were recorded at Englefield Sep 18th (RCr), a very impressive 500 were reported at Crookham feeding on thistle heads Sep 20th (KGW) and there were 35 at Bagnor on Nov 8th (JL). Not much information regarding breeding was received this year, however with such a familiar species to us all, maybe it tends to get overlooked.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in summer (Green Listed)

Records were received from pretty much the length and breadth of the county in suitable habitat. Primarily thought of as a winter visitor, however it was only for May and June that no records were received. The species is now a very familiar sight in our gardens on feeders, so many of the records received were from this source. The first winter period produced high counts as follows: 50 at Moor Green Lakes Jan 1st (RCM) plus the same figure at this site Feb 15th (RTG). Birds were more prevalent during the second winter period producing much higher counts: a very impressive 500 were reported at Crookham feeding on thistle heads Sep 20th (KGW) (an early date for this number), 100 at Padworth Lane GPs Oct 7th (KEM), 55 at Moor Green Lakes Oct 25th (TGB), 40 birds at Horton GPs Oct 31st (JMC) and 50 birds at Bagnor 20th Nov (IW).

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 received from 77 locations county-wide. Some very impressive flocks were recorded: 110 were at Greenham Common on Feb 8th (JL), at Bottle Lane, Cold Harbour, 100 were reported on Feb 18th (MSFW), a flock of 300 was recorded at Brimpton on Oct 3rd (GEW), 111 birds were at Englefield Oct 19th (RCr), at Compton Downs 300 were feeding on stubble Oct 25th (NJB), 100 at Combe Church Nov 11th (IW), flocks of 100+ were at Moor Green Lakes on several dates during the second winter period. 100 were at Remenham Dec 14th (ABT), flocks of 100 were also recorded at other downland sites (ABT). However, the most exceptional record came from CDRH - on Jan 16th, at Lambourn, 800+ flew north followed by another 100 then, at 3pm, a massive flock of c2000 birds flew back south, taking several minutes to pass over. This was perhaps several flocks combined as they relocated from the downs following a heavy sleet/hail shower. This was the observer's highest ever count of this species in Berkshire. Overall, considering the figures received, this species seems to continue to thrive in our county. **Breeding:** a recently fledged bird was at Padworth Lane GPs Jun 27th (KEM), two juvs were at Burnthouse Lane GPs Jul 10th (RJB) and a pair was seen with juvs at Combe Jul 31st (DJB). As can be seen breeding records received were quite low, but this probably doesn't reflect a true picture, it could be just down to being overlooked as breeding of this species is not always easy to detect.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

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

Primarily a bird of the winter months, records were received widespread from east to west and birds were present in most areas with suitable habitat. Birds were reported from 48 locations county-wide, with high counts for the first winter period: ten at Greenham Common Mar 1st (IW/JL), 55 were at Wishmoor Bottom Mar 27th (DJB) and there were 30 at South Forest, Windsor Forest Apr 6th (DJB). The second winter period produced some more impressive counts, among these: 26 at Greenham Common Oct 20th (IW, JL), 50 at Longwater Road, Eversley Nov 10th (BA Osborne), a high count of 140 birds were at New Diggings, Moor Green Lakes Nov 21st (DFL), 50 at Brimpton GPs Dec 17th and 18th (JPM) and 35 at Remenham Dec 30th (MSFW). This species is becoming increasingly familiar in gardens in recent years, so quite a lot of records received were from this source.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

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

A very lean year for this irruptive species, it being recorded at just five sites. 14 individuals were recorded at Emmer Green Jul 17th (ABT), a bird was heard flying over Clayfield Copse, Emmer Green Aug 2nd (HRN), there was a single at Finchamstead Oct 4th (RCM), 12 Crowthorne Woods triangle, Swinley Forest on Dec 4th (CRG) a male was seen at Crowthorne Woods Dec 16th (RHS) and finally another single was seen and heard at Ufton Nervet on Dec 20th (RCr). Overall a poor year, but not unexpected as the species is irruptive with many records one year and very few the following.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Uncommon but widespread resident, the long-term decline appears to have stabilised (Amber Listed)

Reported from 90 locations county wide. This is quite a drop from 2013 when records were received from well over 100 locations. The highest counts were as follows: seven at Greenham Common Jan 2nd (IW) with eight at this site on Jan 18th (JCM), six were at Moor Green Lakes Jan 30th (NS), twelve were at Theale Main GP Feb 12th (AVL) (this being the only double figure count), six birds, (three pairs) were at Braywick Nature Centre Feb 14th (R Hayward), three pairs were at Emmer Green Feb 26th (DJW), six birds were recorded at Woolhampton GP Mar 19th (IW), six at Welford Military Base Mar 21st (RJC), eight birds were at Enborne Jun 16th (RJC), (due to the date this may involve a family group), six at Padworth Common Aug 8th (TGB), six at Thatcham Marsh Sep 27th (IW) and six birds on several dates in August/September at Walbury Hill (IW). So generally abundant in our county. However, the spread appears to be from western areas as far east as the Maidenhead area but not much further. Breeding reports weren't numerous, but evidence was received as follows: three juvs were on garden feeders at Emmer Green Jun 25th (DJW), a pair with three juvs was at Padworth Common Jul 18th (TGB), at Walbury Hill three juvs were seen Jul 21st (IW), one juv was at Wooshill, Wokingham Aug 11th (PBT) and finally Wishmoor Cross where one juv was observed Aug 20th (M Hu).

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Very rare summer visitor

A male of this species was discovered on feeders in a garden in Greenham. The bird visited the garden daily from Jun 13th until finally being seen on Jun 25th. From the many photographs taken of the bird, it appears to be a sub-adult or full adult male. There was quite a lot of pinkish red around the head and upper breast, but the rump was lacking any red at all. It was calling frequently but was never heard to sing. This represents the third record for Berkshire. The others, also males, were at Earley on May the 6th 1982, and at Aldermaston between June 6th and 23rd 1997.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce and declining visitor, formerly an uncommon resident (Red Listed)

Just the one record of this beautiful finch species in 2015, a record of two birds at Walbury Hill, Combe Oct 19th (IW). Hopefully this is not a true reflection on the population in our county, as the species is very secretive and sometimes hard to detect. The felling of ancient woodland, especially the favoured tree, the Hornbeam, has of course, not helped.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

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

We are lucky in our county, to have so much farmland and downland, which is essential for this species, these areas are mainly at the central and western parts of the county. Reports were received from 80 locations in 2015, mainly in the west and south of the county. The species is scarcer in the east. Groups of 20 or more reported in the first winter period were as follows: twenty at Maidenhead Feb 16th (TOA), 20 birds were at Arborfield Feb 18th (ABT), 20 at Cow Down Mar 17th (RCW), 16 were at Englefield Feb 25th (RCr), 40 at Bucklebury Mar 19th (DJR) and 20 at Sheepdrove, Lambourn Mar 25th (ABT). The second winter period produced: thirty birds at Compton Down Nov 5th (ABT), twenty-one at Boxford Nov 25th (RJC), 25 at Bury Down, West Ilsley Dec 4th (RJB), 24 at Eastbury Down, Lambourn also Dec 4th (IW), 20 at Several Down, East Ilsley Nov 12th (ABT), 20 at Jealot's Hill Dec 16th (RCM) and finally 40 were at Walbury Hill, Combe Dec 23rd (IW). Breeding reports were few but included: a male observed carrying food at Woodlands Park Fields, Maidenhead on Jul 7th (DJB) and three juvs at Woolhampton GPs Sep 3rd (RJB). Unfortunately, the species continues to decline and is becoming scarcer in east and mid Berkshire.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

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

The winter periods are probably the best time to observe this species in any numbers, this is when they join roaming flocks of other Buntings and Finches. Some high numbers recorded were: at least twelve birds at Sulhamstead Abbots Jan 10th (PH), ten in a garden at Southcote Feb 12th (AVL), six were around the feeders at Moor Green Lakes Feb 15th (LGL). ten at Dorney Wetlands Feb 19th (BDC), an impressive 25 at Bucklebury Feb 22nd (DJR), 18 at Englefield on Mar 3rd (RCr), 13 at Woolhampton GPs Mar 19th (IW) and 18 at Englefield on Dec 9th (RCr). In the Spring and Summer, birds were recorded at 44 sites, these of course were mainly wetland sites with suitable breeding habitat. Breeding was reported at a few sites including: up to eight juvs observed at Woodlands Park Fields, Maidenhead during July (DJB), singing males were recorded at many suitable breeding sites, but few juvs and little breeding behavior was reported.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Locally common resident on the downs of NW Berks, now possibly extinct elsewhere in the county (Red Listed)

This species was reported throughout the year, in reasonable numbers but is restricted to suitable habitat in the northwest of the county. Winter flocks on the downs were the main source of records, but other farmland habitat also produced sightings. Some high counts include: twenty at Wellbottom Down Jan 22nd (ABT), 35 to 40 present at Bury Down, West Ilsley on Feb 10th (RRi), 24 at Aldworth Downs Feb 21st (NJB), 39 birds at Compton Downs Mar 13th (ABT), 90 were at Cow Down, West Ilsley Mar 14th (ABT), 100 at Bury Down, West Isley on Sep 9th (RRi) and 30 birds at Eastbury Grange, Lambourn on Nov 26th (ABT) and the population in Berkshire continues to decline and it is now completely absent from its previous stronghold in the east of the county and is becoming scarcer in mid Berks. The few records away from the main population included two at Sparrow Bill Copse, Brightwalton Holt Feb 1st (IW, JL).

ESCAPES, FERAL SPECIES AND HYBRIDS

ESCAPES AND FERALS

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

The first of the year was observed on the Englefield Estate, near to Victoria Drive. This bird was first noted on Feb 5th (RCr) mixed in with a herd of Mute Swan, the attraction being the brassica field on which they were all grazing. This bird was present until the Mar 6th at least with occasional visits to Lower Padworth. Another was seen at Kennetmouth on Mar 22nd with another on the May 3rd (PG) whilst two further individuals were noted on Apr 23rd (PNe) at Cockmarsh. June recorded singles at Woolhampton GPs on Jun 3rd and 12th (JPM) whilst July had a single on the 29th at Moatlands GP, Burghfield (RCr).

2013 Correction

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

Two at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park on May 3rd (CDRH). Seen well, both on the ground and in flight. Plumage details taken at the time enabled one of the birds to be identified as a first summer.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Beginning on Jan 10th a single bird was at Streatley (NJB), with a further sighting on Apr 5th at Swallowfield. Then another (or perhaps the same) at Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park which stayed a week from Apr 12th to 19th (DJB). Next sighting was Widbrook Common on May 25th and 26th (BDC). After this, there were only two further sightings recorded in Berkshire. On Aug 3rd a single at Purley-on-Thames (C. S. Garrett) and then on Dec 13th another single at Beale Wildlife Park, close to the Thames (DJB).

Snow Goose *Chen caerulescens*

The single remaining bird was reported from Moor Green Lakes in Jan to May, Aug, Nov and Dec (MO). One was reported flying over Wokingham on Mar 2nd (LFo).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Just the single surviving drake seen at two locations this year (unlike previous years). Singles were reported only from Maiden Erleigh Lake in January, April, May and October (MO) with a single sighting on Sep 27th at Searles Farm Lane GP (JA).

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadomoides*

In late June, a friend of RRI reported an Australian Shelduck on Theale Main GP, this was confirmed on Jun 28th (KEM). This bird was seen a few times in July by other observers and then disappeared. This bird had no white neck ring and was therefore a possible 1st year /eclipse drake, the possibility of a female was also considered - see Pizzey *et al*.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

During the year a single drake Muscovy Duck was first seen at Thatcham Marsh on Feb 8th (DAC) and then seen at both Rowney Predator Lake, Woolhampton and Thatcham Marsh for the rest of the year (JLS/KEM)

Cocaktiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Just a single record of a bird on Mar 22nd in Lower Earley (G Turner).

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Two singles were seen. One bird was at Crookham Common/Clapton/Elcot between Apr 24th and 30th (JL) with another record at Clapton reported on Jun 4th (JL, JLS). The second bird, or possibly the same (an immature male) was in Brimpton on Jun 8th (GEW).

HYBRIDS

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

Ring-necked Duck type (Ring-necked Duck × Tufted Duck)

A drake, of this parentage, was seen at Bray GP on Jan 20th (DJB). In the second winter period, it, or another similar bird, was seen at Bray GP on the Dec 22nd (DJB).

Ferruginous Duck type (Ferruginous Duck × Pochard – “Paget’s Pochard”)

Moor Green Lakes has had, for at least the past ten years, an annually returning Paget’s Pochard. This year was no different, it being seen in the first winter period on Feb 1st (RCM) and then through February (MO). During the second winter period it arrived on Oct 19th (RFM) and was occasionally seen during November and December (MO).

2013 Corrections

Wigeon × American Wigeon is an *Anas* hybrid and should not be listed as an *Aythya* hybrid.

The bird (or birds) listed as a **Tufted Duck × Ring-necked Duck** hybrid is, in fact, a Tufted Duck × Pochard hybrid bearing some resemblance to a Ring-necked Duck.

First and last dates of selected summer migrants

Species	First Date	Last Date
Blackcap*	18th March	31st October
Chiffchaff*	8th March	31st October
Common Sandpiper	20th March	14th October
Common Tern	7th April	9th September
Cuckoo	8th April	20th July
Garden Warbler	15th April	11th September
Hobby	18th April	4th October
House Martin	28th March	18th October
Lesser Whitethroat	16th April	24th September
Little Ringed Plover	7th March	23rd August
Nightingale	10th April	22nd August
Nightjar	7th May	17th August
Quail	27th May	27th July
Redstart	14th April	2nd October
Reed Warbler	10th April	25th September
Sand Martin	13th March	6th October
Sedge Warbler	25th March	4th October
Spotted Flycatcher	4th May	26th September
Stone-Curlew	6th April	8th October
Swallow	1st April	1st December+
Swift	18th April	16th September
Tree Pipit	9th April	2nd September
Turtle Dove	17th May	15th August
Common Whitethroat	6th April	25th September
Willow Warbler	18th March	25th September
Yellow Wagtail	8th April	1st October

Notes

*Difficult to distinguish between winter residents and early/late migrants

+An exceptionally late date – the latest since at least 1974

Last and first dates of selected winter migrants

Species	Last Date	First Date
Brambling	19th April	13th October
Fieldfare	9th April	27th September
Redwing	13th April	27th September
Golden Plover	24th April	2nd August
Goldeneye	26th April	30th October=
Goosander	17th June	24th October

Note

=Excludes a remarkable record of five birds at QMR on 15th June

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Well over 400 people contributed to this year's systematic list, a magnificent effort for a small county. Please keep your records coming. Sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.

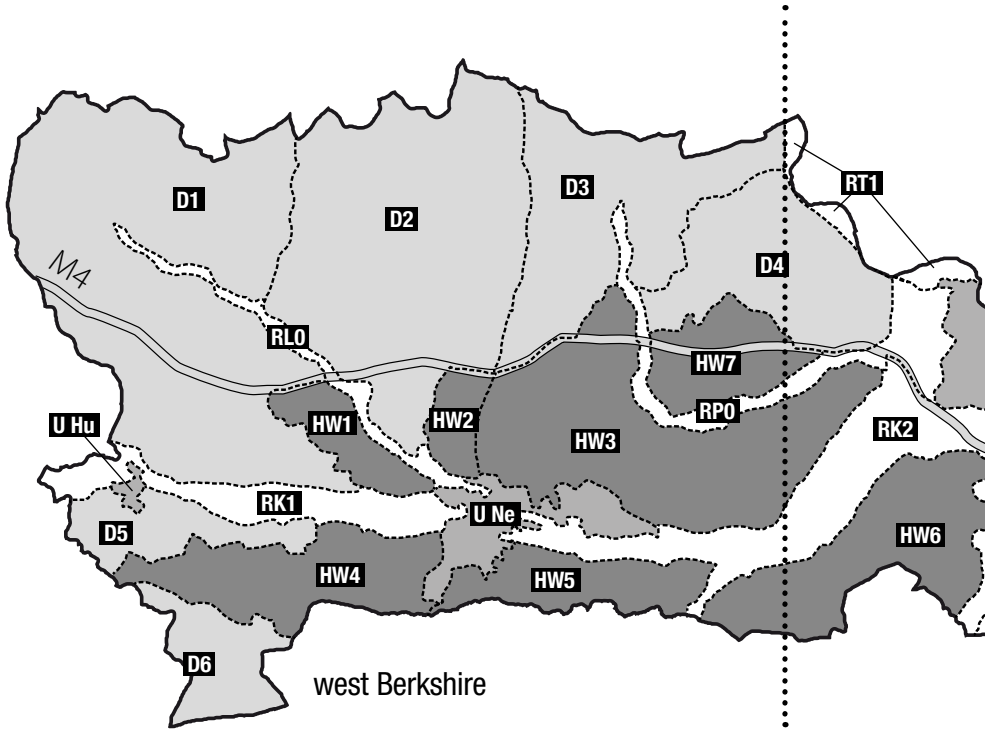
Abbott S D..... SA	Burness R J..... RJB	Duncan.....KPD
Absolom A.....AA	Butler D..... DBu	Dwyer P K
Adams V	Butler J.....JBut	
Addison R.....RAAd		East D.....DEa
Alder G..... GAL	Callister T.....TCa	Eaton M A
Alexander T O.....TOA	Campbell D	Edwards N..... NE
Allen J.....JAll	Carpenter D	Eldridge T
Andrews J E.....JA	Carter D A.....DAC	Elliot-Moustache G
Angus R.....RAn	Catell M	Evans G..... GE
Archer B M..... BMA	Chalmers S	Evans H W.....HWE
Austin P	Chapman P	Evans L G R..... LGRE
	Charles N.....NCh	
Bailey L	Chivers J L.....JCh	Fairley M
Baird T	Chown P K	Farrell G R.....GRF
Ball T G.....TGB	Claridge R J..... RJC	Finchman N
Barber L J	Clark F C.....FCC	Firth T.....TFi
Barker D J..... DJB	Clark J M.....JMC	Fisher S L.....SLF
Barker S R J.....SRJB	Cleal D.....DCl	Fishwick M
Barnes C	Cleere N.....NC	Flack D.....DFI
Bass C G	Clements F A	Floyd P
Bassett A D.....ADB	Clews B D.....BDC	Follett P.....PF
Bassett D C.....DCB	Collier S	Ford J P
Bateman L	Collins C J	Ford K J
Batho G S.....GSBa	Collins R.....RCo	Foster C.....CF
Bates E	Coney S P	Foster C W.....CWFo
Baulcomb G	Cookman J	Foulds P
Beaney V R.....VRB	Cottingham F J.....FJC	Frampton O
Beever D.....DBe	Coupland J.....JCo	Fuller D.....DF
Beglow B.....BB	Cox S.....SC	
Bennett B T.....BTB	Craig C	Gale A.....AGa
Bennett R W	Crathorne B.....BCr	Gardner M
Beveridge D	Crawford R.....RCr	Garner-Langham L.....LGL
Birkett J	Creed K.....KCr	Garrett C S
Bishop J.....JBi	Crispin J.....JC	Gent C R.....CRG
Blackmore D.....DBI	Crowley P J.....PJC	George C M
Blundell L R.....LRB	Culver C	Gibson T.....TGi
Bolton A	Cumming D A	Gilham R.....RGi
Booth A.....ABO	Curson L	Gipson P.....PG
Booth R		Godden N
Borwnlow H	Darrell-Lambert D G	Godden R J.....RJG
Boswell S A	Davies D P	Gordon J D
Boult P.....PBou	Davies R C W	Goriup P.....PGo
Brannan K	Dawson R.....RD	Graham A
Brant P.....PBr	Day S.....SDa	Graham S A.....SAG
Breaks M T	Dean S.....SD	Gray T.....TGr
Bright-Thomas P.....PBT	Dear M J.....MJD	Green C
Brook R	Denyer R A	Guyatt T A.....TAG
Brooks C	Dewey S	
Brown G.....GBro	Dickinson B.....BDi	Hale J.....JHal
Brown S A.....SAB	Dixon K.....	Halsey R
Brown V F	Dodds D A M.....DAMD	Hampton D W
Brown W.....WB	Dodgington C	Hannaford A C
Buchanan J.....JBU	Downie I S	Harcombe S
Bucknell N J.....NJB	Drake S	Harden T.....THar
Budd P A.....PAB	Driver P W.....PD	Hardy R.....RHAr
Bunce T.....TBU	Dryden R.....RDr	Harley S.....SHAr
Burch C.....CBur	Duffus G.....GDu	Harrison A.....AHarr

Hassler J.....	JH	Larkins S.....	SLA	Noble D J
Hastings D		Latham M J.....	MJL	Norman N
Hatfield J		Lawson A V.....	AVL	Norris D
Hawtree J N.....	JNH	Legg J.....	JL	North A.....
Haydon R M.....	RMH	Lerpiniere J.....	JLe	O'Brien J.....
Hayward M.....	MHayw	Lerpiniere R J.....	RJL	Oldcorn I
Hayward R		Lester A J B		Orr P J.....
Heard C D R.....	CDRH	Lewis P.....	PLe	Osborn P
Hemmings M.....	MHe	Leyland K		Osbourne B A
Hickman A E D.....	AEDH	Lloyd-Parry J.....	JLP	Overy M K
Hickman P.....	PH	Loades B		Owen G M
Higgins R.....	KHoa	Lomas P J.....	PJL	Painter C
Highfield M		Long D F		Palmer K J
Hines M		Luker P A		Pang Valley Barn Owl Group.....
Hoare K		Lyle B.....	BL	Patterson D.....
Holland B J.....	BJH			Payne D E E.....
Holmes G		Mackenzie D.....	DMac	Peck R.....
Honey G		Mann L B.....	LBM	Pemble L.....
Hook J.....	JHo	Mannion P		Perrier G
Horscroft A M.....	AMH	Many Observers.....	MO	Perry A S
Hosehill Ringing Report		Marchant J H		Philpott M G.....
Hotchkiss R		Marriner N.....	NM	Platt M S.....
Humphrey P.....	PHu	Marsh R.....	RM	Pont S
Hunt M.....	MHu	Martin J P.....	JPM	Potter N
Hutchins P E.....	PEH	Maskell J M		Pottinger D.....
Hutchison A.....	AHut	May B.....	BM	Povey R
Huttner I.....	IH	McCarthy M.....		Price R A G.....
I'Anson M.....	MIAn	McEwan C.....	CMc	Pritchard D M
Inskip M.....	MIIn	McEwan D.....	DMc	Proddow S K.....
Jackson E D		McIlvray K L.....		Pyrah R J.....
Jacobs R S.....	RSJ	Mckee M J.....	MMc	Ramm S
James P		McMahon A.....	AMc	Rampton N.....
Jinks R		McNeill J M.....	JMcN	Randall G.....
Johnstone P W.....	PWJ	Meads S M.....	SMe	Rapesy C
Jones B.....	BJ	Meatcher J.....	JM	Reed C
Jones C.....	CJ	Middleton S		Reedman R.....
Jones C M		Milligan R F.....	RFM	Reeve B.....
Jones G J		Mills D J.....	DJM	Reynolds D J.....
Jones M.....	MJo	Minchin E.....		Richards D
Jones S E I		Mitchell M J.....	MJM	Ricks S.....
Karunanayke K		Moor Green Lakes Report.....		Righelato R.....
Keel R R.....	RRK	MGLR		Rimes D N T.....
Kelson D W.....	DWK	Moore K E.....	KEM	Rivoire J R.....
Kendall P.....	PKe	Moore R C.....	RCMo	Roberts A.....
Kerr K		Moore P D		Robertson D A
Kettell M.....	MK	Morgan J C.....	JCM	Rogers P
Kettell M M.....	MMK	Morrison L		Rogers T.....
Kirby M.....	MKir	Morrison R		Rohl A.....
Kirkland M		Murdoch D		Rose J.....
Knight A.....	AK	Murfitt R C.....	RCM	Rossiter B N
Knight C.....	CK	Napper E.....	EN	Rouane D
Knight D C.....	DCK	Nash S		Rowe S J
Kujawa S.....	SKu	Ness R.....	RN	Rowing C G M
Kwantes L.....	LK	Netley H R.....	HRN	Ryall J
Lamsdell C.....	CL	Nette-Thomas A		Ryland C
Langley G B.....	GBL	Newbound P J.....	PNe	Rylands K.....
Langton K.....	KL	Newbury District Ornithological Club.....	NDOC	Rymer A.....
		Nicholls J		Sanger C M
		Nickson J.....	JN	
		Nn N		

Saunders I.....	IS	Swallow J L.....	JLS	Watson M I G.....	MIGW
Scholey G D.....	GDS	Swann M		Watts R C.....	RCW
Scott S.....	SSc	Sweetland T.....	TS	Weeks S.....	SW
Scudamore P.....	PSC			Westmacott J.....	JWe
Seligman P M		Taylor A.....	ATa	Weston I L G.....	IW
Seward L.....	LSe	Taylor K.....	KTa	Wetland Bird Survey.....	WeBS
Seward M		Taylor M J.....	MJT	Whitaker I	
Seymour K		Tegg R		Whitaker M S F.....	MSFW
Sharp A H L.....	AHLS	Terry M		Whitaker P	
Sharp M		Theale Area Bird Report ..	TABR	White D J.....	DJW
Sheridan J B.....	JBS	Thornton G.....	GT	White K G.....	KGW
Short P P		Tilby J		White S.....	SW
Silver N.....	NS	Tomczynski A B.....	ABT	Whitfield J	
Simmons M.....	MSi	Treen P		Why M	
Sinclair G		Trout N S		Why T	
Smart S.....	SSm	Turner D R.....	DRT	Williams C D	
Smedley R		Turner G		Williams G D	
Smith M J.....	MJS	Turner R M		Williams -Jones D	
Smith W.....	WS	Turton M H.....	MHT	Williams P A.....	PAW
Southam M		Tyler D		Williams R.....	RWi
Stannard J				Williamson C S	
Stansfield R H.....	RHS	Uttley B		Willmott N	
Stansfield R T.....	RTS			Wilson C	
Steel M		Vallas J C.....	JCV	Wilson G E.....	GEW
Steele A J		Vaughan J		Woodham J S.....	JSW
Stevens P J.....	PJSt	Vogel M.....	MV	Woodward G	
Stewart G J.....	GJS	Walford M F.....	MFW	Wright D	
Stoney A		Walker A.....	AWal		
Stow A N.....	ANS	Walker B J.....	BJW	Young C A	
Sumner G J.....	GJSu	Wallace R			
Sussex D J.....	DJS	Wang E			

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

- Lambourn Downs
- 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

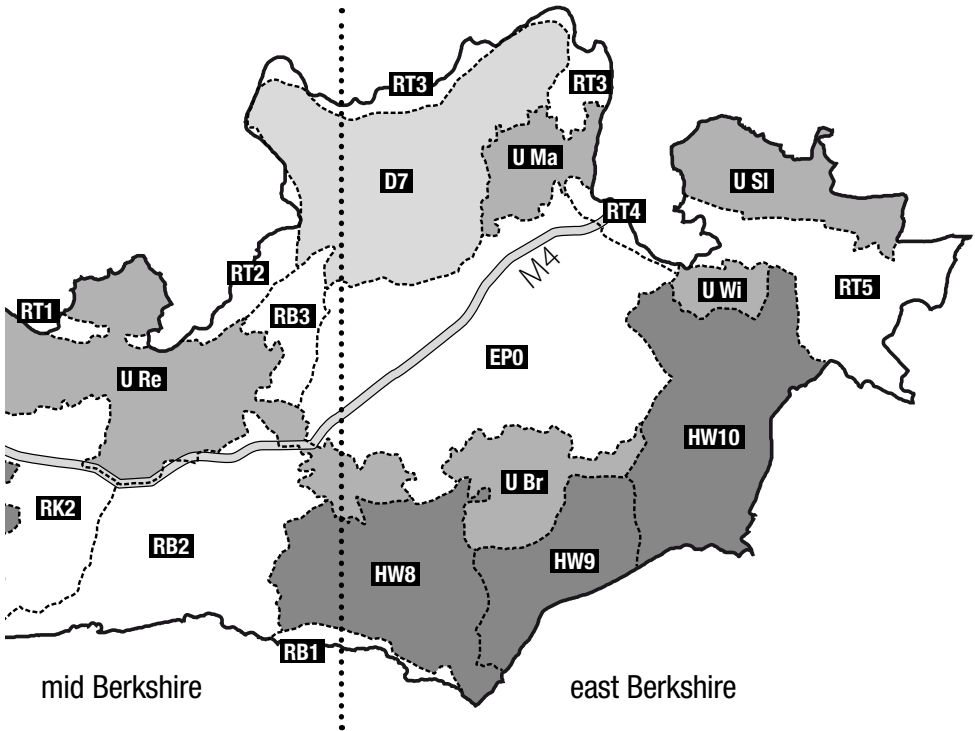
- D1 Wickham Heath
- D2 Snelsmore Common
- D3 Curridge/Hermitage & Bucklebury Plateau
- D4 Inkpen Plateau
- D5 Greenham/Crookham Plateau
- D6 Wasing/Burghfield
- D7 Yattendon/Frilsham
- Crowthorne/ Finchampstead
- Swinley Forest
- Windsor Great Park & Forest

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
- TC: Urban Areas**
- RT5 Hungerford
- RK1 Newbury-Thatcham
- RK2 Greater Reading
- RLO Bracknell
- RP0 Maidenhead
- RB1 Windsor
- RB2 Slough & Langley
- RB3

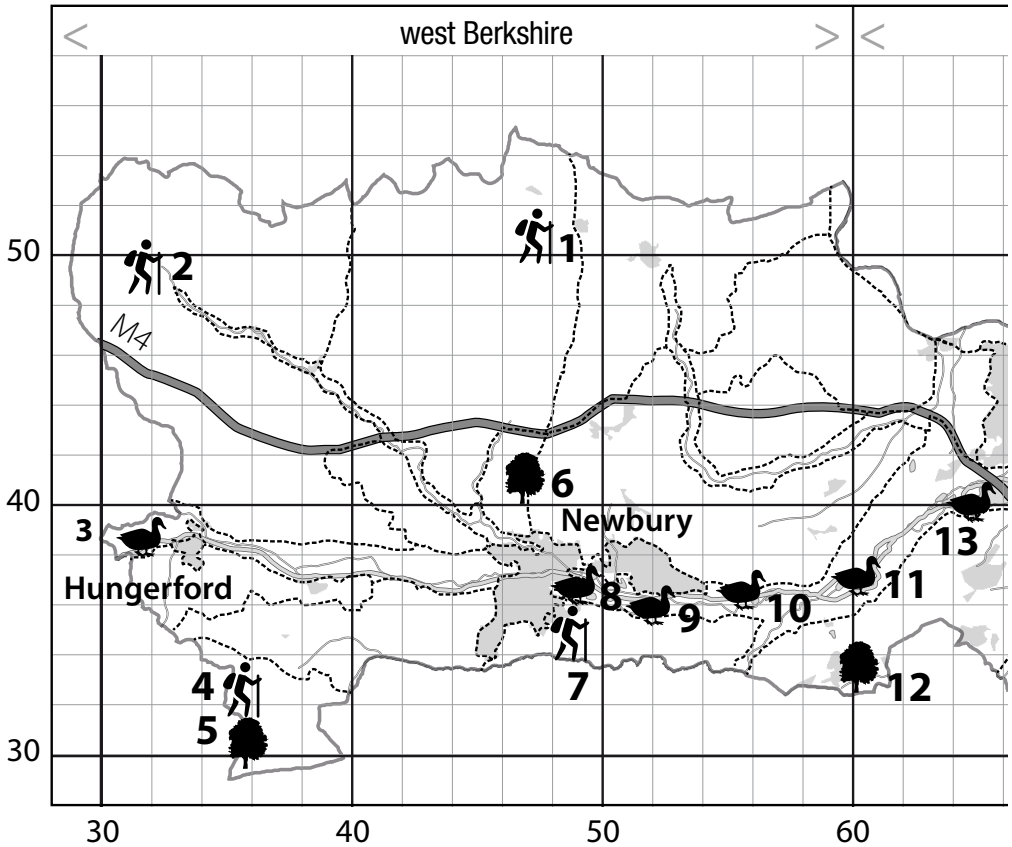
EP

- EP0





UR

- U Hu
- U Ne
- U Re
- U Br
- U Ma
- U Wi
- U SI

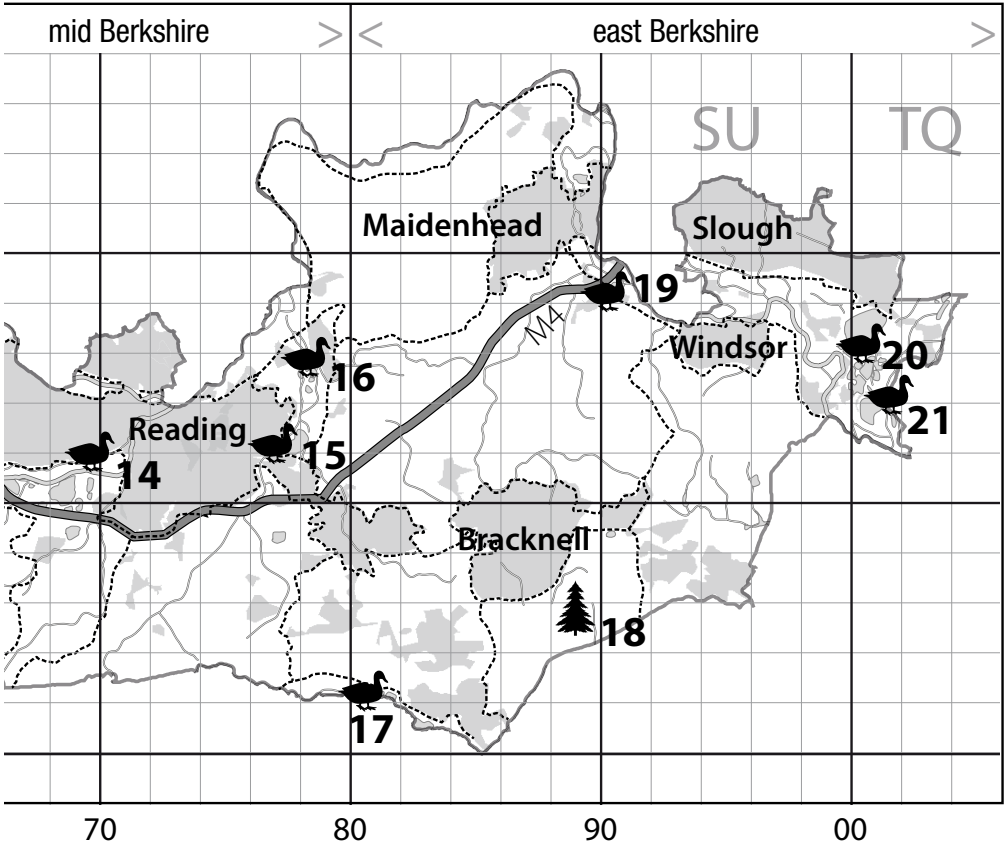
Some birdwatching sites in Berkshire



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. Wryasbury 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

BERKSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

www.berksoc.org.uk

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

Secretary, Sally Wearing, 9 Deans Farm, The Causeway, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JZ

Telephone 0118 946 3125

Email: berksocsecretary@berksoc.org.uk

NEWBURY DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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

BIRDS OF BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION FUND

Charitable Fund managed for the benefit of Berkshire's birds.

Enquiries and applications to: Renton Righelato

TELEPHONE 0787 981 2564

EMAIL: renton.righelato@berksoc.org.uk

www.berksbirds.co.uk

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

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY (BTO)

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

Telephone 01635 268442

Email: btoberks.ken.sarah@googlemail.com

FRIENDS OF LAVELL'S LAKE

Conservation volunteers managing Lavell's Lake 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 or see

www.foll.org.uk

MOOR GREEN LAKES GROUP

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

THEALE AREA BIRD CONSERVATION GROUP

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

www.freeWeBS.com/tabcg/

Cath McEwan, Secretary,

Email: Catherine@cmcewan.fsnet.co.uk

LOCAL RSPB GROUPS

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

Further details from the RSPB

www.rspb.org.uk or directly from:

East Berks Local Group

www.eastberksrspb.org.uk/

Reading Local Group

www.reading-rspb.org.uk/

Wokingham and Bracknell Local Group

www.wbrspb.btinternet.co.uk/

The bird-watching code

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

The interests of the bird come first.

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

Whether your particular interest is photography, ringing, sound-recording or 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.

Know the law

In England, Scotland and Wales, it is a criminal offence to disturb, intentionally or recklessly, at or near the nest, a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Disturbance could include playback of songs and calls. The courts can impose fines of up to £5,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to six months for each offence. In Scotland, disturbance of Capercaillie and Ruffs at leks is also an offence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you discover a rare breeding species under any circumstances report it to the County Recorder (for Berkshire: email records@berksoc.org.uk) as a matter of urgency or the RSPB if it's outside the county. The County Recorder will consider telling the landowner of the bird's presence and legal obligations in most cases, and this will help ensure that the nest is not disturbed accidentally. If you have the opportunity to see a rare bird, enjoy it, but don't let your enthusiasm override common sense. In addition to the guidelines above:

- If you go to see a rare bird, park sensibly, follow instructions and consider making a donation if requested.
- Don't get too close for a photograph – you'll earn the wrath of everyone else if you flush the bird out of sight.
- Be patient if the viewing is limited, talk quietly and give others a chance to see the bird too.
- Do not enter private areas without permission.
- Birds should never be flushed in important wildlife habitats or where there are other nesting or roosting birds nearby. Birds should not be flushed more frequently than every two hours nor within two hours of sunrise or sunset, so that the bird has chance to feed and rest. At any time in the breeding season flushing rare visitors can be very disruptive to other species that are breeding in the area and so shouldn't be done.